



ART FRONTIER

An International Art Journal / Vol. 3, No. 2 (Total Issue No. 10) Apr.-Jun., 2025

Qiaopi Network and Art Ecosystem: A Study on the Art Sponsorship Mechanism in Southern Fujian

Wang Zihao

To cite this article: Wang Zihao, “Qiaopi Network and Art Ecosystem: A Study on the Art Sponsorship Mechanism in Southern Fujian,” *Art Frontier* 3, no.2 (June 2025): 126-135, <https://doi.org/10.64212/NSPJ5287>.

DOI: 10.64212/NSPJ5287

ISSN: 2835-5490

EISSN: 2836-841X

© 2025 Frontier Press.

This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0). For full license details, please visit: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

This article has undergone double-blind peer review.

Website: www.artfrontier.org

Email: artfrontier2023@outlook.com

Publishing Frequency: Quarterly (March, June, September, December)



Qiaopi Network and Art Ecosystem—A Study on the Art Sponsorship Mechanism in Southern Fujian

Zihao Wang

Abstract: This paper studies the overseas remittance network in Southern Fujian to investigate how transnational capital flow has affected local art production and culture during the first half of the 20th century. Analyze the working mode of the remittance system, capital flow, and all other factors affecting the creation of folk art, architectural style and art education. It also explores the localisation of Nanyang visual elements under official cultural supervision. Research shows that the Qiaopi network served as an economic support system and, at the same time, a channel for cultural inheritance and reciprocity; thus, overseas Chinese actively participated in the construction of their homeland's culture under the conditions of globalisation. Through this “structural process”, the artistic ecosystem of Southern Fujian gradually emerged and showed various forms and levels of non-Western paths to modernity.

Keywords: qiaopi; artistic ecology; art patronage; transnationalism

Since the early 20th century New Culture Movement's engagement with Western historiographical theories, modern Chinese art history research has continuously sought methodological approaches, a pursuit that remains fashionable and burgeoning. The vibrant practice of the contemporary “South China School” offers insights into Chinese scholars' approaches to regional history studies. The South China School is a transregional historical school formed by generations of scholars primarily from Xiamen University, Sun Yat-sen University, and The Chinese University of Hong Kong. For decades, they have researched the regional political, economic, social, and cultural histories of the “Greater South China” region (Fujian, Guangdong, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau), focusing on studies related to political systems, clans, religion, household registration, and markets. The core concept of the South China

School's regional history research is viewing the historical evolution of a specific region as a "structural process." This approach emphasizes both the importance of purposeful human action in historical evolution and the dynamic nature of "structure" itself. This can be further understood through specific theoretical explanations: We have often arbitrarily divided the ideas of "structure" and "change". In fact, we know that the role people take in analytical research should be understood as a "process of structure", rather than just a static "structure". By their own choices, people create networks of relationships and meanings; these networks either support or restrict further behaviour, thus forming an infinite loop.¹

Li Yumin argues that China's mainstream modern art history narrative has long been marked by a dual obscuring phenomenon. The first is spatial obscuring: Most of the previous studies have focused on the "Western Painting Movement" in Beijing and Shanghai, such as the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts established by Liu Haisu, and have paid little attention to local autonomous explorations of modernity. The second is a concealment of actors; although the deeds of famous artists such as Xu Beihong have been widely studied, the unnamed but essential folk cooperative system has received little attention.

Based on this, this paper raises two core questions: First, how did the Qiaopi Network promote artistic creation in Southern Fujian through economic channels? Second, how were visual elements from Nanyang adapted locally under the influence of official cultural control?

I. Overseas Capital Flow and Cultural Industry Formation

Qiaopi specifically refers to remittances and family letters sent from overseas Chinese to their families in China through private institutions between 1900 and 1949, which integrated money and letters. Qiaopi agencies, as foreign remittance intermediaries, were as numerous as 243 in Fujian Province in the 1920s. Water couriers were individual messengers who carried qiaopi across borders and generally charged a fee of 3%-5% of the remittance amount.

Funds from labour income and commercial profit of Southeast Asian Chinese people. They were collected by overseas Qiaopi agencies (e.g., "Jian Da Xin Bureau")

and “Hong An Xin Bureau” in the Philippines) or door-to-door by shuikè, covering areas such as Manila (Philippines), Penang (Malaysia), and Singapore. For example, several remittances in the qiaopi records of the Huang Kaiwu family originated from the Philippines (e.g., No. 01-002 “Huang Kaiwu of the Philippines to Father at Jin House, Tong’an”), and the funds were in the form of silver dollars or US silver coins. Initially, the funds were mainly carried by “water couriers”. Later on, they began to circulate through the transnational networks of overseas remittance agencies, and some used instruments such as drafts (e.g., the “Check issued by Manila Jian Da Remittance Agency and cashed by Anhai Qianji Remittance Agency” recorded in Volume 11) and telegraphic transfer orders.²

Mail Agencies acted as intermediaries for collection and distribution. For example, after receiving remittances in the Philippines, the agency would transfer the funds to the hometown through branches in Xiamen, Zhangzhou and other places (e.g., “Anhai Qianji Mail Agency”). Finally, the funds were distributed directly to the overseas Chinese families by domestic money-transfer agencies or banks (e.g., Document 01-001 “Philippines Chen Changsheng to Huang Kaiwu in Jin Zhai, Tong’an”, which was explicitly marked “Pay ×× Yuan to Recipient”). They are for living expenses, home purchase and education. Some return receipts show that the family has received the funds and used them; thus, a closed-loop record of capital flow has been created.



Figure 1. Chen Changsheng from the Philippines, Huang Kaiwu from Tong’an Jinzhai sealed and sent the

The three levels of the overseas remittance system were set up for art patronage. Overseas Chinese employers have requested the construction of ancestral halls or artistic commissions through money transfer to remittance agencies with creative instructions. After receiving the funds, the agency paid a commission to the water courier. Water couriers carried the special requests from overseas families to the folk artists and had them create works. Folk artists created the works themselves and then gave them to the water couriers; these couriers would take the items abroad and hand-deliver them directly to the overseas employers.⁴

Huang Xiulang was a typical case; he was a 1935 Filipino-Chinese immigrant who sent 500 silver dollars through the “Wang Shunxing Money Transfer Agency” to have a stone carving of The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars made by Jinjiang artists commissioned. This work is now displayed at Jinjiang’s Guobai Mountain Villa. Chen Sanpin was a water courier who delivered a total of 27 batches of art works to Singapore between 1937 and 1941.

A 1912 remittance from the Philippines to Jin House in Tong’an explicitly stated “Please inspect the sale of bulk timber and stone materials for construction”, confirming that funds had been allocated to purchase building materials for traditional vernacular dwellings (cuo) in their hometown. These Min Nan traditional houses use brick carving and wood carving techniques and are classified as folk art. Financial support has helped preserve the traditional architecture of art. Several remittance letters (e.g., No. 01-222, 01-238) refer to funds for “repairing ancestral homes” and “renovating ancestral houses”. The Huang Kaiwu family’s ancestral home in Jin Zhai, Tong’an, retains traditional Min Nan architectural features such as “swallowtail ridges” and “saddle walls”, and these financial investments have indirectly protected local architectural heritage.⁵

In addition to small-scale individual remittances, a considerable proportion were direct investments by overseas Chinese merchants in China that significantly affected Minnan’s cultural industry. Chen Jiageng focused on the construction of infrastructure and curricula for art education in overseas Chinese schools. Jimei School is a typical case; as early as the 1920s, an art museum had been built there⁶, and during the war,

an arts and crafts exhibition hall was set up at its Anxi campus. Xiamen University's 1941 recruitment advertisement mentioned that it had over 100,000 volumes of books and many art-related ones. By 1947, Jimei School's library had accumulated over 70,000 volumes and 927 of them were for art. Xiamen University established the Institute of Chinese Studies in 1926 and added art courses to its teaching plan. That same year, Jimei School established a Faculty of Chinese Studies based on Peking University and added calligraphy to the high school Chinese literature curriculum.⁷ Since the 1910s, the school has offered fine arts classes. Although there was chaos in the 1940s, art education still proceeded normally. Both Jimei's middle and high school divisions were based on the idea of "nurturing national culture", and they aimed to develop students' minds and bodies and foster an "interest in the arts"; junior high school had art classrooms equipped with plaster models, sketching boards and easels. Both junior and senior high schools organised drawing competitions. Art and Crafts formed the combined arts discipline, and joint department meetings were held. According to the regulations, if a student's submitted work did not reach two-thirds of the required standard or was not completed and submitted on time, no grade would be given. Tan Kah Kee's Overseas Chinese School in Singapore also recruited pioneers of the "Nanyang School of Painting", such as Lin Xuedai, Liu Kang, Zhong Sibin, Chen Wenxi, and Chen Zongrui, to teach there.⁸ The Overseas Chinese School worked with other Chinese schools to organise various art activities. The school took advantage of the Singaporean festivals and memorial days to organise calligraphy and painting contests, as well as public exhibitions of art and photography works. Featured works included landscape and still-life Chinese paintings, oil paintings, watercolors, chalk drawings, pencil drawings, charcoal sketches, etchings, paper-cut artworks, and applied art designs such as embroidery, fabric patterns, advertisements, book covers, paper boxes, stamps, schoolbags, and record sleeves. Many exhibitions have had more than 100 works.

Overseas Chinese capital also regularly organised art exhibitions for overseas Chinese. In the 1930s and 1940s, Tan Kah Kee organised fundraising exhibitions for the War of Resistance through the organisations he led, such as the Singapore Chinese

Relief Fund and the Southern Overseas Chinese Association. For example, in June 1939, the Singapore Chinese Relief Fund held an exhibition of works by Weng Zhanqiu. Weng specifically thanked Tan Kah Kee at the beginning of his speech.⁹ In August, cartoonists Yu Shihai and Ning Hanchang from the Kunming branch of the Chinese Literary Association travelled from Burma to Singapore to hold a fundraising exhibition. Upon arrival, they were introduced to Tan Kah Kee. After hearing about the exhibition, Tan Kah Kee was moved by its “praiseworthy spirit of charity” and promptly arranged for the Star and China Relief Association to sponsor it. In December, the Singapore Chinese Relief Fund organised a joint fundraising exhibition of calligraphy and painting, and appointed Tan Kah Kee, Lim Kim Dian, Lim Keng Nien, Zeng Jichen, Tan Chin Hian, and Lim Shi Wan as honorary presidents. In June, to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the July 7th War of Resistance, Tan Kah Kee, along with Li Tiemin, Wang Yingxiang, Deng Taifu, Chen Guoqi, Li Chunrong, Lin Zhenzhong, and Guo Shanshu, decided to issue commemorative art certificates to support the relief fund.¹⁰

The Luchao Academy of Fine Arts was established with donations led by Filipino-Chinese entrepreneur Huang Changshui and later became the model for the Xiamen College of Arts and Crafts at Fuzhou University. In November 1951, the Fujian Provincial Education Department officially approved the establishment of the private Luchao School of Fine Arts. In the spring of 1952, the Luchao Art School opened at No. 38 Tianwei Road, Gulangyu (now within the Provincial Sanatorium). By mid-1952, the school had moved to the Bagua Building at No. 43 Guxin Road, Gulangyu. However, the Bagua Building had been unused for a long time and was in a bad state of disrepair. The founders have raised some funds themselves and have also mobilised social forces for donations and support of the school. One of the school’s founders, Teacher Li Qizheng, organised his older brother Li Qibin to participate; school teacher Zheng Guangyao also contacted his father Zheng Wenliang for a donation. Through the hard work of the school leadership and widespread public support, the Luchao Art School Board of Directors was formed in 1953. Huang Changshui provided financial support for the school’s construction and served as an

honorary chairman of the board. Lin Caizhi and Luo Dan were the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, and Zhang Xia was the Board Secretary. Over time, the board recruited more than twenty outstanding individuals, such as Cai Yanjie, Cai Jitang, Du Chirong, Yan Xiyue, Zhou Minghui, Xiao Feng, Yang Dikang, Cai Wushi, Ouyang Huang, and over twenty other distinguished community members as board members. All the directors have made generous contributions to help run the school. Together with the subsidy from the Provincial Cultural Bureau and student tuition fees, this has helped cover most of the school's expenses and keep it running normally.

With the development of world trade in the 20th century, the Min Nan Qiaopi system was also closely linked to capital flows abroad by overseas Chinese communities. Immigrant communities around the world have built similar transnational financial networks, such as the hawala system in the Middle East and Sowa or rotating savings and credit associations. Members provided funds, and their relatives and dependents used them for starting businesses, buying houses, etc. These systems were based on trust and cooperation among community members, and many took the form of mutual-aid finance.

II. Cultural Reverse Infusion

Fuzhou's Architecture has changed significantly over time from the end of the Qing Dynasty to the present day. Traditional Fuzhou houses were mainly made of natural materials, such as blue bricks, blue stones and wood, and had rich cultural connotations. However, after the implementation of the late Qing reforms, Western building materials and techniques started to enter the area, and new materials such as steel and glass began to appear. Given the above reasons, overseas Chinese residences were among the first to use these new materials and showed remarkable innovation and inclusiveness. Most of the Qiaocuo buildings were newly built with later-stage overseas Chinese capital, so they did not use the "incorporation" method for traditional dwellings; instead, new materials were added to some parts of the old structures. Qiaocuo architecture used new materials as its main structural components and, at the same time, incorporated and integrated traditional Fuzhou decorations skillfully. Quince blossoms are associated with the wish for family peace and

happiness, so they have been carved on glass. This Design can show the newness of the new materials and subtly incorporate the traditional wish for good luck in Fuzhou. It will be in harmony with the surrounding Western-style buildings and not out of place. Therefore, overseas Chinese clan halls have shown a willingness to accept and integrate new ideas while maintaining the spirit of traditional fortune culture.¹¹

Xingyuan is a typical cultural site in the mountains of Minqing County, Fujian Province. Built in 1925, it was financed by Liu Guanqiu, the 29th-generation descendant of the LuoJiao Liu clan. In 1917, Liu went to Sibul, Malaysia to start a Heli Garden plantation, and then returned to his hometown in 1925 to build this new house himself. After it was finished, he sold the west side of the property to his older brother, Liu Guanshi. As Liu Guanshi was known by the courtesy name Xingcun and Liu Guanqiu by Suyuan, the name “Xingyuan”¹² was formed by taking one character from each brother’s courtesy name.¹³ Xingyuan is not a typical example of “East meets West” architecture. It has a different arrangement of floors in the main house, but they are not staggered. Therefore, it does not conform to the traditional ritual-oriented system based on the main hall and ancestral altar; rather, a practical residential system combining reception, living, production and defence has been established. There is almost no empty space left, and thus it shows the transition from tradition to modernity. The Liu family were among the first Christians in Minqing. Brothers Liu successively moved to Sibul in Southeast Asia for land cultivation and became well-known local gentry and overseas Chinese leaders. The Design of their houses did not follow the traditional “grand mansion” style of Minqing, which featured wooden decorations such as dougong brackets and curved brackets, nor did it align with the modern Chinese architectural trend of “prioritising Western styles”; instead, it had a simple outside and rich inside.

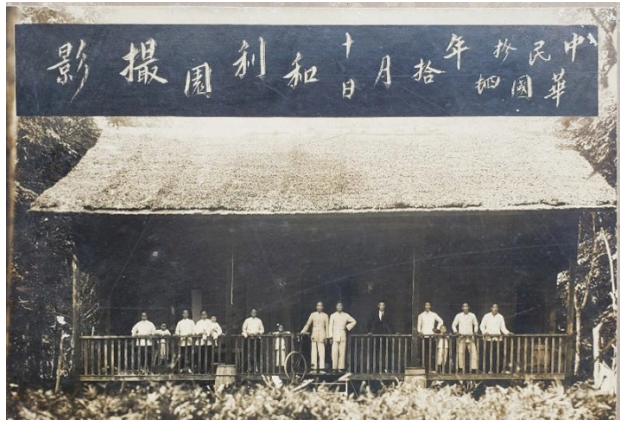


Figure 2. The old appearance of the Xinyuan¹⁴

Over a dozen residential examples in the style of Xingyuan have been found in places such as Bandong Town, Sanxi Township and Yunlong Township in Minqing County. Among the collected architectural samples, these buildings fall within the range of the 1930s-1940s. All of their owners had previously taken part in the Sibu settlement in Malaysia and were mostly Christians. In June 1902, Huang Naishang led settlers from the ten counties of Fuzhou to the new settlement of Xinshu Mountain in Sibu, Sarawak. Huang named it “Xincu’an”, meaning “new attap houses” built for the pioneers, hoping for peace and prosperity in the land-reclamation project.¹⁵ Rattan refers to the leaves of the palm family; they are relatively strong and water-resistant, so they can be used to build roofs. The first type of building in this area uses local materials, is easy to construct, and has a whole-house system with pillars supporting the upper floors. At the “Xincu’an” settlement in Sibu, overseas Chinese leaders from Minqing County, including Huang Naishang and Liu Jiashu, founded an immigrant community led by Chinese Christians. Following this, the Christian Church gradually built the Chinese Methodist School and the Methodist Boys’ School in Sibu, both of which adopted the attap house architectural style. The application of these elevated stilted facade elements is simple, free and varied, and resembles the facade style of modern Fujian-Qing overseas Chinese residences, such as those at Xingyuan.¹⁶



Figure 3. Appearance of the Xingyuan¹⁷

Discussions on “rattan houses” should also be placed in the larger context of colonial architecture development across Asia. Southeast Asia has been developing in recent years under the influence of various cultures from the East and West. The Sibu Settlement in modern-day Sarawak was an agricultural-based overseas Chinese community that reflected the special mountainous overseas Chinese cultural system formed in Minqing villages. This is quite different from the industrial and commercial environments created in the port areas of China during the 19th century; the difference is due to the genetic inheritance and changes in local “terroir”. If the arcade-style shophouses in coastal southern Fujian absorbed elements from Southeast Asian urban verandah-style shop houses, then the modern mountainous Chinese immigrant dwellings in Minqing, such as Xingyuan, may have incorporated the morphological features of Nanyang vernacular architecture. Therefore, they have different spaces and development paths compared with those near the coast. These buildings have achieved formal transplants and, at the same time, created rich spatial design narratives through selection and adaptation within the context of Minqing’s vernacular architecture culture.¹⁸

Such cultural transplants are not uncommon among other ethnic groups: Malaysian-Chinese architect Wong Wing-ho integrated Peranakan culture with Chaozhou architecture to renovate a 100-year-old house in Shantou’s Longhu District for eight months and created China’s first Peranakan museum-themed restaurant. He added Nanyang rattan screens and glass mosaics, combined Chaozhou ceramic inlay

with Penang terracotta mosaic techniques, and gave the old house's front wall a black-and-white-striped style inspired by Nanyang landmarks. This practice of "Southeast Asian spirit nourishing Chaozhou architecture" supports Portes' theory of transnationalism; that is, immigrants carry multiple cultural identities across borders and form ¹⁹. Italian immigrants' descendants brought American garment manufacturing techniques back to their hometowns and helped Milan become a world-class fashion city in the 1970s. Giorgio Armani was inspired by American casual wear to design a simple "power suit", and at the same time, he maintained the traditional Italian art of bespoke tailoring; thus, a new type of cultural fusion was born.

The behaviour of Min Nan overseas Chinese who spread foreign culture in their home country through global activities is a case study of global migrant trade. Multidimensional cultural fusion will have many stages and problems. All Cultures have their own origins. By tracing the localisation paths of these plants, we can learn about the reasons for their exclusion and inclusion at different times.

III. Traditional Power vs. Overseas Chinese Influence

As an immigrant group, overseas Chinese do not fit neatly into the categories of politics and culture. In the early 20th century, this ambiguity was especially prominent; the Nationalist government had engaged with foreign powers at times but also kept a wary eye on them, and thus its policies towards overseas Chinese were constantly changing.

In 1921, the Bureau of Overseas Chinese Affairs was renamed as the Overseas Chinese Affairs Bureau, and thus a central government department for overseas Chinese affairs officially came into being. That same year, the Beiyang government required all consuls abroad to register overseas Chinese for passport issuance, and conducted two surveys of overseas Chinese communities the following year. In 1923, the Beiyang government again reorganised the Overseas Chinese Affairs Bureau and issued policies to set up a series of overseas Chinese affairs institutions. After the formation of the Nanjing Nationalist Government in 1927, it continuously adjusted the structure of overseas Chinese affairs institutions at home and abroad, established

local branches for overseas Chinese affairs, and issued and implemented new plans for overseas Chinese affairs. In 1937, Japan began its full-scale invasion of China. The Chinese government responded by strengthening and expanding its overseas Chinese policies, adding measures such as soliciting donations from overseas Chinese, protecting the education of overseas Chinese students, attracting overseas Chinese talents, and establishing Qiaole Village for returning refugees.²⁰

However, alongside macro-level policies protecting overseas Chinese, the government implemented corresponding strict controls. Article 14 of the Regulations of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee, promulgated in 1929, explicitly stipulated that “overseas Chinese-funded cultural projects must promote orthodox Chinese traditions.” During the New Life Movement launched in 1934, instances occurred where decorative elements blending Chinese and Western styles were removed from Jinjiang overseas Chinese residences. This prompted a joint protest from the overseas Chinese community: “Can we not decorate our own doors with what we have earned through blood and sweat in Southeast Asia?”²¹ Through these policies and measures, the Nationalist government aimed to regulate the overseas Chinese cultural movement strictly and promote cultural development in line with official ideas.

The overall situation for overseas Chinese in their host countries was also far from optimistic. Many Southeast Asian nations implemented anti-Chinese measures. For instance, in the Philippines, many overseas Chinese had prospered through hard work, yet they faced “suspicion from the Philippine government and Filipinos, leading to anti-Chinese actions.”²² Consequently, most overseas Chinese sent their children to live in China, and over time, educational issues became increasingly prominent. Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia explicitly stated: As most overseas Chinese have moved to Southeast Asia, this discussion will use Southeast Asia as the model. Due to the different circumstances of life abroad for overseas Chinese, it has not been possible to develop a single educational system for them. Yet today, complacency is no longer acceptable; only by promptly issuing an overseas Chinese education policy can we achieve redemption. All of the above issues need to be

addressed urgently and effectively: setting educational goals, raising funds, building an incentive mechanism, organising and reviewing textbooks, determining teacher qualifications and remuneration, and issuing organisational rules.²³²⁴

Due to the government's restrictions, some local communities have been forced to adapt. Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia provided funds for the cultivation of cultural figures and professionals. For example, in 1928, Guo Yinglin, recommended by educator Yan Wenchu, received financial support from overseas merchant Lin Zhuguang to study in France. He studied at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and worked part-time to complete his oil-painting courses there. In 1933, Guo Yinglin returned to Xiamen and was appointed as the director of the Art Museum at Jimei School, and at the same time, he taught Western painting at Xiamen Academy of Fine Arts. He continued to teach art in Xiamen after that.²⁵ Gulangyu Island developed its own way of art education, refused to be subjected to the cultural control of the Nationalist government, and thus created a free and open cultural space. In 1938, under the invitation of Principal Lin Kegong of Xiamen Academy of Fine Arts, Taiwanese painter Zhang Wanchuan joined the faculty. Zhang taught Western painting and Japanese language at the academy, was skilled in detailed sketches, and could also expressively draw in an abstract style. After returning to Taiwan in early 1939, Zhang told his friends that his years of artistic life on Gulangyu had fulfilled his "Paris dream".²⁶

Cultural inheritance should take into account the openness of the receiving culture to indigenous culture and avoid forced assimilation. Therefore, the Overseas Chinese Style and Min Nan folk culture have been in a state of negotiation and integration. The former residence of Yang Amiao in Tingdian Village, Jiangnan Town, Licheng District, Quanzhou, was built by Yang Amiao, an overseas Chinese from the Philippines. Construction started in the 20th year of the Guangxu era (1894) and was finished in the third year of the Xuantong era (1911). The house has a traditional five-bay, two-wing structure and two protective wings on both sides. However, there are differences in the floor plans; for example, a "five-petal plum blossom" courtyard arrangement and the treatment of the protective wing's "flower hall" indicate new

developments outside the traditional form. Although the above modifications are based on the traditional system of construction logic, they have also been inspired by foreign architectural ideas. This particularity shows that the owner wishes to be part of the old gentry class but also desires some new ideas for that group.

After the economic reform, the impact of overseas Chinese in Southern Fujian gradually increased. With the spread of foreign culture, society has been changing at a rapid pace. In the 1920s and 1930s, many overseas Chinese in southern Fujian built Western-style houses to show off their wealth. Westernisation in daily life was also related to having more money and being well-off. Therefore, the new style of architecture in the West did not merely represent changes in taste.

The changing relationship between traditional forces and overseas Chinese culture has shifted from opposition and resistance to cooperation; thus, both have been transformed by economic development and changes in society. Thus, there was a change in society and the incorporation of foreign cultures. Local governments and civil organisations representing overseas Chinese communities sometimes competed for resources, and at other times worked together to promote modern city construction and urbanisation in the region.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the above analysis in this paper, the artistic ecosystem created by the Minnan Qiaopi network is by no means a solitary case of local culture. Instead, it can be seen as a typical model of cultural production and dissemination among overseas Chinese communities around the world. At its core, it drives local artistic creation via transnational informal financial networks (qiaopi) and forms hybrid modern styles through collaboration with national cultural policies; thus, it offers an excellent case study for exploring cultural flows under globalisation.

The Minnan paradigm shows that there are various ways and agents for modernisation in the non-Western world, and it no longer follows the traditional “centre-periphery” model of cultural inheritance. It shows that the periphery can use global networks to create new cultural spaces. There is no single culture; all have resulted from continuous negotiations, translations and recreations in particular places

and times. Scroll-work patterns on the houses of overseas Chinese in Min Nan and the educational system at Egret Tide Art School are concrete manifestations of this creative negotiation. Explorations of modernity have never been a single path of “Westernisation” or “retrospection”; instead, they constitute a “plural modernity” collectively created by countless grassroots individuals in their daily lives under the influence of globalisation. At the bottom is the spirit of pragmatic innovation, cross-cultural translation and unwavering local commitment; a conflict between fluid civilisation and individual agency.

School of Humanities, Central Academy of Fine Arts

WANG ZIHAO is studying at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, majoring in Art History and Theory. His current research focuses on the art of cross-cultural communication.

REFERENCE

- ¹ Xiao Fengxia: “Twenty Years of the School of South China Studies” [J], Tsinghua Sociology Review, No. 1, 2001, p. 195.
- ² Editorial Board of The Complete Collection of Southern Fujian Overseas Chinese Money Orders. The Complete Collection of Southern Fujian Overseas Chinese Money Orders (Volume 1) [M]. Fuzhou: Fujian People’s Publishing House, 2016: Volume 11.
- ³ Image Source: The Complete Collection of Southern Fujian Overseas Chinese Money Orders (Volume 1) [M], Fuzhou: Fujian People’s Publishing House, 2016: Volume 1, No. 01-001.
- ⁴ Data Source: Reconstructed based on Historical Materials on the Quanzhou Qiaopi Industry (2009)
- ⁵ Editorial Committee of The Complete Collection of Southern Fujian Overseas Chinese Money Orders. The Complete Collection of Southern Fujian Overseas Chinese Money Orders (Volume 1) [M]. Fuzhou: Fujian People’s Publishing House, 2016: Volume 1, No. 01-002 (12th day of the 5th lunar month, Year of the Rabbit [1924], Philippines. Huang Kai. Goods sent to father at Jin Residence, Tong’an. Enclosed letter), pp. 12-13.
- ⁶ Recent Developments in Fujian Jimei Academy Village [N]. Jingbao, 1924-02-19(5)
- ⁷ Jimei School Establishes Department of Chinese Studies [N]. Nanyang Commercial News, 1926-02-24(16).
- ⁸ “Master and Pupil Works Shine Together” - Huazhong Faculty and Student Art Exhibition to Open Next Month [N]. United Evening News, 1989-05-27(4).
- ⁹ Weng Zhanqiu Relief Fundraising Exhibition Opens This Morning [N]. Nanyang Commercial News, 1939-06-17(38).

- ¹⁰ Fujian Association's Relief Fundraising Committee Discusses "July 7th" Relief Efforts Across Ten Groups, Decides to Strengthen Flower Sales and Art Commemorative Voucher Sales [N]. Nanyang Commercial News, 1941-06-22(5).
- ¹¹ Shi Xinyi, Cai Weiting, Wang Jiazen et al. "On the Architectural Characteristics and Value of Western-Style Buildings in Cangshan, Fuzhou" [J]. Inner Mongolia Science and Technology & Economy, Issue 8, 2019: pp. 15-16.
- ¹² Minqing County Local Chronicles Compilation Committee. Minqing County Chronicles [M]. Beijing: Masses Publishing House, 1993, pp. 301-467.
- ¹³ Guo Huanyu. "Review and Reflection on Research into Modern Guangdong Overseas Chinese Homeland Residential Culture" [J]. Southern Architecture, No. 1, 2014, pp. 25-29.
- ¹⁴ Image Source: <http://www.tcmap.com.cn/photo/art/108/xingyuanguminju108452.html>, accessed [please supplement the actual access date when using].
- ¹⁵ Liu Zizheng: Huang Naishang and Sibü [M], Beijing: China Overseas Chinese Press, 1991, p. 213.
- ¹⁶ Liu Biquan. The Chronicles of Southeast Asian Nations [M]. Taipei: Chuanliu Publishing House, 1981, p. 85.
- ¹⁷ Image Source: <https://tzb.fznews.com.cn/node/23337/20250422/680758b85df27.shtml>, accessed [please supplement the actual access date when using].
- ¹⁸ Li Yunqi, Wang Hantao, Zhong Yan: "From 'Mountain Migrants' to 'Returnees from Nanyang': Spatial Construction of Xingyuan Overseas Chinese Houses in Fujian's Minqing Mountains from a Global History Perspective" [J], Decoration, No. 1, 2025, pp. 83-89.
- ¹⁹ Alejandro Portes, "Introduction: The Debates and Significance of Immigrant Transnationalism," Global Networks 13 (2001), pp. 181-193.
- ²⁰ Jiao Jianhua, Geng Jiaqi: "Themes and Evolution of Overseas Chinese Affairs Policies During the Republican Era: A Quantitative Analysis of Policy Texts Using Python" [J]. Journal of Xiamen University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), Vol. 75(01), 2025, pp. 192-204.
- ²¹ An Min. Xiamen's Jiangsheng Bao (1927-1950). Party History Materials and Research (Fuzhou), 1986, (2): 50.
- ²² Liu Shimu: "Overview of the Philippines," Nanyang Research, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 6.
- ²³ Fei Zemin. "The Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee We Anticipate." Nanyang Research, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 3.
- ²⁴ Chen Guancun: "Immigration Issues and the Survival of East Asian Nations," Nanyang Studies, Vol. 2, No. 5, p. 49.
- ²⁵ Dong Song: "The 'Invisible' Art History: The Discovery and Study of Guo Yinglin, an Early Oil Painter in France," Journal of Fine Arts, No. 2, 2019.
- ²⁶ Guo Yiping: "The Era of Early Maturity in Gulangyu Fine Arts," Xiamen Daily, August 20, 2006.