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徽学研究经典文献选译

方传余 ◎ 编译



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Fang Chuanyu

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Part I

The Basics of Huizhou Studies

Chapter 1 A Random Reflection on Huizhou Studies

The late 1970s to mid-1980s saw another round of prosperity of academic research in China, and Huizhou Studies budded as a new research field of regional culture. With decades of the joint efforts of scholars inside and outside China, Huizhou Studies, or Huixue, took on an exciting development, hence a boom and, most likely, a crescendo of Huizhou Studies, so to speak.

As the name suggests, Huizhou Studies is the study of Huizhou prefecture or its culture. It is an integration of cultural phenomena in the six counties (Shexian, Yixian, Xiuning, Qimen, Jixi and Wuyuan) under Huizhou prefecture in history. While the counties share more or less similarities in cultures, each is unique in one way or another. Locally rooted and outwardly expanding, Huizhou culture fuses both small Huizhou and big Huizhou into a colorful and high-quality cultural treasure.

As a matter of fact, the term Huixue can be found in early literature of Huizhou, as in "Wengong is the master of Huixue". Nevertheless, Huixue in early literature refers to Xin'an Rationalism founded by Zhu Xi, thus

different than what it denotes and covers today. While the old Huixue is mono-disciplinary, belonging to the history of academics, the new Huixue is about regional culture and therefore multidisciplinary.

As studies of regional culture, today's Huizhou studies is inclusive so much that it covers Xin'an[®] Rationalism, Xin'an medicine, Xin'an literature, Xin'an drawings, Xin'an clan community, Xin'an merchants, Huizhou academies, dialects, rituals, operas, dwellings, genealogies, land system, tenant system, contract documents, philology, engraving, seal cutting, architecture, bonsai, and even writing brushes, ink sticks, paper and ink slabs. All these, with either Xin'an or Hui in naming, are typical cultural specialties which represent the business and academic prosperity of Huizhou and thus constitute Huixue, a giant thesaurus of regional culture.

What may account for the colorful regional cultures in such a scarcely populated remote mountainous area? The answer lies in the cultures in the central plains, which served as the source or gene, and Huizhou merchant clans, which served as the catalyst of the development.

It has never been accidental for cultures in the central plains to be the source of Huizhou culture. Huizhou was historically an area of immigrants, who were mostly from the central plains, the birthplace of the Chinese civilization. This area, the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, used to be the political and cultural center of the country and suffered from the most frequent wars resulting from regime substitution, ruling class scrambling, warlords separatism, national conflicts, and peasant revolutions. Each war would drove out a considerable number of people, who mostly moved southward over the Huanghuai Plain and across the Yangtze River. With its unique geographic features, Huizhou was just an ideal place for these immigrants. According to local records, "half of the major national groups of people in Huizhou were immigrants from the north especially

① Xin'an prefecture is what Huizhou was known as in the Jin Dynasty and Xin'an was used thereafter to refer to the prefecture.

during Jin, Song and late Tang dynasties", others moved here either from the central plains or from other places during other periods in history. Many of the immigrant families "get into the officialdom and love the landscape, thus settling down here generation after generation" (Minguo Shexian County Chronicles, Volume 1). According to Xin'an Chronicles of Noble Families by Cheng Shangkuan in Jiajing, the Ming Dynasty, the number of "noble families" had amounted to 84 by the Mid-Ming Dynasty, among which about eighty percent were from the central plains by origin. These immigrants were of more or less the same sub-nations as the "Hakka people" who moved also from the central plains to the mountainous areas in Fujian, Guangdong and Jiangxi.

Apart from some common people, many of the immigrants from the central plains were of business, official or academic gentry with a noble family background. Settling down in Huizhou, they brought in the advanced culture and gradually gained dominance in social life.

What the immigrants brought in was above all the Confucian atmosphere. As recorded in the entry of Yixian in Hanshu, Geographic Annals, Huizhou is a mountainous area where the "south barbarian tribes" dwelled. Before Six Dynasties, Huizhou was a land of prevalent martialism and undereducated people. With the immigration of people from the central plains, Huizhou became more Confucian than ever, especially in social morals as the atmosphere of valuing education and etiquette was brought in. The upsurge of reading was felt everywhere so that "the sound of reading could often be heard in mountain huts", as recorded in Kangxi, Qimen County Annals, Volume 1. The Confucian atmosphere in Huizhou was even more vigorous during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, which gave birth to multitudes of scholars and the thriving of Confucian classics studies (Daoguang, Preface to the Revised Annals of Huizhou Prefecture) so that Xin'an was generally regarded as a land of propriety and righteous in the southeast, as compared to the hometowns of Confucius and Mencus. Along with the prevalence of classics reading came the emphasis on such social morals as etiquette,

harmony and frugality. As is noted in Collected Works of Taihan[®], Xin'an was a land of etiquette and harmony. Even when the common people encountered each other on the country road, the younger would behave with courtesy towards the elder. Such social relic was so strong in Huizhou that it remained widely known for long. The relic, in fact, had as its source in none other the central plains and was passed down for later generations. Such social customs are vigorously embodied simply in some old couplets in Xidi village of Yixian County, for example, in which words like the five cardinal relationships, the six classics, reading, books, virtue, thrifty and others can be found. All these qualities originated from the central plains and perfectly fit into Huizhou and took root and flourished in Huizhou.

In addition to the Confucian atmosphere, the immigrants also brought in religious culture of the central plains. It is mostly in family clans that the immigrants from the north moved to Huizhou and settled down here, which helped keep each clan united against the bullying of other family groups and maintained the particular family rules under the patriarchal clan system. In some villages of the major family clans, in fact, there was not even one family of other clans. According to Volume 18 of Random Records of Shexian County², all the major family clans in Huizhou have a long history and "many even last for hundreds of years ever since the Six Dynasties through Tang and Song Dynasties". They built their own ancestral temples where the clan members gathered on special occasions to hold sacrificial rites. In this way, the patriarchal clan system is impellingly rooted. In his The Thoughts of Jiyuan, Zhao Jishi, a Huizhou native in the late Ming Dynasty and early Qing Dynasty, mentions his elders' describing "many of the social customs in Xin'an as better than those in other areas", and "it is usually for hundreds of years, or generation after generation, that forefathers' tombs are sacredly maintained, family clans closely bonded,

A book by Wang Daokun, a writer in the Ming Dynasty.

② A book by Xu Chengyao, a Jinshi in Shexian County during the Guangxu period.

family pedigrees orderly recorded, master-servant relations strictly emphasized." The generations of family inheritance succession is exactly the living specimen of the clan culture in the central plains.

Huizhou gave birth to a great Confucian in the Southern Song Dynasty, Zhu Xi, whose philosophy was profoundly influential in the area, yet it has to be noted that Zhu's learning is derived from that of Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi (generally known as the two Cheng's) in the Northern Song Dynasty, whose philosophy is typically part of the culture of the central plains. The source of Zhu's learning and its influence is documented in *Guangxu*, *Wuyuan County Annals*, *Volume* 3 and *Preface to Family Documents Wu's in Mingzhou*, *Xiuning*. With the enlightenment of Zhu's philosophical learning, human relations and social customs in Huizhou continuously inherited and developed the Confucianism in the central plains. Just as Zeng Guofan comments in Volume 4 of his *Complete Works*, Huizhou, as Zhu Xi's hometown, has a repertoire of historical and cultural heritage which dwarfs many other areas. With Zhu's influence found everywhere, Huizhou has indeed grown into a culturally refined land after Zhu's era.

With the above-mentioned long-term accumulation of the culture in the central plains, Huixue, or Huizhou culture experienced a healthy growth. At the same time, in the course of social and historical generation, the absorption of elements of other cultures also added to the depth of the cultural deposits of Huizhou culture.

It is the Huizhou merchant clans, with the great fortune they made, that served as the catalyst of the development of Huizhou culture. Historically, economy is the foundation of culture, and without a strong economic support, a culture can hardly grow into high quality. Huizhou was a barren land of mountains, yet as the large number of immigrants moved in and settled down one generation after another, the farming land became scarcely enough to support the ever-increasing population. To better their living, many people had to give up farming and switch to business instead. Since the Ming Dynasty, the number of businessmen in Huizhou had grown to more

than twice as many as farmers, and such a high businessman proportion could hardly be found in any other areas. Moreover, many of the businessmen had a scholastic background, which enabled them to make good judgments in the competitive business world. Shrewd as they were, the businessmen were also hard-working and, with their unique spirit generally known "camel spirit of Huizhou merchants", many soon became wealthy. They generally accumulated their wealth to the middle level in five years' time and to the upper level in ten. A considerable number of the Huizhou merchants had their deposits around a million qiang, a currency unit at that time, some even up to ten millions. Large in number of people, amount of wealth, business scope and scale, Huizhou merchants had grown into a leading clan in the south of the Yangtze River by the Mid-Ming Dynasty. With the great profit they made, they gradually brought the whole area out of poverty, making Xin'an even the most prosperous place in the south of the Yangtze River.

Much of a Confucian turn of mind, Huizhou merchants were generous in financing local educational and cultural undertakings as they got rich. The building and repairing of schools, temples and academies in Huizhou during the Ming and Qing Dynasties were mostly financed by the merchants, especially the academies of higher level of classic learning enjoyed a much better growth over earlier times both in number or scale. According to Daoguang, the Revised Annals of Huizhou Prefecture, Volume 3, "there are scores of academies is Huizhou, and Ziyang Academy is the largest." To rebuild Ziyang Academy, some of the merchants of Shexian County who did salt business on both sides of the Huaihe River even offered as much as 30 million liang of silver, another merchant in Yixian County donated up to 2,400 jin at his county fellows' proposal to build an academy, similar donators were not rare in every other county of Huizhou. Thanks to the thriving of academies, each of the triennial imperial exams saw as many as a thousand candidates from each of the counties.

The Huizhou merchants attached more importance to their children's education. In fact, they would spare no expense in hiring teachers for their

children once they became rich enough. The keen enthusiasm of Huizhou merchants in general for their children's bright future can be best exemplified by "what's the use of saving the fortune without spending it timely on children's education" as asked by Bao Baiting, a merchant himself, and quoted in *Genealogical Sub-tree of the Bao's*, *Shexian County* (Volume 3). It's no wonder therefore that many famous scholars and officials in the Ming and Qing Dynasties were from business families in Huizhou, such as Wang Daokun, Xu Guo, Jin Sheng, Cao Wenzhi, Cao Zhenyong, Dai Zhen, Cheng Jinfang, Cheng Yaotian, Ling Tingkan, Wang Maoyin, to name just a few.

The focus of the development of Huizhou Studies is Study. It was the academies and schools and hundreds and thousands of students that made it possible for the region to be able to boast so many learned scholars. With the scholars' joint efforts, common goal and unique creativity, different groups with their own characteristics came into being in each field. Besides, it was just with the involvement of the Huizhou merchants, direct or indirect, that many of the cultural phenomena in Huizhou developed into schools with their own characteristics, such as drawing, opera, carving, architecture, gardening and even medicine. In fact, as the local historical records show, Huizhou culture developed just while the business was thriving.

The schools in Huizhou culture are so varied and inclusive that they fall into such academic fields as philosophy, history, sociology, economics, linguistics, art, education, genealogy, architecture, medicine, folklore and other interdisciplinary fields. The academic and practical value of all these fields is immeasurable in the course of carrying forward traditional culture and developing local cultural resources. Huizhou Studies has so far just opened its gate and a probe into its mystery will need the joint efforts of all people concerned.

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Written by Zhang Haipeng

Translated by Fang Chuanyu

Chapter 2 A Discussion on Contemporary Huizhou Studies

I. Objects of Contemporary Huizhou Studies

What are the objects of Huizhou Studies? Scholars give different definitions to Huizhou Studies and thus provide different answers to this question. Some say the object of Huizhou Studies is Huizhou's social history, or "it is a comprehensive discipline whose object is the history of Huizhou"; or "Huizhou Studies is a historical discipline whose objects are Huizhou documents, Huizhou's history and culture; whose aim is to expose social realities and laws of late feudal China"; or "Huizhou Studies is a series of concepts and theories whose objects are Huizhou's society, economy, culture, thoughts, arts, technology, etc.".

It is academically known that the distinction of disciplines is based on different research objects, which are always about some particular phenomenon in a particular field.

In fact the expression "Huizhou Studies" appeared in documents long ago. In history, the expression could refer to "Xin'an Neo-Confucianism", or "Huizhou Academia", or "Huizhou culture", or "the study of Huizhou culture".

Today, "Huizhou Studies" is a new concept, but the new concept is also related with the old one because it still contains Xin'an Neo-Confucianism, Huizhou Academia and the study of Huizhou culture. We should see the connection between the new and the old, but more importantly, we should distinguish the new from the old.

Then what is the "new" Huizhou Studies? We think it is a discipline that uses historical documents and other materials, that studies the development and change of Huizhou's society, economy, culture, that exposes Huizhou people's activities in other places and Huizhou culture's

development in neighboring areas, and that discusses relative social movements in late feudal China.

What are the differences between the old and the new Huizhou Studies? First, the old one only used materials in the four traditional categories of Chinese writings (Confucian classics, historical records, philosophical writings, miscellaneous works), while the new one uses not only those materials but also historical documents and files. Second, the old one only emphasized social consciousness, but not social existence; and it only studied spiritual culture, but not material culture. The new one emphasizes both social consciousness and existence, studies both spiritual and material culture, and even studies the inner relationships in the above two pairs and their laws. Third, the old one only studied the history of the rulers, but not of the ruled; the new one studies both of them and emphasizes the history of the ruled.

There are five points about study objects which need more explanation. First, we think historical files of Huizhou are not only materials, but also a research object. As materials, they have unique academic values; however, as a research object, they are as important as clans, land systems, merchants of Huizhou. Second, Huizhou has a long history, in which Xin'an period and Shezhou period were the origins. We should not cut off the history, but we focus our study on Huizhou from the Song Dynasty, because every scientific expression can only reflect the most basic, the most important contents. What about the most important contents of contemporary Huizhou Studies? We think they are about Huizhou's society, economy and culture from the Song Dynasty; about Huizhou people's activities in other places and Huizhou culture's development in neighboring areas. Third, we think the aim of contemporary Huizhou Studies is similar to that of other historical studies. They both hope to expose social realities. If there is any difference in this aspect, that must be the distance to social realities—from which some historical studies are a little far and to which Huizhou Studies are much near. Fourth, the geographical scope of our study is not only Huizhou.

Huizhou people's activities in other places and Huizhou culture's influence in neighboring areas are also study objects. Fifth, we think Huizhou Studies can only discuss some social problems of late feudal China. If we want to expose the development of late feudalism in China, we should make a comprehensive study on the whole history of Chinese feudalism.

What kind of discipline should contemporary Huizhou Studies be? We think it is a historical discipline. The main contents of the Studies are the history of Huizhou's society, economy, culture; Huizhou people's historical activities in other places and Huizhou culture's historical development in neighboring areas. Can we say they do not belong to history discipline? Of course the history of Huizhou's society is also included in sociology, the history of Huizhou's economy economics, the history of Huizhou's culture culturology, the history of Huizhou's philosophy philosophy and so on, However, Huizhou Studies cannot be said to belong to these disciplines, because these contents are not the main part of these disciplines, So we think Huizhou Studies, as a whole, belong to the discipline of history, and the specific objects of Huizhou Studies can belong to two or three disciplines. Undoubtedly this expression is different from the idea that Huizhou Studies is a comprehensive discipline. Can this put Huizhou Studies in a proper academic position?

Here we also want to point out that world history and Chinese history are in the same academic position. Can we say that the two are rather comprehensive disciplines than historical ones?

II. Characteristics of Contemporary Huizhou Studies' Objects

It was documented that Huizhou was an immigrant society. From late Eastern Han Dynasty, notable families and clans immigrated from Central Plains area into Huizhou for varied reasons. They brought advanced technology and culture into this region and consequently Huizhou saw its first historic leap in society in the Song Dynasty. "Famous officials emerge in large numbers" "Vulgar customs gradually turn to elegance". Huizhou's education, book-

engraving, medicine, philosophy, ink-stone industry, ink-stick industry were all in flourishing conditions.

Since the Mid-Ming Dynasty, with the development of commercial economy and the sprout of capitalism, a lot of people left Huizhou to other places and became merchants instead of farmers or Confucian scholars at home. These merchants occupied the leading position in the whole country for more than three centuries. At that time, there appeared the second historic leap—advanced education, flourishing business, prosperous culture, great achievements in imperial examinations etc. The merchants established their nets in many places and brought their culture to over half of China.

Then, what about the characteristics of their activities in other places and their culture's development in neighboring areas and of Huizhou's society, economy and culture?

1. Rich Contents What can be studied in this discipline is very rich. All the following should be included: clans, education, historical relics, customs, files and documents, land systems, merchants, forestry, bookengraving, technology, medicine, philosophy, painting, architecture, opera, dialect, cuisine, ink-stone, ink-stick, carving arts, etc. The objects of Huizhou Studies can be divided into many categories and in each category the contents are all very rich. According to records, education in Huizhou was very advanced, which had a complete system and a reasonable structure. Besides government schools, there were 120 local schools in Shexian County, 140 in Xiuning County, 140 in Wuyuan County, 27 in Qimen County, 13 in Yixian County, 30 in Jixi County (totally 470 local schools). Meanwhile private schools scattered everywhere. "In mountains and valleys where there are people living, there are teachers and students." "Even in a small village of 10 families, students can be heard reading and reciting." In addition, academies were an outstanding landscape in Huizhou. According to incomplete statistics, there were 104 schools named "academy". Since the Song-Yuan Dynasties, book-engraving industry had flourished and become