

## **Livelihood Zone of Chiu-lung River: Hometown of Early Immigrants to Taiwan in 16th-17th Century**

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### **ABSTRACT**

From the 16th century, Taiwan had come to be known as “Dong Fan” (literally “Eastern Barbarians”) by the Ming dynasty gentry owing to activities of sea merchants and pirates of southeast coastal China. In 1567, Yuegang (or “Moon Port”) of Zhangzhou, Fujian was opened for foreign trade, thus ushering Taiwan onto the stage of East Asian History. Large-scale agricultural immigrants and reclamation started in the early 17<sup>th</sup>-century Taiwan under Dutch rule. The number of immigrants from southern Fujian to Taiwan reached its first peak after the Ming loyalist Koxinga founded the Kingdom of Tungning and until Taiwan came under Qing rule during Kangxi’s reign. The capital of both Dutch Formosa and Kingdom of Tungning was Tainan; therefore, the earliest reclamation and development started in the vicinity of Tainan.

Using historical materials of first-generation immigrants of old settlements, this paper examines hometowns and immigration sequence among the early settlers in two main reclamation areas in Tainan: Yan-shui Creek/Hsu-hsien Creek basin adjacent to Chi-yu Lake and Tseng-wen Creek/Chi-shui Creek basin near Beimen peninsula. The analysis reveals that immigrants preferred settling in river valleys and floodplains near foothills, which were reclaimed earlier than coastal plain areas. Generally speaking, immigrants from Zhangzhou came before those from Quanzhou. However, the earliest immigrants were mainly from the border between Zhangzhou and Quanzhou near the estuary of Chiu-lung River. This area in Ming-Qing times was within the Zhangzhou livelihood and social zone, with Yuegang and Xiamen as centers. The fact that these earliest immigrants shared the same community culture shaped by the basin and were unapt to be divided simply based on their Zhangzhou and Quanzhou origins has had a profound impact on the development of Taiwan history beginning from Tainan.

**Keywords:** Yuegang, Chiu-lung River Livelihood Zone, Immigrants from Zhangzhou and Quanzhou, Tseng-wen Creek Basin, Hsuhsien Creek Basin