

BOOKS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES LIBRARY REVIEW

LƯU VĂN AN. **Political Regimes in Vietnam before the August Revolution: An Overview From the Modern Perspective.** H.: National Politics Publishing House, 2008, 271 pages, Vb 46496.

Political regimes are an important component of the superficial structure. Each era has a regime corresponding and suitable to it. To provide readers with an overview of the political history of Vietnam from the time of founding the country to 1945 when the August Revolution occurred as well as the governing experience of various reigns with different governmental organization and thus, varied mistakes and failure - a great source of lessons for us on building and protecting our country, the four chapters of the book focus on the followings:

Chapter I: *Political regimes in Vietnam from the founding time to the 10th century* – presents the political regimes in Hùng King Era, the era of protection against Chinese invasion, and Ngô, Đinh and pre-Lê Eras.

Chapter II: *Political regimes in Vietnam from the 11th to the 15th century* – describes the political regimes in Lý, Trần, Hồ, and post-Lê Dynasties.

Chapter III: *Political regimes in Vietnam from the 16th to the 19th century* – outlines the political regimes in Mạc – Lê Trung Hưng – Tây Sơn and Nguyễn Dynasties.

Chapter IV: *Political regimes in Vietnam from the 19th century to 1945* – sketches out socio-economic conditions

as well as political happenings and political regimes in those periods of 1858 – 1887, 1887 – 1945; village institutions; and the political organizations other than those within the colonial mechanism.

KHÁNH VÂN

NGUYỄN KHẮC VIỆN. **Southern Vietnam after Điện Biên Phủ Triumph.** (translated by Diệu Bình). H.: Knowledge Publishing House, 2008, 458 pages, Vb 46008.

The book is Nguyễn Khắc Viện's last work in France before he returned to Vietnam to reside.

On collecting and analyzing information from newspapers, magazines and other publications of Vietnam (both the north and the south), of France and the USA, the author outlines the history of southern Vietnam from 1954 to 1963. The author clarified what is meant by "the key to Southern Vietnam was handed by France to the USA, the establishment of the State of Vietnam, France's abdication of responsibilities, the American will to stop Vietnamese revolutionary movements, the gathering of feudal powers in the south". More specifically, he dugged deep into the period of American application of neo-colonialism in southern Vietnam with all means possible. Besides, the author wanted foreign readers to know more about people in southern Vietnam three years after the Điện Biên Phủ victory, about the American intervention, the self-interested activities of Ngô Đình

Diệm government, as well as Vietnamese people's efforts to perform Geneva Accords.

In addition to the Preface, Introduction, Bibliography are the five main parts:

1. From one colonialism to another
2. Portrait of the neo-colonialism (1957- 1960)
3. Southern Vietnam on the international chessboard
4. From suppression to war, from political struggle to military one
5. Towards liberation (1961-1963)

HIÊN LY

NGUYỄN THẾ TRƯỜNG. **Perfecting Agricultural Production in Northern Vietnamese mid- and high-lands.** H.: National Economics University, 2008, 172 pages, Vb 46733.

The northern mid- and high-lands are a vast and advantageous area for developing a varied agricultural economy. Nevertheless, they remain under-developed with high proportion of poor families. What does it take to eradicate poverty and to enrich our peasants? This book helps find out the answer.

Besides the preface and the conclusion, the book is divided into three chapters, in which the author systematises different patterns of agricultural production organization, analyzes the relationship between possessive forms and their corresponding agricultural production organizational patterns, and reviews positive changes, remaining weaknesses, obstacles and problems to be solved, especially those regarding

policies. As a result, the author proposes ways to perfect policies on developing agricultural production patterns in order to exploit the regions' potential to boost their socio-economic conditions.

Additionally, the author introduces experience of some countries in organizing their agricultural production.

HÔNG DIÊN

LUU SONG HÀ. **How Parents Relate to Their Children and Their Behavioural Deviations.** H.: Social Sciences Publishing House, 2008, 225 pages, Vb 45682.

The increasing number of children having deviant behaviours has become a big problem for the whole society, negatively influencing their character development. This book focuses mainly on pupils at junior secondary school and contains two main parts.

Part 1, *Theoretical background* (chapter 1-3), reviews various studies into the relationship between parents-children; specifies signs of behavioural deviations of children and different research approaches; analyzes some methods of regulating children's deviant behaviours from the psychological perspective; and analyzes the relationship between children's deviant behaviours and the corresponding parents-children relationship pattern.

Part 2, *The study* (chapter 4-7), targeting at junior secondary pupils, the author analyzes in great detail the current reality of parents-children relationship and the reality of children's deviant behaviours. As a result, she proposes some psychological practice which helps regulate the relationship between parents

and children to prevent possible behavioural deviations.

HOÀI PHÚC

PHAN ĐẠI DOÃN. **Vietnamese Villages – Some Socio-economic and Cultural Issues**. H.: National Politics Publishing House, 2008, 278 pages, Vb 46491.

The Vietnamese culture until now bears so much characteristics of an agricultural-rural one. Therefore, studying villages means looking into an important, not to say primary, feature of Vietnamese people and society. The book focuses on some traditional and modern issues of the socio-economic and cultural life of Vietnamese villages. The book has three main parts:

Part 1, *Economic structure*, generalizes some economic issues in Vietnamese villages.

Part 2, *Social structure*, brings it into light that Vietnamese villages are a multi-functional community with close relationships; investigates roles and characteristics of a Vietnamese traditional family, a traditional family line in the Red River Delta; studies the establishment and development process of Vietnamese village regulation, and socio-political institutions in Vietnamese rural areas in the latter half of the 20th century.

Part 3, *Cultural structure*, provides an overview of religions and beliefs existing in rural areas of Vietnam; emphasizes on main traditional cultural features of Viet people from a village perspective, and the social structure of a traditional Viet village in the Red River Delta.

TRUNG HẬU

NGUYỄN ĐẮC HÙNG. **Vietnamese Intellectuals Keeping Pace with the Modern Age** (Reference book). H.: National Politics Publishing House, 2008, 285 pages, Vb 46849.

Intellectuals are always considered “the backbone” or “the life-sustaining element” of a nation in the cause of liberating and building a country. In fact, our intellectuals have greatly contributed to the reputation of Vietnam in the world map.

Nowadays the exciting regional and international integration, together with big leaps of the scientific and technological revolution, puts forward important issues which require Vietnamese intellectuals, in the cause of developing and protecting the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, to make great attempts to acquire modern scientific and technological achievements, assisting our country in gradually keeping pace with other nations in the region and in the world.

With four chapters, the author has drawn out a rather comprehensive and lively picture of the Vietnamese intellectuals regarding their roles, positions and development in the modern age. He also specifies main obstacles for Vietnamese intellectuals in the globalization and integration process, and suggests main directions for and solutions to the development of this community in Vietnam.

HÔNG DIÊN

LƯƠNG VIỆT HẢI (chief author). **Ownership and Sustainable Development in Vietnam and China in the Early 21st**

Century. H.: Social Sciences Publishing House, 2008, 316 pages, Vv 9150.

Over nearly three decades since China applied its open-door policy (1978), and more than twenty years since Vietnam performed an economic innovation (1986), issues relating to ownership and sustainable development seem never cooled down in the two countries. Although each period sees a different manifestation of those issues, the common pattern is that at the beginning the transition from purely public ownership to multi-ownership aroused much more heated debates in theory than the later period when each type of ownership has proved its advantages and the market economy has been operating widely.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, a series of socio-economic and environmental problems have been accumulated and become serious. A number of questions relating to sustainable development need sound answers. Many ideas and suggestions have been given, but to some problems, not all.

This book is a collection of writings and speeches of several Vietnamese and Chinese scientists in two big conferences held in each country in terms of ownership and sustainable development in the modern era by Vietnam's Institute of Philosophy - Institute of Social Sciences in collaboration with China's Institute of Social Sciences in 10/2004 and 9/2006.

HẠ VÂN

NGUYỄN ĐỨC TÒN. **Cultural and Ethnic Characteristics of Language and Thinking.** H.: Social Sciences Publishing House, 2008, 588 pages, Vb 46463.

The book focuses on a topical issue, i.e cultural-ethnic characteristics of language and thinking of a people, including: cultural and ethnic characteristics of the generalization and nominalization of the objective world, and the characteristics of lexical meanings and language thinking of Viet people in comparison with other peoples, based on the investigation of some basic lexical fields and groups.

The book has 5 chapters.

In chapter 1, the author presents an overview of culture and the method used to study cultural and ethnic characteristics of language and thinking.

The other 4 chapters (from chapter 2 to 5) analyzes those characteristics in terms of: "reality" and "a language picture of the world"; language nominalisation; lexical meanings; and language thinking.

HUỆ NGUYỄN

VŨ KHÁNH (chief editor). **The Mường in Vietnam.** VNA publishing House. H.: 2008, 140 pages, Vb 46253.

Origin of the local inhabitants

The Mường is one of the five largest ethnic groups in Vietnam, ranking after the Việt, Tày, Thái and Khmer. According to the latest census, there are now about 1,137,515 Mường people in Vietnam. They are concentrated in the provinces of Hòa Bình (in all districts) with 479,197 people, Thanh Hóa (Ngọc Lặc, Cẩm Thủy, Thạch Thành, Lang Chánh, Thường Xuân, and Như Xuân districts) with 328,744, Phú Thọ (Thanh Sơn and Cẩm Khê) with 165,748, Sơn La (Phù Yên, Bắc Yên, Mộc Châu) with 71,906, Hà Tây with 23,938, Ninh Bình

with 18,149, Yên Bái with 13,688, Đắk Lắk with 11,964 and others. Twenty two provinces out of Vietnam's 64 hold between 100-1,000 Mường people, seven provinces hold 1,000-5,000 people, four provinces hold 5,000-50,000 people, and other four provinces hold 50,000-500,000 people^(*)

Linguists include the Mường group in the Việt – Mường linguistic family (together with Việt, Thổ and Chứt). The ethnic name Mường is used broadly now. However, some Mường subgroups have their own names, such *Mol*, *Moi* and *Ao Tá*. Together with the Việt (Kinh), the Mường community originated from the ancient Lạc Việt population, who were the first dwellers in Vietnam. Around the 9th - 10th centuries, the ancient Việt-Mường community was divided into two separate groups. Whilst the Việt mainly reside in the deltas and coastal areas, the Mường were concentrated in the midlands and mountainous areas of Hòa Bình, Thanh Hóa, and Phú Thọ, among others.

Hamlets and traditional community

In the traditional Mường society, the basic self-governing institutes are hamlets (*quel*) and regions (*mường*) of which the chiefs are called *lang đạo* and *lang cun*. Their residential unit is a hamlet, which is often found at the base of a mountain or on a mound or hill. The walkways within a hamlet are small and narrow. The houses are located along the walkways or in the shape of hoops. A hamlet is named after its topographical

features: *Xóm Đác* (the hamlet with a water source), *Xóm Đung* (the hamlet near the forest), *Xóm Đôn* (the hamlet on the hill), *Xóm Thung* (the hamlet in the valley); after plants: *Xóm Lão* (Neohouzeana), *Xóm Trạch* (Bamboo), *Xóm Mít* (Jackfruit), *Xóm Pài* (Grass), *Xóm Bui* (Canarium); after animals: *Xóm Hồ* (Tortoises), *Xóm Oong* (Bee), *Xóm Po* (Oxen) or after walks of life: *Xóm Chiêng* (the hamlet where a *lang cun* resides), *Xóm Roong* (the hamlet of milpa cultivators).

In the past, a *mường* hamlet had its own domain with boundaries like rivers, streams, rocks or century-old trees. All members of a hamlet maintained relatively close unity in performing different activities. Work-day exchange (*lụ nhau*) was a well-known popular form of mutual assistance. Formerly, a hamlet was headed by a *lang đạo* (hamlet chief) who was in charge of all the hamlet's activities. He was assisted by *ậu*.

In the old days, a *mường* was a vast area that covered several large valleys. Each *mường* consisted of dozens of hamlets. Mường were ruled by noble families (*nha lang*) (Đình, Quách, Bạch, Hoàng, Hà, Xá). The chief of a *mường* was a *lang cun* (who was also called *dao muong* in Thanh Hóa or *Thổ Tú* in Phú Thọ). He was also the head of the *nha lang* family. *Lang cun* and *lang đạo* were highly respected by all members in their *mường* and hamlets. Bronze drums, gold and silver were symbols of the power of a *nha lang* family. By customs, annually, whenever *nha lang* held marriages or funerals or erected homes, all members in the *mường* had to contribute their labor and offerings. A *lang cun* was assisted by a contingent of

^(*) General Statistics Office. Vietnam's census. April 1, 1999. Statistics Publishing House, Hanoi, 2001.

thổ lang (or *âu*) who were appointed by *nha lang*. After the liberation of North Vietnam, the *nhà lang* regime was abolished and replaced with the new administrative organization.

House

Despite historical ups and down, many *mường* hamlets in Hòa Bình have retained their original features and cultural activities.

Differing from other ethnic groups, the *mường* houses-on-stilts have great significance not only for the family but also the community. They meet material demands as well as spiritual ones.

Mường houses are made of timber, bamboo, thatch and palm leaves. In the past, the pillars of a house were fixed in the ground. At present, they are placed on stones. The traditional structure consists of beams and girders which were bound together with knots or joints. A house has one or three major compartments, two lean-tos, two main roofs shaped in an isosceles trapezium, and two smaller gable roofs. According to J. Cuisinier and P. Grossin, in the early years of the 20th century, the *mường* in Hòa Bình lived in houses with tortoise shell-shaped roofs (*), which disappeared several decades ago. Ancient *Mường* houses were small and low, having bamboo wattles and roofs running down to the windows at the gables and on the rear wall. For the *Mường*, the window in the ancestral worshipping compartment (*voong tong*) is very sacred. No object can go through and nobody is permitted to lean on this window. At the two gables are two

wooden or bamboo staircases. The number of stairs is always odd in total. The staircase near the outer compartment (*voong toong*) is reserved for men, and that near the inner compartment (*voong khua*) for women. The interior disposition is quite similar. The upper part of the floor (adjacent to *voong tong*) is for sleeping and relaxation; the lower part contains the fireplace and is for family activities. *Voong tong* is the space for men, and *voong khua* for women. Adjacent to *voong khua* are the drying floor and the place for cistern.

In the past, the *Mường* kept their cattle and other domestic animals in the space under the floor. Here, there was also a shed for mortars, farming tools and other utensils. In some localities, the *Mường* erected a hut in the garden in front of their house to worship the house spirit. The whole residential campus was fenced with bamboo or thorny plants (pineapple, cactus, etc.). There was an entrance gate. Now in their residential camps, the *Mường* usually reserve space for a garden where they plant fruit-trees, tea, sugarcane, and vegetables.

Kitchen

In the past, the *Mường* people used to set up a fire place in their house-on-stilts. This is not only the place to prepare daily meals but also to receive guests, discuss family affairs, and have relaxation.

According to the *Mường* practices, voice offerings will be presented to the spirit of kitchen in case of wedding or funeral.

At present, in some localities, the *Mường* build separate kitchens.

(to be continued)

(*) Jeanne Cuisinier. The Muong people (Human geography and sociology). Labor Publishing House, Hanoi, 1995, pp.138-139.

