

Beyond the Line: Everyday Borders, State Practices, and Identity across Divided Space

Date: 12/20,2025,13:00-18:00,

Place: YOTSUYA CAMPUS, BUILDING 10, 3F ROOM 301, Hybrid

English (with Japanese interpretation)

Organizer: Yejia Ke, PhD Candidate,
International Relations, Graduate School of Global Studies,
Sophia University

Presenters:

1. Aesoon Cho, Master Student, Graduate School of Global Studies, Sophia University,
“The Border Between North and South Korea: From the Perspective of Linguistic Differences”,
2. Yejia Ke, PhD Candidate, Graduate School of Global Studies, Sophia University,
“Invisible Borders, Present States: Gendered Border Practices and State Power on the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland”,
3. Huan Piao, Research fellow, Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Tohoku University,
“Aspects of Pluralistic Life Practice Beyond Borders: Korean-Chinese Small-Scale Migrant Trade in China and Russia”
4. Kazushige Nagano, Assistant Professor, College of Law and Politics, Rikkyo University,
“Border and Water: The Political Ramifications of Climate Change on The Kashmir Issue”
5. Chailigen•Caogetu, PhD Student, Graduate School of Intercultural Studies, Kobe University,
“Interethnic Relations and Religion in Central Asian Border Regions: A Preliminary Study of Bayan-Ölgii Province, Mongolia”

Commentators:

- Decha Tangseefa, Associate Professor of Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS).
Kyoto University,
- Naoki Amano, Professor of Foreign Studies Department of Russian Language and Studies,
Sophia University

Keynote Speaker:

Kazufumi Nagatsu, Professor of Sociology, Toyo University.

Interpreter:

Daewon Park, Tokyo University

This symposium, centered on the theme of “Borders,” seeks to explore the border not simply as a fixed geopolitical line, but as a dynamic social and political process. Approaching the concept from multiple perspectives—language, gender, religion, trade, and political Ramifications—the symposium treats these themes not merely as observable phenomena, but as analytical and methodological lenses for interpreting the complex functions and lived realities of borders.

After opening remarks by the Dean of the Graduate School of Global Studies, Professor Saaler, the symposium began with a keynote lecture by Professor Kazufumi Nagatsu (Toyo University), titled “Making a Vernacular Place on the Border: A Perspective of Border Studies to Encourage Area Studies in the Future.”

Following the keynote address, the symposium was organized into two thematic sessions. The first session, titled “State Power and Border Reinforcement,” featured three presenters. The session began with Kazushige Nagano, who presented “Border and Water: The Political Ramifications of Climate Change on the Kashmir Issue.” His presentation examined the political implications of climate change for border governance and territorial disputes in the Kashmir region. The second presentation was delivered by Yejia Ke. Her paper analyzed the gendered mobility of marriage and labor migrants among cross-border ethnic groups, focusing on how state power operates through everyday practices of movement in border regions. The session concluded with a presentation by Aesoon Cho, titled “Linguistic Differences Between North and South Korea,” which explored how language functions as a marker of political division and national identity. Together, these three presentations addressed diverse empirical contexts—climate governance, cross-border mobility, and linguistic differentiation—while sharing a common analytical focus on how states reinforce borders and reassert sovereignty through environmental governance, embodied mobility, and language practices.

The second program, titled “Ethnic Networks Beyond Borders,” featured presentations by Huan Piao, and Chailigen Caogetu. Drawing on ethnographic research in different regional contexts, the two presenters examined how cross-border ethnic groups sustain livelihoods and social relations through transnational networks. Huan Piao’s presentation, “Aspects of Pluralistic Life Practice Beyond Borders: Korean-Chinese Small-Scale Migrant Trade in China and Russia,” analyzed how Korean-Chinese traders engage in small-scale cross-border commerce, demonstrating how economic disparities between regions generate flexible and adaptive trading practices that transcend state boundaries. Chailigen Caogetu’s presentation,

“Interethnic Relations and Religion in Central Asian Border Regions: A Preliminary Study of Bayan-Ölgii Province, Mongolia,” focused on the role of religion in shaping interethnic relations in a borderland context, showing how religious practices function as a key medium through which ethnic ties and social networks are maintained across national borders. Together, this program highlighted the transnational reproduction of ethnic practices and networks beyond the framework of the nation-state. It illustrated how cross-border economic activities and religious life enable ethnic communities to sustain social cohesion and everyday practices, even in contexts shaped by political boundaries and uneven development.

Through five case studies—China/Russia, China/Vietnam, Mongolia/Kazakhstan, North Korea/South Korea, and China/India—the symposium aims to bridge macro-level analyses of state governance, diplomacy, and security with micro-level investigations of everyday experience, institutional power, and symbolic boundaries.

Each presentation thus moves beyond region-specific or descriptive accounts to engage with a shared set of questions: What mechanisms are inherent in national borders? How do states exert power across divided communities? And how are borders enacted, contested, and redefined through everyday practices, state policies, and identity formations? Together, the symposium fosters an interdisciplinary dialogue that highlights the persistent yet evolving presence of state power in borderlands.