

COMPLETION REPORT

"News from Tonkin"

The Dutch Report of Northern Vietnamese Politics to Japan in The Seventeenth Century

Dr. Hoang Anh Tuan (+2)

Associate Professor

College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Vietnam National University of Hanoi

Under the sponsorship of the Sumitomo Foundation, from 1 April 2014 to 30 September 2015, I carried out the research project "News from Tonkin: The Dutch Report of Northern Vietnamese Politics to Japan in the Seventeenth Century". During the past eighteen months, the following major works have been carried out:

1. Archival research and data analysis for research constituted the most important part of the research project since I depended heavily on the newly-extracted data from the seventeenth-century texts. So far, around two thousand pages of the Dutch East India Company records (of both Nagasaki and Tonkin factories) have been checked for relevant information;

2. Fieldworks were carried out in August 2014 and again in April 2015 in search of supplementary information for the textual data. We have re-surveyed the ancient town of Pho Hien (Hung Yen province) where a number of seventeenth-century relics still remain (Hien Pagoda, Foreigners' cemetery) and several pieces of Japanese *Hizen* ceramics were recently discovered in an archaeological excavation;

3. A seminar was held at History Department in July 2015 in order to report on the research project.

On the basis of the abovementioned three major activities, we have gained the following major scientific achievement (as aimed at in the Research Proposal):

1). *A vivid picture of the seventeenth century socio-political history* as depicted and perceived by the Dutch. During the course of 64 years trading in Vietnam, the Dutch recorded the everyday politics of the northern Vietnamese kingdom of Tonkin in their "*dagh-registers*" (daily records) and transferred these documents either to Batavia or Hirado/Nagasaki at the end of every trading season. A large part of this information never existed in the Vietnamese chronicles. For example, *Nagasaki daghregister 1642* described vividly the Trinh Lord's plan to pacify the Nguyen "rebels" in southern kingdom of Cochinchina. In order to support his grand strategy, the Trinh ruler demanded the Dutch to send warships, soldiers, weapons to Tonkin in the following summer. He also ordered the Dutch factors in Nagasaki to get some Japanese swords and Japanese wooden handle for spear... to be shipped to Tonkin in the next shipment. Understandably, this information would enrich the Dutch *Oranda fusetsu gaki* (Dutch world report) to Edo that year since the Japanese Shogun was, without doubt, concerned with the political development in the regional countries. Such information on Tonkin could be seen in the Dutch Nagasaki records almost every year.

2). *An extra overview of the seventeenth-century Vietnamese political history*, with focus on the diplomatic front aimed by the northern Vietnamese rulers (the Trinh Lords) towards a possible political recognition (and even a military support) from the Japanese Shogunate in the former half of the 1600s. As shown in the Dutch records, there were sporadic attempts by the Trinh rulers towards Edo, either by direct diplomatic letters or through the Dutch connection. The Trinh rulers, however, did not attain their

goal, as expected, owing to their half-hearted attitude in this diplomatic relationship.

3). *A re-depiction of early modern Vietnamese – Japanese relationship*, with a periodization of the commercial relation between the two countries from the late sixteenth to early eighteenth centuries. Through the Dutch (and the Chinese, to a lesser extent) active intermediation, trade between the two countries thrived throughout the most part of the seventeenth century, which helped connect Tonkin and Japan even after Edo had promulgated the Closed-Door policy in the mid- 1630s.

4). *An additional account of the political impact on the socio-economic transformation in Vietnam during the early modern time*. It is rather clear from the documents that the Japanese Shogunate did not favor the northern Vietnamese rulers in the civil war between Tonkin and Cochinchina. Edo, however, did not hinder the Dutch trade between Japan and Tonkin. This contributed to the existence of the trading connection between North Vietnam and Japan in the most part of the seventeenth century.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Data from my research project is utilized in the following presentation:

1. Hoang Anh Tuan, “Climating an Empire: Natural Disasters and Socio-economic Vicissitudes in Early Modern Tonkin”, paper presented at the International Conference *War, Environment and Urban Transformation: A Comparative Approach* (USSH, Vietnam National University, Hanoi, 29-30 September 2015) [in English]

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Data from my research project is utilized in the following theses:

1. Hoang Anh Tuan, “Vietnamese – Japanese Diplomatic and Commercial Relations in the Seventeenth Century”, in: *History, Culture and Cultural Diplomacy: Revitalizing Vietnam – Japan Relations in the New Regional and International Context* (Hanoi: Vietnam National University Press, 2014, pp. 21-50) [in English]
2. Hoang Anh Tuan, “Góc nhìn khu vực về quan hệ Việt Nam – Nhật Bản thế kỷ XVII” [Seventeenth-Century Vietnamese – Japanese Relationship in the Regional Perspective], *Journal of Sciences*, VNU-Hanoi, Vol.30/issue 3, 2014, pp. 1-13 [in Vietnamese, with English summary]

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

Data from my research project is utilized in the following monograph:

1. Hoang Anh Tuan, *The Dutch East India Company in Tonkin, 1637-1700* (Hanoi Publishing House, 2015, c. 800 pages, forthcoming) [book in Vietnamese, with English summary article]
Note: the major part of data which I extracted from the Dutch archives (Nagasaki and Tonkin records) within this research project was included in Appendix 7 “Documents and Chronic Events of the Dutch-Vietnamese Relationship” [c.300 pages]. This book is under printing, expected by Winter 2015.