



Tonan Talk

A Brown Bag Lecture Series

Title : Robbed and Killed: The Impact of the Pacific War and the Japanese Occupation (1941-5) on the Chinese of Borneo

Speaker: Prof. OOI Keat Gin, School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Date : November 18th (Mon.), 2013, 12:00 - 13:30

Place : Tonan-tei (Room No. 201), CSEAS, Inamori Foundation Memorial Building, Kyoto University

Abstract:

Drawing from the treatment and experiences during the wartime occupation (1941-5), the Chinese communities in Borneo vis-à-vis the indigenous peoples were adversely impacted. It shall be argued that owing to the attitude and occupation policies of the Japanese military regimes the Chinese in Borneo received the proverbial short straw in being singled out as a community for harsh treatment, namely being '*robbed and killed*'. Two examples are used for demonstrating and supporting this contention: the *shu-jin* monetary demands imposed on the Chinese communities of Sarawak, Brunei and former British North Borneo, and of the Chinese pogrom in West Borneo. The imposition of *shu-jin* or 'blood money' was Japanese retribution on the Chinese populace for their pre-war 'sins' against Imperial Japan. This *shu-jin* demand resulted in the Chinese communities in post-war British Borneo enduring economic dislocation and facing socio-political conundrum. On the other side of the island in Pontianak and Singakawang in West Borneo, the pre-war Chinese elite – merchants, intellectuals, schoolteachers, and communal leaders – were eliminated as alleged anti-Japanese conspirators. The victims numbering in hundreds were taken away and clandestinely executed. This wartime Chinese pogrom created a vacuum in the socio-political leadership of the community in the post-war period. This paper attempts to evaluate the impact and repercussion of the wartime experiences of the Chinese inhabitants of Borneo and their post-war situation.

Bio note:

OOI Keat Gin is Professor of History and coordinator of the Asia Pacific Research Unit (APRU) in the School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia. His areas of interests include social and economic history, socio-cultural and heritage issues, urban history of colonial cities, women and labour, and history of colonial education. His recent publications include *Post-war Borneo, 1945-1950. Nationalism, Empire, and State-building* (Routledge, 2013); *The Japanese Occupation of Borneo* (Routledge, 2011); *Traumas and Heroism* (Opus, 2007), *Rising Sun Over Borneo* (Macmillan/St Martin's Press, 1999). As an editor he oversaw the critically acclaimed, award-winning *Southeast Asia: A Historical Encyclopedia from Angkor Wat to East Timor*, 3

vols. (ABC-CLIO, 2004), and the latest, *The Works of Nicholas Tarling on Southeast Asia*. Critical Concepts in Asian Studies, 7 vols. (Routledge, 2012). Elected as a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society (London), Professor Ooi is founder-editor-in-chief of *International Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies* (IJAPS) (www.usm.my/ijaps/) and serves as series editor of the Asia-Pacific Studies Series under the auspices of APRU and Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM Press).

Moderator: Calorine HAU, CSEAS, Kyoto University

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