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Bridging Hmong/Miao, Extending *Miaojiang*: Divided Space, Translocal Contacts, and the Imagination of Hmongland

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Abstract: Over the past several decades, the Hmong communities scattered around the world and their co-ethnic Miao ethnic group in China came into close contact. This paper explores the nature and dynamics of this encounter as well as the connections and ties that have been rediscovered and reestablished between the Hmong in diaspora and the Miao in China, two groups long separated by time and distance, and the impact and implications this entails. Based on three-month fieldwork in the Hmong/Miao communities across Southwest China and Southeast Asia, this paper examines the ever increasing movement of people and materials, as well as symbolic flows on the one hand, and connections and linkages between different localities on the other hand. It discusses how this new fast-changing development contributes to a new translocal imagination of Hmong community, re-territorialization of a new continuous Hmong space, a Hmongland encompassing Southwest provinces of China and northern part of Southeast Asian countries, and what it means to the Hmong/Miao people in the region. It further discusses how the emerging translocal imagination of the Hmong/Miao community will produce unique translocal subjects and how it interacts with the nation-states they belong to.

Keywords: translocality, Hmong/Miao encounter, Hmong corridor, *Miaojiang*, Hmongland

Introduction

The Hmong/Miao is a people with "a history punctured by struggle and migration" (Yang 1990, 3). After discussing the migration history of the Miao in China over thousands of years, in his book, *Migrants of the Mountains*, Australian scholar William Geddes (1976) draws a comparison between the Miao in the East and the Jew in the West and marvels that, "the preservation by the Miao of their ethnic identity for such a long time despite their being split into many small groups surrounded by different alien peoples and scattered over a vast geographical area is an outstanding record paralleling in some ways that of the Jews but more remarkable because they lacked the unifying forces of literacy and a doctrinal religion and because the cultural features that preserved seem to be more numerous" (p. 10).

As one of the oldest aboriginal groups native to China, with a remarkable history of migration, the Miao is now the fifth largest ethnic group among 56 officially recognized nationalities (*minzu*) in China. According to Shi Chaojiang (2006), a Chinese Miao scholar, there have been five major waves of Miao migration in history. Due to wars, oppression, natural disasters, and the search for new space for survival, the Miao moved internally from the North to the South, from Central China to Southwest China. Now the majority of the Miao can be found in South Central and Southwest provinces of Hunan, Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan, with a total population close to 10 million, according to a 2010 national census.

The Miao is an extremely diverse group. Linguistically, it can be divided into three major dialect groups, to a large extent, mutually unintelligible, including Eastern Dialects (*Xiangxi* 湘西), Central Dialects (*Qiandong* 黔东) and Western Dialects (*Chuanqiandian* 川黔滇). They can be further divided into 7 sub-dialect groups and 18 vernaculars (*Miaozu Jianshi* 1985; Li, Zhang, and Zhou 1996). However, the Hmong overseas, as Xiong and Yang (2010) state, is just a branch of the Miao, a subgroup that is the most widely dispersed among all Miao groups, with a population between 4 to 5 million around the world, most of them still living in Southwest China. "The so-called Hmong in actuality comprise all those Miao who call themselves Hmong or Mong and whose speech is mutually intelligible to one another. In terms of linguistic affiliation, the Hmong are the Miao who speak the Sichuan-Guizhou-Yunnan (*Chuanqiandian* 川黔滇次方言) sub-dialect of the Sichuan-Guizhou-Yunnan (*Chuanqiandian* 川黔滇) dialect of the Miao language."

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As Geddes (1976) indicates, the date of the Hmong first arrival into Southeast Asia is uncertain, "most writers believe it to have been within comparatively recent times – not much less than 200 years and probably not more than 400 years ago" (p. 27). However, a Miao scholar from China, Shi Chaojiang (1995, 2006) believes that sporadic migration into mainland Southeast Asia dates back about 700 years to the early Ming dynasty, a time when the border was not fixed, under the traditional Chinese tributary system. "Until the nineteenth century, relations between China and Southeast Asia were conducted in accordance with what has come to be known as the 'tribute system'" (Stuart-Fox 2003, 2). Nonetheless, in the last two hundred years, before the modern nation-states were fully established, groups of Miao moved further south, settled in the remote mountain hilltops in present-day Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Burma (Myanmar), in order to escape the Qing dynasty oppression and natural disasters, especially after several failed rebellions against the Manchu government in 1700s and 1800s. After the Vietnam War and the Secret War in Laos ended in 1975, some of the Hmong in Laos who supported American CIA operations during the war, out of fear of retaliation, were forced to move further away. About 130,000 Hmong crossed the Mekong River and fled Laos to refugee camps in Thailand. Later they again went on a long distance migration, this time from Asia to the West. Nowadays, they can be found in diaspora in many parts of the world, including the US, Australia, Argentina, Canada, Germany, France and French Guyana.

After living in spatially confined and geographically isolated localities for generations, many Hmong dispersed in diaspora overseas, especially in the West, started "tracing the path of the ancestors" (Yang 2005) and family roots: to refugee camps in Thailand, to mountain villages in Laos and Vietnam, and finally to China, a land where their ancestors once lived. The Hmong in the West ignited a whole movement connecting various Hmong communities in the West, in Southeast Asia, and in Southwest China. This is a journey through space and back in time. It is where the Hmong from the diaspora and the Miao in China finally met. The Miao, once one of the subnational minority groups in China, is gradually taking on a supranational character.

What does this encounter mean to the Hmong in diaspora and the Miao in China? Schein (2004)'s transnationality study on "identity exchanges" between the Hmong and the Miao across the Pacific sheds lights on cultural production and consumption of videos and costumes as well as the movement of people, between these two co-ethnics, the Hmong in America and the Miao in China. She argues that, their transnational identification forged through cultural production and what she has called "identity exchanges" could be "for Hmong and Miao a means not only to reconnect but simultaneously to circumvent marginalization within their respective states." However, I want to further explore the relationship between the Miao in China and the Hmong in diaspora, especially in Southeast Asia. With the Miao transforming from a subnational minority group in China into a supranational ethnic group, how does that change the nature of relations between Miao/Hmong and the respective nation-states? Is the role of nation-state fading to the background? How do the multiple displaced and multiple staged Hmong migration experiences change the dynamics of this connectivity between their ancestral land and various diasporas? Is an overarching common Hmong/Miao identity emerging and a global Hmong/Miao solidarity possible?

Following what Schein (2004) proposed as an "itinerant ethnography" – that is of "multi-sited and episodic," and "follow cultural products and events around the global, and often to settle for their discursive traces in anecdote or written account" – I conducted a three-month fieldwork in Southwest China and Southeast Asia. Clifford (1997, 19) criticizes anthropologists who "traditionally" sited themselves in villages, focusing on and emphasizing only the "localized" culture while failing to pay attention to the ways in which the villages were linked to the wider world beyond their borders. Therefore, an itinerant ethnography and a multi-sited approach are appropriate choices for studying what I will later discuss as translocality of Hmong/Miao. Participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups together with local archival research were employed in this study.

The fieldwork started in Guizhou province, where the majority of the Miao in China live. I visited the Miao New Year celebration in Leishan, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province, a place belonging to the Central Miao dialect region aiming to become the Miao cultural center in China (Figure 1). From there, I traveled west to Wenshan, Yunnan Province, an important site on the Miao migration route to Southeast Asia, located in the Western Miao dialect region. In Southeast Asia, I visited important Hmong communities in Chiang Mai and Patchaboon provinces in Northern Thailand; From Thailand, I crossed the border at Nong Khai into Laos, visited Hmong villages in Xieng Khouang, Luang Prabang, and Vientiane provinces. In Vietnam I visited the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology in the capital city of Hanoi, as well as

Figure 1: Xijiang Miao Villiage, in Guizhou.

Hmong villages in Pha Long and Sapa in Lao Cai Province close to the China and Vietnam border. This research trip is a condensed journey, connecting me directly with a long (in both a spatial and temporal sense) Hmong migration history and migration experiences along the route.

Miaojiang, Corridors, and Hmong Mountains

The Miao have been living in Southern China, in West Hunan and the bordering area of Hunan and Guizhou since the Spring and Autumn period (774BC-476BC) and the Warring States period (475BC-221BC). Until the Yuan 1271–1368 and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties, this area formed a relatively stable and concentrated area inhabited by the Miao, an area surrounding the La'er Mountain, historically, called "*Miaojiang* (苗疆, or Miao territory or Miao frontier)" (Wu 2003). In the Qing Dynasty, "*Miaojiang*" signifies two areas with a heavy Miao concentration: one West Hunan and Northeast Guizhou, the other Southeast Guizhou (Zhang and Wang 1981, 64). However, "*Miaojiang*" in a broader sense, means a large area in South and Southwest China where many minority groups live, including Miao (Li and Tan 2009).

As early as the late 1970s and early 1980s, Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiaotong (1980) proposed an "ethnic corridor" concept to study ethnic formation, contacts, amalgamation, and changes among different ethnic groups by looking at historical and cultural deposits holistically and dynamically in those "historically ethnic regions." Based on Fei's idea, Li (1995) defines ethnic corridor as "routes that some ethnic groups follow certain natural environment, like river courses and mountain ranges for a long period of time, to move and migrate." Along the same line, Yang Zhiqiang, a Miao anthropologist from Guizhou proposed a concept of an "ancient *Miaojiang* corridor," an ancient trade route linking the Central Plain to Southwest borderland, to study the interaction between state power and local ethnic groups along the trade route. This trade route, from present-day Changde in Hunan to Kunming in Yunnan, was first opened in the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368); it was heavily garrisoned in the Ming and Qing Dynasties which followed. Several scholars (Yang, Zhang, & Cao 2012; Cao 2012) link this road to nationalization of Southwest China. However, since the Miao continued migrating south from Guizhou, via Yunnan, to Southeast Asian countries, this migration route outside of China to Vietnam, northern Laos and Burma actually forms another ethnic corridor, I would call it a "Hmong corridor," along which many Hmong communities still reside.

Over the past two decades a significant amount of study has been done on transnationality of the Hmong/Miao. However, transnationality is not really a new phenomenon for the Hmong/Miao and other ethnic groups living in the area. They have been living on both sides of the borders between China and other Southeast Asian countries for centuries, long before the national borders were demarcated and nation-states fully established near the end of the nineteenth century. The Hmong living along the borders knew their relatives and kin were living on the other side of the border, sometimes even living in the same locality, separated by an invisible border. During times of peace, people on both sides crossed borders and visited each other regularly. During times of tension or conflict, people kept minimal ties or totally lost contact with each other – sometimes even fighting one another from different camps for different nation-states.

The situation of transnationality is however, compounded with a localized isolation in its own locality. The reality of Hmong modern geographic division goes beyond national borders, which as Lee (2015, 21) argued, "impeded the conception of a kingdom as a contiguous, expansive territory." She observes that, "in twentieth-century China and Southeast Asia, the Hmong lived above certain elevations, scattered between different ethnic groups that occupied the lowlands. These pockets of Hmong on mountaintops formed isolated islands amid lower-lying oceans of other ethnicities." Mottin (1980) also finds that while Hmong live among various ethnic groups, "the different ethnic groups are to be found established at very different but precise heights, ...at the highest altitudes for the people of these regions, between 1,000 and 2,000 meters if it is possible, live the Hmong" (p. 10).

Nevertheless, the area where the Hmong live stretches from Southwest China to Southeast Asian countries, and is physically located in the large geographical space what James Scott (2009) described as "Zomia," the Southeast Asian mainland massif. Tomforde (2006) points out that, this area is perceived by Hmong as one continuous space, "the Hmong Mountains" (*Hmoob ntshuab roob*), a cognitive concept, which geographically includes the mountains of South China, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Burma. At times it might also include other (partly lowland) regions of current Hmong settlement in, for example, Australia, France, North America and French Guyana (Tomforde 2006, 14–15). Tomforde further explains that the concept of the Hmong Mountains demonstrates that the Hmong spatially constitute their own life world in a manner that permits the maintenance of cultural identity in spite of their stateless, legally landless, and fluid society. In the same vein, Tapp and Cohn (2003, 13) propose the idea of a "Hmong world", a culturally constituted realm of social practice. This is what Anderson (1991) defines as "imagined community," a nation as a deterritorialized community that is socially constructed and detached from a specific physical locality.

In reality the Hmong live in a space divided by various national borders. The border between China and Vietnam and between China and Laos were not clearly demarcated, but flexible and murky, under the traditional imperial Chinese tributary system and the "*Tianxia*" (天下) system until 1885 and 1895, respectively, when China and France signed treaties for both borders. From 1886 to 1897, China and France delineated the land border between China and Vietnam, erecting over 300 boundary stone marks (Li and Qi 2008). In a sense, rather than the Hmong crossing borders, Leepreecha (2014, 1) argues that, "it is the political, social, and legal borders that have cut across the Hmong people and subjected them to be citizens of different modern nation-states. Even in the present time, these borders still, and continuously, play important roles that cross and divide the Hmong people into distinctive subgroups and fragments." Shi Maoming (2004, 79), a Miao scholar from Beijing holds a similar idea, stating "some border-crossing ethnic groups were actually made by 'border demarcation', and it is the state power thousands miles away that determined the fate of these groups."

A modern nation-state keeps fixed borders to claim its sovereignty within. However, the border is a site where the state maintains power and where the international migrants challenge it. As Clifford (1994, 304) argues, a border is a site of regulated and subversive crossing. The nation-state, as common territory and time, is traversed and, to varying degrees, subverted by diaspora attachments (Clifford 1994, 307).

Border in between: Open and Closed

When I was traveling in Southern China and Southeast Asian countries, one of the impressions I had is that the border was not always impervious. The Hmong people could easily move back and forth across the borders, especially fifty or sixty years ago. In Xieng Khuang province, Laos, I visited my informant Yang and the family of her parents. They took me to the border gate at Nong Het, between Vietnam and Laos, an area heavily populated by the Hmong. Yang's mother, who was born in Vietnam, told us how she and her husband packed all of their belongings, goaded their cattle along the road, and crossed the pass from Vietnam to Laos, and settled in a village near the border. They moved back to Vietnam during the war and returned to Laos after the war. However, the border pass is now much more tightly controlled, and it is hard for people to travel without a permit, let alone move a whole family.

Similarly, I encountered many stories about Hmong crossing the borders between China and Vietnam in the 1950s and the 1960s, up to the 1970s. One Hmong scholar in Wenshan told me that during the 1950s his family moved to Vietnam to live with his relatives because of food shortages in China during the years of the Great Leap Forward and the resulting famine. He was born in Vietnam and in the 1960s his whole family returned there. During the Sino-Vietnamese War in late the 1970s, some of the Hmong fled to China as refugees, and the Chinese government set up several farms in Yunnan for them to settle – temporarily. One of these refugees is a famous Hmong singer in China, who finally got her Chinese citizenship a few years ago. One of my Hmong colleagues from Thailand told me her family story: when her great grandfather and his two other brothers moved out China, one went to Vietnam and the others moved on to Laos. Fortunately they finally found their relatives in Vietnam.

In the 1970s, the borders tightened again. The Miao in China generally had little knowledge of the Hmong living in other countries, other than the Miao/Hmong people living along the borders. There were only a few anecdotal reports and very few translated articles about the Hmong living in other Southeast Asian countries at that time. The situation didn't change until the 1980s, when China saw an influx of Hmong overseas from America, France, and Australia visiting China. Father Yves Bertrais, a Roman Catholic missionary, who, together with others, invented the Hmong RPA script (Roman Popular Alphabet), went to China in 1984. He brought 5 volumes of Hmong RPA books to the

Southeast Asia Minority Institute at Yunnan University. The following year Yon Yia Yang, a Hmong refugee from Laos taught RPA to scholars and selected students from around Yunnan. One of them is Zhang Yuanqi (Chij Tsab), a Hmong cultural expert from Wenshan, Yunnan whom I interviewed. According to him, after Father Yves Bertrais returned to French Guyana where he lived with a small Hmong community, he regularly mailed *Liaj Luv Chaw Tsaws*, a Hmong publication of the Hmong Community Association of the Hmong of French Guyana, to Miao friends he met in Yunnan. It is from there, the Miao in China contributed articles introducing the Miao in China to the Hmong diaspora outside of China. They also discovered that some of the Hmong had moved out of Asia and now lived on other continents. The Hmong magazine helped bridge the gap between the Miao in China and the Hmong in diaspora, and is perceived as "a model magazine of Hmong unity, in the age before the Internet hit the mainstream" (Ellis 2016).

With the normalization of relationships between China and Laos, China and Vietnam in late 1980s and 1990s, the movement of people, goods, capital, and ideas crossing borders reemerged and accelerated. The integration of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries further enabled people in those countries to travel within the member states without a visa. Even on the tightly controlled border between Vietnam and China, there are many border markets where people living on both sides of border can do business and purchase various commodities from food, domesticated animals, agricultural products, daily necessities, to cultural products, like music videos and CDs. Those people living on the border all have a special permit, with which they can cross the border without a visa or passport.

More and more Hmong people can travel across the border for various reasons easily and frequently now. Ngo (2015) describes the missionary encounter at the Chinese and Vietnamese border, where many Hmong converts from Vietnam cross the border to attend courses organized by overseas Hmong missionaries and the Chinese underground church in various border towns in China. In northern Thailand outside of Chiang Mai, Hmong Christian churches also operate an underground network, spreading the Gospel to Hmong communities in Laos and Vietnam. A growing number of Hmong students from Laos are receiving Chinese government scholarships and studying at Chinese universities. In Guizhou Province, I met several Hmong students studying at the Guizhou Nationality University, who came from different provinces in Laos. With increased Chinese investment into Laos, there are growing opportunities to develop business relations between Laos and China. Many Chinese-owned companies prefer to hire local Hmong to expand their business. In a village in Xieng Khouang province, Laos, I met a Hmong girl whose husband is a Hmong Chinese from Wenshan, Yunnan. The husband came to Laos with a large Chinese state-owned company, fell in love with this Hmong girl, and decided to settle in Laos, in part because they can have more babies in Laos than in China.

Similarly, the cross-border marriages between Vietnam and China are also increasing, with most Hmong girls from Vietnam marrying Hmong Chinese. In Maguan County, Yunnan province, every village on the border has several Hmong Vietnamese brides. Most of them do not have legal status due to a lengthy, costly, and complicated process to get all the notarized documents from both countries to prove their marital status. However, if they don't have the necessary paperwork, they are ineligible to receive welfare and healthcare benefits in China. Some of these brides are runaway women who were married in Vietnam before. One of my informants told me that his cousin married a Hmong girl from Vietnam, who disappeared later and married another man in a neighboring county; furthermore, many people from Vietnam, many of whom are Hmong, cross the border into China and travel on to other parts of China, working as migrant workers in Chinese cities on the East coast. Some of the first to arrive become recruiters who later bring others into China.

In any case, the idea of a nation-state as one important dimension of identification still seems to be relevant. I went on a trip to Pha Long, Muong Khuong district, in Lao Cai province, Vietnam, to attend the Flower Mountain Festival, a Hmong New Year celebration, with a local Hmong delegation from one bordering Hmong village in Hong He prefecture, Yunnan in China. Pha Long is only 5 kilometers from the Chinese border. That Hmong Chinese village is also a few kilometers away from the border. Both villages occupy the same locality. However, there is a heavily guarded border pass between them. We had to get off the bus on the Chinese side and walk through the gate, and get on the bus on the Vietnamese side. After a ceremonial hand-shaking greeting, the Hmong Chinese delegates went on to the Flower Mountain Festival grounds a few kilometers away where tens of thousands of people, most of them Hmong in their festive costumes gathered to "*hauv toj*" (Figure 2). At the opening ceremony, both the Vietnamese and Chinese languages, instead of Hmong were used when people from both sides gave a speech, with an interpreter translating the speeches from one to the other, even though the majority of the audience were Hmong and spoke Hmong. I was told that because it was supposed to be an official state-to-state diplomatic event.

Figure 2: The Flower Mountain Festival, Pha Long, Vietnam.

On our return, the Hmong Chinese delegates spontaneously first sang a popular Hmong song in unison on the bus, "*Peb Lub Npe Hu Ua Hmoob*" (Our name is Hmong). Later on, they continued with a Chinese national anthem. They pointed to at a village down the mountain valley on the other side of the border in China, where Tao Shaowen (*Khuat Dlob*), a Hmong hero, who died in the Sino-Vietnamese conflicts in 1979, was born. Once they crossed the border into the Chinese side, they broke into cheers. I also heard stories about the Hmong serving in different armies on different sides of the border during the Sino-Vietnam conflicts in 1970s. They would shout out to each other in Hmong on the battlefield, trying to persuade each other to give up the fighting.

The borders of a nation-state are not fading way, even though Hmong people can cross it with much more ease now. As Peter van der Veer (1995, 11) argues in his introduction to the book, *Nation and Migration*, bordered territory symbolizes the fixity, stability, and sovereignty of the nation-state, so that the borders have become sites for international warfare, refugees, and immigration policies. Those who see themselves as a nation often seek a spatial, territorial expression of their nationhood. For the Miao in China and the Hmong in diaspora, the nation-states they belong to still provide a confined space to condition their identification.

Paj Tawg Lag: Locality of Departure and Return

Not far from the China and Vietnam border is a site of departure and connection. *Paj Tawg Lag* is a poetic Hmong name for Wenshan, a Zhuang and Miao autonomous prefecture in Southeast Yunnan province, bordering Ha Giang province, Vietnam in the South.

Paj Tawg Lag literally means "a place where flowers bloom." According to Hou Jian (n.d.), a local Hmong expert from Wenshan, this name is derived from an old Han Chinese name for Wenshan, which is "Kāihuà fǔ" (开化府), which he believes was pronounced incorrectly by the Hmong people as "Kāihuā fǔ" (开花府), with a different tone, and *Paj Tawg Lag* is the Hmongization of this name.

According to Wang Wanrong (2010), a Miao scholar in Wenshan, the Miao in this area migrated mostly from a bordering area between Sichun, Yunnan and Guizhou provinces, between early Ming Dynasty and to late Qing Dynasty: first they came for guarding the border, later they migrated here because of economic, political and military oppression and persecution. About the mid-Qing dynasty, some Miao in Wenshan started migrating south. Another Miao scholar Hou Jian (n.d.) points out that, *Paj Tawg Lag* is an important landmark on the Hmong migration route, the last stop inside China in the collective memories of the many Hmong people in diaspora. He describes the following:

> About 200 years ago, ethnic Miao leaders, Tao Xinchun and Tao Sanchun led poor Miao people in an uprising against the Qing dynasty government in the neighboring Guizhou Province. After the government crushed this rebellion, large groups of Miao people were forced to move south, from Sichuan and Guizhou provinces to Yunnan. They settled here in *Paj Tawg Lag* for some time, before moving further south, into Ha Giang and Lao Cai in northern Vietnam. Later they moved even further down, crossed the Fansipan in Sapa which is called "the Roof of Indochina," the highest mountain in Southeast Asia, through Lai Chau and Diên Biên Phu, and finally reached Laos.

The Vietnamese studies of Hmong migration history in Vietnam confirm this migration. According to the Vietnamese studies, there were three waves of Hmong migration into Vietnam. The first wave occurred about 300 years ago, when Hmong groups from Guizhou migrated to Yunnan, then to the districts of Dong Van, Meo Vac, Ha Giang, in Vietnam. The second wave happened about 200 years ago, with a large number of Hmong people moving in two main directions: one continued to Dong Van, Bao Lac (Cao Bang), Bac Me, Xin Man and Hoang Su Phi (Ha Giang); the other to Si Ma Cai area, Muong Khuong (Lao Cai), Phong Tho (Lai Chau). A third wave occurred about 150 years ago, the Hmong migrating to Si Ma Cai (Lao Cai), Phong Tho (Lai Chau); from here, they continued northwestward to Tua Chua, Tuan Giao (Lai Chau), Thuan Chau, Song Ma (Son La), and finally to the mountains Tay Thanh Hoa. At that time, a group of Hmong in Xieng Khuang (Laos) had migrated to the mountains of Thanh Hoa - Nghe An, and

resided in Ky Son district of Nghe An (Vũ Quốc Khánh 2004; Vương Duy Quang 2005; Cư Hòa Vần and Hoàng Nam 1994).

Hmong migration routes are recorded orally, and passed from generation to generation. According to Hmong custom, death for a Hmong means leaving this world to join the ranks of the ancestors to await a time to be reborn (Quincy 1988, 90). So at the funeral, a shaman or a funeral specialist will chant "*Qhuab Ke or Krua Ke*" (指路经), a "spiritual road map" that is intended to guide the deceased's soul back, step-by-step, to the land of its ancestors, which is China. This is an important part of Hmong funeral ritual. And *Paj Tawg Lag* is often mentioned as their last stop on their migration route out of China (Yang, n.d.).

In the 1980s, there was a sudden influx of the Hmong from the West into China which peaked in 1990s. It occurred just a few years after Hmong refugees moved to America, France and other Western countries from Laos. Living in a totally foreign land among alien people, as Hmong Australian scholar Gary Yia Lee (2005b) points out, the Hmong experienced a "multi-pronged, transnational revival of their cultural heritage in response to urgent cultural needs after their post-war relocation in foreign cultures." One bright spot on the horizon culturally is the interest shown by young Hmong adults in preserving the history of their lineages, even back to their roots in China (cf. Dunnigan and Olney 1985, 123).

This is the time when the Miao in China and the Hmong in diaspora encountered each other. Many Hmong intellectuals, including Dr. Yang Dao and Dr. Kou Yang, led this journey back to China. Hou Jian (n.d.) told a story about a Hmong delegation from Minnesota that visited Wenshan in 1991. The first thing they asked is where *Paj Tawg Lag* was. When the Hmong from diaspora visit China, they look for not only *Paj Tawg Lag*, but also for information and history about Chiyou, or *Txiv Yawg*, a legendary figure in Chinese history and alleged ancestor of the Hmong people (Zhang, n.d.). He was defeated at the epic battle of Zhuolu about 5,000 years ago by armies of the Yellow Emperor and Yan Emperor, the alleged ancestors of the Han people. Additionally, the delegates from Minnesota tried to find the clans they belong to.

Clan solidarity in Hmong culture is strong. As Lee (1986, 57) describes clan names in Hmong, "when two Hmong meet for the first time, their immediate concern is to establish their clan identities so that they can relate to each other. It is easy to discover one's clan through one's surname. If they belong to the same clan, the next question will be which sub-clan they originate from. This is done by inquiring whether they perform similar rituals in relation to funerals, the door ceremony, and ox ceremony, and whether the graves of their dead are of the same construction. If these common factors are established, membership to a sub-clan is confirmed. A further step may be to try to determine whether the two Hmong persons descend from the same ancestor. If this were true they would belong to the same lineage and would be known as "cluster of brothers" (*ib cuab kwv tij*). Even though it's been four or five generations since their families migrated out of China, Many Hmong visiting China can still rediscover and reconnect with their clans and reestablish kinships."

A Hmong American I interviewed in Maguan at the Hmong Flower Festival celebration described his journey to me: "My parents' silence regarding their lives in Laos and Thailand echoed the trauma which still afflicts their hearts. They wanted to forget the past and move on. And we did. Yet for me, I always wanted to know more. I craved an understanding of our history, where we came from, what life was like for them in Laos and in the refugee camps and my ancestors in ancestral land."

With the newly established connection in China, the Hmong from the United States started to purchase traditional cultural products and bring them back to the US to enrich their cultural inventory. One of the important commodities is the traditional Hmong costume. Gradually, Wenshan, or *Paj Tawg Lag*, became the Hmong costume center. There are two special Hmong markets with many shops designing, making, and selling Hmong costumes. The market here actually leads the fashion trend of the Hmong costumes. Hmong costumes made and sold here can be found in the Miao communities all over China and in the Hmong communities all over the world.

At one Hmong shop, I interviewed a Hmong girl from California. She pointed the colorful Hmong costumes out to me, "I would really like to own some Hmong clothes from China. They speak to me in a powerful way. Weaving, batik work, wax dye, cross-stitching, natural color dyes, textile work ... all were amazingly mastered and passed down without written down ... colors flow naturally on the clothes that resemble the natural colors of nature...Simple and full of life on the clothes." She thought those costumes constituted "authentic Hmong fashion," even though the style of Hmong costumes in Wenshan changes every year.

Ambiguity of *Suav Teb*: Homeland or Ancestral land

Safran (1991) emphasizes the vital importance of homeland in defining one of the essential characteristics of diaspora.

For him, members of a diaspora retained a collective memory of "their original homeland"; they idealized their "ancestral home," were committed to the restoration of "the original homeland" and continued in various ways to "relate to that homeland." However, for Hmong in diaspora, the ideas of homeland, ancestor land, or a Hmongland are contested, or as Lee (2009, 3) points out, there is an "absence of a clearly defined territorial homeland."

Davidson (1993, 85) argues that the Hmong people are Chinese – not Han Chinese, but Chinese in the sense that China is their homeland. Schein (2004) also claims that, "to my knowledge, everywhere the Hmong reside they refer to China as homeland." However, from my fieldwork, although almost all of them acknowledged China as their ancestral land, not necessarily all of them see China as their homeland. The degree of attachment of Hmong from diaspora to the land and people varies. Lee (2015) points out, there is no consensus about where the homeland is located, and at the same time, "lately some Hmong Americans, while continuing to recognize their origins in China, have been promoting Laos as the homeland." It is worth exploring the notions of homeland and ancestral land in diaspora studies, especially taking into account of the history of displacement and the migration experience of a subnational minority group, their attachment to the land, its people, and the nation-state of origin as a whole.

Quite often, the Hmong are perceived as a stateless nation. For example, Davidson (1993, 174) identifies four themes that are apparent in Hmong history. One of them is stateless, alongside with migration, ethnic identity, and survival. His argument is that the Hmong in America or their ancestors have lived in four countries during the past several hundred years: China, Laos, Thailand, and the United States. In each of these countries the Hmong have been a minority, a marginal people. That makes them stateless. In the same vein, Lee (1986, 55) put a long tradition of being stateless as one of the Hmong ways of life which distinguishes the Hmong from others. However, being a minority in a society does not necessarily make a group stateless: Much depends on the political power they exercise and the political rights they enjoy. For example, the Manchu was the minority group who ruled China during the Qing dynasty; nevertheless, they were certainly not stateless. According to the preamble of the constitution of the People's Republic of China, "The People's Republic of China is a unitary multi-national state built up jointly by the people of all its nationalities. Socialist relations of equality, unity and mutual assistance have been established among them and will continue to be strengthened." China, therefore, should not be understood as a country solely of Han Chinese, so none nationality or *minzu* in China, majority or minority, should be considered as stateless.

There exists a dilemma in the relationship between the Hmong in diaspora and China as a state. The emotion of this dilemma was captured when I interviewed a Hmong American visiting Leishan, China from California. "We are not recognized in China as Oversea Chinese, even though we consider this place as our homeland. This is the place where our ancestors lived. You see, for Han Chinese, wherever they were born, in Southeast Asia, in Europe, or in America, they can still be considered as 'Overseas Chinese'. But what about us?"

I brought this question to a Hmong Official working at a local All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, a semi-government organization that "safeguards the lawful rights and interests of returned overseas Chinese, their relatives and Chinese living abroad, and shows concern and care for the just rights and interests of Chinese living overseas." I was told that this issue was much more complicated than it seems. Recognizing Overseas Chinese is a thorny issue that affects China's relations with the host countries. China signed agreements and renounced dual nationality and multiple citizenships for overseas Chinese in 1950s. During the Sino-Vietnamese conflicts in 1970s and 1980s, a certain amount of Hmong fled to China from Vietnam as refugees. They stayed in refugee camps in Yunnan, but only very few of them finally got their Chinese citizenship. So what they are doing now is to welcome any Hmong from abroad, as long as they come and seek help. Some scholars propose a concept of "ethnic minority overseas Chinese", to determine their overseas Chinese status according to their "records, origins, objective identification, time of migration, and subjective identification," however, "this identification should be based upon their acknowledgements of political, national and cultural identification with the countries they belong to first" (Li 2003, 6).

Tu (1994) refutes the essentialistic Chineseness that "defining a Chinese as belonging to the Han race, being born in China proper, speaking Mandarin, and observing the 'patriotic' code of ethics may seem innocuous, but this oversimplified conception conceals as much as it reveals. Indeed, it can easily produce unintended and unfortunate consequences" (p. vii). What complicates the whole idea of China being the homeland is how China is referred to and perceived by the Hmong overseas. On the one hand, in Hmong language, China is referred as "*Suav Teb*", literally means the land of "*Suav*", Han Chinese. Researchers found that "*Suav*" is a term derived from "Xia dynasty," or "Hua xia." So for Hmong/Miao, the *Suav* is the other, "*Suav Teb*" is the land of the other. To some extent, the Hmong is self-

distancing them from that land. On the other hand, according to Tapp and Cohn (2003, 14), the Hmong in Thailand were in effect still imaginary habitants of a ritual and political world their grandparents or great-grandparents had left decades previously. They persist in referring to their motherland of China as the realm of the 'great dynasties' (*Tuam Tshoj*, 大朝), rather than those of the 'lesser dynasties' (*Xov Tshoj*, 小朝), the lands outside China particularly in Southeast Asia. He argues that, "it seems to me that it must have been their strong sense of still belonging to a far wider, Chinese community..."

Yang (2003, 295) acknowledges the attachment of the Hmong to China, "although the Hmong in America came from Laos, and knew very little about China, they continue to be very attached to China. Many Hmong Americans continue to guide the souls of their loved ones to return to China, the land of their ancestors... Many Hmong individuals have gone to study and visit China." Vang (2010, 6) argues that people of Hmong ethnicity today define their homeland differently, "For some of the elders, the true homeland is the People's Republic of China, the country where their ancestors originally migrated. For the adult emigrants, that place is Laos. But for immigrant children, home may simply be Detroit, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, or Providence. To still others who were born and spent their childhood in refugee camps, home may mean Thailand." Because of the unique, multi-staged migration experience of Hmong people, Schein (2004) suggests a double homeland in both Laos and China. The disparity and ambiguity of Hmong homeland and ancestor land illustrates the conflicting condition of a minority group, being minority both in homeland and hostland, and being multiply displaced over time. Above and beyond homeland and ancestor land, they long for a Hmongland, or a Hmong Tebchaws, a space where Hmong live freely and a place they call home.

Khek Noi: Hmollywood and Transnational production of Hmong movies

Khek Noi is a village and *tambon* (subdistrict) of Khao Kho District, in Phetchabun Province, Northern Thailand, with a population over 11,000 residents. Between 1965 and 1984, this remote mountainous area was the battlefield of the Thai Communist Party and the Royal Thai Army. Now, it is home to the largest Hmong community in Thailand and a "Hmong Hollywood", or "Hmollywood" (Baird 2014, 10), the Hmong movie/video production hub of the world.

I was introduced to a Hmong movie production team in Khek Noi by a Hmong Chinese woman living in Wenshan, China, who owns a Hmong video and costume shop, and traveled there two years ago.

This mountainous village is nestled in the rolling hills of Northern Thailand. Today it is connected to the outside world by highway 12, just in front of the village. When I got off the bus on the main road that afternoon, I was picked up by one of the film crewmembers at the village gate (Figure 3). He drove me through its labyrinth of narrow and bustling streets, until we came to a modest one-story brick house on the edge of the village facing the rugged mountains and valleys. There I met Xab Thoj, a multi-talented Hmong super-star: an actor, singer, as well as movie producer and editor, scriptwriter and director. He introduced me to his film crew, most of whom eat, work, and live together in his house in a collective way like a family; many are in fact his extended family members.

Figure 3: Khek Noi, a village in Phetchabun Province, Northern Thailand, Hmong movie production hub of the world.

Xab Thoj used to be a farmer, as were most of his crewmembers and moviemakers based in this village. He has been in the movie industry for about 18 years and has made more than 20 Hmong movies.

At that time of the year (January), his was the only film production team working in the village (Figure 4). I was told that production picks up later and that during the busiest season, more than 10 film production teams could work in the village at the same time.

Behind all the Hmong movies produced here, there is a streamlined transnational network that links the production, distribution, and consumption of Hmong movies throughout the Hmong communities around the world.

Figure 4: Xab Thoj and his Hmong movie production team.

Almost all the Hmong movies are funded (or in their own words, "sponsored") by Hmong Americans, who usually own video shops or a video distribution system in Hmong American communities. Once funding is secured, they fly to Thailand, pick up stories, meet with potential producers, and assemble a production team here in Khek Noi with talents from Thailand and Laos. When the movie is done, the production team will send a master copy to the sponsor back in the US who then mass-produces the movie in videotape and DVD, distributing them to vendors in many Hmong communities around the country. Two annual sales seasons are very important for Hmong movies in the US market: One is around the July 4th celebration; the other is Hmong New Year celebration in November and December. The movie production teams are very conscious about the timeline for releasing each new Hmong movie.

Khek Noi has emerged as a "Hmong Hollywood", because of its relative low cost of production, easy access to the talents who are mostly from Thailand and Laos. Also the natural settings are beautiful and fit to make movies that are set in Asia. Another important reason is that the Hmong enjoy comparatively more freedom here in making their own movies, especially those movies about the Hmong experiences during the time of the "Secret Wars in Laos".

The budget for each movie varies, ranging from $20,000 to $40,000 for a comedy or drama, to $60,000 or more for a war movie. This all depends not only on the cost, but also expected sales in the cultural market in the U.S. The last few years witnessed a gradual decline in Hmong movie sales because of easy access to entertainments on the Internet, which impacts the Hmong movie industry in general, and Hmong movie production in Khek Noi in particular.

I interviewed a Hmong American movie sponsor, Mr. Vue from Fresno, California, who also maintains a house in the village. He came back to Thailand to make movie for the first time in 1999, after working at a local TV station in California for a few years. He first went to the Hmong community of Tham Krabok temple in Saraburi Province. It took him about one month to film a story, and two months for editing. It turned out to be a success and people liked it. He made his way to the village the year after, and made more movies. However, right now he temporarily quit making movies, because of what he described as "a sluggish Hmong movie market." In the past, one movie can be sold and made into 3,000 to 4,000 DVD copies selling for $5 a piece. Now that the Hmong movie market is shrinking, sales have dropped from one-third to one-half, to 2,000 to 3,000. Many Hmong movie investors can barely break even and can no longer afford to invest in movies. "The internet kills Hmong movies," he sighed, "and the Hmong movies are not well protected from copyright infringement in the market. Some people just purchase a DVD and make copies themselves for sale."

However, making Hmong movies is not just about business. Like Mr. Vue said, the Hmong movie is the best media for Hmong to learn the Hmong language and culture through Hmong stories. Through making movies, he wants to "make our people be aware of Hmong culture and see how our people live our lives. Hopefully that will bring them back to Hmong traditional culture." Xab Thoj also sees his movie making as a way to tell Hmong stories to the Hmong people. Throughout the whole process of Hmong movie-making, there is a well-developed system of flow of capital, people, ideas and cultural products. They are widely distributed and consumed by the Hmong communities around the world. On my research trip, I found these movies in a video shop in Wenshan, at vendor stands at border markets between China and Vietnam and in small video shops along the dirt road in the villages in Thailand and Laos (Figure 5), I also saw them being sold at the Hmong New Year celebration in La Crosse, Wisconsin. A translocal Hmong community detached from a physical space is imagined, according to Anderson's description (1991), imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group through consuming Hmong movies and other cultural products.

Negotiating Hmong/Miao Identity

As one of the sub-group of what we called the Miao in China, the Hmong in diaspora came into contact with the

Figure 5: A roadside video shop selling Hmong movies, in Xieng Khouang Province, Laos.

Miao in China in 1980s. They discovered that some Miao groups didn't speak the same language as they do, and they celebrated various cultures and customs that differ greatly with theirs. They started to question the validity of the classification of the Miao in China (Lee 2005a). While some among the Miao people in China call themselves Hmong in the western dialect region, others identify themselves as Hmub, Xong (Qo-Xiong), and A-Hmao in other dialects. Some see the name "Miao" as a lumping term, "Concrete evidence has yet to establish a common origin, history and culture of all four groups under the term, Miao" (Yang 2008), and "that the earliest embryonic form of Miaozu (Miao nationality) as a modern ethnic group was first imagined and constructed by the 'Other'" (Yang 2009, 22). Scholars like Lemoine (2005, 1) even calls for rejection of this name, Miao, "the (H)mong of China have been trapped into the Miao nationality in the wake of the communist takeover in 1949." As a matter of fact, although largely mutually unintelligible, according to Shi (2004, 91), so called cognates, words that have a common etymological origin, account for about 30 to 40 %, among all of the Miao dialects.

Naming and classification play an important role in the identity and identification of any ethnic group. For the name of Miao, as Tapp (2004), Yang (2005) and others note is something "Hmong outside China fiercely resent and have yet to come to terms with", because in Southeast Asia, they were once referred as "Meo", a disparaging term that relates to animals (Davidson 1993, 11). They see "Miao" and "Meo" as similar terms so they repudiate the Miao designation as well. Enwall (1992) claims that Miao is a derogatory term and many non-Chinese Hmong would like the term Hmong used for those living in China and outside of China. He did however, mention that the Miao in China have voiced no concern for changing their self-designation.

The Hmong outside of China prefer "Hmong", an autonym that they use to identify themselves. Some, including Dr. Yang Dao, who is the first Hmong from Southeast Asia to hold a doctorate degree, believe Hmong means "freeman" (Garrett, 1974; Mottin, 1980; Chan 1994). Later Dr. Yang Dao revised it as defining Hmong as "human being" (Yang and Blake, 1993). Heimbach (1969) believes the word Hmong does not have any specific meaning at all. As Schein (1986) explains, the term Miao "was considered the only appropriate term to embrace the various subgroups that had been found to be linguistically similar enough to be considered co-ethnics, thus, unlike any previous era in Chinese history, the name 'Miao' is now widely used for self-identification by members of that nationality and there is significant evidence that negative connotations have indeed been dispelled" (p. 77).

Zhang Xiao (2005), a Miao scholar from Guizhou, China, discusses the name Miao. According to phonologists, Miao is a Han record of the same Miao autonym. Many Miao scholars in China support this view. According to a Hmong American researcher, Tzexa Lee, who was trained in anthropology and linguistics, and has been working on Miao/Hmong language proto-reconstruction for many years. He found that Hmong and Miao are actually the same word with different pronunciations. Based on his proto-reconstruction, Miao comes from *Hmiau*. The "u" sound has a tendency of being assimilated by a nasal sound (in linguistic theory). The Han can only say *Miau*, and "h" was dropped, because they do not have the aspirated nasal. Neither does an English speaking person. That's why some Americans or westerners may say "hoh-Monng" for Hmong. He points out how the name *Hmiau* changes over the time:

> Hmiau –》 Miao (Han Chinese) –》 Meo (Vietnamese and Lao);
>
> Hmiau –》 Hmau (Hua Miao) –》 Hmu (Qiandongnan Miao) –》 Hmon (Western Miao) –》 Mon (US Green Hmong);
>
> Hmiau –》 Hiau –》 Xiong (Xiangxi Miao)

Now the Hmong in diaspora and the Miao from China are engaging in what Schein (2004) called "identity exchange" and "identity production". She observes that, "the Hmong visitors usually identify themselves as Miao with their hosts. When Miao from China visit the Hmong in America, they also identify themselves as Hmong" (Schein 1998). The general consensus is that Hmong is generally used in English for Miao and Miao is used in Chinese for Hmong in diaspora. Sometimes these two names co-exist. I once saw a restaurant in Xijiang,

Figure 6: A Hmong Restaurant in Xijiang, which belongs to the Central Miao dialect.

Qiandongnan, Guizhou, with both Miao in Chinese and Hmong in English in its name (Figure 6). Furthermore, according to Julian (2003), Schein (2002, 2004) and Lee (1996), the Hmong diaspora in the West tends to reconstruct its identity by erasing cultural and linguistic differences between them and all the Miao in China. As Barth (1969) states, what is more critical is "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (p. 15). This is a process of identity negotiation.

Furthermore, the Hmong/Miao people are actively engaged in defining their own identity, Hmong-ness, or Miao-ness, the meaning of being a Hmong or a Miao. *Peb Lub Npe Hu Ua Hmoob* (Our name is Hmong), a song written and composed by two Miao scholars in Wenshan, became very popular not just in the Miao communities in China, but in diaspora Hmong communities as well. It touches the heart of every Miao/Hmong.

Peb Lub Npe Hu Ua Hmoob (Our Name is Hmong)

Vim li cas peb yuav hais peb suab lus? (Why do we use our own language?)
Vim li cas peb yuav hnav peb zam tsoos? (Why do we wear our traditional clothing?)
Tsis vim tsav niaj tus dab tsi, (If you ask for the reason,)
Tsuas vim peb lub npe hu ua Hmoob. (It is because our name is Hmong.)

Vim li cas peb yuav kawm peb ntaub ntawv? (Why do we learn our own language?)
Vim li cas peb yuav nthuav peb txuj ci? (Why do we promote our own culture?)
Tsis vim tsav niaj tus dab tsi, (If you ask for the reason,)
Tsuas vim peb lub npe hu ua Hmoob. (It is because our name is Hmong.)

Vim li cas peb yuav taug peb kab ke? (Why must we follow our cultural heritage?)
Vim li cas peb yuav ua peb kos tshoob? (Why must we practice our wedding traditions?)
Tsis vim tsav niaj tus dab tsi, (If you ask for the reason,)
Tsuas vim peb lub npe hu ua Hmoob. (It is because our name is Hmong.)

Peb muaj peb li ntshav, （We have our own blood,)
Peb muaj peb li nqaij, (We have our own flesh,)
Peb muaj peb li siab, (We have our own hearts,)
Peb muaj peb li hmoov, (We have our own fate,)
Peb yog saum ntiaj teb no ib haiv neeg, (We are a people on earth,)
Luag muaj pes tsawg xyoo yus los muaj pes tsawg xyoo. (With a history as long as others.)

Peb nquag ua qoob loo, (We are hardworking agriculturalists,)
Peb li tswv yim coob, (We have lots of ideas,)
Peb muaj kev txawj ntse, (We have own knowledge,)
Peb li siab ntsws zoo (We are kindhearted,)
Peb Hmoob txawm nyob rau qab ntuj khwb, (We Hmong live all over the world,)
Sab hnub tuaj nyob txog sab hnub poob. (From the East to the West.)

Peb tsis ntshai leej twg, (We are not afraid of anyone,)
Peb tsis ua qhev ntxoog, (We don't want to be slaves,)
Peb tsis khib leej twg, (We are not envious of others,)
Peb tsis txeeb teev ntoo, (We don't fight to become officials.)
Peb nrog txhua yam haiv neeg ntaus phooj ywg, (We make friends with all people,)
Tso dag zog muab peb neej nyoog txhim kho zoo. (We work hard to improve our lives.)

Txawm tias mus txog lub teb chaws twg peb yog Hmoob, (No matter how much we have traveled, we are Hmong,)
Txawm tias dhau lawm pes tsawg niaj xyoos peb yog Hmoob, (No matter how many years have passed, we are Hmong,)
Peb tsis txawj hnov qab peb lub npe --- (We will not forget our own name---)
Hmoob! Hmoob!! Hmoob!!! (Hmong! Hmong!! Hmong!!!)

This song, like a statement of an identity, proclaims to all Miao/Hmong members, as well as to the world: We have our own language, culture and customs, as well as long history that parallels theirs; We went through many adversaries, but still are resilient, brave and hardworking; We love freedom and peace; We are Miao/Hmong. One of the authors of this song, Zhang Yuanqi, told me he wrote the lyrics of this song in Hmong as a poem in 1987 which was read at a New Year celebration broadcast on Wenshan radio. Tao Yonghua, a Hmong musician, composed the music for it the following year. Since its debut at the 1988 New Year Celebration, it became so popular that it was performed at many important Hmong/Miao events, from the Western Miao dialect area, to Central and East Miao dialect areas where the Miao there don't identify themselves as "Hmong". Some of the ethnic minority groups, Like Tujia ethnic group, love this song so much

that they even replace the name of Hmong with their name, and sing at their cultural events. The song is also well-liked by Hmong communities in diaspora. Some call this song the "Hmong national anthem."

Conclusion: Towards a Translocal Hmong/Miao and Re-territorialized Hmongland?

After generations of separation and moving apart, the Hmong in diaspora and their co-ethnic, the Miao in China rediscovered and reunited with each other. In a way these two groups are gradually converging. As Lee (2005b) notices, a more acute level of shared national consciousness has been developing. A globalized identity has been forged based on the bringing together, and the adoption, of Hmong cultural items and the practices of the various countries of residence. That speaks to what Appadurai (1996) terms as global ethnoscape, "which can no longer be easily localized but instead has become increasingly connected to a global distribution of persons, groups, relations and imaginations characterized by motion and interactivity" (p. 192).

While people celebrate transnationality of Hmong/Miao, I would argue that transnationality is not a new phenomenon; rather, translocality is, because the Hmong people have been living across the national borders in different countries and maintaining some contacts for a long time. Nevertheless, they lived in a particular isolated bounded locality. Sometimes this locality may be transnational, an area lying cross the border. In the last few decades, however, the Hmong/Miao people started to look beyond the imminent vicinity and the local territorialized community, and became translocal, because of the intensified connectivity that is happening in the Hmong/Miao communities around the world.

Transnationality or transnationalism and translocality are closely related. Greiner and Sakdapolrak (2013) traces the relationship between transnationalism and translocality by reviewing recent research on translocality, finding that translocality "serves to overcome some of the conceptual weaknesses of the former," including its limited focus on the nation-state. Bromber (2013, 69) elaborates that translocality "is more encompassing than transnationalism because it transcends the nation-state as analytical framework, and thus, accounts for an historical depth." She argues that translocality means spatial mobility, whereas transnationalism means the physical, political, social and cultural spaces and localities that are shaped by it.

Transclocality starts first at the local, rather than at the national level. It rises above and goes beyond the local. Translocality implies a transcendence of local boundedness of a territorialized community, while at the same time emphasizing the locality where the connectedness originates. In a sense, transnationality can be seen as just one layer of this big picture of translocality. Translocality enables us to see the mobility, connectivity, and interconnectedness from the below, beyond the local, but not limited to the nation-state level. For this Hmong/Miao case, it is not only between the Hmong in diaspora and the Miao in China, but also among various sub-groups of Miao in China, and among various sub-groups in Hmong in different countries. In his study of Miao/Hmong transnationalim, Miao scholar Shi Maoming (2004, 117) observes migration of the Miao. Historically the Miao moved from the geographical center of China to its periphery, first to Southwest China, then from Guizhou to Yunnan. From Yunnan, some of them moved out of China, to Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Burma, and finally to other parts of the world. This engendered a marginalization not only in a geographical sense, but also in terms of their culture and economic life. Now, a reverse trend is emerging as more Hmong overseas connect with the Miao in China in solidarity and unity, while at the same time traveling back to China.

Aparurai (1996) identifies five dimensions of global "scapes" flowing across cultural boundaries, including ethnoscapes, financapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, and ideoscapes. These "are the building blocks of…imagined worlds, that is, the multiple worlds which are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe" (p. 329). With the growing movement of people, as well as material and symbolic flows, a translocal imagination of Hmong community with a sense of interconnected, multi-layered, multidimensional Hmong/Miao community is emerging. It re-territorializes a Hmong space which reintegrates the traditionally fragmented Hmong communities dispersed in inaccessible mountainous locations in separated nation-states into a continuous space of a Hmong *Tebchaws*, a Hmongland, or an extended new *Miaojiang*. It constitutes a physical Hmong corridor which extended the traditional Miao territory in China all the ways to northern Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Burma, with its nodal points, like *Paj Tawg Lag*, Sapa, Khek Noi, and Vientiane, from southwest China to Southeast Asia. At the same time, with the increasing movement of goods, people, capital,

and ideas and cultural symbols along this new corridor, and re-establishment of the long lost and forgotten Miao/Hmong kinship system, re-territorialization of an imagined translocal Miao/Hmong community becomes possible. This also produces new translocal Hmong subjectivity with a cultural self-consciousness of who they are and the attachments to the land they belong.

There are still obstacles in the process. One of them is lack of a unified Hmong/Miao writing system. There are several Miao writing systems in China, including four Latin based writing systems invented in the 1950s, for Eastern, Central, Western dialects, and Northeast Yunnan (*Diandongbei*) respectively, as well as a century-old script created by Christian Methodist missionary, Sam Pollard, for use with A-Hmao. Outside of China, there are several scripts as well, including the most widely used RPA, as well as various Hmong scripts in Vietnam, Laos (Pahawh Hmong Alphabet) and Thailand. The question then arises as to how the Hmong and Miao from different parts of the world can communicate in their own language? Especially how can the Miao speaking the same Hmong dialect communicate with each other in the same writing system? Is it possible to unify the writing systems first? Some scholars are working on creating a unified writing system, which would enable the Hmong from around the world meet on common Hmong/Miao websites, such as tojsiab.com, based in Thailand, or 3-hmong.com based in China, or hmongtvnetwork.com based in St Paul, Minnesota.

On the other hand, the concept of the nation-state and its territory is far from obsolete. It provides another space for people to negotiate. As Chiyou, or *Txiv Yawg* in Hmong, the legendary ancestral leader of the Hmong/Miao, is now revered alongside with Yellow Emperor and Yan Emperor as three common ancestors of Chinese nation. How that and an extended *Miaojiang* will change the dynamics of translocal Hmong/Miao identification with the land, state and the people of China as well as with other nation-states in the region remains to be seen.

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学术论文

张伟东*

苗疆的连接和延伸: 分隔的空间, 跨地域的联络, 和苗族的再疆界化

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摘要: 在过去的三十年间，移居世界各地的海外苗族蒙人族群跟中国的苗族展开了前所未有的紧密联系。本文旨在探讨海内外两个被时空分隔多年的苗族同族群体之间这种久别重逢的性质与动态，他们重新发现并建立起来的联系与纽带，以及随之而来的冲击与影响。基于在中国西南与东南亚不同的苗族社区为期三个月的田野研究，本文一方面检视在不同地域的苗族之间日益活跃的人与物及符号的流动，另一方面考察他们之间正在形成的连接和纽带。本文讨论了这些快速的变化如何促生一种新型苗族共同体的跨地域想象，以及在此基础之上形成一个连续的苗族空间，一个跨越中国西南诸省和东南亚国家北部的苗族再疆界化的新苗疆的可能，及其对于海内外苗族的意义。本文还进一步探讨了海内外苗族共同体的形成中，这种跨地域的想象会如何生产出独特的跨地域的苗族主体性，以及将如何与所属的民族国家展开互动。

关键词: 跨地域性，海外内苗族，苗疆，海外苗蒙走廊，再疆界化

前言

海内外的苗族是 “历史上充满着抗争和迁徙” (Yang, 1990, p.3) 的一个族群。澳大利亚学者威廉姆·格迪斯（1976）在他所著的那部《山地的移民》中，在探讨苗族在中国数千年的迁徙史时，比较东方的苗族跟西方的犹太民族后感叹道，“苗族尽管被分成许多小的支系，分散到一个广阔的地理区域，并杂处在不同的族群中间，经历如此长的时间却保存了他们的族群身份，这样出色的成果在某种程度上可以与犹太人相媲美，但是更为非凡，因为他们缺乏文字和教义宗教那样的凝聚力量，同时被保存的文化特征更为众多” (p. 10)。

做为中国最古老的原住族群之一，有着悠久迁徙历史的苗族，如今在中国已经是所有 56 个民族中的第五大族群。根据中国苗族学者石朝江 (2006) 的研究，苗族历史上经历过五次大迁徙。由于战争，政治压迫，自然灾害，以及寻找新的生存空间，苗族从北部到南部，从华中到西南，经历了一次又一次的迁徙。现今苗族大部分生活在湘川黔滇等中南和西南省份。据 2010 年的全国人口普查统计，苗族的总人口接近一千万。

苗族本身是一个有着丰富多样性的一个族群。从语言上来说，苗族可以被划分为三大主要的方言区。这三大方言之间，包括东部方言（湘西），中部方言（黔东）和西部方言（川黔滇），在很大程度上互不相通。进一步细分，他们还可以被划成七大次方言和十八种土语 (苗族简史, 1985；李廷贵 张山 周光大, 1996, p. 7)。不过，海外苗族，俗称苗族蒙人，如熊玉有和杨凤华 (2010) 所述 只是苗族的一个支系，是苗族所有的支系中分布最广的一支，在全世界约有四百到五百万人口，其中大部分仍居住在中国的西南。“所谓（赫）蒙人实际上包括自称为赫蒙人或蒙人等语言相通的苗族。按语言划分，就是操苗语川黔滇方言川黔滇次方言的苗族” (p.1)。

正如格迪斯 (1976) 指出，苗族蒙人何时进入东南亚的时间尚未确定，“多数作者认为应该是相对比较近的年代——不晚于 200 年前，可能不早于 400 年前” (p.27)。但是，苗族学者石朝江 (2006, p.3) 却认为苗族零星迁移进入东南亚大陆可以追朔 到 700 年前的明朝初年。那个时代在中国古老的 “朝贡体系” 之下边界尚未确定。“一直到 19 世纪中国与东南亚关系的开展都处在大家熟知的‘朝贡体系’ 规范之下” (Stuart-Fox, 2003, p. 2)。不过最近的两百年间，在现代民族国家完全确立之前，特别是在十八世纪和十九世纪经过几次反抗满清政府的起义失败后，苗族的一部分群体就往更南迁移，他们在当今的越南，老挝，泰国和缅甸的偏远山巅安家落户，以逃离清政府的迫害镇压以及自然灾害的影响。越南战争和在老挝的秘密战争 1975 年结束以后，在老挝的一部分曾经协助美国中情局战斗的苗族蒙人，出于害怕因此遭到报复，被迫再次离乡背井。大约有十三万苗族蒙人跨过老泰边界的湄公河，逃离老挝进入泰国的难民营，后来他们又再度远涉重洋，这次是离开亚洲前往西方。如今这些海外苗族蒙人散居在世界各地，包括美国，澳大利亚，阿根廷，加拿大，德国，法国和法属圭亚那诸国。

苗族的分布有着大散居，小群居的特色，大多居住在空间上相对闭塞，地理上相隔离的地域。然而越来越多散居在海外，特别是西方的苗族蒙人开始 “踏寻祖先的迁徙足迹”（Yang, 2005），一路寻找家族的历史，到了泰国的难民营，老挝和越南的山村，最后来到中国，这块他们的祖先曾经生活过的土地。正是这些生活在西方的苗族蒙人点燃起了整个联结在西方，在东南亚和在中国西南的苗族的集体联动。这是一个穿越时空的旅程，历经了数代人的

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分隔，海外的苗族蒙人和中国的苗族人终于再度相逢了。苗族这个原本作为中国的亚国家（subnational）一级的少数民族，逐渐具备了超国家（supranational）的族群特性。

这样的相遇对于海外的苗族蒙人和中国的苗族有着什么意涵呢？路易莎（Schein，2004）对于跨越太平洋的美国苗族蒙人和中国苗族间“身份互换”所做的跨国性研究，让我们进一步认识了这两个同族群间影像和服装的文化生产和消费以及人员之间的流动。她认为，通过文化生产和她所称的“身份互换”而形成的跨国身份认同，“不仅为海外苗族蒙人和中国苗族提供了一种让两者重新联结的方式，而且同时让他们克服在各自所在的国家里被边缘化。”不过，本研究希望进一步探究中国苗族与海外，特别是在东南亚的苗族蒙人的关系。随着苗族从中国的一个亚国家少数民族转变为一个超国家的族群，这种变化如何影响海内外苗族与各自所在的民族国家之间的关系，民族国家在其中的角色是否已经开始消解？苗族多次的流离失所和多阶段的迁徙经历又如何改变他们所处的流散之地与他们祖先故土联系的力度？ 一个涵盖海内外苗族的新的身份认同是否已经在生成中？一个全球性的苗族团结是否可能？

按照路易莎 (Schein，2004) 所提出的“多点和分段式”的“流动的民族志”，“跟随文化产品和事件到全球各地，常常满足于在传闻轶事和书面记事中的话语痕迹。”本人于 2014 年末至 2015 年初，在中国的西南和东南亚进行了为期三个月的田野研究。Clifford (1997, p.19) 曾经批评人类学家们“传统上”将他们自己定位在村庄里，专注于并仅强调“在地化”的文化，而忽视了这些村庄与在它的边界之外更广阔的世界是如何联结的。因此“流动的民族志”和多地点的方法对于这一海内外苗族跨地域性的研究是适切的。此项研究综合运用了参与观察，深度访谈和焦点团体座谈，并结合当地档案历史研究的研究方法。

田野研究工作始于中国苗族主要聚居地的贵州省。本人先后访问了位于中部苗语方言区的黔东南苗族侗族自治州，目标是成为中国苗族文化中心的雷山，参加了在村寨的苗年庆典（图一）。从那儿又转道去了贵阳和昆明，然后直奔坐落在西部苗语方言区，在苗族往东南亚迁徙路途上的一个重要节点城市的文山，以及周边的中越边境口岸与苗族村寨，还与苗族同胞一同跨越国境去越南边境的花龙参加苗族新年花山节。在东南亚，本人先后访问了泰国曼谷以及北部清迈（Chiang Mai）和碧差汶府（Patchaboon）的苗族蒙人社区。在泰国东北的廊开府（Nong Khai）跨过泰老边境进入老挝，在老挝首都万象（Vientiane）走访了老挝社会科学院，也访问了苗族蒙人聚居的川圹 (Xieng Khouang) 和琅勃拉邦（Luang Prabang）省的苗族蒙人村庄；在越南则访问了在首都河内的社会科学院和越南民族学博物馆，也走访了在中越边境附近老街省勐康县和沙巴的苗族村寨。这次研究之旅可以说是一段经过压缩的旅程，一路上使本人同漫长的（在时间和空间意义来说）苗族蒙人迁徙的历史和迁徙的经历直接联结了起来。

苗疆、苗蒙走廊与苗蒙山岭

苗族，自春秋战国起就居住在中国南方的湘西和湘黔边界，直到元明在这个地区以腊尔山为中心，形成了一块的相对稳定的苗族聚居区，史称“苗疆”(伍新福, 2003)。清代的“苗疆”有广义和狭义之分。狭义而言，“苗疆”是指湘西，黔东北和黔东南这两个苗族主要聚居区(张永国 王正贤, 1981, p. 64)。 而广义的“苗疆”则泛指西南三省、两湖、两广等省的各少数民族地区，几乎包括了整个中国的西南、南方地区 (李良品 谭清宣, 2009)。

早在七十年代末八十年代初，中国的人类学家费孝通（1980）就提出了“民族走廊”的概念，提倡通过全局地、动态地去考察“历史形成的民族地区”的历史文化遗存，去探究“诸如民族的形成、接触、融合、变化等”（费孝通, 1982, p.300)。基于费孝通的这个概念，李绍明将“民族走廊”定义为“一定的民族或族群长期沿着一定的自然环境如河流或山脉向外迁徙或流动的路线。”同样的，来自贵州的苗族学者杨志强提出了“古苗疆走廊”的概念，来研究沿线这个独特的区域空间内当地各民族或族群间的交往以及与国家权力之间的互动。这条走廊沿着一条古代的驿道。这是元代（1271–1368）开辟，明代后用重兵驻守的一条连接内地与西南边陲的重要通道，连接今天的湖南常德和云南昆明。多位学者 (杨志强 赵旭东 曹端波, 2012; 曹端波, 2012) 将这条走廊与中国西南的“国家化”和“内地化”联系起来。不过，苗族在明清两代持续南迁，从贵州经云南，又前往东南亚诸国。他们在中国境外的迁移路线，从中国进入越南，老挝和缅甸的北部，再往南，实际上形成了另外一条海外的苗族“民族走廊”—— 我称之为“苗蒙走廊”。这条走廊沿路分布着众多的海外苗族蒙人的村寨。

在过去的二三十年间涌现出了不少有关海内外苗族跨国性的研究，对苗族的研究提供了新的视角。然而对于苗族和在这个地区生活的其他族群来说，跨国性并不是一个新现象。这些族群跨越中国和东南亚国家之间的边界在两边生活已经上百年，远早于十九世纪末中国与东南亚国家间边界的正式勘定，民族国家的全面确立。生活在边境两边的苗族一直都知道在边境的那边同样住着自己的亲戚和同胞，有时大家甚至就生活在同一个地区，只是中间被一条无形的边界隔离。在和平年代，两边的人们跨过边界频繁地互相走动。到了关系紧张甚至冲突的年代，人们就往来稀疏甚至杳无音讯，—— 有时竟为了各自所在的不同民族国家在同一个战场上兵戎相见。

伴随着这种跨国性状况的还有一种它所在地域的本地化封闭性的分隔状态。当代苗族在地理上的分隔不仅仅是国家的边界，正如 Lee (2015, p. 21) 在讨论苗族时所述，这种分隔状态“阻碍了做为一个连续性伸展空间的王国构想。”她分析道，“在二十世纪的中国和东南亚，苗族生活在特定的海拔高度以上，分散在占领着低地的不同族群中间。这些在山顶上的苗族居住点分布在低海拔相异的族群的大海中，形成了一座座封闭的孤岛。” Mottin (1980) 同样也发现，苗族虽然生活在不同的族群中间，但是“不同的族

群生活在不同的海拔高度地带,...在对于这些地区人们来说的最高处,可能海拔 1000 米到 2000 米的地带住着苗族" (p. 10)。

然而,苗族所生活的这个地区跨越了中国的西南和东南亚国家,坐落在一个大的地理空间,也就是 James Scott (2009) 所称的 "Zomia"(佐米亚),东南亚大陆北部群峰。Tomforde (2006) 曾指出,这个地区被苗族人视为一个连续的空间,"苗蒙山岭" (*Hmoob ntshuab roob*),一个认知上的概念,在地理上包含了中国南方,越南,老挝,缅甸绵延不断的山脉。有的时候它还可能包含了当今苗族蒙人居住的其他(部分低地)地区,比如澳大利亚,法国,北美洲和法属圭亚那 (Tomforde, 2006, p.14–15)。Tomforde 进一步阐明,苗蒙山岭的概念显示出苗族蒙人在空间上建构自己的生活世界,让他们虽然没有国家,法律上也没有土地,处于流动的社会却能保持自己的文化身份认同。同样,澳大利亚学者王富文(Nicholas Tapp, 2003, p.13) 也提出了一个 "蒙人世界" 的概念,一个文化建构的社会实践领域。这也就是 安德森 (1991) 定义的 "想象的共同体",一个社会建构的与特定地域脱离的去地域化群体。

在现实中,苗族生活在一个被不同国家间的边界分隔的空间。在传统的中国 "朝贡体系" 和 "天下制度" 下,中越、中老之间的边界并非一向是界限分明的,而是弹性的,模糊的,直到 1885 年跟 1895 年,中法分别才就中越和中老边界签订条约。"1885 年《中法会订越南条约》签订之后,越南成为法国的保护国,此后从 1886 年到 1897 年,中法按照《中法会订越南条约》划定了中越陆地边界,并根据条约在边界上树立了 300 多块界碑" (李桂华 齐鹏飞, 2008)。从某种程度上讲,如泰国的苗族蒙人学者 Leepreecha 教授 (2013, p.1) 所论述的,不是苗族跨越了边界,而是"政治、社会、和法律的边界划过了苗族,使他们成为不同现代民族国家的公民。即使是在现代,这些边界依旧继续扮演着重要的角色,将苗族割裂成独特的支系和碎片。" 在北京的苗族学者石茂明 (2004, p.79) 也持相近的看法,他指出 "一些跨界族群就是 '划界' 给制造出来的,远在千里之外的国家权力主宰着他们的命运。"

现代的民族国家维持着固定的边界,以获得在边界范围内的主权。然而边界就是国家维持它的权力,跨国移民挑战它的权力的一个地点。Clifford (1994, p.304) 认为,边界是规范性和颠覆性跨界的一个地点。做为共同的领土和时间的民族国家被穿越,并在不同程度上被流散的忠诚所颠覆 (Clifford, 1994, p.307)。

开放和封闭的边界

当我在中国的南方和东南亚国家进行田野调查旅行的时候,一个突出的感受就是边界并非总是不可逾越的。特别是在五六十年前,苗族蒙人还可以相当容易地在边界的两边来回举家搬迁。在老挝的川圹省,我访问了苗族朋友杨女士的苗族村寨和她父母的家。他们带我们去了位于老挝和越南边界的农黑边防站。农黑地区是一个苗族蒙人的聚居区。杨妈妈在边防口岸向我们描述了当年她跟她丈夫如何收拾了他们所有的家当,一路赶着他们养的牲口,穿过老越这个边界关卡,从越南来到了老挝,并在离边境不远的一个小村里安住下来。后来在老挝的秘密战争中,他们一家又搬回了越南,直到战后又搬了回来。但如今这个边防站已经是严加把守,没有通行许可很难越过这道边界,更不用说越界搬家了。

同样,在中越边境我也听说了许多五六十年代边境附近的苗族跨境走动的故事,一直持续到七十年代初。云南文山的一位学者告诉我,他家在大跃进和三年自然灾害期间搬去越南投亲靠友,他本人就出生在越南。到了六十年代又举家搬回中国来。在七十年代末的中越战争期间,不少在越南的苗族人做为难民逃到了中国。中国政府在边境附近设立了农场临时安置他们。其中有一位是当今著名的苗族歌手,直到不久前她才正式加入中国国籍。我的一位从泰国来的苗族同事也曾经讲述过她的家族史,她曾祖父一共三兄弟在往南方去的迁徙路途上,一位决定往越南,另外两位决定前往老挝方向。幸运的是他们经过几番周折,后来还是找到了在越南的那一支家族兄弟。

到了七十年代,边界再次强化了警备。在中国的苗族除了知道在边境那边同样生活着他们的同胞以外,对在国外的苗族情况知之甚少。当时只有数量极少的几篇有关东南亚苗族的报道和翻译文章。这种状况直到八十年代才出现了改观。那时从美国,法国,澳大利亚来的海外苗族纷纷回到中国访问。曾经在老挝创制了海外苗族 RPA 文字的法国出生的罗马天主教神父恩保羊 (Father Yves Bertrais, *Txiv Plig Nyaj Pov*) 也在 1984 年访问了中国。他给云南大学的东南亚少数民族研究院带去了5卷苗文书籍。第二年,老挝来的苗族难民杨勇亚(Yon Yia Yang)在昆明为从云南各地选来的学生和学者教授这套苗语书写系统。他们中间的一个就是我曾在文山采访过的苗族历史文化专家张元奇。据他介绍,在恩保羊回到法属圭亚那他生活的苗族社区后,常常给在国内认识的苗族朋友邮寄一本由法属圭亚那苗族协会办的苗语刊物《鹰燕栖息》(*Liaj Luv Chaw Tsaws*)。正是在这儿学过了海外苗文的文山苗族开始在这本刊物上撰写文章,把在中国的苗族介绍给流散在海外各处的苗族社区。他们也在这儿开始发现海外的苗族已经迁徙得很远,有的甚至已经离开了亚洲,搬去了别的大陆。这本苗族刊物为海内外的苗族架起了沟通的桥梁,被人称为 "是在网络未成为主流的那个时代的一本苗族团结的典范杂志" (Ellis, 2016)。

随着中老、中越在八十年代、九十年代相继实现关系正常化,跨越边界的人、财、物和观念及文化的流通再次盛行起来。东南亚国家联盟(Association of Southeast Asian Nations) 的整合也让这些国家的居民在整个东盟的成员国内旅行变得更为便捷。即使是在戒备森严的中越边界,中越两国也开放了很多生意兴隆热闹非凡的边境口岸,让生活在两边的边民在此进行边境贸易。人们从远近各处前来购买各种物品,从食物,到家畜家禽,农产品,日用品,到音乐录音带,影视光盘等文化用品,应有尽

有。这些生活在边境附近的人们都有一本特别的通行证，不需要申请护照和签证就可以跨越边界从事商业活动。

越来越多的苗族如今可以相当便利地，也越来越频繁地跨越边界，他们从事的不仅是经贸活动，还有涉及诸如宗教，教育，婚姻等各样事务。Ngo (2015) 的研究描述了在中越边界附近的跨国传教活动，许多来自越南的苗族信众跨境到中国边界城镇，参加由海外苗族传教士和中国地下教会举办的各种教会培训课程。在泰国北部的清迈，苗族基督教会也差派传教士去老挝和越南的苗族蒙人社区传播福音。在教育方面，越来越多的海外苗族获得中国政府的奖学金去中国留学。在贵州民族大学，我就访问了几位从老挝来的苗族学生，他们来自老挝不同的省份。近年来随着越来越多的中国投资进入老挝，在中老两国间从事贸易往来的机会很多。许多中资公司愿意招收在老挝当地的苗族来帮他们拓展在老挝的事业。在老挝川圹省的一个苗族村寨，我还听说过一个当地的苗族姑娘嫁给了一位随中资公司来老挝的云南文山苗族小伙。他们在老挝相识相爱，因为老挝更宽松的人口生育政策，他们决定就在那安家落户。

同样，中越边境的跨国婚姻也变得越来越稀松平常，其中大多数是越南的苗族姑娘嫁给中国的苗族小伙。在云南马关，几乎每个沿着边境的村庄都有近十个来自越南的苗族越南新娘。他们多数由于不愿经过漫长繁琐而又花钱的手续，从各自的国家取得经公证的未婚证明，去申请登记结婚，因而没有合法的婚姻身份。他们也因此不能在中国合法领取社保，医保等社会福利。其中还有一些新娘是在越南结过婚又跑婚的新娘。我认识的一个在云南马关的知情者就告诉我，他的侄子跟一个越南来的苗族姑娘结婚后，那个新娘没多久就跑了，他们到处找，最后发现那姑娘在邻县又与人结婚了。除了跨国婚姻以外，还有许多从越南跨境进入中国打工的人，其中有不少也是越南的苗族。他们跨越国境进入中国以后，继续前往中国的内地，特别是沿海的大城市去应聘成为打工一族。那些先期进入中国劳动力市场的，就直接回越南帮企业去招聘，把那些人一批批地带进中国。

不管怎样，民族国家的观念做为身份认同的一个重要维度依旧尚未过时。我随云南红河州中越边境附近的一个苗族村寨代表团，一同前往边境那边的越南老街省勐康县的花龙乡参加那儿的苗族新年花山节。这中越两个苗族村寨其实相距不远，花龙乡离边界大概只有五公里。而在中国境内的苗族村寨也离边境只有几公里。可以说两地都在同一个地区。只是中间隔了一道庄严的边境国门。通过那道国门时，所有中方代表团的成员不能直接开车进入越南境内，只能下车步行过境，然后在边界那边经过越方礼仪性的握手欢迎仪式以后，坐上他们提供的几辆客车，直接接送去几公里以外的花山节场地。那儿成千上万穿着节日盛装的越南苗族蒙人同胞们早已经将花山节的场地挤得水泄不通，大家等着中国来的苗族同胞一起“踩花山”。（图二）不过在开幕式上，来自两边的代表分别用越南语和汉语致辞，中间还有翻译相互翻成对方的语言。他们没有在花山节上使用现场那么多苗族同胞熟悉的苗语。据解释，因为这活动代表了国与国之间一种正式的礼节性的外交往来。

在我们回程的路上，中国的苗族代表团一路意犹未尽，自发地同声唱起了那首传唱已久的苗族歌曲，“*Peb Lub Npe Hu Ua Hmoob*”(我们的名字叫苗族)。后来，他们就转而唱起了雄壮的中国国歌《义勇军进行曲》。一路上，他们指着远处在边界那边山脚下的一个村庄，告诉我那是 1979 年中越战争中牺牲的苗族英雄陶绍文 (*Khuat Dlob*) 的出生之地。当我们跨越边境回到中国境内的时候，一行人爆发出欢呼声。在边境上，我听到过很多发生在七十年代中越战争中的故事。那时居住在中越边境两边的苗族分别在各自的国家军队中服役，保家卫国。两边的苗族在战场上都使用苗语向对方的苗族军人同胞喊话，希望对方放下武器投诚。

即便是如今，生活在不同民族国家的苗族可以比较容易地相互跨越边境，民族国家的边界并没有消失。正如范笔德（Peter van der Veer，1995, p.11) 在那本《民族和移民》一书的前言中所说，划定边界的领土象征着民族国家的固定性，稳定性和主权性，所以边界已经成为国际战争，难民，和移民政策发生的场域。那些把他们自己视为一个国族的常常寻找关于他们独立国族地位的一个空间的领土表达。对于海内外的苗族来说，他们身处不同的民族国家，所从属的不同国族，依旧提供着一个有界限的空间来规范他们的身份认同。

鲜花盛开的地方: 离别与回家的交汇点

在离中越边境不远的地方，有一个曾经是苗族人迁徙告别和出发的地点，如今又是一个寻根和联系的交汇点。那就是位于云南省的东南部，与越南的河江省交界的文山。而 *Paj Tawg Lag*，蒡兜兰，就是文山这个壮族苗族自治州一个非常诗意的苗语名字。

Paj Tawg Lag 在苗语中的意思是“花开的地方”。根据当地的苗族专家侯健介绍，这个名字来源于文山的一个旧名“开化府”，他认为由于苗族对汉语“开化”一词的理解不准确而说成“开花城”，而 *Paj Tawg Lag* 就是这个地名的苗语化名字。

文山的苗族学者王万荣（2010）通过研究，认为文山地区的苗族大多是从川黔滇结合部迁来，而迁入文山的时间大致从明初开始直至清朝末年，前后有三次大规模的迁徙。主要原因是统治阶级长期以来对苗族采取经济上剥削、政治上压迫、军事上镇压而导致的。到了清中叶时有一些在文山的苗族开始南迁。而侯健指出，*Paj Tawg Lag* “是 200 多年前苗族迁往东南亚国家的‘桥头堡’；文山，是现当代欧美苗族来华寻根问祖的第一站；文山，是东南亚及欧美苗族最重要的迁徙地标，” 是海外苗族集体记忆中他们的迁徙在中国的最后一站，是海外苗族的故乡。他这样描述：

> 据考证，大约距今 200 多年前，贵州苗族首领陶新春、陶三春率领广大穷苦苗民揭竿而起，举行声势浩大的反清起义。清廷

派重兵进行残酷血腥的镇压，迫使大批苗族从川黔南迁进入云南，并在开化城附近作休整停留，然后挥师南下进入越南河江、老街等北部省份，随之翻越东南亚最高峰——越南黄莲山主峰，经莱州、奠边府等地，进入老挝境内。

越南方面有关苗族在越南的迁徙历史研究同样证实苗族的南迁。根据越南的研究，苗族前后三波迁入越南。第一波发生在 300 多年前，从贵州迁到云南的苗族，迁入了越南的同文，苗旺和河江地区。第二波发生在 200 多年前，一大批的苗族从两个方向迁入越南：一个是继续前往同文，保乐（高平省），北靡，箐珉和黄树肥（河江省）；另一支迁往新马街，勐康（老街省），封土（莱州省）。第三波发生在 150 年前，苗族迁往新马街（老街省），封土（莱州省）；从那儿他们继续往西北迁往达取，巡教（莱州省），顺州，马河（山罗省）多处，最后到达清化省的山区。那时，有一队在老挝川圹的苗族已经迁到了清化和义安省，并居住在义安省的祺山地区 (Vũ Quốc Khánh, 2004; Vương Duy Quang 2005; Cư Hòa Vần, Hoàng Nam, 1994)。

苗族的迁徙路线经过口头记录，一代又一代地流传下来。根据苗族的习俗，一个苗族人的过世意味着这人离开这个世界，去追随祖先们，等待重生的日子 (Quincy 1988, p.90)。所以在葬礼上，一个巫师或者办理丧葬的人士会诵唱《指路经》(*Qhuab Ke or Krua Ke*)，一个指引亡者的灵魂一步一步回到自己祖先的故土中国的一个 “灵魂的路线图”。这是苗族葬礼中的一个重要组成部分。随着苗族人的迁徙，《指路经》“在流传中也因时代和社会地域不同添加了些不同的内容，如进入越南后，因多数苗族是从云南文山出去的，有的家族在其《指路经》中就出现引导死者返程时要经过 “开花”（文山）这地方，而进入老挝的部分苗族族群的《指路经》就有返程必须经过越南老街沙巴市城西的 “冷死人的垭口饿死人的坡” (Daox duas chaib dleuf duas naot)，而进入欧美国家的苗族，有的族群现在《指路经》内容已有引领死者灵魂回中国的内容了” (杨朝山, n.d.)。

八十年代渐渐出现了一股来自西方的海外苗族回中国寻根的热潮，到了九十年代这股热潮达到高峰。这发生在老挝难民移居到美国，法国和其他西方国家仅仅几年之后。澳大利亚的苗族学者 Gary Yia Lee (2005b) 这样描述，居住在异国他乡陌生人中间的苗族，那时经历着一个 “文化传统多方位的跨国的复兴，以回应在战后他们在外国文化中落地后产生的一个急迫的文化需求”。值得欣慰的是在文化上，年轻的苗族人开始对于探寻保留他们宗族的历史，甚至对去中国寻根感兴趣 (cf. Dunnigan & Olney 1985, p.123)。

正是这个时候，中国的苗族和海外的苗族蒙人开始相遇。许多海外苗族的知识分子，包括 杨道博士 和 杨扣博士，都循着这条祖辈的迁徙之路回到了中国。侯健 (n.d.) 讲述了 1991 年来自美国明尼苏达州的 7 人苗族蒙人代表团访问文山的故事。“他们第一件事就提及 ‘蒌蒟兰（*Paj Tawg Lag*）’ 在哪里？第二件事就是用芦笙语言与文山的苗族同胞进行交流。” 他们去中国不仅要寻找传说中的 “鲜花盛开的地方”，而且还要寻找被尊为苗族人祖先的，据传说五千年前在涿鹿之战中被黄帝和炎帝联军击溃的蚩尤（或 *Txiv Yawg*）的有关信息和历史（张晓, n.d.)。除此之外，明尼苏达的代表团还试着寻找他们在中国所属的家族和宗族。

在苗族文化中讲究宗族的团结。Lee (1986, p.57) 谈及苗族的族名时这样说，“两个苗族初次见面，他们立刻关心的就是相互建立起宗族的身份，这样他们就可以建立起联系。这很容易通过一个人的姓氏来发现这个人所属的宗族。如果他们属于同一个宗族，下一个问题就是他们来自这个宗族中的哪一支。这一般通过相互询问是否各自进行相似的葬礼，门祭，牛祭等仪式，以及从他们亡者的坟墓构造中来找寻答案。如果这些共同因素都建立起来了，那宗族支系关系也就确定了。再接下来就可能是看这两个苗族是不是同一个祖先的后代。如果他们有着同一个祖先的家族血缘关系，那么他们就被称为 ‘一家兄弟’ (*ib cuab kwv tij*)。即使他们的家族迁出中国已经四五代了，许多海外苗族蒙人来到中国，仍能重新发现并建立起他们的宗族和亲属关系。”

在云南马关的苗族花山节广场上，我见到了两位来自美国加州的苗族父子俩。这位儿子向我介绍了他这一路来的心路历程，“我父母对于他们在老挝和泰国生活的沉默不语，其实是他们受到的心灵创伤的一种回响。他们希望忘却过去大步往前。我们也这样做了。但是对于我来说，我总是想知道得更多。我渴望了解我们的历史，想知道我们从哪里来，他们在老挝在泰国难民营是怎么样生活的，我的祖先在他们的土地上又是怎样生活的。” 所以他们来寻访祖先的故土。

有了这些新建立起来的联系，来自美国的苗族蒙人开始来购买传统的文化产品，把他们带到美国去，去充实他们的文化库存。其中的一项主要商品就是苗族的传统服饰。慢慢地，文山，或者蒌兜兰，就成了苗族服饰的中心。仅文山一地就有两个经营苗族服饰的市场，里面有许多的店家设计，裁剪，缝制，出售苗族服饰。这儿生产和销售的服饰远销到了全国各地的苗族地区以及世界各地的苗族社区。这儿的市场引领着各地苗族服饰的潮流。

在一家苗族服饰店，我遇见了一个来自美国加州的苗族姑娘，她指着色彩鲜艳的苗族服饰告诉我，“我非常想要拥有几件来自中国的苗族服饰。这些服饰用一种强有力的方式跟我说话。纺织，染色，蜡染， 十字绣，自然的染料，还有纺织的工艺……虽然没有文字记录，但这一切工艺和技术都令人奇妙地掌握着，并传承了下来……这色彩自然地流淌在这些服饰上，就像在大自然中那些自然的色彩……在服装上显得简洁而富有生活气息。”她觉得这些苗族服饰代表了“地道的苗族时尚”，即使这些苗族服饰只是文山每年推出的苗族服饰新花样的一部分。

模糊的中国: 祖国还是故土？

Safran (1991) 曾强调祖国在定义一个流散族群基本特性中起着异常重要的作用。对他来说，流散族群的成员保留

着一个“他们最初的祖国”的集体记忆；他们把“祖先家园”理想化，并且致力于要恢复“最初的祖国”，并继续以不同的方式“与祖国联系起来”。但是对于流散在海外的苗族，祖国， 故土，或者一个苗族之地这些观念相互碰撞，如 Lee (2009, p.3) 所指出的那样，“缺乏一个定义清晰的领土的祖国”。

Davidson (1993, p.85) 认为，苗族是中国人——不是汉族中国人，但是他们也是中国人，因为中国是他们的祖国。路易莎 (Schein，2004) 也提出“据我所知，在每一海外苗族居住的地方，他们都指向中国为他们的祖国。”但是在我的田野研究中，虽然几乎所有的海外苗族都承认中国是他们的祖先故土，但他们并不一定都视中国为自己的祖国。海外苗族蒙人与中国那块土地和人民的亲近程度有差异。Lee (2015) 认为，“现在对于祖国在哪儿至今还没有形成一个共识。最近有些美国苗族蒙人，虽然继续承认他们最初来自中国，但是一直在倡导将老挝作为他们的祖国。”在离散研究中值得探讨祖国和祖先故土这些概念，特别是考虑到作为亚国家的少数民族，他们流离失所的历史和背井离乡的经历，他们对于那块土地，人民和祖居地所在的民族国家整体的关系密切程度。

海外的苗族蒙人常被视为是“无国家的民族”。比如 Davidson (1993, p.174) 指出了在苗族蒙人历史中很显著的四大主题，其中的一个就是没有自己的国家，其他还有迁徙，民族认同和幸存。他的论据是，在美国苗族蒙人或者他们的祖先在过去的几百年间已经在四个国家生活过：中国、老挝、泰国和美国。在这些国家，苗族蒙人都是少数族裔，是处在边缘的人。这使他们成为没有自己的国家。同样地，Lee (1986, p.55) 也将没有自己的国家这个传统作为海外苗族蒙人的一种生活方式，以此将他们与别的族群区别开来。然而，在一个国家成为一个少数族群，并不一定就使这个族群丧失了自己的国家。比如满族，在清朝他们作为少数民族统治了整个中国，但是他们并非没有国家。而根据中华人民共和国宪法的序言，“中华人民共和国是全国各族人民共同缔造的统一的多民族国家。平等、团结、互助的社会主义民族关系已经确立，并将继续加强。”因而，中国不应该被视作一个汉族中国人的国家，而是各民族中国人共同拥有的一个国家。在中国不应该有哪个民族， 不管多数还是少数，被视为无国家。

但是在海外苗族蒙人与作为民族国家的中国之间存在着一种复杂而微妙的关系。这种关系情感的一面，在我与一个从美国加州来贵州雷山过苗年的海外苗族蒙人的访谈中充分体现出来。他说，“我们并不被视为海外的华人，即使我们把这个地方看作祖国。这是我们祖先生活过的地方。你看，对于汉族，不管他们出生在哪儿，在东南亚，在欧洲，或者在美洲，他们仍然可以被视为‘海外华人’，但是我们呢？”

我把这个问题带到了文山当地侨联的一个苗族负责人。侨联是负责“保护归国的海外华人以及他们的亲属和居住在海外的华人的合法权利和利益”的半官方组织。但是我所了解到的这个问题比想象的更复杂。承认海外华人的身份是一个可能影响中国与他们所住在国关系的棘手问题。中国早在五十年代就签署了协议，对海外华人取消了双重国籍或多重国籍。在七八十年代 中越冲突的时候，有相当一部分逃入中国成了难民，住在这边专门安置难民的农场。他们中间只有一部分最后拿到了中国的国籍。他们现在的做法是，只要是海外的苗族来中国或者寻求帮助，他们都表示欢迎。有些学者提出了“少数民族华侨华人”的概念，根据他们的“记录、祖籍地、客观认同、迁移时间和主观认同”这五个因素作为辨识“少数民族华侨华人”的标准。但是“这种辨识必须建立在承认华人目前对所属国的政治认同、民族认同和文化认同的基础之上”（李安山，2003, p.6)。

杜维明（1994）驳斥了本质主义的中国性，“定义中国人属于汉族，出生于中国本土，说国语普通话，遵守‘爱国’的道德规范，这看似无伤大雅，但这种过于简单化的概念所掩盖的跟它所揭示的一样多。事实上，它可以很容易产生意外和不幸的后果”（p. vii)。而让“中国是否是祖国”这样的想法变得很为复杂的是，海外苗族蒙人对中国的称呼和感知。一方面，在海外苗族蒙人的苗语中，中国被称为“*Suav Teb*”，字面意思是“*Suav*”也就是汉族的土地“*Teb*”。根据研究，“*Suav*”是源于“夏朝”的夏，或者华夏的夏。因此，对于苗族特别是海外的苗族蒙人，“*Suav*”就是他者，而“*Suav Teb*”是他者的土地，他者的国度。在某种程度上，海外苗族蒙人将自身与中国拉开距离。可是在另一方面，根据王富文 (Tapp, 2003, p.14) 所描述，在泰国的苗族蒙人实质上依然是他们的曾祖父母们，祖父母们几十年前离开的，那个仪式和政治国度的想象的居住者。他们在谈及他们的祖国中国时坚持称之为“大朝”（*Tuam Tshoj*），而不是那些在中国境外的东南亚的“小朝”（*Xov Tshoj*）。他认为，“在我看来，他们的一个很强的意识应该是依旧属于一个更广泛中国人 / 华人的群体。。。”

Yang（2003，p.295）承认苗族蒙人对于中国有种亲近，“虽然美国苗族蒙人从老挝迁徙而来，对中国知之甚少，但他们对中国持续非常重视。许多美国苗族蒙人继续引导已故亲人的灵魂回到中国，祖先的土地上。。。不少苗族蒙人都去中国留学或访问过。”Vang (2010, p.6) 承认，今天的苗族蒙人对他们的祖国有不同的定义。“对于一些年长者，真正的祖国是中华人民共和国，他们祖先最初迁移出的国家。对于成年的移民，那个地方则是老挝。而对于移民的子女，他们的家可能就是底特律，明尼阿波利斯，密尔沃基，或普罗维登斯。对于那些难民营出生并在那度过童年时光的人来说，家可能就意味着是泰国。”由于苗族蒙人特有的，多阶段的迁徙经历，路易莎 (Schein，2004) 建议一种老挝和中国并存的双重祖国。苗族对于祖国和祖先故土的认知差距和模糊性，说明少数族群面临的一种冲突状态，他们在祖国和寄居国都处于双重的少数，在历史上又经历过多次的流离失所。超越祖国和祖先的故土，他们渴望着一块苗族之地或 *Hmong Tebchaws*，一个苗族人自由生活居住的空间，一个可以称为家的地方。

Khek Noi: “苗” 莱坞和苗族电影的跨国生产

Khek Noi 是泰国北部碧差汶府（Phetchabun）考阔地区（Khao Kho District）的一个山村，居住人口超过一万一千人。在 1965 年至 1984 年间，这个偏远的山区曾是泰国共产党和泰国皇家陆军激战的战场。如今它是泰国最大的苗族蒙人聚居地，也是世界苗族蒙人影视生产的中心，是 “苗族的好莱坞” 或 “‘苗’ 莱坞” (Baird 2014, p.10)。

一位在云南文山经营苗族音像制品和服饰商店的苗族妇女，两年前去访问过这个地方。她把一个在 Khek Noi 的苗族电影制作团队介绍了给我。

这个山村坐落在泰国北部连绵起伏的丘陵中。如今在村前通过的 12 号高速公路将它与外面的世界连接起来。我那天下午在公路上下了长途车后，一位电影制作团队的成员来村口接我（图三）。他开车带我穿过狭窄而繁忙，像迷宫一样的街道，直到我们来到村边一座面对起伏的山峦和峡谷的普通一层楼砖房前。在那里我见到了*Xab Thoj*，一个多才多艺的苗族超级明星。他既是演员，歌手，又兼电影制作和编辑，编剧和导演。他把我介绍给他的摄制组团队，其中大多数人在他家同吃，同住，同工作，过着像一个大家庭一样的集体生活。很多团队的成员其实本来都是他大家庭的成员。

同他的电影摄制组其他成员和在这个村里别的电影制作者一样，*Xab Thoj* 曾经是一位农民。他从事电影行业已经有 18 年多，并制作过 20 多部的苗族电影。在我访问的那个季节（1 月份），他的摄制组是村里唯一在工作的电影制作团队 (图四)。他们告诉我，电影生产过几个月会慢慢忙起来，在最繁忙的季节，这个村可能会有 10 多个电影制作团队同时在拍摄制作。

在这里生产的所有苗族电影的背后，都有着一个遍布世界各地苗族社区，联结苗族电影的生产，销售，以及消费的流畅的跨国经营网络。几乎所有的苗族电影都是美国苗族蒙人投资（用他们自己的话说是 “赞助”）的，这些投资人一般在美国的苗族社区经营自己的录像店或有一个影视录像的销售系统。一旦投资确定以后，他们会飞到泰国，寻找合适的故事，与潜在的制作者见面，然后吸收来自泰国和老挝的苗族人才，在 Khek Noi 组织起一个制作团队。当影片制作完成后，摄制组将主拷贝寄给那些美国苗族电影的投资赞助商，供他们批量生产影视录像带和光盘，并供应给分布在全美各地苗族社区里的分销商。每年有两个苗族电影重要的销售季节：一个是在 7月4日美国国庆前后；另一个是每年的十一月和十二月的苗族新年庆祝活动之时。这些电影摄制团队对于影片发行的时间表有清楚的认知。

Khek Noi 已成为一个 “苗族好莱坞”，因为这儿生产成本相对较低，往来便利，也容易吸引大多数来自泰国和老挝的优秀人才组成团队。这儿优美的自然环境也很适合拍摄亚洲背景的电影。另外一个重要因素是，海外苗族蒙人在泰国享有相对多的自由可以拍摄自己的电影，特别是那些有关苗族蒙人在老挝 “秘密战争” 中悲惨遭遇的电影。

每部电影的预算不尽相同，从两万到四万美金一部的喜剧或剧情片，到六万美金以上的战争片。这一切不仅取决于成本，而且还取决于美国文化市场所期望的销售。在过去几年，网络上的娱乐越来越普及，致使苗族电影销量逐年下滑，影响到苗族电影行业的生计，在 Khek Noi 的苗族电影生产也深受影响。

我访问了一位赋闲住在村里的美国苗族电影赞助商，Vue 先生来自加利福尼亚州弗雷斯诺，在这村里也置有一处房产。他当初在加州的当地电视台工作了几年之后，第一次回到泰国制作电影，那是在 1999 年。他先去了北标府（Saraburi）Tham Krabok 庙附近的苗族聚居区。他花了一个月左右在那拍摄了一部苗族影片，又经过两个月的后期编辑制作。这部影片非常成功，受到了大家的喜爱。一年后，他就来到了这座村庄，拍出了更多的苗族影片。不过现在他暂时退出这个行业，是因为他所说的 “一个低迷的苗族电影市场” 的缘故。过去一部电影可以销售并制作三千到四千盘，以五美元一盘出售。如今苗族电影市场萎缩，销量也下降了三分之一到一半，只能制作销售两三千盘。许多苗族电影投资者很难维持收支平衡，再也无力投资电影。他感叹道，“网络摧毁了苗族电影”，“并且苗族电影的著作权在市场上没有受到很好的保护。有些人购买了一部电影的 DVD，就回去自己复制来出售牟利。”

然而，苗族电影不只是一桩生意。就像 Vue 先生所说，苗族电影是让苗族人通过故事来学习苗族语言和文化的最佳媒介。他希望通过拍电影 “能让苗族人了解苗族文化，知道苗族人是怎么生活的，以此促使他们重新找到苗族的文化传统。” Xab Thoj 同样也希望通过他制作电影，来将苗族人的故事讲给苗族人听。纵观苗族电影制作的全过程，有一个从资本，人才，创意到文化产品的发展完备的流通系统。苗族影片在世界各地的苗族社区被广泛传播和消费。在我的田野研究旅途中，这些苗族电影，我在文山的不少音像店看到过，也在中越边境的边贸口岸市场的小摊，在泰国和老挝苗族蒙人村庄边土路旁的小音像店里 (图五)，以及美国威斯康星州拉克罗斯的苗族新年活动中都看到过。按照安德森（1991 年）的描述，人们通过消费苗族电影和其他的文化产品，视自己为其中的一部分，这样促成了一个与物质空间相分离的跨地域的苗族共同体的想象。

协商苗族 / 蒙人的身份

作为在中国被称为苗族的一个支系，散居海外的苗族蒙人八十年代初与在中国的苗族开始接触。他们发现在中国的有些苗族支系操着跟他们不同的语言，他们庆祝的文化和习俗与他们的也有很大的差距。他们开始质疑在中国苗族识别的有效性。虽然西部方言区有些苗族自称

为（赫）蒙人，但在别的方言区的苗族分别自称为“牡”（中部方言），“果雄”（东部方言）和“阿卯”（滇东北方言）。有些人甚至认为“苗族”是一个被揉合起来的名称，“被称为苗族的四个支系还未建立起一个关于共同的起源，历史和文化的具体证据”(Yang, 2008)，而且认为，“苗族作为一个近代民族的最早雏形，最初是被‘他者’想象和建构出来的”(Yang, 2009, p.22)。有学者，比如 Lemoine (2005, p.1) 甚至呼吁抵制“苗族”这个名字，认为“中国的蒙人在 1949 年以后掉进了‘苗族’这个陷阱”。事实上，虽然苗语的三大方言在很大程度上互不相通，但是根据石茂明 (2004, p.91) 所引述的专家考证，苗语各方言之间的同源词，也就是具有共同词源的词，达到 30% 至 40%。

称谓和分类在任何族群的身份和识别中扮演着重要作用。正如王富文 (Tapp，2004), Yang (2005) 和其他人指出，对于苗族这个名称，“在中国以外的海外蒙人对此强烈愤怒，还没有适应和习惯”，因为在东南亚地区，他们曾经一度被称为“Meo”，这是一个涉及到动物的侮辱性的名称 (Davidson, 1993, p.11)。他们把“苗”和“Meo”看作是类似的称谓，所以同样也否定“苗族”的指称。Enwall（1992）也称“苗”为贬义词，并说许多海外蒙人喜欢用蒙人这个名称来指称在中国国内和国外的蒙人。不过他也提到在中国的苗族没有表示要改变他们自我识别的想法。

海外的苗族喜欢用他们的自称“蒙人”来标识自己。有些人，包括杨道博士，东南亚甚至西方的第一位苗族博士，认为蒙的意思就是“自由人”(Garrett, 1974; Mottin, 1980; Chan, 1994)。不过后来，他重新定义蒙的意思是“人”(Yang & Blake, 1993)。更有人，像 Heimbach (1969)，认为蒙这个词在苗语里没有任何特定的意义。不过路易莎 (Schein, 1986) 指出，苗族这个称谓“被认为是唯一适当的称谓，可以涵盖已被发现是语言相似到足以被认为是同族群的不同支系，因此，不同于中国历史上以往任何的时代，‘苗族’这个名称现在被这个民族的成员广泛用于自我识别，有显著的证据表明这个词负面性意涵确实已消除”(p.77)。

来自贵州的苗族学者张晓（2005 年）讨论海内外苗族认同时指出，据音韵学家分析，“苗”可能是对于苗族自称的一种汉语记音。许多中国的苗族学者多支持这一观点。据有着人类学和语言学训练，并多年致力于苗语语言原重建（proto-reconstruction）的美国苗族研究者李哲相（Tzexa Lee）所研究，“蒙”和“苗”实际上是同一个词的不同发音。根据他的原重建，“苗”最初来自“Hmiau”。这“u”音有一种被鼻音同化的倾向（语言学理论）。因为汉族没有送气鼻音，他们只能说 *Miau*，“h”被遗失了。一个讲英语的人也不会发这个“h”音。这就是为什么一些美国人或西方人可能会说“hoh-Monng”。他指出了Hmiau 最初的名字如何随时间产生了不同的变化：

Hmiau —》Miau (汉语) —》Meo (越南 / 老挝);

Hmiau —》 Hmau (花苗) —》 Hmu (黔东南苗族) —》 Hmon (西部苗语) —》 Mon (美国青苗);

Hmiau —》 Hiau —》 Xiong (湘西苗族)

如今散居海外的苗族和生活在中国的苗族正在进行路易莎 (Schein，2004) 所称“身份互换”和“身份生产”。她观察到 蒙人旅行者来访时常跟他们的主人自称为苗族，而当从中国来的苗族访问美国苗族，他们也自称为“蒙人”(Schein, 1998)。普遍的共识是，蒙人一般用于英语中指代苗族，而苗族被用于中文来指代海外散居的苗族蒙人。有时候这两个名称并存。我在贵州黔东南属于中部苗语方言区的西江就看到一家饭馆，它的英文名字就叫“Hmong Restaurant”(图六)。此外根据 Julian (2003)，路易莎 (Schein，2002, 2004) 和 Lee (1996)，散居在海外的苗族倾向于通过抹除他们与所有中国苗族之间的文化和语言的差异，以重建其身份。正如 Barth (1969) 所说，更关键的是“界定族群的边界，而不是它包含的文化内容”(p.15)。这正在进行的是一个身份的协商过程。

此外，苗族 / 蒙人都积极参与定义自己的身份，苗蒙或苗族性，身为苗族 / 蒙人的意义。***Peb Lub Npe Hu Ua Hmoob***（我们的名字是苗族），一首由文山两位苗族学者作词作曲的苗语歌曲，就是一个很好的例子。这首歌不仅在中国苗族地区，而且在散居海外的苗族蒙人社区中广泛传唱。因为这首歌拨动了每个苗族的心弦。

Peb Lub Npe Hu Ua Hmoob (我们的名字叫苗族)
Vim li cas peb yuav hais peb suab lus? (为什么我们要使用自己的语言?)
Vim li cas peb yuav hnav peb zam tsoos? (为什么我们要配饰自己的装束?)
Tsis vim tsav niaj tus dab tsi, (不为什么啊,)
Tsuas vim peb lub npe hu ua Hmoob. (只因为我们的名字叫苗族。)

Vim li cas peb yuav kawm peb ntaub ntawv? (为什么我们要学自己的书本?)
Vim li cas peb yuav nthuav peb txuj ci? (为什么我们要将弘扬自己的艺术?)
Tsis vim tsav niaj tus dab tsi, (不为什么啊,)
Tsuas vim peb lub npe hu ua Hmoob. (只因为我们的名字叫苗族。)

Vim li cas peb yuav taug peb kab ke? (为什么我们要继承祖先留下的文化?)
Vim li cas peb yuav ua peb kos tshoob? (为什么要保留自己的传统习俗?)
Tsis vim tsav niaj tus dab tsi, (不为什么啊,)
Tsuas vim peb lub npe hu ua Hmoob. (只因为我们的名字叫苗族。)

Peb muaj peb li ntshav，(我们有自己的血缘,)
Peb muaj peb li nqaij，（我们有自己的骨肉,）
Peb muaj peb li siab，（我们也有自己的心地和思想,）
Peb muaj peb li hmoov，（我们也有自己的命运和前途,）
Peb yog saum ntiaj teb no ib haiv neeg，（别人有多长的历史我们有多长的历史,）

Luag muaj pes tsawg xyoo yus los muaj pes tsawg xyoo，（我们是世界上一个坚强的民族。）

Peb nquag ua qoob loo，（我们勤劳我们勇敢，）
Peb li tswv yim coob，（我们善良我们质朴，）
Peb muaj kev txawj ntse，（我们用我们的双手种我们的庄稼，）
Peb li siab ntsws zoo，（我们用自己的双脚走我们的道路，）
Peb Hmoob txawm nyob rau qab ntuj khwb，（我们居住在这宽广而有辽阔的天底下，）
Sab hnub tuaj nyob txog sab hnub poob，（从东方的富地平原到西方的贫穷山谷。）

Peb tsis ntshai leej twg，（我们不畏强暴，）
Peb tsis ua qhev ntxoog，（我们不当奴仆，）
Peb tsis khib leej twg，（我们不欺压任何弱小，）
Peb tsis txeeb teev ntoo，（我们不与别人争官做，）
Peb nrog txhua yam haiv neeg ntaus phooj ywg，（我们与各民族平等相处友好往来，）
Tso dag zog muab peb neej nyoog txhim kho zoo，（我们一心建设我们的祖国和民族。）

Txawm tias mus txog lub teb chaws twg peb yog Hmoob,（不管走过多少路途，不能忘，我们是苗族，）
Txawm tias dhau lawm pes tsawg niaj xyoos peb yog Hmoob,（无论度过多少时光，要牢记，我们是苗族，）
Peb tsis txawj hnov qab peb lub npe --- (我们也不会忘记自己的名字---)
Hmoob! Hmoob!! Hmoob!!! (苗族! 苗族!! 苗族!!!)

这个歌仿佛是一个身份的宣告，告诉族人，也告诉世界：我们有自己的语言，文化和习俗；我们历史悠久，经历磨难，勤劳勇敢又坚强；我们爱好自由与和平；我们是苗族。这首歌的词作者张元奇在访谈中说，这首歌的歌词源自他用西部方言创作的一首苗语诗歌。这首诗 1987 年在文山电台的新年广播会上朗诵后深受欢迎。当地的苗族音乐人陶永华第二年为它谱了曲。自从这首歌在 1988 年文山的新年晚会上首次亮相以后传唱开来。无论是在自称 “蒙” 的西部苗语方言区，还是不自称 “蒙” 的中部和东部苗语方言区，每到苗族的重要活动或节日都会演唱这首歌。一些兄弟民族，像土家族，彝族，哈尼族等也喜欢这首歌，他们将苗族改为他们自己的族名，也在他们的文化活动演唱。这首歌在散居在海外的苗族地区同样深受欢迎。有些人称它为 “苗族之歌”。

结语: 新苗疆, 一个跨地域苗族的再疆界化

经过数代人的分离和迁移，散居在海外的苗族蒙人和他们同族群的中国苗族，重新相互发现并团聚。在某种程度上，海内外两支同族群的苗族已开始逐渐结合。如 Lee (2005b) 指出，一个更加强烈的共同的民族意识在发展之中。基于汇集和采纳在全球不同国家生活的苗族的文化项目和实践，一个全球化的身份正在形成之中。这充分阐明了阿帕杜莱（1996）所称为的 “族群景观”（ethnoscape），“不能再轻松地本地化，而是已经越来越与一个以运动和互动为特征的，个人，群体，关系和想象的全球分布相关联” (p.192)。

当人们庆祝苗族/蒙人的跨国性，我认为这种跨国性不是一个新现象；相反我们更应关注跨地域性，因为苗族人跨越国界在不同的国家生活并保持一定接触由来已久了，不过尽管如此，他们过去生活在一个特定的隔绝的和限定的地域空间。有时本地可能本身就处在这边界的两边，是跨国界的。然而在过去的几十年，苗族/蒙人开始把眼光投向了超越紧邻和本地的地域范围之外，随着在世界各地的苗族之间越来越紧密的联系，呈现出了跨地域性。

跨国性或跨国主义跟跨地域性紧密相关。Greiner and Sakdapolrak (2013) 曾经通过查找最近关于跨地域性的研究，找寻跨国主义与它的关系，发现跨地域性可以 “用来克服一些前者的概念弱点”，包括其焦点局限性地集中在民族国家上。Bromber (2013, p.69) 进一步阐明了跨地域性 “比跨国主义更具包容性，因为它超越了作为分析框架的民族国家，因此有着历史深度。” 她认为，跨地域性意味着空间流动性，而跨国主义则是被它影响的物理的，政治的，社会的和文化的空间和地域。

跨地域性起始于本地层面，而不是国家层面， 但它又超越本地。 跨地域性意味着对于一个地域性区域的有界性的超越，而同时又强调了源自当地的各种连接。从某种意义上说，跨国性可以被视为是更广阔的跨地域性的一个层面。跨地域性使我们看到了从底层开始的移动，连接和相互关联，并超越了本地的局部地域，却又不仅局限于民族国家层面。对于海内外苗族/蒙人来说，他们的跨地域性，不仅仅体现在散居海外的苗族蒙人和在中国的苗族之间，同时也包括分散在中国各地的不同苗族支系之间，以及各国海外苗族蒙人的不同支系之间。中国的学者石茂明 (2004, p.117) 在他的跨国苗族研究中考察苗族的迁移后指出，历史上苗族经历几千年的迁移，从中国的地理中心（中原）到西南边疆，从贵州到云南，再从云南，一部分人迁出了中国的疆界，进入了越南，老挝，泰国，缅甸等国家，最后到了世界其他地区。这迁徙形成了一种不仅是地理意义上的，而且是文化和经济生活方面的边缘化。而如今，随着更多海内外苗族在团结和统一中的互相连接，以及海外苗族到中国的旅行，一种反向的非边缘化趋势正在显现。

阿帕杜莱（1996）指出了跨越文化界限流动的全球 “景观” 的五个方面，包括族群景观，金融景观，媒体景观，技术景观和意识景观。这些 “都是……想象世界的建筑构件，也就是由遍布全球的个人和团体，在历史情境中的想象构建而成的多个世界” (p. 329)。随着人们日益频繁而加速的流动，以及物质和符号的流动，一个具有互连，多层次，多方面的苗族共同体的跨地域想象正在形成。过去分散在不同的民族国家内，相互分隔的，无

法到达的偏远山区里的苗族空间整合成新的苗族之地，一个新苗疆。这个新苗疆从中国西南传统的苗疆走廊一路延伸，沿着在东南亚的海外苗蒙走廊，连接起越南，老挝， 缅甸和泰国的北部地区的不同苗族村寨，而文山，沙巴，Khek Noi 和万象就是这新苗疆的不同节点。与此同时，人、财、物、和思想、文化符号等在这条走廊间的不断流动，曾经遗失和遗忘的苗族宗族亲属关系的重新发现和建立，不仅使想象的跨地域的苗族共同体再疆界化成为可能，同时孕育出一个具有文化自觉性的，新的跨地域的苗族主体性。

然而这个过程仍存在着各种障碍。其中之一就是缺乏统一的苗族/苗语书写系统。单在中国就有好几个苗语书写系统，包括在 20 世纪 50 年代为东部，中部，西部方言和滇东北苗语方言区分别创制的四套基于拉丁文的书写系统，以及一套由基督教卫理公会传教士柏格理等人为滇东北方言区创制，已经使用近一个世纪的老苗文。在海外，也有好几套文字，包括使用最广泛的国际苗文 (RPA)，以及在越南，老挝（杨松录苗文系统）和泰国等的不同版本。这带来的问题就是来自世界不同地区的苗族如何通过文字进行沟通？尤其是讲同一种方言的苗族如何通过同一种书写系统实现联系和交流？已经有学者正在研究如何将苗族的不同书写系统统一起来。一个统一的苗语书写系统将让来自世界各地的苗族有可能相聚在这些苗族的网站上，比如在泰国的 tojsiab.com，或在中国的 3-hmong.com，或是在美国明尼苏达的 hmongtvnetwork.com。

再者，民族国家的概念和它的领土远未过时。它为人们提供了另一个需要协商的空间。而在中国，传说中的苗族祖先蚩尤如今已经跟黄帝和炎帝一起，被供奉为中华民族的三祖之一。这将如何改变海内外跨地域的苗族与中国这块土地，国家和人民的认同，以及他们与这个地区的其他民族国家的认同？而这个延伸的新苗疆与这些民族国家又将产生什么样的联系，这一切都还有待进一步的研究。

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图一: 贵州黔东南的西江千户苗寨

图二: 越南边境花龙的苗族新年花山节

图三: 位于泰国北部碧差汶府山区的海外苗族蒙人影视基地 Khek Noi村入口口

图四: Xab Thoj 和他的苗族电影摄制组

图五: 老挝川圹路边的小音像店出售苗族音像制品

图六: 属于中部苗语方言区的西江苗寨的一家苗人饭馆

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