

Relocation and symbolic capital

---some architectural representations of the Hui nationality in south of Fujian in recent years

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Abstract: In this paper, the notion of “relocalization” produced by the British anthropologist, Thomas, will be employed to interpret the new style of architecture which appeared recently in the south of Fujian and which is said to embody the ethnic characters” of the local Hui nationality. The author maintains Bourdieu’s insightful theory of “symbolic capital” that may help in detecting a sense of “resentment” objectified in the architectural representations. The sense of resentment is an alarming sign of the increasing tension between local government and the will of local people.

Baiqi is a coastal city in the south of Fujian, facing the sea in the southwest, with the Houzhu Harbor across the sea. It is a county exclusively for Hui nationality in the Fujian province. At present, it covers a total area of about 17.6 square meters. Up to the middle of 1990s, there had been more than 13,000 in 13 original villages or 5 administrative villages. The Hui nationality has taken up 91% of the total population in the county, all of who share the same family name Guo. Actually, Guo is not only a Hui district, but a big clan (Fan, 2003). Before the appearance of modern transportation tools including bicycle, Baiqi seemed to be remote and obdurate, though it was not far away from a place what now called Quanzhou.

The Moslem history have left cultural heritage in various terms for the Hui people in Baiqi. In their daily life, besides the attractive burial custom in foreign style, this heritage was embodied by, as what Tu Ergan referred to, the customs and habits that emphasize the difference between profane and sacred, especially their attitude and ways of respecting, treating and dealing with death of their ancestors. In my field research, the villagers I paid a visit to all showed me another set of household

utensils. These things are all serious packed with plastic, and they are only applied when it is the memorizing day of the birth and death of the ancestors. They told me those things are absolute “Moslem”, without touching pork (everything related to pork). None of the reporters denied that they were hanized, as well as the fact that they were eating pork, but they all emphasized that they are “not Moslem when alive, but true Moslem when dead”. They can neither apply pork to worship their ancestors, nor can they cook the staff of the ceremony with lard, and most people will self-consciously stop having any lard when they sense their death is approaching---stop eating pork and related things, and begin to drink large amount of tea with an aim to clean the inner organs for them to be seen the ancestors with a clean body when they pass away. Sixty years ago, many people maintained the custom of inviting Ah Yan, and treat the dead body and bury it in the Moslem way. Later, most of the habits disappeared because of the diminishing influence of Moslem in Qunazhou. However, one thing never to be ambiguous is that they will “invite the Alkoran” when in funeral: the family who hold the funeral will invite the Alkoran from people in their clan and then worship it before the dead person; they will bury the dead body without choosing the day, and with a boy holding the Alkoran in front of all the people taking part in the funeral, etc.

Of course, all of these become the symbol of recognition at present. In the past, villagers only regard them as ways to respect and memorize their ancestors, which have never been linked to the nationality elements they own at the later time. In other words, to a certain extent, the existence of the custom and spreading respect thanks to their ancestors, or say, chinesization, in a certain degree, has helped preserve some customs related to Moslem. On the other aspect, it has fully showed the common impact that the ethical theories of the Song and Ming dynasties have in Fujian Province on the other aspect. However, because of the Moslem cultural heritage, the identity of Moslem with the surname Guo in Baiqi firstly gains the recognition from outside, and has been identified as Hui nationality since 1950s.

The funny thing is that, almost all villagers been visited denied their nationality as minority with the similar words when the civil administration department launched a survey in Baiqi for the first time with the purpose of recognizing the Guos as the Hui nationality in 1953. This led to the failure of identifying other majorities in the researchers' reports. The reports also released that obviously some Guos who with ambiguous attitude on this issue have understood that they will gain some political and economic benefit if they were recognized as minority, which was called "preferential treatment" in the report. Even so, the government identified Guos in Baiqi as Hui nationality with the foundation of Baiqi Hui County, and was officially departed from Dongyuan Town, the previous administration region it belonged to.

After the nationality county, the county government took great pain to make the county prosperous, and aggressively hope that it could change the local setback situation. Besides the concrete solutions, it also attracted investments from the "oversea Chinese, Chinese in Taiwan and nationality" who are regarded as pillars of local economic development.

During this process, local government adopted the suggestions from the local scholars who stressed "nationality character", moreover, it is recommended that this character should be embodied in the space, with the expectation of the combination of developing commodity economy, attracting the investment. In this project, constructing the "Moslem Commercial Street" is among the significant part. Since the street is named "Moslem", it has to embody the name. It is no doubt that it had become a concrete mission of the Hui County's city plan to embody the "Moslem culture" in Baiqi. In this case, the idea of "others as Moslem" existing all the time in the general people's mind became the only frame of reference for the construction of nationality character. In architecture representation, it seems that only the windows in

the arch shape, doors and dome can be regarded as the representative of the Moslem culture. In doing so, sides for sparing no effort to acquire the outside recognition by embodying their ethnic characters, there are some other practical purposes. In a working conference in the middle of 1990s, the previous lead of the county directly and explicitly stated that another important target of consistence of Moslem in Baiqi is to explore the business opportunity from the Moslem countries and to strive for introducing their product into the markets of those countries. At that time, the countable enterprises relying on funds or the towns mainly produce shoes, including leather shoes or sports shoes. From the above, we can find that the need of strengthening the links with Moslem countries is among the architectural ideas of pursuing some Arabia cultural.

The administration building of the local government put into use after the foundation of the nationality country locates in front of a small hill. It was early 1997, there was a road leading to the gate of the building after the twisting of the temporal unshaped abandoned field. There was neither building in front of or around nor any trees, so the building is very obvious. Entering Baiqi from the west in the car, you can see the building from afar. Honestly speaking, this building is not luxurious, and its material is available in the local areas, but one thing to be sure is that it is the biggest building; and what makes it attractive is its design.

The architectural representation of the administration building obviously means to deliver some information related to Moslem. The centre of the top floor stands three sets of yellow domes, with the front decoration as a giant arch in the shape of the top of onion and some lines in reticulation to form some figures, and last, the passages of the three sets of domes, the bigger one stands in the middle, while the smaller two in two sides that compose the bulgy parts of the front part of the building as a whole, and the two smaller domes are linked with the cylindroid building up from the ground,

inside which are the stairways to every floor. This kind of design is obviously enlightened by the minaret which is commonly seen in the foreign Moslem temples for greeting and worshipping. Additionally, all the bulgy parts and the windows in distinct places are in arch shape. There are hedge out of the building, whose gate frame is in arch with the top as an onion. Seen from afar, the six-storage government building in the county is just like a Moslem temple with the Arabian style.

Such a building has brought with a self-evident visual effect in the area where is dominated by the Han nationality in the cultural representation. The local architecture is characterized with the two-side sloping roofs and the symmetrical form, which is recognized as one of the top three architectural systems in the world, from the technical or structural point of views. In view of the difference of geographical situation, architecture in various places of China shows the territory diversity due to the difference of material, but the two characters said above will stay the same as the principle, so it is the local traditional architecture. The traditional district “mutual architecture” such as temples follow the traditional principle even in a stricter way, commonly with quadrangle as the “prototypical”, including the parvis, corridor and double-compartment that belongs to the building style of palace.

Picture 2 shows one example, the Guo family temple in Baiqi

In fact, it is difficult to define the kind of architecture with Hui characteristics. In terms of architectural style, it is of no difference between the Hui's and their neighbors', the Han nationality. This situation goes with the generally accepted concept of Hui. As a nationality group living together with Moslem coming from south and central Asia, Han nationality and other nationalities in China, the Hui nationality have shown no difference from their neighbor, the Han nationality in terms of outer cultural representation. Living habit or religion can be referred to as the

ethnic marks between the two, but the distinction between them lies in their recognition---if p.Duara's recognition definition is accepted.

If the Moslem temple architecture is recognized as the outer cultural representation of the Hui nationality, the Moslem temple in the palace style should be the representative. It is one of the two biggest systems among the Chinese Moslem temple styles, which was initiated after far Ming dynasty, approximately when the "Hui-Hui" recognition emerged. Moreover, it has been marked with the character which Hui should bear as their identity in whatever forms or content. The other system is the Arabian style, the buildings in which were mainly built before Yuan dynasty and the present. The Moslem temples in Xinjiang fall into this category (Sha qiuzhen, 1996). There was no Hui nationality as the one we are calling today. The early Moslem temples such as "Huisheng" in Guangzhou, "Qingjin" in Quanzhou are among those funded by the foreign Moslem doing business there at that time. And most of the temples in Xinjiang are built by the local nationalities in the A Ertai system. The temples at present time refers to those put into use in the late 1980s, most of which are in the Arabian style with the dome as their character. But they are not the property of the Hui nationality, so it is with other symbolic meanings besides serving as the place for the Moslem to worship their God. So it is the case for the government building of the Baiqi County. If it is only served as the office building, there is no need of presenting such characters.

The so-called "Moslem commercial street" is the core part of the plan of the whole Baiqi town proposed by the local County government in the middle of 1990s, with the purpose of making the local commercial market prosperous. Since it was required to show the local ethnic character in the street, with the main purpose of inheriting the Moslem things as what the designing idea of the whole planning expected, and that is why it was named so. A survey was concluded in Baiqi in the early 1997 when the street was still under construction, but its rudiment could be seen then. It was right

after the spring festival, and the workers hadn't begun to work in the building site yet, that the place was very quiet and empty there at that time. Though the street was not quite long, both sides were designed for shops (refer to picture 3).

The construction project of Moslem Commercial Street was initiated in 1994. According to the introduction by the villagers, the fund was collected by levying the lands from the local administrative county by the county government, and they sold it to those interested bidder at a higher price. Those individuals who brought the land have to hand over several hundreds annually that was to cover the administration fee and the payment to the design drawing purchased at the same time. According to the provision of the contract signed, the bidder had to build their house based on the given design, and those who broke the rule will be heavily punished for chastenment. It is said that some were amerced over tens of thousands. Though most of bidders thought the deal was unfair, the majority considered it as valuable from the long-term point of view. They believed that the price of the land would definitely increase after the whole planning was fully carried out, which would benefit with one shop. The shops on the "Moslem commercial street" were all subscribed right after the plan was carried out.

According to the architecture of several buildings that have been finished or were about to finish, the standardization of the so-called standardized drawing is to regulate that the design on all the buildings on the street have to be the same as the specialized one to show the Moslem culture character. As what picture three shows, besides the onion shape and the archy lines as decoration and the windows with the same archy lines, more importantly, the sides facing the road of each building have to be in the special swag eave. According to the writer's observation, the whole design is just like the door frame in arch, but without the lower part of it, it is of no use if not for decoration. The Arabian style in this design is also reflected by the archy lines with

the shape of onion on the top.

Besides the commercial street and the county government administrative building, there are similar decoration in the main building of Baiqi County Hospital that is under construction to show the “Moslem character”. The yellow dome was added to the top of the main teaching building and the teachers’ dormitories with the purpose of presenting ethnic character. However, it is fun to note that few new houses of the local people showed any similarity with the “public building” mentioned above in terms of theme. This seems to indicate that the local Hui people are difficult to recognize the representation of these buildings.

“再地方化” 与象征资本

---一个闽南回族社区近年来的若干建筑表现

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