

THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF VIỆT-NAM

A NEW STUDY

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1976

*This humble study
is dedicated
to a Vietnam
free and happy*

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I left Vietnam last year, when it stopped to be free...

Homeless and stateless, I was literally helpless, when I was month after month confined in St. John's Island, Singapore.

All my work, all my career, seemed condemned to be ended for ever...

Fortunately, I was accepted into the United States, where Ford Foundation gave me a fellowship to study history. Of course, I was deeply grateful for this grant.

But how much I was more so, when the subject agreed upon was the ancient history of Vietnam, because while studying it, I felt that I still have a country that had successfully managed to be free.

So, thanks to Ford Foundation, I know more about the basic part of Vietnam history.

Now, I am happy to present it to the benevolent Foundation and to the public.

Nguyen Phuong
November, 1976

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction : A New Look At The Ancient History Of Vietnam	1
Chapter I. Historical Methodology Of The Old Chi- nese School	16
Chapter II. The Dynasty Of HÔNG-BĂNG: A Series Of Tales Poorly Connected	41
Chapter III. The Southward Expansion Of China	62
Chapter IV. The Sisters Trưng: The Uprising Of The Autochthons	75
Chapter V. Chinese Administration Of The Far-South Colonies	92
Chapter VI. Lý Bí : The Uprising Of The Calons	112
Chapter VII. The Duong : The Acceptance Of A Poli- tical Change In The Far-South	129
Chapter VIII. The Nam-chiều Domination: A Power- ful Push Towards Independence	146
Chapter IX. The Positive Step Towards Independence	163
Epilogue : Viet-nam Was Born	179
Appendix I : Important Dates	189
Appendix II. Chronological Correspondence	191
Bibliography.	201
Maps: 1.Vietnam Today	15
2.China Under The Tần	31
3.The Legendary Kindom Of Văn-lang	46
4.China Before The Unification Of Tần Thủy Hoàng	61
5.Gao-chi Area After The Fall Of Nam-việt	74
6.Map Of Giao-châu	106
7.Map Of The Protectorate Of An-nam	131
8.The Nam-chiều Domination	145
9.Localities Of The Sứ-Quân	162

INTRODUCTION

A NEW LOOK AT THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF VIETNAM

Historians who write about the ancient history of Vietnam¹ pertain to two categories: those belonging to the old Chinese school and those belonging to the socialist school.² The aims of these two schools can be diametrically divergent, their historiographical method is similar. Their researches are only a subjective selection, and their criticism is based entirely on their own point of view.

For Vietnam's official chronologists using Chinese characters to record events, from the 13th century up to the end of the 19th century, history was a glorification of their nation.³ And for the writers of the socialist school, history is conceived as a justification of socialism.⁴ Glorification and justification are different not in nature, but only in degree of subjectivity. The two schools differ only in their

1. Vietnam is the name given by Gia-long (1802-1820) in 1803 to the territory composed of both North and South of Vietnam today. In its ancient history, Vietnam covers only the northern part and wears a series of different names: Giao-chi (111 B.C. - 264 A.D), Giao-châu (264-680), An-nam (680-866), Tĩnh-hai (866-968), Đại-Cổ-Việt (968-1054), Đại-việt (1054-1802).

2. Few foreign historians make a serious study on the ancient history of Vietnam. We will mention their works when necessary.

3. By official chronologists we mean all the mandarins appointed by Vietnamese emperors in the History Writing Department (Quốc-Su-Quán).

relative intensity of blindness in regard to their goals. In other words, the history of Vietnam has been traditionally written with partisanship the product of which is a praise of a party: the party of the 'old school' historians was the dynasty they served; that of the new school is communism.

According to both schools, Vietnam has more than 4,000 years of history. Both schools want to induce the Vietnamese to pride themselves in this long national existence. And this pretension has its motives. At the side of its gigantic neighbor, China, Vietnam feels the need to assert itself as an independent country and encourage its people to endeavor to remain independent. The leadership in Vietnam is trying to erase in the mind of its people that stigma of having been, in the past, a part of China, evidence of which can be found in many respects. It insists, among other things, that the first dynasty to appear in Vietnam, was the dynasty of H⁵ng-b⁵ng, that this dynasty was as old as the first dynasty of China itself, and that China had established a domination on Vietnam over a period of a thousand years, from 111 B.C. to 968 A.D.⁶

4. This is the purpose of the Historical Institute (Viện Sử Học) and Social Sciences Committee (Ủy-ban Khoa-học Xã-hội) of Hanoi government, which have published many historical works.

5. H⁵ng-b⁵ng 鴻臚: This is the name of a legendary dynasty in the history of Vietnam whose kings were called Hùng-vương 雄王 who supposedly reigned from 2,879 B.C. to 257 B.C.

6. It is supposed that Vietnam had existed and when China expanded to the south from the 3rd century B.C., it had invaded Vietnam.

The first existing Vietnamese document to detail the history of Vietnam is entitled The Complete History of Đại-việt (Đại-việt Sử-Ký Toàn-thư) . Its author, Ngô Sĩ Liên, was a courtier under Emperor Lê-thánh-tông, one of the most brilliant emperors of the dynasty of the Lê Posterior . In 1479, when this author wrote his history, he listed the date 2879 B.C. as the beginning of the dynasty of Hồng-bàng, which was considered as being the originator of the founding royal family of Vietnam. The Vietnamese historians, therefore, estimated the age of their nation at more than 4,000 years.

7. Đại-Việt Sử Ký Toàn-thư 大越史記全書: was written in Chinese characters, was carved in wood planks and printed in 1697. This edition is used until now.

8. Ngô Sĩ Liên 吳士連: was graduated last on the list of doctors, under Emperor Lê Thái-tông (1433-1442). He was listed as one of the 28 bright men under the reign of Lê Thánh-tông

9. Lê Thánh-tông 黎聖宗 (1460-1496): was one of the most famous emperors of Vietnam. Under his reign literature (Chinese, of course) flourished, and the province of Quảng-nam was added to Đại-việt in 1470 after his successful expedition against the Chiêm-thành.

10. The Lê Posterior 後黎 (1428-1527): was the dynasty established by Lê Lợi (1428-1433) after his victory over the domination of the Minh.

11. 4,000 years: This is the result of a simple computation. The period starting from the first year of the Hồng-bàng dynasty 2879 B.C. to the year when Ngô Sĩ Liên wrote his history 1479 A.D. is :

$$\begin{array}{r} 2879 \\ + \\ 1479 \\ \hline 4358 \end{array}$$

This number was rounded up in 4,000 for the convenience of memory.

Four thousands years of history and civilisation for such a small country as Vietnam is^a feature attractive enough to the minds and hearts of the inhabitants to make any challenge to that "historic fact" a resentful topic. Generation after generation, the Vietnamese used to be proud of their ancient heritage.

A recent text, History of Vietnam, written in 1971 by a group of social scientists of North Vietnam, proclaimed the period from HỒng-bàng to HỒ-chí-minh as being a period full of sacrifices, distresses, hopelessness and shame, but also of fame and glory. The thinking of the Committee who wrote the book is clear. They put HỒng-bàng, a dynasty based mainly on legend, on the same ground with HỒ-chí-minh, one of the most important and recent political figures of Southeast Asia. It seems that there is no vacillation in the mind of

12. From 1960 to 1970, I published many articles in different periodicals in Vietnam, such as Bách-khoa and Đại-học, and a study entitled Vietnam, Period of Birth (Vietnam, Thời Khai sinh) to challenge "historical facts" like that one, and I was bitterly criticized both by the so-called patriots of South Vietnam and the Communists of North Vietnam.

13. From the 15th century, all the Vietnamese historical texts, either in prose or in verse, relentlessly repeated the 4,000 years of the Vietnamese national existence.

14. HỒ-chí-minh: He was born in the province Nghệ-an in 1889 and died in 1969, in the midst of the Vietnam War. He used Communism to regain independence to Vietnam.

15. Ủy-Ban Khoa-học Xã-hội Việt-nam, Lịch-sử Việt-nam, Nhà Xuất-bản Khoa-học Xã-hội, Hanoi, 1971, page 10: "Từ thời-đại Hùng-vương đến thời-đại HỒ Chí Minh, trải qua đoạn đường lịch sử dài bốn nghìn năm, cuộc sống của dân tộc ta đầy hy-sinh gian khổ, nhưng cũng đầy khí-phách anh-hùng; có những lúc lâm-than tui-nhục, nhưng cũng có nhiều ngày quang-vinh chói-lọi".

these authors when they spoke about the life of the Vietnamese people during that period of 4,000 years. They suggested that in the time of Hồng-bàng, that is, in 2879 B.C., there was already a nation of Vietnam and a Vietnamese people, with its organization, political and otherwise, almost exactly as it is found today. They gave, no doubt, a good example of a non-historical approach to history, because it seems that in their understanding there is little room for evolutionary change.

According to the Vietnamese historians, both of the 'old school' and of the 'new', the southward expansion of China from the 2nd century B.C. to the 10th century A.D. was an invasion into Vietnamese territory. Consequently, they spoke of a millenary of Chinese domination, and of the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese people against China during that period. Any rebellion, any revolt, was hailed as a liberation effort on the part of the Vietnamese. They cited the uprising of the Sisters Trưng against the Han, of Lý Bí against

17. The static view of history is not a lack of knowledge on the part of the socialist historians, but it is their systematic stand for the benefit of propaganda.

18. The Vietnamese historians do not bother much about who had revolted or for what cause. They accepted a priori that all those who fought against China were Vietnamese and for the purpose of Vietnamese liberation.

19. The story of the Sisters Trưng 徵 will be treated at length in Chapter Two.

20. Hán 漢 : the Chinese dynasty that consisted of two parts: the Hán Anterior (206 B.C.-8 A.D.; the Hán Posterior (23-226).

the Lương in the 6th century,²² for examples.

In order to affirm or deny the long life of Vietnam, the socialist school thought it beneficial to use the archeological findings in Vietnam. For them, the remains of the mesolithic, neolithic and bronze periods should be construed as belonging to the cultural heritage of the Vietnamese people. Explicitly they said: "With the development of the age of bronze, we come to the period of Văn-lang²³, that is the period of the King Hùng of Vietnam history"²⁴ ²⁵.

In the eyes of the common people, the themes of the socialist historians seem convincingly right. Tradition says²⁶ so; historical documents say so; even archeology says so. But this is only one aspect of the reasoning. Other aspects to be considered are of much more importance. Of course, there

21. Lý Bí 李贲: About the revolt of Lý Bí, we will dedicate an entire chapter, the Chapter Six.

22. Lương 梁: A Chinese dynasty (502-557) after the Tề 齊 and before the Tùy 隋.

23. Văn-lang 文郎: Imaginary name of the imaginary country that the tale of Hồng-bàng imputed as Vietnam.

24. Kings Hùng are the Hùng-vương, the 18 kings in the tale Hồng-bàng, beginning their reign from 2879 B.C. to 257 B.C.

25. Ủy-ban Khoa-học Xã-hội Vietnam, op. cit., page 45.

26. The principal archeological periods that are unearthed in Vietnam are the mesolithic period of Hoà-bình, the neolithic period of Bắc-sơn and the bronze period of Đông sơn. These findings were made in the time of French Protectorate and studied by Henry Mansuy and Madeleine Colani. North Vietnam had found more remains pertaining to these periods. What is peculiar to North Vietnam is that it considers all these findings as belonging to the Vietnamese.

are traditions, but we have to know how old they are, in what circumstances they are created. There are historical documents, but we have to know by whom and with what method they are written down. Archeological findings in Vietnam are many and meaningful, but we have to know whether they belong to the Vietnamese people or not.²⁷ In a historical sense, legendary tales are worth studying only because they reflect the thinking mood of the time in which they appeared; historical documents convey the truth only when they are objective testimonies; and archeology findings, liable to wishful interpretations, are useful only when they concur with²⁸ historical documents.

This research is an effort to apply historical method to the study of the ancient history of Vietnam. It requires an extensive reading in Chinese historical literature covering more than ten centuries, from the 3rd century B.C. to the 10th century A.D. It requires also an intensive scrutiny into the works written in Chinese characters by Vietnamese historians and literary authors, in order to grasp the historical facts that might be found in them. Mandatory is not

27. According to Henry Mansuy and Madeleine Colani, both French archeologists who devoted their life time to the study of archeological findings in Vietnam, the mesolithic remains of Hoà-bình belong to the Melanesians, and the neolithic of Bắc-sơn to the Indonesians.

28. The bronze kettle-drums that archeologists attributed to the Lạc-việt, have the confirmation of history, when we read in the History of The Hán Posterior that Mã Viện brought back to China, after his victory over Trưng Trắc, a lot of Lạc-việt đồng-cổ 雉越銅鼓 (kettle-drums of Lạc-việt).

only a good understanding of the historical method prevailing nowadays, but also of the method used by the historians of the old school. The student should be aware of what writings these historians considered as their sources and of how much credulity they adopted them. He should be warned also against the daring and rueful manner they could twist them to serve their own purposes.

The aim of this study is not only to repudiate unjustified claims of a long life for the Vietnamese nation, but also to give a new presentation, based on serious and comprehensive researches, of the formative period of the same. To this end, the following chapters will be developed:

Chapter One. Historical Methodology of the old Chinese School.

This chapter will provide an insight into the methodological understanding of the old school of Vietnamese historians. Their method is the traditional Chinese method, but-tressed by a strong nationalism. This chapter will bring out the fact that their works are only a plagiarary compilation of what was previously written, adding from their own a final period, which nobody hasn't covered yet.

29. In 1856, Emperor Tự-đức (1847-1883) ordered his historians to write a history of Vietnam. In his preliminary edict, he gave them the mandate of following the method of L' "Tự Trường", pen-name of Chu Hy (1130-1200), historian and philosopher of the Tống 宋 dynasty (960-1280). This history was entitled: Khâm Định Việt Sử Thông Giám Cương Mục.

↳ Tự Mạnh Thìn

**Chapter Two. The Dynasty Of Hồng-bàng: A series
Of Tales Poorly Connected.**

This chapter is an analytical study of the different legendary tales that were included under the title "Dynasty Of Hồng-bàng". The purpose is to show that these tales have no other meaning than a vision into the past of some Vietnamese patriots of the 13th or 14th century, whose ancestors were comparatively recent immigrants from China.

Chapter Three. Southward Expansion of China.

In the South China, formerly region of Ngũ-lĩnh³⁰, lived many ethnic groups that the Chinese called by a common name Việt³¹. The first emperor of the Tần³² sent out an expedition, took over Viet's territory, created the departments of Nam-hải³³, Quê-lâm³⁴ and Tượng³⁵. He sent afterward another expedition of undesirable Chinese to strengthen the colonization of these departments. When the Tần fell, Triệu Đà³⁶ seized the new departments and made out of them

30. Ngũ-lĩnh 五嶺: means five ranges of mountains or the South of China from the Blue River (Đuống-tử-giang).

31. Việt 越: the meaning of this word will be discussed in the chapter itself.

32. The first emperor of the Tần or Tần Thủy Hoàng 秦始皇帝 reigned from 246 B.C. to 210 B.C.

33. Nam-hải 南海: Canton today. Initially it had six districts.

34. Quê-lâm 桂林: Kwangsi today.

35. Tượng 象: This is the department that covered the region from Nam-hải and Quê-lâm southward, including the area which later became Vietnam.

a kingdom called Nam-việt³⁶. When the Hán came into power, they invaded this kingdom in 111 B.C. and created seven departments of which Giao-chỉ³⁷, Cửu-chân³⁸ and Nhật-nam³⁹ would eventually become Vietnam. The Hán used the same policy as the Tần to colonize their new departments.

Chapter four. The Sisters Trưng: The Uprising Of The Autochthons.

Leaders of a tribe called Lạc-việt, Trưng Trắc⁴⁰ and Trưng Nhị⁴¹ stood up and fought against Chinese authorities. The reason of their uprising was the new policy of the Hán Posterior and the atrocious behavior of Chinese officials. It was a war of the autochthons against the Chinese, not a war of the population of Giao-chỉ, Cửu-chân and Nhật-nam against China. The failure of the Sisters Trưng marked the political extinction of the tribe Lạc-việt.⁴²

Chapter Five. Chinese Administration Of The Far-south Departments .

35. Triệu Đà 趙佗 : He was an official of the Tần and, when the Tần fell, took over the departments of Nam-hải, Quế-lâm and Tượng. He proclaimed himself king in 207 B.C.

36. Nam-việt 南越: Name of the kingdom of Triệu Đà. Later in 1803, Emperor Gia-long, after the unification of his country, wanted to name it Nam-việt. Chinese Court objected to it and suggested the name Vietnam. Gia-long had to agree.

37. Giao-chỉ 交趾: This name had been used under the reign of Triệu Đà, when this king dominated the department of Tượng. Under the Hán Anterior, its territory covered the North Vietnam today.

38. Cửu-chân 九真: This name had been used also under Triệu Đà. Its territory covered the provinces of Thanh-hóa and Nghệ-an today.

The far-south departments, namely Giao-chí, Cửu-chân and Nhật-nam were a permanent cause of trouble to the Central Government of China because of their distance and especially because of the ill-will of governors and prefects that Chinese emperors sent to this area. Their corrupted behavior irritated the population, stirred up revolts and prevented China to expand further.

Chapter Six. Lý Bí : The Uprising Of The Colons.

In the 6th century, a colon named Lý Bí led a successful revolt against China. He established a kingdom for 4 years, from 544 to 548. Then an army of the Lương, under the command of Trần Bá Tiên⁴³ came and re-established Chinese power. The kingdom of Lý Bí was short-lived but his temporary success had the effect of awakening the colons to the vision of an independent country.

Chapter Seven. The Đường⁴⁴: The Acceptance Of a Political Change In The Far-south.

39. Nhật-nam 日南 : This department covered the Quảng-binh, Quảng-tri, Thừa-thiên today. Its south border might have been in the Da-nang area.

40. Trưng Trắc 徵側 : She was the lady the most admired in the history of Vietnam because of her supposed accomplishment.

41. Trưng Nhi 徵貳 : Younger sister of Trưng Trắc and her companion in battle.

42. Lạc-việt 雒越 : The tribe the most populous that lived in some places of Giao-chí and of Cửu-chân before the arrival of the Chinese.

43. Trần Bá Tiên 陳霸先 : General of the Lương 梁 and founder of the Trần dynasty 陳 (560-589).

The long reign of the House of Đường, whose appearance on the imperial throne opened a period which was well described as an Augustan age of China influence, had the beneficial initiative of recognizing the special situation of the departments of Giao-chí, Cửu-chân and Nhật-nam. The Đường emperor, Cao-tông⁴⁵, gave them a common name, An-nam⁴⁶. He gave them also a new form of government called the Protectorate⁴⁷. With this acceptance of political change on this part of China, the people of An-nam felt deeper their responsibility over their territory.

Chapter Eight. The Nam-chiếu Domination: A Powerful Push Toward Independence.

The Nam-chiếu⁴⁸, a kingdom newly established at the expenses of China to the north-west of An-nam, took avail of the weakness of China, tried to expand eastward over An-nam. It seized and dominated An-nam with the co-operation of An-nam's ethnic groups. The colons then helped Chinese general Cao-Biên to chase away the intruders in 866. This fatal experience brought in the open the irresponsibility of

44. The Đường 唐 : This dynasty played a decisive role in determining An-nam to become independent.

45. Cao-tông 高宗 : Emperor of the Đường dynasty who reigned from 650 to 683. He instituted the protectorate regime for the 4 territories on the outskirts of China.

46. An-nam 安南 : This name means the South Pacified. During the French domination (1884-1954), it was used to designate the Central Vietnam, from the province of Thanh-hóa to the province of Bình-thuận.

governors and prefects in regard to this part of China. The colons were therefore determined to work for independence.

Chapter Nine. The Realization Of Independence.

Opportunities came with the fall of the Đuồng dynasty. After the Đuồng, followed a period of anarchy, called "The Five Dynasties"⁴⁹. Many little kingdoms came into existence, the closest of which to An-nam, then renamed Tĩnh-hải⁵⁰, was the Nam-hán⁵¹. While Tĩnh-hải could not have relations with Chinese Central Government, Nam-hán tried to dominate it. The king of Nam-hán sent to Tĩnh-hải an important army, but Ngô Quyền⁵² of Tĩnh-hải destroyed it. When the first emperor of the Tống dynasty⁵³ had pacified China, all other little kingdoms surrendered to him and disappeared. Only Tĩnh-hải remained independent by the skillful diplomacy of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh⁵⁴, a man who had just pacified and unified his own country, that he named Đại-cồ-việt.⁵⁵

47. Protectorate of An-nam or An-nam Đô-hộ-phủ 安南都護府: This regime lasted from 680 to 886.

48. Nam-chiêu 南詔: This kingdom was established by the autochthons of the region of Yun-nan today.

49. The Five Dynasty or Ngũ-đại 五代: Was one of the most tumultuous of Chinese history from 907 to 959.

50. Tĩnh-hải 靜海: Means the Calmed Sea. This is the last name of the Chinese far-south departments.

51. Nam-hán 南漢: The kingdom made out of the area of Thanh-hải 淸海, neighbor of Tĩnh-hải to the north-east.

Epilogue. Vietnam, A Nation Established By The Chinese Colons In The Tenth Century.

Đai-cô-việt is Vietnam. Vietnam began to exist in reality in the 10th century. Its independence was brought about by the first emperor of the Đinh dynasty ⁵⁶. It was ~~not~~ an accomplishment^{not} of the aborigenes, but of the colons who had shown themselves as the dominant element of the population since the uprising of Trưng Trắc. These colons attempted to play their role, since Lý Bí, in establishing a new country out of Giao-châu or An-nam. Lý Bí had tried and succeeded for a short while. Circumstances helping, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh tried again and got a lasting result. This result that all the Vietnamese are benefitting till today, did not stem from the fact that the Vietnamese were originally different from the Chinese, but that they were descendants of Chinese colons.

52. Ngô Quyền 吳權: This general, after his victory over Nam-hán, had proclaimed himself king, but did not give to his new country a name.

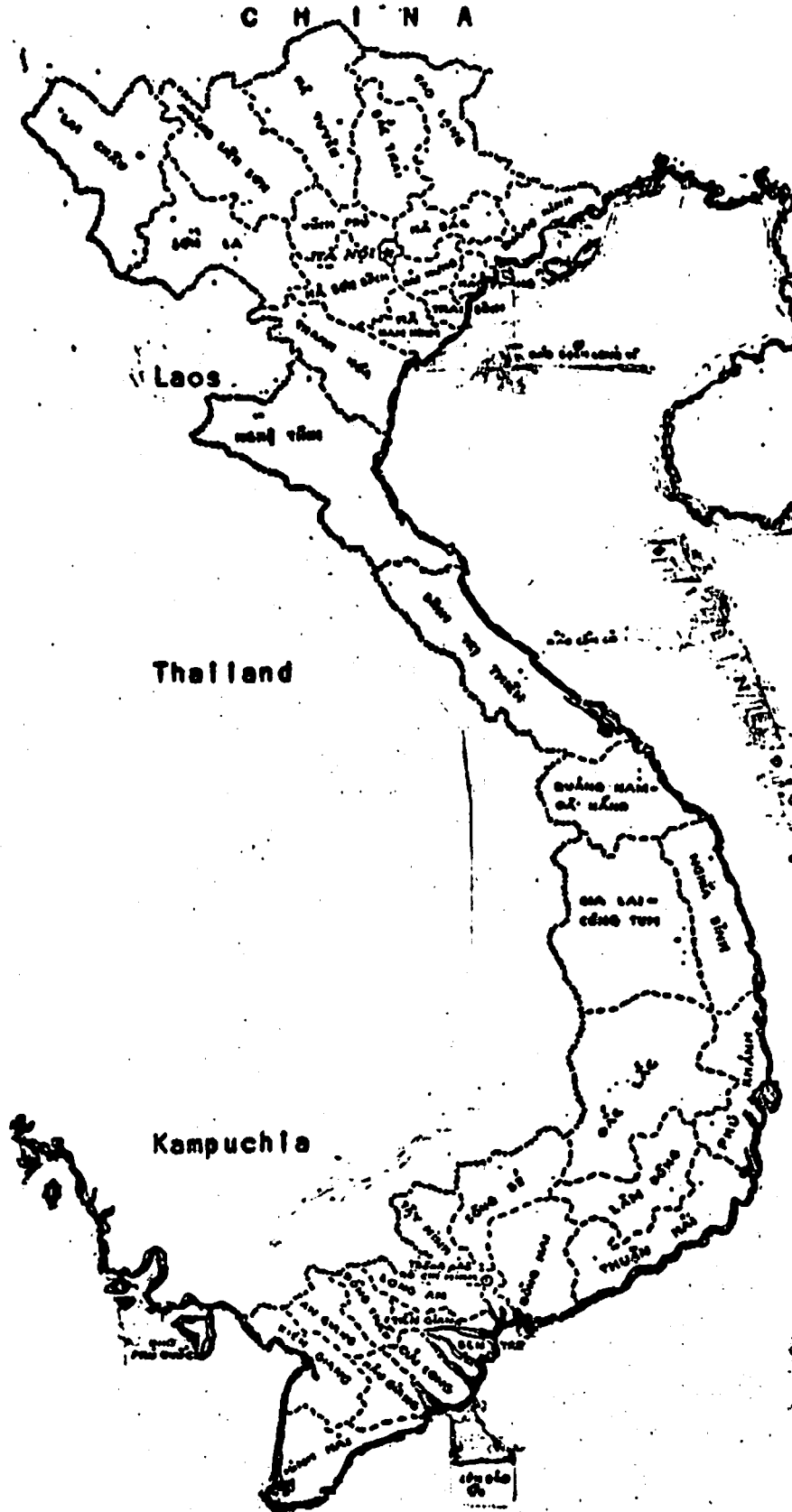
53. The first emperor of the Tống, or Tống Thái-tổ 宋太祖: Reigned from 960 to 976.

54. Đinh Bộ Lĩnh 丁部領: He gained independence to his new nation by skillful diplomacy with the Tống.

55. Đai-cô-việt 大鵝越: First name of Vietnam. The emperor chose that name perhaps to avoid the name Đai-việt already used once by the king of Nam-hán.

56. First emperor of the Đinh dynasty, or Đinh Tiên-hoàng 丁先皇: Đinh Bộ Lĩnh.

VIETNAM TODAY



Provinces and Cities

- Thành phố HÀ NỘI
- Thành phố HÀ CHÍ MINH
- Thành phố HẢI PHÒNG

- 35 tỉnh lỵ
- 1 - Lai Châu
 - 2 - Sơn La
 - 3 - Hoàng Liên Sơn
 - 4 - Hà Tuyên
 - 5 - Cao Bằng
 - 6 - Bắc Thái
 - 7 - Quảng Ninh
 - 8 - Hà Sơn Bình
 - 9 - Hà Bắc
 - 10 - Vinh Phó
 - 11 - Hải Hưng
 - 12 - Thái Bình
 - 13 - Hà Nam Ninh
 - 14 - Thanh Hóa
 - 15 - Nghệ Tĩnh
 - 16 - Bình Trị Thiên
 - 17 - Quảng Nam - Đà Nẵng
 - 18 - Nghĩa Bình
 - 19 - Phú Khánh
 - 20 - Gia Lai - Công Tum
 - 21 - Diên Khánh
 - 22 - Lâm Đồng
 - 23 - Thuận Hải
 - 24 - Đông Nai
 - 25 - Sông Bè
 - 26 - Tây Ninh
 - 27 - Long An
 - 28 - Bến Tre
 - 29 - Tiền Giang
 - 30 - Hậu Giang
 - 31 - Cửu Long
 - 32 - Đồng Tháp
 - 33 - Kiên Giang
 - 34 - An Giang
 - 35 - Vĩnh Hải

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY OF THE OLD CHINESE SCHOOL

Historical methodology, in the West as well as in the East, is aiming at telling the historical truth. But experience shows that historians do not understand the nature of the truth the same way, nor do they express it in the same manner. Because of this, historical methodology is changing emphasis according to the progress of human understanding the meaning of history ¹.

In the West, students of history used to repeat what Cicero once said: 'Primam esse historiae legem ne quid falsi dicere audeat, ne quid veri non dicere audeat'²!. Then, centuries passed, dark and bright, and nobody could bring out a satisfactory definition of this 'verum', though everybody seems to have understood it. In the 19th century, Leopold von Ranke, one of the greatest historians of all times, got a resounding reputation for having stated that historians should tell things as it was. His idea was repeated, commented, and for a long while taken as norm of methodical historiography ³.

1. In the XIV International Congress Of Historical Sciences held in San Francisco in August 1975, Professor Ernesto Sestan still brought out the idea that "historiographie pourrait aussi bien ne pas être une science" (Paolo Brezzi, Ernesto Sestan, Historiographie Comme Science Historique, SISH, page 1). See also George Lefebvre, La Naissance de L'Historiographie Moderne, Flammarion, Paris, 1971, pages 315-320.

But who, on this earth, can tell thing as it was? Is there anyone gifted enough to be able to see at the same time all the aspects of a happening? or to record dutifully and faithfully all these aspects? Even so, human beings continue to yearn for historical truth, and historians continue to express it. But now both readers and writers of history become more cautious. The readers are cautious because they have to judge the historical truth for themselves. As for the writers, they are cautious because they are aware that historical truth might always evade them. People have no more total confidence in historians, and historians in their ability. Objectivity is a goal as ever before, but nobody can boast to get it fully or to serve it wholly.

If this is the situation of historiography in the 20th century and in the West, what would have been its situation in the centuries close to the birth of Christ and in the East. Anyhow, one must deal with this kind of situation when one's study is about the ancient history of Viet-

2. "The first principle of history is never to tell falsehood, and never not to tell the truth". Cited by William Leo Lucey, S.J. in History: Methods and Interpretation, Holy Cross College Publication, Worcester, 1948, page II.

3. Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) left a collection of 51 volumes of historical works and was ranked as the greatest historian of his time. His historical knowledge was so enormous that he could move with great ease over great tracts of human experience. See Paul Weiss, History: Written and Lived, Southern Illinois University Press, 1962, pages 7-9.

nam. Because of the peculiar character of historiography in Vietnam, many things should be made clear before starting any research in this field.

To begin with, historians should know Chinese. Not only Vietnamese documents were written in Chinese, but historians should read Chinese historical writings of more than ten centuries, encompassing a period from the 2nd century B.C. to the 11th century A.D. The reason for this painful undertaking is that during that long period Vietnam was part of Chinese territory. If the student doesn't know Chinese, and relies on the work of others, mistakes would abound.

To have an idea of this necessity, let us look at a passage of a textbook, entitled History of Southeast Asia, except Vietnam of Mr. Nguyễn Thế Anh, "agrégé en Histoire" and former head of the History Department of Saigon University⁴. Mr. Anh wrote:

According to Chinese documents, a little kingdom was established to the south of the department of Nhật-nam in 192, the name of which was Lâm-áp. This name remained in use until 758 when it was changed into Hoàn-vương. The new name was good until 860 because from this date, Chinese documents called that kingdom Chiêm-thành...

In the beginning of the 5th century, the Chams renewed their invasions into the territory where the Chinese had made the census (?)⁵. The governor

4. The book is written in Vietnamese under the title: Lịch Sử Các Quốc-gia Đông-nam Á, Trữ Việt-nam, Từ Nguyên Thủy Đến Thế Kỳ XVI, Lưu Thiêng, Saigon, 1972.

of Giao-châu appealed for help. Not until 431 a couple of battle-ships were sent down against the Chams, but they had no result. In 446, the governor of Giao-châu led to the south his army and fought in the region of Hue. He carried back a loot of about 50,000 kilos of gold. From that time, the Chams let the north quiet for a long while... 6

And the author gave this footnote: ''D.G.E. Hall, History of Southeast Asia, page 52''.

In comparing with Chinese documents, almost all the dates mentioned in this passage are inexact; the facts given are rather inaccurate or insufficient. The kingdom of Lâm-áp, as Tư Tri Thông Giám⁷ of Tư Mã Quang⁸ recorded, was established by Khâu Liên⁹, when this man took over the district of Tượng-lâm¹⁰ in 137. This little kingdom was re-named Hoàn-vương in the period from 756 to 858¹¹, then it was called Chiêm-thành¹² until its disparition.

5. The Vietnamese words used by Mr. Anh are: ''...lại xâm nhập vào lãnh thổ kiểm tra bởi người Tàu...''. The exact words should have been ''kiểm soát''.

6. Nguyễn Thế Anh, op. cit. page 26,27.

7. Tư Tri Thông Giám 資治通鑑 : A voluminous work composed of 294 books, very well written and meticulously documented. It was accomplished in 1066. The edition used is of Văn-hóa ĐỒ thư Công-ty 文化圖書公司, Taipei 1974.

8. Tư Mã Quang 司馬光 : Politician and historian of great reputation under the Tống dynasty.

9. Khâu Liên 區連 : Was son of an official of lower rank in the district of Tượng-lâm, department of Nhật-nam. He killed the sub-prefect and revolted, made Tượng-lâm an independent country in 137. See Tư Tri, book : 52, page 352.

10. Tượng-lâm 象林 : One of the five district of the department of Nhật-nam, located in the area south of Đnanh.

In the first half of the 5th century, the governors of Giao-châu usually responded in kind to the attacks of Lâm-ấp. When the Lâm-ấp king Phạm HỒ Đạt¹³ ravaged Cửu-chân in 413, Governor ĐỖ Tuệ ĐỘ¹⁴ killed him.¹⁵ Two years later, the Lâm-ấp army that attacked Giao-châu, was hurled back by Chinese generals.¹⁶ In 420, the same ĐỖ Tuệ ĐỘ led a big army into Lâm-ấp, won over his enemies, killing more than the half of Lâm-ấp fighting men. The king of Lâm-ấp surrendered and ðệ released all Lâm-ấp prisoners.¹⁷ The battle that Mr. Anh located in 446¹⁸ happened in reality in the territory of Lâm-ấp south of Đà-nẵng, not in the region of Huế. Governor Đản Hòa Chi¹⁹ of Giao-châu cap-

11. Hoàn-vương 環王 ; see Tứ Tri book 238, page 1634: Lâm-ấp quốc, Chí-đức hậu, cải Hoàn-vương 林邑國王德後改環王.

12. Chiêm-thành 占城 : see Tứ Tri, book 249, page 1719: Đại trung, thập nhị niên, thất nguyệt, Chiêm-thành, Chân lập giai phục thông sứ 大中十二年, 七月, 占城, 貞臘皆復通使。

13. Phạm HỒ Đạt 范胡達: He was king of Lâm-ấp but descent of a Chinese, Phạm Văn, See Tứ Tri, book 95, page 639.

14. ĐỖ Tuệ ĐỘ 杜慧度 : Son and successor of ĐỖ Viên in the governorship of Giao-châu.

15. See Tứ Tri, book 116, page 779: Nghĩa hy, cứu niên, Lâm-ấp Phạm HỒ Đạt khấu Cửu-chân, ĐỖ Tuệ ĐỘ kích, trăm chi: 義熙九年林邑范胡達寇九真, 杜慧度擊斬之。

16. See Tứ Tri, book 117, page 784: Nghĩa hy, thập nhất niên, Lâm-ấp khấu Giao-châu. Châu tướng kích bại chi. 義熙十一年, 林邑寇交州, 州將擊敗之。

17. See Tứ Tri, book 119, page 796: Giao-châu ĐỖ Tuệ ĐỘ kích Lâm-ấp, đại phá chi, số sát quá bán. Lâm-ấp khát hàng. Tiên hậu vi số lược giả khiến hoàn. 交州杜慧度擊林邑, 大破之, 所殺過半, 林邑乞降, 前後為所鈔掠者皆遣還。

tured the town of Khu-Túc²⁰, then the capital Tuong-phô²¹ while the king of Lâm-ấp²², Phạm Dương Mai, fled away by sea to the south. And Mr. Anh himself has indicated, a page earlier, that from the 4th century, the capital of Lâm-ấp was in Trà-khieu, some 30 miles south of Đà-nẵng. So, a comparison of a paragraph of Mr. Nguyễn Thế Anh with Chinese documents, that he professed to have consulted, shows clearly the need of careful reading in the Chinese texts themselves.

To be noted also is the fact that the first Vietnamese history, the History Of Đại-việt²³, appeared only in the 13th century. This work is now lost, but it is clear that it begins with the Chinese historical figure of Triệu-Đà, king of Nam-việt in 207 B.C. The part of Vietnamese history prior to that date was added in the 15th century by the author of the Complete History Of Đại-việt.

18. 446 is the only date correct of the passage, but unfortunately here the place is misplaced. The battle happened not in Huế, but south of Đà-nẵng.

19. Đản Hòa Chi 檀和之 : This governor fought against Lam ap in 446, not in 436 as Complete History (used in place of Đại-việt Sử Ký Toàn-thư) book 4, page 10.

20. Khu-Túc 區栗 : To go to Khu-túc one should leave Lũ-dung then take the sea until one reached the area south of "the high mountain". (Tứ Trị, book 124, page 835, note.)

21. Tuong-phô 象浦 : This was the capital of Lâm-ấp.

22. Phạm Dương Mai 范陽邁 : He was son of Phạm Hồ Đạt, killed by Đỗ Tuệ Độ.

23. History of Đại-Việt or Đại-việt Sử-ký 大越史記 ; the work of Lê Văn Hưu 黎文休 written in 1272.

Then, the student should know what historians of the ancient time thought about history, and how they did write it. The then historical truth sometimes might have been only political expediency. Historians related past events, of course, but most of the time, ^{they} related as they pleased. This expedient method, unless warned in advance, might induce the readers into misleading views and erroneous conclusions.

24

Ancient historians used to repeat one another without much modification. With the general public, they shared a special respect for what had been written²⁵. Therefore, when someone undertook to write history, he copied almost literally the texts of his predecessors and wrote only the period still left unauthored. This writing habit had the advantage of perpetuating traditions. True things were sure to be repeated, so would fanciful inventions.

To understand how much one historian could tell again the story of the others, let us take a passage of Chinese history regarding the attitude of Triệu Đà towards the Tân dynasty. The story was first written in the famous Records of History²⁶ of Tư Mã Thiên²⁷ in the 1st century B.C. A cen-

24. We have an example in the use of the story of Hồng-bàng as a historical document.

25. The special respect that the Vietnamese manifested towards what was written might partly stem from the fact that printed materials were exceptionally scarce.

26. Records of History or Sử Ký 史記 : Was the first work

tury and a half later, Ban Cồ²⁸ re-told the same story in his History Of The Hán Anterior²⁹. And 15 centuries after Ban Cồ, the Vietnamese historian Ngô Sĩ Liên had himself an occasion to go over that same story. In these cases, the similitude in words used, in style, and in presentation is particularly striking. Here is the translation of the story as given in the Records:

In the period of Nhi-thê (30), the prefect of the department of Nam-hải, Nhâm Ngao (31), was seriously sick. He called over the sub-prefect of the district of Long-xuyên (32), Triệu Đà, and said to him: "I heard about the revolt of Trần-Thắng (33). The Tần are immoral. The people are suffering much from that situation. [The generals like Hang Võ (34), Lưu Bang (35), Trần Thắng, Ngô Quảng (36), and all the departments and districts are rising up, gathering strength and fighting each other to usurp the power in the country. China is in chaos. No one knows when peace will come about.] Strong men are betraying the Tần and become independent. Nam-hải is a far-away department. I fear that highwaymen will come here. So I want to declare independent, to shut the borders and to get ready for self-defense, waiting for the outcome of rebellion!". But with his sickness becoming more serious, he added: "Phiên-ngung (37) has a strategic

of history after the Springs and Autumns (Xuân-thu) of Confucius.

27. Tư Mã Thiên 司馬遷: His biography is found in the History of the Han Anterior, book 62. He devoted all his life to his history work covering the beginning of China until Emperor Võ of the Hán dynasty (140-87).

28. Ban Cồ 班固: His story is found in the History of The Hán Posterior, book 70, 2nd part.

29. History Of The Hán Anterior or Tiền Hán thư 前漢書
It covers China history from the first emperor of the Han until the reign of Bình-dê (28-1 B.C.) inclusively.

position: mountains behind and accesses difficult. Nam-hai is many thousands miles wide to the east and to the west. Besides, we have the support of the Chinese (38). That much is more than enough to declare oneself head of a region and to establish a new nation. In this department, there is nobody smart enough to realize this plan, so I called you over and confide it to you.''. There upon, he invested in writing to Đà the power to run Nam-hai. Ngao being dead, immediately Đà sent to Hoàng-phô (39), Dương-sôn (40) and Hoàng khê (41) a proclamation, saying: 'Highwaymen are coming. Let us shut our borders, gather our soldiers and get ready for self-defense'. Gradually, he used lawful disguises to eliminate the officials appointed by the Tần and put his men in their places.(42)

30. Nhị-thê Hoàng-đế 二世皇帝 : Means Second Generation of emperor of the Tần dynasty. He reigned only 3 years, from 209 to 207 B.C.

31. Nhân Ngao 任 嚮 : He was the first prefect of Nam-hai department of the Tần.

32. Long-xuyên 龍 川 : A district of Nam-hai administered by Triệu-Đà.

33. Trần Thắng 陳 勝 : His story is found in the History Of The Hán Anterior, book 31.

34. Hạng Võ 項 羽 or Hạng Tịch 項 籍 : One of the most powerful generals who had brought down the Tần dynasty. His story is found also in book 31 of the History of the Hán Anterior.

35. Lưu Bang 劉 季 : The founder of the Hán dynasty.

36. Ngô Quảng 吳 廣 : Companion of Trần Thắng in his struggle against the Tần.

37. Phiên-ngung 番 禺 : The residence of the prefect of Nam-hai, later capitol of the Nam-việt kingdom.

38. When Triệu Đà and Nhân Ngao came to Nam-hai, many Chinese came along with to colonize that department. These Chinese were more trustful than the Việt people.

39. Hoàng-phô 橫 浦 : A place in Quê-dương 桂 陽 department.

When we look at the narrative of the History Of The Hán Anterior, concerning the same story, we find again the same text, word by word, with only the omission of the sentences beginning with "The generals like Hạng VÕ ..." to "when peace will come about".⁴³

Ngô Sĩ Liên, when his turn came, he took the version of Ban Cố. Again word by word, he copied the Chinese text. He added, however, another omission, small in appearance, but loaded with historical meaning. He left out three characters that are translated into 'gradually he used lawful disguises'⁴⁴. To take the Vietnamese historian's text, the sentence should be: 'At that, he eliminated the officials appointed by the Tần..'. Thus, Triệu Đà appears to be cruel and no politician at all. In reality, according to the Chinese historians, he was astutely subtle in his elimination of the Tần officials.

40. Dương-sơn 陽山 : was also a place in Quê-dương department.

41. Hoàng-khê-quan 滄谿關: The March Hoàng-khê was also a place in Quê-dương department.

42. Tư Mã Thiên, Records of History, Đài-loan Trung-hoa thư-cục 臺灣中華書局, book 113, page 1.

43. Ban Cố, History Of The Hán Anterior, Đài-loan Trung-hoa thư-cục, book 95, page 6.

44. Ngô Sĩ Liên, Complete History of Đại-việt, book 1, page 9. The words left out are : Sảo dĩ pháp 稍以法. It is proper to remind here that the edition of Đại-việt sử ký Toàn thư we use is the carved wood edition of 1697,

The fact of cutting off an entire sentence or paragraph in order to shorten a text, as Ban Cố did in regard to the above-mentioned passage of the Records, was not an incident in Chinese historiography. It had come to be a method. Historians used to put chunks of texts one after another, these texts being taken from previous writers. Sometimes they took pain to change or add a coordinative or expletive word to make this juxtaposition stick, sometimes they forgot even to do that, and their narrative looked very jumpy. One can say that the historians of the old school did not compose their texts, rather they compiled historical documents they had gathered, without serious judgement or criticism. A study of another text of Ngô Sĩ Liên, relating to the southward expansion of China under the Tần dynasty will illustrate more clearly this way of writing history. The version of the Vietnamese historian runs as follows:

On the 33rd year of the first emperor of the Tần (45), the emperor enlisted the vagabonds, those who were parasites of the bride's family, (46), the charlatans; he assigned Prefect ĐỒ THỨ (47) to lead the rovers of decked boats; he directed SỬ LỘC (48) to take charge of supply by rivers. His army went

45. The 33rd year of the first emperor of the Tần corresponds with 214 B.C.

46. 'Those who were parasites of the bride's family' translates the Chinese characters *chú-tà* 贅壻.

47. ĐỒ THỨ 屠睢: General of the Tần who commanded decked boats or *Lâu-thuyền* 樓船.

48. SỬ LỘC 史祿: In the Records, book 112, page 7, he was called *Giam Lộc* 監祿.

deep into Lĩnh-nam (49), took over the territory of Lục-lương (50). The emperor created the departments of Quê-lâm (51), Nam-hải, and Tượng. Nhâm Ngao was made prefect of Nam-hải and Triệu Đà sub-prefect of Long-xuyên. 500,000 prisoners were mobilized to guard Ngũ-linh. Ngao and Đà took this opportunity to invade us. (52).

Such a text, in its entirety, cannot be found anywhere in Chinese literature, but many parts of it can. Let us divide it into six topics for the benefit of source-finding: 1) the mobilization; 2) the role of Đồ Thư and Sĩ Lộc; 3) the creation of three new departments; 4) the functions of Nhâm Ngao and Triệu Đà; 5) the guard of 500,000 men; 6) the intention of Nhâm Ngao and Triệu Đà to invade Vietnam.

Number 1) and number 3) can be traced to a passage of the Records, book 6, page 17, which reads: "On the 33rd year, the emperor sent out the vagabonds, those who were parasites of the bride's family, the charlatans, to take over the territory of Lục-lương. He established the departments of Quê-lâm, Nam-hải and Tượng". Number 2) matches well with what was said in the Records, book 112, page 7: "The Tần also sent out Đà and Đồ Thư, who led the rovers

49. Lĩnh-nam 嶺南 : The region south of the mountains. This means South China,

50. Lục-lương 陸梁 : Bùi Ân under the Tống (420-477) explained that "Because the character of the southern people was lục-lương, that means easy-going, so the place was called by that name.

51. Quê-lâm 桂林 : Now in the province of Kwangsi.

of decked boats, and ordered Giám Lộc to take charge of supply by rivers. The army reached deep into the territory of the Viet people''. The elements of number 4) can be found in the passage of the Records cited above as illustration of the repeating habit of the ancient historians. ⁵³ Puzzling are number 5) and number 6) which respectively deal with the stationing force of 500,000 men and the invasion of Vietnam.

Let us begin with number 5). To the eyes of a careful reader, the number 500,000 men is too big for its job, that is to mount the guard against the Việt. These inhabitants of Lục-lương might be very good fighters. They might watch for occasions to retaliate against the invaders. But they were vainquished. What they were up to was only to stage guerillas. The question now is: Was so big a Chinese force stationing there just to wait for fighting back guerilla attacks? It is very doubtful. What then was the document that allowed the Vietnamese historian to put down this seemingly unreasonable detail?

There is ^{not} such a detail in the Records, nor in the History of The Hán Anterior. The first historian who placed that numerical detail in that place was Tư Mã Quang in his Tu' Tri. However, he gave another job to that huge crowd. He

52. The intention of Ngô Sĩ Liên is to extend into the past the existence of Vietnam, so he thought that when Triệu Đà planned to establish the kingdom of Nam-việt, he was planning also to take Vietnam.

53. See above, page 23.

wrote: " The emperor sent out the vagabonds, those who were parasites of the bride's family, the charlatans, made them soldiers to occupy the territory of Lục-lương of Nam-việt, established the departments of Quê-lâm, Nam-hải and Tụng. The emperor dispatched also 500,000 prisoners and resettled them here and there among the Việt people".⁵⁴

Here the number 500,000 prisoners was used, but not for the purpose of mounting the guard against the Việt. Rather they came to live with them. Is this an interpretation of Tư Mã Quang or a fact of history ? Or sensing the unreasonableness of some source he found, he had tried to make a correction. More importantly, is there any document that led the historian to this tentative solution ? In effect, there is no document, but there is a commentary. In the Records' text on the expedition, Bùi Ân, the commentator, said at the end: " 500,000 men mounted the guard in Ngũ-linh".⁵⁵

If the research must stop here, the correction of Tư Mã Quang should be preferred. But if the Chinese historian had some reason for his correction, the commentator had also some reason to insert his sentence. Both, however, did not get a full documentation when they wrote, and both committed an error. In reality, the number 500,000 did

54. Tứ Trị, book 6, page 47.

55. Records, book 6, page 17.

not go with the second expedition, but with the first, the purpose of which was to conquer, not to mount the guard against guerillas. This is what one can find in a memoir entitled Hoài-nam-tử⁵⁶, written by Lưu An⁵⁷, who died in 123 B.C. The passage in question reads:

The emperor of the Tần liked horns of unicorns, tucks of elephants, feathers of peacocks, and pearls of oysters, So, he made Đồ Thủ commander of 500,000 men, set into 5 divisions:

- The first division took position at Tân-thành (58);
- The second division took position at Dam Cửu-nghi (59);
- The third division took position at Phiên-ngung;
- The fourth division took position at the border of Nam-dã (60);
- The fifth division took position at River Dư-can (61).

During three years, the soldiers were always on the alert with their arms and their arcs. Giám Lộc could not transport supplies by rivers and commanded his men to remove the handicaps on the waterways. They fought against the Việt, killed Dịch Hu Tông (62), king of Tây-âu (63). The Viet people chose to hide themselves in dark forests rather than to serve the Tần. They elected their strong men and made them generals to attack the Tần during the night. They won big victories, killed Đồ Thủ, and made some hundred thousands dead and wounded. The Tần then sent out the prisoners to replace that loss and to guard the territory.

56. Hoài-nam-tử 淮南子: The Gentleman Of Hoài-nam. Lưu An took this pen name because he was governor of the department of Hoài-nam.

57. Lưu An 劉安: Was the grand-son of the first Emperor of the Hán dynasty. He has his biography in the Records, book 118, pages 5-14.

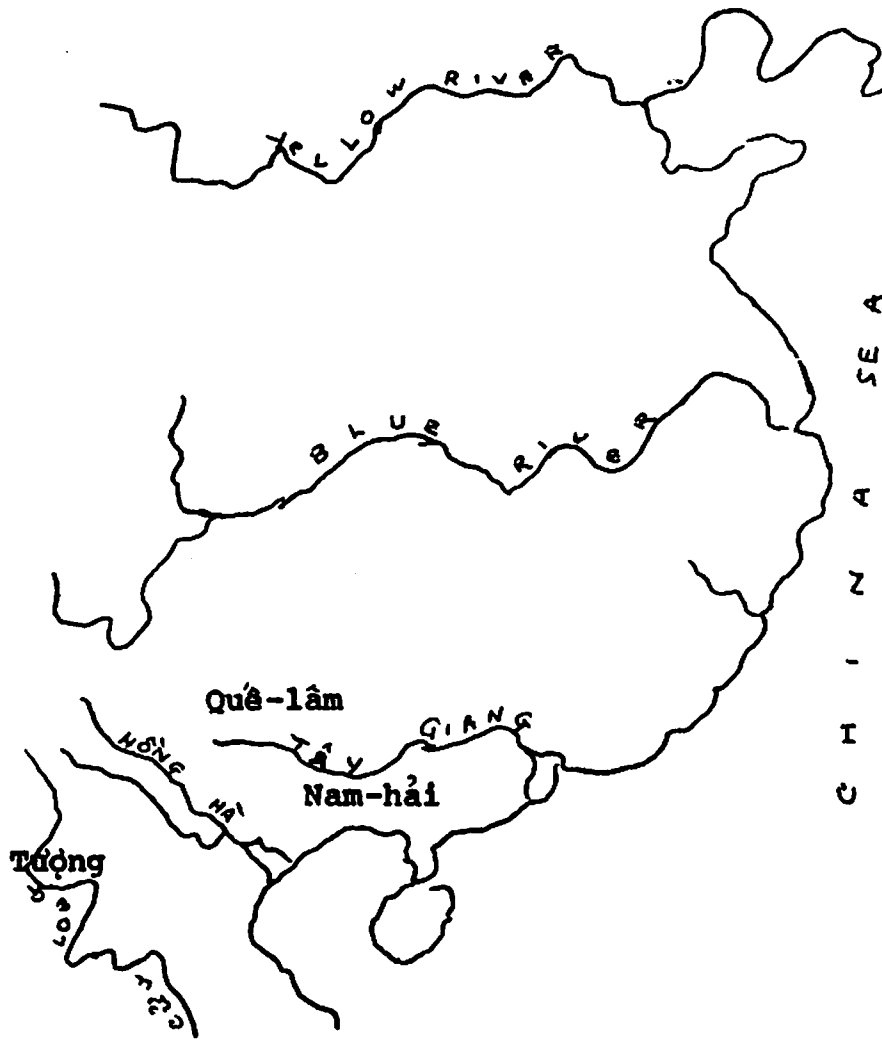
58. Tân-thành 新成 .

59. Cửu-nghi 九 擬

60. Nam-dã 南 野 .

61. Dư-can 餘 汗 .

CHINA UNDER THE T'AN



With this text, a text coming from a source nearest to the event, and from a man who was in a position to be informed, the fact about the number 500,000 men is satisfactorily established. This example is a bit far-fetched. But it illustrates well that the historiographical method of the old Chinese school is far from ^{entirely} reliable, even in the hands of the most famous Chinese historians.

Remains number 6) to be evaluated. Was there an invasion of Vietnam by Triệu Đà in the beginning of the Hán dynasty? It was already too much wishful to claim that Triệu Đà was the first king of Vietnam, as Lê Văn Hưu did in his History of the Đại-việt, which begins with the Triệu ⁶⁴ dynasty and ends with the Lý ⁶⁵ dynasty. By all account, Triệu Đà was a Chinese official, who rose up against the Tần, carved out a kingdom called Nam-việt, the capitol of which was Phiên-ngung, now in the province of Canton of China. Once independent, he took over the two other new ⁶⁶ departments gained to the Tần by the expedition of 214 B.C. Now, two questions arise:

1) If Nam-hải was a department of China, why Quê-lâm

62. Dịch Hu Tông 役回宗 : He was king of Tây-âu, one of the Việt tribes. Vietnamese historians used to consider him as one of their former kings.

63. Tây-âu 西甌 : This is the name of a tribe that some commentators identified with the Lạc-việt.

64. The dynasty of Triệu 趙 : Was founded by Triệu Đà (207-111 B.C.)

and TƯỢNG weren't ? When Triệu Đà seized these departments he rather invaded the territory of the TẦN, not of Vietnam.

2) If the Vietnamese now claim Triệu Đà as their first king owing to the fact that when Triệu Đà reigned over Nam-hải, he reigned also over Quê-lam and TƯỢNG, why don't they claim the first emperor of the TẦN as their first emperor, because while reigning over China, this emperor reigned also over three new departments ?

But it was different with Ngô Sĩ Liên. He was determined to give to Đại-viet the longest past possible. The reason that prompted him to do so was more personal than patriotic, more political than scientific. In 1459, when Lê Nhân-tông⁶⁷ was assassinated by his half brother Nghi-dân⁶⁸, and the throne of the Lê was usurped by this man, Ngô Sĩ Liên did not mind about his illegitimacy, instead took side with this cruel and lascivious man. Eight months later, Nghi-dân was overthrown. The new emperor, Lê Thánh-tông, not only gave pardon to Ngô Sĩ Liên, but also made him official historian. No wonder, then, that Ngô Sĩ Liên,

65. The dynasty of the Lý 李; Đinh Bộ Lĩnh founded the Đinh dynasty (968-980); Lê Hoàn 黎桓 founded the dynasty of the Lê Anterior or Tiên Lê 前黎 (980-1009), Lý Công Uân founded the dynasty of the Lý 黎 (1009-1225).

66. Records, book 113, page 2; History of the Hán Anterior, book 95, page 7.

67. Lê Nhân-tông 黎仁宗: The third emperor of the Lê Posterior 後黎. He reigned from 1442 to 1459.

68. Nghi-dân 宜民: Usurper of the throne of the Lê, he was killed after 8 months of reign.

filled with gratitude, tried to find a way to extoll to the utmost his royal benefactor.

He had in his hands a powerful means given by his official function : writing history. He had also the materials. By the 15th century, many tales regarding the past of the nation came into existence. These tales were mostly of exhortative or explicative nature. Some were intended to tune-up the morale of the population; some explained natural phenomena or geographical names. Their value were dubious even for literature, a fortiori for history. But they were of greatest value to Ngô Sĩ Liên, who was conceiving the magnificent idea of glorifying his king.

These tales involved far-away peoples and immemorial times concerning the nation, why not to use them to make Đại-việt great and Lê Thánh-tông glorious ? A great nation bespeaks a great king, and a nation is great when its area is immense and its past distant. With all that in mind, Ngô Sĩ Liên compiled his Complete History, in which fairies and ghosts were as real as human beings. He was very successful. His work captivated the imagination of the king and of the people. Its influence on the superstitious minds was deep and long-lasting.

Thus aware of the intention of the author and of

69. These tales were gathered into two collections published by Vũ Quỳnh under the title Lĩnh-nam trích Quái, and by Lý Tế Xuyên under the title Việt Điện U Linh Tập.

the nature of the work, the reader can easily understand the reason why Ngô Sĩ Liên had inserted the sentence :
 " Ngao and Đà took this opportunity to invade us".

So, repetition, compilation, absence of criticism, and researches, open subjectivity, the historical method of the old Chinese school was also imaginary. It was imaginary both in inventiveness - creation of a new chapter to national history - and in easy acceptance of the inventiveness of previous writings. Here is an illustration of the latter attribute.

In the 6th century, a colon named Lý Bí revolted successfully against China. He proclaimed himself emperor in 544. He had a general Triệu Túc⁷⁰ who hurled back an attack of Lâm-ấp. In 548, the Chinese general Trần Bá Tiên came and beheaded him. He defeated also Lý Thiên Bảo⁷¹ and Lý Phất Tử⁷² in Cửu-chân. These two men fled into the mountainous region of Cửu-chân. Later, in 602, again Lý Phất Tử⁷³ revolted. He surrendered, however, when General Lưu Phương came in 603.

On the basis of these brief data, Ngô Sĩ Liên built up a period of Vietnamese independence of more than 50 years, with two other kings succeeding Lý Bí, namely Triệu

70. Triệu Túc 趙足: His family name Triệu created in the mind of the writer of the tale Triệu Việt-vương the association with Triệu Đà and with the tales related to this king.

71. Lý Thiên Bảo 李天保: The tale said that he became king in a place called Daolang.

72. Lý Phất Tử 李佛子: According to the tale he succeeded Lý Thiên Bảo and became Lý Nam-dê Posterior; Lý Bí hav-

74
Việt-vương or Triệu Quang Phục, and Hậu Lý Nam-đế⁷⁶ or Lý
Phật Tự. Ngô Sĩ Liên did so, just because a tale-teller
had done so before him.

The first king was introduced into history by a
victory over Chinese armies thanks to supernatural power.
And then he kept his kingdom also by supernatural power.
The second king was presented as beginning his kingship
by stealing the supernatural power from the former, de-
feated him, who ended his life tragically in the sea. The
theme of the struggle between these two kings was ready-
made in a novel entitled "Kim Qui Truyền"⁷⁷, in which
Triệu Đà emerged as winner. Here, Triệu Quang Phục emerged
as loser -the only difference. An outline of the two themes
will show their striking similarity:

ing been Lý Nam-đê Anterior.

73. Lưu Phương 劉芳 : A great general of China who after
defeating Lý Phật Tử came down to Chiêm-thành, got a big
victory, carried back to China a big loot, but he and a
great number of his men died by dropsy on their way home.

74. Triệu Việt-vương 趙越王 : King of the Việt by name
Triệu. The family name Triệu inspired the tale writer the
whole story of Triệu Quang Phục, by reminding him of the
story of Triệu Đà. Triệu Đà was called also Triệu Việt-vương.

75. Triệu Quang Phục 趙光復 : He supposedly was son
of Triệu Túc, a general of Lý Bí. The story of Triệu Quang
Phục was entirely made up of imagination.

76. Hậu Lý Nam-đê 後李南帝 : Nam-đê means emperor of the
South. Hậu means Posterior, in comparison with Lý Bí who was
Anterior. Lý means of the Lý family.

77. Kim Qui truyện 金龜傳 : Story of the Golden Tortoise.
This is a novel.

- Kim Quy : Triệu Quang Phục
- Two kings fought one another without issue, because An-duong-vuong (78) had the magic tortoise nail. : -Two kings fought one another without issue, because Triệu-Quang Phục had the magic dragon claw.
- The two kings divided the country between themselves : -The two kings divided the country between themselves.
- Triệu Đà married his son Trọng Thủy to An-duong-vuong's daughter My-nuong (79) : -Lý Phật Tử married his son Nhã Lang to Triệu Quang Phục's daughter Cao-nuong. (80)
- My-nuong revealed to her husband the secret of her father's strength. : -Cao-nuong revealed to her husband the secret of her father's strength.
- Trọng Thủy stole the magic tortoise nail. : -Nhã Lang stole the magic dragon claw.
- War broke again and Triệu Đà won. : -War broke again and Lý Phật Tử won.
- An-duong-vuong killed his daughter and threw himself into the sea. : -Triệu Quang Phục killed his daughter and threw himself into the sea.

Could all this be a topic of history? Ngô Sĩ Liên answered yes. Not only he accepted the tale as historical document, but also he was very proud of his initiative. At the beginning of the new chapter he just inserted, entitled "Triệu Việt-vương Ký"⁸¹ he wrote: "Because ancient historical writings did not carry the story of Triệu Việt-vương and Đào-lang-vương,⁸² so I take what can be found in

78. An-duong-vuong 安陽王 : He is said to have destroyed the kings of Lạc-việt and reigned over this tribe until Triệu Đà came and took over the territory.

79. Trọng Thủy 仲水 and My-nuong 美兒 : Are heroes in the tale Story of The Golden Tortoise.

80. Nhã Lang 訖良 and Cao-nuong 姁娘 : Are heroes in the tale Triệu Việt-vương.

local history and other documents and write, for the first time, the history of Triệu Việt-vương and add the story of Đào-Lang-vương, so that our history can be complete''.

Was this only a confusion between literature and history, as often happened in ancient times ? It seems that it was not only a confusion, it was rather a state of mind . After giving the account of Triệu Quang Phục, as summarized above, Ngô Sĩ Liên seriously blamed him. He questioned the wisdom of Triệu Quang Phục, saying: ''When a girl is married, it is said ''qui''⁸⁴ and the family of her husband becomes hers. The king's daughter had been married to Nhã Lang; why the king did not allow her to ''return'' to her husband's family ? Why did he practice the custom of the Tần, and kept his son-in-law in his home. No wonder why he was lost''.

By this remark, we can see that the Vietnamese historian was serious with himself when he considered the tale of Triệu Việt-vương as part of Vietnamese history. His determination to glorify his king and extoll his nation made him kind of blind before the reality. He contradicted him-

81. Triệu Việt-vương ký 趙越王記 : History of Triệu Việt-vương.

82. Đào-lang-vương 佻良王 : King of Đào-lang. The tale said that when Lý Thiên Bảo was defeated by Trần Bá Tiên, he came to a mountaneous ressort named Đào-lang and reigned there.

83. Complete History, book 4, page 20.

84. Qui 歸 : Means return. In Vietnam, after the wedding,

self, because while affirming the independence of Lý Phật Tử, he assured also that there was a Chinese prefect in the department of Giao-chỉ. Pertinent to Khâu Hoà⁸⁶ he wrote: " Khâu Hoà was prefect of Giao-châu (?)⁸⁷ ... for more than 60 years...He was rich as a prince. That year (622), the Đường established the Protectorate of An-nam(?)⁸⁸ ". Otherwise we know that from that year, Khâu Hòa returned to China⁸⁹. Now, if in 622, Khâu Hòa had been in Giao-chỉ more than 60 years, then he should have come in this department around 560, that means Giao châu was under Chinese government. Besides, in 590, Chinese documents mentioned the revolt of Lý Xuân⁹⁰, this mentioning would have had no meaning if it was not a revolt in Giao-châu against Chinese authorities.⁹¹

All the tale or history of Hồng-bàng dynasty, as will be discussed in the following chapter, was the product of the same imaginary state of mind.

there is another ceremony, called Vu-qui, to accompany the bride to the groom family.

85. Complete History, book 4, page 17.

86. Khâu Hòa 和 : Prefect of Giao-chỉ at the end of the Tùy and the beginning of the Đường.

87. Ngô-Sĩ Liên used confuse between Giao-chỉ and Giao-châu. Here there should be Giao-chỉ instead of Giao-châu.

88. This is a wrong date. The establishment of the Protectorate of An-nam took place in 680, instead of 622. See Đường-thứ, or History of the Đường dynasty, written by Lưu Hư, under the dynasty of Hậu Đường (926-933), in the edition of Nhi Thập Ngũ Sử 二十五史 or 25 Histories, published by Hùng Cường Văn-học Nghiên cứu xã, 1959, book 5, page 3074.

See Complete History, book 5, page 2.

89. On the return of Khâu Hoã to China, Tứ Trị gave a full date, that is, the 25 of May 622. (book 190, page 1269). See also Đường thư, book 63, page 3309.

90. The revolt of Lý Xuân 李春 happened in 10th year of Khai-hoàng. See Tứ Trị, book 177, page 1177.

91. The social scientists of Hanoi followed the Complete History of Ngô Sĩ Liên, wrote: Lý Thiên Bảo chạy lên động Dã năng (biên giới Việt Lào), chiếm giữ vùng đó, tự xưng là Đào-lang vương. Năm 555, Thiên Bảo chết, tướng cùng họ là Lý Phật Tử lên thay. Năm 557, Lý Phật Tử cất quân đánh Triệu Việt vương. Về sau, hai bên chia đôi nước, lấy bãi Quân thần (thuộc Thượng cát, Hạ cát, huyện Từ Liêm, Hanoi) làm ranh giới. Năm 571, Lý Phật Tử đánh úp Triệu Việt-vương, chiếm lấy cả nước. Hành động thôn tính phe phái đó của Lý Phật Tử làm thế nước suy yếu. Lịch Sử Việt Nam, 116. Translation: " Lý Thiên Bảo fled to a grotto, called Dã-năng (Border Vietnam-Laos), took over this area, made himself King of Đào-lang. In 555 Thiên Bảo died; a general in his family, Lý Phật Tử replaced him. In 557, Lý Phật Tử fought against Triệu Việt-vương. Afterward, they divided the country between themselves with the field Quân Thần as dividing line. In 571, Lý Phật Tử seized Triệu Việt-vương by surprise, occupied the whole country. This action of partisanship of Lý Phật Tử weakened the country".