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SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

FOREIGN POLICY

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“RUSSIA – VIETNAM – CHINA” TRIANGLE: CURRENT CHALLENGES, TRANSFORMATIONS AND ASYMMETRIES

S. G. Luzyanin¹

Abstract. The article discusses Russia – Vietnam and China – Vietnam relations in the conditions of the changing geopolitical situation in the world, aggravation of Russia-US/the West relations and the rise of China. It is an attempt to follow the dynamics and development features of two bilateral models, their place and role in the Southeastern Asian region, the influence of external factors on economic, military and political processes, to throw light upon the reaction of the leading Russian and Chinese experts to the relationships in the “Russia – Vietnam – China” system, the specificity of China’s realization of infrastructure projects in the scope of the “One Belt and One Road” initiative in Vietnam.

Keywords: Russia, Vietnam, China, cooperation, challenges and threats, disputed islands, “One Belt and One Road”.

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Introduction

The conventional “Russia – Vietnam – China” tripartite structure exists virtually as a regional combination of bilateral Russia-Vietnam, China-Vietnam and Russia-China formats connected with Vietnam (the latter is not considered). At the same time, it develops fragmentarily in different regional and subregional projects and initiatives, such as APEC, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the Eurasian Economic Union

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(EAEU), “One Belt and One Road” and others. Between Russia-Vietnam and China-Vietnam relations there has been formed a significant trade-economic and investment asymmetry in favor of China, which annually increases its presence in Vietnam.

In Russia, the academic discourse on issues of Russia – Vietnam and China – Vietnam relations, as well as on common security and cooperation issues in Southeastern Asia including “dispute islands” in the South China Sea, are actively developed. There are researches of the bilateral Russia – Vietnam model, evolution of its political shape and trade-economic content including military-technological cooperation [Mazyrin 2019–2021; Kobelev 2020; Kolotov 2019; Kanaev 2021; Kashin 2020; Britov 2022; Lokshin 2017]. The crucial idea in this trend is the analysis of new economic realities, as well as “the limiters” in the structure of Russia-Vietnam relations and the recommendations how to adapt the partnership to the current challenges and to overcome the existing barriers [Mazyrin 2020: 114–132].

An important part of the Russian discourse is the research of Vietnam’s foreign policy in different regional aspects, Hanoi’s combination of ‘balancing’ tactics with the use of different external supports and priorities [Koldunova 2021], as well as general works on ASEAN issues in the context of the enhancing China’s pressure on ASEAN countries and aggravation of China-US relations in the region [Sumskiy 2021; Mosyakov 2021].

A relatively independent track seems to be the research of trade-economic preferential formats “EAEU – Vietnam”. A number of Russian economists have presented a macro-economic situation and dynamics of bilateral paths of EAEU countries and the SRV, having thrown light on the specificity of influence of the liberal mechanisms introduced in 2015 on the growth of commodity exchange in some options [Glinkina, Migranyan, Pylin 2018].

As far as foreign researchers are concerned, an important place belongs to the PRC’s researchers, who investigate China – Vietnam relations and who can be conventionally divided into several groups. One of them is represented with the experts of the Institute for Southeastern Asian Studies of China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), the China Institute for International Studies of RF MFA, and a number of other centers. Some of them focus on China’s “strategic concerns” of the cooperation with Vietnam, justify a Chinese version (“nine-dash line”) of historical belonging of the disputed islands to China [Lijian Gang 2020; Gu Huoping 2022]. The others, on the contrary, emphasize the necessity to increase trade-economic cooperation of the two countries and to conserve “the unsolved problems” and focus their attention on the involvement of Vietnam into the “Maritime Silk Road” project and neutralization of the US in China [Qu Wenjia 2017; Jiang Yushan 2018].

The author makes an attempt to compare the two bilateral models of relations, i.e., Russia – Vietnam model and China – Vietnam one and to determine the degree of the exhaustion of “historical memory” between Moscow and Hanoi and the current stage of its converting into more pragmatic relations. What crucial projects and trends are especially relevant in the current China – Vietnam relations? What is especially troublesome and frightful in them for Hanoi?

The Russia – Vietnam format

On bilateral tracks of Russia and SEAN countries Russia – Vietnam track was traditionally strong and priority one, with a long friendly history since the Soviet period and traditions of a great economic, military and ideological assistance in the 1960s to the 1980s.

In 2012 political frames were consolidated with the Declaration on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the RF and the SRV. At the same time Vietnam pursues multi-vector foreign policy of “three nos”, i.e., no to participation in military alliances; no to the presence of third states’ military bases in its territory; no to joining alliances against third states.

After the reunion of the Crimea and Russia in 2014, and general aggravation of the US/the West relations, Russia-Vietnam structure had no systemic political deformations and “breaks”. At the end of 2021 during the visit of the SRV President to the RF, after V.V. Putin’s and Nguyen Xuan Phuc’s talks there was adopted the Joint statement on the vision of strategic partnership development [Sovmestnoe zajavlenie... 2021].

An important economic relations’ driver was the agreement of the establishment of the Free Trade Zone between Vietnam and the EAEU, which was signed in 2015 and strengthened bilateral economic relations between Russia and Vietnam. The volume of the bilateral trade was evaluated \$4,1 billion in 2018, and by 2021 it had achieved \$5,7 billion (15,7% increase). The crucial component was hydrocarbon cooperation, including the operation of joint enterprises “VietSovPetro” for oil and gas exploration on the sea shelf of the Vietnamese zone of the South China Sea and “RusVietPetro” in the territory of Russia, as well as the operation of the Vietnamese Concern “TH True Milk” in Moscow and Kaluga oblasts in the sphere of agriculture and the launch of the joint industrial park “DEEP C Russia” in the north of Vietnam, which had been planned to be ready by 2023. The industrial park was designed as a logistics hub for coastal industrial territories shipping [“Aziatskij povorot”... 2022].

According to the Russian experts from the RAS Institute of economics in 2016 and 2017 the total volume of the trading turnover of the EAEU integrated group should have been \$4,3 billion and \$5,9 billion respectively; by 2019 the growth of gross volumes of trade had been evaluated \$6,6 billion and no less than \$7,041 billion. At the same time, the main increase was observed in pairs “Kazakhstan-Vietnam” and “Russia-Vietnam”. Real volumes were 17–20% less than those predicted. In the experts’ opinion, the liberalization effect, i.e., the reduction of trade barriers, which ensured a certain trade growth, “had exhausted itself” [Migranyan 2019: 95].

Russian researchers mention that there were three reasons for the success of the Eurasia-Vietnam preferential project, namely, 1) there were no competition between import goods produced in the EAEU countries and their analogues in Vietnam; 2) insignificant trade volumes could not have a negative impact on the signatories’ economies in the case of the project unfortunate development; 3) Russia was interested in the speedy signing of the agreement on the Free Trade Zone to increase the political effect and prospects of the established Eurasian integration association [Koldunova 2021: 31–35].

Traditional military-technological cooperation developed continuously and successfully. Though in 2016 Washington lifted its embargo on military supplies to the SRV and in 2017 an American military destroyer demonstratively entered the port of Danang [Mosyakov 2021], Vietnam preserved a significant niche for the cooperation with Russia in the military sphere. Russia controlled more than 50% of Vietnamese fleet of armaments from the Russian defense industry and all the military supplies. The US could not monopolize this sector.

Vietnam bought Russian fighters Su-27/Su UBK and Su-30MK, and anti-aircraft missile systems S-300 PMU1. Under Russian licenses the SRV began to build missile boats project 1241 with “Uran” anti-ship missile system. There were concluded contracts for supplies of light frigates (code Gepard) and diesel-electric submarines Project 636.1 etc. [Kashin 2020: 75–77, 80–83]. Despite the withdrawal of the Russian Navy base from Cam Ranh in 2002, Russian Navy still had ship maintenance points on the Vietnamese coast.

There emerged the license production of several types of Russian weapons in the territory of the SRV, a new cooperation form. A number of contracts were signed for the establishment of service centers on maintenance and repair for helicopters, supplies of Russian tanks T-90M “Proryv” and coastal anti-ship systems “Bal” and “Bastion” etc. [Ibid.: 77, 80, 82–83].

On the other hand, after 2014 there appeared serious cracks and mismatches in Russia-Vietnam cooperation.

In February 2014 Russia retired from the project for building a plant of the SRV Defense Ministry. As the result, the production of Russian AKM Kalashnikov was replaced by the production of

Galif ACE-31 и ACE-32 from Israel. In 2016 Vietnam unexpectedly for the Russian leadership blocked several crucial projects in the spheres of metro construction, Cosmos, gas exploration as well as modernization of “Dung Quat” oil refinery and purchase of the Sukhoi Superjet 100. The most serious blow for Moscow was Hanoi’s cancellation of the Ninh Thuan 1 Nuclear Power Plant after eight years’ works to prepare the construction by “Rosatom”, in spite of the \$10 billion loan from Russia [Britov 2022: 5–7, 11–15].

Most leading Russian experts do not connect this resolution with official explanations by Hanoi of some economic and ecological reasons not to adopt those projects. In their opinion, the main reason was much deeper due to direct influence of the US, EU, and Japan, who virtually torpedoed mutually beneficial contracts between Moscow and Hanoi [Mazyrin 2020: 115–119, 126–129; Britov 2022: 5–7, 9, 12–15]. At the same time, some experts believe that the geopolitical part is not the chief obstacle, that everything was due to mismatches of economic formats, that Russia’s attempt to increase the bilateral economic level but on the base of administrative resources, by increasing the trade turnover with Vietnam, embedded in the East Asian supply chains, in the processes of Hi-Tech production, are wrong and have no prospects, that the executive decision cannot attach Russian producers to Vietnamese commercial processes [Kanaev, Fajnshtmidt, Fedorenko 2020].

After the beginning of the Special Military Operation, some Vietnamese experts are pessimistic about Russia-Vietnam relations prospects. Thus, in the opinion of Nguyen Chi Tam, the former SRV trade representative in Russia, the Ukraine conflict has jeopardized the whole system of Russia-Vietnam commercial contracts, including purchases of technologies and equipment for raw materials exploration, extraction and processing, due to the disconnection of Russian banks from the international SWIFT banking networks, conservation of the conduct of a large order (77% ready) by the Power Machines company for Long Phu-1 thermal power plant, because the company is subject to the US sanctions. [Nguyen Chi Tam 2022].

Like publications, according to the author, do not show the whole picture of Russia-Vietnam relations, concentrating exclusively on negative effects. Complexification of fulfilling a number of Russian-Vietnamese commercial contracts in the conditions of total western sanctions is complicated, indeed, but as a rule it is a technological problem, typical for all trends in Asian foreign economic relations after February 24, 2022. At the same time, given all the difficulties of fulfilling current contracts, Russia is still dominating at Vietnam’s military markets, as well as de-jure and de-facto being the crucial EAEU state which realizes the preferential project with the SRV. On July 5–6, 2022, S.V. Lavrov, Head of the RF Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visited Hanoi, had a meeting with the Vietnamese leadership and discussed economic and technological, current and long-term issues of the bilateral relations. There were emphasized the importance to strengthen on the strategic partnership format, the necessity to develop the Free Trade Zone between the EAEU and SRV [RF i V'etnam...: 17.07.2022].

Hanoi’s maintenance of friendly neutrality in connection with the Ukrainian events and general positivity for the further development of the partnership with Moscow, if they really exist, is a certain political base for building the updated Russia – Vietnam model.

The prospects of its updating are connected with the solution of the problem of a discrepancy between a high form of the existing partnership and the unsatisfactory condition of trade-economic and investment cooperation. Western sanctions and Ukrainian events have intensified this asymmetry. In the opinion of the leading Russian specialists on Vietnam, to slow down the process of form and content breaking and to strengthen the momentum it is necessary:

a) to increase Russian investments into industry, first and foremost into energy and transport; to ensure the presence of Russian companies in infrastructure transport and pipeline projects in Vietnam;

b) to take part in a long overdue modernization of nearly 300 enterprises and energy objects built in the USSR;

c) to promote the Greater Eurasia project due to a real contact between the EAEU and economic ASEAN community, widening the scope of the Agreement on the Free Trade between the EAEU and Vietnam, as far as investments, services trade, exchange in people, information and technologies are concerned, and reducing non-tariff barriers [Mazyrin 2020: 119–120, 128–132].

Though these recommendations had been made prior to the Russian special military operation, they are quite relevant now adjusted for current technological, financial and international legal realities of Russian positioning worldwide and particularly in Southeastern Asia.

The China – Vietnam model

Chinese reform experience has been studied in Vietnam. As the Chinese reforms appear to be ideologically-friendly they are also friendly to the SRV economic structure. Vladimir Mazyrin, the leading Russian Vietnamist (RAS Institute of China and Contemporary Asia), mentions that the Vietnam's model, certainly, used the principles of market transformation and socialism-capitalism “synthesis” in China. At the same time both China and Vietnam accentuate national specificity and originality in constructing Chinese and Vietnamese “market socialism” models [Mazyrin 2013].

Bilateral relations embraced a whole complex of trends and projects such as regional-integration ASEAN – China and trade-economic ones, where China in the early 2000s drove out all the competitors and during twenty years has steadily been the leader by a large margin. To compare, in 2020 the SRV volume of trade with the PRC and US was correspondingly \$153,4 billion and \$87,2 billion [Grossman 2022].

One of the main obstacles are disputes on the ownership of the Paracel Islands being a part of the more general “island dispute” by ASEAN countries (Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei) with China on the Spratly Islands. Since 2002, when China signed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, and in 2017 The Code of the Conduct of Parties on the South China Sea began to be discussed, with the “freedom of navigation”, the right of warships passage, navigation etc., the China – Vietnam relationships have not got better, but in some cases become complicated. Experts mention that the adoption of the Code would not be decisive as it is unlikely that China will consider it as a binding and enforceable document. Vietnam, in its turn, does not agree to adopt the project which will exclude the Paracel Islands regions, once annexed, Hanoi believes, by Beijing [Lokshin 2017: 58]. At the same time, since 2009 there exists so called line of nine sections/points established in the PRC; in accordance with it 80% of the South China Sea area and all its islands are historically China's ownership [Ibid.: 43].

It is obvious that the historical-legal dispute is gradually transforming into a geopolitical one, with the dominating military-strategical and hydrocarbon (oil and gas) interests of the parties, first and foremost of China, which fortifies its southern maritime borders. Thus, a number of China's mass media describe the construction of three artificial islands near Nansha (the Paracel Islands), which became “the strongest defense establishments, virtually, unsinkable aircraft carriers”, as well as the control of other forty islands and reefs in the same area [Woguo nansha... 2020].

In May 2014, when China had located its platform in the disputed waters, the hydrocarbon crisis in the bilateral relations obviously reached the interstate level. The PRC President Xi Jinping's visit to Vietnam in 2015, politically mixed the problems, being of symbolic importance for the SRV's involvement into the Chinese “One Belt and One Road” Initiative assessed rather contradictory by the Vietnamese leadership.

Vietnam joined the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) established by China and the leading world states to finance “The New Silk Road” project, and stated its participation in the construction of the Vietnamese part of the Trans-Asian Railway and a number of coal-fired power plants etc.

On the other hand, the SRV having agreed to cooperate with the PRC on some projects did not state its support of the entire initiative including “The Maritime Silk Road”. In Vietnam, at the expert and political levels they said about finance and credit risks from Chinese contracts, because economic dependence would automatically strengthen Chinese position in “the islands disputes” at the same time weakening the position of Vietnam in them, that the terms of the contracts were not transparent etc. [Model' razvitiya... 2019: 623–624].

Vietnam has developed its own long-term maritime strategy to 2030, which contains the plan of maritime economy, ship transport, navy security and other trends development and is made for self-sufficiency an independence of external players (China) [Le Dinh Tinh 2021].

China views energy and military issues in the South China Sea mainly through the prism of “nine-dash line” being very quick in response to Russia – Vietnam cooperation in oil exploration in these areas, including “Rosneft” projects, Russian-Vietnamese military exercises, as well as RF military supplies to the SRV.

Beside “the island issue”, one of the crucial problems in Chinese expert community is the problem of embedding Vietnam into the Chinese “Maritime Silk Road” strategy, the analysis of geo-economic and international-political factors of its realization. Professor Qu Wenjia, one of the leading experts (China University of Political Science and Law, Beijing), marking the beneficial geographical location of Vietnam, its “socialist kinship” suggests to build the two countries’ rapprochement on mutual “maritime strategies” granting a number of economic preferences to the Vietnamese party [Qu Wenjia 2021].

On the contrary, Li Jianggang, a leading researcher of China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) emphasizes that the countries have already achieved the necessary consensus in the scope of cooperation in the projects of “One Belt and One Road”, including “The Maritime Silk Road”; therefore, it should be found a more careful approach to new risks, also, he mentions, “Vietnam’s strategic doubt about China”, shifting tides of China-Vietnam relations etc. The expert suggests to take a tougher and more selective approach to Vietnamese projects tracking and preventing Hanoi’s negative reaction [Li Jianggang 2020].

Other Chinese experts mention the necessity to enhance the work with the Vietnamese leadership in order to convince them that further integration of economic development plans, embedding into “One Belt and One Road” with its maritime part, intensifying the interaction with the AIIB etc. will help Vietnam to accelerate economic growth at a new higher level of its own economic modernization [Jiang Yushan 2018].

Chinese applied researches are focused on the structure, demand and features of macro-economic indices of the bilateral trade and investment interaction. According to Chinese official figures, by 2019 Chinese accumulated investments in Vietnam had been estimated at USD 66,42 billion, while Vietnamese ones in China but USD 2,2 billion. These estimates directly contradict the SRV statistics, according to which the first indicator in 2021 was USD 21.6 billion, and the second USD 36.8 million (SYBVN, 2022: 277, 291). The scope of the PRC investments’ sector-specific application is also rather broad, i.e., from labor-intensive industries, agriculture to high-tech production, manufacturing industry, energy and tourism. A number of infrastructure projects (such as ports modernization, construction of five highways) is realized in “One Belt and One Road” framework. Regionally, Chinese investments concentrate mostly in south-eastern coast of Vietnam, namely in the Red (Hong) River Delta and in the border areas neighboring China.

Conclusion

Thus, in “Russia – Vietnam – China” triangle the crucial role in economic sphere belongs to the PRC. Vietnam’s foreign policy strategy is still based on the combination of three balance types, i.e., the institutional type using the ASEAN, EAS, ARF etc.; the foreign policy type, based on the search for the partners other than China, and the internal one, which is diversification of the growth sources [Koldunova 2021: 48–50]. Given this methodology, Russia, with its enhancing Chinese trend, does not so far meet entirely Vietnam’s foreign policy priorities. At the same time, after 2014 Ukrainian events indirectly influenced Hanoi’s decreased activity and cancel of a number of projects.

On the other hand, Russia-Vietnam relations are self-sufficient; they are of success in a set of local mutually beneficial economic, military-technological and humanitarian tasks. Despite China-Vietnam complicated relationships, Russia, purely theoretically, can be a mediator between China and Vietnam, smoothing conflicts at some stages. Doctor Evgeny Kobelev (RAS ICCA), a veteran of Vietnamese studies in Russia, mentions that this task will force Vietnamese elites to overcome old approaches and stereotypes connected with some Russian obligations to Vietnam, which existed in the Soviet-Vietnamese friendship period, and it means the active support of Vietnam’s position against China [Kobelev 2020: 17].

Contemporary Russia develops outside of ideological and country-specific (pro-Chinese or pro-Vietnamese) frameworks. Therefore, taking place just in between Hanoi and Beijing. It can objectively influence both parties, equally advantageously for all.

It is possible, that the RIC (Russia – India – China) project experience, being regionally and historically unlike Vietnam, theoretically may be useful for Mainland Southeast Asia and in the perspective realized in a tripartite interaction in “Russia – Vietnam – China” triangle, which is potentially able to play a stabilizing role in the sub-regional structure of international relationships.

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INDIA–VIETNAM: FIFTY YEARS ON THE PATH OF INTERACTION

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Abstract. 2022 is the fiftieth year of diplomatic relations between India and Vietnam. The article is an attempt to follow the history and stages of the bilateral relations, mutual interests and their limiters. The author discusses the main trends of the current interaction in the scope of comprehensive strategic partnership. The conclusion is made of a favorable prospect of the two countries' relations, which meets the interests of Russia.

Keywords: Vietnam, India, partnership, interests, Chinese factor, security, economy.

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Introduction

The past fifty years were the time of steady advancing development of Vietnam – India relations. Their importance often went beyond the bilateral format and so today they are relevant not only as a crucial factor, but also pressing in a broader regional context, also, considering the situation in the virtual triangle of “Vietnam–India–China”. Also, the relations between Hanoi and New Delhi are of importance for Moscow, as India and Vietnam are among the priority foreign policy partners of Russia.

The theme of the two countries' relations attracts researchers' intent attention. There are mostly works by Indian experts such as A. Malhotra [Malhotra 2012], H.V. Pant [Pant 2018], A. Godbole [Godbole 2017]. In their comprehensive research of history, mutual interests and current agenda of the bilateral relations they almost unanimously conclude on “the top priority” of India-Vietnam relations. New Delhi calls them “the pillar” of the Indian East Asian Policy (Look East Policy and Act East Policy). Also, there is an apparent consensus in the estimation of India's main incentives for interaction. Usually, the chief ones are “the Chinese factor”, as well as the geographical location of Vietnam near maritime communications crucial for India, the South China Sea among them. Among the mutual strategic interests there is also “ensuring energy security” [Chaturvedy: 21.07.2022]. Nevertheless, a number of

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analysts, for example, from Drishti IAS expert center, speak of the cooperation's "challenges and limiters", but do not attach any dramatism to them [To the Point: 20.05.2019]

Also, the Indian aspect of the SRV policy attracts attention of Vietnamese specialists, such as Vo Xuan Vinh [Vo Xuan Vinh 2013], Linh Pham [Linh Pham 2020] and others. The mainstream of these publications is also the positive estimation of the nature and prospect of Vietnam-India relations, awareness of mutual goals and driving forces of "Act East Policy" and policy of Vietnam. It is observed that on the ground of such common imperatives like strengthening relations with traditional friends, multilateralism, desire of broad diversification of relations with partners, India and Vietnam can build close and strong strategic relations [Vo Xuan Vinh 2013: 48].

Also, Vietnam-India relations are investigated in the works by experts of third countries. Thus, a researcher of the Stanton University A. Panda [Panda: 05.03.2018] and a researcher of the Institute of South Asian Studies of the National University of Singapore R. Borah [Borah: 01.03.2018] also pay attention to serious strategic motivations for India-Vietnam rapprochement closely connected at the same time with their concerns facing China. At the same time the Singapore specialist mentions that "not everything is rosy in this burgeoning relationship", for example, in the "modest" trade and economic sphere.

The two countries' relations are also the subject of Russian research-works. However, they discuss but separate aspects. Thus, E.V. Bragina in her research-work on trade and economic relations of the two countries, "the Chinese factor" among them, concludes that despite modest (so far) volumes of the bilateral trade recently it "has gained momentum" [Bragina 2019: 40].

Different stages, unchanged tendency

Historical versions of the earliest economic and cultural exchange between the peoples who lived on the territories of today's India and Vietnam go back to the 2nd century A.D. These versions evidence that in the 7th – 17th centuries Champa, the state on the territory of current Vietnam, bore a clear imprint of Indian tradition and culture introduced by Buddhist monks and other emigrants from Hindustan [Cultures: 01.04. 2014]. In 1972 the establishment of official relations between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of India was, on the one hand, the tribute to historical logic and, on the other, it was an impulse to the gradual development of mutually beneficial relations.

But prior to this, in 1954, J. Nehru was one of the first world leaders, who visited Vietnam soon after the victory over the French in the Battle of Dien Bien Phu. Four years later Ho Chi Minh, President of the DRV, visited India and said that India-Vietnam relations "flourished under the serene sky" [Dipanjan: 11.06.2021]. That start set the tone to the current relations of the two states, which later had to go through several major stages, being invariably friendly ones.

Already in the early years after the establishment of diplomatic relations, India opposed the US actions during the Vietnam War and spoke out in favor of the democratic reunion of the country. Later India became one of a few countries of the non-Socialist world which took the side of Vietnam during the Third Indochina War. Those steps found Vietnam's positive response.

In 1975 India gave Vietnam preferential treatment for trade. In 1978 the two countries signed a trade agreement. In 1982 regular sessions of the Joint Commission for Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation were initiated; it is functioning to this day with two Foreign Affairs Ministers at the head.

In the late 1970s the defense and security cooperation began gain momentum. In spring of 1979 Indian military delegation visited northern regions of Vietnam affected with a border war.

In 1984 and 1989, the CPV Secretaries General's visits to India were the impulses to new exchanges of high-level visits. Also, there developed contacts in other spheres, the cultural and humanitarian ones among them. The vector of bilateral relations acquired the sense of close partnership.

In the 1990s the disappearance of the world bipolar system predestined also inevitable transformations in domestic and foreign policies of many states, India and Vietnam among them. However, with all those changes at the background it is noteworthy that they have not weakened the positive trend of the Vietnam-India dialogue.

The important Indian novation, Look East Policy proclaimed by Narasimha Rao government, objectively assisted to this. The new course, providing mostly for foreign orientation of economic policy, meant enhancing relations with the states of East Asia, but first and foremost with those of Southeast Asia. From the very beginning, New Delhi gave priority to Vietnam, India's constant partner [Malhotra 2012: 76]. It is obvious that Hanoi, who also needed "post-bipolar" diversification, was ready to please his traditionally friendly partner [Vietnam among pillars...: 18.11.2013]

In any event, enhancing relations were typical of the early 1990s, particularly in the economic sphere. Also, some progress was notable in the defense sphere (new agreements) [Malhotra 2012: 81].

But it is highly important that in the early 21st century the mechanism of bilateral interaction have been significantly strengthened through maintaining dialogue at the highest level. In 2001 Prime-Minister of India made an official visit to the SRV; in 2005 and 2007 the CPV Secretary-General and Prime Minister of Vietnam visited India. During fifteen years of the 21st century there were made fifteen mutual visits at the high and highest levels (the visits of the CPV Secretaries-General, as well as Presidents and Vice-Presidents, Prime Ministers and parliamentary Heads of the two countries). A close dialogue was maintained between the heads and high representatives of Foreign Affairs Ministries.

Negotiations at the high and highest levels ended with a number of fundamental agreements, among them there was the Joint Framework Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation, the first complex document since the beginning of official relations signed by Foreign Affairs Ministers on May 1, 2003. The Declaration paved the way to another significant event, that is, the bilateral relations reached the level of "strategic partnership". This was proclaimed in July 2007 in the course of negotiations of the two countries' Prime Ministers. The document on strategic partnership contained also the agreement to launch since 2009 "Strategic dialogue at the level of Foreign Affairs Deputy-Ministers [Pant 2018: 4].

"Strategic and comprehensive" interaction

There are reasons to count out a new stage of the bilateral relations from the second half of the 2010s. At the least, there are two reasons.

First, given the positive dynamics of the dialogue, India and Vietnam decided to give the highest status to it, the status of "comprehensive strategic partnership". This was declared in the Joint statement from September 3, 2016, during the visit of Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, to Vietnam.

Second, there appeared a new, so to say, catalyst, i.e., a new version of "East Policy", – the "Look East Policy" was renamed the "Act East Policy" in 2014 [The Big Picture: 22.08.2022]. Indian experts state that it meant not a mere correction of the form, but also an important specification of its content,

while the former “economic, cultural and humanitarian tasks” were added now with the target of “the security cooperation and defense partnerships as well”, as well as the desire “to build ties with countries in the wider Asia-Pacific region, including Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea” [Mazumdar: 15.03.2021]. At the same time, such targets were mentioned as responses to the growth of territorial influence and “China’s assertiveness in the South China Sea” [The Big Picture : 22.08.2022].

However, from the standpoint of India-SRV relations, it was crucial to India to increase their importance. Prime Minister N. Modi spoke plainly about it [Godbole 2017: 2]. Experts spoke more expressively, emphasizing that “Vietnam has been emerging as a pivotal state in India’s Act East policy” [To the Point: 20.05.2019].

It is significant that such an approach is but supported in Vietnam. Time and again Vietnamese experts wrote about this welcoming the role of Vietnam in India’s regional policy [Linh Pham: 27.08.2020].

Exchange of visits at the high and highest levels continued. In 2018 Prime Minister of Vietnam visited India; Presidents of the two countries made cross-visits. In May 2019 Vice-President of India arrived in Vietnam, and in February 2020 his Vietnamese colleague visited India.

During Covid-19 pandemics the contacts did not weaken, but went into the virtual mode. The virtual summit on December 21, 2020 was a landmark event; then Prime Ministers of the two countries made comprehensive statement “The Joint Vision of the World, Prosperity and Peoples”. Having summarized the development of relations the document outlined the broad prospects for interaction in the period ahead [Ministry of External Affairs: 21.12.2020]. Later (in July 2021 and April 2022) there were telephone negotiations between Head of India’s Government and Prime Minister and President of the SRV.

As far as the practical cooperation is concerned, in August 2020 the 17th session (online) of the Joint Commission for Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation was held, which was an important event.

However, in 2021 some in-person contacts were renewed: in September the speakers of the Indian and Vietnamese parliaments met in Vienna. The Foreign Affairs Ministers of the two countries conducted talks in the lobbies of the regular General Assembly of the UN in New York. Their next meeting took place in June 2022 in New Delhi; also, Head of the Vietnam’s diplomacy was received by Prime Minister of India [Vietnamese FM: 17.06.2022].

Imperatives and interests

The above-exposed picture of history, stages and general nature of the relations contributes to a clearer understanding of their driving forces and mutual interests. Clearly, the main motive is the mutual desire to use “strategic and comprehensive” interaction with the purpose to fortify own foreign policy stances (first and foremost regional ones), contribute to the interests of their security and economic development. At the same time, it is obvious that both India and China consider the PRC policy to be one of the main challenges to these interests. Both countries have territorial disputes with China; both Hanoi and New Delhi express their hidden (sometimes explicit) concerns with “the PRC’s desire for regional dominance”.

This mutual imperative is especially frankly formulated in the Indian expert community: “Having faced Chinese aggression in 1972 and 1979, India and Vietnam have shared a degree of antagonism

towards China. Vietnam's streak for independence and its strong defence against hegemonic powers in the region was seen by India as a potential force to counter Chinese ambitions." [Malhotra 2012: 80].

India expresses the most serious interests in the field of "maritime cooperation" with the SRV. On the one hand, India means the needs of the country as "the maritime nation", with 90% maritime trade volume, on the other, the geostrategic location of Vietnam "being the direct player in the South China Sea is especially important from the point of view of commercial shipping, the way for a large share of Indian commercial cargos" [Chaturvedy: 21.07.2022]. This is why India highly appreciates the interaction with Vietnam in the disputes for "freedom of navigation" and "the open sea space". At the end of the 2010s India began to discuss the conception of "the united Indo-Pacific", which, in specialists' opinion, reflects India's goals "to establish in the region a flexible system of geopolitical balancers in the conditions of the growing China's influence and the consequent US interest in the region" [Gulevich: 23.01.2019]. In this balance system New Delhi offers a significant place to Hanoi expecting the counter movement, also, due to its dispute with Beijing in the South China Sea.

One should keep in mind that despite the complexity of the "Chinese factor" perception both India and Vietnam show the mood towards the constructive dialogue with the PRC in the spheres of mutual interests (the PRC is the chief foreign economic partner for Vietnam and definitely the main import market for India) [Department of Commerce: 23.08.2022]. Both Hanoi and New Delhi desire to avoid crossing anti-China "red lines", first and foremost in what the both capitals' sufficiently close dialogue with Washington is concerned.

Generally speaking, the factors contributing to the rapprochement is historical absence of any notable bilateral political concerns, disputes, commonalties in international priorities, including the desire for "the strategic autonomy" and diversified policy combining a broad international interaction with independence and the equal distance from different centers of influence and force. India highly appreciates the Vietnamese support in its desire to become a constant member of the UN Security Council and to join APEC.

Security, defense, international agenda

As far as the relations of the two countries are concerned, "comprehensive partnership" is not at all a figure of speech; it reflects their real desire for a dialogue in a broad spectrum of events. An attempt itself to give a short agenda of events necessarily leads at first to the sphere of "strategic stability", security and defense.

Launched in 2009, *the Strategic dialogue* at the level of Foreign Affairs Deputy-Ministers by summer 2022 had already numbered eight rounds. The eighth meeting held in November 2021 focused particularly on the task of fortifying the bilateral cooperation according to India's Initiative on Indo-Pacific Region (IPOI, stipulates for seven items of cooperation on "the maritime topic" beginning with security and transport to ecology and Ocean's resources) [Ministry of External Affairs: 12.11.2021].

The Defense Cooperation of the two countries is based on a number of bilateral documents (including those from March 2000 and November 2009) saying, in particular, of India's obligations to render assistance in creating Vietnam's defense industry and general fortification of Vietnamese Air Force and Navy, as well as in the training of Vietnamese military personnel. Also, they envisaged India's supplies of a number of weapons [Malhotra 2012: 81-84].

Also, Joint Statement on mutual vision of defense relations (May 2015) and the Joint Statement on the results of the above-mentioned visit of India's Prime Minister to Vietnam (September 2016) are of great importance. In the scope of the proclaimed "comprehensive partnership" India announced to grant two credit lines to Vietnam (US\$100 and 500 mln) for purchasing Indian military equipment. The contract to supply twelve Larsen & Toubro maritime high-speed patrol boats to Vietnam was signed [Ministry of External Affairs: 03.09. 2016].

The equipment of the both armies with many types of Russian military technology contributes to their interaction. Therefore, Indian more experienced forces can help Vietnamese submariners and pilots. In summer 2021 joint military exercises have been conducted with the participation of Navies in the South China Sea.

The "Joint Vision Statement on India-Vietnam Defence Partnership towards 2030" and the Memorandum of Understanding on mutual logistics support signed in June 2022 in Hanoi by two Defense Ministers were considered to be a new important step in strengthening the defense cooperation. The agreements will permit Indian and Vietnamese Navy and Air Force to refuel and get technical support in each other's marine and port facilities [Peri: 08.06.2022].

Besides, it is expected that in addition to the mentioned contract of patrol boats Vietnam will receive a "Khukri"-class corvette.

In their *international agenda* Vietnam and India state their intention to interact in multilateral formats, including the UN, mechanisms of ASEAN, in ASEM, as well as in the Mekong – Gang Cooperation Structure (MGCS). Vietnam supports India in its full-format dialogue with ASEAN, the key organization for the entire India's "East Policy".

It is obvious that interacting on regional sites, India and Vietnam desire to promote their security interests, also, in the context of already mentioned complicated relations with the PRC, which desires to establish reliable relationships with ASEAN and other important structures. One of these structures, in the opinion a number of experts, is, for example, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), represented with six South Asian countries headed by India, and ASEAN member-countries Myanmar and Thailand. BIMSTEC structure, where Pakistan and China are absent (though Beijing showed interest in the organization) [Anand: 11.03.2014], is important for India not only at the background of the contest with the PRC (also, in Myanmar), but also from the point of view of the development of India's north-eastern states and their involvement into the inter-regional economic dialogue [Yahya: 01.09.2005]. However, some regional experts believe that joining BIMSTEC would meet interests of Vietnam, which could enter, at least, new export markets [Hasan: 23.11.2021]. So far, there is no evidence that Hanoi would take visible steps in this direction and the reason may be "difficulties in Bangkok's stance" [Yahya: 01.09.2005]. However, if Vietnam had joined BIMSTEC, the organization could have performed the role of an additional site of Vietnam-India interaction along the broad agenda, namely, from economics to security.

Trade-economic and other spheres

The above-mentioned spheres are important, but it was a simplification to think that India-Vietnam interaction agenda is limited with them. No wonder that analysts emphasize that the two countries relations "should not be looked from only the prism of Vietnam is for India, what Pakistan is for China. There is a huge scope of cooperation in the multidimensional sector" [To the Point:

20.05.2019]. Indeed, New Delhi and Hanoi possess many other cooperation spheres, such as trade and investments, science and technologies, culture, industrial cooperation, extractive industry and so on.

India-Vietnam *trade* has grown from US\$200 mln in 2000 to US\$14,1 billion in 2021-2022 (Indian fiscal year); in 2015 it grew threefold. The establishment of India-ASEAN Free Trade Zone has contributed to its promotion. Indian statistics show that in mid-2022 Vietnam position is not very high; Vietnam is the twenty-third in the rating of twenty-five India's largest trade partners. But in any case, it is higher than Russia which is the last on the list. In the list of India's trade partners among ASEAN countries Vietnam is the fourth after Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia [Department of Commerce: 12.09.2022]. At the same time, India constantly enters Vietnam's top-10 trade partners.

For the both parties trade seems to be balanced, with a small positive balance in favor of Vietnam. Indian capital invested in Vietnam almost US\$2 billion, having channeled them into more as 200 investment projects in such sectors as energy, mineral exploration, agrochemicals, sugar, tea and coffee production, IT-technologies and auto parts [Bhatla: 01.12.2020]. Vietnam's investments, about USD29 mln, in 2021, were realized in Indian pharmacy, IT-technologies, chemicals and building materials production.

In the sphere of extractive industry India and Vietnam have exploited oil resources in the South China Sea for more than thirty years. According to agreement between the Indian ONG Corporation and PetroVietnam Exploration Production Corp explore (in spite of the PRC's discontent) new marine minerals. Also, Vietnam expects India's assistance in the sphere of peaceful nuclear energy.

Humanitarian cooperation agenda is rich enough. The Indian Swami Vivekananda Cultural Center (SVCC), established in Hanoi functions successfully. There are scientific and youth exchanges. Academic connections are being developed. Launching direct flights between the countries in 2019 and simplified visa regime introduced by the parties contributed to *tourist contacts* development [Embassy of India: 01.05.2022]

Conclusion

Positive trends do not mean that a dialogue is free of challenges and unresolved problems. The both countries consider the volumes and level of their economic cooperation insufficient. Vietnam's attitude to some regional projects with India's participation is cautious. (Quad). "The China's factor", on the one hand, urges Vietnam and India on each other, but on the other, sometimes makes them conduct the bilateral dialogue with special caution "respecting the red-lines".

Nevertheless, the prospects of India-Vietnam partnership seem to be sufficiently reliable. On July 21, 2022, the influential Indian newspaper "Hindu" accentuated in its Editorial Commentary that the road map supported by the leaders of the two countries, contributes to finding answers to common challenges and can give a decisive impetus to India-Vietnam partnership, hereby fortifying the regional stability.

This scenario seems to be hardly hampered with the current international turbulence (around Ukraine, Taiwan). In both cases India and Vietnam hold to like moderate positions (latent distancing from the anti-Russian sanctions and "neutral" voting on Ukraine in the UN; the "one-China" principle in the Taiwan issue). The two capitals give no signs of changes in the former "autonomous" course to strong partnership with all the significant players. Also, it is expected that such a course will hardly undergoes essential correction facing possible new accents in international transformations.

The positive development of Vietnam-India dialogue (being priority Asian partners of Russia, along with China,) meets Russia's foreign policy interests. The situation in Asia and the Asia-Pacific Region, including large marine spaces of the region, will stabilize, if all the major states, the neighbors of India and Vietnam among them, are involved in the constructive dialogue for solving inevitable problems and if the only goal of their relations impulse is that of development and peace.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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VIETNAM'S GEOECONOMIC FEATURES: ADVANTAGES AND PROBLEMS

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Abstract: Geographical features which are mostly considered as privileges to Vietnam are now dragging the country into some international issues namely the South China Sea, The US – China trade war and COVID-19 pandemic. The research points out unique geographical features of Vietnam and how they have been used to Vietnam's national interest. Then, the research underlines some noteworthy impacts of specific current geographical issues on Vietnam's and regional economy. By stating and analyzing these issues, the evaluation of the government's economic policies in response can be further clarified. Ultimately, the research provides implications for foreign governments and investors in future cooperation or investment in Vietnam.

Key words: geo-economic, Vietnam, territorial disputes, the South China Sea, US-China trade war, economic cooperation, Covid-19.

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Introduction

Globalization is supposed to strengthen the interrelationship among countries, resulting in the remarkable development of both the international and national economy. However, strategic geographical locations have led to tense conflicts between the countries with more advantageous features and the less advantageous ones over national economic interests and influence in the current multipolar world order. This global situation has raised concerns for countries and foreign investors because it dramatically impacts their orientation towards strategies and plans related to economic

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development. Therefore, it called for further research on economic geography to give a more profound understanding in many critical aspects of the whole impact on some specific objectives.

Due to particular features of geography, Vietnam has been involved in some significant issues that are attracting the attention of countries worldwide. However, there is no special study analyzing the effect of geographical issues on Vietnam's economy in current affairs.

To give a comprehensive analysis and insight into Vietnam's economic geography in the current situation, this research mainly uses the method of synthesizing the official information of Vietnamese geographical features and analyzing the impact of some current affairs the South China Sea, the US – China trade war and COVID-19 pandemic on Vietnam. Furthermore, by evaluating the Vietnamese government's economic policy towards these geographical issues, the research also provides implications for foreign governments and investors in future cooperation or investment in Vietnam.

Literature review

There is still no specific definition for the term economic geography; however, it has appeared in many research papers. One of the most declarations of new geo-economic came in Luttwak 1990's essay as "the admixture of the logic of conflict with the method of commerce". Geo-economics is replacing the old "system of interstate rivalry" [Mattlin&Wigell 2015] that has prevailed as the consequence of the Cold War geopolitics, which means either the cause or the instrument of conflict in this new era must be economic. There are four important criteria for a country to maintain its geo-economic power and unpredictable short-term challenges. How a country deals with those will most likely determine their 'true geo-economic status' [Baru 2012]. Mazyrin [2013: 56] revealed the direct dependence of the success of market reforms in Vietnam at the end of the 20th century on the creative use of the experience of China and Asian tigers such as Singapore, as well as their geo-economic connection with the collapse of the USSR and the socialism.

In Vietnam, the concept of economic geography is quite new, even though it has been understood and applied in Vietnam's policy for quite a long time. Laura Ngo & Paulo Santos [2012] posed a question whether geography can be responsible for lower growth rates and consequently, poverty persistence in Vietnam and the research shows limited support for their thesis. Le Thai Ha [2017] studied the impact of relative economic distance (RED) between countries on bilateral foreign trade and foreign direct investment (FDI). The results indicate that the economic distance between Vietnam and its partner countries influences significantly on bilateral trade and FDI inflows.

Geographical features of Viet Nam also raised concerns on its economic dependence on other countries, especially China – neighboring countries with huge economic potential. Ramses Amer [1993] has shown Viet Nam's clear dependence on Chinese investments and assistance. The traditional relationship of these two countries has laid the foundation for future prospects in developing their bilateral cooperation with some areas. Zaharul bin Abdullah and Sity binti Daud [2020] put emphasis on the high dependence of Viet Nam on China since the normalization in 1991 and resolve a question about Vietnamese government's ability to manage this economic dependence. The research claimed that although the power of the Vietnamese government has never been abolished due to the assistance of China, Vietnamese government still have to face some restrictions of some internal and external factors including global economic uncertainty driven by the US-China trade war.

In recent situations, there has been a change in the dependence of Viet Nam's economy on China. With some tight events and an effort of the Vietnamese government in mitigating its dependence on China, a new tendency has been created. Alexander L. Vuving [2015] mentioned a new tendency of Viet Nam in developing its diplomatic strategy after China's actions on the South China Sea. China has clearly expressed its intention of expanding its power and appearance in the region, which directly pose a threat to the security of Viet Nam. In response, the Vietnamese government tried to strengthen its diplomatic and economic relations with other countries, including the US. Sharing the same conflict with China, Viet Nam and the US have a reasonable excuse to boost their relationship for the safe of its own country. This situation shows a new tendency called "US - China - Vietnam Triangle" with the new interference of the US in the traditional relationship between Viet Nam and China.

Some research found so far only mentions of geographical features in the relationship with some specific economic sectors. In the new context with new problems which do link to the geographical features of Vietnam, the research whose number is out-of-date cannot give the proper explanation.

Geographic features of Vietnam and their roles to the national, regional and international economy

Vietnam, a country in the South East Asia region, extends 1,650 kilometers from north to south. At its widest point the country stretches 600 kilometers horizontally, and at its narrowest point, only 50 kilometers. Vietnam's geographical position is also close to major shipping routes, which connect the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. With the South China Sea to the East – one of the largest trade routes in the world, Vietnam has a crucial economic role in connecting the inland Southeast Asia countries such as Lao, the Northeast region of Thailand, Myanmar, with the Pacific Ocean and providing the logistic services for countries inside and outside the region (Fig. 1).

Moreover, Vietnam's strategic position, the gateway to enter Asia from the Pacific Ocean, makes it the ground where big countries contest to gain influence. The Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States put a large emphasis on Vietnam, China's Belt and Road Initiative also has many foundation routes that run through Vietnam. This served as both chances and challenges to Vietnam as it can not only use this to attract more foreign investment to develop the economy but also have to come up with proper foreign policy to avoid choosing a side in the competition.

The country's location and length provide it with the tropical monsoon climate, which is suitable for developing agriculture. Due to these advantages Vietnam has paid great attention to the development of the agriculture sector. The agriculture sector is still one of the key sectors of Vietnam's economy, accounting for 12.56% of total GDP in 2021 [SYBVN 2021: 192]. Rice agriculture is the main driver of the country's agriculture sector. The Mekong Delta is the region with outstanding production of rice in the country. Vietnam's rice agriculture sector serves not only domestic needs but also aims at exporting. Specifically, in the year of 2021, Vietnam exported 6.2 million ton of rice worth 3.3 billion USD [SYBVN 2021: 636, 638]. Vietnam passed Thailand on the list to become the second largest rice exported in the world, ranking behind only India [6,7% growth...: 01.02.2022]. By deploying measures and policies aiming at expanding the export market, improving the quality of agricultural products and encouraging the application of technology into agricultural production to increase and ensure productivity Vietnam will continue to focus on expanding the agriculture sector using favorable geographical features.



Fig. 1. The map of East Asia. Photo from open sources

A lengthy coastline (about 3,000 kilometers) provides Vietnam with the possibility of fishing and tourism, and ensures that most areas of the country are easily accessible to transport to foreign markets. Indeed, Vietnam is famous for many beautiful beaches such as Nha Trang, Da Nang, Phu Quoc, which attract millions of foreign and domestic tourists every year. In 2019, before the COVID 19 pandemic struck, there were a total of 18 million foreign visitors coming to Vietnam while that number of domestic tourists was 85 million, contributing the amount equal USD 32.8 billion in revenue [Tốc độ tăng trưởng...: 09.07.2020]. Taking advantages that the sea offers, Vietnam also develops its fisheries sector for export products and achieves excellent outcomes. The total export turnover of fisheries products in 2021 was USD 8.9 billion [SYBVN 2021: 636], one of the billion-dollar export sectors of the country.

Vietnam locates in the intersection of Northeast and Southeast Asia, where many fast-growing economies like Japan, Korea, India, China lies, and has land border with China, Laos and Cambodia, which is favorable for forming bilateral as well as multilateral trade relations, immensely boosting the country's trade turnover, facilitating for further economic growth.

That Vietnam being one of the major parts of the East-West economic corridor, whose vision is to connect the Indian and the Pacific Ocean through a land route aiming at saving the sea route through the Malacca Strait [Clark 2021], constructs a huge possibility of attracting investment in the Central Coast region and establishing new commercial strategy. This will further consolidate the essential strategic position of Vietnam in terms of both land and sea.

Geographical issues in the current context: impacts on the economy and Vietnam's policies

In the context of South China Sea dispute

that Vietnam is trying to resolve in the South China Sea some disputes related to the waters with huge amounts of potential economic benefits in terms of fishing grounds, natural resources (including crude oil, marine biodiversity and valuable placer ores) and the control of sea lanes. Vietnam's longest and most devastating confrontation in the South China Sea dispute is with China, including many large and small clashes in the history of relations between these two countries. Those clashes all lead to certain effects on the economy of Vietnam. The most remarkable recent event – China's placement of oil rig 981 in Vietnam's EEZ in 2014 – has been recorded to not only cause Vietnam to lose billion-investment contracts, prevent Vietnam's legitimate exploitation of natural resources, but also indirectly affect affect to the FDI into Vietnam due to the tension between the two countries.

The growing tensions between Vietnam and China pose a risk that China might impose sanctions which will have a strong impact on the Vietnamese economy, including the loss of massive jobs and one of the most important commodity export and import markets. In terms of trade, up to now, China is considered as the largest trading partner of Vietnam, Vietnam's biggest import market and Vietnam's second largest export market (after the US). Therefore, any China's move or intention to use economic sanctions with the aim of threatening Vietnam to accept its claims on the South China Sea will cause serious harm to Vietnam's economy. China has to consider carefully if it intends to take these measures because by doing so, China must face some considerable consequences when losing a traditional trade partner as Vietnam. According to statistics of China Customs in 2020, Vietnam is the 6th largest trading partner and the 5th largest export market of China.

The participation of another great power, the United States, to intervene in the South China Sea dispute has put Vietnam in a dilemma when it is sandwiched between the tense relationship of the two world giants. Both the US and China are two essential trading partners of Vietnam. Any carelessness to show extreme support or opposition to each side has the potential to make the relationship between the three countries deteriorate, thereby leading to the risk of Vietnam being damaged by the economic sanctions that either of the two countries impose.

In the context of America – China trade war

Some analysts have pointed out that Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, may be the biggest winner of the US – China trade war. With the up-to-25% tariff on some products alongside with many issues from within China such as rising labor cost, currency shift and Chinese government's push for more sophisticated manufacturing sectors, big manufacturers had decided to move their manufacturing out of China and Vietnam, China's nearest neighbor, was first to come into their consideration. Competitive labor cost, stable politics and strategic maritime position are among the main reasons explaining why Vietnam was a favorable destination to which foreign firms shifted their supply chain. And that showed great results to Vietnam's economy as in 2021, total foreign investment reached USD 38.85 billion, a 5–7% rise compared to that of 2017-2018, and the trade surplus reached a record high of 19,84 billion USD [SYBVN 2021: 275, 628].

Nevertheless, Vietnam was also struggling to sustain such benefits from the trade war. In the course of the supply chain shift, there were also Chinese manufacturers who sought to avoid being taxed when exporting to the US. This could be the loss for Vietnam's gain as it raised suspicion from

the US that Vietnam was allowing Chinese goods to be rerouted through its territory, which contributed partly to the increase in Vietnam's trade surplus with the US and would likely negatively affect the Vietnam-US trade relationship. Specifically, in late May 2018, after reaching the conclusion that 90% value of Vietnamese's steel products originated from China, the US Commerce Department has decided to slap severe tariffs on those products of Vietnam, namely cold-rolled steel and corrosion-resistant steel [U.S. slaps... 21.05.2018]. However, about 679 thousand tons of steel were exported to the US in 2017 from Vietnam, making about 2% of the country's total steel imports. On the Vietnamese side, steel exports make up 18% of the nation's overall steel production, with only 2% of that going to the US, so these tariffs will not have much effect on Vietnam's steel industry [Nguyen Hien, Hoang Anh 2018]. Despite that, the Ministry of Commerce of Vietnam still advised domestic companies not to export China-originated steel to other market to prevent further damage to reputation of the country [Thach Hue 2022].

In the context of Covid-19 pandemic

Vietnam borders 3 countries: Laos, Cambodia and China, which is a huge advantage to promote trade and improve economic relations. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the issue of illegal immigrants through these borders arose. Illegal immigrant workers from China were the most recorded, then there were Vietnamese from Laos and Cambodia moving back to the country due to economic hardship.

During the COVID 19 pandemic, Vietnam's geo-economic became somewhat of a weak point in the country's policy. Having a strategic position on the world map, Vietnam has always been a place where major countries expand their influence. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it can be seen that Vietnam was standing in a crossroads, requiring its government not only to make reasonable respond the US, China and perhaps Russia on the international area but also to come up with proper domestic policy. Nevertheless, it can still be the main actor in the outlook for economic recovery after the pandemic.

Policy to overcome negative external influences

Vietnamese government avoids any possibility of creating alliances against one of his partners in this tension, which clearly shows through the unfinished answer of Vietnam in response to the invitation of the US in joining the Indo-Pacific strategy. Vietnam's firm resistance toward China has made the two countries' relationship become tougher. Instead of letting the consequences of this geographical issue deteriorate the relationship, Vietnam has tried to redirect the attention of its relationship with China to the long-term economic benefit. Vietnamese government has promoted the economic cooperation with China by opening up many bilateral talks to solve current problems which have affected the trading between two countries. Specifically, after China's putting the HD981 rig in Vietnam's EEZ, Vietnamese government quickly compensated more than 1,000 billion VND for nearly 480 affected foreign enterprises. The action showed Vietnam's goodwill towards foreign investors and demonstrated the Vietnamese government's responsibility in protecting the safety of these enterprises. This action was also advocated by China in particular and countries with investment enterprises related to this case in general.

Vietnamese government has realized that the main way to reduce tensions in relations with China is diminishing its dependency on China's economy. Therefore, Vietnam has diversified its economic relations by forming trade cooperations with other big countries, using both bilateral and multilateral channels. One of Vietnam's most significant achievements in this field is promoting trade

with the EU. By successfully signing the European – Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA), Vietnam has opened its market even wider, creating a powerful counterbalance to Chinese dominance. However, it remains heavily dependent on China for raw material imports and agricultural exports. China has been the largest supplier of goods to Vietnam since 2014, accounting for about 29% of Vietnam's import purchases [Nguyễn Thị Quỳnh Hoa 2015]. Today imports from China make up nearly 1/3 of Vietnam's total import value [SYBVN 2021: 643]. Despite all efforts to expand the geography of its foreign trade and increase the pool of trading partners, Vietnam still has a long way to go before it can be free from dependence on trade with China.

Vietnam's favorable features of geography has brought about both chances and challenges that can be exploited during the US – China trade war. To improve Vietnam's investment environment, the government has published three important resolutions, which are Resolution number 02/NQ-CP about performing key tasks and solutions to improve the business environment and enhance national competitiveness in 2019, 2020 and 2021 [Vietnamese Government 2019-2020-2021]. These resolutions set out the goals on improving the business environment in the coming time, notably including improving the international rankings of the World Bank, WEF, WIPO and UN. Up to now, Vietnam has gained certain achievements in improving the business environment.

In releasing the suspicion of the US about Vietnam – China collusion in producing export goods to the US, Vietnamese government has published Resolution number 50-NQ/TW on August 20, 2019 [Chính phủ Việt Nam 2019] about orientations to perfect institutions and policies, and improve the quality and efficiency of foreign investment cooperation to 2030. In this resolution, the government proposed criteria for selecting and prioritizing high-quality foreign investment capital sources, which gives priority to projects with advanced and clean technology. Another notable policy of Vietnamese government in improving the quality of Vietnam's foreign investment is the establishment of two specialized teams on FDI attraction. Vietnam has shown its initiative to find quality investment sources through these teams with the task of finding out what investors need to negotiate so as to meet exactly what investors need, and bring benefits for both sides.

To maintain trade with other countries, Vietnam sought solutions to trading sustainability during the epidemic situation. In the meetings on pandemic response with members of the ASEAN, where Vietnam then held the role of chair, all countries agreed to maintain economic and trade connection among countries [Chính phủ Việt Nam 2020]. Vietnam also had conversations with China and successfully signed two Memorandums of Understanding on taking advantage of the Vietnam – China rail container transport route to reduce pressure at the land border gates and on the sea routes. In addition, in its trade relationship with other countries during the pandemic, Vietnam lowered fees, air and sea freight for key markets of the US, Europe and Middle East to increase competitiveness and reduce costs for businesses. The Vietnamese government has also gradually reopened flight routes to and from countries with positive epidemic situations, which facilitates trade activities and contributes to economic recovery. For experts entering Vietnam to conduct production and business operations, the government also facilitates by completing the new entry process, creating a safe entry stream for them.

Generally, many efficient solutions have been conducted by Vietnamese government in dealing with the geoeconomics issues of Vietnam in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. In the long term, there should be more adaptive policies in the new stage of the pandemic to safely drive Vietnam trade with other countries.

Prospects for cooperation with Vietnam for foreign partners

With all above analysis regarding to geographic advantages and problems, it is possible to determine the prerequisites for cooperation for foreign investors as follow.

Firstly, Vietnam is a potential and flourishing investment environment, thanks not only to its geographical location, but also to the promising opportunities of its economy. With the policy to open the economy and the promo “being-a-friend-to-all”, Vietnam has had many economic relationships with other countries around the world, especially with big economies such as the US, China, EU, Japan, Russia, etc. Achieving many bilateral trade agreements and participating in multilateral organizations has brought Vietnam some special priorities, and also for investors themselves when investing in Vietnam. Up to now, Viet Nam has established diplomatic relationships with 189 countries, participated in 15 Free Trade Agreements, including “new generation” ones such as CPTPP, EVFTA, RCEP, etc. Thanks to these relationships, businesses in Viet Nam can benefit from tax reductions in exporting activities, or more investment capital from foreign partners.

Secondly, despite all the geographical problems that the country can encounter, a stable political background based on peaceful relationships with other countries, the business environment in Vietnam has always been evaluated as a safe environment with long-term conditions for investors to develop. According to the Doing Business 2020 Report published by the World Bank (WB) [World Bank: 16.10.2021], Vietnam's score on the business environment has increased gradually over the years: 66.77 points in 2018, 68,8 points in 2019 and 69.8 points in 2020. Vietnam is also currently ranked 4th in terms of business environment in ASEAN.

Thirdly, for foreign governments and investors willing to work in Vietnam, carefully researching the Vietnamese government’s direction toward some concerning issues such as South China Sea and the US-China trade war in the long term is vital so as to gather as much information to make the right decision. Moreover, these investors might need to analyze opinions of the related objects in these situations to evaluate and foresee the most possible future view.

Conclusion

Geographical issues do have considerable impacts on Vietnam’s economy in both positive and negative ways. Some consequences are long-term, requiring the consistency and specific orientation of the government in the future such as solutions for Vietnam – China disagreement on South China Sea or the improvement of Vietnam’s business environment. From the policies’ analysis, the responses of the government were quick and have achieved some positive results when applying appropriate and well-oriented economic policies, such as successfully calling for bilateral and multilateral conversations in dealing with the stagnation in trade; establishing and promoting promising economic cooperation with big economies around the world; etc. All of these factors lead to the conclusion that the Vietnamese government has likely successfully improved the attractiveness of Vietnam in the eyes of foreign governments and investors by using efficient economic policies, consequently elevating Vietnam’s status in the international arena.

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EMIGRATION OF RUSSIAN PENSIONERS TO VIETNAM (AND OTHER COUNTRIES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA)¹

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Abstract. This article analyzes the migration of elderly Russians to Vietnam (in comparison with other countries in Southeast Asia). The migration of the social group takes place against the background of a change in the age structure of the population in Russia and the world, which implies a greater activity of the older generation, including in the context of migration. The paper highlights various factors of migration in old age: demographic, social, economic, regional-climatic. Official statistics allow us to describe the growing emigration of the Russian older generation to Vietnam, where 318 senior citizens officially emigrated in 2011-2021. It is noted that during the pandemic, Vietnam turned out to be an attractive place for elderly Russian migrants. State statistics do not take into account forms of temporary migration, therefore, using a two-stage content analysis of the social network service “Odnoklassniki”, the number of accounts of elderly Russian speakers in Southeast Asia was revealed: the most frequent users were in Thailand, then in Vietnam and Singapore. The analysis of cases made it possible to identify several models of migration and adaptation of elderly Russian speakers in Vietnam: the “Tourism” model (transitional), “Family”, “Active lifestyle”, “Treatment”. Additionally, the legal aspects of the elderly moving to Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries are analyzed. The authors come to the conclusion that the “retirement visa” does not have a decisive impact on the migration of the elderly, since, for example, Vietnam is one of the main destinations for the migration of elderly Russians, while not providing them with special conditions. The reason is the high financial requirements for candidates to acquire a “retirement visa” (in countries where such a visa is granted) and the lack of fundamental benefits from obtaining such an opportunity.

Key words: international migration, population aging, pensioners, older generation, emigration risks, Southeast Asia, elderly people, migration factors, adaptation models, retirement visa.

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Introduction

As evidenced by the UN data, we see the role of the older generation increasing: by the middle of the XXI century there will be an almost twofold increase in the number of the elderly⁴. Society is entering an era of active longevity, bringing with it a specific impact on the migration of the elderly.

According to the UN, there were 280.6 million migrants in 2020, with 48.2 million of them over the age of 60 (and the number of elderly migrants has doubled in the past 30 years)⁵. Moreover, migration of this social group has regional specifics: representatives of older age move mainly to Europe and North America, accounting for 2/3 of migrants of older age in 2020 (32.4 million people)⁶. At the same time, the introduction of “retirement visas” is gaining popularity, having been actively offered in a number of Southeast Asian countries (Thailand⁷, Philippines⁸, Malaysia⁹ etc.), thus considering the elderly as one of the main target groups. In this context, Vietnam occupies a special position, as it is among the top 5 destinations for emigration of the working-age Russians¹⁰, leading then to the migration of their parents (the older generation). It is the desire to reunite with relatives that is identified as one of the main reasons for international migration at an older age [Zaiceva 2014].

Literature review

Old-age migration is an understudied socio-demographic process in Russia. Due to the underestimation of the role of international migration of pensioners in the formation of the demographic structure of the country's population, this aspect is practically not touched upon in the works of Russian scientists. At the same time, some works are devoted to internal migration of pensioners [Gridasov et al. 2011; Karachurina, Ivanova 2019], and this aspect is also touched upon in the study of age differentiation of migration [Efremov 2014; Mkrtychyan 2015]. There are several classical and contemporary approaches to international migration in old age in the Western literature (see for details [Litwak Longino 1987; Greenwood 2014; Nioradze 2021]), however, in this article we focus on the problem of migration in the context of Vietnam and other South-East Asian countries.

Works by Russian and Vietnamese scholars cover aspects of migration from Vietnam to Russia: historical and contemporary features of migration processes between the two countries [Mazyrin 2004; Pismennaya 2015], studies of assimilation of Vietnamese communities [Dinh Ha My 2015; Tuzova 2019], the role of the Vietnamese diaspora for bilateral relations [Ryazantsev et al. 2022], the attractiveness of certain regions of Russia for Vietnamese [Khramova, Manshin, Vu Quoc Hu 2021], and the structure of remittances of Vietnamese migrants (in the world at large) [Nguyen Dac Hung 2022]. In the context of this article, let us consider studies of emigration from Russia to Vietnam.

The works of Russian scientists related to the study of the migration of Russians to the countries of Southeast Asia in general form a separate line of research. For example, one of the studies

⁴ World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights. New York, 2019. P. 18

⁵ United Nations. Retrieved on 22.04.2021 from URL: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Embassy of the Kingdom of Thailand. Retrieved on 07.10.2021 from URL: <https://clck.ru/Y4VnT>.

⁸ Department of Tourism of the Republic of the Philippines. Retrieved on 07.10.2021 from URL: <https://pra.gov.ph/srv>

⁹ Embassy of Malaysia in the Russian Federation. Retrieved on 07.10.2021 from URL: https://www.kln.gov.my/web/rus_moscow/requirement_foreigner

¹⁰ Federal State Statistics Service. Retrieved on 30.04.2021 from URL: https://gks.ru/bgd/regl/b20_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/2-12.xlsx

revealed the approximate number of Russians in this region, as well as highlighted the main trends of emigration to Southeast Asia and assessed the economic activity of Russian-speaking migrants in this region [Ryazantsev 2017]. The sociological research allowed us to identify the following flows of Russian-speaking migrants: 1) purposeful move to SEA, 2) temporary migration (including labor), and 3) marriage with a resident of SEA [Ryazantsev et al. 2017]. Another study, based on the analysis of social networks, identified the main factors of attraction of Russian labor migrants to Vietnam: favorable climate, low cost of living, opportunity to travel, opportunity to live in fundamentally new conditions [Maksimova, Rzhevskaya, Frolova 2016]. The presented studies describe in detail the situation of Russian-speaking migrants in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, almost without touching on the age cut.

Migration factors of elderly Russians

The elderly is a specific socio-demographic group that tends to grow numerically. In 2021 the share of the elderly¹¹ reached 26.6% (38.9 million people) of the total age structure of the country, increasing by 4.4% over 11 years (2010-2021¹²). The aging of the Russian population leads to an increase in the activity of the elderly in various spheres of life, including migration. Thus, the first factor of elderly migration is *demographic*.

The *social* factor is reflected by the changed sociocultural and legal conditions. Perestroika and the subsequent collapse of the USSR led, in addition to severe negative consequences, to the abolition of the “iron curtain” and the opening of borders. As a result, the elderly gained the right to carry out external migration on a permanent (with a change of residence) or temporary basis (“wintering” in a more comfortable climate, visiting previously emigrated children, etc.).

The *economic opportunities* are the third factor in elderly migration. Transportation costs, renting or buying a home, visas, and living arrangements require a sufficient level of wealth or financial support from children.

Finally, the *regional-climatic* factor contributes greatly to the emigration to Southeast Asia of people from Siberia and the Far East. This is due, firstly, to the great distance from European countries. Secondly, there is an interest in the year-round warm climate. Thirdly, the inhabitants of the Far East are mentally close to the cultures of the East as a whole (unlike, for example, the inhabitants of the European part of Russia).

Information sources

The main statistical source is Rosstat (Federal State Statistics Service, Russia) data providing the distribution of pensioners by country of emigration. However, the Rosstat (FSSS) information is based on de-registration records. Consequently, this is only the tip of the iceberg due to the existence of many forms of temporary migration that do not lend themselves to official records¹³. The Russian Pension Fund is another source of data on Russian elderly migrants, but they do not have a country distribution. At the same time, international statistical agencies (UN, IOM) allow us to estimate the number of migrants to SEA countries, but it is not possible to identify the share of elderly migrants from a particular country of origin (Russia). Thus, the lack of statistical data required the use of different methods to estimate the extent of migration of elderly Russians to SEA countries.

¹¹ Within the previous retirement age limits: men 60 and over, women 55 and over.

¹² Demographic Yearbook of Russia. 2021: Stat. coll. Rosstat. M., 2021. P. 20-21.

¹³ Russia in Figures. 2020: Brief statistical collection. Rosstat-M., 2020. P. 74.

Methodology

First, the content analysis method of the Odnoklassniki social network (16-17 September 2021) was used, consisting of two phases:

- I) *Formal selection* of men over 61 and women over 56, and region of residence – SEA countries (excluding East Timor). An additional filter is the age of no more than 85 years old (due to the large number of fake accounts). In the first phase, 86,500 accounts were eligible.
- II) *Qualitative selection* of identified accounts: 1) Presence of a relevant avatar, 2) First name, last name, 3) Russian name (South Asian, European, etc. are excluded), 4) Exclusion of repeated accounts. According to the results of the selection in the second stage, 807 accounts met the conditions.

We do not refer the analysed social network accounts to Russians, but to Russian-speaking Odnoklassniki users, as “...there is no single and universal concept that includes the totality and diversity of natives of Russia and people who speak Russian” [Ryazantsev 2018: 52].

As an additional research method, case studies were analysed – the stories of elderly Russians who had moved to Vietnam. A total of two Internet sites, Wonder (2016)¹⁴ and TV Channel 360 (2018)¹⁵, as well as two issues of the video blog were selected (2020-2021)^{16,17}.

Main results

Migration of Russian pensioners to Vietnam and other SEA countries

The official data (Rosstat) suggests that 318 people over working age migrated to Vietnam between 2011 and 2021 (Fig.1). Comparing the dynamics of elderly migration to Vietnam, elderly migration in general and migration of all age groups in the 'pandemic' year 2020, a paradox emerges. Older migration to Viet Nam follows the migration pattern of younger generations: there has been a significant increase in the number of departures to Viet Nam, in spite of a decrease in migration of older people in general. Moreover, as Figure 1 shows, this indicator has doubled.



Fig. 1. Dynamics of the number of elderly migrants who left Russia for Vietnam (2011-2021).

Source: Rosstat (FSSS)¹⁸. Note: Data for 2012 are not available

¹⁴Wonderzine Internet edition. Retrieved on 08.10.2021 from URL: <https://www.wonderzine.com/wonderzine/life/life/217377-go-vietnam>

¹⁵ 360tv.ru online edition. Retrieved on: 08.10.2021 from URL: <https://360tv.ru/news/mir/pensionnyj-daunshifting-pozhilye-rossijane-rasskazali-o-zhizni-na-aziatskih-kurortah>

¹⁶Alexey Bessmertny's YouTube video blog. 2020. Retrieved on 08.10.2021 from URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFNLeUjHIM>

¹⁷Alexey Bessmertny's YouTube video blog. 2021. Retrieved on 08.10.2021 from URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0sD4aQsrPY&t=522s>

¹⁸Federal State Statistics Service. Retrieved on 17.09.2021 from URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/q9wFke4y/bul-migr20.xlsx>

Such a dramatic increase in emigration to Vietnam in 2020 can be attributed to the following reasons. First, the statistics are distorted by reverse migration – the return of Vietnamese families to their home country in the context of pandemic. This assumption is confirmed by the return migration rate as early as 2021, which was much less related to lockdowns and other anticoronavirus restrictions in Russia. Secondly, the relocation of older Russians to a more prosperous climate in terms of self-isolation. This is illustrated by data on immigration from Vietnam to Russia in contrast: the number of elderly immigrants from Vietnam to Russia in 2020 did not change, i.e. the onset of the pandemic did not affect the decision of Russian pensioners living in Vietnam to experience a pandemic in a foreign country. Thus, this confirms the hypothesis of Russian elderly migrants' interest in Vietnam as a place to live comfortably in the face of the pandemic (Fig. 2).

In retrospect, however, in 2011-2021 there was a steady increase in the interest of elderly migrants in Vietnam, even in official terms (not taking into account latent forms of migration – e.g. "wintering").



Fig. 2. Russian pensioner in Vietnam. *Source:* online edition "360tv.ru"

Content analysis of the Odnoklassniki social network

Due to the limited amount of statistical data, a quantitative content analysis of the Odnoklassniki social network was conducted. At the first stage of the analysis, the results indicated 86,500 accounts of Russian-speaking people in Southeast Asia. However, the large number of false accounts with deliberately irrelevant information required a qualitative selection of the resulting units. In addition, there was an imbalance in the gender structure: men outnumbered women by two times.

The second stage of the content analysis allowed us to clarify the number of accounts of Russian-speaking seniors in Southeast Asia (Table 1). Among Southeast Asian regions, Thailand (278 accounts), Vietnam (166 accounts) and Singapore (146 accounts) are the most popular places to live. These results correlate indirectly with another study where Thailand and Vietnam are the countries with the largest number of migrant Russians [Ryazantsev 2017: 71].

Table 1. Distribution of the number of users over the working age living in Southeast Asia¹⁹ (data from Odnoklassniki's content analysis), account

	Total, people.	Men	Women
SEA countries	807	238	569
Thailand	278	45	233
Vietnam	166	66	100
Singapore	146	47	99

¹⁹ No data is available for East Timor, so this country is not included in the table.

Philippines	78	24	54
Malaysia	38	13	25
Cambodia	30	14	16
Indonesia	22	5	17
Myanmar	18	8	10
Laos	18	10	8
Brunei	13	6	7

Source: compiled by the authors

Migration and adaptation models of Russian pensioners in Vietnam

Analysis of the Internet press has revealed five cases – stories of elderly Russians who have moved to Vietnam. On this basis, the following adaptation models are identified:

I. Tourism Model. Vietnam is not the migrant's country of residence, but the migrant regularly travels around the world (Vietnam, Thailand, Czech Republic, Germany, etc.)²⁰. This model can only tentatively be classified as “migration”, but studies on emigration to Southeast Asia show that tourism (previous tourist experience of staying in a given country) is one of the key drivers of future migration decisions [Ryazantsev 2017: 70; Dan Nguyen Anh et al. 2022].



II. Family Model. Relocation is carried out to their children who have settled in the new country. Sources of income are income from rental housing in Russia. Gradual integration is possible – getting a job in a local travel agency, founding their own excursion office, income from fishing and gastronomic activities^{21, 22}.

III. Active Lifestyle Model. A hobby for windsurfing brings migrant spouses to Vietnam. The integration goes very well: a medical degree allows one to get a job in a local clinic even without knowing the Vietnamese language. Later, the migrant sets up his own business: a windsurfing station, turning the hobby into a source of income²³ (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3. Russian pensioners in Vietnam. Source: online edition "360tv.ru"

²⁰ 360tv.ru online edition. 2018. Retrieved on: 08.10.2021 from URL: <https://360tv.ru/news/mir/pensionnyj-daunshifting-pozhilye-rossijane-rasskazali-o-zhizni-na-aziatskih-kurortah/>

²¹ Ibid.

²² Wonderzine online edition. 2016. Retrieved on 08.10.2021 from URL: <https://www.wonderzine.com/wonderzine/life/life/217377-go-vietnam>

²³ 360tv.ru online edition. 2018. Retrieved on 08.10.2021 from URL: <https://360tv.ru/news/mir/pensionnyj-daunshifting-pozhilye-rossijane-rasskazali-o-zhizni-na-aziatskih-kurortah>

IV. Treatment Model. The migrant spouse moves for medical treatment at the end of her or his working life due to health problems, then decides to stay. Source of income: increased (“northern”²⁴) pension²⁵.

The models presented are not intended to be exhaustive of patterns of migration and adaptation of older Russians to SEA (for example, there is no information about those older migrants who have failed to adapt to new conditions). In addition, there is hypothetically another pattern – the content analysis repeatedly captures pictures of elderly Russians dressed in naval suits. Elderly migration may be related to labor activity, during or after the end of which older people decide to stay in the same region where they worked or continue working (“temporary labor migration tends to turn into permanent migration: labor migrants eventually settle in the host countries”) [Ryazantsev 2017: 69-70].

Legal conditions for migration of elderly Russians to Vietnam and other SEA countries

An additional factor in elderly migration is the barriers to immigration in a given state. In addition to general conditions for entry into a country, some states offer special programmes that attract older migrants specifically. In this regard, information on opportunities for Russian pensioners to emigrate to various countries of South-East Asia is systematised. The analysis showed that “retirement visa” is available only in four countries (Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia) and, according to unofficial information, in Cambodia. At the same time, “retirement visas” are not available in Vietnam or Singapore (these are among the top 3 countries in terms of the number of Russian-speaking elderly people's accounts). Thus, the “retirement visa” is not a determining factor for the migration of elderly Russians. This is due, firstly, to high requirements for the financial solvency of the elderly and, secondly, to weak privileges for holders of exactly retirement visas rather than standard residence permits available to all age groups. At the same time, most countries (7 out of 11) have a visa-free regime facilitating visits to local resorts by Russian tourists²⁶.

Conclusions

International migration of elderly Russians to Vietnam is a growing process, although this form of migration is specific and not large-scale. The potential of the region (both Vietnam itself and other Southeast Asian countries) for the Russian older generation is not exhausted. First, the driver is the openness of visa regimes for Russian citizens (7 out of 11 countries) allowing short-term stays (from 14 to 30 days) without a visa. As the analysis of the cases and the findings of other studies confirm, it is the positive tourist experience that encourages further emigration to Vietnam. Second, Russians of working age are actively moving to Vietnam (among the top 5 destinations for international migration outside the CIS), which eventually facilitates the migration of their parents (pensioners) for family reunification and joint household management.

Data from Rosstat (FSSS) records elderly migration to Vietnam: during 2011-2021, 318 people over working age officially moved there, with the number of migrants steadily increasing. The results of Odnoklassniki's two-step content analysis show that Vietnam is in second place in terms of

²⁴ According to Russian pension legislation, citizens living in the Far North and equivalent areas, as well as citizens who previously worked in such areas, regardless of their current place of residence, are entitled to an increase in the fixed payment to the insurance pension.

²⁵ Alexey Bessmertny's YouTube video blog. 2020. Retrieved on 08.10.2021 from URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFNLeUjHIM>

²⁶ Consultant Plus. Retrieved on 07.10.2021 from URL: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_126897

the number of accounts in which users have marked one of the Southeast Asian countries as their place of residence (Thailand – 278 – ac., Vietnam – 166 ac.).

Analysis of visa regimes shows that special conditions for immigration of the elderly (“retirement visas”) are of questionable value. The quantitative distribution of this category of migrants shows that the “retirement visa” does not play a significant role for their emigration. Thus, Vietnam is one of the most popular destinations for elderly Russian-speaking migrants despite the absence of a “retirement visa”. This is due to the fact that in order to obtain a 'retirement visa' one must have a large capital and/or monthly income. As a result, it is more convenient to obtain entry permits available to tourists and migrants of all age categories.

The case study method was based on an analysis of the information space featuring pensioners living in Vietnam. The analysis of the cases revealed four models of migration and adaptation of elderly Russians in this country: “tourism” (transitional model), “family”, “active lifestyle”, and “medical treatment”. The results show that in all the cases studied, tourism is a key factor in the decision to spend retirement life in the region. Subsequently, the onset of the pandemic has generally not changed the decision of pensioners to stay in Vietnam, which confirms that there is no change in the number of elderly immigrants from Vietnam (in contrast, emigration to Vietnam by Russian pensioners increased markedly in 2020).

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HISTORY, RELIGION AND CULTURE

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RE-CONSIDERING THE COUP D'ÉTAT OF 1370

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Abstract. In Vietnam's history virtually every new dynasty existed or emerged as the transition of power through the female line. Tran Thu Do, de-facto the founder of the Tran dynasty, attempted to construct such a system of power succession in the scope of a ruling family (intra-kin marriages, new emperors' appointments long before their fathers' deaths, widowed empresses being sent to nunneries) which could have excluded such an opportunity. The system peacefully existed longer than a century, and crashed. The analysis of the "Complete Annals of Dai Viet" and Chinese chronicles shows that the Coup of 1370 was the crucial event in that process. All the chronicles consider it to be supposedly a successful repulse of the attempt to seize power by the Duong House, strange to the Tran dynasty. However, that was the starting point of the final crash of Tran Thu Do's system and the result was the fall of the dynasty.

Keywords: Vietnam's medieval history, the Tran dynasty, the system of power succession in far-eastern empires in Middle Ages, the coup d'état of 1370 in Vietnam.

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Introduction

This article is an attempt to analyze the essence of the coup d'état of 1370 in Vietnam as the launching of final crash of a special power succession system which existed under the Tran dynasty (1225-1400), whose mission it was to maintain it in the scope of the ruling House and to prove that the event essentially preconditioned that dynasty's fall thirty years later. It is noteworthy that in the traditional and current historiography these events are always treated definitely, like an attempt of the usurper having no relation to the Tran dynasty, to seize power in the country, but it was successfully repulsed by legal representatives of the ruling House (see, for example: [Khâm định..., т. 1: 622-625;

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Lịch sử Việt Nam..., t. 2: 429; Polnaya akademicheskaya istoriya..., т. 2: 143]). I do not know any researches written with the aim to understand the essence of the event and to find who was the real usurper in that situation.

The chief method of the research is the use of the full existing information and the discovery of “secondary” details, which made it possible to doubt the generally accepted viewpoint on those events, as well as the direct comparison of the data of the Vietnamese and Chinese sources. Virtually all the facts in this article are taken from “Complete Annals of Dai Viet”. Special notes only are given to the information from other sources or from research-works.

The Tran dynasty succession system

In Vietnam virtually every new dynasty coming to power was a victory of the female ruling line over the male one. Perhaps, the only exclusion is the founder of the Late Ly dynasty (1009-1225) Ly Cong Uan (Ly Thai To, ruled in 1009-1028), who, being the palace guard’s commander unceremoniously kicked out the juvenile member of his guard and took his place. In this connection, medieval historiographers had to invent the whole theory justifying his actions, pour buckets of mud on his predecessor’s father and to find half a dozen “signs” of rising this man to power, by grace of Heaven.

A classic example of coming to power through the female line was also the seizure of the throne by the Tran dynasty . The authorship of the usurping power plan, particularly, its final part, is attributed to Tran Thu Do , a seemingly distant relative, a second uncle of Tran Canh, the future first ruler of the dynasty. Nevertheless, from 1224 up to his death in 1264, Tran Thu Do was de-facto the ruler of the country. We will not touch concrete dramatic events in Dai Viet with regards to the plan (they used to be described in details). It is noteworthy that Tran Thu Do’s and his relatives’ obvious and indisputable success in the process of the power seizure, on the one hand, certainly, pleased him, but on the other, it made him think that in the course of time descendants of the Tran dynasty could experience the same from other female lines nearby. So, he decided to construct such a system of power succession in the scope of his dynasty which could completely exclude the like opportunities. This system, the subject matter of Ta Chi Dai Truong’s article [Tạ Chí Đại Trường 2009], consisted of the following three main theses:

— henceforth, all the important representatives of the dynasty (first and foremost emperors and their children) were to officially marry but in the scope of their House. The children of these marriages were to be considered the only true members of the Tran House, with all the ensuing consequences, rights and privileges. Thus, potentially dangerous for the throne places of the emperor’s father- and son-in-law always belonged to his relatives through the male line; whatever the events, the power could not leave the House;

— to avoid the second threat, a potential opportunity of coups in a troubled period following the active emperor’s death, under the Tran dynasty a new practice had been introduced, and the official successor took the throne immediately upon reaching adulthood, but his father or predecessor was proclaimed the Supreme emperor having retained all his powers up to his death or voluntary renunciation of them (the case of Emperor Tran Nhan Tong);

— finally, the Supreme emperor’s widow (if she was still alive) was obliged, according to the system, to become a Buddhist nun.

All these three rules were strictly observed for about a century, but as early as in the 14th century the perfect Tran dynasty succession system, designed and realized by Tran Thu Do, began to falter, and finally crashed. It began under the Emperor Tran Minh Tong (ruled in 1314-1329), who, despite his relatively young age (34 years old), decided not to wait for the sons of his elder wife (and a cousin) Empress Hien Tu, but appointed ten-year old Tran Vuong his successor and later the emperor (Emperor Tran Hien Tong), who was not even his elder son. His mother Le Huan Nhuong did not belong to the Tran House and to correct that defect, Tran Vuong's "chief" mother was proclaimed the Empress Hien Tu. Nevertheless, for the first time at the horizon of Vietnam's history began to loom the figure of Le Quy Ly, a favorite who had not been born yet; Le Huan Nhuong was his paternal aunt.

Emperor Tran Hien Tong ruled in 1329-1341; meanwhile Empress Hien Tu gave birth to two sons, and after the emperor's death for the first time in the history of the Tran dynasty the power was transferred not vertically (i.e., from one generation to another), but horizontally (from one brother to another), to return it to a representative of the main line. Empress Hien Tu's younger son, 5-year-old Tran Hao was proclaimed the emperor (Tran Du Tong), because for some reason Tran Minh Tong considered his elder brother Tran Nguyen Duc to be "wild and violent". This appointment was almost imperceptible for the state: Tran Minh Tong, as usual, dealt with the affairs of the state up to his death in 1357.

Tran Minh Tong's wife's and the active emperor's mother's Supreme Empress Hien Tu's refusal to become a Buddhist nun after her husband's death, like all her predecessors did, contributed to the crash of general principles of government created by Tran Thu Do and the delegation of power in the scope of the dynasty. Living in the palace, supposedly on the Supreme emperor's last request, she engaged in the power-struggle in the country and played one of the key roles in the events which happened a little later.

In 1369, when 33-year-old Tran Du Tong got a fatal disease, the matter of succession to the throne was to be urgently solved. Empress Hien Tu had done that in the strict compliance with the traditions, founded by Tran Thu Do. To retain the power transfer through the chief line and vertically, she decided to transfer it to Tran Nguyen Duc's (already dead by that time) elder son, Tran Du Tong's elder brother. Doing that she gained the support of the dying emperor, who had proclaimed his will on his deathbed. The new appointed emperor, whom Vietnamese historical documents call Duong Nhat Le, and Chinese ones know him as Tran Nhat Kien, in reality was, probably, called Tran Nhat Le (?-1370). He was an adult man and even had children of his own, at least, one child. His mother was a former homeless actress, who occasionally found herself in the emperor's son's harem, not on political reasons. He had no alternative support of "the female line"; therefore, the choice of such a candidate, who owed everything to his grandmother, made the latter's positions very strong to maintain control over the emperor's court. Nevertheless, also, in this case they tried and maintained the power configuration prescribed with the Tran House traditions, in the compliance with the former samples: in 1369 the new emperor was made the husband of one of his paternal uncles' daughter; the uncle's name was Tran Phu (future emperor Tran Nghe Tong), having proclaimed her the Empress at once, thus having given at least formal opportunities to become the second person in the state to her father, i.e., "the omnipotent father-in-law". And let us not forget that Tran Phu's "chief" mother had already been appointed the empress Hien Tu, which made his positions more fortified. However,

for some time the post of the second person of the state was occupied by Tran Nguyen Trac , the eldest of Tran Minh Tong's living sons . Somewhat later Tran Phu took his place.

The description of the further events in Dai Viet in 1369-1370, according to official Vietnamese sources is extremely contradictory and inconsistent, which makes to think on some deliberate corruptions. Here is a short version of the events contained in the chronicles.

The official version of the coup and its inconsistencies

The new emperor was not Tran Nguyen Duc's native son . His mother found herself in the emperor's son's harem being already pregnant from a simple actor Duong Khuong, therefore, he had no rights for the throne. At the very beginning of 1370 Duong Nhat Le poisoned Empress Hien Tu, not to share the power with anybody. After that he began behave unseemly concentrating on drinking, theatre and even desired to change his family name back to Duong (?!). The Tran House relatives with Tran Nguyen Trac, the eldest of Tran Minh Tong's living sons at the head in the ninth lunar month of 1370 decided to rise the army for the purpose of overthrowing the usurper and to bring the power back to their family, but did not manage to make the coup d'etat, and all the participants of the plot had been executed. In the tenth lunar month Tran Phu, "the omnipotent father-in-law", fled from the capital to mountains, then came to Thanh Hoa province , where all his survived relatives and allies gathered around him. The rebels managed secretly attract commanders of all the troops Tran Ngho Lang, and Tran Kinh (another Tran Minh Tong's son, future emperor Tran Due Tong), and in the eleventh lunar month they began their offensive on the capital. Having lost the army's support, Duong Nhat Le went down without a fight having met in person the attacking troops. He was demoted to Hon Duc-cong and could live in the capital, but the emperor was Tran Phu, the rebels' leader. Soon Duong Nhat Le trapped Tran Ngho Lang, his former commander-in-chief, and killed him to revenge his treachery. For some reason he was executed together with his infant son.

Now, let us try to observe dubious and inexplicable places of the version.

1. The data are generally known, but at the same time, the fact that Duong Nhat Le was not Tran Nguyen Duc's native son seems very dubious. In Dai Viet only the emperor had an official harem with strict rules, carefully guarded, with the eunuchs, who fixed all his visits. Also, Tran Nguyen Duc's relationship with Duong Nhat Le's mother could have begun prior to her coming to the harem. Also, even the baby's mother cannot exactly know who the father was. In any case the future emperor of Dai Viet was born, grown and educated in the family of one of the eldest sons of the Supreme emperor, always feeling his being the heir through the chief line, preparing to his future mission, obviously with no suspicion that someday he could be blamed in the absence of family relationships with the dynasty. And the only answer to the rhetorical question from the commentary by Ngo Si Lien: "Didn't [Duong] Nhat Le , an actor's son, know that he was not [Tran Nguyen] Duc's son?" is this: "No, he did not!"

In Vietnam's history there were many cases, when active emperors were suspected that their high-ranked fathers had had no relation to their birth. For example, Tran Nhan Tong , who was born on the eleventh day of the eleventh lunar month of 1258, though his mother became Tran Thanh Tong's official wife only in the eighth lunar month of the same year. Or Le Nhan Tong (ruled in 1442-1459), whose mother also came to Le Thai Tong's harem, supposedly being already pregnant [Fedorin 2020: 130-132]. Nothing could interfere with their rising to emperors. Also, they avoided direct suspicions and gossips during their lifetime. It is likely that the proclaiming Duong Nhat Le

actor Duong Khuong's son is a deliberate lie of the victors with the target to attach a bit of legitimacy to "the palace coup" of 1370, while there were no other motives to overthrow Duong Nhat Le. His nomination to the post of the emperor was quite appropriate with both the will of his late predecessor and absolutely all the norms and rituals of the Imperial Law.

2. The statement that Duong Nhat Le poisoned Empress Hien Tu is no less dubious. It is noteworthy that the authors of Vietnamese chronicles usually describe such events most thoroughly, paying them special attention. In the chapters devoted to the Tran dynasty ruling they are as follows: Ly Hue Tong's death, Phe De's death, Tran Thuan Tong's death, Tran Quoc Chan's death, which are described in all the details on the pages of the chronicles. But in the above-mentioned case the story is condensed in one sentence. It is not clear, how Duong Nhat Le poisoned the Empress and what the reason was. Even if Empress Hien Tu, as the chronicle mentions, soon was sorry about her choice in favor of Duong Nhat Le, she still was the main support and hope for him in conditions when he was opposed by omnipotent relatives, dissatisfied with his appointment. Future Tran Nghe Tong and his adherents were rather interested in the Empress' death, because the disappearance of such an authoritative and well-experienced opponent, virtually holding power, gave them freedom of action, what the furthering events showed. And to lay the blame on the man, who would never be able to answer the charges, was the usual practice of that time. For instance, it is sufficient to mention that the blame for Emperor Le Tuong Duc death (ruled in 1510-1516) was laid, in correspondence with the Chinese on the rebel Tran Cao, though it was well known that he perished by his own uncle Trinh Duy San's hand. However, there are no direct evidence that the Empress was killed by future plotters from the circle of her relatives, either. By the way, being an elderly person, she could die natural death, which was given out to be a poisoning. In any case, the version of her death as a result of Duong Nhat Le's actions seems to be the least probable.

3. In order to find concrete reasons which made Tran Phu rebel, essentially the first person in the state after the emperor, when Empress Hien Tu and his predecessor Tran Nguyen Trac had died, we will take the text of his poem addressed to Tran Kinh, his brother, the commander of all the troops in the country, with the request to support him. This document is especially interesting, while its form (a poem) interferes with (even excludes) any later intrusions, which makes it the most authentic part of the narration.

— Being of the highest rank, I am rudely slandered, and I had to leave my post,
— I have hidden myself, overcoming mountain ranges and leaving for the mountains to
Barbarians.
— Seven tombs. Thinking of the past, I shed tears for thousand times,
— Ten thousand li. I have put my hand on my heart, and my temples have grown grey.
— Let us shatter the vicious moves of [the Kingdom of] Wu and keep safe the Tan
dynasty's Fatherland,
— Let us rejoice the Liu and see the Hanh dynasty's civilization again,
— Sir, you must remember the deeds of [Emperor Tran] Minh Tong,
— Let us reconquer the sacred capital and fix the day of the return!

What conclusions does the text suggest? First of all, Tran Phu was obviously charged with some crimes ("rudely slandered"). Most likely, this was his connection with the plotters with his elder brother Tran Nguyen Trac at the head and his participation in the attempt of the coup d'état, but most

probably the charge of killing Empress Hien Tu, the evidence of the lines below. “The vicious moves of Wu” mean, of course, an event from Chinese history, Empress Wu Zetian attempt to take away power from the Tan (dynasty) and to create own Zhou dynasty [Istoriya Kitaya..., т. 3: 239-263], and the words “let us rejoice the Liu” means another event of the kind, an attempt of Empress Lu Hou to take away power from the Han dynasty (the Lu House) [Istoriya Kitaya..., т. 2: 240-241]. At last, “the deeds of Minh Tong” are, certainly, Tran Quoc Chan, Empress Hien Tu father’s ban and death in 1328. Thus, the appeal concentrates on the confrontation with Empress Hien Tu (dead by that time!) and no bad words of the active emperor. Not a word about his hypothetic kinship with the actor Duong Khuong. In my opinion, the tendency of Tran Phu’s actions is obvious. In this poem he suggests to oppose not Duong Nhat Le, but the chief line of the dynasty as a whole, the hateful Supreme Empress being its embodiment and at the same time his step-mother.

4. The version of the chronicles evidence that Tran Phu fled from the capital in order to return (with his relatives’ assistance) the power from the hands of “the usurper”, who did not belong to the imperial House. In this case he should have logically left for his Motherland, the Thien Truong province (now Nam Dinh city and its suburbs), or for the Motherland of his ancestors in Yen Sinh (now Dong Trieu of the Quang Ninh province). That was the place of family lands of the dynasty’s relatives, where they recruited the guards from the local population who defended the dynasty and had significant advantages being fellows-countrymen of the emperor, ready to stand to the end guarding them. But Tran Phu was not quite sure that all those people would support him. Therefore, first, he fled to the mountains (then Gia Hung in the area of the current Son La province). However, it was possible to find shelter there, but not allies to withstand the existing power. Then he moved to Thanh Hoa province, to his mother’s native village-*huong* Dai Lai. Thirty years later, Le Quy Ly built his own capital by that place. It means that launching his struggle for the throne he did not support on the Tran family (later several its representatives joined him), but on his mother’s family, but unfortunately the chronicles give no information about it. Thus, future emperor Tran Nghe Tong seized power not because all the Tran took his side, but because they mostly refused to support Duong Nhat Le keeping de-facto neutrality and observing the development of the situation.

5. The version of Vietnamese chronicles of the events of 1370 contradicts the version of all the Chinese sources. According to them Tran Phu (or Tran Thuc Minh, called so in Chinese chronicles) is a villain-usurper, having killed the ruler, who got the power legally. It is noteworthy that usually Chinese sources are not basic for us when studying internal political processes in Vietnam. As a rule, the Chinese were not interested in those processes; in their conclusions and actions they were guided first of all by their pragmatic interests and, if it suited them, they easily believed and agreed with any point of view of which the authorities of their southern tributary informed them without even trying either to re-test it or making it more precise. But the events of 1370 are a special case. The thing is that they occurred just in the moment when the Tran dynasty was quite successfully finishing the establishment of traditional tributary relations with the Ming dynasty, which came to power in China. During that process the circumstances were quite beneficial for the Vietnamese party. The thing is that the Juan dynasty did not acknowledge emperors of the Tran dynasty to be the legal rulers of Dai Viet. Under them that country had a very modest, if not the last, place among the tributaries of the Celestial Empire, its ambassadors were let to the capital but in the last resort, the tribute was taken just on the border. In this connection, unlike the situation during the transfer of the power from the Southern Song dynasty to the Juan dynasty, the Trans did not doubt having resolved to acknowledge new Chinese authorities; they were (among) the first tributers of the Zhonguo to

have acknowledged them (as early as in 1368). The founder of the Ming dynasty Zhu Yuanzhang highly appreciated that behavior of his southern neighbor and no later as in 1369 he sent his embassy to Thang Long together with Vietnamese ambassadors returning to the South. His embassy's heads were a courtier-reader *sidu* Zhang Yining and keeper of archives (*dianbu*) Niu Liang, to hand emperor Tran Du Tong (Tran Nhat Khue in Chinese chronicles) the edict of his appointment the ruler of Annam and the gilded silver seal. But when the Chinese embassy arrived, Tran Du Tong had already died. Tran Nhat Kien (Duong Nhat Le) who had taken the throne, tried to persuade the ambassadors to hand all those attributes of power to him, but as the edict was nominal, they refused. Niu Liang was forced back for a new edict, Zhang Yining waiting for him with the seal and gifts in Thang Long. Thus, he was a witness of all the events of 1370 and gave a true and detailed information of them to the Chinese emperor [Minh thực lục, ch. 43: 847-848; ch. 51: 1006-1007]. By and large, proceeding from pragmatic interests of China the Ming dynasty did not care who was or would be the ruler of Dai Viet, because the situation could not influence the two countries' relations, being at the same time so scandalous, that Zhu Yuanzhang categorically refused to acknowledge Tran Phu's power and give investiture to him, which virtually levelled all the achievements of the latest Vietnamese diplomacy; moreover, the prospect was threatened with active attempt of China to interfere with the domestic affairs of the state, even by the intrusion of victorious Chinese armies, which had lately united the entire country [Ibid., ch. 72: 1327]. This problem was to be solved in 1372, when after but two years of direct rule Tran Nghe Tong had to hastily give up (formally) the power having become the Supreme emperor, but having transferred the throne not vertically (to his son), but horizontally (supposedly to another line) to his younger brother Tran Kinh (emperor Tran Due Tong), which satisfied the Mings who needed no confrontation at that time [Ibid., ch. 88: 1566]. Up to his death in 1395 Tran Nghe Tong was the omnipotent ruler of Dai Viet, and the Chinese knew that well, sometimes even addressing him directly notwithstanding diplomatic protocol, but later they categorically refused to send a delegation for the ritual of commemoration of the departed emperor in order to make this the lesson for everybody who dared to come to power using such illegal methods as Tran Nghe Tong did [Ibid., ch. 244: 3547].

6. It is worth to note Tran Phu's attitude to his defeated adversary after the victory. It is known that at the final stage Tran Nhat Kien rejected the armed resistance to the rebels and voluntarily went towards the advancing armies. If he were a real usurper, who acted in the interest of another family, he would have been immediately and most severely executed. However, Tran Phu met him as a close relative ("Today the affairs have turned out otherwise than we expected, haven't they?"), allowed him to retain his high noble title (*Hon Duc Cong*), which could belong but to the emperor's close relative, and even allowed him to stay on in the capital. Nobody reminded the dethroned emperor of the mass murder of his Tran relatives with his uncle Tran Nguyen Trac at the head after the recent unsuccessful revolt. Indeed, Tran Nhat Kien was hastily executed charged with a criminal offence, but at the same time they killed his innocent juvenile son, who in the future certainly could have been the chief claimant to the throne being the elder great-grand-son of Tran Minh Tong through the main line. The execution of those unfortunate people was typical; they were neither quartered nor beheaded, but were beaten to death with sticks. Moreover, they both were buried, and the place of their tombs was known. This is the evidence that also in this case they were treated like close relatives. It is very likely that the version of the out-of-family origin of that hapless ruler emerged later, after his death, in order to justify Tran Phu's actions both in the face of the country's population (the issue of the legitimacy of the supreme power in Vietnam used to be a

sensitive one), and in front of the vexed China of the Mings , which was well informed of the true underlying cause of the events, and there should have been found a more or less suitable justification for it.

Conclusion

Much of the above-said allows to state that the authenticity and correct interpretation of a significant part of the events of 1369 - 1370 in Vietnamese chronicles are dubious (history is always written by winners), and it is very likely the attempt to justify Tran Phu, the winner in the bitter fight for power, whose actions from the standpoint of neo-Confucian morale were not righteous at all. Also, it equally concerns the origin of Tran Nhat Kien, who was suspected of being supposedly a son of a modest actor and of his absolutely senseless desire to be named after Duong , being both the cause of Empress Hien Tu's death, and the forces serving the support for the future emperor Tran Nghe Tong in his seizure of the throne.

In any case, the events of 1370 meant the final and decisive crash of the system of internal marriages in the Tran dynasty, carefully constructed by Tran Thu Do and existed more than a century. Already in 1371 Tran Nghe Tong appointed Le Quy Ly, his relative through the maternal line (his mother's nephew) the head of the country's administration, which earlier under the Tran dynasty had been unthinkable, having shown who really stands behind the plotters, who carried out the coup a year ago. To insert Le Quy Ly into the system of intra-kin relations of the dynast , he got Tran Minh Tong's daughter for his wife, princess Huy Ninh . Earlier she had been married to Tran Nhan Vinh, a relative of the imperial family, who in various versions was either killed at the very unsuccessful attempt to overthrow Tran Nhat Kien in 1370, or just banned to free the princess for a new marriage and for giving birth to babies. That was the marriage which had brought the birth of the future emperor Le Han Thuong (Ho Cang), therefore, the crucial one for the transfer of power in 1400 through the female line, so feared by Tran Thu Do .

Soon Tran Nghe Tong awarded the title of the Supreme Empress to his mother Le Thuan Nhuong: for the first time this post ceased to belong to representatives of the Tran House. Tran Thu Do's system definitely crashed and the Tran dynasty crashed soon afterwards. The power in the country was seized by the Ho dynasty founded by Le Quy Ly (1400-1407).

The coup of 1370 is acknowledged the victory of the Tran House united forces over Duong Nhat Le, the imposter, who tried to usurp the dynasty's power. However, the analysis of the existing historical documents makes think that the assessment is most likely false. Moreover, that event, vice versa, put an end to a special system of transfer authorities in the scope of the House, which existed for nearly hundred and fifty years and was the first, but decisive step in the way, where the Trans completely lost their ruling position, at least thirty years later.

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THE INFLUENCE OF TAOISM ON THE FOLK BELIEFS OF THE VIETNAMESE

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Abstract. The traditional culture of Vietnam, in addition to typical indigenous folk beliefs, also includes three systems of ideas imported from outside Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. In those three ideological systems, Buddhism and Confucianism are very easy to evaluate and comment on, because the two religions have been “used” by the feudal Vietnamese dynasties and respect is the “national religion”; such as Buddhism under the Ly Dynasty and Tran Dynasty; Confucianism under the Le Dynasty and Nguyen Dynasty. Particularly for Taoism, its influence was mainly on the folk, living with the common class in society. To consider correctly, few documents can be as authentic as Confucianism and Buddhism, when the activities of these two religions were well documented. However, the influence of Taoism on Vietnamese culture is undeniable. Based on researching ancient documents, and actual surveys in the provinces and cities of Vietnam, this research focuses on studying the influence of Taoism on the folk beliefs of Vietnamese in 3 beliefs: (1) Belief in worshipping the ancestors; (2) Belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess; (3) Belief in worshipping the village’ Tutelary god.

Keywords: Taoism and Taoist, Vietnam culture, folk beliefs and religion, Belief in worshipping the ancestor, Belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess, Belief in worshipping the village’ Tutelary god.

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Introduction

Taoism was introduced in Vietnam very early, around the second century [Trần Văn Giàu 1973; Nguyễn Duy Hình 2003, 2007; Vu Hong Van 2020]. It was once introduced into Vietnam as an independent religion under the Ly and Tran dynasties [Trần Văn Giàu 1973; Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004; Vũ Hồng Vận 2017]. But, also from that time, the phenomenon of fusion of Taoism with Buddhism and Confucianism took place [Nguyễn Duy Hình 2003]. By the Le dynasty, Daoism quickly combined with Buddhism, and most of the contemplatives turned to Buddhism, Taoism, and the Buddhist scriptures were lost [Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004]. By the Nguyen dynasty, when Confucianism became the dominant ideology in society, highly valued by the Nguyen Dynasty and honored as the “state religion” [Nguyễn Tài Thu 1997; Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004], Taoism was almost wholly lost in the religious life of the Vietnamese, the noun Taoism is not mentioned much anymore.

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The spiritual life of Vietnamese is heavily influenced by Eastern ideologies, especially religious ideas [Trần Văn Giàu 1973, 1983; Nguyễn Tài Thu 1997; Trần Ngọc Thêm 2000; Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004; Vũ Hồng Vận 2017]. Along with Confucianism and Buddhism, Taoism profoundly influences the spiritual, traditional, and cultural life of the Vietnam nation, especially in the life of the working population [Trần Văn Giàu 1973, 1983]. As a religion stemming from the peasant uprising [Ho Fusan 1995; Lịch sử... 1999], it already had in mind the idea of protesting against the ruling class, so, just like in China, when entering Vietnam, the people used it as a weapon against the ruling class as well as before the invasion of the Northern colonialists [Nguyễn Duy Hinh 2003; Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004]. During the anti-French resistance war, many revolts actively used witchcraft as spiritual weapons to deal with the enemy who had the predominance of guns [Phan Ngọc 2002].

When propagated in Vietnam, Taoism immediately found similar beliefs available for a long time [Nguyễn Duy Hinh 2003, 2007]. The ancient Vietnamese people's cult of magic, spells, etc., has become fertile Vietnamese and Chinese philosophy, as well as the content, purpose, and style of literary culture. By 1939, Duong Quang Ham's "Vietnamese Literature" (Ministry of Education's textbook) also presented more details on literary styles and practices in the style of Tang poetry [Duong Quang Ham 1939: 63-66].

Unlike Buddhism and Confucianism, the study of Taoism in Vietnam is very complicated and difficult to study [Chuan 2006]. In fact, a lot of researchers have attributed all Vietnamese folk beliefs [an important part of Vietnam's culture] to Taoism, and vice versa the people who "*sính* [overly concerned] "*lên đồng*" (a form of soul-calling for the dead to enter the body), spells do not understand what Taoism is [Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004]. This has created many difficulties in identifying and studying Taoism in Vietnam as well as the values of Vietnamese culture through the relationship with Taoism.

In Vietnam, for many years, the Taoism collection and research and its relationship with Vietnamese culture have not been as complete, comprehensive, and profound as Buddhism and Confucianism. There have been a few studies but appear too many different views and different and sometimes conflicting opinions. It can be mentioned the basic contents such as: has not been distinguished between Taoist and Taoism; do not understand the basic content and schools of Taoism. In particular, there are no studies that comprehensively survey the influence of Taoism on Vietnamese belief through field surveys in provinces and cities in Vietnam. In addition, there are many unanswered issues, many contents cannot reach unanimous conclusions.

The cultural history of the Vietnamese people is tied to the nation's process of building and defending the country. As the economy grows, countries around the world come closer together, and the national culture becomes more and more the center of attention. Documents of the Communist Party of Vietnam and policies of the Vietnamese state have repeatedly affirmed the role and importance of the goal of "building an advanced culture imbued with national identity". Therefore, the study of the topic: "The Influence of Taoism on the Folk Beliefs of the Vietnamese", I think that is necessary and important, to understand more about phenomena, social concepts, etc., and from there, to understand the origin and specificity of Vietnamese culture, and the traditional cultural values that the predecessors have worked hard to build. This research contributes a part to the identification of positive factors, and good traditional values of the nation in the cause of "building a new, advanced Vietnam culture imbued with identity nation".

Literature Review

In Vietnam, Taoism is a difficult religion to the studying. Taoism is difficult to study for many reasons but focuses on the following three main reasons:

1) Lack of official historical documents: The Taoism record is very little in Vietnam's feudal dynasties. As mentioned above, Taoism has never been used by the feudal dynasties of Vietnam. The best position of Taoism was under the Ly Dynasty. However, soon after that appeared the phenomenon of the three religions of the same religion (Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism). The recording of Taoism of this period is mainly through historical books. Vietnam began to record history from the Tran Dynasty and continued in later feudal dynasties. The first history of Vietnam known so far is the book *Dai Viet Su Ky* (Dai Viet History) by Le Van Huu in King Tran Nhan Tong, the year of Nham Than (1272); *An Nam Chi* book written by Le Tac in China (1333). Next was the book *Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu* (Complete Dai Viet History), printed woodblocks in the 18th Ching Hoa year (1697); *Dai Viet Thong Su* of Le Quy Don (1759); *Viet Su Tieu An* of Ngo Sy Lien (1775); or *Quoc Su Quan - Dai Nam Thuc Luc Chinh Bien* (1909), etc. Those books recorded some Taoism activities, but mainly anecdotes, and stories related to Taoism with little record of religious activities of Taoism.

2) The sutras of Taoism are also very few. Currently, a number of Taoist scriptures, mainly written in the Han Nom script, are stored at the Han-Nom Research Institute. Due to many objective and subjective factors, these scriptures have not been fully translated. Wang Kha 92000], when consulting about Taoism scriptures in Vietnam, he made the comment: “The Taoism in North Vietnam also left a number of Taoism tales, etc. During the Nguyen Dynasty, the temple Ngoc Son engraved a lot of Taoism scriptures such as *La To Toan Thu*, *Linh Bao* five scriptures, *Ngoc Hoang* scriptures, etc. The ancient Taoism books still kept at the Han Nom Research Institute include *Thai Thuong To Linh Dong Nguyen Dai Huu Dieu Kinh*, *Thuong Thanh Hoang Dinh Chan Kinh*, *Thai Thuong Cam Ung Bien*, *Am Chac Van Chu*, *Viet Nhan Giai Chu*, *Tham Am Chan Kinh*, *Thai Duong Chan Kinh*, *Tao Vuong Kinh*, *Nguyen Duong Quan Bi*, *Tien Phuc Quan Bi*, *Vo Tu Bi*, etc. [Trường Đại học Sư phạm 2000]. According to the comments of Wang Kha: “The above-mentioned books are mostly not found in the Ming Dynasty treasure book in China (also called Orthodox Taoism scriptures), so these are the materials for studying the history of Vietnamese Taoism is very valuable” [Ibid.: 381].

3) Survey about Taoism in Vietnam faces many difficulties. Although it is a religion, in Vietnam, this religion does not have a church, congregation, dogma, or precepts [Nguyễn Duy Hinh 2007]. This religious practice is concentrated mainly in the rural villages of Vietnam [Trần Văn Giàu 1973; Nguyễn Duy Hinh 2007], and in folk activities [Nguyễn Duy Hinh 2007]. A reality survey shows that very few people admit they are Taoism followers (accounting for 190/3500 respondents).

In general, most of these studies have talked about Taoism, and the Taoism propaganda process in Vietnam, but still lack consistency such as the first Taoist organization, characters, sects, students' active religion, etc. Particularly “the influence of Taoism on the folk belief of Vietnamese” is mentioned very little, and only mentioned the influence of Taoism in specific areas of culture. Realizing the importance of Taoism to Vietnamese culture, needing to find more roots that create the tradition of Vietnamese culture, and at the same time, want to introduce Vietnam's cultural values to the world, I choose the subject “The Influence of Taoism on the Folk Beliefs of the Vietnamese” is the research topic for this article.

Research Methods

First, studying Taoism writings in Chinese history books, Chinese authors, and foreign scholars studying Taoism. Specifically, they can be mentioned in books such as the book “Tung Thu Tam Bach De” (1999) by the Shanghai Publishing House; the book “Great Chinese Taoism dictionary” (1995) by Ho Fusan (China) (1995); the book “Tao-Tsang T’i-Yao [Synopsis of the Taoism Canon]” (1991) by Jen, Chi-Yü and Chung, Chao Peng; the book Seven Steps to the Tao: Sima Chengzhen’s Zuowanglun” (1971) of Kohn, Livia, etc.

Second, researching ancient documents about Taoism in Vietnam, specifically the famous historical books in Vietnam such as the book *Dai Viet Su Ky; An Nam Chi, Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, Dai Viet Thong Su, Viet Su Tieu An, or Quoc Su Quan - Dai Nam Thuc Luc Chinh Bien*, etc. However, as mentioned above, the books mainly write about anecdotes, and Taoism stories but do not record much about religious activities, religious organizations, etc. so the search for orthodox historical records about Taoism is very difficult.

Third, study the stories and legends about Taoism handed down by folk. It can be affirmed that this is the place where Taoism shows the most abundantly. Many Taoism stories are passed down in folk through tales, religious stories, and religious figures. With the people’s imagination interwoven with Taoism stories, Taoism has a lasting vitality in the spiritual life of the Vietnamese people [Phan Ngọc 2002; Nguyễn Duy Hình 2007; Vu Hong Van 2019, 2020b, 2020c]. It should be added that Taoism’s religious activities are almost identical to the belief in the demons and deities of the Vietnamese people, so Taoism easily integrates into the spiritual life of the Vietnamese people [Nguyễn Duy Hình 2007].

Fourth, study religious activities related to Taoism. At present, in many families and villages in Vietnam, there are still religious activities related to Taoism. Through field surveys in 10 provinces and cities of Vietnam, the author found that many Taoism religious activities are taking place, which is reflected in activities such as worshipping apples, earth gods, talent gods; divination activities, spells; priests in funerals, Vietnamese people’s death anniversaries; feng shui; funeral rituals, etc.

Fifth, study the historical Taoism worship facilities and the existing Taoism worshiping facilities. The actual survey shows that, although the Taoism worshiping facilities no longer retain the original religious functions, religious activities are still carried out. Many typical Taoism figures are still worshiped in these religious institutions. Due to the time and budget conditions, the author only surveyed 05 existing Taoism religious institutions (mainly in the North of Vietnam): Ngoc Son Temple, Quan Thanh Temple, Bich Cau Temple, Dong Thien Temple, and Linh Tien Temple.

Research Results

The influence of Taoism on the Belief in worshipping the ancestor (Tín ngưỡng thờ cúng tổ tiên)

If Confucianism lays the theoretical foundation of morality, social order, and discipline for Vietnamese ancestor worship; Buddhism affects the preservation and development of ancestor worship in Vietnam, first of all, the concept of death, reincarnation, and karma; Taoism contributes to strengthening belief in the existence and supernatural power of the souls of the dead through several worshipping rituals such as: summoning spirits, incantations, funerals, graves and so on. burning votive paper [Nguyễn Duy Hình 2003; Vũ Hồng Vận 2017].

One of the rituals of ancestor worship that we can see as the manifestation of Taoism is the “*Trai tiểu bạt độ*” ceremony (the exoneration ceremony for the deceased). One of the significant ceremonies of Taoism is the “*lễ sám hối gọi trai*”. In the “*Trai*” ceremonies there are “*Trai bìn*” and

“*Than*” – applying coal to the face and soaking in the mud to repent of one’s sins; “*Trai bùa vàng*” – that is, a repentance ceremony for the dead, etc. Its origin is like that, but the ceremony of “*Trai tiều bặt đợ*” in the belief in ancestor worship of Vietnamese people, is to promote goodwill and goodwill, punish evil. However, this ceremony is not held regularly, it is only used when there are “graves and caves” in the family, there are many calamities that family members believe are related to deceased ancestors [Vũ Hồng Vân 2017, Vu Hong Van 2020b]. When there are bad points in the family, they think it is related to the deceased ancestors, they often resort to the “*Trai tiều bặt đợ*” (but not all of these ceremonies, but only some rituals). Perhaps, the “*Trai tiều bặt đợ*” ceremony according to the main Taoist rite has a slightly different implementation. Here, I would like to describe a ritual in that ceremony: The “*Khai ngục trị đàn*” ritual, to show that people not only know how to use the rituals of other religions but also change them to suit their tastes. Although, it is the main ceremony of Taoism.

The expression of Taoism in ancestor worship is also reflected in the concept of birth and death. According to folk beliefs, the dead after the soul leaves the body, must go through ten great hells due to the rule of the kings in the underworld, called the ten-faced palace. The Vietnamese took the punishment of the soul after death to promote good and eliminate evil. The promotion of good and the punishment of evil were done through the kings of the underworld. As for Taoism, this governance is exercised by the “*Phong Đô Bắc Âm Đại Đế*” with 88 mandarins devil.

Those in the family who die are held at funerals very carefully. Depending on the family’s affluence, the funeral organization is large or small, but anyway, the organization is carried out with the utmost standards. Beliefs about death say that “*tử tuất quy thổ, cốt nhục tê u, hạ âm vi giả thổ, kỳ phí phát dương u thượng vi chiêu minh*”. That means, when you die, your body will be buried in the ground, your bones and bones will dissolve in the ground, and your soul will fly up high, shining brightly. Along with the above meaning of life and death, Confucianism also has the word filial piety with the concept of “death as birth, death as existence”. Being filial to your parents when they die is like being filial to your parents while they are still alive [Trần Văn Giàu 1973, 1983; Nguyễn Duy Hình 1997].

One of the manifestations of Taoism in ancestor worship is the belief in funerals. The belief in mourning comes from the Taoist concept that each person lives attached to a star in the sky when that star goes out, that person dies. Looking after the birth and death of the world is “*Nam Tào*” and “*Bắc Đẩu*”. The “*Nam Tào*” star manages birth, the “*Bắc Đẩu*” star manages death. Therefore, when talking about death, folk often have the phrase “*xoá sổ Nam Tào*”. Or the phrase “*bút chú tử trách Nam Tào sớm định*”. This sentence means that “*Nam Tào*” used the death note to write down the date and time of death of a person (father, mother) so early. The Taoism concept also says that death is about the fairy realm, so in the “*Bức trướng*” in funeral services often see the words “*Bồng lai tiên cảnh*”.

Faith is trust, admiration is respect, “ancestor worship means a belief in that it causes sacred belief in the souls of ancestors as guardians. Bless and protect children and grandchildren during the months of doing business and living” [Nguyễn Duy Hình 2003: 191]. The burial according to the burial items found in the ancient tombs, the burning of votive papers in the past, and the burning of money in the underworld today manifests the belief in ancestors who are still “living” like in the world; still have an effect on their descendants. The Vietnamese have a saying that “*Sống về mồ về mà không ai sống về cả bát cơm*” (this sentence means that the merit of ancestors is very important).

In the belief of ancestor worship, the grave is an inseparable sacred expression. When the year ends, children and grandchildren eagerly go to dig graves, build graves, and burn incense to invite

their ancestors to come back to celebrate Tet. What is not good in the family is that people immediately think of the grave, grave, and the descendants have to make sacrifices to the land that governs the place where the grave is located.

Ancestor worship is to express one's gratitude to those who gave birth, but behind that gratitude is a philosophy of Vietnamese people's outlook on life. The Vietnamese believe that the appearance and existence of humans are partly due to ancestors. Therefore, living people must be grateful to those who gave birth to them. It is that gratitude that helps children and grandchildren connect, stick together, and know how to live for each other, and for everyone around. This is the basis for community harmony and creates a bond of solidarity for an entire nation.

Unlike Taoism, there is a whole system of elves that govern all areas of life. In the minds of Vietnamese people, the belief in the existence of ancestral spirits has also shown the deification of ancestral spirits. help children in life.

Making the above point, I do not intend to completely refute the influence of religion on the lives of Vietnamese people. But in fact, for Vietnamese people, regardless of any religion, one of the indispensable things in every family is the ancestral altar. On the full moon day, the first day of each month, on the anniversary of the death anniversary, children and grandchildren must burn incense to pray to their ancestors to bless their children's health, everything is favorable.

Using and transforming rituals of many religions into religious activities is also a way that Vietnamese people use to protect the true values of their nation - a nation whose patriotism is always the subject that all put on top. The Vietnamese have affirmed an unchanging truth of all times: The development of each family creates the existence and development of an entire nation. In other words, ancestor worship with its sacred meanings has created an endogenous foundation for an entire nation.

The influence of Taoism on the Belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess (Tín ngưỡng Thờ Mẫu)

The belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess is a pure Vietnamese folk belief, popular, with a long history, adapting to the changes in Vietnamese society. Belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess is the belief, admiration, honor, and worship of goddesses associated with natural phenomena, the universe is believed by people to have the power to create, protect and protect the lives of people such as heaven, earth, rivers, forests, mountains, etc. worshipping empresses, queens, and princesses who, when living well, have meritorious services to the people and the country, when they die their epiphanies, they help people, help nation, and things prosper. Through formation and development, the Belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess in Vietnam has developed to form the beliefs of the Three Realism: "*Thiên Phủ*" (Heaven Realism), "*Nhạc Phủ*" (Forest Realism), "*Thoải Phủ*" (Water Realism); Four Realism: In addition to the three above, there is also "*Địa Phủ*" (Earth Realism).

The belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess holds a special place in the spiritual activities of Vietnamese people. It is a spiritual need of a part of the people that have existed throughout history and even today. "*Mẫu*" is an image, a symbol, and a living crystallization of the spiritual and cultural life of Vietnamese people [Trần Ngọc Thêm 2000; Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004; Vu Hong Van 2020a; Vu Hong Van 2022], but also poses many problems for many scientists and researchers interested in many different directions in society. Mother worship is also a phenomenon of rich and attractive folklore activities that attract people. People who come to "*Mẫu*" also have empathy for cultural values. culture and contribute to strengthening the sense of community of the Vietnamese nation.

At the beginning of the process of importing foreign cultures, especially Confucianism, the women who were considered to have that mysterious power were separated from each other, without any connection or entanglement. In other words, Vietnamese Models have not yet formed a genealogy and government system like secular life. When Taoism entered Vietnam, especially a fairy pedigree was promoted, immediately meeting the need to institutionalize the “heavenly court” of the “Mẫu”, The belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess was quickly absorbed to form a paradise’s very own family. It can be said: “The belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess is where Taoism manifests its greatest influence” [Phan Ngọc 2002: 332]. But, the belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess still cannot be a religion. Because, in fact, the Vietnamese mother worship system is still fragmented, lacking a cardinal and a church. One can only consider the Vietnamese mother-worshipping custom as a folk belief.

The manifestation of Taoism in the belief in the Mother Goddess is first shown in the phenomenon of “*hầu đồng*” (*lên đồng*). The phenomenon of going to “*hầu đồng*” is associated with the custom of worshipping Mother Goddesses. “*Đồng* according to Chinese characters refers to boys under 10 years old (children) who are still innocent and innocent in praying to the gods to bring down the pen of the Taoism fairy. Through prayer, the elves enter the baby, giving out signals by scribbling words in the sand, on rice, or saying some cryptic words. The Taoists who are good, deduce those words and letters into the will of the gods and the will of the saints” [Ibid.: 126]. That phenomenon is similar to going to “*lên đồng*” (“enter the field”). The problem of “*lên đồng*” is common in many parts of the world. It is believed that after death people still have a soul, and that soul continues to exist and can communicate with living people through mediums. “The soul is no longer a body, just a shadow. That shadow borrows the body of a bronze person like a chair (rack), a horse so that it manifests itself” [Ibid.: 333].

Thus, “going to the field” is understood both as representing the voice of the gods and as expressing the mind of the dead. “Religious researchers consider this to be a form of Shamanism, found in many parts of the ancient world, a kind of tribal god cult. At that time, the divine bias was not as diverse and complex as it was later, the society at that time was simply people and gods from the reality of their lives. Humans need to increase their strength to control wild beasts, only borrowing the power of the gods. People dream, aspire to become gods, want to know what gods know” [Phan Đăng Duy 2002: 159].

The reality of Vietnam’s history, under feudal dynasties [especially from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries onwards], the society was in turmoil, killing each other, foreign invaders, etc. [Trần Quốc Vượng, Hà Văn Tấn 1960] makes the lives of people, especially farmers, increasingly poor. Then what faith to let the poor people follow? Confucian feudal rites have bound women to extremely harsh standards [Van 2020; Van et al 2020], and Buddhism has not been able to improve the actual situation [Nguyễn Tài Thu 1997; Vu Hong Van, Nguyen Trong Long 2020]. Therefore, the Vietnamese people only know how to arouse the sacred belief that has existed for many generations which is “mother god”. However, it is not enough to just burn incense and pray like all other offerings.

From the experience of life, the subconscious about beliefs and origins has motivated people to want to transform into a god, to have the power of “mother god”, to help them solve the pressing problems of real life. Therefore, the form of “entering the field” from the tribal times was recreated when praying to the Mother. This is also the form of praying for the “*giáng bút*” of fairy Taoism to form a composite deformation. Thus, it is not because of the belief in Mother Goddesses’ worship that witchcraft is born, but because people re-create witchcraft for the sake of the divine Mother’s salvation.

The influence of Taoism on the Belief in worshipping the Village's Tutelary god (Tín ngưỡng thờ Thành Hoàng Làng)

In the minds of many Vietnamese people, talking about the village' Tutelary god is referring to the god who protects the village, few people think that there is a Tutelary god for the whole country. The Vietnamese village' Tutelary god is a god who was worshiped by the people before, then was awarded the title of King by the king with the title of “*Thành Hoàng*”.

In the concept of Vietnamese countryside people, the village citadel holds an important position in the village. The village' Tutelary god can bless and help the villagers in difficult times. Experiencing the ups and downs of the country and of the village, generations of villagers continued to increase. But, the village' Tutelary god is still there, becoming an undeniable proof of the village through the ups and downs [Nguyễn Duy Hình 2003; Vũ Hồng Vận 2017].

Like other folk beliefs, the Belief in worshipping the village' Tutelary god cannot avoid the influence of foreign religions and beliefs in religious activities. The influence of Taoism on the Belief in worshipping the village' Tutelary god is reflected in the story about the village's Tutelary god. As follows:

First, is the view of the characters appearing in the fairy tales. In the concept of Taoism, extraordinary people are those who have magic, can jump in the clouds, but can still fly without wings; someone rides a cloud dragon to heaven; there are people hovering over the mountains; some people just breathe the air; there are people who hide their bodies, hide and appear, so no one knows [Ho Fusan 1995; Vu Hong Van, Nguyen Trong Long 2019]. Or fairies with bright faces like pearls, elegant looks, smiling like streams, etc [Chi-Yü, Chao-Peng 1991]. This is a very characteristic feature of Taoism. The extraordinary characters in Taoism often have extraordinary backgrounds. If you are a fairy, you have to go through a very difficult process of training and testing; If they are the first reincarnated as a human, they are usually the fairies who make mistakes, are sent down to earth, and also have to suffer a lot of bitterness and humiliation, and then return to the fairy world. “Good people are turned into fairies, fairies are mocked and become human” [Nguyễn Duy Hình 1997; Vũ Hồng Vận 2017]. Some typical figures of Taoism can be mentioned such as Ly Thiet Quai, Chung Ly Quyen, Ha Tien Co, La Dong Tan, Truong Qua Lao, Han Tuong Tu, and Cao Quoc Cuu [eight immortals].

Almost in the village' Tutelary god legends, the characters are always given many powers before being crowned the village' Tutelary god. They can do many things that mortals cannot do, such as call the wind, call rain, go out into the holy world, enter the spirit; use magic spells to help people in an area. After that, he was worshiped by the villagers and proposed to the feudal state to be the village' Tutelary god.

Second, in determining space and time. There are many similarities between the legends of the village' Tutelary god and Taoism. In Dao Hoang Canh's Chan Cao, the activities of humans, angels, and demons are divided into three different spaces: the top is a fairy, the middle is a human, and the bottom is a demon: “It's like the things in heaven and earth cannot be limited that can be determined. According to the mind that thinks, in the realm of gloom, there are three interrelated parts. Above are fairies, in the middle are humans, and below are demons. Good people are turned into fairies, wronged fairies become humans, nefarious people are turned into ghosts, and good-natured demons become human again. Demons imitate people, people imitate fairies, rotate back and forth, and so on. That is the small difference between heaven and earth” [Lagerwey 1987a]. In some of the village' Tutelary gods, in addition to the real times mentioned [such as the day, month, and year of birth of the Citadel], the image of a fuzzy space has also been mentioned. In that space and

time, it is difficult to define specifically. Sometimes it only takes a wind to rise, the sky and earth are cloudy, and time can move for decades; even those gods can go from time to time in a “blink of an eye”, etc.

In many legends of the village' Tutelary god, many characters are from the Hung Kings' period but can still transcend space and time to be able to reunite. This is really a new creation, creating a thrill for the legends of the village' Tutelary god.

Conclusion

Beliefs are people's beliefs and admiration of mystical, supernatural forces. People believe that these forces influence and govern human life and destiny and form a social nest according to that sacred belief. Although there are some elements borrowed from foreign religions, the value of beliefs cannot be denied. That is shown:

First, ancestor worship belief represents a cultural lifestyle, not the belief of a religion. Because, it has no doctrine, church, synagogue, or priest. It also does not bring about the end of death to heaven, or hell, but only to the satisfaction or rebuke of the ancestors. It creates conditions to maintain sacred spaces, and traditional cultural environments and has excellent educational significance when children remember their ancestors.

Second, the belief in Mother Goddess worship clearly shows the consciousness of the Vietnamese people. A nation that always longs for peace, a simple life, living in the home of a family with a mother's love [Mẫu], mothers who have both non-worldly powers but are very ordinary. Especially the immense love for their children, their non-worldly strength for one purpose is to protect their children and the sacred values of the nation.

Third, the Vietnamese Village's Tutelary god belief is the creation of Vietnamese farmers, experienced through many generations. However, Vietnamese society entered a period of industrialization and modernization, and Village's Tutelary god belief does not keep the original. But, the values it brings to the spiritual life of the villagers cannot be denied.

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PHILOLOGY

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SOME PROBLEMS OF SPELLING VIETNAMESE TOPONYMS AND ANTHROPONYMS IN RUSSIAN

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Abstract. In the course of development of Internet, search systems and scientometrics, a unified standard of spelling proper names, toponyms and anthroponyms among them, acquires special importance. The purpose of this article is to suggest such a standard for the papers for publication in editions of the Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies of the RAS ICCA. Based on the rules set in previous years, there are some suggestions for spelling Vietnamese letters and their combinations in toponyms and anthroponyms in Russian, as well as the written form of Vietnamese personal names, also in references.

Keywords: the Vietnamese language, the Russian language, practical transcription, toponyms, anthroponyms, temple names.

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Introduction

The change of the geopolitical situation and Russia's "turn to the East" set Vietnam into the focus of Russian officials, businessmen and scientists. The number of publications about this country increases. The major part of research-works on Vietnam has been prepared and issued by the Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies of the RAS Institute of China and Contemporary Asia, including its "Russian Journal of Vietnamese Studies". The authors of articles on political science and economics, demography and history, religion, culture and philology are not only Russian researchers from different regions of this country, but also those from Vietnam, Australia, France and other countries. Their works contain a lot of Vietnamese toponyms and anthroponyms. English articles usually follow Vietnamese spelling omitting diacritic marks, while Russian authors and translators of English articles must follow certain rules for spelling Vietnamese geographical and personal names. In the course of development of Internet, search systems and scientometrics, a unified standard of

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spelling proper names, toponyms and anthroponyms among them, acquire special importance. The purpose of this article is to suggest such a standard for the papers for publication in the editions of the Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies of the RAS ICCA.

The polemics on the ways of spelling foreign proper names in Russian has been conducted for many years. Some researchers (A.A. Reformatsky, B.A. Starostin, A.V. Superanskaya etc.) thought that onyms should be borrowed using practical transcription with exception of those traditionally transliterated in the language, other (O.O. Sorokina, A.V. Fedorov) stood up for transliteration as the leading way of spelling foreign proper names, others acknowledged the mixed way, a combination of the two previous ones.

All these variants can be met in Russian spelling Vietnamese geographical and personal names. Yet the main way is transcription. The first attempt to create Russian transcription for Vietnamese words belongs to J. Minin (Nguyen Khanh Toan), the author of the first manual of Vietnamese (Annamese), issued in Leningrad in 1933. An orderly system of Vietnamese-Russian practical transcription was developed by T.T. Mhitaryan and published in her “Vietnamese Phonetics” [1959]. Professor G.P. Serdyuchenko suggested his own variant of transcription in his book “Russian Transcription for Languages of Foreign East” [1961]. In 1967 based on T.T. Mhitaryan’s transcription there was published “The Instructions for Spelling Vietnamese Geographical Names on Maps”. With some changes and additions, it was the basis for “The Instructions for Russian Spelling Vietnam’s Geographical Names” [1973], published by the Central Research Institute of Geodesy, Aerial Survey and Cartography (CRIGASC). That book took into consideration the conclusions of T.T. Mhitaryan’s book “Vietnamese Toponyms Spelled by Means of Russian Graphics” [1962] and E.M. Murzayev’s article “Vietnam’s Geographical Names” [1969]. In 1988 “The Instructions” served the basis for “A Dictionary of Vietnam’s Geographical Names” issued by CRIGASC. The Preface said that the purpose was “to establish the Russian unified scientifically based spelling of Vietnamese toponyms on maps, in the press, in scientific literature and guides, as well as in other Soviet editions” [Slovar’... 1988: 3].

In the 21st century, this problem has been touched by the translators and commentators of “The Complete Annals of Dai Viet (Dai Viet su ky toan thu)” [2002]. In the first volume of this epoch-making work, they set the rules for spelling names and terms having been used while translating “Toan Thu”. In 2014 D.D. Zvorykin’s article “Russian Spelling of Vietnam’s Geographical Names” was published in “The Ecology of Vietnam’s Inland Waters”. M.A. Syunnerberg raises problems of transcription of Vietnamese names in his work “The System of Vietnamese Given and Family Names” [2014]. I.V. Britov addresses the matter of spelling Vietnamese anthroponyms and toponyms in his wonderful book “To Understand the Language of the Dragon’s Descendants” [2021]. He has suggested some changes for T.T. Mhitaryan’s practical transcription system.

Suggested rules for Russian spelling of Vietnamese toponyms and anthroponyms

This article discusses the rules set on the ground of the above-said, which are suggested to follow when spelling Vietnamese toponyms and anthroponyms in articles for the editions of the Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies of the RAS ICCA. The discrepancies with the existing variants will be marked and commented separately. All Vietnamese double-syllable and polysyllable geographical names are single words in Russian.

Vietnamese spelling, examples	Russian spelling, examples	Notes
<p>a ă â Ma, Lâm Thao, Câu</p> <p>a ă â Nha Trang, Chàm Chù, Gia Hối</p>	<p>a Ma, Ламтхао, Кау</p> <p>я Нячанг, Тямтю, Зяхой</p>	<p>Except after letter combinations <i>nh, ch, gi</i></p> <p>In the words with Tây – э Tây Ninh – Тэйнинь</p> <p>In the words with Plây – e Plây Cu – Плейку</p> <p>After letter combinations <i>nh, ch, gi</i></p>
<p>b Bắc Bộ</p>	<p>б Бакбо</p>	
<p>c Cà Mau</p>	<p>к Камау</p>	
<p>ch Bạch Mã, Bích</p> <p>ch Chứa Chan</p> <p>ch Chàm Chu, Châu Phú, Cheo Reo, Chợ Gạo, Chí</p>	<p>ть Батьма, Бить</p> <p>ть Тьяатян</p> <p>т Тямтю, Тяуфу, Теорео, Тёгао, Ти</p>	<p>At the end of a syllable</p> <p>Before <i>u</i></p> <p>Before the rest vowels (the vowels <i>u, e, ẽ, я, ю</i> are used to soften a consonant)</p>
<p>d Hải Dương, Dững</p>	<p>з Хайзыонг, Зунг</p>	
<p>đ Đắc Lắc, Đức</p>	<p>д Даклак, Дык</p>	
<p>e, ê Bé, Chê, Nghiêm, Nguyệt,</p> <p>e, ê Én, Huế</p>	<p>e Бе, Те, Нгием, Нгует</p> <p>э Эн, Хюэ</p>	<p>After consonants and in the combinations <i>iê u uyê</i></p> <p>At the beginning of a word and after vowels</p>
<p>f Fiji</p>	<p>ф Фиджи</p>	
<p>g Gành Rai</p>	<p>г Ганьрай</p>	<p>Everywhere but the position before <i>i</i> и <i>e, ê</i></p>
<p>gh Ghép</p>	<p>г Геп</p>	<p>Before <i>e, ê</i></p>

gi Gia Ray, Gió, Giôn, Giếng Đày	з Зярай, Зё, Зён, Зиенгдай	Before <i>a, ă, o, ô</i> , which are spelt <i>я, ь</i> to soften a consonant With the diphthong <i>iê</i> is read <i>зие</i>
h Hòa Bình	х Хоабинь	
i, y Bình Đình, Nà Nghịu, Quy Hóa	и Биньдинь, Нангиу, Куихоа	After consonants, in the syllables <i>qui (quy), hui (huy),</i> <i>khui (khuy), thui (thui)</i>
i, y Hội An	й Хойан	After vowels
iê Diên Vọng	ие Зиенвонг	<i>Exclusions:</i> Việt Nam — Вьетнам Điện Biên Phủ — Дьенбьенфу Ngô Đình Diệm — Нго Динь Зьем
k Kiên Giang	к Киензянг	
kh Khoai Lang	кх Кхоайланг	
l Lai Châu	л Лайтяу	
m Minh Sơn	м Миньшон	
n Nam Định	н Намдинь	
ng Quảng Nam	нг Куангнам	
ngh Nghệ An	нг Нгеан	Before <i>e, ê, i, y</i>

<p>nh Vĩnh, Như Xuân</p>	<p>нь Винь, Ньысуан</p>	<p>At the end of a syllable and before <i>u</i></p>
<p>nh Nhé, Nhơn Hòa, Nhu Gia</p>	<p>н Не, Нёнхоа, Нюзя</p>	<p>Before <i>e, ê, o, ô, ơ, i, u</i> which are spelled <i>ě, u, ю</i> to soften a consonant</p>
<p>o, ô, ơ Ngọc Sơn, Cần Thơ</p>	<p>о Нгокшон, Кантхо</p>	<p>Everywhere but after <i>ch, nh,</i> <i>gi</i></p>
<p>o, ô, ơ Chợ Mới, Gio Linh</p>	<p>ё Тёмой, Зёлинь</p>	<p>After <i>ch, nh, gi</i></p>
<p>p Hiệp Hòa</p>	<p>п Хиепхоа</p>	<p>Found at the beginning of a syllable only in foreign words Pa Mam — Памам</p>
<p>ph Phú Thọ</p>	<p>ф Футхо</p>	
<p>q Quy Nhơn</p>	<p>к Куинён</p>	
<p>r Ráng</p>	<p>ж Жанг</p>	
<p>r Rạch Sỏi</p>	<p>р Ратьшой</p>	<p>In geographical names of Central and South Vietnam</p>
<p>s Sông Bé, Nghiêm Sơn</p>	<p>ш Шонгбе, Нгиемшон</p>	<p>Exclusion: Sài Gòn — Сайгон</p>
<p>t Tam Đảo</p>	<p>т Тамдао</p>	
<p>th Thái Bình</p>	<p>тх Тхайбинь</p>	
<p>tr Trung Bộ</p>	<p>ч Чунгбо</p>	

<p>u Huế, Nhu Quan, Thui Phả</p> <p>u Kon Tum, Thái Nguyên, Quy Nhơn</p>	<p>ю Хюэ, Нюкуан, Тхюифа</p> <p>у Контум, Тхайнгуен Куинён</p>	<p>After <i>ch, nh, gi</i>, in the combinations <i>uê, ui, uy, uyê</i> after <i>h, kh, l, th, x</i></p> <p>In the other cases</p>
<p>ư Tương Dương</p>	<p>ы Тьонгзыонг</p>	<p>After <i>ư</i> is also written <i>ы</i> Sùng Trâu – Шынгчай</p>
<p>v Vĩnh Phú, Vãn</p>	<p>в Виньфу, Ван</p>	
<p>x Xuân Long</p>	<p>с Суанлонг</p>	
<p>y Mỹ Tú, Quỳnh Lưu</p> <p>y Yên Châu, Mây</p>	<p>и Миту, Куиньлыу</p> <p>й Йентяу, Май</p>	<p>After consonants and in the letter combination <i>uy</i></p> <p>At the beginning of a syllable and after vowels, except <i>u</i></p> <p>Voiceless in the letter combination <i>uyê</i> Nguyễn – Нгуен</p>

We are going to comment those cases which differ from other similar rules. Recently there has appeared a tendency to spell Vietnamese soft consonants *ch, nh, gi* with the use of the soft sign. The SRV Prime-Minister *Pham Minh Chinh* became *Фам Минь Тьинь*, the city *Quy Nhon* was turned into *Куиньон*, etc. By the way, this variant has been suggested by the translators of “*Toan thu*” and by I.V. Britov [Britov 2021: 71]. Yet, we believe, it is worth to save the variant suggested in “The Instructions for Russian Spelling Vietnam’s Geographical Names”, when the letters/sounds *e, ê, u, ю, я* soften the consonants before them. This is the closest variant in terms of Russian voicing. The only case requiring the soft sign for a consonant is its position before *ư*, in order to show a soft consonant before the sound which does not soften it. M.A. Syunnerberg is right when arguing that correct spelling *ti* and *chi* is impossible in Russian, because in any case a consonant will be softened with the following vowel «*u*» (in Russian *tiến* and *chiến* sound the same). The Vietnamese form of a toponym or an anthroponym must be given in brackets when used for the first time in an academic work to identify them [Syunnerberg 2014: 60].

There are numerous toponyms with diphthong *iê* in Vietnamese. “The Instructions for Russian Spelling Vietnamese Geographical Names”, and other editions following it suggest to spell this letter combination «*ьe*». The most well-known examples are *Вьетнам, Дьенбьенфу, Нго Динь Зьем*. But some researchers are of the opinion that in this way we must only spell the diphthongs in the words

with “heavy” tones or those before final *p, t, c, ch*, which “tighten”, or shorten, the diphthong, but in other cases it should be spelled «иє» [Ibid.: 61]. However, we agree with I.V. Britov that this rule will only complicate the process of spelling Vietnamese proper names in Russian and in a number of cases spoil the perception of the Vietnamese phonation, like with the word *Tiếp*, which does not sound «тъеп» in Vietnamese, as it is suggested to be spelled in Russian [Britov 2021: 67–74]. At the same time, any Russian will find it difficult to pronounce a consonant being softened with the soft sign and followed with the ioted «е». Therefore, we suggest to spell all the Vietnamese proper names with the diphthong *iê*, by means of the Russian letter combination «иє». But the toponyms and anthroponyms firmly embedded into the language and for a long time used in the academic, political and information space, must be spelled as usual. They are: «Вьетнам» and all its derivatives, «Дьенбьенфу», the place of the decisive battle in the First Indochina war, and «Нго Динь Зьем», the name of the first president of the Republic of Vietnam.

Complicated Vietnamese proper names

Before having taken their current Russian form, Vietnamese names had to undergo many changes. M.A. Syunnerberg writes about it with full knowledge in his work [Syunnerberg 2014]. At last, they arrived at the decision to write three elements of a Vietnamese name separately, each element with a capital letter (for example, *Phan Van Dong*). But Vietnamese, unlike the overwhelming majority of the peoples, are not satisfied with the only name, but change their names in the course of the life. First and foremost, it concerns rulers of the state. They used to leave behind their posthumous temple names (for example, *Le Thanh Tong*). Besides, they are named by the era of their governing. This is especially true of the *Nguyen*, the last Vietnamese dynasty. Its first emperor *Phuc Anh* received the temple name *Nguyen The To*, but he is more known as *Gia Long* by the era of his governing. In academic and reference literature you can find two variants of writing a temple name and a name by an era of governing, either like common names, when each element is written separately with a capital letter (*Le Thanh Tong, Gia Long*) or with the hyphen joining the last element (*Le Thanh-tong, Gia-long*). For the RAS ICCA editions we suggest to follow the rules set by the translators and editors of “Dai Viet su ky toan thu” [Polnoe sobranie... 2002: 54–55]. According to these rules, the first two elements of the emperors’ temple names are written with capital letters, and the last one with the hyphen: *Ле Тхань-тонг, Ле Тхай-то*. Names of eras are written as follows: double-syllable names – the first element with a capital letter, the second one with the hyphen; the whole word in italics (*Кань-хынг, Хонг-дык*); polysyllable ones – with separate double-syllable semantic components, each of them with the hyphen and separately from the others, the first one with a capital letter, the entire name in italics (*Тхиен-кам ти-бао*). Name-titles of nobility are written as follows: the name part (in one word), the hyphen, the title (in italics, in one word): Тай-выонг, Зунг-куокконг, Тхуатзыонг-хау. When first mentioned, names and titles should be written in Vietnamese in brackets.

How to get to scientific databases

We would like to touch another problem in this article, the problem of spelling names while citing sources. Correct lists of literature in academic articles are of great importance for various ratings both of academic editions and research-workers. In foreign English editions Vietnamese names are written in American English. i.e., in lists of literature you often see the full family name and initials instead of a middle name and a given name. Thus, *Nguyễn Anh Hùng* becomes *Nguyen*

A. H. If in the text there are references to the works of namesakes (Nguyen is a widely spread family name in Vietnam), sometimes having the same initials, the confusion is inevitable. Also, Vietnamese researchers themselves, publishing their works in foreign journals often write their names in the Western way, i.e., first a given name is written, and the family name is put at the end. Thus, instead of *Lê Thị Nguyễn* (all the names are but examples) you may see Nguyen T. L. in the list, and sometimes it is hardly possible to know, who the person is.

Names of Vietnamese researchers in editions of the RAS ICCA should be written in the Vietnamese way, i.e., the family name, the middle name, the given name. In lists of literature, if an article is published in a Vietnamese edition, the author's name must be spelled with every diacritical mark. If an article is published in English, Vietnamese anthroponyms and toponyms are written in the text with no diacritic, but they must be given in Vietnamese in brackets when first mentioned.

Conclusion

The language is a living and constantly developing organism. In response to the changes in the environment, it changes itself in all its components: phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, graphics, so do the principles of spelling borrowed words. But the development of Internet, social nets, search systems hashtags etc. has aggravated the matter of unification, unified standards, and common rules, as never before. This small article is an attempt to make some changes in the rules of spelling Vietnamese toponyms and anthroponyms, set by specialists in the 20th century. We hope, it is a step towards a future common standard.

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SCIENTIFIC LIFE

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A SCIENTIFIC DISCUSSION ON THE CURRENT STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND VIETNAM: MIXED ESTIMATES BY THE TWO PARTIES

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Abstract. The article provides an overview of the round table held by CIVAS RAS ICCA together with scientists from the VASS Institute for European Studies to discuss the results of the decade-long comprehensive strategic partnership between Russia and Vietnam, as well as an international conference of the Institute of Economics of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the same Vietnamese partner dedicated to Russian-Vietnamese cooperation in the era of sanctions. Vietnamese scientists are convinced that mutual relations are being strengthened and improved, and interaction is developing in all areas. Russian scientists are more critical. They noted the decline in Russian influence in Vietnam in all areas, which worsened after the start of the NWO. A particularly weak point is trade and economic cooperation. The causes of this phenomenon were analyzed and measures were proposed to correct the situation. According to experts, one of the main conditions for improving the current situation is Vietnam's departure from pro-Western guidelines.

Keywords: Vietnam, Russia, Russian-Vietnamese economic cooperation, Russian-Vietnamese cooperation in science and culture, energy cooperation, comprehensive strategic partnership, sanctions.

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On September 20, 2022 the Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies held a round-table discussion with the researchers of the Institute for European Studies (IES) VASS dedicated to the results of the decade-long comprehensive strategic partnership of Russia and Vietnam (Fig. 1). The relative aspect of the subject (the influence of sanctions on the bilateral cooperation) was discussed at the international conference of the RAS Institute of Economics and the above-mentioned Vietnamese partner on October 18, 2022. The participants discussed achievements, prospects and issues of the bilateral cooperation.



Fig. 1. Round table at RAS ICCA. *Author's photo*

Vietnamese researchers are convinced that mutual relations are being fortified and improved allowing not only to maintain the traditions of our true friendship, but also to develop the interaction in every sphere of the bilateral cooperation. Thus, Nguyen Chien Thang, Director of the VASS IES, drew attention to the fact that multi-vector policy of Russia contributed to real changes in the relations with the SRV. Vu Thuy Trang, Head of the Center for Russia and the CIS Studies of the VASS IES, mentioned that “despite numerous ups and downs, the leaders of the two countries always prioritize the maintenance and promotion of good values, cultivated by the two peoples, creating important premises for the development of cooperation in all fields”. Nevertheless (so I.A. Korgun, leader of the Center of Russian Strategy in Asia of the RAS IE, and Nguyen Quoc Hung, senior researcher of the Center), in the near future the Soviet legacy devaluation is probable due to the special military operation in Ukraine and the deterioration of the bilateral relations.

Russian researchers emphasized a significant difference of nature and results of the parties' cooperation in various spheres. E.V. Kobelev, leading researcher of the Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies, pointed out a political component having shown a special dynamism in its development. He emphasized that the leaders of all branches of power of the two countries maintain regular and intensive contacts. Even despite COVID-19 pandemics and the aggravation of the international situation, the dialogue at the higher and other levels continues. Inter-parliamentary ties allow to timely provide the necessary legislative basis for the bilateral relations. The high level of cooperation is maintained in the sphere of defense and security. The two countries' Defense Ministries regularly pursue the strategic dialogue, a number of documents on military interaction have been signed, common military exercises are held, Russian specialists provide technical assistance, the warships of the both countries enter each other's ports, they both fight piracy in the Strait of Malacca.

Russian researchers emphasized the hardships of the bilateral relations, while their Vietnamese colleagues avoided this. E.V. Kobelev pointed out two multi-directional factors which recently negatively affected the cooperation dynamics, i.e., on the one hand, the tension of Vietnam-China relations due to the debated islands in the South China Sea, on the other, Hanoi's course to the close cooperation with the US, Hanoi expecting the US assistance in the case of a serious conflict with China. Under the influence of these factors (so the patriarch of the Vietnamese studies in Russia),

the former confidence is disappearing, and important common projects in economic and military-technical fields are being hampered, etc.

The condition of the bilateral relations was most acutely estimated by D.V. Mosyakov, D.Sc. (History), Head of the Center for SEA, Australia and Oceania, RAS Institute of Oriental Studies. He thinks that the statements of the officials of Russia and Vietnam do not correspond to the current realities of cooperation. The thing is that influence groups in Vietnam oriented to the US interfere with the expansion of ties with Russia. Vietnam takes advantages out of trade confrontation of the US and China and out of capital transfer of foreign investors from China to Vietnam, while Russia is becoming a toxic partner. The economic elite connected with Russia can influence some political decisions of Vietnam, but it is necessary to work with it to fortify the relations.

The weakest sphere where since 2012 difficulties have increased, is acknowledged the trade-economic cooperation. Such an estimate found its reflection in numerous papers with the theme (Vu Thuy Trang, Head of the Center for Russia and the CIS Studies, Nguyen Ha Phuong, a researcher of the Institute of Southeastern Asia, VASS, Russian researchers V.M. Mazyrin and D.V. Mosyakov). According to Russian experts' data, the commodity turnover between Russia and Vietnam was USD 2,48 billion for eight months of 2022, as compared with USD 7,8 billion as the result of 2021. It is expected its more than doubled drop, while the RF and EAEU share in the structure of Vietnamese import and export is no more than 1%.

It was mentioned the increasing RF deficit in the trade with the SRV due to a quicker and more successful development of Vietnamese export compared to Russian one. Among the causes, restraining the flow of goods from Vietnam V.M. Mazyrin mentioned trigger mechanisms in the Agreement on the Free Trade Area of the SRV–EAEU, concerning such Vietnam's priorities as rice, clothes etc. Thus, supplying cars from Russia is limited with the shortage of assembly facilities in the SRV, supplying oil, oil products and coal is limited with high prices, inefficient logistic and other barriers. Thus, Russian export is limited with the Vietnamese measures for the protection of some export groups (cardboard, fertilizers).

The participants of the discussions concluded that these results do not meet the parties' potentials and pointed to such issues as non-tariff barriers, foreign competition, high costs and time for transporting goods, binding of payments essentially to the equivalent in US dollars, insufficient diversification of trade and investments.

In conditions of confrontation with the West the RF found other difficulties in the way of supplying its goods, both traditional (rolled steel, fertilizers, oil products) and new, perspective, gaining momentum (grain). Fearing secondary sanctions, Vietnamese companies reduced or stopped buying Russian goods, not to risk the trade with Western partners. An obvious barrier in the payment of goods is the disconnection of Russian banks from SWIFT and other consequences of the sanction pressure, such as the absence of direct flights. The researchers of the RAS IE are expecting that the US and their Western allies will soon introduce new sanctions aggravating trade conditions between Russia and Vietnam.

Russian experts state that chief competitors of Russia, as far as Vietnam is concerned, i.e., the US and China, increase the commodity turnover with Vietnam much quicker and left Russia far behind (in 2012-2021 our average annual growth was about 10%, while theirs being 30-40%). As a consequence, in the list of trade partners Russia takes still lower positions, and the economic influence of our opponents and their soft power are increasing.

Also, the Russian-Vietnamese trade is interfered with decreasing investment cooperation, Russia is losing positions in the strategic branches of Vietnamese economy. A great damage to our

relations was “the postponement” of building a number of big industrial facilities, such as NPP, due, in the opinion of Russian experts, to Washington’s recommendations blocking the promotion of the RF companies to these branches. For instance, the sanctions concerned Rostec, Rosneft projects and others. Retired Vietnamese experts, among them Nguyen Chi Tam, the former trade representative of the SRV in the RF, consider that the continuation of projects in the initial stage of their realization (both big energy projects and military-technical ones) today is hardly possible, and they are supposed to be frozen.

Also, the direct VASS participants of the discussion acknowledging the negative influence of sanctions (but in 2022) see one of the causes in the oil price volatility since 2015. At the same time, they emphasize that due to the Agreement on the Free Trade with EAEU the flow of Vietnamese investments in Russia significantly increased, mostly due to energy projects, building industrial dairy complexes by TH True Milk. According to the data given by M.O. Turaeva, leading researcher of the Center for Post-Soviet Studies of the RAS IE, 68% of Vietnamese FDI have been made into mining, agriculture, IT, energy. Russia’s share of the total investment volume from the SRV is 7,7%. At the same time, the leaders of attracting FDI to Vietnam are still the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Japan, while Russia ranks 26th in September 2022 (Fig. 2). Mentioning the obvious importance of maintaining and developing of investment cooperation with the SRV, D.V. Mosyakov pointed out among their premises the desire of JSC Zarubezhneft to become the chief Russian partner of SC PetroVietnam, launching ships on the line Haiphong–Ho Chi Minh City–Vladivostok, the discourse of the opportunities of parallel import-export and direct flights.



Fig. 2. Report by M. O. Turaeva at the Institute of Economics. *Author's photo*

V.M. Mazyrin pointed to the task of overcoming this situation, namely, the transfer of Russian trade flows from the West to Asia and at the same time their diversification in order to direct them not only to China and India, but also to ASEAN-countries, in particular, to Vietnam. Therefore, experts from RAS IE suggested to re-consider the mechanism of the Agreement on the Free Trade Area, to deepen the cooperation in wood treatment and building livestock complexes, to continue the exploration of deposits on the SRV shelf, the construction of a gas-fired power plant in Quang Tri province. The urgent tasks are acknowledged improving conditions for export-import operations, enhancing competitiveness and efficiency of logistic, facilitating mutual settlement realized in national currencies, cooperation diversification, including the projects in the sphere of renewable energy resources. At the same time, the colleagues from the SRV agreed that to increase commodity

turnover and investments by 15-20 times, on the suggestion of the SRV President Nguyen Xuan Phuc, is not possible, so far.

Unlike other economic branches, in the opinion of the experts, the most successful one is the energy cooperation. In his paper V.M. Mazyrin, D.Sc. (Economics), Head of the Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies of the RAS Institute of China and Contemporary Asia, and I.D. Kalmykov, undergraduate of the Institute of Asian and African Countries at Lomonosov Moscow State University mentioned that for more than thirty years hydrocarbon production has remained the most profitable sphere of this cooperation, Vietsovpetro being currently the leader of the oil and gas sector and the most successful foreign enterprise in Vietnam.

Nguyen Thanh Lan, Deputy Director of the Center for Russia and CIS Studies of the Institute for European Studies VASS, stated that Russia–Vietnam cooperation in the efficiently developed energy sphere is of great importance in the SRV energy sustainability. In the near future Vietnam's need in energy import will swiftly grow, its economy's forecasts being super-optimistic. Thus, the enlarging and fortifying trade with Russia will be of great importance; it has a great potential creating objective grounds for new projects in the energy sphere and for the participation of Russian companies. Among the obstacles for promoting cooperation in this sphere there has been mentioned infrastructure which does not meet the needs, logistic service and anti-Russian sanctions.

Experts gave different estimates of the cooperation in scientific-technical and cultural spheres. Tran Thi Hanh Ha (the Institute for European Studies VASS) pointed out its formal premises: both governments maintain cultural exchange, which is reflected in the Cultural diplomacy strategy of Vietnam and in the principles of Russian policy in the field of cultural and humanitarian cooperation. The legal base for the interaction serves the Agreement on the Strategic Partnership in the field of education, science and techniques (November 2014). Nguyen Chien Thang considers a big Vietnamese diaspora (more than 80 thousand persons) in the RF and the agreements providing legal guarantees for it to be a positive factor of fortifying bilateral economic and cultural relations. In 2022 the Society of Vietnamese-Russian friendship intends to deepen the cooperation with the partners through its diaspora and inter-regional ties.

Dang Thi Phuong Hoa, acting editor-in-chief of "The European Studies" journal, mentioned a great contribution of the USSR/RF into the development of Vietnam's science and technique, training of skilled specialists, and reminded that Soviet specialists shared their rich experience and conducted joint research. Scientific and technical cooperation is priority up to 2030; the parties intend to conduct joint research in the sphere of energy and IT, medicine, and training of personnel.

E.V. Nikulina, a researcher of the Center for Vietnam and ASEAN Studies made an objective analysis of the cooperation in this sphere. According to her data, currently the mutual links are limited with the exchange of scientific and technical information, and the transfer of technologies and joint research are much weaker due to the imperfect mechanism of management and legal support, the absence of development stimuli, the administrative support, also, complicated with limited funding. In comparison with the Soviet period the situation has changed dramatically. Vietnam intensifies the cooperation in the field of science and education with the US, Japan, Australia, EU countries. Currently, the number of Vietnamese students in these countries surpasses the number of the SRV students at Russian universities. At this background Russia has a modest place in the international relations of Vietnamese scientific institutions.

At the same time, E.V. Nikulina called to maintain unique projects with long history, including the Joint Russian-Vietnamese Tropical research and technological Center, projects of the Far Eastern Branch of the RAS and the Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology in the field of marine

biology and ecology, pharmacology and biotechnology, marine-geological and geophysical research, biology, ecology and genetics of land and water ecosystems. Also, joint expeditions in Vietnam's territorial waters on the science ships of the Far Eastern Branch of the RAS, which allow to update numerous data on Vietnam's maritime resources.

A special attention was drawn to the cooperation in the field of nuclear science. It was proposed to transit as soon as possible to the stage of realization of the Hi-Tech innovation project, namely to construct, with the assistance of Rosatom, the Center for Nuclear Science and Technologies in Vietnam. Its target is, in particular, to produce nuclear isotopes for needs of agricultural complex and medicine, create premises for a NPP construction.

The rare examples of successful cooperation in the field of humanities were mentioned, such as linguistic expeditions with the task to describe phonetics, lexica and grammar of the languages of small nations of Vietnam, as well as the edition of a New Big Vietnamese-Russian Dictionary in two volumes, the result of the more than 20 years' work of the team of the two countries' researchers.

At the same time, there were mentioned unfavorable tendencies; Russian literature has lost its leading positions in Vietnamese society; translation and dissemination of Russian literature is more complicated every day due to the reduction in the number of translators; the number of books printed is low; therefore, they are not available to the general reader.

The situation in the field of cinema, theater and painting in the scope of the cultural exchange is still more alarming, than in literature. The only opportunity to get acquainted with the other country's culture are the Days of culture of the two countries, which are held in turn once every three years. Tran Thi Hanh Ha acknowledged that such a cultural exchange is insufficient to attract the young generation, who is more interested in art and literature of Europe, America, China or Korea, than in those of Russia.

Vietnamese researchers inform that the actors of Vietnamese culture and its leaders, many of them being the graduates of Soviet and Russian universities, call to intensify cultural exchanges, to increase the number of students in Russian art universities. They need to oppose the total expansion of the Western, first of all, American culture.

Summing up the above-mentioned successes and hardships, P.Yu. Tsvetov, an assistant professor of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RF, concluded that current bilateral relations do not meet the spirit of comprehensive strategic partnership. He emphasized a rather skeptical attitude to the results of our decade-long partnership in the expert community of the two countries and the absence of consensus on the meaning of the term. In the expert's opinion, it means the relations of the two countries with a broad field of mutually beneficial cooperation. a certain degree of confidence between the parties' leaders aimed to a long-term prospect with no confrontation on any issues. The expert concludes that Russia and Vietnam possess obviously more spheres of interaction and mutual understanding than with many other countries, but you should not expect something special. These are not allied relations of the Soviet era. Today they are relations of friendship and cooperation between close partners, along with the others.

Still more optimistic was Dr. Dang Thi Phuong Hoa. She believes that Vietnam's role in ASEAN for the RF has increased after the launching of the special military operation. The situation in Vietnam is stable, foreign policy is well-balanced, and this has a positive effect on Russia. The interest to Russia in Vietnam is sufficiently high to continue the cooperation.

Estimating prospects and challenges of mutual relations, V.M. Mazyrin supposed that one of the chief conditions to improve the current situation is Vietnam's diversion from pro-Western guiding lines. In the expert's opinion, this may happen, if Hanoi is aware of the world's being broken into

two camps, i.e., on the one hand, the developing countries fighting for their independence with Russia and China at the head, on the other, the Western block, desiring to maintain the US hegemony and one-polar architecture.

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THE CONFERENCE ON TRADITIONAL VIETNAM IN THE RAS ICCA

A.L. Fedorin¹

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 emigres' life in the US. In his ethnographic notices titled "The Manicure Diaspora: the Vietnamese in America" he showed how numerous Vietnamese emigres 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.

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DISSERTATION DEFENSE

The defense of the dissertation for obtaining the scientific degree of candidate (PhD) in Law by Nguyen Son Nam [the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia] with the theme "The Evolution of the legal regulation of the state and confessional relations in Vietnam"

The defense of the dissertation on specialty 5.1.1 – Theoretical and historical legal sciences – was held on December 14, 2022 at the Dissertation Council Session PDS 0900.007 based on the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia.

For the first time in Vietnamese legal science the dissertation discusses the evolution of the legal regulation of the state and confessional relations in Vietnam from the historical-legal standpoint in the broad chronological scope, in their making and development.

The work reflects the civilizational and cultural nature of the regulation of the state and confessional relations which should be perceived like cultural transformations in Vietnam and its interaction with other religious cultures, such as Indian and Chinese cultures, Western religious culture, and atheism in the USSR.

The dissertation contains different models of the state and confessional relations, which functioned in different historical periods, and the currently existing model.

The research-work argues the idea that legislative regulation of confessional relations and the state policy can in this respect constructively and efficiently be built but taking into account civilizational grounds, culture and traditions of the Vietnamese people.

The results of the research can serve the ground for improving the legislation on freedom of religion and religious associations in Vietnam, as well as the practice of law enforcement in this sphere.

Supervisor: Nemytina Marina Viktorovna, D.Sc. (Law), Professor, the Department of Public Policy and State and Law History of the Institute for Law of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia.

Opponents:

Dorskaya Alexandra Andreevna, D.Sc. (Law), Professor, Head of the Department of the General Theoretical Legal Disciplines of the North-Western Branch of the Russian State University of Justice;

Bespalko Viktor Gennadievich, D.Sc. (Law), Assistant Professor of the Arefieva Department of Philosophy, Political Science and Sociology of National Research University MPEI;

Varlamova Natalia Vladimirovna, Ph.D. (Law), Assistant Professor, Leading Researcher, the RAS Institute of State and Law.

Main Publications

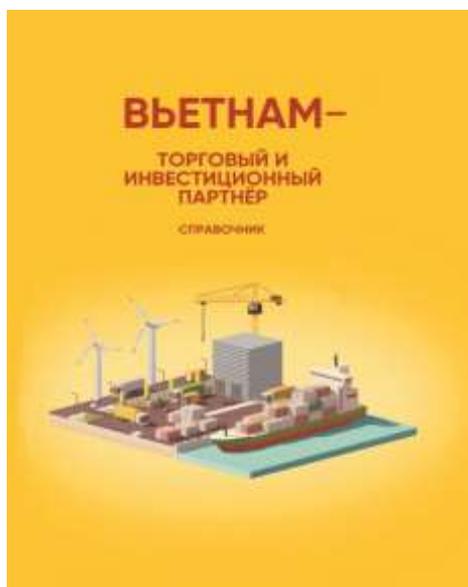
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BOOKSHELF

DOI: 10.54631/VS.2022.64-117630

THE UNIQUE VIETNAM TRADE-ECONOMIC GUIDE

A.A. Rogozhin¹



Vietnam – Trade and Investment Partner: Handbook.
Moscow: ICCA RAS, 2022. 389 p. ISBN 978-5-8381-0447-2

The review is given to the handbook “Vietnam – Trade and Investment Partner” – a unique publication that combines the deep knowledge of Vietnam and a business approach that takes into account the interests of Russian entrepreneurs working or planning to work in Vietnam. The authors paid great attention to almost all sectors of the Vietnamese economy, analyzing their problems and assessing the prospects for their development, and also spoke about Vietnam's relations with the main partner countries and international economic organizations. The book provides information about the organization and conditions of doing business in Vietnam. This

guide will be very useful to all Russian entrepreneurs who are already working in the Vietnamese market, and especially to those who are going to do so.

Keywords: Vietnam, foreign economic relations, leading partners, ASEAN countries, Russian entrepreneurs in Vietnam.

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First of all, it is noteworthy that this guide is unique. In the 1990s there were attempts to prepare such editions in Russia, but as their authors usually were former officials of the Ministry of Foreign Trade of the USSR, the content of those manuals, as a rule, was limited with the information

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on foreign trade regulation of the partner countries. In the early decades of the 21st century, mostly in response to practical demands and taking into account Russia's "Turn to the East", Russian Vietnamists chose the path of revival.

The reviewed guide is a clear example of the action. In Russia this edition is the first of the kind. It managed to unite deep knowledge of the country and its specificity in various aspects with a businesslike approach allowing for the interests of Russian entrepreneurs working or planning to work in Vietnam. As far as the amount of information and the depth of its analysis are concerned, this guide appears to far surpass analogous foreign works (for example, the recently published "Vietnam Business Guide" (Ho Chi Minh City, 2021), having been prepared by ACSV Legal, an international, Vietnam based law-firm, and the representative office of the British Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam).

The positive features of the reviewed guide are as follows:

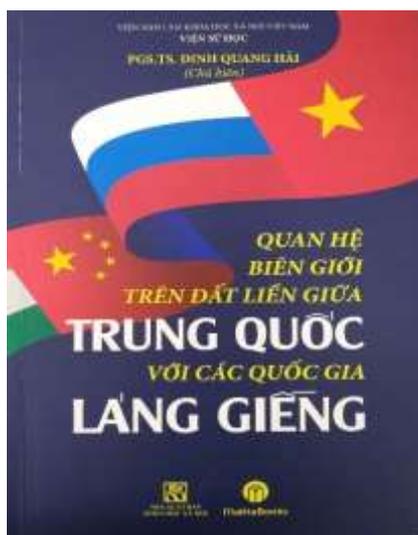
- a huge amount of collected and analyzed concrete information, useful for entrepreneurs, who are going to work in Vietnam's market both in the sphere of trade and in investment field. The authors not only have collected a big new factual material, including business cases, but also have given very informative statistical data, always greatly needed by entrepreneurs for whom figures are sometimes more significant than the text itself;
- the authors appear to have made a right move, having prepared one-of-a-kind edition, attractive to businessmen, trade and investment, because in their ideas of the market they have to assess both the trade component and the investment one;
- for the first time the authors of the reference book have paid great attention to the development of virtually all the sectors of Vietnam's economy. At the same time, this is not their academic matter-of-fact description, but the analysis of these branches' problems, of the measures undertaken by governments to solve them, and the assessment of prospects of developing these or those branches of Vietnam's economy, which is most important for Russian partners;
- the authors clearly draw special attention of Russian entrepreneurs to regional features of Vietnam's economy and the specificity of economic zones of various types. This is very important for beginners at Vietnam's market, who sometimes do not know that Vietnam is a densely populated and very diverse (not only economically) country; it is not reduced but to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City;
- a big part on economic relations of Vietnam with its main partner countries and international economic organizations seems to have been successfully included. Certainly, it will be attractive for Russian entrepreneurs while studying the activity of their rivals at Vietnam's market, the more so that the authors not only give broad panoramic view of trade and investment relations of Vietnam with its foreign partners, but also show their minor things sending the analysis down to the proprietary level;
- we believe that (often met in the guide) comparisons of Vietnam with other countries, first and foremost with those of ASEAN, will be very useful for Russian entrepreneurs, especially useful for potential investors who assess advantages and risks of several countries of the region;
- parts 4 and 5 in the guide will be especially useful to Russian entrepreneurs. They contain the information on the organization and condition of business in Vietnam and its administrative and legal specificity.

There is no doubt that the reviewed guide will be of invaluable aid to all Russian entrepreneurs, who are working at Vietnam's market, and especially to beginners. This guide is a valuable practical step on the way of the realization of the "Turn to the East" doctrine.

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COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH ON CHINA'S LAND BORDER RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

Nguyen Manh Dung¹



Quan hệ biên giới trên đất liền giữa Trung Quốc với các quốc gia láng giềng (Land Border Relations Between China and Neighboring Countries). Edited by Dinh Quang Hai. Hanoi: Social Sciences Publishers, Mai Ha Books, 2022. 370 p. ISBN 978-604-308-860-1

Abstract: China is one of the rare countries with a rich history and culture, a large area and extremely diverse natural conditions and resources. Played as a superpower, China's policies in fact have regional, interregional and global scope and influence. Among historical and contemporary issues, the border relations between China and neighboring countries is one of the most complex issues which are the top concern in the foreign affairs of the concerned sides including Vietnam. The author of the review, at the request of the journal, focuses on the section of the book that characterizes the border aspects of relations between China and Vietnam, moreover, from the standpoint of Vietnamese interests and perception. On the base of various sources of material and given a dimensional and interdisciplinary approach, with the contributors as Vietnamese experts in historical studies, international studies, regional studies, country studies, the book is a valuable work, providing background knowledge on China's policy and border relations with neighboring countries in history, especially since 1949.

Keywords: China, border relations, international relations, Vietnam, Russia, Southeast Asian countries.

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On the study on world history and international relations in Vietnam, China is one of the research subjects and themes that greatly attract Vietnamese scholarship. Chinese culture and civilisation influenced and impacted widely throughout East Asia, forming civilisations that

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A.J Toynbee from his *sous-classe* classification has considered as civilisations satellites. Obviously, China is a power in the world with a rich historical and cultural tradition. It is the fourth largest country by land area in the world after Russia, Canada and the United States. In international and regional relations, there are so far problems that have been, are and will have a persistent and long-term influence on China's foreign policy with regional countries, including relations of the mainland border between China and neighboring countries, especially those that share land borders with China.

The book under the title “Land border relations between China and neighboring countries” is one of the important scientific monographs with profound theoretical and practical significance, providing useful insights on China's policies and actions in border-territorial relations with neighboring countries.

Historians, political scientists, ethnologists, international researchers in such their areas of specialisation as Chinese studies, the Soviet Union/Russian Federation studies, Indian studies, Vietnamese studies, Southeast Asian studies, Area studies contribute to the work which is edited by Prof. Dr. Dinh Quang Hai, Editor-in-Chief of Vietnam's leading scientific journal Journal of Historical Studies, former Director of the Vietnam Institute of History.

The overarching content of the work is the border policies and the land border relations between China and neighboring countries with a time focus (scope) since October 1949 (and including comparative analysis in the historical past). On the other hand, due to time constraints, this book only seeks to focus on major issues of policy and land border relations between China and neighboring countries as case studies.

In addition to the Preface and Conclusion, the book consists of five chapters:

Chapter One provides an overview of the process of forming the Chinese frontier and the border policy of the People's Republic of China. From the Chinese concepts of the border definition and the ideological basis for the border formation, this chapter clarifies the process of forming the Chinese frontier, China's border policy, especially since the People's Republic of China. By September 2019, China had diplomatic relations with 180 countries. Basically, China's foreign policy is the “five principles of peaceful coexistence” (from the time of Premier Minister Chou En-lai). However, the book comes to comment that over the past 70 years (1949-2020), China's foreign policy and guideline did not fully comply with that principle, especially in border-territorial relations with neighboring countries.

Chapter Two. Border relations between China and Tsar Russia and the Soviet Union/Russian Federation address two main focuses on the process of forming the China-Russia/Soviet border (from the seventeenth century to the early 1920s), the border policy of the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China. The work also highlights why China did not question the border between China and the Soviet Union until 1959?

Chapter Three is to shed useful insights on China's land border relations with Southeast Asian countries, Laos and Myanmar. This is a chapter with rich and diverse focuses on typical cases of China's border relations with India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Laos, and Myanmar. The work notes that the unresolved border disputes with India so far make the smaller South Asian and Southeast Asian countries becoming a very important buffer zone between India and China.

Chapter Four considering as the essential chapter of the book, is to deal with the land border relations between China and Vietnam. Among the borderline between Vietnam and neighboring countries, the Vietnam and China border is the most important and the most complicated border. The

land border between the two countries covers 1,065.652 km long in a total length of 1,449.466 km (about 384 km at sea). Its starting point is the intersection of the border lines of three countries China-Vietnam-Laos at the Apachai border gate (Lai Chau province, Vietnam) and the end of the border line is the first point of the territorial water delimitation in the Gulf of Tonkin (p. 233).

During the French colonial period of Vietnam, and the Qing dynasty of China, the land border was one of crucial problems in French pacification of Vietnam, for instance the Franco-Qing Treaty was signed in Tianjin (China) in 1885 with many provisions related to surveying and border marking process; in 1887, France - Qing China basically planned the land border between Tonkin and Qing China (p.242). In 1895, the Franco-Chinese Convention was signed, resulting in a definitive demarcation of the Tonkinese and Chinese border and the border between Laos and China as well (p. 244).

As for the period from 1966 to 1979, China stepped up activities that violated the borders and expanded the territorial encroachment with a large number of shape. In February 1979, China attacked six northern border provinces of Vietnam. The Vietnam-China border war broke out, and the relationship between the two countries was interrupted until the late 1980s (p. 255–256). And during 10 years from 1980 to 1991, the two sides did not conduct any round of border negotiations (p. 258).

From 1994 to 1999, Vietnam and China conducted 6 rounds of government level negotiations, 16 rounds of joint working group negotiations, and 3 rounds of group negotiations on a draft of a treaty of land border. At the end of 1999, the two countries signed the Land border Treaty, a treaty of great significance for the two countries. The demarcation activities continued from 2000 to 2009 (p.263-273).

Thus, this is a comprehensive and in-depth chapter on China's border relations with Vietnam before and after 1945, during the period 1980 and 1999, and from 1999 to 2009; as well as addressing a number of major issues in the relationship such as the land demarcation, the Border Treaty dated 30 December 1999, the status of land and population management in the border area between the two countries since 1945.

Indeed, regarding the Vietnamese-Chinese land border, the book also mentions the situation of land management and population in the border areas, in which the issues of ethnic structure characteristics, ethnic policies with the adjusted process in both countries; then the impact of border policy on ethnic minorities in border areas and so on are the major contents relatively concretely presented in this chapter.

Chapter Five provides remarked comments on land border relations between China and neighboring countries. It comes to China's policy on border and territorial issues, emphasizing the policy of “maintaining the status quo”, flexible changing to protect national interests; China's border and territorial policy, the process of resolving the land border issue. The impact of Chinese border relations to Asia-Pacific countries with a positive effect is to maintain a peaceful international environment for economic development. In addition to the claim to Taiwan, the book comes to remark that China constantly causes border and territorial issues with almost its neighbours, and disputes have developed into armed conflicts. On the other hand, the negative effects cause instability in all aspects. The work also assesses the impact on Vietnam in both positive and negative effects. The book states that the Vietnam-China relationship is always the most important and awkward foreign policy issue for Vietnam (p. 342).

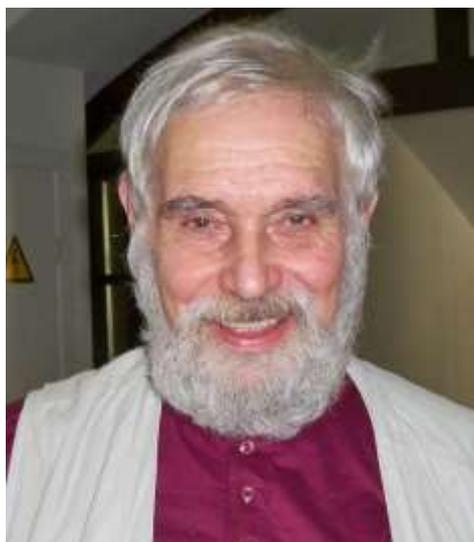
In summary, given an interdisciplinary approach, along with diverse, reliable, official and up-to-date documents, the work contributes to provide a general picture on the frontier relations between China and neighboring countries. As for Vietnam, the authors consider that China's competition for regional influence with the United States has created more favorable conditions for Vietnam to strengthen her relations with both the United States and China and to implement the Vietnamese policy of independence and self-reliance, relationship diversification and multilateralization. The two powers (the U.S, China) in increasing their cooperation seem to contribute positively to regional activities.

Developing friendly and neighborly relations with China is one of the top priorities in Vietnam's foreign policy. Vietnam needs and is able to take advantage of trends and cooperation programs in line with her economic and strategic interests, “to enhance national general force and at the same time take all advantage of opportunity to settle border and territorial disputes with China for the respect of international law” (p. 360).

SCHOLAR'S JUBILEE

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THE PATRIARCH OF THE RUSSIAN ORIENTAL STUDIES The 90th birthyear of D.V. Deopik



On November 9, 2022 Dega Vital'evich Deopik celebrated his 90th birthyear. His name is known to students, graduates, teachers and researchers of numerous institutes and universities, as well as to scholars studying ancient and medieval Asia, history and archeology.

In 1956 Dega Deopik graduated from the Historical faculty of MGU. In 1961 he defended his candidate dissertation with the theme "Early Vietnamese States" (supervisor A.A. Guber). For his dissertation he not only worked out French and Vietnamese literature, but also translated such Chinese sources as several chapters of "Records of the Grand Historian" by Sima Qian (c. 145 – c. 86 BC) and the Spring and Autumn Period: Hegemony of Wu (506 – 496 BC) and Hegemony of Yue (496 – 465 BC).

Many years of his life D.V. Deopik devoted to his first love, i.e., to Vietnam. At the time when Vietnamese studies in the USSR were just beginning, when there were no specialists, some sources had not been published yet, other were hard to be got, he taught courses in all the disciplines concerning Vietnam, except the language, including geography, economics and contemporary

history. D.V. Deopik had never borrowed ideas and information from his European or Vietnamese colleagues. Originally, he concentrated on Vietnam's ancient history; that information could be taken from easily accessible Chinese chronicles. Therefore, he had to learn the Chinese language. The list of his publications on Vietnam strikes with the broadest scope of their author's knowledge and interests. There is the analysis of the works by Chinese authors of the Southern Song period (1127 – 1279) concerning Vietnam (jointly with M.Yu. Ulyanov), political history of the Tran dynasty (jointly with A.B. Polyakov), comparative description of Singapore and Vietnamese Ha Tien, peasants' revolts of the 16th century, an analysis of the origin of Confucian exams' laureates, and even medieval splint and woodcarving. This broad subject matter is due to the access of new sources and new publications, which received an adequate response. If the scholar could not do anything himself, he generously gave those themes to his students and supervised their research-works. Among his pupils there are such famous researchers as O.V. Novakova, G.M. Maslov, A.B. Polyakov, A.L. Fedorin, P.V. Pozner, P.Yu. Tsvetov, A.V. Nikitin, K.Yu. Leonov, V.I. Antoshchenko, as well as Vietnamese researchers, who defended their candidate and doctor dissertations in Moscow, and later became the cream of Vietnam's community of historians (Vu Minh Giang, Nguyen Hai Ke, Nguyen Dang Na, etc.). At the final stage of the "Vietnamese" period of his studies D.V. Deopik was busy summarizing the experience and knowledges accumulated by him and his pupils. He created a conceptual course of history of traditional Vietnam, as well as a part on political history in collective monograph "The New History of Vietnam". In 1996 D. Deopik got the doctor degree (History) for the first volume of "History of Vietnam" in two volumes, covering the period from ancient times to the end of the 18th century.

D.V. Deopik stood at the sources of important initiatives. In the 1990s he was the initiator of creating the Center for Vietnam Studies at the Institute of Asian and African Countries at MGU. It was one of the biggest Centers for Oriental Studies in Moscow. This center served for carrying out research, translation and publishing projects. It allowed to get an invaluable experience of academic community organizing, as well as of translating and analyzing historical sources. One of such projects has already been completed by A.L. Fedorin. This is the first European translation of the Vietnamese main annals "Dai Viet su ky toan thu" (Complete Annals of Dai Viet), supplemented with translations of Chinese sources and provided with extensive historical and regional commentaries.

Another service rendered to the Russian Oriental and particularly Vietnam studies by the Hero of the day was the foundation of the Institute of Practical Oriental Studies (1994), the first and only non-governmental educational institution in Russia, which trained students in the specialty of "History of Vietnam". For more than twenty years main works of Russian Vietnamists were issued under the auspices and grants of the Institute. All those years D.V. Deopik was the permanent supervisor of the Institute. In 2002 the Institute published the book "D.V. Deopik. Vietnam: History, Tradition, Modernity", a collection of the scholar's articles, published in various editions and scientific journals at different times.

D.V. Deopik's academic interests went far beyond Vietnam. He studied ancient history of India, history of medieval Korea, Japan etc. But in his life-long work he paid the greatest attention to the countries of South-East Asia. He taught lecture courses on ancient and medieval history virtually of all the SEA countries, guided students' works, supervised post-graduates. This allowed him to make courses and educate several generations of specialists, who left a noticeable trace in the study of the SEA countries. He is the author and a co-author of a number of manuals, such as: "History of Vietnam" (vol. 1), parts in "History of Kampuchea", "History of Indonesia", "Archeology of Foreign Asia", "History of Ancient East". Those who study South-East Asia cannot help studying the South

of East Asia, in antiquity being the northern part of “proto-SEA” region. It is the region of historical ancestral homes of nearly all the SEA peoples; here their ancient states emerged; now related ethnic groups live here. Therefore, the students and teachers of the Chair of history of the countries of the Far East and South-East Asia at the Institute of Asian and African Countries of MGU headed by Professor Deopik in 1990 – 2007, were to learn the Old Chinese language and Old Chinese sources. Under D.V. Deopik’s supervision an academic school for study of epigraphic and annalistic funds of the region was formed, first of all of Vietnam. D.V. Deopik has been closely linked with his colleagues and cooperated with them. He is a research adviser of numerous articles and monographs.

The most important part of D.V. Deopik’s academic work is connected with the development and adaptation of different methods of historical research, first and foremost quantitative ones. In 2011 the most significant works in this field were issued in a separate collection.

In 2000 D.V. Deopik was one of the founders of the historical faculty of Saint Tikhon’s Orthodox University of Humanities, where he teaches the courses of history of world’s civilizations, history of Asian and African countries and biblical archeology. For this university he has written a number of original manuals on archeology of ancient Western Asia and on history of Ancient East. These works reflect the author’s great scientific erudition.

D.V. Deopik’s life has been connected with teaching and with students. He does not spare his time for them. His main approach to the work with the students is to attract them to research from the very beginning of their studies. D.V. Deopik offered wonderful perspective themes to his most famous pupils, when they were still students. For many of them, the communication with this handsome man with original thinking and brilliant humor determined their further carrier.

Dega Deopik’s pupils call him the Teacher, who has changed their idea of science. For them he is the embodiment of the current history, a true history which determines people’s lives. His teaching, his readiness always to support and lead the pupil is the example of a special service to people and science.

The editorial board of the journal “Vietnamese Studies” congratulates Dega Vital’evich on his birthday and wishes him many happy returns of the day!

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