

# Reconsidering Social Order in Border Region of Qing Taiwan: Study of “*Kang Wu Zu*” at Midstream Zhuo Shui & Wu Rivers

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## ABSTRACT

By examining ancient literature, gazetteers, land contracts, related survey data and oral history (collective memories), this study discusses the social order of the geographically remote border region in Qing Taiwan, with special emphasis on the social customs and public authority of this region being distant from government rule. Moreover, it examines how the self-autonomous immigrants negotiated with the local shui-sha-lian aborigines to establish their new living space, with analysis on the social relationships thus formed.

Thanks to the system of “*kang wu zu*”, the immigrant-aboriginal relationship had remained stable and peaceful. Nevertheless, Han immigrants felt threatened by the head-hunting culture of local ethnic groups, and sought protection from divine power, thus fostering the devout worship of the god *Can Kui Zu Shi*.

This paper contains two main findings. First, it sheds light on the nature of “*kang wu zu*” by challenging the prevailing conception that it was synonymous with “*fan ta tsu*”, which referred essentially to the land rental relationship between Han immigrants and the natives. Rather, it highlights that “*kang wu zu*” in fact had a much broader connotation. Second, it reveals changes in the living space of shui-sha-lian aborigines under Qing rule, which can serve as the basis for further research into daily life characteristics and social order in the border regions of Qing Taiwan.

**Keywords:** *Shui-sha-lian* Aborigines, *Kang Wu Zu*, Border, Social Order, *Fan Shi Zu*, *Fu Fan Zu*, *Fan Ta Zu*