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# 連州的傳統經濟、宗教與民俗(上)

譚偉倫 曾漢祥 主編



國際客家學會  
海外華人資料研究中心  
法國遠東學院



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# **The Traditionl Economy, Religion and Customs in Lianzhou**

Tam Wai Lun, Zeng Hanxiang

## **Traditional Economy**

There are many similarities between Lianzhou and Shaoguan. Both are located on the Guangdong – Hunan border and, although northeastern Shaoguan is contiguous with Jiangxi and western Lianzhou with Guangxi, Lianzhou and Shaoguan are both important centers for Hunan – Guangdong traffic. Both people and goods from southern Hunan were transported along the Wu and Gan rivers to the North River in Shaoguan and from there on to Guangzhou. Similarly, people and goods from southern Hunan were transported along the Dongbei and Xingzi rivers in Lianzhou to the Lian River, which eventually joins the North River. Goods were also transported by porters, and northern Guangdong and southern Hunan were connected by many ancient roads. In Pingshi, Shaoguan, there were the famous Qingyi and Western Capital Roads. In Lianzhou, there were the Jingchu Road in Xingzi and two other major ancient roads in Dongbei. When Guangzhou was occupied by the Japanese in 1938 – 1949, the government of Guangdong was moved to Shaoguan and later to Lianzhou. Since large numbers of Cantonese moved to Shaoguan and Lianzhou, both places were known as “little Guangzhou”. Cantonese dialect is still popular in both places. After the building of the Yuehan Railway in 1935 and

many other highways<sup>①</sup>, goods and people no longer relied on water transport and porters, and both Shaoguan and Lianzhou suffered from the same fate: their economy atrophied as the railways and highways replaced water transport.

The seventy – year old Qiu Feng and eighty – year old Wu Zuxian tell us the story of the traditional economy in the Lianzhou county seat. The name Lianzhou first appeared in 590. During the Tang, it was a remote place for exiled officials: the famous writer Liu Yushi (772 – 842) was exiled to Lianzhou, and Hanyu (768 – 824) to Yangshan. Lianzhou was, however, known as “little Liangzhou”<sup>②</sup> during the Song. This had to do with the improving of sailing conditions on the Lian River in 1230. We believe that the opening of this sailing route was related to the transport of salt. Salt had long been a national monopoly in China, either wholly monopolized by the government or by merchants with a patent. The sale of salt was a major source of revenue. Salt produced in Guangdong became very important from the southern Song on when the supply of salt from Shanxi, Jiangsu and Zhejiang was cut off by the Jurchens. In the period from 1128 to 1162, it reached thirty million catties.<sup>③</sup> One possible route for transporting salt from Guangdong was through Xingzi and Dongbei in Lianzhou. The transport of salt was, therefore, closely related to the development of the economy in Lianzhou. The Qianlong version of

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① The Republican version of the Lianzhou gazetteer mentions the building of five highways in Lianzhou: (1) the Lianxing Highway to Xingzi, (2) the Liandong Highway to Dongbei, (3) the Liansan Highway to Sanjiang (now in Lianshan County), (4) the Shaolian Highway to Shaoguan, and (5) the Lianyang Highway to Yangshan County. The first two were built by the government, the remainder by the people.

② Name of ancient Sichuan. See Tongdian, volume 170.

③ Guo Zhengzhong, Songyan Guankui (A Close Look at Salt Policy during the Song) (Taiyuan: Shanxi Jingji chubanshe, 1990), p. 280. Production in the early northern Song was five million.

the gazetteer tells us that since the Ming dynasty, salt from Lianzhou was transported to and sold in Hunan<sup>①</sup>. Huang Zhaoxing thinks people in Hunan started to import salt from Guangdong after the prohibition of sea transport in 1525. The Republican version of the Lianzhou gazetteer reports that salt from Lianzhou was prohibited from entering Hunan during the period 1567 – 1573, when the government was responsible for the transport of salt rather than merchants. Huang Zhaoxing points out that, because of the competition from both Hunan and Guangxi officials, the trade of salt in Xingzi of Lianzhou shrunk. This competition probably refers to the use of a trade route that connected Guangxi with Hunan. It consists of (1) the Xiaohe Road which joined the Xiao River in Hunan and the He River that runs through Guangxi and Guangdong and (2) the Xianggui water route, opened by the First Emperor of the Qin and linking the Xiang River in Hunan with the Gui River in Guangxi. This was a main route by which people traveled from the north to Lingnan before the Tang dynasty. It joined the Xi River that goes to Guangzhou. During the period 1573 – 1620, the Grand Coordinator of Guangxi agreed to allow Lianzhou to share the salt market in Hunan. This was apparently the result of a long negotiation between the officials in Guangxi and Lianzhou. The Republican version of the Lianzhou gazetteer says that in 1708, the sale of salt was transferred back to the merchants and an agreement was reached that merchants in Lianzhou could have a 30% share of the salt trade in Hunan while those in Guangxi and Hunan together had 70%. The same gazetteer states that in Lianzhou—when is not clear—the sale of salt was in the hands of Guangdong merchants. As already mentioned, a massive migration of residents from Guangzhou to Lianzhou took place

① *Lianzhou zhi* (1771), fascicle 4.

during the anti – Japanese war. From then on, Cantonese merchants took over not only the salt trade but also other businesses in Lianzhou.

According to the gazetteer, there were three kinds of merchants in Lianzhou. The Cantonese merchants had the most capital. They were mostly from Nanhai and were engaged in the export trade. The Nanhai merchants controlled the cloth and miscellaneous goods trade as they had relatives who were wholesalers in Guangzhou. They could buy goods and delay their payments until the goods were sold. The food trade was also controlled by Cantonese merchants. The grain invoices of two Cantonese shops could even be used as cash in Lianzhou. In Xingzi, the street where the Cantonese merchants engaged in the salt trade was called Guest (Hakka) Street. Residents in the Yijia village were known as the “old Hakka”. Clearly, “Hakka” here is not what the word usually refers to. According to seventy – five year old Xu Mingbo, the Hakka in Jiubei came from the East River during the Qianlong and Daoguang periods. Huang Zhaoxing thinks that “old Hakka” refers to the Cantonese who worshipped Tianhou. Based on the distribution of dialects in Lianzhou, however, there is another possibility. The Republican version of the Lianzhou gazetteer says that there were five main dialects in Lianzhou: 50% of the people spoke Hakka, 35% some local dialect or other, 15% a Sihui dialect which came from Shaoqing and was found in every village. Among the 35% dialect speakers, only 10% spoke the Hunan or Cantonese dialects. Thus Hakka was the most popular dialect in Lianzhou followed by the Sihui dialect of Shaoqing. According to Zhuang Chushang, a linguist from Shaoguan University, the Sihui dialect is closely related to the dialect in Guangxi. It seems that the Cantonese were not the first to arrive in Lianzhou but merchants from Shaoqing who operated via the Guangxi

trade route and spoke a Guangxi – related dialect. They are the most likely candidates for the designation “old Hakka”. The salt trade in Lianzhou was always in keen competition with Guangxi. At the end of the Wenli (1573 – 1619) era, it was decided that Lianzhou would be allowed to participate in the salt trade in four districts in southern Hunan. This would have attracted merchants engaged in the Guangxi trade to migrate to Lianzhou.

Qiu Feng summarizes the traditional economy of Lianzhou as follows: exports from southern Hunan and the import of salt and miscellaneous goods from Guangdong. There were seventy one salt shops in Lianzhou city. Three ancient stone roads ran from Lianzhou through Qingshui, Dongbei and Xingzi respectively to Hunan. Hundreds of porters used these paths daily. They started their journey at dawn and arrived in the evening. Using the water route to go from Lianzhou to the Lianjiangkou took five to six days. The return route, against the current, took twenty – one days. A round trip thus took about one month. There were more than two hundred boats traveling daily on the Lian River. More than a hundred thousand tons of goods were transported each year. Bamboo and logs from Lianzhou were lashed to form rafts and drifted downstream to Guangzhou via Lianjiangkou. As more than 80% of the merchants in Lianzhou were non – local, there were nineteen guild halls in Lianzhou. The majority of the merchants were from Nanhai, followed by Qingyuan, Dongguan and Shunde. Some also came from Jiaying. They were all counted as Cantonese merchants. Most of the Hunan merchants in Lianzhou, who had a smaller amount of capital, sold cloth. They worked hard, wore simple clothing, ate simple food and had no luxurious customs. Local merchants

were few and usually worked part – time<sup>①</sup>. A Cantonese merchant association was set up in 1906, a Hunan association in 1918.

Apart from the county seat, the centre of the traditional economy in Lianzhou was in Xingzi and Dongbei, both situated on old roads. Huang Zhaoxing writes on the traditional economy of his own native town Xingzi. Cotton, tobacco leaves and mats from Xingzi were sold to Guangzhou<sup>②</sup>. Two roads ran through Xingzi. That to Linwu in Hunan was called the Jingchu Road. Used for transporting goods selected for the emperor, it was first built by the Qin emperor for his army to invade the south. The general of Han Wudi also used this path to attack Panyu. Another road went to Yicheng in Hunan. Both old roads played important roles in the circulation of goods before the building of the Xingping Highway in 1941. Xingzi also lies on the upper reaches of the Lian River. One could go by boat to Lianzhou, Yangshan, Lianjiangkou and Guangzhou. The shipment of salt from Guangzhou through Qingyuan took five to six days. It was then transported by porters using the stone roads to Wuguang, Hangshui and Yongbao prefectures in Hunan. There was a Salt Street, three docks and a salt pavilion in Xingzi. The main transit center for Guangdong, Hunan and Jiangxi in the mid – Qing, Xingzi had three hundred shops. According to the Republican version of the Lianzhou gazetteer, commerce in Xingzi during the Guangxu period was prosperous. The Cantonese merchants in Xingzi sold salt and miscellaneous goods; the Hunan merchants salt and mountain products. Merchants from Jiangxi usually sold medicinal herbs. Merchants from these three provinces built guild halls during the Xianfeng (1851 – 1861) and Guangxu (1875 – 1908) periods.

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① *Lianzhou zhi* (1949), Chapter on commerce.

② *Lianzhou zhi* (1949), Chapter on Industry, especially the tables on handicrafts.

Huang Hanfeng introduces to us the traditional economy of his native town of Dongbei. Situated in a fertile plain, Dongbei was Lianzhou's rice basket. The navigable Dongbei River was one of the sources of the Lian River. Dongbei was one of the main Lianzhou centers for trade in salt, agricultural products, herbs, lumber and industrial products. Two of the three ancient roads in Lianzhou passed through Dongbei. One went from Xiahuang in Dongbei to Nanshan in Hunan, the other from Xian and Qingshui in Dongbei to Shuikou and Jianghua in Hunan. According to Huang Hanfeng, salt for a million people in Hunan was transported through Dongbei. The salt was first shipped from Guangzhou to Qingyuan, then on to Yangshan, Lianzhou and finally Dongbei. From there it was portered to Hunan. Over one billion catties of salt were transported in this way each year. There were twenty – two salt shops in Dongbei. In addition, twenty thousand porter's poles of food and ten thousand pigs were exported via Dongbei each year. Miscellaneous goods and clothes from Guangzhou were shipped to Dongbei. Local products from Hunan were also carried by porters to Dongbei and then to Guangzhou via Lianjiangkou by boat. Thus commerce in Dongbei flourished from the mid – Qing till the Republican period.

There was an old saying to the effect that “straw sandals come from Sanjiang, and wooden sandals from Lianzhou, water chestnuts from Dongbei and stones from Xian.” In Dongbei, they used cow dung, lime, and ashes from grass stalks as fertilizer for growing water chestnuts that were planted in winter and reaped the following year at the winter solstice. Marble from Xian is called greystone or Lianzhou greystone. It was shipped overseas via Guangzhou ever since the late Ming. Mountains in

Dongbei were also suitable for growing camellia seeds planted in winter and reaped between 10/8 and 10/23 of the following year. One hundred catties of Camellia seeds could make twenty catties of oil, which was just enough for the use of one family during festivals and the Lunar New Year. Farmers took part – time jobs during the slack season. Alternatively, they could cut wood for fuel to be sold in the market. Meat dried by the chilly wind in Dongbei is still regarded as a great delicacy in northern Guangdong. Twenty shops of a respectable size sold such dried meat. There were Cantonese, Hunan and Panyu guild halls in Dongbei. On any given day in Dongbei there were upwards of a thousand porters, most of them from Hunan. Bricklayers and carpenters also came from Hunan, as did hand – woven cloth. Another old saying tells us that “straw mats come from Dongbei, straw shoes from Sanjiang and wooden shoes from Lianzhou.” Thus straw mats from Dongbei were also famous. The time for reaping straw was in the fifth and sixth months. One hundred mou (about 15. 15 acres) of straw could make three hundred mats. Bamboo was also grown in northern Dongbei for the use of the over one hundred paper factories in Dongbei that produced some ten thousand porter poles of paper.

## Religion and Customs

One of the most distinguished customs in Lianzhou was the carrying of the ‘great god’ in Bao’ an. Ouyang Kang, a native son and retired party secretary of Bao’ an, provides us a detailed description of this activity. The Republican version of the Lianzhou gazetteer states this event took place during the Double Nine festival. About ten people, dressed in costumes and wearing gods’ masks, were tied on a platform and carried through the streets to music. This is clearly a form of Nuo. Bao’ an was situated on the old road that led from Lianzhou to Hunan by way of Dong-



bei. Many porters from Hunan carried their goods for sale in Bao' an. According to Ouyang Kang, the term 'great god' refers to the god of the West Peak and the Lord of the River<sup>①</sup>. These gods were represented by two layers of masks with the kind mask hiding a fearsome a green face and ferocious fangs. The masks of the gods had to be worn by people. Accompanying the 'great gods' were the judge of Hades and his messenger.

In Bao' an, the responsibility for carrying the great god was rotated among four of six wards, reflecting the local distribution of power. The Wanchuan ward, which consisted mainly of the Ouyangs, carried the god every other year. Three other wards – Wenming, Yuxiu, and Dongxing—had a turn once every five years. Two wards never carried the 'great' gods but only the 'high gods', which the four other wards also carried. There were seventy two high gods, also called locally 'Gao-gong.' They were mostly local worthies, including Liao Chong, who became immortal in the Six Dynasties; Meng Binyu, a jinshi poet of the Later Jin period; Cai Qiji, a southern Song official; Grandpa White, a robber who helped the poor; and Grandma Liu who enjoyed philanthropic work. The high gods were also represented by masks worn by people tied on a platform and swung from side to side during the procession. This was called 'swinging the gods.' Grandpa White was carried by the Yuxiu ward, the poet Meng Binyu by the Wenchuan ward, the Official – in – Charge Cai Qiji by the Wenming ward and Liaochong by the Liao village. Huang Zhaoxing explains that the eight village wards in Xingzi also formed

① According to an entry in the *Gujin tushu jicheng*, the Xiyue dashen took illegal possession of people's wives, asked for bribery and was selfish. See Lu Zhongli and Luan Baoqun ed. *Zhongguo minjian zhushen* (The Popular gods of China) (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1991), Vol. 1, pp. 355 – 361. The Chuanzhu probably refers to the god Erlang from Sichuan.