



The Department of Anthropology
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

presents a seminar

by

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on

Circulating “Debts” Among Friends: The Business Practices and Communality of Tanzanian Dealers in Hong Kong and China

Friday, 10 March 2017

1:00 – 2:30 pm

Room 115 Humanities Building

New Asia College, CUHK

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

In her *Philosophy of Debt* (2014), the French philosopher Nathalie Sarthou-Lajus advocates the reinstatement of “debt.” “Debt” is generally considered to be negative. We are reluctant to be indebted to others, and glorify living on our own without being in debt. However, Sarthou-Lajus points out that this very idea is at the root of the problems of our capitalistic economy. This presentation shows how Tanzanian dealers circulate “debt” and “indebtedness” among themselves and various customers in African countries through electronic money-sending services and SNS on mobile phones in order to pursue commercial transactions and construct their own communality. Based on this, I argue for the possibility of a voluntary and independent system of “debt without repayment obligation” that is different from Sarthou-Lajus’s ideas. I show the potential of a new system of debt circulation arising out of the gray zone of nations, namely, the pirate arena in the heart of the capitalistic economy rather than in governmental social welfare.

Sayaka Ogawa is an associate professor of the Graduate School of Core Ethics and Frontier Sciences, Ritsumeikan University, Japan. She has specialized in African area studies and cultural anthropology. Her research theme is exploring how marginal people can construct their own life-world while adapting to the logic of global capitalism, and how they can build their own communality for mutual security while respecting autonomy and heterogeneity. Her book *The Art of Surviving in the City* (in Japanese, 2011) explored the unique business practice and communality of street traders in Tanzania by focusing on street-wise cunning. This book won the 33th Suntory Prize for Social Science. Now she is trying to reveal global distribution systems of second-hand goods and copy products in order to discuss contemporary consumption culture.

ALL INTERESTED ARE WELCOME