



States, Religions and Modernities for One Nation

Historicizing a Converging Secularization
in 20th Century Vietnam

February 21, 2025
Fri.

15:00–16:30 (Japan Time)

Seminar Room (No.213), 2nd Floor,
Inamori Center, Kyoto University



DETAIL / WEB

FORMAT: HYBRID

<https://kyoto-u-edu.zoom.us/meeting/register/vVW4AHqPTByv-H1pWqWhUw>



科研費
KAKENHI

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ABSTRACT

This conference will present a collective book that has addressed the issue of the Secular in Asia (De Gruyter, 2022). It will resume more precisely our case study dedicated to the Vietnamese context to, finally, update and discuss the main hypothesis of this essay that will be republished and translated into French this year. On January 1, 2018, Vietnam's first Law on Belief and Religions came into effect. Before this law was drafted, a former Ordinance (2004) and decrees defined religious policy and practices with the same aims: first, strengthening national unification and, second, international integration. This process started in 1986 with the proclamation of the Đổi mới policy, in other words, the acceptance of a socialist-oriented market economy. Five years later, religious policy was updated to regulate a so-called religious revival, or desecularization as theorized by some sociologists. From this period, state secularism came under pressure from churches and, even more so, from diffuse spiritual dynamics expressed within the society. To present the religious situation of Vietnam on the eve of this new era, I propose to historicize the concept and process of secularization in Vietnam by expanding the time-frame and considering overlapping political spaces (multiple states and regions in one nation). I then form the hypothesis that present-day Vietnam is characterized by an ongoing converging secularization which has to deal simultaneously with different models of religious pluralism, modernity and secularity. This confirms the genealogy of secularization in its dual legacy, as a political project and as a sociological process.

SPEAKER

DR. PASCAL BOURDEAUX



Pascal Bourdeaux is Associate Professor (Qualified Research Supervisor) at the *École pratique des hautes études* (Paris). An historian of Southeast Asian religions, his main topics concern contemporary religions in Việt Nam (Buddhism, new religious movements), the history of religious sciences in South-East Asia and the study of the Mekong delta riverine civilisation. He was posted to Việt Nam as representative of the *École française d'Extrême-Orient* in Hồ Chí Minh City (2012-2015). He published these last years a trilingual annotated edition of the *Lục Vân Tiên* poem (2016) and co-directed a collective book, *Chrétiens évangéliques d'Asie du Sud-Est. Expériences locales d'une ferveur conquérante* (2016). His last monography is titled *Bouddhisme Hòa Hảo, d'une royaume l'autre. Religion et révolution au Sud Việt Nam 1935-1955* (2022). He also co-edited the collective book *Secular in Asia. Francophone Perspective in a Global Age* (2022). His current project focuses on the birth of Religious Modernity in Việt Nam ("Poetry and religious controversy in Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's *Dương Từ Hà Mậu* work— Historical Essay on religious modernity during the first 19th Century Việt Nam).

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