

Collection « Petit atlas urbain »

Edited by Sylvie Fanchette

Hà Nội, a Metropolis in the Making

The Breakdown in Urban Integration of Villages

Foreword by Rodolphe De Koninck

IRD Éditions
Institut de recherche pour le développement
Marseille, 2016

Atlas edited by the Cartography Department

Direction de l'information et de la culture scientifiques pour le Sud (DIC, IRD), IRD France-Nord (Bondy)

Maps (Plates) drawing: Éric Opigez

Mapping coordination: Éric Opigez

Layout: Marie-Odile Schnepf

Financial support of Ccped for English translation

Financial support of the Institut des métiers de la ville (IMV) for writing chapter 2 and buying photos

English Translation: Nicholas Stedman

Scientific and editorial coordination: Sylvie Fanchette

Photographies: Nội Pictures Agency, Hà Nội

Cover design: Éric Opigez

Cover photography

A Vietnamese woman holds branch of peach tree in blossom in a street of Hà Nội

© Francis Roux, Nội Pictures

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, xerography, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

ISBN : 978-2-7099-2197-8



© IRD, 2016

Hà Nội: the villages, the heart of social and patrimonial life

R. Orfeuvre, Ph. Brouillac, C. Mounier

Unlike large Southeast Asian cities with primary trade and port functions, Hà Nội was founded in the Upper Delta, along the Red River, as the administrative centre of the feudal empire of Vietnam, after more than a thousand years of Chinese colonisation. The city at the head of an agrarian and, to a lesser degree, merchant empire, Vietnam's capital had developed very close ties with its hinterland, particularly through the Quarter of 36 Streets and Corporations. In keeping with the Chinese model, the administration had integrated a hundred or so villages within the city limits, making up a green belt of artisans who supplied the capital: 'the city's existence depended on a close relation with the countryside, whether it was the nearby countryside of peri-urban villages or more distant countryside from whence came the merchants and craftspeople who worked in the centre of Hà Nội' (PAPIN, 1997).

These very close relations with the surrounding villages derive from the village foundations of the capital. Hà Nội, a thousand-year-old city, grew up from a core of urban villages that formed neighbourhoods in the 17th century and from a substrate of villages that were gradually absorbed into its fabric. As they established themselves in the Quarter of the 36 Streets and Corporations, the artisans and traders from Delta villages brought with them their material and immaterial heritage, made up of temples, communal houses

and festivals. To this day, this bears witness to the profoundly village-like nature of the Old Quarter.

The trading system between the imperial capital and the nearby 'suburban' and Delta villages led to the development of a process of countryside urbanisation and an economic boom in Hà Nội. A commercial integration of the countryside and the country thus took place around the activity of the Quarter of the 36 Streets and Corporations and markets situated along the Red River. Thanks to its favoured location at the intersection between waterways, the Red River, the Tô Lịch River and the Kim Ngưu River, this district was at the centre of regional, then international trade (NGUYỄN THỪA HỖ, 2002). This integration worked both ways, and it was greatly disrupted during the collectivist era, then resumed with the economic liberalisation of the 1980s.

The Old Merchant Quarter and the craft villages

In 1010, a little less than a century after the end of Chinese domination (939), King Lý Thái Tổ chose the current site of Hà Nội, on the bank of the Red River, to found Thăng Long, 'the city of the rising dragon'. It was his capital and the affirmation of a new dynasty's power. The site offered several advan-

Hà Nội: the villages, the heart of social and patrimonial life

tages: big enough to house a royal city, it sits upon wide alluvial terraces, relatively higher than the average altimetry in the Delta. Located at a fulcrum of contrary forces of rock and water, it conforms to important geomantic principles: to one side Tản Viên Mountain, today known as Ba Vì; to the other, the curve formed by the Red River to the north and east, the Tô Lịch River to the west and the Kim Ngưu River to the south. At the city level, this water/rock pair is repeated with Tô Lịch River and several raised embankments in the city.

Trade between the city and the countryside flourished as early as the 11th century. At the emperor's command, artisans originally from craft villages in the Red River Delta gradually settled in Hà Nội. Private workshops were still scarce as state manufactures monopolised craft production.

This trade developed more steadily from the 14th century onwards for two main reasons (PAPIN, 2001). Firstly, in 1371, the Emperor Ming forbade Chinese merchants to conduct export trade, which stimulated the local private economy, as the royal manufactures were not capable of responding to demand for manufactured products. In addition, the predominance of collective land in the countryside guaranteed a minimum income to the majority of villagers and something to eat. They had free time, when not required for the harvest, to go and sell their craft work in the city. It was at this period that the name of *Kê Chợ* 'the market' appeared, referring to the merchant quarter that was developing to the east of the citadel. It became the interface between town and country. In the 14th century, it already seemed very animated, in particular in the streets located near the mouth of the Tô Lịch River out into the Red River. International trade passes through the port of Vân Đồn, in Hạ Long Bay. Situated on the trade route linking China to Southeast Asia, it remained very active until the turn of the 15th century.

The merchant quarter and the craft villages experienced their golden age in the 17th and 18th centuries. The traders, who were relegated to the lowliest rank in the Confucian vision of society, gradually began to enjoy an improved status. To respond to demand from the Court, many of them embarked upon private business ventures, including civil servants. At that time, Hà Nội's economic structure featured a strong relation between a network of markets, specialised villages and the ferry across the Red River (NGUYỄN THỪA HỖ, 2002):

– the joint development of the capital's merchant quarter and craft villages depended upon a network of village and regional markets of which Hà Nội formed the epicentre. The merchant quarter, to the east, was the biggest of them. Eight big markets were usually held at its gates, while others, smaller

and more specialised (rice, fish, silk, etc.) were set up on the banks of the Tô Lịch River or along canals. In this network of urban markets, people bought artisanal produce made in the craft villages or half-finished produce intended for completion and sale at the market;

– at the same time, craft villages developed and organised themselves into clusters (see Chapter 8): each village specialised in one part of the production process. Craft villages developed the capacity to make very sophisticated products and to keep busy a large workforce occupying large spaces in very varied domains (paper, pottery, weaving, etc.). These villages were also Hà Nội's main suppliers of market garden produce;

– the Red River ferry played an important part at a regional level. Located at the junction of trade routes between the mountains and the plain, it was a port of call for long- and medium-haul boats. The Red River gave access to the high plateaux of the Northwest and the Northeast, and beyond into the Chinese province of Yunnan: buffalos, elephants, lumber, metals were traded in the capital for rice, salt or craft produce. A second river route links Hà Nội with the coastal regions of Central Vietnam from where were carried salt, fish sauce or citronella, which were then forwarded to the High Plateaux. Simultaneously, the port of Vân Đồn declined as the river ports of Phố Hiến and Hà Nội flourished. These ports did business directly with Asian, then European merchants.

The Old Quarter and the urban model

In its recent configuration, Hà Nội's merchant quarter resembles one 'Chinatown' among others in Southeast Asia (GOLDBLUM, 1991). Here we will mention the characteristics of its architectural and urban development, and its impact on the production of the contemporary city.

• Birth of an urban model: *Kê Chợ*

With the market activity and the progressive settling of migrant villagers (merchants and artisans), the social life of the quarter gradually became organised into villages of corporations specialised in a craft, until they became 'urban villages'. We can no longer see any trace of the architecture and the divisions of land into plots in the merchant quarter, dating back to around the 13th century, but it is certain that the constructions echoed the characteristics of 'vegetal cities' typical of Southeast Asia: hut-style houses made of wood, bamboo, straw and wattle and daub, modelled on rural houses (GOUROU, 1936).



© Aaron Joel Santos / Nôi Pictures

Photo 3
Street food stall in the Old Quarter

From the 17th century, the merchant quarter, made up of a conurbation of urban villages, experienced a golden age. These villages united people all from the same rural village, who practised the same craft along the same stretch of road. The limits of urban villages therefore passed behind the plots of land, in the heart of the urban space. Closely juxtaposed, they form a first urban unit, characterised by high demographic densities and a merging of diverse populations. However, these villages retain rural characteristics: the street running through the middle of each urban village was closed at both ends by a postern gate and possess typi-

cally rural places of worship (temples, pagodas, and communal houses – the *đình* where is celebrated the founding spirit of the craft or the guardian spirit of the original village) (Plate 6).

Plate 6 makes plain the reproduction of the traditional village structure in the context of the merchant quarter and its evolution. As with rural villages, urban villages (*thôn*) were bounded and closed by gates. Each village was home to a corporation. They usually possessed several places of worship with a predominance of

Hà Nội: the villages, the heart of social and patrimonial life

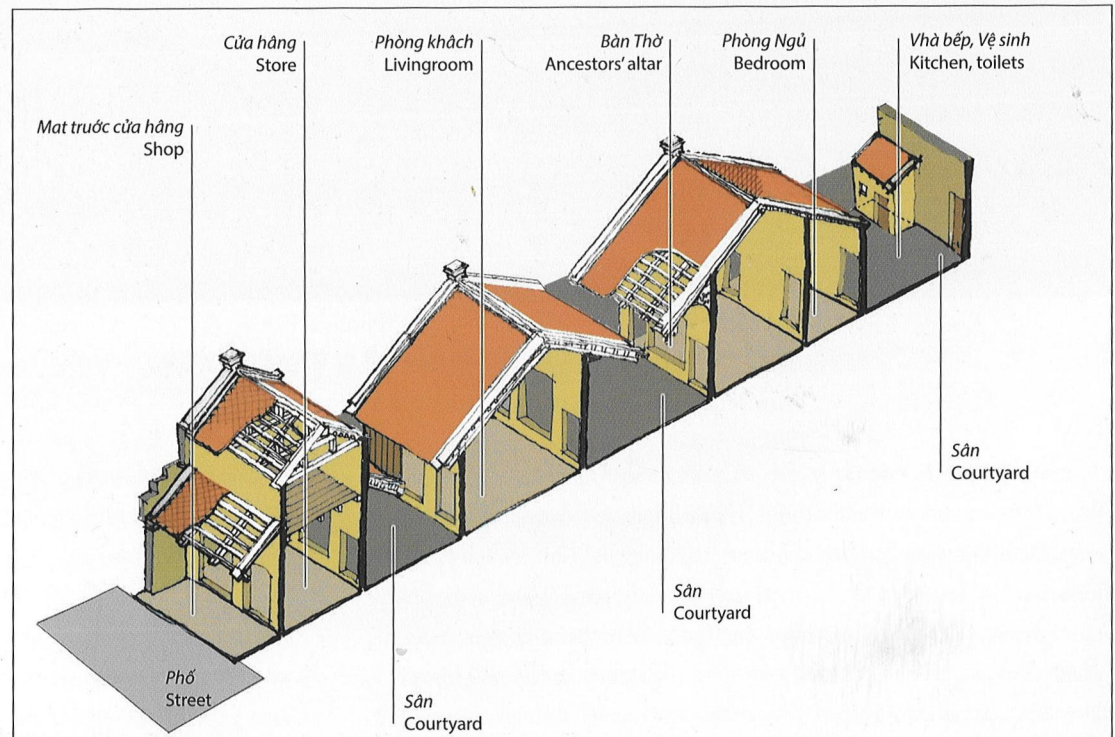
dinh related to the craft of each street (50), followed by *dền* (34) and pagodas (10). This profusion of *dinh* clearly shows the interest conferred upon the corporation by the quarter's artisans and merchants. The northern part of the quarter (Đống Xuân canton) and the canton outside the dyke, Phúc Lâm, featured fewer places of worship than the cantons in the southern part (Đống Thổ and Xuân Mỹ) which became urbanised much earlier (except the environs of the citadel). At the end of the pre-colonial era, lakes were still very prevalent. Linked between each other and to the Tô Lịch River, they enabled inhabitants to fish, but above all to move commodities around by water and to regulate flooding.

Once Hà Nội was opened up to foreign boats, international trade was organised with the rest of the world (Europe, China, Japan by routes *via* Macao and Batavia) (DUMOUTIER, 1895). The mass arrival of Chinese traders was probably, in Hà Nội as in many Southeast Asian cities, the origin of the establishment and development of the 'Chinese compartment', called in Vietnam 'tube houses' (see Figure 5). Although the exact nature of the influence is still discussed today, an entirely indigenous model seems unlikely.

'Tube houses' progressively replaced the 'vegetal city' to become the model shaping the urban space of the merchant quarter. This constituted a significant step towards the emergence of the urban landscape. It reshaped how land was divided up in the quarter and developed the architecture (of the houses but also of the places of worship), but without undermining the structure of urban villages, nor completely erasing their rural characteristics.

'Tube houses' are laid out on long, narrow strips of land perpendicular to the street (3 to 4 m wide) and are developed lengthwise between load-bearing walls. Successions of buildings and courtyards provide natural lighting and ventilation. They fulfil not only domestic and commercial functions, but are also places for production and storage. The building that gives onto the main street, completely open to the public thoroughfare thanks to removable wooden panels, is dedicated to trade. On top of this is an attic storey, used for storage. A first courtyard and a second building usually serve as a workshop for craft production. The everyday living spaces (family life, room dedicated to ancestor worship, kitchen, etc.) are located at the far end of the plot of land.

Figure 5 – DIAGRAM OF A 'TUBE HOUSE'



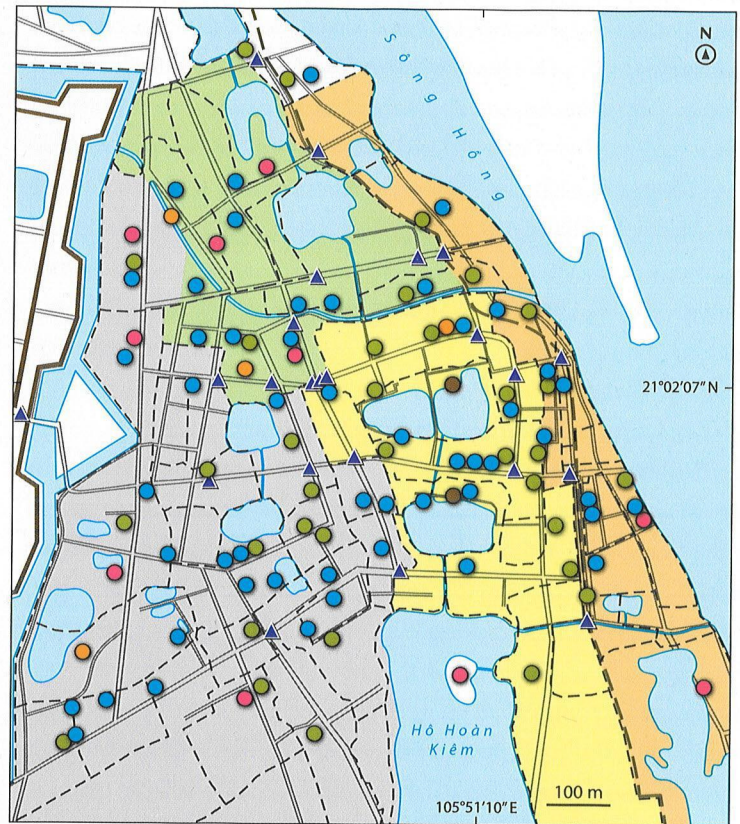
Source: NGUYỄN MINH TRĂNG, Old Quarter Management Office, 2005

Urban structure of the Quarter of the 36 Streets during the 17-18th centuries

Village structure of the Quarter of the 36 Streets and cultural heritage (17-18th centuries)



Source: ORFÈVRE R., according to Phạm Đình Bách plan, 1873 rescaled on current plan



Source: ORFÈVRE R., according to Phạm Đình Bách plan, 1873 rescaled on current plan, BABONNEAU M.-L. plan 1885, NGUYỄN VINH PHÚC & NGUYỄN THÚA HỖ (2006)

- | | |
|--|---|
| Lake, river, canal | Đình : communal house |
| Communal house grid | Đền : temple |
| Urban village boundaries | Chùa : pagoda |
| City wall of the Citadel | Miếu : temple |
| Dyke | Chinese community house, mosque, church |
| Citadel, urban villages and city gate | |
| Built-up area | Thuận Mỹ township |
| Place of worship: pagoda, temple, communal house | Đồng Thọ township |
| | Đồng Xuân township |
| | Phúc Lâm township |

• Restructuration during the colonial era: the 'Annamite' Quarter

France, by making Hà Nội the capital of its Indochinese empire at the end of the 19th century, jeopardised its organisation into urban villages. The commercial city was redolent with negative values: overpopulation, insalubrity, proliferation of vegetation; attempts were made to clean it up: the postern gates were destroyed, the streets widened and reshaped with corner houses and hipped gables. Other streets were opened, equipped with pavements, electricity and sewers. In 1889, the French drained and filled in the Tô Lịch River and several lakes to make the district denser. They gathered the markets together into a new solid structure: the Đông Xuân Market. In 1886 laws were decreed to eradicate thatched houses, deemed ugly in some streets. The exclusion zone was gradually extended to encompass the whole city (PAPIN, 1997). By 1902, thatched huts only represented 16.5% of constructions, compared with 79% in 1890. They had completely disappeared in 1924.

'Tube houses' also underwent significant changes. The awning-shops of traditional Vietnamese houses were destroyed to widen the streets. Buildings became taller while still respecting the compartmental structure. Emphasis was placed on the façade, which took on designs inspired by the colonial buildings in the French Quarter. Traditionally, the frame was the most striking feature of 'tube houses', as much from a decorative point of view as a structural one, richness only being expressed on the interior. With the advent of French building culture, it was now the architect's job to draw the 'tube house' and the mason's to make designs for the façade, showing off the owner's wealth. New materials appeared (cement, reinforced concrete, metal, glass). This architect/mason then architect-engineer/mason duo became ever more established throughout this period, and even up to the present day.

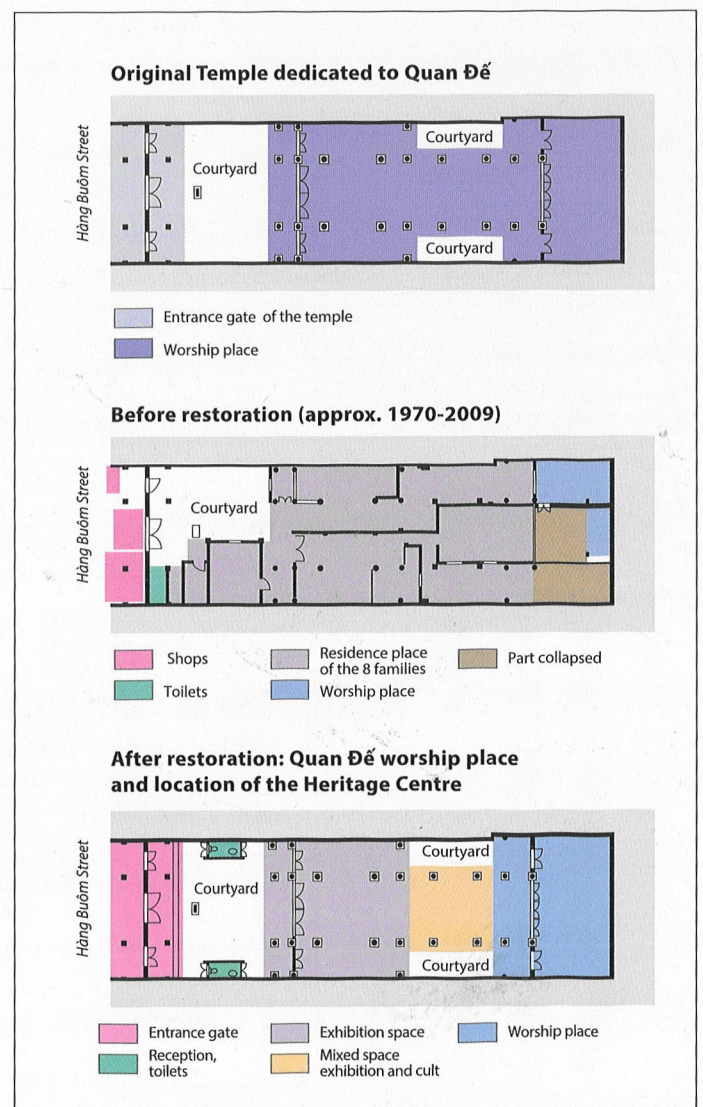
• The collectivist period: frozen architecture and abolition of property

Following the suppression of individual trade in favour of state co-operatives in 1955, in 1960 the state introduced a 'policy for socialist transformation of housing'. A wave of nationalisations affected among others the houses of families considered 'bourgeois' (including most homeowners in the merchant quarter) and places of worship. Former homeowners became occupiers among others of a public possession of which they only retained a small part, being obliged to share the rest with families from the countryside (up to several tens of families for the bigger properties) (see Chapter 4). The state instituted travel permits and resi-

dency requirements. Because of the war, only extensions to existing houses were authorised, in bamboo and recycled materials, as the use of cement was forbidden.

Between 1960 and 1974, the urban population of Hà Nội doubled through migrations of rural populations towards the city, a tangible consequence of the taste for revenge of the new communist leaders (originating from the countryside in their overwhelming majority) against the former urban elites. The houses were reorganised, with much unauthorised construction in courtyards. Some monuments such as pagodas or temples were converted into housing or into public

Figure 6 – OCCUPATION PLAN OF QUAN ĐẾ TEMPLE



Sources: ORFÈVRE R. - Adapted from Archives *Ban quản lý phố cổ* - 2009

buildings. The plans in Figure 6 show the evolution of Quan Đẽ Temple, which housed up to eight families (with one single bathroom) towards the end of the collectivist period. This occupation of places of worship (rented by the state to families not able to find lodgings in times of war) involved a majority of such buildings. Today, they are being gradually recovered by the state, which usually returns them to their original function.

In the 1980s, a black market developed to deal with a chronic shortage in housing. The makeshift measures employed for conversion or for basic maintenance of houses led to a degradation in the quarter's ancient fabric. But this situation also blocks the quarter's development and stultifies its architecture and its urban renewal. As a consequence, in 1981, most houses dated back to before 1954, which explains the richness of architectural heritage in the historic centre just after *Đổi mới* (PANDOLFI, 2001).

• Post-*Đổi mới* effervescence and the Old Quarter's loss of identity

Following the economic reforms of *Đổi mới* in 1986, the Quarter enjoyed a revival of its commercial past. Overpopulation (840 inhab./ha) is one of the major causes of poor living conditions of inhabitants. Many of them took advantage of economic liberalisation to convert their living quarters into commercial spaces (residents with a shop or direct access onto the street were best placed). With density increasing and property prices extremely high¹, owners of sections of property, as well as investors from outside the Old Quarter (25% of shop owners in 1999), tried to re-divide plots of land to build mini-hotels there. Buildings became higher and courtyards disappeared, compromising the quality of life specific to traditional houses. However, major land regrouping projects did not come to fruition because of the complexity and fragmentation of plots, as well as extremely high land prices. Owing to overpopulation and the liberalisation of private trade, roadside and pavement businesses reappeared (restaurants, bars, markets, itinerant traders). Simultaneously, thanks to a more permissive policy concerning religious practices, people again began to attend places of worship.

These profound changes moved both the Vietnamese and the international community to act. In 1990, an initial study looked at the question of heritage preservation in the commercial quarter and the living conditions of its inhabitants (HOÀNG HỮU PHÊ & NISHIMURA YUKIO, 1990). Then a Unesco report replaced this heritage within the issues to be addressed in the historical centre (Citadel, Old Quarter and French Quarter). It evoked the risks of instability due

to the metropolisation of the city that took shape with the 1992 Hà Nội Master Plan (UNESCO, 1994). Several experts and international organisations proposed the establishment of a major plan for protection and the improvement of inhabitants' living conditions. Developed from foreign legal criteria, successive strategic plans turned out to be unsuited to the very complex situation of the Old Quarter and the economic and political context. They could not be implemented by the Vietnamese authorities, who would have been financially responsible for their application (WAIBEL, 2004). It took some time, until the beginning of the 2010s, for the public authorities to make this question one of their priorities.

Diversity of crafts and links with villages

• Specialised streets during the colonial era

In the 17th century, the business quarter was organised into streets specialised in kinds of articles made in craft villages in the Red River Delta or near the capital, around West Lake. There were about a hundred streets, and not 36, a figure chosen for its auspiciousness. Each street bore the name of the merchandise sold on it: streets named for Sugar, Hemp, Cards, Dyers, Mugs, Cotton, Chickens, Trays, Tin, Drums, Fans, Combs, etc. (PAPIN, 2001). Merchants were sometimes themselves also artisans (Plate 7).

Each street was inhabited by artisans from one or several villages that practised the same activity: in Hàng Bạc Street, jewellers' street, could be found artisans originally from the village of Định Công (Thanh Trì District, Hà Nội), specialised in silver jewellery, from the village of Trâu Khê (Binh Giang District, Hải Dương) and Đồng Xâm (Thái Bình), specialised in making silverware. Hàng Đồng Street devoted itself to making bronze and copper objects and to selling articles from the villages of Đại Bái and Ngũ Xã. Artisans and merchants made up the backbone of the socio-economic structure of Hà Nội. The former had various statuses: freelance artisans, itinerant artisans come to the city in search of orders, artisans requisitioned to work in the state workshops. From the 17th and 18th centuries onwards, men usually migrated from villages located between 30 and 60 km from the city, then once they were installed, they summoned their families. They created new corporations that specialised in making or selling a product. Each corporation settled in one street, itself managed by one or several villages, depending on where the inhabitants were from. Many villages could line the same road, like the one crossing the quarter from north to south from the present-day Hàng Đào Street, occupied by at least four different villages. With the street as public space, these

Hà Nội: the villages, the heart of social and patrimonial life

communities, which enacted their own laws and regulations, were virtually autonomous.

The transformation of urban villages specialised in craft industry and trade into streets devoted to crafts gradually took place as urban development became denser. The diagrams of Plate 8 portray a hypothetical evolution of the parallel evolution of urban villages into craft streets and of rural craft villages. As we have seen previously, several rural markers were present in the merchant quarter.

However, unlike rural villages that usually looked like islands amid rice paddies, the merchant quarter was above all made up of markets located along main roads, then was organised in the shape of villages along these same streets. With the advent of the 'tube house', the merchant quarter gained its autonomy through the use of a new urban model, a model that, since *Đổi mới*, has progressively colonised rural villages.

On an economic, social and cultural level, the merchant quarter retained a strongly rural character. Most of its inhabitants remained enrolled on the registers of their respective villages. In the countryside, they invested the money they earned in the city: purchase of land or restoration of public buildings often heralded the return of city-dwellers to the countryside upon their retirement. Family and village ties were strengthened by movements of workforce and by the observance of worship offered up to the village's tutelary spirit.

Buoyed by regular income and relative affluence, city-dwellers tended however to enfranchise themselves from their native villages and assume control of their own lives, creating the foundations of a fully urban society (TẠO TRANG & THÊ HÙNG, 1977; PAPIN, 2001). Communal houses blended gradually into an atomised urban landscape, in stark contrast to the situation of the rural *dinh*. They became communal to all the inhabitants of the street, and no longer exclusive to those people originating from a single village.

• The supply chains: Hàng Bạc Street

To understand the cultural heritage of this trading city, one must follow the trail of these urban villages of artisans and merchants linked to their native villages. What remains of this identity today? To determine this, one can examine four of its structural elements: the existence of an activity making or trading craft products; the management of certain questions linked to commerce and to daily life by representatives of the community of inhabitants (a corporation); the occupation

to these ends, as well as for worship, of the craft's *dinh*; the existence of economic and/or familial links with the native craft village. Hàng Bạc Street, the former urban village of Dung Thọ, is a well-documented case that makes it possible to analyse the current evolution of these parameters.

Like most streets of the Old Quarter, it is still full of business activity. In spite of the very significant development of tourist activities (mini-hotels, travel agencies), two studies made in 2005 and 2011 (Old Quarter Management Bureau) show that the crafts linked to gold/silversmithery and money-changing have progressed over this period, even if they are less visible from the street and give the impression of having regressed.

Although the craft corporations, as formal institutions, naturally disappeared during the communist era, mutual assistance practices have survived. They manifest themselves in a significant concentration of similar activities in the same street. Each trader is free to set his or her prices and to choose his or her products (this was the corporation's role in the pre-colonial era) but finds an economic interest in this situation: supply of raw materials, available workforce, etc.

The shared origins of the inhabitants are also a characteristic trait of the street's gold and silversmiths. Nearly half of the artisans claim a familial link with one of the three original craft villages (Châu Khê, Định Công, Đồng Xâm). Visiting the village *dinh* during the annual festival perpetuates the link with village roots.

For its part, the urban *dinh* contributes to a 'horizontal' integration, at street level. Although the building has been occupied by numerous families since the 1960s, the altar dedicated to worship has continued to be maintained in a space limited to a few square metres. In 2010, its restoration was supported and financed by artisans from the street, underlining their attachment to this symbol of the community's cultural identity. There are plans to organise cultural events there in the future specific to the craft of shaping precious metals.

This apparent resurgence in traditional craft activities in Hàng Bạc Street does not however reflect the situation of other crafts in the quarter, often deprived of this vital link between street and craft village. The profound urban changes experienced by Hà Nội over the last twenty years have contributed to modifying at the regional level the role of the Old Quarter, which was formerly the indispensable outlet for craft produce. Two parameters make it possible to analyse the evolution of crafts within this constantly changing system: firstly, the kind of clientele and

Location of crafts in the Quarter of the 36 Streets during the 17th-18th centuries

Evolution of craft streets of the Quarter of the 36 Streets since the colonial era



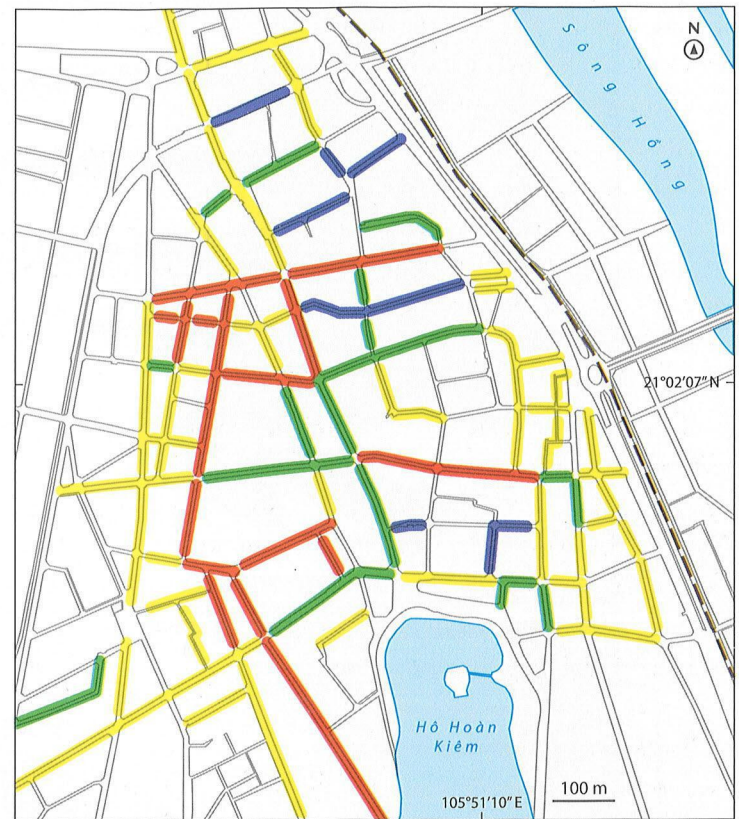
Source: ORFÈVRE R., according to Phạm Đình Bách plan 1873 rescaled on current plan, BABONNEAU M.-L. plan 1885, NGUYỄN VINH PHÚC & NGUYỄN THỨA HỖ (2006)

Urban structure before colonial intervention

- Lake, river, canal
- Street
- Urban village boundary
- City wall of the Citadel
- Dyke
- Citadel, urban villages and city gate

Goods and products of the pre-colonial era

- Bamboo, rattan, reed
- Wood
- Pottery, ceramic
- Textile (fabrics, dyes), clothing
- Food processing
- Metal
- Traditional medicine
- Worship artefacts
- Art craft
- Other



Source: ORFÈVRE R., according to Phạm Đình Bách plan 1873 rescaled on current plan and inventory of the Old Quarter Management Bureau

Urban structure according to the Cadastre 2005

- Lake, river, canal
- Street
- Dyke

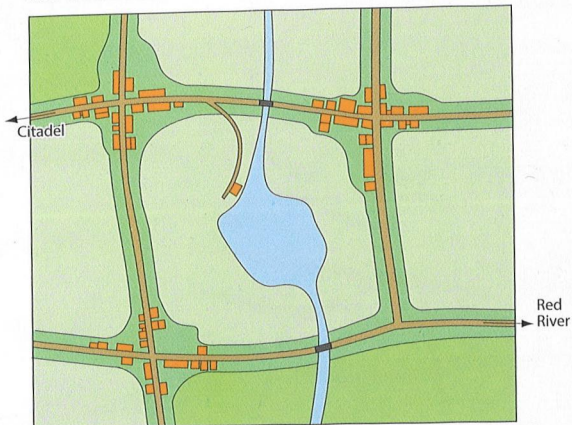
Evolution of craft streets

- Street having partially retained its original artisanal activity
- New specialised street
- Street no longer having the characteristics of a craft street
- Street having lost its original artisanal activity in favour of another

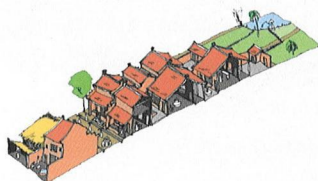
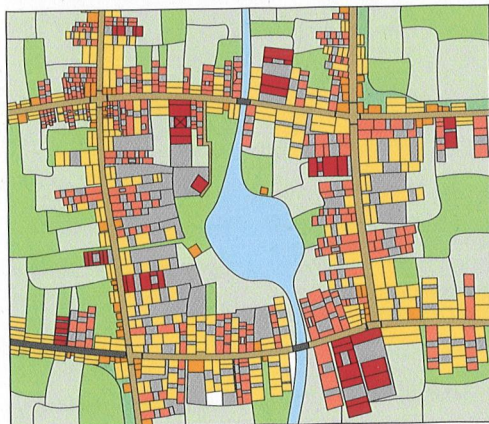
Hypothesis of parallel development of craft villages and craft streets

Hypothesis of development of the Old Quarter of Hà Nội

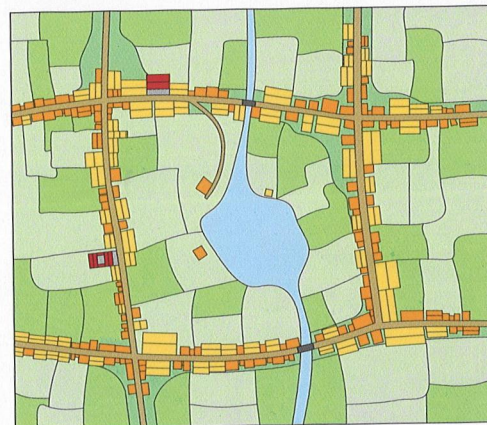
Installation of temporary markets between the Citadel and the Red River



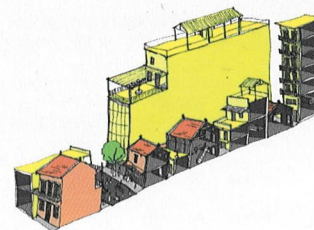
Structuring urban villages (gate) and corporations, development of tubehouse



Market development and beginning of craftsmen settlement



Colonial era: from urban villages to specialised streets. Today, development of vertical tubehouse



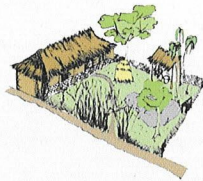
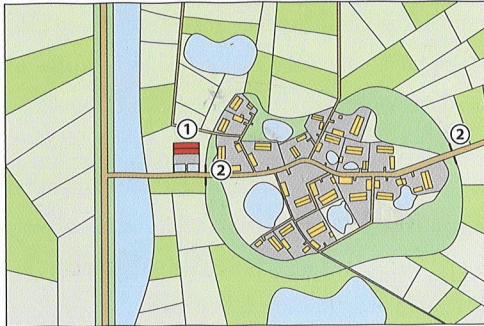
- Raised road edge
- River, lake
- Track, street
- Non built area, garden
- Communal house, temple, pagoda
- Temporary market
- Straw and bamboo hut
- Tubehouse made of bricks
- Vertical tubehouse (over 3 floors)
- Village residential area

Sources: ORFÈVRE R., 2010 according to TIBOR ALEX & LUONG TU QUYEN, 1998

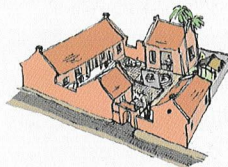
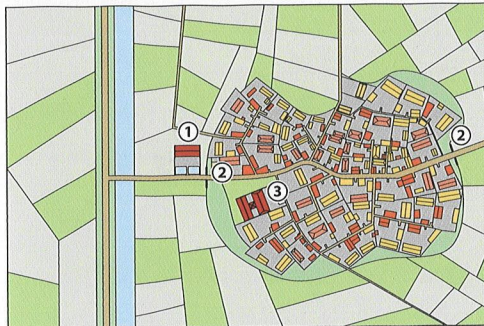
Hypothesis of parallel development of craft villages and craft streets

Hypothesis of development of craft villages

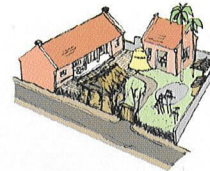
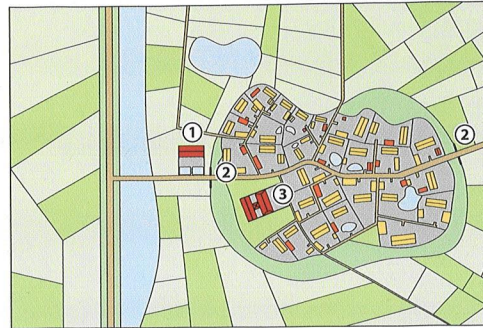
Settlement of farm village organised around rice production



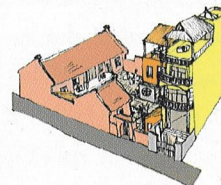
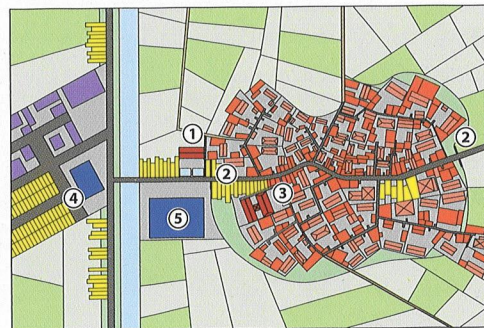
Craft replaces agriculture activities. Technical and marketing networks development



Rise of craft to complement rice production



Today, rediscovering and transmission of know-how, adaptation to industrial techniques, new opportunities



- | | |
|---|---|
|  | Raised road edge |
|  | River, lake |
|  | Track, street |
|  | Swamp, ricefield |
|  | Communal house, temple, pagoda |
|  | Peasant house (straw, bamboo, earth...) |
|  | Craftsman house made in brick or wood |
|  | Craft workshop and storage |
|  | Tubehouse (residence, production, sale) |
|  | State cooperative, public building |
|  | Private workshop |
|  | Village residential area |

- ① Communal house
- ② Village gate
- ③ Pagoda chù
- ④ Cooperative
- ⑤ Public building

Hà Nội: the villages, the heart of social and patrimonial life

its location, secondly, the relative distance separating the street from the village where the merchandise is produced.

After the collectivist era, many under-employed urban artisans who had gone to live in the countryside were able, for the most part, to resettle on Hàng Bạc Street, given the long-established roots of the inhabitants of Châu Khê. At that time, the street played the double role of trading post for the village and production workshop: the idea was to sell the jewellery made in the village and take fresh orders, but also to install workshops for on-the-spot production and repairs on a smaller scale. Maintaining such a system proved to be crucial for this village quite far from the city centre (40 km) and with a predominantly urban clientele.

The second community, the one from Định Công, was less well established in the street. But the geographical situation of this former peri-urban village, which has become a district of Hà Nội, enabled artisans to compensate for this handicap: they had more space, and could therefore add shops onto their workshops. In addition, the centre's proximity offered relatively easy access to their clients. The presence in the city of a member of the village community or of the family made it possible to curry demand.

The third case is that of the village of Đồng Xâm. The members of this community arrived later in the street, and are therefore less well entrenched. The village is also more remote from the centre of Hà Nội. This double handicap led to the artisans developing export sales networks, resorting in particular to the Internet. This positioning followed on naturally from the collectivist period, during which the state co-operative made gold and silver jewellery for Soviet bloc countries. Similarly, the village now attempts to diversify its activities by offering cultural activities for tourists, and by turning to bronze work, for which there is greater demand.

These three cases do not constitute a model of change in Old Quarter crafts, but allow us to clarify certain parameters that determine the survival or the disappearance of craft activities. One can observe for example that the presence of activities linked to traditional craftwork in the streets of the Old Quarter is dependent on the existence of family links with the village. In fact, at least half of the inhabitants of Hàng Bạc Street have a family tie with the village. Things changed after the war. Having for the most part found refuge in the countryside, many artisans could no longer resettle on an overpopulated street, save for the richest ones, those from Châu Khê. The others were obliged to continue their activity in the village, or to settle elsewhere (Phúc Tản Street), on the other side

of the dyke. The management of re-housing people to thin out the Old Quarter's population² and allocations of property rights will therefore in the coming years have a decisive impact on the continued presence of these families of artisans and traders linked to villages, and by the same token on the survival of craft streets.

These changes suggest that the legitimacy and recognition of the Old Quarter as the trading centre of the Hanoi urban area emanate above all for the craft villages to which these streets are affiliated. Limited by its spatial and productive resources, the quarter remains dependent on the vitality of the villages, even if it can stimulate their renaissance or their growth (as was the case with silk in Hàng Gai Street). It is therefore advisable, for each street and village, to identify both their strong and weak points, taking into account their commercial potential, but also considering image, environment, rural and urban development, in order to propose suitable and efficient development strategies.

A policy of restoring links between Old Quarter and villages

• Architectural heritage

A policy of decentralised co-operation has been developed between the cities of Toulouse and Hà Nội over the last twenty years or so. It is based on an exchange of experiences and technical and financial support to the local authorities, the Old Quarter Management Bureau, an agency of Hoàn Kiếm Urban District. It aims to protect the heritage, both material and immaterial, that makes up the quarter (architectural, urban, cultural, artisanal, etc.).

A heritage inventory carried out in 1995 by the Head City Architect's Bureau with the collaboration of the *phường* (urban districts) led in 1999 to the establishment of a heritage protection policy. Decree 45 determined henceforth a heritage protection zone where the laws are more strictly applied. In 2010-2011, a second inventory was carried out within the framework of this collaboration and made it possible to assess the qualified impact of heritage protection policies in the Old Quarter. Of the 1,141 old houses listed in 1995, 31.4% have disappeared during the 12 years that Decree 45 has been in force (Plate 9). The complementary inventory carried out in 2010-2011 identified 256 further houses possessing heritage qualities. The protection of the former perimeter by Decree 45 has proved ineffective, as destructions are carried out equally over the whole area.

Protection of architectural urban heritage of the Old Quarter (1995-2012)



Hà Nội: the villages, the heart of social and patrimonial life

Apparently, the objective sought by the authorities is a reduction in the number of houses to protect in order to limit the financial efforts required. A worrying choice, as the value of urban heritage, already much undermined, depends on its consistency.

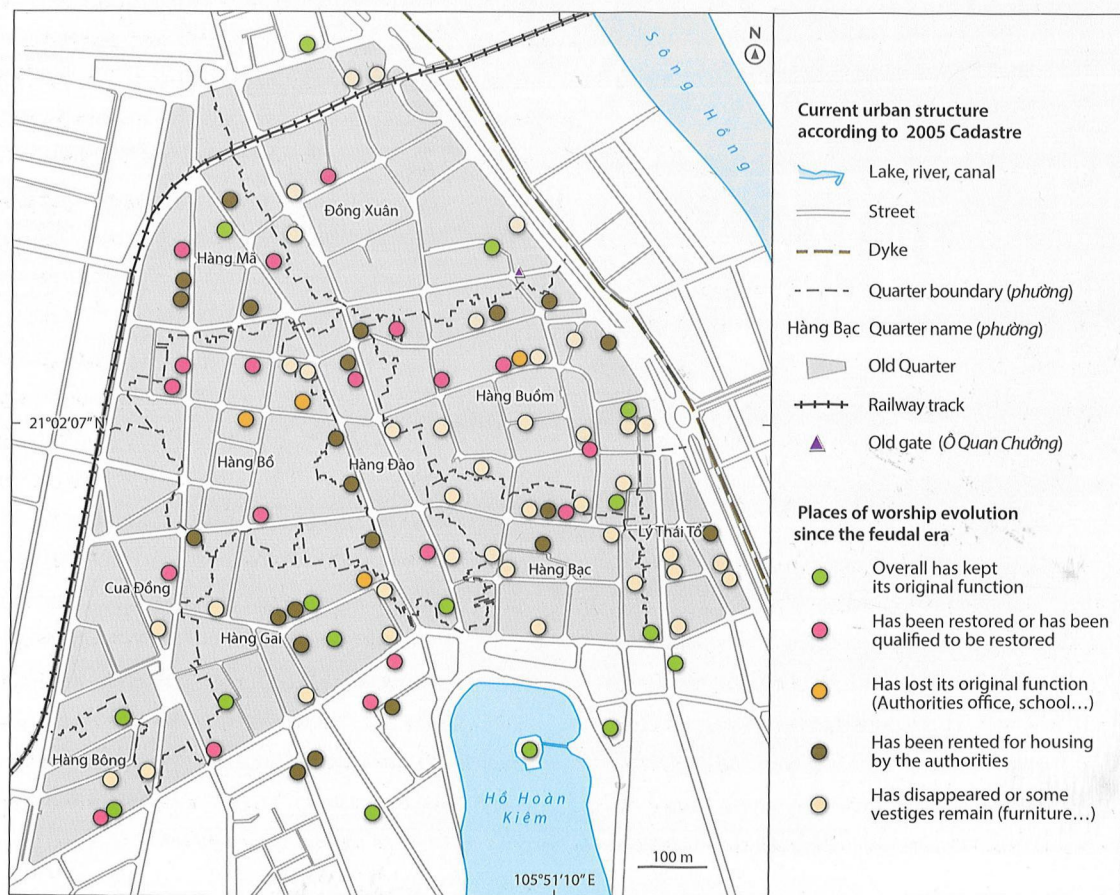
This appraisal shows Decree 45 to be now obsolete and to what extent the authorities lack any means of coercion to get laws applied. The objectives of the Hà Nội 2030/2050 Master Plan aim towards a better protection of heritage and a reduction in the commercial role of the quarter. One may however question the capability of the local authorities to apply such a planning policy.

Some of the places of worship have disappeared (according to the Management Bureau, there are 86 places of worship left in the Merchant Quarter, compared with 115 before 1954), between 1954 and *Đổi mới* (Figure 7). The *dinh*

and the *dền* are the most affected. According to the authorities of the collectivised era, these places represented backward and/or anti-revolutionary ideologies. Indeed, they were very probably the property of, or were maintained by, wealthy families of the quarter who were stigmatised at that time. However, these buildings were not intentionally destroyed by the authorities. They were rather left abandoned or rented to families so that they had somewhere to live. During this period of religious disaffection, families often opted to destroy these buildings, thus gradually gaining space from places of worship. Some of these buildings have now been restored or are in the process of being restored.

The administrative authorities currently have neither the means nor the force to implement a blanket policy as was envisaged at the end of the 1990s. It would appear however that the policy of small steps, initiated in particular within the framework of the Hà Nội –Toulouse co-operation, has led to a better

Figure 7 – STATE OF PLACES OF WORSHIP IN THE OLD QUARTER SINCE THE PRE-COLONIAL ERA



Sources: ORFÈVRE R., according to BABONNEAU M.-L., 1885. Cadastre and Inventory of historical vestiges, Old Quarter Management Bureau (2006), Phạm Đình Bách plan, 1873 rescaled on current plan

understanding on the part of the authorities, both on the question of objectives and on that of means. Since independence, only major monuments had benefitted from a policy of restoration. After economic liberalisation, minor places of worship were considered as well as, more recently, local or colonial non-monumental urban heritage.

This change in policy is in part the result of micro-interventions carried out by international co-operation on historic buildings, with the aim of carrying out exemplary restorations while encouraging a skills transfer to the authorities. This objective is paying dividends today, since these quality projects have demonstrated the capability of local teams to successfully carry out restoration actions, leading the overseeing authorities to entrust them with fresh, more ambitious projects. At the regulatory level, the work of a local team was due to culminate, for the first time, in 2012, in the drawing up of a heritage conservation plan.

Finally, this policy – very dependent on state involvement – is accompanied by a pedagogical component, with the establishment of an interpretative and educational centre for heritage, aimed as much at inhabitants as at visitors to the Old Quarter.

• The crafts of Hà Nội: a heritage in danger

Since a decade ago, a certain proportion of urban development experts and local authorities have realised that the identity of the Old Quarter also depends upon the question of the craft streets. The artisans have struggled to thrive amid this quarter in upheaval, caught up in intense property speculation that has sidelined them. Simultaneously, this identity has tended to be diverted to mercantile and touristic ends that traders cannot easily ignore, even if this leads to a loss of know-how.

The typology of the craft streets put in place is based upon two different rationales: one, concerning heritage, refers to the names of the streets, to know-how; the other, economic, highlights the significant establishment of similar activities. These characteristics can be superimposed, as is the case in Hàng Bạc Street. The aim is to balance the historic dimension with healthy economic activity: the first has enabled the authorities to grasp the notion of immaterial heritage, while the second is an essential condition for its survival. Between the lines, one can read into these categories the strong and the weak points of each street: visibility, quality, vitality, and so on.

Tasked with economic development, the *phường* are beginning to realise that the craft streets can become a more sustainable development resource than the anarchic multiplication of mini-hotels. The cultural events organised over the last few years in Hàng Mã Street and Lãn Ông Street bear witness to this. In 2009, the traders in the latter street installed display cases down the centre of the street. Texts in Vietnamese and photos told the history of the craft and of the street's inhabitants.

However, these initiatives do little to play up the links existing with the craft villages, which poses the question of the level of know-how implemented, of the quality and of the origin of the products.

In Hàng Mã Street, only one craftsman still makes artisanal masks at the end of a passage, while the street is awash with masks and lanterns *made in China*. The rural village continues to produce this merchandise traditionally but finds its customers by other channels than the Old Quarter. Hàng Gai Street is considered as one of the most developed craft streets, with more than 80% of businesses selling cloth. However, the produce found here is of poor quality, for the most part made with synthetic or mixed silk coming from China; this street sells very little of the silk coming out of the Hà Đông cluster, its original production area. One of the keys to conservation would be to create links between the initiatives to protect traditional know-how in the villages on the one hand, and the actions aimed at regulating the craft trade in the Old Quarter on the other (a labelling system giving information on quality and the origin of products).

Plate 7 shows how much the Old Quarter has lost its artisanal specificity since *Đổi mới*. Only a few streets have retained their original artisanal activity (Hàng Bạc Street specialised in gold and silver jewellery, Hàng Thiếc Street in making things out of tin and aluminium, Hàng Đường Street for confectionary, etc.).

Others have lost their original activity in favour of another, less traditional one, such as Hàng Gai Street, called Silk Street, while it was once called Hemp Street. Still others no longer have the characteristics of a craft street and have specialised in the sale of imported products (clothing made in China or wide varieties of products). This raises two questions: how can the Old Quarter retain its identity as a showcase for local culture and know-how when faced with metropolisation and therefore with pressure on property? To what extent can its economic development benefit the rural areas to which it is historically linked?

Conclusion

Unlike many cities of Southeast Asia and China where old quarters and Chinatowns have seen their marketplaces dwindle, or even completely disappear with globalisation and the change in scale of cities, the Quarter of 36 Streets and Corporations has survived and has survived while changing rapidly with economic liberalisation. As far back as the collectivist era, the revolutionary government had severed the commercial ties between the craft villages and this quarter, ties that are at the root of a very ancient process of urbanisation of the countryside, owing to the prohibition of trade and craftwork by the private sector at that time.

However, with the acceleration of Vietnam's integration into the global market and of rises in the price of land in the city centre with the expansion of the service sector (headquarters of big foreign companies, banks, etc.) and the verticalisation of constructions, we are witnessing strong pressure on the property market in the Old Quarter. This competition for space is the reason for misappropriation during land transactions in this historic quarter, a proportion of whose buildings are protected, given its great heritage importance. Tourism and the resale of products for the most part imported from China now dominate the activity of this district, which counts as one of the most densely populated in the city.

In this context, one may wonder about the future for this historic quarter and ask oneself whether it will not simply follow the direction taken in other countries of the region, integrated much earlier than Vietnam into the market economy. If the new 2030-2050 Master Plan for the capital advocates the showcasing of the exceptional heritage of this quarter, will it be possible to implement this policy?

1) The square metre traded for between 20,000 and 40,000 USD in 2012, depending on which street and the position of a plot of land, giving onto a street or located inside a group of buildings. A plot with street frontage is 11 times more expensive than one within a block, in keeping with inevitable commercial interests.

2) In 2009, the Old Quarter was home to 66,660 inhabitants, giving a very high density of 840 inhab/ha. This can be explained in part by the settlement of many rural people during the collectivist era in buildings and places of worship. The objective of the People's Committee of Hoàn Kiếm Urban District was to lower the population to 40,460 inhabitants to reach a density of 500 inhab/ha. Accordingly, more than 26,000 people had to be moved and re-housed in new districts on the outskirts of the city. During the first quarter of 2012, it was planned to re-house 1,800 households in the new district of Việt Hưng (Long Biên Urban District), and 1,020 others during the first quarter of 2013 (*Le Courrier du Vietnam*, 08/07/2011).