Li Minghuan  
*Seeing Transnationally: How Chinese Migrants Make Their Dreams Come True.*  

This welcome addition to the Chinese transnational migration studies showcases the range and new research findings achieved by Chinese scholars. This volume of essays by Li Minghuan, an anthropologist based at Xiamen University of south China but trained 28 years ago at the University of Amsterdam, documents the extraordinary story of Chinese transnational migration over the past three decades. As noted by Diana Wong from Kuala Lumpur, this volume “represents over two decades of untiring empirical field research, going to where the migrants go — the Netherlands, France, Canada — and to where they come from — Wenzhou in Zhejiang, Mingxi in Fujian — in order to observe, and to listen, with an unwaveringly sympathetic eye and ear, to what they, their families, their neighbours, their brokers and their local officials had to say” (p.x.).

Fifteen essays are selected and divided into three parts. The first two parts are in-depth studies based on fieldwork research and the third focuses on archival and literature studies. Part I and II comprise six essays each whereas Part III comprises three essays.

Part I deals with the migrant sending areas of south China, the villages of Zhejiang and Fujian in particular. Chapters One and Two explore why and how villagers in Zhejiang’s Wenzhou region emigrated to Europe, and how Chinese transnational migration trends have been shaped by the migration policies adopted by the European Union (EU). The author argues that it was the motives of “getting rich quickly in Europe” that drove huge number of villagers of southern Zhejiang to join the emigration waves.

Chapter Three is an interesting case study about the rise of a new *qiaoxiang* in a remote mountainous village of northern Fujian. A shrewed would-be Zhejiang migrant Hu Zhiming, who moved to settle down in the remote Shaxi Village of Mingxi County in northern Fujian in the early 1980s to cultivate mushrooms. In the 1980s, he was surprised to learn that many of his relatives and friends in his homeland of southern Zhejiang had emigrated overseas. He then decided to go to Uganda and obtained a visa. Nevertheless, Hu dropped off in Hungary and finally made his way to Italy to join his Zhejiang relatives. Soon after, Hu started to invite his relatives and friends in the Shaxi Village of Fujian to join the emigration wave and work in Italy. A new *qiaoxiang* thus gradually came into being in the mid-1990s with the assistance of traditional chained migration. Chapter Four looks at contracted labour emigration from rural Fujian to Israel. The author reveals that the urgent need for manual labour in Israel has
attracted both documented and undocumented migrant workers from China and turned labour migration into a profitable business. Chapter Five examines the emergence and development of emigration brokerage in China, and it contends that transnational brokerage is a key element in the operation of transnational migration, functioning at a level between the state and the individual while hovering between legality and illegality. Chapter Six probed into the issue of identity formation among overseas Chinese returnees in a state farm. In describing the formation of a collective identity among the so-called patriotic returnees, the author explores how decollectivization would prompt those who chose to remain on the state farm to renegotiate their identity and develop new collective strategies to safeguard their livelihoods.

Part II examines new Chinese migrant communities in Europe and Canada with a focus on the Chinese migrants in the Netherlands. Chapter Seven is a study on the formation and development of European-wide Chinese voluntary associations. Apart from a brief historical background, a discussion on the basic functions played by the Chinese migrant associations and detailed statistics, the author points out that Chinese migrants in Europe have already organised themselves at the transnational level, despite being divided into several layers and categories, and their distinct ethnic traits still influence their relations with fellow countrymen in other countries (p. 131). While Chapter Eight is a brief account of Chinese migrants in Europe, including their migration history, size of migration, geographical distribution and economic activities, Chapter Nine gives readers an in-depth and interesting study on the Peranakan Chinese in the Netherlands. The author observes in her fieldwork interviews that Peranakan Chinese in the Netherlands have formed a unique and separate category, a sub-cultural group, of the ethnic Chinese Dutch, and quite often this group of ethnic Chinese migrants possess a triple identity (Indonesia, Dutch and Chinese). Chapter Ten looks into the case of the Chinese student and scholar migrants in the Netherlands. The author believes that this is a professional and highly educated migrant group, and its social visibility and impact are significant to both their receiving and sending societies, and she predicts that the total number of Chinese student migrants and scholar migrants will keep rising in the future (p. 174). Chapter Eleven is a short fieldwork report on the refugee determination process in British Columbia, Canada, with a case study of Fujian boat people. Chapter Twelve provides an overview of Chinese migrants in Europe, including the size and composition of Chinese migrant communities in different European countries, their economic activities in different sectors of host society, their participation in local electoral politics, the internal differentiation, as well as their relations with China. What is important is that the author rightly pointed out that with the rise of China economically