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The Evacuation Experience of an Okinawan in Colonial Taiwan Who Studied Abroad in the United States: ISHIMINE Chozo's Oral History

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This paper is the oral history of Chozo Ishimine. It is one of a series of interviews which are the fruits of an oral history project that focuses on collecting the memories of Okinawan people who lived in Taiwan during the Japanese Colonial Era. The project's aim is not to record the political or economic successes of prominent individuals; rather, it emphasizes the personal lives and experiences of ordinary citizens of the time, which would not be recorded in an official history.

Chozo Ishimine, born in 1933 on Miyako Island, Okinawa, was a wartime evacuee to Taiwan for one year, during 1944–45, when he was at fifth grade in state school (*kokumin gakkō*). He was one of the 10,000 evacuees from Okinawa who were sent to Taiwan to escape from possible raids and attacks by U.S. military forces. After Japan's defeat in 1945, he was repatriated to Miyako Island and completed his secondary and higher education. Later on, he was selected as one of the students to study abroad in the U.S., receiving a scholarship from GARIOA, Government and Relief in Occupied Areas Fund. After completing his graduate studies at the University of Hawaii, he worked for the Ryukyu Development Loan Cooperation.

Although the total length of his stay in Taiwan was only a year, his first border crossing experience and his memories of cultural contacts with Taiwanese people appeared to have affected the subsequent course of his life. In his conclusion, the author underscores the importance of recording and sharing personal memories of encounters and interactions at a grass roots level, in order to prevent them from being left out of the official collective memory provided by national history. This series of oral history interviews was supported by a JSPS KAKENHI Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (Number: 25257009).