Going Back to Anhui: Formation of Huizhou Culture

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GOING BACK TO ANHUI: FORMATION OF HUIZHOU CULTURE

by

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1. Introduction

Huizhou Prefecture, a geographical area that can no longer be found named on contemporary maps, was well known for its culture, merchants, and its beautiful view of Yellow Mountain. It was located in south Anhui Province, contiguous to both Jiangxi and Zhejiang provinces. The former Huizhou Prefecture governed six counties: She, Xiuning, Wuyuan, Qimen, Yi and Jixi. Historically, the people of these six counties had high esteem for their cultural identity as Huizhou people because they had been living in the same prefecture for hundreds of years. In late Imperial China, Huizhou Merchants, via their commercial activities in the lower Yangtze area, attained large amounts of wealth. The Salt industry during the Qing dynasty had long been controlled by Huizhou merchants. Behind the scenes, strong lineage connections accelerated and helped the culture and business activities of the Huizhou people. Neo-Confucianism, local lineages, and Huizhou merchants nationwide shaped the formation of Huizhou culture during this period.

The disintegration of the Huizhou prefecture started with the national policy in 1934 to give Wuyuan to Jiangxi Province. It was enforced by the Nationalist Government in Nanking, in the consideration of military convenience, to purge Mao’s Red Armies in Jiangxi. From the view of military geography, the policy is not unreasonable. Huizhou Prefecture is located in deep

southern Anhui province and borders Jiangxi in the south and west. On a map, Wuyuan looks like a nail stuck into Jiangxi. As a result, it took more time for the Wuyuan county government to report the military situation to Anhui Province’s capital, than it took to report it directly to the Jiangxi government. In addition, Red Armies were able to take the advantage of Wuyuan’s military vacuum as a base to retreat. For instance, the Red Army took over the whole county of Wuyuan in 1931 and the county magistrate, embarrassed, fled. Therefore, the act of giving over Wuyuan to Jiangxi’s jurisdiction and strengthening its connection with Jiangxi was aimed at helping the Nationalist army to purge Red bandits in Jiangxi. On September 4th, 1934, Wuyuan was given to The 5th Administrative Region of Jiangxi Province.

This policy irritated natives of Huizhou. Localism was encouraged as a reply to national policy. The natives of Wuyuan and other Huizhou counties, along with Huizhou merchants and noble people nationwide, strongly opposed the decision. The “Going Back to Anhui Movement” from 1934 to 1947 was a reaction against the policy. Anti-Jiangxi sentiment in Wuyuan and other areas in Huizhou achieved its peak during the “Going back to Anhui Movement”. Xu Jianping collected several slogans that the Wuyuan people used during this period, and they were aggressive toward Jiangxi. ² “Both men and women want to go back to Anhui, no matter if we live or die, we won’t become Jiangxi people.” Aside from these local slogans, the Wuyuan people adopted the testament of Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Republic of China, which called for the people’s struggle for a free China, into a testament to the struggle toward reuniting the glorious Huizhou Prefecture. Even more interesting, popular songs originally intended as calls to fight against the Japanese were edited to become songs that were calls to fight against the thieves of Jiangxi.

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² Xu, Jianping. Zheng Zhi Di Li Shi Jiao Xia De Sheng Jie Bian Qian: Yi Minguo Shi Qi Anhui Sheng Wei Li, (Shanghai: Shanghai Ren Min Chu Ban She, 2009), 27.
The main reasons for staying in Anhui, as stated to the government, were different costumes, historical administrative division, the military administration’s temporality, and the natives’ will. In reply, Chiang Kai-shek, sermonized that the top priority was to purge Red bandits; once Wuyuan was given to Jiangxi, local military affairs could be more focused and convenient, and the day in which the red bandits would be erased could be numbered. However, the natives didn’t give up their efforts to persuade the government to reverse this policy until 1947. In 1939, another statement by the Wuyuan Sojourners Guild was handed to the Nationalist government, this statement further stated the economic differences and the change in warfare. Again, the statement was refused by Chiang kai-shek. In 1946, the Second Sino-Japanese War ended and the Nanking Nationalist Government began its process of implementing a Constitution and opening the National Assembly. A petition by the Wuyuan natives was propagated to Chiang Kai-shek through the National Assembly. Under the new political atmosphere and military situation, the national government gave in and approved the petition. On August 16th, 1947, Huizhou identity won out against national policy, and the jurisdiction of Wuyuan returned to Anhui province.³

Ironically, Wuyuan was again given to Jiangxi in 1949 when the People’s Liberation Army was about to win the Civil War. Wuyuan was liberated by the Second Section of the People’s Liberation Army while the other five Huizhou counties were liberated by the Third section of the People’s Liberation Army.⁴ Because of military control by different armies, Wuyuan was once again given to Jiangxi, from 1949 until the present. According to current jurisdiction, Wuyuan is a county under Shangrao city, Jiangxi Province.

³ Ye, Yiyin, ed. Wuyuan xianzhi 婺源县志, (Beijing Shi: Dangan chubanshe, 1993), 23.
⁴ Ibid., 25.
In the waves of economic reform in the 1980s, disintegration damaged Huizhou unity once more. In 1987, Huizhou as a geographic term was abandoned. “Huangshan”, literally meaning Yellow Mountain, replaced it. Propaganda considerations were highly considered as reasons for the name change. First of all, tourism had gradually become important to China’s economy in 1980s. It was popular at the time to change a city’s name to that of a famous mountain, lake, or river. Secondly, Premier Deng Xiaoping’s arrival at Huangshan in 1979 and his appreciation of this mountain made the government enthusiastic to name old Huizhou “Huangshan”. Huangshan was merely one of the thousands of mountains surrounding Huizhou. As a result of the change in the administrative division, Jixi county was given to Xuan Cheng City. In all, only four counties of the Huizhou prefecture survived in one city and the current administrative division of South Anhui is chaotic.

As a prefecture bordered by three provinces, why did the Huizhou people have such a strong identity regardless of pressure from national policy? Due to the “Going back to Anhui” movement’s sensitivity and complexity, limited historiography can be found about the event itself, much less scholars using it as a starting point to analyze Huizhou culture’s identity formation. Tang Lizong of National Chengchi University wrote a detailed essay describing the process of the “Going back to Anhui” movement from 1934 to 1939. He analyzed the origin, process, and influence of three main statements by Wuyuan natives refused by the central government. In his article, he mentioned the Huizhou people’s long-existing prejudice against the Jiangxi people and its influence on the movements. Fudan University scholar Xu Jianping chose Wuyuan as an

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6 Ibid.
7 Hu, Chunhui, ed. Zhongguo Zhi Shi Fen Zi Yu Jin Dai She Hui Bian Qian, (Taipei: Guo Li Zheng Zhi Da Xue, 1994), 266.
example in his scholarly work on administrative changes during Chinese Republican period. He talks about the migrants from Wuyuan to Huizhou’s other five to demonstrate Huizhou’s great influence there. Based on the theory of China’s physiographic macroregions, developed by G. William Skinner, the Huizhou region seems to fit into both the Middle Yangtze region and Lower Yangtze region due to its commercial activities and routes. Nevertheless, Huizhou kept its unique geographical identity as a marginalized region.

The “Going back to Anhui Movement” and Wuyuan’s jurisdiction is meaningful in that it is an example of an encounter of national policy and civil movement. Behind the theme were various factors: long existing animosity between two places, Wuyuan lineages’ connection with Huizhou, Huizhou’s typical guardian folk religion, and the difference in economy. These all come together to support the unity of Huizhou prefecture. They became the abundant supporting force for the civil movement and local identity. Setting the “Going back to Anhui Movement” as a starting point, this essay aims to discuss Huizhou culture’s formation through anti-Jiangxi sentiment’s development, faith in guardian gods among its six counties, and a unique economy, both locally and nationwide in the late Imperial China. By analyzing the formation of Huizhou culture, it’s worth noticing that culture and history should still play important roles in the administrative division. National policy isn’t omnipotent and it’s always arbitrary when reaching a local level. In the long run, historical heritage and cultural identity should be taken into granted in administrative division. Geographical names, such as Wuyuan and Huizhou, with a rich heritage, is not merely a symbol, but a trait of a historical fountain, and a belt connecting today and yesterday.

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2. Geography of Wuyuan and Huizhou

The formation of Huizhou Prefecture can be traced back to the Sui Dynasty in 589 A.D. It was called Shezhou at this time. During the Northern Song Dynasty (1121 A.D.) the Hui Zong Emperor renamed it Huizhou. After that, this glorious name was in use until the twentieth century. As for Wuyuan, it became a county in the year 740 A.D., during the Tang Dynasty. Thus, the history of Wuyuan as part of Huizhou lasted over a thousand years. The Hui-sub six counties, She County, Wuyuan, Xiuning, Qimen, Yi county and Jixi, as a single geographical unit have a long history. On the other hand, for 63 years, Wuyuan has been a formal Jiangxi county under the jurisdiction of Shangrao City.

The geographical environment of counties in Huizhou prefecture are similar, they were all quite isolated from the outside world. It was surrounded by mountains in South Anhui. In the north, the famous Yellow Mountain blocked entry via the Yangtze River. The main river flowing through Huizhou is Xinan River. In the east and west, dangerous shoals and streams made it difficult for local people to get to Zhejiang and Jiangxi. From a strategic military point of view, Huizhou’s position is very important to Jiangnan, Zhejiang and Jiangxi. The prefecture government was set in She County. Wuyuan was commonly considered as the second important county in the prefecture. In old times, Wuyuan was considered as the dragon artery of the whole prefecture due to its mystical complex terrain and noble scholars, most notably Zhu Xi, who represents the orthodoxy of academic life in late Imperial China.

Wuyuan is located in the southernmost county in Huizhou Prefecture. In addition, it used to be the southernmost county of the whole Anhui province when it was still under the jurisdiction

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10 Ye, Yiyin, ed. Wuyuan xianzhi 婺源县志, (Beijing Shi: Dangan chubanshe, 1993), 74-75.
of Huizhou Prefecture. To its north, it bordered with Xiuning, a county also belongs to Huizhou Prefecture. Its west and south were surrounded by several Jiangxi places, including the place well known for its china production, Jingde Town. On the east, Kaihua County of Zhejiang Province serves as its neighbor. Thus, being bordered by different places of three provinces, its terrain and water system are complex. The terrain of Wuyuan is not flat. It is largely mountainous in the north and west, while the rest is hilly and basined. The highest peak, Leigu, which literally means “beating the drum,” is 1,628 meters’ high in the north. The main water system is Lean River, which literally means “happiness and peace,” and flows from the northeast side of Wuyuan to Jiangxi province. During time of turmoil, it becomes a notable strategical point on the map. The complicated location also made the government reluctant to decide which province to which it should belong.

Its geographical situation largely confined Wuyuan’s economy. As a typical Huizhou county hidden within a myriad of mountains, Wuyuan lacks fertile farming land and its economy relied heavily on business and imports from other provinces, especially Jiangxi. Centrality of economy always depended upon tea and timber, mostly cedar and pine. The altitude of most mountainous areas are fitting choices for growing tea. The vast forest coverage rate of Wuyuan, 82.5%, supplied abundant resources for timber industry. In the past, most Wuyuan merchants were tea and timber merchants. After the 1980s, with the rise of tourism in China, tourism became another important pillar supporting Wuyuan’s economy. Wuyuan is a famous tourist destination due to its old architecture from the Ming and Qing dynasties. In addition, the beauty of its
mountains and waters attracts tourists’ attention as well. Being a small county in mountainous area, many natives chose to go out to work. Its permanent population 2012, is 334, 020.11

Although nowadays Wuyuan natives still use the nomenclature “old Huizhou” to express their pride and nostalgia. Huizhou, the former southernmost prefecture of Anhui Province can be only found on historical maps. For the six counties within the Huizhou prefecture, She county, Yi County, Qimen, and Xiuning are now parts of Huang Shan City, Anhui. In addition, Jixi is in Xuan Cheng, Anhui, while Wuyuan is in Shang Rao, Jiangxi. Thus, the former Huizhou Prefecture has now been divided among three different cities in two provinces. The current complex administrative division was largely caused by its geography.

3. Long animosity: Huizhou’s anti-Jiangxi sentiment

The hard barrier between the Huizhou and Jiangxi people did not build in one day. Animosity formed over time due to various intertwined reasons. Historically, the barrier also underwent changes. Both areas were in the south far away from the northern political center, there was no big difference between them in the beginning. The earliest conflict was merely a land dispute. The term “bandits” began to be associated with the Jiangxi people in the Yuan dynasty. From the late Ming dynasty on, local Huizhou documents often mentioned Jiangxi robbers invading Huizhou. The Jiangxi people’s cutting off of water routes which the Huizhou merchants used in their businesses caused hostility between the two regions as well. From the late Qing dynasty on, sheer prejudice against people from Jiangxi, and working migrants appeared in local official’s journals. Thus, the anti-Jiangxi sentiment during the “Going Back to Anhui Movement” did not occur suddenly; instead, its historical roots may be traced back to the late Ming period.

The two regions interacted a lot in the long path of history due to their tight geographical and commercial relationship. Nevertheless, there are several reasons causing the Huizhou people’s hostile attitude toward the Jiangxi people: robbery, commercial conflicts, and regional customs. Though the unfortunate animosity has its origins beginning in the 9th century, Huizhou’s hostility toward Jiangxi mainly occurred after the late Ming Dynasty, around 1640 A.D.

Conflicts between Huizhou and Jiangxi have origins back to 811 A.D. in the Tang Dynasty. Competition for the land caused the discord. Because Huizhou was mountainous and lacked arable lands, many Huizhou natives chose to develop their land to the south, and eventually invaded two villages of Raozhou in Jiangxi. With the conflict heated up, the Imperial Court eventually decided through arbitration that the two villages of Jiangxi be given to Huizhou to develop.12 This arbitration laid the pattern that causes Wuyuan to look on a map like a nail attached onto Jiangxi’s territory. The Imperial Court’s favorable decision toward Huizhou was reasonable. Although these two villages did not belong to Huizhou geographically, it was Huizhou natives, especially these from Xiuning County, who settled there to farm and develop. As Xu Jianping noticed, most migrants who developed early Wuyuan were Xiuning natives.13

After the Huizhou natives won the first battle of the land dispute in the Tang Dynasty, the Song Dynasty (960-1279) was a relatively peaceful period of coexistence between the Huizhou and Jiangxi. Official gazetteers did not record conflicts on the chronicle of events. Conflicts began to occur more frequently during Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). In 1356, bandits from Fuliang,

12 Wuyuan xianzhi 婺源县志. 1883, (Tai bei shi: Cheng wen chubanshe, 1985), 5a.
13 Xu Jianping, Zheng Zhi Di Li Shi Jiao Xia De Sheng Jie Bian Qian: Yi Minguo Shi Qi Anhui Sheng Wei Li, (Shanghai: Shanghai Ren Min Chu Ban She, 2009).
Jiangxi invaded both the capital of the prefecture, She County and Xiuning county.\textsuperscript{14} This marked the first animosity between the two places since 12\textsuperscript{th} century.

Conflicts became intimidating after the mid-Ming Dynasty. In 1513, the so-called “thief of the Yaoyuan cavity” from Jiangxi led his brothers in the mountains to rob both the Xiuning and Wuyuan. The casualties were appalling. More than thirty militias in Huizhou died. Bandits raped women, many of whom committed suicide.\textsuperscript{15} In 1641 and 1642, conflicts occurred twice. In 1641, several hundred thieves from Leping, Jiangxi robbed Xiuning and Wuyuan. The next year, bandits from Fuliang, Jiangxi invaded Xiuning again.\textsuperscript{16} Meanwhile, These Jiangxi rebels and bandits not only sacked the territory of Huizhou prefecture, from time to time they also hindered Huizhou merchants’ travel. In a petition-style memorial to the emperor written by Huizhou native official Wang Wei, the author stated that the damage caused by Jiangxi people could even threaten Huizhou people’s daily living.\textsuperscript{17} Due to the scarcity of farmland, most natives’ survival heavily depended on commercial activities; thus travel across Jiangxi was inevitable. However, bandits often closed Jiangxi areas, obstructing Huizhou merchants’ passage on rivers. One serious outcome was that food in that Huizhou area could not sufficiently support local people and famine became likely. In this memorial, Wang Wei listed the many offences of the Jiangxi people, such as using heavy ropes to stop ships that went in and out of Huizhou, and even using weapons and rocks to attack ships. In another letter, this one to Governor Xu written by a Xiuning native official, Jin Sheng, the author said that when the Huizhou people tried to bring a lawsuit against these

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Huishou fuzhi} 徽州府志. 1699, (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1975), 190.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 205.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, 224-225.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Xiuning xianzhi} 休宁县志. 1693, (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1970), 561.
bandits to the local Jiangxi government, the outcome was shocking and sad. As a reply, Jiangxi officials simply said that their people robbed Huizhou because Huizhou people were rich. Jin Sheng said that the reason Huizhou people were rich was due to commercial activities outside the province and was only because its difficult landscape and lack of farmland forced them to look outside to make a living. The Jiangxi people’s crimes of hindering commercial routes greatly threatened the Huizhou people’s livelihood. He urged Governor Xu to take the case seriously.

Bandits and robbers from Jiangxi did not stop after the foundation of another new dynasty in 1644. In the Qing dynasty, the first conflict broke out with the subsidence of Yi County. Jiangxi bandits occupied Yi County in 1646. In 1661, the thieves from Fuliang, Jiangxi robbed Xiuning. A more influential event occurred in 1670; bandits from both Raozhou, Jiangxi, and Chizhou, a prefecture north of Huizhou, invaded Huizhou Prefecture. Local commanders united armies from two provinces to suppress these bandits. After learning hard lessons from previous conflicts, the 1699 edition Huizhou gazetteers displayed the author’s deep prejudice against the Jiangxi. This gazetteer was revised during the transitional period when the chaos of the late Ming had ended and the new Dynasty was about to stabilize its power. As a native elite who experienced much sadness and tragedy caused by wars, Zhao Jishi greatly emphasized recording wars, rebellions, and military records in this book. At the beginning, by way of explanation, he wrote that the Jiangxi people frequently engaged in banditry and inflicted great damage on Huizhou. When he described the villages and towns of the 25 years prior to his writing, he stated that although Huizhou had always been prosperous and peaceful, Jiangxi people’s depredations greatly

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18 Ibid., 573.
19 Huizhou fuzhi 徽州府志. 1699, (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1975), 229.
20 Ibid., 234.
21 Ibid., 236-237.
damaged it. Zhao made a graph to list all the bandits that sacked Huizhou, and among them, Jiangxi appeared the most often as a geographical term. In all, the two counties in Huizhou Prefecture targeted by the Jiangxi people were Wuyuan and Xiuning, the former of which was located to the north of the latter. From 1356 to 1699 A.D., Jiangxi bandits invaded Xiuning six times. They sacked Wuyuan five times. Not to mention that Wuyuan always serves as the corridor from Jiangxi to Huizhou on the map.

Cultural difference between two places began to occur during the Qing dynasty. A factor caused estrangement between people from both sides. The Chinese term “Feng su” means mores or customs, which is an outward demonstration of culture. An early twentieth century local gazette used to teach Wuyuan children geography described people who lived near the border of Jiangxi as having tough, rude, warlike personalities, which were different from Huizhou people’s gentle, civilized, and cultured behavior. Nevertheless, historically, the two regions’ differences in social customs were not always so extreme. Early in the Northern Song Dynasty, Jiangxi contributed several great scholars to Chinese history: Wang Anshi, Zeng Gong, Ouyang Xiu, and others. As for Huizhou, it was still a very marginal and backward area at the time. Huizhou began to be confident of its own literary prosperity only after the late Southern Song, when Wuyuan native and Neo-Confucian scholar Zhu Xi was born. Later, in the Ming Dynasty, large numbers of Huizhou people did their business in the lower Yangtze area, supporting their homeland with subsidies for education and public institutions. With its sufficient educational resources, Huizhou became a place with the reputation of scholarship in late imperial China. In early Huizhou

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22 Wuyuan xianzhi 婺源县志. 1925, (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1996), 84.
24 Zhang, Yi. Li Xue, Shi Shen He Zong Zu: Song Ming Shi Qi Huizhou De Wen Hua Yu She Hui, (Hong Kong: Zhong Wen da Xue Chu Ban She, 2013), 40.
gazetteers, natives would naturally describe themselves as tough and brave mountain people. In some ways, the Huizhou people’s customs were similar to the the Jiangxi people’s in earlier times. As time passed, the Huizhou people began to feel unwilling and even ashamed to categorize in this way, so they gradually painted themselves as civilized and gentle figures. In a 1699 gazetteer, Zhao Jishi wrote that most Huizhou people had their households in the lower Yangtze area. The thrifty habits of older times were no longer popular because people were getting wealthier.  

4. Lineage connections

Although Wuyuan’s south and west bordered Jiangxi, most of its great lineages didn’t have any origin in Jiangxi. Instead, most lineages in Wuyuan had their origins in other counties in Huizhou Prefecture. Huizhou Prefecture has long been an Jiangnan prefecture that was well-known for “its Confucian gentry society” and “strong practice of Kinship organization”. In the countryside, villages were often named after the lineage’s family name. Even in towns and cities, there are streets or several streets occupied with people of the same lineage. The Huizhou people were proud of their glorious family name and lineal history. They loved to revise their family genealogy because Zhu Xi said “it would be considered as not filial that one’s family doesn’t revise its genealogy every three generations”. They built numerous family Memorial halls as organizations to control the local community and protect the people of their lineage. Under each family memorial hall, there are also many branch family memorial halls. Hu Shi said that if one

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travels around China, people with the family names of Wang and Cheng mostly came from Huizhou.28

Probably the most well-known lineage in Wuyuan downtown is Zhu family. Because of their ancestor, Zhu Xi (1130-1200), who was the most influential figure due to his great contribution to Neo-Confucianism, and recognition by late Imperial China government, the heir of the Zhu family has inherited the title “doctor of the five classics” ever since the Ming dynasty. Zhu Xi was born to an official family with an origin from Wuyuan, Huizhou. In fact, his birthplace was Yuxi, a county in Fujian Province where his father served as a district magistrate.29 However, Zhu Xi proudly considered himself as a Huizhou native and was concerned about his homeland situation, especially his own lineage and relatives.30 The Confucian Four Books compiled by him were sanctioned as textbooks in schools and his commentaries on them were declared as orthodox exegesis for the civil service exam since 1313.31 That is why the Huizhou people were proud call their homeland the “Archgate of Zhu Wen Gong”. In 906, Zhu Xi’s ancestor Zhu Guliao immigrated from She County, the primal county of the Huizhou Prefecture to Wuyuan. So the Zhu lineage’s migration was from county to county inside of Huizhou Prefecture.32

The Yu family of Tuo Chuan in north Wuyuan was another great lineage well known for its Neo-Confucianism tradition. The three great branches of the Yu Family lived in three villages, one of which was named “origin of the principle” so as to demonstrate its traditional belief in Confucianism. In 1120 A.D., Yu Lineage’s ancestor Yu Daoqian, moved from Tong Cheng to

32 Bu, Yongjian, and Xinding Bi. Wuyuan De Zong Zu, Jing Ji Yu Min Su (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Chubanshe, 2013), 36.
Wuyuan. Tong Cheng is a county on the north side of the Yangtze River in contemporary Anhui Province. Though Tong Cheng is not a county of Huizhou Prefecture, it is always under the jurisdiction of Anhui Province. Another famous lineage in North Wuyuan, Zha family’s ancestor moved from Xiuning to Wuyuan in 936 A.D. The Zha family is another instance of migration inside Huizhou prefecture. The Hu family in Qinghua Town, North Wuyuan, also has even more complicated migration within Huizhou. Hu’s early ancestors moved from She county, to Qimen and finally located in Wuyuan. Northeast and East Wuyuan are two other places where large lineages live. The Jiang family of Longwei village, in northeast Wuyuan, was a very powerful lineage. During the Cultural Revolution, Longwei was blamed as being a sinful “feudal fortress” due to its large numbers of fascinating ancient buildings. The Jiang family’s ancestor moved from She Longwei County to Wuyuan in 902 A.D. The Yu family of Wangkou Village, in east Wuyuan, was another example of an ancestor moving from She County to Wuyuan.

While most big lineages in Wuyuan had their origins from other counties inside of Huizhou, few of them on the west Wuyuan have origins from Jiangxi. Two eminent lineages there, the Qi family of Chongtian Village and the Dong family of Youshan, had their roots in Jiangxi. The Qi family’s ancestor immigrated from De Xing, Jiangxi, to Wuyuan. The Dong family’s earliest ancestor also came from that place. The number of lineages with origins in Jiangxi were less than these with origins in Huizhou. In addition, west Wuyuan was always more marginalized compared to north and east, where most big lineages reside.

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 12-14.
37 Ibid.
The immigration routes of lineages in Wuyuan share similarities. Most of their ancestors came to Huizhou for safety from the instability caused by rebellions or invasions from the north. When they arrived in the south, their first location was usually She County, which was the prefecture location of Huizhou. Later on, they moved to Wuyuan for various reasons. The Zhu family of Rancheng, the Zha family of Fengshan, the Hu family of Qinghua, the Jiang family of Xiaojiang, the Yu family of Youshan all followed this pattern. For the two lineages originating in Jiangxi in West Wuyuan, Dong and Qi, they only came to Wuyuan after the Song dynasty and their influence was minor in Wuyuan. Thus, Xu Jianping’s saying that early Wuyuan was developed by immigrants from other Huizhou areas in the north can be supported by looking into local family records. On a map, it is true that She county or Xiuning, etc., were farther from Wuyuan compared to Dexing or Fuliang of Jiangxi; nevertheless, most of the first generation immigrants were people from the north, either from She county or Xiuning.

5. Three guardian gods: Cheng Lingxi, Wang Hua and Master Zhu

As mentioned previously, Huizhou was located in mountainous areas on the borders of three provinces, Anhui, Zhejiang, and Jiangxi. It is a prefecture in borderlands of complicated landscapes. Nevertheless, Huizhou natives among six counties share the same guardian gods, who have been venerated through history exclusively to native Huizhou people. The most notable ones are Cheng Lingxi, Wang Hua and Zhu Xi. One thing they share in common is that they gained their reputation of being a symbol or deity of Huizhou culture posthumously. Cheng Lingxi and Wang Hua were heroes during transitional dynastic times. They demonstrated their bravery and dedication to Huizhou by guarding their native land and people efficiently. They represented a Huizhou with early settlers and a territorial Huizhou which is remote from central China. On the other hand, Zhu Xi was a devote Confucian scholar, who later became a representative of academic
orthodoxy in late Imperial China. With the development of the economy of the Yangtze Delta area, and the emergence of Huizhou merchants nationwide, the emergence of Zhu Xi represented a prosperous and civilized Huizhou with its rising reputation of Confucian orthodoxy.

Cheng Lingxi was the first Huizhou native recorded in official history. As a brave local, he defended Huizhou successfully on behalf of Chen Dynasty by defeating the insurgent force of Hou Jing in the 6th century. He was strong and dedicated to his land. He was appointed as a General then and promoted to a god by Huizhou natives. His kingship Cheng also became one of the most important noble families in Huizhou. Differing from Cheng Lingxi because he was a commoner, Wang Hua was an official of Huizhou appointed by the Sui Dynasty in the early 7th century. During the transitional period of Sui and Tang, Wang Hua defended Huizhou and its surrounding five prefectures successfully. Later on, he surrendered to the Tang dynasty under the consideration of civil injuries. Wang Hua then was honored with noble titles in Tang’s rank. After his death, he gained even more popularity than Cheng because of his noble title and political pragmatism. Later, Wang and Cheng were the prime kingships in Huizhou prefecture. Both Cheng and Wang were warriors and fighters in a time of turmoil, and gained honorary titles from the Imperial court in the afterlife. As early settlers and territorial warriors, they become guardian gods of the whole Huizhou. Many cults, shrines, and village worship associations were dedicated to them. Due to Cheng and Wang’s contributions locally, their shrines were exempted during the anti-cult movements led by the government in the early Ming Dynasty.

38 Yao, Silian. Book of Chen. (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), 114.  
40 Ibid., 193-194.
In addition to Wang Hua and Cheng Lingxi, another guardian deity of Huizhou appeared in late Imperial period: Zhu Xi. In comparison to the prior two heroes who defended Huizhou in a chaotic period, Zhu Xi had a more profound influence as a local deity in Huizhou culture both locally and nationwide. He was posthumously given the title “Duke of Huizhou Kingdom” and his memorial tablet was venerated in the Confucian temple in 1241.41 Huizhou natives had long been honored with the glorious title “homeland of Master Zhu”. Zhu Xi’s posthumous reputation was recognized by the court, his influence in Huizhou lineage’s construction, and his identity as a deity among Huizhou people nationwide made him the sole figure of Huizhou culture in late Imperial China.

Before Zhu Xi was recognized by court, the Huizhou lineages were merely noble families who migrated from the North to seek protection by living together in the frontier areas. As time moved on, lineages in Huizhou were gradually recognized as standard models in late Imperial China due to connections with Zhu Xi. The Genealogy of Wu lineage in Xiunin says, “As the homeland of Master Zhu, it is appropriate for natives to read his books, to follow his instructions, to hold on his liturgical rites, and to live according to the custom of Zoulu (Confucius’ homeland), so as to teach our descendant in these ways”.42 With Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism having been approved by the Imperial government in the late Yuan Dynasty, the local practice of Neo-Confucianism become popular in Huizhou society and accelerated the orthodox ideas of lineage in the early Ming Dynasty.43 Huizhou, as a region, had the biggest number of Ming-Qing lineage

42 Zhang, Haipeng and Wang Tingyuan, eds. Ming Qing Hui Shang Zi Liao Xuan Bian. (Hefei: Huang Shan Shu She, 1985), 38.
43 Zhang, Yi. Li Xue, Shi Shen He Zong Zu: Song Ming Shi Qi Huizhou De Wen Hua Yu She Hui. (Hong Kong: Zhong Wen da Xue Chu Ban She, 2013), 94.
Among these genealogies, many revisions were made through time, as Zhu said that if no revision were made in three generations it would be considered to be unfilial. As the compilers of lineal genealogy, the Huizhou gentry was different from gentry elsewhere because of their “periodic elevation and idealization of themselves in the form of local composite genealogies”. That’s why giant and collective projects of counties like Xiuning noble lineages’ chronology and Xinan noble lineages’ chronology could be produced.

Huizhou Lineage’s proud sense to keep the orthodoxy of Zhu Xi also reflects on editing rituals according to Zhu Xi’s Family Rite. The text of each family’s ritual was usually compiled into Genealogy. It mainly covers four aspects of Confucian rites: initiations, weddings, funerals, and veneration of ancestors. The acting places of these rites were at home, usually family memorial halls, with the head of family serving as a mediator between the living and the dead. Qing scholar Zhao Jishi said that “For various surnames of Huizhou, people lived together by lineage...People do ancestry worship according to Master Zhu’s Rituals, and behave gently...the natives always say, Huizhou’s costumes are better than other places”. This high appreciation of these rituals also emerged among Huizhou lineages in the Ming-Qing period because of Zhu Xi’s posthumous recognition from the government. Strictly following Zhu’s liturgical instructions in ancestral sacrifice had long been an outlook for the Huizhou people living outside of Huizhou. Even in the early Republican period, Huizhou people around China were still firmly obsessed with Zhu’s family rites. As a Wuyuan merchant, Zhan’s autobiography recalled, Jiangxi natives mocked Huizhou merchants’ rigid ancestry worship, in accordance with Master Zhu, as hypocritical and

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45 Zurndorfer, 65.
46 Fan, Shuzhi. *Jiang Nan Shi Zhen Tan Wei*, (Shanghai: Fudan University, 1990), 87.
zombie-like. On the other hand, the Huizhou people identified the whole liturgical process as civilized behavior.

To a larger extant, Zhu Xi also became a popular local deity representing the Huizhou people nationwide. In later Imperial China when Civil Service Examination achieved its peak, regarding Zhu Xi as a local deity was somewhat exceptional compared to other provinces or areas because it met the needs of court propaganda. Emperor Kangxi of the High Qing period praised Zhu’s Neo-Confucianism as “clear and precise”, and made it soothe scholars had “not dared to criticize”. The political atmosphere from Yuan till the end of the Qing dynasty made Zhu the representation of orthodoxy. Therefore, the Huizhou people’s veneration of their native son was correct politically. Secondly, Zhu Xi as a local deity also helped Huizhou merchants gain the reputation of Confucian merchants. As merchants from Zhu’s homeland, Huizhou merchants enjoyed the duality of both mercantilism and Confucianism. Qing scholar Dai Zheng described how Huizhou merchants gave the public the impression of being Confucian scholars. Huizhou merchants’ most significant characteristic in late Imperial China was their emphasis on Education. Engaging in business for Huizhou natives was merely a tool to achieve its economic foundation and was a better approach to getting educated so as to become scholars.

Although three guardian gods still had their influence in local society up until the 20th century, Zhu Xi, as the well-known master Zhu, clearly had more influence than the two braveries in Huizhou culture in late Imperial China. Ironically, even in the same Anhui Province, conflicts occurred between Huizhou merchants and North Anhui merchants as to who should be the guardian god of the entire province. For Huizhou natives, Zhu Xi was the only choice while the

47 Qing shi lu, Kangxi Shi lu, volume 2, 49.
48 Zhang, Haipeng and Wang Tingyuan, eds. Ming Qing Hui Shang Zi Liao Xuan Bian, (Hefei: Huang Shan Shu She, 1985), 438.
northerners in Anhui preferred Bao Zheng, a righteous judge in Song Dynasty. When the Nationalist Government gave Wuyuan county to Jiangxi, a trigger of anger among Huizhou natives was that Zhu Xi was a native of Wuyuan in Huizhou. As for Jiangxi people, they have their own guardian god, a Taoist immortal, Xu Zhenjun, whose religious identity distinguishably differs from a secular scholar.

6. Huizhou’s mercantilism

Huizhou mercantilism was not only shaped by Huizhou natives’ faith which highlighten the idea of Confucian merchants, but the isolated local economy in the prefecture, and its special exports nationwide. When Hu Shi gave his advice to the Jixi Sojourners Guild in Taiwan on how to improve the gazette of Huizhou, he mentioned the idea of differentiating between small Huizhou and large Huizhou.49 Locally, Huizhou’s inner market sphere is very special, just like its unique geographical location. As for Huizhou in the larger context of China, the Huizhou merchants’ mainstay business didn’t have many similarities to merchants of other areas. The economy of small and large Huizhou interacted and connected closely. From the perspective of economy, specifically market and trade systems, Huizhou’s economy has an unreplaceable role in Huizhou culture.

Huizhou’s marginal geographical location largely confines its traditional market and trade. Huizhou is a prefecture that has an embarrassing place in the context of Physiographic Macroregions of China.50 Among the nine macroregions mainly determined by the drainage basins of the major rivers, Huizhou belongs to marginal areas of both the Middle Yangtze region-Gan basin subarea and the Lower Yangtze region. Even so, it never possed a crucial role as market center or trade center in both regions. Huizhou possessed a relatively isolated location in Jiangnan,

whereas most prefectures in Jiangnan areas enjoyed convenient traffic routes and gregarious markets. Hidden among mountainous areas, Huizhoun doesn’t have fertile soils to grow agriculture; thus, its product was not as abundant as both the two regions it belonged to, for instance, the Po Yang Lake area and the Hangzhou area. So Huizhou natives had to go out for business because of this and their families at home mostly depended on food from outside entirely. Therefore, any cutoff or accident that affected the traffic route and would hinder Huizhou’s food supply was an emergency.

Huizhou’s mountainous landscape and its fragile soil made it unlikely to grow cereal grains, and the local economy was largely supported by special products from various high and beautiful mountains. As a result, an export directed local market was formed as well, exporting almost exclusively special products and importing daily necessities. Two of the most important local products, both from the mountains, were tea and timber, and timber products. Other minor products included ink, ink stone, and achieved high reputations among Chinese scholars. Certainly, the Huizhou natives could not rely on these special products to be self-sufficient, but these products were irreplaceable and cannot be obtained from other areas. Locally, the Huizhou people didn’t have a distribution center or big market for these products. They were either sent to Hangzhou in Zhejiang or Jing De Zhen in Jiangxi to distribute.\(^5^1\) Inside the prefecture, a small Huizhou market sphere has formed maturely. Various water conjunctions of routes formed small towns like Tunxi, but are merely connecting points along the commercial routes. Zurndorfer pointed out that Huizhou’s lack of a central market locally, and lack of an intermediate market can defy Skinner’s hexagonal model of Chinese marketing areas.\(^5^2\) Relatively speaking, Huizhou’s local market was

\[^5^2\] Zurndorfer, 128-129.
not big enough to form a compatible market sphere with Jiangxi and Zhejiang. Local market systems in Huizhou were exporting dependent upon and connected by limited vertical water routes with outside world.

In a larger context, Huizhou merchants’ businesses were largely defined by homeland’s products. Though it is widely acknowledged that the salt industry resembles Huizhou merchants’ ultimate success in late Imperial China, the vitality of Huizhou merchants only depended on the salt industry for a brief period of time, by playing edge ball in national policies and possessing a closer geological distance to the place producing salt.53 Viewing Huizhou merchants’ business in a longer choreology, the two major industries supporting Huizhou merchants were tea and timber. In addition, other special miscellany from Huizhou Prefecture, like ink stone and ink. For the salt industry and pawn industry, whether the business is good or bad could be confined by many unpredictable variables from outside. However, teas and timbers are always accessible from the homeland, regardless of political upheavel and outside competition. Huizhou tea merchants’ footsteps were not merely limited to big market’s circles around Huizhou, they reached Beijing in north China, and travelled down to Canton in deep south. As for timber industry, Huizhou timber was had its reputation for good quality even local officials would help natives to grow trees regularly so as to prevent deforestation.54 That’s why though the decline of Huizhou salt merchants brought a huge blow to the Huizhou merchants power, they were still active in business until the foundation of People’s Republic of China in 1949, mainly by supplying their special and replaceable goods, tea, timber, and stationary to the people. The cornerstone of Huizhou’s

economy in the larger context of the whole country was mainly supported by its unique local economy.

7. Conclusion: Vindication of Huizhou Culture in 21st Century

The original solid pattern of Huizhou Prefecture, one prefecture and six counties, were eventually gradually dismantled in 20th century by national policies for various reasons. The “Back to Anhui Movement” eventually gained success in 1947 with the confirmation from Nationalist Government in Nanjing. Ironically, Communists took power in mainland China only two years later. The Fourth Field Army of the People’s Liberation Army “liberated” Wuyuan in 1949 and again handed it to Jiangxi Province. Wuyuan’s intimate reunion with the other five counties only lasted merely two years. With the founding of the People’s Republic of China, land reform and confiscation of property stripped Local gentry’s roles in politics. Most of those local elites who used to acclaim “Huizhou instead of Jiangxi” then chose to survive in silence. New order and rising Nationalism in People’s Republic hindered Huizhou Culture with harsh policies.

Changes in administrative divisions regarding politics as priority are not an infrequent phenomenon in Chinese History. The United Empire, either Ming or Qing, and latter The People’s Republic have done many things in local geographic administrations to combat unified local identities and to undermine the trend to independence. Instead, convenience in traffic and politics has been considered to be more important than culture. Huizhou, with its long history and deep heritage, has an irreplaceable culture identity based on costumes, faith, mercantilism, et cetera. Just like its geographic position, it received influences from the outside world, and exported influences to the outside world. Consequently, it is a unique place with a splendid cultural identity. In the battle between national policy and local identity, Huizhou natives put fierce effort toward resisting the national machine, which is very uncommon in Chinese history. Even in Anhui, the
same Province, Huizhou was not the only place being dismantled and given away. Xuyi, a city in the north of Yangtze River in Anhui, and the official birth place of the first Emperor of the Ming Dynasty, was given to Jiangsu Province in 1955. Dangshan County and Xiao County, both important parts of Xuzhou, Jiangxi Province, were given to Anhui in 1949. However, natives of those places didn’t react as sternly and stubbornly as Huizhou natives did in the “Back to Anhui Movement”. Huizhou culture’s exceptionalism was demonstrated in comparison to other places.

To conclude, cultural identity and cultural spheres are not guilty in front of national policy and administrative convenience. A vindication of culture among various factors determining political geography is necessary. The consideration of culture is beneficiary to administrative divisions and local development. Further, the consideration of culture is also an expression of respecting natives and cultural confidence. This year, an article propagating in People’s Daily, the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party, called for restoring Huizhou as the official name of Huangshan area. The author demonstrated the necessity of restoring important historical geographic names nationwide, for instance, Huizhou. Nevertheless, acting upon this genuine suggestion is not easy in reality. Restoring Huizhou is not only a matter of name, but involving the administration of two provinces, and three cities, not to mention the famous mountain symbolizing Chinese tourism. Although it is hard to implement so far, attention and discussion are on their way. Restoring the original Huizhou area would a good sign of caring about the natives’ emotions, protecting cultural spheres, and expressing the genuine interaction between government and local communities. 21st century China needs cultural confidence. Restoring Huizhou can be a good start!

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