



Explanation: Author, Wakayama, and Pingtung, Taiwan

An A4 notebook was found in the back of an old drawer that has been passed down in an old family for generations in T City, Wakayama Prefecture in 2018. “Travels in Pingtung, Taiwan, Showa 11 (1936)” was written in ink on the title page. I opened the notebook to read, but I had a very difficult time distinguishing the characters due to the extremely bad handwriting, and it took a few minutes to read just one sentence. For that reason, I spent a great deal of time reprinting the notebook. As it was found that this record dealt with various topics on the southern part of Taiwan at the time, I took permission from the surviving family to publish it. I would like to thank the surviving family members heartily for granting my self-serving wish. In addition, I would like to briefly describe the history of this record and its historical background.

On the Author of the Record When I verified the name of the author from the remaining mortuary tablets in this old family, I found that he died at age 50 on New Years of 1955. Therefore, the author of this record was born immediately after the Russo-Japanese War in 1906, spent his youth through the period of Taisho democracy, wrote this record at age 31, and experienced the cruel war after that, dying before experiencing the post-war high economic growth period. Although other details are unknown, there are three characteristics of the author that can be presumed from this record as follows. One thing is that he loved eating and drinking. For example, he carefully described the names and other details of the Hakka cuisine he had had at his Taiwanese friend’s house, which can lead us to presume the food culture of the southern part of Taiwan at the time to some extent. It is of particular note that his love of food extends to sweets. I am especially interested in the recipe for “banana cream” that is mentioned in the record (there is no sweet equivalent to banana cream in modern Taiwanese cuisine). That the concept of putting curry in sweets may be surprisingly tasty indicates his flexible mindset for food. On the other hand, he spoke critically of puerh tea, which was loved by the Emperor of Manchuria, as a bad tea, and he mercilessly cursed coffee for its bad taste - it can be said that these details the author’s strong commitment to food.

His way of thinking gives a liberal impression in general. While hating the army and prodigal sons, he indiscriminately interacted with Taiwanese and indigenous people. Although he discredited China and Korea, it resembled a joke of some sort rather than ethnic discrimination. It may be due to the fact that he spent his youth through the period of Taisho democracy, but I get the impression that the author was a liberal.

One last thing is that he showed deep interest in the red-light district, womanizing, and erotic and grotesque nonsense. He described prostitution as a major “geisha” industry. Finding out that there was no red-light district in Hengchun, he said: “It’s a business opportunity” - it made me almost believe that the author was an officer for a brothel union. That he knew quite a bit about womanizing can be understood by looking at two song lyrics written in the record. The song lyric of “In a huge bush that extends 4000 km...” refers to none other than geisha entertainment called “Tora Tora.” The Taiwanese hero, Koxinga is mentioned in this song lyric. Is it just a coincidence? Another song lyric, “Sore tsuke yare tsuke” is a vulgar show tent game that involved poking woman’s lower body with a bar. This game was prohibited in the early years of Meiji, but the fact that the song lyric was carefully written in the notebook indicates that the author knew about this game in detail. Also, the author must have been surprised that this kind of game was still played in Taiwan at the time. Without him actually looking into the parlor, he wrote, “awfully vulgar” as his impression.

On Wakayama and Osaka at the Time Wakayama, where the author spent his youth, was one of the major cities in Japan at the time. The castle town of Wakayama under the Kishu Tokugawa family was very prosperous with thriving commerce and



industry. Although it was not at all a bright period with the continuing economic crisis and terrible ethnic discrimination, the author must have walked the streets of Burakuri-cho in downtown, Wakayama City. According to the record, it is confirmed that the author entertained himself in Furou Kuruwa and Shin-waka. Furou Kuruwa indicates the Furou-kan brothel that used to exist on the side of Furoubashi in Wakanoura. The magnificent three-story wooden house has already been torn down, but the art complex facility called Art Cube is built on site, and it is often crowded with people. Shin-waka is Shin Wakanoura neighboring Wakanoura. Locally, Wakanoura and Shin Wakanoura are recognized as separate places. While Wakanoura is a traditional scenic spot that appears in the Manyoshu, Shin Wakanoura is a modern tourist site developed at the end of the Meiji period. Both places can be easily accessed in approximately two hours from Namba by taking the Nankai Electric Railway and then taking a streetcar. Shin Wakanoura in particular has been promoted to vacation seekers in the Kyoto-Osaka-Kobe area as a tourist site where tourists can stay overnight after watching the sunset. Also, the Kaiso District Public Office was located in the current Kobai Memorial Hospital in Shinseicho, Wakayama City. There was a shopping street with a cinema in the neighborhood. Although the Chinese restaurant Pekinrou has already closed down, Tenou-shinchi (a red-light district) still exists on a small scale.

I'd also like to write a little about Osaka at the time. As there are countless references and studies on Osaka during the Taisho romance and Showa modern periods, I'm not going into detail. The straight distance between Wakayama and Osaka is approximately 60 km, and the Nankai Electric Railway that connects the two cities had already been opened in the end of the Meiji period. At the time, Nankai Electric Railway was operating late at night in some sections for transporting newspapers, and waitresses and barmaids who worked at cabarets and cafes in Minami, Osaka. There was one express train operation per hour between Wakayama and Namba, and the duration is almost no different from the present day. The concept of inter-urban transportation was already familiar in the Kansai region at the time. Therefore, it was not difficult for the citizens of Wakayama to visit Osaka. When I go to secondhand bookstores in Osaka, I find sightseeing maps of Shin Wakanoura and Shirahama at the time on sale at cheap prices. It obviously indicates that the residents of Osaka went sightseeing in Wakayama at the time.

On Pingtung, Taiwan For Japanese people at the time, Taiwan was an island rich in products with prosperous agriculture. Due to the visit to Taiwan by Prince Hirohito (later Emperor Showa), and renamed geographical names in Japanese style ("Matsuyama," "Takao," and "Heitou" were renamed at this time), Taiwan was favorably accepted by Japanese people in general. However, an anti-Japanese movement led by the Taiwanese indigenous people occurred in Musha in the central part of Taiwan in 1931 (the Musha Incident), and cast a dark, large shadow, and deep-rooted prejudice of Taiwan was implanted as a dreadfully barbaric land, where headhunting tribes lived.

Pingtung was by no means a large city, but the economic effects of Taiwan Seito K.K. and the army base were outstanding. Pingtung was recognized as a city from a relatively early period, and according to the map, etc. created by the Japan Pingtung Club at the time, there were many cinemas, restaurants, and cafes in business. According to further research about Pingtung, the schematic description of the record is thought to be generally correct, and the details of various incidents written in this record are considered to relatively reflect the actual condition.

Martial law was proclaimed in Taiwan after the war, and the government of the Nationalist Party led by people who moved to Taiwan from the continent after the war dominated the island for a long time. As these were times without ties to the Western Bloc, and notorious sex tourism existed in Taiwan during the period, martial law was finally lifted in 1987. Accompanying progress in democratization, social improvement saw progress. At the same time, many policies that focus on Taiwanese indigenous people and minorities have been adopted. In 2019, Taiwan became the first country in Asia to recognize same-sex marriage.

Kanjou-cho, Pingtung City, where the Japanese military barracks were located, was renamed Qingdao Street after the war.



Ending the role of military dependents' village where outsiders were accommodated, the city is currently known as a fashionable location with a row of coffeehouses.

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