ABSTRACT

This study represents an attempt to investigate the forces behind the debate on the national policy of defence in the Southern Song dynasty ( 南宋 ). The Song dynasty had always been threatened by foreign invaders such as the Liao ( 金 ), the Xia ( 夏 ), and the Jin ( 金 ). Despite these tenacious attacks, the Southern Song was very resilient. This invincibility was due in part to the strong defence policy during the regime. Little research has been done on this aspect of the Southern Song history. This dissertation examines the background of the defence policy. Chapter 1 to 4 is an examination of the military, economic and political situations, describing the historical background of the debate. Chapter 5 attempts to clarify the national policy debate about the location of the capital in a chronological order. Chapter 6 discusses the arguments of court officials regarding peace settlements and war. Chapter 7 summarises the discussions on this topic by later scholars and examines the success and failure of the peace settlement policy. The conclusion elaborates the effect of the peace settlement policy on the Southern Song regime.