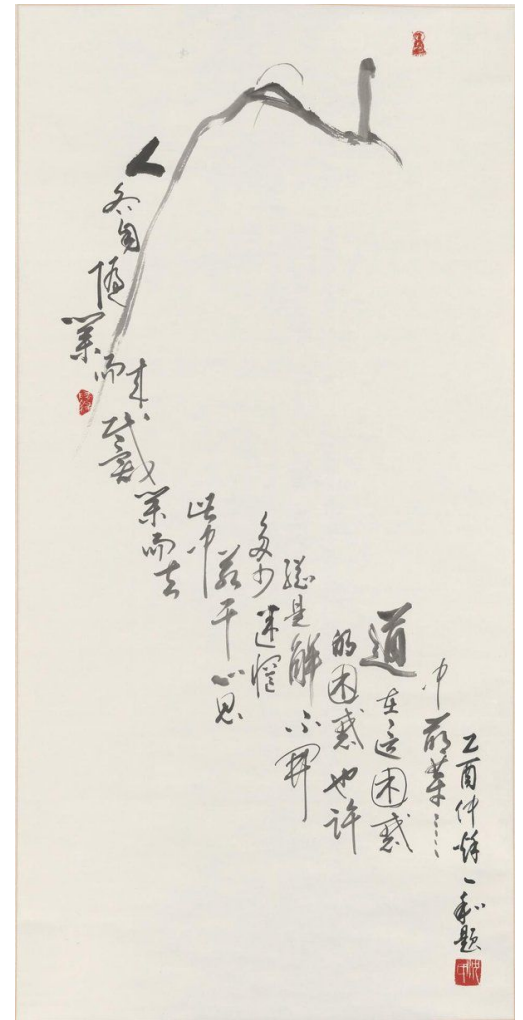


Thư Pháp Vietnamese Calligraphy

Angeline Phan



“thư” = script

“pháp” = rule

“thư pháp” = “the rule of writing”

Chữ Hán / Chinese Characters

- Han Chinese characters introduced after the Han dynasty conquered Nanyue (111 BC)
- Restricted to scholars and elites
- Even after independence, literary Chinese was used for official purposes
- Vietnam developed its own styles of writing but still heavily influenced by Chinese standards

Mountain 山 岗 sơn núi shān saan1	Fire 火 焰 hoả lửa huǒ fo2	Flower 花 嵐 hoa bông huā faa1	Mother 母 媯 mẫu mẹ mǔ mou5	Day 日 昃 nhật ngày rì jat6	Wind 風 颶 phong gió fēng fung1
Water 水 諾 thuỷ nước shuǐ seoi2	Four 四 罌 tứ bốn sì sei3	Big 大 畝 đại lớn dà daai6	Sky 天 歪 thiên trời tiān tin1	House 家 茹 gia nhà jiā gaa1	Face 面 麵 diện mặt miàn min6
Father 父 希 phụ bố fù fu6	Child 子 猥 tử con zǐ zi2	Year 年 辭 niên năm nián nin4	Person 人 訖 nhân người rén jan4	Land 地 坦 địa đất dì dei6	Leaf 葉 蘿 diệp lá yè jip6

Chữ Nôm / Original Vietnamese Characters

- Logographic writing system devised for transcribing spoken Vietnamese
- By the 14th and 15th centuries it became widely used by the elite
- Used in popular works including folk verses, proverbs, and poems

𡵓 Chử
 𡵓 Chử
 漢 Han
 儒 Nho

Chinese loan words

山	山 (mountain)	火	火 (fire)	花	花 (flower)	家庭	gia đình (family)	島	đảo (island)
湖	hồ (lake)	貓	mèo (cat)	羊	đồng (sheep)	國語	quốc ngữ	廟	miếu (temple)
頭	đầu (head)	北	bắc (north)	南	nam (south)	東	đông (east)	西	tây (west)
爹	cha (father)	媽	mẹ (mother)	棍	con (child/son)	牺	犧 (sacrifice)	品	nhân (virtue)
聰	trí (wisdom)	躉	đầu (head)	棲	ngủ (sleep)	肉	thịt (meat)	鳩	chim (bird)
駟	trị (govern)	輔	bổ (assist)	狂	cố (dog)	獵	học (study)	蛭	nhện (spider)
𡵓	hôm (day)	朥	tháng (month)	辭	năm (year)	仁	hạt (seed)	匹	ba (three)
𡵓	hôm (day)	𡵓	năm (year)	𡵓	bảy (seven)	𡵓	thăm (eight)	𡵓	chín (nine)

𡵓

佛

𡵓

數

𡵓

齊

𡵓

義

𡵓

魏

𡵓

德

𡵓

蕭

𡵓

聞

𡵓

國

𡵓

問

𡵓

臨

𡵓

溪

𡵓

歲

𡵓

遠

Chữ Quốc Ngữ / Latin-based Characters

- French colonization resulted in discouraged use of classical Chinese
- Popularized under the influence of French literature and the New Poetry Movement
- The modern script for romanized Vietnamese

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	

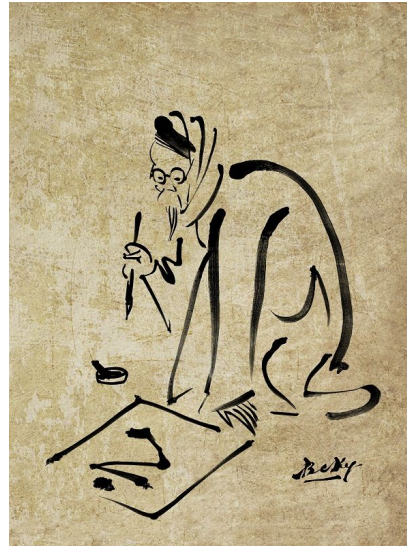
Vietnamese Calligraphy

- Historically used chữ Hán Nôm but modern calligraphy also uses Quốc ngữ
- Can use any type of script or combination in one piece
- Similar to Chinese calligraphy, it uses ink and brush



Calligraphy Uses

- Special occasions, especially Lunar New Year
- Silk paintings, hangings, poetry
- Greeting cards, calendars, decoration
- Tattoo
- Can be used on paper, wood, glass
- Decline in interest since 1950s, but increasing popularity in recent years



Lunar New Year Festival

- Tradition of calligraphy giving—people tell the scholars their wishes for the New Year and receive writing





Styles

- Lệnh thư “edict script” - writing style for chữ Hán Nôm, distinguished by sharp upward hooks and mimics cursive script
- Thảo thư “grass script” - cursive style



Tin

Chữ chân phương

Tin

Chữ cách điệu

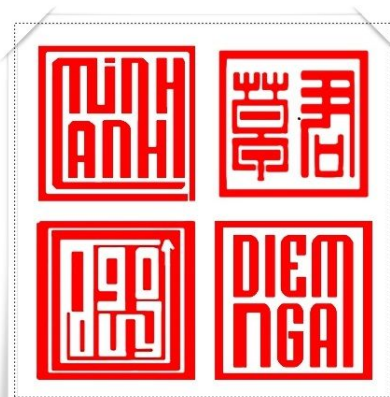
Tin

Chữ thảo

Tin

Chữ mộc

海秀鍾靈捍蓄默運玄機此
民於衽席相吉茂參拱造奠
祚於泰磐英聲稔濯廟祠其



新婦服地黃湯來以
戕賊舍為未往憂
然不吉心言等前
悔事 志成及謝生
未當行 尔進也 不可
解 吾亦書問也

中見生



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