

The Role of Political-merchant in the Development of East Taiwan during Japanese Colonization —The Case of Katakinsaburou

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the essence of Japanese colonization in the light of the complicated relationship between the political and business sectors and discusses the impact of the exploration schemes initiated by Katagumi on the development of east Taiwan.

Analyses of historical materials led to conclusions as follows. First, in terms of administration characteristics, Katagumi showed obvious features of a political-merchant. Second, the development of east Taiwan from the late 19th century depended heavily on factors such as capital, immigration policy, social order and transportation. It was the lack of support from these factors that the exploration schemes of Katagumi failed. Nevertheless, Katagumi had laid the ground for further development which was finally realized by subsequent immigration of officials and the irrigation projects they implemented. During Japanese colonization, people from Katagumi were main social leaders of east Taiwan's society. The contribution of Katakinsaburou to the development of east Taiwan had also won himself merit and recognition. Third, the Government-General of Taiwan favored the Japanese more than the natives. This has affected the livelihood of the Han and their development in the east. In other words, the close relationship between the political elite and the merchants resulted in favoritism towards the Japanese and restricted the possibility for native Taiwanese to develop the east under Japanese rule.

Keywords: political-merchant, Okuragumi, Katagumi, Katakinsaburou, Ekidensya, east Taiwan