Chapter abstracts
Book project – *Trans-Himalayan Borderlands: Livelihoods, Territorialities, Modernities*

Dan Smyer Yü
"Introduction: Tran-Himalayas as Multi-state Margins"
Abstract: This introductory chapter lays out a roadmap of the book regarding its overarching themes, conceptual concerns, and individual chapter highlights. It attempts to initiate a trans-Himalayan study aimed at an ethno-culturally and ecologically coherent but geopolitically demarcated world region. Based on the borderland perspectives of the contributors, it deems the trans-Himalayan region a space of multiple state margins between which connectivity and disconnectivity concurrently take place. Concerning the diversity of trans-Himalayan livelihood, territoriality and modernity, the chapter emphasizes the criticalness of ecological forces, which, along with human-induced global-local forces of change, reshapes the multidimensional borderland engagements between different ethnic communities and nation-states in the greater Himalayan region, including the highlands of Southeast Asia and Southwest China.

Gunnel Cederlöf
"Seeking China's Back Door: On English handkerchiefs and global local markets in the early nineteenth century"
Abstract: This chapter focuses on the early nineteenth century, when European mercantile commerce and British colonial military force simultaneously began to make inroads east of the Brahmaputra River, into Assam and the Surma-Barak lowlands towards Burma and Yunnan. From early on, the purpose was to secure the overland routes to the markets of the Chinese Middle Empire. The study is explorative in its endeavour to establish the movement of mercantile commercial interests and capital into the territories that were part of the old south-west Silk Road network. It focuses on how, as British officers explored the natural resources and markets of these territories, they observed and handled the day-to-day transactions that made up social, political, and economic relations. It also discusses how the EIC introduced new boundaries into complex socio-political and ecological environments for the purpose of securing and mapping imperial visions.
Keywords: British Empire, Indian colonial history, trans-regional South Asia, colonial trade, Burma, Northeast India

Hildegard Diemberger
"Buddhist books on trans-Himalayan pathways: materials and technologies connecting people and ecological environments in a transnational landscape"
Abstract: Buddhist book culture has been historically associated with traveling texts that spread Buddha's teachings across Asia. Literary artefacts emerged over time as nodes in networks that connected many people, technologies and materials as well as different forms of engagement with the written word. Paper, wood, inks and pigments have

connected different ecological niches, linking a 'galaxy' of communities with different histories and different perspectives on what constitutes centre and margins and their mutual relationship. Whilst the consolidation of nation-state borders has often challenged flows across these 'borderlands', new technologies have opened up avenues of communication with *digital dharma* becoming an iconic form of 'vernacularized modernity'. Scriptures in digital form have thus expanded in new directions the web of trails that crisscrosses Himalayan transnational landscapes.

Keywords [4-6]: Himalaya, Buddhism, books, literary artefacts, digital technologies, transnational landscapes.

Georgina Drew
"Contested Modernities: Place, Subjectivity, and Himalayan Dam Infrastructures"
The Himalaya are a final frontier for much of the world's dam infrastructure. When set within seemingly remote border areas, these projects intersect with socio-cultural landscapes in ways that reveal nuance in how the development agenda is accepted, adapted, resisted, or rejected. Focusing on a contested dam built along the Ganges—a river sacred to Hindus—in the Indian Himalaya, this chapter explores a diversity of responses to hydroelectric development alongside the mixed evaluations that interlocutors expressed about the projects of modernization and modernity. Analyzing these complexities, the chapter considers if the selective concession to dams in the Himalaya enable a better appreciation of the contested modernities that may be evident in the mountains that serve as Asia's 'water tower'.

Keywords [4-6]: Ganges/Ganga River, Tehri Dam, Hinduism, Himalaya, Subjectivity, Modernity

Brendan A. Galipeau
"Tibetan Wine Production, Taste of Place, and Regional Niche Identities in Shangri-La, China"
ABSTRACT: This chapter explores Tibetan wine productionin Yunnan Province, where areas have been transformed into vineyards for state promoted 'Shangri-La Wine,' marketed using Tibetan culture and landscapes. This marketing is also based upon a history of Catholic missionaries who first introduced grapes and wine during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the chapter I focus on a Tibetan Catholic community, examining how state promotion of tourism and wine has led to promotion by villagers of their Catholic history through the production of wine, and to the transformation of the village landscape into one defined by vineyards. Historical transregionality of Catholic Tibetan wine making with France and Switzerland, and contemporarily with the larger Chinese and global economy is also emphasized.
Keywords [4-6]: Tibetan people, landscape, wine, *terroir*, identity

Alexander Horstmann
"Plurality and Plasticity of Everyday Humanitarianism in the Karen Conflict"
Abstract: The chapter is based on nine years ethnographic fieldwork on and off in Karen

state, Eastern Myanmar and examines the grassroots efforts of Karen community-based organizations to alleviate suffering of displaced civil Karen villagers who are caught in the protracted, decades-long brutal conflict. Decades of civil war and repression in southeast Myanmar have created a particular sort of humanitarianism in the borderlands that is characterized by the dense presence of local and international humanitarian organizations. How do humanitarian regime work on the ground? How are humanitarian regimes in the Southeast Asian massif influenced by larger geopolitical factors? And most significantly: How did the majority of Karen villagers benefit from humanitarian assistance and how were their livelihood influenced?

Li Quanmin
"Tea and Merit-Landscape Making in the Ritual Lives of De'ang People in Western Yunnan"
Abstract: De'ang is a Mon-Khmer speaking people who, known for their tea farming livelihood, reside in the subtropical monsoon uplands of southwestern Yunnan bordering with Myanmar. For De'ang, tea is not only a traditional farming crop for their market exchange, but is also an embodiment of their cultural memories and religious practice. This paper demonstrates that De'ang often use tea as an important object of Buddhist offering rituals to yield merit for their lives. This ritual practice produces what the author called 'merit-landscape' in their living space. Based upon the author's ethnographic research, this paper argues that the merit-landscape making conceived in De'ang tea offering rituals exposes an ecological image with indigenous cultural practices and their responses of balancing their morality and their farming scale of tea in their living space to the impact of development on their trans-regional livelihood, which reflects their way of keeping a sustainable relationship between people and environment.

Li Yunxia
"In between Poppy and Rubber Fields: Experimenting a Trans-border Livelihood among the Akha in the Northwestern Frontier of Laos"
Abstract: Fueled by the synergy of cross border trade, investment and development between China and Laos, the Lao State attempts to reassert its domination over the upland areas and population by converting poppy fields into rubber land. However, at the same time, the influx and circulation of money, goods and people resulting from the cross border economic exchanges rework the local social and economic life and produces new forms of sociality. Accordingly, my focus is on the social significance of the interactions between the Chinese and the Lao Akha in Muang Sing and Muang Long. Problemtising the concept of "frontier", I argue that this frontier space is of multiple engagements and significantly provides the Lao Akha new ways to experiment with a spectrum of social and economic opportunities. By highlighting the role of aspiration , indigenising modernity and personalised connections, this

examination casts new lights on the Lao Akha's experience of their livelihood transition from a subsistence-oriented to a market based one.

Jean Michaud
"Adjusting Livelihood Structure in the Southeast Asian Massif"

Abstract: The uplands east of the Himalayan range stretch over 8 countries, deep into Northeast India, Southwest China, and Mainland Southeast Asia. This region, that I call the Southeast Asian Massif, harbors high valleys and mountain ranges where a staggering diversity of cultures and social systems have thrived or, according to James' C. Scott's thesis, found a refuge against state inclusion. This chapter offers a general introduction to these populations, focusing on geography, social structures, livelihood practices, relationship with the state and the lowlands, and current issues revolving around rampant modernization and forced inclusion to the global economic order.

Jean Michaud
"Conclusion. Frictions in Trans-Himalayan Studies"

Abstract: Several undercurrents run throughout this book that exemplify the types of frictions characteristic of the trans-Himalayan situation. I briefly reflect here upon four that cut across our case studies transversally and point to telling overlapping implications: livelihoods, modernity, agency, and borderlands. I argue that bringing together approaches that can build on locally rooted understandings of livelihoods, while being acceptable to the state, should be our aim. It is where the challenge lies for creating and supporting truly sustainable livelihoods and durable life projects.

Sara Shneiderman
"The Properties of Territory in Nepal's State of Transformation"

Abstract: How do Himalayan peoples conceptualize "territory"? In English, this concept joins the multiple scales of individual land-ownership, communal emplacement in locality, and belonging and ownership of sovereign space at the national level. But how are the links between these different scales envisaged in Himalayan worldviews and languages—if at all? These questions emerge out of my ongoing study of the state restructuring process in Nepal since 2006—in which political debates over all three scales of territorial belonging have played an important discursive role. Here I investigate how such political categories are constituted in relation to *practices* of territoriality at the grassroots level in rural Nepal, both before and after the 2015 earthquakes.

Dan Smyer Yü
"Trans-Himalayan Buddhist Secularities: Sino-Indian Geopolitics of Territoriality in Indo-Tibetan Interface"
Abstract: This chapter is concerned with trans-Himalayan Buddhist secularities as a parallel development of state sanctioned secularisms and as an integral part of Buddhist modernism in India and among Tibetans in diaspora. It inquires into how the differently expressed Buddhist secularities in these two constituencies are engaged in the geopolitics of Tibet in relation to China. Situated in this transregional context, the author makes two arguments. First, Tibetan Buddhism in the last half a century has been a moving matter in the trans-Himalayan flows of people, ideas, and interregional politics. Its secular engagements and their outcomes are now affecting the ways how Tibetans and non-Tibetans project the future status of Tibet. Second, secularism and secularity are two sets of divergent practices and yet both dialectically lodge in one another. In such unique entanglement, the trans-Himalayan Buddhist secularities in essence are projects of both Buddhists and geopoliticians.
Keywords: secularism, secularity, Tibet card, Sino-Indian geopolitics, Indo-Tibetan interface

Sarah Turner
"A fortuitous frontier opportunity: Cardamom livelihoods in the Sino-Vietnamese Borderlands"
Abstract: Rural livelihoods in the Sino-Vietnamese borderlands are in a state of flux. While some upland societies have been cautious about altering long-standing practices, others have embraced new prospects offered by agrarian transformations, far-reaching commodity markets, and commercial intensification. The dilemmas created by such opportunities are especially palpable in the case of one upland non-timber forest product, black cardamom (*Amomum aromaticum*), now increasingly commoditized across these borderlands. Demand for this high-value spice has risen steadily over the last two decades, and many ethnic minority farmers have seized the opportunity to cultivate cardamom under the forest canopy. Yet this trade includes complex webs of social relationships, uneven power structures, and very different economic returns for different actors competing to access key resources.
Keywords [4-6]: Rural livelihoods, Sino-Vietnamese borderlands, Hmong, non-timber-forest-products, commodity chains.

Yang Cheng
"Being Modern: Livelihood Reconstruction among Land-lost Peasants in Chenggong (Kunming)"
Abstract: Chenggong, a former farming county adjacent to Kunming, China, is undergoing a rapid urbanizing process as the Chinese state re-designates it as the transnational hub of Southwest China connecting to Southeast Asia and South Asia. Urbanization engenders the transformation of farmland into urban space and of farming populations into urban low wage earners. In this context, this chapter narrates the land-lost peasants' experiences of the urbanization and their actions to resume their farming

livelihood as an entrepreneurial endeavour. While it discusses the meanings of being modern among the former peasants, this chapter proposes two conceptual terms – 'floating niche' and 'circular livelihood' – to facilitate an argument that 'floating' signifies a creative adaptation of the land-lost peasants' agentive responses to uprootedness, dispossession, and deterritorialization.