

The Preservation of Traditional Value System of Sichuan Migrant Tibetans

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System of Sichuan Migrant Tibetan



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Introduction

- Area we focus on - Sichuan Tibetan Area

The Sichuan Tibetan Area is the Sino-Tibetan convergence zone at the east side of the Tibetan Plateau.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibetan_people



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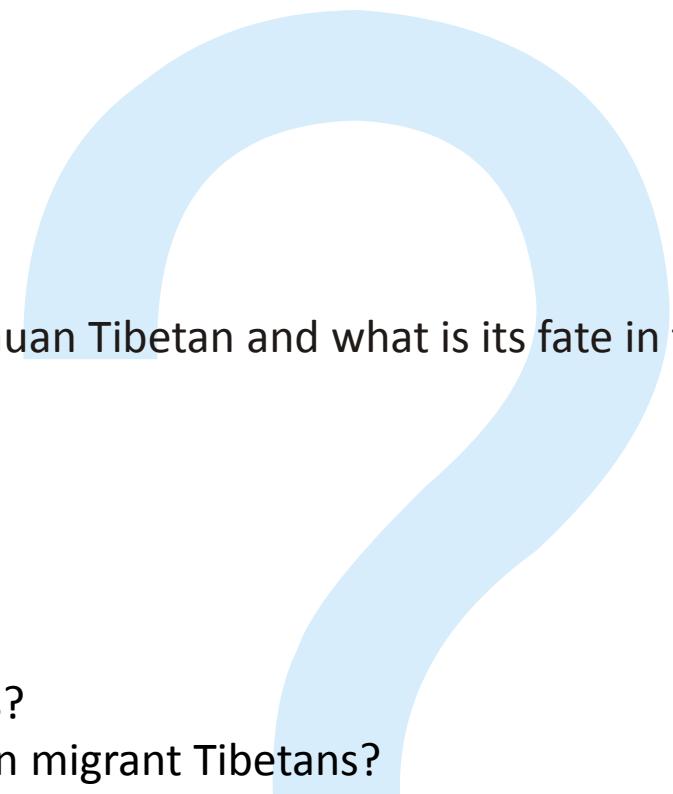
- People we focus on - Migrant Tibetans (for work or study)
- Subject we focus on – Tibetan Culture, traditional beliefs and values



• The Big Question

What is the traditional value system of Sichuan Tibetan and what is its fate in the modern society of China?

Research questions

1. What are the traditional Tibetan values?
 2. How well are they preserved by Sichuan migrant Tibetans?
 3. Living in a cultural convergence zone, what cultural conflicts were experienced by migrant Tibetans and what are their attitudes towards cultural differences?
- 





• Interviewee Selection

Familiar Friends as starter

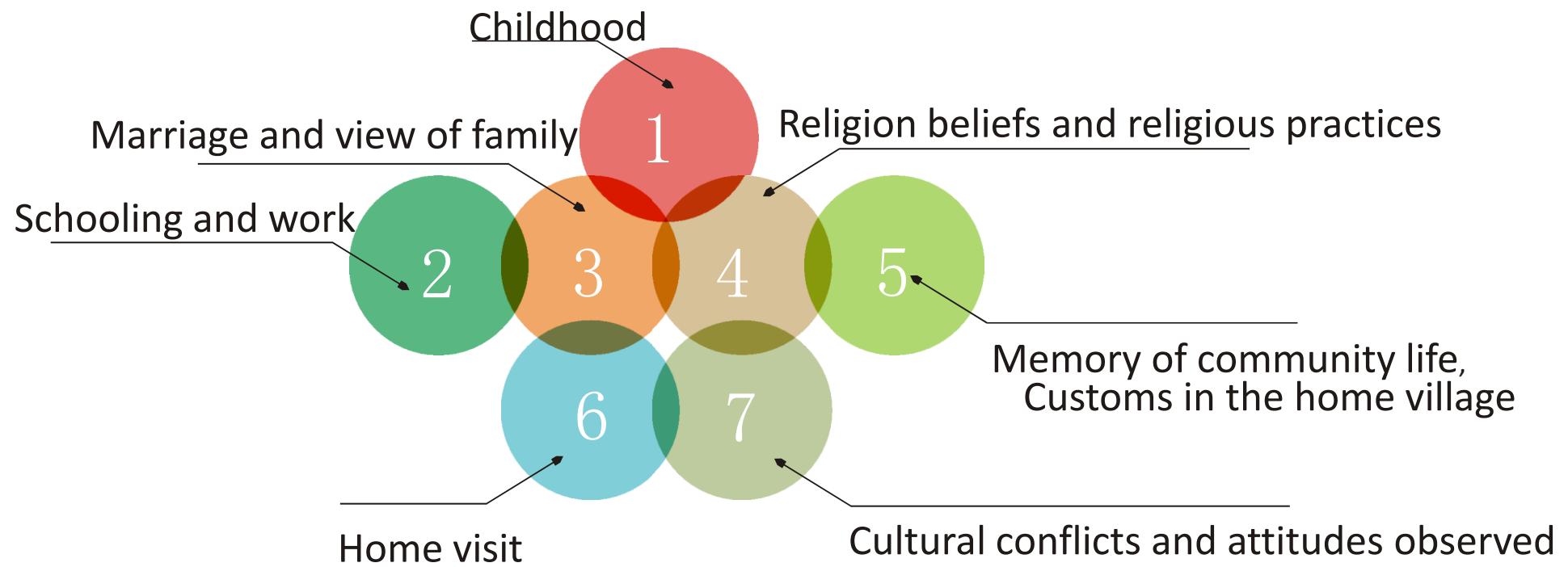
Workers withdrew in fear in Jiuzhaigou Valley (Tibetan area is sensitive)

Workers more open in Chengdu (Han area)

All the names here are fictitious in order to protect them



Interview Question Design



- **Background of interviewees**

Sanbuzha: 46, from a small Ruoergai village, Aba Prefecture.

Han primary school and Tibetan secondary school.

Worked as truck driver, tractor driver, and security guard before settling down as Tibetan restaurant partner.





Photo from Guoqiucang

Guoqiucang: 32, from a Hongyuan township, Aba Prefecture.

Training School graduate, dedicated English learning.

5 Years as tour-guide, and now running a tour business with his 2 brothers.



www.abazhou.gov.cn



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Zewanglamu: 25, from Kangding County, Ganzi
A Ph.D student in Anthropology.



Kangding Guozhuang



Kangding New District





Rongmu: 22, from a village in Danba County, Ganzi

Quit primary school;

Waitress hopping from one restaurant to another.

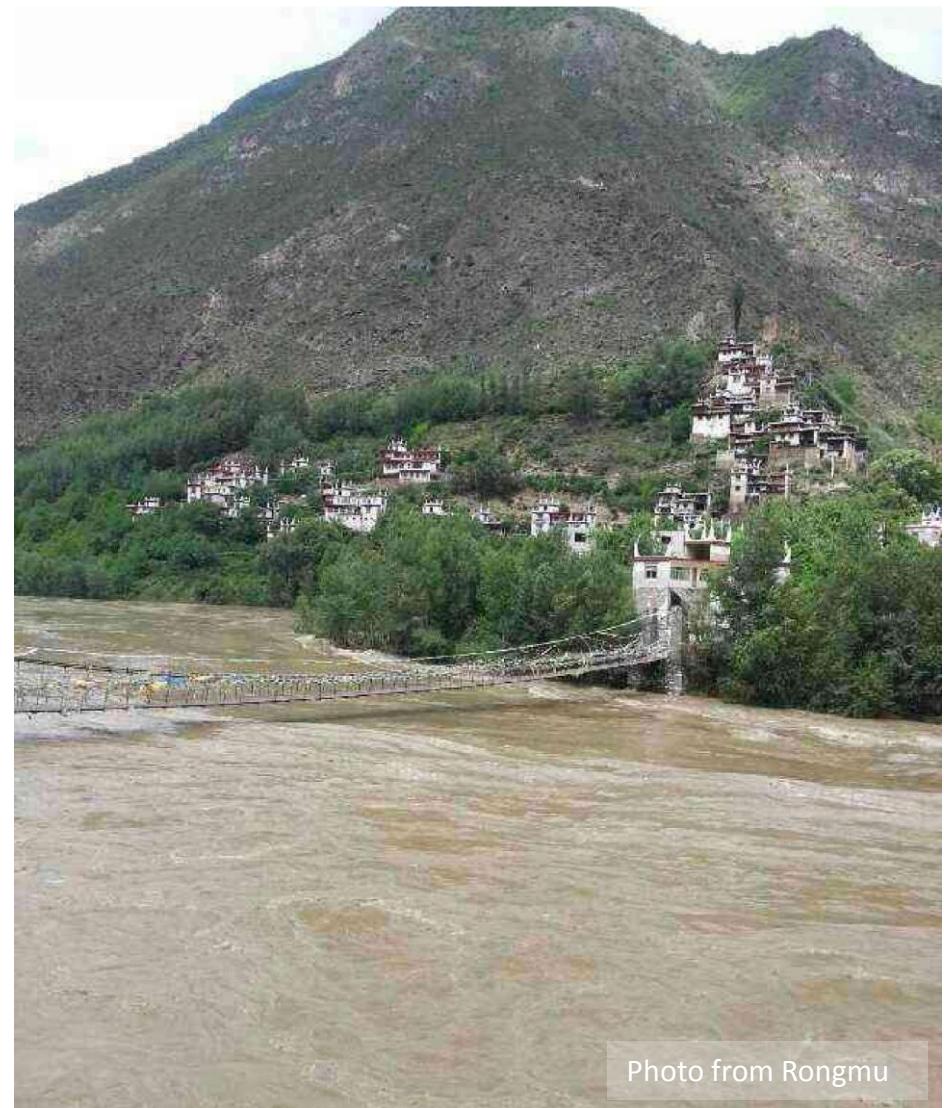


Photo from Rongmu



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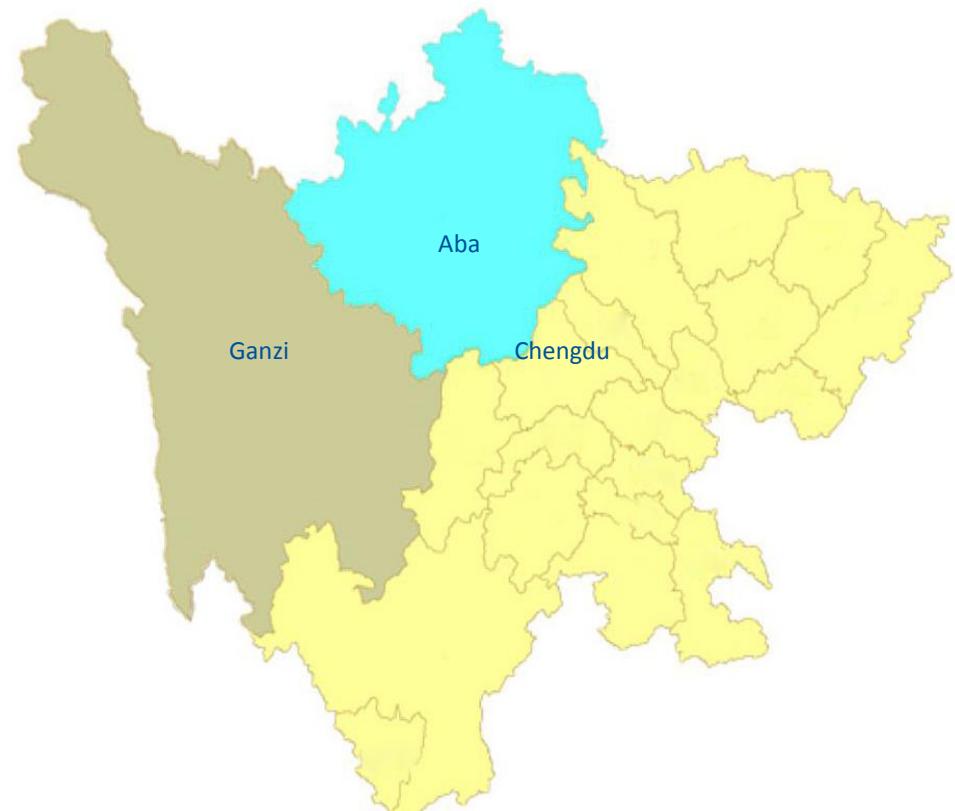
- **Distribution of interviewees**

Aba pastoral area - 2 interviewees

Ganzi agricultural area – 2 interviewees

Going out of hometown: 2 cases

1. For study
2. For work
 - blue collar
 - small business owner
 - white collar



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Traditional Tibetan Values and their Preservation Status

- Faith, Views on Life, Views on Ecology
- Family and Marriage
- The Community Life



Faith, Views on Life, Views on Ecology

Faith: Tibetan Buddhists

Sanbuzha:

Recite the Sutra, even for a little insect

Rongmu:

Believe in Bon Religion, asking the good
and ill luck

Zewanglamu:

“Tibetan Buddhism is a kind of knowledge
with wisdom.”



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Guoqiucang: Rational views on the religion. "As for Tibetan Buddhism, I neither believe in it 100%, nor do I not believe it. I believe its theoretical doctrines."

1. Reciting Sutra is a good psychological adjustment.
2. The full body prostration gives Tibetans a healthy body
3. The Tibetan Buddhism promotes good public life and integrates the community.
4. Tibetan Buddhism also serves as a teaching tool to the community.
5. Tibetan Buddhism establishes a system that provides benefits and security to the community



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Views on Life

Sanbuzha:

Believe in reincarnation. Death is not the ending; it is a new beginning.

Zewanglamu:

Cherish the days in this life, although we can not control its length

Guoqiucang:

Tibetans will not be uncomfortable to talk about death, but will have fear that they haven't done enough good.

Rongmu:

Instinctive fear of death



www.lnsss.com

Views on Ecology

Protect and Treasure every living creature in the nature

Sanbuzha: Food = Medicine for hunger

“We plateau people cannot survive without meat. However, we still feel bad when eating animals. Do we have to kill another life just because we are hungry? It does not sound humane.”

Zewanglamu: Even eat the fish -a food that most Tibetans do not eat

Rongmu: Normally they raise cows for milk not for meat

Guoqiucang: All the creatures are equal.



Family and Marriage

Place the family's benefit before the individual's.

Sanbuzha:

Sacrificed his love and the opportunity to have children of his own for better care for his parents and his nieces

Zewanglamu:

If you want to go to a place, it will be a matter for the whole family. If you want to buy something, that will be something for the whole family

More examples from Guoqiucang and Rongmu



Photo from Sanbuzha

The Community Gathering

New Year



Family Gathering



Photo from Sanbuzha



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Weddings



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Factors affecting the preservation of the traditional value system





Cultural Conflicts and Attitudes

Cultural Conflicts Experienced:

Sanbuzha:

Hurt by frivolous insult: do you have human meat?

Guoqiucang:

Conflicts observed during tours.

1. lack of manners (e.g. upon photo-taking)
2. lack of respect for animals
3. yield v.s. fair play

Zewanglamu:

Minority students are often labeled. 3 labels:

1. Have problem
2. No good grades, never achieve
3. Teachers give them favors

Rongmu:

Attribute the aggressiveness of Tibetans to self-protection



Attitudes towards Cultural Differences:

Sabuzha: No difference between Tibetan and Han

Rongmu: Observed very few clashes in between Tibetan and Han

Guoqiucang: Social conflict was caused by misunderstanding.

Zewanglamu: Crisis with her identity and self-esteem

Can't speak Tibetan but learning it now

For cultural co-existence and harmony:

Cultivate:

1. Strong ethnic cultural roots
2. Understanding of other cultures
3. Appreciation of cultural diversity

In formal education
social education specifically ethnic tourism





Looking forward

1. Expand our sample base (more categories and more samples in each category);
2. Accompany these migrant Tibetans during their home village visits:
 - Record their traditions
 - Interview them, their family members and friends in the village



Thank You
Questions?



Photographed by Clara Tian



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