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ABSTRACT

The city of Hôi An provides a platform for traditional Vietnamese know-how from which the expansion linked to the sea and sustainable development in the context of globalisation can be investigated. During the 15th century, Portuguese culture gained roots through the establishing of commercial and cultural exchanges with Hôi An. Located at the confluence of the Thu Bon River, the city known as "Faifoo" during the French colonial period was, until the 19th century, an important international supply port. Trade relationships have transformed Hôi An into a cultural trade centre, a prosperous wholesale supplier of local products, where the breeding of silkworms and the weaving of high-grade silk products were conducted for export all the way along the Silk Road. In the 21st century, it would be beneficial for Hôi An to identify for further conservation such cultural items as the national use of *Quoc-ngu* (the writing system used for the Vietnamese language), handicraft lanterns and watercolour painting techniques (inks and pigments, and the forms and symbols of Asian cultures, in particular *marouflés* – glued paper layers). However, in 2015 it is urgent to increase the protection of the city's heritage from future devastation by floods and coastal erosion.

KEYWORDS

Hôi An, silk, globalisation, *Quoc-ngu* legacy, flooding

¹ Princess Huyền Trân *Huyền Trân Công Chúa*, later Queen of Champa, was a princess during Vietnam's Trần Dynasty. She was the daughter of Emperor Trần Nhân Tông and the younger sister of Emperor Trần Anh Tông. In 1306, Trần Anh Tông married off princess Huyền Trân to the Champa King Jaya Sinhavarman III to become Queen of Champa, in return for the two provinces of Chau O and Chau Ly (today known as Quảng Bình Province, Quảng Trị Province and Thừa Thiên–Huế Province).

² Alexandre de Rhodes, who spent six years in Vietnam (1624–30) on his Catholic missions, introduced a new writing system based on the Roman alphabet into the Vietnamese language and published the first Vietnamese Catechism and the first Vietnamese–Latin–Portuguese dictionary (*Journée Internationale de la Francophonie*, Montpellier, France, 20 March 2007; www.adaly.net).

THE IMPACT OF HÔI AN AS HERITAGE FROM THE SEA

A PLATFORM FOR VIETNAM'S TRADITIONAL MARITIME KNOW-HOW

In memory of Hoa Cabane who promoted local *Quoc-ngu* in Hôi An.

HÔI AN IN EARLIER HISTORICAL PERIODS

Dreams of the people of the sea

Ceramic fragments (2,200 years old) were recently discovered in Hôi An. They are the oldest vestiges of human habitation, attributed to the Sa Huỳnh culture and related to the Dong Son culture dating back to the late Iron Age. From the 2nd to the 10th centuries, Hôi An was an important harbour in the Kingdom of Champa. In 1307, the Cham King married the daughter¹ of a monarch of the Tran Dynasty and donated Hôi An to the Vietnamese of Quang Nam province. After his death, his successor challenged the legitimacy of the gift and undertook to repossess the province. For over a century, the region was in chaos. In the 15th century, when peace returned, trade regained its normal course. For the next four centuries, Hôi An remained the major international dockyard of Southeast Asia. Chinese, Japanese, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, Indian, Filipino, Indonesian, Thai, French, British and Americans all came to stock up on silk, cloth, paper, porcelain, tea, sugar, molasses, areca nut, pepper, herbal medicines, ivory, beeswax, pearl, lacquer, sulphur and lead. In the spring season, the Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese and Spanish ships were driven to the south by the monsoon winds. They then stayed in Hôi An in anticipation of the southerly winds in the summer. During their four-month sojourn, merchants would rent the beachfront homes which were used as both warehouses and residences. Some of them later established representatives empowered to manage their business affairs for the remainder of the year. Thus they established their first colonies – with the exception, however, of the Japanese, since their government had banned all contact with the outside world in 1637. Furthermore, it was through Hôi An, and the efforts of the Catholic priest Alexandre de Rhodes, that Christianity penetrated into Vietnam.

Quoc-ngu Latin script invented by Alexandre de Rhodes

Of all the 17th-century missionaries, the most famous was Alexandre de Rhodes² (born Avignon, France, in 1591; died Ispahan, Persia, in 1660), inventor of *Quoc-ngu*, the Latin script that is today used by the Vietnamese people. In 1624, Alexandre de Rhodes arrived in the southern part of Vietnam, known as Cochinchina. Since the end of the 16th century, Vietnam, although under the nominal rule of the Lê dynasty, had been effectively divided into two separate political entities, at a frontier line slightly above the 17th parallel: the Inner Region in the South, under the control of the Nguyễn lords, and the Outer Region in the North, known as Tonkin, governed by the Trịnh lords. Starting in 1627, wars between the two regions persisted until 1672, during the Trịnh

vs. Nguyễn warring states period. Vietnam was not reunited until 1802 under Gia Long, the first emperor of the Nguyen dynasty.

De Rhodes was amused by the exotic tonal sounds of the Vietnamese language. Early in 1625 he was in Faifoo with four other Jesuit priests and a Japanese Catholic. The city was active with trade during the 16th and 17th centuries, with colonisers from different provinces of China, Japan, India and Portugal. Among the Japanese immigrants were Christians who had run away from religious persecution in their own homeland. Although Alexandre de Rhodes was already fluent in several languages, he first came to the south of Vietnam to learn to speak the local Vietnamese dialect. Then he came back to the city of Faifoo, where he tried to convert villagers to Christianity using his Latin script *Quoc-ngu*. This early period in his study of Vietnamese verbal communication in Faifoo would influence the Vietnamese of his dictionary many years later, even when the latter was mostly based on a slightly different Vietnamese spoken in the northern part of Vietnam.

Portuguese empire based on trading posts and the Silk Road

Hôi An contributed to the growth of the Portuguese empire which was mainly based on trading posts. The Casa da India in Lisbon controlled and verified the imported goods. The riches from the colonies (spices, gold, precious stones and silk) poured onto caravels during the following centuries. A caravel (*caravela* in Portuguese) is a high-sided sailing ship invented by the Portuguese in the early 15th century for long journeys of exploration. The lateen sails, affixed to a long yard and mounted at its middle to the top of the mast, enabled the vessel to tack into the wind. Thus the fear that winds and currents would prevent the ship from returning disappeared and allowed the Portuguese explorers to undertake their acts of bravery. It should be noted that Portuguese royal power had never been greater than at the time of the discoveries. King Manuel I reformed the administration with a new legal code in order to promote and strengthen his power (Manueline Ordinances in 1521) and he also organised voyages westwards, reaching Greenland and Newfoundland. In an effort to improve culture in Portugal, he advanced the reform of the so-called General Studies. From an artistic point of view, he used a generous part of the money that came from commerce to construct royal buildings, thus giving birth in Portugal to the Manueline style that would come to dominate various types of construction (civil, military and religious). Examples of this style are the Tower of Belém and the Monastery of the Hieronymites. In 1555, Portugal was known as the richest country in Europe.³

HÔI AN ENDOWED TODAY WITH TOURISM, ARTS AND CRAFTS, SERICULTURE AND UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY

After contributing to the dreams and realities of Portuguese power at a historical time, Hôi An is today endowed with a beautiful colonial-style old town, gastronomy, green tourism (Tra Que and Cam Thanh vegetable villages), sericulture and underwater archaeology. An example of the beauty of its buildings can be seen in the house of worship of the Tran

³ King Manuel I was the first king to assume the title of “King of Portugal and the Algarves, of either side of the sea in Africa, Lord of Commerce, Conquest and Navigation of Arabia, Persia and India”. It was under his rule that the bureaucratic and mercantile state was born (www.mosteirobatalha.pt/en/index.php?s=white&pid=234).



Figure 1 – House of devotion



Figure 2 – Cult altar. Photo by Pierric Le Neveu

family. Standing behind a tall fence and mixing Chinese and Japanese styles, this house was built in 1802 by a civil mandarin named Tran Tu Nhạc and dedicated to the worship of his ancestors. The “Garden of the West” represents the future; the “Garden of the East” refers to the past, and the house, divided into two, represents the present day. In dedication to the cult, a museum, an altar of the ancestors and a collection of ceramics were handed over from generation to generation. Today, restored in traditional style, the brightly painted houses offer a beautiful shade at sunset. Several architectural styles rub shoulders in these houses: the French colonial style, Chinese style and even Japanese style. A Japanese covered bridge was restored to become the city’s emblem. Some rooftops are protected with concave and convex tiles, yin and yang style. This Chinese symbol is sometimes written on the doors of houses, as it is believed to protect the inhabitants.

Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1999, the city centre is an authentic museum where it is possible to admire the architecture of an eastern trading port from the Middle Ages that mixes Portuguese and French influences, as well as Chinese and Japanese. Longhouses, Buddhist pagodas, headquarters, houses of ancestor worship, inhabitable bridges, wells, tombs, platforms and more than 840 buildings are listed for their historical and architectural interest. It should be noted that the architectural vestiges were barely protected during the era of French colonisation. This explains why, at that time, neither publicity in travel guides nor postcards of historical monuments were to be seen.⁴

Gastronomy

Visitors are encouraged to try Quang noodles, chicken rice, stuffed steamed bread and black sesame sauce. Facing the sea, the Thu Bon River offers fishing opportunities, and at the fish market, all sorts of fish are displayed in the morning in order to be transformed into typical central Vietnamese specialities.

ART WORKS

In Hôi An, the watercolourist Jean Cabane works with “inks and pigments”. Inspired by the garrigues and colours of the Gards in France, he highlights his paintings with images of the landscape, paddy fields, aquaculture fish ponds lined with water palms and clumps of bamboo. For a support, Jean Cabane uses “Do” paper (*giay do*) made in small batches in North Vietnam which can be easily found in Hôi An shops. For the *encres et pigments* technique, he uses this paper because it is simple, delicate and inexpensive. For painting, he makes the most of this support either with ink or with pigments and water for watercolour effects in order to obtain *aquarelles*. The traditional “Do” paper is bright red, thin, light and durable. It was once used for royal documents, exam papers and clan lineage records. Today it is associated with “Dong Ho folk paintings”, a type of folk prints produced in Dong Ho village near Hanoi. Made from the bark of the “Do” tree (*Rhamnoneuron balansae*) growing in some northern parts

⁴ Dominique Foulon, editor-in-chief of *Carnets du Viêt Nam* in Lyon: “I also think that it should be pointed out that during colonisation the architectural treasures of the city of Hoi An (then Faifo or Faifoo) were absolutely not taken into account. No reference at all in travel guides of the time (hence the fact that there were very few postcards of the city)” (private letter, 14 October 2014). For further information on Vietnam see <http://www.carnetsduvietnam.com/web/premiere.htm>.



Figures 3 and 4 – Inks and pigments. Photos by Jean Cabane

of Vietnam, it is unknown when it was first used, but its origins are thought to date back more than seven centuries in Yen Thai village. Artisans collect the bark, and then dip, cook, wash, thrash and pulp it. They use the pulp to make sheets which are squeezed and dried to make the paper.⁵

Another visual artist, Jean-Luc Mello, from Switzerland uses the technique of juxtaposing (placing close together or side by side) the forms and symbols of Asian cultures. While he uses the basic Xuan Zhi traditional Chinese rice paper for his ink drawings, digital prints are then mixed with them to elaborate his concept. Using traditional Vietnamese papers for ceremonies like weddings and funerals, he creates vivid and strange colours. Acrylic is added to make effects and generate various tones of sensation. Varnish highlights the *marouflé* paper layers to make a mixed kind of transparent but solid material so that paintings can be exposed by simple suspension. Sizes are generally close to those of Xian paper, between 55 and 65 cm in width and 110 to 140 cm in height (this technique can be seen in Siu Pham's film *Fog Over the Summit ... Storm Over the Land*).

Green tourism, Silk Village and coloured lanterns

Travellers are invited to cross the town by bike. This means of self-transportation allows a visit to the village of Tra Que. Along the way, one can stop and climb on the back of a water buffalo in the rice fields and take pictures. Then, at the village of Tra Que, a farming family will show visitors around their farm. Further on, they may take a look at the organic vegetable village of Cam Thanh, and stop at the side of a coracle (local fishing boat) and enjoy a cruise on the small canal. A different tour takes travellers to the village of silk worms, the Hôi An Silk Village. Products shown in the city's shops are made of different materials, natural and synthetic. At the market and in ancient Hôi An, the clothes sold in the shops are made of natural materials, such as cotton and silk, which are grown and produced locally. To manufacture silk, the cocoon is soaked in hot water at 80°C. Depending on how the thread is pulled, the quality will differ. After spinning, the silk is dyed and then woven. Woven silk is produced at the rate of one metre per day. The breeding of silkworms for sericulture and the spinning of silk thread brought the Silk Road to Hôi An and enriched the Portuguese Crown at that time.

Another charming attraction are the coloured handmade lanterns, generally made by women. The technique of lantern-making is a well-known traditional handicraft in the city. For that reason, short-term courses in lantern-making are occasionally run for visitors.

Underwater archaeology

Recently, an underwater archaeology team has been established in Hôi An. It includes representatives from the services of culture and information, and also of police and border guards in the province. The team

⁵ Dang Thou and Le Bich: As "Do" paper is thin and fragile, the images drawn in this traditional paper can convey strong messages and emotions (in *Heritage*, 16 August 2013, p. 16).



Figures 5 and 6 – Lantern shop and studio. Photos by Pierric Le Neveu

is responsible for investigating the origin and value of antiquities that have just been discovered at Hôi An offshore places.

HÔI AN: A PROMISING VISION FOR THE FUTURE BUT TROUBLED BY COASTAL EROSION

Vision of Vietnam by women film producers and the protection of Hôi An from flooding

At the crossroads between Portuguese influences from the past, the future of Hôi An is now a combination of local and overseas influences. French and Swiss painters have opened art galleries in the Old Houses.⁶ Furthermore, Vietnamese women film producers have opened up social aspects of Vietnamese life and work through the Women Film Festival in Créteil (France, 14–21 March 2014). In the context of the 2013–2014 France–Vietnam Year, the festival featured a multifaceted programme of films relating to Vietnamese society enriched by traditions, while positioning itself at the forefront of numerous currents of thought. It covered documentaries, fiction and video art on a broad cross section of topics addressed in Vietnam. The screenings were held in conjunction with debates and meetings with invited Vietnamese women film producers and directors such as Ms Viet Linh, Ms Siu Pham, Ms Trang Phuong Thao, Ms Nguyen Thi Trinh, Ms Doan Hong Le, Ms Nguyen Hoang Diep and Ms Nghiem Quynh Trang. However, women film producers and directors have to overcome all contingencies (at home and abroad). As shown in *Fog Over the Summit ... Storm Over the Land*, the director, Ms Siu Pham,⁷ is taking advantage of every opportunity open to women to achieve her objectives. Her documentary film examines the devastation of the dyke by the flood in Hôi An in October and November 2013 and the people working to tidy up the city. Should mangroves be planted to stop the sea water (Linh 2014)? Or should wooden poles be used according to tidal movements like General Tran Hung did at the Battle of Bach Dang against the Mongols in 1288?

Hôi An beach resorts affected by erosion

In 2013, the authorities in Hôi An warned that rising tides would inundate a third of the touristic town centre. The news website *Voice of Vietnam* has reported that hundreds of households and hoteliers in the city have suffered continuously from the high tides on the Cua Dai embankment, a 300-meter section of beach ravaged by waves that have uprooted coconut trees and electricity poles. Again, in October 2014, *Thanh Niên News* reported that,

Tides have gradually swallowed the 3-km Cua Dai Beach; some sections of the beach have been eaten 40 meters into the shore. The People's Committee of Hôi An Town (the local government) is calling on local residents and businesses to build makeshift embankments at the eroded beach sections. It also extracted VND 10 billion (USD 471,200) for a project to build the Cua Dai embankment, but the project has run into a lot of difficulties

⁶ Such as the Ami Galerie at 46 Nguyễn Thái Học, Hôi An (ami.galerie@gmail.com).

⁷ Forty-three minutes in length, *Brouillard au sommet... Orage en bas* gives an account of the flood that took place in Hôi An in October/November 2013. Furthermore, the film shows Hôi An and its green villages, the sea resort under threat by flood waters, Mello's painting technique with *marouflé* paper layers, and the friendship between "overseas people and the natives" of Hôi An.

due to rogue waves and strong winds. The town administration admitted that the project is just a temporary solution to prevent erosion during the rainy seasons. As Hôi An lies on the banks of the Thu Bon River, and faces the sea on one side and the river on the other, it is difficult to prevent erosion. The Hôi An Department of Natural Resources and Environment said that the government should take more steps to control the flow of the Thu Bon River and dredge Cua Dai Bay as its one-dimensional entrance retains flood waters longer.⁸

Over the last five years floods have devastated the city's holiday resorts. Every typhoon season, the people and local administration in Hôi An worry about the penetration of seawater, which causes heavy crop damage. In addition to that, dozens of acres of protected forests have been ravaged and humans and animals have to retreat further and further inland. In the area of Cua Dai, where there are luxurious resorts and other properties, the shoreline is only 40 m from Au Co Street (as against 200 m before). The waves have destroyed the concrete dykes at the Dong Duong Resort. Other resorts, such as Golden Sand, Sun Rise and Verpeal find themselves confronted with the same problem. These establishments have had to take temporary measures to protect themselves. Coastal erosion upsets many activities at these resorts. In 2010, the provincial People's Committee approved a construction project for a 7,600-metre-long breakwater to protect the coast of Hôi An. In recent years, the sea level has risen 0.5 cm annually. According to a scenario for the province, by 2020 flooding will affect 306 m², and Hôi An will be the most affected, losing 27% of its area.

In Vietnam, the ability to do business is the major key to success, but this pernicious attention to "getting rich" has distracted people's minds from the laws and regulations (rights and duties). In addition, the parity law implemented on 1 July 2007 has encouraged the Vietnamese to live together in cities and villages and to trade and cooperate with outsiders. It is very important that the Hôi An protocols be protected to safeguard the cultural diversity and overseas influences in the city.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND OVERSEAS INFLUENCES IN A MELTING POT OF NATIONALITIES

Rich in traditions and exposed early to the outside world, the natives of Hôi An have an exceptional cultural identity that has been well preserved from generation to generation. The lives of the people who reside here tend to be quiet. In their mind, their city consists of a big family of many descendants including hospitable dwellers, friendly hosts and hostesses. Together they shape a pleasant community which has lived peacefully side by side for successive generations. In terms of the variation in life expectancy over time, Hôi An has developed into a melting pot of various nationalities who have moved into the area and brought their own cultures. There are people who practice animist cults and others who worship natural deities (such as the rain, wind and thunder). There are

⁸ "Hôi An beach resorts affected by erosion". *Thanh Nien News*, Friday, 10 October 2014 (<http://www.thanhniennews.com/society/Hôi-an-beach-resorts-affected-by-erosion-32280.html>); "A third of Vietnam's ancient town could soon be under water". *Thanh Nien News*, Monday, 13 October 2014 (<http://www.thanhniennews.com/society/a-third-of-vietnams-ancient-town-could-soon-be-under-water-32488.html>).

also worshippers of Holy Protectors, such as Thien Hau, Quan Cong, Bao Sinh Dai De, Avalokitesvara, especially among the Chinese community. They hold regular festivals or engage in cultural and religious activities on the occasion of Tết Nguyen Tieu (the 16th day of the first lunar month, i.e. late January or February), Thanh Minh (the third lunar month, i.e. late March or April), Doan Ngo (the 5th day of the fifth lunar month, i.e. late May or June), Trung Thu (the 15th day of the eighth lunar month, i.e. late August or September), Trung Cuu (the 9th day of the ninth lunar month, i.e. late September or October) and Ha Nguyen (the 15th day of the tenth lunar month, i.e. late October or November).⁹

THE HÔI AN DECLARATION ON CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC DISTRICTS OF ASIA (ICOMOS, HÔI AN, 2003) AND THE CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (UNESCO, PARIS, 2003)

For Hôi An, preservation of its cultural resources is necessary to retain the historic value and extension of its physical life.

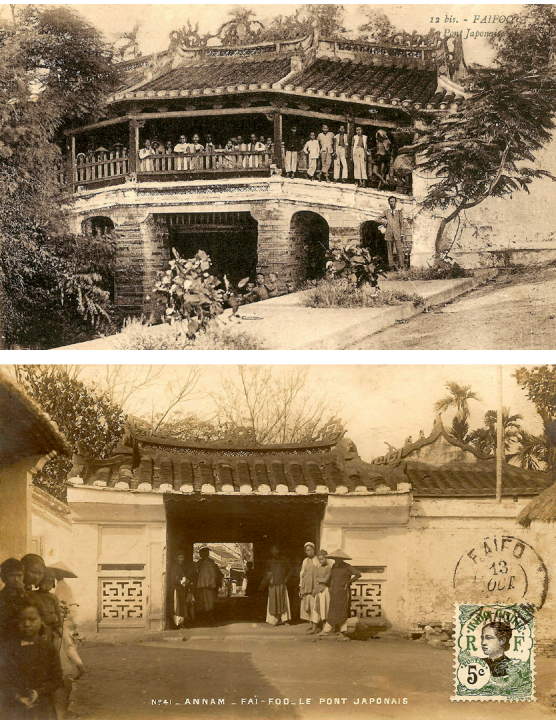
There are conservation disciplines that address different kinds of cultural resources. All share a broad concept of conservation that embraces one or more strategies that can be placed on a continuum that runs from least intervention to greatest. (*Nara Document on Authenticity*). (...) *Cultural diversity*: The manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression. These expressions are passed on within and among groups and societies. Cultural diversity is made manifest not only through the varied ways in which the cultural heritage of humanity is expressed, augmented and transmitted through the variety of cultural expressions, but also through diverse modes of artistic and creative production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment, whatever the means and technologies used. (*UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, Article 4.1). (...) *Cultural expressions*: Those expressions that result from the creativity of individuals, groups and societies, past or present, and that have cultural content. (*UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, Article 4.3). (...) *Authenticity*: When applied to cultural heritage refers to the degree to which cultural values are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes, including, but not limited to:

- (a) form and design;
- (b) materials and substance;
- (c) use and function;
- (d) traditions, techniques and management systems;
- (e) location and setting. (*Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, Paragraph 82).¹⁰

⁹ Hôi An, Danang and Cham ruins in central Vietnam (http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Vietnam/sub5_9j/entry-3561.html).

¹⁰ *The Hôi An Protocols for Best Conservation Practice in Asia: Professional Guidelines for Assuring and Preserving the Authenticity of Heritage Sites in the Context of the Cultures of Asia* (UNESCO Bangkok 2009). <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001826/182617e.pdf>.

As regards aspects of tradition – such as songs, dances and technical items (the making of lanterns and/or paintings with “ink and pigment



Figures 7 and 8 – Faifoo Japanese Bridge in the era of French colonisation. Photos by Dominique Foulon

techniques”, and the “juxtaposing technique of *marouflé*” with glued layers of paper such as Xian paper from Asia) – Hôi An must propose their addition in the future to the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the World.

PERSPECTIVES

Since the end of World War II, the world has been characterised by multiplicity and economic globalisation. Countries are becoming more and more connected to each other because of technical and scientific links. An era of cooperation has been established and continues to develop with international law and humanitarian law between East and West. With regard to economic cooperation and cultural integration between East and West in the context of globalisation,¹¹ there are many questions left for the consideration of our colleagues at the meeting at the University of Évora (Portugal), where they will share opinions and explore issues linked to the sea from new perspectives, including heritage and other subject matters that have shaped all cultural identities.

In Vietnam, Hôi An has risen to the challenge posed by the social and multicultural aspects of its maritime environment: the culture of fishing; ecological structures (green tourism and silk culture); architectural vestiges, such as its ancient houses and the Japanese bridge; and its recently exploited underwater archaeology. They are safeguarded under The Hôi An Protocols for Conservation.

In present-day Vietnam, governance systems are required to provide the Vietnamese people with the possibility to shape tomorrow’s world,¹² the one Hôi An natives wish for their children to inherit. As a special inheritance, owed to Alexandre de Rhodes, Vietnam has been endowed with the *Quoc-ngu* Latin script.¹³ In 1906, the French administration set up the Council for Improvement of Education, which ordered the study of *Quoc-ngu* as a secondary subject in schools. In 1908, the Royal Court of Hue created the Ministry of Education, which was tasked with applying the new school curriculum in *Quoc-ngu*. From 1915 to 1919, a series of decrees were promulgated abolishing the triennial literary examinations for the recruitment of governmental officials. In North Vietnam, the last triennial examinations in Chinese characters were held in 1915, and the last one in Central Vietnam’s imperial city of Huê was held in 1919. Since then, *Quoc-ngu* has become the accepted form of national writing, bringing to an end the use of Chinese-style *chu nom* characters.

Another important challenge for the city is to prevent flooding and coastal erosion. It is therefore working hard to erect iron poles to break the incoming waves on Cua Dai Beach. But this is only a temporary solution and the city is looking for additional assistance to prevent further flooding.

Hôi An continues to be at the forefront of progress, looking to the sea as an attraction, and combining this with its ancient houses, Japanese

¹¹ Globalisation is the concept of a single global economy and culture resulting from improved technology and communications, and the influence of very large multinational trading companies.

¹² Nguyen Dac Nhu-Mai, “France-Vietnam: De L’Orient à l’Orient-extrême”, *Zig Zag Magazine*, 20 May 2011. <http://www.zigzag-francophonie.eu/FRANCE-VIETNAM-De-Lorient-a-l>.

¹³ Vietnam’s modern alphabet uses the Latin script, based on its use in the alphabets of the Romance languages, in particular Portuguese, with some digraphs and the addition of nine accent marks or diacritics – four of them to create additional sounds, and the other five to indicate the tone of each word. The many diacritics, often two on the same letter, make written Vietnamese easily recognisable. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnamese_alphabet.

bridge and overseas cultural influences, alongside colourful lanterns, green villages, beautiful beaches, river tours and delicious food. For all these reasons, the city and its people have to be protected from floods permanently.

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