This paper is delivered on 14 March 2003 at Kota Kinabalu during the occasion of Pioneers’ Memorial Lectures in conjunction with the 90 Anniversary of the arrival of the Hakkas and the founding of the Inanam-Menggatal-Telipok Towns.

Sabah has always been a peaceful country. Among the turbulent events, the Jesselton Uprising was the crown incident. In relation, the Hakkas of the Inanam-Menggatal-Telipok corridor were the backbone of the Kinabalu Guerillas. Moreover, the corridor was also the centre of gravity of the uprising. This paper attempts to assign the Hakka of the three towns their proper place in history and thus represents a fitting salute to their immortal contribution to defending their newly found homeland.

This year marks the 90 Anniversary of the establishment of the Hakka-based Basel Church Christian community in the area of Inanam-Menggatal-Telipok. Interestingly, this also coincides with the 60 Year of the Jesselton Uprising that took place on 9 October 1943, of which the Hakka Christians from these three areas were heavily involved.

This paper will attempt to highlight the involvement of the Hakka Christians in the Kinabalu Guerillas. Arguments on the rationale for their involvement and an assessment on the outcome would be presented.

Existing Literatures

Since the end of World War Two, there have been several attempts in trying to give an account of the formation of the Kinabalu Guerillas and what had transpired during and after the Jesselton Uprising of 1943. The first attempt was made in 1949 by J. Maxwell Hall who published an elaborate account of the exploits of the Kinabalu Guerillas. Hall, who was a magistrate in pre-war British North Borneo Chartered Company administration, returned to Sabah in 1945 as a military officer. He had the opportunity to interview survivors from the uprising. This was followed by an article written in 1950 by Pang Tet Tshung. Pang assisted his father, Pang Vui Chau, when the latter was invited by the guerillas to treat the wounded after the uprising. Another earlier work belonged to Wong Yun Tshin. He penned personal notes before his death in 1951. Wong was the treasurer of the Kinabalu Guerillas.

In 1978, Sia Yuk Tet, who founded the Kinabalu Guerillas together with others in 1942, also published a detailed account of the history of the Kinabalu Guerillas. Unlike Hall, who drew most of his information from shopkeepers and former government servants, Sia was able to give the Chinese dimension of the story, especially those who were directly involved. Another Chinese account was by Liew Chi Nyen, who was involved with the Kinabalu Guerillas in Tuaran.

Chong Kui Fah, who was arrested by the Japanese together with his father in Menggatal after the failure of the uprising, also contributed to enrich the narrative. Chong’s account was serialized in the Hua Chiao Jit Poh. In 1993, a group of journalists in Kota Kinabalu produced a commemorative volume in conjunction with the fiftieth anniversary of the Kinabalu Guerillas Uprising. The volume consists of oral account from former members of the guerrillas as well as reproduction of some written accounts.

There are at least three works by Japanese in relation to the Kinabalu Guerillas. In 1952, a war memoir entitled, The Southern Cross Never Deceives was published in Japan. Yamazaki Aen, the writer of this memoir, was the Sabah born Sino-Dusun wife of Yamazaki Kenji, the Japanese prefecture governor in Keningau during the Japanese occupation. Even though the memoir was issued in Yamazaki Aen’s name, it contains a lot of input from the husband, primarily from his wartime diaries, making it more detailed and accurate in many ways.

---

2. I am grateful to Dr. Wong Tsen Hin of Kota Kinabalu for providing some of his father’s personal notes regarding the uprising.