

Vietnamese Images on the Japanese Soldiers
(1940-1945) through the Angle of the Five
Virtues of Confucianism*

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I. Introduction

As the first Southeast Asian country occupied by the Japanese army in 1940, Vietnamese people experienced the longest period of the Japanese rule in the region. The Japanese soldiers were liberators who defeated the oppressive French, but they were also the greedy rice-grabbers resulting in the notorious famine that caused millions of casualties in northern area of Vietnam. The five years of Japanese occupation, and their harsh and clumsy rule in Vietnam was enough for the self-respectful Vietnamese to form various kinds of memory about the Japanese domination. The memories have been illustrated in novels, poems, and oral discourse.

* This article is based on the author's workshop papers (July/2005, Jakarta; June/2006, Seoul; November/2006, Kuala Lumpur) with the similar titles under the overall subject of "The People's Experiences during the Japanese Occupation in Southeast and East Asian Literature" supported by the Toyota Foundation.

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In reality, however, it is not easy to find published literature works produced in this period. The reason for the difficulty was a strict control either of French or of Japanese authority on the publication and the press. As far as I know, the works well known to Vietnamese people these days, so that influenced and represented the Vietnamese memory on the Japanese soldiers were written a bit later, after 1945.

Among them, I chose the earliest ones as main sources, ‘Boui Chieu Xam (A Grey Evening)(1945)’ and ‘Ngoi Lua (A Flame) (1945)’ of the author Nguyen Hong, who produced numbers of short stories on the Japanese occupation period and famine as its result. Of the short stories on these issues in Vietnam, Nguyen Hong's occupy over 90% in number.

Nguyen Hong was one of the realism group writers of modern Vietnam. Born in the North, he participated in the anti-French movement and actively worked for the revolution. He was the member of the Viet Minh, which had been trying to control literature from 1943 by the declaration of ‘the Direction of the Literature’ (Van Hoc Dai Cuong), so that he could be categorized into the group called ‘the Writers with the Idea of the Contemporary Affairs Critic (Nha Van Hien Thuc Phe Phan) (Nguyen Dang Manh 2004: 467). However, his works at this time at least, do not show any influence of political ideology. His way of description either on Japanese or on Vietnamese is just realistic based on his own experience and a fresh memory on the period of Japanese rule over Vietnam.

To write an article on history by the analysis of the short stories

is quite challenging work. Especially for the research of modern period that left lots of historical documents, to use literary works seem to be useless. So that no attempt of this kind of work has been made as far as I know. In addition, literature analysis can be regarded as the job of the literature researcher, not of the historian.

But there are something historical documents cannot fully find out. They are emotion, physical tendency, and the depth of animosity in front of the deaths of two millions by hunger, by which the direction of the history was drastically changed with the success of Viet Minh in earning the hearts of the poor peasants in the north and north-central region of Vietnam. Without understanding the systematic animosity of the peasants against the Japanese, it is very difficult to comprehend the reason why Viet Minh could become powerful so quickly. For example, David Marr, in dealing with the issue of the Japanese occupation of Vietnam by the well known historical facts and documents such as Viet Minh pamphlets, does not seem to be successful in picking out the reason for the side of the Vietnamese peasants why they actively took part in Viet Minh against the Japanese (Marr 1985: 111). A Japanese historian with the cooperation of a Vietnamese historian compiled a book mainly filled with interviews and horrible photos without any appropriate analysis to discuss this period (Van Tao and Furuta Moto 1995). For them, photos must have been more effective means for the history of this crazy period.

In order to depict the substantial emotion of the Vietnamese

peasants against the Japanese occupants, I chose a way to link history with literature, hoping that this experiment would be able to contribute in enriching the historical context of this period.

During the years of the Japanese occupation, the sentiment of the Southeast Asians towards the Japanese can be neatly summarized as ‘from admiration to hatred.’

But the case in Vietnam should be regarded very exceptional among those of the Southeast Asians because the attitude was strongly interwoven with their previous experience with Japan due to the cultural heritage they had shared, to some extent, such as Confucianism, Chinese characters, Chinese classics, and the regular tributary system to China. In other words, they knew about Japan more than any other Southeast Asian country did.

For me, the ‘admiration’ was not the precise word to represent the Vietnamese sentiment toward the Japanese soldiers. It was rather ‘an ambivalent curiosity,’ than ‘admiration,’ making a new sentence: ‘Ambivalent curiosity was developed to hatred.’ For example, the next narrative, based on her father’s memory, of a Vietnamese author, Duong Van Mai Elliott, will make us easily catch the reality: "In an office there were two Vietnamese mandarins, and a high rank French official who had run into the room to hide. In a second, a Japanese captain came in, bowed to the Vietnamese mandarins politely, went straight for the Frenchman, hit the head of the French with the hilt of his sword. The French official lay crumpled on the floor, where the Japanese had thrown him with a deft judo move. Blood streaming down his face, he took the blows meekly without any protest [...] horrified

[...] the Vietnamese mandarins dared not intervene [...]." (Elliott 1999: 104-105)

This is a miniature of the whole situation at that time. Japanese were superior to the French in terms of military power. It provides Vietnamese a positive image on the Japanese army to some sense. But the Japanese seemed to be so brutal enough to horrify the Vietnamese that the latter would feel the next victim of the former could be themselves. No admiration can be found in the horrible scene mentioned above though the Japanese soldier was so polite to the Vietnamese mandarins. Rather, the view of the Vietnamese towards the Japanese was more negative than positive from the beginning

Some Vietnamese called the Japanese "*oai*", the same Chinese word "*wae*" that Korean had also used to indicate the Japanese with despising manners. When the disaster of the famine (1945) was culminating with the huge number of casualties of two millions, Vietnamese clearly found the clumsy nature of the Japanese and began to call the Japanese "Fascists" and "dwarf bandits."

Nguyen Hong's two stories that were published slightly after the end of the Japanese occupation and the disaster of the famine as a result, put weight much more on the later impression than the earlier image. It is unavoidable that my research mainly focuses on the later image, the hatred, as long as I should depend on Nguyen Hong's stories.

But I will check additional stories written by different authors and in the different time which would inform us more of the earlier

image, too. In addition, Nguyen Hong also gives us some elements relevant to the earlier image on the Japanese soldiers such as military power, discipline, bravery, modernity, and a deep compassion as human beings.

By this way, I will show the transition of the Vietnamese attitude from the curiosity to the hatred.

As the cause to the change, I pay attention to the Confucian values that had been shared by the Chinese classic world peoples: especially, the Five Virtues of the Confucianism, benevolence (*nhan*), righteousness (*nghia*), manners (*le*), wisdom (*tri*), and trust (*tin*). Among the peoples of the Chinese classic world, the Japanese was a bit exceptional in terms of the possessing the Five Virtues as the daily life ethics in proper manners. As Ruth Benedict pointed out, they even distorted the virtue of the 'benevolence (*nhan* in Vietnamese, *ren* in Chinese, *jin* in Japanese)' as to apply it to the ugly behavior of bandits or rascals, while the righteousness (*nghia* in Vietnamese, *y* in Chinese, *ki* in Japanese) was even conceptualized as the compulsory duty (Benedict 1982: 156-157). For the Vietnamese, however, the five virtues consisted (even now) important daily life criteria, and they must have expected the Virtues from the Japanese to a certain level as one of the members of the Chinese classic world.

To see the background of the Vietnamese sentiment on the Japanese, it is necessary to review how Vietnamese had understood Japanese until the beginning of the 20th century before the Japanese occupation.

II. Vietnamese View on the Japanese in Traditional Time

As well known to the present academics, Vietnamese commercial ports in the traditional time were frequently visited by the Japanese trade ships, though the official relation of the state to state such as the exchange of the court missions was never established. Yet, we cannot find any concrete evidence of Vietnamese view on Japan in the historical documents from the Vietnamese side.

Instead of that, we have some anecdotal stories about the relationship between the two peoples, and indirect materials written by outsiders including Western missionaries and Korean.

It was during the 16th century when the Japanese contacted Vietnamese most frequently, and this situation lasted until the middle of the next century. Especially in Hoi An which was prosperous during this time as the international port city, Japanese were bustling in such a level to form the Japanese street along with the Chinese street, contributing to form Hoi An's another name Faifo (two streets). They were diligent traders and faithful business partners for Vietnamese side. In addition the Japanese were sincere Buddhists to build a fascinating Buddhist temple which still survives with the name of 'Temple of the Japanese Bridge.' One of the Japanese ship owner, Kimura Mazudaro maintained so friendly and sincere relationship with a Vietnamese king (Nguyen Phuc Nguyen), as to be able to marry a Vietnamese princess in 1619 (Yang et al 2003: 105-107). In addition, the

Japanese in Hoi An maintained an enough reputation for the bravery to impress an Italian missionary, Cristoforo Borri who stayed in this area during 1621-1622, to describe Japanese were so brave, though they were shorter than Vietnamese, so that they did not care about losing lives in any dangerous situation (Borri 1997: 45; 48-49).

At the same time, however, the Japanese marshal bravery was also understood as the source of cruelty, the aggressiveness to other countries, and even the ignorance. In this period, Vietnamese were fully aware of the Japanese invasion (1592-1599) of Korea which the Vietnamese intellectuals were regarding as a 'civilised' country in terms of Chinese classic learning and Confucian ideology. Court missions from both countries had frequent chances to meet in the capital of China, and they occasionally stayed together in the same guest house called 'Ngoc Ha Quan' in Vietnamese for several months. During this time, they exchanged literary works such as prose and verse in Chinese letters. For example the famous Vietnamese scholar Phung Khac Khoan and Yi Su Gwang from Korea left tens of prose and verse, and these outputs were circulated in both countries among the Confucian intellectuals (Choe 1966: 70-99).

A Korean gentry, Jo Wan Byeok, was captured by the Japanese army during the war (1592-1599), and was brought to Japan. Due to his literacy in Chinese letters, he was used as one of the trade agent by Japanese, so that he had chances to visit Vietnam three times during the beginning of the 17th century. Once he revealed his story to the Vietnamese intellectuals, they expressed a great

extent of the sympathy towards his situation by organizing warm parties for him, and by showing Yi Su Gwang's writings that were popular among them (Choe 1966: 98-100). For the Vietnamese, Japanese were good at with military skill and commercial activities, but must have been a blind invader to destroy a 'civilised' Confucian country, to capture scholars and to exploit these precious intellectuals as trade agents.

In the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Japanese appeared with the military strength to the eyes of Vietnamese as the result of the China-Japan war and Russia-Japan war. In addition, at this time, Japan was regarded by Vietnamese as a civilized (according to Western standards) and modern country which was worth to learn. One of the sequences was the "Dong Du (Study overseas in Japan) Movement" initiated by a famous nationalist movement leader Phan Boi Chau.

However, the hope to learn from Japan proved an illusion, when Phan Boi Chau and his students were kicked off by Japanese authority, and by the developing situation in which Japan extended its militarily aggressive policy not only in Korea but also in China. As their ancestors had maintained solidarities through the Confucianism, the 20th century leaders of Vietnam shared common ideas of nationalism of liberation movement or communism with those of China and of Korea. But Japanese solders at this time were the members of the front group to oppress the communism.

In 1940, the Japanese soldiers put their steps on Vietnam

claiming that they are the 'liberators' of Vietnam. However, most of the Vietnamese were not so dull to welcome and respect the Japanese soldiers as liberators. Some of Vietnamese, in fact, hoped the Japanese to support for independence of Vietnam and willingly associated with the Japanese claiming that "We East Asians both Vietnamese and Japanese were children of the gurus Confucius and Mencius (Nguoi A Dong ta, con chau cu Khong minh)!" (Nguyen Dinh Thi 1993: 648) Especially when the Japanese presented independence to the Vietnamese people after the *coup de force* of the March, 1945, many of the Vietnamese were fascinated for a while by the Japanese decision. But, as Marr pointed out, even pro-Japanese intellectuals were uneasy at the lack of progress by the June of that year (Marr 1985: 121). Major tendency was the change from the ambivalent (between negative and positive but with certain hope) curiosity based on their traditional view to the hatred as time passed.

In the next part, examples which escalated the Vietnamese hatred against Japan would be presented based on the two short stories of Nguyen Hong. The examples will be grouped into the violations of the five Confucianism Virtues.

III. Violators of the Five Virtues

Contents of Two Stories

First, I will briefly introduce the contents of the <A Grey

Evening> and <A Flame> published in 1945. The former describes Japanese soldiers who were destroying their reputation in front of the Vietnamese civilians. The author's animosity goes to the extremity to portrait a Japanese soldier as the 'poisonous monkey (*con khi doc*).' But the author does not miss humanitarian view that this soldier also has human mind and implicates that he is also the victim of war. Finding out a strange looking man like 'a man of forest,' he asks by himself: 'No, such kind of man should be in a certain forest or in a certain mountain of Korea, of China, or in any other different country. Japanese cannot be like that. That guy is also short, but [...].' This sentences imply Japanese are different from these two neighbouring peoples of China and Korea even in the outlook. But it also has an implication that the Japanese should be hated selectively. The other day, the teller hears of a story of an old Japanese soldier who is supposed to be the strange man he accused of a 'poisonous monkey.' In the night, the soldier was sitting in a coffee stall with his young officer. After the drinking coffee without saying anything, the soldier takes out a photo and a small toy from his pocket and put them on the table. The soldier began to sob. Realizing those two items are of the soldier's baby in Japan, the officer also sobs. Abruptly the soldier take out the officer's pistol and kills himself. The teller talks to himself 'the poisonous monkey, he is also a father like me [...]. he kills himself because of sadness, suffer, and pains, doesn't he?' (Nguyen Hong 1945a)

But in <A Flame>, the author abandons any sympathy on the Japanese as human beings. A group of Japanese rushes into a

village to round up rice. A woman persistently protests it, and the Japanese chop down her arms with her baby.

Violations

The story teller of the <A Grey Evening> was walking along the street of the city centre. By judging from his mentioning that people were suffering hunger, we easily guess that the background of the story was during the end of the War. He encountered a group of Japanese soldiers on trucks. From the eyes of this hungry Vietnamese the trucks and canons on those trucks were so big, prestigious, and threatening. This is an important setting that the material power of Japan is admirable. But the material superiority from the Japanese side was not an important element to draw Vietnamese respect. In terms of material advancement, there were also other countries, such as the USA USSR, and Germany etc. In addition, this is not the elements of the Five Virtues of the Confucianism.

The earlier image of the Japanese disciplines already went away in this story about the Japanese soldiers on the trucks. Once they found a public tap water, the soldiers disorderly jumped down and intercepted the waiting Vietnamese for the couple of buckets of water. They were noisy, thus made a big contrast with the polite and well mannered Vietnamese who were calmly looking at the rude soldiers. This is the violation of the *Je* the manners. The Japanese soldier who chased French official and hit the head of the French with the hilt of his sword in front of the Vietnamese

high rank mandarins horrifying them cited in the part of introduction should also be judged as the violator of the manners despite his polite bowing to the Vietnamese mandarins.

This kind of rude manner of the Japanese soldiers competing with weaker people for small interests (water in this case) has been introduced very often in different stories. Japanese soldiers buy goods in Vietnamese shops but pay by their own paper money (military payment certificate) that the Vietnamese owners don't know how to use them, and some of soldiers buy and eat food from a poor female vendor, don't pay, but just giggle in front of the woman who is asking them to pay (Nguyen Dinh Thi 1960: 647; 661). A Japanese soldier slaps and kicks a boy selling popsicles on a street of Hanoi probably instead of paying for his demand (Elliott 1999: 105). This image strongly matches with Vietnamese term "dwarf bandits" (ibid), and it is far from the Virtue of *nghĩa*, righteousness.

The most serious action to violate the Virtue of righteousness was the exploiting of rice from poor Vietnamese peasants, leading to the huge loss of the Vietnamese lives.

The cause of the famine is attributed to several reasons. One is the storms of October and November 1944 in northern and north-central Vietnam. The second is Japanese policy to force peasants to shift some of their arable land to cultivation of jute, hemp, peanuts and castor oil plants instead of corn, potato, and beans. The third one is the confiscation of rice by Japanese soldiers. In addition, the U.S. air-crafts' bombing northern Indochina resulted in the curtailment of rice transporting from the

Mekong delta both by sea and land (Marr 1985: 110-113).

Among the four reasons, Japanese were responsible to the twos, the shifting and confiscating of rice in such a depressed situation of the bad weather. It was the opening of the 'rice war' between Japanese soldiers and Vietnamese peasants. The teller of the <A Grey Evening> screams "they robbed us of land and take all of grains in the bad season." (Nguyen Hong 1945a: 367). In more detail way in the <A Flame>, a woman in a village which had already been hit by the bad harvest protests in front of the Japanese soldiers who were accompanied by the Vietnamese interpreters and some officials in the district level: "I don't afraid of district officials. Japanese official I don't fear, either. I don't fear of anybody. They come here [...]. To take all grains of my mother and children [...] I will protect the grains of my village. If we give them all grains, all the villagers will die of hunger [...]." Eventually, her left arm and half of the body of her baby who was in her left arm were chopped down by a Japanese, and grains were taken to the Japanese big military trucks (Nguyen Hong 1945b: 394-395).

At this point, the Japanese sword and trucks that used be the important motifs of their bravery and modernity are nothing but the cruelty against the weak, and the carriages of the exploited grains from the hungry peasants. *Nhan*, benevolence, was never expected from the Japanese occupants in this 'rice war.' For the Vietnamese peasants who had been accustomed to the benevolence of the officials and even of the landlords in the previous time, if we borrow James Scott's 'Moral Economy'

paradigm, the action of the Japanese was absolutely strange. Though the peasants had been so rational, if we think according to Samuel Popkin's 'Rational Peasants' theory, the Vietnamese peasants could not find any breakthrough at this dead end.

One of sequences is described in this way: "Starving peasants flocked to the cities to beg for food that no one could spare [...]. The streets were littered with dying peasants [...] my mother saw carts piled with dead bodies passing by our house every morning [...]. After eating everything could be eaten – grass, leaves, roots, dogs, and rats – some people resorted to cannibalism [...]. Whenever my father had to travel, he would avoid eating in restaurants or stalls along the way, because he could not be sure whether the meat he was served was rat meat or human flesh" (Elliott 1999: 107-108).

In the history of Vietnam the explosive power of peasants has been quite strong. Unless you buy peasants' hearts, you never be able to be successful either in politics or in war. If you buy their hearts, however, you can get the country. Vietnam has the exceptional history in which a peasant rebellion, Tay Son movement in other word, succeeded to form a dynasty in the 18th century, and another dynasty was willingly did land reform to redistribute land for peasants by confiscating land from landlords during the 19th century.

In contrast, Japanese army deprived the Vietnamese of rice. It was the way of losing the hearts of peasants, far from another Virtue of *tri* (wisdom), though it is often argued that one of the intentions of the Japanese rice grabbing policy was to weaken the

potential strength of the peasant against Japanese army. As a result, the unwise policy of the Japanese army helped the peasants to support Viet Minh, which appealed and led the northern peasants to attack Japanese grain warehouses.

Another unwise policy of Japanese army from the view of the Vietnamese peasants was to force the peasants to plant industrial crops for their military use instead of grains in the northern and north-central region where the rice product was always not enough to feed the dense population. In addition, the Japanese are described not to be able to calculate the economical way of planting. For example, in Nguyen Dinh Thi's *Vo Bo* (Broken Horizon), an old peasant politely suggests to the Japanese soldiers they should wait for a while until the corn crop on the field is ripen before the jute be planted, otherwise the villagers suffer hunger. But the Japanese officer did not listen to this suggestion and just pushed his order without any deliberate consideration (Nguyen Dinh Thi 1993: 188-189). It was an example of 'unwise' policy, which resulted in the famine.

Instead, the Japanese officer delivers a cunning promise: "Just plant well. When the harvest time reaches, the Great Japan will purchase all of them, and will pay with high price. We won't let the peasants suffer [...] don't need to worry about hunger [because you cannot harvest the corns], [we will] order district officials to care for the peasants to have enough grain to eat" (Nguyen Dinh Thi 1993: 188-189). This is telling a lie, which betrays the last Virtue, *tin* (trust).

IV. Conclusion

In this article I argued the earlier image of the Vietnamese on Japanese soldiers was not an admiration, but an ambivalent curiosity. The curiosity was due to the fact that they had been aware of the Japanese from the experience in history. From the sixteenth century, Vietnamese accumulated enough information about Japanese character and tendency. In the field of commercial relationship, they were reliable partners. But they had aggressive attitude whenever needed and had enough military power to achieve their goal. In addition, Vietnamese kept hearing about Japanese activities of the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century in relation to foreign countries such as Ryukyu (present Okinawa), Korea, and China. Thus, Vietnamese were just curious with the Japanese occupants what they will do to Vietnam at the beginning stage though the Japanese kept saying that they would help Vietnam. They could be another conquerors. It was a negative perspective. But many of Vietnamese expected Japanese role to weaken or remove French rule which had lasted over 100 years either by friendly intention or by Japanese own interests. In any case it was a positive perspective.

The ambivalent curiosity, however, did not last long. As the Vietnamese found out the Japanese were going to negative direction, the curiosity quickly gives its way to hatred.

Vietnamese short stories on the subject of Japanese activities during 1940-1945 mainly reflect this sentiment of hatred.

Especially the 'rice war' between the Japanese army and Vietnamese peasants was a fatal factor that escalated the tension between the two peoples. But the 'rice war' was a part of the causes for the Vietnamese dissatisfaction.

I analyzed the causes of the negative sentiment according to the well known five Virtues of Confucianism which was traditionally shared by four Northeast Asian Chinese classic countries. Interestingly Vietnamese were criticizing Japanese soldiers, in the stories, through the angle of the Five Virtues though the writers did not seem to be realizing that they were using this angle. Vietnamese had expectation towards Japanese behaviors based on Confucian value. Other element such as religious concern, ideological confrontation, cultural clash, ethnic distinction, and sexual abuse was completely ignored in those stories to arouse the sentiment of hatred.

The transition from the ambivalent curiosity to the hatred was the process of disappointments from the side of Vietnamese. It was the series of breaking downs of expectations. Needless to say, the expectation was based on the Confucian value that the Vietnamese believed that they had been sharing it with the Japanese. When the expectation was betrayed, reactional hatred becomes more furious. The rapid growth of the Viet Minh can be attributed to this furious hatred towards the Japanese occupants.

Key words: Vietnam, Japanese occupation, Nguyen Hong, famine, 'rice war', Viet Minh.

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<한글초록>

일본군에 대한 베트남인의 이미지 (1940-1945) - 유교적 '오상 (五常)'의 각도를 통해 살펴봄

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이 논문은 베트남 문학에서 일본군 점령 시기가 어떻게 그려졌는가를 논하고 있다. 일반적으로 동남아시아에서 일본군의 점령을 보는 시각은 초기의 '존경심' 또는 '경외'에서 '증오'로 바뀌었다고 얘기되지만 베트남의 경우는 매우 예외적이라고 필자는 주장한다. 베트남에서는 애초부터 '존경심'이라든지 '경외'는 존재하지 않고 단지 '모호한 우려'로부터 '극도의 증오심'으로 변화했다는 것이다. 이는 베트남이 동남아시아의 다른 어떤 나라보다도 역사적으로 일본의 속성에 대해서 잘 알고 있었고, 일본군 점령 말기 동남아시아의 그 어떤 나라에서 보다도 참혹한 재난 (일본군의 쌀 수탈에 의한 200만 가까운 아사자가 생김)을 경험했기 때문이었다. 이러한 심리 변화는 문학작품 속에서 매우 잘 드러나고 있는데, 이러한 정서를 파악함으로써 우리는 일본군 점령기를 거치면서 왜 베트남 북부 및 북중부 지역에서 베트남인의 세력이 급성장했는지를 명확히 이해할 수 있다.

본고는 이러한 변화를 일본군 점령기를 그린 대표적 문학작품인 응우옌 홍 (Nguyen Hong)의 '회색빛 저녁(Buoi Chieu Xam)'과 '불꽃 (Ngoi Lua)'을 중심으로 분석하고 있다. 문학 작품에서 그리는

내용은 물론 작가의 상상력의 소산이다. 때문에 문학작품의 내용 그 자체가 사료일 수는 없다. 필자가 관심을 갖는 것은 문학작품의 내용 그 자체가 아니라 그 내용을 만들어낸 작가의 의도 및 작가에게 체현된 베트남인의 정서, 전통, 그리고 시대상이다.

제 1장에서는 베트남인의 전통적 일본인관을 이해하기 위해 역사 속에서 보이는 양국의 관계 및 베트남 지식인들의 일본 이해 방식을 고찰한다. 베트남인에게 일본인은 성실한 교역자며 신실한 불교도이고 또 매우 용맹스러운 전사들이었다. 그러나 한편으로 일본인은 잔인성, 침략성을 가진 민족이었음도 베트남인은 충분히 이해하고 있었다. 특히나 20세기 초 베트남 민족주의자들이 동유 운동 과정에서 직접 겪은 일본상과 일본의 조선, 및 중국 침략은 상호 결합되어 견고한 부정적 일본인상을 형성했다.

제 2장에서는, 부정적 일본인상이 어떻게 문학 속에서 구체적으로 그려지고 있는가를 살펴계 되는데, 이를 위해서는 문학작품 속의 부정적 내용 그 자체를 수집하기 보다는 선악의 판단 근거가 되는 유교적 가치 틀에 주목했다. 유교적 이념이 보편적이었던 베트남에서는 유교적 가치가 선악의 판단 기준이 된다고 필자는 생각하기 때문이며 이 기준에 의한 비판이 훨씬 더 독자 대중에게 강하게 호소할 수 있었다고 여기기 때문이다.

물론 베트남과 일본은 유교적 영향의 정도 차가 있지만, 중요한 것은, 베트남인들은 일본도 같은 한자/유교 문화권이며 ‘공맹의 자식’이라는 인식이 있었다는 사실이다. 작가가 의도했든 의도하지 않았든 가장 기본적 생활 덕목인 인, 의, 예, 지, 신이 선악 판단의 준거 틀로 문학작품의 구성에 사용되었음을 우리는 발견할 수 있는데, 이는 매우 특이한 현상이다. 일본 점령군을 부정적으로 묘사하는 다른 나라의 문학작품에서 보이는 종교적 마찰, 강간, 종족적 차별 등의 요소는 베트남 문학작품에서 일본군을 악의적으로 묘사하는데 거의

사용되지 아니한다. 단지 유교적 가치의 위반이 일본군의 악행 근거로 묘사될 뿐이다.

주제어: 베트남, 일본점령기, 응우옌 흥, 기근, '쌀전쟁', 베트남