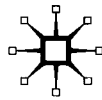


# Impact of China's Rise on the Mekong Region

Edited by  
*Yos Santasombat*

palgrave  
macmillan



IMPACT OF CHINA'S RISE ON THE MEKONG REGION  
Copyright © Yos Santasombat, 2015.

All rights reserved.

First published in 2015 by  
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®  
in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,  
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world,  
this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited,  
registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills,  
Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies  
and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States,  
the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN: 978-1-137-47621-0

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available from the  
Library of Congress.

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Knowledge Works (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: June 2015

## Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
Introduction	1
<i>Yos Santasombat</i>	
Chapter 1 China's Geoeconomic Strategy: Toward the Riparian States of the Mekong Region <i>Hsing-Chou Sung</i>	23
Chapter 2 China's "Comrade Money" and Its Social-Political Dimensions in Vietnam <i>Nguyen Van Chinh</i>	53
Chapter 3 Changing Landscape and Changing Ethnoscape in Lao PDR: On PRC's Participation in the Greater Mekong Subregion Development Project <i>Bien Chiang and Jean Chih-yin Cheng</i>	85
Chapter 4 Commodifying Sovereignty: Special Economic Zones and the Neoliberalization of the Lao Frontier <i>Pinkaew Laungaramsri</i>	117
Chapter 5 <i>Xinyimin</i> , New Chinese Migrants, and the Influence of the PRC and Taiwan on the Northern Thai Border <i>Aranya Siriphon</i>	147
Chapter 6 China-Myanmar: Toward a More Balanced and Better Neighborhood <i>Khine Tun</i>	167
Chapter 7 Patterns and Impacts of Chinese Assistance in Cambodia <i>Touch Siphath</i>	195

**Newspaper and Other Media**

*Asian Commerce Magazine*. Bilingual Magazine for Traders and Investors in Thailand-China-ASEAN, 2010.

CCTV. December 20, 2012. [http://v.youku.com/v\\_show/id\\_XMjY3MjY2MTI4.html](http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMjY3MjY2MTI4.html).

**CHAPTER 5**

## *Xinyimin*, New Chinese Migrants, and the Influence of the PRC and Taiwan on the Northern Thai Border

*Aranya Siriphon*

### ***Setting the Stage: Historical Background and Border Contexts***

Mae Sai is a major northern Thailand-Myanmar border town opposite from Myanmar's<sup>1</sup> Tachileik, which is linked to southern China via Myanmar's R3B route. Throughout history, this border town has been a diverse cultural landscape with a multiplicity of ethnic people pursuing translocal trade for their livelihoods. These various peoples, which include Tai Yuan (the native Tai in this area), Tai Lue, and subethnic Tai from Shan state and Yunnan, and Yunnanese Chinese,<sup>2</sup> have all been very mobile in northern mainland Southeast Asia. Horses and mules were used for short- and long-distance caravan trading along overland routes through mountainous areas<sup>3</sup> prior to the emergence of modern transportation and sovereign nation-states in Southeast Asia and China. Mae Sai has also been affected by the migratory history of the Han Yunnanese in the border area, particularly the movements of Chinese Nationalist Army troops (or Kuomintang, KMT) into Myanmar and northern Thailand after the Chinese Communists took power in China in the 1950s. Han Yunnanese people settled in northern Thailand, including the town of Mae Sai and nearby mountainous areas. People from southwestern China, Yunnan and Shan and Kachin states have come for economic pursuits in ordinary times and for political refuge in times of unrest. Some of them have crossed back and forth from Shan and Kachin states in Myanmar or from Yunnan province.

With the development of China's economy and society since the 1980s, the changing policies of the Chinese government and the governments of Southeast Asian countries have allowed the borders between China and Southeast Asian countries to open for mainly economic purposes. Chinese economic reforms were implemented, and after the 1990s the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries<sup>4</sup>

received financial assistance from Asian Development Bank (ADB) to establish regional economic cooperation and promote ideals of "regionalism."

The six GMS countries entered into several regional economic cooperation programs—Economic quadrangle, GMS, as well as ASEAN community—designed to enhance economic relations among the countries. These regional policies for economic cooperation have increased the flow of capital, people, technology, and even culture. Within this general context of increasing flows of capital, people, and culture, the *Xinyimin*, that is, the new Chinese migrants who are flowing into GMS countries, are evident in the border towns of Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar.

The following is a case study of Xinyimin who have been immigrating into the northern Thai border area from the 1990s to the present and their socioeconomic activities in Mae Sai. Although these new Chinese migrants are not yet very numerous as compared to Xinyimin in northern Laos,<sup>5</sup> fieldwork conducted in Mae Sai over the course of a year has uncovered that new Chinese migrants are growing in number and their economic activities in the border area include diverse patterns and occupations. The study also finds that, to gain more economic success and better living opportunities, these new Chinese migrants have built and regulated "border *guanxi*" networks that operate on various levels and involve ethnic Chinese and institutionalized Chinese associations. My study of Xinyimin from the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC or Taiwan), who work as education volunteers in Chinese schools in Mae Sai supported by different Chinese associations, reveals the intersection between Chinese states' influences (referring here to both the PRC and Taiwan) and ethnic Chinese desires for a future.

### *The Rise of Xinyimin Mobility throughout the World*

The term "Xinyimin" has been used lately by the PRC government and academics to refer to the wave of Chinese migrants who left China after the "open door" policy was launched by Deng Xiaoping in the 1970s. Initially, Xinyimin went mainly to developed countries, particularly to North America. From the Chinese government's view, the Xinyimin may or may not return to the country, but may have created their lucrative opportunities and gained economic success outside China. In return, whether they settle outside China or go back and forth between home and new countries, these Xinyimin always send money remittances, provide economic investment, and donate money to charities for Chinese in mainland China.<sup>6</sup> The fact that large numbers of Xinyimin were leaving China to go to Western countries attracted the world's attention in the 1980s. It is estimated that more than 6 million Xinyimin headed to North America in the 1980s.<sup>7</sup> In addition to Xinyimin emigration during 1970s–1980s, there has been a new phenomenon of Xinyimin mobility beginning in the 1990s. It has come to light that more and more Chinese migrants are heading to developing countries in Southeast Asia, South America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Russia.

The new Xinyimin phenomenon has been studied by many scholars. Nyiri and Saveliev<sup>8</sup> contributed an edited volume on Chinese migration in Europe and Asia, focusing on previously undocumented migration patterns, such as the students and tourists who visit other countries and then find better economic opportunities for

themselves. The scholarship suggests that in some sense the new Chinese migration into developing countries has occurred in association with the Chinese government's so-called authoritarian capitalism.<sup>9</sup> An example is the "shuttle trade" of Chinese petty traders in Russia and Eastern Europe, whose numbers have been growing since relations between Russian and Chinese governments improved in 1987.<sup>10</sup> Mohan and Kale<sup>11</sup> examine Chinese migration to Africa, which has accelerated in the past five years as new business opportunities have become apparent. They found that, although ethnic business communities are certainly not new in Africa, the scale and dynamism of the new Chinese communities are more intensive, and these new communities are likely to shape economic, social, and political relations on the continent for decades to come.

Regarding Southeast Asian countries, Mohan and Tan-Mullins and Tan<sup>12</sup> share an argument about Xinyimin mobility in Laos since the 1990s, suggesting that although the Xinyimin in Laos are viewed as "an army of ants" that plunder the natural resources of this poor country, these Chinese migrants are also the main drivers of development. Meanwhile, the Xinyimin view themselves as "agents of Chinese development" who bring development and civilization to the barbaric places they go. Ang See<sup>13</sup> studied new Chinese migration in the Philippines after the economic reforms in China in the 1980s. The study found that there are large numbers of "undocumented" and "illegal" Chinese who enter into the country and that some of them are fortunate to become billionaires and wealthy *Taipans* (Chinese Filipino business tycoons). Zhuang and Wang<sup>14</sup> note that the Xinyimin flow into Southeast Asia since the late 1980s. These migrants depart from most parts of China, and in recent years migrants from the west and central provinces of Hunan, Sichuan, and Hubei have been part of the wave of migration to Southeast Asia. These new Chinese migrants who go to developing countries are mainly engaged in commercial sectors, working as businessmen, traders, vendors, or hawkers. Zhuang and Wang also point out that the Xinyimin objectives for migration are to make a fortune or create a much better life abroad. This is especially true for investment immigrants. China's rapid economic growth in the 2000s resulted in increased foreign trade and overseas investment, which created more opportunities for new Chinese migrants to engage in various occupations. In return, the Xinyimin have promoted China's economic expansion. Accordingly, the Chinese government has a positive attitude toward these new Chinese emigrants, expecting that they will be well educated and ambitious with a drive to gain wealth. It is expected that their activities and achievements will help strengthen relationships with foreigners and overseas Chinese around the world.

Some scholars further note that the PRC government has played an important role in increasing Xinyimin mobility. Nyiri<sup>15</sup> argues that the PRC government created a "Xinyimin official discourse" on Chinese emigration, disseminated through mass media, especially CCTV stations that broadcast throughout the world. According to "Xinyimin official discourse," Chinese emigrants and returnees are not only an invaluable resource for a new era of Chinese economy, but are also "patriots" who help build the new China and the good reputation of their homeland. Moreover, the PRC government at all levels (including the central government and provincial and county-level government) greatly support this migration in order to gain benefits

in the form of remittances, direct and indirect investment and trade, the establishment of economic networks, and the reduction of the unemployment rate in China. Therefore, the Chinese government at various levels has improved regulations and set standards to support connections between these emigrants and their homeland, facilitating their travel into and out of China.

### ***Xinyimin in the History of Chinese Migration to Thailand***

The history of Chinese immigration to Thailand dates back many centuries. Historically, there have been five waves of Chinese migration into Thailand from the mid-thirteenth century (the Sukhothai kingdom of King Ramkhamhaeng in 1253) to the mid-twentieth century, when the communist party took over and forced a mass exodus of Chinese from China.<sup>16</sup> Nowadays, we can find many people of Chinese descent in Thailand, who originated from Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan, and other southern coastal provinces of China.

Chinese who migrated into Thailand and their descendants can be classified into five main groups, based on their dialects: Teochiu,<sup>17</sup> Hakka, Hainanese, Cantonese, and Hokkien (or Fujian). Presently, Teochiu is the largest ethnic Chinese group in Thailand. They play significant roles in political and economic life and mostly live in Bangkok and urban cities along the Thai coast. Hakka is the second largest group; they play important roles in trade and politics. The Hainanese, Cantonese, and Hokkien play less important roles than the Teochiu and Hakka and usually follow the Teochiu group's lead. Today, the exact number of ethnic Chinese living in Thailand is difficult to ascertain because of their back and forth movement and intermarriage between Thai and Chinese over the past two hundred years. However, the National Statistical Office of Thailand shows the numbers of Chinese living in various regions of Thailand from data collected during the 2000s: 3.5 million ethnic Chinese in Bangkok; 0.953 million in the central part of Thailand; and in the north, the northeast, and the south are 0.751, 0.459, and 0.336 million, respectively.<sup>18</sup> In terms of Chinese penetration of northern Thailand, records from the Rama V period (1870s onward) indicate that sea-faring Teochiu, Hainanese, and Hakka followed the new road and rail transport routes being introduced into the area, settling first in Lampang, and then dispersing throughout the region, including into Shan state and Laos.

Although both groups in Thailand self-identify as *Huaren* or "Chinese nationality," the main difference between the old waves of Chinese immigrants and the Xinyimin is that the old Chinese migrants in Thailand identify as ethnic Chinese whose citizenship is Thai, while Xinyimin consider themselves *Zhongguo Ren* or "Chinese nationals/citizens." Through the decades, the older waves of Chinese migrants into Thailand encountered changes in national policies and regulations related to migration. However, the Xinyimin pass through the Chinese border supported by regional economic policies and regional cooperation.

Regarding the Xinyimin in northern Thailand in particular, at least three factors related to economic and political conditions have encouraged the flow of new Chinese migrants across the border.

The first factor is the Chinese economic reform in the 1980s, which grandly opened China to the world. The reform included policies to increase industrialization,

foreign trade, and economic development projects in special economic zones (SEZs). Reform also included restructuring unprofitable and inefficient state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in traditional sectors such as coal, textiles, and machinery. These policies have caused economic and social tensions in China and have resulted in the escalation of rural to urban migration, increasing unemployment, and a widening gap between the poor and the rich. While the reform of SOEs from 1999 to 2005 left more than 21 million state workers unemployed, China's urbanization process, which has accelerated over the past decade, has caused more than 200 million people to leave their land in rural areas and move into urban centers to find jobs. As a consequence of rural to urban migration during 1990–2000, the populations of China's big cities have greatly increased, estimated at: Shanghai, 430 percent; Guangdong, 272 percent; Zhejiang, 270 percent; Beijing, 196 percent; and Yunnan, 230 percent.<sup>19</sup> The State Council's China Development and Reform Commission estimated that in 2006 there were 25 million people competing for 11 million jobs in urban areas, indicating that 14 million people were unemployed. This is more than 5 percent of the total 283 million people who make up the urban workforce. Moreover, a report published in February 2007 by the China Development and Reform Commission together with other bureaus estimated that between 12 and 13 million new workers would enter the labor market each year. Even if China retained its current economic growth rate, only 8 million jobs would be created, thereby adding between 4 and 5 million young people to the unemployment roster each year (China Labour Bulletin 2007).<sup>20</sup> China's internal migrants are called "floating people" (*Liudong Renkou*), as they move from rural areas into urban areas to look for jobs, although it is difficult to get employment in big cities. As a result of economic tension in China, some "floating people" and unemployed or laid-off workers in China have changed their migratory direction. Instead of heading to the big cities of China, they are moving south to the Southeast Asian border to seek new economic opportunities in northern Laos, Myanmar, northern Vietnam, and Thailand.

The second main factor encouraging new Chinese migration has been the process of GMS regionalization, which has connected China to mainland Southeast Asia since the early 1990s. With support from the ADB and other donors, the GMS program has encouraged the implementation of high priority subregional projects in transportation, energy, telecommunications, human resource development, tourism, trade, private sector investment, and agriculture. Substantial progress has been achieved in implementing GMS projects since 1992. There have been numerous priority infrastructure plans and development projects to boost economic connectivity; for example, Mekong river ports and R3A and R3B international highway have been developed in an attempt to complete an infrastructure network to support the opening of markets. Border towns have become SEZs for economic opportunities, promoting the import and export of goods among southern China and mainland Southeast Asian countries in this area where "China meets Southeast Asia."<sup>21</sup> As a result of various states' policies in GMS regionalization, there have been changes in border regulations, allowing more flexibility for economic flows. Along the northern Thai border, the economy has changed since the 1990s when the Thai government launched its "battlefield to economic field" policy, which signaled a decline in

political tension in the region. According to GMS regionalization, the circumstance has encouraged the intensive flow of new Chinese migrants into the border area.

The third factor affecting Chinese migration concerns “Chinese soft power,” which is part of the foreign policy of the PRC government toward developing countries in Southeast Asia. Along with Official Development Assistance (ODA) to these countries, which includes development aid, investment funds, grants, and concessional loans, the PRC government applies a “soft power” strategy. It donates funds and provides technology and human resources to support health, education, and humanitarian assistance. Soft power includes academic, professional, and cultural exchanges that offer friendship to help countries develop. Soft power, to some extent, aims to strengthen China’s bargaining power in Southeast Asia vis-à-vis the United States.<sup>22</sup> More interestingly, the soft power strategy of the PRC government is also associated with a “civilizing mission” ideal. The idea of Chinese and, specifically, Han Chinese superiority in relation to less-civilized “barbarians” in marginal areas has operated as an ideal throughout China’s long history. The “civilizing mission” has been reflected in Chinese history in the campaign of the Chinese state moving into ethnic minorities in the south and other parts of China.<sup>23</sup> Apparently outside China nowadays, these waves of Chinese migrants contribute to the “Xinyimin official discourse” representing an invaluable resource for a new era of Chinese economy and transporters of civilization into “barbarian” places.

### ***Xinyimin on the Northern Thai Border: Migratory Routes and Group Differentiation***

Based on fieldwork conducted in the Mae Sai border area, this chapter found that new Chinese migrants have come from several provinces in southern China: Hunan, Guangzhou, Sichuan, and Yunnan. Some of them are Chinese-Burmese who lived in Mong La and Keng Tung in Myanmar for many decades before moving to northern Thailand. Tracking their migration trail, the study found that there are three main routes from China to Mae Sai commonly used by the Xinyimin: (1) via road through Myanmar using R3B highway—the road component travels through Xishuangbanna to border checkpoints of Mong La-Daluo or Muse-Ruili (Chinese-Burmese border) prior to crossing the border checkpoints of Thai-Myanmar at Mae Sai; (2) via road through Laos using R3A highway—this route departs Xishuangbanna, crosses the Chinese-Laotian border at Boten-Bohan, then passes Houayxay/Chiang Khong (Lao-Thai border) before arriving in Mae Sai; and (3) via the Mekong river using Chinese cargo ships—this route departs Jinghong (Xishuangbanna), and then passes through Guanlei (southern China), Suolei (Myanmar) ports before docking in Chiang Saen and then travel to Mae Sai.

As for their career choices, our fieldwork in Mae Sai confirms Zhuang and Wang’s work,<sup>24</sup> which contends that the majority of new Chinese migrants in developing countries are engaged in commercial sectors, that is, as businessmen, vendors, or hawkers. What new Chinese migrants do in Mae Sai is based upon their work experience and background in China, their capital, and personal network; the migrants can be classified into four main groups. The first group is *medium-sized investors* who mostly emigrate from big cities in southern China; Shanghai,

Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Guangdong, Sichuan, and Xishuangbanna. They usually invest in business sectors and rent or buy land and property<sup>25</sup> (e.g., buildings and townhouse projects) in the market or in the urban area. Some also buy land for agriculture, to grow rubber and golden bananas to send back to market in China. This group however is still small in number since the economic growth in the border area has not yet caught on. Many investors move on to Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, to engage in a larger economy of scale. They invest in transporting Chinese products to Bangkok markets and Thai products to Chinese cities using Mae Sai as a transit town.

The second group of Xinyimin is *Chinese entrepreneurs* who concentrate their business in wholesaling and retailing. They open wholesale and/or retail shops in Doi Wow Market and Indochina Market, the two main markets in Mae Sai. Most of the shops are small or medium-sized. These entrepreneurs mostly have a good economic background and have experience working for their own or their families’ shops in big cities in China (e.g., Kunming, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Jinghong). Our survey in Doi Wow and Indochina markets showed that about thirty out of a total three hundreds shops (10 percent) are rented by the new Chinese migrants. The rest of the shops belong to entrepreneurs who are Thai citizens coming from various places. Typically, these new Chinese entrepreneurs conducted wholesale business with Thai traders for many years, sending Chinese goods and merchandise by order to Thailand. Then, after the border opening in the 1990s, the increased economic competition in mainland China’s markets drove them to the border area to seek opportunities, to open shops for themselves, and sell products as they used to in their hometowns. For example, many shops in the Doi Wow Market belong to Chinese traders who came from Kunming. They import tea and other merchandise from the area where they came. The Chinese entrepreneurs selling products in Mae Sai can be identified as to which part of China they come from by checking the origins of their products; for example, blankets come from Guangdong, electronics products from Shenzhen. Most of these merchandisers engage in both wholesaling and retailing, selling goods to local traders. They regularly go back to China to order products for their business. Most Chinese entrepreneurs begin their border trade business by traveling to Mae Sai to explore the markets and economic circumstances. After making the decision to set up a shop, they then look for workers or shopkeepers who can speak Chinese, Burmese, and Thai. In addition, this group of Chinese entrepreneurs also makes an attempt to open other types of businesses, for example, Chinese restaurants, to gain more benefit from border market growth.

The third group of Xinyimin in Mae Sai is *small traders* who emigrate from China to the Thai border in order to explore the border economy through petty trading. As found in our local markets survey, several Chinese peddlers or street traders came from the southern part of China, the Dehong autonomous prefecture, and traveled via Ruili-Muse border towns on the Chinese-Burmese border. For example, A. Jong, a divorced Chinese man, left his three children with his parents in Dehong and came to Mae Sai several years ago. In Mae Sai, he rents a room in a small rental building, which he shares with five other Chinese families who moved from China and Myanmar. For the past three years, he has tried selling fresh seasonal fruits such as mangosteens, dragon fruits, mangos, and apples in the Mae Sai

fresh market. In his daily routine, he wakes up early in the morning, goes to the wholesale markets to buy fruit, and then prepares his products for retail sale in the evening market. Asked why he chooses to sell fruit, he said he is not sure about his future career. He is selling fruit now to meet his daily needs and also to explore other market possibilities.

The last group of Xinyimin in Mae Sai is the *professional group*, which includes Chinese youth volunteers who work as teachers for Chinese schools. This group comprises approximately 40–50 persons per year from mainland China and Taiwan. The number of volunteers depends on both the demand in the Chinese schools in the border area, and the supply of volunteers from the PRC and Taiwan. The Chinese volunteers come during their summer break from college to teach several subjects in Chinese language to students in secondary schools or high school along the border. However, there are differences between volunteer teachers from the PRC and from Taiwan.

In the case of volunteer teachers from the mainland, the system is supported financially by the PRC government, and particularly by the provincial government (e.g., Yunnan provincial government). The *Hanban* office, Confucius Institute Headquarters,<sup>26</sup> and *Qiaoban*<sup>27</sup> (Overseas Chinese Affairs Bureau) working under the policy on Chinese cultural promotion nowadays have encouraged Chinese youth volunteers to work on social and cultural service and education mission outside China. According to this policy, these Chinese official organizations have sent the numbers of Chinese youth volunteers to Thai schools. In Mae Sai, there are approximately 25 Chinese youth volunteers from the mainland. They teach several subjects in Chinese language to local students in the secondary schools and high schools that are set up by the *Guang Meng* ethnic Chinese association. In the case of volunteer teachers from Taiwan, there are approximately 15–20 volunteer teachers sent by the Taiwanese government and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Taiwan. The volunteer teachers from Taiwan fall into two groups; in the first group are those who teach temporarily for three months during their off-semester from college. The second group of teachers have permanent full-time volunteer positions by a request of the Mae Sai Yunnanese Chinese Association. These two groups teach courses in Chinese language for local students in secondary and high schools as well as a vocational college run by the Mae Sai Yunnanese Chinese association.

Apart from these Chinese volunteers, it is worth noting that there is a growing number of young people who graduate from high school in mainland China and pursue their undergraduate education in Thailand. After their college graduation, some of them look for a job in Thailand rather than going back to face the competition for employment in China. They become self-employed Chinese tutors, teach Chinese language to local children, work as translators for the local business sector, or become middlemen or business agents doing trade between China and Thailand.

#### “Border guanxi” at work

The term “guanxi” refers to Chinese-style social connections and reciprocal relationships. Understood as a cultural phenomenon, a guanxi system sets Chinese

social structure and Chinese people’s relatedness within the ethical framework of Confucianism.<sup>28</sup> In a recent study of Chinese business networks, some scholars<sup>29</sup> contend that economic growth depended fundamentally on guanxi networks that are cultivated under Confucian values of familism, trust, loyalty, reciprocity, and harmony. Considered within a cultural framework, the guanxi system is one main mechanism linked to cultural norms and values to facilitate economic flows and to provide assistance to the Chinese who are faced with economic barriers or a crisis. Hefner and Weller<sup>30</sup> view guanxi as informal and interpersonal relationships and their exchanges support achievement in business. However, some scholars argue that conceptualizing guanxi within a cultural framework essentializes these social ties and overlooks the dynamism of Chinese emigrants from different classes working under relevant economic and political conditions. Yao<sup>31</sup> notes that a cultural approach to *guanxi* overromanticizes Chinese culture in what he calls “the romance of Chinese business.” Ong<sup>32</sup> points out that culturalists tend to focus more on the functionalism of Chinese culture, ignoring the dynamism of Chinese economic classes and power struggles that contradict traditional values regarding social connections.

In this essay, we consider the guanxi system of the Xinyimin not only in terms of relationships between persons on multiple levels and in diversified patterns, but also in terms of persons’ contacts with institutions. Moreover, we consider relationships between institutional networks of relatives and friends facilitate the Xinyimin’s economic life in the Mae Sai border area. Chinese medium-sized investors usually use their connections to Chinese-Thai relatives who migrated from Xishuangbanna and settled in Mae Sai decades ago. Relatives and friends with Thai citizenship are a significant asset, because they can help Xinyimin avoid the prohibition against foreigners buying land and houses under the Thai land and property laws. As putting relatives’ or friends’ names on official land registration certificates is risky, because one might lose one’s money and land investment, the practice illustrates that social connections depend upon a high degree of trust. Close relations guarantee economic activities in the border area.

As for Xinyimin entrepreneurs in general, shop owners provide positions mainly for their relatives and friends whom they can trust, so that they can leave their shops with their relatives and friends in charge and travel back to China in order to get newer products and/or to run other shops in China. If it is difficult to find workers and shopkeepers at the border, Chinese entrepreneurs normally ask their relatives and friends to help find someone they can trust, so that they can go further for business.

In addition, new Chinese migrants, no matter whether medium-sized investors, traders, or entrepreneurs, try to extend their social connections into “peer to peer” ties with Thai friends in Thailand. For new Chinese migrants, these Thai friends are either ethnic Chinese with Thai citizenship or local people who become their close friends. For example, the ethnic Chinese with Thai citizenship who become their Thai peers may agree to help oversee the business in Mae Sai. They may assist new Chinese migrants to find land, cars, and house property and to obtain official land registration certificates. In other words, Thai peers may take care of official documentation and procedures while the Chinese peers provide the financial

support. To set up such an arrangement, both sides must have a high level of trust in each other. In certain cases, small and medium-sized Chinese traders will set up temporary shops for five–six months to import and export seasonal agricultural products. They will find a Thai representative through the Chinese peer network and/or a Chinese-Thai person who can facilitate low-cost trade and business. A Chinese-Thai or Chinese person who migrated into Thailand earlier often becomes a business agent to facilitate their business.

Apart from these networks of relatives and friends, another popular *guanxi* strategy for male Xinyimin is to marry Thai women. Such marriages allows young Chinese men to build a new network of relationships to facilitate trade and banking, to establish and implement transactions with Thai companies, and to invest in land and property with official registration documentation. From our fieldwork, we found the marriage strategy is pursued in two ways: with normal marriages and “fake” marriages that are set up solely for business purposes. In some cases, a Chinese man and a Thai woman (usually a descendent of Yunnanese Chinese living in nearby Chiang Sean or Mae Sai) fall into a normal marriage, and they are successful in continuing their family in Thailand. Unsuccessful marriages between couples often occur and end in divorce. The other marriage form is fake marriage, which is arranged to build a new border *guanxi* network to facilitate business and investment. A new Chinese male migrant may find a Thai woman to sign up for marriage registration certificate, and that woman becomes his representative for official contracts and documents. This kind of marriage has benefits for both sides, but at the same time it carries risks. A male migrant may be cheated with fake documentation and lose his investment if his wife runs away. The woman with Thai citizenship who marries a new Chinese migrant may incur debt obligations in years to come if his businesses fail.

Information from our fieldwork also illustrates a kind of “border *guanxi*” that is at work with Chinese associations in Mae Sai. There are two main Chinese associations in Mae Sai that were established by older waves of ethnic Chinese migrants including (1) Chinese subethnic groups of Teochiu, Hakka, and Hainanese<sup>33</sup> of northern Thailand; and (2) Yunnanese Chinese. The first association is the Guang Meng Foundation which was established by ethnic Teochiu, Hakka and Hainanese whose ancestors migrated via oversea routes during the past decades. The other association is the “Yunnanese-Chinese Association of Chiang Rai,” which was established by Yunnanese Chinese in 1981 by Hui and Han people who traveled into Thailand via overland routes.

As their presidents observed, both Chinese associations provide as much assistance to new Chinese migrants as they can. Many Chinese migrants have visited the associations over the past few years, asking for favors and for information about Thai laws, rules, and obligations for foreigners living and working in Thailand. The associations normally provide information about visa application procedures, and both formal and informal ways of obtaining a nonimmigrant visa for long-term stay. They recommend migrants to visit the Chinese consulate in Chiang Mai. Some cases illustrate a form of *guanxi* system involving Chinese institutions. For example, Chinese associations have helped some Chinese middle-aged persons who aim to settle longer in Mae Sai by introducing them to local Thai officials so that they

can develop informal connections with these influential people. For some volunteers who want to teach Chinese courses outside of school, the Chinese associations assist them by giving them recommendation letters to get work permits and to apply for nonimmigrant visas. The Chinese associations sometimes help young Chinese migrants to get a nonimmigrant visa or student visa regardless of their real purpose of staying in the country. For example, the staff members at the Chinese associations who have contacts with travel agencies in Bangkok or Chiang Rai, or with educational institutions in Chiang Rai, provide these connection to help migrants apply for student visas. Regarding this tactic, some young Chinese migrants need to register for an undergraduate program or vocational program with a Thai college where the association provides the connection, no matter whether they are really studying in the program or not.

### ***Border guanxi: The Competing Influence of the PRC and Taiwan in the Borderland***

Conceptually, *guanxi* systems in institutionalized level, particularly between the PRC governments and other developing countries, can be seen through a model of “development gift” from China to foreign “friend countries.” Manynooch<sup>34</sup> explores the mission and the role that Chinese youth volunteers play in Lao communities. She found that the presence of computer technicians, consultants, sports coaches, Chinese medical doctors, advisors, and Chinese-language teachers at various government offices not only serves a diplomatic function, but also represents a “development gift,” symbolic of growing “friendship” and “respect” between China and Laos.

From the perspective of China and Chinese people, these Chinese youth volunteers represent a “development gift” that China pursues through a campaign of growing “friendship” with other countries, which is emphasized in Chinese mass media. As a result, the Chinese volunteers, entrepreneurs, and other Chinese migrants who leave mainland China for developing countries view themselves as agents of Chinese development, helping the poor in the name of the nation. Nyiri suggests that the PRC government has changed its international role from aid recipient to aid donor by exporting its “civilizing mission” through entrepreneurs and Chinese migrants. Nyiri argues that China’s aid donor role is intended to bring political and economic benefits and reciprocity.<sup>35</sup>

Apart from the interpersonal networking and other *guanxi* practices in Mae Sai, *guanxi* systems in institutionalized level can be seen through the model of “development gift” from the PRC and Taiwan governments, to different Chinese associations in Mae Sai. Foreign assistance of this sort expresses Chinese generosity and the desire to cultivate *guanxi*, a connection based on friendship in order to reconnect with *Huaqiao*, the oversea Chinese outside China and Taiwan. In Mae Sai, the “development gift” practice of sending Chinese youth volunteers to teach in local Chinese schools is expressed through cooperation among the local Chinese associations (both the Guang Meng foundation and Yunnanese Chinese association), the PRC government, and Taiwan’s government. For example, both governments offers donation and charity in various sectors: technical support, training, Chinese



volunteers in Chinese-language educational institutes, sport. Information from the fieldwork suggests that a “development gift” demonstrates multiple layers of Chinese influence in the eyes of the locals and both old and new Chinese migrants. On one level, the practice shows China’s strength in resources and development, which elicits the gift receivers’ respect. On another level, the assistance in times of need implies sincere friendship among those involved.

Historically, in Mae Sai where Yunnanese Chinese communities have established for many decades, Taiwan’s government and several Taiwanese donors have long played their important roles in donation, charity, and social service for the Yunnanese Chinese in the border area. Although the practices of making a “development gift” from Taiwanese are in a smaller scale, the donation practices always have consistency due to the request from Yunnanese Chinese communities living in Thailand for many decades. Recently, the PRC government has offered “development gift,” providing education facilities, text books, scholarship to Yunnanese Chinese communities in the border area. This kind of donation and charity extended from the PRC to the border areas reveals another layer of influence at the border: the PRC influence challenges over Yunnanese Chinese who have long-standing ethnic and social connections and political ideas toward Taiwan.

In terms of the different Chinese influence over Yunnanese Chinese in Mae Sai, it needs to understand the historical backgrounds of the two main Chinese associations in Mae Sai. They differ prominently in terms of their members’ ethnic sub-groups and political experiences, specifically concerning the Kuomintang (KMT) experience after the communist expansion in China in the 1950s. As mentioned earlier, the first Chinese association in Mae Sai is the “Guang Meng Foundation,” which includes ethnic Chinese groups of Teochiu, Hakka, and Hainanese. The association was established by a group of wealthy Sino-Thai who migrated from coastal areas of Fujian and Guangdong by sea during the mid-twentieth to settle in northern Thailand. The other association is the “Yunnanese Chinese Association of Chiang Rai,” which was established in 1981 by Yunnanese settlers, especially the former KMT general named Chen Mo Xiu or Charoen Priddepot (in Thai), who was the former general of the Third and Fifth KMT Armies, and the former chief of the Thai Volunteer Self-Defense Forces, which helped the Thai government fight communism along the northern border in the 1970s.

Generally, both associations aim to improve the quality of life in the border area, through providing education, health related services, and social relief. However, the main objectives of the “Yunnanese-Chinese Association of Chiang Rai” are to provide general assistance to Yunnanese Chinese in Chiang Rai, particularly those who are from families of the Chinese Nationalist Army (KMT) troops who escaped through Myanmar into Thailand. The main members of the association are Yunnanese Chinese immigrants who settled in 56 villages in Chiang Rai province, but the association is open to new members of Yunnanese Chinese outside Chiang Rai as well.

Believing that education is a gateway for improving quality of life as well as preserving Chinese language and cultures, both associations focus their charitable activities on building and managing schools for ethnic Chinese children. The Guang Meng Foundation invested over 30 million Baht in the “Guang Meng Hua Qiao”

private school established in 2007. Today, the Guang Meng Hua Qiao School has over 30 ethnic Chinese teachers, including registered and volunteer teachers from PRC China. The school teaches Chinese language using the Mainland Mandarin writing system for approximately five hundred students. The students are children and descendants of Chinese immigrants who settled in Chiang Rai and nearby provinces, as well as Chinese children living in Myanmar. The latter group goes back and forth across the Thai- Myanmar border everyday to study at the school. Chinese-language education in the border area has expanded during the past decade because mainland Mandarin has become one of the most common languages used in the growing business sectors, in this area and throughout Thailand, for trading, business, and tourism. The “Guang Meng Hua Qiao” school recently extended its education program to include boarding services, and claims to draw in Chinese children who live in Bangkok and other urban areas. The school also accommodates students’ parents who visit their children during summer vacation or on weekends.

While the “Guang Meng Hua Qiao” school was established to provide Chinese-language education using the simplified characters of the writing system used in mainland China, the “Yunnanese Chinese Association of Chiang Rai” established two private schools to teach Taiwanese Mandarin using the traditional Chinese characters used in Taiwan. The first school is the “Mae Sai Vocational Training School,” established in 1996 in Baan Tam village, which is one of the 56 villages in Chiang Rai where Yunnanese KMT soldiers and their families settled after 1949. The idea to build a Chinese school came from a committee of older villagers who wanted to provide a better education to their children to maintain Chinese language and the Taiwanese writing system and culture. This school teaches in Taiwanese Mandarin at the primary, secondary, and high school levels, and has recently extended up to college level. The school also offers courses in business computing and commercial accounting. The other school is the “Wai Win” School, which was founded in 1999 to give educational support for Yunnanese Chinese descendants living in the Mae Sai municipality. The school teaches in Taiwanese Mandarin from kindergarten level to junior high school. Courses are offered in the daytime for younger students, and in the evening or during summer for adult learners. There are around nine hundred students who come from downtown Mae Sai and nearby areas. There are around twenty-five teachers who graduated from the higher education system in Taiwan, or from this school. These two schools are run by the “Yunnanese Chinese Association of Chiang Rai” and are supported financially by Taiwanese donors, including Taiwan’s government and some Taiwanese Foundations.

Like the Yunnanese Chinese Association of Chiang Rai has a close relationship with the Taiwanese government, the Guang Meng Foundation has a very good connection with the PRC government. The strong relationship is evident in the assistance offered by the PRC Consulate in Chiang Mai to support education and other charitable activities. Recently, the PRC Consulate in Chiang Mai provided Chinese textbooks, computers, and scholarships to the school. Moreover, as requested by the Guang Meng School, 20 Chinese youth volunteers were recently sent by the *Qiaoban*, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Bureau in China, to teach several subjects in Mainland Mandarin writing system. The Guang Meng school and the Qiaoban office agree in their joint assistance program for border education to pay half and

half of the salaries for each volunteer. In the coming years, the Guang Meng School will add another building to support its education mission in response to an increasing demand for these services by ethnic Chinese and other people who live at the border, in nearby provinces, in Bangkok, or on the Myanmar side.

It is important to note that the expansion of Chinese education in the border area sheds light on the growing desires of ethnic Chinese in northern Thailand. For a local point of view, education meets a need for "border development" with the open China and its rising future spreading in the border. While the Guang Meng Foundation has a strong connection with the PRC government, the Yunnanese Chinese Association of Chiang Rai and the Yunnanese Chinese in the border area only receive assistance from Taiwan's government and Taiwanese peoples' networks.

Amid the strong social connections to both Chinese governments, the bitter history over the past 50 years between the Taiwanese and PRC governments is reflected today in the "development gifts" and charitable donations to different ethnic Chinese groups at the border. Looking at the development gifts provided by the PRC government and Taiwan's government to ethnic Chinese in Mae Sai, we see the two governments helping the ethnic Chinese of their own networks in a competing fashion in an attempt to gain influence over ethnic Chinese and Yunnanese Chinese in particular.

It is significant to claim that the PRC government has made an effort to gain influence over the Yunnanese Chinese, especially those who have a close relationship with Taiwan's government, by offering assistance and development gifts to the Yunnanese Chinese Association. Recently, the Yunnan provincial government of the PRC China sent an official letter to the Yunnanese Chinese Association, offering to donate computers, laptops, textbooks, and youth volunteers to the two schools of the Yunnanese Chinese Association. But this offer from the PRC came with a condition that the two schools of the Yunnanese Chinese Association had to change their Chinese education system to the official Mainland Mandarin writing system. Instead of using the traditional characters of the Taiwan writing system, they were asked to use the simplified writing system used on the mainland. The offer was promptly rejected by the elder leaders of the Yunnanese Chinese Association, especially the elders committees, and the former soldiers who had bitter experiences with the political struggle against communism in China over the past five decades. The elder leaders of the Yunnanese Chinese Association could not accept the offer from the PRC because of their historical experience with Chinese communism and their political identification with "Taiwanese" as distinct from the PRC Chinese identity.

However, the offer from the PRC China engendered a big discussion among the older and young generations in the core leadership of the Yunnanese Chinese community in the border area. Questions were raised about when the bitter history would be resolved and what would be the best way forward for Yunnanese Chinese children and their society in the future. Some elder leaders said: "It is not the proper time since we are now alive and we still feel the pain and suffering," and some young leaders thought that "the proper time may be our next generation, after all elder leaders pass away."

The big discussion between the different age groups among the Yunnanese Chinese reveals their ethnic desires, which are deeply roots in their historical background, and their aspirations, which are different among generations. For the older members of the community, especially the former soldiers of the Chinese Nationalist Army's (KMT), the bad history and political unrest and suffering during this period have never been forgotten. But for the new generation of the Yunnanese Chinese in Mae Sai, their aspirations for success and future border development are linked to China's success, which they have been looking for.

### Conclusion

The Xinyimin Chinese migration into northern Thai border has increased prominently since 1990. The phenomenon has been stimulated by three main factors in economic and political contexts: (1) Chinese economic reform after 1980 caused an economic and social crisis in China with the result that urban to rural Chinese migrants changed their direction and began looking for new opportunities outside China. This factor was encouraged by a second factor, which is (2) the border opening policies and economic regionalization programs between China and mainland Southeast Asia. In addition (3), because of the foreign policy applied by the PRC government toward developing countries in Southeast Asia, the PRC government has sent Xinyimin to work as volunteers outside China. In this case study of Xinyimin in Mae Sai, we see that they come from different classes of southern China and have taken up important roles in commercial sectors in the border economy. Whether they are living temporarily or permanently in the border area, they rely on a "border guanxi" system, which operates on multiple levels and involves the use of different ethnic Chinese associations, networks, and relationships. Moreover, the situation of youth volunteers who are sent by the PRC government and Taiwan's government to teach ethnic Chinese in Mae Sai reveals the diverse influences of China and Taiwan in the area and their competition to serve the border ethnic Chinese people's contemporary desires and aspirations for their future.

### Notes

1. Throughout the chapter, I use the term "Burma" to refer to the country in its pre-1988 context and "Myanmar" in the period thereafter.
2. Yunnanese Chinese here refers to both Hui ethnic Yunnanese and the later Han ethnic Yunnanese who migrated into the northern Thai borderlands, the Hui in the nineteenth century and the Han in the mid-twentieth century. As Yunnanese in this area commonly migrated by land, they are often categorized as "overland Chinese" and are thus differentiated from those ethnic Chinese migrants who came to Thailand by sea. The Hui practiced long-distance caravan trading, using horses and mules to pass through Burma once or twice a year during the dry season. The Han are generally perceived to be ex-soldiers and supporters of the Chinese Nationalist Army (Kuomintang) who escaped from Yunnan into Thailand after the communist takeover of China in 1949. Nowadays, many descendants of those Hui soldier-traders live in the northern cities of Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai. Yunnanese Chinese who live in these mountainous areas have played key roles in trade, commonly serving as intermediaries in the trade of opium and daily

- items with hilltribe peoples. See Wang Liulan, "Hui Yunnanese Migratory History in Relation to the Han Yunnanese and Ethnic Resurgence in Northern Thailand," *Southeast Asian Studies* 44, no. 3 (2006): 337–358; Wen-Chin Chang, "Beyond the Military: The Complex Migration and Resettlement of the KMT Yunnanese Chinese in Northern Thailand," PhD thesis, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1999.
3. See Suthep Soonthornpasuch, "Islamic Identity in Chiang Mai City: A Historical and Structural Comparison of Two Communities," PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1977; Ann Maxwell Hill, *Merchants and Migrants: Ethnicity and Trade among Yunnanese Chinese in Southeast Asia* (Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1998), 33–62; A. Forbes, *The Haw—Traders of the Golden Triangle* (Chiang Mai: Teak House, 1997).
  4. The GMS represents a program of subregional economic cooperation initiated in 1992 under the auspices of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and subsidiary donors. The GMS region covers 2.6 million square kilometers and comprises a combined population of around 326 million people from Cambodia, China (specifically Yunnan province and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.
  5. See Aranya Siriphon, *Poo Ka Jin Nai Chai Dan Lum Nam Khong* (in Thai) (Chinese traders in Mekong border) (Chiang Mai: Thailand Research Fund (TRF), 2013), chapter 2; and Danielle Tan, "'Small Is Beautiful': Lessons from Laos for the Study of Chinese Overseas," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 41, no. 2 (2012): 61–94.
  6. See Guotu Zhuang, "Policies of the Chinese Government toward Overseas Chinese Since 1978," *China Area Studies Series*, no. 10 (Tokyo: Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture, Scientific Research in Priority Areas 113, Structural Changes in Contemporary China, 2000).
  7. See Guotu Zhuang, "New Chinese Migrants and Southeast Asian Chinese Culture," *Chinese Heritage Centre Bulletin* no. 8, Singapore: Chinese Heritage, 2007.
  8. See Pal Nyiri and Igor Saveliev, *Globalizing Chinese Migration: Trends in Europe and Asia* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002); Pal Nyiri, *Chinese in Russia and Eastern Europe: A Middleman Minority in a Transnational Era* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2007).
  9. Michel Witt and Gordon Redding, "China: Authoritarian Capitalism," INSEAD Working Paper No.2012/108/EPS/EFE, 2012, accessed on May 15, 2013, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2171651>.
  10. See Nyiri and Saveliev, *Globalizing Chinese Migration*; Nyiri, *Chinese in Russia and Eastern Europe*; Carine Gurassimoff, "China and New Chinese Migrants in Europe," *Migrations Societies* vol. 15 (2000), retrieved May 15, 2013, <http://www.empowerment-migration.net/spip.php?article>.
  11. Giles Mohan and Kale Dinar, "The Invisible Hand of South-South Globalisation: Chinese Migrants in Africa," a Report for the Rockefeller Foundation prepared by the Development Policy and Practice Department, The Open University, UK, 2007.
  12. Giles Mohan and May Tan-Mullins, "Chinese Migrants in Africa as New Agents of Development? An Analytical Framework," *European Journal of Development Research* 21, no. 4 (2009): 588–605; Tan, "'Small Is Beautiful,'" 61–94.
  13. Teresita Ang Sec, "Influx of New Chinese Immigrants to the Philippines: Problems and Challenges," paper presented at the International Conference Quezon City, October, 21–22, 2005.
  14. See Guotu Zhuang and Wang Wangbo, "Migration and Trade: Role of Overseas Chinese," *International Journal of Chinese Studies* 1, no. 1 (2010): 174–193.
  15. Pal Nyiri, "From Class Enemies to Patriots: Overseas Chinese and Emigration Policy and Discourse in the People's Republic of China," in *Globalizing Chinese Migration: Trends in Europe and Asia*, ed. Pál Nyíri and Igor Saveliev (Aldershot; Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2002), 208–241.
  16. See William Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1957); Richard Coughlin, *Double Identity: The Chinese in Modern Thailand* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960); Disaphol Chansiri, *The Chinese Émigrés of Thailand in the Twentieth Century* (Youngstown, NY: Cambria Press, 2008).
  17. Teochiu is sometimes written: Chiuchow, Tiochui, Twechew, and Chaochow.
  18. See Chansiri, *The Chinese Émigrés of Thailand in the Twentieth Century*, 30–36.
  19. Kam Chan, Ta Liu, and Yunyan Yang, "Hukou and Non-hukou Migrations in China: Comparisons and Contrasts," *International Journal of Population Geography* 5 (1999): 425–448.
  20. See Anonymous, "Unemployment in China," in *China Labour Bulletin*, accessed on May 15, 2013, <http://www.clb.org.hk/en/content/unemployment-china-0>, 2007.
  21. See Grant Evans, Chris Hutton, and Kuah Khun Eng, *Where China Meets Southeast Asia: Social and Cultural Change in the Border Region* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), 2000).
  22. Thomas Lum and Wayne M. Morrison, China's "Soft Power" in Southeast Asia paper prepared for members and committees of Congress (Congressional Research Service—CRS report for Congress), 2008.
  23. See June Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions: Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); Steven Harrell, "Introduction: Civilizing Project and the Reaction to Them," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Steven Harrell (Seattle and Washington: University of Washington Press, 1995), 3–36; Susan Blum, *Portraits of "Primitives": Ordering Human Kinds in the Chinese Nation* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Mette Halskov Hansen, *Frontier People: Han Settlers in Minority Areas of China* (London: Hurst & Co.; Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005).
  24. See Guotu Zhuang and Wang Wangbo, "Migration and Trade," 174–193.
  25. Some Chinese medium-sized investors buy land and housing property in the border by registering these properties through a Thai nominee whom they can trust. This tactic is basically against Thai land law, which restricts foreigners from owning land in Thailand.
  26. As mentioned in their web site, *Hanban*, Confucius Institute Headquarters is a public institution affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education. See more detail in <http://english.hanban.org/> (accessed on November 18, 2013). Hanban/Confucius Institute Headquarters is discussed by some Asian scholars who look at Hanban's association with the political agenda of increasing Chinese influence through Soft Power Diplomacy in PRC China. See more detail in the International Workshop on "Confucius Institutes in Asia and Beyond: Examining China's Soft Power Diplomacy," organized by Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, and Center for Asia Pacific Area Studies in Taiwan, on November 30, 2012.
  27. *Qiaoban* is the Chinese government's Overseas Chinese Affairs Bureau supported by the Chinese government to help develop the Overseas Chinese schools outside China. The assistance focuses on the overseas Chinese groups, and provides curricula and some textbooks, for Chinese-language study and for other subjects, such as mathematics, history, and geography. This is intended to unify the curricula of Chinese schools, to promote the simplified characters used in mainland China, and to support Chinese-language education overseas.

28. See Wen-Chin Chang, "Guanxi and Regulation in Networks: The Yunnanese Jade Trade between Burma and Thailand, 1962–88," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 35 no. 3 (2004): 482–483.
29. See Joel Kotkin, *Tribes: How Race, Religion and Identity Determine the Success in the New Global Economy* (New York: Random House, 1992).
30. See Robert Hefner, "Introduction: Society and Modernity in the New Asian Capitalism," in *Market Cultures: Society and Morality in the New Asian Capitalisms*, ed. Robert Hefner (Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 1–38; Robert Weller, "Divided Market Cultures in China: Gender, Enterprise, and Religion," in *Market Cultures: Society and Morality in the New Asian Capitalisms*, ed. Robert Hefner (Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 78–103.
31. Souchuo Yao, "The Cultural Limits of Confucian Capitalism," paper presented at the Conference on Chinese Business in Southeast Asia, Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, June 23–25, 1997.
32. Aihwa Ong, "Chinese Modernities: Narratives of Nation and of Capitalism," in *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*, ed. Aihwa Ong and Donald M. Nonini (New York: Routledge, 1997), 21–23.
33. About 90 percent of overseas Chinese in Mae Sai are Teochiu and Hakka Chinese descendants who migrated from Bangkok, Phayao, Phrae, Nan, and Lampang and are living in Mae Sai. A few families are Hainanese Chinese. These Chinese descendants have been living in Mae Sai for decades, doing cross-border business with Myanmar via Tachilek and Keng Tung.
34. Manynooch Faming, "Civilizing Mission and the Development Gift: Chinese Youth Volunteers in Laos," research paper for Regional Center for Social Sciences and Sustainable Development (RCSD), Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang mai University, 2012.
35. Pal Nyiri, "The Yellow Man's Burden: Chinese Migrants on a Civilizing Mission," *The China Journal*, no. 56 (2006): 83–106.

### Bibliography

- Ang See, Teresita. "Influx of New Chinese Immigrants to the Philippines: Problems and Challenges," Paper presented at the International Conference on Philippine-China Relations: Charting New Directions in a Changing Global Environment. Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila, Ortigas Center. Quezon City, October 21–22, 2005.
- Anonymous. "Unemployment in China." *China Labour Bulletin*, 2007. Accessed on May 15, 2013. <http://www.clb.org.hk/en/content/unemployment-china-0>.
- Aranya Siriphon. *Poo Ka Jin Nai Chai Dan Lum Nam Khong* (in Thai) (Chinese Traders in Mekong Border). Chiang Mai: Thailand Research Fund (TRF) and Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, 2013.
- Blum, S. D. *Portraits of "Primitives": Ordering Human Kinds in the Chinese Nation*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.
- Chan, Kam et al. "Hukou and Non-hukou Migrations in China: Comparisons and Contrasts." *International Journal of Population Geography* 5 (1999): 425–448.
- Chang, Wen-Chin. "From War Refugees to Immigrants: The Case of the KMT Yunnanese Chinese in Northern Thailand." *International Migration Review* 35, no. 4 (2001): 1086–1105.
- . "Guanxi and Regulation in Networks: The Yunnanese Jade Trade between Burma and Thailand, 1962–88." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 35, no. 3 (2004): 479–501.
- . "The Kuomintang Yunnanese Chinese of Northern Thailand." In *The Dynamic of Emerging Ethnicities*. Johan Leman, editor. 35–55. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998.

- Coughlin, Richard J. *Double Identity: The Chinese in Modern Thailand*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960.
- Disaphol Chansiri. *The Chinese Émigrés of Thailand in the Twentieth Century*. Youngstown, NY: Cambria Press, 2008.
- Dreyer, June. *China's Forty Millions: Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Evans, G, Chris Hutton, and Kuah Khun Eng. (Eds.). *Where China Meets Southeast Asia: Social and Cultural Change in the Border Region*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), 2000.
- Forbes, A. *The Haw—Traders of the Golden Triangle* (Chiang Mai: Teak House, 1997).
- Gomez, Edmund T. "Chinese Business Development in Malaysia: Networks, Entrepreneurship or Patronage?" In *Chinese Entrepreneurship and Asian Business Networks*. Thomas Menkhoff and Solvay Gerke, editors. 159–183. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Gurassimoff, Carine. "China and New Chinese Migrants in Europe." *Migrations Societies* 15 (2000). Retrieved May, 15, 2013. <http://www.empowermentmigration.net/spip.php?article81>.
- Hansen, M. *Frontier People: Han Settlers in Minority Areas of China*. London: Hurst & Co. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005.
- Harrell, Steven. "Introduction: Civilizing Project and the Reaction to Them." In *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*. Steven Harrell, editors. 3–36. Seattle and Washington: University of Washington Press, 1995.
- Hefner, Robert. "Introduction: Society and Modernity in the New Asian Capitalism" in *Market Cultures: Society and Morality in the New Asian Capitalisms* edited by Robert Hefner, 1–38. Oxford: Westview Press, 1998.
- Hill, Ann. *Maxwell. Merchants and Migrants: Ethnicity and Trade among Yunnanese Chinese in Southeast Asia*. Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1998.
- Kotkin, Joel. *Tribes: How Race, Religion and Identity Determine the Success in the New Global Economy*. New York: Random House, 1992.
- Lum, Thomas, and Wayne M. Morrison. "China's 'Soft Power' in Southeast Asia." Paper prepared for members and committees of Congress. Congressional Research Service—CRS report for Congress, 2008.
- Manynooch Faming. Civilizing mission and the development gift: Chinese Youth Volunteers in Laos. research paper for Regional Center for Social Sciences and Sustainable Development (RCSD), Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang mai University, 2012.
- Menkhoff, Thomas, and Solvay Gerke. (Eds). *Chinese Entrepreneurship and Asian Business Networks*. London/New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Mohan, Giles, and Dinar Kale. "The Invisible Hand of South-South Globalisation: Chinese Migrants in Africa." A Report for the Rockefeller Foundation prepared by The Development Policy and Practice Department, The Open University, United Kingdom, 2007.
- Mohan, Giles, and May Tan-Mullins. "Chinese Migrants in Africa as New Agents of Development? An Analytical Framework." *European Journal of Development Research* 21, no. 4 (2009): 588–605.
- Nyiri, Pal. *Chinese in Russia and Eastern Europe: A Middleman Minority in a Transnational Era*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2007.
- . "From Class Enemies to Patriots: Overseas Chinese and Emigration Policy and Discourse in the People's Republic of China." In *Globalizing Chinese Migration: Trends in Europe and Asia*. Pál Nyiri and Igor Saveliev, editors. 208–241. Aldershot; Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2002.

- . "Investors, Managers, Brokers, and Culture Workers: How the 'New' Chinese Are Changing the Meaning of Chineseness in Cambodia." *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 4 September 2012. Retrieved January 2014. <http://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-4>.
- . "The Yellow Man's Burden: Chinese Migrants on a Civilizing Mission." *The China Journal* no. 56 (2006): 83–106.
- Nyiri, Pal, and I. R. Saveliev. (Eds.). *Globalizing Chinese Migration: Trends in Europe and Asia*. Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2002.
- Ong, Aihwa. "Chinese Modernities: Narratives of Nation and of Capitalism." In *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*. Aihwa Ong and Donald M. Nonini, editors. 171–202. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Redding, S. G. *The Spirit of Chinese Capitalism*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990.
- Skinner, G. William. *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1957.
- Solinger, Dorothy. "China's Floating Population: Implications for State and Society." In *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*. Roderick Mac Farquhar and Merle Goldman, editors. 1–45. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Suthep Soonthornpasuch. "Islamic Identity in Chiang Mai City: A Historical and Structural Comparison of Two Communities." PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1977.
- Tan, Danielle. "'Small Is Beautiful': Lessons from Laos for the Study of Chinese Overseas." *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 41, no. 2 (2012): 61–94.
- Weller, Robert P. "Divided Market Cultures in China: Gender, Enterprise, and Religion." In *Market Cultures: Society and Morality in the New Asian Capitalisms*. Robert Hefner, editor. 78–103. Oxford: Westview Press, 1998.
- Witt, M., and G. Redding. "China: Authoritarian Capitalism." INSEAD Working Paper No.2012/108/EPS/EFE, 2012. Retrieved May 15, 2013. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2171651>, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2171651>.
- Yao, S. "The Cultural Limits of Confucian Capitalism." Paper presented at the Conference on Chinese Business in Southeast Asia, Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, June 23–25, 1997.
- Yeung, Henry Wai-chung. *Chinese Capitalism in a Global Era: Towards Hybrid Capitalism*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Zhuang, Guotu. "New Chinese Migrants and Southeast Asian Chinese Culture." *Chinese Heritage Centre Bulletin* No. 8. Singapore: Chinese Heritage, 2007.
- . "Policies of the Chinese Government toward Overseas Chinese Since 1978," China Area Studies Series. No. 10. Tokyo: Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture, Scientific Research in Priority Areas 113, Structural Changes in Contemporary China, 2000.
- Zhuang Guotu, and Wang Wangbo. "Migration and Trade: Role of Overseas Chinese." *International Journal of Chinese Studies* 1, no. 1 (January 2010): 174–193.

## CHAPTER 6

# China-Myanmar: Toward a More Balanced and Better Neighborhood

*Khine Tun*

### Introduction

China and Myanmar have had a number of remarkable interactions over centuries. The first description of a China-Myanmar relationship is found in the first Myanmar Empire of Bagan Dynasty in the thirteenth century. The exchange of China's silks with Myanmar's jade and spices was a common people-to-people connection. However, wars between the two countries were a notable element in the historic relationship during the age of Myanmar kingdoms.

More friendship than rivalry was achieved after they gained the status of independent countries in the late 1940s although economic ties were not significant. The strategic relationship began after 1988 when there was a military coup in Myanmar. The crackdown on democratic allies and the creation of a dictatorship resulted in political and economic sanctions of Western countries. The pressure of outside entities strengthened the two countries' connection and then enhanced the influence of China on Myanmar. Economic, political, and social dominance of China brought both opportunities and threats to Myanmar.

The transition from military rule to civilian administration in 2011 seemed to alter the China-Myanmar relationship. At the request of Myanmar people, the president announced the postponement of dam construction for the Chinese hydropower project on the Ayeyarwaddy river. While some tension resulted from termination of the project, the democratic reform of Myanmar was welcomed by the international community. The support for the stability and development of Myanmar has changed from a unilateral source to