

The Mac Family In Ha Tien In The Nguyen Lord's Foreign Policy Towards Siam And Cambodia In The XVII-XVIII Centuries

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Abstract: In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Ha Tien was an important land for the ambition of three kingdoms in mainland Southeast Asia: Cochinchina (the land of Dang Trong) - Cambodia- Siam. For the Nguyen lords, Ha Tien was a strategic location for the Nguyen lords to enter the Mekong Delta, assemble the last pieces of the puzzle into the map of Dang Trong, and complete the cause of Nam Tien. For Cambodia, Ha Tien was originally a land under the management of Chan Lap, but it was only loosely managed, the country was not willing to lose Ha Tien, however, due to its weakened potential, Cambodia had to accept reality for Ha Tien to merge into Cochinchina and find an ally against Siam. For Siam, Ha Tien was located on the way to the sea, an important point on the international trade route of this period. Therefore, Ha Tien played an important role in the Eastern plan of the Siamese court.

Keywords: Ha Tien, XVII-XVIII centuries, Cochinchina - Cambodia- Siam

1. INTRODUCTION

“Dai Nam Nhat Thong Chi” of the National History of the Nguyen Dynasty records Ha Tien as follows: “East-west are 27 miles apart, north and south are 25 miles apart. The border to the east is 35 miles to Ha Duong and An Giang districts, 2 miles to the west to the sea, 5 miles to the south of Suzhou mountain to the sea, 25 miles to the north to the border of Cambodia, and 25 miles to the north of Bach O mountain 20 miles to the sea. From the provincial capital go east to the capital 1325 miles” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2006, p.5). Through the above description, it can be seen that Ha Tien's important position for the kingdoms in Southeast Asia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Chenla is weakened beyond management; Cochinchina is promoting the opening of the South; Ayuthaya (since 1767 is Siam) after a period of renaissance is accelerating eastward. Ha Tien becomes the intersection of the power interaction of the triangle: Cochinchina - Cambodia- Siam.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

About the Mac family in Ha Tien, there are many works mentioned in different aspects. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Trinh Hoai Duc in Gia Dinh citadel mentioned quite fully the process of Mac Cuu passing through Cambodia (after the defeat of the anti-Qing

movement), then was assigned the position of Okna by king Cambodia, then he gathered the Vietnamese, the Chinese, and the Khmer to establish 7 communes and villages in Ha Tien. In 1708, Mac Cuu asked to be subordinated to Dang Trong. After Mac Cuu's death, his son Mac Thien Tich continued to develop Ha Tien land and made a great contribution to the process of exploiting and merging the Southwest region into Dang Trong, Vietnam.

The Nguyen Dynasty's histories such as “Dai Nam thuc luc”, “Dai Nam nhat thong chi”, “Dai Nam liet truyen”... describe relatively fully the events of the disputes between Dang Trong - Cambodia - Siam in Ha Tien.

A work that cannot be ignored is “Mac Thi genealogy”. The genealogy is considered the oldest in the South, recording the Mac family in Ha Tien, and is also a work about a group of Chinese who migrated to the South in the 17th century. “Mac Thi genealogy” compiled by Dinh Duc marquis Vu The Dinh (adopted son of Mac Thien Tu) is a very valuable document because it is not only the genealogy, the second generation of a famous family, having great merit in life. the cause of land opening in the South, which, with a contemporary's record, will provide the next generation with a more objective view of the process of formation and development of the southernmost land of the country. As shared by translator Nguyen Khac Thuan, Mac Thi's genealogy “contains many special contents” that can be added to the national histories of the Nguyen dynasty to help us have a more comprehensive view of the Mac family, about the role of the Chinese as well as the formation and development of the land of Ha Tien on the map of Dang Trong.

In the modern period, many new views about the Mac family in Ha Tien. The most prominent is Tran Kinh Hoa, a scholar who researches and teaches history in Taiwan, in the speech “The Mac family and the Nguyen lord in Ha Tien” read at the headquarters of the Government's Association for Asian Cultural Relations Saigon on September 9, 1958, affirmed that “Ha Tien under the goodwill of Mac Cuu prospered day by day, the people settled down and settled down, Ha Tien society was a civilized society”. Tran Kinh Hoa also said that politically, the Mac family in Ha Tien always retains the real power of a state - an autonomous government that used to play the role of a “delayed state” between the three countries of Vietnam – the land of Dang Trong of Lord Nguyen, Siam and Cambodia.

“Research on Ha Tien” collects articles from a person who has studied Ha Tien for many years, Truong Minh Dat. Many articles in this work are valuable for those who want to study the Mac family as well as the process of establishing the land in the southernmost part of the country. Truong Minh Dat has diligently researched and corrected many false facts in previous historical works when writing about Ha Tien, the contributions of father and son Mac Cuu to Ha Tien in the early days are emphasized. However, the limitation of the book is that it is only a collection of articles, so it is fragmentary, there is no connection between the contents, especially the role of Ha Tien's enlightenment in the Mac family has not been presented in a uniform manner. In addition, some dates and names of Truong Minh Dat also need to be compared for further verification.

In addition, there are many other works of scholars inside and outside Vietnam mentioning the Mac family and the role of learning Mac in Ha Tien, such as: “The Chinese in the South” (2005) by Phan An, “Chinese in South Vietnam” (1968) by Tsai Maw Kuey, Chau Thi Hai with the work “Chinese in Vietnam and Southeast Asia - Yesterday's image and today's position”, “Histoire moderne du pays d'Annam-Paris” (Modern History of Annam) by Charles B. Maybon, thesis of Brian A. Zottoli (defended at the University of Michigan in

2011): “Reconceptualizing Southern Vietnamese history from the 15th to 18th centuries: Competition along the coasts from Guangdong to Cambodia”...

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

To make this article, the author relies mainly on two historical methods and logical methods. In addition, the author also uses Interdisciplinary and area methods, statistical methods, comparisons ... to clarify the problems posed.

To make this article, the authors based on rich literature sources, including two main sources of primary data and secondary data. Primary sources include records of feudal historians, merchants, missionaries, and foreigners who used to trade in Vietnam in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Secondary sources are documents of domestic and foreign scholars who research the contents related to the article.

From the collected data, we summarize, evaluate and clarify the position of the Mac family in Ha Tien in the policy of the Nguyen government in Dang Trong, Vietnam towards Cambodia and Siam in the XVII - XVIII century.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Period before 1708

Before the group of Minh Huong people led by Mac Cuu came to Ha Tien, there were many Vietnamese people who settled down to explore the land and set up villages here. In the middle of the seventeenth century, due to the pressure of the Trinh-Nguyen war, Vietnamese exiles (who lost their homes in the war, including political criminals or those who escaped soldiers) from the Thuan - Quang areas migrated by sea into the South. They go in many different ways (can go with the whole family, relatives, or go in small groups to go first and then pick up the family later). There are people who go by boat to the land of Phuong Nam right away, there are also people who go step by step into the land that is now in the south. According to Truong Minh Dat, the Vietnamese settled in Ha Tien very early, exploiting the land, forming villages. The documents all say that: in 1671, a man in Leizhou, Guangdong province, was Mac Cuu “because he could not stand the disturbance caused by the invasion of the Ho barbarians”, and mobilized his family to cross Hainan to the countryside thanks to Chan Lap country, please be a guest. Due to the instability of the Chan Lap court, around 1780, Mac Cuu asked the king of Cambodia to come to Lung Ky to work as an okna, then moved to Mang Kham (Ha Tien) (about 1700). According to Ly Khanh Tan (李慶新): “In the land of Ha Tien of Chan Lap, Mac Cuu devoted himself to developing his power, building towns and villages, and turning Ha Tien into a densely populated area. Living, a prosperous and international port, which at that time was called “Port of the Kingdom”; later, I returned to Phu Xuan and asked to be a deity. After Mac Cuu's death, his son Mac Thien Tu attached great importance to economic development and actively expanded trade with China, Peninsular Malaysia, and the Indonesian archipelago, turning Ha Tien into a prosperous port in the East. South Asia, known as “little Guangzhou”, makes an important contribution to the development and social progress of South Vietnam.

According to “Dai Nam nhât thong chi”: At the beginning of the dynasty, Mac Cuu, a Chinese man from Guangdong province, went to the South to see that this land had traders from other countries gathered and gathered people to flee to the land of Phu Quoc and Vung Thom, Rach Gia, Ca Mau established 7 self-governing communes. Legend has it that this

place often has fairies appear on the river, hence the name “Ha Tien” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2006, p.6).

Vu The Dinh in Mac Thi's genealogy records: “At the end of the Ming dynasty, China was in turmoil, Mac Thai Cong, the name's Cuu, Loi Chau, was born on the 8th day of the 5th lunar month, the year of the Goat, the year of Vinh Lich of the Ming Dynasty. The 9th (1655), because he could not stand the disturbances of the Qing invaders, crossed the sea to the South, and lived in Cambodia. This event occurred in the year of the New Pig (1671). That year Mac Cuu was 17 years old. Thai Cong was favored and trusted by king Chenla, all trades were entrusted to Mac Thai Cong to take care of all... Thinking so, Thai Cong gave bribes to concubines and courtiers, who were favored by Vuong. With the most love, thanks to them asking for (Thai Cong) to go out to Mang Kham, Thai Cong will take care of recruiting traffickers and traders from all four directions, benefiting the country is not small, so he happily approves it, and also grants Thai Cong the title okna” (Vu, 2005, p.16). Truong Minh Dat disagrees with the milestones that Vu The Dinh put forward for the 3 year period from 1671 to 1674, but Mac Cuu did too many things: just stayed in China, helped the King of Cambodia, and exploited the land Mang Kham becoming a rich land is unlikely to happen. The author also thinks that those huge jobs cannot be done in 3 years. And the time when Mac Cuu came to Ha Tien in 1671 (when he was 17 years old) also needs to be reviewed, whether 17 years old was a rich merchant, used to trade in many countries, used to help Trinh Thanh Cong in his life. the purchase of food...before coming to Cambodia or not?

The documents all record that Mac Cuu was originally from Chau Loi, Guangdong province, China, used to be a large merchant ship owner who often brought goods to exchange in Cambodia, Cha Va (Java), Siam ..., and was related. closely related to Trinh Thanh Cong's resistance against Qing on the island of Taiwan. About the time Mac Cuu came to Chan Lap and Ha Tien, there were many different milestones. According to the author personally, Mac Cuu came from China to Chan Lap at the time of the 19th Kangxi year (1680), realizing the failure of the uprisings against the Qing Dynasty (this year, the Tam Phien forces were almost defeated by the Qing Dynasty, Trinh Kinh withdrew to Taiwan), Mac Cuu and his servants went to Chan Lap. Mac Cuu was originally in the capital Cambodia (Udon), but realizing the instability of this court, he used gold and silver as bribes (for the king's love concubines and officials) to ask to guard the Lung Ky region, was ordained Okna by King Cambodia, Lung Ky is also known as Trung Ke, located in the middle area between Réam and Sré Cham, northwest of Phu Quoc (Truong, 2008, p.68).

Here Mac Cuu gathered people to clear the land, set up a casino to collect taxes. By about 1700, realizing the narrowness of Lung Ky and the convenient location of Mang Kham (Ha Tien) area, Mac Cuu came here, to gather people to discover and establish 7 communes and villages including Ha Tien, Rach Gia, and Ca Mau, Phu Quoc (collectively known as Ha Tien), merchant ships from all over the world come to trade.

According to Truong Minh Dat, Mac Cuu's time in Cambodia can be divided into 4 stages: The first was trusted by king Cambodia and appointed as okna and bought flower tax at Sai Mat government.

Second, reclaiming land in Lung Ky and this time Siam attacked Ha Tien, Mac Cuu went to seek refuge in Siam for a while (many documents suggest that he was taken away by Siam).

Third, returning to Lung Ky, this time Mac Cuu openly established 7 communes and villages.

Fourth, move to Phuong Thanh and in 1708 consecrate the land they reclaimed and manage for Lord Nguyen (Truong, 2008, p.71).

Mac Cuu is the one who has openly and clearly shaped the land of Ha Tien (including Ha Tien, Rach Gia, Ca Mau, Phu Quoc, and a part of Cambodia). Located in a critical position,

the intersection of the power of the kingdoms in Southeast Asia at this time (Siam, Cambodia, Dang Trong, Java), right from its inception, Ha Tien became a place to compete for influence fiercely between countries. “At that time, Siam, relying on its wealth and strength, often sent troops to invade Chan Lap. Phuong Thanh is located right on the coast, just a profitable trading place, not a dangerous place to use martial arts, so whenever the enemy sends marines, they can immediately capture (Thai Cong) and cannot be kept” (Vu, 2005, p.17).

With fertile soil favorable for agricultural development and located in an important position on the international maritime route from the Indian ocean to the Pacific ocean, Ha Tien quickly became a prosperous port. Also because of such a position, Ha Tien was the place to compete for the influence of Siam, Lord Nguyen, and Chan Lap. Siam sought every way to influence Mac Cuu to annex Ha Tien. Cambodia was powerless to protect Ha Tien against the threat of the Thais, leaving them to the Mac family. Especially with his policy towards the East, the King of Siam had many times invaded Ha Tien. In 1687, the Siamese attacked Ha Tien, plundered and captured Mac Cuu, and brought them back to Siam. It took more than 10 years for Mac Cuu to the plot, escape and return to the land of Ha Tien (Dang, 2010, p.12). From here, he has contemplated his future as well as the land of Ha Tien. Through that great event, Mac Cuu realized that the Siamese dynasty was too ambitious, if it stood with Siam, its rights and the family line would not be preserved. Meanwhile, with his position as an okna in Cambodia, more than anyone else, Mac Cuu clearly saw the weakness of this kingdom. Cambodia became weaker and weaker, internally forming two factions. The National History of the Nguyen dynasty confirms the situation that “brothers are in dispute with each other, if they can't help me, they will run to Tiem, if they can't, they will run to me” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.571). Moreover, the invasions of Siam into Cambodia in 1687 showed that relying on Cambodia for survival and development was unthinkable for the Mac family. In order to maintain their achievements and protect their inherent power in the land of Ha Tien against Siam's ambition to annexation, the Mac family was forced to rely on another force as a counterweight. Advised by a counselor surnamed to: “The Cambodians ... cannot be relied on for a long time. It is better to ask for Vietnamese goods, accept the position and claim the god as a base, if anything happens, someone will help” (Vu, 2005, p.19), Mac Cuu decided to dedicate his land to explore given to Lord Nguyen. Mac Cuu still retained his power, gained a backing force in the regional dispute, the Cochinchina government took an important step on the journey to the South. Mac Cuu still retained his power, gained a backing force in the regional dispute, the Cochinchina government took an important step on the journey to the South. About the time Mac Cuu offered Ha Tien to Lord Nguyen, there were many different opinions, Trinh Hoai Duc wrote: “... Mac Cuu also sent his subordinates Truong Cau and Ly Xa to offer confessions to the capital Phu Xuan begging for permission to beg for mercy the head of that land. August autumn, 18th year of the Rat year (1708) during the reign of Hien Tong Hieu Minh Hoang De (King Nguyen Phuc Chu) (Le Du Tong, 4th year of Vinh Thinh, 47th Dai Thanh Khang Hy), lord Nguyen to bestow it on Mac Cuu General. Ha Tien town and conferred the title of Cuu Ngoc Hau” (Trinh, 2004, p.159). The event that Mac Cuu offered his land to be discovered and asked to be a part of Dang Trong was a great event not only for Ha Tien land in particular but also for the whole of South Vietnam in general. Together with Gia Dinh, Dong Nai (Southeast), Ha Tien became one of the three peaks of the Dang Trong triangle in the South, and at the same time a strategic transit station west of the Hau river, creating a premise for the progress of “southward” down to the Mekong Delta under the Nguyen lord's government.

2. The period after 1708

In 1708, after a long time of deliberation, with the advice of the wise men of the to family, Mac Cuu decided to consecrate the Ha Tien land that he had organized to exploit and manage for a long time to be merged into the territory Dang Trong of Lord Nguyen.

In Gia Dinh citadel, Trinh Hoai Duc records this event as follows: “August autumn of the 18th year, Mau Ty (1708) (Le Du Tong, 4th Vinh Thinh year, 47th Dai Thanh Khang Hy), The court appointed the people of Loi Chau, Guangdong province, Mac Cuu to be the Commander of the Ha Tien army” (Trinh, 2004, p.5). The Ministry of “Dai Nam thuc luc” of the Nguyen Dynasty records the event more fully: in 1708 “taking Mac Cuu as the general of Ha Tien. Cuu is from Lei Chau, from Guangdong. When the Ming dynasty lost their hair to the South, they came to Chan Lap land to work as the Oc Nha and saw that there were many merchants in that country gathered, so they opened a casino to collect taxes, called the tax on flowers, and were buried in a silver pit should become rich. On the occasion of recruiting people to Phu Quoc, Can Bot, Gia Khe, Luong Cay, Huong Uc, Ca Mau, Ha Tien province established 7 communes and villages. Seeing that there was a legend that there were fairies regularly appearing on the river, the world named Ha Tien. There, the Cuu has entrusted his subordinates Truong Cau, Ly Xa, submitted a letter asking for the position of Lord Nguyen to accept and give the position of General. Cuu built a palace in Phuong Thanh, and more and more people came” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.122). Thus, in 1708, Mac Cuu did not go to Phu Xuan to ask for dependence on Lord Nguyen but sent his subordinates Truong Cau and Ly Xa to bring gifts and letters to Lord Nguyen. In 1711, Mac Cuu personally went to see Lord Nguyen. Nguyen Dynasty historians said: in 1711, “In the summer of April, the General of Ha Tien town Mac Cuu, came to the door to give thanks, Lord Nguyen rewards” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.126). Tran Kinh Hoa also said: After becoming rich by opening a smoke shop, organizing a casino to collect taxes, and digging a silver tunnel, Mac Cuu immediately thought about it and immediately began to develop a wholesale business. Ha Tien's sale, especially foreign trade, expansion of market streets, construction of citadels, according to Gia Dinh, a citadel is a citadel of land, and according to the Qing Dynasty's Reference Literature, it is a tree citadel. Many documents show that Mac Cuu called and received merchant ships from other countries to trade, and also actively established trade relations with other countries. In 1728 and 1729, Mac Cuu sent Luu Ve Quan and Huynh Tap Quan to bring two merchant ships to Japan to engage in trade and were granted a trading license by the Japanese government - Duc Xuyen shogunate. In 1731 and 1732, merchant ships were sent to Japan again. Trade with China also began in 1729, from which Ha Tien's local products such as sea cucumbers, dried fish, dried shrimp, etc. were exported to China. To encourage foreign merchant ships to trade, Mac Cuu has implemented a rather favorable goods tax policy. Merchandise is only subject to a small tax. The development of Ha Tien took place in an important context of the lower Mekong's history in early modern times. Expansion of centralized state projects of the Vietnamese, Khmer, and Thai people to the southeastern part of the Indochinese peninsula. Some historians refer to this region as the “water frontier”, which witnessed the last state power vacuum in Southeast Asia with the free movement of migration, trade, and political conflict (Tana and Cooke, 2004).

The opportunity came to the Nguyen Lords, but at this time, the Cochinchina government had not stood firmly in the South, not having enough potential to immediately acquire Ha Tien. Of course, the opportunity could not be missed, lord Nguyen Phuc Tan cleverly legalized this land by deciding for Mac Cuu to be the “General of Ha Tien town and confer the title of Cuu Ngoc Hau” (Trinh, 2005, p.156). At this stage, the symbiotic factor prevailed in the policy of

the Cochinchina government. Relying on Dang Trong, the Mac family had allies to support, while the Nguyen lords would have more hope of expanding their territory. Protecting the Mac family in Ha Tien, the Nguyen lords were considered to help the weak. At the same time, the forces of overseas Chinese and Vietnamese People (who are gradually making up the majority here) in the exploration of the Mekong Delta, protecting the border against the plot to annex Siam and Chan Lap. By conferring a title on Mac Cuu, Nguyen Phuc Tan turned Ha Tien into an administrative unit under Dang Trong, Ha Tien was the domain of the Mac family but also the territory of Dang Trong - a special administrative unit separate. The autonomous nature of Ha Tien, which was accepted by Dang Trong, was reflected in the fact that Mac Cuu had the right to self-governance, enjoyed the collective regime, and allowed him to use his own seal. From the organization of the local mandarin apparatus, the military organization to the tax regime, the Nguyen Lords all assigned the Mac family to self-determination and considered Ha Tien as a “dependent land”. Historians of Southeast Asia call these the last autonomous lands in Asia before they were annexed as territories by centralized states, “the last stand of Asian Autonomies” (Anthony Reid, 1997). Even when Cambodia asked for help from Siam to attack Ha Tien in 1715, the historical records of the Nguyen dynasty did not show the effective intervention and assistance of the Nguyen lord. It can be affirmed from the events of 1708 until before the attack of Siam (1715), although Mac Cuu voluntarily gave the land of Ha Tien to the Nguyen lord and merged it into Dang Trong of Dai Viet, however, there were two points noteworthy:

Firstly, Ha Tien is still a land with a very high degree of autonomy, Lord Nguyen is promoting the process of Southern progress, but at this time Gia Dinh and Dong Nai (Southeast region) are still a priority. The Cochinchina government could not reach down to manage this remote land, nor did it have the necessary support for Ha Tien in the face of the threat of Siam and even Cambodia. As evidenced by the attack of the Cambodia - Siamese coalition in 1715, almost all the troops in Gia Dinh did not have timely support for Mac Cuu and as a result, Ha Tien was defeated, the Siamese army occupied and looted ruined this land. Second, right after Mac Cuu presented Ha Tien to the Nguyen lords' government, Chan Lap did not accept this, Siam took the opportunity that Dang Trong did not have strict management of this region to influence and invade. This was when Ayuthaya (since 1767 Siam) entered the stage of development and expressed the territorial ambitions of a young rising kingdom in the region. After forcing a number of countries to submit to and influence Cambodia, Ayuthaya promoted the eastward policy. Ha Tien land is in the sights of this kingdom. The year 1715, the attack was an offensive alliance between Cambodia and Siam, each pursuing a different goal. Cambodia wanted to retake the land of Ha Tien (formerly in his name but Mac Cuu gave it to Lord Nguyen); Siam wanted to take this opportunity to defeat the Mac and force Ha Tien to become its vassal, expanding the way to the sea to develop foreign trade. The book “Dai Nam thuc luc” of the Nguyen Dynasty records this event as follows: “In February, Nac Tham led the Siamese army to rob Ha Tien. At that time, Ha Tien had no defense. The Siamese army suddenly arrived, the General Mac Cuu could not resist, ran to protect the land of Luong Cay (Lung Ky). Nac Tham took all his possessions away. Cuu returned to Ha Tien, built a citadel of earth, and set up the far rear as a defense plan” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.132).

After the year 1715, the connection between the Mac family and the Nguyen lords became increasingly close, Ha Tien gradually integrated, becoming a part of the land of Dang Trong. From here, Lord Nguyen paid special attention to Ha Tien land, interested in encouraging and assisting the Mac family in time to defend their territory. In 1736, Lord Nguyen Phuc Khoat took another step to acquire Ha Tien when he appointed Mac Thien Tu as Ha Tien Tran

Admiral, “for 3 long cards, exempt from tax” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.175). Eleven years later (1747), Lord Nguyen Phuc Khoat still arranged “Ha Tien as a separate town” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.208). In particular, he also gave Mac Thien Tu 4 identity cards to anoint the captains and captains of the town. The town is a border town, a dangerous place, and the management apparatus is a military government. Ha Tien's autonomy is still there, some people call this “self-governing territory” (Do, 2013, p.128). This mechanism was maintained until 1759. However, Ha Tien at this time was completely different from the colonies or vassal states because in fact, in terms of reputation, this was a frontier town of Dang In. Mac Thien Tu himself was not a king but became an official of Dang Trong (Governor, Admiral). Therefore, Ha Tien's “vassal” or “national” character was lost. In 1739, Lord Nguyen Phuc Khoat “determined to control Gia Dinh that, whenever Ha Tien has alarm news, he must respond quickly” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.141). In 1772, when Nguyen Cuu Khoi failed to rescue Ha Tien, who was now being invaded by Siamese troops, he was demoted to Commander and became Team Captain. Right after that, Lord Nguyen Phuc Thuan sent Nguyen Cuu Dam to defend the Ha Tien area, “capture the Nam Vang and La Bich governments, and bring Nac Ton back to the country. Cambodia was calmed down” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.148). This proves the importance of Ha Tien land by the Cochinchina government.

On the other hand, the Dang Trong government wanted to use the Mac forces in Ha Tien as a pioneer in protecting the border. Also from here the disputes between the three forces: Dang Trong- Cambodia -Siem took place fiercely in Ha Tien. In that dispute, the Nguyen lord's government held the advantage: because the Mac family was on his side, at the same time, the influence of the Nguyen lord on the Southwest region became more and more prominent. In fact, the Mac family followed the intentions of the Nguyen Lords in the task of protecting Ha Tien and the whole Southern region. Ha Tien soon became involved, even becoming the focus of these wars, and joined the "Vietnam" space. Not only accepting the title General in 1708 and General in 1735, but the Mac family also became an important ally/vassal of Cochinchina in the regional power dispute. In fact, the Mac family needed the Nguyen lord to fend off frequent Thai and Khmer invasions because of Ha Tien's extremely vulnerable position. The Vietnamese also need to control this land as a protective gateway for their territorial project in the lower Mekong. Ha Tien's entry into Vietnam was therefore a natural process.

The disputes in Ha Tien, Lord Nguyen, and the Mac family always took the initiative to deal with the plots of Siam and Chan Lap. In 1739, Nac Bon of Chan Lap country took advantage of the time when Mac Cuu had just died (in 1735), his son Thien Tu took over and invaded Ha Tien. “Chenla resented Mac Cuu for losing his land. After the death of the nine, the new Thien Tu took charge of the peace. Bon then sent troops to encroach. Thien Tu brought all his troops to fight, chased to Sai Mat, fought hard day and night, food supplies could not be kept in time. His wife Nguyen Thi commanded the soldiers' wives to transport wages to feed the army, the army was not deprived of food and was enthusiastically determined to defeat Bon's army” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.148).

Through the above description, it proves that Chan Lap still harbors “resentment” to the Mac family and always tries to take Ha Tien; while the Mac family in Ha Tien is always prepared to deal with attacks from the outside, even in the most confusing context. The Cochinchina government also provided timely support and encouragement to Ha Tien at the right time to both affirm her position and create a solid position for the work to advance down the Mekong Delta. He was appointed as the Admiral of the General, bestowed with a red robe, hat, and

belt. His Vietnamese wife with the capacity of a soldier's wife to transport food was also granted the title of Lady (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.166).

During the reign of Mac Thien Tu with many policies, including clever diplomacy with Siam and Chan Lap, he helped the Nguyen Lords expand his land in the southernmost of Cochinchina. In particular, with ingenuity and determination, the Nguyen lords made the Mac family a bridge to legitimize the Mekong Delta. Mac Thien Tu founded Tran Giang (in present-day Can Tho), creating the basis for Lord Nguyen Phuc Khoat to merge two lands of Tra Vang (Tra Vinh and Ben Tre) and Ba Thac (including Soc Trang and Bac Lieu) in 1757. Entering the territory of Cochinchina: "In the year of Dinh Suu (1757), Cao Mien had a rebellion called Thien Tu and asked Lord Nguyen for an escort to take him home. Nac Ton took as a favor to cut the land of 5 areas, namely Chau Um, Sai Mat, Linh Quynh, Can Foam, and Vung Thom to repay the favor. Thien Tu offered those 5 palaces, assigned the court to Ha Tien to govern, then established the Kien Giang religion in Rach Gia and the Long Xuyen religion in Ca Mau, both of which set rulers (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2006, p.6).

Through the above event, it can be seen that Mac Thien Tu always wholeheartedly served the lord Nguyen government, it was Thien Tu who acted as an intermediary between Cambodia and Dang Trong, helping Lord Vo Vuong (Nguyen Phuc Khoat) to mission basically completed the Southern cause in the year of Dinh Suu (1757). Regarding the event that Vo Vuong Nguyen Phuc Khoat grafted the last piece of the puzzle into the land of Southern Vietnam, "Dai Nam thuc luc" described it as follows: "...At that time Mac Thien Tu also asked to help Nac Ton. The Lord then ordained Nac Ton as king of Chenla, and sent Thien Tu and five generals to escort him back to the country. Nac Ton offered the land of Tam Phong Long. Phuc Du and Cu Trinh asked to move Long Ho's palace to the land of Tam Bao" (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.166), and again cut the land to cover 5 areas of Vung Thom (Kompong Som), Can Vot (Kampot), Chung Rom (Chan Sum), Sai Mat (Bantay Mas), Linh Quynh (Raung Veng) to give thanks to Thien Tu. These five regions today belong to Cambodia: Vung Thom is also known as Huong Uc (now in Sihanouk province), Can Vot (now in Kampot province), Chung Rom (now in Chkuk district, Kampot province), Sai Mat (now in Kampot province). Banteay Meas district, Kampot province), Linh Quynh (now in Chum Kiri district, Kampot province). "Thien Tu donated to Lord Nguyen. Lord Nguyen allowed that year to depend on Ha Tien county. Thien Tu again asked Gia Khe to be Kien Giang's religion, Ca Mau to be Long Xuyen's religion. They all set mandarins, recruited people, and made Ha Tien's territory wider and wider" (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.166).

Not only passively defending, but Mac Thien Tu was also active in dealing with the plot of Siam's annexation and the invasion of Cambodia. The Mac family organizes a team of detectives specializing in providing information on Siam and Chan Lap for timely preparation. Nguyen Dynasty historian said: in 1766, "Siamese newspaper detective prepared a warship to invade Ha Tien. In the winter of October, the army sent 3 boats to the sea, 20 boats, and more than 1000 soldiers stationed in Ha Tien to prevent the Siamese invaders" (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.171). The news of the detective team helped the Mac government to keep ready in the battle to protect Ha Tien, the southernmost land of Dang Trong: "The 4th year of the year (1769), spring of February, King of Siam, sent his general Phi Nha So Si (name of official) and Bon Ma (name of man) to bring his army to bring the King of Chan Lap country Nac Non back to the country..." (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.172). In the battle with the Siamese army in 1771, thanks to the intelligence information Mac Thien Tu had carefully prepared, especially with the effective

support of the Cochinchine forces stationed in Gia Dinh, made completely defeated the plot of the Siamese army. “Dai Nam Thuc Luc” recorded the following: “The 6th year of the New Year (1771), in the fall of August, Mac Thien Tu heard that Siam was censoring its armor, set a date to invade, and ran to ask for aid in Gia Dinh. ...In the winter of October, the King of Siam saw Chieu Thuy running to Ha Tien, afraid of having to worry about it later, so he sent 20,000 marines, using the enemy name of Bach Ma mountain, Tran Thai, as a scout to surround Ha Tien town...” (National History of the Nguyen Dynasty, 2002, p.177).

The Siamese army occupied and destroyed Ha Tien, the Dang Trong army (under the command of Nguyen Cuu Dam) attacked the Siamese-Cambodia coalition to the capital Chan Lap. The King of Siam offered a letter of peace, but Mac Thien Tu refused. The following year, Lord Nguyen secretly sent Mac Thien Tu to Siam to ask for peace to spy on the situation, the King of Siam was glad to release the captives and withdraw his troops from Ha Tien. Through the above event, we also partly see the complicated black relationship in the land of Ha Tien. Both Lord Nguyen, Cambodia, and Siam wanted to capture this important land to influence the vast and fertile lower Mekong basin. With his shrewdness and determination, Lord Nguyen won the three-way power struggle in Ha Tien, with the help of the Mac family. It can be asserted that: “With the help of the Chinese in Ha Tien, the Annamites find themselves the undisputed masters of the whole western region of Cochinchina” (Paul BauDet, 1863, p.21).

5. CONCLUSION

It can be seen that at the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century, Ha Tien, with its important position, was the center of the dispute of the kingdoms: the territory of Dang Trong, Cambodia, and Siam. In that three-way dispute, Lord Nguyen had an advantage when he was able to draw the Mac family to his side. Based on the growing position and force, the Nguyen lords made a correct strategic countermeasure in the context that both Cambodia, Siam Lap, and Cochinchina were pursuing their interests in this land. The policy of flexibility and flexibility towards Ha Tien of Cochinchina follows the motto "the people go first, the state follows", the Nguyen lords have claimed sovereignty over the territory of the Mac family. The process of making Ha Tien a part of the territory of Dang Trong was carried out according to the formula: expanding the land, establishing stable villages and hamlets, and then proceeding to establish higher-level administrative units, finally, territorial claims. As a result, the relationship between Ha Tien and Dang Trong gradually changed, adjusted over time in the direction of Ha Tien from a relatively autonomous territory but gradually became finally a town, the inseparable territory of Cochinchina. A lesson has been drawn: wherever Vietnamese people settle down and settle down, the national territory will be expanded and preserved there.

The strong association between the Mac family and the Nguyen lord, as well as the gradual and complete integration of Ha Tien into Dai Viet, was an important factor for the Cochinchina government to deal with Cambodia's plot and Siam's ambition for the land in the lower Mekong river, successfully completed the exploration, established the sovereignty in the Southern region in the middle of the 18th century.

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