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Reflective Essay

In my project, I examined gazetteers of Guangdong province, government archives of 18th and 19th century China, and travelogues from the same period in order to outline the literary rhetoric that the Cantonese and Hakka literati of the province used to express their *Chineseness*, or the close political, cultural, linguistic, and even biological ties that they had with other Han Chinese outside of the province. Overall, my research question concerns that of the relationship between national and local identities of the Cantonese and Hakka literati in Guangdong, China.

The way that the research direction and question were determined came in twofold. On one hand, my background as a native of Guangzhou, China, with both Cantonese and Hakka ancestry, and my ability to speak Cantonese, Hakka and Mandarin pushed me to think about the complexity of my identity. While I am a Cantonese, I am also a Hakka and a Han Chinese. But the distinction in custom and speech, which in turn reflect differences in culture and even politics between these groups often create confusion and contradictions in my mind. Seeking to answer the questions in my heart, I turned to those Cantonese and Hakka literati from two centuries ago. On the other hand, the final version of my research question was determined after a one month browse of secondary sources on similar topics. These scholarly works range from the early 20th century to the present, and from English and French to Chinese. Before reading works of other scholars, I was apt to fall into the trap of being blind and over confident, claiming all findings and theories under my own name. But browsing secondary sources expanded my scope. The works from previous scholars allowed me to learn from their discoveries and faults, which refined my own research question and argument. Their bibliographies filled my research repertoire, through which I could track down more primary sources. As the old saying goes, standing on the shoulders of giants made clear to me what have been done and what have not, and made me realize how little I knew.

Similar to the secondary sources that I browsed, I found primary sources through a handful of channels. After reading the secondary sources that I could find from the UCSB library catalog and from online databases such as *JSTOR* and *Web of Knowledge*, I browsed the library website and examined bibliographies of those scholarly works to come up with my own list of primary sources. The UCSB library's East Asian collection contains many of those documents, including parts of the gazetteers and travelogues that I examined. While I acquired and found the rest through interlibrary loan and from the library website's database, and Chinese online archives like *Erudition* and *Chinamaxx*. In addition, I also explored digital archives of Chinese universities and governments, such as that of the Sun Yet-Sen University of Guangzhou, Chinese University of Hong Kong, digital library of Guangzhou and the People's Government of Guangdong.

The research process was long and sometimes tedious, but it was also fulfilling and illuminative. Through the process, I learned about the craft of the historian of being patient and in tracing down origins of obsolete and unique documents through comparison between bibliographies and citations of different scholarly works, and of other documents. Since the research project, my knowledge on existing archives and databases expanded greatly, and it will reduce the time that I spend in search of sources in future research. In addition, since many of the sources that I examined are written in Chinese, especially Classical Chinese, which is grammatically and logographically different from modern Chinese, I also learned and improved my ability to read and translate Classical Chinese sources into English. After all, though my research was but a general survey, it was my first attempt to answer the questions in my heart and my first venture into serious historical scholarship, and through it I went closer into becoming a historian.

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Becoming Chinese: A Study on the Cantonese and Hakka Gazetteers during the 18th and 19th Centuries in Guangdong, China

Abstract

In the 18th and 19th centuries, writing of local gazetteers reached its peak in China. To the literati of Guangdong, a wealthy southern province that remained in the eyes of Chinese literati and the ruling bureaucracy a politically remote and culturally different region from the rest of the empire, local gazetteers provided an opportunity for them to make a claim about their dialect, custom, and identity. This study focuses on the Guangdong province in Southern China, and the literati of its two Han Chinese subgroups, the Cantonese and Hakka. It seeks to outline the literary rhetoric of the Cantonese and Hakka literati during the two centuries through the examination of gazetteers, travelogues, and government archives. It pays attention to dialect and customs, not merely as social boundaries, but identity indicators which the Guangdong literati utilized to escape limitations of geographical marginalization and align themselves culturally with the Chinese population outside of Guangdong, and politically with the imperial dynasty that ruled the empire through Confucian orthodoxy.

Introduction

Guangdong, or the vast eastern lands, was a province on the southern tip of China. Along with Guangxi, or the vast western lands, the two provinces formed the larger region Lingnan, meaning the land south of the five mountains. Lingnan was a fertile land enriched by three streams collectively known as Zhu Jiang, or the Pearl River, but populated by the Yue Aborigines, the region could hardly be described as Chinese. Unlike the Yellow River Basin (Central Plains) in the north, center of the earliest Chinese states that nurtured Confucianism and formed the earliest shape of China proper, Lingnan was only conquered and incorporated into the Chinese empire by Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of China and the Qin dynasty in 214 BCE. But as the Yue aborigines resisted against Chinese settlement, Chinese influence—cultural, linguistic, or political—over the region remained insignificant, and state authority maintained only through military strength and suppression. As the Qin dynasty fell 206 BCE, the Chinese state lost authority over the region. Under the leadership of Zhao Tuo, Qin dynasty governor-general of the region, Lingnan styled itself as the Kingdom of Nanyue. It was not until Emperor Wu of Han in 111 BCE did Lingnan became an inseparable part of the Chinese state, or the Central Kingdom as it styled itself.

However, due to its geographical remoteness and an environment strange to northern Chinese, and a large aboriginal population, Lingnan remained a peripheral place marked by its exoticness and difference. Moreover, despite the rising status of its provincial capital, Guangzhou

as one of the largest commercial cities of the empire and its only port opened for foreign trade, Lingnan remained to the literati of the Central Plains, political and cultural center of the Chinese empire and its most populated region until the 15th century, a culturally different and politically marginalized edge land of the Chinese empire. Since the 15th century however, when Lingnan was finally divided into the provinces of Guangxi (which is not the subject of this research) and Guangdong, frequent trade activities with foreign powers, massive development of agriculture, and rapid growth of local population combined with almost continuous northern migration led to the rise of Guangdong's commercial and political importance. Under which its literati were able to utilize their cultural, economic, and political resources to compel and promote the status of their province as a civilized and rich land within the empire in order to integrate themselves into the imperial bureaucracy, which was traditionally dominated by literati from the Zhili and Jiangnan regions. The trend of Guangdong literati to fight for a seat for themselves in the Chinese state continued and in the 18th and 19th centuries, the rise of writing of gazetteers gave the Guangdong literati an opportunity to consolidate Guangdong's and their status within the empire, create their own narratives and make claims about the authenticity of their history, language, custom and identity.

While there are three major Han-Chinese subgroups in Guangdong—the Cantonese, Hakkas, and the Teochews—this study focuses only on the Cantonese and Hakka. The Cantonese people are those who live under administration of the Guangzhou prefecture in central, western, and northwestern Guangdong and are the dominant residents in the Pearl River Delta, the most prosperous and fertile region in Guangdong. However, concentration of the Cantonese population under one administrative center did not mean an absolute uniformity in their culture and identity, nor dialect. For instance, the Cantonese speech, which is itself a dialect under the Chinese languages, could be divided into numerous sub-dialects with some extreme cases of mutual unintelligibility, while matters of identity within the Cantonese population were much more complex than language boundaries. Nevertheless, the word Cantonese connotes an idea of unity of the Cantonese population. Yet, it is in fact a Western word that has no exact Chinese equivalent. Westerners used it to denote the Cantonese speech, which in Chinese was referred to as *Yueyu*, or the speech of Yue, with Yue being the abbreviated term for Guangdong. Built into the word doubtlessly, was a sense of connection with Canton, or Guangzhou whose variant of the speech was thought of as the purest form of Cantonese. In the past, European Missionaries as well as western scholars occasionally used the word to translate *Guangdong-Ren*, or people of Guangdong. Such usage suggests the dominance of Guangdong by Guangzhou and speakers of Cantonese, and so long as Guangzhou maintained its high political and commercial importance within the province, the diverse Cantonese population remained a uniformed one when facing external affairs, such as in feuds against the Hakka during the Punti-Hakka War of the mid-19th century. For the purposes of this paper, Cantonese will represent both the speech of Guangzhou, and the people who identified themselves with any local identities associated with Guangzhou or the Cantonese speech and will be used accordingly.

In contrast to the Cantonese population, the Hakkas lacked a wealthy heartland like the Peral river delta and a prosperous center such as Guangzhou. The term Hakka, English transliteration of *guest people* in Cantonese, was originally a label given by Cantonese landlords to their tenants from Jiayingzhou prefecture, a poor and mountainous region on the overlapping provincial borders of Guangdong, Jiangxi and Fujian. According to *Chixi Xianzhi*:

> "people from Jiayingzhou prefecture moved either to Guangzhou or Zhaoqing prefectures during the Ming-Qing period and worked as tenants [under the Cantonese] … Due to their late arrival and their difference in speech, people of Guangzhou… called them the Hakka. Thus, whoever that is from Jiayingzhou prefecture and speak the same speech, is considered a Hakka."[1]

Despite its derogative meaning, Hakka quickly became an identity indicator and was widely accepted by the people from Jiayingzhou prefecture. Like the usage of Cantonese, Hakka in this paper will refer both to the Hakka speech and the people who accepted the label of Hakka and identified themselves as such.

In recent years, research on defining Cantonese and Hakka identities became prolific, and many of these research are indeed exceptional. This study does not intend to join the discussion and examine the nature of Cantonese and Hakka identities. Instead, it examines historical accounts that had sought to define Cantonese and Hakka identities. It seeks to outline the literary rhetoric during the 18th and 19th centuries through the examination of gazetteers, travelogues and government archives and hopes to answer the question: with whom did the Cantonese and Hakka identify during the 18th and 19th centuries; and through what literary rhetoric did they claim their identities? It is also important to note, before further investigation that the literary rhetoric of the Cantonese and the Hakkas were dominated by their literati. Thus, it is essentially the literati rhetoric that this study examines. But while literacy was limited to a relative few, local literati who deemed themselves organizers of village society where state authority was not present and who indeed acted as agents between the illiterate mass and the state, nevertheless represented or at least reflected parts of the thoughts of the mass.

Additionally, in order to understand the context of this study, one needs to understand the orthodox Confucian Weltanschauung and imperial institution utilized by the Chinese state and accepted by the empire's different subjects. Since Zhou dynasty in the 11th century BCE, a refined system of orthodoxy and hierarchy was established. The Zhou king, known as the son of heaven, ruled All-Over-Heaven, or the world known to the Chinese under heaven's will and with *Li* and *Yue*, or rituals and music which the Zhou court utilized to construct the Chinese social system and its hierarchy. Later, with the synthesis of Zhou classics by Confucius, a hierarchical ideology of proper human relationships between emperor and minister, father and son, husband and wife, was consolidated and accepted by the whole of Chinese society. Furthermore, culture and a region that would best represent it became important to the imperial court that sought to attract able minds for its use, for those literati who sought prestige and imperial favor by serving the court. For the Zhou and of many later dynasties, the regions in northern China nourished by the Yellow River, or the Central Plains, was their center of power. Consequently, Chinese educated elites saw the Central Plains as center of the Chinese civilization and its culture as the orthodoxy that all subjects of the empire should accept. All while the people who lived in the remote corners of the empire were classified as barbarians of the four directions. Although the term barbarian does not always carry a negative denotation, but simply refers to a people culturally different from the Han Chinese, the tribalized aborigines, and even those Han Chinese who lived on the edges of the empire often found themselves oppressed and discriminated by the ones living within or closer to the Central Plains.

As the Chinese empire expanded, the expanse of All-Under-Heaven grew to become a far-flung landmass, but the idea of the central plains and remote barbarity endured. The further away

[1] *Chixi Xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Chixi County), (1920), 179-180.

a region is from the Central Plains, the more difficult it was to be governed and the lesser it would be influenced by the state orthodoxy (Confucianism) and hence the more barbaric it would be perceived by people of the Central Plains. While China has always had a strong state managing the empire's vast and diverse peoples, its tentacles did not extend to the lowest levels of society—village communities where most of the empire's population resided. Most scholars in Chinse studies think that in imperial China, the civil service examination, a system established in the 6th century CE, served as a force of cohesion that shortened the distance between the imperial court and its subjects and whose awards provoked literati's aspiration to partake in state administration and serve all that were under heaven. Throughout imperial Chinese history then, the empire's literati acted as agents between the state and their village communities.[2] On one hand, they followed state policies and administered local matters; on the other, they represented local peoples and expressed their views to the state.[3] As learners of the Confucian orthodoxy and civil servants of the imperial court, the literati also performed the duty as teachers of imperial ideology and orthodoxy about *Li* –Confucian rituals and proper manners of social hierarchy– of which they learned, believed, and disseminated; and were deeply immersed in their roles as administers who assume the selfless responsibility of All-Under-Heaven.[4]

Among the Chinese literati who shared the same dream about the acceptance by and prevalence of *Li* across the lands of all-under-heaven, were the Cantonese and Hakka literati in Guangdong. The Cantonese and Hakka literati accepted the state ideology of Confucianism and shared the views of the Central Plains that Guangdong was an exotic region where state orthodoxy was not being practiced. Thus, these inhabitants of Guangdong sought enthusiastically to make a claim about their history, speech, custom and identity through gazetteers in order to reform the image of their province and align themselves with the Central Plains. Such incongruity in the thinking of the Cantonese and Hakka literati would become clear in the paper to be a product of the peripheral reality and forced co-existence of the Cantonese and Hakka in Guangdong with a body of diverse aboriginal groups. Moreover, the phenomenon also demonstrated the far-reaching influence of the Chinese state and the acceptance of state orthodox and authority by both the literati and peoples of the Cantonese and Hakka groups. It will also become clear that speech and custom served not only as sociocultural boundaries that separated the Cantonese and Hakka peoples from each other but also as identity indicators in which their literati used in similar ways to escape bindings of geographical marginalization and align themselves culturally and politically with the Chinese orthodoxy.

Outsider's Impression

In past accounts by non- Guangdong literati, Guangdong was described as remote and different from the rest of the Chinese empire. To the state, it was a distant land filled by miasma, or noxious air, and ferocious beasts such as South China tigers and crocodiles, a perfect place for relegated officers who fell out of imperial trust and favor.[5] To the Central Plains and Jiangnan –Chinese cultural centers that were known for prominent scholars and high civil service examination degree-

[2] May-Bo Ching, *Di Yu Wen Hua Yu Guo Jia Ren Tong*, (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2006), 15.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Wang Zhixing, *Guangzhiyi*, (1597), 145.

holders– it was an uncivilized place thalit lagged behind in scholarship, in contribution to the state, and produced nothing more than exotic goods and barbaric manners.[6] As the speeches of Guangdong also differed greatly from *Guanhua* or Mandarin, the speech spoken in the imperial capital and shared by bureaucrats and literati of the empire, people of Guangdong were often mocked by Mandarin speakers as having tongues of the southern barbarian.[7]

Moreover, for many careful individuals, the different speeches of Guangdong were seen as a threat to state authority and unity of the empire. In an imperial edict, Yongzheng Emperor of the Qing complained about the unintelligibility of local speech from Guangdong:

> "Every time I meet with my officials, only those from Guangdong and Fujian still speak a difficult local speech…… If you speak a speech that is unintelligible to the people, how can you announce state admonishments and review court cases? When the official and his people cannot understand each other, they must depend on translators and all kinds of corruption creep in… the viceroys of Guangdong and Fujian need immediately announce instructors of all prefectures and counties to teach those people about the standard pronunciation and… local speech should be forbidden."[8]

Like Yongzheng Emperor, many literati realized the problems of divided speech and urged the people of Guangdong to learn *Guanhua*.[9] It was under such harsh and discriminative environment, did past research on Cantonese and Hakka identities claimed that provoked the literati of Guangdong to a literary campaign that could free them from barbarity and difference.[10]

However, as Guangdong remained one of the most prosperous regions in the empire, there were as many compliments made by literati from the regions mentioned above about this province. As early as the 10th century, Jiangnan literatus Yue Shi in his work mentioned the richness of Guangdong in both culture and commerce, noting specifically that "[its] customs and rituals are close to those of the Central Plains."[11] Another Jiangnan literatus Wang Shixing during the 16th century noted in his travelogue that Guangdong was nothing like before Chinese colonization but "its people are acknowledged of music and rituals… [and its] richness in wealth and culture is not lacking behind the central plains."[12] Although separated by centuries, both works recognized the closeness of Guangdong's culture and customs to the Central Plains, the place that Chinese literati deemed as the center of the Chinese civilization. In the 18th century, even the speech of Guangdong, or Cantonese in this case, had been described by the Sichuan literatus Li Tiaoyuan as beautiful and ancient that "if [one] translates them according to the ancient Verses of Chu... they sound exactly like the poetry of Qu Yuan himself."[13]

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[6] Ching, 46. Wang, 145.
[7] Ching, 112-115.
[8] *Nanhai Xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Nanhai County), (1870), 71
[9] Zhang Qu, "Yue Dong Jian Wen Lu. In May-Bo Ching", *Di Yu Wen Hua Yu Guo Jia Ren Tong*, (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2006), 114.
[10] Ching, 112.
[11] Yue Shi, *Taiping Huanyuji*, (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1998), 3011.
[12] Wang, 145.
[13] Liao Yuandiao, *Nanyue Biji*, (18th century), chapter 1. Qu Yuan was a Chinese poet and minister known by his royalty to the Chu Kingdom, and contributions to classical poetry and verses. His work, *Chu Ci* was deemed as one of the two greatest collection of ancient Chinese verse.

As the literature cited above shows, outside impressions about Guangdong is a perplexing topic, where no single account is dominant. Although northern contempt and mockery existed, they were not the dominant description about the region and certainly not the only driving force behind Guangdong literati's efforts to write literature in the way they did. Nevertheless, one can still observe from these accounts the impacts of outside perspectives on how the Guangdong literati understood and expressed themselves.

Joining the Central Kingdom

Before the arrival of Qin Shi Huang's troops and Han Chinese settlers, Guangdong was known for its archaic *Yue* people, who were deemed by the Central Plains as barbarians and whose name became label for the Guangdong people even to present day.[14] Today, it is normal for someone in Guangdong, especially of Cantonese origin, to style himself as *Yue-Ren*, or *Yue* people, and his speech as *Yueyu*, or the *Yue* tongue. But as the character also implied an unpleasant past, Guangdong literati in the past, especially the politically and culturally dominant Cantonese who dominated the use of *Yue*, clarification must be made between themselves, the *Yue-Ren*, and the archaic *Yue* conquered by the Qin.[15] In the 17th century, the Cantonese literati Qu Dajun made a clear distinction between the authentic *Yue-Ren* and the archaic *Yue*:

> "Since Qin Shi Huang… [sent] Chinese migrants settled with the Yue Barbarians… Today's Yue people are mostly Chinese in blood. Since the Qin-Han period, they were nourished by [music and rites], and are no different from the Central Plains. The archaic Yue people who cut their hair short and tattooed their bodies, are today's Yao, Tong, Song, Lang, Li, Qi, Dan barbarians…… Qin Shi Huang's great feat lied in his civilizing of the archaic Yue People. And Zhao Tuo, who claimed kingship for himself… ruled with Barbaric customs… not allowing the Yue people to be civilized and educated by the Great Han for more than ninety years had indeed, committed a great crime… until its conquest by Emperor Wu of Han, [Yue] experienced another great change, whence it was civilized by the central plains. Until today, the Yue people did not believe they were once barbarians."[16]

According to Qu, the *Yue* people were to be differentiated from the other barbarians because they accepted *Li and Yue* from the Central Plains. Similarly, in *Guangzhou Fuzhi*, an outline of Guangdong's civilizing process was present. Through two thousand years from Qin to Qing, the culture of the Yue people went from "bloody and ferocious," barbaric and improper, to being "no different from the Central Plains," that "all customs… are like those of Zou-Lu of the antiquity."[17] Like Qu Dajun and the compiler of *Guangzhou Fuzhi*, many Cantonese literati shared the idea that the Guangdong they lived in was a civilized place and that they were no different culturally or even biologically from the Chinese residing in the Central Plains. While Mencius came from Zou,

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[14] Yue here represents two distinct Chinese characters. While in Chinese literature they were both used to represent Lingnan, a region that includes Guangdong and Guangxi; they nevertheless represented different groups of people. In this paper, the archaic Yue, which represents the non-Chinese aborigines in Lingnan is to differentiate from the later Yue, which represents the Han Chinese or the Cantonese people of Guangdong.

[15] David Faure, "Becoming Cantonese," in *Unity and Diversity*, edited by Tao Tao Liu and David Faure, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 37.

[16] Qu Dajun, *Guangdong Xinyu*, (A New Lexicon of Guangdong), (17th century), 232.

[17] *Xinxiu Guangzhou Fuzhi*, (Revised Gazetteer of Guangzhou Prefecture), (17th century), 173-179.

Confucius was born in Lu; by linking themselves with the ancient sages, one could observe the pride that Cantonese literati took in their regional culture but also their eagerness to present themselves as part of the central kingdom.

More than simply narrating a history, the Cantonese literati also utilized a migration tale to refine their claim. In the gazetteers of most Cantonese prefectures and counties, the place Zhujixiang echoed throughout the pages. According to *Guangzhou Fuzhi*, "most prestigious and old lineages of [Guangzhou] came from Zhujixiang," while *Kaiping Xianzhi* recorded that, "most lineages of Southern Guangdong came from Zhujixiang."[18] In *Xiangshan Xianzhi*, sixty of a hundred recorded lineages trace their origin back to Zhujixiang.[19] These gazetteers not only made mention of Zhujixiang, they also recorded the reason behind its continuous appearance. For instance, in *Kaiping Xianzhi*:

> "Most lineages in Kaiping today traced the year of their migration to the Mongol invasion, and place of settlement to Zhujixiang because it is the northern entrance into Guangdong, and every migrant who travel southward must take Zhujixiang as a temporary hub."[20]

In *Guangzhou Fuzhi*, the name Zhujixiang was said to have been named after Kaifeng, the Song dynasty capital because "when the Song dynasty fell, its officials who took refuge to Nanxiong could not forget about their grief and their home."[21] One can observe that the Cantonese compilers of these gazetteers utilized Zhujixiang to refine their claim. More than just a history, Zhujixiang could act as a representation of their Chinese blood. Rather than being the archaic *Yue* who became civilized, the Cantonese literati through Zhujixiang became descendent of the people of the central plains.

Moreover, through Zhujixiang, Cantonese literati were able to legitimize their position as the dominant group in Guangdong. In a popular fiction of the 18th century, an anonymous author wrote a story about Zhujixiang migrants settling in the Pearl River delta where documents like authorized passes and tax-registration, which bear an official marking, appeared multiple times. Whether or not the story was true, it made a claim about the Cantonese people as rightful and contributing subjects of the state in comparison to aborigines like the *Yao*, whose name indicated their exemption from taxation and corvée labor.[22] Like a duet, the Cantonese history and Zhujixiang thus became an identity indicator that affirmed Cantonese similarity to the central plains, and the purity of their Chinese blood.

Like their wealthy neighbor, the Hakka literati, members of another Chinese subgroup in Guangdong, sought to make a similar claim about their identity. Unlike the Cantonese, however, whose literary rhetoric appeared as early as the 17th century, the Hakka voice did not become a considerable force until after the devastating Hakka-Punti War between the Hakkas and the Cantonese in the mid-19th century.[23] Xu Xuzeng, a Jinshi, or civil examination degree-holder of

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[18] *Guangzhou Fuzhi* (Gazetteer of Guangzhou Prefecture), (1879), chapter 160. *Kaiping Xianzhi*, (Gazetteer of Kaiping County), (1933), 111-112.
[19] *Xiangshan Xianzhi Xubian* (Revised Gazetteer of Xiangshan County), (1920), chapter 3.
[20] *Kaiping Xianzhi*, (Gazetteer of Kaiping County), (1933), 111-112.
[21] *Guangzhou Fuzhi* (Gazetteer of Guangzhou Prefecture), (1879), chapter 160.
[22] Faure, 45.
[23] Liu Ping, *Bei Yi Wang De Zhan Zheng*, (Beijing: Shang Wu Yin Shu Guan, 2003), introduction.

the highest rank, wrote in 1808 perhaps the first literature from a Hakka perspective. According to Xu,

> "Today's Hakkas are in fact descendent of Song loyalists from the Central Plains... Then the Mongols invaded further south, the Song court moved hither and thither, finally to Lingnan. The old prestigious families along with commoners uprooted themselves and followed… Accompanying the emperor to the very south, only one in ten thousand survived, scattering everywhere… Avoiding the unhealthy climate of the lowlands and unwilling to live among people of different customs and speech, they selected an area [in the highlands] ... Moreover, as survivors of the same cause, they felt they should reside together [and] preserve their customs and speech… so that their patriotic spirit would not diminish."[24]

In Xu's rhetoric, Hakkas, like the Cantonese, were descendent of migrants from the Central Plains, but through narrating the Mongol invasion and the fall of Song, the wordsmith endowed the Hakkas with loyalism, one of the most praised characteristic in Chinese culture and one that the Cantonese did not claim. Perhaps Xu's intent wasn't merely to claim a northern origin as the Cantonese literati did, but to prove that Hakkas are bearers of the Chinese civilization because of their higher intrinsic values.

After Xu, Hakka literati quickly began to utilize the rhetoric of loyalism and other valued attributes to refine their claim. In *Jiaying Zhouzhi*, another Hakka Jinshi, Wen Zhonghe made a similar claim about Hakka loyalism:

> "According to the elders of the prefecture, when the dynasty was in danger, eight hundred loyalists from Songkou fought to protect the emperor. They failed, and Zhuo Man, the only survivor along with other Northern migrants settled in the valley of Ning Hua Shi Bi. When I took a survey of my friends and relatives, most of them said their ancestors came from Ning Hua Shi Bi."[25]

Unlike Xu's rhetoric however, Wen's description was ambiguous in that the Hakka Jinshi left out details of time and space but instead focused on the rhetoric itself. In addition, Wen created a narrative of southward migration like the Cantonese literati. In his telling, Ninghua Shibi became the Zhujixiang for Hakkas, a strategically important region on the borders of Jiangxi and Zhejiang province.[26] Regardless, like Zhujixiang for the Cantonese, Ninghua Shibi served the same purpose for the Hakkas. Although they might have produced different outcomes[27], their original intents were nevertheless to open Cantonese and Hakka accessibility to the Central Plains by narrating a story of social unrest and refugee, and by tracing a northern root. Blown by the wind, fallen leaves of the Hakkas flew to the South, and with them their northern speech and customs.

As another rhetoric used by the Hakka literati, Hakka literature often praised traits and values that were present in their customs and lifestyles. In *Xingning Xianzhi*, Hakka women were said to "have no restrains but worked in the farms just like their men."[28] Though a short description,

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[24] Lo Hsiang Lin, *Historical Sources for the Study of the Hakkas*, (Hong Kong: Institute of Chinese Culture Hong Kong, 1963), 297-299.
[25] *Jiaying Zhouzhi*, (Gazetteer of Jiayingzhou Prefecture), (1898), 2327.
[26] Lo, 377-286.
[27] Y.M Zhang, "Ke Jia Ning Hua Shi Bi Chuan Shuo De You Lai Yu Yan Jiu", in *The Periodical of Hakka Research*, vol. 34, no. 1, (2009), 26-28.
[28] *Xingning Xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Xingning County), (1856), 136.

the compiler in fact endowed the Hakka women with great perseverance and diligence, two highly praised characteristics in Chinese culture and in Confucianism. Unlike Cantonese women who took pride in their bound-feet, and stayed in their chambers, Hakka women "grow up learning all domestic skills… serve their husbands and teach their children."[29] For the various Hakka literati, admirable traits of Hakka women were reactions to the "disastrous fall of the dynasty" when their forefathers were forced to migrate southward. In addition, the uniformity of Hakka customs was raised in accounts of different Hakka literati. For instance, Xu Xuzeng observed the similarity between customs of the Hakkas and the people north of the Yangtze River during his incumbency as an official.[30] While Lin Daquan explicitly expressed that "the so-called Hakkas do not exist north of the Yangtze River, because the North is the land of the Hakkas."[31]

Once again, the Cantonese and Hakka literati utilized different elements in their culture and languages, whether admirable traits or others, to refine their arguments. In the end, despite different applications, simple or obscure, the Hakka literati argued for one point, that "Hakkas really are descendent of the ancient emperors Tang and Ru, and bearers of the cultures of antiquity,"[32] while the Cantonese literati asserted their identity as the civilized and legitimate Chinese settlers of Guangdong. The efforts of both the Cantonese and Hakka literati in aligning themselves with the Central Plains and the state orthodoxy suggested their acceptance of state authority and of the Chinese literati culture, embodied in Confucianism. Furthermore, their undertaking of the responsibility of All-Under-Heaven indicated the eventual penetration of state authority into southern local society and the reinforced cultural and political connection between Guangdong, a peripheral region and the central state power in the 18th and 19th centuries.

From Barbaric Tongue to Ancient Speech

As discussed above, one of the most significant Cantonese features for those not affiliated with Guangdong was the Cantonese speech. In many accounts, including that of the diligent Yongzheng Emperor in the 18th century, the Cantonese speech and its many local sub-dialects posed a threat to the efficiency of state administration and even to the unity of the empire itself. Despite non-Cantonese suspicion and discrimination however, the Cantonese literati took pride in their speech. Cantonese or formally the speech of Guangzhou, was the *Zhengyin* or standard pronunciation of the province, just as Guanhua was the Zhengyin of the state bureaucracy and of many cross-province literati societies. For the Cantonese literati who took pride in their speech, Cantonese was also believed to have a close relationship with a more ancient form of Chinese speech than Mandarin, which was spoken in the Central Plains during the 18th and 19th centuries. In *Guangdong Tongzhi*, Cantonese was described as a speech spoken "out of the lips… not clear nor turbid yet matches the ancient musical tone… elegant and emotional, often [makes] the listeners cry."[33] In *Gaozhou Fuzhi*, the compiler even claimed that "the southern barbaric tongue recorded in past literature was the speech of southern savages like the Yao."[34] While the compiler of *Panyu Xianzhi*

[29] Lo, 297-299.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ching, 74.
[32] Ibid.
[33] *Guangdong Tongzhi* (Gazetteer of Guangdong Province), (1864), 6139.
[34] Ching, 116.

argued for the commonality of speech variation across the empire that it was not "a phenomenon unique to Guangdong," but a result of the abandonment of phonology since the 13th century.[35]

In their literature, Cantonese literati often utilized quotations and philology to reinforce arguments about their speech. Chen Li, a prominent 19th century Cantonese scholar, argued for the antiquity and elegance of the Cantonese speech:

> "The speech of Guangzhou matches the speech of the Sui-Tang period more than speeches from other provinces… Master Zhu said, the speech of all four directions have their flaws except the speech of Guangzhou… The flawlessness of the speech of Guangzhou came from northern migrants through a thousand years. So, when I examined it with books of the Sui-Tang, they matched perfectly well."[36]

According to Chen, Cantonese was an ancient speech and one praised by Zhu Xi, the Neo-Confucian scholar whose fame matched that of Confucius and Mencius, and whose interpretations of Confucian classics became state orthodoxy. Chen's method of associating the Cantonese speech with a quote from Zhu Xi added significance to his argument and raised awareness amongst other literati who practiced the speech. After Chen's work, his methods were frequently referenced in other literature about the Cantonese speech. The compiler of *Panyu Xianzhi*, for instance, gave an example of the character Zai, which means juvenile and wrote that "if [one] read the ancient poetry of *Lisao*, [he] would know that its character matches with its sound in the speech of Guangzhou."[37] By making a claim about the elegance, antiquity and past compliments of the Cantonese speech, the Cantonese literati unilaterally subverted the barbarity that was sometimes attached to them and ultimately reinforced the claim about a northern ancestry of the Cantonese people.

While the Cantonese made a claim about their speech antiquity through quotations of prominent scholars and classical Chinese philology, Hakka literati sought to prove their point through social observations and comparative method. In *Jiaying Zhouzhi*, Wen Zhonghe asserted the similarity between the Hakka speech and the Chinese speech during the Sui-Tang period from 6th to 10th centuries, and proclaimed that "If not by careful research, one could not notice that the only surviving parts of the ancient speech lie in the tongue of [Jiayingzhou]."[38] In such rhetoric the Hakka speech surpassed the antiquity of Cantonese because it became the sole representative of the ancient speech in Wen's time. However, as the sturdiest ritual bronzes would lose their grandeur due to corrosion over time, so would languages be influenced by the vicissitudes of dynasties. In *Xingning Xianzhi*, its compiler admitted the nuances between Mandarin and Hakka despite making a claim about its proper essence.[39] In response to such incongruity, the Hakka literati Lin Daquan in *Ke Shuo* argued about the commonality of speech variations across the Chinese empire:

> "The speech of every province south of the Yangtze River is different from one another except the Hakkas. Hakkas from different counties, prefectures, and provinces speak the same speech…… Guanhua is the official speech of every dynasty, Hakka is the speech of our ancestors,

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[35] *Panyu Xianzhi*, (Gazetteer of Panyu County), (1774), 1564-1565
[36] Chen Li, "Guangzhou Yinshuo", in *Dongshu Ji*, (19th century), chapter 1.
[37] *Panyu Xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Panyu), (1774), 1564-1565.
[38] *Jiangying Zhouzhi* (Gazetteer of Jiayingzhou Prefecture), (1898), 369.
[39] *Xingning Xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Xingning County), (1856), 136.

> and that is why they match so perfectly well. Although today's Hakka speech is occasionally mixed with local influence, the phenomenon is not unique to the Hakkas."[40]

For Lin, Hakka, unlike speech of other southern provinces, is a speech of uniformity despite its occasional "local influence" and that Hakka people from different regions could communicate without difficulty.[41] Lin's words elevated the status of Hakka speech and aligned it with Mandarin which is spoken by two thirds of the empire's population. With Lin's emphasis on its uniformity and prevalence, the Hakka speech escaped the boundary of dialect, a word that contains a negative connotation about a rural and lowly speech. Along with the rhetoric of antiquity, the Hakka speech was utilized by the Hakka literati to reinforce their claim of northern ancestry, just like the Cantonese literati.

Us, Central Plains, and Them

While the Cantonese literati focused on proving their similarity and close relationship with the central plains, they never passed up an opportunity to defame the other residents of Guangdong through literature. Very frequently, the Cantonese literati's overt discrimination against other groups appeared on the pages of Cantonese gazetteers. In *Zhaoqing Fuzhi*, the compiler described the *Liao* people as bloody barbarians who perform "ceremonies by peeling off face tissues of a man" and "eat everything that moves."[42] While in *Enping Xianzhi*, the *Yao* was described as a violent people who "when arguments… occur, [would] slay even their closest ones."[43]

Among all discriminatory descriptions in Cantonese gazetteers, the use of dog radicals was the most observant trend. In written Chinese, a radical is the indicator of a character's meaning, and a dog radical indicates a Chinese character's association with animals or bestial traits. Therefore, by attaching a dog radical to the names of other people, the Cantonese literati implied that in their view, the non-Cantonese groups in Guangdong were more closely, physically and mentally, with beasts than humans. Perhaps the intent of the Cantonese literati was to draw a line between themselves and the bestial peoples, in their words, to reinforce their claims about the sophistication in Cantonese culture and purity in their Chinese blood. In some extreme cases, the Cantonese people even referred to the people outside of Guangdong as "Waijiangliao, or savages outside of the river's boundary."[44] *Waijiangliao*, with the last character, *Liao* being attached to a dog radical, subverted the efforts of the Cantonese literati made to associate themselves with the larger Chinese population. However, such extreme views also revealed the possibility of a growing consciousness and superiority within the Cantonese people since the 18th century, and of their flaunting about being the purest Chinese people within the empire and the group most closely related to the Central Plains.

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[40] Ching, 73-74.
[41] *Chixi Xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Chixi County), (1920), 180-181.
[42] *Zhaoqing Fuzhi* (Gazetteer of Zhaoqing Prefecture), (1876), 488.
[43] *Enping Xianzhi*, (Gazetteer of Enping County), (1825), 639.
[44] *Guangzhou Fuzhi* (Gazetteer of Guangzhou Prefecture), (1879), 271.

Besides the extreme superiority expressed by their uses of dog radical in names,[45] the Cantonese literati also insistently emphasized the orderliness of their society, which was explicitly expressed through strict sexual separation and hierarchy. In *Xinhui Xianzhi*, the compiler stated that "one will not meet the wife of his brother at any time except the celebration of new year."[46] In *Kaiping Xianzhi*, rules were stricter in that "unmarried women will not see any men outside of her family unless she becomes ill; even when she is ill, she cannot talk to the doctor."[47] Taking pride in the controllable variable—the chastity of their women—the compiler of *Kaiping Xianzhi* even expressed proudly that "such is the sincerity of a woman's chamber."[48] The separation of sex not only revealed the male dominance in Cantonese society, such social restriction which was practiced throughout Chinese communities, aligned the Cantonese people with the larger Chinese population.

In addition to the limitations of women's chamber, foot-binding was another way in which the Cantonese literati reinforced their identity. Since the Manchus established their supremacy over the Chinese, foot-binding became a way for the Chinese to preserve their last dignity as their conquerors have forbidden the practice. For the Cantonese, a similar practice could be used as another justification for their close ties with the Chinese orthodox. In *Xinxiu Xiangshan Xianzhi*, the compiler asserted that all Cantonese "women take pride in their bound-feet."[49] While *Zengcheng Xianzhi* stated that "only those servants and women of the Yao, Dan and the Hakka will have bare feet, which disgust any men walking by."[50] Although the comparison between the Cantonese and the others who didn't practice foot-binding gave the Cantonese literati a justification for their claims about their more sophisticated Chinese culture, it nevertheless revealed the unilateralism of the Cantonese literati's wishful thinking.

However, if one connects the Cantonese literati's expression of the chastity of their women and their use of dog radicals to denote other peoples of Guangdong with the peripheral location of the province and its wide ethnic diversity, it is not difficult to understand the motifs behind such aggressiveness. Not only was Guangdong located on the edge of the empire, it was a region shared by aboriginal peoples, Han-Chinese subgroups, and foreign traders. As a result, these different peoples experienced inevitable processes of amalgamation and mutual cultural influence. For instance, a Jiangnan literatus in the 16th century noticed the Cantonese peoples' obsession with areca nut while official history centuries earlier stated the aboriginal origin of areca nut usage.[51] Even the Hakkas, finding themselves among extremely diverse groups, used the same strategy but like the Cantonese literati, they have neglected the refutability of their argument. Bone-collecting, a burial practice deemed by the Hakka literati as reflection of their filial piety, had in fact originated from the Yao and She peoples and was widely practiced by groups in Guangdong.[52] No doubt, the

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[45] Attaching dog radicals to names of the aboriginal or nomadic peoples was in fact, a practice common among the Chinese literati rather than the Cantonese literati alone. This could be considered as another commonality between the Cantonese literati and the larger Chinese literati community.
[46] *Xinhui Xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Xinhui County), (1841), 60.
[47] *Kaiping Xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Kaiping County), (1823), 137.
[48] Ibid.
[49] *Xinxiu Xiangshan Xianzhi*, (Revised Gazetteer of Xiangshan County), (1920), chapter 2.
[50] *Zengcheng Xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Zengcheng County), (1820), 202.
[51] Wu Y.J, "Ke Jia Wen Hua Er Yuan Lun," in *Periodical of Guangxi Minzu Xueyuan*, vol. 2, (1995), 8.
[52] Wu, 8. Xie C. G, "Ke Jia Wen Hua Xing Zhi Yu Lei Xing Xin Shuo," in *Periodical of Hakka Research*, vol. 34, no. 1, (2009), 17-18.

Cantonese and Hakka literati were conscious about their situation and I propose that the peripheral and ethnically diverse space in which the Cantonese and Hakka people resided in had inflicted a collective inferiority complex upon the two Chinese subgroups. But it was under such mentality and their forced co-existence with the aborigines and other Chinese subgroups that the Cantonese and Hakka literati felt the strong need to justify and express the purity and legitimacy of their identity. For an individual who resides within the central plains, there was never the need to claim insistently a Chinese identity. Instead, it was always those who lived by the edges of the empire and who have frequent contacts with other non-Chinese groups that felt the urge to identify with the center to express their identity and proclaim their uniqueness and sometimes superiority over the others.

Conclusion

The population of Guangdong is large and diverse; and the history of its two largest groups, the Cantonese and Hakkas, is long and complex. This is such a complex topic, that literary rhetoric of the Cantonese and Hakka literati examined in this paper can only scratch the surface of a hidden iceberg. But from the many narratives about acculturation and migration to the purity and antiquity of speeches; and from virtues and cultural practices to Cantonese discrimination against non-Cantonese, the Cantonese and Hakka literati filled gazetteers of their counties and prefectures with eloquent rhetoric that they believed and hoped would align them with the central plains and prove their close associations with the core of Chinese culture and with the Chinese state orthodoxy. Rather than focusing on the relationship between the outsider's perspective and the radical reactions of the Cantonese and Hakka literati, I provide in this paper a different perspective, one that attempts to examine the Cantonese and Hakka rhetoric themselves and their motifs through their peripheral and ethnically diverse living space and seeks to further the research on the historical relationship between Chinese state authority and local society in China and the role literati played between the two. The limitations of this study are that it takes too board a geographical expanse, and while it focuses only on Guangdong's gazetteers, much of the other forms of literature were left aside. Hence, when given a chance, a more detailed research, set in a smaller spatial expanse but within the same time frame will be conducted. Since the Cantonese literati, based in Guangzhou dominated much of the literary, cultural, and political activities within the province of Guangdong, the prefecture of Guangzhou will be the ideal location of the research. Whence the dialect, custom, scholarship, and literature—practiced and produced by its literati will b examined.

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