

Migration History of Taiwanese to North Borneo before World War II

Shu-min Chung

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the historical issues related to the dispatch of Taiwanese by the Japanese colonial rulers to British North Borneo (Sabah, Malaysia today) in 1917 and 1938. Research findings reveal that the recruitment of Taiwanese in 1917 to British North Borneo was mainly motivated by the shortage of Chinese laborers working on Japanese farms there. In other words, the Taiwanese sent served as substitutes for the Chinese workforce. On the contrary, the migration of Taiwanese in 1938 under a scheme launched by the Taiwan Development Corporation was more than exportation of human resources. Funding was provided by the Taiwan Government-General for settling the migrants in their new homeland. This migration scheme was considered one of the accomplishments of Japanization in Taiwan as mentioned in the Plan of Taiwan Development. Taiwanese migrants to Tawau had the mission to communicate or to confront with the Chinese residents there, who had become the majority. During the Southward Expansion of the Japanese imperial empire, Taiwanese also headed south, playing a role in the same policy implemented by the Taiwan Government-General.

Keywords: North Borneo, Tawau, Taiwan Government-General, Kuhara Estate, Hayashi Kenkichirou, Orita Ichiji, The Taiwan Development Corporation, Hakka