

## COMPLETION REPORT

### **"Skinning Deer - Gearing Trade": The Dutch Export of Siamese and Taiwanese Deerskin to Japan in the Seventeenth Century**

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During the past year, based mainly on the extraction of the archival documents, I focused on the study of Dutch East India Company (VOC)'s export of Siamese and Taiwanese deerskins to Japan market in the seventeenth century.

1) Data reveal the increasing number of deerskins shipped to Japan by the VOC throughout the first three quarters of the seventeenth century. Since the early years after its establishment in Siam (1609) and Taiwan (1624), the Dutch began to collect hides to send to the island market. The annual quantity varied from a few thousands up to hundreds of thousands in some certain years. In 1656, for instance, out of around 195,574 pieces of deerskins which were carried by the Dutch to Japan, the majority came from the Siam and Taiwan. The export of volume of hides by the VOC began to slow down after 1662 (when the Dutch lost Taiwan to Coxinga) and decisively declined after 1684 (when the Qing lifted the maritime ban which allowed Chinese merchants to sail abroad to compete with the Dutch in Siam and other trade places).

2) Information from the archives also shed light into the other aspects of the deerskin production and trade. Accordingly, the process of hunting and processing in both Taiwan and Siam was not profoundly dissimilar. The local people hunted deer in order to get skin, dried it up before selling it to agents or brokers who would gather up the hides to provide the Dutch in a considerable load. Hides were then shipped, together with the other commodities, to Japan via Taiwan, where the other load of hides were also sent hither to the island market.

3) Since deerskins were an important source of export from both Siam and Taiwan, this commodity played a significant role in the regular income of both countries. Sporadic figures show that between 25,000 to 40,000 tael of silver were reserved for the hide trade in Siam and Taiwan in the most part of the seventeenth century. In some specific years, the capital reserved for deerskin purchase in Siam soared up to approximately 50,000 tael of silver (1658), marking the importance of this branch of trade to the Dutch overall business in the Far East.

4) The large sum of money from the Dutch as well as the other foreign merchants visiting Siam and Taiwan undoubtedly must have fueled the local hunting industry. As a matter of fact, the huge herds of hundreds of thousand deer in both countries reduced throughout the century. It is said that, down to the dawn of the eighteenth century, the population of deer in the island of Taiwan had dramatically reduced to the level of approximately 20%. It was also roughly estimated by the Dutch merchants in Ayutthaya in the last decade of the 1600s that the herds of deer in Siam were also reduced drastically, standing at around half of the previous decades... Although there has been no such serious warning, yet, there were concerns expressed by both the locals and the foreign merchants on the reduction of the deer population, hence, the possible ecological damage caused by the increasing hunting of deer in Siam.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

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

The below papers have been presented / printed in the conference proceeding:

- Nguyễn Văn Vinh, “Vị trí của Batavia trong mạng lưới thương mại Nội Á của công ty Đông Ấn Hà Lan thế kỷ XVII/On the Position of Batavia in the Intra-Asian Trade of the Dutch East India Company, Seventeenth Century”, Kỷ yếu Hội thảo khoa học quốc tế: *Việt Nam và Đông Nam Á hội nhập và phát triển*/ Paper presented at the International Conference *Vietnam and the East Asia: Integration and Development* (Phú Yên, Vietnam 5-6/12/2015).

- Nguyễn Văn Vinh, “Tơ lụa đổi bạc”: Hoạt động xuất khẩu bạc của Bồ Đào Nha ở Nhật Bản (1571-1639)/Silk for Silver: The Portuguese Export of Japanese Silver in the Seventeenth Century”, Kỷ yếu hội thảo quốc tế *Quan hệ Việt Nam – Nhật Bản thời cận thế kỷ XVI-XVII* / Paper presented at the International Conference *Vietnam – Japan Relations in the Early Modern Time, Sixteenth – Seventeenth Centuries* (University of Social Sciences and Humanities, HoChiMinh City, 18-19/3/2016).

- Nguyễn Văn Vinh, “Quan hệ thương mại Việt Nam – Nhật Bản trong mạng lưới thương mại Nội Á của công ty Đông Ấn Hà Lan thế kỷ XVII / Vietnam – Japan Commercial Relations in the Intra-Asian Trade of the Dutch East India Company during the Seventeenth Century”, Kỷ yếu hội thảo khoa học quốc tế *Văn hoá Việt Nam và Nhật Bản: Hội nhập - Phát triển* / Paper presented at the International Conference *Vietnamese – Japanese Culture: Integration and Development* (University of Social Sciences and Humanities, HoChiMinh City, 12/12/2015).

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

- Nguyễn Văn Vinh, “Hoạt động thương mại của công ty Đông Ấn Anh ở Nhật Bản 1600-1623/The Commercial Activities of the English East India Company in Japan, 1600-1623”, *Tạp chí Nghiên cứu châu Âu/Journal of European Studies*, Vol. 6 (2015), pp. 14-21.

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

- Nguyễn Văn Vinh, “Công ty Đông Ấn Anh ở vương quốc Xiêm (1611-1623)/The English East India Company in Siam, 1611-1623”, Kỷ yếu Hội nghị Khoa học cán bộ trẻ và học viên sau Đại học, Trường ĐHKHXH & NV, Hà Nội 2015/ A Chapter in the Collection of Research Papers Published by University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hanoi, 2015 (ISBN 978-604-62-4251-2).