INTRODUCTION: MARITIME INTERACTIONS IN EASTERN ASIA

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The historical scholarship of the nationalist age in the second half of the 20th century achieved much in understanding the roots of Southeast Asian national cultures and the resilience of each of them in maintaining an autonomous dynamic despite imperial pressures. Among the models energetically rejected by that era were not only European and Japanese imperial ideas of a civilizing mission, but the “Greater India” school celebrating Indian cultural expansion in the first millennium of the Common Era, and Sino-centric notions of a Chinese world order extending its influence into Southeast Asia. The new national historians insisted on disentangling their pasts, as well as their presents, from the stories of others. Busy building new pasts to match and legitimate their new futures, they had neither time nor inclination to explore more regional themes. Comparison and connection within Asia and beyond it has only recently returned to the agenda, not before time in a globalizing world.

In the West there was also much sympathy for decolonizing history and for exploring the roots of the new nationalist and radical forces transforming society. But the single-country focus was modified from the 1970s by an area studies approach to organizing knowledge, dominant in
the U.S. and to some extent English-medium scholarship more generally in this period. In the classroom, and increasingly in books that served the classroom, Southeast Asian history was often taught as a whole. To a lesser extent those studying China, Japan and Korea outside that region had to know something about Northeast Asia as a whole. But the more these area-focused textbooks sought a particular character for Southeast (or Northeast) Asia, however, the more they emphasized its distinctiveness from each of the other conventional regions. The maritime and commercial character of Southeast Asia, open to external influences, was contrasted to the self-sufficient Confucian societies of the Northeast, ideologically inclined to extol agriculture and scholarship in contrast with commerce. The fluid, plural and kinship-based political systems of the Southeast were contrasted with the relatively bureaucratic, bookish and “earthbound” states of the Confucian tradition. 4

The new scholarship represented in this volume seeks to overcome this dichotomy by writing across the boundaries of area studies. By taking a long perspective it shows the extent and importance of maritime commercial linkages throughout eastern Asia from at least the 9th century of the Common Era. The attempts to introduce sterner self-reliant neo-Confucian policies by the Ming in China (1368–1644) and the Tokugawa in Japan (1601–1868) could not erase the commercial interdependence of eastern Asian economies that had already become central to power structures. Rather, the new political orthodoxies drove the merchants into indirect and underground paths to maintain essential connections.

The book applies two particular innovations in pursuit of these objectives. The first involves its regional scope in seeing all eastern Asia as a maritime and interdependent arena. The Chinese model, or “Chinese world order” familiar in much Chinese and Japanese, as well as Western, scholarship is thereby decentred. China and Chinese re-emerge as crucial actors, within the distinct northeastern and southeastern seas, and as the vital interface between these two dimensions. This book also pays ample attention to interactions and comparisons between Southeast Asia, the Japanese archipelago and the Korean peninsula, subjects usually subordinated to the relationships of all these areas with China. Research on these interactions is in its infancy. Comparison between the Asian “rimlands” of the Northeast and Southeast is particularly overdue for attention. The following chapter attempts it from a Japanese perspective, very aware of the weight of the middle kingdom in prior studies. While this volume was in gestation, however, two other studies made the connection in even more provocative ways, too late for the authors in this book to utilize. Victor Lieberman developed an ambitious thesis categorizing Northeast Asia, Mainland Southeast Asia and Western Europe together as the “protected zone” of Eurasia, secure against nomadic invasions from inner Asia and therefore developing increasing coherence under indigenous leadership. 5 Meanwhile Ann Kumar has argued on the basis of rice, ritual, genetics and language for an earlier connection between Japan’s Yayoi civilization and Island Southeast Asia. 6 The time for such revisionism has arrived.

The second innovation of this book entails a dialogue between two different scholarly traditions, each one offering insights that have been missing from the other. One of these traditions is that of Northeast Asian historical studies, in which scholars from within the subject region conduct nation-state-oriented research and usually present findings in their own languages. The other is Southeast Asian historical studies, which involves many scholars from outside the subject region, particularly Europe and North America, and in which it is not uncommon for findings of regional or supra-regional research to be presented in an English language medium. Many chapters of this book draw on the extensive historical records of Japan and Korea to provide valuable information for scholars of Southeast Asian history. Furthermore, its broad and open outlook on Asian history, not bound to the historical perspective of any single state, suggests a way forward for historians of Northeast Asia.

The question of perspective is central here. Because Northeast Asia was resistant to the European project of globalized free trade wrapped in Western hegemony, and presented a neo-Confucian and self-sufficient face to these pressures in the 19th century, this aspect of its history has been given disproportionate weight. If its constituents were as insular and wedded to agriculture rather than trade as neo-Confucian orthodoxy and much later writing suggested, then comparison with Southeast Asia would not be likely to be particularly fruitful. As the new scholarship represented in this book demonstrates, however, commerce and trade were always crucial to both regions. The neoconservative ideologies that sought to marginalize trade had some purchase in 15th century China as a reaction against Mongol world-empire, and throughout the region from the 17th century as a reaction to aggressive European trade strategies. But these should not be allowed to obscure the intense interactions that had developed earlier, and that continued to sustain an increasingly intense interaction on the ground. To place this book in context, therefore, we should turn to a longer-term trajectory before these events.
A COMMERCIAL BOOM IN THE 10TH–13TH CENTURIES

As Geoff Wade’s chapter makes clear, the 10th century began a period of growth in manufacturing and commerce in China, which sparked a rapid expansion of maritime trade activity. The burgeoning trade of the Indian Ocean and South China Sea was carried by cosmopolitan and frequently hybridized networks, which defy the application of ethnic labels such as “Arab”, “Chinese”, or “Malay”. Islam, with its agreed commercial law and acceptance of an Arabic lingua franca provided one set of unifying lubricants for the long-distance trade. The Chinese written language, currencies and weights and the protection of particular Sino-Buddhist deities provided another set on the eastern sector. In between, the Malay lingua franca was helpful within and beyond Southeast Asia, while particular religious communities — Indian commercial castes, Jews and Armenians among them — were able to overcome the tyrannies of distance and language to move goods and ideas around a vast region.

Janet Abu-Lughod has already postulated that, as a whole, these networks constituted a “13th-Century World System”, linking much of present-day Asia, Europe and North America. In particular, growing attention to the Mongol empire of the 13th and 14th centuries reveals the existence of sophisticated systems of military and commercial organization. Wade extends this argument to point to a veritable “age of commerce” in Asia in the period from the 10th to the 13th centuries.

A focal point in this system was China proper, which encompassed Dadu (present-day Beijing), the northern capital of Yuan China, as well as the immense port cities of Hangzhou and Quanzhou in the central and southern regions. China’s internal production capacity was centred on the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, but the massive state-controlled distribution from this area, together with the expansion in trade with the oasis regions of the West and forest belts in the Northeast, drove continued growth in the mercantile and manufacturing sectors in Northern China.

The mountainous Korean peninsula (Koryo) and Japanese archipelago, although lacking large alluvial plains suitable for agriculture, had nevertheless supported states with agriculture-first ideologies. From the 10th to 14th centuries, however, as Yamauchi’s chapter in this volume shows, they were drawn into this expanding trade-based interaction — mainly through the activities of Chinese merchants. This prompted one member of the Japanese nobility in Kyoto at the end of the 12th century to lament the spread of a “money sickness”: the permeation into Japan of a money economy using copper coins brought in huge quantities from Sung China, as Yamauchi’s chapter makes clear. In the Ryukyu archipelago, increasing trade activity provided the backdrop for the formation of a flourishing unified kingdom in the 15th century. Hokkaido and the islands to its north, where environmental conditions were similar to those of Manchuria and Siberia, experienced growth in exports of furs, marine produce and other goods, prompting the gradual development of distinctive social systems reliant on trade and lacking in agricultural enterprise.

The chapters of Yamauchi and Robinson, and at a later period Liu and Sun, show how even the Korean “hermit kingdom” maintained contacts and essential supplies of Southeast Asian goods, however passively. The volume shows the extent and importance of maritime commercial linkages from the 9th century onwards, rendering Reid’s Southeast Asian “age of commerce” (15th–17th centuries) only the culmination of a process that had its origins much earlier.

Archaeological evidence, including the marine archaeology of the shipwrecks in East Asian seas, helps to document the culmination of this early period of commercial expansion. It was not simply fine Song and Yuan ceramics that flooded into Southeast Asia and Japan, but Vietnamese and Thai ceramics were increasingly major factors in the network of Asian exchange in the 14th and 15th centuries. Just as in Southeast Asia, this period reveals an abundance of Vietnamese and Thai trade ceramics at sites in Okinawa, throughout Kyushu and in the port city of Sakai in central Honshu, revealing hitherto unsuspected levels of trade at that period. The carriers of these ceramics around East Asia were undoubtedly various, but included shipping of what might be called “maritime China”, operating in and out of China, often evading imperial controls, usually hybridized, and frequently operating from bases outside China proper such as Ryukyu, Taiwan, Champa, Vietnam and elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

Many authors have seen the 14th century as a turning point, marking the end of one set of trade networks and polities dependent on them, and clearing the path for new formations (including Islamic, Theravada Buddhist and Confucian ones). The Mongol conquests of much of Eurasia fundamentally changed the relationship of China with its neighbours, and for a time (exceptionally) made the “silk route” by land more secure than the maritime routes between Eastern Asia and the Mediterranean. The plague wrought havoc on China and the areas united by the “Mongol
peace. In Southeast Asia the polities that had seemingly dominated the landscape for centuries — Pagan (Burma), Angkor (Cambodia), Dai Viet and Sriwijaya (Malay world) — collapsed through internal and external pressures. Victor Lieberman, who labels these polities “charter states”, recently summarized his understanding of the reasons for this crisis, for which he sees broader Eurasian parallels. “Charter disintegration between c.1250 and 1440 reflected the combined effects of institutional weaknesses; destabilizing economic growth, post-1250/1300 cooling, which weakened monsoon flows; and external assaults.”10 The external assaults included Mongol forays by sea and land in the 1290s. The economic growth refers primarily to that stimulated by the Mongol peace, whereas the sea routes of concern to this volume were considerably disrupted in this period.

The environmental aspect of this shift remains problematic, though scientific understanding of the long-term shifts is making giant strides. For the Southeast Asian peninsula and archipelago a more precise environmental disaster can now be added to the debate. There is clear evidence of at least one and probably a series of catastrophic earthquakes and tsunamis on the scale of that of 2004 between 1350 and 1450.11 This may have eliminated one or more of the Sumatran and peninsula port-states vital to the long-distance trade, and perhaps altered vital passages through the strategic Singapore Strait.12

The authors in this book generally accept the 14th century as a turning point also for inter-Asian trade. Geoff Wade identifies “a period of stagnation in Southeast Asian maritime trade”, in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. Momoki and Hasuda, reviewing periodization theories in Chapter 2, conclude that there was a 14th century general crisis “more serious in some aspects than the 17th-Century Crisis”, and affecting both Northeast and Southeast Asia. Sun Laichen, chronicling, for the first time in English, the remarkable story of the Asian saltpetre trade and its role in the gunpowder empires, adds his evidence for much expanded trade from the late 14th century.

EXCHANGE IN EARLY MODERN EAST ASIA

The Ming dynasty in China (1368–1644), marks a remarkable watershed which inaugurated the early modern period, seen by some as an “age of commerce” for both Southeast Asia and Japan. The first century and a half of Ming rule were a striking interruption of the gradual expansion of trade between China and its neighbours which had marked the previous Song and Yuan. On the one hand this period witnessed the imposition of a maritime ban (haijin), which forcefully suppressed the private trade of coastal communities with Southeast Asia and Japan. On the other hand an unprecedentedly vigorous and forceful naval intervention in the southern seas revived an older state-trading mechanism in the guise of the huge fleets assembled under Zheng He for the southern seas in 1405–35 and the “tribute” missions to China that they encouraged. The only trade regarded as legal in Ming eyes had to conform to the imperial rituals and vocabulary that reinforced the legitimacy of a Chinese world-empire, so that only those (mostly hybridized overseas Chinese) able to manipulate the official system for trade purposes could flourish within it.

This disruption was far from the retreat from commerce which official Ming ideology might have envisaged. On the one hand enormous quantities of “tribute” items from overseas entered the Chinese market, with many Chinese officials and soldiers being paid in Southeast Asian pepper and sandalwood, while corresponding gifts of Chinese coins and manufactures were distributed through the returning missions.13 Many “offshore” polities dynamically seized the opportunity to monopolize particular branches of trade by claiming privileged access through “tribute” to the otherwise closed Chinese world. Tributary trade with Ming China was crucial to the authority of the Muromachi shogunate in Japan (1336–1573) and Okinawa’s moment of commercial opportunity as an eastern Asian hub in the 15th century. Trade was also conducted on a large scale between Japan and Chosŏn Korea, through channels such as the import of Korean cotton into Japan. In Southeast Asia, Sino-Southeast Asian polities such as Ayutthaya (Siam), Melaka, Brunei, Manila, Japara and Gresik (both in Java) arose to exploit the new opportunity.14 A vital factor in their rise was the flight from Quanzhou in the 1360s of much of its cosmopolitan Sinicized Muslim commercial community, as a result of pogroms against Muslims in what had been China’s principal port. This explains the counterintuitive phenomenon of a prominent “Chinese” role in the early Islamization of Southeast Asia.15 At the Portuguese arrival in Asian waters around 1500, it was largely Southeast Asia–based traders, often with this Chinese-Muslim hybrid background, who conducted most of the trade with China.

The ceramic trade, which had brought millions of Song and Yuan items to buyers in Southeast Asia and Japan, was one instance of the Ming effect. Roxanne Brown has documented a remarkable hiatus in the evidence of
Chinese-made ceramics in sites and shipwrecks of the early 15th century, indicating that in this domain at least the Ming bans had a real effect. What happened instead was a remarkable flowering of production of fine but distinctive trade wares in what is today northern Thailand and northern Vietnam, and also in Champa, which largely took the place of Ming ware at sites dated to the 15th century. Trade found a way. By the 16th century, however, shipment of Chinese-produced wares was at a higher level than ever and the supply of Thai and Viet wares slowed drastically.\(^{16}\)

The collapse of the 13th-century world system had generated wide-ranging economic disorder and rampant piracy. The *haijin* bans were in part a response to this disorder, though these bans played their part in forcing trade to choose between “tribute” and illegal (in Ming eyes) activity such as smuggling and piracy. Although Ming documents classified those engaged in these activities as “dwarf bandits” (*wokou*), a pejorative term for Japanese, knowledgeable Ming officials knew that they were predominately Fujian and Ningpo traders forced into these channels of activity, as one means of maintaining the lucrative interaction between China and its neighbours.\(^{17}\)

There were, however, other means of trading. One was the Ryukyu (Okinawa) connection, which maintained tribute-like formal relationships with the Chinese court as well as the Japanese and several Southeast Asian polities. Thereby China could be supplied with Japanese silver and Southeast Asian tropical produce, and these regions with Chinese manufactures.\(^{18}\) In the 16th century, however, the Ming trading bans were gradually less effective, the ideology of world-empire and tribute began to fade, and Chinese shippers could bribe officials to equip their vessels for the south. Direct China–Japan trade was more difficult, and instead Japanese ships began in the late 16th century to trade to Southeast Asian ports where they could also acquire Chinese products. Adaptation and appropriation of the *haijin* system to particular national settings enabled a resumption of vigorous trading activity both in Northeast and Southeast Asia. Chinese products such as raw silk and silk fabrics were consumed in huge quantities in Japan, but so were goods sourced from Southeast Asia and India, such as deerskin, sharkskin, brazilwood, sugar and cotton textiles. In exchange, silver, copper and other Japanese products were exported to Southeast Asia and further westward. As their Dynasty’s military power waned in the mid-15th century, Ming leaders were also forced to recognize the trading rights of Mongolian and Manchurian chiefs in order to win their continued support.

There was undoubtedly a peak in the intensity of this interaction in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. One factor was the influx of silver, both from the new mines in Spanish America and from Japanese sources such as the Iwami silver mine (opened in the 1520s in the Western Honshu region). The bulk of these exports were bound for China, which was establishing financial and economic systems with a silver standard. Japan provided more silver to China before 1645 than did Spanish America (see Fujita below). Japan imported a variety of goods, mainly raw silk, from China in return. Tributary trade with China was not feasible during the internal conflict that swept Japan in the Warring States Period. Yet the flow of Japanese silver into China grew rapidly by indirect trade through Southeast Asia, trade to Macao in the Portuguese “black ships”, and various illegal (at least in Ming official eyes) forms of smuggling and ferocious plundering along the Chinese coast at the hands of latter-era “Japanese pirates” (*kōki wakō*), which actually included many Chinese locals.

In the 1560s, after these pirates had been suppressed, Ming China revised the *haijin* system and acknowledged the value of Chinese merchants being licensed to travel abroad. The entry of non-tributary European vessels was also reluctantly permitted. Meanwhile Japan, the presumed location of the pirates’ headquarters, had presented a brazen challenge to the Ming-focused international order when Toyotomi Hideyoshi dispatched troops to Chosón Korea in the 1590s. The result of this was that diplomatic relations between the states of China and Japan were not restored until after Japan’s Meiji Restoration in 1868. The exchange of Japanese silver for Chinese silk could no longer be conducted through either tributary or contraband trade; other methods were needed.

One method was for Europeans based in places such as Macao, Manila, Batavia and Taiwan to function as intermediaries between China and Japan. From the end of the 16th century, as Japan moved towards becoming a unified state, “the Nanban trade” burgeoned in the Japanese archipelago. The Europeans would obtain raw silk from Chinese merchants able to visit their bases freely, take it to ports in Kyushu and Honshu, and bring silver home in return.

Under the second method, Chinese merchants would depart their home country after reporting to the authorities that they were “going to conduct trade with countries other than Japan”, and proceed to Taiwan (not yet under effective control of the Chinese empire) and port cities across Southeast Asia, notably Manila, Batavia, Hoi An, the Red River ports, Ayutthaya and Cambodia. There they would meet with merchants...
from Japan, trading goods on the spot and sometimes even travelling (illegally) to Japan to trade. Immediately after its establishment, Japan's Tokugawa regime (1600-1867) instituted a licensing system for outbound trading vessels from Japan. Most licensed "red seal" traders, probably including many former wakō pirates, travelled to Taiwan and Southeast Asia to trade.

**UNDERSTANDING THE "CLOSURES" OF THE 17TH CENTURY**

For Reid's "Age of Commerce" the period of intense commercial activity peaked with the silver boom of 1570-1630, but changed direction with a "crisis" in the mid-17th century.8 Some of the authors in this volume, notably Wade, argue rather for a steady escalation in commercial interaction since the 9th century, with the 14th and 17th century crises acting as only temporary setbacks. Victor Lieberman9 declares the idea of a mid-17th century watershed "inapplicable to continental Southeast Asia", and dwarfed in significance by the late 18th century breakdowns of Burma, Siam and Dai Viet. Like numerous writers on Tokugawa Japan, Lieberman sees the turn away from dependence on foreign trade in the 1630s and 1640s as a mark of growing state consolidation and strength rather than crisis. The significance of Japan's sakoku (literally "closed country") policy, enforced in a series of decrees in the 1630s, cannot be denied, particularly when paralleled by a similar policy in Chosön Korea and a distinct turn against maritime commerce in Mataram (Java) and Ava (Burma) in the early 17th century and Siam after 1688. In all these cases the new regime focused on establishing internal order and cultural coherence, vital for understanding the modern shape of the successor states. Debate will continue about just what the change of direction implied.

China experienced in one sense the most obvious "crisis" in the 1640s, with the vast Ming empire brought to its knees by internal conflict and eventual foreign conquest by the Mongols in 1644. It was therefore the first Asian case to be brought into the 17th Century Crisis debate.10 The Ming-Qing transition, as this crisis is known among Sinologists, has spawned a vaster literature than the other Asian crises of the 17th century, revealing a much more complex picture than could be captured by a term such as "closure". The resistance to the Manchu conquest by commercial elements in Fujian coalesced around the Zheng family regime which conquered Taiwan from the Dutch in 1662 as its vital maritime base. On one hand the victorious Qing (Manchu) Dynasty imposed unprecedentedly draconian measures against any form of maritime trade in the 1650s, to the extent of evacuating inland the coastal population of Fujian to deny them any contact with the Zheng, and remained very hostile to maritime trade until it conquered Taiwan in 1683. On the other hand the Zheng regime itself marked the first truly maritime Chinese power in Asia, entirely dependent for survival on the inter-Asian trade.

The argument of this book is firstly to emphasize that "closure" cannot be taken to mean that the maritime interactions of an earlier era ceased. On the contrary even Tokugawa Japan had become so dependent on the international Asian trade through the commercial florescence of an earlier period that it could not turn off the flow even in response to the shogunate's desire to eliminate foreign influences. Even more than the Qing Dynasty in China from the 1680s, and the English and Dutch East India Companies, the Tokugawa did succeed in regulating external commerce in the interests of the state. Fujita in this volume argues that "no other country in the world carried out such a rigid state-centred foreign policy". These moves did not, however, mark a regression towards self-sufficient economies or national autarky. Both the forces that brought unity to warring Japan (including the eventual victor, the Tokugawa shogunate) and the Qing Dynasty, which came out victorious in the civil war that began in Manchuria and raged across China for half a century from the 1630s, were originally military-commercial powers. Neither could have existed without the torrent of silver that spread across Southeast and Northeast Asia, or the massive trade in sulfur and saltpetre in those regions. In order to secure profits from this trading activity at the same time as mitigating the impact of the turbulent global trade environment on their domestic economies, both Tokugawa and Qing authorities carefully built mechanisms to control trade and external relations.

For at least a half a century after the sakoku policy was instituted in Japan, large scale trade between Japan and Southeast Asia continued to take place through Chinese maritime traders and the VOC (Dutch East India Company). Iioka's Chapter 9 shows, with particular reference to one family of Chinese traders in Nagasaki, that the local authorities routinely evaded the official policy and even invested their own capital in the profitable voyages of the Wei brothers to Tonkin and elsewhere. Northeast Asia in practice was not as different from Southeast Asia as the official rhetoric of its rulers suggested. Fujita, in the final chapter, shows how the VOC linked Japan into the Indian Ocean trading world, bringing its metals to India and Persia in exchange for Indian cloth and silk.
In the "long 18th century" however, including the early decades of the 19th century, the kind of direct linkage between Northeast and Southeast Asia that had existed from the 14th to 17th centuries was no longer present. Within Northeast Asia, however, this period was one of growth in the proto-national economy of Japan proper and of major development of frontier regions of Manchuria, Northern Choson and the Northern reaches of the Japanese archipelago, bellying the stereotype of an "insular and stagnating Asia". Comparison between Northeast and Southeast Asia is still an issue of great interest in the 18th and early 19th centuries, as it was in the period from the 9th to 14th centuries.

Put simply, trade continued to be an essential constitutive feature of the states and societies of Northeast Asia, even in periods and regions where wealth moved through systems of reciprocity and redistribution rather than a complete market economy. It is our view that conditions prevailing in this region from the 18th century onwards raise particularly crucial issues for the world economy. Scholars seeking to adjust the World System theory proposed by Immanuel Wallerstein to afford greater emphasis on Asia assert that up to a certain stage in its early modern history, China maintained economic standards not inferior to Europe. This itself is not a new proposition. However, if we undertake a comparison of Japan's standard of living with those prevailing in Europe, just as Kenneth Pomeranz sought to compare Europe with the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, this book's insights can assume greater significance. Sugihara Kaoru has argued that the early modern states of East Asia followed not Europe's "path to the Industrial Revolution" but their own "path to the Industrious Revolution" in order to build the foundations for industrialization and the emergence of capitalism. The comparison of Northeast and Southeast Asia presented in this book can help us better comprehend the processes and features implicated in Sugihara's model.

This book's comparative approach to the histories of Northeast and Southeast Asia, and the collaboration between scholars in Japan, Korea and the English-speaking academic world, have antecedents in fields such as joint research on Southeast Asia and Choson Korea in the latter part of the early modern period. Thanks to edited translations by scholars, including Kobata Atsushi and Ishii Yoneo, there is steadily growing recognition of the potential for records from Asian countries, in addition to those of China, to be used in research on Southeast Asian history.

Taken overall, this book seeks to demonstrate that the vast and growing commercial interactions between the countries of eastern Asia, which dominate the 21st century economy, have long historical roots. The so-called "opening" to Western trade in the mid-19th century which is typically seen as the beginning of this process was rather the reversal of a relatively temporary phase of state consolidation in the long 18th century. The data on which this book is based, however, is not only expressed for the most part in Asian languages, it is scattered in difficult archives and collections. Only such international collaboration as this volume exemplifies can do justice to its importance.

Notes

1. The Greater India Society flourished in Calcutta in the 1920s and thirties, inspired in part by the work of French Indologists such as Sylvain Lévi. Its most influential scholar was R.C. Majumdar, Professor of History and later Vice-Chancellor (1937-42) of the University of Calcutta. Majumdar's work documented and celebrated what he first labelled "Indian colonies" and later "Hindu colonies" in the Far East.

2. While J.K. Fairbank, ed., The Chinese World Order (Harvard University Press, 1968) presents a sophisticated summary of this in the English literature, there is an even fuller body of work in Chinese and Japanese, partly discussed in the following chapter. For a recent critique of the way early French scholarship on Vietnam tended to portray it as the "lesser dragon", derivative of China, see Nhüng Tuet Tran and Anthony Reid, eds., Vietnam: Borderless Histories (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

3. Although D.G.E. Hall's A History of South-East Asia (Macmillan, 1955) had already blazed this trail (on something of a pre-nationalist base), the new multi-author studies were more ambitious in trying to locate common themes even in twentieth century Southeast Asia — David Joel Steinberg, ed., In Search of Southeast Asia (1967, revised edition 1987); its successor Norman Owen, ed., The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), and Nicholas Tarling, ed., The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).


26. Ishii Yoneo, ed. The Junk Trade from Southeast Asia: Translations from the Tōsen Fisetsu-gaki, 1674-1723 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998). A second volume of these translations, dealing with material on the area of present-day Vietnam, is being prepared by Dr Iioka Naoko.