

## Family Life of Tsai Lien-Fang, a Taichung Gentry in 1920s

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### ABSTRACT

Tsai Lien-Fang, the descendent of Tsai Yuen-Shun's family, was appointed as the mayor of Taichung District, delegate of Taichung City and of Taichung Prefecture. He was a prominent gentry in central Taiwan during the Japanese colonial era, and was also closely connected to and deeply respected by the Government-General of Taiwan.

Like other prominent clans in Taiwan, Tsai Lien-Fang's family faced clashes due to concubines and adopted children. Tsai Bo-Xiang and Tsai Bo-Fen, who were both adopted, worried about their family status being undermined by the birth of Tsai Lien-Fang's own children. As a result, a dispute broke out over the family estate. Liao Kui, the concubine of Tsai Lien-Fang, who gave birth to three sons and had a background on Chinese studies, was good at resolving disputes. Hence, she was highly respected and remained a dominant figure in the family. While the Tsai family had typical characteristics of affluent eminent clans in Taiwan, it also showed a rather unique state of affairs with a concubine enjoying high status and commanding high esteem, a rare situation in those days.

With reference to historical materials including journals of Huang Wang-Cheng, family documents of the Tsai clan from The Archives at the Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica, government documents, and the Taiwan Daily Newspaper, this study attempts to reconstruct the life of Tsai Lien-Fang and his family in the 1920s. The observations and experiences recorded in the journals of Huang Wang-Cheng, a tutor of the Tsai family from 1921-1925, offered valuable insight into the daily activities and interpersonal relationships of the Tsai clan. Photographs, appointment letters and award certificates of Tsai Lien-Fang were also precious first-hand historical materials.

**Keywords:** Tsai Lien-Fang, Tsai Yuen-Shun, Liao Kui, Tsai Bo-Xiang, Tsai Bo-Fen