Fire and Fire Control in Cities of Fujian during the Late Ming Dynasty
by Akira HORICHI

After the 16th century, fires occurred frequently in cities of Fujian due to high population density. A way of putting out fires in those days was to demolish the buildings in the path of a fire. The fire station was called Lengpu 冷铺, which was equipped with fire extinguishers. In order to prevent fire from spreading, the local government furnished the people with fire wall (Huoiqiang 火墙) in the house and the street passages (Huoxiang 火巷). Firemen were called Zongxiaojia 隊小甲 and Huofu 火夫. Since they were levied by the local government, in turn they watched for fires in Lengpu all night. In Fuzhou, the local government organized special fire control unit called Houjian 火禁. In the Wanli period (1573-1619), all the functions of the Lengpu, firemen and Houjian to prevent fires had declined. Therefore the local government restored them mainly in Fuzhou. I conclude that during the Late Ming Dynasty the fire control in Fuzhou was not self-governed but was controlled by the local government.

Decline of the Black Tea Export Trade to Britain and the Limit of the ‘Solidarity’ of Chinese Merchants: A Case Study of Conflicts and Controversy in Fuzhou
by Eiichi MOTONO

This article attempts to cast a new interpretation on the decline of the black tea export to Britain from China during the 1880s by considering why Chinese and foreign merchants could not establish a cooperative relationship in this case. The analysis of the commercial disputes between them in Fuzhou after 1867 and the controversy between foreign merchants and the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs during the 1880s reveal the common element that none of them dared to improve
the production and the sales system with their own capital and their own risk, though they were clearly aware that they should do something in order to revive the trade and to compete with their commercial rival: British India.

The reason for the above mysterious phenomenon was the lack of guarantee system for invested capital or sales profits, which was revealed through the proceedings of two civil cases, “David Sassoon Sons & Co. v. Fan Desheng and Chen Yintang” and “Wu Yu-shan v. David Sassoon Sons & Co,” from 1884 to 1887.

The two civil cases brought about two injurious effects upon the commercial relationship between Chinese and foreign merchants, in which the role of compradors was indispensable. Since both foreign and Chinese merchants could no longer trust the compradors after the two civil cases, neither side dared to invest upon an enterprise which would improve the production system of black tea.

The decline of the black tea trade to Britain should be regarded as a reflection of the unfriendly commercial relationship between Chinese and foreign merchants. It also revealed the limit of the “solidarity” of Chinese merchants. As long as they secured the monopoly of certain economic activities, Chinese merchants could intensify the “solidarity” of their commercial organizations. On the other hand, due to the lack of guarantee system and the unlimited liability of the huku style firm, they were quite impotent in improving the production and the sales system of the economic activity they monopolized by themselves.

From the Arjunawijaya to the Sutasoma:
Two Old Javanese Texts in their Historical Context

by Tōru AOYAMA

In the second half of the fourteenth century, the Majapahit court poet Tantular composed two major Old Javanese kakawins, Arjunawijaya and Sutasoma. The former was composed some time after the death of the powerful chief minister Gajah Mada in 1364, who epitomized the kingdom’s expansionist policy, and the latter some time before the