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## THE CONFERENCE ON TRADITIONAL VIETNAM IN THE RAS ICCA

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**Abstract.** This is a survey of the All-Russian conference “Traditional Vietnam” held by the RAS ICCA and dedicated to the 90th birthday of D.V. Deopik, one of the founders of Vietnamese studies in Russia. The participants of the conference, over 80 Russian specialists, directly or on-line heard and discussed 13 detailed papers with the themes on Vietnamese philology, archeology, ethnography and Vietnam’s history up to 1945.

**Keywords:** Vietnam, Vietnamese literature, the Vietnamese language, history of traditional Vietnam, history of Vietnamese religions, Vietnam’s archeology, Vietnamese diaspora abroad.

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On October 26, 2022, a regular All-Russian conference with the theme “Traditional Vietnam” was held in the RAS ICCA. First, these conferences were held under the auspices of the Center for Vietnamese Studies of MSU IAAS, later under the auspices of the Institute for Practical Vietnamese Studies. These forums unlike other analogous measures do not limit their participants with the only specialized theme. Each participant has an opportunity to speak on the results of his/her current researches, which significantly improves the quality of reports and draw the audience’s attention.

The ICCA’s leadership decided to revive the tradition and dedicated the regular conference to D.V. Deopik, professor of Moscow State University, the chief initiator of these conferences, who is 90 years old this year. A.L. Ryabinin, DSc (Hist.) (the Higher School of Economics, Moscow) thanked Degi Vital’evich in the name of all his pupils, highly estimating his researches and pedagogic work.

There were presented thirteen papers which can be conditionally divided into the three big sections.

The central report of **the philological section** was delivered by K.Yu. Leonov, candidate of history (Moscow), who summarized his long-term studies of the poetry in the period under the Vietnamese dynasties of Later Ly, Trang and Ho (11th – 14th cent.). He succeeded in justifying his thesis that in its essence that literature was a component of the analogous phenomenon in China both in its form and content, at the same time including a number of quite original, highly artistic works, worthy to stand in line with the best poems by Chinese classics. At the same time not all their authors are authoritative in their native country.

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A.Ya. Sokolovsky, candidate of Philology, Professor of Far Eastern Federal University (Vladivostok), acquainted the audience with the biography and work of Nguyen Dinh Chieu (1822–1888), a famous Vietnamese poet, whose 200 birthyear is celebrated this year.

T.N. Filimonova, candidate of philology, assistant professor of MSU IAAS, analyzed the image of Nguyen Trai (1380–1442), a great Vietnamese state figure of the 15th century, as described by Nguyen Huy Thiep (b. 1950) a well-known writer, in his story “Nguyen Thi Lo” about Nguyen Trai’s wife.

The theme of the only linguistic report in the philological section, delivered by E.I. Tyumeneva, candidate of philology, professor of the High Courses of Foreign Languages at the RF MFA, and Nguyen Thanh Ha, candidate of philology, a staff member of the CC CPV, was gastronomic culture of Vietnam reflected in proverbs and sayings. Its content drew interest of the audience, also of those who do not speak Vietnamese.

In the section on archeology and ethnology of Vietnam A.V. Kandyba, candidate of history (the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography, SBRAS, Novosibirsk) delivered a most important and interesting report, having summed up preliminary data of five-years’ archeological excavations in Central Vietnam, resulted in the discovery of global significance. There was found and preliminary studied a group of sites of the early paleolith (Ankhe culture, Gia Lai province), being the evidence that since ancient times the territory of this country has been one of the places of settlements.

A.S. Legostaeva (The State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow) in her detailed and well-illustrated report acquainted the audience with such a phenomenon of Vietnamese ceramics as “Blue of Hue” (Bleu de Hué), sharing her doubts and arguments on who could really have been the author of those works (first of all, wine-vessels), what their relation to analogous Chinese and Japanese series is, the degree of their originality.

E.Yu. Knorozova (Herzen University, St. Petersburg) spoke on the image of the crane/stork in Vietnamese literature and art being one of the main totems of the ancient Vietnamese civilization. Besides, the report contained comparisons with the analogous images in neighboring far eastern cultures. This made the author’s arguments more convincing (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** St Petersburg University students listen to online reports of the conference.

*Photo by V. N. Kolotov*

A.A. Sokolov, candidate of philology (the RAS Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow), shared his curious observations of Vietnamese emigrees' life in the US. In his ethnographic notices titled "The Manicure Diaspora: the Vietnamese in America" he showed how numerous Vietnamese emigrees arrange their lives abroad soberly assessing their real possibilities and needs, and pointed to the causes of their successes in small and middle-sized businesses, but not in the big one.

Three of the five reports delivered at **the historical section** were, one way or another, devoted to religious life in traditional Vietnam. V.N. Kolotov D.Sc. (History) (St. Petersburg State University), having used historical documents of the 17th century, made an attempt to prove that from the very beginning of their staying in Vietnam Catholic missionaries, first and foremost Jesuits, beside their religious activity prepared the ground for the future subordination of Eastern countries to European colonizers working in the close interaction with the authorities of western states. In his report he paid great attention to the missionaries' working forms and methods, which allowed them to turn their flock from the law-abiding patriots into fervent enemies of the national authorities and made them resolutely deny traditional values and culture.

Despite the significant difference in the approach to the issue of the dissemination of Christianity in Vietnam, the report delivered by O.V. Novakova, candidate of history (MSU IAAS), on the role of the representatives of the West, as a whole, and Pigneau de Behaine, Bishop of Adran, in particular, in the process of rising the Nguyen dynasty's founder (1802–1945) to power was virtually the illustration of V.N. Kolotov's report. The later materials of the second half of the 18th century showed how Catholic actors of high rank using stilted words on the salvation of the soul and spreading the Gospel, desired to make their governments dominate in Eastern countries, particularly, in Vietnam, believing that the definite victory of their dogmas in these lands could be achieved but in this way.

A.Sh. Sharipov, candidate of philosophy (the RAS Institute for Linguistic Studies, St. Petersburg), delivered the report on Caodaism, a monotheistic syncretic religious movement in Vietnam. At the same time, due to the specificity of his researches, the author drew attention not to the history of this movement, but to the discursive strategy of its leaders, which allowed in the shortest time to multiply the quantity of the adherents. The latter's estimate in the course of the discussion ranged from 600 thousand to 2,5 mln persons.

M.A. Syunnerberg, candidate of history (MSU IAAS), touched the question of the role of women in Vietnamese traditional society analyzing the legal regulation of widows' position. The analysis of the appropriate legislation, developed and enshrined later, in the period of French colonialism, showed that the existing conceptions of the complete lack of their rights in the scope of the Confucian "Three Obediences" (her father, her husband, and her sons) are rather distant from the real situation in the country. The women's rights, especially the property ones, were much broader.

In his report A.L. Fedorin, D.Sc. (History) (RAS ICCA) touched the attempt of the Tran dynasty (1225–1400) to construct such a system of the power transfer in the ruling House, which could exclude even theoretical opportunities of its "legal" seizure by representatives of other powerful families in the state. Concrete examples allowed to follow the policy of ruling elites and its forms; the time was determined when this system began gradually to collapse, which in the end resulted in the dynasty's quick fall.

Summing up the results of the conference, V.M. Mazyrin, D.Sc. (Economics), its initiator, the Head of the Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies (RAS ICCA) mentioned a certain success of the conference, its fruitful and sincere discussions.

It is intended to publish the proceedings of the conference in a separate volume of articles in the first half of 2023.