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Review and Prospects of Cross-Border Marriage between China and Myanmar

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Abstract: *Transnational marriage is a common phenomenon in the China-Myanmar border area. Based on the characteristics of the social structure of the nation, the ways of choosing a spouse for Sino-Myanmar transnational marriages include kinship, geography, and industry relationship networks. These approaches fully demonstrate that the individual's social behavior matches the corresponding ethnic group and regional characteristics, and further demonstrate that transnational marriages in border areas are mostly the result of border residents' daily interactions. In this regard, many researchers in my country's academic circles have carried out more in-depth research and discussion on the status quo and management of transnational marriages on the Sino-Myanmar border. This review summarizes scholars' existing research on this issue, deeply analyzes the problems of transnational marriages on the Sino-Myanmar border, and actively explores measures and countermeasures to solve the problem of transnational marriages on the Sino-Myanmar border. Governance provides ideas and references.*

Keywords: *China-Myanmar border; transnational marriage; Research Review*

Marriage is the union of a man and a woman, which is permitted by the social system, civilization, and ethical code of a particular time and place, and is influenced by the natural attributes of society and bound by the moral code of society. In the world, no matter what race has its form of marriage, the rules of its development are constantly changing with the development of society. With the advent of China's internationalization period and technological breakthroughs in the capital, technology, and information resources, the cross-border movement of Chinese talent and foreign migration has become increasingly prominent. In the wake of China's reform and opening up, the resulting cross-border marital developments have broken through the shackles of national boundaries and ethnicity and have gradually formed the normative phenomenon in traditional Chinese marriage patterns, and cross-border marriages between China and Myanmar have formed an important social phenomenon on the Sino-Myanmar border.

For the definition of transnational marriage, there is no systematic discussion in the academic community from a theoretical perspective, but it is usually illustrated in relevant narratives with specific study regions in mind. Wei Xing (2016) points out that transnational intermarriage is also widespread because of the interchange of transnational minority discourses, similar ethnic cultures, and long-standing exchanges. Mei Ying (2016) pointed out that the people of the China-Myanmar border have the same root due to their geographical location and cultural background, so there is closer proximity in living habits and social behaviors between the two peoples. It is also for this type of reason that the phenomenon of high-frequency transnational intermarriage has arisen. Given the above-mentioned scholars, transnational marriage is defined as the normal

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intermarriage between males and females entered into by Chinese and foreigners in China. Sino-Myanmar transnational marriage refers to the phenomenon of intermarriage between people in the border areas of Yunnan and those in the border areas of Myanmar. The author hopes that by sorting out the recent research results on the current situation of transnational marriages at the China-Myanmar border, he can further promote the deeper expansion of this research topic and provide theoretical reference for transnational marriage management, border governance, and cultural exchange between China and Myanmar.

Current situation of transnational marriage research at the China-Myanmar border

Types of transnational marriages at the China-Myanmar border

Regarding the types of transnational marriages on the China-Myanmar border, many scholars have expressed concern about the types of various types of transnational marriages on the China-Myanmar border and their causes. Yang Wenying (2011), taking Baoshan City as an example, found that transnational marriages at the China-Myanmar border are mostly introduced by friends, relatives, and fellow villagers, and most of them are composed of three models: resource exchange marriages, complementary interest marriages, and fraudulent marriages, which are all "exchange marriages" in essence. Among these three types of marriages, resource swap marriages account for the majority of marriages, in which Burmese women can swap their social resources, such as age and physical conditions, with the resources of Chinese men's living environment. Some scholars classify transnational marriages in terms of their nature, which are legal and illegal marriages, respectively. Yang (2020) and other scholars point out that cross-border Burmese wives are illegal immigrants in the eyes of the law, and their status is simply not recognized by society therefore their basic interests are not protected by law. Most scholars regard the failure to register a marriage by Chinese marriage law as a de facto marriage. According to Xia Kai (2020), transnational marriages have become a major way of life for people living along the Sino-Burmese border, and the main reason for such marriages is that the first consideration of Burmese women is to have a place for themselves and their children, and as long as the other party can accept their children and create a family environment, she will consider marrying a Chinese man no matter how poor his conditions are. If a Chinese man who remarries chooses a Burmese daughter-in-law, he will also put the children factor at the forefront and focus on finding a woman to take care of his family and children's emotions.

Characteristics of cross-border marriages between China and Myanmar

The transnational relationship between China and Myanmar has been passed down from ancient times to the present and has always played a special and far-reaching role in the friendship and development of the relationship between the ethnic minorities in China and Myanmar. Ma Liyuan (2020) took Nanxiao Township, Yunnan Province as the research object, and his study pointed out that since 1990, the phenomenon of Sino-Myanmar transnational marriages has continued to develop in a rising trend year by year, and the number of registered marriages in Nanxiao Township has exceeded 300 families of Sino-Myanmar transnational marriages in 2016, while the number of unregistered marriages is higher. Sino-Myanmar transnational marriages have become a regular phenomenon in the border areas of Yunnan and are highly respected by the people of

both regions. According to Yin Zaichun (2020), Burmese women use their "youthful resources" to exchange with Chinese men's "residential resources", so that Burmese women can get a place for themselves and Chinese men can solve the task of life's journey and pass on the family line. They each take what they need to fulfill their supply and demand exchange relationship. Such an exchange relationship is a disguised transformation of young resources and new resources in the living environment. Hu Xuhui (2019) emphasizes that the age of marriage in cross-border marriages between China and Myanmar is nowadays also increasingly early, showing that most Chinese and Myanmar women are much younger than Chinese men, and the age difference is so great that there are even situations where both men and women marry before the legal age of marriage. These Burmese women marry and have children in China before they reach maturity.

Analysis of the causes of the close development of transnational marriages along the China-Myanmar border

Nowadays, with China's further opening up to the outside world, transnational marriages on the China-Myanmar border have gradually developed into a normal trend. In this regard, many Chinese scholars have conducted studies and discussions on the causes of the development of close marriages along the China-Myanmar border. Chen Deqiong (2019) took Chinese historical and cultural background as the main research direction, and this research result concluded that the historical and cultural background of ethnic interconnectedness is an important cornerstone of transnational marriages between Yunnan border people and Myanmar people in China. Many ethnic minorities in the country have been forced to become homogeneous roots of various nationalities due to the demarcation of the Chinese national borders. The same folkways and customs have also led to the creation of cross-border marriages between China and Myanmar.

At the level of geo-geomorphology, Tian Xuexue (2019) argues that for Chinese border people living in the region along with the Sino-Myanmar border, the unique topography, and landscape, as well as the common ethnic cultural factors, make the products and life of the border people of the two countries full of numerous cultural crossings [10], and the unique geopolitical, lineage, and kinship ties and interchangeable language symbols contribute to the cultural exchange of the border people in different forms and The unique geopolitical, lineage, kinship ties, and interchangeable language symbols contribute to the different forms of cultural exchange among the border people and permeate all aspects of their products and lives, as well as the economic and social network structure of the Chinese border region.

In addition, the political landscape in Myanmar is more volatile, thus accelerating the development of border marriages between China and Myanmar. For example, Yang Jingmin (2017) emphasizes that Myanmar's ethnic problems are particularly prominent, and social unrest has led to huge economic losses in the border areas, as well as homelessness for many Burmese. The turbulent international political situation has made it impossible to ensure the survival of the Burmese population, stores have had to close, border people have had to relocate, and farmland has gone uncultivated. Some of the refugees flowed into the border areas of China, which also greatly increased the chances of contact between young people of the appropriate age in both places.

From a business perspective, Fu Yaohua's (2017) study highlights that some people on the Sino-Myanmar

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border specialize in making a living by recommending Burmese wives to Chinese men, who have usually traveled to Burma to work, and because they understand the economic environment in both places, they often bring young Burmese women back to work in the country on the pretext of recommending jobs to Burmese women or taking their children to the country for fun, etc., and introduce them to local families who marry In this way, they can earn a living. Some Burmese women also work with unscrupulous middlemen to marry Chinese men to get money and then look for opportunities to escape. Some of the idle people in Nan Xiong village have to put up with this situation because they cannot marry local brides due to various factors such as economy and strength.

Legality of transnational marriages on the China-Myanmar border and the social problems it raises

In the context of the modern nation-state legal system, such transnational marriages are often not considered acceptable by the laws of the countries concerned, making them difficult to manage and causing a series of social problems in the border areas, which are bound to become more and more serious if they are not given sufficient attention.

From the national level, the state attaches great importance to the long-term stability of border areas, and scholars have mostly analyzed and studied the legal problems arising from transnational marriages from the perspectives of sociology, law, international relations, and other disciplines. Bai Zhihong and Li Xijing (2013) conducted a case study of Xujiazhai in Longing, Yunnan to explore the negative impact of illegal transnational marriages at the Sino-Myanmar border on peace and stability in ethnic regions of China. Zhao Shujuan (2011) focused on the group of "stateless women" to objectively analyze the current situation of "stateless women" in marriage and family. Most of them are black, most of them are in "de facto marriages", and their legal awareness is low. They have little awareness of their laws. Such marital relationships cannot be recognized, and not only their legal rights and interests are not guaranteed, but also the children's household registration and future education and employment, as well as the distribution of the couple's inheritance and inheritance, are not protected by law. Huang Kai (2017) points out that according to the policies and regulations of the People's Republic of China, foreign spouses and children who have not registered for marriage and settled in the household are unable to enjoy various policies to support and benefit agriculture, such as new rural cooperative medical care, educational subsidies, and civil assistance, which makes families who marry Burmese daughters-in-law because of poverty or men's poor conditions sink deeper and deeper into the vicious cycle of poverty. This also makes it difficult to implement HIV mother-to-child interruption, antiviral drug treatment, and prevention measures in cross-border marriage families between China and Myanmar.

On a social level, the number of cross-border marriages has been on the rise in recent years, and the resulting social problems are increasing, making border social security management more difficult. Scholars such as Yu Fei and Kor Yanfang (2019) pointed out that because of the lack of legal protection, early marriages and over-births have become more evident, thus making population management difficult. Some Burmese wives, who have been living in China, have gradually changed their concepts of marriage and money, and with the lack of national regulations, the phenomenon of divorce, dissolution of de facto marriages, and remarriage has been increasing, which has also created some single-parent children problems. Some Myanmar nationals

enter, stay and work illegally, and it is very easy to induce smuggling and drug trafficking, human trafficking, and other illegal and criminal acts because of economic factors. All these bring great challenges to social governance and security management at the Chinese border.

At the individual level, due to the household registration problem, which has given rise to a series of problems such as employment, Burmese daughters-in-law have difficulty integrating into society and they behave more negatively, as scholars such as Yang Wenying and Wu Zhanbing (2014) point out that because the majority of Burmese women do not know Chinese characters and have limited understanding, they either do not understand policy propaganda or have a half-understanding of it. They do not pay much attention to China's policies for the benefit of the people, and they have an inferiority complex as the "three have-nots", believing that they may be repatriated at any time, and have a negative attitude toward life, which also leads to a significant impact on their quality of life. Scholars such as Qiu Geping and Zhang (2019) point out that they suffer great physical and psychological harm from marriage fraud. Many aspects cause the above problems, but mainly due to a large number of illegal marriages. Most scholars believe that: firstly, the registration procedures are complicated, and too many supporting documents are required to do the procedures, which require constant travel between China and Myanmar to do so; secondly, the costs required for registering border marriages are high, and most of the families married on the border between China and Myanmar are poor families; thirdly, individuals have little legal awareness and low education, and do not realize the seriousness of illegal marriages.

Management of cross-border marriages at the China-Myanmar border

In the process of China's integration into economic globalization, with the opening up of border areas, the number of foreigners entering the China-Myanmar border for intermarriage has been increasing year by year, and the negative impact has increased because most of them are illegal immigrants. Researchers have also provided specific solutions to address a series of social problems associated with transnational marriages to strengthen the management of transnational marriages at the China-Myanmar border. Yang Qingqing and Zhang Mengyan (2020) and other scholars suggest that as state rights continue to sink and institutional norms continue to improve, some of the "stealth tactics" practiced by Burmese daughters-in-law are highly vulnerable and illegal, and do not fundamentally alleviate the dilemmas caused by the "household registration" The lack of "household registration" does not fundamentally alleviate the dilemma. Therefore, we should be open-minded and tolerant, make appropriate adjustments to the transnational marriage system according to the characteristics of the border groups between China and Myanmar, and should also reasonably adjust the resources for social governance in the prescribed area to ensure that women enjoy the basic rights granted by national law in the prescribed area. Taking the practice of "localization" in Dehong Dai Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture as an example, Shen Zhaohua (2019) argues that the state should take into account the actual situation in border areas, formulate special measures, and continuously improve the measures of "localization", and draw on other places to set up transnational marriage At the same time, it should adhere to the principle of mutual assistance between Germany and France and propose flexible countermeasures to guide civil power to intervene in the protection of women's rights and interests. You Weiqiong (2017) pointed out that the obvious phenomenon of transnational marriage at the Sino-Burma border is the result of the combined influence of subjective and objective reasons and various internal and external factors. The phenomenon of cross-border marriages at the border not only involves various aspects such as social, cultural, economic, family and

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relationships but also affects the basic life of people in both places. Therefore, in the face of the phenomenon of cross-border marriages between China and Myanmar, the relevant management authorities should enhance their awareness of positive actions and make positive analyses against its hazards, and seriously join and contribute to the general wave of comprehensive national reform.

The soundness of the legal system is not only required in border management but also requires a value-oriented emphasis on humanistic care in border development and management. Wang (2016) discusses the importance of border marriage training from the perspective of training, and his study emphasizes that people in transnational marriages, especially potential transnational marriage smokers and those concerned with surviving AIDS, should be made to truly recognize the ills caused by illegal marriage smoking and illegal family planning, strengthen their protection awareness, and fight to protect legal marriages. Likewise, it is important to strengthen the attention and targeted professional skills training for young men at risk of entering into transnational marriages with poverty, to improve their ability to develop autonomy and allow them to actively resist illegal marriages. In the final analysis, the problem of transnational marriage should be dealt with in the context of further improving ideological awareness. Only by overcoming the problem of ideological awareness and consciously preventing the emergence of unsound transnational marriages can we also truly deal with the problem of transnational marriage at its root.

Problems in the study of transnational marriages on the China-Myanmar border

From the research results available so far, the following major problems of transnational marriages on the China-Myanmar border need further field investigation and research.

(1) The research field sites are relatively single, mostly in Baoshan and Dehong states and some villages in Yunnan. The research on Lancang, Menglian, Ximeng, and other counties in Pu'er and Xishuangbanna is almost blank, so it is easy to make generalized conclusions.

(2) The research content is not deep enough, mainly focusing on cross-border marriages on the Chinese side of the China-Myanmar border, but not on those on the Myanmar side; it is mostly limited to the types of cross-border marriages, problems, management measures, etc., but less research on the living conditions and education of their children.

(3) The research subjects are single, mostly Burmese women, and rarely focus on men in cross-border marriages.

(4) The governance of cross-border marriages between China and Myanmar is still limited to regional governance and policy support, and there is a lack of direct local policy orientation and stability maintenance.

Future research trends

As part of transnational marriages, the author believes that, based on the existing research, future research should further expand the themes and contents of research in the following aspects.

Taking advantage of multidisciplinary approaches to expand the depth and breadth of research

Due to its special geographical location and historical background, the border area in southwest China has many transnational ethnic groups, and its "transnational living" feature makes it involve multidisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research content, therefore, to break down the disciplinary barriers, build a comprehensive knowledge system, and further develop the study of transnational marriages on the border between China and Myanmar, it is necessary to take advantage of multidisciplinarity. (i) increase disciplinary perspectives, study cross-border marriages between China and Myanmar from different perspectives, and expand the depth and breadth of research.

Increase the number of field sites and focus on empirical research

We will increase the number of field sites, pay attention to the current situation of cross-border marriages in other areas along the China-Myanmar border and do research, and pay attention to the situation of cross-border marriages on the Myanmar side to increase the breadth of research on cross-border marriages in China-Myanmar. We focus on the real-life problems arising from transnational marriages at the border, to better promote the construction of a harmonious society in the border areas.

Switching perspectives and conducting multidimensional research

In the cases related to transnational marriages, most of the research subjects are women, but the attention to the other party who forms the transnational marriage family, that is, the "husband" party, is neglected. Therefore, from the perspective of gender equality, analyzing transnational marriages at the China-Myanmar border from the perspective of men can help to understand transnational marriages at the China-Myanmar border more comprehensively.

Second, the case studies of cross-border marriages in China-Myanmar have little knowledge of the survival of cross-border marriage families and their members on the Myanmar side. Increasing the number of case studies and analyses on the Burmese side of transnational marriages at the China-Myanmar border, and comparing them with studies on the Chinese side, can fill the research gap on the Burmese side of transnational marriages at the China-Myanmar border.

Develop international cooperation and enhance international exchange and dialogue

Nowadays, China is integrating into the process of economic globalization, and with the opening of border areas, cross-border marriages between China and Myanmar have accelerated the development of cross-border marriages between China and Myanmar under the influence of political, economic, and humanistic factors, etc. Given a series of social problems arising from cross-border marriages between China and Myanmar, it is of great practical significance to actively develop international cooperation and enhance international exchange and dialogue.

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Therefore, the author believes that further research on transnational marriages at the China-Myanmar border should be carried out by combining the above points to better provide a reference for the management of transnational marriages, border governance, and cultural exchanges between China and Myanmar, and promote the governance and construction of a harmonious society in border areas.

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