

Original Paper

A Study on the Belief in Wuxian and Related Issues in Three Surnames Village Northeastern Yunnan

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Abstract

Northeastern Yunnan is one of the regions in Yunnan with a relatively early historical development. The construction of the Wuchi Road strengthened the connection between Yunnan and the interior of China, also marking the beginning of large-scale migration from the interior to Yunnan. The completion of the eastern postal route accelerated the integration of Yunnan with the interior. Migrants from the interior brought their original folk beliefs with them. During the development and construction of villages in northeastern Yunnan, temples were also built. With historical development and social changes, the folk beliefs and clan structures within the villages also evolved. This study, based on an analysis of the Wuxian belief and clan changes in Three surnames Village, northeastern Yunnan, further explores the characteristics of the immigrant society in this region.

Keywords

Three Surnames Village, Wuxian Temple, Clan, Belief Transmission, Social Change

1. Introduction

Northeastern Yunnan refers to the northeastern part of Yunnan Province, encompassing the entire territories of Qujing City and Zhaotong City, as well as Xundian County and Dongchuan District of Kunming City. It has long been known as the “Key to Yunnan and Guizhou”. The Maxiong Mountain in Zhanyi District, Qujing City, is the source of the Pearl River, creating the geographical wonder of “one drop of water feeding three rivers,” with its distributaries flowing into the Beipan River, Niulan River, and Nanpan River. Qujing City is the second-largest city in Yunnan, administering 3 districts, 5 counties, 1 county-level city, and a national-level development zone, covering an area of 28,900 square

kilometers with a population of 6.53 million. Zhaotong City administers 1 district, 9 counties, and 1 county-level city, covering an area of 23,000 square kilometers with a population of 6.09 million. This region has historically been the gateway into Yunnan.

2. Overview of Sanxing Village and its Folk Beliefs

2.1 Overview of Sanxing Village

In this study, Sanxing Village in northeastern Yunnan is located in Panjiang Town, Zhanyi County, Qujing City, Yunnan Province, belonging to a basin area. It is 2.5 kilometers from Panjiang Town, with a land area of 26.57 square kilometers, 1,482 households, and a population of 5,982 people. It comprises 11 villager groups: Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, Group 4, Xuanhua Tun (Groups 5 and 6), Group 11, Hujia Tun (Groups 7 and 8), Taojiaying (Group 9), and Shangba (Group 10). The village is nestled alongside the Nanpan River, at the center of the Panjiang Basin, and is one of the most water-advantaged areas along the Qujing section of the Nanpan River, making it a treasured location. According to village elders, Sanxing Village was developed and built jointly by the three surnames: Tao, Zhou, and Wang. A local saying goes: “The Tao family’s bridge, the Zhou family’s well (dragon spring), the Wang family’s street.” The Wuxian Temple at the village entrance is a temple shared by the three surnames and is also considered the location of the village’s dragon vein. A ridge extends north and south from the temple. To the north, it extends to Longwo Shu, the location of the village’s spring, considered the dragon’s head; to the south, it extends to Heini Tang, considered the dragon’s tail.

Sanxing Village is situated by the Nanpan River. The saying “The Tao family’s bridge, the Zhou family’s well, the Wang family’s street” hints at the reasons for the village’s formation and the resources controlled by each surname. There are no historical local records about the village’s formation. Based on ancient trees, old tombs, and elders’ accounts, it is speculated that the village formed during the mid to late Ming Dynasty when large numbers of Han migrants came for garrison farming and settlement. Early in its formation, a sluice gate was built on the Nanpan River. While villages are scattered throughout the Panjiang Basin, only Sanxing Village has fields lower than the water level, facilitating irrigation. Moreover, most paddy fields in the basin rely on water diverted through Sanxing Village, giving it extremely convenient water access, controlled by the Tao family at the river head. Besides the Nanpan River, the village has nearly ten ponds and several dragon springs, covering dozens of mu of water surface. These ponds are the main sources for villagers’ water fetching, drainage, and vegetable watering, while the springs are daily drinking water points, controlled by the Zhou family. Sanxing Village has convenient transportation, historically being a necessary route from Zhanyi to Deze, Huize, and Zhaotong, leading to the formation of a market street, controlled by the Wang family. Although each surname controlled certain resources, all resources were shared, and the three surnames lived harmoniously, thriving together.

2.2 Current State of Folk Beliefs in Sanxing Village

The primary belief in Sanxing Village is ancestor worship. Villagers believe ancestors will bless their descendants. During festivals or major family events, they must burn incense, offer watery rice, and burn yellow and white paper money. Graves are swept during Qingming Festival and the “October Festival.” There are no other distinct characteristics. The difference between being religious or not is simply whether one goes to the temple to burn incense, but often this is utilitarian or simple prayer. Villagers lack a concept of religion or belief in their hearts; they worship any bodhisattva without distinction. In daily life, they hold reverence for deities, all things, and ancestors. For example, they respect the river, believing dirty things should not be dumped into it, and caution is needed when playing by the river due to “foot-pulling ghosts” (water ghosts). They revere the sun and moon, believing one should not point at or curse them, and children especially should not urinate towards them, lest they face retribution.

Currently, almost every household in Sanxing Village has its own altar, primarily worshipping “Heaven, Earth, Monarch, Parent, Teacher” and ancestral tablets. Incense is burned on the first and fifteenth days of the lunar month and during festivals. Besides household altars, the Wuxian Temple is the common place of worship for the villagers. Additionally, there is a local Earth God temple in Group 2 and a Buddhist hall at the shamaness’s home. On the first and fifteenth days of the month and during festivals, every household burns incense, regardless of personal belief, but not everyone goes to the Wuxian Temple or the Earth God temple. Most villagers only visit the Wuxian Temple during the Spring Festival (mainly on New Year’s Day) to burn incense, make offerings, and donate merit money. Some villagers visit the shamaness’s Buddhist hall when facing difficulties to seek help in averting disasters and praying for blessings.

3. Historical Changes of the Wuxian Temple in Sanxing Village

There are no records of when the Wuxian Temple in Sanxing Village was first built. However, according to a stele inscription “Judgment of the State Magistrate” stored in the temple, it existed at least by the Guangxu period of the Qing Dynasty, and the main deity worshipped was the “Wuxian Bodhisattva.” The full text of the stele is transcribed below:

Judgment of the State Magistrate

Acting Magistrate Han of Zhanyi State, Qujing Prefecture □

To settle disputes and prevent encroachment. In this case, according to Wang Zepei’s claim: the Shijiabei site is the burial ground of his ancestors. The submitted deeds contain many inconsistencies. Due to the long passage of time, it is difficult to investigate thoroughly. It is now adjudicated that the original grave at Shijiabei shall remain with the Wang family, who may mound the grave, with a space of twelve feet in front, behind, left, and right, either building a wall or laying stones as they wish. The land outside the grave shall be public land of the Wuxian Temple. Not only shall the Wang family not encroach upon it, but no family in the village shall occupy even a foot of it. Both parties have agreed to

this and have signed settlements to conclude the case. If litigation recurs hereafter, Wang Zepei and Tao Hongxue will be held responsible.

Originally, this land has always been public. East to the road, South to the Wang family's garden wall, West to the main road, North to the Wang family's wall foundation. There was formerly a market period, serving as a place for trade among the four classes. There is an ancient stele there, but over the years, no one from the Zhou, Tao, or Wang families recognized it. Now, the market is more prosperous than before. In the ninth year of Guangxu (1883), the Wang family mounded a grave to recognize their ancestors, leading to a lawsuit with the Zhou and Tao families. After repeated hearings at the Yan and Song sub-prefectures and the former State Magistrate Chen, it remained unresolved. In March of the tenth year (1884), it was brought before various offices again. The current State Magistrate Han adjudicated, ruling that this stele should remain as an earthen mound, with a grave space of about twelve feet. There was no permission for the Wang family to erect a stele or engrave names. Beyond this, it is all Buddhist land, not to be occupied by the grave. This is all based on the settlement statements and case files from the various offices. The Zhou and Tao gentry leaders, acting with great impartiality, labored on behalf of the Buddha. Therefore, the judgment is respectfully copied onto stone for posterity, so that future generations will know that this land belongs to the Buddha.

Actually, there is one plot of dry land located at Paomachang, bordered by main roads to the East and North, and by the Tao Shicheng family's land to the South. For years, no one dared claim it. Suddenly, Tao Zhengtai privately added a dispute over its division. The village found it intolerable and reasoned with him, inviting intermediaries Chen Shaoyuan and Zhou Shaotang to clarify. Ashamed, he returned it to the public, not daring to occupy even a foot. Another matter... [text unclear]... the public fears that over time and generations, records will be lost, hence this stone is erected.

Total expenses for the various petitions: 81 liang, 6 qian, and 2 fen of silver.

Late Spring, Guangxu 10th Year (1884)

[List of names: Tao Zhengbing, Tao Shicong, Tao Zhengtao, Tao Fake, Tao Hongxue, Zhou Guocai, Zhou Guoqing, Zhou Gaogao, Tao Jinmei, Tao Hongshun, Tao Zhengji, Zhou Guomei, Tao Zhengliang, Zhou Guorong, Zhou Guocan, Tao Shaoqing, Tao Kaitian, Tao Zhengwan, Tao Baobang, Zhou Guoyao] Publicly erected.

This stele records a dispute in Sanxing Village caused by the Wang family's recognition of ancestral graves. The Wang family, wanting to expand their grave at Shijiabei, attempted to occupy more public land of the Wuxian Temple. The Zhou and Tao families, "acting with great impartiality, labored on behalf of the Buddha," argued their case, resulting in a judgment that only the grave itself within a twelve-foot radius belonged to the Wang family, and the rest was public temple land.

Besides this stele, there are several newly erected steles inside the temple in recent years: one titled "Origin of the Tao Family and Continuation of the Sixty-Character Generation List", one "Merit Stele" for temple renovation, and four "Records of Merit Donations for Yunlong Temple." These steles contain nearly 600 names, primarily from the Tao, Zhou, and Wang surnames.

According to interviews with villagers and elders, the “Judgment of the State Magistrate” stele was indeed seen in the Wuxian Temple before liberation, but its whereabouts became unknown after the “Four Olds” destruction campaign after 1949. However, based on field research, it can be confirmed that the stele was discovered embedded within a wall during temple repairs in the 1980s. When the author described specific details of the stele, the village elders agreed it was indeed the original ancient stele. When discussing the public land of the Wuxian Temple, elders mentioned that there were two fields next to the temple, called the “Monk’s Fields,” along with some vegetable plots. Additionally, there was a public plot of land at Paomachang. In the late Republic of China period, a Mr. Wu from Qingshuigou (religious name Wu Jishan) resided at the temple, responsible for daily incense and rituals for surrounding villagers. After liberation and the “Four Olds” campaign, the temple was abolished, and everything was lost.

During the late Qing and Republic of China eras, the Wuxian Temple was prosperous. Festivals were held according to the seasons: Lantern Festival on the 15th of the first month, Green Sprouts Festival in April, Dragon Boat Festival in May, Ghost Festival in July, Mid-Autumn Festival in August, Double Ninth Festival and Horse King Festival in September, Kitchen God Festival, etc. The Lantern Festival on the 15th of the first month was the most lively. The festival would begin on the 9th day of the first month. Anyone from the three surnames with money could sponsor the festival, with the chief and deputy sponsors determined by the amount contributed. The festival would rotate on the 15th, include a boat procession on the 16th, and then conclude. During the Lantern Festival, a doumeasure and offerings were placed before the Wuxian Bodhisattva, and a large broom was placed in the open space behind the main hall. During all festivals, different scriptures were chanted, and Dongjingmusic was performed. During the late Qing and Republic of China, temple participants were predominantly male. However, currently, over 90% of the devotees are female, primarily elderly women.

Religious activities at the Sanxing Village Wuxian Temple ceased after liberation in 1950 due to specific political campaigns. The temple was used for processing starch and vermicelli, brewing alcohol, and pig farming. It was not rebuilt until 1993 and has yet to be officially recognized by the Zhanyi County Religious Affairs Bureau. The temple’s restoration went through three phases: a sacred space without idols -> painted deity portraits -> clay statues. During this process, the number of deities increased, and the main worshipped deity changed.

When the temple was first rebuilt, the main hall was dilapidated and uneven. Devotees placed a few planks to make a platform, a small oil lamp, an incense burner, and ritual instruments like a wooden fish and silver bell. Devotees gradually began visiting on the first and fifteenth days of the lunar month to burn incense and pray. They would kowtow and pray towards the general direction of the empty hall. Sometimes, village elders would guide them, indicating where the Wuxian Bodhisattva, the Duke of the Fields, and Earth Mother were supposed to be. Followers would then kowtow accordingly, murmuring prayers. This continued for over a year. Later, with donations from devotees, those leading the restoration hired a painter surnamed Hu from Hujiatun to paint portraits of the deities. On the day

of inviting the deities, all portraits, each draped with red cloth, were carried by two young boys from the painter's home in Hujiatun to the Wuxian Temple, accompanied by gongs, drums, and firecrackers. This event attracted almost the entire village, with many devotees burning incense along the way. It was very lively. Subsequently, a grand consecration ceremony was held. At this point, almost no one noticed that the "Wuxian Bodhisattva" in the paintings had been replaced by the "Five Peacock Emperors," yet the plaque "Hall of Wuxian" still hung at the entrance.

Over time, as donations accumulated, the organizers planned to create clay statues. The task was again entrusted to the painter Hu from Hujiatun. During this period, one of the organizers, Zhang the shamaness, brought an image of Thousand-Armed, Thousand-Eyed Guanyin from Zhongcun Village. Consequently, the main deities became Thousand-Armed, Thousand-Eyed Guanyin, Manjushri, and Samantabhadra, with the Five Peacock Emperors on both sides, along with the Ox King, Kitchen God, Duke of the Fields, Earth Mother, Local God of the Land, his wife, Golden Boy, and Jade Maiden. As the temple expanded and devotees increased, the main deity changed again from Thousand-Armed, Thousand-Eyed Guanyin to Guanyin Bodhisattva. The main hall gradually added deities like the Sun God, Moon God, Ksitigarbha, King of Medicine, God of Longevity, and Weituo. A wealthy family from a neighboring village donated a ceramic statue of the God of Wealth in a side hall, establishing a Wealth God Temple. By October 2013, after the last major renovation, the plaques on the main hall were changed to "Hall of Yunlong" and "Mahavira Hall." The two "Hall of Wuxian" plaques were discarded in a corner, ignored.

However, over these thirty-plus years, all these changes did not alter the sanctity of the temple or the devotion of the believers. Whether it was the "Hall of Wuxian" or the "Mahavira Hall" made no difference to the villagers. All changes were decided by a few key devotees leading the restoration, without any research or basis. The majority of villagers followed along without objection, continuing to visit on the first, fifteenth, and festivals to worship and pray.

Another notable change was the position of the main door. During the initial restoration, the door was placed in the center of the hall according to the old design. Later, it was moved to the south end, and finally back to the center. These changes were also decided by the leading devotees, with no one else expressing any disagreement.

The reasons for these changes are likely: First, there are no descendants within the three surnames who have specialized in religious studies, folklore, or related disciplines, nor any devotees with formal religious training or literacy. Second, the restoration was primarily led by a few enthusiastic devotees without broad consultation, often based on subjective wishes. Finally, due to the "Four Olds" campaign and subsequent religious policies, many male elders and former members of the Dongjing society are unwilling to enter the temple or participate in its affairs. Thus, there is almost no discussion or objection regarding the temple's layout or changes in main deities. The villagers have no strong feelings or dissatisfaction regarding the changes to the Wuxian belief or the temple. Regardless of the renovations, when entering the temple, they simply say it's getting better and well-built.

For the devotees and villagers, the temple is a sacred space. The specific deities enshrined inside seem largely irrelevant. People enter to worship and pray, and the addition or change of deities does not affect the space's sanctity. In other words, villagers lack a concrete concept of folk belief. Whether the main deity is Wuxian Bodhisattva, the Five Peacock Emperors, Thousand-Armed Guanyin, or Guanyin Bodhisattva makes little difference to them. Similarly, whether the plaque reads "Hall of Wuxian" or "Mahavira Hall" is inconsequential.

4. The Transmission Path of Wuxian Belief in Yunnan from the Perspective of Sanxing Village's Wuxian Temple

The current distribution of Wuxian belief in Yunnan can be seen in the paper "A Study on the History and Current Situation of Wuxian Belief in Yunnan" by Xiao Jihong from the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences, Institute of Religious Studies. This paper discusses the distribution and current state of Wuxian temples in Yunnan. However, it primarily posits that the belief originated in Jiangxi, which somewhat limits its depth. Furthermore, the author's focus is solely on Yunnan and does not fully cover all Wuxian temples in the province. Consequently, it does not discuss the transmission routes into Yunnan or analyze the reasons for their distribution.

Based on currently collected literature and field research, there are nearly 100 Wuxian temples in Yunnan and the surrounding provinces of Guizhou, Sichuan, and Chongqing.

Yunnan has 14 Wuxian temples, distributed in Kunming, Yuxi, Jianshui, Baoshan, Chengjiang, Yao'an, Dayao, Luliang, Zhanyi, Yiliang, Simao (now Pu'er), Zhaotong, Xuanwei, etc.

The Wanli Yunnan General Gazetteer contains five entries recording Wuxian temple distributions:

Wuxian Temple in Yunnan Prefecture: Outside the east gate of the prefectural city.

Wuxian Temple in Lin'an Prefecture: Outside the north wall of the prefectural city.

Wuxian Temple in Yongchang Prefecture: Outside the east gate of the prefectural city.

Wuxian Temple in Chengjiang Prefecture: Two in north of the county seat.

Wuxian Temple in Yao'an Prefecture: South of the prefectural seat; also one in Dayao County.

Additionally, there is one on Yuanbao Mountain in northern Kunming, one in Nandaying Village, Yuxi, two in Luliang County, one in Xiaohousuo, Panjiang Town, Zhanyi County, one in Xiaotun, Yangzonghai, one in Yiliang County, one in Simao (now Pu'er).

Guizhou has over 50 Wuxian temples. According to the Guizhou Provincial Gazetteer · Religion Gazetteer, 43 Wuxian temples were documented in the province: 7 in Yunyan District, 2 in Huaxi District, 6 in Wudang District, 1 in Renhuai City, 2 in Tongzi County, 1 in Xixiu District, Anshun, 2 in Puding County, 1 in Guanling County, 16 in Zhenning County, 1 in Tongren City, 1 in Shiqian County, 1 in Yuping County, 1 in Duyun City, 1 in Changshun County. Furthermore, historical records indicate temples in Weining, Liuzhi Special Zone, Yuqing County, Qingping in Kaili, Qinglong County, Xingren, Baoli Dazhai in Rongjiang County, Huangping County, Suiyang County, etc.

Sichuan Province and Chongqing Municipality have nearly 30 documented Wuxian temples. In Sichuan, they are distributed in: Chengdu City, Nanchong County, Da County, Songpan County, Batang Town, Pengzhou City, Dujiangyan, Xuyong, Chongqing County, Tongjiang County, Xichang County, Shifang, Daying County, Wenchuan County, Luzhou, Deyang, Jiangyou City, Jianyang, etc. In Chongqing, they are found in: Jiangjin City, Hechuan, Fuling, Wanzhou, Shima Town in Dazu County, Sanqu Town in Dazu County, etc.

Centering on Kunming, the distribution of Wuxian temples in Yiliang County, Luliang County, Zhanyi County (Xiaohousuo), Xuanwei, Weining County in Guizhou, Zhaotong in Yunnan, Yibin, Xuyong County, Luzhou in Sichuan, etc., largely aligns with the route of the Chuan-Dian Courier Route (Wuchi Road). It can be inferred that the Wuxian belief along this route was transmitted from Sichuan. The distribution along Kunming, Qujing, Fuyuan in Yunnan, and Panxian, Pu'an, Qinglong, Guanling, Zhenning, Anshun, Guiyang in Guizhou aligns with the Dian-Qian Courier Route (Eastern Route). It can be inferred that the belief along this route was transmitted from Guizhou. The distribution in Xichang, Dayao County, Yao'an County, etc., might be related to the "Lingguan Road," but this requires further verification. Based on current data, the Wuxian belief in Yunnan was introduced from Guizhou and Sichuan (including Chongqing), primarily along these major courier routes. The discovery of the Wuxian Temple in Xiaohousuo, Zhanyi County, clearly shows the distribution along the Sichuan-Yunnan route, supporting the transmission path theory for the Wuchu Road. This seems fairly certain.

5. Temple Festivals, Clans, and Social Change at the Grassroots Level in Sanxing Village

The northeastern Yunnan basin area contains numerous small basins. The largest basins by area are: Luliang Basin, Qu-Zhan Basin, Shizong Basin, Luoping Basin, Caobai Haizi, and Panjiang Basin. The Panjiang Basin (elevation 1935m, area 100.56 km) is the sixth-largest basin in Qujing. The villages scattered throughout this basin are all settlements of migrant families. Except for the Hui population around Rongxing Village, the other villages are predominantly Han Chinese. These villages are almost all multi-surname villages. Although there might be one or a few dominant surnames in each village, clan power is generally not strong.

Currently, Sanxing Village lacks large ancestral halls like those in Tengchong, western Yunnan. There have been no large-scale conflicts organized around clan lines, no collective clan worship or clan cemeteries typical of northern clan societies, and no genealogies maintaining clan history and lineage. Although there are large surnames and clans within these migrant villages, clan consciousness and power structures based on clan organization are almost non-existent. Connections and mutual aid within and between villages are complex and cooperative. Resources within and around the village, while owned, are also shared. The Panjiang Basin shares the water of the Nanpan River for irrigation, following a natural top-down flow without conflict. The surrounding hillsides are commonly cultivated

without strict boundaries; while trees on the hills might be owned, the pine needles, firewood, wild fruits, and mushrooms underneath are for anyone to gather.

During the late Qing and Republic of China, the Wuxian Temple held festivals according to the seasons and was the most prosperous temple in the Panjiang Basin. The Lantern Festival on the 15th of the first month was the liveliest. However, the chief and deputy sponsors of the festival were determined by financial contribution. The chief sponsor could be from the Tao family, the deputy from the Wang family; or the chief from the Zhou family, the deputy from the Wang family. The three surnames did not compete for sponsorship rights; it was determined by contribution amount. For a long time, the three surnames coexisted harmoniously until the “Shijiabei” dispute during the Guangxu period caused conflict between the Wang family and the Zhou/Tao families. After the magistrate’s judgment, harmony was restored. To this day, the three surnames intermarry, integrate, and coexist peacefully.

Before liberation, the only clan organization in the village was the incense organization during funerals, with the Tao, Zhou, and Wang surnames each carrying incense within the same surname. When one of the three surnames passes away, with the deceased’s family as the center, a total of 16 households, consisting of eight households on each side, need to send a male member to participate in the funeral procession. The two households on the left and right of the deceased’s family are called “gangtou” (responsible for moving long stools during the funeral procession). “gangtou” is the liaison between the deceased’s family and members of the incense organization, responsible for notifying the male members of the incense organization of the specific funeral time. But after liberation, with land reform and collectivization, villages implemented the “three fixations”, and incense organizations changed from clan boundaries to administrative village delineation. When it came to large collectives, incense organizations were almost paralyzed, and those who argued were drawn by team leaders or village leaders, and did not follow the original incense organizations. After the reform and opening up, incense organizations were divided according to the existing administrative village groups. Xiaohousuo Village was divided into 11 “incense” groups according to the villagers’ groups, and sometimes the members of the incense organizations were also women. Some people who worked outside began to leave the incense organizations, and some people paid people to replace themselves to argue.

At this point, it can be said that the incense organizations that help each other, maintain family development, consolidate family power, and exchange emotions within the three surnamed village clans have lost their original meaning with social changes. Nowadays, more people see incense organizations as an exchange of labor force, where everyone helps and assists each other. When a family has something to do, everyone helps. In fact, since the reform and opening up, the cohesion of the three surnamed villages has been weakening from clan tombs to village tombs, from clan worship to individual worship. The clans that were originally clustered and scattered have become looser with the changes in society. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the emergence of large collectives, the formation of village groups, and the breaking of the pattern of geographically harmonious and same surname living, as well as the changes in incense organizations and the

relocation of ethnic graves, almost completely dissolved the clan power in San Xing Village. With the changes in society, the interactions and marriages among the three ethnic groups have become intertwined and intertwined. They share weal and woe, and the power of their clans is almost non-existent in these villages. This is probably one of the characteristics of the immigrant society in northeastern Yunnan.

In addition, the looseness of the clan organization and family branches in Sanxing Village. Currently, the only thing that maintains the relationship between the clan and family branches is probably the funeral. During the funeral, a seemingly unrelated family will offer a “road sacrifice” to the deceased. At this time, the onlookers (young people) will ask, what is the relationship between these two families? At this point, the elderly will say that they are a family, and their ancestors or ancestors are an ancestor. It can be said that the current loose clans do not have much influence in Sanxing Village, and the existing administrative management of the village is not perfect. After the liberation, the public fields of Wuxian Temple, the ponds inside the village, the old river channels outside the village, the barren mountains and wastelands, and the unclaimed land were all occupied by some villagers. Some were converted into fields, and some even built houses. Many villagers complained about this, but the situation has not improved until now. Especially the pond of Longwo Tree has been occupied by several villagers, who have built toilets in the original location of the “Dragon Temple” and piled up a lot of pig manure and miscellaneous items. Villagers say that the Dragon King has become holy and told the villagers that he can’t bear the smoke anymore, hoping that the believers can rescue him. But no one is willing to clean up the clutter occupying there, and the village leaders also ignore it.

6. Conclusion

No matter how the folk beliefs of Sanxing Village change, the sanctity of temple space by villagers and believers will not change. Although I have repeatedly appealed that the main worship god is not Wuxian Bodhisattva, our temple is Wuxian Temple, and we should not hang the plaque of “the Shakyamuni Hall”. The main worship god in the Shakyamuni Hall should be Sakyamuni, and we should hang the “Wuxian Hall” back, but no one replied and responded, occasionally, but there was no clear dissatisfaction with the status quo of the temple and the need to change. The elders in the village always talk endlessly about the main deity worshipped in the temple during the Republic of China era and the cave music festival at that time. They still vaguely remember the regulations and main deity worshipped in the temple, but they have no thoughts or discomfort about the current situation of the temple. They believe that restoration is always good, and it doesn’t matter who the main deity is. Entering the temple is nothing more than praying to the deity and worshipping Buddha.

After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the Three Surnames Village broke through the limitations of surnames and established administrative villages. The three surnames were also divided into one group, two groups, three groups, and four groups, implementing the “three fixed” policy. In addition, later land reforms and other reforms made the single surname settlement become intertwined

with each other. The intermarriage among the three surnames in the village has invisibly strengthened the connection between them. Since the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China, the three surnames have prospered and suffered together. If one surname causes trouble, the other two surnames will surely unite. The “Ten Family Steles” cemetery case during the Guangxu period is the best example. To this day, the three surnames live harmoniously together and participate in religious activities at the Wuxian Temple without distinction. Until today, after the death of the three surnames of Tao, Zhou, and Wang in Sanxing Village, they all go to Wuxian Temple to hold a “gift ceremony”, that is, to pray to the gods and obtain a reward.

All the villages around Sanxing Village are immigrant villages, seemingly inhabited by multiple ethnic groups, but in reality, they are inhabited by multiple surnames. Therefore, in such an immigrant society, everyone helps each other and develops together. Villages like Sanxing Village can be seen as a microcosm of the Southwest immigrant society. Although the village is inhabited by various ethnic groups, the ethnic groups are not large. In addition, the changes in modern countries and society have brought certain impacts to the relative instability of this originally immigrant village’s ethnic group. Living together among clans, but relatively loose, the village’s cultural style is not prosperous, and there have been few elites and cultural figures. There are no genealogies, ancestral halls, clan cemeteries, or clan worship ceremonies; Without a carrier to maintain the history and culture of the village, this ethnic group has no history, no memory, everything seems elusive and uncertain. No matter what happened in the past or how it will develop in the future, the three surnames just follow history forward, without memory or history. Everything is disappearing and slowly lost.

The restoration of Wuxian Temple and the revival of folk belief activities have not brought much change to the village and its followers. It has not united the clan, nor has it changed the existing living conditions of the village. No one cares about how Wuxian Temple changes. Whether in the past or in the future, Wuxian Temple may continue to change with social changes, but it will always exist in the village space, become a sacred space in the village, and become a place for villagers and the public to believe and gather.

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