Gender Roles in Ming Dynasty China: The Water Dragon Classic

Michael Paton

This paper considers the relationship between spatiality, emotions and gender from the theoretical perspective of traditional Chinese thought in the early art/science of fengshui (wind and water). The discussion is based on translations of the seminal Form School fengshui text: Mi chuan shuilong jing (the Secretly Passed down Water Dragon Classic), compiled by the renowned scholar Jiang Pingjie in the late Ming dynasty (circa. 1600 CE). The discussion concludes with what light these traditional concepts might shed on present day gender roles and business in China, specifically in relation to the oversimplification of the Confucian basis of Chinese culture in the business literature.

Michael Paton, University of Sydney. <michael.paton@sydney.edu.au>