

Nguyễn Văn Khánh

Part One: Opening and Preliminary Session

Opening Address

Nguyễn Văn Khánh Rector, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, VNU-Hanoi

Mr. Jun Yanagi, Deputy Head of the Mission, Minister, Embassy of Japan.

Mr. Ando Toshiki, Director of the Japan Foundation for Cultural Exchange in Vietnam.

Prof. Shiraiishi Masaya, representative of the Postgraduate School and Institute for Asia-Pacific Studies of Waseda University; Prof. Furuta Motoo, President of Japan-Vietnam Friendship Association, President of the Japan Association of Vietnamese Studies.

International and Vietnamese scholars.

Today, the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University and the Postgraduate School and Institute for Asia-Pacific Studies of Waseda University (Japan) are co-organizing the international conference entitled “*Vietnam-Indochina-Japan Relations during World War II—Documents and Interpretations*” under the sponsorship of the Japan Foundation.

On behalf of our Board of Leaders and the Organizing Committee, I would like to send my warmest greetings to distinguished guests, Vietnamese and international scholars as well as research fellows, postgraduates and students.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the presence of the Minister of Japan to Vietnam. Your presence today is a huge encouragement for our University and everyone participating in this Conference.

I would like to avail myself of this occasion to express my gratitude to the Japan Foundation and Mr. Ando Toshiki, —Director of Japan Foundation for Cultural Exchanges in Vietnam for your enthusiastic and effective cooperation.

I also greatly appreciate all professors from Japan, France, the People’s Republic of China, Taiwan, Thailand, Czech Republic, Singapore and Vietnam for your valuable interest and for taking your time to contribute papers and participate in this Conference.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Seventy years have passed since the end of the Second World War, but the sad memories and serious consequences of this war still remain today. Recently, on August 14th, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe emphasized that “Japan has etched in its mind the history of the sufferings that people in Asia had to overcome” and that the world “must never forget that behind the battlefields were many women whose honor and dignity were deeply injured.” The Prime Minister also confirmed that Japan would never resort to violence as a means to settle international disputes, and highlighted the need to construct a world where nations are respectful of one another’s self-determination. Japan would also play an effec-

tive role in the non-proliferation and complete elimination of nuclear weapons and contribute more to peace and prosperity throughout the world. To fulfill these commitments, Japan is working to improve cooperation with all Southeast Asian countries and making real contributions to their economic development.

With regards to Vietnam, Vietnam–Japan relations have been improving and developing. On March 18th 2014, in his official visit to Japan, President Trương Tấn Sang released a common statement with Prime Minister Abe on the upgrading of Vietnam–Japan strategic relations to a new level, namely an “In-depth Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity in Asia.” Japan is currently Vietnam’s most important economic partner, as well as the largest ODA provider and one of the biggest investors with its registered capital of over \$30 billion USD. Total bilateral trade has exceeded more than \$20 billion USD.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Seventy years have passed since the end of the Second World War, but its consequences still trouble mankind with the serious question of how to develop lasting peace. The great physicist Albert Einstein once said: “Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.”

To achieve this end and improve our relations with East Asian countries, as one of the leading universities in Vietnam, the University of Social Sciences and Humanities has always put a strong emphasis on historical studies, especially on the history of diplomatic relations between countries in the region, including diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Japan.

In recent years, with the effective and helpful support from the Japan Foundation, the University of Social Sciences and Humanities has organized several international conferences such as “100 Years of the Đông Du Movement,” “Towards an East Asian Community—Opportunities and Challenges,” and most recently the conference “History, Culture and Cultural Diplomacy: Revitalizing Vietnam–Japan Relations in the New Regional and International Context.” These activities significantly contribute to improving the overall quality of training and research at the University in general and Japanese studies in particular.

With the spirit of “creating the new by revising the old,” this conference once again focuses on demonstrating and studying the cultural-historical and political-diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Japan and between Japan and other Southeast Asian countries during the Second World War. I hope this will be a good occasion for Vietnamese, Japanese and other international scholars to share their latest findings, documents and evaluations on this historical topic to move towards a more profound and comprehensive understanding of the relations between Vietnam and Japan and the countries of Indochina in particular and Southeast Asia in general during the Second World War.

For this conference to be organized, apart from the cooperation of international and Vietnamese scholars and the assistance of Japan Foundation, the Postgraduate School and Institute for Asia-Pacific Studies of Waseda University and especially Prof. Shiraishi have also made important contributions. On this occasion I would like to express my most sincere thanks for all of your cooperation and sup-

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port in organizing this Conference.

On behalf of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, I officially announce the opening of the international conference “Vietnam–Indochina–Japan Relations during World War II—Documents and Interpretations.”

I would like to wish you health, luck and success. I look forward to the success of the conference. Thank you very much!