

Inherited Geography: Post-national History and the Emerging Dominance of Pimaba in East Taiwan*

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ABSTRACT

The paper takes the position of history of post-nationalism and further explores that of spatial identity, which presents not only a colonial experience but also a local history other than that out of the post-colonial national ethos. It takes the case of East Taiwan and argues that the presence of the Dutch East India Company or VOC over there since 1638 facilitated the emerging dominance of Pimaba. The Dutch-Pimaba coalition in East Taiwan is a matter of geography, resulting from the remoteness of the area away from the headquarters of the VOC on the southwestern part of the island. The VOC, therefore, adopted a strategy heavily relying on the support of local inhabitants to expand and consolidate their influence, and the Pimaba residents turned out to be the candidate fitting into the scheme. In addition to the mutual political collaboration and military alliance, the VOC-inaugurated East annual *landdag* (*oostelijke landdag*) after 1652 also strengthened the political geography created by the Dutch-Pimaba coalition. By the year of 1662 when the Dutch withdrew from Taiwan, Pimaba basically inherited the geography of subservient villages left by the earlier Dutch-Pimaba coalition and became the emerging local authority in East Taiwan until the 19th century.

Keywords: Pimaba, VOC, history of post-nationalism, spatial identity

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