

A Spatial Analysis of Basic Administrative Units, Taiwan in the 1930's: The Case of “Agricultural Implementation Associations”

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ABSTRACT

The 1936 Movement to Remake Folk Customs (*Minfū Sakkō Undo*) in Taiwan laid the foundation for the Movement for the General Spiritual Mobilization of All Japanese (*Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Undo*), launched empire-wide in 1938. A key to understanding the nature of the Movement to Remake Folk Customs is through the spatial analysis of Agricultural Implementation Associations (*nōgyō jikkō kumiai*), which involve both cooperate persons (if defined strictly) and individuals (if broadly defined).

It is commonly assumed that the *buraku shinkōkai* (Sub-Village Revival Associations) were organized along the lines of the *hokō*. While this observation remains largely valid, a closer look at the 1936 Movement to Remake Folk Customs reveals, however, that the picture was somewhat more complex. Briefly, *ōaza* (sub-village zones), along with *hokō*, were two key concepts for conceptualizing the spatial structure of the sub-village level administration in rural Taiwan during the latter part (1920-1945) of the Japanese colonial rule — depending on regional variations.

In principle, the 1936 Movement to Remake Folk Customs in Taiwan was organized — as were many other movements within the Japanese empire — along the administrative hierarchy. Thus, each prefecture had a prefectural association (*shū minfū sakkōkai*), each county a county association (*gun minfū sakkōkai*), each township or village a matching association (*gai or shū minfū sakkōkai*), and each *ōaza* or *hokō* (*pao-chia*) unit a *buraku shinkōkai*. Similarly, the implementation of the Movement to Remake Folk Customs varied in accordance with locality.

As soon as the Movement to Remake Folk Customs was launched, various agricultural groups in most prefectures were soon brought under the unified supervision

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of Agricultural Implementation Associations, most of which were newly created. The primary goal of Agricultural Implementation Associations was to revive Taiwan's economy, and in doing so they were to be guided by Associations to Remake Folk Customs (*minfū sakkōkai*) along the lines of the administration. Where the sub-village level organization of Agricultural Implementation Associations was created before that of the buraku *shinkōkai*, such as Takao (Kao-hsiung) Prefecture, it was Agricultural Implementation Associations (rather than the *buraku shinkōkai*) that acted as the cell units for the Movement. The case of Taichū (Taichung) Prefecture, it seems, was a result of compromise, and implementation in eastern Taiwan was loosely observed.

To conclude, I argue that the *buraku shinkōkai* was created partially to reinforce — not replace — the coordination of existing local groups; thus police administration in transportation, social order, and sanitation remained the responsibility of the *hokō*. In this way, the Movement to Remake Folk Customs was designed mainly to improve local “enlightenment,” despite the fact that the range of the movement was intended to be all-inclusive. Finally, the examination of two crucial geo-administrative units, *hokō* (*pao-chia* in Chinese) and *ōaza*, begins to explore the question of how a *buraku* should be defined.

Keywords: *hokō* (pao-chia), *Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Undo* (Movement for the General Spiritual Mobilization of All Japanese), *Minfū Sakkō Undo* (Movement to Remake Folk Customs), *nōgyō jikkō kumiai* (Agricultural Implementation Association), *ōaza* (sub-village zone), spatial structure