Khai Hung's novels and the Vietnamese mandarinate between 1920 and 1945

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Abstract
This article examines some major novels by Khai Hưng, a well known writer in Vietnam in the period 1930–1945, to glean social developments in Vietnam during this period. While there was a significant social transformation in the public domain, as shown by scholarly works by David Marr and Nguyễn Văn Ký, Khai Hưng's novels show that in the families of the mandarinate (the Confucian educated literati, or members of the traditional ruling elite and their families), traditional values managed to survive and even to remain dominant in some cases. Also according to Khai Hưng, it was probably this resistance to change that eventually led to the social and political revolution in the 1930s and 1940s, when some members of this social class broke away from the constraint of tradition and created for themselves a new world in which they became leaders of a new age.

Introduction
In this article I will briefly examine some of Khai Hưng's major novels, such as Gánh Hàng Hoa (Flower Vendor, co-authored with Nhật Linh, 1934), Nửa Chừng Xuân, (Half Way Through the Prime of Life, 1934), Gia Đình (Family, 1939), and Thoát Lý (Breaking Away, 1939) to argue that, just as Vietnamese social traditions faced challenges in the public domain toward the end of the French colonial era, as portrayed in David Marr’s book Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920–1945 (1981) those traditions also faced challenges in the private domain, but that they remained relevant among the families of the mandarinate, the traditional ruling class, who have been ignored by social historians, largely...
because they were regarded as corrupt and collaborating with the French. I will seek to show that members of that class were often successful in resisting the inroads of modernization introduced mainly by social and economic conditions and government policies. I will argue further that the apparent social transformation in Vietnam in the period between the two world wars was actually the manifestation of a tug of war between two forces: tradition and modernity, and that the revolution in 1945 did not stem from a triumph of the force of modernity as portrayed in David Marr's book but was caused by the ruling elite's failure to embrace the changes brought on by the forces of modernity.

I want to emphasize that in this article I do not assume the role of a literary critic but rather that of a working historian seeking a deeper understanding of historical developments in Vietnamese society that usually are not included in conventional textbooks.

Vietnam between the two World Wars

Between 1914 and 1918 France recruited nearly 100,000 men from Vietnam to serve as soldiers and workers in France for the duration of World War I. Since these men were to receive training in France as professional soldiers and workers in the medical, industrial, and service sectors, the colonial government saw this as an opportunity to modernize its army and labor force by using these men to build a modern society in postwar Indochina.

The modernization of Vietnam began in 1906 with the opening of a School of Pedagogy in Hà Nội, which drew students from among the tú tài (baccalaureate) and cử nhân (graduate of a four-year college system). Graduates from the School of Pedagogy taught quốc ngữ (Latinized script) and other modern subjects such as mathematics, geography, history, and sciences. To further the modernization process and utilize the skills of the returnees from the war, the colonial regime inaugurated a public education system in 1917 and abolished the triennial court examinations in 1919. It also created a system of higher education, admitting not only men but also women, and expanded its system to include a School of Medicine which also trained veterinarians and midwives, as well as Schools of Education, Letters, Sciences, Law and Administration,
and Engineering. Next, in 1926 the French President Gaston Doumergue signed a decree allowing Vietnamese to compete with the French colons for any government jobs if they had the required qualifications and a degree or vocational certificate from a French educational institution. All of these measures were designed to induce changes in the social, political, and governmental systems in Vietnam by creating a new class of men and women who would eventually replace the traditional mandarins and the French colons as modern leaders.

These measures, however, had some serious consequences for Vietnamese society as a whole. First, chữ nho and chữ nôm (Chinese script systems), which had been the keys to knowledge and power for centuries were replaced by French and quoc ngữ. Although quoc ngữ was regarded by some as a tool to subjugate the natives, it had certain advantages over the Chinese ideographic scripts: it took only a few months to learn to read and write and provided the Vietnamese with a writing system that reflected their spoken language.

Second, an increase in literacy triggered a rise in demand for printed materials. In response to this demand, a new profession of writer was born. Subsequently, periodicals, newspapers, and books written in quoc ngữ proliferated. In effect, “Vietnamese prose was born with the twentieth century.”9 The Trung Lập Bào (Neutral News), for example, circulated about 15,000 copies per day; the weekly Phụ Nữ Tân Văn (Women’s News) printed about 8,500 copies; and between 1923 and 1944 about 10,000 quoc ngữ books and pamphlets were published. New genres such as novels and short stories also emerged.10 Novels, according to David Marr, increased the public understanding of how others lived, especially women whose lives had been kept hidden behind the closed doors of their homes.11 Third, the reform dealt a death blow to the mandarinate, who had been central to the organization and the governing of Vietnamese society for centuries. These Vietnamese mandarins were products of the Confucian education system whose moral beliefs, ethical behavior, and social practices were based on the principles of Nho Giáo (Confucian ideology and philosophy). Under this system education was exclusively for men, who devoted decades of their lives to the study of Chinese classics and Confucian ethics, learning
how to compose poetry in the hope of passing a series of rigorous examinations, which were modeled after those in China. If they passed they would immediately gain power, fame, and appointment as district chiefs in the imperial administrative system. Their wives, families, and villages would share in this newly found honor and prestige. Under the new education system, however, women were also admitted to educational institutions. District chiefs had to be a graduate of the School of Law and Administration or hold a Bachelor of Law from a French university. These requirements forced many men from the mandarinate, who were too old to adapt to the new system, to abandon their pursuit of power.

Nonetheless, the reform did not produce the result that the colonial government desired. To maintain their status and power, the families of the mandarinate pressured their sons to obtain high degrees in the new education system and seek appointments in the colonial civil service system. If their sons resisted, the families employed every means possible to force them to comply. Moreover, although women could now obtain an education, it was almost impossible for them to achieve independence and escape from the hold of tradition on their lives. In short, traditional customs and practices remained strong among the families of the ruling class.

The plan to use the returnees from France to speed up the modernization process created resentment and disappointment instead of satisfaction. The returnees expected to find the same kind of work and to receive the same level of wages as they had in France. Although some did find the jobs they wanted, many did not, and many of them could not bring themselves to compete for low-paying manual jobs. In Thanh Hoa, most of the 10,000 returnees refused to work as laborers and farmers and demanded regular compensation for their service in France. Moreover, French employers refused to hire them, regarding them as "specialists who could do only piece-work but could not deliver a complete product," and suggesting that "industrial workers are not useful in Indochina" where manual labor was abundant. Some even showed disdain for village leaders by dealing directly with French administrators. Consequently, villagers often avoided the returnees, regarding them as "arrogant" and "boastful," and even a source of "embarrassment." These tensions and conflicts became
evident when the Great Depression hit Indochina in the 1930s. Disenchanted First World War veterans collaborated with communist agents to organize labor protests and lead demonstrations against the established order. In May 1929, returnees participated in a worker strike in Hanoi and raised the communist red flag. In 1930, seventeen First World War veterans participated in the soldiers’ revolt at Yen Bay. Another 1,500 took part in five labor demonstrations in May 1930; and about 5,000 were leading strikers at Vinh and Ben Thuy in May 1931. No doubt, these veterans had reconnected and collaborated with one another to voice their disappointment and resentment against the ruling class and the colonial government. In seeking change, the returnees faced resistance from the established order in the public domain and had to resort to violence to be heard.

Similarly, as the following sections will show, those seeking change in the private domain often faced strong resistance from the defenders of tradition. For example, young women who practiced new ideas such as the freedom to fall in love and marry whom they pleased were laughed at, and even punished, for daring to defy tradition. Their parents regarded education as a means for them to attract better suitors, not as a means for them to establish their independence.

In summary, between 1920 and 1945 the colonial government’s policies were the driving force behind a social transformation in Vietnam. In theory, these policies would erase the monopoly of the mandarinate on access to upward social mobility and ensure women were no longer invisible in the public domain. In practice, although these changes were welcomed by some, many others viewed them as threats. Consequently, tension and conflict were bound to occur, and they became a source of inspiration for contemporary journalists, novelists, cartoonists, and playwrights.

Khái Hưng, the novelist

Khái Hưng was a well-known literary figure of his time and a product of the early twentieth-century hybrid culture. His real name is Trần (Khánh) Gîr. He was born in 1896 into the family of a mandarin, studied Chinese classics until age twelve, and was
educated in the Franco-indigenous education system. Before becoming a famous writer he was a merchant, a translator of French literature, an artist, sales manager for Standard Oil, and a teacher in the well known Thăng Long High School in Hà Nội.

According to Vũ Ngọc Phan, Khải Hưng’s contemporary, Khải Hưng’s novels resonated with many young members of the mandarinate, especially young women. Like him, they were the hybrid product of Confucian and French cultures. He gained their admiration and respect because he was speaking as an insider of the mandarinate. According to a literary critic, “Khải Hưng did not just tell a story, he lived it.”

Khải Hưng was one of the most prolific writers of his time, producing fourteen novels, thirty short stories, two collections of plays, children’s stories, translations, and newspaper articles. His last novel was Đẹp (Beautiful, 1940). He was also the editor for a newspaper-magazine, Phong Hóa (Custom and Culture), and co-founder of a periodical, the Ngày Nay (Today). Together with Nhật Linh or Nguyễn Trương Tam, another well-known literary figure of the time, he also founded Tự Lực Văn Đội (Independent Literary Association) and the publishing house Đội Nay.

While Indochina went through social turmoil during World War II, Khải Hưng, like many of his colleagues, was pulled into the whirlwind of wartime politics. He collaborated with the Japanese and founded the Binh Minh (New Dawn) which was an instrument for Japanese propaganda. In retaliation for his collaboration with the Japanese, the French, who continued to administer Indochina under Japanese control, accused him of plotting a revolt and sent him to prison in 1941. He was released in 1943 but kept under house arrest until 1945. When he was freed, he founded a periodical, Ngày Nay Kỳ Nguyễn Mởi (Today a New Era) and was a contributor to a communist party newspaper, the Việt Nam. Later, for unknown reasons, he distanced himself from the communist cause and voiced his opposition to the communist party in Chinh Nghĩa (Righteous Cause). In 1946 the Việt Minh placed him under house arrest. He disappeared in 1947. The Việt Minh claimed he died of illness but many believed that he was liquidated.
Novels and history

Between 1920 and 1945, under the rising influence of the communist revolutionary movement, many of Khái Hưng's contemporaries such as Ngô Tất Tố, the author of Tất Đến (Light Out, 1937) and Nam Cao, the author of Cái Lò Gạch Cũ (The Old Brickyard, 1941), later renamed Chí Phèo, the name of the main character in the novel, used their pens to reveal the centuries-old struggle of the peasants against oppression under the rule of the mandarinate and the colonial regime. 27

Khái Hưng, however, made a living by writing about conflict in the mandarinate and its struggle to retain power and maintain its wealth and prestige after the French abolished the court triennial examinations. 28 His writing indicates that, contrary to the popular belief that new ideas introduced by the new education system and French influence triumphed over tradition, the only things that became extinct were the Confucian education system and, with it, the teachers of chú hán and chú nôm, whose livelihood depended wholly on the transmission of Chinese classics. Like Hiền's father in Biên Đôi (Changes, 1939), some teachers committed suicide because they could not handle the humiliation caused by the loss of honor and prestige in the village and their subsequent inability to support their families. 29 However, like the family of a judge in one of Khái Hưng's most famous novel, Gia Diình (Family, 1939), the majority of the mandarinate managed to retain their social standing, power, and wealth by pressuring their children to maintain family traditions by going to Franco-Vietnamese schools and seeking high-ranking positions in the colonial civil service. 30

In the novel, when An, a son-in-law of the judge, showed no interest in joining the colonial administration, preferring instead the life of a wealthy local gentleman, family members, especially his wife, used their influence to pressure him to return to school and obtain an appointment as a local district chief. By contrast, although the judge's only son did not seek such an appointment, he did obtain a job as tham tạ lục sử, or a high ranking officer, in the French colonial civil service, thus extending the family's power and prestige into a domain which was previously exclusively French. As the indigenous governor of Tonkin pointed out, these modern
district chiefs and civil servants in the colonial administrative system continued their families’ practice of oppressing, exploiting, and abusing the peasants, "Cuộp đêm là giặc, cuộp ngày là quan" (bandits robbed people in the dark, but the mandarins robbed in daylight).31

In the same novel, Viêt, another son in-law of the judge and a local district chief, forced peasants who were down on their luck to sell him their land at low prices. To eliminate his opponents, he framed them as robbers and had them arrested. He prosecuted peasants when they made alcohol for their own consumption, because at the time that was illegal and alcoholic beverages could be purchased legally only from government controlled stores.32 To meet his government-imposed sales quota and earn rewards, Viêt forced peasants to buy alcohol from such a store. When the family’s wealth was squandered on drinking, gambling, and other forms of dissipation, An looked the other way when his wife and his subordinate dealt with criminals and accepted bribes to replenish their wealth.33

Khái Hựng’s novels suggest that many women still observed the Confucian codes: be virtuous, faithful and loyal wives, and seek upward social mobility through their husbands. His own wife upheld the Confucian tradition: loyal, faithful, and supportive. She supported him while he was in school, encouraged him when he struggled to find a vocation, and faithfully visited him in prison.34 In Gánh Hàng Hoa (Flower Vendor, 1936) Liên sold flowers to support her husband while he was in school, hoping that when he graduated they would have a better life. Unfortunately, a car accident rendered her husband blind. Instead of feeling bitter and distressed, she immediately focused her energy and attention on helping him to cope with the tragedy and sought medical help to have his sight restored. During this ordeal she acted as her husband’s secretary and, with her assistance, he became a famous writer. As he gained fame he had many admirers, including a lover. When his sight was restored he left Liên to live with his lover. Nonetheless, Liên remained faithful and loyal to her husband, hoping he would return to her someday. He did so when his lover rejected him. Liên welcomed him back with open arms, thinking: "Why bring back sorrow when happiness once lost had just been
found?" By holding on to tradition and remaining faithful and loyal to her husband, she finally got what she wanted: a famous husband, his love, and a share in his fame.\textsuperscript{35} Tradition, represented by Liên, prevailed.

Traditionally, Vietnamese parents used a matchmaker to find spouses for their children from families of mọn đăng họ đôi, or equal wealth and social status. However, in the 1930s young people exercised the freedom to fall in love and marry without their parents' approval, a practice that was frowned upon by the general populace and rejected by their parents.\textsuperscript{36} In Khải Hưng's popular novel Nửa Chừng Xuân (Half Way Through the Prime of Life, 1934), when the abolition of the triennial court examinations rendered his profession as a teacher of Chinese obsolete, Mai's father died of sorrow and humiliation, leaving a small piece of land to his children, Mai and her brother. However, Mai could not farm and her weaving did not earn enough money to pay land taxes and her brother's tuition fees in Hà Nội. No one in the village had money to buy her land. A neighboring village chief offered her a large sum for her land if she agreed to be his fourth wife. Mai refused and looked for ways to solve her dilemma. Lộc, her father's former student, appeared and helped her move to Hà Nội to avoid the village chief and keep her land. Eventually the two fell in love and married without the consent of Lộc's mother, who disapproved because Mai's family was inferior in terms of money and social status. Moreover, she had already chosen the daughter of a family friend to be Lộc's vợ thứ or junior wife; Mai declined and told the old woman "No woman in my family has ever become anyone's junior wife."\textsuperscript{37} Feeling humiliated, however, and although she was already pregnant, Mai left Lộc out of pride, so that he would be free to marry the woman of his mother's choice. Meanwhile, believing that Mai had betrayed him, Lộc married the woman his mother had chosen for him. His mother, therefore, won this struggle with Mai by appealing to tradition to pressure her into leaving Lộc. Again, tradition prevailed over love and reason.
Confucian ideology placed emphasis on having a male heir to carry on the family name and assume the responsibility of keeping incense burning on the ancestral shrine all year round. Therefore, a woman who produced a male heir would gain more power and prestige in her husband's family. Lộc's new wife, however, could not bear him any children. Fearing that her family name would die with Lộc and that there would be no one to care for the family's ancestral shrine, Lộc's mother sought custody of Mai's son, who was born after Mai left Lộc. Mai refused to relinquish custody and demonstrated that her son did not bear his father's family name by asking Ái, her son: "What is your family name?" Ái answered: "Duong" (which was Mai's family name). Lộc's mother was astonished: "How dare you teach my grandson things that go against [traditional] moral principles?" Mai smiled and dealt the last blow to end the argument: "My dear Old Lady, you must be mistaken. He is my son. I can teach him anything I want. No one told you that you were immoral when you ordered your son to abandon his pregnant wife." Mai dared to stand up to Lộc's mother because she had given birth to the only male heir in Lộc's family. Although Mai lost the first battle when she left Lộc, in this second battle she used tradition as a weapon to defeat Lộc's mother.

Other young women, like Hồng in Thoát Ly (Breaking Away, 1939), succumbed in their fight to gain freedom and independence against the hold of tradition on their lives. Hồng was the daughter of a wealthy mandarin in Ninh Giang, a few hours by bus from Hà Nội. Her father sent her to Hà Nội to study in the School of Pedagogy. Before she finished school to become a teacher her father called her home to prepare herself for marriage. With the help of a matchmaker, her father and stepmother chose the son of a judge to be their son-in-law. However, the would-be son-in-law died of illness ten days before the wedding. Although Hồng had not yet married the man, her stepmother ordered her to observe a three-year mourning period, during which she could not marry. During this time Hồng returned to Hà Nội to live with her older sister. While there, she did a few things to defy tradition: she removed the black dye on her teeth, which was regarded as beautiful at one time, and fell in love with a former schoolmate, whose family's social
status was inferior to hers. Each time Hồng’s stepbrothers and sisters saw her white teeth they ridiculed her because “only dogs would have white teeth.”

Meanwhile, to shame her into giving up her love affair, the stepmother circulated a rumor that she was pregnant. Facing unbearable public scrutiny and humiliation, Hồng attempted suicide but did not die. She gave up the fight, withdrew to her room, and eventually died of depression and loneliness. Her death finally set her free from oppression. The implication of this story is that, although the new Franco-Vietnamese education system promised young women opportunities to achieve independence; it did not provide them with a safe haven when they attempted to escape the shackles of traditional customs and practices. In fact, contemporary newspaper cartoons made fun of young educated women having love affairs without their parents’ consent, and ridiculed educated married women for behaving as their husbands’ equal. They viewed these new practices as immoral, and blamed the new education system.

That is not to say that tradition was invulnerable to challenges from modern practices. In France during World War I, most Frenchmen of productive age were mobilized to the frontline and women replaced them in factories, on farms, in hospitals, and even in administration as clerical workers. Most of the time they worked side by side with men from the colonies brought to France to help make up the labor shortage. Interracial relationships inevitably developed, sometimes resulting in marriage. Despite the French government’s attempt to discourage this kind of relationship, records show that by the end of the war 250 Vietnamese men had legally married French women, there were fifty Eurasian children whose fathers were Vietnamese in Saint Médard-en-Jalles, and there were also 1,132 Vietnamese men living with French women. A number of French women petitioned for permission to join their Vietnamese men in Vietnam.

In his novel Gia Đình, Khải Hưng pointed out that, while the French women were successful in their petitions, their presence in Vietnam challenged established Vietnamese traditions on family and marriage. The father of the judge’s son-in-law, Hắc, was a high ranking civil servant in the French colonial administration when he
met a French woman through gambling. The two had an affair which resulted in a son. Despite the violent protest of Hac's mother, his father determined to bring the French woman and their son home to live under the same roof with his Vietnamese wife and children. The two women and their children did not get along. Jealousy and bickering were daily occurrences. The French woman was lăng loan (disrespectful and aggressive) toward Hac's mother. After three years, Hac's mother left her husband, took her children to live with her parents, and filed for divorce. She got the divorce plus the custody of their children and the right to a portion of her husband's salary. This drama left its imprint on the lives of the children for decades to come. When Hac decided to get married, his future mother-in-law refused his proposal at first, telling the matchmaker: "Who would want to marry their daughter to a man whose father married a French woman and whose mother deserted her husband?" She approved of him only after her daughter became seriously ill due to disappointment.\(^\text{42}\)

Clearly, Vietnamese society looked down on interracial marriages, disapproved of divorce, and held members of such families in low esteem. Ironically, although the society allowed the man to have more than one wife, it was prejudiced against the French wife who was subjected to that practice; and although it disapproved of the French woman, it condemned the Vietnamese wife for daring to leave her husband. Interestingly, in the post World War I era, a Vietnamese woman could obtain a divorce, gain custody of children, and be awarded alimony and child support from her former husband—a new custom based on French family law. It contradicted a tradition which dictated that a woman was the property of her husband and had no right to divorce him, let alone have custody of their children and receive alimony. It is particularly significant that the wife was given custody of the eldest son, who traditionally belonged to his father. Under French rule, therefore, the position of women changed from one where their rights and privileges were determined by the institution of polygyny and Confucian ideology to one where their rights and privileges were defined and protected by law. This encouraged many women, like Hac's mother, to stand up against the oppression of tradition. The result, however, was less than satisfactory for either side.
Nevertheless, as Khái Hưng indicated, tradition did not always win out.

In the 1930s, when the country was in economic and political turmoil caused by the Great Depression and the penetration of the communist party and anti-colonial movements, Khái Hưng observed that young Vietnamese were divided into two groups: one which adopted a policy of collaboration and association with the French; and the other which adopted a policy of non-cooperation and independence. In Gia Định, while all the males in the judge’s family chose a career in the French colonial administrative system, Hắc rejected family pressure to become a district chief and had no desire to work for the French. After graduating from the School of Medicine in Hanoi he used the money he inherited from his maternal grandparents to buy about 1,000 mậu (a mậu is 36 square meters) of deserted land near the Chinese border in an area which was a haven for bandits, opium addicts, gamblers, and criminals. Hắc turned the place into a settlement and an agricultural production center with paved roads, a medical clinic, and rows of neatly built houses. Criminals and bandits became law-abiding citizens and tillers of the soil. Hac himself provided medical services to his tenants, making house calls and distributing quinine to victims of malaria. He also allowed his tenants to pay taxes in kind and to pay whenever they were able to do so. For every gift that he received from the peasants, he gave some money in return. In short, the community operated on equal give-and-take relationships based on individual ability and needs. Hắc and his community represented people who lived on the margins of society. They were self-governed and self-sufficient, and rejected the colonial government’s attempt to impose its rule.

Hence, Khái Hưng suggests that in the 1930s Vietnam showed signs of national division and discord: some segments of society were not happy with the established order and they banded together and organized their own government, forming a utopian nation in which they were the pioneers of a new age. This suggestion was not farfetched, because history records that by the 1930s Vietnam was a divided nation, embroiled in social tension and labor conflict. Communist agents collaborated with anti-colonial elements to
organize labor protests and manipulate student demonstrations, demanding national independence and denouncing colonialism. As we know, eventually the French were driven from Vietnam and a communist government was established, first in the north and then over the whole country.

In the domestic domain, Khải Hùng showed that, despite conflict and tension, family members sometimes yielded to one another out of love in order to solve conflict and achieve harmony. In the novel Nụa Chung Xuân the struggle between modernity and tradition, represented by Mai and her mother-in-law respectively, was bitter in the beginning when Mai refused the request of Lộc’s mother to be Lộc’s minor wife and to give her son to Lộc’s mother so he could carry Lộc’s family name. However, when Lộc came begging for forgiveness, Mai realized that she still loved Lộc and could not refuse his request to have their son visit his grandmother, who was getting old, and to bear his father’s family name. In this case, love and compassion prevailed over bitterness, distrust, and revenge.

Conclusion

Today Khải Hùng’s legacy lies in his literary work, not his political activities. Through his works he provided readers with a valuable chronicle of developments among the members of the mandarinate in the period between the two world wars. In this period, the members of this social class still retained most of their traditional customs and practices in order to stay in power. Not only were they persistent in their efforts to eliminate any challenges to their position, but they also had the ability to adapt to new social and political conditions. That is not to say that the generation created by the new public education system did not question the validity of traditional practices and the authority of their elders. Yet, as Khải Hùng suggests, young people who rejected tradition faced strong resistance from traditionalists. Some women had to give in to tradition to find peace; others paid a heavy social penalty for being rebellious. Men, however, had two choices: be true to tradition but adapt to change in order to survive; or reject tradition and become rebels. Those who made the latter choice withdrew
deep into deserted jungles and established themselves as leaders of a new society. They attracted followers from the margins of society, such as bandits, criminals, and poor peasants, who either rejected society or were rejected by society and no longer believed in the status quo. Together, these men adopted a policy of non-cooperation and alienated themselves from society. Interestingly, although the followers of this movement came from the margins of society, their leaders, like Hạc, came from the same social class that they rejected—that is, the mandarinate.

Overall, Khải Hùng's novels have served as a window on developments in the families of the mandarinate between 1920 and 1945. In this period, when facing reforms that threatened their social standing and power, the majority of the traditional ruling class rejected change, while a minority embraced reform and hoped for change. When that minority found that the established order refused to accept change, however, they became disenchanted, broke away, and created for themselves a new world in which utopian principles were at the core. Khải Hùng suggested that it was the ruling class's resistance to change and their refusal to share power with the emerging proponents of modernity that caused the unbridgeable gap between the two groups and led inevitably to the social and political revolution in 1945 that saw those at the head of the movement for change emerge as the leaders of a new age. In Nửa Chung Xuân, Khải Hùng observed that these two groups were “like two rivers, each runs its own course and the two shall never meet.”

Notes

1 This article is adapted from my master thesis, ‘Khải Hùng, novels, and history,’ Department of History, University of Oregon, December 1995.
3 Marr, Vietnamese Tradition.
4 Albert Sarraut, La Mise en Valeur des Colonies Françaises [Exploitation of the French Colonies] (Paris: Payot, 1923), pp. 42–3. The actual numbers were:
48,922 Vietnamese soldiers and 48,254 Vietnamese workers. Scholars often round up the figures of the volunteer to 100,000; 10 SLOTFOM 4, Notes in file, 1918; 10 SLOTFOM 4, ‘Les Indochoinois en France’, 30 December 1919; 3 SLOTFOM 93, Memo from the Ministry of Public Works, Transportation, and Merchant Marine to the Ministry of the Colonies, 24 November 1919. SLOTFOM is an acronym for Service de Liaison avec les Originaires des Territoires de la France d’Outre Mer. The acronym is used to refer to the boxes which are deposited at the French national archives Centre des Archives d’Outre Mer (hereafter CAOM) in Aix-en-Provence and at the Military Archives for the Service Historique de l’Armée de Terre.


7 Administrative Order on the reorganization of the colonial civil services system to include indigenous candidates in JOIF (31 July 1918): pp. 1226–8; 3 SLOTFORM 118, Decree to put into law a decree approved on 20 May 1926, signed by President Gaston Doumergue, 28 August 1926.


9 Nguyễn Khắc Viên and Hưu Ngọc, Vietnamese Literature, p. 108.


12 Alexander Barton Woodside, Vietnam and the Chinese Model: A Comparative Studies of Vietnamese and Chinese Governments in the First Half of the Nineteenth

13 GGI 607 4, Report on political situation in Thanh Hoa, 3rd trisemester, 1921.


15 9 PA 13, 'Les Ouvriers Indigènes en France,' in Le Courrier d'Haiphong, 13 October 1918.

16 RST 73172, Report to the resident superior in Tonkin, 3 July 1922; RST 73172, Report by the provincial governor of Kiên An, 5 July 1922.

17 3 SLOTFOM 22, Reports by the resident superior of Tonkin on 'Mentality of WWI returnees,' 17 March & 20 April 1930; 3 SLOTFOM 7, Report to the Ministry of the Colonies, 21 August 1933; L'Humanité, 18 March 1930.

18 Nguyễn Văn Kỳ, La Société Vietnamienne, pp. 54–5.

19 Nguyễn Văn Kỳ, La Société Vietnamienne, pp. 131–228.


23 Vũ Bằng, 'Tướng Nhớ Đơn Khái Hưng,' in Khái Hưng Thân Thê Tác Phạm, p. 29; Đặng Phùng Quân, 'Về Tiểu Thuyết của Khái Hưng,' in Khái Hưng Thân Thê Tác Phạm, p. 67. In fact, the physical settings of his novels like Ninh Giang in Thoát Ly (1939) and Phủ Thọ in Nửa Chung Xuân (1934) were his former residences.

24 Thu Trung, 'Khái Hưng Tân Thê và Tác Phạm,' pp. 9–12


30 Khái Hưng, Gia Đình [Family]. (Hà Nội:: Đời Nay, 1939).

31 Nguyễn Thế Anh, Kinh Tế và Xã hội Việt-Nam Đời Cục Vua Triệu Nguyên [Vietnamese Economy and Society under the Nguyen Dynasty] (Saigon: Trình
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33 Khải Hưng, Gia Đình, pp. 215–9, 335–7.
36 See also Montira, ‘Class, gender,’ p. 3.
37 Khải Hưng, Gia Đình, p. 149.
40 Nguyễn Văn Kỳ, La Société Vietnamienne face à La Modernité, pp. 217–21.
42 Khải Hưng, Gia Đình, pp. 169–71.
44 Khải Hưng, Nửa Chung Xuân, p. 268.