Inconspicuous Consumption: Sake, Beer and the Birth of the Consumer in Japan

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Over recent years, historians of Europe and North America have been in the process of discovering the history of consumers and consumption. This process largely originated in the work of Neil McKendrick, whose seminal paper proposing the concept of a 'consumer revolution' in eighteenth-century England argued that, although earlier periods had undoubtedly experienced the spread of the commercial market economy, the century which gave birth to the industrial revolution witnessed a change in attitudes to material goods across a wide sweep of English society so dramatic as to justify the revolutionary label and to constitute 'a necessary analogue to the industrial revolution' (McKendrick 1982, 9). Just as subsequent work has tended to down-play the revolutionary nature of the industrial revolution itself, so has it also spread the consumer revolution out over much more of the pre-modern' period, but it has not undermined the thesis that developments on the demand side cannot be ignored in analysis of the historical changes that surrounded industrialization in 'the West'.

As a result, a burgeoning literature has emerged on the origins of 'the consumer' and the historical conditions surrounding the growth of consumption in the industrialized nations of Europe and North America. Much of this work has concerned the part played by emerging individualism, status differentiation and 'modernization' in determining what people consumed and has largely fallen within the sphere of cultural and social historians. Those in the economic field, on the other hand, have tended to remain wedded to traditional utility-maximizing theories of consumer behavior and the belief that income alone is what matters in determining consumption patterns, thereby leaving themselves free to concentrate on production, technology and the ‘supply side’ in general. A consequence of this is that the ‘ordinary consumption’ which is of greatest significance to an economic understanding of the changing patterns of everyday life and their relation to economic growth and industrialization has not been the main focus of attention. Consumption history has instead centered around those goods embodying fashion, status and modernity that are associated with the emergence of the consumer as part of the process of social and cultural modernization pioneered in the Western industrial world.

In this climate, work on Japan’s economic history has continued to concentrate, for the most part, on the supply side and in as far as it has considered final consumption, the question has remained ‘how much?’ (with very often the underlying query ‘enough?’), rather than ‘what?’ or ‘why?’. This has meant leaving in a historical limbo the Japanese consumers widely recognized, by the 1980s, as the world’s most avid connoisseurs of fashion, product differentiation and branding, but typically treated, in the by-now substantial but predominantly anthropological literature on contemporary Japanese consumer culture, as springing fully-formed on to the global stage of post-modern consumerism.[1] Meanwhile, the absence of the consumer in historical study of Japan has meant that comparative surveys of the literature on the history of consumption have been forced, often reluctantly, to assume that the ‘consumer revolution’, whatever it was and whenever it occurred, was an exclusively Western phenomenon.[2] There are now a number of notable studies of élite consumption in Ming-period China (e.g. Clunas 1991; Brook 1999), and Kenneth Pomeranz, for one, has attempted comparisons of consumption levels of some more basic consumer goods, such as textiles, sugar and consumer durables, in the pre-

[1] Clammer, for example, sees mass consumption in Japan as emerging only in the 1960s, when the transition occurred from ‘purely industrial capitalism, with its production-oriented ethos,’ to ‘consumer capitalism’ originating in a culture based on ‘desire rather than need, one in which signs rather than just economic/materialist forces are dominant’ (Clammer 1997, 9).

[2] Glennie 1995, 191. See also Clunas 1999 who criticizes the history-of-consumption literature for its assumption of Western exceptionalism.

industrial period, principally for Western Europe and China but also where possible Japan (Pomeranz 2000, ch 3). But without serious consideration of the circumstances surrounding the growth of consumption in the one non-Western country to achieve significant industrial development before World War II, the historical role of the everyday consumption activities of Japanese people continues to be invisible and the hypothesis that it was only in 'the West' that the emergence of the consumer represented an integral part of the industrialization process remains untested.

This paper therefore aims to take a first step towards discovering the origins of 'the Japanese consumer' and the part played by growth and change in consumption in Japan's economic history, in the light of the issues that have emerged from studies of Europe and North America. After outlining the possible causes of the reluctance to recognize the consumer in Japan's past, I shall first summarize those issues that seem most relevant to the Japanese case, before attempting to bring together the main features of the nature and growth of consumption in pre-industrial and industrializing Japan. These will then be demonstrated through a more detailed focus on the 'ordinary' consumption of food and drink products, in particular sake, the brewing of which represented a major industry through to the inter-war period at least, and beer, the drink that was eventually to overtake it as the everyday accompaniment to Japanese social life. The analysis is based, for the present, on a necessarily eclectic range of sources, but the hope is that the raising of the issue might inspire further research that could reveal in greater depth and detail the birth of the consumer in Japan.

The invisible consumer in Japan's economic history

The reluctance to acknowledge the historical existence of consumers in Japan may in part be attributable to the assumption, originally part of the adaptation of the Marxist theoretical framework to Japanese conditions, of the 'narrowness' (*kyōai*) of the domestic market. This 'narrowness' was a function of the 'agricultural problem' and the persistence of the 'semi-feudal' landlord/tenant system in the countryside and was seen as helping to explain the contradictions and peculiarities of Japanese capitalism and imperialism (Ishii 1986, 1–3). Hence, even more perhaps than in the England described by McKendrick (1982, 30), belief in a prelapsarian myth of the self-sufficient farming household and stress on the suffering that commercialization and industrialization may have brought for the working class tended to preclude consideration of the historical processes through which ordinary people came to relate to goods as consumers. Hence, it is still the case that, for example, Shimbo and Hasegawa's authoritative account of the development of the market economy during the Tokugawa period talks not of consumer goods, but of 'daily necessities' or 'goods necessary in daily life'.[3] Despite evidence of the undoubtedly growing quantity and variety of goods available and the flexibility in the concept of a 'necessity', economic historians have continued, for the most part, to assume that Japanese people of the past, in their consumption activities, were simply engaged in the process of acquiring 'daily necessities'.[4]

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[3] In English translation, Shimbo and Hasegawa 2004, e.g. 164, 177. In the original Japanese, the terms used are 'nichijō seikatsu busshi', 'nichijō seikatsu ni kakasu koto no dekinai …..', etc.. (Shimbo and Hasegawa 1988)

[4] There are exceptions to this approach, in English notably Hanley and Yamamura (1977) and Hanley (1997), but even so the issue addressed is by and large that of the standard of living/quality of life (i.e. how much?), rather than that of why and how particular goods were acquired by consuming households. A number of Japanese scholars, on whose work this paper largely draws, have come to consider consumption issues via, for example, studies of particular products (e.g. Hayashi on soy sauce in, for instance, Hayashi 1986 and Tamura on fashion in clothing in Tamura 2004), the development of market networks (e.g. Ishii 1986) or the spread of Western-style goods

This assumption may also reflect the long-term 'official' or ideological view in Japan that consumption is bad and frugality, saving and self-sufficiency good. Simon Partner, in his work on the Lifestyle Improvement Movements pre- and post-World War II (Partner 2001), shows how the official ideology, especially for rural areas, emphasized thrift, elimination of 'waste', home or co-operative production and in general hostility to consumption, particularly if, like expenditure on food and drink at weddings and funerals, it was 'irrational'. Farmers were not to be consumers (in the modern sense); they were there to work and eat and clothe themselves in a rational, healthy, hygienic way that would make their lives better, not to derive enjoyment, status or personal satisfaction from the consumption of things. Partner himself remains somewhat in thrall to the idea that farm households were essentially producing not consuming organizations, continuing to puzzle over the fact that: ' economic logic would indicate the purchase of value-adding, or at least labor-saving, machinery before that of entertainment products. But most farm families purchased a television set before they bought a washing machine or a mechanical cultivator' (Partner 2001: 516).

The view that it is only though the purchase of 'rational', 'modern' goods that people become valid consumers can also be found pervading the academic work that does exist on Japanese consumption history, reflecting the equation of consumerism with Western-style modernity on which much consumption history in general is based.[5] In practice, there is now a growing body of research on how the urban middle classes in Japan by the inter-war period were coming to act as consumers. However, this is demonstrated through their consumption of 'modern' goods and is treated as part of an educative, modernizing process, promoted in

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(Nakanishi 2000), but without reference to the questions raised by the history of consumption elsewhere in the world.

[5] See Stearns 2001, which does include Japan within a comparative history of consumerism, and Trentmann's critique of Stearns' definition of consumerism as a fundamental feature of 'modern' society, exported from Western Europe to the rest of the world (Trentmann 2004).

particular by the ‘modern’ retail organization of the department store, rather than as the purchase of goods for comfort, pleasure or status that is seen as driving the early growth of consumption in the West. Louise Young, for instance, describes the relation between consumer goods and the definition of modernity in Taishō and early Shōwa Japan, and sees this as linked to the emergence of the urban middle classes as they adopted the ‘salaryman lifestyle’, rather than as the kind of widespread ‘consumer revolution’ envisaged in the literature on the West (Young 1999). Sheldon Garon’s work on pre-war and war-time savings campaigns (Garon 1998 and 2000) shows how the idea that consumption was bad – ‘luxury is the enemy’– did not so much squash the emerging consumer society of the Taishō period as validate ‘rational’ consumption – largely of Western-style products that the urban middle class saw as being ‘modernizing’ – and denigrate ‘traditional’ consumption, which involved indigenous forms of food and drink and consumption for pleasure. As evidence presented later will suggest, such campaigns do not in fact seem to have done much to inhibit increases in the consumption of not very rational ‘luxuries’ like alcoholic drink, but they did serve to take such kinds of everyday, ‘non-modern’, often indigenous goods out of the official discourse on consumption.

This move provides contemporary economists, such as Charles Horioka, with a neat way of avoiding the possibility that Japanese people in the past might have been engaged in expanding the kinds of ‘ordinary consumption’ that underlay the emergence of the consumer in pre-industrial Europe (see Horioka 1993, 273–9). This involves making the assumption that in general Japanese-style goods are ‘necessities’, purchases of which increase little as incomes rise, while Western-style goods are ‘luxuries’, bought only when incomes are high enough to allow the purchase of more than necessities. As in much of the growing literature on consumer culture in other parts of present-day Asia, growth and change in consumption – i.e. the increasing acquisition of 'luxuries' – are thus assumed to be a consequence of 'globalization', precluding the possibility of the birth of the ordinary consumer of 'indigenous' products prior to or alongside the Western impact.[6] Consequently, Japan is presumed not to have experienced the growth and change in consumption now catalogued for pre-industrial Europe, but rather to have launched into industrialization without the 'necessary analogue' of a consumer revolution.

The consumer revolution in Europe and North America

By contrast, a wide range of studies of Britain and other parts of Europe has now come to show that the take-off of industrial growth from the mid-eighteenth century was preceded by a significant period of expansion in the demand for marketed consumer goods.[7] The goods involved fall into three broad categories:

- food and drink products, especially the 'new groceries' and 'drug foods'– tea, coffee, chocolate, sugar, tobacco – increasingly imported from what became colonial possessions;
- clothing, including both items made from new, cheaper materials, such as muslin, which enabled people to buy and discard fashionable clothes more often, and accessories – hats, shoes, ribbons, fans, buckles, watches – by means of which even those on quite low incomes could enjoy fashion;
- relatively cheap and disposable household goods – cups and saucers, cutlery, curtains and bedding, individual tables and chairs, mirrors, clocks – often associated with new kinds of eating and drinking and the accompanying social interaction.

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[6] See for example the cases in Chua 2000, which typically treat consumerism as a consequence of globalization, with the result that Asian consumers in general appear to have had no 'pre-globalization' forebears.
[7] See for example the British evidence of this, as presented in Weatherill 1996, Shammas 1990 or Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann 2004.

Many of these sorts of goods had clearly once been luxury products appreciated and consumed only by those of high economic or social status and for McKendrick the consumer revolution was driven by emulation of the conspicuous consumption of luxury goods that had once defined such status. Its origins could therefore be traced back to the growth of concern with the ‘world of goods’ observed among the élite of late medieval Europe, as a result of which status came to be defined and reflected in the connoisseurship of goods. However, the spread of demand for new and fashionable items to wider areas of society depended on a range of factors, including urbanization, increased social mobility, expanding trade and colonization, and a widening communications network, as well as rising incomes, which produced social, cultural and economic change of a new order. In this context, the motives for increased acquisition of goods could be seen to go beyond mere emulation and to encompass the search for the means to define new identities and ways of life, as individuals or within society. Although, to some extent, consumers were substituting commercially-produced items for things they would once have made for themselves, the variety of products involved demonstrates how, for the ‘middling sort’ – the middle-income commercial groups seeking to establish themselves as the ‘polite society’ of the growing towns and cities – and even for those below them on the social scale, consumer goods were coming to embody both the ‘decencies’ of family life and the expression of individuality in a fluid, commercial society. As a result, Glennie suggests, ‘widespread cultures of consumption nearly always preceded mass markets for consumer goods rather than the other way about’ (Glennie 1995: 177–8).

At the same time, growth in consumption in the forms that it took could not be divorced from the shifting patterns of work and family organization and in particular from changes in the role of women within the household and the labor force. The growth of rural manufacturing in significant areas of pre-industrial Europe offered households new sources of income, frequently through the increased utilization of the labor time of women, while encouraging and enabling them to substitute a greater range of market-supplied goods for home-made items now too time-consuming to produce. Jan de Vries' model of the 'industrious revolution' postulates a pre-industrial household that actively engages in specialization and production for the market in order to be able to purchase more varied and better-quality goods than subsistence production can offer.[8] By the eighteenth century in England, such strategies were enabling more and more households of 'middling' rank to define themselves by means of the household goods with which the 'domestic sphere' of the housewife was furnished, while throughout society the luxuries of previous generations were being transformed into everyday necessities. In eighteenth-century Paris, men and women of all ranks acquired what Fairchilds has labeled 'populuxe' goods – cheap copies of the fans, snuff boxes, umbrellas, watches and numerous clothing accessories that had once been aristocratic luxuries – while workers in the years preceding the Revolution rioted over the prices of the sugar and coffee that made up the working man's now essential breakfast-time café-au-lait (Fairchilds 1994; Jones and Spang 1999). The mass markets for consumer goods on which industrial revolutions ultimately depended thus appeared to have their origins in the consumption strategies of pre-industrial households, as they engaged with expanding markets for goods and labor, incorporated new products into their everyday lives and derived new meanings from the goods with which they surrounded themselves.

The issues raised by the historical study of consumption therefore operate on various levels. In macro terms, they suggest some kind of relationship between growth and change in

[8] De Vries 1993. Significantly, the industrious revolution model developed earlier and independently by Hayami Akira (see e.g. Hayami 2003, 287—306) to describe the nature of pre-industrial growth in Japan, in contrast to that of 'the West', is essentially driven by (supply side) demographic and resource pressures, rather than the increasing market involvement of households as (demand side) consumers, as well as producers, that drives de Vries' model.

consumer demand and the conditions determining the nature and timing of industrialization. At the micro level, they bring to the foreground the circumstances under which households came to substitute market-supplied goods for home-produced ones and to embrace new products as increasingly 'necessary' elements in their life-styles. They thus oblige the economic historian to come to grips with the wider social and cultural context within which consumption took place and they present considerable challenges to historical ingenuity as regards sources and evidence. However, once it is accepted that an understanding of economic growth and change involves knowing not just how much was produced and sold but also what, when, how and why output was acquired by consumers, then the consumption genie is out of the bottle and there is no avoiding the complex inter-disciplinary issues that it presents to the historian of economic life.

The birth of the consumer in pre-industrial Japan

The main stimulus to the development of markets for consumer goods in Japan was clearly the significant growth in the populations of towns and cities that set in after the establishment of the Tokugawa regime. By 1800, Japan possessed more large cities than any other country in the world and its urban populations had come to rely almost entirely on the market for their supplies of consumer goods. By the second half of the Tokugawa period, Osaka and Edo had food markets offering wide varieties of fish, fruit and vegetables, a huge array of specialist and general stores and market provision of all kinds of service and leisure activity, from restaurants and tea-houses to hairdressers, take-away food purveyors, doctors and bankers (see e.g. McClain 1999; Nakai and McClain 1991; Hanley 1997, 83). The goods on offer were frequently differentiated and branded according to producer, region of origin, wholesaler or retailer, and advertising was widespread (see e.g. Jansen 1989, 69, Nishiyama 1997, 167–71, Shively 1991, 736–7). The quantities of goods produced in or shipped to the major cities, and their huge range of prices and qualities, indicate that the possibility of consumer choice reached down from the *daimyō* and rich merchants able to demonstrate their status and taste by purchases of luxury craft products to the artisans, traders, laborers and servants who made up the mass of the urban population.

Outside the great cities, and especially in rural areas, subsistence production of course remained much more significant, with farm households continuing to produce and process much of their own grain, pulses and vegetables until well into the twentieth century. Nonetheless, with the shift in the locus of economic growth into the countryside as the Tokugawa period progressed, the range of goods and services available in the markets and shops of rural towns significantly increased and village shops competed with itinerant peddlers to supply goods to the rural population. As rising agricultural productivity lifted growing numbers of people above subsistence level, consumption of processed food and drink products, sometimes home-made but increasingly purchased, began to expand. An official reporting on the condition of the countryside in the late Tokugawa period in Kazusa-*han* (part of present-day Chiba prefecture) describes the recent growth in numbers of commercial outlets for miso, tofu and other products that rural people had once made for themselves, while cheaper versions of the Japanese-style cakes, once craft-produced in small quantities for the upper classes, were now widely sold in town and country (Sasama 1979, 23; 63–5). Tea, which had once only been available either in luxury powdered form or as poor-quality, home-grown and sun-dried leaves, had become part of everyday life, marketed in shops and by peddlers within distribution networks reaching down through the castle towns to the villages (Pratt 1999, 52; Nakai and McClain 1991, 545–6). In such ways, by the second half of the Tokugawa period, consumption of the food products that had once distinguished the cuisine of the urban upper classes was spreading into rural areas.

Meanwhile the range of household goods, clothing and accessories available to consumers steadily expanded: the long lists of goods shipped into and out of Osaka in 1714 include, on the out-shipments side, entries such as the 1.7m folding fans and over half a million pairs of leather sandals which must have been reaching a market well beyond that of the upper classes (McClain 1999, 62–3); by the late eighteenth century, village stores were selling paper, ceramic goods, cooking utensils, footwear, hair accessories and much more, besides the range of processed food products (Hanley and Yamamura 1977, 196–7); specialist retailers of, for example, tea kettles and tea-pots, sent their traveling salesmen round the villages (Narimatsu 1989: 178). And as has been well documented, the significant growth in textile output both before and after the opening to trade in the mid-nineteenth century was in large part consumed domestically, in the form of both luxury silk for the better-off and the cotton cloth and off-the-peg clothes which households of all kinds substituted for home-produced alternatives (Tanimoto and Saitō 1989). Changing fashions in kimono materials and accessories spread out from the cities, finding their way into the trousseaux of brides from aspiring households in many parts of the countryside (Tamura 2004, ch 5).

McKendrick's analysis of the English case provides a number of clues as to the routes whereby the knowledge of new goods and tastes that underlay the growth and spread of consumption activity might have been transmitted from city to countryside. Tokugawa-period Edo paralleled eighteenth-century London as a metropolitan center to which a relatively large proportion of the population traveled at some time. The London 'season', which drew the aristocracy, along with large retinues of servants and hangers-on, from their country residences to the capital for part of each year, has obvious parallels with the *sankin kōtai* system, both representing mechanisms whereby the tastes and fashions of the city, at the level of the 'mass market' consumer as well as that of the status-conscious upper-classes, were transported back to rural or small-town homes.[9] Those traveling to Edo ate out in the growing number of inns and restaurants and took their new food tastes home with them when they returned (Hanley 1997, 83). Shopping was clearly a significant activity for *sankin kōtai* participants: the scholarly and better-off collected scrolls, calligraphy and books, while everyone brought back, as souvenirs or gifts, more ordinary items such as cloth and clothing, footwear, chopsticks, ceramic- and lacquer-ware and processed foodstuffs like tea, much of it of particular 'branded' types presumably not available at home (Vaporis 1997).[10] Servants taken to the great households in Edo engaged in tea-drinking, smoking, samisen-playing and theatre-going, as they learnt consumption habits from their masters (Leupp 1992, 121–2). As a result, they returned to the countryside suffering from beriberi after consuming the white-rice urban diet, and while they may have recovered their health, their distaste for the 'lower-class' rural diet was presumably there to stay.

Although Fine and Leopold (1990) have criticized McKendrick on the grounds that there is insufficient evidence that emulation of the consumption patterns of the upper classes can bear the weight placed on it in his analysis, in the Japanese case, the well-documented spread of elements of the 'samurai life-style', particularly as regards food and drink, clothing accessories and household goods, suggests a process – the gradual transformation of high-class items into mass-market (though not necessarily mass-produced) necessities – in which less well-off

[9] McKendrick quotes an estimate that one in six of the adult population of England in the 1650–1750 period had had experience of living in London (McKendrick 1982, 21). Estimates of the size of the transient population of Edo – composed of *daimyō* retinues, seasonal workers, tourists and travellers – are difficult to make but Rozman suggests that 25–30 per cent of the city's population consisted of those involved with *sankin kōtai* and around 20,000 seasonal migrants regularly spent the winter in the city (Rozman 1974, 100–1). On the attractions of Edo and other cities for tourists and travellers, see Jansen 1989, 65.

[10] Guides were already being published as to which souvenir products (*meibutsu*) to buy where (Watanabe 1964, 197–8).

transmitters of consumer taste, such as servants, could have played a part. Tokugawa Japan, like eighteenth-century England, was a society in which communications and market networks were developing and spreading, while the clearly-defined status distinctions of earlier times were breaking down, so that, as the potential for social, as well as geographical, mobility grew, goods took on increasing meaning as indicators of status, taste and sophistication within wider sections of a fluid society. Repeated sumptuary laws clearly failed to halt the spread of the goods that had distinguished the samurai – silk clothes, white rice, sake, tea – among better-off commoners, while 'populuxe' adaptations of the fans, combs, hair ornaments, footwear and umbrellas which had once demonstrated samurai status were widely acquired. Hence, complaints that 'serving girls dressed as well as did their employers' or that, in 1830s Sendai, even servants and the landless have *haori*, umbrellas, *tabi* and clogs and ordinary people 'seem better dressed than their superiors' (quoted in Jansen 1989, 67; 79) echo English tourists' observations of the shifting relations of goods to status in pre-revolutionary Paris.[11] Meanwhile, just as in England, writers and thinkers on the one hand delighted in descriptions and analysis of goods and on the other deplored the spread of 'luxury' and its effect on the social order.[12]

Nonetheless, despite the role of 'samurai-style' goods in the growth of consumption, in Japan, as in the Britain described by Fine and Leopold, it is not clear that consumers were simply motivated by a desire to live like the samurai upper class or to become part of its society. In fact, by the latter half of the Tokugawa period, it was the urban merchant classes who were acting as the leaders of fashion, developing their own styles of elegant dining, clothing and entertainment

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[11] 'Wenches with umbrellas and Workmen with Muffs' shocked Dr Johnson's friend Mrs Hester Thrale, for example (quoted in Fairchilds 1993, 228).

[12] See for example Shively's discussion of Saikaku's *chōnin mono* (books about merchants), which on the one hand 'celebrate the pursuit of wealth' and lovingly describe the goods that can be bought with it, but on the other excoriate those who acquire luxury items inappropriate to their status – 'Because they forget their proper place, extravagant women should be in fear of divine punishment' (quoted in Shively 1991, 763–4).

that many samurai could simply not afford to follow. Models such as those of the *tsū*, the connoisseur or man-of-the-world, or the *sui*, the dandy or fashionable man-about-town, were essentially non-aristocratic creations devised to guide the deployment of consumer goods as expressions of taste and style (Maruyama 1999, 186). Meanwhile, in the countryside, while the better-off and 'middling sort' certainly remodeled their houses along samurai-style lines, bought 'prohibited' silk to wear on special occasions and engaged in the travel and leisure pursuits – tea ceremony, martial arts, poetry- and letter-writing – that were technically aristocratic and samurai preserves, they do not seem to have sought thereby to 'break into' the world of the political élite (Platt 2000; Pratt 1999). Certainly, village headmen did seem to feel it necessary to lay on sophisticated banquets, involving the kinds of seasonal specialities available in the city, to impress visiting government officials.[13] But at other times, as in the case of the entertainment put on by the head of a merchant family in Kyūshū in 1858 to show off the china and tea ceremony items brought back as souvenirs of a trip to Edo and Osaka, it was local élite society, in particular the other members of his tea-ceremony group, who were meant to be impressed (Maruyama 1999: 187). Thus rural élite consumption, at least, seems to have been driven by some combination of the desire to be incorporated into local élite society, the need to mark status distinctions within the village, and an individual concern for self-cultivation.

One consequence of this diffusion of consumption activity through urban and, to some extent, rural society was the significant share that manufactured consumer goods had come to represent, by the time of the Meiji Restoration, in the total output of the economy. Table 1 uses data assembled by Yamaguchi from the government-organized survey of national output of 1874

[13] It was possible to order such delicacies from nearby towns (e.g. Narimatsu 1989, 177) or to hire a chef from Osaka (Nishiyama 1997, 161–2) . The 1828 menus for the household in Gifu described by Narimatsu included fish, chicken and tofu, a wide range of fruit and vegetables (e.g. three kinds of mushroom) and processed items such as senbei, sake, mirin and nori. Their fish came from a specialist retailer and they bought in such items as sake and oil in large quantities, although they made their own miso and udon (Narimatsu 1989, 177).

known as the *Fuken Bussanhyō*, within which manufactured goods represented 30 per cent of the total output recorded. The considerable extent of double-counting of both inputs and final output in the tables makes economic analysis of the data problematic but nonetheless they do indicate that almost all of the manufactured output produced took the form of goods (or inputs into them) destined for private household consumption via the domestic market. They also demonstrate the wide range of goods available but confirm that processed food and drink products, most notably sake, represent by far the most important category of product. Alongside these, however, are all kinds of household goods, including both furniture and fittings and the smaller-scale items of pottery, lacquer-ware, bamboo and paper which accompanied changes in eating styles and home improvements in general. Given that an unknown but surely significant share of the output of agriculture and the natural resources sector took the form of inputs into food processing and other areas of manufacturing, the data suggest that the growth in demand for consumer goods that continued through the later Tokugawa years and into the Meiji period constituted a major driving force behind economic growth in general.

The growth of consumption in industrializing Japan: food and household goods

Susan Hanley makes a convincing case for the continuity in Japanese life-styles through the Meiji transition and on to the end of the nineteenth century at least, as rising incomes continued to be spent principally on goods of the kinds once enjoyed only by the samurai (Hanley 1986). However, this basic continuity does not preclude the increasing and spreading use of commercial consumer goods, as the infrastructure of the market economy developed, or the acquisition of new products as luxuries and accessories. Transmission both of goods themselves and of knowledge about them was widened and speeded up by developments in communications during the second half of the nineteenth century. Travel about the country may still have represented the main transmission route, but where this had once taken the form of *sankin kōtai* and pilgrimages by road and sea, it now involved business and shopping/sightseeing trips by rail. The head of a well-to-do landowning household in Tōhoku experienced Western-style food and train travel on a three-month excursion to take in an industrial exhibition in Tokyo and came home with Western-style clothes and hats, umbrellas, spectacles, toothpaste and some more expensive items – a quartz vase, a clock – as souvenirs; his counterpart in the Kinai countryside made use of an employee's business trips to Osaka to acquire the new products not yet to be found in local shops (Nakanishi 2000, 242–4; 257–60). By the turn of the century, such households were subscribing to the local and national newspapers which represented the main vehicles for advertising commercial products. Meanwhile, outside the rural élite, as cash incomes rose and employment opportunities for women in particular increased with the growth in textile production for export and the home market, consumption of commercially-produced and often higher-quality versions of processed food and drink products once made at home continued to expand.

Tables 2, 3 and 4 demonstrate these developments and take the story on through the pre-World War II period, bringing together available data on changes in the consumption of some of the Japanese equivalents of the sorts of goods that have been of interest to historians of consumption in Europe and North America. These data are largely taken from Shinohara Miyohei's estimates contained in Volume 6 of the *Chōki Keizai Tōkei* series (Shinohara 1967) and those for the period before 1910 are based on different original sources from those used for later figures, so that the series are not strictly continuous. Nonetheless, they indicate broad trends and phases, with consumption in all cases tending to expand up to the years of the Matsukata deflation in the 1880s and again during the boom years around World War I, before being hit by the Great Depression and subsequently by the effects of the war economy.

Table 2 picks out miso and soy sauce as examples of 'traditional' processed food products and demonstrates how, in the cases of products such as these which could be made at home, the significant change lay less in growth in per capita consumption and more in the switch from home-made to purchased, factory-produced and generally better-quality alternatives. However, the development of consumption differed even between two seasoning products that both came to be regarded as 'necessities' within the Japanese life-style. Miso is relatively easy to make at home and although it was marketed from quite early on, it was apparently still regarded, well into the Meiji period, as rather shameful not to make one's own miso, even in big cities such as Osaka and Kyoto, though less so in Tokyo, where miso shops sold a range of differentiated regional varieties and brands (Sasama 1979, 58–9).[14] Home production therefore continued to provide a relatively large share of what was consumed and it seems plausible to argue that, as appears to have been the case with products such as bread, butter and cheese in parts of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England (Overton et al 2004, 63–4), it was poorer households without servants and suitable kitchen facilities, who relied on 'shop-bought' products, while the better-off made their own.

Soy sauce, on the other hand, is the result of a more complex production process, making it harder to produce a good-quality product at home, and it was not in fact widely used as a seasoning until the later Tokugawa period (Hayashi 1986, 237).[15] In eastern Japan, it was a commercial, rather than home-made, product from the start, while home production remained

[14] Amongst the samurai of late-Tokugawa Mito domain, 'many families bought the soy sauce they consumed, but no one bought miso' (Yamakawa 2001, 60).

[15] The precursor of soy sauce, *tamari*, which is made from the liquid exuded during the fermentation of miso, was commonly produced at home, however.

more common in the west (Ioku 1999, 239–40). As with miso, some increase in per capita consumption is observable in the late nineteenth century but more striking is the relatively rapid switch to factory-made products.[16] Most soy sauce was consumed within the region of production and local differences in style and taste encouraged loyalty to local products: soy sauce produced in, for instance, Fukuoka, a major producing area distributing to other parts of northern Kyūshū, was distinctively sweet and differentiated from both Kansai and Kantō products (Ioku 1999, 241). However, larger-scale producers did start to emerge during the Tokugawa period in the production areas supplying the big cities, selling high-quality and branded products eventually aimed at the national market (Fruin 1983, 14–23). Hence, while the use of commercially-produced soy sauce had become widespread by the time of the World War I boom, urban consumers and the rural better-off distinguished themselves through their consumption of high-quality, branded products (Ishii 1986, 32–6).

Table 3 illustrates the rapid growth in expenditure on sugar, tobacco and tea, examples of the ‘drug foods ’of the consumer revolution in Europe. Tea and tobacco had both been grown for home consumption during the Tokugawa period and the increase in expenditure reflects both rising consumption and the switch to higher-quality commercial products.[17] Commercial sugar production developed in a number of domains during the Tokugawa period and the sugar trade through Osaka was booming by the early nineteenth century (Roberts 1998, 190). However, domestically-produced sugar was relatively expensive and mainly consumed as medicine or

[16] Ishii gives alternative estimates of per capita consumption of soy sauce for some years. These suggest a much lower level of consumption – around 5 litres of home- and factory-produced product – in 1873, with per capita consumption of factory produce rising from 5.4 litres in 1887 to 8.3 in 1912 and 10.7 in 1924, by which time total (home- + factory-made) consumption is estimated as 13.8 litres per capita (Ishii 1986 :19). Estimates of home production – and even definitions of exactly what counts as home-made soy sauce – are necessarily unreliable.

[17] A contemporary analysis of late nineteenth-century consumption patterns by class for an area of rural Tōhoku distinguishes tobacco consumed by quality rather than quantity, noting that, while the better-off may smoke ordinary rough tobacco at home, they smoke cigarettes when they go out (Nakanishi 2000, 254).

given as gifts by the better-off, although restaurants used it from quite early on.[18] After the opening of the ports, imported sugar, which was cheaper and purer, made higher levels of consumption, initially predominantly in confectionery but by the end of the nineteenth century also as seasoning, much more widely possible (Sasama 1979: 25–7). According to Ishii's estimates, annual per capita consumption of sugar in Japan was about 2 *kin* or around two and a half pounds in the late Tokugawa period, about the level estimated for Europe in the eighteenth century, though half of Pomeranz's estimate of Chinese consumption at that time (Pomeranz 2000, 118–22).[19] It had reached 5 *kin* (6.6 pounds) by 1885–8 and around 10 *kin* (13 pounds) by the World War I period, rising further to around 20 *kin* (26 pounds) during the inter-war period (Ishii 1986: 36).[20] This is well below levels in the US and UK at the time, but not strikingly different from those of continental Europe.[21] Thus, although per capita consumption never reached the levels of countries where much sugar came to be used to sweeten tea and coffee, it continued to increase, suggesting that the link between sugar consumption and industrialization was not a purely 'Western' phenomenon.

Meanwhile, Table 4 shows similar expansion in real expenditure on furniture and household utensils, indicating that Japanese consumers, like their Western counterparts, increasingly sought to acquire the equipment that went with emerging forms of eating and drinking, leisure and social life and thereby to demonstrate and enjoy new items embodying fashion and status. Ōkado provides survey evidence from a number of villages over the course of

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[18] In lower-ranking samurai households in Mito domain, unrefined brown sugar was used to produce New Year specialities and white sugar was occasionally received as a gift and used medicinally or to decorate treats (Yamakawa 2001, 58). This appears very similar to the pattern of early upper-class usage of sugar in Europe (Mintz 1985, ch 3).

[19] European consumption rose rapidly in the nineteenth century, although China's had probably fallen back to something like the Japanese Bakumatsu level by the 1930s (Pomeranz 2000, 122–3).

[20] Alternative estimates (Bank of Japan Statistics Department 1966, Table 129) give per capita sugar consumption of around 4 kg (about 10 pounds) in the 1900s and 1910s, rising to 15 kg (33 pounds) by the late 1930s.

[21] Ishii quotes per capita consumption levels for the early 1920s of 73 pounds for the UK but 38 and 34 for Germany and Holland respectively (Ishii 1986, 36).

the Meiji period, not just of widening possession of a range of clothing items and accessories – hats, shawls, watches, etc. – but also of home improvements, such as tiled roofs and *tatami*-floored rooms and of facilities and consumables for social occasions, including guest rooms, 'best' clothes and wedding banquets (Ōkado 2000, 348–9). At the same time, the table also provides some evidence of the selective introduction into the consumption patterns of initially urban but in due course also better-off rural households of some new, typically Western-style, goods. The clocks and bicycles that appear in the table were acquired alongside a range of more basic items – toothpaste, soap, matches, lamps, pens – as comfort- or status-enhancing add-ons to ways of life and patterns of consumption that otherwise retained much continuity.

Something of the role of such new products in the emerging consumption patterns of the second half of the nineteenth century is revealed in Nakanishi's collection of budget details for rural households, ranging from substantial business families to solid owner-farmers and from those in the vicinity of towns and cities to those much more isolated, which charts the initial acquisition of Western-style items in eating and drinking, dressing and furnishing (Nakanishi 2000). Western-style clothing materials – velvet, muslin, calico – were relatively common, small-scale, early purchases, but it was accessories – hats, shoes, handkerchiefs, umbrellas – that seem to have been the crucial symbols of 'civilization and enlightenment'. Western-style food and drink products – beef, milk, a bottle of wine, 'lemon soda biscuits' – gradually appear as exotic items for special occasions. Gadgets and more expensive household goods – clocks, glass bowls, cameras – were acquired first by the rich with urban connections and eventually by local commercial and landowning households, depending on the development of communications with the towns and cities. This suggests a pattern whereby Western-style goods entered the consumption repertoire of the 'middling sort' as relatively inexpensive ornaments, accessories and gadgets that demonstrated style and fashion, as well as respectability and conformity to national modernization goals, without disrupting the basic structure of ordinary, though increasingly commercialized, consumption. It thus seems to represent an element in the development of the consumer in Japan which predates and is different from the growth of 'modern', 'rational', department store-led, middle-class urban consumption of the Western life-style that the literature describes for the 1920s and onwards.

Nonetheless, with the take-off of industrialization from the 1890s and especially the World War I boom, the analysis of consumption patterns and their transmission and change becomes more complex. Many new goods became available; communications expanded greatly, with the railway, the development of printed media and eventually radio; new forms of advertising and retail establishment appeared, and ways of life changed as more-and-more people moved into urban areas, formed nuclear households and took up new types of employment. Within this environment there emerged the kinds of urban middle-class household which, as the literature on the emerging consumer culture of the inter-war period demonstrates, were encouraged to use goods to create 'rational' lifestyles centering on the model of the housewife and the modern home.[22]

However, analysis of such trends largely ignores the growth in consumption of 'ordinary' goods, many of them 'indigenous', and the large areas of most people's lives that were not what the department stores and life-style magazines were concerned with. The economic importance of such areas of everyday life is indicated by the fact that, despite the growth of 'modern', heavy-industrial and military-related output, domestic consumption continued to represent the major source of demand for Japanese producers. Over the pre-World War II period as a whole,

[22] For the complete description of this model lifestyle, lived out in the suburban 'culture house', see Sand 2003.

on average 60–70 per cent of the overall growth of expenditure in the economy was accounted for by growth in personal consumption expenditure, and although consumption's contribution did decline over time, it was only in the depths of the inter-war depression that investment or exports contributed more to growth (Ohkawa and Shinohara 1979: Table 1.7). The activities of Japanese people as they developed into consumers, substituting purchased products for home-made ones, increasing their expenditure on desirable food and drink items, acquiring furniture, utensils, clothing and accessories and diversifying their consumption patterns to include new, sometimes imported or at least foreign-style goods, cannot be ignored, any more than can those of their counterparts in earlier industrializing economies, as a factor in the continuing growth of the economy.

Drink and development: the consumption of sake and beer

In the literature on Europe, one approach that has been used in the historical analysis of consumption under the more complex circumstances of the industrializing economy involves abandoning generalization and focusing in on particularly significant products. In the Japanese case, a number of products might be considered in this way but, for comparative historical purposes, the consumption of alcoholic drinks is a quite widely-studied phenomenon which Japan shares with most other now-industrial societies.[23] Moreover, as a case-study in consumption history, it demonstrates how a 'traditional' product, sake, developed into a consumer good, alongside which a new, imported product, beer, came to enter the repertoire of consumer choices, under the circumstances of an urbanizing and industrializing economy and society. It therefore provides a convenient route into more detailed consideration, in the light of

[23] Clark (1983, 1), in his major study of the alehouse in England, seeks to demonstrate the universality, from early times, of the institution of the public drinking place by citing Engelbert Kaempfer on 'the innumerable smaller inns, cook-shops, sachi or alehouses … all along the road' noticed by seventeenth-century visitors to Japan.

experience elsewhere, of the particular ways in which consumption grew and changed, conditioned by past developments, over the course of Japan's pre-World War II industrialization and 'internationalization'.

There is a good deal of evidence that pre-industrial Europeans consumed what would nowadays be considered enormous amounts of alcohol, in the form of wine, ale and cider, and that they derived significant proportions of the calories they needed for their labor from alcoholic drinks (Martin 2001, 28–37). Hence, although it was once commonly thought that industrialization produced higher levels of drunkenness, as workers drowned the sorrows that alienated industrial work produced, developments in alcohol consumption were probably more a matter of forms and contexts than of quantity (Brennan 1989). Where once watered-down wine and home-brewed ale had been consumed with meals in the home or at social gatherings in public spaces, branded and location-specific wine and mass-produced beer, not to mention gin, rum and absinthe, came to be purchased and drunk in bars and cafés, or in a solitary quest for oblivion. The 'peasant pattern' of drinking, involving large amounts on special occasions, alongside regular consumption of weak forms of alcohol as 'food', gave way to the urban 'middle-class pattern' of smaller amounts of stronger and/or more refined products drunk more regularly in small and more private gatherings.

In Japan, methods for making rice-wine were probably known from not long after rice itself was introduced and there are records of its use in rituals and as a medicine from early times. By the Heian period, court brewers were producing differentiated forms of sake to be drunk by different levels of the nobility at different kinds of ceremony, and by the fourteenth century it was being produced commercially in the countryside for consumption on market days and at other public events (Smith 1992, 149; Kondo 1996, 21–2). Home-brewing to produce unrefined sake, known as *doburoku,* was also widespread by the Tokugawa period and sake held a virtual monopoly over forms of alcohol consumption at all levels of society.[24]

By the nineteenth century, small-scale commercial breweries producing refined sake were common throughout the country and larger-scale breweries had also developed in specialist sake-producing areas to supply the major cities. The persistence of home-brewing, even after it was made illegal in 1900, complicates analysis of trends in production and consumption and it is clear that, when taxes on 'official' sake were raised, or when incomes were falling as during the 1880s, rural households would revert to increasingly 'secret' home-brews. Estimates for 1889–91 give the value of sake produced for home use as approximately a fifth of that of commercially-produced refined sake, at a time when its share of total consumption was likely to have been rising in response to increases in sake taxation (Umemura et al 1983, Tables 1–3; see also Tanimoto 1996, 258). Nonetheless, there is no doubt that, as with soy sauce, commercial refined sake was preferred, when circumstances allowed, although, again as with soy sauce, up to the inter-war period at least, most sake was brewed by small-scale local breweries and consumed in its area of production, so that regional product differentiation was widespread (Tanimoto and Saitō 1989, 270).

Table 5 presents data on sake consumption and demonstrates that consumption per capita, though very susceptible to fluctuations in incomes and taxation, reached peak levels in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century period, which it maintained until the onset of the Depression in the late 1920s. As a result, sake-brewing, its market benefiting also from the effects of population growth, continued to represent a major industry through to World War II and beyond. While the world around them was transformed by economic growth and

[24] Distilled liquor (*shōchū*) made from rice, sweet potatoes or, as Smith puts it, 'whatever' was also produced and drunk, especially in the southwest, but never had the mass appeal, or high-class and religious associations, of sake, remaining associated with drunken poverty until it became briefly fashionable in the 1980s (Smith 1992, 148)

industrialization, Japanese consumers thus continued to drink sake, but the observed growth in consumption appears to have been achieved not simply through the higher levels of drinking made possible by rising incomes, but also through developments in the ways in which consumers fitted the 'traditional', but increasingly commercialized, product that was sake into their changing everyday lives.

Mass public drinking of sake on special occasions was a custom that clearly continued through and even beyond the Tokugawa period. The late-Tokugawa village headman described by Platt organized an annual pilgrimage to a local shrine that 'expanded into village-wide feasting, drinking, and socializing' (Platt 2000, 65n73). The villagers of Suye Mura, studied by Embree in the 1930s, could still remember when the village traditionally got together to brew sake for communal events, though the practice had to be abandoned when home-brewing became regulated and taxed (Embree 1964: 282). At the same time, however, home-brewed sake continued to be consumed at a private level in the countryside, as a convenient (and congenial) source of energy. An interview (recorded in Shinohara 1967, 79–80) with an old Tōhoku farmer, recalling his youth in the early Meiji period, reveals how he would get up at three in the morning to go to work in the rice-fields, knocking off at eleven, when it got too hot. When asked what he did then, he replied that he went home, drank *doburoku,* and went to sleep and Shinohara points out how 'rational' this was, as a means of generating the energy needed for hard agricultural labor. Well before this, however, sake, whether home-made or produced in local breweries, was clearly a significant element in the diets of those living and working in rural areas. Tax records for fishing villages in Fukuoka domain as early as 1776 show that, in this commercialized area inhabited by fishermen and sailors, most villages contained at least one tax-paying 'drinking place' and many also supported breweries (Kalland 1995: 83). The village of Kumagawa, in the

Hachiōji area north of Edo, contained 144 households in 1829 and supported six establishments serving sake and one selling it retail (Pratt 1999: 169–70).

As the Tokugawa period progressed, however, in the cities and among the rural élite, more varied and sophisticated forms of sake consumption were clearly beginning to emerge. Sake continued to represent the ceremonial drink at banquets and other formal occasions, but amongst a widening stratum of society and, with the development of restaurants and tea-houses, it also came to accompany meals of a less grand sort. The rural élite household entertaining visiting officials ordered sake from local suppliers, alongside food for the meals. In the report on Bakumatsu-period Kazusa-*han* mentioned earlier, the writer bemoans the tendency for high and low to hold banquets involving much eating and drinking (Sasama 1979, 23). Meanwhile, a retired village teacher is plied with sake by his former pupils, as they watch a local performance of *kyōgen*; his son spends his own retirement teaching, writing poetry and drinking sake with his friends (Platt 200, 60, 55–6). In Edo, growing numbers of *izakaya* bars served light meals accompanied by sake -- drunk from specially produced ceramic flasks and cups -- to the mass market of single men congregating in the city (Kanzaki 2000, 146—8). By the second half of the eighteenth century, *izakaya* were spreading out along the main roads (Watanabe 1964, 212; 216), while, at the higher end of the market, an official on his travels records drinking a flask of sake with his lunch at a tea-house (Hanley 1997, 88).

By 1910, Nakano Makiko, a Kyoto housewife who kept a diary through that year, was recording frequent occasions for sake consumption, ranging from formal drinking ceremonies at weddings, through meals accompanied by sake for the staff of her husband's pharmacy business, to small social gatherings at home when guests got drunk and disgraced themselves (Nakano 1995). However, Makiko also explicitly notes how a visiting relative from the country, portrayed as something of a jovial farmer, drank sake with his breakfast – 'it seems that he always drinks in the morning' – persisting in a country custom that appeared rustic in the sophisticated context of urban society in Kyoto (Nakano 1995, 121; 221).

The drinking of sake at social gatherings by a widening range of urban and better-off rural consumers opened the way to product differentiation as a means of establishing status and taste. In late-nineteenth century rural Tōhoku, as with tobacco, better-off households could be distinguished by the quality of the sake they drank. Poorer households were said to drink it only in the old-fashioned way at ceremonies or festivals, although no doubt a blind eye was still being turned to their everyday, home-made *doburoku* (Nakanishi 2000, 254). After the turn of the century, sake become increasingly a branded and advertised drink, differentiated according to quality and region of origin (Kondo 1996, 49–50). For the growing urban population in particular, what had once been an essential accompaniment to communal life and work had become a differentiated product to be consumed with friends in bars or restaurants or in the privacy of an individual home.

It was against this background of changing drinking habits, in the context of the shifting patterns of social activity consequent on urbanization and industrialization, that Japanese people first encountered the new product that was beer. Drinkers in Japan do not appear to have tasted beer until their first nineteenth-century interactions with Westerners, at home and abroad. Thereafter imported bottled beer became available in liquor stores in Tokyo and Yokohama and by the 1890s, Japanese breweries were being established, supplying beer that could be sold by the glass. Beer was initially relatively expensive and its consumption confined to expatriates and members of the 'modern' bureaucratic and military élite in the big cities (Kirin Bīru 1984, 73). The development of the railway network, however, helped to promote awareness of it, as it was standardly sold in buffet cars on trains and in bars at stations. It became associated with eating Western-style food, initially in expensive restaurants serving ‘proper’ foreign food but in due course in cheaper venues where meat was served.

By the turn of the century, however, breweries were establishing ‘beer halls’, where Japanese-produced beer was sold in German-style glass tankards, at first in the big cities but in due course elsewhere. In comparison with the sake-serving *izakaya*, where patrons typically sat on cushions around a Japanese-style table, drinking from ceramic flasks and cups, beer halls, with their Western-style décor and packed customers, sitting close together on chairs at long tables and drinking beer served in glasses, appear to have created a bustling and informal atmosphere.[25] While other ‘foreign’ alcoholic drinks, such as wine or brandy, remained exotic luxuries, consumed only in more consciously ‘modern’ environments, the beer hall and other kinds of eating and drinking establishment selling beer appear to have offered venues more clearly adapted to the changing forms of everyday social life in urbanizing and industrializing Japan.[26]

From the turn of the century onwards, therefore, beer appears to have been shedding the connotations of its foreign origins and beginning its march towards status as a mass-market product and a necessary element in the Japanese life-style. For Nakano Makiko, recording an occasion when ‘we went “modern”’, entertaining with ‘München beer and bananas’ (Nakano 1995, 149), beer still, in 1910, retained its association with Western style, but, as the rapid growth in per capita consumption shown in Table 5 suggests, it was coming to be much more

[25] See the drawings reproduced in Kirin Bīru 1984, 113.

[26] Lists of foreign forms of alcoholic drink available for sale in Tokyo after the opening of the ports include, alongside branded bottled beer, wine and spirits in quite specific forms – claret, Scotch malt whiskey, Swiss absinthe, etc. (Kirin Bīru 1984, 56–7). However, although, bottles of wine were served on special occasions or given as gifts and wine and spirits were consumed in the modern-style cafés of the Taishō period, such drinks never, in the pre-war period at least, escaped the realm of the exotic in the way that beer did.

widely consumed, as appropriate occasions and environments for beer-drinking became more common. In the cities at least, beer became the drink for 'modern' public occasions – celebrations of the return of soldiers from the Russo-Japanese war (beer was clearly the drink of choice within the military), outdoor gatherings in parks, opening ceremonies for bridges and railway lines – where it was beginning to accompany Japanese-style take-away food as well as Western-style snacks (Kirin Bīru 1984, 138–41). Following the World War I boom, with the explosion in the numbers of cafés and other leisure facilities for the emerging urban middle classes, the practice of drinking with colleagues after work began to develop among business and bureaucratic salaryman groups. Beer-drinking was central to these activities and terms such as 'the beer party' (bīru-tō) were apparently coined to refer to the members of the 'new middle classes' who amused themselves on their way home from work (Kirin Bīru 1984: 162-3). Although a bottle of beer remained a relatively expensive item, beer production expanded spectacularly in the years between World War I and the onset of the Great Depression, as demand in the beer halls and cafés, for gifts and entertainment at home, and even to wash down ordinary middle-class meals, expanded. The salaryman taking a bottle of beer with his meal (Western- or Japanese-style) in a cafeteria or at home became a familiar cartoon figure;[27] a café was not a café without furnishings supplied by a beer company (Kirin Bīru 1984, 164–5).

Beer consumption was slower to take off outside the cities and its spread was closely connected to the expansion of the railway network. While members of the rural élite were buying occasional bottles of wine or brandy in the 1880s and 1890s, it was typically not until after the turn of the century, when railway lines reached their villages that they became regular beer-

[27] For examples, see Kirin Bīru 1984, 155–61. The cafeteria customer, wearing *haori*, kimono and *geta* (though also a trilby hat), struggling with his tray of Western-style food on plates and a big bottle of beer, is particularly striking.

drinkers.[28] Beer-halls began to appear in the provinces from 1914 onwards and beer production approximately tripled in volume over the course of the World War I boom, as consumption spread out from the cities to regions like northern Kyūshū, caught up in the spurt of industrial growth. Sake production also grew during the boom and continued to dwarf that of beer, but the peak in per capita consumption was not greatly different from that of previous boom times and the post-war decline was noticeable, whereas beer consumption, though small by comparison, grew explosively during the boom and continued to expand through the inter-war years.[29] In rural areas, beer remained far from an everyday drink, even for the élite,[30] but by the inter-war period brands of beer were being advertised nation-wide, in newspapers and on posters and daily objects such as match-boxes, so that, although consumption was still largely concentrated in urban areas, the product awareness on which a mass market depended was being created throughout the country.

The experiences of beer and sake over the course of Japan's pre-World War II history thus demonstrate that growth and change in the consumption of basic consumer goods such as alcoholic drinks were inextricably bound up with the process through which everyday lives, as well as incomes, were transformed in the course of economic development. On the basis of their changing relationship to sake as an increasingly commercialized consumer good, drinkers added beer to their repertoire of alcoholic drinks, reflecting the changing patterns of their lives as they adapted to life and work in the industrial cities. While consumption of beer and of sake both

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[28] For an example, taken from the diary of a local notable, see Kirin Bīru 1984, 172–5. The festivities surrounding the opening of the railway line and station at his village involved public beer consumption for the first time and thereafter purchases of beer, although never reaching the level of those on sake, regularly appear in his accounts, in a way that earlier outlays on wine and brandy (which ceased once he had discovered beer) never did.
[29] The volume of beer production had come to exceed that of sake by 1947 (Smith 1992: 147). The decline in sake production and consumption over the war years also reflects restrictions on the use of rice for sake-brewing .
[30] In Katai Tayama's 1909 novel *Country Teacher*, the young and relatively poor village school-teacher of the title drinks beer on occasions when he is being entertained by his superiors, for example when taken to a bath house-cum-restaurant by his school principal (Katai 1984, 74–5).

increased, the circumstances under which more was drunk were different. As with many other Japanese-style goods, there remained occasions, by no means all of them straightforwardly 'traditional', when sake was appropriate, and economic and social change enabled more-and-more of the population to enjoy, at home or in small-scale gatherings in bars and restaurants, increasingly differentiated forms of the refined product that had once been the privilege of the élite. At the same time, however, they began to incorporate the 'foreign' product that was beer, alongside sake, into their accepted consumption patterns, using it to accompany the new patterns of social activity that economic change was producing. By the post-war period, beer had become the 'necessity', having shed all its foreign connotations, but both drinks had come to fulfill their distinctive roles within the everyday lives of modern Japanese consumers.

Conclusion

The emergence of the consumer in pre-war Japan was something that even contemporaries whose careers depended on it found difficult to acknowledge. Hamada Masuji, a pioneer of advertising design in the inter-war period, argued in his writings that the purpose of commercial art was 'the spiritual elevation of commerce' which would 'enhance the prosperity and livelihood of the masses', rather than the creation of desires for 'unnecessary' goods, a position which, as Weisenfeld points out, he was never able to reconcile with the fact that it was precisely the expansion of the consumer market that opened up the field for commercial design (Weisenfeld 2000, 83). This reluctance to recognize the historical existence of the Japanese consumer has contributed to the neglect of the role played by major industries outside the 'modern' sector in Japan's development and of the influence of changing patterns of everyday domestic life on the path that the Japanese economy took.

In many respects, the emergence of the consumer in Japan bears broad similarities to the parallel but earlier processes in Europe and North America. Although the goods involved were often, though not always, quite different, their purchase and diffusion seems to have been driven by many similar forces, including initial emulation of the élite, the development of 'populuxe' copies and the eventual emergence of patterns of consumption in which goods were used by the rising middle classes as symbols of status, respectability and new-found comfort, converting former luxuries into the 'necessities' of modern Japanese life. New products – not to the same extent the imported 'drug foods' that trade and imperialism brought to Europeans and Americans, but rather Western-style gadgets, accessories and forms of processed food and drink – were incorporated into changing life-styles, but alongside the development – much more significant for the growth of consumption and the economy as a whole – of 'traditional' products as the consumer goods of everyday life.

If this is so, then it would follow that the growth of consumption and the emergence of the consumer need to be seen as part of the process of economic development that leads to and, in due course, sustains industrialization beyond, as well as within, the cradle of the industrial revolution in Europe and North America. As the example of beer suggests, increasing interaction with the 'modern' outside world introduced Japanese consumers to new products embodying Western-style modernity that they were eventually to 'domesticate' as their own. However, such products represented only one element in the increasingly differentiated array of consumer goods available to them, as their incomes rose. Within this array, the 'traditional', 'indigenous' products which constituted the major part of the economy's output had already established themselves and continued to develop, alongside 'modern', 'Western' products, in response to the changing conditions of consumers' working and family lives.

The shoppers who throng the temples of consumerism in present-day Tokyo and Osaka are thus heirs to their own long history, predating the nineteenth-century Western impact and continuing to condition the growth of consumption and the emergence of the consumer through the course of modern industrialization. To see that history solely in terms of the impact of Western-style modernity is not only to neglect a central element in long-term economic development in Japan, and perhaps in other industrializing parts of Asia, as earlier in the West, but also to ignore a key factor determining the ways in which Japanese people have come to live their lives as consumers in the modern world.

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Table 1: Output of Manufactured Goods Recorded in the *Fuken Bussanhyō* of 1874
(Share (%) of product category in total manufacturing output. Value in thousand yen of output of all individual items with total output valued at over one million yen.)

Textiles/clothing %		27.7	**Household goods** %		7.7
	woven cloth	17,159		pottery	2,092
	dyed cloth	3,033		metal-ware	1,537
	ready-made items	1,367		sundries	1,485
	raw silk	6,165	**Paper, writing materials & books** %		5.2
	cotton thread	1,234		paper	5,167
	footwear	1,816	**Furnishings** %		1.7
Processed food & drink %		41.9		floor covering	1,432
	sake	18,605	**Oil & wax** %		6.3
	soy sauce	6,338		oil	5,443
	miso	6,137		wax	1,575
	tea	3,951	**Other** %		9.5
	salt	2,394		instruments/appliances	3,061
	sugar	1,380		fertilizers	3,057
				medicines & toiletries	1,539

adapted from Yamaguchi 1963, Table 28

Table 2: Supply and Per Capita Consumption of Miso and Soy Sauce, 1876–1935
(5-yearly averages centred on years shown)

	soy sauce			*miso*		
	supply tonnes	factory share %	consumption p.c. kg	supply tonnes	factory share %	consumption p.c. kg
1876	471924	35.6	13.3	454622	28.1	12.8
1880	505620	34.5	13.8	487266	27.6	13.3
1885	498060	37.7	13.0	479343	30.4	12.5
1890	517356	40.0	13.0	497981	32.3	12.5
1895	619488	38.1	14.9	596942	30.8	14.4
1900	655380	42.9	14.9	631715	35.0	14.4
1905	644328	48.9	13.8	621831	39.5	13.4
1910	715115	59.4	14.5	612635	49.1	12.4
1915	667588	72.9	12.7	694919	60.6	13.2
1920	805513	74.0	14.4	758179	61.4	13.5
1925	864095	82.0	14.4	789778	67.2	13.2
1930	919939	82.5	14.3	727199	67.8	11.3
1935	890568	83.5	12.9	731979	69.3	10.6

Shinohara 1967, Tables 54, 55, 56, 57; population from Ando1979, 4–5

home production of miso and soy sauce is estimated on the basis of consumption of salt.
conversion rates for soy sauce from Ioku 1999, 237: 9 kg of soy sauce = 8.8 litres = about 5 *shō*

Table 3: Consumption of Tobacco, Tea and Sugar by Value, 1875–1935

	Total value of consumption, current prices, ¥'000			Value of p.c. consumption, 1934–6 prices, ¥		
	tobacco	tea	sugar	tobacco	tea	sugar
1875	2033	1007	2052			
1890	6955	633	6002	0.72	0.07	0.62
1895	11965	2420	6358	1.06	0.21	0.56
1900	29253	2813	13443	1.64	0.16	0.75
1905	54628	2004	12526	2.48	0.09	0.57
1910	88208	3668	25306	3.48	0.14	1.00
1915	88186	7654	31358	3.11	0.27	1.10
1920	248848	32233	101540	3.33	0.43	1.36
1925	275801	39642	81278	3.69	0.53	1.09
1930	323526	30569	71799	5.04	0.48	1.12
1935	333424	28332	84272	4.78	0.41	1.21

Shinohara 1967, Tables 48, 47, 73, 74, 75, 76; population from Ando1979, 4–5; consumer price index 1934–6 = 100 from Ohkawa and Shinohara 1979, Table A50.

Table 4: Real expenditure on furniture and utensils, total and selected items, 1890–1935 (1934–6 prices, ¥'000)

	total	wooden h'hold furniture	bamboo & rattan furniture	bicycles & parts	ceramic ware	pots & pans	watches & clocks	lacquer ware
1890	34979							
1895	56114							
1900	62875							
1905	57477							
1910	77707	3804	6959	5047	19395	3205	4161	16283
1915	114532	6097	12792	6935	21141	11069	3740	20033
1920	171583	6471	10125	17064	33234	25018	14696	19737
1925	201425	19853	17317	9107	46361	10943	16799	30112
1930	226304	26196	17384	13472	43687	10783	20979	37706
1935	300477	36962	13950	22063	57873	19189	18212	49548

Shinohara 1967, Tables 86, 87; price index from Ohkawa and Shinohara 1979, Table A50

Table 5: Total Supply and Per Capita Consumption of Sake and Beer, 1876–1935
(5-yearly averages centering on years shown)

	sake		**beer**	
	supply ‘000 *koku*	consumption p. c. litres	supply ‘000 *koku*	consumption p.c. litres
1876	3355	17.0	2.4	0.01
1880	3460	17.0	2.8	0.01
1885	3259	15.3	10.4	0.05
1890	3786	17.1	17.2	0.08
1895	4642	20.1	32.0	0.14
1900	4938	20.2	88.4	0.36
1905	4172	16.1	111.8	0.43
1910	4794	17.5	142.2	0.52
1915	4764	16.3	235.6	0.80
1920	5982	19.2	545.2	1.75
1925	6331	19.0	770.2	2.32
1930	5206	14.5	761.2	2.12
1935	4683	12.2	949.4	2.47

Shinohara 1967, Tables 58, 59, 62, 63; population from Ando1979, 4–5

data are for refined sake and do not include *doburoku*
1 *koku* = 180 litres