Beyond Borders
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I encountered my ethnographic field among migrant Yunnanese by chance while backpacking in northern Thailand during the summer of 1993. The launch of my fieldwork among a Yunnanese migrant community a year later was, however, followed by a series of grave challenges, primarily due to the sensitivity of the research, which almost compelled me to abandon it. Without numerous people’s kindness and trust in me, I would not have been able to overcome the initial obstacles and persist on my quest to learn about Yunnanese migrants’ history. Although challenges have never ceased, following my informants’ networks of connection I have expanded my research field from Thailand to Burma and other places. I owe enormous debts to these informants, and my retelling of their stories in this book is my humble repayment. Unfortunately, I am not able to thank them individually, not only because the thank-you list is too long, but primarily in consideration for their security. In addition to my informants, many local people and scholars in Thailand and Burma have helped me enormously. Again, for safety concerns, I can name only a few here: the late
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