Seminar - Co-organized with Sociology Department

The Extended Family as a “White Lie”: Competing Family Ideals in Qing Taiwan Family Division Contracts

Professor Timothy Y. Tsu, 祖運輝教授
Kwansei Gakuin University (日本關西學院大學)

Abstract

This paper examines the ideological scaffolding of inheritance contracts from pre-20th-century Taiwan. It explores how Han Chinese inhabitants on the island negotiated with the traditional extended family ideal — as expressed by the aversion to “family division” — when it became necessary to act against the cultural norm. Borrowing the concept of “white lies” from Pierre Bourdieu, this paper demonstrates that Chinese in pre-modern Taiwan not only recognized the extended family ideal as a “white lie,” but also attempted to address the discrepancy between cultural norm and social reality through rationalization. Moreover, this paper argues that some of the excuses offered for the cultural transgression went beyond mere rationalization to espousing an alternative vision that came close to supplanting the extended family ideal.

About the Speaker:

Professor Timothy Tsu was educated in Hong Kong, Japan and the United States. He received his PhD from Princeton University. He has worked at the National University of Singapore, Australian National University, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong before joining Kwansei Gakuin University. His research interests include: Chinese in Japan, Chinese culture in Japan, Environmental issue and consumption, and comparative studies on war movies in Japan and China.
Selected Publications:


Date: 14 March 2018
Venue: RHB 204 12:55 to 2:40 pm
Language: Cantonese/Mandarin
For Enquires: Miss Vicky Li 28065194