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始興縣的傳統經濟、宗族與宗教文化

曾漢祥 主編



國際客家學會
法國遠東學院
海外華人資料研究中心



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The Traditional Economy, Lineages and Religious Culture of Shixing

Zeng Hanxiang

Shixing is situated at northern Guangdong, on the Zhenjiang River, a branch of the Beijiang. Shixing borders on the Quannan county to the east, Wengyuan county to the south, Qujiang county on the west and the Nanxiong county to the northeast. Its county seat, Taiping is 63 kilometers from Shaoguan. It consists of an area of 2,174 square miles with a current population of 225,000, of which 97.7% are Han and 3.28% (that is 7,000) are She or Yao people.

I . Traditional Economy

The county seat is the political, economic and cultural center of a county. Chen Fangchou's essay introduces us to the traditional economy of Shixing. Shixing was known as the granary of northern Guangdong. Both agriculture and forestry are flourished. There was a saying which stated that "in the south there is wood, in the north, bamboos and grains are everywhere." The scale of commerce and industry was, however, relatively small. Taiping was located on the northern shore of the Mojiang, a branch of the Zhenjiang. Its population began to grow in the Ming dynasty. During the Qing and Republican periods, because of the lack of highways, river transport was vital. Among the northbound goods from

Guangzhou were salt, seafood, sugar, fuel, medicines, cigarette, cloth and miscellaneous items. Cotton, coarse cloth, dried and preserved meat, tea, pottery and minerals were shipped south to Shixing from Jiangxi. The main export of Shixing were agricultural and forest products including bamboo, lumber, paper, hempen cloth, lime, cigarettes, poultry. Based on the Shixing annals in 1926, Chen states that 2,500 piculs (the load of a porter) of cigarettes and 2,000 piculs of hempen cloth, and 1,000 tiao (equivalent to 385 pieces) of lumber were exported from Shixing in 1926. Based on 1946 revenue data, Chen notes that there were 420,000 tiao of pinewood, 2000 jian (equivalent to 32 pieces) of bamboo, 1,500 piculs of paper and 800,00 piculs of charcoal were exported from Shixing in 1946. Buffalo skins, pine resin, lime and mushroom were also shipped in great quantities to the Pearl river delta area.

The county seat was a major trade center with 39 major businesses including wholesale trade in raft, rice, dried fruits, miscellaneous items and cloth. There were 295 shops. Market dates for Taiping were on the third, sixth and ninth day of each ten-day week when peasants from nearby villages will bring their specialty products in for sale. According to Chen, the most popular shop was called 'Maxiang, the old ghost' where ointments were sold while acrobatics were performed. The owner was from Xingning. He took out an old broken signboard to hang in the street and struck a gong whenever he opened his shop for business. Dressed as a traveling salesman, the owner spoke in a funny way and was good at both acrobatics and story-telling. Whenever he told the story about emperor Qianlong visiting the south, his listener will either listen attentively in silence or burst into laughter. When his story reached its climax, he would stop to sell his ointments which were reputed to be quite effective.

There was a large number of non-local merchants taking part in Shixing's business world. They came mostly from Guangzhou and Jiangxi, with some from Fujian and Jiaying. Like Shaoguan, local people of Shixing engaged primarily in farming and were not good at commerce^①. Because of the presence of large numbers of non-local merchants and artisans and in spite of the relatively small size of the county seat, there were merchant guilds, from Guangzhou, Jiangxi and Fujian. The biggest merchant guild hall was that of Guangzhou, built in 1857. Built in typical Cantonese style, it was situated in the wholesale shop of sticky rice on the river front street and its total area of 150 square meters was divided into front, middle and back halls. During the Anti-Japanese War, large numbers of refugees fled from the Pearl River Delta area to Shixing. Many of them opened shops in Shixing. One-tenth of the shops in the county seat, about 31, were owned by Cantonese. Together with the Cantonese bankers, factory owners, civil servants and revenue officers, the Cantonese formed a strong economic and political group in Shixing. In 1939, the Guangzhou Natives Association was formed. It helped its members in three ways by buying a site in the hills for a cemetery for members who died away from home, by organizing an ancestor worship during the Qingming festival, and by creating a primary school in the merchant guild for members' children. Funding for the association came from donations and by renting the houses located in front of the school owned by the association.

The Jiangxi merchant guild was also called the Yuzhang guild. Be-

^① See the essay by Hou Chongyan in volume nine of this series, P222, where he quoted the Shaozhou Fuzhi to substantiate his claim.

cause it borders on Jiangxi, Shixing had many traders who came from there as well as artisans, blacksmiths, carpenters and tailors. The Jiangxi merchant guild was built in the Tongzhi period of Qing. Built in the Tongzhi era in Jiangxi style, the Jiangxi merchant guild was situated across the river outside of town. In the middle of the main hall there was a small opera. In the middle of the back wall there hung a horizontal tablet inscribed with the words 'Tiangou Palace'. Below it were the statues of Tiangou Gong and of the two generals Heng and Ha. Tiangou Gong was an imperial eunuch who was granted the title Tiangou Gong because he was a favorite of the emperor. It was said of the generals Heng and Ha that their shout of 'heng' and 'ha' was enough to paralyze their enemies for capture. The Jiangxi merchant guild hall served as the venue for temple festivals with opera and for the annual worship of Tiangou Gong during Qingming festival. In 1941, the Jiangxi people in Shixing gathered donations to build a primary school behind the guild hall. In the 1920s and the 1930s, many people from Gannan migrated to Shixing. Their merchant guild was small and was consisted of a small house. Closely linked to the county seat were market towns like Mashi, Jiangkou Jie and Zhousuo. The first essay by Zhang Xijin and Zhang Lumei gives a detailed account of the vicissitudes of Zhousuo. Twelve kilometers southeast of the county seat, it was located on the south bank of Mojiang and was point of convergence for water and land transport from all directions. There were four main streets within the market and at their intersection there was an open-air market. To the north of the market a wide embankment served as a place for the storage of charcoal and lumber and the sale of water buffalo. The eastern shore of the river was used to tie up rafts while the western shore was used for boats. Variety goods bamboo and lumber were shipped out via the Mojiang.

The Zhangs constituted 80% of the population of Zhousuo and one Zhang Sichun belongs to the most populous branch of the lineage. His grandfather Zhang Yongqian, an official during the Guangxu period, settled in Zhousuo after retirement.

Zhang Sichun began with a pine wood business that proved a success. He then opened a grocery store selling oil and salt and set up salt warehouses in both Zhousuo and the county. He then became a wholesale salt merchant. He also grew fruits like dragon's eyes in his home village. With his wealth, he bought houses and land in the county seat and Zhousuo and so came to be one of the most well known merchants of Zhousuo. Zhang Qinglong was another. With his father, he left his home in Xingning at age 13 to go trade in Shaoguan. By night, they prepared sweets which by day they peddled in four nearby villages. They attracted children with the sound of their chisel and hammer used to cut the large pieces of sweets. Later they also sold miscellaneous items. They never missed a market day and delivered their goods to their village without extra charges. Married at age 18 to a local Zhang from Zhousuo, Zhang Qinglong started a pinewood business with the help of his father-in-law. He then bought a shop in Zhousuo where he sold oil, salt, miscellaneous items, pine wood. He also opened a factory to make iron and process paper. He hired 700 workers and his shops became the most famous in Zhousuo.

Zhousuo flourished because of water transport and declined when especially after the construction of the highway linking Shaoguan with Daiyu in Jiangxi in the year 1933. After a history, which according to the local annals, lasts 600 years, the market in Zhousuo closed in 1948.

In their second essay on the history of Mazi ao, Zhang Xijin and Zhang Lumei introduces us to the market town now known as Mashi. It had a history of 700 years and continues to flourish to the present day. Located on the Zhenjiang 14 kilometers to the northeast of the Shixing county seat and 24 kilometers away from that of Nanxiong, Mazi ao is the exchange center for peasant goods from the two counties. It is said that there were three conditions for the opening of the Mashi market to take place, namely, that a horse ride on a man, that someone put on an iron hat and that a fish climb a tree. Because of these impossible conditions, the market of Mashi was never officially opened until one day when it was raining heavily and a pony was born. The owner, wishing to protect the new born pony, put it on his back and rushed home. En route, he ran into someone holding a big wok over his head and then while crossing a river, he saw a fisherman hanging a big carp on the branch of a tree for sale.

The most famous merchant in MaziAo was Pei Wenguang from Tangjiang village in Nankang county, Jiangxi. He left home to become an apprentice at age 14 and became a carpenter three years later. It was said that he became rich when he passed through Dawang ao and found a bowl of silver. Later, he refurbished the small mountain god temple in Dawang Ao. He also bought land and build houses in Nanxiong to trade in cigarettes. He bought cigarette leaves from Mazi ao in Shixing, divided the cigarette growing areas in four and hired a skillful farmer to be in charge of each area. He paid them to develop cigarette plant seeds and bought fertilizer in Hunan. He owned two shops in Mazi ao with one located on 'Chicken and Duck Wholesale' street selling cigarette and paper and the other on Hay Shoe Street selling coffins. He built the Jiangxi

guild hall on Hay Shoe Street and donated money to support temple festivals. He sponsored half of the opera performed in the market place, and when beggars died, he would donate a simple coffin for them. He was the first to build a three-story 300-square meter fortress house in Mazi ao.

The essay by Xiao Xinglin and Tan Zhangyou gave a vivid description of Jiangkou Street. According to the 1926 Shixing Gazetteer, Jiangkou Street, also known as Jiangkou Market, was built between 1573 and 1620. It was situated 8 kilometers west of the county seat and one kilometer from the point of confluence of the Zhenjiang and Mojiang rivers, hence very conveniently located for water transport. By the Mojiang, one could reach the county seat, Dungang and Qinghua market towns and northwards along the Zhenjiang, go to Mashi, and Nanxiong's county seat and southbound go to Qujiang, Shaoguan and Guangzhou. Over 100 and sometimes as many as 500 ships tied up at the piers in Jiangkou. Everyday there were 1,800 people on the street including pier workers, raft workers and laborers making everyday look like a market day. Among the most famous shops was one owned by a Luo from Xingning. He sold one-third of all the paper in Jiangkou. He had ten paper factories in Beishan alone producing as much as 5000 piculs of paper per year. Luo also sold wine in Jiangkou and to Shixing and Nanxiong.

Boats in Jiangkou were either sampans or barges. The former carried up to 15 tons and the latter up to 6. The sampan needed seven to eight laborers, one each in the front and the back of the boat, five haulers and one man to cook and perform miscellaneous duties. On the second and sixteenth of every month, the owner had to provide extra dishes for his workers as he did when all goods had been loaded and the sampan was

ready to sail. Giving them extra dishes was a way of wishing them a safe journey and it was called 'the blessing of the god of the boat'. Similarly, when all goods had been unloaded, the special dinner was called 'washing the blessing of the god of the boat.' There were rules with regard to buying pork for these ritual dinners: when the sampan was going upstream to Nanxiong or to the market towns in Shixing, the owner had to buy everyone seven liang (one catty is 16 liangs) of pork; when going down-stream to Shaoguan, the amount was eight liang. This symbolized less suffering and more joy (as going upstream is harder).

The owner had also to provide extra dishes also on the second day of the New Year. A chicken had to be sacrificed and a portion of it saved for those who stayed on board with the rest kept for the celebration of the New Year. Before the meal, a ceremony for sailing had to be performed. All workers had to stand in line with the helmsman standing at the back of the boat and the rowers on the side. The chief worker said, "steering on the right and left side going straight up and down in the middle." Then the meal started. The chicken's head was offered by the owner to the newly-assigned chief worker, the white meat to the helmsman and the chicken legs to the cook. Even when they were not present, these three parts of the chicken had to be saved for them. There were many secret sayings in the shipping profession. For example, as the pronunciation of the word for 'celery' in Shixing dialect sounds the same as that for 'to sink', it was changed to sound like the word for 'to float'. Boatmen who were numerous in Jiangkou, traveled frequently to the Pearl River Delta area and loved to watch Cantonese opera. As a result, Cantonese opera was also popular in Jiangkou. In the county seat, people preferred to watch opera of Hunan and Jiangxi.

Opera was performed day and night in front of the Stone top (Shishang) temple from the tenth month until the fourth month of the following year. There was no need to pay to watch the opera in Jiangkuo as it was paid for by the owners of the gambling tables. Forty percent of the profits from gambling was given to the head of the troupe. Hence, whenever there was opera, there was gambling.

By way of the county seat and the market towns, villages in Shixing were connected to outside markets. Nevertheless, Shixing remained a backward rural agricultural society owing to the relatively small volume of trade. According to Chen Fangchou, the Republican government classified Shixing as a grade 'C' county, that is, poor and underdeveloped. Because of its abundant food supply, however, there was seldom famine in Shixing and relatively few people left home to look elsewhere for work. This was similar to Gannan but different from Minxi and Yuedong. Because of population pressure, Hakka in Minxi and Yuedong had to migrate overseas to earn their livings, but only since the 1990s people in Shixing began to leave in considerable numbers to seek employment in the Pearl River delta area.

II .Lineage and Village Culture

Basing himself on an essay dated 1847 in the Chen lineage register, Chen Fangchou says that the Chen founding ancestor, Ao Yang Gong, came from Fujian to Guangdong between 1506 and 1521 on an official trip. He later migrated from Tile street in Fujian to Xingren village (see below note 2). All descendants living in Xingren claim to share a genetic feature in the form of a split nail of the last toe of both feet. The eldest