

Leonard BLUSSÉ

Netherlands | Historian (Expert in Southeast Asian History)

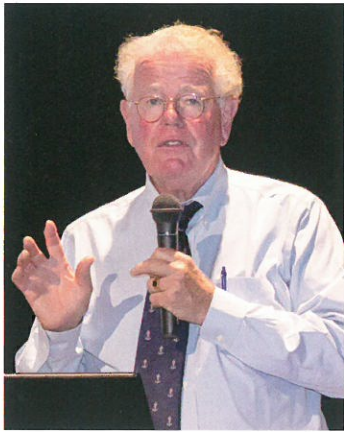
Public Lecture

Three Bold Entrepreneurs and Their Heritage

■ Date: Friday, September 13, 2019 15:00 - 17:00 ■ Participants: 150
 ■ Venue: Science Hall, 6F, Fukuoka City Science Museum

Part 1: Keynote Speech

- **Entrepreneurs' intertwined lives in turbulent times**
- **Legacy of the early stages of globalization**



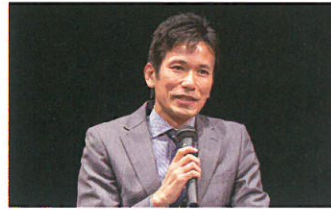
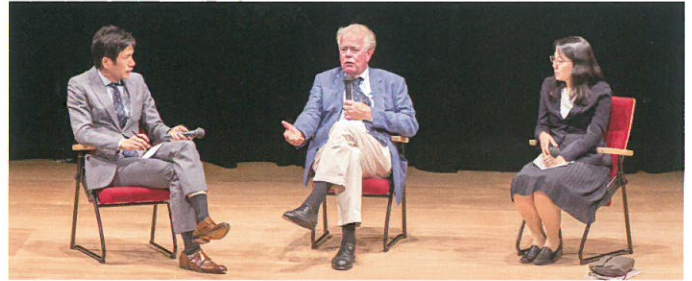
As people who live in the age of globalization, what should we learn from history? This is the question the audience was made to ponder in Leonard BLUSSÉ's lecture about three merchants from 400 years ago who contributed to globalization through their experiences in the Far East in an age of political upheaval.

He explained: "When you look at the process of globalization, it appears as a tapestry that has been woven by outstanding people over several centuries. In the beginning,

it was a loose patchwork. Different patterns emerged in different regions, and the people involved were barely able to connect them. But gradually, a uniform pattern emerged to form a single tapestry. The history of connection became the history of globalization. The globalization that is frequently mentioned now started about 400 years ago with the global trade in tea, sugar, and silk. The trailblazers of this globalization were Suminokura Ryoi (and his son), François Caron, and Koxinga (and his son). Japan and China resisted Western interference for generations. But the Dutch East India Company (VOC) sailed to the East to set up outposts in Japan and China. Amid this backdrop, these three entrepreneurs expanded their networks in their own ways, and they left their names in the history books as troubleshooters living in the same tumultuous era. They did not get their start on accident, however. It was the result of possessing outstanding abilities along with intelligence, will, and personality. In an age of tumult, these three can be considered the first weavers of the tapestry of globalization I mentioned earlier. Today, this tapestry continues to be woven, and it continues to change. These three men experienced many things and made many things happen. But they would not have been able to succeed without vision and diligence. I believe there are many things we can learn from their resolve and courage." The audience listened intently to Blussé's fascinating lecture on history, which he concluded by asking them to see the statue of Suminokura Ryoi when they visit Arashiyama in Kyoto.



Part 2: Interview



Coordinator: OTA Atsushi
 (Professor, Faculty of Economics,
 Keio University)



Interlocutor: MATSUKATA Fuyuko
 (Associate Professor, Historiographical
 Institute, The University of Tokyo)

Understanding the Globalization that flourished transnationally in the 17th century with its history

In a lively interview following the lecture, the participants engaged in a dialogue about the three merchant adventurers who not only adeptly followed the paths that were presented to them in life, but also forged their own paths. Associate Professor Matsukata began the exchange with a question: "To leave your mark on history, you cannot just be admirable. Leaving a legacy requires the help of those who come after you. In this sense, how important were the Dutch resources in your work?" Blussé replied by saying, "It was interesting to see how the work of the Asians was viewed by the Europeans. History is human. We know that these three entrepreneurs from the 17th century could speak Japanese, so that's why I wanted to give a lecture on them." This information session highlighted what makes history interesting by showing how the history of the 17th century lives on to this day, and how each of these three men, each with their own senses of loyalty; helped to shape the economy.

Participant Comments

- I enjoyed the historical commentary. It was like stepping back in time.
 The talk made me think about human potential.
- It was a fascinating lecture based on detailed research and analysis about discussed three trailblazers who were able to succeed in foreign lands several hundred years ago.
- When you think of the Netherlands, the Dutch East India Company comes to our mind first, so this lecture from a Dutch person's perspective was both refreshing and interesting.
- I listened intently about these three entrepreneurs. It inspired me to learn more about them as they are not well known in Japan.