

**The Descriptive Geography  
of the Emperor Đồng Khánh**

**同慶地輿志**



**For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.**

**We, the mandarins of the province of **Hà Nội**, respectfully present the following papers,  
being the Geographical Description of**

## **The Province of **Hà Nội****

Including the following maps:

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| The Province of Hà Nội                    | 河內省     |
| The Prefecture of Hoài Đức                | 懷德府     |
| The District of Từ Liêm                   | 慈廉縣     |
| The Districts of Thọ Xương and Vĩnh Thuận | 壽昌縣，永順縣 |
| The Prefecture of Thường Tín              | 常信府     |
| The District of Thượng Phúc               | 上福縣     |
| The District of Thanh Trì                 | 青池縣     |
| The District of Phú Xuyên                 | 富川縣     |
| The Prefecture of Ứng Hòa                 | 應和府     |
| The District of Sơn Minh                  | 山明縣     |
| The District of Thanh Oai                 | 青威縣     |
| The District of Chương Đức                | 彰德縣     |
| The District of Hoài Yên                  | 懷安縣     |
| The Prefecture of Lý Nhân                 | 里仁府     |
| The Districts of Duy Tiên and Kim Bảng    | 維先縣，金榜縣 |
| The District of Thanh Liêm                | 青廉縣     |
| The District of Bình Lục                  | 平陸縣     |
| The District of Nam Xương                 | 南昌縣     |

## The Description of the Province of Hà Nội

### [Note on the Administrative History of the Province:

*The province of Hà Nội was formed during the twelfth year of the reign of Minh Mệnh 明命 (1831) from the ancient capital Thăng Long 昇龍 and some of the surrounding territories. Under the Han 漢 and Sui 隋 dynasties, it was part of the Chinese dominion of Giao Chỉ 交趾. Under the Tang 唐, it became part of the Chinese prefecture of An Nam. At that time its capital, Tống Bình 宋平, was commonly known as Đại La 大羅 (this was before Zhang Boyi rebuilt it in 767). Several months after he came to the throne (1010), the emperor Lý Thái Tổ 李太祖 had the capital transferred from Hoa Lư 華閤, in the province of Ninh Bình, to Đại La. He gave it a new name: Thăng Long. This new capital lay in the prefecture of Ứng Thiên 應天, which was renamed Nam Kinh in 1014. Under the Trần 陳 dynasty, it became the prefecture of Đông Đô 東都, which also comprised the district of Từ Liêm. Under the Ming, the capital and its surrounding territory was part of the district of Đông Quan 東關. During the reign of Lê Thái Tổ 黎太祖, in 1430, Đông Quan was renamed Đông Kinh 東京, and was also known as Trung Đô 中都. During the reign of Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗, in 1469, the thirty-six quarters of the capital were divided between two districts in the prefecture of Phụng Thiên 奉天: Vĩnh Xương 永昌 and Quảng Đức 廣德. At the time of the Tây Sơn, after Quang Trung 光中 decreed the construction of a new capital in the province of Nghệ An, Thăng Long was renamed “the Citadel of the North” (Bắc Thành). Under the Nguyễn 阮 dynasty, during the first year of the reign of Gia Long 嘉隆, Bắc Thành 北城 became the capital of the “Government General of the Citadel of the North”, the authority of which extended over the eleven governments of the northern part of the country. In 1805, the district of Quảng Đức was renamed Vĩnh Thuận 永順, and the prefecture of Phụng Thiên became the prefecture of Hoài Đức 懷德. In the twelfth year of the reign of Minh Mệnh 明命 (1831), the district of Từ Liêm was transferred from the prefecture of Quốc Oai 國威 into the prefecture of Hoài Đức to form a province called Hà Nội, which was made up of four prefectures with fifteen districts.*

*At the time of the emperor **Đông Khánh**, the province of Hà Nội covered the southern part of the city of Hà Nội, as it existed at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It also covered the town of Hà Đông and the districts of Thanh Oai, Chương Mỹ, Mỹ Đức, Ứng Hòa, Thường Tín and Phú Xuyên, in the province of Hà Tây, and the entire territory of province of Hà Nam.]*

The provincial citadel is situated in the district of Thọ Xương, prefecture of Hoài Đức. Its four-sided rampart is built in brick and is 1,285 rods, six cubits and six inches in circumference. The rampart is one rod, one cubit high and four rods thick. It opens at three principal entrances – the East Gate, the West Gate and the North Gate – as well as two secondary entrances – the Southeast Gate and the Southwest Gate. The gates are one rod, one cubit high, and one rod wide. Each gate is surrounded by an outer reinforcement, known as the ‘goats and horses wall’ [intended for the security of these animals]. The goats and horses wall measures sixty rods in length at the Southeast and Southwest

Gates, fifty-seven rods, three cubits at the East Gate, sixty rods, three cubits at the West Gate, and sixty-five rods, five cubits at the North Gate. Each of these walls is seven cubits, five inches high, and two rods, seven cubits thick, opening at a double entrance one rod wide. The goats and horses walls are protected by moats more than eight rods across. The moat which surrounds the entire citadel is five rods across and six rods deep.

To the east, the province is bounded by the Red [Nhị] River. The districts of Đông Yên and Kim Động, in the province of Hưng Yên, lie beyond the river. To the west, the province is bounded by the districts of Đan Phượng, Yên Sơn and Mỹ Lương, in the province of Sơn Tây. To the south lie the districts of Mỹ Lộc, Vụ Bản, Ý Yên and Thượng Nguyên, in the province of Nam Định, as well as the prefecture of Nho Quan, in the province of Ninh Bình. To the north lies the district of Yên Lãng, in the province of Sơn Tây, as well as the Red River where it passes the districts of Đông Ngạn, Gia Lâm and Văn Giang, in the province of Bắc Ninh.

From east to west, the province is ninety leagues across. From north to south, it is 113 leagues and 120 rods across.

The province is divided into four prefectures, with a total of fifteen districts.

- 1- The prefecture of Hoài Đức: principal district of Từ Liêm, secondary districts of Thọ Xương and Vĩnh Thuận.<sup>1</sup>
- 2- The prefecture of Thường Tín: principal district of Thượng Phúc, secondary districts of Thanh Trì and Phú Xuyên.
- 3- The prefecture of Ứng Hoà: principal district of Sơn Minh, secondary districts of Thanh Oai, Chương Đức and Hoài An.
- 4- The prefecture of Lý Nhân: principal districts of Kim Bảng and Duy Tiên, secondary districts of Thanh Liêm, Bình Lục and Nam Xương.

Population registered for tax payment: 56,748 people.

Population registered for military service: 5,822 people.

Agricultural land: 393,914 acres.

Annual tax receipts:

Paid in cash: 223,424 ligatures.

Paid in paddy: 216,108 square bushels.

Paid in other produce: gauze, silk, white cloth, different types of paper.

### **Customs and Manners**

Rites are strictly and respectfully observed. Commemorative ceremonies, death anniversaries, weddings and funerals are carried out in different ways, with some places celebrating them sumptuously, others more modestly. In this province, Catholics make up only a small minority of the population as a whole. The scholars of the two prefectures of Ứng Hoà and Lý Nhân practise their arts in a spirit of simplicity, displaying little desire for cultural refinement. Most of the inhabitants of the

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<sup>1</sup> The term translated here as principal district (*kiêm lý*) described the district in which the seat of the prefecture and some or all of its administrative services were situated. Other districts were known as secondary districts (*thống hạt*). These were distinctions within the prefecture denoting the presence of administrative services, and did not necessarily correspond to the hierarchy represented by the system of *huyện* and *châu*, or even the strange statute of *ki mi*, which were hierarchies of integration into the empire rather than local administrative responsibility. See notes 8 and 15 below.

districts of Thanh Oai and Nam Xương are stubborn and treacherous. In the districts of Hoài Đức and Thường Tín, most of the people one meets are flamboyant and frivolous. In the districts of Từ Liêm and Phú Xuyên, one comes across people of fiery temperament from time to time. The townsfolk of the two districts in the vicinity of the citadel, Thọ Xương and Vĩnh Thuận, live in an excessively extravagant manner, never satisfied with even the most lavish of luxuries.

### **Local Produce**

Autumn and summer harvests of rice, mulberries, mountain tea, vegetables, melons and marrows, potatoes and beans may be found throughout the province, as well as cloth, silk and other products of daily use. The district of Từ Liêm specialises in the production of crepe and satin, rice flour and malt. Vĩnh Thuận is reputed for the manufacture of paper, both white and coloured. Thanh Trì is known for its lychees and rice vermicelli, and Thanh Oai for its taffeta. These are the best known products of the province but recent times have been rather eventful, and the families practising these professions have found it difficult to make ends meet. Prosperity has given way to poverty and many people have left the area.

### **Climate**

The districts near the mountain regions – Chương Đức, Hoài An, Duy Tiên and Kim Bảng – are cloaked with mists in the early morning, which only disperse in the middle of the morning. Otherwise, springtime tends to be humid with frequent drizzle. Summer is torrid with frequent storms. Autumn is mild and winter bitterly cold. From the fifth to the seventh month each year, floods are frequent as the waters rise, and they only gradually go down after the mists of the tenth month. During the first ten days of the seventh month, it often rains on the third, seventh and eighth day. This rain is usually known as the ‘shower of the buffalo and the woman’, named perhaps after the fable of the Cowherd and the Spinning Maiden. Rain on the ninth day of the ninth month is regarded as a sign of good harvest. But if it fails to rain on that day, people fear the ruin of the crops and the coming of hunger. That is why the adage is not wrong when it states:

*If it's dry on the ninth of the ninth  
We sell the harrow and barter the plough to eat.  
If it rains on the ninth of the ninth  
Leaving early, we're home at lunchtime easy at heart.*

Paddy fields situated on higher ground are sown in summer and harvested in the tenth and eleventh months. Lower-lying paddy fields are sown in winter and harvested in the fifth and sixth months of the following year.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

In the past, Hà Nội was the town of Thăng Long. In ancient times it was also called Long Đỗ and Long Biên. Geomantic principles define this stretch of land as reaching from the mountain of Tản Viên in the province of Sơn Tây. From there, it follows the winding course of the Hát River, before crossing it and ending at the mountain of Nùng. It is on the mountain of Nùng that one may nowadays find the main building of the emperor's residence in the province. Facing south from there, one may see the mountains of Đới Sơn and Diệp Sơn. The mountain of Tam Sơn stands behind one's back. On the left, the Red River may be seen embracing the town. The mound of Khán Sơn is on the right, and it is said that in the past the sovereign watched his troops exercising their martial arts from this mound, hence its name Khán [watch]. One may also see the West Lake, the ‘aquatic brain’ of the town. The impetuous Tô Lịch river runs past on the right, and the Nhuệ, Ngưu and Tô rivers surround the town in

front. Their waters meet at the Luong confluence and empty into the Red River, before flowing down to Hung Yên, Nam Định and the sea.

The districts of Thượng Phúc, Phú Xuyên, Duy Tiên and Kim Bảng, are made up of low-lying land and stagnant water (mostly used for summer crops of paddy). These areas are the marshland of the Hà Nội region.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

To the southwest, the mountains bordering Mỹ Lương and Nho Quan form the boundary of the province. Mountain ranges and forests stretch further than the eye can see. The best known mountains include the following: Hương Tích, in the district of Hoài An; Đồi Sơn, in the district of Duy Tiên; Tiêu Tương and Quyển Sơn, in the district of Kim Bảng; Kẽm Trống, in the district of Thanh Liêm; An Lão, in the district of Bình Lục. These are the best known mountains. As for lakes, the West Lake is situated in the district of Thọ Xương. This district is also home to the Hoàn Kiếm lake, on the banks of which may be found many temples and pagodas, including the Tiên Phúc pagoda where it is said that Lê Thánh Tông met a fairy. The pagoda of An Lăng is situated in the district of Vĩnh Thuận. This was the monastery where Từ Đạo Hạnh, an eminent monk of the Lý dynasty, learnt the practice of Buddhism. The cave of Hương Tích may be found in the district of Hoài An. The cave is known for the coloured stalactites hanging to the left and right of its entrance. Ancient pagodas and peaceful, cheerful and enchanting landscapes may be discovered in the mountains of Tiêu Tương and Quyển Sơn, in the district of Kim Bảng. These are the best known historical sites of the province.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs from the stage post (*trạm*) of Hà Trung southwards, past the stage posts of Hà Mai, Hà Hôi, Hà An, Hà Kiều and Hà Phú, to the province of Ninh Bình. This road is 130 leagues long.

- A main road runs from the stage post of Hà Trung. This road has two branches, one heading northwards and another eastwards to jetties on the Red River. The northern branch meets the Red River by the Thanh Hà city gate, while the eastern branch meets the river by the Cựu Lâu city gate. Each branch is one league long. The jetties are situated opposite the province of Bắc Ninh.

- A main road runs from the stage post of Hà Trung westwards as far as the stage post of Sơn Xá, in the province of Sơn Tây. This road is three leagues long.

- A main road runs from the stage post of Hà Kiều eastwards as far as the stage post of Hà Xuyên, on the boundary with the province of Hưng Yên. This road is ten leagues long.

For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.

We, the mandarins of the province of **Hải Dương**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of

## The Province of **Hải Dương**

Including the following maps:

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| The Province of Hải Dương    | 海陽省 |
| The Prefecture of Bình Giang | 平江府 |
| The District of Đường An     | 唐安縣 |
| The District of Thanh Miện   | 青沔縣 |
| The District of Cẩm Giàng    | 錦江縣 |
| The District of Đường Hào    | 唐豪縣 |
| The Prefecture of Nam Sách   | 南策府 |
| The District of Chí Linh     | 至靈縣 |
| The District of Thanh Lâm    | 青林縣 |
| The District of Thanh Hà     | 清河縣 |
| The District of Tiên Minh    | 先明縣 |
| The Prefecture of Ninh Giang | 寧江府 |
| The District of Vĩnh Thuận   | 永賴縣 |
| The District of Vĩnh Bảo     | 永保縣 |
| The District of Gia Lộc      | 嘉祿縣 |
| The District of Tứ Kỳ        | 四岐縣 |
| The Prefecture of Kiến Thụy  | 建瑞府 |
| The District of Nghi Dương   | 宜陽縣 |
| The District of An Lão       | 安老縣 |
| The District of Kim Thành    | 金城縣 |
| The District of An Dương     | 安陽縣 |
| The Prefecture of Kinh Môn   | 荆門府 |
| The District of Giáp Sơn     | 峽山縣 |
| The District of Thủy Đường   | 水棠縣 |
| The District of Đông Triều   | 東潮縣 |

## **Description of the Province of Hải Dương**

### **[Note on the Administrative History of the Province:**

*Under the Han, the territory of the province of Hải Dương was part of the Chinese dominion of Giao Chỉ 交趾, and may have been situated in the district of Chu Diên 朱鳶, according to Đào Duy Anh. The Trần 陳 emperors gave it the name of the territory of Hồng 洪路, before changing it to Hải Đông 海東路. Between 1428 and 1433, the emperor Lê Thái Tổ 黎太祖 renamed it the regional inspectorate of the East. Around 1454-1459, it was divided into the territories of Nam Sách Thượng 南策上 and Nam Sách Hạ 南策下. During the reign of the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗, in 1469, it took the name of the division of Nam Sách 南策承宣. In the atlas of the realm compiled by the court in the same year, the region appears as the division of Hải Dương 海陽, and included the prefectures of Thượng Hồng 上洪, Hạ Hồng 下洪, Nam Sách 南策 and Kinh Môn 荆門, with eighteen districts. Under the Mạc 莫 dynasty, Dương Kinh 陽京 was formed from the prefecture of Thuận An 順安, transferred from Kinh Bắc, and four prefectures transferred from Sơn Nam. These were Khoái Châu 快州, Tân Hưng 新興, Kiến Xương 建昌 and Thái Bình 太平. After the Lê Restoration, in 1578-1599, the Mạc 莫 reforms were repealed and the division returned to its former status. In 1741, four counties were created, named Thượng Hồng, Hạ Hồng, Đông Triều 東潮 and An Lão 安老. At the time of the Tây Sơn, the prefecture of Kinh Môn was transferred to the county of An Quảng 安廣. Under the Nguyễn 阮 dynasty, from the first year of the reign of the emperor Gia Long 嘉隆 (1802), Kinh Môn was returned to Hải Dương, which then comprised four prefectures with eighteen districts, as under the Lê emperors although some of the district names changed. In the twelfth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1831), the realm was divided into provinces and the province of Hải Dương came into being. Six years later, the sub-prefecture of Kiến Thụy 建瑞 was added and promoted to prefecture in 1852. At this date, the province was made up of five prefectures with nineteen districts.*

*There were no further changes in the prefectures and districts of the province up to the time of the emperor Đông Khánh. At that time, the province of Hải Dương extended across the entire territory of the province of Hải Dương, as it existed at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as the city of Hải Phòng.]*

The provincial citadel is situated in the communes of Hàn Giang, Hàn Thượng and Bình Lao, district of Cẩm Giàng.

To the east, the province is bounded by the districts of Yên Hưng and Nghiêu Phong, in the province of Quảng Yên. To the west lie the districts of Văn Giang and Lang Tài, in the province of Bắc Ninh. To the south lies the district of Quỳnh Côi, in the province of Nam Định. The province is bounded to the north by the district of Lục Ngạn, in the province of Bắc Ninh. To the northeast lie the provinces of Lạng Sơn and Quảng Yên, while to the northwest lie the districts of Quế Dương and Gia Bình, in the province of Bắc Ninh. The province is bounded to the southwest by the districts of Ân Thi and Phù Cừ,

in the province of Hung Yên. The sea lies to the southeast, as well as the district of Thuy Anh, in the province of Nam Định.

From east to west, the province is 132 leagues across. From north to south, it is one hundred leagues across. The distance from the provincial seat to the capital, Huế, is 1,097 leagues.

The province is divided into five prefectures, comprising a total of nineteen districts.

- 1- The Prefecture of Bình Giang: principal districts of Đường An and Thanh Miện, secondary districts of Cẩm Giàng and Đường Hà.
- 2- The Prefecture of Nam Sách: principal districts of Chí Linh and Thanh Lâm, secondary districts of Thanh Hà and Tiên Minh.
- 3- The Prefecture of Ninh Giang: principal districts of Vĩnh Lại and Vĩnh Bảo, secondary districts of Gia Lộc and Tứ Kỳ.
- 4- The Prefecture of Kiến Thụy: principal districts of Nghi Dương and An Lão, secondary districts of Kim Thành and An Dương.
- 5- The Prefecture of Kinh Môn: principal district of Giáp Sơn, secondary districts of Thủy Đường and Đông Triều.

### **Citadels**

The provincial citadel is built in brick. The rampart is 551 rods in circumference and one rod, one cubit, two inches high. The body of the citadel is reinforced by six protruding buttresses and opens at four gates. It is surrounded by a moat eleven rods across and six cubits deep. Each gate is protected by a goats and horses wall. The goats and horses wall at the South Gate is fifty-seven rods long and thirty-seven rods, five cubits thick. At the East Gate, the wall is fifty-eight rods, seven cubits long, and thirty-eight rods, five cubits thick. At the North Gate, it is sixty-six rods, five cubits long and thirty-three rods, five cubits thick. At the West Gate, it is fifty-five rods, five cubits long and thirty-five rods, five cubits thick. These walls are all five cubits, four inches high.

Beyond the goats and horses walls, there is a secondary fortification. This is an embankment surrounding the entire citadel, which explains its name La Thành. The embankment is built entirely of earth and stands 1,539 rods in circumference, three cubits high and two cubits thick. It is protected by a further moat, which is five cubits across and four cubits deep.

All five prefectures have square citadels built of earth. The citadel of the prefecture of Bình Giang is situated in the communes of Hoạch Trạch and Mỹ Trạch, in the district of Đường Hà. The citadel of the prefecture of Nam Sách is situated in the communes of Tống Xá, Linh Khê and Lương Nhân, district of Chí Linh, while that of the prefecture of Ninh Giang stands in the commune of Tranh Xuyên, district of Vĩnh Lại. The citadel of the prefecture of Kiến Thụy is situated in the commune of Xuân La, district of Nghi Dương, while that of the prefecture of Kinh Môn stands in the commune of Tuấn Trì, district of Giáp Sơn.

### **Army**

- Soldiers recruited by the court: 4,373 people, including the following:
- |                               |               |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| The prefecture of Bình Giang: | 891 people.   |
| The prefecture of Nam Sách:   | 1,020 people. |
| The prefecture of Ninh Giang: | 1,323 people. |
| The prefecture of Kiến Thụy:  | 645 people.   |
| The prefecture of Kinh Môn:   | 494 people.   |

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- Militia recruited by the mandarins: 419 people, including the following:
  - Prefecture militia: 298 (258 formerly, 40 new recruits).
  - Citadel guard: 97 (81 formerly, 16 new recruits).
  - Military labourers: 24 people.
- Prefecture and district escort: 546 people.

### **Population**

Population registered for tax payment: 46,519 people, including the following:

|                               |                |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| The prefecture of Bình Giang: | 9.684 people.  |
| The prefecture of Nam Sách:   | 10.433 people. |
| The prefecture of Ninh Giang: | 13.701 people. |
| The prefecture of Kiến Thụy:  | 7.282 people.  |
| The prefecture of Kinh Môn:   | 5.419 people.  |

### **Agricultural Land**

The agricultural land of the province extends across 424,439 acres, five square poles, eight square perches, six square yards, eight square feet and six square inches. This land is distributed as follows:

The prefecture of Bình Giang: 110,053 acres, six square poles, eight square perches, six square yards and one square foot.

The prefecture of Nam Sách: 80,053 acres, four square poles, fourteen square perches, eight square yards, five square feet and three square inches.

The prefecture of Ninh Giang: 123,999 acres, one square pole, eight square perches, six square yards, five square feet and six square inches.

The prefecture of Kiến Thụy: 60,183 acres, three square poles, one square yard, eight square feet and one square inch.

The prefecture of Kinh Môn: 50,149 acres, nine square poles, six square perches, three square yards, eight square feet and one square inch.

### **Annual Tax Receipts**

Paid in cash: 153,208 ligatures, seven strings (of sapeques), and nine sapeques. This sum was received as follows:

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| The prefecture of Bình Giang: | 34,710 ligatures and forty-four sapeques.              |
| The prefecture of Nam Sách:   | 31,637 ligatures, nine strings and seventeen sapeques. |
| The prefecture of Ninh Giang: | 44,982 ligatures, three strings and one sapeque.       |
| The prefecture of Kiến Thụy:  | 23,982 ligatures, one string and fifty-three sapeques. |
| The prefecture of Kinh Môn:   | 17,895 ligatures, seven strings and fourteen sapeques. |

Paid in paddy: 259,039 bushels, sixteen pints, one double handful and nine handfuls. This sum was received as follows:

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| The prefecture of Bình Giang: | 69,391 bushels, nine pints, six double handfuls and five handfuls.         |
| The prefecture of Nam Sách:   | 51,271 bushels, twenty-eight pints, nine double handfuls and two handfuls. |
| The prefecture of Ninh Giang: | 80,454 bushels, thirty-one pints, six double handfuls and seven handfuls.  |
| The prefecture of Kiến Thụy:  | 31,474 bushels, eight pints and one handful.                               |
| The prefecture of Kinh Môn:   | 26,447 bushels, seventeen pints, nine double handfuls and four handfuls.   |

### **Temples and Shrines**

The following places of worship may be found in the district of Cẩm Giàng. The rostrum to the gods of the soil and harvests is situated to the northwest of the provincial citadel, in the commune of Hàn Giang. The rostrum to the gods of agriculture may be found to the east of the citadel, in the commune of Hàn Thượng, and the rostrum to the gods of the mountains and rivers lies to its southwest, in the commune of Bình Lao. The temple of Confucian literature also lies to the southwest of the citadel, in the commune of Mao Điền.

Temples dedicated to Confucius exist in each prefecture and district.

The temple of the revelation of the spirits is situated to the south of the temple of Confucian literature. The shrine of all the saints is situated to the north of the provincial citadel, while the shrine of the tutelary deities lies to the northwest. Both shrines are in the commune of Hàn Thượng. The temple of Khúc may be found in the commune of Lỗ Xá.

The following places of worship may be found in the district of Tứ Kỳ. The shrine of Lý Thần Tông is situated in the commune of Hàn Hy. There is also a shrine to this emperor in the commune of Dương Nham, in the district of Giáp Sơn. The temple of Nguyễn Công [Nguyễn Minh Biện] may be found in the commune of Phạm Xá.

The following places of worship may be found in the district of Đông Triều. The shrine of Trần Nhân Tông is situated in the commune of Yên Sinh. There are also shrines to this emperor in the communes of Diên Lão, district of Tiên Minh, and Hương Đại, district of Thanh Hà. Shrines to the emperors Trần Thái Tông and Trần Thánh Tông may be found in the commune of Yên Sinh.

The following places of worship may be found in the district of Tiên Minh. The Trần princes are worshiped at a temple in the commune of Hà Đái. General Ngô [Ngô Phúc Tín] is venerated at a temple in the commune of Cẩm Khê. People pay their respects to the mountain god Kinh Sơn in the commune of Vân Đồi. The prince Bạt Hải is worshiped at a temple in the commune of Tử Đồi. Trang Định, the divine son of the emperor Trần Nghệ Tông, is venerated at a temple in the commune of Đẻ Xuyên.

The following places of worship may be found in the district of Thanh Hà. The shrine of the Chinese governor Shixi [Sĩ Nhiếp] may be found in the commune of Tiên Liệt. There is also a temple to this governor in the commune of An Nghiệp, district of Tứ Kỳ. The shrine of Trần Trùng Quang is situated in the commune of An Lão. The dragon prince is worshiped at a temple in the commune of Hào Xá.

The following places of worship may be found in the district of Chí Linh. The temple of the Trần dynasty prince Huệ Vũ [Trần Quốc Chân] is situated in the commune of Kiệt Đặc, as is the temple dedicated to Chu Văn Trinh [Chu An]. There is a temple to the Trần dynasty prince Nhân Huệ [Trần Khánh Dư] in the commune of Linh Giang. The temple of Cao Sơn may be found in the commune of Lương Nhân, and a temple to the same deity may also be found in the commune of Tri Yếu, district of An Dương. General Trần Hưng Đạo is venerated at a temple in the commune of Dục Sơn, and temples to this general may also be found in the commune of Thụ Khê, district of Thủy Đường, and the commune of Phú Xá, district of An Dương.

The following places of worship may be found in the district of Giáp Sơn. The temple of general Phạm [Phạm Luận] is situated in the commune of Ngư Uyên, while the temple of minister Phạm [Phạm Đình Trọng] is in the commune of Kinh Dao. The temple of the Trần dynasty dignitary [Trần Quốc Bảo] may be found in the commune of Kim Xuyên.

The following places of worship may be found in the district of Thủy Đường. The temple of the Trần dynasty princes is situated in the commune of Tràng Kênh. Doctor Lê [Lê Ích Mộc] is worshiped at a temple in the commune of Thanh Lãng. A temple to the deity of the miraculous apparition is situated in the commune of Chung Mỹ.

## **The Descriptive Geography of the Emperor *Đông Khánh***

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The following places of worship may be found in the district of *Vĩnh Bảo*. There is a temple dedicated to the god of the eastern sea in the commune of *Đoàn Hương*. This divinity is also worshiped in the communes of *An Nhân*, district of *Đường Hào*, and *Cao Bộ*, district of *An Dương*. The commune of *Đoàn Hương* is also home to a temple dedicated to the god of the southern sea, the temple of the imperial counsellor *Cương* and the temple of *Bảo An*. A temple dedicated to a Sung dynasty queen mother is situated in the commune of *Nghĩa Am*.

The following places of worship may be found in the district of *Vĩnh Lại*. The inhabitants of the communes of *Tranh Xuyên* and *Tranh Chủ* venerate the god of the *Tranh* river at a temple situated in the commune of *Tranh Xuyên*. The temple of the monk *Minh Không* may be found in the commune of *Hán Lý*.

The following places of worship may be found in the district of *Gia Lộc*. The temple of the Guardian of the North is situated in the commune of *An Cư*. A temple dedicated to the general *Yết Kiêu* may be found in the commune of *Hạ Bì*. The inhabitants of the communes of *Cầm Cầu* and *Cầm Đới* frequent the temple of a *Lý* dynasty queen mother there.

The following place of worship may be found in the district of *Đường An*. The temple of *Cao Vương* [*Cao Hiến*] is in the commune of *Minh Giám*.

The following place of worship may be found in the district of *Đường Hào*. The temple of the imperial counsellor *Đỗ* [*Đỗ Thế Diên*] is situated in the village of *Thanh Xá*, in the commune of *Liêu Xuyên* and the temple of *Đế Thích* is situated in the commune of *Liêu Hạ*.

The following places of worship may be found in the district of *Nghi Dương*. The temple of dame *Trần A* [*princess Quỳnh Trân*, the younger sister of *Trần Nhân Tông*], may be found in the commune of *Nghi Dương*. Colonel *Ngô* [*Ngô Hùng Cự*] is venerated at a temple in the village of *Đông Tác*. The temple of the *Đồ Sơn* water deity is venerated by the entire population of the canton of *Đồ Sơn*.

The following places of worship may be found in the district of *An Lão*. The inhabitants of the commune of *Bách Phương* frequent the temple of *Dụ Khánh*. A temple dedicated to the heir apparent [*Cao Duệ*], the husband of princess *Chiêu Hoa*, may be found in the commune of *Phù Liễn*.

The following places of worship may be found in the district of *An Dương*. The temple of prince *Ngô* may be found in the commune of *Lương Thám*, while that of *Phạm Tử Nghi* is frequented by the inhabitants of the communes of *An Dương* and *Vĩnh Niệm*. Duke *Lôi* [*Đào Xuân Lôi*] is venerated at a temple in the commune of *Vân Tra*.

A temple of the celestial emperor *Phù Đổng* may be found in the commune of *Cổ Phục*, district of *Kim Thành*.

### **Customs and Manners**

Some of the customs of the prefectures of *Nam Sách*, *Ninh Giang* and *Bình Giang* display a certain elegance, and the people are almost ceremonial in their lifestyle. The people of the prefectures of *Kinh Môn* and *Kiến Thủy* are, by contrast, quite brutal in their manners but retain nonetheless a sense of honour. In the districts of *Đường Hào* (the communes of *Bạch Sam* and *Dị Sử*) and *Thanh Hà* (the communes of *Đại Điền* and *Tiền Liệt*), the people live in ways that may be described as perfidious. The inhabitants of the districts of *Thủy Đường* and *An Dương* are rustic and down-to-earth.

People living near the mountains collect firewood for a living, while those near the rivers fish with nets. Throughout the countryside, the men shave their heads bald. Members of poor families make up beds of straw during cold winters and sleep together to keep warm.

Both men and women wear clothes coloured with natural brown dye. The women cover their hair with headscarves made of cloth or silk dyed black. Their blouses are not fastened with buttons but only with a waist-cloth fitting tightly around the body. They wear skirts in the old style, rather than trousers, in the manner of the women of all the provinces of the north.

- Rites and ceremonies are observed with some extravagance. Springtime is marked by festive celebrations, including singing and games intended to entertain the deities. The girls, for example, sing in canon, and there are puppets and chess games. During these festivals, the village is highly animated and remains hectic for a whole week.

- In the countryside, marriages and funerals are celebrated with simplicity and modesty, but in the towns and markets some of these ceremonies are occasions for luxury and waste. The family of the bridegroom is not expected to provide the wedding feast, but offers money in lieu of betrothal gifts. On the day of the nuptials, as the young man's family goes to fetch the bride, chairs and tables are placed en route, allowing the guests to rest their legs during the procession. Offerings of fruit are placed on trays and covered with bright red silk scarves. The young woman is released by her family only after the bride price has been paid.

- Funerals are generally celebrated with restraint, with mourners wearing white clothes and turbans. During ceremonies held with great solemnity, family members wear a further shirt of fine, pale blue cloth after the burial. Late in the day, they go out to the grave to weep for about an hour. This ceremony is repeated for three days, and is known as the 'rite of prostration at the grave'.

Most of the rural inhabitants of the province are Buddhists. Catholics are few and far between. In each district, there are no more than seven to ten communes partly or wholly inhabited by Catholics.

### **Local Produce**

Most of the province is covered in low-lying, flooded paddy fields, and as a result the rice harvest is more abundant in autumn than in summer. Cotton, potatoes and beans are the main other crops and are cultivated throughout the province, but not in any great quantity. Sweet oranges are grown only in the district of Tứ Kỳ. Small shrimps may be found in Gia Lộc, tobacco in Tiên Minh, areca nuts in An Dương, sugarcane molasses in Cẩm Giàng and unusually delicious small sea slugs in Thanh Hà.

Flowering bamboo, timber, white clay, tigers and panthers are all found in the district of Đông Triều. There is a great deal of good quality stone in the district of Giáp Sơn. The main products of the district of Đường An are fans and other articles in split bamboo as well as crockery, such as earthenware bowls and cups of poor quality.

Cẩm Giàng produces finely woven white cloth and preserved longans. The commune of Triều Dương, in the prefecture of Bình Giang, produces striped cloth, or rather used to do so in the past as this profession no longer seems to be practised nowadays. The commune of Văn Khê is reputed for its vermilion, which is not found elsewhere in such quantities. Sea products such as white salt, prawns and crabs, molluscs and sea turtles may be found in all the coastal areas.

- Duck breeders hatch duck eggs in the following manner. The eggs are incubated in a closed room, with a single opening to allow the air to circulate. The floor is covered in dried cow's manure or straw of varying depth: deep if the weather is cold, shallow if warm. The eggs are then placed on top. Above them is set a bed on which the breeder lies to tend the incubating oven. The eggs are turned every three days. They are turned a total of seven times and hatch after twenty-one days, whereupon the ducklings crawl out and people arrive from all around to buy them and take them home for breeding.

The fisherfolk are also fish farmers. The province is home to a flat fish with small scales known as *cá phượng*, a sort of red-tailed tench which flips up its fins and tail in a splash of red as it swims. In the

fourth and fifth months of the year, the tench lays its eggs in the river springs, doing so in the little clouds of spume in much the same way as the field crab. The more substantial clouds of spume are caught in the grasses of the river bank, and local inhabitants skim it off, transfer it into tubs and carry it home. In due course, the fish hatch and are taken out to small sandy ponds for breeding. Leaves of the china tree are cast into the pond and left there to soak into the water, and the water is stirred once a day to allow the fish to feed. Raised in this way from birth, the fish gradually grow. When the time comes to sell them, the farmers pull the fish out of the water, place them in two lacquerware tubs filled with water and carry them on their shoulders to market. While walking to market, the two tubs have to be continually agitated. While sitting at the market, both hands are used to stir the water, shaking up clouds of bubbles. All this is to get the fish accustomed to life in the ripples of water. Fish bred in ponds in this way for just over a month grow to the size of a forefinger, and can then be released into other, larger ponds for further breeding.

### **Climate**

The weather is rainy in springtime and sunny in summer. It is cloudy in autumn and cold in winter. In the first and second months of the year, mists hide the sun until the end of the morning. Showers are common during the third and fourth months. In the fifth and sixth months, the wind blows from the southeast, and in the seventh and eighth months, it blows from the southwest. Strong winds get up and the rain falls heavily on the tenth day of the eighth month. The breeding season for small sea slugs starts on the twentieth day of the ninth month and lasts until the fifth day of the tenth month. At this time the river waters are high and there are whirlwinds, known locally as ‘sea slug winds’. During the three months of winter, the sky is overcast, the wind blows from the north and the weather is piercing cold.

The tides ride and fall twice every month, with the exception of the second and eighth months when they do so three times.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

Mountains and forests cover large parts of the prefectures and districts of Chí Linh, Đông Triều, Giáp Sơn, Thủy Đường and Kiến Thụy. Famous mountains include the following: Yên Tử, Quỳnh Lâm, Đạm Thủy, Bác Mã, Thiên Tí, Đôn Sơn, Châu Cốc and Lộc Đầu (or Stag’s Head), in the district of Đông Triều; Phượng Hoàng, Côn Sơn, Dược Sơn, Phao Sơn, Nùng Sơn and Doanh Sơn, in the district of Chí Linh; Yên Phụ, Dương Nham and Vân Ổ, in the district of Giáp Sơn; Đường Sơn, Đào Sơn, Diêm Khê and Hoàng Tôn, in the district of Thủy Đường; Tượng Sơn, Đô Sơn, Phiên Sơn, Đẩu Sơn, Vụ Sơn, Trà Sơn, Đối Sơn, Mã Yên, Áng Sơn, Dương Sơn, Tiên Hội and Đào Lĩnh, in the district of Kiến Thụy.

An extremely dense network of rivers and canals covers the province. The major waterways include the following rivers: the Lục Đầu, Lâu Khê, Hàn, Thủ Chân, An Điền, Cấm, Bạch Đằng, Đạo Khê and the Đích Thượng.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The following places deserve mention among the more notable sites in the province: the monastic retreats of the mountain of Yên Tử and the cave of Tượng Sơn, in the district of An Lão; the ancient stupa on the mountain of Đô Sơn, in the district of Nghi Dương; the ancient shrine at the Trung Tân jetty, in the district of Vĩnh Bảo; the stupa of Huyết Thư and the pagoda of Minh Khánh, in the district of Thanh Hà; the monastic retreat of Bạch Vân on the mountain of Côn Sơn and the cave on the mountain of Phượng Hoàng, in the district of Chí Linh; the pagoda of Quang Khánh, in the district of Kim Thành; the cave of Dương Nham, in the district of Giáp Sơn; the pagoda of Hàm Long, in the district of Thủy Đường; the pagoda of Quang Minh, in the district of Gia Lộc. All these ancient sites

certainly merit description as celebrated and picturesque but more than half of them have been reduced to ruins by repeated wars.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs from the stage post of Yên Xá, in the province of Hưng Yên, at the southern extremity of the province. It passes the stage posts of Đông Bồng, Đông Thượng, Đông Khê and Đông Mai before reaching the Bạch Đằng river, where it enters the province of Quảng Yên. This road is 159 leagues and one rod long.

- A main road runs from the stage post of Đông Thượng, at the eastern extremity of the province, heading westwards as far as the boundary with the district of Lang Tài, in the province of Bắc Ninh. This road is forty leagues and one rod long.

- A minor road leads from the provincial citadel northwards to the boundary with the districts of Quế Dương and Lục Ngạn, in the province of Bắc Ninh. This road is thirty-seven leagues and five cubits long.

- A minor road leads from the stage post of Đông Mai as far as Hải Phòng. This road is seven leagues and thirty-five cubits long.

- A further minor road heads southwest from the stage post of Đông Bồng as far as the boundary with the district of Phù Cừ, in the province of Hưng Yên. This road is fourteen leagues and five cubits long.

### **Forts and Strongholds**

The principal customs office is situated in the commune of Hạ Lý, canton of Đa Viên, district of An Dương, prefecture of Kiến Thụy. The same canton is home to the fort of Ninh Hải 1, in the commune of Lạc Viên, and the forts of Hải Phòng and Ninh Hải 2, in the commune of Đa Viên. The fort of Đông Tân may be found in the commune of Hàn Giang, in the district of Cẩm Giàng, to the east of the provincial citadel.

More recently constructed forts include the following: the fort of Lâu Khê, in the commune of Lâu Khê, prefecture of Nam Sách; the fort of Ngã Ba, in the commune of Quý Cao, district of Tứ Kỳ; the fort of Tiên Am, in the commune of Tiên Am, district of Vĩnh Bảo, prefecture of Ninh Giang (this was originally the right hand fort of Ngã Am and has recently been transferred here); the right hand fort of Ngã Am, in the commune of Phương Đồi, district of Tiên Minh; the left hand fort of Văn Úc, in the commune of Dương Áo, district of Tiên Minh; the right hand fort of Văn Úc, in the commune of Đa Ngư, district of Nghi Dương, prefecture of Kiến Thụy; the fort of An Khê, in the commune of An Khê, district of An Dương; the fort of Đoàn Lễ, in the commune of Đoàn Lễ, district of Thủy Đường; the fort of Ninh Hải 3, in the commune of Bình Động, district of Thủy Đường; the fort of Phi Liệt, in the commune of Phi Liệt, district of Thủy Đường; the fort of Kiến Bái, in the commune of Kiến Bái, district of Thủy Đường; the fort of Phấn Đường, in the village of Phấn Đường, district of Nghi Dương; the fort of Xạ Sơn, in the commune of Xạ Sơn, district of Giáp Sơn; the fort of Cập Nhất, in the commune of Cập Nhất, district of Thanh Hà; the fort of Phù Kinh, in the commune of Phù Kinh, district of Thanh Hà; the fort of Ngọc Lạc, in the commune of Ngọc Lạc, district of Tứ Kỳ; the fort of Phạm Xá, in the commune of Phạm Xá, district of Tứ Kỳ; the fort of Liêu Xá, in the commune of Liêu Xá, district of Tứ Kỳ; the fort of Ngọc Uyển in the commune of Ngọc Uyển, district of Thanh Lâm; the fort of Đông Bình in the commune of Yên Ninh, district of Chí Linh; the fort of Mặc Ngạn in the commune of Mặc Ngạn, district of Chí Linh; the fort of Ba Soi in the commune of Phúc Diên, district of Gia Lộc; the left hand fort of Ngã Am in the commune of Nghĩa Am, district of Vĩnh Bảo.

**For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.**

**We, the mandarins of the province of **Hung Yên**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of**

## **The Province of **Hung Yên****

Including the following maps:

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| The Province of Hung Yên               | 興安省     |
| The Prefecture of Khoái Châu           | 快州府     |
| The District of Đông Yên               | 東安縣     |
| The Districts of Phù Cừ and Ân Thi     | 芙蓉縣，恩施縣 |
| The District of Kim Động               | 金洞縣     |
| The Prefecture of Tiên Hưng            | 先興府     |
| The District of Thần Khê               | 神溪縣     |
| The Districts of Diên Hà and Hưng Nhân | 延河縣，興仁縣 |
| The District of Tiên Lữ                | 仙侶縣     |

## The Description of the Province of **Hưng Yên**

### [Note on the Administrative History of the Province:

*Under the Han, the territory of the province of Hưng Yên was part of the Chinese dominion of Giao Chỉ 交趾. It was called the outer district of Đằng [Đằng Châu 藤州] under the Ngô 吳, Đinh 丁 and early Lê 黎 dynasties, becoming the prefecture of Thái Bình 太平 in 1005 on Lê Long Đĩnh's return from a victorious military campaign. During the reign of the emperor Lý Cao Tông 李高宗, the outer district of Đằng Châu was divided in two, and the newly created outer district was named Khoái 快州. Under the Trần 陳 dynasty, the two outer districts were renamed the territories of Long Hưng 龍興路 and Khoái 快路. Under the Ming 明, they became the prefecture of Kiến Xương 建昌府 and the district of Diên Hà 延河縣, which was part of the prefecture of Trấn Man 鎮蠻府. During the reign of the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 two prefectures were created: the prefecture of Khoái Châu, which consisted of the districts of Kim Động 金洞, Đông Yên 東安, Thiên Thi 天施, Tiên Lữ 仙侶 and Phù Dung 芙蓉, and the prefecture of Tân Hưng 新興, made up of the districts of Diên Hà, Ngự Thiên 御天, Thần Khê 神溪 and Thanh Lan 青蘭. Both prefectures became part of the division of Thiên Trường 天長 in 1469, and then Sơn Nam 山南 in 1473. Under the Mạc 莫, they were re-allocated to the government of Hải Dương. After the Lê Restoration, the Mạc reforms were repealed and the division returned to its former status. In 1741, Sơn Nam was divided into two territories: the prefecture of Khoái Châu became part of Sơn Nam Thượng 山南上, while the prefecture of Tiên Hưng (previously Tân Hưng) became part of Sơn Nam Hạ 山南下. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Gia Long 嘉隆, the territories were renamed governments and there were no further changes. However, in the third year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1822), Sơn Nam Thượng became the government of Sơn Nam while Sơn Nam Hạ became that of Nam Định 南定. Nine years later, the realm was divided into provinces. Khoái Châu and its five districts were added to the districts of Thần Khê, Diên Hà and Hưng Nhân 興仁, prefecture of Tiên Hưng 先興, government of Nam Định, forming the province of Hưng Yên. At that time, the province consisted of two prefectures with eight districts.*

*There were no further changes up to the time of the emperor **Đông Khánh**. In later years, the province was to lose three districts from the prefecture of Tiên Hưng, which were transferred to the province of Thái Bình on its formation in 1890. If compared with the province which existed at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the province of Hưng Yên at the time of the emperor **Đông Khánh** did not yet include the former district of Văn Giang, which at that time was part of the province of Bắc Ninh. It did still include the districts of Hưng Hà and Đông Hưng in the province of Thái Bình which at that time was yet to be created.]*

The provincial citadel is situated in the commune of Yên Vũ, district of Kim Động. Built of bare brick, its rampart stands 391 rods, three cubits, eight inches in circumference, one rod high and one rod, two cubits thick. It is octagonal in shape and opens at four entrances. The walls are surrounded by

a moat nine rods across and three cubits, seven to eight inches deep. Beyond the moat, a road surrounds the citadel on three sides. This road is 800 rods long.

To the east, the province is bounded by the district of Thanh Miện, in the province of Hải Dương. The Red River passes to the west. The districts of Nam Xương and Phú Xuyên, in the province of Hà Nội, lie beyond the river. To the south, the provincial boundary is formed with the district of Thư Trì, in the province of Nam Định, and to the north with the district of Văn Giang, in the province of Bắc Ninh. To the northeast lies the district of Đường Hào, in the province of Hải Dương, while the northwestern extremity of the province meets the districts of Văn Giang, in the province of Bắc Ninh, and Thanh Trì, in the province of Hà Nội. To the southwest lies the district of Nam Xương, in the province of Hà Nội, and to the southeast the district of Quỳnh Côi, in the province of Nam Định.

From east to west, the province is forty-three leagues across. From north to south, it is thirty-nine leagues across. The province is divided into two prefectures, with a total of eight districts.

- 1- The prefecture of Khoái Châu: principal district of Đông Yên, secondary districts of Kim Động, Phù Cừ and Ân Thi.
- 2- The prefecture of Tiên Hưng: principal district of Thần Khê, secondary districts of Diên Hà, Hưng Nhân, and Tiên Lữ.

### **Customs and Manners**

The scholars of the province are assiduous in their pursuit of examination success and ardent in the composition of literary works, and the learned men of the district of Tiên Lữ are greatly more talented in this respect than those of other districts. The common people farm the land, and those of the district of Thần Khê achieve the best results. Many people also earn a living from the practice of trade, the breeding of silkworms and the weaving of cloth. Some of the inhabitants of the district of Tiên Lữ set out on long journeys to trade their wares. The inhabitants of the communes of Mỹ Sở, Đa Hòa and Thiết Trụ, district of Đông Yên, and the commune of Nguyễn Xá, district of Thần Khê, travel regularly around the country to buy live silkworm cocoons and thread for weaving into silk. The artisans of the province cannot be described as very skilful. People living along the river banks commonly earn their livelihood from fishing.

Of the four districts of the prefecture of Tiên Hưng, generally speaking the inhabitants of Thần Khê are rich but litigious, the inhabitants of Tiên Lữ are studious, while the majority of the people of Diên Hà and Hưng Nhân are tempestuous and fiery in character and some can be slanderous. Of the four districts of the prefecture of Khoái Châu, the inhabitants of Đông Yên are down-to-earth and rustic, holding the deities in great reverence. The inhabitants of Kim Động, who live near the estuaries and boat jetties, are frivolous and flighty and many of them are lazy and idle. The people of Phù Cừ and Ân Thi tend to be unpredictable, and their economic fortunes have declined in recent years.

Weddings and funerals are celebrated without pretension, and the worship of ancestors is practised in different places in different ways.

### **Local Produce**

The rice crop is more abundant in autumn than in summer. Potatoes, beans, manioc, jute, millet and sugarcane are the main other crops and are cultivated throughout the province. Rivers pass through most of the districts. On their banks, lychees are grown in parts of the district of Thần Khê, longans in Tiên Lữ, and throughout the province people plant guava and jackfruit to reinforce the dikes.

Families in the districts of Thần Khê and Diên Hà commonly grow tea trees in their gardens, crushing the leaves and cooking them in water to make a beverage. The district of Phù Cừ, and most notably the commune of Đình Cao, is reputed for its watermelon seeds, while round aubergines grown from the seeds of the district of Thần Khê are known to be most delicious. Rushes, for the lighting of lamps, are produced in two communes of the district of Đông Yên: Đông Xá and Xuân Lai. Fish for farming and their eggs are raised along the rivers of the district of Kim Động. The inhabitants of the communes of Xuân Trúc, Kiều Thạch and Quan Khê, district of Hưng Nhân, weave white reeds into mats. The people of Kim Động are rather good at making feather fans. Rock crabs used to abound in the commune of Xuân Điểm, district of Tiên Lữ, but can no longer be found there nowadays.

### **Climate**

In its climate, this province resembles the provinces of Hà Nội and Nam Định. The three months of spring are fine and mild, although during the third month a persistent drizzle usually sets in. The three months of summer are scorching hot, although the rains come in the sixth month, when the river waters start to rise. During the three months of autumn it rains often, but after the seventh month a cool wind blows and storms are common during the eighth month. During the three months of winter, gales blow from the north, the weather is piercing cold and drizzle is rare.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

The entire territory of the province is flat. There are no mountains, with the exception of a knoll known as the mountain of Bình Đẩu, near the district seat of Tiên Lữ.

The following watercourses may be found in the province: the Cửa An river, the Càn Hải estuary and the Nhất Dạ marsh, although the latter has been drained. Only the Đằng and Luộc rivers may be described as deep and wide. Other rivers include the Nông, the Phiên and the Kênh, but they are mostly narrow and dry. The Half Moon lake may be found to the west of the provincial citadel. This lake is about three acres in area and four to five cubits deep.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

Temples dedicated to the worship of Chử Đồng Tử and the princess Tiên Dung may be visited in the district of Đông Yên. The temple of the warlord may also be found in this district. The pagoda of Kim Chung is situated in the district of Kim Động, the temple of Đế Thích in the district of Ân Thi and the temple of the emperor Lê Đại Hành in the district of Thần Khê. The district of Hưng Nhân is home to the sanctuary of Quang Hiếu, where the emperor Lê Cung Hoàng is venerated. Also to be found in this district are the temple of the Trần dynasty emperors, the temple of Phạm Trạng Nguyên [Phạm Đôn Lễ], and the pagoda of Báo Quốc. The pagoda of Kim Phụ is situated in the district of Diên Hà. The shrine of Kê Lạc, where Ngô Quyền is venerated, and the temple of prince Trung Quốc, otherwise known as Lê Canh, the son of the emperor Lê Đại Hành, may be visited in the district of Tiên Lữ. All these ancient sites certainly merit description as picturesque but years of wind and rain have reduced them to a shadow of their former glory.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

A post road heads northwards from the provincial capital, through the districts of Kim Động and Đông Yên as far as the commune of Nhị Mỹ, which lies on the boundary with the district of Văn Giang, in the province of Bắc Ninh. This road is thirty-eight leagues, 173 rods and four cubits long. It is raised one cubit above the ground and is one rod wide.

## **The Descriptive Geography of the Emperor Đông Khánh**

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A post road heads eastwards from the provincial citadel, through the districts of Kim Động, Tiên Lữ and Phù Cừ as far as the commune of Phú Mỹ, which lies on the boundary with the district of Thanh Miện, in the province of Hải Dương. This road is nineteen leagues, twenty-two rods long.

In the southern part of the province, a post road runs eastwards from the commune of Thượng Ngạn, in the district of Diên Hà. It passes the stage post of Yên Xá and extends as far as the commune of Hy Hà, on the boundary between the districts of Diên Hà and Thanh Miện. The road is eighteen leagues long.

A dike road runs from the provincial citadel towards the northwest, through the districts of Kim Động and Đông Yên, as far as the boundary with the district of Văn Giang, in the province of Bắc Ninh. This road is fifty-five leagues and thirty rods long. It is raised one foot above the ground and is one rod, five inches wide.

Soldiers officially recruited by the court: 1,749 people. This number does not include twenty-eight absentees temporarily suspended from the roll.

The actual population is 18,725 people, including 419 scholars, 18,087 people registered for tax payment and 219 people exempt.

Annual tax receipts:

Paid in cash: 31,724 ligatures and nine strings of sapeques.

Paid in paddy: 1,725 bushels, seventeen pints and five double handfuls.

Tax is paid on the following quantities of communally and privately owned agricultural land of all categories: 199,448 acres, eight square poles, three square perches, five square yards, eight square feet and five square inches. This land is divided between paddy and other crops as follows. Paddy land of all categories: 157,712 acres, three square poles, thirteen square perches, two square feet and slightly less than four square inches. Other cultivable land of all categories: 41,736.4 acres, five square perches, five square yards, one square foot and slightly over four and a half square inches.

Annual tax receipts from agricultural land:

Paid in cash: 60,147 ligatures, three strings and nine sapeques.

Paid in paddy: 33,895 bushels, thirty-one pints, five double handfuls and slightly over six handfuls.

For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.

We, the mandarins of the province of **Nam Định**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of

## The Province of **Nam Định**

Including the following maps:

|                                   |      |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| The Province of Nam Định          | 南定省  |
| The Prefecture of Xuân Trường     | 春長府  |
| The District of Giao Thủy         | 膠水縣  |
| The District of Mỹ Lộc            | 美祿縣  |
| The District of Thượng Nguyên     | 上元縣  |
| The District of Nam Chân          | 南真縣  |
| The District of Chân Ninh         | 真寧縣  |
| The Prefecture of Nghĩa Hưng      | 義興府  |
| The District of Đại An            | 大安縣  |
| The District of Vụ Bản            | 務本縣  |
| The Sub-Prefecture of Nghĩa Hưng  | 義興分府 |
| The District of Phong Doanh       | 豐盈縣  |
| The Prefecture of Kiến Xương      | 建昌府  |
| The District of Vũ Tiên           | 武僊縣  |
| The District of Chân Định         | 真定縣  |
| The District of Thư Trì           | 舒池縣  |
| The District of Tiền Hải          | 錢海縣  |
| The Great Prefecture of Thái Bình | 太平府  |
| The District of Đông Quan         | 東關縣  |
| The District of Thanh Quan        | 青關縣  |
| The District of Thụy Anh          | 瑞英縣  |
| The District of Thái Bình         | 太平分府 |
| The District of Quỳnh Côi         | 瓊瑰縣  |

## The Description of the Province of Nam Định

**[Note on the Administrative History of the Province:**

*Under the Han, the territory of the province of Nam Định was part of the Chinese dominion of Giao Chỉ 交趾. At the beginning of the Tang 唐 period, it was called Tống Châu 宋州 and belonged to Giao Châu. In 621, the name Nam Định appeared for the first time, to describe a district of Tống Châu. The region became a regional inspectorate under the Đinh 丁 dynasty and a territory under the early Lê 黎 and Lý 李, although its name at this time remains unclear. Under the Trần 陳 emperors, it was made up of the territories of Thiên Trường 天長 and Long Hưng 龍興, corresponding to the Nguyễn 阮 dynasty prefecture of Thái Bình 太平. Under the Ming 明, it consisted of three prefectures: Trấn Man 鎮蠻, Phụng Hoá 奉化 and Kiến Bình 建平. During the reign of the emperor Lê Thái Tổ 黎太祖, it was part of the regional inspectorate of the South. The emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 promoted Thiên Trường to the status of division in 1469, and then changed its name to Sơn Nam 山南. At that time the division of Sơn Nam was made up of nine prefectures. The Nguyễn 阮 dynasty province of Nam Định corresponded to five of those prefectures: Nghĩa Hưng 義興, Thiên Trường, Tiên Hưng 先興 (district of Thanh Lan), Kiến Xương 建昌 and Thái Bình 太平. Under the Mạc 莫 dynasty, two of those prefectures, Kiến Xương and Thái Bình, were transferred to the government of Hải Dương. After the Lê Restoration, the Mạc reforms were repealed and the division returned to its former status. In 1741, Sơn Nam was divided into two territories, Sơn Nam Thượng 山南上 and Sơn Nam Hạ 山南下, and the Nguyễn 阮 dynasty province of Nam Định covered almost the entire land area of the latter. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Gia Long 嘉隆, the territory of Sơn Nam Hạ became a government. There were no further changes until the third year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1822), when Sơn Nam Hạ was renamed Nam Định. In 1829, the district of Tiền Hải 錢海 was added. Three years later, in the twelfth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh, the realm was divided into provinces. The three districts of Hưng Nhân 興仁, Diên Hà 延河 and Thần Khê 神溪 were removed to form the province of Hưng Yên 興安, and the remaining territory became the province of Nam Định. In 1833, the district of Chân Ninh 真寧 was added.*

*From the reign of the emperor Tự Đức up to the time of the emperor **Đông Khánh**, the province consisted of four prefectures with eighteen districts. It was to lose some of these in 1890, on the formation of the province of Thái Bình. It was subsequently to be merged with two other provinces to form the late twentieth century province of Hà Nam Ninh, though this reform was then reversed. The province of Nam Định, as it was at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, thus corresponded to the province which existed at the time of the late Nguyễn emperors.]*

The provincial citadel is situated in the communes of Túc Mặc and Năng Tĩnh, district of Mỹ Lộc. In 1833, the emperor Minh Mệnh ordered the construction of a rampart around the citadel. Built in brick, it stands 830 rods, seven cubits, three inches in circumference, and six cubits, seven inches high. A parapet was built on top, measuring two cubits, five inches in height. The moat surrounding the rampart is 858 rods long, ten rods across and more than six cubits deep. In 1862, the emperor Tự Đức

ordered the construction of further fortifications outside each of the four citadel gates. Each of these consists of an embankment built of earth, shaped in a point and measuring eighteen rods, seven cubits, two inches in length. Each embankment is protected by a moat two rods, two cubits and five inches across. The citadel opens at four gates. The distance from the southern gate to the *Vị* river is over one hundred rods.

To the east, the province is bounded by the districts of *Vĩnh Lại* and *Vĩnh Bảo*, in the province of *Hải Phòng*.<sup>2</sup> The middle of the river is understood to be the boundary. To the west the middle of the river also forms the provincial boundary with the districts of *Gia Viễn*, *Yên Khánh* and *Kim Sơn*, in the province of *Ninh Bình*. To the southeast lies the open sea. To the north, the middle of the river forms the boundary between the districts of *Thanh Liêm*, *Bình Lục* and *Nam Xương*, in the province of *Hà Nội*. To the northeast, the middle of the river and a minor road form the boundary with the districts of *Hung Nhân*, *Thần Khê* and *Diên Hà*, in the province of *Hung Yên*.

The province is divided into four prefectures, comprising a total of eighteen districts, 141 cantons, 834 communes, and 337 villages of various categories (eighty-five *thôn*, thirty-six *trang*, thirty-two *trại*, twenty-two *lý*, fifty-nine *ấp*, eleven *giáp*, five *phường*, one *tuần*, one *sở*).

- 1- The prefecture of *Xuân Trường*: principal district of *Giao Thủy*, secondary districts of *Mỹ Lộc*, *Thượng Nguyên*, *Nam Chân* and *Chân Ninh*.
- 2- The great prefecture of *Nghĩa Hưng*, including
  - The prefecture of *Nghĩa Hưng*: principal district of *Đại An*, secondary district of *Vụ Bản*.
  - The sub-prefecture of *Nghĩa Hưng*: principal district of *Ý Yên*, secondary district of *Phong Doanh*.
- 3- The prefecture of *Kiến Xương*: principal district of *Vũ Tiên*, secondary districts of *Thư Trì*, *Chân Định* and *Tiền Hải*.
- 4- The great prefecture of *Thái Bình*: principal district of *Vũ Tiên*, secondary districts of *Thư Trì*, *Chân Định* and *Tiền Hải*.
  - The prefecture of *Thái Bình*: principal district of *Đông Quan*, secondary districts of *Thanh Quan* and *Thụy Anh*.
  - The sub-prefecture of *Thái Bình*: principal district of *Phụ Dực*, secondary district of *Quỳnh Côi*.

The paddy land of the province covers the following area: 416,407 acres, three square poles, eleven square perches, six square inches.

Land used for other crops covers the following area: 1,001,573 acres, four square poles, three square yards, seven square feet and one square inch.

Population registered for tax payment: 64,072 people.

Soldiers recruited by the court: 6,778 people.

Annual tax receipts:

Paid in cash: 295,183 ligatures, six strings and twenty-one sapeques.

Paid in paddy: 451,815 bushels, seventeen pints and five double handfuls.

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<sup>2</sup> The province of *Hải Phòng* was created in 1887, the second year of the reign of the emperor *Đông Khánh*. It was formed from territory transferred from the province of *Hải Dương*, and is included in the description of that province.

### **Customs and Manners**

Many people from all parts of the country live around the provincial seat and diverse professions are practised there, but the people are prone to extravagance. The markets are crowded with traders. Foreigners arrive through the Trà Lý estuary and trading vessels travel through the Liêu estuary, bringing their cargoes for storage and carrying abundant wares for sale throughout the country. People celebrate the spring festival with firecrackers. Festivals are also held on the fifteenth day of the first month and in mid-autumn, and on these occasions people light lanterns. During the festivals, people take the air and pay each other visits, bidding each other well. The sounds of musical instruments may be heard all around, and people regard these scenes as expressions of their prosperity. These are the customs of the inhabitants of the areas around the citadel. In the countryside, the natives of the province generally live in a quiet and down-to-earth manner, presenting quite a contrast to the townspeople.

The land is well suited to the growing of rice. Paddy farming is the main activity of most of the common people, but between harvests, when there is no farm work, they seek other jobs. Professions such as handicrafts and trading are less commonly practised here than elsewhere. The students are so conscientious that as many as sixteen to seventeen people graduate from the regional examinations to the mandarinates, and even for the general examination there is constant competition between the numerous candidates from the province. Country women and girls commonly make a living from the breeding of silkworm and the weaving of silk. Most of the people are hardworking and virtuous, and the province is known neither for its libertines nor its thieves. However, in those places where much of the fertile land is communally owned, it is often appropriated by the rich families for their own use, and the paupers, who have no access to land, tend as a result to be litigious. Many of the inhabitants of coastal areas are violent. Robbers congregate in deserted areas by the sea such as Chân Ninh and Đại An. However strenuously they are hunted down and captured, it is impossible to stamp them out. In fact, the existence of this situation in such a place is unsurprising.

Annual ceremonies and rites of passage such as weddings and funerals are celebrated in the usual manner, and practices here differ little from those in other provinces.

### **Local Produce**

The rice crop is more abundant in autumn than in summer. The land throughout the province is also well suited to the cultivation of mulberry and cotton. The people of the commune of Thái La, district of Vụ Bản, weave many types of cloth, while those of other parts of the province weave only silk. In the coastal areas, an inferior type of grass serves as cooking fuel, and a slender but long species of rush is used for roofing and the weaving of mats. The inhabitants of a few places make a living from salted fish, and the larger rivers contain carp, which grow to a length of more than two cubits. All types of marrow and melon grow in the province, including cucumbers, squashes, watermelons and loofahs. Vegetables include mustard greens, beet, garlic and shallots. Lychees, longans, mandarins, oranges, pomeloes, jackfruit, peaches and plums are the main fruits. Orchids, lotuses, apricots, chrysanthemums and lilacs are the main flowers. As for poultry, chicken and geese are raised. These are the main farm produce of the province and differ little from other parts of the country. There is also a vegetable known as roll cabbage, grown in Giao Thủy and Chân Ninh. A delicious variety of pomelo is grown in Thanh Quan. Small sea slugs may be found in the districts of Giao Thủy, Chân Ninh and Thanh Quan.

### **Climate**

In springtime the climate of the province is mild with persistent drizzle. In summer, it is warm, the river waters are high and there is frequent thunder and heavy rain. The heat is less oppressive in autumn, when cool weather sets in. Long periods of rain are also common during this season as well as thunderstorms, and an announcement is usually made to the people before storms arrive. In winter, a cold northern wind blows. Miasmas are common in coastal districts, while inland districts may be regarded as free from these sources of cold and humidity. The tides are at their highest at the end of autumn and beginning of winter, but rise less high during the other months of the year. The agricultural cycle starts during the fifth month, when the seeds are sown. The seedlings are planted out in the sixth month, and when the tenth month comes, the harvest is taken in. But in the coastal region, planting out is completed early and the crop is reaped in the ninth month. As for summer rice, the seeds are sown in the tenth month, the seedlings are planted out in the twelfth month and at the beginning of spring, and the fields are harvested one after another during the fourth and fifth months. In general, the climate is uniform throughout the province.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

The entire territory of the province is a wide, empty plain. The district of **Vụ Bản**, however, is home to the mountains of **Trang Nghiêm**, **Tiên Hương**, **Xuân Bảng**, **Gôi**, **Hổ** and **Lê Xá**. The district of **Ý Yên** is home to the mountains of **Phi Lai** and **Thiên Kiện**. The district of **Phong Doanh** is home to the mountains of **Ngô Xá**, **Bảo Đài**, **An Hòa** and **Mai Độ**. All these are mountains of earth and rock rising suddenly from the plain, with the only exception of the mountain of **Hổ** which is craggy and densely forested. The **Cực Lạc** pagoda may be found on the mountain of **Bảo Đài** and the **Phi Lai** pagoda on the mountain of **Tử Mặc**. Both of these places are suitable for country walks.

The great river which crosses the southeastern part of the province from the district of **Thượng Nguyên** is a lower reach of the Red [**Nhị**] River, which flows southwards as far as the **Hoàng Giang** confluence. Its main branch passes to the east of the citadel of the prefecture of **Xuân Trường**, and then forks. On one side it flows eastward to the channels of **Lạt** and **Lân**, and on the other side westward as far as the channel of **Lác**. The left hand branch flows past the commune of **Thượng Hộ**, in the district of **Thư Trì**, and then onward down to the citadel of the prefecture of **Kiến Xương**, past the districts of **Vũ Tiên**, **Chân Định** and **Thanh Quan**. It empties into the sea at the **Trà Lý** estuary. The right hand branch, meanwhile, flows past the village of **Đệ Tứ**, district of **Mỹ Lộc**, where it meets the **Vị** river, before making a bend around the provincial citadel. It then flowing towards the southwest past the districts of **Vụ Bản**, **Thượng Nguyên**, **Nam Chân** and **Đại An**, forming the **Độc Bộ** confluence and emptying into the sea at the **Liêu** estuary.

The river which crosses the western part of the province is also a lower reach of the Red River. It enters the province at the commune of **Dũng Quyết**, district of **Ý Yên**, and passes through that district as well as those of **Phong Doanh** and **Đại An**. It too flows down to the **Độc Bộ** confluence and empties into the sea at the **Liêu** estuary. To the western side of this river lies the territory of the province of **Ninh Bình**.

Two rivers cross the eastern part of the province, flowing down from the **Luộc** river in the province of **Hung Yên**. One branch flows from the commune of **Tang Thác**, district of **Quỳnh Côi**, through the districts of **Đông Quan**, **Phụ Dực**, **Thanh Quan** and **Thụy Anh**, before emptying into the sea at the **Diêm Hộ** estuary. A second branch flows from the commune of **Nghi Phú**, district of **Quỳnh Côi**, through the districts of **Phụ Dực** and **Thụy Anh**, before emptying into the sea at the **Thái Bình** estuary. To the western side of this river lies the territory of the province of **Hải Dương**.

Finally, the Ba Sát river flows from the commune of Chân Ninh, district of Mỹ Lộc, past the districts of Ý Yên and Phong Doanh and meets the Vĩnh Trĩ river in the district of Đại An. One of its branches flows out at the confluences of Hoàng Đan and Thiên Phái. There exists a further branch as well as a number of other, recently dug rivers.

### **Estuaries and Channels**

The channel at the estuary of Liêu, situated in the district of Đại An, is the main route used by ships and boats travelling between the sea and the capital and other provinces of the north. The channels at the estuaries of Ba Lạt, Lân and Lạn, situated in the district of Giao Thủy have all been silted up and are nowadays so narrow that boats rarely travel this way. The Qing-dynasty Chinese arrive in great numbers through the channel at the estuary of Trà Lý, in the district of Tiền Hải. They settle in the markets and small towns along the river banks, and a temple to Huệ Phil may be visited there. The channel at the estuary of Diêm Hộ, in the district of Thụy Anh, is so narrow and shallow that only the smallest types of boats can pass through. It takes almost a day to travel upstream from the Liêu, Lác, Ba Lạt, Lân and Lạn breakwaters to the provincial citadel. From the breakwaters at the Trà Lý and Diêm Hộ estuaries, the same journey takes half a day.

### **Forts and Strongholds**

The rampart of Bình Hải is situated in the commune of Quân Liêu, district of Đại An. This fort faces to the south. Its inner fortification is forty-four rods long and forty-seven rods wide. It is protected on four sides by an earth embankment seven cubits high, one rod thick at the top and two rods thick at the base. This military post is under the command of an officer assisted by two sergeants in charge of detachments responsible for land defence and sea patrol, with a complement of one hundred soldiers. When stronger defensive actions are required, reinforcements are called in. Once the attack is repelled, the reinforcements immediately pull out. Each side of the rampart is armed with two great guns cast in bronze and eleven bronze falconets.

The rampart of Trà Lý, situated in the commune of Trụ Lý, district of Chân Định, faces to the east. Its inner fortification is twenty-eight rods long and ten rods wide. It is reinforced on all four sides by an earth embankment six cubits, five inches high, five cubits thick at the top and one rod, five cubits thick at the base. This military post is under the command of an officer assisted by five sergeants with 230 conscripts. The wall overlooking the river is armed with two great guns cast in bronze and an iron falconet.

The fort of Ba Lạt, situated in the commune of An Tứ, district of Giao Thủy, faces to the south. Its inner fortification is built of earth in the shape of a half moon. It is fourteen rods, four cubits long. It is protected by an earth embankment which stands six cubits, three inches high, five cubits thick at the top and one rod, four cubits thick at the base. Beyond this, to the rear, there is a further embankment 117 rods long, seven cubits high, six cubits thick at the top and six cubits, five inches thick below the parapet. This military post is commanded by an officer, seconded by a sergeant with fifty soldiers from the Định Hải detachment. The fort is armed with two iron cannons.

The channel at the estuary at Diêm Hộ is protected by a 'breakwater fort', situated in the commune of Diêm Hộ, district of Thụy Anh. This fort faces south. Its inner rampart is thirteen rods long and eleven rods wide. It is protected on four sides by an earth embankment seven cubits, five inches high, four cubits thick at the top and two rods, five inches thick at the base. A single officer commands this fort. The fort is armed with two iron cannons.

The breakwater forts of **Lân Hải** and **Hà Lạn** are situated in the communes of **Đông Hào** and **Hà Lạn** respectively, in the district of **Giao Thủy**. A single officer commands each of these military posts.

The fort of **Lộng Khê** is situated in the commune of **Lộng Khê**, district of **Phụ Dục**. The original fort on this site is now in ruins. The new fort is situated near a residential area, and a two-storey gate and gun slits have been added to the existing rampart and moat fortifications. This military post is under the authority of an officer commanding ten regular soldiers and fifty militiamen. It is armed with a single iron cannon.

The fort of **Ninh Mỹ** is situated in the commune of **Ninh Mỹ**, district of **Chân Ninh**.

The military camp of **Thiên Quan** is situated in the commune of **Thiên Quan**, district of **Thanh Quan**. An officer commands the two hundred soldiers here, assisted by four sergeants.

The forts of **Hà Cát**, and **Phương Viên** are situated in the commune of **Hà Cát**, district of **Giao Thủy**.

The forts of **Độc Bộ** and **Phù Sa** are situated in the communes of those names, in the district of **Đại An**. The forts of **Hữu Bị** and **Ngô Xá** may be found in the communes of those names, in the district of **Mỹ Lộc**. The fort of **Túc Tranh** and **An Tứ** are situated in the communes of those names, in the districts of **Tiền Hải** and **Giao Thủy** respectively.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The rostrum to the gods of agriculture may be found to the south of the provincial citadel. To the west, one may find the rostrum to the gods of the soil and harvests, the shrine of the literati and the shrine of the revelation of the spirits. The shrine to the gods of the walls and moats is also situated in this direction. To the north, outside the citadel, may be found the shrine of all the saints. The shrine of **Kỳ Phong** is beside the river in the commune of **Thụ Ích**, district of **Đại An**. The shrine of **Quan Đế** may be found to the southeast of the provincial citadel. The temples of **Thiên Hậu** and **Quan Thánh** are in the commune of **Minh Hương**. The field used for the annual ceremony of the first furrow lies to the south of the provincial citadel.

In the prefecture of **Kiến Xương** may be found shrines dedicated to **Cao Lang**, **Triệu Vũ Đế** and the **Lê** dynasty queen mother **Quang Thục Hoàng**, as well as temples venerating **Triệu Vũ Đế**, the minister **Đỗ**, the monk **Đạt Ma** and **Trần Minh Tông**. The prefecture of **Nghĩa Hưng** is home to shrines dedicated to **Kỳ Phong**, **Triệu Việt Vương**, **Đình Tiên Hoàng** and **Trần Thái**, temples venerating the deity **Thủy Tể**, doctor **Lương**, lady **Liễu Hạnh**, general **Phạm**. There are two pagodas in this prefecture: **Tiền Sơn** and **Nộn Sơn**. The prefecture of **Xuân Trường** is known for the shrine dedicated to the **Trần** emperors, the temples of general **Trần Hưng Đạo** and **Kiểu Tam Chế**, the stupa of **Phổ Minh**, the former residence of the **Trần** emperors, the mausoleum of **Trần Minh Tông** and the pagodas of **Thần Quang**, **Phổ Minh**, **Thùy Hồng** and **Đại Bi**. In the prefecture of **Thái Bình**, one may admire shrines dedicated to **Lý Nam Đế**, **Ngô Đông** and **Đế Thích**. A lady of the **Tống** dynasty is venerated at **Cần Hải**. One may also visit the temple of the minister **Quách** and the pagoda of **Trung Liệt**. Notable sites of the sub-prefecture of **Thái Bình** include the shrines of the spirit of the eastern sea and the monk **Không Lộ**.

In the sub-prefecture of **Nghĩa Hưng**, one may visit shrines to **Trần Anh Tông**, the monk **Minh Không**, **Lê Đại Hành** and **Đình Tiên Hoàng**, temples to the monk **Minh Không** and duke **Lương** and, finally, the pagoda of **Cực Lạc**.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs westwards from the stage post of Ninh Đa in the province of Ninh Bình to the stage post of Nam Đội. It then passes the provincial citadel, heads on to the stage post of Nam Hoàng, and crosses the boundary straight to the stage post of An Xá, in the province of Hải Dương.

- An old main road runs from the provincial citadel through the districts of Vụ Bản and Phong Doanh to the Dục Thúy ferry pier, in the province of Ninh Bình. The journey normally takes about four watches, and is shorter in distance than the new main road. This is why it is often frequented by traders.

- A minor road runs from the provincial citadel to the prefecture of Xuân Trường. A traveller on foot will arrive after a journey of about two watches, while boats take more than half a day.

- A minor road leads from the provincial citadel to the prefecture of Nghĩa Hưng, and the traveller on foot will arrive after a journey of half a day. Boats travelling from the provincial citadel downstream arrive after about a watch and a half, and in the opposite direction the journey takes a day and a night.

- A minor road leads from the provincial citadel to the prefecture of Kiến Xương, along which the traveller on foot will spend about half a day to reach the destination. By boat, this journey takes about half a day downstream and three times as long in the opposite direction.

- A minor road leads from the provincial citadel to the prefecture of Thái Bình, involving a journey of about one day on foot. By boat, it takes twice as long.

**For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.**

**We, the mandarins of the province of **Quảng Yên**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of**

## **The Province of **Quảng Yên****

Including the following maps:

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| The Province of <b>Quảng Yên</b>  | 廣安省      |
| The Prefecture of <b>Sơn Định</b> and the District of <b>Hoành Bồ</b>       | 山定府兼理橫蒲縣 |
| The District of <b>Yên Hưng</b>   | 安興縣      |
| The District of <b>Nghiêu Phong</b>   | 堯封縣      |
| The Prefecture of <b>Hải Ninh</b> and the Outer District of <b>Vạn Ninh</b> | 海寧府兼理萬寧州 |
| The District of <b>Tiên Yên</b>   | 先安縣      |

## The Description of the Province of **Quảng Yên**

**[Note on the Administrative History of the Province:**

Under the Han, the territory of the province of **Quảng Yên** was part of the Chinese dominion of **Giao Chỉ** 交趾. Under the **Liang** 梁, it was called **Hải Ninh** 海寧郡 and belonged to the outer district of **Hoàng** 黃州. It was renamed **Ninh Việt** 寧越 under the **Sui** 隋, and became **Ngọc Sơn** 玉山郡 under the **Tang** 唐, when it was part of the outer district of **Lục** 陸州. According to the historian **Lê Quý Đôn**, “the original outer district of **Ngọc** took the name of **Lục** because of its multitude of roads [lục]; it corresponds to what we know as the government of **Yên Quảng** 安廣. We also know that ‘a day’s march to the south of the outer district of **Khâm**, there was a land called **Ngọc Sơn**, south of the outer district of **Tĩnh Yên**. So this **Ngọc Sơn** must be situated in **Tiên Yên**.” Up to the **Đinh** 丁 and **Lê** 黎 dynasties, this was known as the government of **Triều Dương** 潮陽鎮. In 1023, the emperor **Lý Thái Tổ** 李太祖 renamed it the outer district of **Vĩnh An** 永安州. During the reign of the emperor **Lý Anh Tông** 李英宗, in 1149, the port of **Vân Đồn** 雲屯庄 was established as the place of residence for traders from around the world, and they would stop there before proceeding with their wares to the markets of **Hải Đông**. During the reign of the emperor **Trần Thái Tông**, the country was divided into twelve territories and the **Vân Đồn** region became part of the territory of **Hải Đông** 海東路. The territory’s name changed to **An Bang** 安邦路 at the end of the **Trần** 陳 dynasty or under the **Hồ** 胡, and then at the beginning of the **Ming** 明 period, in 1407, it changed again, becoming the outer district of **Tĩnh An** 靖安州. At that time, it was made up of the following eight districts: **Đông An**, **Chi Phong**, **An Lập**, **An Hoà**, **Tân Yên**, **Đại Độc**, **Vạn Ninh** and **Vân Đồn**. At the beginning of the **Lê** period, its former name was restored, and it was known as the outer district of **An Bang**, being a part of the regional inspectorate of the East. In 1469, it was renamed the regional inspectorate of **An Bang** 安邦道, consisting of the prefecture of **Hải Đông**, with its districts of **Hoành Bồ** 橫蒲, **Yên Hưng** 安興 and **Hoa Phong** 華豐, and four outer districts: **Tân An** 新安, **Vạn Ninh** 萬寧, **Vĩnh An** 永安 and **Vân Đồn** 雲屯. Under the **Mạc** 莫, it became the government of **An Bang** 安邦鎮. After the **Lê** Restoration, out of respect for the taboo placed on the name of the emperor **Anh Tông** (**Lê Duy Bang** 黎維邦), it was renamed **An Quảng** 安廣. Under the **Tây Sơn**, the prefecture of **Kinh Môn** 荆門 was transferred from the government of **Hải Dương** to the government of **An Quảng**. In the first year of the **Nguyễn** 阮 dynasty, the emperor **Gia Long** 嘉隆 returned the prefecture of **Kinh Môn** to **Hải Dương**, and restored the prefecture of **Hải Đông** to its original status as the government of **An Quảng**. In the third year of the reign of the emperor **Minh Mệnh** 明命 (1822), the name of this government was changed to **Quảng Yên** 廣安. In the twelfth year of the same reign (1831), the realm was divided into provinces and the province of **Quảng Yên** came into being.

In later years, the two districts of **Tiên Yên** and **Vạn Ninh** were to merge, forming the province of **Hải Ninh** (1906). The district of **Đông Triều** was subsequently transferred from the province of **Hải Dương** to the province of **Hải Ninh**. Then the two provinces of **Quảng Yên** and **Hải Ninh** merged to form the province of **Quảng Ninh**. That is how the province of **Quảng Yên** as it was during the reign of the emperor **Đông Khánh** was to become the province of **Quảng Ninh** as it existed at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The only

*difference was that Quảng Ninh included the district of Đông Triều, but not the two maritime districts of Cát Hải and Bạch Long Vĩ, which came under the control of the city of Hải Phòng.]*

The provincial citadel is situated on a hill, known as the mountain of Tiên, in the commune of Quỳnh Lâu, district of Yên Hưng. In 1826, the emperor Minh Mệnh ordered the construction of a reinforcing rampart built of earth, and chose the hill for the citadel. The land is rocky there, which is why there is no moat. In 1859, the emperor Tự Đức ordered the rampart to be built in brick, and it is now 295 rods in circumference. Its facade is nine cubits high, while at the left, right and rear the walls rise eight cubits above the ground. The rampart opens at three entrances, at the front, right and left. [The citadel is divided into four sections.] The front section is thirty-eight rods, two cubits wide, the middle section thirty-six rods, four cubits, eight inches wide, the next section two rods, nine cubits wide and the back section six rods, five cubits, two inches wide. The distance from the front gate to the rear of the hill is eighty-two rods and eight cubits.

Each gate is protected by an outer embankment shaped in a point, of the following dimensions. At the front gate, the protective embankment is fifteen rods, five cubits long, five cubits high and seven inches thick at the top. At the left gate, it is fifteen rods, seven cubits long, four cubits high and seven inches thick at the top. At the right gate, it is seven rods, five cubits long, four cubits, five inches high and seven inches thick at the top.

To the east, the province is bounded by the outer district of Khâm Châu in the country of the Qing [China]. To the west, the middle of the Uông and Bạch Đằng rivers forms the provincial boundary with the districts of Đông Triều and Thủy Đường, in the prefecture of Kinh Môn, province of Hải Dương. In the coastal region to the south, the province is bounded by the districts of An Dương and Nghi Dương, in the province of Hải Dương. In the forested region to the north, the provincial boundary is formed with the district of Yên Bái, in the province of Lạng Sơn.

### **Administrative Evolution**

The province used to be known as the government of An Quảng, and its seat was situated in what we know now as the commune of Cổ Dũng, in the district of Kim Thành, prefecture of Kiến Thụy, province of Hải Dương. In 1804, it was transferred to its current position on the hill in the commune of Quỳnh Lâu in the district of Yên Hưng. This hill used to be called the fort of An Bang, and was the stronghold of the prefecture of Hải Đông, which consisted of the districts of Yên Hưng and Hoàn Bồ and the outer districts of Tiên Yên, Vạn Ninh and Vân Đồn. In 1823, the emperor Minh Mệnh renamed this region the government of Quảng Yên. In 1832, the government became a province and the prefecture of Hải Đông was divided in two, forming the prefectures of Hải Ninh and Sơn Định. The principal district of Hải Ninh was that of Nghiêu Phong, but the mandarin of this district worked from the offices of the prefecture. The secondary district in this prefecture was the outer district of Tiên Yên. In 1850, the emperor Tự Đức ordered that the seat of the prefecture of Hải Ninh be transferred from Nghiêu Phong to the outer district of Vạn Ninh. The prefecture's secondary district remained that of Tiên Yên. The principal district in the prefecture of Sơn Định was that of Hoàn Bồ, but the mandarin of this district worked from the offices of the prefecture. The secondary districts of this prefecture were those of Yên Hưng and Nghiêu Phong.

The province is divided into two prefectures, comprising a total of five districts and outer districts.

- 1- The prefecture of Sơn Định: principal district of Hoàn Bồ, secondary districts of Yên Hưng and Nghiêu Phong.

- a- The district of *Hoành Bồ*: four cantons, twenty-six communes and villages (*thôn, phường, động*).  
Soldiers recruited by the court: thirteen.  
People of the principal category of taxpayers registered for tax payment: 127.  
Head tax paid in cash: 163 ligatures, one string and thirty sapeques.  
Mán people of the separate category of taxpayers tax registered for tax payment: six.  
Head tax paid in silver: six taels.  
Privately owned paddy fields paying tax: 484 acres, eight square poles and eight square perches.  
Land for housing, gardens and ponds paying tax: one acre and seven square poles.  
Land tax receipts:  
Paid in cash: thirty-nine ligatures and twenty-six strings of sapeques.  
Paid in paddy: 128 bushels and twenty-nine pints.  
Annual tax receipts:  
Paid in cash: 202 ligatures, one string and sixteen sapeques.  
Paid in silver: six taels.  
Paid in paddy: 128 bushels and twenty-nine pints.
- b- The district of *Yên Hưng*: two cantons with seventeen communes and villages (*thôn*).  
Soldiers recruited by the court: thirty-six.  
People of the principal category of taxpayers registered for tax payment: 552.  
Head tax paid in cash: 705 ligatures and nine strings of sapeques.  
Privately owned paddy fields paying tax: 3,675 acres, three square poles, one square yard and two square feet.  
Privately owned land for housing, gardens and ponds paying tax: 146 acres, two square poles, four square perches and six square yards.  
Annual tax receipts:  
Paid in cash: 305 ligatures, nine strings and thirty-five sapeques.  
Paid in paddy: 945 bushels, twenty pints, six double handfuls and eight handfuls.
- c- The district of *Nghiêu Phong*: three cantons with seventeen communes and villages (*thôn, lý*).  
People of the principal category of taxpayers registered for tax payment: 205.  
Head tax paid in cash: 264 ligatures, five strings and thirty sapeques.  
Qing-dynasty Chinese of the separate category of taxpayers registered for tax payment: twenty two.  
Head tax paid in silver: twenty-two taels.  
Communally owned paddy fields paying tax: one acre, two square poles and nine square yards.  
Privately owned paddy fields paying tax: 14 acres, two square poles, five square perches and five square yards.  
Privately owned salt fields paying tax: one square pole, fourteen square perches and one square yard.  
Communally owned salt fields paying tax: 156 acres, eight square poles, four square perches and eight square yards.  
Privately owned land for housing, gardens and ponds paying tax: 23 acres, six square poles and four square perches.  
Land tax receipts:  
Paid in cash: thirty-six ligatures, two strings and fifty-five sapeques  
Paid in paddy: four bushels, sixteen pints and five double handfuls.  
Annual tax receipts:

Paid in cash: 300 ligatures, eight strings and twenty-five sapeques.

Paid in paddy: four bushels, sixteen pints and five double handfuls.

Paid in silver: twenty-two taels.

2- The prefecture of Hải Ninh: principal district of Vạn Ninh, secondary district of Tiên Yên.

a- The district of Vạn Ninh: four cantons with thirty-six communes and villages (*thôn, phố*).

Soldiers recruited by the court: thirty-six.

People of the principal category of taxpayers registered for tax payment: 381.

Head tax paid in cash: 492 ligatures and thirty sapeques.

[Qing-dynasty Chinese of] the separate category of taxpayers registered for tax payment: sixty-eight.

Head tax paid in silver: 135 taels.

Privately owned paddy fields paying tax: 609 acres, seven square poles, seven square perches, two square yards and one square foot.

Privately owned land for housing, gardens and ponds paying tax: sixty-eight acres, two square poles, five square perches and seven square feet.

Land tax receipts:

Paid in cash: slightly over fifty-nine ligatures.

Paid in paddy: 158 bushels and sixteen pints.

Annual tax receipts:

Paid in cash: 551 ligatures and thirty-nine sapeques.

Paid in paddy: 158 bushels and sixteen pints.

Paid in silver: 135 taels.

b- The district of Tiên Yên: five cantons with forty-two communes and villages (*thôn, động*).

Soldiers recruited by the court: seven.

People of the principal category of taxpayers registered for tax payment: eighty-nine.

Head tax paid in cash: 115 ligatures and thirty sapeques.

Qing-dynasty Chinese of the separate category of taxpayers registered for tax payment: five.

Head tax paid in silver: ten taels.

Mán people of the separate category of taxpayers registered for tax payment: six.

Head tax paid in silver: sixteen taels.

Communally owned paddy fields paying tax: eight square poles.

Communally owned land paying tax: three square poles.

Privately owned paddy fields paying tax: 266 acres and four square poles.

Privately owned land for housing, gardens and ponds paying tax: nine square poles.

Land tax receipts:

Paid in cash: twenty-one ligatures, seven strings and fourteen sapeques.

Paid in paddy: sixty-nine bushels, seventeen pints, four double handfuls and three handfuls.

Annual tax receipts:

Paid in cash: 136 ligatures, seven strings and forty-four sapeques.

Paid in paddy: sixty-nine bushels, seventeen pints, four double handfuls and three handfuls.

Paid in silver: twenty-six taels.

### **Customs and Manners**

The province is situated in a remote and sparsely populated region of sea and forests, where paddy fields are few and far between and the inhabitants live in varying degrees of comfort. More than half the population makes a living from trading, fishing and the manufacture of salt and fish sauce. Farming is a secondary activity here. Each district has its own customs. The districts of Yên Hưng and Nghiêu Phong are reputed for their successful scholars. The inhabitants of the canton of Hà Bắc, district of Yên Hưng, are known for their down-to-earth and hardworking lifestyle, while those of the canton of Hà Nam are traders for the most part, many of whom are quite profligate. The people of the district of Nghiêu Phong are vicious, often getting into fights and difficult to keep in order. It is rare to find a corner of the districts of Hoàn Bồ, Tiên Yên and Hải Ninh where people take any interest in studying, and most of the population are stingy and rough. In this province, the Qing-dynasty Chinese live alongside the Hán [Kinh], Mán and Nùng people. The customs of daily life, such as clothes and behaviour, present many differences with those of the inhabitants of the delta, but for the most part, the Hán [Kinh] people living here celebrate their important family festivals – weddings, funerals and death anniversaries – in much the same way as in the province of Hải Dương. Catholics may be found in the commune of Yên Trì, district of Yên Hưng, as well as in the communes of Lương Tri, Trà Cổ and Xuân Ninh, district of Hải Ninh. A proportion of the population of the commune of Đôn Lương, district of Nghiêu Phong, also follows this doctrine.

### **Local Produce**

The rice crop is more abundant in autumn than in summer. After the harvest, farmers sow sweet potatoes, manioc, shallots, garlic, and green and black beans. The forest is also a great source of all types of produce used for daily living or trade. The timber available includes varieties like teak, ironwood (*lim*), a hard red wood called peltophore, and other types of precious coloured wood. Different types of bamboo and rattan are also common. Peacocks and red jungle fowl abound, as do tigers, roe deer, mountain goats, wild boar and forest cattle. From the sea, people harvest prawns, sea turtles, crabs, sea cucumbers, sea eels, clams, snails, cockles and oysters. Nature also offers a whole variety of other goods such as satin, beeswax, honey, castor sugar, brown sugar, loaf sugar, funghi and incense resin. There are fruits such as longan, jackfruit, pineapple, guava and Buddha's hand. Tortoiseshell is used by the artisans of the district of Nghiêu Phong, but it is by no means as fine as the tortoiseshell of the south. The forests of the districts of Tiên Yên and Hoàn Bồ are known for their numerous ironwood trees, but also for their fierce tigers which is why few people dare to go in and cut down the timber. The longans of the commune of Lương Tri, district of Hải Ninh, are so delicious that when they ripen most of the local population can find work peeling the fruit and drying it for sale. These longans, along with animals harvested from the ocean such as sea cucumbers and cockles, are the most sought-after produce of the province.

### **Climate**

The four seasons of the year experience a similar climate to the coastal districts of the province of Hải Dương. But the different stages in the agricultural cycle take place at different times, according to where the fields are situated. In general, the seeds are planted out in the fifth and sixth months throughout the province, and the grain is harvested in the ninth and tenth months. But in the canton of Hậu Cơ, in the outer district of Tiên Yên, the seeds are sown in the second and third months and the harvest is reaped in the seventh and eighth months. The land around the provincial seat enjoys a particularly favourable climate. By contrast, in the mountainous districts of Tiên Yên and Hoàn Bồ and the communes and villages of Khoái Lạc, Trạp Khê, Động Linh, Yên Lập and Yên Cư, in the

district of Yên Hưng, as well as the maritime cantons of Vân Hải and Hà Liên in the district of Nghiêu Phong, the abundance of mountains and rocky outcrops makes the ground vapours chill. In the eleventh and twelfth months of every year, many people go down with malaria. The mountain winds and sea rains come and go according to no discernible pattern.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

The famous mountain of the province is the mountain of Lôi Âm, while the largest river is the Bạch Đằng. Apart from these, there are numerous smaller hills, river branches and islands.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The pagoda of Lôi Âm may be visited on the mountain of Lôi Âm in the village of Yên Cư, district of Yên Hưng. The pagoda was built during the reign of emperor Lê Thánh Tông, and has been regarded as a site of great beauty since ancient times.

### **Confucian Temples**

The temple of the literati is situated in the commune of Quỳnh Lâu.

### **Shrines**

The shrine of Suất Hải is situated in the commune of Cẩm Phả, the shrine of Tiên Yên is in the commune of Tiên Yên, and the shrine of Tam Trĩ may be found in the commune of Tam Trĩ.

### **Forts and Strongholds**

The fort of Nhất Tụ is situated in the commune of Yên Hưng, the fort of Độ La in the commune of Quỳnh Lâu, and the fort of Cốc in the commune of Hưng Học. There is an embankment in the shape of a moon by the jetty at the provincial seat, in front of the provincial citadel.

### **Routes and Itineraries – By Water**

- One may travel by boat from the provincial citadel along the Tranh river in the district of Yên Hưng, through the commune of Lựu Khê in the canton of Hà Nam. A turn to the east takes one through the waters of the communes of Hoàng Lỗ and Tuần Châu and on as far as the channel of Lục, in the district of Hoàn Bồ. The journey takes a whole day. Travelling north through the waters of the commune of Trí Xuyên, one reaches the district seat of Hoàn Bồ after a journey taking three watches. From this district seat, one may continue out along the Trí Xuyên river, back past the channel of Lục, then after a turn to the east as far as the peak of Truyền Đăng. From this point one follows the mountains to the inlet of Suất before turning to the east again. One finally reaches the Ba Chẽ river, then the Hà Trường river, before stopping at the seat of the outer district of Tiên Yên. This journey takes about two and a half days in all.

- A route extends eastwards along the Hà Trường river from the district seat of Tiên Yên. One travels through the waterways of the communes of Đàm Hà and Hà Cối, following the river out past Mỹ Sơn and Mạo Sơn, through a number of channels and then inland to Ngọc Sơn, before reaching the seat of the prefecture of Hải Ninh. The journey takes around two days.

- From the provincial citadel one may travel eastwards along the Tranh river as far as the waters of the commune of Lựu Khê. After a turn to the south, one passes through the channel of Nghiêu Phong before reaching the district seat of the same name. This journey takes about half a day.

- A further route extends westwards from the Tranh river along the Bạch Đằng river. After a turn to the south, one reaches the district seat of Nghiêu Phong. This journey takes about half a day.

- One may travel on from this district seat out into the channel of Nghiêu Phong. After a turn east one reaches the channel of Vân Đồn in two days. One then passes through a succession of other sea passages, reaching the channel of Đồi in three watches, Nội in three watches, Mô in three and a half watches, Hứa in three watches, Hiệp in one watch, Vạn Mộc in two watches, Tiểu in two watches, Đại in three watches and Tấn in a day, before arriving at the seat of the prefecture of Hải Ninh. The entire journey takes six days and four watches.

- A further route also starts at the district seat of Nghiêu Phong. One travels out to the channel of Nghiêu Phong and then to the south, through the maritime canton of Vân Hải to the island of Chàng Sơn. This journey takes three days.

- If one encounters rain or wind during these voyages, it is impossible to predict their exact itinerary in advance.

### **Routes and Itineraries – By Road**

- A road runs from the provincial citadel through the commune of Quỳnh Lâu, district of Yên Hưng, to the communes of Động Linh and Yên Lập, before reaching the district seat of Hoàn Bồ. The journey takes one day.

- Two roads link the district seat of Hoàn Bồ with the outer district of Tiên Yên. An upper road passes through the communes of Sơn Dương, Quảng La, Kênh Trạo, Vị Lại, Dương Hưu, Lương Mông, Đạp Thanh and Minh Cẩm. It then goes through the communes of Phát Mê, Đồn Độ and Sơn Lập in the outer district of Tiên Yên before arriving at the district seat, where the fort of Hà Trường is situated. This journey takes seven days. A lower road passes through the communes of Yên Mỹ, Xích Thổ, Yên Thổ, Vũ Uy and Dương Huy. It then crosses the forest and the communes of Hà Gián and Tam Trĩ, before reaching the district seat. The journey takes six days.

- An upper road leads on from the district seat of Tiên Yên. It first passes through the communes of Phong Dụ and Vô Ngại. After a turn to the east, it crosses the communes of Bình Liêu, Lục Hồn, Đồng Tâm and Kiến Diên, and then the communes of Mông Sơn, Thượng Lại, Tiêu Sơn, Tuy Lai, Hoàng Mông and Bắc Nham, in the prefecture of Hải Ninh. It then comes down to the commune of Phục Thiện before arriving at the seat of the prefecture of Hải Ninh. The journey takes seven days.

- The traveller may alternatively take the lower road from the district seat of Tiên Yên. This road first passes through the commune of Đại Dực, in the district of Tiên Yên. It then crosses the communes of Đàm Hà, Đại Lai, Lập Mã, Mã Tê, Quất Đoài and Quất Đông, in the prefecture of Hải Ninh, before reaching the seat of the prefecture of Hải Ninh. The journey takes about four days.

- The roads listed above pass through remote and perilous regions of mountains and ravines, and if the traveller encounters rain and floods, and the water rises in the ravines, it is impossible to proceed.

- A road heads eastwards from the provincial citadel past the commune of Quỳnh Lâu and through the communes of Khoái Lạc and Trạp Khê. The traveller will then arrive at the Uông river in the district of Đông Triều, in the province of Hải Dương. The journey takes about half a day.

- A road runs westwards from the provincial citadel past the commune of Yên Hưng to the ferry pier. The traveller may then cross the Bạch Đằng river directly. The journey takes about a third of a day.

- A further road runs from the provincial citadel down to the Tranh river ferry pier. After crossing the river, the traveller may carry on to the commune of Lựu Khê in the canton of Hà Nam, and from there down to the district seat of Nghiêu Phong. The journey takes about half a day.

For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.

We, the mandarins of the province of **Bắc Ninh**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of

## The Province of **Bắc Ninh**

Including the following maps:

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| The Province of Bắc Ninh                 | 北寧省     |
| The Prefecture of Từ Sơn                 | 慈山府     |
| The District of Đông Ngàn                | 東岸縣     |
| The District of Tiên Du                  | 仙遊縣     |
| The District of Yên Phong                | 安豐縣     |
| The Districts of Quế Dương and Võ Giàng  | 桂陽縣，武江縣 |
| The Prefecture of Thuận Thành            | 順成府     |
| The District of Siêu Loại                | 超類縣     |
| The District of Gia Bình                 | 嘉平縣     |
| The District of Lang Tài                 | 良才縣     |
| The Sub-Prefecture of Thuận Thành        | 順成分府    |
| The District of Gia Lâm                  | 嘉林縣     |
| The District of Văn Giang                | 文江縣     |
| The Prefecture of Đa Phúc                | 多福府     |
| The Districts of Đa Phúc and Hiệp Hòa    | 多福縣，洽和縣 |
| The District of Kim Anh                  | 金英縣     |
| The Prefecture of Lạng Giang             | 諒江府     |
| The Districts of Phượng Nhãn and Bảo Lộc | 鳳眼保祿二縣  |
| The Districts of Yên Dũng and Việt Yên   | 安勇縣，越安縣 |
| The District of Lục Ngạn                 | 陸岸縣     |
| The Sub-Prefecture of Lạng Giang         | 諒江分府    |

## **The Description of the Province of Bắc Ninh**

**[Note on the Administrative History of the Province:**

*According to the annals, the territory of the province of Bắc Ninh was called the region of Vũ Ninh 武寧部 at the time of the Hùng kings. Under the Han, it was part of the Chinese dominion of Giao Chỉ 交趾, which was later renamed Giao Châu with its capital at Luy Lâu 羸樓, in today's district of Thuận Thành 順成. At the end of the Tang 唐 period, it became part of the prefecture of Bắc Giang 北江. Under each of the dynasties from the Ngô 吳 to the reign of the emperor Lê Thái Tổ 黎太祖, it continued to bear the name Bắc Giang. It was a regional inspectorate under the Đinh 丁 dynasty and a territory under the early Lê 黎 and the Lý 李. Under the Trần 陳, it was divided into two territories, Bắc Giang Thượng 北江上 and Bắc Giang Hạ 北江下. The annals record this region as 'the territory of Kinh Bắc' but it is more than likely that this was a name in common usage rather than its official appellation. Under the Ming 明, the names were changed and the two territories became the prefectures of Bắc Giang and Lạng Giang 諒江. They returned to their former names and status under the Lê, becoming part of the regional inspectorate of the North. In 1466, the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 divided the country into thirteen divisions, and merged these two territories into the single division of Bắc Giang. Three years later, the division was renamed Kinh Bắc, comprising four prefectures – Thuận An 順安, Từ Sơn 慈山, Bắc Hà 北河 and Lạng Giang 諒江 – with nineteen districts. It was later recategorised as a domain 處, and then a government 鎮. The Mạc 莫 dynasty transferred the prefecture of Thuận An over to Hải Dương, and this reform was reversed after the Lê Restoration. Under the Tây Sơn, the capital was relocated, but there is no evidence to suggest that any changes were made to the government of Kinh Bắc 京北. However, a stele which may date from the turn of the eighteenth century records the appearance of the name Bắc Ninh 北寧. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Gia Long 嘉隆, it remained the government of Kinh Bắc, and comprised four prefectures with twenty districts. In the third year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1822), it was renamed the government of Bắc Ninh. In 1831, the realm was divided into provinces and the province of Bắc Ninh came into being.*

*There were no further changes up to the time of the emperor Đồng Khánh. But over the subsequent years, the province was to be split and merged many times, as in 1890 when it became the two provinces of Bắc Ninh and Lục Nam, in 1895 when Lục Nam was renamed Bắc Giang, in 1903 when the districts of Kim Anh, Đông Anh and Đa Phúc were transferred to the newly formed province of Phúc Yên, and in 1960 when the district of Văn Giang was transferred to the province of Hưng Yên, and the district of Hữu Lũng to the province of Lạng Sơn.*

*The province of Bắc Ninh at the time of Đồng Khánh thus corresponded to the territory of the provinces of Bắc Ninh, Bắc Giang and Phúc Yên, as they existed at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It also covered the district of Hữu Lũng (Lạng Sơn), and parts of the districts of Sóc Sơn, Đông Anh and Gia Lâm (Hà Nội), Chí Linh (Hải Dương) and Văn Lâm, Văn Giang and Khoái Châu (Hưng Yên).]*

The provincial citadel straddles the three communes of **Đỗ Xá**, district of **Võ Giàng**, **Hoà Đình**, district of **Tiên Du**, and **Yên Xá**, district of **Yên Phong**. The rampart measures 532 rods, three cubits and two inches in circumference and stands nine cubits high. Its facade is one cubit, eight inches thick at the top and three cubits thick at the base. The moat is nine rods across and one cubit deep. There are four citadel gates, each of them one rod, four cubits, five inches high. The middle part of the rampart is nine cubits, seven inches high and seven cubits, two inches thick. A watchtower stands over each gate and each of the six corners of the citadel has several gun platforms, amounting to a total of fifty-four emplacements.

To the east, the province is bounded by the districts of **Chí Linh** and **Thanh Lâm** in the province of **Hải Dương**. To the west the provincial boundary is formed with the districts of **Yên Lãng**, in the province of **Sơn Tây**, and the district of **Bình Xuyên**, in the province of **Thái Nguyên**. To the south lie the districts of **Thọ Xương** and **Thanh Trì** in the province of **Hà Nội**. To the north the province meets the outer district of **Ôn Châu** and the district of **Yên Bái**, in the prefecture of **Trường Khánh**, province of **Lạng Sơn**. To the northeast lies the province of **Lạng Sơn**, and to the northwest the provinces of **Lạng Sơn** and **Thái Nguyên**. To the southwest lie the provinces of **Hà Nội** and **Sơn Tây**, and to the southeast the provinces of **Hải Dương** and **Hưng Yên**.

From east to west, the province is 216 leagues across. From north to south, it is 187 leagues across.

The rostrum to the gods of the soil and harvests is situated in the commune of **Hoà Đình**, in the district of **Tiên Du**, while the rostrum to the gods of the mountains and rivers may be found in the mountainous part of the same commune. The temple of Confucian literature and the temple of the revelation of the spirits may be visited in the mountainous part of the commune of **Thị Cầu**, in the district of **Võ Giàng**. The shrine of all the saints and the shrine of the tutelary deities are both situated in the commune of **Hoà Đình**, district of **Tiên Du**. The rostrum to the gods of agriculture may be admired in the commune of **Ỗ Na**, in the district of **Võ Giàng**.

The province is divided into four principal prefectures and two secondary prefectures, with a total of twenty districts.

Soldiers recruited by the court: 6,992 people, including the following:

Soldiers recruited within the province: 5,967 people.

Soldiers recruited from the province of **Hải Dương**: 1,025 people.

Militia recruited by the mandarins: 110 people.

Population registered for tax payment: 48,980 people.

Agricultural land: 451,590 acres.

Annual tax receipts of all categories:

Paid in cash: 175,550 ligatures.

Paid in paddy: 265,660 square bushels.

These sums included the following:

Sums currently collected by the province:

Paid in cash: 162,835 ligatures.

Paid in paddy: 246,116 square bushels.

Sums collected in the province of **Thái Nguyên**:

Paid in cash: 12,715 ligatures.

Paid in paddy: 19,544 square bushels.

- 1- The prefecture of *Từ Sơn*: principal district of *Đông Ngạn*, secondary districts of *Yên Phong*, *Tiên Du* and *Quế Dương* (also responsible for the administration of the district of *Võ Giàng*).
- 2- The prefecture of *Đa Phúc*: principal districts of *Đa Phúc* and *Hiệp Hoà*, secondary district of *Kim Anh*.
- 3- The prefecture of *Thuận Thành*: principal district of *Siêu Loại*, secondary districts of *Gia Bình* and *Lương Tài*.
- 4- The sub-prefecture of *Thuận Thành*: principal district of *Gia Lâm*, secondary district of *Văn Giang*.
- 5- The prefecture of *Lạng Giang*: principal districts of *Phượng Nhân* and *Bảo Lộc*, secondary districts of *Yên Dũng* (also responsible for the administration of the district of *Việt Yên*) and *Lục Ngạn*.
- 6- The sub-prefecture of *Lạng Giang*: principal district of *Yên Thế*, secondary district of *Hữu Lũng*.

### **Customs and Manners**

Of the four orders of society, there are many scholars and farmers in the province but few artisans and traders. Weddings, funerals and other family ceremonies are celebrated in a similar manner throughout the province. The inhabitants of the upper prefectures such as *Đa Phúc* and *Lạng Giang* are mostly brutal and care little for style, while those of the lower prefectures such as *Từ Sơn* and *Thuận Thành* show greater interest in cultivated manners, although there are a number of cantons where the people remain brutal in their behaviour. *Mán* people may be found in various parts of the mountainous districts of *Lục Ngạn* and *Hữu Lũng*, where they live in houses raised on stilts and practise customs which may be described as rather backward. Substantial numbers of Catholics may be found in the districts of *Siêu Loại*, *Gia Bình*, *Văn Giang*, *Hữu Lũng*, *Lục Ngạn* and *Tiên Du*. There are also Catholics living in different parts of the remaining fourteen districts, but their numbers only amount to about one or two people in every hundred, each district being home to only three or four communes wholly or partly inhabited of Catholics.

In those villages and communes where the population does not follow the Catholic doctrine, the people take the worship of the ancestors and saints very seriously and all the more so among those that venerate the Buddha. There are in fact some truly sumptuous and magnificent Buddhist pagodas, and this may be because people have maintained the Buddhist tradition here since the time of the *Lý* dynasty.

The villages and communes throughout the provinces are surrounded by a hedge planted of bamboo, with a village gate built of brick as solid as a fortress. This may be a result of the establishment, since the time of the *Lý* and *Lê* dynasties, of the capital at *Thăng Long*, not far from the country of the *Sung*, *Yuan* and *Ming* dynasties [China]. In those days enemy armies were at the frontier and the province was a gateway to the capital. At that time, the people were ordered to fill in the *Thiên Đức* river [known today as the *Chiêm Đức* river], and to dig ditches and raise ramparts to improve the defences of the capital. Once these constructions were raised, they might be used for defence against bandits. On the other hand, as the ancient tale reminds us, whenever there emerged a rebel who stole weapons from the people and ‘ran off to the marshes’, the mandarin and his soldiers found it difficult to restore order and root out the menace. These ditches and hedges should not then be regarded as entirely useful constructions, but that is how things are.

Those families who specialise in the manufacture of handicrafts tend to be concentrated in villages by profession, like the communes of Việt Vân and Phúc Thắng, where the entire population is engaged in the manufacture of brass, and Phú Mộng, where they cast iron. Others include the commune of Trang Liệt, where the people make copper leaf, the commune of Kiều Kỳ, where they work gold and silver, the commune of Đại Bái, where they make brass goods, the commune of Đề Cầu, also known for its artisans in brass, and the communes of Bát Tràng, Thổ Hà and Phù Lãng, which specialise in ceramics. In general these professions are all highly specialised and their work presents many originalities compared with that of other provinces.

Items of military necessity such as cast-iron, iron and saltpetre may be found in communes and villages throughout the province and there are people who manufacture them secretly or steal them. It should be added that while endless plains of paddy cover the low-lying districts, the upper districts are remote areas of mountains and ravines where gangs can come and go without fear of detection. The inhabitants of these regions did not acquire their reputation for brutality in a day. It may be a result of the fact that as long ago as the Lý and Trần dynasties, our country had to confront the Sung and Yuan armies from the north. Lý Thường Kiệt defeated the Sung army while Trần Quốc Tuấn destroyed the Yuan, and they mostly relied on the courage of the people of Bắc Ninh to do so. When [Trần Hưng Đạo's] palace was established at Vạn Kiếp, in the prefecture of Lạng Giang, the entire population of the province became soldiers. Because of their participation in the wars against the enemies from the north, they learnt the values of military courage, bellicosity and belligerence. That is why it is far from easy to turn them into folk of mild manners, or to instil values of elegance and cultivation into their behaviour.

### **Local Produce**

The rice crop is more abundant in autumn than in summer. Fragrant rice is grown in the communes of Phù Đổng and Dưỡng Mông, district of Tiên Du, and the communes of Thanh Tước and Đông Đô, district of Kim Anh. The inhabitants of the communes of Nghĩa Phương, district of Lục Ngạn, and Kim Tiên, district of Kim Anh, cultivate green tea. Yams are produced by the inhabitants of the commune of Đình Bảng, district of Đông Ngạn. The hardy variety of southern ginseng grows on the mountain of Chung Sơn, district of Yên Thế, and angelica grows on the mountain of Tiêu Sơn, district of Yên Phong, although both of these are becoming quite rare. Oil of canarium is produced in the districts of Yên Thế and Hữu Lũng. Ironwood forests may be found in the districts of Lục Ngạn and Hữu Lũng. Iron and saltpetre are produced in the following communes: Phúc Thắng, Danh Thắng, Thường Thắng, Vạn Thạch, Vân Chuỳ and Quế Trạo, district of Hiệp Hoà; Hữu Lân, Chiêu Tuấn, Vô Mộng, Ý Tịch, Vạn Linh, Bả Lộng, Đàng Yên, Hương Vĩ, Ngao Thượng, Khôn Lũ, Thiện Ý, Đông Hoà, Yên Định and Bồ Sơn, district of Hữu Lũng; Việt Vân, district of Võ Giàng. The inhabitants of the commune of Tư Thế, district of Siêu Loại, manufacture ink pens. Gold and silver goods are produced in the commune of Kiều Kỳ, district of Gia Lâm. Copper goods and white cloth are produced in the following communes: Ngô Xá, Nghiêm Xá and Trung Bạ, district of Yên Phong; Tráng Liệt, Phù Khê, Phù Ninh and Xuân Trạch, district of Đông Ngạn; Xuân Cầu, district of Văn Giang; Bảo Lộc, Sơn Lục Liễu, Mực Sơn, Đạm Phong, Hoà Mực and Hữu Mực, district of Yên Thế; Tiên Táo, district of Đa Phúc. Crude red lacquer is produced in the communes of Văn Quan, district of Siêu Loại, and Tử Nê and Nội Viên, district of Tiên Du. Brass goods, including incense burners and trays known for their quality, are manufactured in the commune of Đại Bái, district of Gia Bình. Brass goods, including pots, pans, trays, cymbals and gongs, are also manufactured in the commune of Đề Cầu, district of Siêu Loại. Ceramics, including large bowls, plates, cups, rice bowls and enamelled tiles, are manufactured by the

inhabitants of the commune of Bát Tràng, district of Gia Lâm. The people of Thổ Hà, district of Việt Yên, make earthenware pots and jars, and those of Phù Lãng, district of Võ Giàng, make earthenware pots and vases. Iron needles are produced in the commune of Đạo Chân, district of Võ Giàng.

Agricultural produce includes potatoes, beans, vegetables, melons and marrows, and these are grown throughout the province depending on local conditions. Small sea slugs and fresh water shrimps are known to be delicious in the districts of Lương Tài and Gia Bình, but may also be found in many places around the province. There is a gold mine at Phong Hanh in the district of Lục Ngạn, but it has long fallen into disuse.

### **Climate**

Springtime throughout the province is mild, summer is scorching hot, autumn is cool and winter cold. But in general throughout the year it is more often warm than cold, and the farmers can plant two crops of rice and raise eight litters of silkworms. This is true for the low-lying districts, but the upper districts, such as Yên Thế, Hữu Lũng and Lục Ngạn, are colder and only some places allow two harvests of paddy. The raising of silkworms is by no means as successful there, by comparison with the lower districts. Because these are remote regions of mountains and ravines, in the third and ninth months the miasmas can be stifling. Fresh water may be found throughout the province, but the districts of Lương Tài and Gia Bình suffer from the presence of saltwater. The emperor Tự Đức ordered the enlargement of the Chiêm Đức river in 1859-60, and after this digging was completed the quality of the water in these two districts gradually improved, as the salt content in the water fell by comparison with the past. In the middle of the summer and autumn, there are high winds, thunder and heavy rain. Every few years, during the seventh or eighth months, the province experiences a great storm.

### **Mountains**

Mountains of earth and mountains of earth and rock may be found in parts of the lower districts. Mountains of earth and rock cover the entire territory of upper districts such as Yên Thế, Hữu Lũng, Bảo Lộc and Lục Ngạn.

Famous mountains include the following: Nguyệt Thường and Lạn Kha, in the district of Tiên Du; Thất Diệu and Tiêu Sơn, in the district of Yên Phong; Phả Lại, Trâu Sơn and Lãm Sơn, in the district of Quế Dương; Thiên Thai, in the district of Gia Bình; Tam Tầng, in the district of Việt Yên; Huyền Đỉnh and Tượng Phục, in the district of Lục Ngạn; Nham Biền, in the district of Yên Dũng; Chung Sơn, in the district of Yên Thế; Bảo Đài, in the district of Bảo Lộc; Sóc Sơn, in the district of Kim Anh.

### **Rivers**

The Chiêm Đức river is a branch of the Red [Nhị] River, and flows from the commune of Xuân Canh, district of Đông Ngạn, and then successively through the districts of Gia Lâm, Tiên Du, Siêu Loại, Gia Bình and Quế Dương.

The Nhật Đức river has a branch which rises in the mountains of the commune of Xuân Dương, in the district of Yên Bái, province of Lạng Sơn. This branch flows through the district of Lục Ngạn and out at the commune of Phượng Nhãn, district of Phượng Nhãn, prefecture of Lạng Giang. A second branch rises in the mountains near the commune of Chi Lăng, in the district of Ôn Châu, province of Lạng Sơn, and flows through the sub-prefecture of Lạng Giang, district of Hữu Lũng. It empties into the Lục Đầu river at the commune of Phượng Nhãn, district of Phượng Nhãn.

The Nguyệt Đức river also has two branches. The first rises in the hills near the commune of Ngọc Long, in the district of Tư Nông, province of Thái Nguyên, and flows through the districts of Hiệp Hoà and Đa Phúc to the commune of Hương La, in the district of Yên Phong. The second rises in the hills near the commune of Đạm Xuyên, in the district of Yên Lãng, province of Sơn Tây, and flows through the districts of Việt Yên, Võ Giàng and Quế Dương where it reaches the commune of Hương La, in the district of Yên Phong. From there, it flows on through the districts of Việt Yên, Võ Giàng and Quế Dương before emptying into the Lục Đầu river.

The Ngũ Huyện stream may be found in the district of Đông Ngạn. The Tiêu Tương stream flows through the districts of Đông Ngạn, Tiên Du and Quế Dương. The Bái river flows through the district of Gia Bình. Streams and torrents may be found throughout the upper districts such as Hữu Lũng, Yên Thế, Bảo Lộc and Lục Ngạn.

Other rivers include the Kim Ngưu in the district of Văn Giang, which is a further branch of the Red River. Arriving in the province at the commune of Sơn Hồ Châu, district of Văn Giang, it is augmented by smaller streams at Phụng Công and Công Luận, winds around the commune of Từ Hồ, and joins the Red River in the province of Hưng Yên.

The Nghĩa Trụ river, in the district of Gia Lâm, flows from the canton of Gia Thụy to the commune of Cự Súu where it follows the old course of the Chiêm Đức river through the district of Văn Giang to the confluence of Dung. From there, it flows on into the districts of Đường Hào and Cẩm Giàng, in the province of Hải Dương, and out into the Hàm river.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The mountain of Phả Lại is situated in the district of Quế Dương. The Lục Đầu river passes the foot of the mountain, providing water for the area's verdant and peaceful landscape, which may explain why the eminent monk Minh Không chose it when he entered the Buddhist orders. The mountains of Lạn Kha and Phật Tích may be admired in the district of Tiên Du. In the past, the woodcutter Vương Chất went into the mountain and seeing two old men playing chess in the shade of a pine tree, leant on his hammer to watch. He became so absorbed in the game that he did not notice the hammer's handle rotting through. This was also the place where Từ Thức, of the Trần dynasty, met an immortal being. Governor Gaopian [Cao Biền] of the Tang dynasty built a stupa on the mountain of Thiên Thai, in the district of Gia Bình. The mountain of Tiêu Sơn, in the district of Yên Phong, is the place the eminent monk Vạn Hạnh chose for his retreat, and it is also said that the emperor Lý Thái Tổ was born here. The mountain of Sóc Sơn, in the district of Kim Anh, is also known as the mountain of Vệ Linh. This was where the iron horse of the spirit of prince Đông flew to heaven. The mountain of Chung Sơn may be admired in the district of Yên Thế. These are the province's places of fresh and natural beauty.

The temple of Vạn An may be visited in the district of Lục Ngạn. This temple is dedicated to general Trần Hưng Đạo, and used to be a part of the district of Phượng Nhãn, before it was transferred to Lục Ngạn. The forest temple of Đình Bảng is situated in the district of Đông Ngạn, and the mausoleum of Lý Bát Đế may be found here. The citadel of Cổ Loa, which is also situated in the province, is the ancient capital of king Thục An Dương. The temple of Phù Đổng in the district of Tiên Du is the native place of the spirit of prince Đông. The mausoleum of the Chinese governor Shixi [Sĩ Nhiếp] may be found at the temple of Tam Á, in the district of Siêu Loại. His former citadel is situated in the same district, at the temple of Lũng Khê. The commune of Khương Tự, in the same district is home to the pagoda of Diên Ứng. The pagoda of Trăm Gian is remarkable for its nine-storey stupa and nine-arched bridge, built during the Trần dynasty by Mạc Đĩnh Chi. At the temple of Á Lữ may be found a shrine where prince Kinh Dương is worshiped. Temples venerating the two great princes of the Trương

family, Trương Hống and Trương Hát, may be found in the commune of Hương La, district of Yên Phong, and on the mountain of Tam Kỳ, in the commune of Phượng Nhân, district of Phượng Nhân. These two princes, who were retainers of Triệu Việt Vương, hailed from the commune of Chu Mậu, in the district of Quế Dương. Needing their help, Lý Nam Đế summoned them many times but they refused to obey and together drank poison and died. An incident took place here during the reign of the emperor Lý Nhân Tông, when the Sung armies invaded the country. Sent with an army to fight them, Lý Thường Kiệt stopped at this temple where he suddenly heard the sound of chanting poetry:

*The frontier of the Southern land where the Southern king reigns  
Its inscription is clear in the books of the heavens  
Why then do hostile armies trespass?  
They come to stare defeat in the face!*

The chanted message made it apparent that the enemy would flee in disorder, an event now recorded in our country's history books.

These are the sacred places of the province. In recent times, soldiers have brought fire to the province on many occasions, and more than half of these sites now lie in ruins.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs southwest from the provincial citadel, passing the stage post of Bắc Liêm before reaching the ferry pier at the commune of Ái Mộ, in the district of Gia Lâm. Across the Red River lies the province of Hà Nội. This road is thirty-nine leagues long and one rod, two cubits wide.

- A main road runs northeast from the provincial citadel, passing the stage posts of Bắc Mỹ, Bắc Càn and Bắc Lệ before reaching the commune of Hoà Lạc. The stage post of Lạng Quang is just across the boundary, in the province of Lạng Sơn. This road is 104 leagues long and one rod, two cubits wide.

- A main road runs northwest from the provincial citadel, passing the stage post of Bắc Đông before reaching the stage post of Thái Long, in the province of Thái Nguyên. This road is fifty-three leagues long and one rod wide.

- An old main road runs southeast from the provincial citadel, passing through the districts of Tiên Du and Siêu Loại, before reaching the bridge of Lãng. The bridge is situated in the commune of Xuân Đào, district of Lương Tài, just inside the provincial boundary with the commune of Nhật Tảo, province of Hải Dương. This road is thirty-three leagues long and five cubits wide.

- A minor road leads straight from the main gate of the provincial citadel to the commune of Phả Lại, in the district of Quế Dương. The provincial boundary with Hải Dương separates this commune from that of Phao Sơn. This road is twenty-five leagues long and five cubits wide.

**For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.**

**We, the mandarins of the province of **Lạng Sơn**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of**

## **The Province of **Lạng Sơn****

Including the following maps:

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| The Province of <b>Lạng Sơn</b>         | 諒山省 |
| The Prefecture of <b>Tràng Định</b>     | 長定府 |
| The District of <b>Thất Khê</b>         | 柒溪縣 |
| The District of <b>Văn Quan</b>         | 文關縣 |
| The Outer District of <b>Thoát Lãng</b> | 脫朗州 |
| The Outer District of <b>Văn Uyên</b>   | 文淵州 |
| The Prefecture of <b>Trường Khánh</b>   | 長慶府 |
| The Outer District of <b>Ôn Châu</b>    | 溫州  |
| The District of <b>An Bác</b>           | 安博縣 |
| The Outer District of <b>Lộc Bình</b>   | 祿平州 |

## **The Description of the Province of Lạng Sơn**

**[Note on the Administrative History of the Province:**

*Under the Han, the territory of the province of Lạng Sơn was part of the Chinese dominion of Giao Chi 交趾. Under the Tang, it became part of Giao Châu 交州. At the beginning of the Trần 陳 dynasty, it was known as the territory of Lạng Giang 諒江. In 1397, it was renamed the government of Lạng Sơn 諒山 and under the Ming 明 became the prefecture of the same name. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Lê Thái Tổ 黎太祖, it belonged to the regional inspectorate of the North. In 1466, it took on the new status of division, although it retained the name Lạng Sơn, becoming a domain in 1490 and then a government again after the Lê Restoration. At the beginning of the Nguyễn 阮 dynasty, it was a government made up of a single prefecture divided into seven outer districts. In the twelfth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1831), it became a province, and three years later the three outer districts of Yên Bái 安博, Văn Quan 文關 and Thất Thủy 七泉 became districts. In 1834, the prefecture of Tràng Định 長定 was added.*

*No further changes were made up to the time of the emperor Đông Khánh, when the province consisted of two prefectures, divided into four outer districts and three districts.]*

The provincial citadel is situated in the commune of Mai Pha, in the outer district of Ôn Châu. The rampart is built in brick, and is 593 rods in circumference. The walls are of uneven height, varying from seven cubits, six inches to seven cubits, eight inches. A parapet stands two cubits, five inches high above the facade of the citadel. The rampart opens at four gates. At the southwest corner, there is a protective hill built of earth, and a further mountain may be found within the citadel, surrounded by a fan-shaped rampart 145 rods in circumference and five cubits high. There is no moat, but the Kỳ Cùng river protects the citadel to the northeast. To the east, the distance from the foot of the rampart to the river bank is six rods, and to the north thirteen rods. To the southwest lies an open space, filled only with a few mountains here and there. On this side of the citadel, the distance from the foot of the rampart to the mountain of Dương Lĩnh is 155 rods. To the south lies the mountain of Dương Cốc, at a distance from the rampart of ten rods, fifteen cubits and three inches.

To the east, the province is bounded by the forests of the outer district of Tiên Yên, in the province of Quảng Yên. The district of Thạch An, in the province of Cao Bằng, lies across the provincial boundary to the west, along with the mountains and forests of the district of Thông Hoá, in the province of Thái Nguyên. The province is bounded to the south by the districts of Hữu Lũng and Yên Thế, in the province of Bắc Ninh. Across the province's northern border lies the outer district of Bằng Tường, and across the northeastern border may be found the mountains of the outer districts of Tư, Tư Lăng and Ninh Minh; all of these four districts are part of the country of the Qing. To the northwest the province is bounded by the district of Thạch An, in the province of Cao Bằng. Across the southeastern boundary stretch mountains and forests belonging to the districts of Lục Ngạn, province of Bắc Ninh, Hoàn Bồ, province of Quảng Yên, and Đông Triều, province of Hải Dương. The mountains and forests of the district of Võ Nhai, province of Thái Nguyên, lie across the southwestern boundary of the province.

The road journey across the province from east to west takes five and a half days. The journey from north to south takes two and a half days.

The province is divided into two prefectures, comprising three districts and four outer districts, with forty-five cantons and 254 communes and villages (*thôn, trang, trại, phố, quán*). The population includes Thổ people, in 194 communes and villages, Nùng people, in forty-two communes and villages, and Ming-dynasty Chinese, in seventeen market villages.

According to a survey of the province carried out on the orders of the emperor Tự Đức in 1852, residents of [Kinh] origin in the province could be found in all forty-five cantons, while Thổ, Nùng and Ming-dynasty Chinese people lived in 298 communes and villages. The number of inhabitants in the province has since declined, because of the frequent ravages of bandits and thieves. In 1874, a further survey ordered by the emperor Tự Đức found that the inhabitants of many places did not return home to make a living after the attacks, and that as a result forty-four communes and villages had disappeared without trace. Furthermore, these included villages divided over the territory of several communes, and communes divided over the territory of several cantons. This was the case for the canton of Trừ Trĩ, in the outer district of Thoát Lãng. Some of the communes administered by the canton of Trừ Trĩ were situated in the territory of the neighbouring cantons of Vĩnh Dật, Uyên Lệ and Hành Lư in the outer district of Văn Uyên. The same situation existed in the cantons of Dã Nham and Quang Bí, in the outer district of Văn Uyên. A number of the communes administered by these cantons could be found in the territory of the cantons of Chu Túc and Phú Xá, in the district of Văn Quan. The same problem was faced by parts of the cantons of An Hùng and Hoá Nhân, in the district of Văn Quan, which administered communes situated in the territory of the neighbouring cantons of Tú Xuyên, Bình Gia and Cam Thủy, in the same district.

The province is divided into two prefectures, with seven districts and outer districts.

- 1- The prefecture of Tràng Khánh: principal outer district of Ôn Châu, secondary district of An Bắc, secondary outer district of Lộc Bình.
- 2- The prefecture of Tràng Định: principal district of Thất Khê, secondary district of Văn Quan, secondary outer districts of Văn Uyên and Thoát Lãng.

### **Population and Agricultural Land**

The population of all categories amounts to 2,547 people. They include:

Thổ: 2,110 people.

Nùng: 277 people.

Ming-dynasty Chinese: 160 people.

Paddy fields paying tax: 6,022 acres, eight square poles and eleven square perches. These include.

Communally owned land: 124 acres, six square poles and thirteen square perches.

Privately owned land: 5,898 acres, one square pole and thirteen square perches.

According to two surveys carried out under the orders of the emperor Tự Đức (in 1852 and 1867), the population of the entire province, including residents of [Kinh] origin, as well as the Thổ and Ming-dynasty Chinese, amounted in those days to 7,310. Communal and private land paying tax amounted to 7,648 acres, two square poles and eleven square perches. Much agricultural land still lies fallow, as the people have not yet returned since the time pirates and thieves used to roam the province. According to the emperor Tự Đức's survey of 1874, the returned population and the area of cleared agricultural land amounted to the figures mentioned above.

### **Tax Regulations**

Annual head tax receipts:

Paid in cash: 1,730 ligatures.

Paid in silver: 408 taels.

Land tax receipts:

Paid in cash: 903 ligatures.

Paid in paddy: 2,168 bushels and fourteen pints.

According to the survey of 1852, the annual head tax receipts from all categories of the population amounted to 6,767 ligatures at that time. Land tax received in cash amounted to slightly over 1,147 ligatures and in paddy to 5,425 bushels and slightly over eighteen pints. The amounts detailed above, which were correct at the time of the 1874 survey, represent a substantial decline in receipts, due to ravages of the bandits and the flight of the population.

### **Enlisted Soldiers**

There are three squads of *Lạng Hùng* militiamen with a complement of 141, and a further fifty men make up the single squad of *Thổ* auxiliaries. The survey of 1852 recorded the existence of ten squads, including three of *Lạng Hùng* militiamen, and a total of 582 soldiers. As a result of the activity of bandits, there are not enough soldiers for the number of people in the province. In 1865, a total of 141 soldiers were chosen from the two districts of *Văn Quan* and *Ôn Châu* to form the three squads of *Lạng Hùng* militiamen. Further recruitments were made from the districts along the border with the country of the Qing, in order to strengthen the local defence forces. In 1874, the squad of *Thổ* auxiliaries was formed with fifty men.

### **Temples, Shrines and Rostrums**

From the provincial citadel, the rostrum to the gods of agriculture may be found to the east, and the shrine of all the saints to the northeast, both in the commune of *Vĩnh Trại*, outer district of *Thoát Lãng*. To the west may be found the rostrums to the gods of the soil and harvests and the rostrum to the gods of the mountains and rivers, in the commune of *Mai Pha*, outer district of *Ôn Châu*. The same commune is also home to the temple of Confucian literature, situated to the south of the citadel. The shrine to the gods of the walls and moats lies within the citadel walls. The pavilion of *Quan Thượng*, in other words the forward gate, may be found in the commune of *Bảo Lâm*, outer district of *Văn Uyên*, not far from the border gate of *Nam Quan* in the country of the Qing.

### **Forts and Strongholds**

The fort of *Văn Uyên* is situated in the commune of *Bảo Lâm*, outer district of *Văn Uyên*, across from the frontier post of *Nam Quan*, in the outer district of *Bằng Tường*, in the country of the Qing. A sergeant and ten messengers are responsible for carrying the official correspondence between the two countries. The fort of *Du Thôn* is also situated on the border, in the same commune. Here, the common people have been given the responsibility for standing guard, as in the other places listed below.

The old fort of *Trĩ Mã* is situated in the commune of *Yên Khoái*, outer district of *Lộc Bình*. The frontier post of the North faces the border with the outer district of *Bằng Tường*, in the country of the Qing, and is situated in the commune of *Trừ Trĩ*, outer district of *Thoát Lãng*. The old fort of *Thanh Mật* also stands on this border, in the commune of *Thanh Mật*, outer district of *Văn Uyên*. The old fort of *Cửu Dương*, in commune of the same name, district of *Thất Khê*, faces the frontier post of *Bình Nhi*, in the outer district of *Long Châu*, in the country of the Qing. The mountains of *Khâu Thường* are

protected by the fort of An Khuyển, in the commune of the same name, district of Thất Khê. This fort faces the frontier post of Ba, in the district of Hạ Đống, in the country of the Qing.

The fort of **Đông Bộc** is situated in the village of the same name, in the outer district of **Lộc Bình**. There is a road here which runs through to the outer district of **Tiên Yên** in the province of **Quảng Yên**. Another road leads out to the frontier post of **Trĩ Mã**, and some minor roads cross the border into the outer district of **Tư Lãng**, in the country of the Qing. The fort of **Na Dương** is situated in the commune of **Đông Quan**, district of **Yên Bái**, where many minor roads lead into the mountains and forests of the outer district of **Tiên Yên**, province of **Quảng Yên**. The commune of **Yên Châu** is home to the fort of the same name, in the district of **Yên Bái**. Roads here lead to the district of **Lục Ngạn**, province of **Bắc Ninh**, to the district of **Đông Triều**, province of **Hải Dương**, and to the districts of **Tiên Yên** and **Hoành Bồ**, province of **Quảng Yên**. The old fort of **Vân Mạc** originally stood in the village of the same name, in the district of **Vân Quan**, while the fort of **Kim Cúc** stood in the commune of **Thu Cúc**, outer district of **Văn Uyên**. Roads from both these places lead into the forests and mountains of the province of **Thái Nguyên**. The old fort of **Na Lĩnh** originally stood in the commune of **Hoàng Liệt**, district of **Thất Khê**. A road leads from here to the province of **Cao Bằng**.

### **Stage Posts**

The stage post of **Lạng Quang** is situated on the provincial boundary with **Bắc Ninh**, in the commune of **Quang Lạng**, district of **Ôn Châu**. This post comes under the control of the prefecture of **Tràng Khánh**. The stage post of **Lạng Nhân** lies in the same district, in the commune of **Nhân Lý**, outer district of **Châu Ôn**. There are two stage posts in the outer district of **Văn Uyên**, that of **Lạng Mai** in the commune of **Mai Pha**, and that of **Lạng Uyên** in the commune of **Uyên Lệ**. There are two stage posts in the outer district of **Thoát Lãng**, that of **Lạng Trọng** in the commune of **Trọng Sơn**, and that of **Lạng Du** in the commune of **Du Chàng**. In the district of **Thất Khê**, there are three stage posts. The first is the stage post of **Lạng Tú** in the commune of **Tú Sơn**, which comes under the control of the prefecture of **Tràng Định**. The stage post of **Lạng Chỉ** is in the commune of **Chỉ Mỹ**, and the stage post of **Lạng Hoàng**, commune of **Hoàng Liệt**, lies on the provincial boundary with **Cao Bằng**.

### **Customs and Manners**

The **Nùng** and **Thổ** people, who live alongside one another, are unsophisticated folk. Some of them are quite courageous. They speak their own language, which has no script. In the markets, they exchange goods with the aid of weights and measures. Paddy and rice is measured by volume, but also sometimes by weight. Money is counted in hundreds and thousands of sapeques, and one thousand sapeques is called a *tieu*. Both men and women wear clothes of blue and black linen. They build their houses on stilts, with people living upstairs and livestock underneath. The ancestors of the **Nùng** originally came from the province of **Guangxi** [**Quảng Tây**], and they are of two types. The first is the **Nùng Anh**, who wear short tunics with generous sleeves. The men braid their hair, while the girls and women from wealthy families fasten their hair into buns with silver hairpins and embroider red flower patterns on the collars of their blouses. The second is the **Nùng Phần Xinh**. The men wear long tunics with tight sleeves and the girls wear short blouses, but in general the **Nùng Phần Xinh** disdain personal adornment. They do not set up their own separate homes, preferring to live together, with families of more than twenty people – including the husband, wife and other relatives – sharing the same hearth and property until they reach old age.

The majority of the **Thổ** people are indolent. But most of the **Nùng** are hardworking and thrifty. When the **Nùng** first arrived, they had no paddy fields or gardens, and single-mindedly set to clearing

farm land from the forest and mountains. That is why up to half of the *Thổ* people's paddy fields actually belong to the *Nùng*. *Thổ* people are not allowed to sell their land in perpetuity, but only to cede it for other people's use. People owning paddy fields are liable for corvee labour duty, which is called 'field head'.

Both *Nùng* and *Thổ* people believe in the power of worship and prayer, but not in medicine. Whenever they fall ill, they have their fortune told by a sorceress, known as a medium. These sorcerers prey off the people. They sing a song in their language, mutter an invocation, tell the person's fortune in an instant, then pronounce that the disease is caused by this devil or that spirit. Patients have then to ask the sorcerer for right word of supplication to oust the evil. Whether the disease is cured or not they still have to obey the sorcerer. They are not allowed to treat the disease with northern methods of medicine and pharmacopœia.

In the springtime of every year, men and women invite each other to the market taverns where they rival each other all day long in the singing of alternating couplets. Farming is not practised with the aid of irrigation, and fields may be dry or drenched according to the rain or sunshine offered by the heavens. Each year in about the second or third month, the inhabitants of each commune conduct the sacrificial slaughter of a chicken or a pig in the fields. Each family takes a tray of food offerings to the fields for display during the ceremony, which is called 'the ceremony of going down to the fields' in reflection of its function of praying for a safe harvest and a good yield.

Buddhism is only practised in a few dispersed areas like the outer district of *Ôn Châu*, which lies on the boundary with the province of *Bắc Ninh*, the district of *Văn Quan*, which lies on the boundary with the province of *Thái Nguyên*, and the districts of *Thất Khê*, *Lộc Bình* and *Yên Bái*. But religious practices are uncomplicated affairs, and nothing is taken as the object of very great esteem or veneration. There are no village festivals. Weddings and funerals, celebrated in the manner dictated by local tradition, are simple, rustic occasions, involving few troublesome rites and rituals. Families with daughters and no sons tend to bring their son-in-law to live with them, and their fields and property are left under his control as heir. Other relatives of the wife's family have no right to dispute this.

Ming-dynasty Chinese reside only in the market villages and specialise in the practice of trade. They live entirely according to the customs of the *Qing* dynasty.

There are no Catholics in this province which has suffered greatly from enemy occupation, but where no one is content to submit to the enemy.

### **Local Produce**

Autumn rice is grown in the province, but there is no summer rice. Only in the district of *Thất Khê* may one find places where people harvest a crop in the sixth month. The *Thổ* people call this crop *lục mẫu* rice, as it is sown in the third month and reaped in the sixth. Pears are grown in the cantons of *Lạc Dương* and *Nghiêm Lật*, in the district of *Thất Khê*. They are of two types. One ripens early, has a smooth soft skin and is extremely sweet, while the other is longer in shape, ripens late and has a thick skin. Star aniseed grows in the border areas of the districts of *Văn Uyên* and *Lộc Bình*, and all the communes of the district of *Văn Quan*, and the land must be carefully chosen for its cultivation. Potatoes, beans, corn and millet may be found in all seven districts of the province, but is not grown in any great quantity.

Gold mines can be found at the following places: *Hữu Lân*, in the outer district of *Ôn Châu*; *Đông Bộc*, *Suất Lễ* and *Nà Ba*, in the outer district of *Lộc Bình*; *Nông Đôn* and *La Sơn*, in the district of *Thất Khê*; *Phúc Vượng* and *Hội Hoan*, in the district of *Văn Quan*; *Xuân Dương* in the district of *Yên Bái*.

Mines of iron ore can be found in the following places: Bằng Mạc, in the outer district of Ôn Châu; Phú Xá in the district of Văn Quan; Bảo Lâm, in the outer district of Văn Uyên; Đà Lịch and Tân Lang, in the outer district of Thoát Lãng. Mines of gold and iron ore can be found throughout the province but only the gold at Nà Ba, in the outer district of Lộc Bình, has enjoyed the reputation of good quality since ancient times. All these mines of gold and iron ore have recently become exhausted, and have ceased production. The inhabitants of communes situated near the mines have drifted away to live elsewhere.

Mandarin fish abound in the waters of the Kỳ Cùng and Vân Mạc rivers, but their flesh is tasteless and cannot be described as appetising. Among the rocks and caves of the mountain of Công Mẫu, in the outer district of Lộc Bình, there is a type of frog with soft skin and delicate flesh, slightly smaller than the field frog. It is usually cooked in congee, which is quite delicious. The frog named after the mountain which is its habitat: it is known as the 'Công Mẫu frog'.

### **Climate**

The land here is cold, and there are frequent northeasterly winds. Clouds and mists cover the hill slopes until almost midday, only to return towards the end of the afternoon. Only in the three months of summer do the mists disperse. As a result, most the inhabitants of the province suffer from illnesses caused by the miasmas. From the end of autumn, the hoar frosts set in. The months of winter are bitterly cold, and sometimes it snows. If one pours water into a bowl or pot, leaving it out overnight in an exposed place, the following morning it will be covered in ice, to the thickness of a finger and sometimes even as much as an inch. This only occurs in the border areas, and only rarely even there.

The rhythms of rain and sunshine allow for a normal agricultural cycle, similar to other places. The paddy is planted out in the fourth month or the first week of the fifth month, and people bring in the harvest in the eighth and ninth months. Because of the cold climate, the seedlings are not planted out late.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

The province is entirely covered with mountains, and mountain chases mountain from one end to the other. However, few of the mountains are rocky, most are simply earth. Famous mountains include the following: Công Mẫu, in the outer district of Lộc Bình; Anh Linh, in the outer district of Văn Uyên; Khâu Nham, in the district of Văn Quan; Vọng Phu and Tam Thanh, in the outer district of Thoát Lãng; Khâu Thường and Ba Chi in the outer district of Thất Khê; Kháo Sơn, Mã Yên, Dương Lĩnh and Song Tiên in the outer district of Ôn Châu.

The province is situated in a highland region, and has no large rivers. Famous rivers include the following. The Kỳ Cùng river has two branches. One rises in the outer district of Tiên Yên, in the province of Quảng Yên, while the other has its source in the outer district of Tư Lãng, in the country of the Qing. While the river is known as Kỳ Cùng in its upper reaches, it is called Bắc Đức further down. A small river called the Vân Mạc empties into the Bắc Đức on its left bank, and from that confluence the river flows into the outer district of Long Châu, across the border with the country of the Qing. The river chases and twists around the mountain slopes, with stretches of differing width and depth as well as numerous rapids and waterfalls. When the waters are high, canoes and wooden rafts can make the journey.

In addition, a number of streams and torrents join up to form rivers. One of these is a small river which forms from the runoff from the mountain of Kháo Sơn in the outer district of Ôn Châu. It crosses the commune of Chi Lãng in the same district, where people call it the Áng river, before

flowing down to the district of Hữu Lũng, in the province of Bắc Ninh. Another small river forms from streams and torrents in the two cantons of Lệ Viễn and Yên Châu, in the district of Yên Bái. It crosses the commune of Yên Châu, where takes the name Yên Châu river, before flowing down into the district of Lục Ngạn, in the province of Bắc Ninh.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The ancient sites of great renown in the province include the cave of Song Tiên, in the outer district of Ôn Châu, the pagoda of Linh Quang, in the district of Thất Khê, the cave of Tam Thanh and the market village of Khâu Lư (Kỳ Lừa), in the outer district of Thoát Lãng, and the market village of Đông Đăng, in the district of Văn Uyên. Their fame is reflected in the popular saying: “Đông Đăng, Kỳ Lừa, Tô Thị, Tam Thanh”. The ravages of bandits have taken their toll over the years, and these landscapes and monuments are no longer what they used to be.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A post road runs from the stage post of Bắc Lệ, near the southern boundary with the province of Bắc Ninh. It passes the stage post of Lạng Quang, in the prefecture of Tràng Khánh, and the provincial citadel, before turning to the west. It finally reaches the relay station of Lạng Hoàng, in the prefecture of Tràng Định, on the provincial boundary with Cao Bằng. This road is 225 leagues and one hundred rods long.

- A road leads from the provincial citadel northwards to the gate of Nam Quan, in the country of the Qing, a distance of twenty leagues.

- A minor road runs east from the provincial citadel and passes the fort of Đông Bộc. After a turn to the southeast, it reaches the forts of Na Dương and Yên Châu, in the district of Yên Bái, on the provincial boundary with Quảng Yên. This is a mountain road and travellers crossing its numerous streams and torrents take about four and a half days to reach their destination.

- A minor road leads from the fort of Đông Bộc to the fort of Trĩ Mã, on the border with the country of the Qing. The journey takes about one day.

- A further minor road runs eastwards from the provincial citadel. It turns to the southwest before the district of Văn Quan, and passes the fort of Kim Cúc before reaching the provincial boundary with Thái Nguyên. This is a tortuous road and travellers who wish to cross this region of mountains and torrents take five days to do so.

**For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.**

**We, the mandarins of the province of **Cao Bằng**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of**

## **The Province of **Cao Bằng****

Including the following maps:

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| The Province of Cao Bằng    | 高平省 |
| The Prefecture of Hòa An    | 和安府 |
| The District of Thạch Lâm   | 石林縣 |
| The District of Thạch An    | 石安縣 |
| The District of Nguyên Bình | 原平縣 |
| The District of Trùng Khánh | 重慶府 |
| The District of Thượng Lang | 上琅縣 |
| The District of Quảng Uyên  | 廣淵縣 |
| The District of Hạ Lang     | 下琅縣 |

## The Description of the Province of Cao Bằng

### [Note on the Administrative History of the Province:

*The territory of the province of Cao Bằng was part of the outer district of Thái Nguyên 太原 under the Lý 李 and Trần 陳 dynasties. Under the Ming 明, it formed a part of the two prefectures of Thái Nguyên (districts of Lộng Thạch 弄石 and Thái Nguyên) and Lạng Sơn 諒山 (outer districts of Thượng Tư Lang 上司良, Hạ Tư Lang 下司良 and Quảng Nguyên 廣原). At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Lê Thái Tổ 黎太祖, this region became the prefecture of Bắc Bình 北平 and then Cao Bình 高平, comprising four districts: Thượng Tư Lang, Hạ Tư Lang, Thái Nguyên and Lộng Nguyên 弄原. In 1469, during the reign of the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗, it was still known as the prefecture of Cao Bình, and was part of the division of Ninh Sóc 寧朔, which was later renamed the division of Thái Nguyên. At that time, the four outer districts of the prefecture were Thượng Lang 上良, Hạ Lang 下良, Thái Nguyên and Lộng Nguyên. At the end of the Hồng Đức 洪德 period, the outer district of Thái Nguyên was renamed Thạch Lâm 石林, and the outer district of Lộng Nguyên was renamed Quảng Uyên 廣淵. In 1499, the region became the government of Cao Bình 高平, but after the definitive defeat of the Mạc 莫 dynasty the government of Cao Bình was separated from the government of Thái Nguyên (1676). Under the Tây Sơn, out of respect for the taboo on the word Bình 平 (which was part of the name of the emperor Quang Trung 光中), the name was changed to Cao Bằng. At the beginning of the Nguyễn 阮 period, this reform was repealed and the government of Cao Bình was restored, but local usage had already established the pronunciation of the name as Cao Bằng. In the seventh year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh (1826), the prefecture of Cao Bình became the prefecture of Trùng Khánh 重慶, and five years later the province of Cao Bình was established, with a single prefecture named Trùng Khánh. In 1835, the district of Thạch Lâm was transformed into a second prefecture named Hoà An 和安. In the third year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức 嗣德 (1850), this prefecture was abolished only to be restored by the same emperor twenty-four years later.*

*From the end of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức to the time of the emperor Đông Khánh, the province of Cao Bằng was made up of two prefectures, with six districts. The province of Cao Bằng, as it existed at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, corresponded to the province which existed at the time of the emperor Đông Khánh, with the single exception of the district of Bảo Lạc which was transferred from Tuyên Quang.]*

The provincial citadel is situated in the commune of Gia Cung, in the district of Thạch An. The province originally boasted a provincial seat and a fortress (at a distance of 140 rods to the southeast of the provincial seat). In 1862, the emperor Tự Đức ordered the abolition of the provincial seat, which was then re-established on the site of the fortress. Nine years later, the same emperor ordered the abolition of the fortress, and the provincial seat was returned to its former position. Nowadays the old fortress is made up of four forts surrounded by an earth embankment. Most of these have tumbled down. There remain two entrepôts with tiled rooves, each of them with eleven rooms and two

outbuildings. The wind and rain has taken its toll over the years and most of the buildings are suffering from the effects of subsidence.

The rampart of the citadel is built of earth. An additional bamboo fortification has been planted on top of the rampart, which is 176 rods, one cubit long. The south wall is forty-one rods, five cubits long; the north wall measures forty-two rods; the east wall, forty-seven rods, three cubits; the west wall, forty-five rods, three cubits. The rampart is seven cubits high and one rod thick at the base. The right hand side and rear of the rampart are each fortified with a raised gun platform in the form of a half moon. The citadel opens at the facade and left hand side through gates built in brick. A moat surrounds the facade and two sides. On the left, it is one rod, three cubits across and five cubits deep. On the right, it is one rod across and at the front it is one rod, two cubits across. On both these sides it is one rod deep. A bamboo hedge has been planted along the whole length of the moat, and is situated immediately at the base of the ramparts. In front of the citadel, at a distance of one rod, three cubits from the rampart, there is a further bamboo hedge, running the entire length of the facade to the corner of left and right hand sides of the moat. An advance fort is situated outside the main citadel, with a rampart 140 rods and eight cubits in circumference. Its south wall measures forty-one rods, five cubits; its north wall, fifty rods, three cubits; its east wall, twenty-eight rods; its west wall, twenty-one rods. An earth embankment protects the facade and sides of the fort. It is three cubits high and three cubits thick. A bamboo hedge has been planted on top of the embankment.

To the east, the province is bounded by the outer district of *Hạ Lôi*, in the country of the *Qing*. To the west lies the prefecture of *Trần An*, in the country of the *Qing*, and the district of *Đề Định*, in the province of *Tuyên Quang*. To the south, the district of *Thất Khê* lies across the boundary with the province of *Lạng Sơn*. The outer district of *Quy Thuận*, in the country of the *Qing*, lies across the border to the north and northeast. To the southwest lie the districts of *Bạch Thông* and *Cầm Hoá*, in the province of *Thái Nguyên*. To the southeast, the province is bounded by the outer districts of *Hạ Đống*, *Long Châu* and *An Bình*, in the country of the *Qing*.

- From east to west, the province is 152 leagues across. From north to south, it is eighty-seven leagues across.

The army originally consisted of two militias, the *Hùng* and *Dũng*, with a total complement of 836 soldiers. Nowadays there are only 269 soldiers.

The population of all categories originally amounted to 9,334 people. Nowadays there are only 3,980 people.

Annual head tax receipts:

Head tax paid in cash: 4,139 ligatures and four strings of sapeques.

Head tax of the separate category, paid in silver: 313 taels of silver.

Taxes on iron (paid in silver): twenty-five taels of silver and two silver sapeques.

Agricultural land of all categories: the original area of cultivated land covered 37,393 acres, five square poles, thirteen square perches, one square yard and six square cubits. Nowadays the land under cultivation covers 20,940 acres, nine square poles, fourteen square perches, seven square yards and five square cubits.

Land tax:

Paid in paddy: 5,934 bushels, eighteen pints, six double handfuls and six handfuls.

Paid in cash: 3,493 ligatures, four strings and ten sapeques.

The iron ore mine of *Khải Hoà* pays tax of twenty taels of silver.

The iron ore mine in the southeastern part of the province pays tax of four taels of silver and five silver sapeques.

The tin mine of *Vụ Nông* pays tax of one hundred catties of white tin.

## **The Descriptive Geography of the Emperor *Đông Khánh***

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The customs gate of Lương Mã originally collected taxes of 1,100 taels of silver. Nowadays it receives taxes in cash amounting to 1,000 ligatures.

The customs gate of Na Thông originally collected taxes of 1,300 taels of silver. Nowadays it receives taxes in cash amounting to 1,300 ligatures.

The silver mine of Ngân Sơn was originally recorded as paying taxes of 370 taels of silver. Nowadays one hundred taels are collected.

Other mines which used to pay tax, but which have since shut down, include the following: the gold mine of Thuận Mang (thirteen ounces of gold), the gold mine of Vĩnh Giang (three ounces of gold), the gold mine of Tĩnh Đà (two ounces of gold and five gold sapeques) and the gold mine of Phú Nội (thirty ounces of gold).

The province is divided into two prefectures, comprising a total of six districts.

- 1- The prefecture of Hoà An: principal district of Thạch Lâm, secondary districts of Thạch An and Nguyên Bình.
- 2- The prefecture of Trùng Khánh: principal district of Thượng Lang, secondary districts of Hạ Lang and Quảng Uyên.

### **Customs and Manners**

The inhabitants of the province live in villages dispersed across the territory. Each commune consists of three or four villages, and each village is made up of three or four or as many as eight or nine houses, situated in places conveniently near to the paddy fields. The population includes Thổ, Nùng and Mán people. Nùng and Mán people live alongside one another in the districts of Thạch Lâm and Thạch An, in the prefecture of Hoà An. In the district of Nguyên Bình, there are more Mán people than Thổ, and there are no Nùng. In the districts of Thượng Lang, Hạ Lang and Quảng Uyên, in the prefecture of Trùng Khá, Nùng and Thổ people live alongside one another, and there are no Mán.

Thổ people build their houses on stilts, installing their livestock underneath. They wear clothes dyed with indigo. They plough their paddy fields, some of which are irrigated with the aid of huge bamboo pipes placed end to end to channel stream water down to the fields. Sometimes they use water-wheels to irrigate the fields, a method which costs little in terms of effort but often produces significant results. In matters of farming, however, most of the Thổ people are lazy.

For weddings, the bridegroom's family chooses two members of the senior family line, known as ushers, to preside over the marriage rituals. The bride's family meanwhile chooses two unmarried women, known as bridesmaids, to bear the flasks and cups of wine and wait at the gate for the bridegroom's arrival. When he arrives, they kneel down and offer the wine. The groom drinks first, whereupon other members of his party drink in turn. The whole party is then invited into the house, and the wine is set out for the celebration. Once the ceremony has been completed, the bridegroom accompanies the bride in procession to his house, and members of the family offer gifts such as cotton and cloth, cups and bowls, and other household implements.

For funerals, an ensemble plays mourning music on wind instruments to enhance the atmosphere of lamentation. The funeral chants often include the following refrain: 'Dear beloved! Your descendants remember the twenty-four ancient models of filial piety by which, from king Thuấn to king Văn Đế, we have learnt to present countless offerings to our ancestors'. Death anniversaries and other family ceremonies are brief affairs. The festival of souls, however, stands out as the most meaningful ceremony of remembrance. On this day, the whole family put on their finest clothes and carry out incense, wine, chickens and ducks, as well as five-coloured glutinous rice, for the ceremony of cleaning and decorating the ancestral graves.

Nùng people live in the shadow of the high mountains, also building their houses on stilts. Most of them eat congee made of corn. The men wear short tunics dyed with indigo and shave their heads, leaving a tuft of hair on the crown. The women wear skirts and tie their hair into a bun, fastening it with a hairpin. Girls show that they are unmarried by cutting the hair on their foreheads, leaving a single one-inch-long lock hanging down. Their main occupation is farming and they irrigate their fields in the same way as the Thổ, by means of pipes and water-wheels. Although their farm labour is more demanding than that of the Thổ, are more hardworking.

For marriages, Nùng people do not follow the custom whereby the bridegroom accompanies the bride in procession to his house. Their funeral ceremonies follow the Buddhist tradition whereby the souls are freed from their sufferings. People over the age of forty celebrate their birthday with lavish parties of meat and wine, but after people pass away their death anniversaries go unnoticed. At the festival of souls, the graves are decorated and cleaned. Most of their customs and festivals resemble those of the Thổ, but they commemorate the souls with considerable ceremony in a festival held in the seventh month, each family serving trays of meat and wine. While drinking, each member of the family has to eat a whole duck, and adults finish off the leftovers uneaten by children who cannot manage a whole bird. Every family celebrates the festival in this way.

Mán people live in the mountains and farm the mountain terrain, frequently moving from one place to another. The Mán Đại Bản people are otherwise known as the Mán Sừng (Horned Mán), from their men's habit of shaving their heads, leaving tufts on four sides, and wrapping a scarf around their temples, knotted to the right. The effect of the whole resembles a horn. They wear short black tunics. Women wear clothes tailored from two cuts of cloth. The front section is joined to the back section with red thread sown in flowered patterns. The upper part is mounted with a narrow, round collar pierced around the four sides from which hang strands of thread in a fringe, studded with seeds which shine like diamonds.

The Mán Tiểu Bản are otherwise known as the Mán Tiên (Sapeque Mán). They are known as such from their women's habit of wearing a square wooden scarf-frame on their heads covered with a white cloth, and fringed blouses embroidered with wave patterns and backed with sapeque coins which they sport as tokens. The men wear indigo scarves and collar-less shirts embroidered on all sides with decorative patterns in coloured thread.

The Mán Bạch Miêu are otherwise known as the Mường Khao. Their men and women all leave their hair to flow naturally and wear clothes of coarse white cloth.

The three Mán clans described above are hardworking and put up with great difficulties. They mill their rice with the aid of a mortar, powered by water channelled from the streams along huge bamboo pipes. Men over the age of fifteen all carry a flintlock hand gun. Marriages are governed by the tradition of the bride price. When a man marries, he must bring wedding gifts purchased at vast expense, but when a daughter is born and grows up, he nonetheless marries her off in respect to this tradition, demanding a high price for the bride. Funeral rites are celebrated in much the same way as the Nùng. Tombstones are not used and when families move, their ancestors' remains are brought with them. Festivals marking dates in the lunar calendar or respect for the ancestors are little respected, and death anniversaries are not observed. With the exception of those who follow the Catholic doctrine, most of the Mán people live in awe of spirits and ghosts. When they fall ill, they call sorcerers and mediums to make supplications on their behalf.

Thổ and Nùng people call sorcerers *giang*, and sorceresses *bụt*. When they make their supplications, these people run their fingers over a zither, shake their feet to beat a gong and use their mouths to pronounce words of invocation supposed to exorcise the spirits. They take a shirt belonging to the sufferer, along with a hen's egg and a tube of rice, and once the invocations are pronounced these

items become talismans and are placed on the sufferer's cot. Mán sorcerers are all men, and are called *thầy mo*. They use drums for their invocations and have young children hold sacred stones called *đá hành* as charms to call up the spirits, whose words are used to chase away the disease. Plants of medicinal value are not used. All the Thổ, Nùng and Mán have such practices, which vary in their details but resemble each other in the main.

The inhabitants of the districts of Thạch Lâm and Thạch An display some elements of morality. The people of the districts of Thượng Lang and Quảng Uyên are rather good-natured. Those of the district of Nguyên Bình almost have a sense of right and wrong. Those of the district of Hạ Lang are brutal, deceitful and rather mad, the inhabitants of each commune in a different way.

Throughout the markets of the province, it is impossible to find anyone wearing rags, and there are no beggars on the roads. Robbers are rare. It seems to be easy to make a living in the province. As for the Qing-dynasty Chinese, they can be found living in the market villages of the province and they follow the customs of their homeland.

### **Local Produce**

Autumn rice is grown in the province, but there is no summer rice. Other crops include potatoes, beans, corn and barley. There are three types of barley, 'triple-edged barley' used to cook congee, 'king barley' used for making flour, and 'baby barley' used for making alcohol. On the slopes of rocky mountains, one may find a hardwood tree called *nghiến*, as well as the *quang lang* tree, the pith of which is milled into a type of flour. In different places throughout the province, one may find various types of deer, white honey, red jungle fowl and yams. In the district of Thạch An, there is sugarcane, cardamom, brown root dye, gold and iron ore. The inhabitants of this district manufacture bamboo mats. The district of Thạch Lâm is also known for its sugarcane and brown root dye, as well as magnetic rocks and iron ore. The inhabitants make earthenware pottery. In the district of Nguyên Bình, one may find brown root dye, gold, silver, lead and tin, and in the district of Thượng Lang, there are hazelnuts and *hương* fish. The inhabitants of the district of Quảng Uyên make brocade. White roses grow in the district of Hạ Lang. Peaches and pears may be found in all the districts of the province, but the peaches of the district of Thạch Lâm and the pears of the district of Thượng Lang are the most succulent.

### **Climate**

Mountains cover the entire territory of the province and the weather is often cold, producing poisonous miasmas, but it has one advantage: there are no storms. From autumn through until springtime, fogs are thick and do not disperse until late morning. The weather is often overcast and only in the summer do the skies clear and the clouds disappear. Around the fifth and sixth months, showers are common. In the prefecture of Hoà An, the streams often flood, while in the prefecture of Trùng Khánh, they hold their banks after it rains. The coldest weather comes in the eleventh and twelfth months, and it sometimes snows in the prefecture of Trùng Khánh, and even in Hoà An. The inhabitants of Hoà An follow the agricultural cycle of the middle region, which starts in the fifth and sixth months, when the seedlings are planted out, ending in the ninth and tenth months, when the harvest is brought in. In the prefecture of Trùng Khánh, the cycle starts earlier, in the fourth month and planting out is completed by the fifth month. If the seedlings are planted out late, in the sixth month, the paddy does not have time to ripen.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

Mountain chases mountain from one end of the province to the other, and streams and brooks wind their tortuous courses. The four highest mountains, regarded in the province as the mandarins of the natural world, are named Sâm, Hoàng, Luân and Liêu. The mountain of Sâm is situated in the

commune of Tượng Cần, district of Thạch An, five leagues north of the provincial citadel. The mountain of Hoàng stands in the commune of Ngọc Pha, two leagues and ninety rods east of the citadel. The mountain of Luân is in the commune of Phú Thứ, fifteen leagues south of the citadel, while the mountain of Núi Lạ may be seen in the commune of Triều Vũ, district of Bình Nguyên, twenty-four leagues southwest of the citadel.

There are three rivers in the province: the Mãng, Hiến and Cồn rivers, which join together to form an ox-bow around the northern, eastern and western sides of the provincial citadel.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The province is situated in a border area, which is why there are few notable sites and monuments. Those worth mentioning include the ancient citadels at Nà Lữ and Phục Hoà, the ancient pagodas at Xuân Lĩnh and Mạnh Thủy, the temple of Sầm Sơn which is home to the mark of the running rose, the mountain of Hoà Ninh famous for its poetry engraved in stone, and the cave of Thông Thiên, on the mountain of Trà Lĩnh.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs from the provincial citadel southwards. It passes the stage posts of Cao Phúc and Cao Nhã, before reaching the mountain peak of Chung Sơn, which is situated on the boundary with the district of Thất Khê, in the province of Lạng Sơn. This road is forty-three leagues long.

- A minor road heads southeast from the stage post of Cao Phúc. It passes the market village of Thơm Ban, before reaching the camp of Nà Lạn, near the border with the district of Hạ Đống, in the country of the Qing. This road is forty-five leagues, twelve rods long.

- A further minor road leads west from the provincial citadel. It passes through the commune of Tân Trại ('new camp'), district of Thạch An, and the market village of Tứ Chiếng, district of Thạch Lâm, before reaching the commune of Cầm Nông, on the boundary with the district of Đẻ Định, in the province of Tuyên Quang. This road is ninety-one leagues, seven rods long.

- A road heads northwest from the market village of Tứ Chiếng. It passes through the commune of Quảng Trù, before reaching the commune of Nà Xác, which is across the border from the frontier post of Bình Mạnh, in the prefecture of Tiểu Trấn An, in the country of the Qing. This road is fifty leagues, twenty-five rods long.

- A minor road runs from the provincial citadel towards the southwest. It passes through the communes of Lãn Sơn and Vân Du, district of Thạch An, and the commune of Bằng Đức, district of Nguyên Bình, before reaching the commune of Vân Tông, near the boundary with the district of Cầm Hóa, in the province of Thái Nguyên. This road is eighty leagues, thirty-five rods long.

- Another minor road runs eastwards from the provincial citadel. It passes through the commune of Ngọc Pha, district of Thạch An, the commune of Án Lại, district of Thạch Lâm, the communes of Đà Tàu, Mạn Đà and Cầm Hảo, district of Quảng Uyên, the communes of Ý Cống and Hiếu Lễ, district of Thượng Lang and the commune of Trạo Nhi, district of Hạ Lang. It finally reaches the village of Lũng Đa, near the border with the outer district of Hạ Lôi, in the country of the Qing. This road is 130 leagues, seventy-three rods long.

- A further road leads from the commune of Án Lại towards the northeast. It passes through the commune of Trà Lĩnh before reaching the commune of Hy Lũng near the border with the outer district of Quy Thuận, in the country of the Qing. This road is thirty-four leagues, fifty rods long.

- A final road runs from the commune of Đà Tàu towards the southeast. It passes through the communes of Bà Dương, Lạc Giao, Cách Linh and Phát Mê, before reaching the fort of Nà Thông,

## **The Descriptive Geography of the Emperor Đồng Khánh**

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across the border from the frontier gate of Thủy Khẩu, in the outer district of Long Châu, in the country of the Qing. This road is sixty-five leagues long.

For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.

We, the mandarins of the province of **Hung Hóa**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of

## The Province of **Hung Hóa**

Including the following maps:

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| The Province of Hung Hóa         | 興化省 |
| The Prefecture of Gia Hưng       | 嘉興府 |
| The District of Tam Nông         | 三農縣 |
| The District of Thanh Sơn        | 清山縣 |
| The District of Thanh Thủy       | 清水縣 |
| The Outer District of Sơn La     | 山羅州 |
| The Outer District of Mai Sơn    | 枚山州 |
| The Outer District of Phù Yên    | 扶安州 |
| The Outer District of Mai        | 枚州  |
| The Outer District of Đà Bắc     | 陀北州 |
| The Outer District of Mộc        | 木州  |
| The Outer District of Yên        | 安州  |
| The District of Quy Hóa          | 歸化府 |
| The District of Văn Chấn         | 文振縣 |
| The District of Trấn Yên         | 鎮安縣 |
| The District of Yên Lập          | 安立縣 |
| The Outer District of Văn Bàn    | 文盤州 |
| The Outer District of Thủy Vĩ    | 水尾州 |
| The Prefecture of Yên Tây        | 安西府 |
| The Outer District of Chiêu Tấn  | 昭晉州 |
| The Prefecture of Điện Biên      | 奠邊府 |
| The Outer District of Ninh Biên  | 寧邊州 |
| The Outer District of Thuận Giáo | 遵教州 |
| The Outer District of Luân       | 倫州  |
| The Outer District of Lai        | 萊州  |
| The Outer District of Quỳnh Nhai | 瓊崖州 |
| The Outer District of Thuận      | 順州  |

## **The Description of the Province of Hưng Hoá**

### **[Note on the Administrative History of the Province:**

*The annals relate that the territory of the province of Hưng Hoá was, at the time of the Hùng kings, 'part of the region of Tân Hưng 新興'. Under the Tang 唐, it belonged to the outer district of Lâm Tây 臨西, and under the Lý 李 to the outer district of Đăng 登州. During the Trần 陳 dynasty, it became part of the regional inspectorate of Đà Giang 沱江道, and was then established as a government. In 1397, it was renamed the government of Thiên Hưng 天興. Under the Ming 明, it was divided into the two outer districts of Gia Hưng 嘉興 and Quy Hoá 歸化. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Lê Thái Tổ 黎太祖, these two outer districts became territories in the regional inspectorate of the West 西道. In 1469, when the realm was mapped on the orders of the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗, the division of Hưng Hóa 興化 was established, comprising the prefectures of Gia Hưng 嘉興, Quy Hoá 歸化 and Yên Tây 安西. The division later became a domain, and under the Mạc 莫 it became a government. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Gia Long 嘉隆, it was still known as the government of Hưng Hoá, and comprised three prefectures, four districts and sixteen outer districts. In the twelfth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1831), the district of Tam Nông 三農 was transferred from the Sơn Tây into what became the province of Hưng Hoá. Two years later, the district of Thanh Xuyên 清川 was divided into two, becoming the districts of Thanh Sơn 清山 and Thanh Thủy 清水. In 1841, the three outer districts of Ninh Biên 寧邊, Thuận Giáo 遵教 and Lai Châu 萊州 were merged to form the prefecture of Điện Biên 奠邊府.*

*There were no further changes up to the time of Đồng Khánh. The territory of the province was subsequently divided to form the provinces of Sơn La, Lai Châu and Lào Cai, as they existed at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as the districts of Văn Chấn, Trấn Yên and Văn Yên (Yên Bái), the districts of Thanh Sơn, Thanh Thủy and Yên Lập (Phủ Thọ) and the districts of Đà Bắc and Mai Châu (Hoà Bình).]*

The provincial citadel is situated in the commune of Trúc Khê, district of Tam Nông. The rampart, built in stone, is 316 rods, nine cubits, eight inches in circumference, one rod, two cubits, one inch high, and nine cubits, one inch thick. It has four corners, opens at four gates, and is surrounded by a moat, which is two rods, eight cubits across and nine cubits deep.

To the east, the province is bounded by the district of Bát Bạt, in the province of Sơn Tây, and to the west by the outer district of Quảng Lăng, in the country of the Qing. The district of Trình Cố, in the province of Thanh Hoá, lies to the south, and the outer district of Lục Yên, in the province of Tuyên Quang, to the north. The province is bounded to the southeast by the prefecture of Nho Quan, in the province of Ninh Bình. The country of Laos [Nam Chưởng] lies across the border to the southwest. The prefecture of Lâm Thao, in the province of Sơn Tây, lies to the northeast and the prefecture of Khai Hoá, in the country of the Qing, to the northwest.

From east to west, the province is 764 leagues across. From north to south, it is 646 leagues across.

The province is divided into four prefectures, with six districts and sixteen outer districts.

- 1- The prefecture of Gia Hưng: the prefecture has not yet established a seat; the secondary districts are the districts of Tam Nông, Thanh Sơn and Thanh Thủy and the outer districts of Sơn La, Mai Sơn, Phù Yên, Mai Châu, Đà Bắc Châu, Mộc Châu and Yên Châu.
- 2- The prefecture of Quy Hoá: the secondary districts are the districts of Văn Chấn, Trấn Yên and Yên Lập, and the outer districts of Văn Bàn and Thủy Vĩ.
- 3- The prefecture of Yên Tây: the secondary district is the outer district of Chiêu Tấn.
- 4- The prefecture of Điện Biên: this prefecture has a seat at the principal district of Ninh Biên; the secondary districts are the outer districts of Tuần Giáo, Luân Châu, Lai Châu, Quỳnh Nhai and Thuận Châu.

### **Enlisted Soldiers**

Soldiers recruited by the court: 136 people.

Local militia: 2,576 people.

Reserve militia: 200 people.

Two forts have recently been established for the purposes of defence: forts of Quán Ty and Trấn Hà.

### **Population**

- Population registered for tax payment: 8,976 people.

### **Agricultural Land**

Privately and communally owned land of all categories: 19,294 acres

### **Annual Tax Receipts**

Paid in cash: 15,054 ligatures.

Paid in produce but calculated in cash: 2,805 ligatures.

Paid in paddy: 7,720 bushels.

### **Customs and Manners**

Throughout the prefectures, districts and outer districts of the province, inhabitants of different groups live alongside one another, including the Hán [Kinh], Thổ, Nùng and Mán people as well as the Qing-dynasty Chinese. The Hán [Kinh] people in the province are simple, straightforward folk who live in a relatively compliant and courteous manner. They each have their own profession, whether they are scholars, farmers, artisans or traders. Their daily life, including the language they speak and write, the clothes they wear and the things they use, closely resembles life in the neighbouring province of Sơn Tây. Qing-dynasty Chinese may be found living throughout the mountainous part of the province, and they follow the customs of their own country which may be described as extravagant. The customs of the Nùng people are excessively rustic and backward. Thổ people build houses on stilts with thatched roofs, and clear paddy fields on flat land. They live on the edge of the forest or beside the torrents and streams. Mán people move from one place to another, building their houses on the mountain slopes, clearing swiddens to grow their rice, living off the resources of the forest. Both the Thổ and the Mán are largely brutal in character, as well as simple and miserly. In addition to their work in the fields, the men go fishing and hunting. In some parts, the girls raise silkworms and make silk. Most of them eat glutinous rice, wear clothes dyed with indigo, and carry their children in a length of cloth strapped around the back. They make pipes out of reeds and bamboo to provision

themselves with water. When they fall ill, they rely on prayers and invocations. When they get married, the husband goes to live with the family of his wife. The great landlords celebrate their funerals and annual family commemorations in the manner of the Hán [Kinh] people, whose customs are gradually beginning to take hold among the clan heads of the province. The common people observe these rituals with indifference, and their customs are different from the Hán [Kinh].

### **Local Produce**

The rice crop is more abundant in autumn than in summer. Potatoes, beans, oranges and tangerines, as well as many types of livestock can be found throughout the province, though not in any great quantity. Forest resources include cardamom, reeds, various types of bamboo, teak and other types of precious wood, and brown roots used for making dye. There are also red jungle fowl, nightingales, parrots, various types of deer, tigers, panthers, wild boar, goats and bears. The rivers provide tortoises, sturgeon and bream. Other products include hemp, eaglewood bark, grains of paradise, beeswax, stick-lac, coarse cloth and brocade. The inhabitants of the district of Tam Nông weave white cloth and manufacture crude lacquer, paying tax on these products according to the law. Gold can be found at the mines of Sơn La and Mai Châu, and saltpetre and brimstone at the mines of Thuận Châu, but the miners have submitted to the court a request for temporary exemption from taxation. The gold mine of Văn Chấn, the gold and copper mines of Thủy Vĩ, and the saltpetre mine of Mai Sơn have all shut down. Prospecting continues.

### **Climate**

- Persistent rain sets in throughout the province in the first month, but during the second and third months the weather is warm and fair. The fifth and sixth months are scorching hot. Rain and winds come in the seventh and eighth months, and whirlwinds strike from time to time. In the tenth month, the thunder ceases, and the weather turns cold in the eleventh month. By the twelfth month, it is bitterly cold, rains little, and the thunder returns. In the mountains, dry air ventilates the soil, while in the plains the ground vapours are humid, but otherwise the weather follows the normal patterns. Summer paddy is sown in the ninth month, transplanted in the twelfth month and harvested in the fourth month. Autumn paddy is sown in the fourth month, transplanted in the sixth and harvested in the tenth, following the same cycle as the middle region. The inhabitants of the highlands all live in the mountains, where the weather changes constantly: as soon as it changes, it changes again. As soon as the sun comes out, one feels the heat and the cold numbs the bones before the chill winds blow. The ground vapours tends to be humid in low-lying areas but dry in the mountains where they rise in whirls and spirals. In the morning, when the mists have yet to disperse, miasmas are frequent, especially in the third and ninth months when they are at their most unbearable. The water in the streams and rivers is extremely poisonous. Fields skirt around the mountain slopes, rising in terraces from the streams. Families farming land on the mountain slopes tend to grow corn, while low-lying fields are set aside for the cultivation of glutinous rice. Ordinary rice is not commonly grown. When it rains long and hard, the water drains away very slowly, which may be a result of the mountainous terrain with its narrow, shallow streams. When the streams spill their banks, the farmers lose their harvest.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

There are many mountains throughout the province, but the most reputed are the following: the mountain of *Động Đình*, in *Yên Châu*; the mountain of *Pha Lung* in *Mộc Châu*; the mountain of *Hùng Nhĩ* in *Thanh Sơn*; the mountain of *Chuyên Thiết* in *Thanh Thủy*.

Other mountains include the following: *Trường Sơn* and *Thu Cúc*, in *Thanh Sơn*; *Thục Luyện*, in *Thanh Thủy*; *Lỗ Động*, *Phong Huyệt* and *Yên Huyệt*, in *Mộc Châu*; *Ban Sơn*, *Ca* and *Nạp*, in *Sơn La*;

Hiền Sơn and Tượng Sơn, in Mai Sơn; Chi Sơn and Bút Sơn, in Văn Chấn; Cái Đỉnh and Mỏ Cò, in Trấn Yên; Loan Nương, Cổ Lôi, Cổ Tốt, Chiêu and Ái, in Thủy Vĩ; Lan Sơn, Loan Khoá, Nghi and Mã Yên, in Văn Bàn; Hào and Phú Thành, in Thuận Giáo; Quảng and Thạch Trản, in Luân Châu; Phong Cương, Ngũ Tiên, Cương and Kha, in Chiêu Tấn; Hiền Liêu, Cổ Thành and Phạ, in Ninh Biên; Xích Thổ, Đốc, Tương and Lung, in Thuận Châu; Liên, Lai, Chân Thạch and Càn Ca, in Lai Châu; Thạch Lãng, Thính Đáp, Thái, Lai and Thục Lũy, in Phù Yên; Hành Sơn, Xích Thạch, Nữ Vương, Tiên Biều and Bân Sơn, in Mai Châu; Tâm Cảnh, Cử, Than, Roi, Ngải, Long Môn, Ninh, Cồn and Thần Cốc, in Đà Bắc; Quang, Hộ, Trầm Trĩ, Tượng Khẩu, in Yên Lập.

The only two large navigable waterways in the province are the Red [Thao] and Đà rivers. Less substantial rivers include the Mã, Mỹ, Xuân Đài, Thục Luyện, Kim Tử, Ngưu, Sâm, Lôi Giang, Phù Yên, Na and the Nậu.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

In the district of Tam Nông, one may visit the temple of the revelation of the spirits, the shrine of all the saints and the shrine of the gods of the walls and moats, all of which are situated in the commune of Trúc Khê. The mountain god Tản Viên is venerated at a temple in the district of Thanh Sơn, where one may also visit the temple of Quan Công, the temple of the great Trần generals and the temple of Linh Ý. A temple to the great Đinh generals may be found in the district of Thanh Thủy. The water dragon, deity of the dikes, is venerated at a temple in the outer district of Đà Bắc. The temple of Hoàng Giang is situated in the outer district of Mai Sơn. The mountain god Tản Viên is worshiped in the outer district of Phù Yên. The pagoda of Cổ Thành may be found in the outer district of Ninh Biên. The district of Trấn Yên is home to a temple where the lady Diệp is venerated. There is a temple to the principality of Vệ in this district, as well as in the outer district of Văn Bàn. The temple of Quan Công, the temple of the princess Liễu Hạnh and the temple of the dragon prince may all be found in the outer district of Thủy Vĩ.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road enters the province from the stage post of Sơn Quang, in the province of Sơn Tây. It runs eastwards to the Hạ Nông jetty on the Đà river, and then on to the stage post of Hưng Nông and the Trúc Khê jetty on the Red [Thao] River. It finally reaches the stage post of Sơn Thạch, which is also in the province of Sơn Tây. This road is seventy leagues, one rod long.

- A minor road runs southwards from the provincial citadel to the jetty on the Đà river at Suối Thập, in the outer district of Phù Yên. It then crosses the prefectures and districts of Mai Sơn, Sơn La, Thuận Châu, Thuận Giáo and Điện Biên, before finally reaching the border with the country of Laos [Nam Chưởng]. This road is 1,250 leagues long, and four cubits wide.

- A minor road runs westwards from the citadel to the ferry pier of Mỹ Hà in the district of Tam Nông. It then crosses the districts of Cẩm Khê and Hạ Hoà, in the province of Sơn Tây, before reaching the district seat of Văn Chấn. This road is 160 leagues, eleven rods long, and four cubits wide.

- A minor road runs westwards from the citadel to the Mỹ Hà pier in the district of Tam Nông. It then crosses the districts of Cẩm Khê and Hạ Hoà, in the province of Sơn Tây, followed by the districts of Trấn Yên, Văn Bàn and Thủy Vĩ, before reaching the border with the country of the Qing. This road is 960 leagues, five rods long, and four cubits wide.

- A minor road leads from the citadel westwards to the Mỹ Hà pier in the district of Tam Nông. It then crosses the districts of Cẩm Khê and Hạ Hoà, in the province of Sơn Tây, branching off towards the districts of Trấn Yên and Văn Bàn before finally reaching the seat of the outer district of Chiêu Tấn. This road is 500 leagues long, and three cubits wide.

For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.

We, the mandarins of the province of **Thái Nguyên**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of

## **The Province of Thái Nguyên**

Including the following maps:

|  |      |
|--|------|
| The Citadel of the Province of Thái Nguyên | 太原省城 |
| The Prefecture of Phú Bình                 | 富平府  |
| The District of Tư Nông                    | 司農縣  |
| The District of Phổ Yên                    | 普安縣  |
| The District of Động Hỷ                    | 洞喜縣  |
| The District of Bình Xuyên                 | 平川縣  |
| The District of Võ Nhai                    | 武崖縣  |
| The Prefecture of Tông Hóa                 | 從化府  |
| The Outer District of Định                 | 定州   |
| The District of Văn Lãng                   | 文朗縣  |
| The District of Đại Từ                     | 大慈縣  |
| The District of Phú Lương                  | 富良縣  |
| The Prefecture of Thông Hóa                | 通化府  |
| The District of Cảm Hóa                    | 感化縣  |
| The Outer District of Bạch Thông           | 白通州  |

## The Description of the Province of **Thái Nguyên**

### [Note on the Administrative History of the Province:

*Under the Tang 唐, the territory of the province of Thái Nguyên was part of the outer district of Vũ Nga 武峨. During the early Lê 黎 and Lý 李 dynasties, it was the outer district of Thái Nguyên 太原, and in 1397, the emperor Trần Thuận Tông 陳順宗 named it a government. Under the Ming 明, it returned to its former status, and was made up of the following eleven districts: Phú Lương 富良, Tư Nông 司農, Vũ Lễ 武禮, Động Hỉ 洞喜, Vĩnh Thông 永通, Tuyên Hoá 宣化, Lộng Thạch 弄石, Đại Từ 大慈, An Định 安定, Cảm Hoá 感化 and Thái Nguyên 太原. In 1412, it was named a prefecture. Eleven years later the district of Tư Nông was merged into the district of An Định, the district of Động Hỉ became part of the district of Phú Lương, and the district of Đại Từ was transferred into the district of Tuyên Hoá. There were then eight districts. During the reign of the emperor Lê Thái Tổ 黎太祖, it was part of the regional inspectorate of the North (北道). The emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 established the division of Thái Nguyên in 1466, and three years later renamed it Ninh Sóc 寧朔. At the beginning of the Hồng Đức period, it was renamed the government of Thái Nguyên, comprising three prefectures, with eight districts and seven outer districts. At that time, the prefecture of Phú Bình 富平 contained the districts of Phổ Yên, Đại Từ, Tư Nông, Bình Nguyên, Đông Hỉ, Phú Lương and Văn Lãng, and the outer districts of Định Hoá and Vũ Nhai. The prefecture of Thông Hoá 通化 contained the district of Cảm Hoá and the outer district of Bạch Thông. The prefecture of Bắc Bình 北平 contained the outer districts of Thượng Lang, Hạ Lang, Thạch Lâm and Quảng Uyên. It later became a domain, and after the Lê Restoration, in 1677, the prefecture of Bắc Bình was transferred to the government of Cao Bình 高平, now the province of Cao Bằng. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Gia Long 嘉隆, the government of Thái Nguyên was made up of two prefectures, with nine districts and two outer districts, as it had been before except that the outer district of Vũ Nhai had become a district. In the twelfth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1831), provinces were created across the country and the province of Thái Nguyên came into being. Four years later, four of the districts and outer districts in the prefecture of Phú Bình were transferred to the prefecture of Tông Hoá 從化.*

*There were no further changes up to the time of the emperor **Đông Khánh**, when the province included three prefectures with nine districts and two outer districts. Further changes were to follow, and the province of Thái Nguyên at the time of the emperor **Đông Khánh** was to be split between the province of Thái Nguyên, as it existed at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as the district of Bình Xuyên, which was to become part of the province of Vĩnh Phúc, the districts of Bạch Thông, Na Rì and Chợ Đồn (Bắc Cạn), and the districts of Ngân Sơn and Ba Bể (Cao Bằng).]*

### **Provincial citadel**

In the past, the citadel of Thái Nguyên was situated in the commune of Bình Kỳ, prefecture of Đa Phúc, province of Bắc Ninh. In 1813, the emperor Gia Long transferred it to the village of Đồng Hoà, in the district of Động Hỷ, within the provincial boundary. The rampart, which is shaped in a square, is

## **The Descriptive Geography of the Emperor Đông Khánh**

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325 rods, seven cubits, two inches in circumference and stands five cubits high. It is four cubits, two inches thick at the top, and one rod, eight cubits thick at the base. A two-cubit high gun platform has been constructed on the rampart. The citadel opens at four gates built in brick and tile, each with a watchtower on top. The ramparts are surrounded by a moat which measures two rods across and five cubits deep.

To the east, the province is bounded by the district of Hữu Lũng, in the province of Bắc Ninh (at a distance of thirty-two leagues from the provincial citadel). The districts of Chiêm Hoá and Vĩnh Điện, province of Tuyên Quang, lie to the west (350 leagues from the citadel), as do the districts of Sơn Dương and Tam Dương, province of Sơn Tây (165 leagues from the citadel). To the south, the province is bounded by the district of Yên Lãng, province of Sơn Tây (sixty-three leagues from the citadel), as well as the districts of Hiệp Hoà, Đa Phúc, and Kim Anh, province of Bắc Ninh (thirty-three leagues from the citadel). To the north lie the districts and outer districts of Văn Uyên, Văn Quan and Thất Khê, province of Lạng Sơn (290 leagues from the citadel) and the districts of Thạch An and Nguyên Bình, province of Cao Bằng (310 leagues from the citadel).

From east to west, the province is 382 leagues across. From north to south, it is 373 leagues across.

The province is divided into three prefectures, with nine districts and two outer districts.

- 1- The prefecture of Phú Bình: principal districts of Tư Nông and Phở Yên, secondary districts of Bình Xuyên, Động Hỷ and Vũ Nhai.
- 2- The prefecture of Tông Hoá: principal districts of Định Châu and Văn Lãng, secondary districts of Phú Lương and Đại Từ.
- 3- The prefecture of Thông Hoá: principal district of Cẩm Hoá, secondary outer district of Bạch Thông.

Privately and communally owned agricultural land paying tax: 53,869 acres, four square poles, fourteen square perches and one square yard.

Note that the two cantons of Thượng Quan and Kim Mã, prefecture of Thông Hoá, which have been transferred to the province of Cao Bằng, contain 1,664 acres, two square poles, two square perches and nine square yards of agricultural land.

Population registered for tax payment: 9,021 people.

The two cantons of Thượng Quan and Kim Mã, prefecture of Thông Hoá, list 252 people registered for tax payment.

Tax paid in cash: 19,300 ligatures, four strings and fifty-five sapeques. This includes:

Land tax: 8,511 ligatures, six strings and fifty-five sapeques.

Head tax: 10,788 ligatures and eight strings.

Tax paid in paddy: 13,151 bushels, nineteen pints, four double handfuls and two handfuls.

There were originally 700 soldiers recruited by the court, and there now remain 135.

The province contains the following other inhabitants:

Residents of the Mán Thất group used to number 226 people. Each registered taxpayer paid annual head tax of one tael of silver. Twenty-three members of this group now owe tax in the province of Cao Bằng.

Residents of the Mán Sơn Miêu group used to number 143 people. Seventy of them have now returned to the province.

Qing-dynasty Chinese residents used to number fifteen people. Each registered taxpayer paid annual head tax of two taels of silver. They have now all dispersed from the province and none have returned. Seven of them now owe tax in the province of Cao Bằng.

Ming-dynasty Chinese residents living at the markets used to number 163 people. Registered taxpayers of all categories paid annual head tax of two taels of silver, with the exception of the old men who paid one tael. They have all now dispersed from the province and none have returned. Four of them now owe tax in the province of Cao Bằng.

There are four gold mines in the province, which normally pay tax of forty-nine ounces of gold annually. Two further mines at An Bảo and Bảo Nang shut down long ago, and the mine of Thuần Mang has been transferred to the province of Cao Bằng. Of the four existing mines, three have recently been abandoned and tax is now longer collected. These are the mines of Kim Hỷ, Bằng Thành and Sảng Mộc. Nowadays, tax is collected only from the mine of Mụ Thượng, but this mine is constantly subject to bandit incursions and even here the tax has not yet been paid. The province contains five mines of silver, lead and iron ore, which normally pay tax of 470 taels of silver annually. The mine of Khiếu Nương shut down long ago, the mine of Ngân Sơn has been transferred to the province of Cao Bằng, and the other mines have ceased paying tax. A further ten mines of iron ore pay tax in iron amounting to 8,900 catties. This tax is still collected. There are two lead mines, owing tax in lead amounting to 1,200 catties, and two saltpetre mines, owing tax in saltpetre of 200 catties. Tax is no longer collected from these mines. Tax amounting to 818 catties of saltpetre is owed on the output from four communes, where there are seventy-two registered taxpayers. This tax is no longer paid. Two boundary posts, at Đông Mụ and Bắc Cạn, pay annual customs tax of 8,370 ligatures. This sum is still collected.

The main sites of the province include the rostrum to the gods of the soil and harvests, which may be found to the west of the provincial citadel, at about one league from the provincial seat. The rostrum to the gods of the mountains and rivers is situated to the south of the citadel, about half a league from the provincial seat, while the temple of Confucian literature is to the northeast, at about one league. The shrine of all the saints may be found at a distance of about thirty rods east of the citadel. The rostrum to the gods of agriculture is situated in the same direction, fifty rods from the citadel. The rostrum to the gods of the walls and moats is southeast of the citadel, half a league away. There are, in total, six rostrums and shrines in the area around the citadel. There were originally one courier post and fourteen forts in the province. Nowadays only the courier post of Thái Long remains. All the forts have been abandoned.

### **Customs and Manners**

Hán [Kinh], Thổ and Mán people live alongside one another in the lower districts of Động Hỷ, Tư Nông, Phổ Yên, Bình Xuyên, Phú Lương and Đại Từ. The Hán [Kinh] people are numerous in this part of the province, and here and there one may meet someone who knows how to read and write. As for the districts of Cẩm Hoá, Bạch Thông, Định Châu, Văn Lãng and Vũ Nhai, in the highlands of the province, the main inhabitants are Mán and Thổ people, in roughly equal numbers. Few of them are literate. The main professions of the province include farming paddy, felling timber, fishing with nets and hunting for game. At the beginning of spring, the people hold festivals of sacrifices to the gods. Lunar new year and new year's eve, the double five festival (held on the fifth day of the fifth month), the mid-autumn festival, the festival of souls (held in the middle of the seventh month) and the winter solstice, as well as weddings and funerals, are all celebrated simply and with indifference by the inhabitants of the highlands. In the lower region, Hán [Kinh] people follow the traditions of the plains,

and only the customs of the Nùng and Mán present noticeable differences. The Nùng people's origins lie in the border areas of the country of the Qing, and they have come here as sojourners. As a result, their clothes and language are rather similar to those of the people of their country of origin. Mán people refer to their places of residence as 'camps'. They belong to five different clans. Members of the first clan are known the Mán Sơn Miêu Quần Cộc (Short Trousered Mán Sơn Miêu), named after their short trousers which cover only their thighs. They build thatched huts on flat land, clearing fields from the forest. Their harvests yield enough for their needs, and when they have a surplus they exchange the paddy for silver. Members of the second clan are known as the Mán Cao Lang. They build their houses on stilts beside the mountain torrents and chose suitable sites for their fields of paddy and corn. After two or three years, when the soil is exhausted, they clear a plot from the forest elsewhere. Both of these Mán clans are, as a result, obliged to move regularly, never staying in the same place for long. On the birth of each child, they hold merry feasts in celebration. On the wedding of each son, a high bride price is exacted. They celebrate only two of the important dates in the lunar cycle, the new year and the winter solstice. Members of the third clan are known as the Mán Bản, which is divided into two lineages: the Mán Đại Bản, who live in areas of rocky mountain and the Mán Tiểu Bản, who prefer mountains made of earth. Their marriages are celebrated in the seventh month. For the ceremony rich families bring silver to the bride's house, after which she is accompanied in procession to the house of her new husband. The sons of poor families move in with the family of the bride, but may set up their own home after twelve years. When they reach the age of sixteen, girls start to tie up their hair and wear a scarf tied over a square frame on their heads. When they get married, they knot this scarf in the shape of a horn, resembling that of a golden bull. The men plait their hair and dress themselves in the manner of the country of the Qing. They cremate their dead. Members of the fourth clan are known as the Mán Đeo Tiên (Sapeque Clothed Mán). In their houses, these people build altars dedicated to the gods, which they call the 'first ancestors and great spirits'. On the birth of each child, they slaughter a pig in offering to the gods. All of them wear blue clothes decorated with ancient coins and embroidered with round motifs. Members of the fifth clan are known as the Mán Bạch Miêu. The men plait their hair, while the women cover their heads in white scarves embroidered with flower patterns. Their mourning rites are centred on the scarf wrapped around the head of the deceased: mourning ceases when the scarf is torn. Clan heads often eat and dress in a similar manner to the Hán [Kinh] people, and from time to time one of them goes to wait upon the mandarin, which is a sign of great competence and ability. Members of all the Mán clans mentioned here wear blue clothes and speak in a warbling language, but nowadays they have dispersed and only one or two in every ten of them remain in the province. The tax rolls still record them all as belonging to two, rather than five clans: "Sơn Miêu, Thất Tộc" (the Mán Sơn Miêu and the Mán Thất). With the exception of some of the more educated Hán [Kinh] people, the inhabitants of the province are generally stupid, backward and quarrelsome, knowing little of good manners and polite society. Many people follow the path of Buddhism, but few the doctrine of the Catholics. Catholics may be found in a single commune in the district of Tư Nông, seven communes in the district of Bình Xuyên and a single commune in the district of Động Hỷ.

### **Local Produce**

The rice crop is more abundant in autumn than in summer. Corn, beans, fruit, vegetables, marrows and melons are also grown. Nature offers produce including bamboo and timber in the mountains, and fish and shrimps in the streams, but none of these are of great rarity or value. High quality hardwood may be found in the districts of Động Hỷ, Phổ Yên and Phú Lương, including ironwood (*lim*), nailwood, peltophore and teak. Pheasant and red jungle fowl may be found in scattered parts of the

districts of Bạch Thông and Cẩm Hoá. There are great hornbills in Định Châu and Văn Lãng, and peacocks in Vũ Nhai and Phú Lương. Five different types of metal (gold, silver, copper, iron and lead) may be found in the province, and the gold at Kim Hỷ and silver at Bông Ngân are of the best quality. In recent years, these mines have suffered from many bandit attacks and the local people can no longer work them. Most have shut down as a result.

### **Climate**

The winds of the province are generally chill, while the ground vapours are dry. Heavy rain falls in summer, while in winter the skies are fine. The warm weather comes at the end of spring, while the cold sets in at the beginning of autumn. Gloomy clouds and dreary mists cover the land at the break of day, and disappear only in the middle of the morning. There are miasmas in the lower districts of Bình Xuyên, Tư Nông, Phổ Yên and Động Hỷ, but they are relatively mild. By contrast, the miasmas throughout the rest of the province are quite unbearable. Torrents and streams cover the province, and break their banks when it rains heavily. Then the rain ceases, the skies clear, and nature returns to normal.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

Mountains and torrents cover the province from one end to the other. Famous mountains include the following: the mountains of Khâu Hoắc, Cổ Lân Đầu, Linh Quang and Biều Sơn, as well as the cave of Thạch Kê, in the district of Cẩm Hoá; the mountains of Yến Đĩnh, Phương Viên, Yên Hân and Hán Lĩnh, in the district of Bạch Thông; the mountains of Tượng Sơn, Lịch Sơn and Triện Sơn, and the rocky mountain of Hoá Trung, in the district of Động Hỷ; the mountains of Hanh Sơn, Ngọc Sơn and Đột Sơn, in the district of Tư Nông; the mountains of Độc Tôn and Thanh Lộc in the district of Phổ Yên; the mountains of Đăng Cao, Ngọc Quang, Yến Đĩnh and Ngọc Bội, in the district of Bình Xuyên; the mountains of Tam Canh and Vũ Lễ, and the caves of Tam Canh and Lũng Năng, in the district of Vũ Nhai; the mountain of Tam Đảo, in the district of Đại Từ; the mountain of Điểm Sơn, in the district of Phú Lương; the mountains of Trúc Lĩnh and Yến Lĩnh, and the rocky mountain of Trung Khâm, in the district of Định Châu.

Streams and brooks chase around the mountain slopes throughout the province. Of the larger bodies of water, the Ba Bể lake may be found in the district of Bạch Thông. Small boats can make the journey down the Đông Mỗ river, in the district of Động Hỷ, and the Mão river in the district of Phổ Yên, but encounter many rocky rapids.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The pagoda of Thạch Sơn may be admired in the district of Động Hỷ. The pagoda of Đột Sơn may be found in the district of Tư Nông. The pagoda of Tây Thiên is situated in the district of Phổ Yên. The pool of fairies called Tiên Trì may be visited in the district of Cẩm Hoá. The Ba Bể lake is in the district of Bạch Thông. The forest is luxuriant here, and one rarely comes across the footprints of passers-by.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs southwards from the market village of Đông Mỗ near the provincial citadel as far as the stage post of Thái Long. This road is thirty-one leagues and seven rods long. If you travel a further two leagues on from this stage post, you reach the provincial boundary with Bắc Ninh.

- A road runs from the same market village past the market of Chợ Mới ('new market') in Bạch Thông. It follows the gorge westwards through the outer district of Bạch Thông, past the mountain of

## **The Descriptive Geography of the Emperor **Đông Khánh****

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Phương Viên, as far as the provincial boundary with the district of Vĩnh Điện, in the province of Tuyên Quang. This road is 300 leagues long.

The following roads all lead through the forest:

- A road runs southwest from the market village of **Đông Mỗ** near the provincial citadel. It passes through the district of **Bình Xuyên** before reaching the provincial boundary with the districts of **Yên Lãng**, in the province of **Sơn Tây**, and **Kim Anh**, in the province of **Bắc Ninh**. This road is one hundred leagues long.

- A road leads from the outer district of **Bạch Thông** to the citadel of the prefecture of **Thông Hoá**, the former district seat of **Cẩm Hoá**. It then runs northeast as far as the provincial boundary with the districts of **Thất Khê**, province of **Lạng Sơn**, and **Thạch An**, province of **Cao Bằng**. This road is 200 leagues long.

- A road leads from the citadel of the prefecture of **Thông Hoá** through the gorges. It passes the market of **Dã** and the fort at **Ba Bể** lake, before reaching the provincial boundary with the district of **Nguyễn Bình**, province of **Cao Bằng**, and the outer district of **Chiêm Hoá**, province of **Tuyên Quang**. This road is 200 leagues long.

- A road leads eastwards from the market village of **Đông Mỗ** through the districts of **Đông Hỷ** and **Vũ Nhai** as far as the provincial boundary with the districts of **Văn Quan** and **Văn Uyên**. This road is 250 leagues long.

- A road runs southeast from the citadel of the prefecture of **Phú Bình** as far as the provincial boundary with the districts of **Yên Thế** and **Hữu Lũng**, in the province of **Bắc Ninh**. This road is thirty leagues long.

- A road runs southwest from the market village of **Đông Hoà** near the provincial citadel, through the districts of **Phổ Yên** and **Bình Xuyên**, as far as the provincial boundary with the district of **Kim Anh**, in the province of **Bắc Ninh**. This road is one hundred leagues long.

- A road follows the torrent westwards from the market of **Chợ Mới**, through the prefecture of **Tông Hoá** which used to be the district seat of **Định Xuyên**, as far as the provincial boundary with the district of **Vĩnh Điện**, in the province of **Tuyên Quang**. This road is 250 leagues long.

- A road leads westwards from **Quang Vinh** and **Mỏ Bạch** through the districts of **Phú Lương**, **Đại Từ** and **Văn Lãng** as far as the provincial boundary with the district of **Sơn Dương**, in the province of **Sơn Tây**. This road is 200 leagues long.

- A road leads from the former district seat of **Phổ Yên** southwards as far as the provincial boundary with the district of **Hiệp Hoà**, in the province of **Bắc Ninh**. This road is 25 leagues long.

- A road leads along the top of a small dike in the district of **Bình Xuyên**. This road is 2,810 rods long.

**For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.**

**We, the mandarins of the province of **Tuyên Quang**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of**

## **The Province of **Tuyên Quang****

Including the following maps:

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| The Province of <b>Tuyên Quang</b>                   | 宣光省    |
| The Prefecture of <b>An Bình</b>                     | 安平府    |
| The District of <b>Hàm Yên</b>                       | 咸安縣    |
| The Outer District of <b>Thu</b>                     | 收州     |
| The District of <b>Vĩnh Tuy</b>                      | 永綏縣    |
| The District of <b>Lục Yên</b>                       | 陸安縣    |
| The Prefecture of <b>Tương Dương</b>                 | 襄安府    |
| The Districts of <b>Vĩnh Định</b> and <b>Đẻ Định</b> | 永奠縣底定縣 |
| The District of <b>Vị Xuyên</b>                      | 渭川縣    |
| The Outer District of <b>Chiêm Hóa</b>               | 霑化州    |

## The Description of the Province of **Tuyên Quang**

### [Note on the Administrative History of the Province:

*Under the Han, the territory of the province of **Tuyên Quang** was part of the Chinese dominion of **Giao Chỉ** 交趾. Under the **Trần** 陳 it was the outer district of **Tuyên Quang** 宣光 in the territory of **Quốc Oai** 國威, later becoming the government of **Tuyên Quang**. Under the **Ming** 明, it was first known (1407) as the outer district of **Tuyên Hoá** 宣化 and was made up of nine districts: **Khoáng Huyện** 曠縣, **Đương Đạo** 當道, **Văn Yên** 文安, **Bình Nguyên** 平原, **Đế Giang** 底江, **Thu Vật** 收物, **Đại Man** 大蠻, **Dương Huyện** 楊縣 and **Ất Huyện** 乙縣. A year later (1408), it became a prefecture. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor **Lê Thái Tổ** 黎太祖, it was part of the regional inspectorate of the West 西道. In 1466, it became the division of **Tuyên Quang**. At this time it was made up of one prefecture, **Yên Bình** 安平, one district, **Phúc Yên** 福安, and five outer districts, **Thu Vật** 收物, **Lục Yên** 陸安, **Bình Nguyên** 平原, **Đại Man** 大蠻 and **Bảo Lạc** 保樂. In 1509-1516 it was renamed the government of **Minh Quang** 明光. After the **Lê Restoration**, the region was offered as a hereditary command to the family of **Vũ Văn Mật** 武文密, and was named the shire of **Yên Tây** 安西, sometimes referred to as **Yên Bắc** 安北. In 1705-1719 the court sent a further mandarin to carry out reforms, and its former name, the government of **Tuyên Quang**, was restored. At the beginning of the **Nguyễn** 阮 dynasty it was still called the government of **Tuyên Quang**. In the twelfth year of the reign of the emperor **Minh Mệnh** 明命 (1831), when the country was divided into provinces, the province of **Tuyên Quang** came into being. Two years later, after the **Nùng Văn Vân** 儂文雲 revolt had been put down, the outer district of **Bảo Lạc** was abolished, and its territory was divided between the two districts of **Vĩnh Điện** 永奠 and **Đế Định** 底定. In 1835, the outer district of **Vị Xuyên** was similarly divided, forming the districts of **Vĩnh Tuy** 永綏 and **Vị Xuyên** 渭川. At that time the outer district of **Đại Man** was renamed **Chiêm Hoá** 霑化, and the prefecture of **Yên Bình** 安平 was divided. The new prefecture thus formed was named **Yên Ninh** 安寧 and included four districts. The district of **Vĩnh Tuy** remained in the prefecture of **Yên Bình**. The prefecture of **Yên Ninh** was later renamed **Tương Yên** 襄安.*

*At the time of the emperor **Đông Khánh**, the province of **Tuyên Quang** covered the territory of the following districts and provinces as they existed at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: the districts of **Yên Bình** and **Lục Yên** (**Yên Bái**), the districts of **Hàm Yên**, **Yên Sơn**, and **Chiêm Hoá** (**Tuyên Quang**), the districts of **Bắc Quang**, **Hoàng Su Phì** and **Vị Xuyên** (**Hà Giang**), the district of **Bảo Lạc** (**Cao Bằng**).]*

The provincial citadel is situated in the commune of **Ý La**, in the district of **Hàm Yên**. Built in stone, its rampart is 259 rods, eight cubits and eight inches in circumference and nine cubits, seven inches high. The citadel open at three gates, its fourth side lying against the mountain. The front, left and right hand sides of the rampart are surrounded by a moat of uneven width and depth, which vary from five cubits to one rod depending on the presence of rocks and stones. The moat is full of water in

summer and autumn but empty in spring and winter. The left hand side of the citadel overlooks the river. The front and rear gates are two-storey constructions, and a six-cubit-high embankment protects each gate. Beyond the rampart a further fortification surrounds the front, left and right hand sides. Built of earth, it is 642 rods, five cubits in circumference and three cubits high. Beyond this embankment, a barrier of bamboo and reeds completes the citadel's defences. The embankment's left hand side dominates the river. The district seat of **Hàm Yên** and the population of the markets and villages all live on the left bank of the river.

The province is bounded to the east by the provinces of **Sơn Tây**, **Cao Bằng** and **Thái Nguyên**. To the west lie the provinces of **Hung Hoá** and **Sơn Tây**. The province of **Sơn Tây** also lies across the provincial boundary to the south. The districts of **Khai Hoá** and **Trần An**, in the country of the **Qing**, lie across the northern border.

The journey from east to west across the province takes thirteen days by road. From north to south, it takes sixteen days. Because the roads throughout the entire province twist and wind through the forest, it is impossible to represent these distances exactly in leagues.

The province is divided into two prefectures, with a total of eight districts and outer districts.

- 1- The prefecture of **Yên Bình**: principal district of **Thu Châu**, secondary districts of **Hàm Yên**, **Vĩnh Tuy**, and secondary outer district of **Lục Yên**.
- 2- The prefecture of **Tương Yên**: principal districts of **Vĩnh Điện** and **Đề Định**, secondary districts of **Vị Xuyên** and **Chiêm Hoá**.

### **Customs and Manners**

Only in the two districts of **Hàm Yên** and **Thu Châu** may **Thổ** and **Hán** [**Kinh**] people be found living alongside one another. The population of the rest of the province is made up of **Thổ** people, some long-term sojourners such as the **Bạch Miêu**, **Anh Miêu** and **Hắc Miêu** people, some guest sojourners, as well as the **Nùng**, **Mán** and **Qing-dynasty Chinese**. Most of the inhabitants wear clothes dyed with indigo. The **Thổ** and **Mán** wear tunics with short sleeves but long flaps, while the other groups all wear short tunics.

All the inhabitants of the province farm the land. They are little given to study, being docile and easily led into superstition. It is very difficult to get them to understand explanations. No sophisticated professions are practised in the province, with the exception of the **Thổ** people of the districts of **Vĩnh Điện** and **Đề Định**, who are excellent marksmen with their flintlock guns. In general the people live in awe of demons and spirits, using prayers and supplications to cure their illnesses rather than medicine. In the past, people from the delta moved up to settle in the province, and among them there were people who followed the doctrine of the Catholics. In recent years, bandit attacks have caused many of them to leave and go elsewhere, and nowadays there are no Catholics in the province.

### **Local Produce**

Autumn rice is grown in the province, but there is no summer rice. Glutinous rice is cultivated, in addition to ordinary rice, potatoes, beans and barley. The forest offers cardamom, in **Vĩnh Điện**, **Đề Định**, **Vĩnh Tuy** and **Vị Xuyên**, tree bark in **Chiêm Hoá**, and a forest grain valued for its oil in **Thu Châu**. Brown roots used for dye, as well as bamboo and coloured wood may be found in all districts of the province.

The canton of **Đông Quang**, district of **Đề Định**, is home to a delicious species of pear. Opium is grown in different parts of the same canton, as well as the cantons of **An Định**, district of **Vị Xuyên**,

and Tụ Long, district of Vĩnh Tuy. There is a copper mine in the commune of Tụ Long and it is said that good quality ore may be found there, but bandit attacks have disturbed production and mining there has ceased.

### **Climate**

In the northern part of the province, the first and second months of spring are cold, and the warm weather comes only in the third month. During the months of summer, the heat is torrid and sultry, and the weather cools only in the seventh and eighth months. It is already cold by the ninth month. The months of winter are extremely cold, with constant miasmas and thick mountain fogs which disperse only in mid-morning when the first rays of sunlight pierce through. The miasmas are less insalubrious in the districts of Hàm Yên and Thu Châu. The highland districts of Vĩnh Điện, Đẻ Định, Vị Xuyên, Chiêm Hoá, Vĩnh Tuy and Lục Yên are all situated in a region known for its toxic miasmas, notably in the third and ninth months when they are at their most unbearable. The people know this, and express their knowledge in a saying: ‘When in the ninth month the tangerines start to redden, when in the third month the mugwort shoots appear, it’s time to leave’. The waters rise little throughout the province and floods are unknown.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

Mountain chases mountain and forest chases forest from one end of the province to the other. The most famous mountain in the province may be found in the district of Hàm Yên. Known as the mountain of Sâm Sơn, it stands right behind the provincial citadel. Other well known mountains include the mountains of Nghiêm Sơn and Chân Sơn. The mountain of Biền Sơn may be found in the district of Thu Châu. The district of Vĩnh Tuy is home to the mountains of Lão Quân, Đại Lĩnh Can, Nam Sơn and Ba Tiêu, as well as the pass of Phân Thủy. The mountain of Mạn Lĩnh may be found in the district of Lục Yên. The mountains of Cổ Long, Ngọc Nữ and Ngọc Mạo may be found in the district of Vĩnh Điện. The mountains of Bốc Khê and Tam Phùng are situated in the district of Đẻ Định. The mountains of Nam Thiên Môn, Hiểm Cảnh, Hiểm Hoạ, Sài Sơn, Bà Sơn, Chu Sơn, Bọt Sơn, Dương Sơn, Bồ Lai, Hành Sơn and Thủy Lạc are all situated in the district of Vị Xuyên. The district of Chiêm Hoá is known for the mountains of Tượng Sơn, Thần Sơn, and Tạ Sơn. There are, in addition, multitudes of other lesser known mountains.

The larger rivers in the province include the following:

The Lô river rises in the district of Văn Sơn, in the country of the Qing, and flows through to the commune of Tụ Thành, in the district of Vĩnh Tuy.

The Khâm river rises in the district of Tiểu Trấn An, in the country of the Qing, and flows through to the commune of Ân Quang, in the district of Đẻ Định.

The Lôi river rises in the outer district of Thủy Vĩ, in the province of Hưng Hoá, and flows through to the commune of Điện Quan, in the outer district of Lục Yên.

As for the smaller streams and torrents, it would be impossible to describe them all here.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The province is empty border country, and the only well known sacred site is the pagoda of Cao Sơn, in the district of Hàm Yên. The market village of Văn Trung, in the commune of Ân Quang, district of Đẻ Định, and the copper mine of Tụ Long, in the district of Vĩnh Tuy, used to be known as popular and crowded meeting places. In the village of Ngọc Mạo, in the commune of Ân Quang, there is a cave where the wind makes strange sounds.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

The roads twist and turn through the mountains and gorges, and it is impossible to count the leagues as they pass. On these forest roads, the turns are so frequent that it is difficult to draw them on the map.

- A main road runs south from the commune of Thúc Thủy, near the stage post of Sơn Hoà, on the boundary with the province of Sơn Tây, as far as the provincial citadel. This road is one rod wide.

- A road runs from the provincial citadel, turning to the west and then to the north, passing the fort of Hương Mang, crossing the Lô river and following it upstream through the districts of Vĩnh Tuy and Vị Xuyên, before reaching the fort of Tụ Long. The journey takes twelve days. From this fort, the traveller may press on for a further day and half, as far as a locality called Đình Bia, on the border with the country of the Qing. The whole journey takes about thirteen and a half days.

- A road leads from the market village of Xuân Hoà near the provincial citadel. It crosses the river, following a route from the commune of Trường Đà upstream along the bank of the Khâm river, through the districts of Chiêm Hoá, Vĩnh Điện and Để Định, as far as the fort of An Lĩnh, on the border with the country of the Qing. The journey takes about sixteen days.

- A road runs west from the provincial citadel through Thu Châu and Lục Yên, as far as the boundary post of Quán Ti, in the province of Hưng Hoá. The journey takes about six days.

All the above-mentioned roads present such extreme difficulties that only birds can make the journey in safety and reasonable time.

### **Forts and Strongholds**

There are eighteen forts in the province, six in Hàm Yên, one in Vĩnh Điện, five in Chiêm Hoá, two in Vĩnh Tuy, one in the district of Để Định, two in Lục Yên and one in Vị Xuyên.

### **Confucian Temples**

The province's Confucian temple is in the district of Hàm Yên. A commemorative temple has been built in each of the outer districts of Thu Châu and Lục Yên. No temples have yet been erected in the other districts of the province.

### **Shrines**

There are nine shrines in the province, seven in the district of Hàm Yên and two in the outer district of Thu Châu. The two most sacred of these are the shrine of Hiệp Thuận and the shrine of Quang Nhuận.

### **Soldiers**

The following figures are based on the report drawn up in the eleventh year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức [1858].

The officially recorded contingent of soldiers recruited by the court is 197 people. Since 1862, the provincial citadel has fallen on difficult times, the road into the mountains was cut, and the majority of the soldiers deserted. Two years later, the inhabitants of the province respectfully presented their troubles in petitions to the court, and the ministry of war withdrew the garrison, replacing it with local Tuyên militia. One squad of Tuyên militia was garrisoned in the district of Hàm Yên, with a total complement of 334. Two more were garrisoned in Thu Châu, with a complement of 418, and three in Chiêm Hoá, with a complement of 250. The other districts did not have time to set up Tuyên militia. The frequent ravages of bandits led to further desertions by the soldiers, and there now remain only

two squads, with a total complement of 104. The first squad has a complement of sixty, the second of forty-four.

### **Population**

According to old figures, there are 5,140 registered taxpayers in the province, but since the bandit attacks many people have fled. They have not all returned yet, despite imperial decrees and edicts to do so.

Agricultural land: 16,204 acres, according to old figures.

Annual tax receipts, including land tax and head tax, amount to:

Paid in cash: 8,361 ligatures

Paid in paddy: 4,164 bushels.

Customs duties and other taxes:

In each of the districts of Hàm Yên, Thu Châu, Vị Xuyên and Chiêm Hoá, there is a customs post, and the district of Vĩnh Tuy has two such posts.

Annual customs tax receipts:

Paid in cash: 9,730 ligatures.

Paid in silver: 1,030 taels.

Paid in copper: 10,000 catties.

Gold panning is carried out at three exploitations, one in each of the districts of Vĩnh Tuy, Đẻ Định and Vị Xuyên. Two of these mines pay a total of three ounces of gold in tax every year, and one of them, where workers are paid and organised to mine the gold, pays around eighteen ounces of gold.

There are five further gold mines which shut down long ago: one in each of the districts of Hàm Yên and Vị Xuyên, and three in the district of Đẻ Định. In 1860, an inspection was carried out and a further mine was closed down. They paid a total of twenty-five ounces of gold in annual tax.

A lead mine in the district of Hàm Yên shut down long ago.

Two silver mines in the district of Vĩnh Tuy pay annual tax of 110 taels of silver. A copper mine in the same district pays tax of 12,000 catties of copper annually. They asked for permission to transport 1,000,000 catties of salt and fish sauce up to the mine to provision the miners, requesting exemption from customs tax as this cargo passed the customs post. They settled finally for a payment of 3,000 catties of copper.

Outside residents of the province fall into the categories of long-term sojourner, guest sojourner, and thirdly the Nùng, Mán and Qing-dynasty Chinese. They total 2,026 people. This figure includes the following:

Long-term sojourners: 680.

Guest sojourners: 267.

Qing-dynasty Chinese: 123.

Nùng: 117.

Mán: 839.

There are, in addition, some troops recruited by the local mandarin: nine units of Tuyên Quang guards, two detachments of the citadel watch and one of artillery. These troops total 479, and do not include the district soldiers mentioned above.

For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.

We, the mandarins of the province of **Sơn Tây**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of

## The Province of **Sơn Tây**

Including the following maps:

|                                  |      |
|----------------------------------|------|
| The Province of Sơn Tây          | 山西省  |
| The Prefecture of Quảng Oai      | 廣威府  |
| The District of Tiên Phong       | 先豐縣  |
| The District of Tùng Thiện       | 從善縣  |
| The District of Phúc Thọ         | 福壽縣  |
| The District of Bất Bạt          | 不拔縣  |
| The Prefecture of Quốc Oai       | 國威府  |
| The District of Yên Sơn          | 安山縣  |
| The District of Đan Phượng       | 丹鳳縣  |
| The District of Thạch Thất       | 石室縣  |
| The District of Mỹ Lương         | 美良縣  |
| The Prefecture of Vĩnh Tường     | 永祥府  |
| The District of Bạch Hạc         | 白鶴縣  |
| The District of Lập Thạch        | 立石縣  |
| The District of Tam Dương        | 三陽縣  |
| The Sub-Prefecture of Vĩnh Tường | 永祥分府 |
| The District of Yên Lãng         | 安朗縣  |
| The District of Yên Lạc          | 安樂縣  |
| The Prefecture of Lâm Thao       | 臨洮府  |
| The District of Sơn Vi           | 山圍縣  |
| The District of Cẩm Khê          | 錦溪縣  |
| The District of Thanh Ba         | 青波縣  |
| The District of Hạ Hòa           | 夏和縣  |
| The Prefecture of Đoan Hùng      | 端雄府  |
| The District of Hùng Quan        | 雄關縣  |
| The District of Phù Ninh         | 扶寧縣  |
| The District of Sơn Dương        | 山陽縣  |

## The Description of the Province of **Sơn Tây**

### [Note on the Administrative History of the Province:

*The Nguyễn 阮 dynasty province of Sơn Tây covered a number of outer districts which existed at the time of the dynasties of Đinh 丁, Lê 黎 and Lý 李: Phong Châu 峰州, Quốc Oai 國威 and Chân Đăng 真登. Under the Trần 陳, it covered the territories of Tam Giang 三江, Quốc Oai 國威 and Tam Đái 三帶, and under the Ming 明 belonged to the outer districts of Từ Liêm 慈廉, Tam Đái 三帶, Tuyên Giang 宣江, Tuyên Hoá 宣化, Đà Giang 沱江 and Quảng Oai 廣威 and the prefectures of Tuyên Hoá and Tam Giang. During the reign of the emperor Lê Thái Tổ 黎太祖 it included the territories of Quốc Oai Thượng 國威上, Quốc Oai Trung 國威中 and Quốc Oai Hạ 國威下, in the regional inspectorate of the West 西道. In 1466, the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 established the division of Quốc Oai, and three years later, at the time the realm was mapped, he renamed it Sơn Tây. At this time, the division was composed of six prefectures: Quốc Oai, Tam Đái, Thao Giang, Đoan Hùng, Đà Dương and Quảng Oai. In 1490, the division became a domain, and under the Mạc 莫, a government. After the Lê Restoration, the prefecture of Đà Dương was abolished, and out of respect for the taboo on the name Trịnh Giang 鄭杠, the prefecture of Thao Giang 洮江 was renamed Lâm Thao 臨洮. At the beginning of the Nguyễn 阮 dynasty, it was still known as the division of Sơn Tây, composed of five prefectures. In the second year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1821), the prefecture of Tam Đái was renamed Tam Đa 三多, and was renamed again the following year, becoming the prefecture of Vĩnh Tường 永祥. In 1831, the realm was divided into provinces and the province of Sơn Tây came into being. At this time the district of Từ Liêm was transferred to the province of Hà Nội, and the district of Tam Nông to the province of Hưng Hoá. The following year saw the creation of sub-prefecture of Vĩnh Tường and two other sub-prefectures, Quốc Oai and Quảng Oai, which were subsequently abolished.*

*The government of Sơn Tây under the Lê, and the province of Sơn Tây under the Nguyễn 阮 was an extensive region, covering the eastern part of the province of Hoà Bình, as it existed at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including the provincial town, the districts of Lương Sơn, Chương Mỹ and Kim Bôi, and the following parts of other provinces: the districts of Hoài Đức, Đan Phượng, Quốc Oai, Thạch Thất, Ba Vì, and Phúc Thọ, (Hà Tây); the city of Việt Trì, the town of Phú Thọ and the districts of Lâm Thao, Sông Thao, Thanh Ba, Hạ Hoà and Đoan Hùng, (Phú Thọ); the district of Sơn Dương (Tuyên Quang); the town of Vĩnh Yên and the districts of Tam Đảo, Yên Lập, Lập Thạch, Vĩnh Lạc, Phong Châu, Mê Linh and Vĩnh Yên (Vĩnh Phúc).]*

The provincial citadel straddles the communes of Thuận Nghệ and Mai Trai, in the district of Tùng Thiện. Each of the four sides of the citadel consists of a rampart eighty-one rods, five cubits, five inches long, with a total circumference of 326 rods, two cubits. The rampart is six cubits, six inches high on the inside, and one rod, one cubit high on the outside. It is nine cubits, five inches thick at the top, and one rod, five cubits thick at the base. Both the inner and outer walls of the rampart are built in

stone. On each side, the inner wall, including the protruding terraces, is seventy-nine rods, seven cubits and seven inches long. The gates are all one rod, seven cubits, eight inches wide and one rod, five inches thick. They stand one rod, three cubits and one inch high. The moat is eighty-seven rods, two cubits long on each side, reaching a total circumference of 348 rods, eight cubits. It is six rods, seven cubits across and one rod deep. Both banks of the moat are reinforced with brick. An earth embankment lies beyond the moat, and beyond that a bamboo hedge. All four citadel gates are built in stone.

To the south, the province is bounded by the district of Yên Hóa, in the province of Ninh Bình. The districts of Chương Đức and Hoài An, in the province of Hà Nội, lie to the southeast and the outer district of Đà Bắc, province of Hưng Hóa, to the southwest. To the north, the province is bounded by the districts of Đại Từ, Phổ Yên, Bình Xuyên, in the province of Thái Nguyên. The districts of Kim Anh and Đông Ngạn, province of Bắc Ninh, lie to the northeast and the districts of Yên Lập, Trấn Yên and Văn Chấn, province of Hưng Hóa, as well as the outer district of Thu Châu, province of Tuyên Quang, to the northwest. The province is bounded to the east by the district of Từ Liêm, province of Hà Nội, and to the west by the districts of Tam Nông, Thanh Sơn and Thanh Thủy, province of Hưng Hóa.

From east to west, the province is eighty-one leagues across. From north to south, it is 232 leagues across.

The province is divided into six prefectures, comprising a total of twenty-one districts.

- 1- The prefecture of Quảng Oai: principal district of Tiên Phong, secondary districts of Tùng Thiện, Bất Bạt and Phúc Thọ.
- 2- The prefecture of Quốc Oai: principal district of Yên Sơn, secondary districts of Đan Phượng, Thạch Thất and Mỹ Lương.
- 3- The prefecture of Vĩnh Tường: principal district of Bạch Hạc, secondary districts of Lập Thạch and Tam Dương.
- 4- The sub-prefecture of Vĩnh Tường: principal district of Yên Lãng, secondary district of Yên Lạc.
- 5- The prefecture of Lâm Thao: principal district of Sơn Vi, secondary districts of Cẩm Khê, Thanh Ba and Hạ Hoà.
- 6- The prefecture of Đoan Hùng: principal districts of Tây Quan and Hùng Quan, secondary districts of Phù Ninh and Sơn Dương.

### **Soldiers**

Soldiers recruited by the court: 4,948 people.

Militia: 732 people.

### **Population**

Population registered for tax payment: 41,618 people.

### **Agricultural Land**

Communally and privately owned agricultural land of all categories: 3,200,633 acres.

### **Annual Tax Receipts**

Paid in cash: 174,273 ligatures.

Paid in paddy: 164,254 bushels.

### **Customs and Manners**

The inhabitants of the highland districts tend to be rustic, down-to-earth folk, while those of the plains are quite cultivated in their manners. In general, however, in the regions near the mountains, the people are of oafish and obstinate temperament, and only a few of the more educated of them reject informality and tend towards civilised behaviour. When fights, drinking and gambling occur in the villages, it is usually because the people there are lazy, most of them preferring contention and litigation to hard work. One should add that the land in these areas consists mainly of mountains and valleys, providing convenient refuge for bandits and troublemakers, and robbers find it easy to come and go. People with an education here are no match for those in other provinces. According to the list of graduates, the people of Đan Phượng, Lập Thạch and Yên Lãng excel in their studies, followed by those of Bạch Hạc, Yên Lạc, Tiên Phong, Sơn Vi, Thạch Thất, Yên Sơn and Phúc Thọ. In third rank come the districts of Bát Bạt, Phù Ninh and Tam Dương, which sometimes produce successful scholars. The districts of Thanh Ba, Cẩm Khê, Hạ Hòa and Sơn Dương have never produced a scholar who passed the doctoral examination at the court. The professions of handicrafts, commerce and industry are practised throughout the province, but not with the sophistication of the provinces of Hà Nội, Bắc Ninh, Hà Đông and Nam Định. People of wealth are rare in the province, and those with fortunes are by no means as well off as rich families in other provinces. The common people tend, as a result, to put their money aside, and are little given to extravagance. Weddings, funerals and family ceremonies are celebrated in the same manner throughout the province, with the single exception of the districts of Mỹ Lương and Bát Bạt, where there are some Thổ and Nùng people whose customs are somewhat different. The majority of the population professes obedience to Confucius, a number of people follow the Buddha, and Catholics are few and far between.

### **Local Produce**

Two crops of rice are harvested every year, but the soil near the mountains is poor, offering lower yields and an inferior quality of rice. Fragrant rice is grown in the communes of Hương Ngạc and Bình Sơn, in the district of Lập Thạch. The communes of Hương Canh, Ngọc Canh and Tiên Khang produce an appetising variety of white rice, although even this is nothing special compared to rice grown in other places. Mulberry, sugarcane, corn, potatoes and beans are grown throughout the province. As for fruit, it is worth noting the delicious coconuts of the communes of Yên Sở and Quế Dương, in the district of Đan Phượng, and the exquisite persimmons of the commune of Chi Cát, in the district of Phù Ninh. The custard apples, pineapples, jackfruit and canarium grown in the province may all be described as ordinary.

Produce of the forest includes bamboo, timber, palm leaves, lacquer, brown root dye, honey, beeswax, coral tree oil and garcinia oil. There are also different types of deer, tigers, wild boar, peacocks and pheasant.

Delicious mandarin fish abound in the Bạch Hạc river, but once they come out of their caves these fish do not live for long. The other types of fish in the province are ordinary.

Thick cloth is produced by the inhabitants of Cổ Đô and Chu Chàng, in the district of Tiên Phong, while soft cloth is made in Vân Ổ, in the district of Yên Lạc. Smooth silk is manufactured by the people of Phùng Xá, in the district of Mỹ Lương. Bamboo items and feather hats are made in the

commune of Phú Vinh, in the district of Mỹ Lương, where the people's sewing and weaving skills are quite sophisticated.

### **Climate**

In the highland districts, there are a number of places on the edge of the forest where stifling mountain vapours rise, and the sky is often overcast and gloomy. The weather turns cold early in the year, and the miasmas are unbearable. In the lowland districts, the land and water is lush, similar to the land of the provinces of the southeast. Between the seasons of summer and autumn, heavy rain falls every week in the highlands of Hưng Hóa and Tuyên Quang, and pours down the rivers in torrents. Beyond the dikes, the water can rise to eighteen or nineteen cubits, while the fields that lie within their protection remain dried up, craving rain. In the sixth and seventh months, whirlwinds cross the province. Even the lighter winds tear up the trees and flatten the paddy, while the high winds of this season sink boats and topple houses. These events are caused by nature, and in this respect the province does not suffer as badly as the provinces of the southeast.

Because of the high waters, summer paddy is planted out only at the end of the first month. There is less water for the autumn crop, which is planted out at the end of the eighth month. In this respect, the agricultural cycle is rather later than in other provinces.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

The famous mountains of the province include the following: Tản Viên, in the districts of Bất Bạt and Tùng Thiện; La Phù, in the district of Bất Bạt, Tùng Sơn, in the district of Tùng Thiện; Tam Đảo, in the districts of Tam Dương and Sơn Dương; Đinh Lộng, in the district of Tam Dương; Trâm Sơn and Lịch Sơn, in the district of Sơn Dương; Thảm Sơn, in the districts of Sơn Vi and Phù Ninh; the mountain of Hùng Sơn, in the district of Sơn Vi; Nghi Địch, in the district of Phù Ninh; Sài Sơn, Quy Sơn, Long Sơn, Phượng Hoàng, Tử Trâm and Hoàng Xá, in the district of Yên Sơn; Câu Lậu, in the district of Thạch Thất; Lập Thạch, Long Động, and Sáng Di, in the district of Lập Thạch; Cổ Pháp, in the district of Tiên Phong; Viễn Sơn, in the district of Phúc Thọ; Phượng Dực, in the district of Hạ Hoà; Ninh Sơn, Vạn Sơn, Đầu Sơn, Bà Đà and Vọng Cương, in the district of Tây Quan; Đoạn Sơn, Minh Cầm, Thạch Sơn and Hồ Nham Động, in the district of Hùng Quan.

Large navigable rivers include the Lô, Red [Thao], Hạc and Đà rivers. Lesser rivers include the Lôi, Đáy, Hát, Nguyệt Đức, Mỹ and Chiết rivers.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The shrine of the literati, the temple of prince Phùng, the temple of prince Ngô and the shrine of Hai Bà Trưng may be found in the district of Phúc Thọ. The temple of the mothers of the deities and the shrine of the mountain of Tản Viên may be found in the district of Bất Bạt. The shrine of the mountain of the Hùng princes may be found in the district of Sơn Vi. The mountain of Tam Đảo and the pagoda of Tây Thiên may be found in the district of Tam Dương. The pagoda of Sài Sơn, the pagoda of Quảng Nghiêm, the pagoda of Lạc Lâm and the temple of Văn Xương may be found in the district of Yên Sơn. The palace of Đông Cung, the palace of Nam Cung, the palace of Hạ Thần and the pagoda of Tùng Sơn may be found in the district of Tùng Thiện. The mountain of Câu Lậu and the pagoda of Tây Phương may be found in the district of Thạch Thất. The shrine of Lý Nam Đế, the temple of Lý Phục Man, the pagoda of Đồi Hôi and the sanctuary of Linh Tiên may be found in the district of Đan Phượng. The shrine of Hà Thần, the temple of Tam Giang and the pagoda of Hoa Long may be found in the district of Bạch Hạc. The temples of Tả Tướng and Tiết Nghĩa may be found in the district of

Lập Thạch. The mountain of Thạch Sơn and the cave of Hồ Nham may be found in the district of Hùng Quan.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs eastwards from the boundary with the district of Từ Liêm, in the province of Hà Nội, past the stage posts of Sơn Xá, Sơn Đông and Sơn Quang, and the stage post of Hưng Nông, in the province of Hưng Hóa, before reaching the provincial boundary with the district of Hàm Yên, in the province of Tuyên Quang. This road is 225 leagues long and one rod wide.

- An old main road runs northwards from the citadel to the district of Tam Dương, on the boundary with the district of Bình Xuyên, in the province of Thái Nguyên. This road is sixty-seven leagues long and one rod wide.

- A minor road runs from the citadel towards the southwest, through the district of Tùng Thiện, to the district of Bát Bạt, on the provincial boundary with the outer district of Đà Bắc, in the province of Hưng Hóa. This road is seventy-three leagues long and five cubits wide.

- A minor road runs from the citadel to the southeast as far as the district of Mỹ Lương, on the provincial boundary with the district of Hoài An, in the province of Hà Nội. This road is 102 leagues long and five cubits wide.

- A minor road leads from the citadel towards the northeast as far as the district of Yên Lãng, on the provincial boundary with the district of Kim Anh, in the province of Bắc Ninh. This road is fifty-one leagues long and five cubits wide.

- A minor road leads from the citadel eastwards to the district of Phúc Thọ. This road is four leagues, ninety-three rods long and five cubits wide.

For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.

We, the mandarins of the province of **Ninh Bình**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of

## The Province of **Ninh Bình**

Including the following maps:

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| The Province of Ninh Bình   | 寧平省 |
| The Prefecture of Yên Khánh | 安慶府 |
| The District of Yên Khánh   | 安慶縣 |
| The District of Yên Mô      | 安謨縣 |
| The District of Gia Viễn    | 嘉遠縣 |
| The District of Kim Sơn     | 金山縣 |
| The Prefecture of Nho Quan  | 儒關府 |
| The District of Phụng Hóa   | 奉化縣 |
| The District of Lạc Yên     | 樂安縣 |
| The District of Yên Hóa     | 安化縣 |

## The Description of the Province of Ninh Bình

### [Note on the Administrative History of the Province:

*Under the Han, the territory of the province of Ninh Bình was part of the Chinese dominion of Giao Chi 交趾. Under the Ngô 吳 dynasty, it belonged to the outer district of Giao, and under the Liang 梁 to the outer district of Trường Yên 長安. During the Đinh 丁, Lê 黎 period, the area surrounding the capital at Hoa Lư 華閭 remained known as the outer district of Trường Yên. In 1010, the emperor Lý Thái Tổ 李太祖 renamed it the prefecture of Trường Yên, but up to the end of the Lý dynasty it was sometimes known as the outer district of Đại Hoàng Giang 大黃江州. At the beginning of the Trần 陳 dynasty, it was the territory of Trường Yên, and subsequently became a government. During the reign of the emperor Trần Thuận Tông 陳順宗, in 1397, it was renamed the government of Thiên Quan 天關. Under the Ming 明, its former name was restored and it was known as the outer district of Trường Yên, part of the prefecture of Kiến Bình 建平. It became a government again during the reign of the emperor Lê Thái Tổ 黎太祖. In 1469, at the time the realm was mapped, the government of Trường Yên was divided into the two prefectures, Trường Yên and Thiên Quan, part of the division of Sơn Nam. Both parts became collectively known as the territory of Sơn Nam Hạ 山南下. After the Lê Restoration, it became part of Thanh Hoa 清華, known as the 'outer government' of Thanh Hoa. Under the Tây Sơn and at the beginning of the Nguyễn 阮 dynasty this name remained in place. The outer government of Thanh Hoa then comprised two prefectures. The prefecture of Trường Yên, which was later renamed Yên Khánh, was made up of three districts: Yên Khang 安康, which was later renamed Yên Khánh 安慶, Yên Mô 安模 and Gia Viễn 嘉遠. The prefecture of Thiên Quan, which was later renamed Nho Quan 儒關, was also made up of three districts: Yên Hoá 安化, Phụng Hoá 奉化, and Lạc Thổ 樂土, which was later renamed Lạc Yên. In 1806, the emperor Gia Long 嘉隆 replaced the outer government of Thanh Hoa 清華 with the county of Thanh Bình 清平. In 1822, the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 renamed this county Ninh Bình 寧平. Seven years later, the county became a government and a new district was added, Kim Sơn 金山, making a total of seven districts. In 1831, it became the province of Ninh Bình, with a prefect at its head under the overall control of the governor of Hà Ninh 河寧, whose authority extended from the region of Hà Nội as far as Ninh Bình.*

*There were no further changes up to the time of the emperor **Đông Khánh**. Subsequently, during the reign of the emperor Thành Thái, the district of Lạc Yên was to be transferred to the newly created province of Hoà Bình. The remaining territory would make up the province of Ninh Bình as it existed at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.]*

The provincial citadel is situated in the commune of Đại Đăng, in the canton of Yên Đăng, district of Yên Khánh. The rampart is built in brick, and is 393 rods, nine cubits in circumference and nine cubits high. It opens at three gates, to the east, west and south. The rear side of the rampart backs against a mountain which overlooks a wide river. The circumference of the upper section of the rampart is 383

rods, six cubits. This includes the defensive parapets, which are one cubit, nine inches high, and according to an edict of this year are due to be reinforced with brick. The parapets have seventy shooting slits as well as emplacements sufficient to house twenty great guns and mountain cannons, and five falconets. The rampart of the fortress on the summit of the mountain of Hộ Thành is thirteen rods, eight cubits, eight inches in circumference. It stands three cubits, nine inches high in some places and two cubits, seven inches high in others. There are three gun emplacements, for great guns and cannons. The moat is four rods across and eight cubits deep on two of its sides, the left and front. To the right and rear, the river serves as a moat.

The province is bounded to the east by the district of Đại An, in the province of Nam Định, and to the west by the district of Thạch Thành, province of Thanh Hoá. To the south lie the districts of Tống Sơn and Nga Sơn, province of Thanh Hoá. To the north, the province is bounded by the districts of Thanh Liêm and Chương Đức, province of Hà Nội. The estuary of Chính Đại, in the district of Tống Sơn, province of Thanh Hoá, forms the provincial boundary to the southeast. To the southwest, the boundary is formed with the district of Tống Sơn, province of Thanh Hoá. The districts of Ý Yên and Phong Doanh, province of Nam Định, lie to the northeast, and the district of Mỹ Lương, province of Sơn Tây, and the outer district of Đà Bắc, province of Hưng Hoá, lie to the northwest.

From east to west, the province is sixty-eight leagues across. From north to south, it is fifty-seven leagues across.

The province is divided into two prefectures, with seven districts.

- 1- The prefecture of Yên Khánh: principal district of Yên Khánh, secondary districts of Yên Mô, Gia Viễn and Kim Sơn.
- 2- The prefecture of Nho Quan: principal districts of Phụng Hoá and Lạc Yên, secondary district of Yên Hoá.

### **Customs and Manners**

The inhabitants of the prefecture of Yên Khánh are all Hán [Kinh] people. The scholars of the districts of Yên Khánh and Yên Mô devote themselves to their studies with determination. The farmers work hard on the fields and live frugally. The artisans and traders practise their professions without skill and few of them accumulate great property. The inhabitants of the district of Gia Viễn practise a wide variety of professions, and include scholars, farmers, woodcutters and fishing folk. Their scholars are known for their desire for moral integrity and their candour. Their farmers are careful and industrious. Their women raise silkworms and weave silk. Paupers collect firewood to make a living. People living in villages floating on the rivers use nets to catch fish. The scholars of the district of Kim Sơn are show determination in their studies and thrift in their daily living. The farmers of this district work hard on the land, but tend to squander its product. None of the artisans can be described as very skilful. Not one of the traders has a boat suitable for large-scale commerce. Weddings and funerals are celebrated in much the same manner as in the prefecture of Nho Quan.

The districts of Phụng Hoá and Yên Hoá are inhabited by roughly equal numbers of Thổ and Hán [Kinh] people living side by side. By contrast, the district of Lạc Yên is entirely populated with Thổ people. The Hán [Kinh] people here tend to be excessively courageous and insufficiently civilised. The Thổ are bold and vigorous in character, and do not learn how to write Confucian characters. Only a few of the village leaders invite learned men to their houses to guide their studies. They worship their deities in a modest manner, but their weddings and funerals are celebrated on a vast scale at great expense. The common people hold their village leaders and dignitaries in tremendous respect, and they depend on sorcerers and mediums, to their great harm and detriment. They live in houses built on stilts, their clothes are rough and their food is meagre. The Thổ and Hán [Kinh] people have very different

ways of living, but the differences may be explained simply as a matter of habits and customs. Catholics may be found in parts of the province. There are eighteen communes and villages in the district of Yên Khánh where the population is partly made up of Catholics, and twenty in the district of Yên Mô. In the district of Gia Viễn there are twenty communes and villages where the population is either partly or wholly made up of Catholics, and in the district of Kim Sơn, there are forty-one such villages. There are five partly Catholic communes in the district of Phụng Hoá, and two in the district of Lạc Yên. The district of Yên Hoá is home to five partly or wholly Catholic communes. Their customs differ from one place to the next.

### **Local Produce**

The rice crop is more abundant in summer than in autumn in the district of Gia Viễn, the opposite is the case in the districts of Yên Khánh and Yên Mô, and rice is only harvested in autumn in the district of Kim Sơn. Cotton, beans, potatoes, corn, vegetables, melons and marrows are grown throughout the province, but not in any great quantity. Small sea slugs and jute may be found in the district of Yên Khánh, as well as mountain chrysanthemums, which are also grown in the district of Yên Mô. Rushes are cultivated in the district of Kim Sơn, and the district is also known for its prawns, crabs, ducks, eels and small sea slugs. The district of Gia Viễn is known for its carp, available in quantities varying from one year to the next. The inhabitants of the district of Yên Khánh pay tax on their manufacture of mats.

The rice crop is more abundant in autumn than in summer in the three districts of the prefecture of Nho Quan. Mulberry, jute, corn and beans are grown, but not in any quantity at all. Forest products like honey, grains of paradise and dappled bamboo may be found only in the district of Lạc Yên. Potatoes, yams, manioc and other root crops are harvested in the districts of Phụng Hoá and Yên Hoá, and there are also some species of bamboo and low quality timber.

### **Climate**

The prefecture of Yên Khánh is situated in the lowland region, and the northeast wind blows in spring, bringing cold and drizzle. The wind blows from the south in the months of summer, bringing heavy downpours and clear sunny skies. In the seventh and eighth months, it is replaced by a northwesterly, with heavy rains and frequent floods. The sea slug season lasts from the twentieth day of the ninth month to the fifth day of the tenth month. A cold northerly wind blows in the eleventh and twelfth months, and it is during these months that summer paddy is transplanted, ripening for harvest in the fifth month the following year. The autumn crop is transplanted in the sixth and seventh months and reaped in the tenth month. Potatoes, manioc, cotton and beans are all planted in the first and second months, and harvested in the fourth and fifth. The coastal district of Kim Sơn presents the only exception to this agricultural cycle. In saltwater areas, the autumn crop must be transplanted in the fourth and fifth months and harvested in the eighth and ninth. In freshwater areas, transplanting takes place in the sixth month and the crop ripens for harvest in the tenth. There are two tides every month, with the exception of the third and eighth months when there are three.

The prefecture of Nho Quan is situated in terrain of forests, mountains and valleys, where the air is poisoned by frequent miasmas, the sky is gloomy and the weather is bitterly cold. The Thổ people live in houses on stilts and do not burn wood to make charcoal. Only the Hán [Kinh] people living near the lowland regions live and work the fields in much the same manner as in other districts of the plains.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

There are many mountains in the province. Famous mountains include the mountains of Hộ Thành, Hôi Hạc and Diên Xí, in the district of Yên Khánh; the mountains and caves of Địch Lộng, Kẽm Trống, Hoa Lư, Thổ Tích, Xuyên Thuỷ, Mã Yên, Hoàn Kỳ and Đa Giá, in the district of Gia Viễn; the

mountains of Thiện Dưỡng, Hải Nham, Đàm Khánh, Ngọc Thỏ, Bàng Sơn and Xa Triệt, in the district of Yên Mô; the mountains of Mã Can, Chân Lại and Sơn Âm, in the district of Phụng Hoá; the mountains and passes of Thạch Bi, Ngọc Lâu, Túc Tranh, Bình Hiểm and Vũ Lao, in the district of Lạc Yên, and the mountain of Mã Hương, in the district of Yên Hoá.

A large river flows into the province at the commune of Hưng Thí, in the district of Yên Hoá. It passes the fort of Ninh Cường, and meanders down to the Kênh Gà confluence, in the district of Gia Viễn.

A second large river flows from the prefecture of Nho Quan past the ferry pier at the commune of Lãng Phong, and down to the Đông Đình confluence where it empties into the Kênh Gà river. This river then flows through Hoàng Long and Trường Yên down to the Gián Khẩu confluence.

Another large river flows down from the Thanh Quyết river, near the boundary with the district of Thanh Liêm in the province of Hà Nội. The river then flows past the confluences of Gián Khẩu and Non Nước as well as that of the Bồng Hải river (its bank faces the Độc Bộ river, in the province of Nam Định). It finally joins the Đài river at the Liêu estuary in the province of Nam Định.

A lesser river flows down from the Vân Sàng river, passes through Yên Đãng and Hương Du and on to the confluence of Yên Phú. From there it winds through the communes of Liên Trì and Trinh Nữ, and divides into two branches. One branch flows from Bồ Xuyên and Ngọc Thỏ to the commune of Nhân Phẩm, where it empties into the Chính Đại river, in the province of Thanh Hoá. The other branch follows the Hồ and Kiển rivers to the east before emptying into the sea.

A lesser river flows out from the Yên Phú confluence, in the district of Yên Khánh, passes Khương Giang and Thổ Mật, in the district of Yên Mô, and Trì Chính, in the district of Kim Sơn, before emptying into the Đài river. This river is also called the Vạc river.

There are, in addition, many other watercourses and rivers in the province.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The pagodas of Động Sơn and Đại Đãng may be found in the district of Yên Khánh, while the pagoda of Cổ Am may be visited in the district of Gia Viễn. The mountain pagodas of Bích Động and Tam Động may be admired in the districts of Yên Mô and Yên Hoá respectively.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs from the mountain of Tam Điệp in the province of Thanh Hoá, at the southern end of the province, passing the stage posts of Ninh Du and Ninh Đa, as far as the Thanh Quyết river. On the opposite bank lies the district of Thanh Liêm, in the province of Hà Nội. This road is 7,377 rods and from eight cubits to around one rod wide.

- A main road leads from the stage post of Ninh Đa to the ferry pier of La Mai. Across the river lies the province of Nam Định. This road is 280 rods long and five cubits wide.

- A minor road runs eastwards from the Phúc Đãng bridge at the provincial citadel and winds its way as far as the fort of Phùng Thiện, in the canton of Bồng Hải. This road is 3,336 rods long and five cubits wide.

- A road runs westwards from the Phúc Đãng bridge at the provincial citadel, and winds its way out to join the main road at the village of Phúc Am. This road is 140 rods long and one rod wide.

- A road forks off from the main road at the commune of Gián Khẩu, and heads towards the northwest passing the ferry piers of Ngô Đông and Vô Hốt, before reaching the seat of the prefecture of Nho Quan. This road is 3,939 rods and four cubits wide.

- A minor road runs from the Lý Nhân bridge eastwards to the district of Yên Mô. This road is 1,905 rods long and four cubits wide.

## **The Descriptive Geography of the Emperor Đông Khánh**

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- A minor road leads from the district seat of Yên Mô southwards to the provincial boundary with the district of Tống Sơn, in the province of Thanh Hoá. This road is 2,087 rods long and five cubits to about one rod wide.

### **Forts and Strongholds**

The fort of Lý Nhân is situated in the commune of the same name, in the district of Yên Mô. The fort of Phùng Thiện is situated in the commune of the same name, in the district of Yên Khánh. The district of Kim Sơn is home to a fort in the commune of Chát Thành and a breakwater fort in the commune of Trì Chính, both of which are named after their respective commune. The fort of Ninh Cương is situated in the commune of Chi Nê, in the district of Yên Hoá. Five forts may be found in the district of Lạc Yên: the fort of Chủng Khế, in the commune of Phong Phú; the forts of Mỹ Hoà and Địch Giáo, in the communes of the same names; the fort of Đụn Cỏ, in the commune of Văn Lãng; the fort of Hoàn Giang, in the commune of Tân Mỹ.

### **Confucian Temples**

The province's temple of Confucian literature is situated in the village of Phúc Am, in the district of Yên Khánh. The same district is home to the prefecture's temple of Confucian literature, in the village of Lịch Dương. District Confucian temples may be found in the following places: the commune of Thượng Trạo, district of Yên Khánh; the commune of Đa Giá, district of Gia Viễn; the village of Thượng, commune of Yên Mô, district of Yên Mô; the village of Như Độ, district of Kim Sơn; the commune of Lãng Phong, district of Phụng Hoá.

### **Famous Shrines**

The shrine of Đinh Tiên Hoàng may be found in the commune of Trường Yên Thượng, district of Gia Viễn. The neighbouring commune of Trường Yên Hạ, in the same district, is home to the shrine of the emperor Lê Đại Hành. The temple of Nguyễn Giác Hải is situated in the commune of Yên Vệ, in the district of Yên Khánh. The temple of the enlightened monk Áp Lãng is situated in the commune of Thân Phù, in the district of Yên Mô. Nguyễn Minh Không is venerated at two temples in the district of Gia Viễn, in the communes of Điem Xá and Điem Giang. The monk Trần Thái is worshiped at a temple in the commune of Trà Tu, in the district of Yên Mô. The shrine of the emperor Trần Thái Tông is situated in the canton of Vũ Lâm, in the district of Yên Khánh. The temple to the deity An Quốc may be found in the commune of Đa Lộc, in the district of Gia Viễn. The two emperors Trần Giản Định and Trần Trùng Quang are venerated at a temple in the commune of Bô Xuyên, in the district of Yên Mô, which also boasts a temple to duke Lương, in the commune of Đàm Khánh. The shrine of Triệu Việt Vương is situated in the commune of Tiên Yên, in the district of Yên Khánh. The temple of the deity Cao Sơn may be visited in the commune of Yên Lão, in the district of Phụng Hoá. The deity Quảng Uyên is worshiped at a temple in the commune of Chi Phong, in the district of Gia Viễn. The temple to the four deities of the south seas is situated in the village of Càn, in the commune of Yên Mô, district of Yên Mô. The same district is also home to the shrine of Trương Hán Siêu, in the village of Phúc Am, and the temple of the princess Liễu Hạnh, in the commune of Lý Nhân.

Population of all categories: 30,984 people.

Communally and privately owned agricultural land: 146,742 acres.

Land tax:

Paid in cash: 77,728 ligatures.

Paid in paddy: 106,254 bushels.

Soldiers: 2,333 people.

For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.

We, the mandarins of the province of **Thanh Hóa**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of

## The Province of **Thanh Hóa**

Including the following maps:

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| The Province of Thanh Hóa         | 清化省 |
| The Prefecture of Hà Trung        | 河中府 |
| The District of Tống Sơn          | 宋山縣 |
| The District of Nga Sơn           | 峨山縣 |
| The District of Hoàng Hóa         | 弘化縣 |
| The District of Mỹ Hóa            | 美化縣 |
| The District of Hậu Lộc           | 厚祿縣 |
| The Prefecture of Thiệu Hóa       | 紹化府 |
| The District of Thụy Nguyên       | 瑞原縣 |
| The District of Đông Sơn          | 東山縣 |
| The District of Yên Định          | 安定縣 |
| The Prefecture of Gia Tĩnh        | 靜嘉府 |
| The District of Ngọc Sơn          | 玉山縣 |
| The District of Quảng Xương       | 廣昌縣 |
| The District of Nông Cống         | 農貢縣 |
| The Prefecture of Quảng Hóa       | 廣化府 |
| The District of Vĩnh Lộc          | 永祿縣 |
| The District of Quảng Tế          | 廣濟縣 |
| The District of Thạch Thành       | 石城縣 |
| The Outer District of Quan Hóa    | 關化州 |
| The District of Cẩm Thủy          | 錦水縣 |
| The Prefecture of Thọ Xuân        | 壽春府 |
| The District of Lôi Dương         | 雷陽縣 |
| The Outer District of Thường Xuân | 常春州 |
| The Outer District of Lương Chính | 良政州 |
| The District of Trình Cố          | 呈固縣 |
| The District of Man Duyệt         | 蠻維縣 |
| The District of Sầm Nưa           | 岑椰縣 |

## The Description of the Province of Thanh Hoá

### [Note on the Administrative History of the Province:

*Under the Han and up to the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the territory of the province of Thanh Hoá was part of the Chinese dominion of Cửu Chân 九真. Its northern part was removed under the Liang 梁 to form the outer district of Ái Châu 愛州. Its former boundaries were restored under the Sui 隋, but it then became known as the dominion of Ái Châu Cửu Chân. This name persisted throughout the Tang era as well during the Ngô 吳, Đinh 丁 and early Lê 黎 dynasties. In 1010, during the reign of the emperor Lý Thái Tổ 李太祖, the ten regional inspectorates of the country were reorganised into twenty-four territories, and Hoan Châu and Ái Châu were named the camps of Hoan 驩 and Ái 愛 respectively. The name Ái Châu nonetheless continued to be used in the annals, as is shown in the historical record of the events of the year 1029, during the reign of the emperor Lý Thái Tông. The name Thanh Hoá 清化 appeared in the court annals for the first time in 1111, when it was recorded that “the prefecture of Thanh Hoá made an offering of an areca tree with nine trunks”. During the Trần 陳 dynasty the prefecture of Thanh Hoá became a territory, then a prefectural territory and finally a government. At the end of the Trần era, the grand dignitary Hồ Quý Ly 胡貴聲 obliged the emperor Trần Thuận Tông 陳順宗 to transfer the capital to the village of An Tôn 安尊, and the government of Thanh Đô 清都 was established (1397). Under the Hồ, Thanh Hoá’s new citadel was known as Tây Đô 西都, and its status of prefectural territory was restored, although 1402 it was renamed the prefecture of Thiên Xương 天昌府. Five years later, under the Ming 明, the former status of prefecture of Thanh Hoá was restored. At this time the prefecture was made up of three outer districts (Thanh Hoá, Ái Châu and Cửu Chân), to which, in 1427, was added Quỳnh Châu 葵州 (part of Diễn Châu 演州) making a total of four outer districts in all. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Lê Thái Tổ 黎太祖, the prefecture of Thanh Hoá was transferred into the regional inspectorate of Hải Tây 海西. The emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 divided the realm into thirteen divisions (1469), and at this time the three former outer districts of the prefecture of Thanh Hoá (those of the Ming period) were added to the prefectures of Trường Yên and Thiên Quan to form the division of Thanh Hoa. This division consisted of six prefectures, with twenty-two districts and four outer districts. After the Lê Restoration, the prefectures of Trường Yên 長安 and Thiên Quan 天關 became the outer government of Thanh Hoa, as distinguished from the inner government of Thanh Hoa 清華. This was how the province of Thanh Hoá which existed at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was known under the Tây Sơn and during the early years of the Nguyễn 阮 dynasty. In the twelfth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1831), the realm was divided into provinces, and the province of Thanh Hoa came into being. The name Hoa became taboo in 1841 (being that of Hồ Thị Hoa 胡氏華, queen mother of the emperor Thiệu Trị 紹治), and the province was renamed Thanh Hoá. This name was retained by all the subsequent emperors.]*

The provincial citadel is situated in the commune of Thọ Hạc, in the district of Đông Sơn. The rampart, built in brick and stone, is 630 rods in circumference and stands one rod high. It opens at four gates and is surrounded by a moat nine rods, three cubits across and seven cubits deep. The Tuyên Vũ, Hùng Vũ and Nhuệ Vũ squads of guards are responsible for the protection of the citadel's facade. The Quảng Vũ and Nghĩa Vũ squads are stationed to the rear, the Túc Vũ and Công Vũ squads to the left and the Trang Vũ, Kiện Vũ and Cương Vũ squads to the right. The naval fortress is situated in the territory of Nam Ngạn, where two squads of guards are garrisoned – to the left and right – for the protection of the site. The rostrum to the gods of agriculture may be found to the southeast of the citadel. The rostrum to the gods of the mountains and rivers are to the southwest, the temple of Confucian literature to the northeast, the temple of all the saints to the south and the temple of martial arts to the west. The boarding school may be found to the south of the citadel, while the examination field lies to the northeast.

The province meets the sea to the east, and borders the country of Laos [Ai Lao] to the west. To the south lies the district of Quỳnh Lưu, in the province of Nghệ An. The provincial boundary to the north is formed with the district of Yên Mô, province of Ninh Bình, and to the northwest with Mai Châu and Mộc Châu, province of Hưng Hóa.

From east to west, the province is 174 leagues across. From north to south, it is 285 leagues across.

The province is made up of five prefectures, with sixteen districts, three outer districts and three loosely administered districts.<sup>3</sup> There are 128 cantons, and 2,008 communes and villages of various categories (*thôn, trang, trại, sở, giáp, lãng, tộc, vạn, phường, ấp, động, man, mường*). The prefectures and districts of the province include the following:

- 1- The prefecture of Hà Trung: principal districts of Tống Sơn and Nga Sơn, secondary districts of Hoàng Hóa, Mỹ Hoá and Hậu Lộc.
- 2- The prefecture of Thiệu Hoá: principal district of Thủy Nguyên, secondary districts of Đông Sơn and Yên Định.
- 3- The prefecture of Quảng Hoá: principal districts of Vĩnh Lộc, Thạch Thành and Quảng Tế, secondary district of Cẩm Thủy, secondary outer district of Quan Hoá.
- 4- The prefecture of Thọ Xuân: principal district of Lôi Dương, secondary outer districts of Thường Xuân and Lương Chính.
- 5- The prefecture of Tĩnh Gia: principal district of Ngọc Sơn, secondary districts of Quảng Xương and Nông Cống, loosely administered districts of Trình Cối, Man Duyệt and Sầm Nưa.

### **Customs and Manners**

The Hán [Kinh] people of the province include scholars who are ardent in their pursuit of knowledge, and every generation includes some scholars deemed talented, virtuous and earnest in matters of piety, while more than a few are ranked as outstanding men of character. This may be a consequence of the natural strength that exists in the atmosphere of this region of mountains and rivers. The province's

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<sup>3</sup> We have translated as 'loosely administered' (*ki mi*) the districts which were not *stricto sensu* part of the empire, but came under the authority of the Vietnamese court, notably from a fiscal point of view. The term *ki mi* originally referred to a horse's bit, or the ring through the nose of a buffalo. The district was thus regarded as 'tethered', rather than (as perhaps was the case of districts closer to the capital) 'put to the plough'. The loosely administered districts mentioned in the Geography never went beyond the 'tethered' stage. They now form part of Laos.

farmers are industrious but their methods of agriculture do not compare with those of the inhabitants of the northern part of the country and they reap only small quantities of paddy. No sophisticated specialised handicrafts are practised in the province. Only the profession of stone-cutting is practised with any skill, by the people of the commune of An Hoạch, district of *Đông Sơn*, who produce articles of everyday use. Few traders live in the province. Only the people of the towns and market villages use boats and junks to carry large quantities of goods for exchange in other provinces. The gods are worshiped in the temples and the Buddha is venerated in the pagodas. Local temples of literature (*Văn chỉ*), demonstrating the people's regard and respect for the way of Confucius, may be found in many villages and hamlets all over the province. Festivals, anniversaries and ceremonies of celebration and condolence are organised in a similar manner to other provinces. But the third month of spring, or the fifth and sixth months, is the season for sacrificial festivals, when feasting is organised around trays of food and people dress in their finest and sing spiritual songs. This is the main festival of the year. Most of the population venerates the Buddha, and Catholics are few and far between, each district having only three or four communes either partly or wholly inhabited by Catholics, though some have five or six such communes and a few more than ten. The people of the highland region build their houses on stilts, wear different clothes and speak different languages from the *Hán [Kinh]* people. They write their languages in horizontal lines with the entire sentence all joined up. To farm the land, rather than transplanting seedlings, they dig the ground and scatter the seeds, and rather than ploughing their fields, they gather their cattle to trample the land and soften the soil. Their calendar is made up of thirty-day months, without distinction between months with fewer days and those with more. On the first day of the year, they celebrate new year and make offerings to the ancestors at the same time, and thereafter observe no other death anniversary or festival. When their parents die, they leave the coffin to lie in the house for three years before burial. The burial rite is led by a sorcerer and lasts for half a day. They observe neither the sacrifice of the peace of the heart nor the oblation to the spirits. Joyful family events are celebrated with the invitation of guests to drink home-made wine, made by mixing yeast with rice in an earthenware jar which is sealed tightly for more than two months. When the guests arrive, fresh water is poured into the jar and everyone sits around it, holding a sort of straw made from a length of bamboo used to suck the wine up and drink. These are occasions of great merriment, and the wine is known as 'wine from a straw'. This is how the people of the wild tribes live. Nowadays, one may find scattered throughout the districts and outer districts of *Quảng Tế*, *Thạch Thành*, *Cẩm Thủy*, *Thường Xuân* and *Lang Chánh* a small number of educated people, whose customs – including the celebration of weddings, funerals and festivals and the use of clothes and household utensils – are gradually coming to resemble those of the *Hán [Kinh]* people, but the customs have not yet been learnt with any degree of skill.

### **Local Produce**

Rice, potatoes, beans, mulberry and cotton are produced in all the prefectures and districts. Deer antlers from the mountainous districts of *Tống Sơn*, *Quảng Hóa*, *Thiệu Hóa*, *Lôi Dương* and *Nông Cống* are of good quality, as is the cinnamon bark from *Thường Xuân* and *Lang Chánh*. Timber is plentiful in the districts of *Thụy Nguyên*, *Lôi Dương* and *Nông Cống*. The coastal communes of *Nga Sơn*, *Hậu Lộc*, *Hoàng Hóa*, *Quảng Xương* and *Ngọc Sơn* all produce prawns, fish and fish sauce.

### **Climate**

In the first and second months of the year, a northeasterly wind blows, bringing drizzle, clouds, cold weather and the first peals of thunder. The wind comes from the south in the third and fourth months, driving the cold away, and the weather gets steadily warmer until the fifth and sixth months when it is

scorching hot. The seventh and eighth months are a time of autumn winds, heavy showers and great storms, when the waters rise causing floods and the heat subsides. In the middle of autumn and winter, the sky is sometimes overcast, sometimes clear, and there are long periods of rain and short storms. The people reflect on this with a saying: 'in the ninth month, the wind calls up the small sea slugs; in the tenth month, it brings up the fish'. In the eleventh and twelfth months, a northerly wind blows bitterly cold. When the cold season ends, spring has arrived. In general the cold and hot weather follows this pattern every year. When the weather changes from autumn to winter, coastal areas experience fogs which wither the trees and blight the fruit. These are not found in mountainous areas, which is why they are called 'sea fogs'. This is the main climatic difference between the highlands and the coast. Tides resemble those of other provinces. The tide rises on the fifth and nineteenth days of the first and seventh months, on the third, seventeenth and twenty-ninth days of the second and eighth months, on the thirteenth and twenty-seventh days of the third and ninth months, on the eleventh and twenty-fifth days of the fourth and tenth months, on the ninth and twenty-seventh days of the fifth and eleventh months and the seventh and twenty-first days of the sixth and twelfth months.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

There are numerous small mountains in the provinces, and the famous ones include the following: *Tường Sơn*, *Vạn Đầu* and *Tam Điệp*, in the honourable district of *Tống Sơn*;<sup>4</sup> *Long Hàm* (*Hàm Rồng*) and *Khế Sơn*, in the district of *Đông Sơn*; *Hoả Châu* and *Linh Trường*, in the district of *Hoàng Hóa*; *Đa Bút*, in the district of *Vĩnh Lộc*; *Na Sơn*, in the district of *Nông Cống*; *Biện Sơn* and *Bảng Sơn*, in the district of *Ngọc Sơn*. These are the best known mountains.

Large rivers include the *Mã*, *Lương* and *Ngọc Giáp* (*Ghép*) rivers, which are the main rivers of the province.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The notable sites and monuments in the province are the pagodas of *Nguyên Hải* and *Lộc Vân*, in the district of *Tống Sơn*, the caves of *Từ Thức* and *Bạch Ác*, in the district of *Nga Sơn*, the caves of *Kim Sơn*, and *Hồ Công*, in the district of *Vĩnh Lộc*, the mountain of *Bàn A*, and the pagodas of *Đại Hùng*, *Mật Sơn* and *Tiên Sơn*, in the district of *Đông Sơn*, the pagoda of *Thái Bình*, in district of *Thụy Nguyên*, and the pagoda of *Diệu Sơn*, in the district of *Cẩm Thủy*. These are the main notable sites of the province, past and present.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs from the stream of *Nước Lạnh*, at the southern extremity of the province, northwards as far as the summit of the mountain of *Tam Điệp*. This road is 90,499 rods long.

- A minor road leads from the provincial citadel to the districts of *Hoàng Hóa*, *Mỹ Hoá* and *Hậu Lộc*, passing *Thần Phù* and then reaching the boundary with the province of *Ninh Bình*. The journey takes a day and a half and the road is six to seven cubits wide.

- A minor road leads from the provincial citadel to the district of *Lôi Dương*. The journey takes a whole day and the road is six to seven cubits wide. The road then continues as far as the outer districts of *Lang Chánh* and *Thường Xuân*. This distance may be covered in three days, and the road is five cubits wide.

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<sup>4</sup> The district of *Tống Sơn* was officially described as honourable, being the place of origin of the *Nguyễn* dynasty. The same is true for the honourable village of *Gia Miêu*, below.

- A minor road runs from the provincial citadel to the districts of *Vĩnh Lộc*, *Cẩm Thủy*, *Thạch Thành* and *Quảng Tế*. The journey takes a day and a half. After four days' further travelling, the road reaches the outer district of *Quan Hóa*. The road then passes through the districts of *Man Duyệt*, *Trình Cố* and *Sầm Nưa*, as well as *Mai Châu* and *Mộc Châu* in the province of *Hung Hóa*. This final stretch takes seventeen to eighteen days. The road is five cubits wide along its entire length.

### **Forts and Strongholds**

In addition to the provincial citadel, described above, the fortifications of the province are as follows. The citadel of *Triệu Tường* has a rampart which is 182 rods in circumference and moat which is three rods across and three cubits deep. The breakwater fort of *Bạch Cầu* is situated in the district of *Nga Sơn*. The breakwater fort of *Y Bích* and the lunette of *Trương Xá* are situated in the district of *Hậu Lộc*. The forts of *Đại Tiên* and *Liên Châu* are situated in the district of *Hoàng Hóa*. The fort of *Hải Yến* is situated in the district of *Quảng Xương*. The forts of *Biện Sơn* and *Du Xuyên* are situated in the district of *Ngọc Sơn*. The mountain defence service is situated in the district of *Vĩnh Lộc*. The stronghold of *Sơn Châu* may be found in the district of *Ngọc Sơn*. The strongholds of *Trần Man* and *Biển Sơn* and the bastion of *Vân Tụ* are situated in the district of *Tống Sơn*.

### **Temples and Shrines**

The shrine of *Nguyễn* may be found in the honourable village of *Gia Miêu*, in the district of *Tống Sơn*. A shrine venerating the duke *Trùng Quốc* lies to the left hand side of the *Nguyễn* shrine. The province's temple of Confucian literature is situated to the northeast of the provincial citadel, to the right hand side of the mountain of *Hàm Rồng*, in the commune of *Đông Sơn*, in the district of the same name. The temple of the revelation of the spirits lies to the east of the temple of Confucian literature. The shrine of all the saints, where the local spirits of the earth and sky are worshiped, may be found in the commune of *Bố Vệ*, to the south of the provincial citadel. The shrine of the tutelary deities lies to the east of the citadel, in the village of *Phú Cốc*. The shrine of *Kỳ Phong* may be admired on the mountain in the commune of *Trường Lệ*, in the district of *Quảng Xương*, to the right hand side of the *Triều Tấn* estuary. The shrine of the mountain god *Triệu Tường* is situated in the district of *Tống Sơn*.

The shrine of *Triệu Việt Vương*, as he was called out of respect for the taboo on the name *Quang Phục*, is situated in the commune of *Trình Hà*, district of *Mỹ Hoá*. The prince quartered his troops here during a campaign march, and after miracles were performed, the commune's inhabitants build a temple in his honour, in accordance with a decision of the provincial mandarin concerning worship and veneration. This temple has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine of the emperor *Lê Đại Hành*, situated in the commune of *Trung Lập*, district of *Thủy Nguyên*, used to be the house and garden of the emperor's ancestors. A temple was built in his honour, which has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter. The shrine to the *Lê* kings is in the village of *Kiều Đại*, commune of *Bố Vệ*, district of *Đông Sơn*. Here the people venerate the tablets of twenty-nine emperors and twenty-eight empresses. In accordance with the regulations laid down by the provincial mandarin concerning worship and veneration, this shrine has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter. The shrine of *Lê Quang Thục*, a queen mother of the *Lê* dynasty, may be visited in the commune of *Động Bằng*, district of *Yên Định*. This was the queen mother's home village. She was of the family of *Ngô*, with a taboo on the name *Đào*. She was originally an official in the harem of the emperor *Lê Thái Tông*, and became the mother of *Lê Thánh Tông*. In 1460-69, she was posthumously honoured as the queen mother *Quang Thục Hoàng*. The emperor *Lê Thánh Tông* built a palace in her honour in her native village, called the *Phúc Quang* palace. To worship her,

the people of the commune of **Động Bàng** later built a shrine on the site of her ancestral home, which has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine of **Quan Công** may be found in the commune of **Vân Trai**, district of **Ngọc Sơn**. In 1842, this shrine received a charter from the provincial mandarin. The spirit of the princess **Liễu Hạnh** is venerated at the shrine of **Sùng Trân**, which lies in the communes of **Cổ Đam** and **Phú Dương**, district of **Tống Sơn**. This shrine has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter. A shrine to the Four Ladies is situated in the commune of **Y Bích**, district of **Hậu Lộc**. The empress of the dynasty of **Nam Tống** is worshiped here. When she was pursued and captured by the **Nguyên** army, the empress and her two daughters committed suicide by jumping into a river. Their corpses drifted down to the estuary of **Cần Hải** (the estuary of **Cờn**) in **Nghệ An**. Great miracles took place which is why the people of the commune founded a temple. This shrine has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter. This empress is worshiped in many communes throughout the province, in a total of seventy places.

The shrine of the deity **Đông Cổ** is situated in the commune of **Đan Nê**, in the district of **Yên Định**. The mountain god **Đông Cổ** is venerated here by the people of the commune, and great miracles take place. This shrine has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter. The shrine to the deity **Đổng Thiên Vương** may be visited in the commune of **Trịnh Điện**, in the same district. The deity was originally from the village of **Phù Đổng**, in the former province of **Vũ Ninh**, and helped **Hùng Vương** drive out his enemies. After miracles took place, the inhabitants of the commune founded a temple, which has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine to the mountain god **Tản Viên** is situated in the district of **Cẩm Thủy** and frequented by the people of the communes of **Quan Phác**, **Biện Thượng** and **Tiên Lãng**. The deity was a child of **Lạc Long Quân**, and when he went for walks in the mountain of **Tản Viên** understood that he had miraculous healing powers. The local inhabitants founded a temple in his honour, which has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine of the deity **Cao Vương** lies in the territory of the commune of **Thạch Phương** and **Phạm Xá**, in the district of **Quảng Xương**. The deity was originally from the village of **Bảo Sơn**, province of **Guizhou [Quảng Nam]**, in the country in the north [China]. His family name was **Gao [Cao]**, his given name was **Pian [Biền]**, and after seeing himself through his studies and successfully defending his doctorate, he became a mandarin, rising to the rank of Minister of State, and led the army to fight the wild tribes of the south. He was later named, by royal edict, the deity of **Cao Vương**. All the vassal states in the world have founded temples to this deity, to whom people pray for great miracles. People throughout the province venerate **Cao Vương**, in a total of 330 places. This shrine has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

Shrines to the **Nguyễn** family god of the eastern sea may be admired in the prefectures of **Hà Trung**, **Thiệu Hoá** and **Tĩnh Gia**, and this deity is worshiped there in a total of forty-three communes and villages. His family name was originally **Nguyễn**, his given name was **Phục**, and after receiving his doctorate from the **Lê** court, he became a mandarin, rising to the rank of preceptor, later becoming an official with naval responsibilities. During the campaign against **Champa**, he was swept away by the winds and the storms. The emperor later named him as the deity of the eastern sea. These shrines have on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine of the **Đoàn** family god of the eastern sea may be admired in the commune of **Ngọc Sơn**, and is frequented by the inhabitants of the commune. This deity's name was originally **Đoàn** with the given name of **Thượng**. He became a mandarin under the **Lý** court, rising to the position of grand

councillor. He refused to surrender to the Trần and raised troops to oppose them, finally committing suicide. The deity performed miracles, and the inhabitants of the commune founded a temple in his honour, which has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine of *Triệu Ấu* may be visited in the commune of *Phú Điền*, district of *Mỹ Hoá*, and is frequented by the inhabitants of the commune. This deity was a daughter of the *Triệu* family, in the Chinese dominion of *Cửu Chân*, and when she was born she was already of strange appearance. She was nine rods tall, with breasts three cubits long and a back measuring ten arm spans. She was of unusual strength and possessed great skill in martial arts. At the time of the Three Kingdoms, at the end of the Han era, our country was occupied by the Wu dynasty. In outrage she tied up her hair and raised rebellion, mustering her troops at the mountain of *Phú Điền* before advancing and retaking the entire dominion of *Cửu Chân*. After she died, she performed many miracles, and the inhabitants of the commune founded a temple in her honour which has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine of *Khuông Công Phụ* may be found in the village of *Cẩm Cầu*, district of *Yên Định*. The shrine was founded in the garden of duke *Khuông*'s former house. This deity was originally a successful candidate at the doctoral examination, who went on to become a mandarin under the Tang, rising to the position of minister of state. The emperor later named him as a deity and the shrine has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine to the mountain god *Chiếu Bạch* may be found in the commune of *Bình Lâm*, in the district of *Nga Sơn*, and is frequented by the inhabitants of the commune. The deity is *Lê Phụng Hiểu*, who was a minister at the *Lý* court. This shrine has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine of commander-in-chief *Lý* may be found in the commune of *Ngọ Xá*, in the district of *Vĩnh Lộc*. The deity is *Lý Thường Kiệt*, a mandarin at the court of *Lý Thánh Tông* and plenipotentiary in the domains of *Thanh Hoá* and *Nghệ An*. The commander-in-chief's virtue led the people here to build a temple in his honour, which has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The temple of the deity *Tham Xung* may be found in the commune of *Biện Thượng*, in the district of *Cẩm Thủy*. The deity's given name was *Tham Xung*, with a secondary given name of *Lý Lang*, and although his original name is unknown it was changed by taboo from *Hữu*. In 605-18, under the Sui, he was a general who led the army to drive out the enemy, and during battle was beheaded by the enemy who cut his head into pieces. The general, holding his head, rode his horse in flight to the jetty on the river, at the commune of *Cổ Định*, in the district of *Nông Cống*. Meeting an old lady en route, he asked her about the meaning of life and death, whereupon she explained the entire truth to him. After hearing this he fell from his horse and died. The inhabitants of the commune founded a temple in his honour. The deity is worshiped in forty-four places throughout the district of *Nông Cống*, and ten places in other districts. This shrine has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine of the grand counsellor *Thiều Phòng* may be found in the district of *Đông Sơn*. The grand counsellor *Phòng* of the *Thiều* family is venerated at a temple there, frequented by the inhabitants of the communes of *Triệu Xá*, *Triệu Tiên*, *Thọ Sơn* and *Thừa Hạ*. The deity, originally from this district, bore the family name of *Thiều* and the given name of *Thốn*. He was a mandarin at the Trần court, and rose to the position of grand counsellor. The emperor later named him a deity, and the local population founded a temple in his honour, which has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine to the Trần minister of the armies is situated in the commune of *Phương Nhai*, district of *Vĩnh Lộc*. The deity, originally from this district, bore the family name of Trần and the given name of

Khát Chân. He was a mandarin at the Trần court and rose to the position of minister of the armies. When Hồ Quý Ly usurped the throne, he plotted to assassinate the usurper, but someone denounced him and he was executed by Hồ Quý Ly. The people of this commune founded a temple in his honour, which has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

Shrines venerating the commander-in-chief Tô may be found in fifty-seven communes and villages throughout the province. This deity's name was Tô, his given name was Thành, and he was otherwise known as Tô Đại Liêu. After receiving his doctorate, he became one of the best known personalities at the Lý court, rising in the mandarin to the position of commander-in-chief. In each place he visited on inspection, its inhabitants founded a temple in his honour which have on many occasions been the beneficiary of royal charters.

The deity Uy Minh is venerated at a shrine frequented by the people of the communes of Du Độ and Đông Loan, in the district of Ngọc Sơn. The deity was the eighth child of the emperor Lý Thái Tổ. He was at first named the retainer Uy Minh, was subsequently ordered to carry out military campaigns in Nghệ An, and then rose to become a prince. He was entrusted with the seal and military axe, and governed the people with benevolence and sound judgement. After his death, the people remembered his works and built a temple in his honour, which has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine of the Trần prince Chiêu Văn is situated in the commune of Văn Trinh, in the district of Ngọc Sơn. This prince was the sixth son of the emperor Trần Thái Tông, and was named prince Chiêu Văn. He was in charge of the armed forces, leading the army against the emperor's enemies, and successfully managed the affairs of government wherever he went. The people expressed their gratitude for his achievements by building a temple in his honour, which has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine of the deity Long Uyên is frequented by the people of the communes of Hoàng Học and Thọ Phật, in the district of Đông Sơn. In the temple, there is a lake formed from an abyss so deep it cannot be measured. In times of drought, the local people come to the temple to pray for rain and their wish is immediately granted. This shrine has on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The deity Ngu Giang is honoured at two shrines. One of these, in the commune of Yên Vực, district of Hoàng Hoá, lies on the southern bank of the Ngu river. The other, in the commune of Tào Xuyên, district of Mỹ Hoá, lies on the river's northern bank. In the past, when the emperor Lý Thái Tổ led the army to fight the wild tribes in the mountains, his boat arrived in this region from the sea, and when it reached the junction of the Ngu and Mã rivers found the water was too shallow to pass. The emperor prayed quietly to himself, and within the space of a quarter of an hour the waters rose and the boats were able to pass easily. The emperor immediately named the deity 'the spirit of the confluence of the Ngu river'. To honour the deity, the local population built these temples, which have on many occasions been the beneficiary of a royal charter.

The shrine of the cave of Bích Đào is situated in the commune of Trị Nội, in the district of Nga Sơn. The deity Linh Tiên, of the cave of Bích Đào, is venerated there. The commander-in-chief Trịnh is venerated at a shrine in the commune of Kim Bôi, in the district of Vĩnh Lộc. This deity's name was Trịnh, with the given name of Khả, and participated in the insurrection of the emperor Lê Thái Tổ, rising to the position of general in the army. The inhabitants of the commune founded a temple in his honour. The minister is worshiped at a shrine in the commune of Văn Hà, in the district of Thuy Nguyên. This deity's name was Nguyễn, with the given name of Quán Nho. After receiving his doctorate in 1667, he entered the mandarin to the position of minister of the army. After his

## **The Descriptive Geography of the Emperor *Đông Khánh***

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death, he was named a duke. The inhabitants of the commune founded a temple in his honour. The shrine of the minister Lương is situated in the commune of Tào Xuyên, in the district of Ngọc Sơn. This deity was of the Lương family, with the given name of Chí. He received his doctorate in 1589, and entered the mandariate, rising to the position of minister of finances. After his death, he was named a grand duke. The inhabitants of the commune founded a temple in his honour.

There are 13,263 soldiers in the province, not including the courageous *Thổ* troops who are this year being recruited and prepared for service in the three loosely administered districts of the province.

Soldiers in the service of the army and navy: 6,342

Village militia: 3,759

*Thổ* soldiers: 2,893

Soldiers recruited by the mandarin: 278

Population registered for taxation: 63,684

Agricultural land and tax receipts:

Total agricultural land: 441,143 acres, seven square perches, one square yard, eight square feet and two square inches.

Annual tax receipts:

Paid in cash: 133,572 ligatures, seven strings and thirty-nine sapeques.

Paid in paddy: 142,217 bushels, six pints and four double handfuls.

Paid in silver: 457 taels of silver, and two silver sapeques.

For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.

We, the mandarins of the province of **Nghệ An**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of

## The Province of **Nghệ An**

Including the following maps:

|  |      |
|--|------|
| The Citadel of the Province of Nghệ An | 又安省城 |
| The Province of Nghệ An                | 又安省  |
| The Prefecture of Anh Sơn              | 英山府  |
| The District of Lương Sơn              | 梁山縣  |
| The District of Nam Đường              | 南塘縣  |
| The District of Thanh Chương           | 清漳縣  |
| The District of Hưng Nguyên            | 興元縣  |
| The District of Chân Lộc               | 真祿縣  |
| The Prefecture of Diễn Châu            | 演州府  |
| The District of Quỳnh Lưu              | 瓊瑠縣  |
| The Prefecture of Đức Thọ              | 德壽府  |
| The District of La Sơn                 | 羅山縣  |
| The District of Hương Sơn              | 香山縣  |
| The District of Hương Khê              | 香溪縣  |
| The District of Nghi Xuân              | 宜春縣  |
| The District of Can Lộc                | 干祿縣  |
| The Prefecture of Tương Dương          | 襄陽府  |
| The Prefecture of Quỳnh Châu           | 葵州府  |

## **The Description of the Province of Nghệ An**

### **[Note on the Administrative History of the Province:**

*Under the Han, the territory of the province of Nghệ An was part of the Chinese dominion of Cửu Chân 九真 and, under the Jin 晉, belonged to the Chinese dominion of Cửu Đức 九德. Under the Sui 隋, in 598, it became the outer district of Hoan Châu 驩州, which was soon thereafter (605-618) renamed Nhật Nam 日南. Under the Tang 唐, it was divided between and Diễn Châu 演州. The name Hoan Châu was maintained under the Đinh and early Lê. In 1010, the emperor Lý Thái Tổ 李太祖 “gave the status of camp to Châu Hoan 驩州 and Châu Ái 愛州”, but they were called outer districts at the beginning of the reign of the emperor Lý Thái Tông. In 1036, the emperor Lý Thái Tông 李太宗 built a palace in Hoan Châu, to facilitate his travels, changing its name to Nghệ An 乂安. Nghệ An means eventless peace, as the annals relate: “peace reigns throughout the kingdom, the barns are full of wares”. At the beginning of the Trần 陳 dynasty, the status of camp was restored. In 1375, during the reign of the emperor Trần Duệ Tông 陳睿宗, Diễn Châu became the territory of Diễn Châu while the former Hoan Châu was divided between the territories of Nhật Nam and Nghệ An (North, Centre and South), which belonged to the prefecture of Nghệ An, which later became a government. In 1397, the emperor Trần Thuận Tông 陳順宗 laid a taboo on the name of Trần Nghệ Tông 陳藝宗, who died in 1394, and the government of Nghệ An was renamed Lâm An 臨安 by consequence. The government of Diễn Châu was renamed Vọng Giang 望江 and became the prefecture of Linh Nguyên 靈源 during the reign of Hồ Hán Thương 胡漢蒼 (1403). Under the Ming 明, the two regions became the prefectures of Nghệ An and Diễn Châu respectively. At the beginning of the Lê 黎 dynasty, they were merged under the name Nghệ An, which was a part of the regional inspectorate of Hải Tây 海西. In 1469, the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 established the division of Nghệ An, which was made up of eight prefectures, with eighteen districts and two outer districts. It later became a domain and then, under the Tây Sơn, was renamed the government of Nghĩ An 義安, with the ‘Capital of the Centre 中都’ established at Vĩnh Dinh 永營 (Vinh). During the first year of his reign, the Nguyễn 阮 emperor Gia Long 嘉隆 (1802) restored its former name and status as the government of Nghệ An. In the twelfth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1832), the realm was divided into provinces, and the two prefectures of Đức Thọ 德壽 and Hà Hoa 河華 were removed to form the province of Hà Tĩnh, the remaining territory becoming the province of Nghệ An. In 1853, the emperor Tự Đức Tự Đức ordered the return of the prefecture of Đức Thọ from Hà Tĩnh to Nghệ An.*

*There were no further changes up to the time of the emperor Đồng Khánh. This territory corresponded to the province of Nghệ An as it was to exist at the beginning of the twenty-first century, with the exception of the districts of La Sơn (Đức Thọ), Nghi Xuân, Hương Sơn, Hương Khê and the northern part of Can Lộc, which were to form part of the province of Hà Tĩnh, and the loosely administered prefectures of Trấn Biên and Trấn Ninh were to become part of the country of Laos.]*

The provincial citadel straddles the communes of Yên Trường and Vĩnh Yên, in the canton of Yên Trường, district of Chân Lộc. The citadel is built in the form of a turtle, with six corners. The outer part of the rampart is made of stone, and is 630 rods in circumference. The inner part is made of stone and shellfish fossil, and is 294 rods in circumference. The rampart is nine cubits high, and the parapet raises it a further two cubits, five inches. Four sides of the citadel are protected by a moat, which is eight rods across and eight cubits deep. The citadel opens at three gates, at the front, left and right hand sides. Each gate is protected by an embankment in the form of a crescent moon.

The embankment protecting the front gate is reinforced on the outside with stone and shellfish fossil, and is fifty-four rods, eight cubits long. The inner part of the embankment is built in brick, and is forty-eight rods, two cubits long. It opens at a gate in the centre. The embankment is six cubits high, and a parapet raises it a further two cubits, seven inches.

The embankments protecting the left and right hand gates are built of earth. Each opens at a gate in the centre, which is one rod, two cubits, eight inches high, and one rod, two cubits wide.

The province meets the sea at its eastern extremity, and borders the country of Siam [Tiêm La] to the west. To the south, the province is bounded by the provinces of Hà Tĩnh and Quảng Bình, while to the north lie the provinces of Thanh Hoá and Hưng Hoá.

From east to west, the province is 384 leagues across. From north to south, it is 356 leagues across.

The province is made up of seven prefectures, with thirty-two districts. In the past it was made up of three prefectures, Trấn Định, Trấn Tĩnh and Lạc Biên, which have since been abolished.

- 1- The prefecture of Anh Sơn: principal districts of Lương Sơn and Nam Đường, secondary districts of Thanh Chương, Hưng Nguyên and Chân Lộc.
- 2- The prefecture of Diễn Châu: principal district of La Sơn, secondary district of Quỳnh Lưu.
- 3- The prefecture of Đức Thọ: principal districts of Đông Thành and Yên Thành, secondary districts of Hương Sơn, Hương Khê, Nghi Xuân and Can Lộc.
- 4- The prefecture of Tương Dương: principal districts of Tương Dương, Hội Nguyên, Vĩnh Hoà and Kỳ Sơn.
- 5- The prefecture of Quỳnh Châu: principal districts of Nghĩa Đường, Quế Phong and Thuý Vân.
- 6- The loosely administered prefecture of Trấn Ninh: loosely administered districts of Khâm, Quảng, Xôi, Sen, Cát, Mộc, Liêm and Khang.
- 7- The loosely administered prefecture of Trấn Biên: loosely administered districts of Mường Lan, Man Soạn, Sầm Tộ and Xa Hồ.

The population of all categories amounts to 75,615 people. Details of the population may be found in the revised population register of the twenty-fourth year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức [1871].

The armed forces include nineteen units of guards and squads of defence militia, with a complement of 8,179.

The communally and privately owned agricultural land of all categories paying tax amounts to 133,108 acres, nine square poles, nine square perches, five square yards, three square feet, and slightly over nine square inches. Details may be found in the revised land register of the twenty-fourth year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức [1871].

The land area of the province includes communally and privately owned paddy fields of all categories, as well as residential land, amounting to 100,453 acres, seven square perches, one square yard, eight square feet and slightly over six square inches.

This land area includes salt fields of all categories amounting to 135.4 acres, five square perches and seven square feet. It also includes communally and privately owned land of all categories including

river banks, ponds and marshes: 32,520.4 acres, twelve square perches, two square yards, eight square feet and three square inches.

Annual taxation receipts:

Paid in paddy: 69,749 bushels, twenty-one pints and thirty-six double handfuls.

Paid in cash: 91,933 ligatures, three strings and slightly more than twenty-seven sapeques.

Tax on salt paid in cash: 304 ligatures, seven strings and slightly more than fifteen sapeques.

### **Customs and Manners**

The soils of the province are infertile and its population is poor, and as a result the province cannot compare with those of the northern part of the country. But the people are honest and obey the law with awe. The scholars place great importance on moral integrity and take their studies seriously, showing no desire for affected polish and trumpery. They bear their poverty with dignity, and are usually the butt of jokes and laughter from people of other provinces who regard them as rustic and down-to-earth. The common people work hard on the farm. Few of them practise trade. They are frugal and parsimonious folk, never despising the smallest trifles, which explains why the people of other provinces insult them, regarding them as miserly. The people in the mountains burn fields from the forest where they plant their seeds, which they irrigate with water-wheels. The people in the coastal areas live by the sea, building dikes to keep the saltwater out, so they can grow paddy in the fields.

In addition, people practise other professions and exchange different types of produce to make a living. Weddings, funerals and other ceremonies are celebrated in much the same way throughout the province. However, the people who live in the mountains still have rather coarse customs. They live in houses built on stilts, they wear wrap-around shirts and every family makes offerings to ghosts and devils. Outsiders do not dare to trespass here. Only the inhabitants of the prefecture of *Trấn Ninh* are, by contrast, extremely prosperous. These are the loosely administered regions of the province, and culture and education have not yet penetrated there.

### **Local Produce**

This province lies between the mountains and the sea, and the soil is hard and infertile. The paddy fields of the plains yield a single harvest every year. Those places where the seedlings are planted out in the summer do not produce an autumn crop, and those places where the seedlings are planted out in the autumn do not produce a summer crop. The ordinary rice has a pungent taste, and the glutinous rice cannot be described as fragrant. All types of potato, bean, aubergine, vegetable, fruit, marrow and melon may be found throughout the province, but only in sufficient quantities for people to survive those times when the paddy harvest fails. Local produce worth mentioning includes the sugarcane of *Hung Nguyên*, *Thanh Chương* and *Nam Đường* and the fresh areca of *Lương Sơn*, *Hương Sơn* and *Hương Khê*. Cinnamon and ironwood may be found in *Quỳ Châu*, jute and brass pans in *Diễn Châu*, iron ore in *Hương Khê*. There are mountains containing iron ore in *Hung Nguyên*. The profession of silk-weaving is practised in the villages of *Việt Yên* and *Quỳnh Đồi*. In the villages of *Cổ Đạm* and *Kê Quan*, the earth is of the colour of gold. Young breeding fish are raised along the *Dương*, and fresh bamboo shoots at *Yên Đình*. Peacocks may be found on the mountain of *Đại Hàm*. Pine resin may be found in the forests of *Quỳnh Lưu*. Reeds for thatch, rattan and palm leaves may be found in the prefecture of *Tương Dương*. Sandalwood, beeswax, rhinoceros, elephants and different types of deer abound in the forested regions. Fish, prawns, crabs, snails, salt and fish sauce are the main sea products of the coastal regions.

The produce of the province is of rather ordinary quality, and nothing can be described as particularly unusual or precious.

### **Climate**

In the first month, the weather is cold and a strong easterly wind blows. The mild spring weather arrives in the second month. The southerly wind gets up in the third month, and there are scattered showers but they only last a moment before dispersing. When the wind blows in the forest, it howls and roars like rolling thunder. Early rain sometimes falls during the fourth month. The fifth and sixth months are scorching hot. During the eighth and ninth months, the east wind blows, bringing rain clouds. The wind brings the rain, then passes on, to be followed again by more wind and then more rain. Small sea slugs thrive in such weather, which is why the people call it 'the sea slug wind, the sea slug rain'. In the autumn and winter, there is no fog or snow, but rain and floods are common. It is not unusual for the waters to flood several times a month. Crops are planted and harvested in two periods every year. The seedlings are planted out in the tenth month, and the ripened paddy is reaped the following summer. The seedlings are then planted out in the sixth month, and the winter paddy ripens in the tenth month. There are types of rice called 'three moons' and 'eight moons' which grow on certain types of land, and may be found in scattered spots throughout the province but not in any great quantity, perhaps because of the poor quality of the soil.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

There are many mountains in the province. The greatest of them are the mountains of **Hồng Lĩnh**, **Khai Trường**, **Thiên Nhân**, **Vạn Tầng** and **Kim Nhan**, all of which have important positions in the province. The district of **Chân Lộc** is home to the mountains of **Tượng Sơn Yên Dũng**, **Kỳ Lân**, **Lư Sơn**, **Kiểm Sơn**, and **Lập Thạch**, the inner and outer mountains of **Lan Châu** and the mountain of **Song Ngự**. The district of **Hưng Nguyên** is home to the mountains of **Thiết Sơn**, **Đại Vạc**, **Đại Hải** and **Long Thủ**. The mountain of **Thần Tí** may be found in the district of **Thanh Chương**. The mountains of **Độc Lôi**, **Đại Huệ**, **Ngọc Sơn** and **Hùng Lĩnh** may be found in the district of **Nam Đường**. The mountain of **Thành Nam** stands in the prefecture of **Tương Dương**. The mountains of **Mộ Dạ** and **Di Lặc** may be found in the district of **Đông Thành**. The mountain of **Câu Sơn** stands in the district of **Yên Thành**. The district of **Quỳnh Lưu** is home to the mountains of **Tùng Sơn**, **Quy Sơn** and **Long Sơn**. The district of **La Sơn** is home to the mountains of **Long Mã Phụ Đô**, **Tùng Lĩnh**, **Châu Sơn** and **Mặc Sơn**. The mountains of **Đại Hàm**, **Nấm Sơn** and **Kê Quan** stand in the district of **Hương Sơn**. The mountains of **Bạch Thạch** and **Thống Lệnh** may be admired in the district of **Hương Khê**. The district of **Can Lộc** is home to the mountains of **Nhạc Thốc** and **Côn Bằng**. The mountain of **Quỳnh Nhai** stands in the district of **Nghi Xuân**.

- Small mountains stretch endlessly across the province, and they cannot all be described here. As for rivers, they wind and meander through the province.

The larger rivers include the following. The **Lam** river rises in two places, at the source of the **Hiếu** river and at the source of the **Tương** river. Other rivers include the **Dương**, **Vũ Liệt**, **Cương**, **La**, **Tiêm**, **Trúc**, **Ác**, **Phố**, **Minh**, **Phân Thủy**, **Ngạn**, **Cấm**, **Mã**, **Giát** and **Hoàng Mai**.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The cave of **Đá Dựng** may be found in the district of **Chân Lộc**. The temple of **Triều Khẩu** and the port of **Thiên Uy** are situated in the district of **Hưng Nguyên**. The pagoda of **Hương Tích** is in the district of **Can Lộc**. The cave of **Kim Nhan** lies in the district of **Lương Sơn**. The stream of **Vũ Môn**, the marsh of **Bách Linh** and the peak of **Đá Bạc** are in the district of **Hương Khê**. The mountain of **Đại Hàm** stands in the district of **Hương Sơn**. The mountain of **Tùng**, which used to be known as the mountain of **Thi Đàn**, may be admired in the district of **La Sơn**. The shrine of **Kinh Dương Vương** and the mountains of **Di Lặc** and **Câu Sơn** are situated in the district of **Diễn Châu**. The shrine of **Đại Càn** may be found in the district of **Quỳnh Lưu**. The temple of **Tả Ao** may be visited in the district of **Nghi Xuân**.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A 'one thousand league road' extends from the provincial citadel southwards, passing the stage posts of Yên Dũng and Yên Liễu before reaching the ferry pier of Nghèn, on the boundary with the county of Hà Tĩnh. This road is fifty-four leagues long.

- A 'one thousand league road' extends from the provincial citadel northwards, passing the stage posts of Yên Kim, Yên Hương, Yên Luỹ and Yên Quỳnh, before reaching the stream of Nước Lạnh, which forms the boundary with the province of Thanh Hoá. This road is 137 leagues long.

- A minor road leads from the provincial citadel to the southwest and reaches the country of ten thousand elephants [Laos] after a journey of 515 leagues.

- A minor road extends from the provincial citadel to the northeast and reaches the estuary post of Hội after a journey of twenty-seven leagues.

- A minor road extends from the provincial citadel to the southeast and reaches the estuary post of Động Gián, in the district of Nghi Xuân, after a journey of forty-three leagues.

### **Temples and Shrines**

One may find the temple of Confucian literature and the rostrum to the gods of agriculture to the east of the provincial citadel. The rostrum to the gods of the soil and harvests lies to the west, the rostrum to the gods of the mountains and rivers and the shrine of Quan Công to the south. The shrine of all the saints and the shrine of the tutelary deities lie to the north.

The shrine of Kinh Dương Vương is situated in the district of Đông Thành. The shrine of Mai Hắc Đế and the temple of Độc Lôi may be visited in the district of Nam Đường. The district of Lương Sơn is home to a shrine where the Lý dynasty prince Uy Minh is venerated. The temple of Càn Hải is in the district of Quỳnh Lưu. There are two temples in the district of Hưng Nguyên, in the honour of Chiêu Trưng and Bà Chúa Hạng respectively. The temple of Thống Chinh is situated in the district of Thanh Chương, while that of Tả Ao may be visited in the district of Nghi Xuân. The temple of the censor Bùi is in the district of Can Lộc.

These are the most miraculous of the temples and shrines of the province.

### **Forts, Strongholds, Channels and Estuaries**

Nine estuary posts and five coastal fortresses may be found in the province, along with two mountain fortresses, an estuary fort and four frontier posts.

The estuary channels of the province are named as follows: Cửa Hội and Cửa Xá, in the district of Chân Lộc; Cửa Động Gián, in the district of Nghi Xuân; Cửa Sốt, in the district of Can Lộc; Cửa Hiền, in the district of Hưng Nguyên; Cửa Vạn, in the prefecture of Diên Châu; and Cửa Đài, Cửa Hoan and Cửa Càn, in the district of Quỳnh Lưu.

The coastal fortresses of the province are named as follows: Cửa Hội, Yên Lưu and Kỳ Lân, in the district of Chân Lộc, and Hội Thống and Tiên Cầu, in the district of Nghi Xuân.

The mountain fortresses of the province are named as follows: Hà Tân, in the district of Hương Sơn, and Quy Hợp, in the district of Hương Khê.

The frontier posts of the province are named as follows: Lương Trường, in the district of Thanh Chương, Lãng Điền, in the district of Lương Sơn, Minh Lương, in the district of Can Lộc, and Tam Soa, in the district of La Sơn.

The border fort is named Vĩnh Lộc, and is situated in the district of Quỳnh Lưu.

**For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.**

**We, the mandarins of the county of **Hà Tĩnh**, respectfully present the following papers,  
being the Geographical Description of**

## **The County of **Hà Tĩnh****

Including the following maps:

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| The County of Hà Tĩnh     | 河靜道 |
| The District of Thạch Hà  | 石河縣 |
| The District of Cẩm Xuyên | 錦川縣 |
| The District of Kỳ Anh    | 奇英縣 |

## The Description of the County of Hà Tĩnh

### [Note on the Administrative History of the County:

*Under the early Lê, the territory of the county of Hà Tĩnh corresponded to the outer district of Thạch Hà 石河. It was renamed Nhật Nam 日南 under the Trần 陳. Under the Ming 明, it became the outer district of Nam Tĩnh 南靖, when it comprised four districts: Khả Hoàng 可黃, Trại Thạch 砦石, Hà Hoa 河華 and Kỳ La 奇羅. In 1469, the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 created the prefecture of Hà Hoa, which comprised the districts of Thạch Hà and Kỳ Hoa and four of the six districts of the prefecture of Đức Quang 德光 (La Sơn 羅山, Thiên Lộc 天祿, Nghi Xuân 宜春 and Hương Sơn 香山), which were part of the government of Nghệ An. There were no further changes up to the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命, when the name of the prefecture of Đức Quang was changed to Đức Thọ 德壽 (1822) and the four districts listed above remained the only ones in the prefecture (1826). In 1831, the prefecture of Đức Thọ was merged with the prefecture of Hà Hoa to form the province of Hà Tĩnh. Six years later, the district of Hoa Xuyên 華川 was created, in the prefecture of Hà Hoa. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Thiệu Trị 紹治 (1841), a taboo was placed on the name Hoa, which was the name of the emperor's mother. The prefecture of Hà Hoa was thus renamed Hà Thanh 河清, the district of Kỳ Hoa was renamed Kỳ Anh 奇英, and the district of Hoa Xuyên was renamed Cẩm Xuyên 錦川. In the sixth year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1853), the prefecture of Đức Thọ was transferred to the province of Nghệ An, and the prefecture of Hà Thanh became the county of Hà Tĩnh, under the authority of Nghệ An. In 1864, it became a fully-fledged county in its own right, but remained under the authority of the governor of An-Tĩnh 安靜.*

*The county of Hà Tĩnh thus corresponded to the southern part of the province of Hà Tĩnh, as it existed at the beginning of the twenty-first century, including the districts of Kỳ Anh, Cẩm Xuyên and Thạch Hà, as well as the southern part of the district of Can Lộc.]*

The county citadel is situated to the east of the post road, in the commune of Đại Nại, canton of Thượng Nhị, district of Thạch Hà. It was originally the citadel of the former district of Thạch Hà. The rampart is built of brick. It is 192 rods, eight cubits in circumference and stands one rod high. The citadel has four corners and three gates, as well as a moat which is twenty-five cubits across and two cubits, two inches deep.

The county meets the great sea to the east and the great mountains to the west, where it is bounded by the village of Thanh Lãng, province of Quảng Bình, and the district of Hương Sơn, province of Nghệ An. To the south lies the district of Bình Chánh, prefecture of Quảng Trạch, province of Quảng Bình. The southern boundary is formed by the peak of the mountain of Hoàn Sơn. To the north, the Ngạn river forms the boundary with the district of Can Lộc, prefecture of Đức Thọ, province of Nghệ An.

From north to south, the county is 171 leagues and seventy-five rods across. From east to west it is 103 leagues across (in the district of Kỳ Anh) and sixty-eight leagues across (in Thạch Hà and Cẩm Xuyên).

The principal districts of the county are Thạch Hà and Cẩm Xuyên, and there is one secondary district, Kỳ Anh. The county is made up of a total of fifteen cantons, with 247 communes and villages.

Soldiers: 2,244 people.

Population of all categories: 18,080 people. These include:

Village notables: 438 people.

People exempted from tax payment: 761 people.

Soldiers recruited by the court: 2,244 people.

Others: 14,637 people.

Communally and privately owned land: slightly over 7,585 acres.

Communally and privately owned paddy fields: slightly over 32,384 acres.

Salt fields: slightly over 49 acres and three square poles.

Taxation receipts paid in cash (including head tax, paddy field tax and land tax):

Paid in accordance with the old regulations: slightly over 25,764 ligatures.

Paid in accordance with the new regulations: slightly over 30,181 ligatures.

Taxation receipts paid in paddy:

Paid in accordance with the old regulations: slightly over 21,994 bushels.

Paid in accordance with the new regulations: slightly over 26,527 bushels.

Salt tax receipts: slightly over 3,702 quarts.

### **Customs and Manners**

The people of all three districts of the county – Thạch Hà, Cẩm Xuyên and Kỳ Anh – are generally hardworking and thrifty. They place great importance on moral integrity. The students take their studies seriously and the common people are industrious. Most of the professions are practised in a rough and ready manner, and few involve high levels of skill. The people who live near the mountains make a living from the production of charcoal, while those who live by the sea catch fish. Few of the people follow the Catholic doctrine, while the majority revere other gods.

### **Local Produce**

The rice grown in the county is mainly harvested in the summer and autumn rice is not common. Fish and salt are the main produce of the two breakwaters of Nhưộng, in the districts of Cẩm Xuyên and Kỳ Anh. Cows, bulls, and buffaloes are raised in the villages of Xuân Sơn and Vọng Liễu, district of Kỳ Anh. Reeds grow in abundance at the mountain of Bảo Đài, in the district of Thạch Hà, while a sort of abalone is harvested at the island of Ô Tôn, which is a small promontory on the coast of the district of Kỳ Anh. The district of Thạch Hà is known for its beetles and a number of villages grow sugarcane there. In other places, such as Đông Môn, white cloth is produced, while Trảo Nha produces rush mats. Cloth is woven in a number of places, but most of it is of wretched coarse quality, good only for the common people's use. Crops like potatoes and manioc are grown throughout the county.

### **Climate**

The three districts of the county – Thạch Hà, Cẩm Xuyên and Kỳ Anh – tend to be cold during the months from autumn to spring. It is hot from the end of spring to the beginning of autumn. During the

transition from autumn to spring, heavy rain commonly causes floods. The wind often blows from the south in the summer and great storms, known locally as ‘windstorms’, are not unusual during the eighth and ninth months. The tides rise and fall once a day, but at times that differ from place to place. The mountains are full of miasmas and the paddy fields there suffer from soil erosion. Summer rice is sown the last week of the eighth month, transplanted in the eleventh month and harvested in the fourth and fifth months. Autumn rice is sown in the fourth month and harvested in the tenth. Wild animals often graze and damage crops grown in the paddy fields situated near the mountains, while those near the sea suffer from the encroachment of saltwater. If summer rice is reaped, the autumn rice will be lost, and if autumn rice is reaped, the summer rice will be lost. If the summer wind blows and there are floods in the autumn, the entire year’s crop may be lost. As for the sand bar along the coast, neither grass nor other plants will grow on most of it, the wind blows day and night and the bar is constantly changing in height. The people who live here have no paddy fields to farm, but go fishing to make a living.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

There are many mountains and rivers in the county. Famous mountains include the mountain of Nam Giới, in the district of Thạch Hà, the mountains of Chủ Trương, Tượng Tị and Thiên Cẩm, in the district of Cẩm Xuyên, and the mountains of Hoả Hiêu, Mã Yên, Cao Vọng, Bàn Độ and Hoàn Sơn, in the district of Kỳ Anh. The Ngạn and Nghiêu rivers may be found in the district of Thạch Hà. The Lạc and Hộ rivers may be found in the district of Cẩm Xuyên, as well as the breakwater channel of Nhượng. The Trí and Độ rivers and the breakwater channel of Độ Khẩu may be found in the district of Kỳ Anh. Gorges include those of Bát, in the district of Thạch Hà, and Mây, in the district of Cẩm Xuyên, while the torrent of Kiện Khê and the mountain of Từ Lĩnh are situated in the district of Kỳ Anh. All these are places of tortuous terrain, with mountains and ravines presenting many difficulties of access. These are the main strategic places in the county.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The pagoda of Cẩm Sơn, the retreat of Chủ Đồng Tử and the stream of Hiêu Hiêu in the mountain of Nam Giới may all be admired in the district of Thạch Hà. The Việt Tĩnh Cương hill may be found in the district of Kỳ Anh. These are the places which have been regarded as the sites of beauty in the county since days gone by, but the effects of war over the years have reduced them to ruins.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A post road starts at the southern extremity of the county, at the mountain pass of Hoàn Sơn on the boundary with the province of Quảng Bình. It passes the stage posts of Tĩnh Thân, Tĩnh Sa, Tĩnh Lạc, Tĩnh Khê and Tĩnh Đan, and meets the boundary with the province of Nghệ An to the north. This road is 171 leagues long and one rod wide.

**For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.**

**We, the mandarins of the province of **Quảng Bình**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of**

## **The Province of **Quảng Bình****

Including the following maps:

|                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| The Province of <b>Quảng Bình</b>    | 廣平省 |
| The Prefecture of <b>Quảng Ninh</b>  | 廣寧府 |
| The District of <b>Phong Lộc</b>     | 豐祿縣 |
| The District of <b>Phong Đăng</b>    | 豐登縣 |
| The District of <b>Lệ Thủy</b>       | 麗水縣 |
| The Prefecture of <b>Quảng Trạch</b> | 廣澤府 |
| The District of <b>Bình Chính</b>    | 平政縣 |
| The District of <b>Minh Chính</b>    | 明政縣 |
| The District of <b>Bố Trạch</b>      | 布澤縣 |
| The District of <b>Minh Hóa</b>      | 明化縣 |

## The Description of the Province of **Quảng Bình**

### [Note on the Administrative History of the Province:

*In the past, the territory of the province of Quảng Bình was divided between the three outer districts of Địa Lí 地哩, Ma Linh 麻令 and Bố Chính 布征, in the country of Champa. In 1069, the king of Champa, Rudravarman IV, offered these three outer districts to the emperor Lý Thánh Tông 李聖宗. Five years later, during the reign of the emperor Nhân Tông 李仁宗, the outer district of Địa Lí was renamed Lâm Bình 臨平, the outer district of Ma Linh was renamed Minh Linh 明靈 and the outer district of Bố Chính was renamed Bố Chính 布政. Under the Trần 陳, they became the prefecture of Lâm Bình. In 1375, during the reign of the emperor Trần Dụ Tông 陳裕宗, this prefecture was renamed Tân Bình 新平, and under the emperor Hồ Quý Ly 胡貴聲, it became a government. Its former status of prefecture was restored by the Ming 明, and at that time it was made up of three outer districts and nine districts. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Lê Thái Tổ 黎太祖, it became the territory of Tân Bình. In 1469, the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 once again restored it to its former status of prefecture, and at this time it was made up of the districts of Khang Lộc, Lê Thủy and Minh Linh, as well as the outer district of Bố Chính, which meant that it covered the territory of the province of Quảng Bình and the northern part of the province of Quảng Trị as they existed at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The prefecture of Tân Bình was then part of the division of Thuận Hoá. After the Lê Restoration, in 1601, a taboo was placed on the name Kinh Tông (Lê Duy Tân) 黎維新, and out of respect for this the prefecture of Tân Bình was renamed Tiên Bình 先平. Under the Nguyễn 阮 lords, further changes followed. After seizing the capital of the government of Thuận Hoá, lord Nguyễn Hoàng 阮黃 changed the name of the prefecture from Tiên Bình to Quảng Bình 廣平 (1604). In 1630, lord Nguyễn Phúc Nguyên 阮福源 occupied the territory from the north of the Nhật Lệ to the south of the Gianh river, calling it the outer district of Nam Bố Chính. From 1786, the Lê Trịnh army attacked Phú Xuân 富春, and retook this territory, calling it the outer district of Bố Chính and placing it under the authority of the government of Nghệ An. Under the Tây Sơn, the prefecture of Quảng Bình became the prefecture of Quảng Thuận 廣順, and Bố Chính became the outer district of Thuận Chính 順政. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Gia Long 嘉隆, its former status was restored and two outer districts were created, named inner Bố Chính and outer Bố Chính. They joined the districts of Khang Lộc 康祿 and Lê Thủy 麗水 to form the shire of Quảng Bình 廣平營. The outer district of Minh Linh 明靈 then became a district, belonging to the shire of Quảng Trị. In the eighth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1827), Quảng Bình became a government and four years later, when the realm was divided into provinces, the province of Quảng Bình came into being. The province remained unchanged at the turn of the twenty-first century.]*

The provincial citadel straddles the villages of Tiên Hiệp and Phú Ninh, in the cantons of Vũ Xã and Minh Lý, district of Phong Lộc, prefecture of Quảng Ninh. It has four corners and is built of brick and

stone in the shape of a star aniseed. The rampart is 460 rods, nine cubits, five inches in circumference. It is three cubits thick at the top and four cubits thick at the base. Including the parapet, it is one rod high, and is reinforced with earth on the inside to a height of three rods. It opens at three gates, on the left and right hand sides and at the rear. The moat is seven rods across and seven cubits deep. Extensions to the left and right hand sides are built in brick and stone according to the model of the 'long rampart'. The right hand long rampart is 833 rods, five cubits in circumference, and reaches the seashore. The left hand long rampart is 300 rods in length and reaches the bank of the Nhật Lệ river. Each long rampart has a gate to allow people to pass on their way out to the main road. Beyond the bridge, on the south side of the river, a further embankment runs along its bank as far as the foot of the mountain of **Đầu Mâu**, a distance of 3,966 rods and two cubits. There is a minor road near the foot of this mountain, which passes through a gate called the **Vũ Thắng** gate.

From north to south, the province is 206 leagues across. From east to west, it is 126 leagues across. To the south, the province is bounded by the district of **Minh Linh**, in the county of **Quảng Trị**. To the north, it is bounded by the district of **Kỳ Anh** in the county of **Hà Tĩnh**, where there is a pass at the mountain of **Hoành Sơn**. In the forested mountainous areas to the north, the district of **Hương Khê**, in the province of **Nghệ An**, lies across the provincial boundary. To the east the province meets the sea, while its boundary runs along the edge of the mountains to the west. The distance from the foothills of the mountains to the coast varies, there being narrow places and wide places, and the journey from one to the other can take anything from one to three watches. There are even parts of the province where the distance from the mountains to the sea may be covered on a single stretch of road. The inhabitants live in crowded settlements only on both sides of the **Linh** river. Beyond, when you reach the forested regions of the wild tribes' villages, the tortuous mountain roads mean that the journey as far as **Laos**, which lies beyond the upland border, may take about five or six days.

The province is made up of two prefectures, with seven districts, twenty-four cantons, 324 communes and villages of various categories (*thôn, phường, ấp, giáp, trang*), as well as the nine mountain settlements (*nguyên* or *nguồn, sách*) in the region where the rivers rise.

- 1- The prefecture of **Quảng Ninh**: three districts, thirteen cantons, 158 communes and villages. The principal districts of **Phong Lộc** and **Phong Đăng** are made up of eight cantons and 106 communes and villages. The secondary district of **Lệ Thủy** is made up of five cantons and fifty-two communes and villages.
- 2- The prefecture of **Quảng Trạch**: four districts, eleven cantons and 166 communes and villages. The upland people live in nine mountain settlements. The principal districts of **Bình Chính** and **Minh Chính** are made up of five cantons and ninety communes and villages. The secondary districts of **Bố Trạch** and **Minh Hóa** are made up of six cantons and seventy-six communes and villages, as well as nine mountain settlements.

### **Climate**

In the first and second months, a constant rain falls and the weather is cold. A southerly wind starts to blow in the third month. By the fifth and sixth months, it is stifling hot by the time the sun rises and the night is as hot as the day. Between summer and autumn, the rain comes and goes and a south wind blows. This wind is usually called the 'inner south wind', to distinguish it from the 'outer south wind' which blows from the west, less strongly but for longer periods. In the eighth month it is scorching hot and the people reflect on the heat in a saying: 'in the eighth month, the sun tans the grapefruit'. In the eleventh and twelfth months, the cold weather sets in. Farming lore maintains that if the reeds start to

blossom in the eighth and ninth months, the flood rains have come to an end. But if by the tenth month no flowers have appeared, it will rain heavily for the rest of the year. The reeds are widely used to predict the climate, and these late rains are called 'reed flower floods'. A further country saying goes: 'if it rains on the fifth day of the fifth month, parasites infest; if it rains on the sixth day of the sixth month, vermin abound.' During the year, the farmers plant two crops of rice, in summer and winter. The summer crop is planted out after the first frost of the ninth month and reaped in the fourth and fifth months, which explains why it is known as fifth month rice. The winter crop is ploughed when the earth is dry and crumbly, in the fifth and sixth months after the previous fourth month harvest. Wet paddy fields are ploughed, however, in the sixth and seventh months. In the tenth month, the harvest is brought in, and this crop is known as tenth month rice, as it is reaped during the dry season. Other crops, like fruit, vegetables, melons and marrows are sown at different times of the year, according to a cycle which varies according to the weather.

The tides come and go two or three times a month. In the first and seventh months, the tide rises on the fifth and nineteenth days. In the second and eighth months, it rises on the third, seventeenth and twenty-third days. In the third and ninth months, it rises on the thirteenth and twenty-seventh days. In the fourth and tenth month, it rises on the eleventh and twenty-fifth days. In the fifth and eleventh months, it rises on the ninth and twenty-third days. In the sixth and twelfth month, it rises on the seventh and twenty-first days.

### **Customs and Manners**

All the orders of society – scholars, farmers, artisans and traders – work hard at their different professions. They find the resources they need to make a living in the forests and mountains, lakes and marshes, rivers and sea. But the soil is infertile and the people are poor. This is why they chase after riches, and selfishly pursue their own interests, although some help each other out in a mutually affectionate way. The common people celebrate their weddings, funerals and other rituals in a frugal and parsimonious way, and the same spirit of thrift governs their everyday life, including their household goods, clothes and meals. Only the families of mandarins and the households of traders with boats pay any attention to ornament and luxury. While this is certainly due to their wealth, it is also because they are men of experience and knowledge who have gradually learnt the customs and habits current in other parts of the country. The inhabitants of the communes and villages worship their deities, and they present offerings – platters of wine and meat – on two occasions during the year, in spring and autumn. Once the offerings are made, the people eat and drink with great merriment. Some of the communes and villages situated on the river banks organise boat races along the river, but most of these are simple affairs, neither troublesome nor costly. The province enjoys the advantage of its situation near to the capital, receiving the light of the civilisation from the court earlier than other places, and its scholarly tradition benefits as a result, with the students making constant progress and each generation producing men of great talent. This justifies the province's reputation as a place of learning and civilisation, whose share of glory leaves nothing to be ashamed. But the common people have also picked up some of this culture, relishing argument, dispute and political contest, and village affairs are usually dominated by local men of power while the head of the canton is rarely able to impose his authority. Most of the district mandarins conduct their business with the maximum of obstacle and delay.

The highlanders who live in the settlements in the mountains where the rivers rise are primitive people. They know only how to use a knife to dig a hole and plant a seed, or take honey from the forest to the market to make a living. When they see a fertile patch of land, they build their huts there

to live in. Farming families have a bed used for ritual purposes, and spread mats around the hearth to sit and sleep on. They cut down lengths of bamboo to make pipes, used to contain their food and drink. Most of their household utensils and clothes are of this sort. The further you go into the mountains and the further you leave the plains behind you, the more backward these people are. Only the highlanders live like this. As for the Catholics, there are seven communes and villages where the whole population follows this doctrine. They include the village of Mỹ Hội, district of Phong Lộc, the village of Mỹ Phúc, district of Lệ Thủy, the villages of Thủy Vực and Trùng Hải, and the commune of Hướng Phương, district of Bình Chính, and the commune of Phương Liên, district of Bố Trạch, which is also home to the village of Trung in the commune of Câu Lạc. Forty-one communes and villages are partly Catholic. These include the following: the commune of Văn La and the villages of Tráng Tiệp, Tiên Tiệp and Kiên Bình, in the district of Phong Lộc; the communes of Yên Định, Phụ Việt and Đại Phong Lộc and the villages of Mỹ Hương and Mỹ Duyệt Hạ, district of Lệ Thủy; the communes of Tiểu Đan, Đan Sa, Thuận Bài, Tô Xá, and Lũ Đãng and the villages of Mỹ Hòa Thượng, Diên Phúc, Ngoại Hải, Phù Ninh, Tượng Sơn and Xuân Kiều, district of Bình Chính; the villages of Thượng and Hạ, in the commune of Phương Liên, as well as the communes of Hoàng Trung, Lâm Trạch and Đông Thành, and the villages of Lý Nhân Bắc, Mỹ Lộc, Thiên Lộc, Phúc Tự and Chính Hoà, district of Bố Chánh; the communes of Văn Phú, Đại Đan, Kênh Nhuận, Kênh Trùng and Phù Kênh, and the villages of Nội Hà, Diên Trường, Giáp Tam, Vĩnh Phúc, Vĩnh Lộc, Hòa Ninh and Diên Trường, district of Minh Chính. In recent years, the Catholics have been aggressively forcing and seducing people to follow their doctrine, their numbers are swelling constantly, and who knows when this tendency will come to an end.

### **Population, Land and Taxation**

Population registered for tax payment: 16,996 people. These include:

Notables and people exempt from corvee labour: 6,297 people.

Others: 10,699 people.

Soldiers: 3,282 people. These include:

Soldiers of the capital: 2,165 people.

Soldiers of the province: 1,117 people.

There are, in addition, 192 soldiers recruited by the mandarins.

Agricultural land: 38,437 acres, seven square poles, eleven square perches, four square yards, five square feet. This area includes:

Paddy fields: 33,079 acres, eight square poles, thirteen square perches, five square yards, six square feet.

Other land: 5,357 acres, eight square poles, twelve square perches, eight square yards, nine square feet.

Annual tax receipts:

Paid in cash: 29,265 ligatures, nine strings, sixteen sapeques.

Paid in paddy: 25,638 bushels, thirteen pints, eight double handfuls and slightly over five handfuls.

### **Local Produce**

The upper part of the province is mountainous and the lower part lies by the sea, so the resources of both the mountains and the sea are available. Among the resources of the mountains, one may find ivory, deer horns, timber, rattan and different sorts of bamboo. Among the resources of the sea, one

may find salt and fish sauce, prawns and fish, snails and cockles. The strip of land in between is where the people live, and mostly consists of land with a high proportion of sand. Places where paddy can be transplanted and grown are few and far between. Different types of potato, beans, vegetables, tubers, melons and marrows, as well as fruit, may be found in different places according to the season. They are grown between the paddy fields, which explains why the people who live from hand to mouth still have enough to eat, and never actually go hungry.

The prefecture of *Quảng Ninh* is a land of flat paddy fields spreading far into the distance. The people express this in a saying: ‘first comes *Gia Định* and second comes Two Districts’ (Two Districts being the name for the territory of *Phong Lộc* and *Phong Đăng* districts, which used to be a single district, combined with the district of *Lệ Thủy*). In reality, of course, we know that the *Gia Định* is much richer than Two Districts, and if we compare the soils of the northern and southern parts of the country, then it is clear that *Quảng Bình* is far less fertile. Cotton, silk thread and different sorts of livestock are produced in the province, not in any great abundance but certainly enough for the local people’s needs. Precious produce includes ivory and rhinoceros horn, in the mountains, and swallows’ nests and abalone, in the sea, but these are all of great rarity, and cannot be found on a daily basis. Other valuable produce includes local ginseng, watermelon, soybean, arrowroot flour, mulberry wine and eaglewood, all of which enjoy a certain reputation.

### **Mountains**

The western strip of the province is entirely made up of mountains. One peak follows another chasing all the way up to Laos, and the tallest peak is that of the mountain of *Tam Linh*, a mountain which serves as a protective defence in this direction. Other famous mountains worth mentioning include the mountains of *Đâu Mâu*, *Thần Định*, *Mã Yên*, *Thiên Tài*, *Thành Thang*, *Thọ Linh*, *Cao Mại* and *Vũ Nguyên*. The mountains of *Hoành Sơn* and *Hùng Sơn* separate the two parts of the country, north and south. The route through these mountains is important for travel between the two parts, and an imperial edict established a frontier post here, to protect and defend the boundary, a weighty task not to be taken lightly.

### **Rivers**

The eastern strip of the province lies beside the sea, while the sources of the rivers lie in the forests of the highland region. A thousand torrents and ten thousand streams form rivers that flow down to the sea. The *Linh* river flows on the south side of the border gate, while the *Nhật Lệ* river flows to the north, but in terms of length, width and depth the *Linh* is the more important of the two. The river waters irrigate the paddy fields, and allow the transportation of timber, bamboo and rattan. The people are immensely reliant on the rivers for the resources they provide.

The *Thọ Linh*, *Châu Nguyên* and *Đâu Trạm* rivers and the *Xuân Lai* and *Phan Xá* streams are in fact nothing more than branches of the two rivers mentioned above, with their own local names.

The *Ròn*, *Lý Nhân* and *Lý Hoà* rivers also flow out to the ocean, but they are of no great length and their estuaries are narrow and shallow. The bay of *Từ*, however, lies on the northern side of the *Ròn* river estuary, in the shadow of the mountain of *Ông*. The promontory here provides some shelter allowing boats and rafts to moor and anchor on their way out to sea, to escape from the wind and the waves. But pirate boats also frequent this place, where they lie in wait to board and rob trading ships. For boats plying the coast, this bay is therefore a place of refuge from the elements, but this route can also be quite terrifying.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

There are not many temples, pagodas and other religious buildings in the province. A temple of Confucian literature, as well as the temple of **Thần Nữ** and the temple of **Song Trung**, may be found in the prefecture of **Quảng Trạch**. The pagodas of **Cảnh Tiên**, **Kim Phong** and **Hoàng Phúc** may be found in the prefecture of **Quảng Ninh**. These are not large temples but their scenery is acceptable. Landscape of truly great natural beauty may be found at the cave of **Tiên Sư**, where people love the impression created by the rocks and the stream flowing amidst the silent foliage. Another beautiful spot may be found at the cave of **Chân Linh Tiên Nữ**. It is a shame that this cave is situated in such a remote and empty place, where no one maintains and repairs it and visitors who come to pay their respects are few and far between. As a result little attempt has been made to beautify the river here. Regarding ancient historical sites, the names of both **Tiên Sư** and **Tiên Nữ** should be mentioned, but we actually know nothing about their history. Other sites, like the well of **Ngọc Tinh** and the rock of **Trượng Nhân**, were probably creations of nature. As for the story about the pagoda of **Hóa**, sometimes it seems the legend is true and sometimes it seems unlikely. But however hard you think, it is impossible to find any basis for an answer. Now it is just a wide expanse of beach, with some of the ancient trees still standing there. Tradition suggests this is a place of miracles, but not one of the boats and rafts that pass this spot has ever experienced anything strange.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs from the stage post at the southern extremity of the province, on the boundary with the province of **Quảng Trị**. It leads northwards to the frontier post of **Hoành Sơn**, where the stage post of **Tĩnh Thần** is situated on the boundary with the county of **Hà Tĩnh**. This road passes six stage posts and is slightly longer than 195 leagues.

- A minor road follows the bank of the **Gianh** river upstream, passing the seat of the prefecture of **Quảng Trạch** before reaching the district seat of **Minh Hóa**. This journey takes a day and a half. From there, the traveller may continue along a mountain road which twists and turns as far as the frontier post of **Cửa Ve**, and then on up to the border with **Laos**. This stretch of the journey takes four or five days, and the road is five cubits wide.

- A sea route takes the traveller from the breakwater at the estuary of **Cửa Luật**, on the boundary with the province of **Quảng Trị**, as far as the mouth of the **Nhật Lệ** river. This route is 123 leagues long. The distance from the mouth of the **Nhật Lệ** river to the mouth of the **Gianh** river is forty-four leagues. From there to the **Ròn** river estuary, it is a further twenty-two leagues. A journey of sixty leagues from the **Ròn** estuary leads to the estuary named **Cửa Tấn Khẩu**, on the boundary with the county of **Hà Tĩnh**. The entire distance is 249 leagues, and boats usually take a day and a half to complete the journey.

For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.

We, the mandarins of the county of **Quảng Trị**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of

## **The County of **Quảng Trị****

Including the following maps:

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| The County of <b>Quảng Trị</b>                        | 廣治道     |
| The District of <b>Đăng Xương</b> and <b>Hải Lăng</b> | 登昌縣，海陵縣 |
| The District of <b>Mình Linh</b> and <b>Đo Linh</b>   | 明靈縣，由靈縣 |
| The District of <b>Thành Hóa</b>                      | 成化縣     |

## The Description of the County of **Quảng Trị**

### [Note on the Administrative History of the County:

*In the past, the territory of the county of **Quảng Trị** was made up of the two outer districts of **Ma Linh** 麻靈 and **Ô** 烏州 in the country of **Champa**. In 1075, the outer district of **Ma Linh** was renamed **Minh Linh** 明靈 by the emperor **Lý Nhân Tông** 李仁宗. In 1371, the outer district of **Ô** was renamed **Thuận** 順州 by the emperor **Trần Anh Tông** 陳英宗. At this time it consisted of the districts of **Thạch Lan** 石蘭, **Ba Lăng** 巴陵, **Lợi Điều** 利調 and **An Nhân** 安仁. Under the **Ming** 明, the outer district of **Thuận** was placed under the authority of the prefecture of **Thuận Hoá** 順化. In 1469, when the emperor **Lê Thánh Tông** 黎聖宗 ordered the mapping of the realm, the outer district of **Minh Linh** was transferred to the prefecture of **Tân Bình** 新平. At the same time, the outer district of **Thuận** was divided into the districts **Vũ Xương** 武昌 and **Hải Lăng** 海陵, which were placed under the authority of the prefecture of **Triệu Phong** 兆豐, in the division of **Thuận Hoá**. In 1765, the district of **Vũ Xương** was renamed **Đặng Xương** 登昌. In 1802, the first year of the reign of the emperor **Gia Long** 嘉隆, the districts of **Đặng Xương** and **Minh Linh**, formerly an outer district, were merged to form the shire of **Quảng Trị** 廣治. From an administrative point of view, however, the district of **Minh Linh** remained under the authority of the prefecture of **Quảng Bình** 廣平. Four years later, the shire of **Quảng Trị** was renamed **Trực Lệ** 直隸. In the third year of the reign of the emperor **Minh Mệnh** 明命 (1822), the district of **Minh Linh** was transferred to the prefecture of **Triệu Phong**. Five years later, the shire of **Trực Lệ** became the government of **Quảng Trị**. In 1832, when the provinces were created, the province of **Quảng Trị** came into being. In the sixth year of the reign of the emperor **Tự Đức** 嗣德, the province became a county, which was placed under the authority of the prefecture of **Thừa Thiên** 承天. There were no further changes up to the time of **Đông Khánh**, and the status of county was retained. By this time, however, the county had its own administration and no longer answered to **Thừa Thiên**.*

*The county was later to be merged with the provinces of **Quảng Bình** and **Thừa Thiên**, forming the province of **Bình Trị Thiên**. It regained its administrative independence in 1990. At the beginning of the twenty-first century it was the province of **Quảng Trị**.]*

The county citadel straddles the communes of **Cổ Bưu** and **Thạch Hãn** in the district of **Hải Lăng**. The rampart is built of earth and brick. It stands one rod, seven inches high. It is one cubit, seven inches thick and 489 rods, four cubits in circumference. The citadel has four corners and opens at four gates. The moat is eight rods, two cubits across and five cubits deep.

To the east, the county meets the sea and the boundary with the district of **Lệ Thủy**, in the province of **Quảng Bình**. To the south, a river separates it from the district of **Quảng Điền**, in the prefecture of **Thừa Thiên**. To the north lies the sea. To the southeast, it is bounded by the district of **Quảng Điền**, in the prefecture of **Thừa Thiên**. To the northwest, it is bounded by the district of **Lệ Thủy**, in the province of **Quảng Bình**.

From east to west, the county is 122 leagues, ninety-four rods and one cubit across.

## **The Descriptive Geography of the Emperor *Đông Khánh***

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The county is made up of five districts: the district of *Đặng Xương*, which is responsible for the administration of the district of *Hải Lăng*; the district of *Minh Linh*, which is responsible for the administration of the district of *Do Linh*; the district of *Thành Hoá*.

Population of all categories: slightly over 23,090 people, not including people recorded in the rolls as having run away from the county who number 121.

Soldiers: 5,333 people. These include:

Regular soldiers: 3,789 people.

Militia recruited by the mandarin: 1,544 people.

Population:

Ordinary inhabitants: 11,387 people.

“Strong men” (owing head tax of one ligature and one string of sapeques annually): 10,402 people.

“Old men” (owing head tax of seven strings and thirty sapeques annually): 969 people.

Men exempt from corvee labour and military service: 704 people.

Notables: 1,372 people.

Bachelors of letters: 159 people.

Men exempt from corvee labour: 6,617 people.

Highlander inhabitants of the six outer districts (owing head tax of two silver sapeques, or one ligature in cash): 1,302 people.

Highlander inhabitants of the nine cantons and settlement zones (owing head tax paid in cash of one ligature and three strings of sapeques): 1,532 people.

Inhabitants of the villages of the Ming-dynasty Chinese (owing head tax of one ligature and three strings of sapeques): 12 people.

Congregations of Qing-dynasty Chinese (owing head tax of one ligature and three strings of sapeques): 6 people.

Agricultural land of all categories: slightly over 56,688 acres in total.

Paddy fields: slightly over 47,130 acres and three square poles.

Other land: slightly over 9,557 acres and nine square poles.

Taxation of all categories:

Paid in ordinary paddy: 40,842 bushels.

Paid in paddy from the region of *Minh Xuân*: 69 bushels.

Paid in paddy from the region of *Bái Ân*: 315 bushels.

Paid in salt: 239 bushels.

### **Customs and Manners**

Some of the *Hán [Kinh]* inhabitants of the county, who include scholars, farmers, artisans, traders, fisherfolk, woodcutters and herdsmen, live in a relatively stylish way. But the common people are mostly self-interested, enjoying disputes, lawsuits and denunciations, and the inhabitants of the district of *Minh Linh* are the most notorious in this respect. They also believe in ghosts and devils, and when they have an accident or fall sick they visit fortune-tellers, conduct expiatory Buddhist ceremonies and consult sorcerers and mediums. Once healed they present offerings to the deities – platters of beef, pork and fruit – with gratitude and profound respect. The people of the highlands are naive, bold, down-to-earth and have very little understanding of Confucian moral principles. They live in a quite primitive way. These are the main manners and customs of the inhabitants of the county.

### **Local Produce**

Most of the land in the county is arid. Potatoes, manioc, corn, beans and cotton cloth are all produced in the county. Eaglewood may be found in the district of Minh Linh and arrowroot flour in the district of **Đăng Xương**. The sea offers fish, prawns, crabs and cuttlefish. In the district of **Thành Hoá**, one may find job's-tears, brazilwood, flowering bamboo, hemp, beeswax, honey and natural brown dye. The highland people bring these goods down to the market, exchanging them for other produce. In the mountains, different types of precious wood may be found, such as jackfruit and ironwood (*lin*). Wild animals in the county include rhinoceros, elephants, different types of deer, wild boar, red jungle fowl, pheasant and peacock, but none of these species are found in any great quantity.

### **Climate**

The climate of the county is similar to that of the prefecture of **Thừa Thiên**. In springtime, a northeasterly wind blows and the sun is obscured. During the months of summer, a strong wind blows from the south bringing scorching heat and muggy weather. The sunshine and heat abates in the autumn, when the northeasterly wind blows and heavy rain causes floods. The wind blows from the north during the winter, and the sky is clear. There is no thunder and when it rains, the weather turns rather cold. The weather follows this pattern most of the time.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

There are many mountains in the county, but beautiful landscapes may only be found in the district of **Thành Hoá**, at the caves of **Tá Linh** and **Phụ Ba Mân**, and the district of **Minh Linh**, at the mountain of **Tượng Sơn**. There are two beautiful rivers worth mentioning, the **Tham** and **Hãn** rivers. All the other rivers are small and narrow.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

Apart from the **Tĩnh Quang** and **Thiên Tôn** pagodas, the temple of the lady **Trảo Trảo**, and the market at the commune of **Cổ Thành**, in the district of **Đăng Xương**, the sites and monuments of the county are all rather mediocre.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs from the southern provincial boundary at the commune of **Lương Điền** to the northern boundary at the village of **Chấp Lễ**. This road is 122 leagues, ninety-four rods and one cubit long, one rod wide. It is divided into the following stretches:

- From the stage post of **Thừa Mỹ** to the stage post of **Trị Xá**: a distance of twenty-six leagues, eighty-seven rods, four cubits and eight inches.

- From the stage post of **Trị Xá** to the stage post of **Trị Nghĩa**: a distance of thirty-three leagues, sixteen rods and five cubits.

- From the stage post of **Trị Nghĩa** to the stage post of **Trị Cao**: a distance of twenty-six leagues, ninety-two rods and five cubits.

- From the stage post of **Trị Cao** to the stage post of **Trị Lập**: a distance of twenty-five leagues, eighty-four rods and five cubits.

- A main road runs from the county citadel to the estuary of **Việt Yên**. By road, the journey takes one day. By water, it takes the same time. The road is five cubits wide.

- A main road runs from the district seat of **Thành Hoá** towards the east, joining the principal main road. The journey takes about four hours. Westwards from the district seat of **Thành Hoá**, the road reaches the market near the offices of the county resident. The journey takes about one hour and the road is five cubits wide. A further route runs from the county citadel to the ferry pier of this district. The journey by water takes more than one day.

For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.

We, the mandarins of the prefecture of **Thừa Thiên**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of

## **The Prefecture of Thừa Thiên**

Including the following maps:

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| The Prefecture of Thừa Thiên               | 承天府     |
| The Districts of Hương Trà and Phú Vang    | 香茶縣，富榮縣 |
| The Districts of Hương Thủy and Phú Lộc    | 香水縣，富祿縣 |
| The Districts of Quảng Điền and Phong Điền | 廣田縣，豐田縣 |

## The Description of the Prefecture of Thừa Thiên

### [Note on the Administrative History of the Prefecture:

*In the past, the territory of the prefecture of Thừa Thiên was part of the country of Champa. At that time, it was part of the two outer districts of Ô 烏州 and Lý 里州 which were offered to the emperor Trần Anh Tông 陳英宗 by the Cham king Jaya Sinhavarman III. In 1307, the outer districts of Ô and Lý were renamed Thuận Châu 順州 and Hoá Châu 化州. The former corresponded to the territory of the province of Quảng Trị 廣治, while the latter corresponded to Thừa Thiên and the district of Điện Bàn 奠盤, in the province of Quảng Nam 廣南. At the end of the Trần 陳 period, the prefecture of Thuận Hoá 順化 was made up of the two outer districts of Thuận and Hoá. Under the Ming 明, Thuận Châu was divided into four districts and Hoá Châu into seven districts. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Lê Thái Tổ 黎太祖, the territory of Thuận Hoá was created, and placed under the authority of the regional inspectorate of Hải Tây 海西. In 1469, when the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 ordered the mapping of the realm, the division of Thuận Hoá was created, consisting of the prefectures of Triệu Phong 兆豐 and Tân Bình 新平. After taking office, the governor of Thuận Hoá established the palace at the commune of Ái Tử 愛子, in the district of Vũ Xương 武昌, which is now part of Quảng Bình. In 1626, lord Nguyễn Phúc Nguyên 阮福源 transferred the palace to the commune of Phúc Yên 福安, in the district of Quảng Điền 廣田, and ten years later lord Nguyễn Phúc Lan 阮福蘭 transferred it to Kim Long 金龍, in the district of Hương Trà 香茶. In 1687, lord Nguyễn Phúc Thái 阮福泰 moved it to the commune of Phú Xuân 富春, also in the district of Hương Trà. From the time lord Nguyễn Phúc Khoát 阮福闊 came to power, in 1744, the palace at Phú Xuân became known as the Capital City (Đô Thành 都城). The Tây Sơn court retained the capital at Phú Xuân. In 1802, the emperor Gia Long 嘉隆 also established the capital of the Nguyễn 阮 dynasty court at Phú Xuân. The three districts of Hương Trà, Quảng Điền and Phú Vang 富榮, in the prefecture of Triệu Phong, were at this time established as the shire of Quảng Đức 廣德 (with the rubric 'direct dependence' to indicate the shire's administrative dependence on the capital). In the third year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1822), the shire of Quảng Đức was renamed the prefecture of Thừa Thiên 承天 (and the rubric 'direct dependence' was abolished). In 1835, the districts of Phong Điền 豐田, Hương Thủy 香水 and Phú Lộc 富祿 were created. In the sixth year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1853), the province of Quảng Trị became the county of Quảng Trị, and was placed under the authority of the prefecture of Thừa Thiên. There were no further changes up to the time of Đồng Khánh, although the county of Quảng Trị's relationship of dependence was abolished.*

*The prefecture was later to become the province of Thừa Thiên-Huế, as it was known at the beginning of the twenty-first century.]*

## **The Descriptive Geography of the Emperor Đông Khánh**

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The seat of the prefecture is situated in the commune of Phú Xuân, in the district of Hương Trà, to the northeast of the citadel of the capital. It consists of three halls, where the offices of the commander-in-chief of the prefecture's armed forces, the prefect and the head of the district may be found.

Each hall is built with three rooms and two wings, facing the south. There are two further office buildings, to the left and right, as well as barracks for five squads of soldiers, each squad being housed in two rows. Brick walls surround these buildings on four sides. To the front and rear, the walls are forty rods long and to the left and right they are twenty-one rods long. The walls stand five cubits high. They open at six gates, three in the front and three in the rear wall.

The territory of the prefecture meets the sea to the east and the mountains to the west. To the south, it is bounded by the district of Hòa Vang, in the province of Quảng Nam, and to the north by the district of Hải Lăng, in the county of Quảng Trị.

From east to west, the prefecture is eighty-three leagues across. From north to south, it is 160 leagues across.

The prefecture is made up of six districts, with thirty-six cantons, and 413 communes and villages.

- 1- The district of Hương Trà, which is responsible for the administration of the district of Phú Vang, is made up of six cantons: Phú Xuân, An Ninh, Long Hồ, Phú Ốc, Vĩnh Trị and Hương Cồn.
- 2- The district of Phú Vang is made up of six cantons: Mậu Tài, Dương Nỗ, Đường Anh, Sư Lỗ, Quảng Xuyên and Kế Mỹ.
- 3- The district of Hương Thủy, which is responsible for the administration of the district of Phú Lộc, is made up of five cantons: Cư Chính, An Cựu, Dã Lê, Lương Văn and Vỹ Nhi.
- 4- The district of Phú Lộc is made up of four cantons: An Nông, Lương Điền, Diêm Trường and An Cư.
- 5- The district of Quảng Điền, which is responsible for the administration of the district of Phong Điền, is made up of five cantons: Hạ Túc, Khuông Phù, Phúc Yên, An Thành and Thanh Cồn.
- 6- The district of Phong Điền is made up of five cantons: Vĩnh Xương, Chính Lộc, Phù Trạch, Phù Ninh and Hiền Lương.

Population of all categories: 38,798 people. These include:

Notables: 3,602 people.

People exempt from corvee labour: 4,128 people.

Soldiers of the court: 9,928 people.

Other taxpayers include:

Common people: 18,143 people.

People with children serving as mandarins, or children and grand-children of mandarins, and all categories of people exempted from military service and corvee labour: 2,917 people.

Agricultural land: 72,184 acres, two square poles, ten square perches, six square feet, eight square inches.

Paddy fields: 59,767 acres, eight square poles, tens square perches, seven square yards, four square feet, eight square inches.

Land for other crops: 12,416 acres, three square poles, fourteen square perches, three square yards, two square feet.

Annual tax receipts:

Paid in paddy: 51,285 bushels, nine double handfuls, eight handfuls and a few grains. This figure has been adjusted to take into account the tax paid in cash. It includes:

Tax of all categories paid in lieu of corvee labour: 12,143 bushels, nine pints, seven double handfuls, six handfuls and a few grains.

Other tax: 39, 141 bushels, sixteen pints, three double handfuls, two handfuls and a few grains.

Paid in cash: 60,356 ligatures, six strings and nine sapeques. This sum includes:

Tax of all categories paid in lieu of corvee labour: 19,069 ligatures and twenty-seven sapeques.

Other tax: 41,286 ligatures, six strings and forty-two sapeques.

Annual tax paid by the highland villages of Tả Trạch, Hữu Trạch, Sơn Bô, Phù Âu, Ô Lâu, Thu Lai and Hưng Bình:

Paid in cash: 4,400 ligatures.

Paid in silver: 612 taels of silver, five silver sapeques and slightly over seven silver grains.

Paid in kind: five catties of beeswax, 5,000 strands of big rattan, 30,000 strands of ordinary rattan.

Tax on salt, paid in cash: 360 ligatures.

Annual tax paid by the marshes of An Truyền, Thanh Lam, Hà Trung, Bắc Vọng, Lai Hà, An Xuân and La Bích, paid in cash: 2,935 ligatures, five strings of sapeques.

Tax paid in cash by the ferry piers of Hương Lang, Cao Đồi and Minh Hương: 1,330 ligatures.

### **Customs and Manners**

The inhabitants of the prefecture practise different professions, and include scholars, farmers, artisans, traders, fisherfolk and woodcutters. The inhabitants of all three districts are educated, but most of the people only study for a short time, and then have to take up some other profession. Some of the people learn the martial arts and take examinations. In the regions by the coast and by the mountains, the soil is infertile and the people are poor, and most of them live simply and thriftily. Along the river banks, the paddy fields are fertile. Weddings, funerals and other ritual ceremonies are celebrated with generosity. However, people who live on the street fronts specialise in trading, and most of them pursue their own interest without regard for others, the number of people displaying any sign of generosity being rather low. As for clothes and food, most people live in showy and elegant way. Districts where Catholics may be found, either as a proportion or the whole population of the village or commune, include Quảng Điền (seven communes and villages), Hương Thủy (nine communes and villages) and Hương Trà (nineteen communes and villages).

### **Local Produce**

Different types of silk are produced in the communes of Vạn Xuân and Kim Luông. Aromatic rice is grown in the commune of An Cựu. Brass goods, such as pots, pans and platters, are manufactured by the inhabitants of the commune of Dương Xuân Thượng. Ceramics are made in the commune of Phúc Tích.

## **The Descriptive Geography of the Emperor *Đông Khánh***

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The autumn crop of rice is more abundant than the summer crop. On other land, people grow mulberry, jute, beans, melons and marrows, potatoes, sugarcane, areca and jackfruit. In the mountains, one may find different varieties of ironwood, other types of timber and rattan. Along the coast, one may find fish, prawns, crabs and shellfish almost everywhere, but not in any great quantity.

### **Climate**

Northerly winds blow in springtime, bringing cold and rain, and it is only in the third month that the weather turns mild. Summer is hot and sunny. In autumn, during the eighth and ninth months, and winter, during the tenth month, there are storms and floods. Cold rain falls during the eleventh and twelfth months. On paddy fields situated on higher ground, the summer crop of rice is usually grown according to the following cycle. The seeds are sown in the eighth month, the seedlings are planted out in the tenth month and the harvest is reaped in the third month. On low-lying fields, the seeds are sown in the ninth month, the seedlings are planted out in the eleventh month and the harvest is reaped in the fourth month. As for the autumn crop, the seeds are sown in the fourth month, the seedlings are planted out in the fifth month and the paddy is harvested in the eighth month. Crops grown on dry fields are sown in the sixth month, transplanted in the seventh month and harvested in the tenth month.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The temple of Quan Công, in the district of Hương Trà, and the pagoda of Thánh Duyên, in the district of Hương Thủy, are the main places of beauty in the prefecture.

### **Mountains**

There are many mountains in the southwestern part of the prefecture. The more famous of them include the mountains of Ngọc Trản and Kim Phụng, in the district of Hương Trà, the mountains of Ba Trục and Huyện Sơn in the district of Quảng Điền, and the mountains of Ngự Bình, Thúy Vân, Linh Thái, Hải Vân, Tam Thai, Sầm Sơn, Động Lăng, Động Nại and Song Ngự in the district of Hương Thủy.

### **Rivers**

Rivers and canals flow in a criss-crossed tangle across the prefecture. The larger bodies of water include the Hương, Bồ, Lợi Nông and Hưng Bình rivers and the lagoons of Tam Giang and Hà Trung.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs south from the jetty on the Hương river, passing the stage posts of Thừa Nông, Thừa Hóa, Thừa Lưu and Thừa Phúc before reaching the pass of Hải Vân, on the boundary with the district of Hòa Vang, in the province of Quảng Nam. This road is 111 leagues long and three rods wide.

- A main road runs north from the bridge of Lợi Tế, passing the stage posts of Thừa An and Thừa Mỹ, before reaching the district of Hải Lăng, in the county of Quảng Trị. This road is forty-nine leagues long and three rods wide.

**For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.**

**We, the mandarins of the province of **Quảng Nam**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of**

## **The Province of **Quảng Nam****

Including the following maps:

|                                     |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| The Province of <b>Quảng Nam</b>    | 廣南省 |
| The Prefecture of <b>Điện Bàn</b>   | 奠磐府 |
| The District of <b>Diên Phước</b>   | 延福縣 |
| The District of <b>Duy Xuyên</b>    | 澮川縣 |
| The District of <b>Hòa Vang</b>     | 和榮縣 |
| The Prefecture of <b>Thăng Bình</b> | 升平府 |
| The District of <b>Lễ Dương</b>     | 醴陽縣 |
| The District of <b>Quế Sơn</b>      | 桂山縣 |
| The District of <b>Hà Đông</b>      | 河東縣 |

## The Description of the Province of **Quảng Nam**

### [Note on the Administrative History of the Province:

*Under the Han, the territory of the province of Quảng Nam was part of the Chinese dominion of Nhật Nam 日南, and was later seized by the country of Champa. In 1306, during the reign of the emperor Trần Anh Tông 陳英宗, the northern part of Champa, including the two outer districts of Ô 烏州 and Lý 里州 were returned to the country of Đại Việt. In 1402, the emperor Hồ Hán Thương 胡漢蒼 attacked Champa and seized the regions of Chiêm Động and Cổ Luỹ 古壘, establishing the territory of Thăng Hoa 升華, which was made up of the four outer districts of Thăng 升, Hoa 華, Tư 思 and Nghĩa 義. Under the Ming 明, the territory became a prefecture but was otherwise unchanged. In reality, however, this region remained under Cham occupation up to the beginning of the Lê dynasty. The emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 led the army to restore sovereignty here (1472), and established the division of Quảng Nam 廣南, which was made up of the prefectures of Thăng Hoa 升華, Tư Nghĩa 思義 and Hoài Nhân 懷仁. This division corresponded to the territory of the provinces of Quảng Nam, Quảng Ngãi 廣義 and Bình Định 平定, as they existed at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The first Nguyễn lord, Nguyễn Hoàng 阮黃, established the shire of Quảng Nam in 1602, and named the district of Điện Bàn 奠盤, which had previously belonged to Thuận Hoá, a separate prefecture. At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Gia Long 嘉隆, the prefectures of Thăng Hoa and Điện Bàn were established as a separate shire, named Quảng Nam, and in 1806 the rubric 'direct dependence' was added to indicate the shire's administrative dependence on the capital. In the eighth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1827), the rubric was abolished, and the government of Quảng Nam was established. Five years later, when the country was divided into provinces, the province of Quảng Nam came into being.*

*During the reign of the emperor **Đông Khánh**, the province covered a territory which would be known, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as the province of Quảng Nam and the city of Đà Nẵng.]*

The provincial citadel is situated in the commune of La Qua, in the district of Diên Phước. Built of brick, the rampart is 480 rods, six cubits in circumference and stands one rod, one cubit, two inches high. The citadel has four corners and opens at four gates. Its moat is eight rods, two cubits across, and one cubit and slightly more than two inches deep. A dike built of earth surrounds the moat. It is of uneven height, varying between five and six cubits.

The territory of the prefecture meets the great sea to the east and the villages of the wild tribes to the west. To the south, it is bounded by the district of Bình Sơn, in the province of Quảng Ngãi, and to the north by the gate of Hải Vân, in the prefecture of Thừa Thiên.

From east to west, the province is ninety-nine leagues across. From north to south, it is 194 leagues across.

The territory of the province is made up of two prefectures, with six districts.

1- The prefecture of *Điện Bàn*: principal district of *Diên Phước*, secondary districts of *Duy Xuyên* and *Hoà Vang*.

2- The prefecture of *Thăng Bình*: principal district of *Lễ Dương*, secondary districts of *Quế Sơn* and *Hà Đông*.

The province is divided into forty-four cantons, with 1,054 communes and villages (*thôn, châu, phường, ấp, giáp, tộc*).

Population currently registered for tax payment: 52,686 people.

Agricultural land on which tax is currently paid: 134,126 acres, six square poles and slightly more than one square perch.

Annual taxation – including field, land and head tax – paid in cash: 107,056 ligatures, six strings and seventeen sapeques.

Taxation paid in paddy: 85,204 bushels and slightly more than nineteen pints.

Annual taxation paid in gold: 622 ounces of gold and one gold sapeque, which (converted into ligatures at the rate of one gold sapeque to eight ligatures) is equivalent to 49,769 ligatures.

Annual taxation paid in silk: 128 lengths of silk cloth.

Annual taxation paid in refined iron: 8,880 catties.

Annual taxation paid in silver: 610 taels, paid by the commune of Qing-dynasty Chinese.

### **Customs and Manners**

The majority of the scholars take the questions of honour and moral integrity seriously, and apply themselves to ethical matters in an upright manner. As for the common people, those living in the highlands burn charcoal and cut wood for a living, while those along the coast catch fish and practise trade. The others grow rice and other crops and weave cloth, specialising mostly in arable farming. Carpenters and other artisans often leave their home village to practise their profession, and only one or two out of every ten stay at home. Most people are thrifty in their manners, living simple country lives and studying little. Weddings, funeral and ceremonies of worship are celebrated with gatherings and feasts in the normal way, with respect for ritual. Generally speaking, the people live in this way in all six districts of the province.

### **Local Produce**

The produce of the province usually includes the five cereals as well as mulberry, cotton, vegetables and fruit, prawns and fish. Gold may be found in the sand in the district of *Hà Đông*, and marble in the district of *Diên Phước*. Swallows' nests and honey may be found in the district of *Hoà Vang*, and peacocks and cinnamon in the district of *Hà Đông*. *Bacca* fruit may be found in the districts of *Quế Sơn* and *Duy Xuyên*, and mangoes in the districts of *Hoà Vang* and *Diên Phước*. Other produce includes beeswax, fragrant essences, grains of paradise, tobacco, silk gauze and thick cloth, as well as ceramics, iron goods, stone, dipterocarpus bark, castor sugar, canarium, charcoal, jute, essence oils, fuel oils, coarse salt, molasses, flowered and white mats, rattan, and pots and pans. These are the main professions and produce of the province. Some may be found in this district and some in that, and they differ from one place to the next.

### **Climate**

The climate is similar to that of the province of *Thừa Thiên*. Summer, however, is hotter and winter is colder. In the ninth and tenth months, there are storms and strong winds.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

There are many mountains in the province. The more famous of them are the mountains of Hải Vân, Định Hải, Thạch Lĩnh and Ngự Đảo, in the district of Hoà Vang, the mountains of Ngũ Hành and Trà Sơn, in the district of Diên Phước, the mountain of Tào Sơn, which straddles the two districts of Duy Xuyên and Quế Sơn, and the mountain of Chủ Sơn, in the district of Hà Đông.

The larger rivers include the Cu Đê river, in the district of Hoà Vang, the Cẩm Lệ, Vĩnh Điện and Sài rivers, in the district of Diên Phước, the Dưỡng Chân river in the district of Quế Sơn, the Tam Kỳ and An Tân (Ván) rivers in the district of Hà Đông and the Bàn Thạch and Trà Nhiêu rivers in the district of Duy Xuyên.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The marble mountain (Ngũ Hành) stands in the district of Diên Phước.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A road runs from the frontier gate at the Hải Vân pass, at the northern extremity of the province, southwards as far as the provincial boundary with the district of Bình Sơn, province of Quảng Ngãi. This road is 194 leagues long.

- A sea route extends from the frontier gate at the Hải Vân pass, at the northern extremity of the province, southwards as far as the breakwater of Thới Cấn, in the province of Quảng Ngãi. With a fair wind, the journey by boat takes about two days.

**For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.**

**We, the mandarins of the province of **Quảng Ngãi**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of**

## **The Province of **Quảng Ngãi****

Including the following maps:

The Citadel of the Province of **Quảng Ngãi**

廣義省城

The Prefecture of **Tư Nghĩa** and the District of **Chương Nghĩa**

思義府，彰義縣

The District of **Bình Sơn**

平山縣

The District of **Mộ Đức**

慕德縣

## **The Description of the Province of Quảng Ngãi**

### **[Note on the Administrative History of the Province:**

*In the past, the territory of the province of Quảng Ngãi was the region of Cổ Luỹ 古壘, in the country of Champa. In 1402, the emperor Hồ Hán Thương 胡漢蒼 took Cổ Luỹ, calling it the outer district of Tư 思州 and the outer district of Nghĩa 義州. The Cham later reoccupied the region, proclaiming their sovereignty. In 1470, the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 led the army to conquer Champa, and established the prefecture of Tư Nghĩa 思義, which consisted of the districts of Nghĩa Giang 義江, Bình Sơn 平山 and Mộ Hoa 慕華 and was placed under the authority of the division of Quảng Nam 廣南. After Nguyễn Hoàng 阮黃 became governor of Thuận-Quảng 順廣, the prefecture of Tư Nghĩa was renamed Quảng Nghĩa 廣義, and came under the authority of the shire of Quảng Nam. In 1691, a taboo was placed on the name Hoàng Nghĩa 弘義王, which was the official title of lord Nguyễn Phúc Thái 阮福泰 (1667-1691), and Quảng Nghĩa was renamed Quảng Ngãi. During the reign of the emperor Gia Long 嘉隆, the shire of Quảng Ngãi became a government (1808) and in the thirteenth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1832) the province of Quảng Ngãi came into being. This name was to persist up to the beginning of the twenty-first century.]*

### **The Provincial Citadel**

The citadel of the province of Quảng Ngãi is situated in the commune of Chánh Mông, in the district of Chương Nghĩa. The provincial seat used to be in the commune of Phú Nhơn, district of Bình Sơn, but was transferred to its current position in the sixth year of the reign of the emperor Gia Long (1807). At the beginning of 1815, the rampart was built in stone. It is 500 rods and slightly over two cubits in circumference, and stands one rod high. The citadel has four corners and opens at three gates, one on each side except the south. The moat is five rods, one cubit across, but cannot hold water.

### **The Territory of the Province**

- From east to west, the province is thirty-nine leagues across. From north to south, it is 153 leagues across.

To the east, the territory of the province meets the sea, sixteen leagues from the provincial citadel. To the west it meets the long rampart, which forms the boundary with the regions inhabited by the highland people, twenty-three leagues from the citadel. The province is bounded to the south by the district of Bồng Sơn, in the province of Bình Định, and the boundary lies ninety-eight leagues from the citadel. To the north lies the boundary with the district of Hà Đông, in the province of Quảng Nam, fifty-five leagues from the citadel. To the southeast lies the district of Bồng Sơn, province of Bình Định, 103 leagues from the citadel. The same district lies to the southwest, along with the regions inhabited by the highland people, 130 leagues away. The province is bounded to the northeast by the district of Hà Đông, province of Quảng Nam, forty-one leagues from the citadel, and to the northwest by the same district as well as the regions inhabited by the highland people, fifty-nine leagues away.

### **The Administration of the Province**

The province is made up of a single prefecture with three districts: the prefecture of Tư Nghĩa, with the principal district of Chương Nghĩa and the two secondary districts of Bình Sơn and Mộ Đức, is made up of eighteen cantons and 428 communes and villages (*thôn, trại, phường, ấp, ti, vạn*).

Registered household heads: 21,788 people. These include:

Notables and people exempt from corvée labour: 4,618 people. These include:

Soldiers from the capital: 1,206 people.

Soldiers of the province: 1,589 people.

Militia recruited by the mandarin: 316 people.

Residents of [Kinh] origin: 17,170 people.

Soldiers of the [tranquil tribes] regiment: 3,357 people.

Agricultural land: 50,934 acres.

Paddy fields: 49,917 acres.

Other fields: 1,017 acres.

Taxation:

Tax on paddy fields paid in paddy: slightly more than 38,775 bushels.

Tax on potatoes, beans, mulberry and sugarcane, paid in cash: 1,144 ligatures.

Tax on other types of goods, paid in cash: 14,975 ligatures.

Tax paid by the highland people in the highland villages:

Paid in cash: 1,350 ligatures.

Paid in paddy: 1,200 bushels.

Paid in produce: rattan fibres: 120,000 strands.

### **Customs and Manners (of the three districts, which resemble each other)**

The soil of the province is infertile and the population works hard to make a living. As a result, the people do not engage in competition over vain and frivolous matters. The land of the province is narrow and crowded, and the scholars take matters of moral integrity seriously, most of them being quite studious. The common people pursue their own interest without a thought for others and often bring lawsuits and make denunciations. The farmers work hard in the paddies, but the most of their fields are on dry, raised ground and have to be irrigated with pedal-powered water-wheels, as in the districts of Bình Sơn and Chương Nghĩa. With four seasons of farm work the people grow enough to eat, but the annual rice harvest is never abundant and most people have to supplement their diet with potatoes and corn. They live a simple, parsimonious life as a result. Weddings, funerals and rituals of worship are celebrated according to tradition, in the same way as in the provinces of Quảng Nam and Thừa Thiên. In some parts, the people believe in witchcraft and revel in singing parties. The Catholics live in forty communes and villages of the province and number 681 people in all. The highland people who live in the border regions have coarse and abnormal customs and are very difficult to civilise.

### **Local Produce**

Local ginseng (called Nghĩa ginseng, after the old name for the province, or Kỳ ginseng, after the Kỳ tree) is produced in the district of Bình Sơn. However, in the tenth year of the reign of Tự Đức (1857), the families of this region turned to the production of castor sugar, paying tax in one or two categories, each category owing 360 catties.

Rock crabs are found in the Châu Tử river, in the district of Bình Sơn. Cinnamon is produced by the villages of Thanh Bông and Thanh Cù, in the same district, but this type of cinnamon now offers very

little oil and is insipid in taste, being rather inferior to the cinnamon of Quảng Nam. Peanut oil is produced in the districts of Chương Nghĩa, Bình Sơn and Mộ Đức, and also by the inhabitants of the island of Lý Sơn and the villages of An Vĩnh and An Hải. Goods tax of fifty catties a head per year is paid by the producers of this oil, which – when added to the tax on castor sugar and loaf sugar – brought in revenue of 13,000 ligatures this year. Castor sugar is manufactured in the districts of Chương Nghĩa and Bình Sơn, and also, in lesser quantities, in the district of Mộ Đức, where brown sugar is more common. Loaf sugar is produced for sale by the inhabitants of the village of An Nhơn, in the canton of Bình Châu, district of Bình Sơn. A local variety of golden sugar is produced for sale by the inhabitants of the village of Vạn Tượng, in the canton of Nghĩa Hạ, district of Chương Nghĩa.

Other produce of the province includes ordinary rice, glutinous rice, potatoes, manioc, ordinary corn, white corn, white beans, green beans, black beans, broad beans, peanuts, melons and marrows, sugarcane, water rattan (produced in the regions inhabited by the highland people), cotton, cloth, silk and crepe.

Hemp hammocks are made by the inhabitants of the commune of Phúc Lộc, in the canton of Nghĩa Hà, district of Chương Nghĩa, but they are far from comparable with those made in Nghệ An. Salt is produced in the following places: the village of Tuyết Diêm, canton of Bình Hà, the villages of Đông Xuân and Đông An, canton of Bình Châu, all of which are in the district of Bình Sơn, and the village of Tân Diêm, canton of Triêm Đức, district of Mộ Đức. The annual tax on salt is currently being collected by the state warehouse. There is bamboo in the province, as well as cattle and buffalo, and horses (which are not raised in the province, as the inhabitants only know how to buy and feed them). Goats, pigs, tigers, elephants, bears, fish and turtles are the main other animals, and there are palms, as well as nipa palms (in the canton of Bình Châu, district of Bình Sơn, but not in any great number). There are deer in the region inhabited by the highland people, but not in any great number. Wild boar may also be found.

### **Climate (of the three districts, which resemble each other)**

During the year, the wind most frequently blows from the east, and the southerly wind is also common. The northwesterly wind is rare, as in Quảng Nam. The cold air arrives late in the year, which is why the chrysanthemums blossom in the tenth month and remain in flower until the twelfth month. The warm air comes early. Bean seeds are planted at the end of winter, and by the end of spring the beans are already ripe and dry. Farm work is carried out during all four seasons of the year. Paddy is harvested in a single annual crop, but there are categories of paddy field where two or three crops are grown. In the first month of spring, low-lying paddy fields are planted with mulberry, jute, beans, melons and marrows. In the second month, in dry paddies, the ‘eighth moon’ rice is sown. In the third month, the early rice is harvested. In the fourth month of summer, in muddy and dry paddies, the autumn rice is sown. In the sixth month, in dry paddies and highland fields, the late rice is sown. In the seventh month, peanuts are planted on the higher ground, and the ‘eighth moon’ rice is reaped. In the ninth month, in dry paddies, the summer rice is sown. In the tenth month of winter, the three-month rice is transplanted. In the eleventh month, in the paddies of deep mud, the people start to transplant glutinous rice. In the twelfth month, they plant sweet potatoes, harvest the late spring rice and cut the mulberry and sugarcane. From the first month to the ninth month, it is possible to raise silkworms. In the winter, the weather is rather cold, and most of the mulberry trees turn yellow and lose their leaves. Few people raise silkworms at this time.

### **Famous Mountains**

There are many mountains, and it is only worth mentioning the best known of them. These are the mountains of Bút Sơn and Cổ Luỹ, in the district of Chương Nghĩa, the mountains of Thiên Ấn, Long Đầu and Tam Thai, in the district of Bình Sơn, and the mountains of Đại Sơn and Cao Sơn, in the

district of Mộ Đức. There are other smaller mountains, as well as mountains in the regions inhabited by the highland people.

The mountain of Bút Sơn (Pen Mountain), otherwise known as the mountain of Thiên Bút (Pen in the Sky), is situated a few leagues south of the provincial citadel, in the commune of Chánh Mông. It is shaped like a pen, which is how it received its name. The inhabitants of this region are the most elegant of the district. The rostrum to the gods of the mountains and rivers may be found at the foot of the mountain, to the southwest. When covered in a layer of cloud, this ‘pen in the sky’ forms a landmark which is counted as among the ten beautiful landscapes of the province of Quảng Ngãi.

The mountain of Cổ Luỹ (Ancient Rampart), otherwise known as the mountain of Kỳ Lân, stands eleven leagues to the east of the provincial citadel, in the villages of Phú Thọ and Cổ Luỹ. To the east, the mountain looks out to sea over the river estuary, to the west in the direction of the bay of ships (Vũng Tàu). To the north, it turns its back on the Trà Khúc river. This mountain is littered with jagged rocks and there are small plateaux on it making it look like a chessboard. Tradition has it that the remains of the king of Champa’s palace and citadel lie there, and stone vestiges can still be seen there today. The shrine of all the saints may be found below the mountain, to the southeast, and the tomb of Quang Chiếu is to the west. The mountain is not very high, but is still regarded as a place of beauty.

The mountain of Thiên Ấn (Seal in the Sky) is situated twenty leagues from the district seat of Bình Sơn, to the north of the provincial citadel, on the bank of the Trà Khúc river in the commune of Phú Nhơn. It is more than five leagues in circumference and it stands more than a hundred rods high. Its summit is flat, and its four sides look like seals, hence its name. The Trà Khúc river flows along its southern side, while to the north lies La Vọng. It joins the mountain of Tam Thai to the east and the mountain range of Long Đầu to the west. In the poem “Ten Landscapes of Quảng Ngãi” there appears a description of “the seal of the sky stamped on the river”, which is, in fact, a description of this mountain. In the third year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1850), the mountain was included in the register of sacred places.

The mountain of Long Đầu (Dragon’s Head) also stands beside the Trà Khúc river in the commune of Phú Nhơn, north of the provincial citadel and about twenty leagues south of the district seat of Bình Sơn. From the mountain of Sâm Hội in the north as far as the Trà Khúc river in the south, the mountain ridge twists and turns like a dragon quenching its thirst, hence its name. There is a temple dedicated to general Phi Vận beside the mountain. In the poem “Ten Landscapes of Quảng Ngãi”, a landscape is likened to “the dragon’s head playing in the water”, which is, in fact, a description of this mountain. The mountain of Thủy Mẫu stands beside this mountain.

The mountain of Tam Thai (Three Celestial Bodies) is situated eleven leagues east of the provincial citadel, in the commune of Tư Cung, twenty-eight leagues southeast of the district seat of Bình Sơn. The earth on the mountain is red like lacquer, and standing to the east looking westwards towards the mountain, one can see three peaks, which is why the mountain bears this name. If one stands to the south looking northwards, the mountain looks like two baby elephants with their heads joined together, which is why it is also called Tượng Sơn (Elephant Mountain). It has a further name: the mountain of A Linh. The land around the mountain is a mixture of earth and sand, and ginseng is plentiful there. The mountains of Phúc Thuận and Diệp Thạch are joined to this mountain.

The mountain of Đại Sơn (Great Mountain) is situated forty leagues to the southwest of the provincial citadel and ten leagues west of the district seat of Mộ Đức. The mountain is sinuous in shape, twisting like an eel throughout its length of seventy leagues. It has eighty-one peaks and thirty-six ravines, the middle peak being the highest of the mountain. This is the best known mountain in the

district, and is regarded as the ancestor of all the other mountains in the northern half of the district. At its northeastern end, it stoops to form the peaks and passes of Nê Nguyên and Lỗ Tây, rising after these two peaks meet to form the mountain of Bắc Dương.

The mountain of Cao Môn (High Gate) is situated ninety leagues to the southwest of the provincial citadel and sixty leagues to the west of the district seat of Mộ Đức, beyond the long rampart. The mountain rises up in a great cliff on its northeastern face, forming its highest peak. A road passes this mountain. There are flat spots near the peak, and the highland people's tradition has it that these were dug out by the duke commanding the left hand flank of the army, Lê Văn Duyệt. Towards the west, the mountain stoops to form the mountains of Quả Y, Giá, Vạn Bút, Lập Bút and Hùng Nhĩ, as well as the passes of Ô and Hắc Thạch, all of which lie beyond the long rampart.

### **Famous Rivers**

The larger rivers of the province are the Châu Tử river, in the district of Bình Sơn, the Trà Khúc river, in the district of Chương Nghĩa, and the Vệ river, in the district of Mộ Đức. There are, in addition, smaller shallow rivers, some of which do not have names.

The Châu Tử river is situated about fifty leagues to the north of the provincial citadel and twenty leagues north of the district seat of Bình Sơn. It used to be called the Châu Ổ river. The river rises in the village of Thanh Bông, sixty-five leagues upstream, passes through the villages of Giao Thủy, Mỹ Huệ and Tân An, and empties at the estuary of Thới Cần. Since the seventeenth year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1864), rock crabs have been found in this river.

The Trà Khúc river is situated about half a league from the provincial citadel, and the district of Bình Sơn extends beyond the far bank. The river rises in the mountains inhabited by the wild tribes beyond the long rampart, and flows eastwards through the village of Thanh Cù, meandering more than sixty-two leagues through eight communes and villages – including Kim Thành, Phúc Lâm, An Mỹ, Diên Niên, Phúc Lộc, Chiêu Lộc, Thu Phố and Phú Nhơn – and empties into the sea at the estuary of Đại Cổ Luỹ. In the third year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1850), this river was recognised as one of the country's great rivers and included in the register of sacred places.

The Vệ river is situated more than ten leagues to the south of the provincial citadel, and more than thirty leagues to the north of the district seat of Mộ Đức. It is formed from three confluents which rise in the highland region, the middle one of which is named Tô Thủy. The river has its spring in the village of Ba Tơ, and meanders down towards the east, through the wild tribes' regions of Trà Nô, Trà Nột and Đông Chùa, before joining the left hand confluent, which is named Lý Thủy. The river then turns to the north, passing the foot of the mountain of Cao Môn, before joining the right hand confluent, which is named Na Thủy. The river then turns again to the east, where it is known as the Bôn river, and flows as far as the old fort of Bình An, before forming the Vệ river which meanders to the east out to the estuary of Đại Cổ Luỹ. The river forms the boundary between the districts of Mộ Đức, on its southern bank, and the district of Chương Nghĩa, on its northern bank.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

There are very few notable sites and monuments in the province, with the exception of the pagodas mentioned below.

The pagoda of the mountain of Thiên Ấn may be found on the summit of the mountain of Thiên Ấn, in the district of Bình Sơn. At the entrance, there is a tablet inscribed by the emperor on the threshold with the words: "The Temple of Thiên Ấn". There is also an old well, fifty-five cubits deep, which contains very sweet water, and beside it stands an ancient tree creating a delightful scene for visitors

from all around. Every year, during the season of fine weather, scholars and rich families often come to enjoy the scenery and write poems. In the past, it is said that the monk who built a pagoda here suffered from a lack of water, so he used all his strength to dig the well, which took him twenty years. When the well was finished, the monk passed on to the next world. Even now, the monks and nuns of the pagoda still express their gratitude to him for the water from this well.

The pagoda of Diệu Giác is situated in the district of Bình Sơn. The pagoda is built on a high hill, and there is a small lake in front. At first, the pagoda was named Viên Tôn by royal edict, and was build on a grand scale. Over the years, troubles and disturbances reduced it to ruin, until the court issued a further edict, since when the monks have repaired it on many occasions, and once again the incense rises in curls and whirls. In the first year of the reign of the emperor Thiệu Trị (1841), the pagoda's name was changed to Diệu Giác. Four years later, the local population once again restored and extended the pagoda, and the Buddhist commandments are now taken very seriously. Many people come here to pray and have their fortune told, and it is certainly true that this is an ancient and beautiful pagoda.

The pagoda of the Cave is situated on the mountain of Long Phụng, in the district of Mộ Đức. A stream chases around the front of the mountain, surrounded by lush green trees, and there is a cave in the rock, which is more than two cubits wide but so dark it is hard to gauge its depth. The entrance is concealed by a rock wall more than eight cubits long, shaped like the cave and allowing people to enter it. In the past, a monk named this the pagoda of Cốc, or cave. Because he lived off the leaves and berries he gathered, and ate no cereals from one year to the next, people came to call the cave Thái Tạng, or the cave of the vegetable monk. After the monk passed on to the next world, the cave was left deserted, and few people come this way any more.

### **Stage Posts**

There are five stage posts in the province. The stage post of Nghĩa Bình is situated in the commune of Trì Bình, in the district of Bình Sơn. The next stage post to the south is that of Nam Vân, in the province of Quảng Nam, at a distance of more than thirty-seven leagues. South of that, at a distance of more than twenty-nine leagues, the traveller arrives at the stage post of Nghĩa Lộc, in the commune of Diên Phước, also in the district of Bình Sơn. Over twenty-three leagues to the south lies the stage post of Nghĩa Mỹ, in the village of An Bàn, in the district of Chương Nghĩa. The stage post of Nghĩa Sơn, more than thirty-one leagues to the south, is situated in the village of Tú Sơn, in the district of Mộ Đức. Still travelling south, after a journey of thirty-three leagues, the traveller arrives at the stage post of Nghĩa Quán, in the village of Thủy Thạch, also in the district of Mộ Đức. Across the provincial boundary with Bình Định, one comes to the stage post of Bình Đê, more than thirty-three leagues to the south.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A postal road runs from the stage post of Nam Vân, in the province of Quảng Nam, crossing the northern boundary into the province and passing the stage post of Nghĩa Bình. It heads south straight to the stage post of Nghĩa Quán and across the boundary to the stage post of Bình Đê, in the province of Bình Định. This road is 149 leagues long, one rod wide and is raised two cubits above the ground.

- A minor road runs from the eastern side of the provincial citadel to Cổ Luỹ, where there is a post at the estuary. The journey takes four hours.

- A minor road runs from the western side of the provincial citadel to the military post of the tranquil tribes regiment. The journey takes about eight hours.

- A minor road runs from the northern side of the provincial citadel to the post at the channel of Thối Cấn. The journey takes more than one day.

- A minor road runs from the southern side of the provincial citadel to the post at the channel of Sa Huỳnh. The journey takes more than one day.

- A minor road runs from the northeast side of the provincial citadel to the post at the channel of Sa Kỳ. The journey takes six hours.

- A sea route starts at the northern extremity of the province, at the estuary post of *Thới Cấn*, on the maritime boundary with the district of *Hà Đông*, in the province of *Quảng Nam*. It follows the coast southwards as far as the post at the channel of Sa Huỳnh, on the maritime boundary with the district of *Bồng Sơn*, in the province of *Bình Định*. The journey takes more than three days.

### **Channel, Estuary and Maritime Posts**

The post at the channel of *Thới Cấn* is situated seventeen leagues to the southeast of the district seat of *Bình Sơn*. The channel is fifty-five rods across. When the tide is high, the sea is eight cubits deep, falling to four cubits at low tide. There two rocky islets either side of the channel entrance, one named *Ghềnh Ông*, the other named *Ghềnh Trà*. There is a bay to the south, called *Vũng Quất*, which is a haven for robbers who often board boats passing there. Travelling south from *Thới Cấn*, one comes to the post at the channel of Sa Kỳ, after a road journey of one day. To the north of *Thới Cấn* lies the boundary with the province of *Quảng Nam*, where the authority of the post at the channel of *Đại Ấp* prevails.

The post at the channel of Sa Kỳ is situated thirty-seven leagues to the south of the district seat of *Bình Sơn*. The channel is 145 rods wide, and the sea is six cubits deep when the tide is high, falling to five cubits at low tide. The bay of *An Vĩnh* lies to the south, where trading boats often moor during the spring and summer seasons. The road journey southward from Sa Kỳ to the post at the channel of *Cổ Luỹ* takes four watches.

The post at the channel of *Lý Sơn* is situated on an island in the district of *Bình Sơn*, off the coast from the post at the channel of Sa Kỳ, where a defence fort has been established. The island is surrounded on all four sides by underwater reefs of rock, which boats and ships should avoid. From the post at the channel of Sa Kỳ boats sailing with a fair wind can reach the post at the channel of *Thuận Sơn* in five hours.

The post at the channel of *Đại Cổ Luỹ* is situated seventeen leagues to the northeast of the district seat of *Chương Nghĩa*. The channel is 380 rods wide, and the sea is about fourteen cubits deep when the tide is high, falling to around ten cubits at low tide. Trading boats often gather here. The water becomes shallow as one travels upstream along the *Trà Khúc* to the provincial citadel, and large boats cannot travel this way. The road journey southward from post at the channel of *Đại Cổ Luỹ* to the post at the channel of *Mỹ Ý* takes more than one day.

The post at the channel of *Mỹ Ý* is situated fifteen leagues to the southeast of the district seat of *Mộ Đức*. The channel is seven rods wide, and the sea is three cubits deep when the tide is high, falling to one cubit at low tide.

The post at the channel of Sa Huỳnh is situated forty-nine leagues to the southeast of the district seat of *Mộ Đức*. The channel is ten rods, one cubit wide, and the sea is four cubits deep when the tide is high, falling to one cubit at low tide. To the south of this channel lies the boundary with the province of *Bình Định*, where the authority of the post at the channel of *Kim Bồng* prevails.

The highland village of *Thanh Bồng* is situated thirty leagues to the northwest of the district of *Bình Sơn*. This post used to be called the highland post of *Đà Bồng*, but around the time of the emperor *Minh Mệnh*, it took its current name. An office of the defence service has been established here, and there is also an office of the inspection service responsible for the control of trade with the highlanders. A side road leads straight to the fort of *Đông Dương*. Around the time of *Gia Long*, when the

commander of the left hand flank of the army, Lê Văn Duyệt, mounted an attack on the highlanders, he garrisoned his army here. This village produces cinnamon, which has a spicy taste, but it is somewhat inferior to the cinnamon of Quảng Nam.

The highland village of Thanh Cù is situated thirty leagues to the southwest of the district seat of Bình Sơn. It used to be called Cù Bà, but around the time of the emperor Minh Mệnh, it took its current name. An office of the defence service has been established here.

The highland village of Phụ An is situated twenty-three leagues to the west of the district seat of Chương Nghĩa. It used to be called Phụ Bà, but around the time of the emperor Minh Mệnh, it took its current name. Four local administration services, An Điểm, An Nghĩa, Nghĩa Tân and Hương Thụ, have been established here.

The highland village of Phụ An Ba is situated ten leagues to the west of the district seat of Mộ Đức. It used to be the highland village of Ba Tơ, but around the time of the emperor Minh Mệnh, it took its current name. Three local administration services, Quy Chánh, Thanh Lâm and Hạ Lương, have been established here.

There are, in total, four highland villages and seven local administration services. In the past, an imperial defence fort was established at all the highland villages. However, in the third year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1850) this military presence was reduced, and the highland villages and local administration services came under the authority of their respective regiments and fort commands. They were pressed to pay tax on their trading activities, which brings in more than 1,300 ligatures per year. The villages inhabited by the highland people did not originally have to pay tax, but in the eighteenth year of the reign of Tự Đức (1862), the special envoy Nguyễn Tấn ordered that those highland people's villages which submitted to imperial authority be taxed. The annual revenue from this form of taxation amounts to 1,200 bushels of paddy and 120,000 fibres of rattan, collected in the summer and autumn and placed under the authority and guard of the three larger forts. Receipts from tax on the trade practised by the highland people amounts to fifty ligatures. The total value of tax receipts on trade amounts to 1,350 ligatures.

### **Temples and Shrines**

The rostrum to the gods of the soil and harvests may be found in the commune of Chánh Mông, in the district of Chương Nghĩa, to the southwest of the provincial citadel. It was built in the fourth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh (1823). The rostrum to the gods of agriculture, which was built in the same year, may be found in the same commune, to the east of the provincial citadel. To the east of the rostrum, there are more than three acres of land consecrated to the ceremony of the first furrow. The rostrum to the gods of the mountains and rivers is situated in the same commune, to the west of the provincial citadel. It was built in the fifth year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1852).

The temple of Confucian literature is situated in the commune of Phú Nhon, in the district of Bình Sơn. It was built in the tenth year of the reign of the emperor Gia Long (1811). The temple of the revelation of the spirits may be found to the right hand side of the temple, and was built in the twentieth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh (1839). The mountain of Thiên Bút forms a natural altar to the front of the temple, while the mountains of Thiên Ấn and Long Đầu stand on the left and right hand sides respectively. The Trà Khúc river flows in front of the temple and, with the mountains and rivers surrounding the village, this is truly a place of great scenic beauty.

The shrine of all the saints is situated in the villages of Cổ Luỹ and Phú Thọ, in the district of Chương Nghĩa. The shrine is near the post at the channel of Đại Cổ Luỹ. It was built in the third year

of the reign of the emperor Gia Long (1804). The shrine of the tutelary deities is situated in the commune of Chánh Mông, district of Chương Nghĩa, to the northwest of the provincial citadel. It looks out onto the Trà Khúc river. It was built in the seventeenth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh (1836). The temple of Trấn Công may be found in the commune of Thu Phố, in the district of Chương Nghĩa. The grand duke Bùi Tá Hán is venerated in this temple. He was from the northern part of the country and became the military governor of the army of the north. The emperor Lê Anh Tông appointed him governor of Quảng Nam.

### **Forts and Strongholds**

The fort of Cổ Luỹ is situated ten leagues to the east of the provincial citadel, in the commune of Cổ Luỹ, district of Chương Nghĩa, near the office of the service responsible for the channel post of Đại Cổ Luỹ. The rampart is ten rods long at the front and rear, and eight rods long on the left and right hand sides. It stands nine cubits high, and is one rod, seven cubits and one inch thick. The inner part of the rampart is built of earth and loam, while the outer rampart is built of stone. There are two gates, and the fort is surrounded by a moat, which is six cubits across. The fort was built in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1871).

The fort of Thanh Khiết is situated seven leagues to the east of the provincial citadel, in the village of Thanh Khiết, district of Chương Nghĩa. The mountain of Dương Thạch stands here, on the right bank of the Trà Khúc river. In the twenty-sixth year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1873), some great guns and a military detachment were established here for defence purposes, to take advantage of the natural terrain. This fort is near the fort of Cổ Luỹ.

The fort of Thới Cẩn is situated thirty leagues to the northeast of the provincial citadel, in the village of Hương Trà, district of Bình Sơn, on the southern side of the channel of Thới Cẩn. The facade of the fort is built of strong earth and is eight rods long, five cubits high and four cubits thick. The moat is three cubits across. The fort faces the beach and there is a mountain to the rear. It was built in the twenty-third year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1870).

The long rampart of the tranquil tribes is situated twenty-three leagues to the west of the provincial citadel. To the north, the long rampart meets the boundary with the district of Hà Đông, in the province of Quảng Nam, and to the south it stretches as far as the boundary with the district of Bồng Sơn, in the province of Bình Định. It is 177 leagues long. The long rampart was constructed on the orders of the commander of the left hand flank of the army, Lê Văn Duyệt.

The first fort of the tranquil tribes is situated in the village of Vạn Lý, in the district of Mộ Đức. Each of the four sides of the fort is fifty rods long. It was built in the seventeenth year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1864), and named the left hand fort. The special envoy [Nguyễn Tấn] garrisoned his army here. In the twenty-first year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1868), it took its current name.

The second fort of the tranquil tribes was built in the time of the emperor Minh Mệnh in the district of Chương Nghĩa. During the reign of the emperor Thiệu Trị, it was transferred to the camp of Bàn Thạch, in the district of Mộ Đức. Each of the four sides of the fort is forty rods long. The military commander garrisoned his army here. In the past, this fort was known as the military command, and was renamed the principal fort of the tranquil tribes during the seventeenth year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1864). It took its current name four years later.

The third fort of the tranquil tribes is situated in the district of Chương Nghĩa. In the nineteenth year of the reign of the emperor Tự Đức (1866), the fort was transferred here, and ramparts were built more than thirty cubits long on each of the four sides. It was known as the left hand fort, as the deputy military commander garrisoned his army here.

**For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.**

**We, the mandarins of the province of **Bình Định**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of**

## **The Province of **Bình Định****

Including the following maps:

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| The Province of Bình Định   | 平定省 |
| The Prefecture of Hoài Nhân | 懷仁府 |
| The Prefecture of An Nhân   | 安仁府 |
| The District of Bồng Sơn    | 蓬山縣 |
| The District of Phù Mỹ      | 符美縣 |
| The District of Phù Cát     | 符吉縣 |
| The District of Tuy Phúc    | 綏福縣 |
| The District of Tuy Viễn    | 綏遠縣 |

## **The Description of the Province of Bình Định**

### **[Note on the Administrative History of the Province:**

*In the past, the territory of the province of Bình Định was part of the country of Champa. In 1470, the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 attacked Champa and took the region as far as the mountain of Thạch Bi 石碑山, dividing into the districts of Bông Sơn 蓬山, Phù Li 符離 and Tuy Viễn 綏遠, which were placed under the authority of the prefecture of Hoài Nhân 懷仁, division of Quảng Nam. The region south of the mountain of Cù Mông remained part of Champa. The prefecture of Hoài Nhân was renamed Quy Nhân 歸仁 by lord Nguyễn Hoàng 阮黃 in 1604. Three years after lord Nguyễn Phúc Tần 阮福秦 (1648-87) came to power, the prefecture of Quy Nhân was renamed Quy Ninh. Under lord Nguyễn Phúc Khoát 阮福闊 (1738-65), the old name of Quy Nhân was restored, but a taboo had been placed on the name Nhân (1687), the title of lord Nguyễn Phúc Thái 阮福泰 (1687-91), which became Nhơn. The prefecture was thereafter known as Quy Nhơn. One of the Tây Sơn brothers, Nguyễn Lữ 阮呂, took the old citadel of Chà Bàn 茶盤, changing its name to the citadel of Hoàng Đế 皇帝城. In 1799, Nguyễn Ánh 阮映 retook the old citadel of Chà Bàn, changing its name to the citadel of Bình Định 平定. Three years later, at the beginning of Nguyễn Ánh 阮映's reign as emperor under the name Gia Long 嘉隆, the shire of Bình Định was established, comprising the prefecture of Quy Nhơn with three districts. In the seventh year of the reign of the emperor Gia Long (1808), the shire of Bình Định became a government, and in the twelfth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1831), the prefecture of Quy Nhơn was renamed Hoài Nhơn. The following year, the province of Bình Định came into being. At this time, the district of Phù Li was divided into two, named Phù Mỹ 符美 and Phù Cát 符吉, and the old name of Phù Li was abolished. These two districts came under the authority of the prefecture of Hoài Nhơn. The district of Tuy Viễn was also divided into two, named Tuy Viễn and Tuy Phước 綏福, coming under the authority of the prefecture of An Nhơn. During the reign of the emperor Tự Đức 嗣德, the prefecture of An Nhơn was abolished for a time, and the two districts Tuy Viễn and Tuy Phước were transferred to the prefecture of Hoài Nhơn 懷仁 (1852). These two districts were subsequently restored to their former status, under the authority, once again, of the prefecture of An Nhơn 安仁 (1865). In 1853, Phú Yên 富安 became a county and was placed under the authority of the province of Bình Định. It received administrative independence as a county eleven years later.*

*No further changes were made to the prefectures and districts of the province up to the time of the emperor Đông Khánh. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, this region covered the province of Bình Định and the eastern part of the province of Kon Tum. ]*

The provincial citadel was originally situated in the villages of Nam An, Bắc Thuận and Bả Canh, district of Tuy Viễn. In the past, it was known as the citadel of Chà Bàn. In the thirteenth year of the reign of the emperor Gia Long (1814), it was transferred and rebuilt in the villages of Kim Châu and An Nghĩa, in the same district.

The rampart is built in stone, and reinforced on the inside with earth and loam. It stands one rod, one cubit high, and 612 rods, eight cubits in circumference. The rampart is three rods thick at the top, and four rods thick at the base. The citadel has four corners and opens at three gates, to the east, west and south. The entrances to these gates are all one rod, eight inches high, and eight cubits, four inches wide. Surrounding the rampart, at a distance of two rods, there is a moat which is 632 rods, two cubits long, more than seven rods, five cubits across and about six cubits deep. Beyond the moat, at a distance of a further two rods, there is a 'goats and horses wall'. Built of earth, this embankment is 714 rods long, three cubits, five inches high, five cubits thick at the top and one rod thick at the base. Outside each of the gates, a bridge has been built across the moat. Each of the three bridges is seven rods, five cubits long and one rod, five cubits, four inches wide, and each of the gates is built with a double wall. Beyond the stone bridges in front of each gate, there is a protective embankment. The outer part of these embankments is built in stone, while the inner part is reinforced with earth and loam. Each embankment is one rod high and two rods thick at the base, opening at a staggered gate and surrounded by a moat which, on the left and right hand sides, links up with the citadel moat.

The territory of the province meets the sea to the east, and the region inhabited by the highland people to the west. It is bounded by the district of **Đông Xuân**, in the county of **Phú Yên**, to the south, and the district of **Mộ Đức**, in the province of **Quảng Ngãi**, to the north. To the southeast lies the sea and the northeastern part of the district of **Đông Xuân**, in the county of **Phú Yên**. To the southwest lies the region inhabited by the highland people and the northwestern part of the district of **Đông Xuân**, in the county of **Phú Yên**. To the northwest, the province is bounded by the region inhabited by the highland people and the southwestern part of the district of **Mộ Đức**, in the province of **Quảng Ngãi**. To the northeast, it meets the sea and the southeastern part of the district of **Mộ Đức**, in the province of **Quảng Ngãi**.

From east to west the province is more than 135 leagues across. The distance [from the provincial citadel] to the sea in the east is thirty-six leagues. The distance to the regions inhabited by the highland people in the west is more than ninety-six leagues.

From north to south, the province is 211 leagues across. The distance to the pass of **Cù Mông**, on the southern boundary with the district of **Đông Xuân**, in the county of **Phú Yên**, is forty-five leagues. The distance to the mountain of **Thạch Tân**, on the northern boundary with the district of **Mộ Đức**, in the province of **Quảng Ngãi**, is more than 166 leagues.

The province is made up of two prefectures, with five districts.

- 1- The prefecture of **Hoài Nhơn**: principal district of **Bồng Sơn**, secondary districts of **Phù Cát** and **Phù Mỹ**.
- 2- The prefecture of **An Nhơn**: principal district of **Tuy Viễn**, secondary district of **Tuy Phước**.

Soldiers: 8,987 people:

Regular soldiers from the capital: 6,762 people.

Soldiers of the province: 2,225 people (2,048 regulars, 177 militia).

Population registered for tax payment: 41,849 people.

Ordinary taxpayers: 41,123 people.

Other taxpayers: 726 people.

Agricultural land on which tax is currently paid: 85,068 acres, one square pole and slightly more than five square perches.

Paddy fields: 79,930 acres, two square poles and slightly over five perches.

Other fields: 5,137 acres, eight square poles and slightly over three square perches.

Salt fields: 171 acres, four square poles and slightly over fourteen square perches.

Annual tax receipts:

Paid in paddy: 49,575 bushels and slightly over four pints. This does not include the tax paid in paddy by the district of **Phù Mỹ** and the cantons of **Thạch Bàn** and **Trung Chính**, in the district of **Phù Cát**, which amounts to 14,601 bushels and slightly over sixteen pints, owed in paddy but paid in cash.

Paid in cash: 143,807 ligatures, six strings and two sapeques. This sum is a calculation which includes the tax of all categories owed in cash but paid in paddy, as well as the tax owed in paddy but paid in cash.

Paid in salt: 777 bushels, four pints and five handfuls

### Customs and Manners

The inhabitants of the district of **Phù Cát** are mostly honest and down-to-earth, while those of the district of **Phù Mỹ** tend to be parsimonious. The inhabitants of the district of **Tuy Viễn** can be quite honest, while those of the district of **Tuy Phước** live extravagantly. The inhabitants of the district of **Bồng Sơn** are rather frivolous. The people of the different parts of the district have different ways of celebrating occasions such as weddings, funerals and rituals of worship, as well as passing their moments of entertainment, relaxation and those times when they visit each other to pay their respects. These differences reflect the fertility of the soil here and its poverty there, the wealth of the people here and their slender means there. Most of the farmers in the province use cows to plough the fields. In the districts of **Tuy Viễn**, **Tuy Phước**, **Phù Cát** (the two cantons nearest to **Tuy Viễn** and **Tuy Phước**) and **Bồng Sơn**, the farmers use a variety of irrigation methods to water the fields and grow their summer and autumn rice crops, including dikes, channels and water-wheels. In years of drought, low-lying paddy fields do not suffer too much from harvest loss. The marriage decisions of most of the people are based on comparisons between the two families' wealth and fortune. Although family relations are very close and respectful, people will never marry their cousins on the mother's side, even if the relationship goes back four or five generations. People throughout the province have a number of ugly habits, which include addiction to gambling, believing in sorcerers, smoking opium and living in their wife's village. Few people follow Buddhism, but many err into the false doctrine [Catholicism].

### Local Produce

Most of the land in the province is dry and impoverished, and fertile fields are few and far between. Natural resources include ironwood (*lim*) and other types of timber, rattan, canarium resin, otter oil, sandalwood, fragrant essences, ivory, stag antlers, honey, beeswax, buffaloes and horses. All these items are picked and gathered in the forests and mountains or bought from the highland people.

Goods produced by the inhabitants include glutinous rice in **Tuy Phước**, mulberry in **Tuy Viễn**, coconut in **Bồng Sơn** and white conical hats in **Phù Cát**. Delicious wine is made in large quantities in **Phù Cát**, **Tuy Viễn** and **Tuy Phước**. Other specialities include the tobacco of **Tuy Phước**, the mangoes of **Phù Cát** and the *mạn lệ* fish of **Phù Mỹ**. The people of **Tuy Viễn** produce castor sugar, beans, flower-patterned gauze cloth and silk, which is beautiful but not made in great quantities. White salt is produced in **Bồng Sơn**. Peanuts are grown in large quantities in **Phù Mỹ**, but they do not taste good. All these items are specialities of a particular district, or goods found throughout the province but which are particularly well known for their quality or quantity in this district or that.

Other goods produced in greater or lesser quantities include areca, betelnut, tobacco, sugarcane, bamboo, bananas, coarse cloth, palm fibres, buffaloes, goats, deer, rabbits, kites, storks, chickens, pigs,

golden eels, different types of carp, turtles and tortoises. All the items listed above, from areca to turtles, may be found in all districts of the province. Different types of vegetable, indigo, beans, melons and marrows, pepper, tea of the south, jackfruit, peanut oil, palm oil, fish, prawns, shellfish, crabs, jellyfish, cuttlefish may be found in different parts of different districts, but not in any great quantity.

### **Climate**

The ground vapours are hot and dry in the northwestern part of the province, where there are many mountains. Here, miasmas are common. The ground vapours are damp in southeastern part of the province, which is a wet and marshy region. Here, fogs are common, especially at sea. The air is mild at the beginning of spring but starts to get as hot as summer in the second and third month. The heat and sunshine do not let up until after the seventh and eighth months. The winds blow from the south in the third month. They gather strength by the fifth and sixth months, and drop off gradually only in the seventh month. Constant rain falls in the autumn and winter, but the weather does not turn very cold. The tides rise and fall four times a month, on the ninth, tenth, twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth days of the first month, and on the eighth, ninth, twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth days of the seventh month. The farmers watch the weather and observe the behaviour of different types of plant and animal in order to choose the time they plant their crops. When the bunches of fruit start to take shape on the banana plant, for example, and the fruit grows long and thin at the stem, they sow the seeds early in the season. If the fruit grows short and fat, they sow at the normal time, and if the tail of the fruit grows longer than usual, they sow late in the season.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

There are many mountains in the province. The mountains of Kình Sơn, Hội Sơn, Bản Sơn, Trà Sơn, Phong Sơn, An Tượng, Trà Lan, Lỗ Tây, Thuận Ninh, Hình Hốt and Trụ Lĩnh, as well as the peak of Phú Quý may be found in the district of Tuy Viễn. The mountains of Kỳ Sơn, Mai Sơn, Khố Sơn, Mã Cảnh, Tầm Thát, Cù Mông, Tam Hùng and Sơn Triều may be found in the district of Tuy Phước. The mountains of Bà Sơn, Càn Dương, Mô Ô, Đại Điểm and Hội Sơn may be found in the district of Phù Cát. The mountains of Bình Đầu, Thu Sĩ, Bàn Thạch, Bồng Sơn, Tham Hùng, Chân Chàng, Điệp Thạch, Hà Trang, Mạn Lãng, Bích Khê and Quang Nghiễm, as well as the pass of Bồng Sơn, may be found in the district of Phù Mỹ. The mountains of Hương Sơn, Hàn Tín, Húc Tông, Tượng Đầu, Hoàn Sơn, Độc Dã, Kim Sơn and Trà Vinh, the peaks of Thạch Tân and Cung Quảng and the pass of Ngự Đạo may be found in the district of Bồng Sơn. These are the famous mountains of the province. There is only one mountain which forms a natural defensive barrier for the province and is listed in the register of sacred places. This is the mountain of Phước An, in the district of Tuy Viễn.

The great rivers of the province include the Lại Dương river in the district of Bồng Sơn, which is listed in the register of sacred places. The Tam Huyện and Ba rivers in the district of Tuy Viễn are rather smaller. Minor rivers include the La Tinh river in the district of Phù Cát, and the Vân Sơn river in the district of Tuy Phước.

The marshes in the province include the great marsh of Hải Hạc, in the district of Tuy Phước, the rather smaller marsh of Đạm Thủy, in the district of Phù Cát, and the even smaller marsh of Trà Ổ, in the district of Phù Mỹ. Other marshes include the marshes of Tân Quan and Đông Hải, in the district of Bồng Sơn, and the marshes of Bình Hồ and Hải Đông, in the district of Phù Mỹ. The marsh of Thủy Cơ lies entirely within the boundaries of the province's territorial waters.

There are posts at the channels of Trà Vân, Trà Bình and Ô Kiêm, in the district of Bồng Sơn, Thạch Bàn, district of Phù Cát, Hà Thanh, district of Tuy Phước, and An Tượng and Lộc Động, district of Tuy Viễn. There are seven posts situated at points of passage on the rivers in the highlands. All of them are small, with the exception of Phương Kiêu, in the district of Tuy Viễn, which is rather larger (the

customs of the highland people are roughly the same in all the districts). Boats may pass through a wide and deep channel at the post of Thi Nại, in the district of Tuy Phước. Other channels are narrow and shallow, like the channel at the post of Đê Di, in the district of Phù Cát, and at the posts of An Dụ and Kim Bông, in the district of Bồng Sơn.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The notable sites and monuments of the province include the pagoda of Linh Phong, in the district of Phù Cát, and the pagodas of Thập Tháp and Thạch Công (also known as Nhạn Tháp) as well as the tower of Tiên Sí, in the district of Tuy Viễn. These were places of beauty in the past, but the tower of Tiên Sí was abandoned long ago and is slowly falling to rack and ruin.

### **Forts and Strongholds**

The guard at the estuary of Thi Nại is made up of eight defence services. There is one defence service at Hòn Thử. Eight defence services are garrisoned in the highland canton of Trà Vân, six in Chí Đốc and one at the point of river passage of Phương Kiệu. Three further services are situated in the prefecture of Hoài Nhơn. There are a total of twenty-seven defence services in the province.

### **Temples and Shrines**

The temple of Confucian literature is situated in the district of Phù Cát. The scholars of the four districts of Tuy Phước, Phù Cát, Phù Mỹ and Bồng Sơn have built their own local temples of literature. There are three of them, one each in the districts of Tuy Phước and Bồng Sơn, and one shared between the districts of Phù Mỹ and Phù Cát. The temple of Chiêu Trưng may be found in the district of Tuy Viễn. Temples venerating Bao Trung, the deity Đại Càn and the mountain god Tam Toà may be found in the district of Tuy Phước. Temples venerating the great deity Ba, the grand duke Cống and the grand dignitary Hoàng may be found in the district of Bồng Sơn. The temple of the marquis Tráng Bang may be found in the district of Phù Mỹ. These are the famous temples of the province.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs from the stage post of Bình Phú on the pass of Cù Mông, at the southern extremity of the province, on the boundary with the county of Phú Yên. It heads northwards past the stage posts of Bình Điền, Bình An, Bình Sơn, Bình Dương, Bình Trung and Bình Đê, before reaching the pass of Thạch Tân, on the boundary with the province of Quảng Ngãi. This road is 211 leagues long and about one rod wide for its whole length, as it passes through all five districts of the province.

- A minor road runs from the provincial citadel eastwards as far as the main road in the district of Tuy Phước and southwards as far as the southeastern part of the village of Hoàng Kim. It narrows in the stretch up to the naval defence base of Thi Nại. This road is forty-one leagues long, and three cubits wide.

- A minor road runs from the provincial citadel westwards through the district of Tuy Viễn as far as the village of Yên Khê, which lies on the edge of the region inhabited by the highland people. This road is ninety-nine leagues long and varies in width from one to four cubits.

- A river route, navigable only in autumn and winter when the rain and floods come, extends from the provincial citadel southwards as far as the jetty of Giang Tân, in the village of Tân An. From there it leads downstream to the east, as far as the section of the river belonging to the village of Kim Giản, in the district of Tuy Phước. From this point one may reach the marsh of Biển Cạn. The journey to Biển Cạn takes more than two watches and the journey as far as the post at the estuary of Thi Nại takes one day.

**For the eyes of His Majesty the Emperor **Đông Khánh**.**

**We, the mandarins of the county of **Phú Yên**, respectfully present the following papers,  
being the Geographical Description of**

## **The County of **Phú Yên****

Including the following maps:

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| The County of Phú Yên     | 富安道 |
| The District of Đông Xuân | 同春縣 |
| The District of Tuy Hòa   | 綏和縣 |

## **The Description of the County of *Phú Yên***

### **[Note on the Administrative History of the County:**

*In the past, the territory of the county of *Phú Yên* was part of the country of *Champa*. In 1470, the emperor *Lê Thánh Tông* 黎聖宗 opened up this land as far as the mountain of *Thạch Bi* 石碑山, and called the southern part the division of *Quảng Nam*. The part stretching as far as the mountain of *Thạch Bi* became the district of *Tuy Viễn* 綏遠. The *Cham* subsequently retook the land south of the pass of *Cù Mông*. In the time of lord *Nguyễn Hoàng* 阮黃, the land as far as the mountain of *Thạch Bi* was finally taken (1601). It was named the prefecture of *Phú Yên*, and consisted of the districts of *Đông Xuân* 同春 and *Tuy Hoà* 綏和. It was placed under the authority of the shire of *Trấn Biên* 鎮邊, later renamed the shire of *Phú Yên*. It became a government at the beginning of the reign of the emperor *Gia Long* 嘉隆. In the twelfth year of the reign of the emperor *Minh Mệnh* 明命 (1831) the prefecture of *Phú Yên* became the prefecture of *Tuy Yên* 綏安, and a year later the province of *Phú Yên* came into being. In the sixth year of the reign of the emperor *Tự Đức* 嗣德 (1853), it became a county.*

*More than a century later, in 1976, it was merged with the provinces of *Phú Yên* and *Khánh Hoà* to form the province of *Phú Khánh*, but its former status was later restored. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it was still known as the province of *Phú Yên*.]*

The county citadel is situated in the village of *Long Uyên*, in the district of *Đông Xuân*. The rampart is built of earth and reinforced on all four sides with a bamboo hedge. It is 333 rods in circumference, eight cubits, five inches high, and opens at four gates. The moat is five rods across, and three cubits, five inches deep.

The county meets the sea at its eastern extremity, and the villages of the wild tribes to the west. It is bounded by the pass of *Đại Lĩnh* to the south, beyond which lies the district of *Quảng Phước*, in the province of *Khánh Hoà*. To the north, the pass of *Cù Mông* forms the boundary with the district of *Tuy Phước*, in the province of *Bình Định*.

From east to west the county is seventy leagues across. From north to south, it is 172 leagues across.

The county is made up of two districts:

- 1- The district of *Đông Xuân*, with three cantons: *Xuân Đài*, *Xuân Sơn* and *Xuân Vinh*.
- 2- The district of *Tuy Hoà*, with four cantons: *Hoà Bình*, *Hoà Mỹ*, *Hoà Lạc* and *Hoà Đa*.

### **Famous Mountains**

Mountains chase mountains across the county, their peaks and summits rising, falling and rolling into an infinite horizon. The famous mountains include the mountains of *Cù Mông*, *Mã Vụ*, *Thạch Lĩnh*, *Xuân Đài* and *Ôn Trì*, in the district of *Đông Xuân*, and the mountains of *Bảo Tháp*, *Thạch Bi*, *Chủ Sơn* and *Đại Lĩnh*, in the district of *Tuy Hoà*.

### **Great Rivers**

The rivers that flow through the county are all narrow and shallow, and the only great river is the *Đà Diễn* river, in the district of *Tuy Hoà*.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road leads from the stage post of Bình Phú, in the north, as far as the stage post of Phú Hoà, in the south. It passes six stage posts in all, over a distance of 172 leagues.

- A minor road runs eastwards from the county citadel to the district seat of *Đông Xuân*, a distance of five leagues.

- A minor road runs eastwards from the county citadel to the shore at the estuary of *Xuân Đài*, a distance of twenty-three leagues.

- A minor road runs from the county citadel to the region of the villages of the wild tribes in the west, a distance of forty-seven leagues.

### **Sea routes**

A sea route runs from the channel at the estuary of *Cù Mông* to the boundary with the province of *Khánh Hoà*. With a favourable current, the journey takes one day.

### **Temples and Shrines**

The temple of Confucian literature is situated to the south of the county citadel, in the commune of *Ngân Sơn*, district of *Đông Xuân*. It stands to the right hand side of the temple of the revelation of the spirits. The temple of all the saints is situated to the west of the citadel, in the commune of *Xuân Đài*, district of *Đông Xuân*. It stands to the right hand side of the temple to the gods of the walls and moats. The temple of *Biểu Trưng* is situated in the northern part of the district of *Đông Xuân*, on an island in the estuary of *Cù Mông* belonging to the village of *Vĩnh Cửu*. The temple venerates the more than five hundred generals who died in battle or from disease [in 1793-1801], to the glory of the *Nguyễn* dynasty.

### **Forts and Strongholds**

The fort of *Phú Vĩnh* is built of earth on the summit of the mountain in the village of *Phú Vĩnh*, district of *Đông Xuân*. It stands six rods long and six cubits high, on the left hand side of the bay of *Vịnh Lâm*. Its parapet is six cubits thick, and it is armed with three great guns under the command of a sergeant and fifteen soldiers.

The mountain rampart of *Mũi Tra* stands to the left hand side of the fort of *Phú Vĩnh*. It is seven rods long and six cubits high. Its parapet is six cubits thick, and it is armed with four great guns under the command of a sergeant and twenty soldiers.

The rampart of *Gành Dương* is built of earth in the mountains of the village of *Tân Thạnh*, near the bay of *Vịnh Lâm*, in the district of *Đông Xuân*. It faces the left hand side of the forts of *Phú Vĩnh* and *Mũi Tra*. Eleven rods, five cubits long, six cubits high, with a parapet eight cubits thick, it is armed with two great guns under the command of a sergeant and ten soldiers.

The fort of *Xuân Đài* stands to the left hand side of the main road, on the mountain of *Xuân Đài*. Built of stone, it is ten rods long, five cubits high and has a parapet six cubits thick. It is armed with three great guns and two field cannons, under the command of a sergeant and ten soldiers.

The rampart of *Bán Nguyệt* is built of earth and stands on the north shore of the estuary of *Xuân Đài*. It is twenty-seven rods, seven cubits long and six cubits high. Its parapets are eight cubits thick, and it is armed with four great guns and two field cannons, under the command of a sergeant and twenty soldiers.

The fort of *Hà Bá* is built of earth and stands in the commune of *Xuân Đài*, in the district of *Đông Xuân*. It is ten rods long, five cubits high and has a parapet eight cubits thick. It is armed with three great guns and two field cannons, under the command of a sergeant and twenty soldiers.

## **The Descriptive Geography of the Emperor Đông Khánh**

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The rampart of Phú Sơn is built of earth and stands in the village of Lễ Thạnh, in the district of Đông Xuân. It is six rods long, six cubits high and its parapet is eight cubits thick. It is armed with one great gun, one field cannon and two falconets. Issued with patrol orders, it conducts joint operations with local fighting men to defend the site.

The fort of Thạch Lĩnh stands in the commune of Phước Đức, in the district of Đông Xuân. All four sides are reinforced with a hedge of thorny bamboo, and the fort is placed under the command of a sergeant with ten soldiers. This squad is also responsible for the guard of the prison.

The fort of Phước Sơn stands in the village of Củng Sơn, in the district of Tuy Hoà. All four sides are reinforced with a hedge of thorny bamboo, and the fort is placed under the command of a sergeant with ten soldiers. This squad is also responsible for the guard of the prison.

Regular soldiers recruited by the court: 1,461 people.

The left hand guard of Bình Định: 503 people.

The right hand guard of Bình Định: 402 people.

The right hand regiment of Bình Định: 506 people.

The artillery squad: 50 people.

Militia recruited by the mandarins:

The citadel guard: 37 people.

Population registered for tax payment:

Taxpayers of all categories: 7,865 people.

Agricultural land:

Paddy fields: 23,013 acres, two square poles, one square yard, one square foot and slightly over one square inch.

Communally owned paddy fields: 290 acres, six square poles, nine square perches, two square yards and five square feet.

Privately owned paddy fields: 22,722 acres, five square poles, five square perches, eight square yards, six square feet and slightly over one square inch.

Fields for other crops: 5,828 acres, five square poles, two square perches, one square yard, six square feet and one square inch.

Communally owned fields for other crops: 14 acres, three square poles, ten square perches and three square yards.

Privately owned fields for other crops: 5,814 acres, one square pole, six square perches, eight square yards, nine square feet and slightly over one square inch.

Annual tax receipts:

Paid in cash: 23,057 ligatures, two strings and thirty-four sapeques.

Head tax: 9,742 ligatures, four strings and thirty sapeques.

Tax on paddy fields: 6,903 ligatures, nine strings and thirty-six sapeques.

Tax on fields for other crops: 6,410 ligatures, eight strings and twenty-eight sapeques.

Paid in paddy: 14,780 bushels, sixteen pints, six double handfuls and slightly more than four handfuls.

Tax on communally owned paddy fields: 211 bushels, ten pints, eight double handfuls and one handful.

Tax on privately owned paddy fields: 14,569 bushels, five pints, eight double handfuls and slightly more than three handfuls.

We, the mandarins of the province of **Khánh Hòa**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of

## The Province of **Khánh Hòa**

Including the following maps:

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| The Province of Khánh Hòa    | 慶和省 |
| The Prefecture of Diên Khánh | 延慶府 |
| The District of Phúc Điền    | 福田縣 |
| The District of Vĩnh Xương   | 永昌縣 |
| The Prefecture of Ninh Hòa   | 寧和府 |
| The District of Quảng Phúc   | 廣福縣 |
| The District of Tân Định     | 新定縣 |

## **The Description of the Province of Khánh Hòa**

### **[Note on the Administrative History of the Province:**

*In ancient times, the territory of the province of Khánh Hoà was part of the country of Champa. In 1470, the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 fought a war in the south and opened the land as far as the mountain of Thạch Bi 石碑山, at the southern extremity of Tuy Hoà. The Cham subsequently retook the land south of the pass of Cù Mông. In 1653, lord Nguyễn Phúc Tần 阮福秦, at the head of the Hùng Lộc regiment, led the army against Champa, after the Cham people started encroaching on his territory, and seized the land stretching as far as the Phan Rang river. He divided it into the prefecture of Thái Khang 泰康, including the districts of Quảng Phúc 廣福 and Tân Định 新定, and the prefecture of Diên Ninh 延寧, including the districts of Phúc Điền 福田, Vĩnh Xương 永昌 and Hoa Châu 華州. The whole was named the shire of Thái Khang 泰康, and corresponds the province of Khánh Hoà as it existed at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In 1690, during the reign of lord Nguyễn Phúc Thái 阮福泰, a taboo was placed on the word Thái, and the prefecture of Thái Khang changed its name to Bình Khang 平康. In 1742, during the reign of lord Nguyễn Phúc Khoát 阮福闊, the prefecture of Diên Ninh changed its name to Diên Khánh 延慶. Both the prefectures of Bình Khang and Diên Khánh belonged to the shire of Bình Khang. In the second year of the reign of the emperor Gia Long 嘉隆 (1803), a taboo was placed on the word Khang, which was part of the title (Hiếu Khang) of the emperor's father, Nguyễn Phúc Cồn 阮福喦. The shire of Bình Khang thus became the shire of Bình Hoà, and the prefecture of Bình Khang was renamed Bình Hoà 平和. Five years later, the shire became a government. In the twelfth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1831), it became the prefecture of Ninh Hoà 寧和, and in 1832, when the realm was divided into provinces, the province of Khánh Hoà 慶和 came into being.*

*In the late twentieth century, the province was to be merged with Phú Yên to form the province of Phú Khánh, but by the beginning of the twenty-first century was restored to its former status as the province of Khánh Hoà.]*

The provincial citadel is situated in the territory of the communes of Trường Thành and Phú Mỹ, in the canton of Ninh Phước, district of Phước Điền. The rampart is built of earth, and stands 636 rods, four cubits, seven inches in circumference, and eight cubits, five inches high. The citadel has eight corners, four of which are protected by earth mounds. Its four gates are built of brick and stone, and are covered by tiled rooves. The moat is four rods, five cubits wide and eight cubits deep.

The territory of the province meets the sea to the east, at a distance of twenty leagues [from the citadel] and the region of the mountain villages of the wild tribes to the west, at a distance of thirty-seven leagues. It is bounded to the south by the district of An Phước, province of Bình Thuận, at a distance of 117 leagues. To the north, the boundary with the district of Tuy Hoà, in the province of Phú Yên, lies at a distance of 155 leagues. To the southeast, the boundary with the territorial waters of the province of Bình Thuận is at a distance of eighty-nine leagues, and to the southwest, the region of the villages of the wild tribes are seventy-one leagues away. To the northeast, the province is bounded by the estuary of Vân Phong, at a distance of ninety-one leagues, and to the northwest by the region of the villages of the wild tribes, at a distance of ninety-seven leagues.

From east to west, the province is fifty-eight leagues across. From north to south, it is 272 leagues across.

The province is made up of two prefectures, with four districts.

Population registered for tax payment: 5,425 people.

Soldiers: 1,308 people.

Agricultural land: 12,976 acres, seven square poles, eight square perches, seven square yards and five square feet.

Paddy fields of all categories: 9,687 acres, seven square poles, eight square perches and four square yards.

Fields for other crops of all categories: 3,289 acres, three square yards and five square feet.

Annual tax receipts:

Paid in cash: 13,718 ligatures, twenty-one strings and slightly over six sapeques.

Paid in paddy: 6,406 bushels, five pints, one double handful and slightly over six handfuls.

- 1- The prefecture of **Diên Khánh**: principal district of **Phước Điền**, secondary district of **Vĩnh Xương**.
- 2- The prefecture of **Ninh Hoà**: principal district of **Quảng Phước**, secondary district of **Tân Định**.

### **Customs and Manners**

The inhabitants of the four districts of the province, which resemble each other in their customs, are rustic and down-to-earth people. The people who live in the shadow of the mountains plant rice and mulberry to make a living, while those who live by the sea use nets to catch fish. There are a number of artisans and traders, but most of them are lazy and no one has enough goods to engage in large-scale commerce. Both men and women wrap their head with square turbans, which are made of crepe among those coming from wealthy families and of green cloth among the poor people. Most people drink the water from the streams. On the occasion of death anniversaries and other ritual celebrations, some families organise singing and fortune telling ceremonies. The people who follow the false doctrine [Catholicism] may be found in thirty communes, where they make up a proportion of the population. These include the communes of **Phú Cốc**, **Phú Lộc**, **Đại Điền**, **Phú Cấp**, **Phú Năm**, **Vũ Cảnh**, **Xuân Phong**, **Trường Thạnh**, **Trường Lạc**, **Phước Thạnh**, **Lương Phước** and **Trung Giang**, in the district of **Phước Điền**; the communes and villages of **Ngọc Hội**, **Phú Nông**, **Phú Nhơn**, **Phú Vinh**, **Xuân Lạc** and **Vĩnh Châu**, in the district of **Vĩnh Xương**; the communes and villages of **Phước Đa**, **Vân Định** and **Ngọc Sơn**, in the district of **Quảng Phước**; and the commune of **Mỹ Thành**, **Đại Cát**, **Mỹ Thạnh**, **Xuân Hoà**, **Vĩnh Phước**, **Hội Phú**, **Hội Bình** and **Cát Lợi**, in the district of **Tân Định**. Only one village is wholly populated by these people. This is the village of **Tiên Hương**, in the district of **Phước Điền**.

There are two posts at points of river passage at **Nha Trang** and **Bình Nguyên**. The mountain villages of the wild tribes live in houses built on stilts made of timber. They practise different professions, either raising livestock or growing crops. They like brass pans and ceramic goods. All they have to wear is coarse cloth and their diet is based only on salt [rather than fish sauce, soy sauce, etc.]. Throughout the year, they may frequently be seen bringing goods like pigs and rattan fibres to exchange for goods with the **Hán [Kinh]** people. The wild tribes who inhabit the villages of **La Vạn** and **Lục Vân**, in **Bình Nguyên**, are stubborn in character and difficult to civilise, presenting a contrast with the guileless tribes who live in the villages of **Nha Trang**.

### **Local Produce**

Paddy, potatoes, beans, melons and marrows may be found in all the districts of the province. Other goods like cloth, mats, gauze, crepe and satin decorated with flower patterns, are produced in different places here and there. Resources of the mountains include ebony, jacaranda, ironwood (*lim*), aloe, different types of sandalwood, beeswax, white honey, grains of paradise, pearl-barley, mountain betel, *bối điệp* leaves (used for making sails and paper), oils of dipterocarpus, benjamin gum and canarium, styrax, a strong sort of rattan, nux vomica, stag antlers, rhinoceros, ivory, peacocks, pheasant feathers, bears and tigers. Resources of the sea include fish and salt. Mother of pearl, sea turtles and swallows' nests may also be found in some places, but not in any great quantity.

### **Climate**

The prefectures and districts of the province share the same climate, which is often hot and rarely cold. Heavy downpours are common after the fourth month. At the end of autumn and beginning of winter, the rain falls so heavily that floods are common, the ground produces miasmas in great quantity and the air is unbearably humid and muggy. In these circumstances, many people catch malaria. Two crops of rice are grown every year and are harvested in summer and autumn. The tides rise twice or three times a month. In the second and eighth month, the tide rises three times, on the third, seventeenth and twenty-ninth days of the month. In the other months it rises twice, on the seventeenth and thirtieth days.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

There are many mountains in all four districts of the province, and the famous ones include the following: the mountains of Tam Phong, Đại Lĩnh and Phước Hà in the district of Quảng Phước, and the mountains of Bà Sơn and Đại Điền, in the district of Phước Điền.

Most of the rivers are narrow and shallow. Rather larger rivers include the Phú Lộc river, in the district of Phước Điền, and the Vĩnh Phú river, in the district of Tân Định.

### **Temples and Shrines**

The district of Phước Điền, in the prefecture of Diên Khánh, is home to the following sacred buildings: the rostrum to the gods of the soil and harvests, the rostrum to the gods of the mountains and rivers, the rostrum to the gods of agriculture, the temple of Confucian literature, the shrine of all the saints, and the shrine to the gods of the walls and moats. The shrine to the meritorious mandarins (Công Thần) may be found in the district of Vĩnh Xương. The temple of Thiên Y, situated within the provincial citadel, is dedicated to the memory of the mother goddess Thiên Y. The temple of Quá Quan, in the district of Phước Điền, is also dedicated to the memory of this goddess.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The tower of Linh Tiên, situated in the district of Vĩnh Xương, is a place of beauty in the province.

### **Forts and Strongholds**

The fort of Lục stands in the district of Vĩnh Xương, prefecture of Diên Khánh. Built of earth, its rampart is thirty-six rods, four cubits in circumference, seven cubits high and seven cubits, five inches thick.

The fort of Hiệp Khẩu stands in the district of Vĩnh Xương, prefecture of Diên Khánh. Built of earth, its rampart is seven rods, five cubits in circumference, seven cubits high and eight cubits thick.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road heads southwards from the provincial citadel to the stage post of Hoà Thạnh. It then passes the stage posts of Hoà Tân, Hoà Du and Hoà Quân before reaching the stage post of Thuận Lai, in the province of Bình Thuận. This road is 117 leagues long and less than one rod wide.

- A main road heads northwards from the provincial citadel to the stage post of Hoà Thạnh. It then passes the stage posts of Hoà Cát, Hoà Mỹ, Hoà Hoàng and Lương Hoà Mã, before reaching the stage post of Phú Hoà, on the boundary with the mountainous territory of the county of Phú Yên. This road is 155 leagues long.

- A minor road runs eastwards from the provincial citadel, past the naval base and on to the post at the main channel in the estuary of Cù Huân. This road is twenty leagues long. From the naval base, the road also continues eastwards to the narrower channel in the estuary of Cù Huân. This stretch is three leagues long and less than three cubits wide.

- A minor road runs westwards from the provincial citadel as far as the region of the villages of the wild tribes. This road is thirty-eight leagues long.

- A sea route extends from the island of Chông, on the southern boundary of the province with the territorial waters of the province of Bình Thuận, passing the channels of Cam Ranh, Cù Huân, Nha Phu and Vân Phong. It finally reaches the channel of Đà Nùng, on the boundary with the county of Phú Yên, after a journey of only three days and nights, given a fair wind.

We, the mandarins of the province of **Bình Thuận**, respectfully present the following papers, being the Geographical Description of

## **The Province of Bình Thuận**

Including the following maps:

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| The Province of Bình Thuận   | 平順省 |
| The Prefecture of Ninh Thuận | 寧順府 |
| The District of Tuy Phong    | 綏豐縣 |
| The District of Hòa Đa       | 禾多縣 |
| The Prefecture of Hàm Thuận  | 咸順府 |

## The Description of the Province of **Bình Thuận**

### [Note on the Administrative History of the Province:

*In the past, the territory of the province of Bình Thuận was part of the country of Champa. In 1470, the emperor Lê Thánh Tông 黎聖宗 fought a war in the south and opened the land as far as the mountain of Thạch Bi 石碑山, at the southern extremity of Tuy Hoà. Lord Nguyễn Phúc Tần 阮福秦 organised a further advance to the south, as far as the Phan Rang river. This land was to become Khánh Hoà 慶和 in 1653, though its western part remained under the authority of the king of Champa, as a vassal of the emperor. In response to Cham encroachments into Diên Ninh 延寧 (Diên Khánh 延慶), lord Nguyễn Phúc Chu 阮福周 despatched regiment commander Nguyễn Hữu Kính to lead the army against Champa. The Cham king, known by the name Bà Tranh, was captured, and land was seized which became, in 1693, the government of Thuận Thành 順城. In 1698, the western part of Phan Rí was merged with Thuận Thành to form the district of Hoà Đa 禾多, which was made up of the counties of Phan Thiết 藩切, Ma Li 麻離 and Phố Hải 庸諧. The remaining part, stretching as far as the southern frontier, became the district of Yên Phước 安福, under the county of Phan Rang 藩朗. These two districts formed the prefecture of Bình Thuận 平順, which came under the authority of the shire of Bình Thuận. In the fourth year of the reign of the emperor Minh Mệnh 明命 (1823), the county of Phan Rang was abolished, and two years later the other counties were also abolished. In 1832, the province of Bình Thuận came into being.*

*There were no further changes up to the time of the emperor **Đông Khánh**. Many changes in status were to follow, however. Part of the province was to be transferred to Bà Rịa (1906), and another part to Bình Tuy during the time the country was divided between North and South. The remaining part, known at the time of the emperor **Đông Khánh** as the prefecture of Ninh Thuận, was to become a county (1906) and then a province (1945), and was then to split and merge several times. The Nguyễn 阮 dynasty province of Bình Thuận thus corresponded to the provinces Bình Thuận and Ninh Thuận, as they existed at the beginning of the twenty-first century.]*

The provincial capital is situated in the village of Xuân An, in the canton of Đa Phúc, district of Hoà Đa. The citadel is built of earth and equipped with four gates as well as a watchtower at each of the four corners. The rampart is 390 rods in circumference and stands five cubits high. It is one rod, three cubits thick at the top and one rod, eight cubits thick at the base. Its parapet is three cubits high and three cubits thick. The moat is three rods, three cubits across at its surface, and one rod, eight cubits across at its bed, which is eight cubits deep. The citadel opens at four gates, and a further protective earth embankment lies beyond each of these. These additional reinforcements are 144 rods long in total, which means that the embankment protecting each gate is thirty-six rods long. The dimensions of the ramparts, parapets and moat correspond to the citadel norms of the province.

To the east, the province is bounded by the district of Vĩnh Xương, in the province of Khánh Hoà, and to the west by the district of Phúc Bình, in the province of Biên Hoà. To the south lies the sea, and to the north, the mountains and wild tribes.

From east to west, the province is 449 leagues across. From north to south, it is fifty-five leagues across.

The province is made up of two prefectures, with four districts.

1- The prefecture of Ninh Thuận: principal district of Yên Phong, secondary district of Tuy Phong.

2- The prefecture of Hàm Thuận: principal district of Tuy Lý, secondary district of Hoà Đa.

There are thirty-one cantons in the province, with 523 communes and villages (*thôn, phường, ấp, hộ, xóm, lý, sách*).

Hán [Kinh] people live in eight cantons and 219 communes and villages.

Thổ people live in eight cantons and eighty-nine communes and villages.

Highlanders live in fifteen cantons and 268 villages.

### **Forts and Strongholds**

The fort of Xích Thổ stands in the commune of the same name, by the mountain of Nguyễn Bảo, in the district of Hoà Đa (but is now part of the village of Hoà Bình). Its rampart is built of earth, and opens at a single gate. The rampart, which is fortified with a corner watchtower, is fifty-two rods long, three cubits high and one rod thick. The parapet is two cubits high all the way round.

The forward stronghold [Bảo Tiền] stands in the village of Đông An, in the district of Hoà Đa. The rampart is built of earth, and opens at a single gate. The rampart, which is fortified with a corner watchtower, is 129 rods, six cubits long and five cubits high. It is seven cubits thick at the top and one rod thick at the base. The parapet is two cubits high all the way round. The moat is two rods across at its surface, and one rod, two cubits and five inches across at its bed, which is six cubits deep.

The rear stronghold [Bảo Hậu] stands in the territory of the villages of Đông An, Thuy Giang and Hoà An, in the district of Hoà Đa. This is the administrative seat of the district of Hoà Đa. The rampart is built of earth, and opens at a single gate. The rampart, which is fortified with a corner watchtower, is 109 rods, six cubits long and five cubits high. It is seven cubits thick at the top and one rod wide at the base. The parapet is two cubits high all the way round. The moat is two rods across at its surface, and one rod, two cubits, five inches across at its bed, which is six cubits deep.

### **Temples and Shrines**

The rostrum to the gods of the soil and harvests is situated in the village of Xuân An, to the northwest of the provincial citadel. The temple of Confucian literature and the temple of the revelation of the spirits may be found in the same village, to the southwest of the citadel. The shrine of all the saints stands in the village of Thủy Tú, in the canton of Đa Phúc, district of Hoà Đa. The shrine of Champa is also situated in this district, in the village of Xuân Hội, canton of Ninh Hà. The shrine to the gods of the moats and walls may be found in the village of Xuân An, in the canton of Đa Phúc, district of Hoà Đa. The rostrum to the gods of agriculture is situated in the same village, to the northeast of the citadel.

### **Customs and Manners**

The customs of the four districts and prefectures are rather different from one another. The inhabitants of Ninh Thuận and Tuy Phong may be described as somewhat honest and down-to-earth. The inhabitants of Hàm Thuận and Hoà Đa, on the other hand, are gradually learning the arts of cunning and deceit. Ghosts and devils are the limits of their beliefs, although they also follow Buddhism. They eat, dress and spend money with great extravagance, and their festivals of song and

worship are celebrated with luxury. The Thổ people and the highlanders live in a simple and naive way, as they do in other parts of the country.

### **Local Produce**

Cotton, cloth, potatoes, manioc, vegetables, melons and marrows, beans and barley may be found in the province, as well as fish, prawn, fish sauce and salt. The prefecture of Hàm Thuận is known for the *bối diệp* trees grown there, and the prefecture of Ninh Thuận for its aloe. The district of Tuy Phong is known for its lime. These products may be found in certain places, but not everywhere.

### **Climate**

The wind and sun make this region very arid. The wind blows from the north in winter and spring and the skies are clear and bright. In summer and at the beginning of autumn, the wind blows from the south. It turns at the end of autumn, coming instead from the northeast and bringing rain and floods. The tides rise and fall twice a month (on the fifteenth, sixteenth or seventeenth, and thirtieth or first days of each month). The climate is the same throughout the province.

### **Mountains and Rivers**

The rivers are shallow and the mountains are low, unlike other parts of the country, but one may say that the following mountains are well known: the mountains of Kha Cú, Hồn Thiên, Tà Trú and Tham Lý, in the prefecture of Ninh Thuận; the mountain of the mother goddess Thiên Y as well as the mountains of Tà Cú and Đàn Linh, in the prefecture of Hàm Thuận; the mountains of Hương Ấn and Kỳ La, in the district of Hoà Đa; and the mountains of Diên Chuỷ and Hoả Diệm, in the district of Tuy Phong.

The rivers of the province include the Mai Nương river in the prefecture of Ninh Thuận, the Phan Thiết and Phố Hải rivers in the prefecture of Hàm Thuận, the Kỳ Xuyên river in the district of Hoà Đa and the Long Vĩnh river in the district of Tuy Phong.

### **Notable Sites and Monuments**

The main places of beauty in the province include the pagoda of Bảo Sơn, in the prefecture of Hàm Thuận, the cave of Tam and the lake of Hạ, in the district of Hoà Đa, and the pagoda of Đá (where prince Phiên is venerated), in the district of Tuy Phong. There are no places of beauty worth noting in the prefecture of Ninh Thuận.

### **Roads, Routes and Itineraries**

- A main road runs from the eastern extremity of the province, on the boundary with the province of Khánh Hoà, and passes sixteen stage posts (Thuận Lai, Thuận Mai, Thuận Trinh, Thuận Lãng, Thuận Hảo, Thuận Vĩng, Thuận Phú, Thuận Động, Thuận Cương, Thuận Tĩnh, Thuận Phiên, Thuận Lý, Thuận Lâm, Thuận Trình, Thuận Phước and Thuận Phương) before reaching the boundary with the province of Biên Hoà, in the west. This road is 449 leagues long and one rod wide.

- A minor road runs from the provincial citadel towards the south, passing three forts (the fort of Xích Thổ, and the strongholds of Tiên and Hậu) and the stage post of Thuận Phú, before reaching the channel at the estuary of Phan Rí. This road is fifteen leagues long and six cubits wide.

- A minor mountain road heads south from the citadel, and then twists and turns towards the northwest before reaching the boundary with the region of the villages of the highlanders. This road is thirty-nine leagues long and the journey can only be made by ox cart.

## **The Descriptive Geography of the Emperor Đông Khánh**

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- A minor mountain road runs from the eastern provincial boundary, with Khánh Hoà, in the region of the highlanders' villages, as far as the western boundary, with Biên Hoà, also in the region of the highlanders' villages. This road is 446 leagues long. Some parts of it are flat and some are impenetrable.

- A minor coastal road runs from the eastern provincial boundary, with Khánh Hoà, as far as the western provincial boundary, with Biên Hoà. It passes ten estuaries and is 446 leagues long. On foot, the journey takes nine days and two and a half hours.

- A sea route runs from the eastern extremity of the province, where the provincial boundary meets the small islands belonging to the territorial waters of the province of Khánh Hoà, as far as the western extremity of the province, where the boundary meets the island of the mother goddess in the province of Biên Hoà. With a fair wind, the journey takes two days and five hours.

Soldiers: 2,731 people. These include:

Regular soldiers recruited by the court: 1,837 people.

Stage post personnel: 734 people.

Mandarin's guard (provided by the villages): 160 people (some of whom pay head tax).

Population registered for tax payment (according to the rolls): 10,187.

Ordinary taxpayers: 6,525 people.

Others: 1,383 people.

Highlanders registered for tax payment: 2,279 people.

Agricultural land:

Agricultural land (according to the land register): 43,130 acres, nine square perches and six square yards.

All types of paddy field (on the plains and in the mountains): 32,732 acres, eight square poles, six square perches and five square yards.

All types of field used for other crops: 13,097 acres, two square poles, three square perches and one square yard.

Annual tax receipts:

Tax payment owed from all categories of registered taxpayer and agricultural land:

Paid in cash: 31,691 ligatures, six strings and five sapeques.

Head tax: 10,383 ligatures, three strings and thirty sapeques.

Head tax owed by the highlanders: 1,925 ligatures and eight strings of sapeques.

Tax on paddy fields: 9,819 ligatures, eight strings and thirty-two sapeques.

Tax on other fields: 9,562 ligatures, six strings and three sapeques.

Paid in paddy:

Tax on paddy fields: 30,879 bushels, eight pints, four double handfuls and slightly over one handful.

Tax payment owed in fixed quantities according to the register, in other categories of taxation:

Paid in cash:

Value in cash of the tax on salt fields: 751 ligatures, five strings and twenty-seven sapeques (the salt fields cover an area of 429.4 acres and eight square poles).

Value in cash of the tax on wooden planks: 1,224 ligatures.

Tax on ships and boats: 8,468 ligatures, six strings and forty sapeques (tax is paid on 665 boats of all different types).

Value in cash of the tax on foundries (one person): seven ligatures.

Tax on land used for growing betel (six plots of land): 5,099 ligatures, nine strings and fifty-three sapeques.

Paid in silver:

Tax paid by the Qing-dynasty Chinese: 151 taels of platinum (which is in fact silver).

All categories of tax owed in fixed quantities according to the register, paid in produce:

Tax on *bôi diệp* leaves: 6,580 bundles.

Tax on white cloth: 402 lengths and fifteen cubits.

Tax on fish sauce: 226 jars.

Tax on salt sauce: 27 jars.

Tax on marinade sauce: 27 jars.

Tax on wooden planks (paid by woodcutters): 248.5 boards.

Tax on sandalwood oil torches: 136 torches (large category: 68 torches, small category: 68 torches).

Tax on canarium oil: 1,910 catties.

Tax on dipterocarpus oil: 5,730 catties.

Tax on beeswax: slightly over 793 catties.

Tax on honey: slightly over seventy-six catties.

Tax on aloe: slightly over one catty.

Tax on sandalwood: one catty.

Tax on fragrant essences: one catty.

Tax on rhinoceros horns: eight catties.

Tax on ivory: 140 catties.

Tax on refined iron: slightly over 373 catties.

Tax on lime: 170 catties.

Other categories of tax, paid in cash and silver, and not owed in fixed quantities according register (the amount of tax collected depending on the amount of trade, which varies from year to year):

Tax on white salt.

Tax on wooden planks.

Tax on horses.

Tax on trading goods owned by the Qing-dynasty Chinese.

Tax on distilleries of alcohol.

Tax on opium.