

圍，它可以是從問題觀點引申出來的空間。因此地域研究的範圍是因應觀點而伸縮。從而，地域研究的研究方法，可以單獨或同時由驗證的人類學和社會學的方法、包含廣泛的地域為論題的政治經濟學和國際關係學、以至從長期的歷史學的方法來進行。

無論範圍的廣狹，地域構成的因素是多元的。

宗族和鄉黨、市場和商業網絡，甚至廣大範圍間的貿易和國家與國際關係等，都是我們要充分地注意的因素。

華南研究資料中心的設立，不單止是收集資料，更重要的是同時擔負着整理、編輯和出版資料的任務。我希望透過這個中心，可以進一步促成建立一個中外研究機構之間廣泛的研究交流的網絡。

What do anthropologists have to do with documents?

Helen F. Siu

Department of Anthropology, Yale University

Working in a discipline built upon ethnographic fieldwork in non-literate societies and oral traditions, anthropologists may find the use of historical documents superfluous. For historians whose preoccupation has been the careful scrutiny of fragments of documentary evidence, months spent in the field may seem equally odd. Nonetheless, a partnership between our mixed group of anthropologists and historians in the South China project started ten years ago. We shared a dissatisfaction with conventional disciplinary boundaries and cherished an intellectual curiosity to go beyond them.

I remember the times in the mid 1980s, when Liu Zhiwei, Chen Chunsheng, Lo Yixing, David Faure, and myself spent much time walking the fields in the Pearl River delta. At times, Liu Zhiwei would urge me to move on, when I seemed too absorbed in conversations with old villagers about local rituals and customs. His reasons were obvious: We already found the stone stele concerning the particular historical event; it was all clearly carved in stone! I had, however, insisted that the interpretations by the villagers of the stone stele were as interesting as the words themselves.

At times when we dug into local archives, there were pleasant surprises. On one such occasion, I came upon a country gazetteer of Xiangshan. In the section on “virtuous women,” local literati seemed so impressed with women who hurried back to their dying husband’s bedside that they praised these worthy acts in the most Confucian terms. I remember the look on Chen Chunsheng’s face, when I asked him: “Where could these women have been before rushing ‘home’?” If staying away from their husbands after marriage was the norm

taken for granted by both local men and women, what would this tell us about the historical evolution of cultural identity and ethnic relationships? Was there another level of cultural meaning which informed local behavior but was braided into elaborate Confucian language and documentation? How should we determine what was left unsaid was important as what was carved in stone or established in print?

What we learned from these questions is that both ethnographic and historical explorations can be enriched by a critical “reading” of textual resources we manage to collect and contextualize. Our sharpened sensitivities allow us to appreciate nuances in local cultural meaning woven into formal written records, standardized rituals, and the reminiscence of villagers. A multi-centered approach to Chinese culture and history problematizes the usual analytical dichotomies, such as that between central polity and local society, popular and elite cultures, the literate and the oral traditions.

These concerns, developed during our early explorations in the archives and in the field, open up new avenues for the collection of research materials, and point to an ever expanding repertoire of analytical issues with regard to cultural and historical processes in South China. Down to Earth: The Territorial Bond in South China “documents” our initial collective effort, expressing shared intellectual concerns as much as our diverse range of substantive interests. In the tenth anniversary of our “re-reading” of the buluoja, I add my sincere wish that this Station will point to a long term bonding between history and anthropology.