內陸：甘蜜、胡椒與種植者的信貸

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島上的種植園經濟

轉口港並非單靠轉運貿易維生。從開埠初年起，島上已有種植園經濟，幾乎全由華人種植者經營，其中大多是潮州人。萊佛士於1819年抵達時，他們已在種植甘蜜。1822年的殖民地紀錄提及政府山以西有一個華人甘蜜種植園。[1]甘蜜葉經熬煮後提取的萃取物，最初用於檳榔嚼塊。胡椒與甘蜜一同種植生長良好，因為熬煮甘蜜後的殘渣可用作胡椒藤的肥料。

這種作物的興衰取決於遙遠的市場。荷蘭的限制性關稅導致甘蜜業在1827年後崩潰，但到1830年代，甘蜜被發現是用於鞣製皮革和染製紡織品的單寧酸的良好來源，產業因而復甦。其後英國和美洲的需求推動了迅速擴張。[2]到1849年，甘蜜和胡椒的種植面積約達27,000英畝，遠超島上任何其他種植園作物。[3]

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甘蜜大王

佘有進（Seah Eu Chin）的經歷，說明了種植、貿易與社群領導如何結合。他於1805年在廣東澄海出生，1823年來到新加坡，先任文員，後來成為種植者、貿易商和商人。[4]到1839年，他的甘蜜種植園綿延8至10英里，為他贏得「甘蜜大王」的稱號。[5]1830年，他協助創立義安郡，義安郡於1845年改組為義安公司（Ngee Ann Kongsi），他一直擔任主席，直至1883年去世。他於1867年獲委任為太平紳士。[6]潮州社群的組織義安公司至今仍然存在，並在新加坡營運教育和慈善機構。

墊款、農產品與依賴

種植園的資金來自市區。種植者開墾新地，早在首次收成之前，便需要資金支付勞工、工具、米糧和鴉片。新加坡的華商以未來收成作抵押為這些需要墊款，種植者則承諾按一個大體由商人控制的價格向他們交付收成。[7]商人再將甘蜜和胡椒售予歐洲商行出口。種植因此成為下文所述信貸鏈的另一環，將英國的製革廠與在內陸墾地勞作的苦力連繫起來。

這套制度令種植者依賴債權人，並承受世界價格波動的風險。它亦耗盡土地。甘蜜約在15年內便耗盡地力，熬煮又需要大量柴薪，因此種植者不斷遷移，留下被砍伐殆盡的土地。到1860年代，隨着種植者遷往柔佛，島上的產量開始下降。到該世紀末，甘蜜已在新加坡消失。[8]在柔佛，天猛公政府以河流特許權制度組織新的墾殖區，將特許權批予稱為港主（kangchu）的華人頭人，而其融資同樣經由新加坡的商人。[9]新加坡商界因而將信貸延伸至英國領土以外的內陸，這種模式預示了這座城市日後作為鄰國金融中心的角色。

註釋

1. “From Gambier to Pepper: Plantation Agriculture in Singapore”, *BiblioAsia*, vol. 17, issue 1, 2021年4–6月：萊佛士抵達時潮州種植者已在種植甘蜜，

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1822年的紀錄提及"a Chinese gambier plantation west of Government Hill"。 ↩

2. "From Gambier to Pepper: Plantation Agriculture in Singapore", *BiblioAsia*, vol. 17, issue 1, 2021年4–6月，論1827年後的崩潰，以及1830年代"gambier was discovered to be a good source of tannic acid, used for tanning leather and dyeing textiles"後的復甦。 ↩

3. "From Gambier to Pepper: Plantation Agriculture in Singapore", *BiblioAsia*, vol. 17, issue 1, 2021年4–6月：到1849年，甘蜜和胡椒以27,000英畝佔"by far the largest"種植面積。 ↩

4. Wikipedia, "Seah Eu Chin"（2026年9月瀏覽）：1805年8月30日生於廣東澄海；1823年來到新加坡，"first working as a clerk, then becoming a plantation owner and finally becoming a trader and a merchant"。 ↩

5. Wikipedia, "Seah Eu Chin"（2026年9月瀏覽）：到1839年，他的種植園綿延8至10英里；人稱"King of Gambier"。 ↩

6. Wikipedia, "Seah Eu Chin"（2026年9月瀏覽）：1830年協助創立義安郡（Ngee Ann Kun），1845年改組為義安公司；擔任主席直至1883年去世；1867年任太平紳士。 ↩

7. 關於市區華商向甘蜜及胡椒種植者墊款的制度以及種植者由此產生的依賴，參見Carl A. Trocki, *Prince of Pirates: The Temenggongs and the Development of Johor and Singapore, 1784–1885*, Singapore, NUS Press, 2nd edition 2007，第4–5章，以及Trocki, *Opium and Empire*，第2章。 ↩

8. "From Gambier to Pepper: Plantation Agriculture in Singapore", *BiblioAsia*, vol. 17, issue 1, 2021年4–6月，論約15年後地力耗盡、森林砍伐及遊耕；"By the 1860s, Singapore's gambier output had begun to decline as planters moved to Johor"。 ↩

9. 關於柔佛的港主制度及新加坡商人為其提供的融資，參見Wikipedia, "Kangchu system"，以及Trocki, *Prince of Pirates*，第5章。 ↩

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