

Declaring Righteousness for Obedience: The Historical Process of How the Hakka Became “Righteous People” (Yimin, 義民) in Qing Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

This article aims at illuminating the historical process of how the Hakka became “Righteous people” in alliance with the Qing ruler in Taiwan, in the light of the nature of Qing state as a foreign regime and interactive relationship between the Hakka group and bureaucratic staffs.

As a foreign ruling regime the Qing state was not able to obtain a strong national commitment of the ruled Han people, and thus made the bureaucratic staffs constituted by the Han people played a key role in ruling Taiwan. The military forces used by the Qing dynasty in suppressing rebellions in Taiwan, no matter the Han righteous people or the aboriginal righteous people (Yifan 義番), are made of Taiwan’s local inhabitants. In the beginning, the sources of “righteous people” were not confined to the Hakka, but included peoples of Zhang (漳) and Quan (泉) groups. However, “righteous people” became a specific label of the Hakka group later; this development had much to do with the ethnic characteristics of the Hakka as a group of being good at fighting and agriculture. The gap between the Qing state and Taiwan society made the orientation and interest of Han bureaucratic staffs become determinant factors in the development of the society. The Han bureaucratic staffs chose the Hakkas as alliances because of their capacity in military campaigns and economic need of developing inner mountain area.

The discussions in this article are divided into two periods following the main axis of the interest alliance between the Han bureaucratic staffs and the Hakka group. The first is a passive declaring period, lasting from Kangxi (康熙) to mid Qianlong (乾隆) reign. For this part, the discussion is focused on analyzing the official farm (Guanzhuang 官莊) as private estates of the Han bureaucratic staffs from its setting up to abolition. These estates relied on the farming laborers supplied by the Hakka group. The second is an active declaring period, lasting from the late Qianlong period to the ceding of Taiwan in 1895. The analyses focus on the process of how the

Han bureaucratic staffs utilized the Hakka group as labor force to develop inner mountain area and utilized their capacity to run new enterprises for increasing tax revenue.

Keywords: Righteous People, Lan Dingyuan, the Family of Lins in Banqiao, the Family of Lins in Wufeng, the Hakka