

## **The Compound Development of the East Asian Cotton Industry in the Context of Global History, 1945-1965**

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This paper is an attempt to analyze East Asian industrialization in the twentieth century from the viewpoint of global history. Before WWI, one could not find many industrial cotton mills in East Asia outside Japan. But after WWI, cotton mills, including those supported by Japanese capital investment, spread over mainland China. The cotton industry also developed very rapidly in Inner China, Hong Kong and Taiwan after WWII.

The development in Hong Kong and Taiwan after WWII was supported by the following similar factors:

1. Most of the capital and technology came from mainland China.
2. Most of the entrepreneurs also came from mainland China. Most of the heads of the newly established cotton mills were engineers who had experience of studying abroad.
3. Economic policy helped the development.

Compared with Hong Kong, the situation in Taiwan shows certain differences. In Taiwan, the public sector played an important role in the early 1950s. Taiwan received economic aid from America including cheap cotton. Although such differences existed, we can see the development of the cotton industry in East Asia as a phenomenon of global history.

After WWII, Hong Kong and Taiwan achieved rapid economic growth and both became NIEs. Of course, numerous factors contributed to their economic growth, including social and economic institutions formed during the colonial period. But we should not solely emphasize these factors. If we understand that the most important sector of the Hong Kong and Taiwan economies during the 1950s and 1960s was the textile industry, we also need to consider the influence of the cotton industry in mainland China.

Therefore, we will pay attention to mainland China. Chinese economic history during the planned economy did not happen in isolation from the outside world and should be understood in the context of global history. Technology transfers in the Chinese cotton machine industry had already started in several machine shops of Japanese owned cotton mills during WWII. After WWII, Nationalist China acquired those machine shops under the umbrella of the China Textile Construction Company. After the 1949 revolution, inheriting the CTCC's machine shops, the PRC used these technological foundations to build 18 new cotton mills in North China. So the PRC was founded on the basis of developments in Republican China. This was true especially in the field of light industry, including the textile industry.