Towns with Markets: The Interaction of Various Ethnic Groups from the Perspective of Trade

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In this paper I discuss the market held once every six days in Jinping Miaozu Yaozu Lahuzu autonomous prefecture, Honghe Hanizu Yizu autonomous state in Yunnan Province. I first establish the structure of the market and then examine the impact that it has on regional society.

The structure of the market in Zhemigu where fieldwork was conducted has revealed the existence of four criteria for the formation of a regular market. They are: the existence of surplus produce which villagers are able to sell, their inability to get to distant urban areas which are areas of large consumption because of unsuitable transportation, the capability to process produce at the market, and the need to transfer goods through intervention by vendors and the market network.

Regular markets are able to expand without recourse to national boundaries or ethnic groups. By incorporating the regional society into the market network the system of regular markets makes available regional produce and daily necessities brought in from outside.

It is not possible look at the history of regions on China’s periphery without looking at the influence of China. This influence has continued unbroken since the united Han state was established approximately 2,000 years ago. However, if we attempt to paint a clear picture of that influence using not only a political perspective but also micro perspectives related to the region, combining the special features of the market and this influence will most likely reveal the transformation that has occurred in regions on China’s periphery.