

Company, Industry and Network in “The Far East” in the 1940: A Study of Directory Published in Hongkong

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Abstract: Before the World War II, “Intra-Asian” trade continued to make a steady and dynamic progress. But little attention has been given to the business development from the view point of the companies in this “Intra-Asian” trade. In order to analyze some aspects of the location and the business activities of the companies in “Intra-Asian” Trade, this study is intended as an investigation of “the Classified List of Trades covering China, Japan, Malaya, Borneo, Siam, the Philippines, Korea, Indo-China, Netherlands Indies, etc.” and “List of Industries in “the Far East” compiled in *the Directory and Chronicle for China, Japan, Straits Settlements, Malaya, Borneo, Siam, the Philippines etc.* published by Hongkong Daily Press in Hongkong in 1941. It is certain that “The Far East” did not mean what “Intra-Asian” Trade was, but “The Far East” should be some part of it. Furthermore, “The Far East” seemed to be a certain regional trade area, not only the geographical scope of which the contemporary business persons there in those days might recognize and could “imagine”, but also in which they conducted their actual business activities and strengthened their trade networks.

Keywords: Intra-Asian trade, The Far East, Company, Directory

1. Introduction

In the first half of the twentieth century, before the World War II, “Intra-Asian” trade continued to make a steady and dynamic progress. But little attention has been given to the business development from the view point of the companies in “Intra-Asian” trade. Certainly it is not easy to investigate the whole activities of the companies in this large business arena of “Intra-Asian” trade including in especially South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia, but, by using the classified business lists and industrial lists of the companies in “the Far East” reported in *the Directory and Chronicle for China, Japan, Straits Settlements, Malaya, Borneo, Siam, the Philippines etc.* published by Hongkong Daily Press in Hongkong, it is possible to analyze some aspects of the location and the business activities of the companies in “Intra-Asian” Trade.

Of course, “the Far East” did not mean what “Intra-Asian” Trade was, but should be some part of it. Furthermore, “the Far East” seemed to be a certain regional trade area, not only the geographical scope of which the contemporary business persons, the Asian merchants as well as the European business persons, in those days might recognize and could “imagine”, but also in which they conducted their business and strengthened their trade networks.

It is certain that *the Directory and Chronicle for China, Japan, Straits Settlements, Malaya, Borneo, Siam, the Philippines etc.* could not compile all of both the local and the foreign companies and industries in “the Far East.”

This Directory listed mainly the European companies and industries, but compiled some major Asian local companies and industries which were closely related directly or indirectly with the European business community in “the Far East.”

So it is noteworthy that this study investigates the limited company’s information of this directory. This point is the limit in this study.

But very little attentions has been paid to this kind of extensive research on this directory. So this study may clarify some aspects of the location, development and network of companies and industries in “the Far East” before WWII, based on the limited company’s data in the Directory.

This study is intended as an investigation of “the Classified List of Trades covering China, Japan, Malaya, Borneo, Siam, the Philippines, Korea, Indo-China, Netherlands Indies, etc.” and “List of Industries in “the Far East” compiled in the directory published in Hongkong, 1941. In this study, there are three main research points as follows, (1) to analyze the classified lists of trades in 1940, (2) to investigate the lists of industries in the Far East in 1940, and (3) to examine the possibility to utilize these kinds of companies data in the Far East compiled in this Directory by using the GIS analytical method.

2. Directory published in Hogkong and “The Far East”

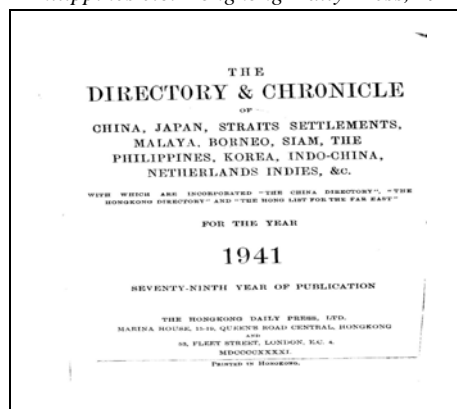
2.1 Directory published in Hongkong

Hongkong Daily Press published *the Directory and Chronicle for China, Japan, Straits Settlements, Malaya, Borneo, Siam, the Philippines etc.* since 1860s. This study examines *the Directory and Chronicle for China, Japan, Straits Settlements, Malaya, Borneo, Siam, the Philippines etc.* published by Hongkong Daily Press in 1941(see photo 1 and photo 2). This directory overviewed and compiled the business persons, the companies and the industries in the major cities of “the Far East.”

(Photo 1) A Cover of *the Directory and Chronicle for China, Japan, Straits Settlements, Malaya, Borneo, Siam, the Philippines etc.* Hongkong Daily Press, 1941.



(Photo 2) Top page of the *Directory and Chronicle for China, Japan, Straits Settlements, Malaya, Borneo, Siam, the Philippines etc. Hongkong Daily Press, 1941.*



2.2 “The Far East”

The Directory and Chronicle for China, Japan, Straits Settlements, Malaya, Borneo, Siam, the Philippines etc published in Hongkong covered the directories of companies and foreign residents on the main cities in “the Far East” which was recognized as a kind of the regional trade area before World War II (see Map 1).

(Map1) “The Far East” in *the Directory and Chronicle for China, Japan, Straits Settlements, Malaya, Borneo, Siam, the Philippines etc. Hongkong Daily Press, 1925.*

3. The Classified List and the List of Industries in “the Far East”

The Directory and Chronicle for China, Japan, Straits Settlements, Malaya, Borneo, Siam, the Philippines etc published in Hongkong compiled the important lists about companies, their professions and industries, which includes “The Classified List” and “The List of Industries” in “the Far East.”

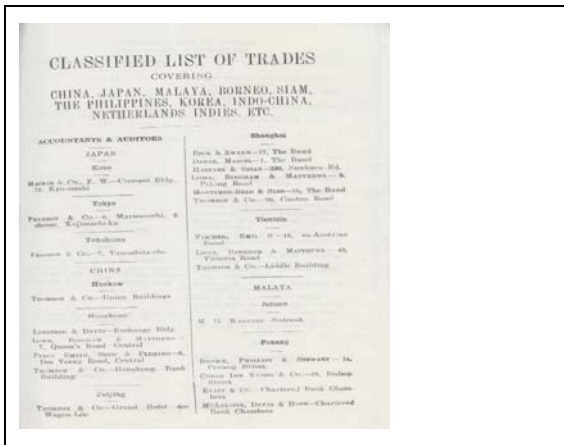
It is important to note that the directory published in 1941 included the companies’ data in 1940. So the classified list of trade and the list of industries published in 1941 recorded the information in 1940.

3.1 The Classified List of Trade in “the Far East”

The classified list of trade reported totally 10,676 companies of the all 82 business classifications in 97 cities in the Far East, such as Shanghai, Manila, Hongkong, Kobe and the others. This number of 10,676 companies are counted in nominal terms, but the number of the real companies were counted about 6,700. Because some companies carried on several business. So these companies were listed on several business categories.

The most common business profession in 97 cities of the Far East was General Merchants, 1,463 companies of the total 10,676 companies. The second was insurance (633). The third was shipping (458). The 4th was banks (410). The 5th was Machinery & Hardware Merchants (350). The 6th was Electrical Supplies (278). The 7th was Chemicals & Drugs (268). The 8th was Cotton & Textiles (267). The 9th was Motor Car Dealers (267). The 10th was Newspapers & Publications (251).

(Photo 3) The Sample Page of the Classified List in 1941



One main city in 97 cities in which the most companies were located was Shanghai (1,589 companies). The second city was Manila (1,090). The third city was Hongkong (977). The 4th was Kobe (801). The 5th was Singapore (685).

In Shanghai, the most common business profession was General Merchants, 199 companies, of the total 1,589 companies. The second business profession was Insurance (78). The third was Machinery & Hardware Merchants (67). The 4th was Chemicals & Drugs (59). The 5th was Cotton & Textiles (55). In Manila the most common business profession was General Merchants, 87 companies of the total 1,090 companies. The second business profession was Mining (76). The third was Insurance (51). The 4th was Timber & Lumber Merchants (41). The 5th was Newspapers & Publications (37). In Hongkong, the most common business profession was General Merchants (151) of the total 977 companies. The second was Insurance (63). The third was Shipping (40). The 4th was Electrical Supplies (30). The 5th was Machinery & Hardware Merchants (28).

By analyzing “the Classified List” in “the Far East,” it is possible to clarify the branch networks of the main companies in the Far East. For example, the first example of the companies which built the largest branches of business network was Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation, which had 27 branches in “the Far East,” such as Amoy, Canton, Dairen, Harbin, Shanghai, Swatow, Hanoi, Saigon, Kobe, Yokohama, Johore, Malacca, Penang, Perak, Bangkok, Iloilo, Manila and the others.

The second example of the main company was Mitsui Bussan Kaisha, Ltd. which built 27 branches, such as Amoy, Canton, Chefoo, Dairen, Hankow, Hongkong, Mukden, Newchwang, Peiping, Shanghai, Tientsin, Tsinan, Tsingtao, Kobe, Moji, Nagasaki, Nagoya, Osaka, Shidzuoka, Tokyo, Yokohama, Manila, Singapore, Batavia, Semarang, Sourabaya and Manila.

The third example of the main company was Jardine Matheson & Co., Ltd. which built 15 branches, such as Formosa, Kobe, Canton, Foochow, Hankow, Hongkong, Ichang, Kiukiang, Nanking, Shanghai, Swatow, Tientsin, Tsingtao and Wuhu.

(Photo 4) The Sample Page of the List of Industries in 1941

3.2 The List of Industries in “the Far East”

Number of Companies on the list of industries in “the Far East” was 1,879. But some companies carried on several industries. So these companies were counted at several times. Real number of companies was counted about 1,700 in 130 districts or cities such as Kowloon, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Perak, Binondo (Manila), Selangor, Singapore and the others. Then these companies were sorted into 115 industrial classifications.

Industries on “the List of Industries” is classified into 115 categories. The most common industrial category was the power plants. 161 companies of the total 1,879 companies were listed in the category of the power plant. The second was Tin Mines (147 companies). The third was Knitting (144). The 4th was General Engineers (104). The 5th was Electrical Engineers (93).

The total 130 districts or cities were listed. The main district or city in which the most companies were counted was Kowloon, 602 companies of the total 1879 companies. The second was Hongkong (404). The third was Shanghai (134). The 4th was Perak (74). The 5th was Binondo, Manila (68).

In Kowloon, the most common industrial category was Knitting, 140 companies of the total 602 companies. The second common industrial category was Weaving (91). The third was Metal Wares (21). The 4th was Preserves (19). The 5th was Shirts & Garments (18).

In Perak, the most common industrial category was Tin Mines, 56 companies of the total 74 companies. The second common industrial category was Mining Engineers (6). The third was Mechanical Engineers (4). The 4th was Consulting Engineers (3). The 5th was Civil Engineers (2).

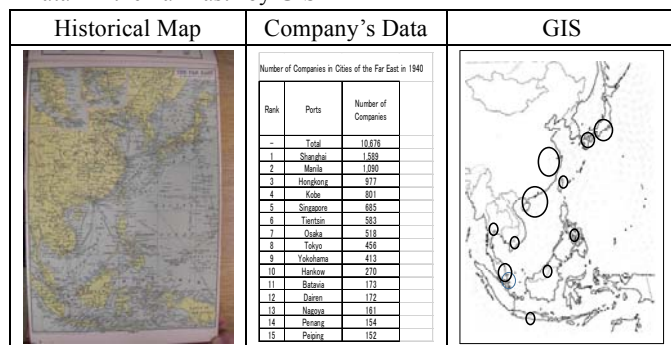
At the country’s level, the industrial categories of both Malaya and the Philippines are very unique. In Malaya, Tin Mines were the most common industrial category, 147 companies of the total 198 companies. Tin Mines accounted for about 74.2%. The second industrial category was Mining Engineers (11). The third was Civil Engineers (10).

In the Philippines, Power Plants was the most common industrial category, 161 companies of the total 328 companies and accounted for 49.1%. Mining was the second category and accounted for 74 companies and 22.6% of the total

companies. Sugar Central was the third category and accounted for 49companies and 14.9%. Contracting Engineers was the 4th category and accounted for only 9companies and 2.7%.

3.3 GIS framework and Companies in “the Far East”

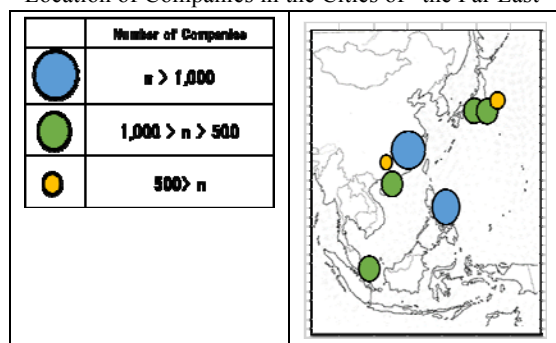
(Map2) Combination of the Historical Map and the Company’s Data in “the Far East” by GIS



This study needs more to combine historical map and company’s data by GIS analytical framework, method and techniques in order to define the historically dynamic process of the distribution of professions and industries and the location of companies in “the Far East” (see Map2). Location of companies in several main cities of “the Far East” in 1940 can be shown on Map 3. On this map 3, Shanghai of 1,589 companies and Manila of 1,090 are shown as the blue circles which mean that in those cities more than 1,000 companies were listed. In the cities of green circles, from 500 to 1,000 companies listed such as Hongkong (977 companies), Kobe (801), Singapore (685), Tientsin (583), Osaka (518). The Orange circles mean the cities in which less than 500 companies were listed like Tokyo (456), Yokohama (413), Hankow (270) and others.

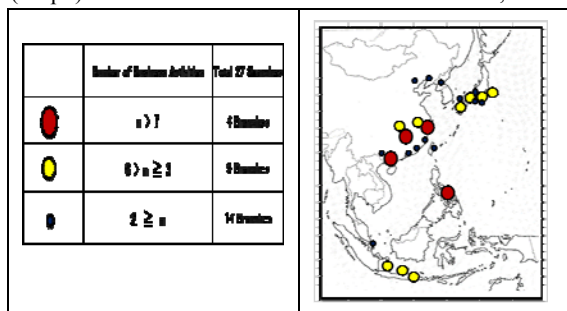
(Map3)

Location of Companies in the Cities of “the Far East” in 1940

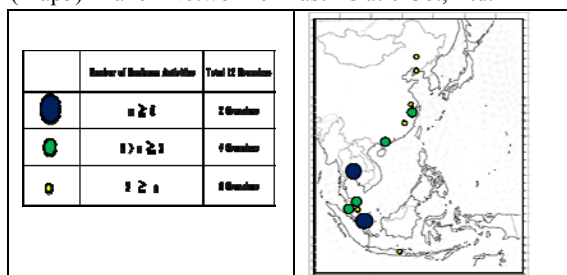


Branch networks of the main companies like Mitsui Bussan Kaisha, Ltd. and East Asiatic Co., Ltd. in “the Far East” in 1940 are shown in Map4 and Map5. These maps clarify three point as follows. (1) The circles show the location of branches which each main company had in this area. (2) The colours and sizes of the circles show the numbers of the business activities of each branch, but not the values of profits or investment. (3)The mapping of branch networks reveals how the geographical varieties of the business activities were expanded by the companies in “the Far East.”

(Map4) Branch Network of Mitsui Bussan Kaisha, Ltd.



(Map5) Branch Network of East Asiatic Co., Ltd.



4. Concluding Remarks

This study examines only the classified list of trade and the industry list published in 1941. So the more extensive research should be made as follows, (1) the dynamic change of location of the companies in the main districts, cities and countries in the 1930s, (2) the dynamic change of the business classification in the 1930s, (3)the change of the companies’ branch networks in the 1930s by using the GIS analytical framework.

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