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Family Structure in Early Modern Vietnam: A Case Study of Villages around Huế

Ueda Shinya*


In present-day Vietnam, patrilineal kinship groups called *dòng họ* are widely dispersed. However, from a historical viewpoint, there have been various arguments about the formation and transformation of the Kinh people's patrilineal kinship groups. In this article, we will introduce the village documents called *Viên bộ* and examine the family structure and household division around Huế in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. From those examinations, this article concludes that the patriarchal image of the patriarch having strong authority in a large family based on polygamy does not apply to rural areas near Huế in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rather, it is supposed that members of the next generation were separated from the patriarchal household one after another. This brought about a loosely knit household group comprising two or three generations based on paternal blood relationships, which was formed with the patrilineal family at the top. When paying attention to the inheritance of ancestral rituals and inheritance of property, it can be said that they were clearly a kind of Confucian patrilineal kinship group. On the other hand, we can also find a point in common with multi-household compounds in the rest of Southeast Asia. It may be necessary to reconsider the family structure of the Kinh people in comparison with Southeast Asia and East Asia from a historical viewpoint.

Keywords: early modern Vietnam, patrilineal kinship group, Huế, village documents

Introduction

In present-day Vietnam, patrilineal kinship groups called *dòng họ* are widely dispersed. In recent years there have been some transformations and a decline of the family structure due to urbanization—for example, an increase in nuclear families and a declining

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Due to space limitations, Table 4 is opened on the following website: https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/seas/12/2/12_239/_article/-char/en#supplimentary-materials-wrap

birth rate—as well as some regional differences such as between the north and south. But for the Kinh, who are the main ethnic group in Vietnam, accounting for more than 90 percent of the country’s population, *dòng họ* is considered part of their “traditional culture.” However, from a historical viewpoint, there have been various arguments about the formation and transformation of the Kinh people’s patrilineal kinship groups.

The beginning of this argument was most likely a series of studies in *Lê triều hình luật* 黎朝刑律 (*Lê code*). *Lê code*, which contains numerous regulations unique to Vietnam though it is a law adopted from China, has attracted attention from early on as a symbol of the cultural and social uniqueness of premodern Vietnamese society. It drew the attention of researchers such as Makino Tatsumi (1930) and Yamamoto Tatsuro (1938) during the first half of the twentieth century, and since then researchers such as Katakura Minoru (1987), Yu Insun (1990), and Yao Takao (2020) have conducted further research. According to their studies, the original restrictions contained in *Lê code*, especially those related to the family system—such as marriage and inheritance—represented the Southeast Asian social situation at the time of enactment.

However, a new research trend has emerged in recent years. This consists of studies using local documents from the early modern period. Vietnamese economic reforms from the 1990s onward enabled foreign researchers to conduct field surveys, resulting in the rise of studies utilizing local documents. In particular, the new historical materials made it possible to examine local society and communities in ways that government compilations of historical documents could not. As a result, the study of premodern Vietnamese history since 2000 has made a clear distinction not only in terms of content but also in terms of historical materials,¹⁾ and research fused with anthropology using family genealogy and testaments is rapidly developing in early modern Vietnamese social history.²⁾ At a minimum, these studies indicate that Vietnam’s patrilineal kinship group, known as *dòng họ*, is not just a copy of China’s but has its own uniqueness. These new studies have led to a controversy among some researchers about the social status of patrilineal kinship groups and women’s social status in premodern Vietnamese society.³⁾

Thus, in recent years, debates have resurfaced in cultural anthropology and history

1) This tendency is particularly remarkable in Japan. As representative studies, see the study of the early Lê Dynasty by Yao Takao (2009) and that of the late Lê Dynasty by Ueda Shinya (2019).

2) For example, studies on women’s property rights in the premodern period by Miyazawa Chihiro (1996; 2016), the study of premodern Vietnamese family genealogy from the cultural anthropological viewpoint by Suenari Michio (1995), and the study of family property in early modern Vietnam by Tran Nhung Tuyet (2018). At the same time, family research through field surveys has made great strides. See Luong Van Hy (1989) and Suenari (1998).

3) Regarding the social status of women in premodern society, Miyazawa (2016) and Tran (2018) hold conflicting opinions; their arguments have not yet been settled.

over premodern *dòng họ*. However, the fundamental issue of why a patrilineal kinship group with fixed and closed membership like *dòng họ* developed in Southeast Asia, which is generally characterized by a “loosely structured society,” has not been extensively examined. Therefore, in previous research, the author (Ueda 2021a) took Thanh Phước village near Huế as an example and demonstrated how the village community gradually became closed due to the limits of agricultural development and population pressure, resulting in the establishment of social groups based on Confucianism. In another article, Ueda Shinya (2021c) examined the testaments and land cadastres for the nineteenth-century Red River Delta and established that “multi-household compounds” may have been transformed into patrilineal kinship groups by the generalization of patrilocal residence due to the popularization of Confucianism. The above studies did not cover the specifics of household composition and household division. Nevertheless, after collecting more village documents around Huế, the author discovered some historical sources recording detailed ownership of residential areas in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century villages. In this article, we will introduce the outline of these village documents and examine the family structure and household division at that time.

I Outline of *Viên Bộ*

I-1 *Basic Bibliographic Information for Viên Bộ*

First, the author would like to explain the *viên bộ* 園簿 (garden cadastre) that was used as the main historical source in this article. Simply described, the garden cadastre is a land register that records the landowners and areas in the residential area of the village for each parcel of land. As is generally well known, the Nguyễn Dynasty conducted nationwide surveys since the dynasty was founded, and the survey results are still in existence as a *địa bạ* 地簿 (land cadastre). However, residential areas comprising house and garden parcels were only recorded with their total area as *thổ trạch viên trì* 土宅園池 or *thổ trạch viên cư* 土宅園居 in the land cadastre. The main purpose behind compiling the land cadastre was to determine the tax amount for each village. Considering the administrative costs, it is understandable that there was no detailed survey of the living spaces that were not taxable under the tax regulations of the Nguyễn Dynasty.⁴⁾ However, when we consider the premodern family structure in early modern Vietnam, the lack of information on residences presents a barrier for analysis. In fact, in the previous

4) On the land tax of the Nguyễn Dynasty, see Trương Hữu Quýnh and Đỗ Bang (1997). Since the end of the seventeenth century, the rice field tax has been largely fixed for each village (Ueda 2019, 147–153).

studies using the land cadastre up to the present, only the amount of cultivated area for each individual was examined, and the type of family/household connection was not comprehensively considered.⁵⁾ However, because the “garden cadastre” used as the main historical source in this article records the detailed ownership status of each parcel of land in the residential area, we can use this to speculate on the actual living conditions and family ties in the village.

The garden cadastre is a type of historical material that is hardly known even in Vietnam, and the author obtained a total of only four documents photographed in two villages in the northern suburbs of Huế. At this point, it is unclear how many analogous historical materials exist, and we must await the results of future investigations. Prior to these analyses, I will introduce the bibliographic information and outline of the four garden cadastres.

The garden cadastres analyzed in this article were photographed in the village communal halls (*đình*) of Thanh Phước and An Thành villages.⁶⁾ Both settlements are located about 7–8 km north of the Imperial City of Huế, and they are only a few kilometers apart from each other. The basic bibliographic information of the garden cadastres photographed by the author is provided in Table 1.

In this article *viên bộ* is used to refer to the four village documents mentioned above, though the actual titles of each document vary slightly. This term applies not only to the title but also to the format and content, which are slightly different for each era and village. There is no unified format such as the Nguyen Dynasty’s land cadastre. For example, in *Thanh Phước A* and *An Thành A*, which were compiled in the late eighteenth century, landowners are listed in the form of a personal pronoun and personal name such as “Lão Phúc 老福 (Old Phúc),” “Chú Minh 注明 (Uncle Minh),” and “Mụ Luu 媒畱 (Aunt Luu).” Modern Vietnamese also uses various personal pronouns with given names depending on the person’s age, gender, and social status. The method of writing the personal names in the two garden cadastres is basically a *chữ Nôm* notation of “personal pronoun + given name (or alias).”⁷⁾ On the other hand, *An Thành B*, compiled in the mid-nineteenth century, is basically described in the form of “family name + middle name (*tên đệm*) + given name” with Chinese characters, such as “Trần Viết Tô 陳曰蘇” and “Trần Viết Lương 陳曰良.”

In addition, the garden cadastres of *Thanh Phước A* and *Thanh Phước B* not only

5) Nguyễn Đình Đầu (1997) has conducted statistical analysis using the land cadastre of Huế Province and clarified the basic facts, such as the large number of public rice fields and official fields compared to other areas. However, there is no mention of residential areas in the village.

6) Their current addresses are as follows: Thôn Thanh Phước, xã Hương Phong, huyện Hương Trà, tỉnh Thừa Thiên Huế, Thôn An Thành, xã Quảng Thành, huyện Quảng Điền, tỉnh Thừa Thiên Huế.

7) In modern Vietnamese the full name consists of the “family name (*họ*) + middle names ↗

Table 1 Garden Cadastre in Thanh Phước Village and An Thành Village1) *Thanh Phước A*

Title:	園居并園簿 [<i>Viên cư tình Viên bộ</i>]		
Edited year:	Cảnh Hưng 33 (1772)	Reference number:	ĐTP68d
Location:	Village communal hall of Thanh Phước village	Photographed date:	March 10, 2010
Size:	30 cm × 16 cm	Number of leaves:	30
Overview:	The cover leaf is difficult to read because this document is adhered to another document [ĐTP68c]. For the same reason, what seems to be a regulation of this garden cadastre is written on page 1a, but it is unreadable. In addition, each leaf is moth-eaten and missing about 2 to 3 cm at each end, so about one-fifth of the information is missing. The characters in the document are from the Lê Dynasty period. The landowners of garden and house sites are recorded by personal pronouns and personal names using chữ Nôm, not by first and last names in Chinese characters.		

2) *Thanh Phước B*

Title:	壬辰年園簿 [<i>Nhâm Thìn niên Viên bộ</i>]		
Edited year:	1780s–1810s	Reference number:	ĐTP70
Location:	Village communal hall of Thanh Phước village	Photographed date:	March 10, 2010
Size:	30 cm × 21 cm	Number of leaves:	27
Overview:	“Nhâm Thìn niên” in the title probably refers to 1772, when <i>Thanh Phước A</i> was compiled. Although there are some differences, the content is almost a duplicate of <i>Thanh Phước A</i> as it is. The year of transcription is not stated, but the characters in the document are from the Lê Dynasty period. In general, the fonts of the Lê Dynasty changed to the refreshing fonts of the Nguyen Dynasty after the Minh Mạng era (1820–41), so the document was probably copied around the 1780s–1810s. The landowners of garden and house sites are recorded by personal pronouns and personal names using chữ Nôm.		

3) *An Thành A*

Title:	Unknown		
Edited year:	Bính Thìn year (1796)	Reference number:	An Thành-Đinh56
Location:	Village communal hall of An Thành village	Photographed date:	November 20, 2016
Size:	24 cm × 17 cm	Number of leaves:	16
Overview:	The cover leaf and all the other leaves are moth-eaten and lacking about 2 to 3 cm at each end, so about one-fifth of the information is missing. After compilation, many annotations were written by the village secretary (<i>Thủ bộ</i> 守簿), and the status of transfer of ownership up to 1859 can be seen. The characters in the document are from the Lê Dynasty period. The landowners of garden and house sites are recorded by personal pronouns and personal names using chữ Nôm, not by first and last names in Chinese characters.		

4) *An Thành B*

Title:	安城社土園簿 [<i>An Thành xã Thổ viên bộ</i>]		
Edited year:	Tự Đức 13 (1859)	Reference number:	An Thành-Đinh52
Location:	Village communal hall of An Thành village	Photographed date:	November 20, 2016
Size:	23 cm × 15.4 cm	Number of leaves:	28
Overview:	This garden cadastre was compiled to update the information in <i>An Thành A</i> . After that, the information was updated until the beginning of the twentieth century by the village secretary. The landowners are recorded by family name, middle name, and last name in Chinese characters.		

document the owner, location, length, and area of each parcel of land but also record the usage status of each parcel, such as *viện thổ* 園土 and *viện cư* 園居. *Viện thổ* probably refers to a parcel of land meant only for a garden, while *viện cư* most likely refers to a parcel of land where a house is built in the garden. However, in the case of *An Thành A* and *An Thành B*, the owner, the length, and the area of all four sides are listed, which is the same as Thanh Phước. In addition, an amount of money is recorded. This is the tax levied on the parcel of land, as described later. However, it appears that both garden cadastres of An Thành are unconcerned about the usage status of each parcel, because *An Thành A* classifies all the pieces of land as *Thổ trạch* 土宅 (garden and residence). Conversely, *An Thành B* classifies all the land pieces as *Thổ viên* 土園 (garden) for the same residential area. That is, the garden cadastre of An Thành does not strictly distinguish between “garden” and “garden with house” in the document.

Instead, the garden cadastres of An Thành provide us with a more detailed transaction and inheritance history for each parcel of land. For example, the parcel of land owned by Uncle Binh 注秉 listed at the beginning of *An Thành A* and the parcel of land owned by Trần Việt Lương 陳曰良 at the beginning of *An Thành B* clearly refer to the same parcel of land, because the length and area of all four sides are exactly the same. According to *An Thành B*, this parcel was purchased by Trần Việt Tô 陳曰蘇 and subsequently inherited by Trần Việt Lương. In other words, when we combine the information from these two sources, we can see that between 1796 and 1859 Trần Việt Tô purchased the parcel of land from “Uncle Binh” and subsequently bequeathed it to his offspring Trần Việt Lương. Furthermore, when the ownership of the land was transferred through a transaction after creating the garden cadastre, a note to that effect is appended to the left and right.⁸⁾ By combining these descriptions, it is possible to trace the sales transactions

↘ (*tên đệm*) + given name (*tên*),” and people are usually called by their “personal pronoun + given name.” For example, a man named Nguyễn Văn Thanh would be called “ông Thanh,” “chú Thanh,” “em Thanh,” etc. (personal pronoun for male + given name). However, the reality is not so simple. For example, in the case of a father named Nguyễn Văn Thanh with an elder son named Nguyễn Văn Minh, the father is sometimes called “ông Minh”—the son’s given name (personal pronoun for male + son’s given name). This is because calling someone by their given name is considered impolite, especially in the case of older people. Furthermore, married women are often referred to as “bà Thanh” or “cô Thanh,” using their husband’s given name (personal pronoun for female + husband’s given name). Currently, such common names are not often used in public places. However, they continue to be used in places and situations with a traditional culture, such as when people return to their hometown or attend a get-together of relatives.

8) As far as the notes of *Thanh Phước A*, *An Thành A*, and *An Thành B* are concerned, if landownership was sold to another lineage or another lineage’s member, the purchaser had a reporting obligation. However, it seems that there was no reporting obligation when the property was inherited by children. Therefore, there are some cases where the landowner is deceased, such as “前老善 Tiền lão Thiện” (the late old Thiện). This means that ownership was not renewed because the male offspring inherited it after the death of the previous owner.

and inheritance of a residential area from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth.

I-2 *Purpose of Compiling the Garden Cadastre*

In this sub-section, we will briefly examine why the documents called “garden cadastre” were compiled in Thanh Phước and An Thành villages, and clarify the social background of the documents. To begin with, we introduce the regulations at the beginning of *An Thành B*.⁹⁾ The head of the garden cadastre describes the situation as follows:

We, the village officials of An Thành commune, An Thành canton, Quảng Điền District, Thừa Thiên Prefecture, gathered together and considered that roads, gardens, and houses always change their boundary over time. Thus, maintained according to the previous scale regulations, the village officials worked together to measure the area of each parcel of land in the residential area. Compared to the previous garden cadastre [*An Thành A*], there was an increase or decrease, but it was not due to an individual’s evil act. When editing the landowner, tax amount, and area of land, we rewrote or followed the description of the previous garden cadastre [*An Thành A*], but of course, we have no evil intention at all in those new registrations. Regarding the new and old regulations, we will clarify by adding an annotation to each entry. Keep this new garden cadastre for generations and make this an invariant rule. The details are described below.

1. Every year, the tax is 130 *tiền* per 1 *sào* as payment of land tax by coin. If another commune purchases the garden, the tax is 230 *tiền* as payment of land tax by coin. The regulation is stipulated here.
2. Hereafter, none of the landowners of the residential area shall be allowed to lend to other villages. If a person violates this rule, the punishment will be one pig, one tray of betel nuts, and liquor. The regulation is stipulated here.
3. If a person permits the lease of a garden to other people in the commune, the contract should be submitted to the village official of our commune, and his name should be recorded in the garden cadastre, and the contract will be transcribed and used as evidence. After that, he/she must pay 1 *quan*, betel nuts, and liquor. If a person makes a bad attempt and falsifies it, it will definitely be a felony.¹⁰⁾

9) Of the four garden cadastres photographed by the author, *Thanh Phước A* and *An Thành A* also have something resembling regulations at the beginning, but the text is difficult to read because the documents are not well preserved. *Thanh Phước B* is very well preserved but does not have the regulation part, probably because it is a duplicate copy of *Thanh Phước A*.

10) Original text: 承天府廣田縣安城總安城社員職本社等。會同竊念，道路土園人居，日久不能無疆界之差殊。至茲，一依前代尺寸定規保置，員職同心協力，整度土園高尺寸分，或加或減，原非一己之妄。為刪修舊簿姓名錢土。或革或因，原非一毫之私意。并及新舊例定，腳註明白。俾長留于世，永為不易之成規。若干具編于後。

計

一例定。常年稅每高代納錢壹陌參拾文，他社造買土園稅代納錢二陌參拾文。茲定例。

一例定。自茲向後，何員名有土園，不得雇賣許他鄉。若何人違例者，則豬狗壹口並美榔酒壹盤。茲定例。

一例定。或何員名，有土園雇賣，許內社人，將文契，呈與本社職役，著名入簿，再抄文契為憑。懸于後，簿納例，錢壹貫并美榔酒。若何員人陰謀私寫，必干重罪。茲定例。

As stated in the preamble, *An Thành B* was compiled in 1859 to update the contents of *An Thành A*, compiled in 1796. The first article that follows the preamble most clearly indicates the purpose behind compiling the garden cadastre. Because Article 1 stipulates that the owner of each parcel of land in the residential area pays tax according to the owned area, in the case of the residents of An Thành village, the tax rate is 130 coin/1 *sào*.¹¹⁾ The tax rate for residents of other villages is 230 coin/1 *sào*. This is the main reason why not only the land area but also the amount of money is recorded for each parcel in both garden cadastres of An Thành. In other words, the garden cadastre was compiled to collect taxes from residents according to the area owned in the residential area. It is probable that the garden cadastre was a kind of tax collection ledger compiled by the commune (*xã* 社). Another point to note is the restriction on landownership for outsiders. In Article 1 the tax rate is set high for outsiders, and Article 2 prohibits future sales of land to outsiders. *An Thành A*, which is difficult to read due to missing characters, also has tax regulations for village members at 300 *tiền*/1 *sào* and 500 *tiền*/1 *sào* for outsiders.¹²⁾ The second article of *An Thành A* is also difficult to read, but it states: “If a person from another commune buys the parcel of land in our commune and builds a house, . . . [missing some characters] . . . must not record it with the land cadastre of another commune (如有他社人造買在本社地分內土, 而結立家居 . . . 不得著入他社簿).”

It is presumed that the reason for preventing land purchase by an outsider was to avoid disputes caused by the purchased land being registered as the land of the other village.¹³⁾

However, if the main purpose of the garden cadastre was to collect taxes from the

11) To avoid confusion, *An Thành B* surveyed each parcel of land by the same measure scale as *An Thành A* compiled in 1796, without using the Nguyễn Dynasty’s measure scale of 1859. Thus, on the last page of *An Thành B*, a straight line of 26 cm is drawn with the annotation “Measure scale for garden. 5 *tắc* (土園尺. 由五寸).” Based on this, units of measure are calculated as follows.

Unit of length: 1 *sào* 高 = 780 cm, 1 *thước* 尺 = 52 cm, 1 *tắc* 寸 = 5.2 cm.

Unit of land area: 1 *mẫu* 畝 = 6,105 m², 1 *sào* 高 = 610.5 m², 1 *thước* 尺 = 40.7 m², 1 *tắc* 寸 = 4.07 m². These units of measure are presumed to be from the Nguyễn Lords period (Ueda 2021b).

12) Compared to 1859, the tax amount in 1796 appears to be very high. This is probably due to differences in coins. According to Taga Yoshihiro’s study (2018, 7–11), zinc coins were the common currency for small purchases since the eighteenth century in central Vietnam. The tax amount in 1796 presupposed the use of zinc coins. After that, the Nguyễn Dynasty distributed several types of copper coins from the 1830s, and both zinc and copper coins were used in mid-nineteenth-century central Vietnam. In the edict of 1858, one small copper coin was valued at three zinc coins and one large copper coin was valued at four zinc coins. It is probable that the tax amount in 1859 presupposed the use of copper coins.

13) This description is interesting as an indication of the concept of ownership at the time. It is obvious that in modern times, administrative right and landownership are separate. However, it seems that common people in the premodern period did not make a clear distinction between them. This may be one of the reasons for closed village communities.

owner of the garden, a new question arises. As mentioned above, in the land cadastre of the Nguyễn Dynasty, the description of a residential area is very simple, because the residential area is tax-exempt. Why was such a tax collected in Thanh Phước and An Thành villages? Was it not a legitimate tax but a kind of “village membership fee” that each village collected voluntarily? To clarify these questions, we look at the land cadastres from the Nguyễn Lords period to the Nguyễn Dynasty period and observe that the two villages had a common feature regarding the legal treatment of residential areas in the national land system.

At first glance, in the case of Thanh Phước village—whose land cadastres from 1669 to 1814 still exist (Ueda 2019, 298–305)—we make a strange observation. In the land cadastres from the Nguyễn Lords and Tây Sơn periods, all of Thanh Phước’s village territories are recorded as public rice fields (*công điền* 公田) or official land (*Quan thổ* 官土). If this registration is accepted as the truth, it means that there were no residential areas in Thanh Phước village, only agricultural lands, which is obviously unlikely. Probably, the parcel called “Viên Trạch xứ 園宅處” (meaning “parcel of garden and house,” 37 mẫu 1 sào), which was registered as official land, was actually a residential area.¹⁴ That is, in the case of Thanh Phước, from the Nguyễn Lords period to the Tây Sơn period, its residential area was registered as taxable “official land” under the land system, and thus the village had to collect money from the residents in some way to pay the land tax. This was the reason behind compiling the garden cadastre. However, “Viên Trạch xứ” was removed from the land cadastre of the Gia Long era in 1814; instead, a new description appeared as follows: “the former constructed area consisting of garden, house, village communal hall, market, shrine, and pond is taxed as rice field. 34 mẫu 4 sào 3 tước 3 tấc.” This means that even though residential areas were not taxable under the Nguyễn Dynasty tax system, land tax was still collected because the residential area of Thanh Phước was classified as “rice field” under the tax system. In other words, the tax system of the Nguyễn Lords was virtually inherited by the local administration of the Nguyễn Dynasty, who disregarded the tax system laid down by the Nguyễn Dynasty’s central court.

The residential area of An Thành village is also similar to that of Thanh Phước village. There is no residential area in the land cadastre of An Thành compiled in 1731 (An Thành-Đình40), which still exists in the village communal hall. However, two official lands of “Thượng Thôn xứ 上村處” and “Hạ Thôn xứ 下村處” (meaning “parcel of the upper village” and “parcel of the lower village”); total area about 12 mẫu) were registered.

14) This residential area is called *phe Đông* in the present Thanh Phước. New residential areas made in the first half of the nineteenth century are called *phe Tây* (Ueda 2021b, 6–10). The registered areas in *Thanh Phước A* and *Thanh Phước B* do not include new residential areas.

Probably, these parcels were residential areas. In the land cadastre of the Gia Long era in 1814 (An Thành-Đinh36), instead of those parcels of land disappearing, there is a new description and note: “Public land 14 *mẫu* 8 *sào* 5 *tước* 4 *tấc*. (Note: Taxed from Tân Mùi year [1811?]. This commune has been building gardens and houses for some time).” Thus, even though the two parcels “Thượng Thôn xứ” and “Hạ Thôn xứ” had been residential areas since the Nguyễn Lords period, they were not tax-exempt “residential areas” under the land system, and the taxation for residential areas was transferred to the Nguyễn Dynasty.

Therefore, in the case of Thanh Phước and An Thành villages, the residential area was subject to taxation during the Nguyễn Lords period, and this was passed down even after the Nguyễn Dynasty was established. Thus, in both villages it was necessary to compile a detailed cadastre of residential areas in order to collect taxes from residents. As a result, the creation of garden cadastres and their updates continued long after the nineteenth century. Normally, the taxes of rice fields and plowed fields were paid in the form of products of those fields; however, in the case of these two villages, as they were actually places of residence, tax was paid in the form of money. Therefore, unlike the land cadastre, the garden cadastre is a semi-official document independently created by the commune (*xã*), which was the tail end of the administrative organization, to meet the demands of the state. This is why the format and description are slightly different for each village.

II Analysis by Personal Pronouns

II-1 Household Size in Thanh Phước Village

The average household size will be defined as a basis for analyzing family structure using the garden cadastres. The garden cadastres of Thanh Phước village are useful in this analysis. During the period of study, Thanh Phước village had two garden cadastres; however, *Thanh Phước A* is not very well preserved—about one-fifth of the total information is missing as the pages were eaten by moths. *Thanh Phước B* is a transcription of *Thanh Phước A*, but because *Thanh Phước B* is almost identical to the remaining part of *Thanh Phước A*, we can trust its description.¹⁵⁾

In *Thanh Phước B* the residential area is subdivided into 289 parcels of land, and each is recorded with its owner and area. What is important and advantageous while

15) *Thanh Phước A* has many notes for each parcel of land due to transactions. However, only the original text is transcribed in *Thanh Phước B*, and the notes are ignored. It seems that *Thanh Phước A* was used for updating information and *Thanh Phước B* for saving the original text.

considering family structure is that these parcels of land are classified into *viên thổ* 園土 (garden) and *viên cư* 園居 (garden with house). When the utilizations of the parcels of land are arranged according to the descriptions in *Thanh Phước B*, “garden with house” accounts for just 100 parcels.¹⁶⁾ That is, as of 1772, there were 100 houses in the residential area of Thanh Phước. Meanwhile, per the census registers in 1786 (ĐTP45), the oldest population registration in Thanh Phước village recorded 162 males aged over 20, and the census registration in 1793 recorded 201 males (including 48 males aged 17 to 19). Judging from these censuses, it is estimated that Thanh Phước village at the end of the eighteenth century had around 160 adult males. Assuming that there was no significant change in the number of houses and population in the village between 1772 and 1786, we can presume that each house had about 1.6 adult males on average. Vietnamese premodern census registrations recorded only males who were subject to taxation and conscription, and no females were recorded at all. Therefore, if the village had roughly the same number of adult females, each house had about 3.2 adults on average. In other words, there were only three to four adults in each house, and it is not possible to assume a large household size. The typical household composition assumed from this figure consists of parents, one or two grandparents (grandfather/grandmother), and minor children. In the case of slightly older families, the household was made up of parents, one adult son/daughter, and minor children. That is, the general household in late-eighteenth-century Thanh Phước was a nuclear or lineal family. When a child came of age, he/she formed an independent household due to marriage and was separated from the parents’ household. At the very least, a large family system in which the patriarch had strong power is hard to imagine from these figures.

II-2 *Classification by Personal Pronouns*

As mentioned in the previous section, the owners of each parcel of land in the garden cadastres of the eighteenth century were recorded by the colloquial notation of “personal pronoun + personal name” rather than the official family name and given name. More than one hundred landowners are recorded in the garden cadastre with various personal

16) At the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, there was probably only one dwelling in each parcel. In the case of household division in northern Vietnam researched by Suenari (1998, 241–243), the dwelling for a son’s household was built on the site of the parents’ house, and the land was eventually divided into two parts. On the other hand, in the garden cadastre of An Thành, there is little evidence of fragmentation of land parcels associated with the division of households from the end of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, there was a trend toward the division of lots and parcels, probably due to the division of households. From the second half of the nineteenth century, we can see a trend toward land division and subdivision due to household division.

pronouns. Most of the Vietnamese personal pronouns are derived from the words used to indicate relationships between members of a family. For example, *ông* (meaning “grandfather”) is used as the personal pronoun for a man who is considerably older than the speaker, and *chú* (meaning “younger brother of father/mother”) is used as the personal pronoun for a man who is considerably older than the speaker but younger than the speaker’s father.

However, in Vietnamese the personal pronoun is variable due to the relative age relationship and hierarchical relationship between speakers. For example, if an eighty-year-old man and a 75-year-old man are having a conversation, the older man can call the younger one *em*, which means “younger brother/sister.” Therefore, the personal pronoun and the actual age do not always match. According to such rules of grammar, if the editor of the garden cadastre was a very young person, most of the landowners would be recorded by the personal pronoun for elder people; and conversely, if the editor of the garden cadastre was an aged person, most of the landowners would be recorded by the personal pronoun for younger people.

Although the garden cadastre was not an official document of the Nguyễn Dynasty like the land cadastre, it was a public document used by the village to collect land taxes from residents. Probably, the use of personal pronouns, which could change greatly depending on the personal relationship between the editor and the landowner, was not common. Rather, it is assumed that the use of personal pronouns in the garden cadastre was determined according to the relationship between the village and the landowner, or by the social status of the landowner in the village. Even in modern Vietnamese, personal pronouns are often determined by hierarchical relationships and social status, regardless of age—for example, the boss at work is called *anh/chị*, which means “elder brother/sister.” Unfortunately, there is no description in the garden cadastre of an objective standard for the use of personal pronouns. We have to rely on analogies from the modern Vietnamese language for many of these usages. Table 2 summarizes the usage of each personal pronoun and the landownership of each personal pronoun group in Thanh Phước and An Thành.¹⁷⁾

II-3 Men’s Landownership

We can understand the cycle of land acquisition and dissolution in the village to some extent by examining each generation. According to Table 2, basically, the owned area

17) Regarding the statistics of Thanh Phước, about one-fifth of the information in *Thanh Phước A* is missing; hence, it was created based on the duplicated *Thanh Phước B*. Furthermore, the last few pages of *An Thành A* are also missing; therefore, it is hard to say that the statistics of An Thành are very accurate. The information lost due to the omission is probably about 15 percent of the total.

Table 2 Landownership by Gender and Generation in the Late Eighteenth Century

Thanh Phước Village		Category	Personal Pronoun	Number of Persons	Average Area (m ²) (Viên thổ + Viên cư)	House Ownership	Remarks
Men	Aged	翁 (Ông), 博 (Bác)	5	2,521.1	80%	1 person owns two houses.	
		老 (Lão)	12	1,796.8	100%		
	Middle-aged	吒 (Cha)	8	702.4	50%	4 persons own two houses. 10 persons do not own a house.	
		注 (Chú)	41	2,081.8	76%		
Youths	尚 (Thàng)	16	1,027.9	44%	9 persons do not own a house.		
	員 (Viên)	15	1,285.5	87%	2 persons do not own a house.		
Women	Aged–middle-aged	媒 (Môi)	21	1,012.7	81%	1 person owns two houses. 4 persons do not own a house.	
	Youths	昆 (Con)	1	2,226.0	100%		
	Co-owned	媒 and 尚	1 pair	1,866.5	0%	Common ownership by mother and son?	
Others	Common facility	裡在 (Lái tại), 圖家 (Đồ gia)	–	541.4	–		
	Deceased men	前首 (Tiền thủ), 前老 (Tiền lão), 前教 (Tiền giáo), 前錄 (Tiền lục)	5	1,452.0	60%		
Deceased persons	Deceased women	前媒 (Tiền mụ)	2	1,280.7	100%		

Source: *Thanh Phước B* [DTP70].Notes: Conversion rate: 1 mẫu = 6,105 m² 1 sào = 610.5 m² 1 thước = 40.7 m² 1 tấc = 4.07 m²

◆ An Thành Village

Category		Personal Pronoun	Number of Persons	Average Area (m ²)
Men	Aged	翁 (Ông), 博 (Bác)	0	-
		老 (Lão)	5	981.7
	Middle-aged	吒 (Cha)	2	755.5
		注 (Chú)	16	764.8
Youths	尚 (Thằng)	3	413.4	
	Officials	社政 (Xã chính), 訓導 (Huán đạo), 護軍 (Hộ quân), 該 (Cai), etc.	11	912.0
Women	Aged-middle-aged	媒 (Mụ)	5	817.1
	Youths	昆 (Con)	0	-
Others	Co-owned	媒 (Mụ) and 尚 (Thằng), 父 (Bố) and 媒 (Mụ)	2 pairs	581.8
		前老 (Tiền lão)	21	530.0
Deceased men	Middle-aged	前吒 (Tiền cha), 前注 (Tiền chú)	8	530.8
	Officials, literati	前訓導 (Tiền Huán đạo), 前參 (Tiền tham), 前教 (Tiền giáo), 前該 (Tiền cai), etc.	9	597.0
		前媒 (Tiền mụ)	2	426.2

Source: *An Thành A* [An Thành+Đình làng56].

Notes: Conversion rate: 1 mẫu = 6,105 m² 1 sào = 610.5 m² 1 thước = 40.7 m² 1 tấc = 4.07 m²

* Based on the current usage of personal pronouns, the following are generally assumed:

Ông: Man around 70 years old

Bác: Man around 60 years old

Lão: Man around 50 years old

Chú: Man around 40 years old

Thằng: Man over 20 years old—Man around 30 years old

Mụ: Woman over 30 years old

Con: Woman around 20 years old

Tiền: The deceased person

However, in the case of young people, there is a possibility that their identification has been changed due to being married or unmarried.

* See note 8 for why deceased persons are registered as landowners.

per person tends to gradually increase from the young to the elderly in both Thanh Phước and An Thành villages. The average owned area in Thanh Phước and An Thành is nearly twice as large, because the garden cadastre of Thanh Phước was not only a registered residential area called Nội viên thổ 內園土 (“Inner garden”), where “garden” and “garden with house” were mixed, but also was registered as an upland field called Ngoài viên thổ 外園土 (“Outer garden”), which was located along the Hương River, north of the settlement. The per capita owned area in the residential area called “Inner garden” is not very different from that of An Thành village.

Furthermore, in both villages the number of people in the “Cha” group, which supposedly refers to men aged between forty and fifty years, is much smaller than that of the “Lão” and “Chú” groups. This is probably because many of the official groups comprised men between the ages of forty and fifty. In the case of Thanh Phước village, many people who belong to the official group use the personal pronoun *Viên*, and in the case of An Thành, official titles are used instead of personal pronouns, although it is assumed that they actually refer to the same individual.¹⁸ In the administrative documents of Thanh Phước during the Nguyễn Lords and Tây Sơn periods, village officials are often referred to as *Viên chức* 員職. In the Nguyễn Lords period, tax collectors with various names were abundant as government posts were on sale, and they were collectively called *Giám tô viên* 監租員. However, in the first half of the eighteenth century tax collectors were so numerous that their number was regulated according to the population of each administrative unit.¹⁹ Probably, the “Official” groups in Thanh Phước and An Thành villages (Table 2) of the eighteenth century made up a terminal organization for tax collection, and in reality its members were wealthy peasants in charge of tax collection in the village.

We may infer the family cycle at that time to some extent from the garden books of both villages. In both villages, the areas owned by the elderly group were the largest; the area owned by Thanh Phước’s Ông/Bác group was particularly large. However, there was a large disparity in the owned area between the five people in the group. Three men—Ông thủ Hiến 翁首憲 (six parcels of land, total 5,688.3 m²), Ông Lam 翁藍 (four parcels of land, total 3,074.4 m²), and Ông giáo Uyên 翁教淵 (four parcels of land, total 2,751.2 m²)—owned a fairly large area. The area owned by the two remaining men—Ông thủ Công Điền 翁首公典 (one parcel of land, 537.3 m²) and Bác cai Phù 博該扶 (one parcel of land, 509 m²)—was extremely small. We can assume that Công Điền and Phù

18) Unlike An Thành village, the area owned by the Viên group in Thanh Phước village was smaller than that owned by the Chú and Lão groups. This was mainly because the members of the Viên group owned very little “Outer garden.” These people might have been less active in growing vegetables and fruit in the upland field because of their extra income.

19) *Đại Nam thực lục* [Veritable records of the great South], Vol. 1, pp. 126–127 (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, Keio University, 1961).

kept only what was essential for their existence and passed on the rest to their children during their lifetime.²⁰⁾ As a result, there was a large disparity depending on whether the person was retired or still in the Ông/Bác group. Nevertheless, the Thằng group clearly owned a small area in both villages. They were a relatively new household that had become independent from an elderly household through property division and had not yet accumulated sufficient property. However, as the number of families increased, they purchased new parcels of land and gradually increased their holdings, forming a middle-aged group called Chú.

As mentioned above, *Thanh Phước B* records each parcel of land by classifying it into “garden” or “garden with house,” and we can see that villagers’ property normally comprised a parcel of a garden with a house and other parcels of garden. However, according to *Thanh Phước B*, there were a certain number of people who owned only gardens but no houses in the village. For instance, the Chú group included ten people who owned only a garden but no house. On the other hand, four members of Thanh Phước’s Chú group owned two houses. This was an unusual pattern of land possession not seen in other groups in Thanh Phước village.

II-4 *Women’s Landownership*

As seen in Table 2, there is a clear economic disparity between men and women in both communities. In the case of Thanh Phước, women’s ownership is clearly lower than men’s, and the average area of the Mụ group is almost identical to that of the Thằng group. Moreover, in the case of Thanh Phước the number of listed people is 97 men and 22 women, whereas in the case of An Thành the number of listed people is 37 men and 5 women (excluding those in the “Other” category). Assuming that the actual male and female populations in the villages were almost equal suggests that most women did not own any real estate in the residential area, and the women listed in Table 2 must have belonged to a relatively affluent hierarchy within the village. Assuming that there were many women who were not registered in the garden cadastre, we can assume that the actual economic gender gap was much larger than the data in Table 2. However, from the viewpoint of family structure, of particular note is the high homeownership rate for women. This suggests that, as compared to men, women’s real estate ownership was more likely to be concentrated in the house than in the garden. What makes this fact even more unique is that, as mentioned in the introduction, the kinship group currently called *dòng họ* is a patrilineal kinship group based on patrilocal residence. If it was common for a wife to live in her husband’s house, why did a woman need to own her house?

20) In the case of inheritance while living, it was normal to leave part of the property as self-reserved land (Đường lão điền 養老田) for the life of the parents. See Ueda (2019, 268).

In addition, who lived in that house?

The first possibility we should consider is that there may have been a certain number of matrilineal residences in late-eighteenth-century Thanh Phước village. A detailed examination of the land registration in the garden cadastre reveals some traces of matrilineal residence. To understand this, it is necessary to explain the common name in Vietnamese. As mentioned earlier, in daily life people often call each other by the “personal pronoun + personal name.” However, in reality, not only the personal pronoun but also the personal name changes. For example, when there is an elderly couple A (male) and B (female), the wife may sometimes be referred to as *bà A* using her husband’s given name. If we translate this term into English, it means “Mr. A’s old woman.”²¹ Even in *Thanh Phước B*, which was strongly influenced by colloquial Vietnamese, such common names were adopted mainly by relatively elderly couples. For example, *Thanh Phước B* records two men named *Tiền thủ Duyệt* 前首悅²² and *Ông giáo Uyên* 翁教淵. Correspondingly, there are records of two women named *Mụ thủ Duyệt* 媪首悅 and *Mụ giáo Uyên* 媪教淵. Personal pronouns such as *thủ* 首 and *giáo* 教 were used by only a very limited number of people in Thanh Phước, so it is unlikely that the given names matched by chance. It can be considered that the couples *Tiền thủ Duyệt* and *Mụ thủ Duyệt*, and *Ông giáo Uyên* and *Mụ giáo Uyên*, were almost certainly in a marital relationship. Thus, there are seven pairs who can be inferred to be married couples in *Thanh Phước B*. Table 3 shows details of these couples.

In three of the seven couples in Table 3 (No. 2, No. 5, and No. 7), there was a high likelihood of matrilineal residency because the husbands owned several parcels of “garden” but did not own a “garden with house.” Each of their wives owned a parcel of “garden with house.” In other words, the couple owned one house, and the owner of that house was the wife. It is natural to think that they had a matrilineal marriage. In the case of Thanh Phước village, only seven pairs are clearly presumed to have a marital relationship. However, if three of the seven couples were in matrilineal residences, then a few of the female-owned houses also should be suspected of having a matrilineal couple living in them.

However, such matrilineal residence cannot adequately explain a woman’s ownership of a house. This is because, as depicted in Table 3, there are many cases where one person owns multiple houses—as in the case of *Lão Tài*. Table 3 also suggests that in many situations, such as the No. 1, No. 4, and No. 6 couples, a couple owned multiple houses. These cases demonstrate that female homeownership cannot be explained completely by matrilineal residence alone. As mentioned earlier, the average household

21) See note 7.

22) As of 1772, *Tiền thủ Duyệt* had already died and his parcel been inherited by his offspring. “*Tiền 前*” was used for deceased persons. See note 8.

Table 3 Landownership Status of Each Couple in Thanh Phước Village

Couple No.	Landowner	Details of Parcel	Area			Area (m ²)	Total Area (m ²)
			Sào	Thước	Tấc		
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Tiên thủ Duyệt (前首悦)	Garden with house. Near Tiên lục Doãn.	1	12	0	1,090.8	3,090.6
		Illegible	1	0	7	634.3	
		No data	2	3	8	1,365.5	
	<input type="radio"/> Mụ thủ Duyệt (媒首悦)	Garden with house. Near avenue.	1	5	4	824.2	824.2
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Ông giáo Uyên (翁教淵)	Garden. Near mụ Các.	1	4	2	775.7	2,751.2
		Outer garden. Near thẳng Phó.	1	2	8	719.1	
		Outer garden. Near thẳng Xuyên.	1	0	1	610.0	
		Outer garden. Near chú Lễ.	1	1	0	646.4	
	<input type="radio"/> Mụ giáo Uyên (媒教淵)	Garden with house. Near avenue.	0	12	4	501.0	501.0
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lão Tài (老才)	Garden with house. Near thẳng Tế.	1	6	0	848.4	1,535.2
		Garden with house. Near chú Tuấn.	1	2	0	686.8	
	<input type="radio"/> Mụ Tài (媒才)	Garden. Near viên Ước.	0	14	1	569.6	569.6
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Chú biện Trung (注卞忠)	Garden with house. Near chú Nhiệm.	0	9	5	383.8	3,385.5
		No data	4	14	3	3,001.7	
	<input type="radio"/> Tiên mụ Trung (前媒忠)	Garden with house. Near mụ Chu.	0	8	7	351.5	351.5
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Chú Các (注各)	Outer garden. Near lão Cố.	1	14	4	1,187.8	2,997.7
		Outer garden. Near Hallowed Pond.	1	5	8	840.3	
		Outer garden.	1	9	0	969.6	
	<input type="radio"/> Mụ Các (媒各)	Garden with house. Near mụ Dư.	0	12	5	505.0	1,191.8
Outer garden. Near alley of chú Thích.	1	2	0	686.8			
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Chú Toản (注纘)	Outer garden. Near thẳng Nhiều.	1	6	9	884.8	1,369.6
		Garden with house. Near mụ Toàn.	0	12	0	484.8	
	<input type="radio"/> Mụ Toản (媒纘)	Garden with house. Near avenue.	0	8	7	351.5	351.5
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Chú Doãn (注允)	No data	0	11	6	468.6	1,692.8
		Garden with house. Near market.	1	4	3	779.7	
	<input type="radio"/> Mụ Doãn (媒允)	Outer garden.	1	7	6	913.0	

Source: *Thanh Phước B* [ĐTP70].Notes: : Male : Female Gray: Garden with houseConversion rate: 1 mẫu = 6,105 m² 1 sào = 610.5 m² 1 thước = 40.7 m² 1 tấc = 4.07 m²

size in Thanh Phước was not very large; and it is presumed that adult children lived separately from their parents' households, establishing their own households at a relatively early stage. When a newlywed couple did not have sufficient financial resources, they most likely constructed and lived in their new dwelling on the land of the husband's or wife's parents. As the children's households built on the land of their parents were registered in the name of their parents, many aged/middle-aged couples owned multiple houses. Consequently, the house ownership ratio of young couples was reduced in the garden cadastre. Assuming this, it is possible to explain the homeownership rate and household size in the garden cadastre of Thanh Phước without contradiction.

III Property Inheritance in An Thành Village

III-1 Garden Cadastre of An Thành and Family Genealogy of Trần Việt Lineage

As previously stated, An Thành village has two garden cadastres: *An Thành A*, written by someone with the personal pronoun chữ Nôm in 1796; and *An Thành B*, written by someone with a full name made up of Chinese characters in 1859. Neither of the garden cadastres distinguishes between “garden with house” and “garden,” and we cannot examine homeownership as in the case of Thanh Phước village. However, An Thành's garden cadastres have two major merits for us. First, An Thành village has two editions of the garden cadastre, one compiled in 1796 and the other in 1859, allowing us to trace the transition of landownership over a long period of time. Second, the Trần Việt lineage 陳曰族 living in An Thành village has a detailed family genealogy through which we can compare the landowner recorded in the garden cadastres with the person recorded in the family genealogy. This makes it possible to infer to some extent what kind of property inheritance took place within the lineage.²³⁾

Table 4 is a genealogical tree based on the family genealogy of the Trần Việt lineage. As established from this, there is extremely scarce information on the generations before Trần Việt An 陳曰安. The given names from the founder to the fifth generation are unknown, and all of them just add the honorific title *đại lang* 大郎 to the family name Trần 陳. The sixth generation has only the common nickname Nghiễn 覲, and this indi-

23) The Trần Việt lineage at present has three editions of the family genealogy: untitled family genealogy (*An Thành-Trần Việt 4*) (compiled in 1870), 陳族譜系 *Trần tộc Phả hệ* (Family genealogy of Trần lineage) (*An Thành-Trần Việt 3*) (compiled in 1928), and 陳族譜系(正本) *Trần tộc phả hệ (chính bản)* (Family genealogy of Trần lineage [original edition]) (*An Thành-Trần Việt 5*) (compiled in 1928). The first family genealogy compiled in 1870 (*An Thành-Trần Việt 4*) was updated until 1928. In this article, the family genealogy of *An Thành-Trần Việt 4*, in which the compilation age is close to that of the garden cadastre, is used as the basic material.

vidual's official given name is unknown. Subsequently, the full names of 24 individuals are enumerated in the family genealogy without noting their mutual genealogy. It is presumed that the individuals belong to four or five generations, though we cannot ascertain any details. In other words, by the time this genealogy was compiled in 1870, the details of people before Trần Việt An were already unknown.²⁴⁾

As for the generations after Trần Việt An, the years of birth and death are recorded for some people. From these figures, assuming that one generation spans 25 to 30 years, it is estimated that Trần Việt An lived around the last half of the seventeenth century. Trần Việt Nghi 陳曰儀, the grandson of Trần Việt An, had as many as 11 sons, and the Trần Việt lineage is divided roughly into three branches comprising the second son Trần Việt Tô 陳曰蘇, the eighth son Trần Việt Giao 陳曰膠, and the 11th son Trần Việt Hà 陳曰何. In the family genealogy, all the descendants of Trần Việt Hà have the middle name (*tên đệm*) Việt 曰; but in reality they all seem to be the same in the garden cadastre using the middle name Đức 德, as mentioned below. Furthermore, according to *An Thành B*, there were other lineages in An Thành village with the same family name (but different *tên đệm*), such as Trần Đước 陳得 and Trần Văn 陳文. However, the blood relationship between the Trần Việt lineage and these same family-name lineages is unknown because the latter do not appear in the family genealogy of the Trần Việt lineage. It is presumed that the Trần Đước and Trần Văn lineages were branches of the Trần Việt lineage before the generations of Trần Việt An in the sixteenth century.

Table 4 illustrates that the An Thành village of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had the typical high birth and death rates. For example, Trần Việt Giao 陳曰膠, a fourth-generation man from Trần Việt An, had four sons (and six daughters) from his first and second wives, but only one son got married and left a grandson. The other three sons probably died prematurely, because the family genealogy gives no description of their wives or children. Similarly, Trần Việt Nho 陳曰儒, a fifth-generation descendant of Trần Việt An, had 13 sons (and six daughters) from four women: his first and second wives, and two concubines. However, only five sons got married and left grandsons.²⁵⁾ For the sons who died early without leaving any offspring, the age of death is unknown

24) It seems that the names of the ancestors up to the fifth generation, which are necessary for ancestral rites, are listed as “Trần đại lang 陳大郎.” On the other hand, there are many descriptions of the generation close to the editor. Suenari (1998, 307–308) refers to this type of family genealogy as “hollow-structured family genealogy.”

25) In the family genealogy of the Trần Việt lineage, most men had more sons than daughters. Although there is no clear evidence, it is likely that gender selection of infants took place after birth. An imbalance of the male-female population ratio due to such gender selection generated a large number of males who lacked marriage opportunities. Perhaps the search for new lands in the south by these people encouraged the *Nam Tiến* (southward advance) of Kinh people in early modern Vietnam.

because only the date of death is recorded. However, at the time there was only a 25 percent to 50 percent probability that a son would marry and leave a grandson; that is, if a man wanted to ensure male descendants, he would need to have at least three or four sons. If there were about the same number of daughters as sons, three or four sons and three or four daughters would be the standard number of children at the time. As it was difficult for a single woman to give birth to this many children, polygamy was very common in the village. In fact, the family genealogy has recorded many cases that are presumed to be divorce due to sterility and remarriage due to maternal mortality. Trần Việt's lineage consisted of members who were not particularly wealthy but became influential bureaucrats and literati. Most men in the lineage had wives and a few concubines.

However, because the average number of adults per house in the previous section was three to four people, we cannot presume a large household. It is probable that the ownership of numerous houses by men or couples, and the ownership of houses by women, were due to the fact that each wife/concubine and child owned their own house depending on the polygamy scenario. In the case of landed gentry during the early twentieth century in northern Vietnam, each wife and concubine owned her own home (Luong 1989, 748–755). Probably, Thanh Phước and An Thành had many separate households for women similar to Luong's case study of the landed gentry.

III-2 *Inheritance in An Thành Village*

Polygamy, as stated earlier, is likely to have resulted in several separate establishments for concubines and mistresses in An Thành village. What implications did this have for property inheritance? The best way to understand the situation is by looking at the inheritance of property in the generations from Trần Việt Tô 陳曰蘇 to his grandchildren in Table 4. The time span of these generations ranges from the end of the eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth, when *An Thành A* and *An Thành B* were compiled. Therefore, we can easily trace the family property inheritance by comparing the garden cadastre of An Thành with the family genealogy of the Trần Việt lineage. For example, according to *An Thành A*, the 70th parcel of land was owned by a person called Xã chính Diệu 社政曜 in 1796. This is the same person as Trần Việt Nghi 陳曰儀 in Table 4, because according to the family genealogy of the Trần Việt lineage, Trần Việt Nghi had another name: Diệu 曜. After that, in *An Thành B*, compiled in 1859, the same parcel of land was written as “Trần Việt Hân 陳曰欣 inherited by the late secretary Trần Việt Tô 陳曰蘇.”²⁶⁾ According to the family tree of the Trần Việt lineage, Trần Việt Hân

26) Original text: 前守簿陳曰蘇留來陳曰欣。A “Thủ bộ 守簿” was a kind of secretary who managed the official documents and public funds of the village. When adding a note to update information in the garden cadastre, the village secretary called “Thủ bộ 守簿” always signed in confirmation.

was a grandson of Trần Việt Tô. Thus, from the end of the eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth, it can be observed that this parcel of land was passed down through the male bloodline from Trần Việt Nghi to Trần Việt Hân. Table 5 summarizes the land inheritance from Trần Việt Nghi to his great-grandchildren based on the two garden cadastres of An Thành.

According to Table 5, Trần Việt Nghi owned three parcels of land in 1796, two of which were inherited by his second son, Trần Việt Tô (ostensibly the eldest surviving son, because the eldest son had passed away early). It is unknown what happened next, but the remaining parcel was owned by a man named Trần Đước Chính 陳得正 in 1859.²⁷⁾ Among the sons of Trần Việt Nghi, the eighth son, Trần Việt Giao 陳文膠, tenth son, Trần Việt Hạc 陳曰鶴, and 11th son, Trần Việt Hà 陳曰何, also left offspring; however, no trace of them can be found in the garden cadastre.²⁸⁾ Trần Việt Tô bought six parcels of land in addition to the property inherited from his father. According to the family genealogy, Trần Việt Tô had at least four sons, but three of them died young. As a result, it is presumed that all his parcels of land were inherited by his second son, Trần Việt Nho. Trần Việt Nho had 13 sons and six daughters from his former wife 元配, second wife 再配, concubine 側室, and mistress 小妾. Of his children, the fourth son, Trần Việt Lương 陳曰良, fifth son, Trần Việt Long 陳曰隆, sixth son, Trần Việt Hân, seventh son, Trần Việt Hoan 陳曰歡, eighth son, Trần Việt Gian 陳曰間, and 13th son, Trần Việt Cẩn 陳曰謹, grew to adulthood and left male descendants. Of these six sons of Trần Việt Nho, the five other than Trần Việt Hoan are listed in *An Thành B*. In terms of the boys' inheritance, their father, Trần Việt Nho, gave preferential treatment to the eldest son of his former wife, divided the share of inheritance evenly among the sons of his second wife, and gave the son of his mistress about half the inheritance of the sons of the second wife.²⁹⁾

27) In *An Thành B*, Trần Đước Chính was given the cognomen “gentry 鄉紳” and owned a vast quantity of land (ten parcels, 6,183 m²). His father, Trần Đước Gia 陳得嘉, who was a low-ranking military officer, also owned a considerable amount of land, and most of the land owned by him was inherited by Trần Đước Chính. The Trần Đước lineage is presumed to be a branch separated from the Trần Việt lineage before the seventeenth century, but further details are unknown.

28) According to *An Thành A* and *An Thành B*, the Trần lineage had two common pieces of land in the residential area. It is presumed that these parcels of land were purchased by Trần Việt An 陳曰安 and Trần Việt Xoá 陳曰刷 from the latter half of the sixteenth century to the first half of the seventeenth. Sons other than Trần Việt Tô might have lived in these parcels.

29) It is a difficult issue whether to consider such divisions of property because of discrimination based on age or the status of the mother. However, in reality, there was no big difference in the results according to either principle. As far as Table 4 is concerned, after the legal wife gave birth to several children, a concubine was set up, followed by another concubine. As a result, the ages of the children naturally tended to be in the following order: children of the legal wife > children of the concubine > children of the concubine.

Table 5 Land Inheritance of Trần Việt Lineage in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century

Landowner in 1796	Inheritance in the first half of the nineteenth century			Landowner in 1859	Area		Total area (m ²)		
					Sào	Tắc		Area (m ²)	
Chú Bình	Purchase	Trần Việt Tô (1763-?)	Purchase	Trần Việt Lương (1808-75)	1	3	4	515.2	
Chú Pháp	Purchase				1	13	5	798.0	1,514.8
unknown	Purchase				0	7	2	201.6	
Tiền cha Trang	Purchase				1	6	4	599.2	
unknown	Purchase	Trần Việt Tô	Purchase	Trần Việt Long (1812-72)	1	0	1	422.8	
Trần Việt Nghi	Purchase				0	7	4	207.2	1,033.2
unknown	Purchase				1	14	5	826.0	
unknown	Purchase	Trần Việt Tô	Purchase	Trần Việt Hán	1	6	4	599.2	
unknown	Purchase				0	13	3	372.4	971.6
Trần Việt Nghi	Sale?	Trần Việt Tô	Purchase	Trần Việt Gian (1824-?)	1	0	3	428.4	
					Trần Việt Cán (1839-85)	1	0	3	428.4
				Trần Đước Chính	1	11	3	736.4	736.0

Sources: An Thành A [An Thành-Dinh làng 56], An Thành B [An Thành-Dinh 52], [An Thành-Dinh 52], [An Thành-Trần Việt 4].

Notes: Gray: Member of Trần Việt lineage (→); Inheritance (→); Purchase (→); Sale? (→)

Conversion rate: 1 mẫu = 6,105 m² 1 sào = 610.5 m² 1 thước = 40.7 m² 1 tấc = 4.07 m²

Polygamy was widely practiced in An Thành village, as mentioned above, to ensure male offspring due to the high birth but high death rates. In many cases, a husband would have as many sons as possible with his legal wife. When it became difficult for the latter to give birth due to her age, the husband would set up concubines to have more sons. As a result, it was not uncommon for a man to have two or three wives and concubines and ten or more children. However, that does not mean everybody lived under one roof. Considering the average household size in Thanh Phước, it may be presumed that each wife/concubine had one house, where she formed a semi-independent household with her own minor children. In fact, *Thanh Phước A* has some cases where a middle-aged man owned two houses, and the parcel of the second house is marked with “Allow Aunt X to live.” Probably this meant that his concubine or mistress lived in the secondary house owned by him or his legitimate wife. This assumption may explain to some extent the ownership of multiple houses by middle-aged people and the ownership of a house by a woman.

III-3 *Landownership by Women*

As we saw in the previous sub-section, it was not uncommon for a man to have more than ten children in the Thanh Phước and An Thành of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Naturally, about half the children were female, but there is little evidence that daughters inherited their parents’ property in either the family genealogy of Trần Việt or the garden cadastre of An Thành. For example, in the case of *An Thành B*, which describes in detail the history of parcels of land, many parcels were recorded as “Bequeathed from A to B” or “Purchased by A and bequeathed to B” with both the decedent and the heir being men. Most of the lands owned by women were marked only as “Purchased by A.” This indicates that, in principle, women were not included as heirs in the inheritance of parents’ real estate.³⁰⁾ However, there are many cases in which women conducted land transactions. In this section, we will introduce some cases of land transactions to clarify landownership by women.

30) In *An Thành A* and *An Thành B*, there are some suspicious cases in which a woman’s real estate is inherited by maternal consanguinity or relatives rather than paternal descendants. For example, one parcel in *An Thành B* is explained thus: “The late Nguyễn Thị Thanh purchased and bequeathed to Nguyễn Tất Văn (前阮氏清造買留來里長阮必挽).” Nguyễn Thị Thanh is obviously a woman’s name. As the decedent and the heir have the same family name, it may be inferred that the wife’s property was inherited by her relatives rather than her husband’s. However, as can be seen in Table 4, the same-surname marriage rule was not strictly adhered to, and even if the surname was the same, marriage was permitted if the branch was different. Therefore, it cannot be determined that the husband and wife had the same family name. Even in Thanh Phước village, the scope of the same-surname marriage rule was narrow (Ueda 2021b, 11–13).

◆ Case 1: No. 6 parcel of land in An Thành village

According to *An Thành B*, No. 6 parcel of land in An Thành village was owned by Trần Đại Điền 陳大田 in 1859. However, in 1877 it was sold by a woman named Đỗ Thị Điền 杜氏田 to a woman named Lê Thị Viện 黎氏院. Subsequently, in 1882, Lê Thị Viện 黎氏院 and her son Lê Văn Khoa 黎文科 resold this land to Phan Văn Thiệp 潘文涉. As mentioned earlier, since it was customary for a woman to be called by her husband's name, Đỗ Thị Điền was probably Trần Đại Điền's wife. It is speculated that Đỗ Thị Điền became a seller because Trần Đại Điền died between 1859 and 1877. Lê Thị Viện bought the land from Đỗ Thị Điền on her own, but the land was resold under the names of Lê Thị Viện and her son five years later.

◆ Case 2: No. 7 parcel of land in An Thành village

According to *An Thành B*, No. 7 parcel of land in An Thành village was purchased by the late Đỗ Thị Nghĩa. However, Đỗ Đăng Sĩ 杜登仕 sold the land to a woman named Nguyễn Thị Mái 阮氏買 in 1859.³¹⁾ The relationship between Đỗ Thị Nghĩa and Đỗ Đăng Sĩ is unknown, but there is a high possibility that they were a parent and child.³²⁾ Nine years later (1868), Nguyễn Thị Mái alienated the land for a woman named Nguyễn Thị Hám 阮氏憾. In 1872, Nguyễn Thị Hám resold the land to a woman named Thị Vãn 氏隕 (her family name is unknown) and her son named Trần Văn Bị 陳文備. Nguyễn Thị Mái is unknown, because there is no historical material, but Nguyễn Thị Hám was the second wife of Trần Việt Hà 陳曰何 (the 11th son of Trần Việt Nghi) in Table 4. His former wife, Nguyễn Thị Tùng 阮氏叢, had given birth to only a son and a daughter; and after that, his second wife, Nguyễn Thị Hám, gave birth to seven sons and five daughters. Since the first wife probably died after giving birth to only two children, Trần Việt Hà remarried Nguyễn Thị Hám. Judging from the phonology, it is presumed that a woman named Thị Vãn 氏隕 and her son named Trần Văn Bị 陳文備 in *An Thành B* are the very same people: Nguyễn Thị Vãn 阮氏欄 (wife of Trần Việt Hà's second son) and Trần Văn Bị 陳曰被 (Trần Việt Hà's legitimate grandson) in Table 4.

The transaction between Nguyễn Thị Hám and Nguyễn Thị Vãn involved complex family circumstances. In the family genealogy of the Trần Việt lineage, although Trần Việt Mỹ 陳曰美 (Trần Việt Hà's eldest son) had neither a wife nor a concubine, he had one son named Trần Việt Bị. Instead, Trần Việt Bị is annotated with "Change mother 改母." Presumably, Trần Việt Bị's parents died young for some reason, and he was

31) The original text is "the 3rd year of Tự Đức" (1849). However, this is clearly inconsistent, as *An Thành B* was compiled in 1859. It is probably a clerical error for "the 13th year of Tự Đức" (1859).

32) Since the child's family name is Đỗ, it means that both the father and mother of Đỗ Đăng Sĩ had the same family name, Đỗ. On the same-surname marriage rule in An Thành, see note 30.

brought up by his uncle Trần Việt Kim's wife, Nguyễn Thị Văn. As a result, Trần Việt Bị's position in the Trần Việt Hà branch was subtle because Trần Việt Bị was a direct descendant of Trần Việt Hà in the genealogy. However, he was brought up in the household of his father's stepbrother Trần Việt Kim. Thus, although Trần Việt Bị was a grandson in the direct bloodline of Trần Việt Hà, it was difficult for Trần Việt Kim to give him preferential treatment in the inheritance of property like Trần Việt Nho and his sons in the previous section. Therefore, the grandparents prepared the land for their grandson Trần Việt Bị separately from the land to be inherited by their sons, and the adoptive mother purchased it on the condition that it would be inherited by him after adulthood. This line of thought can easily explain a series of transactions.

◆ Case 3: No. 26 parcel of land in An Thành

As of 1859, No. 26 parcel of land in An Thành was only marked as “purchased by the late Nguyễn Xuân Bế 前阮春閉.” Its inhabitants in 1859 are unclear. This parcel was bought in 1866 by a man named Lê Văn Viện 黎文院, and then in 1888 it was sold by three people—“Ngô Thị Hóa 吳氏化 and her sons Lê Khoa 黎科 and Lê Cường 黎強”—to the Trần lineage. It was probably sold by Lê Văn Viện's wife and sons after his death.

◆ Case 4: No. 9 parcel of land in An Thành

As of 1859, No. 9 parcel of land in An Thành was owned by Corporal Trần Đức Bài 伍長 陳德排. In 1877, two people—“Thị cai Bài and Trần Đức Phụng 氏該排, 陳德”—sold it to a woman named “Lãnh binh Viện's legal wife 領兵院正室.”³³⁾ It may be presumed that Trần Đức Bài and Trần Đức Phụng were the same as Trần Việt Bài 陳曰排 (third son of Trần Việt Hà) and Trần Việt Phụng 陳曰鳳 (eldest son of Trần Việt Bài) in Table 4.³⁴⁾ “Thị cai Bài” is the same as Hoàng Thị Hợi 黃氏亥 (Trần Việt Bài's second wife).³⁵⁾ It is supposed that after the death of Trần Đức Bài, his wife and eldest son sold part of his bequest in the name of the mother and child.

◆ Case 5: No. 84 parcel and No. 94 parcel in An Thành village

As of 1859, No. 84 parcel in An Thành village was owned by a man named Đỗ Ngọc Sô

33) Probably, “Lãnh binh Viện's legal wife 領兵院正室” in Case 4 and “Lê Thị Viện 黎氏院” in Case 1 are the same person. Her husband is “Lê Văn Viện 黎文院” in Case 3.

34) In the family genealogy of the Trần Việt lineage, all the men's names are written as “Trần Việt ~~, ” but in reality it seems that the descendants of Trần Việt Hà formed another branch under the name of “Trần Đức ~~.”

35) Her husband, Trần Việt Bài, had the military title of “corporal 伍長.” Such low-ranking military positions were often decorated as “cai quan 該官.” Therefore, “Thị cai Bài” means “wife of a man named Bài.”

杜玉芻 and No. 94 parcel by a man named Đổ Ngọc Tại 杜玉在. However, both of these parcels were sold to Nguyễn Tất Văn 阮必挽 by a woman named Đổ Thị Lý 杜氏裡 on the same date of the seventh lunar month in 1863. This transaction is a fairly peculiar case because, judging from their family name, it seems that the woman named Đổ Thị Lý inherited these parcels from two men of the Đổ Ngọc lineage. With reference to *An Thanh A*, it seems that these parcels were passed down the Đổ Ngọc lineage for generations as they were purchased by two men named Đổ Ngọc Thiện 杜玉善 and Đổ Ngọc Can 杜玉乾 before the eighteenth century. This transaction should be considered not as a sale of Đổ Thị Lý's personal property, but as a sale of some of the assets of the Đổ Ngọc lineage on behalf of Đổ Thị Lý.

There are not many women-only transactions based on the examples of land transactions involving women. In many cases, land purchased in the name of the husband was sold by his wife after his death, or purchased in the name of the mother instead of her minor child. In both cases, the seller's name was often a joint name with a son or grandson rather than a woman's alone. Basically, when a woman became the entity of a land transaction, there were some circumstances in which a man could not become the entity of the transaction. However, such a situation was temporary or transitional, and it disappeared when the male heir became an adult. It is presumed that women's ownership of a house and joint ownership by a woman and a man in the garden cadastre are the results of the registration of such transitional states.

Conclusion

In this article, we examined the family structure based on historical materials called *viện bộ* (garden cadastre) of Thanh Phước and An Thành villages in the northern suburbs of Huế. From those examinations, the general family structure in the rural areas around Huế is inferred to have been a two- or three-generation patrilineal family. In family genealogies, it is not uncommon for one man to have a wife and mistresses along with ten or more children; however, in this case they did not all live under one roof. One of the reasons for this is that sons other than the eldest one were separated from the father's household during their youth due to marriage or other reasons, and they established independent households. Real estate was inherited by sons—with a slight preference given to the eldest son, who inherited ancestral rituals of the lineage; females were not granted the right to inherit their parents' estate.

Although it is impossible to say with certainty since the analysis in this article is based only on residential areas and does not include other forms of real estate such as

rice fields, Thanh Phước and An Thành villagers were patrilineal kinship groups under the influence of Confucianism.³⁶⁾ However, there remain aspects that cannot be fully explained by Confucianism alone. For example, in Thanh Phước and An Thành villages, concubines and mistresses formed separate households from that of the husband and his wife. It was often the case in the Confucian cultural area that after the death of the husband, his widow became the head of the household because her sons were minors (Washio 2018, 380–382). Especially in the Ming and Qing periods in China, a widow was required to remain chaste and loyal to her husband even after his death, and widow remarriage was severely criticized.³⁷⁾ It is conceivable that Thanh Phước and An Thành villages also had such widowed households. In addition to such households, concubines and mistresses formed separate households with their own children from the husband's household, and as a result the husband visited his concubine or mistress rather than living with her. In other words, it is assumed that the situation was a “duolocal marriage.” If we understand that this situation was a remnant of the matrilineal family structure, as Luong Van Hy (1989) insists, then it makes sense that there were many matrilocal residence marriages in Thanh Phước and An Thành villages.

However, we should be careful not to overemphasize the high social status of women in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Vietnam. An inspection of the garden cadastre shows that women were not granted the right to inherit their parents' property. Furthermore, land transactions by women were conducted mostly when their husbands had died and their sons were still minors. In other words, the status of women as “female heads of household” was basically only transitional, until their sons came of age, and females' property was eventually inherited by the male descendants along the paternal bloodline. If we focus only on the household of the concubine and mistress, it is certainly possible to consider it as a “matrilocal marriage.” However, considering the inheritance of property and ancestral rituals, the household clearly belonged to the husband's patrilineal kinship group.

This article only examines the family structure of two villages in the suburbs of Huế.

36) There is no extreme emphasis on the eldest son as seen in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century China and Japan. The influence of the neo-Confucianism of the Song Dynasty, which was based on equal male inheritance, is stronger. If the extreme preferential treatment for the eldest son in inheritance was due to the lack of land to pass on in China and Japan, its lack in Huế may indicate that this region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was not as land starved and labor intensive. For the interaction between land development and the popularization of Confucianism, see Ueda (2021b).

37) In China during the Ming–Qing periods, it was difficult for widows to remarry because they were strictly required to be faithful to their husband even after his death (Gomi 2018, 194–196). However, the neo-Confucianism of the Song period was not necessarily negative toward widow remarriage (Sasaki 2018, 184–187).

Even including the case study of the former Hà Tây Province by the author (Ueda 2021b), it must be said that there are too few cases to reveal the overview of the Kinh family structure and patrilineal kinship groups in the premodern period. More examples will have to be developed in the future. At the very least, what can be said from some case studies is that Vietnamese gender history, for example women's social status and property inheritance (Miyazawa 2016; Tran 2018), is clearly inadequate to elucidate household composition and household division within kinship groups, which are prerequisites for Miyazawa's (2016) and Tran's (2018) analyses. Microanalytical subjects such as household and marriage have not been adequately studied due to archival constraints. However, as seen in this and the author's previous article (Ueda 2021b), it is now possible to examine the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by combining the land registries of the Nguyễn Dynasty period and village documents. Newly discovered village documents will bring about new possibilities and enable the study of new aspects of Vietnamese history.

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