

A PUBLIC LECTURE

RESILIENT STRANGERS, LASTING CITIZENS: THE CHINESE IN NICARAGUA, 1882-1979

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DISCUSSANTS:

Professor Elizabeth Sinn (The University of Hong Kong)

Professor K.S. Louie (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Dr. Sonia Ng (Guest Curator, Hong Kong Museum of History)

When we think of Chinese migration to the Americas, Nicaragua is rarely mentioned. Yet for nearly a century, small but influential Chinese communities thrived there—running shops, engaging in mining and fishing, and shaping local politics. Excluded from the U.S. and Mexico, many migrants turned to Nicaragua beginning in the 1880s, where they built new lives.

Unlike stereotypes of isolated diasporas, Chinese Nicaraguans integrated deeply: they mastered Spanish, joined Catholic parishes, intermarried, sent children to elite schools, and organized civic events. By the mid-twentieth century, they had become prosperous merchants, enjoying opportunities unimaginable to relatives in Communist China or Nationalist Taiwan.

This success was shattered by the 1972 Managua earthquake and the revolution that followed. By 1979, more than 90 percent of the community had left, beginning a second migration to Miami, San Francisco, and beyond. Drawing on archives in Chinese, Spanish, and English, as well as oral histories, this presentation reframes migration in the Americas, not just as displacement, but as resilience, adaptation, and reinvention. It highlights Chinese Nicaraguans as nation-builders and transnational actors, revealing a story of belonging, loss, and diaspora creativity.

Date	November 12, 2025 (Wednesday)
Time	11:00 am - 12:20 pm
Venue	UG04, Jockey Club Campus of Creativity (JC3), Kowloon Tong
Language	English

No registration required, seats are on first-come-first-served basis

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