

## Research Summary

The research entitled “Textbooks used in Elementary Schools in Colonial Vietnam from 1906 to 1945 and in Japan in the Meiji Era – a Shift from Confucianism-Based Education to Western Style Education- a Comparative Approach” funded by The Sumitomo Foundation was aiming at 1) clarifying the living pictures of Vietnamese and Japanese societies from the mid XIX century to the early XX century; 2) proving a thorough image of educational transformation in the two countries and 3) accordingly, taking insights into the new generation of textbooks with focus on those used in elementary schools in both Vietnam and Japan.

The data were mainly collected from published materials (books, monologues, magazines, Journals, newspapers, pictures, maps etc.) and written documents in Vietnamese, Japanese, English, French. Collection of textbooks in Vietnamese and Japanese were surveyed. In addition, interviews with prototypes were conducted in the case of Vietnam (with persons who used to learn in Franco-Vietnamese schools).

In the mid XIX century Vietnam and Japan experienced a striking encounter with the west. However, the ever closed and centralized feudal society of Vietnam had a virtually different reaction to the alien power in comparison with that of Japan whose more decentralized societal structure have had earlier modernity-oriented elements, though the two societies took deep roots in Confucianism. A strong overlap of East and west, tradition and modernity was the main feature of the Vietnamese and Japanese societies at the time. Nevertheless, mentally, the two nations coped with it in different ways. Although a part of Vietnamese society had seen the positive aspects of the Western civilization, creating the movement “Duy Tan” (“For the new”- to strengthen the new people’s spirit, to increase people’s knowledge, to encourage the new way of livelihood), the main target for the whole nation was to defeat the French imperialists to gain independence. Thus, the opportunities to take advantages of the new waves from the West were likely omitted, leaving Vietnam in extremely poor and ignorant situation. Japan, on the other hand, made a good use of the chance. The open policy of Meiji Emperor was to great degree a significant contribution to the prosperity of the contemporary Japanese society, making Japan one of the world superpowers. Many Vietnamese elite then considered Japan a power to rely on (Phan Boi Chau). As a result, educational transformation in the two countries bore similarities and discrepancies at the same time. Three stages of reform were found in Vietnamese schools from 1906 to 1945: period of 1906-1917 witnessed the co-existence of three kinds of schools: indigenous (Confucian), Franco-Vietnamese, French+ period of 1918-1925 saw the disappearance of the Confucian schools; period of 1925-1945 was emphasized with the communal schools. Likely, two stages were classified in education in Japan in the Meiji time: period of 1868-1890 was described as strongly Westernization and period of 1890-1912 was considered as self-transformation (traditional spirit was returned). Both Vietnam and Japan employed the French schooling system which was characterized as strongly centralized and costly. This system existed in the latter for a short time (from 1872-1879) and eventually was rejected for its disadvantage. In fact, it was replaced by other western models of education (Dutch, American, German, English), which were more skill-drilling and practice-oriented. Whereas it was the only one in Vietnam, where it underwent several adjustments but the main characteristics was level-based and exam-focused.

Inquiries into changes in societies and education in Vietnam and Japan were prerequisites for study of textbooks used in elementary schools in the two countries. As elementary school was the very first focus of the whole schooling system, textbooks used in it were early taken into consideration. The study showed some similarities in their contents as many of them were translated from the Western sources (from French in case of Vietnam and mostly from American as in Japan). The old Confucian books were replaced by the new ones, whose contents were more scientific, practical and supported by more visual aids (pictures, figures, maps etc. )

The differences were found in philosophy of compilation of textbooks, their selection process and content focus. Many efforts of Japanese scholars, philosophers, and educators were made to figure out the politics, strategies to provide textbooks as an important source of knowledge to best develop Japanese children. Borrowing

enlightenment ideologies, they gradually combined with Japanese philosophy to develop textbooks in the Japanese context. Textbooks used in elementary school in Vietnam in the survey period varied from region to region and from time to time. In Cochinchina, which was the French colony, most of textbooks borrowed the entire contents of those in France and were published in French. In Annam and Tonkin, the multilingual policy was applied as three languages were used: Vietnamese (Quoc Ngu), French, Chinese with the gradual shift to French. In communal schools, Quoc Ngu was the main language of instruction due to the lack of teachers. But in Franco-Vietnamese schools, French took the dominant place. Another difference was textbook focus. In Japan, moral books were paid great attention. In Vietnam, a stress was placed on books for exam preparation, the number of which was much more than school textbooks.

### Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)
<p>Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)</p> <p>* <b>Vietnam Review of Northeast Studies, No. 4, June 2006.</b> Tran Phuong Hoa. <i>Franco-Vietnamese Education in Vietnam (1906-1945) and Educational Reform in Japan in Meiji Era (1868-1912)</i>. Pp41-48</p> <p>* <b>European Studies Review, No.1(07), September 2006.</b> Tran Phuong Hoa. <i>East and West, Tradition and Modernity in Education in Vietnam (1906-1945) and in Meiji Japan (1868-1912)-A Comparative approach</i>. Pp44-54</p> <p>* <b>Vietnam Review of Northeast Studies, No.3, March 2007.</b> Tran Phuong Hoa. <i>Elementary Textbooks Used in Franco-Vietnamese Schools in Vietnam (1906-1945) and in the Early Period of Meiji Japan</i>. Pp40-49</p>
Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)