

commercial pathways through which medicines circulated in colonial Indochina. Chapters 4 and 5 attend to the individual and institutional actors involved in the private pharmaceutical trade in Vietnam. The book's last three chapters discuss the consumption of medicines, emphasizing the agency and perspectives of Vietnamese individuals and communities. A uniquely satisfying read for area studies scholars and historians of medicine, *The Colonial Life of Pharmaceuticals* will also appeal to specialists in business history, postcolonial studies, and global health.

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A Medicated Empire: The Pharmaceutical Industry and Modern Japan. By Timothy M. Yang. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021. Notes, references, index. Cloth, \$54.95. 354 pp. ISBN: 978-1-5017-5624-5.

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Reviewed by Emilie Takayama

A Medicated Empire chronicles the genesis and evolution of the pharmaceutical industry in early twentieth-century Japan. Timothy M. Yang expands on existing scholarship that explores the emergence of public health regimes in Asia by showing how businesses played an influential role in “mold[ing] compliant minds and produc[ing] docile bodies for the benefit (and sometimes to the detriment) of state rule” (p. 2). The book focuses on the rise and fall of Hoshi Pharmaceuticals. Founded in 1906 by Hoshi Hajime, the company emerged in tandem with Japan’s rapid industrialization during the first half of the twentieth century. Hoshi became well known for its patent medicines and was also one of the primary producers and traders of alkaloids. This naturally occurring organic compound include morphine, quinine, and cocaine. At its zenith in 1923, Hoshi was capitalized at 50 million yen, outperforming and outmaneuvering its competitors (p. 3).

As Yang highlights throughout the book, Hoshi achieved meteoric growth by catering to the needs of the modern Japanese state. When Japan embarked on a path to modernity following the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the state viewed pharmaceuticals as a “strategic industry” that supported its efforts to improve and protect the health of Japanese citizens both at home and abroad through medicines. Hoshi Hajime perceived an

opportunity, and the company acted as one of the intermediaries of modernity by manufacturing Western-style medicines and instilling Japanese consumers with new medicinal practices. This included promoting a culture of self-medication, which was marketed as the hallmark of modern life. The author shows how the culture of self-medication was a double-edged sword for the state. Although Hoshi played a vital role in imbuing Japanese with the values of hygienic modernity through the sales of its medicines, citizens' consumption of drugs on their own initiative without professional consultation was a source of anxiety among state authorities.

Yang's extensive access to Hoshi's archival materials allows the author to provide a rare and detailed narrative of the complex relationship between the company and the state during the first half of the twentieth century. Any scholar who has attempted to write on Japanese business history will be familiar with the difficulties in gaining access to company archives. As Yang notes in his introduction, large firms often hire a designated historian to write the company history and rarely grant access to scholars. The official company history, known as *shashi*, is written for the public and routinely updated, often resulting in an embellished narrative of the company. Hoshi Hajime studied at Columbia, and Yang used his affiliation with the university to access a treasure trove of archival materials. As a result, *A Medicated Empire* offers a detailed narrative of not just the triumphs of but also the controversial roles played by the pharmaceutical industry—and businesses in general—in the construction of modern Japan that are often minimized in or even left out of *shashi*.

One of the dimensions often downplayed in company histories is how corporations participated in and profited from Japan's colonial expansion during the first half of the twentieth century. Colonies were important for firms like Hoshi because they offered much-needed resources and new markets. In chapter 5, the author delves into Hoshi Pharmaceuticals' involvement in the opium trade in the empire. The Opium Wars fought between China and the West irrevocably transformed Asia, leaving Japan fearful that it too might lose political autonomy if it failed to control drug use among its citizens. Japanese authorities portrayed opium use as an uncivilized vice and strictly controlled the sale, possession, and use of the substance on the mainland. As the author shows, however, the same rules did not apply in the colonies. The governors-general of Taiwan and Korea and the puppet state of Manchukuo operated state monopolies for the manufacture and trade of opium-based intoxicants for colonized people because it helped finance Japan's pricey colonial projects. Hoshi Hajime leveraged his connections to the governor-general of Taiwan, allowing his company to obtain a

lucrative contract to purchase discounted crude morphine from Taiwan's Opium Monopoly Bureau. Hoshi's dealings in opium resulted in a public outcry, as they contradicted the firm's claims to humanitarian interests above profit. The incident tarnished Hoshi's reputation and resulted in its bankruptcy.

Although the close-knit relationship between businesses and the state is well known in the context of Japanese capitalism, Yang's work is nevertheless important in understanding the extent to which companies acted as agents of modernity and imperial expansion. Given the attention that the pharmaceutical industry has received over the past few years, this book comes at an important time. As the author notes, the business of medicine is "always deeply political and deeply flawed" (p. 15). *A Medicated Empire* is a thorough and intriguing story of the development of the pharmaceutical business in modern Japan and should appeal to historians interested in business, medicine, and imperialism.

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Ingenious Trade: Women and Work in Seventeenth-Century London. *By Laura Gowing*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021. x + 275 pp. Bibliography, index. Hardcover, \$39.99. ISBN: 978-1-108-48638-5.

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Reviewed by Charlie Taverner

The seventeenth century is a significant moment for the long-running debate about the prominence of women's work in the preindustrial era. In a classic study first published in 1919, Alice Clark (*Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*) argued that this was when women's labor was marginalized, particularly within skilled and more prestigious trades, as part of England's capitalist transition. This chronology has since been rewritten, with greater emphasis on the continuing restrictions that women workers endured. Recently, several large-scale projects have stressed the complexities of the gendered division of labor across early modern Europe. Laura Gowing's *Ingenious Trade: Women and Work in Seventeenth-Century London* is a major intervention centered on the period that intrigued Clark. The book illuminates how, in the flux of fast-growing London, women were a regular,