



A Chinese migrant in Tanzania: Jackey Zhou

LI Xiangyun

Fishermen in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Reproduced under a CC license, courtesy Rajesh India on Flickr.

Jackey Zhou studied French at Yunnan University in the early 1990s. After graduation, he worked for a pharmaceutical company in Kunming. In 1999, the young Jackey Zhou was sent by this company to work in, what he would later describe as, “the mysterious continent of Africa”. Thus began his life in Africa, which lasted for nearly two decades.

When he first arrived on the continent, Jackey Zhou worked as a salesman of artemisinin, an antimalarial. He still remembers the experience of being robbed for the first time. On the morning of 9 April 2000, he was walking on Karl Marx Street in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, taking photos of the scenery. Suddenly, three young black men rushed forward, pushed him to the ground, and stole his camera. At first he was scared, but then he jumped up and chased after the men to get his camera back. The price he paid was a seriously injured right thumb. Later, he settled in Tanzania to marry and have children. He no longer impulsively chased thieves.

Jackey Zhou has two children, a handsome boy and a pretty girl, both born and raised in Tanzania. They study at international schools and are fluent in Chinese and English. To maintain the children's Chinese language skills, Jackey Zhou and his wife speak Chinese with their children at home. He has also invited Chinese students from the University of Dar es Salaam to teach his children Chinese at home. In addition, he takes his children back

to his hometown every year. Besides visiting relatives and friends, he has also traveled with his children all around the motherland.

Jackey Zhou is a warmhearted person. He has several good Chinese friends in Tanzania. They all came to Tanzania in the 1990s and struggled from youth to middle-age. During the Spring Festival, they gather at Jackey Zhou's home. His virtuous wife prepares a full table of dishes. Everyone drinks wine, talks about the world, and enjoys each other's company. Jackey Zhou's home also serves as a temporary hotel for good friends visiting Dar es Salaam, or for those who have had too much to drink. Every Chinese scholar who has done research in Tanzania in the early 21st century knows of Jackey Zhou.

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This essay is based on the author's fieldwork in Tanzania, conducted in 2016, for the project “Chinese Immigrants in Tanzania”.

The Center for African Studies at Yunnan University (CASYNU) is an academic institution specializing in African research and talent cultivation. Currently there are 7 full-time researchers and 10 part-time researchers, with 26 Master's and Doctoral candidates at the center. The center has also invited experts and scholars to form an academic committee, which is chaired by Professor Liu Hongwu.

A summary of research on Africans at SYSU in Guangzhou, China

Daming Zhou

Known as the pilot site of China's reform and opening up, and the “workshop of the world”, Guangzhou is attractive for its low cost of living, proximity to manufacturing suppliers, and as host to the Canton Fair. Contemporary African immigration to Guangzhou began in the late 1990s and reached its peak in the year 2010. According to official statistics, there were 11,000 Africans living in Guangzhou, while the number of inbound African tourists was over 500,000 in 2016. At Sun Yat-sen University, researchers from a variety of disciplines such as Public Management, Economics, Urban Planning, Sociology and Anthropology have conducted a number of studies on migration.

Before 2010, when Guangzhou hosted the Asian Games, most Public Management studies focused on foreigners' illegal entry, illegal residence and illegal work (termed the “three illegals” for short) and their negative impacts. Since 2009, LI Zhiqiang and his team have studied the socio-spatial features and the organizing principles of African ethnic enclaves from the perspective of residential segregation.¹ Urban Planning scholars have examined how African immigrants explore and make sense of places like the business area of Xiaobei or religious sites such as the Sacred Heart Cathedral. A number of sociological works examine the collective life of these groups through the lenses of social networks, social adaptation and mutual perceptions between non-African Guangzhou citizens and African immigrants. In his doctoral thesis, XU Tao conducted a qualitative analysis of African merchants' adjustments to changes that took place in 2010. LIANG Yucheng (2013²) examined the mechanisms of African migrants' transnational migration and collaborated with LIU Lin et al (2015³) to study their living conditions in local communities, both using the survey data.

While some social scientists have viewed the African community in Guangzhou as a more or less homogenous group, anthropologists ZHOU Daming and XU Duotian have in their recent work (2017⁴) emphasized ethnic heterogeneity and explored certain groups such as shopping-guide brokers. African Muslims in Guangzhou were one of the main topics of MA Qiang's doctoral thesis (2005), in which he proposed the concept of a “mobile spiritual



Guangzhou. Reproduced under a CC license, courtesy of Xiquinhosilva on Flickr.

community’ (*liudong de jingshen shequ*) based on Islamic belief. NIU Dong (2015) focused on Africans' household, neighborhood and associations, and raised a new analytic framework of “the transient (*guoke*)” that highlights transnational mobility and minimal integration among these sojourners. Among the various research methods applied in the studies of African migrants, sociologists have mainly used large-scale social survey data, and anthropologists have begun to conduct in-depth fieldwork through which abundant qualitative information can be collected. Indeed, the qualitative approach seems to have gained popularity recently, as geographers and urban planning researchers, such as the team led by LI Zhiqiang, now use both questionnaires and interviews in their research.

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Notes

- 1 Zhiqiang Li, Desheng Xu, Feng Du, et al. 2009. “The Local Response of Transnational Social Space under Globalization in Urban China: A Case Study of African Enclave in Guangzhou”, *Geographical Research* 28(04):920-932
- 2 Yucheng Liang. 2013. “African Immigration in Guangzhou China: A Cumulative Causation Perspective on Immigration Behavior”, *Sociological Studies* 28(01): 134-159+243-244
- 3 Lin Liu, Yucheng Liang, Guangwen Song, et al. 2015. “Migration Patterns and Its Influencing Factors of African Immigrants in Guangdong Province”, *Chinese Journal of Population Science* (01):115-122+128
- 4 Daming Zhou & Duotian Xu. 2017. “Research on the Social Network of Guide Brokers in Guangzhou in the Perspective of Structural Hole”, *Ethno-National Studies* (03):41-49+123



Above: African Museum at ZNU. Right: Jinhua Qiubin Primary School; both photos courtesy of IASZNU.