

CONTINGENT ADAPTATION AS EVERYDAY PERFORMANCE

Crafting New Agriculture Practices to Respond to a Historic Flood in Vietnam's Northern Uplands

JULY 3 ^{Wed} **2024** **15:00-16:30 JST**

Seminar Room 213

Inamori Foundation Memorial Building, CSEAS, Kyoto University

Abstract

Everyday adaptation to environmental stress is a new but still understudied topic of interest in adaptation studies. It allows moving away from the tropism of exceptionality conflated with extreme weather hazards and to reinsert adaptations within the flow of routinized activities.

This paper presents findings from an extensive ethnographic study that documents the everyday adaptations that took place after a historic flood in the northern uplands of Vietnam. By examining the transition from subsistence rice cultivation to market-oriented sericulture, this article expands the theoretical framework on everyday adaptation by introducing the concept of "contingent adaptation". This form of adaptation emphasizes the farmers' abilities to grasp opportunities, demonstrate flexibility, and leverage improvisational skills to address unpredictable circumstances. It provides a comprehensive understanding of how farmers adapt not only to climate hazards, but also to deal with day-to-day uncertainty, whether they are environmental, climatic, political, economic, or social. Ultimately, we argue that this ability to craft everyday adjustments to navigate uncertainty is an effective mechanism for coping with shifting ecologies.



Emmanuel Pannier

PhD – Anthropologist

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