



Dr Claudine Ang

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Dr Claudine Ang is an Assistant Professor of Humanities (History) at Yale-NUS College. She completed her doctoral studies at Cornell University, where her dissertation was awarded the 2012 Lauriston Sharp Prize. Her book, *Poetic Transformations: Eighteenth-Century Cultural Projects on the Mekong Plains*, is forthcoming with Harvard University Asia Center Publications in July 2019. Her second book project examines the woodblock-print production of Vietnamese-language books composed in the demotic script (*chu Nom*) in nineteenth-century Guangdong and its distribution in Saigon.

The Nature of Ming Loyalism a Century After the Fall of the Ming

Abstract

In the aftermath of the Ming-Qing dynastic transition, a group of Chinese Ming loyalists settled in Ha Tien (now located on the border between Cambodia and Vietnam) on the Mekong delta. On those frontier lands, they built a flourishing city around a busy port that maintained close trading connections with Guangdong, Fujian, and Chinese communities along the Vietnamese coastline. Through works of literature composed on the frontier, Chinese literati attempted to shape the cultural and political landscape of the Mekong delta. This paper examines an ambitious eighteenth-century literary project, which takes as its topic the landscape of the port-city of Ha Tien. In this project, Ha Tien's ten scenic sites were first described in poetry, then distributed via the South China Sea trading network to thirty-one other poets scattered along the Vietnamese and southern Chinese coast. The poets were asked to compose matching suites of poems and to return them to Ha Tien with the next sailing season. The poems appear to be lyrical celebrations of nature; I argue, however, that they were a medium through which the originator of the project rendered his domain civilized by bringing it into cultured discourse. Moreover, I have discovered that the poems contained coded messages urging dispersed Ming loyalists to make Ha Tien their new capital.

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4:00-5:30pm

TYB-1B-G04
To Yuen Building (TYB)

All are welcome

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