

# **An Analysis of the Geographical and Historical Factors in the Formation of Lingnan Literature**

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**Abstract:** The Lingnan literature is a typical regional literature, but during the historical development process, the Lingnan literature has formed its own distinctive characteristics. Which are inseparable from its special geographical location and historical development, it also embodies the openness, integration, and Regionality, individuality, inclusiveness, secularity, etc. can be found in its geographical and historical characteristics.

## **Introduction**

Regional literature is one of the important components of Chinese traditional literature. They represent the characteristics of a region's literary development, and the regional cultural characteristics that are reflected in many literary works. The Lingnan literature belongs to a spontaneously formed category of regional literature, the creative form of Lingnan literature which is often based on the description and reflection of folk customs and secular life, thus reflecting the cultural characteristics of its literary creation. The Lingnan's unique geographical environment and historical development make it an important venue for cultural games between the East and the West, forming a special Lingnan literary characteristic.

## **1. The Basic Features of Lingnan Literature**

Lingnan literature has long had a distinctive "straightforward" characteristic, whether it is from Zhang Jiuling, Chen Baisha, Chen Gongyin, Qu Dajun, etc., all have this characteristic. But due to its unique geographical characteristics and historical factors, the Lingnan area has not been formed by the Central Plains culture, and the Confucian culture has not been highly respected here. These factors have provided more conditions for the development of the individuality and heterogeneity of the regional literature of the Lingnan literature. On the whole, the Lingnan literature has the characteristics of "openness and integration" [1], "regional and transcendence, time and space and advancement, and also the combination of its individuality and trend of times" [2]. At the same time, the Lingnan literature has the characteristics of being pragmatic, flexible and adaptable. Therefore, it has a kind of "interest-driven changes in people's minds", "worldly self-reliance lightly norms", and "common people's mentality is negligent of kingship"[3]. The literary form finally made the Lingnan literature permeated with secular, tolerant and pragmatic style.

The texts of Lingnan literature do not have a unified form, and there is no distinction between the superiority and inferiority. At the level of discourse connotation, the Lingnan literature has a very strong tolerance and freedom. For example, in the overseas narrative literature of overseas students in the early last century, the creations of Lu Xun and Yu Dafu were mostly related to their home country, while the overseas narratives of Zhang Ziping and Li Jinfa rarely involved the feelings of life experience, showing a sense of heterogeneity and Cultural tolerance. In the same period, the Zhang Ziping, Huang Guliou, Chen Canyon, etc., their creative content is different. Whether it is symbolism, citizen novels, low-level legends, water village stories, etc., they can coexist harmoniously, and there is no distinction between inferiority and mainstream, and the overall literature Ecology has the characteristic of freedom.

In Lingnan literature, the writing dialect is also an important feature, but there are not only Muyu

songs, Hakka folk songs, Cantonese songs and other forms, but also "Gu Ling Jing Wei", etc., which are all written in dialects. After the New Culture Movement, Lingnan Literature, the creation has long followed the creative mode of combining vernacular and dialect. For example, "Single Eyed Tiger" (Ouyang Shan) is written in Cantonese; Chen Canyon's works involve a variety of dialects; "Shrimp Ball" (Huangguliu) is also based on Guangdong and Hong Kong dialects... a large number of dialects that exist in Lingnan literature, focusing and highlighting on the regional characteristics presented by the Lingnan literature [4].

The Lingnan people are also very tolerant of the commercialization of literature in terms of literary entrepreneurship, which is not unrelated to their pragmatic and mercantile customs. The Hong Kong and Macao have been influenced by the Western culture for a long time, and the development of mainstream literature contrasts with that of the mainland, and its commercialization is very strong. Take Zhang Ziping as an example. He is good at writing modern people's marriage and love stories. In the process of creation, Zhang Ziping will start from the actual hobbies of the public and cater to readers' interest in reading, thus making his works very popular as Shen Congwen once described him: "He understands the masses, grasps the masses, and knows what the masses want." [5] This is a manifestation of Lingnan literature's tolerance for commercialization.

## **2. Geographical Factors in the Formation of Lingnan Literature**

In ancient time, the Lingnan belonged to the gathering place of Baiyue tribe, and at the end of Qin and early Han, it belonged to Nanyue Kingdom. The ridge specifically refers to the south of the five ridges, namely Yuechengling, Dupangling, Mengzhuling, Qitianling, and Leitangling. Its geographical distribution is mainly located at the junction of eastern Guangxi to the eastern Guangdong, Hunan and Jiangxi. The Lingnan has its special geographical location, while Wuling is the largest mountain range in the south of the Yangtze River, and it is also a watershed between the Yangtze River and the Pearl River. In the long history of development, the existence of the Nanling Mountains has been separated by the Lingnan region from the Central Plains, and its economy and culture are out of touch with the Central Plains, and it is even called the "land of barbarians." However, the historical civilization still left a strong mark here. The Central Plains culture, Jingchu culture, Wuyue culture, Bashu culture, etc. Has been merged with the local culture, thus forming today's Lingnan culture, which has a unique influence on the Lingnan culture under the circumstances of Lingnan literature that also shows the strong regional color.

### **2.1 The Semi-closed Geographical Location**

The geographical location of the Lingnan area is very special, which is a "semi-blocking" type. But Wuling separates the Lingnan area from the Central Plains area and forms a natural barrier, which allows the local culture of Lingnan to be successfully inherited and developed, and forms the local cultural characteristics. However, this barrier is not completely closed, as there are many that passages through the Central Plains in the Five Ridges using these passages, the local residents can communicate and contact with the outside world, and even move to the Central Plains. At the same time, the outside residents will also move here. Under this situation, the different living customs and literary characteristics of various places have been brought into the Lingnan region, and they have exchanged with the literature of the Lingnan region in continuous life, thus forming a unique Lingnan literature, which is contemporary in Lingnan literature and has a "diversified integration" based on the fact that the characteristics of it are precisely due to the relationship of this geographical feature. Most areas of Lingnan are surrounded by the sea, which has also strengthened its closure. The Lingnan literature has also formed its own independent development trend for a long time. However, its closure by the sea is not absolute, at the same time, it is located above South China Sea Shipping Center Hub, which makes it necessary to communicate with the outside world. Because they are located on the edge of the ocean, as the locals began to develop and utilize the marine resources very early, and even went abroad to communicate with other countries, which increased their openness. The semi-closed geographical location gives the Lingnan literature a very obvious feature of "openness and integration", which embodies the "regional" and "transcendence"

[6].

## **2.2 The Geographical Environment is Diverse.**

The Lingnan region can be divided into three main parts: the northern part of Guangdong and the northeast, the northwest and the northeast of Guangxi are mainly mountains and hills; the middle and lower reaches of the Beijiang and Xijiang, and the lower reaches of the Dongjiang are mainly alluvial plains and delta plains; The Leizhou Peninsula in the south, the Beibu Gulf coast, and the Chaoshan Plain are the southern coastal plains, which also contain some mountainous and hilly terrain. The complex geographical environment has caused the residents of Lingnan area to form different living habits and cultural types, and under the combined effect of these, Lingnan literature which also shows the characteristics of its diversity and tolerance. The northern part is dominated by farming mountains, and the commercial development is relatively good, while the communication with the Han people inside and outside started earlier, which formed the Cantonese culture. The coastal areas of the South China Sea embodied the spirit of pioneering. On the whole, the regional environment within the Lingnan area is diverse, and there is still a relationship between each of them, which is independent, but this is also the importance of the "diversity", "inclusiveness" and "freedom" embodied in Lingnan literature, the reason been that there is no "dominant literature", and there is no distinction between superiority and inferiority.

## **3. Historical Factors in the Formation of Lingnan Literature.**

The historical culture development is an important factor in the formation of regional literature. In the process of historical development, there are a large number of reasons that will affect the formation and inheritance of regional literature and the Lingnan literature is no exception, the closely linked characteristics reflections are related to the history Development.

### **3.1 The Pre-Qin Cultural Influence.**

As early as the pre-Qin period, Lingnan became a gathering place for the Baiyue ethnic group. These people lived here and had a certain connection with the Han ethnic group, this also formed a combination of Han-Yue exchanges and literature, thus forming a diverse, compatible and Regional literary color of cultural integration. For example, the emergence of factions such as the Cantonese family, the Hakka family, and the Fuk-Lao family were formed by the Sinicization of the Yue people in different regions under a specific historical environment. The Gu Yanwu once pointed out: "Zhuang is the old Yue people"[7], pointing out the different factions formed by the Yue people in the historical development, because they have had many types and wide distribution, and they have long existed here. Even if they are sinicized, they still reflect his own advantages, while the blood relationship is rich and colorful, his physical characteristics are still the characteristics of Lingnan people. During the continuous Sinicization of the pre-Qin period, the Lingnan literature was also influenced by it, and Zhuang language inversion grammar and word formation appeared, such as "I go first", "Jigong", etc.[8] At the same time, the symbiosis of these different factions also has an important influence on the inclusiveness and multi-factional nature of their culture.

### **3.2 Political Stability in Historical Development.**

Because the Lingnan area is blocked by the natural barrier of Wuling, which is far away from the political center of the Central Plains. In the course of historical development, the local politics is stable and has not been affected by social unrest and war. Although its overall development lags behind the Central Plains, due to its political stability and strong local power, because most feudal emperors implemented special policies. For example, when the feudal system prevailed in the Qin and Han dynasties, it was still a clan in Lingnan system; Emperor Wu's policy of suppressing business did not also affect Lingnan, "ruling by the old custom, no taxes" [9]; but the Tang Dynasty specially implemented the system of "selecting the officials from the south" for Lingnan.

These policies are conducive to local political stability, and at the same time, they provide conditions for the development and inheritance of local culture, under this situation, even after other

cultures entered the Lingnan, they all respected the local culture. But the Nanyue King Zhao Tuo claimed to be "the barbaric elder, the minister Tuo" [10] is an important manifestation in the development of history, as there have been a large number of cultural migration and immigration activities. The Immigrants from other regions have entered the Lingnan region. Under this situation, multiple cultures have achieved harmonious integration under this stable political environment, and indigenous people have gradually gathered here the different factions such as crowds, Yue people, Cantonese, Hakka, and Fuk Lao have gradually been formed. These are all important reasons for the inclusiveness, diversity, and development of dialect in Lingnan literature.

### 3.3 The Influence of Modern Western Culture.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Western powers opened the door to China. A large number of Lingnan people gain knowledge abroad and brought this knowledge back to Lingnan, such as "Western knowledge" (Yong Hong), "Japanese History" (Huang Zunxian), "Hawaii" "Travel Notes" (Liang Qichao), etc., these works make the Lingnan people to also realize the outside world, which is an important foundation for the multicultural development of Lingnan literature. At the same time, with the continuous influx of foreign cultures, foreign thoughts and local cultures to continue to collide in Lingnan, making the literature in the Lingnan region as the present characteristics of the coexistence of local literature and heterogeneous ideas. For example, my country's first modern newspaper in modern times was "Zhongwai Xinbao" (1958), and my country's first domestically published Chinese newspaper was "Monthly Biography of Eastern and Western Studies", which was developed by the Prussian missionary Guo Shili founded. But after the introduction of Western culture, which has had an important influence on the literature of the Lingnan region, that is the combination of different news literary forms appeared, such as "Gu Ling Jing Wei" and other personalized folk publications.

As a kind of regional literature, the characteristics of Lingnan literature are closely related to its geographical location and its historical development. The Lingnan literature has its traditional characteristics and is worthy of being passed on for a long time, in the process of inheritance and development, the fundamental factors of its formation are of great significance to its future healthy development. Starting from the geographical environment, resource status and historical factors of Lingnan, grasp the key points, maximize strengths and avoid weaknesses, and find inheritance and innovation a good point of integration is an important direction for the development of Lingnan literature in the future.

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