

Temple worship and Guilds in old Beijing  
——a case study of ZhenWu temple in XiSi district (1779-1952)

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This paper investigates into the pork guild and the Zhenwu temple in the Xisi district, Beijing. The research is carried out mainly based on the stele inscriptions in the ZhenWu temple, and also on the fieldwork and archive documents. We found that a specific community was founded among the pork hostels, butchers and other businesses during the middle of the reign of Qing emperors Qianlong(around 1750 A.D), in the Xisi district of old Beijing. With the help of the sacred authority of the temple, this community controlled the flow of population and the commodity resources effectively. At the same time a stable labor division and collaboration pattern which includes three different but inter-constrains right, namely, the material producing right, the market trading right and the currency exchanging right, are established. During the reign of Qing emperors Qianlong(1736~1795 A.D), besides Xisi pork guild, there were two other similar communities in the old Beijing city. Both of them was independent, but sometimes cooperated with each other. Normally they obeyed the national authority, but sometimes also rebelled as an alliance. The stable relationships among the communities and between the communities and the village societies were consistently kept.

However, along with the introducing of the western thought, and the changing of the political situation, the urban pattern greatly changed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even the raw materials remained adequate, the economic unities in the urban market broke the boundaries of the traditional communities and started to joint with each other both in depth and width. Besides leads to monopoly, the new joint broke the traditional sacred authority in the communityies. At the same time, no new authority arised to integrate the unities. More importantly, the new joint damaged the link between the city and the village. As a result, the communities disappeared, the flow of population disordered, and the traditional urban economic structure collapsed as well.