

**Asian Community: Exchanges in Middle Ages East Asia and Hakata**

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Courses on Asian Community, One Asia Foundation

Translated by Wenting Yang

For 13<sup>th</sup> lecture of international seminar of One Asia Foundation, Principal Hsu Hsing-Ching invited Professor Saeki Kouji, who is Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at Kyushu University, to be our guest speaker. The theme of lecture is “Asian Community: Exchanges in Middle Ages East Asia and Hakata.” After this lecture, Professor Saeki visited Chang Jen-Hu, the chairman of the board of directors of our University. Professor Saeki and Chairman Chang had a pleasant conversation and a good time.

Professor Saeki Kouji is a distinguished scholar of the history of Japanese Middle Ages. His books included *日本の中世 9. モンゴル襲来の衝撃 Japan's Middle Ages 9: The Impacts of Mongol Invasion* (中央公論新社 Chuokoron-Shinsha, Inc., 2003), *対馬と海峡の中世史 Middle Ages History of Tsushima and Strait* (Yamakawa Shuppansha Ltd., 2008), *朝鮮前期の韓日関係と博多・対馬 Korea-Japanese Relations and Hakata and Tsushima in Early Joseon period* (景仁文化社 Kyungin Publishing, 2010), etc.

Thus, in this lecture, Professor Saeki explained “Exchanges in Middle Ages East Asia and Hakata” based on the academic results of his long-term research. East Asian world in Middle Ages (11<sup>th</sup> ~ 16<sup>th</sup> century) were composed of China, Korean Peninsula, Japan and Ryukyu. Japan hold a particular position in East Asian world for geographical reason. In the exchanges with China (Sung, Yuan, Ming), Korean Peninsula (Goryeo and Joseon), and Ryukyu, Hakata was representative trading port in Japan in Middle Ages. Urban development of Hakata in Middle Ages can be divided into several periods: Korokan Period (7<sup>th</sup> ~ 11<sup>th</sup> century), Japanese-Sung Trade Period (11<sup>th</sup> ~ 13<sup>th</sup> century), Mongol invasions Period (1274, 1281), Japanese-Yuan Trade Period (13<sup>th</sup> ~ 14<sup>th</sup> century), Japanese-Ming, Japanese-Joseon, Japanese-Ryukyu period (14<sup>th</sup> ~ 16<sup>th</sup> century), and the formation of autonomous city period. In this lecture, Professor Saeki focused on Japan's relation with Ming, Joseon, Ryukyu in 15<sup>th</sup> century. He discussed the city of Hakata and the role that Hakata Merchants played and examined his research with archaeologic results. The following is a summary of his lecture:

Japan in 15<sup>th</sup> century was during Muromachi period. What kind of period was Muromachi period? The peak of Muromachi period was the political heyday of the third shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358~1408). In this period, the economy and industries were advanced, relations with East Asian countries were stable, and culture was highly developed. For example, famous *Kinkaku-ji* (金閣寺, Temple of the Golden Pavilion) in Kyoto was built by Yoshimitsu. *Kinkaku-ji* was the representative of *Kitayama* (北山) Culture and its characteristics was it integrated traditional *Kuge* (Japanese aristocratic class) culture, newly-emergent *Buke* (military nobility) culture, and *Zen* culture from China. Other well-known Japanese traditional theatre and culture, like ink wash painting (水墨画), The Japanese tea ceremony (茶道), Ikebana (華道), The Japanese rock garden (枯山水), Noh (能), Kyogen (狂言) were developed in Muromachi period.

Professor Saeki referred to Iio Sōgi (飯尾宗祇)'s descriptions in his book *Tsukushi michi no ki* (筑紫道記, 1480) that Hakata became one of main international trading ports in Japan in Middle Ages under the background that Japan maintained stable relations with Ming, Joseon, Ryukyu and flourished trade ties. These factors promoted Hakata's development and prosperity. Regarding the characteristics of Japanese-Ming Trade, it took a form of tributary trade. Ming Emperor conferred a title upon Ashikaga bakufu shogun as "King of Japan" and then Japan was allowed to conduct tributary trade. Ming Empire issued "tally (*Kangofu* 勘合符, lawful trade certificate)" to distinguish legitimate traders from *Wako* (倭寇, Japanese pirates) and to show that the ship is lawfully registered by Ming. Bilateral trade were limited to these lawfully registered ship to Ming (*Kenminsen* 遣明船) and it was called "The tally trade (*Kango Boeki* 勘合貿易)."

Professor Saeki pointed out that the research regarding Hakata Merchants in 15<sup>th</sup> century was restrained by the difficulties of collecting historical materials because the domestic historical materials were not only in Hakata but in many places. Some of historical materials were in foreign countries which made collecting materials even more difficult. However, the digitization of archives and open archives for search and reading in recent years and archaeologic materials excavated from relics in Hakata both contributed to recent systemic research related to Hakata merchants. Hakata merchants like *Hsieh Kuo-ming* (謝國明, he was a *Hakata Goshu* 博多綱首), *Kamiya Soutan* (神屋宗湛), *Shimai Soushitsu* (嶋井宗室) were well-known merchants in Hakata. On the other hand, there were forgotten merchants. Professor Saeki considered it is important to unveiled these merchants from historical materials. Thus, he brought precious foreign historical materials to our class and described various dimensions of Hakata Merchants.

Professor Saeki Kouji gave five examples of Hakata Merchants. (1) *Tsukushi*

*Shoukyaku* (筑紫商客, Hakata Merchants) *Koitsumi* (肥富). As described in *Zenrin kokuhouki* (善隣國寶記), “in 1394 (the first year of *Oei*), Hakata Merchants Koitsumi came back from Ming Empire and talked about the benefit of bilateral exchanges. Thus, Shogun *Minamoto Ason* (源朝臣) Ashikaga Yoshimitsu appointed Koitsumi as envoy and started to exchange credentials and paid tribute.” It showed that Koitsumi’s talks about the benefit of trade with Ming Empire to Ashikaga Yoshimitsu was the turning point for the later success of sending lawfully registered ship to Ming. (2) *Soukin* (宗金) and his family. Professor Saeki discovered that *The Annals of the Joseon Dynasty* (also known as *The True Record of the Joseon Dynasty* 朝鮮王朝實錄(李朝實錄)) described that *Soukin* and his family was sent as envoy of King of Japan to Joseon. This material provided evidence that *Soukin* and his family mainly traded with Joseon and they also traded with Ming and Ryukyu. (3) *Douan* (道安) especially received attention in cartography and diplomacy history. The base map of Japan and Ryukyu map recorded in *Sin Suk-ju* (申叔舟)’s *The Haedong Chegukki* 海東諸國紀 was provided from “Map of the distance between Hakata, Satsuma, and Ryukyu” dedicated by *Douan* to Joseon government in 1453 (the first year of Danjong). This was known by everyone in the field of cartography. In diplomacy history, *Douan* was sent as envoy for King of Ryukyu and was treated with courteous reception by Joseon government and Joseon government gave him favorable terms of trade offer. In 1457, Joseon government granted him with the position of “*Hujun* (護軍, Commissioner over the Army),” for his achievement in escorting drifters. Thus, *Douan* played an important role in the activities in Joseon-Hakata-Ryukyu trading route. (4) Fuji (藤) Family. Fuji’s mother was very active in trade with Joseon and female merchants was very rare. (5) Okudou (奥堂) was very active merchants in the middle period of Japan-Ming trade. There is still a place named “Okudou” in Hakata now, near Gokushomachi, Hakata District (博多區御供所町).

Professor Saeki explained how the exchanges between Hakata and East Asian countries in 15<sup>th</sup> century brought impacts to the urban development of Hakata. At that time, there were many foreign envoys sent to Japan to visit King of Japan (Ashikaga Shogun). Most of them stayed in Hakata and thus promote the urban development of Hakata. In addition, relics excavated from Hakata also further brought clearer picture of Middle Ages city. Foreign ceramics brought by trade (they were originally from China, Joseon, and Southeastern Asia) in particular revealed the concrete evidence of trade. The stable economic and trade development and foreign relations led by Hakata merchants further promoted the prosperity of Hakata city and the solidarity of Hakata merchants. As the result, Hakata merchants governed the city through “a council system” and Hakata became an autonomous city in 16<sup>th</sup> century. Hakata still maintains a traditional festival “Hakata Gi On Yamakasa (祇園山笠)” which was hold

mainly by Kushidaj Shrine (櫛田神社) and hold annually from July 1 to 15 since the autonomous city period in Middle Ages.

Professor Saeki's lecture familiarize students with modern city Hakata (Fukuoka city) and history of East Asian exchanges. It also inspired students to think about the meaning of the coexistence of "new and old," "technology and tradition" in a modern city. (Written by: Meihui Huang, Assistant Professor of Department of Japanese Language and Literature)