

The Role of Tradition in Japan's Industrialization: Another Path to Industrialization. Edited by Masayuki Tanimoto. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. xvii + 342 pp. Index, notes, maps, figures, tables. Cloth, \$140.00. ISBN: 0-198-29274-0.

Reviewed by David G. Wittner

At least three generations of historians have been examining the history of Japanese industrialization during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While there is largely consensus that Japan's premodern economic development helped to launch the country on the road to becoming a modern industrialized nation, the role of traditional industry is still debated. Part of the issue is that, under the aegis of the Meiji government, Japan imported numerous technological systems from abroad. If industrialization was based on technological absorption and turnkey factories, then tradition played only a small part. A look at many private ventures, and even some early government enterprises, however, reveals either complete reliance on indigenous technologies or the adoption of hybridized Japanese–European technological artifacts. Adding to the indigenous–imported debate is the fact that many studies of Japanese industrial modernization focus on industries, such as cotton spinning, iron and steel production, chemicals, or railroads, which, while initiating Japan's industrial revolution, initially relied on imported artifacts.

This collection of twelve papers is a new approach to the subject. The authors define “tradition” and “indigenous” more broadly and in terms of industrial production systems—factory or factorylike systems that diverge from the Western model of industrial growth. Through case studies of small-scale industries, such as cotton and silk weaving, silk reeling, pottery manufacture, the machine industry, and brewing, this work provides evidence of an alternate path to industrialization, which in many cases had its origins in Tokugawa-era protoindustry.

Part one comprises two chapters, in which volume editor Masayuki Tanimoto and economic historian Takanori Matsumoto establish a baseline for understanding Japanese

industrial modernization. Tanimoto provides the historical and theoretical overview, while Matsumoto quantifies the value of traditional industry in the twentieth century.

Chapters three through seven, which make up part two, deal with specific industries or a set of industries. Here, the authors' intention is to illustrate the various ways that Japanese industries reacted to modernization. The common thread running through each chapter is that industrial modernization, through the absorption of Western technologies, was influenced by traditional or indigenous factors. Johnzen Takeuchi argues that traditional skills combined with foreign technology in the manufacture of brushes, buttons, matches, and soap; Satoshi Matsumura demonstrates that a strong domestic raw silk market created production dualism. Based on a case study of Suwa county, Nagano prefecture, in the first decades of the twentieth century, Matsumura argues that traditional systems of organization and production remained strong, despite the expansion of modern, Western-style factories that catered to the export market. Complementing this chapter is Jun Sasaki's contribution on factory labor. Sasaki's approach to the role of tradition is different. He demonstrates that farm labor trumped factory jobs in rural textile mills, and he argues that industrial modernization based on Western-style factories and machinery were still determined by traditional labor patterns. Jun Suzuki's chapter demonstrates that traditional craftsmen and the domestic market were essential for the development of Japan's machine-manufacturing industry. Traditional metalworkers were responsible for designing and building the machinery needed by newly industrializing filatures and collieries, which produced for the export market. Kazuhiro Ōmori rounds out part two with a comparative examination of trade and manufacturers' associations in two traditional industries, pottery and straw goods. Ōmori believes that trade associations, combined with government legislation aimed at expanding export production, helped traditional industries develop during the first decades of the twentieth century.

Part three, comprising two chapters, examines industrial modernization and institutions in the silk-reeling and pottery-manufacturing industries. Masaki Nakabayashi challenges commonly accepted views of Japan's cheap-labor advantage and argues that an efficient system of labor organization allowed Suwa county's modern silk-reeling industry to expand and capture the lucrative American raw silk market. Facilitating this

process were relations with leading national financial institutions, such as the Bank of Japan and Yokohama Specie Bank, which eased financial pressure. Turning to the roles played by technical schools and trade associations in the modernization of pottery production, Takehisa Yamada argues that local manufacturers were able to create a distinctively Japanese pottery by combining imported Western technologies with traditional handicrafts motifs. Technical-school graduates learned the latest Western manufacturing processes and disseminated their knowledge through exhibitions organized by trade associations and through employment in pottery firms.

The final three chapters, which make up part four, examine the relations among communities, community leaders, reputation, and industrial development. This section should provide a degree of correction to the popular misconceptions of a harmonious Japanese society. Hisami Matsuzaki and Futoshi Yamauchi (chapters ten and eleven) examine the silk-weaving industries of Isezaki and Kawamata, respectively. Matsuzaki's story is of a negotiated balancing act between social class, industrial entrepreneurs, market cycles, and mutual trust that was facilitated by community leaders. Cooperation was learned in the creation of a regional brand and industrial district. Yamauchi also examines mediated community conflict in the creation of a regional industrial policy. Although trade associations played an important role in maintaining the quality of the Kawamata brand, the cooperation of the community in general, and of the rural elite in particular, was necessary for sustaining industrial policy. In his examination of the soy-sauce and sake-brewing industries, Masayuki Tanimoto discusses how elite entrepreneurs contributed to capital formation and regional industrial investment. Tanimoto argues that "local notables," concerned with their reputations, responded to community demands for regional industrial investment during the late Meiji era (1868–1912). Thus, quintessentially traditional industries contributed to modernization in other areas.

This book is a welcome addition to the literature on Japanese industrial modernization. Tanimoto has taken care to include industries, such as machine manufacturing and brewing, which are often overlooked in the larger picture of Japan's industrial history. Although a few of the chapters are not necessarily as strong as the others, I do not feel compelled to single any out as weak. In fact, this volume has a great deal of continuity and coherence. Tanimoto's introduction lays out a straightforward

theoretical foundation on which the authors proceed to build their accounts. This book is illustrative of the complexity of Japanese industrial modernization and the role that tradition—whether that of artisans, artifacts, organizational systems, or institutions—played in the process. It should be required reading for economic historians and historians of technology. If I have any regret, it is that it has taken so long for such prominent Japanese historians to be introduced to an English-language audience.

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