

## David Faure, *Emperor and Ancestor: State and Lineage in South China*

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Readers interested in Chinese state formation and local institutional structures of the Ming-Qing period will find Faure's book, *Emperor and Ancestor*, a must read. Non-specialists will find much of value in the vast amount of new data and materials that Faure presents.

Faure's previous publications have established him as one of the major experts on local lineages in the New Territories of Hong Kong. His most recent book about the Pearl River Delta, two decades in the making, builds on his previous work, extends and readjusts Maurice Freedman's work and shows how changes in the state and the formation/development of lineages went hand in hand.

This book focuses on the Pearl River Delta, or more precisely the town of Foshan and its surrounding villages, from the 12th century to the early 20th century. It was during the Song Dynasty that the Pearl River Delta's political incorporation began in earnest. In the early Ming Dynasty the *li-jia* system of household registration was established and Neo-Confucian ideals were adopted as official state orthodoxy. In the 15th century the *li-jia* household registration system broke down and evolved into local "tax account" system more closely related to land registration. In the mid-15th century the stage was set for institutional change. Local lineages appeared and with no other local social organization capable of assisting in tax collection, the stage was set for a new relationship between the lineages and the state. In an implicit exchange, the local lineages collected taxes for the state and assisted in other capital intensive projects. In return the state gave legitimacy to the lineages, sanctifying ancestral worship guided by Neo-Confucian ideology. The right to sacrifice had

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previously been an exclusive right of aristocrats and officials. In the 1530s commoners gained the right to sacrifice to lineage ancestors. One of Faure's biggest contributions is to document and describe the formation and development of these lineages. Many individual cases are covered.

Piracy and rebellion often served as the impetus to tie the state to well positioned local leaders, thus gaining legitimacy and power from the state. Faure suggests that ritual differences throughout China arose in part from the varying nature of the state at the time it extended its relationship to the local lineage.

Faure's book identifies important aspects of the formation of local lineages as well as the factors that gave rise to their new relationship with the state. Careful attention to a vast array of sources, including the traditional literature, land deeds, endowments, genealogies, lineage registrations, contracts, local gazetteers and other source materials, provides Faure with rich and diverse data to carve his broad sweep of history.

Faure, at times, fails to explain why a given factor is important for the discussion at hand and at times belabors detail. An editor should have corrected many minor errors and expanded the overly brief index. In the epilogue Faure discusses local lineages outside of the Pearl River Delta—which is now needed given our growing knowledge of South China. Faure does not address population growth and its relation to the nature of the local lineages and their links to the state. China's population roughly increased four-fold over the Ming-Qing period and likely grew at an even higher rate in South China given the southern migration. Like adding levels of hierarchy in the administration of a company, increasing the local population strains and stretches the capabilities of the lineage institution to manage and serve the state. A discussion of such changes would have been profitable.

Faure's book clearly shows how lineages exploited circumstances and the state's needs to become powerful and legitimate local institutions around the 16th century in South China. The book's minor shortcomings should not deter one from reading this important contribution to Chinese local institutions.

**Ronald A. Edwards** specializes in Chinese political economic history at Tamkang University, where he is an Associate Professor of Economics. He has worked and lived in Greater China for over a decade and has been a visiting scholar at the Institute of History and Philology and the Institute of Political Science at Academia Sinica. He has served two terms as a board member of the Chinese Economists Society.