An Introduction to Vietnamese Culture

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THE VIETNAM COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
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CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Lying between 8°33' and 23°22' north latitude, Vietnam is bounded on the west by Cambodia and Laos, on the south by the Gulf of Siam, and on the east by the Pacific Ocean which washes her coast along some 1,460 miles. On account of her privileged geographical position in Southeast Asia, she has always been a crossroad of many important ethnic migrations and main streams of various civilizations. Vietnam originally comprised North Vietnam and the northern part of Central Vietnam. Conquered by China in 111 B.C., she remained under the influence of Chinese culture for the following ten centuries. Independent again in 939 A.D., she then entered on a struggle for influence with Champa, which she finally absorbed in 1471. Soon the Vietnamese were masters of the eastern part of the Indochinese Peninsula from the basin of the Red River to the lower Mekong.

The first traces of human life on Vietnam’s territory date back to about the end of the Tertiary period and consist of pieces of stone either left in their natural shapes and serving as rudimentary tools or worked into pointed spears or sharp blades. At the end of the palaeolithic era and the beginning of the mesolithic era, were used other kinds of tools also made of stone but shaped into such weapons as hatches, gouges, adzes, paring-knives, and arrow-heads. The people who used these tools lived in limestone caverns on the right bank of the Red River, and left abundant evidence of their industry mostly in Hoà-binh. Hence the name «Hoabinhian culture» which dates back to about 3000 B.C. Hoà-binh’s cut-stone implements were frequently found together with tools made of polished stone which were unearthed mostly at Bac-son. The culture of this second prehistoric period was named Bacsonian culture which dates back to about 1000 B.C. The former was supposed to be used by the people of Melanesian stock and the latter by the people of Indonesian extraction. In
the neolithic era, about the first millenary B.C., the Austro-Asiatic culture spread over Vietnam. Its characteristic elements are ready-made stone axes to be fitted with handles. Megalithic works at Xuân-lộc also belong to the Austro-Asiatic culture. However, the Bacsonian culture progressed on the spot until the introduction of metal from about 500 B.C. to the approach of the Christian Era. It was not before the middle of the first century A.D. that the Bacsonian culture was destroyed in North Vietnam by the Chinese invasion, but it still remained preserved in some Indo-chinese mountains and in Southeast Asia. Then came the period of Dongsonian culture.

At that time, China, which had just come out of the Bronze age, conquered North Vietnam for colonization. Local cultivations were suddenly reactivated by the techniques brought by the Chinese conquerors. These techniques were not at all of Chinese origin but imported from a vast area which included southwestern China, the population of which was not solely Chinese. Thus at Dông-son in Thanh-hoa province were discovered, at the same spots, iron objects, bronze works such as vases and drums and many polished tools as well as others in cut stone. These finds show clearly that the Dongsonian culture was a blend of local traditions, both technical and aesthetic. That is why there could be found such Chinese objects as swords, vases, bronze mirrors and such bronze objects of Indonesian origin as weapons of various models, lamps, drums with indigenous form.

During the Chinese colonization which lasted ten centuries, many settlers arrived in North Vietnam. The result was a blend of races in which the Mongolian element tended to become progressively the most important one. The arrival of the Chinese led to the exodus of North Vietnam’s Indonesian populations toward the mountainous regions of Indochina and the islands of Southeast Asia. The Muongs, the Moïs, the Indonesians of Borneo and Sumatra are their descendants. The ancestors of the present Indonesians were able to bring along with them the vestiges of ancient cultures. This explains the analogy between the decorative motifs used by the Dayak of Borneo and those found on bronze drums of the Dongsonian period.

It is also in the course of the Bronze age that appeared the legendary dynasty of Hông Bàng. According to Vietnamese legends, corroborated by Chinese annals, the Viets (Yüeh), ancestors of the Vietnamese, were once included in the kingdom of Xích Quy which was bounded on the north by Hunan province, on the south
by Champa, on the west by Szechwan and on the east by the South China Sea. At the end of the third century B.C., the Lac Việt (Lo Ytieh), one of Xich Quy kingdom’s Việt tribes, in their southward move, reached the Red River where they established Van Lang kingdom over which reigned the dynasty of Hồng Bàng.

Later on, the kingdom of Van Lang was replaced by the kingdom of Au Lac. Its first king was Thuc Vuong Phan. It succumbed in 207 B.C. to the Chinese General Chao To (Triệu Đà) who established the kingdom of Nam Việt with its capital at Phiên-ngine (Fan-yū: now Canton), thus founding the dynasty of the Triệu. In 111 B.C., General Lu Po-tè was sent to Nam Việt by Emperor Wu Ti of the Chinese Han dynasty to overthrow the Triệu and to make Nam Việt a Chinese province called Giao-chi (Chiao Chih), which literally meant toes crossed.

This was the beginning of the first Chinese domination which lasted until 39 A.D., when Trung Trac and her younger sister, Trung Nhi, raised their own troops against the Chinese authorities. After fighting victoriously, they proclaimed themselves queens, and reigned over the entire country from their new capital established at Mê-linh. But their reign lasted only three years before the Chinese armies under the command of Ma Yüan returned to impose their protectorate anew. The second Chinese domination (43-544) was marked by memorable accomplishments of such Chinese governors as Hsi Kuang (Tích Quang), Jên Yen (Nhậm Diên) and Shih Hsieh (Si Nhiếp) in the field of the propagation of Chinese culture in Vietnam. In 544, under favour of a weakened Chinese authority, a Vietnamese kingdom called Van Xuân was established. However, for more than a half century there followed a very confused period in which transitory dynasties by turn contested for power. The third Chinese domination (603-938) came as a result of the rivalries of the Vietnamese dynasties and a reassertion of Chinese power. In 605, the Chinese General Liu Fang (Luu Phuong) launched an expedition against Champa and in 679 the Chinese protectorate was established over what became later Central Vietnam. In 863, invaders from Nan Chao kingdom in Yunnan swept down and occupied the country briefly before being repulsed by the Chinese Governor Kao P’ien (Cao Biên) in 866. In 906, under favour of the diminishing of Chinese power, the Chinese governor was replaced by the first Vietnamese governor, Khuc Thua Du and finally, in 938, Ngô Quyền, after defeating the Chinese forces at the Bach-dang River, completely freed Vietnam from Chinese suzerainty.
Under this long Chinese protectorate which lasted more than ten centuries, Vietnam was being deeply influenced by Chinese civilization. Before the Chinese domination ended, there appeared a typically Vietnamese culture in North Vietnam. Its vestiges were found in Dai-la, the capital which Kao P'ien built in the northwestern part of Hanoi around 864; hence the name Dai-la culture which incorporates all three influences of Indian, Chinese and Dongsonian cultures. The most characteristic art works of this culture are represented by small six-tiered stupas with figures of Buddha carved on each tier and with slightly curved roofs that suggest the architecture of houses as figured on Dongson bronze drums.

After the first three national dynasties which had only a short period of existence, it was the Ly dynasty that remained in power for more than two centuries from 1010 to 1225. Under this dynasty, Chinese attacks were successfully fought back and two provinces of Champa, Quang-binh and Quang-tri were annexed to Vietnam.

As Buddhism flourished at that time, many Buddhist pagodas were built. In addition to works of architecture, the Ly dynasty also left famous pieces of celadon. The kilns used for the production of these remarkable items were found mostly in Thanh-hoa province; hence the name Thanh-hoa's celadon wares. The Ly were succeeded by the Trần dynasty (1225-1400). It was during this period that the national script of chu nôm was used for the first time in the literary field and the first annals of Vietnam, Dai-Việt su-ky, were published. While cultural development was going on, many feats of arms were recorded. Three times successively, the Mongol hordes of Kublai Khan invaded the country, but were turned back and finally they were cut to pieces on the Bach-dang River by the Vietnamese troops under the leadership of General Trần Hưng-dão. The Trần also proved their skill in diplomacy by adding two more Cham districts to the national territory in 1306 through the marriage of Princess Huyền Trần with Prince Harijit who later became King of Champa under the royal title of Jaya Simhavarman III. In 1400, the Trần dynasty was put to an end by Hô Quy Ly's usurpation. Under favour of internal disorders following the Hô's accession to the throne, Vietnam fell again under the Chinese yoke in the form of the Ming domination (1407-27). As the Ming planned a long stay in the country, they tried by various means to carry out their Vietnam assimilation policy. Public education was to be given in Chinese. The Chinese classics were substituted for the Vietnamese ones which were
collected and sent to Chin-ling (now Nanking). Fortunately, the Ming domination was short-lived. As early as 1418, a centre of resistance was organized by Lê Loi in his own native village of Lam-son in Thanh-hoa province and finally in 1427, the Ming rule was brought to an end after Lê Loi's victory at Chi-lang. In commemoration of the recovering of national independence Lê Loi instructed Nguyễn Trai to write a proclamation entitled Binh Ngô đại cao, which is considered as a masterpiece of political literature under the Lê dynasty.

Establishing his capital at Dông-kinh (Hanoi) and re-naming his kingdom Dai Việt or the Great Việt, Lê Loi took the royal title of Lê Thai-tô (1428-33). Among Lê Loi's successors, we should insist on Lê Thanh-tôn (1460-97). Under his reign, Vietnam knew one of the most prosperous periods of her history. The country was administratively reorganized. The tax regime was revised. A population census was made every six years. The king took so great an interest in agriculture that he appointed special officials for promoting cultivation and exploitation of abandoned lands. He reacted strongly against the loose morality of his time. The famous Hồng-duc legal code was promulgated under his reign between 1470 and 1497. In the literary field, an administrative map of the country was drawn up and a fifteen-volume history of Dai Việt was written by Ngô Si Liễn by the king's order. Lê Thanh-tôn himself was a great poet and writer. He was the author of Quỳnh-uýn cuû-ca (Royal Anthology and Thần-chinh Ky-sìn (War Memoirs). He also headed the Academy of Letters named Tao-dàn. Among other numerous cultural accomplishments, the Lê dynasty, especially Lê Thanh-tôn's reign, has left in Lam-son several tombs whose gravestones mounted on stone turtles summarize all the traditional arts of Vietnam. The army was also reorganized under Lê Thanh-tôn and was credited with many victories and with increasing Dai Việt's prestige abroad. In 1470, Lê Thanh-tôn personally led an expedition against Champa. After laying hold of this country, he divided it into three parts, each under a local lord. As for the districts of Dô-bàn, Dai-chiêm and Cô-luy, they were merged into the new province of Quang-nam under the direct rule of the king.

After Lê Thanh-tôn's death in 1497, the Lê dynasty fell into a period of decline. In the first half of the sixteenth century, Vietnam was partitioned between two rival dynasties. It was the Mac, the usurping dynasty known as the Northern Court, that ruled the territory from Son-nam to the north. The territory which
extended south from Thanh-hoa was ruled by the Nguyên, known as the Southern Court. In 1592, Trịnh Sâm succeeded in restoring the Lê dynasty in the north after removing the usurper. However, Vietnam continued to be divided and ruled by the two great rival families. The Trịnh seized real powers in the north under the nominal rule of the Lê kings. The Nguyên settled as independent lords in the south. During the Trịnh-Nguyên internecine war, the whole coastal area down to the southernmost extremity of the Indochinese Peninsula was added by the Nguyên to the national territory. It was also during this period that Western missionaries and, later on, traders successively arrived for the first time in Vietnam.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the uprising of the Tây-son brothers put an end to the Trịnh-Nguyên internecine war and to the Lê dynasty. Vietnam was divided between the three Tây-son brothers. But the unity of the Tây-son began to break up in 1786. Profiting by this disunity, Nguyên Anh, a descendant of the Nguyên lords, succeeded in recovering the lands of his forefathers in the south, and later on, in putting the north under his control. In 1802, he proclaimed himself Emperor Gia-long, changing the name of the country from An Nam into Việt Nam and establishing his capital at Phú-xuân (now Huế) in Central Vietnam. Gia-long and most of his successors were indefatigable architects. Marvellous buildings such as the Imperial Palace, the imperial tombs in Huế as well as citadels and fortresses scattered all over the country testify to a very flourishing art. Literature also reached its apogee with Nguyên Du, Nguyên Dinh Chiêu, Bà Huyền Thanh Quan and Nguyên Công Tru, while historical and geographical studies received careful treatment. The so-called Huế blues are world-famous for their delicate and delightful porcelain design and enamel. Handicrafts were given official support and each village had its own specialty, thus the village of Thổ-hà wellknown for its baked clay ceramics.

With the assumption of power by Gia-long, Vietnam entered into that period of her history which saw the beginning of effective Western influences in the form of technical ideas and administrative services as well as the introduction of Western religious and political ideologies. Gia-long's successors, however, were less sympathetic to these new trends and their hostile attitudes often concretized in severe repressions and bloody persecutions of those who responded to Western ideas and to the Christian missionaries in particular. Their hostility, jointly with French colonial aspirations, resulted in French military intervention and eventual con-
quest of Vietnam. In 1863, the French annexed South Vietnam and in 1874, they invaded North and Central Vietnam. Within ten years they had consolidated their authority over the whole country. From then until World War II, Vietnam was a part of French Indochina. However, during the whole French occupation, the drive of the Vietnamese people for independence was frequently manifested in various forms. Such are, for instance, the uprising of Phan Đình Phùng at Hà-tinh from 1893 to 1895, the foundation of the nationalist movement Đồng-kinh nghĩa-thúc by Prince Cuong Đệ, Phan Bội Châu and Phan Châu Trinh in 1906, the revolutionary movement under the leadership of Nguyễn Thái Hộc in 1931, etc.

Following the fall of the French in 1940, the Vichy regime assented to the occupation of French Indochina by the Japanese, an occupation which went on until 1945. After the Japanese defeat in August 1945, the Vietminh forces created the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and prevailed upon Emperor Bảo đài to abdicate his throne. The French authorities who had returned to Vietnam in early 1946 gained control over most of the population centres but found their authority challenged by the communist regime in the north. There followed six months of indecisive negotiations. During this period, French troops were permitted to land in the north. But by December 1946, it became clear that no agreement could be reached and on December 19 the Vietminh forces attacked the French on a wide front. The war lasted for eight years and ended in July 1954 with the Geneva Conference which, against her people’s will and consent, divided Vietnam at the 17th parallel into two parts: North Vietnam under communist control, and the South remaining the State of Vietnam with Bảo đài as Chief of the State. Later on, in October 1955, the Republic was proclaimed by a referendum in South Vietnam.
CHAPTER II

VIETNAMESE CULTURE AND

CHINESE CULTURE

In the light of the above-outlined geographical and historical background of Vietnamese culture, we can trace the various exogenous cultures which have, in the past, contributed to the Vietnamese cultural heritage. Chronologically, we have discerned the successive influences of the following cultures. In the first millennium B.C., there had been the Austro-Asiatic culture. Next there came the Indian culture, from the second century B.C. to the middle of the sixth century A.D.; the Chinese culture, from the second century B.C. to the nineteenth century A.D.; and finally, Western culture, from the nineteenth century up to now. Of all these cultures, it was the Chinese culture which had exerted the most long-lived influence on the Vietnamese culture and so, will it be the first to hold our attention.

1. SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Before it was invaded by the Chinese General Chao T'o in 207 B.C., Vietnam, which was successively called Van Lang and Au Lac, had been only a feudal state with a strict and well-defined hierarchical and decentralized system. The supreme authority was a king under whom there were such other lords as Lac-hâu or marquises and other civilian officers and Lac-tuong or military officers. The areas occupied by these lords were called Lac-diên and given them by the king as their own fiefs. The functions of the king, Lac-hâu and Lac-tuong were hereditary. The male children of the king were entitled Quan-lang, his female children, Mê-nàng or My-nuong. This social structure of ancient Việt nam, the vestiges of which have been found in the Dongsonian culture, lasted until the year 43 A.D. when the Chinese General Ma Yuan vanquished the two Trung sisters and brought Giao-chi back under
the Chinese yoke. From then on, it was the adoption of Chinese institutions by the Vietnamese and the virtual obliteration of their own ones. Thus, the social structure of ancient Vietnam was, more or less, patterned after that of ancient China, especially in the triple viewpoint of the family system, the village system and the government system.

The family system was the root of the society both in ancient China and in ancient Vietnam. Here and there, it was based on the Confucian doctrine of social status. Its major principle was what Confucius called Ming-fen. Ming means name and fen means duty. A name, as explained by Lin Yü-tang, is a title that gives a man his definite status in any society and defines his relationships with others. Without a name, or a definition of the social relationship, a man would not know his fen or duties in that relationship and hence would not know how to behave. The Confucian idea is that if every man knows his place and acts in accordance with his position, social order will be ensured. This Confucian principle of Ming-fen also accounts for the status of the Vietnamese family members. At the top of each family, the pater-familias or gia-truong exercised an absolute authority over his wife and children. He had full power to act and command. He was invested with rights prevailing over those of the other members of the family. He was alone qualified to manage their estates and incomes which had to become a common property. His wife, far from being his equal, was his inferior, which is explained by the status assigned to the Vietnamese woman both in the family and in the society. Everywhere the Vietnamese woman had been pushed to the background. At home, she was inferior to her husband and in the social life, she could not take part in public affairs. She had more duties than rights and in such a family of the Confucian type as the old Vietnamese family, her most important duty was to bear her husband a male child to perpetuate his family.

Many such families as just described above, if coming from a common ancestor, formed a clan called ho or tọc which consisted of many branches or chi. The tôc-trưởng, or head of the clan, was the head of the oldest branch. A clan had a temple of ancestors which was to be erected in the house of the tôc-trưởng, who was at the same time entrusted with keeping the gia-phả or the genealogy of the clan. He was also responsible for the cult of ancestors. He had the usufruct of a part of the clan's patrimony for the service of ancestral cult. All members of the clan gathered at his house to perform the worship ceremony on the anniversary
of the death of each ancestor as well as on many feast days in the year. By this cult of ancestors was materialized the Confucian duty of filial piety, a bond which tied the living to the dead.

A Vietnamese village was constituted by a group of patriarchal families whose members shared the same family name. The family was, therefore, the fundamental cell of the old Vietnamese society. According to Prof. Nguyễn Dang Thuc, it is most likely that, at the beginning, a number of families united together for protection against the incursions of pirates and to clear and cultivate the marshlands of the delta; relationship was based on their economic activities. As their collective life developed, these spontaneous taneous groups thus had to get organized administratively with a view to receiving from the central authorities their consecration as an autonomous social cell. Later on, after the establishment of the monarchy and its mandarin system which were patterned after those of China, the State never ceased to promote the establishment of communes for the colonization of the country and its expansion towards the south of the Indochinese Peninsula. As the village system is nothing but the family system raised to a higher exponent, some characteristics of the Vietnamese family were found again in the Vietnamese village. Firstly, just as each family was headed by the pater-familias, so was each village by the head or the chairman of the Council of Notables. Secondly, in a Vietnamese village there was a system of a hierarchy of social classes which also proves to derive from the above-mentioned Confucian principle of Ming-fen. Each village could draw up this system as it found suitable. However, two principal practices were the most common, namely the vương-tuco or the practice of human right and the thiên-tuco or the practice of divine right. The former conferred the communal power on those who took their office from the king, while the latter gave the power to old people. Thirdly, just as each family had its altar dedicated to the cult of ancestors, each village had a temple for the worship of a tutelar god. Finally, let us mention the feeling of attachment for one's own village, which bounds together the people of the same village. This feeling is called in Chinese t'ung-hsiang kuan-nien.

The government system in ancient Vietnam was that of Chinese-type monarchy, i.e., that of absolute monarchy by divine right. In accordance with this system, the king was the Son of Heaven. He represented the celestial sovereign to govern the people, and
he alone was qualified to render account of his terrestrial mandate to Him. Men and gods, all were submitted to his authority. Like the parter-familias towards his own children, he also had an absolute power over his own people. He was «the father and mother» of his subjects. The property and life of everyone belonged to him. As the head both of the kingdom and of his own family, he had the double duty to celebrate the cult of imperial ancestors and to offer to the celestial sovereign the sacrifice called nangiao. Under the leadership of the king, there was a vast body of officials or mandarins divided into two orders: the civil and the military. The sovereign had at his disposal two ways of recruiting civil and military officials: the hereditary way and the way of literary and military competitions, both inspired after Chinese practices. Under the administrative control of the officials, there was the huge mass of the population. In principle, there were no true social classes, all subjects being ranked below the king as those who were invested with his authority. However, there were always, after the Chinese pattern, preferred social categories with scholars (si) ranking first, followed by farmers (nông), artisans (công) and merchants (thuong).

According to the Dai-Việt su-ky ngoai-ky toàn-thu:

«In the spring of the year 939, Ngô Quỳên proclaimed himself king, set up a body of officials, established court protocol and designed uniforms for the army and the administration.»

All these institutions were inspired and patterned after Chinese institutions. When Dinh Bò Linh opened the Dinh dynasty in 968, he went on the same lines by building royal palaces, improving court protocol and regularizing military and civilian statutes. Moreover, by giving his reign the name of Thai Binh, he was the first Vietnamese king to adopt the Chinese practice of naming the year of a king’s reign. With regard to the monetary system, he was also the first Vietnamese king to manufacture two coins, both patterned after the Chinese coins and bearing the inscriptions of Thai Binh Hưng Bao and Thai Binh Thông Bao respectively. The next dynasty, the early Lê, also borrowed such Chinese institutions as the system of fallow fields regulation and the local administrative system of lô (province), phu (prefecture), and châu (sub-prefecture). From the Ly to the Nguyễn, all national dynasties of Vietnam, without any exception, more or less patterned their political institutions after the Chinese ones. Under the Ly, the first imperial college was founded in 1076, where the best scholars were sent to teach the Chinese classics. In 1089, a hierarchy in the
The mandarin system was established. Top-ranking officials were chosen to hold the offices of Thai-su, Thai-pho, Thai-uy, Thiêu-su, Thiêu-pho and Thiêu-uy. The remainder of the hierarchy was divided into civilian and military positions. As to the army, its reorganization was based on T'ang and Sung patterns. In the field of criminal law, a penal code was for the first time compiled from Chinese documentation by order of King Ly Thai-tôn.

Under the Trần, upon the instructions of King Trần Thai-tôn, two digests of laws and regulations were compiled referring to the practice of the previous Chinese and Vietnamese dynasties in the matters concerned. Entitled Quốc-triều thong-chê and Quốc-triều thuong-lê respectively, the former comprised twenty volumes and the latter ten volumes. Later on, King Trần Hiển-tôn ordered Trương Han Siêu to compose a digest under the title of Hoàng-triều đại-diện as well as a penal code to be promulgated. With regard to the status of court officials, it was the same as under the Ly dynasty. In 1242, King Trần Thai-tôn divided the kingdom of An Nam into twelve lô. Each lô had its own census book and was under the control of an An-phu-su (governor in charge of the people's welfare), who was assisted by two deputies. Then came the Đại tu-xa and the Tiêu tu-xa, each administering from two to four villages, while a xa itself was directly headed by a Chanh-su-giam.

In the field of education, the first examination for the selection of Thai-hoc-sinh or the doctorate degree was held in 1232. Three categories were defined in a classification system called Tam-giap. The classification became more elaborate in 1247 with the Tam-khôi which divided the first category into three separate classes: Trang-nguyễn (first prize winner in the competitive examination at the king's court), Bang-nhan (second prize winner) and Tham-hoa (third prize winner). Examinations in the field of three religions—Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism—called Tam-giao (Three Religions) were established at the same time and were held throughout the kingdom.

After having freed the national territory from the rule of the Ming, Lê Lợi ascended the throne in 1428 under the royal title of Lê Thái-tô. As soon as he came to power, he set on reorganizing the kingdom. The new administrative unit was subdivided into phu (prefecture) and huyện (sub-prefecture). Smaller units were constituted by xa (hamlet). He also reorganized the judicial system and the penal code taking for model that of the Chinese dynasty of T'ang. Under the reign of Lê Thánh-tôn, the kingdom was administratively divided into twelve dao, each with three authorities: the military, Đô tướng-bình, the adminis-
trative, Thua-chinh, and the judiciary, Hiển-sat. The Giam-sat
ngu-su (Imperial Inspectors) supervised the affairs of the dao.
Later on, after the annexation of Quang-nam province from Cham-
pa, the country was divided into thirteen xu (region), which, in
turn, were subdivided into 52 phu, 172 huyện and 50 châu. Smaller
units within the phu and the huyện were huông, phuong, xa, thôn,
trang, sach, dòng, nguyễn and truong totalling 8,006 units. In the
educational field, the examination procedures were reorganized
and patterned after the Ming system.

The Nguyễn, the last national dynasty in Vietnam, showed
yet more clearly the Chinese influence. With regard to political
and administrative reforms, we should mention the creation of
six Bồ (Ministries) by Emperor Gia-long: Bồ Lai (Ministry of Public
Offices), Bồ Hồ (Ministry of Finances), Bồ Lề (Ministry of Rites),
Bồ Bình (Ministry of National Defense), Bồ Hính (Ministry of
Justice) and Bồ Công (Ministry of Public Works). All of these
ministries were headed by a Thuong-thu (Minister) and supervised
by a Đô-sat viên (Council of Censors), which also played the role
of advisors to the Emperor. On the regional level, the national
territory was divided into 23 trần and four doanh. The trần was
further subdivided into phu, huyện and châu. With reference to
legislation, Emperor Gia-long, in 1811, charged Nguyen Van Thành
with the compilation of a new code called the Gia Long Code which
was a blend of the Lê’s code and the Chinese code of the Ch’ing
dynasty. Finally, under the Nguyễn dynasty, the Chinese institu-
tion of Co-mát viên (Top Secret Council) was adopted by Emperor
Minh-mang in 1834.

2. CONFUCIANISM, BUDDHISM AND TAOISM IN VIETNAM

According to Jean Herbert, metaphysical, religious, spiritual
and mystical preoccupations with all the ritualism which goes
with them, are the principal foundation of the Asian traditional
life of which they impregnate all the domains, from the familial
and social life to sciences and arts. Thus, religious systems and
ethical concepts, far from being separated from each other, have
always been confounded together, especially in China and in Viet-
nam. In other words, in these countries religious faith has been a
way of life, a way essential to man for the realization of his
destiny in the society and the universe. Consequently, such reli-
gious systems as Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, borrowed
in the past by the Vietnamese from China, have been at the same
time ethical concepts for them.
Confucianism is considered to have been introduced into Vietnam as early as the first century A.D. Two Chinese governors of that time, Hsi Kuang and Jen Yen were the most instrumental in its introduction. Hsi Kuang was governor of Giao-chi from 1 to 25 A.D. As he followed the example of Governor General Teng Jang (Dang Nhuong) and did not recognize Wang Mang’s usurpation of the Han dynasty, many officials and scholars faithful to the dynasty came to take refuge in Giao-chi. During their stay in the country, they fruitfully helped Hsi Kuang to spread the Chinese culture there by founding Chinese schools to teach the Vietnamese farming technique and Confucian ethics. As for Jen Yen, he came to govern Cuu-châm district in about 29. He is said to have taught the use of farming implements and the rites of marriage. However, despite these important contributions of Hsi Kuang and Jen Yen, it was not until the second period of Chinese domination that more advanced studies of Confucianism could be registered. According to the annals, before the year 189, Giao-chi students had obtained the degree of Hsiao-lien and Mao-ts’ai in literary competitions in China. Under the reign of the Chinese Emperor Ling Ti (168-169), one of those students named Ly Tiên was appointed governor of Giao-chi and later on two others, Ly Cam and Truong Trong, were nominated to the posts in Chinese administration.

At the end of the late Han dynasty, Shih Hsieh came to Giao-chi as governor. After giving Giao-chi the new name of Giao-châu, he did his best to develop the teaching of Chinese characters and Confucianism. His achievements earned him the title of Si Vuong or the King of Scholars. Later on, under the T'ang domination (618-907), Chinese studies and Confucianism reached a far higher degree of development. But what seems to be rather a paradox, it was after Giao-châu had gained its independence from China that Chinese characters and Confucianism enjoyed more general popularity in the country. Their growing role in Vietnam, especially in the field of education, was materialized in many cultural institutions successively set up by the national dynasties.

Ly Thanh-tôn’s reign (1054-72) was marked by the king’s order to cast the statues of Confucius, Chou Kung, and the seventy-two sages to be worshipped in a temple called Van-mieu. Under Ly Nhân-tôn’s reign (1072-1127), a literary competition consisting of subjects on three religions was held in 1075 for the recruitment of mandarins. The first laureate of this contest, Lê Van Thinh, was appointed Thai-su (King’s Counsellor), and the others were appointed teachers at the Imperial College which was opened in 1076. A new competition was organized in 1088 to select the mem-
bers of the newly-founded Academy. The first successful laureate of this competition was Mac Hiên Tích on whom was conferred the title of Hân-lâm thi-dắc (Academy High Chancellor). Finally, in 1089, the hierarchy of mandarins was set up. As patterned after the Chinese one, it was divided into nine classes of two grades each, and the mandarin's rank depended upon the degree of success reached by them in the literary competitions organized for selecting public officials. All these innovations of the Lý testified to the development of education and consequently of Confucianism on a wider scale for everyone instead of reserving it exclusively for the upper or privileged class of the society.

Under the Trần, simultaneously with the continuing encouragement of the expansion of Buddhism, new Confucian-inspired institutions were promoted for educational purpose. As the Lý had initiated the three-subject literary competition for the recruitment of government officials, the Trần improved it in 1232 by organizing a competition at a higher level called Thai-hoc-sinh for the doctor's degree and ranked the successful candidates doctors of first, second or third class according to their merits. Other changes were brought about by the kings of Trần in literary competitions. In the three religions competition of the year 1247, the degrees of licentiate and bachelor of letters were created below the doctorate. In 1253, another imperial college, the Quốc-hoc-viên (Institute for National Studies), was founded to teach the four classics as well as the five canonical books of Confucianism. Under Trần Thanh-tôn's reign (1258-78), the educational system developed even further. The king opened a school for the training of scholars and put it under the management of his younger brother, Trần Ich Tac. However, during the last years of the Trần dynasty, the development of education was not achieved as it had been scheduled owing to the massive invasions of the Mongols. People then came to prefer feats of arms rather than success in literary competitions. But despite such a critical situation, many warriors and scholars such as Trần Hưng-dao, Pham Ngu Lao, Dang Dung and Trần Quang Khai proved to be writers of great value. Their works showed the high degree of development reached by the study of Confucianism at the end of the Trần dynasty.

During the Ming occupation, Confucianism of Sung school was imposed in Vietnam by the Chinese authorities. Under the Lê dynasty, studies and teaching of Confucius' doctrine attained to their apogee. Soon after his victory over the Ming and the recovery of national independence, King Lê Thái-tố set about renovating old institutions and reorganizing the system of educa-
tion. Apart from the Imperial College frequented by the children of government officials, new schools were established in the capital and even in such smaller administrative units as phu and huyện to teach the doctrine of Confucius. Examinations were organized throughout the country to give all learned men the opportunity to make themselves known to the royal court and to be appointed to various posts. Under Lê Thai-tông (1434-42), some minor changes were made in the examination procedures. At the same time, it became customary to proclaim aloud the names of successful candidates and to celebrate their glorious return to their native villages. Under Lê Thanh-tông, more improvements were initiated. The king personally presided over the competition held in the capital. Suitable measures were taken to avoid fraud and select really able men for the body of mandarins and officials. Candidates coming from other localities than the capital could enjoy hostel accommodations in a school located behind the Temple of Confucius.

During the Trinh-Nguyễn internecine war, classical textbooks still continued to be imported from China into the north of the country. But in 1734, Trinh Giang forbade their importation in view of building up the national economy. Examinations such as the thi-huong, or regional examinations, were held every three years. In the south, the Nguyễn also organized examinations to select able public servants who, once appointed by the royal court, were classified into three categories according to their functions: administrative affairs, tax questions or rites and ceremonies. Despite such brilliant achievements by the Trinh and the Nguyễn or later, by the Tày-son under Emperor Quang-trung's reign, Confucian studies and Confucian-inspired education began to decline after the Lê dynasty. It was not until the reign of Emperor Gia-long of the Nguyễn dynasty that they could see a rapid recovery. Confucianism was again revived and developed. Temples were built in honour of Confucius. Scholars of the previous dynasty of Lê were then appreciated and appointed Dóc-hoc or supervisors and promoters of education in the provinces. Confucianism received a new impulse under Emperor Minh-mang. In 1822, literary competitions were organized to choose the Tân-si or doctors. The examinations which had been held every six years were now to be held every three years. Although the changes he brought to the various literary competitions proved to be successful for the recruitment of qualified civil servants, the emperor soon realized the shortcomings of the educational system of his time. He said:
For long, our examinations have been leading our students to a useless goal. No literature can be fully developed when it is bound by too old and strict rules. If this is the way by which our people are being educated, then really talented men will become scarce!

However, he did not succeed in finding a suitable system to replace the one he criticized, and the same Confucian-patterned education remained basically unchanged under the successive reigns of the Nguyễn dynasty.

Next to Confucianism, Buddhism was introduced from China into Vietnam. However, there is evidence that it was brought into the country on the one hand by the Chinese refugees in North Vietnam after the death of Emperor Ling Ti in 189, and on the other, by Buddhist pilgrims of Indian, Indo-Scythian and Sogdian extraction from the third to the sixth century. Later on, the Chinese monks who went on pilgrimage to their Holy Land always took the road of Giao-châu, which was then the only convenient way from Canton to the Indian coast, and there is good reason to suppose that these travellers had contributed to the spreading of Buddhism in the country. In any case, according to I Ching, a Chinese pilgrim in the seventh century, many Chinese bonzes had stayed for a certain period of time in North Vietnam on their way to India. Such monks as Văn-ky, Moksadeva and Khuy-sung who, at that time, went on pilgrimage to Buddha's homeland were natives of Giao-châu. From then on, Buddhism never stopped developing in Vietnam. As early as the end of the Chinese domination, under the reign of King Dinh Tiên-hoảng (968-70), Buddhist communities were founded and Buddhist temples and pagodas were built. Especially, Buddhism was the most favoured under the dynasties of the Ly and the Trần. Several kings themselves took the cassock or retired into a pagoda after their abdication. Under King Lý Thái-tôn's reign, numerous pagodas were built and bonzes were sent to China in search of sacred texts. Under the Trần, King Trần Anh-tôn ordered in 1297 the publication of the Buddhist texts brought back from China by a royal delegation.

From the fifteenth century to the sixteenth century, owing to the prodigious development of Confucian culture introduced into Vietnam by the Ming, Buddhism received less favour from the kings. However, many Buddhist sects which had been established in the country did not cease to flourish. The first of them was founded by Vinitaruci, a Brahmin, native of south India. As early as his youth, he had travelled in western India for studying Buddhism. After following the patriarch Sêng-ts'anj in China, he
came to Vietnam where he settled in Phap-van pagoda in Hà-dông province. There, he founded a new Buddhist sect which never stopped prospering since the seventh century. The second Buddhist sect was founded by Wu-yen-t'ung (Võ-ngơn-thông), a native of Kuang-chou, who came and settled in Kiến-so pagoda in the village of Phú-dông in Bac-ninh province, where he died in 828. The third sect was created in the middle of the eleventh century by a Chinese known under the name of Ts'ao-t'ang (Thao-duong). It developed in the very court of King Lý Thanh-ton who was considered one of the first successors of the founder. In the thirteenth century another sect called Trúc-lâm (Bamboo-wood) was founded on Mount Yên-tu in Quang-yên province by the three patriarchs under the Trần, namely King Trần Nhân-tông, Phap-loa and Huyền-quang; the first one being just the grandson of King Trần Thái-tông, the author of a doctrinal book entitled *Khoa-hu luc* (Path of Dhyana's Emptiness). About at the end of the sixteenth century, the Chinese bonze Shui-yüeh (Thuy-nguyệt) introduced into North Vietnam the Chinese sect of Ts'ao-t'ung, which he transmitted to his Vietnamese disciple Tôn-diên, who died in 1709.

In 1676, a new sect was founded under the name of Liên-ton (Lotus sect) by a prince of Trinh. This prince was a disciple of a Chinese bonze named Cho-kung (Chuyêt-công), a native of Fukien who came to North Vietnam from the South, then under the rule of the Nguyễn, after travelling through Cambodia. One of the greatest success achieved by this bonze was the conversion of Queen Diệu-viên, wife of Lê Thần-tông, and her daughter Diệu-tué who were both of the Trinh family. In the same period, the prince of the Nguyễn family who ruled over the Southern Court also helped to develop Buddhism again. Pagodas were built all over his territory and the first one called Thiên-mu dated from 1601. It was erected in the west of Huế by Prince Nguyễn Hoàng. The successors of this prince were also fervent adepts of Buddhism. They built many pagodas in Central Vietnam and offered asylum to the Chinese bonzes who fled from China because of the Manchu invasion.

Taoism, simultaneously with Confucianism, had been introduced into Vietnam before Buddhism at the beginning of the first Chinese domination. Originally, it derived from the philosophical doctrine of Lao-tzu, centring on the metaphysical notion of man's oneness with the universe. Until the end of the Trần dynasty, it was generally appreciated by the Vietnamese people as much as Buddhism and Confucianism. Under Trần Thái-tông's reign, for instance, it was officially admitted as a subject for the examina-
tions and, later on, under the Mac dynasty (1527-1592) and then in the course of the Trịnh-Nguyễn internecine war, it inspired most of the poets and writers of both the Northern and Southern Courts. However, from the end of the Trần dynasty, Taoism began to degenerate into a kind of polytheism with innumerable gods the supreme one of whom is Ngoc-hoàng (Emperor of Jade). Under the sovereign rule of Ngoc-hoàng there are, besides a large number of deities, Diêm-vuong (King of Hell), Long-vuong (King of Waters), and the household gods, one of whom is the Tao-quan (God of the Kitchen). Taoism, in its degenerate form as summarized above, has left in Vietnam many superstitious practices and religious cults. The former include sorcery, witchcraft, horoscopy, chiromancy and geomancy, all of which are also derived from Chinese Taoism. Among the religious cults originating from Taoism, there are, for instance, the cult of Chu-vi or spirits of the three worlds (the sky, the earth and the water) and the Nơi-dao or cult of heroes and heroines. The cult of Chu-vi consists in the worship of the numerous deities in the sky, on the earth and in the water. If a deity is masculine, he is called Duc-ông (our lord). A feminine one is called Thanh-mẫu (our holy mother). Often a deity is young and is called Câu (young master) or Cô (young mistress). The mortals can communicate with them only through a medium in the form of a man called Ông-dông or a woman called Bà-dông.

In some Vietnamese temples, national heroes and heroines are worshipped. For instance, General Trần Hưng-dao of the Trần dynasty, who won many victories over the Mongols and succeeded in recovering national independence, was worshipped as a national hero in the temple built for his cult in the village of Van-kiếp in Hải-duong province. This hero is also believed to be the divine killer of evil spirits. Another temple was erected near Hanoi for the cult of two heroines, Trung Trắc and Trung Nhi, who headed an uprising against the Chinese oppressors in 39 a.d. The third temple built in the nineteenth century in Gia-dinh province was dedicated to Marshal Lê Văn Duyệt. On the eve of every new year, many people go to this temple to have their future foretold by diviners and to pray for good luck.

3. LANGUAGE, WRITING AND LITERATURE

Although the Vietnamese language is likely more linked with the Austro-Asiatic family, its lexicon includes a great number of
words borrowed from many other languages among which the Chinese language has been the most important supplier. In the course of over one thousand years of Chinese domination, the Vietnamese people had adopted and used the Chinese writing system which was called Chu nho or scholars’ script. From about the ninth century and long after the country was freed from the Chinese rule, Chinese characters continued to be employed in government transactions as well as in education, correspondence and literature. Under such circumstances, a large number of Chinese words were introduced into the Vietnamese language. Chinese loanwords which were imported along a double process, the scholarly one and the vulgar one, consisted of two categories of words: the classical Sino-Vietnamese and the vulgar Sino-Vietnamese. The former category included loanwords coming from Chinese characters which remained the same but received a Vietnamese pronunciation. According to Henri Maspero, such loanwords dates back approximately to the end of the T'ang dynasty and showed many similarities with the Chinese dialect of the then capital, Chang-an, from which they were, to some extent, very likely to derive. We quite share this point of view and also recognize that a number of Sino-Vietnamese words took shape in the tenth and eleventh centuries, created as they were by the Confucian scholars on the basis of T'ang and Sung dictionaries of rhymes. However, we should also take into account of many other Sino-Vietnamese words which did not cease to be introduced into the Vietnamese language from the tenth century up to now. Therefore, it often happens that one Chinese character has two ways of pronunciation, the classical and the vulgar Sino-Vietnamese. For instance, the Chinese characters 十 and 申, meaning ten thousand and late respectively, have given van and van in the classical Sino-Vietnamese and muŏn and muăn in the vulgar Sino-Vietnamese.

Very long before the romanized system of writing was officially adopted, the Vietnamese people had used the Chinese writing system which was called Chu nho. Later on, however, when they felt the need to write in their own language which the Chinese script was not able to express, they started borrowing Chinese characters of which they made various combinations to represent ideas and concepts and also to phoneticize native sounds. Hence, was invented the Chu nôm or demotic system for writing which looks somewhat like Chinese characters but may be undecipherable to the Chinese themselves. Although dating back at least to the fourteenth century, and proving to be in most cases both semantic and phonetic, this writing was used only for popular
literature and non-official documents. This humble rank of the Chu nôm was perhaps due to the fact that in traditional Vietnam Chinese was held in high esteem and carried with it all the prestige of an educational medium with the sanction of civil service examinations from the village to the national level at the Court of Huế.

After recovering their independence from the Chinese in the tenth century, the Vietnamese people, by lack of a national script, went on using Chinese characters as their educational and literary media. Therefore, if we put aside the vast body of the people's literature orally transmitted from the remotest times up to now, the oldest form of Vietnamese literature was the Vietnamese literature in Chinese characters, which had been prior to that in demotic script and in romanized script.

The first three national dynasties have left only two short poems written by two Buddhist monks Đỗ-thuần and Ngô-chánh-luu in honour of Li Chiao (Ly Giac), a Chinese envoy, before his return to China. Under the Ly dynasty, several poetical works were composed either by Buddhist monks or by high-ranking court officials, who were deeply imbued with Buddhist thinking. Bonze Khánh-hy was the author of Ngô-dao thi-táp (Collected Poems on the Way) and Bonze Bao-giac was the author of Viên-thông-táp (Collected Poems of Viên-Thông). Such other bonzes as Khồng-lô and Tu-dao-hanh also left poems nearly all of which developed various themes of Dhyana. Among the non-religious writers, let us especially mention General Ly Thuong Kiệt who was famous for the following poem composed in 1076, when the country was threatened by the Sung invasion:

Nam quốc son hà Nam Đề cu
Tiet nhiên định phân tai Thiên-Thu
Nhu hà nghịch lô lai xâm pham
Nhu dang hành khan thủ bài hu.

(The Southern Kingdom with its mountains and rivers belongs rightly to the Southern King.
The Book of the Heavens has so willed.
Then, why did your hordes invade our territory?
Very soon, you will see, your forces will be annihilated.)
Under the Trần dynasty, many kings and members of the Buddhist clergy went on composing poetry, together with such famous Confucian scholars as Mac Dinh Chi, Truong Han Sieu and Chu Van An. But the most valuable documents of this dynasty consisted of historical writings, the most important of which was the **Dai-Việt su-ky** (Historical Memoirs of the Great Viet) of thirty volumes, composed by Lê Van Huu under the reign of King Trần Thái-tông. Many other books covering various subjects such as laws, rites, poetry, military and science were also produced during this era. Unfortunately, a great number of them were seized and sent by the Ming army to China. The best-known of these lost books were the **Hinh-thu** (Penal Code) by King Ly Thái-tông, the **Hinh-luát** (Penal Law) by King Trần Thái-tông, the **Quốc-triếu thuong-lê** (Court Ceremony of the Kingdom) by the same king, the **Tu-thu thuyét-uoc** (Summary of the Four Books) by Chu Van An, the **Binh-thu yêu-luoc** (Treatise on Strategy) by General Trần Quốc Tuần, the **Thi-Tập** (Collected Poems) of Nguyễn Trung Ngan, the **Nam-Việt thê-chi** (Historical Memoirs of Nam-Viet’s Dynasties) and the **Việt-su cuong-muc** (Annals of Viet’s History) by Hồ Tôn Thộc.

After a short eclipse, the Vietnamese literature in Chinese characters flourished again before attaining to its apogee with such masterpieces as the **Binh Ngô dai cao** (Proclamation on the Campaign against the Chinese) by Nguyễn Trai, the **Thiên-nam du-ha-táp** (Spare Times in the South of the Sky) and the **Quynhuyễn cuu-ca** (Nine Songs of the Imperial Garden) by King Lê Thanh-tông and his Academy of Letters, the **Chinh-phu-ngâm** (Complaints of the Warrior’s Wife) by Dang Trần Côn, the **Linh-Nam Trích-Quai** (Super Human Beings of Linh-nam) composed by Lý Tế Xuyên and revised by Vũ Quỳnh, the **Truyện-ky man-luc** (Vast Collection of Legends) by Nguyễn Du, the **Tuc Truyện-ky** (New Collection of Legends) by Đoàn Thị Diễm, the **Lu-trung tap-thuyét** (A Traveller’s Notebook) by Bùi Huy Bích. With regard to historical writings composed under the Lê, let us mention such valuable works as the **Dai-Việt su-ky toán-thu** (A Complete History of the Great Viet) by Ngô Si Liên, the **Việt-giam thong-kha o** (A Thorough Historical Study of Viet) by Vũ Quỳnh.

An outstanding place must be reserved for Lê Quy Đôn (1726-84), whose works constitute a precious mine of information on Vietnam’s history and her traditional institutions. This encyclopaedist writer has left many masterpieces, very remarkable for their scholarship and their variety. Let us mention, among others,
the Dai-Việt thông-su (A Complete History of the Great Viet), the Phu-biên tap-luc (Miscellanea on Marches' Administration), the Bac-su thông-luc (Notebook on a Mission in the Northern Country), the Quê-duong thi-táp (Collected Poems of Quê-duong), the Toàn-Việt thi-luc (A Complete Collection of Vietnamese Poetical Works), the Quan-thu khoa-biên (Commentary on Various Works), the Văn-dài loai-ngh (Essays on Various Subjects), the Danh-thân-luc (Biographies of the Most Famous Mandarins) etc.

Chinese script literature remained prosperous from the nineteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century. With regard to the Nguyễn dynasty, especially, many masterpieces of poetry and historical writings worthy to be mentioned are the Phuong-dinh thi-van-táp (Collected Poems of Phuong-dinh) by Nguyễn Siêu, the Cao-chu-than thi-táp (Collected Poems of Cao-chu-than) by Cao Ba Quat, the Thao-duong thi-táp (Collected Poems of Thao-duong) by Pham Quy Thich, the Bac-hành thi-táp (Collected Poems on an Ambassadorial Tour in China) by Nguyễn Du, the Khâm-dinh Việt-su thông-giam cuong-muc (Authorized History of Vietnam) compiled under the reign of Emperor Tu-duc, and the Lich-triều hiền-chuong loai-chi (Institutional History of National Dynasties) by Phan Huy Chu.

As far back as the thirteenth century, while Chinese characters were officially employed in literature and government transactions, Vietnamese scholars had felt the need to devise such a script as would be able to transcribe native sounds. Hence the Chu nôm or demotic script was invented. The first writer to have used this new writing system was Nguyễn Thuyên in the thirteenth century, and many writers such as Nguyễn Si Có and Chu Văn An were said to have followed his example. But the literature in Chu nôm knew effectively full bloom from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, when Chinese patterns still prevailed in poetry and in prose. Vietnamese writers who very soon struggled out of the Chinese models began to work in other directions: the narrative verse and the plaintive ballad. Đoàn Thi Diễm was the author of the very popular ballad Chinh-phu-ngâm (Warrior's Wife Ballad). Equally famous is Cung-oan ngâm-khúc (Complaint of a Palace Maid) by Nguyễn Gia Thiệu (1741-98). As for the narratives (truyện nôm), we will have to mention Hoa-tiên (The Flowered Letter), Kim Văn Kiều (Story of Kim, Van and Kiều), Phan-trần, Nhi-dố-mai, Luc-văn-tiên, Thach-sanh and Nu tu-tài.

All these ballads and narratives together with most works of Vietnamese literature in Chu nôm were to be transcribed into
romanized script from the nineteenth century after the Quôc-ngu was officially adopted all over the country.

4. ARCHITECTURE, SCULPTURE, MUSIC AND THEATRE

Except for Loa-thành, the City of Shell built in 255 B.C. by King An Duong Vuong of the Thuc dynasty, almost nothing was left of prehistoric Vietnam's arts. The first era in the history of Vietnamese arts, which has been called the Dai-la era and lasted from the ninth to the eleventh century A.D., has already shown a strong Chinese influence conjunctly with the Indian influence. But as early as the thirteenth century, some specific features began to emerge in Vietnamese arts, which proved to be eminently original in the Lê era, before undergoing again the Chinese influence in the Nguyễn era. The Chinese influence which was being exerted on Vietnamese arts from the ninth century down to the nineteenth century can be traced through such aspects as architecture, sculpture, painting, music and theatre.

The Chinese influence on Vietnamese architecture is clearly revealed in many Chinese-patterned buildings, in their decorative designs and in the choice of their sites. Like most of Asian countries' architecture, the Vietnamese was imbued with religious spirit. That is why religious monuments always took the first rank of all. Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism have through centuries inspired Vietnamese architecture. These three Chinese systems of religion have respectively presided over the setting up of Chùa or Buddhist temple, Đền or Taoist temple, and Văn-miếu or the temple of Confucius. They have also inspired the various decorative designs of religious monuments as well as civil buildings. Scenes from the Hell's torments and from Taoist mythology can be seen in Buddhist and Taoist temples. As for Confucianist-patterned designs, they are ornamentally used for house buildings.

The Chinese influence was also visible in the choice of sites for the buildings whatever they might be. In this matter, the geomancer played an important role. In the old times and even nowadays, especially in the countryside, he was necessarily consulted, whenever a religious temple, a dwelling house or a tomb had to be built, so as to locate the best site for it. The choice of site was considered most important, because, according to the popular belief, the happiness and the life of all the family members depend upon it.
The Chinese influence, far from limiting itself to the religious monuments, was also felt in the structure of the imperial palaces, of the mandarins' abodes, and of the buildings for military purposes. The imperial palaces and the mandarins' abodes, generally patterned after their Chinese equivalents, were characterized by their shapes, which were frequently similar to those of the Chinese characters 亊 (kung: work) and 闩 (môn: gate), and by their roofs suggesting the image of a dragon or a phoenix. Among the Chinese-patterned constructions for military purposes, let us mention the citadel of Dai-la built by the Chinese General Kao P'ien in 867, and the citadel of Tây-dơ built in Thanh-hoa by the throne-usurper Hồ Quy Ly at the end of the fourteenth century.

Sculpture played an important role in old Vietnam. Like Vietnamese architecture, it also centred on the religious field and showed many foreign influences, among which the Chinese one was the most prominent. Chinese inspiration was particularly obvious in such ornamental motifs as bats, squirrels, fabulous animals like dragons, unicorns, phoenixes, cranes, symbolic plants and flowers like bamboo, plum-tree, and chrysanthemum. It was also revealed through some kinds of sculptures in stone, such as gravestones and stelae. Old Vietnamese gravestones bore carved Chinese characters indicating the names, titles, dates of birth and death of the deceased persons. They were usually erected on the back of a stone giant-turtle as the symbol of quiet and continuous life in the other world. Many of these old gravestones still exist in the imperial tombs in Huế and in several religious temples throughout the country. As far as stelae are concerned, the most characteristic ones with regard to the Chinese influence were those erected to commemorate the people's gratitude towards famous great men in the past or to record some important events of the national history. Such are, for instance, stone stelae which can be found today in the temples dedicated to General Trần Hưng-dao and the Trung sisters, and in the Temple of Confucius in Hanoi to commemorate the literary competitions that successively took place there from 1442 to 1779. Finally, let us mention the biggest Chinese-patterned bronze statue in old Vietnam, the statue of the God Trần Vũ worshipped in Quan-thanh Temple of Hanoi.

Besides such pictures as found on carved, inlaid and embroidered works, painting in old Vietnam consisted merely of a few works depicting religious scenes such as the pictures of Tháp-diên (Temple of ten great Buddhist deities), of Bach-hồ (white
tiger) and of Ngu-hô (five tigers). Like Vietnamese architects and sculptors in the past, Vietnamese painters themselves used to take their inspiration from Chinese models and borrowed them such motifs as the Tu-linh (four sacred animals: dragon, unicorn, tortoise and phoenix), the Tu-qui (four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter), the Ngu-phuc (five blessings: riches, honours, long-life, health, and peace), the Tam-da (three abundances: happiness, riches and long-life). As for painting practices, water-coloured paintings on silk or rice-paper or on wood cuts were adopted.

Vietnamese music in the past underwent the double influence of Chinese music and Indian music. Under the Chinese domination Chinese music must have been rather familiar to the Vietnamese people. However, no written proofs can yet be found to ascertain the influence of Chinese music during that period. According to Dr. Trần Văn Khê, three successive eras can be distinguished in the history of Vietnamese music: the first period from the tenth to the fifteenth century, the second period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century and the third period from the nineteenth century to the eve of World War II. In the course of the first era, the Indian influence through Cham music competed with the Chinese one and sometimes predominated over the latter. According to Lê Tắc, a Vietnamese historian in the fourteenth century, there were under the Trần dynasty two orchestras: the bigger one or Đại-nhạc and the smaller one or Tiểu-nhạc. The Đại-nhạc was reserved for the sovereigns and high dignitaries and made use of Cham instruments, while the Tiểu-nhạc was at the disposal of the other social strata and included Chinese instruments. Moreover, under the Lý and the Trần dynasties, the influence of Chinese music was merely limited to the field of dramatic music, perhaps owing to the introduction, at that time, of Chinese theatre into Vietnam. During the second era, from the Hô dynasty to the Lê dynasty, Indian influence yielded precedence to the Chinese one and Vietnamese music began to take model after Chinese music. At the beginning of the Lê dynasty, under the reign of King Lê Thai-tôn, a new ritual music was set up by Luong Dang who took off the music of the Ming period. From then on, the Vietnamese adopted Chinese instruments and Chinese styles. The royal court set the fashion which began to be felt in the whole national music.

Chinese influence on Vietnamese music under the Lê dynasty was officially recognized by King Lê Thanh-tôn who, in 1470, order-
ed Trần Nhạn Trung, Đỗ Như An and Lương Thế Vinh to undertake research on Chinese music. Two organizations in charge of music were established: Đông-van and Nha-nhac. The former was charged with score-composition and the latter with singer-training. Both of them were placed under the control of a court dignitary called Thai-thuong. However, they were on their decline, since 1578, when the Giao-phuong or popular orchestra began to supersede them. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, new regulations were framed for ritual music. The Giao-phuong, which had previously operated on the occasion of official ceremonies gave way to such other orchestras as the Nha-nhac or the regal music, the Dai-nhac or the grand music, the Tê-nhac or the small music, the Dao-nghiêng-nhac or the reception music, the Nu-nhac or women's orchestra, the Ty-chung or group of bells and the Ty-khanh or group of lithophones. Civil music as well as military music were all patterned after Chinese music. The Chinese influence on Vietnamese music lasted on until the latter came in touch with Western music in the twentieth century to give birth to the modernized music.

With regard to the Vietnamese theatre, chronologically, there has been the Hat-bô or the traditional theatre, which was introduced into Vietnam in the thirteenth century, the Hat-chêo or popular theatre which dates back to the fourteenth century, the Hat cai-luong or renovated theatre which came into existence in South Vietnam in the course of World War I, and the Kich or westernized theatre initiated by Nguyễn Văn Vinh's translations from Molière's comedies in 1921 and 1935. Of these four kinds of theatre, the first one will exclusively retain our attention now, because of its Chinese origin and inspiration. According to Vietnamese annals, the Trần who defeated the Yuan caught a prisoner Li Yuan-ki, a distinguished Hat-bô actor, who taught the Vietnamese Chinese theatre songs and dances. The performance of a Chinese play called Si-wang-mu was presented by Li Yuan-ki to the royal court and was greatly appreciated. Thus, the Chinese theatre was introduced into Vietnam by a Chinese actor at the end of the thirteenth century, and was adopted by the Vietnamese under the name of Hat-bô (gestured theatre) or Tuòng Tàu (Chinese theatre).

The Hat-bô was primarily performed in the royal palaces and was reserved only for the sovereigns and the royal court dignitaries. It was favoured under such dynasties as the Trần and the Lè, but during the Trinh-Nguyễn wars, it was only appreciated by the lords of Nguyễn in the Southern Court. However,
it was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that the first theatre for the Hat-bô was set up by Emperor Gia-long in the very precincts of the Imperial Palace in Huế. Most of the successors of Emperor Gia-long took interest in the traditional theatre. Under the reign of Emperor Minh-mang (1820-40), the official troupe was headed, as dancing and singing master, by a Chinese actor named Kang Koung-heou. Emperor Tu-duc (1847-83) invited men of letters to cooperate with him for composing new plays. Emperor Thanh-thai (1889-1909) who went in enthusiastically for theatrical art, sometimes willingly played himself the part of an actor. With respect to the troupes of Hat-bô for the public, they only made their appearance in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Many performances were given by them in the remotest villages through the century until the eve of World War II, when the traditional theatre was superseded by the Hat cai-luong or the renovated theatre. The Hat-bô, which is now more than seven centuries old, shows such main similarities with Chinese theatre as related to the plays’ subjects, stage arrangements, stage properties, actors’ costumes, making-up, and playing technique as well as parts distribution.

Emphasis has been laid only on the most characteristic fields where Vietnamese culture has been influenced by Chinese culture. Nevertheless, such is not the exhaustive extent of the Chinese influence which, as a matter of fact, has covered many other aspects of the Vietnamese life and civilization. However, despite the vast and powerful ascendancy of Chinese culture in the past, Vietnam has been able to shape an eminently national culture with such other exogenous ones as Indian culture, Austro-Asiatic culture and Western culture.
CHAPTER III
VIETNAMESE CULTURE AND
INDIAN CULTURE

The efforts of cultural anthropologists have usually been directed to stressing too much on the influences of Chinese culture, thus sometimes overlooking the influences of Indian culture. The influences of Indian culture should be examined in three aspects, namely, its direct influence on Vietnam, its indirect influence through Chinese culture and through Cham culture.

Central and South Vietnam had received an earlier acculturation from India than North Vietnam. This is due to the fact that this area had been formerly the sites of such Hinduized states as Champa, Funan and Chen-la. As for North Vietnam, it began to be open to Indian culture only during the years from the second century to the sixth century, through the expansion of Indian Buddhism which, prior to Chinese Buddhism, was brought into North Vietnam by way of sea-route. Moreover, during the whole period of Chinese domination, a great number of monks from Sogdiana, from the Indo-Scythian Empire as well as from India, continued to come to the country to preach Buddhism. Scriptures from Vietnamese monks in the thirteenth and fourteenth century also referred to this fact as follows:

«Under the Han dynasty, many Buddhist monks from the north came to our country both by sea and by land to preach their religion, such as Marajivaka, K'ang-sêng Hui and Mou-po.»

The Chinese history of the Wu also recorded that:

«Shih Hsieh was a powerful governor in Chiao-chou (Giao châu), respected by the local population. In his comings and goings, bells and high-sounding stones could be heard. His imposing escort moved forwards to the sound of cornets and flutes. Roads were filled with vehicles, by the side of which were marching groups of Hu barbarians, burning incense. There were usually several tens of them.»
According to Sylvain Lévi, *Hu* in Chinese language of the third century meant «inhabitants of the West.» i.e., of Central Asia or of India. So, the so-called *Hu* barbarians might be Indians who came to Vietnam by searoute. The *Biography* of Vietnamese Monk Thông-biên also quoted a passage from the *Biography* of Monk T’an-t’ien who reportedly said to King Kao-tsu of the Sui dynasty as follows:

«The people of Chiao-chOU can communicate with India more easily than ourselves, though Buddhism has already entered into China, but has not yet reached our Chiang-tung. The inhabitants of Chiao-chou have already built twenty stupas and they have more than five hundred religious people who recited fifteen series of scriptures. That is why it is said that Chiao-chou is more advanced in Buddhism than China. Several monks had come over there to preach Buddhism at that time, such as Marajivaka, K’ang-sêng Hûi, Kalyanaruci and Mou-po... Your Majesty’s desire is to send some monks of ours to preach Buddhism over there, but I do not think they are needing anyone.»

The Buddhist book *Phap-vu thuc-luc* also tells us that, in the third century, a Brahmin named Kandra came to Giao-châu at the same time with Marajivaka from eastern India. These records reveal that there had been direct intercourses between India and Vietnam by way of sea-route, and that consequently Buddhism was introduced into Vietnam by Indian Buddhist monks. Thus, from the end of the second century to 544 and also under the early Ly dynasty (544-548), Buddhism in the country was only at its beginning, although a certain number of monasteries had been built. Vietnam at that time was undergoing the direct influence of India rather than that of China in the Buddhism area, so that except for a few Indian scholars who had been devoted to the translation of Buddhist scriptures, nobody had considered getting Chinese Buddhist scriptures from China. From 603 to 939, when the influence of Chinese Buddhism gradually transcended that of the Indian, there were still some monks coming from India to preach Buddhism. For instance, in 580, Vinitaruci came to Vietnam, took up residence at Phap-vân pagoda and founded the Buddhist sect of Dhyana. Thus Indian Buddhism had directly influenced Vietnamese culture before it was supplanted by Chinese Buddhism. Another direct influence of Indian culture can be traced through a few Vietnamese words which, according to Souvignet, seem to have been derived from Sanskrit. Let us quote below the most probable ones among them.
As far as its indirect influences are concerned, we should distinguish between two categories: Indian influence through the channel of Chinese culture and Indian influence through the channel of Cham culture. As for Indian influence through the channel of Chinese culture, much has been said about Buddhism (see pp. 17-18). Here they should be traced in such fields as sculpture, music and language.

The vestiges of Vietnamese culture unearthed by Louis Bezacier, who considers them as representative specimens of what he calls the Dai-la art, include carved stone works from Phât-tich in Bac-ninh province, materials from Hanoi in the vicinity of the race course, terra cotta figures from Phât-tich, and also a stele and brickwork from Long-dôi-son in Hà-nam province. The gritstone sculpture from Phât-tich, according to his conjectures, probably belongs to a stupa erected for celebrating the victory of the Chinese General Kao P'ien over Nan Chao in 866 to 870. Including a Lokapala, a Vajrapani and a Kinnari, this stupa makes up what he calls the Phât-tich style, whose Indian characteristics are clearly revealed by the presence of small flowers arranged in bandeau as ornament for the hair on all the Kinnari's heads, by the presence of the same kind of flowers with which the Vajrapani's tunic, the Lokapala's gown, the Kinnari's torso as well as the carved dancers' and musicians' dresses are strewn, and finally by the presence of little naked manikins between the foliated scrolls of the Long-dôi-son friezes and the Phât-tich console. The same Indian elements can be found again, but already modified by Chinese influence, in the vestiges from the brick-built stupa erected in 1057 by Ly Thanh-ton on the very site of Dai-la citadel. These vestiges, whose characteristics are terra-cotta decorative motifs based upon flowers, elongated dragons, and foliated scroll patterns together with cabo-chons, have been classified by Louis Bezacier among the art works of the Ly dynasty's style.

Vietnamese music itself has been influenced by Indian music. Till the end of the dynasties of Northern and Southern China,
several musical instruments were introduced into China from India, passing through Central Asia. Emperor Yang Ti of the Sui dynasty collected all the instruments and divided them into nine groups, among which were some instruments from Khotan and India. The hu-ch'ın, a stringed musical instrument used by the ancients, came from India during the Han dynasty and became very popular. The p'i-p'a, another important musical instrument of the guitar-type used during the Han and the T'ang dynasties, came from Egypt through Arabia and India. Most of those instruments were used both by Chinese and Vietnamese peoples.

Finally, let us say a word about Indian influence on Vietnamese culture through the channel of Chinese Buddhism in the field of language. We know that the Indian Buddhists, who came to China to preach their faith, contributed certain tables which were helpful in the spelling of words. Shên Kung, a Buddhist priest, is said to be the author of the system, and the dictionary Yu-p'ıen (Discrimination of Language) was one of the first extensive works in which it was employed. There was also a famous historian, Shên Yo, to whom the discovery of the four tones has been attributed. This Chinese system of four tones shows many relationships with the tones of Vietnamese words, especially those of Sino-Vietnamese words. We can also mention the enrichment of words from Sanskrit through Chinese translation. As we know, during the eight hundred years between the Han and the T'ang dynasties, prominent Chinese Buddhist scholars created more than 35,000 new phrases and words by two methods. On the one hand, they combined two Chinese words to evolve a new meaning, such as chên-ju. Chên (chân in Sino-Vietnamese) means real, ju (nhu in Sino-Vietnamese) means likely; their combination means Bhutathata. The word is fundamental to Mahayana Buddhism, implying the absolute, the ultimate source and character of all phenomena. On the other, they adopted a Sanskrit word with its original sound; for instance, San-mei coming from Samadhi and Na-mo coming from Namo. Most of these words have been integrated into the Vietnamese language.

Indian influence through the channel of Cham culture have affected many aspects of Vietnamese life and culture. Let us mention here the most important ones like religious beliefs, fine arts and folkloric literature.

As a Hinduized state, Champa welcomed from India both Buddhism and Brahminism. According to Vietnamese annals, many Buddhist monks of Chinese origin as well as of Cham origin came from Champa to North Vietnam, where they preached Buddhism
or founded new Buddhist sects. Among them are, for instance. Haha Mara, the Cham monk who, in the tenth century, took up his residence in a pagoda of North Vietnam, and a Chinese monk, Ts'ao-t'ang, who came from Champa under the reign of King Ly Thanh-ton and founded a new sect of Dhyana in Vietnam. Brahminism, which probably was introduced into Champa at the same time as Buddhism, has left many marks in Central Vietnam from the Annam Gate to Phan-thiet province. With regard to Islamism, it was brought into Champa only in the tenth or eleventh century. Here, let us only give the terms Hoi Hoi and Nguoi Hoi which were used by the Vietnamese in reference to Islamism and the Chams. In the field of religious beliefs, mention must also be made of the worship of snakes, fish, trees, stones and evil spirits, which can be found in old India, Champa, and Vietnam.

Cham arts, although very typical of the Cham people’s spirit, had been deeply influenced by Indian culture. From the seventh century to the end of the fifteenth century, they developed through various stages. All through these stages, Cham arts have left several vestiges which can still be found in Central Vietnam in the form of such art works as brick-built towers, animal reliefs, Cham deities sculptures and stone pillars of worship along the roads. Moreover, some elements of Cham sculpture were re-employed by the Vietnamese, who occupied the kingdom of Champa. Let us mention, for instance, great doorkeepers and beasts like the stone elephants which perhaps were used by Cham artists to line the access road to a temple, and more particularly, the Ong-phong or Cham stone statuettes of kneeling manikins which can still be found now in some Vietnamese temples dedicated to the great men of the national history.

Indian influence on Vietnamese music and songs through Cham influence probably dates back to the eleventh century. In 1044, King Ly Thai-tôn personally led an expedition against the kingdom of Champa, which had neglected during the first fifteen years of his reign to keep its duty of allegiance toward the Vietnamese court. Jaya Simhavarman II, King of Champa, lined up his troops south of the river Ngu-bò. But finally, they incurred heavy losses with five thousand men taken prisoners and thirty elephants captured. Cham General Quach Gia Gi, at the end of his resources, killed his king and brought his head to the Ly as a sign of submission. Ly Thai-tôn then proceeded to Vijaya, capital of Champa (now in Huong-thuy prefecture, Thua-thien province), levelled its citadel and captured My E, the favourite of Cham king, and
all of the maids of honour. According to Kham-dinh Viet-su, those people knew how to play the tune called Khuc Tay-thiên (western sky tune) which was a part of their dances and songs' repertoire. In 1202, by orders of King Ly Cao-tôn, the Royal Academy of Music composed a new tune called Chiêm-thành âm (Champa's tune) which was characterized by its specifically languorous rhythms. Such are the historical circumstances of the introduction of Dieu nam or southern songs into Vietnam. As far as musical instruments are concerned, some of them, despite their Sino-Vietnamese names, may be considered to have come from India through the channel of Champa. Among them are the wooden castanets called phach, the transverse flute called ông sao and the drum called phan-cô, a forerunner of today's Trọng cơm which seems to derive from the Damaru of ancient India.

One of the most popular forms of Vietnamese folkloric literature consists of the vast body of anonymous tales and legends which, from time immemorial, have been transmitted orally throughout the country. Many of these tales and legends can easily be connected with their Chinese sources. However, some of them have been more likely of Indian origin and probably date back to the time when Buddhism was introduced into Vietnam from India through the channel of Champa. They must have been patterned after such Indian popular epic poems as the Bhagavadgita, the Mahabharata, and especially the Ramayana, which was widespread in Champa. But we should also take into account, as another source of inspiration, Indian fables which are to be found in various Indian books. Besides numerous detached apologetes, which they are very fond of alluding to in their everyday conversations, the Indians have a regular collection of old and popular fables called Panca-tantra (the five tricks). With respect especially to Vietnam's relationship with Champa in the field of folkloric literature, let us take into account, among the most pertinent indications, the existence of many Cham and Vietnamese folktales which seem to have proceeded from the same Indian sources. For the enjoyment of our readers, we hope it would not be superfluous to quote in an Appendix two excerpts from The Stork and the Shrimp by Đỗ Vang Ly with our best anticipated thanks to the author.
CHAPTER IV

VIETNAMESE CULTURE AND INDONESIAN
OR AUSTRO-ASIATIC CULTURE

Among all the exogenous cultural substrata which have ever contributed to the making of the Vietnamese culture, the most subjacent, the most momentous, too, has been the Indonesian or Austro-Asiatic one. Most of its elements, more or less modified by its inter-reaction with subsequent cultural patterns, can yet be recognized in many aspects of the Vietnamese culture: in the fields of linguistics, mythology and ethnology.

The Vietnamese language has been enriched by innumerable Chinese words and expressions. However, it is not admitted by Orientalists as having originated from the Chinese language. German linguists like Kuhn and Himly were inclined to believe that the Vietnamese language belongs to the Peguan, T'ai or Mon-Khmer group. Henri Maspero maintained that it is of T'ai origin, and Souvignet traced it back to the Indo-Malay family. A.G. Haudricourt has recently refuted the thesis of H. Maspero and concluded that the Vietnamese language must be properly placed in the Austro-Asiatic family between the Palaung-wa group in the northwest and the Mon-Khmer group in the southwest. None of these theories fully explains the origin of the Vietnamese language. One fact, however, remains certain: Vietnamese is no more a pure language. It seems to be a blend of several languages, ancient and modern, encountered through history following the contacts between foreign peoples and the Vietnamese people.

Consequently, the Vietnamese language was enriched with new words from each successive wave of immigrants among whom were the Indonesians. For these considerations with regard to the origin of the Vietnamese language, we share Prof. Nguyễn Đình Hoa's following opinion:

«For the time being, inclusion in the broad Austro-Asiatic family, which comprises a number of languages widely scattered
through southeastern Asia and generally surrounded by languages of other families, can be considered adequate until the results of lexico-statistics or glotto-chronology bring us more definitive conclusion.

One of the mythic themes, which were the most widely spread among the Austro-Asiatic-stocked peoples, concerns the origin of ethnic races. In many Southeast Asian and particularly Indochinese countries, there is a whole cycle of legends related to this theme. «Among the Palaungs (a Mon-Khmer people), for instance, the story is told of a serpent maiden who fell in love with the son of the solar king and loved him, and eventually was delivered of three eggs. Due to a misunderstanding with her lover, who had been called back home by his father, the Naga princess took two of the eggs and threw them into the Irrawaddy River. One of the eggs moved upstream to Man Maw (Bhamo), where it was taken out of the river by a gardener and his wife and put in a golden casket as a curiosity. A male child hatched out of the egg, and the gardener and his wife brought him up under the name of Hseng Nya, and afterward of Udibwa (Born of an egg). Later, married to the daughter of a Shan chief, he became the father of two sons, one of whom became emperor of China, while the other became the ancestor of all the chiefs of the Palaungs. The second egg drifted down the Irrawaddy until it was picked up by a washerman and his wife. From this also came a male child who grew up to be the king of Pagan.»

The same mythic theme can be found again in a folktale from Hsen-Wi, one of the northern Shan states of Burma. According to this, «there was an old couple who lived on the bank of Lake Nawng Put. They had a son who fell in love with a Naga, a princess who came out of the lake one day in human form and talked with him. The princess also loved the lad, and took him to the country of the Nagas, where she explained the matter to her father, the King of the Dragons. The father then allowed all the dragons to assume human forms, so that his son-in-law might feel at home. The princess and her husband lived happily together, until the annual water festival of the Nagas came round. During this festival, the Nagas assumed their dragon shapes and disported themselves in the lakes of the country. The princess, however, told her husband to stay home during the festival but, overwhelmed with curiosity, he climbed up the roof of the palace and was very much dismayed to find the whole of the country and the lakes all around filled with gigantic writhing dragons. In the evening, all the dragons returned to the palace in human shapes. Likewise
the princess; but when she came to her husband, she found him dejected and wanting to go back to his own father and mother. The princess accordingly accompanied him back to his own country, but told him that she could not stay there. On her departure, she told him that she would be delivered of an egg from which a child would be hatched, and that he was to feed the child with the milk which would ooze from his little finger whenever he thought of her. Then she said that if either he or the child were ever in danger or in difficulty, he would strike the ground three times with his hand, and she would come to his aid. She laid the egg, plunged into the lake, and returned to the country of the Nagas. The child was born in due course and grew up under the care of the young man’s parents into a splendid youth. Later, he married a beautiful princess, inherited a kingdom, and had a long and prosperous reign of seventy-two years.

This theme of marriage between human beings and aquatic animals was also the foundation of our national myth, related to Lac Long-quân and Au Co.

According to the popular tradition, more than four thousand years ago, King Dê Minh, a descendant of the Chinese King Thánh Nông (Sên Nung), went on a tour to the south and met at Ngũ-Linh (Wu-ling) mountain (Hunan province) a fairy whom he married. She bore him a son who was given the name of Lộc Túc. Lộc Túc received from his father the southern part of his kingdom named Xích Quy, and reigned under the royal title of Kinh Dương Vương. One day, Kinh Dương Vương called on the God of the Seas and married his daughter, Long Nu. From this union was born a son named Sùng Lam. Sùng Lam succeeded to his father under the royal title of Lac Long-quân. Later on, he withdrew to his former palace under the sea. But as the Xích Quy kingdom was invaded by the army of Dê Lai, a Chinese Emperor, its inhabitants invoked Lac Long-quân who came back from his palace under the sea and saved the country from Dê Lai’s oppression. Lac Long-quân then married Au Co, the daughter of Dê Lai. Au Co bore a pouch of one hundred eggs which gave one hundred male children. Lac Long-quân and Au Co shared the sons between themselves. Half of them went with their father to the South China Sea, the other half accompanied their mother to the mountains located in the area of Phong-châu. Once in Phong-châu (now Bach-hac, North Vietnam), the fifty sons who had followed Au Co named their eldest brother the first king to reign over the new kingdom. He was Hùng Vuong, and this kingdom was called Van Lang.
Thus, we can see that the national myth of the Vietnamese people shows the same elements as its congeners in most of the Southeast Asian countries, one of those elements being the maritime character of the folktales.

A more careful investigation of ethnological affinities between the Austro-Asiatic peoples and the Vietnamese people would take a whole volume. In this short study, we may therefore limit ourselves to the wearing apparel and ornaments, the types of dwelling, and the family organization of Vietnam in early times.

The most persistent thing about Vietnamese dress is yet the cai-khô (loincloth) for men and the cai-vày (petticoat) for women. The cai-khô, consisting of one piece of cloth, was wrapped once and a bit around the waist and intermediate space of the hips. It is still used as an undergarment by women, as an outer garment by fishermen and the mountaineers of the highlands. As for Vietnamese women, especially the country women of North Vietnam and of the northern part of Thanh-hoa province, they wear a kind of skirt like the Indonesian one. Both men and women wear jackets and petticoats with diminutive sleeves like Indonesian people. Also like Indonesian people, Vietnamese people wear a turban made of a piece of cloth wrapped around their heads. As mentioned in An-nan chih-yüan by Kao Hsiung-chêng, a Chinese historian of the Ming dynasty, Vietnamese males wore loincloths while females wore petticoats during the tenth century. As we can read in Dai-Việt su-ky by Ngô Si Liên, the fishermen of ancient Vietnam up to the Trần dynasty used to tattoo themselves in the guise of dragon before going out to sea in order to protect themselves from the attacks of sea creatures. Besides, there are still other vestiges of Austro-Asiatic customs such as the custom of blackening the teeth and the use of betel nut.

Also in the field of architecture, while remaining eminently original, Vietnamese architecture shows many affinities with Austro-Asiatic architecture. According to Luong Duc Thiệp, the characteristics of Vietnamese architecture lie in its reflection of the living mode of the Vietnamese people, who lived in the delta. Being not very fortunate and having not enough vital space, they are reduced to build their dwellings with the materials they can find around. Since wood and bamboo are the building materials most commonly available, all edifices are essentially a system of columns and rafters on which rests the roof strengthening the whole with its weight. One of the many characteristics of Vietnamese architecture is precisely the role of the columns which
serve as supports for the roof. On the other hand, the tropical climate explains why there are few walls or partitions separating the interior apartments and also explains the frequent absence of a door. One sees the entrance wide open or perhaps shaded with a blind. The most ancient type of shelter consists of four roofs, two main and two accessory roofs leaning on a wooden frame system which is in turn supported by a system of columns. Concerning Vietnamese and Indonesian roof-structure, we think further studies should be undertaken for a better understanding of the religious meaning which may lie in the various crossing ways of rafters. In any case, the Vietnamese Dinh is certainly a parallel of such houses on piles as can still be found in Indonesia today.

The family organization in traditional Vietnam has been under the overwhelming influence of Confucian concepts which give precedence to men. That is why, as early as the beginning of the Chinese domination, the Vietnamese society has been a patrilineal one, where the woman was subordinate to her father before her marriage, to her husband after her marriage, and to her sons after her husband’s death. This status of women in ancient Vietnam was based upon a Confucian precept called Tam-tong (three subordinations of women). However, one can suppose that in the remotest times, before undergoing Chinese influence, the Vietnamese family may have been a matrilineal one. According to Luong Duc Thiệp, the uprisings of the Trung sisters in 40 to 43, and of Lady Triệu Au against the Chinese yoke in 248 testify to the existence of the matrilineal family system in ancient Vietnam. As a matter of fact, the Vietnamese woman, in spite of the humble status reserved for her by official legislation which has been of Chinese inspiration, has always proved to be better treated in practice. Other proofs of this matrilineal system can be found in the biography of Dinh Bô Linh, the founder king of the Dinh dynasty, and Ly Thái-tô, the first king of the Ly dynasty. Neither of them knew whose son he was. In other respects, women have always been the main force behind in an agricultural country like Vietnam.

In this connection, the two following Vietnamese proverbial sayings are the most significant:

«Chồng cày, vợ cày, con trâu đi bua»: «The husband is ploughing, the wife transplanting rice seedlings while the buffalo is harrowing.»

«Lệnh ông không bằng công bà»: «Man’s orders are not worth woman’s jobs.»
Recently, Prof. Robert Lingat has contributed many important findings about the matrimonial system of joint estate. According to him, contrary to official legislation, the respective marriage portions of man and woman have been put into community. Thus, the Vietnamese woman has, at least in practice, never been in the status of subjection, which bears testimony to the strong survival of Indian influence and of Austro-Asiatic influence in Vietnamese social life. Those are a few ethnological data we can take into account within the very narrow scope of this book. Let us, however, mention such other important research matters on the Austro-Asiatic and Vietnamese ethnological affinities as related, for instance, to seasonal festivals and those in the fields of naval ethnography, as well as of physical and spiritual culture of the Vietnamese people.
CHAPTER V

VIETNAMESE CULTURE AND
WESTERN CULTURE

1. HISTORICAL OUTLINE

Though there are several evidences showing that the contact between Vietnam and the West began as early as the second century B.C., regular contacts between Western countries and Vietnam only started when the Portuguese came to Southeast Asia and took Malacca in 1511. After the taking of Malacca, Portuguese envoys came to the royal court of Siam. Thence, Christian missionaries penetrated into Indochina. As early as 1550, they set about preaching the Catholic faith to the Cambodians. The first apostles were the Portuguese Dominicans of Malacca, and then the Spaniards of Manila. One of them, Diego Aduarte, landed at Hôi-an (Faifo) to evangelize the Cochinchinese from 1593 to 1596. North Vietnam attracted the Jesuits who remained there for more than 150 years. Giuliano Baldinoti, an Italian, went there in 1626 and Alexandre de Rhodes in the following year.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Vietnam was in the midst of the Trinh-Nguyen internecine war. The Europeans, therefore, had two different partners to contact in Vietnam. In South Vietnam, which was ruled by the Nguyen, Hôi-an was the key port where trade was carried out by Chinese and Japanese as well as other peoples from abroad. The Portuguese opened there a trade centre in 1637, but unfavoured by the Nguyen, they had to leave in 1641. The Dutch came next to the Portuguese, but were not very heartily welcomed for they also sought relations with the north. In 1641, as they killed a native servant suspected of theft, a naval action from the Nguyen ensued, in which they were put to rout. Things improved again in 1651 and the Dutch established at Thuân-quang a trade centre which they maintained for three years before leaving.
In 1613, an English merchant coming from Japan presented the Nguyễn with precious gifts as a precursory step to trade negotiations, but he happened to be killed by the villagers. In 1695, another English merchant arrived in Hoi-an and succeeded in reaching a trade agreement, but did not return for its implementation. In 1777, Charles Chapman was sent by the English East India Company on a commercial mission to South Vietnam which, from Quang-nam southward, was then occupied by the Tày-son. In 1664, a Frenchman named Veret was sent by the French Company of India to study trade possibilities at Pulo Condore Island. In the same year, another Frenchman, Pierre Poivre, arrived at Đà-nang, then proceeded to Phú-xuân where he was received by the lord of Nguyễn.

While the Portuguese were taking a peculiar interest in developing trade in South Vietnam, the Dutch were allowed to open a store in 1637 in Phô-hiên in Hưng-yên province, which soon became an important business centre. But as they refused to give their assistance against the Nguyễn, they were dismissed from the Trinh’s favour and by 1700 they had to leave Phô-hiên. In 1672, the English were allowed to settle in Phô-hiên, but as business grew worse, they also left in 1694. In 1680, Chappelain was sent to the north by the French Company of India. He was authorized to settle in Phô-hiên.

In 1682, the French ship St. Joseph brought gifts from Louis XIV to the lord of Trinh who returned the courtesy. The French continued to come to Phô-hiên but did not engage in any commerce there, and from the early eighteenth century on, they paid more attention to the Nguyễn in the south.

Economically, in spite of the establishment of a few trade centres in Vietnam, the impact had been almost insignificant for many reasons until the end of the eighteenth century. Firstly, the foreign traders did not stay in the country for a long time, and they made little attempt to expand their trade activities on a wider scale and on a permanent basis, mainly because of the political instability which characterized Vietnam at that time. Secondly, all business transactions were performed with governmental authorities but not with private local merchants. Finally, luxury items and weapons formed the greater part of the imports from the West, neither of which contributed to the welfare of the masses.

While the traders were engaged in business, Catholic missionaries came to Vietnam. The first one was Ignatio who, as early as 1533, had come to preach in Nam-dinh province. In 1550,
Gaspard de Santa Cruz landed in Hà-tién which was still a province of Cambodia. In 1585, two Dominicans, George de la Motte and Louis Fonseca, evangelized in lower Cochinchina. In 1596, Diego Aduarte preached in the Nguyễn’s territory. In the first half of the seventeenth century, the Jesuits came to Vietnam. Early in 1615, two of them, an Italian named Francesco Busomi and a Portuguese named Diego Carvalho, arrived in Tourane. They founded in Hôi-an the Cochinchina’s mission which, in the beginning, included for the most part Portuguese and Italian Jesuits. Encouraged by the first success, the Jesuits set up to extend the preaching to the north. In 1625, Giuliano Baldinotti was sent there. His report was instrumental in setting up a Jesuit mission for North Vietnam. In 1626, Alexandre de Rhodes, who had been in the south since 1623, was chosen to head this mission. The French Jesuit stayed in the north from 1626 to 1630 when he was expelled by the Trình. In the south, the Nguyễn themselves prosecuted Catholic preaching. Alexandre de Rhodes then fled to Macao but continued to come back to South Vietnam until he was definitively expelled from there. In 1645, he was sent back to Europe by his superiors to ask for more assistance, missionaries, and bishops.

By that time, since 1641, the Dutch who were Protestants became masters of Malacca and took away from the Portuguese the control of the routes to Japan and China. Prior to this event, the Papacy, foreseeing Portugal’s loss of privilege in Asia, planned to preach Christianity out of her patronage. The Congregation of Propaganda founded as early as 1622 set to work on the evangelization of Asia. In 1636, they appointed to the East Indies an apostolic vicar depending directly on them and working free from any interference of the Portuguese authorities. It was in this context that Alexandre de Rhodes arrived in Rome in 1649, where he submitted to the Congregation a plan for the establishment in Vietnam of an episcopate independent from Portuguese patronage. The task of organizing a local clergy was entrusted to bishops who were to be appointed not directly from Rome but in the areas where they preached to non-Christian people. Negotiations with the Portuguese took a long time, during which the Congregation of Propaganda began to publish such first works of Alexandre de Rhodes as the narrative of his voyages, a catechism both in Latin and in Vietnamese in 1650, and the Vietnamese-Portuguese-Latin dictionary in 1651.

In the meantime, Alexandre de Rhodes, unable to restrain his impatience, went back to Paris where he did his best to speed up the sending of more priests for the Catholic missions in Viet-
nam. He succeeded in winning the sympathy and support of both the French church and the French aristocracy who agreed to help him and appeal to Rome. But he was unexpectedly sent on mission to Persia where he died in Ispahan in 1660. However, the French aristocracy continued to collect money to support the episcopates in Vietnam. Then in 1658, two French apostolic vicars, François Pallu and Lambert de la Motte, were appointed by Rome to Vietnam’s episcopates.

By that time, the policy was prevailing in France which aimed at developing together religious, political, and commercial activities for the glory of the French king. Under these circumstances, the Holy Sacrament Company planned to found the Company of China for the Propagation of Faith and the Establishment of Commerce. François Pallu took a boat for his travel to Vietnam. But his boat was destroyed by a typhoon and the Company’s plan was cancelled. Later, in 1664, the Société des Missions Etrangères was founded and Colbert also set up a new company for trade in the East Indies. Pallu embarked again for Vietnam but his boat was struck anew by a typhoon on the coast of the Philippines. He had then in hand a plan for the establishment of a company in North Vietnam. Thus, up to the end of the eighteenth century, French trade was represented in Vietnam only by missionaries.

At the same time, Christianity also developed rapidly in the country. But Vietnamese authorities were anxious about its increasing spread and began to take proscription measures. In 1662, Trinh Tac issued instructions for moral amendment, in which the cardinal virtues of Confucianism were taken as basic principles to be observed by all Vietnamese subjects who were bound to evince loyalty towards their lords and devotion to their country. All books teaching Buddhism, Taoism, and Christianity were prohibited. Stronger measures were taken in 1665 for the proscription of Christians. In Hōi-An Christians were sentenced to death. About the middle of the seventeenth century, preaching of Christianity was banned both in the north and the south.

Despite the proscription, Catholic missions continued to work for the evangelization of Vietnam either openly or clandestinely. Prayer books were burnt and missionaries were expelled from Vietnam. The proscription was especially severe under the Tây-son, perhaps because the Tây-son were fighting against the Nguyễn in the south and suspected European missionaries of being the secret agents of their rivals.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Nguyễn Anh, through the care of Bishop of Adran, asked help from France against the
Tây-son. However, after defeating these and proclaiming himself Emperor Gia-long, he proved to be little appreciative of French culture since, as a matter of fact, all of his political and social reforms were patterned after Chinese institutions. Moreover, his successors Minh-mang, Thiệu-tri, and Tu-duc were far less sympathetic than himself to the new trends coming from the West and labelled them «perverse to public order.» Thus, in the nineteenth century under the Nguyễn dynasty like under the previous one, if Vietnamese rulers were not reluctant to make good use of Western technology and Western abilities, they did so only to meet temporarily pressing needs, far from being conscious of Western cultural values. Such a behaviour toward the West can probably be explained by the root influence of Chinese culture and especially of Confucian teachings.

The same Chinese influence accounts for ancient Vietnamese rulers’ policy against the preaching of Christianity which, they were afraid, might throw disorder into the Vietnamese society hitherto based on the principles of Confucian ethics. This attitude of self-esteem and narrow-mindedness charaterized the Nguyễn in so far their response to Western influences is concerned, and could still be found among some of the intellectuals even after France’s conquest of Vietnam. It was to last until the beginning of the twentieth century when it was strongly shaken by important events in such neighbouring countries as China and Japan. The Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95 and the defeat of the conservative China by the modernized Japan brought about the Chinese reformist movement headed by K’ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch’i-ch’ao, both of whom had sojourned in Japan. Despite the failure of their movements in China, the political ideology of these two Cantonese intellectuals was wide-spread in Vietnam, and old-school scholars discovered with astonishment the revolutionary trends of the West which were coming through the smuggled Chinese translations of the works of Western writers like Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, J. J. Rousseau, Thomas Huxley, Herbert Spencer, Adam Smith, and John Stuart Mill. In 1911, revolution broke out in China under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen and, from 1915, the New Thought Movement was launched, through which Western thought imbued with nationalism and humanism influenced all fields of Chinese intellectual activities. In September 1915, Hsin Ch’ing-nien (The New Youth), the principal journal of this movement, was published under Ch’ên Tu-hsiu. In January 1917, Ts’ai Ylian-p’ei was inaugurated as chancellor of Peking University and, owing to his educational reforms based on Western ideas, the University became the cradle of the so-called Chinese Renaissance. The clas-
sical written language was attacked in favour of the spoken language. This linguistic revolution was led by Hu Shih and Ch'en. The Young China Association was reorganized in June 1918 by Li Ta-chao and others with the following stated purpose: "Our Association dedicates itself to social service under the guidance of scientific spirit, in order to realize our ideal of creating a Young China." It began the publication of its journal Shao-nien Chung-Kuo (Young China). The May Fourth Movement of 1919 was primarily a student's protest against the decision made in Versailles concerning Shantung, but it also inaugurated an epoch in the intellectual movement. Here the new ideas were closely connected with nationalism.

Under the influence of these various events abroad, Vietnamese patriots who, for the most part, were Confucian scholars, started changing their struggle tactics. Two main trends could be noticed among them. One was a revolutionary movement headed by Phan Bội Châu and aimed at freeing Vietnam with Japan's assistance. The other was a reformist movement represented by Phan Châu Trinh and advocating the urgent need for the country to be modernized through Western patterned education. For that purpose, Phan Châu Trinh together with other patriots set up a school under the name of Đồng-Kinh nghĩa-thúc where, through the channel of Quoc-ngu or the romanized script, they aimed at implanting among their compatriots scientific knowledge and political concepts of the West. They also worked for the introduction of a modern way of life. Many teachers of the School were sent to the provinces where they lectured on such subjects as how to modernize the country and to save it from the foreign rule. Unfortunately, this reformist movement was not long-lived because of the rising disapproval of the French authorities. In 1908, the School was closed by a decree. Some members of the staff were arrested on the charge of rebellion. Only a few succeeded in escaping to China or Japan.

In the wake of the failure of the Đồng-Kinh nghĩa-thúc Movement which lasted only one year, other factors were to operate on the orientation of the Vietnamese toward modernization. The first one was of political inspiration. From World War I, a new policy was inaugurated in Vietnam by French Governor-General Albert Sarraut. Inclined to believe that Confucian studies were responsible for such Vietnamese uprisings as those led by Phan Châu Trinh and Phan Bội Châu, the French authorities started reforming the civil service examinations, making Western learning rather than Confucian learning the requisite for success. At the same time, new French schools were opened such as the
School of Medicine and Pharmacy, the Higher School of Pedagogy, the Special School of Agriculture and Sylviculture, the School of Applied Sciences, the School of Commerce, and the School of Fine Arts.

According to Prof. Vu Quoc Thuc, up to 1956, the Western impact in the form of French colonization which ended in 1945 was rather of superficial character and narrow scope.

"This [Vietnam's social] structure which was built up over a period of more than ten centuries is effectively communalistic since its basis was in the village or commune. Vietnam's entire economic evolution was conditioned by the division of her population into a multitude of autonomous and insulated rural communities.

"In eighty years, the French colonial administration did not basically alter this archaic structure.... As late as 1945, rural communities still embraced more than 90 per cent of the total population of the country. This preponderance of the peasant population with its static way of life explains the existence in Vietnam of many old beliefs, traditions and superstitions and the unchanging character of the entire social organization of the country.

"The principal result of the French colonization was the expansion into new domains and the creation of a new economic system superimposed upon but not replacing the traditional structure. This new system, clearly capitalistic, was implemented by the extension and modernization of some old urban centres, the creation of new towns and the development of big agricultural and mining concessions. But barely ten per cent of the Vietnamese population found a place in the new system, and were thus directly exposed to the influence of Western civilization."

2. WESTERN IMPACT ON VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE AND WRITING

Western impact or more accurately the influence of the French language on the Vietnamese language dates back to the beginning of the French occupation of South Vietnam. It began to operate through the first newspapers in Quoc-ngu like the Gia-Dinh Bao (1865) and the Nông-Cô Min-Dâm (1900). But it was after 1910, and especially after the suppression of the old triennial examination system in 1915 in North Vietnam and in 1918 in Central Vietnam, that the French language gained more and more importance. Among the various contributions of the French language to the enrichment of the Vietnamese language, we should
lay emphasis on the French-patterned structure of some Vietnamese sentence patterns and some loanwords from French.

Before receiving the influence of the French language, the Vietnamese sentence had been modelled after the old Chinese sentence and it had been, like the latter, too much symmetrical, florid and finical. Later on, in touch with the French language through the channel of translation works, it became more simple, clear and realistic. With regard to loanwords from French, they have not been too abundant at least as far as direct borrowings are concerned. Let us mention, for instance, cuốc (course), bac (bac), xà-lụp (chaloupe), ca-nọt (cannot), ô tô (auto), and to-nít (tennis).

While being both discreet and relatively recent with regard to the Vietnamese language, Western impact, on the other hand, proved to be more apparent and of longer standing as far as the Quốc-ngu or the Vietnamese romanized script is concerned. This new Vietnamese script had been, for the first time, used by Alexandre de Rhodes in his Vietnamese-Portuguese-Latin dictionary. However, the history of its invention was not all clear. In any case, many missionaries of various nationalities might have contributed to it. Effectively, the system shows traces of the spelling habits of such languages as Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Italian. Moreover, it has likely had more or less connection with the first attempts to romanize such Asian languages as Japanese and Chinese. As a matter of fact, in 1548 the Romaji or the romanized script of Japanese was practised for the first time by Yajiro, a Japanese missionary. Later on, in 1626, Nicholas Trigault, another famous missionary, published his lexicographical work entitled Hsi-ju ērh-mu-tzu, in which the Chinese language was romanized for the first time. At first, the romanized script was used only by missionaries to translate prayer books and catechisms. When they began to teach it in school after the southern part of Vietnam became the French Colony of Cochin-China in 1867, such scholars as Petrus Truong Vinh Ky and Paulus Huynh Tinh Cua also wrote in Quốc-ngu to translate Chinese novels and to produce some elementary textbooks.

After the adoption of the Quốc-ngu as the official medium of education in primary school all over Vietnam, the romanized script which gained its popularity and universality through the campaign for the diffusion of Quốc-ngu has acquired the full status of «national script.» As a phonetic script, particularly, the Quốc-ngu provides for the transcription not only of all the loanwords
but also of all the original Vietnamese words. Through this medium, the traditional values of national literature, whether they were expressed in demotic characters or written in Chinese characters, could be preserved to our times. But the effective contribution of the Quôc-ngu is not limited exclusively to the past. It is also oriented toward the future, and will certainly help to produce a literature which would be a fruitful synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures.

3. WESTERN IMPACT THROUGH THE PRESS

The press, which did not exist in Vietnam before the French occupation, made its first appearance in Saigon with the Gia-Dinh Bao (Gia-Dinh Newspaper) in 1865, and in North Vietnam with the Dai-Nam Đông-văn Nhật-bao (Dai-Nam Daily News). The former was published in Quôc-ngu and the latter in Chinese characters. Both of them were official information papers supervised by the Protectorate Government.

Next came the newspapers published by private persons, such as for South Vietnam the Nông Cổ Mìn-Dặm (1900) and the Nhật Bao tinh (1905), and for North Vietnam the Đại-Việt Tấn-Bao (1905) which was written both in Quôc-ngu and in Chinese characters. In 1907, the Đại-nam Đông-văn Nhật-bao took the supplementary name of Dang Cô tụng bao and included a supplement in Vietnamese. Its chief editor was Nguyễn Văn Vinh. All these papers aimed at publishing nothing but daily news and circular notices. From 1910 to about 1934, besides such daily newspapers as the Luc-Tinh Tân-văn (1910), Trưng-bặc Tân-văn (1915), Thúc-Nghiệp Dân-bao (1920), Trưng-Lập-bao (1923), there were also literary, scientific and artistic magazines. Literary magazines like the Đông-Dương Tạp-chi (1913), the Nam-Phòng Tạp-chi (1917), the Đại-Việt Tạp-chi (1918), the Huu-Thành Tạp-chi (1921), the An-nam Tạp-chi (1926) intended to popularize Eastern and Western cultural values through the channel of Quôc-ngu. Among the most famous scientific and artistic magazines of this period, let us mention the Học-Bảo (1919), the Khoa-học Tạp-chi (1931), the Khoa-học phổ-thôn (1934), the Bao-an y-bao (1934) the Chợp-bông (1932) and the Loa (1934).

Of all the above-mentioned magazines, the most prominent ones with regard to the impact of Western culture have been unquestionably the Đông Dương Tạp-chi and the Nam-Phòng Tạp-chi. One of the main activities of these two magazines was to endeavour to introduce and popularize Western culture by
writing many articles on them or by translating works of Western sciences and humanities into Vietnamese.

From 1935 to 1945, the Vietnamese press was in full swing and, as one of its new characteristics, more emphasis was laid on political considerations. That is why, apart from literary magazines and information papers, many politico-cultural organs were also published, such as the Ngày Nay (The Present Times) in 1935, the Nam-Cuong (Vietnam's Strength) in 1938, the Tin-Tuc (Information Magazine) in 1938, the Cập-Tiên (Radical Party) in 1938. The most influential among these has been the Ngày Nay. It was a new organ of the politico-literary group Tu-Luc Văn-Đoàn from 1935 to 1940. It was set up as early as 1932 and headed by the writer Nhât Linh. It included as its principal members such writers as Khai Hung, Thế Lu, and Tu Mo. Among its achievements, as far as the Western impact is concerned, we should mention the so artistically written novels in which individual freedom was shielded from the big family's oppression; translations of famous works of French, American, British, and Russian literatures into Vietnamese; Western-patterned styles of writing such as play-writing and modern poetry; and, always along the same line, the initiative of the reform of women's clothes. In a word, it had revived the thought and the modernist movement which were advocated by many intellectuals and revolutionaries since 1920. Simultaneously, other literary circles and magazines contributed more or less to the spreading of Western cultural values in Vietnam. Finally, from 1945 to 1954, during the resistance against the second French occupation, there occurred a pause in the cultural exchange between Vietnam and the West which was not to be reopened until after 1954.

4. WESTERN IMPACT ON VIETNAM THROUGH TRANSLATIONS

Next to the schools and the press, translations of Western works into Vietnamese have been perhaps the most efficient auxiliary of the Western impact on Vietnamese culture. The first Vietnamese translation of Western works dates back to the seventeenth century when Alexandre de Rhodes published his bilingual Latin-Vietnamese catechism in Rome. But it was only in the beginning of the nineteenth century that Latin-Vietnamese and French-Vietnamese translations were published again, for the most part, in the form of bilingual dictionaries.
In the course of the period running from the first quarter of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, most of the translators were Catholic missionaries and it is obvious that their primary motive was a religious one. The earliest of their works was produced by a French missionary, Bishop of Taberd, who in 1838 was the first to give English, French, and Vietnamese translations of a Latin poem about the martyrdom of Agnes (Agnetis Martyrium). Then other missionaries followed his process. Their translation programme necessarily laid emphasis on religious works like Sacred Scripture, theology, hagiography, and rituals. However, translations of Latin and French textbooks also retained their attention.

During the last years of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century, translation of Western works grew more and more important and began to interest Vietnamese intellectuals themselves. The most active translators were Truong Vinh Ky (1837-1898) and Huynh Tinh Cua (1834-1907) in the south, and shortly after, Nguyêん Van Vinh and Pham Quynh in the north. Truong Vinh Ky, a polyglot scholar, was the author of numerous works covering various subjects, such as old legends, humorous tales, Vietnamese grammar, Vietnamese history, and accounts of travel. However, he was most appreciated for his French-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-French dictionaries as well as for his translations from Chinese, Latin, and French. Huynh Tinh Cua, one of his contemporaries, was also known especially for his Western-patterned tales and his Vietnamese dictionary entitled Dai-Nam Quác-âm tu-vi. The period from 1913 to 1932 was, so to speak, the golden age of the translation of Western works, and was represented by two eminent translators: Nguyêん Van Vinh and Pham Quynh. The former’s translations covered various kinds of Western literary works with special emphasis on novels and comedies. Let us mention for instance Les Fables by La Fontaine, Les Contes de Ma Mère l'Oye by Perrault, Les Vies Parallèles des Hommes Illustres de la Grèce et de Rome by Plutarque, Gil Blas de Santillane and Turcaret by Lesage, Gulliver’s Travels by Jonathan Swift, Les Aventures de Télémaque by Fénélon, Les Trois Mousquetaires by Alexandre Dumas, Manon Lescaut by Abbé Prévost, La Peau de Chagrin by Honoré de Balzac, Les Misérables by Victor Hugo, and Le Malade Imaginaire, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, L’Avare, Le Tartuffe de Molière. Most of these translations were to be reissued in the collection named Au-Tây Tu-tuong (The Western Thought) which was initiated in 1927 by Nguyênn Van Vinh and Vayrac.
Pham Quynh's translations showed a clear preference for works of ethics and philosophy, such as *Le Discours de la Méthode* by Descartes, *Le Manuel* by Epictète, *La Vie Sage* by Paul Carton. Nevertheless, he also translated French novels like *Le Rouge et le Noir* by Stendhal, French tragedies like *Le Cid* and *Horace* by Corneille. Moreover, he was the author of such numerous compilations on various fields of Western cultures as *Van-minh-luan* (Essay on Civilization), *Khao vê chinh-tri nuoc Phap* (Studies in Political Institutions of France), *Thế giới tiến-bồ su* (History of the World’s Progress), *Lich-su và hoc-thuyêt cua Rousseau* (Rousseau’s Biography and Doctrine) and *Lich-su và hoc-thuyêt cua Voltaire* (Voltaire’s Biography and Doctrine).

Apart from Nguyễn Van Vinh and Pham Quynh, we should mention such translations of works by other writers as published in the *Dòng-Dương Tạp-chi* Magazine, in the French supplement to *Nam-Phong Tạp-chi* Magazine, and in the bulletin of the Society of Mutual Education of Tonkin headed by Nguyễn Van Tô. From 1932 to 1945, translations from Western literature kept on being an important field of Vietnamese intellectual activities. However, some changes could be observed in their orientation. More attention was given to other Western literatures than French literature and, with regard to the latter, preference was shown for modern authors rather than for classical ones.

Under the influence of Western masterpieces translated by such writers as Trương Vinh Ky and others, Vietnamese prose became richer, expressing its ideas in new ways, and grew in fame with the production of various valuable works such as novels, theatrical plays, and criticism. Vietnamese poetry also kept pace with this Western trend in Vietnamese prose and was given fresh lustre by such remarkable poets as Nguyễn Khắc Hiếu, Trần Tuấn Khai, and Đông Hồ. Finally, let us point out again the role of the Vietnamese press which, through their original writings and their translations of Chinese or French works, greatly contributed to the growth and enrichment of the Vietnamese literature in Quốc-ngu.

5. WESTERN IMPACT ON ARCHITECTURE, PAINTING AND MUSIC

As far as Vietnamese arts are concerned, Western impact has also been very important. It has been, according to Prof. Pham Biểu Tám, «on the whole quite positive» in architecture, painting, and music.
Western impact on Vietnamese architecture dates back as early as to the beginning of the Nguyễn dynasty, and was revealed by such structures as the Hoàng-thành (Imperial City), and the fortifications in Vauban’s manner built with the cooperation of the French military officers who gave their assistance to Nguyễn Anh against the Tây-son. But it was during and after the reign of Emperor Khai-dinh (1916-25) that the Western influence on Vietnamese architecture began to show considerable increase. The influence of French architecture superseded then that of the Chinese and the neoclassical style, which was all the rage in France about the beginning of the twentieth century, attempted vainly to get acclimatized to Indochina as evidenced by the Imperial Villa gate in An-dinh. Nowadays, Western impact on Vietnamese architecture is increasing on an ever larger scale, especially in the urban centres.

French patterns started influencing Vietnamese painting from 1923, when the French School of Fine Arts was founded in Hanoi with the participation of such artists as Tardieu, a painter, Jondhère, a sculptor, and Inguimberty, an artist-decorator. The first Vietnamese artists to introduce Western fine arts, especially Western styles of paintings, into Vietnam were Lê Phô, Mai Trung Thu, and Vu Cao Đàm. A number of these pioneers boldly adopted Western oil painting technique while some others continued to practise the traditional technique of silk painting. Later on, from about 1944, a new creative spirit has taken shape in Vietnamese painting and gave birth to various masterpieces such as the cubist paintings of Ta Ty, the silk prints of Tu Duyên, and the silk paintings of Trần Văn Thọ. Recently, many painters, after improving their technique in Europe, have brought back with them various concepts of Western neoplastic. At the same time, together with other artists in the country, they have been feverishly working to build up Vietnamese painting on a new basis.

Western impact on Vietnamese music dates back to World War I, at about the same time as the rise of Hat cai-luong or renovated theatre in South Vietnam. After the first successful attempts by such artists as Nguyễn Văn Tế, Nam Châu, Ái Liên, and Kim Thoa, the movement for music renovation gained ground more and more over the country. Enthusiasm for Western music reached its climax between 1932 and 1939. Many modern musical scores were published in the Phong-Hoa literary magazine (1932-35) by such artists as Nguyễn Văn Tuyên, Nguyễn Xuân Khoát, and Lê Thuong. In 1939, other ones were all the rage, such as Khúc ban.
Ca Chiều (Serenade) by Van Chang, Biệt Ly (Farewell) by Dzoan Mán, Dôi Ôanh Vàng (The Two Orioles) by Thắm Ôanh, Tâm hồn anh tim em (My Soul Seeking You) by Duong Thiệu Tuọc, and Buồn tận thu (Sadness in Late Autumn) by Van Cao.

From 1941, new trends could be found in many songs inspired by patriotism and heroism. A group of students at Hanoi University materialized them in their new productions, the most characteristic of which were represented by Tiếng gọi Thanh niên (Appeal to the Youth), and Sông Bach-Dang (Bach-dang River). Finally, from 1945 to now, Vietnamese modern music has realized many other achievements, some of which were also appreciated abroad. With regard to music teaching, we should mention the activities of the Saigon National Conservatoire which has set itself the task of renovating Vietnamese music on the basis of a new synthesis of East and West.

6. WESTERN IMPACT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND FAMILY LIFE

Under the Western impact, especially in the form of French culture which was spread by the schools, the press, and the radio, the traditional social framework of Vietnam slowly crumbled in the urban areas. As early as 1920, there were evident clear tendencies toward the emancipation of the individual from the restrictions of traditional institutions. From 1920 to about 1940, the success of romanticism in Vietnamese literature seemed to symbolize an over-emphasis on individual concepts. However, a change of attitude occurred after this period. The notion of individual interests began to give way gradually during the forties in favour of the social concept which has been exploited by the communists in their rule over North Vietnam since 1954, while it has been inspiring South Vietnam in her struggle for freedom and democracy.

It is rather a minority that has been influenced by Western practices, while the rural population was kept aloof from any foreign influences. In all urban centres, housing conditions have been altered considerably and Western architecture has almost entirely replaced traditional structures. Vietnamese furniture have also been greatly influenced by Western contacts. It was either superseded by Western-style pieces or was only kept for decorative purposes. Clothing has been modernized with the same facility. Most men in town have adopted Western costume. Traditional
dresses and trousers are rarely worn by students and schoolboys, whose uniforms generally consist of a white shirt, a pair of trousers and a pair of shoes or sandals, all being cut in Western style. Girls and women prefer having their hair cut and curled in the Western fashion. With respect to means of transportation, Vietnamese have freely adopted the use of modern vehicles. Even women can be seen now driving cars and riding bicycles or motor scooters. As for recreational pursuits and sports, the movies, tennis, football, and boxing have won over Vietnamese youth.

Thus, Western impact has been effective on the Vietnamese way of life, especially in the urban area. Nevertheless, as rightly stated by Prof. Vu Quốc Thuc, «it would seem that Western influence has been irregular, its importance varying from one aspect to another. There has been on the part of Vietnamese city-dwellers neither a stubborn rejection nor a hasty adoption. Instead, Vietnam has taken from the West what she thought best suited to her comfort, pleasure, and taste. Westernization has taken place, in other words, according to a thoroughly rational pattern.»
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters, we have tried to trace back various contributions of Eastern and Western cultures to Vietnamese culture in the process of its formation. If we set aside such constituents as Hoabinhian and Bacsonian cultures which date back to the prehistoric era, Vietnamese culture from the Christian era up to now has been successively moulded by Austro-Asiatic culture, Indian culture, Chinese culture, and Western culture.

The importance of alien constitutive elements in Vietnamese culture had led to the tempting hypothesis that the Vietnamese culture is, after all, no more than a provincial variant of Chinese culture. This hypothesis has been disapproved by A. H. Christie. He said that the culture of the Vietnamese developed in a distinctly Chinese pattern. Yet, from a careful analysis of the earliest surviving evidence and detailed comparative studies of regional cultures, it is possible to show that the naïve view which holds Vietnamese culture to be no more than provincial Chinese is over-simplified and untenable.

Thus, despite the overpowering impact of Chinese culture, Vietnamese culture should not be considered only as a variety of Chinese culture. Nor should it be identified with Indian culture, although many elements of which can yet be traced through some present Vietnamese cultural patterns.

Apart from these two views which hold Vietnamese culture to be an impoverished version either of Chinese culture or of Indian culture, we should also mention a new hypothesis which attempted to identify Vietnamese culture with Austro-Asiatic culture. According to Dr. Condominas, «the virile originality of Vietnam emerges in all spheres. Certainly, there is no question of minimizing Chinese influence, which has been preponderant, but not so absolute, as most works intended for the general public seemed to give the impression that the cultural personality of Vietnam had been suffocated by Chinese culture, of which it was
alleged to be nothing more than an integral part. It is undeniable that there was a Chinese cultural influence on Vietnam just as there was elsewhere an Indian influence. But that ancient cultural substratum which is common to the peoples of Southeast Asia, a crossroad for both Indian and Chinese cultures, has survived intact with the remote minority mountaineers. Moreover, it has also profoundly tinged the language, customs, manners, social organization, arts, and beliefs of modern Vietnam. It will absorb all the opposing currents of Western world just as it gratuitously absorbed or accepted by force the multiple elements of Chinese culture and made use of them to build up its own culture and to maintain its own originality.

While recognizing that the previous opinion has rightly taken into account such main constituents of Vietnamese culture as Chinese, Indian, and especially Austro-Asiatic cultural patterns, we are inclined to think, however, that the originality of Vietnamese culture lies rather elsewhere than in its Austro-Asiatic substratum. It is likely to be seen in the synthesis that it has realized of native and exogenous elements. This synthesis has been materialized more or less successfully as evidenced above, in almost every sphere of Vietnamese culture.
Many centuries ago, there lived a happy couple, and a beautiful daughter was born to them. But as if charging a price for giving the couple such a beautiful daughter, nature took away the mother as soon as the girl was born. The girl was named Tâm by her father who was torn between grief and joy. But time passed heedlessly, and the father decided to marry again. From the second marriage, another daughter was born, whom they named Cam. All the four lived together. Tâm loved her little half-sister, but was hated by her stepmother. In the midst of love and hate, the two girls grew up.

One day the stepmother sent two girls to bring shrimps from a nearby pond. Tâm worked hard; Cam was too spoilt to work, and played with the flowers and butterflies. When the time came to return home, Cam seeing Tâm's full basket, felt a little apprehensive of her reception at home. But a scheme took shape in her mind, and she exclaimed to Tâm, «My goodness, just look at your hair and face. Go and wash!» Tâm put the basket down and scampered away to clean herself. When she returned, the shrimps were of course not there. Neither was Cam. Tâm sat down and began to cry.

While she was crying, someone touched her shoulder. She did not know it, but it was a Bodhisattva. He asked in a gentle voice: «Why are you crying, my child?» Tâm told him the story, and said: «My mother will beat me to death when she finds I've brought no shrimps.» Bodhisattva replied: «Child, do not cry. If you endure your suffering now, you will be happy later.» Then he asked her to look into her basket, and there was a small fish in it. «Take this fish,» he said, «and put it in the pond.»

This Tâm did. And everyday, instead of eating all her three bowls of rice, she would keep one for the fish. She would go to the pond and call «Fish, Fish!» and the fish would come to surface and eat out of her hand. It soon became big, beautiful, and playful.
But how could this happiness be concealed from the curious eyes of Cam? One day, Tàm called the fish, with food on her hand, but the fish did not come up. It never came up any more.

So, Tàm sat down and cried again, quietly, near the pond. And again the Bodhisattva appeared before her, and asked: «Why are you crying, child?» She sobbed out her loss. The Bodhisattva said: «The fish was caught and eaten. Its bones are in the garden. Gather them, and bury them under the four legs of your bed.» Then he left. When she went to the garden, Tàm found a cock scratching the earth very hard. Sure enough, she found there the bones of the fish. She did as Bodhisattva had advised.

Some time after, there was a big festival in the vicinity which the King was going to grace with his presence. Everybody in the village was going, and there was much excitement. Tàm also was excited, and wished to go. But the stepmother, though she allowed Cam immediately, told Tàm to finish some work before going. She took two jars of black and green peas, mixed them, and put the whole lot in front of Tàm. «You can go to the festival after you have separated the black from the green peas,» she said. And the family left for the festival.

Tàm sat alone, looking at the heap of peas before her. She began to separate them and tears flowed silently from her eyes as she worked. Then the Bodhisattva again appeared. «Crying again, child?» he asked. Tàm pointed at the mixed peas and said: «I can never go to the festival.» The Bodhisattva consoled her, and thought for a moment. Then he looked up and thence flew down hundreds of little birds which separated the green from the black peas in a few minutes. «There!» said the Bodhisattva. «Now you can go.» Tàm was full of joy. But she suddenly remembered that she had nothing to wear. But the Bodhisattva advised her to dig under the bed, where she had buried the fishbones. There she found beautiful garments, and she dressed to leave.

When she was on the bridge, the King arrived. The guards unceremoniously asked everybody to clear out of the way, and as she hurried to one side, she dropped one of her shoes. It lay there for some time. Then one of the guards saw it, and was attracted by a strange, undefinable quality of it, and by its beauty. It did not seem to him to have been made by a human hand—it wasn't, of course. So he took it to the captain, who conveyed it to the King. The King was also struck with wonder. He wished
to know which lady's shoe it was, but no one stepped forward to tell him. Then he proclaimed that whomsoever the shoe fitted would become his queen. All the ladies tried, including Cam; when her foot was found too big for it, her mother was so enraged with envy. Ultimately, Tâm also had to try, and she of course became the queen. Her mother and her half-sister would never forgive her, for they were very jealous of her.

Many years passed. One day, Tâm heard that her father was ill, and she returned home to see him. While she was there, her stepmother thought of a ruse and asked her to climb up and get some areca nut for her father. Although she was a queen—and queens don't normally climb trees—she went up. When she was well up, Cam and her mother, who had cut sufficiently deep into the trunk before sending Tâm up, now quickly cut the tree down. Tâm fell, and died. The Bodhisattva transformed her into a yellow bird.

In the meantime, Cam went to the palace as a substitute. One day she was drying the King's clothes, when a yellow bird came fluttering around and said, «Do not dry my husband's garments on the fence—they will tear, they will tear!» As destiny wanted, the King standing nearby was amazed to hear this. Then he raised his hand and said, «Yellow bird, yellow bird, if you are my wife, get into the sleeve of my robe!» The yellow bird of course flew in. The King loved the bird, and made a home for it in the palace. But Cam could not stand. At the first opportunity that came, she killed the bird and threw its feathers into the garden. The wind carried the feathers away, and where it deposited them there grew up a luxuriant tree with just one beautiful fruit. A beggar-woman, passing by, saw the fruit, and opening her bag, said, «Fruit, beautiful fruit, fall into my bag. I'm not going to eat you, I shall keep you in my house.» Immediately the fruit fell into the bag. The beggar-woman brought it home and the house was immediately filled with fragrance. She kept it in the rice jar.

But from the day she brought the fruit, a strange thing happened. Everytime she returned from her rounds, she found the housework done, and her meal ready and served. She couldn't find out how, so she decided to investigate. One day she hid outside the house and watched. She saw emerging from the jar a beautiful lady who began to do the housekeeping. The beggar-woman rushed in and caught her by the arm. After she had learnt as much as the lady told her, the women began to live quietly together.
It chanced one day that the King came that side for hunting. Tired, he stopped at the woman's place for some betel leaves and a drink of water. When the betel leaf was brought to him, he was surprised to find that it had been made in the way that his wife used to make it for him. So, he inquired from the old woman and she told him it had been made by her daughter. The King summoned the «daughter» and when she came, he could only stare: she was the image of his wife. He asked her all about herself, and she told him the whole story. The King's joy was boundless, and she went back with him to the palace in full glory, to live happily ever after.

II. THE BUFFALO BOY

On a clear night, if you look at the moon intently, the pattern on its surface will play all kinds of tricks: sometimes its corners will round to curves, and its curves to corners; sometimes it will approximate to this known shape, sometimes to that. But if you continue to look, the movement will gradually cease, and the silhouette of a man sitting all alone at the foot of a banyan tree will emerge. The man's name is Cuôi, and he went up to the moon long, long ago. But the children of Vietnam still sing of him when they see the moon, and sometimes they are sure that he turns his head to look at them and smile. And they sing:

Cuôi, Cuôi, the dream-time boy,  
Alone, alone on the Moon,  
Playing with the stars in the lost twilight  
Till Late has become Soon.

Cuôi was a buffalo-boy who came of a very, very poor family. Because he was so poor, he worked without being paid for the richest man in his little world. He used to look after the buffalo in the fields, prepare food for the pigs, collect firewood in the forest, and cook dinner for his master. For all this, the master used to give food to eat, a cloth to cover himself with, and a box on the ear to encourage him.

One day, while gathering wood in the forest, Cuôi saw a tiger-cub come frolicking up to him. He picked it up. As he did so, he heard a frightful growl somewhere close by. The mother of the cub was looking for her little one. Cuôi threw the cub down and
scrambled up to hide in a tree. But he had thrown down the cub with such violence that it lay unconscious. The tigress soon came crashing through the undergrowth, and growled again—this time with anger. In the tree, Cuôi held his breath with difficulty. Then Cuôi saw a strange thing happen. The tigress walked to a stream not far from the spot, gathered leaves from a tree which looked like a banyan, chewed them, and applied them to the cub’s head. The cub almost immediately stood up and jumped about as if nothing had happened.

When the tigress and her little one had disappeared into the forest, Cuôi came down and made his way to the banyan tree. He gathered a handful of leaves and took them home. On the way, he saw a dog lying dead in the dust. Cuôi chewed the leaves as he had seen the tigress doing, and applied them to the dog’s head. After a few minutes the dog came to life again, and bounded away. Realizing that these leaves had the strange property of bringing the dead back to life, Cuôi returned to the stream and brought away the whole tree complete with its roots. He replanted the tree at his house, in the middle of the yard, and warned his wife not to throw refuse and dirty water where it was planted. «Otherwise,» he joked, «the tree will by away to the sky.»

But Cuôi’s wife was like the other village women of Asia; how could she remember where not to throw refuse and dirty water? She threw these things just where Cuôi had asked her not to throw them. Slowly the tree began to pull itself out, and make towards the sky. Somehow, the joke was coming true. Cuôi, returning from the fields, saw the tree floating away, to his horror. He ran after it, as if he were mad, and just caught hold of its roots. But his slight weight was not sufficient to keep the tree down, and he too was carried up. After many hours, the tree and Cuôi reached a strange world, with a permanent after-storm calm. It was the Moon. Cuôi planted the tree there, and sat down to wait at its foot. And there he has sat waiting, year after year, for Late to become Soon.

Excerpts from Dô Vang Ly, The Stork and the Shrimp, (The Claw of the Golden Turtle and Other Vietnamese Tales), New Delhi, 1959.
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