Transnational Social Practice from Below: The Experiences of a Chinese Leneage
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Part One:

Transnational Social Space: Emerging and Shaping

Transnationalism and associated concepts such as transnational migration, transnational capital, transnational social space and the like have only emerged as prevalent discourses in the late wave of globalization. For this reason, scholars have focused on the modern forms of transnational phenomena and relate them to discussions about the late capitalism and flexible capitalism. However, as a kind of social phenomenon, transnational practice, both in its individual form and in its collective one, has been a social process for several centuries, and this depth of historicity has asserted an indubitable influential impact on the contemporary transnationalism, whether this be in terms of form or of content. For this reason, when facing migration groups like overseas Chinese who have had a rather long migrant history, our investigation and consideration of the transnational activities would be incomplete without tracing the early phase as well as the transformations when crossing various periods and different space.

The following two chapters will present a picture of a particular place first, revealing how it developed its connection overseas over a long period of time. Consequently a major feature of Fujian as a region had been forged before the second half of the twentieth century, that is that this place not only functioned as a receiving point for domestic immigrants, but more importantly, it was a place for producing emigrants abroad (Chapter One).
Then Chapter Two will disclose how immigrants strategically built up their transnational living pattern (liangtougu, literally: both-ends living pattern). In this process, a sort of transnational social space has been historically constructed. Furthermore, we will see how these trans-territorial practices have evolved from examples of individual and scattered behaviour into an institutional and organized framework.

To sum up, what Part One would like to suggest is that transnational practice is not a new phenomenon. To investigate its developing trajectory, which has been historically, socially, and culturally formed will help us to understand better the modern forms of transnational phenomena.