



The Regional Dynamic and Development Vicissitude of the Historical Geography in Nanyang, China

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Abstract. The town of Nanyang in Henan Province, China, known simply as Wan, has a long history and is the second batch of historical and cultural cities named by the State Council. Historical geography studies the interaction between people and places in historical periods and the laws of their evolution. This paper uses the perspective of historical geography as an entry point, the beginning (Qin Dynasty) and the end (Qing Dynasty) of China's feudal dynasties as the timeline of the study, and the administrative evolution and population changes of Nanyang as the research questions, to explore the dynamic relationship between people and place in Nanyang and analyse the characteristics on the various dynasties' rise and fall in Chinese history. The findings of the study are concluded as follows. (1) Population changes in Nanyang through the ages correlated with administrative unification. The population peaks with rapid growth due to administrative unification. The population reaches a low point when the political region is in disarray, and warfare is frequent. (2) Population density and number are in an overall U-shaped structure, with high levels in the Han and Qing dynasties and low levels in the Three Kingdoms to the Ming dynasty. The Yuan Dynasty was the trough of population numbers and population density. (3) The Qin and Han dynasties were the peak of ancient Nanyang. Because of its geographical location, the rulers organised many moves of people into Nanyang to occupy an essential political and military position. At the same time, the rulers had constructed water resources and developed agriculture in the area, leading to a large population with a developed economy and a flourishing culture. (4) The period from the Wei and Jin Dynasties to the Tang and Song Dynasties was a low point for Nanyang in ancient times, with many northern and southern regimes opposing each other in China. Because Nanyang occupied an essential position in military traffic and was located at the junction of the northern and southern regimes, it was subjected to war for thousands of years, leading to a rapid decline in population and a significant economic depression. (5) The Ming and Qing dynasties were a recovery period for ancient Nanyang. Displaced people moved into Nanyang and brought many people to reclaim the hills of western Henan to produce more food. At the same time, the government paid attention to the dredging of rivers, which led to population growth, agricultural prosperity, convenient water transport and commercial development. (6) Nanyang has historically shown a U-shaped development trend

influenced by internal and external factors. The Nanyang basin's topography, the changing waterway transportation conditions and the increase or decrease in population numbers were important internal factors that influenced the development of the Nanyang basin. Political factors are essential external factors influencing the rise and fall of Nanyang.

Keywords: Historical Geography · Administrative Dynamic · Population Change · Development Vicissitude · Nanyang · China

1 Introduction

Historical geography studies human-terrestrial interactions and their evolution over historical periods [1]. Historical geography takes the geographical environment of a historical period as its object in the study, and it aims to explore the laws to make them useful for the world [2]. Due to its disciplinary nature, historical geography places more emphasis on historical issues from the perspective of the geographical environment. However, this is not in a narrow sense but in a broad sense that includes natural, human and social environments [3]. Therefore, this paper enriches geography research with the historical geography perspective while expanding the philosophies and methods in geography. Advances the development of the two disciplines towards a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach. Based on the previous work, it also proposes the changing characteristics of historical geography in Nanyang, China. The development of historical geography in China cannot be achieved without studying the historical geography of each region. As an important town in history, Nanyang has gone through very different stages of development, and its own cultural and historical values are unique. Therefore, taking it as an object of study helps to enrich the content of historical population geography research, deepen the study of regional history and also helps to lead to more research on Chinese historical geography.

2 Methodology

Nanyang in historical times began with the establishment of Nanyang County in 272 BC during the Warring States period by the state of Qin, which governed the city of Nanyang and parts of the surrounding towns of Pingdingshan, Shiyan and Xiangyang. The administrative districts were later adjusted, and no administrative district was named after Nanyang during the Tang and Song dynasties. To ensure the unity of the study area, the administrative districts named after Nanyang in the historical period are not used as the study area. Therefore, this paper takes a natural area of the Nanyang Basin as the study area. This is the area south of the Furniu Mountains to the east, west of the Tongbai Mountains, north of the Wudang Mountains and Hanshui, between 32°17'-33°48'N and 110°58'-113°49'E. This paper focuses on a historical geography approach to explore historical Nanyang. The specific study collects statistics mainly utilising historical sources, the city's historical archives and periodical literature.

3 Results and Discussions

3.1 Regional Dynamic of Nanyang in the Historical Period

3.1.1 Administrative Dynamic in Nanyang During the Historical Period

The name Nanyang has a long history. An important transportation hub and military stronghold in ancient China [4]. It first appeared during the Warring States period. This paper finds that by summarising the history of the development of the administrative region of Nanyang. Since the reunification of the Qin Dynasty, there have been 36 counties, of which Nanyang was one. During the Han Dynasty, the county was still known as Nanyang County, following the Qin system. According to the Book of Han Geography, Nanyang County in the Western Han Dynasty had 34 counties under its jurisdiction, which extended beyond the jurisdiction of the present-day Nanyang City and included parts of Pingdingshan City, Shiyan City and Xiangyang City. In general, the Qin and Han dynasties were the period of unification of the Nanyang basin, after which the political area of Nanyang was adjusted until the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties returned to unity. From the Three Kingdoms to the Southern Song Dynasty, China was confronted by many Northern and Southern regimes, such as the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the Southern Song Dynasty and the Jin Dynasty. However, the Nanyang basin was located at the junction of the regimes, so it was not a complete secondary administrative region. The setting and scope of the Nanyang region changed drastically. The boundary between the Sui dynasty and the Nanyang basin was a mixture of counties before the Sui dynasty and states after the Sui dynasty. In 1271 AD, the Yuan unified China and adjusted the administrative regions, restoring the Nanyang basin to unity. The Nanyang Prefecture was established and gradually evolved into the present-day city of Nanyang. During the Yuan Dynasty, Nanyang Prefecture was the most extensive area under the name of Nanyang, encompassing the Xiong'er Mountains and the middle reaches of the Danshui River in the west, extending to the Yishui-Rushui basin in the north, and advancing to the localities along the Fangcheng Road in the east. The Qing dynasty inherited the Ming system, and although some adjustments were made, it eventually remained a state of two counties and eleven counties. In addition, the development of market towns in the Nanyang basin during the Ming and Qing dynasties formed a three-tier system of the prefecture-county-market village [5].

3.1.2 Population Change in Nanyang During the Historical Period

Based on data from the Nanyang City Information Database, the population statistics of Nanyang over the ages were compiled (Table 1). The results show that the population of Nanyang over the periods correlates with the unification of administrative districts. The merger of administrative regions led to rapid growth and population peaks. The population was at a low point due to disorder and war. Population density and number have an overall U-shaped structure (Fig. 1), with high levels in the two Han and Qing dynasties and low levels in the Three Kingdoms to the Ming dynasty. The Yuan dynasty is the trough of population numbers and density.

Table 1. Historical Population Statistics of Nanyang, China (Data source: Compiled from data collected and collated from the Nanyang City Information Database)

Chinese Historical Periods	Year	Emperor’s Chronology	Number of People (Individuals)	Area of the Jurisdiction (km ²)	Population Density (Persons/km ²)
Western Han Dynasty Period	2AD	The second year of Yuanshi	1942051	48878	40
Eastern Han Dynasty Period	140AD	The fifth year of Yonghe	2439618	60442	41
Western Jin Dynasty Period	280AD	The first year of Taikang	317500	57024	6
Sui Dynasty Period	607AD	The third year of Daye	897550	36515	25
Tang Dynasty Period	742AD	The first year of Tianbao	347621	28428	12
Northern Song Dynasty Period	1106AD	The fifth year of Chongqing	489722	28638	17
Jin Dynasty Period	1234AD	The third year of Tianxing	219521	31360	7
Yuan Dynasty Period	1252AD	The second year of Xianzong	4893	48616	0.1
Ming Dynasty Period	1578AD	The sixth year of Wanli	388433	31390	12
Qing Dynasty Period	1820AD	The 25th year of Jiaqing	2316877	31972	73

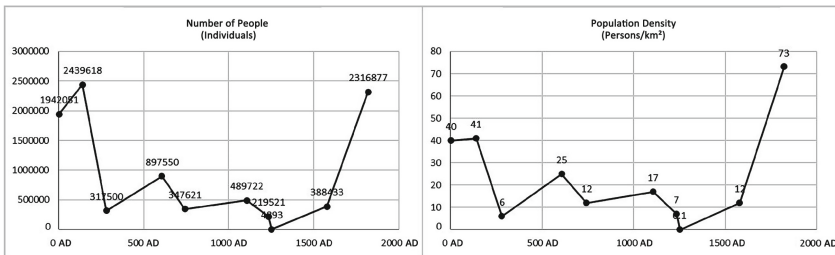


Fig. 1. U-shaped Trend in Population Number and Density in Historical Nanyang, China (2 Anno Domini -1820 Anno Domini)

3.2 Characteristics of Development Vicissitude in Historical Nanyang

Nanyang was at its peak in the Qin and Han dynasties. During the Qin and Han dynasties, Nanyang County became one of the six metropolises of the country, along with Chang'an, Luoyang, Linzi, Handan and Chengdu, and was known as the 'Southern Capital' and the 'Imperial Township'. The population of the Nanyang basin was large, with 528,551 households and 2,439,618 people in the five years of Yonghe in the Eastern Han Dynasty, accounting for 24.6% of the population of Henan and 4.3% of the population in the whole country, ranking first among all counties in the country, which was the heyday of the people in ancient times. The economy is well-developed and is one of the three major water conservancy areas on par with the Guanzhong Plain and Chengdu Plain, known as the world's granary. Among the four Nanyang saints, two came from the Eastern Han Dynasty, the scientific sage Zhang Heng invented the geodetic instrument, and the medical sage Zhang Zhongjing wrote the Treatise on Typhoid Miscellaneous Diseases [6].

Nanyang was the low point of the period from the Wei and Jin Dynasties to the Tang and Song Dynasties. When many northern and southern regimes confronted China during this period, Nanyang occupied an important position in transportation and military affairs. During the historical dynasties, wars were fought between the northern and southern regimes in Nanyang. As a result, the Nanyang basin was a war-torn area, and the rulers did not pay much attention to its development. This was the norm in the Nanyang basin after the wars between the North and South and the establishment of the dynasty. This period is characterised explicitly by population loss, land wastage and economic decline in Nanyang.

Nanyang was a period of recovery during the Ming and Qing dynasties. The Ming and Qing dynasties saw an influx of displaced people into the Nanyang basin. As a result of this influx, the land resources of Nanyang were developed on a large scale during this period. With no more arable land available on the plains, the displaced people moved to the mountains to build their land. The hills around the Nanyang basin were formed for the first time in history. The influx of people, combined with the fact that the Nanyang Basin was located on a major transportation route to the capital from the Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan regions. It also bridges the north-western part with Jianghuai and the restoration of the Tangbai River navigation channel within the area. Further developed water transport, Nanyang became a transportation and transit hub and the economic centre of southern Henan, mainly operating in the tea transit and grain and cotton trade.

4 Conclusion

Nanyang has historically shown a U-shaped development trend influenced by internal and external factors. Among them, the Nanyang Basin's topography, the changing waterway traffic conditions and the increase or decrease in population numbers are essential internal factors that have influenced the development of the Nanyang Basin. The geographical basis for the emergence of the Nanyang Basin was the area's topography, which is surrounded by mountains on three sides and numerous water flows. The waterway traffic based on the meeting of the three capitals enlivened the economy of the Nanyang

region and increased the development of the areas along the main traffic routes. The periods of economic development in the Nanyang basin were all periods of abundant population resources. Population growth brought sufficient labour and production techniques, deepening the depth and breadth of geographical expansion. Political factors were an important external factor influencing the rise and fall of Nanyang. Nanyang's political status was necessary because of its well-connected transportation and military importance to military activities. As China's capital cities moved eastwards, the pattern of opposition between east and west changed to one between north and south after the Sui and Tang dynasties, a shift that had a particularly marked effect on the Nanyang basin. During the Qin and Han dynasties, when Qin Shi Huang unified the six kingdoms and Chu and Han fought for hegemony, there was a confrontation between East and West. Nanyang was situated at the southern end of the boundary between East and West China, controlling the Wuguan Road, which is one of the two eastern and western roads. It was very significant in regional historical-geographical. The Qin and Han dynasties were a period of prosperity for Nanyang, as the rulers attached great importance to the region's development. The period from the Wei and Jin Dynasties to the Tang and Song Dynasties was a period of north-south rivalry, with the north-south rivalry generally divided by a line along the Jianghuai River, where the plains to the north and south were extensive, and water and land transport between the north and the south were well developed. During this period, the Nanyang region was only a tiny traffic point on the north-south transport network. The Nanyang basin was far less prominent in north-south transport and military status than in previous generations. As a result, the central government of the Nanyang basin was also reduced, and there were many wars and political disunity, so the period from the Wei and Jin Dynasties to the Tang and Song Dynasties was a low point for Nanyang. The revival of the Ming and Qing dynasties was linked to the fact that Nanyang was located at the crossroads between the three provinces of Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan into the capital and between the south and the northwest. The rulers' focus on economic development coincided with a time when the world was unified with less war, and the administrative regions of the Nanyang basin were unified, so the Ming and Qing dynasties were a period of recovery for Nanyang. The recovery of the Ming and Qing dynasties was far from the peak of the Qin and Han dynasties. After the opening of the Luhan Railway, Nanyang's transport status fell into disarray, and Nanyang rapidly declined again.

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