Vietnamese History: Before the French

War, National Identity and regionalism
Broad Themes – and Paradoxes - in Vietnam’s history

1.) Spirit of resistance – toward outside forces and conquerors (coupled with a willingness to use foreign assistance against rivals)

2.) Internal Divisions – regional divisions, dynastic rivalries (coupled with a strong sense of being one people)

3.) Role of China – cultural model, political foe (a love/hate relationships, with periods of great cooperation and times of conflict)
China and Vietnam: The Most “Sinicized” Country of Southeast Asia
Nam Viet

- Founded by Trieu Da in 208 B.C.
- Initially independent, but conquered by the Han emperor Wu Ti in 111 B.C.
- Within Chinese sphere of influence – literature, arts, religions (Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism) agricultural techniques – particularly the cultivation of rice –
- faced resistance and rebellions – the Trung sisters, 39 A.D.
Major Vietnamese Dynasties

- Ngo Dynasty (939-967) – Founding Dynasty
  - named the country Dai Viet
- Dinh (968-980) – negotiated tributary relationship with China
- Tien Le (980-1009)
- Ly (1009-1225) – flourishing of Buddhism, capital moved to Hanoi, in 1075 first examinations held, revival of Confucianism
- Tran (1225-1400) – continued expansion in population and territory
Vietnamese Dynasties

- Ho (1400-1428) – defeated by Ming dynasty – Chinese occupation
- Le (1428-1776) – Le Loi defeated the Chinese, (using guerilla tactics) renewed expansion to the South and defeated Champa – but rivals divided the country in the 16th and 17th century – sought aid from Portuguese, Dutch, French, and Chinese in their struggles – relative decline in midst of internal fighting
- Tayson Rebellion 177-1802 – divided Vietnam into three regions
March to the South
Dynastic Divisions

- **Tonkin, Mac Dynasty**
- **Tonkin, Trinh Dynasty**
- **Annam, Nguyen Dynasty**
- **Champa**

1590
Vietnam in the 17th century

- Tonkin
- Annam
- Cochinchina (dependency of Annam)
- Champa

1697
Effects of Expansion

1. Destruction of the Champa
2. Conflict with the Khmers
3. Development of Regionalism
4. Feuding Dynasties – frequent wars and divisions – Tayson Rebellions late 18th century
5. Unity of the entire country under Nguyen Dynasty – 1802 – Emperor Gia Long – (helped by French military advisers) – moved capital to Hue – modeled upon the Chinese court in Beijing - lasts until 1883
Vietnamese language

- Alexander de Rhodes – 17th century

Đây vườn cỏ mộc lau thưa,
Song trắng quanh quẽ, vách mua rã-rồi.
Trước sau nào thấy bóng người,
Hoa dào năm ngoài còn cười giọt dòng.
Xập-xệ ẻn liếng lâu không,
Cô lan mạt đất, rêu phong đậu giấy.
Cuối tường gai góc mọc đầy,
Di về này những lời này năm xưa.
Vietnam – Ethnic map
Geographic areas
Some thoughts on similarities between the US and Vietnam

1.) Both countries emerge out of colonial relationships – Vietnam with China, the US with Britain

2.) Both countries go through periods of expansion and fragmentation – the “March to the South” and “Manifest Destiny” – difference between North and South

3.) Both countries come to their national unity after wars and at roughly the same time – the US after the American Revolution in 1789, and Vietnam in 1802 after the Tayson Rebellions