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*Part Three: Economic and Cultural Issues*

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# Japanese in Tonkin during the First-Half of the Twentieth Century

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## Introduction

Having pacified Vietnam in the late nineteenth century, the French colonialists had the immediate objective of laying a solid basis for their colonial ruling regime in all of French Indochina. Administratively, Vietnam was divided into three regions — Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina — within the framework of the Indochinese Union. Among foreign residents in Vietnam, the Japanese had a presence from a relatively early period. They were engaged in various economic activities. Over time, they were influenced by the changing policies of their home country and the French colonial administration. In this context, the Japanese in Vietnam had to readjust their attitude and life patterns, in accordance with the new regional and local conditions.

Compared with the case of the Chinese,<sup>1</sup> relatively few accounts exist concerning the Japanese in colonial the Vietnam in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There may be several reasons for this scarcity of related documents. One is the shortage of archival documents. Another is the characteristics of the Japanese residents: generally speaking, they lived quietly without flocking together in a group. They tried their best to adapt themselves to the indigenous society.

This essay analyzes the changes in Japanese life patterns in Tonkin during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainly based on the newly discovered documents at the National Archives Center No 1 in Hanoi (TTLTQG1).

## 1. Statistical information concerning the Japanese

Faifo (Hội An) in the 17<sup>th</sup> century is a very famous name for researchers because it was home to a large number of the Japanese in Vietnam. Nevertheless, it is not easy to confirm the moment that the Japanese took their presence in colonial Vietnam. During the colonial period, Hải Phòng and Hanoi in Tonkin and Saigon in Cochinchina were the major destinations for Japanese immigrants. During the period of World War I, according to David Marr, the Japanese tried to penetrate into Southeast Asian markets that had been restricted by the Western colonialists. In Indochina, a young businessman named Matsushita Mitsuhiro begun his business in 1912, initially engaging in modest imports of Japa-

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<sup>1</sup> In Tonkin in 1930 there were 35,000 Chinese (0.4% total population), mostly in Hanoi, Hải Phòng and Nam Định; Philippe Papin, *A History of Hanoi* (Hà Nội: Mỹ Thuật Publishers, 2009), p. 353.

nese pottery, toys and *bric-à-brac* and later expanding his commercial activities to include a wider variety of commodities. However, after the end of the war, Matsushita had to reduce his activities substantially, with the return of French competitors.<sup>2</sup>

In his informative research, Frédéric Roustan<sup>3</sup> has described the daily life of Japanese residents in French Indochina. They lived quietly, due to the restrictions posed by the French colonialists, who had pacified all of Indochina.

As for the professions of the Japanese residents in Vietnam, there existed a lot of *moussmé* (literally girls, in actuality prostitutes called generally *karayuki*). They were the first immigrants from Japan to Vietnam. Others were interpreters, businesspersons, staff members of the Japanese Consulate, and so on.

The archival documents dated 21 July, 2 September 1898, and 28 November 1898 list some of the Japanese as below<sup>4</sup>:

	Name	Residence	Profession	Duration of stay
1.	Nakashima Jetousaburo (from Okayama)	Hanoi Hotel, cotton filature Bourgouin-Meiffre	Engineer	3 months
2.	Kijuro Yoshimitsu	Japanese brothel (rue de Cuirs, phố Hàng Da)	Trader	4 or 9 days
3.	Alasaakira Nakamoura	Hanoi	Business traveler	A few days

According to the report of 28 November 1898 by *Gendarme Dupré*, Nakashima Jetousaburo spent 3 months in Hanoi, and then visited Hải Phòng from 18 to 28 November 1898. Now, he had no job, staying at a brothel on Hàng Chén.

Another report on 13 June 1900 by the *Gendarmerie nationale-Compagnie de l'Indochine* (Arrondissement du Tonkin and Annam) listed the Japanese staying in Tonkin as below.<sup>5</sup>

	Name	Sex	Resident places	Profession
1.	Araki	Male	Hải Phòng	Tenant of the brothel
2.	Hoyaso	Female	Đáp Cầu	Domestic
3.	Koshiwagi-Tora	Female	Móng Cái	Tenant of the brothel
4.	Mida	Male	Hải Phòng	Tenant of the brothel
5.	Madagota	Male	Hưng Hóa	Tenant of the brothel
6.	Masajira Sindo	Male	Hà Nội	Tenant of the brothel
7.	Ochia-Kasaburo	Male	Hà Nội	Embroiderer of wool
8.	Oquamessan	Female	Hòn Gai	Domestic servant
9.	Shirakawa	Male	Hòn Gai	Photographer
10.	Va-Da	Male	Hà Nội	Tenant of the brothel
11.	Kijuro-Yoshimitsu	Male	Hà Nội	Knickknacks merchant
12.	Tsichi-Yoshimitsu	Male	Hà Nội	Knickknacks merchant

<sup>2</sup> David Marr, "World War II and the Vietnamese Revolution" in Alfred W. McCoy ed., *Southeast Asia under Japanese Occupation* (New Haven: Yale Council on Southeast Asian Studies, 1980), p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> Frédéric Roustan, «Français, Japonais et société coloniale du Tonkin: exemple des représentations coloniales», *French Colonial History*, 6 (2005): 179–204; "Moussmés and French Colonial Culture: Making Japanese Women's Bodies Available in Indochina," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, 7, 1 (2012): 52–105; "From Oriental Studies to South Pacific Studies: The Multiple Origins of Vietnamese Studies in Japan, 1881 to 1951," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, 6, 1 (2011): 1–42; "Migrants japonais dans le Vietnam colonial 1885–1954: entre catégorisations juridiques et catégorisations visuelles," *Migrations société*, no. 128 (2010): 51–66.

<sup>4</sup> RST 84218. A/s contrôles des Japonais et Coréens venus à Tonkin (RST documents are held in TLTQG1 Hanoi).

<sup>5</sup> RST 9280. Renseignements sur des sujets Japonais établis au Tonkin.

Another document in 1900 showed the number of foreigners in Hanoi as follows:

The population of Hanoi in 1900:	
• European (680 men, 219 women, 189 children) . . . . .	1,088
• Chinese . . . . .	2,000
• Cantonese . . . . .	1,800
• Fukienese . . . . .	200
• <b>Indian and Japanese</b> . . . . .	<b>100</b>
• Annamite . . . . .	100,000
Total: 105,188 people	
Source: Robert Dubois, <i>Le Tonkin en 1900</i> , Paris, 1900. Official gazette in 1904, p. 1056 in <i>Recueil général permanent des actes relatifs à l'organisation et la réglementation de l'Indochine</i> , Paris, 1909, p. 13.	

Article 2 of the Decree of Hanoi and Hải Phòng cities on 21 December 1891 regulated that the City Council should include the Chairman and 2 Vice-Chairmen, consisting of 12 Frenchmen or those with French citizenship as well as 4 Annamites (for the case of Hanoi) and 2 Annamite and 2 overseas or other Asians (for the case of Hải Phòng).

According to the 21 Mars 1904 decree, which amended the decree of 27 January 1897, the City Council of Hải Phòng had two Overseas Chinese or Asians, and that of Hanoi had one Overseas Chinese or Asian.

Source: Gouvernement général de l'Indochine. Ville de Hanoi (Tonkin): Historique, Développement financier, Règlementation administrative et Fonctionnement des divers services municipaux de la Ville de Hanoi. Hanoi, Imprimerie G. Taupin & Cie, 1905.

Another list of foreigners in Hải Phòng in January 1903 included one Greek, one American, one Swiss, four Germans, one Austrian, one British and **three Japanese**. The three Japanese were as follows:

Name	Profession or places of residence
Takanashi	Brothel
Hoshika	Brothel
Hamamasou	Commercial agent

According to another report dated 21 January 1904, there were 16 Japanese in Hanoi: seven in Gia Lâm, six in the former Hàng Chén, present-day Bát Đàn, two at a professional school, and one in Đường Thành.<sup>6</sup> The same report also noted that some prostitutes were in brothels, but the exact number was unknown. These women were usually registered as “domestic servants.”

A report from 11 November 1909 mentions Japanese visitors to Hải Phòng in November 1909<sup>7</sup> as follows:

<sup>6</sup> RST 76441. Sur les surveillances des Asiatiques étrangers.

<sup>7</sup> RST 8864. État nominative des Japonais arrivés et partis pendant la première décade du mois de November 1909.

	Dates	Name	Age	Sex	Departure	Profession
1.	4 November	Watanabe	25	Male	From Hong Kong by the steamboat "Victoria"	Trader
2.	4 November	Oyoso		Female	From Hong Kong by the steamboat "Victoria"	Trader
3.	4 November	Omasu	25	Female	From Hong Kong by the steamboat "Victoria"	Trader
4.	4 November	Omitou	25	Female	From Hong Kong by the steamboat "Victoria"	Trader
5.	4 November	Osioki	25	Female	From Hong Kong by the steamboat "Victoria"	Trader
6.	6 November	Kyuzaburo Kubo	12		From Hong Kong by the steamboat "Jacob Diederichsez"	Trader
7.	6 November	Kikuo Yosimitsu	14		From Hong Kong by the steamboat "Jacob Diederichsez"	Trader
8.	6 November	Okasaki	26		From Hong Kong by the steamboat "Jacob Diederichsez"	Trader
9.	9 November	Kamimoura Hachijiro			From Hong Kong by the steamboat "Hanoi"	Trader

Another report dated 1 April 1912 counted the number of Japanese in Tonkin as follows<sup>8</sup>:

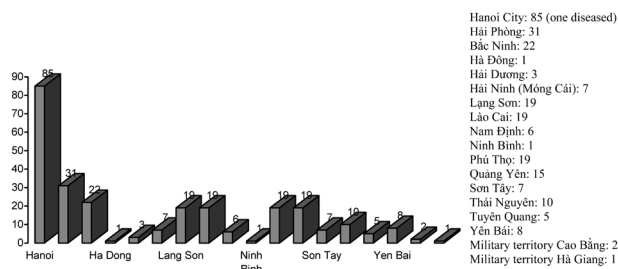


Fig. 1. The number of Japanese in Tonkin in April 1912

Based on the above table and graph, the total number was 261, most possibly accounting for three-quarters of the total population of Japanese in all of Indochina.

The number of Japanese living in the Western part of Hanoi: 5 in 1899, 77 in 1918, 50 in 1920–1936, 100 in 1940. As for the gender distribution, women made up 86% in 1902, and 62% in 1910. The majority of Japanese women were prostitutes (whose name was Oki-Kou for example). Before 1907 there were no Japanese born in Hanoi. Many Japanese men were photographers.

Philippe Papin (2009)'s *A History of Hanoi* (pp. 245, 354)

Based on various historical sources, it seems that the Japanese arrived in French Indochina for the first time during the 1880s. It was recorded that the first Japanese visited Hải Phòng in the year of 1885. It is difficult to count the exact number of these early arrivals in Vietnam.

There were not so many coming to Indochina before 1940. The major reason for their migration was poverty. In fact, most of them were very poor coming from poor villages in Kyushu, where land problem was serious such as Nagasaki, Shimabara, and Amakusa. They started from Japan by boat via Hong Kong and arrived in Hanoi, Saigon, Singapore etc. as their final destination.<sup>9</sup> Human traffickers

<sup>8</sup> Liste nominative des sujets Japonais habitant le Tonkin au 1<sup>er</sup> Avril 1912. RST 9294. Liste de sujets Japonais habitant au Tonkin.

<sup>9</sup> According to Frédéric Roustan ("Mousmés") a Japanese named Kisaburo Kioma acted as a go-between in selecting Japanese girls to travel through Hong Kong to Vietnam. This brothel located at Sơn Tây citadel (urban Hanoi).

and brothel managers were usually in cahoots with each other in doing this smuggling business.

General speaking, the history of the Japanese in colonial Vietnam can be divided into three periods: (i) the period under the French colonial government (from the late 19th century to 1941); (ii) the period under the Japanese imperial regime (from 1940 to 1945); (iii) the period of the Việt Minh revolution (from 1945 to 1954).

There were about 88,150 Japanese migrants to the whole region of Southeast Asia from 1907 to 1941. The first arrivals before World War I were mostly women, i.e. prostitutes, who were linked to the commercial activities of big companies whose agents came to work in Indochina. Then, plantation workers and representatives of big Japanese companies arrived in the region. Meanwhile, 250,000 Japanese were in Korea under colonial rule.

As for the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam, there were 195,000 in 1921, 217,000 in 1927 (accounting for 4.3% of the total population), and 267,000 in 1931.<sup>10</sup> As for the geographical distribution in 1931, there were 19,000 Chinese in Hải Phòng and 5,000 in Hanoi. On the other hand, there were only 300 Japanese in the whole Indochina in 1932, many of whom engaged in trade and transportation.<sup>11</sup>

According to a report sent from Lưu Trường, district chief of Hạ Hoa district to the provincial chief of Phú Thọ, three Japanese arrived in the district on 8 April 1937. They were accompanied by a Tonkinese guide, a driver and a driver assistant. They visited Khâm Thôn village where an iron mine was located.

Name	No. of Passport (P), ID card (IC)
Hakarn Mori	P: 335274
Watanabé Kihachiro	IC: T-4270
Matsuo Chojiro	IC: T-165

Another report by the *Sûreté* dated 27 September 1937 also mentioned the arrival of two Japanese in Lạng Sơn as below:

Names	
Yebara Kichinosuké (Ehara)	T.2054
Ishikawa Shimao	T.3384

Two reports by the Tonkin *Sûreté* dated 8 and 19 October 1937 mentioned the activities of the “Yamane Group” between 27 September and 6 October, and between 7 and 16 October of the same year. According to the first report, among the group were Ono Inui,<sup>12</sup> Uno Chikamasa, Ujihara Susumu, Ogasawara Mitsuo, Yamane, Subira, Komatsu Motokichi, Onishi Bunichi, Onoda Naoji, Ikekawa

<sup>10</sup> Ky Luong Nhu, “The Chinese in Vietnam: A study of Vietnamese-Chinese Relations with Special Attention to the Period 1862–1961” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1963), p. 42; Phạm Văn Thủy, “Beyond Political Skin. Convergent Paths to an Independent National Economy in Indonesia and Vietnam” (Ph.D. dissertation, Leiden University, 2014), p. 26.

<sup>11</sup> Murakami Sachiko, “Japan’s thrust into French Indochina 1940–1945” (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1981), p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> The report also added that 28-9-1937 Ono Inui went with three other Japanese without any ID cards to visit iron mines in Thanh Hoá and Thái Nguyên.

Hideo.<sup>13</sup> The second report named Yamane Doichi, Yebara Kichinosuké, Nishihara, Ujihara Susumu, Yamada Chikachi (Michel), Yamada Naokiko. They conducted research concerning mine exploitation in Tonkin, as well as logistics, transports, prices, the Sino-Japanese conflict, and the garrison in Lạng Sơn...<sup>14</sup>

Other reports during the 1930s and 1940s also referred to Japanese names, such as Miyasaki Seizo, *Tan-Bun-Tong*, Goma Shohei, Yebara Yoshio, Masui Junichi, Saheki Mituo, Hashimoto Saburo, Yasuji Akubo, Karou Bando, Akira Okada, *Ri Tean Tuo (Ly Thien Cho)*, *Tou Kyou Chik (Trinh Kien Tac)*... (The names in italics were unidentified in terms of nationality).

An example of the ID card formulated by the Tonkinese authorities is below (for the case of Masui Junichi)<sup>15</sup>:

**GOUVERNEMENT GÉNÉRAL de L'INDOCHINE TONKIN**  
**RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE**  
**ÉTAT** Signalétique du nommé **MASUI JUNICHI**  
 sujet **Japonais**  
 SERVICE d'IDENTITÉ résidant à \_\_\_\_\_

Noms **MASUI**  
 Prénoms **JUNICHI**  
 Profession **Surveillant des mines à la Société Indochinoise du Commerce et de l'Industrie**  
 date **4 Mai 1901**  
 Naissance lieu **Shiruo Kaken, Japon.**

Noms et prénoms des père **Masui Tokisaburo**  
 mère **Ito Matsui**

Sont-ils vivants père **non**  
 mère **non**

Dernier domicile à l'étranger **Shiruo Kaken**  
 Domicile actuel **Hanoi (147 Boulevard Henri d'Orléans)**  
 Nationalité d'origine **Japonaise**  
 Nationalité d'adoption \_\_\_\_\_  
 Congrégation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Marié **oui**  
 Célibataire \_\_\_\_\_  
 Veuf \_\_\_\_\_

Marriage date **Inconnue**  
 lieu **Sontfay**

**NOTA.** — Si l'individu dont l'expulsion est demandée est métré, le spécifier.

Nombre d'enfants **deux**  
 Date de l'arrivée au Tonkin **23 Août 1923**  
 Date de l'arrivée à **Sontfay, en novembre 1923**  
 Visage \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cheveux **châtain noir**  
 Sourcils **larges**  
 Menton **carré et saillant**  
 Front **étroit**  
 Barbe \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teint **jaune**  
 Nez **à largeur grande**  
 Bouche **grande**  
 Taille **1 m 60**  
 Signes particuliers **Léger œdème à la/m5 dansus milieu sourcil droit**

L'intéressé a-t-il séjourné au Siam ? **non**  
 Possède-t-il des attaches ou des relations dans ce pays ? (En préciser la nature : familiales, commerciales, politiques, etc...) **non**

*Le Chef du Service de l'Identité.*

**DEFFONT JACQUES**  
 Chef des Services de l'Identité  
 147 Boulevard Henri d'Orléans

## 2. Colonial authorities and the Japanese

According to a study by Frédéric Roustan based on archival documents, during the 1880s, the official reports by the French colonial administration only mentioned Japanese visitors such as military men and travelers, and did not refer to Japanese migrants living in Indochina.<sup>16</sup> According to the RST

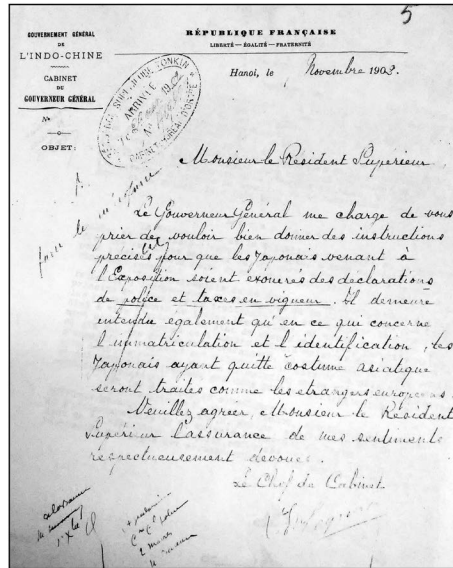
<sup>13</sup> There is almost no information about these Japanese. Ikekawa Hideo was noted in the report by the Consul-General of Japan (Y Nagata) in Hanoi to the General Governor of Indochina dated on 14 October 1931. Ikekawa had been in Indochina since 1919 and had a Vietnamese wife and a 7-year-old child (RST 76457-01. Expulsion des Japonais résidant à Hanoi).

<sup>14</sup> RST 69993. Arrivé des Japonais au Tonkin par le Contrôleur Général de la Sûreté Chef des Services de Police au Tonkin.

<sup>15</sup> RST 76457-01. Expulsion des Japonais résidant à Hanoi.

<sup>16</sup> Practically, the French local administration reported to higher authorities relatively in detail about Japanese activities in Tonkin. Every Japanese coming to Tonkin had to register with local authorities Also in the report by RST to the Governor-General dated on 23 April 1907 for example, among suspect Japanese, three — Takatsuki, Sugiyama, Otsuru — were named. In general, the French local authorities had good information about foreign Asians in Tonkin; see RST 76441, Sur les surveillances des Asiatiques étrangers.

(*Résidence Supérieure du Tonkin*) reports preserved in Hanoi Archival Center No1, in November 1902, Governor-General Paul Doumer identified the Japanese residents as foreign Asians. However, his cabinet chief instructed the RST in the same month that the Japanese should be treated as European foreigners with a lot of privileges.



Notes: the Cabinet chief of the Governor-General of Indochina to the *Résident Supérieur du Tonkin* dated 5 (?) November 1902: Japanese coming to attend an exposition would be exempt from taxation and having to make a police declaration. In terms of registration and identification, those who had stopped wearing Asian dress would be treated as European foreigners.<sup>17</sup>

In 1904, Governor-General Paul Beau made an instruction to identify the Japanese as foreign Asians, but they would not be taxed. More concretely, the document *Confidentiel* dated 28 December 1904 circulated to *Résidents* in Tonkin concerning Japanese brothels noted: “*Les Japonais, en effet, ne sont pas partie des Asiatiques [the Japanese are in actuality not in the Asiatic category] désignés dans l’arrêté du chef du pouvoir exécutifs en date du 23 Août 1871, donc ci joint copie et se trouvent par suite, obligés de se conformer aux formalités prévues à l’article 1<sup>er</sup> de l’arrêté précite du 7 avril 1904.*”<sup>18</sup>

The Decree cited here (issued on 28 August 1871) regulated that the *Asiatiques* including **Chinese**, **Cambodians**, **Minh Hương** [non-immigrants of mixed Chinese and Vietnamese descent], **Siamese**, **Mois** [a pejorative general term for highlanders], **Chams**, **Stiengs** [a specific group of highlanders], **Jang Meles (Malais de Châu Đốc)** [referring to the Cham communities along the Cambodian border] should be administered by Vietnamese law, while all the other races should be covered by French law.<sup>19</sup>

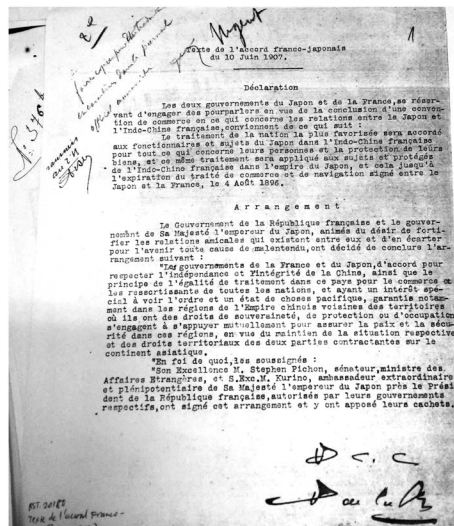
<sup>17</sup> RST 9285. Formalités d’immatriculation vu l’identification sur les Japonais.

<sup>18</sup> RST 76441. Sur les surveillances des Asiatiques étrangers.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. A Japanese named Kempei Moura arrived in Hải Phòng had to register with the Municipal Administration; RST 76418-01, A/s déclaration de domicile faite par un Japonais Kempei Mioura.



With the Japanese victory in the 1904–05 war with Russia, Japan's status was elevated. Many Japanese believed that they should be a spiritual leader of Asians in the struggle against Western imperialism. Nevertheless, the Japanese government signed an agreement with the French in 1907, in which they secretly agreed to respect each other's colonies in Asia. As a result, the Japanese government forced Vietnamese students in Japan to leave the country.<sup>20</sup> More concretely, the Franco-Japanese Accord on concluded on 10 June 1907 (cited below) promised territorial integrity and the open-door policy in China. In addition, the Japanese government implicitly recognized the special position of France in Indochina.



The document also declared as follows:

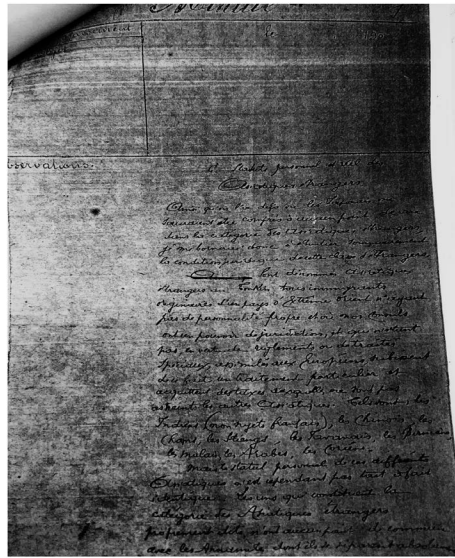
“Les deux Gouvernements du Japon et de la France, se réservant d’engager des pourparlers en vue de la conclusion d’une convention de commerce en ce qui concerne les relations entre le Japon et l’Indo-Chine française, conviennent de ce qui suit:  
Le traitement de la nation la plus favorisée sera accordé aux **fonctionnaires et sujets du Japon dans l’Indo-Chine française** [most-favored nation status will be given to Japanese officials and citizens in French Indochina] pour tout ce qui concerne leurs personnes et la protection de leurs biens et ce même traitement sera appliqué aux sujets et protégés de l’Indo-Chine française dans l’Empire du Japon, et cela jusqu’à l’expiration du Traité de Commerce et de Navigation signé entre le Japon et la France le 4 Août 1896”.

In summary, the Japanese in French Indochina would have the best privileges, different from other Asians.

Another page of the June 1907 Accord is cited below. The Japanese in Indochina would be treated on a par with the peoples of powerful European countries (just like the treaty signed between Great Britain and Japan in October 1854).

<sup>20</sup> Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 177.





Note: The part of the Franco-Japanese Accord in 1907, regulating in detail the categorization of foreigners in Indochina.

The French colonial authorities originally divided the people living in Indochina into three categories: *Indigenous/natives*, *Europeans and Asians*. Later, they added another category “foreign Asians.” The Japanese government in Tokyo wanted their subjects to be treated as Honorary Whites or civilized people, equivalent to Europeans and French. In fact, Governors-General in Indochina in the early twentieth century never categorized the Japanese as foreign Asians. Before 1929, the French administration officially defined only two groups: (i) **Européens** [Europeans] and **assimilés** [assimilated] as civilized races; and (ii) Foreign Asians (*Asiatiques étrangers*). However, the official documents reserved in the Hanoi Archives did not always make this distinction clear. In an *Arrêté* in June 1929, the French colonial government attempted to make a distinction between Europeans, Asians (belonging to civilized nations) and foreign Asians. According to it, **Chinese** should be administered by separate rules, whereas **Siamese, Taiwanese, Japanese and others** were to be put under the same laws.

According to the dissertation by Phạm Văn Thủy, the population of Europeans and Chinese in colonial Vietnam in 1937 was as follows<sup>21</sup>:

	<u>Europeans</u>	Chinese
Tonkin	18,171	35,000
Annam	4,982	11,000
Cochinchina	16,084	171,000

Here, the category of “Europeans” included both Europeans and “*assimilés*.” The *assimilés* enjoyed

<sup>21</sup> Phạm Văn Thủy, “Beyond Political Skin,” p. 27.

the legal status of Europeans, although they were not necessarily of European origin. The Japanese for instance could be included in this group. The status of the Japanese did not change from the early years of the twentieth century.

In sum, in 1908, Governor-General Anthony Klobukowsky reaffirmed that the Japanese should not be considered as foreign Asians. There were however many cases where the legal regulation and practical application were inconsistent. For instance, a report in 1912 concerning a Japanese in Nhà Bè working together with Chinese mentioned that “the Japanese must be treated as same as other Asian people.”<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, in a decree on 20 August 1913, the Ministry of Colonies in Paris ordered Governor-General Albert Sarraut in Indochina that the the Japanese should be grouped as *Européens* and *assimilés*.

The French administrators in the colony were not satisfied with the instruction from the home country. This kind of ambiguity concerning the Japanese status remained until the 1940s.<sup>23</sup> On 6 May 1941 a series of documents were signed between France and Japan, in which Japanese businesspersons were given equal status with the French in Indochina.<sup>24</sup> In addition, the French were expected to provide a portion of their local revenue to support the Japanese military forces in Indochina. The total amount for this purpose reached 723 million *piastres* by March 1945.

Concerning the Japanese prostitutes, the French colonial government did not prohibit their business (similar to the case of British colonies). The immigration officers accepted them without disturbance. For instance, in May 1904, twenty-one Japanese women were shipped to Hải Phòng. Out of them, seven were sent to Hanoi, three to Móng Cái, and only one was sent back to Hong Kong. According to Roustan’s study, these girls were transferred to Tonkin as normal immigrants or travelers, and the local authorities registered them upon their arrival in each province.

Dr. Joyeux’s account of Japanese prostitutes in Hanoi in 1930 mentioned with a nostalgic tone: “Some people still remember the Japanese women with favorable feeling because of their cleanness, (relative) safety and even delicacy, and esteemed body of *hétaires* [courtesans]. Unfortunately, a [Japanese] imperial edict ordered the Consulates [in Indochina] to ban [Japanese prostitutes]. Today, the nice *moussmé* [girls] have disappeared from the [place of medical] controls [that is, there are no more Japanese prostitutes].”<sup>25</sup>

According to the archival document file RST 9294, other than the trade employees in big cities such as Hanoi and Hải Phòng, most of the Japanese had “no profession” (*sans profession*). It is not clear whether they really had no employment or they had simply not registered their job. However, some of

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<sup>22</sup> RST 76441. Sur les surveillances des Asiatiques étrangers.

<sup>23</sup> In the report on registration, tax for *Asiatiques étrangers* from Nam Định province to the *Résident Supérieur* dated 21 October 1913, all Asians without distinction race or nationality including Japanese must come under the registration tax for *Asiatiques étrangers* (applied for Tonkin at least). RST 76450-09. Règlement sur l’immigration des asiatiques étrangers au Tonkin. Furthermore, in the general regulation on *Asiatiques étrangers* promulgated by the *Résident Supérieur* of Tonkin in 1912, although there are no word about the Japanese, most possibly these must be under this regulation.

<sup>24</sup> Marr, “World War II,” p. 133.

<sup>25</sup> Roustan, “Moussmés.”

them possibly might have worked for houses of prostitution or brothels. Interestingly, most of them were men aged between 18 and 33 (mostly under 30). Many researchers have argued that the brothel managers acted as a kind of cultural broker. I think that the brothels were the guaranteed places to interact with local authorities. The managers were experienced people who had dealt with many political challenges.

The Japanese also established their Associations in Hanoi and Hải Phòng. For example, the Association of Japanese Residents in Hải Phòng in 1935 chose their leaders for the next term<sup>26</sup>: Yokoyama as President, Takeuchi as Vice-President, and Kokugan as Treasurer. The number of its members was 17 (male) and 7 (female), totaling 24. The same association for the two-year new term<sup>27</sup> selected again Yokoyama as President: Takéuchi as Vice-President and Kokugan as Treasurer. The number of its members was 18, all male.

In Hanoi, the Association of Japanese Residents (*Hanoi Zairyu Nippon-jinkai*) in 1937 had its headquarters at No 6-B, rue de la Citadelle (Đường Thành). The Association had a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer, and two other Council members. It had received a permission letter from the *Résident Supérieur* of Tonkin.

Members of the Administration Council of the Association of Japanese Residents in Hanoi in 1937:

Full name	Title	Profession	Domicile	Signed
Satoju Shimomura	President	Trader	No 45 rue Tien Tsin (Hàng Gà)	
Naohiko Oda	Vice President	Hotel keeper	No 49, Hàng Chén	
Utarô Yamada	Treasurer	Trader	No 96 rue Jules Ferry (Hàng Trống)	
Bin Matsuda	Council member	Trader	No 60 rue Jules Ferry (Hàng Trống)	
Ichinosuké Kikuchi	Council member	Trader	No 31 rue Duvillier (Nguyễn Thái Học)	

On 25 May 1939, the same association in Hanoi held the general meeting with the presence of 26 members, out of 21 registered members.<sup>28</sup> The assembly voted the following persons as the new leaders:

Full name	Title	Votes
Sakamoto Shiro	President	17
Naohiko Oda	Vice President	12
Masuda Satoshi	Treasurer	14
Kikuchi Ichinosuke	Secretary	14
Watanabe Toichi	Member	9

The results of the vote was approved by the *Résident Supérieur* on 15 December 1939. Kikuchi Ichinosuke and Watanabe Toichi were assigned as administrators.

<sup>26</sup> Reports signed by Yokoyama in Hải Phòng to Maire Administrateur of Hải Phòng on 01 December 1935. RST 79729. Constitution de l'Association des Résidents Japonais d'Haiphong.

<sup>27</sup> Reports signed by Yokoyama in Hải Phòng to Maire Administrateur of Hải Phòng on 08 September 1938. RST 79729. Constitution de l'Association des Résidents Japonais d'Haiphong.

<sup>28</sup> RST 79715. A/s demande d'autorisation de fonder un groupement dénommé "l'Association amicale des résidents Japonais d'Hanoi."

On 15 May 1940, 24 members attended the meeting, out of 38 registered. They selected the new leaders as follows:

Full name	Title
Yamada Utaro	President
Naohiko Oda	Vice President
Masuda Satoshi	Treasurer
Tutumi Hideo	Member
Kotaru Shinji	Member

According to the report from the *Sûreté* in Hanoi (signed by General Controller P. Pujol) to the *Résident Supérieur* on 11 July 1940, the profiles of the leading members were as follows<sup>29</sup>:

- Yamada Utaro: born on 8 November 1877 in Muira, Higachi Sonogi district, Nagasaki prefecture; son of Iwago and Tanaka Iano; trader; residing in rue Jules Ferry (Hàng Trống).
- Naohiko Oda: born on 8 December 1886 in Sakagegawa, Amakusa district, Kumamoto prefecture; son of Kohachi and Ritsu; photographer; residing at No 26 in rue de la Citadelle (Đường Thành).
- Masuda Satoshi: born on 02 August 1901 in Hondomachi Akigum Hirushimaken; son of Mokudo Kamenosuki and Kosaman Kane, residing at Hotel Ishija, No 64 Bd. Bonnal in Hải Phòng (present day Nguyễn Đức Cảnh and Trần Phú streets in Hải Phòng).
- Tutumi Hideo: born on 19 October 1894 in Seido-Mura Uchide (Mar Code) Hyogoken, Japan; son of Titumi Masatao and Suje; residing at No 67 Bd. Carnot (Phan Đình Phùng), Hanoi.
- Kotaru Sinji: born in 1899 in Susano Dory Kobeshi Hiogoken; son of Cotaru Isuke and Sugahara Natsu; commercial agent.

### 3. The image of the Japanese in the eyes of French and Vietnamese

The first group of Japanese “who gave surprise or excitement” to the local people were prostitutes, girls of “superior category.” Tonkinese men were impressed by “cute and young girls wearing national costume with gloves and smoking...”<sup>30</sup> The image of Japanese women wearing a kimono was very popular in photos and postal cards in Indochina before 1920. The Japanese men in Indochina were usually photographed in European dress. It was difficult to distinguish them from the Chinese. Japanese shops were usually in houses of European style.

Dr. Jacobus once described: “It may be said that the Vietnamese is ranked at the lowest among all races. If we call male Negroes stallions, then it is logical to call the Vietnamese men monkeys.” “[Japanese prostitute] is very close [to] French women, in physical and moral qualities, [to] French women... she takes a bath every day, and washes herself before and after copulation, as the European prostitute does”; *Japanese prostitutes as prostitutes of luxury*.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Roustan, «Migrants Japonais».

According to information by the consulting room for prostitutes in Hanoi, in 1905 there were around 150 Japanese and Vietnamese prostitutes licensed by the authorities. One third of them frequently visited surgery for treatment.

Source: Gouvernement général de l'Indochine. Ville de Hanoi (Tonkin): Historique, Développement financier, Règlementation administrative et Fonctionnement des divers services municipaux de la Ville de Hanoi. Hanoi, Imprimerie G. Taupin & Cie, 1905.

Another report from naval officers greatly appreciated the cleanness of Japanese women as perfect wives, contrasted with Vietnamese women: “No *congai* [a term for Vietnamese concubines and low-class women]! No betel! They are dirty, they cannot even sew a button, and they are just good to dump a baby··· A [Vietnamese] madam is less valuable than a [Japanese] girl who knows about housekeeping and can remove any risk of pregnancy.” A naval officer, Jean Léra, viewed Japanese prostitutes as almost equal to European women, “The Japanese [girls] are almost the sisters of our wives. They are the French women of the Far East.”

Another account mentioned that the Japanese prostitute “have different habits and characteristics that separate them radically from European prostitutes. In terms of morality, they are classified well above the Europeans.” According to Dr. Paul Roux, the racial hierarchy from the top to the bottom was: Europeans, Japanese, Chinese and Vietnamese. Consequently, Annamese men were banned from entering Japanese brothels. In a mixed environment “the frontiers of the nation were the bodies of these women, who were Japanese first and prostitutes second”<sup>31</sup> in general.

### ***Discussion and Issues to be Raised***

It is necessary to reexamine visual images of Japanese monuments in Tonkin, especially in the Old Quarter of Hanoi such as *Rue des Cuirs* (Hàng Da), *Rue de la Citadelle* (Đường Thành), *Rue des Voiles* (Hàng Bùom), *Rue Jules Ferry* (Hàng Trống), and *Rue des Tasses* (Hàng Chén)··· Among other cities in Tonkin, Hải Phòng is also very important as a focus of research, because it was the first town where the Japanese arrived.

It is also necessary to further study Japanese men in Indochina. Some of them got married with Vietnamese women; possibly, there was no case in which Japanese women were married with Vietnamese men. Some accounts by the Consul-General of Japan concerning the Japanese expelled from Indochina referred to the Japanese, including *métis* born of Japanese and Vietnamese parentage. The documents held in the National Archival Center No. 1 in Hanoi only mention the mining activities by the Japanese in various parts of Indochina. Most of them lived in the old streets of Hanoi where many brothels were located. There are very few documents concerning Japanese women’s daily life.

A further analysis on the categorization of Japanese residents by the French colonial government

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<sup>31</sup> These examples and quotations are all taken from Roustan, “Mousmés.”

should be given attention. As has been mentioned in this essay, there existed inconsistencies between the Paris government and colonial authorities, and ambiguity in the attitude of colonial officers *vis-à-vis* Japanese residents.<sup>32</sup>

During the period prior to World War Two, the Japanese in Indochina had to readjust themselves to the changing international circumstances (including the escalation of Japan's war in China). After the outbreak of the Asia-Pacific War, they became the vanguard of the yellow colonialists. In mid-1940, Nazis troops entered Paris. "The Tripartite Pact enabled the Japanese to negotiate an agreement with the Vichy authorities to station troops in the northern region of the French colony of Indochina (Vietnam)."<sup>33</sup> The Vichy government allowed Japan to station 6,000 soldiers and use three airbases in Tonkin and transport 25,000 soldiers through Tonkin to attack China.<sup>34</sup> The Vichy government also promised various economic and political interests to the Japanese. Thus, "the Indochinese were the first people in Southeast Asia who encountered the Japanese military."<sup>35</sup> The relationship between the Japanese and French in Indochina started to change significantly. One of the first reactions by the French authorities to the Japanese military penetration into Indochina was more severe press censorship and suppression against the local papers sympathetic to Nationalist China.<sup>36</sup>

The Chinese faced many difficulties in doing business in Indochina, after the Japanese troops arrived there. Archival documents notes: "The first Chinese bank in the north was closed last September, and it is reported that their colleagues in the south (the Chinese economic stronghold in Indochina) were forced to go out of business. In April 1941, *Trans-ocean* reported that 60 members of the Chinese business community in Tonkin had invited the Japanese to a conference held in Hanoi, in order to establish more friendly relations."<sup>37</sup> Significantly, "Vietnam's internal situation during the last stage of the war, particularly the Japanese relationship with Vietnamese nationalists and economic conditions, need further clarification."<sup>38</sup> And as a matter of course, after the end of the war, some Japanese who remained in Vietnam to become the "new Vietnamese", i.e. volunteer participants in the Việt Minh struggle, to support the Democratic Republic of Vietnam are also an interesting subject for research.

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<sup>32</sup> "Les Japonais sont donc visuellement des étrangers, c'est à dire, un élément allogène non-européen, non Vietnamien et non-chinois," "Les Japonais doivent être considérés comme des Européens"; Roustan, «Français, Japonais et société coloniale».

<sup>33</sup> Gordon, *Modern History of Japan*, p. 208.

<sup>34</sup> Marr, "World War II," p. 126; John E. Dreifort, "Japan's Advance into Indochina, 1940: The French Response," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 13, 02 (1982): 294.

<sup>35</sup> Marr, "World War II," p. 125.

<sup>36</sup> Virginia Thompson, "Japan in Indochina," *Far-Eastern Survey*, 10, 23 (1941): 270.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Kiyoko Kurusu Nitz, "Japanese Military Policy towards French Indochina during the Second World War: The Road to the Meigo Sakusen (9 March 1945)," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 14, 02 (1983): 349–50.