

A History of Aboriginal Migration in the Sun-Moon Lake Region, 1815-1934

Kai Yiu Chan*

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the migration of aborigines in the Sun-Moon Lake region from 1815 to 1934 in order to understand the historical contacts between different aboriginal tribes (*she*) in the region. Previous research has utilized a concept of “ethnicity” (*tzu-ch'un*) introduced during the Japanese colonial period; however, this has led to a divergence between depictions in Ch'ing literary records and Japanese ethnographies. I re-examine the growth of geographical and ethnographic knowledge of the Sun-Moon Lake region, chart the migration patterns of seven aboriginal tribes (the Shui, T'ou, Valan, Shen-lu, She-tzu, Fu-ku, and Mu-chi-lan *she*), and detail the land reclamation and migration in the area by Han settlers.

The patterns of migration of these aborigines suggests that they formed a collective “group” with a strong internal cohesion during the nineteenth century. As a result, although some of the aboriginal tribes had initially settled in dispersed areas, in the end they chose to live together and form one settlement. The boundaries demarcating this group, moreover, differ greatly from the area traditionally ascribed to the Shui-sha-lien or Shao tribe and distinguish them from the plains aborigines (*p'ing-p'u tzu*) who migrated into the region in the nineteenth century.

Keywords: Aborigines, Sun-Moon Lake region, migration, land reclamation, tribe (*she*), ethnic group (*tzu*)

* Assistant Professor, Department of History, Tunghai University.