

# Research on the Characteristics of Nanjing Culture during the Six Dynasties

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**ABSTRACT.** *Nanjing is the political, economic and cultural center of the six dynasties, especially with its diversified ideology and culture, it has made an immortal contribution to the preservation, innovation and revival of Chinese civilization, leaving rich and splendid cultural treasures for today's people. Nanjing's brilliant cultural achievements during the six dynasties benefited from its unique cultural characteristics. According to the special historical background of the six dynasties, this paper concretely explains the cultural characteristics of Nanjing at that time, in order to enrich the cultural study of Nanjing city.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Six dynasties, Nanjing, Culture, Characteristics*

## 1. Introduction

From the beginning of the 3rd century to the end of the 6th century, six dynasties in southern China, Wu Country, The Tsin Dynasty, Song, Qi, Liang and Chen, established their capital in Nanjing for more than 320 years, known as the “six dynasties”. The six dynasties controlled half of the territory in the southeast, inherited the two Han dynasties and opened the prosperous Tang Dynasty, which played an important role in the history of Chinese civilization, while the center of the culture of the six dynasties was basically stable in Jianye and Jiankang, so Nanjing was known as the “ancient capital of the six dynasties”. In Nanjing during the six dynasties, ideas and culture contended and blended with each other, literature, history and art flourished in an all-round way, science and technology made great achievements, and exchanges between China and foreign countries were opened up, which played an immortal role in the preservation, innovation and revival of Chinese civilization. It has also established the pattern that the economic center will move southward in the future. Nanjing of the six dynasties, which has left treasures for today, benefits from its unique cultural characteristics, which is inclusive, progressive and distinct scholar spirit. According to the special historical background of the six dynasties, this paper concretely explains the cultural characteristics of Nanjing at that time, in order to enrich the cultural study of Nanjing city.

## 2. Inclusion Aggregation

The integration of southern culture. Jianye and Jiankang in capital in the six dynasties are not only located in an important position in the north and south, but also the place where overseas Chinese live, which naturally became the place of spread and transplantation of northern culture. Nanjing experienced at least two cultural confluences in the six dynasties, both of which were brought about by the immigration movement. Once, during the period of the establishment of Sun Wu, "there were many people in the south of the Jiangnan where the wise men of the four directions were sheltered". [1] Their descendants were all from Danyang, which realized the confluence of overseas Chinese and old people. They have made many contributions to the spread of Chinese culture and the promotion of Jiangdong culture. The other was after the Yongjia Rebellion, many northern tribes who went south settled in Jiankang, in which the Han and Jin culture of the Central Plains was combined with the culture of Wu and Yue. This is the largest southward transmission of Chinese culture in Chinese history, together with the political center (Nanjing), and created a new cultural blending center (Nanjing). For example, in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, under the influence of the ideological trend of Shang Xuan, a scholar surnamed overseas Chinese, the local scholars in Jiangdong had to learn metaphysical words and imitate the style of famous scholars, and even "Xuanyi had no teacher's method, but they were supernatural and talked about it in white and black, and they could hardly resist it." the metaphysical level of Zhang's family in Wu County tends to exceed that of overseas Chinese. In terms of style and literature, the overseas Chinese scholars' feeling of the beautiful landscape in the Jiangnan is particularly novel, which promotes the natural characteristics of the celebrities, especially the Xie family living in Jiankang, which gave birth to Xie Lingyun, the ancestor of the landscape poetry school. In terms of language and living habits, the language of Jingluo celebrities who moved to the south became the "correct sound" of the south. Jiangdong figures seek officials to enter the political career and make friends in order to go to Jiankang. By the beginning of the Southern Dynasty, almost all of them had spoken "elegant words" [3]. However, "when the scholar-officials of the The Tsin Dynasty lived abroad for a long time and got along with the scholars of Wuzhong every day, they naturally mixed with Wu Yin. And if their children and grandchildren grow up in the south of the Jiangnan and learn the local customs, the language they speak will not be the same as that of Luo Xia. So "cover not pure north, not pure south, oneself become a kind of Jiankang language" [4]. Therefore, Nanjing, Zhenjiang and other places bid farewell to the Wu dialect and gradually changed into the northern language during the The Tsin Dynasty and Southern dynasties.

The trend of thought merges and develops. During the six dynasties, since the Han Dynasty, the monopoly position of Confucianism was broken, and the thoughts of Confucianism, metaphysics, Buddhism and Taoism competed to refute and infiltrate and develop, which was another era of active thought after the Spring and Autumn and warring States period. This is particularly evident in these aspects of Jiankang, including political, economic and cultural centers. For example, metaphysics is a combination of Confucianism and Taoism, which uses a

philosophical way of thinking to explore the relationship between Confucian “celebrities” and Taoist “nature”, and at the same time provides new vitality for the development of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. At that time, many scholars in Jiankang and other places studied metaphysics and Confucianism at the same time, and many of them were good at lecturing and debating, with an audience ranging from ten to a hundred to a thousand, so “handouts are popular in schools, which are different from those of the Han Chinese.” [5]. This has something to do with metaphysics. The materialism of Confucianism is also related to metaphysics. “Metaphysics and superstition are not the same.” Therefore, with the fall of the Wei and Jin dynasties, metaphysics prevailed, while superstition gradually disappeared. “Under the influence of metaphysics in Wei and Jin dynasties, Taoism also began to differentiate and change. GE Hongrong, a famous Taoist, entered Taoism and established the theoretical system of immortal Taoism. However, the thought of Buddhism was “married” with the theory of metaphysics, and the differences of various schools of Prajna at that time were fundamentally the differences of different schools of metaphysics [7]. In the Eastern Jin Dynasty, famous scholars and monks were integrated into one, and there are many records in *A New Account of the Tales of the World*. However, the famous scholar and eminent monk Zhi Daolin, who was active in Nanjing, used metaphysics to explain Prajna Yili and founded the namely Sezong School. Emperor Wu of Liang initiated the “theory of the same origin of the three religions”, which is a summary of the development of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Therefore, Mr. Lu Simian once pointed out: “the world calls the Jin, Southern and Northern dynasties as Buddhists, the old prevailing, the decline of Confucianism, but it is not.” It is the metaphysical scholar of the time, the rate is called *I-Ching* and *Old*, that is to say, it is known as both Confucian and Taoist, and the bandit is good at Taoism. After that, Buddhism said that it was prosperous, and Confucianism and Taoism were ruled at the same time, and Buddhists were also familiar with the study of Confucianism and Taoism. In fact, the theories of the three schools are becoming more and more confused.” [8]

### 3. Opening Up and Upgrading

The culture of the south spreads to the north. With the Han regime moving southward to Jiankang and the convergence and development of southern culture, the majority of Han people regard the The Tsin Dynasty and Southern dynasties as the orthodoxy of Chinese culture. Due to the requirements of the Sinicization reform in the north, after Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei Dynasty, the cultural exchange between the North and the South was mainly based on the study of the cultural relic system and academic ideas of the Southern Dynasty. According to historical records, when Xu Ling of the Liang Dynasty was sent to the Northern Wei Dynasty, Wei Shou mocked that “Wang Su came here before to make you understand etiquette, but today I was ordered to go on a mission to make you understand the cold and warm weather” [9], reflecting the cultural superiority mentality of the scholars of the Southern Dynasty. The key factor for the return of southern culture to the middle soil is the flow of scholars, and there are many southern scholars who have transferred to the north because of the change of

political power, war capture and other reasons. Jiankang, the capital, and its surrounding areas are the main exporters of culture, because the scholars who lived here mastered the quintessence of the culture of the Southern Dynasty, so it was easy for them to get the attention of the rulers of the Northern Dynasty after they moved northward. For instant, in the introduction of laws and regulations, the Yuan of “learning from ancient events” returned to the Qin Dynasty and then to the Wei Dynasty after Liu Yu came to power. When Szeto Cui Hao of the Northern Wei Dynasty revised and determined the laws and regulations of the Imperial ceremony, “every creation, Henggu visited it (Yuan)” [10]. Liu Chang of the patriarchal clan of the Liu Song Dynasty fled to the Northern Wei Dynasty, and Emperor Xiaowen, in order to “reform court etiquette”, “told Liu Chang and Jiang Shaoyou to be in charge of this matter. The old model in Liu Chang's regulations has not been forgotten “[11]. Wang Lu, a scholar who settled in Jiankang, played an important role in the spread of culture to the north. Wang Su “transferred the cultural relic system developed in the early Southern Dynasty to the Northern Dynasty, and used it to create a new culture in the Taihe era” [12]. Academically, the culture of the south slowly spread to the north. Emperor Xiaowen in the Northern Wei Dynasty liked articles and was good at talking about Laozi and Zhuangzi. Emperor Wu of Zhou enlisted Shen Zhong, a great Confucian scholar of Hou Liang, to enter the pass and set up the Temple of Heaven to explain his academic theory. Shen Zhong's speech is very reasonable, the central idea is easy to understand, and all the explanations are recommended by Confucian scholars [13]. Pi Xirui pointed out: “the world is unified and the south is annexed by the north, while the unity of Confucian classics makes the northern culture be merged by the southern culture... It can be considered that the northern culture is in decline. “[14]. In terms of literature, the literature of the Southern Dynasty was generally prosperous, while the literature of the Northern Dynasty was in an inferior position for a long time, so that “all the clothes and manners were biased towards the new culture of the Southern Dynasty.” Yu Xin and Wang Bao, writers from Jiankang (present-day Nanjing), were given preferential treatment by the rulers of the Northern Zhou Dynasty, and their writing style was loved by the northern people. In addition, the envoys of the Northern and Southern dynasties also communicated with each other, and every time the other envoys visited, there was a great response. Historical records: “every time the messengers of the Southern Liang came to the city, the people of Yuancheng were very sensational. People of status gathered together to watch in grand clothes and gave rich gifts. There were many people in front of their homes.... The envoys of the Wei Dynasty came to Nanliang in the same situation as the envoys of the Southern Liang to the Wei Dynasty. Xiao Yan, Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty, talked to him personally and respected each other very much. “The culture of the North and the South tends to cooperate and develop, and the Jiankang of the Southern Cultural Center has played an important role.

Cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries. Due to the progress of navigation technology during the six dynasties, Jiankang was the center of foreign exchanges with Haidong countries, Southeast Asia, India, Persia, East Rome and other countries and regions. With regard to the Korean Peninsula, Koguryo, Baiji and Silla often sent envoys to Jiankang, and the regimes of the Southern dynasties

also sent envoys to visit back. At that time, brocade from Jiangnan and *Zhaoming Wenxuan* and *Zilin* were introduced into Koguryo; Yuanjiali, Yue kiln celadon, tomb shape, Buddha carvings and *Nirvana*, Doctor's *Mao Poems* and craftsmen and painters [17] were introduced into Baiji. Silla was most influenced by Buddhism in the Southern Dynasty, and monks came to seek Dharma one after another. The exchanges between the regimes of Japan, the Eastern Jin Dynasty and the Southern dynasties have been recorded for more than 10 times [18]. Confucian classics, advanced iron ware, ceramic manufacturing and silk weaving and other handicraft technologies have been introduced into Japan. With regard to the various countries in Southeast Asia, it is the meeting place of Chinese and Western cultures, especially playing an important role in the eastward spread of Buddhism. Kang Monk will go from Jiaozhi to Sun Wu Jianye, and Faxian in the The Tsin Dynasty will seek the Dharma from the sea route to the west. Emperor Liang Wudi set up Funan Hall in Jiankang and hired many famous Funan monks to translate scriptures here. With regard to the countries of South Asia, when Emperor Wen of the Song Dynasty, the King of Central Tianzhu sent envoys to Jiankang. In addition to glassware, spices, silk goods and other trade, Tianzhu eminent monks: pray for Gunabhadra, Qunabama and Zhendi to come to Jiankang this place to preach the Dharma. During the Liu Song Dynasty, eight people from Bhikkhuni in the Simhalauipa came to Jiankang, which was the earliest record of a foreign female monk coming to China. About Persia, Cippus and Emperor Wudi of Liang Dynasty, Persia sent envoys to Jiankang many times. Chinese sericulture and silk weaving techniques spread to Persia, and Persian stone carving and painting techniques were also introduced into China. For example, the existing stone carvings of the mausoleums of the six dynasties in Nanjing are the application of Persian style in practice. During the period of Sun Wu, Qinlun, a businessman of Cippus, came to Jiaozhi and was sent to Jianye [19]. He was the first Cippus to leave his name in the official history of China, and then The Tsin Dynasty exchanged envoys with Cippus, and Cippus's glass, diamond, "Haixibu" and other things were introduced into Jiankang and other areas.

#### **4. A Distinct Spirit of the Scholar Clan**

The six dynasties were aristocratic times, and the great families occupied the supreme position of politics, economy and culture. Jiankang and its surrounding areas are the settlements of big families, which embodies the scholar spirit they show. Personality awakening. In the article *A New Account of the Tales of the World and Beauty of Jin People*, Mr. Zong baihua pointed out: "the late Han Dynasty, Wei Dynasty and Jin Dynasty were the most chaotic and painful times in Chinese politics, but they were extremely free, liberated, intelligent and emotional in spiritual history." [20] This is first manifested in the awakening of self-consciousness. According to historical records, Huan Wen, a powerful subject in The Tsin Dynasty, asked Yin Hao, "who is better than me?" Yin Hao replied, "I have been dealing with myself for a long time. I would rather be me." [21] In addition, Fan Ye was willing to play the pipa for the emperor only with the equal participation of monarchs and ministers, and so on [22], which can be said to highlight the independent personality and willpower of "me". Secondly, it mainly advocates the

return to nature and the pursuit of physical and mental freedom. A New Account of the Tales of the World records the bold, open-minded and informal behavior of many celebrities of Jiankang. For example, Zhou Yi didn't wake up for three days after getting drunk, Xie Shang was invited to drink in filial piety clothes, Wang Xizhi's "son-in-law" and so on. It shows that they do not want to restrain their emotions like the people of etiquette and law. In addition, scholars are good at metaphysical talk, and people are relatively equal when they talk to each other, and they can fight with each other and cross-examine each other, without such strict teacher-follower relations and family law restrictions as Confucianism. In addition, Jiankang and its surrounding people find the most suitable art form to express the free mind, showing an extremely high level of attainments. Xie Lingyun's landscape poems are fresh and meaningful, with the feeling that "many words of Wang Xizhi are different", and even the letters and essays are gorgeous. The personality awakening and ideological emancipation of the people of the six dynasties promoted the overall spirit of Jiankang urban culture.

Despise the military and attach importance to literature. The regime in the north advocated force, while the south advocated literature, because, on the one hand, the Tsin Dynasty relied on the elites who passed down Confucian classics and their moral norms from generation to generation, and on the other hand, it was easy to fail to establish political power by force. Therefore, even if some scholars initially rely on martial arts, they will gradually give up force and turn to literature, showing a social atmosphere of despising force and advocating literature. In Jiankang area, the royal family generally advocated literature. Historical records: "Song Xiaowu good articles, all over the world to praise each other with literary talent, not to specialize in the study of Confucian classics." By contrast, Emperor Wudi of the Liang Dynasty only surpassed but not inferior. The famous literati were basically concentrated around the imperial clan of the Qi and Liang dynasties, and the "eight Friends of Jingling" was the most famous. The big families in Jiankang and its surrounding areas inherit the tradition of learning literature. Such as Xie Lingyun, "every time he has a poem spread to the capital, no matter high or low, everyone writes it. Overnight, everyone knows the poem, and everyone admires his poetic talent" [24]. "(Zhang rate) went to the banquet and wrote poems again. Gao Zu gave Zhang rate's poems and said, 'there are talented people in the southeast, so they can be officials. Although the rest are getting old slowly, they are very energetic now.' Zhangshuai was ordered to go back and forth several times. In that year, he moved to the post of Secretary Cheng and was received at the Yuheng Hall. Gao Zu said, "Secretary Cheng is a good official in the world, and the descendants of the emperors and aristocrats in the southeast have not taken up this post. Putting you in this position can already give you a good reputation." This is the favor he received.[25]. Thus it can be seen that the cultural literacy with literature as the core has a great influence on the society. The prosperity of Nanjing's literary style has established its lofty position in the history of Chinese culture.

The inheritance of family literature. After several generations of reproduction, the famous families have many descendants, and many talented and learned people in each generation maintain the family's immortal fame. As Mr. Qian Mu said, "A

large family not only depends on external power and financial resources to maintain the prosperity of the family for hundreds of years, but also not indifferent to fame and wealth and constant waste in order to make the family harmonious, and the children abide by the law cautiously.” to protect the family from depravity. At that time, he attached great importance to the style of family education, and his filial piety, love and elder brother abided by women's morality, all of which were passed down from the Confucianism of the Han Dynasty. “[26] The inheritance of family literature is especially represented by the Wang and Xie families of Jiankang City. Wang of Langya was a family of etiquette and law, and Wang Daoli persuaded the Jin and Yuan emperors to restore etiquette. Wang Biaozi “the knowledge of Biaozi is very rich, familiar with court etiquette, handed down from generation to generation” [27], and Wang is the most skilled calligrapher. Xie of Chen County “since the Jin Dynasty, the culture has been passed on” [28]. Xie of Chen County “since the Jin Dynasty, the culture has been passed on” [28]. The informal Xie Kui opened up the family style of Xie's celebrities. Xie an is known as the “flirtatious prime minister”. Most of his brothers and nephews have the style of celebrities, while the landscape poems reflect Xie's outstanding contribution to Chinese literature.

In short, with the southward migration of the Jingluoshi nationality, the cultural center moved southward from Luoyang to Jiankang. Nanjing of the six dynasties became a place of collision and blending of northern and southern cultures, Chinese and foreign cultures, giving birth to the characteristics of inclusiveness and openness. The southern culture with Nanjing as the center has a high degree of cultural flexibility and the function of gathering and dispersing in the process of integration. After variation, development and return to the original place, the southern culture has a profound impact on the northern culture and forms the characteristics of continuous renewal and promotion. The interaction between the scholar family culture and the society gained benefits from literature, which strongly promoted the rise of Nanjing culture in the six dynasties. Therefore, the Nanjing culture of the six dynasties has a unique cultural development road of tolerance and aggregation, openness and promotion, and full of distinct scholar spirit, which not only solves the mystery of the brilliant achievements of Nanjing culture in the six dynasties, it also shows the movement mechanism of the interaction of Chinese civilization.

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