

A Study of Chinese Filipino Family Lifestyle in CebuChinese

Cemeteries and Places of Worship

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Southeast Asia has always been the first choice for Chinese immigrants. In particular, the Philippines are close to China and the country has become one of the main places for Chinese business people. In addition, Cebu City is the largest harbor in the Philippines for Chinese immigrants.

At least a century before the Spanish arrived, Cebu City had already become one of the largest trading centers for Chinese people. According to the records, more than 80% of the residents in Cebu City are Hokkienese. As a historic city in the Philippines, Cebu preserves a continuing and overlapping culture.

In this respect, cemetery studies provide a new vision and an important historical material toward overseas Chinese history studies and their society. Cemetery studies are an important culture issue; hence, they serve as an index of traditional culture transition in Chinese society. Through funerary culture, the after death landscape presents a religious world view. We can also discover details of their daily life through language on tombstones in Chinese cemeteries.

This paper includes a visit to Cebu and presents a field study of two old Chinese cemeteries and four new cemeteries where most of the Chinese Filipinos are buried. It also collects historic records of early Chinese cemeteries and conducts a comparative research between old and new Chinese cemeteries, as well as their places of worship. Finally, it shows the current status of their tombs and buried areas, and how Chinese families maintain their Chinese culture.

Keywords: Chinese cemeteries, culture transition, religious space, Chinese Filipino, ancestor worship