

ested in the looming changes of Japan's nineteenth century -- and, in the process, exposed the science of cartography as not exclusively a "universalizing force," but rather as the socially and culturally constructed arena of knowledge that it is, particularly when transported to such places as Japan.

**Martha Chaiklin.** *Cultural Commerce and Dutch Commercial Culture: The Influence of European Material Culture on Japan, 1700-1850.* Studies in Overseas History, Vol.5. Leiden: Research School CNWS, School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies, 2003. 275pp. (177 pp. text + 98 pp. appendices, glossary, bibliography, notes and name index). ISBN 90-5789-086-0

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In Martha Chaiklin's *Cultural Commerce and Dutch Commercial Culture: The Influence of European Material Culture on Japan, 1700-1850*, the author examines the influence of finished European manufactured objects on the cultural sphere of Japan during the last half of the Tokugawa period. Her work challenges the misconception that Dutch/European influence on Japan was negligible. According to Chaiklin, this misconception came about due to the fact that historians to this point have concentrated primarily on the economic and intellectual aspects of Dutch/European contributions, rather than on the influence of material culture – which she defines as “the objects generated by a society for use in daily life” (5).

In general, Chaiklin's work succeeds admirably in depicting a greater European cultural impact on Tokugawa Japan than has previously been acknowledged. This has been achieved in spite of the admission by the author that her study had to cope with “the constraints of imprecise historical data” (173) and the fact that “Cultural influence may ultimately be unquantifiable....” (177). In an effort to address these challenges, Chaiklin

attempts to treat material culture as a primary source; however, in practice, she ultimately ends up using predominantly Dutch-language trade records and printed Japanese-language sources for her study.

The book, which reads like a dissertation, and is referred to as such on more than one occasion by the author, is divided into two sections: the first (chapters two through five) examining the trading relationship between the Dutch and the Japanese, and the second (chapters six through eight) detailing three case studies (clocks, glass and firearms) in terms of their diffusion and acculturation in Japan.

Chaiklin begins her study with a discussion of the diffusion of imported manufactured goods in Tokugawa Japan through both legal and illegal means. These goods came into Japan via legal trade (both officially-sanctioned company trade and quasi-legal private trade), smuggling, and the theft of legal imports. Whereas bulk commodities were the main concern of the Dutch East India Company's (VOC) official monopolistic trade policy with Japan, “European material culture in the form of finished manufactured goods...were brought as a speculative sideline, as gifts, in response to special requests, or even as ballast” (12). Private trade (goods trafficked by employees of the VOC) was originally prohibited by the Company but encouraged by local Nagasaki officials who profited handsomely from the transactions. By 1700, however, the VOC had grudgingly accepted the practice and limited the goods that could be sold by individual Dutch employees. Both the official and private trade continued side-by-side until the end of the Tokugawa period, fluctuating at times depending on the state of the Japanese economy.

It has long been known that, in spite of the strict regulations of *sakoku* and the harsh penalties enforced by the Japanese government, smuggling was rampant in the Tokugawa period. Chaiklin rightly notes, however, that the smuggling of Dutch goods paled in comparison to the smuggling of Chinese goods, and that most of the smuggling involved Dutch commodities rather than manufactured objects. Theft of Dutch goods was also common, but this too usually consisted of small amounts of food items taken from the houses of VOC employees. Chaiklin con-

cludes that “Legal trade, both official and private, was the most significant route by which foreign objects entered Japan,” and that “Neither smuggling nor theft can be considered major routes for European goods to spread to the general populace of Japan” (31).

In Chapter Three, Chaiklin examines the role of gift-giving in the diffusion of Dutch/European commercial culture in Japan. On an official basis, the Dutch provided gifts to the Japanese twice annually: the first occurred on the court journey to pay respects to the shogun and included presents for the shogun and bakufu officials in Edo; and the second occurred at the beginning of the eighth month when *hassaku* gifts were provided for the local officials in Nagasaki. Chaiklin notes that these gift-giving occasions did little to spread European commercial culture, however, because “with the exception of a few wine bottles and a fixed number of wine glasses to a fixed number of officials, European-manufactured goods were not included in the pre-set official gift exchange mechanism after the seventeenth century” (42). Special gifts given by the Dutch to the shogun rarely left the palace grounds and thus had little influence on the ordinary people of Japan, but Chaiklin postulates that some of the smaller presents given to lesser officials in exchange for favors may have made their way into the general population. This, she concludes, “represented the first step toward creating demand and sowed the seeds of cultural influence” (48).

In Chapter Four, Chaiklin discusses special orders (*eisen*) for supplies and goods, “in order to examine whether there was a Japanese demand for things from Europe and, if so, what items were in demand and by whom” (10). There were two forms of documentation of the special orders: one consisted of the requests made by the Japanese and the other was the Dutch record of what was actually brought to Japan each year in response to the requests. Once the special order goods arrived at Nagasaki, they were taken to the Nagasaki *kaisho*, where the goods were taxed before being turned over to their owners. The exception to this practice was the shogunal requests, which were usually given as gifts by the Dutch on their journey to court.

Among the shogun of the later Tokugawa period, Yoshimune and Ieharu made the most special requisitions of the Dutch. Although Yoshimune asked primarily for plants and medicines, he also requested horses, weapons, telescopes, tableware and paintings. Ieharu, on the other hand, ordered Western clothes, animals, sun glasses, pocket watches and fire engines. Lesser government officials, especially at the local level in Nagasaki, also made requests for a wide variety of objects. According to Chaiklin, while the most frequently requested items were “pocket watches, spectacles, telescopes, glass tableware, and, to a lesser extent, magnifying glasses...[m]any other items...brought in smaller quantities...had far-reaching cultural effects or represented something unique about Dutch trade with Japan” (64). These objects included fire engines, tobacco, snuff, horse brushes, and ceramic tableware. From these examples, Chaiklin argues that “The *eisen* goods came to form an essential part of the structure of exchange between Japan and the West” (69). She also concludes that the large number of these goods that came into Japan represented “the quest for knowledge in a restricted society” (69).

Chapter Five explores the distribution system that was developed by the Japanese to move imported European manufactured goods from the port of Nagasaki to various marketplaces across the country. By examining the accessibility of these goods to the Japanese consumer, Chaiklin attempts to determine the degree of European cultural influence in Japan. She concludes that a “complex but effective structure for purchasing imported goods was in place by the mid-seventeenth century” (71).

According to Chaiklin, two kinds of specialized wholesale and retail shops handled foreign goods at the consumer level: one dealt in a wide variety of imported items “from peacock feathers to glassware,” and the other “specialized in one kind of product but sold imported goods [often clocks and glassware] and produced the same sort of object on the premises” (80). While most of these shops were located in the major cities of Nagasaki, Osaka, Kyoto and Edo, “Itinerant merchants and gift purchases by visitors to [these cities] helped distribute products to more distant regions” (85).

Each of the final three chapters depicts an important aspect of technological diffusion and acculturation. Chapter Six examines clockwork, because, according to Chaiklin, "it is often seen as the primary technological advance that instigated and facilitated industrialization" (10). As she also notes, "clocks and watches were one of the non-monopoly products in highest demand throughout the Edo period" (86). It is evident that the Japanese were interested in clockwork from an early period. Clocks, which were first introduced into Japan by St. Francis Xavier in 1549, were being produced by the Japanese by the beginning of the eighteenth century. Pocket watches (introduced by the Dutch in 1645) were more difficult to manufacture, and their reproduction probably did not occur until the early nineteenth century. Other forms of clockwork, such as musical clocks, music boxes, astronomical instruments and automata, also became popular in the later Tokugawa period. Chaiklin argues that, unlike China, Japan absorbed and adopted European clockwork technology into its culture on many levels.

In Chapter Seven, Chaiklin examines glass production "because it illustrates a skill that cannot be copied but must be taught and thus provides a clear example of technological transfer" (10). Before the arrival of Europeans in Japan in the mid-sixteenth century, the Japanese could make glass metal but the technique of glass blowing was not yet known. While the Portuguese were the first to bring blown glass to Japan, it was the Dutch and English who actively imported it in the early seventeenth century and stimulated Japanese interest in the technique. By the 1670s, there were Japanese glassblowers in Nagasaki and soon thereafter, they could be found in the other large cities as well. The Dutch brought in all sorts of glassware, ranging from bottles to eyeglasses, and including items such as magnifying glasses, telescopes, magic lanterns and engraved wine glasses. The Japanese not only learned how to produce these objects, but they created their own inexpensive glass products, such as glass hair ornaments. According to Chaiklin, "By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, inexpensive glass objects by Japanese artisans were sold widely at temples, fairs and even small shops on back streets" (144-145).

Chaiklin concludes the body of her work with an examination of firearms and the role they played in Japan after the implementation of *sakoku*. She argues that Japan never rejected firearms in the Tokugawa period because even though firearms "were discouraged among the populace, they were maintained among the military" (151). In addition to their military uses, firearms were also utilized in ceremonies and for hunting. Hunting was both a leisure activity for the wealthy and a necessity employed by peasants in protecting their crops from animals.

During the first century-and-a-half of the Tokugawa period, Japan felt relatively safe from outside threats and because of this, the domestic production of firearms and the development of new weapons technology remained stagnant. However, both the importation of European weapons and Japanese interest in Western military technology increased dramatically in the early nineteenth century with the Russian threat from the north, the *Phaeton* Incident of 1808, the increased number of castaways from American whaling vessels, and, ultimately, the Opium War in China. As Chaiklin notes, "Each time gunfire was exchanged, the Japanese stepped up arms development. News of the Opium War and its outcome brought about the biggest change of all" (172).

In her brief concluding chapter, Chaiklin argues that even though European-manufactured objects did not comprise a major portion of the official VOC trade with Japan, "In the minds of the Japanese, pipes, clocks, watches, music boxes, spectacles, bottles, and pistols had a far greater impact than bulk commodities such as raw silk or tin" (173). She also asserts that "far greater numbers of distinctively European manufactured goods were imported into Tokugawa Japan than has ever been acknowledged" (172). This she attributes to poor or missing records concerning *kambang* trade, the failure to examine *eisen* documents, the underestimation by scholars of the importance of unofficial gift-giving practices, and ignorance of the vast trading networks that brought these goods to people across the country. On the other hand, Chaiklin believes that too much weight have been given to the roles of smuggling and theft in the Japanese acquisition of European material culture.

Chaiklin also claims that “The overall influence of imported European culture on Japanese society was not confined to the wealthy elite, but rather reached all social strata either through foreign objects or domestic interpretations of them” (176). And even though *rangakusha* and Japanese government officials were able to read about European developments through Western books and annual news reports (*fusetsugaki*) compiled by the Dutch, Chaiklin maintains that the material culture brought by Dutch ships was just as important in making the Japanese aware of European culture. In conclusion, she argues that “European manufactured goods played a vital role in awakening [the Japanese] to a different world of possibilities” (177).

Chaiklin has taken on the formidable task of trying to show the impact of European culture on Tokugawa society through an examination of European finished manufactured goods brought in by Dutch traders. Her claims of a European cultural influence that, in certain instances, reached all levels of Japanese society is best supported by her use of private trade and *eisen* records. Her argument is weakest when she relies on speculation and extrapolation from inconclusive trade records.

I would have also liked to see the author employ more local Japanese documents, especially from the Nagasaki area. By confining herself to printed Japanese collections (and sometimes even abbreviated forms of these), she has denied herself the fullest possible record of what is indeed a poorly documented field. In an attempt to strengthen her argument, she also, in my opinion, devalued the contributions of the Portuguese and, especially, the Chinese in introducing the Japanese to European material culture. Furthermore, I see very little use of archeological data in her study. For example, I would imagine that the extensive work that has been done on Deshima would have provided valuable information on her topic.

Chaiklin’s study has certainly contributed to our increased understanding of the influence of European material culture on the Japanese during the latter half of the Tokugawa period. By confining herself to an examination of finished manufactured goods, she has omitted other important areas of Dutch/European influence, such

as food, clothing, written materials and language – but this is another book. The book at hand is, in general, well-researched and well-written, and offers an entertaining and readable account of a valuable, yet neglected, aspect of Tokugawa history.