

外国語 (英語) 要旨

Title:

The Formation of American Mass Consumption Society and the Sales of Japanese Ceramic Products by Morimura Brothers.

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This dissertation explores how Japanese companies having overseas business in the modern period became internationalized, through analyzing the case of Morimura Brothers which sold Japanese ceramic products in the United States.

Morimura Brothers is a New York branch store of Japanese exporter Morimuragumi, which was founded by Ichizaemon Morimura and his younger brother Toyo Morimura in 1876. They sold many kinds of Japanese goods like antiques and miscellaneous for the first several years but gradually specialized to sell only ceramic products after they recognized the great demand of ceramics in the American market. The characteristics of Morimura Brothers in comparison with other Japanese firms are: 1) To be a specialized trading company exporting ceramics, not a general trading company (Sogo-Shosha), 2) To be leading force to develop the whole Japanese ceramic export industry by holding the top share of exports, 3) To keep the offices in the United States for long years from the foundation of 1876 to the closing of 1941 by the War, 4) To supply the products that match the consumers' demand because the group companies did all from manufacture to sale, 5) To carry out the international branding strategy of "Noritake China" as the earliest example among Japanese companies.

This study mainly reveals the sales activities of Morimura in the American market and especially focuses on its policy change from selling artworks to daily use porcelain, which have not been discussed much in the prior research.

Besides, it takes account of American market situations and social changes when examining Morimura's activities, not to take only Japanese point of view. In the late 19th century to the beginning 20th century, the American experienced mass consumption culture with developing of mass production, transportation and communication technologies, and up to 1920s, the country formed "Mass Consumption Society" which involves "public" equally regardless of races, genders, occupations, incomes, places to live, etc. In this process, ceramic

goods as “luxury” for people turned to be “commodity,” and the product designs in fashion changed and diversified very quickly.

Morimura Brothers was also in this transition and developing its business more and more as an international company. The method of this study is to examine the process by following the qualitative change of Morimura products by periods, while other prior researches tend to approach quantitative structures or human activities.

The target period is from 1876 (the Morimura Brothers foundation and the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition) to 1929 (the Great Depression and the starting point of decrease in ceramic imports from Japan to the United States). These 54 years can be divided into three periods as below by products that Morimura mainly dealt with.

The first period (1876-1892): The Japanese-style artworks.

The second period (1893-1913): The “fancy ware” (ornamental vases and tableware) with Western-style paintings.

The third period (1914-1929): The dinner sets with Morimura’s original designs.

Each discussion is done along the three periods. In the first chapter (the first period: 1876-1892), it is discussed how Morimura Brothers started and stabilized its business by selling Japanese-style art ceramics for the rich, in the rise of “Japan craze” of the late 1870s and its decline of the late 1880s.

In the second chapter (the second period: 1893-1913), it is shown that the World’s Columbian Exposition of Chicago, 1893 marked a turning point in Morimura’s products. It was a change from the artworks to “fancy ware” with Western-style paintings, when the demand of commodities in general increased in the country.

The third chapter (the third period: 1914-1929) considers, in the American Mass Consumption Society, how Morimura Brothers achieved a high position in the market as they could compete with European and American products. The trigger was success of dinner sets manufacture in Japan, 1914.

This transition is caused not only by Morimura’s own decisions but also by change of American taste, design in fashion, economy and society in background and a level of manufacturing techniques in Japan.

And, the factors which make Morimura Brothers prosper for such long time are: 1) Turning from artwork business to commodities from the early point, 2) Cooperation between

Morimura Brothers, Morimuragumi, Nihon Toki Gomei Gaisha (manufacturing factory) by information sharing, 3) Strategies that adapt the formation of American Mass Consumption Society, for example, starting to wholesale new and large-scale American retail stores or changing target consumers from the rich to the middle and lower classes. In other words, the Morimura's business activities deeply rooted in the American society in all aspects of products, sales and organizations. Thus, it can be said that Morimura Brothers is the origin of Japanese international companies.

Moreover, it yielded mutual communication like human relationships among the Morimura's Japanese staffs and American staffs and customers. It also contributed to form some "Japanese images" in the United States through the circulation of Made-in-Japan products all over the country. This is intercultural communication by articles. Thus, it is also the outcome of this study to offer the possibility that we can describe trade history in the modern Japan as "history of international communication."