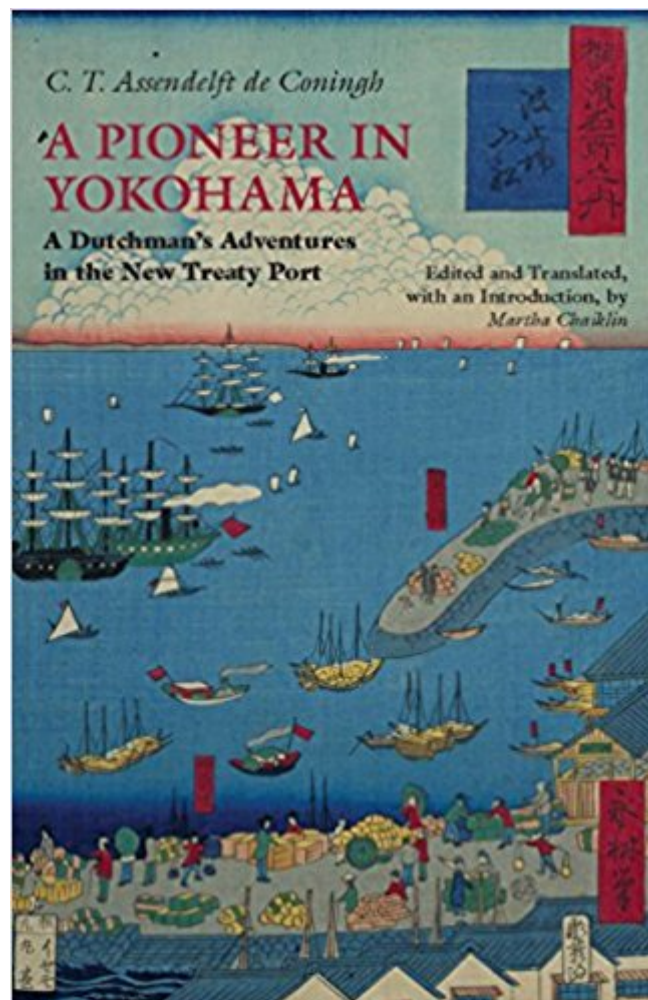




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A Pioneer In Yokohama: A Dutchman's Adventures In The New Treaty Port (Hackett Classics)



Synopsis

In relating the story of his life on the island of Deshima and in the port of Yokohama during the late 1850s, Dutch merchant C. T. Assendelft de Coningh provides both an unprecedented eyewitness account of daily life in the Japanese treaty ports and a unique perspective on the economic, military, and political forces the Western imperial powers brought to bear on newly opened Japan. A general Introduction provides essential historical and cultural background as well as a brief biography of De Coningh; substantial footnotes explain those terms, names, and cultural references that may be unfamiliar to modern readers. Thirteen illustrations are included, as are a chronology of events, a bibliography, and an index.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A great read--I couldn't put it down! A Pioneer in Yokohama truly brings the earliest months of the Japanese treaty port to life. From the brief Japanese 'Gold Rush' to duels and terrorist attacks, from the perils of international commerce to hilarious problems of translation and miscommunication, Dutchman De Coningh's memoir provides vivid insights into both nineteenth-century trade and Yokohama's international community. Moreover, the extraordinary sleuth work done by translator Chaiklin to identify even the most preposterous-seeming events and characters adds the spice of historical confirmation to the drama. . . . A great resource for researchers, classrooms, and casual readers alike. --Sarah Thal, University of Wisconsin-Madison A marvelous translation. We're all lucky to now have [this work] in English. . . . Chaiklin's introduction is especially good: based on

solid research in primary and secondary works, it finds a nice balance between information for specialists and for the general reader. --Joshua Fogel, York University

This is a fresh and distinct account of Japan in the last years of shogunal rule. De Coningh's prose reads almost like a novel, brimming with the thrill of discovery, the despair of homesickness and isolation, and moments of genuine terror. His stories, such as an account of making new friends in a foreign land over stiff drinks, have a wonderful immediacy, as though they were pulled from contemporary student's blog posts. De Coningh's memoir gives insight into Dutch manners, mores, and politics, while his observations about Japan are astute, nuanced, and appreciative. His account is especially valuable because it contrasts Japan before and after the opening of the treaty ports: De Coningh relates both the cloistered isolation of old Dutch trading post in Nagasaki and the tumult and mayhem of the new port of Yokohama. This is a delightful read for anyone interested in nineteenth-century Japan, but *Pioneer* also offers insights into European political and economic rivalries. For teaching, it could be used in survey courses, or paired with other [contemporary] memoirs. --Mark Ravina, Emory University

Martha Chaiklin is Assistant Professor of History, University of Pittsburgh.

This was okay, but we didn't find it particularly interesting. Purchased it for an asian history course.

Great book

Martha Chaiklin's translation of a little-known Dutchman's adventures in Japan provides a unique glimpse into the early years of the opening of Japan's ports to Western merchants. With an erudite introduction and well-researched notes, this work bring to life the turbulent, rowdy, and precarious existence of the budding foreign settlement of Yokohama. De Coningh's depictions of the people in Yokohama are colorful but balanced, both for the various foreigners and the Japanese he interacted with. From his description of the gruesome murder of a fellow Dutchman to the fanfare surrounding the arrival of the first "Western" woman in the port, De Coningh's narrative entertains the reader as his lively prose immerses us in the life of this treaty port of a century and half ago.

A Pioneer in Yokohama was a delightful surprise. Having read *The Thousand Summers* of Jacob de Zoet, which took place in an earlier period of the Dutch stay in Japan, I found *A Pioneer in Yokohama* added a new dimension to the picture portrayed in *The Thousand Summers*. De

Coningh, the author of the memoir, is an artful storyteller with an attractive personality, who treats all nationalities honestly. Unlike the typical Western attitude towards non-Westerners, his is one of respect for Japanese culture and people. His stories of his time on Yokohama are lively and full of interesting information. Chaiklin's translation is excellent, and her scholarship thorough.

As a non-historian I found this book an exciting work of scholarship. To tell this tale of a Dutch trader's experience in Yokohama Martha Chaiklin had to master Old Dutch, know Japanese and show great diligence in checking out names and other obscure words and references. This is an exciting tale of one of the early traders with Japan. It tells you what goods were considered important by the Japanese and shows the dangers this trader experienced from the Japanese and from other western traders. One of the more interesting aspects of the book are his observations about human nature and the politics of the times. Interested Reader

Dry, rigid, thick. All words that describe a usual history book, but not that describe "A Pioneer in Yokohama". Among the many historical books and references I've read, this one in particular stands out as a entirelyly different kind. A true first hand account into a time period past. All information is direct from the source and the original authors experiences are echoed in this translation, apart from just his words. Works like a primary source, but a lot less dry, interesting to say the least, having a history book that conveys all its knowledge, while reading like a novel.

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