

On a project honoring the invention and illustrating the recognition to the creators and promoters of the actual Vietnamese writing (Chữ Quốc Ngữ)

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ABSTRACT

In this short communication, we announce a project concerning our plan to honor and gratify the creators and promoters of the actual Vietnamese writing (Chữ Quốc Ngữ). The details of our planned actions are described. The reasons which justifies our intention are exposed. The style of our intervention are indicated.

In last year 2017, the Vietnamese community is shocked by the announce of a project [1] from Prof. BÙI HIỀN, suggesting a new way in recording the Vietnamese language.

This new propositions have touched the nerves of almost all the people who speak Vietnamese and use the “Chữ Quốc Ngữ”. At least on the social network, the reaction of the people is unanimously hostile. It appears that the actual “Chữ Quốc Ngữ” after 3 centuries of development and practice has intertwined and entered into the soul of Vietnamese and becomes an inestimable property of the people of Viet Nam!

Quốc Ngữ	Chinese	Bùi Hiền script
Dân tộc	Zan	Zân tộk
Giáo dục	Zao zu	Záo zụk
Giao dịch	Zao zi	Zao zịc
Chính phủ	Cin fu	Cin'fủ
Lạnh giá	Lan za	Lạn' zá
Giao thông	Zao wong	Zao wôq

Comparison between different scripts of Vietnamese

As researcher then professor in the domain of computational mechanics during 40 years [2], [3], I am not a historian nor a linguist but as retired from my position in

Belgium since 2006, I live now in Vietnam and I have the opportunity to follow this discussion and my positive reaction is to launch this above mentioned project.



VIETNAMESE ALPHABET

a	ă	â	b	c	d	đ	e	ê	g
h	i	k	l	m	n	o	ô	ơ	p
q	r	s	t	u	ư	v	x	y	
ph	ch	tr	qu	gi	th	kh	ng	nh	

The “Chữ Quốc Ngữ”, alphabet



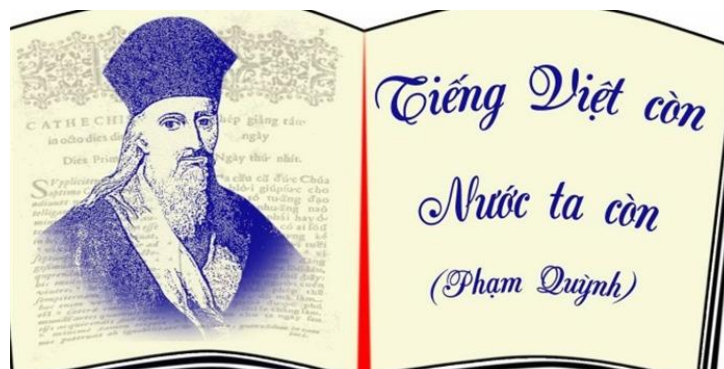
1. As the birth and dissemination of the “Chữ Quốc Ngữ”, constitutes the efforts and the labors of many people: the Portuguese missionaries [4] (Francisco De Pina, Gaspar De Amaral, Antonio Barbosa..., Vietnamese local young collaborators, Vietnamese scholars-promoters: Truong Vinh Ky, Huynh Tinh Cua.. in South of Vietnam, Pham Quynh with Nam Phong Journal in the Centre..., Nguyen Van Vinh with Dong Duong Journal in the North ...), honor and gratitude towards Alexandre de Rhodes, cannot ignore their contributions. Indeed, by the official publication in Rome in 1651 of the Vietnamese – Latin - Portuguese dictionary [5], the priest Alexandre de Rhodes had acted as a synthesizer, a perfectionist, had realized the public proclaiming the international birth of the “Chữ Quốc Ngữ”.



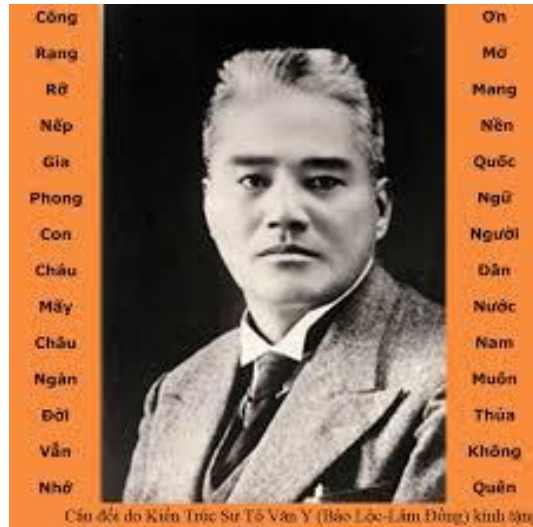
Alexandre de Rhodes' Vietnamese – Latin - Portuguese dictionary



Truong Vinh Ky and his journal of Gia Dinh the first journal of “Chữ Quốc Ngữ”.



Phạm Quỳnh's opinion in Nam Phong journal



Nguyễn Văn Vĩnh, important promoter of “Chữ Quốc Ngữ”.

2. It is also clear that in the beginning, Western missionaries had applied the rule of Latin alphabets for recording Vietnamese language to create a convenient language to the purpose of promulgating their religion, but objectively this action with its the seriousness and scientific basis gave birth to a great linguistic creation the “Chữ Quốc Ngữ”. By that way, since the 17th century, Vietnam had leave the phase of the medieval period in using the “Nôm” characters based on rules of Chinese language to record Vietnamese language.
3. Later during the period of French colonization, the leaders of the patriotic national renewal movements such as Duy Tan, Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc ... soon became aware of the advantage of the “Chữ Quốc Ngữ” in spreading the ideas of democracy, freedom, human rights, independence, in promoting the national liberation from occupation of the French colonialists.
4. During the decade 30 of 20th century Hoi Truyen Ba Chu Quoc Ngu (Association for the promotion of “Chữ Quốc Ngữ”, directed by Nguyen Van To and Hoang Xuan Han...) was appeared and play an important role in triumph of August Revolution in 1945.
5. Today, with the “Chữ Quốc Ngữ”, Vietnamese people have the opportunity to quickly integrate into the civilized world, enabling Vietnamese children to quickly read and write, and escape the complication of figurative borrowing from China.

These facts indicate that the recognition to the creators and promoters of “Chữ Quốc Ngữ” has to be undertaken in the spirit of national concord, the idea of

national union, avoiding all forms of intolerance, religious prejudices or political myopia.

Three realistic actions are proposed:

1. Organizing a delegation composed of Vietnamese intelligentsia and civil society which will render visit to Alexandre de Rhodes tomb buried in 1660 on the [New Julfa Armenian Cemetery](#), Isfahan, Iran .



Alexandre de Rhodes tomb in Isfahan, Iran

2. Organizing a delegation composed of Vietnamese intelligentsia and civil society which will participate to the present seminar dedicated to Vietnam and ancient relations with Portugal. The delegation will take this opportunity to investigate the information about the Portuguese missionaries (Francisco De Pina, Gaspar De Amaral, Antonio Barbosa...).
3. Organizing a large campaign among the Vietnamese Communities or setting down international projects to obtain aids and funds for the construction of a memorial space of history, dedicated to the authors and promoters of “Chữ Quốc Ngữ”. The site of Thanh Chiêm or its neighborhood Hoi An, the birthplace of “Chữ Quốc Ngữ”, would be a good choice avoiding all controversial discussions.



1. Dinh trăn Thanh Chiêm. Thủ phủ xưa của vùng đất Quảng Nam. 2. Nhà thờ Anrê Phú Yên, thôn Thanh Chiêm 2, nơi linh mục Francisco de Pina đặt nền tảng đầu tiên cho chữ Quốc ngữ.

The historic site of Thanh Chiêm where Francisco de Pina formulated the first the rule of Latin alphabets for recording Vietnamese language

This action necessitates the collaboration between Vietnamese and European academic and cultural organizations which are interested to this historic ancient relation.

We hope that the actual famous Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa (SGL), may take part into this cooperation.

CONCLUSIONS

In the decade of 70 of the last century, as young researcher, I had the opportunity to be in Lisboa in attending an international symposium in the domain of my competence: computation mechanics organized with the support of NATO organization. I had already point out myself by personal feelings, this exciting fact of the presence of Portuguese in the “Chữ Quốc Ngữ”. Now after various historic studies, mostly the recent Roland Jacques thesis [4] this reality becomes a cultural evidence.

The **Romanization** of Vietnamese constitutes an unique success in Asia, initiated by 17th-century missionaries. The other tentatives in China or Japan implemented by the same missionaries are failed. The description of tones and the influence of Portuguese on Vietnamese orthography are indisputable! So in term of recognition, as Vietnamese, I may mention here the Portugal people, where the admirable spirit of exploration and devotion are well known in the world!

REFERENCE

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