

## Introductory Research on the Genesis of Modern Management of Technology: in the case of the Meiji Cotton Spinning Sector.

Eugene K. Choi

Graduate School of Technology Management, Ritsumeikan University

This is an introductory study of investigating the genesis of Japanese-style modern management of technology in the case of the Meiji cotton industry. The cotton-spinning sector was at the forefront of Japanese industrial modernisation, underpinned by imported British technologies. It was also the leading sector of full-dressed mechanisation for mass production; this entailed rapid development of a modern and export-driven international business system since then. Throughout the Meiji period, the spinning sector constantly constituted the most distinct frontier of Japanese modernisation in managerial practice as well. In analysing the essence of their success, Choi focuses particularly upon the initial phase of the evolving management of new body of knowledge and textile technologies, coordinated strategically with dynamic global market competition.

In the perspective of economic history, the cost advantage from cheap female labour has certainly collected the most scholarly attention. This macro view of the industrial essentials has enriched our understanding of key success factors in late industrialisation. Nevertheless, Choi's standpoint concerned that the mere abundance of cheap labour did not guarantee the sustainable development of industrial competitiveness; only high managerial calibres could take advantage of rich potential of quality labour supply. Choi's historical analysis therefore approached to the issue from the view of entrepreneurial management.

The principal management of technologies in this period concerned three essential perspectives: choice of (British textile) technologies, operation and maintenance of the chosen technologies, and internalisation of them. Regarding the focal debate, this study attempts to historically prove the absolute significance of strategic management of advanced technologies not only to catch up and take over the global forerunners but also to build up sustainable advantage in international market competition. This study also intends to combine the two areas of study, management of technology (MOT) and business history. This leads to a literature review of the past and recent scholarship on the two research fields. The former has concerned mostly with analyses of today's management of profitable technologies, and lacked in examination of much richer historical sources to explore evolutionary context of every technology. By extending the scope and time scale, the essential nature of today's MOT should be reconsidered as well.