

The Sculpture of Ninomiya Kinjiro in Japanese-ruled Taiwan: A Study on the History of Schools' Material Culture

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ABSTRACT

Ninomiya Sontoku (Kinjiro) was one of figures that most impressed people who had received Japanese education before the Second World War. One reason is that Ninomiya Kinjiro was a frequent caller in the textbooks of moral, and the other is that his bronze statues on campus left a strong impression on those people.

Since the mid-1920s, to promote their products, local businessmen had started manufacturing the statue of teenaged Ninomiya Kinjiro who carried firewood while studying, which was widely popular among elementary schools. Taiwan's schools did not start putting up the statue of Ninomiya Kinjiro until after 1935 to encourage young students to study diligently and work hard without complaint because they were influenced by the movements of local education and regional revitalization.

In 1940, to commemorate the 2600th Anniversary of the Japanese Imperial Era, schools across Japan began putting up bronze statues and other facilities, and the number of bronze statues also increased greatly that year. However, as the war situation in Japan intensified, the bronze statues of Ninomiya Kinjiro that had been used to instruct students to cultivate themselves and contribute to their hometowns were used to mobilize people. In the end, these bronze statues were commandeered as war reserves.

It has been heard from time to time about the history stories of the past through people's memories for the bronze statue of Ninomiya Kinjiro. This might be because the values of "studying hard without any complaint" presented by the bronze statue, which had a common ground with the collective behavior of respecting knowledge in the Han Chinese society in Taiwan. Therefore, they still arouse resonance in Taiwan's society even though it has been three generations. The bronze statue of Ninomiya Kinjiro that has disappeared is in fact a part of Taiwan's historical memories as it talks about the history of schools in Taiwan over the past 100 years.

Keywords: Ninomiya Sontoku, Ninomiya Kinjiro, Bronze Statue, The 2600th Anniversary, Arai Store