

The “Gendarme-oriented” Police System in the Japanese Colonial Empire: The Transfer of Models of Rule Used in Colonial Korea to Kwantung Province and Manchukuo

Toshihiko Matsuda

ABSTRACT

This essay is intended as a critical review of Japanese “imperial history,” using that term to include consideration of both directly ruled colonies and occupied territories, as it has come to be understood in recent years. For this purpose, special attention is paid to the “gendarme-oriented” police system (*kenpei keisatsu seido*) that was first created in 1910 in Colonial Korea and then introduced to Kwantung Province in Northeastern China in 1917–19 and to Manchukuo in 1934–37.

Previous research in “imperial history” has dealt primarily with the history of thought, and has tended to focus on the relations between the Japanese mainland and the colonies, taking the mainland as the central axis. This paper, however, based on the theory of “transfer of models of rule,” attempts to examine the political and institutional aspects of imperial history by considering the way the “gendarme-oriented” police system was transplanted from Korea to other colonies. This essay thus tries to present a different viewpoint from earlier studies. It reveals that although the military police system was introduced in other colonies, substantial changes occurred as the Colonial Korean model was adapted to the situation of each colony.

Keywords: Imperial History, colony, Korea, Kwantung Province, Manchukuo, gendarme-oriented police