



In 1905 **Karafuto (Southern Sakhalin)** became Japan's second formal colony and the most sparsely populated territory in the Japanese empire. Despite its peripheral location and small population the colony was of important economic value, boasting considerable natural resources such as marine products, coal, oil, and timber. This **combination of richness and remoteness** meant that enterprises in the colony faced an acute labor shortage. In order to manage recruit, manage and house labour Karafuto labour bosses utilized the worker-lodge (hanba) system which was used throughout Japan. In some cases **coercive practices were used at hanba**, known as **tako-beya**, as labour bosses struggled to enforce contracts.

Who ended up in tako-beya and what does this tell us about the labour market for Japan's far north?

Approach

- Examines "incidents" of workplace abuse in the forestry and construction industries reported in the Karafuto press 1910-1937, as well as contemporary social research.
- In total there were 112 such reports in the *Karafuto Nichi Nichi Shimbun*.
- These reports and others give an outline of the scale of the labour market for migratory labourers in Karafuto, how it functioned, and who ended up in *takobeya*.

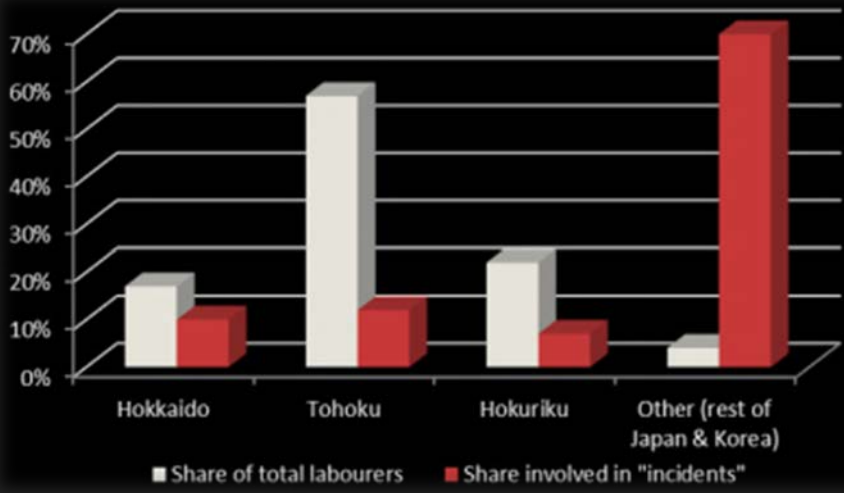


Over two thirds of labour bosses in Karafuto operated in Hokkaido—where the *takobeya* had emerged previously—before heading further north, and the vast majority hailed from Japan's northeast, as did most migratory labourers. This had important implications for the labour market.



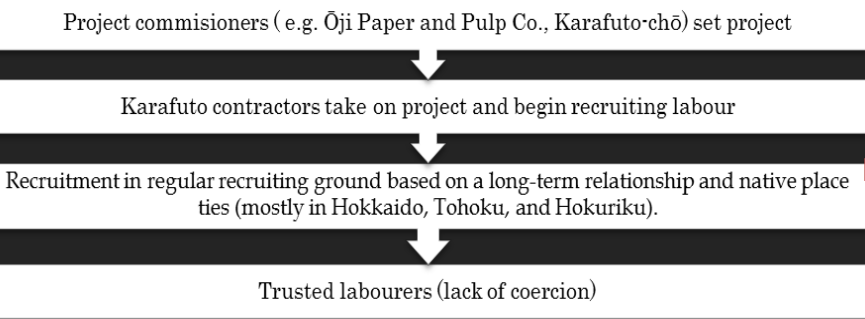
Work in Karafuto was hard and dangerous, but well-paid. Labourers received an **advance payment and final wages paid on completion**. This **system worked when both labour and management had trust**, but otherwise gave an incentive to cheat (i.e. to flee the workplace or use violence to enforce contracts). **When is there (not) trust?**

Dual Track Recruitment and Coercion



Prefectures "other" than Hokkaido, Tohoku and Hokuriku accounted for **4% of the migratory labour force**, but made up a vastly disproportionate **71% of the incidents of abuse** reported in the colonial press.

Track one



Track two

