EX ORIENTE LUMINA

HISTORIAE VARIAE MULTIETHNICAE

Festskrift tillägnad Juha Janhunen
på hans 61. födelsedag 12.2.2013

Studia Orientalia 113

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NAMUYI TIBETANS: ELECTRIFIED CHANGE

Libu Lakhi (Li Jianfu), C.K. Stuart & Gerald Roche

INTRODUCTION

China's 4,000 Namuyi (Namuzi) Tibetans live in Mianning, Muli, Yanyuan, and Jiulong counties and Xichang City of Sichuan Province (Lewis 2009), primarily in the Yalong River (locally called the An'ning River) basin and tributary valleys as the river bends between Mianning and Xichang (see Map). Classified as Tibetan, the Namuyi speak a Qiangic language. Previous work on the Namuyi (see contributions by Libu Lakhi et al. in References) provides detailed information on language and culture, which we do not summarize here.

We focus on Libu Lakhi's (b. 1981) initial encounters with electricity during the time he lived in Dashui Village, Minsheng Township, Xichang City, Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, in terms of electricity's arrival in the village, lighting, milling, electricity generation, a cassette tape player-recorder, and telephone. Electricity has brought extreme and irrevocable change to villagers' life. Libu Lakhi's lived experiences resonate with many younger people in China who experienced life prior to the arrival of electricity, and are therefore provided as representative of a much broader social and historical experience that took place after the implementation of China's Reform and Opening (1978) and Develop the West policies (2000). Libu Lakhi's accounts also provide a window on a sensory world and aesthetic experience that are now gone forever.

More broadly, the six accounts that follow are of theoretical interest because they contribute to our understanding of the impact of electricity on social and cultural phenomena. Winter's (2011) important study of electricity and its relationship with development in the context of rural Zanzibar suggests that the presence of electricity and what it powers change the way women and men work, have conflicts, socialize, relax, have sex, and the stakes for entry into marriage. Electricity also publicizes individuals' private finances. Winter's research suggests that the impacts of electricity are diverse, broad, and often surprising. We therefore offer this study of Dashui Village (population of 300 in 2011: 70% Yi, 20% Han, and 10% Namuyi) as an indication of the impacts of electricity on communities in China, specifically on the Tibetan Plateau, and more broadly as an in-depth village level case study of the impacts of electrification in general.

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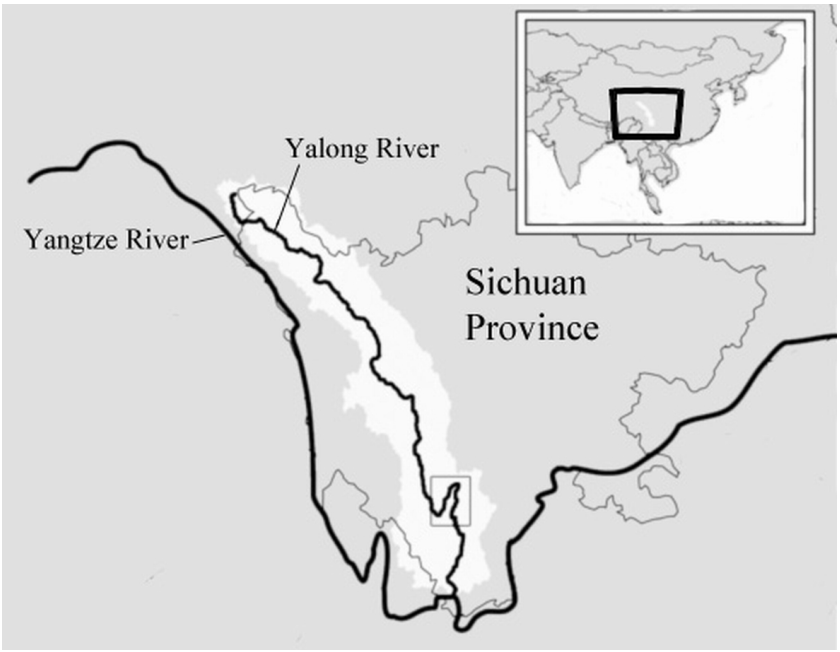

Map 1 The black line (left) shows the Yangtze (Yangzi, Changjiang) River, the smaller tributary (center) is the Yalong River, the white area surrounding the river indicates its basin, and the square (lower center) indicates the approximate distribution of Namuyi communities.

ACCOUNTS

Account one: Electricity reaches the village (1986)[1]

I was about five years old in 1986. The village leader announced in the autumn of that year that every family had to provide one strong man to carry logs, each about ten meters in length, and place them around the village. My parents said that we would soon have electricity, which seemed to make everyone happy and excited. Mother said it would be great because it would then be possible to work at night. Father was happy, explaining that he and I would

1 This and the following accounts feature members of Libu Lakhi's family. Libu Lakhi's mother was born in 1943 and his father in 1945. He has two sisters (Shamu b. 1976 and Sanjin b. 1986) and four brothers (Xiaolong b. 1967, Bajin b. 1973, Jiujin b. 1978, and Jibu b. 1984). These siblings figure prominently in the narratives used in this article. Local names often reflect the weight of an infant at birth, e.g. Jiujin = 4.5 kilograms, Bajin = four kilograms, Sanjin = 1.5 kilograms. One *jin* is equivalent to a half kilogram.

no longer have to climb into the mountains and collect pinewood with high resin content to burn for home lighting. Some families at that time burned diesel but, at 0.40 RMB per kilogram, it was too expensive for my family.

"We'll finish putting the poles in the ground in three days, and then the electrical wires will be brought to our village", Xiaolong said, while everyone sat around the hearth after dinner.

"Oh! How slow! I can't wait!" Mother complained.

"It's not easy. Both of my shoulders were numb from carrying those logs", Brother said.

"Yes, it is very hard work", Mother said.

"I'm tired and going to bed", Xiaolong said, standing up.

"Don't you want to hear Father's stories?" I said, because my parents usually told stories while everyone sat around the hearth after dinner.

"Tomorrow night", Xiaolong said, and went to bed very early.

Father told riddles that night. All my other immediate family members were there: Shamu, Bajin, Jiujin, Jibu, and Sanjin. The hearth fire danced for everyone's enjoyment as light from the pine resin colored our faces red.

"OK! A brother and sister always look for each other, but can never see each other because of a mountain range separating them. Guess!" Father said, asking the first riddle.

There was silence until Bajin said, "A pair of ears."

"No, but you're very close", Father encouraged.

"Oh, I know! A pair of eyes. The two eyes are the brother and sister who can't see each other because of a nose mountain", Shamu said.

"Yes! My dear daughter is so clever", Father said.

Shamu, thus encouraged, climbed onto Father's shoulders and started pulling his beard. Traditionally, the one who guesses a riddle's answer may say, "You are eating Han Chinese shit soup", or "You are eating Nuosu shit soup" to the riddle teller. In contrast, not guessing the answer means the teller has the right to tell all the listeners to eat one bucket of Chinese shit soup or two buckets of Nuosu shit soup. However, Shamu had created the rule of pulling Father's beard if she guessed the answer because only he had a beard.

I had no idea what electricity would be like. I curiously went around the village and watched villagers carrying logs, digging holes, putting poles in the

holes, standing the poles straight, then refilling the holes with the dirt using shovels and hoes. After several days, a row of poles stretched from our village to the other side of the valley. I wondered where the row of poles ended but never tried to find out because I was afraid of walking beyond the village.

Electrical wires came to my home about two weeks later. Electricity was said to be on the wire between the poles. My parents warned me to never touch the wires because, they said, I would be immediately burned to ashes if I did. When I saw birds perched on the wires, I asked Father why they were not burned to ashes. He replied that birds were different than humans but that he did not really know why they were unharmed.

My family received one gourd-shaped, incandescent light bulb, which the local government provided. I was also told to not touch it because it contained electricity and that if I did touch it, I would be burned to ashes. Electrical wires were threaded through holes in the wall and connected to the bulb. All my family members sat around the hearth after dinner the first night the bulb was connected to the wires. As darkness approached, everyone discussed how the electricity would come when darkness fell.

That night was unusually quiet. Father normally talked about work we should do the next day while the sounds of bowls and basins being washed came from Mother's activities in the kitchen, as my brothers and sisters vociferously clamored for stories and riddles. But none of this happened on this night. We all waited quietly and expectantly, our faces tinted orange from the flickering hearth flames.

"It's here! It's here!" everyone said excitedly as the bulb began glowing. I was surprised that electricity seemed to be just like the fire from burning charcoal in the hearth. The only difference was that it hung from the ceiling of the room above where we sat. Slowly it grew brighter until the glow of the fire in the charcoal could no longer be seen.

The electricity was on for only three or four hours at night from dark to bedtime, which meant we had to plan the work that required light. After several months, people complained that electricity was useless, because it was winter and the volume of water turning the generator turbine had diminished. Consequently, light in the bulb resembled the dim glow of charcoal in the hearth.

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I had not seen the power station until Father asked me one day to carry a small sack of rice and go with him. "We've finished eating our husked rice. We need to carry rice to the power station and have it husked", he said, urging me to get up early one morning.

"I don't want to! Why should we go that far? We can have our rice husked here using the water mill", I complained, because I did not want to carry rice that far.

"Son, husking is very fast at the power station, though it is a bit far. But it means less work for us", Father said.

The water mill was situated near a river that flowed by our home. Villagers usually ground corn and husked rice there, and it did take a long time. This was especially true for cracked rice. A hand-powered wooden winnowing machine separated the cracked rice from dust. Villagers found that the mill at the power station could do everything they wanted to a sack of grain within thirty or forty minutes.

"We're going to the electricity place, Father!" I said some minutes later, after we had started our journey. I was quite excited, even though I had a ten kilogram sack of rice on my back. I was very curious about how electricity was generated from water.

"Yes, the electricity is from there", he said, pointing to two parallel wires on electrical poles by the dirt road we were walking on.

"I can't wait to see that place! Let's go!" I urged Father, who had stopped and was resting his big sack of grain on a roadside stone.

A whooshing sound assaulted my ears when we got near a small building at the bottom of a hill. Father told me this was where we would have our rice husked.

"Coming to husk your rice?" asked a middle-age man about Father's age as we entered. The machine was so loud that we could hardly hear each other. Others who had come to husk their rice were also there.

"It's your uncle", Father said, pointing.

"Oh! Dear Uncle! I didn't recognize you!" I exclaimed. I had at first thought he was a white-haired stranger dressed in white clothes and then I realized it was dust from the husking that covered him.

"You're so grown up, helping your father carry grain!" he praised, delighting me. Father and he began chatting but I could hardly hear them. However, I

was not very interested in them because I was terribly attracted by the big machine with turning wheels that spit out grain, accompanied by an endless whooshing sound. Rice was poured into a basin-shaped container that sat atop the machine and clean white rice came from a separate tube. I put my right hand under the rice that spat out of the tube. I liked that the rice was warm and clean. Our husking was done in about thirty minutes and we then gave one kilogram of husked rice to Uncle. Everyone paid him with a small amount of their husked grain. Father put all our husked rice in a big sack and asked me to carry the rice husk in my small bag. We set out and got home about two hours later.

I then fully understood what Father had meant that morning when he had said that milling at the power station was fast. In contrast, the stone water mill required at least two hours to husk the same amount of rice and another hour to separate the rice and the dust with a winnower. We sometimes had to sleep in the millhouse overnight if there was much grain to mill. People who did stay overnight then made a fire and told stories. The most horrible story I heard was a story about the two millstones: one was for grinding corn and the other was used to husk rice. I was told that there were seven ghosts under the corn-grinding millstone and nine ghosts under the rice-husking millstone. Hearing the water splashing loudly under the millstone house and recalling those ghost stories made it very hard for me to sleep there at night, and made my heart beat wildly when I was a pupil and had to walk by the abandoned millstone house *enroute* to the primary school every day.

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In the fourth year of the village having electricity, the local electricity authority surmised that some families had slowed down the meters in their homes because the meter measuring electricity use for the village registered a much higher use of electricity than the sum of individual home meters. Consequently, the total village electrical cost was divided among the number of village households. This created conflict in the village, as families that had not "stolen" electricity had to pay for those who did. This was finally solved by putting paper seals on the meters that would break when tampered with.

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Five years later (1993) when I was about to complete primary school, the water mill near my home had collapsed because it was no longer used.

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I returned home from the Sichuan Tibetan Language School in Kangding where I was a student in the year 2000. A tall, four-story brick building stood between the old building that housed the electricity generator and my home. I learned later that a private businessman had built a new electricity station. I also noticed the wood electrical poles had been replaced by taller, concrete poles. At that time, a few rich families in the village had electric mills that they used to mill their own grain. They also milled other families' grain at a charge of one RMB per fifty kilograms.

Electricity was constant and available twenty-four hours a day after the new power station was built. Light bulbs were no longer dim as a dying match. However, most village families only switched on the light after dark because of the expense.

Father complained about the new power station on the grounds that the crops did not grow well now that the volume of water in the river had diminished. Furthermore, the river had been dammed and diverted to produce electricity and now fish that we had once caught and eaten were gone. Father said that the odor of the fish and other insects that lived in the river was very good for crop growth and now that they were gone, the crops in our valley did not grow as well as before. All the villagers think that flour ground from millstones tastes better than that ground in metal machines, but the machines are still preferred because they are so fast.

Account two: Telephone (~1987)

I went with my parents to a meeting at the township government center where I saw a telephone for the first time in my life. I wandered around and ended up in a room where a person was talking, which interested me because I could not see anyone else in the room. He was talking to something in his right hand that had a cable connected to a red box on a table in the room, while turning a handle as he talked. I also noticed that the cable could stretch. He left after about five minutes and then another man entered the room, cranked the red box's handle, picked up another handle, and started talking loudly in Nuosu. I did not understand anything. At this point, Mother came and took me to a place where many people were sitting on the ground, eating together. I asked Mother about the mysterious red box with the handle. She said, "It is a *dianhua* and you can use it to talk to friends and relatives who might be far away."

Account three: Harvesting rice (1988)

During my first year in the village primary school in 1988, I was walking home hurriedly after school because Mother had told me to return home as soon as possible because our family was harvesting rice. As half of the sun's face lay hidden behind the western hill in the valley, as though saying goodbye to the hard-working villagers in the rice fields, I saw people harvesting my family's rice.[2] Women were reaping the plants and bundling them with rice stalks. Men then carried the bundles on their shoulder to a foot-powered threshing machine where a woman was busy at the back of the machine where grain emerged along with the chaff. She separated the grain and chaff and then filled big baskets of relatively clean grain that a man would carry to our home.

I could not hear what the villagers were talking about because their voices were indistinct under the whine of the thresher. I met our neighbor, Qijin (b. ~1970), at our home gate. He was carrying a basket of rice grain on his back. The grain in the basket resembled a small hill. He walked slowly, his body bent forward to keep the rice from falling out of the basket.

"You finished school", he said, turning to face me. Drops of sweat rolled down his forehead and face.

"Yes", I nodded, and rushed into our courtyard ahead of him, because he walked very slowly. I heard children's laughter and shouts as they merrily chased each other.

"Didn't you kids listen?! I told you countless times to play outside the courtyard, otherwise you'll spill rice on the ground!" my elder brother's wife, Mimi (b. 1970), yelled at the children, who were running around the piles of grain. She held and shook a sieve in both hands, working with Shamu to further separate the grain, stalks, and dirt at the edge of the courtyard under the eaves of the house.

"You're back!" Shamu said when she saw me. "Quickly go inside and help Mother."

I passed the piles of grains in the courtyard and entered the main room. I immediately realized what Shamu meant as I heard the very familiar sound of a hand mill from the kitchen. At that time, the main room was divided

2 Mutual assistance was provided primarily by neighbors and close relatives.

into three parts. The hearth and the place for sacrifices to the deities was in the center, to the left was the kitchen, and a bedroom was on the right.

I tossed my school bag on a stool by the hearth and went into the kitchen. "I'll help you, Mother", I said, grabbing the mill handle as she turned it.

"Son, you're back! Help me! The mill is so hard for me to turn. We need to get the tofu ready. We must serve a nice tofu meal.[3] All the villagers and our relatives are working very hard harvesting our rice today", Mother explained. She was delighted that I had returned earlier than usual to help her grind the soybeans.

Mother was an expert at grinding, scooping soaked beans with a wood dipper and feeding the beans into the mouth of the millstone with her left hand, while turning the millstone with her right hand with my help. I tried several times to scoop the soaked beans but failed to do it well. The wet beans were mashed into milk resembling what a baby might spit out when it refused to swallow its mother's milk. This soymilk flowed out between the two millstones, dripped onto a wooden board, and fell into a wood bucket under the mill. I ground for a while, while Mother scooped soybeans into the grinder, then stood on a stool because I was not tall enough to get good leverage in using the mill without it. We stopped grinding beans after Mother poured two buckets of soymilk in a large pot on the stove to boil.

I sometimes ground soybeans or corn with Shamu because it was much easier if two people turned the millstone rather than one. We usually told stories and riddles if we had much grinding to do, but Mother did not tell me any that day because she had almost finished grinding when I arrived.

"OK, go see if our goats are around. If not, drive them home. I'll manage the rest of the work", Mother said as she added wood to fire in the stove to boil the soymilk.

I went out with my right hand feeling sore from turning the millstone and walked to the fields where villagers were working. All the standing rice plants had been cut and bundled by the women, who were now feeding the bundles into the threshing machine. They were talking and laughing but I had no idea what they were laughing about.

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3 Meat was traditionally considered the best food, but it as it was typically unavailable, tofu was served on important occasions as a treat for guests. Solid tofu and soup may be eaten with salt, MSG, and pepper or the tofu may be eaten mixed with rice with garnish from a separate bowl.

When I approached the threshing machine, Father (b. 1945) pointed to the hill behind our house and shouted, "The goats are over there! Drive them home quickly! It'll be dark soon. We're finishing the work. Your mother's tofu should be ready by the time we return home, so we'll be able to eat soon."

I herded the goats back into our stable and closed the door. It was now dark and hard to see the faces of those gathered in the courtyard, creating an atmosphere that was livelier than in the daytime. By the light of the resin lamp hung from the house eaves in the courtyard, I could dimly make out groups of five or six people eating in the courtyard by piles of grain covered with long pieces of cloth. The sound of chatting and babies' wails mingled as the tofu meal was eaten. Mother, Shamu, and three of my elder brothers' wives Mimi, Chunxiu (b. ~1978), and Odromi (b. 1981) busily served food. When I entered the main room of our home, I found mostly village elders chatting about the bountiful harvest that year.

Father constantly walked in and out of the room, adding more pieces of dried pinewood to keep both inside and outside lit, while yelling, "The tofu here is finished!" "Bring more rice to this group!"

I was very hungry but Father said we would eat our meal after all the villagers had finished. It was another two hours before we had all eaten. Most women who had to feed their family swine left after the meal while adults and children remained active. Children played hide-and-seek in the dark under dim moonlight as adults drank liquor around the hearth under the resin light. I was in the group outside and could hear laughter and songs coming from inside. I realized it was very late when the children's group gradually shrunk from eleven to only Sanjin, Jibu, and me. Most children left with their parents without a light, while old people left holding dried rice stalk torches.

I smelled strong liquor on Father's breath, but he could walk steadily. He made the bed for Jibu, himself, and me. We all were tired and lay down for the night.

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On 20 June 2011 while working in Xining City, Qinghai Province, I called my parents on my cell phone and learned that it was time for the wheat harvest in my village and that they lacked helpers because all young village adults were out doing construction work in such urban centers as Xichang City, Beijing, and Guangzhou. Additionally, villagers no longer help each other for free with the same spirit as before. My parents were worried

because the wheat had to be harvested at once in order to transplant rice into the same field. To solve the problem, I transferred 500 RMB to my sister's account. She was working in a restaurant in Xichang City and I knew it would be easy for her to receive the money and give it to my parents so they could pay ten people fifty RMB each to complete the harvest in one day.

Account four: Film (~1991)

When I was about ten years old, I and my elder brothers and sister spent a half hour rushing to the village schoolyard. It seemed everybody was going there, except for elders who stayed at home. We had heard that a free film would be shown. It had just become dark when we arrived. The film was about to start in a schoolyard full of people. A white piece of cloth hung on a school building wall. Two films were shown. I do not remember the titles or the storylines but I do remember that many people were shot and killed in the films. I was very afraid. When I returned home and told Father about what I had seen, he said, "Don't go to school tomorrow because it will be full of corpses." I readily promised because I was afraid of seeing corpses. That was the first night in my life that I can remember Father not telling stories.

Account five: Radio-cassette tape player (1990s)

Bajin bought a machine that played cassette tapes and had a built-in radio. My family enjoyed listening to cassette music, though it was all in Chinese. The most fun part was the recording. Not long after Bajin married a woman from a neighboring village, he brought a tape of local Namuyi *madami* songs to our home that he had made in his wife's village when he visited her home during the New Year Festival.[4] My family members listened to these songs over and over.

One night during the next New Year period, many of my relatives gathered in my home because Bajin was going to visit his wife's home the next day and wanted to record some songs from my village for his wife's relatives to hear. Everyone except me then sang local Namuyi songs. I was encouraged to sing a song that I had learnt in school, and was teased with, "Your future wife will hear your song", because I had been engaged to a girl in my sister-

4 Songs sung when relatives and friends gather after some time of being apart. The situation determines if the lyrics are sad or happy. They are sung according to established melodies, although the lyrics are improvised. See Libu Lakhi et al. (2009) for more on *madami*.

in-law's village before I started primary school. I then performed the only song I knew – a song I had learned in Chinese from my teacher, though I did not know the lyrics' meaning. Bajin played each song he had recorded after everyone had sung, delighting everyone.

Account six: Television (1997)

I first saw a TV one night in 1997. Nobody had a TV in our village at that time. But, across the river in front of our village, a Nuosu family owned a store that sold liquor, beer, salt, and other necessities. This family had the only nearby TV and many villagers went there every night to watch TV. I did not, however, because I had to help my family with such night work as husking corn and dividing potatoes between small (for later planting) and big (that we would eat). On the night of July first I did go because every adult was saying, "Xianggang [Hong Kong] will be returned." I had no idea what Xianggang was, but I was very excited since everyone was rushing there after supper.

The room was stuffed with people when I arrived. I squeezed between the adults. A square luminescent box contained people who talked and walked. I was amazed. I understood none of the sounds coming from that box, but I heard the audience talking about "Xianggang" and "Zhongguo" [China]. I don't remember much from that night other than a red flag being raised on a pole while another flag slowly came down a pole. In our primary school textbook, I had learned that the red flag represented China. Adults in the room said the other flag was a British flag.

The villagers said TVs were really excellent but very expensive. I yearned for my family to have a TV after this experience of watching the transfer of Hong Kong sovereignty to China. My interest in television was shared by my family and we became the first home in our village to purchase one with 2,700 RMB we earned by selling dried tobacco.

Bajin went to town to buy food, clothes, and fireworks for the New Year in 1999. We were all excited that day, because we knew we would have a television that evening. Bajin returned with a big cardboard box tied to his back when it was almost dark. We had delayed supper in anticipation of his return. I helped open the box. It took Bajin about thirty minutes to connect all the cables correctly. When the reception was clear, we all watched the TV screen while sitting around the hearth. There was much singing and dancing because it was the special annual New Year Program broadcast

from Beijing. Everything was in Chinese so we did not understand a great deal, but we all liked the program very much.

Father suggested several times that we eat, but everyone ignored him. Later, my parents and brothers ate rice with pickled vegetable soup while still watching TV, but I did not want to move. I sat in front of the TV with unblinking eyes until some villagers came to watch TV. Then we chatted while watching TV.

Account seven: The Torch Festival (2010)

I visited my home in July 2010 for the Torch Festival, which is celebrated by both Namuyi and Nuosu in my village. I arrived in the village in the evening. The valley was green and the river in front of my house had running water because it was the rainy season.

All my siblings were married at this time and lived with their own children except for Sanjin and me. Jiujin lives closest to my parents. His wife, three children, and he were at my parents' house that night. My parents were delighted that I was back home.

The TV was turned on as usual after dinner and we all watched it. Jiujin told Sanjin to return to a channel featuring Chinese singing after she switched the channel to a TV series. As Sanjin clicked the remote control, national news, singing programs, and advertisements flitted by on the screen.

After a while, I opened my laptop and showed photographs I had taken from my previous visit at home. Then we all watched more TV and went to bed.

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Much work was done at night before electricity came to Dashui Village, especially during the harvest period. Villagers came to Libu Lakhi's home and helped husk corn while sitting around a big pile of corn ears. His parents usually assigned him the task of caring for the resin-fueled light by adding more wood, because he disliked the laborious and painful task of husking. Everyone told stories and riddles in turn during these work gatherings, and enjoyed listening to them. Villagers also came to chat and tell stories and riddles, even when there was little work to do at night. This practice of communal reciprocity was no longer in place in 2011, as illustrated in Account Two. Evening has become a time to sit silently and watch television.

The electrification of the village has occurred alongside another significant power shift in the community. University and senior middle school students and graduates are now pioneers in adopting novel behavior, and advocate opinions opposed to local tradition. These youths are seen as models because they often have better Chinese language skills and, with the diplomas they earn, stand a good chance of finding permanent, official jobs outside the village. Nobody champions being a disempowered, illiterate, impoverished farmer with little access to modern health care and limited ability to maneuver in a huge, predominantly Chinese-speaking society. The regular salary and lifetime security ensured by official government employment have empowered officially educated individuals and imbued them with authority. Educated youths who label local beliefs and practices "superstitious" and "troublesome" have a profound impact on local culture.

Most notable has been the disempowerment of elders, who were previously not only important sources of authority but also key tradition bearers. The disempowerment of such individuals has led to a break in transmission of many oral traditions. The presence of TV further contributes to the gap between elders, strongly rooted in ancestral traditions, and youths. Before the arrival of electricity, elders were the focus of evening entertainment. Family members of different generations sat around the hearth and listened intently to what elders shared, creating a sense of intimacy and unity. After the arrival of electricity and TV, children were glued to the TV. "Turn off the TV! It's so noisy! We can hardly hear each other!" are commonly heard in the village when elders chat around the hearth while children watch TV. In response, the children usually turn the volume down and then, when elders are not paying attention, increase it again.

In 2011, it was the norm for a couple to hold wedding celebrations in a restaurant, which has reduced the traditional three-day wedding period to a few hours during which complex rituals, songs, and dances are not performed. Elders who know traditional wedding songs are ignored as popular songs in Chinese are sung in restaurants using microphones and loudspeakers. The high volume of these electrically amplified non-indigenous performances often negates consideration of the meaningfulness of the lyrics and the singers' vocal ability. Importantly, it also relegates elders to the role of passive spectators because they are unable to perform songs and dances that are considered "fashionable" and "modern", and therefore lacking power and significance to post-electric youths.

Ritual practices in recent years have been simplified and are less frequent. Traditionally, a religious specialist was invited to the home to conduct complex rituals when a family member was ill. Specific dances and songs were also offered during the New Year, weddings, when guests visited, harvesting, and during the construction of new houses. This rapidly began to change after electricity arrived

in the village and gave authority to what electricity powered, for example, many younger people quickly came to believe that religious rituals were "superstitious" because that is the message they receive on TV. Empowered youths and electrical power have become interlocked in a mutually sustaining loop that deprives elders and the knowledge they represent of authority.

During the course of writing this paper, Libu Lakhi asked Guisin (b. 1983), "How do you think Namuyi elders and youths are different?" Guisin replied, "Elders know much about our customs while youths don't know anything about themselves; we just try to speak Chinese and Nuosu."

This sentiment effectively summarizes the consequences of the profound changes that have taken place in Dashui Village in the last two decades, including the introduction of electricity and TV. A loss of confidence in local tradition and tradition-bearers, and the empowerment of younger community members and their post-electrification worldview, dramatically and irreversibly impacts the continuity of traditions not only in Dashui Village, but also for much of the "developing" world.

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Namuyi video and audio materials may be accessed at the following sites:

<www.archive.org/details/NamzinamuyiTibetanCulturalRevitalization> (songs, folktales, dances, flute music)

<www.archive.org/details/NamziNamuyiTibetanSpritit MediumChants> (many hours of the spirit medium, Shada (b.~1940), chanting)

<www.archive.org/details/NamyiRitualSacrificeToTheDeities> (a ritual of sacrificing to the deities)

<www.archive.org/details/NamyiWeddingInMianningCounty> (a wedding)

<www.archive.org/details/ANamyiRitualCallingBackTheSoul> (a soul calling ritual)

<www.archive.org/details/NamyiFolktales--audioFiles11OfElevenFolkloreAccounts> (folktales)

<www.archive.org/details/NamyiFolktales--audioFiles1-10OfElevenFolkloreAccounts> (folktales)

NON-ENGLISH TERMS

An'ning 安宁
Bajin 八斤
Beijing 北京
Changjiang 长江
Dashui 大水
dianhua 电话
Guangzhou 广州
Han 汉
Jibu 吉布
*jin*斤
Jiujin 九斤
Jiulong 九龙
Kangding康定
Li Jianfu 李建富
Liangshan 凉山
Mianning 冕宁
Minsheng 民胜
Muli 木里
Namuyi 納木依, 納木義
Namuzi 納木兹
Nuosu 诺苏
Qijin 七斤
Qinghai 青海
RMB 人民币
Sanjin 三斤
Shamu 沙姆
Sichuan 四川
Xianggang 香港
Xiaolong 晓龙
Xichang 西昌
Xining 西宁
Yalong 雅砻
Yanyuan 盐源
Yi 彝
Zhongguo中国