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Introduction

0.1 "Yue" and "Cantonese"

The present study is intended as the first of a series of studies on the Yue (粵) dialects, which constitute one of the several major dialect groups of Chinese.[1] The Yue dialects are sometimes referred to as the Cantonese dialects. The terms "Cantonese"[2] and "Yue" have been used in two senses. In their broad sense they designate a group of dialects; in their narrow sense they designate the standard dialect (dialect of Canton) of that group. In order to avoid unnecessary confusion, we shall use "Yue" to designate the dialect group[3] and "Cantonese" to designate the norm of the group.

0.2 Historical background

Historically speaking, the term "Yue" (粵 or 越)[4] was first used in Han and pre-Han historical documents for a group of coastal peoples living south of the "Central Plains" states and for one state of the Warring States period lying south of the Yangtze and along the coast. As a term referring to peoples, Yue is an abbreviation of "Bai-Yue" (百越 or 百粵, literally 'hundred Yue's').[5] The Yue peoples had inhabited a vast area from Kuai-ji (會稽, the present-day coastal area south of the Hangchow (杭州) Bay) to Cochin (交趾, the northern part of present-day Vietnam) during the Spring and Autumn Era, and had long been in contact with the peoples of the Central Plains. The names "South Sea" or Nan-hai (南海)[6] and "Cochin" appeared in early documents.[7] The Yue state,[8] established by one of the Yue tribes, after annexing the state of Wu (吳),[9] was later defeated by Chu (楚) in 334 B.C. This was the beginning of historically recorded contacts between the Central Plains people and the Bai-Yue area. However, it was not until Qin (秦) times that large-scale emigration started as a result of military conquest, around the middle of 3rd Century B. C.[10] Further large-scale emigrations took place at the end of Han (漢), and again in Tang (唐), Song (宋) and later periods as a result of political turmoil in North China.[11]

Politically speaking, the Bai-Yue area south of the Five Passes[12]

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first came under the administration of the Central Plains people during the Qin dynasty, when the prefectures Nan-hai (comprising the whole of present-day Kwangtung province except the southwest), Gui-lin (桂林, comprising roughly the present-day Kwangsi province), and Xiang (象, comprising the southwestern part of present-day Kwangtung, the southern and western parts of present-day Kwangsi, and part of Vietnam) were established (see Map 1). However, shortly after the Qin period, the Nan-Yue state was established over these prefectures (comprising the present-day area of Kwangtung and Kwangsi) and it enjoyed about a century's independence.[13] Afterwards the area again came under the direct control (at least nominally if not practically all the time) of the Central Plains government. During the Tang dynasty, the area corresponding to present-day Kwangtung, Kwangsi and northern Vietnam came under the administrative district called Ling-nan-dao (嶺南道), which was subsequently divided into Ling-nan Dong-dao (嶺南東道, comprising present-day Kwangtung) and Ling-nan Xi-dao (嶺南西道, comprising present-day Kwangsi). Even today the central part of Kwangtung and Kwangsi south of the Five Passes is still referred to as Ling-nan. In the post-Tang Five Dynasties period, Ling-nan-dao became the Southern Han (南漢) state for more than half a century (see Map 2). The division into Kwangtung and Kwangsi provinces was made during the Qing (清) dynasty, and was roughly followed in subsequent arrangements. The name "Yue" has also become a geographical term, referring to the southern area the Yue peoples once inhabited. Nowadays, Yue or Yue-dong (粵東) refers to Kwangtung, Yue-xi (粵西) refers to Kwangsi, and Liang-Yue (兩粵, literally "two Yue's") to both.

The migration of the Central Plains people into the Ling-nan area took place in greater or smaller numbers at different times and probably from different regions. Two major migration routes were from the Dong-ting (洞庭) Lake through the Xiang (湘) River, and from the Bo-yang (鄱陽) Lake through the Gan (贛) River (see Map 3).[14] As far back as the Qin dynasty, a canal (the Ling-qu, 靈渠) was dug to connect the Xiang River with the Gui (桂) River to facilitate communication between the Central Plains and the Ling-nan area. It is quite understandable that this route through the canal should have been the most

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popular one in the early times. Judging from the present-day language situation in the Liang-Yue area, with the Yue speakers occupying mostly the rich delta areas of the Yue River (or Pearl River, 珠江) and the West River (西江) as well as along the valleys of the West River and its extensions (Xun River 潯江 and Yu River 鬱江),[15] the Hakka speakers mainly the North River and the East River (東江) valleys plus the hillier parts of the Delta areas,[16] the Min speakers around the Han River (韓江) delta, the coastal areas of the Lei-zhou Peninsula and of Hai-nan Island; the Yue speakers must have been the earliest settlers who had advanced both through the canal route and the North River route,[17] while at a later date the Hakkas must have advanced mostly through the Gan River,[18] and the Min speakers, a sea-faring people, must have come by the sea route. The earliest emigrants ranged from military personnel and government officials to political refugees. Indeed, the last category probably formed the core of the mass influx of immigrants at the end of the Tang, the Song, and subsequent periods. Merchants and traders came at times, but probably in far smaller numbers.

Our account is of course an oversimplification of an immensely complicated picture of a complex process, which we do not pretend to know much about. Moreover, there is the further question of the racial origin of the Bai-Yue people and their relationship to the present-day Yue speakers. The constant influx of Central Plains immigrants no doubt resulted in assimilation of the aborigines and mixture of peoples on a vast scale. The assimilation process must have started as early as the Han time;[19] although it was not until the Tang period that it had become truly significant. The fact that even nowadays the Yue speakers, especially immigrants into foreign countries, call themselves the Tang people (唐人), call their country Tang-Shan (唐山), their language the Tang language (唐話), and their clothes the Tang costumes (唐裝), suggests that the local people became anxious to be identified with the Central Plains people during the Tang dynasty. According to Yang 1943, the population of Ling-nan only doubled during the millennium between the Han and Song periods, but rose to more than ten times as many during the Ming (明) dynasty, and has increased steadily since

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then.[20] The considerable and steady increase in population was partly due to the greater influx and settlement of immigrants. It is also recorded in some local gazetteers that most of the so-called socially prestigious families in Kwangtung came to take refuge in the south with the last Song emperor at the end of the Song dynasty.[21] It is now difficult to determine whether the present-day Yue speakers are more descendants of the Central Plains people or more from the aborigines who adopted the Central Plains culture. No doubt both types existed and merged.

Culturally speaking, the prestigious Central Plains culture of course exercised tremendous influence on the local cultures; in any contest between the two, inevitably the former was largely adopted.[22] Or we may say that the immigrants brought with them various forms of the Central Plains culture at various times, which took root as they settled down in the new area, especially after the Tang-Song dynasties when the area was largely settled and kept in easier and more frequent communication with the Central Plains. It is difficult to trace the process and extent of cultural diffusion. But we do find evidence of the gradual growth of a learned culture in Kwangtung and Kwangsi. For example, ever since the first political encroachment from the north, some renowned scholarly officials were now and then exiled into this area, as a result of which centers of learning began to grow,[23] and these in turn played a leading role in the cultural development of the area. According to Luo 1967, during the period (420-588 A.D.), Cang-wu (on the West River at the border of eastern Kwangsi) was the most advanced cultural district of Southern China; during the South-North Dynasties (南北朝, 420-588), Qu-jiang (曲江, on the North River in northern Kwangtung) was the provincial cultural center; while during the Northern Song period (960-1126 A.D.) the areas around the East River and the Han River were the center. It was not until the Southern Song (1127-1279 A.D.) period that Canton became the center of local culture though its importance as a trading center was established much earlier. The Pearl River delta became the largest local cultural center from the Ming dynasty (around the 16th century) onwards, during which time the delta was part of Guang-zhou-fu (廣州府).[24] It is

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of natural consequence that the city of Guang-zhou (廣州) or Canton remains such a center to this day, and that its dialect has acquired social prominence. The area around Canton was once the site of the capital of the Nan-Yue state more than two thousand years ago, as attested by archeological excavations.[25] The Han River delta remains the cultural center for Min speakers in Kwangtung to this day; while the upper East River area remains the cultural center for Hakka speakers in Kwangtung, and the upper Gui River area has become the cultural center for present-day Kwangsi.

One effect of the growth of centers of learned culture in various parts of China has been that there have developed literary pronunciations of the classics in citation reading, often rendered in a chanting style. After centuries have passed and local dialects have evolved in different areas, wherever the classics are taught we can still find a literary pronunciation and its chanting style in the individual dialects. Although the chanting style is on the decline, the literary pronunciation has remained. In some of the dialects the literary pronunciation has constituted a layer in the language different from the colloquial speech in certain features of pronunciation, in the choice of vocabulary items, and in sentence structure. The co-existence of two closely related phonological and grammatical systems within one dialect or one language is not uncommon in the Chinese dialects in general, and the Yue dialects are not exceptions.

To understand this dual linguistic orientation, let us take the example of a modern literate Yue speaker (the literary reading or pronunciation of course does not exist for the illiterate). He communicates with his fellow speakers in the colloquial style of speech, but he reads and writes in another style -- the literary style.[26] He hardly ever writes the same way he speaks.

However, there does exist a vernacular literature in the Yue dialects, although it is not as impressive as the vernacular literature in the Wu dialects. In order to express themselves in writing in the vernacular, Yue speakers have coined a number of colloquial characters for words particular to their dialect group. The most prominent and popular among the vernacular literature is the Yue-ou (粵謳), a

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collection of ballads compiled and written by Zhao Zi-yong (招子庸) in the first half of the 19th century. The songs, whether lyrical, satirical, or didactic, were written in a free style, to be sung to the accompaniment of the *pi-pa* (琵琶, a four-stringed instrument). They were so popular that the style was copied in later works, and the "Yue-ou" came to refer to this particular style of song writing. Two other types of folksongs are the Mu-yu (木魚) songs and the Nan-yin (南音, southern melody). The former consists of the recitation of heroic poems narrating folklore or popular fiction. They have no musical accompaniment except for the striking of the *mu-yu* (made of two pieces of wood) or two pieces of bamboo. The latter is usually a tragic lyric sung to the accompaniment of a two- or three-stringed instrument; the singer is often a blind girl. In recent years, however, all three types of folksongs have begun to disappear, although the Nan-yin is sometimes incorporated into the still popular Cantonese opera, also sung in the vernacular. Other types of vernacular literature include fiction and drama in lesser quantity.[27]

The Ling-nan area had thus been a place of interactions among various peoples and various cultures. Though the ascendant cultural tradition basically derived from the Central Plains, but not uncontaminated with aboriginal influences, prevailed in the river valleys and coastal plains; some aboriginal tribes had retreated into the mountainous areas of northern Kwangtung, Hai-nan Island, and Kwangsi (especially the western region) and maintained their original cultural forms in some degree there. We have yet to find out the nature and extent of the influence of aboriginal culture on the present-day Yue culture. Linguistically speaking, it is very possible that the Yue dialects, especially their colloquial layer, contain a number of aboriginal elements in their sound system, their morphology or word structure, their vocabulary, and their grammar. We shall mention some of these features in the general discussion of the characteristics of the Yue dialects in section 0.4 below.

To this already complex picture has been added some foreign influence in the past few centuries, and especially the past century.[28] Around the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries,

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European missionaries who came to China and brought with them the knowledge of Western sciences, first landed in the Pearl River delta before proceeding to Northern China. Places like Macao and Zhao-xing (肇慶, or Gao-yao, 高要, on the lower West River valley) were for a time affected by the new sciences of the West.[29] Foreign influence, which is of some linguistic significance, was witnessed in the past century, when major cities in the coastal area were forced open as trading ports, or ceded to foreign countries. For example, Hong Kong (香港) was ceded to England and Canton officially opened as a port in 1842;[30] the Sha-mian (沙面) district of Canton was leased to England and France in 1858;[31] the Kowloon (九龍) Peninsula was ceded to England in 1860;[32] the New Territories (新界) were leased to England and Guang-zhou-wan (廣州灣) or Zhan-jiang (湛江) to France in 1898. The influence of these foreign languages, predominantly English, is relatively superficial. It prevails in the form of transliterated loanwords in the areas directly or indirectly in contact with foreigners. In the past two decades, when all but Hong Kong, Kowloon, and Macao have been reincorporated into China, the use of loanwords has been greatly discouraged and it has subsequently declined, except for the two places still under foreign control -- Hong Kong and Macao. The transliteration of loanwords will be discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.6 below. A China coast pidgin -- "business English" based on the structure of Chinese, or a form of simplified English stripped to suit the sounds and grammar of Chinese -- based on Cantonese, also developed, but died out two decades ago together with the form of trade which had nurtured its existence.

0.3 Present-day distribution

Today the Yue dialects are spoken in central and southwestern Kwangtung as well as southeastern Kwangsi. The great majority of Chinese immigrants in North America and a significant portion of those in Southeast Asia are also Yue speakers. Map 4 shows the Yue speaking areas in China: names of localities, which are known to be inhabited by Yue speakers through extant published dialect materials[33] or through dialect investigations,[34] are circled. These include: Canton, Nan-hai, Pan-yu (番禺), Shun-de, San-shui, Gao-yao, Zeng-cheng (增城), Dong-

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guan (東莞), Zhong-shan (中山), Macao, Hong Kong, Xin-hui, Tai-shan, Kai-ping, En-ping, Hao-shan (鶴山), Yang-jiang, Cang-wu or Wu-zhou (梧州), Teng-xian, Gui-ping (桂平), Bo-bai (博白), Gui-xian, and Nan-ning. Localities mentioned by name as Yue speaking areas in extant works but whose varieties of dialect are not actually described,[35] are marked with a question mark, ?. These include: Si-hui (四會), Guang-ning (廣寧), Gao-ming (高明), Yun-fu (雲浮), Yu-nan (鬱南), Feng-chuan (封川), Kai-jian (開建), Xin-xing (新興), Luo-ding (羅定), De-qing (德慶), Bao-an (寶安), Hua-xian (花縣), Qing-yuan, Cong-hua (從化), Fo-gang (佛岡), Long-men, Mao-ming (茂名) or Gao-zhou (高州), Xin-yi (信宜), Yang-chun (陽春), Hua-xian (化縣), Dian-bai (電白), Lian-jiang (廉江), Wu-chuan (吳川), Sui-qi (遂溪), Hai-kang (海康) or Lei-zhou, Xu-wen (徐聞), He-pu or Lian-zhou, Qin-xian (欽縣) or Qin-zhou (欽州), Fang-cheng (防城), Ling-shan (靈山), Rong-xian (容縣), Yu-lin (鬱林).

Two points must be kept in mind when we read Map 4. First, the Yue speaking area does not necessarily mean an area in which the Yue dialects predominate to the exclusion of other dialects. The Yue speakers have long lived in the neighborhood of Hakka speakers, for example. In the same town or city, we might find Yue speakers in certain villages or areas and Hakka speakers in others. The Yue speaking area thus indicates not necessarily an exclusively Yue speaking area but a predominantly Yue speaking area. For example, most of the population in Dong-guan and Zhong-shan speak a Yue dialect, but one-fourth of them speak a Hakka dialect and a number of the Zhong-shan inhabitants speak a Min-nan dialect. Conversely, in Hakka speaking areas or other dialect areas we might find some Yue speakers. For example, there are a number of Yue speakers in Bo-luo (博羅) and Hui-zhou, predominantly Hakka speaking areas. Among the places listed as Yue speaking areas in Map 4, Cen 1941 claimed that the following contain Hakka speakers in the countryside: Tai-shan, Dian-bai, Hua-xian (化縣), Lian-jiang, He-pu, Fang-cheng. The coastal area around Zhong-shan contains both Hakka and Southern Min speakers; and the coastal areas around Lian-jiang, Dian-bai, Sui-qi, Wu-chuan, Xu-wen contain Southern Min speakers. While Yang 1943 listed Long-men and Fo-gang as mainly Hakka speaking areas; and

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the following as having scattered Hakka speakers: Hua-xian (花), Zeng-cheng, Qing-yuan, Bao-an, Qin-xian, He-pu, Fang-cheng, Dong-guan, Hao-shan, Kai-ping, Yang-chun, Hua-xian (化), Zhong-shan, Cong-hua, Xin-hui, Xin-yi, Xu-wen, San-shui, Guang-ning, Luo-ding, as well as the coastal area of Bao-an, Zhong-shan, Dong-guan, Dian-bai, Gao-zhou, Lei-zhou, and Qin-zhou. Min speakers also inhabit Hai-kang, Xu-wen, Wu-chuan, Dian-bai and Yang-jiang; and there are some Yao and She (畲) peoples in Luo-ding and Guang-ning.

The linguistic situation of the Yue speaking areas in Kwangsi is even more complicated, but unfortunately not much information is available about it. In Gui-ping, the majority of the population speak a Yue dialect; but there are some Hakka as well as Southern Min speakers, in addition to minority peoples speaking Miao, Yao, or Zhuang (僮) dialects. In Gui-xian too, besides the majority of Yue speakers, there are Hakka speakers in the southeastern part of the city, and Zhuang speakers in the northern part of the city. Most of the people in Wu-zhou are Yue speakers, but there are Hakka speakers in the countryside too. In Nan-ning, also, the majority are Yue speakers; however, varieties of Mandarin are spoken in both Nan-ning and Wu-zhou.[36]

Second, there is uncertainty concerning the grouping of dialects. There are always borderline and transitional cases. In addition, we are still at the stage of trial and error with respect to the classification of dialects. Therefore, dialects that are cited as Yue varieties in other works but which we deem questionable, will be marked with a parenthesized question mark, (?), in Map 4. For example, the dialect of Lian-zhou is cited as a Yue variety in Yuan et al. 1960[37] but is quite similar to the Hakka dialects according to the materials available to us.[38] There is always the possibility that the two types of dialects may co-exist, as noted above. There is also the possibility that we are classifying dialects on different criteria. Lian-zhou is thus marked with (?) in the map.

We do not have updated figures for the number of Yue speakers in China. Yuan et al. 1960 gave the figure of 27 million, which was based on the census of 1953 and which amounted to 5% of the total population of China at that time. If the estimated figure of 750

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million can be given for the total population by the end of 1970,[39] and if the percentage of Yue speakers has remained the same, then an estimated figure of 37.5 million may be given for Yue speakers on the China mainland, and that amounts to nearly 2/3 of the Chinese population in Kwangtung and Kwangsi.[40] The main concentration is around the Pearl River delta and the lower valley of the West River.

The above estimate does not include overseas Yue speakers. The emigration of Chinese abroad, mostly for economic reasons in the earlier days, is a relatively recent matter, although the southern coastal areas had had contact with foreign countries as far back as Han times. Up till the mid 19th century, emigration from China was prohibited by the Chinese government. It was the century from roughly 1850 to 1950 that witnessed large-scale Chinese migration, mainly from the provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien and mainly into Southeast Asia and North America. The majority of these emigrants were from rural villages or small country towns. The emigration of intellectuals and professionals, usually from big cities and mainly for political reasons, is a matter of only the past two decades. Most of the Yue emigrants were from rural districts in the delta area and in the Four-Districts or Si-yi. It is well-known that the majority of Chinese immigrants in North America were from the Four-Districts.[41]

The 1960 census of the U.S.A. gave a figure of 237,292 for the Chinese population (definition based on country or area of origin) in the country, and these are concentrated in large cities. In selected standard metropolitan statistical areas[42] the distribution of Chinese by region, approximately 86% Cantonese or Yue speakers, is as follows:

Total	West	Northeast	North	Central	South
87,987	43,771	28,324	8,534		7,081

The states which have more than a thousand Chinese (which means an average of 860 or more Yue speakers) in 1960 are the following, with figures from the 1960 census: California (34,556), New York (21,048), Illinois (3,208), Massachusetts (3,052), Hawaii (2,961), Washington (2,694), Texas (1,701), New Jersey (1,658), Pennsylvania (1,491), Michigan (1,454), District of Columbia (1,282), and Ohio (1,246). The metropolitan areas which have about 400 Chinese or more (350 or more Yue

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