The social wasps comprise the following three subfamilies in the family Vespidae: Stenogastrinae, Polistinae and Vespinae. All three subfamilies occur in Southeast Asia, thus the area could be the center of divergence of social wasps. Viet Nam is expected to harbor a very diverse biota, not only because it spreads widely from north to south, or in other words from subtropics or warm-temperate in the north to tropics in the south, but also because the northern part is on the eastern slope of Himalaya, one of the centers of biological divergence. This should also be the case for the social wasps, of which the Vietnamese and/or Indochinese faunas are, however, yet very poorly studied. The present study aims to provide a comprehensive taxonomic review of the Vietnamese social wasps, including keys to all species occurring in Viet Nam, biological notes including descriptions of nests, and summary of distribution records. A total of 75 species in 11 genera of social wasps are recognized in Viet Nam.

In the hover wasps, or the subfamily Stenogastrinae, 12 species belonging to four genera are recognized in Viet Nam. There are three species of Cochlischnogaster, four Eustenogaster species, two Liostenogaster species, and three Parischnogaster species. Of these hover wasps, three species (one Cochlischnogaster, one Eustenogaster and one Parischnogaster) are undescribed.

In the paper-wasps, or the subfamily Polistinae, 49 species in four genera are recognized in Viet Nam. The cosmopolitan genus Polistes, the only genus comprising the tribe Polistini, has 25 species occurring in Viet Nam; five species in the subgenus Gyrostoma and 20 species in the subgenus Polistella. Of those, one Gyrostoma and six Polistella species are undescribed, and ten species of Polistella are newly recorded for the Vietnamese fauna.

Three of the four subgenera recognized in Polistes are found in the Old World. Detailed comparison of morphological characters of adults among species in the subgenus Polistella was made. Consequently the P. mandarinus group is proposed to harbor 16 species, including 11 species occurring in Viet Nam (P. affinis Gusenleitner, P. dawnae Dover and Rao, P. horrendus Gusenleitner, P. lepcha Cameron, P. mandarinus de Saussure, P. nipponensis Pérez, P. santoshae Das and Gupta, and four undescribed species). Details of morphological characters...
of both females and males of these 11 species are given.

*Ropalidia*, in the tribe Ropalidiini, with 20 species recorded from Viet Nam, is another genus of the subfamily Polistinae with abundant species. The nests of two species, *R. birmanica* van der Vecht and *R. nigrita* Das and Gupta, are described for the first time. The species in the other two genera of the tribe Ropalidiini recognized from Viet Nam are *Polybioides gracilis* van der Vecht, *Parapolybia varia* (Fabricius), *Pp. indica* (de Saussure) and *Pp. nodosa* van der Vecht. Taxonomy of these wasps is briefly discussed.

In the subfamily Vespinae 14 species belonging to three genera are recognized in Viet Nam. They are *Provespa barthelemyi* (du Buysson), *P. nocturna* van der Vecht, two *Vespula* species, *Vespula koreensis* (Radszkowski) and *V. orbata* (du Buysson), and ten *Vespa* species, *Vespa affinis* (Linnaeus), *V. analis* Fabricius, *V. basalis* Smith, *V. bicolor* Fabricius, *V. ducalis* Smith, *V. mandarinia* Smith, *V. mocsaryana* du Buysson, *V. soror* du Buysson, *V. tropica* (Linnaeus) and *V. velutina* Lepeletier. The taxonomy of *Vespa* is revised based mainly on the species from Viet Nam, but the revision affects the taxonomic status of these *Vespa* species worldwide. Biological notes on some vespine species are also given.

From the biological point of view, climatic conditions in Viet Nam can be categorized into the following three areas: (1) Northern area, area north of the Hai Van Mountains, where there is a more or less defined winter; (2) Southern area, south of the Hai Van Mountains, where it is warm or hot throughout the year; and (3) Mountainous area, which appears in the areas more than 500m altitude in the northern part and more than 700m altitude in the southern part. Distribution records of all social wasps in Viet Nam are summarized, showing that the number of species tends to decrease from north to south and that the social wasps are distributed in the highest number in the Mountainous area.

The Vietnamese social wasp fauna is discussed in comparison with that of other areas in southern Asia. Viet Nam has a rich social wasp fauna consisting of three major components. The first is the northern element, of which the center of divergence might be on the eastern slope of Himalaya including the northern part of Viet Nam. This element includes the largest in the Vietnamese social wasp fauna. The second might be termed the Sundaland element, which are distributed in the southern part of
Viet Nam. The third comprises the species that are distributed widely in the Indo-Australian region. Not only because Viet Nam harbors various climatic conditions accommodating various social wasps with different habitat requirements but also because of its geographical peculiarities, Viet Nam has a rich social wasp fauna.