

Paper#: K279

The Modernization of the Country and the Introduction of Double-entry Book-keeping: A Case of Northeast Asian Countries

Reika TSUMURA

Takamatsu University
tsumura@takamatsu-u.ac.jp

Yasuhiro SHIMIZU

Kobe University
simizu@kobe-u.ac.jp

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to clarify the process surrounding the introduction of Western-style bookkeeping in Northeast Asia alongside the modernization of Northeast Asian countries. This paper elaborates upon the dynamics underlying the international transfer of accounting knowledge.

After a long closed-border period, Northeast Asian countries, including Japan, China, and Korea, opened up their borders, under the pressure of Western countries. Then they began to modernize their economies from the latter part of the 19th century to the early part of 20th century. Following their modernization, these same countries rapidly imported Western culture, technology, and business practices. Bookkeeping was an artifact that was imported in that era into Northeast Asian countries. However, the process of importation was not simple. The people there had to adopt “Western” knowledge of bookkeeping into their culture. That included the invention of new basic terms, and concepts that students could understand based on their prior limited knowledge. Japan was the leader of that process, and Korea and China, which were late to adopt a modernization policy, decided to import bookkeeping and accounting knowledge from Japan, rather than from Western countries. What was behind the transfer of the knowledge was a network of students who were dispatched to Japan. After returning to their home countries, they became lecturers and wrote their own textbooks based on the texts used in Japan.

Keywords: Western-style Bookkeeping, Modernization, Northeast Asian Countries, Bookkeeping Textbook