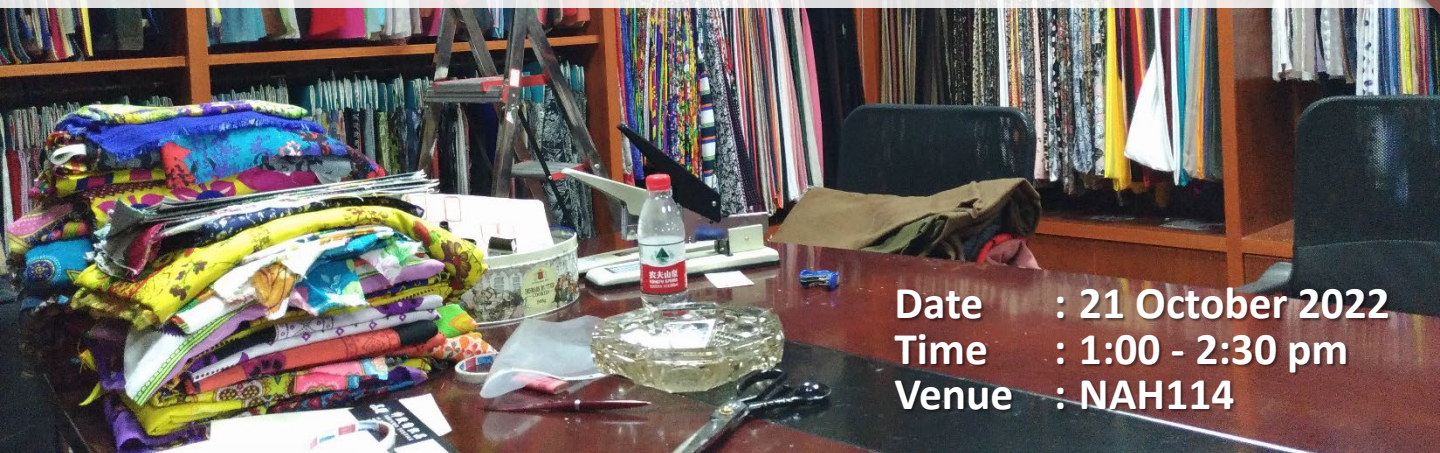


Friday Seminar

Fall
2022

Money circulations and fabric exports from China to Dubai through Indian diasporic connections



Date : 21 October 2022
Time : 1:00 - 2:30 pm
Venue : NAH114



Chiefly drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in the district of Keqiao in Zhejiang Province since 2009, this talk will show that irregular financial transactions play a significant role in the sustenance of otherwise tenuous business relations between Indian traders and Chinese suppliers in the China–Dubai fabric trade. Much of the fabric exported from Keqiao to Dubai relies on intertwined formal and informal transactions operated by Indian diasporic trading networks. These labyrinthine transnational money transactions aim to circumvent institutional hurdles and overcome deficiencies in operating capital, yet inherent to this system is a cycle of payment lags that cause tense relations between payers and payees. Such money transactions facilitate eventual payment in most cases most of the time and maintain enough trust to keep the trade network alive. Furthermore, the interlocking circuits of money circulations also prevent the overaccumulation of wealth and power by any particular stakeholder involved in the international trade and defy or at least circumvent the formal political authority of state and financial institutions that seek to curtail such practices. These transactions thereby create a larger space for business survival among the grassroots players, especially Indian traders who may not have enough capital available when they initiate a deal with a Chinese supplier.



Dr. Ka-Kin Cheuk is Assistant Professor in Anthropology in the Department of Chinese and History at the City University of Hong Kong. He previously held teaching and research positions at Universiteit Leiden, NYU Shanghai, and Rice University. His research revolves around the study of migration, transnationalism, and inter-Asian connections, with ethnographic focuses on China, Hong Kong, India, and the Middle East. His recent publications include “Diasporic Convergence, Sustained Transience and Indifferent Survival: Indian Traders in China” (*History and Anthropology* 33:2, 2022), “Teaching Ethnographic Research Methods in the Time of COVID-19: Virtual Fieldtrips, a Web Symposium, and Public Engagement with Asian American Communities in Houston, Texas” (*Teaching and Learning Anthropology* 4:1, 2021), and “Making Mumbai (in China)” (in Lisa Björkman, ed., *Bombay Brokers*, Duke University Press, 2021). In recent years, he has received several teaching grants, including a Course Development Grant from Rice University, for developing new, alternative, and decolonizing teaching methods in Asian studies, Chinese studies, and anthropology. Having conducted fieldwork over the past 17 years on the Sikh diaspora in Hong Kong and on Indian traders in southeast China, he is currently developing a new project on the transnational flower industry and environmental ethics in China and Scotland.

