



The Association for
Asian Studies

Review

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Source: *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 65, No. 4 (Nov., 2006), pp. 830-831

Published by: [Association for Asian Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25076150>

Accessed: 10-05-2015 19:36 UTC

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a historical period and as such provides less detail in certain areas while providing ample in others. Still, the book provides a number of clear paths for the development of gender variance in modern Japan and as such provides an intriguing point of departure for those interested in further research on gender and Japan.

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Practical Pursuits: Takano Chōei, Takahashi Keisaku, and Western Medicine in Nineteenth-Century Japan. By ELLEN GARDNER NAKAMURA. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005. viii, 236 pp. \$40.00 (cloth).

For years, there has been a dearth of scholarship available in English on *rangaku* or *yōgaku*. These terms, translated as "Dutch studies" and "Western studies," respectively, refer to the pursuit of Western knowledge, especially medicine, science, and technology, during Japan's early modern period. One reason for this shortage is the belief that Western studies was a failure as an intellectual movement because its scholars never truly grasped the theories and methodologies that fueled the scientific revolution in the West. Happily, Ellen Gardner Nakamura's *Practical Pursuits* challenges that estimation of its import by examining the spread of Western-style medicine into rural regions during the nineteenth century.

Nakamura asserts that it is inappropriate to merely dismiss "Dutch studies" in Japan for not following a Eurocentric trajectory or, for that matter, laud it on the basis of preparing Japan for the Meiji period "modernization." Instead, she argues that by examining the activities of rural doctors, we can see that interest in Western medicine was widespread and that individuals actively attempted to use it for the social welfare of their communities. Her work builds on Japanese research over the past thirty years that has taken a social-historical approach in its analysis of medicine and intellect in rural areas of Japan. Nakamura effectively makes her case by focusing on a group of physicians in the Kōzuke region west of the Kanto plain. Takano Chōei, who has received much historical attention for his imprisonment following criticism of the Bakufu's repelling of a U.S. ship in 1837, is her central figure. Nakamura's interest in Chōei is not as a political figure, however, but for his role in promoting and spreading Western-style medicine.

Making a case study of Chōei's relationship with several doctors located around the town of Nakanojō, Nakamura argues that rural physicians created social networks that aided the pursuit of Western medicine. Nakamura's research adds to other recent research that examines the profound impact of network formation in areas ranging from economic development and the spread of technology to cultural production during that period. Her work shows that this medical network in Kōzuke was shaped by economic and social changes, which provided greater access to travel, improved communication, and easier circulation of goods, including medicines. As Nakanojō had roads connecting it to a national highway and was neighbored by hot springs famous for their medicinal relief, it is not surprising that it became a hub for cultural and intellectual exchange.

Chapter 1 provides a brief biography of Chōei. Nakamura's use of his various correspondences flavor her description of his life. Chōei was extremely dependent upon his social network for financial and other support because he cut many of his feudal and familial ties to pursue medicine. Although he did not reside in Kōzuke, Chōei corresponded regularly with its physicians and made visits. Nakamura gives a skillful

and concise social history of the Tokugawa medical world, including descriptions of the types and status of doctors.

This book is at its most original in chapters 2 to 4, which investigate the lives and interactions of rural doctors and their use of Western medicine to address local welfare concerns. Nakamura effectively argues that doctors in rural areas focused their studies of Western medicine in areas that might better their own communities. Examining two of Chōei's treatises, she shows how doctors attempted to combat famine and epidemics with their knowledge of Western medicine. Similarities between Chinese medicine and new intellectual trends in "practical learning" during this period aided them in adapting Western medicine for their own uses. Many of these physicians were elites within the countryside, even holding local government offices, and felt a duty to attend to the well-being of their community. According to Nakamura, as rural elites became more involved in the practice of Western medicine or other cultural pursuits, such as poetry circles, they helped move their communities toward greater dependence on literacy. Her use of the diary of local doctor Takahashi Keisaku in this endeavor is quite fruitful, though there is still work to be done.

Nakamura's work is an important contribution to the social history of Japan. She clearly shows that research should not divorce practitioners of Western medicine from their positions as farmers, village officials, and even poets. Nakamura also rightly claims that social networks were significant. Not provided with a definition, however, we are left to assume that social networks are simply groups of individuals in contact with one another. Sociologists have developed a sophisticated understanding of networks that could have helped Nakamura more richly dissect the ties between these doctors. In addition, although Nakamura claims to examine the "social impact [of Western medicine] at the level of everyday life" (p. 175), she looks at what rural physicians wrote about Western medicine rather than the real impact that that medicine had.

Despite these criticisms, *Practical Pursuits* is a fascinating investigation of the social side of medicine in Tokugawa Japan and a much-needed corrective to the mistaken notion that Western studies were of little consequence to Japanese history. Her discussions of the development of Dutch studies and of socioeconomic change during the Tokugawa period are well written and concise, making this a useful book for both scholars and the classroom.

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KOREA

Hungry for Peace: International Security, Humanitarian Assistance, and Social Change in North Korea. By HAZEL SMITH. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2005. xix, 234 pp. \$45.00 (cloth); \$19.95 (paper).

In *Hungry for Peace*, Hazel Smith, an experienced nongovernmental organization (NGO) worker in North Korea who teaches at the University of Warwick, aspires "to