

THE ROLE OF THAI TOURISM IN PROMOTING  
THAI – VIETNAMESE RELATIONS

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This thesis argues that tourism has contributed greatly to the better relationship between Thailand and Vietnam, especially on people – to – people relations. In it, the factors that lead to the growth of Thai tourism in Vietnam will also be investigated. Then, it will analyze to what extent Thai tourism helps shape Vietnamese attitudes and understanding of Thailand as well as how Thai tourism contributes to the development of Thai – Vietnamese relations. The research will utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods but is mainly based on qualitative research method including documentary research, questionnaire and interviews.

Findings show that the history of long-standing relationship between Vietnam and Thailand has witnessed many ups and downs stage. In some periods, it was very complicated and was governed by prejudices and suspicions. However, since diplomatic relation between two countries was officially established on August 6, 1976, the Thai – Vietnamese relationship has improved significantly. A better understanding between the people of the two nations has contributed to better diplomatic relations. This is partly due to the development of Thai tourism in the Vietnam market. Thai tourism helps build a strong and beautiful image for the country. The study also reveals the contribution of Thai tourism to the development of Thai – Vietnamese relationship and its role in changing attitudes and understandings of Vietnamese tourists toward Thailand.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| APEC      | Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation                      |
| ASEAN     | Association of Southeast Asian Nations                 |
| FIT       | Free Independent Traveler                              |
| HTV       | Ho Chi Minh Television                                 |
| G – G     | Government to Government                               |
| HCMC      | Ho Chi Minh City                                       |
| MoTS      | Ministry of Tourism and Sports                         |
| MOU       | Memorandum of Understanding                            |
| P – P     | People to People                                       |
| PRD       | The government Public Relations Department of Thailand |
| PM        | Prime Minister   |
| TAT       | Tourism Authority of Thailand                          |
| TCEB      | Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau                |
| VCCI      | Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry               |
| VIETTRADE | Vietnam Trade Promotion Agency                         |
| VNA       | Vietnam News Agency                                    |
| VNAT      | Vietnam National Administration of Tourism             |
| WTO       | World Trade Organization                               |

## **Chapter I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Rationale and background of the Study**

Thailand and Vietnam have long and rich relations in the regional and international arena. Historically, the relations between the two nations have witnessed different status, with both positive and negative steps taken in building the relationship between the two countries. Thailand and Vietnam used to stand on opposite sides, if one were to imply they used to see each other as enemies concerning many problems in the past. Nevertheless, a friendship has rapidly grown in time.

Thailand and Vietnam officially established diplomatic relations in 1976 and, it can be said, the relation has flourished by leaps and bounds since the Vietnamese government opened a new policy for renovation of the country called “Đổi Mới”. Thai-Vietnamese relations have moved to a different level, and never before have they been in such a good shape as they are today.

Thai – Vietnamese relations have been improving day by day through many concrete factors. A number of agreements and memoranda of understanding between the two nations have been signed and implemented — with fruitful results over the past 36 years. After Vietnam joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 1995 this relationship has increasingly consolidated and developed; the threads that

weave the rich relations between the two countries are not only the outcome of a long history of diplomatic relations but also of their similarity in terms of geography, tradition and culture.

Generally, the relationship has been developed and mainly based on government-to-government (G - G) relations. However, people-to-people (P - P) relations are not seen much. In recent years, some activities were implemented to promote P - P relations of Thailand and Vietnam; for example, the inauguration of the Thailand-Vietnam Friendship Village in the northeastern province of Nakhon Phanom in February 2004 and the establishment of the “Hội Hữu Nghị Việt – Thái” (Thailand – Vietnam Friendship Association) in Ho Chi Minh City — two events of particular significance for Thai – Vietnamese relations which should be considered as a concrete platform for both governments to launch more projects for promoting people-to-people relations.

Additionally, ASEAN is in the preparation process for the ASEAN Community in 2015, all members of ASEAN countries are moving closer together to learn about each other, this — of course — includes Thailand and Vietnam. Raising awareness among people towards their neighbors is a step to move forward the ideals of the ASEAN Community. Apart from learning about each other in various aspects and by different channels, information and experience through tourism can provide a good channel towards an increased understanding of each other.

It can be noticed that tourism industry plays a major role in the economic and social development of the Kingdom of Thailand, with a continuous number of

tourists taking advantage of the various destinations and products the Kingdom has to offer. The number of foreign visitors to Thailand has steadily increased over the last fifty years. Additionally, tourism policies in Thailand promote not only its own destinations for Thai citizens but also for visitors from other countries in the world, especially from neighboring countries including Vietnam. Thailand has built a strong base for tourism development in the Vietnamese market in general, which has been instrumental in upholding the relations between Thailand and Vietnam and thus leading to a better position, especially in term of people-to-people relations.

Together with awareness of the important role of people-to-people relations in enhancing bilateral cooperation and forging a relationship of mutual trust and understanding between the two countries and peoples, Thai tourism can also be considered a new channel to promote the relationship between Thailand and Vietnam.

Based on the review of academic documents, Thai – Vietnamese relations are not a novel topic for scholars to research. However, most of the works have focused on G – G relations and - apart from some research works written about overseas Vietnamese (Việt Kiều)<sup>1</sup> in Thailand — few probe into P – P relations between the two nations. This research will provide a new perspective on this relation, especially concerning the attitude of the Vietnamese towards Thailand in the tourism dimension.

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<sup>1</sup> *Việt Kiều* is a term used to call Vietnamese who live in overseas countries. This term is not applied to Vietnamese who travel abroad for different purposes such as education, work or medical treatments.

Traditionally, when one mentions international diplomatic relations most people think about them on a macro level based on G – G relations. However, few notice that P – P relations are also a critical factor in determining the sustainability of the relationship between two countries. Paying attention to the Thai – Vietnamese relation on the aspect of people-to-people, this thesis will use tourism as a key factor to analyze the attitudes of Vietnamese towards Thailand, and investigate to what extent tourism can contribute to the development of their relationship.

Long-standing diplomatic G – G relations bring about a strong development of the tourism industry, and together with progress in a new period it is worth it to delve into the research of people-to-people relations resulting of this development. As noticed, government-to-government relations are important but temporary, whereas people-to-people relations are vital since governments come and go but people remain and help develop long lasting international relations.

## **1.2. Literature review**

In the process of preparing for the ASEAN Community in 2015, it is hardly surprising that the relationship between ASEAN countries has attracted considerable attention and has seen remarkable improvement in recent years, including Thai – Vietnamese relations. Up to now the study of Thai – Vietnamese relations has been of interest to Thai, Vietnamese and foreign scholars. As a result, there are many publications dealing with this subject. Yet, even if many academic works have been done on this issue, most have focused on diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Thailand in different historical periods. In addition, many available research works have concentrated only on the political changes, while some others have sought to

show the attitudes of Việt Kiều in Thailand. Moreover, many available documents on this matter were published many years ago. However, the study of the role of tourism as a key factor to promote the Thai – Vietnamese relations, especially people-to-people relations, has not been addressed deeply. Particularly, the up-to-date databases and information about changing attitudes of the Vietnamese towards Thailand has not been widely discussed.

Even though the scope of this thesis is focused on the role of tourism in promoting Thai – Vietnamese relations, and most of the available literature is not directly relevant to this topic, the survey of literature does provide a substantial contribution for the understanding of Thai – Vietnamese relations. Besides, it gives a good basis to capture the view and policy of the Vietnamese government as well as the Vietnamese's attitudes towards Thailand.

There are many interesting works; to name a few, Thanyathip Sripana's book, *The Thai – Vietnamese relations after the economic reform of Vietnam* (1998), Nguyen Anh Tai's M.A. thesis, *Thai – Vietnamese relations during the First Indochina War 1946 - 1954* (2009), Hoang Khac Nam's book, *The history of the development of Thai – Vietnamese relations 1976 - 2000* (2007), Khien Theeravit's article, "The development of Thai – Vietnamese political relations" (2003), Nguyen Si Sung's article, "20 years of Viet – Thai relations" (1996), Le Cong Phung's article, "Thai – Vietnamese relations" (1996) and Kavi Chongkitthavorn's article, "Thai – Vietnamese relation in the view of journalists" (1996) have outlined various stages in the relationship between Thailand and Vietnam.

The historical background and the process to establish the official international relations between Thailand and Vietnam are addressed clearly and systematically in *The history of the development of Thai – Vietnamese relations 1976 – 2000* by Hoang Khac Nam, published in 2007. This work not only provides a basic knowledge about diplomatic relations between the two countries, but also points out the factors affecting it — political changes and cultural relations. Sharing the same opinion with Hoang Khac Nam, Thanyathip Sripana shows that the political change is one of the main factors affecting Thai – Vietnamese relations (Sripana, 1998). Moreover, the author discusses the factors that had an impact on this relationship in both obstructive and supportive aspects. The new look on this relation based on regional view is also mentioned in this research. Apart from the political issues affecting Thai – Vietnamese relations, Khien Theeravit establishes that security relations can also be counted as a factor that has damaged the relation between the two countries (Theeravit, 2003). This work gives several cases that caused misunderstandings and disturbed Thai – Vietnamese relations. Besides, it also provides the view of Vietnam towards Thailand in the early stages of their relationship. The work “20 years of Viet – Thai relations” written by Nguyen Si Sung also provides some background knowledge for this thesis (Nguyen, 1996). Particularly, the development of economic relations between Thailand and Vietnam is discussed in this work and shows the economic role in Thai – Vietnamese relations. Economic factors playing a vital role are also mentioned in the works of Le Cong Phung. As he puts it, “looking back on the twists and turns of the past 20 years, it is obvious that Thai – Vietnamese relations at each juncture were under strong influence of political and economic development in the world and the region”



(Le, 1996:5). The author concludes that economic cooperation can be seen as the motivation for Thai – Vietnamese relations in a regional and international level. Apart from those academic works on Thai – Vietnamese affiliations, a series of events from the past are vividly reported by Thai journalist Kavi Chongkitthavorna (Chongkitthavorn, 1996). His works assists in understanding what Thai people think about Vietnam.

Interesting studies on the people-to-people relation between Thailand and Vietnam are the works by Trinh Dieu Thin's book, *Formation of the Vietnamese Community in Thailand* (2003), Thanyathip Sripana's book chapter, "New thinking of Vietnamese foreign policy towards Thailand after 1986" (2003), Somporn Buasak's M.A. thesis, *Policy adaptation of Thai foreign policy towards Vietnam* (1987), Samrut Batchapap's book, *Vietnamese refugees and Thailand's security* (1990), Gareth Porter's book, *The Vietnamese perspective on Thailand* (1983), Trinh Dieu Thin's article, "The Vietnamese community in north-east Thailand: a century of attachment with I-san" (2002), Trinh Dieu Thin and Thanyathip Sripana's book, *Viet Kieu Thailand in Viet – Thai relations* (2006) and Peter A Poole's book, *The Vietnamese in Thailand: a historical perspective* (1970). As mentioned earlier, in an attempt to go beyond Thai – Vietnamese relations and the assumption about the role of tourism in promoting the relationship, this study focuses on the role of Thai tourism - especially in shaping the attitudes of the Vietnamese towards Thailand. However, only a few works address this topic. The literature found here pays attention only to the Việt Kiều in Thailand. Several studies suggest that Thai – Vietnamese relations are based on the development of Việt Kiều in Thailand. Those works, however, provide a valuable background on Vietnamese attitudes towards

Thailand in the past. For example, in *The Vietnamese in Thailand: A historical perspective* by Peter A. Poole draws a picture of Việt Kiều in Thailand from both positive and negative perspectives (Poole, 1970). Moreover, Thai – Vietnamese relations in earlier periods such as Siamese — Vietnamese alliances — before and during the colonial era — are also discussed. Porter examines the Vietnamese perspectives on Thailand mainly through international and regional contexts (Porter, 1983). He argues that “Vietnamese perspective on Thailand has gone through four distinct phases, each one shifting further to the right on a left-right spectrum, with the left representing militant revolutionary views and the right representing efforts to influence by winning trust and confidence” (Porter, 1983: 23). Further, the author addresses that “each of these phases in Vietnamese thinking represents a step in the gradual transformation of the Vietnamese perspective from the classic “left” posture to a posture which is more characteristic of a moderate state” (Porter, 1983: 24). In a similar fashion, Batchapap (1990), Trinh and Sripana (2006) also discuss the matter of Vietnamese refugees in relation to Thailand’s national security.

In addition, an interesting work on *New thinking of Vietnamese foreign policy towards Thailand after 1986* (Sripana, 2003) can be a useful reference for the background chapter. This work not only discusses the factors shaping the Vietnamese’s view on Thailand, but also states the positive changes in attitudes towards Thailand.

The common characteristic of all above-mentioned studies is that they examine and investigate the relationship between Thailand and Vietnam from political and economic dimensions. They all conclude that Thai – Vietnamese

relations are directly affected by politics, both domestically and internationally. Besides, there are very few works mentioning people-to-people relations, apart from Việt Kiều in Thailand. However, a few academic works also deal directly, systematically and comprehensively with the topic. In this regard, the aim of the current study is to contribute to a further understanding about the role of Thai tourism in promoting Thai – Vietnamese relations, as well as to analyze the changes in Vietnamese attitudes towards Thailand.

Although there are many works on the relationship between Thailand and Vietnam, the reflection concerning people-to-people is still missing; therefore, this thesis will take a different approach to Thai – Vietnamese relations by going beyond political, economic and diplomatic aspects. This thesis will fill in the gap of Thai – Vietnamese relations focusing on people-to-people, not just government-to-government through the channel of tourism. With this scope, limited time and budget, this study cannot represent the entire picture of what the whole country thinks of Thailand. However, and to some extent, it can reveal the attitudes of Vietnamese visitors towards Thailand.

### **1.3. Objectives**

This thesis has the following objectives:

- To investigate Vietnamese attitudes towards Thailand and their understanding of Thailand before and after visiting the country.
- To analyze how tourism contributes to the development of Thai – Vietnamese relations.

#### **1.4. Hypothesis / Major argument**

The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity pays considerable attention to people to people connectivity through education, culture and tourism. A successful story, achieved through tourism, can be seen in the case of Thai tourism in Vietnam. In the process of building a strong base for expanding its market in neighboring countries including Vietnam, Thai tourism has played a significant role in promoting a good image of the country and building diplomatic relations among people in the region. This thesis proposes that Thai tourism is well positioned to strengthen the agenda of the Thai – Vietnamese relationship, especially at the level of people-to-people relations.

It can be noticed that Thai tourism helps promote Thai – Vietnamese relations through many channels. Advertisements of Thailand in Vietnamese press and mass media — with various tourist attractions and cultural aspects, as well as Thai cultural activities carried out in Vietnam — not only promote positive Thai images but also build up knowledge about Thailand and its culture for the Vietnamese people. With impressions from sightseeing trips to Thailand, interaction with Thai culture and people, and information about the country provided by the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Vietnamese attitudes towards Thailand have gradually changed in recent years.

### **1.5. Research methodology**

This research will utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods but it is mainly based on qualitative data. Questionnaires will be used to gather statistical information about Vietnamese tourists' perspectives toward Thailand. However, questionnaires supplement only one part of the analysis.

The study requires gathering relevant data from documents and compiling databases in order to analyze materials on historical construction of the agenda of Thai – Vietnamese relations, especially in terms of people-to-people.

Perceptions of Vietnamese in travel writing on Thailand will be included to investigate what Vietnamese people view and think about Thailand. Data collection will consist of interviews with relevant key informants in tourism and foreign affairs, as well as surveys and focus group discussion.

Besides, multiple interviews will be conducted with individual participants in order to provide more in-depth data collection and opportunities for follow-up. The aim is to interview approximately 10 key individuals working in the area of tourism and international relations dealing with Thailand and Vietnam.

### **1.6. Scope of study**

This study will explore Thai-Vietnamese relations on the aspect of people-to-people relation. As mentioned earlier, this thesis will not discuss nor focus on government-to-government relations in detail. Moreover, tourism will be used as the tool for monitoring this relationship at two levels: local attitudes (the attitudes of

Vietnamese tourists who travel to Thailand) and the role of tourism in changing them.

Before going further into the study, it is important to define the key word used in this thesis: *attitude*; which can be defined as a positive or negative evaluation of people, objects, event, activities, ideas, or just about anything in your environment (Zimbardo, 1999: 745). However, within the framework of this thesis, the definition of *attitude* used will be that in the Oxford dictionary: *An attitude is a term to name the way that you think and feel about somebody or something, the way that you behave towards something or someone that shows how you think and feel* (Oxford, 1997: 81). Therefore, attitudes of Vietnamese towards Thailand in this study are drawn from the way they think and feel about Thailand, and the Thai people.

As for the scope of study, this thesis will also mention Thai – Vietnamese relations. Diplomatic relations discussed in Chapter II of the thesis are mainly to provide the perspective of historical relations between the two countries, and set the foundation for understanding the background before going further onto people-to-people relations.

This thesis' main purpose is to focus on the role of Thai tourism in promoting Thai-Vietnamese relation, in addition to people-to-people relations. The study is limited to Vietnamese tourists and Thai tourism to see how it contributes to the development of the relationship between the two nations. This, to explore the changing attitudes of Vietnamese towards Thailand before and after visiting the country.

Hopefully this thesis will bring forth useful information to build a better relationship between Thailand and Vietnam. However, it does not only benefit bilateral relations between the two nations, but it also acts as a bond to connect and enhance this relationship reaching another scale on the regional level. As addressed in the ASEAN Vision 2020, signed in Kuala Lumpur on 15 December 1997, the vision of ASEAN is “as a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies” (ASEAN, 1997). There are many factors contributing towards the implementation of the ASEAN Vision 2020. Apart from economics, politics, science and technology, regional identity and ASEAN societies are also discussed much in this paper. ASEAN Vision 2020 also pays attention to the importance of social cohesion and caring societies. Therefore, to achieve this vision, many factors and motivations are required, especially the understanding among people in the region. While pursuing a bilateral cooperation, Thailand and Vietnam are not losing sight of the ultimate goal of achieving the regional goals with other ASEAN members. It is crucial to enhance bilateral and regional cooperation among ASEAN nations in the process to build ASEAN Community in 2015. People-to-people relations between Thailand and Vietnam, therefore, are closely related to the development of the ASEAN Community.

### **1.7. Limitations of the research**

Questionnaire and interviews are planned to involve one hundred Vietnamese tourists who visit Thailand with 3 travel agencies namely: 1) TST tourist - one of the best travel companies in Vietnam with the trade name being trusted for

its safe and best quality products. TST tourist won “The Friend of Thailand” award in 2010, from The Tourism Authority of Thailand, for the greatest number of Vietnamese tourists to Thailand. 2) Fiditour – another prestigious travel trade name inside and outside of Vietnam, is not only known as reliable, but also well recognized as one of the first travel companies in Ho Chi Minh City. 3) Ben Thanh tourist, finally, is among the top ten travel companies in Vietnam since 1999.

Moreover, the interviews and focus group discussions will be done with representatives of three sectors namely 1) government officials in tourism and foreign affair fields both in Vietnam and Thailand sides; 2) directors of travel companies that organizing trips to Thailand from Vietnam; and 3) focus group interviews with Vietnamese tourists who travel to Thailand. In addition, questionnaires will be collected from Vietnamese tourists, in order to compare their attitudes before and after visiting Thailand.

However, the researcher is fully aware that the materials collected from fieldwork will mainly reflect the Vietnamese tourists’ perspectives and that of those who work on the field of tourism. A complete picture of the Vietnamese attitudes toward Thailand cannot be presented; it can only reflect Vietnamese tourists’ attitudes.

### **1.8. Significance and usefulness of the research**

I expect this thesis will provide a better understanding of Thai – Vietnamese relations. Additionally, the research will be a first step for further studies on Thai – Vietnamese relations. Findings and suggestions obtained from this research can be useful for policy makers in the Thai tourism industry.



## **1.9. Structure of thesis**

This thesis consists of six chapters. Major arguments and details of each chapter are as follows:

### **Chapter I: Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the general background of the study and explains the study's objective, hypothesis, scope and limitations of the research. This section also includes other general information of the thesis such as literature review, research methodology, significance and usefulness of the research, and structure of thesis.

### **Chapter II: A Review of Thai - Vietnamese Relations**

This chapter reviews some important points following the timeline of the relationship between Thailand and Vietnam before 1986, and examines Vietnam's foreign policy towards Thailand after the Doi Moi policy — from 1986 to the present — in order to provide more knowledge on historical relations between the two countries, and set the foundation for understanding the background, before going further on to the people-to-people relations of these two nations. Finally, this chapter also provides a review on the attitudes of the Vietnamese toward Thailand in the past and its changes in the present.

### **Chapter III: Thai Tourism in the Vietnamese Market**

This chapter will study the situation of Thai tourism in the Vietnamese market. Structurally, this chapter is organized into three main sections; the first section deals with the office set up of the Tourism Authority of Thailand in Vietnam, a first step for

Thai tourism to pave the way for its investment and development in the Vietnamese market; the second part describes Thailand's tourism policies for the Vietnamese market; the third section's focus is the development of Thai tourism in Vietnam. Briefly, all sections in this chapter are chosen for discussion in order to see more clearly how Thai tourism delivers the national image of Thailand to the Vietnamese and its contribution to the development of Thai – Vietnamese relations.

#### **Chapter IV: The Popularity of Thai tourism in Vietnam**

This chapter assesses the popularity of Thai tourism in Vietnam in helping to uphold the national image of the country. It is divided into four parts including Vietnamese perception of traveling, Thailand as a destination, images of Thailand in Vietnam and the main channels for getting information about Thailand for Vietnamese tourists.

#### **Chapter V: Changing attitudes of Vietnamese tourists towards Thailand**

This chapter highlights Vietnamese tourists' attitudes towards Thailand and their understanding of Thailand before and after their visit. The roles of Thai tourism in promoting Thai – Vietnamese relations are also indicated in the second part of this chapter.

#### **Chapter VI: Conclusions**

This chapter contains the conclusion of the study drawn from research findings and analysis from previous chapters of the thesis. It also gives suggestions for further studies related to this research.

## **Chapter II**

### **A REVIEW OF THAI-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS**

The Thai – Vietnamese relationship before 1986 — and from 1986 to the present — will be discussed in this chapter. The changing attitude of Vietnamese towards Thailand from the past to the present is also reviewed.

#### **2.1. Thai – Vietnamese relations before 1986**

The history of the long-standing relationship between Vietnam and Thailand has witnessed many stages. In some periods it was very complicated and was governed by prejudices and suspicions. However, since diplomatic relations between the two countries officially were established on August 6, 1976, Vietnam's relationship with Thailand has improved significantly. A better understanding between the peoples of the two nations, and a better diplomatic relation, started to develop.

In this part of chapter II, the author will not discuss in detail the diplomatic relations between Thailand and Vietnam before 1986. However, with the limitation of this thesis, the author would like to review some important points in the timeline of Thai – Vietnamese relations before 1986, to provide more knowledge on historical development between the two countries, as well as to set the foundation for a background understanding before going further into people-to-people relations between the nations in question.

The review of Thai-Vietnamese relations will not be listed in chronological order; this relationship will be analyzed — and the discussion will be based — on the key events that affected to the different stages in the Thai-Vietnamese relations.

Historically, as recorded in many sources, the relationship between Thailand and Vietnam has experienced many conflicts and misunderstandings which affected the friendship and harmony between the two countries in the past.

Before the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Vietnam and Thailand (was called Siam at that period) did not have direct relations. In the periods of Krung Sri Ayutthaya and Thonburi, most of the contact between the two nations was related to the matter of power struggle and attempt to expand their influence to Laos and Cambodia. However, this conflict took place only at the level of the power struggle on the third country. The people of both Vietnam and Siam did not confront each other directly.

The relationship between Thailand and Vietnam can be counted from the Thonburi and early Rattanakosin dynasties of Thailand, and Nguyen dynasty of Vietnam. When the war inside Vietnam was at its pinnacle, Nguyen Phuc Anh fled to Siam. The King of Siam offered him shelter and gave him aid, also sending troops to support and help Nguyen Phuc Anh to gain the power back from Tây Sơn. The relations between the two countries were developed both in quality and quantity since Nguyen Anh was crowned King and proclaimed himself as Emperor Gia Long. Relations between the two countries became closer and reconciled (Pussadee Chandavimol, 1998: 12 - 32).

The direct contact between Thailand and Vietnam actually happened in the French colonial period when Thailand had an involvement in the Indochina war —

the Vietnam War in particular. The scale of conflict did not stop at the small scale as before, but it was up to a larger scale — a regional scale. The ideology conflict was very clear in this period. The world was divided into communism and democracy. It can be said that even though the two countries had a long standing relationship in the past, the views and attitudes toward each other clearly appeared in the colonial period.

In the colonial period, with the different policies and political trends, Thailand and Vietnam were standing opposite each other many times. Vietnam was under the French colonial domination and was hand in hand with Laos and Cambodia fighting with the French to regain its independence and freedom. Meanwhile, Thailand was trying to innovate, modernize and westernize the country. The nation was very clever in using wise and intelligent foreign policy to avoid being colonized and maintain its sovereignty against the Western powers. Siam was the only Southeast Asian country to remain independent during the European colonial period. Unlike its neighboring countries such as Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia — which had been colonized by Western powers — Thailand has always maintained relatively cordial relations with the West. Thai people always welcomed westerners with open arms, great hospitality and friendship; Thai people have always maintained a friendly attitude toward foreigners, and Thailand's foreign policy with the West has always been flexible. Yet somehow, Vietnam and Thailand did not have a good attitude towards each other during this period.

On one hand, Thailand joined Japan and became its ally during World War II. On the other hand, Thailand is a very good friend of Western powers in Southeast Asia (Nguyen Tuong Lai, 2001: 59-60). In particular, under the time of Phibun

Songkhram<sup>2</sup>, Thai – Vietnamese relations were hostile. Phibun’s government was very harsh in its confrontation with communism while Vietnam was a communist country. This can be seen very clearly in March 1950 when the Phibun government officially endorsed the French puppet — the anti-communist emperor — the “bù nhìn”<sup>3</sup> government of Bao Dai in South Vietnam and set up the relations with the Bao Dai’s government (Hoang Khac Nam, 2007: 54-55). Moreover, in September 1952, Thailand enacted the so-called “anti-communist legislation” and suppressed Việt Kiều in Thailand (Nguyen Tuong Lai, 2001: 63). These kinds of actions from the Thai side put the Thai – Vietnamese relations into peril.

Additionally, after the United States of America (US) became officially involved in the Indochina war, Thailand chose to be a friend of the US. During the Vietnam War, most of the United States Air Force (USAF) air strikes over North Vietnam originated from air bases in Thailand. In addition, the bases belonged to the Royal Thai Air Force and were commanded by Thai people. In addition, Thailand did not just let the US army build military bases on Thai territory, but also sent military

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<sup>2</sup> *Phibun Songkhram (July 14, 1897 - June 11, 1964) was a member of the People's Party in Thailand. He had participated and was one of the leaders of the coup d'état in 1932. He used to take many important positions in the government of Siam (Thailand today). For example, he appointed himself as head of the army and Minister of Defence, interior, and (later) Foreign Affairs. From 1938 to 1944, Phibun Songkhram took over as Prime Minister (PM) and replaced PM Phraya Phahol. On 8 November 1947, Phibun led the military seized power by coup and became prime minister again from April 1948 to November 1957 (Baker, 2005: 120 – 145)*

<sup>3</sup> *“bù nhìn” government is a term in Vietnamese to call a government that does not act or comply with the rights and obligations of government. In addition, it is a tool to take advantage from other outside forces. It can be referred or called as “puppet government” in English.*

troops to support the US army in Vietnam (Richard A. Ruth, 2010: 35). Therefore, the relationship between Thailand and Indochinese countries in general, and Vietnam in particular, worsened.

Apart from the element of US in the Thai-Vietnamese relations, the Cambodian conflict can be counted as another element that affected the relationship between the two nations. From 1979 to 1991, relations between Vietnam and Thailand once again stood on a very unstable situation.

In general it can be seen that, before 1986, the Vietnam-Thailand relations had suffered under the impact of third parties such as France, the U.S and Cambodia. The third parties had led the two nations into conflicts, misunderstandings, and adversely affected the relations of Thailand and Vietnam. From the Vietnamese side, there are several terms to call Thailand at that time such as “Thái Lan - tay sai của đế quốc Hoa Kỳ,” which can be translated as “Thailand – lackey of the U.S imperialism”, “Thái Lan – bàn đạp của đế quốc Hoa Kỳ” which means “Thailand – strategic base for U.S imperialism” and “Thái Lan - sân sau của Mỹ” or “Thailand – American’s backyard”<sup>4</sup>. As stated in the book of Richard A. Ruth namely *Thai soldiers in the Vietnam War*, Thailand is absent from the history of the Vietnam War. When Thailand is mentioned, it is always portrayed only as a staging area for American

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<sup>4</sup> Information is gathered from the field trip in Vietnam in October, 2012 and personal interviews with Prof. Hoang Khac Nam and Prof. Nguyen Tuong Lai as well as focus group interview with Vietnamese tourists on March 25, 2013.

bombing campaigns directed against Laos, North Vietnam, South Vietnam and Cambodia (Richard, 2012: 10-11). According to Professor Nguyen Tuong Lai<sup>5</sup>,

“Although in the present Thailand and Vietnam have normalized diplomatic relations, it can even be said that the two countries are in the best period of their relationship, however, in previous times, especially the Vietnam War, the Vietnamese people used to see Thailand as an enemy because of their involvement in the war of Vietnam and America both directly and indirectly”<sup>6</sup>.

Moreover, the older generation of Vietnamese had very bad memories of Thailand; they might have even hated Thailand<sup>7</sup>. It can be noticed that before officially establishing diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Thailand in 1976, the Vietnamese people never seemed to think that Vietnam and Thailand would have a good relationship as it does today. Even after the governments of Thailand and Vietnam signed an agreement to establish diplomatic relations on August 6, 1976, Vietnamese people still kept their old views and never thought that Vietnam and

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<sup>5</sup> *He is a lecturer at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Department of Thai studies, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam. He used to work for the Institute of Asia Studies in Vietnam and Institute of Linguistics under Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences as well as an expert on Thai studies in Vietnam.*

<sup>6</sup> *Personal interview with Professor Nguyen Tuong Lai, lecturer at the department of Thai studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam on January 17, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand.*

<sup>7</sup> *Personal interview with Prof. Hoang Khac Nam, Lecturer at the Faculty of International Relations, Vietnam National University, Hanoi on October 16, 2012 in University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam*



Thailand would have a good relationship at the level of the citizens, especially traveling to Thailand<sup>8</sup>.

Further explanation can be found in focus group interview participants of the new generation; they do not have an aversion to Thailand. However, they feel that generations of their parents and grandparents did not view the Thais favorably. Some people even said that if the Thais did not help the Americans attack Vietnam, the Vietnamese would not have suffered such a long war<sup>9</sup>. Mrs. Le Thi Sam, a 67 year old tourist, added:

“The Vietnamese of my generation mostly viewed Thailand as an enemy because of Thailand’s involvement in Vietnam War. Whether light or heavy, Thailand has created wounds to the Vietnamese during the war”.

Mr. Bui Ngoc Du, a 54 year old tourist working for Mai Linh Company, further explained:

“I was very young when the war happened in Vietnam, I didn't know much of the political issues nor the involvement of Thailand in the Vietnam battle at that time. However, I still have something in my mind, which can be described as a “dislike” for Thailand in term of personal feelings”.

Not only the Vietnamese view Thailand with a negative attitude as “an American base force or American backyard”; at the same, Thai people also see

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<sup>8</sup> *Personal interview with Professor Nguyen Tuong Lai, lecturer at the department of Thai studies, faculty of oriental studies, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam on January 17, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand.*

<sup>9</sup> *Focus group interview with Vietnamese students in Bangkok on November 16, 2012*

Vietnamese as “communist”. Terms such as “เวียดกง // Vietcong”, “ฮ้ายญวน // Ai Yuan” and “แกว // Kao” or “ญวนเก่า // Yuan Kau” come to mind for Thai people when describing Vietnam in a negative tongue (Chandavimol, 1998: 78-121). It is perceived more as a country suffering of war than a country fighting to gain its independence and freedom back.

According to the research of Chalermchai Piwruangnonta, conducted in Thailand in 1979, 79.45 percent of Thai interviewees dislike Vietnamese while only 8.90% do not. Moreover, 77.75% saw Vietnam as an invasion force, Communists, and Thailand should be cautious regarding the Vietnamese. More importantly, there were 41.74% informants not willing to support the establishment of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Thailand at that time (Piwruangnonta, 1979: 120-146).

It can be said that the relationship at the level of people to people of both countries had no position to take action at that time. Mostly, the relation of the two nations was governed and indicated by G – G relations. Also in this period, diplomatic relation between Vietnam and Thailand were mainly oriented in a negative direction. There was not much space for people to voice their ideas. Additionally, the people - to - people relations of the two countries were not well positioned because of the war in Vietnam.

Nevertheless, it can be said that Thai – Vietnamese relations were not totally severed in this period. On the contrary, in some aspects it can be seen that the Thai people were caring and helping Vietnamese refugees who fled into Thailand’s territory under the French colonial period. Vietnamese refugees have received an

enthusiastic support and good care from Thai people (Trinh Dieu Thin, 2003). This also can be one factor maintaining Thai – Vietnamese relations.

Historically, Vietnam and Thailand used to have a very good relationship in the past such as in the reign of King Rama I, Rama II of Thailand and the dynasties of Gia Long and Minh Mang of Vietnam. Vietnam also used to have good relations with Thailand in the period of Pridi Phanomyong's government from 1946 to 1947. The situation also improved after Thai Foreign Minister Bhichai Rattakul paid an official visit to Vietnam, signing the joint communiqué on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries on August 6, 1976 (VIR, 2006: 5).

As previously stated, better diplomatic relations between the two countries started in 1976. Although there were many obstacles ahead, both Vietnam and Thailand tried their best to promote and accelerate this relationship. There were a lot of meetings and visits back and forth between the leaders of the two countries in an effort to build and develop this relationship. This can be seen in several concrete events, for example on December 13, 1977, Thailand formally invited a delegation of Vietnam's government led by Nguyen Xuan to visit Thailand to prepare the location for the of Embassy of Vietnam in Bangkok. In addition, on December 27, 1977, the Deputy Minister of Transportation of Thailand paid a visit to Vietnam to prepare for the aviation agreement between the two nations. Thailand and Vietnam issued a joint communiqué calling for the normalization of diplomatic relations as a contribution "to the cause of genuine peace, independence and neutrality in Southeast Asia" (EIR, 1977) on December, 1977. On the other hand, several official and unofficial visits of leaders from both the governments of Vietnam and Thailand

mark a milestone on the relation between the two countries. On January 9-12, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Vietnam, Nguyen Duy Trinh, paid an official visit to Thailand, signing agreements on trade, scientific and technological cooperation and air transport between the two nations. Moreover, on February 2, 1978, Vietnam opened its Embassy in Bangkok; Thailand opened its Embassy in Hanoi on March 1978 (VIR, 2006: 5). Another official visit to Thailand was made by Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong on September 1978 (Nguyen Tuong Lai, 2001: 72-77).

The relationship between Vietnam and Thailand improved significantly after World War II, the Indochinese war and the Vietnamese War; especially after Vietnam declared unilaterally to withdraw all Vietnamese troops from Cambodia in 1985 and announced its reform policies in 1986. This event can also be seen as a starting point and an important step towards a better understanding and attitude of people in both countries in later periods.

In 1986, Vietnam launched an economic reform program called *Đổi Mới* (renovation or reconstruction) during its Sixth National Congress. *Đổi Mới* policies have shifted Vietnam from a centrally planned economy to a market economy with socialist orientation. Hence, Vietnam made significant changes with regional relations in general, and Thailand in particular. The argument for renovating and developing the country is that people-to-people contact must improve. At a time when the renovation of *Đổi Mới* policies were in process, it seemed that the exchange and contact between ordinary people of the members of the Association of Southeast

Asian Nations (ASEAN), offered a glimpse of hope for a better regional relationship, particularly in Thai – Vietnamese relation.

## **2.2. Vietnam relationship policy towards Thailand after the Đổi Mới, 1986 to present**

After the end of the war in 1975, Vietnamese economy declined for approximately fifteen years. Poor infrastructure, weak banking system, switch from rice export to import, and other difficulties in Vietnamese economy were waiting for a resolution. Before 1986, Vietnam foreign policy revolved around securing sovereignty against all foreign troops. Most of the time before launching the Đổi Mới policies, Vietnam attempted to find the right way for healing the scars of war and bringing better life to its people.

However, looking at the open door policy of the Đổi Mới program, it is clear that by any perspectives, the Đổi Mới is still an important period in Vietnamese history. Since the implementation of the Đổi Mới policies in the Vietnamese government in 1986, the economic, political and social context of Vietnam has changed dramatically, with a trend towards decentralization, democracy and cooperation. Finally, the Đổi Mới program has brought about something to Vietnamese society in general and improved the living standards of people in particular.

As addressed in the Sixth Vietnam National Congress in 1986, improving relations with ASEAN countries became one of the priorities of Vietnam's foreign policy at that time. As it was put in the report of the Sixth National Congress, “tasks of the Party and the State on the foreign relation’s field tried to combine national

strength with the strength of the modern era, striving to maintain peace in Southeast Asia and around the world” (Vietnam, 1986: 99).

With the opening of new policy for renovation of the country, Thailand and Vietnam's friendship has grown rapidly. Thai – Vietnamese relations have been developed through many channels. After Vietnam joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on July 28, 1995, this relationship became increasingly solid. Currently, the friendship between Vietnam and other Southeast Asian members including Thailand, is improving rapidly and aims at building peace, stability, sovereignty and development in the region.

Improvement of Vietnamese relations with ASEAN members, Thailand in particular, has increased the national economic growth and contributed to better relations. Also, it can be the foundation for the understanding between people of each nation to know more about their neighbors in the region.

As mentioned earlier, Thai – Vietnamese relations continue to develop and achieve success in many fields since 1986. It has occurred not only in governmental cooperation, but also appeared in many different fields such as economy, culture and society.

If from 1986 to 1995 trends of relationship between Vietnam and Thailand were primarily based on improving the friendship, the period after 1995 to the present is mainly based on exchange and cooperation (Hoang Khac Nam, 2007: 151). Since 1986 to the present, the two nations have exchanged many high level visits. From the Vietnamese side, several Vietnamese leaders paid official and unofficial visits to Thailand, including the visit of the Vietnamese Chairman of the National Assembly

Le Quang Dao (September 25-30, 1990); the official visit of Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet (October 27-30, 1991); the official visit of the General Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party Do Muoi at the invitation of Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai (October 15-18, 1993); the official visit of the Chairman of the National Assembly Nong Duc Manh (September 3-7, 1996); the official visit of the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam (July 8-10, 1997); the official visit of the Vietnamese State President Tran Duc Luong at the invitation of King Bhumibol Adulyadej (October 6-8, 1998); the official visit of the Vietnamese Chairman of National Assembly Nguyen Van An (December 26-30, 2002); and the official visit of Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung (December 2006).

On the other hand, Thailand's visits to VietNam include those paid by Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun (January 15-17, 1992); the official visit of Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai to sign an agreement on tourism cooperation between the two countries and an agreement between Vietnam's Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Thai Chamber of Commerce (March 16-19, 1994); Prime Minister Banharn Silpa-archa (October 1st, 1995); Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh (March 30-31, 1997); Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai attending the 6th ASEAN Summit in Hanoi (December 1998); the official visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Surin Pitsuwan (February 1998) and attending the 6th Joint Committee Meeting (June 1999); the official visit of Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra (April 25-26, 2001); Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai (March 2001); Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont's official visit (October 2006) and attending the 14th APEC Summit (November 2006); Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej (March 2008); Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya (February 2009); and Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva (July 2009).

There are several visits to Vietnam by members of the Thai Royal Family. For example, the Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn, on behalf of the King of Thailand, paid an official visit to Vietnam at the invitation of Vietnamese President Le Duc Anh on November 15-20, 1992, and many other official and unofficial visits on September 5-9, 1997, December 2007, January 2008 and May 2008; an official visit of Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn at the invitation of Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet on February 17-23, 1993, and a second visit on April 17-21, 2000; the official visit and lectures under the program funded by the United Nations Development Program of Princess Chulabhorn on November 8-12, 1998, and other visits in May 1999, June 2000, November 2001, February 2003, December 2003 and July 2008; Head of the Privy Council of the King of Thailand Prem Tinsulanonda (April 2002) (VIR, 2006: 7). The two sides also exchanged many delegations at ministry and provincial levels.

Apart from official and unofficial visits of leaders of Thailand and Vietnam, a number of agreements and memoranda of understanding between the two nations has been signed and implemented with fruitful results over the past 36 years. For example, in August 24, 2003, the Government's Public Relations Department of Thailand (PRD) and the Vietnamese News Agency (VNA) have reached a negotiation and signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Ch Hanoi. The two countries have agreed to use internet as a channel to exchange news and media contents.

In addition, the Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) recently also signed an MOU with Vietnam Trade Promotion Agency (VIETRADE) aimed at bilateral collaboration between the two countries to uplift — as well as strengthen —



MICE<sup>10</sup> industry, and cooperate in terms of market research in the ASEAN region as a way to develop an industrial knowledge base for both countries. The joint-force between TCEB and VIETRADE has marked the important stepping stone to unveil the trade and tighten the relationship. Additionally, this also helps in boosting tourism by encouraging the usage of Single – VISA which is under the cooperation framework targeting to achieve 1 million tourists by 2015 for Vietnam and Thailand. Moreover, other MOU between TCEB and Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) was signed on 16 March 2012, and which paved the way to establish a long-term mutually purposeful affiliation in five sectors: bilateral trade missions, facilitation in meetings and trade events delegates, support in cross-promotion, exchanging market surveys in ASEAN, and mutually providing both financial and non-financial support.

On the tourism dimension, the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) have recently signed a cooperation agreement — targeting around 1 million tourists for the two countries until 2015 — in the Hanoi capital of Vietnam, in occasion of celebration of the one thousand year anniversary of Thang Long – Hanoi in October, 2010. The two sides focused on plans to exchange information, invite journalists of Vietnam and Thailand to visit and report both sides’ s tourism, and invite travel agents from the two countries to take part in exhibition fairs. Over the years, Thailand has always been on the list of Vietnam’s top ten key markets. In the first ten months of 2012 alone, over one hundred and fifty-eight thousand (158,470) Thai tourists travelled to Vietnam, and at

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<sup>10</sup> *MICE is a short term of Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions*

the same time, more than five hundred and twenty thousand (527,012) Vietnamese came to Thailand (TAT Governor's speech on November 17, 2012). Under this MOU, the two sides agreed to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in tourism area.

The final milestone that can be seen as the most effective expression in the development of Thai – Vietnamese relations are the first and second joint cabinet meetings between the two nations. The first meeting was held on February 20, 2004 in the period of Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai, the first joint cabinet meeting can be seen as one of the most important events between two countries in this new period of enhancing and upholding the Thai – Vietnamese relations. Most importantly, this meeting opened up a new page in the cooperation for equality, mutual benefits, development and stability of both countries. The success of the First Vietnam - Thailand Joint Cabinet Retreat was not only shown in the agreements signed, but also in how the opportunities created for further direct contacts.

To promote the good results of the first joint cabinet meeting, Vietnam and Thailand cooperated to organize the second Vietnam – Thailand Joint Cabinet Retreat which took place in Hanoi on October 27, 2012 under the co-chair of Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and his Thai counterpart Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra — to raise the relationship to a strategic partnership.

It can be said that both joint cabinet meetings above are a milestone in the bilateral relationship of the two nations. The presence of a great number of high-ranking officials from both governments from Thailand and Vietnam shows that both sides highly appreciate their cooperation, relationship and friendship. Over the years,

there have been several important historical events which significantly influenced the Thai - Vietnamese relations. The policy on Thai – Vietnamese relations has been gradually implemented by the efforts of both sides for a better understanding of the people of both nations.

As mentioned earlier in the scope of this thesis, diplomatic relations between Thailand and Vietnam in this chapter are mentioned mainly to provide a historical background of the two countries' relations, to set the foundation before going further onto people – to – people relations.

Thailand and Vietnam's relationship before and after 1986 has undergone many stages of ups and downs. However, both the government and the people of the two countries have tried their best to cultivate this relationship to be more productive and sustainable. Moreover, it has created favorable conditions for the two countries to have a chance to exchange, learn and understand each other better. Since then, the friendship between the two nations has gradually developed in many different fields, opening new pages for regional cooperation between Vietnam and Thailand.

Before 1986, the Thai – Vietnamese relation was full of skepticism and suspicion. Nevertheless, after 1986 this relationship has been improved significantly. It should be noticed that the people of the two states began to care and learn more about each other in general, and their cultures in particular, in order to have a better understanding of their neighbors. In the general trend of development, it can be seen that Thai tourism is a good channel to promote its image and enhance the favorable understanding of Vietnamese people towards Thailand in particular, and to accelerate the people – to – people relations between the two nations in general. Therefore, the

information about Thai tourism in the Vietnamese market — including the Thai tourism policy, Thai tourism development and its popularity among Vietnamese tourists — will be explored in the next chapter to provide more supporting factors that lead to the fundamental role of Thai tourism in promoting Thai – Vietnamese relations.

## **Chapter III**

### **THAI TOURISM IN THE VIETNAMESE MARKET**

The situation of Thai tourism in the Vietnamese market will be investigated in this chapter, which also discusses the setting up of the office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand in Vietnam, and Thailand's tourism policy for the Vietnamese market in order to see the investment and development of Thai tourism in Vietnam. In addition, the development of Thai tourism in Vietnam will be employed to reveal the contribution of Thai tourism in building a national image and promoting Thai – Vietnamese relations.

#### **3.1. Setting up the office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand in Vietnam (TAT HCM)**

Situated in Southeast Asia, Vietnam today is recognized by outsiders as a small country with a history of wars with China, France, Japan and America. Before launching of the Đổi Mới (called “reconstruction” or “renovation”) policies, Vietnam attempted to find the right way to heal the scars of war and bring a better life to its people. After thirty-seven years of proclaiming independence — in April 30, 1975 — and twenty-six years of reform after the launch of Đổi Mới policy, Vietnam has transformed itself into one of the most dynamic emerging markets in the world through decades of hard work, commitment and continuing reform.

Vietnam has achieved many successful results. For example, it was able to normalize the diplomatic relations with America in 1995 and joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a full member in the same year. Moreover, Vietnam was accepted into the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1998. The greatest success for Vietnam was its accession into World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2006 after eleven years of negotiations. This marked a very important moment in the integration process for Vietnam, both in the region and in the world community.

With the rapid development in recent years, Vietnam is a new market that many investors aim to explore. Tourism investment is one of the most dynamic fields and a lot of foreign travel agencies would like to set their representative offices in Vietnam, such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Korea. Thai tourism has achieved the most successful tourism industry among all Southeast Asian countries. Therefore, Thai tourism is one of the big names in tourism investment in Vietnam.

According to Mr. Pichai Raktashinha, Director of ASEAN, South Asia and the South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), former director of TAT Ho Chi Minh office (TAT HCM) in Vietnam, there are two reasons for setting up TAT office in Vietnam. One of the main reasons that TAT decided to set up a new branch office in Ho Chi Minh City was the growth of Vietnam's economy<sup>11</sup>. Before going to set the new office in Vietnam, TAT studied the situation of the country and the conditions that could enable the development of Thai tourism in the Vietnamese

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<sup>11</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Pichai Raktashinha, director of ASEAN, South Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand, on November 6, 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand.*

market. Vietnam's economy was considered for Thai tourism investment. Many economic policies that are enforced throughout the country have helped Vietnam's economy develop rapidly as well as improve living standards significantly.

Additionally, from many other studies, it can be seen that the trend of economic restructuring has also been demonstrated over the years in Vietnam. The Vietnamese economy has impressed the world by an increasing average growth rate in the past decades. The stable political environment and fast economic reform process have made the country a favorable destination for foreign investment. Vietnam has been attempting to further integrate itself into the outside world. After suffering from decades of war and isolation, Vietnam today is experiencing significant growth and proudly ranking as one of the strongest economies in Asia.

The development of tourism also created good conditions and foundations for other economic development in the country. With these advantages, and the positive aspects of tourism development, Vietnam is opening its doors to welcome more and more tourism investment from all over the world including Thailand.

Side by side with economic reasons, a better relation between Vietnam and Thailand is also a main motivation for TAT to set its office in Vietnam<sup>12</sup>. It can be noticed that Vietnam and Thailand are two neighboring countries. Their people have numerous similarities in culture and lifestyle. The two nations have celebrated the 30th anniversary of their diplomatic relations in 2006, when TAT was on the way to prepare for setting up office in Ho Chi Minh city. It could be understood that good

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<sup>12</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Pichai Raktashinha, director of ASEAN, South Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand, on November 6, 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand.*

relations among both nations is also another element in enhancing and accelerating the establishment of TAT HCM.

TAT HCM's task is not just the Vietnamese market, but it is also responsible for the Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar markets (TAT, 2010: 235). Looking back to the study about the situation of Thailand and other Indochinese countries at that time, it can be seen from any perspective that Vietnam is the best choice for TAT in expanding a new office up in the Indochinese zone in order to promote Thai tourism<sup>13</sup>. At that period, Myanmar had not opened the country yet, Cambodia and Thailand seemed to have conflict with each other and the Lao economy was not suitable for promoting tourism there.

Additionally, TAT has studied that Vietnamese themselves love to travel and love to learn new things<sup>14</sup>. They are always willing to study and open their perspectives. It could be asserted that Vietnam was kept away from the world during wartime. So after gaining independence and rebuilding the country, the Vietnamese were eager to study and reach out to the outside world on any condition possible<sup>15</sup>.

Finally, the Tourism Authority of Thailand received permission from the Vietnamese government, with the approval of Deputy Prime Minister (PM) Pham Gia Khiem to set up a representative office in Ho Chi Minh City, on Tuesday April 3,

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<sup>13</sup> *Personal interview with Ms. Chutathip Charoenlarp, Director of Tourism Authority of Thailand – Ho Chi Minh office, on October 3, 2012 in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.*

<sup>14</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Pichai Raktashinha, director of ASEAN, South Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand, on November 6, 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand.*

<sup>15</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Pichai Raktashinha, director of ASEAN, South Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand, on November 6, 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand.*



2008. This could be a signal that TAT had received the green light to promote Thai tourism and introduce it to the Vietnamese. After that, the Deputy PM entrusted the Vietnam Administration of Tourism to work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Security and the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City to guide the TAT in establishment of the office in accordance with Vietnam's laws.

After receiving permission from Vietnam's government, TAT assigned Mr. Pichai Raktashinha to be director and Mrs. Siriges A Nong Trirattanasongpol to be assistant director of TAT HCM in the first four year duty term from 2008 to 2011. The grand opening of TAT HCM was organized in Ho Chi Minh City at Caravel hotel on December of 2008 to launch its presence and announcement to travel agents and media that TAT would start to work for Thailand's tourism promotion in Vietnam.

"TAT HCM overseas office has four main responsibilities described by the TAT head office: marketing, collect information, information center, and collaborate with different tourism businesses", said Mr. Pichai Raktashinha<sup>16</sup>. In order to understand more about the four responsibilities above, it can be seen in the public document of TAT in detail as follows: 1) marketing: TAT overseas offices promote Thai tourism under policies and marketing strategies of TAT, 2) collect information: TAT overseas offices have to collect information, statistics, and reports about the tourism situation in the target countries. This information is important in designing marketing activities and understanding the market, 3) information center: TAT overseas offices act as Thai tourism information center, providing general information

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<sup>16</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Pichai Raktashinha, director of ASEAN, South Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand, on November 6, 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand.*

for all tourists. Furthermore, the overseas offices have to provide marketing information for local private tourism sectors, 4) collaborate with different tourism businesses: TAT overseas offices act as collaborators to strength relationship with local tourism business and organizations (TAT Overseas Offices website, 2012).

For setting up a representative office in Ho Chi Minh city, TAT only put the first step on the process of development and promotion for Thai tourism in Vietnam in general, and the Thai – Vietnamese relation in particular. Therefore, to study more on how Thai tourism can contribute to the development of Thai – Vietnamese relations, we need to know the way that TAT HCM acts as a key channel in bringing positive image of Thailand to Vietnam and creating good attitude of Vietnamese toward Thailand. The next part of this chapter will discuss the policies that TAT HCM has used to promote the Thai image to the Vietnamese.

### **3.2. Thailand's Tourism Policies for the Vietnamese Market**

In order to access the policy of Thai tourism in the Vietnamese market, the author will introduce the general policy of Thai tourism. Thailand's tourism industry established a policy used as a major device in attracting foreign visitors into the country and to enhance the well being of the people as well as to promote the national image.

The main principles of the tourism policy, as established by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, are stated very clearly in the report of Mr. Auggaphol Brickshawana, Deputy Governor of TAT, former Director of Policy and Planning Department of Tourism Authority of Thailand:

“Develop as well as promote sustainable tourism with the least environmental, natural, social and cultural impact, so as to preserve the existing national resources for the benefits of later generations.....

Use Thai uniqueness as the country’s selling point while establishing a brand image for each region and push them to be developed accordingly....

Develop an integrated management of information, public relations and customer relations through the use of information technology” (Brickshawana, 2003)

TAT has coordinated with the implementation of tourism policy of Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MoTS). At the same time, based on the general direction of the MoTS, TAT has issued travel policies based on the specific conditions of the TAT. One of the TAT’s tourism policies is to “promote cooperation in all levels domestically and internationally on promotion for the development of tourism markets. This aims to get rid of all hindrances in the tourism industry and pave the way for Thailand to be the tourism hub of Southeast Asia” (see more in appendix D).

Mr. Pichai Raktasinha further explained that TATHCM tried its best in recent years in order to promote the beautiful images of Thai tourism to Vietnamese tourists as well as to enhance the positive image of the nation to be a well-known place in the heart of international friends including the Vietnamese<sup>17</sup>.

On the one hand, TATHCM always works with strategic policy of the TAT quarters head. On the other hand, TATHCM itself also has specific policies in

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<sup>17</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Pichai Raktashinha, director of ASEAN, South Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand, on November 6, 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand*

accordance with the Vietnamese tourists for the highest efficiency for Thai tourism and satisfaction to Vietnamese tourists when they travel to the Kingdom of Thailand.

After setting TATHCM up, many projects and programs have been implemented and practiced to adapt with the movement of the growth of Vietnam market. TATHCM has performed its main tasks discussed above as “marketing, collect information, information center, and collaborate with different tourism businesses” in accordance with the strategy “promote cooperation in all levels domestically and internationally on promotion for the development of tourism markets. This aims to get rid of all hindrances in the tourism industry and pave the way for Thailand to be the tourism hub of Southeast Asia”.

At the governmental level, TATHCM has enthusiastically participated in many events organized by the Vietnamese side in order to make a good relation with Vietnam’s organizations and private sectors in general and promote a positive image of Thailand in particular. It can be noticed in many events that TATHCM attended such as Hue festival which is an extraordinary cultural event of Vietnam and attracts millions of visitors every year. Yearly events such as Ho Chi Minh International Travel Expo (ITE), Hanoi Tourism Fair (HTF) and International Cuisine Festival are also good occasions for TATHCM to introduce itself and to bring Thai tourism destination, Thai culture and Thai cuisine to the world in general and the Vietnamese in particular.

Apart from attending to events organized by the Vietnamese side, TATHCM has also organized many kinds of events by itself or received support from Royal Thai Embassy in Hanoi, the Royal Thai Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City, and the

Thai Trade Center. It can be seen at Thailand Cultural Day in 2009, 2010 and Thai Night in 2009, 2010, 2011 with different themes aimed to promote Thai positive image and culture to the Vietnamese.

Apart from policies in participating and organizing events to attract the interest from the Vietnamese tourists, TATHCM still focuses on mass media activities. TATHCM's cooperation with mass media has performed in many forms such as joint advertising with travel agents, PR and marketing via short documentary films about Thai tourism, and advertisement on newspapers and magazines.

Ms. Chutathip Charoenlarp, director of TAT HCM further explained that "TAT is not on duty to attract tourists from Vietnam to Thailand only, but TAT also deliberately introducing the national image of Thailand to Vietnamese, helping the Vietnamese to understand and know more about Thailand"<sup>18</sup>.

Another policy that can be considered as a very effective of TATHCM is organizing the "Fam Trip"<sup>19</sup> in order to create better conditions and opportunities for reporters, journalists and travel agents to inspect and examine by themselves the tourism products as well as services that Thailand offers. At the same time, it can create the reliability of Thai tourism to Vietnamese tourists.

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<sup>18</sup> *Personal interview with Ms. Chutathip Charoenlarp, Director of Tourism Authority of Thailand – Ho Chi Minh office, on October 3, 2012 in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.*

<sup>19</sup> *"Fam Trip" is a short name for "Familiarization Trip". The purpose of the trip is to give a specific look at the tourist destinations and see firsthand exactly what goes on and gives a reality feeling for the place so you can recommend it to your customers or readers.*

Side by side with the general policy and activity, the TATHCM has introduced many programs in bringing Thai tourism products more closely to Vietnamese tourists. The TATHCM has launched and promoted many tourism products to the Vietnam Markets such as honeymoons, health tourism, edu-tourism, and new tourist attractions and destinations such as Kanchanaburi, Isan, Chiang Mai, Phuket, Koh Samui, Hua Hin-Cha Am, etc...

Understanding that the Vietnamese market is a young and active market, to provide more confidence and convenience for the tourists, more applications for smart phone users such as iPhone, iPad, Blackberry, and Android were launched either by TAT or by private sectors. One remarkable example is the campaign named “Smile Land” that TAT launched on June 27, 2011- new social-media game applications to promote the country’s iconic images – the famous transportation known as the tuk-tuk and the extremely popular Thai food. “Smile Land” also capitalizes on Thailand’s well-known personality character, the Thai smile. The games are targeted at the millions of young people using Facebook and smart phones (Tatnews, 2011).

“TAT has initiated an active digital marketing strategy in order to promote and strengthen the image and positioning of Thailand's tourism industry. Digital is the new media to reach the Internet and smart phone users, all of whom are well-educated with high income levels” said Mr. Suraphon Svetasreni, Governor of Tourism Authority of Thailand (Tatnews, 2011).

To end this part of Chapter III, the author would like to list a few targets of the TATHCM in promoting Thai tourism in Vietnam market in 2012. For the marketing strategy, the TATHCM aims to focus on increasing the first time visitors and re-

visitors as well as promoting new tourist attractions and tourism products. For the product strategy, the TATHCM aims to maintain and develop more suitable package tours to some popular destinations beyond Bangkok like Ayutthaya, Nakhon Ratchasima, Hua Hin- Cha Am, etc.. as well as to develop products for Free Independent Traveler (FIT) especially Free & Easy Packages. For the activities strategy, the office would like to expand more cooperation with potential local tour operators in promoting new tourist attractions and go deeper in changing the itinerary and joining promotion with tour operators, ticket agencies for PR and advertisement to improve the Thailand Brand<sup>20</sup>.

The next section will discuss more about how the TATHCM implemented the tourism policy and the development of Thai tourism in Vietnam in the past years since the establishment of TAT representative offices in Ho Chi Minh City.

### **3.3. The development of Thai tourism in Vietnam**

Vietnam is not a big country in terms of economy or technology. Moreover, Vietnam was buried in a very long period of war. The State was under control of China more than one thousand years and fighting with western powers and Japan almost one hundred years after that. Nevertheless, there are several factors that would transform Vietnam from a small market to more substantial one for tourism.

According to the report of TATHCM in 2012, despite the flooding in December 2011, Vietnam had a very good increase of tourists with 28.38%. Vietnam

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<sup>20</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Huynh Dang Khoa, marketing officer of TATHCM on October 6, 2012 in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.*

market has increasingly developed since the establishment of the office in 2008 (TATHCM, 2012).

Many factors can be seen as a success of the development of Thai tourism in Vietnam. Firstly, that is the number of Vietnamese tourists coming to Thailand which has improved gradually from 2008 to 2012. Secondly, the improvement of package tours to Thailand of travel agents and the number of flights between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to Bangkok can be noticed as another element for the development of Thai tourism in Vietnam market. Finally, positive feedback of Vietnamese tourists after traveling to Thailand is good evidence to show how much Thai tourism develops in the country.

It is remarkable that Vietnamese tourist's number has increased in recent years considerably. However, in practice, it requires hard work and effort to achieve this target. Therefore, after its establishment in Ho Chi Minh City, TATHCM in accordance with its strategy and policy has tried its best to promote Thailand's tourist destinations and its national images to Vietnamese people, particularly to attract the Vietnamese tourists travel to Thailand. It can be said that TATHCM with the task of operating the Thai tourism in all four countries Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, there are many activities to promote Thai tourism and introduce the country in general. TATHCM has a lot of activities in collaboration with other agencies and offices such as Royal Thai Embassy in Ha Noi, Royal Thai Consulate



General in Ho Chi Minh City, Thai Trade Center and Team Thailand help to promote Thailand's image<sup>21</sup>.

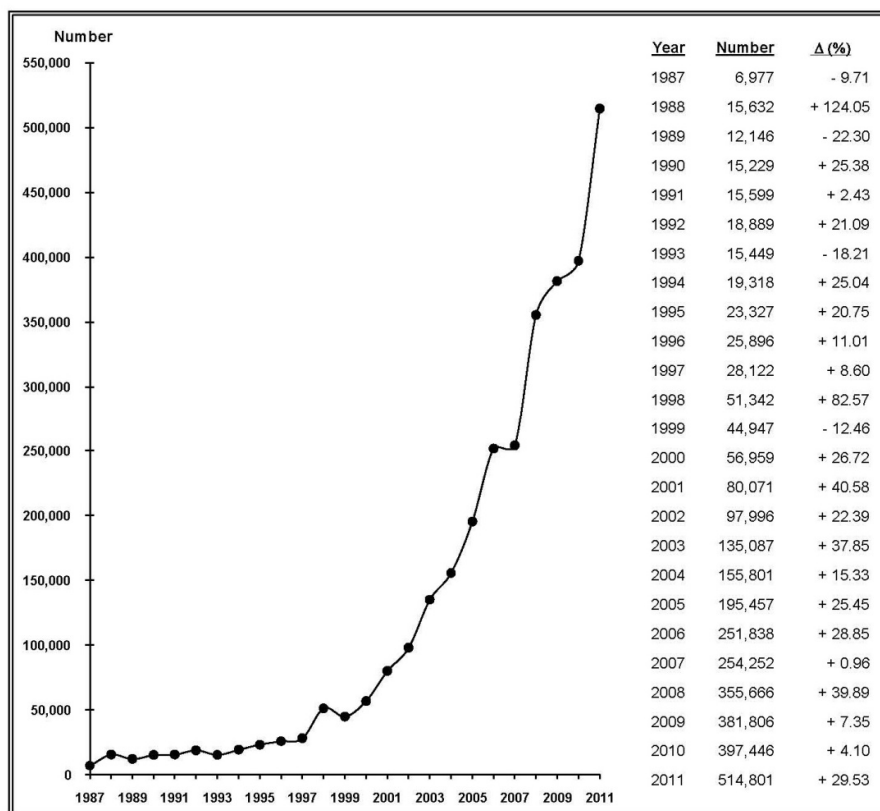
“The positive attitude of the Vietnamese towards Thailand is more clearly seen in the present. By specific activities of tourism, TATHCM has really helped the Vietnamese people to understand and know more about Thailand gradually. TATHCM has contributed to the relationship between Vietnam and Thailand, especially the people-to-people relation has also improved significantly”<sup>22</sup>.

Additionally, the increasing number of Vietnamese tourists to Thailand from 2008 to 2012 is clearly shown in the Vietnamese tourist chart of TAT.

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<sup>21</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Huynh Dang Khoa, marketing officer of TATHCM on October 6, 2012 in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.*

<sup>22</sup> *Personal interview with Mrs. Natthakarn Sriyaphan, Consul, Royal Thai Consulate General on October 8, 2012 in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.*



Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand<sup>23</sup>

In this section, according to the timeline of establishment of TATHCM, the number of Vietnamese tourists before 2008 would not be discussed in detail. Based on the information from TAT chart, Vietnamese tourists coming to Thailand have increased significantly from 2008 to 2011. In the chart above, at the first year after setting up the office (2008), TATHCM was very successful in attracting Vietnamese tourists to Thailand. The number of 355,666 tourists (increase of 39.89% compared to 2007) is not a small number for the first year operation like TATHCM. Moreover,

<sup>23</sup> TAT provided the author the data table of Vietnamese tourist number in hard copy in occasion of interviewing Mr. Pichai Raktasinha, Director of ASEAN, South Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand, on November 6, 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand.

after 4 years of establishment, TATHCM has reached over to the target of 500,000 (514, 801 tourists is the exact figure).

To achieve a significant number of Vietnamese tourists as seen today, the contribution of TATHCM is undeniable. This result can be asserted as a successful story in promoting Thai tourism of TATHCM and Thailand's offices both government and private sectors. The improvement and development of Thai tourism in Vietnam market can be inferred as good evidence in developing of understanding between Thai and Vietnamese people. Because "diplomatic relations between Thailand and Vietnam is not at government-to-government level only, but people-to-people factor can also play as a key element in tightening the relation of both nations"<sup>24</sup>. It can be noticed very manifestly that tourism is certainly a very effective channel to promote the image of the country, tighten relationships, and increase understanding between people of the two countries in particular.

Additionally, from most of the strategies, policies and programs to promote Thai tourism in Vietnam, TATHCM has not even advertised directly Thailand's package tours. Instead, TATHCM has gradually brought the image of the country, the culture and traditions of Thai people as well as the Thai cuisine to the mass media in Vietnam. TATHCM has systematically introduced Vietnamese people and help them

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<sup>24</sup> *Personal interview with Mrs. Natthakarn Sriyaphan, Consul, Royal Thai Consulate General on October 8, 2012 in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.*

understand and know more about their neighboring country. Thus, Thailand is not only for tourism, but also includes the people, history and culture of Thailand<sup>25</sup>.

Apart from the number of Vietnamese tourists coming to Thailand from 2008 to 2012, the improvement of package tours to Thailand of travel agents and the number of flights between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to Bangkok can be noticed as another element to prove for the development of Thai tourism in Vietnam market. It is very easy to understand at this point, for a very simple reason, if Thai tourism has not been developed and improved its role in the market and Vietnamese tourists do not travel to Thailand, the transportation between two nations as well as package tours from Vietnam to Thailand could not be increased and flourished as it is today.

Additionally, one of the most important factors that helps increase the greater number of Vietnamese tourists to Thailand is transportation. Airlines operators in the region have also grown remarkably in number over the past few years in Vietnam in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Last year alone (2012), many new outbound travel agencies were established and low cost carriers have developed a strong presence in Vietnam. Regardless of road transportation, air carriers between Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City of Vietnam and Bangkok of Thailand have been fully booked. Compared to more than 15 years ago when the first Vietnamese tourist came to Thailand, the transportation today is more convenient. According to the information from the airlines, Vietnam - Bangkok, daily flights are significantly increased. Some airlines not only have one flight per day, but increased to two flights, even three flights per

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<sup>25</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Pichai Raktasinha, Director of ASEAN, South Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand, on November 6, 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand.*

day between Ho Chi Minh-Bangkok and Hanoi-Bangkok. For example, Air Asia operates three flights a day for Ho Chi Minh – Bangkok route, and Vietnam Airlines operates three flights a day for Hanoi – Bangkok route. For short-haul destination, two or three flights a day are very significant number.

Currently there are seven airlines operating between Vietnam and Thailand including Vietnam Airlines, Thai Airways, Air Asia, Lufthansa, Turkish Airlines, Qatar Airways, and Vietjetair. With total 140 flights per week from Vietnam both in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh to Bangkok, Thailand have the most available flights for Vietnamese tourists traveling to Thailand (see more in appendix E and appendix F). Besides that more and more international border gates were recently opened for trading and traveling between Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand.

Moreover, in order to further develop aviation facilities, increase frequencies, seat capacity and services in the future, Thailand and Vietnam do not link only major places like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city, but also another destinations, which have tourism potential in the two countries such as Ubon Ratchathani-Da Nang, Bangkok-Danang to help encourage tourism flow. For example, in December 2011, the delegation of People Committee of Hai Phong city of Vietnam led by Deputy Governor of Hai Phong city came to Bangkok and had a meeting with tourism business sector to discuss tourism's cooperation between Thailand and Hai Phong city particularly. In addition, they had a meeting in exchanging tourism issues with TAT at Bangkok. Many matters was discussed and the interesting point made at this meeting is the agreement to help each other to open a new direct flight between Hai Phong city

and Bangkok city in order to encourage tourists travel to each destinations more and more in the near future.

Along with the development of airline routes, road systems connecting Vietnam and Thailand via Laos and Cambodia were built with high quality such as road number 9, Thai-Laos friendship bridge no.1, no.2, no.3 and rail service between Thailand and Lao PDR. (Nong Khai-Thanalaeng) also has been launched in March 2009. It can be said that transportation is no longer a “nightmare” for Vietnamese tourists who want to travel to Thailand by road as before.

Another signal that could not be forgotten when talking about the development of Thai tourism in Vietnam is the diversity of tour packages to Thailand from Vietnam.

In the past, Vietnamese tourists have known Thai tourism with two familiar locations, Bangkok and Pattaya. Today, other of Thailand’s tourist destinations has become familiar and more well-known to Vietnamese tourists such as Hua Hin, Koh Samui, Rayong, Chiang Mai and Phuket.

Moreover, type of tourism products in Thailand is also developed and promoted more widely in Vietnam. Thai tourism products not only encapsulated in the leisure travel tour packages as before, but it has also known to wider groups such as golf tourism, medical tourism, edu-tourism, eco-tourism, etc.

In the past, Vietnamese travelers had no interest in traveling to Thailand for sports, health and spa. There are only a few Vietnamese female travelers who were interested in health and beauty would like to try Thai massage. They love to have

quality massage in Thailand. However, the majority of Vietnamese tourists were not interested because the services are deemed expensive and unnecessary. Also they could find plenty of these in Vietnam. It is the same for other sports, even among businesspersons; Golf is not in their interest since it is expensive. Nevertheless, from 2008 to present, with an attempt of the Thai government, especially Tourism Authority of Thailand and relevant agencies, Thailand is more well-known among Vietnamese for health and spa purposes<sup>26</sup>.

There are several Thai hospitals welcoming Vietnamese patients such as Bangkok hospital, Samitivej Hospital, BNH, Payathai and Superior ART. Samitivej, Payathai and Bangkok Hospitals are known as a place for general health check-up, BNH and Superior ART are recognized as a professional place for couples who wish to have a baby. Moreover, Wuttisak, one of the famous beauty clinics of Thailand, opened new branch in Ho Chi Minh City in October, 2012. This shows that the Vietnamese begin to look after themselves in terms of physical beauty. Many Vietnamese golfers have visited Thailand during weekends for playing golf at the golf courses around Bangkok and nearby such as Pattaya and Hua Hin. Health, medical and sport tourism are also packages that Thai tourism has considered to put more attempt to attract Vietnamese tourists because of many potential reasons in this groups, said Mr. Pichai Raktasinha<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> *Personal interview with Mrs. Nguyen Hao Thanh Phi, Director of Blue Sky Travel (BST), Vietnam, on October 3, 2012 in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.*

<sup>27</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Pichai Raktasinha, Director of ASEAN, South Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand, on November 6, 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand.*

Thailand is well-known as a shopping paradise among Vietnamese visitors due to its high quality products at affordable prices. When visiting Thailand, Vietnamese travelers like to do shopping, visit historical places and experience Thai culture and traditions. Most of them look for clothes, shoes and souvenirs. This is because the diversity and availability of product in Thailand is better than in Vietnam<sup>28</sup>. In recent years, Thailand is always the best choice for shoppers from all ranks of Vietnamese society. In addition, Thailand attempted to become an interesting place for shopping for Vietnamese visitors. From 2008 to the present, Thailand has constant by launched special offers for Vietnamese tourists in shopping season from June to August in every year. Let us look at one of announcements last year (2012) which shows how Thailand tried to attract Vietnamese travelers.

“Special offer for Vietnamese passport holders! Get a FREE Miss Sixty carry-on bag (worth 2,150.-) with min. 25,000. - purchase. (Valid for Vietnamese passport holders only. Limit: 1 premium / person / day)”<sup>29</sup>

Another good evidence to illustrate how much Thai tourism develops in Vietnam is the positive feedback of Vietnamese tourists after traveling to Thailand. Tourism development is not only recorded by the number of tourists, the improvement of aviation carriers or the variety of tour packages only, but it can be recognized by the positive attitude of tourists after visiting the country.

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<sup>28</sup> *Focus group interview with Vietnamese students in Bangkok on November 16, 2012*

<sup>29</sup> *Quoted from an advertisement of Central Grand Sale 2012 in campaign “Amazing Thailand Grand Sale 2012”*



There are a lot of opinions about Thai tourism. However, it is impossible to quote all of them in the small section like this. Another way to study how Vietnamese tourists think about Thailand after they travel to the Kingdom is to ask about their feelings after traveling to Thailand.

The findings from questionnaires and focus group discussions show that Vietnamese visitors are quite satisfied when they choose Thailand for their holiday trip. Most of them have a positive attitude towards Thailand. The tourists normally answered that they love Thailand and would be pleased to come back if they have a chance<sup>30</sup>. Besides, some of them chose to express their good attitude toward Thailand through mass media. They wrote what they experienced, what they saw and how they felt about Thailand. They shared and provided many useful tips and showed that they enjoyed the happiness in “the land of smiles” to other Vietnamese tourists who are interested in traveling to Thailand.

An interesting example is a writing by Mr. Dang Quoc Chi, a Vietnamese tourist who used to travel to Thailand. He shared a lot of experiences, feelings about Thailand and Thai people. This can be an example to show the positive attitude of Vietnamese tourist towards the land of smiles – Thailand.

He revealed that “I arrived in Bangkok in the late August, 2002. At that time, I did not know that it would be an important and remarkable time of my life, marked “my love” to the beautiful country of Thailand. Thai people are very friendly. I could not find their hospitality and kindness in the other countries I have been to.... . He then concluded that traveling is not only a chance to experience the fun when you go

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<sup>30</sup> *Information is gathered from the field trip in Vietnam in October, 2012.*

to other destination, but also a chance to learn good things to improve yourself. One thing that I am really impressed with the Thai people is their imperturbability. The shopping centers in Bangkok or Chiang Mai are very crowded but orderly. Customers themselves respect each other. No pushing or shoving. If they accidentally bumped into each other or stepped on the foot of each other, they said "Kho Thoot - sorry" and smiled. You can see this friendly smile of the Thai people everywhere in "Thailand - the land of smiles".

He further commented that "since then, regularly twice a year, I go back to Thailand, approximately 20 times. Despite returning to Thailand so many times, but I am still excited as the first time I got there. Every time when the plane prepares for landing at the Suvarnabhumi airport, I have a feeling like I'm going to get back my second hometown, Thailand – my beloved country" (Tin nhanh Việt Nam, 2011).

The development of Thai tourism in Vietnam market can also be understood in another aspect that is Thai tourism has opened a new door for Vietnamese people and Vietnamese tourists have the opportunity to learn and know more about the country.

With efforts to develop tourism in general, Thai tourism has gradually brought the good image of the country and Thai people to Vietnam as well as helped the Vietnamese people learn and understand more about Thailand. The relationship of people-to-people between two nations has improved significantly throughout the channel of tourism. Next chapter will explore the popularity of Thai tourism in Vietnam market in order to understand more how Thai tourism contributes to the development of Thai-Vietnamese relations.

## Chapter IV

### THE POPULARITY OF THAI TOURISM IN VIETNAM

This chapter examines the popularity of Thai tourism in Vietnam. Structurally, this chapter is divided into four main sections. The first part deals with Vietnamese perception of traveling. The second part discusses Thailand as a destination. The third and fourth section's focus are images of Thailand in Vietnam and main channel for Vietnamese tourists to get information about Thailand.

#### 4.1. Vietnamese Perception of Traveling

The rise and improvement of economic conditions in Vietnam market have an effect on the tourism atmosphere in the nation including traveling to the other countries. The trend of traveling is more and more common as the Vietnamese enjoys higher standards of living as well as the changing perception of Vietnamese towards tourism in general. These bring tourism closer and closer to the people step-by-step.

Vietnam has a great change to adopt and open the door for tourism development inside the country. It is a good signal for tourism development in near future and it is another key factor for tourism development in Vietnam. Additionally, perceptions of tourism development and innovative thinking to develop tourism are also significantly improved in the understanding of Vietnamese<sup>31</sup>. The shift in

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<sup>31</sup> *Personal interview with Mrs. Nguyen Thi Kim Chau, Lecturer at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ho Chi Minh on October 24, 2012 in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.*

perception on tourism can be referred as an optimistic signal for Thai tourist investment in Vietnam market and a chance to attract more Vietnamese tourists travel to Thailand. Moreover, awareness at all levels and sectors of tourism development has gradually had created positive changes in Vietnamese understanding of tourism. At national level, tourism has been considered as an important economic sector or spearhead of the nation. Therefore, tourism activities have finally attracted more attention of the entire society.

Some Vietnamese tourists pointed out that travelling is to change the environment, enjoy a different atmosphere, relax and find something new in life to experience<sup>32</sup>. It seems common for people and to explore and discover new things. Travel is a form of rest, the combination of learning and discovering places where you travel. Normally, Vietnamese tourists said that traveling is away to relax after long working days under stress, pressure and fatigue<sup>33</sup>. In other words, people travel to discover and learn more about the geography, customs and local lifestyle of the places where they visit. Overall, Vietnamese people thought that tourism can be enjoyable and bring new things to them.

People have different purposes when going abroad. However, the main purpose of most Vietnamese tourists includes recreation, relaxation and taking a rest. Moreover, travel can help them to get more new information about food, landscapes, people, customs, culture and local lifestyle that they hardly approach if they do not go and witness by themselves. As the Vietnamese have an idiom “Đi một ngày đàng, học

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<sup>32</sup> *Focus group interview with Vietnamese students in Bangkok on November 16, 2012.*

<sup>33</sup> *Gathering info from field trip in Vietnam in October and November, 2012*

một sàng khôn” can be translated into English as “travel for a day and you will be wiser”. Therefore, it is clearly shown why Vietnamese love to travel to other places that are to explore new things.

Tourism is a great form of entertainment that has drawn interest from most of the Vietnamese have in recent years. “Apart from relaxing purpose, tourism helps travelers open their mind to learn a new knowledge, adapt new things, and catch in touch with the changing trend in the world”<sup>34</sup>.

From a focus group interview, one student addressed that “people may understand what they read in book very well. However, reading is not as useful as a trip to the outdoor places. Therefore, tourism is a very good learning experience and effective way for travelers to see the world apart from their places”<sup>35</sup>.

Additionally, for young travelers, “traveling will improve very good communication skills. If they go more, they will get more and learn more from real life. The feeling after a trip, spending time on refreshment and let their mind go, is much better than the feeling before taking that trip. Getting more energy to fight with things are waiting ahead”, said Mr. Lai Minh Duy, general manager of TST tourist<sup>36</sup>.

TAT HCM’s report explained the trend of young Vietnamese travelers that “the new trend of the Vietnamese tourist is to travel by their own, with a group of 5 or 6. Even for the first time visit to Thailand, they hunt for the special discounts in some

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<sup>34</sup> Focus group interview with Vietnamese students in Bangkok on November 16, 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Focus group interview with Vietnamese students in Bangkok on November 16, 2012.

<sup>36</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Lai Minh Duy, General Manager of TST Tourist, Vietnam, on October 5, 2012

popular websites” (TATHCM report, 2012). It can be seen that Vietnamese tourists, perception on traveling is quite more open than before. Tourism is not only based on package tours of travel agents. Their thinking and attitude toward tourism is more independent and flexible. It also can be noticed from the tour programs to Thailand by travel agents in Vietnam that average tour to Bangkok-Pattaya has added more new tourist attractions such as: Siam Niramit, Madame Tussauds Bangkok, Siam Ocean World, Khao Kheow Open Zoo, Khao Yai etc. This is the result from the demand of the market. The Vietnamese tourists can now enjoy and prefer to pay more to get better services and experiences. They are now looking for new tourism products for health, beauty, special interest like golf, caravan or even wedding album oversea (see more in appendix G and H).

The perception of Vietnamese tourist was further explained by Mr. Nguyen Van My, director of Lua Viet tourist added, “For years, the Vietnamese tourists love to travel to Thailand because of cheap prices, friendly people, many places for entertainment and shopping. Actually, the tourist destinations of Thailand have nothing compared to Vietnam. However, Thai tourism services are more admirable and can be described as “best of the best” (tin nong, 2012).

It can be said that Vietnamese tourists nowadays have started to open their mind and dare to travel abroad, to explore and study the new things. Generally, for the Vietnamese traveling is relaxing and learning. This is why Thailand can be an interesting destination and gets popularity in Vietnam market.

## 4.2. Thailand as a Destination

Thai tourism is changing its own form and finds opportunities in the integration process in Vietnam market. Thai tourism has a significant chance due to better living conditions and tourism trend in Vietnam nowadays. Because of the positive attitude toward tourism in general Thai tourism, therefore, has been given a chance to gain the popularity in this market.

Vietnamese perception of traveling become that has been discussed in previous section helps us understand more about their reasons for traveling to Thailand. Before making a decision to travel to Thailand, there are many reasons for the Vietnamese tourists to decide among their choices. According to Mr. Lai Minh Duy and Mrs. Nguyen Hao Thanh Phi, short haul and cheap price package can be counted as key reasons of Vietnamese travelers when they chose Thailand for their destination<sup>37</sup>.

However, based on data directly collected from Vietnamese tourists, they choose Thailand because of many beautiful tourist destinations (44.22%), many attractive entertainment centers (22.45%), shopping paradise (17.69%), and rich and diverse in culture (10.20%). Even one of three channels to get the information about Thailand is through relatives and friends (see more in appendix 9). Nevertheless, this is not the main reason for visiting. It is only 1.36% of informants said that they travel to this country to visit friends and relatives. Normally, Vietnamese tends to travel in

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<sup>37</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Lai Minh Duy, general manager of TST tourist on October 5, 2012 and Mrs. Nguyen Hao Thanh Phi, Director, Blue Sky Travel (BST) on October 3, 2012 in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.*

group than travel alone. The result of 52.21% shows that they travel with family members and close friends, 18.58% travel with travel agents, and 15.93% travel with colleagues, and only 9.73% travel alone. This manifestly shows that group traveling is popular among Vietnamese tourists (see more in appendix I).

It can be said that Vietnamese' passion and positive perception of traveling is combined with what is available in Thai tourism. This is also another factor for Thai tourism to become more popular in Vietnam.

Moreover, Thai tourism has increasingly well-known among Vietnamese people through specific activities that attract visitors from all areas of Vietnam. In order to make Thailand as “a tourist destination” for Vietnamese tourists, Thai tourism has brought several tourist products to many fields in Vietnam. It is included the groups as young travelers and officers. Their tourism has been promoted through several aspects such as culture, education, and health.

On cultural aspect, Thai tourism has cooperated with many government and non-government agencies such as Royal Thai Embassy in Hanoi, Royal Thai Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh city, Thai Trade Center, Thai Business Association in Ho Chi Minh, and Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) in Vietnam to organize many cultural activities in Vietnam such as “Thai Night – Thainess” in 2009, “Thai Night – Loy Krathong” in 2010 and “Thai Night – Muay Thai” in 2011 in order to promote the cooperation between two countries, especially to enhance the understanding of the Vietnamese towards Thailand as well as to mark Thailand as a cultural destination. Through tourism products, Thai tourism has also introduced many cultural tour packages to the Vietnamese such as “Ayutthaya – the



world heritage”, “yearly Thai festivities – amazing cultural events” and many packages go along with specific festivals like Songkran in April, Loy Krathong in November or vegetarian festival in Phuket, Candle festival in Ubon Ratchathani, and “light and sound in Kanchanaburi and Phimai historical park”.

Moreover, on educational field, TATHCM has organized many “fam trip” for Vietnamese students and related agencies to travel to Thailand and inspect the educational atmosphere and educational system of Thailand. Besides, the office also cooperates with the Ministry of education of Thailand to organize the “Thailand education fair in Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi” in order to introduce and promote Thai education to Vietnamese students. With its effort, Thai tourism has successfully organized the “Thailand Cultural Day” in Vietnam National University – University of Social Sciences and Humanities in bringing Thai culture, Thai cuisine and Thai dance to the students of Vietnam in general and students of Thai studies in particular. This event is another popular activity among Thai studies’ students in Vietnam and become a yearly activity since 2009 not really relevant here. Moreover, Thai institutions have various long- and short-term programs to suit the needs of international students at affordable fees. Educational tourism can be developed and promoted to bring more Vietnamese students to Thailand. Thai tourism has also promoted the image of the country through education and advertised the country as an educational destination.

Additionally, hospitals and medical centers in Thailand are recognized as being among the best in Southeast Asia. With the better standard of life, the Vietnamese have started to care about their health and beauty. Apart from this,

Thailand's golf courses are renowned for their international standards, first-class facilities and services with affordable price. Therefore, Thai tourism has taken advantage of this great opportunity to advertise and promote the tourism package of health and sport tourism. For example, TAT has launched the 'Thailand Golf Paradise' to sell golf package in Vietnam market. Moreover, the "Thailand medical and health tourism fair" was successfully organized in many places in Vietnam such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh and Cantho city. This is really a good chance for Thailand in promoting sport, health and medical services to Vietnamese tourists. It also can be considered as a good way to introduce Thailand as a destination for sport, health and medical treatments.

Apart from cultural tourism, edu-tourism or health and medical tourism, Thailand is also promoted as a destination for pre-wedding album shooting and honeymoon places. Thai tourism is very active in term of creating a new product to meet the need of Vietnamese tourists. For new trend package, Thai tourism focuses on young couples. Normally before the Wedding Ceremony in Vietnam, the couples spend time to prepare for a wedding album to keep memorable moment together. In addition, after wedding ceremony, they will travel to many domestic places for their honeymoon popular destinations are Da Lat, Nha Trang, Hanoi, Sapa etc... which cost them as much as the trip to Thailand. Sea and mountain are popular for wedding album outdoor.

Therefore, investing more on campaign and promotion for wedding album shooting and honeymoon packages in Vietnam market can be a successful strategy. In order to approach to this target, Mr Huynh Dang Khoa explained, "TAT HCM has

work closely with private sector and Vietnamese local studios cooperating with wedding planners to offer favorable prices for wedding album photo shoot in Thailand”.

He also added “Thai tourism has studied well that there are different clients from Vietnam to Thailand. Various packages and activities have been developed and offered to this market. It is indicated that the Vietnamese travelers are more interested in traveling to new places rather than getting back to the place they have visited”<sup>38</sup>.

In order to meet the needs of Vietnamese travelers, Thai tourism has flexibly created different types of tourism products for all travelers from all sectors of the Vietnam market<sup>39</sup>. With market research and good preparation, it can be said that Thai tourism has been successful in introducing Thailand as rich and diverse destination for Vietnamese tourists as well as in attracting more interest from Vietnamese travelers.

#### **4.3. Main channel to get information about Thailand**

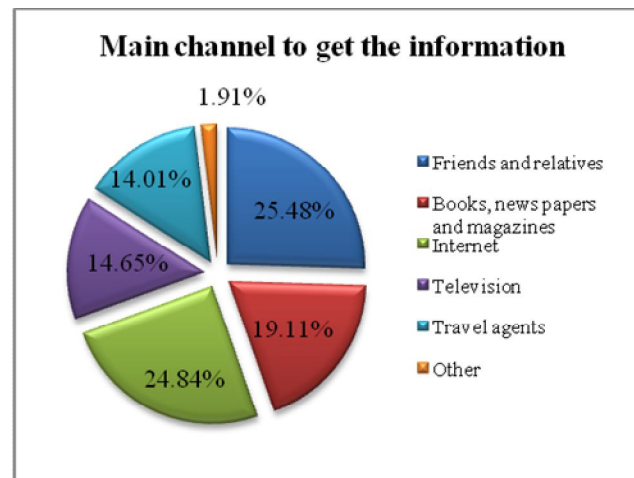
Previously, it was hard for Vietnamese tourists to search for some information about Thai tourism in the previous time. The Key channel to get the traveling information on Thailand was through friends and relatives who lived or used to travel to Thailand before and mostly through travel agents. Nowadays, Vietnamese travelers can find information easily through different channels such as internet, social network like Facebook, and advertisements on local newspapers, magazines and television.

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<sup>38</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Huynh Dang Khoa, marketing officer of TATHCM on October 6, 2012 in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.*

<sup>39</sup> *Personal interview with Ms. Chutathip Charoenlarp, Director of Tourism Authority of Thailand – Ho Chi Minh office, on October 3, 2012 in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.*

The data collection from fieldwork shows that Thai tourism become more widely known in Vietnam and can be found through many channels. The figure shows that they know Thailand mostly through friends, relatives and television. However, the number does not have a big different gap from internet channel.



It can be noticed from the chart above that one of the main channels to get the information about Thailand is internet with percentage of 24.84 while friends and relatives takes 25.48%. The number of books, news papers and magazines is 19.11%. Television is also another main channel for Thai tourism with 14.65%.

It can be seen that Thai tourism has more channels to approach to the Vietnamese tourists, particularly young travelers than in the past. In the country like Vietnam, young population is very active and can discover all the information they would like to get from different channels.

According to the report of TAT HCM in 2012, young generation is a main target for Thai tourism as well. With a significant number of internet users and smart phones owners (50% of Vietnam population use internet with more than 32 million

use internet daily) together with online shopping and the rise of e-commerce, Vietnamese tourists can easily gain access to the information about Thailand through social media and internet (TATHCM, 2012).

It can be said that information about tourism of Thailand can be found in mass media in Vietnam such as advertisement on newspapers and magazines, short news on Ho Chi Minh and Vietnam television, and short documentary films about Thailand's tourist destinations on television. More advertisements could also be seen in magazines, newspapers, television and billboards. Moreover, after setting up the representative office in Ho Chi Minh, TAT has played a very active role in promoting Thai images and Thai tourism in different channels in Vietnam market.

#### **4.4. Images of Thailand in Vietnam**

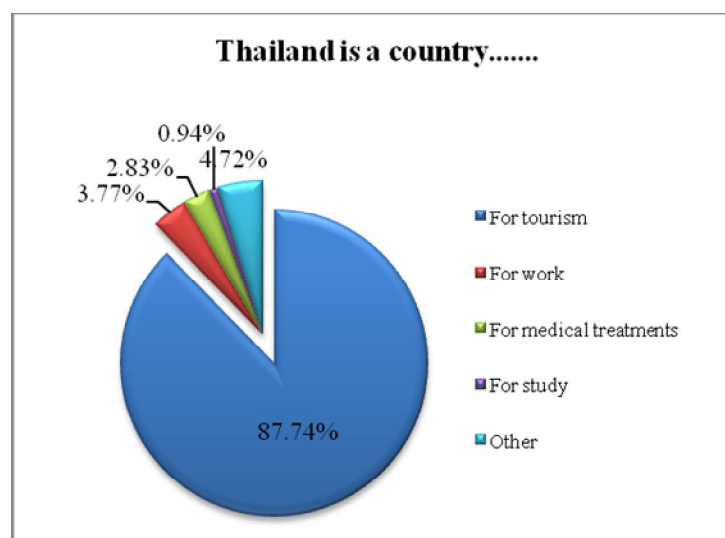
TAT put a great effort to introduce Thailand as a destination, to bring potential and diverse tourism products to Vietnamese and to provide Thailand's information in Vietnam market. Thai tourism has contributed its part in building good images for the Kingdom through the channel of tourism. Good result and positive feedback from Vietnamese tourists can visibly see today and Thai tourism has become more popular in Vietnam.

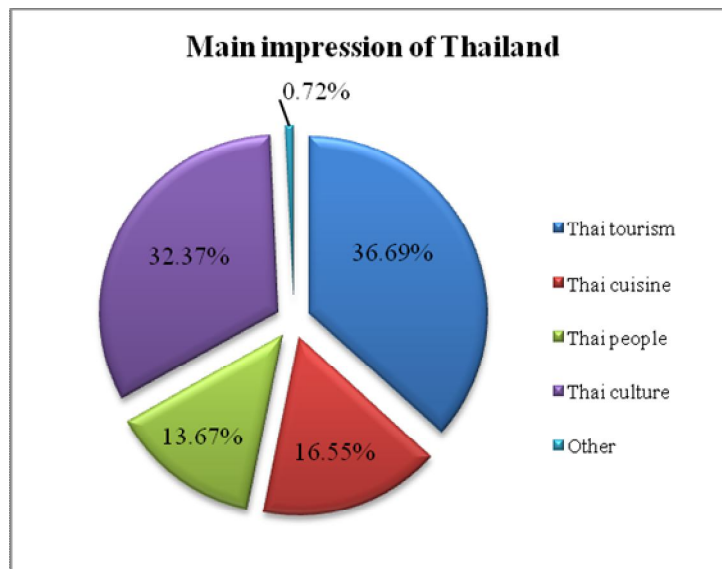
The popularity of Thai tourism can also be seen from the recognition of Vietnamese tourist towards Thai tourism. Based on the information collected from the questionnaire (see more in appendix 9) answered by Vietnamese tourists, the result shows that the percentage of Vietnamese visitors who recognized Thailand as a country for tourism is up to 87.74%. This figure is much higher than 3.77% of travelers who think of Thailand as a country for work, and 2.83% for medical

treatments. Moreover, when being asked about their main impression of Thailand, most of the answer is Thai tourism and Thai culture. 36.69% of Vietnamese tourists chose Thai tourism for their answer, 32.37% for Thai culture, 16.55% for Thai cuisine and the rest of 13.67% is for Thai people. Further explanation, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Thu Ha, a 48 years old tourist, is working for C&T company, said that

“She was impressed by the Thai tourism industry. Especially, the policies and strategies are used to attract the tourists. On the terms of tourist attractions, although Thailand did not have the landscape more than Vietnam but tourist services are one of the main factors contributing to the success of Thai tourism. It is really amazing”.

Although the numbers collected data here is only limited to a certain number of Vietnamese tourists as mentioned in the limitation of the research in chapter I, but the results can reflect that Vietnamese tourists know quite well about Thailand and have good impression on Thai tourism. Detailed information can be found in following charts.





The popularity of Thai tourism is not only familiar to the Vietnamese tourists who live in Vietnam; but it is also very popular with Vietnamese tourists who live in other countries (Việt Kiều). From the interviews with Mr. Lai Minh Duy, General Manager of TST Tourist and Mrs. Nguyen Hao Thanh Phi, Director of Blue Sky Travel (BST), it can be stated that most Việt Kiều who come back to visit their homeland, Vietnam, tend to have a family trip with their relatives. It is interesting to know that most of the holiday trips of Việt Kiều were taken place in Thailand<sup>40</sup>.

Additionally, the popularity of Thai tourism in Vietnam can establish its position in this market despite the competitive condition with tourism of other countries.

In fact, at the present, Thai tourism is put in the very competitive atmosphere with the tourism promotion agencies of many countries such as Malaysia, Singapore,

<sup>40</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Lai Minh Duy, general manager of TST tourist on October 5, 2012 and Mrs. Nguyen Hao Thanh Phi, director of BST on October 3, 2012.*

and South Korea. However, Thai tourism has also proven its position by its own unique characteristics. Thailand is still the first choice even for first time Vietnamese visitors<sup>41</sup>. This feature can be clearly explained by the record of department of tourism, Ministry of tourism and sport of Thailand about the first visitors and re-visiting of Vietnamese tourists<sup>42</sup>.

| Profile of Vietnamese tourist                  |         | 2011    | % Δ   | % Share           |
|--|---------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| <b>Sex</b>                                     |         |         |       |                   |
| Male   | 294,416 | + 22.56 | 57.19 |                   |
| Female   | 220,385 | + 40.18 | 42.81 |                   |
| <b>Age</b>                                     |         |         |       |                   |
| Under 25                                       | 68,757  | + 60.85 | 13.36 |                   |
| 25 - 34  | 164,001 | + 21.49 | 31.86 |                   |
| 35 - 44  | 144,318 | + 28.13 | 28.03 |                   |
| 45 - 54  | 85,858  | + 20.47 | 16.68 |                   |
| 55 and over                                    | 51,867  | + 44.85 | 10.08 | 0.00              |
| <b>Frequency of Visit</b>                      |         |         |       |                   |
| First visit                                    | 201,829 | + 59.20 | 39.21 |                   |
| Revisit  | 312,972 | + 15.63 | 60.79 |                   |
| <b>Travel Arrangement</b>                      |         |         |       |                   |
| Group Tour                                     | 174,155 | + 71.84 | 33.83 |                   |
| Non Group Tour                                 | 340,646 | + 15.05 | 66.17 |                   |
| <b>Purpose of Visit</b>                        |         |         |       |                   |
| Holiday  | 257,798 | + 68.89 | 50.08 |                   |
| Meeting  | 76,703  | + 8.08  | 14.90 |                   |
| Incentive                                      | 89,166  | - 6.62  | 17.32 |                   |
| Convention                                     | 49,720  | + 12.79 | 9.66  |                   |
| Exhibition                                     | 1,336   | + 15.17 | 0.26  |                   |
| Others   | 40,078  | + 21.06 | 7.79  |                   |
| <b>Average Growth Rate</b>                     |         |         |       |                   |
| Average Growth Rate 1987-1999                  |         |         |       | + 16.79 %         |
| Average Growth Rate 2000-2011                  |         |         |       | + 22.16 %         |
| <b>Average Growth Rate 1987-2011</b>           |         |         |       | <b>+ 19.63 %</b>  |
| <b>Average Length of Stay</b>                  |         |         |       |                   |
|  |         |         |       | 2011              |
| Average Length of Stay                         |         |         |       | 6.04 Days         |
| <b>Average Expenditures (person/day)</b>       |         |         |       |                   |
| (Baht)   |         |         |       | 4,034.70 + 0.26   |
| (US\$)   |         |         |       | 132.33 + 4.21     |
| <b>Revenue</b>                                 |         |         |       |                   |
| (Million Baht)                                 |         |         |       | 12,545.47 + 44.19 |
| (Million US\$)                                 |         |         |       | 411.46 + 49.86    |
| <b>Note:</b> Exchange rate 1 US\$ = 30.49 Baht |         |         |       |                   |

From the chart, it can be noticed that in the total number of Vietnamese visitors traveling to Thailand in 2011, first time visitors to Thailand accounted for

<sup>41</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Huynh Dang Khoa, marketing officer of TATHCM on October 6, 2012

<sup>42</sup> TAT provided the author the data table of Vietnamese tourist number in hard copy in occasion of interviewing Mr. Pichai Raktasinha, Director of ASEAN, South Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand, on November 6, 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand.



39.21%. However, revisiting travelers accounted for 60.79%. The figure of revisit travelers can also be a very good evidence to prove for the popularity of Thai tourism in Vietnam market. Although there are many challenges is waiting ahead for Thai tourism, the number of the Vietnamese revisiting Thailand can be a good signal for the development of Thai tourism in the market.

Hence, Thai tourism with its own popularity, has gradually contributed their small part in bringing the image of Thailand to the country and people of Vietnam, especially, in shifting the relationship between people-to-people of two nations. It acts as a bridge to connect and help people of the two nations to have the opportunity to learn and come closer together.

On the process to earn its popularity, Thai tourism has been steadily introduced and brought to the Vietnamese in various fields the Thai tourism image in particular and the positive images of the country and the people of Thailand in general.

It can be asserted that Thai tourism has built a stronger and more beautiful image for the Kingdom of Thailand in the Vietnam market through its own channel: Tourism. Thai tourism has penetrated into many areas of Vietnam to promote tourism and national image. At the same time, through the packages to promote different tourism products, Thai tourism has steadily introduced and brought the images about the country, landscape, culture and people of Thailand closer and closer to the Vietnamese.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Vietnamese tourists are very willing to learn new things from traveling. The familiar destinations of Vietnamese

travelers are China, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. However, neighboring countries are more preferred dominate than other countries for young travelers who love adventure and do not want to pay much. If Thai tourism can maintain the position of Thailand as the regional gateway of ASEAN, it will ensure the continuous growth of the tourism industry of Thailand as well as maintain good images of the country in Vietnam.

Last but not least, the award that Thai tourism received in 2011 can be regarded as another evidence for the positive feedback of Vietnamese tourists toward Thai tourism in the heart of Vietnamese tourists. The Kingdom of Thailand and the Tourism Authority of Thailand have been gained the award called “the best and most favorite foreign destination in 2011” (HUBA, 2011) voted by Vietnamese tourists, organized by Báo Tiền Phong (Tien Phong newspaper) – one of the most famous and oldest newspaper in Vietnam. This award is the most prestigious award for foreign tourism in Vietnam.

Finally, it can be said that Thai tourism is not only for the benefit of the country’s economy, but also a key channel to advertise, to introduce and to bring the positive images of the country to the world including Vietnam. Thai tourism can be compared as a bridge to connect Thai culture with outsiders. Development of Thai tourism does not mean just for tourism purpose. However, the development of Thai tourism will benefit other aspects of Thai society in general and in building good images for the nation in particular. As Mr. Pichai Raktasinha further indicated “Thai

tourism still has to work hard on this duty to promote both Thai tourism and Thailand's national image in the heart of friends all over the world"<sup>43</sup>.

After the development of Thai tourism and its contribution to the development of relationship between Thai and Vietnamese people are discussed in this chapter, changes in Vietnamese attitudes toward Thailand and role of Thai tourism in promoting Thai – Vietnamese relations will be explored in detail in next chapter.

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<sup>43</sup> *Personal interview with Mr. Pichai Raktasinha, Director of ASEAN, South Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand, on November 6, 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand.*

## **Chapter V**

### **CHANGING ATTITUDES OF VIETNAMESE TOURISTS**

#### **TOWARD THAILAND**

This chapter includes two main sections. Changing attitudes of Vietnamese tourists toward Thailand and their understanding of Thailand before and after their visit to Thailand will be discussed in the first part and the roles of Thai tourism in promoting Thai – Vietnamese relations are also investigated in the second section of this chapter.

##### **5.1. Changes in Vietnamese attitudes toward Thailand**

As mentioned in the earlier chapters of the thesis, this study aims at providing a new look on Thai - Vietnamese relations, especially in the attitudes of the Vietnamese towards Thailand through tourism.

There are many academic works dealing with Thai-Vietnamese relations, but most of them have focused on diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Thailand in different historical periods. Moreover, there are very few works dealing with people-to-people relation, apart from some research works writing about overseas Vietnamese (Việt Kiều) in Thailand. People-to-people relation will enhance bilateral cooperation and mutual trust and understanding between the two countries. The study of the role of Thai tourism in promoting Thai-Vietnamese relations, especially in changing attitudes of Vietnamese tourists toward Thailand can also be considered as a concrete

factor to show that Thai tourism can contribute to the development of Thai-Vietnamese relationship. This chapter will mainly employ the data collected from the fieldwork in Vietnam during September and October 2012 to examine the changing attitudes of Vietnamese tourists before and after their visiting Thailand.

The survey form aims at collecting information about attitudes, feelings and understandings of Vietnamese tourists toward Thailand. The answers of Vietnamese tourists will be very useful in providing a concrete data for my research, and for the improvement of Thai-Vietnamese relations, both at people-to-people and government-to-government level, in general. This survey consists of three parts. The first part is to seek general information about informants; the second part is to survey their attitudes, feelings and understandings of informants toward Thailand before traveling to Thailand, and the third part is to check the informants' attitudes toward Thailand after they travelled to Thailand.

This part of the chapter V tries to study Vietnamese understanding of Thailand. More importantly, it also seeks to analyze the available materials to explain the factors and to develop a distinctive explanation for the general understanding and attitudes of the Vietnamese towards Thailand.

It can be noticed that the popularity of Thai tourism is increasing within the ASEAN region including Vietnam. With this increase, the older generation and younger consumer markets are also significantly growing. Moreover, the popularity of Thai tourism in Vietnam market has created a positive effect in changing attitudes of Vietnamese tourists toward Thailand.

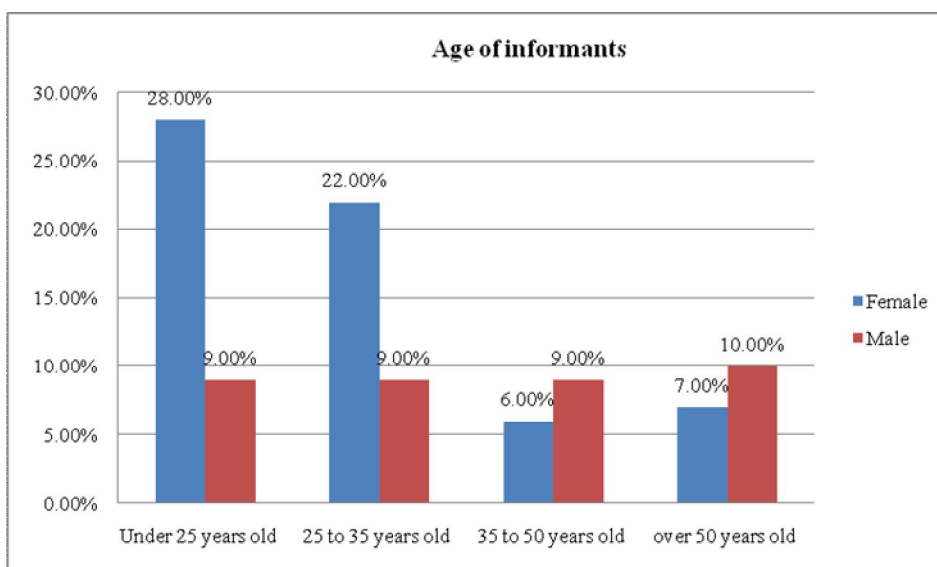
Thai tourism industry has identified the potential improvement in the Vietnam tourism market. It is clearly seen that the Thai tourism generates a sense of people-to-people relation and open a new door for citizen of both nations to step to each other closer.

The relationship between Vietnam and Thailand has significantly improved from the past to the present. Due to wartime conditions in Vietnam and many external factors, the relation between both nations was decided at State level. People of both nations had no chance to study, exchange and understand about their neighboring country. Economic development after the reform in 1986 in Vietnam and better diplomatic relationship, Thailand started to put the first step to promote Thai tourism in Vietnam market. Hence, with the improvement of Thai tourism in Vietnam, Vietnamese people have at least one more channel to know about Thailand. That is through Thai tourism. With its development and popularity in Vietnam, Thai tourism is a very useful tool for bringing the information about Thailand and Thai tourism to the Vietnamese people. More importantly, it also provides a significant change in the understanding and attitudes of Vietnamese people toward Thailand including changing attitude from negative to positive and changing viewpoint from foe to friend.

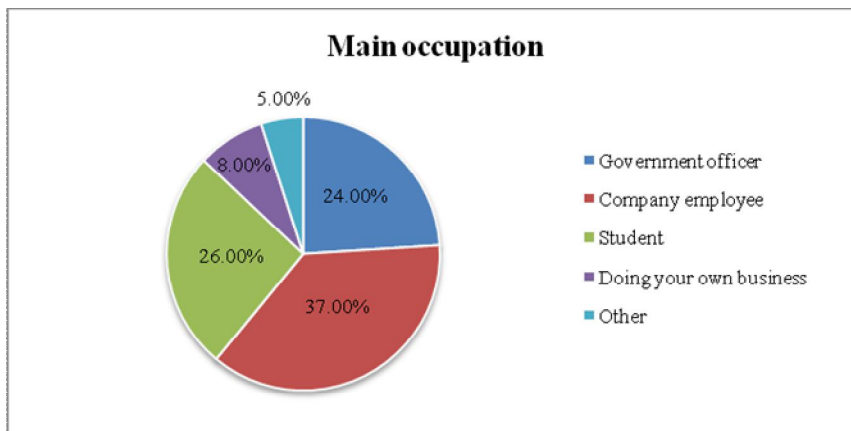
#### ***5.1.1. General background of informants***

This section aims to provide a general background of informants. As shown in data collection, the percentage of Vietnamese travelers under 25 years old is 37% and from the age 25 to 35 years old is 31%. The rest is 15% (35 to 50 years old) and 17% (over 50 years old). The dominant percentage of younger travelers can also be

understood in another aspect that the Vietnamese young generation starts to have an interest in Thailand, at least in term of tourism. This figure seems to have something slightly different with the older generation who lived in the period of Vietnam War. However, 17% of the people at the age of over 50 can also be counted as a good signal for the change in mind of older generation towards Thailand in this modern era.



Moreover, the majority are company employees who have highest potential in term of tourism. The figure of 37% of company employee visitors can be seen as a good signal for Thai tourism in the Vietnam market. Besides company employee travelers, students and government officers are also main groups that are interested in traveling to Thailand. The students make up 26% and government officers hold 24% of Vietnamese tourists. Apart from those groups mentioned above, the number of business person visitors is also growing. Percentage of main occupation of Vietnamese travelers is shown in details in the following chart.



Another interesting aspect of informants is the level of education. Dominant percentage of informants is at the level of bachelor degree. It occupies 76% of those who took part in the questionnaire. Postgraduate is 12% and high school is 5%. As shown in the table below:

| Level of education | Percentage |        |        |
|--------------------|------------|--------|--------|
|                    | Female     | Male   | Total  |
| Under high school  | 3.00%      | 1.00%  | 4.00%  |
| High school        | 3.00%      | 2.00%  | 5.00%  |
| Post graduate      | 1.00%      | 11.00% | 12.00% |
| Bachelor degree    | 54.00%     | 22.00% | 76.00% |
| Other              | 2.00%      | 1.00%  | 3.00%  |

Additionally, 73 percent of informants coming to Thailand are first time travelers. 13% of this number is second time visitors and 10 percent is third time visitors. Perceptions, feedbacks and attitudes towards Thailand before and after coming to this country will be exploded later. It is also evident that Thai tourism plays



an important role in promoting the national images to the Vietnamese. It will be seen clearly in the next parts of this chapter.

| Number of visits to Thailand | Percentage |        |        |
|------------------------------|------------|--------|--------|
|                              | Female     | Male   | Total  |
| First time                   | 47.00%     | 26.00% | 73.00% |
| Second time                  | 8.00%      | 5.00%  | 13.00% |
| Third time                   | 5.00%      | 5.00%  | 10.00% |
| More than three times        | 3.00%      | 1.00%  | 4.00%  |

### ***5.1.2. Changing attitude from negative to positive***

Based on the data collection from Vietnamese tourists in Vietnam for two months in October and November, there are many elements showing that the understanding of Vietnamese tourists towards Thailand has changed in a positive way. It can be seen on the percentage that they answer about how much they were impressed, how they feel and how they know about the Kingdom of Thailand, Thai culture and Thai people. Most of informants who were interviewed and delivered questionnaire gave very good feedback on Thailand. It can be said that the dominant image of Thailand generated by tourism gave Vietnamese tourists a better understanding of Thailand.

This part of chapter V will present the positive change of tourists' feelings, understandings and attitudes toward Thailand through their traveling to Thailand. As explained in the previous chapters, this thesis could not survey Vietnamese people in

large scale of national level. So the results of data collection are only based on the Vietnamese tourists' attitudes, feelings and understandings of Thailand. They cannot be representatives of all Vietnamese people. However, their answers can be regarded as good examples of how Vietnamese understanding and attitudes can be changed by tourism.

As shown in the previous part, a main channel to get the information about Thailand of most informants is through internet with the percentage of 24.84, while friends and relatives take 25.48%. Books, news papers and magazines take 19.11%. Television is also another choice to know about Thailand with the percentage of 14.65. As for age, it can be seen from the official number of TAT that 31.86% of Vietnamese tourists is below 34 years old (see more in appendix J). Moreover, the information collected from fieldwork shows that 31% tourists are from 25 to 35 years old. It is not much different in term of ages. On the other hand, with the young generation, the channel to get information can be diverse. They can discover information they want in different ways. It is clearly seen that Thai tourism has more channels to approach for the Vietnamese tourists especially these young travelers.

Knowing the trends and the channels that Vietnamese tourists used to get the information about Thailand is also very useful. It can be employed for different purposes in term of approaching and providing information about Thailand in Vietnam. It is also a good way to provide a better understanding of Thailand for the Vietnamese.

Professor Hoang Khac Nam, lecturer at the faculty of International Relations of Vietnam National University and an expert on the diplomatic relations between

Vietnam and Thailand, spent many years doing research on Thailand – Vietnam relations. To him, the attitudes and understandings of the Vietnamese toward Thailand has dramatically changed from negative to positive for both older generation (who lived during the Vietnam War and witnessed the unfriendly relationship between Vietnam and Thailand) and younger generation (those who live far from war). This results from the contribution of the mass media in Vietnam. It can be said that Thai tourism is successful in refreshing the image of Thailand from the past to the present, from negative to positive and from dislike to like<sup>44</sup>. Mrs. Le Viet Mong Thuy, a 54 years old tourist, who had experienced the last period of Vietnam War, further explained that

“Living in the time of peace, I do not forget about the past war. However, Thailand is a special case. It can be said that our generation did not like Thailand, even hated this country because they did help the U.S. to invade Vietnam. Nevertheless, the diplomatic relation between two nations, especially after traveling to Thailand has helped me understand more about the country, culture and people of Thailand. I no longer see Thailand as a dangerous enemy as ever. The development of the country and the smile of Thai people created a nice impression in me. It is worth to call Thailand-a land of smiles”<sup>45</sup>.

Better understanding of Thailand can also be confirmed through the image of the country, most informants when asked what they would think about Thailand, the

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<sup>44</sup> *Personal interview with Prof. Hoang Khac Nam, Lecturer at the Faculty of International Relations, Vietnam National University, Hanoi on October 16, 2012 in University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam.*

<sup>45</sup> *Focus group interview with Vietnamese tourists on March 25, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand*

answer is tourism. Dominant image of Thailand in the understanding of Vietnamese tourists before traveling to Thailand is the fact that Thailand is a country for tourism. 87.74 percent of interviewees agreed and shared the same opinion about Thai tourism. The rest of informants showed that they thought of Thailand as ideal place for work (3.77%), and for medical treatments (2.83%). The Vietnamese did not view Thailand as a suitable place for higher study. Even though, there are people saying that Thailand is a country for sex tourism. However, this attitude just appears in a very small number of informants. The good image of Thai tourism still makes the majority of Vietnamese tourists think of Thailand in a positive way.

It is interesting to note that as shown through internet, newspapers and magazines, Vietnamese tourists have strong impression of Thailand mainly on Thai tourism and Thai culture. Based on fieldwork data, main impressions of Thailand can be mainly divided into four categories including Thai tourism (36.69%), Thai culture (32.37%), Thai cuisine (16.55%) and Thai people (13.67%). It can be noticed that mass media plays a vital role in bringing information about Thailand to the Vietnamese. Before coming to Thailand, there are many key channels to make Thailand more popular to the Vietnamese such as Thai cuisine and Thai hospitality. Thai tourism and Thai culture are chosen as dominant images of Thailand in the eyes and understandings of Vietnamese tourists. As Professor Hoang Khac Nam further explains:

“The Vietnamese today know more about Thailand. However, it is not really based on the activities of government-to-government. Moreover, people-to-people activities such as cultural exchange, educational exchange and tourism exchange can

be seen as a major channel in connecting Vietnamese and Thai people. On the other hand, the main channels that have brought the Vietnamese to feel closer to Thailand in general and Thai people in particular are tourism and mass media”<sup>46</sup>.

According to focus group interview with Vietnamese tourists who travel to Thailand on March 25, 2013, most of interviewees said that they liked Thailand’s tourist destinations and really enjoyed the short time that they traveled to this country because Thai cuisine was wonderful and at the affordable price. Mr. Nguyen Tang Ngung, is working for Ngoc Bien Company, added:

“I love sour and spicy flavor of “Tom Yam Kung” dishes, like the flavor of sweet and sour have been blended in Thai papaya salad “Som Tam”, especially grilled dishes along the street such as grilled chicken and grilled pork. Thai food is so amazing”<sup>47</sup>.

It can be said that the attitudes of the Vietnamese has been changed to be more positive in the present day. Before traveling to Thailand, the attitudes and understandings of Vietnamese tourists mainly base their information on mass media, friends and relatives. However, after traveling to Thailand, they have more chance to experience this country by themselves. They have contact with the culture, cuisine and people of Thailand. They touch the Thai’s life by their own senses. There is nothing “right or wrong” about personal viewpoints. It is just about the different feelings of each individual. Their attitudes, feelings and understandings of Thailand

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<sup>46</sup> *Personal interview with Prof. Hoang Khac Nam, Lecturer at the Faculty of International Relations, Vietnam National University, Hanoi on October 16, 2012 in University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam.*

<sup>47</sup> *Focus group interview with Vietnamese tourists on March 25, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand*

can, to some extent, be regarded as essential evaluations of the Vietnamese towards Thailand as indicated in the scope of this research.

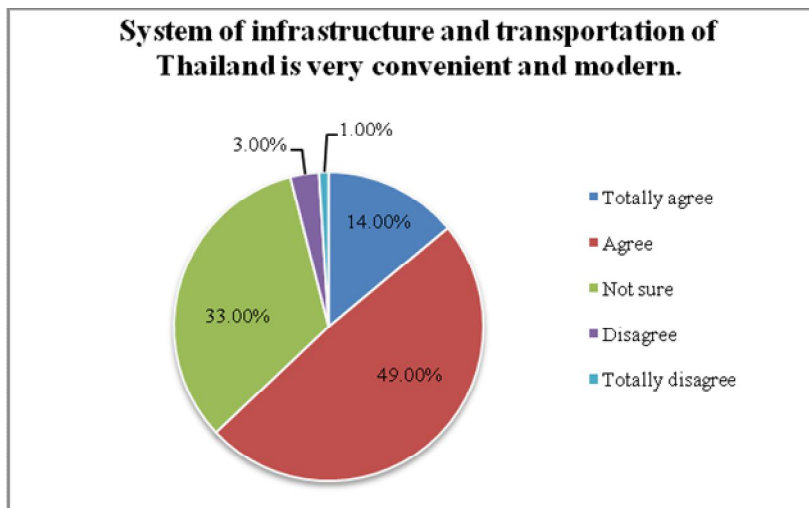
When Vietnamese travelers were in Thailand, they experienced and evaluated the country and people of Thailand through different kinds of criteria. For example, they can evaluate the country by system of infrastructure and transportation or customs system. Mrs. Nguyen Thi Thu Ha expressed that

“The first impression when she came to Thailand is Thailand's transport system. Modern transport system with a series of highways overlap looks very nice. Especially the culture of Thai people when they drive on the street is very polite and orderly. During the time that she traveled in Thailand, she has rarely heard the noise of car horns on the road”<sup>48</sup>.

According to the number of questionnaires, more than 60% of informants agreed that the system of infrastructure and transportation in Thailand was very convenient and modern (exactly number is 49% agree and 14% totally agree). Moreover, 65% of Vietnamese tourists agreed and 21% totally agreed that Thai customs system and procedure were not too complicated and customs officers helped facilitate tourists. Some Vietnamese travelers did not agree on the point of infrastructure (1%) and customs service (2%). However, in general, it can be seen that Vietnamese tourists were quite satisfied with Thailand's infrastructure and customs. It can be shown in details in the chart below:

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<sup>48</sup> *Focus group interview with Vietnamese tourists on March 25, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand*

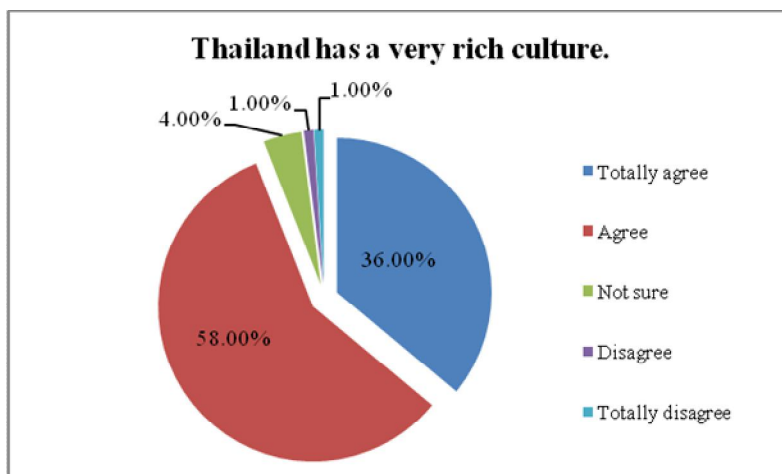


Additionally, there is more than 90% of informants agree that Thailand is a country of rich culture. Before traveling to Thailand, through different sources of information, 32.37% of informants have good impression of Thailand on cultural aspect and 10.20% of informants said that rich and diverse culture of Thailand was their main reason to travel to this country. Nevertheless, after visiting the country, almost all Vietnamese visitors admired and agreed with the settlement about the rich culture of Thailand. 94 percent of people agreed on this aspect, and demonstrated that the Vietnamese tourists were very impressed by Thai culture. They had no negative view about Thailand as before even thought still having some negative comments on the way that Thailand allowed for the freedom of sexual industry. As Mr. Phan Van Dung commented that:

“Thailand has a sex industry is not suitable for many ages, especially children and adolescents. Liberalization of sexual services will also impact on the aspects of religion and culture of foreign tourists who travel to Thailand”<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> Focus group interview with Vietnamese tourists on March 25, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand

Moreover, the Vietnamese tourists began to open and explore in order to understand about their neighboring country. It can be said that the short way to connect people-to-people relation between two nations is culture<sup>50</sup>. As shown in the following chart:

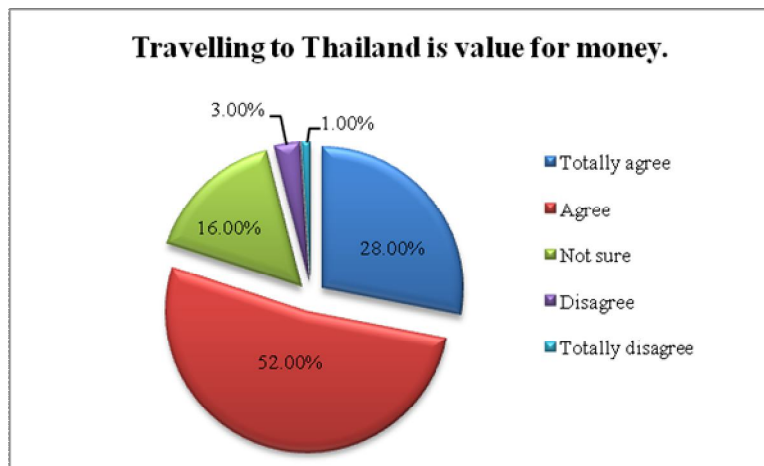


Another positive feedback of Vietnamese tourists towards Thailand after traveling to this country is their satisfaction. This satisfaction can be seen in the finding that tourists agreed (52%) and totally agreed (28%) that traveling to Thailand is good value for their money.

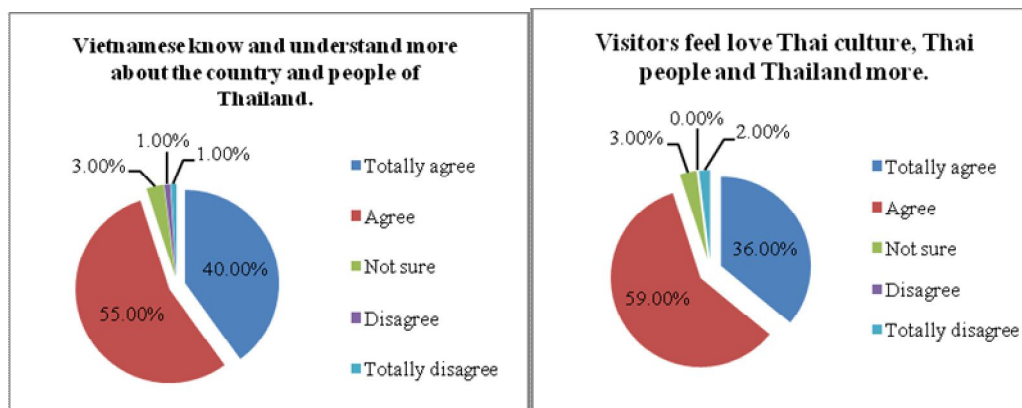
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<sup>50</sup> *Personal interview with Mrs. Natthakarn Sriyaphan, Consul, Royal Thai Consulate General on October 8, 2012 in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.*





In addition, more than 80% of travelers agreed that Thailand is a paradise for shopping (see more in appendix I). They always felt comfortable and found it convenient when travel in Thailand. They also had a chance to experience Thai food and enjoy their shopping. It is important to note that, after traveling to Thailand, 95% of Vietnamese tourists felt that they knew and understood more about the country and people of Thailand. Moreover, 36% of informants who totally agreed and 59% agreed that they liked Thai culture, Thai people and Thailand more after their trips to the Kingdom of Thailand. Still, there are Vietnamese travelers who disagree (1%) and totally disagree (1%) that traveling to Thailand could help them know and understand more about this country. It is about 2% of visitors that totally disagree that they admire Thai culture, Thai people and Thailand more after their trips. However, that figure is not worth considering in comparison with a large number of Vietnamese tourists who have good attitudes towards Thailand after their trips ended. As it is evident in the following charts:



Last but not least, positive changing attitude of the Vietnamese toward Thailand can be seen in their desire to get back to Thailand. Most Vietnamese tourists said that they would return to Thailand if given the opportunity. The figure of 89% is not a small number. The positive feedback of Vietnamese visitors after their journey to Thailand has brought a significant signal to the development of Thai tourism in Vietnam market as well as the formulation of people-to-people relation.

Together with activities at governmental level, the activities at the scale of people-to-people cooperation of both nations also created a vital tie in building the relationship between Thailand and Vietnam. It is worth mentioning that Thai tourism can be regard as a connecting bridge. As Professor Nguyen Tuong Lai emphasized:

“Although the Vietnamese had biases against Thailand, but it can be said that Thai tourism has changed the attitude of the Vietnamese people toward Thailand gradually in a positive way. In the 1970s, Vietnamese people never even thought that they would come to Thailand. However, nowadays, thanks to the traveling between two countries, the Vietnamese have a chance to visit and witness Thailand by

themselves. It helps erase the negative attitudes in the past and develop better understanding and more positive attitude toward each other”<sup>51</sup>.

Next section will discuss changing attitude of the Vietnamese from viewing Thailand as a foe in the past to a friend in the present.

### ***5.1.3. Changing viewpoint from foes to friends***

As discussed in the chapter II the relations between Thailand and Vietnam which used to be broken down, Vietnamese people used to see Thailand as a foe. Time passed and social context change. New atmosphere has contributed to the development of the relation between the two countries. As for the development of Thai tourism in Vietnam and its role in changing attitude of Vietnamese tourist toward Thailand, it can be said that Thai tourism has an impact to change the viewpoint and perception of the Vietnamese toward Thailand, from foes to friends, from competitor to strategic partner.

Based on the fieldwork data, apart from Thai cuisine, culture and infrastructure, in the eyes of Vietnamese tourists, Thai people are very kind, enthusiastic and hospitable. Traveling to Thailand, staying in this country, tasting the Thai cuisine, enjoying the life here and experiencing the surrounding atmosphere in the Kingdom help created more close feeling and better understanding towards Thailand and Thai people. Almost 90% of informants conclude that Thai people are friendly. As it is more evidently shown below:

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<sup>51</sup> *Personal interview with Professor Nguyen Tuong Lai, lecturer at the department of Thai studies, faculty of oriental studies, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam on January 17, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand*

| Thai people are very kind, enthusiastic and hospitable. | Percentage |        |        |
|---|------------|--------|--------|
|   | Female     | Male   | Total  |
| Totally agree   | 26.00%     | 14.00% | 40.00% |
| Agree   | 29.00%     | 20.00% | 49.00% |
| Not sure  | 4.00%      | 2.00%  | 6.00%  |
| Disagree  | 1.00%      | 1.00%  | 2.00%  |
| Totally disagree  | 3.00%      | 0.00%  | 3.00%  |

The Vietnamese have better feelings and attitudes towards Thai people than what they had in the past. Through tourism, Kingdom of Thailand is lively and beautiful, and Thai people are also warm and friendly in the eyes of Vietnamese tourists. Seeing Thailand by their own eyes, enjoying Thai food by their own dishes, feelings Thai culture by their own approach and touching Thai people by their own hearts, Vietnamese can experience more and understand more about this country and its people through their trips. The figure of 92 percent at Vietnamese tourists would like to return to Thailand in the future can imply that they see Thailand as a neighboring country and Thai people as their friends. The terms of “Thailand is a strategic base for U.S imperialism”, “Thailand is American’s backyard” or “Thailand is an enemy no.2 of Vietnam after American” in the past does not seem to exist or has direct impact on the thinking of Vietnamese people anymore. From the focus group interviews with Vietnamese students in Bangkok and Vietnamese tourists with older

generation can be asserted that both the younger generation who live far from the war and the older generation who lived in the war period have the same attitude that at the present, they view Thailand as a neighboring friend and a partner in ASEAN more than an enemy need to be kept the distance away<sup>52</sup>. As the explanation of Mrs. Phan Thi Kim Dung,

“War has gone away long time ago. If we still sit in the memory of the past, we would hardly continue step forward to the beautiful future. On the other hand, the previous government and the present government are not the same. The Thai soldiers participated in the Vietnam War were not all Thai population at this time. Shaking hand and stepping forward together to the future will be the best choice for both of our nations”<sup>53</sup>.

According Professor Nguyen Tuong Lai, “if it is forced to forget, the Vietnamese perhaps could not forget the pain that they or their ancestor suffered during the war. If it is requested to forgive, they will have no right to forgive. It is about history. However, Thai tourism has brought something Thai to the Vietnamese and heals the wounds that Thailand used to help America in the Vietnam War. Vietnamese people nowadays view Thailand as a developed country that they should

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<sup>52</sup> *Focus group interview with Vietnamese tourists on March 25, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand and focus group interview with Vietnamese students in Bangkok on November 16, 2012*

<sup>53</sup> *Focus group interview with Vietnamese tourists on March 25, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand*

follow and study it. Moreover, Vietnam views Thailand as an integral member under one roof of one family. That is ASEAN Community”<sup>54</sup>.

Sharing the same opinion, Professor Hoang Khac Nam pointed out: “Vietnam no longer sees Thailand as an enemy as it was in the past, or a competitor in the marketplace. Moreover, the Vietnamese people today have been looking at Thailand as a friend. We shake hands for the benefits of both nations and walk the same steps to move forward to ASEAN Community in the near future”<sup>55</sup>.

From interviews and questionnaire, it is indicated that Vietnamese tourists have better understanding towards Thailand and Thai people after their trips to the Kingdom of Thailand. Better understanding of Vietnamese tourists can lead to better feelings as well as better attitudes towards Thailand. Hence, they think of each other more favorably. The relation of people also develops in a good way. From the battlefield to the marketplace, from foe to friend and from opposite combatant in war to comrade in developing era, Thailand and Vietnam have witnessed the most flourishing period of their relationship both at government and people level. As Mrs. Natthakarn Sriyaphan, Consul, Royal Thai Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh city revealed:

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<sup>54</sup> *Personal interview with Professor Nguyen Tuong Lai, lecturer at the department of Thai studies, faculty of oriental studies, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam on January 17, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand.*

<sup>55</sup> *Personal interview with Prof. Hoang Khac Nam, Lecturer at the Faculty of International Relations, Vietnam National University, Hanoi on October 16, 2012 in University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam.*

“It is sure and fair to say that Thai tourism is a key channel to promote the images of Thailand in Vietnam. Tourism is a very important channel to help Vietnamese people know and understand more about Thailand, Thai culture and Thai people. Thai tourism has done very well its duty in tourism promotion. Moreover, with the aim of attracting Vietnamese tourists to Thailand, Thai tourism also pays attention to make Vietnamese tourists more comfortable and love Thailand more including removing negative images and building positive images for the nation”<sup>56</sup>.

## **5.2. Role of Thai tourism in promoting Thai – Vietnamese relations**

### ***5.2.1. Role of Thai tourism in promoting national images of Thailand***

As discussed in chapter III that policies of Thai tourism in Vietnam market help attract more Vietnamese tourists to Thailand. This part of chapter V will focus on the role of Thai tourism in promoting national images of Thailand to Vietnamese people.

As implemented in the 41<sup>st</sup> meeting, on April 20, 1979, the National Legislative Council acting as the Parliament approved and it was later announced in the special issue of the Government Gazette, Vol. 96, Section 72 on May 4, 1979, that the Tourist Organization of Thailand (former name of Tourism Authority of Thailand) would now be known as the Tourism Authority of Thailand. Its main objectives include: 1) promoting tourism and industrial tourism 2) propagating Thailand’s natural beauty, archaeological sites, antiquities, history, art, culture, sports, and

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<sup>56</sup> *Personal interview with Mrs. Natthakarn Sriyaphan, Consul, Royal Thai Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh city on October 8, 2012 in Vietnam.*

evolution of technology to others for traveling 3) providing convenience and safety to travelers 4) promoting good understanding and friendliness between people and countries through travel 5) initiating tourism development and evolving basic factors and facilitations to travelers (TAT, 2010: 201). It can be noticed from no. 4 that from its very early establishment, TAT was assigned to promote good understanding and friendliness between people and countries through travel in general.

In accordance with that target, Thai tourism launched many activities in Vietnam market to attract Vietnamese tourists to travel to Thailand as well as to make Thailand become popular tourist destination in Vietnam. Advertisements to promote national images of Thailand can be seen through the bill boards on important roads in the main cities of Vietnam such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang. In addition, culture, tradition and cuisine of Thailand have also been introduced to Vietnamese people in many occasions such as Thailand Cultural Day in March 2009 and 2010 in Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh city. This is to bring Thai culture more closely to Vietnamese young generation especially to Vietnamese students. Another interesting example is World Food Festival in Ba Ria – Vung Tau province in 2010. This was aimed to bring Thai cuisine to friends from over the world including Vietnamese. World Food Festival in Ba Ria-Vung Tau is an international food festival and attracts plenty of foreigners attending to this event yearly. Thereof, this is a good chance for Thailand to introduce its cuisine to international friends. Apart from these, Thai Night with different themes of each year like “Thainess” also introduces what is Thai, “Loy Krathong” introduces the festival of Thailand whereas “Muay Thai” introduces the traditional sport of Thai people and the art of Thai boxing. Thai tourism has also promoted Thai dance as a cultural tradition to the



Vietnamese in many occasions. For example, Hue Festival in Hue ancient city in 2008 and 2012, Ha Long tourism week in Quang Ninh province in 2011 and Mekong – Japan Cultural Tourism Fair in Can Tho City in 2009. Moreover, TAT also attended Da Nang Firework International Festival in 2009 as well as Da Lat Flora Festival in Da Lat city. TAT introduced beautiful flowers and flower seeds of Thailand. For instance TAT brought the model of Chiang Mai pavilion in Ratchapruk Royal Garden to the grant opening ceremony of Da Lat Flora Festival and latter showed it again in the booth of tourism fair. These activities can be counted as good examples of Thai tourism in building images of Thailand in Vietnam.

As an organization, TAT, cooperating with many other Thai organizations such as Royal Thai Embassy in Hanoi, Royal Thai Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh city and Thai Trade Center (Department of Export Promotion, Ministry of Commerce), has worked hard to promote national images of Thailand to Vietnamese people.

As Mrs. Natthakarn Sriyaphan explained:

“Thai tourism did very well in its role in promoting the national images of the country, especially Thailand’s tourism image. Through activities to promote tourism image, Thai tourism tries to make the Vietnamese and foreigners staying in Vietnam know more about Thailand. More specifically, the Thai tourism has developed and

built a positive picture in the heart of Vietnam tourists after so many political conflicts that happened and have been happening in Thailand”<sup>57</sup>.

She further stated that “diplomatic relations is not only for the government – to - government level. However, the relations of its people can be seen as key element to make the relationship between the two countries better. Therefore, Thai tourism should be recorded and honored for its efforts in contributing a significant role in building good image for the country through its specific tourism activities, especially in bringing people of both nations to step closer to each other”.

The success of tourism has brought Thailand much recognition in Vietnam. The existence of the TAT in Vietnam reflects that tourism has played a vital role in the development of Thailand including building positive images for the Kingdom. As shown in His Majesty the King’s royal address to the executives and staff of TAT about the benefits that Thailand has received from promoting tourism:

“All projects device many benefits: tourism promotion is most beneficial in promoting the country, it’s history, culture, traditions, places of interest, people and food to name a few. The result is to promote Thailand to the world” (TAT, 2010: 193).

The fact that Thai tourism contributed to the national image of country can be seen in the documentary film series titled “Amazing Thailand - Amazing Country” which has been produced done by TAT in cooperation with Ho Chi Minh Television

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<sup>57</sup> *Personal interview with Mrs. Natthakarn Sriyaphan, Consul, Royal Thai Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh city on October 8, 2012 in Vietnam.*

(HTV) and TST tourist in December 2009. This short documentary film series broadcasted in HTV in many episodes. This documentary film does not directly promote tourism. Instead, film series tried to give the Vietnamese a better overview of the country with its traditional culture, people and places where the crew had visited. Good relations between Vietnamese and Thai people are also mentioned in the film.

In sum, it is not exaggerating to say that Thai tourism has done very well in bringing Thailand's national image to Vietnamese people.

### ***5.2.2. Role of Thai tourism in developing Thai – Vietnamese relations.***

The “Amazing Thailand” theme gained worldwide recognition including in Vietnam market. It built up a very strong brand for Thailand as a destination that offers value-for-money trip, a unique culture, and a wide variety of experiences for travelers. This theme is complemented with “Thai smiles” to create a very warm image of the country to tourists from all over the world and to make the Kingdom a truly exceptional destination. Also, this campaign helped differentiate Thailand from other countries.

According to Professor Hoang Khac Nam, “it can be seen that the relationship between Thailand and Vietnam has been significantly improved and developed. More importantly, Vietnamese attitudes towards Thailand have changed in a more positive direction. Nowadays, Vietnamese people perceive Thailand as a friend in the ASEAN

Community rather than a competitor like what happened in the past. Thai tourism is a very important factor in accelerating the cooperation among people of both nations”<sup>58</sup>.

There are many programs and activities that Thai tourism has cooperated with agencies and organizations of Vietnam to promote the tourism cooperation and the relationship between Thailand and Vietnam. Several agreements were signed to enhance the development in terms of tourism cooperation between two countries. It is worth mentioning an Agreement on Tourism and Co-operation between Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) signed in Hanoi, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on 16 March 1994. Meetings that subsequently held to implement the agreement focussed on the Tourism Development Planning - Implementation of tourism technical assistance programs by providing tourism experts to research the potential areas for future development to be jointly identified by the TAT and the VNAT.

In addition, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) discussed the concerns about Tourism Investment Promotion. This agreement paid attention to the promotional investment on infrastructure needed for tourism facilities such as tourist resorts, theme parks, convention and exhibition centers that would benefit the tourism industry in both countries and in the region. Moreover, the meetings also touched on the issues of Human Resource Development - to co-operate and assist each other as well as to seek assistance from regional and international agencies in the field of

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<sup>58</sup> *Personal interview with Professor Hoang Khac Nam, Lecturer at Vietnam National University, Hanoi on October 16, 2012*

human resources development for substantial improvement of tourism in both countries.

The governments of Thailand and Vietnam treated tourism as one of the most important fields of the State's economy. They, therefore, worked hand in hand to speed up the tourism development. The latest MOU signed by TAT and VNAT was to enhance the international relation between two countries on the occasion of one thousand years of Thăng Long – Hà Nội in 2010. At the meeting, TAT and VNAT agreed to accelerate the development of tourism and broaden the cooperation in bringing new areas for tourists of both countries when. For example, exchange of information on tourism training programs, curriculum and education, exchange of trainers/ educators, technical visit exchange by tourism officials, training programs in tourism management for VNAT officials, training programs on basic skills of tourism, training for private sector and tourism institutions. Moreover, both sides agreed on the joint program called “Two Countries One Destination”. This is to combine top tourism attractions of the two countries. Activities of this program include dissemination of tourism information, organize familiarization trips for tour operators and travel writers to both countries, participating in international trade shows, promoting joint tourism packages and joint development and promotion of new trend packages.

In December, 2011, the delegation of People Committee of Hai Phong city, Vietnam, led by Deputy Governor of Hai Phong city, visited Thailand and had a meeting with tourism business sector to discuss the tourism's cooperation between Thailand and Hai Phong city. In addition, they had a meeting with TAT at Bangkok.

An interesting conclusion of this meeting is the agreement to facilitate a new direct flight between Hai Phong city and Bangkok city in order to welcome more tourists in the near future.

It can be concluded that more co-operations, more tourism agreements, and more understandings between two countries will create more chances for people of both nations to step forward to a better relationship. Through activities at both governmental and local level, Thai tourism plays an important role in accelerating the relation of Thailand and Vietnam, particularly at people to people level.

### ***5.2.3. Role of Thai tourism in connecting people to people.***

Apart from the fact that Thai tourism still plays an important role in the Thai economy, it is also a key channel to advertise, to introduce and to bring the images of the country to the world. Thai tourism is a bridge to connect Thai culture with outsiders. Development of tourism is not just for economic purpose. It can also be understood that the development of tourism will bring its better national image to the outsider, especially the tourists.

There are many favorable conditions building to the development of people-to-people relation between Vietnam and Thailand. However, it cannot be denied that the development of Thai tourism had brought a direct contact between people of both nations. It has opened a new channel to advertise what is Thai to the Vietnamese. Moreover, data collected from interviews and questionnaire show that Vietnamese tourists have very good attitudes towards Thailand after their traveling trip to this country. Through tourism channel, Vietnamese tourists have occasion to know and understand more about Thailand and Thai people. By using a gateway of tourism,

Vietnamese travelers can directly approach Thai culture, Thai cuisine and Thai life. Thai tourism is like an invisible cord to connect the people of the two countries. Good feedbacks, positive attitudes, and better understandings of Vietnamese tourists towards Thailand found from data collection firmly indicate that Thai tourism has a positive contribution, more or less, in bringing the image of Thailand to Vietnam and connecting the people of two countries.

## **Chapter VI**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter summarizes what is gained from the research findings and analysis from previous chapters of the thesis. The suggestions for further studies related to this research are also given in the second part of this chapter.

#### **6.1. Research findings**

Historically, the relationship between Thailand and Vietnam has witnessed many periods both positive and negative situations. Additionally, it has experienced many conflicts and misunderstandings between people of the two nations. Both Thai and Vietnamese people used to see each other with negative attitudes and feelings. Nevertheless, the relationship between two countries has seen a better turn after the establishment of diplomatic relations on August 6, 1976. Soon after that relations improved both at government-to-government and people-to-people levels. Hence, Thailand and Vietnam have cooperated in many areas including tourism.

Thai tourism after officially coming to Vietnam in 2008 has a significant development in promoting the tourism industry of Thailand, particularly the national images to Vietnamese people. Tourism development has widely promoted Thailand's images in Vietnam. Its popularity has gradually brought Thailand closer to the Vietnamese. It can be said that Thailand is successful in using tourism as a channel to promote national image and accelerate its relations with Vietnam.



Advertisements of Thai tourism in Vietnamese press and mass media with various tourist attractions and cultural aspects as well as Thai cultural activities carried out in Vietnam not only promote positive Thai images but also build up knowledge about Thailand and Thai culture for Vietnamese people. With impressions from sightseeing trips to Thailand, interaction with Thai culture and people, and information about the country provided by the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Vietnamese attitudes towards Thailand have gradually changed in recent years.

On the other hand, through Thai tourism, Vietnamese attitudes towards Thailand and their understandings of Thailand have significant changed from negative to positive, from foe to friend and from competitor to neighbor. However, from the field observation and focus group interviews, it can be concluded that the changing attitudes that mentioned in this study is just only in the group of middle class tourists and had educated. It can not be presented for the changing attitude of the Vietnamese people on the whole country. Moreover, the group of interviewees is mostly at the ages of younger generation and questionnaires was conducted a very large number of Vietnamese tourists under 35 years old. Therefore, the changing attitudes of older generation are not positioned much in the thesis.

It is not exaggeration to say that Thai tourism has done very well its duty in promoting tourism. Thai tourism is a very important channel to help Vietnamese people know and understand more about Thailand, Thai culture and Thai people. Moreover, with the aim of attracting Vietnamese tourists to Thailand, Thai tourism also pays attention to provide Vietnamese tourists with better images about Thailand

including adjusting bad images and building beautiful images for the nation. Comparing to other dimensions such as government cooperation and business cooperation, it can be clearly seen that tourism is more dominant than other aspects in terms of promoting positive image of the country and accelerating the relationship of the both nations.

More importantly, the study shows that the improvement of Thai – Vietnamese relations has benefited from the contribution of Thai tourism in Vietnam. Thai tourism has played vital role in promoting national images of Thailand to Vietnamese people through many concrete activities both at government and people levels. Furthermore, it also contributes to the development of Thai – Vietnamese relations, especially in connecting people to people of both nations.

Instead of the last word, Professor Nguyen Tuong Lai<sup>59</sup>, who has worked for more than 30 years on Thai Studies area, confirmed that Thai tourism has done well its role in the effort to eliminate the negative image and to build the positive images for Thailand in Vietnam as well as to invite Vietnamese tourists travel to the Kingdom of Thailand. In other words, it can be said that Thai tourism provides the Vietnamese with a better understanding of Thailand and more positive attitudes towards Thai people.

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<sup>59</sup> *Personal interview with Professor Nguyen Tuong Lai, lecturer at the department of Thai studies, faculty of oriental studies, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam on January 17, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand.*

## **6.2. Suggestions for further study**

Although, this study investigates Vietnamese attitudes towards Thailand and their understanding of Thailand before and after visiting this country. The research also analyzes the contribution of Thai tourism to the development of Thai – Vietnamese relationship. However, this thesis only aims at promoting people - to - people level. The aspect of government - to - government relation is not major focus for this study. Additionally, there are still several fields can be counted as factors to improve the Thai – Vietnamese relationship which suchlike not researched such as economic cooperation, cultural cooperation and study on young generation. Thus more studies are needed in order to explore more in the relationship between Thailand and Vietnam.

Even though, the author is not deliberately focus on the younger generation and it was not in the scope of the study as well. However, after conduct the field observation and interviews, the number was shown mostly reflect the thought and attitudes of younger generation. Therefore, investigating more on the changing attitudes of older generation Vietnamese tourists is still needed to fill the gap in terms of generation.

On the other hand, better relationship between Thailand and Vietnam does not only benefit bilateral relation amongst the two nations. However, it also acts as a bond to connect and enhance this relation reaching to another scale on regional level. ASEAN is stepping forward to ASEAN Community in the year 2015. It is worth noting that crucial development of ASEAN Community would require not only bilateral relation but it also need regional cooperation among ASEAN nations. More

research works on this area will be needed to fill the gap of knowledge about ASEAN and its members.

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## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A**  
**LIST OF INFORMANTS**

**Part 1: individual interviews**

| No. | Full name                   | Organization / position   | Date of interview              | Places of interview                                      | Remark   |
|-----|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|----------|
| 1   | Ms. Chutathip Charoenlarp   | Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam          | 3 <sup>rd</sup> October, 2012  | Office of the TAT HCM in Vietnam                         | at 16h00 |
| 2   | Mrs. Nguyen Hao Thanh Phi   | Director, Blue Sky Travel (BST), Vietnam                                      | 3 <sup>rd</sup> October, 2012  | Head quarter of BST in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam         | at 13h00 |
| 3.  | Mr. Lai Minh Duy            | General Manager, TST Tourist, Vietnam   | 5 <sup>th</sup> October, 2012  | Head quarter of TST Tourist in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam | at 14h00 |
| 4   | Mr. Huynh Dang Khoa         | Marketing officer, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Ho Chi Minh office, Vietnam | 6 <sup>th</sup> October, 2012  | Office of the TAT HCM                                    | at 09h00 |
| 5   | Mrs. Natthakarn Sriyaphan   | Consul, Royal Thai Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam             | 8 <sup>th</sup> October, 2012  | Royal Thai Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh city         | at 14h00 |
| 6   | Prof. Hoang Khac Nam (Ph.D) | Lecturer, Vietnam National University, Hanoi                                  | 16 <sup>th</sup> October, 2012 | University of Social Sciences and Humanities             | at 17h00 |

|    |                                  |  |                                   |   |          |
|----|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|----------|
| 7  | Ms. Dolada<br>Thongboon          | Second Secretary, Royal Thai<br>Embassy in Hanoi, Vietnam  | 31 <sup>st</sup> October,<br>2012 | Royal Thai Embassy in<br>Hanoi                                | at 10h00 |
| 8  | Mrs. Nguyen Thi<br>Kim Chau      | Lecturer, University of Social<br>Sciences and Humanities, Ho<br>Chi Minh. (USSH)  | 24 <sup>th</sup> October,<br>2012 | Faculty of Oriental<br>Studies, USSH                          | at 14h00 |
| 9  | Mr. Pichai<br>Raktashinha        | Director of ASEAN, South<br>Asia and South Pacific,<br>Marketing Action Plan Section,<br>Tourism Authority of Thailand<br>(TAT). | 6 <sup>th</sup> November,<br>2012 | Head Quarter of Tourism<br>Authority of Thailand,<br>Bangkok. | at 10h00 |
| 10 | Mr. Pham Manh<br>Hieu            | Counselor, Embassy of The<br>Socialist Republic of Vietnam<br>in The Kingdom of Thailand   | 8 <sup>th</sup> November,<br>2012 | Vietnam Embassy in<br>Bangkok                                 | at 14h30 |
| 11 | Prof. Nguyen Tuong<br>Lai (Ph.D) | Lecturer, department of Thai<br>studies, faculty of oriental<br>studies, University of Social<br>Sciences and Humanities         | 17 <sup>th</sup> January,<br>2013 | Bangkok, Thailand   | At 10h00 |

**Part 2: Focus group interview with Vietnamese students in Thailand**

| No. | Full Name               | Institution in Thailand  | Date of interview                  | Place of interview                                |
|-----|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| 1   | Ms. Nguyen Thi Nhu Y    | Faculty of Humanities,<br>Srinakharinwirot University,<br>Bangkok. | 16 <sup>th</sup> November,<br>2012 | Chulalongkorn<br>University, Bangkok,<br>Thailand |
| 2   | Mr. Tran Thanh Long     | Faculty of engineering,<br>Chulalongkorn University,<br>Bangkok.   |                                    |   |
| 3   | Mr. Do Tien Sy          | Faculty of engineering,<br>Chulalongkorn University,<br>Bangkok.   |                                    |   |
| 4   | Ms. Le Thuy Duong       | Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn<br>University                       |                                    |   |
| 5   | Ms. Nguyen Nhu Hien     | King Mongkut's University of<br>Technology North Bangkok.          |                                    |   |
| 6   | Mr. Pham Cao Dinh       | King Mongkut's University of<br>Technology North Bangkok.          |                                    |   |
| 7   | Ms. Ngo Thi Thanh Thanh | Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat<br>University.                         |                                    |   |



**Part 3: Focus group interview with Vietnamese tourists who traveled to Thailand**

| No. | Full name              | Age | Date of interview | Place of interview                         |
|-----|------------------------|-----|-------------------|--|
| 1   | Mrs. Le Thi Sam        | 67  | March 25, 2013    | Bangkok Palace hotel,<br>Bangkok, Thailand |
| 2   | Ms. Nguyen Thi Mai     | 35  |                   |  |
| 3   | Ms. Pham Thi Hong Hanh | 27  |                   |  |
| 4   | Mrs. Tran Thi Quan     | 58  |                   |  |
| 5   | Mr. Phan Van Dung      | 45  |                   |  |
| 6   | Mr. Nguyen Tang Ngung  | 34  |                   |  |
| 7   | Ms. Le Viet Mong Thuy  | 54  |                   |  |
| 8   | Mrs. Nguyen Thi Thu Ha | 48  |                   |  |
| 9   | Mr. Bui Ngoc Du        | 54  |                   |  |
| 10  | Mrs. Phan Thi Kim Dung | 48  |                   |  |
| 11  | Mr. Nguyen Thai Duong  | 30  |                   |  |

## Appendix B

### SURVERY FORM

#### “ ATTITUDES, FEELINGS AND UNDERSTANDINGS OF VIETNAMESE TOURISTS TOWARD THAILAND”

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#### INTRODUCTION

This survey form is a part of my M.A. thesis titled “The role of Thai tourism in promoting Thai – Vietnamese relations” at Thai Studies Program, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. This survey aims at collecting information about attitudes, feelings and understandings of Vietnamese tourists toward Thailand. Your answers will be very useful for my research in particular, and in building Thai-Vietnamese relations, both at people – to - people and government – to – government level, in general. Sincerely thank you for your help.

This survey consists of three parts

1. Part 1: general information about informants.
2. Part 2: attitudes, feelings and understandings of informants toward Thailand before traveling to Thailand.
3. Part 3: attitudes and evaluation of informants toward Thailand after travelling to Thailand.

Survey location: .....

Full name of informants: .....

Date: .....

**Part 1: General information about informants or survey participants**

*Please choose the answer that you feel correct or fill in the blank*

1. Survey code  (This part does not need to fill in)
2. Gender                      1. Male                       2. Female
3. Age
  1. Under 25 years old                       3. From 25 to 35 years old
  2. From 35 to 50 years old                       4. From 50 years old up
4. Your main occupation
  1. Government officer                       4. Doing your own business
  2. Company employee                       5. Student
  3. Other (please specify).....
5. Your level of education
  1. Under high school (under grade 12)                       4. Bachelor degree
  2. High school (grade 12)                       5. Postgraduate (Master degree or higher)
  3. Other (please specify) .....
6. How many times have you come to Thailand (including this time)?
  1. First time                       3. Third time
  2. Second time                       4. More than three times (please specify).....

**Part 2: Attitudes, feelings and understandings of informants toward Thailand  
before traveling to Thailand.**

*Please choose the answer that you feel correct or fill in the blank*

1. Where is your main channel to get the information about Thailand?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Friends and relatives <input type="checkbox"/>            | 4. Television <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 2. Books, news papers and magazines <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Travel agents <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Internet <input type="checkbox"/>                         | 6. Other (please specify).....            |

2. Before travelling to Thailand, you think Thailand is a country.....

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. For tourism <input type="checkbox"/>            | 4. For study <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. For work <input type="checkbox"/>               | 5. Other (please specify).....        |
| 3. For medical treatments <input type="checkbox"/> |                                       |

3. Your main impression of Thailand is

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Thai tourism <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Thai culture <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Thai cuisine <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Other (please specify).....           |
| 3. Thai people <input type="checkbox"/>  |  |

4. The main reason you choose to travel to Thailand is

1. Many beautiful tourist destinations
2. Many attractive entertainment centers
3. Having friends and relative living in Thailand
4. Shopping paradise
5. Rich and diverse in culture



|      |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 3.5  | System of infrastructure and transportation of Thailand is very convenient and modern.             |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.6  | Thailand is the ideal place for medical tourism, study at a higher level, and entertainment.       |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.7  | Thai customs system and procedure is not too complicated and customs officers facilitate tourists. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.8  | After traveling to Thailand, you know and understand more about the country and Thai people.       |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.9  | After traveling to Thailand, you love <sup>60</sup> Thai culture, Thai people and Thailand more.   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.10 | If given an opportunity, you will return to Thailand.  |  |  |  |  |  |

Please express your thoughts and impressions before and after traveling to Thailand

.....  
 .....

---

<sup>60</sup> In Vietnamese, the word “yêu” which means that “love” in English is used quite popular in Vietnam society. The Vietnamese people rarely use words such as “like” or “dislike” to express their feelings. Instead that they love to use the words “yêu// love” and “ghét//hate” to describe their feelings. However, at the same understanding, the word “love” in this study can be understood as “like” in English.

## **Appendix C**

### **Questions for interview**

#### **Questions for interviewing Officials**

1. What is your assessment of the situation of Thai tourism in Vietnam?
2. What is your opinion on Thai-Vietnamese relations after Thai tourism has officially established its office in Vietnam?
3. In your opinion, how does the establishment of ASEAN Community in 2015 affect tourism industry?
4. Do you think that tourism can be a useful and necessary channel to promote the relationship between Thailand and Vietnam, especially in promoting friendship and mutual understanding between the people of two countries?

#### **Questions for interviewing TAT staff**

1. Can you tell about the development of Thai tourism in Vietnam market? How is it like if compared to the previous time?
2. Do you think that Vietnam is a potential market for tourism investment? (specify the potential, if any)
3. With economic growth and international integration as seen today, many countries have been investing to attract Vietnamese tourists to travel to their own countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and Korea. What are the opportunities and challenges of Thai tourism in Vietnam market in your own opinion?

4. In your view, can Thai tourism promote diplomatic relations between Thailand and Vietnam, especially to increase the mutual understanding and friendship between people in the two countries?

5. What are the main reasons that the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) decided to establish its office in Vietnam? Do you think that tourism can be an important factor in the development of mutual understanding between the two nations?

#### **Questions for interviewing Travel Agents in Vietnam**

1. When did your company start offering tour packages to Thailand for Vietnamese tourists?

2. What are the reasons that made you decided to sell tour packages to Thailand for Vietnamese tourists?

3. Is there any difficulty in selling tour packages to Thai destinations?

4. What are the advantages of selling Thai tour packages?

5. What are challenges for selling tours to Thailand in Vietnam market today?

6. What are common comments and feedbacks from Vietnamese tourists travelling to Thailand? Are they similar or different from the comments or feedbacks you received from other countries in the ASEAN region?

#### **Questions for interviewing Vietnamese Students in Thailand (focus group)**

1. Before coming to Thailand, what do you think about this country?



2. After you have been in Thailand for studying, are there any changes in your thoughts about Thailand? If yes, are those changes negative or positive (please specify)?

3. What are the main factors for the changes in your attitude and feeling about Thailand?

4. During your study and stay in Thailand, have you traveled to other places in the country? How do you feel about people and what are your impressions for the places you visited?

5. If given an opportunity, do you want to continue staying in Thailand after finishing your study here?

6. In your own opinion, why do many Vietnamese people like to travel to Thailand?

## **Appendix D**

### **Policy & Marketing Plan of Tourism Authority of Thailand**

(Source: official website of Tourism Authority of Thailand at [www.tat.or.th](http://www.tat.or.th))

1. Promote the tourism industry to be an important instrument in tackling the country's economic problem, creating jobs for people as well as increasing income for the country. Moreover, promotion should be done to make tourism play a vital role in the development of the quality of life in all regions of Thailand as per the policy of the government.
2. Promote and develop the operation on proactive marketing strategies for increasing the new markets as well as the niche markets. This is in order to attract more quality tourists to visit Thailand. At the same time, domestic travel for Thais should be vigorously encouraged. The positioning of Thailand is to be drawn out clearly, too.
3. Promote cooperation in all levels domestically and internationally on promotion for the development of tourism markets. This aims to get rid of all hindrances in the tourism industry and pave the way for Thailand to be the tourism hub of Southeast Asia.
4. Aim at organization and management development as well as development of the human resources' ability to create a capable driving force in the operation. Moreover, this aims at strengthening the potentiality on international

competition under the good governance as well as developing the strength of the organization on its technical roles as well as knowledge on marketing.

5. Accelerate the development of a tourism technological system for accommodating business activities information (E-Tourism) on the Internet. Included here is also the carrying out of electronic commerce as well as applying information technology in marketing. The necessary mechanism on controlling and protection has to be in place to ensure prevention of problems.

### Appendix E

#### FLIGHTS AVAILABILITY FROM VIETNAM TO THAILAND

(Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand, Ho Chi Minh office)

| No | Airlines     | Route   | Code    | Time        | Frequency | Aircraft             |
|----|--------------|---------|---------|-------------|-----------|----------------------|
| 1  | AIR ASIA     | SGN-BKK | FD 2791 | 09:45/11:15 | daily     | Airbus A330          |
|    |              |         | FD 2795 | 18:00/19:25 | daily     | Airbus A330          |
|    |              |         | FD 2799 | 21:35/23:05 | Daily     | Airbus A330          |
|    |              | BKK-SGN | FD 2790 | 07:45/09:15 | daily     | Airbus A330          |
|    |              |         | FD 2794 | 16:00/17:30 | daily     | Airbus A330          |
|    |              |         | FD 2798 | 19:35/21:05 | Daily     | Airbus A330          |
|    |              | HAN-BKK | FD 2783 | 09:10/11:05 | daily     | Airbus 320-180       |
|    |              | BKK-HAN | FD 2782 | 07:00/08:40 | daily     | Airbus 320-180       |
| 2  | THAI AIRWAYS | SGN-BKK | TG 551  | 10:20/11:45 | daily     | Boeing 777-200/200ER |
|    |              |         | TG 557  | 20:50/22:15 | daily     | Boeing 777-200/200ER |
|    |              | BKK-SGN | TG 550  | 07:45/09:15 | daily     | Boeing 777-200/200ER |
|    |              |         | TG 556  | 18:15/19:45 | daily     | Boeing 777-200/200ER |
|    |              | HAN-BKK | TG 561  | 10:35/12:25 | daily     | Boeing 777-200/200ER |
|    |              |         | TG 565  | 20:45/22:35 | daily     | Boeing 777-200/200ER |
|    |              | BKK-HAN | TG 560  | 07:45/09:35 | daily     | Boeing 777-200/200ER |

|          |                         |         |        |             |       |                      |
|----------|-------------------------|---------|--------|-------------|-------|----------------------|
|          |                         |         | TG 564 | 17:50/19:40 | daily | Boeing 777-200/200ER |
|          | <b>VIETNAM AIRLINES</b> | SGN-BKK | VN 601 | 08:50/10:20 | daily | Airbus A321 100/200  |
|          |                         |         | VN 603 | 17:00/18:30 | daily | Airbus A321 100/200  |
|          |                         | BKK-SGN | VN 600 | 11:20/12:50 | daily | Airbus A321 100/200  |
|          |                         |         | VN 602 | 19:30/21:00 | daily | Airbus A321 100/200  |
|          |                         | HAN-BKK | VN 611 | 09:00/10:50 | daily | Airbus A321 100/200  |
|          |                         |         | VN 615 | 15:30/17:20 | daily | Airbus A321 100/200  |
|          |                         |         | VN 613 | 16:15/18:05 | Daily | Airbus A321 100/200  |
|          |                         | BKK-HAN | VN 610 | 11:55/13:45 | daily | Airbus A321 100/200  |
|          |                         |         | VN 614 | 18:55/20:45 | daily | Airbus A321 100/200  |
|          |                         |         | VN 612 | 19:05/20:55 | Daily | Airbus A321 100/200  |
| <b>4</b> | <b>LUFTHANSA</b>        | SGN-BKK | LH 773 | 21:15/22:40 | daily | Boeing 747           |
|          |                         | BKK-SGN | LH 772 | 15:05/16:50 | daily | Boeing 747           |
| <b>5</b> | <b>TURKISH AIRLINES</b> | SGN-BKK | TK 69  | 20:30/22:00 | daily | Airbus A340-300      |
|          |                         | BKK-SGN | TK 68  | 15:20/16:50 | daily | Airbus A340-200      |
| <b>6</b> | <b>QATAR AIRWAYS</b>    | SGN-BKK | QR 617 | 23:35/01:10 | 347   | Boeing 777-300ER     |
|          |                         | BKK-SGN | QR 616 | 13:00/14:30 | 347   | Boeing 777-300ER     |
|          |                         | HAN-BKK | QR 615 | 23:35/01:10 | 1256  | Boeing 777-300ER     |
|          |                         | BKK-SGN | QR 614 | 13:05/14:35 | 1256  | Boeing 777-300ER     |
| <b>7</b> | <b>VIETJETAIR</b>       | SGN-BKK | VJ8911 | 11:20/12:50 | Daily | Airbus A320          |

|  |  |         |        |             |       |             |
|--|--|---------|--------|-------------|-------|-------------|
|  |  |         |        | 10:50/12:20 | Daily | Airbus A320 |
|  |  |         | VJ8311 | 08:35/10:05 | Daily | Airbus A320 |
|  |  |         |        | 09:05/10:35 | Daily | Airbus A320 |
|  |  | BKK-SGN | VJ8912 | 13:55/15:25 | Daily | Airbus A320 |
|  |  |         |        | 13:20/14:50 | Daily | Airbus A320 |
|  |  |         | VJ8312 | 11:35/13:05 | Daily | Airbus A320 |

## Appendix F

### FLIGHTS AVAILABILITY FROM VIETNAM TO ASEAN COUNTRIES

(Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand, Ho Chi Minh office)

| No                | Airlines Logo               | Route   | Code    | Time        | Frequency | Aircraft        |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|---------|---------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| <b>PHILIPPINE</b> |                             |         |         |             |           |                 |
| 1                 | <b>PHILIPPINES AIRLINES</b> | SGN-MNL | PR 0598 | 15:55/19:35 | daily     | Airbus 320-200  |
|                   |                             | MNL-SGN | PR0597  | 13:10/14:55 | daily     | Airbus 320-200  |
| 2                 | <b>CEBU PACIFIC</b>         | SGN-MNL | 7522    | 01:00/04:30 | daily     | Airbus 320-200  |
|                   |                             | MNL-SGN | 751     | 23:00/0:30  | daily     | Airbus 320-200  |
| 3                 | <b>VIETNAM AIRLINES</b>     | SGN-MNL | VN2690  | 10:00/13:50 | daily     | Airbus A320-200 |
|                   |                             | MNL-SGN | VN2693  | 13:10/14:55 | daily     | Airbus A320-200 |
| <b>MALAYSIA</b>   |                             |         |         |             |           |                 |
| 1                 | <b>MALAYSIA AIRLINES</b>    | SGN-KUL | MH751   | 11:00/13:55 | daily     | Boeing 787-800  |
|                   |                             | SGN-KUL | MH759   | 16:40/19:35 | daily     | Boeing 787-800  |
|                   |                             | KUL-SGN | MH750   | 9:05/10:00  | daily     | Boeing 737-400  |
|                   |                             | KUL-SGN | MH 758  | 14:45/15:40 | daily     | Boeing 737-400  |
|                   |                             | KUL-SGN | MH 766  | 17:50/18:45 | daily     | Boeing 737-400  |
|                   |                             | HAN-KUL | MH 753  | 13:20/17:50 | daily     | Boeing 737-400  |
|                   |                             | KUL-HAN | MH 752  | 9:50/12:15  | daily     | Boeing 737-400  |
| 2                 | <b>AIR ASIA</b>             | SGN-KUL | AK 881  | 10:40/13:30 | daily     | Airbus 320-180  |
|                   |                             |         | AK 883  | 16:20/19:10 | daily     | Airbus 320-180  |

|                  |                         |         |         |             |             |                     |                |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|----------------|
|                  |                         | KUL-SGN | AK 885  | 21:10/00:00 | daily       | Airbus 320-180      |                |
|                  |                         |         | AK 880  | 09:15/10:10 | daily       | Airbus 320-180      |                |
|                  |                         |         | AK 882  | 14:55/15:50 | daily       | Airbus 320-180      |                |
|                  |                         |         | AK 884  | 19:40/20:40 | daily       | Airbus 320-180      |                |
|                  |                         |         | HAN-KUL | AK 871      | 09:20/13:40 | daily               | Airbus 320-180 |
|                  |                         |         | KUL-HAN | AK 870      | 06:30/08:40 | daily               | Airbus 320-180 |
|                  |                         | DAD-KUL | AK 869  | 09:45/13:30 | 1,3,5,7     | Airbus 321-168      |                |
|                  |                         | KUL-DAD | AK 868  | 07:35/09:15 | 1,3,5,7     | Airbus 321-168      |                |
| 3                | <b>VIETNAM AIRLINES</b> | SGN-KUL | VN 757  | 10:00/12:50 | daily       | Airbus A321-100/200 |                |
|                  |                         | KUL-SGN | VN 756  | 14:00/14:50 | daily       | Airbus A321-100/200 |                |
|                  |                         | HAN-KUL | VN 751  | 14:55/19:00 | daily       | Airbus A321-100/200 |                |
|                  |                         | KUL-HAN | VN 750  | 18:55/21:10 | daily       | Airbus A321-100/200 |                |
| <b>INDONESIA</b> |                         |         |         |             |             |                     |                |
| 1                | <b>AIR AISIA</b>        | SGN-CGK | QZ 7737 | 20:20/23:25 | Mon/Tue     | Airbus 320-180      |                |
|                  |                         | CGK-SGN | QZ 7736 | 16:35/19:40 | Wed/Thu     | Airbus 320-180      |                |
| <b>LAOS</b>      |                         |         |         |             |             |                     |                |
| 2                | <b>LAOS AIRLINES</b>    | SGN-PKZ | VN 2911 | 12:05/13:35 | daily       | ATR Turboprop       |                |
|                  |                         | PKZ-SGN | VN 2910 | 09:30/11:05 | daily       | ATR Turboprop       |                |
| 3                | <b>VIETNAM</b>          | SGN-VTE | VN 840  | 15:00/18:00 | daily       | Airbus A320         |                |



|                 |                         |         |         |             |       |               |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|-------------|-------|---------------|
|                 | <b>AIRLINES</b>         | VTE-SGN | VN 841  | 11:05/14:10 | daily | Airbus A320   |
|                 |                         | HAN-VTE | VN 841  | 09:15/17:55 | daily | Airbus A320   |
|                 |                         |         | VN 2897 | 16:30/17:55 | daily | ATR Turboprop |
|                 |                         | VTE-HAN | VN 2896 | 14:30/15:50 | daily | ATR Turboprop |
|                 |                         |         | VN 840  | 18:45/19:45 | daily | ATR Turboprop |
| <b>CAMBODIA</b> |                         |         |         |             |       |               |
| 1               | <b>CAMBODIA ANGKOR</b>  | SGN-PNH | VN 3857 | 18:00/18:45 | daily | ATR Turboprop |
|                 |                         | PNH-SGN | VN 3856 | 19:20/20:05 | daily | ATR Turboprop |
|                 |                         | SGN-REP | VN 3819 | 09:35/10:55 | daily |               |
|                 |                         |         | VN 3821 | 15:55/16:55 | daily | ATR Turboprop |
|                 |                         |         | VN 3823 | 19:45/20:45 | daily | ATR Turboprop |
|                 |                         | REP-SGN | VN 3818 | 11:10/12:30 | daily | ATR Turboprop |
|                 |                         |         | VN 3820 | 17:45/18:45 | daily | ATR Turboprop |
|                 |                         |         | VN 3822 | 21:35/22:35 | daily | ATR Turboprop |
| 2               | <b>VIETNAM AIRLINES</b> | SGN-PNH | VN 840  | 15:00/15:40 | daily | Airbus A320   |
|                 |                         | PNH-SGN | VN 841  | 13:25/14:10 | daily | Airbus A320   |
|                 |                         | SGN-REP | VN 827  | 11:35/12:35 | daily | Airbus A320   |
|                 |                         |         | VN 829  | 16:30/17:30 | daily | Airbus A320   |
|                 |                         | REP-SGN | VN 826  | 13:30/14:30 | daily | Airbus A320   |
|                 |                         |         | VN 828  | 18:20/19:20 | daily | Airbus A320   |
|                 |                         | HAN-PNH | VN 841  | 09:15/12:35 | daily | Airbus A320   |
|                 |                         | PNH-HAN | VN 840  | 16:30/19:45 | daily | Airbus A320   |

|                  |                    |         |        |             |       |                  |
|------------------|--------------------|---------|--------|-------------|-------|------------------|
| 3                | VIETNAM AIRLINES   | HAN-REP | VN 843 | 15:25/17:10 | daily | Airbus A320      |
|                  |                    |         | VN 845 | 17:05/18:50 | daily | Airbus A320      |
|                  |                    |         | VN 801 | 18:20/20:00 | daily | Airbus A320      |
|                  |                    |         | VN 869 | 08:55/12:00 | daily | Airbus A320      |
|                  |                    | REP-HAN | VN 842 | 18:05/19:45 | daily | Airbus A320      |
|                  |                    |         | VN 844 | 19:45/21:25 | daily | Airbus A320      |
|                  |                    |         | VN 800 | 21:00/22:40 | daily | Airbus A320      |
|                  |                    |         | VN 868 | 12:40/15:35 | daily | Airbus A320      |
| <b>MYANAMAR</b>  |                    |         |        |             |       |                  |
| 1                | VIETNAM AIRLINES   | SGN-RGN | VN 705 | 15:50/17:40 | daily | Airbus A320      |
|                  |                    | RGN-SGN | VN 704 | 18:40/21:30 | daily | Airbus A320      |
| <b>SINGAPORE</b> |                    |         |        |             |       |                  |
| 1                | SINGAPORE AIRLINES | SGN-SIN | SQ 173 | 13:10/16:05 | daily | Boeing 777-200   |
|                  |                    |         | SQ 185 | 19:45/22:40 | daily | Boeing 777-200   |
|                  |                    | SIN-SGN | SQ 172 | 09:50/10:55 | daily | Boeing 777-200   |
|                  |                    |         | SQ 186 | 17:35/18:40 | daily | Boeing 777-200   |
|                  |                    | HAN-SIN | SQ 175 | 13:15/17:40 | daily | Boeing 777-200   |
|                  |                    | SIN-HAN | SQ 176 | 09:50/12:20 | daily | Boeing 777-200   |
| 2                | LION AIR           | SGN-SIN | JT 157 | 13:40/16:35 | daily | Boeing 737-900ER |
|                  |                    | SIN-SGN | JT 150 | 12:00/13:00 | daily | Boeing 737-900ER |
| 3                | VIETNAM AIRLINES   | SGN-SIN | VN 741 | 09:20/12:10 | daily | Airbus A330-200  |
|                  |                    |         | VN 743 | 16:35/19:25 | daily | Airbus A330-200  |

|         |                      |         |                                 |             |         |                 |
|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|
|         |                      | SIN-SGN | VN 740                          | 13:10/14:10 | daily   | Airbus A330-200 |
|         |                      |         | VN 742                          | 20:25/21:25 | daily   | Airbus A330-200 |
|         |                      | HAN-SIN | VN 745                          | 10:30/14:50 | daily   | Airbus A330-200 |
|         |                      | SIN-HAN | VN 744                          | 15:50/18:15 | daily   | Airbus A330-200 |
| 4       | <b>TIGER AIRWAYS</b> | SGN-SIN | TR 2327                         | 09:10/12:05 | daily   | Airbus A320-200 |
|         |                      |         | TR 2333                         | 13:15/16:10 | daily   | Airbus A320-200 |
|         |                      |         | TR 2323                         | 14:35/17:35 | daily   | Airbus A320-200 |
|         |                      |         | TR 2329                         | 17:25/20:20 | daily   | Airbus A320-200 |
|         |                      | SIN-SGN | TR 2326                         | 07:35/08:40 | daily   | Airbus A320-200 |
|         |                      |         | TR 2322                         | 13:10/14:05 | daily   | Airbus A320-200 |
|         |                      |         | TR 2328                         | 15:15/16:30 | daily   | Airbus A320-200 |
|         |                      | HAN-SIN | TR 2305                         | 21:15/01:50 | daily   | Airbus A320-200 |
|         |                      |         | TR 2303                         | 13:00/17:50 | daily   | Airbus A320-200 |
|         |                      | SIN-HAN | TR 2304                         | 18:15/20:45 | daily   | Airbus A320-200 |
|         |                      |         | TR 2302                         | 10:00/12:30 | daily   | Airbus A320-200 |
|         |                      | 5       | <b>JETSTAR PACIFIC AIRLINES</b> | SGN-SIN     | 3K 556  | 08:55/11:55     |
| 3K 554  | 13:30/16:25          |         |                                 |             | daily   |                 |
|         | 3K 552               |         |                                 | 21:15/00:10 | daily   |                 |
| SIN-SGN | 3K 553               |         |                                 | 11:45/12:50 | daily   |                 |
|         | 3K 551               |         |                                 | 19:30/20:35 | daily   |                 |
| HAN-SIN | 3K 544               |         |                                 | 12:40/17:05 | 2,4,6,7 |                 |
| SIN-HAN | 3K 543               |         |                                 | 09:15/12:00 | 2,4,6,7 |                 |

|          |                 |         |        |             |       |                 |
|----------|-----------------|---------|--------|-------------|-------|-----------------|
| <b>6</b> | <b>SILK AIR</b> | DAD-SIN | MI 630 | 10:20/15:40 | daily | Airbus A320-200 |
|          |                 |         | MI 636 | 16:20/21:35 | daily | Airbus A320-200 |
|          |                 |         | MI 633 | 18:30/22:15 | daily | Airbus A320-200 |
|          |                 | SIN-DAD | MI 630 | 07:55/09:40 | daily | Airbus A320-200 |
|          |                 |         | MI 636 | 13:55/15:40 | daily | Airbus A320-200 |
|          |                 |         | MI 633 | 14:35/17:50 | daily | Airbus A320-200 |

## Appendix G

### New Package Tours for Vietnam Market

(Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand in Ho Chi Minh city)

- **Bangkok-Chiang Mai, Thailand**

Day 1                    SGN-BKK-CNX (Chiangmai)

TG 551 10:20/11:45    SGN-BKK

12:00                    lunch at Suvarnabhumi Airport

TG 113 16:00/17:10    BKK-CNX

15:10                    Arrive to Chiang Mai International Airport

15:45                    Transfer to Rarinjinda Resort & Spa

18:00                    Have dinner at Khum Khantoke

21:00                    Visit *Chiang Mai Sunday Evening Market or Walking Street*

23:00                    back to the resort and overnight in Chiang Mai

Day 2                    CNX

7:00                    breakfast

8.30                    Visit Doi Suthep

11.00                    Have lunch at Huan Huay Keaw Restaurant

14:00                    visit Chiang Mai Zoo

- Chiang Mai Zoo Snow Dome

- Chiang Mai Zoo Aquarium

- Chiang Mai Zoo Convention Center

- 16:00 inspect / preview Chiang Mai Convention Center
- 17:30 inspect All Seasons Hotel and B2 Black
- 19:00 have dinner at Giraffe Restaurant in Chiang Mai Night Safari
- 19:30 Experience Chiang Mai Night Safari

Day 3 CNX

- 7:00 Breakfast at the hotel and depart for Flight of the Gibbon
- 12:00 lunch at restaurant of Flight of the Gibbon
- 15:00 visit Bor Sang Umbrella Village
- 17:00 dinner at Khao Mao–Khao Fang Restaurant
- 19:00 Drop at the resort and celebrate Yi Peng Loi Krathong near Ping River
- 21:00 back to the hotel/overnight

Day 4 CNX

- 7:00 breakfast at the hotel
- 9:00 visit Mae Sa Elephant Camp
- 11:00 have lunch at Tiger Kingdom Restaurant
- 14:00 visit Celadon Ceramic at Chalieng Pottery and visit Lamphun Province
- 16:00 return to Chiang Mai and drop at the resort
- 18:00 free time to experience Loi Krathong Festival and continue to Chiang Mai Night Bazaar
- 21:00 back to the hotel

Day 5 CNX-BKK-SGN

- Morning breakfast at the resort

10:30 check-out

11:00 shopping at Central Village Airport and have lunch at Food Court

14:00 Depart for the Chiang Mai International Airport

TG 113 16:00/17:10 CNX-BKK

TG 556 18:25/19:55 BKK-SGN

- **BKK – PTY – SUPATRA LAND - BKK**

**DAY 1: BKK ARRIVAL - PTY**

Arrival at AirPort about 10:30 – 11:00 welcomes and pick up by Donna Tour representative. T/F to have lunch at local rest. Proceed to PTY , visit Nong Nooch Garden see Thai Traditional Dance & Elephant Show and takes photo around the Garden

17:00 Check in hotel.

18:00 Have dinner at Mai Muong Rest. Free to discover Pattaya by night. O/N in PTY.

**DAY 2: PATTAYA – SUPATRALAND – PATTAYA**

Breakfast at hotel, morning tour, take Speed boat to Coral Island to enjoy Swimming & Sunbathing or you can enjoy with many water sport games .( Pax' own account ). Back to hotel for lunch at hotel rest.

13:30 proceed to Supatra Land at Rayong Province, arrival at the Farm, welcome by coconut drink then go round the Fruits Garden about one and half an

hours by Eco car then enjoy the buffet 4 seasons fruits such as Durian, Mangos teen, Grape, Fruits etc.. Back to PTY . Dinner at Keenary Rest. After dinner see Alcazar Show, O/N in PTY.

### DAY 3: PATTAYA - BKK

Breakfast at hotel, check out and visit Gems collection. Visit Tiger Zoo & Crocodile farm.

After lunch at Tiger Zoo, back to BKK via Bird Nest shop local dried fruits & Leather shop. Dinner at Royal Dragon Rest. Check in hotel. O/N in BKK

### DAY4: BKK - CITY TOUR

Have breakfast at hotel, Visit the five ton solid Gold Buddha at (Wat Triamit). Visit Snake Farm. Visit Safari World and enjoy the show here such at Dolphin Show, Spar War show and goes around the open zoo to see many kinds of animals. Free for shopping. Dinner suki hot pot. Can visit Dream World instead of Safari World.

### DAY 5: BKK - FREE DAY

07:00 Morning call, breakfast at hotel, free for relax or free for shopping. (No services)

### DAY 6: BKK - DEPT

07:30 Breakfast at hotel.

08:30 check out visit The Vimanmex Mansion (The Palace of King Rama V). /OR/& Visit The Art of The King Dom of Thailand . <http://www.artsofthekingdom.com>



10:30 Transfer to Seacon Square , Robinson ,

14:00 Proceed to Airport for light back to your home ( Flight by VN 19:30 )

APPENDIX H

EXAMPLES OF PRINT ADDS FOR NEW DESTINATIONS IN THAILAND

**THÁI LAN**  
"Dàng dặt nụ cười"

**BANGKOK - PATTAYA**  
5 ngày **Giá từ 5.380.000 VNĐ**  
KH: từ thứ 4 đến thứ 7 hàng tuần

**BANGKOK - HUA HIN**  
5 ngày **Giá từ 8.880.000 VNĐ**  
KH: 8/6, 15/7, 17/8

**BANGKOK - PHUKET**  
5 ngày **Giá từ 13.380.000 VNĐ**  
KH: 22/6, 22/7, 11/8

**CHIANG MAI - CHIANG RAI**  
4 ngày **Giá từ 13.880.000 VNĐ**  
KH: 16/6, 9/7, 24/8

**KOH SAMUI**  
4 ngày **Giá từ 17.980.000 VNĐ**  
KH: 20/7, 17/8

(Giá tour trọn gói, chưa bao gồm thuế và phụ phí hàng không)

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- BANGKOK - HUA HIN**  
3 ngày 2 đêm **Giá từ 5.980.000 VNĐ** **NOT**
- CHIANG MAI - THÁI LAN**  
3 ngày 2 đêm **Giá từ 8.380.000 VNĐ**
- KHÁM PHÁ BANGKOK**  
3 ngày 2 đêm **Giá từ 4.380.000 VNĐ**
- KHÁM PHÁ BANGKOK**  
4 ngày 3 đêm **Giá từ 4.780.000 VNĐ**
- KHÁM PHÁ PATTAYA**  
3 ngày 2 đêm **Giá từ 4.980.000 VNĐ**
- BANGKOK - HUA HIN**  
3 ngày 2 đêm **Giá từ 5.980.000 VNĐ** **NOT**
- CHIANG MAI - THÁI LAN**  
3 ngày 2 đêm **Giá từ 8.380.000 VNĐ**
- KOH SAMUI - THÁI LAN**  
3 ngày 2 đêm **Giá từ 8.580.000 VNĐ**
- PHUKET - THÁI LAN**  
3 ngày 2 đêm **Giá từ 8.180.000 VNĐ**

**Lưu ý**

- \* Dành cho du khách có nhu cầu đi công tác, mua sắm, du lịch tự túc...
- \* Chỉ phí bao gồm:
- Vé máy bay khứ hồi,
- Khách sạn tiêu chuẩn 3\* - 4\*
- Xe đưa đón sân bay.
- \* Áp dụng cho nhóm khách tối thiểu 2 người.
- \* Không áp dụng cho các ngày Lễ, Tết.
- \* Giá chưa bao gồm thuế và phụ phí hàng không.

**Liên hệ:**

- > Tour Thái khởi hành hàng tháng  
Ms Bảo Châu Đt: **08 38 328 328** - Ext: 109
- > Tour Thái Free & Easy  
Mr Ngô Cơ Duy Đt: **08 38 328 328** - Ext: 666

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# Thái Lan

## Mùa Khuyến Mãi

### du lịch **FREE & EASY**

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3 - 4 ngày  
Giá từ **4.280.000 VND**

#### • Khám phá **PATTAYA**

3 ngày  
Giá từ **4.880.000 VND**

#### • **HUAHIN**

3 ngày  
Giá từ **5.980.000 VND**

#### • **PHUKET - THÁI LAN**

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Giá từ **8.080.000 VND**

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## APPENDIX I

### Data analysis from questionnaire

**From 25 September, 2012 to 3 November, 2012 in Vietnam**

| No.  | Details                 | Female | Male   | Total  |
|--|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| <b>Part 1: General information about informants or survey participants</b> |                         |        |        |        |
| 1.2  | Gender                  | 63%    | 37%    | 100%   |
| 1.3  | Age                     |        |        |        |
|  | Under 25 years old      | 28.00% | 9.00%  | 37.00% |
|  | 25 to 35 years old      | 22.00% | 9.00%  | 31.00% |
|  | 35 to 50 years old      | 6.00%  | 9.00%  | 15.00% |
|  | From 50 years old up    | 7.00%  | 10.00% | 17.00% |
| 1.4  | Main occupation         |        |        |        |
|  | Government officer      | 11.00% | 13.00% | 24.00% |
|  | Company employee        | 29.00% | 8.00%  | 37.00% |
|  | Student                 | 0.00%  | 26.00% | 26.00% |
|  | Doing your own business | 1.00%  | 7.00%  | 8.00%  |
|  | Other                   | 2.00%  | 3.00%  | 5.00%  |
| 1.5  | Level of education      |        |        |        |
|  | Under high school       | 3.00%  | 1.00%  | 4.00%  |
|  | High school             | 3.00%  | 2.00%  | 5.00%  |

|  |                                     |        |        |        |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
|  | Post graduate                       | 1.00%  | 11.00% | 12.00% |
|  | Bachelor degree                     | 54.00% | 22.00% | 76.00% |
|  | Other                               | 2.00%  | 1.00%  | 3.00%  |
| 1.6  | Number of visits to Thailand        |        |        |        |
|  | First time                          | 47.00% | 26.00% | 73.00% |
|  | Second time                         | 8.00%  | 5.00%  | 13.00% |
|  | Third time                          | 5.00%  | 5.00%  | 10.00% |
|  | More than three times               | 3.00%  | 1.00%  | 4.00%  |
| <b>Part 2: Attitudes, feelings and understandings of informants toward Thailand before traveling to Thailand</b> |                                     |        |        |        |
| 2.1  | Main channel to get the information |        |        |        |
|  | Friends and relatives               | 19.11% | 6.37%  | 25.48% |
|  | Books, news papers and magazines    | 13.38% | 5.73%  | 19.11% |
|  | Internet                            | 14.65% | 10.19% | 24.84% |
|  | Television                          | 7.64%  | 7.01%  | 14.65% |
|  | Travel agents                       | 8.92%  | 5.10%  | 14.01% |
|  | Other                               | 0.00%  | 1.91%  | 1.91%  |
| 2.2  | Thailand is a country .....         |        |        |        |
|  | For tourism                         | 56.60% | 31.13% | 87.74% |
|  | For work                            | 0.94%  | 2.83%  | 3.77%  |
|  | For medical treatments              | 1.89%  | 0.94%  | 2.83%  |

|     |                                       |        |        |        |
|-----|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
|     | For study                             | 0.94%  | 0.00%  | 0.94%  |
|     | Other                                 | 1.89%  | 2.83%  | 4.72%  |
| 2.3 | Main impression of Thailand           |        |        |        |
|     | Thai tourism                          | 22.30% | 14.39% | 36.69% |
|     | Thai cuisine                          | 12.23% | 4.32%  | 16.55% |
|     | Thai people                           | 5.76%  | 7.91%  | 13.67% |
|     | Thai culture                          | 18.71% | 13.67% | 32.37% |
|     | Other                                 | 0.72%  | 0.00%  | 0.72%  |
| 2.4 | Main reason to travel to Thailand     |        |        |        |
|     | Many beautiful tourist destinations   | 26.53% | 17.69% | 44.22% |
|     | Many attractive entertainment centers | 10.20% | 12.24% | 22.45% |
|     | Friends and relatives                 | 1.36%  | 0.00%  | 1.36%  |
|     | Shopping paradise                     | 11.56% | 6.12%  | 17.69% |
|     | Rich and diverse in culture           | 7.48%  | 2.72%  | 10.20% |
|     | Other                                 | 2.72%  | 1.36%  | 4.08%  |
| 2.5 | People you travel with                |        |        |        |
|     | Alone                                 | 3.54%  | 6.19%  | 9.73%  |
|     | Colleagues                            | 8.85%  | 7.08%  | 15.93% |
|     | Family members and close friends      | 34.51% | 17.70% | 52.21% |
|     | Travel agent                          | 15.04% | 3.54%  | 18.58% |

|  |  |        |        |        |
|--|--|--------|--------|--------|
|  | Other  | 1.77%  | 1.77%  | 3.54%  |
| <b>Part 3: Attitudes and evaluation of informants toward Thailand after travelling to Thailand</b> |  |        |        |        |
| 3.1  | <b>Thailand has a very rich culture.</b>                       |        |        |        |
|  | Totally agree  | 21.00% | 15.00% | 36.00% |
|  | Agree  | 37.00% | 21.00% | 58.00% |
|  | Not sure   | 3.00%  | 1.00%  | 4.00%  |
|  | Disagree   | 1.00%  | 0.00%  | 1.00%  |
|  | Totally disagree   | 1.00%  | 0.00%  | 1.00%  |
| 3.2  | <b>Thai people are very kind, enthusiastic and hospitable.</b> |        |        |        |
|  | Totally agree  | 26.00% | 14.00% | 40.00% |
|  | Agree  | 29.00% | 20.00% | 49.00% |
|  | Not sure   | 4.00%  | 2.00%  | 6.00%  |
|  | Disagree   | 1.00%  | 1.00%  | 2.00%  |
|  | Totally disagree   | 3.00%  | 0.00%  | 3.00%  |
| 3.3  | <b>Thailand is a paradise for shopping.</b>                    |        |        |        |
|  | Totally agree  | 21.00% | 14.00% | 35.00% |
|  | Agree  | 38.00% | 14.00% | 52.00% |
|  | Not sure   | 2.00%  | 9.00%  | 11.00% |
|  | Disagree   | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  |
|  | Totally disagree   | 2.00%  | 0.00%  | 2.00%  |



|     |  |        |        |        |
|-----|--|--------|--------|--------|
| 3.4 | Travelling to Thailand is value for money.   |        |        |        |
|     | Totally agree  | 19.00% | 9.00%  | 28.00% |
|     | Agree  | 30.00% | 22.00% | 52.00% |
|     | Not sure   | 10.00% | 6.00%  | 16.00% |
|     | Disagree   | 3.00%  | 0.00%  | 3.00%  |
|     | Totally disagree   | 1.00%  | 0.00%  | 1.00%  |
| 3.5 | System of infrastructure and transportation of Thailand is very convenient and modern.             |        |        |        |
|     | Totally agree  | 9.00%  | 5.00%  | 14.00% |
|     | Agree  | 27.00% | 22.00% | 49.00% |
|     | Not sure   | 23.00% | 10.00% | 33.00% |
|     | Disagree   | 3.00%  | 0.00%  | 3.00%  |
|     | Totally disagree   | 1.00%  | 0.00%  | 1.00%  |
| 3.6 | Thailand is a ideal place for medical tourism, study at a higher level, and entertainment.         |        |        |        |
|     | Totally agree  | 7.00%  | 9.00%  | 16.00% |
|     | Agree  | 27.00% | 14.00% | 41.00% |
|     | Not sure   | 26.00% | 12.00% | 38.00% |
|     | Disagree   | 2.00%  | 2.00%  | 4.00%  |
|     | Totally disagree   | 1.00%  | 0.00%  | 1.00%  |
| 3.7 | Thai customs system and procedure is not too complicated and customs officers facilitate tourists. |        |        |        |
|     | Totally agree  | 13.00% | 8.00%  | 21.00% |

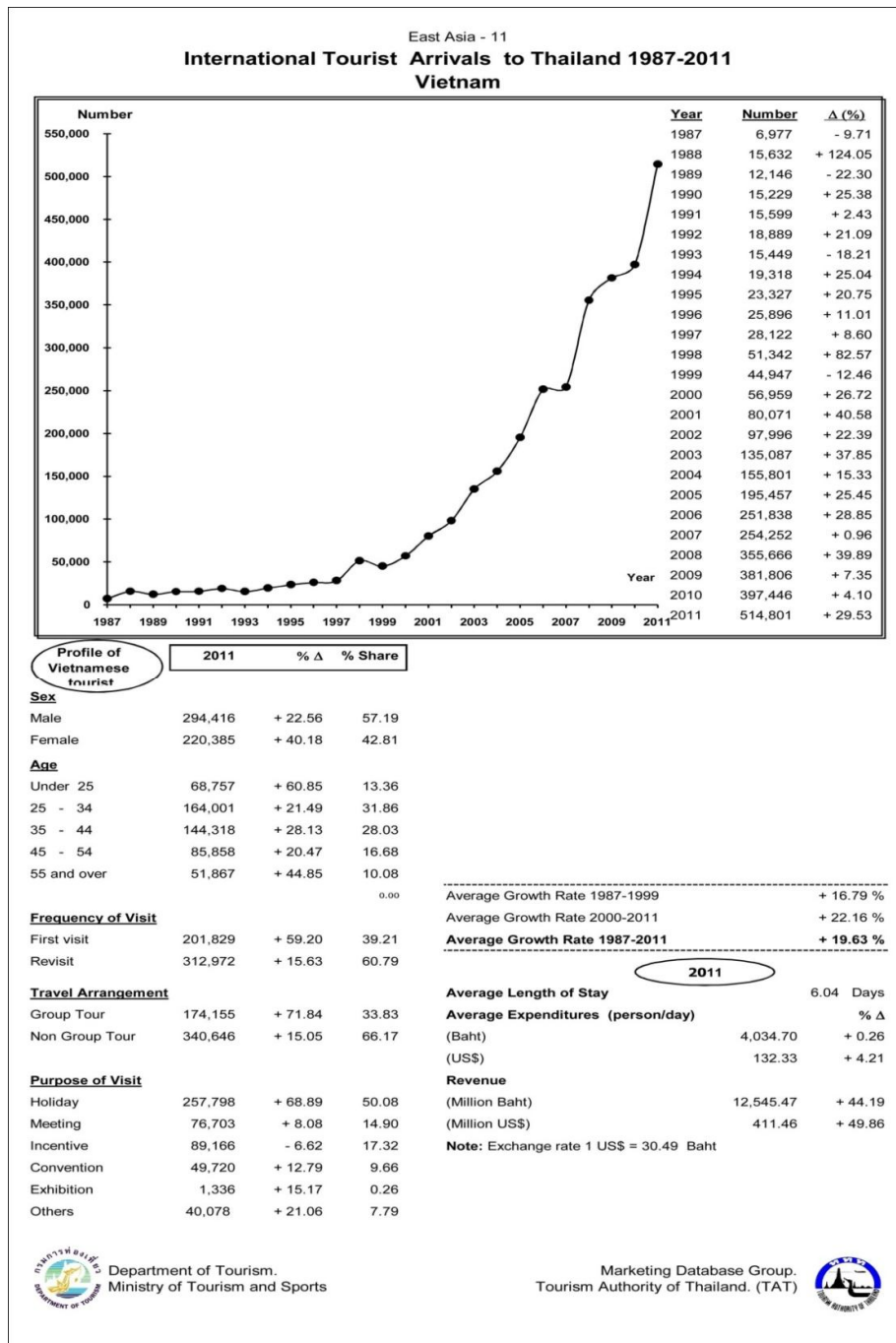
|      |   |        |        |        |
|------|---|--------|--------|--------|
|      | Agree   | 42.00% | 23.00% | 65.00% |
|      | Not sure  | 5.00%  | 6.00%  | 11.00% |
|      | Disagree  | 1.00%  | 0.00%  | 1.00%  |
|      | Totally disagree  | 2.00%  | 0.00%  | 2.00%  |
| 3.8  | After traveling, know and understand more about the country and people of Thailand. |        |        |        |
|      | Totally agree   | 26.00% | 14.00% | 40.00% |
|      | Agree   | 34.00% | 21.00% | 55.00% |
|      | Not sure  | 1.00%  | 2.00%  | 3.00%  |
|      | Disagree  | 1.00%  | 0.00%  | 1.00%  |
|      | Totally disagree  | 1.00%  | 0.00%  | 1.00%  |
| 3.9  | After traveling, you love Thai culture, Thai people and Thailand more.              |        |        |        |
|      | Totally agree   | 22.00% | 14.00% | 36.00% |
|      | Agree   | 38.00% | 21.00% | 59.00% |
|      | Not sure  | 1.00%  | 2.00%  | 3.00%  |
|      | Disagree  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  |
|      | Totally disagree  | 2.00%  | 0.00%  | 2.00%  |
| 3.10 | If given an opportunity, you will return to Thailand.                               |        |        |        |
|      | Totally agree   | 27.00% | 22.00% | 49.00% |
|      | Agree   | 30.00% | 13.00% | 43.00% |
|      | Not sure  | 4.00%  | 2.00%  | 6.00%  |

|  |                  |       |       |       |
|--|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
|  | Disagree         | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
|  | Totally disagree | 2.00% | 0.00% | 2.00% |

## Appendix J

## VIETNAM PROFILE

(Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand)



## **BIOGRAPHY**

Dang Tran Thuc Doan was born in Binh Thuan province, Vietnam in 1985. She finished her BA at Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University. Her major is Southeast Asian Studies specializing Thai Studies. With her love of Thai culture, after her graduation in 2008, she successfully organized “Thailand Cultural Day” in order to bring the stage to showcase Thai culture to Thai studies’ students and others at the Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City in 2009 and 2010 under the support of Vietnam National University, Royal Thai Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh city and Tourism Authority of Thailand. Before she won a scholarship from Chulalongkorn University under the project “Scholarship Program for Neighboring Countries” in 2011, she worked for Tourism Authority of Thailand since 2008. She also taught Thai language for Vietnamese at department of Vietnamese and Southeast Asian Studies, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City.