

# Gender, Religion, Medicine, and Money: Exploring Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Studies

When it comes to the study of Asia and its rich history, the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong (RASHK) is at the forefront. Established in 1847, RASHK has become a leading authority in various fields, including gender studies, religion, medicine, and the intricate relationship between money and society.

## The Role of RASHK in Promoting Gender Studies

Gender studies form one of the crucial pillars of RASHK's research endeavors. Through the exploration of historical documents, artifacts, and testimonials, RASHK scholars shed light on the experiences and contributions of women throughout Asian history. By examining the prevailing cultural norms, societal expectations, and the challenges faced by women, RASHK aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics in the region.

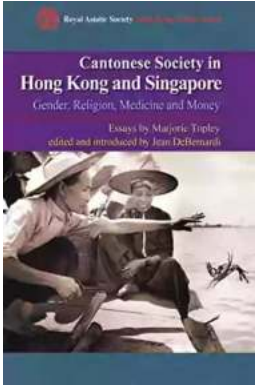
Utilizing advanced research methodologies and interdisciplinary perspectives, RASHK's gender studies contribute to the ongoing global discourse on gender equality and the empowerment of women. As the field continues to evolve, RASHK remains committed to unearthing lesser-known stories that challenge traditional narratives and promote inclusivity.

## Cantonese Society in Hong Kong and Singapore: Gender, Religion, Medicine and Money (Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Studies Series)

by Marjorie Topley (Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English



File size	: 13901 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 809 pages



## **The Intersection of Religion and Society: RASHK's Insights**

With Asia being home to a diverse range of religions, understanding the intricate relationship between religious beliefs and societal structures is of paramount importance. RASHK plays a significant role in the exploration of this intersection, delving into the historical practices, rituals, and ideologies that have shaped Asia's religious landscape.

RASHK's research not only examines the major world religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity but also sheds light on lesser-known indigenous belief systems. By analyzing the profound impact of religious beliefs on social hierarchies, gender roles, and medical practices, RASHK's studies offer valuable insights into the unique religious fabric of Asia.

## **The Historical Significance of Traditional Medicine**

Traditional medicine has been an integral part of Asian culture for centuries. RASHK's extensive studies in this field explore the historical, cultural, and economic factors that have shaped traditional medical practices in different Asian societies. By examining ancient texts, analyzing medical artifacts, and consulting

with experts, RASHK provides a comprehensive view of the evolution of traditional medicine.

Through its research on traditional healing techniques, herbal remedies, and spiritual practices, RASHK aims to bridge the gap between traditional and modern medicine. By recognizing the value of traditional knowledge systems, RASHK advocates for a holistic approach to healthcare, which combines the best of both worlds.

## **The Influence of Money in Asian Society**

Money has always played a significant role in shaping societies around the world, and Asia is no exception. RASHK's multidisciplinary research examines the intricate relationship between money, power, and social dynamics in Asian contexts.

By studying historical trade routes, analyzing financial transactions, and delving into the economic systems of different Asian societies, RASHK seeks to understand how money has influenced social structures, religious practices, and gender roles. By exploring issues such as economic disparity, wealth distribution, and the impact of capitalism, RASHK's research provides invaluable insights into the financial landscapes of Asia.

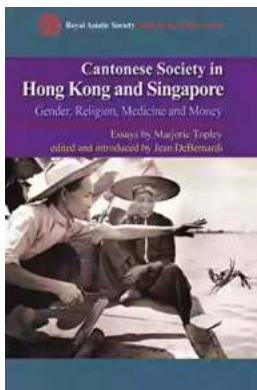
## **Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong: A Nexus of Knowledge**

Since its establishment, the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong has been a hub for scholars, researchers, and enthusiasts interested in Asia and its diverse cultures. By exploring the intricate connections between gender, religion, medicine, and money, RASHK continues to make significant contributions to the field of Asian studies.

Through its publications, conferences, and collaborative projects, RASHK creates a platform for intellectual exchange and facilitates a deeper understanding of Asia's past, present, and future. In an increasingly interconnected world, RASHK's interdisciplinary approach remains invaluable in unraveling the complex tapestry of Asian history and culture.

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The volume collects the published articles of Dr. Marjorie Topley, who was a pioneer in the field of social anthropology in the postwar period and also the first president of the revived Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. Her ethnographic research in Singapore and Hong Kong set a high standard for urban anthropology, and helped creating the fields of religious studies, migration

studies, gender studies, and medical anthropology, focusing on topics that remain current and important in the disciplines.

The essays in this collection showcase Dr. Topley's groundbreaking contributions in several areas of scholarship. These include "Chinese Women's Vegetarian Houses in Singapore" (1954) and "The Great Way of Former Heaven: A Group of Chinese Secret Religious Sects" (1963), both important research on the study of subcultural groups in a complex urban society; "Marriage Resistance in Rural Kwangtung" (1978), now a classic in Chinese anthropology and women's studies; her widely known and cited article, "Cosmic Antagonisms: A Mother-Child Syndrome" (1974), which investigates widely shared everyday practices and cosmological explanations that Cantonese mothers invoked when they encountered difficulties in child-rearing; and "Capital, Saving and Credit among Indigenous Rice Farmers and Immigrant Vegetable Farmers in Hong Kong's New Territories" (2004 [1964]).

Dr. Marjorie Topley is a cultural anthropologist trained at the London School of Economics. She moved to Singapore with her husband, Kenneth, in the early 1950s and was hired as the curator of anthropology at the Raffles Museum in 1951. In 1955 the Topleys moved to Hong Kong and in 1958 Dr. Topley received her PhD from the London School of Economics for her research on the organization and social function of Chinese women's vegetarian halls in Singapore. Dr. Topley published her first articles on Chinese religion in Singapore in 1951 in the *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* and until her return to England in 1983, she conducted path-breaking research in both Singapore and Hong Kong, participated in international conferences and published extensively in the fields of Chinese medical anthropology, anthropology of religion, migration studies, and gender studies.

One of the pillars of Dr. Topley's intellectual life and contribution in Hong Kong undoubtedly was her involvement in the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. She played a major role in the revival of the society in 1959 and helped create a vibrant organization that forms a bridge between scholarly researchers and a wider public including policymakers and members of the city's business community. Dr. Topley served as the branch's vice-president from 1966 to 1972 and as its president from 1972 to 1983.

Dr. Marjorie Topley passed away in December 2010 at her home in England.

Jean DeBernardi is a professor of anthropology at the University of Alberta, Canada. Her areas of specialization include Chinese in Southeast Asia; the anthropology of religion; and ethnicity, nationalism, and transnationalism. She has conducted extensive ethnographic research on Chinese popular religion in Malaysia and Singapore, and her publications include *Rites of Belonging: Memory, Modernity and Identity in a Malaysian Chinese Community* (2004) and *The Way that Lives in the Heart: Chinese Popular Religion and Spirit Mediums in Penang, Malaysia* (2006).

“For more than two decades Marjorie Topley was the intellectual and organizational mainstay of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society—as Council member from 1960, Vice-President (1966–72), and President (1972–83). This splendid edition, incorporating all of her published work on Hong Kong, Singapore and beyond, will make available her pioneering, and still topical, anthropological research to a new generation of readers.” —James Hayes, author of *The Great Difference: Hong Kong's New Territories and Its People, 1898–2004*



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