

Zhuqian Area in Face of Tremendous Socio-Economic Challenges in Second Half of Nineteenth Century

Hsin-yi Lin

ABSTRACT

This paper examines a widely accepted view regarding the late Nineteenth-Century Taiwan. When discussing the economic boom brought by the growing export of tea, sugar and camphor after the opening of treaty ports in the early 1860s, it is pervasively perceived that Taiwan benefitted greatly from the economic progress and successive administrative reforms. However, by looking at the specific case of the Zhuqian area and its agricultural economy in the decades before and after the opening of treaty ports, the author finds that differentiation between regions was often hidden behind the seemingly prevailing prosperity. Zhuqian's economy, for example, remained mostly agricultural. Her trade and subsequent development were yet subject to a late-Qing Taiwan power structure which was molded by treaty port regulations, the successive administrative establishments, and numerous reforms enforced by Taiwan Governor Liu Mingchuan after the 1860s. These elements had led to a widening gap between Zhuqian and Taipei after the 1870s. In other words, even though the Zhuqian area also profited from the economic expansion in the post-treaty port era, it is also obvious that the Zhuqian society was marginalized, especially in comparison with the contemporary development in the Taipei area.

Keywords: Zhuqian, Xinzhu, Taipei, Treaty Ports, Agricultural Economy, Tea and Camphor, Nanzhuang, Marginalization