

Abstract of Doctoral Thesis

Title : Historical Development of the Gas Business in Modern Shanghai

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In this study, I identified the historical development of the gas industry, using modern Shanghai as an example. Although the gas industry is an extremely important area when examining the changes and modernization of society, interest toward it had been low in the research world. It was only introduced briefly in corporate histories and was a completely untapped area. In this study, I examined the positioning of the gas industry within the economic and industrial development history of modern China as well as the historical significance of the gas industry within the history of urban development.

Chapter 1 “The Gas Industry in Shanghai” identifies how foreign capital expanded into the gas industry in Shanghai, and examines the reality of the gas business in Shanghai, which was developed earlier than in Japan. The supply of gas was initiated by Shanghai Gas Co., which was established in 1862 within the British settlement. Subsequently, the Compagnie du Gaz de la Concession Francaise Changhai was established in the French settlement. However, Shanghai Gas Co. later took over the business of Compagnie du Gaz de la Concession Francaise Changhai, resulting in the British gas company’s monopoly of the gas supply in Shanghai. The dawn of the gas industry in modern Shanghai can be characterized by the overwhelming advantage of British capital.

Chapter 2 “The Establishment and Transition of Toho Gas Co, Ltd.” studies the background to the establishment of Toho Gas Co, Ltd. and its development process. In the development process of Toho Gas Co, Ltd., its relationship with Toho Electric Power Co, Ltd. cannot be ignored. A dynamic that reflected the demand of society existed between the two companies, which placed priority on electricity. This dynamic was even more prominent in Shanghai. Toho Gas was involved

in the gas industry in Shanghai during the war, and was confronted by the limitations of a Japanese-type operation and the difficulty of meeting the local demand for electricity.

Chapter 3 “The History of Great Shanghai Gas Co, Ltd., a National Policy Concern” examines the background to the establishment and the business of Great Shanghai Gas Co, Ltd., which was established after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. In reality, the internal management of Great Shanghai Gas Co, Ltd., which was in charge of Japan’s national policy, was instructed by Toho Gas. Its business results were marked by weakness. As the Asia-Pacific War broke out, the management of Great Shanghai Gas Co, Ltd. was relegated to a British gas company in Shanghai, which was under the control of the Japanese military. Although the company’s business expanded after being taken over by the British gas company, demand for gas never exceeded that for electricity.

In terms of this study’s significance within the history of research, I would like to emphasize the following two points. The first point is that this study has opened up a new field in the economic and industrial development history of modern China, and identified the historical significance of the gas industry within the history of urban development. The gas industry attracted limited interest in the past and was an untapped area. The gas industry in Shanghai did not expand rapidly. By a simple comparison of numbers of customers, its size was merely that of a medium-scale company in Japan. Gas was mostly consumed by foreigners living in settlements, and did not become widespread within Chinese society. These industrial characteristics express the rational choice of the Chinese people at that time.

The second point is that this study has identified the relationship between electricity and gas within the economic and industrial development history of modern China, as well as in the history of urban development. As the core of the energy sector, the electricity industry had a huge presence at that time. While electricity supply was widespread across Chinese society, gas was only used in some regions. The primacy of electricity and the secondary status of gas were more prominent in Shanghai than in Japan at that time. The relationship between electricity and gas revealed by this study is an extremely important indicator.