

how doctors view transformations affected by industrialization and a survey of changes in the consumption patterns of their Tibetan and Chinese patients.

Saxer's monograph makes a valuable contribution to a growing literature concerning modernities and Tibetan medicine, the evolution of traditional knowledge systems and the manufacture of traditional medicines in response to contemporary systems of regulation and production. It explores issues highly relevant to the question of how, or if, traditional systems of medical knowledge can survive and adapt to the industrialization of their medicines, interacting successfully with state regulatory bodies and global markets. It examines what impact global markets have on the knowledge bases of traditional medical systems and the manufacture of their medicines, understood as inextricably linked to the ethnic identities of their practitioners. It is an important resource for medical anthropologists, for those working in the fields of Tibetan and Chinese studies, and indeed to all those at any interdisciplinary intersection involving cultural identities or the commodification of ethnicity.

Public Properties: Museums in Imperial Japan. By Noriko Aso.

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As indicated in its title, Noriko Aso's *Public Properties* outlines the contested history behind the idea of "public properties" as constructed through the discursive site of the modern museum in Japan. The museum was established as the kernel of a "modern exhibitory complex" in nineteenth-century Europe. Its development paralleled the creation of various architectural and urban-planning reforms that enhanced the general public's opportunity to view the visual material culture that belonged to and signified the hegemonic powers of social control and prestige. On the other hand, the modern exhibitory complex made this new public existence more visible to such powers. The museum in particular conferred to the public a right to look at previously restricted forms of images and object, while staging their public presence within an arena of a disciplinary power. In this regard, the museum was programmed to fulfill the modern capitalistic state's goal to create a self-ordered society. Aso indicates that this specific idea of the modern Western museum was translated and transplanted to late nineteenth-century Japan, at precisely the time when the emerging state sought to expand its political power and redefine its relationship with its people through cultural institutions. In this way, museums in Japan contributed to the national constitution of culture, while involved in the cultural constitution of the nation. Aso further expands the scope of the book's research by exploring the construction of museums in Japan's colonies beyond the boundaries of the nation. At the same time, the author also explores private museums and spaces of commercial display in the metropolitan and provincial areas. By considering the different forms of exhibitory spaces together, Aso's book illustrates how various ideas of public properties were defined, managed, and institutionalized in the multiple sites of the museum during the formative period of Japan's modernity.

Each chapter deals with the complex relations between museums and public properties under specific economic and political circumstances. Chapter 1 begins by tracing a history of the incorporation of indigenous Japanese exhibitory cultures into an idea of the "modern museum" in the late nineteenth century. At the center of the shift was the new Meiji regime that imagined the museum as both a custodian and a director of national culture vis-à-vis the West. During this process, the state came to obtain a right to determine the boundary between public and private through the institutionalization of norms of display and viewership in the museums. Chapter 2 expands this framework to address a notion of "imperial publicness." In this dynamic field of public and state

interaction, ambiguity rather than certainty effectively constructed a particular relationship between the imperial subject and national cultural properties. This idea was based on the national public audience being defined in terms of a certain set of people who were granted a “gift” by the emperor, and not through the idea of a right of access to art objects displayed in the imperial museums. Chapter 3 extends this idea of the “imperial-museum public” to consider the context of colonial museums – especially in Taiwan and Korea. It addresses how objects in the colonial museums provided the material foundation to support the incorporation of the colony into a shared imperial public framework, a process that was differentially effectuated by particular local interests and situations. Chapters 4 and 5 move back to domestic Japanese circumstances, highlighting what might be considered a counter-movement to the idea of imperial publicness, constructed through the largess of the emperor’s gift. These final two chapters investigate how private museums and spaces of commercial display respectively complicated the way the museum operated as a clear agency in support of the national empire. But this initially alternative mode of publicness was eventually to be incorporated within dominant state discourses during the years of the total war regime. Aso finally concludes that the idea of publicness should be conceived as “relational,” constructed between the state and its subjects, and shaped through various layers of metropolitan, colonial, private, and commercial spaces of display (Aso 222).

By mapping out previous research on museums, cultural expositions, and world fairs, Aso’s book provides a comprehensive view of how museums functioned as a central organ in formulating ideas of national, imperial, and colonial property. While the book may have some overlaps with previous scholarship on the subject of the museum in Japan, due to its familiar subject and references employed, the innovative quality of *Public Properties* can be found in its bringing to light a new conceptual direction that enables the reinterpretation of the museum as a crucial locus that shaped a specific concept of “publicness (*kō*)” in imperial Japan. The author usefully demonstrates that publicness is not a given, universal, self-evident concept. It is both an ongoing process and outcome of the negotiations between the state, emperor, nation, and society, as made through dominant forms of exhibitory culture. Publicness is often expressed through contests of access in relation to material property, and by examining this process in such specific terms Aso illuminates the struggles among different powers in relation to ways of viewing and modes of subjectivity. Thus, it is demonstrated how the Habermasian concept of “public sphere” or a notion of Western European egalitarianism cannot usefully explain the sharp tensions between exclusion and inclusion constructed within the forum of the modern Japanese museum. As Aso illustrates with the example of the rare exhibition of Shōsōin treasures, there is rather an opposite direction and principle to be found in the conventions underpinning Japanese exhibitions: the more important the object is, the more invisible and inaccessible it should be to the general public. The author acutely shows that the idea of publicness in modern Japan emerged during an era of extremely hierarchically structured relationships between the state and the general population, not least extending to the imperial colonies (Aso 9). This is neither to unduly stress that any particular Japanese notion of publicness is due entirely to its intrinsic cultural differences from those determinately existing in Western Europe, nor to highlight that the form of Japanese publicness points to the “singularity” of Japanese exhibitory culture. Conversely, Aso’s book takes a critical angle to shed light on the multiplicity and elasticity of the idea of “publicness,” which emerges out of the various tensions and frictions among different social elements during the period she considers. As such, digressions to explore the museums in the colonies, or the private and commercial museums in the local areas, are not presented as additional cases to supplement the main narrative of the making of modern publicness; rather, they are constitutive in this formation, participating in the ongoing negotiations and contradictions with the state, nation, and empire.

Given its conceptual and comprehensive approach, *Public Properties* both deepens and expands previous scholarship on the topic of Japanese museum studies and visual culture. Its interdisciplinary perspective touches on many important issues relevant to the fields of art history, public culture, and political history. Nevertheless, one may ask whether the notion of “property” as articulated in this book is tilted toward its conceptual formation rather than its history as a material thing. Along with the conceptual history of museums, there is another history that perhaps tells us more about the materiality of the object and its relationships with audience. Material culture has been a considerable consequence of museums and cultural displays. What kind of effects, then, could the object bring to the imperial-museum public? Did its affective register in the public domain result in any political motivation operating in support of the nation, colony, and empire? Seeking to answer such questions may help to explain why we need to engage with the issue of “audience” as another gateway to understand the history of the Japanese museum and the form of publicness it constituted. A growing scholarship in audience studies indicates that viewers participate in the ongoing process of meaning-making by responding to, rather than merely receiving, the values of art work in the museum.¹ They share certain modes of perception and appreciation, which, in turn, creates a specific form of community bound up with things and objects. How, then, was the public “audience” involved in the negotiations and contradictions around the construction of publicness in modern Japan? Could such an idea of “audience” be considered analogous or different to the notion of the “public” deployed in Aso’s study? And in this regard how did the audience or the public create a visual economy of public culture? These questions may go beyond the scope of Aso’s book as its main concern remains the intellectual history of the museum. However, attending also to the audience and its affective relations to the museum and the object within it, might have illuminated another driving force behind the construction of an idea of “public properties.”

The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan. By Adam Clulow.
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Adam Clulow’s first monograph adds to the distinguished cross-disciplinary research which he has presented in history and area studies journals over the past decade. *The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan* summarizes his transnational scholarship on piracy, maritime trade patterns and diplomacy in the China Sea region in the first half of the seventeenth century. The book moreover offers innumerable new insights into related topics such as the political administration of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), the Tokugawa Bakufu’s foreign policies and Southeast Asian debuts in international relations. Illustrating the company’s clashes with and its ultimate surrender to Tokugawa Japan over diplomacy, violence and sovereignty, he shows how the Dutch succumbed to the demands of the Bakufu for the sake of durable access to Japan. This stands in clear contrast to the company’s image as an unrelenting organization, which frequently used its military apparatus elsewhere in Asia.

1 Ōmuka Toshiharu 五十殿利治, *Kanshū no seiritsu: bijutsu ten, bijutsu zasshi, bijutsu shi* 観衆の成立: 美術展・美術雑誌・美術史 (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2008).