

Traditional Private Study Education in Taiwan of 1920s: Zheng Jiazhen's *Diary of a Guest* as Observation Focus

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ABSTRACT

After Japanese invasion of Taiwan in 1895, Zheng Jiazhen, a *juren* (first-degree/provincial certified scholar) born in Hsinchu, Taiwan, migrated back to his ancestral hometown, Nan'an, Fujian, and made his living as a teacher. In 1913, as a well-known *feng shui* (Chinese geomancy) master, Jiazhen was invited to Taiwan to find a good burial place for a local gentry, Zheng Rulan. In 1919, Zheng Rulan's descendants employed Jiazhen as their family teacher. During his eight-year stay as a teacher of this renowned Zheng family of North Gate of Hsinchu, Jiazhen had significant impact on the traditional Chinese-language education in Hsinchu area. On one hand, Taiwan of the 1920s was undergoing educational reform with new laws and policies introduced by the Japanese colonial government. Public schools were increasing but with classes taught in Chinese language decreasing. Traditional private studies were under close scrutiny or even banned. All these posed threat to Chinese-language learning and education in Taiwan. Under this situation, what was the role played by teachers of traditional studies? How did traditional studies survive?

Diary of a Guest is Jiazhen's journal from 1923 to 1926, in which he wrote about history, literature, *feng shui*, and education. In particular, his records of teaching hours, number of students, timetable and curriculum, attendance, school fee, school application, and the relationship between schools of traditional studies and poetry societies were precious historical materials for researching and reconstructing the operation of tradition private study education in Taiwan of 1920s. Jiazhen's diary also served as a good starting point for understanding the challenges faced by school of traditional studies under the new colonial educational reform and Jiazhen's plan and vision for traditional Chinese-language studies.

Keywords: Zheng Jiazhen, *Diary of a Guest*, Traditional Private Study Education, Hsinchu, Poetry Society, Kangaku Short Course