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Silk for silver: Dutch-Vietnamese relations, 1637-1700

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Stellingen behorende bij het proefschrift

Silk for Silver:
Dutch-Vietnamese Relations, 1637-1700

1. The Vietnamese who began to exploit the Hồng (Red) River delta as early as the first millennium BC contented themselves with cultivating the rather infertile littorals, casting an indifferent eye on all ships passing by and unresponsively turning their backs to all commercial tides which prevailed in the adjacent waters in the later periods.

2. After their second defeat by Nguyễn's Quinam in 1633, Trịnh's Tonkin energetically began to seek external military assistance from foreign powers to regain a balance in the internal conflict because they were now fully aware of the superiority of Western weaponry which their Nguyễn rivals had been employing so efficiently.

3. Chinese silk attracted the VOC to Quinam, but in the end it was Tonkinese silk which prompted the Dutch Company to shift its commercial focus from central to northern Vietnam in the mid-1630s.

4. It is no exaggeration to say that, if the Coromandel Coast was the "left arm" of the spice trade with the Moluccas, Tonkin, certainly for the 1641-1654 period, was the "left arm" of the silver trade with Japan.

5. There were three major phases in the history of the VOC's silk trade with Japan: the phase of the Chinese product prior to the early 1640s; the phase of Tonkinese silk between 1641 and 1654; and the phase of Bengali silk from 1655.

6. The rise and fall of the annual import and export volume of the Dutch Tonkin factory has a decisive effect on the production of raw silk and silk piece-goods, and hence, the number of labourers employed in these industries. It also

affected other aspects of the local economy such as the silver/cash ratio and buying and selling prices.

7. Although the Dutch were not the first Europeans to trade in Tonkin in the early modern period, they were by far the most influential merchants. Their rich and enticing VOC archives on Tonkin are the most important source of materials for the study of Dutch-Vietnamese relations as well as a priceless supplementary source for a close scrutiny of the history of seventeenth-century Vietnam.

8. In an attempt to end the long-lasting ignorance about the seventeenth-century Dutch-Vietnamese relationship, during the 1990s archaeologists excavated some relics in the location of Phố Hiến and Doméa. This attempt was not successful as these places had been heavily destroyed by either wars or natural disasters.

9. A large number of Vietnamese people may know that the Netherlands was the second largest European investor in Vietnam in 2005. Many of them, however, do not know that the Dutch East India Company used to be the largest trading partner of northern Vietnam in the seventeenth century.

10. Floyd Landis would have not been stripped of his Tour de France champion title had he used the 'legal doping': *de gezonde en lekkere Hollandse Haring!* It may have been the three-haring-per-week habit which helped me refresh my mind and provided me extra energy to survive five long Dutch winters!