

**LEARNING TO TRADE: THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA
COMPANY IN TONKIN AND COCHIN-CHINA
IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

NGOC DUNG TRAN

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Department of History

School of History and Cultures

College of Arts and Law

University of Birmingham

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ABSTRACT

Tonkin and Cochin-China (Vietnam) were never renowned as the principal markets of European companies, but as supplementary places and intermediaries in their East Asian trading networks in the seventeenth century. With the advantages of local products, especially silk which could serve the intra-Asian demand, and of geography which meant that it lay on the route between the south and mainland China, both Tonkin and Cochin-China attracted the Dutch, English and other foreign merchants to trade there during the seventeenth century. Vietnam epitomised how the English East India Company learned and adapted to the unfamiliar environment of overseas areas in the EIC's first century of discovering and expanding in East Asia. The thesis shows the Company's changes in key management on both personnel and factories; and in business making-decision which included investment, types of imported and exported commodities, and types of trading partners. They learnt lessons in how to establish a trading system in East Asia, how to use this network to serve the main aim of key markets in China, India, and to a lesser extent Japan throughout the seventeenth century. The thesis also examines the progress of the EIC in overseas trade in diplomacy as they understood more about local governments and the way to treat Confucian states to obtain privileges in trading and residing. Alongside a study of the lessons the EIC gained epitomised in this case study of Vietnam, the research also challenges the existing views about how the EIC used small factories or intermediaries in overseas trade and, highlights their role in the EIC's commercial strategy in the seventeenth century before the Company started to focus entirely on China and India in the eighteenth century.

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MONEY AND WEIGHT

Currencies

1 English pound	= 20 shillings = 240 pences
1 Spanish dollar	= 8 reals/ rials
	= 5 shillings
	= 0.75 tael
1 tael	= 6s 8d (1660-1760)
	= 2,200 Tonkinese cash
>>>> 1 English pound	= 4 Spanish dollars = 3 taels

Weight

1 Chinese picul/ pecul	= 133.5 lb	= 60.382 kg	= 100 catties
1 catty	= 16 taels		
1 tael	= 37.5 gr	= 0.0827 English pound	
1 English pound (lb)	= 0.454 kg		
1 English great pound (for raw silk)	= 0.681 kg		

Sources: P. Shepard, 'The Spanish Dollar: The World's most famous Silver Coin', *Business Historical Society. Bulletin of the Business Historical Society (pre-1986)*, 1941, pp. 12-16; Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680. Vol. 2: Expansion and Crisis* (New Haven, 1993), pp. 379-380; Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 471.

GLOSSARY

Amber, ambergris: A yellowish fossil resin used for ornaments; or the wax-like substance found floating in tropical seas

Baa(s): Tonkin silk textile

Baftas: a coarse to fine quality calico, usually dyed white and red, or less frequently black and blue, produced especially at Broach (Persian bafta ‘woven’)

Baize: a coarse English woollen cloth

Broadcloth: the traditional English heavy woollen cloth, between 28 and 30 yards long and 63 inches wide, weighing about 90 lbs

Calambac: the finest kind of aloes wood, found in Champa

Calio: a fine-textured cotton cloth from Malabar. The name derives from the town of Calicut

Canvas: a coarse hempen cloth, occasionally used for outer clothing

Capon: an officer, who worked like an assistant for the Prince in Tonkin in the seventeenth century.

Catty: the anglicization of Malayo-Javanese kati, the term in typical use for the Chinese weight equivalent to 16 taels or 1 1/3 lbs (0.6 kg)

China-root: the tuber of various species of Smilax, used medicinally and particularly valued as a cure for syphilis

Chintz: a fine to superfine quality hand painted or block printed cotton cloth from the Coromandel Coast

Chio(s): Tonkin silk textile

Chious/ Chiourons: Tonkin wrought silk

Chop: an official permit which was granted by the King of Tonkin or Cochin-China towards foreign merchants for trading in the whole country.

Condryn: the anglicization of Malay kanduri, a term in typical use for one hundredth part of a tael

Cossaes: a plain white muslin from Bengal

Damask: a rich silken fabric, woven with designs and figures

Dispatchadore: a Portuguese word, the definition of Tonkin’s officers, as intermediary between the King or Princes and foreigners.

Dungarees: a coarse plain white cotton cloth from South India and Masulipatam

Gauze: a thin semi-transparent silk or cotton fabric

Hockins/ Hockings: Tonkin yellow silk

Indigo a dark blue dye made from the plant *Indigofera tinctorial*

Lacquer: perhaps the most essentially Japanese art form, lacquer is a type of varnish derived from the sap of the tree *Rhus vernicifera*, native to China and Japan. Its main chemical constituent is called urushiol from the Japanese word for lacquer, urushi

Lings/ Pelangs/ Pelings: Tonkin wrought silk

Loas: Tonkin wrought silk

Mas: a Malayo-Javanese word used by the Europeans to indicate one-tenth of the Chinese tael of silver

Moorees: a plain white cotton cloth from South India and Masulipatam, used as a base for chintz making

Musk: an odoriferous reddish-brown substance secreted in a gland by the male musk-deer, used medicinally and in perfumery

Pecul/ Picul: a Malay term used for the Chinese weight of 100 catties (133 1/3 lbs or 60.5 kg)

Perpetuanos: a light English woollen cloth

Quan/ Tonkin cash: Tonkinese money, 1 quan was equivalent to 600 coins

Rial/ Real of eight: an anglicisation of the Spanish real de plata, the 'pieces of eight' of popular usage, equivalent to one-eighth of a Spanish dollar, or 6 1/2 pence

Rixdollar: silver coin, was equivalent around 48-60 stivers (in the 1660s-1670s)

Sandalwood: the wood of the fragrant *Santalum album*, used for incense and cosmetics, or of the non-odorous *Pterocarpus santalina*, used as dyestuff and for manufacturing small wooden articles

Sappan wood: the red type dye wood of the *Caesalpinia sappan*, also known as brazilwood

Satin: a closely-woven silk fabric with a glossy face and a dull reverse

Serasses: an Indian cotton cloth, perhaps from Surat

Tale: Chinese unit of money and weight

Velvet: a silk fabric with a thick soft pile

Vermillion: a bright red pigment obtained from the mineral cinnabar

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the role of Vietnam in the English East India Company (EIC) strategy in the seventeenth century by viewing the complex trading interactions between the EIC and the two Vietnamese kingdoms of Tonkin and Cochin-China. It discusses how the experiences the EIC gathered in Vietnam moulded its future and were critical in helping it to develop an effective system for further development. The connections between the EIC and Vietnam are chosen for analysis because they typify complexities of the EIC changing and improving strategies towards East Asia, as it moved from cultivating free trade to using factories alongside diplomatic trade, and finally tried to establish colonies in the early eighteenth century or the progress from a single trading institution to a complex organization. The EIC experiences during the seventeenth century illustrate its initial engagement with two problematic issues. Firstly it was the issue of administration and personnel or of controlling overseas factories and servants. Secondly, it was the subject of driving distant trade independently and effectively including investment, imported and exported commodities, trading networks and the methods of stimulating overseas trade satisfactorily. In examining the case study of the EIC interactions in Vietnam this thesis reveals the importance of the seventeenth-century trading dynamics, an understudied period in the EIC's development. Via the above evidence, the thesis shows that the case of Vietnam is also significant as it examined the learning process the EIC had applied in both terms of management, diplomacy and trade.

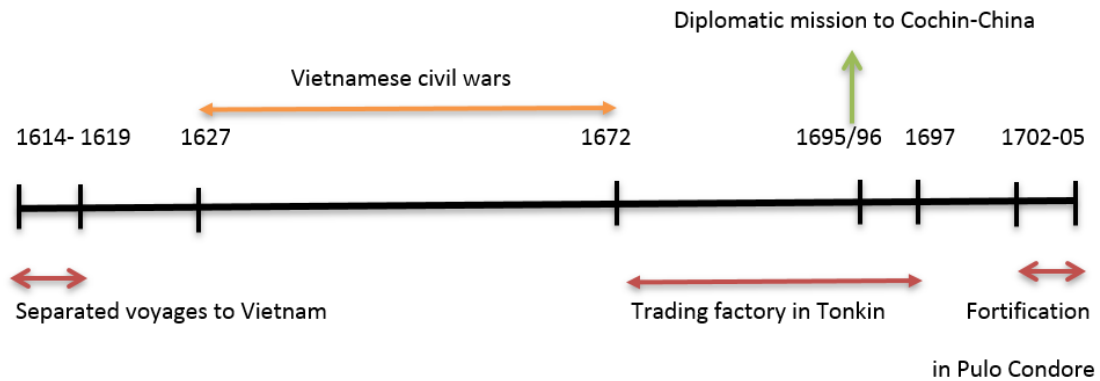
The EIC connections with East Asia, including Tonkin and Cochin-China, changed rapidly during the seventeenth century. After a petition from London

merchants, Queen Elizabeth I founded the EIC by Royal Charter in 1600 as a joint-stock trading organisation with a monopoly to trade between Britain and Asia.¹ Accessing East Asia was essential to the English because of the wealth of commodities there, particularly spices, textiles, ceramics, and sugar. The Company undertook several voyages and established depots and factories in the area in its first decades of trading. Lacking expertise in trading, however, the EIC was unable to take a leading position in East Asia before the 1650s although the English attempted to expand from Bantam to Japan and other places in China Sea in the 1610s.² The Company's revived interest in East Asia developed after the 1650s with a renewed desire to trade with Japan and China which led to the creation of intermediate factories in Siam, Vietnam, and Taiwan. Moreover, until the late century and early eighteenth century, the English considered Cochin-China with military and colonial views as it built a garrison in southern Vietnam to control the South China Sea. The subject of this thesis relates to only one location among several possible choices where the Company attempted to establish branches to take part in the intra-Asian trade and gain access to China and Japan. The role of Vietnam in the EIC strategy, however, is under-studied and little known. The thesis thus tries to provide an important case study of the way in which the EIC learned from such engagements as it moved from a heavy reliance on individuals and agents to developing factories through diplomatic and commercial activities, and eventually to colonial ambitions in the seventeenth century.

¹ W. Foster, 'England's quest of Eastern Trade', in P. Tuck (ed.), *The East India Company, 1600- 1858* (London and New York, 1998), pp. 144-153; K.N. Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company: The study of an Early Joint Stock Company, 1600-1640* (London, 1965), pp. 10-13.

² D.K. Bassett, 'The Trade of the English East India Company in the Far East, 1623-84, part 1: 1623-1665', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 92 (1960), pp. 32-47; J. Keay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the English East India Company* (London, 1991).

Figure. Timeline of the EIC activities in Vietnam (1614-1705)



Vietnam, like other countries in East Asia, experienced a ‘long-term crisis period’ of tumultuous transition with long-drawn-out conflicts and changing dynasties.³ From 1627, Vietnam divided into two parts: *Đàng Ngoài* (Northern Vietnam) which means ‘outside region’ (named Tonkin/Tonking/Tonqueen by European traders), and *Đàng Trong* (Southern Vietnam) which means ‘inside region’ (termed Cochín-China). The appearance of the new kingdom of Cochín-China prompted a distinct shift in Vietnamese history, especially with regards to its diplomatic and commercial policies towards Europeans. Vietnamese rulers opened the kingdoms and invited foreigners to trade to find a political alliance and external supports, with the hope of importing

³ W.S. Atwell, ‘A Seventeenth-Century General Crisis in East Asia?’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 4 (1990), pp. 661-682; R.V. Glahn, ‘Myth and Reality of China’s Seventeenth-Century Monetary Crisis’ *The Journal of Economic History*, 2 (1996), pp. 429-454; G. Parker, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven & London, 2013); A. Reid, ‘The Seventeenth-Century Crisis in Southeast Asia’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 24 (1990), pp. 639-659; *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680, vol. 2, Expansion and Crisis* (New Haven and London, 1993), pp. 202-266; A.T. Hoàng, *Silk for Silver: Dutch-Vietnamese Relations, 1637-1700*, chapter I, (Leiden 2007); D.P. Nguyễn, ‘Việt Nam thời Mạc-Cuộc chiến không khoan nhượng giữa hai tập đoàn phong kiến Lê-Trịnh và Mạc’ [Vietnam in the Mạc period-The Remorseless Struggle between the Lê-Trịnh and the Mạc feudal clans], *Historical Studies*, 9 (2004). Vietnam’s political crisis launched when Mạc Đăng Dung supplanted Lê dynasty and established Mạc dynasty in 1527. This led to the Southern-Northern wars (1533-1592) between dynasties of Mạc and late Lê. The political schisms continuously caused the Trịnh – Nguyễn wars (1627 – 1672) and the long-period separation of Vietnam until 1802.

modern technologies and improving their domestic economy.⁴ The Portuguese and Dutch quickly grasped the opportunity provided by new policies while the EIC arrived into Vietnam in different and harder times.⁵

The English established their first foothold in Tonkin and Cochin-China in the 1610s, before the outbreak of the Trinh-Nguyen wars (1627-1672). The Company's enterprise in Tonkin (1672-1697) and their renewed presence in Cochin-China in the 1690s occurred when there was a pause in the Vietnamese wars and local demands for European military and capital support were reduced. From the Vietnamese viewpoint, the English appeared at inappropriate times, when the opportunity to engage with Vietnam was limited as the relative peace meant that the Vietnamese had less need of foreign assistance, especially Tonkin returned to the hard policy towards foreigners. Consequently, it was harder for the EIC to form relationships with Vietnam than it had been for other Europeans in the first half of the seventeenth century.

The main argument of the thesis is around the place of Vietnam in the EIC strategy in East Asia in the seventeenth century. English activities in Tonkin and Cochin-China in this century provide a rich, but largely neglected example of the Company's changing strategies and learning in management, relationships, commodity substitutions, trading networks and the factory system. During this period, it developed from a nascent company into a full-fledged international trading enterprise.⁶ As the

⁴ Nguyễn Văn Kim (ed.), *Vietnam in the commercial system of Asia, 16th and 17th centuries* (Hanoi, 2007).

⁵ G.B. Souza, *The Survival of Empire: Portuguese Trade and Society in China and the South China Sea, 1630-1754* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 113; T.H. Nguyen, 'The Paracels and the Portuguese navigators in the sixteenth century', *Science Journal*, 3 (1998), pp. 30-42; S. Sanjay, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700: a Political and Economic History* (London, 1993); Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, pp. 52, 61-96.

⁶ K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company 1660-1760* (Cambridge, 1978); D.K. Bassett, 'Early English Trade and Settlement in Asia, 1602-1690' in J.S.

characteristic of writing Vietnamese history in the early modern period and the lack of primary materials from Vietnamese perspective (see next part), the thesis tries to highlight the role of Vietnam in the EIC strategy from the view of the English by analysing primary sources of the EIC. There are three main issues; the change in the EIC administration in the Tonkin factory, the role of individuals (English factors and partly Vietnamese rulers, traders) in helping the EIC to trade successfully in Tonkin, and the place of Vietnam as an intermediary in the EIC trading network in East Asia. It means that the thesis evaluates the role of Vietnam by seeing the EIC process of learning, adapting and improving in the seventeenth century.

The case of Vietnam firstly illustrates the fact that London in the seventeenth century could not easily control the EIC distant factories and servants although the Court of Directors applied various approaches. Due to the lack of experience in the overseas trade, early in the century, the EIC advocated hiring skilled staff to serve in East Asia and granted them privileges to drive trade independently. These individuals secured the Company's influence in East Asia and supplied knowledge of commerce, commodities and diplomacy to London. However, since this policy created a problem of private trade and illegal cooperation (which did not prioritise the Company's interest), the EIC subsequently tried to limit the role of agents and re-organised their system in overseas areas.⁷ Illegal cooperation in the thesis is defined as the secretive and behind

Bromley and E.H. Kossman (eds.), *Britain and the Netherlands in Europe and Asia* (London, 1968), pp. 89-109; E. Erikson and P. Bearman, 'Malfeasance and the Foundations for Global Trade: The Structure of English Trade in the East Indies, 1601-1833', *American Journal of Sociology*, 112 (2006), pp. 195-230.

⁷ From 1662, Englishmen who worked with the EIC could make their own trade with Asia if they would not negatively affect and highly compete with the EIC's trade. P.J. Marshall, *Trade and Conquest: Studies on the Rise of British Dominance in India* (Aldershot, 1993), p. 279; E. Erikson, *Between Monopoly and Free Trade: The English East India Company, 1600-1757* (Princeton and Oxford, 2014), p. 59. Issues about the relations among London-Batavia can be seen in D.K. Bassett, 'The Factory of the

the scenes collaborations between overseas staff in the same or different factories, or between the Company's staff with local people for their own purpose such as obtaining personal power in distant areas, using the Company's capital for their own trade, and then creating a private trading network between factories to compete with the EIC commerce. The EIC in the seventeenth century was not a stable organisation, but an unstable one with the involvement of different groups of merchants with distinct aims and targets. For that reason, the Court of Directors in London never controlled the overseas factories satisfactorily. Issues of management were evident in the struggle between London and Bantam (the EIC's commercial hub in East Asia from 1602 to 1682) and Madras (which managed the EIC's trade in East Asia after Bantam was closed, especially from 1684), and in the conflict between Tonkin factors resulting in the EIC final failure in restricting the interference of distant agents. The thesis reveals the changing interrelationship between central management and overseas factories and particularly the attempts and process the Court of Directors tried to manage its factories and servants directly and effectively. Thus, via the case of the Tonkin factory, the thesis argues how small factories contributed to the EIC structure in the seventeenth century and how the Company changed its way of management to become the most powerful organisation in the next century.

Secondly, each chapter of the thesis discusses the critical roles played by individuals (including English overseas servants and Vietnamese people) to the EIC establishment and expansion in long-distant areas and how that role changed throughout the seventeenth century. Focusing on knowledge transfer and the role of 'agency', 'go-betweens', 'brokers' and 'informants', the study shows how the EIC gained diplomatic

English East India Company at Bantam, 1602-1682' (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of London, 1955), pp. 361, 363, 389.

and trading knowledge via the connections between English factors and Vietnamese people, even Chinese, Japanese and Dutch merchants in Vietnam and East Asia. Towards English overseas servants, their role was in collecting and providing knowledge, relationships, trading networks and commodities, and settling and maintaining the EIC position. Individuals became significant because of the EIC's weakness, its lack of information about overseas areas and its desire to obtain trading advantages. Individuals were encouraged to join existing regional networks and act independently to resolve these problems.⁸ In Vietnam, English factors created knowledgeable accounts of the region at different periods and from different perspectives. For example, the first English presence in Cochin-China and Tonkin in the 1610s was organised by factors from the Hirado factory (Japan), especially Richard Cocks and William Adams, rather than on London's instructions. That role was moved to Bantam agents before the English established factories in East Asia in the 1670s. While the Court of Directors in London had limited knowledge about the region, the Bantam Council (especially in the 1650s and 1660s) provided useful guidance about potential go-betweens. After the establishment of the Tonkin factory, English factors there played a leading role in collecting knowledge, creating relationships, and understanding trading networks and commodity substitution to maintain the factory as the EIC had no direct connection with mainland China and had failed in Japan.

⁸ A. Games, *The Web of Empire, English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 84, 93; N.P. Dhiravat, 'The Voyages of the 'Sea Adventure' to Ayutthaya, 1615-1618: The English East India Company and its Siam-Japan trade', *International Journal of the history of European expansion and global interaction (Itinerario)*, 45 (2013), pp. 50-69; D. Massarella, *A World Elsewhere: Europe's Encounter with Japan in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New Haven and London, 1990), chapter 3 & 4, pp. 89-179.

Beyond that, the thesis also explores contributions of Vietnamese officials and merchants in the EIC improvement in the seventeenth century or the origins of information, knowledge the EIC gained in Tonkin and how the EIC adapted in diplomacy and trade from contacting with Vietnamese people. These people included the King, local Mandarins, traders, brokers, and even interpreters who contacted with the English daily. Their support, their trade, or even their requirements in connecting with the English provided the EIC fundamental knowledge of the necessity of diplomacy or trading lessons. The thesis, particularly in the last three chapters thus shows the role of Vietnamese people in shaping the EIC's knowledge about commodities, trading network, and diplomacy. Understanding the nature of distant countries proved challenging and required the involvement of the Court of Directors, agents in the area and factors in Vietnam. The first alteration of English understanding was in their diplomatic approach to Vietnamese governments, especially the Trinh regime in Tonkin, which applied a hard policy towards foreigners. The daily connection between the EIC and Mandarins in Tonkin helped the English to choose the right people in Vietnam, and further right power in the region, with which to build strong diplomatic relationships. The EIC changing commercial strategy and activities in Tonkin demonstrates their understanding of diplomatic protocols. Moreover, with data from Bantam agents who themselves learned lessons from the Dutch, the EIC tried to build their intercontinental trade network via Tonkin, by exploiting the model of silk-silver trade between Tonkin and Japan, linking Tonkin with Siam, Macao, and Manila, and creating a Eurasian silk trade between Tonkin and London. The change in investment, commodities, and trading partners was created firstly by the English in Tonkin through their commercial with merchants in Tonkin also shows how the EIC studied and

adapted to the requirements of distant markets. That knowledge had a significant role in bringing about the EIC's changes in the next century regarding both diplomacy and overseas trade.

Thirdly, this thesis argues that the EIC use of Vietnam as an intermediary to link with Japan and mainland China reflected the importance of small elements in its overseas trading network or the place of Vietnam in the EIC commercial system in East Asia. It shows how the EIC exploited small and supportive elements to serve its primary aim and highlights the importance of the EIC system of factories in supporting its ambitions for long-distance trade. The thesis argues that in the first period of the EIC history, using small factories in the South China Sea was an effective way to secure the EIC expansion and influence in the area as they could not contact directly with key markets. Tonkin and Cochin-China were necessary as intermediaries due to their geography, and their ability to link with Japanese and Chinese merchants and to provide substitute goods for regional trade. Due to the growing threat of piracy, from the mid-sixteenth century, China prevented Chinese merchants from trading with Japan. In the seventeenth century, the political crisis with the wars between the Manchu and the Ming, and then the Qing Maritime Ban in 1655 undermined all overseas trade from China. The policy prohibited all Chinese merchants from going abroad and refused all foreign merchants the right to trade in mainland China except for neighbours in East Asia who participated in the traditional tributary system. For that reason, the maintenance of formal trade under the tributary system between China and Southeast Asia and the existence of private trade was essential for regional trading. Trading ports in the South China Sea became the primary channel for Europeans to contact with Chinese merchants and collect Chinese products. Meanwhile, in Japan, the 'Sakoku

Edict of 1635' restricted the EIC's opportunities as it allowed only Chinese and Dutch salesmen to call at Nagasaki for trading. These disadvantages required the Company to cultivate intermediary sites in the South China Sea such as Vietnam, Siam, and Taiwan to link with Japanese and Chinese merchants. This study thus reveals the importance of intermediate sites and the interdependence of both key and small markets within the EIC East Asian trading chain. However, the role of Vietnam or other supplementary markets in East Asia was short-lived in periods when the EIC was difficult to trade directly with Japan and China. These intermediate sites were never part of the EIC's main strategy and only existed until the late seventeenth century. In the next century, go-between sites became worthless as direct long-distance trade among Europe, India and China developed. Yet the EIC use of intermediary sites, merchants and markets in the seventeenth century and their investment in the factory system, illustrates their creative and dynamic responses to an ever-changing political and economic landscape.

Alongside the above arguments, the thesis also tries to demonstrate that the limitation of the EIC's commercial and diplomatic relations with Tonkin and Cochinchina reflected its weakness in competing with Asian and European rivals, the main reason of the EIC using seasoned staffs to drive its trade in East Asia. The EIC was financially and militarily weak, which restricted its ability to compete with its chief rival, the Dutch East India Company (VOC).⁹ Before 1657, the EIC worked with

⁹ H. Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800* (Oxford, 1976); L. Neal, 'The Dutch and English East India Companies Compared: Evidence from the Stock and Foreign Exchange Markets' in J.D. Tracy (ed.), *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350-1750* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 195-223; D.A. Irwin, 'Mercantilism as Strategic Trade Policy: the Anglo-Dutch Rivalry for the East India Trade', *Journal of Political Economy*, 99 (1991), pp. 1296-1314. Furber explained that before 1657 the EIC existed with separate investors, 'terminable joint stock' and therefore its capital and organization was weaker than the VOC, 'the greatest of these companies as a business

temporary investments, which only allowed for individual voyages to East Asia.¹⁰ The EIC created a trading joint-stock with permanent capital after receiving a new Charter in 1657, but until 1684 the Dutch still dominated Asian trade.¹¹ The limitations produced by the EIC's financial position thus restricted English activities in Vietnam. In the 1610s, Cochinchina and Tonkin were chosen as places untouched by the Dutch as they had focused on dominating Batavia and the Spice Islands. After the closure of the Hirado factory and the 1623 Massacre in Amboyna, the EIC decisions to stop trading with Japan, Siam, Vietnam and to maintain only the position of Bantam were unavoidable.¹² Later in the century, their position was always shaped by the activities of the Dutch and Chinese in Tonkin.¹³ Moreover, it was difficult for the English to compete with the Chinese, the traditional traders in Tonkin who had the support of the

organization.' He even argued that the EIC was only power in the eighteenth century since it was becoming a government.

¹⁰ Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, p. 22; Furber, *Rival Empires*, pp. 188, 192; P.D. Zwart, 'Globalization in the Early Modern Era: New Evidence from the Dutch-Asiatic Trade, c.1600-1800', *The Journal of Economic History*, 76 (2016), pp. 520-558, p. 521. The EIC's investment in the separate voyages (1600-1613) was more than £500,000; while only the second joint-stock was above £1 million, the rest was around £400,000. Until 1630, the EIC invested £2,887,000 while the VOC always maintained the capital of 6,424,578 guilders throughout its history. Furthermore, from 1600 to 1800, forty-nine per cent of European ships in Asia belonged to the Dutch.

¹¹ F. Gastra, 'War, Competition and Collaboration: Relations between the English and Dutch East India Companies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' in H.V. Bowen, M. Lincoln and N. Rigby (eds.), *The World of the East India Company* (Suffolk, 2002), pp. 50-55; Furber, *Rival Empires*, pp. 31-38, 79-88, 268-271. Furber argued that the Dutch power in Asia lasted until 1713 and only from the mid-eighteenth century, the EIC rose its position in both India and China.

¹² D. Massarella, 'Ticklish Points: The English East India Company and Japan, 1621', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland*, 11 (2001), pp. 43-50.

¹³ IOR/G/12/17/1, *Tonqueen factory 1672*, p. 42a; IOR/G/12/17/2, *Tonqueen factory 1672-1676*, p. 121a. The English always received silks with higher price than the Chinese and Dutch got. In detail, they only got 13,5 taels weight of silk for 1 tael of silver plate while the Dutch had 15 taels weight of silk in exchange for 1 plate silver.

Tonkin Court. Chinese traders were also popular and powerful in the South China Sea before the appearance of Europeans.¹⁴ It was they and the Dutch who monopolised the profitable silk-trade between Japan and Tonkin.¹⁵ As a result, the EIC had to cooperate with the Chinese for their regional trading future.¹⁶ Due to the EIC weakness of both trading knowledge, military and financial issues, the EIC had little choice to use experienced servants in compete with its rivals and expand the EIC position in East Asia.

In conclusion, the thesis's purpose is to illustrate and clarify the place of Vietnam in helping the EIC to gather information and understand more the trading and diplomatic environment in East Asia to adapt and improve over the seventeenth century. This thesis not only supports previous research about the EIC trade in East Asia (including its attempts to manage the long-distance commerce, and its structural revolutions) but also challenges received knowledge about the role of individuals, small factory, small market in the intra-Asian trading system and how the EIC learned and adapted to distant trade. By charting the EIC attempts to trade, to establish factories, to

¹⁴ Kwee Hui Kian, 'Chinese Economic Dominance in Southeast Asia: a *Longue Duree* Perspective', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 55 (2013), pp. 5-34; A.G. Frank, *Re-Orient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1998), pp. 108-117; T. Li, *Nguyen Cochinchina: Southern Vietnam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (New York, 1998), pp. 68-69. Li Tana showed that in 1631, there were twenty junks left China for Southeast Asia and from 1647 to 1720, a massive number of Chinese junks from Southeast Asia to Japan in the sort of port-to-port trade. There were 63 junks from Tonkin, 203 from Cochinchina, 109 from Cambodia, 138 from Siam, 49 from Patani, 80 from Jakarta, 8 from Malacca, and 3 from Bantam. Frank also noted that the Chinese junks in Japan was even ten times higher than the Dutch ships.

¹⁵ N. Iioka, 'Literati Entrepreneur: Wei Zhiyan in the Tonkin-Nagasaki Silk Trade' (Unpublished PhD dissertation, National University of Singapore, 2009), p. 82. From 1680 onwards, while the Dutch voyages from Tonkin to Japan decreased, the English gained no licence to trade there; Chinese traders still maintained at least one junk from Tonkin to Nagasaki annually.

¹⁶ Kwee, 'Chinese Economic Dominance', pp. 10-11.

cultivate formal relationships and to create a colony in Vietnam, the thesis reveals how the EIC evolved to become the most powerful trading company of the eighteenth century.

Previous studies about the EIC, its trade in East Asia and Vietnam, particularly with the terms of new imperial history and transnational history have provided us with the fundamental knowledge of why the Company became involved in the intra-Asian trade including in Vietnam, and the role of information and carriers in social networks. This information was critical in constructing and developing the study's main arguments. The thesis, however, challenges previous studies by exploring new sources of the EIC's records related to the Company's situation in East Asia in the seventeenth century, a crucial period in the Company's historical development but until now largely ignored in the literature. The thesis will now focus on that literature and begin with an exploration of the EIC studies in terms of transnational and new imperial histories.

The English East India Company, transnational and new imperial histories

Philip Stern argues that since the mid-twentieth century, there have been a growing number of studies about the EIC, under terms of the new imperialism, globalisation, border-crossing, and transnationalism.¹⁷ Generally, the appearance of new imperial history and transnational history created various perspectives, more imaginative way of connecting micro and macro levels in researching the history of the EIC and British Empire with different subjects of culture, gender, race, class, political thought,

¹⁷ J.P. Stern, 'History and Historiography of the English East India Company: Past, Present, and Future', *History Compass*, 7 (2009), pp. 1146-1180, pp. 1146-1148.

mobility.¹⁸ Following other scholarship studied ‘small history’ or ‘micro-scale’, this thesis focused on the case of a small factory, market and overseas factors in Vietnam to provide new way of seeing the connection, network in the EIC strategy in the seventeenth century and particularly the role of ‘micro subject’ in the EIC history.¹⁹ Regarding the ‘imperial turn’ and ‘new imperial history’, studies about the EIC consider subjects related to the role of the seventeenth century in the Company’s history, cultural empire, personal relationship or social network during the EIC development.²⁰ In detail, on macro level, the thesis studies a connection of the EIC and Vietnam in the East Asian trading networks while on micro level that was a personal relationship between English factors, and between English overseas servants and Vietnamese people and the ways in which these affected politics and trade, or the ways in which Vietnamese individuals informed and taught the English diplomatic and trading knowledge.

If previous studies before the 1990s ruptured sharply the two different periods of the EIC, ‘age of trade’, and ‘age of empire’, recent research focused more on the EIC’s transformation in the late seventeenth century and the role the first period played in the improvement history of the EIC. The seventeenth-century EIC engaged closely with the first British Empire as it was the time of commercial and industrial expansion with

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 1148; D. Ghosh, ‘Another Set of Imperial Turns?’, *The American Historical Review*, 3 (2012), pp. 772-793, p. 782.

¹⁹ I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System 3 vols* (New York, 1974-1989); Ghosh, ‘Imperial turns’, p. 786; J. Lepore, ‘Historians Who Love to much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography’, *The Journal of American History*, 1 (2001), pp. 129-144; M. Peltonen, ‘Clues, Margins, and Monads: The Micro-Macro Link in Historical Research’, *History and Theory*, 3 (2001), pp. 347-359.

²⁰ See about ‘imperial turn’ and ‘new imperial history’ in A. Burton (ed.), *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation* (Durham, 2003); K. Wilson (ed.), *A new Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840* (Cambridge, 2006); ‘Old Imperialism and New Imperial Histories: Rethinking the History of the Present’, *Radical History Review*, 95 (2006), pp. 211-234; S. Howe (ed.), *The new Imperial Histories Reader* (London, 2010)

global networks and good exchange or a ‘forebear of the modern joint-stock’ with subjectivities of relation markets, networks, capitalism.²¹ From the late seventeenth century, the EIC had transformed its characteristic from ‘empire of liberty’ to imperial power with several military activities in Asia.²² The seventeenth-century Company history is thus notable as a ‘future colonial state’, ‘a harbinger of global capitalism’, and ‘a form of early modern body politic’.²³ Moreover, research about the EIC military history demonstrates that the English gradually paid attention to protect their influence and territorial expansion in Asia from the early seventeenth century.²⁴ Sanjay Subrahmanyam noted that the Company was a political actor from its beginning in both England and Asia.²⁵ Ian Bruce Watson argues that the defensive fortification and force played important role in the Company’s history.²⁶ By evidences from the EIC activities

²¹ V. Forman, ‘Transformations of Value and the Production of Investment in the Early History of the English East India Company’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 3 (2004), 00. 611-642; P.J. Marshall, ‘The first British Empire’, in Robin. W. Winks (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Historiography* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 43-53.

²² C.A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (London, New York, 1989); H.V. Bowen, *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833* (Cambridge, 2006); Steven C.A. Pincus, *The first Modern Revolution: England’s Glorious Revolution of 1688-89* (New Haven, 2009).

²³ Stern, ‘History and Historiography’, p. 1151, ‘A Politie of Civil & Military Power’: Political Thought and the late Seventeenth Century Foundations of the East India Company-State’, *Journal of British Studies*, 2 (2008), pp. 253-283; ‘Politics and Ideology in the early East India Company-State: the Case of St. Helena, 1673-1696’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 1 (2007), pp. 1-23.

²⁴ P.J. Marshall, ‘The English in Asia to 1700’ in N. Canny (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, The Origins of Empire* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 264-285.

²⁵ S. Subrahmanyam, ‘Frank Submissions: The Company and the Mughals between Sr Thomas Roe and Sir William Norris’ in H.V. Bowen, M. Lincoln, and N. Rigby (eds.), *The Worlds of the East India Company* (New York, 2002), p. 70.

²⁶ B. Watson, ‘Fortifications and the Idea of Force in early English East India Company Relations with India’, *Past & Present*, 88 (1980), pp. 70-87; E. Smith, ‘Naval Violence and Trading Privileges in early Seventeenth-Century Asia’ *International Journal of Maritime History*, 25 (2013), pp. 147-158.

in India, Sumatra, and St Helena, previous studies of Stern, David Veevers, Peter J. Marshall argue that from the 1680s the EIC changed its way of contact in the relationship with Asian countries and the history of the EIC was not only considered in term of commerce but also imperialism and that the Company-fiscal state was original from the late seventeenth century.²⁷ Focusing deeply about the transformation of the EIC commercial or pre-imperial phase, James Vaughn argues that, until the 1680s the EIC transformation was remarkable as it considered widespread issues of fortifications, settlements, military affairs, administration rather than the issue of trade with Asia.²⁸ As such, previous studies about the EIC connection with India (partly Sumatra, Bencoolen or St Helena) expressed the crucial role of the seventeenth century in the EIC history, particularly its transformation from ‘age of trade’ to ‘age of empire’ in the late century. Noticeably, most of the above scholarship concerned this idea in the EIC link with India, its main aim of trade with large factories, fortifications and settlements in Madras, Bombay and Bengal. It shows the fact that scholarships have paid more attention to the seventeenth-century EIC, but still with large markets. The broad question is whether small markets and factories could contribute to the seventeenth-century EIC history, particularly in term of trading network. The thesis about the British-Vietnamese relationship thus tries to reveal the contribution of the seventeenth-

²⁷ L. Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (New York, 1994); D. Veevers, ‘The Company as Their Lords and the Deputy as a Great Rajah: Imperial Expansion and the English East India Company on the West Coast of Sumatra, 1685-1730’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 41 (2013), pp. 687-709; P.J. Marshall, ‘One Body Corporate and Politick: The Growth of the English East India Company-State in the Later Seventeenth Century’, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation of Columbia University, 2004).

²⁸ J.M. Vaughn, ‘The Politics of Empire: Metropolitan Socio-Political Development and the Imperial Transformation of the British East India Company, 1675-1775’, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation of University of Chicago, 2009), p. 112.

century EIC small factories, particularly in the South China Sea. Beyond studies about the EIC transformation, the case of Vietnam shows that the EIC evolution also happened in small point as Vietnam, and it is a much more complex story in the EIC history.

The growth of transnational history in nearly decades also provides new ways of considering the history of EIC as networks and connections are treated as central in research and micro subject or individuals are focused deeply. As can be seen, the EIC was a key arena for transnational history with connections in both macro and micro scales and transoceanic flows of goods, ideas, thought and people.²⁹

On the macro level, previous studies have paid attention to the EIC connection with potential markets in Asia and identified the core success of the EIC in the relationship between London and overseas factories. Kriti N. Chaudhuri, Michael Pearson and Sinnappah Arasaratnam view the EIC in the connection with the Indian Ocean.³⁰ Those scholarships argue that the EIC success was in the connection with Asia, especially India and its activities were mostly conducted there. Alongside the Eurasian trade, Holden Furber and David Bassett demonstrate that the EIC also involved in connections of the intra-Asian trade, or even the private ‘country trade’ system.³¹ Previous studies also demonstrate that London’s lack of resources on

²⁹ J. Rüger, ‘OXO: or, The Challenges of Transnational History’, *European History Quarterly*, 4 (2010), pp. 656-668, p. 659.

³⁰ K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asian and The English East India Company, 1660-1760* (Cambridge, 1978); *Trade and Civilization in The India Ocean: An Economic History from The Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, 1985); S. Arasaratnam, *Maritime Trade, Society and European Influence in South Asia, 1600-1800* (Aldershot, 1995); A.D. Gupta, M. Pearson (Eds.), *India and The Indian Ocean, 1500-1800* (Calcutta, 1987).

³¹ I.B. Watson, *Foundation for Empire: English Private Trade in India, 1659-1760* (New Delhi, 1980); H. Furber, *Private Fortunes and Company Profits in the India Trade in the 18th Century* (Aldershot, 1997);

proximity to become core or persuade overseas factories. They thus raised the questions of ‘distant sites of empire’ or the role of distant factories in the EIC history.³² These connections were not run by the Court of Minutes in London, but by overseas factors or agencies in Asia who lived in the networks of kinship or friendship. It might be a connection between distant factories in Asia or between those factories and savant institutions in London as Emily Erikson and Anna Winterbottom argue.³³ Remarkably, those studies mostly still focus on India (or other potential markets in East Asia such as China, Japan, Bantam – see next part) as it was the EIC key markets with rich and explicit evidence for both macro and micro connection. The appearance of Siam or the Malay States in the private trading networks from Madras or Bengal was limited with little function and it was hard to generalise the role of small markets in the EIC commercial strategy in Asia, particularly East Asia.

On the small scale of connection, there are quite a lot of studies about personal relationship and roles of individuals who worked directly in Asia and contributed information, knowledge, experience to the EIC during its evolution process. As the previous mention, the EIC believed in its distant factors and agents in both the learning process and understanding the nature of trade in Asia in the seventeenth century. As a result, alongside studies about individuals in London, studies of Kathleen Wilson,

Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800 (Minneapolis, 1976); D.K. Bassett, ‘British ‘Country’ Trade and Local Trade Networks in the Thai and Malay States, c.1680-1770’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 23 (1989), pp. 625-643.

³² C.A. Bayly, ‘The British and Indigenous Peoples, 1760-1860: Power, Perception, Identity’, in Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern (eds.), *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous People, 1600-1850* (London, 1999), p. 22; Wilson, *A New Imperial History*, p. 15.

³³ A. Winterbottom, ‘Company Culture: Information, Scholarship, and the East India Company Settlements 1660-1720s’, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation of University of London, 2010); E. Erikson, *Between Monopoly and Free Trade: The English East India Company, 1600-1757* (Princeton and Oxford, 2014).

Stephen Howe, Alison Games and Miles Ogborn have argued that the British colonial progress should be concerned from ‘periphery’ or ‘overseas’ and in the connection of ‘sub-imperialism’ or ‘man on the spot’ who had ‘global lives’.³⁴ It is no matter that they were officials or private merchants, but their role was important towards the EIC expansion and connection in Asia as their family and trading networks helped the EIC to maintain the influence and commercial profit.³⁵ Bayly has focuses more on the role of overseas individuals by analysing the issues of creation and transmission of knowledge while Winterbottom looked at the role of ‘go-between’ or brokers with the idea of ‘native informants’ from postcolonial theorists.³⁶ It is obvious that the above studies have paid attention to the role of individuals and their network in gathering information

³⁴ K. Wilson, ‘Rethinking the Colonial State: Family, Gender, and Governmentality in Eighteenth Century British Frontiers’, *American Historical Review*, 5 (2011), pp. 1294-1322; S. Howe, ‘British Worlds, Settler Worlds, World Systems, and Killing Fields’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 4 (2012), pp. 691-725; P.J. Marshall, ‘The British in Asia: Trade to Dominion’, in P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1998), p. 499; A. Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (New York, 2008); M. Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and The World, 1550-1800* (Cambridge, 2008).

³⁵ R. Travers, *Ideology and Empire in Eighteenth-Century India: The British in Bengal* (Cambridge, 2007); S. Mentz, *The English Gentleman Merchant at Work: Madras and The City of London 1660-1740* (Copenhagen, 2005); E. Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Princeton, 2011); D. Veevers, ‘Private Agency and Family Networks in The English East India Company’, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation of University of Kent, 2015); ‘Inhabitants of The Universe: Global Families, Kindship Networks, and The Formation of The Early Modern Colonial State In Asia’, *Journal of Global History*, 10 (2015), pp. 99-121.

³⁶ C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge, 1996); Winterbottom, ‘Culture Empire’, p. 27; ‘Self-Fashioning and Auto-Ethnography: Samuel Baron’s Description of Tonqueen (1686)’, *Journeys*, 14 (2013), pp. 85-105; N. Dirks, ‘Colonial Histories and Native Informants: The Biography of an Archive’ in Carol Breckenridge & Ariun Appadurai (eds.), *Post Colonialism and the Predicament of History* (Oxford, 1993).

and providing the EIC with their knowledge and experience.³⁷ By focusing on ‘uncovering connections’ between individuals, this study shows how the Company learned and adapted new trading environment in the seventeenth century via the personal relationship between English overseas servants and Vietnamese people.³⁸

However, apart from a small study of Winterbottom about Samuel Baron in Tonkin, other works about networks of individuals have largely centred on people in India or their activities in the Indian Ocean. Did English factors in small factories and local people there contribute to the EIC enterprise? This thesis examines personal relationship between English overseas factors and local people in both Tonkin and Cochin-China to view broadly linkages between the EIC and Vietnam in the first century of the Company and the ways in which those relationship affected the EIC. In doing so it shows that the EIC improvement and expansion was original from distant factors, not from the Court of Directors in London. Their role was not only bounded in gathering information of diplomacy, commodities, trading network but also transferring that information from overseas area to London to supply the EIC useful knowledge and partly self-deciding important activities of the Company in Asia. The connections between the EIC and Vietnam in the seventeenth century was not exactly the connection between London and Vietnam, but between the overseas English factors and Vietnamese rulers, mandarins, traders, and other local people. The thesis is not a study

³⁷ M. Ogborn, ‘Writing Travels: Power, Knowledge and Ritual on the English East India Company’s Early Voyages’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 2 (2002), pp. 155-171.

³⁸ C.A. Bayly, S. Beckert, M. Connelly, I. Hofmeyr, W. Kozol, and P. Seed, ‘AHR Conversation: On Transnational History’, *The American Historical Review*, 5 (2006), pp. 1441-1464, p. 1454; A. Saka-Helmhout, ‘Learning from The Periphery: Beyond the Transnational Model’, *Critical Perspectives On International Business*, 1 (2011), pp. 48-65, pp. 48-49.

of political relations, but rather of cultural and social connections, to show how the EIC learned and adapted from the East Asian trading environment via the role of individuals.

The English East India Company in East Asia

Regarding the EIC's presence in East Asia in the seventeenth century, previous studies focus on two main subjects: its weakness and insufficient experience in comparison with rivals, and its connections with potential markets in the area. Chaudhuri, Niels Steensgaard, Leonard Blussé have argued that the EIC, despite being a multinational firm and one of the first joint-stock organisations in the world, was poorly financed and weak in military capability in its first century.³⁹ Due to a lack of invested capital, the Company focused mostly on trade and did not have any powerful armed-land forces until 1660.⁴⁰ Accordingly, Douglas Irwin and Femme Gaastra argued that this century was a difficult period for the EIC to compete with the Portuguese or Dutch.⁴¹ The

³⁹ Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, p. 56; *The Trading World*; 'The English East India Company in the 17th and 18th centuries: a Pre-Modern Multinational Organization' in L. Blusse and F. Gaastra (eds.), *Companies and Trade: Essays on Overseas Trading Companies During the Ancien Regime* (Leiden, 1981), pp. 29-46; N. Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan trade* (Chicago, 1973), pp. 114-153; 'The Companies as a Specific Institution in the History of European Expansion' in L. Blusse and F. Gaastra (eds.), *Companies and Trade*, pp. 245-264; R.A. Bryer, 'the History of Accounting and the Transition to Capitalism in England, part 2: Evidence', *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 25 (2000), pp. 327-381, pp. 345-46; Erikson and Bearman, 'Malfeasance', p. 201.

⁴⁰ H.V. Bowen, 'The EIC and Military Recruitment in Britain, 1763-1771' in P. Emmer and F. Gaastra (eds.), *The Organization of Interoceanic Trade in European Expansion, 1450-1800* (Aldershot, 1996), p. 351.

⁴¹ Furber, *Rival Empires*; Neal, 'The Dutch and English East India Companies Compared', pp. 195-223; Irwin, *The Anglo-Dutch Rivalry for the East India trade*; Gaastra, *Relations between the English and the Dutch*; J.S. Bromlay, E.H. Kossman (eds.), *Britain and the Netherlands in Europe and Asia* (London, 1968).

Company met with little success and found it difficult to maintain its presence in the South China Sea with the closure of Japan factory in 1621, the Amboyna Massacre of 1623 and later the closure of factories in Cambodia, Siam, Taiwan (from the 1650s to the 1680s) and above all with the withdrawal of the commercial hub, Bantam in 1682. While the Portuguese and the Dutch Companies often used military methods to establish their position in the Asian trading world, the EIC mostly pursued a free and peaceful trade policy and avoided direct fighting against other Europeans in the early seventeenth century. As a result, the Portuguese and the Dutch founded colonies early in Asia, and the VOC became the most influential European company in East Asia in the seventeenth century.⁴² By examining the English presence in both Tonkin and Cochinchina, this thesis argues that the EIC's weakness in the seventeenth century was a fact, but it always tries to learn and improve itself through contacting with regional merchants and other European traders. That the EIC learnt from its successful rivals in this period was repeated in instructions of Directors to servants and was one of the ways the EIC borrowed and adapted with the new commercial environment in Asia.⁴³

⁴² O. Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce: the Dutch East India Company in the Indian Ocean trade* (Aldershot, 1994); E.C. Kato, 'Unification and Adaptation, the early Shogunate and Dutch Trade Policies' in L. Blusse and F. Gaastra (eds.), *Companies and Trade*, pp. 207-230; K. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade, 1620-1740* (Copenhagen, 1958); P.C. Emmer, 'The First Global War: the Dutch Versus Iberia in Asia, Africa and the New World, 1590-1609', *E-Journal of Portuguese History*, 1 (2003), pp. 1-14; T. Andrade, 'The Rise and Fall of Dutch Taiwan, 1624-1662: Cooperative Colonization and the Statist Model of European Expansion', *Journal of World History*, 17 (2006), pp. 429-450; J. Nijman, 'The VOC and the Expansion of the World-System 1602-1799', *Political Geography*, 13 (1994), pp. 211-227; M.S. Laver, 'Strange Isolation: the Dutch, the Japanese and the Asian Economy in the Seventeenth Century' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2006).

⁴³ A. Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France c.1500-c.1800* (New Haven, 1995).

Together with the EIC's weakness in long-distant trade, previous studies focus on the EIC problems of connections between London and overseas factories and servants in terms of trading system, administration, employment of workers and collaboration during its overseas trading expansion.⁴⁴ Huw Bowen demonstrates that there were several groups of English merchants received Charters from the Kings and parliaments to trade in Asia in the seventeenth century, and even the EIC was unstable with different groups as well until 1709.⁴⁵ The research uses the administration of the Tonkin factory to examine the issue of 'malfeasance' or 'corruption' in the employment of principal-agents.⁴⁶ On the one hand, Chaudhuri, V. K. Seth, Niall Ferguson, and E.L.J. Coornaert argue that these factors were out of the control of London and that private trade was egregious and dangerous for the EIC due to the issues of timing and distance of the overseas trade.⁴⁷ Moreover, David Veevers and Winterbottom show that

⁴⁴ R.E. McCormick and R.D. Tollison, 'The Economic Organization of the English East India Company', *Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organization*, 4 (1983), pp. 221-238; 'Theory and History: Seventeenth-Century Joint-Stock Chartered Trading Companies', *Journal of Economic History*, 56 (1996), pp. 916-924; B. Buchan, 'The Emergence of The Techno-Structure: Lessons from the East India Company, 1713-1836', *Journal of Management History*, 41 (2003), pp. 105-116; S. Sivramkrishna, 'From Merchant to Merchant-Ruler: A Structure-Conduct-Performance Perspective of the East India Company's History, 1600-1765', *Business History*, 56 (2014), pp. 789-815.

⁴⁵ H.V. Bowen, 'No Longer Mere Traders: Continuities and Change in the Metropolitan Development of the East India Company', in H.V. Bowen, M. Lincoln, and N. Rigby (eds.), *The Worlds of the East India Company* (Suffolk, 2002).

⁴⁶ R. Aya, 'The Third Man; or, Agency in History; or, Rationality in Revolution', *History and Theory*, 40 (2001), pp. 143-152; M. Bevir, 'Foucault and Critique: Deploying Agency against Autonomy', *Political Theory*, 27 (1999), pp. 65-84; E. Erikson and P. Bearman, 'Malfeasance', pp. 195-230.

⁴⁷ Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, pp. 74, 87; E.L.J. Coornaert, 'European Economic Institutions and the New World: the Chartered Companies' in E.E. Rich and C.H. Wilson (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe from the Decline of the Roman Empire*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, 1967), p. 263; V. K. Seth, 'The East India Company- a Case Study in Corporate Governance', *Global business review*, 13 (2012), pp. 221-238, p. 227; N. Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York, 2004), p. 21.

London lacked resources to manage overseas factors and distant factories, factors were important towards the trading and political development of the EIC.⁴⁸ Recently, Erikson asserts that London's attempts to control overseas factories and forts were not always successful due to the overseas social networks or the connections between factors, factories in Asia.⁴⁹ Anna M. Carlos and Stephen Nicholas through a comparative case study of Hudson's Bay Company argue that problems of agents were not serious and Santhi Hejeebu, Furber insist that permitting private trade was an efficient approach to control opportunism and expand the English position in Asia.⁵⁰ Furthermore, a study by Sefarin D. Quiason about the 'country trade' or triangular trade in the South China Sea continuously backs the importance of private commerce for the EIC trading future in the area.⁵¹

Building on the findings of the above research, this thesis highlights the case of Vietnam to show that the EIC employment of experienced men in overseas trading was

⁴⁸ Veevers, 'Private Agency and Family Networks'; Winterbottom, 'Culture Empire'.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 14; E. Erikson, *Between Monopoly and Free Trade: The English East India Company, 1600-1757* (Princeton and Oxford, 2014).

⁵⁰ A.M. Carlos and S. Nicholas, 'Managing the Manager: An Application of The Principal Agent Model to the Hudson's Bay Company', *Oxford Economic Papers*, 45 (1993), pp. 243-256, pp. 253-55; 'Giants of an Earlier Capitalism: The Chartered Companies as Modern Multinationals', *Business History Review*, 62 (1988), pp. 398-419; S. Hejeebu, 'Contract Enforcement in the English East India Company', *Journal of Economic History*, 65 (2005), pp. 496-523, p. 498; H. Furber and R. Rocher, *Private Fortunes and Company Profits in the India Trade in the 18th Century*, (Aldershot, 1997); D. Lewis, 'The Growth of the Country Trade to the Straits of Malacca, 1760-1777', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 43 (1970), pp. 114-130; D.K. Bassett, 'British 'Country' Trade and Local Trade Networks in the Thai and Malay States, c.1680-1770', *Modern Asian Studies*, 23 (1989), pp. 625-643.

⁵¹ S.D. Quiason, *English 'Country Trade' with the Philippines, 1644-1765* (Quezon, 1966). Other works about the trade of Asian and European merchants in the South China Sea can also support the idea of using country trade in Manila and other trading ports in the area. B.M. Tremml, 'The global and the local: problematic dynamics of the triangular trade in early modern Manila', *Journal of World history*, 23 (2012), pp. 555-586; B. Tremml-Werner, *Spain, China and Japan in Manila, 1571-1644: Local Comparisons and Global Connections* (Amsterdam, 2015).

a successful innovation although it created a few problems for the Company's overseas trade. The use of experienced individuals greatly contributed to the EIC expansion in East Asia as these employees provided London with knowledge and information about overseas trade, settled and drove that trade, and built relationships with distant countries. In some periods, the EIC depended heavily on the overseas factors to address trade matters. The case of the Tonkin factory reveals that it was the powers of overseas factors and issues of distance and timing in the monsoon trade which often prevented London from effectively managing outlying branches and staff. The power of the Bantam Council over the Tonkin factory and the struggle between Tonkin servants indicate that until the late seventeenth century, English servants in East Asia were beyond the control of London. They consequently dealt in both Company and private trade being one of the main reasons leading to the ineffective trade and ultimate closure of the Tonkin factory in 1697.

Researching the EIC appearance in East Asia was still unbalanced as it mostly focuses on the EIC connections with leading markets. If India was mainly focused in Asia broadly, China, Japan and Indonesia became the main subject of historians in their concerning in East Asia.⁵² Going beyond, Andre G. Frank considered China as the main

⁵² H.B. Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China 1635-1834*, 5 vols (Oxford, 1926-1929); E.H. Pritchard, *Anglo-Chinese Relations during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (New York, 1970); J.B. Eames, *The English in China: being an Account of the Intercourse and Relations between England and China from the year 1600 to the year 1843 and a Summary of later Developments* (London, 1974); P. Tuck (ed.), *Britain and the China Trade 1635-1842*, 10 vols (London, 2000); J.S. Gregory, *The West and China since 1500* (Hampshire, 2003); Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*; I. Nish, Yoichi Kibata (eds.), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000*, vol.1 & 4 (Basingstoke, 2000-2002); Bassett, *The Factory at Bantam*; M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630* (The Hague, 1962); K. Fiona, 'The early English Textile Trade in Southeast Asia: the East India Company Factory and The Textile Trade in Jambi, Sumatra, 1615-1682', *Textile History*, 28 (1997), pp. 149-160; R. Barbour, 'The English

emergence of the world economy in the early modern period and the activities of European companies were to focus on this market.⁵³ By contrast, the small markets of Siam, Taiwan, Cambodia and Vietnam have received far less research attention and under a term of an experimentation.⁵⁴ The few studies to draw attention to these markets, such as those of Antony Farrington, Bassett, John Keay, have argued that these markets could not cater for the English demand completely.⁵⁵ As a result, their role in the regional trading system is also little remarkable. Those small factories were short-lived, and their function was only considered in the link with Japan, Bantam or China as the EIC faced difficulties in trading directly with those main markets. Significantly,

Nation at Bantam: Corporate Process in the East India Company's first Factory', *Genre- Journal online of Duke University press*, 48 (2015), pp. 159-192. C. Ryu, 'The Politics of Identity: William Adams, John Saris, and the English East India Company's Failure in Japan' in J.G. Singh (ed.), *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 178-189; A. Farrington, D. Massarella, 'William Adams and the Early English Enterprise in Japan' *IDEAS working paper series from RePEc*, July 2000; Massarella, *The English East India Company and Japan.. Research on China has mostly concentrated on the eighteenth-century company*: M. Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-42* (Cambridge, 1951); W.C. Costin, *Great Britain and China 1833-1860* (Oxford, 1968); D. Forrest, *Tea for the British – the Social and Economy history of a famous Trade* (London, 1973); P.W. Fay, *The Opium War 1840-42* (Chapel Hill, 1975); W.E. Cheong, *Hong Merchants of Canton – Chinese Merchants in Sino-Western trade, 1684-1798* (Richmond, 1997); Y-C.T. Simon, 'Trading for Tea: a Study of the English East India Company's Tea Trade with China and the related Financial Issues, 1760-1833' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Leicester, 2003).

⁵³ A.G. Frank, *Reorient: Global Economy in the Asian age* (Berkeley, 1998).

⁵⁴ D.K. Bassett, 'The Trade of the English East India Company in Cambodia, 1651-1656', *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 92 (1962), pp. 35-61; N.P. Dhiravat, 'The Voyages of the 'Sea Adventure' to Ayuthhaya, 1615-1618: The English East India Company and its Siam-Japan trade', *Itinerario* 45 (2013), pp. 50-69; A. Farrington, *The English Factory in Siam (1612-1685)*, 2 vols (London, 2007); Massarella, *A World elsewhere*; 'Chinese, Tartars and 'Thea' or a Tale of Two Companies: The English East India Company and Taiwan in the late Seventeenth Century', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3 (1993), pp. 393-426. R.E. Holroyd, *The English India Company's Trade in the Western Pacific through Taiwan, 1670-1683*, (Master of the University of Alberta, 2011).

⁵⁵ Farrington, *Trading Places*, pp. 80-84; Keay, *The Honourable Company*, pp. 59-60, 197, 348-356.

Vietnam was mentioned as a supplementary place in the regional trade, but it is rarely examined in-depth.⁵⁶

Overall, the research about the EIC in East Asia in the seventeenth century provides us with useful insights about the EIC's major concern with key markets and its problems in the long-distant trade. However, the seventeenth-century EIC in East Asia was mostly narrated in a single relation, in activities of 'mere merchants' and did not show the links between regional markets. The appearance of factories in Hirado, Siam, Cambodia, Taiwan was researched independently as experimentation and with different roles, not really in a trading network. Certainly, existing studies have not shown precisely the importance of the trading system around the primary market and how the EIC learned and operated overseas trade from this network. Previous studies show that the period 1600-1680 was an 'experimental period' of the EIC, but it was viewed through the progress the EIC tried to enlarge its markets, not to link those together. It also did not show the improvement of the EIC in the seventeenth century from free trade to semi-state by the late century. By focusing on small markets in East Asia in this research and the links between the intra-Asian trade, the thesis' contribution is to clarify the role of intermediaries and how much the EIC needed small branches to serve its main trading goals in East Asia, and to build the EIC's regional trading network in East Asia through connecting small factories with significant markets. Moreover, the study views the relations between markets in East Asia and the way capital was transferred in the EIC's trading network. It means that study the British-Vietnamese relationship in

⁵⁶ Morse, *Trading to China*, vol. 1, pp. 32-40; Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, pp. 137-139; A. Farrington, *The English Factory in Japan (1613-1623)* (London, 1991). The book of Farrington was useful as documentary about the first foothold of the EIC in both Tonkin and Cochin-China in the 1610s. It also stated the function of Vietnam was supplemental market of Japan.

the seventeenth century provides more evidence about the way the English tried to create commercial chains in East Asia, to adapt with regional markets and to learn from its successful rivals to develop in the competition with its rivals.

Tonkin, Cochín-China and the East Asian trading world

Previous studies have established two critical features of the East Asian trading system; the central position of the two leading markets of China and Japan, and the attraction of Southeast Asian countries in the regional network in the seventeenth century. The South China Sea was seen as the equivalent of the Mediterranean Sea for connecting merchants of the world.⁵⁷ Importantly, scholars such as Hall Kenneth, Ambra Calo, Ian C. Glover not only consider Southeast Asia as an intermediary but one of the most attractive commercial areas from the ancient and medieval periods with trading links with China, Japan, India, and Central Asia.⁵⁸ Geoff Wade argues that Southeast Asia experienced the early commercial period (900-1300), and Anthony Reid uses the term ‘age of commerce’ to describe the overseas trading development in Southeast Asia in

⁵⁷ C. Guillot, D. Lombard, and R. Ptak (eds.), *From the Mediterranean to the China sea: Miscellaneous Notes* (Wiesbaden, 1998); E.S. Casino, M. Shin, ‘South China Sea or ‘Asian Mediterranean Sea’: Re-Conceptualizing a Common Regional Maritime Zone’, *International Area review*, 2 (1999), pp. 43-64; H. Sutherland, ‘Southeast Asian History and the Mediterranean Analogy’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 34 (2003), pp. 1-20.

⁵⁸ R.H. Kenneth, *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, 1985); A. Calo, *History of Early Southeast Asia: Maritime Trade and Societal Development, 100-1500* (Lanham, 2011); I.C. Glover, *Early Trade between India and Southeast Asia: a Link in the Development of a World Trading System* (Hull, 1990); A. Calo, *The Distribution of Bronze in Early Southeast Asia: Trade Routes and Cultural Spheres* (Oxford, 2009).

the period 1450-1680.⁵⁹ They also present the trading potential of Southeast Asian from its valuable exported commodities included spices, silks, sugar, ceramic, and its commercial networks in the early modern period.⁶⁰ Studies about China's trading world stress the foundation of China's trade with its neighbours in term of 'tributary' where China works as a centre and other markets are as peripheries.⁶¹ Chinese merchants expanded their trade around the South China Sea and built their communities in popular commercial areas from the late fifteenth century, and those connections were essential for the development of supplementary ports in the South China Sea.⁶² Besides China, Japan was another key economy in East Asia from the period of the Tokugawa Shogun in the late sixteenth century.⁶³ However, the political crisis in China from the mid-

⁵⁹ G. Wade, 'An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia, 900-1300 CE', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 40 (2009), pp. 221-265; A. Reid, 'An Age of commerce' in Southeast Asian History', *Modern Asian Studies*, 24 (1990), pp. 1-30; *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680. Vol. 2: Expansion and Crisis* (New Haven, 1993).

⁶⁰ D. Bulbeck, A. Reid, L.C. Tan, and Y. Wu (eds.), *Southeast Asian Exports since the 14th century: Cloves, Pepper, Coffee, and Sugar* (Singapore, 1998); I. Yoneo, *The Junk Trade from Southeast Asia: Translations from the Tosen Fusetsu-gaki, 1674-1723* (Singapore, 1998); A.C. Peterson, 'Making the first Global Trade Route: The Southeast Asian Foundations of the Acapulco-Manila Galleon Trade, 1519-1650' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Hawaii, 2014).

⁶¹ J.K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast* (Stanford, 1953); P-k. Hui, 'Overseas Chinese Business Networks: East Asian Economic Development in Historical Perspective' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, State University of New York, 1995); D. Gang, 'The Foreign Staple Trade of China in the Premodern Era', *International History Review*, 19 (1997), pp. 384-409; P. Roderich, *China's Seaborne Trade with South and South-east Asia (1200-1750)* (Aldershot, 1999); S.F. Martin, *A Short History of China and Southeast Asia: Tribute, Trade, and Influence* (Crows Nest, 2003); H. Takeshi, *China, East Asia, and the Global Economy: Regional and Historical Perspectives* (London, 2008).

⁶² C.A. Trock, 'Chinese Revenue Farms and Borders in Southeast Asia', *Modern Asian Studies*, 43 (2009), pp. 335-362; C.A. Lockard, 'The Sea Common to all: Maritime Frontiers, Port Cities, and Chinese Traders in the Southeast Asian Age of Commerce, ca. 1400-1750', *Journal of World History*, 21 (2010), pp. 219-247.

⁶³ A. Yasunori, 'Concept of the Border: Nations, Peoples and Frontiers in Asian History, The Formation of Japanocentric World Order', *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 2 (2005), pp. 185-216; D.C. Kang,

sixteenth century leading to the restricted policy towards overseas trade and the Japanese edict of 1635 created a new chance for the development of supportive markets in Southeast Asia as Chinese and Japanese merchants still engaged in the regional trade in the South China Sea privately and illegally.⁶⁴ In the thesis, Japan and China were the main EIC targets in East Asia respectively during the seventeenth century. Japan was considered to supply the EIC large amount of silver while China would be the leading market of European goods and supplier of luxury commodities exporting to Europe such as silk, musk, gold, particularly in the late seventeenth century. The EIC demand to trade with Japan and China became the main reasons created the appearance of Vietnam as a supplementary factor or intermediary in the EIC regional trading chain. The English factory and activities in Vietnam were dependent on their situation in China and Japan while the EIC need the place of Vietnam to connect with Japan and China in the extant trading system.

Studies about Vietnam in the early modern period provide a useful point of departure for examining the reasons the EIC chose Vietnam to figure in its commercial strategy in the seventeenth century and to investigate how the EIC learned from

East Asia before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute (New York, 2010), pp. 121-130; H. Xing, 'The Shogun's Chinese partners: the Alliance between Tokugawa Japan and the Zheng Family in Seventeenth-Century Maritime East Asia', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 75 (2016), pp. 111-136.

⁶⁴ B. Leonard, 'No Boats to China: The Dutch East India Company and the Changing Pattern of the China Sea trade, 1635-1690', *Modern Asian Studies*, 30 (1996), pp. 51-76; G. Wang, *The Nan-Hai Trade: a Study of the Early History of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea* (Singapore, 1998); R. Innes, 'The Door Ajar: Japan's Foreign Trade in the Seventeenth Century' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1980); L. Blusse, 'The Rise and Fall of a Chinese Colonial Town', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 12 (1981), pp. 159-178; Hung-Guk Cho, 'The Trade between China, Japan, Korea and Southeast Asia in the 14th Century through the 17th Century Period', *International Area Review*, 3 (2000), pp. 67-107; Kwee, 'Chinese Economic Dominance, pp. 5-34; A. Clulow, 'Like Lambs in Japan and Devils outside Their Land: Diplomacy, Violence, and Japanese Merchants in Southeast Asia', *Journal of World History*, 24 (2013), pp. 335-358.

Vietnam's situation. From the 1960s and 1970s, American scholars such as Alexander Woodside and John K. Whitmore viewed Vietnam as a Chinese political model.⁶⁵ Vietnam was conceived as a culturally advanced state and a central kingdom surrounded by barbarians who had to send a royal tribute to Vietnam to establish a formal relation.⁶⁶ Chinese influence was the main reason for Tonkin's unwelcoming policy towards foreigners in some periods, especially after the Trinh-Nguyen wars. Those studies about the influence of China on Tonkin also explain the difference between Tonkin and Cochin-China's policies towards Europeans in the seventeenth century. Southern Vietnam tried to open the country for trade while Tonkin restricted interaction with foreigners broadly.

From the 1990s, instead of focusing on the Chinese influence in Vietnam, scholars moved to a term of 'southern movement' and the appearance of a new kingdom Cochin-China.⁶⁷ The Vietnamese conflicts and southward movement were also

⁶⁵ M. Coughlin, 'Vietnam: in China's Shadow', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 8 (1967), pp. 240-249; J.K. Whitmore, 'The Development of Le Government in Fifteenth Century Vietnam' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University Microfilms, Michigan, 1970); *Vietnam, Ho Quy Ly, and the Ming (1371-1421)* (New Haven, 1985); A.B. Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model, a Comparative Study of Vietnamese and Chinese Government in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Harvard, 1971); N. Cooke, 'Nineteenth-Century Vietnam Confucianization in Historical Perspective: Evidence from the Palace Examinations 1463-1883', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 25 (1994), pp. 270-312; B. Womack, *China and Vietnam: the Politics of Asymmetry* (Cambridge, 2006); G. Dutton, 'Reassessing Confucianism in the Tay Son regime 1788-1802', *Southeast Asia Research*, 13 (2005), pp. 157-183; L.C. Kelley, 'Confucianism in Vietnam: A State of the Field Essay', *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, 1 (2006), pp. 314-370.

⁶⁶ Woodside, *Chinese Model*, p. 235.

⁶⁷ K. Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam* (Berkeley, 1981); 'Nguyen Hoang and the Beginning of Vietnam's Southern Expansion' in A. Reid, (ed.), *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era: Trade, Power, and Belief* (Ithaca, New York, 1993), pp. 42-64; N. Coke, 'Regionalism and the Nature of Nguyễn Rule in Seventeenth Century Đàng Trong (Cochin-china)', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 29 (1998), pp. 122-161.

considered from the viewpoint of commerce and overseas trade.⁶⁸ The civil wars not only made Vietnam divided and powerless but also led to a strong drive for increased military strength, coupled with the development of a new overseas policy.⁶⁹ As a result, both the Trinh and Nguyen Lords accepted and welcomed foreigners.⁷⁰ Under the term of ‘age of commerce’, scholars such as Charles J. Wheeler, Li Tana and Hoang Anh Tuan have explicitly examined Vietnam’s role as an important market and an intermediate port for East Asian merchants.⁷¹ They comment that Vietnam was attractive due to its geographical location as a mid-point in the South China Sea.⁷² Recently, studies of a Japanese scholar S. Momoki and Vietnamese historians (V.K. Nguyen, M.D. Nguyen) have stressed the role of Vietnam as a trading intermediary in

⁶⁸ T. Li, ‘A View from The Sea: Perspective on the Northern and Central Vietnamese Coast’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 37 (2006), pp. 83-102; K.J. Whitmore, ‘The Rise of the Coast: Trade, State and Culture in Early Dai Viet’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 37 (2006), pp. 103-122.

⁶⁹ Li, *Nguyen Cochinchina*, p. 72. She argued that both Tonkin and Cochinchina were the biggest customers of the Portuguese Macao of guns and weapons.

⁷⁰ Duong Van Huy, ‘Quan ly ngoai thuong cua chinh quyen Dang Trong the ky XVII – XVIII’ [Cochin-Chinese government’s commercial management in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries], *Southeast Asian studies*, 12 (2007), pp. 50-62; Nguyễn Văn Kim, ‘Ứng đối của chính quyền Đàng Trong đối với các thế lực phương Tây’ [Cochin-Chinese governments’ policy towards Europeans], *Scientific journal of Hanoi National University*, 2 (2010), pp. 71-84; Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, chapter 3, pp. 61-95. In the 1640s, the Dutch even intervened with Vietnamese political life by providing weapons, warships for the Trinh lord to fight against the Nguyen lord in the fourth war (1642-1643).

⁷¹ C.J. Wheeler, ‘Cross-Culture Trade and Trans-Regional Networks in the Port of Hoi An: Maritime Vietnam in the Early Modern Era’ (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 2001); T. Li, ‘Tonking in the Age of Commerce’ in G. Wade and L. Tana (eds.), *Anthony Reid and the Study of the Southeast Asian Past* (Singapore, 2012), pp. 246-270; A.T. Hoang, ‘Regionalizing National History: Ancient and Medieval Vietnamese Maritime Trade in the East Asian Context’, *The Medieval History Journal*, 17 (2014), Pp. 87-106.

⁷² T. Li and A. Reid, *Southern Vietnam under the Nguyen: Documents on the Economic History of Cochinchina (Dang Trong), 1602-1777* (Singapore, 1993); T. Li, ‘An Alternative Vietnam? The Nguyen Kingdom in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 29 (1998), pp. 111-121; Wheeler, *Cross-Culture Trade*; Li, ‘Tonking’; N. Cooke, T. Li, and J.A. Anderson (eds.), *The Tonking Gulf through History* (Philadelphia, 2011).

the ancient and medieval periods, providing links with other East Asian countries.⁷³ Some have argued that Vietnam had a range of commodities suitable for Asian demand.⁷⁴ Nguyen Thanh Nha has shown that Vietnam's attraction was enhanced due to the growth of urbanisation, the spread of a money economy for foreign merchants, especially during the crisis period.⁷⁵

Besides the political and economic subjects, recent research about the presence of foreigners in Vietnam in the seventeenth century provides another example of the attraction of Vietnam. Li, Nicholas Tarling, Wheeler, and Robert L. Innes have studied the activities of Chinese and Japanese merchants in Vietnam in this period.⁷⁶ They have shown that Chinese and Japanese brokers were the first foreigners to exploit the potential of Vietnam and they built large communities in Thang Long, Pho Hien (Tonkin) and Hoi An (Cochin-China) to control their operations easily and to expand their influence in Vietnam. G.B. Souza and C.R. Boxer have shown that from the late sixteenth century onwards, the Portuguese sent missions and traders from Macao to

⁷³ Hoang, Regionalizing National History; Nguyễn Văn Kim (eds.), *Vietnamese with Sea* (Hanoi, 2011); *Việt Nam trong hệ thống thương mại châu Á thế kỷ XVI-XVII* [Vietnam in the Asian commercial system in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries] (Hanoi, 2007); S. Momoki, 'Dai Viet and the South China Sea trade: from the 10th to the 15th Century', *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 12 (1998), pp. 1-34.

⁷⁴ Vương Hoàng Tuyên, *Tình hình công thương nghiệp thời Lê mạt* [Handicrafts in the post-Le dynasty] (Hanoi, 1959); Nguyễn Thừa Hỷ, *Economic history of Hanoi in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries* (Hanoi, 2002); Trần Thị Vinh, *Lịch sử Việt Nam tập IV, thế kỷ XVII-XVIII* [Vietnamese history, part 4, 17th and 18th centuries] (Hanoi, 2007).

⁷⁵ Nguyễn, Thanh Nhã, *Tableau Économique du Vietnam aux XVII^e et XVIII^e Siècles*, (Paris, 1970) [Nguyễn Nghị (Vietnamese translated), (Hanoi, 2013)].

⁷⁶ Innes, 'Japan's Foreign Trade'; N. Tarling, *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia from Early Times to 1800* (Cambridge, 1992); Li, *Nguyen Cochinchina*; C.J. Wheeler, *Cross-Cultural Trade*.

both Tonkin and Cochin-China.⁷⁷ They wanted to replace Japanese merchants in Tonkin after the ‘Japanese *Sakoku Edict* of 1635’ and maintained the trade until the late 1660s.⁷⁸ The Dutch also acknowledged the role of Vietnam in the regional trade. From the 1620s they considered Cochin-China as a source of profit on silks for Japan.⁷⁹ From 1637 they established the Japan-Tonkin network to provide substitute silk for Japan in exchange for silver.⁸⁰

Going beyond those studies about Vietnam and the East Asian trading world, the thesis seeks to note the availability and potential of Vietnam in the EIC commercial strategy and use the Vietnamese case study to re-evaluate the role of main and supportive markets in the EIC commercial strategy in East Asia, revealing the critical importance and value of small countries in Southeast Asia. The study argues that the attraction of Vietnam was mostly from its geographical situation in the South China Sea with its extant connections with both China and Japan. Benefit from Vietnamese trade was from the intra-Asian trade because most Vietnamese products served Asian demand which required European Companies to understand and adapt their trading model accordingly. The thesis also shows how the EIC learned from Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch merchants and from Vietnamese people and drew on this knowledge to establish

⁷⁷ M. Barbara, ‘Science, Mathematics, and Reason: The Missionary Methods of the Jesuit Alexandre de Rhodes in Seventeenth-Century Vietnam’, *The Catholic Historical Review*, 86 (2000), pp. 439-458; G.B. Souza, *The survival of Empire: Portuguese Trade and Society in China and the South China Sea, 1630-1754* (Cambridge, 1986); C.R. Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon* (Lisbon, 1963).

⁷⁸ Souza, *The Survival of Empire*, p. 114.

⁷⁹ Buch, *De Oost-Indische Compagnie en Quinam* (Amsterdam, 1929), p. 18; quoted from Li, *Nguyen Cochin-China*, p. 73.

⁸⁰ K. Camfferman and T. E. Cooke, ‘The Profits of the Dutch East India Company’s Japan Trade’, *A Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business Studies*, 40 (2004), pp. 49-75; W.J.M. Buch, ‘*La Compagnie des Indes Neerlandaises et l’Indochine*’, *BEFEO* 36 (1926), pp. 136-162; quoted from Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, p. 52.

a factory and enter into a formal relationship Vietnam in the century. Secondly, the thesis tries to highlight a contribution of Vietnamese people during the process the EIC contacted and traded in Vietnam in the seventeenth century. On the other way, the study researches how Vietnamese people reacted to the appearance of the English and how they contributed to the development of the English trade in East Asia in the seventeenth century.

The English East India Company-Vietnamese relationship

The above section shows how the thesis gathers support in certain aspects from previous studies but also challenges some of the earlier claims about the exact role of overseas individuals, the interrelationship between the main and supplementary markets in East Asia, and the potential of Vietnam in the EIC's commercial strategy. The thesis seeks to use the case study of Vietnam critically to examine how the EIC learned lessons and adapted to trade overseas. While Vietnam has been an understudied area of research on the EIC, it has not been entirely overlooked. Some studies have sought to identify and provide primary sources; other studies have focused on describing and narrating the commercial and political relations. With regards to providing resources, Maybon has played a vital role from the 1910s.⁸¹ He highlighted most types of materials related to the English factory in the British Library. The most significant part of his research is a

⁸¹ C.B. Maybon, 'Une Factorie Anglaise au Tonkin au XVII Siècle (1672-1697)', *Bulletin de l'Ecode Francaise d-Extrême-Orient* (BEFEO), 10 (1910), pp. 159-204. The important parts of Maybon's study related to Vietnamese-European relationship were translated to Vietnamese in 'Những người châu Âu ở nước An Nam' (The Europeans in Annam) and 'Thương điểm Anh ở Đàng Ngoài thế kỷ XVII' (The English seaports in Tonkin in the seventeenth century). Two essays are the most important sources for Vietnamese scholars in the twentieth century to study the European and English presences in Tonkin in early modern history.

documentary account of the EIC's activities, with the inclusion of journals, records and diaries of Tonkin factors and instructions and letters of London, Madras, and Bantam to Tonkin. More than eighty years after it was compiled Farrington's study of the EIC's materials during its time in Pho Hien (1672-1682) provides avenues for investigating the relationship and the process by which the English appeared in Northern Vietnam further.⁸² This task was partly undertaken by Hoang, the first scholar to account for and clarify the EIC's commerce in Tonkin from both the Vietnamese and English perspective.⁸³ However, this study mainly translates English primary sources to Vietnamese, rather than providing new analysis and examination of the EIC's activities in Tonkin.

In terms of the direct connection between the EIC and Vietnam, Vietnamese scholars played little role as they had limited chance to discover the primary sources from the EIC's records while Vietnamese sources rarely mentioned the English presence in Vietnam. They have focused on Vietnamese relations with neighbours in East Asia or on the general idea of Vietnamese overseas trade.⁸⁴ The EIC's relationships with Vietnam, therefore, were unpacked by foreign scholars based on the materials from

⁸² A. Farrington, 'English East India Company Documents Relating Pho Hien and Tonkin', in Hải Hưng province (ed.), *Phố Hiến: The Centre of International Commerce in the 17th – 18th centuries* (Hanoi, 1994).

⁸³ A.T. Hoàng, *Tư liệu các công ty Đông Ấn Hà Lan và Anh về Kẻ Chợ - Đàng Ngoài thế kỷ XVII*, [Materials for the Dutch and English East India Company in the seventeenth-century Ke Cho – Tonkin], (Hanoi, 2010); *Công ty Đông Ấn Anh: Quá trình hình thành và xâm nhập Đông Nam Á thế kỷ XVII* [The English East India Company: the establishment and penetration into Southeast Asia in the seventeenth century] (Hanoi, 2010).

⁸⁴ Thành Thế Vỹ, 'Một số tài liệu về ngoại thương ở Đàng Ngoài đầu thế kỷ XVII' [Materials for Tonkin trade in the first half of the seventeenth century], *Journal of Literature-History and Geography*, 44 (1958); *Ngoại thương Việt Nam hồi thế kỷ XVII, XVIII và nửa đầu thế kỷ XIX* [The Vietnamese foreign trade in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries], (Hanoi, 1961).

the EIC's perspective. In 1958, Ma Yi Yi made a study of English trade in the South China Sea (1670-1715), including English activities in both Tonkin and Cochin-China.⁸⁵ This dissertation was the first to discuss the English presence in Vietnam in the seventeenth century, but it simply narrated and described the relation year by year adding a few basic evaluations. The research was quite clearly based on the EIC's documents, and all the reports of events were copied directly from primary sources to draw a picture of English activities. Moreover, perhaps due to the character of academic study in the 1950s and the nature of this piece of research, it seems to stay at the level of description. Indeed, many of the deeper issues relating to the EIC's presence of that period were not investigated satisfactorily in this study. These issues included the nature of the attraction of Vietnam, the way the English traded, the relationship between London-Bantam/Madras-Tonkin, the relationship between English factors and local government, the interaction between English merchants in Tonkin, and broadly the change of the EIC's strategy in Vietnam throughout the seventeenth century. All these issues need to be investigated to understand fully the English presence in Vietnam in this period and its profile in East Asia.

In the 1960s and 1970s, several aspects of this 'overlooked relationship' were examined and analysed, but for a later period. Alastair Lamb investigated the English activities in Vietnam from the late eighteenth century to the end of the Gia Long dynasty, the first King of the Nguyen dynasty (1781-1821).⁸⁶ He concentrated on the EIC's missions to Vietnam in the context of Anglo-French competition and the attempt

⁸⁵ Y.Y. Ma, 'English Trade in the South China Sea 1670-1715' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of London, 1958).

⁸⁶ A. Lamb, 'British Missions to Cochin China, 1778-1822', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 34 (1961), pp. 1-248.

to expand the sea route from the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea. Lamb's study also serves as 'a documentary account' of the EIC's missions to Vietnam.⁸⁷ Building on Lamb's work, Tarling studied this issue from Ming Mạng's reign (1821-1841) until 1858.⁸⁸ A few years later, Lamb became the first scholar to study English diplomacy in Vietnam from the late seventeenth century to the French invasion in 1858.⁸⁹ A brief narrative of the English presence in Tonkin and Cochin-China was also included in the introduction to his work. After the studies of Lamb and Tarling, scholars seemed to focus on the general Vietnamese overseas trade rather than on any special relationship. There has been only one recent piece of research about the EIC's presence in Vietnam.⁹⁰ It focussed on one of the most tragic massacres of the EIC on Pulo Condore island (in Cochin-china) in 1705. A remarkable feature of the study is that the author employed both Vietnamese and English primary sources to examine in detail Vietnamese reactions towards the English in the fields of sovereignty and diplomacy and explore the reasons why the EIC paused its involvement in Vietnam after the English established a direct connection with China.

In brief, to date, there has been only one dissertation about the EIC's presence in Vietnam in the seventeenth century and one complete academic book about their

⁸⁷ N. Tarling, 'British Relations with Vietnam, 1822-1858', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 39 (1966), pp. 19-51, p. 19.

⁸⁸ Tarling, 'British Relations', pp. 19-51.

⁸⁹ A. Lamb, *The Mandarin Road to Old Hue: The narrative of Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy from the Seventeenth Century to the Eve of The French Conquest* (London, 1970). Based on the Lamb's job, Nguyen Thi My Hanh did a study about the English mission in Vietnam in 'Các phái bộ Anh đến Việt Nam trong bối cảnh sự xâm nhập của Anh vào Đông Á (thế kỷ XVII – nửa đầu XIX) [English missions to Vietnam in the context of English intervene into East Asia from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries]' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Social Science and Humanities-Hanoi, 2014).

⁹⁰ D.W. Tze-Ken, 'The Destruction of the English East India Company Factory on Condore Island, 1702-1705', *Modern Asian Studies*, 46 (2012), pp. 1097-1115.

relationship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, the previous studies have not examined precisely the place of Vietnam in the connection with EIC in the seventeenth century and how Vietnam became important towards the process the EIC improved from free of liberty to a semi-state. Building on the previous studies, the thesis makes considerable contributions. Firstly, it provides extra materials from both English and Vietnamese perspectives which have not previously been studied since these sources were mislaid and scattered in the mid-twentieth century. These sources especially relate to the relationships between Tonkin factors and their private letters to Bantam or London.⁹¹ Secondly, this research unpacks unanswered questions about the EIC activities in Vietnam in the seventeenth century. Thirdly, in broad terms, it examines the critical role that the seventeenth century played in the EIC's history in terms of both commodities and learning progress.

PRIMARY SOURCES AND METHODOLOGIES

This thesis draws on four main sets of primary sources from the EIC, the Dutch, the Vietnamese, and other European travellers. The first and most significant set of primary sources analysed in this thesis are taken from the EIC's rich and detailed archives, including instructions, records, diaries, and consultations, journals of both London and overseas factories. The archives, now housed at the British Library in London, also include letters, logbooks, and narratives of English factors who worked in Vietnam.

⁹¹ For example, letters of Tonkin factors (W. Gyfford, W. Keeling, W. Hodges, T. James) to Bantam and London were recorded in IOR/G/21/6A-7A, Java factory (1670-1680), (1679-1683) but they had not been mentioned in previous studies. Those letters provided more information about what those factors thought about the trade in Tonkin or how they reacted towards London or Bantam's arrange of Tonkin Council in special periods of conflict between Tonkin factors.

Where possible the EIC sources are compared with Dutch and Vietnamese materials. However, these latter only play a minor role in the analysis since the Dutch materials just provide general information about the English in Tonkin and the character of Vietnamese historical sources means that they mostly focus on the affairs of Kings, rather than on commercial and social activities. Indeed, for centuries, most national historical documents or private documents and pamphlets had been written around the political life of Vietnamese dynasties. Issues of commerce were documented only in relation to the Vietnamese Court's policies. Therefore, information about the English in Vietnamese records was sparse and brief. Private accounts and journals of Europeans adventurers in both Tonkin and Cochinchina in the seventeenth century provide a more general understanding and broad view of the European presence and commerce in Vietnam. However, those writings have a character of 'autoethnography' and need to be scrutinised within the historical context to understand their purpose and meaning.⁹²

The EIC's G series which holds the Tonkin Factory Records (among others) is crucial to this study as it includes sources which relate to the Tonkin factory. The Tonkin factory materials are arranged in ten parts of Diary, Records, Consultations, Journals referenced IOR/G/12/17/1-10 (1005 pages). However, around ten years of the Tonkin materials are missing (1680-1681, 1683-1693) from archives.⁹³ Unfortunately, this period was the most dynamic of the Tonkin factory with the regular arrival of English ships after the closure of Bantam in 1682. Due to the lack of English factors' writing in that period, scholars face difficulty in investigating and evaluating Tonkin

⁹² M.L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992), p. 9.

⁹³ In details, IOR/G/12/17/6 ends at 31 May 1680 while IOR/G/12/17/7 starts from 15 December 1681 with a gap of more than one year. Seriously, IOR/G/12/17/8 finishes on 26 August 1683 and IOR/G/12/17/9 begins on 13 May 1693, it means that there is ten years missing from the archives.

commerce, private trade and the EIC's issues of management. This lack was partly compensated for by the records of the Java factory (G/21) in the 1670s and 1680s even though they are brief. Overall, the lack of documentary evidence for this period appears to have confused scholars and perhaps negatively influenced their views of the EIC's activities in this period.

Another problem is that the Tonkin records and diaries were compiled by different chief factors.⁹⁴ As a result, the lack of harmony in the writing styles makes the documents hard to understand and follow. For example, Gyfford wrote a very detailed letter of thirty pages about Tonkin's trading potential in his first record to London while other Tonkin chief factors only recorded the Tonkin factory's activities briefly and ignored significant areas of interest, especially accounting matters.⁹⁵ The Tonkin records acted as a crucial tool by which the chief factor commended or criticised the performance of other servants. For instance, after 1693, the new headman Richard Watts used Tonkin records to blame previous factors, William Keeling and Lemuel Blackmore, for their private trade and for losing the Company's capital.⁹⁶ These

⁹⁴ In details, G/12/17/1 (1672) was written by W. Gyfford, Thomas James and Nicholas Waite. G/12/17/2 (1672-1676): W. Keeling and John Styleman started to write the Journal. G/12/17/3 (1676-1677) was written by Thomas James, W. Keeling, and Henry Ireton. G/12/17/4 (1677-1678) only James and Keeling recorded. G/12/17/5 (1678-1679): the main role belonged to James and Keeling. G/12/17/6 (1679-1680) and G/12/17/7 (1681-1682): Lemuel Blackmore started his role in the factory but the factory's power under the control of James and Keeling. G/12/17/8 (1682-1683): Keeling was the main chief of the factory with the help of W. Hodges, Lemuel Blackmore. From 1683 to 1693 was the time of missing materials and there have complicated views about this period. G/12/17/9 (1693-1697): Madras sent Richard Watts and Richard Farmer to investigate all Tonkin factory's trade. They also played the role of the chief factor with an opposing view to Keeling. G/12/17/10 (1697): R. Watts wrote all journal register of the factory.

⁹⁵ IOR/G/12/17/1, *William Gyfford, Thomas James and Nicholas Waite to the EIC in London, 7 December 1672*, pp. 41a – 55a.

⁹⁶ IOR/G/12/17/9, *Tonkin factory 1693-1697*, pp. 318a, 319a, 328b-330b.

sources, with the records of complaints and altercation, are crucial to the thesis in that they show how relationships functioned in the factory. Because of the variable character of these reports, the letters of other Tonkin staff to Bantam, Madras or London provide useful counter-balance to assess the trustworthiness of the factory's records about management matters and trading activities.

Another set of primary materials for the Tonkin factory is found in the E/3 series, consisting of Home Correspondence including letters sent to and from the Court of Directors in London relating to activities in Asia, especially in Bantam (1672-1682) and Madras (1687-1697).⁹⁷ Those documents support the missing material from the Tonkin factory records, providing some information about Tonkin trade and communications between Tonkin, Bantam and Madras. They are also helpful to discover and compare the Company's general strategies towards East Asia, the policies of Bantam as a director of policy and procedure, the direct action of English factors in Tonkin and the EIC's changes of administrative methods. However, these materials are complicated since the Court of Directors in London frequently gave instructions, while the English Bantam and Madras had different opinions about trade in Tonkin. Information in the Bantam records about the Tonkin factory is brief and limited in nature, insufficient for understanding precisely what happened in Tonkin in some dynamic years. As a result of the inadequacy of any one individual set of records, the thesis tries to draw on all available materials to provide a comprehensive picture of the functioning of the Tonkin factory and to examine in detail different hypotheses about the English presence in Tonkin.

⁹⁷ Letter related to Bantam in the 'Letter books' 4-7 (IOR/E/3/87-90: 1666-1672, 1672-1678, 1678-1682, and 1682-1685); or the '*EIC Original Correspondence*' (IOR/E/3/31-33: 1670-1673), to Madras in the '*Letter Books*' 7 to 9 (IOR/E/3/90-92: 1682-1685, 1685-1688, 1688-1697).

The B series, the Court Books, played only a minor role in providing information about the Tonkin factory as it seems that London paid less attention to small factories, such as Tonkin. The Tonkin factory rarely features in those documents and does so not in its own right but only under issues related to Bantam trade, including shipping and selling products. However, those documents do provide useful information on a few pertinent matters: London's opinion on the structure of the Tonkin factory, how much profit the EIC obtained from the sale of Tonkin silks. This information, thus, helps to explain the change in the EIC's trading plan in Tonkin and provides compelling evidence about the consideration of London towards Tonkin and small factories.

With regards to Cochín-China, primary sources are not so rich as those for the Tonkin factory but do contain a range of different perspectives with three sets of sources. Firstly, the Hirado factory's documents from the 1610s and the private journals of Richard Cocks and William Adams provide all the information available about the problems the EIC faced in Cochín-China. Secondly, we have the Indian Office Records (1695-1705) which refer to the English presence in Cochín-China.⁹⁸ Thirdly, Vietnamese documents about the EIC's appearance in Pulo Condore (1702-1705) provide comparative material and show the Nguyen Lord's reactions to the EIC and the end of the English Pulo Condore colony.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ The Cochín-China part was small in '*Miscellaneous Factory Records*', IOR/G/40/18 (1695-1697). This document also includes private journal and opinion of Bowyear after his voyage. The information of Pulo Condore factory/garrison was in '*East India Company and Indian Office Ledgers and Journals*', IOR/L/AG/1/1/12-13 (title: Pulo Condore factory 1705-1709-1714). Some other unspecific and private letters related Pulo Condore was in Indian Office Records, Home Miscellaneous Series and Bodleian Library.

⁹⁹ '*Đại Nam thực lục tiền biên*' [Chronicle of Great Vietnam, Previous part], the formally historical books of the Nguyen dynasty [first written in 1821] (Hanoi, 1962).

By examining the EIC's activities in Tonkin and Cochinchina, this thesis researches how peripheral markets shaped the Company's organisational structures and strategies in the seventeenth century. This thesis focuses on William McNeill's model of connection to show the interactions between a main and a distinct supportive, and between people in different place and then examines how Vietnam, a small factory contributed to the EIC improvement in both terms of trade and learning process.¹⁰⁰ In particular, it studies how Vietnamese people and English servants in Vietnam provided the EIC with information and knowledge which was the most significant for long-distant trade in the early modern period. It argues that our understanding of the ever-developing position of power centres (London, Bantam and Madras) can be further understood through tracking their changing connections with a go-between site as Vietnam. Moreover, our comprehension of the EIC overseas trade is enhanced through studying the interdependence between small and primary markets in the EIC's commercial strategy in East Asia. Such objectives are reached through a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative and quantitative techniques of analysis are applied to both primary and secondary resources to ensure accuracy and to provide a comprehensive and in-depth investigation. However, primary materials receive minimal quantitative treatment, due to the insufficient and incomplete data sets of the essential periods under study. Therefore, the thesis uses secondary quantitative data which other historians worked on from the EIC's records relating to English ships, commodities, money exchanged between Europe and Asia to compare the position of Tonkin factory in the EIC's strategy towards general Asian markets. A detailed qualitative approach (the

¹⁰⁰ W.H. McNeill, 'The Rise of the West after Twenty-Five Years', *Journal of world history*, 1 (1990), pp. 1-21; P. O'Brien, 'Historiographical Traditions and Modern Imperatives for The Restoration of Global History', *Journal of Global History*, 1 (2006), Pp. 3-39, Pp. 4-5.

close reading and the cross-referencing of different materials, the analysis of different recorded opinions of EIC staffs in their letters, instructions, records, diaries) was employed to 'mine' the rich source materials, in order to discover how the EIC adapted itself to become successful in trade in Vietnam. These source materials came in two forms: 1) the official correspondence between the EIC in London and its servants in Vietnam, and 2) the English overseas factors' diaries and consultations recorded themselves.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Chapter One examines English individuals' involvement in the EIC desire for commercial expansion in Asia, particularly in East Asia in the 1610s and early 1620s and how they recognised the place of Vietnam in the EIC intra-Asian trade. It shows the EIC innovation of using skilful overseas staffs and how they helped the EIC to understand the importance of regional trade in East Asia. Due to the desire to collect spices and to sell English goods, the EIC opened factories in the Spice Islands, Japan and Siam respectively and tried to build a regional trading network to secure its yield. With information from the Dutch and Japanese, the English in Hirado (Japan) considered Tonkin and Cochin-China as places which would support the English-Japanese trade by supplying raw silk and other luxury goods. The chapter concludes that the EIC had little experience in East Asia in the early period about both the issues of administration and trade (trading system and the role of supportive markets). It shows that the remedying of this lack of expertise paved the way for the Company's commercial success in this area in the late seventeenth century.

Chapter Two focuses on how attractive Tonkin and Cochin-China were to European Companies in the seventeenth century and how individuals contributed to the EIC knowledge about the role of Vietnam in the regional trading network. Vietnam was perceived as advantageous due to its geographical position which provided a trading route to China and Japan and provided the potential to control the sea-routes around the South China Sea. Vietnam's traditional relations with China and Japan and the wealth in natural commodities of both Tonkin and Cochin-China further consolidated its potential as a key intermediary site. This chapter argues that Vietnam's advantage was to serve inter-regional trade, not global commerce. Learning from the trading activities of Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese and Dutch merchants, pioneering English overseas staff helped the EIC through experimentation to consider the potential places and then establish factories and create trading connections with Vietnam.

Chapter Three and Four draw the main argument of the thesis, how Vietnam, particularly Tonkin was important in the seventeenth-century EIC history by examining its attempts to manage and use a small factory to re-structure and improve the Company. Although the EIC worked effectively there in around twelve years (1676-1688), the Tonkin factory was a clear example of the Company's adaptation in both structure and commerce to become the most powerful trading force in the eighteenth century. Chapter Three focuses on both the EIC management policy towards distant factories and the role of English oceanic servants in Tonkin through their contact with Tonkinese rulers and officials. Firstly, the chapter argues that the EIC managed and controlled outer factories by means of its many changes to the Company's structure and its constant drive to develop the flexibility required to maintain its position in East Asia. The Court of Directors acted to reduce the power of oceanic agents, control overseas

factories directly and effectively by various means. The case of the Tonkin factory provides clear evidence of the power struggle between the Court of Minutes in London and the Bantam Council, and the ongoing conflict between Tonkin factors or broadly the interaction between the core and peripheral elements in the EIC's structure. By showing that London could not successfully manage the EIC's overseas factories and servants, the chapter, therefore, highlights the role of distant sites in the seventeenth-century EIC history. Secondly, the research shows that Tonkin factors, through their friendship and relationship with local powers, confirmed their influence in overseas areas. They played a crucial role in supplying the EIC with knowledge, contacts and a foundation for trade. However, they also caused problems for the EIC due to their fondness for privileges and due to the EIC's weakness in monitoring its overseas factors. The chapter also demonstrates that the Tonkin Court, particularly officials who worked directly with the English provided the EIC necessary and significant information and knowledge about diplomacy and trade in Tonkin.

Chapter Four examines how the EIC drew on its trading experience to adapt to the Tonkin trading environment in both its commercial strategy and its daily trading activities. With the desire to create an international trading system connecting Asia and Europe, the EIC applied a series of commercial plans in Tonkin, firstly to link with Japan, then Manila (and thereby to Spanish America), and finally to connect with Europe. The chapter draws attention to the noteworthy alterations made by the EIC in investment, commodities and trading network for the Tonkin factory. By examining these issues, the chapter scrutinises the role played respectively by London, the Bantam agents and the Tonkin factors in maintaining the Tonkin factory and maximising the EIC yield in distant trade. Alongside the two main arguments, the section tries to re-

evaluate the interaction and the interdependence between the key and supplementary EIC branches in East Asia. It also highlights the importance of Tonkin as an intermediary or a gateway to link with China from the south, to collect silk for Japan and to obtain Chinese goods indirectly when the trading situation required. By analysing how local merchants traded with the EIC, the thesis partly indicates their special contribution towards English knowledge and adaptation in trade in Tonkin.

Chapter Five considers the English presence in Cochin-China in the late 1690s in the light of the EIC's changes in strategy towards Vietnam and East Asia. Together with matters relating to the employees, the use of trading networks, and the use of intermediaries; issues of military and colony are considered in the transformation trend of the EIC. The voyage to Cochin-China (1695-1696) was partly the continuation of Madras' attempts to develop 'country trade' as in Tonkin from the late 1680s, but it seemed to consider the role of Cochin-China with the idea of fortification. Attention is drawn to the difference in approach employed in this case, with a delegation being sent to negotiate for a free trade deal and a formal agreement recognising the critical role of individuals. The chapter highlights the fact that the primary activity of English people in Cochin-China was that of diplomacy through gifts. They conducted negotiations with both the King and native Mandarins to secure privileges to trade and to reside there.

Before concluding, the thesis shows how the New EIC failed in the relationship with Cochin-China in the early eighteenth century as it ignored the previous lessons about diplomacy and trade the Old Company obtained in the seventeenth century and only focused on using force to control the sea-route through the South China Sea. The lessons from both the EIC success and failure provided the foundation for its full mission to Vietnam from the late eighteenth century. This experimentation demonstrates

to a certain degree the EIC attempt to perfect its structure and approach in trading with East Asia. The English presence in Tonkin and Cochin-China provides extraordinary evidence of the Company's skill in using an intermediate market in the particular period of the English East Asian trade. The English presence in Pulo-Condore in 1702-1705, however, demonstrates a complete change in thinking for the new EIC towards Vietnam. No longer did the English care about trade, but viewed this island as a place to build a fortification to control the sea-route from India Ocean to the South China Sea. From that period onwards, the English only considered Vietnam in geopolitical terms as a means to maintain their strategic position in East Asia.

In conclusion, the English presence in Vietnam in the seventeenth century provides original insights into the EIC's commercial strategy in East Asia. The primary argument of the thesis is that through the role of English overseas individuals and their experience in the relationship with Tonkin and Cochin-China in the seventeenth century, the English Company learned to understand the nature of trade in East Asia broadly. Secondly, the thesis provides an insight into the role of intermediaries in the EIC's trade, a role which seems to have been hitherto neglected. Finally, the thesis challenges the function of networks in both the EIC's structure and its regional and global trading system.

CHAPTER 1. BUILDING A FOUNDATION, HOW THE EIC'S EARLY ACTIVITIES IN EAST ASIA AND VIETNAM (1600-1610s) PAVED THE WAY FOR LATER CONNECTIONS

This chapter argues that it was English overseas factors working for the EIC in Japan in the early seventeenth century who found information about the trading network operating in East Asia and the potential of Tonkin and Cochinchina as intermediaries and supportive markets for trade with Japan and China through the regional merchants and connections with Vietnamese people. Due to their engagement with the existing regional trade network, the EIC decided to use existing overseas staff, particularly who had worked at Bantam and then Japan to establish factories in South East Asia. The factories were designed to act as intermediary ports for trade with Japan, and the staff were encouraged to work mainly on their own initiative, to investigate new markets and source new materials. The establishment of intermediary factories and the use of skilled, independent factors to discover the potential for regional trade are evidence of the EIC's willingness to learn by experimentation in terms of the Company's trading structure and administration. If the Bantam factory, founded in 1602 reflected the EIC's key target for trade in spices and pepper, the founding of a further dozen factories in Asia before the 1620s reflected the EIC's expansionist policy and the strength of endeavours undertaken by its overseas factors.¹⁰¹ Indeed, as Bantam had little demand for English cloth (its

¹⁰¹ Those were factories in Bantam (1602), Bencoolen (1603), Macassar (1610), Pulo Run (1616 – now Banda islands), Ayutthaya (1612), Patani (1612), Sukadana (1612- Borneo), Hirado (1613), Surat (1613), Celebes (1613), Sandas (1614 - Borneo), Banjarnassin (1615), Masulipatam (1615), Amboyna (1620), Ternate (1620), Banda island (1620), Bandar Abbas / Gombroon (1623 – Persia). See A. Wild, *The East India Company, Trade and Conquest from 1600* (London, 2000), p. 86; Bassett, *The Factory at Bantam*, p. 31.

tropical climate, was not suitable for woollen cloth), foreign staff were encouraged to use their own knowledge and connections to locate new sources of trading ‘currency’ (silver), to discover new markets and enlarge the EIC trade into Japan and China.

As the chapter demonstrates the early history of the EIC in Vietnam is inextricably related to its initial expansion into Japan and the policies devised by the relatively isolated factors there to support the Japanese trade. Thanks to the efforts of these overseas factors, supplementary factories in Siam and Borneo were established to serve Japan’s trade, and also exploratory visits to Tonkin and Cochin-China were undertaken. Exploration by the EIC’s overseas factors, largely undirected by London, played a key role in the EIC’s acquisition of knowledge about regional trading chains and the trading potential of various ports in the South China Sea. Such information became indispensable to the EIC in later years when establishing formal trading links in East Asia. This chapter discusses the EICs developing interest in Tonkin and Cochin China in the 1610s in the light of its early expansion in Bantam and Japan. It examines how overseas factors and staff were the driving force behind the expanding trade and how they contributed towards the EIC’s development in East Asia, using their knowledge of trading patterns and desired commodities, gleaned from their experience in Bantam and Japan, to propose extension into Vietnam. Although the EIC’s early interest in Vietnam came to nothing, the experiences and knowledge gained by these early EIC employees laid the foundations for later relationships after the 1650s and formed a key part of the EIC’s learning in South East Asia.

The source material for this chapter primarily arises from the records and reports compiled by the English factors in Japan during the 1610s as they played the most important and direct contribution in the EIC’s expansion in the South China Sea in the

period. These records were largely assembled as part of Anthony Farrington's research into the EIC's factory in Japan. Other important sources include the diary of Richard Cocks, the chief of the Hirado factory and the log-book of a free English merchant, William Adams, who also associated with English merchants in Hirado and voyaged to Vietnam during this period. These documents illustrate the insights and reflections of English overseas factors regarding regional trade.

The EIC commercial strategies in East Asia, 1600-1610s

The establishment of the EIC in 1600 allowed English traders to compete with other European companies for Asian trade. There were two primary drivers behind the founding of the Company: English demands for collecting spices and pepper and selling their cloth and manufactured goods outside Europe. Reports or diaries of other European adventurers were translated into English and help them to have more knowledge about the potential of East Asia.¹⁰² The area was particularly rich in spices, pepper, silk, silver, gold as well as other expensive goods.¹⁰³ The fact that Portuguese and Dutch ships returned full of spices and pepper in the 1590s increasingly motivated

¹⁰² In 1579, J. Frampton translated most of Marco Polo's travels in the 13th. In 1588, Robert Parke translated a book of Gonzalez de Mendoza, '*The Historie of the Great and Mightie Kingdome of China, and the Situation thereof: Together with the Great Riches, Huge Cities, Politike Gouvernement, and Rare Inuentions in the Same*'. W. Phillip worked on the book of the Dutch writer Jan Huyghen van Linschoten '*Itinerario and Reys-gheschrift*' and other sources to public '*John Huyghen van Linschoten his Discours of Voyages into ye Eat and West Indies*' and edited *Voyages into East and West Indies*. Most the English previous voyages and knowledge about Asia were found in R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English nation* (London, 1598-1600).

¹⁰³ Linschoten, *John Huighen van Linschoten his Discours of Voyages into ye Easte and West Indies* (London, 1598), p. 33.

the English to discover new routes to Asia.¹⁰⁴ However, it was not easy to break into the existing Eurasian trading networks because of the power of other Europeans in East Asia and the limited knowledge possessed by English people about this area.¹⁰⁵ The second driver behind the founding of the EIC was the emerging crisis in the exportation of English cloth in Europe and the need to find new markets.¹⁰⁶ By the 1550s there was a crisis in English cloth exports as it experienced a collapse in trade with Antwerp and North Europe.¹⁰⁷ This crisis lasted until the 1650s.¹⁰⁸ New trade routes appeared with the establishment of the Moscow and Levant factories but none of them satisfied English producers and merchants.¹⁰⁹ London brokers thus tried to find new potential markets for English cloth and encouraged the formation of the EIC. However, as R. Brenner has argued, the demand to export English goods was not the main reason

¹⁰⁴ Chaudhuri, *The EIC: The Study of an Early Joint-Stock Company, 1600-1640* (London, 1965), pp. 11-12.

¹⁰⁵ M.J. Huissen, 'England Encounter Japan: English knowledge of Japan in the Seventeenth Century', *The Journal of the Society for the History of Discoveries*, vol.5 (1973), pp. 43-59; D. Massarella, *A World Elsewhere: Europe's Encounter with Japan in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (London, 1990).

¹⁰⁶ Although North Europe was still the main market of English cloth and the Asian market was limited, English cloth was one of the EIC's strategic goods exported to Asia as the EIC wanted to avoid exporting much money. Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, p. 13; R. Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (New Jersey, 1993), pp. 1-22; K.R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 262-63.

¹⁰⁷ D. Loades, *The Mid-Tudor Crisis, 1545-1565* (London, 1992), p. 75; *England's Maritime Empire, Sea-power, Commerce, and Policy, 1490-1690* (London, 2000), pp. 51-78; Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, pp. 4-5; F.J. Fisher, 'Commercial Trends and Policy in Sixteenth Century England', *The Economic History Review*, 10 (1940), pp. 95-117, pp. 105-107.

¹⁰⁸ Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, pp. 33-39.

¹⁰⁹ In the sixteenth century, the Morocco market imported around 3,000 cloths per year while Russia never exceeded 2,500. The Levant Company exported nearly 6,000 cloths annually by 1600. T.S. William, *The Early History of the Russia Company, 1553-1603* (Manchester, 1956), p. 252; *Studies in Elizabethan Foreign Trade* (Manchester, 1959), pp. 275-76; Brenner, *Merchant and Revolution*, p. 11.

behind the creation of the EIC. The main reason for the cultivation of English and European overseas trade in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was to import Asian commodities. The settlements of the EIC or other earlier chartered Companies sought to monopolise trade in Asia.¹¹⁰ In response to the English merchants' eagerness for the creation of a chartered company, which shared out the costs and risks of trade in unknown parts of the worlds, the EIC was born.

On 31 December 1600, Queen Elizabeth granted a Charter to settle 'The Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the Eaft-Indies' (the English East India Company) to 'adventure and fet forth one or more voyages, with convenient number of Ships and Pinnaces, by way of Traffic and Merchandize to the Eaft-Indies, in the Countries and Parts of Afis and Africa, and to as many of the Ifands, Ports and Cities, Towns and Places'.¹¹¹ The Company's task was to focus on commercial activities to obtain profits and compete successfully with its chief rival, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) became a major supplier of pepper, spices and other Asian products for Europe. The Company could trade exclusively in Asia, and it had full authority in addressing all trading issues on behalf of the English government. In the early years, the Company undertook twelve different trading voyages to Asia.¹¹² In the 1610s, the period in which the EIC's factors were seriously examining the possibilities of incorporating Tonkin and Cochinchina into their trade patterns, the Company adopted a far more innovative commercial structure operating as a joint-stock

¹¹⁰ Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, pp. 3-50.

¹¹¹ 'Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth to the East India Company, dated the 31 December' in Charter granted to the East-India Company, from 1601; and also, treaties and Grants...', pp. 5-6; P. Lawson, *The East India Company, A History* (London and New York, 1993), p. 20.

¹¹² G.M. Anderson, R.E. McCormick, R.D. Tollison, 'The Economic Organization of the English East India Company', *Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organization*, 4 (1983), pp. 221-238, p. 226.

company.¹¹³ Indeed, the first joint-stock venture was undertaken in 1613 when the EIC realised that it required productive capital for trading. The need for a substitute source of silver in East Asia and the recognition of Japan as a potential supplier encouraged English overseas factors to learn more about the regional trading system and to expand to Cochin-China and Tonkin. By 1657, the Company had become a formal joint-stock organisation, drawing on capital from numerous investors, including merchants, official, dukes, judges, knights and clergymen. This formal joint-stock arrangement provided it with a more stable financial footing allowing for further attempts at expansion into South East Asian markets.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, the EIC still wanted to gain substitute silver and capital from East Asia, and the establishment of several subordinate factories in the area provides evidence of the EIC's attempts to balance the Eurasian trade by seeking a source of silver in East Asia itself.

From the outset, the EIC also received significant privileges to help it in its trading. Importantly, one of the first privileges of the EIC was to be permitted to carry out up to £30,000 of foreign bullion or silver coins annually to purchase Asian products.¹¹⁵ The EIC lobbied the English government to increase the allowance to £60,000 in 1663 without duty or fee as its exported goods could not cover the capital needed for the transoceanic trade.¹¹⁶ Transporting treasure was understood as an

¹¹³ Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, pp. 23-38; R.A. Bryer, 'The History of Accounting and the Transition to Capitalism in England. Part two: Evidence', *Accounting, Organization and Society*, 25 (2000), pp. 327-381, p. 344.

¹¹⁴ C.A. Cooke, *Corporation Trust and Company: An Essay in Legal History* (Harvard, 1951), pp. 57-8; Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, p. 33; H. Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient 1600-1800* (Oxford, 1976), p. 191.

¹¹⁵ 'Charter granted by Queen', p. 18.

¹¹⁶ W. Foster, *The First Letter Book of the East India Company, 1600-1619* (London, 1893), p. 13; Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, p. 13; *Trading World*, p. 169.

important component within Asian trade, as the Company intended to make profits from imports, rather than to enhance the popularity of English goods, which were mostly unvalued within Asian markets.¹¹⁷ The attitude to treasure transportation shows that the Company appeared to understand and to make the government understand the necessity of bullion in Eurasian commerce.¹¹⁸ English ships to Asia thus contained more money than goods; the first voyage carried £21,742 bullion, which accounted for about 75 per cent of the cargo value and only £6,860 in goods of woollen cloth, lead, and tin. The value of silver exports by the EIC to Asia increased to £52,087 in 1616 and £200,000 in 1626.¹¹⁹

Initially, the EIC was mainly interested in collecting spices and pepper, which is why in the early years of the Company, the Bantam factory played such a significant role. The Spice Islands became the EIC's principal market, with the first voyage to Bantam (a famous trading port in Java, Indonesia) in 1602. Not even Japan and China, let alone Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries, figured in the EIC's initial trading plans as they had little or no spices. Bantam was an existing mercantile centre in Southeast Asia and one of the largest cities in Asia in the seventeenth century.¹²⁰ It also had cheaper spices than other locations in Indonesia. The price of pepper in Bantam was much lower than that in Achin (Aceh, Indonesia), 42 rials per bale of 400lbs compared

¹¹⁷ Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, pp. 13, 111-123; V. Forman, 'Transformations of Value and the Production of "Investment" in the Early History of the East India Company', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 34 (2004), pp. 611-641, p. 612.

¹¹⁸ J. Sperling, 'The International Payments Mechanism in the 17th and 18th Centuries', *Economic History Review*, 14 (1962), pp. 446-468; K.N. Chaudhuri, 'The Economic and Monetary Problem of European Trade with Asia during the 17th and 18th Centuries', *The Journal of European Economic History*, 4 (1975), pp. 323-358; M. Berg, F. Gottmann, H. Hodacs, C. Nierstrasz (eds.), *Goods from the East, 1600-1858: Trading Eurasia* (Basingstoke, 2015), p. 12; Forman, *Transformations of Value*, p. 612.

¹¹⁹ Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, p. 115.

¹²⁰ A. Farrington, *Trading Places: The East India Company and Asia 1600-1834* (London, 2002), p. 34.

with 64 rials per bale of 387lbs.¹²¹ Consequently, the EIC selected Bantam as the site to establish its first factory in 1602.¹²² It had a strategic position and attracted merchants from the Arabian Peninsula, Persia, the Coromandel coast, Malaysia, Sumatra, Siam, Moluccas (Maluku), China and Japan. This factor helped the English to learn about and become involved in the intra-Asian trade.¹²³ For 80 years it was the EIC's principal trading centre in the 'Southwards' China Sea commercial system with the key function of supplying the EIC with pepper (from Sumatra and Java islands) and spices (from India) through both local and the EIC's formal merchants, but with a secondary function of enabling the EIC to participate in the intra-Asian trade networks.¹²⁴

The aim of competing with the Portuguese and Dutch encouraged the EIC to make changes in the 1610s to start accessing the regional trading network by creating an extensive system of factories in East Asia.¹²⁵ Spices and pepper could not preserve the Company due to falling prices for these products as a result of the increased supply from both the Portuguese, Dutch, and English. The price dropped by around 35 per cent, from 26 pence per pound in the period 1613-1616 to 17 pence per pound in

¹²¹ Anonymous, 'The first voyage made to East India by Master James Lancaster (now Knight) for the Merchants of London, anno 1600 [1601], with foure tall shippes, to wit, the *Dragon*, the *Hector*, the *Ascension*, and the *Susan*, and a Victualler called the *Guest*' in Samuel Purchas (ed.), *Hakluytus Posthumus. Or Purchas his Pilgrimes*, vol. 3 (London, 1625), reprinted in W. Foster, *Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to Brazil and the East Indies, 1591-1603* (London, 1940), pp. 113-114, 132-135.

¹²² D.K. Bassett, 'The Factory of the English East India Company at Bantam, 1602-1682' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of London, 1955), p. 4.

¹²³ Barbour, 'The English Nation', p. 173.

¹²⁴ From 1601 to 1612, the EIC gained average profit of 155 percent annually, in which most of them was from spices and pepper of Bantam. See Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, p. 22.

¹²⁵ D.K. Bassett, 'Early English Trade and Settlement in Asia, 1602- 1690' in P. Tuck (ed.), *The EIC: 1600-1858, vol. 4, Trade, Finance and Power* (London, New York, 1998), pp. 1-26, p. 4.

1627.¹²⁶ This situation required the Company to find other Asian commodities, which could give it a dominant position in European markets. As early as 1604 English salesmen, recognising that their dream of selling woollen clothes in Java, Malacca and the Spice Islands was unrealistic, turned their attention to the market for Indian cloth in those areas.¹²⁷ Although the EIC was permitted to export some bullion, Asian trading opportunities exceeded the EIC's reserves and required substitute sources of silver. Identifying possible substitute sources became a considerable task of distant English factors.

A triangular trade between London, Surat and Bantam was born after the formation of the Surat factory in 1613 to help to solve the bullion problem.¹²⁸ They sold Indian textiles in Southeast Asia, sent spices and pepper back to Europe to obtain bullion. They then transported one part of that capital to Asia to purchase merchandise.¹²⁹ However, the triangular trade only solved a small part of the Company's problems. Silver was mainly gained from selling spices in Europe, and it was insufficient to cover the Company's overheads of labour, shipping, transportation, dock fees and warehouse costs. Moreover, the EIC still needed to transport considerable amounts of silver to maintain Eurasian trade. English dealers, therefore, needed other sources of silver in Asia or suitable markets for English cloth. The most viable option

¹²⁶ Markley, *English Imagination*, p. 43.

¹²⁷ Bassett, *Factory at Bantam*, pp. 1-39; F. Kerlogue, 'The Early English Textile Trade in Southeast Asia: The East India Company Factory and the Textile Trade in Jambi, Sumatra, 1615-1682', *Textile History*, 28 (1997), pp. 149-160, p. 149; S.P. Sen, 'The Role of Indian Textile in Southeast Asian Trade in the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 3 (1962), pp. 92-110.

¹²⁸ S. Arasaratnam, 'India and the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century' in A.D. Gupta and N.M. Pearson (eds.), *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800* (Delhi, 1999), p. 107; Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, p. 63.

¹²⁹ W. Foster, *England's Quest of Eastern Trade* (London, 1933), pp. 156-8; Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, pp. 17, 41; Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, p. 63.

was to use Asian money to purchase its goods. Bantam agents played a vital role in exploring potential sources in Japan and China, which would allow the English to expand their commercial influence and balance Eurasian trade. These Bantam-based merchants were not interested in Cochin-China and Tonkin, but the expansion into Japan made English factors learn about the potential of Vietnam through the existing trading network between Japan and Vietnam. The search for new markets meant that the EIC's trading strategy changed slightly in the mid-1610s with the increasing involvement in the intra-Asian trade and the appearance of factories in Japan, Siam, Borneo and led to the first attempts to trade with Cochin-China and Tonkin through which English factors hoped to gain access to Japanese silver. At this stage, therefore, the quest for silver and access to the regional trading system were the driving force behind EIC expansion and its introduction to Vietnam.

The attempt at a trading relationship with Vietnam was not part of the initial expansion from the Bantam Council but rather was a result of its early foray into Japan and the knowledge of Southeast Asian trade gained by English merchants in Japan. As early as 1613, the English established a factory at Hirado in Japan. There are two relevant points about this factory: namely its role in the East Asian trading networks, and secondly, the contribution of English overseas factors towards the settlement and maintenance of this branch and in consequence their learning regarding Vietnam. The Hirado factory, due to its potential source for silver, played a key role in the enlargement of trade in East Asia, second only to the Bantam factory, the headquarters of the EIC in East Asia. At this early stage in the EIC's history, the establishment of other English factories in the China Sea and their attempts to contact China for goods served the primary aim of collecting Japanese silver which could then be traded for

spices in Bantam. Hirado factors recognised that as English products were undesirable in Japan, an effective method of accessing Japanese silver would be by becoming involved in the silk-silver trade since Japan already had large trading networks in the South China Sea in which they traded silver for silks. Later in 1618, English factors in Bantam, George Ball, Thomas Spurway and John Byndon also supported the Hirado factory in using Japan in the regional trade. They wrote to London that ‘it [Japan] supplied as it should be, not with commodities of England but of such as may be had in these partes of the world’.¹³⁰ Although their opinion appeared five years after the establishment of the Hirado factory, it was evident that English factors in the East recognised the limited demand for English goods in Japan and understood how the Hirado branch could contribute and participate in the English East Asian trading network. By the 1490s, the price of Chinese silks in Japan was ten times that of the original price.¹³¹ Nearly 80 per cent of Japanese imported goods were from China, of which silks accounted for more than 50 per cent.¹³² From the 1550s, Japan had become a key manufacturer of silver and then copper for China in exchange for Chinese silks and textiles, around three-quarters of total exported commodities.¹³³ Becoming a middleman in this network would not only have financed English overseas trade but would also have helped the EIC to trade with China, the market with the greatest potential in the area. Japan and its interconnected trade network with South East Asia thus became the best solution for the EIC’s problem of securing local currency. The

¹³⁰ ‘George Ball, Thomas Spurway and John Byndon at Bantam to the East India Company in London, 19 January 1618’ in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 655.

¹³¹ Y. Arano, ‘The Formation of a Japan-centric World Order’, *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 2 (2005), pp. 187-188.

¹³² S. Momoski, ‘Japan and Vietnam in the Asian Commercial System from the late Seventeenth to Eighteenth Centuries’, in *Pho Hien conference* (Hung Yen, 1994), p. 48.

¹³³ Frank, *Re-Orient*, p. 105.

issue, however, was how English factors could obtain that capital as direct China-Japan trade had been halted by the Chinese government together with the appearance and development of Wako piracy from the mid-sixteenth century.¹³⁴ Tonkin and Cochin-China, parts of Japan's existing trade network through the red seal system became important locations in the EIC's commercial strategy in East Asia.¹³⁵ As a result of their participation in this system, Tonkin and Cochin-China became significant players in both the Japanese and Chinese trade as they played a role of an intermediary to connect the halted China-Japan trade. The two kingdoms therefore came onto the EIC's horizon as Chinese merchants also sailed there for trading allowing the EIC to collect Chinese commodities indirectly. As a result, the English presence in Tonkin and Cochin-China or broadly the role of Vietnamese intermediary sites in the EIC's strategy greatly depended on Hirado factory and especially the role of English individuals there.

Establishing extensive and sustainable trading networks in East Asia was key to the EIC's future success. If the Bantam Council played the role of deciding to expand the EIC's trade in East Asia, William Adams (1564-1620), an English man who worked as a translator and an advisor to the Shogun of Japan before the foundation of the EIC in Hirado, played the role of providing the information and advice needed for the EIC to

¹³⁴ The Wako is a definition of Japanese pirate from the mid-sixteenth century. In fact, Wako were private-traders including Japanese, Chinese, and Portuguese who undertook illegal trade on the Chinese coast. See more about Wako (why they appeared, how they affected the China and Japan trade) in Innes, *Japan's foreign trade*, p. 38; Arano, 'Japanocentric world order' pp. 185-188.

¹³⁵ Red-seal is English translation of the terms *shuinsen* and *shuinjo* (Japanese) which was an official document issued by the Japanese Shogun with a vermillion chop to allow Japanese ships to trade overseas (mostly to the Southeast Asia) from the late sixteenth century to 1635 (the *Sakoku* abandon policy). Through this system, from 1604 to 1635, ten Japanese vessels were licensed per year to trade with the south, and total 124 ships passed Hoi An (Faifo, Vietnam), and 56 ships to Philippines and Siam respectively. N. Tarling, *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia. Vol.1, From Early Times to c.1800* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 467-68.

create the factory in Japan and an extensive English trading network in the region.¹³⁶ Working with the Dutch in Japan, Adams learnt that the English had established a factory in Bantam and so sent a letter to the English there in October 1611, suggesting that they open a factory in Japan.¹³⁷ In the second letter to Bantam on 12 January 1613, Adams recommended trading voyages from London to Bantam and Japan and advised that the best place to establish a factory in Japan would be Hirado (or Finando).¹³⁸ Although the English ships under the management of John Saris, a Bantam agent, were dispatched to Japan before the Bantam Council received the second Adams' letter, through Adams' expertise the English came to realise that this was an advantageous time to trade with Japan for several reasons. Firstly, Japan needed weapons from foreign trade due to the domestic political crisis. After becoming Shogun in 1598, Tokugawa Ieyasu was particularly willing to welcome foreign merchants as he needed their military support (to protect his authority and partly to reduce the role of the Spanish and Portuguese).¹³⁹ Secondly, as the English had no contact with China, the Japanese market

¹³⁶ Information about Adams in A. Farrington, D. Massarella, 'William Adams and early English enterprise in Japan', *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc* (2000), Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, pp. 71-89. He was a free English merchant in Japan and had worked for the Shogun Tokugawa before the EIC settled a factory in Hirado. Adams also had trading relationship with the Chinese and Dutch, Spanish in Japan. Through those relationship, Adams became important for the English to provide information and connection to trade there. He, therefore, was rent to work for the EIC from November 1613 with a salary of £120/year.

¹³⁷ IOR/E/3/1, no. 78, 'William Adams at Hirado to his 'unknown friends and countrymen, at Bantam, 23 October 1611' in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, vol.1, pp. 65-73.

¹³⁸ IOR/E/3/1, no. 96, 'William Adams at Hirado to Augustine Spalding at Bantam, 12 January 1613' in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, vol.1, p. 78; I. Veith, 'Englishman or Samurai: The Story of William Adam' *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, 5 (1945), pp. 5-27, pp. 11-13.

¹³⁹ A. Clulow, 'European Maritime Violence and Territorial States in Early Modern Asia, 1600-1650', *Itinerario*, 33 (2009), pp. 72-94, p. 81; The Company and the Shogun, The Dutch encounter with Tokugawa Japan (New York, 2014); Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, p. 85; H. Xing, 'The Shogun's Chinese Partners: The Alliance between Tokugawa Japan and the Zheng Family in Seventeenth-Century

was seen as an important site for the sale of the EIC's products since it had a cold climate which might create a demand for English wool. An estimation shows that the population of Japan in the seventeenth century was between 10 and 18 million while the first national population survey in 1721 showed that the number was more than 26 million.¹⁴⁰ Significantly, Adams demonstrated the existing regional trade network in which ships from Nova Spaya, Patani (Siam) and Malacca carried raw silk, damask, fish, satin, velvet, and other Chinese commodities in exchange for silver in Japan.¹⁴¹ Interestingly, Adams seemed to have no information about Tonkin and Cochinchina as he mentioned nothing about those kingdoms in the letter. Knowledge about Vietnam, thus, was known by the English factors in Japan after the Hirado factory was established. Adams' letter also showed that as 'in Japan is gold and silver in abundance', the EIC did not need to send money out of England if it could participate in the existing trade network to obtain that silver in exchange for other Asian products.¹⁴² It became evident that Japan, which provided nearly 30 per cent of silver production in the world before the 1650s, was a principal source of silver.¹⁴³ If, as Adams' letter

Maritime East Asia', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 75 (2016), pp. 111-136; S. Turnbull, 'Wars and Rumours of Wars: Japanese Plans to Invade the Philippines, 1593-1637', *Naval War College Review*, 69 (2016), pp. 107-120.

¹⁴⁰ J.W. Hall (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan, vol.4: Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 664

¹⁴¹ 'William Adams at Hirado to Augustine Spalding at Bantam, 12 January 1613' in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, vol.1, p. 77.

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 77.

¹⁴³ M. Matao, S. Yoshiaki, 'The Emergence of the Tokugawa Monetary System in East Asian International Perspective' in D.O. Flynn (ed.), *Monetary History*, pp. 169-186, p. 172; D.O. Flynn, A. Giraldez, 'Cycles of Silver: Global Economic Unity through the Mid-Eighteenth Century', *Journal of World History*, 13 (2002), pp. 391-427, pp. 399-405.

suggested might be possible, the EIC could access it, the wealth of Japan would address the EIC's issue of bullion to finance the spice trade.

The presence of Vietnam in the EIC's commercial strategy in the 1610s was indirectly affected by individuals during their consideration to establish the English factory in Japan, especially Adams and John Saris.¹⁴⁴ Their debate and argument centred on two main issues: the EIC's exportation of goods to Japan and East Asia, and how to build the regional trading system around Japan.¹⁴⁵ Adams with his long experience of Japanese trade claimed that the export of woollen cloths had already been supplied fully by the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish in Japan and that the price of English goods was much higher than that of Indian products, so English cloth had no market in Japan. Instead, Adams recommended settling a silk-silver trade between China and Japan.¹⁴⁶ By contrast, Saris, whose central experience had been working for the EIC in Bantam evaluated Japan as a valued market for English woollen cloth as this kingdom experienced cold weather. He also believed that Japan was suitable for pepper, raw silk, skins and wood from Bantam and China. In Bantam in 1609, he provided the EIC with a list of commodities that might be profitable in Japan which included broadcloth of all sorts and colours, cosmetics for women's faces, copper, lead, quick-

¹⁴⁴ 'Contact between William Adams and the East India Company, made at Hirado, 24 November 1613' in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, vol.1, pp. 94-95; Satow, *Voyage of John Saris*, pp. vii – xvi. J. Saris (1579/1580-1643) was from Yorkshire area. He first sailed to East Asia in the EIC's second voyage (1604) under Captain Henry Middleton. He stayed at Bantam from 1605 and became Chief factor in 1608 until 1609 when he came back England. He was the founder of the Hirado factory in 1613.

¹⁴⁵ Their personal dislike with the view of different identified politics in the seventeenth century in C. Ryu, 'The Politics of Identity: William Adams, John Saris, and the English East India Company's Failure in Japan' in J.G. Singh (ed.), *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion* (Chichester, 2013), pp. 178-189.

¹⁴⁶ 'William Adams at Hirado to Augustine Spalding at Bantam, 12 January 1613', in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, pp. 76-79.

silver, velvet, drinking glasses, raw silk, wax, candles, honey and elephant teeth.¹⁴⁷ London wrongly trusted Saris, its existing agent although one without real familiarity with Japan, and caused numerous products to be shipped to and remain unsold in Japan. The problems in Japan caused the English factors there to voyage to Vietnam and Siam to carry out further trade to maintain and enhance the branch. Here again, Adams with his better familiarity with the products, trading relationships, geography and climate of the region provided better advice. Based on the recommendation of Saris, English factors in Japan re-exported the unsold English goods from Japan to Vietnam and obtained poor results.¹⁴⁸ In contrast, Adams carried welcomed commodities to Vietnam such as weapons, brimstone and copper and Japanese products.¹⁴⁹ As such, the disagreement between Adams and Saris and London's trust in Saris indirectly related to the appearance of Vietnam in the EIC's strategy and partly created new knowledge about the market of English commodities in Vietnam. Those lessons would be gradually learned by the English throughout the seventeenth century with both success and failure, through the case of the Tonkin factory and the English mission to Cochin-China.

That both Adams and Saris agreed about the potential and position of Japan in the regional trade and discovered the way for the English to participate in this network initially drew Vietnam into the EIC's orbit since Cochin-China and Tonkin were part of

¹⁴⁷ Saris' full recommendation in 'John Saris' observations on commodities to be bought and sold in Japan', compiled during the time he worked in Bantam 1605-1609, in S. Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes, Containing a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Land Travels by Englishmen and Others*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 2014, first published in London, 1625), pp. 516-18; Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, pp. 56-58; Satow, *Voyage of John Saris*, pp. 227-228.

¹⁴⁸ Thompson, *Diary of Richard Cocks*, vol.1, p. xix; IOR/E/3/5, no. 615, 'Richard Cocks at Hirado to Sir Thomas Smythe and the East India Company in London, 15 February 1618' in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, vol.1, p. 658.

¹⁴⁹ 'William Adams' journal of his voyage to Cochin-China in the Gift of God, with related accounts and notes, 17 March-6 August 1617' in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, vol.2, p. 1110.

the trading network between Japan and Southeast Asia through the red seal system. In their viewpoint, the EIC would play a role of middleman in the area, especially between China and Japan, collecting Chinese goods from Bantam, China, Tonkin, Cochin-China and Siam to sell in Japan. That role was envisaged as the same as that of the Portuguese and Dutch in their port-to-port trade.¹⁵⁰ English factors in the Hirado branch then gradually expanded the EIC's trade in East Asia and discovered the potential of Vietnam in the regional system through learning from the experiences of the Japanese, Chinese, and Dutch merchants in Japan who had traded there.

By pursuing this idea, English merchants in Japan, initially Adams and Saris, but also Richard Cocks the chief factor, proved their role in the EIC's commercial strategy. The importance of their role is reflected in their involvement in the regional trading chain and their attempts to voyage to Cochin-China, Siam, Tonkin and to connect with China. They were most interested in forming a trading relationship with China and sought to revive the silk-silver trade between Japan and China since China was 'the country exceeding fruitful... rich merchandise, velvets, damasks, cloth of gold and tissue, with many sorts of sugar' which were highly desired both in the regional trade network and in Europe.¹⁵¹ China was deemed to contain the biggest potential market for the EIC in East Asia. It was, however, hard for the EIC to establish a formal

¹⁵⁰ Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, pp. 35-49, 71-89; M.S. Laver, 'Strange Isolation: the Dutch, the Japanese, and the Asian Economy in the Seventeenth Century' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2006); C.R. Boxer, 'A Note on the Triangular Trade between Macao, Manila and Nagasaki, 1580-1640', *The Journal of the Society for History of Discoveries*, 17 (1985), pp. 51-59; M. Cooper, 'The Mechanics of the Macao-Nagasaki Silk Trade', *Monumenta Nipponica*, 27 (1972), pp. 423-433. From 1604 to 1635, ten Japanese vessels were licensed per year to trade with the south, and total 124 ships passed Hoi An (Faifo, Vietnam), and 56 ships to Philippines and Siam respectively. N. Tarling, *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia. Vol.1, From Early Times to c.1800* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 467-68.

¹⁵¹ F.A. Patterson (ed.), *Works of John Milton*, vol.8 (New York, 1935), p. 509.

relationship with mainland China in the early seventeenth century as this was still in the period of the Ming rulers' prohibition of private overseas trade. The Ming dynasty maintained only Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang as official ports for tributary trade with neighbours.¹⁵² Chinese private dealers were not permitted to trade abroad, and Western traders were not allowed to trade with mainland China. However, this policy failed to stem the commercial activities of private Chinese merchants as they still traded illegally or the trade between China and neighbours were undertaken through diplomatic missions.¹⁵³ As a result, Chinese official and illegal private trade with other countries in the South China Sea, such as Tonkin and Cochin-China who might act as intermediaries for Chinese goods, began to become more important. Chinese traders carried much merchandise to Southeast Asia by the late sixteenth century.¹⁵⁴ The number of Chinese junks in the South China Sea was ten times greater than the number of European ships.¹⁵⁵ The Chinese traders' imposing presence in Southeast Asia thus provided a flexible means for Europeans to collect Chinese goods.¹⁵⁶ Because Japan was particularly interested in obtaining Chinese silks and the EIC saw a role for itself in

¹⁵² D.Z. Gang, *The Qing Opening to the Ocean: Chinese Maritime Policies, 1684-1757* (Honolulu, 2013), pp. 22-27; D. Deng, 'The Foreign Staple Trade of China in the Premodern Era', *International History Review*, 19 (1997), pp. 253-283, p. 254; S.C. Kenneth, 'Foreign Trade, Commercial Policies and the Political Economy of the Song and Ming Dynasties of China', *Australian Economic History Review*, 48 (2008), pp. 68-90.

¹⁵³ d'Avity, Pierre, *The Estates, Empire, and Principalities of the World*, E. Grimstone (trans), (London, 1615), p. 728; N. Dening, 'Chinese Merchants and Their Maritime Activities under the Ban on Maritime Trade in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1567)', *Ming Qing YanJiu*, 6 (1997), pp. 69-92; A. Yasunori, 'The Formation of a Japanocentric World Order', *International Journal of Asian studies*, 2 (2005), pp. 185-216, p. 186.

¹⁵⁴ Kang, *East Asia*, p. 113. By the 1600s, there were more than 100 Chinese junks arrived in Japan, Tonkin, Siam, Manila, and other Southeast Asian ports.

¹⁵⁵ Frank, *Re-Orient*, p. 165; Markley, *English Imagination*, p. 50.

¹⁵⁶ Frank, *Re-Orient*, pp. 94-5.

this supply chain it re-energised the English interest in the Chinese market. Cocks adopted two approaches to obtain Chinese products. Firstly, he tried to use Chinese salesmen in Japan several times to gain a trading license. For example, he proposed to Li Tan, a Chinese businessman, a deal whereby he would give 8,000 Spanish dollars in exchange for permission to trade in China's continent.¹⁵⁷ However, this effort was unsuccessful and English factors had to focus on voyages to Southeast Asia to collect substitutes. Consequently, Cochin-China and Tonkin and other ports in the South China Sea became important intermediaries for the EIC to obtain alternative Chinese products for Japan.

Cocks and other factors acknowledged the usefulness of the Japanese *red seal* system (which officially allowed Japanese ships to trade overseas) in trading with Southeast Asia.¹⁵⁸ They saw the need for the EIC to gain access to this system to participate in the existing regional network. Importantly, this system allowed participants to avoid setting factories in different places and therefore reduced the expense the English had to pay in trading overseas. They speedily rented a junk to sail to Cochin-China in early 1614 to collect substitute silks.¹⁵⁹ Cocks also bought the junk *Sea Adventure* and started sailing to Siam four times (first in 1615) with the aim of procuring deerskin, sappan wood, pepper, wax and the Siam-Japan trade became an

¹⁵⁷ Thompson, *Diary of Richard Cocks*, vol. I, p. 29; Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, pp. 181-184, 208.

¹⁵⁸ Red-seal is English translation of the terms *shuinsen* and *shuinjo* (Japanese) which was an official document issued by the Japanese Shogun with a vermillion chop to allow Japanese ships to trade overseas (mostly to the Southeast Asia) from the late sixteenth century to 1635 (the *Sakoku* abandon policy). More information about this system and Japanese merchants in this system can be seen in Laver, *Strange Isolation*, pp. 44-89.

¹⁵⁹ IOR/E/3/2, no. 189, 'Richard Cocks at Hirado to the East India Company in London, 25 November 1614', in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 224.

‘integral part’ of the EIC’s strategy.¹⁶⁰ Voyages to Vietnam were also undertaken until 1619 although at this stage trade with Cochin-China and Tonkin was not as successful as trade with Siam due to issues of the quantity of commodities in Southern Vietnam, the hardline policy of the Trinh Lord and the problems which the English themselves faced in using the Japanese red seal (see the next part).

In general terms, the establishment of the Hirado factory signified the EIC’s change in trading policy with East Asia, demonstrating its desire to develop the existing regional trading chain to obtain substitute silver to cover the Eurasian trade (selling English goods in East Asia, exchanging regional commodities for Japanese silver in order to reduce the export of English bullion to Asia). English overseas factors played a pioneering role in finding new markets and expanding the EIC’s position in East Asia by establishing the Hirado factory and by attempting to collect Chinese products using both direct and indirect methods. Tonkin and Cochin-China appeared in the EIC’s system with the role of supplementary markets as the direct trade with China was interrupted. The finding and procurement of silver by English overseas factors was the key to the EIC’s progress and led to participation in the regional trade. These discoveries and the experiment of having employees in offshore areas provided the Company with useful lessons in how to adapt successfully to the character of distant trading networks, and how valuable of the regional trade in the EIC’s strategy.

In the early seventeenth century the Company entered a period of remarkable experimentation, drawing on both the information supplied by its factors and other traders and on the lessons learned from its experimentations of expansion in East Asia. The first lesson was how to remedy the EIC’s lack of trading knowledge which had

¹⁶⁰ IOR/E/3/3, no. 319, ‘Richard Cocks at Hirado to the East India Company’s Agent at Ayutthaya, 6 December 1615’ in Farrington, *Factory in Siam*, p. 170; Dhiravat, *Sea Adventure*, pp. 49-69, p. 62.

caused major problems resulting in the closure of a series of factories and the EIC's halt in the attention to East Asia until the late seventeenth century. The English arrived in this area late, and therefore they had less experience than their competitors. To limit the problem of insufficient knowledge, the EIC hired skilful men such as Pieter Floris and Lucas Antheunisoon who both had formerly worked for the VOC, or Adams (from 1613) who had worked with both the VOC and the Japanese government to work in distant areas.¹⁶¹ These pioneers had themselves learned about the nature of trade and the trading opportunities in this far-flung region.¹⁶² However, using experienced staff could not satisfactorily address the powerlessness of the EIC in East Asia. Its insufficient knowledge and experience continued to limit the EIC in evaluating and building the regional trading system. While the Dutch treated the Malay Peninsula, the Spice Islands and Japan as 'integral parts' of the whole East Asian trading system, the EIC seemed to keep their factories in Japan, Bantam, Siam and other places isolated from the main trading network as overseas factors attempted to connect and expand the English trade in a network themselves while London had no policy to encourage and develop those attempts.¹⁶³ The way overseas factors worked - isolated and without support from London - illustrated the management problems of the early EIC and the relationship between the core London and periphery overseas factories and factors. During the early period of the joint-stock company, London had little experience to manage its branches

¹⁶¹ Court Minutes, 18 and 25 November 1609, in W.H. Moreland (ed.), *Peter Floris his Voyage to the East Indies in the Globe 1611-1615* (London, 1934), p. xiv; Bassett, *Factory at Bantam*, p. 22; IOR/E/3/1, no. 120, 'Contract between William Adams and the East India Company, made at Hirado, 24 November 1613' in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, pp. 94-95.

¹⁶² One among considerable examples is Richard Cocks, the chief factor of Hirado factory (1613-1623). How he learned, adapted with Japanese life, trade was discussed in A. Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion 1560-1660* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 105-115.

¹⁶³ Bassett, 'EIC in the Far East', p. 35.

and staffs, and the driving overseas trade was still greatly depended on the single attempt of those factors. The EIC's overseas trade in this period, therefore, was experimentation mostly based on the policy of using skilled staff. This policy changed in the late century as the EIC recognised the role of management and of regional trade towards the expansion of the EIC in East Asia, which was epitomised precisely via the case of the Tonkin factory. Consequently, Cochin-China and Tonkin appeared in the EIC's trade due to the efforts of English factors in Hirado. Their attempts to become involved in the intra-Asian trade, however, failed as they could not identify the true trading chain due to restricted information and support from London or Bantam.¹⁶⁴ The following section discusses in more detail how English factors in Japan contributed the EIC's knowledge and supplied information about regional trade and the potential of Tonkin and Cochin-China as intermediary sites in the East Asian commercial system.

The English voyages to Cochin-China and Tonkin in the 1610s

This part argues that the way in which the EIC recognised the place of Vietnam in the regional trading network during the progress they contacted with people in both Tonkin and Cochin-China and how their first received information affected the EIC's connections with Vietnam in the next period. The English in Hirado acknowledged that any profit arising from Japanese trade was not from this market itself, but from the

¹⁶⁴ The EIC hoped to obtain Chinese silks in Patani, Siam to demand Japan while Siam only provided deer skins, sugar, sapan wood. Farrington, Dhiravat, *Factory in Siam*, p. 216; Dhiravat, *Sea Adventure*, p. 51.

connections it provided with other ports in East Asia.¹⁶⁵ Adams drew attention to this opportunity in his letter to Bantam in 1613, stating that the EIC would send no money from Europe if they sold velvet, silk, damask and other Chinese products in Japan in exchange for capital as Japan was rich in gold and silver.¹⁶⁶ That was the best solution to trade there since Chinese goods were in high demand in Japan and fetched a high price, while only a limited market existed for European goods. However, it was hard for the EIC to collect Chinese products, as the Chinese government had prevented all trade with Japan. Both Chinese and Japanese wholesalers needed a ‘third place’ or ‘third country trade’ to continue this profitable commerce. Japanese merchants formed ‘Japanese towns’ in various parts of Southeast Asia such as Hoi An/ Faifo (Vietnam), Malacca (Malaya), Patani (Siam) and Bantam (Indonesia) to collect Chinese silk from Chinese junks sailing there. Japanese merchants sailed to North and Central Vietnam 41 times before the English set up a factory in Hirado in 1613, and 50 times during the period of the English factory in Japan (1613-1623).¹⁶⁷ Using the red seal system or investing privately in the Japanese ships to Vietnam became a good means of expanding the English trade to the South China Sea as they did not need invest money to establish factories there and they could use regional junks to trade southwards to collect Chinese and Southeast Asian commodities to sell in Japan in exchange for silver. Chinese private dealers also arrived in the above ports to trade with Japanese and other

¹⁶⁵ Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, vol.1, p. 1. Cocks wrote to London in 1617 that ‘were it not for hope of trade into China, or for procuring som benefit from Syam, Pattania, and Cochin-China, it was noe staying in Japan. Yet it is certen here is silver enough & may be carid out ar pleasure, but then must we bring them comodeties to ther lyking’.

¹⁶⁶ ‘W. Adams at Hirado to Augustine Spalding at Bantam, 12 January 1613’ in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 77.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 58; Li, *Nguyen Cochin-China*, p. 62.

merchants.¹⁶⁸ The deteriorating situation in the Japan-China relationship created intermediate trading ports in Southeast Asia and a good chance for English traders to break into this trading system. Thus, the role of ports in the South China Sea became key for trading activities for the EIC. Aware of this situation, in December 1613 Saris left the English factors in Hirado an advice that ‘the first [job] is...buying and fitting of a junke for Syam and Pottaunye with such quantetie of braudcloath, cloath of Cambaia, ollivants’ teeth and royalles as hath beene conferred upon,...for about that tyme the China junkes wilbe there, and trading with them is the gretest hope of benyfitt, for there commodityes are to be bought reasonable w’ch heare will yealde greate p’fitt.’¹⁶⁹ This quote demonstrates that Saris recognised the importance of regional trade towards the EIC’s position and expansion in East Asia. He was also largely affected by Adams’ knowledge as he believed that Siam and Patani had become the main source of substitute Chinese goods for Japan as Chinese traders shipped and traded there regularly. However, his assessment was inaccurate because Siam and Patani were rich in wood and deerskin only. Through the Japanese and Dutch merchants in Japan, English factors in Hirado seemed to understand that Cochin-China and Tonkin could provide substitute silks for Chinese goods as silks were widely produced in both kingdoms. Consequently, the English arranged voyages to those kingdoms to discover the regional trading network and develop the Hirado factory’s activities.

The first English voyage to Cochin-China in 1614 took place at a time when they had insubstantial and unclear information about this kingdom and its potential for trade. It also was not as initially planned as English factors found no junk to travel to

¹⁶⁸ Innes, *Japan’s Foreign Trade*, p. 54.

¹⁶⁹ ‘Saris’ remembrance left with Richard Cocks at Hirado, 5 December 1613’ in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 119.

Siam as Saris had proposed in December 1613. As Richard Cocks explained, information was mostly gained from Adams' business partner, a Dutch trader who he had traded in Cochin-China a few years earlier.¹⁷⁰ This information and the awareness of the existence of the Japan-Cochin-China trade through the *red seal* system encouraged English factors to travel there to gather Chinese goods. The voyage to Cochin-China was indirectly affected by Saris and Adams' opinion about the participation of the English in the regional trade and directly operated by Richard Cocks and other factors as they made their own decisions about operations and with which 'country trade' to connect. It meant that under the EIC's policy of using experienced staff to discover and experiment in gaining access to the overseas trade, all English overseas factors had the opportunity to make voyages to expand the English trade in East Asia. The adviser (Adams), founder (Saris), and factors of the Hirado factory all agreed about the importance and significance of the engagement into the existing trade network. This example again shows the distinct role of English individuals in discovering new opportunities for trade and expanding the EIC's trade in East Asia and how they recognised the role of regional trade in enhancing the EIC's position in East Asia in the early seventeenth century.

On 14 March 1614, the junk *Rokan* left Hirado for Cochin-China with two Englishmen, Tempest Peacock and Walter Carwarden with presents and a letter signed by King James I to the King of Cochin-China.¹⁷¹ The ship carried a cargo of £750 or 2,983 taels with 8 broadcloths, half the ivory inventory of the Hirado factory, Cambay

¹⁷⁰ 'Richard Cocks at Hirado to the East India Company in London, 25 November 1614', in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 224.

¹⁷¹ 'Richard Cocks at Hirado to Richard Wickham at Edo, 1 March 1614, 1 April 1614' in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, pp. 136, 143.

cloth and 1000 rials (about 200 hundred pounds).¹⁷² The stock for Cochin-China represented 13 per cent of the capital base of the Hirado factory. With mostly clothes and 1000 rials, the voyage not only showed the character of an experimentation to sell English cloths in a new market as Saris had advocated, but also illustrated its desire to obtain a good result on silk trade as they invested more than ten per cent of the Hirado factory's stock there while information about Cochin-China was limited. Unfortunately, this voyage ended in disaster with the death of both Englishmen and the complete loss of the stock. This outcome created significant problems for the Hirado factory, and this start did not bode well for the relationship between the EIC and Cochin-China.

Reports of the Hirado factory to Bantam and London from 1614 to 1617 showed that the English had little exact information about this disastrous trip and they only got information from the Japanese and Chinese. The English received news that the two Englishmen had died, and their stock disappeared a few months after the voyage. At that time, Cocks believed that the Englishmen's association with the free Dutch merchant in Cochin-China had led to their downfall, and the Cochin-Chinese thus killed Peacock and the Dutch while Carwarden had escaped but later had died in a storm.¹⁷³ The second version of events emerged in 1615 through Li Tan, a Chinese merchant, who claimed that Japanese residents had murdered the Englishmen and that the Cochin-Chinese knew nothing about this.¹⁷⁴ In 1617, another version of the event was provided by Japanese people who had travelled in the same junk as the Englishmen to Cochin-China. According to them, Peacock was washed overboard and drowned because he

¹⁷² Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, p. 155; Thompson, *Diary of Richard Cocks*, vol.1, p. xix.

¹⁷³ 'Richard Cocks at Hirado to Richard Wickham at Edo, 25 July 1614' in Thompson, *Diary of Richard Cocks*, vol.2, pp. 268-70; Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, pp. 224-25, 245.

¹⁷⁴ Thompson, *Diary of Richard Cocks*, vol.1, 1 August 1615, p. 28-29; Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, p. 155.

could not swim, being weighed down by 50 or 60 reals of eight in his pockets. Carwarden stayed at Cochin-China and tried to send a letter to the English factors in Japan through Safian Dono, a Dutch trader, but after that, there was no further news about Carwarden.¹⁷⁵ One event recorded in three different versions illustrated that the English clearly had little real knowledge about the trade in Cochin-China and more broadly in East Asia. Their information was provided by other merchants and they had no direct sources to get exact version. This placed a significant limitation on English trade in East Asia as their knowledge about the region is narrow and English overseas factors needed to learn more through other traders. Meanwhile, the relation of the Japanese, Chinese, Dutch and even Cochin-Chinese in the English disastrous event partly demonstrated the difficulty and competition the English had to face in trading in East Asia. Nevertheless, Cocks and the English factors in Japan still expected to take part in the regional trade via voyages to Cochin-China as this kingdom was a depot for both regional and global traders.

If the first voyage to Cochin-China was only a substitute for the preferred journey to Siam, the second voyage in 1617 formed part of the Hirado factory's commercial strategy to collect alternative silk to maintain the EIC's position in Japan.¹⁷⁶ London decided to build the trade with China after receiving Cocks' reports in 1615. The EIC allowed Cocks to establish a factory in China (if possible) instead of carrying goods from Europe to Japan in exchange for silver.¹⁷⁷ With the help of Li Tan, a Chinese merchant in Japan, Cocks expected that a formal relationship would be

¹⁷⁵ 'Richard Cocks at Hirado to the Company, 1 January 1617' in Thompson, *Diary of Richard Cocks*, vol.2, p. 285; Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 558.

¹⁷⁶ 'Richard Cocks at Hirado to the East India Company in London, 1 & 14 January 1617', p. 558.

¹⁷⁷ IOR/G/12/10, *Supplement to China Materials*, vol. 2, (1606-1699), *London to Bantam 1615*, pp. 6-7.

established soon; but their attempts were in vain. Therefore, the Hirado factory decided to improve the system of supporting trading ports to pick up Chinese merchandise for Japan. The English in London had expected to access a 'store of silk' in Ayutthaya and Patani through the voyage of the *Sea Adventure* in 1615. However, they learnt that Siam could provide only sappan wood and deer skins while Patani could supply only pepper and wax.¹⁷⁸ Cocks had a different source of silk in mind and believed that 'yf we may get a quiet trade into Cochin-China there we may be sure to have a raw silk every yeare in greate quantity. Some yeares there cometh above 1000 picos from that place only into Japon.... But for trade into Cochin-China for silk ... it must be done in Japon junkes or English shipping.'¹⁷⁹ It seemed that after four years in Japan, Cocks had gained much more experience and knowledge than previously about the trading system and the available commodities in the South China Sea. Through their contacts with the Dutch and Japanese traders and the experimentation in trading with Siam and Patani, he received information that those places could not supply silks for Japan while silk trade with Cochin-China was possible as this country supplied as much silk as China. Importantly, Cocks also recognised that it was cheaper and safer to engage with the Japan-Cochin-China link through the existing *red seal system* of the Japanese government, rather than settling a factory or using or English shipping (see supra).¹⁸⁰ With that system, the English just needed to get permission from the Shogun and then rent a small junk to sail to Southern Vietnam. This way could save money for the English as they did not need to buy a new ship or establish a new factory with high cost.

¹⁷⁸ Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, vol. 1, p. 127; 'Richard Cocks at Hirado to the East India Company in London, 1 & 14 January 1617', p. 558.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 559.

¹⁸⁰ Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, p. 251.

A junk was sufficient to collect silks and other products from Cochin-China. Cocks believed that although playing a role of supplementary market, Cochin-China would become important in the EIC's survival and development in Japan. This opinion demonstrated the change in Cocks' understanding about the possibility of commodities in overseas areas, the role of regional trade, and especially a consideration between establishing a factory and sending ships to collect goods regularly. A secondary purpose for this voyage was to discover more about the death in 1614 of the two servants, Peacock and Carwarden and to collect the English goods left in Cochin-China and 'to get the debt the King of Cochin-China oweth your Wor's'.¹⁸¹ As a result, the second voyage to Cochin-China was a means to broaden the EIC's trade in East Asia as they had done in Siam and Patani. English factors hoped to gain permission to trade there in future and to participate in the Japanese trading link with Cochin-China. However, Cocks' narrow trading expectation regarding Cochin-China again showed how incomplete was the information of the English about East Asian commodities. They were not aware for instance that Japanese merchants imported sugar into Cochin-China, as this was proving very popular as a commodity in exchange for silver while silk was quite small in quantity here.¹⁸² They were also not aware that Tonkin silk was better in quality and quantity than that found in Cochin-China (see chapter two).

Two English factors, Edmund Sayers and William Nealson, were on the junk the *Gift of God* belonging to Adams, which left Hirado on 23 March 1617 to Cochin-China. They carried around 1,896 taels of money and goods. This cargo included mostly English broadcloth, Indian cloth, Russian hide, some metals, luxury goods, and 9 taels

¹⁸¹ 'Richard Cocks at Hirado to the East India Company in London, 1 & 14 January 1617' in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 561.

¹⁸² Innes, *Japan's Foreign Trade*, pp. 504-06.

of cash.¹⁸³ These products were unsold English goods in Japan. Instead of keeping them to rot in the warehouse in Hirado, the factors expected to sell them in Cochin-China to reduce the Company's loss and find another market for the English goods. Adams did not hold the same belief in these commodities as the English factors, as evidenced by his earlier letter about the possibilities of Cochin-China trade. He also carried for himself some products such as copper, sake (Japanese drink), mawatta (Japanese floss silk), armour, pikes, brimstone, stille, striped cloth, arrows, verdigris, firearms, and long swords.¹⁸⁴ It demonstrates the clear difference between Adams and the English factors regarding their knowledge about trade in Cochin-China. While the EIC carried cloth and luxury goods to everywhere in East Asia, Adams focused on weapons, brimstone and copper which were in high demand in Cochin-China. Accordingly, EIC trade in this kingdom had little success while Adams obtained a more satisfactory outcome. The difference in trading results between the factory and Adams then became the fundamental knowledge of the EIC about exported commodities in Vietnam in the late seventeenth century.

On the diplomatic front, the English factors also gained key lessons about the welcome of Cochin-China towards foreigners and opportunities from the open policy of the native government which encouraged the EIC to come back to Cochin-China in the following year and in the 1690s. In theory, diplomacy, especially diplomatic gift-giving, was important and necessary in all the relationships as it 'transits the trust and

¹⁸³ 'Richard Cocks at Hirado to Sir Thomas Smythe and the East India Company in London, 15 February 1618' in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 658.

¹⁸⁴ 'William Adams' journal of his voyage to Cochin-China in the Gift of God, with related accounts and notes, 17 March-6 August 1617' in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 1110.

generosity of friendship.’¹⁸⁵ Recently, scholars such as Felicity Heal, argue that gift-giving is crucial to political success, and it ‘made the formation of a global political community’, ‘a cross-cultural communication’.¹⁸⁶ The English, during the progress of trading with Cochin-China also used diplomatic gifts to get permission to trade and expand their influence there. On 3 May 1617, the English gave the King presents of broadcloth, amber, looking glasses. In return, they were welcomed by the King of Cochin-China and his Mandarins as Cochin-China needed foreigners to support its economy and military. Adams stated that the King ‘was very glad that Englishmen ware come againe into his countreye, and that we [the English] should bee very welcome whensoevere anye of our shepinge died come to his countreye, and withall had sent us his gousheme, ...’.¹⁸⁷ With the open policy of Cochin-China, the English had good conditions to establish a relationship with the Cochin-Chinese Court, and they were quickly granted an ‘unlimited’ trading licence which allowed them to trade anywhere and at any time in Cochin-China. This was a significant achievement of the EIC since this allowed them to participate in the regional trade via Cochin-China, a convenient place to meet and trade with most East Asian traders. Moreover, the King became the English trading partner as he ordered ‘much a pece of ordnance of brase’. The English were promised that if they could supply this order, they could then trade in Cochin-

¹⁸⁵ P. Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago, 1991), p. 34.

¹⁸⁶ A. Cludow, *The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan* (New York, 2014); F. Heal, *The Power of Gifts: Gift Exchange in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2015); Z. Biedermann, A. Gerritsen, G. Riello (eds.), *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, 2018), pp. 24-25.

¹⁸⁷ C.J. Purnell (ed.), *The Log-book of William Adams 1614-1619, with the Journal of Edward Saris and other Documents Relations to Japan, Cochin-China* (London, 1916), p. 293; Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 1132.

China without paying tax.¹⁸⁸ After the voyage, Adams, to emphasise the potential for further trade with this kingdom, reported that ‘the King of Cochin-China is well contented our nation shall trade into his country’.¹⁸⁹ Success on the diplomatic front, coupled with the King’s demand for a trade, especially arms-trade, was the fundamental reason that the Hirado factory prepared another junk to visit Cochin-China after 1617.¹⁹⁰ The plan also brought hope at a time of little trading success elsewhere. This success also taught English people useful lessons about how to treat the Cochin-Chinese Court and which factors were important for the EIC’s trading future in this kingdom.

On the commercial front, Sayers completed some useful trade in Cochin-China which supported the Hirado factory. He carried to Japan 307 catties 5 taels white silk (priced 493 taels), 79 catties Aguila wood (sappan wood - 180 taels), and 963 catties ditto wood (50 taels).¹⁹¹ The silks were sold in Japan at 218 and then 230 taels per pecul. Sappan wood was sold at between 8 mas and 1 tael 6 mas per catty.¹⁹² With such results, the voyage went some way to support English trade in Japan but could not procure the necessary quantity of silks for the Japanese market as Cochin-China could only provide insignificant amounts of silk. To deal with this problem, Sayers tried to purchase silks from Chinese salesmen (338 catties of white silk for 175 taels per picul),

¹⁸⁸ Purnell, *Log-book*, p. 294.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 177.

¹⁹⁰ On 13 February 1618, Cocks and other factors of the Hirado factory went to meet the Shogun of Japan and confirmed that they were ready to go to Cochin-China again. Thompson, *Diary of Richard Cocks*, vol.2, p. 18.

¹⁹¹ ‘Richard Cocks at Hirado to Sir Thomas Smythe and the East India Company in London, 15 February 1618’ in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 659; Edmund Sayers at Hirado to Sir Thomas Smythe in London, 16 February 1618’, p. 699.

¹⁹² ‘Richard Cocks at Hirado to George Ball at Bantam, 15 February 1618’ in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 692; Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, p. 205.

but unfortunately, the English money was stolen by the Chinese.¹⁹³ This event reflected the inexperience of English factors in dealing with their rivals in overseas trade and the level of difficulty they met during the trade in East Asia. Furthermore, English dealers faced a trading prohibition from Bernardo, a Japanese trader, as he had a commission from the King of Cochin-China to trade exclusively with Chinese merchants.¹⁹⁴ Again the English learnt lessons about trade with regional merchants and recognised the difficulty of accessing the East Asian trade networks and competing with skilful traders in East Asia.

Results of the second journey to Cochin-China showed that this kingdom could be a part of the EIC's trading system in East Asia, but its value was not enough to establish a factory there. Instead, Cocks tried to use more Japanese or Chinese junks under the *red seal* system to trade to restrict the English expense. He thus lobbied Japanese officers to gain a license for future trips to Cochin-China. The English used the Chinese junk, *Shiquan*, with Adams as a pilot, Sayers as merchant and Hayley as a mate for the third trip to Cochin-China in 1618. The amount of money carried on this voyage is unknown but was not very significant as the second journey confirmed the value of Cochin-China and the Hirado factory had little money without support from London and Bantam. Massarella has argued, it was less than 200,000 taels.¹⁹⁵ The junk left Hirado on 11 March 1618 and sailed to Nagasaki on 17 March. Unfortunately, due to the inclement weather, it could not sail to Cochin-China. Until 14 May 1618, the junk had to return to Hirado. After this voyage, the Hirado factory had no opportunity to make further voyages to the South China Sea due to their illegal operation in the red

¹⁹³ Ibid, pp. 659, 699.

¹⁹⁴ Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, p. 206.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 253.

seal system. Instead of shipping southwards, the Hirado factory had to invest as a private trader in Adams' voyage the following year (see below). The only journey was that of a junk which called at the Pulo Condore island (Cochin-China) in 1619 on the way from Hirado to Bantam, but there was no further trade at this time with Cochin-China.¹⁹⁶ The English only reappeared in Cochin-China in the late 1690s as they considered to control all sea-routes in the South China Sea.

The failure of the third voyage to Cochin-China not only put the Hirado factory into further difficulty but also almost ended all English expectations of trading with South Vietnam. Moreover, in a serious miscalculation, they made an illegal exchange of *red seals* in 1617, and the Japanese government responded by delaying all trading offers to them. The English had received a license in 1617 for Cochin-China, but they sold it to Li Tan as the second voyage had not yet returned.¹⁹⁷ That license was then resold to Japanese merchants. These traders encountered problems in Cochin-China, and the affair was reported to the Japanese government.¹⁹⁸ Consequently, there was a delay in the English factory being granted a new license to trade and the *red seal* for Tonkin trade in 1619 was granted only to Adams as a free merchant although he was still associated with the Hirado factory. In these circumstances, the English factors had no choice but to expand their trade by investing as private traders in Adams' voyage to Tonkin to discover the potential of this kingdom.

¹⁹⁶ Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 1588.

¹⁹⁷ Thompson, *Diary of Richard Cocks*, vol.1, 1 January 1617, p. 225.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, vol.2, 9 November 1618, p. 94.

Adams rented a private Japanese junk for his voyage to Tonkin on 17 March 1619 and the English factory invested 700 taels in this journey.¹⁹⁹ As Adams' journal records, although the Tonkin kingdom welcomed foreigners, his trade was small and was not successful due to the competition of Chinese salesmen. On 20 April, Adams gave the King some presents and over the next few days, he proposed a silk-trade of 4000 tales to local Mandarins.²⁰⁰ However, after nearly three months in Tonkin, Adams had only made modest exchanges with local people in Thang Long. The trade Adams most wanted with the Tonkin Court did not take place as there was no silk available for Adams in mid-July.²⁰¹ No reason for this failure was given, but it might have been connected to the visit of a Chinese junk at that time. It could be that the King of Tonkin favoured Chinese dealers, his traditional customers, above Adams and the English merchants, who were relative newcomers. Eventually, Adams only managed to purchase a small range of goods, mostly Chinese silks (from Fukien) at different prices.²⁰² The English factory received only a tiny share of the trade from this visit with 4 piculs 20 catties of silk. The result did not reflect the availability of Tonkin silk and was insufficient to persuade the English to reinvest in Tonkin. However, like in Cochinchina, the English obtained a lesson about the competition of Chinese merchants in trade in Tonkin. The limited supply of silk in both Tonkin and Cochinchina, the difficulties of the Hirado factory from 1619 to 1623, and the issues of VOC-EIC relationship resulted in no further voyages to Vietnam or Siam in the next years. The English withdrawal from Hirado in 1623 was unavoidable, and it caused the collapse of

¹⁹⁹ IOR/E/3/7, *East India Company Original Correspondence, 1619-1621, William Eaton at Nagasaki to the East India Company in London, 10 March 1620*, p. 116.

²⁰⁰ Purnell, *Log-book*, p. 71; Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 1160.

²⁰¹ Purnell, *Log-book*, p. 75; Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, p. 1164.

²⁰² Purnell, *Log-book*, p. 81-82; Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, pp. 1170-71.

any EIC operations in Tonkin, Cochin-China and the South China Sea in the following decades.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in the early days of the EIC, English traders learned useful lessons about the valuable role of individuals in expanding overseas trade and about the possibility of regional trade in East Asia. The EIC's ambitious policy in East Asia was to identify commercial opportunities and enlarge its commerce through its overseas factors who had a free hand in operating without London's direct orders or instructions. Alongside the primary aim of procuring spices and pepper from Bantam, the EIC's factors tried to purchase a more diverse range of Asian commodities through experimental voyages to the South China Sea. Its distant servants were thus encouraged to identify new markets where the VOC had no presence or authority. However, the weakness of its capital base and a lack of military power restricted the EIC's enlargement and competition in East Asia. These issues led to the Company's failure in this period, with the closure of its factories and its withdrawal from East Asia for the following decades.

The Company allowed English factors in Bantam or Japan to trade on their own initiative in East Asia as London had little knowledge about this area. This was also the reason why the EIC preferred to hire seasoned men to live and work in overseas regions. The opening of the factory at Hirado and the decisions to voyage to Siam or Vietnam were the results of the initiatives of English factors as they learnt about and adapted to the nature of trade in East Asia. They were the EIC's pioneers, enlarging its trade and position there. Nevertheless, it also exposed the limitations in the EIC's

knowledge of trading networks in East Asia and its over-dependence on (and sometimes ignorance of) employees' suggestions. On the one hand, the Company's servants were helpful in extending the EIC's commerce through various voyages and factories. On the other hand, because they understood the EIC's ambitions and desires, they reported appealing but biased or even sometimes useless information, to consolidate their position. Such misleading information often damaged the EIC's trade in this region.

The inclusion of Cochin-China and Tonkin in EIC's trade also reflects the pivotal role of English individuals from the Hirado factory, especially Cocks and Adams. Initially, based on the knowledge of Adams and desire of Saris, the Hirado factory wanted Siam and Patani as secondary markets to serve the primary aim of Japan. However, during the trading process in Japan, English factors, especially Cocks discovered the existence of Cochin-China and Tonkin in the regional trade system and how they could provide substitute goods for Japan. After five years in Hirado, the English gradually discovered the role and value of Cochin-China and Tonkin. Both those countries were chosen as they had silks and Chinese and Japanese merchants visited there for 'third country trade'. Since Vietnam showed only modest potential for direct trade with London as its commodities mostly served Asian demands, it was considered as a supportive supplier and intermediary in East Asia. This role was reassessed in the EIC's strategy in the late century. The first contacts between English merchants and Vietnam in the 1610s thus provided the foundational knowledge and experience which led to the EIC's return to Vietnam in the late seventeenth century.

CHAPTER 2. TONKIN AND COCHIN-CHIA: POTENTIAL AND ATTRACTIVE MARKETS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

If chapter one presents the role of English overseas individuals and the EIC's learning about trading networks in East Asia through its first contact with Cochin-China and Tonkin in the 1610s from Japan, this chapter explains why the EIC arrived in the two Vietnamese kingdoms and provides a further focus on the contributions of the EIC's factors in identifying Tonkin and Cochin-China as potentially important nodes in the regional trading system in the seventeenth century. Among the appealing aspects of Vietnam for European traders in this period were its strategic location, its political crisis and resulting relatively open policy towards foreigners, its raw materials and its fabricated products. Vietnam was at the centre of all the trade routes in the South China Sea and allowed for the nearest links with China. The new open-policy of both Tonkin and Cochin-China towards Europeans that resulted from their political crisis created an advantageous environment for trading in this period, especially for European Companies which started entering into Vietnam in the early seventeenth century. This chapter argues that above all the EIC understood Vietnam as a critical node within regional trade due to its availability to supply substitute products and the success in the silk trade of Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese and Dutch traders there. Using Vietnam as an intermediary for its commercial activities provided the EIC with further evidence of the attractiveness and openness of this country for trade. Learning from these activities, the EIC subsequently established a factory in Tonkin and set up a formal relationship with Cochin-China. Bantam agents and other overseas factors played the key role in providing sufficient strategic information to support London in the decision-making

progress of settling formal relations with those kingdoms. While the potential of Vietnam can be seen from the writings of European adventurers during that time; the EIC's engagement in this area, especially in the case of Tonkin, can be tracked through the diaries of English factors in the 1610s and the communication between EIC and Bantam from the late 1650s.²⁰³

The internal appeal of Tonkin and Cochin-China

In the seventeenth century, Tonkin covered the area that is now Northern Vietnam, while Cochin-China was Southern Vietnam (from Hue province to the south). Both the kingdoms had advantageously geographical locations to connect to mainland China from the south and control the sea-routes and expand the regional trade in the South China Sea. Indeed, Vietnam lay on a trade crossroads allowing merchants to travel from Northeast Asia to Southeast Asia and from the West (mainland Southeast Asia) to the East (islands). It is noteworthy that although the indigenous inhabitants only engaged in coastal trade due to the limitations of their navigational technology, Vietnamese trading ports were always appealing to overseas traders.²⁰⁴ Thanks to its favourable position, Vietnam provided a transit point for traders travelling from the China Sea to the Indian Ocean.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Those materials include E and B series at the British Library, such as IOR/B/30 Court Minutes (1667-1670), IOR/E/3/28-33, *East India Company Original Correspondence (1663-1665), (1672-1673)*.

²⁰⁴ Hall, *A History of South-East Asia* (London, 1981), p. 439.

²⁰⁵ Dr. Gutzlaff, 'Geography of the Cochin-Chinese Empire', *Journal of the Royal Geography Society of London*, 19 (1849), pp. 85-143.

Map. Vietnam's strategic geography in the China Sea world



Source: N. Cooke, T. Li, and J.A. Anderson (eds.), *The Tongking gulf through history* (Philadelphia, 2011), p. 4.

From the first century AD, Vietnam's 'earlier' kingdoms such as Dai Viet, Cham-pa and Funan, were the Southeast Asian mainland's gateways to the Southeast Asian islands, especially to the Malay Peninsula.²⁰⁶ Li Tana has highlighted how Dai

²⁰⁶ More detail about the role of Vietnamese coast in the international trade before the tenth century on P. Manguin, 'The Archaeology of Funan in the Mekong River Delta, The Oc Eo Culture of Vietnam' in N. Tingley (ed.) *Arts of Ancient Vietnam, from River Plain to open sea* (New Haven, 2009), p. 103-118; J.N. Miksic, 'Introduction: The Beginning of Trade in Ancient Southeast Asia: the Role of Oc-Eo and the

Viet's (Tonkin in the seventeenth century) ports played a significant position in trade between the hinterlands and the seas and an intermediary role in trade with foreigners.²⁰⁷ Its historical role as an intermediary in the regional trading network and as a southern gateway to China was one of the main reasons for the European presence in Vietnam in the seventeenth century. While the English in Hirado in the 1610s focused on the advantage of Vietnam in the trading system with Japan to get silk to exchange for silver, the EIC in the next decades gradually understood the role of Vietnam in East Asia, especially its location to connect with mainland China from the south and to control the sea-routes in the area.

Tonkin's geography was noteworthy as it had a shared border with China and therefore facilitated the nearest travel to South China by land route while the Tonkin Gulf also supplied convenient access to China and Southeast Asia.²⁰⁸ Chinese merchants in 1776 recorded the fact that 'it is only six days and nights from Guangzhou (China) to Thuan Hoa and Quang Nam (Cochin-China, with the famous port Hoian) by sea.... It takes four days and nights and one geng [2,4 hours] to Son Nam [river port in Tonkin, a transit point before going to Thang Long]...'.²⁰⁹ This quote indicates that Chinese traders were aware not only of the proximity but of the relatively quick sea

Lower Mekong Delta' in *Art and Archaeology of Funan: Pre-Khmer Kingdom of the Lower Mekong Valley* (Bangkok, 2003), p. 1-33; B. Lockhart, K.P. Tran (eds.), *New Scholarship on Champa* (Singapore, 2010).

²⁰⁷ Li, 'A View from the Sea: Perspectives on the Northern and Central Vietnamese Coast', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 37 (2006), p. 86-90.

²⁰⁸ T. Li, 'Introduction. The Tongking Gulf through History: a Geopolitical Overview', in T. Li, N. Cooke, J.A. Anderson (eds.), *The Tongking Gulf through History* (Philadelphia, 2011), pp. 1-24; J.K. Whitmore, 'The Rise of the Coast: Trade, State and Culture in Early Dai Viet', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 1 (2006), pp. 103-122; Momoki, *Dai Viet and the South China Sea trade*, pp. 1-34.

²⁰⁹ Lê Quý Đôn, *Phủ biên tạp lục [Desultory Record of the Subjugated Border]*, c.1776 [Vietnamese translation] (Hanoi, 1962), p. 233.

passage from Guangzhou, a major port and trading city on the Pearl River in Southern China to trading ports in Northern and Southern Vietnam. While Hoian in Quang Nam province was the most famous trading port in Cochin-China, Thuan Hoa was a gateway to the capital of this kingdom which shared the same role as Son Nam in Tonkin in helping foreigners to connect with Thang Long by a river system. Importantly, the understanding of Chinese traders about sea routes to Vietnam showed their regular contact and long-term trading between the Chinese and Vietnamese. Northern Vietnam and China shared a common border and the land route was important for the trading relationship between the two countries. However, it was mountainous and mostly served the trade between provinces near the border. Therefore, the key interest was in the sea passage by which Chinese and Tonkin merchants could carry more goods, and which brought them in touch with a greater East and Southeast Asian trade network. Research about the East Asian trading network show that China and Vietnam had an extant trading relationship. During the Han dynasty (206 BC- 220 AD), Chinese merchants continuously traded the land and sea routes centred on Jiaozhi (Giao Chi or Northern Vietnam) although it was hard to pass the 'narrow waters' of the Tonkin Gulf.²¹⁰ Various goods such as gold, silver, copper coins, aloes-wood, varieties of

²¹⁰ J. Holmgran, *Chinese Colonization of Northern Vietnam: Administrative Geography and Political Developments in the Tongking Delta, First to Sixth Century AD* (Canberra, 1980), p. 175; R.H. Kenneth, *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, 1985), pp. 194-197. Detail of the Chinese southward expansion and the tribute of 'earlier' Dai Viet (Tonkin) towards China in the Han dynasty can be seen in Wang, *The Nanhai Trade*, pp. 8-30. Li Tana argued that the Chinese before the Tang dynasty avoid passing the sea route from China to Tonkin in her research of 'A view from the sea', p. 84. However, the difficulty of sea route in the Tonkin Gulf is not meant that the Chinese had gave up their expansion and trade southward.

fragrant wood, pearls, elephant tusks, and rhinoceros horn were purchased there by foreign merchants.²¹¹

The English in 1672 recognised that Tonkinese Mandarins used the geographical advantages of Tonkin to trade with China by both sea and land routes, and therefore could play the role of a broker to help the English to collect Chinese products.²¹² This understanding not only confirmed the importance of Tonkin's position for making trade connections with China but also raised the role of English factors in Tonkin in discovering knowledge about trading network and partners to improve the EIC's future in Tonkin and East Asia. The role of Tonkin as an intermediary in East Asia was made more important first because of the restrictive trading policy of the Chinese Ming dynasty and subsequently due to the Manchu-Ming and Manchu-Taiwan wars which lasted until 1684.²¹³ Tonkin's geography was thus key to the Europeans in making trading connections between China and Southeast Asia.

While the Tonkin Gulf was famous among Chinese merchants, Cochin-China attracted foreign traders with its central position in the Asian world.²¹⁴ In South Vietnam, the Funan kingdom (1st to 7th century AD) became a commercial centre for Southeast Asia as it had close relations with India, West Asia and even the Mediterranean area.²¹⁵ As Chapter 1 demonstrated, from the 1610s and 1620s, the EIC

²¹¹ Li, 'A View from the Sea', p. 93; Nguyen, *Vân Đồn, thương cảng quốc tế của Việt Nam [Van Don, Vietnamese International Port]*, (Hanoi, 2014).

²¹² IOR/G/12/17/1, Tonkin factory, 16 October 1672, p. 38b.

²¹³ Li, 'Tongking Gulf', pp. 17-19; K.W. Taylor, 'The Literati Revival in Seventeenth Century Vietnam', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 18 (1987), pp. 1-22.

²¹⁴ Wheeler, 'Cross-Cultural Trade and Trans-Regional Networks in the Port of HoiAn: Maritime Vietnam in Early Modern Era' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 2001), p. 6.

²¹⁵ Archaeologists discovered many kinds of coins in Oc Eo, a famous port in Funan civilization; in which they also found Roman coins to show that Europeans arrived here for trade. N. Luong (ed.), *Lịch sử Đông*

knew about the Cochin-Chinese position in East Asia through Japanese, Dutch and English factors in Japan. In 1623, in consideration of how to establish trade with China, the Bantam Council stated that the Dutch fortification in Pescadores [in Taiwan] prevented the English from trading with China and other markets in East Asia and indirectly caused the English withdrawal of many factories in the areas. Bantam agents 'have demanded in writing that we [the EIC] might settle the China trade upon Polo Condore [Cochin-China] and the Liqueos according to the Contract [the Treaty of Defence between the governments of England and Holland in 1619] but received a frivolous answer, & nothing to y^e purpose'.²¹⁶ The quote shows the fact of the EIC's presence in East Asia, but also of the strategic importance of Vietnam and the role it might play in EIC strategy. While the Bantam Council wanted to use the geography of Cochin-China with its well-placed island which would facilitate control of the South China Sea, the Court of Minutes in London had no serious intention to trade with this kingdom and more broadly China and East Asia at this time. This quote also illustrates the English overseas factors' new viewpoint about the advantages of Cochin-China, not only in trade but also in the possibility of building a fortification to control the area. It, thus, clarifies the role of distant English factors in the ongoing discussion regarding East Asian trade, guiding the EIC on how to overcome recognised difficulties and to gain a foothold in the region. Their viewpoint provided the EIC with the foundational

Nam A [*History of Southeast Asia*] (Hanoi, 2008); *Lịch sử vương quốc cổ Phù Nam [History of Funan Kingdom]* (Hanoi, 2005), Le Xuan Diem, Dao Linh Con, Vo Si Khai, *Văn hóa Óc Eo, những khám phá mới [Oc Eo culture – New Discovery]*, (Hanoi, 1995).

²¹⁶ IOR/G/12/1, *China Material, 1596-1673*, pp. 12-13.

knowledge to link itself with this kingdom in the late 1690s. Indeed in 1702 the new EIC took up the plan and established a fortification in Pulo-Condore.²¹⁷

Historically speaking both Tonkin and Cochinchina had benefited from strategic geographical positions in the South China Sea, which had created for them a natural role as intermediaries in the East Asian trade for over a thousand years. Such long-standing links were valuable for Europeans in helping them to participate in the intra-Asian trade. This was especially important after both China and Japan restricted foreign trade in the mid-seventeenth century. The advantageous geography enabled Vietnam to become the substitute location for the Portuguese, Dutch, and then English to deal indirectly with China from the south or via the Chinese or Japanese who arrived in Vietnam for further trading.

If Vietnam's geographical location provided the Europeans with advantages in connecting with Chinese and other East Asian markets, its political crisis and new policies regarding overseas trade in the seventeenth century created real opportunities for European merchants to gain greater business in Vietnam through military alliances or trade in war-materials. Tonkin and Cochinchina's internal needs from the results of civil wars shaped their foreign policy: a relatively open policy towards foreigners vis-à-vis the policy in the previous centuries, creating open trading regimes in the seventeenth century. The establishment of the Mac dynasty in 1527 formally started the age of political crisis with continuous wars.²¹⁸ After the Mac-Le war (1533-1592), the war between Trinh and Nguyen families broke out in 1627 as Nguyen Hoang, a young

²¹⁷ See information about the EIC's colony in Pulo-Condore in IOR/E/3/64, *East India Company Original Correspondence*; IOR/E/3/94, *Letter book XI (New Company), 1699-1709*; W. Foster (ed), *Alexander Hamilton, A new Account of the East Indies* (London, 1930), p. 110.

²¹⁸ V. Lieberman, *Strange Parallels Southeast Asia in Global Context, c.800-1830, vol.1: Integration on the mainland* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 395-396.

brother-in-law of Trinh Kiem moved to Vietnam's southern border.²¹⁹ He tried to build a new independent state called Cochin-China by European using the Gianh River as a natural northern border. He constructed a sufficiently powerful army with new modern European weapons and well-defended garrisons and expanded overseas trade to shape the wealthy and independent kingdom as a way of balancing power with the Trinh Lords in Northern Vietnam, Tonkin.²²⁰ From 1627 to 1672 there were seven military campaigns between the two families, but all the Trinh campaigns were unsuccessful, and the two clans decided to sign a ceasefire in 1672.²²¹

Recognising the weakness of Cochin-China in both economic and military domains, the Nguyen Lords pursued new strategies by using European support to fight against Tonkin. Anticipating that European warships, guns, cannons and superior technologies would create huge advantages in the wars with Tonkin, Nguyen Lords imported European firearms through Japanese merchants. The trade of materials for war such as copper and brimstone also developed in Cochin-China. In 1617, Cochin-China invited the Dutch in Siam and Patani to trade, but they considered the risk of trading there and made no contact with this kingdom.²²² The Portuguese were granted land in Hoi An to build a residence just like the Japanese and Chinese to encourage their

²¹⁹ *Khâm Định Việt sử thông giám cương mục, tập 1 [Text and Explanation Forming the Compete Mirror of the History of Vietnam, vol. 1]* (Hanoi, 1998), p. 137; Phan Khoang, *Việt sử xứ Đàng Trong [A Vietnamese History of Cochin-China]* (Saigon, 1969), pp. 108-109.

²²⁰ K.W. Taylor, 'Nguyen Hoang and the Beginning of Vietnam's Southward Expansion' in A. Reid (ed.), *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era* (Ithaca, 1993), pp. 42-65.

²²¹ Trần, *Lịch sử Việt Nam, tập IV (thế kỷ XVII và XVIII)* [Vietnamese History in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries] (Hanoi, 2007); Tạ Chí Đại Trường, *Lịch sử nội chiến Việt Nam [Vietnamese History of Civil Wars]* (Saigon, 1973); Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, pp. 399-401; K.W. Taylor, 'Regional Conflicts among the Viet People between the 13th and 19th Centuries' in T.A. Nguyen, F. Alain (eds.), *Guerre et paix en Asie du sud-est* (Paris, 1998), pp. 109-134, p. 113-118.

²²² Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, p. 62.

trading in Cochin-China.²²³ Cochin-China not only invited merchants to trade but also imported new technology and involved foreigners in the making of weapons, especially the Portuguese.²²⁴ C. Boxer has shown that the Nguyen Lords regularly imported Portuguese weapons from Macao in the period 1627-1680.²²⁵ To develop the navy from a hundred galleys in 1618 to around 240 galleys in 1642, there is no doubt that Cochin-China not only needed a strong economy but also support from foreign naval forces.²²⁶ Alongside the policies of inviting foreigners for trade and military alliances, Cochin-China was also attractive as it adopted a new tax system for overseas merchants. As Adams' records indicate, the English were among the earliest foreigners to receive a special offer of free-trade from Cochin-China in the 1610s if they could supply weapons for this kingdom.²²⁷ Adams records how in 1617, they were granted '[the king's] goshuin or his Chope which is his seal to come with shipping yearly or to settle a factree in any part of his dominions'.²²⁸ Clearly, the English were welcome in Cochin-China early in the seventeenth century, and would have had good trading conditions in return for providing weapons for the kingdom. The English factors in the Hirado factory, however, were facing difficulties at the time, mostly in finding silks for Japan, and had no chance to join in the arms trade. Therefore, opportunities that Adams spoke of were never realised. Cochin-China's demand for weapons, however, remained

²²³ C. Borri, *Cochin-China: Containing Many Admirable Rarities and Singularities of that Countrey* (London, 1633), chapter VIII, p. 12.

²²⁴ Li, *Nguyen Cochin-China*, p. 45.

²²⁵ C.R. Boxer, *Conquest and Commerce in Southern Asia, 1500-1750, part VII: 'Asian Potentates and European Artillery in the 16th – 18th Centuries: a Footnote to Gibson-Hill'* (London, 1985), p. 167.

²²⁶ Borri, *Cochin-China*, p. H5; W.J.M. Buch, *De Oost-Indische Companie en Quinan*, (Amsterdam, 1929), p. 122.

²²⁷ Purnell, *Log-book*, p. 293.

²²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 290.

unchanged even after the end of the war with Tonkin. According to the reports on Thomas Bowyear's mission to Cochin-China, as late as 1695 the English ambassadors in Cochin-China were again asked to supply cannons for the Nguyen Lords although the war with Tonkin had paused from 1672.²²⁹

The Trinh Lords in Northern Vietnam also tried to import European weapons as they recognised that the Chinese military system was insufficiently powerful to make counterattacks against their rival.²³⁰ They, therefore, purchased guns from Macao and became one of the biggest customers of Macao in guns and cannons.²³¹ When the Portuguese stopped trading with Tonkin, the Trinh quickly asked the Dutch for military and commercial supports in 1637 to battle with Cochin-China.²³² Instead of restricting overseas commerce as the previous dynasties had done, the Trinh Lords then launched new plans for an open-trade policy to foster support from Europeans. In the fifteenth century, all foreigners had been forbidden from living near to the capital, Thang Long or near to the northern border with China.²³³ But in the 1640s the Dutch obtained permission to build a factory in Thang Long as they supported Tonkin in the war with Cochin-China.²³⁴ From 1650, the Trinh Lords decided that Europeans, Chinese or

²²⁹ IOR/G/40/18, *Factory Records: Miscellaneous – Thomas Boyear's Mission from Fort St. George to Cochin-China*, pp. 14-15.

²³⁰ S. Laichen, 'Military Technology Transfers from Ming China and the Emergence of Northern Mainland Southeast Asia (c.1390-1527)', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 34 (2003), pp. 495-517.

²³¹ Li, *Nguyen Cochin-China*, p. 72.

²³² The VOC [*Letters and Papers received 1602-1795*], 1124 (1637), *Translaet Missive van den coninck van Tonquin aen den Gouverneur General, 1637* [Translated Missive from the King of Tonkin to the Governor General, 1637], pp. 80-85; cited in Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, pp. 71-72.

²³³ Nguyễn Trãi, *Dư địa chí. c.1435 [Geography Book]* [Vietnamese translation by Phan Huy Tiep], (Hanoi, reprinted 1960), p. 54.

²³⁴ The *Archieven van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC)*, 1602-1795, 1120, pp. 225-231; 1124, pp. 53-79; cited in Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, pp. 70-88.

Japanese could stay in the Thanh Tri and Khuyen Luong villages, near Thang Long. In January 1683, the Court sent a letter to the Dutch Governor in Batavia to confirm that the Dutch had obtained privileged status in Tonkin as they had been granted permission to live in Thang Long.²³⁵ These events showed that the Trinh Lords had created good conditions for foreigners to stay and trade at Thang Long, the market with the greatest potential in Tonkin, provided they were willing to supply the goods that Tonkin desired (in particular weapons).

The demand for guns and weapons only declined when the war with Cochin-China was stopped in 1672. Thereafter Tonkin, however, still needed saltpetre and copper and these commodities became the EIC's leading exports to Tonkin after the 1670s. However, unlike Cochin-China, Tonkin never opened the trade door completely. Consequently, after the war with Cochin-China (1672), Tonkin's overseas policy again became somewhat restricted just as the EIC was attempting to establish itself there.

The new open-policy of both Tonkin and Cochin-China resulted in an advantageous environment for trade in the seventeenth century with the result that Europeans appeared in greater numbers. However, European companies gained different results from their engagements because of their differing commercial strategies and the timing of their contact with Vietnam. While the Portuguese and Dutch utilised the Vietnamese crisis to promote their own interests by trying to manipulate the various parties involved and gain profits from the weapons trade, the EIC obtained less of an advantage because they arrived in Vietnam (1672) just when there was a pause in the civil war.

²³⁵ T.V. Thanh, *Vietnamese Commerce in the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Hanoi, 1961), p. 172.

Since the VOC was established with the dual purpose of promoting commerce and of fighting the Spanish and Portuguese, the Dutch pursued 'trade by arms' to gain control from their rivals in potential trading areas.²³⁶ Jan Pietersz Coen, a Dutch agent at Bantam in December 1614 wrote to Amsterdam that 'in Asia, trade must be driven and maintained under the protection and favour of your weapons and that the weapons must be wielded from the profits gained by the trade; so that trade cannot be maintained without war, nor war without trade.'²³⁷ They were willing to use the military and developed the arms-trade in Asia. Vietnam was no exception to this policy as the Dutch provided weapons and directly participated in the Trinh-Nguyen wars in the 1640s.²³⁸ The Portuguese not only supplied weapons but also served in the Cochinchina government as high-ranking officers as doctors for the Lords, teachers for the Crown Prince and Princes, scientists, and military assistant.²³⁹ As a result, the Portuguese and Dutch gained privileges to trade in Vietnam and eventually generated a significant yield from commerce.

The EIC, however, did not gain trading advantages in the same way as its rivals. The Company rarely used military methods to open trading in Asia in the seventeenth century. The Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth in 1600 confirmed that the EIC's

²³⁶ V.C. Loth, 'Armed Incidents and Unpaid Bills: Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in the Banda Islands in the Seventeenth Century', *Modern Asian Studies*, 29 (1995), pp. 705-740, p. 708.

²³⁷ C. Boxer, *Conquest and Commerce, part VI: 'War and Trade in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, 1600-1650'*, p. 3.

²³⁸ M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630* (The Hague, 1962); Furber, *Rival Empires*, pp. 310-14; G. Masselman, 'Dutch colonial policy in the seventeenth century' *The Journal of Economic History*, 21 (1961), pp. 455-468; Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, pp. 61-96.

²³⁹ Nguyen, *Tableau Economique de Viet Nam*, p. 400-401; P.H. Phan, *A History of Catholicism in Vietnam* (Saigon, 1965), p. 166.

intention in Asia was to trade, not to establish an English colony.²⁴⁰ It stipulated that ‘the whole entire and only Trade and Traffick, and the whole entire and only Liberry, Ufe and Privilege of trading and trafficking, and ufing Feat and Trade of Merchandize, to and from the faid Eaft-Indies’.²⁴¹ The Charter also confirmed that ‘in Defence of our Realm, or for Offence of our Enimies, or that it fhall be found needful to join to the Navy of us, our Heirs or Succeffors, the Ships of our Subjects, to be alfo armed for the Wars’.²⁴² Consequently, force was rarely used to protect English ships, factories against the competition of other Europeans or to help the EIC in negotiations with Asian governments to enhance trade. The EIC exported weapons to some markets where necessary but tried to avoid participating in regional conflicts directly as this engagement cost a lot of money, time, and man while the effect was uncertain.²⁴³ In the 1610s, English factors in Hirado did not involve themselves in the arms-trade with Cochin-China as the trading incentives were insufficient to induce them to become involved. They had found little silk there to substitute that from China, and they lacked the power and capital to meet the trading requirements of Cochin-China necessary to

²⁴⁰ Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, p. 13; Bassett, ‘English Trade in Asia’, p. 91.

²⁴¹ ‘Charter granted by Queen’, p. 19.

²⁴² Ibid, p. 20; B. Watson, ‘Fortifications and the Idea of Force in Early English East India Company Relations with India’, *Past & Present*, 88 (1980), pp. 70-87; E. Smith, ‘Naval Violence and Trading Privileges in Early Seventeenth-Century Asia’ *International Journal of Maritime History*, 25 (2013), pp. 147-158; D. Veevers, ‘The Company as their Lords and the Deputy as a Great Rajah: Imperial expansion and the English East India Company on the West Coast of Sumatra, 1685-1730’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 41 (2013), pp. 687-709. They only used war or intervened into domestic issues in some places in India and Sumatra where the power of naval and war would help the EIC to open, maintain the trade.

²⁴³ For example, the EIC was willing to provide weapons for Taiwan, but worried about getting involved in the war with mainland China in the 1670s. See D. Massarella, ‘Chinese, Tartars and ‘Thea’ or a Tale of two Companies: The English East India Company and Taiwan in the Seventeenth Century’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3 (1993), pp. 393-426, pp. 401, 403, 406.

allow them to have free trade. Similarly, in Tonkin, there were few incentives to become involved in the wars or arms-trade. Unlike the Portuguese and Dutch, the English came to Tonkin during peaceful periods, before and after the Trinh-Nguyen wars (1627-1672). Consequently, during these periods, Tonkin did not make trade conditional upon the supply of weapons. Its policy towards foreigners in those periods was different from its policy during the years of conflict. The English thus only carried guns and cannons to Tonkin as extraordinary gifts or for a small trading trial (see chapter four). The English in Vietnam in the seventeenth century, therefore, played a very minor role in supplying weapons. Instead, they focused on peaceful trade through negotiations with local governments.

While neither the strategic geography nor the more open attitude of the Vietnamese governments towards foreigners was enough to lure the English to invest in the region, Vietnamese natural and man-made products were key for its appeal to Europeans as those commodities played a role of substitutions in the regional trading system.²⁴⁴ The commodities prompted and shaped Vietnamese trading relationships with foreign merchants as they crucially served intra-Asian trade, rather than Eurasian trade. For example, rice, the most significant product in Vietnam, was not in demand in Europe in the seventeenth century and only became involved in global trade from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.²⁴⁵ Sugar (mostly from Cochin-China) was also one of the famous products desired by the Chinese and Japanese in the seventeenth century in the intra-Asian trade, but the EIC only paid attention to this trade from the late century

²⁴⁴ Nguyen, *Tableau Economique du Vietnam*, p. 458.

²⁴⁵ A. Richard, *Histoire Naturelle, Civile et Politique du Tonkin, vol.1* (Paris, 1778), pp. 52-53, quote from Nguyen, *Tableau Economique du Vietnam*, p. 86; F. Bray, P.A. Coclanis, E.L. Fields-Black, D. Schafer (eds.), *Rice: Global Networks and new Histories* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 8

onwards at the same time as it expanded its tea trade with China.²⁴⁶ In term of ceramics, these became a substitute for Chinese goods from the late sixteenth century onwards, and both the Chinese and Dutch exported lower quality ceramic products from Vietnam to Batavia in the seventeenth century.²⁴⁷ As was so often the case, however, the EIC lagged behind other merchants in catering to this demand. Even Vietnamese products, such as pepper, which were suitable for the European market, were not sufficient in quantity and quality for viable direct trading purposes. Therefore it was gathered by Chinese merchants in small amounts from various sources in Vietnam and then sold to the VOC and EIC in Batavia and Bantam who exported it to Europe. However, certain Vietnamese silks were produced in substantial numbers and became increasingly critical to the functioning of regional trade. It was the attraction of silks, which led to the arrival of Europeans in both Tonkin and Cochinchina in the seventeenth century.

Silks (both raw and piece-good) were the most famous Vietnamese merchandise traded in the seventeenth century as they could act as substitutes for Chinese silks in Japan and they were the key local product led to the presence of the English in Vietnam in the period. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, a French traveller, went to Tonkin in 1638 recorded that ‘the natives, both the rich and the poor, wear silk’.²⁴⁸ Indeed, silk was quite expensive and it mostly served the demand of local Mandarins and rich people in the country. Most of Tonkinese were farmers who worked on agriculture and they had insufficient money to buy silk-cloths. Initially, the emergence of silk weaving as

²⁴⁶ Li, *Nguyen Cochinchina*, p. 80-81; A. Reid, D. Bulbeck, C.T. Lay, Y. Wu (compiled), *Southeast Asian Exports since the 14th century: Cloves, Pepper, Coffee, and Sugar* (Leiden, 1998), p. 112.

²⁴⁷ A.T. Hoang, ‘Tonkinese Ceramics Exported to Southeast Asia in the Seventeenth Century – Primary Materials and Reorganization’, in Nguyễn, *Viet People with Sea* (Hanoi, 2011), pp. 315-336, p. 320; Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, pp. 176-185.

²⁴⁸ J.B Tavernier, ‘Relation Nouvelle et Singuliere du Royaume du Tonkin’, [1679], *Revue Indochinoise*, 1908, p. 514.

economic activity was to serve local people's clothing needs while farmers produced silk between their two rice harvests or when they had free time. Silk production was a family enterprise, especially involving the women in free times. Because of the nature of the industry, it is hard to estimate how many people were involved in it. Hoang argued that it required about 20,000 households or 100,000 labourers while Li suggested three or four times that number since silk production was not the primary job of farmers.²⁴⁹ As a results of the Chinese political crisis, by the early seventeenth century the role of Vietnamese silks improved and changed considerably from being local products for domestic demand to becoming famous commodities produced to meet the growing demand of Chinese, Japanese and then European brokers who were seeking a substitute for Chinese silks. Nevertheless, Tonkinese silks still had low quality in comparison with Chinese and Bengali products because it was a cottage industry and depended on the weather. Because Tonkin's farmers still focused on planting rice, silk-weaving was only done with family-system in free time between their rice harvests and therefore its quantity and quality was quite low. Futhermore, as both farmers and traders did not want to become to rich which was dangerous for them and their family with threats from both officals and thieves, they did not invest too much money in the silk-industry.²⁵⁰ Importantly, Tonkinese silks were considered to serve as substitutes for Chinese low products to export to Japan, the most important market, labours in Tonkin had little reason to improve their work extremmely. The Tonkin Court also participated in producing silks and employed labourers to work in the state-owned factories which

²⁴⁹ Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, p. 181-182; Li, 'Tongking in the Age of Commerce' in G. Wade and T. Li (eds.), *Anthony Reid and the Study of the Southeast Asian Past* (Singapore, 2012), pp. 246-270, p. 251.

²⁵⁰ IOR/G/12/17/1, *Tonkin to Bantam, 2 February 1674*, p. 53; J. Pinkerton (ed), *A collection of the best and most interesting voyages and travels in all parts of the world, vol. 6: A Description of Kingdom of Tonqueen* (London, 1811), p. 663.

were created to produce a considerable volume of silks for garments and general tributary trading, but the quality had no change.²⁵¹ They therefore were the main Tonkinese silk suppliers for the Chinese, Dutch and English merchants.

Silks were the product of both handicraft and agriculture beginning with the planting of mulberry trees. In Cochinchina, the cultivation of mulberries became widespread in the regions of Thuan Hoa, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, and Qui Nhon.²⁵² Tonkin, where mulberries were mainly planted near the capital, was particularly well suited to silk production. The mulberry trees could feed eight cycles of silkworms per year while Bengal where silk also became important, produced a maximum of five to seven crops per year in the seventeenth century before the English imported new technology into the Bengal silk industry.²⁵³ In Tonkin, mulberries had the further advantage of growing in areas of hard ground, in the alluvial grounds of the Red River, which were unsuited to rice production to which the majority of the land was dedicated.

The blossoming of the cultivation of mulberries and silk weaving was the result of the developed agriculture sector, which readily met local food demands and allowed farmers to the luxury of employing their land for other purposes. Silk weaving, in fact, quickly became a traditional handicraft for low skilled families in Vietnam's villages. There were three main steps in producing the finished silk cloth product: sericulture, silk reeling and throwing, weaving and dyeing silk.²⁵⁴ As M. L'abbé Richard, an

²⁵¹ Nguyễn Thừa Hỷ, *Economic History of Hanoi in The Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Hanoi, 2002), p. 155-169.

²⁵² Trần, *Vietnamese History, part IV*, p. 206.

²⁵³ Lê Quý Đôn, 'Kiến văn tiểu lục' in 'Lê Quý Đôn toàn tập', tập IV, c.1777 [*Small Chronicle of Things Seen and Heard*] (Hanoi, reprinted 1977), p. 338; K. Hutkova, 'The British Silk Connection: The English East India Company's Silk Enterprise in Bengal, 1757-1812' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Warwick, 2015), p. 13.

²⁵⁴ See more detail in Hutkova, *British Silk Connection*, pp. 12-15.

eighteenth-century French traveller to Tonkin observed, mulberries there were ‘small shrubs, which are every year cut down...in the winter’ to help the new plant renew annually.²⁵⁵ There were two main periods of silk production each year: a significant ‘summer’ season between April and May and a ‘winter’ crop between October and November, which produced crops of lower quantity and quality. Foreigners thus arrived in Vietnam from May to July to collect the best silk while the winter products were cheap. The English, who first had to call at Bantam, and other places in the Spice Islands for spices and pepper had difficulty reaching Vietnam in May, and, as will be discussed in chapter four, rarely had the best opportunity to obtain silks. They often arrived there to find that their European competitors, with a better trading position and network, had already traded for these.

Europeans saw both Tonkin and Cochin-China as potential sources for silk in the seventeenth century. The Portuguese traveller, Tomé Pires, writing early in the sixteenth century, noted that Cochin-Chinese raw silk was ‘bigger and wider and finer taffeta of all kinds than there is anywhere else here and in our [countries]. They have the best raw silks in colours, which are in great abundance here, and all that they have in this way is fine and perfect, without the falseness that things from other places have.’²⁵⁶ Although this comment about the standard of Cochin-China’s silks very much inflated the importance and desirability of the product, since Pires was urging the Portuguese to develop trading connections with Vietnam, it nevertheless demonstrates that the silk was valued by Europeans and continued to be understood as an important South

²⁵⁵ A. Richard, ‘History of Tonquin’, [Paris, 1778], reprinted in J. Pinkerton (ed.), *A Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in all Parts of the World* (London, 1811), p. 740.

²⁵⁶ T. Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires: An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, Written in Malacca and India in 1512-1515* (London, 1944), p. 115.

Vietnamese product. In 1617 Richard Cocks, the chief factor of the English factory in Japan reported to London that Cochin-China could supply a large quantity of silk for foreign merchants.²⁵⁷ This report shows that the English in the early years of the Company understood the potential of Cochin-Chinese silks, even though theirs was indirect knowledge from the Japanese and Dutch in Hirado who traded with Cochin-China before the English. However, they had limited sources of information to recognise that silks were more abundant in Tonkin than in Cochin-China. Information from both European travellers and merchants showed that Vietnamese silks in the seventeenth century were mostly exported to Japan as a substitute for Chinese products as the China-Japan trade link was interrupted by political reasons. In 1627, Alexandre de Rhodes, a French mission in Tonkin stated silks were the most important commodities the Chinese and Japanese collected and transferred to Japan.²⁵⁸ In 1637, Vietnam could supply 3,000 piculs (Chinese kilograms) of raw silk.²⁵⁹ From 1641 to 1682, 40 per cent of Japan's imported silk was from Tonkin.²⁶⁰ Tavernier showed that 'the chief riches of the country of Tunquin consist in the great quantity of silks which they sell to the Hollanders, and other foreigners' in exchange for silver from Japan.²⁶¹ Silks played the role of a substitute for Chinese silks to supply Japanese demand in

²⁵⁷ 'Richard Cocks at Hirado to the East India Company in London, 1 & 14 January 1617', in Farrington, *Factory in Japan*, vol. 1, p. 558.

²⁵⁸ A.D. Rhodes, *Historie du Royaume de Tunquin*, (Lyon, 1651), [reprinted 1908] [Vietnamese translation], pp. 56-7.

²⁵⁹ Thành, *Vietnamese Overseas Trade*, p. 116.

²⁶⁰ S. Nara, 'Silk Commerce between Vietnam and Japan in the Seventeenth Century', in Hải Hưng province (ed), *Phố Hiến: The Centre of International Commerce in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Hung Yen, 1994), pp. 160-175, p. 166.

²⁶¹ J.B. Tavernier, 'A new and singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin, ...' in E. Everard (translated and published), *A Collection of several Relations & Treaties Singular and Curious of John Baptista Tavernier, Baron of Aubonne. Not printed among his first six Voyages* (London, 1680), pp. 13, 14.

exchanging for silver and became the most attractive Vietnamese commodity in the regional trade in seventeenth-century. Therefore, silks were the chief exported good and the critical reason promoting Europeans, especially the English to establish a trade with Vietnam in the period.

Tonkin and Cochin-China's commodities were not related to direct trade with Europe, but to successful trading in East Asia with Japan, China, and Southeast Asia and thus proved important to the EIC and its ambitions within the region. Vietnamese merchandise mostly served Asian orders, and the trade flourished as those products played the role of substitute goods even with their lower quantity and quality. The search for alternative goods led European companies to get involved in trade with Vietnam as one part of the intra-Asian trade to gather substitute goods and collect Chinese products from Chinese merchants sailing Vietnam regularly. The EIC mostly paid attention to the silk trade in Tonkin in the late century to collect substitute for the demand in Japan.

Foreign merchants in Vietnam in the seventeenth century

As a result of advantageous geographic, economic and political factors, both Tonkin and Cochin-China were attractive markets for regional traders and European companies in the seventeenth century. The preponderance of Chinese, Japanese, and later other European traders in Vietnam became the main encouragement for the EIC to voyage or establish trading relation there. The EIC started viewing Vietnam as a trading port with a supplementary role in its commercial link with Japan and China. Moreover, the activities of the Portuguese and Dutch provided useful examples for the EIC to follow

in building relations with Vietnam. The first information-gathering contact with Vietnam was by English factors in Hirado and then Bantam in the 1610s and 1620s. Further understanding came through visits to Vietnam by other English individuals in the following decades. They acknowledged that the best option to trade with Vietnam was in the context of regional trade which had established Vietnam as a supplementary factor in the intra-Asian network and then an intermediary to connect with mainland China from the south.

With its distinct geography, linking China and Southeast Asia, Vietnam had been the main station for Chinese traders over a lengthy period. Before the tenth century, Vietnam was a Chinese colony, supplying the Chinese Court with luxury goods.²⁶² When Vietnam gained independence in the tenth century, their commercial relationship was not interrupted, but developed with the key role played by the Tonkin Gulf on the trade route from Southern China to Southeast Asia, South Asia.²⁶³ Vietnamese traders also traditionally went to Canton for merchandising by both sea and land routes.²⁶⁴ Communities of Chinese merchants gradually grew up in both Tonkin and Cochin-China and became the most potent settlement of foreigners there in the seventeenth century due in part to the Chinese maritime prohibition policy and in part to the change from the Ming to the Qing dynasty. They mostly stayed at important ports or cities such as the capital Thang Long, Pho Hien (Tonkin) and Hoi An (Cochin-China).

²⁶² W.T. Keith, 'The Birth of Vietnam: Sino-Vietnamese Relations to the Tenth Century and the Origins of Vietnamese Nationhood' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1976).

²⁶³ Momoki, 'Dai Viet'; Li, 'A View from the Sea'; Whitmore, 'The Rise of the Coast'; W. Geoff, 'An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia, 900-1300 CE', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 40 (2009), pp. 221-265.

²⁶⁴ Pires, *Suma Oriental*, p. 115.

The Chinese existence in Vietnam was of greater historical significance as they were the most competitive merchants in the Vietnam-Japan silk trade, which encouraged European companies to try to participate in that trade.²⁶⁵ In the 1640s, the Chinese sent 28 ships from Tonkin and 94 ships from Cochin-China to Japan, more than had been sent from any trading ports in Southeast Asia.²⁶⁶ On these Chinese junks, various types of silk from Southern China, and musk arrived in Vietnam, and they became the principal re-exported commodities to Japan and Europe. Chinese traders also collected other Southeast Asian products from both Tonkin and Cochin-China. As W.J.M. Buch and Li argued, the Chinese loaded full the stock in junks when trading in Cochin-China with pepper from Palembang, Pahang, camphor from Borneo, and other regional goods (porcelain, ivory, wood) from other places in the South China Sea.²⁶⁷ It means that Cochin-China played a significant role both as a market in the area and as an intermediary for regional merchants for further trade. When the EIC arrived in Tonkin in the 1670s, the Chinese still kept their status and benefits as Tonkinese people had become used Chinese and Portuguese languages when trading with Europeans. Recognising this fact, in 1675 Gyfford asked the Bantam Council to send ‘a good honest Chinaman from Bantam who writes China well and is of a ready wit and apt for business’.²⁶⁸ This quote shows that the Chinese were important towards the EIC’s factory not only in Tonkin but also in Bantam as they worked for the Company and

²⁶⁵ H. Bugge, ‘Silk to Japan, Sino-Dutch competition in the silk trade to Japan, 1633-1685’, *Itiberario*, 13 (1989), pp. 25-44; I. Naoko, ‘Literati entrepreneur: Wei ZhiYan in the Tonkin-Nagasaki Silk Trade’ (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, National University of Singapore, 2009).

²⁶⁶ Li, *Nguyen Cochin-China*, p. 68.

²⁶⁷ W.J.M. Buch, *De Oost-Indische Compagnie en Quinam* (Amsterdam, 1929), p. 68, quoted in Li, *Nguyen Cochin-China*, p. 69.

²⁶⁸ IOR/G/12/17/3, *Letter from Tonkin to Henry Dacres and the Council at Bantam, 24 July 1675*, p. 168b.

helped in connection with Chinese merchants in the regional trade. The demand for a broker or interpreter who could understand Chinese clarifies the influence of Chinese merchants in Tonkin and the English desire to develop their trade with the Chinese there for the further aim of indirect connection with mainland China. Beyond that, this quote also indicates the fact that the English depended on brokers or interpreters who understood Chinese and therefore those brokers played a key role in the EIC activities in Tonkin and involved in the struggle between Tonkin factors. Although Chinese traders in Vietnam were competitors for the EIC in the silk-trade, they were helpful in helping the EIC to collect Chinese goods indirectly or become involved in indirect trade with mainland China. Vietnam thus was not only a pure market for Chinese business but also a depot where English merchants gathered Chinese products as they could not trade directly with mainland China because of the Manchu-Taiwan war.

The presence of Japanese traders together with Chinese traders in Vietnam (mainly in South Vietnam before the 1650s) also demonstrates the advantageous position held by this kingdom in the regional trading. There was some initial local anger about the first settlement of Japanese traders in Vietnam. Letters from the Nguyen Lords in the 1600s and 1610s, however, show that local government had invited them to Southern Vietnam.²⁶⁹ Japanese trade with Vietnam, especially with Hoian flourished with the *red seal* system in the early seventeenth century. With thirty-six *Shuin-Sen* ships arriving in Tonkin and eighty-four junks sailing to Cochin-China in the period

²⁶⁹ In 1601, Nguyen Hoang, the first Nguyen Lord sent a letter to Japanese government to settle a relationship between two countries. The English translation of this letter in K. Kawamoto, 'The international outlook of the Quang Nam (Nguyen) regime as revealed in Gainan Tsuusho', in Hoi An (ed.), *Ancient Town of Hoian* (Hanoi, 1991), pp. 111-112. From then to 1606, Nguyen Lord sent eight letters and two gifts to Japan while Tokugawa sent six letters to Cochin-China.

1604 to 1635, Vietnam thus took a ‘*prominent role*’ in the Japanese trade.²⁷⁰ Hoian (Cochin-China) had been known as a well-regulated entrepot, a warehouse with many kinds of natural and Southeast Asian commodities for Japan. Besides buying natural raw silk, the most prized good, the Japanese purchased yellow silk, spun silk fabric, damask silk, longzhao, aloeswood, calambac, sharkskins, black sugar, honey, pepper and gold.²⁷¹ However, one-third of those goods exported to Japan were not native Vietnamese products. They were from Cambodia (lacquer), Siam (deerskin), Brunei (camphor), Indonesia (nutmeg), Fujian (hocking) and Canton (velvet).²⁷² This meant that Southern Vietnam was a trading station in the East Asian world where Japanese dealers could purchase a full range of Southeast Asian goods from foreign salesmen trading in exchange for silver. Vietnam thus became an abundant source of Japanese silver, a resource that was vital for the EIC for financing its Eurasian and intra-Asian trade but required the Company first to break into the Vietnam-Japan trade.

The first European merchants to come to Vietnam were the Portuguese who based at the trading centre of Macao. Although they went to North Vietnam in the early sixteenth century, the Le-Mar war (1533-1592) obliged them to leave the country.²⁷³ From the early seventeenth century, they traded and introduced Christianity into

²⁷⁰ Innes, *Japan's Foreign Trade*, p. 58; Tarling, *History of Southeast Asia*, p. 467; Li, *Nguyen Cochinchina*, p. 62; Wheeler, *Cross-Cultural Trade*, p. 14.

²⁷¹ I. Seiichi, *Shuin-Sen Boeki-shi no Kenkyu, Ko Bun Do* (Tokyo, 1958), p. 242 quoted in Li, *Nguyen Cochinchina*, p. 66.

²⁷² *Ibid*, p. 78.

²⁷³ Nguyễn Thừa Hỷ, ‘Quần đảo Paracels và các nhà hàng hải Bồ Đào Nha trong thế kỷ XVI’ [The Paracels Islands and the Portuguese Navigators in the Sixteenth Century], *Tạp chí khoa học [Journal of Science]*, 3 (1998), pp. 30-42; Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Relations*, p. 19.

Vietnam.²⁷⁴ In Cochinchina, the Portuguese established their regular commerce, especially with Hoian to get silk, sugar, pepper, and calambac. They sold modern weapons such as guns and cannons to the Nguyen Lords (see supra). In 1626, they began their relationship with the Trinh Lords in Tonkin. Their ships from Macao travelled to Tonkin to purchase Chinese goods and natural raw silk to sell in Japan at a higher price. This relationship lasted until the 1660s with at least one Portuguese vessel sailing from Macao to Tonkin every year.²⁷⁵ Even the English recorded that in 1673 one Portuguese ship called Tonkin for trading.²⁷⁶ The triangular trade between Japan, Macao and Tonkin or the silk-silver trade as it was known supplied silver for the Portuguese for their Eurasian trade. It is noteworthy that although the Portuguese were blocked from operating in Japan by the *Sakoku Edict of 1635*, they still maintained the Macao-Nagasaki link as they owned ships to sail to Japan under the command of Chinese chief captains.²⁷⁷ The Portuguese activities in both the Tonkin direct trade with Japan (before 1635) and the triangular trade Macao-Tonkin-Japan (1635-1673) therefore paved the way for the EIC to become involved in the Tonkin trade as a part of the regional trade although they did not establish a factory there. They provided the first example of European traders using Vietnam in the East Asian trade without a factory. Whether

²⁷⁴ Nguyễn Văn Kiệm, *Sự du nhập của Đạo Thiên chúa giáo vào Việt Nam từ thế kỷ XVII đến thế kỷ XIX* [*The Intervention of Christianity into Vietnam from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries*] (Hanoi, 2001), p. 51.

²⁷⁵ G.B. Souza, *The Survival of Empire: Portuguese Trade and Society in China and South China Sea, 1630-1754* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 115-120.

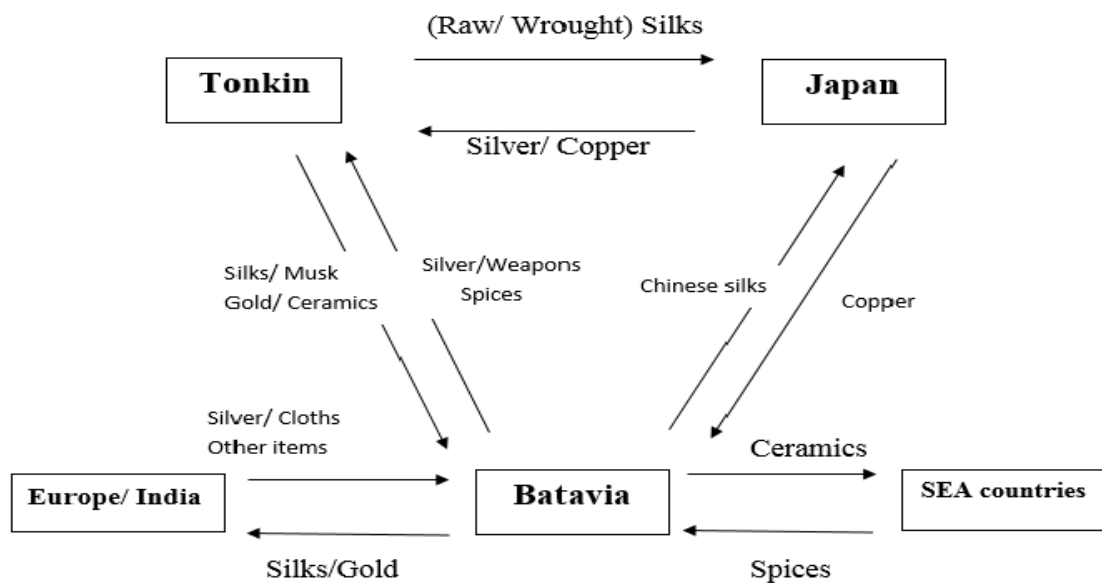
²⁷⁶ IOR/G/12/17/2, *The Tonkin factory, 21 March 1673*, p. 65a; Naoko, *Tonkin-Nagasaki Silk Trade*, p. 58.

²⁷⁷ M. Ribeiro, 'The Japanese Diaspora in the 17th century: according to Jesuit Sources', *Bulletin of Portuguese -Japanese Studies*, 3 (2001), pp. 53-83, p. 69.

supplying goods for direct or indirect trade, Tonkin's role remained the same: an intermediate station in East Asia with stores of substitute silks for Japan.

Beyond the knowledge of using Vietnam through voyaging regularly, the Bantam's factors who worked directly in the East Asian trading network learned more from the Dutch traders with the idea of establishing a factory in Tonkin. While the Portuguese focused only on the trading line Tonkin-Macao-Japan, the Dutch built a substantial intra-Asian commercial network with many trading ports, markets and warehouses to connect with the key market and utilise the regional system to supply capital themselves.

Figure 2.1 The Dutch intra-Asian trade model in the seventeenth century



Source: Hoang, *Silk for Silver, Vietnamese-Dutch Relationship 1637-1700* (Leiden, 2007) p. 126.

Using this network, the Dutch drew on the resources of Tonkin to help them in both the regional and the Eurasian trade. Dutch dealers had traded with Vietnam from Hirado in the 1610s with little or no success. However, instead of abandoning this venture as the EIC had done, profits from the silk-silver trade incentivised the Dutch to

continue sending ships to Cochin-China in the next two decades despite obtaining the little apparent gain.²⁷⁸ The year 1637 witnessed a new chapter in the Dutch trade with Vietnam as they established a formal relationship with the Tonkin Court. From then until the 1660s, they and the Chinese were the most competitive merchants in the silk-silver trade exporting goods from Tonkin to Japan.²⁷⁹ While almost all Tonkin silks (raw and wrought) were sent to Japan, a small part of silk, musk (from China), gold, and ceramics were taken to Batavia and then to the Netherlands. In this system, Tonkin participated in both the regional and Eurasian trade as its role was to sell silks in exchange for silver to cover the Dutch Asian trade in Tonkin, Siam, Java, Bengal and the Coromandel Coast. The operation of this system provided a stable source of silver until the late 1660s before the Japanese government prohibited the export of silver. From the 1670s, this system carried copper and even gold from Japan to Tonkin. At the height of the trade, the sale of Tonkin silks in Japan provided the Dutch with a profit of 100 or 120 per cent.²⁸⁰ In return, they carried back to Tonkin nearly 130,000 taels of silver per year.²⁸¹ Silk hence became the most exported commodity by the Dutch from Tonkin, and the silk-silver trade was the Dutch most successful model for business in East Asia.

As such, through the business activities of other merchants in Tonkin and Cochin-China, the English had fundamental knowledge of the attraction of Vietnam and how to get involved in the regional trade through Vietnam. Before the Tonkin factory

²⁷⁸ Li, *Nguyen Cochin-China*, p. 73.

²⁷⁹ Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, pp. 143-164; Naoko, *Tonkin-Nagasaki Silk Trade*, pp. 63-84.

²⁸⁰ Hoang, *Silks for Silver*, pp. 150-156.

²⁸¹ Hoang, A.T., 'Quốc tế hóa lịch sử dân tộc: Toàn cầu hóa cận đại sơ kỳ và lịch sử Việt Nam thế kỷ XVII' [Internationalize Natural History: Global History in the Early Modern Period and Vietnamese History in the 17th Century], in Hoang (ed.), *Historical Heritage and Innovative Approaches*, (Hanoi, 2011), pp. 247-282, p. 259.

was established, there were two groups of overseas English who contributed information for the EIC. As chapter 1 demonstrates, those in Hirado acknowledged the presence and importance of the Chinese and Japanese settlements in Vietnam and the potential of Vietnam in the regional trading system in the first decades of the century. They, thus, were the main actors in providing the EIC with information and developing its knowledge about the East Asian trading network. This section demonstrates that the English factors in Bantam during their activities until the mid-seventeenth century witnessed the success of the Dutch in Tonkin with the silk-silver trade. They therefore became information suppliers in the 1660s to help the Court of Minutes in London to consider and choose Tonkin as an intermediate station in its commercial strategy in East Asia in the 1670s.²⁸² The establishment of the Tonkin factory in 1672 and the EIC broader commercial strategy using this factory represented an upgraded version of the VOC Tonkin trade model. There exists, however, little in the way of primary documentary evidence to show precisely how the Court of Minutes came to know about the potential of Vietnamese trade or how they learned from the Europeans trading there. Most sources record that until the 1660s, the EIC was still considering supplementary places to support its primary market, Japan. Although, as we shall see, the Bantam factor, Quarles Browne provided guidance and advice to use Tonkin, this kingdom was only chosen because Samuel Baron, a half Dutch and half Tonkin gave a recommendation in 1670. All evidence indicates that London had limited knowledge about Vietnam and East Asia and that the Tonkin branch was only an experiment to allow English servants to learn more about the East Asian trade.

²⁸² IOR/E/3/87, *Letter Book IV (1666-1672)*, London commission 20 September 1671, p. 479.

Overseas individuals and the process of establishing the EIC Tonkin factory

This section discusses in greater depth how English and free skilled merchants in overseas areas contributed to the EIC's process of settling factories in East Asia. It examines their role in collecting knowledge of commodities, potential markets, and trading chain to help the EIC to create a long-term strategy concerning East Asia in the seventeenth century. The thesis then evaluates the advantages of the EIC's policy of using experienced servants in distant areas and how London depended on their knowledge in the decision-making process. Although, as discussed in chapter one, English factors in Japan and Bantam in the 1610s and 1620s knew about Vietnam, their knowledge was limited and imprecise for the EIC to consider Vietnam as a potential trading post in the English trading system in East Asia. The difference between having sufficient knowledge to engage with the trade but not enough information to establish a factory seemed to be important and was only overcome later in that century. Choosing intermediate markets, therefore, reflects not only the role of English overseas factors but also the importance of knowledge about commodities, trading network in the EIC's commercial strategy in East Asia in the late seventeenth century.

Vietnam, especially Tonkin only really appeared in the EIC's strategy in the last quarter of the century as one part of the general trading plan with Japan and China. From the 1630s, London acknowledged that East Asian countries had closed trading relationships and that any English trading yield was to come from the regional trade. They thought 'that without the Company can obteyne a trade to China, the trade to Japan will not bee worth the following for that the profitt wch is expected is not by the commodities to bee sent from England to Japan, but from China to Japan, and soe from

thence to the Southwards and home.’²⁸³ The EIC’s holders therefore partly understood the role of regional trade in East Asia with the flow of regional commodities and the hard situation of English goods there. Based on this evaluation, after receiving the new Charter in 1657, the Company restarted trade in East Asia by preparing the ships *London* and *Discovery* for Japan and China, but no result since it was too late for the monsoon trade.²⁸⁴ In the period 1658-1665, overseas agents in Bantam, especially Quarles Browne, the former chief of the Cambodia factory (1651-1656) played the most prominent role in supplying information and devising a plan for the EIC’s return to East Asia. Since Browne was one of the few overseas staff who had a general background knowledge about this area, he was made an agent in Bantam in early 1658. The EIC was planning to establish a factory in Japan and granted him the position of chief of the proposed branch with a salary of £200 per year.²⁸⁵ Browne immediately recommended a project to establish factories in Cambodia and Tonkin to support trade with Japan, but the Court of Directors remained unpersuaded without better information in 1658.²⁸⁶ As his plan was refused, the factory in Japan could not be founded and Browne was therefore failed to become chief of the proposed factory (but still worked for the EIC). This process demonstrated that London was unwilling to return to East Asia without better knowledge about this area.

²⁸³ IOR/B/15, *Court Minutes (4 July 1632-3 July 1633)*, 13 March 1633, pp. 227-28.

²⁸⁴ E.B. Sainsbury (ed), *A Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company, 1655-1659* (Oxford, 1916), p. 157.

²⁸⁵ IOR/B/26, *Court Book (1657-1665)*, 12-13 January 1658, p. 54; 15 October 1658, p. 140; Sainsbury, *Court Minutes 1655-59*, pp. 213, 289. Browne started working for the EIC from 1646 as a purser, and until 1650 he became a factor in Bantam before was granted a chief of Cambodia factory from 1651 to 1656. Due to his experience, although the proposed factory in Japan was stopped in 1658, Browne still worked for London and became Bantam agent in late 1663.

²⁸⁶ IOR/B/26, *Court Book*, 20 October 1658, p. 142; Bassett, *Factory at Bantam*, p. 311.

In 1661, Browne offered new plan to trade with East Asia, which involved the establishment of factories in Cambodia, Japan, China, and Tonkin (this proposal again was submitted in 1664 as London required Browne a plan to trade with East Asia).²⁸⁷ His proposal, however, was over-ambitious and mostly focused on Cambodian commodities and their attraction for the Chinese and Japanese as he had worked there as a chief factor from 1651-1656. Nevertheless, his knowledge about the commodities available in Tonkin, Japan, China and how to create a regional trade network was too poor to persuade the Court of Directors. Regarding Tonkin trade, he wrote that ‘the Dutch had a great trade for Japan, all sort wrought silk ffitter for that country bring them silver, then what is made in China: a great quantity of raw silk is made, fine great quantity of musk.’²⁸⁸ Browne only provided a general information about silk trading in Tonkin where the Dutch had a great profit from 1637, but gave no details of what kinds of silks were suitable for Japan or Europe, or about the availability of other commodities. Nor did he really set out how to establish a factory or how to trade in East Asia in a period when China and Japan were closed to foreigners. However, that London denied that proposal does not mean that the EIC gave up the plan to return East Asia. It simply lacked sufficient and persuasive information to make the EIC consider East Asian trade viable at that point. Therefore, London became actively involved in finding knowledge about East Asia. It ordered agents in Amsterdam to gather data about the Dutch trade in Japan and East Asia and information about which products might be

²⁸⁷ IOR/G/21/4B, *Java factory, A Relaçon of the Scituation & Trade of Cambodia, alsoe of Syam, Tunkin, Chyna & the empire of Japan from Quarles Browne in Bantam*, pp. 4-8. This is the copy of the letter dated 31 December 1664. In this report, Browne also stated that silks were made in some provinces in Cochin-China and sent to Cambodia.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 8

profitable in trading in East Asia for the EIC in 1663.²⁸⁹ London tried to gain knowledge from various sources to create a comprehensive picture before deciding which country could serve as a suitable go-between for trade and to prepare for the setting up of new branches. This is in sharp contrasts to what London had done in the early years of the Company as at that point London depended completely on the knowledge provided by its overseas factors and ignored advice from outside merchants such as Adams in Japan.

In mid-1663 the EIC again appointed Browne as a Bantam agent and instructed the Bantam Council to link small markets in the South China Sea by annual voyages rather than by setting up factories as Browne had suggested. London proposed that Bantam ‘making a tryall in a ship of or. Owne, of y^e markets of Syam, Cambodia & Tunkeene and to touch at Macao, where for certeyne lyes a mass of China commodities, ..., y^e Portugalls not daring to transport them from thence for feare of y^e Dutch.’²⁹⁰ In London’s opinion, the knowledge received was not sufficient to establish factories and maintain them, and its alternative method was to follow the Portuguese in making voyages in East Asia to collect substitute products to reduce the expense of establishing factories and risks of overseas trade. Above all, this decision demonstrates London’s active involvement in the process of returning to East Asia by experimenting just as it had done as the early years of the Company with annual trading voyages. It also confirms the dependence of London on Browne and other agents in Bantam since London merchants had no substitute option or first-hand knowledge with which to make

²⁸⁹ IOR/E/3/86, *Letter book III (1661-1666)*, *Company to Amsterdam*, 30 January 1663, p. 130; Massarella, *A world elsewhere*, p. 348.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid*, *Company to Agent and Factors at Bantam*, 30 June 1663, pp. 132v-136; *Commission and Instructions to Quarles Browne, appointed Agent for Bantam*, 1 Jul 1663, pp. 136v-138.

a final decision. London, thus, commissioned Browne to prepare a full report on the possibilities of trade in East Asia before making a final decision.²⁹¹ Browne, however, rejected London's idea of only sending voyages to the South China Sea, and still stressed the importance of intermediate factories in Siam, Cambodia (where they would obtain deer hides, sappan wood) and Tonkin (where raw, wrought silks were available) to supply Japan. He was even willing to establish factories in those places.²⁹²

Browne's negotiation with London illustrates the contradictory opinions between London and overseas factors about the trade in East Asia, which was created from their difference in experience, viewpoint and knowledge of the area. Moreover, the emerging situation highlighted the key role of distant factors in the EIC's decision-making process and their freedom given to these factors to drive the EIC's overseas trade independently without instructions from London. On the other hand, it also shows that Browne and overseas agents were beyond the control of London as they tried to put in place another plan to trade in East Asia although London prevented them from carrying out the new project. This contradiction therefore illustrated that it was hard for the EIC to control overseas factors although in this case London succeeded ultimately in preventing the plan's execution. However, the viability of Browne's plan was never tested since the second Anglo-Dutch war (1665-1667) and Browne's death in July 1665 at Batavia meant that it was never put into action.²⁹³ Given Browne's lack of knowledge of and comment on the political situation and trading policies of Japan and China and

²⁹¹ Ibid, *Company to Agent and Factors at Bantam*, 29 February 1664, pp. 184v-190.

²⁹² IOR/E/3/28, *East India Company Original Correspondence (1663-1665)*, Quarles Browne and Council at Bantam to the East India Company in London, 31 December 1664, pp. 191-193; Bassett, *The factory in Bantam*, pp. 316-17; Massarella, *A world elsewhere*, p. 349; 'Chinese, Tartars and Thea or a Tale of two Companies: The English East India Company and Taiwan in the late Seventeenth Century', *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3 (1993), p. 399.

²⁹³ IOR/E/3/29, *Bantam to Surat*, 28 July 1665, No. 3061, p. 1.

the particular commodities of Tonkin, it seems probable that it could not have worked. He knew the market for commodities and the intra-Asian trade network, but even he lacked other aspects of knowledge fundamental to successfully establishing EIC trade in East Asia.

After the second Anglo-Dutch war, the EIC restarted the plan to return to East Asia, but it still considered the possible locations for factories. The new commercial development between Bantam's Sultan and Luzon island coupled with the promising results of the negotiation between the EIC and Spain led to the EIC's idea of using Manila again as a go-between to trade with China.²⁹⁴ In 1668, the EIC formed a Committee to consider how to trade in East Asia with Japan, Manila and other parts of the South Sea and to collect useful information about ships, stocks, commodities, and seasonable business in those countries.²⁹⁵ London considered that the place to establish factories in East Asia was to serve the primary aim of procuring silver to cover the Eurasian trade and therefore focussed on the two options of Japan and Manila. This deliberation also illustrated the EIC's desire of building a massive global network to link China, Japan with Manila and onwards to Spanish America. Accordingly, the Manila Committee was established in 1669 to negotiate with the Spanish Court about the EIC's trade with Manila. However, the expectation of founding a factory in Manila came to nothing because no trading agreement could be reached with the Spanish. Instead, London had to consider Siam, Cambodia, and Taiwan as possible locations for factories. Unable to decide on a site, due to differences of opinion, London again

²⁹⁴ Furber, *Rival Empires*, p. 272; Quaison, *English Country Trade*, pp. 26-28. From indirect trade of Sultan, English factors in Bantam could sell Indian cloths to Manila and Mindanao.

²⁹⁵ IOR/B/30, *Court Minutes (17 April 1667 – 15 April 1670)*, 22 May 1668, p. 271.

requested advice from Bantam and Surat.²⁹⁶ London still lacked knowledge about East Asian trade as experiences from the 1610s seemed to have proved insufficient, and the previous Bantam suggestion of regional trade was uncertain. Not ready to establish a supplementary factory, the EIC again sent the ship *Advance* to Cambodia, Taiwan and Japan in 1670 for a trial voyage although Cambodia was at war with Cochin-China and Taiwan conflicted with mainland China.²⁹⁷ Meanwhile, Bantam wanted to use Taiwan to link with mainland China as the two vessels, the *Bantam* and *Pearl* gained relatively good results in 1670, and the Dutch had been expelled from there in 1662.²⁹⁸

London's activities of asking advice from different sources and trying a further experiment in making trading voyages in East Asia highlight London's responsibility during the process of returning to the region. These activities not only demonstrate English attempts to gain more experience in the trade there, revealing their limited knowledge about this area; but also show that London was still considering the idea of establishing supportive factories there. Consequently, London was slow to make a decision about finding alternative markets in East Asia and did not do so until 1671 when it received reliable confirmation from external factors.

London's decision to choose Tonkin as a supportive branch for Japan only became public with the appearance of Samuel Baron, a free merchant in Tonkin and

²⁹⁶ IOR/E/3/87, *Letter Book IV (1666-1672)*, *London to Bantam*, 30 January 1669; *London to Surat*, 10 March 1669, pp. 213, 235.

²⁹⁷ L.A. Struve, *The Ming-Qing conflict, 1619-1683: a Historiography and Source Guide* (Ann Arbor, 1998); T. Andrade, *How Taiwan became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 2005); F. Wakeman, 'China and the Seventeenth-Century Crisis', *Late Imperial China*, 7 (1986), pp. 1-26; Reid, 'The Seventeenth-Century Crisis', pp. 644-45; Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, pp. 410-411.

²⁹⁸ IOR/G/21/4B, *Bantam to Madras*, 7 April 1670, pp. 9-10; Massarella, Chinese, Tartars, and Thea, p. 400; Bassett, *The Factory at Bantam*, p. 322.

East Asia during that period. He was born in Tonkin around 1640, and was the son of a Dutch trader, Hendrik Baron, ‘a long-term resident’ of Tonkin and his Tonkinese wife.²⁹⁹ Following his father into trade, Baron had a background in both Tonkin and European trade in the late century. He appeared for the first time in 1670 in the EIC’s records with a suggestion to the EIC’s ambassador in Paris of how to open trade with Japan.³⁰⁰ The appearance of Baron, with his knowledge about Tonkin and its trading situation, was timely and fitted well with the EIC’s aim of identifying a supportive branch for a Japanese market. He was sent as the second factor in the voyage to Japan with a salary of £120 per year and the role of acting as an adviser in the English negotiations with East Asian countries.³⁰¹

The EIC trust in Baron to establish a factory in Tonkin in 1671 was noticeably different from the EIC’s behaviour towards Adams in Japan in the 1610s. Both were free merchants, and both had direct and valuable information about distant trade in helping London to decide further trade in East Asia. However, while Adams faced problems of trust and personal relationships, and raised a disagreement about the way the EIC traded in Japan, Baron simply supplied information to London and did not raise any arguments about the way in which the EIC developed overseas trade. Baron’s presence, therefore, urged the EIC to make a final decision on establishing factories in

²⁹⁹ Dampier, *Voyages and Discover*, p. 51. Information about Baron was so complex since he tried to show himself colourful in different situations. In the Court Minutes, his information was stated as ‘whoe informed us that he was borne at Tonqueen, his grandfather by the father’s side a Scotchman, his father a Dutch man, and his mother of the race of the Portugalls, hath bin in the Dutch service, well acquainted with Tonqueen, Tywan, Japon, and China.’ More discussion about this broker can be seen in Winterbottom, *Company culture*, pp. 38-49; ‘Self-Fashioning and Auto-Ethnography: Samuel Baron’s Description of Tonqueen (1686)’, *Journeys*, 14 (2013), pp. 85-105.

³⁰⁰ IOR/B/30, 3 March 1670, p. 104.

³⁰¹ IOR/B/31, *Court Minutes (19 April 1670 – 18 April 1672)*, pp. 302-344.

East Asia. This again shows London's dependence on merchants with first-hand knowledge of the region, and on the importance of knowledge in the EIC's process of expanding the trade in East Asia.

By April 1671, the EIC had made a firm choice, selecting Tonkin as a go-between rather than Cambodia which was in political crisis.³⁰² By September 1671, preparations for the three ships *Return*, *Experiment*, and *Zante Frigate* were nearly finished for the voyage to Japan, Taiwan and Tonkin. In a letter to Bantam in late 1671, London explained that their information about the type of goods available in Japan, Tonkin and East Asia had in large been gathered 'by comparing former proceedings in Japon wth the pticuler comodities vsual sent thither & advising with some experienced therein'.³⁰³ This meant that London decided to set up factories and send goods to East Asia based on the previous knowledge of English factors in Hirado in the 1610s, the suggestions of Browne and Baron and information collected from the Dutch. It shows how carefully the EIC prepared to return to East Asia in this period and the value it placed on the information about overseas trade experienced merchants provided. The role of skilled merchants was still valued, and the EIC's policy of using skilled factors in the progress of settling and expanding the trade in East Asia had not changed in the late seventeenth century.

Conclusion

The situation of Tonkin and Cochinchina in the seventeenth century created new opportunities for the EIC and other European companies to establish relations with them

³⁰² IOR/E/3/87, *Company to Bantam*, 7 April 1671, p. 444.

³⁰³ Ibid, *London to Agent and Council at Bantam*, 20 September 1671, pp. 236-237.

and to make profits there. However, both were ideal only for regional trade either as intermediaries or depots and were not suitable for direct Eurasian trade. In short, the opportunity to connect with mainland China and to control sea-routes in the South China Sea, together with the existing trade of the Dutch in Vietnam were the main factors in influencing the English to establish a trading relationship with Vietnam.

English factors in East Asia had recognised to a degree the advantages and role of Vietnam in the intra-Asian trade in the 1610s by both direct and indirect approaches. However, the EIC's knowledge about this trading area was limited until the 1660s. London only recognised the potential of Tonkin in response to the suggestion of Bantam agents and to the recommendation made by Samuel Baron who played a similar role to that of William Adams in Hirado in the 1610s. As a result, the activities of English overseas individuals in the next decades in Tonkin and Cochin-China represented their attempt better to understand the possible contribution this kingdom could play in the EIC's commercial strategy. The emergence of figures such as Browne and Baron in the 1660s also illustrated the EIC's policy of using a network of overseas informers who had much more knowledge and experience than London about the nature of distant trade. This situation was not different from the 1610s with distantly located staff strongly affecting the EIC's decisions about trading with transoceanic areas, but the trust in these traders seemed more significant.

CHAPTER 3. THE TONKIN FACTORY (1672-1697) AND THE ENGLISH EXPERIENCE OF MANAGEMENT AND DIPLOMACY

This chapter examines how in establishing and maintaining the Tonkin factory the English drew on all available sources, including its own earlier experience in Tonkin, information from Bantam agents in the late seventeenth century. By analysing the interrelationships between London, Bantam agents and Tonkin factors, this chapter firstly explores the EIC endeavours to manage the principal-agent problem created by long-distance trade.³⁰⁴ Hence, the study identifies the complicated relationship between a small overseas factory (Tonkin) and a central power (London) and headquarters (Bantam/Madras), how the interrelationship between those positions affected the EIC structure in long-distant areas, and the result of the EIC attempts to manage overseas factories in the seventeenth century. The chapter also investigates the role of individuals in collecting knowledge and establishing and maintaining the factory. Critical attention is given to their diplomatic activities. London had only limited knowledge about both the politics and economics of the area and faced delays in delivering and receiving information on account of the vast distance between it and Tonkin. It could therefore only issue more general instructions. Company employees on the ground in Tonkin, by contrast, had direct, daily interaction with the Tonkin Court which provided them with invaluable information for establishing the Company's factory. The chapter, thus,

³⁰⁴ The principal-agent problem was the popular issue of all trading companies in the early modern period which was created by their transoceanic trade. That was the problem of how to trust and control overseas factors when they worked in far-flung areas, how to create a good cooperation between the Director of Companies and their agents, how to avoid issue of 'private trading'. See more information in A. Carlos, 'Principal-agent problems in the early trading companies: a tale of two firms', *The American Economic Review*, 82 (1992), pp. 140-145.

argues that the EIC employees on the ground in East Asia played the leading role in creating a trading relationship with Tonkin. And the Tonkin Court, especially Mandarins who worked directly with the English became the main information-suppliers for Tonkin factors before that information was sent to Bantam or London for further considerations and decisions.

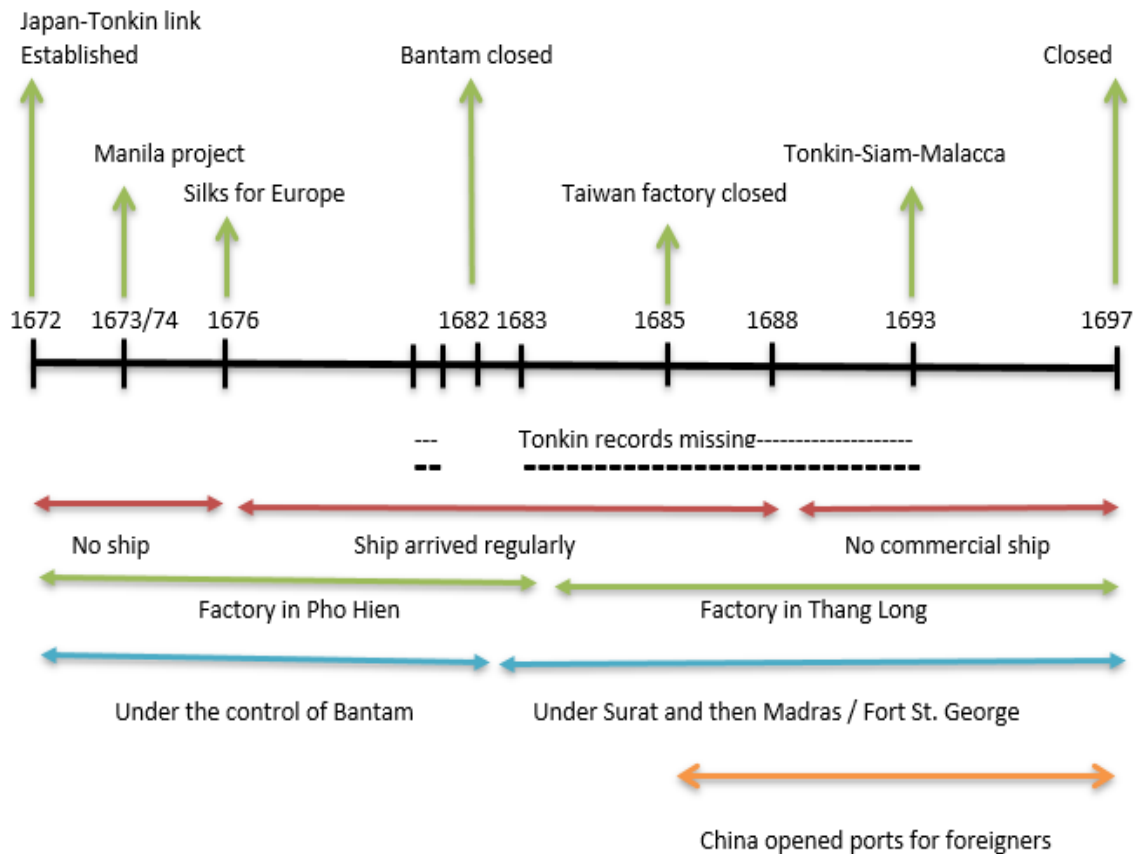
The chapter uses sources found in the British Library's East India Company G series, which primarily relate to the Tonkin factory, and the E series concerned with communication between Tonkin, Bantam, and London. Although these sources provided rich evidence in certain areas of the daily trading activities, data about labour management in Tonkin was limited as it was a small factory under the role of Bantam with few factors. Moreover, the Court books (B series) show how little attention London paid towards this branch. Similarly, the series provide little information on the relationship between overseas servants and the Company, as they do not include private letters, which might show their kinship or friendship relationships. Nevertheless, reports and letters by various Tonkin factors to London and Bantam have been found in the records of Java factory (G series), and together these sources present the complex and controversial story of the Tonkin factory's development.

General information about the Tonkin factory

The maintenance of the Tonkin factory can be divided in three different periods: 1672-1675, 1676-1688 and 1689-1697. The first and last periods were the weakest and poorest times during which the English had a very restricted commercial relationship with the

Tonkin Court. The EIC's trade was dynamic from 1676 to 1688 with a warehouse in Thang Long, the capital, and the Eurasian silk trade.

Figure 3.1. Timeline of the Tonkin factory (1672-1697)



In the first period, the Tonkin factory was isolated due to the EIC's failure in Japan and the third Anglo-Dutch war (1672-1674). Henry Dacres, the Bantam's chief factor announced the information to Tonkin in 1673 that 'since the Dutch have had 7 ships cruseing off this roade, that noe vessel of ours [the English] or the French can come in...'.³⁰⁵ Because the Tonkin factory was designed to exchange silk for silver in the regional trading system, this isolation made it useless. William Gyfford and Thomas

³⁰⁵ IOR/G/12/17/2, *Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to William Gyfford and factors at Tonkin, 1 May 1673*, p. 81b.

James, the chief and second factors of the Tonkin factory wrote to Bantam in August 1673 that ‘it is now neere fifteen months... there hath bin noe opportunity to send us either from thence, Japon or Tywan, soe thar we are altogether in doubt how that designe prospers.’³⁰⁶ That there was no connection with Bantam, Japan or Taiwan made the Tonkin staff nervous, and they decided to make a voyage to Macao, Siam and Manila in 1673-1674 to maintain the branch and find supportive markets for Tonkin. However, this voyage proved disastrous as the Spanish seized all the goods and threw the English traders in prison causing Dacres to blame Gyfford for private trade and demanded the closure of the Tonkin factory. Dacres reported to London in 1674 that ‘it will be a little purpose to continue that [Tonkin] factory since we cannot have any trade for Japan, but very requisite to get clear of long engagements, and to gather in all their debts,, to withdraw that factory so soon as many order shall arrive.’³⁰⁷ As this quote illustrates, and as the previous chapters discussed, the existence and role of the Tonkin factory greatly depended on the EIC’s situation in Japan since silks from Tonkin were to serve Japan in return for silver and the EIC did not need to expend bullion brought from Europe. The EIC thought that that trade would be profitable as China forbade direct Chinese trade with Japan from the early seventeenth century, and especially after the Qing ‘*maritime ban*’ in 1655.³⁰⁸ Expecting to obtain the same success in trade with Japan as the Dutch and Chinese had done, London ordered Tonkin factors both to establish a factory and to

³⁰⁶ IOR/G/12/17/2, *William Gyfford and Thomas James at Tonkin to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam*, 6 August 1673, p. 74b.

³⁰⁷ IOR/G/12/13, *Extract of Letter from the Agent in Bantam*, 5 October 1674, p. 352.

³⁰⁸ L.M. Cullen, *A History of Japan, 1582-1941, Internal and External Worlds* (Cambridge, 2003), chapter 3. *Japan and its Chinese and Europeans Worlds, 1582-1689*, pp. 18-62.

clarify the possibility of supplying silks for Japan and Europe.³⁰⁹ In a letter to Taiwan in 1672, Gyfford and James expressed their hopes that the *Zante Frigate* would ‘receive a stock of silver & cashies’ from Japan for ‘the more efectual carrying on of the silk trade’ and argued that the Tonkin factory ‘must be supplied with stock to buy silk suffitient for Japon...’.³¹⁰ English individuals understood the importance of alternative silver from Japan and the dependence of the Tonkin branch on the English situation in Japan or its existence was to serve the main aim of Japanese trade. Consequently, as Japan refused to trade with the EIC, Tonkin’s envisaged role was useless; and it further lacked capital for its trade as London had sent no silver to Tonkin.³¹¹

The Tonkin factory therefore barely survived in its early years, but after London envisaged a different purpose for it – namely not simply to support Japan but as a key player in the silk trade between Tonkin and London (the Eurasian trade), it enjoyed a dynamic period from 1676 to 1688 when English ships from London (and Bantam) regularly came to the factory. However, in this period Tonkin not only played the role of a regular market for London in the transoceanic trade, it became an intermediary in the regional network to collect silk, musk and other Chinese commodities indirectly and maintain the English expectation of connecting with mainland China. Tonkin allowed English merchants to build a warehouse in the capital after 1682 and the Company had a great opportunity to expand their trade in the country. Interestingly, the improvement in the situation of the Tonkin branch was in contrast to the EIC’s general situation in East

³⁰⁹ IOR/E/3/87, *Letter Book IV (1666-1672)*, London commission 20 September 1671, p. 479; IOR/E/3/33, *The EIC Original Correspondence (1672-1673)*, Tonkin to Company, 7 December 1672, pp. 15, 25.

³¹⁰ IOR/G/12/17/1, *William Gyfford and Thomas James at Tonkin to Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan*, 7 August 1672, p. 22b.

³¹¹ IOR/E/3/87, *Company to Bantam*, 21 September 1671, pp. 475-476. Stock in the *Zant frigate* was valued at £2,016:18:6 with a half of broadcloth.

Asia, as other factories in Siam and Taiwan, and even the key factory in Bantam all closed. The new Sultan of Bantam favoured the Dutch rather than the English and expelled the EIC in 1682.³¹² The Siam factory proved to be fruitless and the Taiwan branch in 1681 also faced difficulties due to the Manchu-Taiwan war and, the small profit in trade resulting from the local government monopoly.³¹³ The English were forced out of Amoy (the Southern coast of China) when the Manchu conquered this area in 1680.³¹⁴ Consequently, the Tonkin factory became increasingly important as the last branch in East Asia to keep in contact with mainland China due to its geography and age-old political and trading relations. It was expected to replace Taiwan in purchasing Chinese products for Europe as well as copper and tutenag for India.³¹⁵

The rebellion of three Feudatories in Southern China (especially in Yunnan, Guangdong, Fujian) from 1673 to 1681 resulted in difficulties in the Tonkinese-Chinese overland trade, however. Tonkin's advantages were also short-lived because the quantity and quality of Tonkin silk were comparatively low, so the increase of Bengali goods and the new policy of China from 1684 to open fifty coastal ports in Fujian,

³¹² Bassett, *Factory at Bantam*, pp. 418-19. In 1682, in Bantam, the old King and his son had a dispute and the final win belonged to the new King. Since the EIC supported the old King, they had to leave Bantam while the VOC replaced the English there.

³¹³ Dhiravat, 'The English East India Company in the Seventeenth Century Ayutthaya: Trading Networks and Local Contexts' in A. Farrington and N.P. Dhiravat (eds.), *The English Factory in Siam*, pp. 1-21; Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia* (London, 1970), pp. 357-374; Morse, *Trading to China*, vol. 1, p. 46; J.B. Eames, *The English in China: being an Account of the Intercourse and Relations between England and China from the year 1600 to the year 1843 and a Summary of later Developments* (London, 1974), p. 34. English trade in Taiwan was hard since the Zheng family monopolized most commodities such as sugar, hide; and the English could not collect silks for Japan because Taiwan was at war with mainland China.

³¹⁴ E.R. Pritchard, *The Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations, 1750-1800* (Washington, 1936), p. 68. R.M. Puga, *The British Presence in Macau, 1635-1793* (translated by M. Andrade) (Hong Kong, 2013), pp. 61-62.

³¹⁵ IOR/E/3/90, *Letter Book VII (1682-1685)*, p. 508.

Canton, Zhejiang, and Yuntaishan for foreigners meant that Tonkin silk became less desirable.³¹⁶ The EIC quickly re-accessed Amoy and Canton and provided London with large quantities of Cantonese wrought silk, damask, and satin.³¹⁷ The EIC's investment in Tonkin therefore reduced, and its commercial ships from London to Tonkin were interrupted from 1683 to 1688 and stopped during the Nine Years' War (1688 – 1697), although they still maintained a small number of English ships to China, especially to Amoy.³¹⁸ Consequently, both Tonkin's roles as an intermediary and a regular market were no longer necessary.³¹⁹ Like other supportive branches in the South China Sea, Tonkin was only exploited in the EIC's factory system in particular periods to serve the important aim of connecting London with Chinese and Japanese products, and this function became unnecessary as core markets linked together.

The last five years (1693-1697) were the most miserable time for the Tonkin factory in regards to both commercial and diplomatic relationships with the Tonkin Court. Inspectors from Madras found that the Tonkin factory was difficult to run without money or support from London and Madras. The old factors (Keeling and

³¹⁶ Chaudhuri, *The Trading World*, pp. 346-47. Z. Gang, 'Shaping the Asian Trade Network: The Conception and Implementation of the Chinese open Trade Policy, 1684-1840' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 2006), p. 3. In 1670 Bengal silks were unsuitable for English manufacturers and innovative technologies were applied there. As a result, Bengal's exported silks to London sharply improved after 1673 with a price of £1.15 per pound.

³¹⁷ Pritchard, *Anglo-Chinese Relations*, p. 114; Y-C.T. Simon, 'Trading for Tea: a Study of the English East India Company's Tea Trade with China and the related Financial Issues, 1760-1833' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Leicester, 2003), pp. 42-43; Bassett, 'The EIC in the Far East', p. 153.

³¹⁸ The *Pearl Frigate* from Madras in 1693 was to investigate Tonkin trade while the *Mary Bowyer* called to close the factory and collect the rest of the debt and goods in Tonkin. Morse, *EIC Trading with China*, appendix 2. From 1684 to 1687, London sent 5 ships to Amoy and 3 during the war to develop the trade with China.

³¹⁹ This idea was agreed by previous scholars such as Ma, Bassett, and Hoang who researched the British appearance at Tonkin in the seventeenth century. However, each scholar had a different evaluation about the influence of China towards the English decision to withdraw the Tonkin factory.

Lemuel Blackmore), with support from local Mandarins, were uncooperative with the new staff from Madras, Richard Watts and Richard Farmer.³²⁰ The factory had to borrow considerable sums from local merchants, the Dutch and the King to keep trading and manage daily life before it was finally closed in 1697.³²¹

To sum up, the Tonkin factory existed for twenty-five years, but it only held a remarkable role as an essential part of the EIC's regional and Eurasian trading networks for just over ten years. For twelve years of its existence (1672-1675, 1689-1697) this factory was isolated, without any extended strategy from London because of the two English wars with the Netherlands and France. Isolation undermined the Company's regular trade in Tonkin and created problems of management as overseas factors had opportunities to undertake illegal trade. Moreover, the character of the monsoon trade, which meant English ships took around eighteen months to finish a voyage from London to Asia and back, caused all of the instructions and orders from London to be out of date, and thus of little use in the daily changing circumstances of overseas trade. As a result of the problems of timing, distance, and the isolation of the Tonkin factory, the role of overseas individuals was crucial to day-to-day operations with Tonkin's people, knowledge gathering and creating the fundamental diplomatic and trading relationships. The Tonkin factory thus was a remarkable example of how the EIC engaged with distant trade in challenging periods, how London managed the administrative problem; how the EIC's overseas servants connected and settled their

³²⁰ IOR/G/12/17/9, *The Tonkin factory*, 6 December 1693, 26 April 1694, pp. 336a-b, 357a.

³²¹ The Tonkin factory's first loan was from Tonkin merchant Monaca Dabada with 600 tales of silver, then also 300 tales from Nicholas Vermeur, the Dutch free merchant. Until December 1695, they were in debt of 1200 tales. In 1697 the factory borrowed Ungja Phaw 200 tales. IOR/G/12/17/9, 6 September 1694, p. 372a; 25 May 1695, p. 428b; 1 August 1695, p. 431a; 7 October 1695, p. 433a; 16 May 1697, p. 473b.

interrelationship, and how they contributed to the EIC's expansion in East Asia in the seventeenth century.

Finally, it is significant to note that one of the critical reasons that London insisted on keeping the factory over the twenty-five year period was for its indirect connection with China. Tonkin facilitated the EIC's commercial strategy in East Asia in the seventeenth century, as it had no direct relationship with mainland China. The Tonkin branch aimed to provide substitute silks for Japan, but behind this role was the idea of linking with Chinese merchants and collecting Chinese goods. For example, the Tonkin factory was kept in 1676 to sell Tonkin silk to Europe, find an opportunity to link with Japan again, and partly to collect Chinese products (see chapter four). After the Nine Years War, although the EIC debated the maintenance of the Tonkin factory because its trade in both pelang and raw silk was no longer so valuable, London nonetheless decided to permit the factors in Tonkin a great deal of independence, instructing them to 'sell and dispose all your goods, and to invest your money' as London had no chance to send instruction and order to Tonkin during the war period.³²² The reason for the permission to continue trade rather than to close the factory related to the EIC's continued desire to contact mainland China via Tonkin. Although China opened ports for Europeans after 1684, the EIC still found trade with China difficult because the Chinese remained wary of the EIC's previous support for Taiwan. English ships called at Amoy or Canton a few times, but no regular relationship was established with the Chinese government. London even considered using Lemuel Blackmore, the second factor of the Tonkin factory in the voyage to China in 1695 to further attempt to connect with China even though he and William Keeling had operated illegal private

³²² IOR/E/3/92, *Letter book IX, London to our Chief & Council at Tonkin, 18 February 1690*, p. 150. Pelang or peling, ling (lĩnh in Vietnamese term) was one kind of Tonkinese wrought silk, quite thick.

trade in Tonkin in 1690-1691.³²³ In London's view, despite severe problems faced by the Tonkin factory, Tonkin's advantageous geography and traditional relations with Chinese merchants, was always an option to help the EIC to contact mainland China.

Administering the Tonkin factory

The problem of principal agents, especially of their recruitment and management in overseas trade was one of the EIC's most crucial issues in the seventeenth century.³²⁴ Due to the problems of transportation and communication resulting from the distances involved in and the character of the monsoon trade, the Company could not directly administer either personal conduct or factors' activities satisfactorily, and its distant factors were, as Chaudhuri put it, 'wholly beyond the control' of London.³²⁵ While the connection between Asia and London was limited and sometimes completely interrupted due to the character of overseas trade and the English wars with Netherlands and France, English traders tried to keep their own contacts in Asia by using family connections and creating their kinship and friendship networks in both Asia and Europe.³²⁶ The EIC Director in 1681 revealed that due to the EIC's policy of allowing its factors to carry relatives to overseas areas, 'there are many hundreds of families [of

³²³ IOR/E/3/92, *London to Fort St George*, 6 March 1695, p. 194.

³²⁴ Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, p. 74; V. K. Seth, 'The East India Company- a Case Study in Corporate Governance', *Global Business Review*, 13 (2012), pp. 221-238, p. 227.

³²⁵ Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, p. 39; N. Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York, 2004), p. 21.

³²⁶ Games, *The Web of Empire*, p. 9; E. Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Woodstock, Oxon, 2011), p. 27; D. Veevers, 'The Early Modern Colonial State in Asia, Private Agency and Family Networks in the English East India Company' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Kent, 2015), pp. 139-179.

English merchants]’ who stayed and traded in Asia.³²⁷ That English factors created their own networks in Asia and traded privately affected the EIC commerce as they used the Company’s official capital and property to serve their private trade. To address this issue, the EIC applied some solutions of making a decent contract which allowed servants to carry out a private trade, putting an entry-level fee on employees or bonding to limit the Company’s cost of employees.³²⁸ The EIC also checked ships returning to Europe, used trading spies, employed honest and experienced factors, wrote letters of instruction, and established ‘presidencies’.³²⁹ However, no managerial strategy or practice solved illegal private trade, cooperation, and interlopers satisfactorily.³³⁰ In recognising itself ‘virtually powerless’ to stop the malfeasance, the EIC gradually allowed private trade in India, which expanded English trade in Asia by the late seventeenth century.³³¹ However, the allowance of private trade and the lack of supervision encouraged Company employee opportunism. For example, agents in the

³²⁷ Sir J. Child, *A Treatise Wherein is Demonstrated* (London, 1681), p. 23. In the research about agency and family network, Veevers showed us a lot of examples about the connection between factors, agents in both Bantam, Madras, especially from the period of Thomas Chamber to Thomas Pitt (1660s-early eighteenth century).

³²⁸ Seth, *The EIC*, p. 227; G.M. Anderson, R. McCormick, R.D. Tollison, ‘The Economic Organisations of the English East India Company’, *Journal of Economic Behaviours and Organization*, 4 (1983), pp. 221-238; S. Hejeebu, ‘Contract Enforcement in English East India Company’, *Journal of Economic History*, 65 (2005), pp. 496-523.

³²⁹ R.F. Unger, *Employee Opportunism in two Early Modern British Trading Companies* (Master Thesis of Old Dominion University, 2015).

³³⁰ About interloper, see P. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford, 2011), p. 44.

³³¹ R. Mukherjee, *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company, a Sociological Appraisal* (New York, London, 1974), p. 80; Stern, *The Company-State*, p. 45. With this policy, there were good deals between the Company’s servants and free merchants which created the expansion of the English trade in Asia from the late seventeenth century.

Bantam factory undertook illegal and private trade on their own and even at the Company's expense in 1663.³³²

The Tonkin factory offers a rich example of the EIC's broader administration issues, regarding both the struggle between London and overseas servants, the EIC's endeavours to manage overseas factors and factories, and the situation of private trade by overseas factors by the late seventeenth century. Moreover, this research provides evidence for the friendship and kinship connections of overseas factors with London, other servants, and especially with local people to explain how the EIC gained knowledge and created relationships with Asia. To clarify, the following section discusses two main subjects, (1) the relationship between London, agents in Bantam or Madras, and the Tonkin factory; and (2) the conflict between the Tonkin factors to become a chief factor. From then, the research seeks to find a fact that London was still hard to control overseas factories and servants; its policy of using experienced staff in distant trade; and the role of overseas agencies towards the EIC from Asia.

The research argues that before 1682, the Bantam factory, a headquarters of the EIC in East Asia, not London took a central power in the relationship with outlying factories in East Asia as a result of the accrued influence of the Bantam Council, and London's limited knowledge and ability to administer overseas branches. The Bantam Council not only recommended Tonkin as a place to settle the supportive factory in the 1660s but also made suggestions to London, and sometimes intervened in and decided

³³² IOR/E/3/84, *Letter Book I (1626-1669), The Company Evidence Taken, 19 June – 1 July 1663*, pp. 140-144. In 1663 London discovered that there were a lot of misdemeanours and wrong things done by John Hunter, Henry Page, Peter Cooke, and other factors in Bantam. Bantam was claimed as 'a hotbed of corruption against the Company'.

the employees in Tonkin.³³³ Due to the Bantam factory's power and position, the argument between the Bantam Council and new factors from London seems unsurprising, and it occurred before the settlement of the Tonkin factory in 1672. London chose William Gyfford, an experienced company factor, as master of the Tonkin factory (salary of £120/year), Thomas James as the second factor (£60/year) and Samuel Baron as adviser and inspector of English branches in East Asia (£120/year).³³⁴ The *Zante Frigate* sailed from London to Bantam with those factors on April 1672 to obtain more goods and information before sailing to Tonkin. In Bantam, while they considered postponing the voyage to Tonkin until 1673 to wait for information from the English in Japan as they recognised the dependence of Tonkin trade on Japan, the Bantam Council decided to send the *Zante Frigate* quickly to Tonkin to catch the monsoon and find more opportunities for their trade.³³⁵ Eventually, they arrived in Tonkin on the *Zante* in mid-July 1672, but Gyfford reported to London that he would not take responsibility for any miscarriage or '*private interest*'.³³⁶

Through the case of Gyfford who had considerable experience working for the Company, this study reveals not only the EIC's policy of using long-serving staff, and

³³³ For example, in 1675, London approved Bantam request of two writers for the Tonkin factory; and in 1677 with 1 factor, 2 writers. IOR/B/29, *Court Minutes*, 4 November 1675, p. 365; Sainsbury, *Court Minutes 1677-79*, 13-19 July 1677, p. xvii.

³³⁴ IOR/B/31, *Court Minutes (1670-1672)*, 7 June, 30 June, and 23 August 1671; IOR/G/21/7, *Java factory (1677-1707)*, p. 22; IOR/E/3/33, pp. 11-12; Winterbottom, *Company Culture*, chapter 1. The EIC paid 160 [Spanish] dollars for S. Baron to work as go-between and informer, and even an inspector. All information about W. Gyfford can be seen in H. Yule (ed.), *Diary of William Hedges during his Agency in Bengal, as well as on his Voyage out and return Overland (1681-1687)*, vol. 2 (London, 1887), pp. clxxxv–cx.

³³⁵ IOR/E/3/33, *S. Baron in Bantam to the East India Company in London*, 4 June 1672, p. 42; Ma, *English trade*, pp. 61-64. Although Baron was ordered to go with Gyfford to Tonkin in 1672 by London, he was late and was then unable to go to Tonkin.

³³⁶ IOR/G/21/6, *Java factory (1670-1702)*, *Bantam Consultations*, 20 May 1672, no. 3646.

their connections, but also wider issues in the relationship between London and Bantam in restructuring distant factories. Gyfford started working as the EIC's factor from 1657 in the Kásimbazár factory (Cossimbazar, West Bengal), and then Macassar (Makassar, Indonesia) until coming back to England in 1665.³³⁷ Believing in his experience, London ordered him to be a temporary member of the Bantam Council before sailing to Tonkin in 1672. He was also allowed to 'take his sister on the *Zant Frigate* to the South Seas' in the same year.³³⁸ During the process of establishing the Tonkin factory, Gyfford made a good connection with Baron, the EIC's adviser in Tonkin and East Asia who had a rich knowledge about trade networks and commodities this area obtained from working with his father in Tonkin (see chapter two). After establishing the Tonkin factory, Gyfford showed his role on finding knowledge about commodities and trade networks of this kingdom. He also operated a project to find alternative silver for the EIC by sending a voyage to Manila in 1673. On the perspective of the competition between the EIC's factories in East Asia, Gyfford's attempts to link with Manila acted against Bantam. If this voyage was successful the position of Tonkin was more important than that of Bantam in the EIC East Asian trading network as Tonkin would have a regular supplier of silver from both Manila and Japan enabling it to become the English key factory in the area. When the venture proved disastrous, Dacres was therefore quick to blame Gyfford for private and rash trade and required London to recall him in 1675.³³⁹ However when back in London, Gyfford was supported as he was

³³⁷ Yule, *Diary of W. Hedges*, p. clxxxvi-clxxxvii.

³³⁸ IOR/B/31, *Court Minutes* 23 August 1671.

³³⁹ IOR/B/29, *Court Minutes (1666-1680)*, 4 November 1675, p. 365; IOR/G/12/17/3, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 3 June 1676, p. 153a; Ma, *English Trade*, pp. 204-205. Ma suggested that Keeling accused Gyfford, but she provided no evidence to support this argument. The Court Minutes showed that 'we [Court of

the EIC's long-serving employee and London was keen to limit the influence of Dacres and the Bantam Council in East Asia. After considering the journal of the Tonkin factory from 1672 to 1675, the Court of Directors decided that Gyfford did not do any illegal trade before and during his time at Tonkin and therefore that he could continue as Tonkin's chief.³⁴⁰ In that record, from December 1672 Gyfford showed that Tonkin had potential commodities to create a trading link with other countries in East Asia, especially Japan and Manila in exchange for silver.³⁴¹ Consequently, sending a voyage to Manila was Gyfford's attempt to find supportive silver for the EIC, maintain the Tonkin factory and expand English trade in East Asia.³⁴² London thus sent a letter in 1676 to inform the Councils in Bantam and Tonkin the decision of keeping Gyfford.³⁴³ Gyfford was also supported by his friends, Baron from East Asia and Robert Hooke in London.³⁴⁴ Moreover, his experience of Asian trade was vital to the Company,

Directors] find how Mr Gifford and Mr James have drove a greater trade in Callicoes for Tonquin.... Gyfford be removed as Chief, and sent for home, ...'.

³⁴⁰ IOR/B/29, 23 October 1676; Sainsbury, *Court Minutes 1674 – 1676*, p. 368. 'The Committees having seen a Journal of Mr Gifford and Councell lately come to their hands, giving a large account of all transactions at Tonqueen, relating to the commerce of those parts... Gifford be continued Chiefs at Tonqueen'.

³⁴¹ IOR/G/12/17/1, *Gyfford to Company*, 7 December 1672, pp. 46a-48a.

³⁴² IOR/B/34, *Court Minutes 1676-1678*, 2 November 1677; Sainsbury, *Court Minutes 1677-1679*, p. 105. The EIC decided that all private trade of Gyfford was before the prohibition made in 1671 and his salary be made up to the time of his arriving home from Bantam. IOR/B/34, *Court Minutes*, 22 February 1678.

³⁴³ IOR/E/3/87, *The Court to Bantam*, 19 October 1676, p. 349.

³⁴⁴ H.W. Robinson, W. Adams (eds.), *The Diary of Robert Hooke, M.A., M.D., F.R.S., 1672-1680: Transcribed from the Original in the Possession of the Corporation of the City of London* (London, 1935), 29 May 1677, 20 August 1677, 22 September 1677, 1 October 1677; Winterbottom, *Company Culture*, pp. 42, 46. The relationship between Gyfford and Baron started as they worked for the Tonkin factory in 1672, and lasted quite long until Gyfford was Governor of Madras. In 1685 Gyfford invited him to work for Madras in the negotiation with mainland China for opening a factory there. Information about Robert Hooke can be seen in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford DNB), Robert Hooke (1635-1703).

especially in the EIC's voyages to Tonkin and East Asia.³⁴⁵ Consequently, in December 1680 London sent him back to Asia and granted him a promotion as the Governor of Fort St. George.³⁴⁶ As such, although the Bantam Council, particularly Dacres had an argument with Gyfford and blamed him for illegal trade in 1675, the Court of Minutes supported him and even granted him more power in the key factory in Madras.

The Gyfford's incident reveals two insights; firstly the complicated relationship between London and the Bantam factory during the process of building influence in the Tonkin factory as London tried to protect its choice (Gyfford) in the competition with Bantam Council; and secondly the EIC's policy of using experienced factors. It showed that English servants had relatives or friends in both London and overseas areas, and the EIC needed their skills and knowledge of the distant trade.³⁴⁷ Sooner or later they would again serve the EIC in London or different destinations in Asia after being dismissed.³⁴⁸ The issue of London's dependence on long-serving servants was also reflected through another Tonkin employee, active at the same time as Gyfford, Nicholas Waite. He had a kinship with Lord Longford, brother of Gerald Aungier, an administrator in Bombay (1672-1677).³⁴⁹ He was ordered to run the Macao-Manila project in 1673 but was captured and put in prison by the Spanish in Manila. With his kinship in Bombay and

³⁴⁵ For example, in 1677, he sent a letter to the English captain in the ship *Flying Eagle* to make sure the success of this voyage. IOR/E/3/37, *Advice from Gyfford to Abel Paywe for his Voyage to Tonkin*, 22 February 1677, pp. 193-194.

³⁴⁶ IOR/E/3/89, *Letter book VI (1678-1682)*, *Commission to W. Gyfford as Agent and Governor at Fort St George*, 29 December 1680, pp. 157-158; *King Charles II to W. Gyfford, Agent & Governor at Fort. St George*, 12 January 1681, pp. 167-168.

³⁴⁷ Veevers, *Private Agency and Family Networks*, p. 142.

³⁴⁸ Chaudhuri, *The EIC*, pp. 87-88.

³⁴⁹ IOR/E/3/34, *East India Company Original Correspondence (1673-1674)*, *Nicholas Waite at Ayutthaya to Gerald Aungier at Surat*, 23 December 1673, p. 301; Bassett, *The Factory at Bantam*, pp. 333-334. Waite claimed this relationship in his letter to Bombay to advise Aungier to build a factory in Siam.

experience of working in Asia, after being held as a prisoner, he was paid £60 for his time and was asked to work again as a factor in Tonkin, or anywhere Bantam thought fit.³⁵⁰ Eventually, he became Bantam's agent and was then dismissed due to his misconduct at Batavia in 1683.³⁵¹

After the incident with Gyfford, the Tonkin factory continued to be subject to the (often) conflicting aims of London and the Bantam Council. London still had little power over distant factories in comparison with Bantam although it tried to send factors to Tonkin to manage the factory directly. The conflict continued immediately after Gyfford was recalled in 1675. In the same year, London ordered Benjamin Sangar, a Bantam agent, to become Tonkin's new chief, while the Bantam Council contradicted this order and had sent him to Siam to establish a factory.³⁵² Rather than Sangar, Dacres wanted Thomas James as a temporary chief and William Keeling as the second factor in Tonkin.³⁵³ We have no evidence to investigate who supported Sangar from London or why the Bantam Council put James in charge of Tonkin. It maybe that he had been the second factor (supporting Gyfford) in Tonkin from 1672. The conflict between the

³⁵⁰ IOR/B/35, *Court Minutes 1678- 1680*, 24 October, 31 October, 2 November, and 18 November 1679; Sainsbury, *Court Minutes 1677-79*, pp. 305, 307, 310, 312.

³⁵¹ IOR/E/3/90, *London to John English on broad the Beauford, regarding affairs at Batavia*, 23 October 1682, pp. 124-125. It is interesting that Waite and other servants of the Old Company worked for the New Company as forerunners after being dismissed. However, he [as President of Surat factory from 1699] was 'the most intemperate and unscrupulous, turned every engine against the Old Company and its servants, ..., to make capital of the native excitement about piracy, to charge that crime upon his rivals.' See Yule, *Diary of William Hedges*, p. cxl.

³⁵² IOR/B/29, 4 November 1675, p. 365; IOR/G/21/6, *Java factory (1670-1702)*, Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to Thomas James in Tonkin, 5 June 1676, pp. 67-68. In the letter to Surat date 13 February 1675, B. Sangar singed as one among members of Council at Ayutthaya. See IOR/E/3/35, *Hamon Gibbon, Benjamin Sangar and Fitch Nadham at Ayutthaya to Gerald Aungier and Council at Surat*, 13 February 1675, no. 4075, pp. 117-18.

³⁵³ IOR/G/12/17/3, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 3 June 1676, p. 153b; *Tonkin general*, 1 July 1676, p. 159b.

Tonkin factors occurred quickly in late 1676 as the Tonkin Council claimed that James ‘being sickly and crasie whereby, very unfit to undertake the troublesome management’ needed to be recalled, and a new chief factor was required.³⁵⁴ Interestingly, the requirement of the Tonkin factory to change chief factor showed that although James was the principal factor and took responsibility of writing reports to Bantam and London, his power was weak within the Tonkin Council, and consequently he was asked to leave the position by other factors. It meant that while the Bantam Council contradicted orders from London, the Tonkin factors themselves were capable of denying orders from Bantam. However, the Bantam Council insisted on keeping James as it found no reason to dismiss him and had no replacement from London.³⁵⁵

In 1678, the administrative issue in Tonkin continued to be complex with open competition arising between old staff and new employees from London.³⁵⁶ John Blunden, a mercer from London, was ordered to replace Keeling in the role of the second factor in late 1678 since London expected that Blunden’s knowledge and skill in the silk industry would help the factory during the developing period of the Eurasian silk trade.³⁵⁷ Although London’s decision of sending a new factor to Tonkin was foremost to improve the local silk industry rather than find a way to manage the factory, it directly affected the role of Keeling in Tonkin and the structure of the Tonkin factory. The Tonkin Council was glad about the arrival of Blunden to help with the silk trade but

³⁵⁴ Ibid, *The Tonkin factory*, 11 December 1676, p. 181b.

³⁵⁵ IOR/G/12/17/4, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 29 May 1677, p. 202b.

³⁵⁶ IOR/B/29, 1 August 1677, 8 August 1677; IOR/G/12/17/5, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 5 June 1678, pp. 226b-227a; IOR/E/3/88, pp. 464-65. George Tash, Thomas Sheppard and Lemuel Blackmore went to Tonkin by mid-1678. Their salary was £10 per year. G. Tash was a remarkable evidence of opposing London’s decision as London sent him to Taiwan, but from Bantam he transferred to Tonkin himself.

³⁵⁷ IOR/B/34, 3 August 1677, 5 September 1677; IOR/G/12/17/5, *London to Tonkin*, 16 December 1678, p. 245b; IOR/E/3/88, *Letter book V*, 5 October 1677, p. 465. Blunden was paid £40 per year.

did not believe his possibility of management and approve London's decision to discharge Keeling's position.³⁵⁸ The conflict between Tonkin factors around Keeling and Bluden, however, did not last too long because on 24 March 1679, Bluden died. It seems that the weather in Tonkin at that time between spring and summer was not good for new foreigner and Bluden died after being sick.³⁵⁹ After the death of Bluden, Keeling tried to get back his power in Tonkin. He wrote to London directly in 1679 that 'Mr John Bluden whereby y^e second place here is become vacant in respect. I [Keeling] have continued ever since y^e Hon^{ble} Comp^{as} hath been settled here. Therefore entreate...jusdicious considerarion & favour relying wholly on you...for my advancement & promotion of y^e second plac as being the nearest to it in the factory having before y^e arrival of Mr Blunden...'.³⁶⁰ Keeling argued that he had worked for the factory from the early days and had achieved the position of the second factor before Bluden had arrived in Tonkin, and as a result, he required more assurances to make him the second in charge after Bluden's death. Keeling's letter shows clear issues: 1) the experience and knowledge of Keeling in trade with Tonkin and East Asia, 2) the desire of Keeling and overseas factors more generally to improve themselves on the ground to gather different benefits in trade in Asia.

The Bantam Council also reacted to London's activities and the death of Bluden by reasserting the Tonkin factory's staffing structure in mid-1679. It asserted that James worked as the chief, Keeling was the second factor to keep go-down (warehouse), Ireton kept disbursement, Styleman and Tash kept a journal and disbursement of servants'

³⁵⁸ IOR/G/12/17/5, 18 December 1678, pp. 245a-b.

³⁵⁹ Ibid, 24 March 1679, p. 250b.

³⁶⁰ IOR/G/21/7A, *Java factory 1679-1683, William Keeling in Tonkin to Sir Nathaniel Herne in London (extracts)*, 24 December 1679, p. 46.

wages and household stuff, Sheppard was a steward, and Blackmore helped in writing and keeping go-down.³⁶¹ Other new staff from London, George Tash, Lemuel Blackmore, and Thomas Sheppard were still on the Council as their first job was a writer and could not affect the role of Keeling and other previous factors in Tonkin.³⁶² Accordingly, that Keeling asked for position in the Tonkin Council and the Bantam Council settled a new Council in Tonkin showed that London still faced difficulty to control overseas factories and servants. Interestingly, from 1676 to 1679, the Bantam Council itself ordered significant replacements with different agents after Henry Dacres was dismissed in July 1676. Respectively, Arnold White, Abel Payne, Robert Parker from London became the chief agent of the Bantam factory in a very short-time (a round one year) before Francis Bowyer, the third factor during the periods of Dacres and A. White, took control in December 1679.³⁶³ It means that as London tried to re-structure the factories in Bantam and Tonkin, the English factors there also reacted if possible to keep their power and benefit. The relationship between London-Bantam-Tonkin therefore was noticeable as London wanted to change while the Councils in Bantam and Tonkin wanted to maintain their position. It again showed the 'beyond control' situation of overseas factories more generally. London once again failed to administer overseas factories due to the influence of distant factors and factories.

The struggle among the Tonkin factors was complicated and unforeseeable with three different groups centred on Keeling, James, and Blunden. While the Bantam Council supported James; London backed Blunden but his task failed due to his sudden death. However, the materials which remain show that both James and Blunden did

³⁶¹ IOR/G/12/17/6, *21 July 1679*, p. 262a.

³⁶² IOR/B/34, *1 August 1677*, p. 294.

³⁶³ Bassett, 'Factory at Bantam', pp. iii, iv, 390-401.

not become actively involved in the struggle to gain power in Tonkin. Their appearance was closely related to instructions from London or the Bantam Council while we found no evidence from their view to protect their position and power as Keeling did. It showed that there were several groups of shareholders in London competing to control the Company and they were the main reason for the instability of the EIC and its problem of weak management towards overseas factories and servants. By contrast, Keeling's faction refused both requirements from Bantam (complaining about James in 1676) and London (disputing Blunden's appointment in 1679 and asking power after Blunden's death). The position of Keeling thus raised a question of how he obtained the power and which emergence led him to join in this tournament. In 1678 he was reported by James for 'being negligent, and unfaithful' and Blunden replaced his position in the same year, but he was not dismissed and still took a very important job of disbursement.³⁶⁴ As the EIC's documents showed none of Keeling's kinship or friendship (as Gyfford, James or Blunden), the most compelling reason seems to have been his relationship with local people. Keeling was one of the longest-serving staff in Tonkin having arrived there in 1672. Thus, he had considerable knowledge about this kingdom; and built relationships with native people, especially in the most important period of the English diplomacy towards Tonkin Court (1672-1682). Their gift-diplomacy was active and effective in this period, in which many times Keeling operated the job of sending gifts to the King or local Mandarins (including the King and Prince's Dispatchers, the Governors of Thang Long and Pho Hien, their secretaries). The appearance of his Tonkinese wife in Tonkin records in 1693 also shows his particular

³⁶⁴ IOR/G/21/7, *Tonqueen to Bantam*, 16 December 1678, p. 35; IOR/G/12/17/6, 21 July 1679, p. 261b.

connections to Tonkin.³⁶⁵ It seems that he was thus secured by the Governor of Hien, Le Dinh Kien, who prevented Madras' inspectors from investigating Keeling in 1694-1695. With those ties, Keeling played a crucial role in the English relationship with the Tonkin Court, and consequently, he gradually rose through the Tonkin factory hierarchy. Keeling's case thus demonstrates how English overseas factors built their connections, and consolidated their power in distant areas, to become important parts of the EIC in the seventeenth century. They created themselves as 'central powers' in overseas factories, and that situation challenged the EIC and was a reason to explain why London found it hard to control outlying factors and factories.

The conflict among Tonkin staff continued as Keeling became interim chief, due to his seniority in Tonkin by re-accusing James and forcing him to sail to Bantam in December 1681.³⁶⁶ It was the second time James was charged to leave the position in the Tonkin factory (the first was in 1676), and Keeling was successful in this accusation as his power base had increased. The letter of the Tonkin Council, signed by James, to Bantam in 1681 explained quite clearly this event as James could not control the factory satisfactorily and he was forced by Keeling to move to Bantam. 'The Chief [James] unwilling to disort the Hon^{ble} Comp^a service abruptly without the order at least your mission yo is now forced to take his passage for Bantam to known Mr Keeling hath to charge him with all for on easier former hee cannot know his charge now bee left in a capacity to justifce himself.'³⁶⁷ It demonstrated two issues in the relationship between English factors, firstly the extant conflict between them and secondly the increasing

³⁶⁵ IOR/G/12/17/9, *The Tonkin factory*, 4 November 1693, p. 335a.

³⁶⁶ IOR/G/12/17/7, *The Tonkin factory 1681-1682*, pp. 277b-279a; Ma, *English trade*, pp. 169-170.

³⁶⁷ IOR/G/21/7A, *Letter from Thomas James and Council in Tonkin*, 15 December 1681, pp. 108-114, p. 112.

power of Keeling over the years. In January 1682 Keeling explained more clearly the reason for this replacement. All issues related to the fact that James used 33,000 tales of silver of the factory to exchange for Tonkinese cash at a high rate and then invested in pelang (Tonkinese wrought silk) with an high price through the factory's existing broker, Domingo while the Dutch obtained this product with a cheaper deal.³⁶⁸ Keeling disagreed with James both on the issues of using the interpreter, Domingo and on investing in unsuitable products at a high price. Interestingly, James's report to London about the potential of Tonkinese silk in November 1680 can be seen as another reason for his discharge by Keeling. In that letter, James illustrated that the quantity and quality of Tonkinese silk were not as good as Chinese products.³⁶⁹ This information not only undermined the role of the Tonkin factory in the East Asian trade network but also his position in the factory. It seemed that Keeling (and possibly other factors) wished to protect the role of the Tonkin factory and his own ambition in connections with Tonkin, and therefore discharged James. After this change, both London and the Bantam Council tried to intervene in the Tonkin factory, but agents from Bantam quickly got success while London's opinion came late due to the problem of timing and distance of overseas trade. The Bantam Council sent William Hodges on the ship *Tonqueen Merchant* to become the chief in July 1682. In August 1682, Keeling again became the second factor with disbursement.³⁷⁰ As such, from 1676 to 1682, the Bantam Council intervened at least three times and changed the Tonkin factory's staffing in 1676, 1679, and 1682 to maintain its influence there. Although Keeling had power and ambition

³⁶⁸ Ibid, *Letter from William Keeling in Tonkin, 16 January 1682*, pp. 190-194, pp. 191-92.

³⁶⁹ IOR/G/21/7A, *Letter from Thomas James and Council in Tonkin, 1 November 1680*, pp. 38-43, p. 39.

³⁷⁰ IOR/G/12/17/8, *14 August 1682*, p. 296a.

based on his relationship with local people, he could not succeed in the infighting against Bantam's dominance.

After the interference of agents from Bantam, arguments between Hodges and Keeling occurred continuously.³⁷¹ While Hodges preferred Domingo who worked for the factory from 1672 as a translator, Keeling wanted a Dutch free merchant, Michael de Cruz. Hodges complained to the Bantam Council that Keeling was uncooperative and prevented the factory from using good labour in late 1682: 'Mr Keeling prevented us [Hodges and George Tash] for y^e future and little hope of prevailin with Domingo or any other worthy...'.³⁷² Therefore, he dismissed Keeling and forced him to move out of Tonkin to Batavia, but was unsuccessful due to London's interference.³⁷³ In detail, after receiving the news of Keeling replacing James to become Tonkin chief in December 1681, London quickly supported Keeling in a letter to Tonkin dated October 1682.³⁷⁴ Through the ship *Smyrnaote*, this letter was dispatched to Tonkin in August 1683 as Hodges had replaced Keeling's position (August 1682) and wanted to discharge him to Batavia (December 1682). London's letter changed the conflict situation in Tonkin completely as it helped Keeling to retake the chief role in Tonkin as Hodges had no support as the Bantam factory was closed in 1682. London stated that 'if our agents and council at Bantam should have displace Mr Keeling from being chief at Tonqueen as it will be done without consent, so we do disapprove this order and hereby order and

³⁷¹ Dampier, *Voyages and Discoveries*, p. 102. Dampier evaluated that 'the chief of the factory [Tonkin - Keeling] was little qualified for the station he was in, was less fit for any undertaking: and the men ought not to run inconsiderately into new discoveries or undertaking, yet where there is a prospect of profit'.

³⁷² IOR/G/21/7A, *Letter from William Hodges and Council in Tonkin, 27 December 1682*, pp. 183-189, p. 186.

³⁷³ Ibid, pp. 299b, 304a, 370a-b; IOR/G/21/7A, *Letter from William Hodges and Council in Tonkin, 12 January 1683*, p. 199; Ma, *English Trade in the SCS*, pp. 176-178.

³⁷⁴ IOR/E/3/90, *London to Tonqueen, 2 October, 4 October 1682*, pp. 83, 85.

appoint the said Mr Keeling to be the chief of that factory'.³⁷⁵ London attempted to prevent the agents in Bantam from imposing its power on the Tonkin factory as it stated that London disapproved any decision from Bantam to discharge Keeling.

After the Bantam factory closed in 1682 and Keeling retook the chief position in Tonkin with support from London in mid-1683, London's attempts to manage the overseas factory system and the conflict between the Tonkin factors changed with advantages for London's side. Due to the missing materials from the Tonkin records (G series) from 1683 to 1693, it is difficult to understand what took place in this period. However, brief records of the Java factory do help to illuminate the events that took place. London tried to reduce the role of the Bantam factory from May 1682 as the Committees Shipping considered using Bombay as the centre of shipping in East Asia rather than Bantam and English ships from Tonkin and other places in East Asia had to pass Bombay before sailing to London.³⁷⁶

In Tonkin, Keeling complained about Hodges, and blamed another employee, Tash for using the Company's capital to trade with Tonkin brokers, corresponding with the Dutch, and using Domingo as an interpreter with a high salary while the trade was decreased.³⁷⁷ Therefore, Keeling dismissed Tash and Domingo in March 1684.³⁷⁸ By contrast, other factors blamed Keeling for mistakes in both business and behaviour. Tash charged him with replacing the factory's interpreter Domingo, although he worked

³⁷⁵ Ibid, London found no evidence to discharge Keeling as other Tonkin factors required. Therefore, London ordered all staff to serve and respect Keeling as the main chief of the factory. However, Court of Directors took a little consideration about the Tonkin factory and there was no information of the discussion directly about Keeling and the struggle in Tonkin.

³⁷⁶ IOR/B/37, *Court Minutes (11 April 1682- 18 April 1684), 26 May 1682*, p. 11.

³⁷⁷ Ibid, *Tonqueen general from Mr. Keeling, 7 January 1684, 26 December 1684*, p. 90.

³⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 90.

well and had good relations with local salesmen.³⁷⁹ As Domingo stopped working for the English, they faced more difficulties in dealing with Tonkin weavers directly and lost 4,000 taels of silver as Tonkin brokers were bankrupt.³⁸⁰ Tash thought that it was hard for staff to work under Keeling's direction as 'Keeling has acted in all thing according to his own fancy, having turned out all the Council, he has not dealt faithfully...'.³⁸¹ He also invested in the wrong silk and caused debts for the factory.³⁸² Tash's arguments suggest that Keeling had become oppressive, deciding the factory's activities unfairly and damaging the EIC's property. Whether Keeling became a dictator in the Tonkin factory, it is impossible to say with certainty, but it is clear that Keeling had a deep relationship with a different group of merchants and that he became the factory's chief was a chance for him to support his own trading partners in Tonkin rather than working through the long-serving Domingo.

Essentially, from 1681 to 1684 there were two conflicts between Keeling and James (1681-early 1682), and then Keeling, Hodges and Tash (12/1682-1684). In both instances, Keeling received support from London, even though late, through instructions and letters. London's first letter to Tonkin in August 1683 was to prevent the Bantam Council for displacing Keeling, but its effect was to help Keeling to protest against Hodges in late 1682. London's second support for Keeling in 1683 met the same issue

³⁷⁹ In fact, this was the second time Keeling dismissed Domingo Hien Tho as he thought that this translator had secret relations with Tonkin merchants and mandarins, which damaged the EIC's trade. Both two times, Keeling flighted against Bantam's favourite, James and Hodges. This action had close relations with the EIC's attempts to prevent private trade and the illegal cooperation between Bantam and Tonkin factors. And it can be seen as one of the reasons London supported Keeling in the progress to gain power in Tonkin.

³⁸⁰ IOR/G/12/17/8, *the Tonkin factory 4 December 1682*, p. 302a.

³⁸¹ IOR/G/21/7, *Tonqueen general from George Tash, 8 October 1684*, p. 92.

³⁸² *Ibid*, *George Tash from Tonquin, 31 December 1683*, p. 87.

of timing as London's letters dated September and December 1684 only arrived in Tonkin in late 1685.³⁸³ These said that through the previous letters on 2 and 4 October 1682, and 2 July 1684, London 'establish M^r Keeling according to his degree in the chiefship of that factory' and in September 1684 London 'still confirm if hee bee upon the place'.³⁸⁴ London also 'have not displace Mr Hodges for any fault wee find in him but only because wee know it is M^r Keeling right and wee would have Hodges continue second there', but in case Hodges desired to move, he would be sent to Fort St. George.³⁸⁵ It meant that London absolutely believed in Keeling, and Hodges could only save his position as the second factor if he supported Keeling. Keeling thus sent Hodges to Madras in 1686 on the *Dragon* as a man who 'threw off all the Company's business'.³⁸⁶ Eventually, the rest of Bantam's group in Tonkin was moved out, and London partly succeeded in eliminating the indirect power of overseas headquarters to contact and manage distant factories directly via single individual.

From 1686 to 1693, there was no noticeable conflict between the Tonkin factors while Keeling accrued more power because of Tonkin's relative isolation from London and Madras due to the outbreak of the Nine Years War. In 1692, London tried to re-contact the Tonkin factory and put all activities under the order of Fort St. George.³⁸⁷ In 1693, two new members of staff Richard Watts and Richard Farmer were sent from Madras to Tonkin to investigate the factory and examine the investment of 30,000

³⁸³ Ma, *English Trade*, p. 187; IOR/G/21/7, Tonkin general 26 December 1684, p. 90; IOR/E/3/90, London to Tonqueen, 26 September 1684, p. 342. Keeling worked as the chief factor, Hodges was the second one; Henry Ireton was the 3rd place as go-down keeper; Tash kept expense account; Blackmore kept journal register.

³⁸⁴ IOR/E/3/90, London to Tonqueen, 26 September 1684, p. 342.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ IOR/G/21/7, Tonqueen general from Keeling and Blackmore, 10 December 1686, p. 95.

³⁸⁷ Ibid, London to Tonkin, 29 February 1692, p. 204.

Spanish dollars.³⁸⁸ Watts quickly replaced Keeling as Tonkin's leader and recorded all the factory's activities. A new conflict between the new and old staff broke out. Blackmore admitted that he and Keeling were driving private trade when Madras' investigators surprised him near Achin, but when they were in Tonkin in 1694, Blackmore denied everything (see below). Watts and Farmer tried to persuade Keeling to pay money for the crew on the *Pearl Frigate* but to no purpose.³⁸⁹ Discovering that Keeling had all the factory's documents and had moved to his own house with his wife, a Tonkinese woman, Watts decided to send him back to Madras in late 1693.³⁹⁰ However, it was hard as Keeling lobbied Tonkin's Mandarins to get the permission for residence in Tonkin. Moreover, Chubu, the factory's interpreter had a close relationship with Keeling and tried to help him.³⁹¹ After few attempts, the factory sent Keeling to Madras in January 1695 and Blackmore moved out of Tonkin by 1697.

Beyond the struggles between Tonkin factors, the relationship between London, the Bantam Council (then the Madras Council) and the Tonkin factory reflects London's attempts to control directly overseas factories and gradually eliminated the role of intermediaries in the EIC's oceanic trading system. In East Asia, London faced difficulty as power of the Bantam Council was dominant and factors in Bantam tried to maintain their benefit and power not only in Bantam but also in East Asia. The greater autonomy of Bantam in the East Asian regional network led to problems associated with the system. Bantam was able to abuse its privileges, and there were numerous opportunities for dishonest servants and illegal cooperation between agents and

³⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 204; IOR/G/12/17/9, p. 328b. London wanted Mr Hunt to Tonkin to investigate the branch and become one of the Council there but instead of Hunt, Madras sent two other staff to Tonkin in 1693.

³⁸⁹ IOR/G/12/17/9, 14 October 1693, pp. 329-330.

³⁹⁰ Ibid, 4 November 1693, p. 335a.

³⁹¹ Ibid, 6 December 1693, pp. 336a-b.

overseas factors and illegal private trade.³⁹² In fact, the activities of the Tonkin factory was much dependent on the control of the Bantam factory before 1682. The progress London tried to send new factor to Tonkin or support Keeling to fight against the factions from Bantam was the progress London tried to reduce the power of the Bantam Council or broadly the position of a headquarters in the EIC's overseas trading chain. In doing so, in September 1682 (as London had not known that the EIC was kicked out of Bantam by the new Sultan and the Dutch), London decided that Tonkin was under the supervision of the Presidency of Surat and the Government of Bombay, but that they had no real relationship except that Tonkin was ordered to prepare suitable goods for Bombay.³⁹³ As Bassett argued, trade with East Asia became more important for the EIC and London distrusted Bantam to manage this duty because its power was beyond the control of London.³⁹⁴ From late 1686, Tonkin was under the supervision of Fort St. George. To avoid Madras's interference in the Tonkin factory as Bantam had done in the 1670s, and to protect Keeling in the conflict with other Tonkin factors, London gave special orders towards Madras about the Tonkin factory's staffing order. After Hodges and Tash were dismissed in Tonkin by Keeling, London banned Madras from 'displac[ing] out chief Mr Keeling at Tonqueen, or resettl[ing] Mr Tash or Hodges there, who have unworthily mutinied against their chief'.³⁹⁵ It meant that London again confirmed the role of Keeling as the chief factor in Tonkin and supported his decision of discharging opposed factors. In late 1687 London confirmed to Keeling in Tonkin that

³⁹² IOR/E/3/90, 2 October 1682, p. 82.

³⁹³ IOR/G/12/17/8, *Batavia to Tonkin*, 4 June 1683, p. 312b; IOR/E/3/90, *London to Tonkin*, 2 October 1682, p. 39.

³⁹⁴ Bassett, *Factory at Bantam*, p. 424.

³⁹⁵ IOR/E/3/91, 22 October 1686, p. 104; *The Court to the President and Council, Fort St. George*, 22 March 1687, p. 370/141.

only the Court of Directors could organise the Tonkin factors.³⁹⁶ Another letter from London to Tonkin in November 1687 said that ‘...you two [Keeling and Blackmore] should share such by commission between you,... though you are under a correspondence with Fort St. George, you shall never be commanded by our council there out of our employment, nor neither of you, we have writ them wee will have none of you removed without our special order in writing.’³⁹⁷ Those letters showed the power of London and prevented Madras from creating a new power in overseas and affecting Tonkin by changing the order of the Tonkin Council, and protected London’s choice of staff in Tonkin from the Madras’ influence. As such, although Tonkin had a connection with Madras, the Tonkin Council would not be affected by Madras. Ma argued that London was worried about the unhappy relationship between Gyfford (the previous Tonkin leader, and the Governor of Madras from 1680) and other staff in Tonkin.³⁹⁸ However, there was no record to show the problem between Gyfford and Keeling in that period. It seemed that the EIC’s attempts to avoid Madras’s influence in Tonkin were to restructure the overseas factory system and increase the role of London in managing distant factories. As Bassett argued, Madras was an experiment as a hub to supervise the EIC’s trade in China and the Spice Islands from July 1684 to replace the previous role of Bantam, but until the end of the century, London directly took this role.³⁹⁹ Moreover, to avoid illegal cooperation between Madras and Tonkin as Bantam-Tonkin in the 1670s, the EIC decided to put Tonkin under the direct control of London. Accordingly,

³⁹⁶ Ibid, *The Court to Fort St. George, 12 October 1687*, p. 444/ 216.

³⁹⁷ Ibid, *London to Tonqueen, 9 November 1687*, p. 454/ 226.

³⁹⁸ Ma, *English Trade*, pp. 204-205.

³⁹⁹ Bassett, *Factory at Bantam*, p. 424.

in 1693 London forbade Madras to send ships to Tonkin without order.⁴⁰⁰ As such, the relationships between London and Bantam, then Madras were really under the term of management as London wanted to experiment with a better solution for controlling overseas factories. During that process, London tried to support and grant privileges for overseas factors under the direct control of London to undermine the role of intermediaries of Bantam or Madras. However, this policy created other negative effects towards the Company, as the Tonkin factors worked without a necessary monitor, especially during the Nine Years War and the issue of ‘adverse selection’ was unavoidable.

Private trade in Tonkin

As the previous discussions, the EIC had to use experienced factors to work overseas as London lacked of knowledge, information, and experience in trading with East Asian countries. Those factors were allowed to work independently in both management and trading. This policy therefore created both positive and negative results in trading as the EIC’s factors run both official and private trade during their time in Tonkin.

On the positive side, the EIC’s policies of using skilled employees and encouraging them to discover the nature of trade, potential commodities and trade network and, to drive overseas factories themselves were necessary and vital due to the English lack of trading experience in Tonkin. Accordingly, Gyfford was actively searching for the possibility of forging Tonkin’s links with Macao, Siam, Japan and Manila. From 1676, as the Tonkin factory served both regional and transoceanic trade,

⁴⁰⁰ IOR/E/3/92, *London to our General St John Goldsborough and our President & Council of Fort St. George, 10 April 1693*, p. 246.

its staff ran the *country trade* with orders from London or by themselves. For instance, London required the Tonkin factory to make a relation with Siamese salesmen in 1677 to get yearly ‘40 or 50 tons of sappan wood the best & reddest sort’.⁴⁰¹ Captain Dedousy of the ship *Formosa* went to Siam for private trade in 1679.⁴⁰² The EIC wished to re-create the Manila link and required Tonkin’s advice on trading and suitable goods for this market in 1679.⁴⁰³ London hoped that English factories in Taiwan, Amoy, Tonkin and Siam would form a satisfactory commercial connection to join and control the regional trade.⁴⁰⁴ In 1685 London reconsidered a plan of collecting Japanese merchandises, copper and tutenague for both Europe and Madras through the Tonkin factory.⁴⁰⁵ In doing so, Keeling sent the ship *Dragon* to Canton and Lampacao to collect musk and pelang for the EIC, while crews of this vessel traded personally in Siam in 1686.⁴⁰⁶ The above example showed firstly the EIC’s allowance towards English merchants to become involved in the ‘country trade’ together with the Company’s activities, and secondly the necessity and importance of English private trade in Tonkin although it was small and irregular.

Nevertheless, due to the limitations of the EIC’s policies of allowing personal trade and managing oceanic factories, the Tonkin factory witnessed examples of

⁴⁰¹ IOR/G/12/17/4, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 29 May 1677, p. 205a.

⁴⁰² IOR/G/12/7/6, *Tonkin General* 14 October 1679, pp. 264a-b. After that trade, Dedousy was put in prison in Tonkin as he traded some monopolized goods.

⁴⁰³ Ibid, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 20 July 1679, p. 259a.

⁴⁰⁴ IOR/G/12/17/8, *London to Bantam*, 12 August 1681, p. 294b.

⁴⁰⁵ IOR/E/3/90, *The Court to Tonkin*, 15 October 1685, pp. 506-07. Before 1684 this plan belonged to Taiwan factory. However, the Machu-Taiwan war led to the closure of the Taiwan factory and London hoped that Tonkin could replace this role in the intra-Asian trade. Meanwhile, London required Pryaman factory to send some pepper for Tonkin. After collecting sufficient commodities, Keeling sent a ship to Bencoolen and then Madras.

⁴⁰⁶ IOR/G/21/7, *Keeling to Court*, 23 January 1686, p. 10.

unlucky trade (the Macao-Manila project in 1673-1674) or illegal private trade (in the 1690s). Overseas factors used the Company's capital without permission, sent ships to 'country trade', missed the trading season and cooperated with private merchants. Accordingly, the EIC's benefits reduced as its agents focused much more on private trade than official business.⁴⁰⁷ The failure of private trade damaged Tonkin through lost capital and ultimately resulted in the closure of this branch in 1697.⁴⁰⁸ Keeling and his activities demonstrated that the EIC's management towards overseas branches would fail if London had no suitable structure to monitor those factories. The entire story of English private trade in Tonkin with the 100-ton junk *Successful Venture* was recorded in Blackmore's letter to Surat in 1691.⁴⁰⁹ Keeling, Blackmore and Sams (a free English trader in Tonkin) bought the junk in 1689. In January 1690 it sailed to Siam, but the Siam's government put Sams in prison because he was related to the EIC's developing a

⁴⁰⁷ IOR/E/3/88, *Company to Bantam*, 29 February 1676, p. 247; IOR/E/3/90, *London to John English on board the Beaufort, regarding affairs at Bantam*, 23 October 1683, pp. 124-125; Bassett, *Factory at Bantam*, pp. 361-363. In 1676, the Court dismissed Henry Dacres, chief agent in Bantam for considering private trade in Indian cloth. In 1683, Waite, another agent of Bantam was removed by private trade. Due to the illegal trade, Bassett discussed the non-necessaries of Bantam headquarters in East Asia from the late 1670s, and its maintenance was expensive while the Court could order commodities from Tonkin, China, Taiwan directly to reduce the expense.

⁴⁰⁸ Although the last letter from Madras to Tonkin showed that the economic issues (debt, no commercial ships) were the main reasons for the idea of withdrawal of the Tonkin factory, there is no doubt that from the previous conflict between Keeling and other staff in the 1680s and then between Tonkin members in 1694-1695, London did not believe any oceanic servants in Tonkin. As a result, the difficulties of managing Tonkin partly contributed to the decision to close the branch in 1697.

⁴⁰⁹ IOR/G/36/110, *Surat factory (1691-1693), Lemuel Blackmore at Malacca to Bartholomew Harris and Council at Surat, January 1691*, pp. 76-79; IOR/E/3/47, *East India Company Original Correspondence (1687-1689), Abstract Narrative of his Voyage 1688-December 1693 by Lemuel Blackmore*, pp. 234-236; Farrington and Dhiravat, *Factory in Siam*; Ma, *English Trade*, pp. 213-217.

lousy relationship with Siam in 1687.⁴¹⁰ After paying forty-five catties of silver to the local government in August 1690, Sams and the junk sailed to Malacca where the Dutch ill-treated the English salesmen and confiscated the goods. While Blackmore sent a letter to Madras asking for support, Sams returned to Siam with an expectation of better trade and stayed there until the end of the south-west monsoon (around October 1692). The junk faced the Madras' inspectors on the way to Achin in 1693, but it was out of control and was then wrecked in the Cochin-Chinese channel in 1694.

Blackmore's complicated reports present a confused picture of the nature of this trade. In his first explanation in 1693, this voyage aimed to serve the Company's regional trade.⁴¹¹ However, he also confirmed that in total £5,259:9:8 of cargo, almost all goods were Tonkin commodities and only some of them belonged to the Company.⁴¹² Blackmore financed 1,000 Spanish dollars himself.⁴¹³ Noticeably, the EIC had 30,000 Spanish dollars in Tonkin, but Madras's inspectors found no money left in 1694.⁴¹⁴ Moreover, Madras and London knew nothing about this trade until they received Blackmore's urgent letter after the Dutch ill-treated the English in 1691. All data about the private investment, the loss of the EIC's capital, the appearance of a free English trader, and the secret of the voyage raised a hypothesis that Keeling and Blackmore ran both official and private activities, even illegal trade.

⁴¹⁰ J. Anderson, *English Intercourse with Siam in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1890); Winterbottom, *Company Culture*, pp. 44-45; Ma, *English Trade*, pp. 206-07.

⁴¹¹ IOR/E/3/47, *EIC Original Correspondence*, pp. 234-236. He showed that there was a great quantity of good and bad goods in the Tonkin factory's hands. It was the main reason to buy a vessel of about 100 tons and made a voyage to Siam to sell the Company's goods.

⁴¹² IOR/G/12/17/9, 3 June 1693, pp. 318b, 319a. Some of the Company's goods were sent to Madras via the ship *Bencoolen* in 1693.

⁴¹³ Ibid, p. 319a. Keeling owned a half of this vessel while Blackmore and Sams had a quarter each.

⁴¹⁴ IOR/G/12/17/9, pp. 328b-330b; IOR/E/3/92, *London to Tonkin*, 29 February 1692, pp. 102-103. As London's requirement, Madras' inspector could dismiss any Tonkin staff if necessary and profitable.

If Tonkin factors ran private commerce, the question is why could they operate such activity and what was the result. With around twenty-years experience in Tonkin and a tremendous relationship with both native Mandarins and merchants, Keeling had sufficient and significant knowledge to be advantageously involved in the intra-Asian trade.⁴¹⁵ His great privilege was more potent after 1688, as London allowed him to dispose of all current stock in Tonkin himself over a few years to purchase better commodities since the Anglo-French war prevented the EIC's connection with Asia.⁴¹⁶ That interruption and the lack of supervision from London created an excellent opportunity for Keeling and other Tonkin's factors who undertook the country trade individually.⁴¹⁷ The problem was how Keeling used and distributed the EIC's property.

That Keeling and other Tonkin factors did their own illegal business with the Company's capital affected the Tonkin factory negatively. That the private junk was wrecked at Cochin-China channel and no money left in the factory, made it difficult for Tonkin branch to trade and maintain living activities. English factors had to borrow money from the King, Mandarins and the Dutch from 1694 to 1697. Furthermore, knowing that there were around twenty Tonkinese men in the private junk, the King of Tonkin forbade all foreign ships to carry Tonkin people abroad.⁴¹⁸ The English faced trading troubles as they had no native pilots or labourers on their vessels.

⁴¹⁵ In 1683 although Tonkin silk was rare and low quality due to the natural disaster, Keeling could still purchase some good silks from his own 'favorites'. IOR/G/21/7, *George Tash from Tonkin, 31 December 1683*, p. 87.

⁴¹⁶ IOR/E/3/92, *The Court to Tonkin, 24 May 1690*, pp. 98-99; *The Court to Fort St George, 18 February 1691*, pp. 135-36; *The Court to Tonkin, 18 February 1691*, p. 150.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, *The Court to Tonkin, 29 February 1692*, p. 204. London complained that the EIC had not received any reports from Tonkin for a long time and they would send experienced staff to check the factory's activities.

⁴¹⁸ IOR/G/12/17/9, *24 December 1693*, p. 340a.

The Court of Directors also considered the reports of factors from both Tonkin and Madras. In 1695, London wanted Blackmore as Tonkin's chief instead of Madras' staff if he was honest since he 'has lived twenty years upon the place, and speak the language incomparably and we heartily wish he now here with us to send him upon China voyage'.⁴¹⁹ It meant that although Madras's inspectors considered that Blackmore operated an illegal private trade, London mistrusted that report and still needed experienced staff for its further trading. The dependence on skilful factors and the fear of Madras's interference in the Tonkin factory's order caused London's concern about the responsibility of staff. In 1697, London mentioned that it received 'some letters and papers from Keeling and Blackmore complaining of Mr Watts and Mr Farmer, concerning what we are not able to judge at present, but shall hereafter when we received result of your [Madras] enquiries and examinations particularly what is become of the 30,000 dollars...'.⁴²⁰ Accordingly, there was no clarification about the Tonkin private trade until 1697, and Thomas Lovell was sent to take responsibility of the factory as London mistrusted both Tonkin and Madras' factors.⁴²¹ He kept one of two keys for the factory's warehouse and checked and signed all trading orders.⁴²² In short, London still failed in managing overseas factories satisfactorily, and the illegal private trade, the EIC's distrust towards distant factors, and the closure of the Tonkin factory were unavoidable.

Diplomatic Activities

⁴¹⁹ IOR/E/3/92, *London to Fort St. George*, 6 March 1695, p. 194.

⁴²⁰ IOR/3/3/92, *London to Fort St. George*, 16 April 1697, p. 271/542; 29 February 1692, p. 96. In 1692, London only concerned about the trade in Tonkin, but still thought that they had 'great staff' there.

⁴²¹ IOR/G/12/17/10, *Fort St George to Tonkin*, 11 May 1697, p. 481b.

⁴²² *Ibid*, 11 May 1697, p. 483a.

If the previous section partly shows the unexpected results of the EIC's policy of using experienced individuals in far-flung areas, this part notes other perspectives about their role in making a relationship with local government to maintain the EIC's position in Tonkin. This part argues that via connecting with the Tonkin Court, particularly with the King's representatives and Governors of Hien and Thang Long, where the English stayed and traded, they had information and lessons about diplomacy in Tonkin and the way to treat well the King of Tonkin. Generally, creating a relationship with local governments to get privileges for settlement and trade was the first and most important job of English factors in East Asia.⁴²³ Since Tonkin only welcomed foreigners reluctantly, forging relationships was complicated and required money, patience, and skills, which differed from those places where local governments really needed foreign merchants for profit and power.⁴²⁴ Accordingly, the English diplomacy and commerce in Tonkin were considered under 'a system of gifts, perquisites and exactions'.⁴²⁵ Was Tonkin's trade entirely under the pressure of gifts? How did the English perform diplomacy and commerce? What were the results? How did they learn from this diplomacy? Through answering those questions, the chapter seeks to highlight the role

⁴²³ Reid, *The Age of Commerce*, pp. 1-2; Kwee, 'Chinese Economic Dominance', p. 10; Berg, *Goods from the East*, p. 10; Massarella, *The EIC in Taiwan*, p. 415. In 1683, Taiwan factory presented Shih Lang and other Manchu mandarins to secure their safety in Taiwan and then get permission to continue to trade there and in mainland China.

⁴²⁴ Bassett, *The British in Southeast Asia*; Farrington, *Trading Places*, p. 82. Mughal empire or Sultans in the Spices Islands were the noted evidence for the welcome of Asian people towards European merchants in the early modern times. By contrast, China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Tonkin followed the Confucian theory; and those kingdoms refused or opened slightly their countries for European companies.

⁴²⁵ Morse, *Trading to China*, p. 36; Ma, *English Trade*, pp. 80-84; Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Relations*, p. 31; Hoang, 'English trade with Tonkin', p. 75. Tonkin mandarins were blamed as they fixed prices, defaulted on debts, demanded bribes from merchants and made inconveniences.

of overseas servants in connecting with Tonkin officials to understand the local customs and identifying the right people/power to establish a relationship. It was they, not the Court of Minutes in London who played a key role in expanding the EIC commerce and power in Tonkin and East Asia broadly.

English factors fulfilled their responsibility by enacting diplomacy in Tonkin and then reporting to London and Bantam to obtain advice on gaining a better position. Tribute diplomacy and gift-diplomacy were existed in Tonkin through many dynasties under the influence from China. All foreigners had to report exactly why they arrived in Tonkin and how many goods they carried before sending the King and Crown Prince gifts for entry-fee and trade. Sometimes a fee was required in silver.⁴²⁶ Moreover, Tonkin maintained a hard policy towards overseas merchants in a long time because its developing trend was in agriculture and most economic activities were to serve domestic demand. This fact and the political crisis from the early sixteenth century required the government of Tonkin to examine carefully foreigners under the demand of national security. The firm policy was particularly enforced during the Trinh-Nguyen war (1627-1672) as the Trinh Lord needed external supports of military and capital. For instance, the Dutch were ordered to maintain only a few factors in the capital in the 1640s.⁴²⁷ In 1658 Tonkin strengthened control with overseas merchants by giving more

⁴²⁶ T.T. Nguyen, *Overseas Commerce in Tonkin in the Seventeenth Century via the Cases of Thang Long and Pho Hien* (Master Thesis of Hanoi University of Education, 1995), p. 31. This fact was also recognised by the English as they had to send silver for the King and Prince as the Dutch and Chinese did. Most of the time, they lost as the King and Prince paid money and silk for silver with a cheaper price. For example, in 1673 the King of Tonkin required the English 20,000 tales of Japan [silver] plate, and the Crown Prince asked for 10,000 tales in return for Tonkinese cash. IOR/G/12/17/2, *the Tonkin Factory*, 21 March 1674, p. 106b.

⁴²⁷ Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, p. 98.

power to Dispatchadores,⁴²⁸ appointing Le Dinh Kien [Unggia Thuoc in the English Tonkin factory's record] as the Governor of Hien to command all foreigners.⁴²⁹ He advised the King to grant the order in 1669 to oblige all foreigners to trade in Hien, a small town.⁴³⁰ As the Trinh-Nguyen war ended in 1672, Tonkin further restricted foreigners as it no longer needed outside support. Important Mandarins such as the Governor of Hien, the King and Prince's Dispatchadores during their contact with Gyfford helped him to realise the difficult situation of foreigners in Tonkin. Gyfford then stated in 1672 that 'the King was King of Tonkin before wee [the English] came and would be after we were gone and that this country hath now neede of any forreigne thing'.⁴³¹ Accordingly, the EIC needed to apply reasonable treatment towards Tonkin Court to obtain privileges for residence and trade.

The EIC came to Tonkin late in comparison to the Chinese, Portuguese and Dutch. Therefore the Dutch became the key example for the EIC in creating diplomacy with the Tonkin Court. In 1673, the Governor of Hien, Unggia Thuoc mentioned to the English the necessity of gift that '[the Dutch] valued noe charge to accomplish their edesigne for at their first comeing they spent soe high that they made nothing of their first ships cargoe and had likewise a great loss yearly for three or four years.'⁴³² Again, local Mandarins became an important channel to provide the English useful information about the requirement of diplomacy and the necessity of gift-diplomacy in Tonkin. In

⁴²⁸ Dispatchadore, a Portuguese word, was the definition of Tonkin's officers, as intermediary between the King or Princes and foreigners. They took care of all issues related to foreigners which included examining goods, seamen, checking the immigrants, sending foreigners' letter to the King.

⁴²⁹ Do, Pho Hien's role, p. 49.

⁴³⁰ A. Launay, *Histoire de la Mission du Tonkin, Documents Historiques 1658-1717* (Paris, 2000), pp. 63, 67 ; quoted in Do, Pho Hien's role, p. 49 ; Dampier, *Voyages and Discoveries*, p. 18.

⁴³¹ IOR/G/12/17/1, 3 July 1672, pp. 6b-7a.

⁴³² IOR/G/12/17/2, 20 March 1673, pp. 65a-b.

1674, Gyfford required the Bantam Council ‘paid att a dearer rate than the Dutch and bee esteemed as other straingers not receiving ye privilege of Dutch till we settle as they have done’.⁴³³ They repeated an order in 1675 that ‘when we served him [King of Tonkin] as the Dutch do, we should have the same privileges as they have.’⁴³⁴ In 1677, the Tonkin factory required Bantam to send big cannons valued at £574 as gifts to please the King and improve its relationship with Tonkin Court.

The English faced further problems because they failed to demonstrate that their real purpose was commerce before 1676 because they lacked commercial ships. With limited commodities for exchange, they were believed to be concealing their real goals. They seemed not to be traders like the Chinese and Dutch, but more like the French who had come to convert local people to the Christian faith while religion was sensitive and forbidden in Tonkin.⁴³⁵ Viewed with suspicion, and having substandard correspondence with Tonkin Court before 1676, the English were treated as the third merchants in Tonkin and received bad commercial deals.⁴³⁶ They had to pay more than the Chinese and Dutch to get silks from Tonkin Court.⁴³⁷

For these reasons, gift-giving diplomacy was necessary to maintain any relationship with Tonkin Court during the English settlement, especially at Hien (1672-1682). Applying gift-diplomacy showed the English role in learning about and adapting to the natural character of Tonkin and using the right treatment towards the Tonkin Court to obtain a trading advantage. Their first job was to send a letter to the King and

⁴³³ IOR/G/12/17/2, *Tonkin to Bantam*, 3 October 1674, pp. 122a-b.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid*, *Tonkin to Bantam*, 6 August 1675, p. 137a.

⁴³⁵ IOR/G/12/17/2, *Tonkin to Bantam*, 2 February 1674, p. 101a.

⁴³⁶ IOR/G/12/17/2, 23 October 1675, p. 144a.

⁴³⁷ IOR/G/12/17/1, *Tonkin to London*, 7 December 1672, p. 42a; IOR/G/12/17/2, 22 September 1674, p. 121a.

Crown Prince to ask for free trade and a formal relation. In 1672, the *Zant Frigate* carried two letters from the Bantam Council with a demand for friendship.⁴³⁸ The main diplomatic approach was to present Tonkin Court with three kinds of gifts: entry-fee for the first time arrival in Tonkin in 1672; annual gifts in the New Year festival, the King's birthday and the Mid-Autumn festival; and lobby-fees to obtain permission to build a factory in the capital. Although seen as important by the factors, such acts were sometimes thwarted as English ships did not arrive. The figures of this diplomatic system were various and changed over time. During the progress of gift-giving, the Tonkin Court shared different roles towards the EIC's learning as some Mandarins supported the English to have a good position while others required money, gifts in pester ways.

Entry-fee was paid in 1672 as the English firstly arrived to Tonkin to trade and establish a formal relationship. They presented gifts eleven times in whole years, especially nine occasions in July as the entry fee. Those who received the factory's gifts in 1672 included the King, Princes, Governors of Hien and Thang Long, Ungia Thay, Ungia Deduckluck (the King and Prince's Dispatchdores) and their secretaries.⁴³⁹ The King was always the primary receiver with the most expensive gift, including cloth, guns, amber and rose water, while the Crown Prince received the same types of goods but in less quantity.⁴⁴⁰ Gifts were mostly luxury goods as well as some more novel

⁴³⁸ IOR/E/3/33, *Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to the 'King' of Tonkin, Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to the 'Prince' of Tonkin*, pp. 34-35.

⁴³⁹ IOR/G/12/17/1, pp. 5b-6a, 9a, 10a-b, 11b, 16a, 21a-b, 31a. Most of gifts for Mandarins were hats, looking glasses, silver knives and cloth although they required silver for their job.

⁴⁴⁰ IOR/G/12/17/1, 2 July 1672, p. 6a. The first gifts for the King included 3 pieces fine cloth, 10 sword blades, 12 agate hafted knives, 1 case amber hafted knives, 1 silver wired tweezers, 1 three-barrelled birding piece, 1 three-barrelled pistol, 1 staff gun, 1 large looking glass, 10 bottles of rose water, 2 sake guns and 1 budge jaw.

products from Europe and India (rose water, guns, sword blades, looking glasses and clothes) alongside a considerable amount of broadcloth. Money was not given.

Annual-gift was presented for the King, Crown Prince and some of important Mandarins in the Tonkin Court. There were two noticeable points related to annual-gift. Firstly, while the English tried to focus on important people such as the King, the Dispatchdores and the Governor of Hien, where the factory stayed; other local Mandarins tried to harass the English to receive gifts, small money if possible. The English frequently had to carry a small gift to Mandarins in Thang Long before showing their proposal to trade in the capital or to ask permission to build the factory. During meeting, appointments with the Dispatchdores, Governors of Hien, Thang Long and other Mandarins, the English recognised the most significant officials who they needed to settle a good relationship to reside and trade well. For example, although the King was the most important people in Tonkin, the EIC need his Dispatchdores to send their trading proposals, asking priviledges, debt or even a presentation. The Governor of Hien, was necessary with the EIC over the factory's existence because the factory lied on the place of Hien, all English ships arrived to Tonkin needed to stay at Hien before sending goods to Thang Long. Therefore, it was vital for the English to establish a good connection with those Mandarins although they asked for quite a few gifts or sometimes those Mandarins were in debt. Secondly, the number and sometimes the desirability of gifts decreased over the course of the EIC's presence in Tonkin, especially after the English built a factory in the capital in 1682 and the Tonkin Court did not appreciate English cloths. The Tonkin factory, therefore, focused on fewer but valuable offers of cannon, guns, and Chinese silks. For instance, in 1679 the King received only three pieces of broadcloth, three ambers and eight moorees. In 1682 he acquired three

broadcloths, two caties of Chinese silk, one perpetuanas and two *lanthozous*.⁴⁴¹ In 1693, the English presented gifts only to the King and Crown Prince.⁴⁴²

The role of English factors was remarkable as they could maintain their trade and position in Tonkin in spite of the isolation and the decreasing gifts to Tonkin Court. The initial explanation was that they knew who was important and how to serve the Tonkin Court satisfactorily. They, therefore, established a good relationship with the local Mandarins, had a relatively good position in Tonkin, and built a warehouse in the capital after 1682. Moreover, as the Tonkin Court stopped providing silks for foreigners from 1678, the English expanded the trading cooperation with private traders and prevented them from depending on the supply of the Tonkin Court. The English, thus, reduced the number of gifts, focused gift-giving on the King who granted trading permissions, and the Crown Prince who would succeed to the throne in the future. They played a crucial role in gaining knowledge and building a good relationship with Tonkin government, which acted as a foundation for the EIC's further trade. As such, the English had experience of the character of a Confucian state with details of diplomatic subject and time, types and measures of gifts. It was a useful lesson which helped enable the EIC to establish a formal relationship with Vietnam in the eighteenth century, and with other countries in the area.

The success of the Tonkin diplomacy in improving the trading position, creating good relations with native Mandarins and obtaining permission to build a warehouse in

⁴⁴¹ IOR/G/12/17/6, 20 July 1679, p. 262b and IOR/G/12/17/8, 31 July 1682, p. 295a. Moorees a plain white cotton cloth from South India and Masulipatam, used as a base for chintz making. Perpetuana/Perpetuanos was an English light/durable woollen fabric widely made and used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

⁴⁴² IOR/G/12/17/9, 26 September 1693, pp. 326b, 327a. Even the Doctor of the Tonkin factory and the factor Richard Hunt advised fewer gifts than Keeling's suggestion.

the capital, demonstrated the critical role of overseas factors who daily communicated with the native government to make the friendship with the essential people in Tonkin. Firstly they obtained a trading licence and received a small amount of land to build a warehouse at Hien in 1673. While the French were refused such permission in 1669 due to religious issues, the English at least formed their foundation. The period 1672-1675 witnessed the crucial role of English factors who directly founded the factory and forged the primary relationship with Tonkin when they were isolated, and Tonkin gradually restricted foreigners. They managed to keep Tonkin branch without support from both London and Bantam in four years. Moreover, they received gifts from the Tonkin Court in 1672 with 50,000 [Tonkin] cash, some provisions, four jars of arrack, a small bullock as a native custom.⁴⁴³ The success in this period became the foundation for the EIC's further and better relationship with Tonkin in the late 1670s and 1680s as they obtained the same deal as the VOC in exchanging silk for silver with the Tonkin Court, even better than the Dutch.⁴⁴⁴ Notably, the Tonkin factory acquired help from native Mandarins during their difficult period. The Governor of Hien was the factory's representative in the capital to order a place for a warehouse or require other Mandarins to pay debts.⁴⁴⁵ He actually was a remarkable picture of Tonkinese Mandarins in the policy towards the English. On the one side, they helped the English in their responsibility and availability in return for gifts, money. On the other hand, they

⁴⁴³ IOR/G/12/17/1, *1 August 1672*, pp. 20a, 38b.

⁴⁴⁴ Hoang, *Silk for silver*, p. 118.

⁴⁴⁵ Even in the last years of Tonkin factory, he offered English merchants a small loan to maintain their regular activities. IOR/G/12/17/9, *1 October 1696*, p. 457b.

required too much in dealing with the English and even made difficult for the English during their residence and trade in Tonkin.⁴⁴⁶

The most significant outcome of the English gift-diplomacy was to gain permission to build a factory in the capital in 1682. Moving from Pho Hien to Thang Long showed, firstly the better English position in Tonkin, secondly the success of the EIC policy of using skilled individuals, and thirdly the attention and attempts of London to find better conditions for EIC trade. English factors quickly recognised the difference between Pho Hien and Thang Long and insisted on building their factory in the capital in 1672. Hien was not a large commercial centre, but just a small town with mostly farmers, quite far from the capital.⁴⁴⁷ It was a local market for natives and an intermediary point for overseas merchants with about 10,000 households in the late seventeenth century.⁴⁴⁸ Accordingly, Hien was an unsatisfactory and problematic location for the Tonkin factory with little chance for commerce as almost all domestic salesmen, rich people, the Chinese and Dutch lived in Thang Long. By contrast, Thang Long was the most attractive city in Tonkin, a centre for Mandarins, wealthy people, workers, and merchants with their high demands for luxury and modern goods. It was one of the most crowded cities in Southeast Asia.⁴⁴⁹ There were eight large markets in

⁴⁴⁶ The evidence for that requisite is that in 1694, the Governor of Hien burned the English flag as he stated that that flag was a symbol of Christianity. Interestingly, this incident occurred in 1694, after 22 years the English arrived to and resided in Tonkin. It meant that although the EIC stayed long time, they still face difficult from the local Mandarins. See IOR/G/12/17/9, *Tonkin factory, 21 September, 27 September, 14 October 1694*, pp. 369a, 371b, 381b.

⁴⁴⁷ IOR/G/12/17/1, *15 July 1672*, p. 11b.

⁴⁴⁸ Do, Pho Hien's role, pp. 41-70; Dampier, *Voyages and Discoveries*, p. 39.

⁴⁴⁹ A.D. Rhodes, *Histoire du Royaume de Tonkin* (Lyon, 1651) [reprinted 1908] [Vietnamese translation], p. 109 ; Dampier, *Voyages and Discovery*, p. 36. Reid, *The Age of Commerce*, table 7, pp. 71-2. While Rhodes estimated that Thang Long had one million inhabitants, Dampier in 1688 accounted for 20,000 households. Before the twentieth century, each Vietnamese household had two or three generations living

Thang Long with around 50,000 retailers, and accordingly, more customers than that traded daily.⁴⁵⁰ Those advantages and the superiority of transport with three surrounding rivers offered excellent conditions for the English to expand their trade in the whole kingdom.

During the progress of applying a permission to build a factory in Thang Long, the EIC received both positive and negative lessons from the Tonkin Court, but the most noticeable thing they learnt was that it took time and money to treat the King and the Tonkin Court to stay in Thang Long. In 1672, the English tried to find support from the *Capon* for permission and a convenient ground in or near the capital but failed due to Tonkin's restricted policy towards strangers.⁴⁵¹ Before 1676, the English could do nothing as there was no English arrived to Tonkin and the King considered them not merchants, but missionaries. The English thus patiently applied the gift-diplomacy and created a satisfying relationship with Tonkin Court to serve that goal. In 1677, London supplied 5,000 Spanish dollars and required the Tonkin factory to build a proper brick or stone warehouse on the riverside.⁴⁵² However, this job did not progress as the Tonkin factory was only willing to lobby 200 tales of silver while the King's Dispatchdores wanted much more money, 2,000 tales.⁴⁵³ He also mentioned that the King did not want some cloths, gold or popular gifts from the English in return for permission to stay and trade in the capital. In the following negotiations, the English increased their payment

together with around 7, even 10 people. Reid suggested that population of Thang Long was high, even higher than some cities such as Ayutthaya, Johor, Bantam.

⁴⁵⁰ Rhodes, *Histoire de Tonkin*, pp. 109-110.

⁴⁵¹ IOR/G/12/17/1, 19 July 1672, p. 13b. See chapter 2: after 1650, all new foreigners must live outside the capital and most of them stayed in Pho Hien/ Hean while the Chinese and Dutch could still stay in the capital.

⁴⁵² IOR/G/12/17/4, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 29 May 1677, p. 202a.

⁴⁵³ IOR/G/12/17/5, 13 August 1678, p. 241b.

first to 500 tales and then 1,000 tales with a cannon for the King in October 1678.⁴⁵⁴ London again paid attention to this task by sending 5,000 *rials of eight* to Tonkin with the expectation that it would keep and develop the factory during the fruitful period of silk trade although it expected that 3,000 rials were enough for this issue.⁴⁵⁵ However, the English still did not receive permission since their gift-cannon broke in a trial. The EIC then hoped that one of the King's wives could help with the price of 4 tales gold, but she scared to give the King the English proposals and only promised to sell them a good land with a nice price.⁴⁵⁶ All failure demonstrated that it was hard for the English to gather any permission to trade or stay in Thang Long as the Tonkin Court followed the hard-policy towards foreingers. Luckily, with the appearance of Ungja Dew, the new King's Dispatchadores, the negotiation was quick, and the lobby was reduced to 500 tales of silver. On 10 March 1683, the English petition was submitted, and they received a place near the Red River, and a licence to build the warehouse in May ended their ten-year-entreaty.⁴⁵⁷

The figure below demonstrates two important things: the necessity to build a factory in Thang Long, and Dutch influence towards the English in Tonkin. The Tonkin factory in Thang Long was quite near the Tonkin Court's Place to enable easy dailydirect contact with the Dispatchdiores. In front of the factory was the main river of Tonkin, which helped the English to transfer all commodities through the reiver system. Meanwhile, this position was quite near and comfortable for the English to get information from the Dutch which showed that the EIC still followed its competitor as

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid, 21 October 1678, p. 244a.

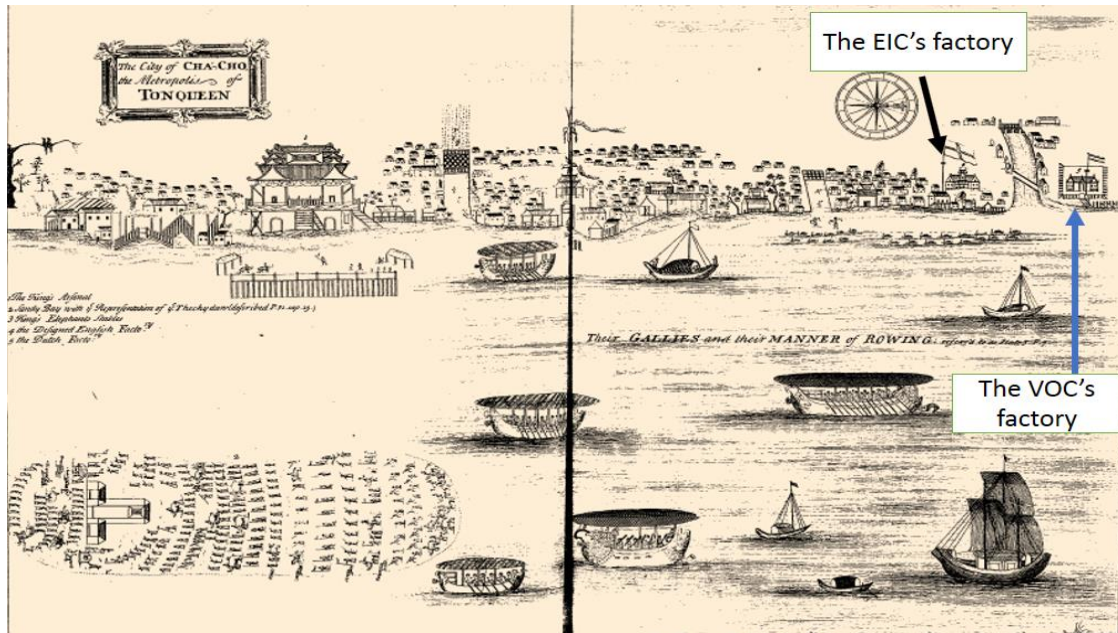
⁴⁵⁵ IOR/G/12/17/6, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 5 July 1679, p. 259a.

⁴⁵⁶ IOR/G/12/17/4, *Tonkin Factory 1677-1678*, 18 December 1677, p. 221a

⁴⁵⁷ IOR/G/12/17/8, 23 May 1683, p. 311b.

the English had little experience in Tonkin. As such, the English attempts in around ten years were to get permission and position as the Dutch had got in Tonkin.

Figure 3.2. The EIC's factory in Thang Long, Tonkin's capital



Source: S. Baron, 'A description of the Kingdom of Tonqueen', in J. Pinkerton (ed), *A collection of voyages*, Plate 3. Indications highlighted by the author.

Conclusion

The story of the EIC management in Tonkin provides a new way of seeing how a small factory could affect the EIC structure and an excellent example of the Company's limitations of overseas management, such as illegal cooperation, private trade, and conflicted relations. The chapter shows that although London tried to improve the EIC's administration, it could be denied a fact that distant factories and servants were still out of control over the seventeenth century as the EIC agency and factories always worked with relatives or friends in their own connections. While London was impotent to

manage Bantam and Tonkin before 1682, they began to accrue control in the later period of the Tonkin factory. Nevertheless, the private trade of primary Tonkin factors in the 1690s, and its far-reaching influence on the EIC and the Tonkin factory epitomised the failure of London to control oceanic factors and factories as London ceded power to its servants, without necessary and suitable observation methods.

The Tonkin factory also reflected two other issues: the key role of English overseas individuals (and then information, knowledge) towards the development and expansion of the EIC in East Asia; and the necessity of diplomacy, particularly gifts in the EIC relationship with Tonkin and other countries in East Asia. London decided to establish the Tonkin factory with limited knowledge, and English factors' task was to discover and learn the character of this country. The cases of Gyfford and Keeling showed different ways in which English distant factors served the EIC by maintaining and improving the English position in Tonkin over the period of twenty-five years and broadly expanding the EIC's trade in East Asia. Tonkin factors also showed their vital role by directly negotiating with Tonkin Court, altering their behaviours towards the King, Princes and Dispatchdors in the consultation about the permission to build a warehouse at Thang Long, and adapting the gift-diplomacy to alter the quantity and quality of presents. In return, the Tonkin Court, particularly the Governor of Hien or the Dispatchdors, provided the English useful knowledge about the diplomacy in Tonkin and how to work well with the officials there. The chapters argues that knowledge from the connection between the English and Tonkin people was fundamental for the EIC's success in Tonkin. Using skilled factors in Tonkin, therefore, demonstrated its important roles in the EIC's managed policy and in its maintenance and expansion in East Asia.

CHAPTER 4. THE EIC's TRADING EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE TONKIN FACTORY (1672-1697)

By studying a range of the EIC's commercial strategies and activities at Tonkin, this chapter demonstrates that the English adapted their trade in response to knowledge learned from Dutch experiences and the advice of its overseas staff. In doing so, they created regional and transoceanic trading networks, which merged in Tonkin. More particularly, the chapter underlines the contribution of distant agency towards the maintenance of the Tonkin branch, by showing how they promoted new commercial plans and drove the trade indirectly and directly. The EIC officials in London gave general instructions and ordered the business while officials in Bantam provided advice and 'special' orders until 1682, and the Tonkin factors directly ran the EIC's projects on the ground. It was the factors who applied the plans regarding Japan's silk-silver trade, the Manila project of finding a substitute source of silver, and of entering into a Eurasian trade network to maintain and raise profits from Tonkin and East Asia. The main object of the EIC's commercial plans in Tonkin was the silk trade, which the EIC perceived as a means of facilitating a large-scale transoceanic trading chain.

By illustrating how the trade worked on the ground on a daily basis in Tonkin, the research offers arguments about the position of overseas factors in Tonkin who ran the English trade directly with and without instructions from London, and the EIC's ability to adapt in various matters such as the nature of imported and exported commodities, types of investment and types of partnership. The chapter also provides evidence about the role of the Tonkin Court and Tonkinese merchants who connected daily with the English and helped them to have fundamental information about trading

commodities and partners together with the way to deal with local merchants satisfactorily. Furthermore, by looking at the EIC's overseas trade, this research provides a clear discussion of how the EIC exploited supplementary markets to serve its key desire to create an effective distant trading network and to show the role of intermediaries in the EIC's commercial strategy in the seventeenth century. The chapter demonstrates that the EIC connections in East Asia greatly depended on creating a regional trading system, in which small markets such as Tonkin, Siam and Taiwan bridged the link with mainland China and Japan and gave the EIC an alternative means of enlarging its influence in trade. The EIC kept the Tonkin factory for twenty-five years, even though it produced few direct economic benefits, because of its essential role as an intermediary. Tonkin provided an important stepping stone, building trading networks in and knowledge of the region, such benefits ultimately allowed the EIC to move beyond using intermediaries in the late seventeenth century, to consider direct trading links at its end.

Data for this chapter comes from London's instructions, Bantam's letters to Tonkin, Tonkin's journal registers and diaries, the brief records of Bantam Council and those held by the Java factory. However, these sources are insufficient to evaluate the EIC's trade in Tonkin due to the lack of materials in important years, especially from May 1680 to December 1681, and the period 1683-1693. During these years, data was taken from and compared with the VOC's records in Tonkin and through the records of Tonkin's Mandarins although these were not precise as foreign merchants arriving in Tonkin always lobbied local Mandarins to record less imported goods and silver to

avoid paying full tax.⁴⁵⁸ In general, the materials in the 1670s are more complete while those in the 1680s and 1690s have proved harder to collect and confirm due to the lack of materials, especially during some of the critical years: 1681, 1685, 1688, 1693, and 1697 when there was limited information available to examine and explain the Company's activity in Tonkin. The research based on these records draws a general picture about the English trade in Tonkin.

The EIC's commercial strategies in Tonkin

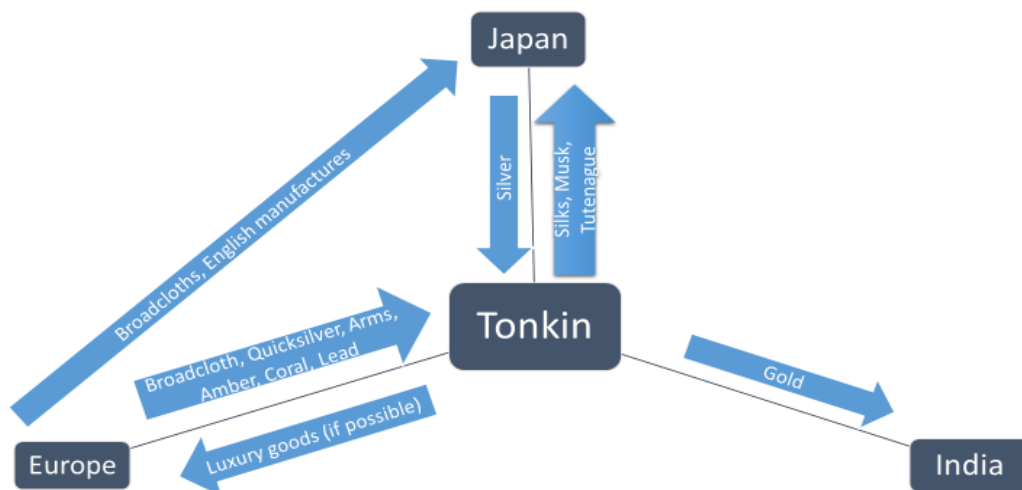
Learning from the Dutch commercial model, the EIC tried to create a regional and oceanic trading network in East Asia as they established the Tonkin factory in the 1670s, in which Tonkin respectively played the role of a supplementary market, then an intermediary in the East Asian system and a part of the large commercial chain. London's instructions to Bantam in September 1671 showed its expectation and knowledge about the potential of Tonkin in terms of commodities and its connection with Japan and other ports in Asia. These instructions state 'Wee would have you take notice, that our cheifest end of undertaking the Japon trade is for the vent of cloth, and other English manufactures, and for the procuring of gold, silver & copper for the supply of other our factories in East Asia, yt wee may not send gold & silver from hence.'⁴⁵⁹ In general, London wished Japan would provide a market for English products and capital of the EIC's regional trading system. Capital from Japan would

⁴⁵⁸ It was the same situation with the Dutch because both the English and the Dutch bribed the Dispatchdores to count their goods wrongly to pay less tax and give less silver to the King and Princes; and they tried to keep their commodities secretly to compete together.

⁴⁵⁹ IOR/E/3/87, *Company to Bantam, 21 September 1671*, pp. 479-480.

become the foundation for the EIC's overseas trade and therefore the maintenance of supportive markets in East Asia including Tonkin was greatly depended on the EIC's situation in Japan. Accordingly, no money was sent to East Asia in 1672 while clothes were valued at 83 per cent of exported goods, and other goods (weapons, lead, coral, amber) played a tiny percentage.⁴⁶⁰ Based on the number of ships London wanted to send to each country (three to Japan, two to Taiwan, only one to Tonkin), Tonkin was considered to have less potential than the other two markets.

Figure 4.1. The EIC's central supposition of Tonkin trade in 1672



Source: IOR/E/3/87, *Company to Bantam, 21 September 1671*, pp. 479-480.

It is clear that the EIC wanted to build Tonkin as a part of a regional and long-distant trade linked East Asia, India, and Europe. In the East Asian trading system, the main role of Tonkin was to supply silks (including Chinese products collecting in Tonkin and local substitutes) to exchange for silver in Japan. Broadlly, London wanted to connect

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 475-76.

Tonkin with both India (providing gold) and Europe (being a market for English goods and exporting luxury commodities to London). As such, in the first plan, the Tonkin factory played two roles of a supplementary market for Japan and a regular market for India and Europe, but the main trend was the silk-silver trade with Japan. This model was builded from the Dutch model of regional trade and London expected that potential goods would be collected from Tonkin and Taiwan and carried to Japan. From there, they were transferred to Surat and Madras for further trading while a ship from Japan returned Taiwan and Tonkin to supply capital. In this system, Tonkin would supply (Chinese) musk, substitute silks to Japan, tutenague and other commodities to India and Europe.⁴⁶¹ The Bantam Council, with fundamental knowledge on the ground, gave Gyfford more detailed instructions to trade in Tonkin. Following, Tonkin would provide silk for Japan, manufacturer and musk for England, gold for India and be a market of pepper and English manufacturer.⁴⁶²

The plan in 1672 showed firstly the EIC's lack of knowledge and trading experience in East Asia. London kept trying (and failing) to sell English cloths and European re-exported goods to cover part of the expense of distant trade. Such misplaced plans and assumptions were formed due to the limited information they collected from overseas agents and the VOC. These misunderstandings were not only a problem for the Tonkin factory as London plagued other English outposts in Taiwan

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, p. 480. Tutenague was a confused term by both Western and Chinese, Indian to show a pure zinc which in Vietnamese was 'white lead'. See Li, *Nguyen Cochín-China*, pp. 180-181.

⁴⁶² E/3/33, *Instructions and Order for the Chief Merchant, Mr. W. Gyfford*..., 25 May 1672, No. 3642, p. 33.

and Japan with limited instructions rather relying on the current information.⁴⁶³ Despite London's optimism, English textiles (mainly woollen textiles) were unsuitable in the hot and wet climate in Tonkin and remained unsold.⁴⁶⁴ When making the instructions to Tonkin in 1671, London still had an unclear idea about the value of Tonkinese goods to the Eurasian trade, except for the silk-silver trade with Japan. In fact, the most significant problem the EIC faced in trying to access East Asian trade was knowledge. This problem was similar to the misstep that the Company had made in evaluating the potential of East Asian markets in the 1610s. Although the Bantam factory had been running for more than fifty years, the Bantam Council had never paid close attention to East Asian trade since they had mostly focused on the spice trade and India. Therefore, although Bantam agents had general information about trade in East Asia, they had no detail of potential exported and imported products in each country. This fact had shown clearly in Browne's commercial plan in the 1660s (see chapter two). Therefore, the EIC's exported goods to East Asia in 1672 were an experiment while the choice of returned goods from Asia was based only on knowledge obtained from the VOC and English overseas agents. After the Tonkin factory was established, overseas factors needed to find and learn more about the trading system to maintain the English presence there. For that reason, Farrington argues that the EIC and its factors were 'poor merchants' who did not 'appreciate the difficulties involved' of long-distant trade.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶³ Chaudhuri, *Trading World of Asia*, pp. 215-219. This ambition was constant in the EIC's strategy as London even decided reducing English cloths' profit in some periods or required one-tenth of the EIC's exports was native products in 1698

⁴⁶⁴ IOR/G/12/17/1, 5 July 1672, p. 5b-6a. They were 29 bales English cloth, 8 bales English stuff, 1 chest glasses, 2 bales Cambay cloth, 1 bale long-cloth, 618 peculs pepper and lead, sandalwood, knives, brimstone.

⁴⁶⁵ A. Farrington, *Trading Places: The East India Company and Asia 1600-1830* (London, 2002), p. 39.

Secondly, the figure shows that due to the limited knowledge, the English trading link was uncertain as London only desired to connect to those places in Asia with ‘*luxury goods*’ but had no explicit data about those products or how to create and develop the trading chain.⁴⁶⁶ There was only one clear objective: the Tonkin silk-silver trade with Japan as the Dutch model meant that the English collected Tonkinese silks and Chinese silks in Tonkin to provide Japan’s demand in exchange for silver to cover the capital of the EIC’s overseas trade. However, this system exposed less effective results from the 1660s.⁴⁶⁷ London did not seem to understand that the Shogun had banned the exportation of silver out of Japan from 1668 onwards.⁴⁶⁸ Hence, London still expected the silver-flow in East Asia and sent no bullion to East Asia in 1672 and hoped that selling European goods in Japan, and sending products from Tonkin and Taiwan to Japan would create sufficient currency for the trading system. In contrast, Bantam agents understood the role of cash in Tonkin’s East Asian trade and used their good

⁴⁶⁶ Luxury goods in the early modern period included manufactured products, metals, gold or silver, ‘exotic’ food or stuffs such as spices and silks. See more about luxury goods in M. Berg, E. Eger (eds.), *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (Basingstoke, 2003); W. Farrell, ‘Silk and Globalization in Eighteenth-Century London: Commodities, People and Connections c. 1720-1800’ (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of London, 2014), pp. 27-30.

⁴⁶⁷ Before the 1650s, Japan was the best market for Chinese and substitute silks, Europeans tried to contact Chinese private merchants or other ports in the South China Sea to obtain those products to supply Japan. In return, they got silver from Japan, which was sufficient to cover their cost of purchasing other products and maintain their activities in the areas. But from the 1660s, the Dutch preferred Bengal silks to Tonkin ones and thus Tonkin-Japan trade reduced in the VOC’s system. See Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, pp. 111-125.

⁴⁶⁸ Massarella, *The EIC in Taiwan*, p. 402; K. Camfferman, T.E. Cooke, ‘The Profits of the Dutch India Company’s Japan Trade’, *A Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business Studies*, 40 (2004), pp. 49-75, p. 51; M. Matao, S. Yoshiaki, ‘The Emergence of the Tokugawa Monetary System in East Asian International Perspective’ in D.O. Flynn, A. Giraldez and R.V. Glahn (eds.), *Global Connections and Monetary History, 1470-1800* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 169-186, pp. 175-176. Japan even prohibited exporting high quality silver in the previous period.

relationship with the Sultan of Bantam to borrow 10,000 Spanish dollars from him to support the Tonkin factory, but this money was insufficient.⁴⁶⁹ This episode shows the role of overseas agents in helping London to settle and maintain factories in East Asia, but also the importance of knowledge about the nature of overseas trade in establishing the EIC's position in East Asia.

The EIC's plan for a Tonkin-Japan link faced problems from the outset, however, for while the factories were settled in Tonkin and Taiwan, English merchants were ill-treated and refused to stay and trade in Japan. The Dutch merchants had deliberately and successfully undermined the possibilities of English trade in Japan, by making the Japanese concerned about the possibilities of English proselytism by instilling a belief that the English would follow the example of the Portuguese.⁴⁷⁰ In 1639 the Portuguese were forced out of Japan for religious reasons since their trading relationship with the Japanese had always had a missionary element to it.⁴⁷¹ They sought to negotiate with Japan three times in 1640, 1647 and 1685 but were unsuccessful.⁴⁷² The Dutch used this fear of Catholic missions to prevent the EIC gaining a trading partnership by mentioning to Japan the marriage between King Charles II of England and the Portuguese infant, Catherine in 1662 and the supposed English plan to bring Catholic priests to Japan.⁴⁷³ Japan thus refused the English. This failure to create a formal trading relationship with Japan showed a crucial flaw in the

⁴⁶⁹ Ma, 'English Trade in the South China Sea 1670-1715' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of London, 1958), p. 61.

⁴⁷⁰ Massarella, *A World Elsewhere: Europe's Encounter with Japan in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New Haven, 1990), pp. 359-360.

⁴⁷¹ S. Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese empire in Asia 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History* (New York, 1993), pp. 169-171.

⁴⁷² C.R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan, 1549-1650* (Manchester, 1993), pp. 384-388.

⁴⁷³ IOR/G/12/17/1, *Tonkin to Bantam, 24 July 1674*, pp. 154, 157-58.

EIC's plans. Although Japan was a central market and a key supplier of silver in East Asia, London and the Bantam Council had limited information about their disadvantages in Japan with the Dutch competition, and the Japanese closed policy towards Europeans. Consequently, the difficulty of the English in Japan together with the EIC's problematic aspirations and its limited knowledge caused the Tonkin factors to adapt and drive distant trade themselves to formulate another commercial plan to maintain the factory as they recognised the potential of this kingdom in the regional trade and the connection with mainland China. The Manila project of finding a substitute source of silver and a network for Tonkin trade thus epitomised the English learning about the trading network and the role of distant individuals to drive the trade on the ground in the seventeenth century.

If the establishment of the Tonkin factory witnessed how London and Bantam agents adapted from the lessons of the Dutch, the Manila project in 1673-1674 examined how English individuals drove the trade independently in a new environment. Broadly, it shows both positive and negative effects of the EIC's policy of using knowledgeable servants in overseas areas. The chief factor in Tonkin, William Gyfford, in particular, operated daily trading and carried out the wishes of the EIC.

On the positive side, Gyfford contributed the EIC's experience of overseas trade by providing a detailed suggestion about Tonkin's position in the regional trading network in 1672 based on the information collected from local and foreign merchants in Tonkin. He advised London to create a land-trading-route between Tonkin and China to utilise the role of Tonkin's Mandarins.⁴⁷⁴ Regarding sea routes, he not only expressed the importance of Japan but also proposed a new plan to create another trading network

⁴⁷⁴ IOR/G/12/17/1, 16 October 1672, p. 38b.

and find substitute silver from Manila. Gyfford acknowledged that Tonkin was part of the regional trading system centred on Japan.⁴⁷⁵ He advised that two small ships could sail from London or Bantam via Jambeo (now Jambi, Sumatra, Indonesia) to collect pepper and then arrive in Tonkin in March or April annually.⁴⁷⁶ Significantly, he attempted to build a trade link between Tonkin and Manila, which illustrated how overseas factors contributed to the EIC in East Asia by providing trading knowledge and driving the factory independently under challenging periods.

Trade with Manila had been one of the EIC's long-term aims, which started in 1644 with a voyage by the *Seahorse* to find silver for Asian trade, but it failed.⁴⁷⁷ At that time, London judged that 'if the Manila trade were followed from Bantam, wee [the EIC] might out of a small stock every year from thence bee supplied from the Maneelaes and Macaw per via Bantam with 50,000 rials of eight in gould and in twoe yeares tyme wee will undertake that the Company need send noe more stockehether,...'.⁴⁷⁸ London evaluated the high potential of Manila in supplying the EIC with a regular source of silver, around 50,000 rials per year and believed that that money was enough to balance its trade in East Asia. In 1645 Madras sent another ship, the *Supply*, to Manila but it also failed. In the 1660s the trade with Manila was again discussed in London. Andrew Richard, the Governor of the Company stated that: 'the freedom of trade to be granted them at the Spanish plantation and factories in the Philippines and Molucca Island may advance the trade of England greatly by helping forward the sale of considerable quantities of English goods and manufactures and in

⁴⁷⁵ IOR/G/12/17/1, *Tonkin to London*, 7 December 1672, pp. 46b - 47a.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 52b.

⁴⁷⁷ Even, the EIC Hirado factorys had tried to voyage to Manila twice from 1620 to 1622 to expand the English trading position in the China Sea. See Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, pp. 267-313.

⁴⁷⁸ Foster, *The English Factories in India 1642-1645* (Oxford, 1913), p. 193.

return furnishing the Company with gold and silver, with which these factories abound by reason of their trade with Indian goods from other parts fit for sale in Europe and thus prevent the exportation of so much bullion.’⁴⁷⁹ The English highly valued free trade with Manila, as it had the possibility to become the main English source of silver for trade in East Asia. However, the conflict between England and Spain in this period prevented the EIC from obtaining trading privileges in Manila. Bantam agents also recognised the importance of Manila in the late 1660s as they tried to sell Indian cloth in Manila and Mindanao indirectly through the trade of the Sultan of Bantam.⁴⁸⁰ It is noteworthy that from the 1670s Madras also traded with Manila in the pattern of ‘country trade’.⁴⁸¹ Those attempts of London, Bantam, and Madras created the possibility of expanding the English ‘eastern part of the South Seas trade’ to compete with the Dutch.⁴⁸² Beyond the issue of a silver supplier, it seems that the EIC wished for a massive international network to link with Manila and then Spanish America if the negotiations with Spain about free trade in Manila were successful. With this in mind, the Gyfford’s project to link Tonkin and Manila was the continuation of the EIC’s previous desire for obtaining silver and creating a global trading chain although London had not instructed Gyfford to voyage to Manila.

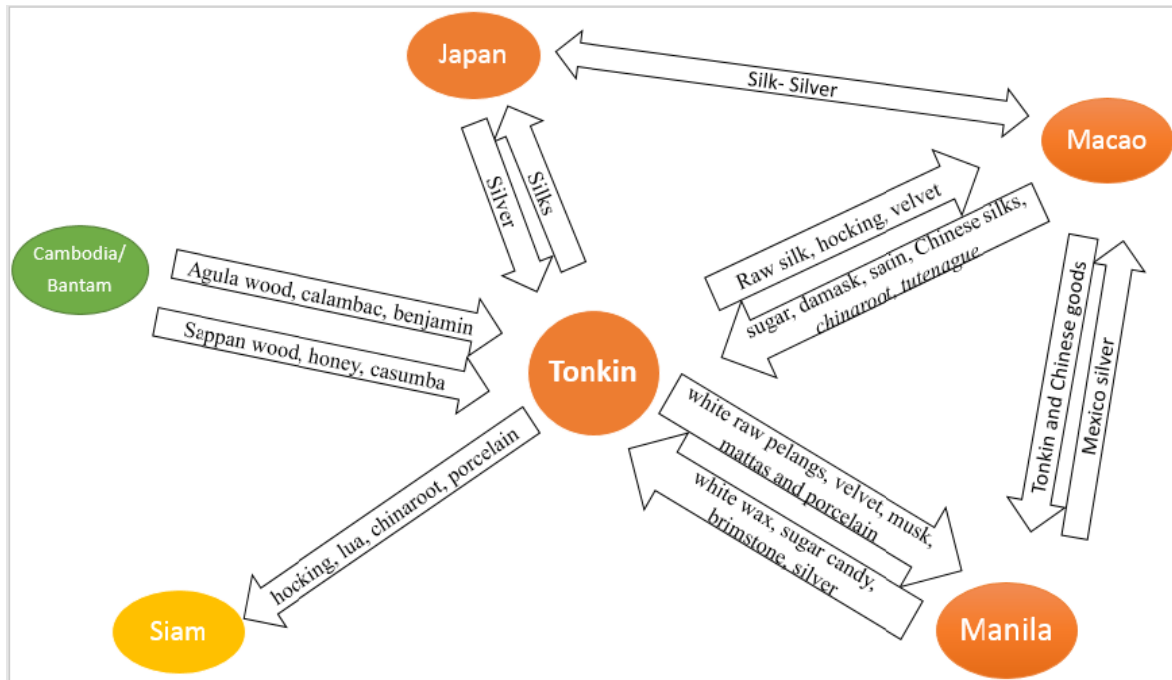
⁴⁷⁹ Sainsbury, *A Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company, 1660-1663* (Oxford, 1922), p. 56.

⁴⁸⁰ Quiason, *English ‘Country Trade’ with the Philippines, 1644-1765* (Quezon, 1966), pp. 26-28; Furber, *Rival empires*, p. 272.

⁴⁸¹ Quiason, ‘The English Country Trade with Manila Prior to 1708’, *Asian Studies*, 1 (1963), pp. 73-74.

⁴⁸² Foster, *The English Factories in India 1668-1669* (Oxford, 1927), p. 28.

Figure 4.2. Gyfford's suggestion of Tonkin's availability in the regional trade in 1672



Source: This figure is built from the report of Gyfford to the English East India Company, 7 December 1672, in IOR/G/12/17/2, pp. 46a-b; 48a-b.

Like the officials in London, Gyfford believed that the Manila-Macao-Tonkin link was as important as the Japan-Tonkin link because Tonkin products were suitable for Manila and Manila could supply a regular source of silver for the English. However, Gyfford not only served the EIC's existing target but also tried to extend its position in the area by learning from the Portuguese. He stated in 1672 that 'if your Honours would get an allowance of the King of Spain to trade from here [Tonkin] to the Manila, it would prove as beneficial to you as the Japon trade, ...because it takes off all the popular commodities of this country'.⁴⁸³ In Gyfford's eyes, the Manila-Macao-Tonkin link helped to collect both Chinese products (as Chinese merchants traded there regularly)

⁴⁸³ IOR/G/12/17/1, *Tonkin to London*, 7 December 1672, p. 53a.

and silver exporting from the Spanish-America through the system of the ‘Manila Galleon’ to finance the transoceanic trade.⁴⁸⁴ As such Tonkin provided white raw pelang, velvet, musk, and porcelain in return for white wax, sugar candy, brimstone, silver (rials of eight).⁴⁸⁵ Moreover, he believed that the Tonkin factory could collect sugar, damask, satin, Chinese silks, chinaroot, tutenague from Macao (on the link with Manila) to exchange with Tonkin raw hockins, velvet and raw white silk.⁴⁸⁶ Gyfford proposed that English ships from Tonkin should sail to Macao and then transport their goods to Manila in exchange for Mexican silver or be dispatched to Japan for the silk-silver trade. In this system, Manila became the EIC’s main silver supplier for English factories besides the capital from Japan. Indeed, before the 1650s, Manila was the second supplier of silver in East Asia (supporting Japan).⁴⁸⁷ After the 1650s, Manila replaced Japan to become the biggest silver-provider in the area. From 1651 to 1675, Manila received 147 tons of silver from Spanish America, and 375 tons in the period 1676-1700.⁴⁸⁸ The growth of the Manila market and the Japanese prohibition on exporting silver from 1668 meant that obtaining trading permissions in Manila was vital for both the Tonkin factory and the EIC. Therefore, in 1674, Gyfford again requested

⁴⁸⁴ See more detail about the international maritime trade between Macao, Manila, Spanish America in A.J.M. Barros, ‘The Manila Galleon, Macao and international maritime and commercial relations, 1500-1700’, *The International Journal of Maritime History*, 29 (2017), pp. 123-137.

⁴⁸⁵ Silver in Manila was mostly Mexican silver which was transferred by the Spanish from the Latin America. Brimstone was the chemical Sulphur.

⁴⁸⁶ IOR/G/12/17/1, pp. 46b, 48b. Hockin was a Tonkinese yellow silk. Velvet was Chinese product, a silk fabric with a thick soft pile.

⁴⁸⁷ J.D. Vries, ‘Connecting Europe and Asia: A Quantitative Analysis of the Cape-Route Trade, 1497-1795’ in Flynn, Giraldez and Glahn (eds.), *Global Connections*, p. 80; Frank, *Re-Orient*, p. 144. 30,000 tons of silver was directly shipped by Manila galleons and 25 per cent of American silver was transferred through the Pacific.

⁴⁸⁸ W. Barrett, ‘World Bullion Flows, 1450-1800’ in J.D. Tracy (ed.), *The Rise of Merchants*, pp. 224-254, p. 249.

that the Company re-negotiate with Spain to trade with Manila. He stated ‘it must be continued to have a factory at Manila which is as proper for yt agent for commodities of this place as Japon itself.’⁴⁸⁹ If this plan ran well, the position of Tonkin in the EIC’s trading chain would completely change as it became the principal place to collect money for the English trading system in East Asia. Tonkin, hence, would become a central hub for the EIC, rather than a supplementary market. Following the above suggestions, Gyfford proved his crucial role by not only promoting a new trade network but also identifying specific Tonkin goods suitable for Manila.

With the above idea about the trading network in the China Sea, when the Tonkin factory was isolated as the third Anglo-Dutch war was broken in 1672, Gyfford decided to send Nicholas Waite to Macao and Manila for a trading experiment. As a supplementary factory, the Tonkin factory depended on the EIC’s situation in Japan, but in this period, they received neither information from there nor instructions from Bantam and London. Tonkin factors were also worried about the continuing existence of the branch as the Dutch traders arriving in Tonkin informed them that the English were defeated in Europe. To maintain the trade and find the link with other markets and another origin of silver for the English, Gyfford decided to trade with Macao and Manila through the Portuguese ship. Waite carried a stock of goods, including 626 tales of silver and some unsold English goods from Tonkin. With these resources, he tried to buy Chinese products (white pelang, damask, white silk and tutenague or chinaroot). Importantly, through a trade with Macao, Gyfford hoped to find an indirect connection

⁴⁸⁹ IOR/G/12/17/2, pp. 111b, 125a; Ma, *English Trade*, p. 110. In the same year, a small Spanish ship sailed from Manila to Tonkin with 600 peculs of brimstone, 20 bales of coast cloth and 8000 rials of eight to trade and purchase silks. This trade encouraged Gyfford and Tonkin factors to operate Manila project.

with the English in Bantam.⁴⁹⁰ Unfortunately, the ship missed the monsoon in August, did not call at Macao. It then sailed to Cambodia and Siam in December 1673.⁴⁹¹ In August 1674, Waite tried to return to Tonkin on the French vessel, but it was late as the Dutch controlled all sea routes. The ship then lost the way and called at Manila where the Spanish put Waite in prison and confiscated all the English goods since Spain still kept the trading monopoly there, and had refused the EIC's negotiations to have permission to trade there.⁴⁹² In prison, Waite sent a letter to Gyfford to report the situation of the voyage. But the Tonkin factory only knew about this failure when the letter arrived on 19 August 1675. This unlucky voyage ended Tonkin's hope of trade with Manila and caused severe problems. With the conflict between Dacres (in the Bantam Council) and Gyfford (see chapter three), and Gyfford's plan of finding a substitute source of silver was without orders from London and Bantam, Dacres accused Gyfford and Waite of performing a rash commercial strategy and considered closing the factory.⁴⁹³ Therefore that Quiason argued that Dacres had a significant influence on the Manila project, and that Bantam consigned goods to Manila via Tonkin factors is

⁴⁹⁰ Ma, *English Trade*, p. 97; S.D. Quiason, 'Country Trade with Manila', pp. 64-83. He had a mistake as he argued that Bantam sent some unsold English goods to Manila. Indeed, Bantam only advised the Company to use Manila as a new intermediary point for Japan and this plan was not received affirmative answer. The problem here is that he highly evaluated the role of Bantam towards Tonkin's activities although the third Anglo-Dutch war blocked all sea-route in Asia and the Tonkin factory was isolated until 1676.

⁴⁹¹ Ma, *English Trade*, p. 97; Hoang, 'From Japan to Manila and back to Europe: The abortive English Trade with Tonkin in the 1670s', *Itinerario*, 29 (2005), pp. 73-92, pp. 83-4.

⁴⁹² IOR/G/12/17/2, *Waite (from Manila) to Gyfford, 25 December 1674*, pp. 139b-141a; Quiason, *English Country Trade*, pp. 22-24.

⁴⁹³ Sainsbury, *Court Minutes 1674-1676*, p. 93. Bantam insisted on closing the factory immediately while the Shipping Committee in London considered giving English traders on more year's trial in September 1674.

problematic.⁴⁹⁴ Dacres suggested to London in 1674 that ‘it very probable that by affactory in Tywan, being scituated where Tonqueen, Macaow, Manila, and Japon lye round about it, some considerable advantage may be found out at one tyme or another’ but received no response from London, and Gyfford had already undertaken to create the Manila link a year earlier.⁴⁹⁵

Gyfford’s project showed both positive and negative effects from the EIC’s policy of using skilled staff as London had little experience in overseas trade. The positive side, as the above discussion indicates, is Gyfford’s attempts to expand the English trade in East Asia and to identify specific types of commodities and trade networks via the point of Tonkin. The damaging issues were from Gyfford’s possibility of evaluating the particular situation of overseas trade to make a right trading decision as he had power and privilege to drive the Tonkin factory himself. Firstly, Gyfford’s activity was beyond the control of London, and even Bantam. It was somewhat similar to the way Browne reacted to London’s order about the East Asian trade in 1663 as he was willing to settle factories in Tonkin, Siam or Cambodia without agreement and support from London. It was the downside of the EIC’s policy of using skilled staff in East Asia as Gyfford operated a new trading plan without asking permission from London. Secondly, he seemed to act in accordance with his own desires rather than taking into account the EIC’s prior dealings with Manila. In both letters to London in 1672 and 1674, he understood the importance of re-negotiating with Spain to obtain free trade in Manila. Clearly, Manila was the unique outpost of the Spanish in East Asia, and it was hard for the English to share the trading monopoly there. However, he enacted the project without instructions or support from both London and Bantam and with the

⁴⁹⁴ Foster, *Factories in India 1668-1669*, pp. 25-26.

⁴⁹⁵ IOR/G/21/6, *Bantam to Company*, 5 October 1674, p. 110.

predictable outcome that the Spanish in Manila ill-treated the English. Thirdly, Gyfford decided to make the voyage without careful preparations as the Tonkin factory faced difficulty due to the Anglo-Dutch war and the lack support of the English from Bantam and Japan. It meant that Gyfford had no choice, but voyaged to Macao and Manila to find another chance to maintain and develop the Tonkin factory. Unluckily, those issues and the bad weather in Vietnam caused difficulty for the English to complete the voyage. Consequently, Dacres blamed that Gyfford acted rashly and damaged the Company's capital. The failure of Gyfford's plan thus illustrates both advantages and disadvantages the EIC faced as it chose to use skilled staff in the overseas areas. Although Gyfford tried to make profit for the EIC, he could not succeed without useful knowledge about the trading situation in the area.

After the above failure, rather than following Dacres' suggestions, the EIC was unwilling to close the Tonkin factory and settled Tonkin as a regular market to furnish silks for Europe.⁴⁹⁶ With the ambition of creating an oceanic trading system and expanding the English position in that network, Tonkin became a hub in the Eurasian trade, but still kept the role in the regional system. This plan thus showed London's ability to adapt Dutch models of commerce to their own ends, and its attempts to exploit the advantages of silk trade to create a global trading chain.

There were a few reasons why the EIC continued to maintain the Tonkin factory in the mid-1670s. As the Dutch captured English ships in Asia in the war 1672-1674, London had limited information about the trade in Tonkin and East Asia and kept expecting to sell English and European products in the area.⁴⁹⁷ London persisted in

⁴⁹⁶ Erikson, *Monopoly and Free Trade*, p. 191; Hoang, *English Trade with Tonkin*, pp. 84-5; Morse, *Trading to China*, p. 40.

⁴⁹⁷ IOR/E/3/88, *Company to Bantam, 23 October 1674*, pp. 135, 138; Bassett, 'EIC in Far East', p. 153.

trying to create a regional trading network as at least it tried to contact Japan twice in 1677 and 1682 through Chinese brokers in Tonkin and local officials.⁴⁹⁸ Importantly, Tonkin was essential to connect with mainland China as the EIC had no direct trading line with this market and Tonkin had advantageous geography. Moreover, through the Dutch experience in trading with Tonkin, London realised the potential of Tonkin silk in Europe.⁴⁹⁹ Gyfford's suggestions from 1672 played a significant role as he evaluated that Tonkin could provide London with (Chinese) musk, chinaroot, and Tonkinese silks (*pelangs, hockin, load, the thua*).⁵⁰⁰ He sent some samples to Bantam via the *Zant Frigate*, but the Dutch captured them. The Bantam Council also emphasised the potential of Tonkin silks for Europe.⁵⁰¹ Musk and pelangs were famous in Europe, and Tonkin raw silk proved vital for the English silk industry, which was growing after the 1650s and much depended on imported materials and skills from France, Italy, Levant.⁵⁰² Over the century, the value of English imported silks increased gradually: £118,000 (1622), £175,000 (1640), £263,000 (the 1660s) and £344,000 (by the 1690s),

⁴⁹⁸ Sainsbury, *Court Minutes 1674-76*, p. 259; *Court Minutes 1677-79*, 7 March 1677, p. xvii; Massarella, *A world elsewhere*, p. 365. In 1677 Surat Presidency considered that the EIC could ask supportive letters from King of Siam to Japan to open the relation with Shogun government.

⁴⁹⁹ IOR/G/12/17/3, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 3 June 1676, pp. 151a-b; Bassett, *Factory at Bantam*, p. 336. In the letter to Tonkin, the EIC repeated the VOC's considered investment in white, wrought silks and musk.

⁵⁰⁰ IOR/G/12/17/1, *Tonkin to London*, 7 December 1672, p. 46b; IOR/E/3/33, pp. 10-11. Load or Loas was a kind of Tonkinese wrought silk. *The Thua* was silk textile in Tonkin. Hockin was a Tonkinese yellow silk. Peling/ Pelang was a kind of Tonkinese wrought silk.

⁵⁰¹ IOR/E/3/33, *Extracts of Letter from the Agent in Bantam to the Company in England*, 5 October 1674, pp. 291-292.

⁵⁰² Chaudhuri, *The Trading World*, p. 344; N. Rothstein, 'Canterbury and London: The Silk Industry in the Late Seventeenth Century', *Textile history*, 20 (1989), pp. 33-47; Farrell, *Silk and Globalization*, pp. 13, 18.

accounted for 23-29 per cent of imported goods.⁵⁰³ However, the EIC only played a tiny role in this trade, with 0.48 per cent of its imported commodities from Asia.⁵⁰⁴ Such demand persuaded the EIC to invest in the silk trade in Bengal, China, Persia, and Tonkin. Because Chinese silk was challenging to obtain, Tonkin provided substitutes although the quantity and quality of Tonkinese silk were less than Chinese products.

London began this plan by ordering 30 to 40 bales of Tonkin white silk, 4,000 pieces of pelangs, 1,500 pieces of damask and 2,000 ounces of musk in 1674 as a trial.⁵⁰⁵ London's idea of supplying Tonkin silks for Europe illustrated the EIC's desire to build a Eurasian trade via the point of Tonkin, not its rash reaction to keep the Tonkin factory after the previous failure. In September 1675, the first positive signal appeared as 113 pieces of Tonkin woven silks were sold in London.⁵⁰⁶ The Company then ordered the Tonkin factory to provide more: 300 pieces of velvet, 4,000 pieces of Chinese damask, 1,000 pieces of satin, and 25,000 pieces of Tonkin silks.⁵⁰⁷ London hoped that the quantity of Tonkin white silk and other wrought silks could meet the demand in Europe.⁵⁰⁸ In 1676, the Court of Directors twice discussed the continuation of the Tonkin factory seriously debating, 'how to trade & improve, manage with least

⁵⁰³ C. Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700*, vol.2 (Cambridge, 1985), p. 125; P. Linda, 'Creating a Silk Industry in Seventeenth-Century England', *Shakespeare Studies*, 28 (2000), pp. 225-226.

⁵⁰⁴ N. Steensgaard, 'The Growth and Composition of the Long-Distance Trade of England and the Dutch Republic before 1750' in Tracy (ed.), *The Rise of Merchant Empires*, p. 114; Chaudhuri, *The Trading World*, table C.16, 17, 18, pp. 533-536. In the 1660s, the value of imported raw silks was only £1,251 in total of £263,000 from imported commodities from Asia.

⁵⁰⁵ IOR/E/3/88, *Company to Bantam*, 23 October 1674, p. 138. While white silk, pelang were Tonkinese products; damask and musk were original from China.

⁵⁰⁶ Sainsbury, *Court Minutes 1674-76*, 8 September, 21 September 1675, pp. 212, 220.

⁵⁰⁷ IOR/E/3/88, *Company to Bantam*, 6 November 1675, p. 243.

⁵⁰⁸ IOR/G/12/17/3, p. 154b.

charge', eventually deciding to give this branch more factors and writers.⁵⁰⁹ Ships and money were regularly sent to Tonkin from 1676 to 1683 to get the permission of trade and build a warehouse in Thang Long.⁵¹⁰ Interestingly, besides Tonkinese products, the factory also provided London with Chinese musk, damask and other silks which were supplied by Chinese merchants sailing to Tonkin yearly. In some years, London required Tonkin to link with other East Asian countries to provide products for both London and India. Tonkin thus played two roles as an intermediary to collect regional commodities and a regular market to trade with London. The role, however gradually ended as China opened commercial ports for foreigners in late 1684, and the re-appearance of Cantonese musk and silks quickly dislodged Tonkin products. Eventually, its closure was as unavoidable as was that of other small factories in East Asia because the EIC withdrew from its plans to become involved in the intra-Asian regional trade, and turned its attention to a direct global trade among Europe, India and China. Nevertheless, for the period 1676-1688, the EIC successfully used the Tonkin factory with its intra-Asian trade connections, to supply silk for Europe. As a result, the below section will focus on discussing Tonkin's trade in this period.

The English commercial activities in Tonkin

The EIC's exported goods to Tonkin illustrate precisely how the Company operated overseas trade, what kind of experience it obtained, and how it changed to adapt to distant areas and from which they could gather trading knowledge. As the first Charter

⁵⁰⁹ Sainsbury, *Court Minutes 1674-76*, 5 January, 11 October 1676, pp. 259-260.

⁵¹⁰ IOR/G/12/17/3, p. 151b; IOR/G/12/17/4, p. 202a; IOR/G/12/17/5, p. 227. In 1676 London sent to Tonkin £19,775; 35,000 Spanish dollars in 1677; and £40,000 in 1678.

in 1600 said, the EIC 'have not yet experienced of the Kinds of Commodities and merchandizes, which are or wil be vendible, or to be uttered in the faid Parts of the Eaft-Indies, and therefore shall be driven to carry to thofe Parts,..., which are likely to be returned again into this our Realm'.⁵¹¹ It meant that the EIC could export goods to Asia to find the best solution and if the result was unexpected, those goods could be returned to England without blame. The EIC exported three types of commodities to Asia: woollen textiles (mostly broadcloth), metals, and luxury products.⁵¹² Their main aims were to support the English textile industry and serve the Asian demand for war and luxury goods.⁵¹³ Most of those goods appeared initially in small quantities in Tonkin as it was a supportive market.⁵¹⁴ With limited knowledge about trade in Tonkin and East Asia, the EIC's exported goods in 1672 were experiments. Textiles, from England (broadcloth) and India (dungarees, Cambay cloth and chintz) made up more than 50 per cent of its stock to Tonkin. Also, London sent weapons as gifts, materials for war (lead, brimstone, guns, knives) and luxury merchandise (coral, ivory and looking glasses).⁵¹⁵

⁵¹¹ 'Charter granted by Queen', p. 14.

⁵¹² Chaudhuri, *The Trading World*, p. 220; *EIC and Export Treasure*, p. 26. In fact, those commodities were not only original English goods, but also came from Spain, France, Venice, Leghorn, Amsterdam which showed that the EIC's trade in Tonkin was one part of global trade.

⁵¹³ Besides the above aims, commodities in the long-distance trade demanded the requirement of financed imported goods from Asia. Therefore, most commodities were valued such as exotic spices and precious metals, silk. K.H. O'rourke, J.G. Williamson, 'When did Globalization Begin?', *European Review of Economic History*, 6 (2002), pp. 23-50, p. 26.

⁵¹⁴ Until 1663 English exported goods to Asia held a tiny 6 per cent of English external trade as the EIC only had some ports in India and Bantam. The EIC's return to East Asia from the 1670s could not make higher rate for the EIC's export to Asia as the main market of China and Japan still closed with English merchants. The value of the EIC's goods to Japan and Taiwan were six and five times respectively higher than that to Tonkin in 1672.

⁵¹⁵ IOR/G/12/17/1, pp. 7b-8a. They included 29 bales English cloth, 8 bales Stuffs, 1 chest Looking glasses, 1 chest Seases and weights, 10/16 chests Brimstones, 257 piculs Lead, 10 Great guns, 4 Casks of Arrack, 3 bales Dungarees, 1 bale long cloth, 2 bales Cambay cloth, 2 bales slave cloth, 1 bale red salloes,

The EIC's policy of exported goods in Tonkin was contrary to the Dutch and Chinese as they carried mostly Japanese silver, copper, arms and Asian products.⁵¹⁶

By analysing the data of the Tonkin factory and the Court of Minutes in London, the research argues that three new trends in the EIC's exported goods to Tonkin gradually appeared after 1676 including (1) increased transportation of money, (2) Asian products progressively replaced European goods, and (3) the arms-trade was considered by London and overseas agents. Those trends illustrated how the EIC adapted to change in investment and commodities to maintain the existence of the Tonkin factory to access the silk trade. They also demonstrated the role of overseas individuals in collecting information from Tonkinese merchants and brokers and suggesting new policies and London's adaptations to the requirements of Tonkin trade. New strategies emerged from new understandings about the demands and possibilities of Tonkin trade.

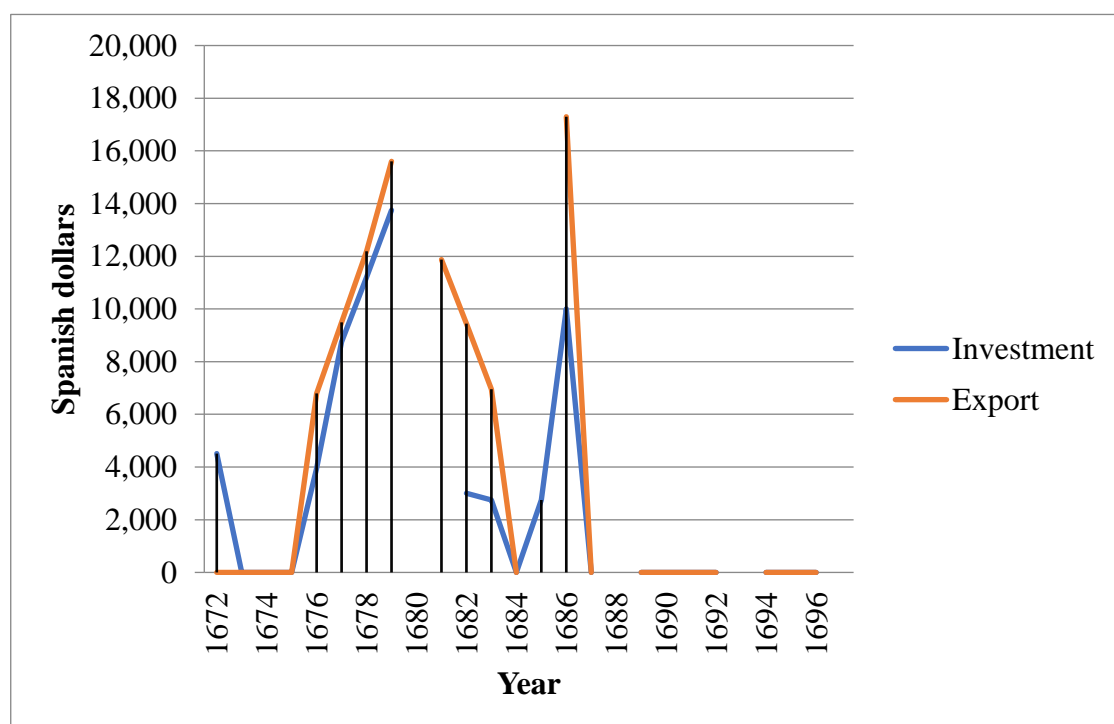
It is difficult to calculate and evaluate precisely the EIC's investment in or yield from Tonkin in this period, because of the missing source material from significant years and the variety of currencies (such as pounds, Spanish dollars, *real of eight* and tael) used in extant documentary evidence. British pound sterling was rare in Asian commerce while the Spanish dollar was an international currency. Moreover, in the South China Sea, tael silver, a Chinese standard silver was a popular type of money. Most of London's instructions, however, used pounds or dollars while Tonkin factors used tael in their reports. We know that 1 Spanish dollar or 1 peso was equivalent to 8

2 bales Chintz, 2 bales Chintz gungam, 1 bale salampares, 1 chest Corral, 1 bale Salloesjunah, 1 bale Fine English cloth, 1 box Knives, 1 tale Musters, 618 piculs pepper, 159 piculs sandalwood, 38 bales Drugs.

⁵¹⁶ Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, pp. 127-143.

reals (or rials, piece) of eight while 1 pound was equal 20 shillings or 240p.⁵¹⁷ From 1660 to 1760, one tael silver was 6s. 8d., and 1 Spanish dollar was 5 shillings or 0.75 taels.⁵¹⁸ That information gives us the way to unify accounting numbers in the materials to re-create the general investment trends and the gap between monies investment and results gained.

Figure 4.3 The EIC's investments and its exported goods from Tonkin



Source: IOR/G/12/17/1-10, the Tonkin factory records (1672-1697); IOR/G/21/7, Java factory (1677-1707); IOR/E/3/87-92, Letter Book IV-IX (1666-1697), Buch, 'La Compagnie' (1937), and Ma, *English trade in the South China Sea*.

⁵¹⁷ P. Shepard, 'The Spanish Dollar: The World's most famous Silver Coin', *Business Historical Society. Bulletin of the Business Historical Society (pre-1986)*, 1941, pp. 12-16; Reid, *Age of Commerce*, pp. 379-380. Real or piece of eight was one bit or one-eighth of Spanish dollar, equivalent as 0,0255 kg silver while a tael silver was 0.04 kg.

⁵¹⁸ Chaudhuri, *The Trading World*, p. 471. Followed the above instructions, we can see that £1 was equal to 4 Spanish dollars or 3 taels, while 1 Spanish dollar was equal to 0.75 taels or 5 shillings.

The EIC's investment in Tonkin shows London's changing acknowledgement of the importance of silver or cash in overseas trade and how it adapted to meet that requirement. The Tonkin factory explicitly argued for the EIC to recognise how little income was to be gained from exporting English goods to East Asia. The EIC tried to adapt by exporting silver, and then other types of Asian products (from India and Central Asia) to Tonkin.⁵¹⁹ Exporting bullion and commodities from Europe, engaging with the intra-Asian trade, and borrowing capital from India were the three main ways to maintain the EIC's trade in Asia. Exporting silver from London to Asia was the most popular as the EIC's products had little market in Asia and its regional trading network partly satisfied the capital demand.⁵²⁰ However, in 1672, London seemed to misunderstand the role of money in trade in Tonkin and East Asia as it still hoped to obtain capital from Japan to cover its regional trading and sent no money to Tonkin.⁵²¹ London only changed its view about exporting silver to Tonkin after receiving fundamental knowledge and suggestions from Gyfford about the necessary and compulsory of cash in Tonkin. As the English plans to obtain alternative silver from Japan and Manila failed, the EIC had no choice but returned to the traditional means of

⁵¹⁹ From 1592 onwards, the gold: silver ratio varied from 1:5.5 to 1:7 in China, whereas in Spain it fluctuated from 1:12 to 1:14. Chinese desire of silver was always high because of the growth of economy and demand for war. Therefore, European Companies found profits in exporting silver to China. F. Gipouloux, *The Asian Mediterranean: Port Cities and Trading Networks in China, Japan and Southeast Asia, 13th-21st Century* (Cheltenham, 2011), p. 140; R.V. Glahn, 'Money Use in China and Changing Patterns of Global Trade in Money Metals, 1500-1800' in Flynn and Giraldez (eds.), *Global Connections*, pp. 187-205.

⁵²⁰ Chaudhuri, *EIC and Export Treasure*, p. 24; *The EIC*, pp. 124-125; *The Trading World*, table A. 7, p. 177; Berg, *Goods from the East*, pp. 23-25. From 1671 to 1675, the silver the EIC exported to Asia double the amount compared to 5 years before and its peak in 1681-1685 with 240,952 kg of silver, more than 10 times the period 1666-1670.

⁵²¹ IOR/E/3/87, pp. 475-476.

exporting silver from London to Tonkin. There were also two trends in the EIC's investment which showed how London adapted to the situation of Tonkin trade. Firstly, money carried to Tonkin was higher than exported goods. For example, in 1677 more money was sent to buy silks and in 1678 the value of bullion was eight-times higher than the value of exported goods.⁵²² Secondly, the value of investment depended on the market of Tonkin silks in London and the external effect of Chinese products. The investment peaked in 1679 with more than 13,000 Spanish dollars from London as Tonkin played an important role to supply Tonkinese and Chinese silks for London.⁵²³ Recognising the role of cash in the Tonkin trade and desiring to compete with the Chinese and Dutch as the silk trade increased, London also encouraged the Tonkin factory to borrow money from the local government.⁵²⁴ However, as the English focused more on Chinese silks in Canton and Amoy in the 1680s, the EIC's expenditure in Tonkin after 1679 decreased, and after 1687 the investment was naught (there was no information about investment in 1688, 1693, 1697 even though English ships arrived in Tonkin at those times).⁵²⁵ In general, the change of the value of the EIC's investment,

⁵²² IOR/G/12/17/4, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 29 May 1677, pp. 201b, 204a, 205a-b, 268b; IOR/G/12/17/5, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 5 June 1678, p. 227a.

⁵²³ IOR/G/12/17/6, 5 July 1679, p. 254b. The Company ordered Bantam to prepare 70,000 dollars for Tonkin, with 50,000 of money and 20,000 of goods. Surat, however, thought that the money was too much for Tonkin and it sent only 35,000 dollars. This change not only applied for the Tonkin factory but it seemed that the EIC's investment for both Taiwan, Amoy, Siam and Tonkin increased. For example, in 1677, London decided to provide 80,000 dollars for those factories, and in 1678 the provision was 100,000 pieces of eight. Sainsbury, *Court Minutes 1677-79*, 12 June 1677, 25 September 1678, pp. 95, 208.

⁵²⁴ IOR/E/3/90, *The Tonkin factory*, 20 September 1683, p. 82. In 1683 the Court wanted English factors to take a loan of 10 or £20,000 if the interest was less than six per cent per year

⁵²⁵ IOR/G/21/7, pp. 93, 95. In this record, it was also confused with the EIC's money in the ship *Dragon*. This ship carried out 75,457:1:2 tale silver of goods or 88,000 reals of eight while it also presented that the EIC invested only 40,000 dollars in money.

particularly from 1672 to 1686 showed how the English adapted with requirements in Tonkin to gain access to silk and other Chinese products there. The value was only high when the factory played the roles of intermediary and crucial nodal point within the global trade. It reduced as China opened the country in late 1684 and the quantity and quality of Tonkinese silks could not meet London's requirement.

The English outlay in Tonkin was relatively little compared with their rivals. While the Dutch sent silver (copper from the 1670s) from Japan, the Chinese carried a lot of Asian goods for exchange, the English had to send silver directly from London to Tonkin as their broad and woollen clothes were not suitable for the tropical weather in Tonkin, and their plan to obtain silver from Japan and Manila failed.⁵²⁶ From 1672 to 1700 the VOC's investment in Tonkin reduced, but it still invested more than 100,000 guilders per year, equivalent to more than 40,000 Spanish dollars, higher than the EIC's value except for the years 1678, 1685, 1687.⁵²⁷ The English Tonkin factory was settled with only five servants and 10,000 Spanish dollars in 1672, while the VOC had around fifty soldiers and slaves brought from Batavia and at least 170,000 Spanish dollars.⁵²⁸ As the VOC's original capital was greater than the EIC's, its investment in Asia, and particularly Tonkin, was also greater.⁵²⁹ Without a substitute source of silver, money from England to Asia comprised between 65 and 90 per cent of the EIC's exports from

⁵²⁶ Chaudhuri, *EIC and Export Treasure*, p. 29. From the first half of the seventeenth century, the EIC's employees appreciated that English broad cloth was a high price in East Asia but not in high demand.

⁵²⁷ Hoang, *Silk for silver, appendices 3*, p. 226. Especially in 1671, 1672, 1675, 1677, their imported value was more than 300,000 guilders. Their capital was mostly reduced in 1678, 1685-1687 and after 1692 as Tonkin silks was no longer available for Japan market.

⁵²⁸ Ma, *English Trade*, p. 89.

⁵²⁹ J. De Vries, *The Economy of Europe in an Age of Crisis, 1600-1750* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 130; Erikson, *Between Monopoly and Free Trade*, pp. 3-4; Furber, *Rival Empires*, pp. 38, 192, 237. The EIC's initial money was £68,373 from two hundred investors while the VOC's initial capitalization was 6.5 million guilders, ten times higher than the EIC's.

1601 to 1760, but it was still less than the VOC's investment in Asia.⁵³⁰ In 1650, the rate of the two Companies' investments in Asia was 0.9 and 0.5 millions of Spanish dollars, and in 1700 it was 2 and 1.5 million.⁵³¹ In the 1660s, the VOC's power in Asia was one of the key reasons that the EIC lobbied the English government to grant the new monopolised trading chapter in Asia.⁵³² Together with the Dutch, the Chinese were highly competitive with the English in Tonkin. From 1671 to 1685 the Chinese carried 780,000 dollars to Tonkin, less than the VOC who carried more than 1,000,000 dollars, but more than the EIC's investment, of around 13,000 to 27,000 dollars per year (maximum 370,000 dollars in this period, nearly a half of the Chinese investment).⁵³³ Moreover, the Chinese were favoured by the Trinh Lords in Tonkin and had more privileges than either the VOC or EIC.⁵³⁴ In brief, the lesser investment in Tonkin gave the English little chance to compete with their rivals, and they always received less Tonkin silk, or other products, than their competitors.

Just as in investment, the EIC's exported goods to Tonkin also changed from 1676 with attempts to find a market in Tonkin and reduce the money transferred from London. This change firstly started from the realisation of the Tonkin factors who worked on the ground and understood the demand of Tonkin. Recognising the limited market for English cloth, in 1673 Gyfford only ordered a low quantity of 100 bales for

⁵³⁰ O. Prakash, 'Financing the European Trade with Asia in the Early Modern Period: Dutch Initiatives and Innovations', *Journal of European Economic History*, 27 (1998), pp. 331- 356, p. 334.

⁵³¹ L. Blusse, '*No Boats to China*', p. 53.

⁵³² A.A. Sherman, 'Pressure from Leadenhall: The East India Company Lobby, 1660-1678', *A Business History Review*, 50 (1976), pp. 329-355, pp. 329, 333. Dutch ship captains, merchants, bankers, financiers were acknowledged to be the finest and most efficient in the world.

⁵³³ Iio, *Tonkin-Nagasaki Silk Trade*, pp. 240, 242. Broadly, from 1633 to 1685, the Chinese carried a smaller quantity of silver to Tonkin than the VOC did. Details, the Chinese junks imported 2,100,300 taels of silver while the VOC carried 4,366,131 taels of silver.

⁵³⁴ Hoang, *Silk for Silver*, pp. 113-114.

the Tonkin Court, while other goods were ordered in higher amounts such as 500 peculs (Chinese weight, 1 pecul/picul is equivalent to 60,382 kg) pepper, 200 peculs saltpetre, 20 peculs brimstone, 10 great guns.⁵³⁵ Interestingly, unwrought metals and war-materials were in high demand in Tonkin. Furthermore, Gyfford required commodities from various origins, mostly from Asia (Japan, Macao, Bantam, Cambodia, Manila and India) instead of English commodities to build the Tonkin factory's role in the regional trade. Gyfford's suggestion thus demonstrated how English overseas factors were important in the EIC's trade by providing useful knowledge about the possibility of exported goods from the ground. The changes from London's perspective started in 1676 as the second English ship to Tonkin carried more saltpetre, pepper, rose water, lead, brimstone, and less English cloth.⁵³⁶ The primary trend of the EIC's exported goods was the decrease of English cloth and the increase of Asian products and war-materials.⁵³⁷ This situation continued in 1677 when only ten bales of cloth, and more money was sent to buy silks.⁵³⁸ In 1678, the change was more evident as European and Asian goods had the same value of 8,000 Spanish dollars.⁵³⁹ Bantam agents were also

⁵³⁵ IOR/G/12/17/1, p. 48a-b.

⁵³⁶ IOR/G/12/17/3, pp. 160a-b: 43 bales broad cloth, 3 bales *stuffs*, 196 bags saltpeter, 10 bales alibanum/allibannies [from Bengal, Bihar, Orissa], 10 bales cotton, 5355 catties brimstones, 6394 catties allum, 54346 catties pepper, 3000 green shott pisger, 14 bury *batoratay*, 2 chests rosewater, 3 pigs butter, 3 casks wine arrack, 1 cask lampe oil, 200 catties wax, 20 caniftor *Julor*, 1 bale cotton yarn, 1 chest plate, 36 amber hafted knives.

⁵³⁷ IOR/G/12/17/6, 30 July 1679, p. 263a. English cargo was checked by Tonkin officers included only 4 tales of broad cloth, 3 pack perpetuanar, 20 bales of putchuck, 183 peculs pepper, 89 peculs brimstone, 1 chest rose water.

⁵³⁸ IOR/G/12/17/4, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 29 May 1677, pp. 201b, 204a, 205a-b, 268b. Tonkin ordered for the year 1678 100-150 peculs brimstone, a lot *put-chuck*, 30-40 peculs coral, and small quantity of broadcloth. *Put-chuck* was dried, fragrant, spicy root of *Saussurea costus*, a species of thistle, used for burning as incense or in medicine as a stomach tonic, diuretic, and expectorant.

⁵³⁹ IOR/G/12/17/5, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 5 June 1678, p. 227a.

creative in their trade, they sent a big cannon in 1677 and transferred 897 bags of rice in 1682 due to Tonkin's high demand for food after the flood.⁵⁴⁰ As such, after 1676, London, Bantam agents, and Tonkin factors played distinct roles during the EIC's changes of exported goods. However, servants in Tonkin played an essential part as they learned from trading on the ground in Tonkin to provide the EIC with valuable knowledge to make the final decisions about trading.

From the early 1680s, those changing trends were visible in the records of the Court of Directors which indicated that London also adapted with the change of trade in Tonkin and East Asia. London asked Tonkin for suggestions of Indian goods available in Tonkin and to prepare local products for Bombay in 1682 to develop the regional trade.⁵⁴¹ The EIC wanted to carry more Asian goods to Tonkin and build this factory in the link with both Southeast Asia and India as London ordered the EIC's shipments called at Aceh or Priman before sailing to Tonkin and in return, those ships sailed through Malacca to Bombay before coming back London. The Committee of Shipping also 'desired to send 80 arms to Tonkin' but we have no more information of how it worked since the Tonkin records for 1683 are missing.⁵⁴² In 1684, Tonkin gave London a suggestion of 'what goods from Surat are proper' for Tonkin, but unfortunately, we again have no detailed list.⁵⁴³ The *Rainbow* came to Tonkin in 1685 with a lot of Indian goods, brimstone and saltpetre.⁵⁴⁴ After the Tonkin factory came under the supervision of Madras, the adaptation of English exported goods to Tonkin was clearer with new consideration of English factors in Madras. The *Prospect* from Madras in 1686 carried

⁵⁴⁰ IOR/G/12/17/8, *Batavia to Tonkin*, 9 June 1682, pp. 292b, 295b.

⁵⁴¹ IOR/E/3/90, *Letter book VII, London to Chief and factory at Tonkin*, 2 October 1682, p. 84.

⁵⁴² IOR/B/37, *Court Minutes (11 April 1682 – 18 April 1684)*, 22 September 1682, p. 40

⁵⁴³ IOR/G/21/7, *Tonkin general* 7 January 1684, p. 84.

⁵⁴⁴ IOR/G/21/7, *Tonkin general* 10 December 1686, p. 95.

iron guns, long cloths and saltpetre.⁵⁴⁵ The Madras Council carried more Indian and Persian commodities to Tonkin in the system of 'country trade'.⁵⁴⁶ Remarkably, the *Pearl Frigate* from Madras in 1693 operated both private and official trade. It carried Indian clothes, *copprica/ copra?* (Malayan dried coconut kenrels), Persian carpets, some private goods (saltpetre, brimstone, rosewater) which meant that they carried diverse commodities from India, Europe, Persia, Malaya.⁵⁴⁷ That Madras sent ships to Tonkin helped this market to become involved in Madras's existing 'country trade' system which covered both the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.⁵⁴⁸ As a part of the intra-Asian trade, Tonkin received more Asian goods than European products as English factors in Madras understood the demand of the Asian market. Beyond the fact that more Asian goods were sent to Tonkin, there is no doubt that London still treated Tonkin as a part of the intra-Asian trade though from 1676 Tonkin was seen as a regular market to provide silks for Europe. This situation presents the way the EIC tried to build and develop both Asian and global trading networks, in which small markets still played a significant role.

Successful trading in Tonkin and East Asia was also dependent on other factors outside of commodities, such as the distance, communication and climatic conditions.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid, p, 95; 3 December 1687, p. 114. In 1688, the Rainbow transferred 20 guns, but the King of Tonkin took only 7 and the rest was sent to West Coast with high price and high demand.

⁵⁴⁶ IOR/E/3/91, *The Court to Fort St George, 7 January 1687*, p. 41; IOR/E/3/92, *London to Fort St George, 18 February 1691*, p. 136.

⁵⁴⁷ IOR/G/12/17/9, p. 325b. There were Indian cloths: Moorees - a plain white cotton cloth from South India and Masulipatam, used as a base for chintz making. Serasses was an Indian cotton cloth, perhaps from Surat. Sallampores was a medium quality cotton cloth from South India and Masulipatam, plain white or dyed blue. Mulmul was a thin variety of muslin (cotton material).

⁵⁴⁸ See more detail of Madras' country trade in Bassett, 'British 'country' trade, pp. 625-643.

⁵⁴⁹ More information about monsoon winds and trade, see Loo Yen, 'Effect of Climate on Seasonal Monsoon in Asia and its Impact on the Variability of Monsoon Rainfall in Southeast Asia', *Geoscience*

Monsoon or trade-winds blew one way for around six months and therefore created two main difficulties for the EIC, namely the problem of long-distance trading and the specific seasonality of entry to Tonkin. It took English ships around eighteen months to complete a voyage from London to Tonkin and back, in which they could only stay at Asian ports for fewer than six months.⁵⁵⁰ The timing, distance of overseas trade and the seasonality of Tonkin silk (see chapter two) required English ships to arrive in Tonkin between March and June at the latest July each year and to leave before October to enjoy good trading conditions. If they did not adhere to such time frames, ships would not arrive in, or depart from Tonkin safely due to the inclement weather.

The English expected to send ships to Tonkin annually, but they were not always able to achieve this goal.⁵⁵¹ The change in the number of English ships to Tonkin demonstrates how the EIC adapted to climatic conditions to trade with Tonkin and East Asia. Twenty-one ships (both official and private) called at Tonkin over a period of twenty-five years, amounting to nearly one vessel per year. Sometimes Tonkin received only a frigate (from Bantam and Madras), a small vessel instead of a great ship since this market had little product with which to load a big English vessel fully.⁵⁵²

frontiers, 6 (2015), pp. 817-823; C-Y. Huang, 'Surface Ocean and Monsoon Climate Variability in the South China Sea since the last Glaciation', *Marine Micropaleontology*, 32 (1997), pp. 71-94; C.B. Thurston, *An Economic Geography of the British Empire* (London, 1924); R. Hall, *Empires of the Monsoon: a History of the Indian Ocean and its Invaders* (London, 1996).

⁵⁵⁰ R. David, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the 17th and 18th* (London, 1962), p. 258.

⁵⁵¹ IOR/E/3/87, *Company to Bantam, 21 September 1671*, p. 479.

⁵⁵² W. Barbour, 'Dutch and English Merchants Shipping in the Seventeenth Century', *The Economic History Review*, 2 (1930), pp. 261-290, p. 261. There were two kinds of ships in the English navy and commerce: great ships and frigate. Great ships had been invented, a build of enormous ships, carrying as many as 120 brass guns, around 800. The frigate, by contrast, was swift, nimble, unencumbered, effectively but not ponderously armed. Not being intended for boarding the enemy, it was built lower to

When considering the possibility of this market, London planned to send one ship to Tonkin yearly. Gyfford in 1672 also confirmed that the best way to trade with Tonkin was to send two small vessels there to collect good for Japan and Bantam. The first period (1672-1675) was a difficult time as neither ships from London nor Bantam called at Tonkin since England was at war with the Dutch, who were already the most powerful European nation in the region with modern warships and soldiers, controlled Asian sea-routes and captured many English ships.⁵⁵³ English ships sailed to Tonkin yearly in the period 1676-1688, except for the years 1684 and 1687 as the quantity of Tonkin silk decreased due to the lousy weather and London's limited demand for Tonkin products.⁵⁵⁴ As a small market, a single yearly ship kept the English trade in Tonkin regular and regulated. However, the sudden appearance of three ships in 1688 made it more difficult for the EIC as the price of local goods rose quickly while the cost of English commodities (cloths, pepper, saltpetre, brimstone, lead) went down.⁵⁵⁵ The last period (1689-1697) was during the Nine Years War, and the EIC's ships to Tonkin

the water than the great ship, with decks flusher. Originally a Dunkirk type, she was adopted into the navy of Charles I, and developed effectiveness in the Interregnum.

⁵⁵³ Chaudhuri, 'The English East India Company's shipping (c. 1660-1760)' in J.D. Bruijn, F.S. Gaastra (eds.), *Ships, Sailors and Spices: East India Companies and their Shipping in the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries* (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 49-80, pp. 75, 78. The war also resulted in the fact that no English came back Europe from Asia in the period 1672-1675 while the EIC sent there more than 10 ships per year.

⁵⁵⁴ Chaudhuri, 'The EIC's Shipping', p. 75. If we see Tonkin as the EIC's regular market as Erikson's argument, this role only appeared in around twelve years (1676-1688) with the idea of Tonkin silks for Europe. This fact presented the role of Tonkin as a regular market of the EIC with the high demand of Tonkin silks. However, this role seemed not quite important as the EIC's ship from London to Tonkin was only one per year while its ships to other ports of Asia gradually increased to twenty-four totally.

⁵⁵⁵ IOR/G/21/7, *Tonkin general 10 January 1689*, p. 114.

and Asia again decreased.⁵⁵⁶ In 1689 the *Modena* was prepared for Tonkin, but eventually, it could not be dispatched.⁵⁵⁷ While these power dynamics played a factor, the real reason that the Tonkin factory faced problems, was from the decreased profit from Tonkin's silks in Europe after China opened the country for foreigners in 1684, the re-appearance of Cantonese silks, and the exported increase of silks from Bengal.⁵⁵⁸ This lack of profit meant that the last two ships were only to inspect the Tonkin factory (1693) and close it (1697).⁵⁵⁹

From 1676 to 1682, English ships mostly came from Batam with London's orders and instructions, or from London via Bantam to Tonkin. In return, Tonkin merchandise was exported to Bantam and then transferred to London. After Bantam was closed in 1682, London adapted by sending ships from London to Aceh, Bencoolen, or Priaman to collect pepper and other spices before arriving in Tonkin, which meant that the EIC still maintained the intra-Asian trade.⁵⁶⁰ This trading line also meant that the EIC tried to manage the overseas trade by sending ships directly to Tonkin and restricted the trade between Tonkin and other agents in the EIC's hubs in Surat and Madras.⁵⁶¹ London also blamed Madras for dispatching the *Prospect* to Tonkin in

⁵⁵⁶ Chaudhuri, 'The EIC's Shipping', p. 75; IOR/E/3/92, *London to Our Chief & Council at Tonkin, 24 May 1690, 18 February 1691*, pp. 98, 130. London stated that they tried to send ships to Asia, but the war prevented all commercial attempts and only 2 small ships arrived in India. As such, while the EIC sent around 14 ships to Asia (1670-1679) and more than 20 ships (1680-1686) annually, in 1687 this number sharply reduced to 5 ships and it never gained 10 ships until 1698.

⁵⁵⁷ IOR/E/3/92, p. 98-99; Ma, *English Trade*, p. 211.

⁵⁵⁸ IOR/E/3/92, *London to our President & Council at Fort St. George, 18 February 1691*, pp. 135-36.

⁵⁵⁹ IOR/G/12/17/10, *Madras to Tonkin 11 May 1697*, p. 481b.

⁵⁶⁰ IOR/G/21/7, *Tonkin general, 18 January 1686, 10 December 1686*, pp. 93, 95. The Dragon was sent to Lampacao island (Lampacau, in the Pear River Delta, China) and Canton to collect silks and musk, while the Rainbow arrived in Bencoolen to fill with pepper.

⁵⁶¹ IOR/E/3/91, *London to Tonkin, 9 November 1687*, p. 454.

1686.⁵⁶² Consequently, although Madras still interacted with Tonkin, it only sent private ships to Tonkin without London's instructions other than the two frigates dispatched in 1693, 1697 to inspect and close this branch. The only aberration in this pattern occurred when the Anglo-French war disrupted London's ability to control Tonkin directly, and Madras was allowed to send 'country ships' to Tonkin and try to 'get what you [Madras] can' from this market until the war ended.⁵⁶³

The amount of shipping to Tonkin showed how little attention the EIC paid to this market and its weakness, especially in wartime, to compete with its rivals. English ships in Tonkin were less common than either Chinese and Dutch.⁵⁶⁴ This was part of a wider trend, as more generally, English ships in Asia were fewer than their rivals.⁵⁶⁵ While the English sent twenty-one ships to Tonkin, the VOC had thirty-five ships, and the Chinese owned thirty-six junks, nearly double the EIC's number.⁵⁶⁶ However, from 1676 to 1688 all of them had the same number of ships (seventeen). The difference occurred in the two war-periods. From 1672 to 1676, the Dutch controlled all Asian sea routes, and the VOC's ships still arrived in Tonkin regularly together with Chinese junks (with thirteen ships respectively) while the English were isolated and had only

⁵⁶² Ma, *English Trade*, p. 203.

⁵⁶³ IOR/E/3/92, *London to Fort St George, 18 February 1691*, p. 136.

⁵⁶⁴ Sainsbury, *Court Minutes 1674-76*, p. vii. In 1676, thirteen English ships dispatched to East Asia, but only one to Tonkin.

⁵⁶⁵ F.S. Gastra, J.D. Bruijn, 'The Dutch East India Company's Shipping, 1602-1795, in a comparative perspective' in *Ships, Sailors and Spices*, pp. 177-208, p. 182; Kwee, *Chinese Economic Dominance*, pp. 11-14; P-K. Hui, 'Overseas Chinese Business Networks: East Asian Economic Development in Historical Perspective' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, State University of New York, 1995), pp. 48-55. From 1670 to 1700, the VOC's ships to Asia were nearly double the EIC's ships, especially from 1690 to 1700, when it was three times as much. Chinese merchants worked in the South China Sea as carriers and they were key players in the inter-island trade. They thus were important with both the VOC and EIC who could not directly trade with China mainland.

⁵⁶⁶ Hoang, *Silks for Silver*, appendix 4, p. 229.

two ships.⁵⁶⁷ From 1680 to 1697, eighteen Chinese junks visited Tonkin before sailing to Nagasaki while both the VOC and EIC's ships went down sharply.⁵⁶⁸

The EIC's silk trade in Tonkin

The EIC's investment and exported goods created relatively successful results for the Tonkin factory between 1676-1688 with the primary return of silks (both native and Chinese) and other Chinese products while other Tonkinese commodities (ceramics, gold, natural products) played little role in the EIC's trade. The value of the EIC's yield from Tonkin increased after 1676, and it was higher than the EIC's investment in the same period. Notably, the Figure 4.3 showed that in 1683, its yield was double its investment while in 1682, this rate was tripled. Although we cannot calculate explicitly how much they achieved after paying wages and transportation fees, at least the above data showed that English merchants found profit in Tonkin.⁵⁶⁹ The value of Tonkin exported goods to London was more than doubled in four years 1676-1679 and peaked

⁵⁶⁷ In fact, Dutch ships in Tonkin reduced gradually from the late 1670s, but sharply from 1679 with only one ship annually while there were 3 ships in Tonkin per year in the 1650s and 1660s. It showed that Tonkin silk trade was not attractive after Japan prohibited exporting silver from 1668. Chinese junks never came to Tonkin annually, but the number was high with 3 or 4 which came together in the same year. The above information again showed that the EIC went to Tonkin in the unsuitable time as Tonkin silk gradually lost its position in East Asia.

⁵⁶⁸ Iioka, *Tonkin-Nagasaki Silk Trade*, p. 82. Chinese Tonkin junks mean Chinese junks from Ningbo, Guangdong, Amoy or other Southern China areas called at Tonkin for trade and then sailed to Japan. In 1687, there were 7 vessels from Canton, Amoy, Taiwan to Tonkin. See IOR/G/21/7, *Tonkin general, 3 December 1687*, p. 105.

⁵⁶⁹ 1676 was a special year as the Flying Eagle carried double value in comparison with the EIC's investment, but with a lot of unsold English goods.

in 1679.⁵⁷⁰ From 1681 to 1683 this value was quite high and achieved the highest point in 1686, although the general trend was to drop and the investment was so low.⁵⁷¹ After this year, the trade in Tonkin was smaller, and there was no trade during the Anglo-French war. The English trade in Tonkin with the main subject of silks demonstrated the role of Tonkin factors in evaluating the potential for trade and driving it independently during challenging periods, and the responsibility and adaptation of London through its decision to continue or stop the silk trade with Tonkin.

The role of the Tonkin factory in both the regional and global trade was evident as it supplied native silks as substitutes, and Chinese musk and silk collecting from Chinese merchants in Tonkin to London.⁵⁷² English individuals firstly discovered the potential of commodities in Tonkin by distinguishing types of native silks. In 1672, Gyfford identified Tonkin silks which included baas, chomongees (or chiourons by Dutch), lyng or pelangs (plain and flower), hockin or lua, the thua (loa in Portuguese), Thea Ming Whing and raw silk, while famous Chinese products in Tonkin were velvet and musk.⁵⁷³ In detail, ‘bass a sort of silk made here very good for Japon, both raw & diet of a pure colo^r’, while ‘Chomongoos was a sort of wrought silk called by the Dutch chiourons, they are well flomish long ½ well broad & better vety good for Japon’, ‘Pelangs or Lyngs plained & flowers for merchadise... good for Japon’, ‘white hockins or lua a few are proper for Japon they are...long & broad... they maybe painted at

⁵⁷⁰ IOR/G/12/17/6, 15 December 1679, p. 267b.

⁵⁷¹ IOR/G/21/7, 10 December 1686, p. 105.

⁵⁷² Chaudhuri, *The Trading World*, p. 55. In the late seventeenth century, the EIC found little strategic commodities in Asia and its commercial area was also not much expanded. Besides spices in the Spices Islands, Indian textiles, gold, silks in Persia, China, India, and Tonkin were one among the main imported goods.

⁵⁷³ IOR/G/12/17/1, *Tonkin to London*, 7 December 1672, pp. 45b-46a. More explanation of Tonkinese products can be seen in the glossary.

Japon', 'The Thua in Portuguese called Loa both flower & plain', 'The Lua plain the silk much twifres proper for y^t coaft for woomans badgoods.' Interestingly, most of those products were raw and simple silk piece-good. As the previous mention, the English silk industry was developed and it need raw materials from both Europe and Asia. For such reason, Tonkinese raw silk became the main interest of English factors as they arrived into Tonkin. Moreover, Tonkinese silks were low quality as most of them were to serve Japan where the Japanese used them as replacement for Chinese commodities. This section discusses how the English exploited those silks to serve their global target from the late 1670s, which factors affected this commerce, and the role of substitute products in Tonkin and the core Chinese goods in the EIC's commerce. Furthermore, the research argues that rather than following the Dutch model of using Chinese goods to fulfill Japanese orders, the EIC experimented by using Tonkin silk as a product for European markets.

Although experimentation was begun in 1674, the EIC started formally to order various types of Tonkin raw and wrought silks for London in 1676.⁵⁷⁴ Its first success was in 1677, as ten bales of raw silk and 7,500 pieces of Tonkin wrought silks were sold in London, together with Chinese products.⁵⁷⁵ Immediately, London reacted the development of Tonkin trade by restricting private trade on some products such as Tonkin pelangs, raw silk and Chinese goods of damask, satins, musk; and encouraged

⁵⁷⁴ IOR/G/12/17/3, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 29 June 1676, pp. 158b-159a. Those were 300 pieces of velvet (a cloth made from silk with a thick and soft surface), 10,500 wrought pelangs, 5,000 *choes/ chios* plains, 2,500 hockins (yellow silk textile in Tonkin), 2,000 *penniascoes?*, 1500 loes plain, 2500 loes, 1000 *Thea Ming Whing*, 4,000 right China damasks 15 yards long or 30 yards long, 1000 plain white satins 15 yards long, and 8-10 bales of fine white raw silk. Pelangs, Loes, Chios, Thea Ming Whing were kinds of Tonkin's silks.

⁵⁷⁵ IOR/B/34, *Court Minutes (21 April 1676- 17 April 1678)*, 21 September 1677, pp. 346-347.

its factors, and free English merchants to import other sorts of silk.⁵⁷⁶ London clarified its monopoly on some valuable commodities to avoid a loss of capital and the competition of private merchants, while also delivering a variety of silks to London. Furthermore, London decided to employ John Blunden, a mercer in London with experience in the silk trade as the second factor in Tonkin from 1677 to improve the quality of Tonkinese silk.⁵⁷⁷ He was also instructed to buy ‘twenty patterns of several sorts of silk’ to take to Tonkin as samples.⁵⁷⁸ This action thus demonstrated the way London engaged in the Tonkin silk trade and adapted to make it better. London then quickly ordered some types of Tonkin silks such as white plain, pelangs, hockin, Thea Ming Whing, and Chinese velvet, damask and satin.⁵⁷⁹ The trade was seen to have potential as many of these products were sold in London in 1678.⁵⁸⁰ Bantam agents evaluated that Tonkin pelangs would be more profitable in London and ordered 20,000 pieces of pelangs while London only wanted 16,500 pieces.⁵⁸¹

However, Tonkin goods were hard to sell in London in 1679 as little Tonkin raw silk, pelang, hockin, and Thea Ming Whing was available in March and only raw silk and cotton yarn in September.⁵⁸² As with the market for cotton, demand was dependent on sustained supplies being made available. Moreover, in April 1679, some Tonkin

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid, 13 July 1677, 28 September 1677, and 19 October 1677.

⁵⁷⁷ IOR/B/34, *Court Minutes 1676-1678*, 27 July 1677, 1 August 1677, pp. 291, 294.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid, 28 September 1677, p. 351.

⁵⁷⁹ IOR/G/12/17/4, *Bantam to Tonkin*, 29 May 1677, pp. 210a-b; IOR/G/12/17/5, *A list of Tonkin silks maybe returned the EIC*, pp. 230b-231a; IOR/E/3/88, *A list of goods to be provided at Tonqueen*, p. 243.

⁵⁸⁰ IOR/B/34, *Court Minutes*, 5-7 March 1678, pp. 451.

⁵⁸¹ IOR/E/3/88, *Letter book V*, 5 October 1677, pp. 466-67.

⁵⁸² IOR/B/35, *Court Minutes (19 April 1678 – 16 April 1680)*, 11 March 1679, 10 and 25 September 1679, pp. 204-05, 271, 303-04.

silks were returned by a customer Alderman Bathurst, due to their quality.⁵⁸³ London reacted quickly by pausing to build a warehouse in Thang Long ‘until it appears how the trade may turn to account of which a further trial to be made’.⁵⁸⁴ It also reduced the amount of Tonkin imported silks, paused in ordering some types of Tonkin silks as hockin, *lua/ loas*, Thea Ming Wing, *lua whaes*, and ordered 2,000 pieces of new silk, Thea Gauze as a trial.⁵⁸⁵ Moreover, it requested the Tonkin factors to be more enthusiastic in participating in the silk trade and, sent another mercer, Thomas Reeves in 1681, to Tonkin to increase the quality of Tonkin silk industry.⁵⁸⁶ London also sought to encourage the Tonkin factory to connect to China for more products as the Taiwan factory was in debt. This situation showed two issues of the English silk trade in Tonkin, firstly the quality of substitute silks, and secondly London’s ability to adapt quickly by stopping trade in poor products, trying new ones and new markets, and finding new means to improve the quality of Tonkin silks to meet the demand of London. The change in the EIC’s trade was clear as London stopped ordering Tonkin wrought silks and focused on Tonkin raw silk to serve the English silk industry. The situation thus improved slowly in 1680 by selling 19,000 pieces of silk.⁵⁸⁷ However, the

⁵⁸³ Ibid, 15 April 1679, p. 212.

⁵⁸⁴ Sainsbury, *A Calendar of Court Minutes, 1677-79*, 24 October 1679, p. 306; IOR/E/3/89, *Company to Bantam*, 6 November 1679, pp. 8, 9, 10.

⁵⁸⁵ IOR/G/12/17/6, pp. 258b-259a.

⁵⁸⁶ IOR/E/3/89, *Company to Bantam*, 25 August 1680, pp. 227-228; *Company to Bantam*, 5 January 1681, p. 296.

⁵⁸⁷ IOR/B/35, *Court Minutes*, 11-12 March 1680, pp. 410, 411, 413; Bassett, *Factory at Bantam*, p. 356. However, as Bassett argued, Tonkin silks found little profit, even loss in market (pelangs) while most Chinese damasks, satins and wrought silks sold well. This again put the Tonkin factory on the circumstance of preparing to withdraw. In comparison with the VOC, it only purchased pelangs and musk for European market from the 1680s while raw silks found no value in Japan.

EIC's attempts to import new technology and improve Tonkin's silk industry were unsuccessful, and from 1684, these silks proved difficult to sell in London.⁵⁸⁸

The EIC's trade in Tonkin in the 1680s witnessed London's adaptation to changes in imported commodities to maintain the factory and the Company's trading system in East Asia in competition with other Europeans. There were two main changes in the English imported goods from Tonkin, firstly the reduction of Tonkinese products in comparison with the increase in Chinese commodities, and secondly the English focus on Tonkinese raw silk rather than wrought silks. In general, the trading trend after 1680 was that London ordered from Tonkin various commodities from different sources such as Chinese products, gold (from Vietnam and Japan), vermilion copper (from Japan), and tutenage (from Southeast Asia) for both Europe and India.⁵⁸⁹ Accordingly, Tonkin's role of providing silk for London in the transoceanic trade decreased, while its function as an intermediary in the regional trade to collect more Asian products increased. Acting as an intermediary became ever-more important as the factories in Amoy and Taiwan were closed in the early 1680s. At the same time, Chinese silks proved to be of a consistently higher quality than Tonkin's products and the Tonkin factory was required to focus mostly on gathering Chinese goods there. London ordered more Chinese musk, chinaware, lacquer in Tonkin with the hope of selling at new markets of Leghorn and Genoa.⁵⁹⁰ In 1684 London only ordered Tonkin's pelangs, and

⁵⁸⁸ IOR/B/38, *Court Minutes 1684-1687*, p. 91-92, pp. 119, 121. However, the problem here is that the record did not mention clearly those were Bengal, Chinese or Tonkin products.

⁵⁸⁹ IOR/E/3/90, *London to Tonkin*, 26 September 1684, pp. 343-344; *London to Tonkin*, 15 October 1685, pp. 506-07.

⁵⁹⁰ IOR/E/3/90, *London to Tonkin*, 20 September 1682, pp. 80-82; IOR/B/37, *Court Minutes (11 April 1682- 16 April 1684)*, 20 May 1682, p. 9.

Chinese musk and lacquer while in 1685 it wanted only Chinese musk.⁵⁹¹ This trend thus demonstrated that London's experimentation of providing Tonkin silks for Europe was unsuccessful and London quickly adapted by paying attention to its role as an intermediary in the regional trade to gather Chinese goods.

From the external perspective, the re-appearance of Chinese silks and the growth of Bengali products in the EIC's import, together with the political change in China had a significant influence on the EIC's trade in Tonkin. In 1680, James reported to London that 'they [silks] were not procurable, not to be made here [Tonkin], nor now we will undertake them, but judge they may be better procured in China'.⁵⁹² This report demonstrated the main issue of the silk trade in Tonkin, the better quality and quantity of Chinese silks in comparison with Tonkin products as silks were not produced satisfactorily in Tonkin. Again, English overseas individuals played an important role towards the EIC as they recognised and provided London knowledge about the fact and situation of silk in Tonkin. It also demonstrated that some of Tonkin factors at any rate were putting the interests of the Company first rather than protected their position and job in overseas. Moreover, from 1681, English factors in Amoy found that Canton's pelangs and wrought silk were better than Tonkin's products. London thus collected more Chinese goods with 14,000 damask and 4,000 pieces satin.⁵⁹³ The growth of Chinese silks in the EIC's trade related to China's open policy after 1684. This policy allowed the English to trade directly with mainland China, and therefore even the

⁵⁹¹ Ma, *English Trade*, pp. 192-193. Court Minutes also acknowledged the fact that pelang Nanking, satins, flowered silks met high demand in London. IOR/B/38, *Court Minutes 1684-87, 17 and 20 March 1684*, pp. 92-93; IOR/E/3/90, *The Court to Tonkin, 15 October 1685*, pp. 506-507.

⁵⁹² IOR/G/21/7A, *Letter from Thomas James and Council in Tonkin, 1 November 1680*, pp. 38-43, p. 39.

⁵⁹³ IOR/E/3/89, *Company to Tonkin and Amoy, 12 August 1681*, pp. 374-375.

intermediate role of Tonkin served no purpose.⁵⁹⁴ English ships sailed to Canton and Amoy more than Tonkin and obtained cheaper and more suitable commodities there, making more Chinese products available in London after 1684.⁵⁹⁵ Chinese raw silk grew from nearly 1 per cent of the EIC's imported silk before 1685 to 17 per cent (1689), 9.9 per cent (1690), and 16.6 per cent in 1691.⁵⁹⁶ Alongside Chinese silks, Bengali products increased their position in the EIC's trade due to their adaptation to London's requirement. In 1670, like Tonkinese goods, Bengali silk seemed unsuitable for the English market, but it quickly changed and played the chief role in the EIC's imported silk. In 1677, profit of silks from Bengal was significant, as their price fetched at £1.15 per great pound.⁵⁹⁷ This growth was remarkable as in 1681 Bengal had 12.5 per cent of the EIC's imported silk, in 1683 14.6 per cent, and by 1694 18.1 per cent. Overall in the period, 1696-1705 silks from China and Bengal comprised 13.56 per cent of the EIC's imported goods, and Tonkin's silks began to play a lesser role in the EIC's trade.⁵⁹⁸ This fact illustrated the position of the Tonkin factory as peripheral market and Tonkin silks as substitutes in the EIC's strategy. When the English built a trading relationship with core markets in China and India, the role of Tonkin's silks, and the Tonkin factory itself was immediately unnecessary. However, it is noticeable that in the 1690s most of Bengal's silks which still served London were of low quality, while in the eighteenth century Chinese silks were required to improve to be suitable for

⁵⁹⁴ Iioka, *Tonkin-Nagasaki Silk Trade*, p. 79.

⁵⁹⁵ Bassett, *EIC in the Far East, part 2*, p. 153; *Factory at Bantam*, pp. 357-358; A. Farrington, 'A new Source for Chinese Trade to Japan in the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 25 (1985), p. 189; Iioka, 'The Trading Environment of Tonking', p. 122.

⁵⁹⁶ Chaudhuri, *The Trading World*, p. 535.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 346-347.

⁵⁹⁸ Steensgaard, 'Long-Distance Trade of England and the Dutch' in Tracy (ed.), *The Rise of Merchants*, p. 114.

London's fashion industry.⁵⁹⁹ It meant that the appearance of products from China and Bengal was not the main reason which led to the decrease of the English silk trade in Tonkin from the early 1680s and we need to consider other internal reasons for this decline.

From the English perspective, although the English in Tonkin worked actively to adapt to the requirements and nature of Tonkin trade, they could not wholly surmount the problem of the late arrival of English ships. They always arrived in Tonkin late in August or even October due to the distance of the transoceanic trade and their calling at Bantam or other places in the Spice Islands to collect pepper and spices for both formal and private trade, while the best period for silk trade was in summer due to the seasonality of Tonkin silk industry and the monsoon trade. English merchants thus were late and had little time to fill the EIC's requirement and compete with the Chinese and Dutch, while Tonkin salesmen could not supply a high quantity of goods in the short period. Accordingly, the English obtained less silk than their rivals, and it was the lesser quality with 'winter silk' although they tried to deal with local traders to take more commodities. For example, in October 1676 the Tonkin factory only received 7,000 taels weight of raw silk from both the King and Prince as their payment for the EIC's commodities.⁶⁰⁰ James decided to find substitute silks from private traders in Tonkin, especially from the English broker, Domingo, by investing the money received from Tonkin Court (2,470,344 Tonkinese cash), but this endeavour had poor results, as the timing was quite late.⁶⁰¹ The trade was more difficult from 1677 when Tonkin Court

⁵⁹⁹ Farrell, *Silk and Globalization*, p. 57.

⁶⁰⁰ IOR/G/12/17/3, pp. 176a, 184a.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 174b-175a. Those were 1000 pieces Lings/Pelangs (yellow, blue, red, green, hair colour – 200 of each); 30 pieces velvet (blue, red, green – 10 of each), 100 pieces *Penniascoes*, 1000 pieces plains

restricted giving silk to the Europeans as return presents. Tonkin factors thus purchased gold and musk to send back to London as they believed that gold was profitable on the Coromandel coast, while musk was always in high demand in Europe.⁶⁰² In 1678, the EIC took only 350 catties of raw silk from the King, and this number reduced to 150 taels (nearly 10 catties) in 1682.⁶⁰³ The English staff therefore always adapted by purchasing more items of high demand in London such as pelangs, raw silk and musk in 1679 or gave money earlier for private traders to collect goods before English ships came in 1680.⁶⁰⁴ As a result, the EIC's trade with private bookers, Domingo and Monica Dabada was quite good, including both 'summer' and 'winter' silks, but the quality of English trade could not better than the trading summer season.⁶⁰⁵

From the Tonkin factory's perspective, the character of Tonkin's silk as a special substitution for Chinese silk, whether serving for the Japanese or European trade, was the main reason which affected the EIC's trade.⁶⁰⁶ The EIC imported both Tonkin raw and wrought silks, but London quickly recognised that they were unsuited for customer's demand and the fashion industry in London. Tonkin only produced white plain and simple wrought silk, while London's fashion required flowered silk, satin,

(white, blue, gallon, red, brown – 200 of each), 500 pieces hockins (white, red, blue, yellow, brown – 100 of each), 500 pieces Thea (white, black, yellow, blue, red – 100 of each), 500 pieces Thea Ming Whing (white, black, blue, red, yellow – 100 of each), 1000 pieces plain thea (black: 600; yellow: 400).

⁶⁰² IOR/G/12/17/4, *The Tonkin factory*, 8 November 1677, p. 214b.

⁶⁰³ IOR/G/12/17/6, p. 256a; IOR/G/12/17/8, p. 302b.

⁶⁰⁴ IOR/G/12/17/6, 21 July 1679, 10 January 1680, pp. 262b, 272b.

⁶⁰⁵ IOR/G/12/17/5, p. 246b; IOR/G/12/17/6, p. 263b; IOR/G/12/17/7, p. 272b. Information of trade in 1680 is limited as there was a gap missing in the EIC's records between June 1680 and December 1681.

⁶⁰⁶ Chaudhuri, *The trading world*, pp. 345-346; Bassett, *Factory at Bantam*, pp. 343-355; H. Bugge, 'Silk to Japan: Sino-Dutch competition in the silk trade to Japan, 1633-1685', *Itinerario*, 13 (1989), pp. 25-44, p. 32. Data of the VOC showed that the price of both Chinese and Tonkinese silks were equal in Japan as they had nearly the same quality there.

velvet and damask.⁶⁰⁷ Tonkin's silk was low quality since it had not improved beyond the traditional, labour-intensive form.⁶⁰⁸ As a result, the VOC limited exporting Tonkin's silk to Japan from the 1650s and increased Bengali goods as a better replacement.⁶⁰⁹ The English attempts to import new technology to adapt to the Tonkin silk industry were not effective as the Tonkin labour system was different from London and Tonkin labourers had little reason to change. Making silk was only a part-time job for the Tonkinese farmers when they finished their rice-crops; and the Tonkin Court still focused on agriculture, not industry or commerce to serve foreign merchants.⁶¹⁰ Consequently, in 1682, the Tonkin factory reported to London that the benefits from the Tonkin trade were less because native traders could not cover a huge trade and the silk-technology was so poor.⁶¹¹ The silk industry which depended significantly on the weather had no advantages to compete with the improvement of Bengali and Chinese silk. As a result, Tonkin's products were useless in the English market in the late seventeenth century.

Besides the character of Tonkin's silk, natural disasters negatively influenced the EIC's trade as the Tonkin silk industry was labour-intensive as well as weather

⁶⁰⁷ Farrell, *Silk and globalization*, p. 18.

⁶⁰⁸ IOR/G/12/17/6, p. 275b.

⁶⁰⁹ O. Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630-1720* (Princeton, 1985), p. 125; Blusse, 'No Boats to China', pp. 69, 72. From 1656 to 1672, Bengal silks got 80 per cent of the VOC's silk trade to Japan. From the 1660s, the Directors of VOC in Amsterdam had already considered the closure of the Tonkin factory because its profit was only 29 per cent. From the 1670s, the VOC's shipping Tonkin-Japan cut down quickly and mainly purchased pelangs (silk cloth).

⁶¹⁰ IOR/G/21/7, *Tonkin to Bantam, 16 December 1678*, p. 35.

⁶¹¹ IOR/G/12/17/8, *Tonkin to the Court, 29 December 1682*, p. 304b. The EIC's attempts to transfer innovative technology to Tonkin silk industry seemed unsuccessful, since this job was mostly run by single families. They did not have enough money to import new machine or technology and they just focused on serving the Japanese demand.

dependent. As records showed, the EIC's investment decreased suddenly when Tonkin encountered floods (1679), drought and famine (1681), hunger and epidemic (1682), famine and floods (1683).⁶¹² Mulberry trees were planted outside the dykes and on the land banks were regularly affected by floods. With too much water, the mulberry trees died, and the silkworm stopped. Moreover, due to natural disasters, Tonkin's farmers faced famine, and they destroyed mulberry trees to plant rice, sweetcorn or potato for food. In 1681, a massive drought caused hundreds of deaths, and the second famine in 1682 killed more in the famous provinces for producing silk in Tonkin.⁶¹³ Without labour and mulberry trees, in 1683, 1684 and even until 1686 silk was very rare in Tonkin.⁶¹⁴ Noticeably, Java records about Tonkin trade from 1682 to 1686 repeated many times the term of 'insufficient silk' or that 'silk was rare and dear' due to natural disasters. Consequently, the quality and quantity of Tonkin silk diminished, and the EIC's competition with the Chinese and Dutch was more serious and its trade with Tonkin's silk was less effective than with silks from China and Bengal.

Tonkinese people and the English trade

Alongside the issues of what the EIC did in Tonkin and how English merchants traded there, the chapter also tries to answer another part of the connection story between the EIC and Tonkin: the position Tonkinese people played in the process of the English

⁶¹² Iioka, *Tonkin-Nagasaki Silk Trade*, pp. 41-45; 'Trading Environment of Tonking, p. 126; H.Q. Truong, *Đại cương lịch sử Việt Nam [A Brief History of Vietnam]* (Hanoi, 1999), pp. 394-398; IOR/G/21/7, *Tonkin general 26 December 1682*, p. 81.

⁶¹³ A. Farrington, 'English East India Company Documents Relating to Pho Hien and Tonkin' in Committee of Hai hung province (ed), *Pho Hien* (Hung Yen, 1994), pp. 148-161, p. 158.

⁶¹⁴ IOR/G/21/7, *George Tash from Tonkin, 31 December 1683*, p. 87; *Tonkin general 18 January 1686*, p. 93; Iioka, *Tonkin-Nagasaki Silk Trade*, p. 45.

learning to trade in Tonkin. While the King and the Tonkin Court showed their role in term of diplomacy, who could help the EIC in trade and whichh lessons they provided?

Interestingly, again the King, his relative and Mandarins supplied the EIC first information about trading in Tonkin, particularly its difficulty in dealing with officials. The King monopolised the trade in Tonkin and all foreigners had to serve him before selling any products to local and other foreign merchants.⁶¹⁵ Gyfford reported to London in 1672 that ‘leade brimstones salpeter guns... or English cloth we can sell to noe other but y^e King...’.⁶¹⁶ This report showed two problem the English faced in trade in Tonkin that the King’s monopoly of trade in important products and the limitation of selling weapons and some kind of raw materials as the Tonkin Court did not create any danger from local people. For those reason, trade in Tonkin was not a popular trade, but rather a special kind of exchange wherein the King could take some defined commodities and pay later on his own terms price. In return, the English got payment in silk and Tonkinese cash. The King and Prince also wanted to take silver from the English at a lower price.⁶¹⁷ This policy not only provided more silver for Tonkinese demand but also caused negative effect for the English as they had little silver to trade directly with private merchants in Tonkin while they had to wait long tine to receive low-quality silk from the Tonkin Court. The power of the King was noted that ‘as for foreign traders, a newcomer suffers, besides hard usage in his buying and selling a

⁶¹⁵ IOR/G/12/17/1, p. 35a. When English merchants tried to move some goods to the capital for trade, Governor of Hien’s soldiers prevented and confiscated all the goods. He also sent soldiers to ‘protect’ outside the house of English merchants, made no merchants wanted to trade with the English.

⁶¹⁶ IOR/G/12/17/1, *Tonkin to Company*, 7 December 1672, p. 47a.

⁶¹⁷ IOR/ G/12/17/2, p. 106a. In 1674, a Chinese merchant, Netthooe carried 80 chest silver, each chest had 1,000 taels to Tonkin. He was ordered to give the King and Prince a half of his silver and they would pay him silks.

thousand inconveniences; and no certain rates on merchandise imported or exported being imposed, the insatiable mandarins cause the ships to be rummaged, and take what commodities may likely yield a price at their rates, using the King's name to cloak their griping and villainous extortions, and for all this there is no remedy but patience.'⁶¹⁸ As in Taiwan, English factors found little profit in Tonkin trade as the King put his dear price and monopolised in vital commodities.⁶¹⁹

Because the King and his Court were the richest and most power in the kingdom, the EIC quickly recognised that they would trade regularly with them although their profit was limited with issues of monopoly.⁶²⁰ That the English had to serve the Tonkin Court first as soon as English ships arrived to Tonkin was popular and repeated. For example, in 5 July 1672, the *Dispatchdores* came to visit the English and ordered goods for both the King and Crown Prince including brimstone, lead, amber knives, ivory, great guns, coral, and some kind of English broadcloth.⁶²¹ A few days later, Mandarins started to order goods for themselves with smaller quantity in comparison with the King and Prince. The EIC records showed that in 1672, particularly from July to September, English goods were only bought by the King and officials. In this year, the Court purchased more than ten occasions English commodities with the major products of English cloth, guns, amber and knives, coral, and put-chuck.⁶²² In 1673, the King and Prince also were the most valuable customers

⁶¹⁸ J. Pinkerton, *A Description of Kingdom of Tonqueen*, p. 663.

⁶¹⁹ D. Massarella, 'The EEIC in Taiwan', pp. 400, 403.

⁶²⁰ Dampier, *Voyages and Discoveries*, p. 55; Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy*, p. 20.

⁶²¹ IOR/G/12/17/1, *The Tonkin factory, 5-6 July 1672*, pp. 8a, 14b.

⁶²² IOR/G/12/17/1, p. 8a, 9a-b, 14b, 15b, 16a, 19a, 31a-b, 32b, 33a.

with a value of 4,559 tales silver.⁶²³ Interestingly, while the King wanted English goods for his own demand, his officials bought commodities for their demands and for re-sale as they worked as merchants as well. As a result, they provided the English with information of types of commodities suitable for exporting to Tonkin.

The situation of trade with the King and local officials not only provided knowledge of the type of goods that were in demand, but also taught the English lessons about collecting debt and treating the Mandarins. They took goods without direct payment and the debt was only paid as they received salary from the King. As a result, in the first few years, the English faced difficulties as Tonkinese Mandarins were in debt and they paid with monopolised price.⁶²⁴ As previously mentioned, the English got paid in the third rank in comparison with the Chinese and the Dutch until 1676. That the English had to visit Thang Long annually asking for repayment of debt became costly.⁶²⁵ The Governor of Hien, therefore became more important with the EIC not only because he provided them a land in Pho Hien, but also because of their representation in the Tonkin Court to collect debt from other Mandarins. This fact caused the English disappointment in trading with local Mandarins but they had no choice as the Mandarins had power to influence the English trading future in Tonkin. In brief, trade with the Tonkin Court provided the English information about their real demand and

⁶²³ IOR/ G/12/17/2, *Accounting on 7 January 1674*, p. 104a. Goods they purchased were similar in 1672 with English cloths, lead, brimstone, guns, knives.

⁶²⁴ The King paid his first debt for the EIC with 1/3 by Tonkinese cash, 2/3 by raw silk while the English wanted silver. However, they never got that requirement even they asked supports from Dispatchdores. IOR/G/12/17/2, *Tonkin factory, 27 March, 3 December, 9 December 1673*.

⁶²⁵ Before 1683, the English had to stay and trade at Hien while most Mandarins lived in Thang Long, so they needed to visit Thang Long regularly for collecting debt. For example, until 27 December 1673, the EIC got the first debt from the Prince while they waited nearly 5 months in Thang Long (September 1673- January 1674) for collecting no debt from the King.

how hard to deal with their power. As a result, the Tonkin factors tried to sell English goods more for local merchants.

Due to the monopolised policy of the Tonkin Court, the English had no chance to deal with Tonkinese and foreign traders without allowance from the King. Moreover, local merchants had relatively little power, were few in number and had insufficient money to make big deals with European traders. They were only the fourth in Tonkin's personal rank with small-scale privileges, and if they were rich, they had to pay heavy taxes or faced danger from both government and thieves.⁶²⁶ As Nguyen's argument, the definition of rich and powerful in Tonkin was not closely related to money, but to rice-fields and cultivated lands. Tonkin merchants, instead of re-investing in commerce, bought land and worked in agriculture.⁶²⁷ Baron stated that 'there is not a Tonqueenese merchant that has or had ever the courage and ability to buy the value of two thousand dollars at once, and to pay it upon the nail.'⁶²⁸ Accordingly, Tonkinese merchants were not the main English trading partner, and there were no 'big name' or long exchange between the EIC and local traders.

The role of Tonkinese merchants was only noticeable from the late 1670s, as the Tonkin Court gradually reduced their interest in English goods. Problematically, the number of local merchants dealt with the factory was limited and changed through the time. Due to the character of Tonkinese traders, 'small' local brokers, traders had no or little reserve fund and therefore there was no 'big name' who could maintain the long and large exchange with the English. Different names of merchants in Tonkin appeared

⁶²⁶ S. Baron, 'A Description of Kingdom of Tonqueen' [first printed in 1685] in J. Pinkerton (ed), *A Collection of the best and most interesting Voyages and Travels in all Parts of the World*, vol. 6 (London, 1811), p. 663.

⁶²⁷ Nguyen, *Tableau Economique du Viet Nam*, pp. 292-293.

⁶²⁸ Baron, *A Description of Tonqueen*, p. 664.

in the Tonkin factory's records, but their trade quite small and alternative. In the first years, the Tonkin factory traded with 'a Siamese woman' and Antonio Dabada while Domingo Hien Tho became the main partner in the late 1670s. The English trading activities with private traders in Tonkin were recorded rarely. For example, in 1673 the English sold pepper to Nicholas Vermeer, a Dutch merchant.⁶²⁹ In 1675 and early 1676, they sold silk for Domingo Hien Tho and the Chinese, as no English ship arrived in Tonkin.⁶³⁰ In 1677, Monica Dabada exchanged saltpetre and brimstone for musk with the English.⁶³¹ From 1683 to 1692 we had no information about the factory's brokers or local tradesmen but at least we know that Keeling did not trust Domingo Hien Tho as interpreter or trading partner.⁶³² In the 1690s, the EIC did very tiny trade with Monica Dabada, Chubu, and Ba Nhung or Ba Cung as London sent no more goods to Tonkin due to a low profit of this market.⁶³³ As such, Tonkin provided a big knowledge for the EIC about trading partner that instead of trading with local merchants, they had to cooperated more with the King and Mandarins in the unbalanced exchange due to the King's monopolistic policy.

Another issue the EIC faced was to collect debt and to trust private merchants on trading. As cash was important in trade, and Tonkinese brokers had little fund to produce goods, the English had to pre-pay to order from local people. By contrast, the English had to accept later payment from Tonkinese merchants after selling their goods.

⁶²⁹ IOR/G/12/17/2, 17 July 1673, p. 72a.

⁶³⁰ Ibid, pp. 146b, 147a. Those were Tonkin silks which the English received from the King in previous years. English factors had no choice but to sell them at a lower price, since no English ships picked them up and they had started to become damaged.

⁶³¹ IOR/G/12/17/3, p. 195b, IOR/G/12/17/4, p. 221b.

⁶³² See the previous part of the factory's factors and their conflicts.

⁶³³ In the 1690s Ba Nhung and Chubu traded a low value of saltpetre and brimstone with the Tonkin factory. IOR/G/12/17/9, pp. 347a, 366b, 367b, 465b, 471a.

As a result, the EIC faced problems of risk in trade and ‘bad debt’ as in their exchange with Tonkinese officials. In the first years in Tonkin, the English had horrible experience with ‘a Siamese woman’ and Antonio Dabada as one of them was bankrupt and refused to pay her debt while the other delayed to pay.⁶³⁴ Tonkin factors several times asked the Governor of Hien for help, but like to deal with Tonkinese officials, it was hard to collect debt. With this lessons, the Tonkin factory dealt all issues of price and way of payment before putting any order in the next cooperation with Tonkinese merchants. They had to chose trust traders and expected good results in trade with them as local law and officials seemed not to help the English or any foreingers. However, sometimes the English still got risk in trade with Tonkinese brokers as they had to pre-pay to complete with the Dutch and Chinese in ordering silk for the next arrival ships.

The Tonkin Court and merchants in Tonkin also supplied the English a lesson about types of commodities. If English cloth and luxury goods were exported to Tonkin in 1672 as the EIC wish and expectation, wrought metals and materials were popular from the late 1670s after they gathered useful information. Due to the situation of Tonkin, the English trade of wrought metals and materials (saltpetre, brimstone, and lead) was profitable while the trade of broadcloth and weapons was small, existing mostly to serve the King’s habit, rather than for real business. More than 90 per cent of Tonkin natives were farmers who worked in the field all day, and therefore they did not need English broadcloths. The hot and wet climate was not suitable for woollen materials for much of the year, so English products only served the King, Mandarins and wealthy people in winter. The wars with Cochin-China had stopped from 1672, and therefore the King of Tonkin just needed a small number of guns as a gift or luxury

⁶³⁴ IOR/G/12/17/2, *Tonkin factory, May – June 1675*, pp. 131b-134b.

goods, while unwrought metals were necessary for their daily life and were welcomed by both the Court and private merchants. As such, while the English mainly purchased silks (both native and Chinese products) in Tonkin, their exporting goods were not English cloths, but saltpetre, brimstone, lead and some types of luxury goods.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Tonkin factory's main activities occurred in the 1670s and 1680s, and they were extremely dynamic in around the twelve years from 1676-1688 when the plan of supplying silk for London was entertained. During that time, both the Court of Directors and English overseas factors made attempts and alterations to maintain the Tonkin factory, while other EIC's branches in East Asia closed. That the EIC sought to preserve and develop Tonkin trade through various commercial plans, was evidence of how the EIC learned from previous experiences and their daily experimentation to create their own success in small and supportive markets in East Asia, and of the necessity of peripheral market in the EIC's commercial strategy in the area to connect with core market of China.

Tonkin in the seventeenth century was important towards the EIC's improvement as it provided lessons on both terms of commodities, trading network and learning process from direct trading experimentation. These were lessons about investment, the type of imported and exported goods and trading partnership. That the EIC recognised the significance of silver or ready cash in Tonkin and overseas trade, was a significant change in their trade, while the appearance of Asian products and a connection with different merchants in Tonkin were evident for the EIC's allowance of 'country trade'

and private trade, with the aim of creating a regional trading system. For that reason, although the Tonkin factory's achievement was not fruitful, it is worth evaluating the English attempts to maintain and enlarge their trade and to consider the Tonkin factory as a case to study how the EIC learned and understood transoceanic markets from the view of the outlying market.

The chapter analyses the EIC's lessons from experience and also provides a comprehensive view of the interrelationship between main markets, China and Japan, and the supplementary place of Tonkin. The Tonkin factory survived due to the EIC's primary aim of trade with Japan, and subsequently China, although within some years this factory was to serve the Eurasian trade. Tonkin became of more significance for the EIC to collect Chinese goods, and to open a gateway to mainland China from the south. However, it seemed that while the English in East Asia recognised the role of small factories as Tonkin in the EIC's trading system, the Court of Minutes in London paid less attention to Tonkin. The data of the English shipping and investment indicated that in comparison with their rivals' presence in Tonkin or to the EIC's treatment of other factories in China, India, the role of Tonkin was subordinate. The fact of English trading in Tonkin showed that a small factory played its roles as substitute and intermediary in some periods and its necessity and significance only stopped as the EIC found a means to connect with core markets directly and effectively. The Tonkin factory thus was evidence of the EIC's policy change from using outlying factories in distant areas to connecting directly main markets in the last decade of the seventeenth century and establishing a completely formal relationship in the next century.

CHAPTER 5. THE ENGLISH CONNECTIONS WITH COCHIN-CHINA IN THE 1690s AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

This chapter argues that the EIC, and particularly the Madras Council, enacted remarkable changes in their contact with Southern Vietnam in the 1690s to serve their aim of connecting India and China. Instead of viewing Cochin-China as a regular market for London, as they had with Tonkin in the 1670s and 1680s, the Madras Council considered it an ideal site to build a station along the sea-route from India to China, which they could use to control and protect the long-distance English trading network in the area. To fulfill this plan, the Madras Council needed to establish a good relationship with the native Court and therefore turned its attention to diplomatic activities. Nevertheless, the Company also went beyond what were now traditional methods of diplomacy and looked to establishing fortifications and a colony in Cochin China. By exploring the changes that the EIC enacted in Cochin-China in the 1690s, this chapter investigates the different ways in which London and Madras evaluated the potential of overseas countries and established a connection with them. English attempts to link Southern Vietnam to a more extensive network in the 1690s, were part of the EIC's new strategy towards East Asia which involved trying to establish fortifications and colonies to control distant trade and enlarge the English position. Through examining the Company's view of Cochin-China and its position in the South China Sea, the chapter argues that English overseas individuals continued to play essential roles in the EIC's expansion in East Asia, but that they started to operate in new ways at the end of the seventeenth century.

As the previous chapters demonstrated, the English faced difficulties when trying to connect with Cochin-China in the seventeenth century. Firstly, their three voyages from Japan to Cochin-China in the 1610s obtained unexpected results as the two English men had died and they collected little silk. Chapter Two shows that from 1623 English agents in Bantam had a distinct view about the position of Cochin-China in the South China Sea: they saw it as a well-placed station to control all sea routes around the area, rather than an intermediary post fuelling trading connections, as was the case with Tonkin. As early as 1627, Cochin-China was again revived in the English consideration as they sought a means of indirect trade with mainland China to compete with the Dutch position in East Asia. English agents at Batavia believed that this kingdom had more advantages than Taiwan in its connection with mainland China, and the English had a chance to settle a factory or a fortification on the island of Cochin-China. Henry Hawley, the Batavia president wrote to London in consideration of the place to establish indirect trade with China that ‘the harbour of Cochin-China are far more secure than Formosa [Taiwan]; are doubtful whether the King will permit them to fortify on the main, but will not be opposed on the island of Champello [now Cu Lao Cham, Southern Vietnam]...’.⁶³⁵ However, the EIC’s general situation before the 1650s was largely to focus on India and the Spice Islands because of its main aim of obtaining spices and the weakness of its capital reserves. As a result, the EIC paid little or even no attention to Southern Vietnam and East Asia in this period. In 1671 the English faced disaster related to Cochin-China as the ships *Advice* and *Bantam Pink* from Bantam to

⁶³⁵ IOR/L/PS/20/G9, W. Noel (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, East Indies, China and Persia, 1625-1629* (London, 1884), p. 373.

Taiwan and Japan were lost near Pulo-Condore island due to the bad weather.⁶³⁶ Nevertheless, with the potential of this market, the EIC's desire to expand trade and influence in East Asia, and its changing strategy in the late century, Cochin-China was again considered in the 1690s, by the Madras Council. The role of Madras' factors was to create a view from the ground of this distant area, commenting on the potential for 'country trade', a new proposition, distinct from long-distance overseas trade.

Reasons for the English mission in Cochin-China

The most important reason which led to the English mission in 1695 was the Madras Council's search for an intermediate station in the East Asian trading network and the Company's continued desire for a stable connection between India and China.⁶³⁷ At this point, the Company was more aware of and became keen to be involved in country trade. After China opened many trading ports for foreigners in 1684, both the English official and private ships from Madras arrived in Amoy, Canton and other Chinese ports more frequently.⁶³⁸ In this system, China provided porcelain, alum, sugar and silk, and Madras worked as a broker to transfer goods from China to Bengal, Surat or Persia.⁶³⁹ China and Chinese commodities were always essential and had potential in the EIC's commercial strategy in East Asia, but from the late seventeenth century onwards the

⁶³⁶ IOR/G/12/1, *China material, 1596-1673*, p. 82; IOR/G/21/4B, *Java Record, Extracts from Letter from Bantam to the East India Company, 12 February 1664 – 8 April 1676*, p. 78.

⁶³⁷ Farrington, *Trading Places: The East India Company and Asia 1600-1830* (London, 2002), p. 84.

⁶³⁸ I.B. Watson, *Foundation for Empire: English Private Trade in India, 1659-1760* (New Delhi, 1980), pp. 151, 306; S. Mentz, *The English Gentleman Merchant at Work: Madras and the City of London 1660-1740* (Copenhagen, 2005), pp. 200-206.

⁶³⁹ P.J. Marshall, 'Private British Trade in the Indian Ocean before 1800' in A.D. Gupta & M.N. Pearson (eds.), *India and the Indian Ocean 1500-1800* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 276-300, p. 284.

trade-route between India and China became significant to the EIC's development as the Company wanted to connect its two main core markets in a comprehensive system. However, it seems that the Chinese government was obstructive and the trading conditions remained complex.⁶⁴⁰ For example, the English arrived in Amoy in 1684, but local officers refused the trade since they had previously supported Taiwan. They were thus required to transfer guns, weapons and lead as gifts for the Emperor of China and to come back in 1685.⁶⁴¹ Due to the limited access to China directly and indirectly through supplementary factories (they were closed in the 1680s), the English trade with mainland China in the 1690s was fragmentary.⁶⁴² At the same time, the Tonkin factory which played the role as an intermediary to collect Chinese commodities and connect with mainland China became difficult to maintain. As a result of such changes, the English needed other options by which to acquire Chinese products. London had considered voyaging to China with experienced and skilful staff and asked Madras to keep Lemuel Blackmore as chief of the Tonkin factory in 1694 to maintain the indirect link with mainland China (see chapter three). Moreover, London's decision to close the Tonkin factory in early 1695 prompted the Company to consider other substitute ports in the South China Sea to act as intermediaries. The Madras Council, therefore, viewed Cochin-China as one possible option because of its trading and geographic potential.⁶⁴³

⁶⁴⁰ Lamb, *The Mandarin Road to Old Hué: Narratives of Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy from the 17th Century to the Eve of the French Conquest* (London, 1970), p. 37.

⁶⁴¹ Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China: 1635-1834; Vol. 1* (London, 2000), pp. 52-57; J.E. Wills (ed), *China and Maritime Europe, 1500-1800: Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy, and Missions* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 194.

⁶⁴² Wills, *China and Maritime Europe*, p. 195.

⁶⁴³ IOR/E/3/92, *London to Our Lieutenant General and President of Council at Fort St George, 6 March 1695*, p. 194.

Beyond the role of an intermediary, Cochin-China was in the EIC's view with the hope of controlling regional trading routes; a strategic aim made more forceful by its adoption of using force in overseas countries.⁶⁴⁴ The loss of its factories in Cambodia, Siam, Taiwan, Bantam, (and soon Tonkin) between the 1660s and 1680s caused problems for the EIC's position in East Asia as they had no presence in the South China Sea to compete with other Europeans. At the same time, the Dutch controlled Batavia and the Spanish had authority in Manila. Therefore, the need for a place to manage the trading routes around the South China Sea became ever more significant. The Madras Council hence perceived Cochin-China to be 'a convenient place for building a dock wherein our [English] ships may be laid and repaired, or new ship built' due to its geographical position in the South China Sea.⁶⁴⁵ As such, this kingdom was not only valued for its geographical position and trading potential, but also the possibility of building a dock, or further a fortification to control the South China Sea and to secure the English presence in East Asia. However, the Company considered the presence of the Dutch in Cochin-China as they wanted to avoid direct competition with them. As discussed below, the Madras Council considered discovering the relationship between Nguyen Lords and the VOC after the war in the 1640s.⁶⁴⁶ If the relationship was still tense, it would be satisfactory for the English to reside and build a place to confirm their position and influence in the area.

⁶⁴⁴ K.N. Chaudhuri, J.I. Israel, 'The English and Dutch East India Companies and the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89' in J.I. Israel (ed.), *The Anglo-Dutch Moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its World Impact* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 407-438, p. 408.

⁶⁴⁵ IOR/G/40/18, *Factory Records Miscellaneous, Instructions to Bowyear from Madras Council, 2 May 1695*, p. 3; Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Relations*, p. 42.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 5.

Besides the great ambitions of the EIC's strategy to link India and China and to control the East Asia trading routes, the mission to Cochin-China also reflected the Madras Council's own desire to create and develop a 'country trade' system in Asia.⁶⁴⁷ The involvement of Madras' agents was key here, as these individuals lived on the ground and held the knowledge, power, relationships and ambition to become involved in the complex Asian trading system. Madras agents were an important new component in how the English approached Southern Vietnam in the 1690s. Madras from the mid-seventeenth century was one of the principal centres of English private trade with the increase of a number of English merchants there.⁶⁴⁸ Until the late century, this factory had the 'largest fleet of private ships' to serve both short trade with other ports in India, and long-distance trade with China, Manila, and Persia.⁶⁴⁹ The Madras Council were heavily involved in the intra-Asian trade especially from the early 1690s, since Indian textiles could find a reasonable market in East Asia, in exchange for other luxury commodities, and therefore Southeast Asian ports were frequented by the English.⁶⁵⁰ As in the previous discussion in chapter four, the influence of Madras towards Vietnam had changed from the outbreak of the Nine Years War. Before 1688 London tried to restrict Madras's power towards Tonkin in both issues of principal management and trade, but private trade still occurred in some years. Due to the war with France, London could not manage distant factories and allowed Madras to be involved in all the Tonkin factory's

⁶⁴⁷ D.K. Bassett, 'British 'Country' Trade and Local Trade Networks in the Thai and Malay States', *Modern Asian Studies*, 23 (1989), pp. 625-643, p. 633. Bassett viewed the English mission to Cochin-China and the voyages to Pegu as private experiments of Higginson.

⁶⁴⁸ Marshall, 'British Private Trade', pp. 278-280.

⁶⁴⁹ P.J. Marshall, 'The English in Asia to 1700' in N. Canny (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: vol. 1, The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the close of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 265-287, p. 280.

⁶⁵⁰ Bassett, 'British Country Trade', pp. 625, 632.

activities and improve ‘country trade’ to have suitable goods and Chinese products.⁶⁵¹ When London ordered Madras to investigate the Tonkin factory in 1693, Madras agents also operated their private trade with a large number of individuals’ commodities carried to Tonkin. Moreover, Madras and London had different opinions on using Tonkin: while London mostly focused on the Eurasian trade to supply silks for Europe, Madras viewed Tonkin as an inherent part of the regional trade. Indeed, some of the members of the Madras Council had previous trading experience in East Asia in Tonkin itself as well as Siam and Taiwan. For example, in the 1680s, Gyfford, the Governor of Madras had experience on both Mallaca and Tonkin while Baron worked as an adviser for Gyfford about the English trade in East Asia.⁶⁵² Moreover, other Tonkin factors such as George Tash and William Hodges who were dismissed from Tonkin to Madras in 1686 became other channels to help Madras understood about the trade with Vietnam. Because such men insured that Madras was very conscious of Southeast Asian trade, Madras continued to think of the possibilities for a continued Southeast Asian presence even after the departure of Gyfford and his cronies and after Tonkin factory was closed in 1595.

Cochin-China seemed to be a potential choice for both the EIC’s general strategy and Madras’s own desire of country trade because of its geographical location and the regular presence of Chinese merchants. Hoi An, the famous trading city of Cochin-China, had an essential location in the regional trading network linked to Macao and Batavia, and it could act as a place to exchange and connect to East and Southeast

⁶⁵¹ IOR/E/3/92, *London to Chief & Council at Tonkin, 18 February 1692*, p. 150.

⁶⁵² His last appearance in Madras was in 1695 with an advice about the trade in India. Winterbottom, *Company Culture*, p. 49.

Asia.⁶⁵³ Voyages from China to Cochin-China were relatively straightforward, as the sea route (around six days and nights) was familiar to Chinese merchants.⁶⁵⁴ The advantage of distance was also recognised by the English in Batavia in 1627 as they reported to London that Cochin-China ‘connected with the main of China, ...seven days journey from Chin-Chew: and there is free intercourse by sea and land...’.⁶⁵⁵ Cochin-China thus offered the Madras Council a means of accessing Chinese merchants in the 1690s, which allowed the English to maintain a connection with China, develop the intra-Asian trade, and control the China Sea in competition with other Europeans. The wealth of China was a potential market for both the EIC’s formal and private trade in India to export textile and import silk, porcelain, lacquer, tea and sugar. While land routes through Burma (now Myanmar) remained unclear, the sea route from the Indian Ocean through the Indonesian area and the corner of Siam Gulf (now the Gulf of Thailand), Cochin-China and Tonkin, was still the main way for the English in India to access China.

For the above reasons, the Madras Council granted Thomas Bowyear leadership of the English mission to Cochin-China in 1695 and instructed him to discover the commercial possibilities of Cochin-China, such as the prices of commodities and trading networks between Cochin-China and Japan, Cambodia and Siam.⁶⁵⁶ These instructions demonstrated both Madras’ desire to find a suitable place in the South China Sea to replace Tonkin as the EIC’s intermediary point in East Asia and the EIC’s

⁶⁵³ Wheeler, ‘Cross-Cultural Trade and Trans-Regional Networks in the Port of Hoian: Maritime Vietnam in Early Modern Era’ (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 2001), p. 6.

⁶⁵⁴ Le Quy Don, *Phu bien tap luc [Desultory Record of the Subjugated Border]*, c1776, Vietnamese translation (Hanoi, 1962), p. 233.

⁶⁵⁵ Noel, *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, p. 373.

⁶⁵⁶ IOR/G/40/18, *Factory Records Miscellaneous, Instructions to Bowyear from Madras Council, 2 May 1695*, p. 5; Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy*, p. 42.

hope to connect with Japan again via Southern Vietnam. Broadly, its ambition was to connect the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea with a station at Cochin-China. As such, the mission to Cochin-China in 1695-1696 served both official and private aims of the Company's officials in Madras. While the EIC needed this kingdom to link with China and to control the sea-routes in the area, English agents in Madras needed a part of the 'country trade' system in the South China Sea to serve their developing private trade. Consequently, the English approached Cochin-China in different ways and for other reasons than those that had earlier guided its activities in Tonkin. In the 1690s, the East India Company was learning to trade in East Asia in new ways with the mission to establish a relationship with native governments and discover the potential of trade.

The Bowyear's mission to Cochin-China and the English experience⁶⁵⁷

By analysing the English mission to Southern Vietnam from the perspective of Madras, this part examines how the Company operated in its diplomacy and trade with the local Court. It also analyses the roles played by English staff, by considering how much they knew about and learnt from Cochin-China in comparison to the earlier lessons gleaned from interactions with Tonkin.

Significantly, the Madras Council used Thomas Bowyear, an experienced member of staff who had worked in the Taiwan factory and visited Tonkin in 1682 and

⁶⁵⁷ Full records, letters, instructions of this mission can be seen in IOR/G/40/18, Factory records: Miscellaneous; Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy*, pp. 41-56; A. Dalrymple, *Oriental Repertory*, vol. 1 (London, 1793), pp. 65-94.

1688, and Siam in 1682, as a leader of the mission in 1695.⁶⁵⁸ Bowyear's appointment demonstrates how, as with the Court of Directors in London, the Madras Council increasingly used long-serving staff to perform pioneering tasks, such as gathering information and settling formal relations. Bowyear, with his skills and background knowledge of Taiwan, Siam and Tonkin, was the most suitable factor for discovering information about and negotiating with Cochin-China.⁶⁵⁹ The 1695 mission also included Mr Gyfford, but we do not know whether this man was William Gyfford, the chief of Tonkin factory (1672-1676) and President of Madras Council (1683-1686) or not, since Elihu Yale replaced him in 1686, and we have no information about him after that.⁶⁶⁰

The primary aim of this mission was to set up diplomatic relations with the Cochin-Chinese Court by sending a letter and gifts from the Governor of Fort St George to the Nguyen Lord. With experience in dealing with Indian kingdoms and the lessons from Tonkin factory, the Madras Council understood the importance of carefully engaging with the Cochin-Chinese Court. Their cautious approach is demonstrated by Nathaniel Higginson's (the President of Fort St. George) instructions to Bowyear. The English began by finding out information about the Cochin-Chinese political system, such as 'the names & titles of y^e King & his family; the names titles & offices of his

⁶⁵⁸ IOR/G/12/17/8, *Tonkin factory, 20 August 1682, 15 September 1682*, pp. 297a, 309b. Tonkin records showed that in 1682 after 20 days at Siam together with Samuel Baron for a negotiation of trade, Bowyear arrived in to Tonkin and sent a letter to Keeling. Lamb also stated that in 1688, Bowyear stayed with the Tonkin factory in Thang Long as William Dampier visited Tonkin. Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy*, p. 35.

⁶⁵⁹ Dalrymple judged him as an 'intelligent and different man'. Dalrymple, *Oriental Repertory*, p. 65. After finishing the job in Cochin-China, Bowyear was appointed Chief of Syriam factory (Burma). See Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy*, p. 36; H. Yule, *Narrative of the Mission of the Court of Ava in 1855* (London, 1858), p. 215.

⁶⁶⁰ IOR/E/3/91, *Letter book VIII, London to Fort St George, 22 October 1686*, p. 104.

chief serv^{at} & favour; the names of the government, especially relating to y^e trade of foreigners' and the political relations between Cochin-China with Tonkin, Siam and Cambodia.⁶⁶¹ The Madras Council was also keen to understand the trajectory of the Nguyen Lords' war with Tonkin between 1627 and 1672, to comprehend the current relationship between the two kingdoms in 1695. The Council also felt that Cambodia and Siam were significant due to their conflicts with Cochin-China as the Nguyen Lords had expanded southward.⁶⁶² The Madras Council's instructions to Bowyear concerning Cochin-China's political issues show that they had collected basic information about the political relationship between this country and its neighbours. That information was indirect from various sources in different periods such as from Gyfford and Baron in the 1680s, and from other of Madras's merchants during their trading activities with Tonkin and in the 'country trade' system with Manila, China, Siam, and the Malayan states in the 1690s.⁶⁶³ With experience of trade in East Asia, the Madras Council understood the necessary political information and considered the political effects of both official and private trade. Accordingly, both the Madras Council and President Higginson sent letters and detailed instructions to the English mission on 2 May 1695.

On 18 August 1695, Thomas Bowyear and his assistants arrived in Champellos (Callao Island, or now known as Cu Lao Cham), Cochin-China under those requirements. The English brought with them a letter from Higginson to the King of Cochin-China. In this letter, Higginson stressed his position in the English East India

⁶⁶¹ IOR/G/40/18, *Instructions to Bowyear from Madras Council, 2 May 1695*, p. 4; Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese relations*, p. 42.

⁶⁶² M.G. Cotter, 'Towards a Social History of the Vietnamese Southward Movement', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 9 (1968), pp. 12-24; Phan, *A History of Cochin-China*; Li, *Nguyen Cochin-China*, pp. 24-35; Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, pp. 406-419.

⁶⁶³ Bassett, 'British Country Trade', pp. 626, 629, 632-33.

Company as the President on the Coast of Coromandel, Bay of Bengal, Sumatra and South Seas who had the power to address all the English issues in East Asia on behalf of the English government.⁶⁶⁴ With such power, Higginson's letter was valued by the Cochin-Chinese Court and helped the English ambassador to meet the King and Grand Mandarins and negotiate meaningfully. Higginson's desired role is illuminated by the issues he chose to mention in his letter to the King of Cochin-China. Besides the desire of a peaceful commerce, he thanked the King for helping Mr. Blackmore in 1693 as the English junk was wrecked in the Cochin-China channel (see chapter three), and noted that the English were 'not seeking to conquer kingdoms but carry on their trade only to the great benefit of the country where they trade.'⁶⁶⁵ It is no doubt that Higginson understood the political situation of Cochin-China and its worry about the external influence towards the national security, as Cochin-China was still on the conflict with its neighbours, and tried to avoid any misunderstanding of the Company's aims in Cochin China. Consequently, Higginson noted that he held the ambition to trade and tried to reassure the King that the English did not focus on political issues or wish to conquer the country. The letter acted to reassure influential individuals about the English presence in Southern Vietnam, and as a passport to help Bowyear to enter and contact the Cochin-Chinese Court effectively.

During their first month in Cochin-China, the English were welcomed by two Dispatchdores and the local Mandarins. On 9 October, Bowyear went to Sinoa, the capital of Cochin-China (now Hue province). Bowyear, however, did not meet the King since he was in the time of recreation and, it took time to transfer the English gifts to the

⁶⁶⁴ IOR/G/40/18, *Nath. Higginson to King of Cochin-China, 2 May 1695*, p. 1

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 2.

King because the two Dispatchdores needed to check them carefully.⁶⁶⁶ All further formal meetings between Bowyear and the Cochin-Chinese Court occurred under the management of the King's Dispatchdores. In November 1695, the English sent their letter to the King after translating it into Portuguese and Cochin-Chinese as they did in Tonkin in 1672, because Portuguese was the international language in Cochin-China (see chapter two).⁶⁶⁷ In general, by using a formal letter and gifts, Bowyear's attempts at forming a diplomatic relationship with the Cochin-China court proved successful, and these activities helped the English to negotiate with the King and native Mandarins about trade and residence.

After their initial diplomatic gestures, the King and his Court welcomed the English. Firstly, they received 3,000 local cash from the King in return for their gifts to the Court. All their goods were then brought to the 'custom house' and were protected carefully by Cochin-Chinese soldiers. On 2 November 1695, the English again received gifts from the King of 10,000 cash, a hog, two bags of rice, two jars of salt fish, and two jars of wine.⁶⁶⁸ Secondly, the Cochin-Chinese Court supported the English in gaining a trading licence, although this negotiation proved difficult due to resistance from the two Dispatchdores, the most important Mandarins for foreigners.⁶⁶⁹ The first, Ung Coy Backe Looke Dean, assisted the English but he had no authority to allow them to trade immediately. The second, Ung Cookey Thoo, the King's uncle shared the same power

⁶⁶⁶ Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy*, pp. 45-48. The English mission arrived in Cochin-China on 21 August 1695, but until 9 October 1695 they could go to the capital to send gifts to the King.

⁶⁶⁷ The same situation was in China and Tonkin in the seventeenth century as the Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive there and settled a long trading relation. The EIC's trade with those kingdoms thus required interpreters who knew Chinese or Portuguese. See chapter 3 and Morse, *Chronicles of the EIC-China*, pp. 66-67.

⁶⁶⁸ IOR/G/40/18, *Thomas Bowyear's Narrative to Nathaniel Higginson*, p. 12.

⁶⁶⁹ Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy*, p. 48.

as the first Mandarin but tried to make a profit from the English. He requested 500 taels of silver for his lobbying while Bowyear was willing to pay only 100 taels.⁶⁷⁰ Luckily for Bowyear, Ung Coy Backe Looke Dean helped the English to send a trading proposal to the King without any fee. In this case, we can see the difference between Cochin-China and Tonkin in their treatment towards foreigners. While all Tonkin's Mandarins required gifts and a fee for the permission of trade and residence, Cochin-China more willingly welcomed overseas merchants, and the native Mandarins tried to help foreigners to trade. They did so because commerce advantaged the Cochin-Chinese in their fight against Tonkin.⁶⁷¹ While Tonkin continued to focus on their agricultural economy and tried to limit newcomers, Cochin-China acknowledged the importance of overseas commerce. Consequently, in contrast to Tonkin, Cochin-Chinese Dispatchdores and other Mandarins were not allowed to restrict or obstruct overseas trade.⁶⁷² The support of local government was always crucial to the development of trading relations in East Asia. With the experience of both Taiwan and Tonkin, Bowyear quickly recognised the differences of Cochin-China, and such recognition led to Bowyear's positive evaluation of their ability to settle an English factory in this kingdom.

Thirdly, the English received a welcome letter from the King of Cochin-China to the Governor of Madras, which was extremely different from Tonkin's treatment of the

⁶⁷⁰ IOR/G/40/18, *Thomas Bowyear's Narrative*, p. 13.

⁶⁷¹ More detail in V.H. Duong, 'The Commercial Management of Nguyen Lords in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' in V.K. Nguyen (ed), *Viet People with Sea* (Hanoi, 2011) pp. 367-384.

⁶⁷² Li, *Nguyen Cochin-China, Southern Vietnam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (New York, 1998); 'An Alternative Vietnam? The Nguyen Kingdom in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 29 (1998), pp. 111-121.

English in 1696.⁶⁷³ In the letter, the King praised the English friendship and good knowledge of his kingdom and its relations with neighbours. He felt satisfied with the Englishmen in the mission and described Bowyear's behaviour in glowing terms: 'the piety, the behaviour, the fidelity, and the truly solid justice'.⁶⁷⁴ The King also sent presents from Cochin-China to the Governor of Madras to represent the friendly relationship.⁶⁷⁵ Furthermore, he sent some samples of Calambac, gold, silk and wood and promised that the trade between the EIC and Cochin-China would be fruitful when the English ships came back.⁶⁷⁶ This welcome contrasted with that from Northern Vietnam, as the Tonkin Court never sent a letter to the EIC or made a trading trial with the English. Consequently, Bowyear and the English had many chances to travel around the kingdom to discover its trading potential, thus meeting Madras' requirement. They were even able to trial a small trade with the native Court. The success of this diplomatic activity led Bowyear to expect that the trading relationship between Madras and Cochin-China would develop in the future, which was important, given the fragility of the Tonkin factory.

As in Tonkin, the English considered diplomacy as a useful and vital tool to settle a trading relationship. To help Bowyear, and explain the aim of the voyage, Higginson wrote to the King of Cochin-China in 1695 and revealed that: '...I have sent my merchant, Mr Thomas Bowyear, to wait on Your Majesty, whom I pray Your Majesty to receive courteously, who if it pleases to permit him will make a small

⁶⁷³ Dalrymple said that this letter was 'throughout very friendly written.' See Dalrymple, *Oriental Repertory*, p. 94.

⁶⁷⁴ Dalrymple, *Oriental Repertory*, p. 93.

⁶⁷⁵ IOR/G/40/18, *Translate of the King of Cochin-China Letter sent to English Governor of the City of Madras in India*, 2 April 1696, p. 22.

⁶⁷⁶ IOR/G/40/18, *Thomas Bowyear's Narrative*, p. 22.

present to Your Majesty's acceptance, and proposals on behalf of the noble English Company for a future commerce.⁶⁷⁷ This letter presented both the English respect for the King of Cochin-China, their desire to trade with this kingdom if possible, and the role of Bowyear as a leading trader to contact with Cochin-China. However, in the instructions to Bowyear, Madras stated that he could 'make and receive proposals' but could not make any contract with the King of Cochin-China.⁶⁷⁸ It meant that Madras continued to consider what Cochin-China's possible functions might be in the regional commercial chain and ensured that Bowyear had little power or autonomy. They, therefore, stated that Bowyear's job was only involved in fact-finding rather than enacting negotiations with the local Court.

The Governor of Madras required Bowyear to 'make a list of the sorts, quantities, and prices of commodities bought and sold' in Cochin-China.⁶⁷⁹ He noted seven specific privileges which the Company was allowed in other markets and hoped to gain in Cochin-China:

1. A piece of ground to build a factory in y^e most convenient place;
2. The English cheif to have power of judging all matters wherein English men are concerned either wth English or natives;
3. Collies & other to serve y^e English paying them at y^e same rate as y^e natives pay & to be punished by y^e English cheif where guilty of a fault;
4. Freedom of custom for all goods exported or imported;
5. A convenient place for building a dock wherein our ships may be laid ashore & repaired or new ships built either in y^e river or on some idland;
- 6.

⁶⁷⁷ IOR/G/40/18, *Letter from Nathaniel Higginson to the King of Cochin-China*, 2 May 1695, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid, *Instructions to Bowyear from Madras Council*, 2 May 1695, p. 5.

⁶⁷⁹ Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy, Instructions to Bowyear from the Madras Council*, 2 May 1695, p. 42.

Ships cast away by stome or other accident on any part of y^e coast of Cochin-China not to be forfeired or seizedbut y^e Kings subjects to assist in saving & securing ship men & goods & all to be delivered to y^e English ffactory; 7. All goods belonging to y^e English ffactory to pass from the ffactory into y^e land & from y^e land to their ffactory free of custom having y^e Chop of y^e English chief & they & their serv^{nt} to travell to free & safe without molestation.⁶⁸⁰

The privileges included places for a factory and dock, advantageous conditions for free trade, labour, and even issues related to law and native's power, transportation, the support from the native government. With such specific orders, Madras showed its serious consideration of trade with Cochin-China and its desire to settle a factory in the area. Madras's requirements were part of Bowyear's proposal to the King on 27 December 1695. In that proposal, Bowyear tried to obtain trading privileges for the English in the issues of tax, a place to build a factory, right to trade in the whole kingdom or take part in the regional trading system. Firstly, he suggested less tax for the English ships that arrived in Cochin-China, a place to build a factory and the ability to trade with Cochin-China's neighbours.⁶⁸¹ The tax was 500 taels silver for all English ships which arrived in Cochin-China to trade while including 200 taels for others which touched in at Cochin-China for more cargo or refreshment on the way to China. Secondly, he desired two places to build a factory, Foy Foe (Faifo or Hoi An), the most famous trading port of Cochin-China and Sinoa, the capital (now Hue province). As in

⁶⁸⁰ All required clauses can be seen in IOR/G/40/18, *Letter to Bowyear from Nathaniel Higginson, Governor of Madras Presidency, dated Fort St. George, 2 May 1695*, p. 3.

⁶⁸¹ IOR/G/40/18, *Thomas Bowyear's Narrative to Nathaniel Higginson*, pp.13-14 They were the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 8th provisions in the proposal.

Tonkin, the English focused on a location near to foreign merchants and the capital. Thirdly, he not only focused on trade with Southern Vietnam but also considered this kingdom as one part of the regional system. Therefore, one of the exciting points of the Madras' trading proposal in Cochin-China was the desire to create a trading network or 'country trade' as they asked for a Royal Chop of free trade with Champa, Cambodia and Siam.⁶⁸² Although political relations between Cochin-China and those countries were bad, the trade, especially private business, still worked, and it was an excellent opportunity for the English to be involved in the regional trade in the Gulf of Siam to make a counterweight to the Dutch in Batavia.

Alongside proposing the English desire for trade in Cochin-China, Bowyear demonstrated his influence and role in the mission by discovering fundamental data about the trading potential of Cochin-China, including information about commodities and trading networks. He exploited his time to travel and find all prospective ports and markets in the kingdom, such as Faifo (Hoi An), the capital Hue and the river system before confirming its potential with Madras. As a result, Bowyear had useful knowledge about the types of Cochin-Chinese products. Like in Tonkin, Cochin-China had many luxury commodities which were suitable for the regional trade such as wood (callamback, agula), jagary, bird's nests, pepper, cotton, and gold and other products for Europe as raw and wrought silks and sugar.⁶⁸³

⁶⁸² An official document with red stamp of the King of Cochin-China granted for foreigners to reside and trade in the whole kingdom.

⁶⁸³ IOR/G/40/18, *Thomas Bowyear's Narrative*, p. 17; Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy*, p. 53. Lings, shues, hockings, theas, holas, chmunges, and trafficlears were various types of Cochin-Chinese silk cloth. Calambac, and agula were different types of aromatic wood, aloes wood. Jagary was a coarse brown sugar.

Furthermore, during his time in Cochin-China, Bowyear contacted the Prince of Champa and the Cambodian ambassador, who warmly welcomed the English to create a trading relationship with their kingdoms.⁶⁸⁴ Those meetings, although short, provided the English with more information and the opportunity to trade in the regional system. Bowyear also discovered the trading relationship between Cochin-China and Canton (Chinese port), which provided silk, porcelain, and medicinal materials. At the same time, other countries provided opportunities for trade in other commodities: Cambodia for local woods and skins; Siam for local woods, tin, lead and rice; together with Batavia for pepper and Manila for silver.⁶⁸⁵ At least ten or twelve junks were arriving in Southern Vietnam from China, Japan, Siam, Cambodia, Manila and Batavia annually.⁶⁸⁶ Importantly, Bowyear recognised the influence of a considerable community of Chinese people in Hoi An, the famous port of Cochin-China, where there were more than one hundred families to conduct the trade among China, Cochin-China and Japan.⁶⁸⁷ Since the Chinese political situation was still erratic and negatively affected the EIC's direct trade with mainland China, the appearance of Chinese traders in Southern Vietnam was important as an optional solution to contact China. Especially from the Madras Council's perspective, the Chinese expansion in the South China Sea was a bridge to link Southeast Asian countries, and it was helpful for the English country trade. With that information, Cochin-China was considered as a suitable port in the South China Sea to collect Chinese and Asian commodities. The wealth of Cochin-Chinese products and

⁶⁸⁴ Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy*, pp. 52, 55; Dalrymple, *Oriental Repertory*, p. 67.

⁶⁸⁵ IOR/G/40/18, *Thomas Bowyear's Narrative*, p. 17; Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy*, p. 53.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁶⁸⁷ Li, *Nguyen Cochin-China*, p. 68. In the period 1671-1690, there were 69 Chinese junks from Hoi An (Quang Nam province) to Japan, and 30 junks in the last decade of the century.

its link with other countries in the area was a potential for Madras' private traders in the system of 'country trade', which they ran in both India and the Malay islands.⁶⁸⁸

By performing a trading experiment with both the Court and merchants in Cochin-China, Bowyear again confirmed his role in providing knowledge about the trading possibility of this kingdom. However, although Bowyear praised the trading potential of Cochin-China, the commercial results of the trial were not as valuable as those of the diplomacy. The King was the first customer of the English, and he had some special orders. Just as in Tonkin, the King of Cochin-China wanted 1400 tael silver in the English bullion, and he paid gold for goods at a high rate.⁶⁸⁹ Except for standard products, English people were asked to supply guns and cannons as samples in the capital, as a requirement for approval of their commercial proposal. The Cochin-Chinese demand for armed-trade was larger and more serious than Tonkin, as this kingdom conflicted with both Siam and Cambodia, and was in a tense relationship with Northern Vietnam. It was a big chance for Madras's private traders to maintain relations with Cochin-China in the 'country trade' system, but unfortunately, there was no trading activities between Madras and Cochin-China in line with Bowyear's suggestion. Significantly, Cochin-China's climate meant that it issued no orders for English cloth or even Indian textile products. Only Indian redwood and brimstone met local demand.⁶⁹⁰ The trading experiment of Bowyear showed that just as in Tonkin, trade with Cochin-China would not benefit from exporting English or Indian goods there, but from

⁶⁸⁸ Bassett, 'British Country Trade', pp. 625-643; S. Mentz, 'European private trade in the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800' in O. Prakash, (ed.), *The Trading World of the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800* (Delhi, 2012), pp. 485-518; *English Gentleman Merchant*, pp. 160-173.

⁶⁸⁹ IOR/G/40/18, *Thomas Bowyear's Narrative*, p. 15.

⁶⁹⁰ Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy*, p. 52. Sarasses, beteelas, and mulmuls were Indian cotton cloths for Muslim people.

collecting local products and transferring in the intra-Asian trade. Cochin-China's role thus was an intermediary or trading market to help the English to collect all kinds of East Asian commodities as Tonkin had played in the 1670s and 1680s.

The knowledge that the English obtained from the mission had unexpected results in issues related to national security. Bowyear asked Cochin-China to judge 'all matters wherein Englishmen are concerned, either with English or natives', and he also asked that no native Mandarins or other people could enter the English factory in a violent manner for any reason.⁶⁹¹ These requirements reflect the wishes and ambitions of the Madras Council as they wanted (as in other places) to build a 'separate area' or a fortification for the English to live and work.⁶⁹² The English also desired to have special privileges at the Cochin-China border and required that the local government would not interfere in English issues. In other words, it was the English ambition to own their territory in Southern Vietnam. On the one side, Madras Council worried about the difficulties from local Mandarins, and they tried to limit their influence towards the English job and secure the commerce smoothly. They wished that English merchants in Cochin-China be treated in the same way as in Madras, where the Company built a fortification and the English could enact free trade after paying regular tax and promising local government necessary support. On the other side, there was a requirement for a 'diplomatic area' or a small colony, where the English applied their law, trade, relations in their own way. That order not only reflected Madras' demands and opinions about the free trade in Cochin-China, but it also showed the English change in their treatment of Asian countries.

⁶⁹¹ IOR/G/40/18, *Thomas Bowyear's Narrative*, pp. 3, 15.

⁶⁹² Marshall, 'English in Asia to 1700', p. 278.

The EIC began asking for more privileges, which amounted to territorial control or at least autonomy. Generally, this change was from the 1680s under the power of Sir Josiah Child, the EIC's Director, as he believed that the English would work well with territories independent from local rulers.⁶⁹³ Such demands had previously been made in Cochin-China and Tonkin but had largely been denied as the Confucianist states claimed that everyone and everything in the kingdom belonged to the King. As in Tonkin, Cochin-China welcomed foreigners but still managed them with the key aim of securing their own national territory, especially when this kingdom was at war with its neighbours. The demands of national security did not allow the King and his Mandarins to offer the English or any foreigners such powerful privileges in the kingdom. Accordingly, it was hard for the English to gain any special permissions related to the territorial issue. All provisions related to those requirements were not mentioned in any future conversations between the King, his Mandarins and the English, while all clauses related to free trade were allowed quickly and satisfactorily. Cochin-China's refusal to give territorial privileges was an essential lesson for the English in their attempts to connect with Confucian countries. As a result, they looked elsewhere to establish fortifications in subsequent years, such as Pulo-Condore island.

The English factory in Pulo-Condore island

With relative successful results in diplomacy and trading experimentation, at the end of this voyage, Bowyear strongly recommended creating a factory in Southern Vietnam to link India and East Asia. Unfortunately, since the EIC's main policy in this

⁶⁹³ Ibid, p. 280; Chaudhuri, Israel, 'The English and Dutch East India Companies', p. 408.

period was to focus on China and Chinese commodities, the potential of Cochin-China could not persuade the Madras Council as it provided little or even no strategic trade products as silks, and there was no Cochin-Chinese formal confirmation about the establishment of English factory in Hoian.⁶⁹⁴ Madras, thus, did not mention the establishment of a factory in this kingdom. However, it still tried to exploit this kingdom until the early eighteenth century by sending ships to Pulo-Condore island which was under the control of the New EIC in the period 1702-1705 before calling at China.⁶⁹⁵ Nevertheless, knowledge from Bowyear's mission to Cochin-China became essential for the New EIC as it considered another place to establish a factory to replace the unsuccessful branch in Chusan (China). That the New EIC attempted to build a factory in Pulo-Condore in Cochin-China between 1702 and 1705 to control the South China Sea by force shows that the New EIC was not only resorting to the suggestion that agents in Bantam had made in the 1620s but simultaneously demonstrated that the Company was moving on to another period in its history. The time of colony also changed its behaviour towards Vietnam.⁶⁹⁶ Creating a fortification and a factory in Vietnam together with other fortifications and colonies in Surat, Jaiour, Madurai, St

⁶⁹⁴ Lamb, *Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy*, p. 37; T.F. Howard, *Alexander Dalrymple (1737-1808) and the Expansion of British Trade* (London, 1970), p. 166.

⁶⁹⁵ Morse, *Trading to China*, vol. 1, p. 127. The *Catherine* from Surat to Condore and Amoy, the *Halifax* from Masulipatam to Condore and Canton, and the *Union* from Hughli to Condore and Chusan in 1703.

⁶⁹⁶ The English appearance in Pulo Condore or Con Dao islands was briefly described in C.B. Maybon, *Une factorerie anglaise au Tonkin au XVIIIe siècle (1672-1697)*, Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1910, pp. 159-204; A. Lamb, *The Mandarin Road to old Hue: Narratives of Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy from the 17th Century to the Eve of the French Conquest* (London, 1970), pp. 37-40; T.M.H. Nguyen, *English Missions to Vietnam in the Background of English Appearance in East Asia from the Seventeenth Century to the first half of the Nineteenth Century* (PhD Dissertation of University of Human and Society, Hanoi, 2014); and Ma, *English trade*, pp. 259-298; D.W. Tze-Ken, 'The Destruction of the English East India Company Factory on Condore Island, 1702-1705', *Modern Asian Studies*, 46 (2012), pp. 1097-1115.

Helena, Tevenapatam, Cuddalore (south of Madras), Anjengo (Kerala), Bengkulu (Sumatra), Calcutta (Bengal) therefore, was a turning point in the EIC's strategy in Asia.⁶⁹⁷ From then until 1858, the EIC only considered Vietnam, especially Cochinchina as a military and political target, not a trading market.⁶⁹⁸ Due to the failure of Pulo-Condore, the English connected with Vietnam solely through formal embassies, and their key goals were to settle a formal relationship with groups who took power in Vietnam for more than one and a half-centuries.

The English attempt to acquire Pulo-Condore island was under the role of the New EIC, and it was evidence of the EIC's changing stance towards Vietnam. The island was an unsuitable place to settle a trading factory but was significant in navigating the South China Sea.⁶⁹⁹ Dampier in 1688 wrote that 'this island lie very commodiously in the way to and from Japan, China, Manila, Tunquin, Cochinchina, and in general all this most easterly coast of the Indian continent; whether you go through the Straights of Malacca, or the Straights of Sunda, between Sumatra and Java, or other parts of the East-Indies...'.⁷⁰⁰ He also said that 'forts might be built to secure a

⁶⁹⁷ See more about the EIC's armed-trade policy and list of its colonies in Chaudhuri, 'The English and Dutch East India Companies', pp. 407-438; P.J. Stern, 'Soldier and Citizen in the Seventeenth-Century English East India Company', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 15 (2001), pp. 83-104, pp. 87-88; Marshall, 'The English in Asia to 1700', pp. 265-287.

⁶⁹⁸ A. Lamb, 'British Missions to Cochinchina: 1778-1822', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 34 (1961), pp. 1-248; N. Tarling, 'British Relations with Vietnam, 1822-1858', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 39 (1966), pp. 19-51.

⁶⁹⁹ A. Hamilton, 'A new Account of the East Indies' in J. Pinkerton, *A General Collection of the best and most interesting Voyages and Travels in all Parts of the World*, vol. 8 (London, 1811), p. 480; Tze-Ken, 'The Destruction in Pulo Condore', pp. 1099-1101; J-H. Michel, *Malay Peninsula: Crossroads of the Maritime Silk Road (100 BC- 1300 AD)* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 268-269; *Veritable Record of early Dai Nam*, vol. 7, p. 14.

⁷⁰⁰ Dampier, *Voyages and Discoveries*, p. 392.

factory, particularly at the harbour, which is capable of being well fortified.’⁷⁰¹ His clear judgment about the strategic position of Condore to control all sea routes in the South China Sea, and from this sea to the Indian Ocean, affected Allen Catchpoole, the English president of the New Company in Chusan (China). As the Chusan factory faced difficulties from the local government, Pulo Condore was chosen as its successor to maintain the New EIC’s expectation of controlling the regional sea routes.⁷⁰² Catchpoole reported to London that ‘its [Pulo Condore] situation is far better than this [Chusan] or any other port of China to settle upon in respect of all the coast in India, because it will be an intercepting port, to and from China and Japan, will much lessen the growth and power of the Dutch in all parts of India within a very few years’.⁷⁰³ As such, a factory with a fortification in Pulo Condore was the best means to help the English control the sea routes via the South China Sea and undermine the position of the Dutch there.

The EIC, thus, sent twenty seamen, including officers, artisans and carpenters to Pulo Condore in 1702. Regarding the role of the island as a new Batavia, more officers, soldiers and workers were quickly ordered to be sent out from England to build a factory.⁷⁰⁴ A Council was created in mid-1702 with Captain Peter Sherstone, Daniel

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² Morse, *Trading to China*, pp. 99-121, 127.

⁷⁰³ IOR/E/3/80, *Original Correspondence (Duplicates)*, 10 March 1701 – 7 February 1709, No. 7487; cited from Ma, *English Trade*, p. 266.

⁷⁰⁴ IOR/E/3/64, *East India Company Original Correspondence*, 24 March 1702 – 27 October 1702, No. 7999, pp. 5, 11; IOR/E/94, *Letter book XI (New Company)*, 1699-1709, pp. 332-333; Ma, *English trade in the South China Sea*, p. 269. There were 16 men: Thomas Rashell– commander, Thomas Fuller (ensign – received £30/ year), Daniel Doughty (steward £24), Joshua Helder (£20), Richard Williams (clerk, £20), John Newbold (gunner, £30), Francis Bolton (gunner, £30), John Linch (armourer, £20), Richard Hooper (carpenter, £20), Mark Pick (carpenter, £20), James Ray (bricklayer, £20), Richard Griffin (£20), John Holding (carpenter, £20), Samuel Heath (£20), Nathaniel Highfield (surgeon, £40) and Richard Haune

Doughty, Joshua Helder, John Newbold and Nathaniel Heyfield. The Chusan factory closed and all the Company's factors there move to Cochin-China on 25 July 1703. Besides those men, Catchpoole hired sixteen Macassar to work as soldiers and builders on the island, since he believed that at least one hundred soldiers were compulsory to secure the safety of the factory there. Commander Thomas Rashell was also advised to invite all natives and merchants to live in the English garrison and protect them.⁷⁰⁵ The Old Company supported this fortification by calling ships at Pulo-Condore on the way from India to China in 1703.⁷⁰⁶

As such, the English used workers and soldiers to build a factory and a fortification in Pulo-Condore without the allowance of local government. However, to create an alliance with foreigners during the progress of conflicts with Cambodia and Champa, and to find military and financial supplies, Nguyen Lords tried to make a peaceful relationship with the English. Knowing about the appearance of English people in Pulo-Condore, the Lord Nguyen Phuc Chu sent a letter to show his desire for cooperation and friendship.⁷⁰⁷ He also sent the English some gifts and asked the English for a delegation in the Cochin-Chinese Court and for help with defending against pirates and in return for the allowing the English to trade, and have a regular relationship with

(surgeon's mate) All soldiers were Thomas Rashell, Richard Dorwell, Thomas Cordwell, William Owens, Peter Hill, Thomas Herring, Thomas Amesnam, John Walton, Robert Emmett, John Goodman, Richard Prat, Joheph Bouchone, Thomas Powell, John Ector, Arthur Aust, John Sherer, Gyles Batterby, Charles Thompson and John Child with salary of 13 guineas/ year. In which three men travelled together with their wives.

⁷⁰⁵ IOR/E/3/94, *Letter Book XI*, p. 334.

⁷⁰⁶ Morse, *Trading to China*, vol. 1, p. 127, 135-137.

⁷⁰⁷ IOR/H/628, *Miscellaneous Collection Firmans & Treaties 1602-1753, King of Cochin-China to the Great General in Pulo-Condore, 2 August 1703*, pp. 469-479.

local government.⁷⁰⁸ The English, however, underestimated the power of Cochin-China; and they were too confident in their army and weapons. They ignored Nguyen Lord's requirements about the peaceful diplomacy and the respect towards the Cochin-Chinese national security. No member of the English Council in Pulo-Condore appeared to meet the Cochin-Chinese requirement. This response showed the difference in behaviour towards local government between the previous English in Vietnam in the seventeenth century and the New Company. While all English merchants had recognised that it was compulsory to present and send Royal Letters and gifts to Trinh Lords in Tonkin and Nguyen Lords in Cochin-China, the New Company did not follow this system. They were confident in their military power and ignored the desire of Cochin-China for free trade and diplomacy. It meant that the English ignored their previous experience with diplomacy and understanding of the power in Vietnam. Consequently, as the Nguyen Lord considered the connection between the English and Cambodians in 1705, he decided to attack the English and massacred English men ostensibly to protect the national security of Southern Vietnam.⁷⁰⁹

The Pulo-Condore fortification ended all the English attempts to contact Vietnam by free trade and diplomacy and pointed to a new period of the EIC's strategy towards this country and East Asia in general. The Company only re-considered the role of Vietnam in the late eighteenth century, when the French fiercely intervened into Southeast Asia and threatened the English position there. Pulo-Condore thus was a turning point in the history of the relationship between the EIC and Vietnam, from early

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid, pp. 469, 474.

⁷⁰⁹ All information about the two massacres on Pulo Condore was described on Tze-Ken, *The EIC on Condore Island*, pp. 1111-1114; William Foster (ed), *Alexander Hamilton, A new Account of the East Indies* (London, 1930), p. 110.

peaceful trade to political consideration. The failure of military action also directly affected the EIC's decision to only send embassies to Vietnam in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Broadly, what the EIC performed in Vietnam was representative of the EIC's strategy in the South China Sea area during its expanding progress.

Conclusion

The English mission to Cochin-China in the 1690s was a remarkable example of the English attempts to find a new means to expand the trade and position in East Asia from the perspective of overseas factors and factories. While the previous English activities in East Asia focused on trading experimentation, Madras started to look to Cochin-China and East Asian countries more broadly, recognising the importance of establishing a formal relationship. Instead of creating a factory immediately, the English considered Cochin-China among other options and operated an official mission to have detailed information about this kingdom before making a final decision to trade or settle a relationship. During this process, overseas factors such as Higginson and Bowyear still played the critical role as they recognised what needed to be discovered in Cochin-China, how to treat with the native government. Beyond the role of factors in the trading company, their job illustrated the way the EIC changed from a trading factory to a semi-government in the eighteenth century with both tradings, political and diplomatic missions.

Through the mission, the EIC gained more knowledge about the potential of Cochin-China indicating that this kingdom was important in the South China Sea, but its trading potential could not meet the EIC's need as they had little strategic products.

Bowyear's reports showed that this kingdom was rich in both natural and manufactured commodities, but they were not ones that drew the EIC's attention. From the late 1680s, the EIC mostly focused on the direct trade with China and the product in which it was most interested was silk. This policy was encouraged after China opened the country to foreign trade in late 1684. Therefore, the role of intermediary sites such as Siam, Taiwan, Tonkin was less important as English ships began to call directly at Canton, Amoy and other Chinese ports. Although Madras kept the 'country trade' system for private trade and considered Cochin-China as a part of this network, it still paid more attention to mainland China as the most significant market. Madras' decision to stop considering to settle a factory in Cochin-China, therefore, showed the strong change of the EIC's policy towards East Asia. Instead of establishing factories in intermediary sites in the South China Sea, the EIC built a factory in Chusan (China) in 1700 to direct dealing with the Chinese government. The presence of English people in Pulo-Condore island (Southern Vietnam) in the next century of the New Company, thus, was not the EIC's trading attempt, but the English extremely new idea to declaim and confirm their power in East Asia, which started a new period of the EIC's history, the time of colony. However, the failure of the New EIC in Pulo-Condore demonstrated how the EIC faced problems in East Asia as it ignored the previous lessons about peaceful diplomacy and believed too much on their military power. This failure thus caused the entire change of the EIC's relationship with Vietnam in the late eighteenth century, sending diplomatic missions to Vietnam rather than running forced actions.

CONCLUSION

Through the case of Vietnam, the thesis examines the roles of small factories and the seventeenth century in the EIC history and its learning process to improve and become the most powerful organisation in the eighteenth century. In terms of the learning process, the connections between English servants and Vietnamese people examines two main arguments about the roles of individuals (English servants and Vietnamese informants) and of Vietnam in the EIC expansion and influence in East Asia. In detail, the thesis shows that individuals provided the EIC with lessons about diplomacy, trade and the place of Vietnam in the regional trading network.

How to treat the native King and Mandarins was one of the first lessons learned by the EIC in dealing with both Tonkin and Cochin-China in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Importantly, the EIC also achieved broader lessons about engaging with existing power structures in the countries they wanted to gain access to. Generally, establishing a relationship with the local government was the primary job of the EIC in all overseas countries. The difference was that Vietnam, particularly Tonkin followed a defensive policy towards foreigners, and it required a patient approach to gain access. The English learned throughout the century with both successful and failed experimentations, and with different subjects in Tonkin and Cochin-China. If English factors were important to learn and understand the nature of diplomacy in Vietnam, local officials were key suppliers through their connecting with the English. During that process, the English learned more about a type and quantity of gifts and the value of diplomacy. However, they also learned a vital lesson with the failure of the military strategy towards Cochin-China in the early eighteenth century. As a result of their

relatively successful results from diplomacy with both Tonkin and Cochin-China and the failure of their military action in 1702-1705 the EIC came to prefer the 'embassy' to trading voyages in connecting with Vietnam and broadly East Asia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The EIC learnt to recognise the role of diplomacy and gifts towards the Confucian countries through the case of Vietnam.

Vietnamese officials not only supplied diplomatic lessons, they and local merchants provided the EIC with knowledge about trading in both Tonkin and Cochin-China in the seventeenth century with issues of commodities, trading chain, competitions, and customers. From the early days of the relationship with Vietnam, the English held the necessary basic information about this market and its availability in the East Asian trade, and about the intense competition from local and regional merchants to develop a trading relationship in the region. However, for much of the seventeenth century, that knowledge was insufficient for the EIC seriously to consider settling a factory or creating a formal relationship with Vietnam, as the Company wanted to focus on India and the Spice Islands. The EIC's experience of trade in Vietnam is only remarkable in the late seventeenth century as they began to pay more attention to East Asia and the need for intermediaries for gaining access to the key markets of Japan and China. Daily trading lessons were about how to deal with local merchants, how to improve native products to satisfy the demand of Europe and how to compete with the Dutch and Chinese to gather more goods.

On the macro level, the experience the EIC gained was about commodities (what to buy, customers' demands, and issues of quantity, quality and type of goods) in which the EIC identified silks (including native and Chinese products) as the main subject of the English trade with Tonkin, for catering to both the Japanese and European markets

In trying to develop this trade of collecting silk from Tonkin, the EIC also learnt a series of lessons about investment, shipping and exchanged goods. More importantly, throughout the seventeenth century, the EIC gradually increased its understanding about the regional trade network and the role Vietnam or other factories played in that system in the EIC's commercial strategy in East Asia.

In the 1610s, the English overseas factors' attempts to expand the EIC's trade highlighted the importance of the existing trade system for the EIC's position and future in the area and as a link between peripheral and key markets. Through experimentation of both the Court of Directors and the Tonkin factory in the 1670s, the EIC recognised more about the interrelationship between a small market of Tonkin and key markets of China and Japan in particular periods, and how the system provided capital for the EIC's trade in East Asia with the flow of goods and silver. English overseas individuals recognised the value of both Tonkin and Cochin-China in the connections with Japan, China, and other countries in the South China Sea in which their role as intermediaries and partly markets to collect Asian commodities. Although the EIC had no direct connection with mainland China, its trade in East Asia still survived and developed due to the role of supplementary markets or broadly the existing regional trade network. However, the role of this trading network was only valuable in the seventeenth century as the EIC had limited connection with mainland China and insufficient knowledge about trade in East Asia. The English acknowledged the limitation of this system in creating global trade, and they gradually removed their dependence on small factories to focus much more on large markets in the massive trading system, or the transoceanic trade in the late seventeenth century. Meanwhile, those small markets had limited potential commodities, and their role was important only in periods of the political

crisis. These factors caused the EIC's changes in policy towards those countries from the last decade of the seventeenth century. When China, the main target of the EIC in Asia outside India, opened the country for foreigners in 1684, supplementary countries in the China Sea came to be considered important only as military and political stations, and the EIC therefore only saw a need for a few of them with strategic locations as a part of the EIC's system in East Asia. Interestingly, the EIC's presence in Vietnam demonstrates exactly this change in EIC strategy. Initially, the EIC viewed it as a small region with a significant role as an intermediary in the seventeenth century and came to consider its purpose in its political strategy in East Asia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It meant that Vietnam and other small markets in the South China Sea contributed economic value in the seventeenth century and held military and political function in the next centuries, in the EIC's view.

Alongside giving contribution about the role of individuals and Vietnam in the EIC position in Asia, the thesis also illustrates the importance of the seventeenth century in the EIC history. That was a background period with experimentations which helped the Company to improve in management and structure. In personnel management, the thesis demonstrates that the EIC's policy of using skilled men in transoceanic areas afforded both positive and negative results for the company. English factors worked day-by-day in distant regions collecting and transferring knowledge, and directly driving the EIC's trade. Throughout the seventeenth century, their contribution to the EIC-Vietnamese connection gradually improved and the EIC became increasingly dependent on far-flung servants to expand and secure their position in Asia. If in the early seventeenth century, with the limitations of capital and military, the EIC's use of experienced staff was unavoidable; it became a strategic aspect of the Company's

policy in the later period since those factors showed their ingenuity and satisfied the EIC's requirements of gathering information of overseas trade, creating relationships, and running the trade. English overseas individuals became pioneers, finding new chances for the EIC to improve its trade in East Asia. The story of Richard Cock, William Adams and John Saris in Japan and Vietnam in the 1610s; Quarles Browne, Samuel Baron, William Gyfford, William Keeling in the 1660s and 1670s in Tonkin; and Thomas Bowyear in 1690s in Cochin-China provides strong evidence of the critical roles played by distant English staff. Through connecting to and consulting with Vietnamese individuals, such staff were increasingly able to provide more detailed information on trading choices, drove the trade directly, and then actively considered those areas from different perspectives. Such individuals offered crucial contributions, ensuring the success or failure of the English trading in the long-distant regions. Tonkin and Cochin-China, therefore, provide an essential example of the EIC's policy of using experienced staff and their position in the Company's enlargement in East Asia in the seventeenth century.

However, the thesis also mentions that the EIC management in the seventeenth century was imperfect as the Company was still unstable with involvement of different groups of merchants in London. The EIC's policy of using and depending on individuals was not perfect, and the problems brought about by failure to control overseas individuals was among one of the important lessons the EIC obtained via the case of Vietnam. Although distant factors informed London of useful information, not all of the knowledge was valuable due to the varying levels of ability of the factors to evaluate, or personal investment in failing to reveal the full situation. In the 1610s, because London had limited information about distant areas and it greatly depended on

overseas staff and preferred the Company's staff to decide all issues related to trade in Japan and East Asia which indirectly affected the results of the EIC's trade with Vietnam. This lesson changed in the 1660s as London required various suggestions from different sources and finally decided to settle a factory in Tonkin with the advice of a free trader, S. Baron. Nevertheless, the problem of self-factor in overseas areas was still serious during the progress to drive distant branches as 'select individuals' tried to exploit their power for illegal cooperation. If W. Gyfford presented the shape of a Company's man (but with unlucky plans), W. Keeling showed the problems of overseas factors who created their own power and might put their own vested interests beyond those of the Company thereby taking risks for the Company. London's dependence on overseas factors and their illegal trade or cooperation with local people in the long-distance areas meant that the EIC faced significant problems in managing both personnel and factories in overseas areas. This study about the English presence in Vietnam in the seventeenth century, therefore, provides supportive research about the EIC's administration or principal managerial issues. The study argues that it was hard and even impossible for London to control both transoceanic servants and branches, directly and satisfactorily, due to the characters of timing, transportation, and distance of overseas trade and the behind-the-scenes relations of their servants. The EIC failed in Japan and Tonkin for many reasons, but one of them was from the negative effect of the actions of overseas factors who misunderstood the nature of trade, manipulated their power for illegal cooperation and private trade, and damaged the Company's profits.

Based on the connections between the EIC and Vietnam in the environment of the East Asian trading system, the thesis challenges the model centre-periphery and provides a view from a perspective of 'periphery' or supportive element to reveal the

role of Vietnam or small factories in the EIC history in the seventeenth century. Within the EIC structure, the Tonkin factory was only ever on the periphery while London and Bantam and later Madras formed at times conflicting cores. In term of the EIC's trading strategy, Vietnam was a peripheral market and trading point in a region where Japan and China were the cores.

In the first group, London was central, in theory, in the network of all the EIC's overseas factories; and its decision was primary in determining the actions of all Company's branches. However, through the case of Tonkin, the research discloses that there were always at least two centres in the Company's structure, London and distant agencies such as in Bantam and Madras and even Bantam was often beyond the control of London. It has shown that the core London greatly depended on outlying factors and the EIC's agencies were beyond the control of London, and they had own power to decide issues of employees and trade which from then affected smaller branches. London in fact, had little control over small branches like Tonkin as it was under the power of regional headquarters, Bantam, especially before 1682. The struggle between London and the Bantam Council thus not only illustrated the EIC's attempts to control oceanic factories in Tonkin, East Asia or Asia broadly, but also demonstrated the inside infighting of the EIC's stockholders in London, and between London and distant areas. Moreover, the role of English staff in Bantam or even the Tonkin factory was crucial towards the EIC during its expansion in the seventeenth century, and the EIC depended on overseas factors due to its policy of using experienced men, as they provided useful information and knowledge about distant areas, helped the EIC to make a trading decision, and drove the trade directly. The complexity in the relationship between London, Bantam and Tonkin and the dependence of London on its overseas staff

challenges the role of centre and argues the importance of supplemental factories in the EIC overseas network.

This view is also considered in the second connection between Tonkin/Cochin-China and Japan/China, as surrounding and middle points in the EIC's commercial strategy in East Asia, or about the role of Vietnam and other small factories in the Company's factory system in East Asia broadly. There is no doubt that besides the Spice Islands, China and Japan were the main EIC markets in East Asia in the seventeenth century, and the English target was to discover an effective route to mainland China and Japan. From the perspective of the core factor, the appearance of Tonkin and Cochin-China together with other small branches in Siam, Cambodia and Taiwan was to serve the key objective. Accordingly, this conception ignored the role of small factories. By contrast, the thesis challenges accepted ideas about the role of intermediaries in both regional and transoceanic trade. It is interesting that, in the EIC's commercial strategy, those factories were always mentioned together with leading markets. Remarkably, the EIC sought to maintain the Tonkin factory a few times, although its trade was bad, and it had little potential. The main reason which is discussed is Vietnam's strategic geography, its possibility of connecting with mainland China and Japan and generally, its role in the regional trade and broadly, and its function as an intermediary to connect with a leading market. The Company never succeeded in trading directly with Japan and China in the seventeenth century, except for the short-lived Hirado factory in the 1610s. They were denied residence and trading rights in Japan in the late century, while their direct trade with China only started from around 1685 with difficulty and dynamically changed and developed in the mid-eighteenth century. For that reason, the role of intermediaries was essential for the EIC

in the regional trading network to help English merchants to connect to the key markets indirectly. The case of Vietnam thus indicates that in the seventeenth century, the English needed small factories to connect indirectly with potential markets and those supportive places created the EIC trading system in East Asia and provided the EIC with lessons of using small factors to develop in the particular situation.

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1.1. Letter of the EIC to the Great and Mighty King of Tonqueen with wishes of a long life upon this earth and victory over his enemies

IOR/E/3/33, East India Company Original Correspondence 1672-73, No. 3643

Ye: yo Ma^{ho} shouath to y^e Dutch Portuguese things & all other stranger dealing with Ma^{ter} Dommions is att all the world and the Kingdom of Tonqueen is also therefore happy y^t y^e Heaven have given them such as our Great King of England hath given order to y^e Hon^{ble} Comp^{as}: to request y^e the English nation may be accepted us and confident as people of ye Ma^{ter} Honor and that they may thou live and freely trade & therefore our dealing in the Ally of the King of Bantam with this letter in the name of the English Comp^{as}: to Cap W^mr Gifford wee comended him to y^e Ma^{ter} favour and good with and that your Ma^{ter} may be phased wee have charged our Cap^t to acquainted ye Ma^{ter} with our request our intention is good and upright, secure ye Ma^{ter} w^t we may and wee take Heaven to willness that wee speak the truth

Appendix 1.2. Letter of the EIC to the Great & Mighty Prince of Toncquin wth wishes of a long life upon earth & victories over his enemies

IOR/E/3/33, East India Company Original Correspondence 1672-73, No. 3644

The whole world esteems y^e Kingdom of Toncquin happy because y^e King of Heaven hath given yo Highness y^t Comand & Government wth now enjoy. We know y^t strangers trading wthin y^t territories of yo Highness freely trade & safely rest under y^e shadon of your Highness at Toncquin, ye freedom subject who have their happy being under y^e safe protection of yo Highness favor as they were never but faithful & obedient, soe y^e

enemies of yo Highness though never soe stubborn were never soe potent as to resist ye Power. The greatness of yo Highness actings are fully known to y^e Great King of England, & therefore have o^d Hon^{or} Comp^{as} given order to y^e English governor willing in y^e cities of y^e King of Bantam for to send their Cap W^m Gyfford wth this letter, & wth their presents to attend yo Highness. What we request & desire of yo Highness is y^e o^d people may have y^e freedom to trade wthin y^e bound of yo Highness dominions wthout disturbance or molestation y^e soe there may be y^e truth of friendship between y^e King of Toncquin & o^d English nation, our Cap will mae yo Highness acquaints wth o^d true intentions, but seeing he is a stranger to yo Highness, we beg yo Highness favour both for him & for all o^d other people. We pray Heaven for yo Highness long life y^e yo Highness may judge wth a true & sincere people we are.

Appendix 1.3. Letter from Nathaniel Higginson to the King of Cochin-China, dated Fort St. George, 2nd May 1695

IOR/G/40/18, Factory records: Miscellaneous 1695- 1697, pp. 1-2.

To y^e most illustrious & Mighty Prince, the King of Cochin-China, Nat. Higginson, Esq, y^e President for y^e English nation on y^e coast of Cormandell, Bay of Bengall, Summatra & South Seas, wishesh health & happiness, & a long & prosperous reign.

May it please your Majesty.

Whilst your ancestor frbid other nations to visit their Kingdoms, their lustre was confined with their own bounds but since your Majesty has permitted & invited them to trade in your ports y^e fame of your Majesty greatness, power of justice shines like the sun throughout y^e world. God made y^e Heaven for y^e throne of his glory, and y^e earth for y^e habitation & use of mankind & hath divided it among a few whose greater wisdom & valour renders them fit to govern men your Majesty is one of those to whom domination is given over numerous & valiant people a large & rich country bless by

fruitful nature with variety of good things convenient for y^e little of man in grater store than is necessary for y^e maintenance of your own people soe hath God given other good things to other countries & hath not given all to any part of y^e earth but hath by his Providence ordered y^e one Country shall communicate to another & that by a friendly exchange each part of y^e world enjoys y^e benefit & choice of all.

In confidence of your Royall goodness & justice I have sent my merch^t mr Thomas Bowyear to wait on your Majesty whom I pray your Majesty to receive courteously who if please to permitt him will make a small present to your Majesty's acceptance & proposals in behalf of y^e Noble English Company for a future commerce at present not understanding y^e trade of y^e country have sent but a small ship & a small stocke for a tryall & I pray your Majesty permitt him to sell his goods & buy such commodities as y^e place affords & give him leave to return in due time the next year I shall send more as your Majesty shall give encouragement.

I have heard a report that Mr Lemuell Blackmore belonging y^e English factory at Tonqueen was cast away on y^e coast of Cochin-China & that your Majesty used him civilly & gave him free passage to Tonqueen for which favour I return your Majesty my humble thanks & beg this further favour that your Majesty will assist Mr Bowyear in sending my letters to my factories at Tonqueen whom I sent two years ago wish a ship & heard nothing them since but there is a report that y^e King of Tonqueen detain my ship.

It is well known to all parts of India where y^e English have traded what they deal justly Y live peaceably with all men not seeking to conquer Kingdoms but carry on his trade only to y^e great benefit of y^e country where they trade.

Your Majesty's most humble serv^t, Nat. Higginson.

**Appendix 2.1. Translate of y^e King of Cochinchina letter sent to English govern
of y^e city of Madras in India ended into Latin from y^e Chinese character**

IOR/G/40/18, Factory records: Miscellaneous 1695- 1697, pp. 21-22

The King of y^e Kingdom of Aynam returned this answer to y^e English govern in India
with of y^e present of y^e King

Our holy Book tays y^e tear of Heaven presents Kingdom & y^e heart of awiseman
carry in itself y^e right ...of gaining y^e friendship & procuring league with ye heigh
turning to we now there any business so difficult for a man of a tough judgment and
who earnestly endeavour at piety will attractive y^e goodness & y^e lightness of its & a
may be said to y^e King.

Supreme Government & Princely Councillor who represent ye Chief Person of y^e
which receive its name from ye northern having over it. The English who preferring
understand whatsoever is contained in ye book of ye Heart of ye three nation to called
among us & containing whole on countries who have ye strength & courage of ye Bear
& ye Pigre & ye Panther who the military art and the mathematics & perfectly
understand not only ye Heaven but also land ye winds ye clouds & any region whose
understanding hatches ye Sun & whose hand are able to sustain ye firmament who are
to very careful in choosing government & ruling their subject in ye ...of their people in
juring amour to great & worthy wee in kindness to Homeness who manage themselves
regularly in those after nine rules of Government and although ye distance from a kinds
our ye our mind are never separated from you in attention & ..not many month are
came whom.

The supreme government & Councillor sent on monose out & who was Cap^t of a ship &
called Bowyear who brought into this our kingdom a Pacquett of letter with gifts &
presents which was appear favour the behaviour ye fidelity & truly solid justice of ye
Deputy not mark of fan interiors lesson.

Now wee returne you an answer to those letter with them and some present to The
supreme government & Mightly Councilour as big as mall memorial of out attention as
to what reply to ye merchandised brought in ye ship rereferred them ministers to be
veined & eseamined in order to ye tale of according you currant nice of this year for it is

not true to drany thing clandestinely as to ye try all rely ye ship & hat we were to receive other things of ye ...ye seaport & opportunity if this now path lutif ye ship return this next year wee will grant them all thing & introduce an method of the making use of ye riches ye are under heaven we may give of all nation both of ye northern & southern Chine this we send some offering: Clamback: one Europe pound, Gold: 10 of ye ame pound, Silk: 30 pound, Wood of a fine quantity 200 peiculs
Dated ye 12th day of ye 12th month of ye 16 year Chinese W^{ch} happens only 16 day of January 16 new style.

Appendix 2.2. The King of Cochinchina gives this answer to the Great General in Pulo Condore his letter, and to those of his Council

IOR/H/628: Miscellaneous collection of firmans and treaties 1602-1753, pp. 469-479.

It is written in one of the classic books - whereas the Heaven has created all people, without doubt it is careful and concerned about them – Upon which account, it is agreeable to reason, that King who in this respect act the part of Heaven, in the first place worship Heaven itself, and next love and embrace the people committed to their charge as their children. They ought also to measure other peoples' bowels by their own heart within rule and establish their Kingdom without and embrace and cherish strangers – They are obliged likewise to look on the Kingdoms, Ho & Viet – altho' at a great distance from one another as one House and Family. Moreover serve – themselves of people and things as of their Brothers and – companions. As for our part truly we are obedient on the one hand to the Commands of Heaven, and on the other we perpetuate the Government of Our ancestors. We largely make use of Royal rules to govern out subject; we penetrate into the methods of governing practised by former Kings, and we shew lenity and meekness towards strangers. When statutes are decreed with mature deliberation, the execution there of takes places and the government is easily continued.

When Piety is not destitute and solitary, it has a great many neighbours. When Royal Bounties are not bestowed partially, the meaner sort daily increase and grow rich.

Some time ago we heard you gentlemen did sail to arrive at and settle upon the island Condore, which land indeed belongs to our Kingdom and jurisdiction; for thither – prows go and return, and there our affairs increase with our people that dwell these. You came all of sudden truly beyond our expectation; you have allotted large stations coming from your native Country without bringing any evidence of your honesty; you have entered another' territories and shewed no civility by making of Presents. But we out of regard to piety and love, embracing the whole world countries so soon as he heard of your arrival was confirmed in the truth thereof; wherefore in obedience to his commands you sent Ambassadors hither to testify your fidelity.

Our complaint is against your uncivil and illegal behaviour, but don't complain because you hant made presents, it Presents are not attended with civility why do we receive them? But seeing you have now settled yourselves there it only remain that the end answer the beginning, and that you don't betray your honesty and fidelity; for although the customs in the southern and northern countries are different, yet there is one reason common to all the world. Consider ye and examine seriously and fear Heaven with all your heart and all your strength, and you will presently become as if we were surrounded by one wall.

Your letter also make mention, that there are a great many Pirates in these places, it is convenient therefore ye guard that country, by which means it will come to pass, that merchants may be without fear and both strangers and our people may get gains together and rejoice together.

Now if you have a desire to trade with us, to be outwardly furnished with arms to appose Robbers and inwardly to be apparelled with your cloaths and civility, there's no reason why we should hinder you; but the examining of ships is the unalterable custom of our Kingdom; so that at this time the ships of all Kingdoms are as many in number as the stars, and all sorts of merchandise abounds as a running water. Follow therefore the old custom and conform your business thereto; for how can it be that we should permit any base thing to be done to you? Whereas if we shewed ourselves singular to you, we shall make the trust of other Kingdoms reposed in us of no effect, and without doubt suspected; for our commands are as regulated as the four seasons of the year, and our method of government is altogether convenient and universal.

You are pleased to say in your letter, that upon another occasion when a ship comes you send richer presents. How can such sorts of things be precious to us? Would you know what it is we highly esteem? Upon goodness and piety we put a great value, friendship and love we reckon of great moment what regard can we have to pearls and rich silks, if honesty and respect be wanting? But seeing you are very expert in sea and military affairs, we are confident yell exert your teeth and hoofs against our enemies; and on this account you will do a considerable piece of service and worthy of you: and so long as you stay and trade in that island we freely forgive you the customs of the goods and tribute of the land, although the old inhabitants pay both; for providing you observe our laws, we do not value the usual ways of measuring out the ground, as well that we may assist your shipping at that we may increase your merchandise and riches.

Get everything in good order that you may come to Court yearly, whereby it will come to pass that we shall mutually as in the winter season cherish one another, and also increase our fidelity and friendship, which two blessings are so great that they can never be exhausted.

Now the wind is favourable, the sea calm, and the vessel desired to leave the port, and we have written this letter. Altho' the Rivers be as a belt and altho' the Hill be as a stone to rub ink upon; altho' also the Sea be spacious and the Heaven high; nevertheless piety, concord, gratitude, and the remembrance of favors done shall never have an end. We send 5 pieces silk, 2 tans, 30 painted canes, 30 clouded ditto.

Dated the 24th of King Chinhao the 20th day of 6th Moon anno Domini 1703 the 2nd August St. Novo.

Appendix 3.1. List of Tonkin's chief factors

William Gyfford	6/1672 - 6/1676
Thomas James	7/1676 - 12/1681
William Keeling	12/1681 - 8/1682
William Hodges	8/1682 - 2/1683
William Keeling	2/1683 - 9/1693
Richard Watts	9/1693 - 11/1697

Appendix 3.2. List of English factors in Tonkin (1672-1697)

IOR/G/12/17/1-10, Tonkin factory (1672-1697); IOR/E/3/33, EIC Original Correspondence 1672-1673; IOR/L/AG/1/1/8, India Office records and Private papers (1678-1682), Personal account of William Keeling, f. 141; IOR/L/AG/1/1/9, (1682-1694), Personal account of William Hodges, Lemuel Blackmore, ff. 140 (1), 520 (2).

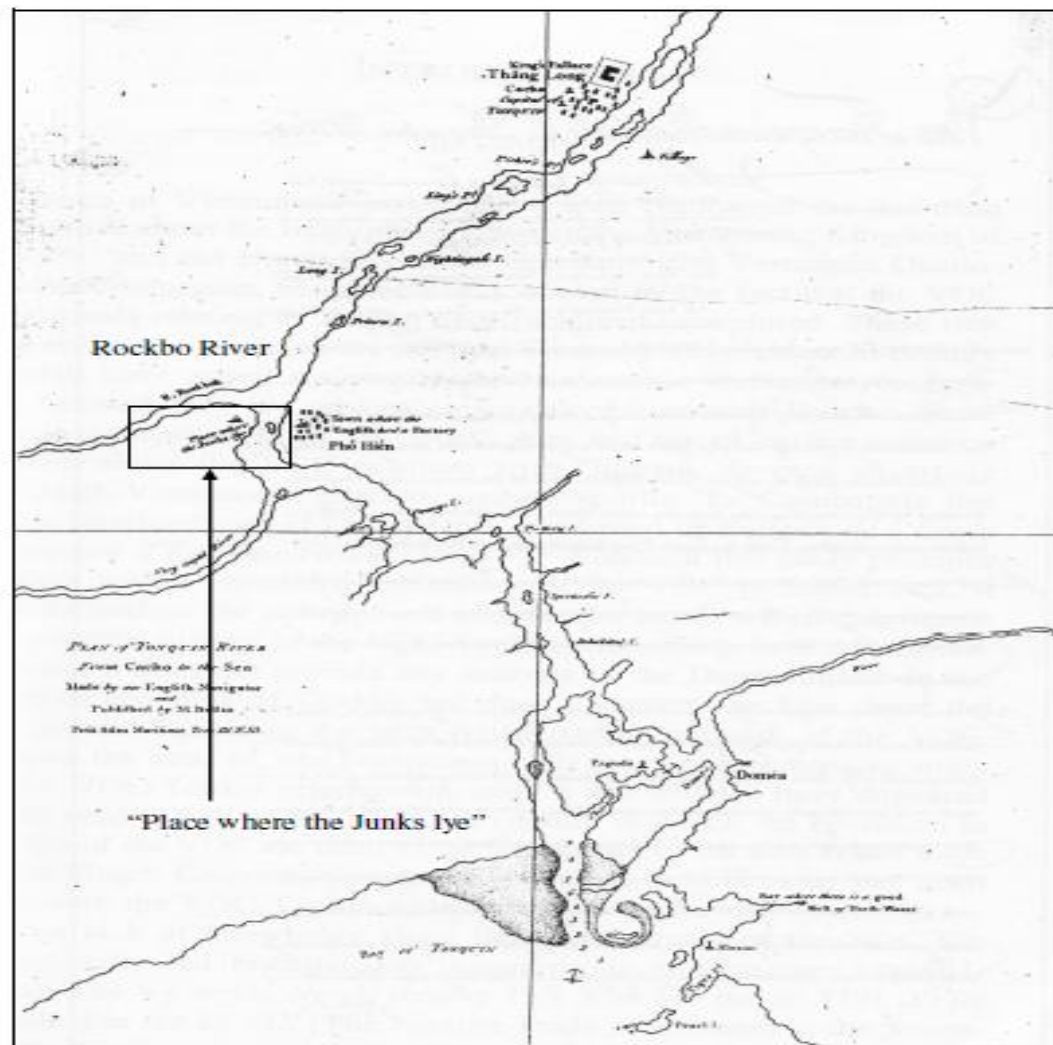
Period	Name	Job	Time
1672-1676	William Gyfford	Chief	6/1672-6/1676
	Thomas James	Second factor, accounting presents, servants wages, household stuff,	
	Nicholas Waite	Writer, charging merchandise,	

		reportation, and general stuff	
	William Keeling	Writer, assistance of Mr Waite of the warehouse, and writing affairs	
	Walter Tapping	Writer, keeping account of diet	
	John Elliott	Steward	Died in 1672
1676-1681	Thomas James	Chief	7/1676-12/1681
	William Keeling	2 nd (temporary): Writing a diary 2 nd factor: Keeping storehouse	7/1676-12/1678 7/1679-12/1681
	Henry Ireton	Writer, Keeping account Keeping charge of disbursement	7/1676-7/1679 7/1679-1682
	Robert Smith	Assitant of writing	7/1676-?
	John Blunden	2 nd factor	12/1678-7/1679
	George Tash John Styleman	Keeping books, journal and disbursement of servant wages and household stuff	7/1679-1681
	Thomas Sheppard	Writer Steward	10/1677-7/1679 7/1679-?
	Lemuel Blackmore	Writer Writing and keeping warehouse	10/1677-7/1679 7/1679-1681
1681-82	William Keeling	Temporary chief	12/1681-8/1682
	Henry Ireton	2 nd factor	
	George Tash	Keeling's assistant: keep books and journal registers	
	Lemuel Blackmore	4 th factor: help Tash and keep warehouse and business	

1682-1683	William Hodges	Chief	8/1682 - 2/1683
	William Keeling	2 nd factor: keep charge, disbursement	8/1682 - 2/1683
	George Tash	Keeping books	1682 - 1683
	Henry Ireton	Keeping storehouse	1682- 10/1683
	Lemuel Blackmore	Keeping account	1682 - 1685
1683-93	William Keeling	Chief	2/1683-9/1693
	Lemuel Blackmore	Keeping account Second factor	1683-1685 1686 – 1693
	George Tash	Keeping books	1683-1684
	William Hodges	Second factor	1683-1686
1693-97	Richard Watts	Chief	9/1693-11/1697
	Richard Farmer	2 nd factor: accounting and writing	
	William Keeling	?	9/1693- 1/1695
	William Warren	Kept account and expense	
	Lemuel Blackmore	?	
	Richard Hunt	?	
	Thomas Lowell	Assistant to chief	7-11/1697

Appendix 4. The 'River of Tonkin' as depicted by the English

British Library, London. This map is adapted from Hoang, *Silk for silver*, p. xxxiii and N. Iioka, *Tonkin-Nagasaki trade*, p. 35.



Appendix 5. The English ships to Tonkin (1672-1697)

IOR/G/12/17/1-10, Tonkin factory records (1672-1697); IOR/G/21/7, Java factory (1677-1707); IOR/E/3/87-92, Letter Book IV-IX (1666-1697), IOR/L/MAR/A: Ships' Journals 1605-1705; Farrington, A., *Catalogue of East India Company ships' journals and logs, 1600-1834* (London, 1999), pp. 169-70, 549, 611, 655, 724; Hoang, A.T., *Silk for Silver: Dutch-Vietnamese relations, 1637-1700* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 228-229.

Year	Number	Name	From	Description	Duration
1672	1	Zante Frigate	London-Bantam	180 tons	27/5 – 27/6/1672
1676	1	Flying Eagle	London-Bantam	120 tons	26/6/1676-25/1/1677
1677	1	Flying Eagle	Bantam	120 tons	7-12/1677
1678	1	Formosa	Bantam	200 tons, 20 crew, 8 guns	12/7-24/12/1678
1679	1	Formosa	London-Surat-Bantam	200 tons, 20 crew, 8 guns	? – 15/12/1679
1680	1	Advice	Bantam	100/150 tons ?	26/7-10/12/1680 ?
1681	1	Taiwan Frigate	Bantam	140 tons 24 crew, 8 guns	5/7 – 20/12/1681
1682	1	Tonqueen Merchant	London-Bantam	180 tons, 36 crew, 18/24 guns	18/7 – 12/1682

1683	1	Smyrnaote	London	190 tons, 37 crew, 16 guns	26/8/1682 - lost 25/2/1683
1685	1	Dragon	London- Acheh	180 tons, 36 crew, 18 guns	10 or 12/1685 – 2/1686 ???
1686	3	Rainbow	London	250 tons, 37/50 crew, 18/24 guns	11/6/1686- 6/1/1687
		Prospect	Madras		26/8 - ???
		Tywan	Siam ??	Private	N/A
1687	2	Tywan	Siam	private ships	N/A
		Bona Vista	Porto Nova		N/A
1688	3	Rainbow	London	250 tons, 37/50 crew, 18/24 guns	7/1688- 13/1/1689
		Saphire Frigate	Madras	N/A	N/A
		Curtana	???	private ship	N/A
1692	1	???	Madras	N/A	N/A
1693	1	Pearl Frigaet	Madras	80 tons, 25 crew, 16 guns ???	6/9/1693- 19/1/1695
1697	1	Mary Bowyer Frigate	Madras	N/A	?/7 – 30/11/1697

Appendix 6. The EIC's investment in Tonkin (1672-1697) (Spanish dollars)

Source: IOR/G/12/17/1-10, Tonkin factory records (1672-1697); IOR/G/21/7, Java factory (1677-1707); IOR/E/3/87-92, Letter Book IV-IX (1666-1697), Buch, 'La Compagnie' (1937), and Ma, *English trade in the South China Sea*.

Year	Investment	Result	Year	Investment	Result
1672	4,516	0	1685	2,750	N/A
1673	0	0	1686	10,000	17,297
1674	0	0	1687	0	0
1675	0	0	1688	N/A	N/A
1676	3,955	6,791	1689	0	0
1677	8,750	9,490	1690	N/A	N/A
1678	11,209	12,194	1691	0	0
1679	13,750	15,598	1692	0	0
1680	N/A	N/A	1693	N/A	N/A
1681	N/A	11,869	1694	0	0
1682	3,000	9,449	1695	0	0
1683	2,744.6	6,957	1696	0	0
1684	0	0	1697	N/A	N/A

Appendix 7.1. The EIC's goods in the Zante Frigate to Tonkin in 1672

IOR/G/12/17/1, Tonkin general, 5 July 1672, pp. 7b-8a.

29 bales English cloth 6 pes each
8 bales of English Stuffs (22 or 23 pieces/bale, each)
8 pieces about 40 couetts
1 chest Looking glasses
1 chest Scales of weights
16 chests Brimstones
107 pigs of Lead of about 257 peculs
10 Great guns
4 Casks of Arrack
3 bales of Dungarees (100 pieces/each)
1 bale of long cloth (30 pieces)
2 bales of Cambay cloth (100 pieces)
2 bales of slaue cloth
1 bale of red salloes
2 bales of Chintz Cuddy
2 bales of Chintz dungum broads, 120 pieces/each
1 bale of salampares (80 pieces)
1 chest of Corral (about 100 cattees)
1 bale Salloes junah (400 pieces)
1 bale of fine English cloth for the King present
1 box of Knives
1 bale of Musters
618 peculs of pepper
159 peculs of sandalwood (1000 pieces)
38 bales of several sorts of Drugs

Appendix 7.2. Goods from Madras to Tonkin in the Pear Frigate in 1693

IOR/G/12/17/9, Tonkin general, 21 September 1693, p. 325b.

10 cask coppria	4,5 carge long cloth
2 half pieces fine broad cloth	4 ditto sallampores
1 piece aurora	1 flowered mulmuls
1 piece yellow broad cloth	6 peculs spapefine
3 fine perpetuation	1 carge ditto orandw
2 pieces morees	19 string amber
4 ditto sannees	1 chest rose water
1 carge jamwars	25 bales of several goods
2 chest small Persia carpets	255 baggs of saltpetre
1.5 carge Dutch long cloth	3 Private carpets rose water
113 bundles of brimstone	

Appendix 8. The EIC's gifts for the King and Crown Prince of Tonkin in the first time they arrived in this kingdom, July 1672

IOR/G/12/17/1, Tonkin factory, July 1672, pp. 6a-b.

For King	For Crown Prince
3 pieces fine cloth (scarlet, black, vermillion)	2 pieces fine cloth (scarlet, black)
10 sword blades	6 sword blades
12 agate hafted knives	6 amber hafted knives
2 half cases of amber hafted knives	6 agate hafted knives
1 silver wired tweezers	1 silver wired tweezers
1 three barrelled birding	
10 bottles of rose water	5 bottles rose water
2 taker guns	1 great taker gun
1 three barrelled pistol	1 two barreled pistol
1 Staff gun	1 two barreled gun
1 large looking glass	3 looking glass
1 budge jaw	

Appendix 9. The EIC's orders from London towards Tonkin factory in the trading season 1678/79

IOR/G/12/17/5, Tonkin factory 1678-1679, pp. 230b- 231a; IOR/E/3/88, Letter book V 1672-1678, p. 243.

Velvets: 300 pieces (100 crimson and cornation, 100 perfect grafs green, 100 sky colour);

Pelangs 16500 pieces (10,000 white, 1,000- yellow, sky colour, cornation, perfect grafs green, 500-haze colour, 2000 perfect white plaine),

Choses plain 5000 pieces (broasest sort sky colourm yellow, cornation, white, grafs green);

Hockins 2500 pieces (white, yellow, sky colour, cornation, grafs green);

Peniascoes 2000 pieces;

Loes of plain corte 1500 pieces (perfect black 1000, yellow 500);

Ditto flower 1000 pieces (white, perfect black);

Ditto yellow 1500 pieces (yellow, sky colour, cornation);

Thea Ming Whing 1000 pieces (white, perfect black, yellow, sky colour, cornation);

Damask 4000 pieces with 15 or 30 long per piece (1000 perfect white, 1500 crimson cornation, vallonves 1000, sky colour 500);

Sattins perfect white 15 yards long: 1000 pieces.

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