

Abstract

It is exciting to read “Xu Xiake Travel Notes” which is an outstanding work in late Ming Dynasty. Xia Xianchun observed that there is a “Xu Xiake phenomenon.” There were lots of scholars like Xu Xiake , they all enjoyed beautiful scenery and they all love travelling. It is said that it is a coincidence to read such an outstanding work; however, it is definitely not a coincidence to read the mature travel notes monograph such as “Thousand Area Unit Hall Booklists” which was compiled by Huang Yu Ji (1629-1691) in Qing Dynasty and his booklists consisted of 57 authors and 65 volumes. Such great numbers of authors and works indicate the prosperity travel notes writing atmosphere.

In late Ming Dynasty, scholars emphasized how to appraise the scenery they saw and how to document what they saw and how they felt about it, because the more the scholars showed their insight about the scenery, the more they showed their taste and wonderful characteristics.

In this dissertation, there are four main parts to investigate the travel activities and the characteristics of travel notes in late Ming Dynasty. The first part discusses about the popularity of travelling in late Ming Dynasty includes the background of the society, the motivations and purposes for scholars to travel, and the most popular sightseeing locations. The second part discusses about the purpose of travel note creation, the development condition, the aesthetic standard of mountains and rivers and the reflection of cultural spirits from travel notes, as well as the important writers and the comparison of their works. The third part discusses about the travel notes literary criticism which analyzes related travel theories proposed at that time. The fourth part discusses about travel notes literature value and its influence including physical geography, the zoology and botany, the historical sites, the folk custom culture, the religion, the art, the political, economic society and so on, as well as the influence to the later generations.

Keywords: Late Ming Dynasty, Late Ming Dynasty scholars, Travel Notes Literature, Travel, Travel theories