Departmental Seminar

TITLE

Zhang on the Southern Frontiers: Image, Diseases, Environmental Changes, and Chinese Imperial Colonization

SPEAKER

Dr Yang Bin

Day, Date, Time, Venue

Wednesday, 3 October, 3 pm
HY/PS Lounge, AS1-0401

Abstract

This talk discusses zhang on Chinese southern frontiers with a long term perspective. First, it examines the image of zhang in the Chinese mindset by which Chinese literati established and enhanced their cultural consciousness to distinguish themselves from the non-Han peoples in the south. Second, it analyzes how Chinese people conceptualized and treated zhang as diseases. Furthermore, it illustrates how zhang as ecological barrier hindered Chinese military campaigns, with the case of the Sino-Myanmar War (1765-70). Finally, the case of Yunnan during the Ming-Qing period will be discussed to reveal how Chinese colonization “reduced” zhang. In words, zhang as image, diseases, and ecological barrier epitomized the complexity and dynamics of Chinese frontier process, and indeed imperial China as a whole.

About the Speaker

YANG Bin is assistant professor in the department of history, NUS. His research focuses on Chinese frontier history and world history. His doctoral dissertation, “Between Winds and Clouds: the Making of Yunnan (2nd Century BCE – 20th Century” was awarded the 2004 Gutenberg-e prize by the American Historical Association and will be published at the end of the this year by Columbia University Press.

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