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Explanatory Note

1) Nguyen Southern Vietnam

This study adopts the use of the name Nguyen Southern Vietnam. Throughout its entire existence, the Nguyen rule in southern Vietnam had never adopted a formal name. Using the family name of Nguyen as the principal sign of authority, the respective Nguyen rulers were contended with the term.

To the foreigners however, Nguyen Southern Vietnam was given different names. To the Chinese and the Japanese, the country was referred to as Guangnan Guo (Guangnan Gako in Japanese), after the name of the rich province of Quang Nam where most foreign businesses were being conducted.

The term Cochinchina was also used by Westerners to distinguish between Nguyen south and Trinh north which was called Tongking. The term Cochinchina was first used by the Portuguese in the 16th Century referring to the southern portion of Dai Viet. The term “Cochin” is a corrupted version of the “Kuchi”, as the Red River Delta part of Vietnam was known as Jiao Zhi (Ciao Chi), but the term “China” was added to distinguish it from Cochin in Kerala, India.

For the northerners, the Nguyen domains were simply known as Thuan Hoa with its centre at Phu Xuan. In referring to the Nguyen’s official correspondence with Siam, Le Quy Don simply mentioned, “That year (1755), Thuan Hoa replied the Siamese with letters”.¹ In other circumstances, Nguyen

¹ *Phu Bien Tap Luc*, Vol. 5: 20.

Southern Vietnam would be referred to as according to the localities or provinces, eg. Thuan Hoa, Quang Nam, Gia Dinh and Qui Nhan.

In the same series of correspondence, the Nguyen Lord, Nguyen Phuc Khoat actually referred himself as 'King of Annam', the first by a Nguyen Lord. This new title was probably in response to the similar term of 'King of Annam' used by the Siamese when writing to the Nguyen Lord.

For some time, the term Dang Trong was commonly used by the Vietnamese to refer to the region of Thuan Hoa and Quang Nam. The term, literary means the Inner Region, was used to distinguish with the region north of Thuan Hoa, which was referred to as Dang Ngoai, or the outer region. The usage of the term Dang Trong is traceable to the dictionary published by Father Alexander de Rhodes in 1640. Nevertheless, it is not found in the Sino-Vietnamese texts, including historical texts. In recent years, at least two major publications had used the term Dang Trong, namely Pham Khoang's *Lich Su Dang Trong* and Anthony Reid and Li Tana's volume of collected sources of the areas.²

2) Nguyen Lords/Nguyen Rulers

The terms 'Nguyen Lords' and 'Nguyen rulers' will be used interchangeably throughout this study. However, the use of the term 'Nguyen rulers' in place of

² Phan Khoang, *Viet Su Xu Dang Trong 1558-1777: Cuoc Nam-Tien Cua Dan Toc Viet-Nam* (History of Vietnam in Dang Trong 1558-1777: The Epic of the Southward Movement of the Vietnamese People), Saigon: Nha Sach Khai Tri, 1969 and Li Tana, Anthony Reid (eds.), *Southern Vietnam Under the Nguyen: Document on the Economic History of Cochinchina (Dang Trong), 1602-1777*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993.

'Nguyen Lords' depends on the situation described.. The conventional usage of the term 'Lords' when referring to the Nguyen was popularised by the early French scholar Charles Maybon who used the term 'Seigneur'(Lord) when referring to the Nguyen rulers.³ The term was later adopted by scholars such as Dang Phuong Nghi, Le Thanh Khoi, Nguyen Thanh Nha, Jean Chesneaux and Pierre Yves Manguin.⁴

Even though the term 'Lords' is a translation of the Vietnamese term of 'Chua', the title used by Nguyen court historians to refer to the Nguyen found in the Nguyen chronicles, the term was strongly influenced by the European context of feudal lordship of the medieval period where the term has a legalistic meaning, namely lords who were accorded titles and authority by an acknowledged sovereign. In this context, the term 'Chua' does not mean being appointed by a higher authority, particularly in the later Nguyen period vis-à-vis the Le. Instead, the term simply means rulers, head, chief, host, lord, sovereign and even God.⁵ In the Vietnamese scenario, a renegade ruler or chief rebel could unilaterally claim to be a 'Chua' as in the case of the Nguyen. When the Nguyen went to the south, their official title was that of a provincial governor. However, after they elevated their position as 'Chua', it was accepted by contemporaries in the region.

³ Maybon, Charles B., *Histoire Moderne du Pays d'Annam, 1592-1820*, Paris: Libraire Plon, 1920. Reprinted by Gregg International Publishers Ltd., 1972.

⁴ Dang Phuong Nghi, *Les Institutions Publiques Du Viet Nam au XVIIIe Siecle*, Paris: Ecole Francaise D'Extreme-Orient, 1969; Le Thanh Khoi, *Histoire du Vietnam: des origines a 1858*, Paris: Sudestasia, 1981; Jean Chesneaux, *Contribution a l'histoire de la Nation Vietnamienne*, Paris: Editions Sociales, 1955; Nguyen Thanh Nha, *Tableau Economique du Vietnam aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siecles*, Paris: editions Cujas, 1870 and Pierre-Yves Manguin, *Les Portugais sur les Cotes de Viet Nam et Du Campa: Etude sur les Sources Portugaises (XVIe, XVIIe, XVIIIe siecles)*, Paris: Ecole Francaise D'Extreme-Orient, 1972.

⁵ *Dictionnaire Vietnamien-Chinois-Francais*, Eugene Gouin (comp.), Paris: Les Indes Savantes and Missions Etrangeres des Paris, 2002, pp. 294-295.

There were also attempts to substitute the term 'Chua' with the term 'King' (French Rois) as in the case of L. Cadiere and 'Principality' referring to the region under Nguyen rule by Yang Baoyun.⁶ This study takes the stand that in the context of the Nguyen of southern Vietnam, the term 'Chua' more appropriately means 'rulers'. This reflects the reality that the Nguyen were de facto rulers in southern Vietnam since 1600. This status was claimed by the Nguyen in as early as 1670 when cannons were constructed with inscriptions bearing the title 'Cannons of the Nguyen Rulers of Cochinchina, Champa and Cambodia'. The term 'ruler' becomes even more appropriate in the context of their dealings with external entities, when the Nguyen consistently acted in the capacity as sovereign rulers. This is evident in their creation of a tributary system when dealing with their neighbours in 1653 when receiving the first tribute from the Cham rulers who were at that time sovereigns in their rights, and in the 1702 tribute delegation to China. Thus, when Nguyen Phuc Chu (r. 1691-1725) wrote to the East India Company in 1703, he referred to himself as 'Chua', clarifying that he was a 'ruler'. In 1709, Nguyen Phuc Chu cast a bronze seal with the title 'Everlasting Nguyen Ruler (Chua) of Dai Viet'. Further evidence of 'rulership' emerged in 1714 when Mac Cuu, the Chinese who controlled Ha Tien was appointed Do Doc or Governor. These instances in Nguyen foreign relations history demonstrate that the Nguyen Lords were 'rulers' throughout their reigns.

⁶ L. Cadiere, "Les Residences des rois de Cochinchine avant Gia-Long", *Bulletin de la Commission Archeologique de l'Indochine*, 1913 and Yang Baoyun, *Contribution a l'histoire de la Principaute des Nguyen au Vietnam Meridional, 1600-1775*, Geneve: editions Olizane, 1992.

3) Cambodia/Khmer

Cambodia will be used throughout the text to denote the Khmer Kingdom. However, where applicable, the term Khmer is also used to refer to culture and people.

4) Champa/Chams

Champa refers to the Kingdom of Champa that covered the region of present day central Vietnam. The people of the kingdom is called Chams.

5) Trinh North/Le-Trinh

Trinh north refers to the Trinh family controlled northern part of the country. Based in Thang Long, and exerted control over a weakened Le Dynasty, the Trinh were the rival of Nguyen. Thus in the conflict between the two sides, the term Le-Trinh refers to the authority of the central government that tried to bring Nguyen Southern Vietnam under its control.

6) Uplanders

Uplanders here refers to the non-Viet ethnic minority hill tribes communities who lived in the highlands of central and southern whom the Nguyen came into contact with.

List of Abbreviations

AMEP	- Archives des Missions Etrangeres de Paris
BAVH	- <i>Bulletin des Amis de Vieux Hue</i>
BEFEO	- <i>Bulletin d'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient</i>
BSEI	- <i>Bulletin de Societe d'Etudes Indochinoise</i>
Cuong Muc	- <i>Kham Dinh Viet Su Thong Giam Cuong Muc</i>
DNNTC	- <i>Dai Nam Nhat Thong Chi</i>
EFEO	- Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient
GDTTC	- <i>Gia Dinh Thanh Thong Chi</i>
HWJS	- <i>Hai Wai Ji Shi</i>
JMBRAS	- <i>Journal of the Malayan (Malaysian) Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JRAS	- <i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSEAS	- <i>Journal of Southeast Asian Studies</i>
Liet Truyen Tien Bien	- <i>Dai Nam Liet Truyen Tien Bien</i>
LTHCLC	- <i>Lich Trieu Hien Cuong Luai Chi</i>
MS	- Manuscript
NHTL	- <i>Nam Ha Trec Luc</i>
PBTL	- <i>Phu Bien Tap Luc</i>
PMTL	- <i>Phu Man Tap Luc</i>
r.	-Reigned

Tien Bien

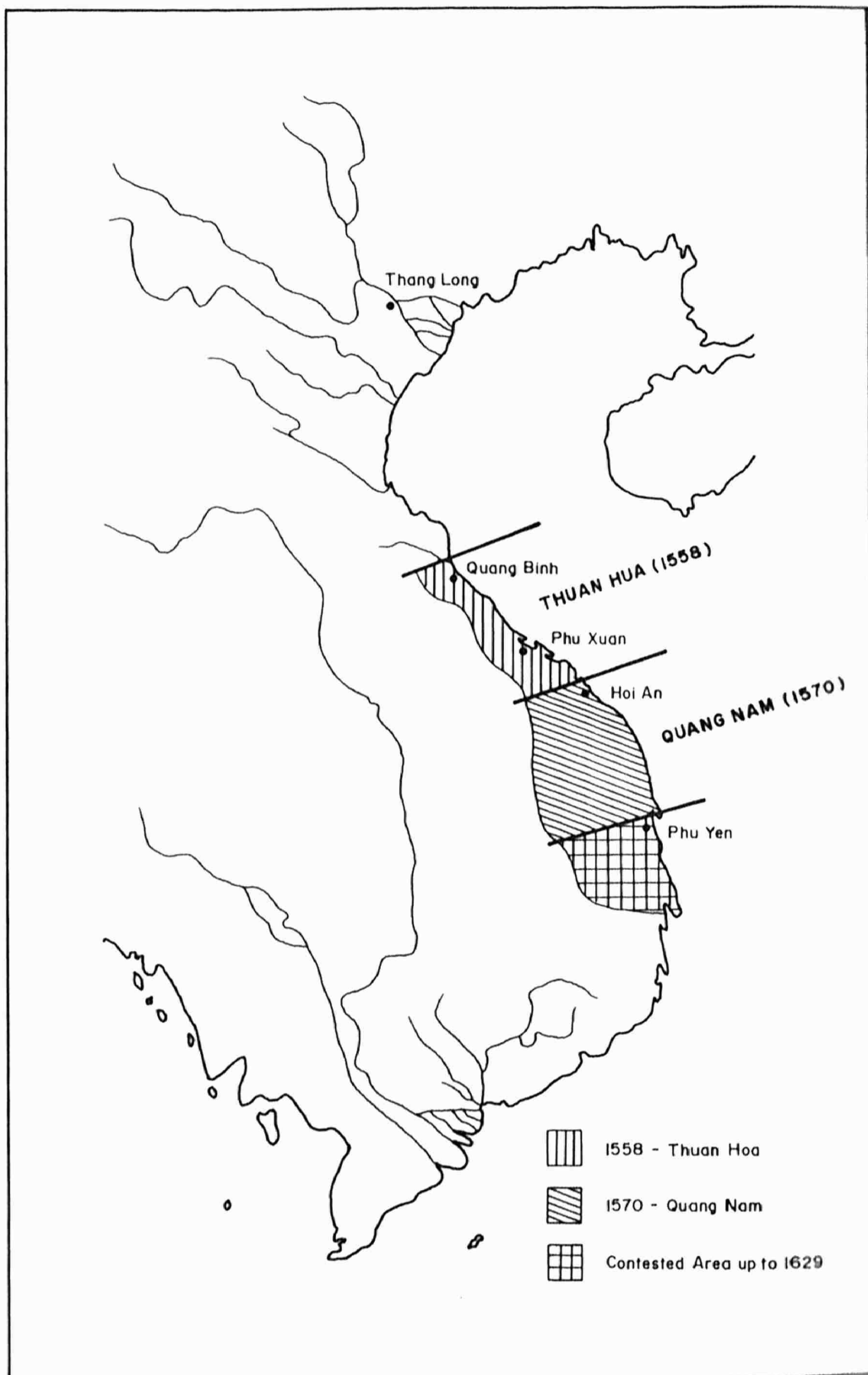
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Toan Thu

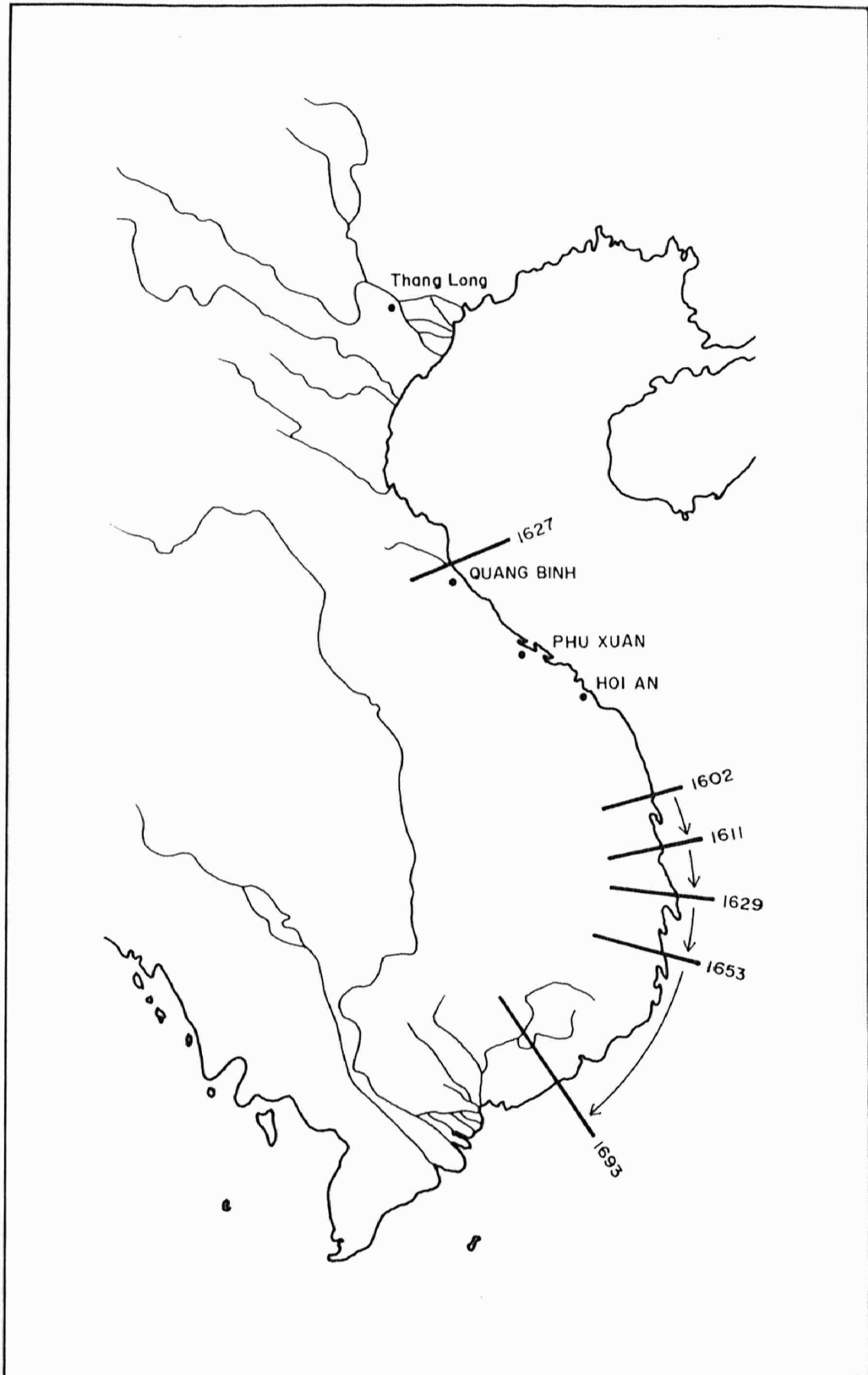
-Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Tu

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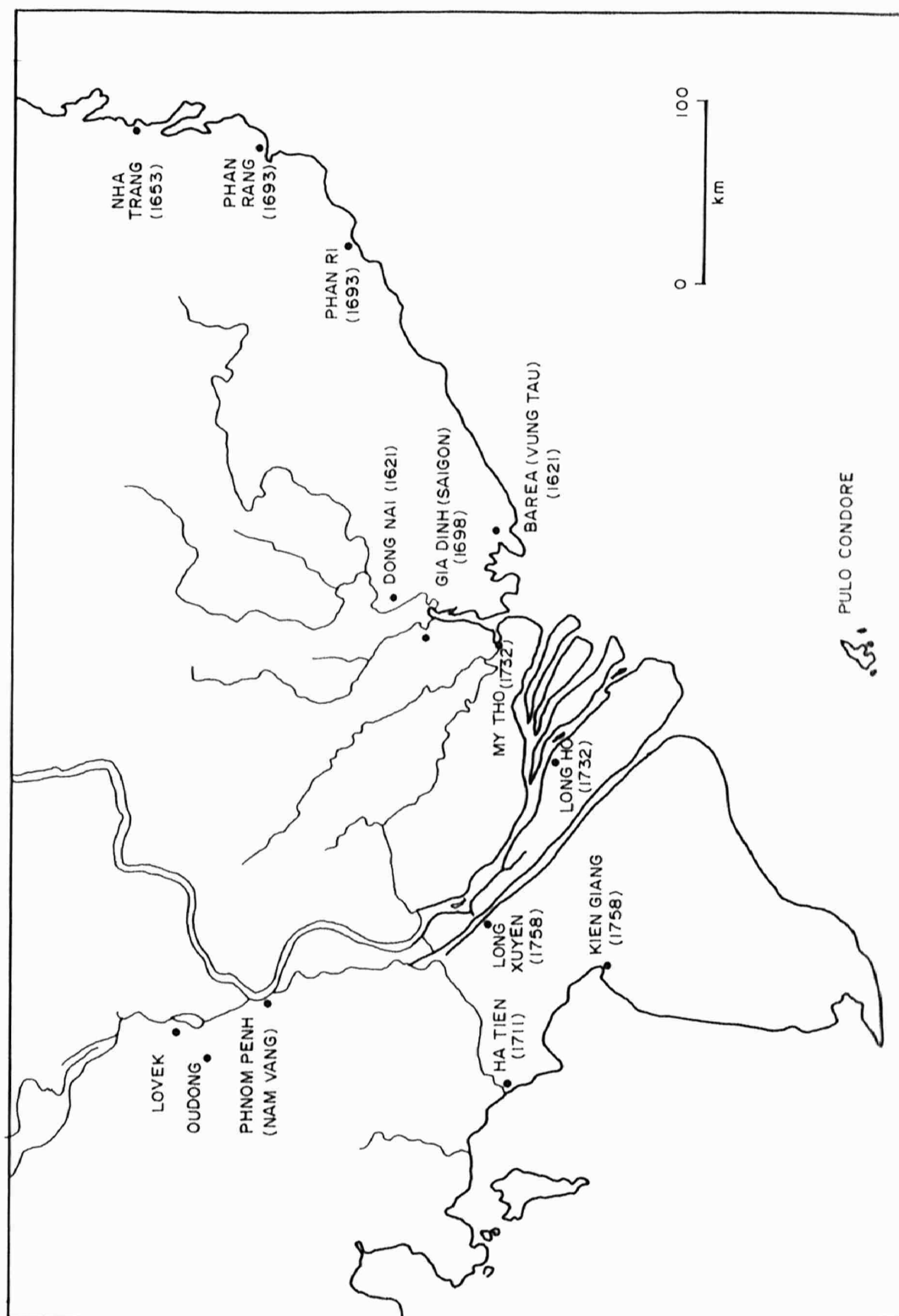
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Map 1 : Nguyen Southern Vietnam 1558-1629



Map 2 : Advance Into Champa, 1611 - 1693



Map 3 - Advance into Cambodian Territories in The Mekong Delta

Table of Measurements

Currency

One Quan = 1,000 cash

Weights

1 Tael/liang = 37.5g

16 Taels = 1 Catty/Kati/Jin

1 Kati = 600 g

100 Kati = 1 Pikul/Tan

1 Pikul = 60 kg

Introduction

This is an attempt to reconstruct a period of Vietnamese history by studying certain aspects of the foreign relations of the Nguyen rulers of southern Vietnam during the years 1558 till 1776. Nguyen rule over southern Vietnam began in 1558 with the appointment of the Nguyen family patriarch, Nguyen Hoang, to the position of governor of the province of Thuan Hoa in central Vietnam. This study begins in 1558, the year Nguyen Hoang took up the governorship of Thuan Hoa, and ends with the collapse of the Nguyen government in 1775. In that year, the last Nguyen ruler, Phuc Thuan, had to flee the capitol, Phu Xuan, in the face of an all-out attack by the Le-Trinh Army of the north.

The period studied also chronicles the Vietnamese expansion from the Red River Deltas, in the north, to the central highlands and subsequently, the Mekong Delta, in the south. This southward expansion was the result of the policies of the nine successive rulers from the Nguyen family. They are Nguyen Hoang (1558-1613), Nguyen Phuc Nguyen (1613-1635), Nguyen Phuc Lan (1635-1648), Nguyen Phuc Tan (1648-1687), Nguyen Phuc Tran (1687-1691), Nguyen Phuc Chu (1691-1725), Nguyen Phuc Tru (1725-1738), Nguyen Phuc Khoat (1738-1765) and Nguyen Phuc Thuan (1765-1776).

The 17th and 18th century history of southern Vietnam is one of the least studied periods of that country's historiography by the Vietnamese. One reason for this neglect is that the Vietnamese government considered this period in the

country's history as divisive and unhealthy for national unity. This was further complicated by the fact that it was the later Nguyen Dynasty (1802-1945) the direct descendants of the earlier Nguyen, who surrendered Vietnam to the French in 1883. They were seen as traitors or betrayers of the nation.

Even less explored is the foreign relations of the Nguyen. It is hoped that by bringing to light the external dimension of Nguyen rule in southern Vietnam, several questions pertaining to the nature of Nguyen rule can be answered. This includes a look at how the Nguyen first used foreign relations to bolster their image where they were placed in a position to act as a de facto independent state, and later to achieve its purpose of state formation.

This study will also investigate how the Nguyen conducted themselves in relation to foreigners. This raises the question as to whether, in its dealings with foreigners and its neighbours, the Nguyen considered itself an independent state or conversely merely saw itself as an extension of the Le rule.

This thesis puts forth the claim that by the 18th century, there was a shift in the stance of the Nguyen from being traditionally bound to their northern rulers to being an independent nation with its identity forged in south Vietnam. This is most apparent in its foreign relations.

In the opening years of the 18th century, the Nguyen began to conduct foreign and tributary relations independently. Freed at last from conditions that had impeded their direction to the South, the Nguyen began to act as overlords when dealing with its neighbours.

This study intends to show that its dealings with foreigners and the experiment of imposing tributary relations on its neighbours is evidence of the Nguyen's projection of themselves as rulers of a separate state. The tributary system was also a source of economic strength where tribute items were used for trade.

The following aspects will be given scrutiny to flesh out this thesis. Firstly, it is important to consider how foreign relations bolstered the image of the Nguyen and eased its transition into becoming a *de facto* kingdom. This then leads to the second aspect, the evolution in the growing strength of the Nguyen vis-à-vis the Le Dynasty towards a real possibility of an independent statehood. The third aspect is an examination on how relations with weaker states and upland tribes allowed the Nguyen to structure a tributary system where it occupied a central position. Finally, this study will investigate the internal efforts of building a governmental apparatus to consolidate its position as a polity.

This study is not confined to the study of state-to-state relations. Foreign relations here refers to all forms of contact with external entities which include foreign nationals (traders and missionaries) living in Nguyen Southern Vietnam and also include non-state groups, non-Vietnamese elements living within or beyond the boundaries of Nguyen Southern Vietnam. The study of the foreign relations of the Nguyen has to be understood in the context of the process of state formation, more precisely, how foreign relations were used to realise the ambition of the Nguyen. Before proceeding with this, it would be pertinent to throw light

on both the primary and secondary material employed in the drawing of this picture.

Literature Review

Generally, the period between 1529 and 1802 in Vietnamese history can be characterized as volatile. The period is associated with civil wars between the Mac Dynasty and the Le Restoration loyalists, followed in 1627 by a standoff between the Trinh in the north and the Nguyen in the south. It was also a period which saw an increase in Vietnam's foreign contacts, both in the north and the south. Past works on this subject are a useful quarry that this study will make frequent reference to.

This notion of division dominating the period is addressed in the works of Le Thanh Khoi,¹ Phan Huy Le and his colleagues in Hanoi.² Another theme which has also received attention for this period of Vietnamese history is the southward movement (Nam Tien) of the Vietnamese people. The Nguyen's territorial expansion in the south became the focus of historians such as Jean Chesneaux,³ Phan Khoang,⁴ and Tran Trong Kim.⁵

¹ Le Thanh Khoi, *Histoire du Viet Nam des Origines a 1858*, Paris: Sudeasie, 1981, pp. 253-264. Le Thanh Khoi's other work is, *Le Viet Nam: Histoire et Civilisation*, Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1955.

² Phan Huy Le et al., *Lich Su Viet Nam, Tap I*, Hanoi: Nha Xuat Ban Khoa Hoc Xa Hoi, 1976, pp. 291-293.

³ Jean Chesneaux, *Contribution a l'histoire de la Nation Vietnamienne*, Paris: Editions Sociales, 1955.

⁴ Phan Khoang, *Viet Su Xu Dang Trong 1558-1777: Cuoc Nam-Tien Cua Dan Toc Viet-Nam* [History of Vietnam in Dang Trong 1558-1777: The Epic of the Southward Movement of the Vietnamese People], Saigon: Nha Sach Khai Tri, 1969.

⁵ Tran Trong Kim, *Viet Nam Thong Shi (Viet Nam Su Luoc A History of Vietnam)*, trans. Tai Gelai, Beijing: Shangwu Yinshu Guan, 1992.[In Chinese] For the Vietnamese version see Tran Trong Kim, *Viet Nam Su Luoc*, Hanoi: Nha Xuat Ban Van Hoa Thong Tin, 1999.

While most general works on Vietnamese history only devote certain parts of their discussions on the Nguyen rule in southern Vietnam, likewise, the same could be said of scholarly works that centre specifically on the later Nguyen Dynasty. The pioneering works are those by Leopold Cadiere, a Catholic missionary of the French Foreign Missionary Society (Missions Etrangeres des Paris) who had served in Vietnam during the early part of the twentieth century. Cadiere, a founding member of the Association des Amis du Vieux Hue (Association of the Friends of Old Hue) in 1913, started his research on Nguyen rule via a survey of the historical geography of Quang Binh, the earlier administrative centre of the Nguyen.⁶ His subsequent works deal with a wide range of subjects relating to Nguyen rule, including the shifting of official residences of the Nguyen,⁷ the subject of Nguyen Phuc Nguyen's Christian wife,⁸ and on the trade of Thuan Hoa.⁹ Perhaps the most important contribution by Cadiere is his explanation of the establishment of the Nguyen rule as an independent entity.¹⁰ This is particularly clear in his description of Nguyen Phuc Khoat, the eighth ruler's (r. 1738-1765) unilateral elevation to royal status.¹¹

With regard to the Nguyen's foreign relations, Cadiere described the lives of two Europeans, namely, Father Alexander de Rhodes and Thomas Bowyear,

⁶ L. Cadiere, "Geographie Histoire Du Quang Binh d'apres les annales Imperiales", *Bulletin d'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient* (hereafter *EFEO*), Vol.2, 1902, pp. 55-73. For more of Cadiere's works, see Bibliography.

⁷ L. Cadiere, "Les Residences des rois de Cochinchine avant Gia-Long", *Bulletin de la Commission Archeologique de l'Indochine*, 1913, pp. 103-185.

⁸ L. Cadiere, "Au Sujet de L'Epouse de Sai Vuong", *Bulletin des Amis de Vieux Hue* (hereafter *BAVH*), Vol.9, No.3, 1922, pp.221-232.

⁹ L. Cadiere "Un Voyage En 'Sinja' sur les cotes de Cochinchine au XVIIe siecle", *BAVH*, Vol.8, No.1, 1921, pp.15-29.

¹⁰ L. Cadiere, "Le Mur de Dong Hoi: Etude Sur L'etablissement des Nguyen En Cochinchine", *BEFEO*, Vol.6, 1906, pp.87-251.

¹¹ L. Cadiere, "Les Changement des Costumes de Vo Vuong", *BAVH*, Vol. 1915, No. 4, pp. 417-424.

an English trader.¹² Cadiere's pioneering works were based mainly on Vietnamese primary sources that had just been introduced when he began conducting studies on Vietnamese history. This includes gazetteers, chronicles and biographical sketches. Due to his reliance on such sources, Cadiere's accounts were, at times, merely translations of Vietnamese sources into the French language. However, Cadiere's access to missionary records, helped provide some balance in his writing. In many ways, Cadiere's works provide the basis for studies on Nguyen rule in southern Vietnam.

Another French scholar is Charles Maybon whose *Historie d'Annam*, from 1592 to 1820 is the earliest single volume of work that addresses Vietnamese history during the period of the civil war between the Nguyen and the Trinh.¹³ It traces the confrontation between the two families to the time when the Nguyen's paramount position in the Le Court was lost to the Trinh following the death of the family's patriarch, Nguyen Kim, who was the leader of the Le Loyalist movement. The movement was formed to restore Le rule in Vietnam following the usurpation of the throne by the Mac in 1529. Apart from discussing the formation of a separate statehood under the Nguyen in the south, Maybon also looked at the interaction between the Nguyen and Europeans. His work is a pioneering effort that demonstrates the importance of both European and

¹² L. Cadiere, "Les Europeens Qui Ont Vu Le Vieux-Hue: Le P. De Rhodes", *BAVH*, 1915, pp.231-249 and "Les Europeens Qui Ont Vu Le Vieux Hue: Thomas Bowyear (1695-1696)", *BAVH*, Vol.7, No.2, 1920, pp.185-240.

¹³ Charles B. Maybon, *Histoire d'Annam, de 1592 a 1820*, Paris: Librairie Plon, 1920. Maybon's other works include, "Une Factorie Anglaise au Tonkin au XVII siecle (1672-1697)", *BEFEO*, 1910.

indigenous Vietnamese sources in understanding Nguyen rule in southern Vietnam.

Like Cadiere, Maybon's works also rely heavily on Vietnamese court sources. Hence, in discussing factors that characterised events at the turn of the 19th century with the defeat of the Tayson and the proclamation of the Nguyen Dynasty, Maybon proposed that the new Nguyen Dynasty was a triumph of the Nguyen in restoring the fortune of the earlier Nguyen. This claim is challenged more recently by scholars such as Nola Cooke, who propose instead that the Nguyen rulers of the 19th century, who were the direct descendants of the earlier Nguyen, helped to perpetuate the restoration myth as a means of legitimising their royal lineage.¹⁴

Among Vietnamese scholars however, the study of Nguyen rule in southern Vietnam only became an important topic in the South during a brief period between late 1950s and early 1970s. The impetus was buoyed by the search for of a *raison d'être* for the existence of the State of Vietnam (1949-1955) and later, the Republic of Vietnam (1956-1975) in the South following the partitioning of the country into two halves by the Geneva Accord in 1954. The first major work which emerged from this is Phan Khoang's survey of the trade of Nguyen Southern Vietnam during the 17th and 18th centuries, published in 1969.¹⁵ In fact, it is the first singular volume devoted to the history of the Nguyen rulers. The work however, draws mainly from the Nguyen court chronicles without much

¹⁴ Nola Cooke, "The Myth of the Restoration: Dang-Trong Influences in the Spiritual Life of the Early Nguyen Dynasty (1802-47)", in Anthony Reid (ed.), *The Last Stand of Asian Autonomies: Responses to Modernity in the Diverse States of Southeast Asia and Korea, 1750-1900*, London: Macmillan Press, 1997, pp. 269-299.

¹⁵ Phan Khoang, *Viet Su Xu Dang Trong 1558-1777*, Saigon: Nha Sach Khai Tri, 1969.

reference to other sources. In contrast, Nguyen Thanh Nha's studies on the economic history of Vietnam during the 17th and 18th centuries published in 1970 is now considered a fine demonstration of scholarship that combines the utilisation of indigenous sources with non-Vietnamese sources.¹⁶ Apart from tracing the Nguyen as well as the Trinh's economic history, this later study also includes a chapter on the foreign relations of the two political entities. However, by limiting the discussion on foreign relations to a single chapter, it did not leave much room for the exploration of various other themes that dominate the Nguyen's foreign relations. It was also around this time in 1967 that Nguyen The Anh published an annotated bibliography on Vietnam's relations with the West.¹⁷

If the historians of the south had attempted to use the rule of the Nguyen rulers over southern Vietnam to justify the existence of the modern southern regime, their counterparts in the North did just the opposite. For the historians of the Hanoi regime, the Nguyen of the 17th and 18th centuries was considered a renegade entity that reflected the national division they were facing. The Nguyen's breakaway was looked upon in the same light as the modern day southern regime that had tried to make permanent what was to be the temporary division provided in the 1954 Geneva Accord. Two major works on the general history of Vietnam were published in the north which included sections on Nguyen rule in southern Vietnam. In both cases however, foreign relations

¹⁶ Nguyen Thanh Nha, *Tableau Economique du Vietnam aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siecles*, Paris: editions Cujas, 1970.

¹⁷ Nguyen The Anh, *Bibliographie Critique Sur Les Relations Entre Le Viet Nam Et L'Occident*, Paris: G.P. Maisonneuve & Larose, 1967.

received scant attention.¹⁸ Apart from that, the Nguyen were cast in a negative light. As stated earlier, the ancestors of the regime that eventually surrendered Vietnam to the French in the late 19th century were presented as feudal which is a description repugnant within the Communist ideology.

Other works from the same era but of a different persuasion includes the work of Dang Phuong Nghi, a French-trained Vietnamese scholar, who examined the public institutions of Vietnam during the 18th century.¹⁹ His work, published in 1969, covers both the Trinh North and Nguyen South. Nghi relied on both Vietnamese and European materials. Special attention was given to the *Lich Trieu Hien Cuong Loai Chi* (Institutions of the Various Dynasties), the record of the public institutions of the various dynasties.

Another was the French scholar, Pierre-Yves Manguin's study which centres on Nguyen and Champa's relations with the Portuguese. It is one of the few available works that describes Nguyen's foreign relations with a single state or power.²⁰ In his work, Manguin, who relied on Portuguese archives, established new dimensions in Nguyen studies with particular reference to Nguyen's foreign relations.

¹⁸ Phan Huy Le, *Lich Su Viet Nam, Tap I* (A History of Vietnam, Vol.I), Hanoi: Nha Xuat Ban Khoa Hoc Xa Hoi, 1976, pp. 296-303 and Phan Huy Le, et al., *Lich Su Che Do Phong Kien Viet-Nam, Tap III* [A History of the Feudal System in Viet Nam, Vol.III], Hanoi: Nha Xuat Ban Giao Duc, 1960.

¹⁹ Dang Phuong Nghi, *Les Institutions Publiques Du Viet Nam au XVIIIe Siecle*, Paris: Ecole Francaise D'Extreme-Orient, 1969.

²⁰ Pierre-Yves Manguin, *Les Portugais sur les Cotes de Viet Nam et Du Campa: Etude sur les Sources Portugaises (XVIe, XVIIe, XVIIIe siecles)*, Paris: Ecole Francaise D'Extreme-Orient, 1972. His other related work is *Les Nguyen, Macau et le Portugal: Aspects Politiques et Commerciaux d'une Relation Privilegiee en Mer De Chine 1773-1802*, Paris: Ecole Francaise D'extreme-Orient, 1984.

The Canadian scholar, Alexander Woodside's study of the later Nguyen dynasty is the latest on the Nguyen.²¹ Even though the work concentrates on the successors of the Nguyen rulers, Woodside's study is built on a careful examination of the 18th century Nguyen. Woodside also suggests that the rulers of the Nguyen dynasty were not only direct descendants of the Nguyen rulers, but that they were also the ones who had established some of the institutions that continued to function in the later Nguyen dynasty era. More importantly, Woodside claims that these institutions such as the Foreign Office continued the policy of the early Nguyen. The case of the Nguyen's relations with the Jarai people of the central highlands as well as the Nguyen's relations with Cambodia are examples he cites to substantiate his claim.²²

After a lull of more than twenty years since the publication of Phan Khoang and Nguyen Thanh Nha's work, two Chinese academicians completed their studies on the Nguyen rulers. The first was Yang Baoyun who submitted a doctoral thesis to the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in 1992, and the second is Li Tana who completed her studies at the Australian National University in 1993. Yang Baoyun gave an overview history of the Nguyen rulers (whose regime he described as a principality) tracing the state's formation process

²¹ Alexander B. Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model: A Comparative Study of Vietnamese and Chinese Government in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Council on East Asian Studies, 1978. Woodside also discussed the earlier Nguyen in his "Conception of Change and of Human Responsibility for Change in the Late Traditional Vietnam", in David K. Wyatt (ed.), *Moral Order and the Question of Change: Essays on Southeast Asian Thought*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982 and Alexander B. Woodside, "Central Vietnam's Trading World in the Eighteenth Century as Seen in Le Quy Don's 'Frontier Chronicles'", *Essays into Vietnamese Past*, K. W. Taylor & John Whitmore (eds.), Ithaca: Southeast Asian Program, Cornell University, 1995, pp. 162.

²² Ibid.

with a chapter dedicated to the Nguyen's foreign relations.²³ Yang Baoyun's work relied heavily on Vietnamese and Chinese sources. The result is a study that conforms to the historical ideas expounded by the Nguyen Court historians.

Li Tana's studies examine the socio-economic changes that took place in Nguyen Southern Vietnam and how these changes contributed to the development of Nguyen rule.²⁴ Li Tana argues that Nguyen Southern Vietnam had emerged as a new alternative Vietnam as compared to the Vietnam of the Red River Delta in the north. Li Tana's work is a path breaking effort that challenges the boundary of enquiries into Nguyen rule over southern Vietnam by utilising a combination of indigenous as well as non-indigenous sources. More information on the sources is explained by Li Tana and Anthony Reid in their volume on Nguyen sources.²⁵

At the same time, established scholars such as Keith Taylor²⁶ and Nola Cooke²⁷ began to devote their attention to the Nguyen rulers of this period, echoing Anthony Reid's call for more studies on the Early Modern Era of Southeast Asia.²⁸

²³ Yang Baoyun, *Contribution a l'histoire de la Principaute des Nguyen au Vietnam Meridional, 1600-1775*, Geneve: editions Olizane, 1992.

²⁴ Li Tana, *Nguyen Cochinchina: Southern Vietnam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Ithaca: Cornell University, Southeast Asian Program, 1998.

²⁵ Li Tana and Anthony Reid (eds.), *Southern Vietnam Under the Nguyen: Documents on the Economic History of Cochinchina (Dang Trong), 1602-1777*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993.

²⁶ Keith Taylor, "Nguyen Hoang and the Beginning of Viet Nam's Southward Expansion", in *Southeast Asia in Early Modern Era*, Anthony Reid (ed.), Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, see also his "The Literati Revival in Seventeenth Centuries Vietnam", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, March 1987, pp. 1-22.

²⁷ Nola Cooke, "Regionalism and the Nature of Nguyen Rule in Seventeenth Century Dang Trong (Cochinchina)", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, March 1998, pp. 122-161. For her other works, see Nola Cooke, "Nineteenth-Century Vietnamese Confucianization in Historical Perspective: Evidence from the Palace Examination (1463-1883)", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1, March 1994, pp. 270-312.

²⁸ Introduction of Anthony Reid (ed.), *Southeast Asia in Early Modern Era*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Despite the numerous studies available on the Nguyen rule over southern Vietnam, either direct or indirect, few are dedicated to foreign relations. Yet, foreign relations remains one of the major developments that had contributed enormously to the process of state building of the Nguyen. This study is an effort to address this area of Nguyen history and is an attempt to illuminate a key element of the process of state formation.

Sources on Nguyen Southern Vietnam

In the course of reconstructing the history of Nguyen rule in southern Vietnam through a study of the tributary and foreign relations of the Nguyen rulers, a variety of materials have been examined, with greater attention paid to primary sources. The lack of emphasis on the subject by existing research means that a major portion of this study is reconstructed through the consultation of original documents. However, this also involves a re-examination of secondary materials.

The original materials used in this research can be broadly divided into four categories: first, contemporary Vietnamese archival sources written in the 18th century and the sources compiled by the Historical Academy of the later Nguyen Dynasty during the 19th century. Secondly, the travelogues of visitors to Nguyen Southern Vietnam during the 17th and 18th centuries and thirdly, Christian missionary reports of the French Foreign Missions. There are also non-Vietnamese original documents, written either in the original Chinese or Japanese. The most important were the royal chronicles of Cambodia and the Champa Archives.

The Nguyen were not known for maintaining substantial historical records. This was simply due to the fact that the Nguyen rule was originally a provincial administration. This provincial position deprived the Nguyen of the services of highly educated scholars. Apart from that, despite its claim to royal status, the administrative system of the Nguyen remained rudimentary, thus it lacks extensive administrative records. This lack of direct original sources was also a result of the political upheaval and wars that took place after the fall of the Nguyen in 1776. During that period, much of the original documents of the Nguyen administration were either lost or destroyed.

Later researchers, this writer included, owe much to Le Quy Don, an official of the Le-Trinh army that entered Phu Xuan in 1776 for recording eye witness account on the Nguyen rule. During the first few months of Le-Trinh occupation of Phu Xuan, Don had the opportunity of going through the surviving archives of the Nguyen. He also conducted interviews with former officials and collected documents from some of their families. The end result is his *Phu Bien Tap Luc* (Miscellaneous Records of the Pacification of the Frontiers), which serves as a major source in this study.²⁹

Also valuable to this study is Le Duy Dan's *Nam Ha Tiep Luc* (Record of the Region South of the River),³⁰ compiled shortly after the establishment of the Nguyen Dynasty (1802-1945) in 1802. The work is a first in the historiographical attempt to justify the existence of the Nguyen rule during the Nguyen Dynasty. However, Dan, a Tien Si (graduate of the Vietnamese Imperial Examination)

²⁹ *Phu Bien Tap Luc* (Miscellaneous Records of Pacification in the Border Area), MS. A. 184.

³⁰ *Nam Ha Tiep Luc* (Selected Records of Nam Ha), MS. A. 586..

laureate of 1775, was originally from the north and had not been to the south. He is believed to have consulted surviving Nguyen documents while compiling the *Nam Ha Tiep Luc*.

The second category of the Nguyen archival sources came from the efforts of the Quoc Su Quan (Historical Academy) of the Nguyen Dynasty. In 1820, Emperor Minh Menh (r. 1820-1840) ordered the setting up of this institution with “the aim of verifying and recording the truth”.³¹ Out of the efforts of the court historians are a compendium of histories and biographies of eminent personalities, some of which are consulted in this work.

Another main source used is the *Dai Nam Thuc Luc Tien Bien* (Veritable Records of the Former Nguyen, hereafter *Tien Bien*), completed in 1844 during the reign of Emperor Thieu Tri (r. 1840-1848). The 12-volume text records the reign of the respective Nguyen rulers, beginning with Nguyen Hoang, and ending with Nguyen Phuc Thuan. Due to a 70 years lapse between the fall of the Nguyen rule in 1776 to the date of its completion, much of the information contained in the *Dai Nam Thuc Luc Tien Bien* were probably drawn from the *Phu Bien Tap Luc* and *Nam Ha Tiep Luc*, as well as whatever fragmented pieces of documents that the court historians could piece together.

Given the nature of the commissioned origin, the *Tien Bien* is less forthcoming in details and tends to be muted in many instances. Apart from that, the manner in which it was written, especially the utilization of the posthumous term of royalty used for the Nguyen rulers and their families, complicates the

³¹ *Dai Nam Thuc Luc Tien Bien* (Veritable Record of the Former Dai Nam), MS VHv 1320, (hereafter, *Tien Bien*), preface: pp. 2-3.

actual situation of Nguyen rule. Despite its shortcoming, *Tien Bien* remains a relatively reliable source for its chronology of events, and this study uses it mainly as a guide to mapping out various events of Nguyen rule in southern Vietnam.

Apart from the *Tien Bien*, the court historians also produced a six-volume biography of eminent personalities of the Nguyen rule known as the *Dai Nam Liet Truyen Tien Bien* (Biography of the Former Dai Nam).³² The text also includes a list of monks from China who had served in the Nguyen domain.

Another important primary source material is the *Dai Nam Chinh Bien Liet Truyen* (Biographies of the Dai Nam)³³ which describes Nguyen's dealings with its neighbours. Even though it is a biographical collection during the period of the establishment of the Nguyen Dynasty and the subsequent reign of the Nguyen rulers, Volume 31-33 of its first collection contains 'biographies' (descriptions) of the Nguyen's neighbours and their interaction with the Nguyen.

Being the products of the Nguyen Court, the Nguyen chronicles and other sources tend to provide favourable views of the Nguyen rulers. In contrast, *Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu* (Complete History of Dai Viet, hereafter *Toan Thu*),³⁴ the histories produced by the Le Court is useful in providing an alternative view of Nguyen rule.

³² *Dai Nam Liet Truyen Tien Bien* (Official Biographies of Dai Nam's Initial Period), MS. VHV. 172.

³³ *Dai Nam Chinh Bien Liet Truyen* (Biographies of Dai Nam), *So Tap*, Vol. 31-33, Ms. VH 1678.

³⁴ *Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu* (The Complete Records of Dai Viet), MS. A. 3 and MS. HM. 2197 A.

This study also referred to the geographical gazetteers regarding Nguyen Southern Vietnam. The first is *Gia Dinh Thanh Thong Chi* (Gazetteer of the City of Gia Dinh),³⁵ Trinh Hoai Duc's six volume description of the region of Gia Dinh (Mekong Delta), first completed in 1820. The 12 volume *Dai Nam Nhat Thong Chi* (Gazetteer of Dai Nam),³⁶ compiled in 1882 under orders from Emperor Tu Duc (r. 1848-1883) and led by Cao Xuan Duc is also a very important source providing Duc information that is not readily available in the chronicles. On the other hand, *O Chau Can Luc*³⁷ provides information regarding the region of Thuan Hoa prior to the setting up of Nguyen rule.

Travelogues relating to Nguyen rule consulted in this study can be subdivided into two groups. The first group were written by European writers while the second, by Asians. The former includes the French priest and envoy to Siam, Abbe Choisy, who published a description of Nguyen Southern Vietnam in addition to his description on Siam.³⁸ Another was William Bowyear, whose narrative was written after his visit to Nguyen Southern Vietnam in 1696. Bowyear was a factor sent by the English East India Company to establish trade with the Nguyen.³⁹ Then came two travellers who were in southern Vietnam around the same time. The first was Robert Kirsop,⁴⁰ an Englishman who arrived

³⁵ *Gia Dinh Thanh Thong Ch* (Gazetteer on the City of Gia Dinh), MS VHv 1335.

³⁶ *Dai Nam Nhat Thong Chi* (Gazetteer of Dai Nam), MS A. 853.

³⁷ *O Chau Can Luc* (Recent Descriptions of O Chau), MS A 263.

³⁸ Abbe de Choisy, *Journal of a Voyage to Siam, 1685-1686*, (trans.) Michael Smithies, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993. (First published in 1687 as *Journal du Voyage de Siam*)

³⁹ 'William Bowyear's Narrative' in Alaister Lamb, *The Mandarin Road to Old Hue*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1970, pp. 9-57.

⁴⁰ Robert Kirsop, "Some Accounts of Cochin China", *Oriental Repertory*, Vol. I., 1808, pp. 241-254. Kirsop was an English trader who was trading in Nguyen Southern Vietnam when Pierre Poivre's delegation arrived.

in Nguyen Southern Vietnam in 1749 and Pierre Poivre, a Frenchman.⁴¹ Both of them left behind useful accounts on the transitional court of Nguyen Phuc Khoat (r. 1738-1765) the eight Nguyen ruler.

Catholic missionaries started their work in Nguyen Southern Vietnam since 1615. Many of them left behind correspondence and reports that provide vivid descriptions of Nguyen rule. With regard to this, this study relies on the correspondences of the Catholic missionaries from the French Foreign Missionary Society of Paris (Missions Etrangeres de Paris).⁴² The society was established in 1658 under the patronage of the King of France to prepare missionaries for mission work in Asia. Apart from that, there are other missionary accounts which also offer interesting and useful observations on the state and society of southern Vietnam under the Nguyen. They include Father Cristoforo Borri's earliest European account on southern Vietnam. Borri, one of the earliest Vietnamese-speaking Jesuit was in Nguyen Southern Vietnam from 1617 to 1621.⁴³ Another important missionary account is by Father Alexander de Rhodes, whose memoir

⁴¹ Pierre Poivre, "Journal d'Un Voyage a la Cochinchie (du 29 Aout 1749 au 11 Fev. 1750)", *Revue d'Extreme-Orient*, Vol. III, 1887, pp. 364-510.-(In Vietnam-1749-1750) and Pierre Poivre, "Description de la Cochinchine (1749-1759)", *Revue d'Extreme-Orient*, T. III, 1887, pp. 81-121. Poivre started off as a novice in the French Foreign Missionary Society and had spent several years in Vietnam before resigning from priesthood. From a wealthy trading family in Lyon, Poivre later served the French East India Company and was sent to the Nguyen Lords to establish trading ties as well as diplomatic ties. For a biography of Poivre see Mallet, *Pierre Poivre*, Paris: Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, 1981.

⁴² The collections of the missionaries correspondence of the Archives des Missions Etrangeres de Paris on Nguyen Southern Vietnam are divided into the following: *AMEP: Cochinchine*, Vol. 725: 1679-1710; Vol. 726: 1677-1722; Vol. 727: 1711-1722; Vol. 736: 1685-1691; Vol. 737: 1692-1695; Vol. 738: 1696-1711; Vol. 739: 1712-1733 and Vol. 800: 1704-1784. Some of the correspondence were later compiled by Adien Launay and published as *Histoire de la Mission de Cochinchine, Vol. I, 1658-1823 : Documents Historiques*, Paris: Anciennes Maisons Charles Douniol et Retaux, 1923 and Volume II of the same title in 1924. Launay however, only published selected correspondence which concern the development of the mission.

⁴³ Cristoforo Borri, *Cochin China: Containing Many Admirable Ranties and Singularities of that Countrey*, London: Robert Ashley for Richard Clutterbuck, 1633.

describes southern Vietnam and Tonkin.⁴⁴ Almost a century later, the Jesuit Jean Koffler also left behind an account of Nguyen rule during the reign of Nguyen Phuc Khoat, the 8th ruler.⁴⁵

There are not many travelogues written by Asians that are related to Nguyen Southern Vietnam. The principal travelogue is the memoir of the Chinese monk Da Shan published in 1697.⁴⁶ Da Shan lived in Nguyen Southern Vietnam from 1695 to 1696. He was the spiritual advisor to Nguyen Phuc Chu (r. 1691-1725, the 6th ruler). The other Asian travelogue, referred to in this study is by the Chinese scholar Zhu Shunsui who was captured by the Nguyen and was forced to serve the regime under the 4th ruler during the 1670s as a scribe.⁴⁷

A major non-Vietnamese source that deals indirectly with the Nguyen rule in southern Vietnam is the Royal Chronicles of Cambodia which provide the Cambodian perspective of the Nguyen's encroachment into the Mekong Delta.⁴⁸ It contains more information on Nguyen ventures in the south than those found in the Nguyen chronicles. This makes the Cambodian sources extremely useful. In looking at the Nguyen's dealings with Champa, particularly during the period of Nguyen domination of that state beginning in 1694, the Champa archives of

⁴⁴ Alexander de Rhodes, *Rhodes of Vietnam: The Travels and Missions of Father Alexander de Rhodes in China and Other Kingdoms of the Orient*, Solenge Hertz (trans.), Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1966.

⁴⁵ Jean Koffler, "Descriptions de la Cochinchine", *Revue Indochinoise*, 1911. (In Vietnam 1744-1755)

⁴⁶ Da Shan, *Hai Wai Ji Shi* (Overseas Journal by Da Shan), in Chen Chingho, *Shiqi shiji Guangnan Zhi Xinshilitao* (New Historical Documents of 17th century Quang Nam), Taipei: 1960. (In Chinese)

⁴⁷ Zhu Shunsui, *Annan Congyi Jishi*, in *Zhu Shun Shui Quan Ji*, Taipei: Shi Jie Shu Ju, 1956. (In Chinese)

⁴⁸ See Mak Phouen, *Chroniques Royales du Cambodge (1594-1677)*, Paris: Publications EFEO, 1981.

Panduranga is extremely important. The materials are useful in illuminating the relations between the Nguyen and an autonomous Champa.⁴⁹

Although the Nguyen did not maintain official ties with China, Guangnan Guo (the Kingdom of Quang Nam), as the Nguyen political entity was known to the Chinese, is featured in several official Chinese records including the *Qing Shi* (History of the Qing Dynasty) and *Huang Zhao Wen Xian Tong Kao* (Literary Contribution of the Dynasty). There are also non-official Chinese sources that are equally valuable in providing glimpses of Nguyen's dealings with China. Among the more important is Zhang Xie's compilation of *Dong Xi Yang Kao* (A Study on the Eastern and Western Seas), which provides a picture of early Nguyen rule during the early part of 17th century.

Due to the Nguyen's engagement in international trade, there is information collected by the Japanese that deals with Nguyen rule. Among those consulted in this study are the correspondence of Nguyen Hoang and Nguyen Phuc Nguyen (1st and 2nd rulers) with the Japanese Tokugawa Shogunate.⁵⁰ This study also makes use of the shipping intelligence collected by the Japanese port authority at Nagasaki from Chinese shippers travelling between Japan and the various ports in Southeast Asia and published as part of the *Kai Hentai*

⁴⁹ The archives of Champa consulted in this study come from a collection of Cham documents in Han characters deposited at the Asiatique Societe, Paris. See Po Dharma, P. B. Lafont (comp.), *Catalogues du Collections Cams*, Paris: Centre d'Histoire et Civilisations de la Peninsule Indochinoise, 1989. See also Ishizawa Yoshiaki, "Les Archives Cam Redigees en Caracteres Chinois au Fonds de la Societe Asiatique avec Annotation Analyse", *Historical Science Reports of Kagoshima University*, Vol. 29 July 1980, pp. 13-40.

⁵⁰ Correspondence relating to Annam in Kondo Juzhu (Comp.), *Gaiban Tsuusho (Ngoai Phien Thong Thu)*, Tokyo: Tokyo University, 1911.

(Description of the Chinese) collection of shipping intelligence on the Chinese and the political changes in China.⁵¹

Chapterisation

To explain the foreign relations of the Nguyen, this study is divided into seven chapters. Chapter One provides the setting and background that are seminal to the discussions of subsequent chapters. In this chapter, Vietnam's brief history, its geographical setting and a discussion on how foreign relations is viewed in Vietnamese history is put forth. Chapter Two deals with the beginning of Nguyen's contact with foreigners. It traces the origin of Nguyen rule vis-à-vis the career of Nguyen Hoang, the Nguyen's patriarch who started as a provincial governor in 1558 and who decided to focus his attention on building his sphere of influence in the south. Chapter Three throws light on the importance of foreign relations to the survival of the Nguyen in the face of Nguyen-Trinh War that lasted from 1627 to 1672. Attempts to procure arms and the promotion of foreign trade were important concerns as explained in this chapter.

Chapter Four is an attempt to look at how foreigners and foreign influences had helped to shape Nguyen rule. This is especially so in the post-1672 era when the military threat from the north had subsided. The link between

⁵¹ The bulk of the information are found in *Kai-Hentai* (Description of the Chinese as Submitted at the Custom Office of Nagasaki and Hirado), Vol. I to III, eds. Hayashi Harakaysu and Hayashi Nobotoku, Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 1958-1960. Yoneo Ishii also published a translated volume of selected documents from the same source. See Yoneo Ishii (ed.), *The Junk Trade from Southeast Asia: Translations from the Tosen Fusetsu-gaki, 1674-1723*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998. However, Professor Ishii left out reports from ships travelling from Nguyen Southern Vietnam.

foreign relations and the process of state formation is also discussed. Expansion into Champa and the establishment of an initial foothold in the Khmer Mekong is discussed in Chapter Five. Chapter Six further explores the Nguyen's campaign in Khmer Mekong and how this campaign eventually brought the Nguyen into contact with Siamese interests. The last chapter deals with foreign relations in the last stages of Nguyen rule. This chapter considers the effect of Nguyen's self-proclamation of nationhood in 1744 and its subsequent decline.

With regard to the four related aspects mentioned above to illustrate the foreign relations of the Nguyen I the process of attaining independent statehood, with first, arguing that foreign relations had bolstered the Nguyen's image and allowed the Nguyen to act as a de facto kingdom - this will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five. Regarding the second aspect, the Nguyen's growing strength vis-à-vis the Trinh north and its neighbours, presented it with the possibility of achieving a separate statehood; and the third where in its relations with weaker states, the Nguyen adopted the tributary system as the *modus operandi* with the Nguyen as the centre of this system – this will be discussed in Chapters Four, Five and Six. With reference to the fourth aspect, whereby the internal efforts of building of a governmental administrative apparatus is closely linked to its treatment of foreigners, this is dealt with in Chapter Four.