

Religious Diversity Colloquium

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“Between a rock and a hard place: Sinophobia and spiritual warfare in today’s Vietnam”

As the dispute about the South China Sea has gained momentum a burgeoning anti-Chinese sentiment can be found in Vietnam. Because public demonstrations and protests are often suppressed by the Vietnamese communist authorities, many patriotic Vietnamese today employ alternatives to express their sentiments. This paper focuses on one of the anti-Chinese spiritual activities that are becoming popular in different circles of Vietnamese spiritists; *giải yểm* or the undoing of Chinese hexing (*trấn yểm*) of Vietnamese sacred geography. Believing that all problems that Vietnam is facing today can be traced to a long history of China domination of the country, Vietnamese spiritists conduct *giải yểm* rituals in a number of locations, where sacred veins in Vietnam’s Geobody are located. Spirit writing is employed as the main method by Vietnamese spiritists in this warfare. By analyzing a number of *giải yểm* events, this paper aims to shed light on the larger issue of sinophobia and the secret but widespread spiritual warfare in contemporary Vietnam.

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