



# Friday Seminar

## A Crisis of Masculinity: Failed Football Journeys in Ethnic Lijiang



**Dec 1** | 1:00 - 2:30PM | **NAH 114**

In this talk, I will explore masculinity, as expressed through football in Lijiang, a Naxi-dominated city in southwest China. Chinese minority ethnic groups have often been depicted in the anthropological literature in feminine terms; but in this talk I discuss the distinctly masculine side of the Naxi in the serious business of football. Typically, a professional footballer is supposed to display his muscular physicality and economic success by showcasing his loyalty and honor to his team and by supporting his family as a breadwinner. In Lijiang, however, a crisis in masculinity was apparent among almost every footballer I knew.

Based on eighteen months of fieldwork, I discuss in this talk the football journeys of young Naxi men who pursue professional careers. This ethnography consists of two parts. For those young talents migrating to elite football clubs elsewhere, I show that a sense of failure and frustration mainly lies in the rigors of their daily training and the uncertainties of potential personal injury. For those who are stuck in the bankrupt hometown team at a lower tier, I argue that they have hidden their anxieties and vulnerabilities by adopting a hyper-masculine lifestyle, disguising the social and economic inequality they are victims of.



**GAO Shiyi** is a Ph.D candidate with the Department of Anthropology in The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her research interests include anthropology of sports, gender studies with a particular focus on masculinity, and ethnicities in southwest China. She is a hardcore Chelsea fan as well.

