

Historical Geography of Hejiang Town in Poetry and Ballads

Yao Gang

College of Marxism, West Anhui University, Lu'an, China

Abstract: *Poetry and Ballads are characterized by chanting the customs. They are a description and memory of people living in the area at that time. They contain rich historical and geographical contents, and are filled with strong local flavour and cultural individuality. We can see the historical geography of Hejiang from relevant poems and ballads. There are beautiful natural scenery, rich products and colourful folk customs. Salt and other goods transported through the Sichuan Guizhou ancient road are traded here, and finally a prosperous town is formed. Through these poems and ballads, we can understand the living, economic and cultural conditions in Hejiang history. Through the analysis of historical materials, we can explore more historical and cultural resources, which is of positive significance to the publicity and development of Hejiang.*

Keywords: *Hejiang, Market, Town, Ancient Road, Historical Geography*

1. Historical and Geographical Environment of Hejiang Town

Hejiang County is located in the southeast edge of Sichuan Basin, bordering on Chongqing and Guizhou, with superior geographical location. The Yangtze River flows through there, Chishui and Xishui flows into the Yangtze River here, hence it is called Hejiang. The terrain of the border area between Sichuan and Guizhou is complex, with mountains, hills, river valleys and plains crisscrossed. The saying “there is no three feet flat” is a very vivid description of this area, but it has a beautiful natural environment, warm and humid climate and rich products.

Due to the needs of ancient politics and commerce, the Qin and Han Dynasty began to develop and manage the Yunnan and guizhou region, where known as the “Southwest Yi”. At the time of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, Tang Meng, Zhang Qian, Sima Xiangru and others were successively dispatched to guide the “Southwest Yi”, these areas gradually became the official jurisdiction of the Han Dynasty. Since then, the Sichuan and guizhou ancient road has become an exchange channel for salt, grain, horses, medicine and other materials, and the economy and culture of the southwest have developed.

From the Han Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty, with the development of Ancient Road business activities, the ancient road continued to expand. The gathering of business travel and the distribution of materials have given birth to many important docks and markets in Hejiang region, such as Fubao, Chewang, Xianshi, Yaoba, etc. In the Qing Dynasty, Zhang Guangsi, Ding Baozhen and other officials dredged and renovated Chishui river and other waterways, so that the ship could sail directly from Chishui River to Hejiang county. Follow the Yangtze River eastward to Chongqing, or go West against the river to Luzhou, which further promoted the convenience of business exchanges between Sichuan and Guizhou.

Although the waterway is smooth, the land route has not declined. The waterway from Chishui river to Hejiang is curved. It is more cost-effective to transport bulk cargo by waterway. The land route is closer to Luzhou through Yaoba market. Considering the problems of manpower and time cost, bulk cargo are transported by water to Xianshi market first, ashore and then transferred to Yaoba market, and then transported by land to Luzhou, This saves a lot of time than single water or land transportation, thus increasing the carrying capacity of goods in Yaoba market of Hejiang. Therefore, Yaoba market has become an important transit point in the west of Hejiang. Chewang and Xianshi have become important markets by water due to the transit of Chishui River, and Yaoba has become important market by land due to the convenience of transit. Water and land cooperate closely and complement each other.

The above-mentioned geographical environment and business exchanges between Sichuan and

Guizhou were recorded in many folk poems and ballads at that time. For example, Zhao Xi's seven character quatrain "Hejiang county" Contains the verse: "Fu County in the Han Dynasty is ancient jiang post^①, a line of itinerant trader came out of Guizhou. Before reaching the county gate, they entered the painting first, and the green mountains of Shaomin fell on the bow of the boat." [1] In another poem "Hejiang County", written by Bei Qingqiao in the Qing Dynasty, it is said that "Ethnic minorities live on the shore of Yong river, where several rivers converge. Passengers arrive at Fu County in the evening. In autumn, Shaomin mountain and the river depend on each other. When tourists are happy, they take off their shoes and express their feelings on the boat. No beautiful songs can be heard, only the cry of apes accompanied sadness in the night." [2] Hejiang County was called Fu County in ancient times. Shaomin mountain is the Bijia mountain in Hejiang today, also known as Hejiang mountain and Anle mountain. The poem depicts a picture of Hejiang water business travel, the green Anle mountain scenery and the long merchant ships are vivid. From the poems, we can roughly see the natural geographical scenery and waterway trade conditions of Hejiang. A poem "Chishui River" of Zhao fan described the historical and social features of the Chishui River Basin in Sichuan and Guizhou, where the land conditions are staggered and complex, the folk customs are rough, and the local people's life is not tranquil due to many times of turmoil in history. He wrote "Carry salt and lead on their shoulders to sell, return with wood and stone for sale" [3]. From the poem, we can see that the main trading goods in Sichuan and Guizhou are salt, lead, wood, stone, etc.

2. Salt Transportation and Exchange between Market and Town

The ancient road between Sichuan and Guizhou connects the two places. One of the important substances transported by people is salt. Because Guizhou is short of salt while Zigong in southern Sichuan is rich in salt, driven by the needs of life and profits, a large number of people take pains to transport salt in the rugged mountain roads. Tian Wen, a former governor of Guizhou in the Qing Dynasty, mentioned the price of salt in his book "Qian Book". "There is salt in Hedong, Kunwu, Persia, Kubin, Khotan and Guduo, however, Guizhou is short of salt. Guizhou rely on Sichuan to supply salt. Without Sichuan, Guizhou people will not know what salt tastes like. Sichuan is rich in salt, mainly well salt. The salt wells in Shunqing have become deserted, Rongzhou's salt is transported to Guizhou, but it can't be transported by boat or horse. It depends on shoulder and walking, resulting in sore shoulders and bleeding feet. It's difficult to transport salt. Therefore, the price is expensive, and many local people can't afford high price salt. The people of Guizhou in that era suffered too much." [4] It can be seen that Guizhou has a large demand for Sichuan salt and the hardships of transportation through people and horses. After all, human endurance is limited. It is an inevitable choice to rest and supply in some towns of Hejiang. Therefore, there are miscellaneous places and goods. The town not only plays a role in economic exchange, but also promotes the integration of Sichuan and Guizhou culture.

There are some folk songs spread on the Sichuan and Guizhou ancient road: "a geomantic country, two high mountains, nine of ten women are coquettish. They don't need silver and rice, just a little salt with pepper." "Grain and mountain products are sold, and the salt is carried back to Guizhou." These folk songs are a true portrayal of the differences in material conditions between Sichuan and Guizhou, the difficult situation of material transportation on ancient roads, and the true feelings of the people. Thousands of businessmen and poor people on the border of Sichuan and Guizhou walk on this ancient road for economic interests or a mouthful of salt, and take the market town as the link to realize the allocation of regional material resources. Market town is a place where you can get benefits, there will be no gathering without towns, and there will be no commodity circulation without towns. People around the town regard the town as a platform to obtain financial benefits, provide tea, wine, meals, accommodation and entertainment, and meet their social and cultural needs while meeting the economic needs of business and tourism. There are no surprises.

There are several routes for Sichuan salt to Guizhou. The southeast route starts from Zigong. Well salt is first transported to Luzhou near the Tuojiang River, and then divided into two routes. One goes south and then transported to Bijie area through Xuyong; the other line is along the southeast to Hejiang, reaching Xishui and Maotai Town in Renhuai. "There are many stones in the ancient road, Climb mountains and big slopes. Hold the walking stick tightly and often pay attention to your feet. The ancient mountain roads are dangerous, there is more joy when many people accompany." These folk songs vividly describe the hard work of the porters from morning to night, their courage to travel across mountains and rivers. During the reign of Emperor Guangxu of the Qing Dynasty, Zhao fan wrote: "when people go out with salt and come back with lead, the income from hard work is only

^① Post: the meaning of post station and wharf.

enough to feed the body. Sweating like rain, rest must rely on stick, It's sad to watch them by the road.”[5] The image of carrying salt people makes us feel unusual hardships.

Some common people who have no permanent property are all engaged in manual transportation of salt. Among them, there are not only the poor people in Hejiang area, but also the poor people in Guizhou mountainous area. Selling labor on the rugged mountain roads has become the main way for the people of the region to make a living. These “carrying goods men” or “carrying goods women” jokingly call themselves “carrying goods sons”. They carry heavy goods and rely on solid food (prepared for a journey) to feed their hunger. When they are tired, they use their stick to hold the goods and have a rest. They carry the hardships of life and the worries of their families, which are filled with poetry and ballads.

Xie Cheng wrote a group of poems in his historical novel “1949 on the edge of Guizhou”, “Singing about the women carrying salt on Erlang Beach”, one of them is written like this: “rouge and powder never added to the cheek, and the bluish never came to the top of the eyebrow. Born to be abandoned by the God of flowers, they bear the hardships of carrying salt at a young age.....” This group of poems describes the rugged mountain roads and the situation of carrying salt people. The oppression of life makes the beautiful women enter a heavy and miserable life and consume their youth. Many men carry salt away from home for a long time. “There is a wife in Sichuan who wants her husband to stay at home, and there is a wife in Guizhou who wants her husband to go home as soon as possible.” “A virtuous wife hopes her husband can earn money to go home. Many men return home are still single. We advise the man who sells coolies not to be deceived. It's hard to get out early and stay late. Making money is to support the family.” How many touching stories or sad endings have been born out over the years?

3. Hejiang Regional Market Town Is Rich in Products

The fertile land and excellent climate environment in southern Sichuan make grain and livestock flourish, so it has become a relatively prosperous area in Sichuan. Hejiang region mainly produces rice, wheat, corn, sweet potato, rape, beans and other crops, and is rich in many specialties. Xianshi, Yaoba, Chewang and other towns are rich in a large number of high-quality fruits, such as litchi, green fruit and pomelo, which are known as the “three wonders of Hejiang”. In the 19th year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu of the Qing Dynasty (1893), Wang ying hao wrote a poem when he left his post as county magistrate, he praised Hejiang's rich products: “the Yuban^① with Zen meditation is the best. Eating fat mandarin fish is better than other fish when drinking good wine. The frost fruit is sweeter than sugarcane, and the dew litchi is tenderer than vegetables. The precious Bergamot was transported by ancient ships, the deep mountain wood leaves are like seal script. The products in Hejiang town are really beautiful, how I want to realize my original dream of rural life here.” The poem describes the delicious specialties of Hejiang represented by bamboo shoots, green fruits, litchi, bergamot and mandarin fish. In order to taste Hejiang's specialties for a long time, the author hopes to live here in seclusion and realize his wish. It makes people salivate. From this, we can also see the situation of Hejiang regional economy and industry in that period.

In the Tang Dynasty, the fruits produced in Hejiang were already famous, especially litchi. “Looking back at Chang'an, it is like a pile of splendid scenery, and thousands of doors open at the top of the mountain. As soon as the horse came flying, the imperial concubine smiled happily, no one knows the cause was the arrival of litchi.” The imperial concubine's love for litchi and Emperor Xuanzong's love for imperial concubine are described vividly. The top-grade litchi sent to Chang'an from afar day and night is called “imperial concubine smile”. Luo Dajing, a scholar of the Southern Song Dynasty, believes that litchi in this poem grows in Luzhou. He gave a detailed description in the book “jade dew in the crane forest”.

Many areas of Hejiang are rich in high-quality bamboo and wood, and Chewang town is also known as the “hometown of miscellaneous bamboo”. Food and goods chapter of the Republic of China edition of the annals of Hejiang County records that Hejiang is rich in bamboo and wood, “the five districts in Nanfan, the city... are especially rich in bamboo and wood. There are many kinds of bamboo, and the South bamboo is the crown. The giant has a circumference of four inches. the bamboo is cut through the joint, so that it can be inserted into the well to draw salt, bamboo is a major export every year...” In the narration, the wide spread of bamboo shoots as a good food can be seen. Bamboo is an important species in Hejiang forestry, the producing area is mostly in the west of Hejiang. Bamboo

^① Yuban: This is the alias of bamboo shoot, which refers to the bamboo shoot in Hejiang.

shoots are not only as excellent food raw materials, but also used as tools and materials for well salt production in Zigong, building materials, bamboo mats and bamboo baskets, which involve all aspects of people's production and life.[6]

A Hejiang folk song praises the green fruit: "a green fruit has sharp ends, crisp skin and fresh taste. It tastes a little astringent at the beginning, and then it tastes sweet." Green fruit trees are rare, the fruit has the reputation of "healthy fruit" and "Chinese treasure". It is not only delicious, but also has high medicinal value. The color of Hejiang pomelo is golden yellow. Both pomelo flowers and grapefruit smell fragrant, and the pomelo meat tastes mellow. Yang Wanli has a poem describing pomelo flowers: "when pomelo flowers in a bottle touch your nose, it will suddenly be called burning incense." "The city is covered with light rain and the fragrance of pomelo flowers". Bergamot is a subtropical plant, which needs a warm and humid environment. Hejiang area has many hilly areas, the climate is warm and humid, so the geographical environment suitable for the growth of Sichuan bergamot, especially on the top of hills. Bergamot is not only delicious and edible, but also can be used as traditional Chinese medicine or as an ornamental. These are the signs of Hejiang's abundant resources, which are still worth exploring today.

4. Folk Customs of Towns in Hejiang Region

Hejiang area has many market town due to the ancient road between Sichuan and Guizhou, and many legends have been born. For example, a ballad spread in Yaoba market in Hejiang: "The terrain of Yaoba market like nine dragons gathering treasures, and the ten thousand horses in Dongyue Temple return to their groove. Standing on the top of the mountain, hundreds of hills gather around the city. King Yao wanted to establish the imperial capital, counting 99 three times. Missing one at his feet, this story has been passed down to today." Folklore, such as King Yao's counting mountains and nine dragon Gather treasures, has been continuously spread and interpreted among the people, which is fascinating and adds color to the local history and culture.

People from south to North gathered in these towns. In order to have a smooth sailing, they prayed for the protection of various gods. Therefore, various small temples, such as Guanyin temple, Dongyue Temple, Sandian temple and Yuhuang temple, were set up in market like Yaoba. The gods of these temples guarded the local peace and entrusted people's demands. This has also led to the town god meeting, fire god meeting, lamp pole meeting and other festival activities. In addition, the local people have also created various customs to express their sustenance. Lu Chengsheng was an official in Hejiang in the fourth year of Tongzhi in the Qing Dynasty, he wrote two Zhuzhi Poem, reflecting the customs of "stepping on the bridge" and "stealing green" in Hejiang. "The toad circle (it means The moon is round.)is in the spring of the fifteenth day, and the sick heart pours a petal of incense. The lights everywhere depict the word double happiness, and stepping on the bridge is devoted to rich dress of woman." "Small foot-binding, walk gently and listen carefully with emotion. Shyly avoid the people she like, and sister-in-law also learns to steal green." [7] It can be seen that in the Qing Dynasty, there were still customs in Hejiang area that women stepped on bridges on the 15th day of the first month and men stole other people's vegetables and cooked food to pray for a disease-free and disaster-free in the New Year.

The entry of immigrants in the late Ming Dynasty and early Qing Dynasty also promoted the multi-cultural integration of these towns. They bring not only commercial exchanges and agricultural technology, but also the blending and transfer of lifestyles and folk customs. This flow and integration contributed to the formation and development of Sichuan Opera in the Qing Dynasty. People from all provinces settled and did business here, built guild halls in Hejiang and other towns, and brought the forms of native opera to southern Sichuan. Different opera styles absorbed each other, and gradually formed the Ziyang River faction of Sichuan Opera. These halls not only serve as a communication platform for foreign people and businessmen, but also often have theatres like some temple. They arrange drama performances for commercial entertainment or festivals. Some people pay money to invite the troupe to perform, which is called offering the play. Some people blamed for making mistakes, eliminating gaps and hatred, which is called punishing play. This kind of opera performance is very effective in maintaining the order of the town, promoting education and people's cohesiveness. It has played a certain role in unifying and educating these people gathered in the town in silence.

Hejiang, a land of natural treasures, has bred many celebrities and sages, such as Li Yuelong, Ren Darong, Liang Ziming, Ling Zifeng, Wang Chaowen and so on. The unique environment also attracts foreign celebrities to stop, visit, explore and chant. Such as Xian Wang, Su Shi, Lu You, Wang Shizhen

and so on. XianWang, a former magistrate of Hejiang County in the Tang Dynasty, wrote in his "Inscribe Anle mountain", "the green hill lies across the white clouds, the Taoist master of the Sui Dynasty have lost traces. The green cypress does not wither, the keel is thin, spring water from the cave flowed under the cold light of the moon. A boat stands far away to the horizon, and all the valleys are seen from the soles of its feet. There are still roads at the top of the mountain, it is not difficult to save immortal bones." [8]

Su Shi of Song Dynasty wrote a poem "Crossing the Anle mountain", In the poem he said that "The Taoist master has become an immortal, I don't know where he has gone. The jade seal is cherished by people in the world. The descendants of our country worshipping the dead immortal. How can autumn leaves all over the mountain be God." These poems reflect the legend that there were Taoist immortal traces and autumn leaves like gods on Anle mountain in Hejiang town at that time. Zhang Wentao wrote in "On the Hejiang beach • writing poems for the king of Xiliang": "There are many stone beams in the east of Xibu River, the boatman respectfully worshipped the gods. In front of you, I'm just an official with a lower position, and I'm drunk. I'm happy to advise Xiliang Wang to have a drink. the matter of ghosts and gods is remote, and the land is dangerous. Officials like rotten rats are extremely boring and it is absurd to Greedy for money. People like me who love drinking regard life and death as the same. It is common for us to throw ourselves into water or fire after death. Crossing Dongting in the south and the yellow river in the north, looking at the Canghai sea in the East and Qutang in the West. The sword on my waist is as bright as snow, When I passed by the boat, the dragons hid! Although all your ghosts and gods are fierce, don't be rampant!" [9]

It reflects the people's worship activities after busy season, and the boatman's behavior of praying Xiliang God to bless peace when crossing the beach. The Zhuzhi poem of Hejiang in the Qing Dynasty wrote: "The boat passes through litchi beach, with mountains in front of and behind the beach. It's not as leisurely as the villagers, they just came back from offering sacrifices to gods in Xiliang temple" [10]

It also confirms the folk custom of God worship in Xiliang temple at that time. These social customs and activities in Hejiang were not only a prayer for the prosperity of agriculture and commerce, but also a memorial to ancestors and gods. Wen Bolun's "literary and historical case of Dongbin cave in Hejiang" makes a textual on the true face of the Xiliang King's temple. He believes that the Xiliang King's temple is a memorial to the filial daughter Xianluo (Also known as xianniang) and the talented Xianwang. Later, it was falsely transmitted as a memorial to LV Guang and others. [11]

This custom activity was originally a tribute to the filial piety of the local filial daughter Xianluo, the memory and admiration of the county sage Xianwang.

5. Conclusion

Folk poetry and ballads are mainly characterized by singing about the eternal customs, so they contain strong regional cultural characteristics. From the poems and ballads related to Hejiang, we can see the historical geographical conditions of Hejiang region, the rich and high-quality agricultural resources, the hard-working quality of the people of Sichuan and Guizhou, the Sacrificial and other wonderful activities scenes seemed to leap off the page, which can be regarded as a vivid picture of Customs. By interpreting these, we can learn more about the local living, economic and cultural conditions, and see the beauty of Hejiang's natural environment, the richness of traditional culture and materials. These analyses are helpful to develop Hejiang historical and cultural tourism resources. It is of positive significance to publicize and support the development of Hejiang.

References

- [1] *Hejiang County Committee of the Chinese people's Political Consultative Conference, Publicity Department of Hejiang county Party committee of the Communist Party of China, Hejiang County Bureau of culture, sports, radio and television, Hejiang county academy of poetry, calligraphy and painting: "one hundred poems in Hejiang", 1997, P. 22.*
- [2] (Qing Dynasty) *Bei Qingqiao: collection of Bei Qingqiao, Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 2013, page 92.*
- [3] *Xuyong County History Compilation and revision committee: selected materials of Xuyong literature and history • Xuyong banknotes, 1983, P. 150.*
- [4] (Qing Dynasty) *Tian Wen: Qian book, Zhonghua Book Company, 1985, Vol. 2, page 28.*

- [5] Xuyong County History Compilation and revision committee: *selected materials of Xuyong literature and history • Xuyong banknotes*, 1983, pp. 154-155.
- [6] Editorial leading group of Hejiang County Chronicles: *selected materials of Hejiang County literature and history*, Vol. 5, 1986, P. 58.
- [7] Lin kongyi, Sha Mingpu, *Sichuan Zhuzhi Ci*, Sichuan people's publishing house, 1989, P. 116.
- [8] Cheng zhangcan: *Research on classical literature*, Vol. 18, I, Phoenix publishing house, 2015, P. 258.
- [9] Hejiang County Committee of the Chinese people's Political Consultative Conference, Publicity Department of Hejiang county Party committee of the Communist Party of China, Hejiang County Bureau of culture, sports, radio and television, Hejiang county academy of poetry, calligraphy and painting: "a hundred poems in Hejiang", December 1997, pp. 15-16.
- [10] Lin kongyi, Sha Mingpu, *Sichuan Zhuzhi Ci*, Sichuan people's publishing house, 1989, P. 116.
- [11] Wen Bolun: *the official case of literature and history of binyan in Hejiang cave*, *Journal of literature and history*, 2014, issue 1.