

Intergenerational Inheritance and Replacement in the Social Transformation of Modern Shaanxi

-- An Investigation Centered on Liu Guyu

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Abstract

In the late Qing and early Republic of China, the Chinese society was complicated and changeable. Facing the transformation and development of The Times, the traditional elite in Shaanxi also began to open their eyes to the world. Liu Guyu was the first elite in Shaanxi who contacted the new ideas. His thoughts had a profound influence on the social transformation of Shaanxi and even the whole northwest. Under the influence of Liu Guyu, a group of Shaanxi elite with regional characteristics threw themselves into the national salvation campaign. They were the first to catch the wind of The Times, bravely undertook the mission, inspired the wisdom of the people, and cultivated the soil of talents for the development of the new democratic revolution in northwest China. The practice and exploration of this group of new intellectuals show the intergenerational inheritance and regional characteristics in the social transformation of the modern Northwest. The research on them provides a case for the study of the regionalization of gentry in the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China, reflecting the varied world of gentry under the changes of the times.

Keywords

Late Qing and Early Republic of China; Shaanxi; Gentry Transformation; Liu Guyu.

1. Introduction

The gentry, as the backbone, was a unique group in ancient Chinese society, and the Shaanxi gentry in the late Qing and early Republic of China is an important part of the Chinese gentry. A group of early representative scholars have defined the concept of gentry. Among them, Japanese scholars mostly use the word "gentry", while Western scholars mostly use the concept of "gentry" or "elite". The gentry referred to in this paper mainly refers to the local elite group, which is the link between the officials and the people, connecting the bureaucrat class and the common class. The academic circles at domestic and abroad have made remarkable achievements in the study of the gentry. The research objects are mostly the overall composition, power, flow and their relationship with society and the state, which is a macro summary of the Chinese gentry class. There are few regional studies, and the research results about the gentry in Shaanxi are also few and far between. As a pioneer of the transformation of traditional elite in Shaanxi in the late Qing and early Republic, the academic research on Liu Guyu mainly focuses on his inheritance and development of Guan Learning spirit, his reform thoughts and practice, his academic and educational thoughts and his educational practice in Weijing and Chongshi Academy. Sorting out these achievements, there is still a lack of research on the early intellectual groups in Shaanxi influenced by Liu Guyu from the perspective of gentry transformation.

Based on this, it is necessary to explore the similarities and differences between Liu Guyu's transformation and the transformation of the southeast gentry, analyze the uniqueness of his thoughts and his position and influence in the transformation of the Shaanxi gentry in the late

Qing and the early Republic of China. Based on the consideration of these problems, to deepen the cognition of Liu Guyu, social transformation and gentry transformation of double-effect interaction, can also promote the regionalization of gentry research.

2. Liu Guyu and Shaanxi Society in the Late Qing and Early Republic of China

Liu Guyu (1843-1903) was an influential patriotic thinker and educator in Shaanxi province during the late Qing Dynasty. He devoted his life to education and served as the president of Weijing, Jinggan and Chongshi Academy, died while serving as the lecturer in Gansu province. He pursued the western truth, actively committed to the reform and saving the country, devoted all his life to the Shaanxi and Gansu region. Under his influence, a large number of outstanding gentry in northwest China embarked on the road of transformation.

In the trend of social change, Shaanxi is located in the northwest, but why in the general trend of social transformation is also gradually from the traditional to modern, shaanxi traditional gentry transformation in what kind of social background is carried out? To answer this question, we must first analyze the social status of Shaanxi in the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China.

2.1. Social Crisis in Shaanxi in Late Qing and Early Republic of China

Heavy taxation is society's foremost problem. From the opium War to the signing of the Xin-Chou Treaty, taxes in Shaanxi increased a number of times, "no money is added every year, no money is stripped people". Under the protection of unequal treaties, foreign churches and missionaries occupied people's land and houses, issued usury loans, and even organized infiltration into local areas to establish prestige. However, the activities of foreign churches influenced the local gentry with certain social prestige and economic interests, and promoted their transformation. In addition, frequent natural disasters make people suffer from hunger and cold. Data shows that GuangXu three years of Liquan County there are starved piled up to be buried in pits dug by soldiers in east of the county, that later referred as mass grave. And in the wells of ChengHuang and BaoAn Temples, children's bodies are also overflowing. And more than 30,000 people starved to death or fled in Sanyuan County. At the same time, disasters such as rain, hail, cholera and locust plagues were common. Severe natural disasters displaced people and stimulated those gentry who had the will to save the world to face the crisis and think about the way out.

2.2. Educational Reform in Shaanxi in Late Qing Dynasty and Early Republic of China

Education is an important factor affecting the traditional gentry's mode of thinking and choice of behavior, so the educational reform in the late Qing and the early Republic laid a foundation for the transformation of modern Shaanxi gentry. First, the form of education changed. Traditional private schools and colleges were replaced by new academies. In 1901, all academies in The country were changed to both middle school and Western learning.[1] In the following year, the new school system was promulgated and the imperial examination system was formally abolished, and the teaching method gradually became scientific and reasonable, focusing on step by step, which directly promoted the differentiation and transformation of traditional gentry. Second is the change in curriculum content. The Christian Church established two academies named Chongzhen and Beautiful Men and women in Sanyuan Gospel Village. The courses mainly involve English, history, religion, biology, geography and music, etc." [1] These new courses encouraged the traditional gentry to accept and form new ideas. In 1905, local schools in Shaanxi selected about 30 government-funded students to study in Japan. The formation of the culture of studying abroad was a major change in shaanxi education in the late

Qing and early Republic, which also made the traditional gentry have more diversified ways to contact western learning and laid a foundation for their future actions of saving the nation and striving for survival.

In short, the serious social crisis is a powerful driving force for the transformation of traditional gentry in Shaanxi. A group of traditional gentry with strong sense of anxiety began to think about the drastic changes of The Times, and thus embarked on different development paths, trying to shoulder the arduous mission of saving the country and striving for survival.

3. The Evolution of Liu Guyu's Thought

In the traditional society, the gentry undertook the mission of cultural continuation and development. "If you excel in learning, you will be an official", and lived by the emperor's stipend. Their education was mostly limited to the indoctrination of ethics, code of conduct, ethical code and political education in the imperial dynasty, and their knowledge system was jointly constructed by village public order and customs and the Confucian classics. However, the drastic changes of The Times urge them to look at the world with open eyes and update their own knowledge system and way of thinking.

Liu Guyu was the first traditional gentry in Shaanxi to advocate universal education. He had written to Shaanxi Learning official Shen Qi-quan, put forward the idea of popularizing compulsory education in the countryside to save the country. This thought is beyond The Times, he tried to township school to reform the people, improve the quality of the whole people, which was not possible at that time, but left the ideological enlightenment of compulsory education. "practice, realistic, broad knowledge, music group" are his educational purposes and Outlines for students, since then "GuanZhong ethos has changed".

Deeply influenced by the theory of "practical and practical", Liu Guyu's concept has undergone a transformation in thinking about how to serve the society. His commentaries on "classics and history" are not to annotate ancient books, but to annotate The Times. He believes that the purpose of learning is to adapt to the needs of The Times, to "adapt to change". [2] Liu Guyu was deeply saddened by the Chinese people's encroachment on opium, so when he presided over the Wei Jing Academy, he ordered that "scholars should not smoke foreign opium". [3] He placed practicability in a very important position. He believed that the progress of science and technology was the foundation of the prosperity of the West, advocated applying what one has learned and pointed out the importance of industry to the development of the country. In addition, For autocratic monarchy, Liu Guyu held a critical attitude, he believed that the rule by man should be replaced by the rule by law, advocating constitutional monarchy. Witnessed the late Qing government to cede land and pay reparations, humiliate the country, Liu Guyu bitterly thought about the state. The rule of man will inevitably affect the overall interests of the country and the people due to the ability and will of a few rulers. The rule of law can ensure the purity of the rule of man. This thought is farsighted and has far-reaching influence on the transformation of shaanxi political system.

In short, as a "little Confucian scholar", Liu Guyu, although far away from the government, was concerned with the world. When the fortunes of the country declined, he kept up with the pace of The Times and constantly updated his own ideological system, truly practicing "everyone is responsible for the rise and fall of the world".

4. Liu Guyu's Practical Activities and the Transformation of Modern Shaanxi Gentry

Due to the double impact of Western learning and Western power, great changes have taken place in the ideology and various systems of modern Chinese society. In this era of change, the

traditional gentry in Shaanxi are also actively exploring in transformation and even reorganization. Some progressive gentry with a strong sense of urgency, not only cared about the current affairs, the country and the people, but also did not lose themselves in the transformation. Liu Guyu was a banner of the transformation of the modern Shaanxi gentry. Under his guidance, a group of traditional gentry promoted the transformation of many aspects of Shaanxi in the late Qing and early Republic of China.

4.1. Opening the Atmosphere through Culture and Education

Since Liu Guyu actively raised funds to establish "Qiuyou Zhai" in 1884, it became the earliest school teaching Western learning in Shaanxi at that time. Some outstanding scholars who were influenced by western learning never forgot their teacher style. Xing Tingjia, a student of Liu Guyu, actively carried out cultural innovation, practiced his idea of teacher education to save the country, and advocated women's education. Under the influence of Liu Guyu, educator Yang Songxuan formed the idea that the happiness of life lies in serving the people, and cultivated thousands of excellent talents for China during his lifetime. In addition, Yu Youren, Li Yizhi, Sun Renyu and others have run schools in Shaanxi for many times. Wu Mi, Yang Mingyuan and others inherited their teachers' teachings on the platform all their lives, further lecturing western learning, and devoted themselves to the education of Shaanxi and even the whole country. Many students grew up to be new intellectuals and played an important role in the shaanxi Revolution.

4.2. Change to Save the Nation

In modern China, the unprecedented national crisis and rising nationalism once promoted the development of the national reform movement in 1898. Liu Guyu practiced and united a group of patriotic and progressive people to actively carry out the reform movement in Shaanxi, this batch of progressive through the reform movement, the revolution, the may fourth movement to the national revolution later gradually become the main force of revolution in shaanxi province. When Kang Youwei initiated the campaign, more than half of the 55 Shaanxi-born students who participated in it were students of Liu Guyu. "[2] Later, under the influence of Liu Guyu, Li Yuerui founded the "Guan Comity" with the purpose of "protecting the country, protecting the species and protecting education". Kang Youwei expanded the "Guan Comity" into the Conservation National Association which there were 34 Shaanxi scholars among the 186 members in Beijing. Most of the members who responded to the Reform came from the gentry class. From then on, they moved from tradition to modern times and demonstrated their power in the later revolution. For example, revolutionary educator Wang Shoujin made explosives with his theoretical knowledge in the Xinhai Revolution. In 1918 in the Dharma Protection Movement, Yu Youren led the Shaanxi revolutionary forces to deal a heavy blow to the Beiyang government in Shaanxi, and during the period of northern expedition, because of the crisis in hometown and "urgent aid to Shaanxi", he went to the Soviet Union to urge Feng Yuxiang to return to China to establish the National Coalition Army.[2] These transformational vanguards of the gentry have promoted the development of Shaanxi's revolutionary cause in all walks of life.

4.3. Survive by Relying on Industry

After the Westernization Movement, large machine manufacturing enterprises had begun to take shape in southeast China, but there were few new national enterprises in Shaanxi at that time. Liu Guyu wrote an article to the local businessmen and gentry to explain the benefits of starting industries and the importance of safeguarding national rights and interests, and advocated that the national interests should be given priority to, and the share raising should not be limited to the household registration in Shaanxi. At the same time, Chen Tao, Yang Hui and Sun Zhenghai were sent to Suzhou and Shanghai to study the technology of machine weaving. Sun Zhenghai also went to Shanghai manufacturing Bureau to visit and learn guns,

steel smelting and ship building. After he returned to Shaanxi, he imitated cotton ginning machine, and since then machine ginning has been very popular in various counties in Guanzhong. Many of Liu Guyu's industrial ideas did not come to fruition due to the opposition of conservatives, but his plans and discussions are a great stroke in the history of shaanxi's national industrial development, pointing out the direction for the traditional gentry to turn to industry to save the country.

4.4. Change Customs to Enlighten the People

Shaanxi society in the late Qing was backward in thought. The trend of young and old taking opium began in the towns and then spread to the villages. Both the rich and the poor were deeply involved in it, and even there were four or five out of ten opium users. Liu Guyu was deeply distressed by this, and tried to promote mulberry planting and sericulture in Shaanxi. He believed that the benefits of sericulture were rich, and if the results were significant, "villagers will abandon opium and engage in sericulture". [4] In addition, Liu Guyu also wrote an article to persuade the people not to bind their feet. Influenced by this, Yang Songxuan wrote the article "Women's Development" in 1898, and organized the "Women's Natural Feet Vibration Society", advocating that men cut pigtaileds and women put feet, changing customs. And then, Sun Renyu donated 700 taels of silver in 1912 to establish the Shaanxi Change of Customs Society, which gradually opened the atmosphere of Shaanxi.

4.5. Run a Newspaper to Spread New Voices

The news of the defeat of the Sino-Japanese War spread to Shaanxi, in order to save the national crisis, Liu Guyu take action immediately, created "The Times Comity" and selecting 40 outstanding students of JingWei academy, specially the affairs of state, founded the earliest modern journal in Shaanxi, which has far-reaching influence. Liu Guyu has made great achievements in the cultivation of news talents all his life. After 1911, a group of students who studying in Japan founded "Guan Long" and "Summer Birth" magazines in Tokyo, where they expressed their patriotic thoughts and actively propagated their revolutionary thoughts, which also left the seeds of revolution in Shaanxi. Yang Mingyuan and Song Xiangchen, the founders of Summer Birth, were liu guyu's students. Li Yi-zhi, a water conservancy expert who initiated the monthly water conservancy, Yu Youren, the founder of Minli Daily, and Zhang Jiluan, the chief writer of Ta Kung Pao, were all influenced by Liu Guyu, and they made great contributions to the widespread spread of new culture and new ideas in Shaanxi.

5. Conclusion

Generally speaking, liu Guyu, as a representative of the wild gentry in Shaanxi in the late Qing Dynasty, had both the commonness of his contemporaries and the uniqueness of the gentry in the interior. Similar to the southeast gentry, Liu Guyu's transformation was also carried out in response to the social changes brought by modern civilization. The difference is that in the process of transformation, the source of Liu Guyu's new learning thoughts is the traditional practical thinking and the spirit of "applying the world"; He lived in Shaanxi and Gansu all his life. His understanding and cognition of western learning and Western law mainly came from reading new newspapers and periodicals, talking about learning and making friends, and communicating by letter. In the course of social transformation in Shaanxi in the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China, the traditional gentry with Liu Guyu as the center did not remain silent in history, they were active in the political, cultural and educational, revolutionary and economic fields of Shaanxi, and gave full play to their dynamic role in social transformation. Transformation was cruel, especially in the turbulent late Qing Dynasty. Shaanxi, which was located in the central Plains and had weak popular spirit, was expensive. These traditional gentry, which went beyond the local characteristics, were the epitome of the inland gentry in

terms of production flow, composition system, cognitive structure and social influence, reflecting the intergenerational replacement of a group in the social metabolism.

References

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