

# Commercial Activities In The South China Sea With The Cultural Formation Process South Vietnam Exploiting First The Xii-Xviii Center

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## **Abstract**

Due to its long stretch of territory along the South China Sea, throughout its history, Vietnam has formed a strong maritime tradition. Since the Nguyen Lords opened the Southern land, that tradition has been further promoted, the East Sea trade flow has had a profound influence on the existence and development of the newly established territory. With the relatively liberal policies of the Cochinchina government, maritime trade activities in the East Sea took place extremely excitingly. In a short time, the Cochinchina government revived the system of trading ports such as Thanh Ha, Hoi An, Nuoc Man in the Central region and then the ports of Dong Nai, Saigon, Bai Xau, and Ha Tien... in the South. Within the framework of this research paper, based on analyzing historical data from feudal historical works of Vietnam (such as Phu Bien tap luc, Gia Dinh thanh thong chi, Nguyen Dynasty histories...), and at the same time Compared with documents of European and Asian merchants and missionaries, we will clarify the development of maritime trade in the Southern region, as well as its impact then to the process of shaping and developing Southern culture in the early days of exploration (XVII-XVIII centuries).

**Keywords:** the South China Sea, commercial activities, XVII-XVIII century, Southern Vietnamese culture.

## **Introduction**

In the seventeenth century, the exploration of the Southern region was promoted and promoted by the Cochinchina government<sup>1</sup>. In the year of the Tiger year (1698), Nguyen Huu Canh was sent by the Nguyen Lord to the South to inspect the southern porcelain. Gia Dinh district was officially

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<sup>1</sup> In 1620, Lord Nguyen Phuc Nguyen married his daughter to King Chan Lap Chey Chettha II. Three years later (1623), Lord Nguyen sent a mission to Udong to request the establishment of 2 tax collection offices in Prey Kôr (Saigon) and Kas Krobei (Ben Nghe), and at the same time sent military officers here to guard. This event was the first brick that Lord Nguyen laid down to start the work of exploring and establishing sovereignty in the South.

born. This process continued to be carried out until the middle of the 18th century when it was fully completed<sup>2</sup>. The southward process of Cochinchina has met with the regional maritime trade, which is very active and tends to gradually shift to the south. There are many reasons for us to affirm the relatively bright picture of commerce in the South of Vietnam in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, even though this is still a young land. The commodity economy was more developed than that of other regions in Cochinchina and Dai Viet during this period, allowing the southern region to promote the exchange of goods within the region, as well as export to the outside world. With the liberal thinking of the pioneers, and the relatively loose policy constraints of the Nguyen lord's government, these are strong attractions for traders from other regions and especially European merchants. The prosperity of foreign trade has contributed to changing the face of the Southern region. From a deserted land with main forests and wild animals, almost derelict, in a short time, it became the most dynamic developing land in Cochinchina. A system of urban ports was established in the Southern region such as Cu Lao Pho, My Tho Dai Pho, Ha Tien, Saigon, Bai Xau... to become urban trading centers and frequent destinations of trade. regional countries, as well as the world. At the same time, these places also became the convergence and exchange of many different cultures, playing an important role in shaping Southern culture in the early days of exploration.

## Literature Review

There are no studies on the impact of trade activities in the East Sea on shaping Southern culture yet, but some authors have mentioned the development of maritime trade in the century XVI-XVII in some respects:

The work “The economic picture of Vietnam in the 17th - 18th centuries” is a comprehensive view of an economist - historian on the situation of Vietnam in the 17th - 18th centuries. Nguyen Thanh Nha has sketched a vivid picture of the economy of Cochinchina and Tonkin during this time. In “part two: The transformation of urban and commercial superstructure”, researcher Nguyen Thanh Nha painted a bright picture of Vietnamese commerce in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In which the Cochinchina trade is paid much attention by the author, in many aspects: the development of internal trade, the flourishing of foreign trade and urban areas, as well as the journey and way of trading of the merchant's foreigners (both regional and Western)... are described quite clearly by the author.

Next is the book “Vietnamese people with the sea”, edited by Nguyen Van Kim, a collection of research papers of the Asian Trade Research Group (Faculty of History, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi). The main content of the book is divided into 3 parts, including Tradition and sea-oriented thinking of Vietnamese people, the position of sea trade and trade relations, sense of sovereignty and security, and economy sea. With a completely new research orientation, the researchers have provided a different perspective on

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<sup>2</sup> In 1757, in return for help, Ang Tong (Nac Ton) cut “the whole land north of Bassac” for Vo Vuong Nguyen Phuc Khoat, the process of Southern progress of the Nguyen Lord was basically completed.

the tradition of the sea, as well as the picture of Vietnam's trade in the long history, especially in the 17th - 18th centuries when regional maritime trade flourished. A number have clarified many aspects of foreign trade activities in Cochinchina during this period, such as the system of trading ports, the activities of Western merchants in Cochinchina, the foreign trade management policy of Lord Nguyen... This is an important historical source for the author to exploit and develop further in his thesis. However, when it comes to trade in the 17th - 18th centuries, "Vietnamese people with the sea" mainly focus on research activities in Tonkin, the foreign trade of Dang Trong, especially in the Southern region, is noticed not much.

The word "Vietnam in the past documentation and research" by Nguyen Manh Dung includes 13 treatises, divided into 3 parts with many sources and new views on the nation's history. In the second and third parts, the author mentions several aspects of the picture of Dang Trong's foreign trade economy in the 17th - 18th centuries, especially the author tries to exploit the relationship between France and Vietnam during the period pre-colonial segment. However, most of the data on Southern Vietnam is very limited.

A person who has studied foreign trade in Vietnam for many years in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is Hoang Anh Tuan. With the advantage of exploiting the large and valuable archives of the Dutch East India Company and the British East India Company, Hoang Anh Tuan has continuously published many works on the activities of the two British East India Companies and the Netherlands in Vietnam in the XVI-XVIII centuries, a series of monographs can be listed: *Silk for Silver Dutch – Vietnamese Relations, 1637 -1700*; *Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1350 – 1800*; *Documents of Dutch and British East India companies about Ke Cho - Tonkin in the 17th century, British Trading in Tonkin (1672-1697)*; *The Dutch East India Company in Ke Cho, Dang Ngoai...* The above works have provided a rich and objective source of material on the picture of the activities of East India companies in Vietnam during this period. However, most of the documents provided by Hoang Anh Tuan are located in Cochinchina; the documents on the activities of East India companies in Cochinchina are relatively limited. A recently published work of Hoang Anh Tuan: *World Trade and Vietnam's Integration in the XVI-XVIII centuries*, although the material on Dang Trong and the South is not much to serve this paper, the author has a way approach to trade issues in Vietnam and the world in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries is remarkable.

In addition to the works of domestic researchers, commercial activities in Cochinchina in the XVI-XVIII centuries are a topic that has attracted the attention of many researchers in many countries, over many periods.

The travel book "The Land of Dang Trong 1621" (*Relatione della nuova missione delli PP. della Compagnia di Giesù al Regno della Cocincina*) compiled by Italian missionary Christoforo Borri is a valuable and important document that helps us gain more angles. a fuller view of the land of Cochinchina. Under the eyes of a Western missionary, he studied, observed, and described this foreign land quite carefully: from explaining the name, climate, soil, soil, to living activities. day-

to-day, as well as an administrative and civil organization... In particular, Borri also had many descriptions and evaluations about commercial activities in the land of Cochinchina that he witnessed with his own eyes. As the writings of his contemporaries, Borri's travel book is even more valuable for those who want to learn about the land of Cochinchina in the seventeenth century. However, Borri's memoirs mainly only record what he learned and recorded about the lands he visited in Quang Nam and Quy Nhon, the southern land not mentioned by Bori.

The treatise "Histoire moderne du pays d'Annam" (Modern History of Annam) and some writings by B.Maybon are important references. With favorable conditions, B.Maybon has approached, collected, and processed a huge amount of information from many different sources, including original manuscripts, letters, manuscripts, records of the archives (under the Colonies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Library of Paris, the Jesuits, the Foreign Missions Society, the Dutch East India Company, France, England, etc.), contemporary travelogues, as well as the histories of the National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, to make a monograph on the activities of Europeans in Cochinchina and Cochinchina in the seventeenth century. Through Maybon's writings, some documents have been provided about the trading process of Western merchants with the Nguyen lord's government: from the characters to the purpose of trading, the process, and the way of exchange goods ... are depicted quite clearly.

Another work that is also very noticeable when learning about the land of Cochinchina, especially in the field of commerce, is "Nguyen Cochinchina, Sothern Vietnam in 17th and 18th Centuries" by Li Tana. This is a valuable book for those who want to study the land of Cochinchina in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Developed from his doctoral thesis, the area the author refers to and focuses on is the socio-economic field. In particular, Li Tana emphasized the role of foreign trade in the existence and development of the new land of Cochinchina. In the 17th - 18th centuries, in the context of a flourishing commercial development in the region, with the requirement to quickly build their land to become powerful to deal with Tonkin (has twice as much potential as Tonkin triple), the Nguyen Lords tried everything to develop foreign trade and achieved success. As noted by Li Tana (1998): We can safely say that it was commerce that made the new kingdom of Vietnam, within a few decades, rich and powerful enough. to maintain its independence from the north and expand to the south (Li, T. 1998, 85). With a relatively rich source of documents from many different sources, the author has relatively presented the Cochinchina system in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: from communicating and trading with traditional merchants about the foreign trade of other countries, to the monetary and tax system of the Cochinchina government. Many new and interesting issues about Cochinchina foreign trade were opened by Li Tana. However, the scope of the problem that the work deals with is the whole territory of Cochinchina, so she emphasizes mainly the foreign trade in Thuan Quang.

The XVII-XVIII centuries was a period of strong development of foreign trade in Cochinchina, many researchers consider this to be the era of great trade when the Nguyen Lord strongly integrated into the Asian and world trade system. Most of the world's major trading countries in

this period had merchants operating in the Cochinchina market. The system of trading ports of the land that Westerners call Cauchin-chine was extended from Thuan Quang to the South to receive many traders not only in the region (China, Japan, Java, Siam...) but also navigators from Europe (Portugal, Netherlands, France...). The participation of Western merchants - missionaries in the trading system in Cochinchina has fundamentally changed the foreign trade of this land, with the character of navigators, they have recorded quite fully. about his journey in the process of finding markets, conducting trade in new lands. Those travel books are valuable documents for us to understand somewhat about the process of participating in international trade in the 17th - 18th centuries, as well as its impacts on the land of Lord Nguyen. Some works: Description of the history of Cochinchina by Jean Koffler, The Company of India and Indochina by Georges Tablet, The French and Annam – Friend or Enemy of Philippe Devillers, Indochina described by the great fathers and greats Georges Tablet, preaching in Cochinchina. Many scenes of nature and human life in Dang Trong, especially commercial activities in this land, are recorded quite vividly. However, mainly during this period, Western missionaries and merchants came to Thuan - Quang area, so their records are also mainly in this area, the southern land with very little historical data.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in Asia, Japan (especially the port of Nagasaki) was a vibrant trading center attracting merchant ships from many countries in the region and the world to exchange goods. Customs records at the international port of Nagasaki in the Edo period (1600-1868), Prof. Yoneo Ishii has translated into English and introduced this valuable resource to international readers and researchers: The Junk Trade from Southeast Asia: Translations from the (Tosen Fusetsugaki, 1674-1723). The records of merchant ships at the same time mention some aspects of the development of maritime trade in the South of Vietnam and supplement some documents on the government's relatively lacking maritime trade activities. Vietnamese history.

In addition, the topic of the foreign trade of Cochinchina in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also attracted many contemporary international researchers. With the strength of being able to access the huge archives of libraries and international archives centers (in France, the UK, the Netherlands, China, etc.) that are difficult for the Vietnamese to access, research works of these foreign Vietnamese scholars, such as J. Kleinen, Bert van der Zwan, Hans Moors, Ton van Zeeland (2008), Lions and Dragons - Four centuries of Dutch-Vietnamese relations Male; or: Yoshiharu Tsuboi (1999), Dai Nam opposite France and China: 1847-1885; Choi Byung Wook, The Southern Land under King Minh Mang's reign... provided a rich, diverse and high-value source of material for a more complete reconstruction of the maritime trade of Cochinchine in the century XVII-XVIII.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **The development of commercial activities in the South China Sea**

By the fifteenth century, the germ of capitalist production relations began to appear in Europe. The process of primitive capital accumulation, together with the struggle that permeated the feudal

society, strongly promoted the advancement of technology, especially maritime technology. Large seagoing ships could be adjusted to the wind by a mast system like the Caravan was built. The knowledge about the earth, about the continents, about the oceans... has helped navigators around the world to make long trips at sea. In the middle of the sixteenth century, after geographical discoveries, the Portuguese and Spaniards quickly penetrated and gradually broke the traditional trade in Asia. In the early seventeenth century, new maritime powers were on the rise, notably the founding of the British East India Company (EIC) in 1600, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1602, and the company. French East Indies (CIO). With great potential, along with the strength of young powers, VOC and EIC have gradually replaced Portugal and Spain, profoundly changing trade activities in Asia as well as in the South China Sea.

Meanwhile, in Southeast Asia in the early 15th century, trade routes in the East Sea have changed: unlike before, the traditional route was to go along the sea route along the East Coast and the North Gulf. Bo can now go from “Nanjing to Fujian and from there directly to Chiem Thanh (Nuoc Man port), from there to other countries” (Vietnam Historical Science Association, 2009, p.126). Because of this, the ports in the Cochinchina region became important in the trading system of Asia. Born in such a favorable international context, Dang Trong has more conditions to integrate into the regional and world trade process. As Li Tana remarked: Cochinchina was born at the right time, in an “Age of Commerce” (Li, T. 1998, 85).

Since 1600, after escaping from Thang Long, Nguyen Hoang had thoughts and plans to change his behavior with the government of king Le - Lord Trinh. The sense of building a prosperous Cochinchina kingdom, separate from the Kingdom of Tonkin, arose in the person of the first lord Nguyen. With a sharp mind and foresight, Nguyen Hoang decided to take commerce as a lever to build his kingdom and focus on developing foreign trade. “He (ie Nguyen Hoang) has found a solution to his considerations in promoting trade with foreign merchants” (Li, T. 1998, 87). Inheriting a land with many advantages in maritime trade, as the missionary Borri who arrived here in 1621 observed: “the port is strange, in just a little over a hundred miles one counts more than sixty seas. ports, all of which are very convenient to dock and land. It is because the coast has large branches of the sea” (Bori, C. 1931, 93), Nguyen Hoang and his successors had open and open policies to develop commerce, with a high spirit of self-reliance. Borri's notes make this clear: “The Lord of Cochinchine did not close the door to any country, he left it free and opened the door to all foreigners... The Cochinchinese motto is not to show it off afraid of any country in the world” (Bori, C. 1931, 92).

Thanks to the progressive policies of the Nguyen government, maritime trade activities in the East Sea in Cochinchina took place extremely excitingly. “In the history of Vietnam, never before has the foreign economy enjoyed such an open, diversified and flourishing relationship” (Nguyen, V. 2011, 497). In just a short time, Lord Nguyen restored the port system such as Thanh Ha, Hoi An, Nuoc Man in the Central region and then the ports of Dong Nai, Saigon, Ha Tien... in the South. The set. Most of the countries in the region and the world's economic powers at that time came to establish trade and exchange relations with Cochinchina.

For countries in the region, Lord Nguyen still maintains and promotes trade with the traditional region, the strongest of which is trade with China and Japan. As Borri commented: “The fact that they (Inner Cochinchina) traded regularly with the Japanese brought God a lot of Japanese-style swords or swords, with very good steel” (Bori, C. 1931, 87). Of course, trading with Japan was not only for military purposes, but the Cochinchina government also gained many other great benefits. The good business relationship between the two governments is reflected in many aspects: regularly exchanging letters, forming a friendship through marriage (Japanese merchants became the son-in-law of Lord Nguyen), establishing Japan Town in Hoi An... However, Lord Nguyen also had very resolute and firm handling of actions that took advantage of trade activities to damage his maritime security (the case of Shirahama Kenchi – Bach Tan Hien Quy). This both showed the strength of the Nguyen lord's government and forced Japan to respect the trade relationship between the two countries. For the Chinese, Lord Nguyen had many more favorable and open policies than the Tonkin government. From the end of the seventeenth century, under the influence of the shogunate's policy of closing the country (sakoku, 1639-1853), the Japanese merchant ship Shuin Sen (Shuin Sen) gradually withdrew to the country. The role of Chinese merchants was enhanced. Chinese merchants were both an intermediary to exchange goods between merchants from other countries and Cochinchina, and a messenger to negotiate a trade for Cochinchina. In addition, Lord Nguyen also expanded trade relations with countries in Southeast Asia. Trade with countries in the region has the advantage of being geographically close to each other (especially countries sharing the South China Sea). Moreover, this activity has a long tradition a very long time (under the kingdoms of Champa and Funan). Not only through the intermediary of Chinese and Japanese traders, but the Cochinchina government also conducts direct trade with several countries in Southeast Asia such as Siam, Malaca, Manila... As confirmed by Li Tana this was the first time: “Many Vietnamese started going out to trade with the encouragement of the state while neighboring kingdoms were able to trade with Vietnam without having to hide their connections. under the label “tribute” to the emperor” (Li, T. 1998, 114). Or Maybon commented on the open relationship between Cochinchina and other countries in the region as follows: “The merchants were not only from the North or the South to Annam but also in the most remote regions like China, Macau, Japan, Manila, and Malacca...” (Maybon, C. 2006, 92).

Not only dealing with countries in the region, but Cochinchina also established more exchanges with Western countries. Portuguese merchants were the first Westerners to visit and establish business relations with Lord Nguyen (1613). Through the intermediaries of missionaries, the Portuguese went to Hoi An and the trading ports in Cochinchina to buy silk, cinnamon, sugar, agarwood, agarwood, etc., to bring back to Macau or Malacca, and sell them at the same time. brimstone, antler, crockery, alloy, zinc, copper, lead... with high-interest rates (Nguyen, V, 2011, 497). By the early seventeenth century, Western merchants and missionaries such as Portugal, Spain, England, the Netherlands, and France... came to exchange, trade, and preach in Cochinchina more and more. Realizing the commercial potential of this new land, many countries have set up shop here, such as the UK setting up a trading post in Con Dao, the Dutch East India

Company (VOC) setting up a shop in Hoi An... In about eastern countries, Lord Nguyen was always in an active position to resolve conflicts of interest between countries to both maximize economic potential and avoid making Cochinchina depend on any one country.

The integration into the international trading system of the East Sea was a wise decision of Nguyen Hoang and continued to be successfully implemented by the successive lords. This is an important factor that helps the Nguyen Lords to explore the Southern region smoothly.

### **The development of Southern of Vietnam trade**

With favorable conditions such as a dense system of canals and the development of commodity agriculture from the early 17th - 18th centuries, the South became a busy trading center. Traders from other areas come here to buy agricultural products, especially rice, to sell in other regions. Because the Gia Dinh area has a large production area, fertile soil is regularly harvested, so the price here is much cheaper than in other regions. This can be seen, when until the end of the 18th century (about 1770), layman Ngo The Lan in his treatise on currency provided data on comparative rice prices between regions (Le, Q.D, 2007, 144).

<b>Sort order</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Price (money/box)</b>
1	Gia Đình	5
2	Binh Thuan Diên Khanh	6
3	Phu Yen Quy Nhon	7
4	Quang Ngai Thang Hoa Dien Ban	8
5	Thuan Hoa Quang Binh Bo Chinh	10

Statistical table of rice prices in areas of Cochinchina at the end of the 18th century

Source: (Tran, V.G, Tran, B.D, Nguyen, C.B, 1987, 160)



It can be seen that the closer the area is to Dang Ngoai, the higher the price of rice. This is because most of these lands are narrow, much less fertile than the newly discovered Gia Dinh Dong Nai area. Especially, the area around the capital is often short of food, Gia Dinh is the main source of food to ensure food security of the capital of Cochinchina. Traders from Thuan - Quang region came to the South to buy rice and bring it back to Phu Xuan by sea to resell it at a high price and make a profit. Although Le Quy Don has not yet set foot in Gia Dinh, through the story of a trader who has come here many times to buy goods, he has described quite accurately the journey, the method of buying and selling here: traders from Thuan Hoa go to Gia Dinh more than 10 times a year, usually going in September and October, coming back in April and May, it takes no more than 10 days and nights to arrive. Each trip usually goes through Nhat Le sea, submits to the management's province, enters the Eo gate, submits to the customs authority, receives a permit to go to the sea, arrives at Vung Tau at the top of Gia Dinh realm, where the island is inhabited, sets sail to dock, inquire where the harvest is good and bad, know where the new season comes to stay. Above, there is Can Gio estuary, in the middle, you enter Soai Rap estuary, below you enter Dai Cua Tieu. Every place is a sad boat gathering, bargaining for the price, the seller himself sends the family to carry the goods off the boat. One precious money can buy 16 measures of rice, each match is equal to 3 bowls of Ho Phien's mouth, into 30 bowls of copper. Nguyen Phuc Nghiep is correct in saying that thanks to the granary in the South, "The land of Dang Trong has enough salary food for the people, although Thuan Hoa and Quang Nam have continued population growth; especially in the early 18th century, they did not have to import rice from Siam and Cambodia" (Nguyen Phuc Nghiep, Tran Thi Thanh Hue, 2010). George Dutton also argues that: "It is certain, however, that the political center of the Nguyen dynasty became economically dependent on the southern lands of the Cochinchina kingdom" (Dutton, G.2019, 85). Or the French merchant P. Poivre in his diary dated February 27, 1749, also shared the same opinion: in the 18th century, the South was the largest granary of the whole territory of Cochinchina. This region has provided the whole country with a large amount of rice (courtesy of Huynh Lua, 2000, p.80). Not only supplying the domestic market with rice of the Gia Dinh region, but it is also a key export commodity of Cochinchina to the outside. However, the rice export market in the South is mostly in the hands of Chinese traders. Le Quy Don also said that: In Gia Dinh province, there is not much rice, but Chinese traders often go to those places to buy and bring to other regions to other countries for consumption (Dutton, G.2019, 442). Not only rice, but areca is also a commodity purchased and exported by Chinese merchants: part is brought to Guangdong for people to eat instead of tea, part is bought and brought by Western merchants. The European market, because areca nut with high tannin content is a necessary raw material for the dyeing and tanning industry which was very developed in Europe at the end of the 18th century (Thach, P, 2005, 343).

The development of commodity exchange led to the formation of many bustling markets in the Southern.

Saigon Market Area (later Cho Lon): 12 miles south of province (Gia Dinh), the road on both sides of the road on the left and the right is the highway, which is a big street straight along 3 roads

adjacent to the river wharf, the width of a road middle and a road along the river. Those roads cross each other like a square, the streets are adjacent to each other, the Chinese and people live together, 3 miles long. Goods sold in these streets include brocade, porcelain, pen and paper, treasures, books, medicine, powdered tea, etc. The items in the southern and northern blankets are not lacking. The north end of the main street has Quan Thanh Temple and three assembly halls Phuoc Kien, Cantonese, Trieu Chau, divided into left and right sides, on the west side of the main street is Thien Hau Temple, near the West, has On Lang Assembly Hall, the other end on the west side has Thien Hau Temple. South of the main street to the west is the Zhangzhou Assembly Hall. On New Year's Day, the moon, the three moons, the squirrels, the hanging lights, the clever competition like the fire tree, the star tree becoming brocade, the flamingo festival, the boisterous drum trumpets, the swaying men and women, It's a big urban and bustling city... In the east of the main street in the middle of the street, there is Binh An market, full of precious products in the mountains, sea, and fish, where, at night, lights are still on for sale (Trinh, H.D, 2005, 98-99).

My Tho Market: Around 1679, Lord Nguyen sent an officer named Van Trinh to guide Duong Ngan Dich's group, both soldiers and boats, to set up camp in My Tho, then built houses and gathered the Kinh and the Kinh people. Connecting to a constellation of neighbors... To the south of the headquarters is My Tho big street market, tiled houses with carved columns, tall communal houses and large pagodas, boats and boats at the intersections of rivers and the sea, crowded, making it a very prosperous and bustling metropolis (Trinh, H.D, 2005, p.119).

Ha Tien Street Market: In the east near the lake wharf, where there is a fish farm, to the north of the treasury, there is a council temple, to the north of the temple there is a boat repair workshop divided into horizontal and vertical areas with a large road as the limit, on the left side of the temple Quan Thanh is Dieu Kieu Street, at the beginning of the wharf there is a wooden bridge connecting to the sea bordering Dai Kim Island, the East of Dieu Kieu Street is Cho Cu Street, the East of Cho Cu Street is the To Su market street. Nine old imperial palaces, contiguous roads, communication streets, Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodian, Javanese... all reside in the area, boats and boats in the river and sea are busy going back and forth, what a place the capital is in such a corner of the sea (Trinh, H.D, 2005, p.129).

In addition, the Southern region has many other bustling urban markets. In Ha Tien, there is My Duc market (Ha Chau district), “consecutive streets, Kinh people and Chinese people gather” (National History of Nguyen Dynasty, 2006, 31); Sai Phu market (in Kien Giang district, known as Rach Gia market) “consecutive shops, busy merchant boats” (National History of Nguyen Dynasty, 2006, 31); San Chim Market (in Kien Giang district) “has a bird sanctuary, seabirds gather thousands of thousands, every year when the birds give birth, they collect a collection called the “bird yard tax”, they take the wings and feathers of the birds sold to Chinese merchants” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2006, p. 32)...In Gia Dinh, there is a Dieu Khien Market, established under Lord Nguyen Phuc Chu (1725-1738) “two miles away from Binh Duong district. To the south, the streets are densely packed, formerly in front of the control center, so it

is called like that” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2006, 265); Tan Canh Market is “6 miles south of Binh Duong district town, on a busy street” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2006, p.265)... In An Giang, there is a Hoa My market “customized to be called Bai Xao market in Phong district. Many and behind the headquarters of Ba Xuyen government, the shops are in a row, the Kinh and the Tho live together and work together to cook salt for sale” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2006, 234); Vinh Phuc market in Vinh Long (known as Sa Det market) “In the east of Vinh An district's capital, the market and riverside street are consecutively 5 miles long, under the river is a bamboo tower, the door is a list of houses. goods, or buy and sell silk and utensils, or trade-in oil fillings, otters, bamboo and rattan wood charcoal, salt and fish, on the banks and in the middle of the river, goods close together are a prosperous place” (National history shop of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2006, 223); In Vinh Long, there is a Long Ho market: “the market opened in the 8th year of the Rat, the 8th Tuc Tong (1732), on both sides overlooking the river and the streets, running for about 5 miles, there are boats under the wharf, and there are communal houses on the land. It's a big market street” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2006,168); Thien My market “meeting in the East of Tra On River, densely packed shops, gathering place for Kinh, Chinese and Cambodian people” (National History of Nguyen Dynasty, 2006, 1700) ...

<b>Formation time</b>	<b>Old market name</b>	<b>Current location</b>
Early eighteenth century	Saigon Market Street	Ho Chi Minh city
Late seventeenth century	My Tho Market	Tien Giang
Early eighteenth century	Ha Tien Market	Ha Tien
Early eighteenth century	Nha Be Market	Ho Chi Minh city
The reign of Lord Nguyen Phuc Chu (1725-1738)	Dieu Khien Market	Ho Chi Minh city
1732	Long Ho Market	Vinh Long
1744-1786	Gao Market	Tien Giang
Mid 18th century	An Binh Market	Tien Giang
1727	Nguyen Thuc Market	Hồ Chí Minh city
Early eighteenth century	Tan Lan Market	Bien Hoa, Dong Nai
Early eighteenth century	Luong Phu Market	Tien Giang

Statistical table of some markets formed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

Source: (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2006)

It can be seen that the development of trade in the South in the XVI-XVIII centuries with the birth of many bustling trading markets, crowded residents, exchanging many kinds of local agricultural products. Researcher Nguyen Dinh Dau made a statistic about the rich products that Dong Nai Gia Dinh region provides as follows: Gia Dinh products are “first rice, second areca, local people don't pick areca, let the areca berries age on their own. stay on the tree, then just collect areca nut and sell it to Chinese traders” (Le Quy Don, 2007, p.443). Alum sugar, lung sugar, and sand sugar

(Phuoc Chanh district, Bien Hoa town) each year sell to foreign merchant ships over 600,000 pounds, excluding honey and black sugar used in the country. Iron and steel for making all tools are mined in Long Thanh district, Bien Hoa town. Bien Hoa laterite in many mines. The worker digs out the kernel while the ground is still wet and soft, and according to the thickness and width of the ruler, cuts it into blocks, leaving it loose between the wind and the sun, and the earth is hard, and even with a hammer, it will not come in. used to build courtyards, poles, graves. White salt produced in Phuoc An district (present-day Long Dat), Bien Hoa; The salt is pinkish because the water is slightly red and yellow, produced in Ba Thac (near Bac Lieu today), Vinh Thanh town, and sold most to Cambodia. Lanh, silk, silk fabrics are made everywhere, but in Phuoc An district (Ba Ria), Bien Hoa is “the most beautiful and soft black linen in the country” (Trinh Hoai Duc, 2005, p.198).

Pepper, lotus seed, ivory, rhino horn, nutmeg, sandalwood, deer antlers, carpentry, beeswax, bird's nest, sea cucumber, tortoiseshell, myrtle, fish fin, fish ball, elephant meat, tendon, pangolin skin, mountain horse skin, otter skin, ai skin, buffalo skin, snakeskin, bird feathers, sea geese wings, feather fan, saltpeter, etc. shrimp, fish, areca, scallops, and other seafood, medicinal plants and spices cannot be mentioned (Nguyen Dinh Dau, 1992, p.94). The South is a rich land with a rich source of goods, which are also supplied to domestic and international traders. In Phu Bien Tap Luc, Le Quy Don emphasized the density of the land of Quang Nam (where the largest city of Hoi An is in Dang Trong) as the richest land in the country: merchant ships come here to buy any goods. , carrying hundreds of ships, not all (Nguyen, D.D, 1992, 432). However, it can be seen that the land of Dong Nai and Gia Dinh has the same potential, even here it is more abundant and rich in sources of goods, especially agricultural products. As a newly rediscovered land that was relatively favored by nature, in the 18th century, the South quickly became the largest agricultural production center of the country, providing food for the whole country of Cochinchine. and export.

### **The flow of trade in the South China Sea with the shaping of Southern culture**

The South is a newly discovered land, where the convergence of the immigrant parts for life has to leave their native homeland. Along with the development of commercial activities, the formation of pores in the South, traders from other regions and countries come here more and more. Traders from each place come here with different cultural traditions. The more the territory expands to the south, the easier it is for the Vietnamese to absorb new cultural elements. Li Tana calls this "localization". The South is an environment with many possibilities to choose from, the work of opening the realm is the “space for training” and developing socio-economic factors, especially culture. A new and more open cultural space far exceeds the narrow space within the narrow frameworks of traditional Vietnamese Confucianism (Li, T, 2012, 217). In our opinion: this not only comes from the nature of “localization”, but higher than that, it is the meeting between, contact, and cultural acculturation among the Vietnamese immigrants influenced by Confucianism (there was a contradiction between the two groups) exposure to the Cham culture in the Five Quang region with indigenous inhabitants imbued with Indianized culture, as well as

merchants from different countries. The result of that process has formed Southern people with many characteristics: curiosity and openness to new things, new ideas, more innocence and openness, an attitude that is not easy to bound by history and tradition (Li, T, 2012, 217).

Along with the development of commercial activities, the development of the port city increases the cultural exchange in the Southern region. Because of that, the South has become a land of cultural diversity, each community has its cultural nuances, and at the same time is an inevitable process of cultural interference between the diaspora in the process of community development. Break new lands. In the South, “people from the four directions gather, each house has its own customs” (Trinh, H.D, 2005, 179).

Trinh Hoai Duc (2005) has summarized the cultural diversity in the South as follows: "Gia Dinh is in the south of Vietnam when it was first exploited, people were living in our country and the Tang people, Westerners (countries like Phu Lang Sa, Hong Mao, Ma Cao are called Tay Duong) Cao Mien, Do Ba (Son man, in the mountains and islands, follow Bai Nhat religion (bow to the sun)(bow to the sun) in the 36 estuaries of Man Lat Gia, are called Do Ba), people from these countries come to live together in large numbers, but the clothes and utensils are all in the style of their ethnic group” (Trinh, H.D, 2005, 151).

It can be seen that the southern ports are the center of convergence and the place where strong cultural exchanges take place. Along with the footsteps of the Vietnamese, religions such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Mahayana Buddhism were spread, along with traditional indigenous religions and beliefs that have existed and changed for a long time (Balamon - Hinduism, Theravada Buddhism, etc.), in addition to the religious beliefs of the Chinese, Japanese and Western communities, have converged in the newly discovered land. These beliefs and religions are not opposed, but mixed, creating diversity and openness in the religion of the southernmost land of Cochinchina. Condominas commented: “The southern expansion of Vietnam along the length of Vietnam has made the religion here more diverse. First of all, the Cham people live on a small coastal plain with the religious beliefs of Brahmanism and Islam; then there were the Khmer followers of Theravada Buddhism in the Mekong Delta. These three religions, together with elements of early Indochinese culture, combine to form a mixed theory that is more profoundly overlapping perhaps than the Vietnamese Three Religions” (Condominas, G, 2003, 32).

The development of commercial activities in urban ports also contributes to creating the openness of society in the new land, reflected in the ease of residents in the South to accept behaviors that are different from the traditional ones such as piracy, using statue soldiers, using Chinese forces, especially the slave trade (Li, T, 1998). At the end of the 18th century, Le Quy Don described this phenomenon as a common occurrence in the South, especially with the development of trading activities. So, after merging the Gia Dinh government into Dang Trong, Lord Nguyen besides recruiting "wealth people" in Thuan-Quang area, also "collected sons and daughters of Moi people from upstream areas and sold them for work. slaves (black people with curly hair are Moi real, cost 20 francs, slightly white ones cost only 10 francs), let themselves get married, raise children, raise them as people, plow the fields for a career” (Le, Q.D, 2007, 442). It can be seen that the

Nguyen lord was familiar with slavery, and trade slavery became so normal that the court set very specific prices.

The socio-cultural openness makes it easier for the South to absorb favorable factors from the outside, in harmony with the flow of foreign trade in the world in the “era of great trade”, easily receiving the wave of Chinese people are leaving the country after political events to run down to Southeast Asia...

## **Conclusion**

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, along with the prosperity of regional and international maritime trade, commercial activities developed rapidly changing the face of the Southern region. From a land that was almost deserted until the sixteenth century, by the end of the seventeenth century many trading centers and bustling cities were formed: My Tho, Dong Nai, Saigon... and especially Ha Tien port town. Trade and exchange activities in these urban areas are not inferior to those in the central region's ports, even superior in many aspects. The development of trade and exchange of goods, along with the appearance of the southernmost ports of Dang Trong, created an important impulse of the Cochinchina government in the process of completing the Southern cause. up. At the same time, the port town is also the place where cultural exchange and acculturation activities take place between communities from many different regions and countries. A colorful cultural picture but also with very specific characteristics of a newly discovered land was started from the major ports and then spread throughout the southern lands following the open footsteps of the community here.

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