

Utilization of Chinese Labor and Recruitment of Vietnamese Laborers in Tonkin, French Indochina

TA Thi Thuy / TAKADA Yoko

Historically, Chinese people have repeatedly migrated into and out of Northern Vietnam as well as resided there. Once French colonization began at the end of the 19th century, the colonists initially made use of their labor. Chinese laborers (coolies) were employed to build railways that would open up trade with surrounding regions to produce tea, rice, coffee, and other agricultural products in mountainous regions, and to extract abundant mineral resources. From the early 20th century onwards, Vietnamese labor began to be used at lower wages. In the late 1920s, laborers were systematically recruited in the Red River delta to establish rubber plantations in southern Indochina. An analysis of the provisions in labor contracts prepared in Nam Dinh Province reveals the reality of the recruitment of Vietnamese coolies.

Introduction

How did colonialist procure the labor that was essential for the development of colonial society under the control of a different ethnic group, such as for building colonial cities, constructing railways, growing agricultural products, and extracting resources? Historically, local people who maintain a traditional society rarely play this role, and it is more common for this labor to be supplied from outside the colony. It is well known that African slaves were used in great numbers in colonies in the New World, as were Indian and Chinese migrant workers in

modern Southeast Asia.

This paper aims to (i) consider the background to the replacement of Chinese labor that had been used in the development of the modern sector with local Vietnamese laborers and the process by which this occurred from the end of the 19th century to the early 20th century in Tonkin, and (ii) reveal the reality in which Vietnamese people responded to recruitment as “contract laborers” from traditional farming societies in the Red River delta with a view towards developing rubber plantations in Cochin-China and Cambodia. This paper is a demonstrative investigation that analyzes a large volume of colonial administrative documents that have not been used to date.

I

Utilization of Chinese Labor in Tonkin from the Late 19th Century to the Early 20th Century

In Vietnam, the Chinese have long been a part of the Vietnamese population due to the significance of their number, activities, and roles in the socioeconomic and, even, political life of the host country. Therefore, the study of this ethnic group since it appeared in Vietnam until now is a very extensive topic that no one has reached a conclusion on the same.¹ In our case, we would like to mention a particular aspect, that is, the utilization of Chinese labor within Tonkin, and not across the country, during the period from the late 19th century to the early 20th century (period of French domination), rather than throughout the history of this population group on this land.

1. The Chinese in Tonkin and the demand for Chinese labor

Documents show that the Chinese people had inhabited Vietnam in general and Tonkin in particular very early in histo-

ry. Their numbers grew further in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, mainly because of political upheavals or starvation in China and the open reception policies of the feudal states in Vietnam.

It is worth mentioning that since the French took the yoke of domination on Vietnam, the emigration of the Chinese into Tonkin did not decrease but instead became increasingly massive, especially in the last decades of the 19th century until the middle of the 20th century. At that time, it was not only the political developments (the political upheavals, reforms, revolutions, etc.) and miserable life in China that drove the Chinese to flee to Vietnam, but also the demand for Chinese labor that the colonial exploitation in Indochina and the French colonial expansion policy in the Far East set forth.

According to the available statistics, although we do not completely rely on it, as the Chinese in Vietnam were generally an unstable population or rather constantly moving, the situation was as follows:

In 1887, the number of Chinese people in Tonkin was 7,467, of which 4,700 were in Hai Phong.² Statistics in 1906 showed that the number of Chinese people in Tonkin had increased approximately six times in the last 10 years, to become second to Cochinchina. Specifically, the number of Chinese people in the whole of Indochina was 304,000, of which 189,012 were in Vietnam alone; among them, 41,800 were in Tonkin, 141,100 in Cochinchina, and 6,112 in Central Vietnam.³ According to the 1921 census, the whole of Vietnam had 195,000 Chinese people, of whom 32,000 were in Tonkin.⁴ Ten years later, in 1931, the number of Chinese people in Tonkin increased by 20,000 to reach 52,000.⁵

From 1923 to 1943, the number of Chinese people coming and leaving different regions of Vietnam was officially counted by the Governor-General's Statistical Office and posted to the *Indochina Statistical Yearbook* (Annuaire statistique de l'Indochine). Table 1 reflects the situation in Tonkin during this period.

The statistics show that the number of Chinese people coming to Tonkin increased each year, from approximately 5,000 people in 1923 to tens of thousands of people in the following years, especially during the years of economic recovery (1936–1940), and decreased only during the war. However, in terms of the number of Chinese people leaving Tonkin, although this was usually smaller than the number of those coming to Tonkin, the percentage was not insignificant. The Chinese left Vietnam for many reasons, but the expulsion of alleged rogue elements or Chinese reformers and revolutionaries from Vietnam by the colonial government was a very common phenomenon. This is reflective of the instability of the Chinese population in Tonkin.

It can be said that the Chinese played a significant role in the economic and financial fields of Indochina in general, especially in trade, by acting as agents for French monopoly companies (Régies) on salt, alcohol, and opium; in contracting tax collection for the colonial government; and in a number of industries such as rice processing, wine processing, and road and waterway transport. Here, we would like to focus on the role of the Chinese as a source of workers or coolies, working in public constructions, and first of all, including railways from Tonkin to China, or working on agricultural exploitation facilities such as plantations and working for industries, especially in mining, opened up in Tonkin. In other words, they usually worked in the modern sectors introduced by the French in their colonies.

Table 1 Chinese immigrants to Tonkin in 1923–1943⁶

Year	Coming to Tonkin	Leaving Tonkin	Year	Coming to Tonkin	Leaving Tonkin
1923	4,600	4,200	1934	11,300	11,300
1924	4,400	2,900	1935	11,300	8,100
1925	4,300	1,800	1936	16,600	15,900
1926	6,300	5,500	1937	18,000	18,100
1927	11,400	1,900	1938	26,200	21,700
1928	22,800	18,300	1939	89,100	78,500
1929	29,300	25,900	1940	46,300	60,200
1930	28,400	23,900	1941	5,500	5,800
1931	27,600	26,000	1942	4,500	3,100
1932	13,100	13,200	1943	4,300	4,800
1933	12,900	11,900			

The number of Chinese workers was always lower than the number of Chinese migrants in the colony.

2. Railway construction and the Chinese labor

Since the late 19th century, when competitive liberal capitalism turned to the imperialist, France had been ranked among the great powers of this period. In this context, the expansion of the market—the expansion of influence to export goods and capital, and exploitation of natural resources and products that the French market and industries were in need of—became her inevitable and vital need. Therefore, along with enhancing exploitation in the already captured colonies like Indochina, France frantically implemented a “foreign” policy that expanded power as a top priority target.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, France seemed to have shifted her focus in the colonial policy to the Far East in the spirit, as Paul Doumer emphasized in the seven-point colonial exploitation program introduced in 1897:

“Expanding French influence; extending French interests in the Far East, especially with neighboring countries to Indochina.”⁷

The reason for this “pivot” is that the competition among the great powers (the UK, Russia, France, Germany, and Japan) in Asian countries became increasingly fierce after the Opium War in China, especially after the Sino-Japanese War (1894) with the defeat of China (1895) and the corruption of the Zhongyuan Empire. China became “a zombie that is ready to be torn off and itself points the knife to it.”⁸ The imperial countries all wanted to take up a larger part of the country; France wanted to acquire its southern provinces. Moreover, to be able to enter these provinces, France needed access routes, of which priority was given to railway lines originating from Tonkin.

Therefore, right from the beginning of the 1890s, the French started to build the 162km Hanoi-Dong Dang (Lang Son) railway. On December 24, 1894, the first train arrived in Lang Son. In June 1895, China allowed the French company

Fives-Lille to extend the Lang Son-Dong Dang (Vietnam) route to Longzhou (China).⁹ A report by Paul Doumer in March 1897 stated the following:

*"It is important in all cases and not too blatant in terms of achievements in the commercial field of the construction of routes coming to China. . . but first of all that was the Lang Son-Dong Dang-Longzhou route (i.e., the Hanoi-Longzhou route). . . Thus, we will be able to attract to Tonkin all the Chinese trade. . . and we also may gain a political interest—a big interest for France."*¹⁰

Subsequently, France sought to reach agreements for the construction of new railway lines connecting with China.

On April 20, 1895, France signed with China the *Gérard Agreement*, in which China allowed France to build a railway line to enter the mines in Yunnan, Guangxi, and Guangdong.¹¹ With the efforts of Paul Doumer and French officials in China, France was able to reach a number of other economic and political agreements¹² including the *France-China Agreement* on April 10, 1898, upon which China agreed to allow the French to build the Lao Cai-Yunnan railway.

The construction of railways connecting with China would not only bring economic benefits but also political benefits to France, including "defending Indochina" from the outside at the risk of a military attack, weapon and opium smuggling, or permeation of new ideological currents—reformist ideology (réformistes) and revolution emerging in China.

Therefore, after the Hanoi-Dong Dang-Long Chau route, Paul Doumer planned a railway construction program based on loans from the government covering a total length of 3,200km spread across Indochina¹³ and on September 10, 1898, the Superior Council of Indochina outlined a construction plan in the shortest time for a number of domestic routes and out of Indochina routes, with a total of 1,700km.¹⁴

The route Hai Phong-Hanoi-Lao Cai (Vietnam) and Lao Cai-Yunnan (China) were built according to a convention dated June 5, 1901,¹⁵ signed between the Governor-General of Indochina and the French Financial Group¹⁶ and was approved

by a law dated July 5, 1901. The construction of the route with a total length of 859km took place over 10 years in two stages:

- The *Hai Phong-Lao Cai* route was constructed section by section, over six years from 1901 to 1906, with a length of 390km (responsible by the Government of Indochina).

- Construction of the 469km *Lao Cai-Yunnan* route started in 1901 and was put into operation section by section from June 15, 1908, and completed on April 1, 1910 (built by the *French Financial Group* under the management of *The French Indochina-Yunnan Railway Construction Company*, the subsidiary of a *finance company* established under the Convention dated June 5, 1901, with an initial capital of 12,500,000 francs).

Inside the country, the construction of railway lines was one of the items in the goal: “*Building for Indochina a great economic equipment such as railroads, roads, canals, harbors... things needed for its profitability, putting it into exploitation*”¹⁷ was included in the seven-point colonial exploitation program by Paul Doumer in 1897. According to the plan of the Indochina Colonial Council (through the meeting on September 10, 1898), in addition to the Hai Phong-Yunnan route, attention was also paid to the construction of the Hanoi-Saigon route. Therefore, by 1913, 910km of this line was put into operation.

Labor was the decisive factor in implementing the construction of these routes. However, the question was from where to get such labor?

With the establishment of the Indochina Public Works Service (Service des Travaux publics de l’Indochine), a railway tracking division was established and a recruitment system was organized. In this study, both the Vietnamese and Chinese were used.

The scant literature on the use of Chinese people in the railway construction from Tonkin to China would be exploited to examine this issue.

On the Hanoi-Dong Dang-Longzhou route

According to De Lanessan,¹⁸ in the years 1890, 1891, and 1892, only Chinese workers were employed in the construction of the

Hanoi-Dong Dang (Lang Son) route. The majority of these workers were originally ancient pirates in Tonkin. These people moved to Tonkin from the end of the 19th century, being insurgents of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom rebellion or of the Chinese gangs of Ba Ky, Luu Ky, A Quoc Thuong. However, due to the harsh life and working conditions as railway construction workers, most of these Chinese people quit their jobs to return to looting.

Therefore, since 1892, the construction owner of this route had to replace the Chinese coolies with the Vietnamese ones recruited from the delta. However, this task proved to be more difficult than recruiting the Chinese because Vietnamese people did not want to leave their villages, especially to work in toxic mountainous areas. At the end of 1893, Resident-Superior of Tonkin Rodier had to negotiate with Vietnamese officials in the delta to get the necessary number of coolies (rotated once a month, together with special care). Since then, according to De Lanessan, there were always 5,000 to 6,000 workers on the construction sites, and the work has progressed rapidly. This means that thousands of Chinese coolies worked on those construction sites before being replaced by the Vietnamese coolies.

*On the Hai Phong-Yunnan route*¹⁹

The recruitment of on-site workers on the Hai Phong-Yunnan route faced many difficulties, because it was a long route, often run through dangerous valleys or deserted and sparsely populated plateaus, which witnessed frequent fighting between the Vietnamese rebels and the French. Therefore, the contractor had to bring in an increasing number of workers from outside. First, attention was paid to the plain area where thousands of Vietnamese workers were recruited. However, because of the difficulty in moving, this type of labor was still not enough to meet the needs of the construction of the route, especially for the 100km running through the Nam Ti valley (in Tonkin). Under such circumstances, they had to rely on the Chinese workers recruited from China and those who lived in Tonkin.

The available document showed that the recruiting entrepreneur (entrepreneur de recrutement) “drained the Dual-Guangs (i.e., Guangdong and Guangxi), to the point that at times, the Deputy Chief of Dual-Guangs had to ban the recruitment in these two provinces.”²⁰ Subsequently, they also had to recruit up to “6,000 coolies in Tianjin (China) with the foremen (contremaitre) as the core and taking that group of labor to the construction site in Nam Tibe organized meticulously.”²¹

The labor recruiter also recruited Chinese workers from Vietnam. For example, in 1903, at the gate of Hanoi, people “encountered a group of 550 Chinese people heading to Lao Cai for railway construction.”²² This recruitment was not too difficult because the number of Chinese people residing in Tonkin was increasing, as mentioned above, among whom the majority did not have a job or stable livelihood, had to participate in bandits, and “they gathered thousands of people in the Red River basin, upstream and downstream of Yen Bai or around Phu Lang Thuong”²³ in the early 20th century.

Although the documents show that recruiting and employing Chinese to work for the Hai Phong-Lao Cai railway site was not always satisfactory, around 45,000 Chinese people were consistently present on this railway construction site (Hai Phong-Lao Cai railway).²⁴

On inland railway routes

The Chinese presence on the railway routes inside Indochina is not reflected much in the documents we have obtained till date. It is only learnt that groups of Chinese railway workers were constantly moving from place to place, and route to route, with the advent of construction sites. For example, in 1908, according to the report of the Resident of Bac Giang on the election of the chief of Fujian State, “the vast majority of Chinese people in Phu Lang Thuong were about to leave for Vinh, where they were about to bring in train factories.”²⁵

These documents show that the number of Chinese people recruited for the construction of railway lines was extremely large, although it was known that this group of people was con-

stantly changing and, hence, unstable.

The Chinese coolies (like the Vietnamese) had the same reason to accept working on the railway lines as “misery.”

In China, “*the ultimate misery of the Zhongyuan Empire was the working site for recruiters to get contracted coolies.*”²⁶

Labor was recruited by a middle class called the “recruiting foremen” (*contremaitre de recrutement*) that the French Consulate in Guangdong once had to call out that those foremen “*whether being European or Asian, in general did the servant trafficking (la traite) with all the abuse entailed. But, unfortunately, such a middle class was necessary.*”²⁷

It was also a “misery” for those Chinese people who were already living in Tonkin, as the lack of source of livelihood pushed them into the railway construction sites.

The construction sites where coolies worked were described as “*prisons where people died*” and though it “*did not reach the peak of the brutality brought by the railways in Congo, the scenes observed at the gate of Hanoi could also cause outrage toward those with hearts.*” One of those scenes was recorded in Hautefeuille’s letter to the Governor-General of Indochina dated February 2, 1903:

“*The other day, while traveling from Son Tay to Hanoi, I met a group of 550 Chinese people headed to Lao Cai for railway projects. This group of people stretched on a road of at least 5 to 6km and most of them were tired or sick and miserable. . . I do not understand why the contractors forced them to walk in vain while they could transfer them by train to Viet Tri, or to Yen Bai.*”²⁸

Like the Vietnamese coolies, the Chinese coolies also had to work in extremely difficult conditions. Work was performed mainly by human power without any mechanical support. Moreover, their accommodation was not guaranteed, and they did not receive any medical care.

On the hundreds of thousands of workers working on the Hai Phong-Yunnan route, the authors believed that the actual number of deaths could not be counted.²⁹

Therefore, the Chinese often quit their jobs together and collectively sued and stood up to fight against the employer.

One document states the following:

*"... In March of 1905, there was no longer a job that suited them. More than half of the Chinese coolies moved toward Mong Tu to sue officials, and then ran in chaos throughout China toward Tianjin. There were only 2,500 people left in Nam Ti. A sudden epidemic struck them and killed 800 of them in just a few days, the remainder frantically fled north, and only about 500 stayed back until the end of construction."*³⁰

In a Notice (Note), the Director of Indochina Public Works Service wrote as follows: *"From 5,000 Tianjin people, one may estimate those who disappeared, we dare not mention the dead, which was close to 4,000. . . the slaughter occurred in this campaign due to lack of accommodation and supplies."*³¹

3. Establishment of plantations and Chinese labor

It can be said that France continuously indulged in different forms of exploitation from 1888, while officially conquering all three regions of Vietnam, beginning with the first colonial exploitation lasting from 1897 to 1918, based on a well-planned mining program proposed by the Governor-General of Indochina Paul Doumer. Thereafter, since 1919, France conducted the second colonial exploitation and the following times that lasted until before World War II still on the spirit inscribed in the Exploitation Program proposed by Paul Doumer:

*"Promote production and trade of Indochina by developing the French colonialism and indigenous labor."*³²

Boosting production is mainly aimed at developing industries related to the exploitation of land and natural resources of the colony that was to expand the land concession, reclamation, and increase in cultivated areas to increase tax revenues and to supply the tropical products that the colonizing country needed; and to develop the mining industry to supply raw materials for French industries and goods for French commerce. Among the regions of Vietnam, Tonkin developed in both the fields.

To achieve the goal set for colonial exploitation in agricultural and industrial sectors, the problem of labor was raised. As mentioned above, France wanted to rely on the natives. However, like in other fields, France still required Chinese workers.

The land concession, reclamation, and Chinese labor

In French colonial history, regardless of whether a colony was a settlement colony (*colonie de peuplement*), exploitation colony (*colonie d'exploitation*), or mixed colony (*colonie mixte*), land occupation and exploitation (colonization) were always the top goals of the French colonialists and colonial governments.

In Tonkin, the first French plantation was established in 1887. This could be the opening milestone for the “*land concession and plantation*.” This course lasted until 1945 with a total of 1,259 plantations spread over 499,266.4643ha of land were ceded to the French, the natives under different forms,³³ which included the following:

- Grant of plantations in accordance with general regulations (to the “*French citizens, subjects and protégés*” (*Concession des terres aux citoyens, sujets, protégés français*): 811 plantations with a total of 457,715.8625ha;

- Grant of plantations according to the regulation of forest cover, also known as on-site reclamation (*colonization sur place*): 100 plantations with a total of 4,958.3101ha;

- Grant of plantation for collective colonization: 63 plantations with a total of 14,776.74ha;

- Grant of sea *lais* concessions: 285 plantations with a total of 21,815.5517ha.

The concession of plantations took place massively, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the so-called “wasteland” existed on a large scale. From 1887 to 1918, 476 plantations were granted under the general regulations, with a total area of 417,650.8079ha. Since 1918, less wasteland could be ceded to the French colonialists, while the red and gray lands in Cochinchina and South-Annan had been opened up for “*land concession and reclamation*.” Therefore, the move-

ment of land transfer in Tonkin decreased gradually, and other small forms of land concession and reclamation were opened to both the French and Vietnamese, with the modest results listed above.

The establishment of plantations with increasingly stricter regulations on the time limit for the full exploitation of the assigned acreage to be transferred from temporary to permanent ownership raised the problem of labor.

The issue of labor on the plantations was raised earlier in Tonkin, not by the colonial government but the concessionaires themselves. Hundreds of thousands of hectares of land were ceded to the French colonialists. However, a question was from where to get the labor to exploit?

From 1890 to 1896, the colonial government introduced a program to exploit Tonkin using soldiers. Subsequently, in the years 1895–1905, he also thought of establishing a European village in Tonkin with families brought over from southern France. However, this did not come true, as Tonkin was not a migrant colony. Moreover, with the severe tropical climate, one could not have thought of bringing in European workers.

Right from the end of the 19th century, the French also tried to analyze the “pros” and “cons” of using Japanese, Malaysian, and Chinese workers with the intention of creating a flow of migration into Indochina, especially Tonkin, to exploit the uplands by the method of tenants.³⁴ Resultantly, the following conclusion was made: *“The Japanese may be useful, but they pose a political danger and they cannot tolerate the climate.”*³⁵ Only a handful of Japanese came to work on the plantations (and mines) as managers for the French in Tonkin. The Malaysians and Indians seemed to be recruited only for the rubber and pepper plantations in Cochinchina and Southern Annam. The case of the indigenous people was that *“without them, we cannot exploit and cultivate wasteland.”*³⁶ As with the Chinese, some people opposed using them on the following grounds: *“Chinese people are not easily obedient, they are very undisciplined, only work when their savings allow them to do business or lend as the model of buying*

young rice (i.e., paying advance to farmers to get paddy in the harvest season).³⁷ Agriculture was not a sector in which the Chinese generally operated in Tonkin. Therefore, according to a document, the estimated number of Chinese farmers in the years 1908–1909 was only 4,000. These farmers resided in the West of Mong Cai and around Lang Son, on the border with China.³⁸ However, there are also concessionaires who say the following: *“If Chinese workers are used for deforestation, while the Vietnamese are used for the second phase, it will bring great results. . . A large facility will have to have both Chinese and Vietnamese being used separately.”*³⁹

Thus, the Vietnamese and Chinese would still be the labor source on the French plantations and are included in the concept commonly used in documents at that time as *“indigenous workers and Asian overseas workers.”*

Tonkin had a considerable population belonging to both these types of labor (Vietnamese and Chinese), but their distribution was uneven. People concentrated in the delta, while the mountainous and midland areas were abandoned. Meanwhile, the plantations and plantation areas were largely distributed in the two regions—the Central and Uplands.⁴⁰ Due to the psychological attachment to their hometown and the difficulties in life in mountainous areas, the farmers of Tonkin never wanted to leave the plain to settle in areas that were too far away, which was often called “sacred forest, poisonous water.”

Due to a lack of understanding of the psychological traits of the indigenous people and minimum conditions for immigration, the colonial government did not foresee the labor problem to take appropriate measures. In legal terms, it was not until 1896 that the first document on labor was issued. Previously, the recruitment of workers was considered as a personal matter, while the management of workers was done arbitrarily by the concessionaires, according to local habits and customs. The indiscriminate concession of land to concessionaires, without a corresponding labor policy, resulted in a labor shortage on the large outland plantations and abuses in the limitless exploitation of workers by the concessionaires.

Facing such a situation, some concessionaires recruited farmer households from the Highlands of An Nam to the Midlands of Tonkin. However, they still do not have sufficient labor to exploit hundreds of thousands of hectares of plantation land. Therefore, the concessionaires had to turn to the Chinese workers. The colonial government also considered the “*celestial*” (célestes) as a powerful aid to colonial exploitation. By imposing taxation measures, it facilitated the recruitment and migration of Chinese people to Tonkin, primarily for agricultural and mining facilities.

As a rule, every Chinese must have a personal tax card with the minimum payable amount of 8.22 *piasters* (official tax payable was seven *piasters*, one photo, and 0.22 *piasters* surcharge). Yet, through the Orders of Governor-General on April 14, 1893, and June 1, 1897, “*All Chinese employed on European agribusinesses gathered in a group with a minimum of 25 people can be issued a personal tax card with the rate of 2.72 piasters according to Order dated June 6, 1892.*”⁴¹

The Chinese people brought to work on the French plantations in Tonkin would also enjoy this incentive.

Further, for the Chinese immigrants to Indochina, the colonial government also reduced the registration fee to 1.5 *piasters* if there were more than 25 people working in the same agricultural exploitation facility.⁴²

French consulates in China were very active in recruiting workers in Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan, Fujian, Fuzhou, and Hoi Hao (Hainan Island) provinces on the plantations in Tonkin. However, it did not appear to gain much fruit. This task encountered many difficulties because the distance was too large, and many Chinese died on their way from China to Indochina. Moreover, many people demanded repatriation shortly after arriving in Indochina, because the owner did not comply with the commitment.

In 1901, Duchemin and Saint Frerès (two merchants) brought 413 Chinese people from Fuzhou (China) to work on the plantations in Hung Hoa. Under the contract, they would

be paid a monthly salary of 15 *piasters* per month by the employer for working eight hours per day. If they worked at a flat rate (forfait), they would be paid 0.1 *piasters* for 2kg of coffee or 1kg of jute or hemp fiber. However, in 1903, all these Chinese workers filed a lawsuit against the owners demanding repatriation. This was because instead of paying monthly wages, the owners required them to sell each jute pack for six *piasters*, while they had to buy it from the locals for 14 to 16 *piasters* per pack.⁴³

The following studies show that although not many plantations used Chinese labor, the ones that did were mostly large plantations, covering hundreds or thousands of hectares. Since Chinese workers seemed to be mainly used only on plantations that were assigned under the general land concession rule—the main form of “*land concession, reclamation*” in Vietnam under colonial rule—we would discuss the following:

How did the employment of Chinese workers happen?

Regarding the way of using the Chinese, some concessionaires favored the direct exploitation mode (mode d’exploitation directe), which means using wage-paid workers. However, others wanted to employ the rental mode (farming) or sharecropping (métayage).

For example, in 1903, during a meeting of the Tonkin Planters Union (Syndicat des planteurs du Tonkin), Blanc advocated for the form of monthly salary, but Duchemin opposed it in favor of flat-rate payment upon contracted work (forfait) for the following reason: “*The actual form of monthly salary payment forces the owner to regularly supervise. This annoys the Chinese and makes them more disorganized when they work in groups. In addition, the Chinese coolies only work if they have practical benefits. However, the fixed salary will eliminate the recruiters’ benefits, forcing them to work for free for the owner.*”⁴⁴

It seems that the tenancy regime was preferred by concessionaires over the direct exploitation or lease of plantations. The survey showed that only a few plantations employed wage workers or cultivators (renting), and the majority of the planta-

tions employing Chinese labor were rice plantations by sharecropping (*métayage*).

Regarding the form of using wage workers

An example can be taken from the five plantations, with 2,050.32ha of the *Duchemin and Saint frères consortium* in Hung Hoa and Tuyen Quang, as noted above. Here, Chinese workers were paid by month or by task. If by month, they were paid four *piasters* (instead of 15 *piasters* as in the contract). If paid by task, they would be paid six *piasters* for one jute pack.⁴⁵

Regarding the form of using the farmer-tenant (fermier-locataire), the document only indicated this form on the plantations (being ceded in 1890 in Hung Yen three plantations with a total of 393.46ha) owned by Cornu Autide, a businessman in Vinh. The document recorded the following: “*The plantation was leased to the Chinese in Guangxi and fully exploited.*”⁴⁶ In other words, Cornu Autide allowed the Chinese to cultivate the plantation so that this person would hire workers to exploit the plantation. This means that the Chinese was the farmer of Cornu Autide.

Regarding the form of using the sharecropper (métayer-transplanters)

Based on the existing documents about the Chinese workers on the plantations, we statistically had about 20 plantations of six owners—individuals, partnerships, and companies—spread over a total of 16,784.25ha exploited by allowing the Chinese people to sharecrop. These plantations were distributed in Dong Trieu (Hai Duong), Bac Giang, Quang Yen, and Hung Hoa; and were mainly rice plantations, some of which were intercropped.

As for the way the landlords allowed the Chinese to transplant, we found nothing different from the way they did with the Vietnamese. The owner provided the field to the tenant, lent them a cow or buffalo, and gave an advance to the tenant in cash or in kind to wait for the harvest. At the time of harvesting, the tenant had to submit a portion of the obtained products (called royalty fee (*redevance*)), either according to the area of the paddy field or the amount of cattle lent, either in

money or in kind. The situation of some plantations are discussed below.

On the 825ha plantation in Dong Trieu (Hai Duong) owned by the Roque brothers (ship-owners) in Hai Phong, these concessionaires used the Chinese to grow rice. According to the *Report of French President Piquet* dated January 16, 1890 on the kidnapping of the Roque brothers (January 1890) by a group of robbers, about 200 Chinese people were used, which formed a village led by a Chinese chief.⁴⁷

Over the five plantations with a total of 2,702ha belonging to the *Partnership between a Malabard* (officer) and a *Malyvernay* (farmer), these concessionaires exploited as much as “100 Turkish and Chinese farmer households, who might be organized into 6 villages.”⁴⁸

Concessionaires Schneider (Basile), a post officer, employed Chinese people as tenants on five rice plantations, with a total of 2,986ha located in two provinces of Bac Giang and Quang Yen.

In 1908, Schneider wrote in a report on the Chinese working on four plantations with a total of 1,486ha ceded to him in the years from 1897 to 1901 in Bac Giang as follows: “Most tenants were Chinese. I had to come to find labor for the plantations due to difficulties in finding local workers (in the Bac Giang region). . . The vast majority of these Chinese people have been living on the plantations for at least 8 years.”⁴⁹

Schneider had another 1,500ha plantation in Quang Yen, which was ceded in 1901. According to the government’s report, the Chinese tenants on this plantation were organized into three villages: Yen Phu, Mai To, and Phi Dien, belonging to Niem Son commune, Yen Bac district, Quang Yen province.

The method of using sharecropping (tenant) recorded in that report was as follows:

“In 1900, the notables of the villages of Yen Phu, Mai To, and Phi Dien, Niem Son commune, Yen Bac district, signed documents to pledge all land to Schneider for a period of 3 years. To exploit, Schneider used Chinese tenants. He provided those fields to the above-mentioned vil-

lages' people to transplant. This concessionaires committed to lend each family one buffalo (10 for Mai To village, 6 to Phi Dien village, 3 to Phu Nhuan village), lend them agricultural tools, and advance a sum of money to ensure farming and cultivating work. The concessionaires would also bear all the tax and other obligations for these villages.

*In the fall crop in October, the tenants must turn in the land rent to the concessionaires. The land rent was set for each buffalo borrowed by the village: in Mai To village, it was 45 paddy squares for each buffalo (30 bushels or 15kg per square); in Phi Dien village, it was 52 paddy squares, and in Yen Phu village, it was 38 paddy squares. If tenants did not have enough paddy, they could pay by cash, at 0.6 piasters for a paddy square (the unit for measuring paddy weight) or 15 piasters/buffalo/year.*⁵⁰

The tenancy regime became popular due to its "convenience," giving the concessionaires more profits and avoiding the troubles due to the fact of not having to contact directly with the labor. However, it also caused many "inconveniences" for the concessionaires. Tenants may break contracts and run away with the advance payments. The situation is described below.⁵¹

The notables and tenants in the villages of the Schneider's plantations sued the concessionaires to reclaim the land on the grounds that the landlord had not reduced his rents during the three years of crop failure. The tenants in the Malabard and Malyvernay plantations even went on to assassinate the concessionaires.

This situation lasted for several years in Bac Giang and the neighboring areas. The number of Chinese people was high that they caused "a lot of troubles" for the authorities at all levels of management; many letters were exchanged among the authorities to resolve this "mess."⁵²

The report of the President of Chamber of Agriculture of Tonkin to the Attorney General (Procureur général) dated December 29, 1925 states the following:

"I would like to inform you so you may undertake an investigation that under your authority, there is a series of violations (by tenants)

harming the concessionaires that in my opinion means a political warning."⁵³

This report lists a series of "stealing and disturbing" cases of plantation workers, including tenants. These include camp burning to take coffee beans and theft of cattle on the plantations. It was because of the "disturbances" of Chinese tenants in Bac Giang that the measure of issuing identity cards (*carte d'identité*) was put into practice. However, the chaos did not stop.⁵⁴ The Report of the Resident of Bac Giang to the Resident Superior of Tonkin dated June 24, 1926 stated as follows:

*"A group of 20 armed men including 4 Browning automatic pistols, 1 shotgun, 1 Reming gun, 2 other guns attacked the Ly Tu's residence; most of these people are opium smugglers and tenants of the plantations. They caused many burglaries in Lang Mom and Luc Nam... 7 cases in Kep alone..."*⁵⁵

The 273.25ha plantation of Nguyen Kim Lan (at No. 93 Hang Buom str., Hanoi), which was transferred on May 23, 1936, was also exploited by the absence of tenants. Regarding the Chinese tenants at Nguyen Kim Lan plantation, the Resident of Hai Duong wrote as follows:

*"There are no single Vietnamese tenants living and working in Nguyen Kim Lan plantation. All of them are Asian foreigners (Chinese). These people have hidden their true identity under Nung people's identity cards with the accomplice of the chiefs of some mountainous villages."*⁵⁶

In short, along with the Vietnamese tenants, the Chinese were employed according to the general tenancy regime, making labor management lot more convenient for the concessionaires and providing a much more stable income without having to invest much capital. However, this regime did not contribute to the progression of the modern plantation system, even though large land ownership dominated the area.

Like the indigenous tenants, the life of the Chinese sharecropping with French concessionaires was always below the living standard of the self-cultivating peasants, that is, those who owned a small piece of land in rural Tonkin. Therefore, the

reaction of tenants to the concessionaires' excessive exploitation took place quite often, which was sometimes bloody. Finally, the tenant regime—the medieval form of exploitation that accompanied the cultivation of rice on plantations—was condemned, leading to a collapse in favor of the direct exploitation mode (mode d'exploitation directe) associated with the cultivation of rich crops (les cultures riches), typically coffee grown in Tonkin.

4. Mine concession system in Tonkin and Chinese labor

Along with the expropriation of public land for the concession of plantations to French colonialists and capitalist companies, the French colonial government in Vietnam appropriated the administration of mine resources from the indigenous government (the Nguyen Dynasty) to grant concessions to the French colonialists, companies, and capitalist groups. In 1888, the first mine section was ceded to the Hon Gai Coal Company (*Société des Charbons de Hon Gai*) in Tonkin. Since then, other mining concessions have been continuously conducted, from gas mines to metal mines. The final result was that until 1945, 58 years after the first land concession appeared in Vietnam, a total of 1,771 mines were conceded mainly to French mining companies and one number of Vietnamese people, with a total area of 1,882,985.7217ha of land with mines for exploration and exploitation. Among these mines, there were only 364 mines; the area of 407,576.7664ha was distributed in Annam, the vast majority of mines (1,407) and the remaining mine area (1,475,408.9555ha) were distributed in Tonkin.

As a rule, in the grant of concessions, the conceded mines should be explored and exploited for a certain period of time. Such a regulation was increasingly specific and stricter that until the Decree dated February 7, 1934, all the mine concessions had to be exploited and maintained from the 5th year after being granted a detecting permit. A decree dated June 1, 1937 announced the withdrawal of unexploited mines.⁵⁷

Similar to the labor problem on plantations, the issue of

workers exploring and exploiting nearly two thousand zones of conceded mines with a total area of millions of hectares in Tonkin was raised very early by both the concessionaires and colonial government.

After a lot of analysis and testing for different types of workers—French, Japanese, Malaysian, Chinese, and indigenous—the same solution as for the plantation area was raised; the final choice was aimed at the two main types of coolie, the indigenous people and the Chinese, with a core team of European workers. The mine management agency said the following:

*“For a job as hard as working in a mine, using only Vietnamese workers is really little practical; so it is most beneficial to accept Chinese workers from the beginning.”*⁵⁸

The two types of Vietnamese and Chinese workers were used in such a way that *“local workers are used for less heavy jobs, especially works in open air (du jour),”* and Chinese workers could be employed for heavier jobs, as they had the advantage of *“providing the labor productivity two times more than that of the Vietnamese workers and not bringing the same worries as employing Vietnamese workers, only on the condition that they are paid with a higher salary than the Vietnamese.”*⁵⁹

After tens of years of mining, in 1933, the Tonkin Mining Association said: *“Most of the workers are Vietnamese or mountainous people from Tonkin or Annam (...) in addition to the Chinese. In particular, the Vietnamese have little interest in working in mines; are very attached to the hometown; and afraid of forests, mountains, and malaria. They only left the delta when required upon demand. They are not healthy but intelligent, skillful, easy-going, and loyal when they are treated well. Labor productivity of Vietnamese is low (only 1/3 of that of the French). But, the salary paid to them is not high. . .*

The Chinese people are strong, better adapted to different climates, especially suitable for jobs that require physical endurance. . . But, they demand a higher salary, more independent and less compliant with disciplines. . . But, they are gradually replaced by the Vietnamese, who today account for 9/10 workers. . .

The Europeans are in charge of engineering and administration... therefore, their wages are usually two or three times higher than in France. The number of Europeans, usually in the position of directing and controlling, has increased slowly."⁶⁰

Thus, until the end, apart from the European workers recruited to make the core team at mines, the Vietnamese and Chinese were also the main sources of labor in the mining in Tonkin during the modern times. These two types of labor were included in the concept of "*indigenous and Asian overseas workers*" (as well as plantation workers) and often used in conjunction with each other in varying proportions among mines.

However, indigenous workers played an increasingly major role. The main reason was that the Chinese became increasingly reluctant to engage in heavy work inside the mines. Recruitment of indigenous people became increasingly easy, especially in densely populated and farm-lacking regions such as the Tonkin delta. According to Pierre Gourou, "*In the mines in Tonkin, there are 40,000 to 50,000 coolies being recruited in the delta plain. Thai Binh and Nam Dinh (the two most densely populated provinces in Tonkin) provided the largest number of workers, nearly 6% of the total and not a single village of these two provinces did not have any mining workers.*"⁶¹

Small-scale land tenure, with the vast majority of farmers who had no fields or only very little farms (less than 1 acre = 0.36ha)⁶² was a factor that made a large number of farmers in the Tonkin delta provinces of Vietnam leave their villages to work in plantations and mines. Hunger, natural disasters, droughts, constant floods, and the burden of taxes and fees made farmers' lives more difficult. Under such circumstances, it was easy for mine owners to find in densely populated plains many workers for the exploitation of vast mines in the plains.

For Chinese workers, even before the management and exploitation of mines in Vietnam were transferred to the French, they were an important mining force, which was directly organized by the state or mines gained by the Chinese (through bidding). For example, in the Tong Tinh mine in

Thai Nguyen, exploited by overseas Chinese in the 18th century, there was a time when “*The number of people gathered is usually estimated to ten thousand people (10,000 people).*”⁶³ The large number of Chinese people frightened the Trinh, and in 1769, Trinh Doanh attempted to expel them to China. There were many other mines, especially the gold mines in the highlands of Tonkin, in which the phenomenon of Chinese people working in mines was very common. Therefore, the French mine-owners could recruit Chinese people who had lived in Tonkin for a long time and could also recruit them from Chinese provinces according to the regulations related to “contracted labor” for “foreign Asians,” which is discussed in the section below.

Recruiting people from China was found to be very costly for the mine-owners. For example, to recruit one coolie from China, the owner would have to spend the following amounts: “*The recruitment fee in China; fee of transport; food for moving from China to Hai Phong; gifts for officials; commissions for the contractors 10 VND/coolie. . . the cost of moving to working site. . .*”⁶⁴

Moreover, the salary for a coolie from China was usually 40% higher than that for a local coolie; that is,⁶⁵ employing Chinese workers was more costly.

Another difficulty was that the provincial governments in China increasingly restricted mine-owners in Tonkin from recruiting their people as coolies. For example, in 1908, the owner of the Thiec Tinh Tucmine (Cao Bang) asked for permission to recruit 600 to 800 Chinese coolies for this mine, but this was refused by the authority of Longzhou province (China).⁶⁶ In the same year, the Cao Bang Tin Company (*Société d'étain de Cao Bang*) “*requested to add 400 more Chinese coolies, but by all means it received only a small number of group of 10 to 20 people.*”⁶⁷

The colonial government increasingly controlled this situation due to the fact that Chinese people who immigrated freely to Tonkin often carried fake documents, names, and nationalities, causing trouble for the management.

An Order dated January 18, 1922 (amending Article 9 of the

Order dated December 12, 1913 on the management of foreign workers) provided for the issuance of travel permits for Chinese workers migrating to Tonkin with a fee of 1 *piaster*. This travel document would be valid for 15 days, and they would have to re-register and pay more money if they wished to renew it.⁶⁸

An Order dated October 31, 1932 (amending Article 26 of the Order dated December 12, 1913) also stipulated that “*Chinese passport holders who are granted a transit visa can only stay in Tonkin for the stated period and within the maximum period of 15 days if the duration is not mentioned on the visa. All violations would be fined 10 francs.*”⁶⁹

This rule limited the number of Chinese workers to be employed in the mines.

However, Chinese workers always played an important role in mining in Tonkin in particular, and Vietnam in general.

At the end of the 19th century, as mentioned above, as early as the 1880s, the Chinese worked in the tin and silver mines in Cao Bang. They often came to Vietnam since the late 19th century for many reasons. They could be bandits or gangs such as Quan Co Den, remnants of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. It could also be that the troops of the Qing Dynasty went to Tonkin to “*suppress the rebellion*” at the request of the Nguyen Dynasty... When staying in Tonkin, apart from robbery, they had many different jobs. It was common to trade, lend loans with high interest, or be coolies at plantations and mines (the mine-owners were initially Chinese, and later French). They competed and prevented the Vietnamese coolies. Consequently, the colonial government was skeptical of using them.

In 1898, at *Ke Bao Coal Company*, out of a total of 2,882 workers, 972 were Chinese, who were recruited from Hong Kong (i.e., one-third).⁷⁰

In 1910–1911, according to *the Indochina Economic Report*, 10,518 local workers were working in 17 mines in Tonkin in 1909—six coal mines, one brown coal mine, six tin-tungsten mines, and four zinc mines. However, it is noted that they were

Chinese and 128 Europeans.⁷¹

In 1909, at the Lang Hit mine, according to a letter from the Resident of Thai Nguyen to the Resident-Superior of Tonkin dated July 7, 1909, Pierron, owner of the Lang Hit mine, used 175 Chinese coolies to exploit.⁷² In Thai Nguyen, in addition to working in mines, the Chinese also participated in mine exploration and Research. The Economic and Political Report of Thai Nguyen province in 1913–1914 showed that, on average, 300 Vietnamese, Chinese, and Tay coolies were used for mine research and exploration; and 2,350 Vietnamese and Chinese coolies were used in active mines.

In 1914, to exploit metal mines in the provinces of Thai Nguyen, Lang Son, Tuyen Quang, Bac Can, and Cao Bang, mining companies had to employ 4,980 workers, of which 3,550 were Vietnamese and 1,430, Chinese. This means that Chinese workers made up nearly one-third of the total number of workers.

In Cao Bang province, in 1919, to exploit the Pia Ouac mine, *the East Pia Ouac tin and tungsten civil company (Société civile des étains et wolfram du Pia Ouac Est)* in Nam Kep used three Europeans, 30 local technical workers, 200 local professional miners, and a few hundred Chinese coolies.⁷³

In the period from 1919 to the outbreak of the world economic crisis, Vietnam was in the second unprecedented large-scale colonial exploitation. With increased investment capital, the public works carried out from the previous stage were mostly completed; the capitalists and French capitalist companies focused on developing economic sectors, including the mining industry. The number of mining workers increased dramatically, from 12,300 in 1919 to more than 50,000 in 1928–1929. This included both Vietnamese and Chinese workers.

As mentioned above, the number of workers used by *the Tonkin Tin and Wolfram Company (Société des étains et wolfram du Tonkin)* in Tinh Tuc-Cao Bang) to exploit three tin mines in this province was between 110 and 470 in 1908. However, the company employed from 600 to 900 people to exploit these three

mines in 1923,⁷⁴ and the number of workers dramatically increased to 2,200 (including both Vietnamese and Chinese workers) in 1926.⁷⁵

In 1926, the report of Bac Can province stated the following regarding the zinc mines in Cho Dien (Bac Can) belonging to the *Indochina Mining and Metallurgical Company* (*Compagnie minière et metallurgique de l'Indochine*):

*"These mines are always full of prosperity and increasing their yields. Mining is controlled by Europeans and used 2,500 to 3,000 local and Chinese coolies."*⁷⁶

However, documents on the use of workers at the mines also pointed to a trend that the number of Chinese workers was decreasing, while local workers were increasingly replacing Chinese workers in those jobs that only the Chinese could seem to take over.

If at the beginning of the century, mining companies had to employ the Chinese for underground jobs because "... the natives refused to work underground and, as in Hon Gai, it was compulsory to employ Chinese people to work underground and pay much higher wages than those who work on the ground,"⁷⁷ years later, the situation was no longer the same.

In 1926, in Bac Can, out of 2,500 to 3,000 coolies used by the *Indochina Mining and Metallurgical Company* (*Compagnie minières et metallurgique de l'Indochine*) to exploit the Cho Dien zinc mine, there were both local and Chinese people.⁷⁸ For these types of workers, the 1927–1928 report on Cho Dien mine revealed that out of 1,236,677 Asian working days at this company, the number of Vietnamese working days was 1,106,239 (89.4%), and the remaining 130,438 working days were Chinese (10.6%). The Chinese mainly worked outside the mines (119,380 working days outside the mines compared with 11,058 working days in the mines).

In 1929, in Bac Can, mine owners used a total of 867,922 working days of Asian workers to exploit three mines of Cho Dien, Cho Don, and Pac Nam, of which 778,313 working days were of Vietnamese people (89.6%), and the remaining 89,609

working days were of the Chinese (10.4%).⁷⁹ In particular, the Chinese mainly worked outside the mines (with 80,485 working days compared to 9,124 working days in the mines).

From 1930 to 1935, in the general context of the economic crisis, the mining industry was the most affected sector due to the slowdown in the export of mining products. Production decreased in both fuel and metal mines. The number of Vietnamese mining workers declined rapidly, from 52,000 in 1929 to 45,700 in 1930, 34,800 in 1934, and 39,000 in 1935.⁸⁰

In Bac Can, in 1930–1931, the number of applications for mine concessions fell to zero, the number of claims for *périmètres* fell from 46 in 1930 to 15 in 1931, and only five mines were officially subject to concessions, while 26 mines were recovered. Of the mines that were being exploited, only the Cho Dien mine survived the crisis, but the output decreased significantly in 1931 compared to 1930. Consequently, the number of workers also dramatically decreased.⁸¹

However, Vietnamese and Chinese workers were still working together at the Cho Dien mine, although the number of Chinese working days was 45,438, only 7.76% of the total number of working days of Asians in 1930 (585,055) and 11,911, and only 4.1% of all Asian workdays in 1931 (289,480). Among the two types of local and Chinese workers, the number of Chinese workers in the kiln decreased to 11,162 compared to the number of workers working outside of 34,276, which was only 1/3 in 1930, and 1,596 compared to 10,315, which was only 1/5 in 1931.

On the one hand, this was due to the difficulty of recruiting Chinese workers both in the colonial and in China.

On the other hand, the pressure on the local working population and their difficult life had pushed them to have no choice but to become coolies on plantations and mines, and accept working in unfavorable and difficult conditions despite the difficult and dangerous working conditions that the Chinese increasingly tried to avoid. However, the Chinese were still an indispensable source of labor in the mines, as assessed

Table 2 Number of working days on mines at Cho Dien in 1930–1931⁸²

Year	Working in the kiln			Working outside mines			Total number of Asians	Total payment to Asians (VND)
	Vietnamese	Chinese	Total	Vietnamese	Chinese	Total		
1930	323,171	11,162	334,333	216,446	34,276	250,722	585,055	283,216.30
1931	190,081	1,596	191,677	87,488	10,315	97,803	289,480	132,381.97

by the colonial government. In the end, these two types of workers were still working together in mines to benefit the French capitalists.

In terms of salary payment, the Chinese were always paid higher wages than the Vietnamese, but many times lower than the wages of European workers.

The payroll on the metal mines of Cho Dien, Cho Don, and Pac Nam in Bac Can province, according to the annual economic report in 1929⁸³ was as follows:

For European employees: 29 people, the total salary paid to workers was 109,821 *piasters*, the average was 3,786 *piasters* per year, and each month was 315.5 *piasters*. If each person worked 25 days per month, on average, each would be paid 12.62 *piasters* per day. However, for Asian employees (55 people), the total salary paid was 26,077 *piasters*; on average, each person was paid 474.12 *piasters* per year and 39.5 *piasters* per month, and if each person worked 25 days per month, on average, each person was paid 1.58 *piasters* per day.

As a result, the salaries of European employees were nearly eight times higher than those of Asians. In other words, salaries of the Asian employees were only 12.5% of that of the European employees on the same operator.

Thus, even though they were foreigners, the Chinese and Vietnamese were both subjected to exploitation by the French employer, discriminated against French workers because they were in the same concept as “local and other Asians.”

Working conditions were very harsh because the mines were usually located in the Central and Uplands, with a toxic climate, far from the center; therefore, supply was very difficult. Moreover, the level of modernization and industrialization in

the mining industry, even in the second colonial exploitation, was still very limited. Workers mainly worked manually with human power in all stages—ore digging, ore washing, ore screening, and ore transportation. The amount of electricity used in pit lighting and ore mining was very limited, especially compared to the total output of the ore produced. Labor productivity was very low, especially when compared to that of European mining workers.

The statistics on the labor productivity of the miners in Vietnam for 14 years from 1924 to 1938 showed that, on average, each worker, including the Vietnamese and Chinese, mined 187kg of ore per day.⁸⁴ Meanwhile, the productivity of the 1935 coal workers in France, the Netherlands, and the UK was 817kg, 1,745kg, and 1,172kg, respectively.⁸⁵ Thus, the productivity of the Vietnamese miners was only 22.88% of the French miners, 10.71% of the Dutch miners, and 16% of the British miners.

Due to inadequate investment in exploitation, labor accidents occurred frequently at a rate of up to 18.7% cases per 10 workers in 1921 and 18.6% per 10,000 workers in 1930.⁸⁶ This situation was common for both the Vietnamese and Chinese workers.

5. Regulations on management of Chinese labor

The Chinese people entered Tonkin early; the use of Chinese workers on railway sites, plantations, and mines in Tonkin also occurred early. However, it was not until August 14, 1909 that the first order on sending foreign workers, mainly Chinese workers, into Indochina was signed by the Governor-General of Indochina. This order was issued in Tonkin by an Order dated March 8, 1910⁸⁷ and later replaced by an Order dated October 25, 1927 on the protection of local and Asian workers.

The Order dated August 14, 1909

Article 1 of the 1909 Order allowed for all plantation or mine owners to bring foreign workers into the colony on the condition that they had to obtain permission from the Indochina

Governor-General or the Governor.

The basic rules were as follows:

In principle, workers brought into the colony must have recruitment contracts. The contracts must be signed in the country of recruited workers, both in that person's language and in French (Article 3).

Minimum age of recruited workers was 18.

Contract period was 1 year.

The recruited workers were exempted from personal taxes and all charges, that is, all obligations in the colony, either in the province or in the village; and had the right to have clean accommodation, food, and health care when being sick.

The entry of recruited workers into Indochina must be through the Immigration Service (Service d'immigration), but Tonkin must go through the Police Department in Hai Phong or through the capital of the Military Territories.

Under Article 13, the recruited workers must be paid monthly, but must work 10 hours per day and spend two hours per week to clean the living place. If it was a flat rate job, the rate could not be excessive, and they were entitled to paid leave if there was a reason.

The recruited workers also had the right to sue the owner and file claims before the authorities.

The Order specified the punishments that recruited workers should bear when it was considered a violation of the order provisions (imprisonment and cash fine).

Thus, the Order dated August 14, 1909 only provided a number of provisions, mainly the obligations that workers had to comply with and the penalties they had to bear, without paying much attention to their interests.

This inadequacy made it difficult for both the employer and the colonial government to address the labor needs of industrial, agricultural, and mining facilities. Therefore, the colonial government issued another order on October 25, 1927.

The Order dated October 25, 1927

The Order dated October 25, 1927⁸⁸ included 100 terms

signed by the Governor-General of Indochina for the purpose of protecting local workers and overseas Asians under contract on agricultural, industrial, and mining facilities in Indochina. This was considered to be the most general and systematic document on worker recruitment and employment (both local and foreign, mainly Chinese) under labor contracts (*contrats de travail*) on plantations and industrial and mining facilities, among others, in Indochina, overcoming the earlier fragmentation of regulations for this type of worker.

Regarding the recruitment age, this order accepted the recruitment of both men and women aged 18 and over, and adolescents aged 14 to 18 years.

The contract period increased (in Article 6) to three years from one, as stipulated in the Order dated August 26, 1899 (this could be extended if the workers needed).

The working hours of the agricultural workers were set to 10 hours. For other types of workers not specified here, it was still 10 hours, as prescribed in the 1909 Order. For miners, it was still 10 hours per day, according to the order dated May 20, 1913.

In terms of diet, employers must ensure for workers at least 3,200 calories per day from food including rice, meat, vegetables, salt, and fat.

However, this order emphasized very heavy penalties for workers' violations, especially those who participated in strikes or fled.

The Order dated October 25, 1927⁸⁹ on Vietnamese and foreign workers in general, and Chinese workers in particular, was still valid until the following years to ensure the labor force for the exploitation and production establishments of French employers.

In a nutshell, the contract labor regime was brought to the colony by the French, along with the expansion and development of colonial exploitation and expansion of the French influence in Asia. This regime created a bond between workers and employers, and rationalized the exploitation and oppres-

sion of employers against workers. At the same time, the colonial government could control every move of workers through labor contracts. Moreover, the labor contract, even just on paper, had become the basis for the struggles of Vietnamese and Chinese workers claiming their rights with the employers and colonial government, as the employers rarely fulfilled the obligations set out in the contract.

(Ta Thi Thuy)

II Recruitment of “Coolies” in Nam Dinh Province for Rubber Plantations in the Late 1920s

1. Statistical analysis based on labor contracts

Since 1919, Tonkin has supplied laborers to work in the rubber plantations and other agricultural products in Cochinchina. With the steep rise in international rubber prices in 1925, a large amount of French capital was invested into rubber plantation exploitation in the hills of Cochinchina and Cambodia (i.e., “the red lands”), and the demand for labor increased. In the Tonkin Delta and northern An Nam regions, a large number of Vietnamese contract workers were recruited. This study highlighted the recruitment of Vietnamese coolies from Nam Dinh (Tonkin) in the late 1920s. The paper further presents a hypothesis by statistically analyzing the contents of the labor contract, such as how the Vietnamese workers from the northern region were recruited and what kinds of people accepted these recruits.⁹⁰

With regard to the recruitment of workers from Tonkin and their transfer to southern Indochina, the colonial government left the brokering of each of the villages to private contractors. These negotiations were authorized by the Governor of Tonkin, who required the preparation of labor contracts. As noted in Section I, the Order dated October 25, 1927 on the

protection of workers determined the labor form and conditions of “contract work” in Indochina. Several amendments and additions were made subsequent to the initial Order, which ultimately formed the basis for coolies’ recruitment. The International Labor Office’s *Labor Conditions in Indo-China series of studies and reports* (series B, No. 26, 1938, Geneva) summarized the background of rubber plantation worker recruitment and the establishment process and the contents of the labor laws related to contract labor.

It should be noted that colonial governments saw the rural areas of the Tonkin Delta, with its dense population and excess labor force, as a source of labor for colonial development. The population of the delta provinces, which is where recruitments were primarily conducted, was recorded as totaling 4,779,000 people at the time. The population further increased by an average of 80,000 people per year. Due to this large and growing population, it was determined that Tonkin’s labor market would not be impacted even if an average of 25,000 workers per year—which is what the Southern Indochina plantations required—were dispatched.⁹¹

The Nam Dinh province, in particular, was a densely populated area with a population density of 551 people per square kilometer. Some villages in this region even reported populations of over 1,000 people. There were also many people who did not own a piece of land and who, instead, made a living as general agricultural and/or miscellaneous laborers.⁹²

The authors of this study discovered a large number of labor contracts (*contrats de travail*: the labor contracts signed between French rubber plantation companies and villagers) among the Nam Dinh province administrative documents generated during the French colonial period that have been stored by the National Archives Center in Hanoi (TTLTQGI Hanoi) as well as “passenger lists” created when recruited villagers were transferred from Hai Phong to Saigon. The data presented in these contracts and lists were used to form a database.⁹³ Among the available information, this study used the individual data of the

Vietnamese laborers written in the *contrats*. The coolies' recruitment that took place in Tonkin in the 1920s has not yet been specifically disclosed, nor has research using the *contrats* been published in the past.

The total number of labor contracts that were analyzed in this study amounted to 6,793 and spanned from the end of 1925 to 1929.⁹⁴ The forms of the labor contracts differed slightly by contract year and, in rare cases, by plantation company. Across all the contracts, most, if not all, had almost the same form and content.

The contracts included designated blank spaces to write down the employer's name; the recruiter's name; the name, identification number, gender, age, and health condition (e.g., height, weight, and vaccination status) of the Vietnamese worker to be contracted; the name of the worker's home village; the name of the prefecture from which the worker came; the date of the contract; whether or not the worker was accompanied; and so on. It was assumed for the purposes of this study that the blank spaces were filled in by French officials asking for responses on each item directly from the contracted worker. All handwritten information has been aggregated and analyzed, as presented in the following paragraphs.

The contracts also contained information in French, such as working conditions in accordance with the Labor Order, places and types of labor (note: although almost all of these were categorized as a "*Coolie*," there were also instances of "*Cai*," which was used in reference to a coordinator/mediator of laborers—i.e., someone who manages and takes care of workers), working conditions (e.g., daily allowances and payment methods, supplies such as food and clothing, advance loans, working hours, number of days off, provision of accommodation, response to illness, etc.), and systems for deducting savings from wages (i.e., the *Pecul system*).

A photo of each Vietnamese worker appeared (from the chest to the head, positioned slightly in profile) in the upper right (or left) corner of each contract. These photos were stamped with a seal from the Nam Dinh provincial government. In the lower

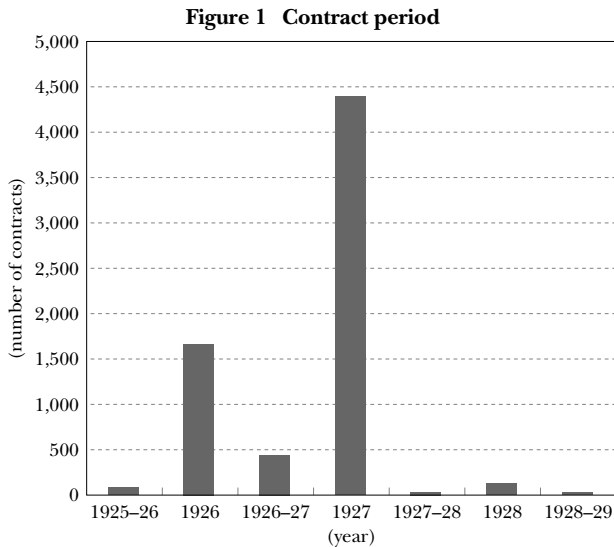
column, the signatures of the relevant parties (i.e., a signature of the employer representative, a fingerprint of the Vietnamese employee, and a signature of the French local administrator) and the date of the contract were written.

2. Contract year and the gender, age, and physical aspects of contract workers

1) Contract year

For the purposes of this study, the contract period was divided into the following seven date ranges along with the number of cases present per category (Figure 1): 1) end of 1925–1926: 88; 2) 1926: 1666; 3) end of 1926–1927: 441; 4) 1927: 4396; 5) end of 1927–1928: 35; 6) 1928: 130; and 7) end of 1928–1929: 33. Of all the date ranges, 1927 was found to be the year with the most contracts and accounted for 64.8% of the total contracts. The number of contracts present in 1926–1927 accounted for 95.8% of the total contracts. It is unclear why the number of contracts declined from 1928 onward.

According to the official statistics of the colonial government, *Annuaire statistique de l'Indochine (ASI) 1923–1929* (Hanoi, 1931),

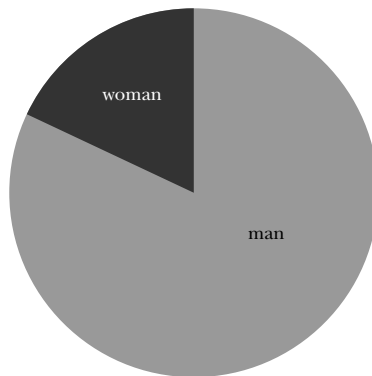


the number of contract workers who moved from Tonkin to plantations in Cochinchina and Cambodia in 1927 was 17,500.⁹⁵ The number of contracts from the Nam Dinh province (i.e., the sum of #3, 4, and 5) was 4,872, which accounted for approximately 28% of the total (i.e., for contract workers). Alone, #4 (i.e., 4,396) accounted for 25% of all workers who moved to the plantations. In terms of labor force movement from Tonkin to the rubber plantations in 1926–1934, Gourou estimated that those coming from the Nam Dinh province accounted for 29.5% of the total.⁹⁶ Therefore, the number of labor contracts that this study analyzed included almost the entire coolie population gathered in the Nam Dinh province.⁹⁷

2) Gender

According to the aforementioned *ASI*, the total number of workers who moved from Tonkin to the plantations in Cochinchina and Cambodia between 1925 and 1929 was 54,138. Excluding children under the age of 15 (1,960), the number of contract workers by gender was 41,761 (86.1%) men and 6,733 (13.9%) women. In contrast, according to the collected Nam Dinh work contracts, 5,589 (82.3%) workers were male, 1,193 (17.6%) workers were female, and 8 (0.1%) workers were unknown (Figure 2). From the available Nam Dinh case examples, it could be asserted that the province's recruitment ratios were higher than the overall male/female

Figure 2 Gender ratio



ratios presented in the *ASI*.⁹⁸

3) Age

The most common age group for both genders was 20–29 with the early 20s accounting for the majority of these contract workers. The ratios of those in their 20s were 61.5% for men and 68.1% for women. Among those under the age of 18–20, only 12.6% were male, and less than 6% were female. Furthermore, 19.9% of men and 23.5% of women were in their 30s. Only 4.9% of men and 1.4% of women were found to be 40 years old and/or older (Figure 3, Tables 3–4).

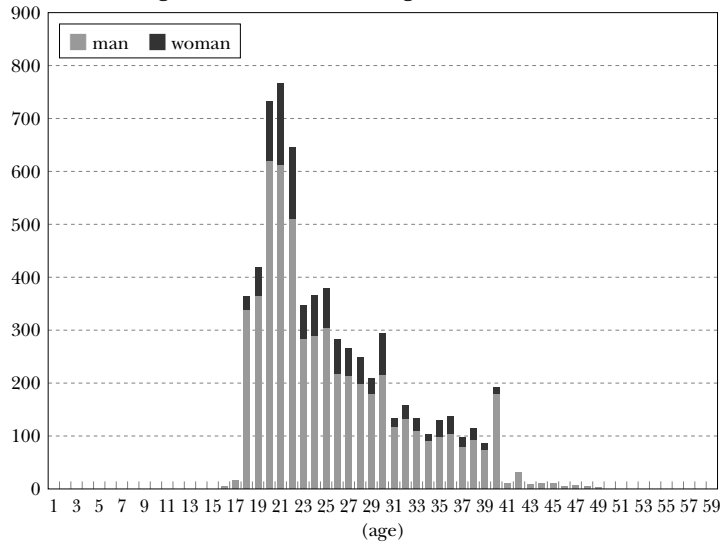
Table 3 Age distribution (man)

Age	Number	%
under 18	24	0.4
18–19	704	12.6
20–24	2,317	41.4
25–29	1,114	20.0
30–34	665	11.9
35–39	448	8.0
over 40	273	4.9
obscure	44	0.8
Total	5,589	100.0

Table 4 Age distribution (woman)

Age	Number	%
under 18	2	0.1
18–19	69	5.8
20–24	542	45.3
25–29	271	22.7
30–34	161	13.5
35–39	119	10.0
over 40	17	1.4
obscure	15	1.2
Total	1,196	100.0

Figure 3 Distribution of Age (man & woman)



4) Height

Men: Of the 3,015 contracts in which heights and weights were recorded (54% of all collected data), the most common heights recorded were 155–160cm (842 men; 27.9%), and 828 men (27.5%) were between 150 and 155cm tall. The average

Figure 4-1 Distribution of Hight (man)

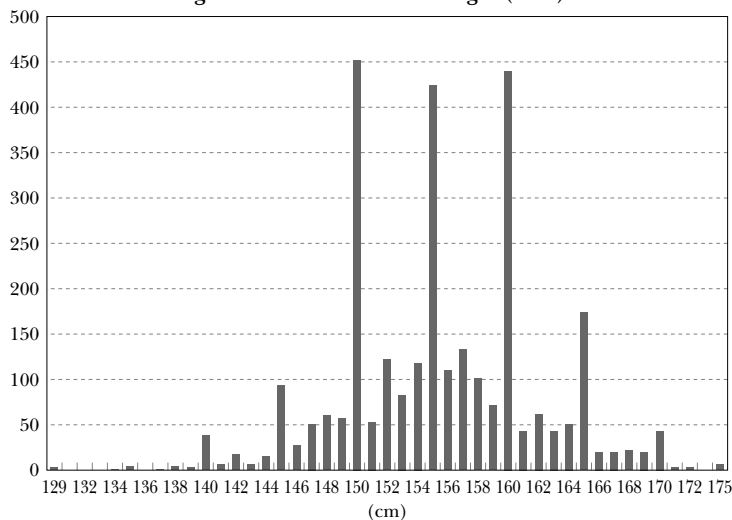
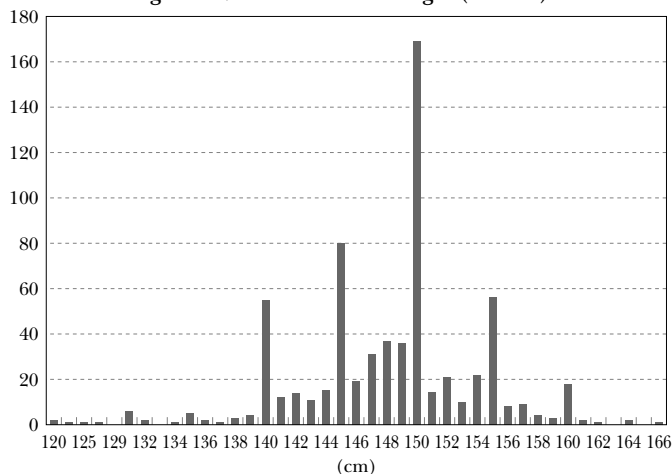


Figure 4-2 Distribution of Hight (woman)



height could, thus, be presented as over 150cm but under 160cm (55.4%). Of the remaining population, 639 (21.2%) men were recorded at 160 to under 165cm. In all, approximately 80% of the men were 150–165cm tall (Figure 4-1).

Women: Of the 638 (57.3%) women present in the collected data, 150–155cm accounted for the majority (238 women, 34.8%). This was followed by 145–150cm (203 women, 29.7%). Thus, 64.5% of the contracted women were 145–155cm tall with 20% recording heights under 145cm and 10% recording heights between 155 and 160cm (Figure 4-2).

In comparing these data with the average height of Japanese people aged 20 years old in the same period (i.e., 1920–1930), we see that the average height of Japanese people was 162.1–163.0cm for men and 150.5–151.6cm for women. This comparison shows that the Vietnamese Tonkin village residents were shorter on average when compared to Japanese people across both genders.⁹⁹

5) Weight

Men: The number of case examples in which the weights of workers were recorded amounted to 53% of the total. Of these, the most common weight was 45–50kg (1,004 men, 33.7%) followed by 50–55kg (849 men, 28.5%). Together, these two groups accounted for 62.9% of the population. The 40–45kg group accounted for a further 21% with 625 men. Over half of the male workers were, thus, within the 40-kg weight range (Table 5) (Figure 5-1).

Women: Of the 678 contracts related to female workers, the

Table 5 Weight distribution (man)

Weight (kg)	Number	%
under 40	180	6.0
40–45	625	21.0
45–50	1,004	33.7
50–55	849	28.5
55–60	266	8.9
60–65	42	1.4
65–70	7	0.2
above 70	3	0.1
Total	2,976	99.8

Table 6 Weight distribution (woman)

Weight (kg)	Number	%
under 40	90	13.3
40–45	219	32.3
45–50	251	37.0
50–55	98	14.4
55–60	18	2.7
above 60	2	0.3
Total	678	100.0

most common weight group was 45–50kg, which accounted for 37% of all female workers. This weight class was followed by 40–45kg (32.3%). Together, these two groups accounted for a little under 70% of the total.(Table 6) (Figure 5-2)

Figure 5-1 Weight distribution (men)

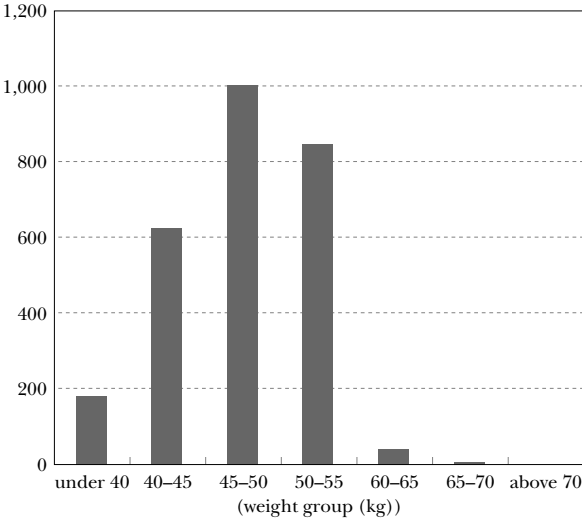
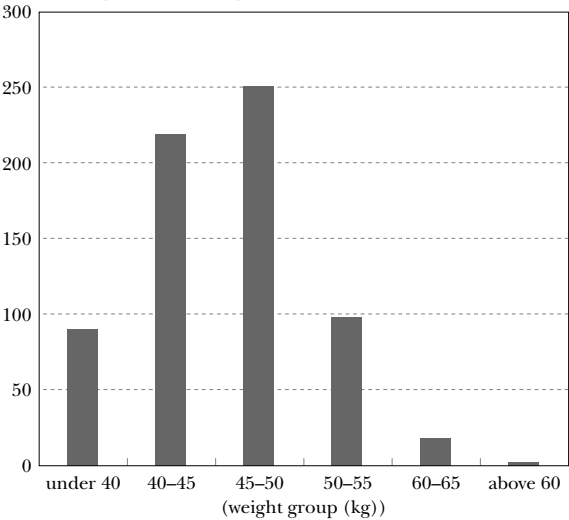


Figure 5-2 Weight distribution (women)



Based on the presented information, in terms of weight, there was not much difference between the two genders. Women were found to be shorter than men but carried more weight while men were taller but skinnier.

3. Contract workers' place of origin

1) District of origin

Of the 6,973 contract workers, 6,724 (after excluding the 69 workers who came from places other than the Nam Dinh province) belonged to all districts of the Nam Dinh province. In particular, 1,348 workers came from the My Loc district, and 1,281 came from the Hai Hau district. Together, these two districts accounted for 38.8% of the total. The My Loc district is located on the outskirts of the Nam Dinh city while the Hai Hau districts meets the Tonkin bay at the lower reaches of the Red River. Table 7 presents the number of workers from each of these districts. The districts that recorded the least amounts of recruited workers were the Y Yen (171 workers) and Phong Doanh (65 workers) districts. These two districts are both located in the Day River Basin in the northeast area of the Nam Dinh province.

Table 7 District of origin

Phu or Huyen	Numbers of Contract(%)
My Loc	1,348(20.0)
Hai Hau	1,281(19.3)
Nam Truc	965(14.3)
Giao Thuy	819(12.1)
Vu Ban	757(11.2)
Truc Ninh	715(10.6)
Nghia Hung	501(7.4)
Y Yen	171(2.5)
Phong Zoanh	65(1.0)
Nam Dinh City	23(0.3)
The Others, obscure	96(1.4)
Total	6,741(99.8)

2) Village of origin

After restricting the analyzed individuals to the Nam Dinh province for the purposes of this study (after excluding 59

cases of workers from villages across other provinces or whose villages of origin were unknown), a total of 384 villages were found. This total accounts for 54.3% of the total number of villages (707) in the Nam Dinh province at the time. Such data indicate that workers were recruited from over half of the villages within the province.

Of the 384 villages, 110 (28.6%) reported only one villager that signed a contract (contract worker). There were 274 villages (64.3%) that reported less than 10 contract workers (1–9 workers). These data indicate that a small number of contract workers were collected from multiple villages. Additionally, 26 villages (7.3%) reported 10–20 contract workers, 23 (6.5%) reported 20–30 contract workers, and 41 (11.6%) reported 30–100 contract workers.

Only 17 (4.7%) villages reported over 100 recruits. However, the total number of contract workers across these 17 villages was 2,536, which accounted for 37.3% of the total. These villages included An Nghiep (239), Vinh Truong (233), Cat Thuong (201), Nho Lam (194), Thuong Huu (194), Tu Quan (178), and Lieu Nha (170). In terms of villages with over 100

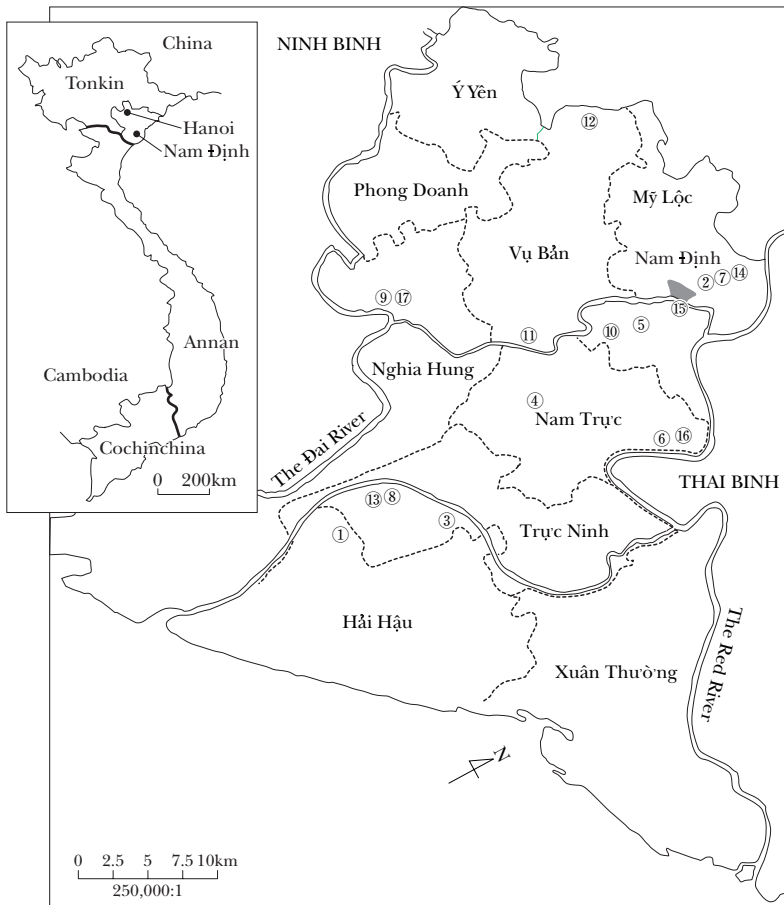
Table 8 17 villages of origin where the number of workers who contracted was 100 or more

Village			No. of contract laborers	Phu or Huyen
①	An Nghiep	安業	239	Hai Hau
②	Vinh Truong	永長	233	My Loc
③	Cat Thuong	葛上	201	Truc Ninh
④	Nho Lam	儒林	194	Nam Truc
⑤	Thuong Huu	尚友	194	My Loc
⑥	Tu Quan	祠館	178	Nam Truc
⑦	Lieu Nha	柳衛	170	My Loc
⑧	Ninh Cuong	寧疆	130	Truc Ninh
⑨	Dong Mau	東畝	122	Nghia Hung
⑩	Van Don	萬屯	120	My Loc
⑪	Dong My	同美	118	Vu Ban
⑫	Duyen Thon	延村	108	Vu Ban
⑬	Lac Mon Phuong	樂門芳	107	Truc Ninh
⑭	Phuong Bong	芳茏	107	My Loc
⑮	Vi Xuyen	渭川	107	My Loc
⑯	Quan Cac	館閣	106	Nam Truc
⑰	Than Thuong	親上	102	Nghia Hung
Total			2,536(37%)	

contract workers, the My Loc district reported six villages with three in the Nam Truc district, three in the Truc Ninh district, and two each in the Vu Ban and Nghia Hung districts. In the Hai Hau district, which reported the highest total number of contract workers, only one village reported over 100 recruits, namely, the An Nghiep village (Table 8 and Figure 6).

In the Hai Hau district, contracts were signed in all villages (54). Given that, in other districts, only one out of two villages had contract workers, the fact that all villages registered con-

Figure 6 Nam Định province, 17 villages (Table 8: ①~⑰)



tract workers is a unique characteristic of the Hai Hau district. Also, in this district, the Tan Dien (96 contract workers), Quan Phuong Ha (95 contract workers), and Ha Quang villages (94 contract workers) reported many contract workers.

4. Recruitment state by companies

1) Employer (plantation company) and number of contracts

The employers of all 6,793 contract workers consisted of 27 plantation companies (Table 9). Of these companies, Michelin & Compagnie contracted 1,664 workers—the largest number—through three recruitment rounds held between 1926 and 1927 and in 1927 and 1928.¹⁰⁰ This number was followed by La

Table 9 Plantation company and number of contracts

No.	Company	Abbreviation	Contracts	%
1	Michelin & Compagnie	MC	1,664	24.5
2	La Société Indochinoise des Cultures Tropicales	SICT	1,483	21.8
3	La Société des Caoutchoucs de l'Indochine à Lóc-Ninh	SCILN	661	9.7
4	La Société Indochinoise de Commerce d'Agriculture et de Finance	SICAF	557	8.2
5	La Société des Plantations des Terres Rouges Cochinchine	SPTR	424	6.2
6	La Société Industrielle et Forestière de Bien Hoa	SIFBH	282	4.2
7	La Plantation du Syndicat de Mimot Cambodge	PSM	272	4.0
8	Le Service des Travaux Publics Cambodge	STPC	165	2.4
9	La Société Agricole et Industrielle de Cam Tièn	SAICT	159	2.3
10	La Société Agricole de Baria	SAB	145	2.1
11	La Société Cotonnière de Saigon à Saigon	SCS	120	1.8
12	La Société de Plantation de Tam Boygambar	SPTB	111	1.6
13	La Société des Caoutchoucs de l'Indochine (Cochinchine)	SCI	110	1.6
14	La Société Civile d'Etudes de Cultures de la Cochinchine et du Cambodge	SCECCC	96	1.4
15	La Plantation de Chanh Luu	PCL	76	1.1
16	La Société de Plantation de Kerhuella	SPK	70	1.0
17	La Plantation de Cỏ Trach Thudaumôt	PCTT	66	1.0
18	La Société Plantation d'An Loc	SPAL	58	0.9
19	La Société Agricole de Cam Tien, Biên Hoa	SACT	50	0.7
20	La Compagnie Agricole Sud Indochine	CASI	43	0.6
21	La Société Agricole de Bung Rieng	SABR	43	0.6
22	La Société de Plantation de Cam Tièn	SPCT	36	0.5
23	La Société des Caoutchoucs et de Cultures en Indochine	SCCI	35	0.5
24	La Compagnie au Cambodge pour les Travaux de Plantation	CCTP	33	0.5
25	La Société de Plantations Thanh Tuy Ha (Cochinchine)	SPTTH	14	0.2
26	La Station Agricole de Bèn Cat	SABC	12	0.2
27	Les Travaux de Débroussailllements de Transports et de Pose des Piquets ou Bornes, de Mesurage etc. Cochinchine	TDT	8	0.1
Total			6,793	99.7

Société Indochinoise des Cultures Tropicales, which signed contracts with 1,483 workers across two recruitment phases in 1926 and 1927. These two companies, combined, accounted for approximately half (46%) of the total number of recruits.

In addition, La Société des Caoutchoucs de l'Indochine conducted three recruitment rounds (Loc Ninh: 661, other locations: 110), and La Société Indochinoise de Commerce d'Agriculture et de Finance similarly conducted three recruitment rounds with a total of 557 workers signing contracts. La Société des Plantations des Terres Rouges signed contracts with a further 424 workers after conducting two recruitment rounds. In the end, the top five companies accounted for 70% of the total.¹⁰¹

2) Contract workers' village of origin per company

Table 10 shows the number of villages of origin of the Vietnamese workers who signed contracts with plantation companies. A comparison of the average number of contract workers per village was established by dividing the number of contract workers by the number of villages of origin for each plantation company. This average shows that most of the companies reported fewer than 10 contract workers per village.

To illustrate this average, Michelin has been used as an example. Specifically, the number of villages from which Michelin contracted Vietnamese workers was 175 (including 33 villages in other provinces). Most districts reported villages of origin of workers who signed the contract. Of these villages, the Vinh Truong village reported the largest number of contract workers (121). This was followed by An Nghiep (100), Cat Thuong (86), and Thuong Huu (81). In addition to these villages, workers from a very large number of villages (i.e., a small number of workers from each village) flocked to Michelin. There were 71 villages (approximately 41%) that reported only one contract worker. The average contract worker per village was, thus, only 9.5. Similar cases and averages were evident across companies other than Michelin.

Table 10 The number of native villages and average

Company	Contracts	No. of villages	Contracts/villages
MC	1,663	175	9.5
SICT	1,483	165	9.0
SPTR	424	74	5.7
SCILN	659	68	9.7
SICAF	557	64	8.7
SAB	145	33	4.4
SIFBH	123	26	4.7
BHIF	159	25	6.4
PSM	272	25	10.9
SCECCC	96	25	3.8
SPTB	110	19	5.8
STPC	165	19	8.7
SAICT	99	13	7.6
PCL	76	13	5.8
SCI	110	12	9.2
CASI	43	11	3.9
SABR	43	11	3.9
SPAL	58	10	5.8
SPK	70	9	7.8
SCS	120	9	13.3
SPCT	96	9	10.7
SACT	50	9	5.6
SCCI	35	9	3.9
TDT	8	6	1.3
PCT	66	4	16.5
CCTP	33	3	11.0
SPTTH	14	3	4.7
SABC	12	1	12.0
Total	6,789	850	8.0

In the case of La Société Indochinoise des Cultures Tropicales, similar contracts were signed with workers from 165 villages. The highest number of contracts was signed with workers hailing from the Nho Lam (70 contract workers) and Quan Cac (65 contract workers) villages. However, even in this case, there were 60 villages in which only one person signed up from a village (36%). The average was, thus, nine workers per village.

To further clarify this point, Table 11 shows the correlation between the respective plantation companies and workers' home villages. The numerical figures in the table indicate the number of villagers each company contracted, along with the villages. The A* indicates the number of companies contracted

Table 11 Correlation between companies & workers' villages of origin (17 villages)

Village/Company	A*	MC	SICT	SCILN	SICAF	SPTR	SIFBH	PSM	STPC	SAICT	SAB	SCS
An Nghiep	11	100	40	40		3	27			13		
Vinh Truong	12	121	50	1	10	4	5	8	3		2	
Cat Thuong	9	86	2				30				12	
Nho Lam	7	32	70	31	26	6		24				
Thuong Huu	10	81	8				33			11		
Tu Quan	8	24	37	57	23			21	6	1		
Lieu Nha	8	25	20			44						
Ninh Cuong	6	35	7		10	2					42	
Dong Mam	4	28	15	18	61							
Van Don	3	34			58					28		
Dong My	7	22	47				27				2	
Duyen Thon	5	4	24					39	20			
Lac Mon Phuong	4	1	34	65								
Phuong Bong	5	20	29			48						
Vi Xuyen	6	13	1				2	77				
Quan Cac	7	6	65	1	1			1	18			
Than Thuong	4	1	8	82								

A* : Number of companies which people had contracted in the village

in village. Specifically, this table shows only 17 villages with 100 or more contract workers.

From the village perspective, there was evidence that some workers from the same village signed contracts with different plantation companies. For example, 239 workers from the An Nghiep village signed contracts with 11 separate plantation companies. A further 100 workers signed with Michelin, 40 with Cultures Tropicales (SICT) and SCILN, 29 with SPTB, 27 with SIFBH, and 43 with other companies. There were only four villages in which all villagers (i.e., contract workers) contracted with a single plantation company: Phuc Hai (35 contract workers [SPTR]), Quan San (27 contract workers [SPTR]), Van Lam (23 contract workers [MC]), and Co Le (22 contract workers [SCI]).

* * *

The data presented in the previous paragraphs indicate the coolie recruitment state in the Nam Dinh province, as gleaned from 6,793 labor contract data. The largest number of recruitments was made in 1927. Recruitment was generally centered on Vietnamese workers in their (early) 20s but included those

SPTB	SCI	SCEOC	PCL	SPK	PCTT	SPAL	SACT	CASI	SABR	SPCT	SCCI	CCTP	SPTTH	SABC	TDT
29		4		1		12		4		6					1
1	30	26					21	2			7			12	
2		5			9	14		13	15	15					2
19			34	30				1		15		16			
					21	1	14				5				
7			7					3							
12		14													2
		11													

in their teens, 30s, and older. Overall, the percentage of women recruits was slightly below 18%. One, a few, or several dozen workers were recruited from a single village for more than half of the villages in all districts (384) across the province. In some districts, workers were recruited from across all the villages in that district. Conversely, in only 17 villages, 100 to more than 200 workers per village were intensively recruited.

Most of the 27 plantation companies recruited workers from several villages. The 1,664 workers who signed contracts with Michelin came from across a total of 179 villages. From each company, cases where 100 to over 200 workers were collected from a single village (i.e., mass recruitment) and cases where one worker was recruited from a single village in a generalized manner were simultaneously conducted. In relation to the respective villages, people in the same village tended to sign contracts with different plantation companies. The recruitments across the Nam Dinh province described in the previous paragraphs were worth examining as a single hypothesis in this study. Future researchers should apply and examine this hypothesis in relation to the provinces of Thai Binh and Ninh

Binh, where there were similarly large numbers of contract workers recruited to rubber plantations.

(Yoko Takada)

Conclusion

The first part of this article is a study on the Chinese workers used at construction and exploitation facilities in Tonkin from the late 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. Historically, due to its territorial proximity, the Chinese people had always considered the land of Vietnam in general and Tonkin in particular as an escape route, a place to take refuge to avoid political persecution and life misery in China. From the middle of the 19th century, the number of Chinese people infiltrating Tonkin had been increasing. In addition to the inherent economic and political reasons, the labor demand due to the colonial expansion in the Far East and the colonial exploitation in Indochina by the French colonialists was the driving force pushing the Chinese people to Tonkin.

Together with the Chinese who had lived in the colony for a long time, many Chinese immigrants had become coolies, workers at railway sites, plantations, and mines of French capitalists. The colonial government and French owners were the supporting force for these powers to fulfill their economic and political intentions.

Local workers, first, were competitors who sometimes caused fierce conflicts because they had become supporters of their employers to put pressure on Vietnamese coolies' work and wages. As can be seen, Vietnamese coolies always received lower salaries than the Chinese on the same exploitation site and increasingly replaced the Chinese in heavy jobs but received no additional compensation. However, like the Vietnamese coolies, they were also subjected to oppression and exploitation by the colonial government and French owners. Therefore, they also had struggles with their employers, of dif-

ferent intensity, sometimes separately, and sometimes joining forces with their Vietnamese colleagues. These two coolie groups shared sympathy toward each other, as they both were hard working classes.

The Nam Dinh and Thai Binh provinces supplied approximately 60% of the 40,000–50,000 miners recruited from the Tonkin delta since the early 20th century. Since the end of World War I, the labor force for rubber plantations in the remote Cochinchina and Cambodia areas came to be primarily recruited from throughout Tonkin. Furthermore, in the late 1920s, when the largest development boom during the colonial period occurred, triggered by an influx of French capital, the recruitment of Vietnamese coolies entered a new phase. The second part of this article, therefore, investigated the recruitment of coolies from the Nam Dinh province at that time.

In the available another colonial administrative documents, there exists a detailed registry of 970 people (1926) who ran away from rubber plantations in the province of Bien Hoa (Cochinchina).¹⁰² According to this report, the escaped workers came from the Tonkin (10) and An Nam (9) provinces. This shows that coolies were being recruited across a wide area of northern Vietnam. In particular, along with Tonkin's Hai Duong province, the Nam Dinh province produced the largest number of deserters. More than 30% of the deserters who fled from the seven plantations were coolies who had been contracted with Michelin company.

The system of contract labor migration was abolished around 1916 in British Malaya. By the end of the 1920s, contract labor was beginning to be replaced by free labor, even in North Borneo and the plantation belt of Dutch Sumatra. In French Indochina, a contract labor law had to be declared in 1927 to ensure a stable supply of the coolies necessary for colonial development. This colonial exploitation fully developed later than in other countries. However, a "plural society" such as British Malaya not being established in Indochina was also a unique consequence of French colonialism.

Notes

1. There have been a number of scholars studying this issue, such as
 - Tran Khanh, “The formation of the Chinese community in Vietnam in the 17th–18th century and the first half of the 19th century,” *Journal of Historical Studies*, 2001, Vol. 5, pp. 39–47; “The position of the Chinese in Vietnamese trade during the French colonial time,” *Journal of Historical Studies*, 2002, Vol. 4, pp. 20–27.
 - Duong Minh, “Some thoughts on the Chinese in Vietnam,” *Journal of Historical Studies*, 1978, Vol. 5, pp. 108–111.
 - Charles Fourniau, “The Chinese in Tonkin before World War I,” *Journal of Historical Studies*, 1991, Vol. 2 pp. 67–74, and Vol. 3, pp. 61–70.
2. Melin, *L’Indochine et l’opinion*, Paris, 1916. The figures cited by the author were too low to the figures in the *Annual Statistics of the Indochina (Annuaire statistique de l’Indochine)*.
3. Henry Brenier, *Essai d’Atlas statistique de l’Indochine française*, IDEO, Hanoi, 1914, Graphique.
4. Gouvernement général de L’Indochina, Direction des affaires économiques, Service de la statistique générale *Annuaire statistique de l’Indochine, Premier volume, Recueil de statistiques relatives aux années 1913 à 1922*, Impri. d’Extrême-Orient – Éditeur, Hanoi, 1927, p. 33.
5. Wang Wen Yuan, *Les relations entre l’Indochine française et la Chine*, 1937.
6. Archives Nationales d’Outre Mer (ANOM), Haut commissariat de France pour l’Indochine, Affaires économiques, *Annuaire statistique de l’Indochine, onzième volume 1943–1946*, Saigon, 1948, p. 272.
7. Paul Doumer, *L’Indochine française (souvenirs)*, Paris, 1905, p. 286.
8. Charles Robert Ageron, *La France coloniale ou parti colonial?*, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1978, p. 139.
9. Charles Fourniau, *Việt Nam – Domination coloniale et résistance nationale 1858–1914*, Les Indes Savantes, Paris, 2002, p. 520.
10. Report dated March 22nd 1897, Paul Doumer (1905), *L’Indochine française (souvenirs)*, Paris, p. 381
11. Charles Fourniau, *Việt Nam – Domination coloniale et résistance nationale 1858–1914*, Les Indes Savantes, Paris, 2002, pp. 517–518.
12. Charles Fourniau, *Việt Nam – Domination coloniale et résistance nationale 1858–1914*, Les Indes Savantes, Paris, 2002, p. 520.
13. Duong Kinh Quoc, *Vietnam – Historical events (1858–1918)*, Vietnam Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 1999, p. 244.
14. Duong Kinh Quoc, *Vietnam – Historical events (1858–1918)*, Vietnam Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 1999, p. 252.
15. Duong Kinh Quoc, *Vietnam – Historical events (1858–1918)*, Vietnam Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 1999, p. 271.
16. French Financial Groups including Indochina Bank, National Discount Bank of Paris, French National Trade and Industry Development Corporation, and Industrial and Commercial Bank Corporation.
17. Paul Doumer, *L’Indochine française (souvenirs)*, Paris, 1905, p. 286
18. J. L. De Lanessan, *La colonisation française en Indochine*, Paris, Félix Alcan, Editeur, 1895, pp. 313–314.
19. Charles Fourniau, *Việt Nam – Domination coloniale et résistance nationale 1858–1914*, Les Indes Savantes, Paris, 2002.
20. Charles Fourniau, *Việt Nam – Domination coloniale et résistance nationale 1858–1914*, Les Indes Savantes, Paris, 2002, p. 566.
21. Historique de la ligne par un ingénieur de la Compagnie du Yunnan 1927. Texte dactylographié, Hanoi, the National Archives Center in Hanoi, série 14, Compagnie française de chemin de fer de l’Indochine et du Yunnan.

22. Lettre de M. Hautefeuille 2-2-1903, Charles Fourniau, *Việt Nam – Domination coloniale et résistance nationale 1858–1914*, Les Indes Savantes, Paris, 2002, p. 640.
23. Charles Fourniau, “The Chinese in Tonkin before World War I (cont.),” *Journal of Historical Studies*, 1991, Vol. 3 (256), pp. 61–70.
24. Chiffre donné dans une note du Directeur général des Travaux Publics, 1 février 1907, in MAE, Papiers Beau, Vol. 11.
25. ANOM, F77.
26. Charles Fourniau, *Việt Nam – Domination coloniale et résistance nationale 1858–1914*, Les Indes Savantes, Paris, 2002, p. 640.
27. Note “*Emigration chinoise*” Canton, 8-5-1905, ANOM Indo GGI 7624.
28. Lettre de M. Hautefeuille, 2-2-1903, Cited from Charles Fourniau, *Vietnam – Domination coloniale et résistance nationale 1858–1914*, Les Indes Savantes, Paris, 2002, p. 640.
29. Charles Fourniau, *Việt Nam – Domination coloniale et résistance nationale 1858–1914*, Les Indes Savantes, Paris, 2002, p. 640.
30. Historique de la ligne par un ingénieur de la Compagnie du Yunnan 1927. Texte dactylographié, Hà Nội, TTLTQGI Hà Nội, série 14, Compagnie française de chemin de fer de l’Indochine et du Yunnan.
31. Note du 23 octobre 1906, in MAE, Papiers Beau, Vol. 11.
32. Paul Doumer, *L’Indochine française (souvenirs)*, Paris, 1905, p. 286.
33. “The plantation was conceded according to the general regulations” (large plantations); “Small plantations for the indigenous” (5ha plantations); “Collective migration plantations” (established in villages); “Coastal plantations.” See Ta Thi Thuy, *The French Plantation in Tonkin 1884–1918*, The Gioi Publishing House, Hanoi, 1996 and *The Land Concession and Reclamation in Tonkin from 1919 to 1945*, The Gioi Publishing House, Hanoi, 2001.
34. Albert Foulas, “Sur la colonisation de l’Indochine française par le Japonais et la race malaise” in *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises de Sài Gòn*, Fascicule 4, 1897.
35. Cochinchina 1900 according to Charles Mayer, *La vie quotidienne des Français en Indochine 1860–1910*, Hachette, Paris, 1985, p. 238.
36. Pierre Pasquier, *La colonisation des terres incultes, et les problèmes de la main d’œuvre en Indochine*, Sài Gòn, 1918, p. 97.
37. Cochinchina 1900 according to Charles Mayer, *La vie quotidienne des Français en Indochine 1860–1910*, Hachette, Paris, 1985, p. 238.
38. Estimation by Jean Andre Lafargue in 1908–1909, *L’Immigration chinoise en Indochine*, 1909.
39. RST 39600, Règlementation de la main – d’œuvre indigène et asiatique.
40. A total of 476 plantations with the total area of 417,650ha was conceded according to the general regulations from 1887 to 1918 in Tonkin Delta: 121 plantations, 57,687ha; Midlands: 299 plantations, 302,716ha; Upland: 56 plantations, 57,246ha. Ta Thi Thuy, *Les concessions agricoles françaises au Tonkin de 1884 à 1918*, Les Indes Savantes, Paris, 2009, p. 114.
41. National Archives Center I in Hanoi (TTLTQGI), RST 29694, Taxe à laquelle doivent-etre soumis les coolis chinois dans les concessions européennes 1913.
42. Devallé J., *La main d’œuvre en Indochine*, Thèse de doctorat en droit 3 Novembre 1905, p 113.
43. RST 12770, Différends survenus entre M. Duchemin et M. Vetch et les coolies chinois employés sur les concessions Saint Frères 1903–1904.
44. René Deschamps, *La Main d’œuvre en Indochine et l’immigration étrangère*, Bousrez, 1908, p. 71.
45. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 12770, Différends survenus entre M. Duchemin et M. Vetch et les coolies chinois employés sur les concessions Saint Frères, 1903–1904.

46. RST 78868, Les agriculteurs européens dans les provinces du Tonkin.
47. ANOM, A20 (34), Report of President Piquet, January 16, 1890 on the kidnapping of the Roque brothers in January 1890 by a Chinese bandit revealed that this group had about 200 people from Ben Chau village, whose chief was Chinese.
48. ANOM, AGGI 975, Au sujet des concessions de Malabard et Malyvernay, 11-7-1910 – 14-1-1917.
49. RST 60306, Bac Giang, Concession définitive appartenant à SAFCAL (antérieur Schneider).
50. RST 60294, Concession définitive de Wielé (Schneider à Quang Yen).
51. RST 60294, Concession définitive de Wielé (Schneider à Quang Yen).
52. RST 71798, Contrôle de la main d'oeuvre sur les concessions agricoles 1926 and RST 57103, Renseignements sur la main d'oeuvre asiatique employée sur les concessions 1926. Bac Giang.
53. RST 71978, Contrôle de la main d'oeuvre sur les concessions agricoles 1926 and RST 57103, Renseignements sur la main d'oeuvre asiatique employée sur les concessions 1926. Bac Giang.
54. RST 71978, Contrôle de la main d'oeuvre sur les concessions agricoles 1926 and RST 57103, Renseignements sur la main d'oeuvre asiatique employée sur les concessions 1926. Bac Giang.
55. RST 57103, Renseignements sur la main d'oeuvre asiatique employée sur les concessions de Bac Giang.
56. National Archives Center I in Hanoi. Service de Cadastre et de la Topographie du Tonkin – M 379. Province de Hai Duong – concession, Nguyen Kim Lan.
57. ANOM, NF, Carton 384, Dossier 3157. Rapport sur l'Industrie minière de l'Indochine en 1937.
58. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, GGI 2570, Notice historique sur les gisements houillers de Vĩnh Phú ở près de Tourane 1901.
59. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, GGI 2570, Notice historique sur les gisements houillers de Vĩnh Phú ở près de Tourane 1901.
60. Association des mines du Tonkin, *L'Industrie minière indochinoise en 1933*, IDEO, Hà Nội, 1933, p. 20.
61. Pierre Gourou, *Les Paysans du Delta Tonkinois, Étude de Géographie Humaine*, Hermann, Paris, 1936, p. 214.
62. In Tonkin Delta, according to Pierre Gourou, there were 586,000 field owners with less than 1 mẫu (3,600m²) of cultivated land; 283,000 with 1 to 5 mẫu (from 0.36ha to 1.8ha); 60,000 with 5 to 10 mẫu (1.8ha to 3.6ha); 20,000 with 10 to 50 mẫu (3.6 to 6.18ha); 800 with 50 to 100 mẫu (18ha to 36ha), and 250 with more than 100 mẫu (over 36ha), Pierre Gourou, *Les Paysans du Delta Tonkinois*, Paris, 1936, p. 357.
63. Phan Huy Lê, "Mining situation under Nguyen Dynasty," *Journal of Historical Studies*, 1963, Vol. 52, p. 49.
64. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, GGI 2570, Notice historique sur les gisements houillers de Vĩnh Phú ở près de Tourane 1901.
65. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, DFI 2608-5, Rapport de l'Ingénieur de Corps des Mines, chef du Services des Mines sur le fonctionnement de l'Industrie minière de l'Indochine en 1932. 1933.
66. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 77322-10, Rapports semestriels et statistiques des mines et carrières des 2^{er} et 3^{er} TM (Cao Bang et Ha Giang) 1908.
67. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 77322-10, Rapports semestriels et statistiques des mines et carrières des 2^{er} et 3^{er} TM (Cao Bang et Ha Giang) 1908.
68. Ta Thi Thuy, *Land concession and reclamation in Tonkin from 1919 to 1945*, The Gioi Publishing House, p. 215.
69. Ta Thi Thuy, *Land concession and reclamation in Tonkin from 1919 to 1945*, The Gioi Publishing House, p. 215.
70. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 63379, Report of Benoit, Minister of

- Quang Yen to the Governor of Tonkin on March 2nd 1898, cited in Ngo Van Hoa, "About two struggles of coal mine workers before World War I," *Journal of Historical Studies*, 1976, Vol. 4, p. 71.
71. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, GGI 7922, Rapport sur la situation économique de l'Indochine en 1910–1911.
 72. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 76699, Rapport du Résident de Thái Nguyên sur l'intension des exploitation des gisements minières au Tonkin et des grèves d'ouvriers, survenus dans les mines de Lang Hít (Thái Nguyên) 1909.
 73. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 76996, Réclamation de Rochat, Administrateur – *Société civile des étains et wolfram du Pia Ouac Est* à Nậm Kép relative à la crise des exploitations minières au Tonkin 1919 (Cao Bang).
 74. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 76678-2, Demande de réduction de la taxe d'exploitation du métal étain formulée par *la Société des étains et wolfram du Tonkin* 1923.
 75. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 36562, Conseil de Gouvernement, session ordinaire 1926. Rapport des provinces et des Territoire militaires 1926.
 76. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 36562, Conseil de Gouvernement session ordinaire 1926. Rapport des provinces et des Territoire militaires 1926.
 77. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, GGI 2471, Renseignements sur les gisements de fer au Tonkin et minière à 1900 Lào Cay, May 23rd 1900 – Note provisoire sur le gisement de fer Ban Vuoc.
 78. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 36562, Conseil de Gouvernement, session ordinaire 1926. Rapport des provinces et des Territoire militaires 1926.
 79. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 78473, Rapport économiques annuels des provinces 1929 Bac Kan.
 80. RS 1913–1940, p. 9.
 81. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 74375, Rapport sur la situation économique de la province de Bắc Cạn au cours de l'année 1931.
 82. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 74375, Rapport sur la situation économique de la province de Bắc Cạn au cours de l'année 1931.
 83. National Archives Center I in Hanoi, RST 78473, Rapport économique annuel des provinces 1929 Bac Kan.
 84. Figures from 1924 to 1928 cited in BEI 1929, p. 909, figures from 1930 to 1938 cited in BEI Hors-serie 1936, p. 47, figures from 1937 to 1938 cited in RST 6979, Renseignement de l'Industrie minière indochinoise en 1938–1939 by J. Desrosseaux, ingénieur au Corps des Mines – Chef du Service des Mines de l'Indochine.
 85. BEI Hors-serie 1936: *L'industrie minière de l'Indochine en 1936*, p. 47 and figures from 1937 to 1938 cited in RST 6979, Renseignement de l'Industrie minière indochinoise en 1938–1939 by J. Desrosseaux, ingénieur au Corps des Mines – Chef du Service des Mines de l'Indochine.
 86. *Annuaire statistique de l'Indochine 1930–1931*, 1932, p. 239.
 87. Inspection générale du Travail en Indochine: *Règlementation du travail en Indochine. Textes en vigueur au 31 octobre 1930*. Exposition coloniale internationale, Paris, 1931, pp. 17–26.
 88. Inspection générale du Travail en Indochine: *Règlementation du travail en Indochine. Textes en vigueur au 31 octobre 1930*. Exposition coloniale internationale, Paris, 1931, pp. 46–62.
 89. Inspection générale du Travail en Indochine, *Règlementation du travail en Indochine. Textes en vigueur au 31 octobre 1930*. Exposition coloniale internationale, Paris, 1931, pp. 46–62.
 90. From the available data, there is evidence that 9,143 workers were transferred from Tonkin to Saigon between January 1, 1919 and the end of December 1922. Approximately 6,000 workers from Tonkin were provided to rubber plantations of

- an estimated 30,000 ha in Cochinchina, Cambodia, and southern An Nam. Regular labor migration from Tonkin to Saigon took place between 1925 and 1929 and consisted of around 54,238 workers with the highest number of 17,500 workers provided in 1927 (Gouvernement Général de L'Indochine, *Annuaire Statistique de l'Indochine [ASI], Deuxième Volume, 1923–1929*, Hanoi, 1931, p. 69).
91. International Labor Office, *op. cit.*
 92. According to research conducted under the Governor Tonkin, the population increase rate in the lower delta regions was 3% (*Ibid.*). P. Gourou noted that the population density of the lower delta region was as high as 830 people/km² due to the region being a two-stage rice-growing area and the soil being fertile enough for winter upland farming. In addition, in Nam Dinh province, there were villages with a density of 1,650 people/km², which is higher than both the world-famous Java Island and Bengal's densely populated areas. Based on the examples of the Ha Dong and Ha Nam provinces, Gourou estimated the population growth rate at 1–1.5% and argued that the delta population of 6.5 million increased by between 65,000 and 100,000 people every year (Pierre Gourou, *Les Paysans du Delta Tonkinois, Étude de Géographie Humaine*, Paris, 1936, pp. 145–146, 161–167, p. 198).
 93. See Yoko Takada's *Study on Rubber Plantation Worker Recruitment in French Indochina: Material Gathering Based on Contract Documents in Vietnam, Nam Dinh Province (1926–1929)* (March, 2020) and *Rubber Plantation Worker Recruitment in the Late 1920s in the French Colonial Period, Vietnam/Nam Dinh Province: Material Gathering Based on Ship Passenger Registry* (March, 2021). See also Yoko Takada, "The Development of Rubber Plantations in the French Indochina and the Recruitment of Contract Laborers from the Red River Delta under French Colonialism, Part 2," *The Keiai Journal of International Studies*, No. 31 (2018). Based on the analysis of ships' passenger registers, the author conducted interviews in two villages in Nam Dinh province that provided multiple coolies.
 94. This study used the following resources as its basis: The National Archives Center I in Hanoi (TTLTQGI Hà Nội), Nam Dinh documents, 57 files (Dossiers) from M-11: 3273, 3274, 3275, 3276, 3277, 3278, 3279, 3280, 3281, 3282, 3282-01, 3283, 3283-01, 3283-02, 3283-03, 3284, 3285, 3286, 3286-01, 3287, 3288, 3289, 3289-01, 3289-02, 3283-03, 3290, 3290-01, 3291, 3292, 3292-01, 3293, 3293-01, 3293-02, 3293-03, 3294, 3295, 3295-01, 3295-02, 3296, 3297, 3297-01, 3297-02, 3298, 3299, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304, 3305, 3306, 3306-01, 3308, 3309, 3310, 3310-01, and 3311.
 95. Gouvernement Général de L'Indochine, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
 96. Gourou, P., *op. cit.*, p. 217.
 97. It should be noted that not all Vietnamese workers who signed a contract ultimately got onto a ship from Haiphong to Saigon. There were cases in which names had been deleted from the planned registry of ships' passengers.
 98. ASI, p. 69. Murray stated that the ratio of female coolies in rubber plantations was slightly below 20% (Martin J. Murray, *The Development of Capitalism in Colonial Indochina (1870–1940)*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1980, p. 273).
 99. Hirotaka Matsuda, "A Study of Japanese Heights in The Meiji-Taisho-Pre War Showa Period — Human Height as an Indicator of Quality of Life," *The Review of the Society of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 59, March 2003, p. 77.
 100. See Panthou, Éric et Tran Tu Binh, *Les plantations Michelin au Viêt-nam*, La Galipote, 2013.
 101. For those companies, see Fernand de Montaigt, *La colonisation française dans L'Est de la Cochinchine*, Paris, 1929, pp. 98–99.
 102. The National Archives Center I in Hanoi, Nam Dinh documents, M-11, 3213, *Province de Bien Hoa, Liste general recapitulation*, 1926.