

Acknowledgements

This book is the co-creation of the cross-continental and transregional endeavors of the contributors from Asia, Europe, Australia, and North America, many of whom are leading scholars responsible for new conceptual currents in borderland and transregional studies in South Asia, Southeast Asia, Southwest China, and the Himalayas. Their thoughts and visions afford us the bases for further interdisciplinary conceptualizations, peer conversations and debates concerning frontier, border, region, livelihood, and multidimensional (dis)connectivity between different ethno-linguistic communities and nation-states in the trans-Himalayan region. This book is therefore an embodiment of the intellectual synergy of our contributors from different fields of social sciences and humanities but united on an interdisciplinary ground for re-visioning more inclusive, diverse Himalayan studies. Our profuse thanks wholeheartedly go to our contributors.

Throughout the book, the works of three distinguished scholars are intertextually referenced in such a high frequency that we would like to recognize our indebtedness to their innovative visions of borderland and transregional studies. Jean Michaud, James Scott, and Willem van Schendel have shared the originalities of their scholarly productions in a way that was symbiotic, processual, intertextual, and interwoven in nature. Key conceptual phrases from their texts – “Zomia,” “Southeast Asia Massif,” “friction of terrain,” “state effects,” “hegemony of ecology,” “process geographies,” “spatial engagements,” “flows” and more – are abundantly found in our individual chapters. Thanks to the inaugural team meeting of Gunnel Cederlöf led India-China Corridor Project at SOAS in June 2016, further connections were made with Scott and van Schendel and through the course of conversations and exchanges, we deepened our understanding of the linkages and connections of the central Himalayas with Northeast India, the Bay of Bengal, and the highlands of Southeast Asia and Southwest China that make their way into this book. Indebted to Michaud, Scott, and van Schendel, the process geographies practiced in this book present multiple geographical meanings of the trans-Himalayas, not merely as the locality based understanding of ethno-linguistic communities and nation-states, but also as significations pointing to the moving nature of geography in terms of trade networks, pilgrimage routes, the hydrosphere, environmental flows, climate patterns, geopolitics, and global-local nexuses.

Intellectual aspirations and synergies are unfortunately not the only ingredients for making a book. Financial and institutional resources are equally crucial for the scholarly endeavors. We would like to extend our deep appreciation to Yunnan Minzu University, the host of our 2015 book workshop. Its seed grant for establishing the Center for Trans-Himalayan Studies and administrative support made it possible for most of the international participants to travel to Kunming, and secured the conference venue and met other logistic needs. In the last ten years, YMU has become one of the most progressive universities in Southwest China. It hosts half a dozen research centers and institutes specializing in transregional and borderland studies. Its sustained support of the publication of the book is a significant contribution to the advancement of interdisciplinary studies of borderlands, modernities, ecosystems, and globalizations. We wish to give our special thanks to YMU President Na Jinhua, Vice Presidents Wang

Deqiang (Ronpa Tashi), Duan Gang and Li Bingze, Director of Academic Affairs Wang Mingdong, and Deputy Director of International Exchange and Cooperation Geng Yi and her staff.

In addition to the support from YMU, this book project benefitted from many funding agencies, academic departments, and research centers that supported the fieldwork, archival search, and write-up of the individual chapters of our contributors. We send our special thanks to the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership Development Grant (PI – Sarah Turner), the Swedish Research Council (PI – Gunnel Cederlöf), The Social Sciences Foundation of China (PI – Dan Smyer Yü), The Wenner-Gren Foundation (PI – Sara Shneiderman), The Hampton Fund of the University of British Columbia (PI – Sara Shneiderman), the Department of Geography of McGill University, the Department of Anthropology at Laval University, the Inner Asia Studies Unit at Cambridge University, Yale Himalaya Initiative, China Tibetology Research Center, the Tibet Autonomous Region Academy of Social Sciences, and the School of Ethnology and Sociology at Minzu University of China, the Center for Concurrences in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies at Linnaeus University, the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, the CeMIS-CeMEAS Transregional Research Network (CETREN) at the University of Göttingen, and Yunnan Institute of Ethnology.

Himalayan studies enchant both the academic and the policy worlds. As an inaugural event of the Center for Trans-Himalayan Studies at Yunnan Minzu University, our book workshop invited special guests from both worlds as keynote speakers and session chairs. We would like to give our special thanks to Danzhu Angben, Deputy Director of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Luosang Linzhi Duojie, Deputy Director of China Tibetology Research Center, Geoffrey Samuel, Board Adviser of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, Li Zhang, Interim Dean of the Division of Social Sciences at the University of California at Davis, Ashok Gurung, Director of the India China Institute at the New School, Emily Yeh, Chair of the Department of Geography, University of Colorado at Boulder, Andrew Quintman, Steering Committee member of the Yale Himalaya Initiative, Jin Ze, Associate Director of the Institute of World Religions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and Qi Jinyu, Director of the Society for the Study of Ethnicities and Cultures in Northeast Asia. The presentations of their own works and their co-leadership of the workshop added more interdisciplinary gravity and policy implications to the book.

We also would like to express our appreciation to the following participants and guests of our book workshop who presented their works and shared their perspectives but were unable to have their papers included in this book for various reasons: Kelsang Chimee, Nyingcha Dorje, Bruce A. Huett, Liang Yan, Adam Liebman, Santi Rozario, Shen Haimei, Dawa Tsering, Wang Jianhua (Nyawrbyeivq Aryoeq), Zhang Ning, and Zengji Zhuoma (Zomkyi Drolma).

The success of our book workshop also heavily depended on the complex organizing skills of Wang Kun the workshop coordinator, her colleagues, and her team of student

volunteers. We would like to extend our thanks to each of them: Sonam Beiji, Dai Ying, Duan Shudan, He Jiale, Li Jia, Li Yan, Liu Xinku, Ma Zhen, Su Li, Tian Tian, Xie-Li Hongjia, Xie Linjie, Yang Xinlei, Yang Yi, Yao Min, Zhang Cheng, Zeng Qingxin, and Zhang Rong. Their enthusiasm convinces us once again that Yunnan Minzu University is committed to supporting its faculty members and students and collaborating with its international peers for the advancement of the social sciences and humanities in the twenty-first century.

Last but not least, we would like to thank Asian Borderlands Series at Amsterdam University Press for hosting this book. Its Series Editors, Willem van Schendel and Tina Harris, and Senior Commissioning Editor, Saskia Gieling, are among the most dedicated publishers we have ever worked with. From the peer review process to revision, they provided us with the best kind of comments, suggestions, and guidance. We applaud their unsurpassed professionalism.