

Dawn of the japan vietnam relationship early moder period

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Abstrak

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This paper aims to clarify the early contact between Japan and Vietnam both Tonkin and Cochinchina during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries by investigating letters sent from Vietnam to Japan. In order to better understand the letters and their background, a paleographical approach is adopted. The oldest letter was sent from Tonkin by Nguyen Canh Doan, a high ranking military officer residing in Nghệ An Province. The addressee, King of Japan, is a fictitious person, which indicates that Vietnamese officials did not understand contemporary Japan. Two entrepreneurs took advantage of this gap in knowledge to deceive NguyEn Canh Đoan into sending the letter to a nonexistent King. The second and third letters were sent from Nguyen Hoang to Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Terasawa Masanari (a chief officer of Nagasaki), not to Tokugawa Ieyasu.

From investigations of the format and terminology of these three as well as other letters, it is clear that both the Trịnh King and Nguyen lords aimed to relativize the authority of the Le emperor and to promote their status by arrogating the title of An Nam Quoc vương (King of Annam). The Tokugawa Shogun also utilized the exchange of letters with a foreign monarch to enhance his authority.