The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya are full of events such as ceremonies for the Supreme-Holy-Lord-Omnipotent, and the King’s holy compassions and angers concerning his beloved Siam, especially in times of conspiracy. Westerners appear to have little knowledge for the Thai kingdom (for a rare appearance see the annals of the time of the famous king Narai, 1656-1688). The Dutch are only mentioned twice: when they transported holy Buddhist monks to Sri Lanka in 1744 and when their ships were destroyed in 1766.

As it already owned large ships suitable for long-distance deep-sea navigation and had access to the Japanese market, the VOC became heavily involved in the sale of copper in South Asia (Bengal, Coromandel, Malabar, Surat, and Ceylon), in Persia as well as in Mocha. From 1757 to 1760 the VOC made particularly good profits, selling some 60 per cent of its purchased Japanese copper on the South Asian market, where it made possible to sell some 300,000 pounds of copper in Bengal, in Coromandel, or on Ceylon really affected the regional economies? Without doubt the merchant communities of Malacca, Nagapattinam, Champakula, and some other ports profited from the imports.

**Ligor's tin trade**

The Thai historian Supaporn Ariyasajsiskul looked at the tin trade in Ligor, the present southern province of Nakhon Si Thammarat. Ligor was a well-known port to Chinese and other traders, where black pepper was for sale as well as tin. Europeans had claimed their share of the black pepper market at the beginning of the seventeenth century, until pepper prices dropped sharply in Europe. In 1751 the VOC sided with Ayutthaya when the Siamese throne pressed its claims to Ligor. During a punishing expedition by Siamese forces, the rebellious Ligor King and his wife were blown up in the palace, which was full of ammunition. Ligor's pepper plantations were also completely destroyed. After the conquest of Mergui in 1746, the VOC decided to monopolize the tin trade on both sides of the peninsula, with Redah, Perak, and Ujong Salang (Phuket) on the one side and Patani and Ligor on the other. During the reign of King Narai, the VOC succeeded in securing exclusive trade contacts with Ayutthaya and purchased 140,000 to 500,000 pounds of tin per year. Thus Ariyasajsiskul argues that the VOC and Siame were “unavoidable allies”. The VOC needed Siam to counter Portoguese and English competition and Siam needed strong European ally for military aid and overseas transportation services. But Ligor, after all, was on the very periphery of the Siamese court and sometimes the Council of Ligor simply ignored both Siamese demands and VOC threats. In the eighteenth century the Dutch hesitated more than once: should they leave Ayutthaya altogether and deal with local kings instead?

A new study on the intra-Asian trade

A group of twenty international scholars, acting as super-visors, had been invited to comment on the papers, so as to share their research experience with beginners in an open atmosphere. Those five PHD students were exposed to a critical-academic atmosphere as had been the case at the previous workshop in Singapore. The Japanese PHD students Ryuto Shimada and Atsuhi Ota presented their respective research results on the inter-Asian competition for Japanese copper and the use of Thai and Dutch currencies. In contrast, other debates concentrated on primary research orientations and methodological problems, such as the papers on South-African history, and those on diplomat-