

Peng Bankers Be Proud

The PENG Bank Genealogy II: The Heritage

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INTRODUCTION

Wenjiang (文江) was a small beautiful village in the Shunde District (順德縣) of Guangdong Province (廣東省) in Southern China. It was and still is better known by the unusual but unique name of Shigen (石五肯).

Peng Bank (彭岸坊) is a tiny area in Wenjiang occupied by the Pengs since 1236 AD when the first ancestor, Guangzhong (廣仲), found work and resided there. It was roughly elliptical in shape, bounded by a small creek on the west and the Zhang's Lane (張巷) on the east. An arch inscribed with the writing Jinshili (進士里) on the cross bar above and situated next to the Chief Commander's Temple (主帥廟) guarded the northern entrance. The passage led eastward to the Central Business Area of the Village including the Village Hall and the Big Temple. Turning northward and across a bridge, a lane with fields, river and ponds on its sides, led to the Liang's area. The road along the creek, the widest in the area, ran from the Arch to the southern exit, which joined the Chen's Area (陳地) after passing another temple. Before that and crossing a bridge to the southwest was Lun's New Area (倫氏新基). Four ancestral memorial halls were erected along the road facing the creek. From north to south they were named Gengyin (耕隱), Hongzhai (洪齋), Yiya (逸崖) and Yongxing (永興) respectively. The greatest diameter of the elliptical suburb was through the Big Lane (大巷) with the sports' field of the Shigen Central Primary School adjacent to its eastern end. The school itself lied further east across the Zhang's Lane and occupied part of the Village Hall.

The Big Lane in Peng Bank is the root of all of us sitting here today.

Tiny as our ancestral homeland is, our heritage is illustrious as any other. I shall discuss this under five headings:

Royal bloodline,
Imperial officialdom,
Scholastic fame,
Artistic achievements and
Business entrepreneurship.

ROYAL BLOOD (皇帝血統)

That we have royal blood direct from Huangdi, Jixuanyuan (皇帝姬軒轅氏) is legendary and based on the general acceptance that Qianheng (錢鏐), alias Pengzu (彭祖) was the first ancestor of all Pengs in China. This was covered in detail in "The Peng Bank Genealogy I: The Beginning" and only the lineage from Huangdi to Qianheng in eight generations is shown here:

黃帝 (Huangdi) > 昌意 (Changyi) > 玄帝 (Xuandi) > 大稱 (Dacheng) > 卷章 (Juanzhang) > 吳回 (Wuhui) > 陸終 (Luzhong) > 錢鏗 (Qianheng).

IMPERIAL OFFICIALDOM (歷朝官祿)

Our first traceable ancestor who moved from Luling (廬陵) in Jiangxi (江西) to Nanxiong (南雄) in northern Guangdong was an Imperial Counsellor (諫議大夫) in the Tang Dynasty, whom I shall call Luling Zu (廬陵祖) as his name was not recorded. Five generations later Qida (啟達) who lived in Dali (大歷), Guangzhou was a Remunerations Officer (朝奉大夫) in the Song Dynasty. After another thirteen generations, Chengzhi (承志), now in the Qing Dynasty and from the Peng Bank, was an Officer in charge of ceremonial etiquettes (冠帶壽官). At the same time Shijia (士欝) who passed the provincial and national examinations in succession to have the double titles of Juren (舉人) and Jinshi (進士) during the rule of Kangxi (康熙), was appointed the governor of Liucheng (柳城) in Guangxi (廣西). His career ended with being honoured as a scholar in literature (文林郎). Peng Bank owed the pride of the additional name of Jinshili to him.

SCHOLASTIC FAME (學士聲名)

There were eight “spectacles” of Wenjiang, which was once well known but have largely gone or could not be located. They are none the less worth keeping on record. They are:

1. 廟前曲水 (The meandering brook fronts the Big Temple)
2. 興賢晚唱 (Singing at sunset)
3. 彭岸書聲 (Loud study in the Peng Bank)
4. 石橋飛雪 (Snowflakes dance over the Stone Bridge)
5. 涌園獨荔 (The lone lizhi in Chongyuan)
6. 長塘夜月 (The long lagoon embraces the moon)
7. 九龍入洞 (Enter the nine dragons)
8. 獨松繼舟 (The boat by the lone pine tree)

It matters not whether Peng Bankers' well-known fervent attitude in studies was the reason of, or the result from, their scholastic successes. The intellectual gene should be in all of us. From the Hongzhai Genealogy, I could count one Jinshi, two Juren and five more ancestors admitted into the prestigious state institute for prospective state officials. The modern equivalent in attaining degrees of diploma, bachelor, master and doctor of philosophy in various specialty fields has been so common and widely known among us that no elaboration here is needed.

However, the most impressive indication as a learned tribe was the unique composition of a couplet to show the genealogical order of their descendants. The couplet reads “公先如逸滿; 謙宜益壽多” (To put public interests first will enhance one’s happiness; to be humble will make one live longer). Isn’t this beautiful? When a male descendant married, he would be given an alias that included one of the words in the couplet to suit his generation position. Thus if the father had “宜” in his married name, all his sons would have “益” in theirs. Isn’t that clever?

To illustrate this further, I shall take our Yifa House as the example. The system started in the fourteenth generation with Rugang (汝剛) in the Peng Bank genealogy, who had the married name of Qiangong (潛公). He was followed by his son, Xigao (希誥) as Jiexian (誠先), then Zhigao (之高) as Rusong (如松), Shejie (社接) as Yihua (逸華), Chaomei (潮梅) as Manxiu (滿琇), Shaoji (紹濟) as Hongqian (鴻謙), Lijia (理佳) as Yifa (宜發), Jiankun (建坤) as Liyi (勵益), and Shengzhen (盛臻) as Shouqi (壽頤). Unfortunately it stops here although my son, Zizhen (子楨) and my nephew, Ziwei (子為) will get “Duo (多)” in their married names if they want to continue with the tradition. For my grand children and further, a new couplet is required.

ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS (藝術成就)

I am aware of many talents in our youngsters in a variety of ways such as painting, music and cooking but I consider it better to skip them at the present since they have yet to attain their best potentials.

The lone example that I could quote for this category is Shengqiang (勝強) who started his career as an actor in school plays when he was studying in the King’s College in Hong Kong. Subsequently he became a radio broadcaster with the Voice of America and later the manager in charge of the Chinese Section in Radio Australia. His highest achievement was taking the main role in the acclaimed dual language movie “Floating Life (浮生)” produced in Australia in 1996.

BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURSHIP (商業運籌)

In the dynasty days of China business was a lowly rated profession particularly to the scholars. It was therefore natural that there was no mention of any business talents in our genealogy as our ancestors took pride in their scholastic performances. We did not witness any change until the early 1940’s when Shengping (昇平, Shengqiang’s father) set up the Yuananxiang Metal Retail Shop (源安祥五金店) and turned it into one of the ten largest in Hong Kong until the 1960’s.

For the next thirty years between 1970 and 2000, it was the electronic era. Jiankun (建坤) and his daughter Zhiyi (秩儀) started the Dahua Electronic

Trading Company (大華電子廠) with a capital of HK\$10,000 each and her husband Wang Xiehe (王協和) as the manager. After a difficult beginning the three grew it slowly and expanded it from a transistor radio to a radio and television production company. At the height in the early 1990's it was one of the largest electronic assemblers in Hong Kong.

I am eagerly looking forward to the next great entrepreneur among the future generations of Peng Bankers.

CONCLUSION

This presentation is not meant to boast our past but to inform the unaware and remind the forgetful about our rich heritage, so that whatever our interests or talents be, we know for sure success is in our genes. Take pride of our heritage but at the same time remember that our ancestral history has not been completely or clearly revealed. My late father had done most of the hard work and I have summed it up in two parts as the Peng Bank Genealogy. It is the obligation of everyone to continue searching and researching on it.