

Title

GODS AND ANCESTORS IN A FOREIGN LAND: PRACTICING LINEAGE IN RURAL SINGAPORE (1890-1965)

Authors

LIN RUO

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KOH KHEE HEONG

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Abstract

This paper attempts to examine the roles and functions that lineages play in the historical process of structuring and constructing the Singapore's rural Chinese communities. The paper looks at three aspects of their lineage practices in the overseas settlement Yio Chu Kang. The dwelling strategies of Yio Chu Kang Chinese communities show the persistent influences of lineage principles from the homeland. By converging the religious and ancestry identities into temple spaces, Ann, Ong and Toh rebuilt their clan-based community boundaries, which were central in the management of village surname headmen, and interactions with the government. This paper argues that the lineage is more than just a kindship organization. It has played important role in the development of Chinese communities in rural Singapore, and provides us with a ground-up perspective to analyze the history of Overseas Chinese.

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