

Research Summary

As the name of the Research Project “*Silk for silver:Commerce Relations between Tonkin and Japan in the Seventeenth Century*”, the core of this research focuses on the so-called “silk-for-silver trade” between Tonkin and Japan and its impacts on the Tonkinese feudal economy and society. In addition, the research also highlights other aspects such as the exchange of ceramic and lacquer-wares between two countries. Thanks to the supports of The Sumitomo Foundation and the cooperation of domestic and foreign scholars, we have obtained satisfactory results.

As part of our work in the project, we have compiled a bibliography containing references to books, secondary sources and archival document on the commercial relations between Vietnam and Japan in the seventeenth century. Particularly, we have collected numerous archival sources from European archives such as the archives in the Hague and Amsterdam (The Netherlands) and London (England) . These documents are not only valuable to this research project but also to further studies relating to Vietnam and Japan’s relationship.

In addition to written sources, we also considered the importance of archeological and fieldworks objects. We have carried out several fieldworks along the sites, where foreign merchants resided and traded in the seventeenth century, such as estuary of the Red River (Domea, Rockbo – present day the port city of Hai Phong and) ancient ports system of Pho Hien (Hung Yen province), Van Don, Mong Cai (Hai Ninh – Van Ninh, Quang Ninh province) and Thang Long (Hanoi) . The objects and information obtained in these surveys were analyzed and compared to the written sources before being delivered to the collaborators, who were in charge of writing reports.

The meetings and workshops also debated an important benefit of exhibiting our studies and exchanging learning experience amongst the scholars. As matter of fact, the meetings were held during the time of doing research, especially after doing archaeological and fieldwork surveys. In March 2007, we organized a workshop “*The commercial relations between Japan and Tonkin in the seventeenth century*” in Hanoi. The workshop was divided into four sections: (1) the Vietnamese commercial activities in the seventeenth century; (2) the development of the Vietnamese silk industry in the seventeenth century; (3) silk for silver trade: the commercial relations between Japan and Tonkin in the seventeenth century and (4) the impacts of silk-for-silver trade on the Tonkinese feudal economy and society. The participants in the workshop were from various institutes, research centers, and universities such as Northeast Asian Institute (the former Japanese Institute), Institute of Vietnamese studies and Development Sciences, and the Social Science and Humanities University. After two days of debating, we have reached some conclusions:

1. In the seventeenth centuries, the Tonkin’s handicraft in general and silk industry in particular flourished, offering a large quantity of products for export.
2. Upon the way to Southeast Asian ports to collect Chinese silk, the Japanese vessels (*shunshen*) arrived in Tonkin every year to buy local silk for Japan. Thanks to the good relations with the Tonkin’s court and local mandarins, a considerably large community of Japanese traders resided in Tonkin to foster the procurement of silks.
3. The import of Japanese silver and other sort of precious metals such as copper and coinage in turn made visible influence on the Tonkin’s feudal economy, giving an impulse to develop Vietnamese commodity production during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.

Aware of the importance of this research project to the public, especially to students and researchers, we have published some parts of this research in journals, books, and historical research studies (see the list below). In the near future, we do hope to improve and disseminate this subject more widely.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

1. *Tradition and Trade activities of the Vietnamese: Historical Facts and Understanding*,
Journal of Historical Studies, Vol.8(376)2007

2. *Eastern Sea –Ssecurity issue and area cooperation: A historical look and a view from sea position of Vietnam* ; In International Conference: ASEAN in its fortieth Year: Looking back and looking forward,H.,2007.

3. *Toward economy and culture interactions between Vietnam and Japan in history*,
Journal of Northeast Asian Studies, No.5(65),2006

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)