

ABSTRACTS

Reconsidering the Taxation System in Early Modern Vietnam: Viewed from the Taxation on Non-agricultural Products under the Nguyễn dynasty

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This article aims to review the taxation system of early modern Vietnam, focusing on taxes levied on non-agricultural products such as handicraft items and various natural resources. By the early nineteenth century, taxation on non-agricultural products was expanded to cover a wide range of items and a substantial number of contributors, under the Nguyễn dynasty. Contributors of non-agricultural products were included in a taxation category characterized as *biệt nạp*, which was exempted from the burden of military service and corvee labor. For the state, taxes provided the necessary goods for administrative operations and state workshops, in addition to valuable export items for state-running trade. Regarding contributors, while tax payment on non-agricultural products occasionally proved onerous, immunity from a variety of duties guaranteed under *biệt nạp* status seemed appealing.

From central power to territorial margins: ancient corpus on Lao space and the history of the highlands

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The rare studies on the history of the kingdom of Lãn Xāng (unified and then divided) have so far focused on a few chronicles of Luang Prabang. They reflect their shortcomings, particularly in the presentation of a past that is not influenced in any way by geographical factors. The historiographical tradition nevertheless conveys a certain collective awareness of what the Lao space was alike from the 14th century onwards, in particular of its great extent. The recent discovery of new types of vernacular sources discovered in the mountainous regions of Northern Laos has, however, allowed for a profound renewal of the historical approach. These documents, dated from the 16th to the 19th century, are part of an administrative production that might at first sight appear to be totally original, but which is linked in many ways to other bodies of work currently being analysed, in particular that of the royal orders (*rāja-ājñā*) inscribed on stelae. It is already possible, on the basis of the numerous and varied data revealed by these texts, to reconsider certain essential questions, such as the political and economic interactions between

the Lao centres of power along the Mekong and the highlands constituting the border margins.

Norodom Sihanouk, from Phnom Penh to Paris. Reflecting on a double royal legitimisation by two French regimes (1941-1946)

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In the latter days of the protectorate in Cambodia, the generally accepted historical account of the access to the throne of young Norodom Sihanouk in 1941 first relays the narrative of the then French colonial power: a ‘consensual’ prince uniting the two dynastic branches constituting the royal house of Cambodia, the Norodom and the Sisowath. An assessment which should be relativised insofar as this justification allows the colonial administration not to dwell on the real motivation of its choice: to appoint a young malleable sovereign in a historical, political and military context critical for a French Indochina under the far-off authority of the Vichy regime but directly threatened by a conquering Japanese army established in South-East Asia. Beyond these two explanatory ridges, the mechanism of the process bringing Prince Sihanouk to the Khmer Throne lacks thickness, particularly in the political treatment of the Indochinese kingdoms by the French Indochina governorate of the years 1930s and 1940s. Not to mention the omission of the temporality orienting the strategy of the Khmer Crown, which perfectly measured the fragility of the Sihanoukian kingly status granted by the Vichy regime, hence the 1946 trip to post-war France. All major points investigated in the present paper.

Searching the tatmadaw – the Burmese military economy, evaluations 2010 and 2020

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Since its 73 years of independence, Burma has only had twenty five years of what can be called a civilian government. As a proportion of GDP, the budget allocated to the army continued to decrease in relative terms from 1959 to 2009, and to increase from 2010 onwards. However, the weight of the *tatmadaw* in Burmese society is not limited to the defence and government exercise alone. By expanding opportunities, the establishment of a market economy at the end of 1988, then the development of land communications maintained the influence of the top of the military on economic life while increasing the possibilities for enriching its personnel. The democratisation process that began in 2011 did not reduce the budgetary resources allocated to

the *tatmadaw*, which, on the other hand, has significantly reduced its relative economic weight due to the emergence of new players.

Saramani, exotic dancer. Note on Suzanne Meyer (1913-1942), daughter of Roland Meyer and Saramani

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A forgotten figure in the European artistic scene of the interwar period, Suzanne Meyer took part in a key moment in the history of modern dance. Adapting on scene, for the public of French metropolis, cultural aspects and atmospheres of Indochina where she was born, she was part of the then in vogue approach of exotic dances which put colonized cultures on show in an often fantasized and eroticized way. The posture of Suzanne Meyer and the course of her life are, however, singular: daughter of colonial administrator and author Roland Meyer and of Cambodian royal dancer Saramani, from whom she borrows her stage name, she draws on her family history and her Khmer and French education the inspiration that leads her career path.

Unpublished letter to Georges Bidault (November 16, 1949)

Paul MUS, Professor at Collège de France and the University of Yale ; letter edited and presented by Pierre BROCHEUX, emeritus associate professor in contemporary history at University of Paris VII Denis-Diderot)

Since his return to France, Paul Mus had taken an active part in Vietnamese affairs to avoid the conflict he foresaw, intervening with French administrative and political authorities, while at the same time bearing witness more widely, through press articles or lectures to the general public, and even within the *École Nationale de la France d'Outre-Mer* which he directed. This unpublished letter addressed by P. Mus to Prime Minister Georges Bidault is part of this process. It is of twofold interest: it sheds light on the political approach of the Orientalist scholar, while at the same time dating the Far Eastern strategic turn that took place at the beginning of the 1950s, after Mao Zedong's victory in China.