

Bulletin of the National Museum of Japanese History

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of the Transitional Period from Early Modern to Modern :
A Comparison of Japan, China, and Siam
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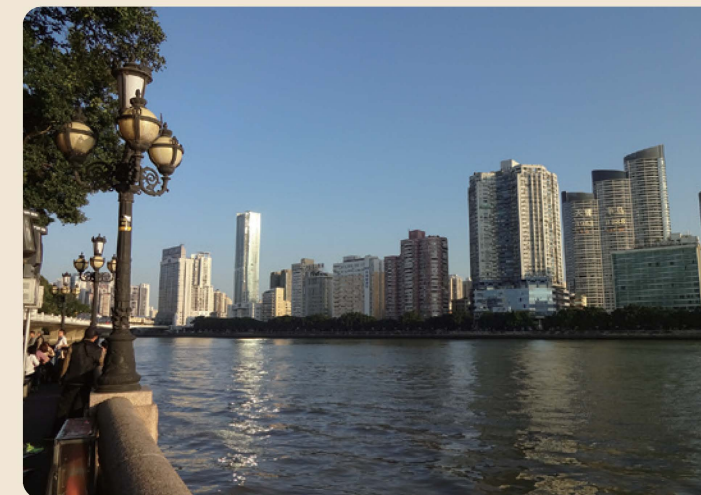
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[Joint Research] “Re-Examination of History of East Asian International Relations of the Transitional Period from Early Modern to Modern: A Comparison of Japan, China, and Siam”

Introduction (Abridged translation of the Japanese original in pp.1-13)

Mariko Fukuoka

This special edition of the Bulletin of the National Museum of Japanese History is the research results of the collaborative research project which was organized by M. Fukuoka in the National Museum of Japanese History from the fiscal year 2016 to 2018 under the same title.

1. Concept and Approach of the Joint-Research Project

The arrival of Perry-Expedition and the following conclusion of treaties with Western powers marked the beginning of the political turbulences spanning from the 1850s to the 1860s that led to the collapse of the Tokugawa shogunate and the establishment of the Meiji government in 1868 (the historical process called Meiji Revolution). The so-called “Western impact,” which triggered the above-mentioned process in Japanese history, is often regarded as the starting point of modern history in other parts of Asia as well. In Chinese history, for example, the Opium War and the Treaty of Nanking (1840-42), waged by the Britain under the Qing dynasty, are generally regarded as the events that raised the curtain on modern history, followed by the second wave of the “impact,” that is, the Arrow War and the Treaty of Tianjin and Beijing (1856-60). Also, Thailand (then Siam) had corresponding experiences in Southeast Asia in the mid-19th century: the arrival of the mission of Sir John Bowring, the British governor of Hong Kong and plenipotentiary, and then the sequential conclusion of treaties with Western powers, followed by structural changes in its society.

Looking at these events from the Western side, the historical figures involved in and the treaties concluded often overlap and interrelate with each other. For example, Townsend Harris, the U.S. consul general who is said to have “opened” Japan to world commerce by his American Japanese commercial treaty in 1858, visited Bangkok, Siam, in 1856, before coming to Japan, and concluded an American version of the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of Amity and Commerce that Bowring had concluded the previous year. Using Harris's treaty in Japan as a model, the Dutch, Russian, British, and French envoys subsequently concluded similar treaties with the Tokugawa shogunate in 1858 (Yedo Treaties); among them, the European four envoys either had concluded the Treaty of Tianjin in China before that (Admiral Putyatin of Russia, Lord Elgin of Britain, and Baron Gros of France), or afterward signed the Dutch-

Siamese commercial Treaty (Donker-Curtius of the Netherlands). Furthermore, following these developments in the East, the Prussian East Asian Expedition was also sent to Japan, China, and Siam in 1860-61, with the goal of concluding treaties of amity and commerce with those countries in name of the Prussian-German states, and returned home with more or less similar results.

It would follow that, during the respective transitional period from the early modern to the modern era, those Asian countries were making their own diplomatic responses to the "Western impact," which were closely interrelated in the background. In the words of Yokoyama Yoshinori, one of the members of this joint research group, "the opening of the ports of China, Siam, and Japan is a situation that goes beyond the comparative history but has a contemporaneous structural linkage." At the same time, for a long period of time in the early modern period, the international relations among those Asian powers were relatively distant compared to the periods that preceded and followed them (medieval and modern period), while they maintained rather loose relations through tribute and private trades. Under such circumstances, each power had established its own system of foreign relations and maintained them in a comparatively stable manner. As a result, each power responded to or dealt with the "Western impact" in a unique manner, inheriting the characteristics of its previous diplomatic practices.

Would it not be possible for us by an interdisciplinary collaboration to reexamine these shared historical experiences in East Asia from the relatively stable to the far more rapidly changing international relations against the backdrop of interlocked "Western impact" from an integrated viewpoint, which tries to transcend the boundaries of sectionalized national histories and to embrace broader East-Asian and global perspectives? Motivated by this interest and hope, this joint research project was organized by researchers of the Japanese and East-Asian diplomatic history (Fukuoka), the history of the Meiji Restoration (Mitani), Japan-Dutch relations (Yokoyama), Japan-China relations (Peng), Chinese history (Muraio), Thai history (Koizumi), the East Asian maritime history (Araki), and the folklore history (Matsuda), thus historians and folklorist covering the period from the medieval to modern era in all.

The history of East Asia during the transitional period from the early modern to modern period (especially from the 18th to the 19th century) has been the subject of intensive and high-qualified research within the framework of national histories, including the Japanese history, the history of the Qing dynasty in China, and the history of the Rattanakosin dynasty in Thailand. However, those studies have paid little attention to the above-mentioned fact that these regions shared the closely interlocked "Western impact" contemporaneously, while responding to them in its own ways respectively. In recent years, studies have emerged to reconsider the history of Japan's "opening" to the West in relation to Western powers'

activities in the Pacific world, or to reconsider Japan's modern history from the perspective of global history. Yet, such research trends are still in their infancy, and there seems to be a considerable lack of attempts by Asian history researchers themselves to relativize their own national histories in a broader context. This is even more striking when contrasted with the research situation in the medieval and early modern periods (especially from the 15th to 17th century), where studies transcending the boundaries of national histories have flourished under the research trend collectively called "Asian maritime history." We have conducted a three-year joint research project based on this perspective, aiming to shed light on the reorganization process of international relations experienced by the eastern Asian region from the 18th to the late 19th century from comparative and transregional perspectives.

The joint research was conducted through a combination of workshops, in which the members had cross-disciplinary discussions based on papers of each member and invited speakers, as well as field trips to selected sites that were the focal points of East Asian history of international relations in the early modern to the turn of the modern period, such as the "Canton system" in China, the Dutch and Chinese factory or settlement in Nagasaki, Japan, the Palace of the Rattanakosin dynasty in Bangkok, Thailand, the Japanese enclave in Busan under the Joseon dynasty in Korea, the Opium and Arrow Wars, the Bowring Treaty, among others. As a result, workshops were held at the National Museum of Japanese History, Tenri University, Kyushu National Museum, and Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture, and field trips were conducted to the Pearl River Delta in China (Guangzhou and Macau), Bangkok and Penang, Nagasaki, Tsushima, and Busan (Korea).

2. Joint-Research Members

[In alphabetical order of the family name; the affiliations and positions are as of FY 2018]

Kazunori Araki, Associate Professor, Research Division, The National Museum of Japanese History [Vice-head of the project]

Mariko Fukuoka, Associate Professor, Research Division, The National Museum of Japanese History [project leader]

Peng Hao, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Economics, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Osaka City University

Junko Koizumi, Professor, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University

Mutsuhiko Matsuda, Associate Professor, Research Division, The National Museum of Japanese History

Hiroshi Mitani, Professor, Atomi University

Susumu Murao, Professor, Faculty of International Studies, Tenri University

Yoshinori Yokoyama, Professor, The Historiographical Institute, The University of Tokyo

3. Results of Joint Research

The incorporation into the modern treaty system and the radical restructuring and liquidation of the early modern international order in and from the mid-19th century on were shared experiences among the countries of eastern Asia, such as Japan, China, Siam (Thailand), and Korea. However, historical research on this phenomenon has been conducted on a regional or country-by-country basis, such as Japan versus the West and China versus the West. On the other hand, the fact and significance of the interrelations and mutual influencing of those processes has not been sufficiently examined, falling off in-between the thresholds of the national histories. In this study, we have sought to address these forgotten interconnections, or the missing links in East Asia from the early modern to the turn of the modern era, with the cooperation of experts in various fields.

The biggest fruit of the three years of joint research for us is the establishment of perceptual foundations in the mind of each co-researcher, which now help us considerably to conceive the history of each region in a transregional and global perspective. The focal points of East-Asian international relations, including those places which our research group visited by the field trips, are connected through the seas (South China Sea, East China Sea, and Sea of Japan), and share the areal expansion, where people, goods, and information have come and gone through coastal routes by sailing ships and later by steamship mail lines from the mid-19th century onward. The historical events that occurred in connection with the so-called "Western impact," such as the Arrow War (China), the Bowring Treaty (Siam), the Perry Expedition and the ports opening to Western trade (Japan), are phenomena that occurred in a chain of interconnected events based on such areal expansion and with synchronic interrelations. The experiences of field trips in this joint research have enabled us to develop our own perspectives to consider such a chain of events not only as a factual relationship that can be reconstructed from written histories, but also with the three-dimensional empirical perceptions obtained from actual on-site observations. The accumulation of workshops and sharing of cross-disciplinary discussions produced a synergistic effect that further deepened the above-mentioned actual experiences and provided each of us with numerous moments of insight into the linkages that have been forgotten in the interstices between each national history.

The following is a summary of the papers by each co-researcher included in this special issue in the approximate chronological order of the subjects treated. Each of them is the result of the "perceptual revolution" in the mind of each member, so to say, which occurred along our joint research through the stimulations triggered by and among each other in and after the above-mentioned activities. Their value is to be estimated through assessment by each

reader of the individual papers.

Peng Hao's "The Trading Passes in Qing Empire's Overseas Trade Administration: 1684-1840," presents a comprehensive examination of the *paizhao* 牌照 trading permit system under which Qing authorities managed overseas private trade during the above-mentioned period prior to the Opium War. The East-Asian international order around China in the pre-modern period has been understood integrally as a tribute system based on tribute trades of neighboring countries with China as the superior power. However, in recent years, the existence of a Qing foreign trade framework outside the tribute trade, generally called *hushi* 互市 (literally meaning mutual trade), has been recognized, and attention has been focused on how to reinterpret the early modern East Asian trade order as implied by this system. As part of this trend, Peng Hao's essay examines the system of *paizhao*, or trading passes, operated by the Qing government to manage the private trade by indigenous and foreign sea vessels. Whereas previous studies have focused on individual cases of *paizhao* to be found in each branch of Chinese maritime trade, such as the Nagasaki trade by Chinese junks, the so-called "South Sea (Southeast Asia)" trade, and the Canton trade by Western vessels, the author aims to give the overall picture of the Qing dynasty's soft control system over private-sector maritime trade by examining and comparing the *paizhao* systems in all those branches comprehensively. In the field of Japanese history, it has been proposed since several decades that the foreign relations of early modern Japan (1600s-1850s), which had long been recognized as "national seclusion," had actually common characteristics with the early modern Chinese tribute system under Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), both being as a system combining sea ban (*Haijin* 海禁) and the ideas of "civilized-barbarian order (*Huayi* 華夷)." In view of the emerging new understanding of Chinese trade order under the following Qing dynasty (1644-1912) in terms of the *hushi* system, this comparative understanding of Japanese and Chinese foreign relations would need to be reexamined carefully.

The *hushi* trade of Western vessels in Canton could only be conducted within the scope of the "Canton system," a mechanism established by the Qing Dynasty to control the circulation of people, goods, and ideas between China and foreign countries by skillfully utilizing the geographical features of the vast Pearl River Delta region from Guangzhou Province to Macao. As long as the Western trade remained in this framework, it could develop relatively freely under loose management systems symbolized by the above-mentioned *paizhao* system among others. However, when Westerners attempted to deviate from or violate the "Canton system" in pursuit of trade expansion, convenience, and equal diplomacy, the Qing government immediately laid bare the logic of tribute and vigorously opposed such moves, while trying to protect the "Great Defense of China and Foreign Nations," the foundation of the Celestial order that was woven into the "Canton system." Susumu Muraō's

"The Imperial Edict of the Qianlong Emperor and the Second Occupation (British occupation) of Macao in 1808," analyzes in detail the development of the Qing counterarguments against such deviation and invasion of the "Canton system" by the "British barbarians" in the context of the British occupation of Macao (1808) that occurred during the Napoleonic Wars. According to Murao, the "Canton System" was established by extending the administrative system of prohibition and restriction of foreign settlement that had been formed in Nagasaki in early modern Japan to the Pearl River Delta in southern China, while leaving maximum room for the free circulation of goods and money. In a macroscopic view, the Pearl River Delta was a boundary between the Christian-tolerant and ethnically-mixed Southeast Asian world and the prohibited-religion and restricted-foreign-settlement world of early modern East Asia. Consequently, Western deviations and encroachments on the "Canton system" were accompanied later by encroachments and upheavals in the order of early modern Japan's foreign relations: thus, the second occupation of Macao brought also about the Phaeton Incident in Nagasaki, and the collapse of the "Canton system" due to the Opium War and Arrow War interrelated with the "opening of Japan" to the West. The essence of the Qing dynasty's logic of "barbarian affairs handling" in the context of these macroscopic interlocking relationships is the focal point of this paper.

Hiroshi Mitani's "SASAKI Shusuke's Correspondence with a Tokugawa Senior Councilor about the Defense of Edo Bay," focuses on "*Osonaeba goyodome* 御備場御用留," one of the fundamental historical documents over the foreign policies of the Tokugawa shogunate from the post-Opium-War period to the eve of Perry's arrival in Japan, presenting the contents of seven volumes of the material as well as the transcription of the main part of the first volume and the whole second volume. As the most important historical record of the Tokugawa shogunate's foreign policy after Perry's arrival in Japan, we have the "*Dainihon komonjo; Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monjo* 大日本古文書幕末外国関係文書" (Documents of Japan; Documents Related to Foreign Affairs at the End of the Edo period) compiled by the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo, which is still being compiled regarding the years after 1861. However, important historical records from earlier periods before Perry's arrival remain unfortunately scattered. The subject of this paper, "*Osonaeba goyodome*" by Sasaki Shusuke 佐々木脩輔, is a collection of notes written by a *Hatamoto* 旗本, a shogunate vassal, who served as one of the financial officers (*Kanjo Ginmi yaku* 勘定吟味役) responsible for maritime defense (*Kaibo gakari* 海防掛) as well as for the construction of batteries in and along the Edo Bay (*Edo kinkai Osonaeba gakari* 江戸近海御備場掛) from the mid-1840s to early 1850s; Sasaki made these records in the course of performing the above-mentioned duties, and they consist mainly of correspondence between him and his colleagues and *Roju* 老中 or the shogunate's Senior Councilors, especially Abe Masahiro 阿

部正弘, the de facto prime minister of the time. These records enable us to chronologically follow the foreign policy decision-making process of the Tokugawa regime on the eve of "Japan's opening" to the West based on concrete primary sources. Although the documents have been used in bits and pieces in studies by Japanese historians such as Fujita Satoru and Mitani, this is the first time that they have been presented in the form of a thorough catalog with a part of full transcription. The study of this document shall reveal that Japan's foreign policy before Perry's arrival was deliberately constructed using three dimensions: keeping seclusion as far as possible, avoiding conflict with Western powers, and building a sufficient military defense. It will contribute not only to deepen our understanding of Japan's foreign policy but also to serve comparative research with the "barbarian affairs handling" logic of the Qing dynasty, as discussed in Murao's essay.

Junko Koizumi's "King Mongkut and the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between Great Britain and Siam (1855)," is a cutting-edge examination of the Siamese King Mongkut's China trade and his relationship with Britain during the period when Siam was incorporated into the modern Western treaty system, beginning with the so-called Bowring Treaty. While the modern history of Thailand of this period has been viewed within a framework as a monolinear transition from tribute to China to the Western treaty system, Koizumi, in her various essays, has revealed how Siam interpreted international relations surrounding its own Kingdom, even after their incorporation into the modern treaty system, by placing the new treaty-based relations in the context of East and Southeast Asian regional relations, including tribute relations with neighboring countries. This paper takes this perspective further and delves into Siamese internal configurations of stakeholders of the China trade including and surrounding the King Mongkut, by utilizing various unpublished sources in Thai and British archives. Koizumi's analysis elucidates that the King took the Bowring Treaty as an opportunity to seize control of Chinese trade against competing Siamese royalty, nobility, and powerful Chinese merchants residing in Siam, by making use of Chinese merchants close to himself and British channels. The paper suggests thereby the novel image of King Mongkut, who can be observed to have sought to establish a superior royal authority by employing a series of new China-associated royal emblems.

After the Bowring Treaty, various Western envoys, including the U.S.A., France, Hanseatic cities, the Netherlands, and Prussia, came to Siam to conclude similar treaties, resulting in a series of commercial treaties made after the Anglo-Siamese Treaty. Mariko Fukuoka's "Bowring's and Harris' Treaty Negotiations with Siam in Comparison: Siamese-Western Diplomacy against the Background of Changing Trade Conditions in Asia from 1820s to 1850s," discusses the American-Siamese treaty negotiations conducted by Townsend Harris and examines the character of the Siamese royalty's reception of the American envoy

by comparing it with that to British plenipotentiary Bowring in the previous year (1855). Through the analysis based on British and American diplomatic records, it is revealed that the Siamese royalty at that time had a ranking view of the world's monarchs and their representatives, and thereby differentiated the treatment of foreign envoys based on the recognition of the hierarchical structure. Fukuoka observes that this hierarchical perception did not replace their traditional Asian hierarchical view with the Chinese emperor at the top, but was being newly organized by incorporating the latter into their integrative view of global international relations or hierarchy. Thereby, the essay suggests the following message: looking exclusively at Japan's diplomacy at the late Edo period, Harris seems to be the unquestioned Western power's diplomat who embodied the "Western impact"; however, his Siamese experience rather reveals new shades of him, which is more nuanced and attached with an inferiority complex toward the hierarchical "Old World."

On the other hand, Fukuoka's paper also tries to review as much as possible the changing trade conditions in Asia which were developing toward the mid-19th century, when the Bowring and Harris treaties were forged. In recent historiography, the global background of Japan's "opening" to the West around the same period has been increasingly examined in the context of the transformation of the Pacific world, considering the Western activities such as fur trade, whaling, sea mapping, and the expansion of steamship mail lines in the Pacific. However, in view of the geographical location of Japan lying in-between the Pacific and the Indian Ocean world, the historical developments in the latter Ocean should also be considered to really realize the background of the Japan's "opening," but this has remained mostly out of the scope of recent historiography. Though the reconstruction of the global context of Siam's incorporation into the modern Western treaty system was the focus of this paper, the state of affairs in question is directly linked to that of Japan, as shown by the fact that the US envoys Edmund Roberts and Harris, as well as the British envoy Bowring, all had the intention to sign treaties with both Siam and Japan. In the future, the global historical backgrounds of the integration of Japan, Siam, and China into the modern treaty system should be further clarified in detail through the comprehensive observation of the developments in the Indian Ocean as well as the Pacific Ocean world.

After Harris arrived in Japan, he succeeded in making the American Japanese commercial treaty in 1858, and this enabled the following speedy conclusion of similar treaties by four European powers (the Netherlands, Russia, Britain, and France) with Japan in the same year. By these Yedo Treaties, the ports of Yokohama (Kanagawa), Hakodate and Nagasaki were opened to foreign trade in 1859, while the treaty also stipulated that the ports and cities such as Yedo (now Tokyo), Osaka, and Hyogo would be opened as well after 1862 in sequence. However, the Tokugawa shogunate strongly desired to postpone their opening

because the Emperor in Kyoto had not approved the Yedo Treaties yet and was especially against the opening of Osaka and Hyogo. Consequently, the question of whether the shogunate could postpone their opening became one of the most contentious issues between Japan and Western treaty powers in the following years, and after the 1862 London Agreement between Britain and Japan explicitly allowed the shogunate to postpone their opening for five years, the question when they should finally be opened to foreign trade became the controversial diplomatic issue way until the Meiji Revolution period, since the above-mentioned agreement stipulated that Westerners could demand the opening of those ports before the deadline if other provisions of the treaties were not observed. Yoshinori Yokoyama's "East Asia and the Civil War in 1861: International Relations around the Sovereigns' Letters Exchanged between Shogun and Lincoln" discusses how the course of events around this diplomatic issue were seriously affected by the frequent attacks and murders of foreigners residing in Japan by antforeign samurais as well as by the Civil War that broke out in the United States just at the same time, and how the issue reached a substantial settlement in later 1861 to 1862 when and after President A. Lincoln sent a letter to Shogun Tokugawa Iémochi. By his multilingual approach utilizing archival sources of the Netherlands, America, and Britain, and Japan, Yokoyama sheds new light on two important factual linkages, which have been completely overlooked in Takashi Ishii's relating renowned work of 1966: First is the significant difference on Japan policies that emerged between the American representative in Japan (Harris) and the home government (Lincoln administration), regarding the postponement of ports-opening and the murder of Hendrick Heusken (1861), the interpreter of the American Legation in Japan. And second, the plan of joint military demonstration against Japan drawn up by the same U.S. administration as the result of Heusken's murder and proposed to the European treaty powers. As the essay elucidated, these courses of events were also influenced by the contemporary outbreak of the Civil War in the U.S.A. and the British Declaration of Neutrality. Against these historical backgrounds, Yokoyama details the intertwined changing process of the policies of the Western representatives in Japan and their respective home governments regarding those issues, and reveals how they came to a settlement, where the shogunate accepted to pay indemnities for foreigners' murders, including Heusken's, and the Western states in turn agreed to the postponement of ports-opening. This way of solution was to place the Tokugawa shogunate in an even more severe diplomatic condition, argues Yokoyama in his conclusion. It should be recognized as an admirable achievement where the author described the development of Tokugawa diplomacy in relation to the world situation from both macro and micro perspectives, making full use of multilingual historical records.

Kazunori Araki, "Diplomatic Letters of the Tokugawa Shogun in the Late Edo Era:

Paleographical Analysis," is a paleographical examination of the shogunal letters sent to sovereigns of Western treaty powers (especially to the U.S. President – J. Buchanan –) in the 1860s after Japan's "opening" to the West, conducted by a specialist of Japanese Medieval history and archives, who is especially versed in diplomatic correspondences which Japanese rulers had exchanged with those of foreign countries including Korea in the medieval and early modern period. To the eyes of the specialist of that field, what kind of messages do those shogunal letters to the West suggest in terms of morphology and style? This is the focal question of this paper. Japanese paleography has developed and deepened in a sophisticated and systematic manner with respect to ancient and medieval documents. On the other hand, it can hardly be said that the same extent of systematic studies has progressed regarding early modern documents, reflecting the vast amount and diversity of remaining records from the period (this is even more the case with documents from later Edo era). Consequently, it has been very rare that Japanese diplomatic documents exchanged with the Western treaty states, which emerged and increased rapidly after the treaty conclusions in the mid-19th century, become the subject of conscious paleographical analysis, even if the same documents have been already scrutinized in terms of their contents. However, in view of the fact that those documents, especially the shogunal letters to Western sovereigns, were actually authored by the shogunate's Confucian scholars who had been traditionally in charge of Japanese-Korean relations, or the officials who received their training in the shogunate's Confucian school, or the secretaries of those in power at that time, who were familiar with *Kokugaku* ideologies, and that they should have made the letters by mobilizing all of their knowledge, worldview, and values, relying on the styles and forms which had been developed in diplomatic as well as samurai-class writings from the medieval to the early modern period, those writings should inherently imply, alongside their contents themselves, a number of symbolic meanings expressed in variations in the style and form of documents. In this context, Araki's discussion raises a variety of new discoveries that have been overlooked by scholars of the diplomatic history of the late Edo period, including the present writer, who have looked only at the contents of documents and not at their style and form. This joint research started with the intention of crossing geographical and spatial boundaries, but with the participation of a researcher of medieval Japanese history, it has also shown that research that crosses temporal boundaries can provide novel perspectives, an impressive achievement that was not initially anticipated.

Mutsuhiko Matsuda, "History of Korean Sea Fishing by Japanese Fishermen Read from Diplomatic Documents: Agreements on Fishing Concluded between Japan and Korea in the 19th Century," is a basic study on the establishment process of the Japanese Korean fishing regulations in the 1880s by a folklorist who has conducted comparative research on the life

and culture surrounding the sea in Japan and Korea in the modern era. East Asia of the period in question was the venue where political turbulences such as the Imo Incident (1882) and the Gapsin Coup (1884) broke out one after another under the Joseon Dynasty, and tensions continued between Japan and Qing and other related powers over Korea's course of modernization and its suzerainty relationship with the Qing Dynasty. Consequently, the history of this time has become the subject of many historiographical studies especially in the field of East-Asian politics and diplomacy. On the other hand, against the backdrop of Japanese fishermen's active fishing trips to Korea after the Meiji Revolution, Japan took the initiative in establishing concrete rules for cross-border fishing through diplomatic negotiations with Joseon during this period, but little attention has been paid to its history, and basic research has been lacking in this rather cultural field of 19th century East-Asian history. As the specialist of folklore studies, Matsuda has investigated the mutual influence relationship between the Japanese and Korean fisheries focusing on modern and present age, and to trace its historical background, he aims in this paper to supplement the lack of research using historiographical methods. The detailed process of enacting these rules and the motives of Japan and Korea behind the scenes will be carefully examined in this essay based on Japanese diplomatic records.

The above essays are intended to reconsider from various perspectives the diplomacy and commerce of East and Southeast Asia during the period of structural change from the early modern to the modern era from transregional and transtemporal perspectives. I conclude this preface with the hope that this collection will contribute to the deepening of our understanding on the Asian maritime history of the critical period around the mid-19th century, where transregional studies are indispensable to understand the starting point of our modern history, but only a few of those trials have been conducted thus far. (End)