

Abstract

**Cross-border Marriage of Vietnamese Women in Wanwei
(Jiangping, Dongxing, Guangxi, China) and the Development
in Border Area**

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Wanwei is a Viet village in Guangxi, China. It is about 25 kilometres away from Dong Xing (Guangxi, China) - Mong Cai (Quang Ninh, Vietnam) border gate and shares both the river and sea border with Vietnam. Viet people there are from Vietnam who settled down in Wanwei from the late Le dynasty (16th century). The co-operation and development of the border area between China and Vietnam through Dong Xing-Mong Cai border gate has been growing rapidly since late 1980s, bringing Wanwei closer to Vietnam and inside of China. The quick development has affected the marriage situation in Wanwei, creating more diverse arrangements and complications.

The fact is that everyday, many Vietnamese women go to Wanwei to marry. However, almost all the marriages have not undergone wedding ceremonies and the women are staying in Wanwei illegally. The life of these women there are also not good, thus inducing me to think about the relationship between development and cross-border marriages. The development of the border is an important reason in bringing these women to Wanwei but it seems that they have benefited little from that development process. In many cases, they are the victims of economic purposes, of trafficking, etc. Based on that idea, this paper examines the following aspects:

First, the paper outlines the portrait of the Vietnamese women who get married and live in Wanwei: Who are they? (Age, native land, knowledge, etc); How did they come to Wanwei? Who are their husbands? Why did they accept the marriage without a formal wedding? In my research, these women themselves explain why they accepted the life in Wanwei and what they expected in the future.

Second, the paper is interested in the benefits that these women derive from the development process in the border area and the difficulties they have to deal with. It also explores the conflict between these women and policy and local government and the way these women adapt to new life in Wanwei.

Lastly, through their lives, the paper focuses on the social problems of the phenomenon where Vietnamese women are married in Wanwei specifically and in China: trafficking woman through the border areas, upsetting the family moral standards, illusions about marriage of countryside girls, the sad life in foreign land, etc.

All these issues are researched in the special context of Wanwei. The development process in this village include many problems such as migration of ethnic minority in the border area, history of dividing the border (both land and sea) between Vietnam and China, re-structuring society and culture of indigenous community etc. The cross-border marriage in this village is also different as many Vietnamese women from Vietnam marry men of Vietnamese origins in Wanwei. The characteristics of cross-border marriages in Wanwei will spark off many suggestions for developing a safe and prosperous border area in the coming years.