



The Department of Anthropology  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

presents a seminar

by

**LING Minhua**

Centre for China Studies  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

on

# Materializing Return: Home in Reconfiguration in a Chinese Village

Friday, 8 November 2019

1:00 – 2:30 pm

Room 114 Humanities Building

New Asia College, CUHK

A light lunch will be served at 12:30 pm. First come first served.

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The return of people is often preceded by the return of material goods. Gifts, household items, and the latest appliances purchased in migrants' adopted cities help realize familial obligations, maintains social relations, and create a sense of home. This talk highlights the often-neglected material aspect of return in the context of internal migration and remigration in post-reform China. The socialist *hukou* (household registration) system continues to tie rural migrants to their registered home villages through a localized citizenship regime. While the state envisions and enforces their return to the countryside, migrants have formed different relations with their families, adopted cities, and home villages. How do they construct, interact with, and make sense of the material worlds as they move between their home villages and residential places? How do they prepare for their return if they need or decide to? Drawing on ethnographic data collected in rural Anhui where the massive emigration of able laborers to cities and towns has been significantly transforming its physical and socioeconomic landscapes, this talk examines the affective, cognitive, and social implications of a pending return as expressed and experienced through material objects among Chinese migrant households.

**LING Minhua** is a sociocultural anthropologist and has been teaching as Assistant Professor in the Centre for China Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong since 2013. She researches, writes and teaches on the processes and ramifications of urbanization and migration as experienced by individuals and communities. Her research, supported by National Science Foundation and Hong Kong Research Grants Council amongst other funding bodies, has been published in international journals such as *Anthropological Quarterly*, *China Journal*, and *China Quarterly*. Her first monograph, *The Inconvenient Generation: Migrant Youth Coming of Age on Shanghai's Edge*, will be published with Stanford University Press (January 2020).

ALL INTERESTED ARE WELCOME