

Hanoi in Transition

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Summary

Ever since *Doi Moi*, that is, the arrival of capitalist market forms (and the evolution of corresponding social relations), Hanoi has been undergoing a dramatic upheaval. After revolution, wars and a centralized economy, we now observe what amounts to a change from pre-modernity to modernity of a globalized age . The observer perceives its consequences when strolling through Hanoi's streets and talking to the inhabitants. This paper attempts to demonstrate that the process of transformation is not random or chaotic but that it follows a logic that can be historically categorized.

The new villas on West Lake and their bourgeois owners representing new (syncretistic) values; the ‚purging‘ of the footpaths of family businesses or private activities in the Old Quarter: each can be viewed as a document of change that can be deciphered like a written text. This is a story of disappearance and of renewal. The city is changing from a place of work and everyday social life into a center of consumption. Urban space is getting disciplined, and its inhabitants are subjected to a new control logic.

Three examples from a wider research project will be presented:

- 1) the portrait of a successful Hanoi architect and restaurer,
- 2) the villa of a nouveau riche couple on Hanoi's West Lake,
- 3) an art exhibition in Hanoi's Goethe Institute in October 2003.