

COMPLETION REPORT

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Subject of Research Project: The Maritime Trade between Japan and Southeast Asia in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Reappraisal

The research on maritime trade between Japan and Southeast Asia revealed its significance as a key component of Asian trade in the early modern period. Communities known as *nihonmachi* played a crucial economic role in bolstering this maritime trade, which was vital for Japan, Southeast Asia, and the broader history of Asia.

The study discovered that the Japanese "trade diaspora" was significantly smaller than the Chinese diaspora, and it did not experience the same influx of newcomers as the Chinese diaspora. Despite its smaller size, the Japanese trade diaspora played a pivotal role—akin to their Chinese, Southeast Asian, and European counterparts—in promoting Japan-Southeast Asia trade. The research provided significant insights into the historical influence of the Japanese Red Seal ship trade on Southeast Asia during the early modern era. It traced both Japan and Southeast Asian nations' historical origins, underlying reasons, and consequences of the Red Seal ship system for both Japan and the Southeast Asian nations involved. Focusing on trade routes to notable destinations such as Indochina, Siam, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Tonkin (present-day Vietnam), the study highlighted the dynamics of commerce among Japanese merchants, Southeast Asian cultures, and European colonial powers.

The findings demonstrated the profound impact of this trade on local markets and economies in both Southeast Asia and Japan. The study enhanced our knowledge of Japan's early modern international trade and its interactions with Southeast Asia, revealing the complexities of regional dynamics during that era. It underscored the crucial role of the Red Seal ship trade in Japan's engagement with Southeast Asia, highlighting its extensive economic ramifications and its influence on diplomatic ties among Japan, Southeast Asian nations, and Western colonial powers. Additionally, the research emphasised the significant economic role of Japanese diasporic communities (*nihonmachi*) in bolstering maritime trade between Japan and Southeast Asia. The study employed qualitative analytical approaches, referencing primary sources from Japanese and Chinese archives from the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, including records of *Tosen fusetu-gaki*. We also examined secondary sources, including books, monographs, articles, and journals by distinguished scholars in international maritime research.

Overall, the findings shed new light on the history of Japan and Southeast Asia, offering fresh perspectives on maritime network aspects. Further research on trade and diplomacy helped illustrate the broader picture of economic change in East Asia and Southeast Asia, especially regarding the international division of labour. The research concluded that the Japanese diasporic communities (nihonmachi) played a crucial economic role in strengthening maritime trade between Japan and Southeast Asia.

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.)

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