



HARVARD-YENCHING INSTITUTE

Lunch Talk Series

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Caught between Tradition and Modernity: Women and Consumption in Colonial Tonkin

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Senior Researcher, Vietnamese Institute for European Studies, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences; Visiting Scholar, Harvard-Yenching Institute

Chair/Discussant: Hue-Tam Ho Tai

*Kenneth T. Young Professor of Sino-vietnamese History,
Department of History, Harvard University*

Tuesday, November 18 11:30 am
Common Room, 2 Divinity Ave., Cambridge

Dr. Tran will discuss changes in women's consuming behavior as a result of cultural, social, and economic modernization in Tonkin, one among the five regions of French Indochina. The emergence of a small number of middle-class women who were educated and aware of their rights and responsibilities gradually shaped consumption trends and was accompanied by a new lifestyle. To some extent, the new woman was trapped between tradition and modernity, between family obligations and community norms on the one hand and the attraction of new, more liberal ideas about freedom of choice on the other hand. Reaction to the emergence of the new woman was characterized by ambivalence and controversy. This sheds light on Tonkinese society's encounter with modernity.



Tran Thi Phuong Hoa is a Senior Researcher at the Vietnamese Institute for European Studies, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences. She received her PhD in History from the Viet Nam Institute of History in 2011. Professor Tran's research focuses on the history of Vietnamese-European cultural interactions, in particular the transformation from a Confucian-based to a Western-influenced education, society and mentality during the colonial period. She is also interested in these changes in contemporary Europe and their possible influence on Vietnam.