

RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

**Institute for Far Eastern Studies
Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies**

**RUSSIAN SCHOLARS
ON
VIETNAM**

Selected Papers

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RUSSIAN SCHOLARS
ON
VIETNAM

Selected Papers

This collection comprises materials contributed for discussion at three theoretical and practical conferences held at the Institute for Far Eastern Studies, the Russian Academy of Sciences, in 2010 through 2012 and published under the common title *Topical Issues of Vietnam Studies in Russia*. The papers in the collection were selected from among those submitted by Russian authors and printed in Russian in three issues of *Vietnam Studies* in 2011 through 2013, even though foreign scholars, some of them from CIS countries, took part in the conferences as well. The Russian scholars are full-time employees of major centers of Vietnam studies, such as academic institutes and university centers in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Vladivostok.

The collection consists of six subject sections covering the main areas of Vietnam research and touching upon various sides of Vietnam's internal and foreign policies, and social and cultural life in that country. Part One includes papers discussing the current state of Russian-Vietnamese relations. Part Two analyzes changes in Vietnam's international position, including its stature in major security centers in Southeast Asia and the stand of its strategic partners. Part Three looks at Vietnam's internal development under the impact of its renovation policy and in conditions of market economy evolution. Parts Four and Five are made up of papers highlighting unpublished episodes in Vietnam's modern history, and Part Six contains papers by experts in Vietnamese linguistics and literature.

The original papers in this collection rely on a wide range of sources and documents reflecting their authors' own findings. The authors' views do not necessarily represent those of the collection compilers.

This collection is the first of its kind in the Russian Federation and is intended for distribution abroad to acquaint foreign readers and researchers with the current state and samples of Vietnam studies in Russia.

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INTRODUCTION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies wishes to express its gratitude to the Scientific and Technological Association of Vietnam in Russia (HIỆP HỘI KHOA HỌC–K THUẬT VIỆT NAM TẠI LB NGA) for the sponsorship of this publication.

The Association was established in Moscow in 1993 and registered as a nongovernmental organization of individual and group members. It provides support to Vietnamese nationals studying at Russian higher education institutions or engaging in scientific research in natural sciences and humanities in the Russian Federation. The Association holds regular meetings to report to its members and have elections, and arranges meetings for its same-occupation members. The results of the Association's efforts and its great contribution to the Vietnamese citizens' academic and educational activities in Russia have been reviewed at several academic and practical conferences and published in collections of reports presented at the conferences.

The Association maintains links with Russian academic and educational centers, societies of Russian-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-Russian friendship, and other nongovernmental organizations in Russia, and contributes to a deeper and broader strategic partnership and cooperation between Vietnam and Russia in all fields.

The Association is headed up today by Dr. Nguyễn Đình Hoàng, who replaced its deceased founder Dr. Nguyễn Văn Thạc, elected Chairman of the Association Board several times in succession until his death in 2010.

The Scientific and Technological Association of Vietnam in Russia is headquartered at 7A Simferopolsky Boulevard, Moscow, Russia.

Evgeny KOBELÉV

Vietnam Studies in Russia Today: Problems and Tasks

Since this country and Vietnam established relations in January 1950, Vietnam studies in Russia have been rapidly and steadily progressing. The discipline reached the highest point in its development in the 1960s–1970s, when relations between the two countries evolved along the lines of brotherly friendship and cooperation. In those years this country saw the emergence of serious fundamental research works on Vietnam's modern and recent history, and ancient Vietnamese literature; there appeared excellent Russian translations of works on history, poetry and prose by Vietnamese authors.

Unfortunately, in the late 1980s, with the heady perestroika euphoria at its highest, political, trade, economic and other ties with Vietnam gradually went into decline, for reasons only too well known today, and once the Soviet Union collapsed, the slide became an avalanche. Naturally, these events could not but affect Vietnam studies in Russia; interest in Vietnam in those years was artificially suppressed, colleges of Oriental studies reduced their student intake in Vietnam classes, the Russian media and television mentioned Vietnam in a negative context, if at all.

At the same time, the radical changes in foreign-policy priorities on either side notwithstanding, the people of our two countries could not tolerate much longer the unexpected oblivion engulfing the traditions of friendship and cooperation that had taken decades to form. Little by little, thanks primarily to the efforts of the Vietnamese side (this deserves special emphasis), and also as New Russia's foreign policy concept continued to take shape, long-term national interests of both countries overcame the difficulties of the minute. Active search began for a model of mutual relationships that

would conform to the drastically altered internal and international conditions, which resulted in signing a series of historic bilateral documents, the main of them the Declaration of Strategic Partnership between the Russian Federation and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam signed in November 2001 in the course of the first official visit to Hanoi by the then President of Russia Vladimir Putin.

The basic content of the Declaration can be summed up as the following logical conclusion. Despite the global changes in the international arena and within our two countries, Russia and Vietnam share so many historically determined factors of rapprochement that they are virtually doomed to continuing extensive and close cooperation, on a mutually advantageous basis, of course, and bearing in mind the new world realities. And finally, the main thing on which both Moscow and Hanoi agree wholeheartedly is that strategic partnership was and should remain a fundamental factor in the two states' relations.

As for the area of bilateral humanitarian relations, which includes Vietnam studies, the Declaration says that the two parties shall expand cooperation and exchanges between sociopolitical organizations of the two countries, including those organized by the Russian-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-Russian Friendship Societies, and also that the parties are determined to promote cooperation in such areas as science and technology, culture, education and personnel training.

Once the Declaration was signed, various areas of Russian-Vietnamese relations started to look up and were off to a good start, which included Vietnam studies in Russia as well. Above all, student exchange was revived with a vengeance. At present, there are dozens of Russian students from Moscow, St. Petersburg and Vladivostok studying in Vietnam. This looks inspiring enough and gives hope that several years from now Russian community of Vietnam scholars that has been thoroughly thinned out over the years will welcome a crowd of vigorous young experts more fluent in Vietnamese and better versed in that country's history and literature than were we, the veterans, and so naturally freer in their research thinking.

Another heart-warming thing is the noticeably greater numbers of academic and popular editions on Vietnam. Personally, I keep a special shelf at home where I place books by Russian experts on Vietnam published within the last ten years, and there is hardly room for more there now. First and foremost, I would like to remark on the unsparing efforts of the Traditional Vietnam Section members at the Institute of

Practical Oriental Studies, particularly their works on translating medieval Vietnamese chronicles, which are a mystery sealed with seven seals

even for ordinary mortal Vietnam scholars. The Center for Contemporary Southeast Asia Studies under the Moscow M.V. Lomonosov University's Institute of Asian and African Studies takes credit for a tremendous amount of work in this area. Admittedly, the range of subjects in their publications is fairly wide, but Vietnam definitely has pride of place there. The RAS Institute for Far Eastern Studies has published a number of interesting monographs and articles on Vietnam over the years, where *The Comintern and Vietnam* by Anatoly Sokolov, Ph.D. (Philology), stands alone.

Of the more outstanding theoretical works I would single out the fundamental monographic research on Vietnam in recent years to my knowledge, the book *Reforms of the Transition Period in Vietnam (1986—2006): Trends and Development Dynamics* by Vladimir Mazyrin, D.Sc. (Econ.), where one can find answers to virtually every major question to do with the specifics of the *Doi Moi* policy by the Communist party of Vietnam and the mechanism of accelerated development of Vietnamese economy over the last two decades.

As I see it, along with the works by professional Vietnam historians, memoirs by Russian authors could be truly invaluable for accurately reproducing the history of Vietnam over the last 60 years. We know that thousands of military and civilian experts, hundreds of diplomats, dozens of prominent journalists from Russia were immediate participants in and eyewitnesses to the two wars of resistance by the Vietnamese people and Vietnam's peaceful revival. What they are telling and can tell in the future is not to be found in any archives.

One cannot, therefore, but give its due to the Society of Russian-Vietnamese Friendship and particularly its current chairman Prof. Vladimir Buyanov, D.Sc. (Econ.), who is today the chief initiator and organizer of compiling and publishing memoir collections. For example, within a mere two and a half years the Society has supervised publication of such supremely important books on the history of Russian-Vietnamese relations as *The War in Vietnam. The Way It Was (1965—1973)*; *This Memorable Word, Lien Xo; A Friendship Tested by Time*. Last but not least, there is a newly published collection of reminiscences, *Russians on Ho Chi Minh*, dedicated to the 120th anniversary of the first President of independent Vietnam (May 19, 1890).

Of memoir works in their own right, which are few and far between, alas, the book that cannot be overlooked is that by Igor Ognetrov, Ph.D. (Hist.), who started his career at the Institute for Oriental Studies, and afterwards supervised for years the Vietnam Sector at the CPSU Central Committee. The book is suitably titled *In the Vietnamese Sector* (Moscow,

2007). This one might say unique book gives a detailed and lucid description of the nitty-gritty of the more significant and fateful decision making in Soviet-Vietnamese relations and the efficient assistance rendered to Vietnam by the Soviet Union in the former's two wars of resistance and peaceful development.

I wish there were lots more of this kind of works seeing the light of day. Time, alas, is relentless. The immediate participants in and eyewitnesses to historic events in Vietnam are departing this world one after another, as did Igor Ognetrov soon after his memoirs appeared. So, a major task for Russian experts on Vietnam is to do their utmost to encourage and help those still living to share with us their knowledge of internal springs of the 1960s–1970s events in Vietnam and explain how important was the part taken in those events by the best members of the Russian people.

Now a few words about the RAS IFES Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies. It was set up just over a year ago, thanks to the personal initiative and effort of our director Academician Mikhail Titarenko. We, the Center staffers, believe that this was a logical and timely decision. If the Institute for Far Eastern Studies, apart from various centers of China studies, has for years had centers for Japan and Korea research, why not Vietnam as well, which is also part of the Ancient Chinese range?

The main research lines of this Center have been formulated in its establishment Provision.

- Comprehensive analysis and forecasts of political and socioeconomic development in Vietnam;
- Modern and recent history of Vietnam;
- Traditional Vietnam as part of the Ancient Chinese world. The impact of civilizational traditions on Vietnam's contemporary politics.
- Strategic partnership between Russia and Vietnam. The potential of Russian-Vietnamese cooperation. Archives, documents, forecasts.
- Historical experience of the Russia-Vietnam relationship development.
- Vietnam's present-day relations with China, the U.S.A., the European Union, Japan, and other global powers and politico-economic centers.
- The current state and prospects of relations between Russia and ASEAN. Russia's interests in Southeast Asia. Issues of security in the region.
- Regional integration in Southeast Asia. Ways of optimizing Russia's inclusion in these developments, above all its eastern areas.

- ASEAN's part in dealing with global and regional problems in the APR and East Asia. Ways of interaction between Russia and ASEAN in the area.

- Intercivilization dialogue in Southeast Asia, and Russia's part in that.

One of the distinctive features of the Center's work is the desire to actively further the partnership relations with institutes under the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences that explore subjects similar to ours. From 2009, this is the practice of annual symposia and conferences held jointly with Vietnamese scholars, alternately in Moscow and Hanoi. Then there is preparation and publication of joint research works. In 2009, we have published, in cooperation with Vietnam's Institute of Chinese Studies, a joint work, *China in the Early 21st Century*, coedited by Academician Mikhail Titarenko and Do Tien Sam, director of the Vietnamese Institute of Chinese Studies. The book contains papers by 20 authors, ten from either side, on all the major issues of modern China's development.

This coproduction is useful in more ways than one, particularly for our China experts, as they have been given their first ever chance of immediate and minute acquaintance with the views of Vietnamese scholars on the very problems they have been exploring themselves.

Together with the scientists of the Institute of Linguistics and the Institute for Asian and African Studies we are finishing work on a dictionary of terms used in social sciences (20,000 units), likewise jointly with our Vietnamese colleagues. Finally, the work plans of our Center provide for a serious monographic research to be completed within the next two years covering Russian-Vietnamese relations in the 18th through 20th centuries. This project we also intend to work on jointly with Vietnamese colleagues, in particular with the Russia and CIS Center of the Institute of Europe under the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, and also with scholars from other Russian institutes.

Besides, in 2010, we have published a team monograph by the Center's staff, *ASEAN in the Early 21st Century*, which attempts a comprehensive analysis of complex regionalization processes in Southeast and East Asia and shows their significance for Russia's strategic interests in the APR. Finally, with assistance from the Russian-Vietnamese Friendship Society, we have published a popular science book, *U.S.S.R./Russia — Vietnam: 60 Years Together*, to mark the 60th anniversary of establishing relations between our two countries. The book looks at the well-known events from a new perspective and discloses new facts of bilateral relations.

Going back to the general issues of Vietnam studies in Russia, one has to admit that, regrettably, today the best books and articles by Vietnamese

authors, primarily those on Russian-Vietnamese relations, hardly ever get translated into Russian and published in this country. At the same time, in Vietnam, despite the declining interest in Russia and the Russian language, for obvious objective reasons, those Vietnamese scholars and researchers who remain true to the traditional ties of friendship and cooperation with this country have been meticulously following our publications on Russian-Vietnamese relations promptly translating them into Vietnamese. For example, within just a few months of the publication of the aforementioned books, *The War in Vietnam. The Way It Was*, and *This Memorable Word, Lien Xo*, they came out in Hanoi in Vietnamese, while the collection *Russians on Ho Chi Minh* was actually translated from the electronic version by our Vietnamese colleagues, and it appeared in Vietnamese almost simultaneously with the Russian original.

According to the International Section of Russia's Union of Writers, even after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Vietnamese writers and translators did not lose heart. In conditions of burgeoning market economy, when translators can barely earn a pittance, Vietnamese experts in Russian literature remain loyal to it. For example, *War and Peace* and *Quiet Flows the Don* have been issued by several publishers at once. In the year of Chekhov's anniversary his books came out in vast numbers. Honorary member of the Russian Writers Union Vietnamese writer and translator Hoang Thuy Tuan distinguished himself by pioneering Vietnamese translations of works by Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoi, Tyutchev, Yesenin, Rubtsov, Vysotsky, and even Nika Turbina, a teenage poet prodigy.

Now, what do we have here? After the demise of our two venerable experts in Vietnamese literature, Marian Tkachev and Nikolai Nikulin, translation of the best pieces of Vietnamese literature, apart from the heroic efforts by our experts in historical Vietnamese chronicles, has been reduced to virtually nil. Sizable chunks of Vietnamese prose, particularly of the 1920s-1930s, such as profound novels by the harbinger of Vietnamese critical realism Vu Trong Phung, lyrical stories by the founders of Vietnamese Romanticism Nhat Linh and Khai Hung, to say nothing of contemporary authors, remain outside the scope of vision of our Vietnam experts, young scholars included.

And now a brief survey of the problems and tasks of our Vietnam studies as they are seen at the current stage of development.

1. As for Vietnam's modern history, we seem to be facing a most serious problem of forming a new approach to the role of various political forces in the national liberation movement of the Vietnamese people. Not surprisingly, Soviet historians always tended to underrate or even denigrate the ac-

tivity of nationalist and bourgeois-democratic anticolonial movements, which is only natural, given the official historiography of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. At present, many Russian experts talk of the need to rid our thinking of official Vietnamese historiography stereotypes, or in fact of deideologizing the entire historical process in the Vietnam of the 20th century, relinquishing certain obviously erroneous estimates and dogmatic sectarian precepts of the Comintern and the *Brief Course in the History of the Bolshevik Party*.

2. Of late our Vietnam studies have been witnessing a development, which professional historians cannot but welcome, i.e. the process of eliminating blanks in Vietnamese history, and one has to say that judging by the more recent theses of younger candidates for academic degrees this approach attracts quite a few followers. The main thing here, in my view, is to stick to a strictly scientific approach and observe moderation in assessing these blanks. For it happens at times that what used to be positive is given a U-turn becoming, without any justification, an utterly negative substance. That is, there was a villain, an enemy of the Vietnamese people, and then lo! this historical personality is transmogrified into a virtual national hero.

3. In terms of scientific objectivity and practical importance the matter taking on significance is profound study of renovation processes (the *Doi Moi* policy) and of the chosen development pattern for the country and society in Vietnam. Today, this appears to be one of the main issues in Vietnam studies. What is the point and what is the content of the socialism that, as Vietnamese leaders and ideologues claim, Vietnam is building today? What if this is a practical implementation of that very notorious concept of convergence between capitalism and socialism once vehemently rejected by Soviet ideology gurus?

4. In this country the younger generation that has entered adult life has but vague memories, if any, of the Soviet people's solidarity with the fighting Vietnam. That is a largely forgotten page in Russia's 20th-century history. Russian newspapers, television, and the movie industry hardly ever show, write and talk about the events, which some thirty or forty years ago were frontpage news.

Meanwhile some Western countries are doing their damndest to distort the causes, nature and results of the Vietnam War. The political undercurrent of these attempts could hardly be more plain — to whitewash aggression, to present the matter so as to suggest that it was all about American good guys defending the ideals of freedom and America's honor. There are scholars in the West who allege that in Vietnam the United States was fighting against Soviet colonialism. Others insist that Ho Chi Minh and his com-

rades-in-arms did the bidding of the Kremlin and misunderstood the idea of freedom.

In other words, the West is starting on the quiet to revise the course and outcome of the two wars of resistance by the Vietnamese people and the role therein of the Soviet Union, along with similar treatment of the World War II. Some Western historians openly subject to revision the content of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina, alleging that what happened in Geneva was a collusion of the great powers at the expense of the interests of peoples in Indochina. Meanwhile, as numerous archival documents suggest, the Geneva Indochina Conference became a good school of practical interaction for Soviet, Chinese and Vietnamese diplomacy. That interaction proved instrumental in achieving a peaceful settlement and in signing the Geneva Accords.

Another fundamentally important thing was the stand of the Soviet Union at the time of the Paris Vietnam talks. The Soviet Union's staunch support of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, and of their just demands voiced at the Paris talks, played an invaluable role in the achievement of fair peaceful settlement and a victorious end to the Vietnamese people's long military, political and diplomatic struggle for their country's independence and territorial integrity.

5. Unfortunately, what is happening at the moment is all but a revision of certain important pages in Soviet-Vietnamese relations, or at least a hush-up tactic, in Vietnamese historical works as well. Some of them rightly show the tremendous importance of the diplomatic front in the fight against U.S. aggression, but along with that they virtually allege that all the victories were achieved by Vietnamese diplomacy single-handedly. A good case in point is the book by prominent Vietnamese diplomat Luu Van Loi *Fifty Years of Vietnam's Diplomacy* (Hanoi 2002) which contains a fair number of odd estimates concerning this country's standpoint.

According to Luu Van Loi, "previously, (i.e. prior to 1950. — E.K.) the Soviet Union was not altogether aware of the realities of the Vietnamese revolution, but after the report by President Ho Chi Minh Stalin approved the policies and strategy of the Vietnamese Communist party in the past years..." The author is apparently ignorant of the fact that the Comintern used to have a special sector focusing on Indochina issues, and once the Comintern was disbanded, that sector automatically moved to the international section of the Bolshevik Communist party Central Committee. As for the Paris talks on Vietnam, the author makes but a brief mention of the Vietnamese negotiators, above all Le Duc Tho, a member of the Central Committee Political Bureau of the Vietnamese Workers' party, having gone

to Paris via Moscow, but is silent on the fact that in the course of each such trip Le Duc Tho was unfailingly received by a major Soviet leader to go over the details of the negotiation plan with Americans based on timely and vital information received from Soviet ambassadors in Washington and Paris.

In this context one cannot but agree with Igor Ognetrov as he wrote in his book with bitterness that "as someone who for half a century was involved in the process known as Soviet-Vietnamese relations, I cannot accept the one-sided and actually erroneous description of this country's stand given by the author" (i.e. Luu Van Loi. — E.K.).

Admittedly, Vietnamese diplomacy displayed to the entire world its enormous strength, but that strength was the result of its prowess in translating into practice Ho Chi Minh's policy of winning a maximum number of friends for Vietnam and reducing the number of its enemies as far as possible, so that Vietnam could fall back on the all-conquering international aid, above all on the part of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

Regrettably, Russia still lacks serious research into the Paris talks and the Paris Accords on Vietnam of January 27, 1973, in whose signing Soviet diplomacy was instrumental, which was at the time acknowledged by the Vietnamese and the U.S. negotiators alike. And those talks went on for nearly four years, and the archives of the main documents and materials of the talks must run into dozens of volumes. I think, therefore, that our Vietnam studies are to take up serious exploration of the more important details of the Paris talks to bring them into circulation and create an objective picture of that epic four-year diplomatic battle.

6. An interesting idea was put forward some eighteen months ago by the Institute for Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. It concerned the need to prepare a six-volume *History of Vietnam from Antiquity to the Present Day*. A respectable team of Vietnam history and economics experts was formed under Pavel Pozner, D.Sc. (Hist.), who recruited scholars from several institutes and centers of Oriental studies. They approved a prospectus and distributed the roles under this grandiose project. Alas, the event coincided with the breakout of the world economic crisis, and owing to lack of real funding and more importantly, to the impossibility of finding sponsors either in Russia or abroad, the future of this promising project remains pretty nebulous. However, if this multivolume collective monograph were successfully prepared and published, moreover, with an updated interpretation of major milestones of Vietnam's history, particularly modern and recent, this would be an outstanding contribution to the development of not only Russian but also world historiography on Vietnam.

7. There is yet another interesting idea. The Institute for Far Eastern Studies is completing work on the publication of a five-volume history of China's spiritual culture. It would be no overstatement to call this a scientific event of enormous significance; no country in the world can boast a history like that, not even China itself perhaps. What am I driving at? To be sure, Vietnam is not a colossus on a par with China. But for more than a whole millennium, from the time of Ngo Quyen and Nguyen Trai, Vietnam had been witnessing vigorous progress in social thinking and boasts a rich literature of various genres. I suppose that the spiritual achievements of that millennium would suffice to inspire a full-fledged history (maybe not in five volumes, but at least in two) of Vietnam's spiritual culture.

8. And now to sad things. Vietnam studies, like most other branches of Oriental studies, are experiencing a fast aging of personnel. Which is hardly to be wondered at, for the pay at humanitarian research centers, particularly in the case of younger scholars, has been reduced to a shameful minimum. So young Vietnam experts, many of whom are receiving excellent language and history training at Vietnam's universities, are reluctant to go into science. In this connection the duty of older Vietnam scholars is to assist our colleges and universities to the best of their ability in training young Vietnamese specialists on the basis of our leading education centers, helping single out those young experts who would like to and could do research and teaching. Our Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies, for its part, would be willing to assist young experts, among other things, by offering them a free MA course.

After the successful completion of the conference titled Topical Issues of Vietnam Studies in Russia, the staff at our Center unanimously spoke out in favor of placing this kind of theoretical and practical Vietnam conferences on an annual footing. In today's far from easy conditions for Russian science on the whole, they are badly needed for the community of Russian experts on Vietnam. The Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies at the Institute for Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, backed by the Institute of Practical Oriental Studies and the Society for Russian-Vietnamese Friendship are on the whole ready to take on all of the organizational work, including expenses (within reason) to prepare and conduct such conferences, and also publish collections of reports and papers by their participants.

* * *

In conclusion I would like to say that despite the serious problems enumerated above we still have the right to view the future with optimism as our

Vietnam studies are part and parcel of Russian-Vietnamese relations as a whole. And as analysis of the entire complex of factors that determine the development of Russian-Vietnamese relations at this stage and in the long term suggests, the potential of bilateral cooperation between our two countries has a fairly solid and diverse foundation. Further expansion and deepening of this cooperation based on the principle of strategic partnership is doubtless in keeping with the national interests and aspirations of the peoples in both countries.

The Vietnamese see in Russia first and foremost an extra-regional power, which has not only preserved but is actively building up a reasonably heavy political and economic weight, and which can be and in fact is useful for balancing Vietnam's relations with other world powers and politico-economic centers. Russia and Vietnam still hold identical or similar views on major international issues. For Russia, now, Vietnam is one of the authoritative members of the influential regional grouping, ASEAN, a country that is not only a good market for our high-tech products, but also a reliable support for developing cooperation with other countries in Southeast Asia.

The relations between our countries and peoples are currently resting not on ideology, but on mutual interest in their all-round development. Vietnam today is the only place in the world employing hundreds of thousands of workers, engineers and technicians, managers, administrators, and academics educated in the former Soviet Union and in modern Russia. This is a country where virtually all major political and state leaders were trained in the Soviet Union and have fond memories of that time in their lives, having preserved love of the Russian language and our culture. Finally, this is a country where the mass consciousness still has the feeling of deep gratitude to our people for efficient help rendered to Vietnam in the difficult years of the two wars of resistance and in the struggle for the country's unification.

PART ONE
**RUSSIAN-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS:
 CURRENT STATE AND PROSPECTS**

Anatoly VORONIN

**Russian-Vietnamese Strategic Partnership:
 the New Stage, a New Agenda**

1. When Vladimir Putin was elected President of the Russian Federation on May 7, 2012, a new cycle of Russia's political and economic development started, along with a new internal and foreign policies.

Understandably, people engaged in the Russian-Vietnamese relations are wondering how the relationship between the two countries will evolve in the medium and in the long term, what place it will occupy within the system of President Putin's foreign-policy priorities and what can and should be done to preserve and build up the positive dynamics of the Russian-Vietnamese strategic partnership that has been in evidence over the last few years.

2. To give the most precise answer to this question one should proceed from the fact that dynamic and consistent consolidation of the eastern vector in Russia's internal and foreign policies is connected precisely with Vladimir Putin. Orientalists are very well aware of indications of this. In particular, vast amounts of money are being allocated for the construction of industrial and transport infrastructure in the Far East to invigorate the country's involvement in regional integration. Let me cite, for example, the APEC Summit in Vladivostok in September 2012, the agreement with the Chinese side on bringing the Russian-Chinese commodity turnover up to \$ 200 billion by 2020. Finally, in the 2000s, particularly in the second half, a set of measures were taken to steadily consolidate the strategic partnership

relations with Vietnam, strengthen Russia's foreign-policy and economic position in Southeast Asia.

Russia has intensified its line of active participation in APR integration processes, of improving relations with the leading states in the region, including resort to network diplomacy, in order to encourage accelerated socioeconomic development in Eastern Siberia and the Far East. This policy is mapped out in Vladimir Putin's decree "On Measures to Implement the Russian Federation Foreign Policy," which he signed on his inauguration day,¹ and in the updated version of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation submitted on February 15, 2013.²

No less significant is one more thing stimulating positive dynamics in Russian-Vietnamese relations, namely the fact that it was Vladimir Putin who gave a start in life to the current model of Russian-Vietnamese relations. On March 1, 2001, during his first visit to Hanoi in the position of the President of the Russian Federation he signed the Declaration of Strategic Partnership between the Russian Federation and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, which contains long-term goals, tasks, principles and mechanisms of Russian-Vietnamese cooperation in a new historical context.³ During the twelve years of his presidency and premiership he has done a good deal to translate the political philosophy of that document into reality, to expand to the utmost the limits of the new format of Russian-Vietnamese relations, filling them with a fundamentally new content best conforming to the national interests of the parties.

I am confident that there are good reasons to conclude that Russia's line of strategic partnership with Vietnam will be continued. There is no sensible alternative to that as a policy determining the nature of bilateral relations for the foreseeable future. In the circumstances the main thing is to successfully and efficiently convert the political philosophy of strategic partnership into practice.

3. There are all the necessary prerequisites for doing just that. Our countries boast a comprehensive economic, investment, and science-and-technology potential that has grown several fold since the start of the 21st century. They are up to tackling the most advanced and grandiose joint projects. The world crisis notwithstanding, the dynamics of economic developments in our countries remain largely positive. Although there are certain limiters in some areas, of course, that are slowing down the dynamics of cooperation.

The international position and authority of both countries have improved. Russia and Vietnam have similar long-term national interests aimed at ensuring peace for sustainable and dynamic development. There are no

unsettled political issues in the relations between the two countries. The leaders of both states are displaying strong political will to work toward further expansion and improvement of cooperation, building up its aggregate might and potential, and consolidating the nature of trust in the relationship.

Our countries have no political parties or other political forces that would oppose further rapprochement between Russia and Vietnam, or could offer an alternative to the current model of strategic partnership. The policy of all-round consolidation of the relations of friendship and cooperation both in Russia and Vietnam enjoys broad public backing. Strong mutual liking has been a steady historical tradition stemming from the very essence of relations between the two countries that go back to the time of the Soviet Union's victory in the Great Patriotic war of 1941—1945, and the triumph of the 1945 August revolution in Vietnam.

Russia's policy of strengthening its position in the Pacific area requires maximum dynamic buildup of the comprehensive potential of Russian-Vietnamese relations. Further invigoration of this policy is dictated by the global trend toward shifting the gravity center of world politics and economics to the Asia-Pacific Region, and by the new fairly ambiguous alignment of forces in this region that is strategically important for Russia's national interests.

Speaking from position of objectivity, one can say that Vietnam, too, is interested in a maximum buildup of comprehensive potential of strategic partnership with Russia. In the complex geopolitical situation taking shape in Southeast Asia, given the increasing pressure from extraregional countries, it deems important to have a strong and reliable strategic partner in the person of Russia whose high-tech, industrial, energy, financial and economic, scientific, educational potential and political support it can rely on. As Vietnam's President Truong Tan Sang said, "consolidation and furthering of relations of traditional friendship and all-round strategic partnership with the Russian Federation is a priority of Vietnam's foreign policy."⁴

4. To attain maximum efficiency, the strategy of our partnership should aim first of all at fulfilling the tasks of industrial and modernizational development in the two countries. This strategy has to be constantly furthered intellectually, to be fed by new ideas and projects of scale that can enlarge the agenda of mutually beneficial cooperation, radically strengthening its synergistic potential, and remove the emerging limiters and barriers, protecting it from internal and external threats.

In this context, as I see it, there is a need to pull apart the time limits of the very concept of strategic partnership. Until now all computation of

long-term partnership between Russia and Vietnam has been made with the year 2020 in view. Today we have approached a line where qualitatively new standards and scale of cooperation will take moving forward the temporal horizon of prognostication and planning to at least 2030.

At the branch level, particularly in industries of long production cycles, this process is already evident in joint project implementation that determines the scale, dynamics and stability of cooperation. It has been particularly pronounced in power engineering, in cooperation within the framework of the Vietsovetpetro oil extracting joint venture, and in nuclear power plants being built in Vietnam.

Transition to new time limits of cooperation will provide substantial material benefits for the two sides, since it will let them work out new projects of scale with more boldness, and maneuver the necessary material, financial, innovation, and personnel resources with greater assurance.

5. A new approach is also required in the matter of the speed and scale of bilateral cooperation. Over the last ten to twelve years our countries have managed to increase mutual commodity turnover four or fivefold. In 2012, it was worth about \$3 billion.⁵ The leaders of the Russian Federation and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam resolved to boost mutual trade turnover to \$7 billion by 2015.⁶ Investment cooperation is progressing at roughly the same pace. This is fairly robust movement, particularly if compared with the 1990s.

But if one views this from the angle of building a material base of Russian-Vietnamese cooperation that would reliably guarantee its efficiency in the new APR conditions, one will see that the scale and tempo are way below the required standards. This becomes particularly obvious if one compares the scale of Russia's turnover and investment cooperation with Vietnam and China or South Korea, or that of Vietnam with the United States and China; the indices of those countries are many times higher than the Russian-Vietnamese trade turnover and mutual investment.

There is just one way out — to increase the speed and scale of commercial and economic cooperation, to push up Russian-Vietnamese trade turnover to \$60 billion to \$70 billion by 2030, and to increase tenfold the scale of mutual investment. These indices are not all that impressive, particularly given the fact that the United States will most likely continue to work toward devaluing its national currency over the next few years.

6. The process of changing the economic growth model actively debated in our countries also takes reforming the model of Russian-Vietnamese economic cooperation. This ought to happen thanks to conscious purposeful expansion of cooperation, including on a coop basis, in indus-

tries with high levels of added value, those that are knowledge-intensive, and innovative, as well as in science and technology, and education.

This can hardly be achieved without a well organized system dialogue on macroeconomic issues involving variant economic-mathematical models of building a more rational cooperation structure. Hence the increasing importance of achieving closer coordination of actions in macroeconomics. Work in this direction should help produce a quantitative description of the cooperation scale and makeup, name the necessary resources, take a deeper look into its future, choose in time the safest scenario of mutually adjusting the chief indices of cooperation to the forecasts and long-term development plans for the national economies.

The principal vector of this work is obvious. It should point to assistance on the part of both countries in fulfilling the tasks of updating their economies in conditions of increasingly fierce international competition, to ensure high growth rates of commodity turnover, diversification and nomenclature, above all thanks to high-tech commodities and services with a high added value.

In this context negotiations on a free trade zone between Vietnam and the Customs Union incorporating Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan take on an added significance. It is assumed that signing a document like that will allow the signatories to reduce import duties and nontariff restrictions, and remove administrative barriers in mutual trade. Meanwhile the starting principle underlying the agreement concept consists in observing mutual benefit and equality of the parties. It is important that participants in the talks agree on avoiding a significant imbalance in trade, because this can slow down all forms and areas of cooperation.

7. Clearly, many of the cooperation problems will reach settlement outside the 2020 limits. But formulating them, studying them, and looking for the more rational approach is a job of today. This is supremely important because we have to create a new technological platform for the modernization phase beyond the year 2020, which is extremely capital-intensive and will take at least a decade to achieve. Macroeconomic forecasting and planning of cooperation at the moment should, therefore, project at least to the 2030 level. This is not only imperative for the field of Russian-Vietnamese relations, but is a global trend.

It appears that rejecting the positive experience of cooperation in Soviet times would be a mistake. (And this mood is present in both countries). In particular, it seems expedient to go back to the practice of drawing up long-term target programs of cooperation for individual most promising, breakthrough areas and projects. Among them, power engineering, metal-

lurgy, mechanical engineering, the mining industry, telecommunications, civil aircraft building, shipbuilding, and agriculture.

Obviously, carrying out joint projects of scale will require vastly increased mutual investment. In this connection the financial and banking agencies of both countries should propose optimum schemes of providing the necessary funding for joint projects, including by means of considerably increased reserves of the joint VRB bank, creation of new state-private investment funds, and Russian-Vietnamese companies working together in applying to international financial structures. We should take steps to further improve the system of mutual settlement. Lately the issue has been discussed extensively, including at the high state level. But any real progress is yet to be seen.

8. Both sides have to ensure a new attitude to personnel training to build a reserve of specialists and experts in Russian-Vietnamese cooperation, in raising the professional competence of bilingual personnel for joint projects and cooperation management agencies. Before long we will have to answer the question about providing personnel continuity in the sphere of Russian-Vietnamese cooperation.

The thing is that in the 1990s and 2000s, in conditions of the general decline in mutual relations, in both countries occurred a serious shortage of experts in cooperation. In the circumstances, let us face it, if the current personnel policy (or rather absence of same) persists, attempts at implementing large-scale projects of high complexity may turn out to be an extremely costly gamble and cause mutual rejection. State interference in addressing this problem appears a *sine qua non*; besides, the efforts of higher education ministries will not be enough. Ministry officials are too little aware of the needs of Russian-Vietnamese cooperation. Rather we should task the intergovernmental commission for trade-economic and science-and-technology cooperation with both drawing up the concept of dealing with this difficult problem and controlling its implementation. It has all the powers needed for the job.

9. The agencies for managing cooperation should concern themselves with building a uniform, bilingual system of mutually informing all the participants in Russian-Vietnamese cooperation that would function on a regular basis, be up to modern standards and sufficiently competent. In terms of organization and methodology, this ought to be done within the framework of that tremendous activity that is conducted by our foreign-policy departments in this area.

10. Also it would be a good idea to update analytical instruments of Russian-Vietnamese cooperation, including more active interaction be-

tween the experts, researchers and political analysts of the two countries. Within this topic one could think out the matter of holding annual theoretical and practical conferences on Russian-Vietnamese cooperation on the basis of institutes under the RAS and Vietnam's Academy of Social Sciences, with conference materials published afterwards. It would also be useful to have a kind of plan for Russian and Vietnamese scholars to conduct joint research into the more topical issues of Russian-Vietnamese strategic partnership. This practice has not been unknown. It helps consolidate the consensus basis of cooperation and make it more efficient. It is important to more resolutely publicize the experience thus acquired, rendering the necessary financial and organizational assistance to the scholars.

11. There is a growing need to upgrade intradepartmental strategies of cooperation. This is particularly noticeable in the energy sphere. Vietnam is displaying a steady increase in energy consumption, while the amounts of extracted oil are falling, and the cost of its extraction is going up. This requires a new makeup of energy cooperation. Vietnam is to create posthaste new generating facilities in hydro-gas and nuclear power engineering while joint oil extraction in the Russian territory is expanded with a view to supplying carbohydrates to Vietnam.⁷ The considerable need to attract extra capital against the background of the heavy credit burden of Vietnam's economy will require Russian-Vietnamese joint ventures to speed up their entry into third countries' energy markets in possession of excessive capital. This tactics will provide the necessary funding for activity expansion of Russian-Vietnamese joint ventures in power engineering on both countries' territories.

12. Strategic partnership requires a constantly strengthened social basis. And this means that cooperation in the humanitarian sphere is to take a new more important place within the entire system of Russian-Vietnamese relations. This is the task on which public organizations of the two countries should focus their activity, above all friendship societies. Here a lot is expected from the media. The same perspective should be used to look at cooperation in education, culture, tourism and migration. Whereas until recently these cooperation areas did not go beyond contacts between dozens of thousands of Russians and Vietnamese, today humanitarian cooperation involves millions. Among them are people of various age groups, with a variety of life experience, professional expertise, politics, moral principles, cultural standards, and religions. All of that requires a more profound knowledge of the sociopsychological portrait of humanitarian cooperation participants, a timely and adequate response to all kinds of unorthodox phenomena. What we have here is a vast "unbroken field" still waiting to be

cultivated. State bodies jointly with sociologists and practical workers of the two countries engaged in governance and management should lose no time in paying attention to these problems in order to create organizational, information, financial and material conditions for direct live exchange between organizations and institutes working in the humanitarian sphere. Citizens of the two countries should have the necessary conditions for communication. This would help further improve the standards of mutual understanding between the people of both countries.

Primary attention should be given to issues of migration. On the whole our two countries have acquired some experience in this area that should be rated positive. Vietnamese experts share this view.⁸ At the same time, it has to be said that there is still room for improvement there. We don't even know how many migrants from Vietnam there are in Russia. This situation provides a breeding ground for unwelcome phenomena — organized crime, shadow business, corruption. Both sides agree that in the long term both Russia and Vietnam will be interested in expanding and raising the quality characteristics of educational and labor migration, including for demographic and economic reasons, because these are important instruments of socioeconomic policies. At the same time, it cannot be denied that the matter calls for a much higher level of organization and management on the part of relevant state bodies, and requires more precise accounting of changes in the geographical and professional makeup of demand for labor resources currently under way in our two countries.

13. If these issues are to be tackled with the utmost efficiency, the key role there will belong to state bodies of cooperation control in both countries, first of all the Intergovernmental Commission for Cooperation in Economics, Science and Technology. A good deal will also depend on how successful, mutually advantageous and responsible will be long-term partner relations directly between Russian and Vietnamese economic entities and individual businessmen, and how harmoniously and professionally they will manage to correlate corporate interests with the national interests of Russia and Vietnam.

14. A vast reserve of increasing the amount of commodity turnover and mutual investment is hidden in the idea of cooperation on development programs for the Russian Far East. The matter has a complex nature. In particular, it requires participation of Vietnamese companies in projects of scale, including in power engineering and agriculture, and in building the production, transport and social infrastructure of Russia's Far Eastern regions. At the general political level mutual understanding of this is there all right. But it takes more than that. It would be useful to subject the issue to a

comprehensive discussion in Hanoi at the expert level under the auspices of the governments and with the participation of leaders of Russian and Vietnamese regions, branch ministries and departments, and interested companies. The conclusions made by a conference like that formulated in the final document could help the devisers of the would-be intergovernmental program (road map).

15. A successful area of Russian-Vietnamese strategic partnership is cooperation in military technology. It is comprehensive and rests on long-term plans. At present, the Vietnamese People's Army is better equipped than ever before. In 2011, Vietnam purchased Russian weapons worth \$1.5 billion.⁹ The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, along with China and India, is among Russia's major partners in the military-technology sphere. Vietnamese military specialists are being trained at Russian military universities. Russia delivers to Vietnam spare parts for the hardware previously purchased to repair and modernize the equipment. Vessels of Russia's Far Eastern Fleet once again moor at Vietnamese ports. There is talk of building a facility for their logistic support at Camranh.¹⁰

At the same time, one has to bear in mind that the armies currently in the lead in terms of technology take up fundamentally new armaments. As these countries are prepared to use them in fighting resented political regimes, one wonders what is to be done to eliminate the potentially negative scenario of military and political situation development, to reduce the current technological gap with relatively limited resources.

Another trend to be borne in mind and noted by experts is this. As Vietnam's industrial and science-and-technology potential continues to grow, the country is becoming more attractive for moving there some production lines of interest to the Vietnamese partners. It appears that in this sphere the business of setting up joint ventures might be a good form of cooperation.

16. What will our cooperation on the international arena be like in the near future? One can confidently say that Russia and Vietnam, as follows from the Treaty on Fundamentals of Friendly Relations between the Russian Federation and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam¹¹, will not set up military and political alliances against third countries. At the same time, conscious rejection of the idea of building ally relations does not mean that we reject comprehensive cooperation and coordination of actions on international security issues. This is implied by the joint documents recently approved at the top level, above all by the Joint Declaration on Further Strengthening All-Round Strategic Partnership between the Russian Federation and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam that crowned the Sochi Summit of July 27, 2013.¹² The parties are determined to actively endorse positive

trends, both in the world at large and in the Asia-Pacific Region. They will work toward a new more fair and democratic global system, a transparent and equal architecture of security and cooperation in the region based on principles of international law and respect for the legitimate interests of all countries. Also, they would like all states in the region to renounce confrontation and settle mutual differences by means of dialogue and negotiations without resort to force or threat of same.

Our countries are to step up interaction within the framework of network diplomacy, first of all within the UNO, ASEAN, APEC, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), East Asia Summits, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). They will have to struggle together against such global threats as the risk of spreading weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, cross-border organized crime, corruption, illegal drug trafficking, human traffic, sea piracy, illegal migration, epidemics, degradation of human environment, and clear water deficiency. Increasingly prominent in the two countries' cooperation on the international arena will be issues of energy, food, information and environment security, as well as prevention of and mitigating the consequences of natural and man-made disasters.

The agenda of Russian-Vietnamese cooperation on international issues will expand, first and foremost thanks to the inclusion of matters of regional security, whether economic, energy, food or environmental. There is a need of setting up, e.g., centers for responding to emergencies, for improved transcontinental transport and logistics systems, to which end experts from the Institute for Far Eastern Affairs put forward relevant proposals.

New challenges and threats also require new modern instruments of responding to them. Moreover, these instruments should be no less effective than the challenges and threats themselves. Russia and Vietnam, together with other countries in Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific Region, have a chance to provide convincing examples of using new technologies essential to modernization in the interests of development. And this makes increasingly topical the modernization agenda not only in bilateral relations, but also within international and regional organizations, primarily to address the issues that unite the region's countries in the face of common challenges and threats.

One should proceed from the fact that the job of solving the problems of Russian-Vietnamese cooperation will go on in conditions of potential worsening of the global financial crisis, enhanced competitiveness requirements, including in the area of high, knowledge-intensive technologies, presence of major risks involved in the raw-material nature of our exports, the macro-economic tension of development plans of Vietnam's economy and high

rates of the credit burden there. There is no reason to idealize the general political situation in Southeast Asia either. It offers its own chances and opportunities, but it is also fraught with its own risks and challenges. I am referring, in particular, to mounting territorial disputes, including in the sea, to the high degree of separatism-engendered conflicts, to the serious burden of socioeconomic, natural and man-made risks.

Conclusion. From the point of view of long-term prospects of Russia's APR policies, Vietnam remains a key strategically important partner for Russia. In the present-day situation we have singularly beneficial opportunities for raising Russian-Vietnamese relations to a qualitatively new level. And whether or not the parties manage to make full use of this chance will decide the fate of strategic partnership between the two countries as a dynamically developing and increasingly active factor of security and stability, progress and integration in the Asia-Pacific Region.

NOTES

¹ www.kremlin.ru/acts — 07.05.2012.

² www.kremlin.ru/news/17520.

³ *Eto nezabyvayemoye slovo*, "Lienso" [This Memorable Word, Lien Xo], Moscow, 2006, pp. 409—413.

⁴ *Nghiên cứu quốc tế*, # 3, 2012, pp. 51—67.

⁵ *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, December 28, 2012.

⁶ *Thế giới và Việt Nam*, December 21, 2012.

⁷ For more detail, see: *Far Eastern Affairs*, # 4, 2012, pp. 56—66.

⁸ *Nghiên cứu châu Á*, # 1, 2008, pp. 62—75.

⁹ *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka*, # 6, 2012, p. 31.

¹⁰ www.mid.ru-1461 — 29.07.2012.

¹¹ *Eto nezabyvayemoye slovo...*, pp. 405—408.

¹² www.kremlin.ru/ref_notes/1279.

Alexander SOKOLOVSKY

Regional Cooperation: a Key Contributing Factor for Closer Relations between Russia and Vietnam (with Primorie Territory as an Example)

The traditions of friendship, support, and understanding laid down in the years of the Vietnamese nation's war of liberation against U.S. aggression are to this day a firm foundation for steadily broadening relations between Primorie Territory and Vietnam.

Now that Russia and Vietnam each have geopolitical significance and maintain relations of strategic partnership in a new international environment, much importance is attached in Primorie Territory to wider cooperation with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) in trade, the economy, investment, science, and culture. Primorie develops relations with Vietnam under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Trade and Economic Ties between Russia and the SRV signed on August 15, 1991, and several other agreements and accords with its Vietnamese partner.

A special role is given today to economic cooperation between Primorie Territory and Vietnam, primarily under the existing agreements on cooperation in trade, the economy, science, and technologies in many areas — in particular, agreements have been signed between the two countries' governments on mutual protection of investments and cooperation in transportation and agribusiness, among others. Still, trade between the two countries has been growing at a rate below the potentialities Primorie Territory and Vietnam possess. For example, trade between Primorie and Vietnam was valued at \$18 million in 1998, \$12 million in 1999, \$12 million in 2000, \$35 million in 2001, \$26 million in 2002, \$29 million in 2003, \$23.7 million in 2004, \$34.4 million in 2005, \$46 million in 2006, \$55.5 million in 2007, \$75.9 million in 2008, and \$49 million in 2009.

In 2009, Primorie Territory's foreign trade fell off by a factor of 1.8 from 2008 (total \$7,460 million, \$1,563.7 million in export, and \$

5,896.3 in import) to \$4,154.6 million. Specifically, its export dropped by 26% to \$1,157.7 million and its import by almost a half to \$2,996.9 million.

The territory traded with 89 countries, with China's share amounting by tradition to 53% of Primorie's foreign trade transactions, followed by South Korea, with 13%, Japan, 10%, and the U.S., 4% in 2008. These four countries accounted for 80% of the territory's foreign trade, in which Vietnam trailed far behind with 1% of the total.

In 2009, Primorie's trade with Vietnam shrunk by 35%, to \$49 million. Its export declined by 14% to \$12.4 million, much of it — \$3.6 million — because of dwindling deliveries of ships and boats to Vietnam. The territory exported \$12 million in asbestos, \$0.2 million in waste and scrap ferrous metals, and \$0.1 million in tools and implements.

Primorie's import from Vietnam dropped by a factor of 1.7 to \$36.6 million, mostly because of a plunge in imports of fish and fish products from Vietnam by a factor of 3.7, to \$0.9 million, a huge fall of rice by a factor of 6.5, to \$0.2 million, starch by a factor of 3, to \$0.4 million, pasta by a half, to \$10.7 million, and rubber by a factor of 3, to \$3.5 million. The territory also imported \$12.6 million in vegetables from Vietnam, \$3 million in fruits, \$2.1 million in sauces, \$0.3 million in plastics and plastic goods, and \$0.6 million in electrical equipment.

According to the Primorie Statistical Office, \$53 million was invested in the territory's economy in January through September 2009. Direct investments amounted to 30% of the total, or \$15.9 million, portfolio investments were 0.6% of the total, or \$0.3 million, and the remaining 69.4%, or \$36.8 million, were other investment types. The largest investments (76.7% of the total) were made in transportation and communications, farming, hunting, and forestry (18.5%), manufacturing (2%), and fisheries (1.3%).

Investments flowed in from nine countries. The most significant investments in the territory came from Japan, \$36.1 million, China, \$9.7 million, the Republic of Korea, \$5.6 million, Singapore, \$0.9 million, Germany, \$0.1 million, and other countries, \$0.6 million.

No investments came from Vietnam in 2009. On January 1, 2010, its accrued investments amounted to \$8,900.

Today, the territory has 370 businesses with foreign interest. Around 150 businesses were registered in 2009, the largest number of them originating in China, 80, and South Korea, 23. Two of the registered businesses hold a Vietnamese interest each. Three of the 114 representative offices and branches of foreign companies accredited in Primorie Territory have Vietnamese roots.

The territory's Administration is working to expand its foreign trade and economic ties with Vietnam. It submitted its proposals for cooperation

between Primorie and Vietnam to the Russian Ministry of Economic Development where a Program of Interregional Cooperation between Russia and Vietnam was still in the works.

In 1989, Consulate General of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was opened in Primorie Territory.

Delegations from the Vietnamese business community come to Primorie every year to attend and take part in exhibition events put on around the territory.

In November 2006, Primorie Governor Sergei Darkin went to Vietnam as a member of the Russian official delegation to attend an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

Cooperation between Primorie and Vietnam was further encouraged by the launch of a direct air route between Vladivostok and Hanoi. Vladivostok Avia was the second Russian air company to be given a general license to fly regular routes to Vietnam. As a result, the number of Russian tourists visiting Vietnam grew significantly.

Between 1999 and 2009, the Primorie Administration, jointly with Vietnam's Consulate General in Vladivostok, established contacts with the travel industry administration and major Vietnamese travel companies in an effort to develop and promote travel between Primorie and Vietnam.

On March 14 to 21, 2000, a delegation of travel company chiefs in Primorie and representatives of the Primorie Administration's Committee on Culture and Tourism went on a familiarization tour to Vietnam. The number of Russian tourists to Vietnam increased as a result of the delegation's tour.

The direct passenger air route opened between Vladivostok and Hanoi in September 2004 encouraged two-way travel between the two countries and certainly had a favorable effect on economic cooperation between Russia and Vietnam. The Vladivostok Avia airline flies the route once a week by the Tu-154 airliner. The data provided by the Primorie Territory FSS Borderline Department show the number of tourists traveling to and from Vietnam over the past six years.

Tourists Traveling from Primorie to Vietnam

Years	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of tourists	104	762	1,622	1,931	3,163	2,964

Tourists Traveling from Vietnam to Primorie

Years	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of tourists	46	73	315	379	329	236

Over 100 flights are operated on the Vladivostok-Hanoi route every year and nearly 10,000 passengers are carried both ways.

In May 2008, Primorie's International Cooperation and Tourism Department and the travel authorities in Vietnam's provinces of Binh Truong and Quang Nam signed protocols on the development of cooperation in the travel industry.

Vietnam's travel companies are regular entrants of the annual Daltour International Travel and Tourism Exhibition put on in Vladivostok. Six Vietnamese travel companies — BT-Travel Company, HG Travel, Vietran Tour, ACT Travel, Nyatmin, and Easia-Travel — participated in the Daltour 2009 exhibition run on May 21 and 22.

Primorie companies are interested in broader trade and economic cooperation with Vietnam in ship repairs and shipbuilding, construction, mining, textiles and leather industry, defense industry, fisheries, travel, and many other industries.

The territory's administration hosts meetings between the two countries' business communities and arranges roundtables for local business executives and business delegations coming from Vietnam to probe the market and look for opportunities to engage Russian partners in economic cooperation. An example of roundtable output was the contract the Eastern Shipyard, OJSC, Russia, entered into with its Vietnamese counterparts in 2008 for the construction of motorboats.

Primorie Territory engages in cooperation with Vietnam for the most part through the Primorie Society for Friendship with Vietnam. The Society is successor to the Vladivostok city branch of the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Society that was established on November 19, 1971 on the initiative of the Far Eastern Shipping Company's sailors after a sea route was opened between Vladivostok and Hai Phong. Today, it is the oldest nongovernmental organization in the territory, and one of its most assertive. The Society sees its principal objective to be maintaining and fortifying friendly relations between Primorie and Vietnam, promoting cooperation in many areas, and forging commercial relations between the Russian and Vietnamese business communities.

The Far Eastern Shipping Company, the Oriental Institute of Far Eastern Federal University (FEFU) [former: Far Eastern State University (FESU)], the Oriental Institute of Far Eastern State Technological University (FESTU), Pacific State Economic University, G.I. Nevelsky Maritime State University, the Primorie Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Vladivostok High School 2, among others, are active members of the Society for Friendship with Vietnam. Students and instructors of the FEFU Ori-

ental Institute go to Hanoi University for year-long advanced language studies under an intergovernmental agreement, and to Hai Phong University that entered into a cooperation agreement with FEFU in 1996. Efforts are also underway to establish academic links with higher education institutions in Hồ Chí Minh City and Danang.

In August 2000, a Center for Vietnamese Culture was unveiled in Vladivostok under the auspices of the Primorie Society for Friendship with Vietnam, with assistance from FEFU and Vietnam's Consulate General in Vladivostok.

Outlook for Bilateral Relations

Prospects for growth and diversification of bilateral commercial and economic cooperation are presently sustained by the absence of linkage between trade and piping of hydrocarbons, the import substitution policy pursued in Vietnam, and Vietnam's continued orientation on Russian machinery in some key sectors of its heavy industry.

Expansion of technological assistance from Russia is held off by the lack of export credits and absence of insurance, and also by aggressive competition from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, West European countries, and the U.S. on Vietnam's market.

The prospects for cooperation with Vietnamese companies may be boosted by major projects for the territory's development under the new Federal Target Program "Economic and Social Development of the Russian Far East and Transbaikalia in the Period to 2013" and by plans for staging an APEC summit.

Primorie Territory invites foreign companies to expand cooperation in:

- joint development of the territory's infrastructure;
- development and modernization of export-oriented capabilities;
- protection and reproduction of aquatic biological resources, prospects for developing aquaculture, acclimatization and re-acclimatization of aquatic life, establishment of protected water areas and reserves, and enforcement of rational modern rules to prevent marine pollution by seagoing ships; and
- adoption of advanced practices for growing and processing farming produce; exchange of information in science and technology; hosting of visiting delegations of scholars and experts; and conduct of tests to assess the effectiveness and biological safety of new chemical plant protection agents.

Primorie Territory has recently been named a federal cluster of regional growth and strategic growth areas have been identified. Above all, it is a competitive transportation infrastructure to be built on Russia's Pacific Coast to cut national exporters' transportation costs of delivering their products to APR markets.

For this idea to be put through, projects have been developed to expand the shipment handling capabilities of the Nakhodka-Vostochny seaport nexus. Groundwork is being laid at Vostochny seaport to set up a special economic zone of seaport type to attract private investors. Plans are also being made to build more specialized ports on concessionary terms. Construction of a logistical center is also in the plans. Over 70 billion rubles has been allocated under Primorie Territory's Investment Program to put these plans into action. If they are implemented, Primorie's maritime infrastructure will handle up to 200 million tons of exports and imports by 2020.

Formation of yet another national center of industrial and economic activities in Primorie that can take its products to APR markets is also a major challenge to Russia. A docket of plans has been put together to build a nuclear power plant, an aluminum plant, an oil refinery and a petrochemical plant, a liquefied gas plant, and a plant on the site of the Progress Aviation Company in Arsenyev to assemble light commercial planes, to name but a few projects on the docket. To have these projects on line by 2020, some 2 trillion rubles will be needed in investments.

To get these projects going, large-scale construction work requiring private domestic and foreign investments is scheduled to begin in Primorie. Investors are encouraged to have a part in starting up these major projects:

- development of the Nakhodka-Vostochny seaport nexus;
- construction of an oil refinery and a petrochemical plant, a liquefied gas plant, and an aluminum plant;
- modernization of the Vladivostok airport considered Russia's international hub in the APR;
- improvement of highways and construction of bridges;
- establishment of a federal gambling zone in Primorie; and
- comprehensive infrastructure development of Russky Island, the site of the 2012 APEC Summit.

The last-named project comprises construction of modern hotels, an exhibition center, an opera and ballet theater, and a variety of other structures.

Implementation of these investment projects will set the stage for more initiative in business and cultural cooperation between Primorie Territory and APR countries.

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Sergei RYAZANTSEV and Elena PISMENNAYA

Vietnamese Migrate to Russia to Study and Work: Trends and Potential

Vietnam has long been Russia's partner in *educational migration*. Today, it ranks fourth in the roll of countries known as sources of educational migrants for Russia's higher education institutions. Vietnamese started coming to the Soviet Union to study back in the 1920s. Those were revolutionaries who studied at the Communist University for Workers of the East and at other educational institutions beginning in 1925. In all, almost 70 Vietnamese, including Ho Chi Minh, the "leader of Vietnam's revolution" then, and Vietnam's first president decades later, received an education in the U.S.S.R. till the late 1930s. The few Vietnamese who stayed on in Russia up to the time when it was forced to enter World War II volunteered to join the Red Army and most of them died fighting in the Battle of Moscow. Vietnamese students started coming to the U.S.S.R. again after it established diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1950.

On February 10, 1978, the governments of the U.S.S.R. and Vietnam signed an agreement on cooperation in education. Shortly before the disintegration of the U.S.S.R., there were about 7,000 Vietnamese studying in the country. Over the fifty years of cooperation, more than 70,000 Vietnamese received professional training. Today, many of those graduates hold high positions in government, head up research institutions, teach at national higher education institutions, and are employed at state institutions and companies. In addition, some 48,000 Vietnamese acquired high professional skills as shop floor workers and technicians for industrial enterprises back home. The U.S.S.R. helped Vietnam to set up five educational institutions, including a polytechnic in Hanoi. Educated professionals were needed, above all, for plants and factories built with Soviet assistance — 12 in the

power industry, four in mining, 13 in engineering and metalworking, and over 50 in the chemical, petroleum, and food industries, in construction, agriculture, transportation, and communications.¹

Disintegration of the Soviet Union put a distance between Russia and Vietnam, political relations cooled, links between the two countries' educational and research institutions were severed, and the flow of educational migrants to Russia thinned out. Opportunities fell off for Vietnamese to learn Russian in Vietnam — no more Russian books were shipped to Vietnam, very little funding is allocated to put on cultural events, and virtually no grants are made for internships and learning. The outflow of education-seeking migrants from Vietnam has turned away from Russia to Western countries, Japan, and Australia. By UNESCO estimates, 15,800 Vietnamese, or 2% of all students in the country, studied beyond Vietnam in 2005. According to national statistics, though, over 25,000 young Vietnamese studied in other countries, a great majority of them going to the U.S., France, Australia, Germany, and Japan.²

In a poll we held in Vietnam in 2009, a third of 300 Vietnamese who had worked or studied at one time or another in the Soviet Union and Russia said they would rather have their children study in the U.S., almost 20% opted for the United Kingdom, and 17% gave Australia. The poll left Russia in tenth place in these ratings (Fig. 1). The respondents were against the idea of sending their children to study in Russia, a half of them saying they would not have their children studying in Russia under any circumstances (Fig. 2).

There are two reasons behind the radically adverse changes in attitudes toward Russia. The first, and main, reason is that countries offering scholar-

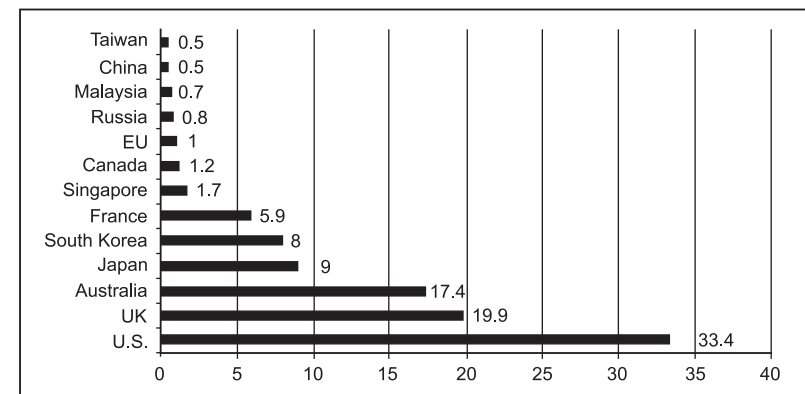


Fig. 1. Respondents' preferences for countries they want their children to study in, %

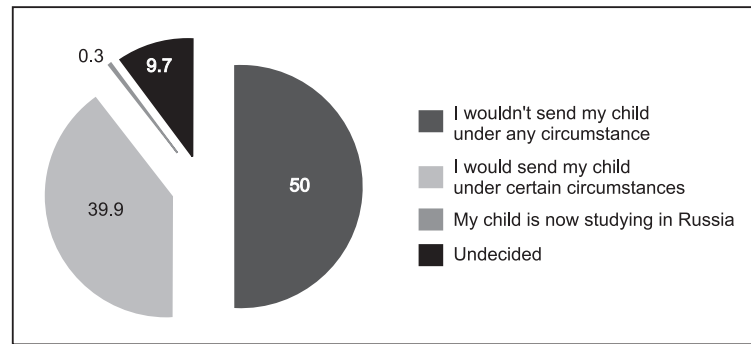


Fig. 2. Vietnamese respondents' preferences for their children's schooling in Russian higher education institutions, %

ships to Vietnamese applicants are pursuing an active policy to invite educational migrants through numerous foundations and language promotion. They award grants and give high priority to the recruitment of foreign students. None of these lures are available in Russia. In actual fact, Russia has lost in the competition on Vietnam's educational market and has not put any efforts into the competition since the breakup of the U.S.S.R. To give an example, 210 places only were allocated to Vietnamese students at Russian higher education institutions in 2007 under interinstitutional agreements. This is not the only option, though, to have Vietnamese students coming to Russia. Another is the agreement signed on July 9, 2002 by the Russian and Vietnamese governments on education to be given to Vietnamese citizens at Russian higher education institutions (tuition is paid under the debt-aid program). Some students get an education at the expense of Vietnam's government, Vietnamese companies, and their families.³ All this is clearly not enough, though, and an articulated policy in this area is what is needed most.

Many parents in Vietnam regard education as a way for their children to settle abroad for good. We were told as much by 33% of the respondents we polled. Moreover, the teaching of English at free and pay courses and schools under many programs has made the knowledge of English a major influence on migration preferences. About 32% of the respondents said they would send their children to universities in countries where the title nation speaks the language their children studied at school. Finally, 13% of the respondents said they were influenced by the advertising campaign promoting educational opportunities in the advertisers' countries, and 12% were swayed by the quality of education (Fig. 3).

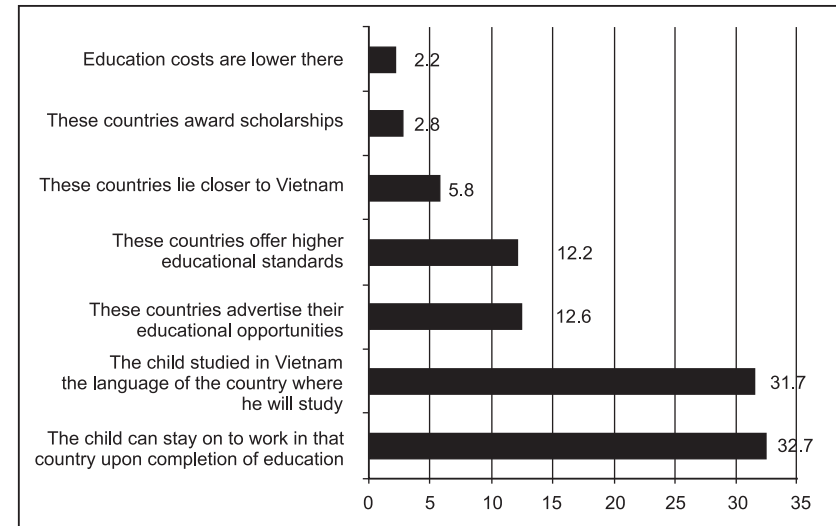


Fig. 3. The reasons why Vietnamese respondents choose a country for their children to study in, %

The other reason for parents in Vietnam to refrain from sending their children to study in Russia was the situation in Russia. Over 42% of the respondents were convinced that Russia was a dangerous place to live in (Fig. 4). Le Dinh Vu, vice president of the Vietnamese community in Russia, was forthcoming with an explanation in an interview we had with him: "The skinheads blow up the opportunity for Russia to export its education. Many Vietnamese parents are calling off their children from Russia and send them to Australia to study, even if it costs them dearer. Now we have options to give our children an education in Russia, Europe, America or Australia. If, though, a specialist got his education in Russia, he will, for the rest of his life, admire Russian culture, science, and industry. Make life calm here, and Russia will have 15,000 Vietnamese students, as many as Australia, if not more. The Vietnamese have very warm feelings for Russians, and their feelings are not to be dismissed lightly."⁴

Russia aside, Vietnam has an enormous pool of educational migrants — every year, 800,000 young people start looking for professional education and skill improvement.⁵

Our survey was, apart from anything else, an attempt to give a rough estimate of potential *labor migration* from Vietnam's regions we covered in our survey, in particular, the potential of labor migration to Russia. To begin

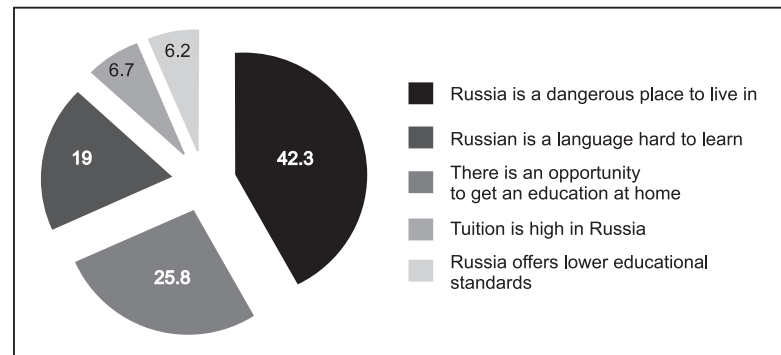


Fig. 4. The reasons why Vietnamese respondents do not want to send their children to study at Russian higher education institutions, %.

with, Vietnam's population increased by almost 33 million between 1980 and 2009, to 86 million. Over this period, the country's population grew at different rates from year to year. The highest growth — over 2 million — was registered in 2005. The population age structure has been changing in recent years as the share of children contracted and that of working-age and postretirement age population rose. Vietnam has approximately 58 million working-age citizens, or 67.9% of the country's population.⁶ Age-related statistics being hard to collect in the provinces, we relied on the general proportions to estimate the size of the working-age population in the provinces we surveyed.

The migration potential was assessed on the basis of the 2009 poll and official statistics, however scanty.⁷ From the start, we estimated the approximate share of the population who had an experience of employment and study abroad. It came out at 12.5% of the working-age population. Next, as the poll got underway, 35.7% of the respondents said they wanted to work in many other countries. We were disappointed to learn that Russia did not figure high among the countries of their preferences. A low 3.3% of our respondents said they wanted to work in Russia. We ended up with the results shown in Table 1.

Vietnam is a society with a vast pool of young adults of both genders to be tapped for work and study abroad. At the time we did our study, we estimated its migration potential at 2.6 million persons. In the provinces we surveyed, it was close to 720,000 persons, some 200,000 of them living in Vietnam's capital, Hanoi. All these people can, in principle, migrate to other countries to work and study. Whether or not they will depends on

Table 1

Migration Potential of Vietnam's Provinces

City, province	Total population, '000	Working-age population, '000	Population with a background of migration abroad, '000	Migration potential for work and study abroad, '000	Including Russia, '000
Vietnam	86,024.6	57,917.0	7,239.6	2,584.5	85.3
Hanoi	6,472.2	4,394.6	549.3	196.1	6.4
Bac Ninh	1,026.7	697.1	87.1	31.1	1.0
Vinh Phuc	1,003.0	681.0	85.1	30.4	1.0
Thai Binh	1,784.0	1,211.3	151.4	54.1	1.8
Nam Dinh	1,826.3	1,240.1	155.0	55.3	1.8
Hai Phong	1,841.7	1,250.5	156.3	55.8	1.8
Hai Duong	1,706.8	1,158.9	144.9	51.7	1.7
Bac Giang	1,560.2	1,059.4	132.4	47.3	1.6
Hoa Binh	789.0	535.7	67.0	23.9	0.8
Thanh Hoa	3,405.0	2,312.0	289.0	103.2	3.4
Ha Tay	1,230.3	835.4	104.4	37.3	1.2
Total in the provinces surveyed	22,645.2	16,211.5	2,026.4	723.4	23.9

many factors in Vietnam itself and in the host countries. First among them is that Vietnam's economy is showing a strong upturn and soaking up most of the redundant labor. Another is that countries attractive to Vietnamese labor migrants have different economic and political priorities that tend to change now and then. Much depends also on a host country's policy toward migrants and the activism of its government agencies, companies, and private employment agencies.

We have found that Vietnam's potential of migration to Russia may run up to 85,300 persons, 23,900 of them in the provinces we have surveyed, including 6,400 in Hanoi. There are almost 99,000 Vietnamese already working and studying in Russia. A majority of Vietnamese labor migrants are engaged in wholesale and retail trade, for the most part in big cities. Employment in construction, textiles, farming, and the restaurant industry is only creeping up, if at all. Even though the number of Vietnamese workers in Russia has grown over the past few years, they face obstacles obtaining work

permits and waste much time clearing bureaucratic hurdles and making their way through the swamp of corruption.

Guided as it is by its current migration policy, Russia's capacity to host Vietnamese migrants is near bottom. To put it another way, Russia cannot receive more Vietnamese than it has now, if it persists in its current approach to the regulation of migration from Vietnam, with the labor market and educational system as they are today. Unless the migration policy toward Vietnam is modified conceptually and resolute steps are taken to build up a migration potential geared to Russia, in the first place, no more migrants will be coming here from Vietnam.

We do acknowledge, above all, that Vietnamese migrants are welcome in some Russian industries. They are more efficient and cost-effective from the economic and political viewpoints than, for example, Chinese migrants. As part of this country's migration policy, quotas are to be allocated to Vietnam by industry and region in Russia where Vietnamese hands are needed and economically justified. Given the long distance between Vietnam and Russia and the Vietnamese prospects' migration preferences for more stability, they have to be given long-term contracts and issued work visas for longer periods, for example, three to four years (instead of one year as a maximum now). A network of companies and institutions has to be set up to train labor migrants in Vietnam before they set off for Russia. It would be fine to start teaching Russian and basics of Russian culture to prospects in Vietnam to give them a foretaste of life in Russia and generate streams of educational migrants. It is also important to stimulate recruiting of educational migrants to Russia. The old academic and educational connections long severed have to be repaired, the Russian language courses set up, literature and information about Russian higher education institutions disseminated, and scholarships and grants allocated in sufficient numbers for students coming from Vietnam.

These decisive measures only will help turn the trickle of migrants from Vietnam to Russia into a flood. Otherwise, we will be left with whatever number of labor and educational migrants we have now, give or take a few percentage points within the margins of statistical error.

NOTES

¹ N.G. Kuznetsov, "Integratsiya v'yetnamskikh migrantov v rossiyskoye obshchestvo [Integration of Vietnamese Migrants into Russian Society]," *Migration between Russia and Vietnam: History, Current Trends, and Role in the Countries' Socioeconomic Development*.

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² E.Ye. Pismennaya, *Uchebnaya immigratsiya v Rossiyu: sovremenniy tendentsiyi* [Educational Immigration to Russia: Current Trends], Economic Education Publishers, Moscow, 2008, p. 88.

³ S.V. Ryazantsev, N.G. Kuznetsov, "Migratsiya iz V'yetnama v Rossiyu: tendentsiyi i regulirovaniye [Migration from Vietnam to Russia: Trends and Regulation]," *Migration in Russia Today: Status, Problems, Trends*, Collection of Academic Articles [in Russian]. Ed. K.O. Romodanovsky and M.L. Tyurkin, Russian Federal Migration Service, Moscow, 2009, p. 242.

⁴ Le Dinh Vu, "Delo poydyot [Things Will Start Moving]," *Konkurentsiya i rynek*, # 30, June 2006, p. 85.

⁵ E.Ye. Pismennaya, *Sotsial'niye efekty uchebnoy migratsiyi i politika v sfere privlecheniya inostrannykh studentov v Rossiyi i za rubezhom* [Social Effects of Educational Migration and the Foreign Student Recruitment Policy in Russia and Other Countries], Ekonomicheskoye obrazovaniye Publishers, Moscow, 2009, p. 64.

⁶ Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2009, Hanoi, 2010, p. 39; Tổng điều tra dân số và nhà ở Việt Nam năm 2009: Các kết quả chủ yếu: <http://www.gso.gov.vn/default.aspx?tabid=512&idmid=5&ItemID=9812>. November 21, 2011, pp. 41–43.

⁷ Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2009, Hanoi, 2012, pp. 29–30.

PART TWO

MODERN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS

Grigory LOKSHIN

Russia's Policy and Problems of Regional Security in Sea and the APR

The processes of changing the structure of security in Southeast Asia, just as in the entire Asia-Pacific Region (APR), are developing quite rapidly. This puts forward crucial demands to all countries of the region. The changing situation calls for adequate reaction, and similar methods of resolving numerous problems should be evolved.

Russia is actively looking for a place, although belatedly, in the emerging system of new international military and political, and economic coordinates. While doing it, Russia is overcoming a bias in its foreign policy toward the U.S.A. and Western Europe, which has emerged historically, on the one hand, and on the other, it is successfully developing, on a sound political and economic basis, its relations not only with China, but with all other countries of East and Southeast Asia.

1. Russia's Geopolitical and Strategic Interests in the South China Sea Area

All states, particularly coastal ones, bear full responsibility for the maintenance of peace and stability, and for the Asia-Pacific Region development. The Russian Federation shares this responsibility as the biggest Pacific country.

The South China Sea is far from the Russian borders, and it would seem that the course of events there should be in the periphery of its inter-

ests. However, this is not the case. The South China Sea area is of major strategic importance for Russia, just as for other states in the APR. As the biggest Pacific maritime power Russia is interested, no less than other countries, in ensuring stability, peace and security, freedom of shipping, and sea communications in the region. A no small part of Russian foreign trade passes through this zone, which is also an important route for supplying the Far Eastern regions of our country. Naturally, China has still greater strategic interests there.

Active participation in regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region, just as urgent measures on modernization and upsurge of the economy of East Siberia and the Far East are a *sine qua non* for solving an important task of the country, namely, ensuring security and territorial integrity of Russia, preventing a new war in the Far East, and contributing to the processes of peaceful solution of all problems and conflicts there.

Russia is a large Asian country with a great economic and military might. It can by right be considered Asian, because three-quarters of its territory are in Asia and it has a very long Pacific coast. More than thirty million Russian citizens live there, and the area boasts from 60 to 80 percent of strategically important resources — from timber, fresh water and nonferrous and rare metals to oil, gas, coal, gold, diamonds, etc. The Asia-Pacific Region is a sphere of Russia's vital interests taking an important place in the hierarchy of its foreign-policy priorities.¹

Russia has not been an active participant in the China-U.S. rivalry for domination in the South China Sea area so far. The United States does not see Russia on the map in the context of its new Asiatic policy. Russia was not mentioned in the programmatic article by Hillary Clinton published in 2011, neither was it mentioned by President Barack Obama in his speeches during a tour of APR countries in November of that year. This seems not only rather strange but also nearsighted.

China has made its conclusions from the events in Russia and the errors committed by the Russian authorities in the 1990s, which have turned it into a demographically weak and economically one-sided and nondynamic country, as compared with China, losing its positions in Asia.

In order to reverse this trend it was necessary to change Russia's policy radically so that the country should not be regarded in Asia as a weak power any longer. From the early 21st century the Russian leadership has undertaken considerable efforts in many spheres.

Certain achievements in this direction have become noticeable recently: in 2010, Russia became a full-fledged participant in the mechanism of East Asian summits, having joined the dialogue interregional forum

ASEAN-Europe (ACEM), and it actively works in the dialogue format of ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting and their foreign partners (ADMM+8). The APEC summit in Vladivostok, which was chaired by Russia, was one of the major multilateral meetings in 2012.

The Pacific Fleet of Russia has now been seen more often in the region. In January-February 2012, a squadron of Russian warships consisting of the antisub missile cruiser "Admiral Panteleyev" and two accompanying vessels visited Indonesia and the Philippines. This was the first visit to that country by Russian warships for almost one hundred years. Many foreign observers paid special attention to that visit, connecting it with the Russian decision to earmark \$678 billion for modernizing its armed forces up to 2020, almost one-quarter of which would be spent on the Pacific Fleet.² In 2010, Vietnam opened its ports for servicing foreign ships, including the Cam Ranh Bay port, well-known to Russian seamen. Since then Russian warships sailing to patrol the Somalia coast have called there time and time again. This creates favorable conditions for the military presence of Russia in Southeast Asia.

2. Russia-ASEAN: Relations of Cooperation and Partnership

What trends will prevail in the APR and how they will correlate with our country's national interests? This largely depends on relations between Russia and ASEAN. Russia has maintained firm relations of trust and mutual understanding with ASEAN countries for many years already. There are no political contradictions between them. On the contrary, our country has supported, invariably and consistently, the ASEAN efforts to turn Southeast Asia into "a region of peace, stability and sustainable economic development," as it was said in the ASEAN Charter adopted in 2008. The positions of Russia and ASEAN coincide, or are close, on all major problems of world development. The peoples of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia and other countries retain the feeling of gratitude for a great help rendered them in the years of their struggle for national independence.

Naturally, today's Russia is far from being the biggest and most influential player in the region. Commercial and economic, scientific and technological, as well as cultural cooperation between Russia and the ASEAN countries is far removed from its potential and leaves much to be desired. Russia is not among the main trade partners of these countries, and flows of cross-border investments between them are not great. According to some

sources, trade turnover between Russia and the ten countries of Southeast Asia is estimated at \$7 billion, not more. For comparison's sake, the trade turnover between ASEAN and China reached \$350 billion in 2011; trade balance of ASEAN with the European Union, the U.S.A., and Japan does not lag behind much either.³ Cultural, scientific and tourist ties between Russia and ASEAN become stronger, but still not good enough. Both sides exert efforts to optimize interaction and step up cooperation in all spheres, but the results achieved are far from satisfactory.

At the same time, the change of the global military and political situation, as well as the positive psychological attitude of the broad public circles of the ASEAN states toward our country create favorable opportunities for the development of cooperation between the two sides. Russian diplomacy created a firm negotiating and legal basis for the purpose in the first decade of this century.

The political elites of the ASEAN countries realize that Russia as a great world and Asian power with enormous military might and being a permanent member of the UN Security Council is an essential factor of the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. It is generally recognized that it will have to play a major role in the formation of a future security system in the APR in general, and in the South China Sea area in particular both as a participant and a guarantor of agreements.

Russia and ASEAN have adopted agreed-on approaches to the problems of strengthening security and cooperation in the APR. At the 2nd Russia-ASEAN Summit in Hanoi in 2010, their leaders agreed that security should be based on the collective, multilateral and equal principles, as well as the generally recognized standards of international law.⁴ The ASEAN leaders particularly emphasized that any new structures or mechanisms of cooperation in the region can only be an addition to the abovementioned and should be built on the already existing structures and on the ASEAN-centric principle, that is, with the preservation of the ASEAN leading role. The Russian side fully agreed with this premise. Russia has time and again demonstrated its attitude to ASEAN as one of the influential centers of world politics, and its interest in a strong and successfully developing Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The joint statement of Russia and ASEAN adopted at the Hanoi summit said, among other things, that international security is indivisible, and that national security cannot be ensured to the detriment of security of others. The statement emphasized the need to respect and take into account legitimate interests and concerns of all states, as well as their laws and rules.⁵

The major plans of the upsurge and modernization of the economy of Siberia and the Russian Far East are connected with the development of mutually advantageous cooperation between Russia and East Asian and Southeast Asian countries. Recently, basic spheres have emerged in which Russia and private Russian companies can contribute, and are already doing it, to the development of multilateral economic cooperation with ASEAN countries, *with government support*, with a view to raising its effectiveness. Energy issues are a priority, of course. The point is not only to ensure uninterrupted supply of energy resources, but grant high-tech services in the construction and modernization of energy facilities, and use Russian experience in managing power networks, etc. Despite the tragic disaster at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan, the planned and existing cooperation in this sphere remains no less promising. Important projects are implemented in the use of outer space, in military and technological cooperation, and in education, science and culture.

As Sergei Lavrov, the Foreign Minister of Russia, wrote in the Indonesian journal *Strategic Review*, Russia would pursue a course aimed at greater involvement in the processes of political and economic cooperation and integration developing in East Asia. This will be a long-term course of a systemic character to be consistently pursued.⁶

At the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and Russia Meeting, which took place in July 2012, measures on effective realization of the Comprehensive Program of Action for 2005–2015 were agreed. With this aim in view, the ASEAN–Russia Business Council has been set up and negotiations begun on the creation of a free-trade zone. An announcement about this has been made at the APEC summit in Vladivostok. The parties have also agreed to continue cooperation in the sphere of energy, science and technology, in countering terrorism and cross-border criminal activity, as well as in mitigation of consequences of natural disasters.

3. Russia-Vietnam Strategic Partnership

Russia has long needed “an additional partner” to promote its interests in APR, not an alternative to and not against China, but along with it. It was necessary in order to diversify Russian relations and gain more advantageous positions in the region by exporting its energy resources, outer space technologies, and educational services there. The attempts to develop cooperation with such partners as the United States, Japan and South Korea

have not been successful for some reason or other. But Vietnam, a traditionally friendly and interested country and one of the leaders of the rapidly developing region has moved forward to take up this role.

The Russian Federation and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam have been connected by the relations of strategic partnership, which is fixed in the Declaration signed by the Presidents of the two countries in March 2001. This course tested by time and not subjected to market fluctuations presupposes the broadening of mutually beneficial cooperation in all spheres, deeper interaction in tackling pressing international problems, as well as opposition to global and regional challenges which mankind comes across.

At present, there are 77 investment projects being implemented in Vietnam with the participation of Russian capital to a sum of \$1 billion. Of course, this is not much. Russia holds 23rd place in the volume of investments in Vietnam. Seventeen investment projects to a sum of about \$1 billion are implemented in Russia with the participation of Vietnamese enterprises operating in foreign trade, food, textile and footwear industries, and building materials production.⁷ Vietnam is using Russian credits to a sum of about \$10 billion.

After a prolonged slump in the 1990s, at the beginning of this century the volume of bilateral trade has been growing steadily, reaching \$3 billion by estimates of the Russian trade mission in Vietnam (according to the Vietnamese sources — about \$2 billion) in 2011. It is planned to boost it to \$5 billion in 2015 and \$10 billion in 2020.⁸

The oil-and-gas complex is a major element in Russian-Vietnamese strategic partnership. Russia takes an active part in cooperation with Vietnam in developing oil and gas deposits on the continental shelf belonging to Vietnam. The Vietsovetropet joint venture set up in 1981 (participants: Zarubezhneft from Russia, and Petrovietnam from Vietnam). It accounts for more than half of all oil extracted by Vietnam.

In December 2010, an intergovernmental agreement on further cooperation in oil and gas prospecting and development on the continental shelf of Vietnam was signed in Hanoi for a term up to December 31, 2030.⁹ The Russian Zarubezhneft company has won a tender for developing the gas block 12/11 on the shelf with the estimated gas reserves about 80 billion cubic meters. Gas extraction there can reach seven billion a year. After the commercial discovery of the deposit, option for acquiring 51 percent of shares will be granted to Petrovietnam state corporation. The project will be implemented in accordance with the agreement on dividing the output. Zarubezhneft undertook to drill three wells during three years and carry out seismic investigation on the area of one thousand square kilometers.¹⁰

Geological prospecting in the central part of the continental shelf is being done by the joint Vietgazprom operational company (Gazprom and Petrovietnam). In February 2009, Gazprom received an investment license for developing blocks in the lower part of the Vietnamese shelf and started to make seismographic research. On April 5, 2012, Gazprom signed an agreement on acquiring 49 percent of the shares of the development projects of blocks 05.2 and 05.3 on the shelf of Vietnam, which had been left by the BP of Britain under China's pressure. Two gas condensate deposits have been discovered there — Moc Tinh (block 05.3) and Hai Thach (blocks 05.2 and 05.3), and also one oil deposit — Kim Cuong Tay (block 05.2) estimated at 55.6 billion cubic meters of gas and 25.1 million tons of gas condensate.¹¹

Along with oil and gas corporations other big Russian companies successfully work in Vietnam, such as Siloviye Mashiny and KAMAZ.

A visit to Russia of Truong Tấn Sang, the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, in July 2012, was an important event in the development of Russian-Vietnamese cooperation. Six documents were signed on the results of the negotiations between the Presidents of the two countries, including a joint Statement on strengthening the relations of “all-round strategic partnership.” It expresses readiness to raise the level of Russian-Vietnamese cooperation to a new height of partnership. Both parties were unanimous in the political sphere concerning the continuation of trust-based dialogue, regular meetings of the supreme leaders of the two countries, and further broadening of all-round strategic cooperation.

In the economic sphere the two sides agreed to sign in the near future an agreement on the creation of a free-trade zone between Vietnam and the Customs Union (including Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan), and broaden investment and credit cooperation. They decided to continue active cooperation in the energy and oil-and-gas sphere. Russia undertook to build Vietnam's first nuclear power plant at the safest level by 2020 and set up a scientific center of nuclear technologies. As the Statement said, this construction should become a “symbol of Russian-Vietnamese cooperation in the 21st century.”

Vietnam and the Russian Federation have confirmed their readiness to create the most favorable conditions for the activity of joint Russian-Vietnamese companies and enterprises and expand the zones of geological prospecting and oil and gas extraction in Vietnam, Russia and third countries. Russia confirmed its intention to continue cooperation with Vietnam in the field of geological prospecting and the mining of hydrocarbons on the shelf of Vietnam in accordance with international law and, first of all, the UN 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea. This was of primary importance in

the exacerbation of disputes between Vietnam and China with regard to developing certain blocks in the South China Sea near the coast of Vietnam.

The two sides declared that all disputed issues in the APR should be solved peacefully, without the use of force or the threat of force on the basis of international law, above all the UN Charter and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Both sides actively supported the Declaration-2002 on behavior of interested parties in the South China Sea and came out for the speediest evolution of the code of behavior in South China Sea.

Russia and Vietnam have agreed to continue military and technological cooperation, particularly in training specialists to handle the latest types of weapons supplied by Russia. Vietnam has replaced China as the second in volume purchaser of Russian arms after India. It is mainly the types of weapon to be used to rebuff blows from the sea and defend its coastal shelf.

These and other agreements of the two sides have shown consistency and invariability of the course of the Russian Federation. Russia does not set the task to defend sea communications in this region, and it has no plans to deploy naval bases in the APR, just as it has no intention to compete with anybody for influence in this region. All its efforts pursue the aims of strengthening cooperation with Vietnam and other ASEAN countries, which is not spearheaded against anybody. But Russia does not intend to neglect its own vital interests in the region either.

The point is that on the eve of the visit of Vietnam's President to Russia and after it, the mass media abroad, including China, have published reports and commentaries about the alleged return of Russian warships to the Cam Ranh Bay in the near future, which Russia left in 2002. The pretext for it was given by the incorrect interpretation of an interview granted by Vice Admiral V. Chirkov, the Commander of the Russian Navy, to the RIA-Novosti news agency. He was alleged to have said that Russia conducted negotiations with Cuba, Vietnam and Seychell Islands on deploying bases for logistic supply of its Navy there. The report was officially denied by the Russian Ministry of Defense, saying that this subject was not discussed at the Commander of the Navy news conference, and there were no official statements on it, and the publication of such information in the mass media was nothing more than a fantasy of an unscrupulous author.

Nevertheless, this false statement has produced sensation, although rumors about it have time and again circulated in the mass media abroad. For example, the newspaper *China Daily* commenting on the visit of Vietnam's President to Russia has written that Vietnam has allegedly promised to allow Russia to use Cam Ranh Bay as a point of logistic supply of its fleet and declared its intention to broaden bilateral military cooperation. “Due to the

strategic position of the Cam Ranh Bay and the long history of its use by the United States and Russia,” the article said, “this statement has immediately evoked great alarm. At the same time, in connection with recent disputes on the South China Sea problems many people have decided that this step was aimed at containing China. In recent years Russia, which has amassed strength, has been striving to restore its military presence in the world. To increase and spread its influence in Southeast Asia it urgently needs such nice port as Cam Ranh. For its part, Vietnam plans to step up its military cooperation and bolster up its strength in order to occupy the leading position in Indochina and ASEAN.”¹²

Indeed, Vietnam’s policy concerning Cam Ranh Bay has taken shape after the Russian naval forces left it in 2002, and remains unchanged since then. According to the Vietnamese press, before the start of his negotiations with President Vladimir Putin, President Truong Tấn Sang of Vietnam made a statement on this subject, saying that “Cam Ranh Bay would not belong to any foreign country, and Vietnam would create its own naval base there. It also plans to build a ship-repair yards capable to render services to sea-going vessels of various countries which may call and get all necessary services there. As to the Russian Federation, it will, perhaps, get certain privileges as a traditional friend and strategic partner.”¹³

At the time the President of Vietnam said in an interview given to the Golos Rossiya radio that Russia would be able to create a ship dispersal area, and repair and service point for its vessels in the port of Cam Ranh. This does not mean, he emphasized, that Cam Ranh will turn into Russia’s military base but the port will be used for the development of military cooperation between the two countries. Russia and Vietnam have for many years been strategic partners and this is why Russia will get definite strategic privileges in Cam Ranh.¹⁴

4. Russia’s Responsible Position Concerning Southeast Asia and Asia-Pacific Region

Like many other APR countries, Russia is striving to contribute to such developments in the region which would allow its states to resolve disputes and contradictions within the framework of peaceful negotiations, which would lead to the creation of an atmosphere of stability, mutual trust and cooperation in this potentially explosive seat of tension. It would be impossible to imagine the establishment of regional military and political stability,

collective efforts to counter international terrorism, cooperation in extraordinary situations, as well as other spheres of life of the regional community of states without Russia.

In July 2009, speaking before students at Bangkok University after the APF session on Phuket Island, Sergei Lavrov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, said that Russia advocated an equal and transparent security and cooperation system in APR based on principles of collectivism, generally recognized standards of international law, and the use of dialogue, consultations and negotiations as an instrument to solve complex problems. That is, what is called the ASEAN method.... “Such a system should be achieved through the establishment of multilateral diplomacy, ties between regional organizations and forums, and, what is more important, with mutual respect and due account of each other’s interests.”¹⁵

A result of a vast joint work was greater similarity of assessments of and approaches of the two sides to the crucial world and regional problems at the 2nd ASEAN-Russia Summit. Of special importance was the fact that the two sides decided to cooperate closely with each other in the formation of a regional structure in the APR. “Successful construction of a new Asia-Pacific home,” said the then Russian President Dmitry Medvedev at the summit, “is in the interests of all countries and in line with their desire to develop a peaceful, creative life.”¹⁶

Russian diplomacy has centered its efforts on working out regulations for the strengthening of the international legal foundations of regional security. With a view to de-escalating tension, the Russian Foreign Ministry provides incentives to the interested parties at all levels to display a responsible approach and proceed from the interests of maintaining stability in the region, displaying respect, and observing the standards of international law.

The joint initiative of Dmitry Medvedev, the then President of Russia, and Hu Jintao, the then Chairman of the PRC, put forward during the visit of the Russian leader to China in October 2010 proved to be a solid contribution to the formation of a comprehensive system of security and cooperation in the APR. They called on the states in the region, while implementing bilateral or multilateral cooperation in the field of security, to respect sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and not to interfere in the internal affairs of one another; to follow the principle of equal and indivisible security and the defensive nature of their military policy; not to use military force or threaten to use it; not to undertake and not to support any actions aimed at overthrowing governments or undermining stability of other states; to settle mutual contradictions by peaceful political and diplomatic means on the basis of the principles of mutual understanding and readiness for

searching a compromise; to strengthen cooperation in opposition to nontraditional threats to security; to develop bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the military field, which is not aimed against third countries in order to guarantee security on the basis of pooling efforts, but not on a bloc basis, which always leaves somebody aside and creates zones with an unequal security level.¹⁷

This initiative worked out by Russian diplomacy for the visit of Russia's President to the PRC could become an idea uniting the Asia-Pacific Region. China's consent with it and the positive reaction to it on the part of many influential APR countries have confirmed that these principles could become a sound basis for the evolvement of a legally binding "code of behavior" not only in the South China Sea area, but in the entire enormous APR. Unfortunately, further developments have taken another direction, and any concrete examination of a possible political and legal framework for their realization has not begun so far. But the promotion of this Russian-Chinese initiative remains one of the most important tasks on Russia's agenda in Southeast Asia, and is one of the crucial directions of its diplomatic efforts.

In these conditions Russia adheres to a responsible position on the territorial disputes in the South China Sea area. At the authoritative security conference in Munich in January 2012, Sergei Lavrov, the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, made a statement to the effect that "Russia will not participate in any bodies *aiming to contain China*, which is our good neighbor and strategic partner."¹⁸

No matter what turn events in the South China Sea might take, Russia should not find itself "between the devil and the deep blue sea," and it should always have an opportunity to influence the situation. This is conditioned by the fact that Russia is bound with both China and Vietnam by the relations of strategic partnership. The latter is a form of the joint activity of states in the basic spheres which is meant for a long and predicted period, based on agreements and recognition and observance of each other's interests, mutual respect, and is directed to reaching common or similar vital goals.

Russia has joined the work of the East Asian summits, proceeding from the premise that they are an effective platform for examining the problems of Asia-Pacific security, including in the context of the abovementioned Russian-Chinese initiative. The goal of Russian diplomacy in this field is to create an organization in the APR similar to OSCE, naturally, with due account of the specific features of the region and in coordination with its countries.

The Russian Federation uses such an important resource as Russia-India-China (RIC) summits. On Russia's initiative the problems of security and cooperation in the APR were discussed in Moscow during the Dialogue on Cooperation in Asia in the RIC format in April 2012. At a news conference after the meeting Sergei Lavrov, the Foreign Minister of Russia, emphasized that "our countries are unanimous in the view that the security system should be open, take into account the legitimate interests of each state situated there, and be based on the generally accepted standards and principles of international law, recognition of indivisibility of security, and mutual respect and trust."¹⁹ The participants in the meeting agreed on doing joint work in this sphere in different formats, including East Asian summits and the mechanisms of ASEAN cooperation with its partners.

On May 7, 2012, Vladimir Putin, the President of the Russian Federation, right after his inauguration, signed Decree # 605 "On measures of implementation of the foreign-policy course of the Russian Federation," which says, among other things, that Russia will continue to uphold the view that there is no alternative to political and diplomatic settlement of regional conflicts on the basis of collective actions of the international community by drawing all parties concerned in negotiations.

This, of course, has a direct bearing on the situation in the South China Sea area, where it is planned to promote initiatives for the formation of a new security and cooperation system in the region based on collective, nonbloc principles, standards of international law and the principle of equal and indivisible security. The Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation has been entrusted with the task "to evolve additional proposals for inclusion in the agenda of East Asian summits and the Russia-ASEAN dialogue partnership."²⁰

Much time will be required for a peaceful solution of disputes in the South China Sea area, but the only alternative is a catastrophe which should not be allowed to take place until there are still time and opportunities. If a conflict breaks out in the South China Sea area, it will inevitably go beyond the boundaries of the confrontation between any two sides, and will involve, in one way or another, many other states, and its consequences will have a negative influence on world and regional security.

In the present conditions it can hardly be expected that anyone will take the risk upon oneself. Until now the threat of a big military conflict is low, but contradictions grow and events develop in a negative direction, which puts off a solution of disputes, threatening to turn them into a permanent conflict. It is only joint management of resources in disputed regions that can alleviate tension between rivals. The first attempt of cooperation in this

sphere failed in 2008. Since then the parties concerned categorically oppose any infringement or restriction of their territorial sovereignty or sovereign rights in the sea.

In the absence of a regional political agreement or effective mechanism to prevent and resolve incidents, instability and potential threats to peace and security will persist in this strategically important region of the world. To ensure the status quo in the conditions of peace, without the threat to use force, to develop jointly natural resources in definite districts and increase cooperation under the 2002 Declaration could satisfy all parties concerned in the dispute over the South China Sea area.

The notorious Chinese “U” line denoting China’s claims to the main islands and 80 percent of the water surface of the South China Sea previously consisted of eleven stretches, nine of which remained. The two stretches dividing the claims of Vietnam and China in the Gulf of Tonkin were removed in 2008 after prolonged bilateral negotiations. This makes it possible to suppose that the remaining stretches can also become a subject of negotiations. But China refuses to explain the reasons for its claims. This refusal shows Beijing’s desire to maximize its legal and political possibilities for the forthcoming bargaining even in the conditions of its growing military and naval might, which gives the PRC greater superiority over its weaker neighbors.

However, these neighbors are not helpless, and from time to time, if necessary, they are able to unite against China’s actions, when they see that it has gone too far. At the same time, both China and its neighbors get big gains from developing trade, investments and other ties with one another.

It is to be hoped that it will be possible to create a manageable situation in the South China Sea area some time in the future, even if it takes many years. There are grounds to believe that real understanding of the consequences of a possible conflict by all states, which are party to the dispute, will induce them to search for a sound peaceful solution. A dialogue is going on and real opportunities have been created for achieving success at all levels. One thing should be out of the question, namely, interference of outside forces. A just and mutually acceptable solution can be found only by the participants in the dispute themselves, if they act in the spirit of good will and compromise, based on the trusted ASEAN method.

In the present conditions it is necessary to support and encourage the efforts of the countries which are trying, on the ASEAN basis and at a bilateral level, to evolve a common reasonable approach to resolving the conflict situation in the South China Sea area, but not to express skepticism or add fuel to the flames of the conflict.

Such is the course of Russian diplomacy in the region from the time of the very first Russia-ASEAN summit in Kuala Lumpur in 2005, in which President Putin took part and still attends summits during his new presidential term. The responsible and well-thought-out position of Russia on disputed territorial problems in the region has no alternative and is well received by all parties to the dispute.

NOTES

¹ Titarenko, M.L., *Geopolitical importance of the Far East: Russia, China and other Countries of Asia*, Moscow, 2008, p. 12.

² ria.ru/defense_safety/20100702/251679573

³ www.aseansec.org

⁴ www.mid.ru, 28.10.2010.

⁵ www.mid.ru, 28.10.2010.

⁶ www.mid.ru, 05.04.2012.

⁷ *Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2011*, Hanoi, 2012, pp. 168, 176.

⁸ *Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2011*, pp. 223, 227+.

⁹ The authorized capital stock of the joint venture exceeds \$1.5 billion, and coupled with current investments the contribution of the Russian side is estimated at \$1 billion, which increases at least twofold the abovementioned Russian investment projects in Vietnam. However, this sum is not taken into account in the statistical data on investments placed in Vietnam, because it has been finalized by a direct intergovernmental agreement.

¹⁰ *Kommersant*, # 128/11(4913), 16.07. 2012.

¹¹ *Vedomosti*, 05.04.2012.

¹² Will Russia’s return to Cam Ranh Bay deepen rift within ASEAN? *People’s Daily Online*, August 01, 2012.

¹³ www.Vietnamnet.vn, 30.07.2012.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ www.mid.ru, 17.07.2009.

¹⁶ www.kremlin.ru, 29.10.2010.

¹⁷ www.kremlin.ru, 20.10.2010.

¹⁸ www.mid.ru, 10.01.2012.

¹⁹ www.mid.ru, 13.04.2012.

²⁰ www.mid.ru, 07.05.2012.

Petr TSVETOV

The 11th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam on International Situation and Tasks of Vietnamese Diplomacy

The problems of world politics and the foreign-policy activity of the Communist party of Vietnam (CPV) took an important place in the proceedings of the 11th CPV National Congress, which was held in Hanoi on January 2–19, 2011. The congress documents, primarily, the political report of the CC CPV and the party program assessed the course of world development, the present international situation, fulfillment of the tasks posed by the preceding, 10th CPV Congress, by the country's foreign-policy departments, and determined the future tasks of Vietnamese diplomacy.

On the whole, the assessment of the world development trends, the situation in the international arena, and Vietnam's international ties bears an optimistic character. It was noted with satisfaction that stability was reached and confidence in a positive development in the future was demonstrated. The feeling that Vietnam lives in a hostile surrounding, all the more so, that it is faced with a military threat has disappeared. This was why the CPV Program has now been given a new title — “Program of the Motherland Development during the Transition to Socialism” (the previous title given in 1991 was “Program of the Development and Defense of the Motherland during the Transition to Socialism”; the word “defense” was omitted).

Characterizing the present epoch, CPV theorists single out, above all, such elements as scientific and technological revolution, economics of knowledge, globalization. The latter is interpreted as a historic inevitability conditioned by the high development level of the productive forces which leads to peace as the only just system. **Peace, national independence, democracy, cooperation and development are named as the leading trends.**

Along with this, it is recognized that contradictions and conflict situations (on religious and ethnic ground, due to territorial claims or natural wealth deposits, or economic rivalry) still exist in the world. They are manifested in various forms and at various levels. However, the documents of the congress do not name the main contradiction of our time. Neither do they point to what distinguishes the present time from the situation in the 1970s-1980s. At that time, the CPV materials clearly said that there were four contradictions: first — between the system of socialism and the system of capitalism; second — between the working class and the capitalists; third — between the oppressed nations and the imperialists; fourth — between the imperialists themselves, between their various groups. Of these four contradictions the main one is between socialism and capitalism. In the 1990s-early 2000s, the Vietnamese communists began to turn away from such detailed scheme of the modern time contradictions. The documents of the CPV congresses contain passages about contradictions, including those between socialism and capitalism, but they are not specially emphasized.

The situation in the Asia-Pacific Region is presented in the Congress' documents dialectically, with positive aspects coming to the fore: the region is developing dynamically, continuously, in the main, restoration after the world economic crisis has begun, yet there is a possibility of destabilization of the situation, primarily due to the disputes over border territories and islands in the South China Sea.

The assessment of the world socialism state is also optimistic. It is said in the party program that the countries going along the path of socialism, including Vietnam, have scored successes, the communist and workers' movements are on the road to revival. This thesis is developed as follows in the propaganda material distributed in connection with the congress:

In the past two or three decades socialism has demonstrated its viability and advantages. The PRC inhabited by one-fifth of the earth's population has been in the lead by economic growth rates in the past thirty years and become the world's second power by the GDP increment. Vietnam has scored major success in renovation. Cuba enjoys support of many countries. The Communist movement unites 130 parties with 80 million members and is the pillar of hopes for the bright future for all mankind.

A conclusion is made from the analysis of the world situation that the victory of socialism will be inevitable. As the CPV Program says, “According to the laws of historical development, humanity will inevitably come to socialism.”

(Here is a characteristic detail: in most of the CPV reports in previous years more attention was paid to the development of world socialism, the

8th and 9th congresses analyzed the lessons from the defeat of socialism in East Europe. The 11th National Congress demonstrated a new approach to the problem).

The assessment of capitalism made by the Communist party of Vietnam seems well substantiated. It admits that capitalism still has a potential for development. Then the program mentions the still existing and constantly growing contradictions within the capitalist system between the social character of production and private capitalist ownership. Solution of this contradiction and the struggle of the working people against capitalism will determine the future of this system.

On the whole, the party Program characterizes the present situation in the international arena in the following way: "Countries with differing social system and development levels coexist, cooperate, and at the same time, strongly compete with one another, protecting their state and national interests. The struggle of the peoples of all countries for peace, national independence, democracy, development and social progress, although running against many difficulties and obstacles, will be crowned with success." In this connection it should be noted that foreign-policy forecasts in the CPV documents are traditionally of an optimistic character, and the 11th CPV National Congress was not an exception.

The 11th Congress summed up the results of the activity of Vietnamese foreign-policy departments for the five years that passed since the 10th CPV Congress. The assessments were positive, the period under review was marked with achievements, but the main emphasis was made on the events of the year 2010, the last before the congress. As is known, the CPV presided at ASEAN that year, it successfully organized two ASEAN summits, the AIPA General Assembly, the East Asia Summit, and conferences of ARF, ADMM, MACOSA, and others. Vietnam's membership in the World Trade Organization was assessed as positive.

There was almost no mention of drawbacks in Vietnamese diplomacy. The only thing admitted was that work on strategic prognostication and scientific analysis of international relations lagged behind the targets set.

In contrast to previous CPV congresses, when political reports contained assessments of Vietnam's relations with individual countries, important for the country's foreign policy, this time there was practically no evaluations of this type. Relations with China, Laos and Cambodia were touched on in general terms. But judging by articles of the responsible officials of the Foreign Ministry of Vietnam published on the eve and at the time of the congress, as well as right after it, one can imagine the picture of Hanoi's bilateral ties. The order of presenting the countries-partners of

Vietnam is rather important, inasmuch as it shows the priorities in the country's foreign relations.

First of all, these articles describe the development of relations with **China**, which are called the relations of "all-round partnership and cooperation." The active exchange of delegations between the two countries is specially mentioned. Trade turnover between the two countries reached \$ 25 billion in 2010, which is quite indicative. The first strategic dialogue between representatives of the two countries on important issues of defense and security, and the first joint exercises in rescue operations at sea also took place in 2010. Three important documents on the border problem were adopted, and the demarcation of the land border between the two countries was officially completed.

Relations with **Laos** were called "special" by tradition, and with **Cambodia** — "all-round." Process of marking borders with these countries was called an indication of the successful development of relations with them. Trade and economic relations with them grew stronger and broader. No concrete figures on trade turnover with these two countries were given, but it became known from other sources that they are so negligible that cannot be compared even to Vietnam's trade with Russia.

Relations with other countries of **SEA** were strengthened on bilateral basis, and also within the ASEAN framework. Relations with Myanmar were singled out since the Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Tan Dung made an official visit to that country in April 2010.

Relations with **Russia** come next. In an article written by Phạm Gia Khiem,¹ the Vietnamese Minister of Foreign Affairs, they were characterized as follows: "The relations of strategic partnership with the Russian Federation have entered a stage when the two countries have come to unanimous views concerning the list of priority problems of cooperation — they are nuclear energy, oil and gas extraction, and military-technical cooperation."

Relations with the **United States** are called "relations of friendly partnership, multifaceted cooperation, mutual respect and mutual benefit." During the abovementioned period they became "broader and deeper, more stable and long-term." Several dialogues on the issues of defense and security, as well as the questions of U.S. participation in the development of the Mekong River basin were held. At the same time, the head of the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry deemed it necessary to dwell on the existing differences with Washington. Among the issues which are differently interpreted by the two sides are democracy, human rights, religious freedom, and humanitarian problems left from the time of the war. While carrying on a dia-

logue on all these issues with U.S. representatives, Vietnamese diplomats resolutely rebuffed the attempts of the opposite side to interfere with the internal affairs of Vietnam.

The Table of Ranks of partnership with Vietnam included the **European Union, Japan, South Korea, India** (relations with the three latter partners were characterized as “strategic partnership”), **Australia and New Zealand** (relations with these two countries were called “all-round partnership”). To characterize the positive development of relations with these countries emphasis is made on economics. For example, mention was made of an agreement with Japan on the construction of a nuclear power plant in Vietnam and on prospecting for, extraction and processing of rare-earth elements. It was also noted that channels remained open for a dialogue on the problem of human rights with the European Union countries and on improvement of relations with Vatican.

Relations with other countries were not thoroughly analyzed. The only regions mentioned were Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, the relations with which develop primarily in the sphere of capital investments and the use of Vietnamese workforce.

The congress of the ruling party could not but touch on the aims and tasks of Vietnamese diplomacy at a new stage. The goal of the foreign-policy activities of ministries and departments of Vietnam was formulated as follows: “To preserve peaceful situation, create favorable international conditions for the renovation and speeding up of socioeconomic development, industrialization, modernization, protection of independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, raise the international status of the country, make a tangible contribution to the common struggle of the peoples for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress all over the world.”

The renovated CPV Program said that the country should carry on an independent, peaceful foreign policy contributing to cooperation and development, multifaceted and many-vector diplomacy, actively enter in international ties, raise the role of Vietnam in world politics in the interests of the state, rich and strong socialist Vietnam, being a reliable friend and partner, and responsible member of the world community, making its contribution to the cause of peace, national independence, democracy, and social progress in the entire world.

Among the concrete tasks set to Vietnamese diplomacy are expansion of international ties and maintenance of broader, deeper, firmer and more stable relations with neighbors and big countries. The political report also called for diminishing negative consequences of entry in the world commu-

nity, working more actively in international organizations, above all in the UN, disrupting the attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of Vietnam, and striving for border problems solution on the basis of international law. The most urgent task for Vietnamese diplomats is the struggle for the ASEAN countries turning Southeast Asia into a region of peace, stability, cooperation, development and prosperity.

The legal foundations of international activity are defined in the congress documents by the framework of the UN Charter and the generally recognized standards of international law. In contrast to the period of orthodox socialism, there was no mention of “proletarian internationalism” in the congress documents.

As to the development of the CPV international ties, the Program calls, continuing its practice of the early 1990s, for developing relations not only with communist and left-wing parties, but also with ruling parties in other countries. The only criterion is that cooperation should proceed in the interests of peace, friendship and development. Evidently, ideological barriers in this respect have been removed. Today’s reality is such that among Russian partners the Communist party of Vietnam maintains relations not only with the Communist party of the Russian Federation, but also with the United Russia party, and recently a CPV representative took part in the work of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties.

The ideological basis of the so-called people’s diplomacy is the traditional call of the congress to develop the relations of friendship, cooperation and mutual understanding with the peoples of the world.

NOTE

¹ In July 2011, Pham Binh Minh, former Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the United States, was appointed Foreign Minister.

Marina TRIGUBENKO

The World Crisis and Its Impact on Vietnam's Economy

It is widely held in the world economic community that economic crises restore the balance by cleansing inefficient industries and underperforming management and putting their advanced and modern substitutes in their place. As the most compelling proof of this truth, the Great Depression in the U.S. in the 1930s and the Asian crisis in the late 20th century ended with the world moving a step up in science and technology. There and elsewhere, the world economy follows a set pattern of crisis, depression, upturn, overheating, and crisis again. Like an earthquake or a volcano eruption, the moment when an economic crisis strikes is hard, if not impossible, to predict. The financial crises in the U.S., Latin America, and Asian countries fit into this mold. Still worse, no one had even a hint that the American crisis would spill over to the rest of the world and become a global affliction.

The effect of the current global crisis was felt less profoundly in East Asia than it was in other countries firmly in its grip. In the backwash of the Asian crisis in 1997 and 1998, they have built up a thick economic cushion by giving greater focus to advanced technologies and competitive industries. East Asian countries have developed their own ways to keep their economies in balance and acquired experience in crisis management. Generous assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), tied about with tough conditions though it was for each borrowing country, was both effective and helpful in driving on progress in science and technology in the postcrisis period.

With the arrival of the 21st century, the global environment was significantly less favorable for any one country overtaken by a crisis to shake it off. Some blame this turnabout on globalization and greater dependence of the world's countries on one another. The domino effect originating in the U.S.

and EU in the latter half of 2008, rippled quickly to Asia not through globalization alone — the export-led policies of a majority of Asian countries were equally at fault. Lulled into complacency by the stability of the developed countries' markets, developing countries shut their eye to the risks of a possible plunge of domestic demand in the U.S. and bankruptcy of major American banks that led immediately to a fall in exports and influx of foreign direct investments. Further down the line, output dropped in core industries and unemployment climbed.

Each country struggled with the regional Asian crisis alone. Unlike globalism, a stronger regionalism gave a new configuration to economic relations between Asian countries that joined together in a tight group around their common interests. As the world crisis was only rising its head, the leading East Asian countries — China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea — took steps to set up a joint anti-crisis reserve currency fund of \$120 billion. They also gave thought to a new common Asian currency they could use in trade between themselves in place of the U.S. dollar that was getting weaker by the day. They failed to agree, though, on the kind of help they could give one another because of the differences dividing them and their rivalry for leadership in ASEAN+3. Besides, they found no substitute for the U.S. dollar as a new reserve currency. True, currency swaps became more commonplace between China, Japan, ASEAN, and Russia. The global crisis had a direct impact of economic growth, foreign trade, and investments in developing countries.

The Asian countries' anti-crisis programs did not differ much in substance — all sought to sustain economic growth and give more attention to social services.

As previously, Asian countries put faith in tough government macro-regulation and a mix of free market forces and government planning. Their anti-crisis programs started paying off in early 2010, backed up by their huge official reserves (gold and hard currency) and helped along by recovery of demand for the Asian countries' high-tech products across the world. And yet, Asian countries are unable to give the nod to any of the three options — democracy, free market economy, or state control. So far, there is nothing like a perfect society on earth they could take as an example to copy in the years following the crisis. The democratic market state in the U.S. all developing countries had been looking to as the guiding light proved inefficient and vulnerable to crisis. Disappointed, they turned to China as a paragon of a successful anti-crisis state policy, even though the Chinese model cannot apply to any other country because of the peculiar customs of Chinese society, its millennia-old traditions, and the thrifty lifestyles, the hallmarks of all Chinese.

Neither can India serve as a benchmark for an ideal postcrisis organization of society — its democratic government and booming economy have had no effect on the appalling poverty of the overwhelming majority of its population. While its government has cultivated high technologies it has given very little attention to social problems. Like it was in China, it took a global crisis to force the Indian government to care for its destitute classes.

Vietnam's economy emerged almost unscratched from the Asian crisis in 1997 and 1998 — it had few links to the world market and world capital to suffer their loss. Its government, though, learned quickly the lessons of crises in ASEAN countries and South Korea, in time for the next crisis. The current world crisis has had a more subdued effect on Vietnam's economy than it did on the economies of Japan, Singapore, or the ASEAN. In fact, the global crisis only had a glancing effect on two pillars of Vietnam's macroeconomy — foreign trade and foreign investments.

As demand for inexpensive quality goods from Vietnam enjoyed a rising demand in the U.S. and the European Union, Vietnam started exporting the output of its big state-owned companies to the U.S. and European markets, and when the day of reckoning arrived in late 2008 and early 2009, its exports plunged more than 50%. The downhill slide slowed sometime after midyear 2009 when the government spent the biggest share of its \$1 billion anti-crisis cash reserves to support major exporting companies, slashed VAT, and put off payment of enormous arrears on loans. Its foreign trade, though, was still running in the red toward late 2009.

The world crisis, though, had a more adverse effect on the inflow of new foreign investments to Vietnam. The \$20.1 billion in foreign direct investments (FDI) accrued over the year was what it was in 2007 and 32% less than licensed FDI were in 2008.

Many Vietnamese experts believe that the global crisis has only had a marginal effect on the country's financial sector. Its State Bank was lowering its discount rate in several takes (from 5% to 3%) and bank loan interest rates (from 8.5% to 7% per annum) to stimulate domestic demand. Commercial banks were given large loans totaling 389 trillion dong to support their operations and stimulate their activity on the domestic market.

The country's banking sector had grown larger as well — from nine banks in 2001 to 80 in 2007. The vigorous lending policy added more weight to the share of bank capital in GDP, which rose from 43% in 2002 to 93% in 2007. Domestic borrowing rose from 42% in 2004 to 54% in 2007. Overall, banking sector assets reached \$73.43 billion.

The largest share of bank assets (80% of the total) are held by five major state-owned banks, with another 12% in the hands of private commercial

banks, and 8% in the possession of foreign banks' branches and offices. To maintain general bank liquidity, the Central Bank pushed up the M2 money supply sending inflation steeply up to 28%, its highest rate ever, in December 2008. The \$1 billion allocated from the government budget for crisis management measures caused the budget deficit to rise by 8.9%. The economic foundation, though, remained strong, with \$23 billion in official reserves (gold, SDRs, and international currencies). Vietnam's foreign and domestic debts (that reached 27% and 50% of GDP, respectively, in 2007) were evidence that the country had not crossed the economic security threshold at the time of the global crisis. Unlike a majority of Southeast Asian countries, Vietnam was spared a GDP slump and escaped recession in 2009. Its GDP rose 5.32% in 2009, almost as it was to grow under government plans for 2009. The annual inflation rate retreated to 6.88%, down from the annual average of 15.8% in 2008.

In a repeat of its performance during the 1997–1998 Asian crisis, Vietnam did not turn for aid to the IMF or other world financial centers — the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank. Aid continued to flow in from other sources, including the donor community (like ODA, Official Development Assistance), and was spent on social programs, development of transportation infrastructure, and selected industries, and also to sustain financial stability, giving Vietnam a better chance to offset the consequences of the global crisis in 2009.

Vietnam's government allocated 170 trillion dong in 2008 to cope with the crisis — 34 trillion dong of this subsidy went into construction; 37.2 trillion dong was given to support several major economic projects; 30.2 trillion dong was sunk into state investments carried over from 2008; 20 trillion dong was spent on yet another government bond issue; 28 trillion dong was earmarked on customs duty reductions; and 17 trillion dong was allotted to back up guarantees for balance sheet lending transactions.

The crisis control program included support for social services, with priority on fulfillment of the government's social programs of support to areas inhabited by ethnic minorities — their residents were given one-off subsidies and cut-rate loans were made for housing construction, establishment of small businesses, and purchase of foodstuffs at low prices.

The government encouraged domestic demand, and aggregate sales rose to 36% of GDP as a result. Its demand promotion policy was facilitated by favorable demographics in the country, with 65% of the total population being in the working age brackets, and it is expected that the average age will go down to 29 years in Vietnam in 2015, in comparison with 37 years in China.

Even though the government suspended privatization in the public sector for as long as the crisis held, it continued to support private enterprise — as a result, 271,000 private companies with a total capital of \$48 billion were established.

Bank loans saved export-oriented big, medium, and small businesses from the damaging effects of the world crisis. The government took tough administrative measures against predatory pricing and encouraged consumers to purchase home-made products on the domestic market. The banks were still solvent. Strategic state-owned banks did not go bankrupt. Major foreign banks, including their offices and branches, still maintained their presence in Vietnam.

While whittling down their investments, investors from APR countries kept up and boosted them in Vietnam's strategic industries. Major infrastructure projects were launched, helping reduce unemployment. A large-scale modernization project was drawn up for Ho Chi Minh City.

Beginning in 2010, the world economy started moving back into balance, and depression in countries affected by the crisis was gradually turning into recovery, most conspicuous in ASEAN, newly industrializing countries, and Japan. Vietnam is looking for major investors from the U.S., Europe, and Japan to establish a presence in the country and counts on their involvement in its industrialization. Lately, Russia has joined in cooperation with Vietnam as a vigorous investor. Plans are being made, in coordination with foreign partners, to develop new industries — space exploration, nuclear power engineering, and high technologies — in the period following the years of crisis.

For large-scale investment projects to be launched, Vietnam will have to clean up the mess left by the global crisis. A package of measures was unveiled at the 2010 National Assembly session that debated guidelines for Vietnam's socioeconomic strategy up to 2020. The draft strategy had to be reviewed at the 11th National Congress of Vietnam's Communist Party in 2011. The country's priorities included:

- government support for the export of manufactures;
- maintenance of macroeconomic stability backed up by considerable official reserves and a favorable balance of foreign trade, and gradual reduction in the budget deficit;
- maintenance of stability and liquidity of the national financial system, extension of targeted loans to core industries — transportation vehicles, auto making, and fuel and energy;
- development of manufacturing and technological potential and easing of the tax burden on developers;

- greater support for, and introduction of modern technologies in, agriculture;
- government support for the defense industry; and
- reduction in redundancies by promoting development of small and medium businesses and expanding redundant labor export.

The 2010 plan unveiled at the fall 2009 session of Vietnam's National Assembly calls for a 6.8% GDP growth, inflation of around 7%, annual export growth rate of 6%, and the gross accumulation rate, or the ratio of investments into the country's economy to GDP, to be raised to 41%.

As preparations for the Communist Party's 11th National Congress were underway, the economic situation in the country improved, and yet the domestic scene is plagued by corruption. The donors, the Asian Development Bank, in the first place, responded by suspending international aid, much of it embezzled at the local level. A bigger role is now played by internal political opposition sponsored by the West through the Democratic Party of Vietnam, a terrorist organization of emigrants banned in Vietnam. Four of its members were indicted for anti-state activities and plans to overthrow the government in 2009 and sentenced to long prison terms. The U.S. and the European Union denounced the Vietnamese court ruling as an infringement of human rights.

Relations between Vietnam and China have taken a turn for the worse following China's imposition of its control over the disputed Spratly and Paracel islands in the South China Sea and China's claims on Vietnam's littoral shelf as its territory. Vietnam has to build up its armed forces and boost its military budget through cooperation with Russia. Its negotiations with Russia were completed with the signing of military contracts for the delivery of six Russian submarines and 12 Su-30MK2 fighter planes at a cost of \$ 4.5 billion.

The world economic crisis has not derailed Vietnam's modernization plans. The breakthroughs it had achieved in crisis control by early 2010 and the arrangements it had reached with its major donor countries on industrial cooperation to remain in effect in the future are a safeguard of Vietnam's sustainable development in the next few years. And yet, with the lessons of the global crisis learned well, its development strategy will certainly be revised. The government must help with investments and technological support for advanced information technologies and innovative industries — telecommunications, nuclear power engineering, and space research. Vietnam can make a greater contribution to global food security by making its agriculture fully mechanized and giving it more government aid.

PART THREE

POLITICAL and SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT in the SOCIALIST REPUBLIC of VIETNAM

Vladimir MAZYRIN

Vietnam: Renovation Patterns and Distinctions

Challenges

A quarter-century back, in December 1986, the Sixth Congress of Vietnam's Communist Party launched comprehensive reforms, better known as a renovation policy (the *Doi Moi* policy), in the existing directive system that was going through a crisis. Over the period between then and now, the country has graduated from the old planned distributive economy to a free market, and reforms have been carried out in many realms with a favorable effect on society and living standards.

These reforms stir up interest toward Vietnam's experience and the underpinnings of its success. We will examine them in more detail below, with a focus on what countries in transition, including Vietnam, have in common and what puts Vietnam apart in its modernization efforts.

Economic Rebound and Reforms

Macroeconomic stabilization that is a sign of Vietnam's economy recovery was translated into high economic growth rates and hence into a fast increase in its GDP. In the latter half of the 2000s, Vietnam was ranked near the dividing line between the top thirty and next dozen in the size of its na-

tional wealth measured in purchasing power parity (PPP). It was certainly a spectacular achievement for a country that was among the planet's poorest countries in the 1980s. Its gross product measured at the exchange rate more than doubled over a ten-year period (1995 to 2004), from \$20.7 billion to \$45.3 billion, and doubled again within a span of five years (2005 to 2009). In fact, its GDP registered a 12.5-fold growth at current prices between 1986 and 2010.¹ A more accurate picture, adjusted for inflation, shapes up in the local currency at 1994 prices, showing a fourfold increase in the gross product between 1990 and 2010.²

The country's GDP averaged an annual 7.5% growth, second only to China among the world's nations and well ahead of the other former socialist countries in terms of market reform returns and sustainability. Vietnam's growth rates over the last two decades were considerably more consistent than they had been between 1976 and 1990. Indeed, they are on a par with the performance of leading Asian newly industrializing countries (NICs) in fast-track industrialization. Rising economic growth rates have contributed to industrial expansion — with annual natural population growth rate having fallen to 1.1% from 2.6%, the gross product grew six to seven times as fast (fourfold is the essential minimum).³

As a result, profound changes occurred within a short time period, by historical standards, in the structure and volume of output, in consumption and accumulation. Private ownership and market institutions were restored and surged forward across the board. Market relations and capitalist type production spread out into many areas and expanded quickly in advantageously sited centers of manufacturing activity and in cities. While we appreciate these breakthroughs impartially, we must give consideration to the advantages of Vietnam's agricultural type of economy and ample natural resources, large domestic market, and deferred demand.

Fast growth rates gave Vietnam a head start in catching-up development (interpreted as efforts to close the gap in development between Vietnam and its neighbors, its immediate rivals), a task that proved to be impossible to accomplish in a majority of developing countries. There is no task more important than this for Vietnam that trailed at least ten years behind China at the start of this century, 15 years behind Thailand, 20 years, Malaysia, 25 years, South Korea, 35 years, Singapore, and 40 years behind Japan.⁴

Between 1991 and 2009, Vietnam's GDP per capita rose from \$158 to \$1,074 (reaching \$1,200 in 2010), and \$2,957 in PPP, placing it 125th among the 177 countries for which statistics are available.⁵ Even though the gap between Vietnam and the region's advanced countries in income per capita in

absolute terms continued to widen, Vietnam was catching up in its lag behind them (except China), particularly in PPP incomes (Table 1).

The economic growth rate in Vietnam and in other developing countries picked up significantly as their industrialization and services gathered speed. The high economic growth rate set off changes in the employment pattern, fixed assets, gross product, and aggregate demand. Over the last two decades, the primary sector of social production dropped from approximately 40% to 20%, that of the secondary sector rose in inverse proportion, and that of the tertiary sector increased insignificantly (Fig. 1). As the country's economy continued to be restructured, the share of the primary sector was scheduled to be reduced to 15% by 2020 and that of the other two sectors together to be raised to 85%.⁶ This role reversal is in the mainstream of modernization that swept over Third World countries in the 1980s to 2000s.

In both China and Vietnam, economic reforms were initiated in agriculture, with vast implications. Larger yields and higher productivity in agriculture helped Vietnam in many ways to ride out its major problems and speed up its economic growth. Rice harvests doubled in Vietnam to nearly 40 million tons, or almost 450 kilograms per capita,⁷ making the nation secure in food supplies and pushing it forward to become a leading world rice exporter. The principal difference between Vietnam and the former socialist countries in Europe and the republics of the former U.S.S.R. is that radical reforms in Vietnam were started in the countryside that supplied processed and unprocessed farming produce to cities and had an overwhelming majority of the population living there.

Vietnam's leaders have set themselves the strategic goal of turning it into a modern industrialized country by 2020, with an annual average income per capita within the range of \$3,000 to \$3,200 in absolute figures, enough for Vietnam to move up to a higher medium-income group of countries. Vietnam's intention to raise its GDP to \$225 billion⁸ is an indication of its claim to rise to a place somewhere in the middle of the world economic rankings. Leading world investors must be right putting Vietnam in the second group of fastest-growing world markets — VISTA (Vietnam, Indonesia, South Africa, Thailand, and Argentina) — following on the heels of BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China).

Beginning in the latter half of the 2000s, elements of a postindustrial technological system have been sprouting in Vietnam. The Communist Party's 11th Congress in January 2011 proclaimed goals such as building a knowledge economy, improving the quality of the country's economy by raising productivity, using the latest technologies, and achieving development goals through intensification, rather than expansion, of asset utiliza-

tion. So far, though, the available resources and growth backlogs have not been used up (frequently because of their low costs). The old practices, however, cause damage to the environment, lead to overheating and disproportions in the economy, and interfere with sustainable development.⁹ On top of all that, Vietnam's leaders want to make the most of recent major changes in the world economy as a unique chance to have their country leap forward.

Vietnam has put in good economic performance largely because it has used its comparative advantages with best effect. In addition to what we discussed above, these are beneficial social characteristics like the demographic dividend,¹⁰ intellect, diligence, discipline, modesty, and education of the Vietnamese, their saving knack and their desire to increase earnings, and competition. Vietnam's important difference from a majority of the former socialist countries is that the traditions and expertise of private enterprise have survived (rather than weeded out as they were, for example, in the U.S.S.R.) and that free market awareness was fostered among the active part of the population. These important market trends were most conspicuous in the country's South that had been moving in the capitalist mainstream for nearly a century following French colonization and projected a strong "demonstration effect" on the country's northern part. The two parts had a unique experience of coexistence between 1955 and 1975, and then cohabitation of two different sociopolitical systems on unified territory from 1976 to 1986. This historical background makes Vietnam's social transformation so different, not to say unique.

Dynamic Foreign Policy and Economic Ties

Even though Vietnam's natural (static) advantages served as a basis for its market economy's rapid growth, its proactive and wise foreign policy had a very important part to play in its successful reforms. Vietnam's leaders succeeded in adapting their country to global changes and taking on new challenges and trials. By cultivating a favorable attitude to Vietnam and creating a preferential investment climate, they attracted an abundant influx of foreign capital, technologies, and management know-how and expertise, received support in launching reforms, and found new markets for the country's exports.

By making the most of the foreign factor, Vietnam advanced, within a relatively short time period, from the primitive phases of economic modernization and specialization at the fringes of the world economy halfway to-

ward its center, a performance that, Russian scholars say, only a few other countries were capable of achieving.

Vietnam certainly followed a development model turned to the outside world, drawing on integration into the world economy, and soaking in foreign investments, and built around trade. This is a fairly common model. Unlike many other countries, in particular, in Central and Eastern Europe, Vietnam stands up for its national interests in spite of its broad economic openness, and dependence, too. Its openness to foreign trade is over 150% of its GDP, its openness to foreign capital is about that of China (3.8% and 4.1%, respectively), the share of foreign direct investments (FDI) in gross capital inputs ranges from 25% to 30%, and enterprises in this sector manufacture 35% of the country's industrial output, generate 55% of its exports, and pay in 40% of its government budget revenue.¹¹

Vietnam joined in the international labor division system and achieved an impressive effect in industrial output expansion, becoming one of the world "workshops" (in the network of manufacturing and marketing transnational corporations, TNCs), starting out in the garments and footwear industries, spreading out to assembly of computers and home electronics, and finally, ending up in the manufacture of complex electronic components.¹²

Spectacular results were produced by Vietnam's integration into the world economy through free trade agreements it signed and free trade zones it established, and its membership of the WTO, which it joined in late 2006. After it embraced the principles of free trade with the U.S., its commerce with that country shot up from near zero to \$18 billion in 2010 over a decade. Vigorous growth of direct cross-border trade and settlements in the local currency, along with the establishment payment of the CAFTA (China+ASEAN free trade area), made China Vietnam's biggest trading partner (with \$27 billion done in trade in 2010).¹³ Vietnam's WTO membership and its domestic market opened, with unpredictable consequences of this move for local producers and traders, led to a doubling of foreign trade within a short four years and a three- to fourfold increase in direct investments.¹⁴

A key role is played in the economic upswing and improvements in living standards by the large emigrant community (over 3 million, or around 4% of Vietnam's total population, most of whom live in the U.S.). Emigrants transfer growing amounts of funds to help their relatives in their home country and invest them in development projects and real estate.¹⁵ Even though emigrants' transfers settle down as development funds in several developing countries, ethnic Vietnamese emigrants' transfers account for 8% of the country's GDP (for an average 2% in the Third World), more

than the total aid (\$4 billion) Vietnam receives from international donors and almost as much as the foreign direct investments poured into local projects (\$10 billion to \$11 billion a year in 2008 to 2010), putting it in the first place among the world's beneficiary countries, considering Vietnam's size.¹⁶

While it reaps enormous benefits from integration into the world economy, Vietnam is pursuing a policy of maneuvering and multipolarity at the same time relying on world power centers and expanding rapidly its relations with the U.S., the European Union, Japan, India, and Australia, in particular. In large measure, its favorable environment is due to its productive involvement in ASEAN and integrated Asia Pacific groups (APEC, Asia-Europe forum, East Asia Summit, and Transpacific Partnership). Its activism on the world scene and in the region and coordination of its efforts with international organizations and the donor community help it to develop its economy at a sustainable rate. Vietnam probably stands out for its desire to maintain workable relations with its old and new allies to obtain substantial benefits from both. The APEC summit held in Hanoi in 2006, Vietnam's presidency in ASEAN in 2010, and temporary membership of the UN Security Council in 2008 and 2009 were evidence of the country's growing prestige in the world and region.

In recent years, Vietnam has invigorated its cooperation with Russia that is trailing far behind its leading partners, at about 15th place, in trade and direct investments. Russia, though, is its main supplier of modern weapons and several strategic technologies (in nuclear power, space exploration, oil and gas, telecommunications, and biomedicine). This gives Russia a strong leverage against the growing influence of China and the U.S. on Vietnam. Decades of friendship and trust, and a large stratum of intellectuals educated in the former U.S.S.R. and now holding influential positions in the party and government, and the outlook for Russia's economic rise turn it into a guarantor of Vietnam's independence and progress. On its part, Vietnam is Russia's reliable strategic partner.

The Social Edge of Reforms

Social orientation combining the benefits of economic growth and government support for the needy and vulnerable population classes as a substitute for a "shock therapy" is the principal advantage of transformation in Vietnamese society. It is patterned on the European model of the welfare state where the state assumes responsibility for assistance to its citizens

through budget allocation programs and off-budget sources of outside aid. In contrast to the previous policy, the new approach does not seek to make everybody eligible for their measure of social welfare as anyone else or to give free social security to each and everyone. Vietnam's authorities believe that social inequality born again does not slow down economic growth, and instead stimulates it, to an extent. Government regulation helps maintain a relative balance of interests and proportions in society. Regulation through free market forces has a social-democratic flavor that has not been a hallmark of any ruling Communist parties up till now.

Living standards have grown significantly (sixfold in GDP per capita at the exchange rate), more so in cities than in the countryside. The share of people living below the poverty line plunged from 56% to 14% between 1993 and 2010 (Fig. 2). For many farmers, of course, living standards improve spontaneously and painfully as they migrate to cities en masse (the urbanization rate had grown from 20% to 30% over 25 years). To soften territorial differences, though, the government is deliberately setting up new growth nuclei in backward areas. For example, the country's first oil refinery at Dung Quat was built at the central point of the country's coast that became a large industrial zone (a nuclear power center is to be established in the southern part of the coast), farmland areas will be developed to cultivate industrial crops, and natural resources are to be mined and electric power generated on the Thai Nguyen plateau.

Insurance institutions have been set up to provide social safeguards at a total cost of up to 3.4% of GDP. For now, the pension system provides coverage to 15% of the gainfully employed population (most of its beneficiaries are in the public service, and it is beginning to spread to private businesses as well), and the obligatory medical insurance covers 16% of the total population.

Optional insurance is taking off as well.¹⁷ In 2009, the government introduced unemployment insurance, a mandatory social safeguard in a free market environment. It also gives essential assistance to approximately 5 million people disabled over decades of wars.¹⁸ The system only offers minimum safeguards to fewer people than are in need of them. The shortage of budgetary funds is offset by networks of social, clannish, and other types of mutual assistance developed in Vietnam, and in other traditional societies, for that matter, quite often from outside of Vietnam (like money transfers from emigrants).

The state also lays down other foundations for social progress by promoting education and health care at a cost some 4% and 1.4% of GDP, respectively. The total costs of social services, including science and research

in engineering, are approaching 10%, making Vietnam a standout among Third World countries for this budgetary item. Funds are allocated from the central and local budgets to operate preschool institutions and implement measures to provide care and protection to children and mothers. As yet, social services, and particularly their quality, are far too little to meet growing demand, a reason why private educational and health care institutions have been cropping up. Payment for their services being affordable to affluent classes only, social inequality has taken new forms. The authorities prevent it from getting out of control by soliciting aid funds from international development promotion institutions, UN organizations, and funds of nongovernmental organizations.

Its official policies have rewarded Vietnam with standards in education and health care, quality of life, and life expectancy typical of countries having considerably higher incomes per capita (including Vietnam's neighbors in Southeast Asia).¹⁹ Average life expectancy has gone up over 71 years (56th place in the world), and its human development index (HDI) has topped 0.73, typical of countries with a medium development status (105th place).²⁰

Other statistics, too, bear out Vietnam social performance and spotlight its distinctions from a majority of developing countries. More specifically, over 90% of its population can read and write (putting it in 57th place in world rankings), 65% of its literate citizens have various grades of secondary education, and 10% have a higher education.²¹ Schooling at all levels comes out at an average eight years, and keeps growing, particularly in backward areas, laying a firm groundwork for higher living standards, larger incomes, and economic advance in general. In the labor force, a mere 22% are skilled and proficient, and there is a shortage of skilled hands for a modern production system to develop.

Building the foundations for transition to an innovative phase is an even more intractable problem — government spending on R&D is below 1% of GDP (2.13% of budgetary expenditure), and the academic community is short of researchers (there are 21,000 of them, with 0.18 inventors per 1,000).²² A dash has been made in recent years in an effort to make wider use of information and other high technologies — in 2006, Vietnam placed 94th in the world rankings for the knowledge economy development index, and 65th for “online standby” in 2007.²³

Conditions have been created for long, active, and affluent life by, above all, reducing the formerly high birth and mortality rates. In particular, female fertility has been reduced to two children (down from 4.4 a quarter-century ago), and infantile death rate has dropped to 17‰ from 44‰.²⁴ Traditional epidemic diseases have been stamped out and the spread of new

ones, such as the bird flu and HIV, is restrained effectively. More people now have access to clean water sources and hygiene products.

Growing incomes have helped improve diets significantly, with surpluses going to purchase clothing, housing, and household items, including electrical appliances. Lifestyles started to change, particularly among young people. On the downside, differences between the rich and poor, urbanites and country dwellers, and members of the title nation and ethnic minorities have intensified. The Gini index of income distribution is still at an acceptable level of 0.37 to 0.38, but points to significant differences (above 0.42) as far as expenses go. Another comparative method (incomes of proportional groups of the population) has brought out a growing difference between the richest and the poorest population groups — eightfold by quintiles (Fig. 3) and 15-fold by deciles, significantly lower than, for example, in China and especially in Russia.²⁵

The figures cited here confirm the expected changes in the structure of Vietnamese society. Midway between its top and bottom is the medium class of entrepreneurs, with a rich and very small crust standing well above the average.²⁶ The bulk of society (except people who earn a livelihood by running private farms) have been turned into hired employees. As it is entrenched in economic positions, the new bourgeoisie experiences an urge to be represented in the top political echelons of power. So far, it has no hand in high politics, and competition is heating up between the two ruling elites — the new technocratic and business elite and the old party bureaucrats.

Obviously, a market economy is coming to life less painfully in Vietnam than it is in other former socialist countries. The state managed, in a way, to blunt the sting of the market forces and lower the price society had to pay for a new economic system to be put in place. It staked on the market forces to regulate the social services given strong support from the state. The market reforms have not ruined society; rather they helped stabilize it, switch its sights to other goals, rally support for the official policy, and legitimize the ruling Communist party's monopoly on power. This is what makes Vietnam like no other place, and what gives it stability in moving forward at a fast speed.

State Governance and Political System

Like so many other countries in East Asia at the outset of modernization, Vietnam is ruled by an authoritarian government that is in many respects justified by the tangled internal and external situation and the surviv-

ing threat of erosion of the dominant ideology, cultural traditions, and internal unity. This is a way to maintain stability in a society exposed to deep-going reforms and assure the possibility of reforms being put through smoothly. Vietnam's record suggests the need for leaving existing social institutions in place to oversee the modernization strategy. This record makes Vietnam's "renovation" unique. Like China's record, too, it is an exception among countries in transition.

Restriction of democratic freedoms within reasonable limits is typical of countries where relations between the state and society are based on paternalism and personal rights are not yet fully understood. It is certainly not inconsistent with the "illustrative examples" of liberal democracy. Moreover, as the "masses' mindsets mature," democratization gradually picks up speed, parliamentary and electoral democracy expands, citizens gain the right to manage themselves ("grassroots democracy"), nongovernmental organizations spring up, and other roots of civil society sprout, and laws are modernized (within the framework of the concept of a law-governed socialist state). Governing institutions, including the Communist party, are moving toward democracy as well — it is common practice now for party executives to be rotated and new and younger faces to be spotted in the corridors of power (no one can now hold an office for over ten years, retirement on pension when past 60 is a rule, and a third of both the Central Committee and the Political Bureau is replaced in each election term), and executive government agencies are exercising more independence from the party.

Politicians in power in Vietnam are efficient, with a market system on their minds, working to achieve economic growth, and pursuing a well-considered macroeconomic policy. They rely on fast-learning, knowledgeable, and business-savvy elites. The renovation policy in Vietnam suggests designing and applying approaches that are not at odds with the national character. Vietnam's leaders are guided by practical common sense as they move ahead from basics to complexities, draw on the unique organizational experience accumulated by the Communist Party over the 80 years of its history, and have skills to mobilize the nation and its resources for achieving strategic goals. Their flexible, graduated approach to reforms is based on realities and interlaced factors at work. Good results were achieved by reforms launched all at a time and all carried out in stages.

Russian researchers believe that whatever approaches met with success in Vietnam can be just as successful in other countries launching their own modernization drives.²⁷ Vietnam is unlike any other country only because its Communist Party is blazing the way for reforms like China's Communist Party is in that country. While it sticks to its old trappings, it switches over

the goals of its foreign and home policies, diluting its social structure with members of the business clans, reversing many of its ideological nostrums, and developing innovative theoretical approaches. It claims to speak for all the classes of society and, in fact, campaigns for a welfare state to be built in Vietnam.

The old economic system was successfully replaced with a new one through an intelligent combination of macroeconomic controls and market forces that enabled the reformers to adjust and shift the speed of economic growth into high or low gear, and have a handle on the uncontrolled course of events. Vietnam is different from Russia and former European socialist countries because the state had a supreme, if declining, role in running the country's affairs and the market was pushed to the sidelines.

The high rate of socioeconomic development in Vietnam is an indication of a direct relationship between the drastic market reforms and their outfall in the economy. The long time it took the reforms to gradually turn Vietnam's economy around did not delay entrenchment of market relations; rather, it was a sure way for changes to strike strong roots. This approach to transformation has obvious advantages, such as lower social and political costs, at least at the outset.

Certainly, profound reforms do not go off without problems, nor does a social institution emerge and develop smoothly. In Vietnam's case, these are the complexity and scale of goals its leaders have set themselves. The countries now well ahead of it achieved their goals gradually or in part only. Vietnam has no other choice but to address them all at a time and follow an accepted set of rules, such as those in force in the WTO. The errors it made and losses it suffered in the situation, and haste, too, have made economic development harder to carry on and its prospects blurred. As the economy rebounded and living standards rose, the country found itself in the "medium development trap," from which few countries found an escape.

Controversies and Prospects of the Mixed Growth Model

The Vietnamese model of transition to a market system is unavoidably entangled in painful controversies. The country is exposed to market laws and buffeted by forces specific for a period when the economy and society have not yet shaken off the effects of the "do-as-I-tell" system. Assets, production capabilities, and management practices are part capitalist and part

socialist (let alone their historically outdated alternatives). The market economy does not yet have both feet on the ground from corner to corner of the country, and its institutions stumble along unsteadily, one more ready for the job it is pushed to take on than the other. Too much intervention by the state in the way it is run gives state-owned corporations overbearing influence on the economy and fills their coffers and the pockets of their lobbies in government.

Hence the dualism of the economy and the social system in general, and the pace of renovation that could otherwise be faster. Economic growth mixes reluctantly with social equality, environmental balance, ethnic, gender, and territorial development running on parallel tracks, shared values, and social mobility options. The output is underperformance and lack of sustainability.

Vietnam's economy is multisectorial, with a large segment of it waiting to be modernized. As much can be understood from a glance at the trends in the general economic structure. For example, the share of the state sector in GDP dipped from 40% to 35% between 1996 and 2009, that of the cooperative sector fell from 10% to 6%, self-employed entrepreneurs' was unchanged at 30%, private capitalist and mixed business rose from 7% to 11%, and the proportion of partly foreign-owned businesses more than doubled, from 7% to 18%.²⁸

Over the quarter-century of reforms, Vietnam's economy grew through expansion — investments were made, for the most part, in physical, not human, capital, preference was given to the export of unprocessed natural products and output of traditional industries, and to capital- and labor-intensive projects, rather than advanced technologies. The country's GDP was boosted by inputs of labor and capital; the role of quality and new technologies impacting total factor productivities was of little consequence, even if growing as well (Table 2). Increase in investments did not produce adequate rise of the national wealth showing in the rising capital-intensity of GDP (Table 3). This growth pattern a less-developed country could afford undercut Vietnam's international competitive standing and slowed down its programs to pull out of its backward status.

In practice, reforms in Vietnam's social system have clearly veered away from the stereotyped recommendations proffered by the Western powers and international financial institutions, and yet it still stays on course. Its persistence in pursuit of its way is evidence that its systemic reforms share much in common with reforms in other countries in transition. Vietnam embraces a two-sector development model, and a mixed economy as its mainstay. The changes accomplished so far have not led to the latest edition

of the new economic policy in Russia a little under a century ago. Rather, they look like convergence of elements of opposite social systems.

Curiously, they neither merge nor intermingle — they exist side by side, the market elements gradually knocking out the older ones and gradually winning the day. Capitalism is bursting into growth in Vietnam the traditional way, from grassroots up, on the ground fertilized by private enterprise. At the top, inefficient leftovers of the old system are trimmed or cut out. As a result, the rift between the capitalist groundwork and socialist top growth is opening wider, threatening to blow up into a conflict.

By all appearances, the Vietnamese leaders are aware of the looming threat and do not rush to attach a label to the development model they have on

Annex

Table 1

GDP-Based National Income per capita in Vietnam and Asian Countries in 2000 and 2008*

Country	GDP per capita, \$				Relative to Vietnam (as a basis of 1)			
	Current prices		PPP		Current prices		PPP	
	2000	2008	2000	2008	2000	2008	2000	2008
Vietnam	402	1,052	1,390	2,700	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
China	856	3,267	2,330	6,010	2.1	3.1	1.7	2.2
Thailand	1,970	4,043	4,850	7,770	4.9	3.8	3.5	2.9
Malaysia	3,881	8,209	8,350	13,740	9.7	7.8	6.0	5.1
South Korea	10,890	19,115	17,130	27,840	27.1	18.2	12.3	10.3
Singapore	22,757	37,597	32,870	47,970	56.6	35.7	23.6	17.8
Japan	37,549	38,455	25,950	35,190	93.4	36.6	18.7	13.0
Philippines	980	1,847	2,430	3,900	2.4	1.8	1.7	1.4
Indonesia	730	2,247	2,200	3,600	1.8	2.1	1.6	1.3
Cambodia	291	711	860	1,870	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.7
Laos	332	893	1,130	2,050	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8

See: Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2004, pp. 642–643; 2009, pp. 693–694 and 701–702, Hanoi, 2005 and 2010.

Note: * The 2000 figures are based on the results of the World Bank's 1993 round of international comparisons, and the 2008 figures are based on the 2005 round (modified on the basis of the 2007 round).

their hands, and are looking unhurriedly for a theoretical rationale for their new course. Given the overly long period of transition, they plan, in their official statements for the record, to finally complete construction of the physical and technological framework of socialism by the mid-21st century. Unlike their Vietnamese counterparts, China's leaders have advanced a clear-cut theory for their country's development and now claim that "a socialist market economy" has been built there. Even though the two approaches — empirical and official — stand in many respects in contradiction to commonly accepted definitions, they are in no way a hindrance to progress.

Table 2

Structure and Dynamics of GDP Growth Factors in 1992 to 2008, %

Periods	1992–1997	1998–2004	2005–2008	1992–1997	1998–2004	2005–2008
Factors	Average Contribution per Year, Periods			Internal Structure		
Capital	6.01	4.10	4.50	69	60	57
Labor	1.47	1.73	1.56	17	25	20
International financial aid	1.24	0.98	1.76	14	15	23
Total in a year	8.72	6.82	7.83	100	100	100

Calculated from: Kinh tế Việt Nam năm 2004: những vấn đề nổi bật. Nguyễn Văn Thương, Nguyễn Kế Tuấn chủ biên. Hà-nội, 2005, Tr. 39; "Prolonged Discussion, Opportunities May Be Missed," *Vietnam Economic Times*. www.gda.com.vn/?page=news&code=news&id=1529, January 2, 2009.

Table 3

GDP Capital Intensity in 1990 to 2008 (in current prices, %)

	1990	1996	1999	2002	2005	2008
Gross capital investments	12.6	28.1	27.6	37.4	40.9	43.1
Gross internal savings	3.3	17.2	24.6	33.2	35.6	33.5
ICOR index*	4.3	3.0	5.8	5.3	6.1	6.9

Calculated from: Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2007, pp. 82 and 93; Report of the SRV State Statistical Department on the Socioeconomic Situation in 2008, pp. 2 and 16 [in Vietnamese]; "Vietnam's Economy: One Year, Two Crises," *Vietnam Economic Times*, December 29, 2008.

Note: * The ICOR index has been calculated as the share of public capital investments in GDP to the GDP growth rate (see.: Kinh tế Việt Nam năm 2004: những vấn đề nổi bật. Nguyễn Văn Thương, Nguyễn Kế Tuấn chủ biên), Hà-nội, 2005, p. 37.

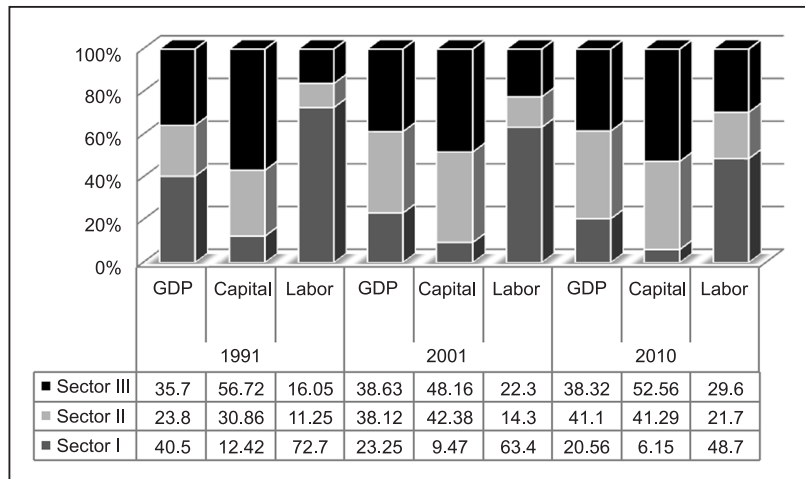


Figure 1. Structure of GDP, Investments, and Labor in Vietnam*.

Calculated from: Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 1996, p. 16; 2004, pp. 53 and 93; 2010, pp. 102, 130, and 153, Hanoi: NXB Thống kê, 1997, 2005, 2011.

Note: * Sector I comprises agriculture, fisheries, and forestry; Sector II comprises manufacturing and construction; and Sector III comprises services.

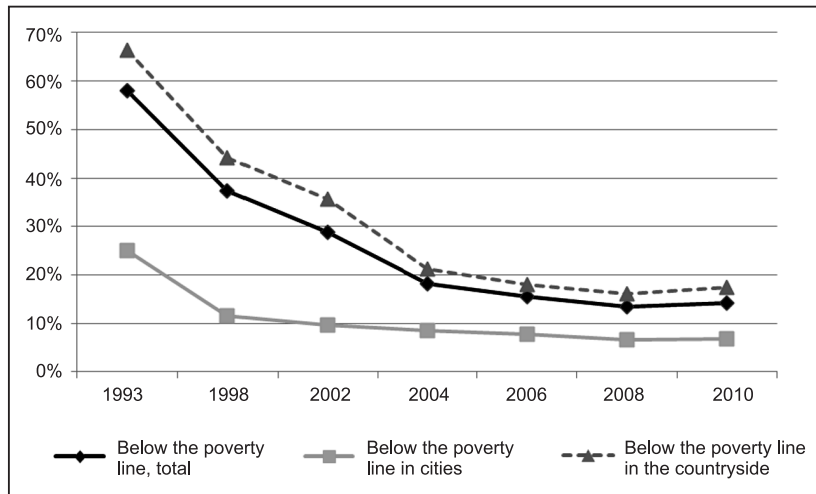


Figure 2. Poverty Reduction in Vietnam in 1993 to 2010*.

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2010, Hanoi, 2011, p. 693.

Note: * This is the share of the population living below the poverty line, and its criterion was measured by Vietnamese techniques and raised in each of the periods shown.

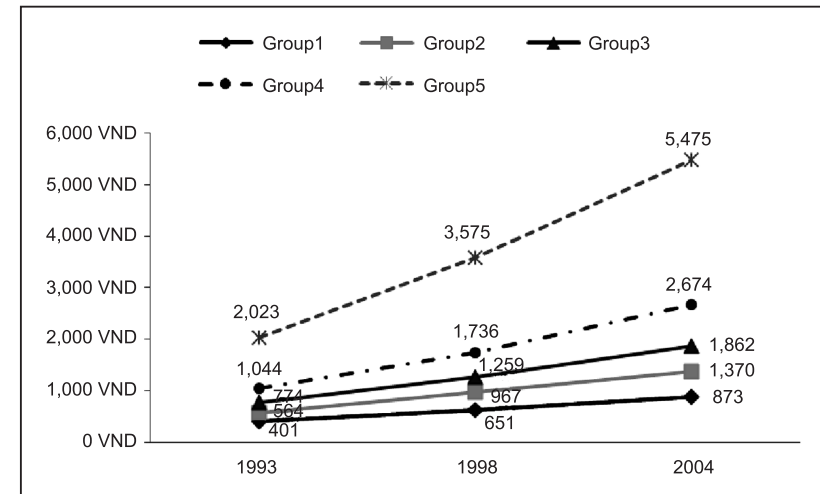


Figure 3. Differentiation of Personal Incomes in 1993, 1998, and 2004 by Quintiles, '000 Vietnamese Dong (VND)*.

Source: Viện Khoa học Xã hội. Báo cáo cập nhật nghèo 2006. Nghèo và giảm nghèo ở Việt Nam giai đoạn 1993—2004. NXB. Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội, 2007.

Note: * The sequence of the 20% groups (quintiles) indicates monthly incomes increasing from the lowest (Group 1) to the highest (Group 5).

NOTES

¹ In the period of 1986 to 1995, Vietnam's GDP rose, in our estimates, more than twofold. This growth rate gives a deceptive impression because of the extremely low starting point of the Vietnamese economy. The calculations are based on data provided by Vietnam's State Statistical Department. See: Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2004, pp. 70—71; 2009, pp. 84—85, Hanoi, 2005 and 2010; World Development Indicators 2009, Washington D.C., The World Bank, 2009, p. 45.

² In the estimates of Vietnamese economists for 1990 to 2005, Vietnam's GDP tripled. We arrived at the same figure.

³ Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2004, pp. 70—71; 2009, pp. 84—85; UNDP Human Development Report 2006, Moscow, 2006, p. 333 [in Russian].

⁴ Tăng trưởng kinh tế Việt Nam: Những rào cản cần phải vượt qua. Nguyễn Văn Thường chủ biên. Hà Nội, 2005, p. 14 and 17—18; Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2005, p. 641.

⁵ Human Development Report 2007/2008. "Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World, UNDP, NY, 2007, p. 230; World Development Indicators 2009, p. 40.

⁶ Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2004, pp. 70–71; 2009, pp. 84–85; “Socioeconomic Development Strategy of the SRV in 2011–2020, *Materials of the 11th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam*, Moscow, 2011, p. 130 [in Russian].

⁷ Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2009, p. 231.

⁸ See: “Socioeconomic Development Strategy of the SRV in 2011–2020,” p. 129.

⁹ Vietnam has to spend a growing share of its national wealth on mitigating the consequences of natural disasters (according to official statistics, nearly 1% of GDP in 2007).

¹⁰ In the mid-2000s, 64.2% of Vietnam’s population were aged between 15 and 64 years. In demographic dividend, Vietnam is close to the fastest growing economies — China (71.1% in 2006) and India (62.4%), and it is more than mere chance that its economic growth rates are closely correlated with theirs. See: World Development Indicators 2008, Washington D.C., The World Bank 2008, pp. 40–42; Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2009, p. 39.

¹¹ Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2009, p. 453; World Investment Report 2007, NY, 2007, p. 259; World Development Indicators 2008, p. 16; UNDP Human Development Report 2006, p. 345.

¹² Leading world cellphone manufacturers are stepping up production of mobile phones in Vietnam, and the Intel Company has recently put on stream the world’s biggest micro-chip plant there.

¹³ <http://www.gso.gov.vn/default.aspx?tabid=629&ItemID=10906>, June 14, 2011.

¹⁴ Foreign projects valued at \$194 billion, twice as much as Vietnam’s GDP, were registered between 1988 and 2009. Even though 37% of this amount only has actually been spent, its effect on the economy has been very high: in some estimates, a 1% increase in FDI a year pushes Vietnam’s GDP 0.2% up a year. The influx of foreign capital at a rate of at least 20% to 25% every year accounts for over a half of Vietnam’s economic growth. See: Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2009, pp. 115–116.

¹⁵ Even though the drain on brains and labor force continues, Vietnam has succeeded in establishing a lifeline with its nationals living abroad (a large proportion of them emigrated after 1975 and still profess their anticommunist views) and, as a result, speeding up national resurgence.

¹⁶ Vietnam has twice as much accrued FDI registered over the initial 20 years of reforms as China — \$533 per capita against \$250. Transfers from Vietnamese emigrants are somewhere between \$7 billion and \$8 billion. See: Tăng trưởng và công nghiệp hóa hiện đại hóa ở Việt Nam. *Võ Trí Thành* chủ biên, Hà Nội, 2007, pp. 232 and 236; *UNCTAD. Development and Globalization: Facts and Figures*, NY, 2008, p. 35; “Vietnam: Selected Issues,” *IMF Country Report 2006*, Washington D.C., 2006; Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 1999, p. 389; 2007, pp. 39 and 103, Hanoi, 2000 and 2008; *Renmin ribao* online. // russian.people.com.cn/31518/6341704.html.

¹⁷ The author’s estimates on the basis of: A. McCarthy, “The Social Impact of the Reform Process,” *Globalization and the Third World Socialism: Cuba and Vietnam*, Ed. by C. Brundenius and J. Weeks, New York, 2001, pp. 246–249.

¹⁸ *Vietnam News*, July 5, 2001.

¹⁹ Correlation between income per capita and life expectancy in different countries suggests that Vietnam must have personal incomes 20% to 30% above those registered by statistics or other valid reasons for the long life expectancy of its citizens. See: V.A. Melyantsev, *Developed and Developing Countries in the Age of Change* [in Russian], Moscow, 2009, pp. 205 and 213.

²⁰ Human Development Report 2007/2008, UNDP, p. 230; Tốc độ và chất lượng tăng trưởng kinh tế ở Việt Nam. *Nguyễn Văn Nam, TrầnThế Đạt* chủ biên. Hà Nội, 2006, pp. 127–128.

²¹ UNDP Human Development Report 2006, p. 325; Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2006, p. 18.

²² In 2003, 69 patents were registered in the national system in Vietnam and two in the international system (WIPO). See: Phát triển kinh tế tri thức gắn với quá trình công nghiệp hóa, hiện đại hóa ở Việt Nam. *Đặng Hữu* chủ biên, Hà Nội, 2009, pp. 198–199 and 204.

²³ High-tech products reached 11% of Vietnam’s exports, the number of Internet users grew from 19% to 35% of the population between 2007 and 2010, the mobile communication penetration index grew from 27% to 78%, computers were installed at public service institutions, and several high-tech parks were set up. See: Phát triển kinh tế tri thức... , pp. 204–211.

²⁴ UNDP Human Development Report 2006, p. 299; Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2009, p. 594.

²⁵ Tốc độ và chất lượng tăng trưởng kinh tế ở Việt Nam... , p. 130.

²⁶ Lists of the country’s 100 and 500 richest people have been compiled in Vietnam since the late 2000s. The names on the lists — major businesspeople and equity holders — have hundreds of millions, and even billions, of dollars. They and other rich people who do not parade their wealth hardly make up a fraction of a percentage point of the country’s total population. Another 200,000 private entrepreneurs (around 1%, together with their families, of the total) who are billed relatively affluent have set up their own companies. A further, and much bigger, group consists of party and state bureaucrats who have grown rich on corruption, embezzlement of public property, and sinecures they have given their close relations in business.

²⁷ See: V.A. Melyantsev, “Developed and Developing Countries in the Age of Change,” p. 64; and A.I. Belchuk, “Systemic Reforms in Russia and in Other Post-Socialist Countries,” *Russia and the Rest of the World*, Moscow, 2006, pp. 214, 319–320, *et seq.* [in Russian].

²⁸ Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam 2009, p. 86.

Oksana NOVAKOVA

Vietnam in the 21st Century: Historical Paradigm — Return to National Traditions (Search for National Identity)

A vast cradle of civilization existed in East Asia since ancient times, which included several countries marked by the strong influence of Chinese civilization. The culture of these countries has been gradually acquiring a consistent character that traces over many centuries right up to the time when it clashed with West European civilization, which produced a shock in East Asian countries. The conceptual center of this culture comprised Confucianism with its scale of ethical values based on a vast platform of traditional ideas and perceptions characteristic not only for China, but for other East Asian nations that refer to the so called Confucian realm. With the course of time, particularly in the view of tumultuous events of the 20th century, traditional and Confucian values were suffering erosion.

One of the basic provisions of the contemporary modernization theory of the developing countries of Asia and Africa lies in the fact that for these countries incorporation into the global economic development system meant a transition to a qualitatively new state, a breakthrough into modernity, which resulted in the peripheral development of the capitalist system. Having become not only objects, but also subjects of history, these countries were constantly making attempts to break away from this peripheral condition. At the same time, the modern developing countries and their societies represent a *sui generis* combination of the new with the traditional.

Since the 1970s, it was noticed that some of the Northeast Asian countries (first Japan, then those that became known as New Industrial States — Taiwan and South Korea) outpaced in their economic development rates many countries of South and Southeast Asia. Quite soon the world community realized that the Asia-Pacific Region (APR) was the world's most dy-

namically developing region, whose countries not only made a breakthrough into modernity, but also left the state of peripheral development and for the first time in history pushed the countries of the economically dominant Atlantic basin to the middle ground.

In order to explain this economic “miracle” it would be worthwhile to raise a certain question: do these countries possess a specific dynamism of development that will contribute to the peculiar revival of their original world?

Among the countries of Chinese civilization influence area solely one example contrasts with the abovementioned successfully developing countries and it is the example of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The start of its economic progress should have been counted from the date of its reunification in 1975. However, that start was not accomplished. Official statistics of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam cites the figures of the annual GDP growth rates at 2.6 percent at the time, which was one of the world's lowest.¹ But even that feeble growth was greatly reduced by demographic processes (over those years the country's population grew from 47.6 million to 56.1 million).² The *Far Eastern Economic Review* journal estimated annual per capita income in Vietnam in 1982 and 1983 at \$160.³ Comparison with North Korea, which has many analogies with Vietnam, showed results unfavorable of the latter even with the 10-year difference. By the year 1982, North Korea outstripped Vietnam by the basic indexes of economic development, such as electricity generation (28 billion kw in North Korea, 4 billion kw in Vietnam),⁴ whilst the territory of Vietnam is 2.5 times larger than that of North Korea. Even the production of high-quality coal, which existed in abundance in Vietnam and, moreover, was very easy to extract, appeared to be eight times lower than that in North Korea.

Many economic failures in Vietnam in those years can be explained not only by the terrible war-induced devastation, but also by the failed attempts of mechanical transfer of administrative methods in economic management in the North of the country to its southern part, where these methods have never been applied. The country suffered from a profound socioeconomic crisis accompanied by such negative phenomena as a slump in production, growth of unemployment and marginal population.

It had been a long time before authorities in Hanoi realized that after a glorious victory in the prolonged revolutionary war the political leaders of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam happened to be unable to carry on peaceful economic development using same old methods. Even ten years later no serious economic changes for the better occurred in Vietnam, which plunged the country into a marginal position compared with other countries

of the region. Only in 1986, in the conditions of a profound economic crisis, and under the impact of the liberal economic reforms in China and achievements of the New Industrial States, did the party and state officials proclaim a new program of reforms, the Renovation policy.

It would be absurd to explain economic difficulties of the 1970s-1980s by the historical traditions of Vietnam. Yet it should be borne in mind that the idea of building a welfare economy based on rational principles of economic management and gaining maximum profit was largely alien to the Vietnamese ruling class and statehood not only within its northern historical borders, but at the scale of the 19th century Dai Nam Empire as well.

The economy of traditional Vietnam was characterized by the all-round interference of the state on behalf of bureaucracy in economic life by means of suppression of the market relations (particularly in the 1830s-1850s), and attempts to preserve and maintain communal ownership of the land. The ideological foundation of Vietnamese statehood resided in collective consciousness shared by bulk of the population (communal peasantry) along with the predominant ideas of egalitarian distribution, as well as the Confucian teaching, that was noticed by the monarchy and the scholars (*si phu*) as perfection, affirming moral values as the highest criterion.⁵

These basic traditional parameters of Vietnam's development caused formation of subsistence economy model in the North geared towards survival, with a very low level of individual needs, primarily among peasantry. No cities as economic centers existed in the North, except for the capital of the state — an administrative and political center with the residence of the supreme ruler, which made it sacred.

Confucian concept claims that the ruler is the Son of Heaven, who possesses the Mandate of Heaven. Two resistance wars against France and the U.S.A. in the second half of the 20th century required mobilization of all forces of the nation in order to fight the enemy, which obviously did not contribute to the experience in economic management in conditions of peace.

Similar Structure of Development

The mentioned features of development were inherent not only to Vietnam, but to other countries of Confucian civilization as well. The preexistent similarities and coincidences in evolutionary processes in these countries decayed and literally detonated with the beginning of colonial in-

vasion of the West. This happened, to a lesser extent, due to the actual conquest by the colonizers, but mainly because Chinese cultural influence wrecked and these countries faced a new mighty and invincible civilization. Because in reality such factors as vitality of nation and its cultural traditions play a much greater role than economy.

This process was accompanied by another one, absolutely new for these countries, which involved abruptness of intercourse with the old traditional world and simultaneous replacement of an old ideology shared by all countries of the Northeast Asia with several new western ideologies, which in the eyes of the elite looked increasingly capable of pulling these countries out of backwardness and ensuring contemporary level of development.⁶

In China, North Korea and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam after World War II and victory of Marxist-Leninist national liberation revolutions, Western ideology appeared in the form of socialism.

End of the 1970s made it clear for researchers and political analysts of the West that East Asian countries had a number of common roots, and their essence deserves not only closer study but reevaluation in terms of national vitality and viability. In this regard a fundamental question arises: what is the source of this astonishing stability and vitality of the social organism of the states marked with strong influence of Chinese civilization, miraculous capacity for self-regulation, assimilation of alien elements and regeneration of indigenous institutions and ideas.

Naturally, all regards in East Asia are turned to Japan — the leader. During the same years, however, another process took place in Southeast Asia: countries of the Confucian realm, in their turn, began to ask themselves if there are any prominently valuable traits in their culture, that could be revived at the present time.⁷

Particular examples derived from the experiences of the reviewed countries might be interpreted as symbols of revived interest in Confucianism at the turn of the 21st century. This ancient ideological and ethical teaching of China exerted profound influence on mentality, customs and mores of the peoples of East Asia. In China, Taiwan, South Korea, Vietnam (Hanoi) and Japan well-known Shrines of literature were reconstructed exactly during these years.⁸

What enables China, Taiwan, Vietnam and other countries of Northeast Asia to use such symbols in the context of modernity? The fact that those symbols had irreversibly become a thing of the past and the world altered. This exact circumstance became the main explanation of the reason for restoration of the old spiritual values and their productive application in the countries of "Confucian world", but without the touch of conservatism

so widespread in the past. It demanded a long time for tradition to transform into something completely extinct, without a trace of viability, in order to be productively applied and help to respond to the challenges of modernity and changes in countries of the region.

Nevertheless, considering revival and use of Confucian tradition in these countries takes great discretion. This thesis should not be perceived unambiguously and linearly, as doctrinal postulates and imperatives of modern development often act as antipodes of basic premises of Confucian ideology. It is true that this ideology had withered in the vine and can not be revived in its previous form. But alongside with that, more and more models of behavior and relations, that fit into the whole system of activities in China-influenced countries, become distinguished by unusual deviations that are impossible to understand without references to the Confucian heritage. It consists of three main components: communitarianism, ritualism and functionalism.

One of the main features that distinguishes communitarian society from western society resides in the fact that Confucian mentality is deeply anti-individualistic. That means that society defines an individual and not vice versa, as in the West. Individualistic society manifests itself through the judicial notion of personal freedom, which has nothing in common with communitarianism, where no one is a stranger to another but at the same time it makes social pressure grow immensely and sometimes even unbearably.⁹ In the modern world communitarian principles are being evident through the social scenery of Northeast Asian countries — society is much more compact and cohesive than in the West, as it is tightly bound by cooperation and solidarity. Extremely high levels of cohesion of Vietnamese society during the First Resistance War might serve as one of the most impressive illustrations. Such result was achieved by combining several traditional factors: an enthusiasm to fight for the sake of one main value — independence and traditional patriotism, largely based on the old communitarian principle. It's worthwhile to mention though, that communitarian principle had nothing in common with socialism, suffice it to say that it is indifferent to politics.

In the modern world communitarianism had a chance to penetrate into the structures directly inherent in the industrial societies of Northeast Asian countries, creating new social dynamism which can be comprehended as their main development factor.¹⁰

However, echoes of old traditions should not be idealized. A result of their manifestation is a subordinate position of an individual in relation to the state power, and preponderance of the “informal” personal connections

system, which leads to tax privileges, protection trade policies and spontaneous growth of corruption and nepotism at all levels of the social pyramid.

At present, the problem of the ways for more efficient and dynamic economic development in Vietnam remains unsolved. Like in China, modernization was proclaimed to be a strategic direction. But a certain Vietnamese-style “modification” occurred, when faults of the system are being fought within its framework.

The vitality of command and administrative style of management in all economic sectors in its Vietnamese variant is explained not only by a number of contradictions bred by the attempts to correlate the socialist ideas, remaining within the borders of Marxist-Leninist heritage, with the timely requirements of economic modernization, but also by fundamental socio-cultural and psychological factors. Reforms in Vietnam do not exceed the bounds of the classical Confucian tradition of “growth without development” and overlap it in a whimsical manner. It has been brightly revealed in attraction of the 21st century reformers to gradual rates of the market principles introduction, which do not create threats to the sociopolitical stability of the authoritarian regime, in their striving to retain strict control at a macro level, and suppress private initiative, enterprising activity and individual energy. These reforms resemble those carried out in China in the last half of the 19th century during the period of the so-called “self-strengthening,” when, just like nowadays, the economic modernization was not followed by a comprehensive political reform, that is, by introduction of corresponding sociopolitical institutions and democratic freedoms. This explained such rapid defeat of the Xinhai Revolution in 1911–1913. Organizers of that revolution clearly realized that just an overthrow of the monarchy was insufficient for the establishment of a new republican system in China, therefore, it was necessary to bring a cultural revolution into people's minds, making them renounce Confucian traditions. As it has been already mentioned, these traditions proved their timelessness.

Orientation toward the “double-track economic development” remains untouched, which means a prolonged existence of two heterogenous economic systems: the outgoing planned and the emerging market systems, the cautious, dozed increase in the market share, including private ownership of the means of production and parallel reduction of the government-regulated sector of the economy. Such economic state became known as a model of “melamine”¹¹ growth, in other words, immiserizing economic growth in its present mobilizing and labor-consuming variant, which leads to “growth without development”, “elections without elections” and “governed openness”. All of this together creates a particular delusive situation and pushes

Vietnamese society to the verge of a permanent danger of financial crisis and political conflict.

In these conditions various groups of Vietnamese society resort to informal personal connections in search for security and comfort. Factors of the cultural heritage, such as discipline and orderliness of the Vietnamese people, who still value the Confucian moral principles, their diligence, respect for the elders and customs, as well as constant striving to raise their social status and competitiveness ensure certain stability of the Vietnamese way of life.

It is precisely the traditional moral and ethical values, which set an imperative of aspiration for harmony and an ability to be satisfied with a little, that surpass the “values of Protestantism” lauded by Max Weber by a number of creative and innovative parameters, that help the Vietnamese (and not only them) to alleviate the impacts of the blind market forces and lower the social costs of reforms. The Confucian tradition enriched by achievements of modern production and culture proves more viable than all known European patterns, including rapid capitalist development, as well as attempts to realize the Marxist Utopia.

But when social contradictions become exacerbated, the sections of society which have not gained much from reforms, inevitably feel nostalgic about the time of general equalization, and against this background the exclusively ruling party obtains better chances for turning to the course of a “socially equalitarian” state. This is exactly what happened during the years of the so called “left deviation” in Vietnam, when it was ruled by the former General Secretary Do Muoi (1996—2001).

It would be reasonable to cite three impressive examples to confirm the thesis about patriotic education in the present conditions on the basis of traditional Confucian values. These examples differ from one another but they can be grouped under the common title *Modest Heroes*. In February 2003, another campaign was unfolded in China — “To follow the example of Lei Feng,” a young soldier who died in the early 1960s and became a national symbol of modesty and selfless service to his people.¹²

Another example concerns North Korea. In 1999, a young girl named Chon Sen Ok became the world Marathon runner champion. An ideological propaganda campaign was launched in the country to honor her in the traditional North Korean style. She was called the *Daughter of Korea*, the authorities encouraged young people “to follow her example and become like her.”¹³

The third example has respect to Vietnam. It is about the girl-guerilla fighter Mac Thi Bui, who was taken captive by the French troops, but did

not say a word during interrogation and was shot. The French author Benoit de Treglode has written an article about new heroes and traditional reverence, where he compared the feat of that Vietnamese guerilla-fighter to the feat of the Soviet girl Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya during the war of the U.S.S.R. against Nazi Germany. He described the posthumous cult of the Vietnamese heroine in her native village, where a museum in her honor was opened in the house she had lived in. There was an altar on which her photo stood, joss sticks smoked, and traditional honors were rendered to the spirit of the heroine who became the guardian spirit of the village.¹⁴

All three examples speak of one and the same thing, namely, that only those, who fulfill the Communist party instructions unquestionably, does not fear difficulties, and is always ready to cope with them can become a hero. In these countries rallies of “modest heroes” were organized, their merits were popularized, their ideas “to live for the sake of the future” were propagated, and everything was being done within the framework of age-old traditions. In this way societies of the countries developing under the influence of Chinese culture nurtured patriotism and devotion to the family, community and village.

Even the most radical ideological concepts, from liberal-nationalist to socialist and Trotskyist, could not typologically step over the bounds of the Confucian paradigm. For example, a well-known representative of the nationalist Vietnamese elite of the colonial period, historian and politician Tran Trong Kim (1883—1953) in the conditions of an ideological vacuum and search for national identity of the 1930s turned to Confucian teaching and published a work entitled *Confucianism*¹⁵ where he emphasized the idea of perfection of this teaching as it was capable giving the answers to all vitally important questions, but it was necessary “to cleanse” it of later accretions and to perceive it in its original spirit.

The irreconcilable ideological and political movements — the Communist party of Vietnam and the Personalist party of Ngo Dinh Diem — were convinced that the general regulation of the entire social life by a strong state would be able to propel a poor country to a qualitatively new level of economic development within the shortest possible time, while “political patronage” by the “guiding party” of a people unready for democracy could bring the masses to a bright future.

Adherence to the ideas of nationalism and Confucian principles in a strange combination with the fashionable French philosophy of the time — personalism — was represented in the views of one of the key personalities in Vietnam’s history in the 20th century — Ngo Dinh Diem, who became President of the Republic of Vietnam in the South in 1955. In the theoretic-

cal foundation of his new party, which was expected to be the main pillar of a strong state, Ngo Dinh Diem included, along with western personalism, the main elements of Confucianism.

Ho Chi Minh, whose charisma continues to grow posthumously, originated from a traditional Confucian family. In early childhood he imbibed the main postulates of Confucian teaching, which were repeatedly expressed in various forms in his ideology and policy: for example, lavish gratitude to the “elder brother” — the Soviet Union — for the aid to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the first years of its existence. The core of Ho Chi Minh’s ideology, which is mightily propagated in Vietnam at present, is a sermon of high morality and denunciation of any form of individualism,¹⁶ as Confucianism, as is known, does not tolerate any displays of self-identification. When creating the Communist party in Vietnam Ho Chi Minh dreamed of making it an archetype and bearer of morality and civilization.¹⁷

The easiness with which Hanoi absorbed Soviet experience and the “Stalin’s model” of socioeconomic development can be explained by the fact that all attributes of “real socialism” coincided and fit in with the idealistic perceptions of Vietnamese tradition that originated from Confucian etatism to Taoist egalitarianism. In this regard it would be worth noting that Confucian traditions were adopted and had the greatest influence precisely in the sphere of state governance and its mechanisms (imperial competitive examination, system of official hierarchy; for example in the PRC, just as in Vietnam, which has the institution of state personnel “*ganbu*” in the 15-rank format), as well as the government vertical structure.

However, complication of social structures in Vietnamese society that follows the current reforms, the emergence of new social contradictions — all these new phenomena reveal inadequacy of the existing capabilities to coordinate conflicting interests and make the introduction of new balanced approaches to social policy more urgent.

Practice has shown that the Vietnamese leaders wish to use the resources of the previous authoritarian state to the maximum in order to accomplish new goals, trying, as much as possible, to limit the erosion of the ideological heritage. While preserving verbal and ritual loyalty to the “ideas of socialism,” the Vietnamese authorities have actually taken the path of deideologization of their policy, putting to the fore patriotic ideas of the building of rich and prosperous Vietnam and, concealing behind this slogan the nationalistic position “as the most pragmatic ideology making it possible never to renounce power”. It is not internationalism and not proletarian solidarity, but ordinary nationalism that nowadays is able to rally the people under the banner of the Communist party of Vietnam.”¹⁸

“Historical memory” about past great achievements at the level of public and individual consciousness serves as a powerful consolidating factor, as well as a form of social identification, which is of decisive importance in the conditions of globalization. However it is necessary to emphasize that large-scale and all-round modernization in conditions of a catch-up development within the framework of the global process — and this is precisely the task that Vietnamese society and the state faces in the 21st century — presupposes the preservation and increase of the significance of individual civilizational values.

It is necessary to examine another aspect characteristic for the modern development of Asian countries and Vietnam in particular. We mean the degree of perception and implementation of democratic institutions into the state bodies. After gaining independence a socially new elite has come to power in Vietnam.¹⁹ The influence of the former metropolis, France, and Western values it had brought, remained strong, and in the situation at the time, Vietnam needed the creation of its democratic image as a new state, inasmuch as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was not recognized by any country in the world. A great role in this process was played by the views of Ho Chi Minh,²⁰ its charismatic leader. A significant part in this had been played by his prolonged stay in France and the Soviet Union, and his clear understanding of the urgent tasks of the moment. All this determined the great degree of democratization of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam at the first stage of its existence: breaking down the old institutions of power — the monarchy and the official apparatus, the establishment of a new republican system with all attributes of democracy as elections, National Assembly as the supreme legislative body, the government, the post of President, new elected local bodies of power — people’s committees, legislatively conformed equality between men and women and national minorities, and finally the Constitution adopted in 1946.

The famous Declaration of Independence proclaimed by Ho Chi Minh on September 2, 1945 on Ba Dinh square in Hanoi was written under the clauses of the Declaration of Independence of the United States and the republican ideals of France, and the 1946 Constitution, also written with Ho Chi Minh’s participation, is considered by Vietnamese experts the best of the four constitutions adopted in independent Vietnam.

This process could be characterized as “flash-forward”, which provoked an inevitable setback. These processes are typical of all former colonial countries. Along with the generational change of the elite (at present, after the 1945 August revolution in Vietnam third or fourth generation of

leadership came to power, the so-called generation of “princes”, namely, children or relatives of high-ranked officials).

In the conditions of harsh challenges of the 21st century, globalization and competition, the influence of traditional civilizational values will grow. This is illustrated by the fact that in the arsenal of political rhetoric and the practice of the leadership one of the most widely used theses is “either socialism, or chaos.”

All the above mentioned makes it possible to typologically identify the modern Vietnamese society. The year 2005, marked the 60th anniversary of the DRV-SRV, an important fact for the mass consciousness, because from the time of establishment of the modern state the wheel of history has completed its full 60-year cycle. The drastic transformation of Vietnam in the 20th and 21st centuries, which incorporated elements of several social epochs and civilizations, has proved that another evolutionary cycle of Vietnamese society terminates after several decades of numerous political and economic experiments. Vietnam returns to the time-tested national political traditions, where the tandem of the “party (ruler) and the state” appears as a pivot and an embodiment of the unity of power and property, politics and economics sealed by kindred, marital and other types of relations.

According to experts, Vietnam is evolving towards the type of political system very well-known in East Asia, which has been most successfully realized in Singapore. This is confirmed by the fact that in the process of elaboration of the Renovation policy, the adviser of Vietnam’s President was Lee Kuan Yew himself.²¹ Vietnamese authorities’ interest in the Singapore model of development was not a mere coincidence. It was borrowed from Chinese political analysts and scholars who worked on this “people-centric” model, whose supporters argue against the further introduction of a market economy and liberalization of China’s sociopolitical life, as well as against acceptance of universal values, but admire the authoritarian political systems of Singapore and Hong Kong and express mistrust in the democratic political system of Taiwan, which has allegedly become a “trap for development.”²²

We face the situation which has repeated various times in the history of Vietnam (and not only in it), when the suppressed lower sections of society develop at a faster pace than the political system that controls them. This retards modernization processes and the maturation of the political forces that are interested in these processes.

Modernization is a unique phenomenon. It is inherent in the period of turning mankind into a coherent whole. Modernization encompasses almost all spheres of social life: economy, sociopolitical structures, education,

science and technology, etc. But nowhere does it proceed in such a complicated way and is so difficult for comprehension as in the sphere of culture.

A difficult operation of “convergence” is taking place, as a result of which spiritual culture “is split” into the old, local, and alien, new, universal. But in all variants of interaction of various parts of culture in its “split” one thing remains the same: sooner or later the autochthonous culture is forced to reconcile to science and all contagious and subordinate spheres of spiritual culture. The split of traditional culture is the most typical and dramatic stage of cultural modernization. A search begins, which often leads to transformations in the sphere of public consciousness, just as in partial changes in certain fields of culture. This is the initial stage of modernization which may prove prolonged and painful, if the traditional cultural heritage is rich. This struggle between the old and the new in the sphere of culture and in understanding the need for recognition of the universal character of all-human values, but not specific “Asiatic” values, is now taking place in most countries of East Asia.

It would be natural to suppose that in cultural transformation the stage of split should be followed by the completing stage. At that stage in a traditional society the process of cultural development becomes free from outside pressure and takes its normal course. The split is overcome, and the spiritual heritage of society, combined with new universal values, should turn into an equal component of universal human culture.

The process of cultural transformation in traditional societies, when entering into its final stage, therefore, presupposes a stable synthesis of the local cultural tradition with universal human culture.²³

The ongoing process of reevaluation has touched the main structure-forming values, but not individual fields, and this is the main significance of the developments in the cultural life of East Asia in the 20th century, which continue in the new century.

NOTES

¹ Objectif coopération. Le Dossier franco-vietnamien, Paris, 1985, p. 263.

² *Ibid.*, p. 262.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

⁵ As an example we cite one of the edicts of Emperor Minh Mang (1820—1840). The state rejoices, each happiness is heaped with our favors. The book *Lingjing* says: ... perform good deeds to express your great duty to the Emperor....

At the beginning of the year We always issue an edict which follows Heavenly command. Happiness! We thank Heaven for help, rivers and mountains also help miraculously, all officials, big and small, show Us great respect, four inner and outer oceans are full of wealth and calm ["The True Record of the Great South"], Vol. 8, p. 152.

⁶ Vandermeerch L., *Le nouveau Monde sinisé*, Paris, 1986, p. 59.

⁷ For example, in the PRC supporters of the so-called Sino-centric trend consider it important for the modernization that the entire population of the PRC should oppose the idea that "China's future is the present of western countries." They see their task in perceiving the mode of survival and development of the Chinese nation, throw a challenge to the mental domination of the western hegemonic discourse and assert the confidence of China's citizens in the full value of their culture and civilization. A. Karneyev, "'Kitaiskaya model' i spory po povodu yeyo sushchnosti v KNR [Chinese Model and Arguments on Its Essence in the PRC]," Vladivostok, 2012: *ATES i noviyе vozmozhnosti Rossiyi* [APEC and New Possibilities for Russia], Moscow, IAAS, M.V. Lomonosov State University in Moscow, 2011, p. 264.

⁸ Vandermeerch L., *Le nouveau Monde sinisé*, Paris, 1986, p. 160.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

¹¹ Korsun V., "Pravyashchaya elita sovremennogo Kitaya: tendentsiyi modernizatsiyi i arkhazitsiyi [The Ruling Elite of Modern China: Trends of Modernization and Archaization]," *Elity stran Vostoka* [Elites of Countries of the East], Moscow, IAAS, M.V. Lomonosov State University in Moscow, 2011, p. 113.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

¹³ Denisov V., "Politicheskaya sistema i politicheskaya elita KNDR: genesis, evolyutsiya, problemy [The Political System and Political Elite of the DPRK: Genesis, Evolution, Problems]," *Elity stran Vostoka* [Elites of Countries of the East], Moscow, IAAS, M.V. Lomonosov State University in Moscow, 2011, p. 134.

¹⁴ Benoît de Tréglodé, "Noviye geroyi, traditsionnoye pochitaniye. Ocherk o kul'te Mac Thi Bui [New Heroes, Traditional Reverence. An Essay about the Cult of Mak Thi Bui]," *Politicheskaya kul'tura i delovaya etika stran Vostoka* [Political Culture and Business Ethics of Countries of the East], Moscow, IAAS, M.V. Lomonosov State University in Moscow, 2006, pp. 167–175.

¹⁵ Tran Trong Kim, "Nho giaó", Hà Nội, 1930.

¹⁶ Lokshin G., "Nekotoriyе osobennosti ideyno-politicheskoy zhizni Vietnama do i posle XI syezda KPВ [Certain Specific Features of Ideological and Political Life in Vietnam before and after the CPV 11th National Congress]," *Vietnamskiye issledovaniya* [Vietnamese Studies], # 1, Moscow, the RAS IFES, 2011, p. 44.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹⁹ In this regard Vietnam is a unique example of an Oriental state: the traditional Confucian elite was replaced with a pro-French elite during the colonial period. After 1945, it

was replaced with a communist elite. It is significant that this transformation was missing the religious element.

²⁰ Characterizing Ho Chi Minh's views as democratic and Confucian at the same time does not bring about a contradiction. For that generation of the elite and partly for contemporary Vietnamese authorities a certain symbiosis of the Vietnamese nationalism and Westernism was typical, which was shown in the examples above.

²¹ Lokshin G., *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

²² Karneyev A., *Op. cit.*, p. 265.

²³ *Istoriya Vostoka* [History of the Orient], Vol. 4, Book 2, Moscow, 1995, pp. 5–11.

Evgeniya MARCHENKO

The Characteristic Features of the Political Culture of Modern Vietnam

Political culture is one of the major factors of the social and political life of every country; it is the experience accumulated by many generations of a people in its intercourse with the government, which is built up over centuries and which cannot be substantially modified in a few years' time. It is the traditions of perceiving the government, communicating with the government and reproducing the government, as well as those of self-identification of the people, legitimation of the government and mobilization of the population that form the basis of political culture.

Today, the modernization of the Vietnamese state and society and their integration into the world community, supplemented ever more frequently and persistently in the last few years with a condition providing for "obligatory preservation of the cultural identity and excellent traditions of the Vietnamese people," have been declared to be the mainstream of their development.^{1,2}

The author makes an effort to identify the set of traditions originally inherent in Vietnamese political culture and characteristic features of Vietnamese political culture, both region-wide and country-specific, which still play a part in the political process and in the everyday life of the country's citizens.

The Vietnamese are a relatively homogeneous ethnol. An overwhelming majority of their traditions, which have been developing since the period of their compact settlement in the delta of the Red River, are of nationwide character: there are regional differences in the language, mentality, cuisine and predominant confessions, yet it would be incorrect to speak of the existence of a South Vietnamese subethnos with its own original traditions.

Geographically and historically, Vietnam is part of Southeast Asia, and culturally it gravitates towards the Chinese realm and not the area where Indian cultural influence and Theravada Buddhism are widespread.

An analysis of the Vietnam's political culture elements calls for knowledge in general of the neighboring countries and peoples' political cultures and their main common features for singling out both specific manifestations of the common features and particular, purely Vietnamese phenomena.

Characteristic of all the East Asian nations are features of **patrimonial statehood**, where the government should take fatherly care of the people's well-being. There could be no civil society and no equal dialogue with the government here. In the East, the rights of an individual existed and were protected only with respect to another individual, whereas the rights of an individual with respect to the government were nonexistent.³ This feature is characteristic not only of the Confucian realm (China, Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam) but also of the Buddhist (Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar), Hindu (originally Indonesia and Malaysia) and other areas (the Philippines, Brunei, etc.). Hence responsive-repressive rather than partner government-society relations in Vietnam.⁴

A common feature of their mentality is the predominance of **collectivist consciousness** and the amorality of individualism concept. Nowadays collectivism, which was in the past the only way of survival, has become a prerequisite for successful economic growth in certain countries. In Vietnam, collectivism manifests itself quite clearly.

Notions of the **naturalness of the hierarchical structure of society** are characteristic of all non-Western countries — particularly so, of the countries of Hindu and Confucian cultures. A hierarchy is built both in the domestic and foreign policies sphere, as well as in the mind of every individual member of society.

Also traditional of the region in question is the nonacceptance of opposition actions, open conflict and rivalry and the viewing of opposition as a departure from the norm and as a danger to society. Accordingly, the suppression of the opposition by the authorities meets with understanding and support among the masses of Vietnamese society, which is at one with the government in the striving to **preserve the harmony and stability** of that society.

Adherence to religious (or **moral and ethical**) norms of conduct and judgment in the sociopolitical sphere is a feature common to all non-Western societies, and it manifests itself clearly in Southeast Asia. In the countries of the region, the education of people to become obedient and patriotic

members of society is a task both of the educational system and of the mass media and public organizations, and even of the family. Quite a few trials are show trials, criticism is suppressed, and pluralism is not encouraged. All of this is in one way or another related to adherence to a common moral and ethical (and not legal) norm.

The influence of multiethnicity and polyconfessionalism on the political process is less characteristic of Vietnam than it is of the other countries in the region. In Vietnam, the titular nation constitutes 86% of its population, while other ethnic groups do not exceed 2% of the population each and their interests are more or less taken into consideration by the authorities, which prevents dissatisfaction from accumulating and turning into a threat. Confessional differences are represented, in the first place, by six million Roman Catholics (mainly in the south of Vietnam).

Westernization is undoubtedly a factor common to all countries in the region and all non-Western countries in general exerting a powerful influence on culture, including political culture. Vietnam has, since the period of French domination to this day, also been subjected to the influence of Westernization.

On the whole, Vietnam is organically inscribed in its region in terms of the main common features of political culture, which is determined by geographic proximity, the general course of historical development, cultural interaction, and similar methods of managing the economy — by all these factors in totality.

Some of the political culture features common to the countries of Southeast and East Asia have found individual expression in Vietnamese political culture.

Undoubtedly, Vietnamese culture has experienced an enormous influence of Chinese culture or, more precisely, of the Chinese culture of the first millennium A.D. Today, relations within the framework of social hierarchy are still largely determined by **Confucian ethics**. It was from China that Mahayana Buddhism, Confucius' teaching, and many institutions of state administration and government organization, and social norms and customs came to Vietnam. The application of Confucian principles turned out to be exceptionally effective in management, and so they were adopted in Vietnam at a rather early stage thanks to practicality characteristic of the Vietnamese. In Vietnam, everything adopted was modified and adapted to the local conditions; it has to be admitted, however, that "Chinese traces" are to be seen everywhere in Vietnamese culture.

Of late, nationalism and the striving for self-affirmation in the face of China have been growing particularly strong in Vietnam. Vietnamese schol-

ars and political writers, while not denying the essential significance for Vietnamese culture of Confucian ethics adopted from China, are trying to emphasize a number of its elements that have not been assimilated or have been rejected by Vietnamese culture or to cast them in a negative light and contrast them with Vietnamese "deep-seated layers" — for example, loyalty to the country, the homeland, in contrast to Confucian personal loyalty to the ruler and the lord and the egalitarianism of the community in contrast to the stratification of feudal China.

Such a traditional institution as **monarchy** should also be mentioned. Although the institution of monarchy in Vietnam ceased to exist more than half a century ago, its influence still remains alive in the historical memory of the Vietnamese people, since it was a central element of the political system of pre-colonial and colonial Vietnam and one of the key elements of its political culture. The niche occupied by the institution of monarchy in the political consciousness of the people is so great that, in the event of desacralization and liquidation of the institution, another institution inevitably takes over that niche. The abolition of monarchy in Vietnam in 1945 was accompanied by a transfer of symbolic power to the Vietminh, which was highly effective in terms of legitimation of the new elite. Later on, the Vietminh evolved into the Vietnamese Fatherland Front with the Party, which inherited remnants of the sacral image of monarchical power and, above all, performed the function of spiritual unification of the nation, as its main force.

Vietnamese indigenous traditions can be conventionally combined into **three groups**: traditions of promoting patriotism and upholding national identity, the observance of the ancestor cult, and an exceptional position of the family in the national culture. This set of traditions is the basis for such a phenomenon as the Vietnamese people's common patriotism, love of the homeland and feeling of everyone's interconnectedness, which, in turn, forms the cultural basis as one of the foundations of Vietnam's independence which can be conventionally combined into four groups: military (military potential of the state), geopolitical (the world powers' and neighboring countries' stands on this problem), cultural, and ideological (which, in turn, relies on, but is not limited to, the cultural foundation).

At crucial moments, society reverts to fundamental spiritual values — above all, national culture and traditional religious and ethical values. For most people, cultural **self-identity** is the most important thing. It shapes patterns of cohesion, disintegration and conflict and, as Samuel P. Huntington believes, "interest politics presupposes identity."⁵ In different societies and in different periods, mechanisms of self-identity may be different, based on

religion (Protestants in Europe in the Modern Age), on a common goal or — later on — a “dream” (Americans), or on the recognition of a single sovereign (empire). However, in modern Asian societies, and, in particular, postcolonial, it is traditions of the past and fundamental cultural values that always serve as the basis for self-identity.⁶

The contemporary Vietnamese state has a strong historical inertia: it has absorbed many stereotypes and features of the past and, according to some Western scholars, “in Vietnam, the present is the past.”⁷ Traditions of the distant and recent past are skillfully used by the Vietnamese leadership thanks to the remarkable adaptability inherent in all Vietnamese. Successful adaptation and integration of traditions of the past, sometimes even not directly related to politics, into the everyday life of Vietnamese society is a process that is in part natural and spontaneous yet largely controlled and directed.

It is undoubtedly **legitimacy** — correspondence of political power to the basic values and aspirations of the majority of society — which is the main condition of the viability of the political elite, the bearer of political power, at a given stage of the political process. Regardless of what has to be legitimated, tradition is one of the main tools of legitimation. In Vietnam, there has developed a tradition related to the Communist party and the socialist regime. Prominent Western scholar Carlyle A. Thayer,⁸ an expert on Vietnam and Southeast Asia, believes that since 1986, the legitimacy of Vietnam’s one-party socialist state has rested on multiple sources such as the Hồ Chí Minh’s charismatic leadership and legacy, success in defending Vietnam from powerful aggressive invasions, and the ruling regime’s successes in achieving effective poverty reduction and high economic growth rates. Increasingly Vietnam’s one-party state has attempted to base its legitimacy on “the rule of law” and constitutionalism. Yet, while law is one thing, old methods are quite another: they still appear to be more tried and true. New concepts are developed and implemented, yet they do not replace old values and traditions but rather supplement them, using their centuries-old rootedness in Vietnamese society.

In the opinion of Russian scholar Galina Murasheva, in the pre-colonial period it was the succession of power, achievements in strengthening statehood, preservation of the country’s territorial integrity, victories over foreign enemies achieved single-handedly, and self-reliance in domestic and foreign affairs that were the main proof of government legitimacy in Vietnam.⁹ Evidently, these traditions of legitimacy remain relevant in our day.

An analysis of the Vietnamese scholarly approach to legitimacy appears to be difficult because of the absence of the very concept of legitimacy in the Vietnamese language. In translation the word “legitimacy” is rendered as “legality,” which is not an equivalent of legitimacy. Vietnamese political science, which, strictly speaking, cannot yet be regarded as fully developed, since in Vietnam there are no political scientists proper, all of them coming from adjacent scientific spheres such as jurisprudence, cultural studies, history, and military science, has not yet coined its own term. However, the very problem of government legitimacy, the “right” of one elite or another to hold power and rule the people, is touched upon in Vietnamese scientific literature and political journalism. It is conventionally designated as “substantiation of power,” “the root cause enabling the ruler to enjoy people’s confidence,” which, on the whole, corresponds to the concept of legitimacy. In the opinion of Vietnamese scholars, the observance of the principle “take care of the people: the people are the root of everything” is the key one for maintaining government legitimacy and stability.¹⁰ Reliance on the people is a crucial prerequisite for maintaining power and the protection of national interests is an essential task for the ruling class. A government failing to cope with that task loses authority and the right to rule the people.

The quotation from the legacy of Nguyen Trai, “The people are like water and the ruler a boat. Water can support a boat or overturn it,” and “Only when the boat overturns will you learn that people are like water,” is quite well known.¹¹ It is quite significant that the words “water” and “country” are homonyms in the Vietnamese language.

Speaking of the **model of political participation**, the Vietnamese in the aggregate may seem at first sight to be apolitical — that is, apathetic towards politics. This is, however, a superficial evaluation. Western-style politics based on dispute and conflict, rivalry and partnership, and a dynamic change of roles in relations between the state and society is alien to most Vietnamese. It is a different matter if one takes the stand of cultural relativism and looks at the political behavior of the Vietnamese through their own eyes: “being a resident of a country called the country of the South, that is, lying to the south of a mighty power that is always ready to invade and conquer, how can one remain outside politics and above politics?”¹² For the Vietnamese, defense has become politics and the interests of the state political interests. A people capable of quickly mobilizing itself to tackle nationwide problems and of sacrificing personal interests, which have not yet become deeply rooted in everyday life, a people not following the details of

day-to-day politics and not yet aware of fundamental civil rights — such a people is highly convenient for the government.

In order to preserve such properties of the people's political behavior, the government has to work incessantly to foster citizens' political education, overcoming the growing influence of the culture of consumerism and pursuit of wealth and the Western propaganda of human rights priority. Judging by the present-day situation, this peaceful struggle is going on with varying success, but the ideals of "common above individual interests" and "patriotic thinking" no longer strike a lively chord with the new generation of people born in the 1990s.

In liberal political science today there is a widespread approach that only democracy is the form of government necessary and sufficient for effective management and development, and all societies, as they develop, should sooner or later progress towards democracy. With respect to Vietnam, Western political scientists are faced with a conflict — a discrepancy between the shortage of democratic institutions and mechanisms and positive shifts in development and management. Australian scholar Benedict J. Kerkvliet, having analyzed the development of two countries, Vietnam and the Philippines, arrives at a bold conclusion that democratic institutions may not be necessary for improving people's well-being, ensuring the accountability of government bodies and giving citizens influence on national-scale decision-making.¹³ What is needed is another thing — **relations between the state and society**, between the authorities and citizens. In Vietnam, the notions "society" and "citizens" are often equated with the notion "people." At least, it is precisely this word which is used in the mass media, in policy papers and in the speech of public officials. When the relations between the authorities and the population are sufficiently positive and based on dialogue, development and effective management will be achieved even if democracy in the customary sense of the term is lacking or totally absent. This is what a "responsive-repressive" state is.¹⁴ Small, unorganized, often unintentional political actions (day-to-day politics) gradually and jointly contribute to a change in the state's political course. This definition is also valid for religious practices and for national traditions.

In the opinion of Vladimir Mazyrin, the distinguishing feature of the Vietnamese political system is the population's traditional obedience and confidence in the ruling elite, above all the Communist party, and the latter's capability of mimicry and evolution.¹⁵ He points out the distinctness of Vietnamese political culture determined by certain priorities, which do not include the people's active participation in the process of formation of elites or free expression of its will: Western-type democracy is not yet in de-

mand, it will have to wait for basic internal conditions such as legal literacy, democratic consciousness and experience and an increase in independent public activity to mature.¹⁶ Substantial limitations of democratic institutions in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam should be regarded not as an anomaly or nonconformity to "advanced" standards but as a common feature of countries in which the relations between the state and society are based on paternalism.

To understand the contemporary political culture of Vietnam, it is helpful to take a look at its manifestations before the August Revolution, in the period which is conventionally called "feudal" in Vietnam. In his book *Le Nationalisme Vietnamien*, Ngo Huu Thoi outlines the pattern of traditional Vietnam's political world order — a triad of Heaven (Trời), Emperor (Vua) and People (Dân). "The national concept was, therefore, nothing else but a politico religious concept, and all corresponding social activity was focused on loyalty to the supreme ruler, the link between Heaven and the people."¹⁷

The pattern of government-people relations is important to us in that, with certain reservations, it may be assumed that it has remained in the political consciousness of the Vietnamese and is implicitly maintained by the ruling circles in a modified form: Party (Đảng) — Government/State (Nhà nước) — People (Dân). In any society, the more so in an East Asian society, it is more convenient and safe to take an already existing tradition, modify it and subtly use it as the basis for the modern system than to introduce an absolutely new practice and turn it into a tradition.

The susceptibility of the Vietnamese to slogans and their readiness to participate in nationwide drives are explained by another specific feature of Vietnamese political culture — the **mythological mode of consciousness**. For example, in the case of Vietnam the idea of "building the country" has a perfectly definite expression: the establishment of the Viet state is ascribed to the half-legendary Hung Vương dynasty; mythical characters and events smoothly and seamlessly flow into a historically authentic chronicle. In the political consciousness of the Vietnamese, including the scientific elite, specialists in history, political scientists, party officials and statesmen, there is no conflict between mythologized and objective reality, and they are not set the task of proving or disproving their actual existence. Not only are the leaders quite happy with established perceptions, society itself does not see the need for a strictly scientific approach which threatens to introduce uncertainty and shatter the ethno-cultural foundations.

One can speak with confidence about successful application of state mythology whose effectiveness is comprised of a long tradition of continuity and consistent support from political elites. The causes of its effectiveness

are also deeply rooted in the socio psychological features of the Vietnamese: they have a habit of inuring themselves to self-delusion (to a certain extent) for the sake of preserving social, family and personal harmony, and for other purposes. A vivid example of this is the already completed process of sacralization of Ho Chi Minh and his transformation into a national hero spirit — in the phrase of Oksana Novakova, “raising to the status of patron spirit of the nation.”¹⁸

The National Independence Priority

In Vietnam itself, it was quite recently that scholars began to analyze Vietnamese political culture from a scientific perspective, and the following viewpoint has become generally accepted: in view of the specific features of the country’s geographical position and historical development, national defense has always been the quintessence of policy in Vietnam and, therefore, Vietnam’s political culture has been constantly oriented toward opposing an invasion by foreign forces.¹⁹ The ideologeme “to build the country, to defend the country” emerged in early times and has retained its significance to this day: it is one of the key formulas in the speech of state leaders at all levels understood by and familiar to the people.

In the opinion of Vladimir Mazyrin, “the factor of cohesion and consolidation in the face of an external threat determined the early emergence of state in Vietnam and promoted the shaping in the local population of notions of their country as a single family, a defense consciousness and a striving to oppose foreign influence and, the more so, rough pressure and aggression.”²⁰ “Defense consciousness” is both the priority of ensuring security and independence over the needs of development of the economy, society, etc., and a reverent attitude towards territorial integrity (in contrast, for example, to Cambodia in the past, where territory was of secondary significance to the population and clear delimitation of state borders was not considered necessary), and a high level of patriotism, including at the mundane level, among all the strata of Vietnamese society — unlike, for example, modern Russian society. Ho Chi Minh formulated the ideological basis of this trait of the national character in his best-known phrase: “Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom.”

The country’s defense capability is strengthened not only by purchasing armaments and modernizing the Vietnamese People’s Army (VNA), but also by conducting propaganda and agitation and affirming patriotic val-

ues.²¹ The essential fact is the country’s proximity to China: in the perception of the Vietnamese, “France has been our enemy for a hundred years, America for only ten years, and our northern neighbor is our thousand-year enemy.” The external threat has not gone away: it has been removed from the agenda for a while. Nationalist sentiments in support of sovereignty and calls for strengthening the country’s defense capability have grown particularly strong in the past few years, when its northern neighbor has often indulged in acts of provocation, asserting its right not just to dominate but to possess the South China Sea.

Over the long history of their country’s subjugation by and opposition to its northern neighbor, the Vietnamese have successfully overcome the threat of their ethnic and cultural assimilation. Australian scholar David G. Marr has noted that the Vietnamese are culturally similar to the Chinese and were historically subject to their cultural influence, yet they retained their own language and resisted Chinese political domination.²² Considering the phenomenal ability of Chinese classical culture for gradual yet complete assimilation of subjugated peoples, the **preservation of Vietnamese distinctiveness** and language (while using the Chinese writing system) is quite significant. Vietnamese scholar Vu Ngoc Phan explains the indigenously Vietnamese method of resisting assimilation precisely as a method of “becoming initiated into a culture for the sake of preserving independence,” and this method is the wisest of all that can be imagined.”²³

According to another Vietnamese scholar, Nguyen The Cuong, “for a small country and a small people constantly forced to repulse foreign aggression or expansion of a more developed culture aiming for assimilation, the only way of preserving the nation was to preserve its distinctiveness and strengthen its national culture.”²⁴ He explains the phenomenon of preservation of Vietnamese distinctiveness in the situation of a constantly looming threat of assimilation by the integrity of the Vietnamese **rural community**: “preservation of the organization of a self-governed and rather closed rural community where links with relatives and neighbors ensured very strong cohesion of the community.”²⁵ This viewpoint has become generally accepted in Vietnamese political and historical sciences: for example, a textbook on the political culture of Vietnam says that “love of one’s country, love of one’s motherland is, above all, *love of one’s community*.”²⁶

In the opinion of Russian scholar Galina Murasheva, “it was the Vietnamese rural community, which enjoyed relative political and cultural autonomy, that was the institution largely blocking the penetration of an alien culture into the most profound strata of the people.” It was precisely community ties shaped over centuries that determined the unity characteristic of

Vietnamese society, people's close contacts with each other and with the government, including the supreme government, and the feeling of patriotism as a trait of the national character.²⁷

Vietnamese scholar Dinh Ngoc Vuong, analyzing the problem of the legal consciousness of rural residents, cites the Vietnamese saying, "King's law is inferior to village customs," which accurately conveys the ideology of rural community members and their notions of the content, role and scope of application of state laws, which are regarded as secondary, subordinate to the codes of rural life. In addition, local government bodies were set up in linkage to and with reliance on the previously existing structure of self-government. The state made concessions, yet achieved results. While dealing with a collective of village residents, it did not concern itself with every single person or every single family. A community was entrusted with certain duties and obligations, which were distributed inside it by the community itself.²⁸

It would be expedient to view national defense in the context of Vietnamese traditional state ideology as a kind of cult whose elements are deified heroes of Vietnamese resistance against foreign invasions. Just as the cult of ancestors, a **cult of Motherland defenders** is clearly seen at the national level. The elements and epitomes of this cult include the Hung Vuong dynasty, the country's founders, Phu Dong or Giong spirit (thần Gióng), the Trung sisters (Hai bà Trưng), Trieu Trinh Nuong (bà Triệu), Đinh Tiên Hoàng or Đinh Bộ Lĩnh, Trần Quốc Tuấn (known by the posthumous name of Trần Hưng Đạo), Nguyễn Trãi, Lê Lợi, Nguyễn Huệ also known as Emperor Quang Trung, and Hồ Chí Minh. The spirit of Kim Qui (Golden Turtle), appearing at least twice as a key figure in epics about national defense, should also be mentioned here. Nearly all the defender spirits have actual prototypes mentioned in several chronicles. Some of them lived literally yesterday, in the mid-20th century — in particular, Hồ Chí Minh (1890—1969) or, on a local level, guerrilla fighter heroine Mac Thi Bui (1927—1955).²⁹

Vietnamese political science links national defense to the people's self-identification: "The national self-consciousness of the Vietnamese manifested itself in myths and historical events such as the uprising of the Trung sisters, the achievements of Ly Thuong Kiet, the victories won by Emperor Quang Trung, etc."³⁰ It is precisely respect for the historical past in general and its bearers (heroes, prominent statesmen, military leaders and scholars) that underlies the feeling of national pride and dignity³¹ that is so often lacking in quite a few countries. Vietnam is not one of them.

The Vietnamese 2005 law "On National Defense" defines national defense as "the cause of defending the country with the integrated strength of

the entire nation, of which the military strength is typical and the people's armed forces act as the core." The entire-people defense, the law goes on to say, means the country's defense strength built on the foundation of human resources, material resources and spirit of all the people in a comprehensive, independent, sovereign and self-reliant manner.³²

This legal document reflects the national character and specific feature of Vietnamese political culture — namely, the collective nature of the country's defense, the entire people's participation in the country's defense. The same law establishes the compulsory character of "defense education" (defense and not military education) as one of the main curriculum subjects at educational institutions, beginning with the third grade of secondary school — that is, at the age of approximately fifteen. Subsequently this subject is taught as part of the main syllabus at higher education institutions.

The **mechanism of "great unity of the entire people"** (đại đoàn kết toàn dân tộc) is regarded as the main mechanism of ensuring "the entire people's participation in the country's defense." The feeling of "great unity of the entire people" is inculcated in the Vietnamese from school days in the process of political socialization, leaving no legal field for pluralism and competition of political movements and parties. Criticism of the policy being pursued is allowed only if it does not affect the foundations of the state ideology and the basis of the legitimacy of the ruling Communist party of Vietnam. It is precisely the vital need to preserve the "great unity of the entire people" that explains the resolute rejection of criticism and any calls whatsoever for democratization of the political system, i.e., for creating competition to the ruling party, coming **from outside**. In the opinion of the ideologists of modern Vietnam, competition means dissension, which is directly opposite to the unity of the entire people. Their reasoning is simple and effective: dissension and rivalry will inflict damage on the unity of the people and will thus decisively affect the country's defense capability up to a threat of the loss of its independence. The latter is close and comprehensible to every Vietnamese personally and, particularly so, to the collective mind of the people. While this chain of associations works, the ruling party holds an indisputable trump card over the proponents of introducing a multiparty system. The vulnerability of the chain is that new generations grow in the course of time, and an ever greater number of Vietnamese have not experienced the threat of losing independence and a dangerous weakening of the state and, unlike their fathers and grandfathers, do not realize the seriousness of the problems. It may be assumed that, where the younger generation is concerned, an appeal to the basic value of the country's sovereignty has a somewhat weaker effect on people's actions and sentiments.

The Party and the government, being aware of the problem, relentlessly take care of keeping up the “defense frame of mind” and fostering a patriotic spirit among the young people so as to slow down, at least partially, the rise of such trends that are negative in terms of the country’s defense capability. The collectivist mentality based on egalitarian psychology and mutual support counters the widening gap between the rich and the poor and growing social polarization. For the Vietnamese state, maintaining social equilibrium, if not relative social equality, has always been and remains an objective no less important than development. That is why community traditions and mechanisms are used in the public administration of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.³³ The government aims for an egalitarian distribution of wealth and development of backward regions even to the detriment of economic expediency; a collective method of solving all issues, a cautious, level-headed and, even, procrastinatory approach to formulating a standpoint, consideration of the opinion of the public, concern for “preservation of face” are all manifestations of community traditions in the country’s public administration.

The impact of the system of worldview and moral, and ethical values, the code of social hierarchy and philosophical notions falling under the term “**Confucianism**” on Vietnamese culture in general and political culture in particular is immense. The contribution of Confucius’ teaching to the formation of the ancient and modern political culture of Vietnam is significant but not as great as, for example, its contribution to the political culture of China itself, as well as Korea and Singapore.

The main codes of state development in Vietnam are Confucian ones, since the ideology of Confucianism is aimed at forming a strong and independent centralized state.³⁴ Confucianism introduced into Vietnamese political culture the principles of strict hierarchy, the need to preserve the government’s face and reliance on an educated elite managing the state on the basis of “supreme knowledge,” including that obtained from abroad (Confucianism itself, then Marxism-Leninism, and now economic sciences).³⁵ In addition, respect for knowledge and learning should be mentioned: the priority of education, even with limited material resources, has a positive effect on the quality of Vietnamese personnel, including managerial staff. The foreign policy strategy of Vietnam has at all times, on the whole, been based on Confucian teaching.

However, being a structure-forming factor in the Vietnamese political *system*, Confucianism appears to be a major but not primary factor in Vietnamese political *culture*, and also only one of the key layers of Vietnamese national identity.

The idea of absolute obedience of a junior to a senior manifests itself more in family rather than social and political relations. For example, as a study conducted by a group of U.S. specialists³⁶ has shown, while the structure of the supreme party and state bodies in Vietnam and China is similar, their powers are different: the CC CPC Political Bureau has the plenitude of power in solving key issues of state policy, appointing top officials and conducting reforms, whereas the Central Committee only provides collective support to the supreme body which the Political Bureau is in relation to; the CC CPV Political Bureau determines the strategic line and each of its members undoubtedly has greater political influence than a Central Committee member, yet solving the key issues of state management and top-level personnel policy is not the prerogative of the Vietnamese Political Bureau. To address major issues, a plenary session of the Central Committee is mandatorily convened; it may not necessarily approve the course of action proposed by the Political Bureau and may even veto its decision.

Even though the influence of Confucianism is structure-forming for Vietnamese political culture, the Confucian principle of strict obedience gives way to the principle of collective participation in discussion and decision-making. The principle of collectivity in solving issues is nothing else than a manifestation of community traditions in state management. Community thinking is the nucleus of Vietnamese identity, as was shown in the corresponding section above. The time-honored Vietnamese formula “King’s law is inferior to village customs” would be impossible in a strictly Confucian society.

Community mechanisms undoubtedly slow down decision-making. However, even U.S. scholars admit that tardiness in decision-making turns out to be forethought, caution — a balanced approach, and ambiguity — flexibility. While not being optimal, this approach remains typically Vietnamese.

The main structure-forming factor in the world outlook of the Vietnamese is the **cult of ancestors**. Ancestor worship is not a solely Vietnamese institution, but only Vietnam has a well-structured nationwide ancestor cult enjoying state support. Most likely, the tradition of worshipping ancestors has largely determined such an essential phenomenon in Vietnam’s political culture as continuity in the sphere of statehood.³⁷

A connection with the past through the cult of ancestors, the continuity of generations, broad family ties are all characteristic features of the Vietnamese national genotype at the level of state policy. A Vietnamese has always felt himself to be a citizen of his country in no lesser degree than he felt himself to be a member of his family.³⁸ It is the institution of family and not

the community or the individual that acts as the basic social institution in Vietnam. In addition, it is customary in Vietnam to compare the nation with a united family.

Conclusion

The political culture of Vietnam is inscribed in the general field of the various political cultures of the Southeast and East Asia countries and combines the features of the Confucian and Buddhist realm but also stands out for its own specific features related to its original tradition of selective adoption, reworking and adaptation of the most effective elements of other peoples' cultures.

The formation of the social, economic and political structure of Vietnamese society was decisively influenced by the Chinese culture of the first millennium A.D. Quite a few traditions such as a strong state power extending patronage to its subjects, the need to preserve the government's face, and the priority of education, in particular, when taking offices in the state apparatus have retained their paramount importance to this day.

What forms the original content of the political culture of the Vietnamese is community cohesion and community self-sufficiency and, as a consequence, the participation of the people (and not an individual) in the political process and a relatively high degree of accountability of the government to the people as compared with other Oriental societies. The other original and inherent pivot of Vietnamese political culture is patriotism, an unswerving readiness to resist foreign invaders and determination to defend the independence of the Motherland at any price. These two phenomena are intertwined with each other: offering a steady resistance to invasions and attempts of assimilation requires cohesion, and community self-sufficiency and traditions have only survived thanks to consistent defense of cultural identity and national independence.

The traditions of the political culture of the Vietnamese have been preserved exceptionally well to this day and have every chance to be preserved in the near future. The main cause of this is the high stability of the bearer of traditions — the Vietnamese ethnos.

The spirit of patriotism and the priority of defending the Motherland permeate society from top to bottom and are reinforced by state mythology and state propaganda. The cult of the patron spirits of the nation, which is celebrated today all over the country, also plays an exceedingly important

role. The idea of continuity of the Vietnamese history of resisting an external threat is constantly reproduced at government institutions; history is represented as a continuous process going on from the creation of the Vietnamese nation. The ability to defend the country from invaders and ensure the well-being of the people has always been and remains the yardstick of legitimacy of the government in Vietnam. The elite failing to cope with these tasks loses legitimacy in the eyes of the people and may lose power.

The ancestor cult has an ethnos-forming significance for the Vietnamese; it is the nucleus of their national identity. The specific feature of the ancestor cult institution in Vietnam is a nationwide ancestor cult.

At the present stage, against the background of integration into the world economy, an expansion of the information field and a rapidly growing level of openness, quite a few values of “Marxism-Leninism and the ideas of Ho Chi Minh” are being devalued (least of all, the ideas of Hồ Chí Minh, which from their inception have been close to the Vietnamese realities, comprehensible to the Vietnamese people and enjoying active support from the authorities), and their niche has to be filled with others in order to avoid such a sad plight as a vacuum of values, which rightly gives rise to apprehension in Vietnam. Curiously enough, it is even older yet still popular traditional values that are best suited for replacing communist values, which is facilitated by the short duration and the intensity of breaking up with them in the period of active development of socialism.

National traditional values serve as a link between the past and the present and help build a path into the future for the Vietnamese nation. In the period of changes all states, including Vietnam, are faced with challenges, crises and thorny issues. Successful national self-identification has so far saved Vietnam from the threat of an identity crisis. The multilayered nature of Vietnamese political culture makes it possible to look for and find purely Vietnamese answers to Vietnamese or even global challenges in the very depths of that culture. The tradition of general cohesion and general involvement provides the basis for mobilization potential and both for repulsing invasions and destructive influence from outside and for solving other nationwide problems.

NOTES

^{1,2} Báo cáo chính trị của Ban chấp hành Trung ương Đảng khoá IX tại Đại hội Đại biểu toàn quốc lần thứ X của Đảng, 2006 (Political Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam at the 10th National Party Congress, 2006).

Chiến lược phát triển văn hóa đến năm 2020 (Strategy for the Development of Culture until 2020, adopted by a resolution of the Prime Minister of the Government of May 6, 2009).

³ A.D. Voskresensky (ed.), *Politicheskkiye sistemy i politicheskkiye kul'tury Vostoka* [Political Systems and Political Cultures of the East], Moscow, 2007, p. 29.

⁴ A term coined by Harold Crouch; it was for the first time used with respect to Vietnam by Benedict Kerkvliet: Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, "Governance, Development and the Responsive-Repressive State in Vietnam," In: *Forum for Development Studies*, Vol. 37, # 1, March 2010.

⁵ Samuel Huntington, *Stolknoveniye tsivilizatsiy* [Clash of Civilizations], Moscow, 2003, p.14.

⁶ I.S. Tarasov, *Politicheskyy protsess v perekhodnykh obshchestvakh* [Political Process in Transitional Societies], A Course of Lectures at the Institute of Asian and African Studies at M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, 2008.

⁷ George McTurnan Kahin and John W. Lewis, *The United States in Vietnam*, New York, 1967, p. 325.

⁸ Carlyle A. Thayer, "Political Legitimacy of Vietnam's One Party-State: Challenges and Responses," In: *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, # 4, 2009, pp. 47–70.

⁹ G.F. Murasheva, "Istoriya i sovremennost' v politicheskoy kul'ture Vietnama [History and Modernity in the Political Culture of Vietnam]," In: *Politicheskaya kul'tura i delovaya etika stran Vostoka* [Political Culture and Business Ethics of the Oriental Countries], Moscow, 2006, p. 166.

¹⁰ Nguyễn Văn Huyền, Nguyễn Hoài Văn, Nguyễn Văn Vĩnh. Bước đầu tìm hiểu giá trị văn hóa chính trị truyền thống Việt Nam, sách chuyên khảo, sách chuyên khảo, Hà Nội, 2009, tr. 92–93.

¹¹ Lý Việt Quang, Nhân dân — động lực chủ yếu để phát triển đất nước theo tư tưởng Hồ Chí Minh, In: *Vietnam: Integration and Development* (Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Vietnamese Studies on CD-ROM), Hanoi, 2008.

¹² Phan Ngọc, Bản sắc văn hóa truyền thống Việt Nam, Hà Nội, 2006, tr. 43.

¹³ Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, "Governance, Development and the Responsive-Repressive State in Vietnam," In: *Forum for Development Studies*, Vol. 37, # 1, March 2010, pp. 33–59.

¹⁴ The author of the term is Harold Crouch, who coined it with respect to the Malaysian political system; it was for the first time used with respect to Vietnam by Benedict Kerkvliet.

¹⁵ V.M. Mazyrin, "Evolutsionnaya model' obshchestvennoy transformatsiyi v SRV [Evolutionary Model of Social Transformation in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam]," In: *Gubrovskiy chteniya* [Guber Readings], Moscow, 2009, Vol. 1, p. 230.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

¹⁷ Ngô Hữu Thời, Chủ Nghĩa Quốc gia Việt Nam — *Le Nationalisme Vietnamien*, Sài Gòn, 1954, tr. 4.

¹⁸ O.V. Novakova, "Vietnam: poisk kul'turnoy identichnosti [Vietnam: A Search for Cultural Identity]," In: *Gubrovskiy chteniya* [Guber Readings], Moscow, 2009, Vol. 1, p. 262.

¹⁹ Nguyễn Văn Huyền, Nguyễn Hoài Văn, Nguyễn Văn Vĩnh, Bước đầu tìm hiểu giá trị văn hóa chính trị truyền thống Việt Nam, tr. 65.

²⁰ V.M. Mazyrin, "Istoricheskiye elementy gosudarstvennosti v sovremennom Vietname [Historical Elements of Statehood in Modern Vietnam]," In: *Tri chetverti veka* [Three Quarters of a Century], Moscow, 2007, p. 374.

²¹ The words *propaganda* and *agitation* do not have a negative connotation in the Vietnamese language.

²² David Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism, 1885–1925*, Berkeley, 1971, pp. 8–9.

²³ Phan Ngọc, Bản sắc văn hóa truyền thống Việt Nam, tr. 38.

²⁴ Nguyễn Thế Cường, Giao lưu, tiếp biến văn hóa và bảo tồn bản sắc văn hóa Việt Nam trong toàn cầu hóa, tr. 8, In: *Vietnam: Integration and Development* (Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Vietnamese Studies on CD-ROM), Hanoi, 2008.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Nguyễn Văn Huyền, Nguyễn Hoài Văn, Nguyễn Văn Vĩnh. Bước đầu tìm hiểu giá trị văn hóa chính trị truyền thống Việt Nam, tr. 44.

²⁷ G.F. Murasheva, "Istoriya i sovremennost' v politicheskoy kul'ture Vietnama [History and Modernity in the Political Culture of Vietnam]," p. 152.

²⁸ Dinh Ngoc Vuong, *Stroitel'stvo pravovogo gosudarstva i grazhdanskogo obshchestva v sovremennom Vietname* [Building of a Law-Governed State and Civil Society in Modern Vietnam] (transl. by G.M. Lokshin).

²⁹ Benoît de Tréglodé, "Noviye geroyi, traditsionnoye pochitanie: ocherk o kul'te Mak Tkhi Bvoy [New Heroes, Traditional Veneration: An Outline of the Cult of Mac Thi Bui]," In: *Politicheskaya kul'tura i delovaya etika stran Vostoka* [Political Culture and Business Ethics of the Oriental Countries], Moscow, 2006, p. 167.

³⁰ Nguyễn Văn Huyền, Nguyễn Hoài Văn, Nguyễn Văn Vĩnh. Bước đầu tìm hiểu giá trị văn hóa chính trị truyền thống Việt Nam, tr. 43.

³¹ V.M. Mazyrin, "Istoricheskiye elementy gosudarstvennosti v sovremennom Vietname [Historical Elements of Statehood in Modern Vietnam]," In: *Tri chetverti veka* [Three Quarters of a Century], Moscow, 2007, p. 377.

³² Luật Quốc Phòng Số 39/2005/QH11 Ngày 14 Tháng 6 Năm 2005 [Law on National Defense, National Assembly, # 39/2005/QH11 of June 27, 2005].

³³ V.M. Mazyrin, "Istoricheskiye elementy gosudarstvennosti v sovremennom Vietname [Historical Elements of Statehood in Modern Vietnam]," In: *Tri chetverti veka* [Three Quarters of a Century], Moscow, 2007, p. 374.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 377.

³⁶ Regina Abrami, Edmund Malesky, Yu Zheng, *Accountability and Inequality in Single-Party Regimes: A Comparative Analysis of Vietnam and China, Working Paper 2008–0130*, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, July 2008.

³⁷ G.F. Murasheva, “Istoriya i sovremennost’ v politicheskoy kul’ture Vietnama [History and Modernity in the Political Culture of Vietnam],” p. 163.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

PART FOUR MODERN HISTORY

Galina MURASHEVA

The Maritime Policies of the Vietnamese Nguyen Dynasty in the First Half of the 19th Century (After the *Dai Nam Thuc Luc Chronicle*)¹

Concern about the safety of the country and repulsion of threats from the sea were the strategic priorities of the Nguyen Dynasty. In the first half of the 19th century, particularly in the Emperor Minh Mang’s reign (1819–1840), the policies of the court to protect the coastal areas and the shores of Vietnam were determined, along with minimizing contacts with the West (permission for foreign vessels to trade only in Da Nang), also by piracy that was on the up in the South China Sea.

Pirate assaults so greatly increased in scale that the local authorities could no longer resist them properly, and the problem came to the attention of the central authority in Phu Xuan (Hue).

Attacking merchant, fishing vessels and Vietnam’s coastal settlements, the pirates (mostly ethnic Chinese) used the plethora of islets along the Vietnamese coast to moor their ships and prepare for the next raid.

“Our coast goes a long distance, so the patrol service is essential. Previously it was decided that annually, each week of every second month, all coastal provinces should send patrol ships out to sea. Last year (1836) metropolitan vessels were also ordered to go to sea....” said an edict by Minh Mang.²

Chinese pirates typically attacked merchant vessels from late spring to early autumn. Their hunting ground was the sea area along the entire coastline, but chiefly in the Thanh Hoa and Nghe An area, north of the Quang Binh province.

Accordingly, Vietnamese patrol boats controlled the area south of Quang Nam till the Phu Yen province, and from Quang Tri in the north to Bac Thanh. Besides, they sent special marine squads, and if in the course of four weeks no pirate ship happened to be apprehended, the military patrols were recalled, and the local officials punished.³

In 1830, Minh Mang gave orders that from the third to the seventh months vessels be sent annually from the Quang Binh province to the north, to the islands where pirates were assumed to be hiding.⁴

Because the pirates active in the sea areas of the country's northern part were mostly Chinese, the Vietnamese authorities subjected all Chinese ships to extra-meticulous inspection.

A special instruction by Minh Mang said, "If the people on board a Chinese ship seem suspicious, they must be apprehended and handed over to the local authorities for investigation."⁵ When in 1831, it became known that three Chinese vessels were plying the sea by Binh Thuan and Bien Hoa, Emperor Minh Mang ordered the Military Department to find out whether or not those were pirate ships, to which end several military squads were dispatched from the nearest provinces to stop and inspect the said Chinese junks to check the presence of arms there and report the results.⁶

In May, when the weather normally settled and many vessels came back from the South and from the North, extra patrol squads were sent to the coastal waters of the metropolitan province of Thua Thien and the Quang Nam province. They were to halt suspicious Chinese vessels. Once the season of active sea transportation ended, those military squads also returned to their barracks.⁷

In May 1832, Le Quang Dao, Governor of the Quang Yen province bordering China, personally led warships to capture pirates who stepped up their activity in the sea next to the Quang Yen province. Apropos of that Minh Mang sent a document to the War Department reminding them that the Thanh Hoa waters did not have any significant numbers of islands, whether large or small, except just two, Bien Son and Van Son where pirate junks could moor.

"On Bien Son there is a gun and a unit of soldiers, so pirates do not risk sailing up there to look for temporary refuge. The Island of Van Dao is a mass of mountains devoid of drinking water and unfit for human habitation. Presently, when our naval forces are focused on doing away with them, the pirates are seeking new places of refuge. And Quang Yen has any number of islands, both large and small.... And pirates find shelter there," read Minh Mang's document.⁸

Le Dao Quang, who was heading an operation to pursue pirates, which would have earned him a reward if successful, as Minh Mang had promised,

was soon reporting failure. "The time-limit for the pirate hunt is out, but they have disappeared far away in the bay, and have proved impossible to capture so far." He said that simultaneously pirates had been combated by Chinese vessels around Hainan Island, under the military leader of the Qing House. "So the pirates will be captured sooner or later." Le Dao Quang requested permission to stay out at sea for another month to carry out his mission.⁹

Pirate raids were such a pest in the 1830s that even the central authorities could not cope with the problem, and in 1834, Emperor Minh Mang proposed handing out weapons to civilians on the coastal islands so that they could defend themselves. It was also planned to issue the islanders with fast fishing boats (three vessels per more densely populated island, and two per less populous one) to fight pirates.¹⁰

In the same year, it was reported from the Khanh Hoa province that the residents of larger and smaller islands in the coastal waters of the province had received both fast junks and weapons to arm them.¹¹ Another part of the plan was to install large-caliber guns, mostly to fire signal shots when they urgently needed help from the mainland in pursuit of the pirates.

The officials who headed the special patrol services and were not successful in pursuing pirates were severely punished.

When the Emperor received reports from the Quang Ngai province in 1835 that the pirates who had attacked a Vietnamese merchant ship in the local sea area managed to escape, the Emperor reminded them that he had personally more than once proposed "a well elaborated strategy of sea battle with pirates, down to the smallest detail," but Tran Huu Gi (the commander of the patrol service) still failed to catch up with and destroy the enemy which (it's the limit!) simply vanished, destination unknown. "This is utter helplessness in fighting pirates."¹² On Minh Mang's orders Tran Huu Gi was exiled, and the rest of his subordinates demoted, but then again sent to combat pirates.¹³

An interesting entry occurs in the *Dai Nam Thuc Luc* Chronicle to show how Emperor Thieu Tri (1841—1847) felt about pirates. In 1842—1843, merchant vessels shuttling between the Ha Tinh province and the North were constantly subjected to pirate attacks. For quite some time patrol vessels failed to catch up with them, but in 1842 they finally managed to capture a large group in the Thanh Hoa sea area, according to the Chronicle.¹⁴ In 1847, Thieu Tri forwarded an address to the War Department in connection with reports coming from the southern provinces of Binh Thuan and Khanh Hoa of several merchant vessels robbed by Chinese pirates. He pointed out that "our country borders China. Recently a large group of ban-

dits violated the border and caused an incident; on dry land those were hunger-stricken people from Kham Chau who formed a gang of 600 to 700 men; at sea, pirate vessels 15 or 16 in number that keep attacking. Lately, merchant vessels have been subjected to assaults in the territorial waters of the Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, and Quang Ngai provinces. Presently complaints are coming in from Binh Thuan and Khanh Hoa.”¹⁵

Emperor Tu Duc (1848–1883) in concert with his predecessors expressed displeasure when a chase after Chinese “bandits in boats” (pirates) in the sea ended in nothing. *Dai Nam Thuc Luc* has a record of his utterances in 1857, “This time the Chinese vessels put together a group, fired at the military post in the bay, and even had the temerity to disembark, wounding men of the coast guard, looted homes, burned houses (burnt the houses and committed robbery in the Ta Khai community), undaunted by anything, while our navy men captured not one of the bandits, apprehended not a single boat, let them take away oxen and possessions, and depart with impunity. When it is said, therefore, that the Chinese in boats took fright and fled, one tends to disbelieve this (this is not very convincing).”¹⁶

Under Minh Mang, it was noticed in 1837 that in the sea next to the Ha Tien province pirate boats found shelter at large and small islands and carried out raids from there. The Emperor ordered the provincial authorities to take stock of the islands discovering their precise number and names, and also make sure whether or not they were inhabited.

Besides, they were to establish the distances between the islands and their configuration, which required drawing up an accurate map. The Emperor also desired to know which islands should be given military posts with suitable security, etc.¹⁷

The provincial authorities sent to Hue a detailed description of the coastal islands. It transpired that of all the islands Phu Quoc was the only inhabited one, and it had guarded fortifications.

The Isle of Duong (formerly Ong), the Isle of Am (formerly Ba), the Isles of Vu, Thang, Tho Chau, Co Luan, That, all of those were uninhabited and fairly far away from the shore. For example, it took four days to reach Duong and Am by sea, three days to reach Vu, two days to reach Thang, two and a half days to reach Tho Chau and Co Luan, and one day to get to That.¹⁸

It was alleged that the topography of the islands precluded the construction of any permanent military posts. Pirates on junks anchored every year at the islands of Am, Duong, Thang, Tho Chau in the third and fourth months in the season of southern winds, just for a day or two, and then sailed away on a hunt.

“In the ninth and tenth months, in the season of northeast winds, pirates stop by the islands of Vu, Co Luan, and That, for no more than one or two days, and then leave....” The information was gathered from the locals; all people said roughly the same things.

The local authorities suggested sending patrol vessels to the islands, the way it had been done before, starting from the fourth month and until the tenth, without organizing permanent military posts, to which Minh Mang agreed.¹⁹

In those years piracy was rife in the sea space of China as well; as in the case of Vietnam, the pirates were mostly ethnic Chinese.

There emerged a sort of tradition of joint struggle against sea pirates by the Vietnamese and Chinese authorities, for the pirates robbed not only merchant ships at sea, but also made devastating raids on the coastal areas in both countries.

And either side fought pirates in its own littoral waters, on its own territory, but a degree of coordination in their actions was there all right, although frontiers were not to be violated.

According to the Chronicle, in 1832, the local authorities of Guangdong asked Vietnamese frontier officials in the Quang Yen province to allow Chinese ships to cross the border when in pursuit of pirates. The suggestion was hotly opposed by the Vietnamese court. Emperor Minh Mang had this to say on the matter, “The maritime part of our country, although bordering China, has well defined borders; why do they talk again of making no distinction between them? Speaking of the fight against pirates, now, both sides send warships to their waters to capture them, so where can pirates flee? Why go so far as to violate borders?”²⁰

The local authorities in Van Ninh were ordered to give a negative reply to the Chinese side (on the strength of the letter from Vietnam’s War Department).

Minh Mang also ordered that only facts “relative to the prestige of the country” be reported to him from then on, while trivial business of the aforementioned kind was to be settled on the spot, for “there is no reason to kowtow [to the Chinese authorities].”²¹

When in 1833, some six dozen Chinese fishing vessels entered the Vietnamese waters near Van Dan in the Quang Yen province, the Vietnamese authorities sent an official letter to the Governor General of Guangxi and Guangdong demanding that the ships be returned to China to avoid trouble.²²

In 1850, seven Chinese vessels turned up in the bays of Quang Nam and Quang Ngai. The crew, saying that they had got there while chasing pirates,

asked to be allowed ashore to make the necessary purchases. The fact was duly reported to Emperor Tu Duc who viewed the newcomers with suspicion and ordered increased surveillance. The War Department was ordered to provide extra patrolling by fast ships (as fast as birds) in the sea areas of Quang Nam, Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh.²³

The maritime policies of the Nguyens were not confined to fighting pirates, although the latter was a major measure of security. A lot of importance was attached to the economic side of the problem. Sea traffic held a considerable place in the country's total freight. So from the start of their reign in the country united in 1804 (North and South), the Nguyens took care not only to make sea ways safe by combating piracy, but also kept under control the condition of sea bays and ports where, among other things, prayers were sent up each spring to beg for a favorable wind.²⁴

Among Vietnam's major harbors along its long shoreline were the Bays of Eo (Quang Duc), An Viet (Quang Tri), Nhat Le (Quang Binh), Dai Tiem (Quang Nam), Co Lui (Quang Ngai), Thi Nai (Binh Dinh), Da Gien (Phu Yen), Cu Huan (Bien Hoa), Phan Ri (Binh Thuan), Can Gia (Gia Dinh), Hoi Thon (Nghe An), Thu Vi or Trao (Thanh Hoa), Hai Lieu (Son Nam Ha), Nam Trieu (Hai Duong), Hoa Phong (Quang Yen).²⁵

All of these harbors are capacious, and convenient for receiving state and private vessels (junks). The Nguyens thought the bay-port of Thuan An particularly important, because it provided the capital Hue with access to the sea.²⁶ The bays were under constant surveillance, and repairs were made as needed.

In 1831, the court yet again resolved to inspect all the working harbors along Vietnam's seashore. Emperor Minh Mang sent the following message to the Noi Cac Department (Imperial Secretariat), "The frontiers of our country extend far into the southern seas, and vessels annually perform freighting, this is the usual practice. But it is necessary to find out at long last which parts of the sea ways are difficult, which are easy, where the waters are shallow, and where they are deep." The Department of Public Works was told to take a series of measurements, which was quite a job at the time, to ensure safe navigation.²⁷

In 1837, the following harbors were included in the inspection list for the benefit of state vessels: Thuan An (the metropolitan area), Can Gia (in Nam Ky), Lieu (in Bac Ky), Da Nang, the river Gianh, Thi Nai, Bien Son.²⁸

Way back in the reign of Emperor Gia Long (1802—1819) the Department of Public Works was tasked in 1817 with making a description of the sea coast in the south as far as the Ha Tien province, and as far as Quang

Yen in the north, including all the harbors (ports), with descriptions of ebb and flow parameters, and distance from the capital. The book of two volumes had the description of 143 sea bays.²⁹

Minh Mang again sent a message to the Department of Public Works to remind them of the length of the sea coast, which made it convenient for ships, given such harbor-ports as Thuan An and Da Nang, where numerous state vessels moored. He also demanded that the arriving seamen be rendered every possible help and support at ports.³⁰

The harbor of Thuan An was ordered to report to the court every sixth and 12th month of the year, as of 1837; as for the other bays, the local authorities were to send in reports at the end of each year.³¹

The significance of the Thuan An harbor for the capital can be seen from the fact that in 1835 Emperor Minh Mang personally took a trip there, and rewarded the servicemen and workers of the harbor (a total of 400 *quan*), at the same time going into all the technical details, in particular the need to replace some building materials with the fire-resistant kind.³²

In permanent combat against the pirates, and seeing to it that their sea expanse remained inviolable, the Nguyens traditionally tended to the shipwrecked.

It was deemed a matter of state prestige to treat kindly shipwrecked foreign seafarers, most of whom happened to be Chinese. They were given money and grain, and feasted like guests of honor. In late 1854, on the Emperor's orders, a Chinese serviceman, Duong Ky Tuan (in Vietnamese transcription), who had been shipwrecked in the waters of the Quang Nam province, was given 20 *lang* of silver on top of everything else.³³

In mid-1855, a Chinese military official, Sung Do An (Vietnamese transcription) shipwrecked at sea, asked permission of the Vietnamese authorities to go back to Guangdong towed by a Chinese merchant ship.

The victim turned out to be a Chinese military commander with a group of 300 soldiers thrown ashore by the storm at the Vietnamese Thi Nai Bay. On orders from Tu Duc they were given 600 *lang* of silver, and then more money (800 *quan* a month) in answer to the military commander's request, which Tu Duc granted also. By the moment of departure to their homeland, the victims were again given rice, money, and silver to "preserve the dignity of the state."³⁴

The episode of the shipwrecked Chinese servicemen had a sequel. When several months later a deputation of Vietnam headed by Phan Huy Vinh found itself in Guangdong, the authorities of that province wanted to return to him all the money and silver the Chinese commander had been given in Vietnam.³⁵

To quote the *Dai Nam Thuc Luc* Chronicle, the Vietnamese envoy refused to accept the “compensation” and was thanked for that by Tu Duc upon his return to the country.³⁶

Chinese ships in the South China Sea got wrecked quite frequently in the 19th century. At the start of 1856 alone the Chronicle records a number of cases when wrecked ships from Fujian and Guangdong were discovered in Vietnamese bays, and went home from there having received humanitarian aid.³⁷

In 1856, two merchant vessels from China got shipwrecked and found themselves in the Dai Tiem Bay and the Da Nang port, Quang Nam province. As always, the case was examined by the local authorities, and then reported to the capital. The crew asked to be allowed to stay in the harbor for repairs and a fair wind (for four weeks), after which they wished to return home.

Tu Duc, who often happened to display more generosity than did his officials, ordered both ships exempted from paying any fines for staying in the port over the four-week term.³⁸

In 1857, the Vietnamese authorities helped a Chinese merchant ship robbed by pirates; they sent over the necessary victuals, a doctor and medicine for the wounded (of the 222 men on board the ship 50 had been wounded by pirates).³⁹

In the same year, a group of twenty Chinese merchants who had been shipwrecked and were returning home by land were given food and papers for free passage.⁴⁰

Occasionally there occurred comic episodes. For example, once, when a shipwrecked Chinese fisher was given help with food and safe passage from Ha Tinh to Quang Yen, whence he could travel straight to China, the authorities of Ha Tinh also gave the fisherman some clothes. The central authorities (one of the departments) objected to the latter act of kindness considering that a breach of the rules. It took interference on the part of Tu Duc to settle the Chinese man’s problem in his favor, much to the resentment of the Finance Department.⁴¹

The generosity which the Vietnamese authorities displayed in sending home shipwrecked Chinese seamen and merchants did not remain unreturned. As a rule, the Chinese side tried to offset the costs. And in 1858, the Chinese Emperor issued a special edict to remark on a lavish reception that the Vietnamese authorities had given to the crew of a Chinese warship from Fujian brought by storm into Vietnam’s territorial waters. Then the Chinese were given 1,000 *lang* of silver and lots of money and rice to see them through the voyage home.⁴²

The Qing Emperor sent a letter of thanks, and also a selection of gold items, pearls, etc., which were brought over to the Quang Yen province personally by the Governor General of Guangxi and Guangdong.⁴³

As for ordinary merchant vessels from China, in the 1850s the rules of their stay in Vietnamese ports got toughened somewhat. Apparently, in those years they had just one big advantage over European traders, to wit they could enter Vietnamese ports, while the Europeans were confined to Da Nang.

But in late 1855, they laid down strict time limits for the stay of Chinese merchant ships in Vietnamese ports, along the entire coast of the country. “From now on, should a vessel anchor at our port for reasons of lack of water or fuel, it is entitled to five days in which it can purchase the required items. If there are sails that need mending or masts to be repaired, the time allowed is ten days. If the time limit has elapsed, the vessel is obligated to quit the port at once. Besides, it is not permitted to allow congregation of more than 12 ships in a single port.”⁴⁴

The Vietnamese authorities disliked too many Chinese ships assembling in Vietnamese harbors, with a resulting commotion and disorder, so that the authorities worried lest some unpleasantness occur. The crews of Chinese vessels were hustled off, but the Chinese, the Chronicle reads, “disembarked, set up temporary shelters, bought grain, tried to seduce local lasses and women, creating lots of inconveniences,” yet “no one dared to do anything against these people,” read one of the edicts by Tu Duc. The latter demanded more resolute actions on the part of the Hai Duong governor where quite a few Chinese vessels had assembled in the Truc Cat Bay, so as to avoid unwelcome incidents.⁴⁵

On occasion, when corruption by officials in ports was only too obvious, as they violated the procedure of levying import dues on Chinese merchant vessels for entering Vietnamese ports, or received bribes for letting the Chinese skip tax paying, then, to quote an edict by Tu Duc, “because the disease is wide spread,” it is necessary to severely punish one of them to discourage a hundred others, and show to them that “a quest for happiness (iniquitous money) incurs severe penalties.”⁴⁶

In 1855, for example, harsh punishment for corruption was meted out to a large group of high-ranking officials.⁴⁷

The local authorities tried hard to inspect with the utmost care the incoming Chinese ships. When two Chinese vessels entered the Cu Huan Bay, the Khanh Hoa province, in the summer of 1856, and asked permission to anchor, it transpired that those were participants in a rebel movement in

China. The local authorities, obtaining consent from Tu Duc, suggested that the ship crews leave the port.⁴⁸

Not infrequently a check of Chinese vessels uncovered lots of firearms, which the local authorities interpreted as “equipment for predatory raids.” On one such occasion in 1855, Tu Duc ordered apprehension of suspicious junks that had turned up in the Vinh Pham Bay, Phu Yen province, to subject them to an extra thorough inspection. “If it is discovered that the people on board the junks do not have obvious plans of robbery, they should be let off.”⁴⁹

In that case it turned out that a rebel of the name Chu Thien Duc (Vietnamese transcription) who alleged that he was a descendant of the Ming Dynasty, intended to return the dynasty to power under the slogan The Great Chinese Ming (Dynasty). Hounded by the Qing authorities, he found himself in the Vietnamese littoral waters and was arrested by the Vietnamese authorities.⁵⁰

By and large, merchant vessels from China excited little awe in Vietnam. The authorities of the Hai Duong province, for example, demanded in 1855 that the Center ban Chinese ships from selling rice in places of their anchoring, “as away from the main city of the province they are more at liberty to cheat, give short weight, shortchange, etc.”⁵¹

And at the end of 1855, Tu Duc decreed (agreed to the request from the local authorities) that “from now on every Chinese person arriving in Vietnam should have a permit from the elder of the congregation, *bang*, for temporary residence where he has put up, and also guarantee by the same elder that the new arrival will pay the necessary dues. Otherwise, in order to avoid complications, he is to be sent back home at once, and banned from residing in our country.” Those who dared to give shelter to the Chinese were in for a severe punishment.⁵²

To all intents and purposes, the Chinese were feared, and were associated with unpleasantness. Yet the real danger was coming from a different direction.

According to the Chronicle, in summer 1856, the following event occurred in the Tra Son Harbor, in the port of Da Nang, Quang Nam province. A European ship entered Da Nang; the ship captain demanded that a letter be handed over to Emperor Tu Duc with a request for “starting up trade, no more than that.”⁵³ Then the ship moved on to the Thuan An Bay, where the newcomers again tried in vain to hand in their letter for Tu Duc, after which the vessel returned to Da Nang. The Europeans behaved insolently, saying that since the letter had been given to the addressee, they would await reply for the next seven to eight days, and if no positive answer

was forthcoming, they “will join forces with the English and then the consequences will be truly bad.”⁵⁴

The Vietnamese responded by increased patrolling of the coast. The European ship fired at all the watch towers in the harbor before leaving.⁵⁵

It was reported to Tu Duc that the two ships had left Da Nang in the easterly direction, but the Emperor remarked merely that “all guests should stay and wait for instructions, before they can leave.”⁵⁶

As follows from the Chronicle, the Imperial Court understood full well the strategic Da Nang’s significance for the country and the West’s interest in that port city. Tu Duc believed that “the Bay of Da Nang, Quang Nam province, is a major sea frontier point,” and in 1856, ordered “calculating everything in advance,” keeping the situation under control, regardless of the fact that the “Western ships have left,” and “reporting regularly and awaiting instructions.”⁵⁷

Shortly afterwards nobleman Dao Tri submitted a plan-cum-proposal for organizing resistance to the West.⁵⁸ The plan included installment of big artillery pieces in certain spots on mountain tops. Also it was suggested building obstacles of felled trees from the city of An Hai to the foot of Tra Son mountain, and from the city of Dien Hai to the Thanh Khe Bay.⁵⁹

The final measure, felled trees as a means of protection against Western expansion, points to the Nguyens’ utter unpreparedness, for a variety of reasons, including civilizational ones, for bearing up to Europe’s powerful aggressor, France. This paper does not examine the subject of France capturing Vietnam; I would merely like to state that the aggressor came from the sea, and the Nguyens’ “maritime policy” did not envisage that disaster, or if it did, was unaware of the true scale of the thing.

Vietnam and the Islands in the South China Sea

Analysis of Vietnamese historical chronicles shows that the Vietnamese authorities, starting from the distant feudal times, had always had a clear vision of their country as a sea power, and of their territorial waters, although the notion itself was absent from their political parlance, and of legitimized delimitation of sea space with the neighboring countries, first and foremost with China.

The Vietnamese side stuck to its views in the matter trying not to allow violation of its sea frontiers. Fairly early on the Vietnamese authorities formed an idea of the close and distant islands as part of their own territory.

One of the first mentions of the Truong Sa islands (Spratly) occurs in the records of the *Dai Nam Thuc Luc* Chronicle of 1711, when a member of the House of Nguyens who contemplated creation of a state in the south, separate from the central authorities, sent some men to the Truong Sa islands to get them measured.⁶⁰ A reasonably detailed description of the Hoang Sa islands (Paracels) and Truong Sa (Spratly) and the economic activity of the Vietnamese members of the An Vinh community in the Quang Ngai province is also to be found in the famous work *Phu Bien Tap Luc* by Le Quy Don (1726–1784).⁶¹

Incidentally, Le Quy Don remarked that “Hoang Sa is not far from the Island of Hainan, and Vietnamese seafarers often encountered Chinese fishing vessels in the open sea, exchanging a few words with the fishermen.”⁶²

It follows from the Le Quy Don’s work that the Nguyens set up a Hoang Sa team of 70 men to obtain and process marine products.⁶³ The team was manned with the locals of the An Vinh community. The Nguyens also formed a Bac Hai squad, its size unknown, but its functions perfectly clear — tax collection and general control over fishing.

A description of Hoang Sa as a natural part of Vietnamese territory is to be found in the classical work of outstanding 19th century scholar Phan Huy Chu, *Du Dia Chi*, which forms a section of the *Lich Trieu Hien Chuong Loai Chi* encyclopedia. Phan Huy Chu, like his predecessor Le Quy Don, ascribes the Hoang Sa Archipelago to the Quang Ngai province. Where he differs from his predecessor is in giving their due to the House of Nguyens that did a tremendous lot to form the country’s territory within its current borders, including insular areas.⁶⁴

The 1754 records in the *Dai Nam Thuc Luc* Chronicle say that in the summer of that year a squad from Quang Ngai on board several ships (nine junks) set out in the direction of the Hoang Sa islands, but a strong wind blew them away into the Chinese waters. The Governor General of the littoral Chinese province ordered a warm welcome to be given to the Vietnamese seamen and equip them with everything necessary for the way back.⁶⁵

The rulers in the House of Nguyens, who were building a state of their own independent from the Le-Trinh court, by then had several times applied to China for confirmation of their right to independent rule, but were refused. This time round, to remind of himself once again, Chua, the head of the House of Nguyens, forwarded a rhymed letter of thanks to China, as was the custom.⁶⁶

Apropos of that episode (the failed voyage to Hoang Sa) the *Dai Nam Thuc Luc* Chronicle gives a fairly detailed description of the archipelago “whose islands consist of more than 130 sandbars a day’s journey from one

another or within the sounding range of a signal drum.” The length of these islands measures no one knows how many thousand *giam*, and are normally called shallows or dunes 10,000 *li* long.⁶⁷ The location of the islands is described in the Chronicle thus — “in the open sea away from the An Vinh community, Binh Son district, Quang Ngai province.”⁶⁸ It says also that the islands have drinking water and a varied fauna.

Also it is written that under the “earlier” Nguyens a Hoang Sa team of 70 men was set up, manned with the natives of the An Vinh community, that annually boarded large junks to set out toward the islands in March; the voyage took three days, and it was not until August that the squad returned with marine products.⁶⁹

Territorial Policies of the Nguyen Dynasty with Regard to the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa Archipelagos

In the reign of Gia Long (1804–1819), the first emperor in the Nguyen Dynasty, the Chronicle registered at least twice Hoang Sa-related actions by the authorities. In 1815, a squad headed by Phan Quang Anh that was to sail to the Hoang Sa islands was charged with reconnoitering the seaways with a view to transporting by sea cheap grain from Gia Dinh to the barns of the capital of Phu Xuan.⁷⁰

In 1817, a ship from Macao anchored at Da Nang, having brought to the Vietnamese authorities a Hoang Sa map, which they were not yet up to making. For that the ship captain got 20 *lang* of silver in reward.⁷¹

This suggests that under Gia Long, as under his predecessors of the feudal House of Nguyens, there was a squad for exploiting the natural resources of the Hoang Sa islands; the latter were considered Vietnamese, although the Chronicle makes no mention of their administrative association with this or that Vietnamese province at the time.

At the same time, in the 1806, *Complete Geographical Description of the Country*⁷² drawn up by the Vietnamese War Department that had a map attached to it with the precise borders of the country, “from the capital to Ha Tien in the south, and to Lang Son in the north,” there must have been nothing about the islands. At least the *Dai Nam Thuc Luc* Chronicle in its description of that national geography does not touch upon sea borders.⁷³

And yet the geography included all the rivers and mountains, whether large or small, roads, whether long or short; it gave a description of the borders, riverbeds and fairways, communications, markets, etc.⁷⁴

It follows from the Chronicle itself and other sources that the Hoang Sa islands got administratively registered under the Nguyens in the 1820s-1830s.

As has been said above, the fundamental work by Phan Huy Chu whose first part deals with the country's geography gives a characteristic of the Quang Nam province. It is in that section of the work that Phan Huy Chu describes the Hoang Sa islands, which, as the text suggests, were territorially part of the An Vinh community, Binh Duong District (subsequently renamed Binh Son).⁷⁵

The first mention of the Hoang Sa islands in the Chronicle as an indisputable part of Vietnamese territory refers to the summer of 1833.⁷⁶ It is clear from the Chronicle records that the Vietnamese authorities continued close work on the Hoang Sa issue.

Emperor Minh Mang turned to the Public Works Department with the following message, "The water area of the Quang Ngai province contains a chain of Hoang Sa (islands). Since from a distance the sky and the water look similar in color, it is difficult to say whether the waters there are shallow or deep. A while ago merchant junks got stranded and wrecked there. It is necessary to prepare a large junk and next year send people over there, put up a temple and a stele, and plant trees in large quantities. When the trees grow tall and green, they will be clearly visible from afar, and people will be able to avoid shipwrecks (will not be stranded). This is a useful thing for many generations."⁷⁷

The Nguyen Dynasty's interest in the Hoang Sa islands changed with time. In the reign of Minh Mang, as we can see, it was determined by the need to solve the problems of navigation, ensuring safety for merchant ships, etc.

The records of the time are noteworthy in that they registered for the first time the appearance of Chinese on the islands. In the 1834 entries it is written that a group headed by Truong Phuc Si, together with a naval squad of more than 20 men, sailed off to the Hoang Sa islands, which are part of the Quang Ngai province, to put them on the map right on the spot.⁷⁸

Upon the return of the seafarers, Emperor Minh Mang asked them about the fauna and flora of the islands. "Truong Phuc Si replied," the Chronicle reads, "that it was a sandy shallow in the sea without beginning or end." Apparently to emphasize the fact that the islands were uninhabited Si said merely that "none but the Chinese (Qing Dynasty people) sail over to catch fish and birds there." The participants in the voyage presented Minh Mang with specimens of rare bird and fish species, a river turtle, edible shells, molluscs, etc. collected on the island. Much of the gift Minh Mang had never seen before.⁷⁹

Subsequent information about one of the Hoang Sa islands refers to 1835, when a temple in honor of the island spirits was built on that sandy island with green vegetation located in the maritime section of the Quang Ngai province, as ordered by Emperor Minh Mang. To that end a sea squad was sent to the island in 1835, as well as a militarized labor team from Giam Thanh and port coolies from the Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh provinces, who brought over on their ships (junks) the necessary building materials for the temple.

The new temple was put up within seven meters of the old pagoda. To the left of the temple they erected a stone stele, and a stone screen in front. The job took ten days. After that the builders returned to the mainland.⁸⁰ The origin of the pagoda with Chinese hieroglyphics is not explained in the Chronicle. It is not impossible that it was built by Chinese seamen who had also visited the archipelago in the past, as the Vietnamese chronicles confirmed.

The year 1836 may be said to be a major milestone in the Nguyens' policies on the islands of Hoang Sa (Paracels). Then it was that the Hoang Sa Archipelago was named borderline territory of strategic importance to the country. In 1836, the Public Works Department reported to Minh Mang that "on the frontier coastline of our country is the island of Hoang Sa whose strategic significance is truly great. Previously we sent people to do cartography work there, but because the island territory is vast, they managed to make a map of just one place, and then not too lucid either. It is necessary to send people over there every year to inspect and master shipping routes."⁸¹

The Department requested, from 1836 on, starting from the last third of January, that units of military frontier forces be sent to the archipelago on board a special ship. In the first third of the second month (February) the ship would reach Quang Ngai and together with four ships of two provinces (Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh) head on straight for Hoang Sa.⁸²

The ship was to explore everything, the islands, the sand shallows, their length, width, height, etc., and also measure the seabed around the islands, whether it was shallow or deep, sandy or stony, whether its shape was dangerous or not, what sort of surface it had, all the details of the outline, and make a map. It had to find the direction from the coast to the island, and measure the distance (how many *giam*).⁸³

It was necessary to find out which province one would reach if one sailed straight ahead from the island; which province, if one went along a slanting line, in which direction and how many *giam* to the shore. Everything without exception was to be explained clearly and reported upon return.⁸⁴

Minh Mang approved the plan. Orders were given to prepare a sea squad of military men under Pham Huu Nhat to make an expedition on board a warship. The same ship was loaded with ten wooden boards for constructing a memorial on the island. Each board was five *thuc* long, five *tac* wide, and one *tac* thick. The legend on the memorial read, “Minh Mang, the year 17, the year *binh thien*, a squad of seamen with Pham Huu Nhat at the head arrived at Hoang Sa and erected this memorial sign.”⁸⁵

The Nguyens’ control over the archipelago in the 1830s was systematic. This is borne out by the episode of a British ship wrecked at one of the Hoang Sa islands. The victims were given money and rice, and high-ranking court officials, Nguyen Tri Phuong and Vu Van Giai, put them on a ship sailing from Singapore to take them home.⁸⁶

In 1838, yet another expedition was organized to go to Hoang Sa to do cartography work there. The result was a map of a fairly large portion of the island territory. The emperor was pleased with the map, noting annual progress in the work of the expedition. All those who had taken part in the work were rewarded with money and valuable gifts (expensive clothes).⁸⁷

According to the Chronicle, in the late 1830s and early 1840s, expeditions from the mainland to Hoang Sa were a routine affair, but far from safe nonetheless. In 1839, the group headed by Pham Van Bien sent to Hoang Sa island returned to the capital after protracted tribulations. The group had been caught in a storm and, as its leaders said, were saved at the eleventh hour by the water spirit. Minh Mang ordered the Rite Department to conduct a ceremony of thanking the sea in the Bay of Thuan An, while the unfortunate voyagers received remuneration.⁸⁸

In the 1840s–1850s, the Nguyens’ interest in the Hoang Sa Archipelago started to wane, if the records in *Dai Nam Thuc Luc* are anything to go by. In the mid-1800s, France started its expansion in Indochina, and with that came a new period in the history of the islands in the South China Sea.

NOTES

¹ *Dai Nam Thuc Luc* (The True Records of the Great South), Vol. I–XXXVIII, Hanoi, 1962–1978; hereinafter, ĐNTL.

² *Dai Nam Thuc Luc*, Vol. XIX, pp. 52–53, hereinafter, ĐNTL.

³ ĐNTL, Vol. X, p. 78.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ ĐNTL, Vol. X, p. 78.

⁶ ĐNTL, Vol. X, p. 98.

⁷ ĐNTL, Vol. XVI, p. 236.

⁸ ĐNTL, Vol. XI, p. 76.

⁹ ĐNTL, Vol. XI, p. 246.

¹⁰ ĐNTL, Vol. XIV, pp. 170–171.

¹¹ ĐNTL, Vol. XV, pp. 294–295. Where there were more people, two fast vessels were sent; where there were few, just one.

¹² ĐNTL, Vol. XVI, p. 145–146.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

¹⁴ ĐNTL, Vol. XXIV, p. 225.

¹⁵ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVI, p. 296.

¹⁶ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 361.

¹⁷ ĐNTL, Vol. XIX, pp. 121–122.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹⁹ ĐNTL, Vol. XIX, p. 122.

²⁰ ĐNTL, Vol. XI, p. 166–167.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² ĐNTL, Vol. XIII, p. 283.

²³ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVII, p. 269.

²⁴ *See*, Vol. III, p. 239. “Our coastline is long, and sea traffic is most convenient,” reported the Rite Administration in 1805.

²⁵ ĐNTL, Vol. III, p. 239.

²⁶ ĐNTL, Vol. XI, p. 74.

²⁷ ĐNTL, Vol. X, pp. 255–256.

²⁸ ĐNTL, Vol. XIX, pp. 155–156.

²⁹ ĐNTL, Vol. IV, p. 324.

³⁰ ĐNTL, Vol. XIX, p. 155.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

³² ĐNTL, Vol. XVI, p. 236.

³³ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 77.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 127–128.

³⁵ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 128.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

- ³⁷ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 191, 204 and ff.
- ³⁸ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 217, 218.
- ³⁹ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 363.
- ⁴⁰ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 369.
- ⁴¹ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 384.
- ⁴² ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 410.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 189–190.
- ⁴⁵ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 112–113.
- ⁴⁶ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 191.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 192.
- ⁴⁸ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 259.
- ⁴⁹ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 122.
- ⁵⁰ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 123. The Chronicle is silent on what happened to the Chinese impostor after that.
- ⁵¹ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 172.
- ⁵² ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 189.
- ⁵³ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 275.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 275, 282, 283.
- ⁵⁶ *See*: p. 285.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 314.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 316.
- ⁵⁹ ĐNTL, Vol. XXVIII, p. 316.
- ⁶⁰ ĐNTL, Vol. I, pp. 116, 172.
- ⁶¹ Lê Quý Đôn, toàn tập, tập I - Phụ biên tạp lục, Hà Nội, 1977, pp. 116, 119, 120.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 120.
- ⁶³ Lê Quý Đôn, *Op. cit.*, p. 119. *See also*: Võ Long Tê, Les archipels de Hoang sa et de Trường sa selon les anciens ouvrages vietnamiens d'histoire et de Géographie, Saigon 1974, pp. 57, 58, 59, 61. The author of the said monograph, *The Archipelagos of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa in Light of Ancient Historical and Geographical Works of Vietnam*, makes an interesting guess that Le Quy Don, when talking of Truong Sa, refers to both the Islands of Truong Sa and the Hoang Sa Archipelago, i.e. the entire set of Vietnamese islands whose importance necessitated the formation of the Hoang Sa and Bac Hai squads.
- ⁶⁴ Võ Long Tê, *Op. cit.*, p. 87.

- ⁶⁵ ĐNTL, Vol. I, c. 222.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 222.
- ⁶⁷ ĐNTL, Vol. I, p. 222.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁰ ĐNTL, Vol. IV, p. 245.
- ⁷¹ ĐNTL, Vol. IV, p. 323.
- ⁷² ĐNTL, Vol. III, p. 313.
- ⁷³ However, it would be prudent to make no categoric statements apropos of the *Nhất thống dư địa chí* geography, which covered the provinces of Quang Duc, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Binh Hoa, Binh Thuan, Gia Dinh, Phien Tran, Tran Bien, Tran Dinh, Vinh Tran, Ha Tien, Quang Tri, Quang Binh, Nghe An, Thanh Hoa, Thanh Binh, Bac Thanh, Son Nam Thuong, Son Nam Ha, Son Tay, Kinh Bac, Hai Duong, Yen Quang, Thai Nguyen, Hung Hoa, Tuyen Quang, Lang Son, Cao Bang, but which allegedly made no mention of the islands of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa.
- ⁷⁴ ĐNTL, Vol. IV, p. 313.
- ⁷⁵ Phan Huy Chú. Lịch triều hiến chương loại chí. Tập. I. Dư địa chí, Hà Nội 1960, p. 137.
- ⁷⁶ ĐNTL, Vol. XIII, pp. 52–53; *See*: G.F. Murasheva, “Ostrova Yuzhno-Kitaiskogo Morya [The South China Sea Islands],” *Formirovaniye granits Kitaya* [Formation of China's Borders], Moscow, 1977, p. 194.
- ⁷⁷ ĐNTL, Vol. XIII, pp. 52–53.
- ⁷⁸ ĐNTL, Vol. XIV, p. 189.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁰ ĐNTL, Vol. XVI, p. 309. *See also*: Võ Long Tê, *Op. cit.*, pp. 104, 115.
- ⁸¹ ĐNTL, Vol. XVIII, p. 30.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*
- ⁸³ ĐNTL, Vol. XVIII, p. 31.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.* *See also*: Võ Long Tê, *Op. cit.*, pp. 110–111.
- ⁸⁶ ĐNTL, Vol. XVIII, p. 330.
- ⁸⁷ ĐNTL, Vol. XX, p. 183.
- ⁸⁸ ĐNTL, Vol. XXI, p. 145.

Alexander KHOKHLOV

**Russian Diplomats on the Independent Status
of Vietnam in the 1870s and 1880s
(based on archival and published data)**

The rise of substantial interest in Vietnam among Russians in the second half of the 19th century is attested, for example, by entries in the Paris diary of Konstantin Skachkov (1821—1883),¹ who was sent as a diplomatic courier to the capital of France in 1857 after his return to St. Petersburg from Beijing, where he had been staying as a secular member of the Russian Theologian (Orthodox) Mission since 1850.² To characterize the below cited letters, we will give here a couple of quotations from the diary, where an entry dated January 3, 1858, reads that when handing over to Nikolai Botkin a letter on the occasion of his departure from Paris, Konstantin Skachkov received as a present from a certain man named Mamontov a book with a description of Cochinchine and Tonkin. On March 10, the Russian diplomat and Sinologist visited the Collège de France, where he had a talk with Stanislas Aignan Julien, head of that educational institution, and his professor colleagues who taught students Oriental languages.³ During his stay in Paris, Skachkov had a chance to make personal acquaintance with many other scholars engaged in Chinese studies.

On his second visit to France, Konstantin Skachkov, together with his wife and children, departed from Marseilles on October 19, 1867, and, taking a sea route to China, arrived in Saigon at three o'clock in the morning of November 23, leaving that port on November 25 also in the early hours of the day. It can be easily assumed that, despite his very brief stay in Vietnam, he as an Orientalist was bound to show an interest in that little-known country.

One example of Russia's scholarly interest in Vietnam and other countries of Southeast Asia is the following entry in a printed copy of the Journal

of the Annual Meeting of the Orenburg Section of the Russian Geographical Society of January 13, 1882: "A brochure on Cochinchine and a view of Saigon ... have been ordered with funds from the Society."⁴

Further evidence of the Russians' growing interest in Vietnam in the subsequent years is the appearance in 1877 of Chinese Tsai Ting-lan's travel notes about Annam, where he was brought by a storm on his way to the city of Fuzhou in Fujian province across the Taiwan Strait in 1835, in *Vostochny sbornik* [Oriental Collection] published by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Russian translation of these travel notes from the Chinese was done by Hieromonk Yevlampy,⁵ member of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Beijing.

A translation of the Chinese work *Hai nan za zhu* (given for the sake of briefness the literary title *A Chinese's Notes about Annam*) was received in St. Petersburg together with a dispatch from Archimandrite Pallady, head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission, of March 23, 1855. This work, which arrived in manuscript form, was highly appraised by its first reviewer, Vasily Vasilyev (1818—1900), a prominent Sinologist, who noted in his comment:

"The Notes of a Chinese Brought by a Storm to the State of Annam (Cochinchine) — translation by Fr. Yevlampy — contain a travel guide through the nearly entire state to the borders of China by land and from thence through China itself to Fujian province. In addition, at the end of the account of his journey the Chinese provides a brief overview of the history of that country, the manners of its inhabitants and the state of its industry. Certainly, from these brief notes one cannot ... derive a detailed picture of the country, but, considering the little knowledge about Cochinchine that we have had until recently, even this travel guide is an acquisition of no small interest."⁶

On his return to his homeland from Beijing, Yevlampy as an experienced translator was sent to Amur Region for conducting missionary activity under the guidance of Archimandrite Innokenty Veniaminov (secular name, Ivan Popov, 1797—1879). The first professional contacts between Archimandrite Innokenty and Yevlampy, who took part in the work of the Russo-Chinese commission on the border demarcation in Primorie Territory in 1861, can be judged from the below cited letter of September 13, 1861, sent by the archimandrite from Hakodate to Archpriest Gavriil Veniaminov with the following postscript:

"P.S. If Father Yevlampy is in Nikolayevsk, pass to him my regards and blessing and tell him that I sent him a letter from Olga [Bay] with Fr. Filaret, who had shown his desire and given permission to stay in Vladivostok until the completion [of the construction] of the church or until

Fr. Yevlampy's arrival there. I have given him the holy antimention for consecrating the church.

"Let Fr. Yevlampy go to Vladivostok at the first opportunity — just in case, give him a copy of the missionary instruction booklet and get the governor's permission or permit for him to travel through Manchuria."⁷

A high appraisal of Hieromonk Yevlampy as a good Sinologist, on whose help Archimandrite Innokenty particularly counted in his plans for missionary work in the Russian Far East and in Manchuria, is given in a letter of May 2, 1864, sent by the future church hierarch from Blagoveshchensk to Nikolai Muravyov, which read: "Hieromonk Yevlampy, who was once part of the Beijing [ecclesiastical] mission and had a good command of the Chinese language and on whom I pinned my hopes, following a long, dreadful illness [delirium tremens], ... has finally passed away. And now we do not even have a good interpreter."⁸

In 1878, a French translation of Hieromonk Yevlampy's valuable work *A Chinese's Notes about Annam*, brought out in St. Petersburg in 1877 (after the translator's death), was published in Paris.⁹

Archival materials of the Russian diplomatic mission in Beijing, whose value is attested by the below-cited messages of Russian diplomats, deserve particular attention of researchers into the history of Vietnam and its foreign relations in the 1880s, when the colonial expansion of foreign powers was markedly stepped up. Here is, for example, what Chargé d'Affaires Alexander Koyander¹⁰ wrote in a message to St. Petersburg dated February 14(26), 1880:

"In 1874, a treaty was concluded between France and Annam, by the second article of which this latter country was recognized as fully independent from any foreign power, and France promised help and protection in resolving all domestic and foreign difficulties of the Annamite government, in exchange for which this latter was obliged to conform its foreign policy to the desires of France....

"Beginning from the 3rd century B.C., Annam has constantly and [sometimes] fully belonged to China and was administered by its officials or was in vassal relations with it which were expressed in [obtaining] investiture from the Beijing royal court for Vietnamese kings and punctually sending a tribute by the latter to Beijing....

"Now the government of the *bogdokhan* [bogdokhan, Mongolian 'sacred ruler,' the term used in Russian sources in the past to describe the emperor of China. — *Translator's Note*] has paid attention to the news that has come to it about the intention of France to occupy Vietnam, and secretaries of Zong Li Ya Men [Office of Foreign Affairs] have handed over to the

dragoman of the French mission in Beijing a note which stated that China regarded Annam as its territory and, therefore, could not remain quite indifferent to what was happening there."¹¹ [The italics here and elsewhere in this article are mine. — *A.Kh.*]

On the other hand, of interest is also the following important evidence characterizing France's politics, which Eugène de Bütow,¹² Russian envoy to Beijing, gives in his message of May 26, 1882:

"In April of this year, a French detachment consisting of several companies of infantry went from Saigon by sea to the estuary of the Son Coi River (northern part of Annam).

"Having traveled up the river as far as the city of Hanoi, the French captured it by storm and subjected part of that country to their direct administration."¹³

In terms of establishing the actual character of the "vassal dependence" of Vietnam on Qing China in the second half of the 19th century, of interest is the opinion expressed by Councilor of State Karl Waeber¹⁴ (future Russian envoy to Korea) in his memorandum of September 6(18), 1883, which read:

"Of late, Korean and Annamite affairs have given cause for discussion in the European and Chinese press of the issue of China's relations with the small states surrounding it.

"Our Chargé d'Affaires [Alexander Koyander] states his considerations on this subject based on historical data and on the now established principles of international law.

"The relations with [Qing] China of the small states surrounding it — Annam, Korea, Burma, Siam, and others — explained now by Chinese dignitaries in terms of supreme domination [of China], on the one hand, and vassalage, on the other, boiled down, in effect, to nominal protection extended by China to the [above] mentioned small states, which in turn displayed only superficial respect for it.

"China's protection manifested itself in recognizing the rulers of these states [as its vassals] and only occasionally in rendering material support to them. [China's] supremacy [in fact] went no further than that, and it often happened that the protector itself had to suffer greatly from its alleged vassals.

"These relations have been developing for centuries. They originated back in the prosperous times of medieval Chinese civilization, when China possessed undeniable charm among the [nearly] savage peoples that surrounded it. Its supremacy was [rather] recognized by China itself, which called itself the Middle Kingdom, understanding this to mean that it occupied nearly the entire area of the square — according to its [traditional ancient] notions — earth's surface on the periphery of which the other, bar-

barian countries were somehow located. As recently as last century, official descriptions of China [including codes of laws and 'di fang zhi' — geographical histories of particular areas] mentioned not only Annam, Siam and other [neighboring states], but also England, France and Russia among such other barbarian countries that paid tribute to the bogdokhan [emperor]. These views, however, have not prevented it [Qing China] in the recent years, when there were clashes between its alleged vassals and Europeans and when [foreign] powers tried to bring the Chinese government to account for the actions of these vassals, from openly and officially stating that they are completely independent in their foreign relations and that they have no power over them. Such statements were made by [Qing] China about Korea to the French government in 1866 and to the United States in 1871; similarly, the *bogdokhan's* government removed itself from interference in the relations between Burma and Great Britain in 1862, between Annam and France in 1874, and between Korea and Japan in 1876."

As can be seen from the subsequent text of this message (after some editing and lithographing), it said: "all these considerations lead Councilor of State Waeber to the conclusion that Korea and Annam should be ranged as states that are under the protection and not under the power of another [neighboring] state; their independence should, therefore, be recognized.

"Without going into details of the issue of the extent to which such recognition would be in the interests of Russian politics as such, our Chargé d'Affaires expresses conviction that with gradual development of foreigners' relations with the states now being protected by [today's] China, their alleged dependence on China will inevitably vanish."¹⁵

Quite characteristic of Sergei Popov,¹⁶ Russian envoy to Beijing, who was closely following the developments in the Far East in the 1880s in connection with the aggravation of Franco-Chinese relations over Vietnam, is the statement made in his letter of November 8, 1883, to Dmitry Anuchin, Governor General of Eastern Siberia, to the effect that "the Annam issue has entered a critical phase and even threatens to result in a war."¹⁷

It is worthy of note that attached to this letter was a copy of Zong Li Ya Men's statement, handed over to the Russian diplomatic mission in Beijing on November 4, 1883, clarifying stand of the Qing government. This document, dated the 17th day of the 10th moon of the 9th year of the Guangxu period, read:

"It is universal knowledge that Annam is a vassal possession of China and that it has for more than 200 years received investiture from it and unfailingly delivered a tribute to its sovereign, the Qing Court. In the Tongzhi and Guangxu periods (in 1862—1875 and from 1875 to the present day), in view

of riots carried out in the northern parts of Annam by local brigands, the Annamite government requested China to send in troops for exterminating the rascals. Then the Chinese government forwarded its troops there, which at different times crushed the gangs of brigands in the Beiji area (Tonkin)....

"For more than a decade China carried on warfare, which cost it millions of liang, for protecting Annam as its vassal possession, which is also universal knowledge. Despite this, France unleashed a war without any cause and occupied Hanoi and Nam Dinh situated in Beiji province. In view of common trade interests, China did not wish to break its agreement with France. But who could expect that there would be no end to its aggressive policy?"¹⁸

A copy of the message of the Russian Chargé d'Affaires [Alexander Koyander] of July 5(17), 1883, sent to Dmitry Anuchin, Governor General of Eastern Siberia, with a cover letter by Alexander Vlangaly, the then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, may be of interest for understanding the Franco-Chinese military conflict over Vietnam. This document noted, in particular, the discrepancies of interests of the conflicting parties:

"For some time past, foreign representatives in Beijing, not excluding, to a certain extent, the French one, have been playing the part of spectators of the drama happening in the south of China, in Annam, whose controlling strings are in the hands of Paris. For the time being China, which is one of the participants in the drama, has confined itself to a more passive role, perhaps being aware of its inability to successfully influence the unfolding an outcome of the drama in which the opposing parties are, on the one hand, France's trade and political interests and, on the other, [Qing] China's old rights and claims to sovereign rights over Annam."¹⁹

Thanks to active mediation of Russian diplomacy, France managed rather quickly to settle the conflict with Qing China over Vietnam. The Russians who took part in rendering mediatory services during the Franco-Chinese war are personally listed in Sergei Popov's message of February 28, 1886, sent to Nikolai Girs, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, which read:

"The French Chargé d'Affaires has informed me about conferring the Order of Légion d'Honneur on twelve Russian officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Military and Naval [Departments], and one private individual as a token of gratitude of the President of the French Republic for services rendered to France during its clash with China.... I have the honor to request [that you will accept the awards] for First Secretary [Nikolai] Ladyzhensky, First Dragoman [Pavel] Popov, Doctor [S.] Velichkovsky, [Pavel] Dmitrevsky, Consul in Hankou, [Julius] Roeding, Consul in Shanghai, [Yakov] Shishmaryov, Manager of the Consulate in Tianjin, and for

Selenga Merchant of the First Guild Honorary Citizen [Alexei] Startsev residing in Tianjin....” Also mentioned in the documents among the persons nominated for the highest French military decoration were military agent [military attaché] Schneur, Baron Wrangel, and Mikhail [Nikolai] Shuisky, third secretary of the diplomatic mission.²⁰

Notwithstanding the insulting tone of the *bogdokhan*’s decree of April 8, 1885 (concerning the conclusion of truce with France) about the need to take strong precautions so that, before the approval of the articles of the treaty, the “cunning and deceitful brood” should not once again break the [probable] alliance and, taking [advantage of] the opportunity, should not rise again, Jules Patenôtre, France’s minister to China, as Sergei Popov’s message of April 28, 1885, to Nikolai Girs reads, “taking into consideration that it [the decree] had not been published, did not find it necessary to protest ... and, certainly, from the point of view of his government (peace with China by any means) acted sensibly....”²¹

Judging from the telegram (in French) sent by Sergei Popov to St. Petersburg on June 8(20), 1885, the fundamental provisions of the new treaty between France and the Qing Empire were that China committed itself in future to respect treaties, conventions and other statutory acts concluded between France and Vietnam; both parties stated that “the existing relations between China and Vietnam in their character are without prejudice to the dignity of the Chinese Empire and do not, in any degree, violate the present treaty.”²²

Of interest in terms of the impact of the Franco-Chinese war in the foreign policy of the Qing Court, which skillfully followed the traditional doctrine of the supremacy of the Chinese Empire over the peoples of the Universe are the comments of Russian diplomat Nikolai Ladyzhensky, who became manager of the Russian diplomatic mission in Beijing after Sergei Popov’s departure (March 5, 1886). Here is what he reported to Nikolai Girs on March 5, 1886:

“China’s recent clash with France and the display of its resistance force that was unexpected for the *bogdokhan*’s government itself have shown to it how great the difficulties are which confront any of the powers of Western Europe in the event of serious misunderstandings with it and have inspired the people and rulers [of that country] with perhaps excessive awareness of its might ... [as a result] the fear of the [Western] threat that the Chinese dignitaries felt has been replaced with self-confidence. Their arrogance has grown to the extreme and, maybe, the time is in the offing when China, carried away by overconfidence in its strength, will embark on a new path and take up a new role — an aggressive one....

“Complaisance with it is perceived in China as an indication of weakness and forbearance, as an indication of disease. These views have long been inherent in China’s statesmen, but they have hardly been formerly expressed in the degree in which they are expressed at present....

“The extreme moderation and strict uprightness of [our] Imperial Government in its intercourse with China, our sincere peacefulness and patience has [now] not only not prompted China on its part to reduce most of its excessive demands but it has apparently increased its hope for greater complaisance on our part.

“The oppression of our subject Sarts in Eastern Turkestan, which began in 1883, gradually increasing, developed into persecution.... In Western Mongolia, where we have the right to carry on trade, purchase buildings and institute consulates in the cities of Kobdo and Ulasutai, a number of misunderstandings have arisen.”²³

It is worthy of note that, in addition to the above cited comments in favor of the independent status of Vietnam made by Russian diplomats in the 1880s-1890s, this was also attested by government awards of that country conferred on foreigners, including those who distinguished themselves in the preparation of or participation in international conferences or who personally contributed to the introduction of a new type of industrial production (for example, for conducting the Fourth International Prison Congress in St. Petersburg in 1890 or for Yakov Molchanov’s personal contribution to the production of brick tea in China). Indicative of this are Alexander the III’s decrees of 1890 granting the appropriate persons the right to wear foreign decorations — those of Vietnam and Cambodia.

Publications of the prominent Orientalist Vasily Vasilyev (1818—1900) about the alleged traditional “supremacy” of Qing China over the neighboring countries, which Qing diplomacy continued to regard as tributaries of the *bogdokhan*, even though in reality their “vassalage” remained only on paper and in the minds of a narrow circle of members of the most conservative part of the Qing Empire ruling top, may well serve as a substantial addition to the above cited messages of Russian diplomats concerning the alleged vassalage of Vietnam to Qing China in the 1880s. This is attested, in particular, by the Russian scholar’s publications in the newspapers *Birzheviye Vedomosti* [Stock Exchange Gazette], *Vostochnoye Obozreniye* [Oriental Review], *Novoye Vremya* [New Times], and others. Particularly valuable in terms of the history of the Qing China foreign policy are his articles about the Franco-Chinese war of 1884—1885 and about Russo-Chinese relations in connection with the issue of returning the Kulja district, tempo-

rarily occupied by Russian troops in 1871 for ensuring political stability in the region, to the Qing Empire.²⁴

As a rule, it was materials of the Chinese press that served as the documentary basis for Vasilyev's publications about contemporary Qing China; however, in a number of cases, in particular, in examining issues of Russo-Chinese relations, the scholar turned to Russian archival documents with which he had first acquainted himself in Kyakhta back in 1840, before his departure for Beijing for a 10-year period for studying Oriental languages.

Vasily Vasilyev paid serious attention to the Qing China foreign policy problems, singling out above all the issue of its relations with the neighboring Asian countries. As many researchers note, underlying the foreign political doctrine of the Qing Empire was Sinocentrism. "Under the present dynasty," Vasilyev noted in 1878, "the Chinese government raved solely about the whole world kowtowing before it; it had [from time immemorial] regarded everyone as its vassal, and not a single monarch in the world was to communicate with the *bogdokhan*."²⁵ Although the severe defeats suffered by the Qing troops in the course of their clashes with Western powers and uprisings of non-Chinese peoples "forced the Beijing Court to hang down its head," it continued to be carried away by this delusion. "There is no way," Vasilyev wrote in 1882, "to root out China's conceit; it cannot allow anyone in the world to claim independence."²⁶ Following this principle implying China's supremacy over other states, officials responsible for receiving foreign ambassadors reported about them as "tributaries" or persons who had brought "tribute" from one foreign ruler or another. As Vasily Vasilyev noted, "a letter from any foreign monarch to the *bogdokhan* was always called a report; in the translation of the letter into Chinese, that monarch was referred to as a subject (the Nepal Raja called himself Maharaja, which was translated as 'slave')."²⁷

In examining Qing China's relations with its neighbors, which it regarded as vassals or which recognized themselves as such only formally (for example, Korea or Vietnam), Vasily Vasilyev pointed at certain interest from the rulers of the "vassal" countries in maintaining "tributary relations," which opened up opportunities, in addition to delivering gifts, to carry on trade operations in the Qing capital and other places. "It will be recalled," the Russian Orientalist stressed in 1861, "that until now the peoples that sent embassies with tribute to the Beijing Court regretted only that they were not permitted to supply the tribute more often: the petty tribute delivered to the Court, for which it paid above its value (according to the old rule: give more than you take) was always followed by caravans of merchants, who under embassy protection brought in their goods and took out

what they had bought not only free of duty but also using government horses!"²⁸

Vasily Vasilyev also pointed at the economic interest of China's neighbors in maintaining "tributary" relations with it in 1883 in connection with France's military conflict with the Qing Empire over Vietnam. "The alleged tribute sent to Beijing from the so-called vassal states," the scholar noted, "costs China more than its value; in addition to reciprocated gifts, which are more expensive than this tribute, the government provides at its own expense for the envoys and their entire retinue from the moment they enter the empire to the moment they leave it; the retinue consists of merchants with their merchandise transported at government expense and guarded by an escort." "That is why the Chinese government itself," Vasily Vasilyev observed, "set time limits for each state after which they can send envoys with tribute; each of them (such as Korea) would be glad to send them several times a year, only it is exhausting for China. It more often receives those which it favors and which it needs more. From this alone one can judge the significance it attached above all to its vassal relations with Annam, Birman, (Burma — *A. Kh.*), Nepal, and others."²⁹ The unconventional approach demonstrated by Vasily Vasilyev in interpreting the Chinese "vassalage" has enabled future researchers into the question to have a better idea of the specific features of Qing China's relations with the countries surrounding it, which included both partially dependent and completely independent states.

It should be noted that Orientalists' materials prepared for print were not always published in full, not to mention the preservation by editors of the salient features of the authors' style and creative concept. One example of editorial "interference" in the original text of a submitted article is the case with Indologist Ivan Minayev (1840—1890). The editors deleted from the original version of his article about the Franco-Chinese conflict over Vietnam an important author's thesis concerning the possible outbreak of a war between France and China, which soon actually happened.³⁰

Naturally, the use of newspaper publications of Russian Orientalists in historical studies should be extremely careful and critical and take account of the special character of current newspaper information and the specific features of the period. In assessing such publications one should bear in mind that they appeared immediately in the aftermath of events, under the influence of current politics and on the basis of available materials (including newspaper articles), which might contain not only inaccurate but also false information. In publications of this type one can easily come across typos, errors and obvious mistakes, in particular, in the spelling of Oriental people's and geographical names for correcting which the researcher should have a

high level of professional training, which presupposes a good command of one or several Oriental languages. For determining the sociopolitical and scientific significance of one publication or another, one should take into account the profile of the corresponding newspaper and its place in shaping public opinion in one or another country being examined.

NOTES

¹ P.Ye. Skachkov, *Ocherki istoriyi russkogo kitayevedeniya* [An Outline of the History of Russian Sinology], Moscow, Nauka Publishers, Main Editorial Office of Oriental Literature, 1977, pp. 162–163.

² K.A. Skachkov (1821–1883), a prominent Russian Sinologist and diplomat, the son of a bankrupt merchant....

Konstantin Skachkov published more than 30 articles about China. His rich collection of books and manuscripts in the Chinese and Manchurian languages gathered during his long spell of service in China is now at the Russian State Library.

³ Russian State Library (Moscow), Research Department of Manuscripts, Folio 273, Box 12, Storage Item 4, Sheet 94.

⁴ Central State Historical Archives of Uzbekistan, Folio 2412 (personal stock of Bitger), List 1, File 221, Sheet 17.

⁵ Yevlampy, hieromonk (secular name, Yelisei Ivanov, 1822–1864), Sinologist and missionary.

⁶ Russian State Archives of Ancient Acts (RGADA), Folio 1385, List 1, Storage Item 1737, Sheet 4. In citing archival materials, the dates of the documents are given according to the “Old Style” Julian Calendar.

⁷ Archives of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, Folio 340, List 874, 1843–69, File 14, Sheet 54 (on the left, there is an inscription running from the bottom up, “The attached package to be sent by first mail”).

⁸ *Pisma Innokentiya* [Innokenty’s Letters], Issue 2, St. Petersburg, 1898, p. 450. See also: A.N. Khokhlov, “Svyatitel Innokenty i yego svyazi s rossiyskimi vostokovedami [Holy Hierarch Innokenty and His Connections with Russian Orientalists],” In: *Svyatitel Innokenty, Mitropolit Moskovskiy i Kolomenskiy, Apostol Ameriki i Sibiri i yego nauchnoye naslediyeye* [Holy Hierarch Innokenty, Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna, Apostle to America and Siberia, and His Scientific Legacy], Proceedings of the Scientific Conference, Moscow, 2000, pp. 33–42.

⁹ *Recueil d’itinéraires et de voyages dans l’Asie Centrale et l’Extrême Orient*, Paris, 1876, pp. 63–161.

¹⁰ A.I. Koyander, Russian diplomat of noble birth, entered public service at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on August 1, 1865.

See: *Sankt-Peterburgskiy Vedomosti* [St. Petersburg Gazette], # 3386 (December 10/23, 1902); *Novoye Vremya* [New Times], # 12439 (October 28/November 10, 1910); Archives of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, Folio of the Department of Personnel and Administration, List 713, 1861–1887, File 14, Sheets 16–17.

¹¹ Archives of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, St. Petersburg Main Archives I-1, List 781, 1880–1882, File 486, Sheet 22.

¹² Eugène de Bütow (July 7, 1837–October 17, 1904), Russian diplomat of noble birth.

¹³ Archives of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, St. Petersburg Main Archives I-1, List 781, 1880–1882, File 486, Sheet 238.

¹⁴ Karl Waeber, Russian diplomat and Orientalist.

¹⁵ Archives of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, St. Petersburg Main Archives I-1, List 761, 1883–1886, File 487, Sheets 63–64.

¹⁶ S.I. Popov, Russian diplomat of noble birth.

¹⁷ Archives of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, Folio 327, List 579, 1883, File 300, Sheet 22.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Sheet 23.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Sheet 3.

²⁰ Archives of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, St. Petersburg Main Archives U-Az, 1886, File 2, p. 33.

²¹ Archives of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, St. Petersburg Main Archives U-Az, 1885, File 1, Sheet 5.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Archives of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, St. Petersburg Main Archives U-Az, 1886, File 2, Sheets 43–44.

²⁴ See: *Golos* [Voice], 1877, # 64; 1878, ## 28, 351, 254, 355; 1879, # 3, and others.

²⁵ V.P. Vasilyev, “Nastoyashchiy vostochniy vopros [Present Oriental Issue]” (II). — In: *Golos* [Voice], # 25 (January 25/February 6, 1878).

²⁶ V.P. Vasilyev, “Nashi otnosheniya k Kitayu [Our Attitudes toward China],” In: *Vostochnoye Obozreniye* [Oriental Review], # 8 (1882).

²⁷ V.P. Vasilyev, “Stolknoveniye Frantsiyi s Kitayem [France’s Clash with China],” In: *Vostochnoye Obozreniye*, # 46 (November 17, 1886), p. 1.

²⁸ V.P. Vasilyev, “Vospominaniye o Pekine [Reminiscence of Beijing],” In: *Severnaya Pchela* [Northern Bee], # 9 (January 12, 1861).

²⁹ V.P. Vasilyev, “Stolknoveniye Frantsiyi s Kitayem [France’s Clash with China],” In: *Vostochnoye Obozreniye*, # 46 (November 17, 1886).

³⁰ Cf. *Novoye Vremya* [New Times], 1883, # 2777; Orientalists’ Archives of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (St. Petersburg), Folio 39, List 1, Storage Item 144.

Alexei POLYAKOV

The Role of Buddhism in the Political Life of Vietnam under the First Independent Viet Dynasties (first third of the 10th—early 11th centuries)

In the period of northern dependence, the Chinese authorities tried to spread Confucianism in Giao Chau. The chronicle *Abbreviated Records of An Nam (An Nam chi lược)* by Le Tac, the 14th-century Vietnamese historian, contains information on this issue. In the section “Educational Institutions” of Chapter 14 he wrote that the Qing general Zhao Tuo (207—137 B.C.), who established the Nam Viet Kingdom, “to some extent used examinations and good manners for the people” [4, 237]. It should be noted that there was no influence of Confucianism in that period, since the Qing Dynasty adhered to Legalism and resolutely opposed Confucianism. It may be assumed that from the days of Zhao Tuo only the Chinese language and writing system were spread in Giao Chau. Le Tac also writes that during the Western Han period the Chinese, who ruled in Giao Chau, “established educational institutions and taught virtue to the people” [4, 237]. It is quite probable that from that time Confucianism began to penetrate into Giao Chau. By the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty rule, several men from Giao Chau, whom Le Tac mentions, were rather high-ranking officials who were not inferior to the Chinese in their level of training. Still another widely educated man by the name of Khuong Cong Phu was an official at the Tang Dynasty court. In all likelihood, during the rule of the Tang Dynasty educational institutions were also founded and Confucian temples built in Giao Chau, although there are no specific data on this issue. Le Tac also mentions competitive examinations conducted under the Ly Dynasty, but provides no information about Confucian institutions of that period.

In the 10th century A.D., the landed aristocracy in Giao Chau ruled in the provinces, had its own, rather numerous armies and made claims to

central power in the country. In effect, its members comprised the military feudal estate. They had rather primitive administrative apparatuses conforming to the social and economic relations of the times. As a matter of fact, local landowners and the rulers of short-lived dynasties had no need for a complex Confucian administrative apparatus.

In the period of the Dinh (968—980) and Le (980—1009) Dynasties rule, Buddhist monks took an active part in state affairs because of the shortage of literate civilians. They were court officials. Buddhist canonical books were written in the ancient Chinese language. This enabled monks to participate in diplomatic intercourse with the Sung Dynasty and easily to communicate with Chinese Confucians, who comprised the staff of the embassies of that dynasty. Buddhist temples and monasteries were centers of culture and education. The children of the imperial dynasty and its officials studied at them. This circumstance increased the influence of the Buddhist Sangha (clergy) on political life in the country.

The founders of the 10th-century short-lived dynasties were members of the military feudal estate who had no education and were not familiar with the dogmata of Buddhism and who only used monks in conducting state affairs.

One of the most famous Buddhist monks of the Dinh and Le Dynasties was the monk Ngo Chan Luu. The chronicles provide very little information about him. *The Complete Book of the Historical Records of Dai Viet [Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư]* tells that Dinh Bo Linh bestowed the title of Khuong Viet Dai su [Great Teacher for Correcting and Sustaining Viet] on Tang Thong [General Supervisor of Monks] Ngo Chan Luu [3, 225]. The same chronicle notes that he took part in receiving Li Jue, an ambassador of the Sung Dynasty, and exchanged messages in verse with him that had a political meaning. Ngo Thi Chi’s chronicle *The Preliminary Compilation of the Historical Records of Dai Viet [Đại Việt sử ký tiền biên]* also mentions these two events [2, 154, 171]. *The Itemized Summaries of the Comprehensive Mirror of Viet History [Việt sử thông giám cương mục]* report only one event as follows: “The title of Khuong Viet Dai su was conferred on Tang Thong Ngo Chan Luu. The emperor revered the Buddhist teaching and, therefore, he instituted a hierarchy and ranks for Buddhist and Taoist monks; he conferred the title of Khuong Viet Thai su [Great Master Who Brings Order to Viet] on Ngo Chan Luu, appointed Truong Ma Ni Tang Luc Dao si [Buddhist Priest Overseer] and gave Dang Huyen Quang the title of Sung Chan uy nghi [Noble and Upright Majesty]” [10, 227]. *An Outline History of [Great] Viet ([Đại] Việt sử lược)*, the earliest of the chronicles to have come down to us, makes no mention of Ngo Chan Luu at all. It records under the

year 971: “Ranks and classes were instituted for civilian and military officials and Buddhist and Taoist monks.” Next follows a name-by-name list of civilian and military officials [1, 130]. Unlike the other chronicles mentioned above, the *Outline History of [Great] Viet* writes only about civilian and military officials and does not give the names of Buddhist and Taoist officials.

In *The Wonderful Tales of Linh Nam* (late 15th century) Vu Quynh writes about Ngo Chan Luu in much greater detail than the chronicles do: “... was an official of the Dinh Dynasty holding the title of Khuong Viet Thai su; by the time of the Le Dai Hanh’s rule, pleading illness, he went into reclusion” [11, 186]. Emperor Le Dai Hanh invited Ngo Chan Luu to the capital so that he could take part in state affairs. However, he declined the invitation [11, 187]. In 981, troops of the Sung Dynasty (960–1279) invaded Dai Viet.¹ Vu Quynh writes that Monk Ngo Chan Luu saw in a dream the spirit of Soc Thien Vuong, who promised to help defeat the Northern aggressors [11, 188]. According to Vu Quynh, that monk, even though he did not want to take part in state affairs, himself arrived at the Imperial Court when the country faced the threat of aggression from the Sung invaders and told everything he had seen in his dream. Emperor Le Dai Hanh, having heard him, came to Soc Son together with the monk and offered a prayer there” [11, 189]. The Dai Viet army routed the Sung troops. The emperor, “believing that Khuong Viet deserved well of his country, gave him a fief of ten thousand households. Khuong Viet refused to accept the gift and asked for permission to return to his former place of abode [i.e., to Soc Son].” [11, 190].

The *Collection of Outstanding Figures of the Zen Garden* [*Thiền uyển tập anh*], a work by an unknown author of the Tran Dynasty period, contains more information about the life of Ngo Chan Luu. He was Ngo Quyen’s relative. Dinh Bo Linh, the founder of the Dinh Dynasty, invited him to Hoa Lu for a conversation. The monk’s answers were to his liking, and he gave him the rank of Tang Thong. In 971, the monk received the title of Khuong Viet Dai su [9, 42,43]. The *Collection of Outstanding Figures of the Zen Garden* describes Ngo Chan Luu’s activities at the court of the Le Dynasty in an absolutely different way than do *The Wonderful Tales of Linh Nam*: “Under Le Dai Hanh, the monk enjoyed exceptional respect of the emperor and took part in the military affairs of the state” [9, 43]. The story of Ngo Chan Luu’s participation in the struggle against the Sung invaders is also somewhat different, whereas the story of receiving the Sung ambassador is quite similar.

Summing up, it can be said that Ngo Chan Luu played a marked role in the political life of Dai Viet under both the Dinh and Le Dynasties. He held the top office in the Buddhist Sangha, took an active part in state affairs and was an adviser to monarchs of the two dynasties and a patriot who inspired Le Dai Hanh to fight against Sung troops.

In addition to Ngo Chan Luu, there was also Van Hanh, a very well-known monk of Vietnam’s first period of independence. The *Collection of Outstanding Figures of the Zen Garden* gives a rather detailed record of him: “... everything he said was perceived as a prophecy in the Celestial Empire. He enjoyed particular respect of Le Dai Hanh.” [9, 188]. The emperor also consulted him on matters related to repulsing the Sung aggression. Van Hanh said: “The enemy will retreat in just 3 to 7 days. Subsequently, this was precisely so.” [9, 188,189]. Le Dai Hanh mounted a campaign against Cham Pa. “The monk requested the emperor to advance the troops without delay, or a good opportunity would be missed. The emperor immediately moved the troops forward and actually won a complete victory.” [9, 189]. Apparently, the Buddhist Sangha in the person of both Khuong Viet and Van Hanh took an active part in deciding military issues under the Dinh and Le Dynasties.

The last emperor of the Early Le Dynasty was of a cruel disposition. He put not only prisoners-of-war and criminals but also ordinary people, officials and even Buddhist monks to torture and execution. The monks, who had been revered under the preceding emperors, could not accept this. His conduct violated the Buddhist principles of mercy and humaneness. This accelerated the preparation of his successor by the Buddhist Sangha. In order to prevent this from happening in future and to increase its influence at court, the Sangha decided to place in power a man educated in the spirit of respect for Buddhist teaching. Ly Cong Uan, commander of the palace guard, was chosen as such man. Monk Van Hanh played an outstanding role in this. It should be noted that, unlike Ngo Chan Luu, the Vietnamese chronicles provide much more information about Van Hanh.

The birth and early years of Ly Cong Uan (posthumously known as Ly Thai To), the founder of the First Late Ly Dynasty (1009–1127), were directly linked to the Buddhist clergy. The fact stands out that recorded in the chronicles is not only the year, but also the date of his birth. The birth dates of all the preceding rulers and emperors are unknown. Records of this type could only be made at Buddhist temples and monasteries. This circumstance shows that the Buddhist clergy turned their attention toward him from the moment of his birth.

In *The Complete Book of the Historical Records of Dai Viet*, Ngo Si Lien describes the Ly Cong Uan's birth as a mystical, miraculous event. For example, his mother, named Pham Thi Nga, took a stroll in the vicinity of Tieu Son Temple, where she had an intercourse with a spirit, as a result of which Ly Cong Uan was born. According to Ngo Si Lien, three years later the baby was adopted by Monk Ly Khanh Van, who served at Co Phap Temple. Later on, he became Van Hanh's disciple at Luc To Temple [3, 240]. All the chronicles written after Ngo Si Lien such as Ngo Thi Chi's *The Preliminary Compilation of the Historical Records of Dai Viet*, *The Itemized Summaries of the Comprehensive Mirror of Viet History*, and other historical sources describe this event in the same way as Ngo Si Lien. Here is what *An Outline History of [Great] Viet*, the earliest of the chronicles that have come down to us, writes about Ly Cong Uan: "The name is Uan, the surname Nguyen,² a man from Co Phap in Bac Giang,³ his mother is Pham; was born on the seventeenth day of the second month of the fifth year of the Thai Binh period [974]. In his childhood he was clever and shrewd and had extraordinary abilities. He went to study to the Luc To Buddhist Temple⁴. Bonze Van Hanh saw him and said in amazement: 'This is an extraordinary person. Later on, when he grows up, he will undoubtedly be able to ensure the well-being of the people and become the lord of the Celestial Empire'" [1, 139]. Quite conspicuous is the fact that according to the *Collection of Outstanding Figures of the Zen Garden* this statement was made by Monk Da Bao, a disciple of Khuong Viet, and not by Van Hanh [9, 47]. Van Hanh's biography, however, has no record of this statement. The *Outline History of [Great] Viet* has no information about Ly Cong Uan's mother having had an intercourse with a spirit. Moreover, this chronicle makes no mention of Ly Khanh Van. Other sources written before Ngo Si Lien such as Le Tac's *Abbreviated Records of An Nam*, two Buddhist writings — the *Collection of Outstanding Figures of the Zen Garden* and the *Compilation of the Departed Spirits in the Realm of Viet* — and also steles make no mention about either Pham, Ly Cong Uan's mother, having had an intercourse with a spirit or the existence of Monk Ly Khanh Van, who adopted him. It is not to be ruled out that Ngo Si Lien added some "historical events" related to the birth and early years of Ly Cong Uan. It should be noted that Van Hanh was the only person who was present at the birth of Ly Cong Uan (he served at Tieu Son Temple) and was his mentor. Van Hanh's surname was also Ly. A hypothesis could, therefore, be advanced that Monk Van Hanh was Ly Cong Uan's biological father.

This case, where a Buddhist monk was the father of a Dai Viet Dynasty founder, is not the only one in history. In the early 12th century, Monk Tu

Dao Hanh became the father of Ly Than Tong, who founded the Second Late Ly Dynasty (1127–1226) in 1127 [7, 59].

Unlike Ngo Si Lien, who maintained that Ly Cong Uan's father was a spirit, Ngo Thi Si wrote in *The Preliminary Compilation of the Historical Records of Dai Viet*: "It is not known who the father of the *vua* (emperor) is; his mother, surnamed Pham, got pregnant and gave birth to the *vua* at Tieu Son Temple." [2, 192]. *The Itemized Summaries of the Comprehensive Mirror of Viet History* repeat after Ngo Si Lien that Ly Cong Uan's mother, surnamed Pham, had an intercourse with a spirit; the commentary, however, notes: "Ly Thai To was the Ly Khanh Van's adopted son, but it is not known who his natural father was.... We will, therefore, put this aside for a while and inquire into this later." [10, 267]. It is interesting to note that, according to folk tradition in Ly Cong Uan's native land, his father was Ly Van Hanh, who instructed his younger brother, Ly Khanh Van, to adopt Ly Cong Uan and give him their surname.

Contemporary Vietnamese researchers do not advance the hypothesis that Van Hanh was Ly Cong Uan's biological father. Professor Nguyen Quang Ngoc writes in his book *The Ly Dynasty 1009–1226*: "Van Hanh was the man who raised and educated Ly Cong Uan, who did exceptionally great services to him and who was his 'spiritual father'; however, there are no reasons to assume that he was Ly Cong Uan's natural father." [6, 20]. The professor arrives at the following conclusion: "... if we summarize the data from the materials that have come down to us and sum up the results, we can fully agree with the observation made by Professor Hoang Xuan Han 60 years ago — 'the hypothesis that Cong Uan originated from [the land of] Man⁵ is probably correct.'" [6, 35]. Both these authors base themselves on Chinese materials. *Lizhuang Zhunei Li hsi fang pu* 李庄煮内李氏房谱 (*The Genealogy of the Family of Li [from the Villages of] Lizhuang and Zhunei*), a Chinese source written by an unknown author in 1226, later than several other informal writings, reports that Ly Cong Uan was born in the land of Man and then, at a young age, moved together with his father to Bac Giang in Giao Chi. Quite a few scholars, both Vietnamese and Chinese, agree that the document contains errors in describing both the history of Vietnam and the history of China. It writes that Ly Cong Uan was born in 984 — 10 years later than the Vietnamese sources indicate. That is, Cong Uan ascended the throne at the age of 25 and prior to that, 10 to 15 years after moving from China, made a military career to become commander of Le Long Dinh's palace guard. This is hard to believe. In his report "Reverting to the Documents about the Place of Birth and Origin of Ly Cong Uan" at a conference dedicated to the millennium of the Ly Dynasty, Nguyen Ngoc Phuc, basing

himself on Chinese and Vietnamese sources, writes on the subject with greater caution: “Proceeding only from folk legends with many dubious points which had not yet been covered and which were very difficult to verify, Chinese authors transferred this story into their records, and they first appeared only in essays and fiction. But, relying on such information alone, they began to state that the land of Man was the native land of the Ly ancestors before they moved to the land of Viet. Such information is, in our opinion, of little value. When examining the issue of the origin and native land of the Ly Dynasty, this information should not be treated as the only documentary basis for solving this problem.” [5, 28].

The fact stands out that the Chinese documents related to this issue were written during the Sung Dynasty rule. Such information was of advantage to that dynasty, which had very tense relations with Dai Viet. In the monograph *The Revival of the State of Dai Viet in the 10th–14th Centuries* [*Sự phục hưng của nước Đại Việt thế kỷ X–XIV*], I analyzed the process of the ruling class of Viet society formation in the 10th century. I arrived at the following conclusion: the struggle for supreme power in the country was waged among members of major family clans, including those who came from South China but who had lived in Giao Chau for several generations. But it was only locals, Viets by origin, who gained the upper hand [8, 63]. If we are to believe Chinese sources that Ly Cong Uan was born in the land of Man in 984 and then moved to Dai Viet together with his father, neither he nor his father would have enough time to occupy a prominent position in the local elite and, the more so, to take the imperial throne in such a short time span.

Le Tac unambiguously points out in his *Abbreviated Records of An Nam* [*An Nam chí lược*]: “Ly Cong Uan was a man from Giao Chau (there are those who say that he came from Fujian, which is incorrect).” [4, 221]. At the time, Le Tac was living in China and receiving appointments and salary from the Yuan Dynasty. It would only be natural for him, therefore, to support the Chinese version concerning Ly Cong Uan’s native land and origin. Le Tac had the opportunity for an in-depth examination of all the Chinese documents related to this issue, including *Lizhuang Zhunei Li hsi fang pu*. We can, therefore, believe Le Tac’s statement.

Monk Van Hanh not only instructed Ly Cong Uan in the dogmata of the Buddhist teaching but also prepared him for a political career. Under the supervision of Van Hanh, Ly Cong Uan read many ancient historical books. He moved up the promotion ladder to the important post of the palace guard commander.

To ensure Ly Cong Uan’s coming to power, Buddhist monks resorted to inventing mystical stories. According to historical sources, their tales appeared before Ly Cong Uan ascended the throne, although it is not clear when precisely this occurred. They include a story that in Ly Cong Uan’s native village, a tree was struck by lightning, which left hieroglyph-like traces reading as follows:

Dark are the roots of the tree,
Green is its bark.
The reaping knife, and the tree falls,
Eighteen seeds are formed.
The sun appears in the Lightning Palace,
The star hides in the Courtyard of Joy.
Six or seven days will pass and there will be
Great happiness and prosperity in the Celestial Empire [1, 139].

This is a literal translation. This eight line poem has another, hidden meaning. If we substitute some of the hieroglyphs with others similar in meaning and sound and rearrange the hieroglyphs in the lines, it can be translated in the following way:

The monarch’s line will decline,
The subject will prosper,
The Le shall fall
And the Ly shall rise.
The Son of Heaven will rise in the east,
The star of the common people will set in the west.
In about six or seven years’ time
The Celestial Empire will have great peace.

Van Hanh explained Cong Uan the true meaning of the omen. Still another legend promoted by monks was that once a bitch at Ung Thien Temple of Co Phap Village gave birth to a white pup with black hair on his back forming two hieroglyphs that read “Son of Heaven.” Now Ly Cong Uan was born in the Year of the Dog.

In the eleventh month of the year 1009, Ly Cong Uan ascended the throne.

In addition to the traditional cult of ancestors, the centralized state needed a single religion. It would make it possible to unite the state and weaken the influence of local beliefs practiced by centrifugal forces. In the Dai Viet of the period, Buddhism alone could be such a religion. Confucianism was not widespread in the 10th century. Under the First Late Ly Dynasty, the military stratum, not particularly distinguished in education,

comprised a major part of the ruling class. Civilian officials, who were few in number, received education at temples and monasteries.

Ly Thai To implemented a number of measures aimed at spreading Buddhism in the country. Temples were built and the number of the clergy increased: in 1016, more than a thousand residents of the capital were made Buddhist and Taoist monks. In 1020, the emperor decreed that monks should preach all over the country. The crown prince was named after Buddha. In 1018, a Dai Viet envoy went to the Sung Court on the emperor's orders to ask for the Buddhist canon, the Tripitaka. Temple bells were cast in great quantities. The emperor displayed Buddhist mercy towards prisoners-of-war and imprisoned criminals. Ly Thai To was the first to use a temporary lifting of taxes and amnesty of prisoners.

In view of the aforesaid, the following conclusions can be made. The influence of the Buddhist religion and the Buddhist clergy on the political life of Dai Viet in the early period of independence under the first Viet dynasties was quite strong. After the 1,000-year-long period of northern dependence, Vietnam embarked on its own independent Buddhist path of development. Buddhist monks were given high-ranking offices at court, took part in deciding military issues and in diplomatic intercourse with the Sung, and comprised the best-educated part of the ruling class. Khuong Viet, Van Hanh and other monks were advisers to the first emperors of Dai Viet. Thirteenth-century historian Le Van HUU, the author of *Historical Annals of Dai Viet*, testified to the dominant influence of Buddhism in the country. He wrote that when Emperor Le Dai Hanh passed away (1005), no Confucian subjects could be found to perform the necessary rites [3, 231]. This observation shows that by the time of the First Late Ly Dynasty coming to power there were no Confucian officials in the administrative apparatus of Dai Viet. Le Van HUU also wrote about the early period of the First Late Ly Dynasty's rule: "Ly Thai To has already been on the throne for two years and the temple of the emperor's ancestors has not yet been built, and the altar of the deities of the earth and grain crops has not yet been put up; first of all he built nine pagodas in the Thien Duc Region ... half of the population are monks, and there are temples and monasteries everywhere all over the country...." [3, 242].

In the conditions of feudal fragmentation in the early period of independence, the Buddhist clergy played an important part in uniting the country and organizing its defense. In the struggle against the Sung and the Chams Le Dai Hanh resorted to the help of the Buddhist clergy, in the first place, monks Khuong Viet and Van Hanh.

The Buddhist clergy in the person of Monk Van Hanh was one of the main forces that placed the first long-term Vietnamese dynasty in power. It is quite probable that Ly Van Hanh was the biological father of the first emperor of that dynasty.

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10. *Việt sử thông giám cương mục* NXB Giáo dục, Tam kỳ, 2007.
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NOTES

¹ This is not a slip of the pen: Dai Viet and not Dai Co Viet. Vietnamese archaeologists have found in Hoa Lu, the capital of Dinh Bo Linh, the founder of the Dinh Dynasty (968—980), quite a number of bricks with the hieroglyphs 大越國軍城磚 (Đại Việt quốc quân thành chuyên — "brick of the citadel of the State of Dai Viet") impressed in them. [A.B. Polyakov, "K voprosu o sushchestvovaniyi gosudarstva Daikoviet vo Vietname v X—XI vv. [On the Question of the Existence of the State of Dai Co Viet in Vietnam in the 10th—11th Centuries]," In: *Tri chetveri veka* [Three Quarters of a Century], Institute of Asian and African Studies of M.V. Lomonosov State University in Moscow, Institute of Practical Oriental Studies. Moscow, Monuments of Historical Thought, 2007, p. 233. No bricks with the hieroglyphs reading "The State of Dai Co Viet" Đại Cổ Việt quốc 大瞿越國 have so far been found.

² The Tran Dynasty (1225–1400), having come to power, banned the surname Ly and replaced it with the surname Nguyen.

³ Ha Bac province.

⁴ Luc To Temple was also known as Truong Lieu and Tieu Son.

⁵ The land of Man is the modern Fujian province. Prior to its conquest by the Chinese in the 3rd century B.C., one of the Viet tribes, Man Viet (Min Yue in Chinese) lived there.

PART FIVE RECENT HISTORY

Evgeny KOBELÉV

The First CPV Leaders and Russia (a historical essay)

After the beginning of the “renewal policy” in Vietnam in 1986 and particularly within the latest decade there started an active process of “humanization” of the main stages of the modern and recent history of Vietnam in the historiography of this country. There appear different monographic studies devoted to the research and understanding of the particular creators of Vietnam’s independence. The two heroes of the national liberation movement of Vietnam, whose lives and destinies are inseparably linked with our country have been selected as the heroes of this essay. They are Le Hong Phong and NguyenThi Minh Khai.

Among the publications mention should be made of a monograph entitled *Lê Hồng Phong, Adamant Fighter of the International Communist Movement and Outstanding Leader of Our Party* (900 pp, Hanoi). The book contains extensive archival material and reminiscences not only about him, but also about his wife Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai, who was one of the leaders of the Saigon Communist party organization. The authors of the book made an emphasis on the years of the life and activity of these two leaders of the Vietnamese Communist party in Moscow and the Soviet Union and showed the role of our country and people in their becoming outstanding personages of the international and Vietnamese national liberation movement.

Lê Hồng Phong and Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai are not only heroic, but also tragic figures. They began an active revolutionary struggle in the late 1920s-early 1930s, in the period of the creation of Vietnam’s Communist party, which headed the resolute and selfless struggle of Vietnamese patriots.

Naturally, the reaction of the colonialists was quite harsh. Their guillotines and concentration camps worked ceaselessly. The Communist party had lost tens of thousands of fighters before their Motherland won independence in August 1945.

Later, the leader of the Vietnamese revolution, President Hồ Chí Minh wrote: “Comrades Chan Fu, Ngo Zia Ty, Lê Hồng Phong, Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai, Ha Hyun Tap, Nguyen Van Ky, Hoang Van Thu and hundreds of thousands of others placed the interests of the party, revolution, working class and nation above all else. They wholeheartedly believed in the great strength and glorious future of the class and nation... They dewed the tree of revolution with their blood so that it blossomed in full colors, and we see today the wonderful fruits of our revolution.”¹

Lê Hồng Phong was born in 1902 in Nghe An province (Central Vietnam) into a poor peasant family. He studied at a village school and learned Chinese characters under the tutorship of the local *nho si* — Confucian, and then graduated from a primary school on “quocngy” — the Latinized Vietnamese written language. In 1920, after his father’s death, he had to leave for the town of Vinh, provincial center, in search of work.

It was time when out-of-the-way Vinh was becoming the main trade and economic center of Central Vietnam. At first young Le found a place at a trade firm of one “huaqiao,” then he took a job at a match factory. While there he found a friend, worker by name of Pham Hong Thai. In 1923, they took an active part in a workers’ strike at their factory, for which they were fired and blacklisted.

Those were the years when the well-known Vietnamese patriot Phan Boi Chau² carried on the “Dongdu” (“to the East”) campaign, whose aim was to help patriotically-minded young Vietnamese leave for Japan and China to train them for a future national liberation revolution. In January 1924, under the guidance of Vyong Thuc Oanh, the son-in-law of Phan Boi Chau, fifteen young men from Nghe An province, including the two friends from Vin, who were jobless and penniless after dismissal from the factory, traversed the mountain passes of the Chyungshon ridge and, having crossed entire Laos, on foot arrived in the mountain northeastern part of Thailand.

Once, having ascended a high mountain, Lê Hồng Phong and Pham Hong Thai, like Alexander Herzen and Nikolai Ogaryov, the Russian revolutionary democrats of the 19th century, gave an oath to each other to devote their entire life to the liberation of their Motherland.³

They did not go to Japan, but settled not far from their country — in Canton, South China. At the time there were favorable conditions for the activity of Vietnamese revolutionaries. They worked at various offices of the

Canton Republic headed by Sun Yatsen, served in its People’s revolutionary army, and studied at the Kuomintang Military-Political School Wampu.

After several months of life in revolutionary Canton the two friends came to the conclusion that their path was different from the one of the Society of Rebirth of Vietnam headed by Phan Boi Tiau. They thirsted for concrete military actions against the colonialists, whereas the Society consisted mainly of Confucians rather advanced in years, who only castigated the colonialists in high-sounding words at collective meetings.

As a result, a new militant organization was created — Tamtam xa [Alliance of Hearts], whose chief method of struggle was individual terror. In the summer of 1924, Pham Hong Thai made an attempt on the life of Merlin, the Governor General of Indochina, who was on a visit to Shamyang, the Canton place of residence of consular officers of European states. Several officers of Merlin’s entourage were killed in the explosion, but Governor General remained alive. Trying to escape from the police Pham Hong Thai jumped into a river from a bridge, but was unable to reach the bank and drowned.

Phan Boi Chau was a close acquaintance of Sun Yatsen, the leader of the Canton Republic, and persuaded him to receive the first young Vietnamese patriots who had arrived from Siam to Canton to study at the Kuomintang military school Wampu, including Lê Hồng Phong. At the time, there were several Soviet military instructors at the school, among them Vasilii Blucher, future Marshal of the Soviet Union. Lê Hồng Phong, as one of the healthiest young men, was accepted to the nine-month course for military pilots at Wampu. After completing the course the heads of the Wampu school suggested to M. Borodin, the U.S.S.R. and the Comintern representative in Canton, to send the capable Vietnamese youth to the Soviet Union to continue training. In October 1926, Lê Hồng Phong arrived in the country, of which he and his comrades-in-arms had dreamed for a long time, and was admitted to the Airforce Military Theoretical School in Leningrad, where he stayed until December 1927.

In September 1928, a slim young man, Mikhail Litvinov by name, arrived to the aircraft school in the town of Borisoglebsk. His fellow cadets were surprised: the name was Russian, but appearance definitely Asian. The most persistent and inquisitive cadets tried to find out where he was from and who his parents were. But he turned everything into a joke and changed the subject of conversation. However, he did not conceal his passion for aviation and confessed in his great desire to become an ace pilot. He said that he came from Leningrad where he had studied at the Airforce Military Theoretical School.

Several months of intensive studies and training flights passed by, and Mikhail Litvinov disappeared as suddenly as he had arrived. For several months after his sudden departure one could see his photo on the board of honor of the school cadets. Lê Hồng Phong could by right be regarded the first Vietnamese military pilot, the forerunner of thousands of Vietnamese ace pilots who, flying the Soviet-made MIGs defended Vietnam's skies from the air attacks of the world's most powerful state.

Lê Hồng Phong was recalled from Borisoglebsk to Moscow on the initiative of the Comintern Executive Committee. In December 1928, the officer of the Soviet airforce Lê Hồng Phong became a student of the Communist University for Workers of the East (CUWE). The path there had been beaten by Nguyen Ai Quoc (future Hồ Chí Minh) who had been one of the first Vietnamese to arrive to Soviet Russia to study at that school training party and revolutionary personnel for colonial and semicolonial countries in Asia and Africa. Hồ Chí Minh came to Moscow in June 1923 and finished a short-term course at CUWE.

Mikhail Litvinov stayed there for four years studying the theory of revolutionary struggle and became a convinced Marxist-Leninist. He was learning Marxist science through the prism of events in Indochina. His working papers were full of thoughts and ideas about the possible development ways of the Vietnamese revolution. At that time already he came to the firm conclusion that the victory of revolution in Vietnam and the eviction of the colonialists from the country were only possible on the basis of a broad national united front creation.⁴

At the time there were quite a few students from colonial Vietnam at the Communist University. Naturally, all of them studied at the French language group, only Mikhail Litvinov, who knew Russian quite well by then, was in a Russian language group. But all Vietnamese students, irrespective of their group, were subordinated to the Indochina sector of the Oriental Department of the Comintern Executive Committee, which was headed by one of its veterans Vera Vassilyeva.

In 1929, an important event took place in Lê Hồng Phong's life: he was admitted to the Communist party of the Soviet Union. In their letters of recommendation three Soviet students of the university characterized him as a "serious, honest and sincere comrade worthy of the high title of the Communist party member."⁵

In the late 1920s, on Vera Vassilyeva's initiative, the Oriental Department of the Comintern Executive Committee decided to train specially the most capable Vietnamese students at the University for their subsequent dispatch to Indochina with a view to strengthening the ranks of the national

liberation movement fighters and creating the Communist party of Indochina.

Lê Hồng Phong came to the fore as the most capable student with the best knowledge of Russian. This was why, when the 6th Comintern Congress took place in Moscow in the middle of 1928, Lê Hồng Phong (alias Mikhail Litvinov) was invited to participate in it as an observer.⁶ Moreover, he was entrusted with the job of translating the basic documents of the congress proceedings into Vietnamese, as well as several timely Marxist-Leninist works, including the well-known V.I. Lenin's pamphlet *Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder* and Bukharin's and Preobrazhensky's booklet *The ABC of Communism*. All these documents and books were published in the Vietnamese language and secretly shipped to Vietnam.

In 1930, after graduation from CUWE, Lê Hồng Phong was accepted to the university postgraduate courses, but he could not write and defend his thesis. The situation in Vietnam aggravated sharply. In October 1930, mass actions of peasants against the colonial rule began in two provinces of Annam (Central Vietnam). They were led by the Communist party of Vietnam created on February 3, 1930, under the leadership of Nguyen Ai Quoc (Hồ Chí Minh).⁷

Peasants in 116 villages of the two provinces set up Vietnam's first organs of people's revolutionary power — the Nghe Tinh Soviets (on the pattern of the Russian Soviets), which were active for almost a year as "islands of independence" in colonial Indochina, until they were liquidated by the French colonialists. "Although the French imperialists cruelly suppressed this movement," Hồ Chí Minh wrote thirty years later, "the Nghe Tinh Soviets were a vivid example of the heroism and revolutionary capability of the Vietnamese working people. This movement suffered defeat, but it forged the forces for the victory of the August revolution."⁸

Right after the suppression of the uprising a wave of police terror swept over the entire country. Many organizations of the recently created Communist party of Indochina were smashed. There were no connections between underground centers, which continued functioning. In these conditions the Comintern Executive Committee decided to send Lê Hồng Phong to South China in order to resume connections with the functioning organizations of the Communist party.

In June 1932, the *Program of Action of the Communist party of Indochina* prepared in Moscow with the participation of Lê Hồng Phong, Chan Van Ziau⁹ and some other Vietnamese working at the Comintern reached party organizations first in South China and then in Vietnam itself. Vietnamese historians maintain that this document was the "Program-minimum of the

party in the new conditions” and that “Lê Hồng Phong made an enormous contribution to the adoption, distribution and realization of the *Program of Action of the Communist Party of Indochina*.¹⁰

In March 1934, Lê Hồng Phong arrived in Portuguese Macao in South China where he set up the Foreign Leading Committee of the Communist party of Indochina, and then organized publication of the underground newspaper *Bolshevik*. In June of that year, he convened a conference in which members of the Foreign Committee and representatives of party organizations who clandestinely arrived from Vietnam took part.

At that time, a report came from Moscow about the forthcoming Congress of the Comintern which should also be attended by a representative delegation of the Communist party of Indochina. The Foreign Committee members entrusted Lê Hồng Phong with the task of forming and heading the delegation. When the delegation was in Moscow, on March 27–31, 1935, the 1st Congress of the Communist party of Indochina was held in Macao which elected Lê Hồng Phong its General Secretary.

The CPI delegation to the 7th Comintern Congress included: Lê Hồng Phong (head) and two members — young Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai, dark-skinned as a peasant woman, and Hoang Van Non, a little-known envoy of the northern Vietnamese Kaobang province where a strong party organization came into being based on rural districts. Soon Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai became Lê Hồng Phong’s wife.

Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai (1913–1941) was born, just like Lê Hồng Phong, in Nghe An province, in the town of Vinh. At the age of 14, she took part in workers’ protest actions in her home town. She joined the CPI right after its foundation and was in charge of propaganda activity among factory workers in one of the Vinh’s coastal districts. Soon, by decision of the party, she was dispatched to Hong Kong to work at the mission of the Oriental Department of the Comintern Executive Committee, where her boss was Nguyen Ai Quoc (Hồ Chí Minh).

On April 29, 1931, she should have met in a clandestine place Le Hyui Bon, who had just arrived from Moscow after graduation from the Communist University, but was arrested. Minh Khai spent three years in a Hong Kong prison in complete isolation from her party comrades. But the International Organization to Help Revolutionaries intervened, and she was freed and moved to Shanghai.

At last, there was a long-awaited meeting with friends and among them was one of the party leaders, Lê Hồng Phong, who informed her that she was included in the CPI delegation to the 7th Comintern Congress in Moscow. Lê Hồng Phong told her about how they would reach Moscow. (They

arrived in the port of Vladivostok in the Far East on board Soviet ship, and from there travelled by train twelve days across Siberia. Incidentally, that was how dozens of Vietnamese revolutionaries reached Moscow.)

Lê Hồng Phong and Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai were together, first on board ship, then in one railway car compartment, for almost a month. Naturally, they came to know and love each other. Several months later, after the end of the Comintern Congress, members of the Vietnamese diaspora in Moscow were present at Vietnam’s first “communist wedding party.”

In the 1970s, while gathering material for my book *Hồ Chí Minh* in the popular series *Life of Outstanding People*, I had several meetings with N.N. Golenovsky, former employee of the Comintern Executive Committee in charge of communists from Southeast Asian countries. He told me about the official marriage ceremony (very modest) in one of Moscow’s district registry offices.

The 7th Comintern Congress opened on July 25, 1935, in the Hall of Columns of the Trade Union House in Moscow. It was attended by 513 delegates from 65 Communist parties and international organizations. The activity of the CPI was highly appraised on the very first days of the congress work. Its representative Lê Hồng Phong (he was known in the Congress documents under the alias Hayan) was unanimously elected to the Congress Presidium.

At the ninth plenary session of the Congress on July 29, he delivered a detailed report on “CPI struggle, above all, the Nghe Tinh Soviets’ movement.” Having described the development of the revolutionary movement in Vietnam under the leadership of the CPI during the five years of its functioning, Lê Hồng Phong pointed to its main achievement and drawbacks, emphasizing “the great services of Indochinese communists for overcoming factional divisions and gaining intraparty solidarity. In the course of its revolutionary struggle the party established close ties with the fighting popular masses and ensured the leading role of the proletariat in that fight.”¹¹

Speaking of the prospects and major tasks facing the CPI he said: “At present, we have much greater opportunities for creating an anti-imperialist popular front of all peoples of Indochina in the struggle against the common enemy — the French imperialists.”¹²

Minh Khai (in the Congress documents she was under the alias Phan Lan), as the youngest and one of the few Asian women-delegates, was given the honor to speak on behalf of women of the East. Later she remembered her meeting with Nadezhda Krupskaya, V.I. Lenin’s widow, as one of the most memorable events of the time.

The decisions and conclusions of the 7th Comintern Congress, as it was shown by further events, were of major importance for the development of the Vietnamese national liberation movement. As it was known, it formulated the tasks of the communist and workers' movements in the face of the coming fascist threat. Although those tasks touched, first and foremost, the European Communist parties, the Congress' conclusions about the fascist danger helped Vietnamese revolutionaries determine and implement a correct course toward the Japanese militarists which became a dangerous potential enemy of Vietnamese revolution.

Apart from that, the 7th Congress rejected the leftist orientation and attitudes toward the need for implementing "workers and peasants' revolution," and creating a "Soviet government" in colonial and dependent countries, which were premature for most of them and underestimated the common national anti-imperialist tasks. It was deemed necessary to work for creating a united popular front, on the one hand, drawing the popular masses in the struggle against the colonialists for national independence, and on the other, actively participate in mass popular movement headed by the national-reformists.

The decisions of the 7th Comintern Congress on the tactics of a united front in colonial and semicolonial countries were a guide to action for the Vietnamese patriots. It was the tactics of the united national front with due account of the degree of maturity of the national-liberation movement and concrete tasks facing it that became one of the decisive factors of the 1945 August revolution victory.

Participants in the 7th Comintern Congress endorsed the decision of its Executive Committee adopted in 1931 to accept the Communist party of Indochina in the Comintern. Lê Hồng Phong, the representative of the CPI, was elected candidate member of the Executive Committee. From then on the growing Communist movement of Indochina was represented in the Communist International leading body.

After the Congress, the Comintern Executive Committee devoted much time to the problem of returning the Communist party of Indochina delegation members back home. The first month they spent in a sanatorium on the Black Sea coast, then returned to Moscow and attended political courses at the Communist University, where everything was so familiar to Lê Hồng Phong. At the time he wrote an article for the Comintern journal *Inprecorr* under the title *The Role of the Proletariat in the Revolution in Indochina*, in which he explained that "the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Indochina (anti-imperialist and antifeudal) was not only an inalienable part of a world socialist revolution, but the victory of this revolution, due to

the existing objective conditions, would mean the first stage along the way to its transition into a socialist revolution." Hence, his logical conclusion was that "the necessary condition was for the proletariat to retain the role of the leader of this revolution."¹³

In the middle of 1936, the ways of Lê Hồng Phong and his wife and comrade-in-arms parted temporarily. He went to Vietnam along his tested route in order to inform the central bodies of the CPI about the Congress decisions. Minh Khai went back via Europe. In Paris she was witness to the first tangible successes of the Popular Front. In those conditions it was easier for her to escape police surveillance.

In July 1936, a wealthy Chinese businessman appeared in Shanghai. Impeccably dressed he drove a luxurious car and looked quite jovial and self-confident. He was constantly engaged in secret talks, and, apparently, his business was thriving. If the Shanghai police had even known that the man was none other than Lê Hồng Phong, it could have done nothing but expel him from the country. He had not a single document on himself which could have served as proof of his clandestine activity. He had learnt by heart the basic documents of the 7th Comintern Congress.

While in Shanghai, he convened the CC CPI plenary session with a view to changing the political course of the party in accordance with the 7th Comintern Congress decisions. Taking into account the fact that a Popular Front government came to power in France, the ICI plenary session approved the course to creating a national anti-imperialist front, which was later called the Democratic Front of Indochina.

At the next CC CPI plenary session in Saigon, in March 1937, this strategy began to be implemented. The session called for closely following the development of the popular masses' democratic movement. Besides, certain leftist, too radical organizational forms of work should have been revised. Having reached Saigon Lê Hồng Phong became immersed in everyday revolutionary work. A great conspirator, he constantly changed his face. He was either a teacher of the Chinese language in one of the suburban schools in Saigon, or an agent of a trade company, or a fitter in a shop. The Saigon police ran off its legs trying to trace and apprehend him.

During the two years in Saigon prior to his arrest Lê Hồng Phong managed to do a great amount of organizational and theoretical work. On his recommendations the party took a course aimed at creating a broad anti-imperialist popular front. Its members had the task of drawing all classes, parties, political organizations, religious groups, and national minorities striving for democracy and national emancipation in political struggle using legal and semilegal forms of work. Due to the creation of such a

front the movement for Vietnam's national liberation entered a new stage and became truly popular in subsequent years.

His tireless activity for national liberation was stopped by a traitor. On June 22, 1939, Lê Hồng Phong was arrested by the colonial police in Saigon. But they did not find any incriminating evidence of his belonging to the CPI on him, and he was thrown into prison accused of holding a false ID card. To dispatch and swiftly punish him on weighty legal grounds (it was time when France was ruled by a Popular Front government and certain democratization processes were underway in Indochina itself) the authorities needed to have irrefutable proof. And the police seemed to have found it, because soon Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai fell into a trap.

Lê Hồng Phong's last meeting with his wife and comrade-in-arms was tragic. Put in irons they were brought to face-to-face interrogation in the central prison in Saigon. The police knew that Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai was the secretary of the Saigon CPI City Committee and Lê Hồng Phong's wife. It was necessary to make them admit who they were. However, they did not betray either by word or by glance that they knew each other, tortured and exhausted as they were.

Of course, she was unable to tell her husband that a year ago she gave birth to a girl, although right after that she managed to send a short note to her sister for him. But, apparently, he did not receive it.

In the mid-1980s, I happened to meet with the daughter of the heroes of this article in Hồ Chí Minh City (former Saigon). Her name was Hong Minh, which means "Morning dawn," or "Aurora" ("Avrora" in Russian). Minh Khai, like most Vietnamese patriots at the time, revered the Great October revolution in Russia and wished her daughter bear the name of the legendary revolutionary battleship *Avrora*.

Hong Minh said that she did not remember her parents because she was born in prison and separated from them. It was only when she grew up that she learnt about their fate. Their daughter also said to me that although they had lived not far from each other in Nghe An province, they got acquainted only in the spring of 1935 on the way to Moscow. Theirs was a very long journey and they talked much about many things, gradually realizing how close they were in thoughts and feelings. And they got married in Moscow.

Having failed to find enough evidence against Lê Hồng Phong the judicial authorities decided to send him to his native Nghe An province and place under house arrest. However, due to events which took place in Cochinchine in 1940, the fate of Lê Hồng Phong and Minh Khai changed sharply. By the end of 1940, the situation in Vietnam developed favorably for the CPI, particularly in Cochinchine. There were no Japanese troops in

the province (they were only in Tonkin, that is, North Vietnam). Parallel with that, the Siamese militarists unleashed a war against Indochina. In an attempt to arrest Siamese offensive operations, the French authorities ordered broad mobilization of the population of Cochinchine. This provoked deep indignation in local society, and Vietnamese soldiers began to desert en masse from the French Army.

In the prevailing conditions the members of the CC CPI of Cochinchine deemed the moment quite favorable for revolutionary actions and decided to start an armed uprising in the south of the country.

But the French gendarmerie managed, not long before the uprising, to seize documents disclosing the date of its beginning. As a result, the authorities had enough time to mobilize reliable troops, disarm the revolutionary-minded Vietnamese soldiers and place them in barracks, introduce curfew in the main towns of the Mekong delta, and arrest many leaders of the forthcoming uprising, including Nguyen Van Ky, Ha Hyui Tap, Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai, and others.

Despite this, the "Nam Ky's revolt" (Cochinchine is "Nam Ky" in Vietnamese) began as planned, on the night of November 23, 1940, spread to several provinces, including Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, and engulfed the western provinces of Cochinchine. It was indicative that the rebels in the provinces of Mitho and Vinlong hoisted for the first time the red banner with a yellow star, which later became the state flag first of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

But the rebels in revolutionary districts not hold out long. Within two months the uprising was suppressed with cruelty surpassing even the terrible days of terror in 1930—1931. During forty days about 6,000 rebels were captured and shot in just four provinces. Quite a few local CPI organizations were smashed, and the arrested leaders of the Communist party of Indochina, including Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai, were sentenced to death.

In these conditions the Supreme Court of France reconsidered the case of Lê Hồng Phong and tied it to the "Nam Ky's revolt." At the end of 1940, after staying in a Saigon prison for several months, he was convoyed to the Pulo-Condor Island of Death (now Con Dao).

The French occupied Con Dao Island about 100 miles from the resort town of Vungtau in 1862 and immediately began to turn it into a huge prison for political detainees. The prison was divided into four sections. During the first fifty years of its existence the number of inmates was one thousand. Along with the growing revolutionary movement, particularly after the "Nam Ky's revolt" it began to increase rapidly, and by January 15, 1943, it reached 4,403 men.¹⁴

Lê Hồng Phong was isolated from all prisoners and placed in the so-called “tiger cage”, one kilometer away from the basic camp. However, there was an underground revolutionary organization on the island which soon established regular connection with Le. That was the period of the greatest toughening of the prison regime on Con Dao. The “Nam Ky’s revolt” thoroughly shocked the colonial regime in Vietnam. The French colonialists unfolded mass reprisal campaign, on the one hand, and on the other, their actions betrayed growing fear for the revolutionary movement. The jailers were afraid even of the shackled revolutionaries and cruelly bullied them. Soon Lê Hồng Phong was transferred to another barracks in section two where among his neighbors were well-known revolutionary figures Nguyen An Ninh, Ta Thu Thau, and Huynh Van Thao.¹⁵ They often argued on various philosophical and religious subjects, and Lê Hồng Phong explained to them Marxist premises on religion, classes and class struggle, and the decisive role of man in concrete historical conditions.

When the German Nazis attacked the Soviet Union, Con Dao inmates, even those who were kept in “tiger’s cages,” found an opportunity to follow the course of the Great Patriotic war of the Soviet people. When there was discouraging news about the situation on the Soviet-German battlefield Lê Hồng Phong told his comrades about the great country Russia, the successes scored by the Soviet people in the building of a new life, and expressed conviction that the Nazis would never be able to conquer it. He composed an octave verse, describing the forthcoming victory of the Soviet people and the liberation of Vietnam, and voiced the hope that Con Dao Island would become a place of rest and recreation for working people in free Vietnam. He sang the song “Russian Girl,” which he had composed during the years of his studies in Soviet Russia, and taught his neighbors in the barracks to sing it in chorus.¹⁶

All years of his incarceration on the island Lê Hồng Phong lived in anguish, knowing nothing about the fate of his beloved Minh Khai. Once on a hot summer day in 1942, he made an acquaintance of a prison guard, an Indian who arrived from the mainland, and asked whether he knew anything about a woman named Minh Khai who was kept in the central prison of Saigon. And he heard the horrible truth from him. “The great lady Minh Khai was shot a long time ago. I call her ‘great’ because this is so. Mountains should crumble remembering her and trees should bow their branches honoring her courage.”¹⁷

The prison guard told him about the day, August 28, 1941, when she was shot. She stood before his eyes as if it was only yesterday. Before execution Minh Khai put on a white dress as if wishing to emphasize that all her

thoughts and desires were pure, and throughout all her life she was fighting against evil and oppression, for the freedom and happiness of her people. The butchers tried to put on a black bandage over her eyes before shooting, but she twitched it off and shouted: “I don’t fear death and meet it with open eyes!”

Going to the scaffold she called on all inmates to be firm and staunch. The guards pricked her with bayonets and blood trickled on her snow-white dress. She asked them to give her a little time to address the people who gathered at the prison wall. She was given only five minutes. First she spoke in Vietnamese and then in French addressing the French soldiers. “Ours is the righteous cause. We work for revolution because we want to see our Motherland free and our people happy. We have not committed any crime.”

Then the officer gave command to the soldiers and they got the rifles ready. Her last words were “Long live Communist party of Indochina! Long live victory of Vietnamese revolution!”

On the wall of the cell where Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai was kept there was the inscription: “I don’t care of myself. All my thoughts are about the party.”¹⁸

Le Duan, the former CC CPV General Secretary, many years later said the following about Minh Khai: “I have met and worked with many women party members, but I have never seen anyone who has been striving to take upon herself the role of revolutionary leader as Comrade Minh Khai.”¹⁹

Lê Hồng Phong died on September 6, 1942, of galloping pneumonia. His last words addressed to his cellmates were: “Comrades, tell the party that Lê Hồng Phong till his last breath wholeheartedly believed in the glorious victory of our revolution.”²⁰

His last words proved prophetic. Three years later the August revolution triumphed in Vietnam and his Motherland became independent. After the liberation of Con Dao all former political inmates gathered at Lê Hồng Phong’s grave and put up a temporary tombstone of bricks made by them on the island. On September 17, 1945, a South Vietnam government delegation arrived in Con Dao to welcome the former prisoners. They laid wreaths on the graves of Lê Hồng Phong and his former cellmate Nguyen An Ninh.

In the years of the resistance against the French colonialists (1946–1954), just as during the period of the American aggression, the enemies destroyed the modest tombstone at Lê Hồng Phong’s grave several times in order to wipe the memory of him off the face of the earth. But the former inmates of Con Dao restored it. After the complete liberation of South Vietnam and reunification of the country in 1975, on a decision of the SRV government, an impressive monument was erected on Lê Hồng

Phong's grave worthy of his contribution to the victory of the national liberation movement.

In 2013, another of his predictions came true. Con Dao Island was officially declared a resort zone for thousands of Vietnamese and foreign tourists, including those from far-off Russia, which Lê Hồng Phong loved so dearly.

NOTES

¹ *Quoted from:* Lê Hồng Phong, Chiến sĩ cộng sản quốc tế kiên cường, Nhà lãnh đạo xuất sắc của Đảng ta [Lê Hồng Phong, Adamant Fighter of the International of Communists. Outstanding Leader of Our Party], Hà Nội, 2012, p. 13.

² Phan Boi Chau (1867–1940) — outstanding leader of the Vietnamese national liberation movement, revolutionary democrat, supporter of armed struggle for the liberation of Vietnam from colonial oppression, founder of the patriotic organization Society of Vietnam Revival.

³ Lê Hồng Phong, Chiến sĩ cộng sản quốc tế kiên cường..., p. 6.

⁴ Comintern archives: Vietnamese part.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *See:* Quinn-Judge, Sophie, Hồ Chí Minh — The Missing Years, 1919–1941, London, 2003, p. 125.

⁷ At the first CC CPV plenary session in October 1930 it was renamed Communist party of Indochina (CPI). This was done on the recommendation of the Comintern Executive Committee, which proceeded from the fact that French Indochina was a single whole both politically and geographically, and the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were faced with similar tasks of the struggle against the colonialists, for national liberation.

⁸ Hồ Chí Minh, Toàn tập, Vol. 10, Hà Nội, 1996, p. 9.

⁹ Chan Van Ziau (1911–2010) — outstanding leader of the Vietnamese national liberation movement. In 1930–1932, he was a student at the Communist University for Workers of the East. One of the CPI leaders in Cochinchina. An active participant in the August 1945 revolution in Saigon. He became an outstanding historian in the DRV, author of fundamental works on the history of the Vietnamese workers' and Communist movements in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

¹⁰ Lê Hồng Phong, *Op. cit.*, pp. 414–415.

¹¹ Đảng cộng sản Việt Nam: văn kiện Đảng, Toàn tập, vol. 5, p. 320.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 324.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 377.

¹⁴ Nguyễn Đình Thông. Côn Đảo từ góc nhìn lịch sử [Con Dao at Historical Angle], Th. phổ Hồ Chí Minh, 2012, p. 11.

¹⁵ Nguyen An Ninh — outstanding patriot-nationalist, founder of two most influential newspapers opposed to the colonial regime — *La cloche fele* and *La lutte*;

Ta Thu Thau — outstanding revolutionary, leader of the Trotskyite faction in the Communist movement in Vietnam; Huynh Van Thao — one of the political leaders of the influential religious sect Caodai in Cochinchina.

¹⁶ *See:* Nguyễn Đình Thông. Côn Đảo từ góc nhìn lịch sử, pp. 169–170.

¹⁷ Nguyệt Tú, Chị Minh Khai..., p. 171.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁰ Nguyễn Đình Thông. Côn Đảo từ góc nhìn lịch sử..., p. 172.

Ilya USOV

**The First Vietnamese Communists
at the Sixth Comintern Congress:
the Shaping of Views on the Development
of Revolutionary Struggle
among the Vietnamese Intelligentsia**

The Sixth Comintern Congress was held in Moscow from July 17 to September 1, 1928. Among the delegates, the first Vietnamese Communists were present at the congress. Since the Communist party was not yet in existence in Vietnam, the Vietnamese participated in the work of the congress as the French Communist party (FCP) delegation members. In April 1928, shortly before the congress, the first Vietnamese Communist group headed by Nguyen Van Tao — in effect, the first Communist organization in the colony — was set up within the FCP.

The FCP delegation included three Vietnamese — Nguyen The Vinh, Tran Thieu Ban and Nguyen Van Tao.¹ The latter of the three delivered a report at the Sixth Congress. Nguyen Van Tao was, therefore, the second Communist from Indochina to ever speak at a Comintern congress (the first one was Ho Chi Minh, who took part in the debates at the Fifth Congress).

For a number of factors, Nguyen Van Tao's report is important for understanding the development of Vietnam's Communist movement. In the first place, the late 1920s were a period of transition of the Vietnamese nationalist youth to revolutionary forms of Marxism; it is, therefore, necessary to consider what questions were the first to be raised by the young Communists, how they analyzed the situation in their country, and what forms of struggle they put in the foreground. The Sixth Congress was the last one before the formation of the Communist party of Indochina (CPIC); that is, its attitudes and sentiments were decisive for forming the tactical and strategic lines of the colony's Communist party in the first years of its existence. The

third major reason why that report deserves special attention is that Nguyen Van Tao, who returned to his homeland in 1931, in fact headed the party's legal activity, first in newspapers published in Quoc Ngu² and then within a bloc set up around the French-language newspaper *La Lutte* [The Struggle], where he and a number of his comrades (in particular, Duong Bach Mai, who was studying at the Communist University for Workers of the East) comprised a Communist faction.

Nguyen Van Tao, who spoke under the pseudonym of An, delivered a speech at the 35th session of the Sixth Comintern Congress, which took place in Moscow on August 17, 1928.

The central point of the Vietnamese Communist's speech was the problem of the class forces balance in the colony. In the reporter's opinion, the capitalist development of the colony, where French industrial and financial capital had become the main force, had reached a sufficiently high level and now it was possible to speak about the onset of the "industrialization process," and also a trend toward the spread of "imperialism" (apparently, Nguyen Van Tao understood it to mean capitalist relations) into the pristine corners of Indochina. Alongside the strengthening of the foreign bourgeoisie activity in the colony from the mid-1920s, national capital, both industrial and financial, scored a "substantial success." "...In parallel with the development of the industry which is in the hands of the French and foreigners, the industry owned by native bourgeoisie is also developing," the reporter stressed. Despite this, however, so far there was no "open resistance" from French capital, even though there was a trend for a certain desire of "imperialism" to slow down the national industry development.

In Nguyen Van Tao's opinion, the national bourgeoisie and the strata of intellectuals linked up with it, in particular those who had returned from the metropolis, did not oppose French imperialism. Its mouthpiece was the Constitutionalist party, whose leader, Bui Quang Chieu, "advocates open cooperation with imperialism." That was why the Vietnamese had "turned their backs on their bourgeoisie, which openly shows its counterrevolutionary essence."

However, the industrial development of the colony led to the formation of the working class. "We are told that there is no proletariat in Indochina, but this is untrue; this is an underestimation of the significance of the Indochinese proletariat.... Even if our proletariat is not numerous and not widespread all over the country as it is in Europe, we nonetheless have a closely consolidated proletariat in major industrial centers," the reporter insisted. Besides the industrial working class, there are also working people concentrated on plantations. In addition, in the countryside the process of "pauperization of the peasantry is under way; peasants increasingly leave

the land and move to industrial centers.” Nguyen Van Tao also noted “the radicalization of the peasant masses” related to an increase in their exploitation by the “feudal system of large landowners,” loan sharking by landlords and constantly growing taxes. However, “in a country where the proletariat is growing and the workers are increasingly leaning to the left, where the bourgeoisie is acting its role of a traitor — in that country the revolutionary masses are still unorganized and, therefore, powerless,” the reporter concluded. That is why “the Comintern should pay particular attention to the question of forming an Indochinese Communist party; it should also explore the issue of setting up workers’ trade unions and peasant unions. Only this will offer the Annamite workers and peasants an opportunity to obtain full freedom,” he further developed his thought. In essence, the Vietnamese Communist covertly reproached the Communist International with ignoring the issue of establishing a Communist party in that French colony.³

It would seem that the first Vietnamese Communists were influenced by the changes in the Comintern strategic attitudes with respect to the issue of national liberation movement in the countries of the East, which took final shape precisely at the Sixth Comintern Congress, where the idea that the national bourgeoisie may betray the cause of national liberation and go over to the camp of counterrevolution became dominant. Following from this premise was the recognition of the need for the hegemony of the proletariat in the anti-imperialist movement, which naturally called for the establishment of Communist parties in the colonies.

In our opinion, however, these views of the rising Communist movement in Indochina did not have an exogenous origin but rather were caused by an internal drift of the revolutionary intelligentsia from nationalism to Marxism (naturally, the influence of the “headquarters of the world revolution” on the internal processes going on among the young Vietnamese intelligentsia cannot to be denied). For example, in her recently published work Western researcher Sophie Quinn-Judge arrives at the conclusion that Nguyen Van Tao’s analysis was close to Otto W. Kuusinen’s views on the development of India,⁴ which, in fact, is not quite true. The Vietnamese Communist speaks about the onset of the process of industrialization in French Indochina, whereas Kuusinen in his report at the Sixth Congress denied the industrialization of India⁵ — a colony more developed compared with Vietnam. Accordingly, one can speak here about an independent analysis (even though somewhat influenced by the Comintern).

In our view, Nguyen Van Tao’s standpoint rather reflects the general sentiment of the Vietnamese emigration (in a broader sense, the rising Vietnamese revolutionary intelligentsia); the opinion about the counterrevolu-

tionary essence of the Indochina national bourgeoisie as well as the demand for establishing a Lenin-style party were, therefore, dictated not only and not so much by the influence of the Comintern modified strategy. To prove this, we should examine the political views which dominated the circles of the Vietnamese (mainly student) emigration that were not part of the Communist movement.

In 1928, a discussion about the social composition of the revolution in Indochina flared up among the nationalist émigré student circles in France. Vietnamese students in Toulouse arrived at the conclusion that the peasantry would be a decisive force in national liberation; at the same time, they denied any revolutionary potential of the bourgeoisie. “Liberation movements in the colonial countries (China, Egypt, India) provide us with countless examples of how the upper classes tend to cooperate with the oppressor in return for a share of income derived from the poverty and incredible overstrain of the working classes in the colonies. The failure of these movements was a result of betrayal by the national bourgeoisie, which preferred entering into an alliance with the colonizers over concessions to reasonable demands of the masses,”⁶ nationalist-minded students wrote in the newspaper *L’Avenir d’Annam* [The Future of Annam] in October 1928.

Other Vietnamese students, in Paris, who had completed their transition from revolutionary nationalism to a Marxism different from the Marxism professed by the Comintern, analyzed the situation in Indochina as follows: “Originating from a conquest which was a real economic revolution that replaced small commodity agricultural production with capitalist production, [the bourgeoisie] can only live and develop in a system created by the conquest.”⁷ Its struggle is, therefore, limited by a competitive struggle for the domestic market with French and Chinese capitals and economic nationalism to the detriment of political nationalism. Hence its “double dealing”: calls for national solidarity when supporting its investment policy was at issue and betrayal as soon as the possibility of a violent revolution arose. There existed two opponents in Indochina: “on the one hand, the new class of savagely exploited proletariat so far lacking political experience..., and also the class of exploited peasantry ... and, on the other, the European and Chinese bourgeoisie pulling in its wake the national bourgeoisie which has tamed, with the help of the military and administrative apparatus..., part of petty bourgeoisie.”⁸

Another problem that arose before the émigrés was that of setting up a party. And, being faced with the problem of implementing the task of forming a revolutionary organization, they came close to the Lenin party model. “Our present mode of operation is substantially different from the former

one. You carried out ‘agitation,’ and we are conducting ‘propaganda’ in order to select organizers and activists. Agitation only gives rise to fear and short-term riots, whereas propaganda is aimed at the very core of things. The present form of organization is also different from the former one. Now it combines legal actions with underground ones, since the existence of a legal organization alone creates numerous inconveniences,”⁹ Nguyen Van Luan, one of the current leaders of the nationalist Vietnamese Independence party wrote to its former head, Nguyen The Truyen, in a letter in January 1929. In December 1928, the printed organ of the Vietnamese Independence party finished an extensive analysis concerning national revolution with the words: “What we need is a domestic organization, a powerful party uniting members in the whole of Vietnam, from North to South, a party setting up an objective of preparing a revolution.”¹⁰ The nationalists in fact repeated Nguyen Van Tao’s thesis that an unorganized mass is powerless to prepare the liberation of the country.

Among politically active young Vietnamese, who were completing their transition from nationalism to revolutionary Marxism, there also existed a certain critical attitude toward the Comintern’s colonial policy. In particular, it is to be seen in Nguyen Van Tao’s speech. At the beginning of his speech, he threw a reproach: “There is a country about which everyone seems to have forgotten....” Another two Vietnamese delegates expressed their critical attitude toward the work of the FCP’s Colonial Commission for which they were apparently sent to France before the congress finished its work.¹¹ These were not Communists’ solitary actions. In 1930, in a letter to the FCP leaders, Nguyen Van Tao once again accused the French Communist party of paying little attention to colonial work, including, in particular, that of explaining the situation in Vietnam to the French.¹² This criticism is comparable to the words of another revolutionary Marxist, who had just completed the transition from nationalism to a communism different from the one professed by the leadership of the “headquarters of the world revolution” in the late 1920s: “So far, no Marxist work has been carried out as yet.... This shortcoming has been many times found in the actions of the Comintern and the FCP.”¹³

In our view, it seems apparent that the adoption by part of the Vietnamese revolutionary intelligentsia of extreme left-wing views was not so much the implantation of the attitudes of Moscow or Paris in Vietnam’s emergent Marxist movement as an inference from an internal analysis of the situation both inside the colony and in the whole world. This concerned, in particular, the negation of the revolutionary role of the national bourgeoisie, the existence of classes ready to lead the revolution inside the colony, and the

long-felt need to set up a Lenin-style party. The Comintern was even subjected to criticism on a number of issues of principle. This created conditions for the formation of not only an orthodox Communist movement but also Marxist trends opposing Moscow’s official line.

NOTES

¹ A.A. Sokolov, *Komintern i Vietnam. Podgotovka vietnamskikh politicheskikh kadrov v kommunisticheskikh vuzakh S.S.S.R. 1920—1930-e gody (Istoriko-politicheskiy ocherk)* [The Comintern and Vietnam. The Training of Vietnamese Political Cadres at the communist higher education institutions of the U.S.S.R.: The 1920s—1930s (A Historical and Political Outline)], Moscow, 1998, p. 105; S. Quinn-Judge, *Ho Chi Minh: The Missing Years, 1919—1941*. Berkeley, 2002, p. 124.

² Quoc Ngu is the modern phonetic writing system for the Vietnamese language using the Latin script, developed by Catholic missionaries in the 17th century.

³ *Shestoy kongress Kominternna. Stenograficheskiy otchet, Vypusk 4. Revolyutsionnoye dvizheniye v kolonial’nykh i polukolonial’nykh stranakh* [The Sixth Comintern Congress. Stenographic record, Issue # 4. The Revolutionary Movement in Colonial and Semi-colonial Countries], Moscow-Leningrad, 1929, pp. 242—249 (further on, The Sixth Comintern Congress...).

⁴ Quinn-Judge S., *Op. cit.*, p. 124.

⁵ The Sixth Comintern Congress..., pp. 9—14.

⁶ *Quoted from:* Hémery D., *Từ chủ nghĩa yêu nước đến chủ nghĩa Mác* [From Patriotism to Marxism], Hà Nội, 2001, p. 76.

⁷ *Quoted from:* Hémery Daniel, “Ta Thu Thau: l’itinéraire politique d’un révolutionnaire vietnamien pendant les années 1930,” In: *Histoire de l’Asie du Sud-Est: révoltes, réformes, révolutions*, Lille, 1981, p. 215.

⁸ *Quoted from:* Ngô Văn, *Việt-nam 1920—1945, Révolution et contre-révolution sous la domination coloniale*, Paris, 1995, p. 153.

⁹ *Quoted from:* Hémery D., *Từ chủ nghĩa yêu nước đến chủ nghĩa Mác*. Hà Nội, 2001, p. 78.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹¹ Quinn-Judge S., *Op. cit.*, p. 125.

¹² McConnell S., *Leftward Journey: The Education of Vietnamese Students in France, 1919—1939*. New Brunswick-Oxford, 1989, p. 116. This state of affairs gave rise among the Vietnamese Communists (including, in particular, Nguyen Van Tao’s wife) to criticism of the French proletariat, which, in their opinion, was passive (Russian State Archives of Social and Political History, Folio 517, List 1, File 1509, Sheet 26).

¹³ *Quoted from:* Hémery D., *Từ chủ nghĩa yêu nước đến chủ nghĩa Mác*, Hà Nội, 2001, p. 103.

Anatoly SOKOLOV

**Russians
in the Foreign Legion: Indochina
(End of the 19th
and Middle of the 20th Centuries)**

On March 9, 1831 the French King Louis-Philippe of Orleans signed a decree on creating a new military formation, the Foreign Legion, where the non-French (i.e. persons who were not French subjects or citizens) could serve the interests of the French crown, and later also of all the five French republics. The French king's idea was that the Legion would be used in military conflicts strictly outside the country.

The first mentions of Russians in the French Foreign Legion in Indochina¹ occur in handwritten diaries of Prince Konstantin Vyazemsky who traveled about that colony of France in 1892. There he discovered that among other foreigners serving with the Foreign Legion, which was part of the French Army at the time, there were also fugitive Russians. He wrote about this in his diary, "There is a Russian corporal here with a belly wound. I failed to find out how he has got here; the French authorities are mighty pleased with him. <...> He is said to have served a long time in Russia and been reduced to the ranks for fighting a duel; he happened to get a mean officer for his company commander, and resolved to flee, first to Austria, and then to France."²

At the juncture of the 19th and 20th centuries a new wave of recruits started coming from the Russian Empire, when Russian subjects joined the ranks of French legionnaires, typically poorly-off labor migrants and settlers moving to the West for various socioeconomic and ethno-religious reasons. In all there have been four waves of Russians enlisting in the Foreign Legion in Indochina; the *first* one dates back to the late 19th and the

early 20th centuries, the *second* started off in the early 1920s, the *third*, during World War II (1939—1945), and the *fourth*, in the years of the First Indochina War of resistance by the Vietnamese people against French colonizers (1946—1954).

* * *

Most of the first-wave legionnaires were the natives of western and south-western provinces of the Russian Empire — ethnic Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Jews, Germans. The revolutionary upheavals of 1905—1907 radically expanded the scale of spontaneous Russian emigration, and the motley human stream flowing abroad incorporated quite a few ethnic Russians and other residents of Russia's central provinces.

As for the first-wave Russian legionnaires, we have records of just a handful of individuals. It is known that one of those was resident of the Russian Empire Joseph (Jozef) Belawsky, an ethnic Lithuanian and a Catholic priest, who came from Vilno (Vilnius). After 1911 and until the start of the Soviet-Polish War of 1919—1920, he served as a chaplain of the French Foreign Legion in Africa and in Indochina.³

In roughly the same years (or slightly earlier) a Foreign Legion member in Indochina was one Dmitry Yazev. As a university undergraduate he had traveled about China with a friend, and thence got to Indochina in the late 1910s or thereabouts. Once there, Yazev joined up as a legionnaire, most probably because he needed money, and served there the length of the contract.⁴ Back in Russia, Dmitry Yazev willingly described the hardships of service in that exotic country, its nature and customs. Among other things, he related an episode indelibly imprinted on his memory when while on duty, a fellow-legionnaire had been attacked by a tiger that whisked him off into the jungle.⁵

Presumably, the first group of Russian legionnaires appeared in Indochina in 1918 or soon afterwards. At any rate, the correspondence between the French consul in Hong Kong and the governor general of Indochina contains a document (of April 20, 1918), which reads that "there is no law to prohibit recruiting Russian soldiers to the Foreign Legion." Further on it was spelled out in more detail, "This matter put to the War Minister, about enlisting Russians, was for officers, and his answer was to concern first and foremost soldiers of that nationality.

"However, officers and men who are at present subjects of a neutral state are in conditions registered by the law of August 4, 1914 (Article 3), to be recruitable to the French Army. The only restrictions on their admission were removed by colony cablegram # 498 of April 4, this year, which said

that their recruitment could not be effected other than as soldiers, 2nd Class, within the Foreign Legion not to be administered in French territory.”⁶

* * *

The next wave, number two, occurred in the early 1920s, when in the wake of the Civil War hundreds of thousands of men were ousted from Russia, a good few of them of the military estate. Many of these people, finding themselves in excruciatingly difficult circumstances of forced emigration, signed contracts and went to serve with the French Foreign Legion. Under the Decree of October 18, 1920 of the French Republic, they could “as officers of allied armies be enrolled into French troops in the rank of junior lieutenants.”

In refugee camps Russian officers and men were faced with a difficult choice. Uncertainty, their own unsettled state plunged them to the bottom of despair. And not infrequently the only way to survive and save their families happened to be recruitment to the Foreign Legion. One should also note the following thing possibly connected with the national psyche. Emigrant writer Yevgeny Tarussky wrote in the 1930s, “...it was not so much fear and hunger that drove them there. Hunger and cold were not enough to intimidate the Russian officer. But he was certainly afraid of poverty and of sinking to the ‘lower depths’.”⁷ Enlistment in the Legion, therefore, provided for them a specific psychological climate of internal routine and military spirit present in the Legion that were familiar and similar to the Russian military tradition.⁸

Recruitment points of the Legion were located in areas where Russian emigrants lived in sufficiently large groups, above all in such cities as Gallipoli, Constantinople, Lemnos, and others. They were recruited to the Legion as a rule through the *Deuxieme Bureau* of the French Intelligence Agency Central Board.

Here is how Russian emigrant doctor Boris Alexandrovsky recalled the atmosphere of those years, “In France itself, as well as in its spheres of influence at the time, one could see colorful posters pasted on the walls of buildings and fences that appealed to young men for voluntary enlistment in this army. The picture on the poster was paradise on earth. A deep-blue sea and azure sky. A bright sun. A sandy beach with a few palm trees in the background. And in the forefront, a soldier of the Foreign Legion. His face a picture of happiness and delight. The caption read, ‘Sign up for the most wonderful regiment of the world!’.”⁹

On joining the Legion the recruit was never asked about his past, from the moment of signing up he dropped his original name, rank and nationality and was issued just a personal number. From then on he ceased to be an individual, but became a legionnaire with a number. That is why the Foreign Legion appeared to be a safe haven for lots of criminals from all over the world, because membership in the Foreign Legion exempted them from extradition to the state of their origin.

Many Russian emigrants, chary of soiling their names with service in a foreign army, signed up for the Foreign Legion as Germans, Czechs, Poles, etc. Most of them had only a vague idea of what the Legion was, and took French propaganda on trust.¹⁰

Typically, all soldiers and some of the sergeants in the Legion were foreigners, but the commanders were invariably French. Under the contract signed on the so-called voluntary basis, the enlistment term in the Legion was five years. The Legion maintained strict discipline, and the merest offense was instantly followed by severe penalties. The location of the service was French tropical colonies. In all there were some 8,000 Russian emigrants signing recruitment contracts in the 1920s.¹¹ More than half of them had remained forever buried in the arid deserts of North Africa and the jungle of Indochina. Others died in hospital beds of wounds, tropical and other diseases.

There is this fact worth noting: a mass influx of Russian military men to the Foreign Legion changed the moral climate in its units. “The place of adventurers and misfits was taken by real warriors who sought nothing but honor, albeit under alien colors.”¹² Russians became its “best disciplined and most valued part.”¹³ And although under the contract they were to serve in the Legion for five years, many stayed on for ten to 15 years.

According to French archival data, in 1921 Russian legionnaires in Vietnam numbered 107 men (or 4.07% of the total manpower).¹⁴ Eventually their numbers grew. Their stay in that French colony in the mid-1920s is recorded in documents related to the activity of the monarchist organization Alliance of Russian People of the Sovereign (ARPS) named after Her Imperial Highness Grand Duchess Kira Kirillovna.¹⁵ Its biggest branch abroad was in the northern part of Vietnam, in Tonkin, and numbered 53 persons.¹⁶

We know about the work of that Indochina branch thanks to written reports that Mikhail P. Koryakin regularly sent to the Alliance Board chairman, General Staff Colonel Gennady Dementyev, for two years, from 1926 to 1928.¹⁷ As a rule, his letters contained a brief description of the situation in that French colony, reported new members joining the Alliance (their

commitments enclosed), and also offered lengthy ideological theoretizing of the author on the prospects of monarchy in Russia.

Koryakin himself was of peasant extraction, a native of Archangel province. He had been on active service since 1915. In 1920, he found himself abroad, in Constantinople, which he left on May 22, 1922 to join the Legion.¹⁸ In Tonkin he was engaged in organizing the Order subsection of the Alliance. This is how he described the situation, “The numbers [of Russians here] are not great, just under 100 men.... Their attitude to law abidance, given their total estrangement from their country ... is satisfactory. Most of them are convinced Russian monarchists, with very few republicans.”¹⁹ But Koryakin did not think that all of them could be granted Alliance membership, chiefly because of their ideological mood, “We hear sometimes a disrespectful attitude to the members of the Imperial House.”²⁰

By the end of October 1925, there were 83 Russian legionnaires registered in Tonkin, seven of them later leaving for Africa and another seven obtaining French citizenship.²¹ The final version of the list has 53 names; those were people of various classes (prince, nobleman, Cossack, peasant), ranks and positions (esaul or Cossack captain, cavalry sergeant major, senior NCO, sotnik or Cossack lieutenant, ensign, etc.), ethnicities and religions. They were also part of the so-called Imperial Army and Navy Corps. Mostly, they served in the ranks of the 1st Infantry Regiment (*1-er Etranger 13 Compagnie*) in the township of Dap Cau, north of Hanoi, in the Bac Ninh province, that could be reached by a French-built railroad, and also in the 4th Battalion in Thai Nguyen (*4 Batallion formant Corp. du 1-er Etranger 15 Compagnie a Thai Nguyen*).

The activity of the Indochina subdivision ceased virtually at once when Ensign Koryakin left Indochina, and the Alliance was disbanded in 1928. In 1929, the Legion recruited 129 Russians under contract to serve in Indochina.²²

In the 1930s, the influx of Russians to the Foreign Legion was on the up, mainly because of the poor economic situation and unemployment in Europe. According to French military historian Tibor Szecsko, serving in the ranks of the Foreign Legion in Indochina, roughly from the mid-1930s, were the following Russian officers:

- Serge Arkchipoff, lieutenant, five-year enlistment;
- Vlad. Dobrovich, lieutenant, five-year enlistment;
- Serge Douplitzky, directly admitted in the rank of junior lieutenant, former officer of the Russian Army;
- Jacques Jitomirsky, military medic, directly admitted to the post of military doctor, former military doctor of the Russian Army;

- Leon Komaroff, lieutenant, alumnus of the Military School of Saint-Cyr;
- Kovaloff, lieutenant, directly admitted in the rank of junior lieutenant, former officer of the Russian Army;
- Alex De Knorre, lieutenant, directly admitted in the rank of junior lieutenant, former officer of the Russian Army;
- Andre Krijitsky, lieutenant, directly admitted in the rank of junior lieutenant, former officer of the Russian Army;
- Jean Pravossoudovich, lieutenant, directly admitted in the rank of junior lieutenant, former officer of the Russian Army;²³
- Constantin Slioussarenko, lieutenant, trained at the Military School in Saint Maixent, five-year enlistment;
- Georges Solovieff, lieutenant, directly admitted in the rank of junior lieutenant, former officer of the Russian Army;
- Alexis Tchenkeli, captain, trained at the Military School of Saint-Cyr;
- Victor Tikhonravoff, captain, directly admitted in the rank of captain, former officer of the Russian Army.²⁴

In the early 1930s, among the Foreign Legion in Indochina were ex-officers of the Kornilov Division Captain Semyon Kireyev and Captain (Lieutenant Colonel) Mikhail Dashkevich.²⁵

In 1939, the Legion recruited 109 Russians under contract for service in Indochina.²⁶

* * *

The third wave of Russian accession to the Foreign Legion in Indochina started in 1939, as World War II broke out in Europe. According to reports from Hanoi of April 20, 1940, a group of Foreign Legion enlistees had arrived there from Hong Kong. The list attached has all the surnames crossed out, with just the Christian names remaining, and nationalities; of the 15 men four were Russians — Boris, Dmitry and two Anatolies.²⁷ And a year later, of the 106 legionnaires arriving in Indochina five were Russians, while the groups of the French and the Germans numbered 24 men each.²⁸

A fairly typical example of a Russian legionnaire's fate in Indochina at the time of WWII seems to be the story of Colonel Fyodor I. Yeliseyev (1892—1987). He was born in Kuban, and educated at a Cossack military school in Orenburg. He took up military service at the age of 17; during World War I he served at the Caucasian Front in one of the best Cossack regiments. From 1918 on, he took part in the White movement, command-

ing a hundred, a regiment, and eventually a division. He fled from Red captivity to Finland, and thence to France.

His emigre life is a veritable Odyssey. Being a professional cavalry officer, he organized a Cossack equestrian circus. As a member of circus troupes Yeliseyev traveled around the world delighting his audiences with masterly fancy riding and excellent artistry. He performed in India, Burma, Singapore, Hong Kong, Siam, Cambodia, and visited Indochina several times.

Fyodor Yeliseyev wrote over 90 brochures and had them mimeographed (in France and the United States). Most of his writings deal with the history of Cossack regiments and their part in the early 20th century battles. In a concise trilogy called *About the Big Wide World on Horseback* he described his stay in Indochina.²⁹

Yeliseyev first came to that French colony in November 1934, with a touring circus troupe. At the time, he visited Haiphong, Hanoi and Saigon. Next time he came to Vietnam in January 1937. The World War II found Fyodor Yeliseyev on the island of Sumatra where he performed with a troupe of Cossack fancy riders. In the spring of 1940, he moved to Indochina for good, taking with him his wife and son. As a Russian Army officer Yeliseyev submitted his papers and passed an examination for the officer rank of captain in the French Army. The examination over, his personal file was sent to the metropolis. However, France was already witnessing the invasion by German troops and Paris had fallen. Small wonder that in the circumstances his papers got mislaid somewhere.

Under the French law, foreigners could not serve in the French Army as officers, apart from those who had acquired French citizenship and graduated from French military schools. On the eve of World War II officers of the armies that had been France's allies in WWI were allowed to enlist in the French Army but in a lower rank.³⁰

As Yeliseyev wrote in his memoirs, "I ... enlisted at a French construction depot. It proved a bit of all right, I met there both French and Russian old-timers. Meanwhile a Japanese corps entered Indochina.... The French in Indochina started preparations to resist the Japanese. I was summoned to the HQ for a second time, again passed both examinations, but owing to my imperfect French was appointed lieutenant to the 5th Infantry Regiment of the Foreign Legion quartered in the north of Indochina, in Tonkin."³¹

During his years in the Legion, Fyodor Yeliseyev (a.k.a. Lieutenant Elise, as he was called in a French fashion) kept a diary that contains valuable information about the life in the Legion seen from within.

He thought his new appointment fair enough, "I was not aggrieved to have been renamed lieutenant instead of captain. In the French Army a captain is to command a company. I am a horseman. I was not really au fait with the infantry routine. Nor did I know the manuals of their army drill. Naturally I could not be a company commander."³² As a cavalry officer of experience, Yeliseyev was ordered to conduct reconnaissance, which was a perilous assignment in the local conditions. "War in this jungle was guerrilla warfare in forests and mountains, very unlike that in Europe...."³³

Here is what Yeliseyev said of the fate and position of a foreign legionnaire, "A foreigner in the Legion was regarded as a second-rate creature with no kith or kin. After death he was struck off the list *as a number*. He had no family of any sort, nor could have. His goods and chattels were auctioned and sent to the company or battalion. The same was true of foreign officers. The death of an officer in battle cost nothing at all. They were all assumed to be *celibataire* (celibate), even if they happened to be married. In the event of their death the family received nothing."³⁴

Of particular value are the diary entries to do with Fyodor Yeliseyev's own service. "Our 5th Regiment consisted solely of older legionnaires who had been transferred here to recuperate, as it were, in the peace and quiet of Indochina with its utterly peaceable locals. But before long events in Indochina showed that the French Government had been wrong to assume that."³⁵

In Yeliseyev's regiment the average age of a legionnaire was over 40, quite a few men were past 50, and a thirty-year-old with five years of service under his belt was considered a greenhorn. Worn out physically by long service in tropical conditions, in Indochina they were confronted with well-disciplined and rabidly nationalistic troops of the Japanese Imperial Army that had come there under the Asia-for-Asians slogan in order to create a Greater East Asia.³⁶

On March 9, 1945, the Japanese staged an armed coup d'état in Indochina; in a surprise nocturnal assault they crushed and disarmed all the French garrisons there. The episode is thus described in Yeliseyev's diary, "Only one detachment of two battalions of the 5th Infantry Regiment, in the military camp at the village of Tong, 40 kilometers from Hanoi, managed to leave its disposition area six hours before the dawn raid of the Japanese. For nearly two months it fought its way through the jungle retreating to China, and finally succeeded saving the honor of its banner."³⁷

On April 2, 1945, providing a rearguard cover for his battalion, Fyodor Yeliseyev rescued his comrade-in-arms, a severely wounded chief corporal, who was a Pole, name of Kolerski. But the very next day he was taken pris-

oner by the Japanese and went through all the trials and tribulations of captivity.

Once the World War II was over and Imperial Japan capitulated, all the French POWs were brought to Hanoi and housed in the city fortress. And there Fyodor Yeliseyev's Odyssey ended in his liberation.

In battles against the Japanese Lieutenant Yeliseyev was wounded twice, and awarded nine decorations for excellent service, the highest of them the Order of Military Cross 2nd Class with Gold Star on Band.

In March 1946, ex-military men and their families started to be repatriated to France. Yeliseyev with his wife and son boarded a big ocean steamer, the *Ile de France*, on August 22, 1946, to sail to France from Saigon. Some time later the Yeliseyevs moved to the United States where they settled for good.

The value of Yeliseyev's diary records is also in portraying other Russian legionnaires who happened to be in Indochina in those years.

For example, Yeliseyev recalls, "I have met a commander of our two battalions of the Tong garrison, Commandant (Major) Tokhadze, of Georgian extraction. He had finished a grammar school in Tiflis, then studied at the Tiflis Infantry School in an independent Georgia. When the Reds occupied it, he was evacuated to France as a cadet with his government in 1921; there he graduated from a military school and became a regular officer of the Legion of the French Army and was considered a proper French national."³⁸

He also portrayed in his diary battalion company commander Captain Slioussarenko,³⁹ an old and experienced officer. "As a young officer he served with the army of Hetman Skoropadski; after the latter's regime fell, the military command moved him and other officers out of Kiev to Germany in closed carriages. He joined the Legion at once, and now he is a captain and company commander; he enjoyed a reputation of a model officer."⁴⁰

Yeliseyev also describes his meeting with 50-year-old legionnaire Bukalov, a native of Voronezh. The man served as adjutant-chef (i.e., senior ensign-bearer), sergeant major of the 6th Company, 3d Platoon, 2nd Battalion.

A special place in his memoirs belongs to Commander of the 6th Company (2nd Battalion, 5th Regiment of the Foreign Legion) Captain Vladimir Komarov,⁴¹ a well educated officer and a modest man. He was the grandson of a well-known Russian General A.V. Komarov,⁴² and an ex-cadet of the Navy School. In 1920, Vladimir Komarov got to Persia with the Caspian Flotilla. Later he moved to France, finished the Military School of

Saint-Cyr, received French citizenship, and became an *officier actif*, a regular officer with all the attendant rights of a French Army officer. He was married to a French woman.

Vladimir Komarov perished on April 1, 1945, not far from the village of Dien Bien Phu, where he was eventually buried.⁴³ To pay his last respects to the dead officer General Marcel Alessandri arrived there in a car. He had personally known and highly valued Vladimir Komarov, and was aggrieved by his demise.

While in captivity in Japan, Fyodor Yeliseyev encountered one more fellow citizen there, a Japanese language translator and a Russian guy from Siberia.⁴⁴

Various other sources likewise supply the names of other Russian legionnaires who were in Indochina at the time. These are Mikhail Gorodnichenko, sergeant of the 5th (Infantry) Regiment; he died of wounds in Indochina on September 15, 1945; Ivanov (*an assumed name*), a former cadet of the Russian Military School in Versailles, perished on March 15, 1945, in Ga Giang in Indochina; Carneri (*an assumed name*), a native of Moldavia, who had finished a Russian grammar school, was a bugler with the French Foreign Legion; on March 10, 1945, he was wounded and finished off with a bayonette during a Japanese attack against the Tong garrison in Indochina;⁴⁵ Siz, a native of the Terskaya Region, an ensign of the 10th Ingermanland Regiment in the Civil War, went missing on March 23, 1945, in Son La.

* * *

The fourth wave of Russian legionnaires in Indochina started in the wake of World War II, and covers the entire period of the First Indochina War of Vietnamese resistance (1946—1954) when France resolved to cling to its colonial possessions, come what may.

Thousands upon thousands of former Soviet citizens, having joined various formations set up by Germans to fight against the Red Army, found themselves in a quandary once the war was over. Most of them surrendered to the Allies. Besides, there were the units of the Russian Liberation Army of General A. Vlasov, numerous Caucasian and Central Asian legions ending up in POW camps. Under the Yalta Agreements of February 1945 signed by the Soviet Union and the Allies, all former Soviet citizens found on territories controlled by the British or Americans, the so-called displaced persons, were to be handed over to the Soviet Union. Those who did not want to go back to the U.S.S.R. started looking for a way out. One such option was to join the French Foreign Legion.

I would like to remind the reader that the Yalta Agreements were signed only by the heads of the U.S.A. and Great Britain. France did not take part in the Conference. Besides, owing to the increasingly serious situation in its overseas colonies, France had to keep remanning the Foreign Legion.

And there was one more thing that mattered: on June 29, 1945, the Soviet Union and France signed an agreement on maintaining and repatriating Soviet and French nationals who happened to be under control of the two countries' authorities. The agreement was on the whole identical to the Yalta Agreements, but unlike the latter, contained a protocol of the following two points:

“1. All Soviet and French citizens shall be repatriated, including those who are criminally liable for offenses they have committed, among them crimes committed on the territory of the other Contracting Party.

2. The said Agreement on maintaining and repatriating Soviet and French citizens also applies to the residents of French possessions and French protectorates liberated by the Red Army.”⁴⁶

The situation was far from straightforward, and in order to avoid aggravating the Soviet Union, the French side decided to conceal that it had been admitting former Soviet nationals to the French Army, of which the Foreign Legion was part. Precisely for that reason there was a nominal ban on enlisting Russians and other persons of Soviet extraction in the Legion, but when papers were drawn up, Russians filling in forms became Poles, Bulgarians, Czechs, while natives of the Baltic Republics were repackaged as Scandinavians, Caucasians turned into Yugoslavs, Greeks, Spaniards and Italians, and Central Asians were Persians, Arabs and Turks.⁴⁷

It seems interesting to recall the following fact. In November 1946, a Soviet military mission with Colonel Vladimir Dubrovin at the head arrived in Saigon.⁴⁸ The official purpose of its visit to French Indochina was said to be assistance to Soviet citizens, legionnaires included, in going back home. According to information in the Soviet side's possession received from the U.S. authorities, in Hanoi alone there were 323 Soviet POWs and 20 civilians awaiting repatriation to the U.S.S.R. In reply to the inquiry from the French government the Russians in Indochina Committee⁴⁹ prepared a document (of February 3, 1946), which said that in Tonkin (in the northern part of Vietnam) there were 44 Russians at the time, of them 28 were legionnaires kept in custody (in the city fortress).⁵⁰ The document also pointed out that “by the present, five legionnaires have expressed a wish to be repatriated to Shanghai as soon as possible. As for the others, not having any definite plans, they prefer to wait for instructions to define their repatriation to the metropolis and their release in Indochina.”⁵¹

Upon arriving in Saigon, the Soviet military mission published the following notice in the local press: “Soviet colonel will see former Soviet citizens and assist them in returning to Motherland.”

For a while the notice got no response, but after December 19, 1946, when the French troops had actually started large-scale hostilities against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the government of Hồ Chí Minh, the first visitors started trickling into the office of the Soviet military mission. For the most part those were soldiers from the Foreign Legion — Ukrainians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and other ex-Soviet citizens, just over a dozen persons in all. Ethnic Russians were few and far between, moreover, one of them had never been to Russia having been born and bred in Yugoslavia. As V.L. Vishnyak, a mission member, recalled, that young man recited to the Soviet mission staff a poem about Stalin, with great feeling, which must have been his idea of displaying his love of the Soviet land.⁵²

According to Vishnyak, some of the former Soviet citizens turned to the mission because they were reluctant to fight in the new war in Indochina and were afraid of ending up in Vietnamese captivity. Saigon newspapers published lots of stuff about “the cruel treatment the Northerners meted out to prisoners.” It was then commonly believed that the Vietnamese assumed all Foreign Legionnaires to be French.⁵³

As per contract with the Foreign Legion, soldiers were to serve for five years. Nevertheless, Colonel Dubrovin managed to persuade the French authorities in Saigon to let Soviet or Russian citizens leave service in the Legion without any adverse consequences or complications for themselves.

The French military archival documents mention eight Russian legionnaires who got within the sphere of interest of the Soviet mission and became a subject of lengthy discussions with the French authorities.⁵⁴ The final outcome of that is not known, but the French military authorities in Cochinchine desisted from opposing the wish of two Lithuanian legionnaires to go back to the U.S.S.R.⁵⁵

As Vishnyak recalled, they afterward sailed from Saigon to France on board the *Alexandre de Rhodes*. In Marseille they were met by a Soviet representative from the Repatriation Directorate, and thence they proceeded to the Soviet Union.

I should give here one more source of information about Russian legionnaires in the Foreign Legion in Indochina — reports of deserters dating back to the late 1940s and mid-1950s. Let me say again that soldiers of various Soviet ethnicities were often viewed as Russians. In 1945—1947, Russian soldiers deserted from the Legion at the rate of one man a year, ac-

cording to official data.⁵⁶ The list of soldiers convicted and sent from Indochina to North Africa contains the names of Ilia Ivanoff and Alexis Nebieridze.⁵⁷

Each officer and man in the Foreign Legion in Indochina had his own complicated and often most tragic life story. The following example is a typical case in point.

In 1950, the newspaper *Posev* (West Germany) published an announcement that read something like this:

“I, Vasily [Ivanovich] Bordianu, Russian, by the will of Fates am currently serving with the French Foreign Legion in Indochina. I seek correspondence with Russian emigrants and also advice as to where I should settle upon discharge. I have another eighteen months to serve.”⁵⁸

Under the rules of service in the Legion the legionnaire, upon finishing the five-year term, was entitled to permanent settlement in any French colony. The only exception was France itself and the colony where the legionnaire used to serve. At the time, a colony of Russian emigrants settled in French Morocco; the colony consisted of Russians from Europe and the Soviet Union. Thanks to G.G. Verbitsky,⁵⁹ Vasily Bordianu managed to establish a connection with Russians in Morocco, and he hoped to move there upon finishing service.

Vasily Bordianu, as he said himself, had been born in Odessa, worked as a driver, and entered the Mining Institute. During the war he was taken prisoner as an Ost-Arbeiter (east worker), spent more than two years in Germany, and then moved to France. As he did not have the necessary identification papers, he decided to join the army. The last news from him came in October 1950, it was a postcard (with a lovely view of the Halong Bay) that said simply, “...We were chopped up like a piece of wood. I am in the rear...”⁶⁰ After that all communication ceased. In all likelihood, Vasily Bordianu died then.

There is information about yet another ex-compatriot of ours in Indochina. He is Count Alexandre Vorontsoff-Dashkoff. He was born in 1922 in Wiesbaden. A son of a life-hussar and aide-de-camp. For some seven years he served with the Foreign Legion as platoon leader. He died of wounds in Hanoi on September 31, 1952.⁶¹

One more legionnaire, an ethnic Ukrainian, Victor Mikheyevich Kovalchuk-Preim, served with the Foreign Legion in Indochina and perished there during the First Indochina War of resistance by the Vietnamese people.⁶²

Another of our fellow-countrymen, Dmitry Yuryevich Stolitsa, also fought in Indochina. He was the son of an officer in the Life Guard Regi-

ment of Chasseurs. In the years of the Civil War he was a personal aide-de-camp of the Far Eastern Cossack Troops Ataman General G.M. Semyonov. Stolitsa graduated from France's best military school, the one in Saint-Cyr, served as a marine officer, with airborne units, fought in Indochina, and also in Algeria and Morocco.

These are by no means the only examples of our compatriots taking part in the First Indochina War. In the notorious Battle of Dien Bien Phu (1954), as Sergeant Claude-Yves Solange of the 13th semibrigade in the Foreign Legion recalled, serving in the 2nd company of his battalion were two Cossacks who had fought at Stalingrad; one was a lieutenant of the Soviet military gendarmerie (apparently, the 10th Division of the NKVD), the other a *zugfuhrer* (i.e. a lieutenant) in the SS Cavalry Division. Both were killed while defending the Isabelle strong point.⁶³

The Vietnamese sources speak of some of our compatriots, legionnaires taken prisoner and sent to camps.⁶⁴ The reference is to the events that had taken place roughly in May 1950, when the war of the Vietnamese people against the French colonizers was in full swing.

Among the inmates of the POW camp organized by the Vietnam People's Army in the mountainous area of Cao Bằng was a group of 100 men, most of them French, plus several Germans, Czechs, Poles and ten Russians.⁶⁵ Particularly prominent was pilot Biblichenko. After German captivity he joined the Foreign Legion and so ended up in Indochina. When he worked at the Gia Lam airfield, not far from Hanoi, he seized a chance to hijack a Junkers plane and flew over the frontline to join the guerrillas stationed in the woodland of the Yen Bai province. Upon landing Biblichenko tried to explain to the guerrillas that the plane had to be camouflaged, but none of them understood Russian. And while the fraternizing went on, a French aircraft came over and bombed the brand-new hijacked Junkers. Quite a few Russian POWs later fought on the Viet Minh side (the patriotic League of Fighting for Vietnam's Independence), were decorated with medals, and issued official messages of thanks.⁶⁶

The best known of the legionnaires who were our compatriots and went over to the Vietnamese people's side were Platon Skrzinski and Fyodor Bessmertny.⁶⁷ Both were natives of Ukraine, members of the famous 307th Battalion of Vietnam People's Army.⁶⁸ Platon Skrzinski was given a new combat nickname of Hai Thanh, while Fyodor Bessmertny boasted two, Anh (Brother) and Lien Xo (Soviet).

Platon Alexandrovich Skrzinski had been through two great wars, the Great Patriotic War that the Soviet people waged against German fascism, and the Indochina War of resistance against the French colonizers in Viet-

nam. Before joining a detachment of French Army legionnaires, he had to endure a spell in fascist captivity. In 1946, he was sent to the Indochina War. In the distant Vietnam Skrzinski decided to go over to the Viet Minh side. And on July 28, 1947, he deserted from the French Army. In Vietnam, he met his lady love, a guerrilla girl called Mai from the Ben Tre province. In 1948, they were married, and a year later their daughter was born.

In 1955, the War of Resistance over, Skrzinski and his daughter were invited to the residence of President Hồ Chí Minh before leaving for home. After that meeting the President wrote a letter to the CC CPSU Politburo to confirm Comrade Hai Thanh's meritorious service to the Vietnamese Revolution and expressed his wish that Platon Skrzinski be issued an entry visa to the U.S.S.R., which was promptly done.

Back home Platon Skrzinski took up the job of translator and announcer at the Vietnamese section of Radio Moscow and brought up his daughter. In 1988, he again visited Vietnam, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the 307th Battalion formation. There he met his former regimental comrades, and went to the native place of his late wife. Platon Skrzinski died on March 26, 2003. But his name and heroic deeds have gone down in the history of the two peoples as a token of internationalism, the spirit of solidarity and mutual assistance of different peoples in a fight against their enemies.

Fyodor Bessmertny saw the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War as a 15-year-old youth. In 1942, he was driven away to Germany to work there. The end of the war found him in France, in a camp for displaced persons. To stave off starvation, Fyodor joined the Foreign Legion and was sent to war in Indochina. Then he and two Polish legionnaires fled to the jungle. There they encountered the 307th Battalion of the Vietnamese guerrillas and joined it turning arms against the French colonizers. Fyodor Bessmertny took part in devising tactical operations. He was a wizard with captured French weapons and an expert in explosives. Also he was fluent in Vietnamese and took part in lots of combat operations, which earned him two medals: For Participation in War of Resistance. There at the detachment Fyodor married a guerrilla girl, Nguyen Thi Vinh, a comely and courageous young lady.

Fyodor Bessmertny returned to the Soviet Union in 1958, with two children.⁶⁹ Shortly afterwards he died of tuberculosis, and the *Komsomolskaya pravda* daily ran a piece about him calling him a hero of Vietnam.⁷⁰

There is no doubt that further study of Vietnam's recent history will uncover more names of our compatriots who happened to serve in Indochina with the Foreign Legion.

* * *

Appendix

Their Name Is Legion

Russian legionnaires in Indochina in the late 1800s through the mid-1900s

Conventional signs and acronyms

- ARPS: member of the Alliance of Russian People of the Sovereign, Indochina Subsection, second half of the 1920s;
- IW I: First Indochina War of the Vietnamese people against French colonizers (1946—1954).

Apatsanov, Vladimir Ivanovich, ARPS.

Arkchipoff, Serge. Early 1930s.

Atoyants, Grigory Vasilyevich, ARPS.

Belawski, Joseph (Jozef) Stanislawovich, 1910s.

Beliayev

Bessmertny, Fyodor.

Biblichenko, I.V.

Bogdanov, Nikolai Mikhailovich, ARPS.

Bordianu, Vasily [Ivanovich], IW I.

Bugaenkoff, Leon Nikolaevich, ARPS.

Bukalov, 1930s-1940s.

Vorontsoff-Dashkoff, Alexandre A., IW I.

Vysotsky, Dmitri Timofeevich, ARPS.

Garkusha, Vladimir Vonifatyevich, ARPS.

Golodnov, Boris Dmitrievich, ARPS.

Gorban, Karp Yeimovich, ARPS.

Gorbachev, Nikolai Stefanovich, ARPS.

Gorodnichenko, Mikhail, 1940s.

Gubin, Vasily Mikhailovich, ARPS.

Darmanyants, Daniel Avanesovich, ARPS.

Dashkevich, Mikhail Nikitich, early 1930s.

De Knorre, Alex, early 1930s.

Dmitroff, Nikolai Ivanovich, ARPS.

Dobrovich, Vlad, early 1930s.

Dolgov, Ivan Petrovich, ARPS.

Domrachev, Vasily Vasilyevich, ARPS.
 Dorozhkin, Prokofy Alexeevich, ARPS.
 Douplitzky, Serge, early 1930s.
 Yeliseyev, Fyodor Ivanovich, IW I.
 Jitomirsky, Jacques, early 1930s.
 Joukoff, Alexandre Yakovlevich, ARPS.
 Zvarish, Pyotr Nikolaevich, ARPS.
 Ivanov (*assumed name*), 1940s.
 Ivanov, Boris Dmitrievich, ARPS.
 Ivanoff, Ilia, IW I.
 Ivanoff, Pyotr Vasilyevich, ARPS.
 Carneri (*assumed name*), bugler, 1940s.
 Kireyev, Semyon Yermolayevich, early 1930s.
 Kovaloff, early 1930s.
 Kovalchuk-Preim, Victor Mikheyevich, IW I.
 Komaroff, Vladimir, 1940s.
 Kopotoff, Iosif Parfenyevich, ARPS.
 Koryakin, Mikhail Pavlovich, ARPS.
 Krijitsky, Andre, early 1930s.
 Kurzanoff, Temir Sultanovich, ARPS.
 Laikoff, Yefrem Ivanovich, ARPS.
 Levashoff, Nikolai Vladimirovich, ARPS.
 Litovchenko, Fyodor Leontyevich, ARPS.
 Likharev, Maximilian Pavlovich, ARPS.
 Mazguliak-Bludoff, Pyotr Maximovich, ARPS.
 Maximoff, Rodion Yegoryevich, ARPS.
 Marcinkiewicz, Sergei Ivanovich, ARPS.
 Miroschnitchenko, Pyotr Vladimirovich, ARPS.
 Moukhine, Ilia Gavrilovich, ARPS.
 Natotchi, Nikolai Mikhailovich, ARPS.
 Nebieridze, Alexis, IW I.
 Paderetche, Vasily Ivanovich, ARPS.
 Pleshakoff, Yefim Mikhailovich, ARPS.
 Pravossoudovich, Jean, early 1930s-1940s.
 Rakhmatoullin, Geltman.
 Ryvoutzky, Fyodor Pavlovich, ARPS.
 Savalyuk, Vasily Nikolaevich, ARPS.

Salamatin, Fyodor Pavlovich, ARPS.
 Siz, 1940s.
 Skorokhod, Yakov Dmitrievich, ARPS.
 Skrzinski, Platon Alexandrovich, IW I.
 Slioussarenko, Constantin, early 1930s.
 Smirnoff, Nikolai Fyodorovich, ARPS.
 Solovieff, Georges, early 1930s.
 Statzenko, Maxim Nikolaevich, ARPS.
 Stepanoff, Stepan Semyonovich, ARPS.
 Stolitsa, Dmitry Yuryevich, IW I.
 Sourjine, Boris Vasilyevich, ARPS.
 Temnikoff, Nikolai Georgievich, ARPS.
 Terletzky, Vasily Ivanovich, ARPS.
 Tikhonravoff, Victor, early 1930s.
 Tokhadze, major, 1940s.
 Troufanoff, Alexandre Alekstarkhovich, ARPS.
 Trioukhine, Pavel Lukich, ARPS.
 Khelemendik, Pyotr Konstantinovich, ARPS.
 Tzouranoff, Vasily Yakovlevich, ARPS.
 Tchalkine, Marc Pavlovich, ARPS.
 Tchebotareff, Pavel Savelyevich, ARPS.
 Tchenkeli, Alexis, early 1930s.
 Charapoff, Nikolai Abramovich, ARPS.
 Chataloff-Castro-Makievsky, Nikolai Mikhailovich, ARPS.
 Yazeff, Dmitri, 1910s–1920s.

NOTES

¹ By 1885, Vietnam had been completely conquered by French colonizers who divided the country into three parts, Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchine.

² Prince Konstantin A. Vyazemsky, *Puteshestviye vokrug Aziyi verkhom* [Traveling on Horseback around Asia], Diaries, Russian State Library, Manuscript Department, Folio 178, museum collection 8390, Folder 19, Page 272.

³ Memorial Martirology, www.memorial.krsk.ru/belok.htm (Retrieved 27.05.2009).

⁴ The information comes from V.M. Alpatov, deputy director of the RAS Institute for Oriental Studies, who learned about the ex-legionnaire from his father, M.A. Alpatov.

⁵ This is not the only episode of Dmitry Yazev's legionnaire existence recalled by him. He loved discoursing at length on everything in nature being commensurate and harmonious, for example, the elephant ear is the same size as a burdock leaf, etc.

⁶ *Quoted from:* Tibor Szecsko, *Op. cit.*, p. 313.

⁷ Yevgeny Tarussky, "Besedy na bivouakakh [Bivouac Conversations]," *Chasovoy* [Sentinel], # 207, 1938, p. 19.

⁸ Historian A.V. Okorokov noted that in the Legion "officer authority rested not on aristocratic descent, but on actual fighting experience. Officers shared with their subordinates all the hardships of life in the field, which produced a spirit of combat camaraderie so dear to the Russian officer." (See: A.V. Okorokov, "Kratkiy istoricheskiy obzor deyatelnosti politicheskikh organizatsiy pervoy volny emigratsiyi [A Brief Historical Survey of the Work of First-Wave Emigre Political Organizations]," *Emigratsiya i repatriatsiya v Rossiya* [Emigration and Repatriation in Russia], Moscow, 2001, p. 404).

⁹ B.N. Aleksandrovsky, *Iz perezhitogo v chuzhikh krayakh* [What I Lived Through in Foreign Parts], Moscow, 1969, p. 24.

¹⁰ Under the contract they signed, each enlisted man in the Legion was equal in status to the French soldier and was entitled to a monthly pay of 100 francs, while immediately upon signing the contract he received an advance of 500 francs.

¹¹ *For more detail, see:* I. Nedzelsky, *Op. cit.*, pp. 36–40.

¹² Ye. Tarussky, *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹³ "Legioner..." pp. 16–17.

¹⁴ Szecsko Tibor, *Op. cit.*, p. 321.

¹⁵ The Alliance was set up in the Bulgarian city of Turnovo Semyen on October 12, 1920, by a group of promonarchy officers of the St. Sergius Artillery School. It got its name on August 24, 1924.

¹⁶ *For more detail, see:* A.A. Sokolov, "Deyatel'nost' 'Soyuza russkikh gosudarstvennykh lyudey' v Indokitaye [Activity of the Alliance of Russian State People in Indochina]," *Yugo-Vostochnaya Aziya: aktualniye problemy razvitiya. Ideologiya, istoriya, kultura, politika, ekonomika* [Southeast Asia: Topical Issues of Development. Ideology, History, Culture, Politics, Economics], Moscow, 2009, pp. 260–277.

¹⁷ Altogether the correspondence comprises 71 hand-written documents on 147 pages.

¹⁸ State Archives of the Russian Federation (hereinafter, SARF), Folio 5763, List 1, File 8, p. 235.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 232. Letter to G.I. Demytyev of January 16, 1926.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 237. Letter to G.I. Demytyev of February 15, 1926.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

²² Tibor Szecsko, *Op. cit.*, p. 321.

²³ In 1946, on the orders of the French Military Administration, Georgy Pravossoudovich was an escort of the Soviet Military Mission in Saigon. *For more detail, see:* A.A. Sokolov, "Sovetskaya voyennaya missiya vo Vietname (26 oktyabrya 1946—13 yanvarya 1947) [The

Soviet Military Mission in Vietnam (October 26, 1946—January 13, 1947)]," *Yugo-Vostochnaya Aziya: istoricheskaya pamyat', etnokulturnaya tsennost' i politicheskaya realnost'* [Southeast Asia: Historical Memory, Ethno-cultural Values and Political Reality], Alexander Guber Readings, Moscow, 2009, Issue 1, p. 147.

²⁴ Tibor Szecsko, *Op. cit.*, p. 280–281.

²⁵ M.N. Levitov, "Kornilovtsy posle Gallipoli [The Kornilov Men after Gallipoli]" (see: www.dk1868.ru/history/LEVITOV1.htm Retrieved on 08/12/2006). The author cites an excerpt from the reminiscences/letter of lieutenant Kozitsky (who must have also served in Indochina at the time). Another name mentioned is that of officer Mishcherinov, but it is not clear whether he served in Indochina.

²⁶ Tibor Szecsko, *Op. cit.*, p. 321.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

²⁹ F.I. Yeliseyev, *V Indokitaye — protiv yapontsev i v plenu u nikh (V Inostrannom legione frantsuzskoy armiyi)* [In Indochina, against the Japanese and in Their Captivity (In the Foreign Legion of the French Army)], New York, 1966. These notes were published in Russia as a separate book: F.I. Yeliseyev, *V Inostrannom legione i v plenu u yapontsev* [In the Foreign Legion and in Japanese Captivity], Moscow, 2005. Further on all quotations are given according to this edition.

³⁰ During the World War II of 1939–1945 foreign officers who had lived in France a minimum of 10 years could join the French Army as *temporary officers* (titre temporaire). The Foreign Legion had a reputation of a model formation in the French Army. The best French officers wished to serve there. The lower ranks and NCOs were foreigners without exception, most of them Germans. Genuine French legionnaires were extremely few.

³¹ F.I. Yeliseyev, *V Inostrannom legione...*, p. 7.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁹ The previously cited list of Tibor Szecsko also mentions Constantin Slioussarenko.

⁴⁰ F.I. Yeliseyev, *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁴¹ The Tibor Szecsko list mentions one Leon Komaroff.

⁴² A.V. Komarov (1830–1904), Russian general, took part in the Caucasian War and Turkestan Campaigns.

⁴³ F.I. Yeliseyev, *Op. cit.*, pp. 51–53.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁴⁵ Alexander Okorokov, *Russkiye dobrovoltsy* [Russian Volunteers], Moscow, 2007, pp. 94–95.

⁴⁶ *Quoted from:* Pavel Polyan, *Zhertvy dvukh diktatur* [Victims of Two Dictatorships], Moscow, 1996, p. 379.

⁴⁷ At the time there were lots of Germans joining the Legion, among them quite a few SS men, who thus escaped retribution. During the next 20 years after World War II, Germans and former Soviet citizens accounted for the biggest percentage of the legionnaires. As Vietnamese later complained to their Soviet friends, every French pub in Vietnam in the Legion disposition rang with Russian and German songs.

⁴⁸ *For more detail, see:* A.A. Sokolov, *Sovetskaya voyennaya missiya vo Vietname...*, pp. 137–158, 947.

⁴⁹ According to its letterhead, the Committee was located in Hanoi. *See:* Archives d'histoire contemporaine, Fondation nationale des Sciences politiques, Fond Jean Sainteny, 1 SA — 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Interview with V.L. Vishnyak, Moscow, August 29, 1999.

⁵³ This fact is confirmed by Fyodor Yeliseyev's reminiscences.

⁵⁴ One of them was said to be Pyotr Novikov (Pierre Novikoff).

⁵⁵ Service historique de l'Armée de Terre (Chateau de Vincennes), Indochine, dossier 10 H -531, Saigon, Janvier 3, 1947.

⁵⁶ Service historique de l'Armée de Terre (Chateau de Vincennes), Indochine, dossier 10 H -184.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Quoted from:* G.G. Verbitsky, *Ostarbaitery* [Ost Arbeiters], St. Petersburg, 2004, p. 41.

⁵⁹ G.G. Verbitsky is the author of the abovementioned book.

⁶⁰ His Indochina address was, Bordianu Wasily, M. 44894 S.P. 50540, C.C.R.T.O.E.

⁶¹ *Nezabytiye mogily. Rossiyskoye zarubezhye: nekrologi 1917—1997* [The Graves We Have not Forgotten. Russians Abroad; Obituaries 1917—1997], Moscow, 1999, Vol. 1, p. 633; *Novoye russkoye slovo* [New Russian Word], New York, November 9, 1952, # 14801.

⁶² A personal letter to me from Vitaly Kustov, resident in Kiev, the grandson of V.M. Kovalchuk-Preim.

⁶³ Veniamin Ginodman, “Nam kazalos’, chto my uvideli dno preispodney [We Thought We Had Seen the Bottom of Hell],” *Gazeta* [Gazette], November 20, 2003.

⁶⁴ Le Van, Nhung ngay song ben hang binh chau Au, *Xua va nay*, 2004, So 207, p. 3.

⁶⁵ In the first section of the article the Russian legionnaires are referred to as Lien Xo (i.e. Soviet), and lower down, as Nga (i.e. Russian).

⁶⁶ The author of the article observed that many Russian legionnaires worried lest back home they be punished for service in the Foreign Legion. It is a known fact that some of them were eventually repatriated to the U.S.S.R.

⁶⁷ There are a good few articles published about them. One of the first journalists to write of the internationalist legionnaires was prominent Soviet foreign-affairs reporter Ivan Shchedrov in his book *V pyatnadsati kilometrakh ot Saigona* [Fifteen Kilometers from Saigon], Moscow, 1967.

⁶⁸ Among the volunteers fighting in this battalion under commander Pham Hong Son, a former university student and a man of exceptional personal courage, were lots of defectors from the Legion of European origin: Poles Jozef Sadowski and Edward Urbinski, Czech Stefan Pasterik, German Adolf Peschem, and others.

⁶⁹ In all there were three children in the Bessmertny family, but one of them had died of a disease.

⁷⁰ After the demise of her husband, the widow returned to her native Vietnam with both children. Eventually, Fyodor's son Nikolai Bessmertny went back to the Soviet Union and settled in Donetsk taking up business. The other members of his family are living in Hanoi.

PART SIX PHILOLOGY

Elena TYUMENEVA

The Role of Metrical and Euphonic Means in Vietnamese Phraseology

The phraseological stock of any language is represented by various forms, each of which has its own distinguishing features. The classification of phraseological units and the criteria for singling out their individual classes constitute a subject of scholarly discussions the line under which has not yet been drawn. Most authors regard as phraseological units all word combinations characteristic of which are three main parameters — “their belonging to the nominal inventory of the language, their complete or partial idiomaticity, and also their stability and its variability in some degree or other manifesting itself in an absolute or relative reproducibility of word combinations in a ‘ready-made form.’”¹ Fully conforming to these three parameters are two main types of Vietnamese paroemias — *tục ngữ* and *thành ngữ*.

Most Vietnamese authors define *tục ngữ* as a complete sentence containing a statement or an idea.² *Thành ngữ*, in turn, are fixed collocations expressing some concept.³ The names of these forms fall into the category of culture-specific words with no direct equivalents in other languages and are translated by analogy in bilingual dictionaries. The 1961 *Vietnamese-Russian Dictionary* (hereinafter VRD) translates *tục ngữ* as “saying,”⁴ and the 1992 VRD, as “proverb.”⁵ The word *thành ngữ* is absent from the 1961 VRD, and in the 1992 VRD it is translated as “phraseological unit.”⁶ (3, p. 610).

Drawing parallels with the Russian language, we can categorize *tục ngữ* as proverbs, since in terms of their structure they are independent complete sentences and can be used independently: *muốn ăn cá phải thả câu*/want to

eat some fish, have to angle for it/“without effort, you can’t pull a fish out of the pond.” *Thành ngữ* may be both fixed collocations and simple sentences with a single predicate center, which makes it possible to classify one part of them as phraseological locutions and another part as sayings.

Proverbs and sayings fall under the sphere of paroemiology. They are creations of folklore reflecting the value picture of the Vietnamese world and are regularly reproduced in speech as models of popular opinion on values. Vietnamese paroemiological units (hereinafter PU) are euphonic and have a distinct rhythmic organization for, in order to be regularly cited, they should be easy to remember and pronounce. That is why rhyme and rhythm are highly important for paroemias.

When speaking of rhyme, we will mean regular repetition of similar sound combinations fulfilling the compositional function in building PU.

The peculiarity of Vietnamese rhymes lies in the specific features of the Vietnamese language phonetics. In its maximum form, each syllable/morpheme has the following structure: initial-medial+tone-final. Obligatory in this structure is the central part, medial+tone. The medial is always a vowel, whereas initials and finals may be both a significant sound and an insignificant sound. This circumstance should be borne in mind in analyzing the rhyme of PU.

There are six distinctive tones in the Vietnamese language. They are termed differently in Russian scholarly and methodological literature. In the *Introductory Course in the Vietnamese Language* by Vu Dang At and I.I. Glebova, the names of the tones approximately coincide with their names in the Vietnamese language: ngang/level, huyền/falling, sắc/upper, hỏi/interrogative, nặng/heavy, ngã/sharply interrogative.⁷ The *Textbook on the Vietnamese Language: Beginners’ Level* by A.P. Shiltova, Ngo, Nhu Binh and N.V. Norova gives different names for the tones: level, falling, rising, falling-rising, rising broken, and sharply falling.⁸ The *Greater Vietnamese-Russian Dictionary* (hereinafter GVRD) names the tones as follows: level, falling, rising-falling, falling-rising, rising broken, and falling broken.⁹ The first two tones, level and falling, are united into the *bằng* group (*bằng* — “flat, level, smooth”) and the other four, into the *trắc* group (*trắc* — “broken”). This division is important for analysis of the PU rhyme.

One feature of the Vietnamese PU rhyme is the coincidence of rhyming words by tone group. From this point of view, *người*/person and *cười*/laugh will rhyme and *người*/person and *cưỡi*/ride will not rhyme. If words with tones of the *bằng* group rhyme, such a rhyme is called a level rhyme. The rhyme with *trắc* tones is referred to as a broken rhyme.

Their other feature is the number of coinciding phonemes. By this criterion, the Vietnamese rhyme is divided into absolute and relative. The absolute rhyme is also called the main rhyme. As follows from its name, characteristic of this rhyme is the largest number of coincidences: medial+tone of one of the groups+final.

- Vô quít **dày** móng **tay** nhọn/skin — tangerine — thick — nail — hand — sharp/“this is diamond cutting diamond.”

Highlighted in bold in this PU is an absolute rhyme, **dày/thick** and **tay/hand**, where both the medials and the tones of the *bằng* group coincide.

Some researchers believe that, if one of the rhyming words has an insignificant sound, such a rhyme should be regarded as absolute.¹⁰

- Cái **khỏe** đẻ ra cái giàu/classifier — healthy — give birth — modifier — classifier — rich/“health generates wealth.” In the word **khỏe/healthy**, the insignificant sound is graphically designated by the letter “o.”

- Treo **cao** ngã **đau**/climb — high — fall — hurt/“the higher you rise, the harder you fall.” In the word **cao/high**, the insignificant sound is designated by the letter “o” and in the word **đau/hurt**, by the letter “u.”

The relative rhyme is also called a plain rhyme. Such a rhyme does not call for complete coincidence of medials and finals; however, there are certain qualifications: finals should be of one group — sonorant (m, n, ng) or implosive (p, t, c).¹¹

- Mía tròng **nắng**, **sắn** tròng mưa/sugarcane — plant — sunny — manioc — plant -rain/“if it is sunny, plant sugarcane; if it is rainy, plant manioc.” Rhyming in this PU are the words **nắng/sunny** and **sắn/manioc**, where there are finals of one sonorant group.

- Yêu nhau **lắm** **cắn** nhau đau/love — each other — very — bite — each other — painfully/“if he loves her, he shoves her.” In this PU, both an absolute and a relative rhyme are to be seen. The absolute rhyme is **nhau/each other** and **đau/painfully**. The relative rhyme consists of the words **lắm/very** and **cắn/bite** with finals of a sonorant group.

According to a number of researchers, there has developed a trend to regard words whose tones do not coincide by the “level/broken” criterion as a rhyme.

- Đắt **chè** hơn **rẻ** nước/expensive — tea — more — cheap — water/“tea is better than tap water.” The pair **chè/tea** and **rẻ/cheap**, where the first word belongs to a “level” group and the second, to a “broken” group, may be regarded as a distant rhyme.

- Áo **dài** chớ **ngại** quần thưa/shirt — long — not — afraid — trousers — rare/“if the shirt is long, there is no shame in wearing pants with holes.”

The pair **dài/long** (*bằng*) and **ngại/afraid** (*trắc*) can also be regarded as a rhyme.¹²

The peculiarity of the Vietnamese PU rhyme also manifests itself in the position that rhyming words occupy relative to each other.

The so-called “contact rhyme” where rhyming words follow each other has become quite widespread:

- Cốc **mò** **cò** xoi/cormorant — catch — stork — feast/“one does the hard work, and another gets rich.” In this PU, we see an absolute level contact rhyme: **mò/catch** and **cò/stork**.

- Tay **làm** **hàm** nhai/hand — do — jaw — chew/“if you work, you will eat.” Rhyming in this PU are the words **làm/do** and **hàm/jaw**. This is also an absolute level contact rhyme.

- Đói cho **sạch**, **rách** cho thom/hungry — do — clean — ragged — do — fragrant/“clad in rags but not a thief, poor but honest.” The rhyming words **sạch/clean** and **rách/ragged** constitute an absolute broken contact rhyme.

However, a much greater number of PU have a distant rhyme with rhyming words positioned at different distances from each other.

1. One word apart:

- Con **sâu** làm **rầu** nồi canh/classifier — insect — do — wretched — cooking pot — broth/“a fly in the ointment.” The rhyming words **sâu/insect** and **rầu/wretched**, constituting an absolute level distant rhyme, are separated by the word **làm/do**.

- Mất **bò** mới **lo** làm chuông/lose — cow — only — worry — make — cow pen/“a peasant needs thunder to cross himself and wonder.” Here the rhyming words are also separated by the limiting modifier **mới/only**.

2. Two words apart:

- Đi với bụt mặc áo cà **sa**, đi với **ma** mặc áo giấy/go — with — Buddha — put on — Buddhist monk’s habit — go — with — ghost — put on — garment — paper/“you should run with the pack.” The absolute level rhyme of this PU, **sa/monk** and **ma/ghost** is positioned two words apart.

- Tránh vỏ **dừa**, gắp vỏ **dừa**/avoid — rind — watermelon — meet — rind — coconut/“out of the frying pan into the fire.” The absolute level rhyme **dừa/watermelon** and **dừa/coconut** is separated by two words.

- Có **tiếng** không có **miếng**/have — renown — not — have — piece/“so much honor but nothing to eat.” In this PU, two words separate an absolute broken rhyme.

3. Three words apart:

- Ăn **nhieu** ở chẳng bao **nhieu**/be — many — live — not — how many/“squeezed but pleased.” The absolute level rhyme of this PU is separated by three morphemes.

• Cây thẳng bóng **ngay**, cây cong bóng **vạy**/tree — straight — shadow — straight — tree — crooked — shadow — crooked/“good roots yield good fruits.” Here in addition to the distant rhyme **ngay/vạy** the words **thẳng/straight**, **bóng/shadow** and **cong/crooked** also rhyme.

• Khi thương củ ấu cũng **tròn**, khi ghét bồ **hòn** cũng méo/when — love — corm — water chestnut — also — round — when — hate — soap tree — also — warped/“faults are thick where love is thin.” In this PU, **tròn/round** is separated by three words from the rhyming morpheme **hòn**.

4. Four words apart:

• Năm ngón **tay** có ngón ngắn ngón **dài**/five — finger — hand — have — finger — short — finger — long/“everyone is different even in one family.” The highlighted words in this PU rhyme and are positioned four words apart from each other.

• Chửi trước **mặt** không sợ, sợ thù **vặt** sau lưng/scold — in front of — face — not — be afraid — be afraid — enemy — pluck — behind — back/“wicked dog bites stealthily.” The absolute broken rhyme **mặt/vặt** is positioned four words apart.

• Có không mùa đông mới **biết**, giàu nghèo ba mươi **tết** mới hay/be — not — season — winter — only — know — rich — poor — thirty — New Year — only — know/“don’t count your chickens before they are hatched.” In this PU, four morphemes separate the relative broken rhyme **biết/tết**.

5. Five words apart:

• Chơi với chó, chó liếm **mặt**, chơi với gà, gà mổ **mắt**/play — with — dog — dog — lick — face — play — with — hen — hen — pick out — eye/“if you play with a dog, the dog will lick your face; if you play with a hen, the hen will pick out your eye.” **Mặt/face** and **mắt/eye** are separated from each other by five words.

• Người khôn chóng **già**, người dại luẩn quẩn vào **ra** tối ngày/person — clever — quickly — old — person — stupid — go — in circles — come in — go out — evening — day/“if you know too much you’ll get old too soon.” In this PU, **già/old** and **ra/go out** rhyme five words apart.

• Trứng rồng lại nở ra **rồng**, liu điu lại nở ra **dòng** liu điu/egg — dragon — once again — hatch out — dragon — lizard — once again — hatch out — race — lizard/“an apple tree does not bear oranges.” The rhyming words **rồng/dragon** and **dòng/race** are positioned five words apart.

The rhyme of Vietnamese paroemias is also subdivided into transitory and inner. In the former case, it is a rhyme between two or several *vế* — parts of a sentence built according to the principle of parallelism — and in the latter case it is a rhyme inside one part of PU consisting of two or several parts.

• Được làm **vua thua** làm giặc/receive — do — king — lose — do — enemy/“victors are not judged.” This PU consists of two *vế*, in which the pair **vua/king** and **thua/lose**, from the syntactic point of view, is a transitory rhyme between its two parallel parts.

• Nhà **giàu** trồng **lau** ra mía, nhà khó trồng củ tia ra củ nâu/house — rich — plant — reeds — grow — sugarcane — house — hard — plant — bulb — tia — grow — bulb — yam/“a poor man finds bad luck and trouble, a rich man finds money and wealth.” Here the absolute level distant rhyme **giàu/lau** is inside a single independent sentence which is part of PU and is syntactically regarded as an inner rhyme.

The rhythmic organization of paroemias does not boil down to metrics alone. It has a depictive function, lending structuredness to phraseology. This is essential for easy remembering and regular citing. The criterion of the rhythmic organization of PU is, above all, the number of morphemes comprising it.

As a minimum, PU have three morphemes: bé hạt tiêu/small — pip — pepper/“a little goes a long way.” The maximum number of morphemes is fourteen. This measure is called *lục bát* (*lục* — ‘six,’ *bát* — ‘eight’). Rhythmically such PU are distichs where the first line consists of 6 morphemes and the second one of 8 morphemes with the sixth morphemes in each line rhyming — that is, rhyming words are positioned five morphemes apart from each other. Some of the *tục ngữ* and *thành ngữ* collections give examples with a larger number of morphemes; however, their number is small and their belonging to PU is questionable.¹³

Most PU are four-morpheme. According to Nguyen Van Hang, they constitute approximately 80% of all phraseological units of the Vietnamese language, since its characteristic feature is a trend toward a two-syllable or four-syllable structure of any multisyllable combination expressing a new concept.¹⁴ One variety of the three-morpheme PU *bé hạt tiêu* is *bé như hạt tiêu*/small — as — pip — pepper, with an even number of morphemes.

Another criterion of the PU rhythmic organization is pausation. A pause in PU built according to the principle of parallelism separates two *vế*.

• 4 morphemes

Ao sâu | tốt cá/pond — deep — good — fish/“gracious living.”

• 6 morphemes

Cây một rễ | lá một cành/tree — one — root — leaf — one — branch/“two of a kind.”

If PU built according to the principle of parallelism include eight or more morphemes, each *vế* is a sentence inside which syntactic pausation has to be observed.

- 8 morphemes

Ăn cỗ | đi trước || lội nước | đi sau/eat — feast — go — at the head — wade — water — go — behind/“first at the pot and last at the work.”

- 10 morphemes

Có của | khôn | như mại || không của | dại | như vích/have — property — clever — as — mại fish — no — property — stupid — as — vích turtle/“a rich man won’t be fooled, while a poor man is easy to cheat.”

- 12 morphemes

Khi thương củ ấu cũng tròn| khi ghét bò hõn cũng méo/when — love — corm — water chestnut — also — round — when — hate — soap tree — also — warped/“faults are thick where love is thin.”

- 14 morphemes

Khi thương nhau | ngóng trông lâu lạn || khi ghét nhau | mặt cạ làm ngo/when — love — each other — wait — crane the neck with impatience — when — not love — each other — face — angry — not pay attention/“when you are in love, everything is beautiful, and when you fall out of love, everything is terrible.”

- 16 morphemes

Mẹ chồng | không ai | nói tốt | nàng dâu || nàng dâu | không ai | nói tốt | mẹ chồng/“no mother-in-law will speak good of her daughter-in-law, and no daughter-in-law will speak good of her mother-in-law.”

In the group of PU without parallel parts, the number of morphemes may be both even and odd and pausation is determined by the syntactic structure.

- Đẹp | như tiên/“beautiful as a fairy.” This comparative phrase consists of three morphemes. The pause is before the comparative conjunction.

- Kiến | bò| miệng chén/an ant is crawling along the side of a cup/“sink to the bottom.” This PU consists of four morphemes and is structurally a sentence consisting of a subject, a predicate, and an adverbial modifier of place. Pauses separate each part of the sentence.

- Nuôi cáo | trong nhà/nurture a fox in the house /“cherish a viper in bosom.” This is four-morpheme predicative word combination with the “predicate-object-adverbial modifier of place” structure, where the pause separates the adverbial modifier of place.

- Tắt đèn | nhà ngói | cũng như nhà tranh/(if you) turn off the light, a house with a tile roof will look the same as a house with a thatched roof/“all cats look gray in the dark.” This PU is a conjunctionless complex sentence which includes a comparison. The pause separates one part of the complex sentence from the other and emphasizes the comparison.

The measure and pausation of paroemias are necessary for lending greater stability to their structure, help correctly understand their meaning and, alongside rhyme, facilitate remembering them and promote their regular use in speech.

NOTES

1. V.N. Telia, *Russkaya frazeologiya: semanticheskii, pragmaticheskii i lingvokulturologicheskii aspekty* [Russian Phraseology: Semantic, Pragmatic and Linguo-Culturological Aspects], Moscow, 1996, p. 56.

2. Triều Nguyên, *Khảo luận về tục ngữ người Việt* [Trieu Nguyen, On Vietnamese Proverbs], Hà Nội, 2010, pp. 37–38.

3. Nguyễn Lân, *Từ điển thành ngữ và tục ngữ Việt Nam* [Nguyen Lan, A Glossary of Vietnamese Fixed Collocations and Proverbs], Hà Nội, 2007, p. 5.

4. I.I. Glebova, V.A. Zelentsov *at al.*, *Vietnamsko-russkiy slovar'* [Vietnamese-Russian Dictionary], Moscow, 1961, p. 560.

5. I.I. Glebova, A.A. Sokolov, *Vietnamsko-russkiy slovar'* [Vietnamese-Russian Dictionary], Moscow, 1992, p. 717.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 610.

7. Vu Dang At, I.I. Glebova, *Nachalniy kurs vietnamskogo yazyka* [Introductory Course of the Vietnamese Language], Moscow, 1963, p. 12.

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Tatiana FILIMONOVA

The Tragedy of a Reformer in the Novel *Hồ Quý Ly* by Nguyễn Xuân Khánh

Since the late 20th century, Vietnamese literature both in Vietnam and in the diaspora has been showing an increased interest in the country's historical past. This is proved by the appearance, one after another, of an impressive number of large, often multivolume, historical novels such as the novel *The Côn River in the High Water Season* (Sông Côn mùa lũ) by Nguyễn Mộng Giác, in the center of which is the Tây Sơn period, the novel *The Twelve Warlords* (Mười hai sứ quân) by Vũ Ngọc Đĩnh centering on events of the 10th century, the novel *Tempestuous Times of the Trần Period* (Bão táp triều Trần) by Hoàng Quốc Hải, the novel *Dragon Capital* (Kinh đô Rồng) by Nguyễn Khắc Phục telling about the initial period of the Lý Dynasty, and works by many other authors. They also include the historical novel *Hồ Quý Ly* by Nguyễn Xuân Khánh,¹ published by Phụ Nữ Publishing House in Hanoi in 2000.

This voluminous, 834-page, novel immediately drew the attention of both literary critics and readers. This is attested by the fact that almost right after the publication it was awarded a prize in the 1998–2000 novel writing contest of the Writers' Union of Vietnam and a prize of the Hanoi Writers' Union for 2000–2001, and has had more than ten reprints by the present time.

In the center of Nguyễn Xuân Khánh's work are real and fictional events and characters of Vietnamese history from the late 13th century — the period of the decline of the Trần Dynasty (13th-14th centuries) — to approximately the year 1400.

As follows from the title of the novel, its main character is Hồ Quý Ly (1336—1407), one of the major Vietnamese reformers of the Middle Ages, who precisely in that period gradually concentrated real power in his hands

and in 1400, having overthrown the Trần Dynasty, founded his own Hồ Dynasty, which existed until 1407. As is known, the assessment of Hồ Quý Ly's figure and his rule is rather contradictory, which follows from official Vietnamese historiography and even from fiction.²

In addition, the novel features quite a number of historical characters, both real and fictional. The real historical characters include Princess Huy Ninh, Hồ Quý Ly's second wife, Nguyễn Trùng, Hồ Quý Ly's eldest son, Nguyễn Trùng's first wife and the daughter of high-ranking dignitary Trần Nguyên Hạng, Hồ Quý Ly's enemy; Emperor Trần Nghệ Tông and Thuận Tôn, his son and heir; Thánh Ngẫu, Thuận Tôn's wife and Hồ Quý Ly's daughter; eminent dignitary Trần Khát Chân, who is at the same time Thanh Mai's, Nguyễn Trùng's fictional lover, rescuer and foster father; Phạm Sư Ôn, a monk and the leader of a popular uprising, and some other characters such as, for example, Nguyễn Phi Khanh, a high official and a poet, his son Nguyễn Trãi, a prominent statesman and poet, etc.

The fictional characters include songstress Thanh Mai, Nguyễn Trùng's lover; Nguyễn Cẩn, Hồ Quý Ly's loyal supporter and Nguyễn Trùng's friend; student Phạm Sinh, the monk Phạm Sư Ôn's son; Sử Văn Hoa, historian and chronicler whose daughter became Phạm Sinh's wife, and a number of others.

Each one of them has their own personal stories, which are to some degree or other reflected in the novel and which, at the same time, are closely intertwined with one another.

For example, the story of Hồ Quý Ly himself is traced in detail in the novel from his birth up to the year 1400, including his first marriage, his touching relationship with his second wife, his relationships with his two sons, whose characters are completely different, his daughter, his little grandson, the emperors under whom he served, and his supporters and opponents. Throughout the narrative we can see Hồ Quý Ly persistently moving towards his goal — that of concentrating power in his hands for implementing reforms necessary for further development of the country and of founding his own dynasty; yet his path is a tragic one.

The stories of the other characters are presented as rather full life stories, each of which is completed by the end of the novel. Hồ Quý Ly's beloved second wife, a zealous Buddhist, slowly dies from grief for her husband. Nguyễn Trùng, forced to part with his beloved, decides, as a loyal son, to stay with his father, even though he foresees the tragedy and hopelessness of the situation. His mind in anguish over his inability to retain power in the hands of the House of Trần, old Nghệ Tông passes away. Under pressure brought to bear on him by Hồ Quý Ly, young Thuận Tôn, inca-

pable of ruling the country, first becomes a Taoist hermit and then leaves this life. Hồ Quý Ly, without pitying his three-year-old grandson, obstinately prepares him for the enthronement ceremony. Hồ Quý Ly's daughter pines away because of her husband's death and her fear for the life of her little son, who has fallen victim to the ambitions of her father. After the suppression of a peasant uprising, its leader, monk Phạm Sư Ôn, is executed. Following the failure of a plot against Hồ Quý Ly, Trần Khát Chân is hanged. Chronicler Sừ Văn Hoa and his faithful wife die a terrible death. And only Phạm Sinh, Phạm Sư Ôn's son, and Sừ Văn Hoa's daughter flee from persecution, condemning themselves to a vagrant yet free life under assumed names.

Compositionally, the plot of the novel is "looped" between the first and the last, thirteenth chapters named, respectively, "Festival of Oath-Taking in Đồng Cổ" (Hội thề Đồng Cổ) and "Festival of Oath-Taking in Đồn Sơn" (Hội thề Đồn Sơn).

In the first chapter, the subjects take an oath of allegiance to the elderly Emperor Trần Nghệ Tông, and in the last one they are to swear an oath to the child emperor, Hồ Quý Ly's grandson. The former event takes place in Thăng Long and the latter, in the new capital, Tây Đô, which has just been built by Hồ Quý Ly.

At the very beginning of the novel, it is said that Emperor Trần Nghệ Tông has decided to make this annual festival with the ceremony of oath-taking more solemn than usual because of a complicated situation both inside the country and outside its borders. The novel reads: "Champa troops led by Emperor Chế Bồng Nga have more than once made dangerous raids into the country, closely approaching the capital. The dependent peasants led by monk Phạm Sư Ôn rose in revolt and rioted in Thăng Long for three days. Emperor Trần Duệ Tông suffered a defeat during his campaign on Champa. Emperor Trần Phế Đế was dethroned by the Retired Emperor Trần Nghệ Tông and killed. Trần Nghệ Tông himself remained in his position as Retired Emperor under three emperors from the House of Trần and eventually passed the throne to Trần Thuận Tông, his youngest son. In other words, while the situation in the country was extremely unstable, the power was in the hands of the elderly emperor and his child heir. At the same time, the might of First Minister Hồ Quý Ly kept growing day after day."³ In the novel, it was this might that the elderly emperor and a substantial share of his subjects feared.

The festival of oath-taking in Đồn Sơn took place in an absolutely different situation — after the death of Emperor Trần Nghệ Tông, when the ruling dynasty had finally lost its hold on power in the country, which was

seized by Hồ Quý Ly through his crafty schemes. Yet festival went sour because Hồ Quý Ly together with his supporters uncovered a plot to assassinate him. As a result, the plotters were exposed and executed, and Hồ Quý Ly won still another victory.

Based on actual historical events recorded in the Vietnamese chronicles and featuring numerous actual historical characters, the novel at the same time contains a great deal of invention, which is quite natural for a historical novel, since invention makes it possible to infuse life into the dry historical facts. However, this also enables the author to interpret events and assess characters and raise questions of a historiosophical and other nature. Thanks to this, the novel can be examined from different points of view such as, for example, the relationship between historical truth, such as we know it, and the author's fiction; the problem of power in general and power in Confucianism; Vietnam's relations with its northern and southern neighbors, that is, China and Champa; Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in Vietnamese society during the Trần period; and many others. One of the possible themes following from the novel is the tragedy of Hồ Quý Ly as a reformer.

In the novel, Hồ Quý Ly is described, above all, as a clever, educated, ambitious, strong-willed, cunning and cruel man, who in the period of apparent decline of the Trần Dynasty gradually concentrated all power in his hands in order to carry out major reforms in the country for restoring it to its former grandeur by all manner of means. For example, in the economic sphere he restricted the size of the Vietnamese aristocrats' landed estates and the number of dependent peasants; he introduced paper money in order to solve the country's financial issues; being a Confucian and waging struggle against the power of Buddhist monasteries, he forced a great number of Buddhist monks to return to secular life so as to make themselves useful to society through actual labor; and so on. His reforms affected the army and competitive examination. In order to secure his rear areas, he decided to transfer the capital from Thăng Long to his homeland, and to build there a new magnificent city, Tây Đô. Unfortunately, his reformer ideas were not appreciated and supported. They raised strong opposition, mainly amongst aristocracy and Confucian servicemen, who, not hoping to overcome him on their own, began to seek support from a foreign enemy — now from the Chams, now from the Chinese Ming Dynasty. That is why Hồ Quý Ly is shown in the novel to be extremely lonely. The thought of his loneliness is repeatedly emphasized in the novel. For example, Nguyễn Trùng, the eldest son of Hồ Quý Ly, says: "I saw an entreaty in the father's eyes ... and suddenly realized that he was terribly lonely. One could say that it was the lone-

liness of a traitor planning to seize the throne or, perhaps, the loneliness of a man doing great things.”⁴ Or the author writes: “... when his wife died, Hồ Quý Ly felt how lonely he was, and this feeling made him dizzy. But then loneliness is a faithful companion of men like him. So he was even proud of his loneliness. Moreover, he thought that he had to be lonely. Only thus would he be able to do great things in this life.”⁵

Even people who are close to him, being aware of Hồ Quý Ly’s loneliness, sympathize with him. In the first place, his second wife, Princess Huy Ninh. And here is how the reflections of Nguyễn Trùng, a person of a completely different character than his father’s, about Hồ Quý Ly are described: “In fact, Trùng understood very well his father’s intentions. He wanted to find a real life-saver for his country. At this thought, his heart was swept by a wave of sympathy for his father, full of both admiration and pity at the same time.... Trùng was not at all naive. He knew quite well the rumors about his father that circulated among the officials and the common people. They said that his father was cunning. That he stirred up rebellion. That he entertained traitorous plans. ...And he actually wanted to find a life-saver! What was it — a good intention or, as people said, crafty words? <...> His father’s delusions or excessive ambitions? It was precisely this that was his tragedy, his misfortune. A life-saver! Who would believe him? The people? The officials? The old Emperor Nghệ Tông? Me? Or his adherents? Are they really following him for the sake of search for a life-saver?”⁶

Knowing his father’s extreme suspiciousness and fearing his reprisals, Nguyễn Trùng burns a book entitled *Wonderful Stories of Lĩnh Nam* (Lĩnh Nam chích quái) — a rare sample of Vietnamese medieval fiction by an unknown author, as the novel says, which has come his way. The book contains a legend, aimed against his father, about an evil ghost in the form of a nine-tailed fox — Hồ tinh. According to the popular legend, in the hoary past this ghost used to live in the west of Thăng Long, but after the Dragon King Lạc won a victory over him, what is now known as Western Lake was formed in that place.⁷ In the book, this legend had a continuation in which it was written that the evil fox had nine sons; the Dragon King Lạc destroyed eight of them, but the ninth one escaped. Hồ Quý Ly is this ninth son.⁸ In other words, Hồ Quý Ly is a live embodiment of the evil ghost.⁹

It is known from history that Hồ Quý Ly, being himself a Confucian, not only tried to implement economic and other reforms in the country, but also dared to encroach on Confucianism, taking the liberty to criticize the doctrine and its founders. This theme occupies a major place in the novel.

At first, two works by Hồ Quý Ly written by him in Nôm (Vietnamese hieroglyphic script) — his translations and interpretations from the Confu-

cian Five Classics, namely, The Book of Songs (Kinh Thi) and The Book of History (Kinh Thư) — evoked sharp rejection among the educated classes. The most courageous of Hồ Quý Ly’s opponents was Confucian Đoàn Xuân Lôi, a real historical person working as a mentor at the Imperial Academy (Quốc Tử Giám, literally the “Temple of the King Who Distinguished Literature”) and reputed to be the truest, most orthodox Confucian. He wrote an indignant message to Emperor Nghệ Tông. But Nghệ Tông, who had himself endorsed this undertaking, showed the message to Hồ Quý Ly. Following which Hồ Quý Ly thought with bitterness: “How pathetic our winners of competitive examinations are! Despite all their erudition, the only thing that they are capable of doing is collecting and rewriting the ideas of people of the past. Is this not sad?”¹⁰

Somewhat later, in 1392, Hồ Quý Ly completed his well-known work, *Minh Đạo* (“Way of Light”), which was the “dream of his life.” In the novel, this work is characterized as “impudent” because it criticizes Confucius himself for some of his actions, and also a number of other theorists of Confucianism and neo-Confucianism for their “teaching on principles” (Lý học).

As is known, this work itself has not survived, and its contents can only be judged from its mentions in other sources. For example, Ngô Sĩ Liên’s *Complete Book of the Historical Record of Đại Việt* says the following about it: “Hồ Quý Ly has written *Minh Đạo* in fourteen chapters and submitted it to the most august monarch. In short, it said that Zhou Gong should be considered the first wise man and Kung Tze (Confucius), only the first teacher; that Zhou Gong should take the central place in the Temple of Culture with his face turned south, and Kung Tze, a side place with his face turned west; that in the *Lun Yu* (Analects of Confucius) there are four dubious passages such as, for example, Kung Tze’s meeting with Nan Tze; the depletion of food in the Chen Kingdom; the invitation extended by Kung-shan Fu-jao and Pi Hsi and the philosopher’s desire to go to them. He called Han Yu a commercialist in a scientist’s cloak. As for such followers of Confucius as Zhou Mao-shu, Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, Yang Shi, Luo Chun Xi, Li Yanping, and Zhu Xi, he called them profoundly learned yet mediocre men and said that they carefully plagiarized works written by others without comprehending the essence of the matter.”¹¹

The novel says that, according to Hồ Quý Ly, all these theorists of Confucianism are “featherbrained dreamers who are not concerned with day-to-day worldly matters. They may be clever and well-educated, but their theories are totally useless for the people of our Đại Việt.”¹² It is with admiration that he cites the example of Emperor Trần Minh Tông (reign

1314–1329), who rejected the advice of two well-known Confucians of his rule period — Lê Quát and Phạm Sư Mạnh (first half of the 14th century) — to implement changes in the country on the Chinese model, saying: “Our country already has its foundations. The South and the North are too different. If we follow the Chinese Confucians [bạch diện thư sinh — literally, “white-faced disciples”] in search of the development ways, this may lead to great unrest.”¹³

In the novel, having read the book, Emperor Trần Minh Tông issues a decree in which he praises it for emphasizing the differences between his country and its northern neighbor:

“We believe that the South and the North are indeed different.

“Let us take, for example, our ancestors. Trần Nhân Tông twice won brilliant victories over the Nguyễn, and yet he did not forget about the tradition of ancient Lạc Việt to tattoo their bodies with images of a dragon; in his old age he founded the Trúc Lâm (Bamboo Grove) Thiên School and became Bodhisattva only in our land. Or Trần Hưng Đạo, who put the enemy to complete rout, having made the Northerners to quake with fright. And our father, the most wise Emperor Minh Tông, also decided against following the Chinese so as not to shatter the institutions of our ancestors.

“Now, having read Minh Đạo, I can see that it is filled with the spirit of our land. The perfectly wise lived long ago, and we are living now. The perfectly wise lived in the North, and we are living in the South. We should not, therefore, copy the olden times so as not to do harm to the present. We should not imitate the Northerners so as not to spoil the customs of our country....”¹⁴

This work by Hồ Quý Ly incited an even more violent response among the educated classes. It met with ardent approval from the camp of Hồ Quý Ly’s supporters. *Minh Đạo* was highly commended by Nguyễn Phi Khanh, who wrote in a letter to Hồ Quý Ly that “... each line, each hieroglyph in it is written in blood and expresses a dream that the country will be strong and its people rich (nước mạnh dân giàu — as is known, this was a popular slogan of the Vietnamese Renovation Period after 1986. — *T.F.*) and that our South will be enlightened....”¹⁵ In the novel, Hồ Hán Thương, Hồ Quý Ly’s youngest son, and his young associate Nguyễn Cẩn admire his work. The former compares his father’s writing with a “pearl shimmering before one’s eyes” and thanks his father for giving him not only his life but also the opportunity “clearly to see the stars above the road” along which he is walking.¹⁶ And the latter says: “What is Minh Đạo? It is the way of a wise ruler (minh chủ). I have been blessed to live next to such a wise ruler. And your aspirations are clear to me....”¹⁷

However, there were more of those who sharply condemned Hồ Quý Ly’s writing, having their reasons for this. As the novel says, Đoàn Xuân Lôi, mentor at the Imperial Academy, was the most ardent opponent of Hồ Quý Ly’s work. Having read *Minh Đạo*, he once again wrote a letter to Emperor Trần Nghệ Tông, in which he accused the author of the writing that, in criticizing the ancients, Confucius, Zhu Xi and others, and putting forward his reformatory ideas that run counter to the old customs, he takes too much on himself, acts above his rank, stirs up chaos and thus aggravates the situation in the country even more, for which he should be given exemplary punishment for the edification of posterity. And again, after he has read this letter, Hồ Quý Ly is upset by the narrow-mindedness and timidity of thinking of Vietnamese Confucians for whom books by the perfectly wise have turned from “golden palaces” to a “prison.”¹⁸

In the novel, chronicler Sử Văn Hoa, a “correct” Confucian, takes a special stand in respect of *Minh Đạo*. In response to Hồ Quý Ly’s work, he writes *A Reflection on Minh Đạo* (Minh Đạo luận), in which, while recognizing the need for changes in the country in order to ensure its further development, he also criticizes Hồ Quý Ly. But it is not Hồ Quý Ly’s attacks on Confucianism and Confucians but, above all, his attacks on Buddhism which is the object of his criticism. He writes that periods of bloom and decline are natural stages constantly replacing each other in the development of any country. Vietnam passed through a period of long decline during its northern dependence, but succeeded in preserving the “soul of the country” (hồn nước),¹⁹ which began to grow stronger under the independent country rulers — Ngô Quyền (939–944), Đinh Bộ Lĩnh (968–979), and Lê Đại Hành (980–1005). Then the Lý Dynasty, having reached its bloom, gradually fell into decline. The same thing is happening with the Trần Dynasty. Changes are, therefore, necessary, but only if they are for the good of the “soul of the country.” The “soul” of Đại Việt and of its mountains and rivers is the sovereignty of the country, the well-being of its people, and culture (văn hiến) brought to every home and to every person. However, Hồ Quý Ly’s attacks on the Buddhism, the monks’ forced return to secular life and the dying away of rural pagodas contradict this. Sử Văn Hoa writes: “Yin and yang should be harmoniously combined in Minh Đạo. Confucianism is the yang of the soul of the country and Buddhism is its yin.”²⁰ In his opinion, Buddhism had done a lot of good for the country and the people. Pagodas both enlightened people and healed their souls from their pains. And individual Confucians such as Lê Quát or Trương Hán Siêu (14th century) attacked Buddhism because of their narrow minds, noticing only bad things about it and not seeing any good in it. In addition, if one relies on Confu-

cianism alone, there will be a tilt towards yang. “And yang is hardness, it is haste and excess,”²¹ Sừ Văn Hoa says, which are incapable of softness and condescension and consequently lead to cruelty, bloodshed and decline.

Hồ Quý Ly’s relations with conservative Confucianism are well characterized by the momentous episode with a dream.

One day Hồ Quý Ly summoned Sừ Văn Hoa, who was famous for his ability to interpret dreams, so that he should explain to him the meaning of a strange and terrible dream. In the dream, he saw from a distance some man standing on the top floor of the palace, where only high-ranking courtiers had the right to appear. However the dress of that man did not match the color of any of the nine official ranks, even the lowest ones.²² Hồ Quý Ly was very much surprised. But when he asked the stranger who he was, he paid no attention to Hồ Quý Ly. He came closer and, having cocked his head upwards, tried to make out the stranger’s face. The man, however, turned his back on him. Then Hồ Quý Ly shouted an order that he should be beheaded. Only after that the man turned around. His face was covered with whitewash, and his bright red lips stood out against it with his teeth sticking out horribly. Hồ Quý Ly was scared; he cried out and woke up.

Before explaining the dream — incidentally, not without fear for his own life — Sừ Văn Hoa told Hồ Quý Ly that this dream contained truth, which Hồ Quý Ly’s conscience wanted to hide from other people, himself included. Its interpretation was as follows. The white-faced man from the dream symbolized the educated classes. And the fact that Hồ Quý Ly was looking at him from below upwards meant that Hồ Quý Ly himself usually looked down upon educated people. Because he considered them “too mediocre and stupid and actually ignored them, hated them and even opposed himself to them.”²³ According to Sừ Văn Hoa, the dream was to help Hồ Quý Ly reform himself and raise educated people to their due height. The fact that he saw a member of the educated classes in his sleep showed that Hồ Quý Ly constantly thought of these people, and the fact that the man turned his back on him spoke of these people’s disagreement with Hồ Quý Ly on many issues.

After that Hồ Quý Ly asked Sừ Văn Hoa, how many learned scholars in Thăng Long, in his opinion, supported him. Sừ Văn Hoa answered boldly that almost all of them were dissatisfied with him and advised him to stop building the new capital. For he personally still thought that, in making a good choice of the site for the capital, “the main thing is high morals (Đức) and not a hard-to-reach spot.”²⁴

These words sent Hồ Quý Ly into a rage: “What? To stop the transfer of the capital? Not for the world! And what is this false-sounding phrase, ‘the

main thing is high morals and not a hard-to-reach spot’? How I can remain in this place where there are a lot of loyal blockheads who can only spout off smooth-tongued rhetoric on the ‘correct way of ruling the country’ (vương Đạo) and who are in fact corrupt and full of cunning plans aimed at prolonging the state of stagnation in the country for as long as possible? Even you, a man whom everyone regards as a noble chronicler (người chép sử quân tử), a man worried about the decline of the country, are in league with them?”²⁵

The reasons for rejection of *Minh Đạo* by the majority of the Confucian community were also given to him by his eldest son, Nguyễn Trùng. They had the following conversation:

Son: “I think that a book that gives rise to debate is interesting. Your book, Father, is precisely of this kind. You are the first in our country who dared to subject Confucius to an analysis. Confucius is the sun of the educated classes teaching (Đạo Nho). But then the sun is discussed, therefore, your book also should be discussed.”

Father: “Tell me more clearly, what do you think of it?”

Son: “Your writing is a ‘program of reforms’ (biện pháp).”

Father: “Bad reforms or good reforms?”

Son: “When Quân Trọng carried out reforms, Từ Lộ and Từ Công condemned them, whereas Confucius extolled them in every way because Quân Trọng brought progress (văn hiến). Thương Ương’s and Lý Tự’s reforms were also in part a success, but posterity condemned them because ordinary people strongly suffered from them.”

Father: “But I am neither Thương nor Lý. Do I burn Confucian books? I write books, I preach virtue, I bring education even to individual villages. I want to achieve progress....”

Son: “But your teaching disregards the concept of ‘loyalty’ (trung).”

Father: “This is true. But Quân Trọng did not leave this life after Prince Cự but, on the contrary, he began to worship Tề Hoàn Công, an enemy of Prince Cự, who was an enlightened ruler.”

Son: “Your book says about changes, but these changes are too hasty. That is the whole point.”

Father: “So what is the point here?”

Son: “Confucius wanted that everyone in the country should mind his own affairs. People should mind people’s business, officials should mind officials’ business, and rulers should mind rulers’ business. And he would not have it that subordinates should discuss the affairs of their superiors. You, Father, are an official, and you dare to discuss rulers’ affairs and even assess the words of Confucius himself. Wishing to do everything quickly, you do

not go in the footsteps of the ancients. You have broken the ‘rule of correspondence of the names of the substance of things’ (chính danh). And thereby you have caused dissatisfied grumbling of service class people. Your methods of implementing reforms are also explained by your desire to do everything quickly. Common people want only to have a square meal and sleep a sweet sleep. And you now issue a decree on paper money, now introduce restrictions on dependent peasants, now conduct a population census, and now set up a secret inquiry office.... And officials take advantage of all these things. Father! Listen to me. I will tell you directly: the people are not with you.”

Father: “Well, well! Calm down, son. I know that much of what you are saying is true. But your words have one substantial flaw: you leave out of account the extent to which our country is now in chaos. Changes are necessary, transformations are needed. It goes without saying that this involves cruelty and suffering, but I will try to ensure that as few heads as possible should be cut off and as little blood as possible should be spilled. Now there is only one thing that worries me: the Chinese have begun to glance in our direction. They have grown stronger, they have peace and order, whereas our country is in utter disarray. Many things have not been completed, and the people are passive. I implore heaven that it may give me another score years.... Son, come to your senses at last! Do not be such a weakling! I just need twenty more years to create a new generation of service class people. And today’s rotten Confucians will die out by then. So, why should I be afraid that not everyone supports me now?”²⁶

At first, Phạm Sinh, dreaming of killing him, is also an opponent of Hồ Quý Ly, for he is guilty of the death of his father, monk Phạm Sư Ôn, the leader of the uprising, and of the suffering of several other characters in the novel. Moreover, during the execution his father urged his son to revenge his death. All this led Phạm Sinh to the thought that “...it was Hồ Quý Ly who brought all sufferings to the land of Đại Việt.”²⁷ Gradually, however, upon reading *Minh Đạo* and after personal contacts with Hồ Quý Ly, alongside hatred, he developed an admiration for this undoubtedly cunning and cruel man who at the same time dared to entertain immense and bold plans. Directly involved in the circle of conspirators against Hồ Quý Ly, he eventually made the decision to step aside, preferring personal, even though homeless, happiness with his beloved over the career of Hồ Quý Ly’s castrated confidant who might be charged with the mission of being “Hồ Quý Ly’s man” at the Chinese Court. This happened not without the influence of chronicler Sừ Văn Hoa. Although he had suffered much from Hồ Quý Ly for the truth, he told Phạm Sinh how Hồ Quý Ly’s opponents led by Trần

Khát Chân suggested that he write a slanderous book about Hồ Quý Ly — a kind of book that would make “the name of Hồ Quý Ly a black stain in historical works.”²⁸ Sừ Văn Hoa was very much surprised and said that the most important thing for a Confucian in writing a book was the truth because slander would do harm not so much to the slandered as to the slanderer. And when Trần Khát Chân noted that all means were fair which helped show loyalty (trung hiếu) to the ruling house and destroy the enemy, Sừ Văn Hoa declined the proposal. He told Phạm Sinh that, although he did not like Hồ Quý Ly, in its opinion, the time had not yet come to praise or disparage him. For the main thing was correctly to understand the actual needs of the country (hồn nước). He did not know who was right in that fight and who was not, who would prove to be the winner and who would be the loser many generations later, but the fact was evident that the country was in need of changes.²⁹

The writer, therefore, shows both reformatory and antireformatory forces in the novel. However, sharing the Phạm Sinh’s and Sừ Văn Hoa’s viewpoint as it were, he does not give the final assessment of Hồ Quý Ly. And, despite the fact that the novel finishes with what appears to be Hồ Quý Ly’s victory over his opponents — for, after all, he succeeds in uncovering the conspiracy, preventing his own death and destroying his enemies — the presentiment of Hồ Quý Ly’s imminent ruin looms over the pages of the novel. Hồ Quý Ly himself also feels this because, being a Confucian, he is aware that his striving to usurp power is wrong and by definition cannot receive support in the country. Thoughts about his not being loyal to the ruling dynasty, not being loyal to Trần Nghệ Tông, who has believed him and led him to the summits of power, constantly torment Hồ Quý Ly.

One day he sees a nightmare in which he meets with dead Emperor Nghệ Tông reading a treatise by Han Fei, Chinese philosopher of the 3rd century B.C. and ideologist of reforms. Hồ Quý Ly himself knows this book almost by heart. They have the following conversation about power. Nghệ Tông says that, although this book is intended for rulers, wise men do not advise to read it because it promotes the “wrong way of ruling a country” (bá Đạo). Yet he reads it and, thanks to this, better understands Hồ Quý Ly. Next Nghệ Tông asks him what in Hồ Quý Ly’s opinion is the most important in the book, and he answers that it teaches well how the ruler can preserve the throne, but there is one important point missing from it: “When the country rots away, when it is eaten through by hundreds of worms, when the roads are heaped high with bodies of peasants who have died of hunger, when common people are mercilessly exploited, and they have nobody to turn to with their complaints, when talented people become hermits, when

there is a threat from the outside and there are robbers everywhere, what should a noble man do in this situation?" To which Nghệ Tông answers that there are different ways of behavior in such a situation: for example, if some people keep loyalty to the sovereign in every way, while others rejoice and join together into "devil's packs" in order to betray the old ruler and found a new dynasty. Having figured out that he is the subject of this speech and aiming to exonerate himself and explain his behavior to Nghệ Tông, Hồ Quý Ly says to the emperor: "I had no choice. I highly appraise you and am very grateful to you. Thanks to my friendship with you, I have become what I am today. But when things fall to pieces, when all officials are extortionists, when there is no major talent left in the House of Trần, when everything has to be upturned in order to sow new seeds, then all the great merits of the House of Trần before Đại Việt have to be disregarded; one has to step over it. And the people also have to endure changes.... This is painful! This is cruel! But I had no other way out ... I was forced to break the oath of allegiance to you."³⁰

Hồ Quý Ly feels distressed and is full of doubts, yet he is steadfast in his purpose. In a conversation with his eldest son, he says: "Đại Việt has for more than a hundred years been a powerful state. And this is a great merit of the House of Trần. But now the dynasty has rotted away and deserves to be overthrown. At the moment, I am the only person who can easily do this. But will I be able to shake the profound gratitude of the people to the House of Trần just as easily?"³¹ For the same reasons, vanquished Trần Khát Chân, one of the leaders of the anti-Hồ Quý Ly faction, predicts Hồ Quý Ly's rapid downfall. Before his execution Hồ Quý Ly tells him that, although he recognizes him as a hero, he cannot pardon him. To which Trần Khát Chân answers: "I understand.... You are also a clever man ... but I think that eventually the same fate awaits you as befell me. <...> Yes, you have succeeded in building a great stone city, but you will not be able to build a similar city in the hearts of people."³²

Summing up, it can be said that, even though Nguyễn Xuân Khánh does not give a definitive assessment of Hồ Quý Ly's activity, he nevertheless supports the idea of the need for reforms to ensure the successful existence of the country in his novel and sees the main cause of the reformer's failure in his being unappreciated and, as consequence, in the lack of broad support in society, which resulted in transforming Hồ Quý Ly's personal tragedy into a tragedy of the whole Vietnamese people since it led to the conquest of Đại Việt by Ming China.

Apparently, thanks to this the content of the novel and its pathos have turned out to be consonant with the changes that have embraced Vietnam

from the late 1980s. And, although the Vietnamese Renovation has not yielded an ideologist and practician of reforms of a type similar to Hồ Quý Ly, yet the "epoch crosstalk" has proved to be timely and relevant.

NOTES

¹ Nguyễn Xuân Khánh, writer, translator, journalist, was born in Hanoi in 1933. In 1951–1952, he studied at Hanoi Medical Institute. Then he joined the Vietnam People's Army and took part in the War of Resistance against the French. From the end of 1959, he worked as a correspondent for the journal *Literature and Art of the Army* (Văn nghệ quân đội); in 1965, he went over to the newspaper *Pioneer* (Thiếu niên tiên phong). Retired since 1983. He became engaged in literary work from 1957. In the pre-Renovation period, however, only one collection of his stories, *Deep in the Forest* (Rừng sâu, 1963) was published. The writer's other works were brought out only in the period of reforms. In 1990, his novel *Imagined Land* (Miền hoang tưởng), written back in 1971, was published under a pseudonym, and in 1993, his book *George Sand — A Writer of Love* (George Sand — Nhà văn của tình yêu) was published in the "Literary Portraits" series.

² See, for example, "Rasskaz o slovopreniyakh s drovosekom na gore uyedineniya [Tale of Logomachy with a Woodcutter on the Mountain of Seclusion]" and "Rasskaz o nochnom pire u reki Polnovodniy protok [Tale of a Night Feast near the Full-Flowing Creek River]" in the collection of medieval Vietnamese novellas *Prostranniye zapisi rasskazov ob udivitelnom* by Nguyễn Du. — Nguyễn Du, *Prostranniye zapisi rasskazov ob udivitelnom* [Extensive Records of Tales of the Wonderful], Hanoi, 1981.

³ Nguyễn Xuân Khánh, *Hồ Quý Ly*, Hanoi, 2002, pp. 15–16 (Nguyễn Xuân Khánh, *Hồ Quý Ly*, Hà Nội, 2000, tr. 15–16).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 571.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁷ See a Russian translation of this legend in: *Mify i predaniya Vietnama* [Myths and Legends of Vietnam], St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 80.

⁸ Nguyễn Xuân Khánh, p. 56.

⁹ A fox-turnskin is a popular character in Chinese folklore and author's literature, also found in Vietnamese literature. See, for example, "Rasskaz o nochnom pire u reki Polnovodniy protok [Tale of a Night Feast near the Full-Flowing Creek River]" in the collection of medieval Vietnamese novellas *Prostranniye zapisi rasskazov ob udivitelnom* by Nguyễn Du. — Nguyễn Du, *Prostranniye zapisi rasskazov ob udivitelnom* [Extensive Records of Tales of the Wonderful], Hanoi, 1981.

¹⁰ Nguyễn Xuân Khánh, p. 370.

¹¹ *Quoted from:* A.V. Nikitin, "Universalniye kharakteristiki traditsionnoy vietnamskoy mysli [Universal Characteristics of Traditional Vietnamese Thought]," In: *Universaliyeh vostochnykh kultur* [Universals of Oriental Cultures], Moscow, 2001, p.249.

¹² Nguyễn Xuân Khánh, p. 478.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 478.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 479.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 492.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 482.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 482.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 490.

¹⁹ “Soul of the country” (hồn nước; in a more Sinicized version: quốc hồn), understood to mean “national spirit, national identity,” is an important concept found more than once in the novel. Its origin and meaning call for further examination. Now it can be stated that it is often found in Vietnamese patriotic literature of the early 20th century. Such well-known poetic works as “An Appeal to the Soul of the Country” (Kêu hồn nước) by Nguyễn Quyền (?–1941), representative of the Tonkin public enlightenment school (1907) or, say, “Awakening of the Soul of the Country” (Tỉnh quốc hồn ca) by Phan Châu Trinh (1872–1926), one of the ideological leaders of the anti-French movement, can be named by way of an example.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 540.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 540.

²² Under the Trần Dynasty, yellow was the color of emperors; officials of the first rank wore garments of the purple color; officials of the second rank, bright red garments; officials of the third rank, pale red garments; officials of the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh ranks, of the turquoise blue, and the eighth and ninth ranks, of the color green. *See*: Nguyễn Xuân Khánh, p. 545.

²³ Nguyễn Xuân Khánh, p. 548.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 549.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 549–550. “Vương Đạo” presupposes humane, nonviolent rule; it is contrasted with “ba Đạo,” i.e., rule based on violence.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 484–486.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 606.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 659.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 659–661.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 476.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 821.

Nina GRIGOREVA

Early Ethnic History of the Vietnamese in the Light of the History of the Vietnamese Language: The Problem of Ethnonyms

“In any discussion of the ancient Yue, or any other people named in early historical records, it is necessary to examine very closely the anthropological content of the name, and to raise the question of whether or not the term has any validity or usefulness in modern research. One of the crucial aspects of this issue is the degree to which the linguistic affiliation of the Yue people can be determined.”

*William Meacham*¹

Before the beginning of the 20th century, all descriptions of the ancient history of Vietnam were mainly based on information contained in Chinese written sources. Ethnonyms mentioned in these sources were widely applied to the ancient population of the country as a whole, without serious attempts of defining their “anthropological content” and “linguistic affiliation.”

In the 20th century, information obtained from written monuments was supplemented and partially revised to take account of the archaeological materials acquired as a result of discovering the Bronze Age Đông Sơn culture and Vietnamese Neolithic, Mesolithic and Paleolithic cultures. During the last few decades, this set of data formed the basis for many studies on the ancient history of Vietnam, including on the early ethnic history and ethnogenesis of the Vietnamese.

At the same time, philologists from various countries of the world carried out extensive studies conducted scale researches in the field of historical, lexicostatistical and comparative typological analysis of the languages of

the region. As a result of these studies, the genetic relations of the Vietnamese language were established with a high degree of reliability, classifications of the Austroasiatic, Mon-Khmer and Vietic languages and other languages of Southeast Asia were made up, and information on the history of the Vietnamese language was enriched.

Since the study of ethnic processes can only be objective and fruitful with an interdisciplinary approach, it appears that the moment has come when the notion of the ethnic history of Vietnam in the ancient period should be adjusted to take account of the latest results from historical linguistics. One of the problems which arise in attempting to describe the ethnic processes using updated linguistic data is the methodological problem related to the lack of adequate designation of the various ethnolinguistic and ethno-cultural communities that existed on the territory of Vietnam in the ancient time.

All the existing descriptions of the ethnic history of Vietnam in the ancient period include the following names: (1) Viets (in various meanings); and (2) Lac Viets.

1. VIETS

In modern historical literature, the name “Viet, Viets” with reference to the ancient period, is, as a rule, understood to mean the following national groups: (1) Viets — the Yue peoples (Vietnamese: Việt), i.e., non-Chinese peoples that in the ancient time inhabited territories to the south of the Yangtze, with which modern Tai-Kadai, Austronesian, some Austroasiatic peoples, including the Viet-Muong peoples, and the Miao-Yao peoples are linked; and (2) Viets — tribes that in the ancient time inhabited the present territory of Northern Vietnam, probable ethnic ancestors of the Vietnamese and carriers of proto-Viet-Muong languages.

1.1. Viets, the Yue peoples

An extensive scholarly literature is devoted to the Yue peoples. By the present, this time scholars have succeeded in identifying and summing up numerous cultural features of these peoples² and in establishing what population groups of Southern China and Southeast Asia during the various periods of history were called by this name³ and which of the languages existing today can be linked to the Yue language (or languages).⁴ Researchers have been able to collect substantial anthropological and palaeoanthropological material on the areas of settlement of the ancient Yue; in the recent years, genetic research of the modern peoples of Southern China and Southeast Asia, associated with the Yue peoples has been stepped up.⁵

Directly related to the subject of our study will be the following observations:

1.1.1. The name “Yue,” found in Chinese sources since the Eastern Zhou period, was originally applied to the kingdom of Yue and its inhabitants. The term “Bai Yue (Hundred Viet)” came into use after the defeat of the state of Yue by the Chinese in the 4th century B.C. and was used for naming all the non-Chinese peoples of Southern China and the northern regions of Southeast Asia. For specific naming of some community or another that was part of the Yue, refining characteristics linked to some particular feature of the culture or area of settlement — Dongyue, Minyue, Nanyue, Luòyuè, Ouyue, etc. — were used. It should be borne in mind that all the names mentioned above are exonyms, and we do not know for sure how they are related to ancient and modern autonyms.⁶ In our opinion, today, when the hypothesis about the original affinity of the Austric languages⁷ has not been confirmed, there are no good reasons to speak about the genetic affinity among the abovementioned groups and the Yue peoples in general. Beginning from the Han period and later, it would, therefore, be more correct to perceive “Yue” not as the name of a single ethnic group but as a quasi-ethnonym that was used for naming different peoples of Southern China and Southeast Asia, close in their cultural features, “as a wide cultural zone that underwent substantial changes as a result of an invasion of the Chinese.”⁸

1.1.2. At the end of the 20th century, when earlier archaeological cultures on the territory of Southeast China were discovered and examined, the “chronological frameworks” of Yue were extended. For example, for lack of information about the former population of these regions, the name “Yue” began to be applied to cultures and the peoples of much earlier historical periods — up to the 5th millennium B.C.⁹ The name “Yue,” quite “historical,” although not quite unquestionable, for the Zhou and Han periods, was, therefore, “hurled” into the past and extended to preceding cultures and, as consequence, peoples. With such use of this name, it is reasonable to say that “Yue” is the name of a regional archaeological culture.¹⁰

1.1.3. In addition to examples of questionable use of the name “Yue” (“Viet”) with reference to ethnic groups of the ancient period, one should also bear in mind A.M. Reshetov’s observation in respect of the use of this ethnonym by modern ethnic communities: “... one cannot help but pay attention to the fact that this ancient ethnonym occurs in some form or another as the self-designation of a number of various peoples — the Vietnamese, the Zhuang, the Buyi, the Tai, etc.”¹¹

The Yue (Viet) language is the modern name not only of the Vietnamese language, but also of the Guangdong (Cantonese) dialect of the Chinese

language (or the “Guangdong” language) spoken by inhabitants of Guangdong and some other regions of Southern China.

In view of the fact that the designation “Yue” is so ambiguous and diverse, some researchers raise the question of its validity in describing concrete situations. William Meacham, for example, whose comments are used as an epigraph to this publication, focuses attention on the following points: “If the anthropological content of the historical term Yue is so broad and amorphous, should it be used at all? It is not my intention to argue that we should not use the word, but rather that we keep ourselves fully aware of its serious limitation.”¹²

1.2. Viets, Inhabitants of Ancient Vietnam

Similar reasons are expressed concerning the ethnonym “Viet, Viets” with reference to the population of ancient Vietnam.

1.2.1. The ethnonym “Viet” in this meaning designates tribes which in the ancient time inhabited the present territory of Northern Vietnam (mainly in the area of the delta of the Red River and the sea coast) and were part of the Yue peoples described in Chinese sources.

It is believed that the Viets of Vietnam possessed characteristic elements of the Yue culture¹³ (which is proved by written evidence and archaeological materials), and were also carriers of proto-Viet-Muong languages (until now this was supposed a priori). Because of the attitudes described above and owing to the fact that in the ancient time the peoples that are commonly named Viets lived on territories which subsequently became part of the Vietnamese state, they are regarded as direct ethnic ancestors of the modern Vietnamese.¹⁴

The problem of invalidity of such approaches and inadvisability of using the ethnonym “Viet” with reference to the ancient population of Vietnam has already been raised by some authors. K.Yu. Leonov, examining the ethnic history of Vietnam of the Jiaozhi period (1st millennium A.D.), observed: “The term ‘Viet’ (Chinese: Yue), which is commonly used for designating the Jiao, has been thoroughly studied in terms of its origin; however, its concrete content as an ethnonym with reference to the territory of Northern Vietnam in the 1st millennium A.D. only gives rise to questions. It is known that Chinese chroniclers did not use the term ‘Viet’ with respect to the population of these parts (and one should not rise to the bait of a simple linguistic error and derive the existence of the Vietnamese from the existence of the word ‘Vietnamese’), which, having become the self-designation of the country’s inhabitants in the Middle Ages, was, in elaboration of the theory of the original belonging of the territory of Northern Vietnam to the Vietnamese, transferred to the Jiao.”¹⁵ Concerning earlier periods in the

history of Vietnam, Stephen O’Harrow notes: “The major problem facing the historian who wishes to see the Đông-son period (eighth century B.C. to the first century A.D.) or even periods prior thereto as the cradle of a peculiarly Vietnamese civilization is largely one of definition; it is the aim of this paper to suggest a way of attacking the rather muddy question of where the term ‘Vietnamese’ becomes useful and, by contrast, where it might hinder our view of things.”¹⁶ In an article devoted to Sĩ Nhiếp, the Chinese governor in Vietnam (186—227 A.D.), Stephen O’Harrow sees it as one of his tasks to “suggest a way of attacking the rather muddy question of where the term ‘Vietnamese’ becomes useful and, by contrast, where it might hinder our view of things.”¹⁷

The impropriety of unconditional application of the ethnonym “Viet, Viets” to the ancient population of Northern Vietnam becomes evident in setting forth the history of the Vietnamese language and in describing the language contacts of the ancient period.

As mentioned above, in historical and reference literature there has developed a tradition of regarding the Viets of Vietnam as carriers of the traditional culture of the Yue peoples and possible carriers of the proto-Viet-Muong languages. The question about these two sets not coinciding in some historical periods has never been raised before. However, the findings of research in the field of historical linguistics are indicative of precisely this situation.

1.2.2. Today, an overwhelming majority of linguists specializing in the languages of Southeast Asia agree about attributing the Vietnamese language to the Vietic¹⁸ branch of the Mon-Khmer group of the Austroasiatic language family.

Studies of the Vietic languages actively conducted in the last few decades have shown that the maximum variety of archaic forms of these languages is to be found in the mountain areas of today’s Vietnamese provinces Quang Tri, Quang Binh and Ha Tinh and on the territories adjoining them in the east of Laos. Proceeding from the theory that it is the area where the maximum variety of its dialects (closely related languages) is found is the center of formation of some language or another (or a group of languages), a number of researchers (James R. Chamberlain, Gérard Diffloth, Michel Ferlus, Nguyễn Tài Cẩn, Trần Trí Dõi, Sergei Yakhontov, and others) consider this mountain region in the Vietnam-Laos border area to be the historical ancestral home of the Vietic languages.

According to the findings of lexicostatistical studies carried out by Vietnamese linguists according to Morris Swadesh’s method, the separation of the Vietic languages from the eastern part of the Mon-Khmer language

massif (conventionally speaking, from the proto-Viet-Katu language environment) occurred about 4000 years ago.¹⁹ As Vietnamese researchers believe, the most archaic of the now existing Vietic languages of the Việt-Chứt subgroup (Aheu and Maleng) were formed during the 1st millennium B.C.²⁰

Part of the carriers of the proto-Vietic languages gradually migrated from the mountain regions on the territory of the present provinces of Quang Tri, Quang Binh and Ha Tinh to the north, to the mountain areas of the present provinces of Nghệ An and Thanh Hóa, and further on. These migrations resulted in a gradual disintegration of the original protolanguage and formation of new Vietic languages on its basis. The age of the less archaic languages of the Pong-Chứt subgroup (Mai, Ruc, Pong) is estimated at approximately 2000 years and that of the Arem language, at about 1.5 thousand years. Three languages of the Viet-Muong subgroup — Vietnamese, Nguon, and Muong — developed into independent languages, according to most researchers, approximately 700 to 1,200 years ago, i.e., in the period between the 8th and the 13th centuries A.D.²¹

If linguists' estimates are correct, the "language ancestors" of the Vietnamese most likely inhabited mainly the mountain and upland regions of the present-day territory of Vietnam in the period of formation of the Đông Sơn culture. Characteristic of their language were features which are generally peculiar to the Mon-Khmer languages and which have survived to the present day in the so-called "archaic" Vietic languages. These features include the prevalence of Mon-Khmer lexis, the presence of disyllabic forms or confluences of consonants at the beginning of a syllable, the possibility of affixal word formation, and an undeveloped tonal system.

The specific features of the culture and world outlook of the proto-Viet-Muong are reflected in the surviving fragments of Vietnamese and Muong folklore that are to be seen, in particular, in the late 15th-century collection of Vietnamese legends and tales, the *Collection of Unusual Events from the Lĩnh Nam Realm* (Lĩnh Nam chích quái),²² and in the Muong epic *The Birth of the Earth and the Water*.

As follows from these literary monuments, the gathering of foods like roots, mushrooms and berries from the forest and hunting were the main types of economic activity of the ancient carriers of the proto-Viet-Muong languages inhabiting mountain and foothill areas; agriculture was limited to vegetable growing²³ and the cultivation of sticky rice, which was planted in mountain paddies and after reaping and threshing cooked in bamboo trunks. Dishes from sticky rice were most likely ritual and not daily foods;²⁴ it was roots gathered in the forest and milled into flour that were the basic food item. The proto-Viet-Muong were not familiar with sea salt and used

the cinders of ginger root instead of salt.²⁵ The ancient Viet-Muong's sphere of the sacral was linked to deities and mountain spirits. It is hard to assume that such types of activity traditional for the Yue peoples as the tilling of rice paddies, flooded with river water depending on the tidal currents of the sea, and seafaring could be characteristic of the proto-Viet-Muong mainly inhabiting upland areas. This may be indirectly confirmed by the fact that the oral folklore of the Vietnamese and the Muong contains no mentions of possible sea voyages.

Narratives of the ethnogenetic myth that has come down to us deserve special attention in the context of examining various groups of the proto-Vietnamese. Unlike the later version of the myth about the origin of the Vietnamese from the marriage of the Dragon King Lạc Long Quân and the Fairy Âu Cơ, recorded, in particular, in the chronicle *Complete Book of the Historical Records of Great Viet*, the narrative by the authors of the *Collection of Unusual Events from the Lĩnh Nam Realm* reports that after the division of the offspring between the parents one of the fifty sons who followed their mother into the mountains became Emperor Hung Vuong I (in Phong Châu, on the territory of the present provinces of Vinh Phuc and Phu Tho). It is, therefore, apparent that initially the dynasty of half-legendary, half-historical Hung rulers was related to the maternal line and localized in mountain regions, but later on, after the myth underwent some revision, it turned out to be related to the line of the father, the Dragon King, and seaside areas.²⁶ The initial "mountain localization" of the Viet-Muong is indirectly confirmed by the Muong version of the same myth, according to which fifty children stayed in the mountains and became the ancestors of the Muong, while the other fifty, who left for the seaside together with their father, became the ancestors of the Vietnamese.²⁷ In analyzing the two versions of the myth, the Vietnamese and the Muong one, it should be borne in mind that both of them are rather late, for the Viet-Muong linguistic community was uniform at least until the first centuries of the Common Era (and, according to the studies of Vietnamese scholars, until the first centuries of the second millennium of the Common Era!).²⁸

Researchers have noted more than once the mixed character of traditional Vietnamese culture reflecting the specific features of life in both valley and mountain areas; however, the question of the language affiliation and, accordingly, genetic relations of the national groups that lived in the mountains and in the plains in certain historical periods has never before been raised. One of the first researchers to link the ancient valley population of Vietnam with the carriers of the Tai-Kadai languages and the inhabitants of the mountain area with the carriers of the Vietic languages on the basis of

the results of studying the history of the Vietnamese language was Nguyễn Tài Cẩn, one of the leading Vietnamese linguists, who unfortunately recently passed away. In describing the history of language contacts on the territory of Northern Vietnam in the ancient time, Nguyễn Tài Cẩn designates the contacting communities in accordance with the linguistic classification terms used by him (the Việt-Chứt community and the Tai-Kadai community). Since the use of the ethnonym “Viet, Viets” is hardly productive in the given context (considering that both these groups should probably be regarded as proto-Viets), further on we will also use the designations accepted in linguistic studies, believing that ethno-cultural communities in the situation being examined are completely comparable to the language communities.²⁹

Noting the fact that many toponyms in Northern Vietnam, in the regions now inhabited by the carriers of Vietic languages, have a Tai-Kadai origin, Nguyễn Tài Cẩn draws a conclusion that the Tai-speaking population of these places was driven out or assimilated, at least, in terms of the language.³⁰ In the scholar’s opinion, contacts between the carriers of Vietic and Tai-Kadai languages on the territory of Northern Vietnam developed within the framework of both peaceful interaction and military opposition. By way of an example of conflict-free coexistence, Nguyễn Tài Cẩn cites the story of King Hung’s marriage to a girl from the Tai-Kadai clan of Ma.³¹ The researcher believes that military clashes between the two ethno-cultural communities were reflected in the well-known Vietnamese legend about the battle between the Spirit of the Mountains and the Spirit of the Waters. Nguyễn Tài Cẩn interprets the fact that, according to the legend, victory in the battle and the daughter of the ruler were won by the Spirit of the Mountains³² and the Spirit of the Waters was forced to leave empty-handed for his sea kingdom as the strengthening of the Viet-speaking peoples and their advancement into the plains in the river deltas formerly inhabited by the carriers of Tai-Kadai languages.³³

Gradual migration of the carriers of Vietic languages to the plains and their transition from gathering and hunting to agriculture based on wet rice cultivation left their trace in the history of the Vietnamese language in the form of numerous borrowings of Tai lexis related to agriculture, animal husbandry, and lowland and coastal areas.³⁴ Vietnamese linguists believe that included among such borrowings may be, for example, the following: varieties of rice paddies (đòng, rẫy), irrigation facilities (ditches and drains — muong phai), agricultural implements (mattock, harrow — cuốc, bừa), agricultural crops (rice, garlic, orange, tangerine — gạo, tỏi cam, quít), fertilizers (phân), harvest (mùa), names of domestic animals (cow, chicken,

duck, — bò, gà, vịt), and the designations of sexual differences between them (female, male — con mái, con đực³⁵), and also lexis related to water bodies: river (sông), pond, to be in water (ao, đầm), oar, to row (chèo), to float (bơi).³⁶

Interaction with the Tai-Kadai languages determined not only the borrowing of specific lexis but also in-depth processes of change in the structure of the Vietic languages widespread in Northern Vietnam, which resulted in the separation of the Viet-Muong languages from the Vietic languages. The processes of monosyllabization in the Viet-Muong and Tai-Kadai languages, just as in some other languages of continental Southeast Asia, proceeded according to a single pattern.³⁷ As a result of these transformations in the Viet-Muong languages, there was a change in the word structure: the original disyllabic forms (which today are still found in “archaic” Vietic languages in the Vietnam-Laos border area), through the stage of drop of the vowel in a weak syllable (presyllable) and the formation of consonant clusters, were gradually contracted into monosyllables. Later on, the formation of a tonal system, whose mechanisms were for the first time described in the well-known work *L’origine des tons en vietnamien* by André-Georges Haudricourt (1954), began on the basis of monosyllabic structures. Haudricourt’s achievement in the field of historical linguistics consists in establishing the fact that the formation of a tonal system may be a stage in the development of a nontonal language, in describing the basic mechanisms of tonogenesis in the Vietnamese language and in convincingly assuming that tonogenesis in the Vietnamese language was most likely determined by its contact with the Tai languages.³⁸

The outward typological similarity between the Tai and Viet-Muong languages (above all, because of the presence of a developed tonal system) has determined the fact that many researchers for a long time included the Viet-Muong languages in the Tai language family,³⁹ accordingly establishing genetic relations among the carriers of the languages. From the standpoint of modern scientific knowledge, the state of affairs should probably be recognized as follows: genetically, the Vietnamese language, just as all the Viet-Muong languages and, on a wider scale, the Vietic languages, belong to the Mon-Khmer group of the Austroasiatic language family; its carriers are linked with the Tai-Kadai languages by ancient and very close contacts; in the period up to the first centuries B.C., at least two groups should be distinguished among the ethnic ancestors of the Viet-Muong: (1) their cultural and “territorial” ancestors — the Tai-Kadai population of plain areas in Northern Vietnam; and (2) the group of their language ancestors — the carriers of Vietic languages who up to a certain period inhabited solely moun-

tain and foothill areas. The special character of the situation is that, with reference to the ancient period, it is common practice in scientific literature to refer to each of these two groups as Viets (or proto-Viets), which is not helpful in ensuring the correct description of actual processes. The absence of generally recognized ethnonyms — well-established designations for the two different groups of proto-Viets — presents a kind of methodological problem facing the researcher of the ethnic history of ancient Vietnam. Another problem is the absence of authentic historical information on the period up to which these two communities existed sufficiently separately from each other and from what point in time we can speak about the process of their merging into a single community.

1.2.3. As a result of mastering the methods of wet rice cultivation in the plains adopted from the Tai-Kadai peoples, the carriers of the Viet-Muong languages gradually adapted themselves to conducting economic life in the valley of the Red River. In terms of time frame, as Nguyễn Tài Căn believes, this process matches the period when the state of Văn Lang was replaced by the state of Âu Lạc and the capital of the new state was transferred from the mountain area in the provinces of Vinh Phuc and Phu Tho to Cổ Loa situated in the plains (20 km north of Hanoi).⁴⁰

Generally conforming to Nguyễn Tài Căn's assumptions about the possible time of spreading of the Viet-Muong languages in the valley of the Red River are the conclusions of the U.S. researcher of the ancient history of Vietnam Stephen O'Harrow, which the scholar draws answering questions that he himself raises: "...what leads us to believe that only a single ethnic group occupied the main lowland areas of northern Việt-Nam when the Chinese first arrived on the scene? (In the 3rd century B.C. — *N.G.*) Is there evidence of a unified material culture throughout the area? Were the indigenous peoples called by a single name? What can be determined about the language they spoke and is it related to Vietnamese as we know it? What do lexical borrowings from outside sources of a datable nature tell us?"⁴¹

Stephen O'Harrow's line of reasoning in connection with the questions he has raised is somewhat different from the view of the situation in Northern Vietnam at the turn of the new era postulated in Vietnamese and Russian-language historical literature. Here are some excerpts from Stephen O'Harrow's article "Men of Hu, Men of Han, Men of the Hundred Man: The Biography of Sĩ Nhiếp and the Conceptualization of Early Vietnamese Society" with a few abridgements:

"There is evidence of at least a trend toward a unified material culture during the Đông-sơn period and this culture itself flows rather directly from earlier pre-metal-using cultures in situ. But Đông-sơn culture is linked to a

very broad span of material cultures which are spread over a region much larger than the area that has been claimed as the Vietnamese *urheimat*, undoubtedly a region encompassing many different ethnic groups at the time. While this trend toward a unification of material cultures does nothing to weaken the proposition of pre-Chinese ethnic homogeneity in northern lowland Việt-Nam (whereas a variety of differing material cultures would definitely weaken the case), it is nonetheless not as strong an argument in favor of such an idea as some would have us believe. However, the existence of the very considerable citadel at Co-loa, the late pre-Chinese focus of Vietnamese kingship (whence the An Dương Prince legends), does indeed lend credence to the idea that there was sufficient political unity, perhaps some form of alliance, league, or amphictyonic coalition with Co-loa as its headquarters, to have required extensive communication between constituent groups. <...> It would appear the society of the area was able to undertake concerted action of a kind difficult to imagine if it were balkanized to the point of incomprehension from a linguistic point of view. This would suggest the availability of a lingua franca, though not necessarily a mutual intelligibility of tongues. <...> This Ancestral Vietnamese served as the lingua franca for intergroup communication, and probably for the court at Co-loa, because it was the language of the most powerful (and likely the most numerous) of the indigenous ethnic groups. <...>

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Stephen O'Harrow offers the following rather interesting observations concerning the ethnonyms used by the Chinese for designating the local inhabitants: "The names applied in the Chinese dynastic histories to the autochthonous people of Việt-Nam varied. In Sĩ Nhiếp's biography, they are called both 'Yi' (a general designation for barbarians of the east) and the 'Hundred Man.' 'Man' is a designation specific to southern barbarians. <...>

"The use of the number one hundred in the designation would seem to suggest a significant variety of peoples, but here it may be only literary license, an allusion to the older term, 'Hundred Yuen,' also applied to the peoples of the region. Many scholars now tend to prefer the term 'Lac' (the

Vietnamese reading of ‘Lo’), used to refer to the hereditary notables of the area whose power derived from their control over the tidal irrigated fields, called ‘Lac fields.’ The An Dương Prince legends introduce a people called the ‘Au’ (the Vietnamese reading of ‘Ou’). <...> Without going into great detail about this parade of names, some of which we are fairly sure have more to do with Chinese regional preconceptions than attempts at ethnography, at least two terms, ‘Au’ and ‘Lac,’ and possibly a third, ‘Yueh,’ appear to represent some kind of ethnic specificity, more likely overlapping than mutually exclusive, but nevertheless, and more importantly, they are evidence of something more complicated than total ethnic homogeneity.”⁴³

The conclusions of the Vietnamese linguist and the U.S. historian, therefore, agree that in the pre-Chinese period the population of Northern Vietnam was apparently not ethnically homogeneous and that by the 3rd century B.C. the proto-Viet-Muong language acquired the status of the most widespread language among the tribes inhabiting the valley of the Red River.

The exonyms used by the ancient Chinese to denominate the population of Northern Vietnam were quite varied, while the autonyms of that period are practically unknown to us (except the self-designation of the Muong “Mol/Moi/Mual/Muan,” which, meaning “man, people,” is quite ancient, having links in the Mon-Khmer world). The ethnonym “Viet,” which is widely used in literature and which corresponds to the ancient exonym and the substantially later (from the 10th century A.D.) autonym, does not make it possible correctly to characterize the ethnic processes that took place in that area in the ancient times. The ethnonym “Lac Viet,” commonly used for designating the Viets of Vietnam before the 1st century A.D., is hardly of any more help in clarifying the situation.

2. LẠC VIỆT

In the last few decades, under the influence of works by Vietnamese authors there has developed a tradition to believe that the Lạc Việt (Chinese: Luòyuè), one of the southern Yue groups, is the autochthonous⁴⁴ population of Northern Vietnam, the founders of the Đông Sơn culture and the state of Văn Lang ruled by the Hùng kings. As such, the Lạc Việt are represented as the direct ancestors of the Vietnamese, who assimilated⁴⁵ the Tây Âu tribes in the 3rd century B.C. and subsequently ensured the preservation of ancient Việt identity throughout the thousand-year period of Chinese domination. After genetic links between the Vietnamese language and the Mon-Khmer languages were established, it also became the accepted practice to regard the Lạc Việt as “Austroasiatics,” the carriers of the proto-Viet-Muong languages.⁴⁶

2.1. “Lạc” (Chinese: Luo) is the earliest of the specific ethnonyms related to the ancient population of Vietnam recorded in Chinese written monuments.⁴⁷ In the last few decades, most Western researchers tend to believe that the morpheme “Lạc” is related above all to the characteristic of wet rice paddies adapted to the change in the water level of the nearby rivers depending on the rise and fall of the tide of the sea,⁴⁸ the so-called “Lạc fields.”⁴⁹ The concepts “Lạc tướng,” “Lạc hầu” and “Lạc dân” are derivative of this meaning and related, respectively, to the ownership, management or cultivation of wet paddies in the river valleys. In addition, the morpheme “Lạc” is part of the name of the cultural hero, the progenitor of the Viets, the Dragon King Lạc Long Quân, who, the myth has it, is a direct descendant of Shen Nung, the Chinese patron deity of agriculture.

Considering all the above, a number of questions arise: How can the ethnonym “Lạc,” derived from the method of arrangement of wet rice paddies in areas subjected to tidal flows of the sea, be related to an ancient Viet-language group that inhabited regions distant from the sea and practiced other types and methods of agriculture? What can the Muong myth about the division of the offspring produced by the marriage of a father fish and a mother doe,⁵⁰ comparable to the myth of the origin of the Vietnamese from the marriage of the Dragon King Lạc Long Quân and the Fairy Âu Cơ, attest to? Why are two folklore characters — the dragon king from the Lạc clan, who taught the people to grow rice in wet paddies, and Spirit of the Mountains, to whom other agricultural crops besides rice were “familiar” as well — venerated by the Vietnamese as the patrons of agriculture?⁵¹ Except for the characteristic of fields and the name of the dragon progenitor related to the sea and the water element, neither the oral tradition of the Vietnamese nor written monuments have preserved any other associations with the morpheme “Lạc”? Why after the 1st century A.D. the Chinese authors did not use the ethnonym “Lạc” with reference to the population of Northern Vietnam? For what reasons is this ethnonym used in Vietnamese historiography and historical literature outside of Vietnam for designating the entire ancient population of Northern Vietnam at least during the Bronze Age, considering that the period of its use in the Chinese sources is short — from the beginning of the Han period to the suppression of the Trưng Sisters’ Revolt in 43 A.D.?⁵²

Answers to most of these questions can probably be found if we recognize that two ethnolinguistic communities — the proto-Tai-speaking population of the lower reaches of rivers, the basis of whose economy was wet rice cultivation, on the one hand, and the proto-Viet-speaking population of upland and mountain areas, on the other, coexisted on the territory of

Northern Vietnam up to the first centuries B.C. The ethnonym “Lạc,” which is most likely an exonym, was originally related to the group of Tai-speaking peoples but later on, with the advancement of Viet-speaking peoples to the plains, probably began to be applied to the entire population of the plain area and, perhaps, the foothills. This assumption may be attested by the fact that, in addition to the Vietnamese, some of the Tai-Kadai peoples (the Zhuang of the People’s Republic of China and the peoples of China and Northern Vietnam closely related to them, as well as the Li of Hainan [self-designation: Hlai/Lai]) are considered to be descendants of the Lạc Việt (Luòyuè).⁵³

The migration of part of the Viet-speaking population to the plains was probably reflected in the Muong myth about the division of the offspring of a mother doe and a father fish from which apparently stems the Vietnamese ethnogenetic myth of the origin of the Vietnamese from the marriage of the Dragon King Lạc Long Quân and the Fairy Âu Cơ. The strengthening of the Viet-speaking peoples in the North Vietnamese valleys led to gradual displacement or assimilation of the preceding previous Tai-speaking population. However, a tangible “Tai trace” was preserved not only in the agricultural traditions of the Vietnamese, but also in their language and folklore. The processes of borrowing certain layers of lexis, monosyllabization and tonogenesis, which developed in the archaic Vietic language under the influence of the proto-Tai languages and determined the separation of the proto-Viet-Muong language from the Vietic language massif, have been described above. As for folklore, probably, the presence of two hero-patrons of agriculture — the Dragon King Lạc Long Quân and Sơn Tinh, the Spirit of the Mountains — was initially determined by different types of agriculture practiced by the two ethno-cultural communities in different natural conditions. The image of the Dragon King Lạc most likely originates from the image of a primogenitor related to the water element venerated by the Tai peoples.⁵⁴ The Han-Viet name of this character, Lạc Long Quân, is indicative of his rather late appearance in the folklore tradition of the Vietnamese. This image is not found in the folklore of the Muong, who are closely related to the Vietnamese, and the images of fish or water dragons comparable to it are related to the idea of foreignness — an essentially different aqueous or subaquatic world.

The disappearance of the ethnonym “Lạc” from the Chinese records about Northern Vietnam since the 1st century A.D. may be indicative of the final establishment of the Viet-speaking communities in the plains. Paraphrasing Keith Taylor’s well-known expression that the ethnonym “Viet” was not endogenous to Vietnam,⁵⁵ one can say with a high degree of confi-

dence that the ethnonym “Lạc” was not endogenous to the Viet-speaking settlers in the plains of Northern Vietnam. In the subsequent Giao Chi (Chinese: Jiaozi) period, it is probably the ethnonym “Giao,” which has survived as the designation of the Vietnamese among the Tai peoples of Vietnam (in the phonetic form Kaew) and the Hmong (in the phonetic form Taew, Taew Ti), that should be regarded as the main ethnonym applicable to the Viet-speaking population of the North Vietnamese plains, which drove out or assimilated the former Tai-speaking communities.⁵⁶

The tradition of applying the ethnonym “Lạc” to the entire ancient population of Vietnam in the period from the 2nd millennium B.C. to the first centuries A.D., which has become established in modern historical literature, is most likely explained by the approaches of Vietnamese government policy towards “modeling” the distant past.

2.2. The question about the correlation between the ethnonym “Lạc,” the name of the mythical state of Văn Lang and the half-legendary dynasty of Hung kings calls for further research. But certain interesting observations can be made even now.

In the mid-1960s, some researchers of the ancient history of Vietnam made careful assumptions that the self-designation of the inhabitants of Văn Lang might coincide with the name of that state.⁵⁷ A certain “Văn Lang tribe” is mentioned in A.I. Mukhlinov’s work *Proiskhozhdeniye i ranniye etapy etnicheskoy istoriyi vietnamskogo naroda* [The Origin and Early Stages of the Ethnic History of the Vietnamese People]. The author singles out this tribe on the basis of an analysis of archaeological material and points out that the center of settlement of this tribe was in the Vinh Phuc province, at a considerable distance from the sea coast. Mukhlinov’s work provides no detailed characteristics of the Văn Lang community or descriptions of its relations with the Lạc Việt, and in this context the conclusion that “the advance to the delta of the Hồng Hà River was carried out from two main directions: by the Văn Lang from the Northwest, along the valley, and by the Đông Sơn Lạc Việt from the South,”⁵⁸ not so much clarifies the situation as gives rise to perplexity in connection with the contraposition of the Lạc Việt and the inhabitants of Văn Lang, uncharacteristic of Vietnam studies in Russia.

It was also in the 1960s that assumptions to the effect that the etymology and parallels of the name “Văn Lang” and the designation of Hung kings could be traced within the frameworks of the Austroasiatic world were formulated.⁵⁹ Somewhat earlier, in the 1950s, Emile Gaspardone showed that Henri Maspero’s hypothesis that the title “Hung” was an incorrectly executed hieroglyph meaning “Lạc” could be hardly supported. The scholar established that the designations “Lạc” and “Hung” had gotten into Chi-

nese written monuments in different ways: the morpheme “Lạc” reflects the Chinese perception of wet rice paddies, which most likely was already known to the Chinese authors, whereas the name “Hung” is conveyed by a hieroglyph which is probably close in sounding to the foreign word, without any attempts at interpreting and establishing associations.⁶⁰

There are, therefore, some arguments in favor of the hypothesis that the designations “Lạc, Lạc Việt,” on the one hand, and “Hung” and “Văn Lang,” on the other, could be related to different ethnolinguistic communities.

The observations presented and the analysis carried out in the paper make it possible to draw the following conclusions:

1. In the pre-Chinese period, the population of Northern Vietnam (which is commonly named “ancient Viets”) included as a minimum two large ethnolinguistic communities — the proto-Tai-Kadai population of the lowlands and the proto-Viet-Muong population of mountain and upland areas. In view of the demonstrated heterogeneity of the population, the application of the ethnonym “Viet” to all the inhabitants of Northern Vietnam of the ancient period does not appear productive, since it does not make it possible to differentiate the abovementioned communities and consistently to describe their language and ethno-cultural characteristics. Since there are no generally accepted ethnonyms for differentiating these communities, it is proposed to designate these two population groups in accordance with linguistic classification — the proto-Tai-Kadai community and the proto-Viet-Muong community.

2. The specific feature of the ethnic processes going on in Northern Vietnam in the second half of the 1st millennium B.C. and, probably, during earlier periods was intensive proto-Tai-Viet interaction. This interaction was determined by gradual advancement of the Viet-speaking peoples from the upland and mountain regions to the lowlands previously inhabited by the Tai-speaking peoples and their establishment on these territories as a result of mastering the methods of wet rice cultivation. Contacts with the proto-Tai-speaking population on the territory of Northern Vietnam brought about processes of change in the system and lexis of the archaic Vietic language, which resulted in laying the foundation for the formation of the proto-Viet-Muong language and its separation from the Vietic language massif. By the 3rd century B.C., the proto-Viet-Muong language was probably the most influential language, a kind of lingua franca, in the valley of the Red River and the adjoining uplands. The processes of formation of the ethnic identity of the proto-Vietnamese of the pre-Chinese period on the basis

of proto-Tai-Viet synthesis were reflected in the folklore of the Vietnamese and the Muong.

3. The ethnonym “Lạc Việt,” related to the characteristic of wet rice paddies, should be associated above all with the proto-Tai-Kadai population of the lowland areas of Northern Vietnam, at least, in the period up to the 3rd century B.C.

4. Historical linguistic and comparative typological studies based on the material of the Vietic (and, in general, Mon-Khmer) and Austro-Tai languages can become a promising area in studying the language and cultural ancestors of the Vietnamese. It appears that further studies within the framework of the hypothesis about the Austro-Tai language affinity and the special place of the Kadai languages in this language community could shed additional light on quite a few unclear episodes of the early ethnic history of the Vietnamese re-created on the basis of ancient written monuments and archaeological artefacts.

NOTES

¹ Meacham, William, “Defining the Hundred Yue,” In: *Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Pre-history Association*, # 15, 1996, p. 93.

² On the cultural features of Yue, see: Barlow, http://mcel.pacificu.edu/as/resources/zhuang/zhuang1.htm#anchor_chapter_47857; Ye.V. Ivanova, “Diskussionniye problemy etnicheskoy istoriyi tsaikikh narodov [Polemic Problems of the Ethnic History of the Tai Peoples],” In: *Kyunerovskiy sbornik. Materialy vostochno-aziatskikh i yugo- vostochno-aziatskikh issledovaniy* [Kuhner Collection of Articles: Materials of East Asian and South-east Asian Studies], Issue 5, Ethnography, Folklore, Art, History, Archaeology, Museology. 2005—2006, St. Petersburg, 2008, p. 56.

³ On how the content of the quasi-ethnonym “Yue” in Chinese written monuments changed in the course of time, see Meacham, W., *Op. cit.*, p. 93; Brindley, Erica, “Barbarians or Not? Ethnicity and Changing Conceptions of the Ancient Yue (Viet) Peoples, ca.400-50 BC,” In: *Asia Major* 16.1, 2003, pp. 1—32, pp. 10—15.

⁴ The Yue languages are most often linked to proto-Tai and more seldom, to Austroasiatic, Miao-Yao and Austronesian languages: for example, Edmondson, Jerold A., “The Power of the Language over the Past: Tai Settlement and Tai Linguistics in Southern China and Northern Vietnam,” In: *Studies in Southeast Asian Linguistics*, Bangkok, 2007; Norman, Jerry, and Tsu-Lin, Mei, “The Austroasiatics in Ancient South China: Some Lexical Evidence,” In: *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. XXXII, 1976, pp. 274—301; YOU, XiuLing, *Ancient Yue Spoken Language and Rice Culture* (<http://http-server.carleton.ca/~bgordon/Rice/papers/youxl99c.htm>). Practically no texts in the Yue languages have survived.

⁵ For example, Vu-Trieu, A., *et al.*, “HLA-DR and-DQB1 DNA Polymorphisms in a Vietnamese Kinh Population from Hanoi,” In: *European Journal of Immunogenetics*,

24(5), 1997, pp. 345–56; Hui, Li, *Genetic Structure of Austro-Tai Populations*, Ph.D. Thesis of Human Biology, Fudan University, 2005; Zhao Qing *et al.*, “Gene Flow between Zhuang and Han Populations in the China-Vietnam Borderland,” In: *Journal of Human Genetics*, # 55, 2010, pp. 774–776; Dongna, Li, *et al.*, “Genetic Origin of Kadai-Speaking Gelong People on Hainan Island Viewed from Y Chromosomes,” In: *Journal of Human Genetics*, # 55, 2010, pp. 462–468; A.M. Reshetov, “Problemy etnografiyi drevnikh yue v otechestvennoy nauke [Problems of the Ethnography of Ancient Yue in Russian Science],” In: *Etnosy i etnicheskiye protsessy* [Ethnoi and Ethnic Processes], Moscow, 1993, p. 40.

⁶ Characteristic in this respect is the opinion of Stephen O’Harrow; *see*: Stephen O’Harrow, “From Co-loa to the Trung Sisters’ Revolt: Viet-Nam as the Chinese Found It,” In: *Asian Perspectives*, 1979, Vol. XXII/2, p. 143.

⁷ The concept of Austric languages is related to the hypothesis about the Austric language family uniting the main languages of Southeast Asia — Austroasiatic, Austronesian, Tai-Kadai and Miao-Yao; *See*: Peiros, I.I., “Avstro-taiskaya gipoteza i kontakty mezhdru sino-tibetskimi i avstroneziyskimi yazykami [The Austro-Tai Hypothesis and Contacts between Sino-Tibetan and Austronesian Languages],” In: *Drevniy Vostok. Etnokulturniye svyazi* [The Ancient East. Ethno-Cultural Ties], Moscow, Nauka Publishers, 1988, pp. 319–332; Sagart, Laurent, “The Higher Phylogeny of Austronesian and the Position of Tai-Kadai,” In: *Oceanic Linguistics*, # 43, 2004, pp. 411–440, and others.

⁸ Ye.V. Ivanova, *Op. cit.*, p. 56, based on Baker’s materials.

⁹ For example, S.V. Laptev, *Predystoriya i istoriya narodov Viet: arkheologiya nizhnego Yantszy i Yugo-Vostochnogo Kitaya perioda ot rannego neolita do rannego zheleznogo veka* [The Prehistory and History of the Viet Peoples: The Archaeology of the Lower Yangtze and Southeast China of the Period from the Early Neolithic to the Early Iron Age], Moscow, 2006.

¹⁰ Peters, Heather, “Tattooed Faces and Stilt Houses: Who Were the Ancient Yue?” In: *Sino-Platonic Papers*, # 17, April 1990, p. 10.

¹¹ A.M. Reshetov, *Op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹² Meacham, William, *Op. cit.*, p. 99.

¹³ *See*: Footnote 2.

¹⁴ The exonym “Vietnamese,” commonly used outside Vietnam since the second half of the 20th century, is apparently related to the name of the modern state. This name of the country was for the first time officially established under Emperor Gia Long in 1804; however, it existed not for long — until 1813. The name of the state, “Vietnam,” was restored in 1945 and has since then been used for designating all the state political formations that existed and now exist within the present borders of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

In the modern administrative practice of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, “Vietnamese (người Việt Nam)” is a designation of citizenship and not an indication of ethnic affiliation. For designating ethnic identification of most of the country’s residents in documents and in special literature, it is the accepted practice to use ethnonyms corresponding to self-designations — Kinh or Việt.

¹⁵ K.Yu. Leonov, “Etnicheskiy sostav naseleniya Tsziao po dannym vneshnikh annalov Toan Thy [Ethnic Structure of the Population of Jiao According to the External Annals of Toan Thu],” In: *Tri chetverti veka. D.V. Deopiku — druz’ya i ucheniki* [Three Quarters of a Century. D.V. Deopiku — Friends and Disciples], Moscow, 2007, p. 94.

¹⁶ Stephen O’Harrow, “Men of Hu, Men of Han, Men of the Hundred Man,” In: *Bulletin de l’Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient*, Tome 75, 1986, p. 251.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Vietic languages is the name that has replaced the former name “Viet-Muong languages.” This name was introduced into scientific use in 1992 “for the purpose of obtaining greater onomastic and taxonomic clarity” (Hayes, L.V.H. “Vietic and Viet-Muong: A New Subgrouping in Mon-Khmer,” In: *Mon-Khmer Studies*, 21, 1992, p. 220; Ferlus, Michel, “Sur l’origine géographique des langues Viet-Muong,” In: *Mon-Khmer Studies*, 18–19, 1989, p. 52).

Nguyễn Tài Căn uses the designation “Việt-Chứt languages” for Vietic languages; *see*: Nguyễn Tài Căn, *Giáo trình lịch sử ngữ âm tiếng Việt (sơ thảo)*. Hà Nội, 1995, tr. 316.

¹⁹ Nguyễn Tài Căn, tr. 317.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ In the *Course in the Historical Phonetics of the Vietnamese Language*, Nguyễn Tài Căn estimates the age of Vietic languages according to Morris Swadesh’s method: *Ibid.*, tr. 318.

²² Another version of the Russian-language translation of this title is *Opisaniye udivitel'nogo zemel, raspolozhennykh k yugu ot gor* [A Description of the Wonders of the Lands Lying South of the Mountains] (Ye.Yu. Knorozova, *Stranstviya v beskonechnom. Vietnamskaya traditsionnaya proza malykh form* [Travels through the Infinite. Vietnamese Traditional Minor Prose], St. Petersburg, 2009, pp. 43–48).

²³ Cucurbit cultures were of much significance in the food pattern and in the ritual sphere of life of the proto-Viet-Muong (G.G. Stratanovich, “Etnogeneticheskiye mify ob iskhode iz yaitsa ili tykvy u narodov Yugo-Vostochnoy Aziyi [Ethnogenetic Myths of the Peoples of Southeast Asia about Their Origin from an Egg or a Pumpkin],” In: *Etnicheskaya istoriya i folklor* [Ethnic History and Folklore], Moscow, 1977, pp. 62–63).

²⁴ Cf. the legend about “New Year’s pies” (for example, Ye.Yu. Knorozova, *Mify i predaniya Vietnam* [Myths and Legends of Vietnam], St. Petersburg, 2000, pp. 97–98).

²⁵ Based on *Linh Nam chich quai*; Nguyễn Tài Căn, tr. 320.

²⁶ Taylor, Keith, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 1983, p. 303.

²⁷ The Muong version of the myth is different from the Vietnamese one in a number of details.

²⁸ *See*: Footnote 21 about possible dating of the disintegration of the Viet-Muong linguistic community.

²⁹ In works written in European languages, the names Tai-Kadai or Kra-Dai (varieties of English-language names — Tai-Kadai, Daic, Kadai, Kradai, Kra-Dai) are used for designating the languages which Nguyễn Tài Căn and other Vietnamese linguists (for example,

Trần Trí Dõi) designate as Thái-Kadai. In works by Chinese authors, these languages are named Zhuang-Dong. In this work, the names which have become established in the Russian-language linguistic literature — Tai-Kadai or, in an abbreviated form, Tai languages — will be used.

³⁰ Nguyễn Tài Căn, tr. 321.

³¹ In the Muong's fairy tales, the cultural hero often marries the daughter of the lord of the kingdom of water dragons living in the "subaquatic world" and personifying the water element (N.I. Nikulin, "Kosmologicheskkiye predstavleniya myongov po folklornym i izobrazitelnyim materialam [Cosmological Notions of the Muong According to Folklore and Pictorial Materials]," In: *Folklor i mifologiya Vostoka v sravnitel'no-tipologicheskoy osveshcheniyi* [Folklore and Mythology of the East from a Comparative Typological Perspective], Moscow, 1999, pp. 161–177).

³² In pieces of Vietnamese folklore, Sơn Tinh, the Spirit of the Mountains, just as the primordial water dragon Lạc Long Quân, teaches the people how to till the land. See: Ye.Yu. Knorozova, *Op. cit.*, 2000, p. 104; Nguyễn Xuân Cường, Lễ rước Ông Khuru Bà Khuru, Heritage, December 2011, tr. 68–74.

³³ Nguyễn Tài Căn, tr. 321.

³⁴ Since there are Chinese parallels for a substantial part of this common Tai-Vietnamese lexis, Nguyễn Tài Căn does not rule out the possibility that the ancient Chinese language could be the source of borrowings. See: Nguyễn Tài Căn, tr. 322.

³⁵ These morphemes are used for designating the concepts of "male" and "female" with reference to certain kinds of birds, including domestic fowl.

³⁶ Nguyễn Tài Căn, tr. 322; Some researchers believe that the lexis related to "coastal localization" is, in general, not characteristic of the Austroasiatic languages (see: Sidwell, Paul, "The Austroasiatic Central Riverine Hypothesis," In: *Voprosy yazykovogo rodstva* [Questions of Language Affinity], # 4, 2010, p. 119).

³⁷ I.V. Samarina, "Protssy monosillabizatsiyi v yazykakh materikovoy Yugo-Vostochnoy Aziyi [Monosyllabization Processes in the Languages of Continental Southeast Asia]," In: *Voprosy filologii* [Questions of Philology], Moscow, # 1(25), 2007, p. 44–45.

³⁸ Haudricourt, André-Georges, "De l'origine des tons en vietnamien," In: *Journal Asiatique*, 242, 1954, pp. 69–82.

³⁹ The most authoritative among these researchers was French Sinologist Henri Maspero, who turned to examining the languages that are widespread in the south of China and in Vietnam — Tai and Viet-Muong. He is the author of such classical works on historical linguistics focusing on the languages of region as *Contribution à l'étude de la phonétique des langues thaï* (1911) and *Études sur la phonétique historique de la langue annamite* (1912).

⁴⁰ Nguyễn Tài Căn, tr. 323.

⁴¹ O'Harrow, S., *Op. cit.*, 1986, p. 254.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 255–256.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ For example, in A.I. Mukhlinov's monograph *The Origin and Early Stages of the Ethnic History of the Vietnamese People* "...an attempt is made to substantiate the autochthonous origin of the Vietnamese ethnons and confute the opinion, rather widespread in scientific literature, about the Viets of Vietnam as settlers..." (A.I. Mukhlinov, *Proiskhozhdeniye i ranniye etapy etnicheskoy istoriyi vietnamskogo naroda* [The Origin and Early Stages of the Ethnic History of the Vietnamese People], Moscow, 1977, p. 4).

⁴⁵ For example, A.N. Leskinen, Ngô Đức Thịnh, "Vietnamtsy [The Vietnamese]," In: *Narody i religiyi mira. Entsiklopediya* [Peoples and Religions of the World: An Encyclopedia], Moscow, 2000, pp. 127–128.

⁴⁶ For example, D.V. Deopik, *Istoriya Vietnam. Uchebnik* [The History of Vietnam: A Textbook], Moscow, 1994, p. 7.

⁴⁷ Taylor, Keith, *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁴⁸ The connections of the modern Vietnamese morpheme "lac" with probable ancient forms with the meaning "water" are traced both on the material of Vietic, i.e., Mon-Khmer, languages and on the material of Tai-Kadai languages.

⁴⁹ The term "Lac-field" was proposed by E. Gaspardon (Emile Gaspardon, "Champs Lo et Champs Hiong," In: *Journal Asiatique*, # 243, Paris, 1955, pp. 461–477). The boundaries of the zones in which the action of sea tides in the delta of the Red River during dry and rainy seasons is felt are shown on the map compiled by P. Gourou and reproduced in K. Taylor's book *The Birth of Vietnam* (K. Taylor, p. 11, based on P. Gourou, *Les Paysans du Delta Tonkinois*, Paris, 1936, p. 78).

⁵⁰ See: Footnote 28 about Muong ethnogenetic myths.

⁵¹ See: Footnote 32 about plots related to the Spirit of the Mountains in folklore pieces and rituals of the Vietnamese and the Muong.

⁵² Taylor, Keith, *Op. cit.*, p. 307.

⁵³ Barlow, Jeffrey, *The Zhuang: A Longitudinal Study of Their History and Their Culture*, <http://mcel.pacificu.edu/as/resources/zhuang/zhuangintro.htm>; A.I. Mukhlinov, *Op. cit.*, p. 147; <http://www.china.org.cn/e-groups/shaoshu/shao-2-li.htm>.

⁵⁴ Myths about taking their origin from a dragon are characteristic of some of the Tai peoples of Southern China (Ye.Yu. Knorozova, *Op. cit.*, 2000, pp. 177–178).

⁵⁵ Taylor, Keith, *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁵⁶ Dang Nghiem Van, "About the Ethnonyms of Ethnicities and Local Groups in Vietnam," In: *Ethnological and Religious Problems in Vietnam*, Hanoi, 1998, pp. 142–143.

⁵⁷ A.I. Mukhlinov, *Op. cit.*, p. 161.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁵⁹ Taylor, Keith, *Op. cit.*, p. 306.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

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