

【ABSTRACT】 -January 13-

Dr. Jianxiong Ma (The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology)

“The Mining Industry, Caravan Transportation and Ethnic Mobilization in southwest China from the 17th to 19th Century”

This talk will review the history of silver and copper mines on the borderland between Yunnan and Burma, in particular the social organization of miners in remote mountainous areas. Two types of ethnic mobilization among the Hui and the Lahu will be examined. These two ethnic minorities were mobilized through different channels to politically resist the Qing government in interior counties and exterior chieftains. This was due to the political influence of unemployed miners, which arose from the decline of borderland silver mines in the early 19th century and local governments' subsequent failure to manage social mobility as miners shifted their work to agriculture or business. The talk aims to study how cooperative transportation system networks became interwoven by different social actors in cities and mines, especially caravan muleteers whose mobility in metal transportation and commercial circulations was bound to the development of the mining industry and ethnic politics in southwest China. Different social sections cooperated through mediators such as the caravan muleteers, silver miners and exiled monks. In general, this talk will explain the historical reconstruction of borderland society in southwest China, showing how ethnic mobilization was a social consequence of economic and political transformation resulting from the extension of state governance in mountain areas from the Ming to the Qing.

Dr. Christian Daniels (The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology)

“Mongol-Yuan and Tai Polity-building in Northern Mainland Southeast Asia : the Chinese Pacification Commissioner of the Lan Na Polity, and the Rise of Mäng2 Maaw2 c. 1260 to c. 1350”

Yunnan lies at the intersection between Southwest China and Southeast Asia. In this talk, I will examine Mongol-Yuan influence on the emergence of proto-Tai/Tai polities after c. 1260. I argue that as a successor state to the Dali Kingdom, the Mongol-Yuan gained possession of former Dali kingdom territories (spheres of influence) in mainland South East Asia by restoring the authority of the fallen Duan royal family, and relied on aid from descendants of the Duan royal family to govern indigenous polities there. I probe Mongol-Yuan administration inside Tai polities through the case of a Han Chinese man named Kang Min who served as their official in Lan Na, who is recorded in a stele recently discovered at Dali, Yunnan. Based on Chinese and Tai sources, I show that the large political Tai confederation of Mäng2 Maaw2 (Moeng Mao, Ch. Luchuan 麓川) arose c. 1335-1350s in the context of the expulsion of Mian power from the Upper Ayeyarwaddy during the 1280s, and the withdrawal of Mongol-Yuan troops in 1303. Rather than notions of “patronage” and “client states”, I emphasize the centrality of the Tai as agents in navigating their own polity building projects.

Dr. Masashi Okada (Osaka University)

“Tracking Routes to Heaven: Diaspora and Re-imagined Ethnicity of Tai Dam”

Ethnic identity has been a challenging topic for academic research about the peoples in the Southeast Asian Massif. For example, Frank Proschan criticized Anderson’s discussion about ethnicity as “appendency theory” by demonstrating Khmu people’s transnational and pluralistic identity which shared through their oral tradition and practice to the present. In the 21th century, we should also consider how the global access to the Internet affect the ethnic identities of the people in the mountains.

Tai Dam or Black Tai people have dominated the upland mountain valleys of northwestern Vietnam. In the present, their dwelling areas disperse more widely as Laos, Thailand and even the Western countries due to the Indochina Wars. In addition, Thai Song Dam or Lao Song are peoples occupying main areas in central Thailand. Their ancestors are believed to be Tai Dam families who have forcibly relocated to the present settlement from Muang Thaeng (a historical toponym for Dien Bien Phu), their homeland in the 18th and 19th centuries. In this presentation, I will show how national / international factors (e.g., Thai government policy and Indochina Wars) and cross-border / global factors (e.g., increasing people’s flow and expanding cyberspace) have influenced the way to imagine ethnic identity in the diasporic Tai Dam communities. It might be seen in various spheres as their memory of migration, funeral ritual and so on. At the same time, this research will also lead to illustrate the role of some kinds of media (including SNS in the present) and its change.

Dr. Mio Horie (Nagoya University)

“Moving South, Moving North: The Gendered Cross-border Migration and its Impact on Ethnicity among the Lahu in China-Myanmar Border”

Southwestern Yunnan is one of the most marginal areas in China. Historically, many ethnic groups, Han migrants and Local chieftains there had been in complicated power balances with the State, and it has made the complex flow of population across the border. The Lahu, one of ethnic groups lived there had the history of southward migration because of such complex politics. But since the beginning of Open Door Policy, the economic growth of China brought big change into the life of them. The border control is stricter than before, and the economic attractiveness of coastal China pulled many laborers. The Lahu people in Yunnan said that they had chosen to move south when they faced poverty in the past, but now they move north to earn money. This wave of “moving north” is not only labor migration but also contains heavy marriage migration to the northern Han areas, and it brought a shortage of marriageable women in Yunnan’s Lahu since the late 2000s.

In this presentation, I will discuss the gendered cross-border migration through the concept of local space formation, such as “northern land” and “southern land”, and show how their change of the migrate direction since late 1980s affect and are affected by their sense of ethnicity.

Dr. Haimei Shen (Yunnan Minzu Univeristy)

“Governing Cross-border Marriage: the Chinese Local Government, Ethnic Minorities and Foreign Brides in Yunnan-Myanmar Border”

Over 15 ethnic groups live across China’s borders with Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. The Dai/Tai, De’Ang/Ang, Jingpo/Kachin, Lisu are four main ethnic minorities living across Yunnan-Myanmar border. The border of the Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture snakes across the lush, mountainous terrain of China’s Yunnan province and its southwesterly neighbor, Myanmar. Historically, the area’s inhabitants have always migrated frequently across the border; families were often scattered across both sides, and their close interactions helped establish the friendly rapport that exists between the two nations. Cross-border marriages have a long local history rooted in common ethnicity, language and religions. According to James Scott's "Zomia" theory, these peoples living in the mountains of Asia have a social and cultural strategy to evade national rule, where is ungoverned periphery.

However, over the past 20 years, with the economic improved and social prosperity and safety people live in peace and stability life in China's border side. More and more Burmese ethnic minority women have migrated China and married to the Dai, Jingpo, De’ang and Lisu ethnic people in border areas. According to scholars estimate nearly as much as 100,000. How does the modern nation-state manage ethnic cross-border marriages in the Asian borderlands? Governing ethnic marriage practices in the context of the modern nation-state, the government of Dehong Prefecture need to face the challenges of social governance brought by the burgeoning "Burmese brides" at the Sino-Burmese border, meanwhile maintains the relationship between the Burmese government and the Burmese ethnic military authorities.

In 2010, the Dehong local government introduced and started implementing the “Blue Card” policy which provided framework for documenting Registration of Marriage for Border Residents in Cross-border Marriages. This policy represents an important step towards legalizing the status of marriage immigrants in China, and providing a mechanism for documenting previously undocumented cross-border marriages.

In fact the government’s policy and practice on governing the transnational marriages of border residents reveals the complex relationship between foreign brides, ethnic minorities and local governments. Based on the author's field research on cross-border marriages in Dehong, this presentation analyzes the foreign bride in the framework of transnational immigration theory and explores the social governance of border foreign brides under the geo-ethnic-gender dimension, providing a critical assessment of this “Blue Card” policy and challenges in its realization.