

The Plains Aborigines Policy of Taiwan Soutokufu during Early Japanese Rule —A Case Study of Kavalan on Gilan Plains

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ABSTRACT

During early Japanese rule, shu-fan were considered culturally affiliated with Han Chinese by Taiwan Soutokufu (Government-General of Taiwan). Shu-fan, who took residence in the general administration region, were beyond doubt imperial subjects, but their non-Han identity subjected them to the jurisdiction of aboriginal affairs. This paper discusses how Taiwan Soutokufu adopted both local administration policy and aboriginal jurisdiction to deal with the ethnicity of Kavalan Shu-fan on Gilan plains from 1895 to 1903. In addition, examining the establishment and transformation of Gokyouhei would shed light on how Taiwan Soutokufu manipulated the relations among ethnic groups in Taiwan to maintain its governing power.

With Taiwan Soutokufu turning its attention to sheng-han, the prior emphasis on shu-fan policy during early Japanese rule gradually vanished. Nevertheless, the census statistics of the Japanese government revealed that the population at that time was composed of three main groups, namely, Han Chinese, shu-fan and sheng-fan. This situation had remained unchanged for more than 10 years. The dichotomy between fan and Han persisted, separating the non-Han from Han Chinese in Taiwan, with shu-fan wavering between sheng-fan and Han Chinese. The ongoing manipulation of the state on ethnic distinction caused shu-fan to differentiate themselves from sheng-fan due to their physical resemblance to Han Chinese. However, such similarity did not lead to assimilation, and shu-fan remained non-Han in the eyes of Han Chinese.

Keywords: Taiwan Soutokufu, Han Chinese, shu-fan, sheng-fan, ethnic distinction