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CONSENSUS AND ATTRACTORS:
THE DYNAMICS OF KNOWLEDGE CIRCULATION AND TRANSFORMATION IN
SOUTHWEST CHINA

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This research, though a case study with the ethnic Jinghpo, proposes an inter-disciplinary framework for addressing a basic question in the cognitive sciences and in anthropology – how people reach agreement in daily life. Jinghpo live astride the border of Burma, China, and India, and were well-known in anthropological literature as Kachin. Since the early 2000s, Jinghpo have undergone a crisis in drugs/AIDS. People’s learning and use of knowledge about drugs/AIDS are shaped by four inter-woven knowledge systems: Jinghpo sacrifice healing, Christianity, modern bio-medicine introduced by the Chinese government, and southwest Chinese folk religions. Based on my 20 months of fieldwork, I investigate how public health information transforms into individually tailored effective knowledge, or a social consensus that shapes behavior. Such consensus derives from micro-level chaotic interactions among individuals of quasi-infinite diversities, who strive to be ethical citizens, religiously righteous persons, and morally un-stigmatized patients. Scholars generally highlight initial conditions and resultant consensus, but neglect or normalize the “middle course” of chaotic interactions among subjects who may eventually reach consensus.

To explore such neglected chaotic processes, I draw on the concept of an “attractor” from chaos theory to formulate my **Major Hypothesis**: In chaos theory an “attractor” is regularities more or less accidentally emerging from, then normalizing, micro-level chaotic interactions. *I hypothesize that a social consensus arises as an “attractor”*. I define an “attractor” in knowledge circulation as a convincing argument that attracts people, reduces micro-level interactional chaos, bridges and absorbs controversies, and creates relative uniformity. A consensus is also influenced by the political economy of drugs /AIDS and of the politics of knowledge production in China. To accommodate such

influence, I formulate an **Alternative Hypothesis**: *inter/intra-ethnic power functions as an “attractor” in the derivation of a social consensus.*

In fieldwork, I followed the flow of 9 cases of knowledge circulation, with complementation from interviews and filming. Analysis demonstrates that at certain moments, a balance among knowledge systems formulated a stable configuration of initial conditions and contingencies, by which one could predict what future interactions would be. More often, a balance was broken, leading to a different balance or maintaining a state of disorder. Using the concept of an “attractor” I analyze how micro-level chaos in each case generates such a balance. Using my data I am also able to argue that power functions as an “attractor” during the derivation of a consensus. I therefore verify both hypotheses.

This project combines my prior work in physics and in anthropology, and will contribute to the broader currents in the Chinese studies, the cognitive sciences, and anthropology. First, I propose a dynamic framework that understands Southwest China as not only an intersection between China and mainland Southeast Asia, but as an active space that drives the two areas into interaction. By focusing on the interactions among the four knowledge systems, my framework integrates three approaches in the literature to understanding Southwest China: 1) That of historians who explore the politico-economic incorporation of ethnic minorities in Southwest China into the imperial Chinese court. 2) That of anthropologists who focus on the Chinese government’s current agenda of nation-state building, treating minorities in Southwest China as a way to reflect on modern China’s transformations or to “annotate” contemporary mainland Chinese reform. 3) That of scholars with a Southeast Asia perspective, who consider Southwest China a politico-economic and socio-cultural intersection between China and mainland Southeast Asia.

Second, this research reveals the cognitive dynamics of achieving social consensus in real-life contexts rather than in the restricted contexts of artificial modeling. An “attractor” represents a contingent combination of socio-cultural structures, power relations, socio-historical contingencies, individual particularities, and human agent. A focus on an “attractor” enables me to explore alternation of order and chaos, and of predictability of structures and randomness of contingencies. I therefore propose a framework for understanding social complexity derived from quasi-infinite diversities and inherent socio-historical randomness, which is a critical yet under-addressed issue in anthropology. My research, by formulating quasi-infinite diversities organized by an “attractor”, tames untraceable patterns of interaction and reflection into traceable regularities.

Third, taking the two hypotheses together I argue that the source of a social consensus and the function of power relations can be treated as two instantiations of an “attractor” in knowledge circulation. My project unifies the cognitive process of a social consensus and the socio-political function of power relations. It *bridges* cognitive / psychological anthropology and studies of power relations, fields long separated by a lack of communication and dynamic reconciliation.

Fourth, my framework integrates two parallel, though connected, approaches to human cognition: the computational approach that treats cognition as a Turing Machine of information-input/output, and the non-computational approach that explores knowledge acquisition through situated learning, the senses, and imagination, etc. I propose that cognition functions (as illustrated by the derivation of a social consensus) as an “attractor”, its computational mechanism serves as a structural force, and situated learning as contingencies.

To my parents

Notes on Jinghpo and Chinese Orthography

All Jinghpo language used in the dissertation is in italics. The orthography and phonetic transcription used here are based on the standard Jinghpo (*nhkum³³ ga³¹*, Jinghpo spoken in Tongbiguan Village Tract, Yingjiang County, which was traditionally the political domain of the most powerful orthodox chiefs in China, *Nhkum³³*, before 1953. *Ga³¹* means language). My fieldwork village, *Sama*, was traditionally the headquarters of the *Nhkum³³* chiefs.

The standard Jinghpo orthography does not mark tones. Many factual errors in Jinghpo studies are partially due to the use of the Jinghpo-English dictionary by Hanson (1913), in which tones are not marked. I will mark tones for all used Jinghpo words used here, except for places and personal names. The four tones of Jinghpo are marked by superscript numbers: ³³ (mid-level); ³¹ (low falling); ⁵⁵ (high-level); ⁵¹ (high falling). For details see Xu *et al.* 1983.

All Chinese used in the dissertation is in quotes. I provide both Pinyin spelling and characters.

The four tones of Chinese are marked as the follows (take the vowel *a* as an example):

<i>ā</i> mid-level	<i>á</i> low rising
<i>ǎ</i> low falling	<i>à</i> high falling

Preface and Acknowledgements

In this dissertation, I address a basic question in the cognitive sciences and in anthropology – how people reach agreement in their daily life. Sometimes an idea stands out and people reach an agreement, at other times people simply disagree. The process leading to agreement becomes exponentially complex when more individuals involve themselves in it. I aim to understand how an agreement derives from the micro-level complex interactions among individuals by drawing on complexity/chaos theory. I consider my research a technical treatment of chaos theory for exploring the cognitive dynamics of knowledge circulation and transformation, though it is not expressed in mathematical terms. I examine details of the good and bad fortune of people’s daily life, love, hatred, etc. These details are deeply bound in particular time and space, but I aim to specify the underlying principles and dynamics that go beyond the locality of specific time and space. In this sense, my research should not be treated as a metaphorical use of chaos theory.

An exploration of the details of individuals’ daily life requires systematic and objective investigation on the one hand, and sensitive as well as subjective appreciation of villagers and their life on the other hand. It requires a view that highlights the integratedness of human life. Unfortunately, our knowledge about humans and their societies has been partitioned by various subjects of science, the humanities, and art. Each subject provides understandings of particular aspects of integrated human life, which might otherwise be inaccessible. And the partition also seduces people to unconsciously set up single-minded views and cultivates indifference, or even hostility, among these views. Current antagonism between humanist and scientific approaches in anthropology has undermined the goal of anthropology as a comprehensive endeavor to understand humans and their cultures. I heartily resist such demarcation and consider the antagonism detrimental. I aim to

understand the integratedness of human life, and embed such awareness of integratedness into the disciplinary knowledge of anthropology. My research is also intended to demonstrate that science and the humanities should, and can, be bridged for understanding humans and their cultures without one missionizing the other, which implies a comprehensive understanding inaccessible by either alone.

Aiming to realize such a goal for anthropology, my ethnographic and linguistic fieldwork is an intellectual collaboration between me and my consultants. I report as a participant-observer while a traditional animist priest or shaman is performing his craft through divination to determine the cause of ailment of a patient and to prescribe a cure. I am in effect an apprentice of this priestly craft. My objective as an ethnographer is to attempt a cognitive representation of how the Jinghpo traditional knowledge system interacts with other knowledge systems, with the former serving as a platform for such interactions. In fieldwork, I strove to probe into villagers' explications of some basic, abstract notions concerning time, space, life, and death. In interviews, most consultants felt that they knew the answer to my questions and had experienced a lot regarding the relevant notions, but they became confused when trying to explain these notions. They racked their brains to figure out a way to explain, but what they could eventually tell me was only a few words or cases. Part of my interviews thus became informants' reflection and exploration of a world that they believed they knew but did not know how to express. To stimulate people's exploration, I brought specific cases I had collected into discussion, asking villagers to specify connections among cases and to propose ways to express these connections. Sometimes my questions made people more puzzled, but at other times villagers were excited and provided magnificent interpretations! In this sense, most of my ethnographic findings presented in the current dissertation are delicately connected to individual flavors and personalities, both mine and my informants', though the fieldwork is systematically carried out by following

carefully designed methods.

I was trained in physics (B.S. 2001, Yunnan University, China) and anthropology (MA 2004, Beijing University) C.f. Schaffer 1994. Starting from 2007, I joined an interdisciplinary project in the Beckman Institute at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). We analogize formation of collective memory with a neuro-physiological model of the consolidation of individual memory. Our co-authored book, *Individual and Collective Memory Consolidation: Analogous Processes on Different Levels* (Thomas J. Anastasio, Kristen Ann Ehrenberger, Patrick Watson, and Wenyi Zhang, MIT, 2012), constructs a uniform theory for understanding how fleeting individual / collective memories transform into long-term memories. Carrying this research one step further, I aim to develop a theoretical framework in the present dissertation for understanding the delicacy of alternations of, and interactions between, predictable socio-cultural structures and inherent socio-historical contingencies. In summer 2008, I was awarded the Cognitive Science / Artificial Intelligence Award at the Beckman Institute for developing my major hypothesis. I then tested my hypotheses in my 20 months of fieldwork among the ethnic Jinghpo in Southwest China.

By bringing together anthropological fieldwork with cognitive science and physics, I aim to reveal the general conceptual stance, and concerns, of anthropology and cognitive science implied by an ethnographic world in which a priest-shaman performs his functions and in which ordinary Jinghpo villagers deal with their daily life details of fortune and disasters. My ethnographic data are organized around two topics. First, how the Jinghpo animal sacrifice, as a diagnostic/divination knowledge system, is capable of reproducing itself in the face of various impinging systems of belief and political policy (chapters one and three), and in the face of unprecedented problems of drug addiction, contagious diseases like HIV-AIDS (chapter four). I investigate sustained system-to-system pressure

that induces change by focusing on how individuals make sense of all available knowledge systems and reach social consensus. I aim to demonstrate how individuals reproduce a knowledge system without impairing its capability to define the outcome system as a continuing expression. Second, how to account for nonlinear changes engendered (chapters two, four, and five). A nonlinear change is a case where pressure from outside traditional experience plays a role in inducing change and so generates hybrid expressions. Hybrid expressions, by definition, are nonlinear in the sense that they break the default way in which the traditional system operates and so elicit new ways that require individuals to blend all available knowledge systems into a, at least a momentary, balance that gives individuals ability to predict their future. The title of my thesis reflects my belief that the processes of hybrid expressions, and the dynamics they bring into the process of change, is knowledge acquisition, and I present this view as my central anthropological theme. The rationale for my use of chaos theory is self-evident here. Chaos theory is a branch of mathematics used to study the physics of turbulence, but today, economics, political science, psychology and sociology also use this approach to deal with the behavior of nonlinear changes. Concept terms such as a variety of “attractors”, “degeneration” and “self-organization” in my thesis are chaos-theoretic tools for describing the succession of hybrid expressions in the Jinghpo diagnostic/divination system as it exists today. These concept-terms are used beginning in Chapter Two.

§ § §

I thank all my consultants’ hard work, generosity, and kindness for helping me understand what they consider important in their minds and lives. In interviews, most expected that their names would be put into my book so that in the future their offspring, who in these modern times do not care about the Jinghpo conventional way of life, will know what Jinghpo were in their parents’ and grandparents’

generations. I thereby give my consultants my genuine gratitude in listing their names here. First of all, I devote my greatest reverence and gratitude to four of my key informants, *Maran La Hkyi Yo*, *Maran La Hkyi Hka*, *Maran Hpaga No Hka*, and *Marip Shang Ko*. I am also grateful to *Maran Nhtum Tu*, *Maran La Hkyi Brang Di*, *Maran A Tong No Gaji*, *Maran Mading No*, *Maran La Hkyi No Bok*, *Maran Hku Sau Seng*, *Maji Tu Lum Sara La*, *Maji Hkang La*, *Maji No Lang Tu San*, *Maji Tu Lum Tu Gaba*, *Maji Sara La*, *Maji Hpau Lun La Gaba*, *Maji Brang Nu*, and *Maji Hpau Lun La Gaba*, *Nhkum Hpau Mai Gam* (late), *Ningwot Tu* (late), *Hhkum Hpau Mai Gam* (late), *the old doctor Sha* (late), *Maji Basi Tu*, *Maran Seng La Mun*, *Dingsa Lu* (late). I also thank my landlord *Maran La Hkyi La Lai* and his family, my assistants *Maji Tu Lum La Htoi* and *Maji Chyi No Seng*, *Maji Hkang Yam*, the director of the Sama village administrative office, and local cooperative team leaders *Maji Gyi Tang* and *Maran La Hkyi Nbok No* for their assistance and help.

Prof. Jin Xueliang of the Yunnan Nationalities University, a native Jinghpo linguist, helped me improve my Jinghpo language skills. Prof. Shi Rui of the Yunnan Nationalities University, a Jinghpo from Sama, provided me with many valuable Jinghpo materials. Prof. Yang Hui (MA 1992, UIUC) of the Yunnan University first introduced me to anthropology and the scholarship of Jinghpo. Through her, I met Prof. F. K. Lehman (Chit Hlaing), my current advisor and mentor, who helped me get chance to pursue a doctoral degree in anthropology in the United States.

My gratitude to Prof. F. K. Lehman is beyond what my language capacity could do. I call him *Saya*, a Burmese word for Teacher. In the past seven years, I believe this word has contained my particular gratitude to him that goes beyond the ordinary reverence and gratitude to an advisor. He treated me as not only a student, but a junior colleague. He has, I believe, built a strong persuasion in my mind to think in a way that both a mathematician and an anthropologist will do. In addition, he

and his family, especially his wife, helped me overcome various kinds of difficulties in living in the United States. In particular, I cherish the help from his wife, Sheila Lehman. When my son was born in 2008, my wife and I were lonely in hospital far from our home. As first-time parents, we were merely scared by the childbearing. Sheila had accompanied us for over twelve hours in hospital. She told doctors and nurses that since my wife's mother was far away from us, she was there to stand for my wife's mother! How kind she was and we will remember her words forever!

I also give my genuine gratitude to my co-advisor Prof. Janet D. Keller, who always provided timely instruction regarding my academic progress towards a Ph.D., and provided critical suggestions and/or critique on my papers and dissertation chapters to help me refine and strengthen my arguments. With her recommendation and help, I was able to join the inter-disciplinary project on memory study in the Beckman Institute in 2007, which stimulated me to bridge science and the humanities. With help from my two advisors, I have honed my skills for academic research and for teaching. I should also mention that, as a non-native English speaker, writing in English was a painful but groping process. Both my advisors have helped me be a much better writer.

I thank my other committee members, Prof. Andrew Orta, and Prof. Martin F. Manalansan for helping me from the conception of the research project to the completion of the dissertation. Prof. Orta helped me situate my research in the anthropological study of globalization and interactions among cultural/religious systems. Prof. Manalansan helped formulate my study within anthropological study of healing and medicine. Prof. Maran La Raw (external, Ph.D. UIUC), as a Jinghpo specialist, explained to me some abstract Jinghpo notions that nobody in villages could explain and helped me, from his experience as a native anthropologist, link my detailed ethnographic data to general anthropological concerns. I also want to thank instruction and help from Prof. Alma

Gottlieb, Prof. Matti Bunzl, Prof. Steven Leigh, Prof. Charles Roseman, Prof. Hairong Yan (in 2005) in the anthropology department, and Prof. Thomas J. Anastasio and Prof. Lillian Hoddeson in the Beckman Institute. My friends and fellow graduate students at UIUC Tzu-Kai Liu, Shanshan Lan, Chris Tan, Junjie Chen, Yu Dong, and Jung Jin-Heon shared with me their study and writing experience. Dawei Yang in Yunnan Art College helped me and my wife with filming techniques. Qunyu Yang and Fu Zhao generously hosted my family when we briefly stayed in Kunming.

My wife Shiping Li accompanied me throughout my fieldwork, helping me with the filming, photography and interviews. She values my pursuit of practicing science as a genuine way to ignite the enthusiasm of life. I cherish her love and support. The major part of the dissertation was written in Champaign (Illinois) during the Spring Semester 2011, with my wife and son away from me in China. In the frost-cold in Illinois, especially during the downtime of writing, I was always warmed and encouraged, through phone, by my wife's consolation and encouragement and my little son's (two years and a half then) adorable voice. When a doctoral degree is anticipated, I feel a strong impulse to express my love and gratitude to my parents, Fan Zhang and Zhixiu Zhang. I always remember their hard work in raising me and my brother when life was tough in rural China in the 1980s.

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Case 2.2 and its analysis have been presented in the Session on Simulations at the annual meetings of SAScI (the Society for Anthropological Sciences) during February 16-19, 2011, at Charleston, South Carolina, where it was chosen as the winner of the best student paper competition sponsored by the Cognitive Science Society. The data regarding the Jinghpo time and space schemes (Chapter One) were presented at the workshop on “Cultural Models of Nature and the Environment: Self, Space and Causality” during September 1-4, 2011 at the Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, thanks to Prof. Giovanni Bennardo (Ph.D. UIUC). Part of the case 2.3 was also discussed in an article manuscript entitled “Bearing the Decline of the Animist Tradition: Enhanced State of Consciousness, Illness, Taboos, and the Government in Southwest China,” which has been accepted for publication by *Anthropology of Consciousness*. The data on the healing dynamics of animal sacrifice and Kachin Christian prayer (the first section in Chapter Two) were also discussed in an article manuscript entitled “Healing Through States of Consciousness: Animal Sacrifice and Christian Prayer among the Kachin in Southwest China,” which I submitted to *American Anthropologist*.

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Introduction

I have lived with Sama villagers in Southwest China for about 29 months. Most villagers were ethnic Jinghpo. I have known great details of their daily life joy and sadness. In 2003, I noticed *Chyi*, a thin and morbidly black man in his fifties, and his eldest son become addicted to drugs¹. In 2007, *Chyi* sold out three-fourths of his swidden plots (about 25 hectares) and got about one hundred thousand RMB (USD 14,871. RMB is the unit of standard Chinese currency). He and his son used the bulk of that money for purchasing drugs (heroin and opium), and spent it quickly. In 2009 they had almost nothing left except for 5 hectares of plots for maintaining a basic life. In 2008, *Chyi's* son was imprisoned for mandatorily forcing him to quit using drugs, and similarly *Chyi* in 2009. His fourteen-year-old youngest son, quit school and started to use drugs. The boy's mother noticed that valuables at home continued disappearing. In March, the boy fell ill and hospital treatment did not work well.

Chyi's wife was despairing. She was alone at home without man's support. She believed there must have been something unknown that led men in her home to be seized by the evil of drugs. She resorted to ritual specialists for figuring that out. In the night of April 6th, 2010, when one of *Chyi's* classificatory brothers invited a Hân Chinese religious specialist to conduct a healing ritual, *Chyi's* wife asked the specialist to divine on behalf of the three males in her family. The divination was intended to figure out whether spirits had bothered these males and led them into misery. The specialist divined through trance. She revealed that *Chyi's* eldest and third brothers, as military officials in the Kachin State (one of six constituent state within the Union of Burma), had died badly together with a band of soldiers in a war with the Burmese government force. As the Jinghpo believe, spirits of people dying in a war cannot have a peaceful life in the afterworld. They will come back to ask for solace and food from their living relatives by making the latter sick.

To recover, the living should make sacrifice to soothe the souls. The two brothers' souls now led their soldiers back to ask for consolation from *Chyi*, their only living brother. Neither of the deceased had married. They had been jealous of *Chyi*'s family's big money gained from selling plots of land, and led *Chyi* and his two sons to use drugs. Worse, they had decided to recruit *Chyi*'s youngest son into their ghost army. This was why the son's face had become slightly greenish blue. "I have seen the two ghosts' eyes become red (owing to jealousy) in my divination". That meant, sacrifice to them should be conducted as soon as possible to avoid the disaster to the boy. The specialist added: "You must have heard big bouncing sound of unknown things and pigs' ramming the sides of the pigpen and screamed at night in the last two years.... Your chickens have been lost mysteriously ... All these were caused by the two souls and their soldiers. These souls now asked for big afterworld money for taking ghost wives and building their barracks!"

The divination scared *Chyi*'s wife. It reminded her of a series of tragedies that had taken place in her husband's lineage. She even dared not go home alone and stayed in her husband's classificatory brothers' house that night. Others sympathized with her, but they all believed that the divination was accurate. "The specialist was right. We remember that in the night before your eldest son's wedding in 2008, pigs had rammed madly at midnight, and two chickens had been mysteriously lost". That night, many people had gathered in *Chyi*'s house. Some brave men had gone out to figure out why these happened but found nothing. "Now, the Chinese specialist had figured out the exact reason. You should invite the specialist to conduct the sacrifice as soon as possible!" they told *Chyi*'s wife.

On April 16th, the specialist was invited to make a sacrifice to release *Chyi*'s youngest son from the bad fate of being targeted by ghosts. She made a straw doll, dressed it with the boy's clothes, asked the boy to blow a gust of air into its mouth, and stained it with chicken blood. The doll was

used to replace the boy to serve in the ghost army. She chanted: “Ghosts! Ghosts! Come to take this doll boy! The real boy is a Jinghpo. He is lazy and backward. He does not know how to be a good soldier. He has been addicted to drugs and will not serve you well. Now, take the doll boy! It has neither parents nor any relatives in this world. It will go with you to be a ‘red guard’, obeying your commands and fighting for you. Take the doll boy and leave the real boy! If you don’t let the real boy pass, he will convert into a Christian ... You ghost soldiers! You once fought with Japanese invaders and died violently. The dead Japanese soldiers have kept following and bothering you! We humans sympathize with you and will help you drive the Japanese away ... Now, you Japanese ghosts! Go back to Japan as soon as possible after receiving our sacrifice. Otherwise, we Chinese will beat you to death again! We have 18 ethnic minorities. All are barbarians with sharp spears and swords. We will behead you if you keep hanging around in China”.

The chanting caught my attention. It twists and mixes two historical events of modern China (the Sino-Japan War of 1937-45 and the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76). It combines Jinghpo and Chinese healing rituals, the local imagination of ethnic minorities and of Christianity, and a widely held view by Chinese regarding ethnic minorities (who are lazy, barbarian but brave in fighting invaders. It also expresses animal sacrifice makers’ impression of local Christians, who believe only in God and reject all other spirits, and so are disgusted by the latter. More interestingly, the chanting illustrates how the wars between the Kachin State and the Burmese government in the 1980s, in which *Chyi*’s brothers died, are projected onto the Sino-Japan War of the 1930s and 40s. The Cultural Revolution that fought all non-Marxist ideas and practices is made use of empowering the doll. As a “red guard” in the Cultural Revolution was prompted to fight with all his heart against Capitalist remnants for Chairman Máo, the doll boy will absolutely obey ghost soldiers.

I talked with the specialist after the ritual. “May Jinghpo youth’s minds have been destroyed by drugs. They have been subject to ghosts and are vulnerable to be taken by ghosts!” She claimed. To save them means to stop drug use and to take them back from spirits. But drugs had been imported from foreign countries *via* Burma when the Chinese government started to exploit mountain resources in the Jinghpo Hills. “This is why I conjured up Chinese soldiers, who fought against Japanese invaders, to wipe out imported drugs and to drive away spirits”. To support her argument, she told me how she had fallen ill one week after she had divined for *Chyi*’s family. Only when she had received *Chyi*’s invitation for conducting a ritual, had she suddenly felt all discomforts disappeared. “I have negotiated with ghosts on behalf of *Chyi*’s family, but they had not made sacrifice in time. The ghosts had become impatient and come to bother me!” “I had experienced such kinds of discomfort many times after a divination on behalf of a teenage drug user who had been targeted by ghosts”.

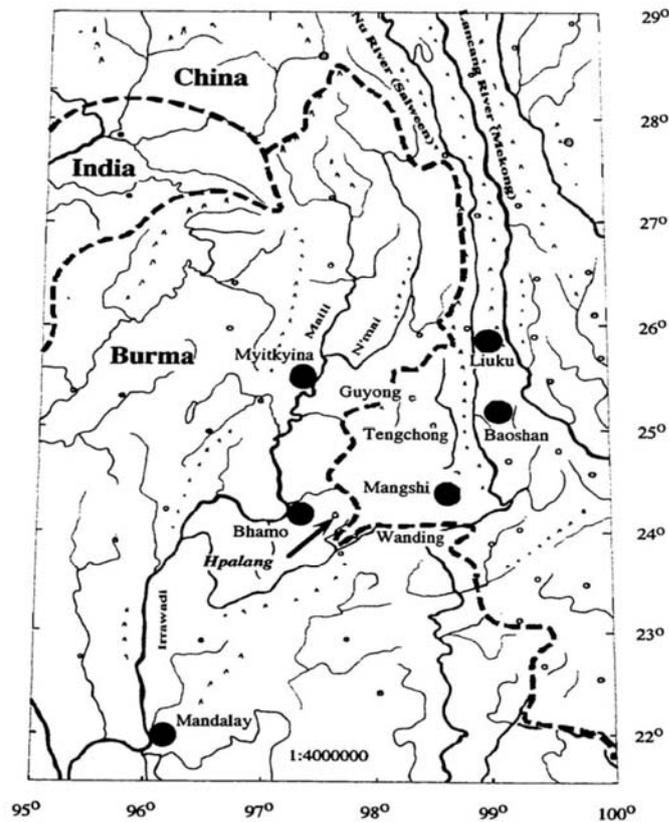
In fieldwork starting from 2003, I had noticed that such projective imagination about drug use and ghosts display a similarity recognized by villagers: spirits bite people and make them ill and die, and drugs do the same, even worse². I witnessed dozens of similar cases of drug use, imprisonment for quitting drug use, spirits’ biting, violent death, and broken families. Drug use has become a crisis throughout the ethnic Jinghpo communities. Jinghpo live astride the border of Burma (where they are known as Kachin with a population of 600,000), China (100,000 or so, where they are known as *Jingpo*, one of the nation’s 55 officially identified ethnic minorities) and India (several thousand, where they are known as *Singhpo*)³. They were once well-known in anthropological literature as Kachin owing to Edmund Leach’s classical study (1954). Owing to their intermediary position in caravan-trade between the Chinese and Southeast Asians, the Jinghpo in China were politically and economically controlled by the Chinese (Hill 1998; Lehman 1989; Wang 1997). Since the 1990s, a

thriving China-Burma border trade has brought unprecedented wealth to ordinary Jinghpo families. Unfortunately, the trade has also brought them large-scale drug abuse and HIV/AIDS (as well as Southeast Asian subtypes of HIV. Beyrer 1998; Hyde 2007; Yang R. *et al.* 2003; Yu *et al.* 2003).

In 2003, I was astonished to find that only 4 of over 100 men in Sama did not use drugs. Opium is smoked in the village and heroin injected intravenously in the nearby border city of *Laiza* (“Lāzā” 拉咱 in Chinese). I witnessed two men’s deaths from drug abuse and noted that half the boys under 18 were using drugs. In 2007, my former professor Yang Hui in Yunnan University found that only 7 of 145 villages in Longchuan County (populated mostly by Chinese, Jinghpo and Dai) were drug-free. By 2007, over 80,000 HIV/ AIDS- bearers of a total population of 45,430,000 were recorded in Yunnan province in southwest China. 2,111 patients died of AIDS with only 0.2-0.3 percent of infected persons having received proper treatment. In the Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan (where almost the majority of Jinghpo in China reside), 589 pregnant women were identified as HIV positive among 8,775 who received the HIV test (Yang H. 2008).

In addition, the border region ranging from the Jinghpo area to the Shan-Wa areas (see map I) is politically unsettled. Drug use and HIV/AIDS are closely associated with gambling centers run by Chinese merchants in border cities and with the drug-sex-trade culture of the region (Hyde 2007). Accordingly, the Chinese government associated drug use with sex and HIV/AIDS in their education. They exerted uniform and overwhelming control over drug use/traffic, prostitution, and HIV/AIDS simultaneously (Liu S. 2011; Zhou 1999). Such a combined view of drugs, sex, and HIV/AIDS results partially from ethnic tourism in Yunnan province from the late 1990s, which revived Hân Chinese imaginings of Yunnan as a place of exoticism and promiscuity and as the land of minority women with unusual sexual practices (Cai 2001; Schein 2001), and partially from the fact of Yunnan as a

major port of drug traffic from Southeast Asia into China (Beyrer *et al.* 2000; Law 2000; Yu X. *et al.* 2003). In the dissertation, I will abbreviate HIV/AIDS and drugs as AIDS/drugs.



Map 1: Jinghpo in China, Burma, and India (Source: Leach 1954:23.)

From the late 1990s, UN AIDS, AIDS China-UK, AIDS Alliance, and Clinton AIDS organizations have sponsored various AIDS and drug use prevention programs in Yunnan (Li H. 1992). Many program workers, following a top-down mode, simply consider the prevention a medical problem having little, if anything, to do with local socio-cultural processes of how scientific knowledge about AIDS/drugs is locally understood and circulated (Yang H. 2008). As a consequence, understandings of AIDS/drugs by ordinary people in Yunnan, especially those with education no advanced than high school, were not improved by the prevention programs. In Wenshan County sex-workers, one of the populations most at risk for HIV/AIDS, understand HIV/AIDS as “fever that will never go away until death comes” (Yang H. *et al.* 2006a). Most people believe that scientific

knowledge about HIV/AIDS and drugs is useful only for infected people or drug users. They do not see any benefits in learning and using such knowledge (Yang H. *et al.* 2006b; c.f. Brown *et al.* 2007; Dolezal *et al.* 1998). Knowledge about HIV/AIDS therefore does not shape behavior, and there is no behavioral response to hold back the increasing rate of infection and drug abuse. For instance, condoms were not commonly used by sex workers across the border because men complained that using condoms made them feel like washing feet with socks on (Yang H. *et al.* 2006 a, b).



Map 2: Dehong Prefecture in China

To understand local modes of knowledge acquisition, circulation, and enactment so as to motivate people to learn and use scientific knowledge about AIDS/drugs on their own, I conducted 20 months of fieldwork among Jinghpo from July 2009. I investigated how scientific knowledge of AIDS/drugs is understood, circulated, and potentially developed into social consensus, and how such knowledge influences possible enactment or avoidance of risky behaviors associated with AIDS /drugs. Accepting that knowledge is not the only influence on behavior (Bennardo 2003; DiClemente *et al.* 1993; D' Andrade and Strauss 1992; Strauss and Quinn 1997), I seek to understand the place of particular knowledge, both consensual and individual, in the Jinghpo responses to AIDS/drugs, and so suggest modes of intervention using local knowledge circulation/use to reduce the crisis.

As illustrated by *Chyi's* case, villagers' understandings of drugs/AIDS in my fieldwork base are

formulated by four inter-woven knowledge systems: Jinghpo sacrifice, southwest Chinese folk religion, Christianity, and the Chinese government (together with the modern bio-medicine). Animal sacrifice has been the primary healing recourse. Traditionally it was deemed the most effective disease treatment. It saves human life by sacrificing animal life to spirits that make people ill. Spirits penetrate people's lives. They allocate pre-given fates to individuals, shaping the latter's life, death, achievements, and even the afterworld life. They circumscribe details of people's actions, such as when and where one might go so as to avoid bad fortune. Sacrifice makers treat Chinese folk belief as a resource for daily life regarding relations between humans and spirits. Such syncretism works for two reasons. On the one hand, according to the Jinghpo genesis legends, Chinese and Jinghpo share a basic essence and can easily understand each other. On the other, the Chinese folk culture is prone to merging with the Jinghpo sacrifice so that both Chinese and Jinghpo consider the syncretism as their own, respectively. The word "culture" ("wénhuà", 文化) in classical Chinese is primarily a verb, meaning to humanize people of different cultural origins by inculcating Chinese folk culture into the latter's minds (see Fowler 2008; Graham 1961; Yang C. 1967).

Currently, economic development is the primary aim for the Chinese government, who considers ethnic cultures/religions are barriers rather than accelerators to development. Animal sacrifice (*nat*⁵⁵ *jo*³¹) is translated in Chinese as "sacrifice to ghosts" ("xiàn guǐ", 献鬼), a deliberate and unapt translation full of disparaging allusion to vulgar Marxist antitheism. The Jinghpo term *nat*⁵⁵ refers to all kinds of entities that do not have a fixed physical appearance⁴, while the Chinese word "guǐ" refers only to ghosts that are bleak. In using the term "xiàn guǐ", Jinghpo are reminded of the primitive connotation of sacrifice. However, due to the policy of religious freedom, the government cannot erase ethnic cultures. It emphasizes minorities as poor citizens and overlooks their different cultures.

Compared with the government's mandatory policies for development, Jinghpo Christians have proposed a middle-way of development. They aim to achieve both economic development and spiritual emancipation. They deprecate animal sacrifice as backward and superstitious, as opposed to Christianity that originates from the world where science thrives and people enjoy the best material life. Conversion is thus a short cut to modernization. For instance, Jinghpo Christians associate Jinghpo writing with modernization (reference for the development of Christianity and writing). Some zealots equate absence of writing with no "culture" (Liu T. 2009), blaming their ancestors for having lost the Jinghpo writing and so holding Jinghpo back⁵. The creation of the Jinghpo orthography by missionaries and the introduction of Bible are thus the "dawning time" for these Jinghpo. As the orthography uses almost the same Roman alphabet as English does, Jinghpo Christians claim Jinghpo is derived from English. As English is the language of the wealthiest people in the world, the Jinghpo writing will presumably enable its users to get closer to the modern way of life.

Within the interactions among these four systems, I explore villagers' acquisition and enactment of knowledge about AIDS/drugs by focusing on how individuals learn and exchange knowledge. Individuals are differentially influenced by several knowledge systems according to their age, gender, education, religious belief, profession, and so forth. Individual knowledge is thus quasi-infinitely diverse, and interactions among them are intractable complex, or even *chaotic*. In addition, individuals interact with each other in particular contexts, which regulate what they can or cannot exchange. Random factors during interactions, such as interruption by an unexpected interlocutor who brings a new conversational topic, also complicate interactions. The crux of my research, then, is to tackle the emergence of individual understandings and consensual knowledge from such chaotic processes of idea exchange *via* inter-personal discussion or non-verbal communications.

Chaos, an “Attractor”, and Two Hypotheses

The chaos of knowledge circulation results from quasi-infinite individual diversities and situational contingencies/randomness of the process. By the time the arbitrary person forms an understanding, it sensitively depends on many others’ understandings of yet others’ understandings, and so on iteratively. A consensus emerges from intractable interactions among these labile understandings. Such emergence exhibits four characteristics of a dynamic process that involves: i) a large number of individuals; ii) chaotic micro-level interactions among individuals; iii) possible consensus, though each individual interprets the consensus differently (Garro 1999; Romney *et al.* 1986, 1987); and iv) such consensus depends on initial conditions and situational contingencies.

Social scientists have developed three models to explain knowledge circulation. The first draws on social and material network theories to highlight inter- dependence between consensual and personal knowledge (Chit Hlaing 2009; Murakami and Middleton 2006; Watts 2006). The second model draws on epidemiology that studies how contagious diseases propagate to explore how ideas circulate by the mechanism of like attracting like (Krieger 2000; Sperber 1996; Trostle and Sommerfeld 1996). The third model explores how consensual knowledge is differentially employed or applied by individuals according to their respective settings or goals (Hutchins 1995; Keller and Keller 1996; Shore 1996; Wertsch 2002). These models explain the structure and result of knowledge circulation, but neglect or fail to address the micro-level processes that lead to such structure.

Scholars also explore the micro-level processes by focusing on how a knowledge system incorporates novel knowledge (e.g. Biehl 2007; Bunzl 2008; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Howlett and Morgan 2011; Padgett 2000; Rimé and Christophe 1997; Skultans 2008). This requires studying socio-cultural complexity in people’s daily life. For instance, Orta (2002 and 2004) examining the

complexity of the notion of “locality” when one examines local peoples from the perspectives of the local, the regional, and the national levels. The linguist Lightfoot (1999) examines how speech errors are incorporated into, and thus change, the standard grammar of a language. Political scientists Padgett and McLean (2006) examine the social processes of the birth of a new form of business organization, the partnership system, in Renaissance Florence. Cognitive scientists Michalski (1994), Holyoak and Thagard (1989) develop “abduction theory” to explain how a novel structure can be borrowed from one domain to change existing structures of another domain. Linguist Urciuoli (2008) studies how the meaning of the term "skills" in the contemporary job market emerges when job seekers and employers associate diverse connotations to it and how such connotations accumulate over time. Anthropologist Sahlins (1985 and 2005 a & b) explains how micro- histories turn into macro-histories by amplifying the individual significance to the collective, so changes to individuals are transferred to the collective. However, most scholars do not extend their analysis to the real socio- historical process of micro-level chaotic interactions among many individuals who reach consensus on linguistic errors, the partnership system, the borrowed knowledge, or the term “skills”, while each interprets the consensus differently. Scholars highlight micro-level factor at the beginning and newly altered system as the endpoint, but neglect or normalize the chaotic “middle course”.

Cognitive anthropologists have begun to explore such chaotic “middle course” by developing situated learning theory for addressing learning and development in ways that take account of socio-historical variables and momentary interactions (e.g. Engestrom 2008; Lave 1991). Scholars highlighted that learning is fundamentally a social process, situated in subjects’ full participation in the socio-cultural practices of a community. In particular, Engestrom (2008) analyzes how learning reflects a self-organizing process by focusing on collaboration within a work team; when work itself

chances, collaboration within a team changes as response to momentary interactions among team members. However, the situated learning theory does not clearly specify different roles played by cultural knowledge systems and situational contingencies, and more importantly, it does not specify a general means to formulate interactions among knowledge systems and situational contingencies.

To provide a general framework for understanding such neglected “middle course”, I draw on chaos theory to formulate a hypothesis. Chaos theory was first formulated in mathematics and physics and is now applied in a variety of fields of science. It has explored how macro structures arise from micro-level chaotic interactions among large number of components of natural or social systems (Alhadeff-Jones 2008; Bar-Yam 1992; Nicolis and Prigogine 1989; Ruelle 1991). Social scientists have drawn on chaos theory to explore social dynamic processes, such as the puzzling formation and disappearance of states and nations after the end of the Cold War (Cederman 1997), the dialectic alternation of order and chaos in the Third Reich in Germany (Beaumont 2000), the non-linear development of a group (Guastello 2002; McClure 2005), and the linguist Cooper (1999) portrays language processing as linked sequences of fractal sets. The Jinghpo is one of the earliest cases in which chaos theory was applied to understand unpredictable political systems (Abraham 1990).

To illustrate how a macro structure emerges from micro-level chaos, consider the movements of millions of water molecules when one boils a kettle of water. Each molecule’s movement can be described by known physical laws. But considering the whole kettle of water, each molecule has its own direction and rate of movement. Among them, interactions are chaotic, and physicists have formulated laws to describe statistical result of interactions. However, the details of such interactions are untraceable. The laws that describe the movements of individual molecules, or the statistical laws, cannot tell us how macro patterns of the movement of the boiling water derive from micro-level

chaotic interactions among millions of molecules. At an unpredictable point when the water absorbs enough heat (again not pre-determined), there starts to appear an observable macro movement pattern in the kettle. The pattern gradually amplifies itself and spreads to the whole volume of water in the kettle. When the water is boiled, millions of molecules move *uniformly* and the kettle of water shows a macro pattern of movements. The pattern regulates interactions among molecules and so reduces the micro-level chaos. Such a pattern will be different if the water is heated at a different initial temperature, or different amount of water at different initial temperatures are added in the process.

In this process, three kinds of physical theories are involved: theory that describes behavior of individual molecules, theory that describes the statistical result of the macro pattern of the boiled water without paying attention to the micro-level chaotic interactions that generate the pattern, and theory that describes how micro-level chaotic interactions among millions of molecules generate the final macro pattern. The last theory is chaos and complexity theory. In chaos theory, the initial macro pattern of water movement is called an “*attractor*”. It depends on initial conditions and accidentally emerges from, and normalizes, micro-level chaotic interactions. It displays four features. First, it is partially determined by structural forces (like the physical laws that describe movement of individual molecule). Second, it depends on initial conditions (such as at what initial temperature the water is heated) and contingencies in the process (such as the amounts of water at various temperatures being added into the kettle). Third, it is contingent. It will never appear if an *unpredictable* critical point is not reached. Fourth, it drives contingencies and micro-level chaos into regularity. Similarly, although a social consensus is partially shaped by cultural knowledge that governs individual interactions (the structural force), it emerges unpredictably from chaotic interactions among individuals.

I formulate my **Major Hypothesis**: *a social consensus arises as an "attractor"*. An "attractor" combines individual particularities and situational contingencies with cultural knowledge. It indicates how an individual transforms shared *information* into personally tailored and effective *knowledge*.

This cognitively conceived hypothesis might be challenged by the relevance of the political economy of AIDS/drugs and of the politics of knowledge production to the formation of social consensus. Scholars have demonstrated how cultural knowledge influences people's behaviors risky for AIDS/drugs (c.f. Biehl 2007; Ingstad 1990; Manalansan 1999, 2003; McGrath *et al.* 1992), and how politico-economic conditions influence people's acquisition of relevant knowledge (c.f. Bourgois 2002; Farmer 1999; Glick 1992; Gorman 1986; Pigg 2001). Ideas put forward by religious specialists, officials, and successful merchants may become "attractors" that shape ordinary villagers' understandings. To accommodate the influence of such power relations (including authority, governmental power, and influence), I formulate an **Alternative Hypothesis**: *inter/intra-ethnic power functions as an "attractor" in the derivation of a social consensus*⁶.

Social Complexity, Chaos, and Predictability

The above two hypotheses aim to address a basic and classical question in the social sciences and anthropology from a novel perspective: how do we capture the complexity involved in the alternation of order and chaos, and of predictability of structures and randomness of contingencies in people's daily life and socio-historical process? Scholars have developed various approaches to socio-cultural complexity (Bunzl 2008; for a contemporary ethnographic example see Orta 2002, 2004). This issue was first raised in anthropology by Margaret Mead (1928) and Edward Sapir (1949) in terms of the tension between society as a super organism and individuals as concrete entities with diverse particularities. The issue was then largely neglected when the French Sociological School,

Structuralism in particular, dominated anthropological theories from the 1950s. The rise of interpretive approaches to culture in the United States brought this issue back into anthropology, as interpretation is always individual-oriented (e.g. Geertz 1973). However, the quasi-infinite possibility of individual interpretations led scholars at that time to deny the possibility of generalization (Lett 1997). Accordingly, scholars of “writing culture” first systematically argue that subjective diversities will inevitably dissolve all structural descriptions of culture as a system (e.g. Abu-Lughod 1993; Clifford and Marcus 1986), and raise the challenge of how to understand complex subjective diversities. These scholars describe or only index the complexity, through which they aim to capture the functioning of the daily life while preserving its original, non-analytical flavor (e.g. Abu-Lughod 1993; Limon 1994). However, by denying culture as a system, these scholars explore details just for the sake of detail, arguing that there does not exist such a notion as culture as a system but rather that everything is only emergent. Without denying culture as a system, other scholars take up the challenge of complexity and explore the interactions between culture and subject diversity in terms of dialogues between structure and event (e.g., Ortner 1984; Sahlins 1985, 2005) or between micro- and macro-histories (e.g. Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1992). However, these studies reduce the complexity involved to interactions among a few individuals. Currently, the issue of complexity is rephrased in the context of globalization (e.g. Appadurai 1996; Elyachar 2005; Mazarella 2003), inter-national interactions (e.g. Tsing 2004), and cross-border flows of capital and information (e.g. De Genova 2005; Evans et al. 2000). Such an emphasis on complexity enables scholars to specify the dynamics that converges geographical areas that were previously isolated in anthropological studies.

I build my research on this on-going literature regarding social complexity by focusing on the micro-level process of individual acquisition of knowledge. This acquisition involves individual

transformations of public information received from daily life interactions with many others into personally tailored knowledge that individuals are willing to act on. Understanding this process of exchange and transformation requires exploring complex, even chaotic, information flow among individuals. Therefore, the two words complexity and chaos gain more specific meanings in the present dissertation that are different from those in the existing literature. I consider that social complexity derives from individual diversity in facing socio-cultural patterns, and that chaos derives from un-traceable meticulous details when the diversity changes the patterns, or get “tamed” by the patterns, or coexists with the patterns so as to form a hybrid combination. In these processes, predictability of an individual’s behavior or understanding according to the existing cultural knowledge systems is only partial. Prediction, by definition, means that if we know the dynamics of a phenomenon and enough details of its current state, we can deduce all its details in the past and predict those in the future. This view of determinism was dominant in science before the Twentieth Century, but we now know that even in hard sciences, such complete prediction is only a dream. Instead, we only have partial prediction. The dynamics and details of the current state of a phenomenon provide us with ranges of choice or possibilities of its future development, while contextual details generated during its development will finalize these choices or possibilities (see Chapters Two and Three), or the development is simply devoid of any patterns and subject to random factors (see Chapter Four).

Therefore, understanding complexity means capturing the balance between chaos / complexity (the micro-level processes) and predictability (macro patterns) in both socio-cultural and political-economic contexts. My two hypotheses are intended to address such dynamics of balance, respectively, from the social-cognitive perspective and the socio-political perspective. The concept of

an “attractor” will further be used to integrate these two perspectives. Regarding the socio-cognitive perspective, my hypothesis of a social consensus arising as an “attractor” aims to provide the cognitive dynamics of achieving social consensus in real-life contexts rather than in the restricted contexts of artificial modeling (Romney *et al.* 1986, 1987). Such dynamics will enable me to propose a means for formulating quasi-infinite individual particularities and interactions among them by an “attractor”, which tames untraceable differences into traceable regularities and so reduces chaos and complexity. An “attractor” represents a contingent combination of socio-cultural logics / structures, power relations, socio-historical contingencies, individual particularities, and human agent/intention. My framework thus enables us to explore the delicacy of alternation of order and chaos, of predictability of logics and randomness of contingencies and particularities.

As for the socio-political perspective, I take the two hypotheses together and argue that the source of a social consensus and function of power relations can be treated as two instantiations of an “attractor” in knowledge circulation. My research thus unifies the socio-cognitive process of a social consensus and the socio-political process of power. It *bridges* cognitive anthropology and anthropological studies of power relations, which have been separated for long without real communication and reconciliation (e.g. Bloch 1985; Leach 1954; Mintz 1985). Scholars either subjugate power relations under the cognitive function of a cultural system (e.g. Dumont 1977; Salins 1976, 2000), or distort cognitions as a function of power relations (Asad 1993; Bourdieu 1991; Foucault 1980; Gupta and Ferguson 1997). I will treat both power and cognition as two independent instantiations of an “attractor” in knowledge circulation, and so incorporates cognitive anthropology and anthropological studies of power relations into a general framework, in which power relations and cognition may evolve independently of, or interact with, each other.

Southwest China as an active space that drives China and Southeast Asia into interactions

By focusing on interactions among the four knowledge systems in my fieldwork base, I also intend to provide an integrative view for understanding cross-ethnic relations of Southwest China. Scholars developed three approaches: 1) Chinese historians explore the historical process of politico-economic incorporation of ethnic minorities in Yunnan into the imperial Chinese court (Fang 2001; Lin 1989); 2) contemporary anthropologists in the US analyze the Chinese government's current agenda of nation-state building that is intended to lump ethnic minorities into a culturally uniform Chinese nationality (Gladney 2004; Harrel 2001; Litzinger 1995; Mueggler 1997; McCarthy 2000; Schein 2000; Wang 1997; Townsend 1992). 3) Scholars of southwest China and mainland Southeast Asia investigate cultural communications among Jinghpo, Chinese and others of the region (Chit Hlaing 2009; Dean 1997; Evans et al. 2000; Fiskesjö 2000; Giersch 2001; Hill 1998; Ho 1997; Robbine and Sadan 2007; Sun 2000; Tagliacozzo and Chang 2011; Yang B. 2004). This project, by focusing on the contemporary interactions among the four knowledge systems, will integrate these three approaches. The Chinese government continues historical incorporation of ethnic minorities into the central court. Chinese folk religion (and marginally Burmese culture through the Tai-speaking peoples) represents cultural communication of the region. Christianity and current crisis in drugs/AIDS represent modern influences from Southeast Asia.

Chinese historians have documented how ethnic minorities in southwest China were incorporated into the central imperial Chinese court (before 1911). From the fourth century BCE Yunnan was involved in Chinese history, mostly when the central court faced external or internal emergencies. Kingdoms in Yunnan were crucial to the development of imperial China in terms of ethnic interactions and imperial administration (Creel 1965; Davis 2005; Fiskesjö 1997; Jiang B. 1994; Lin

1989). Scholars explored the incorporation from the court's perspective. Although the court differentiated peoples within the empire into five categories [the central Hàn Chinese, the Yi of the East (“Dōngyí”, 东夷), the Hu of the West (“Xīhú”, 西胡), the Man of the South (“Nán Mán”, 南蛮) and the Di of the North (“Běidí”, 北狄. All “yí”, “hú”, “mán”, “dí” are disparaging terms for non-Hàn Chinese whose were considered backward, both socio-culturally and economically)], there was only one orthodox criterion for differentiating among them: Any one who accepted Confucian value and departments and so were subject to the Court's taxation can be counted as Hàn Chinese, no matter what cultural or biological origin he was from or what political or religious system he was in⁷. The court had only two institutionalized means to deal with non-Confucian groups: incorporation when they adopted Confucianism or otherwise foreclosure. The Qing Dynasty (1636- 1911) established two bureaux accordingly: “Lǐfānyuàn” (理藩院) for dealing with kingdoms outside the central court's administration who did not adopt Confucianism and so were barbarian strangers (“lǐ”: to administer, “fān”: barbarian; “yuàn”: a bureau), and “Lǐbù” (礼部) for dealing with Non- Hàn kingdoms who adopted Confucianism and so were vassals of the court (“lǐ”: codes for normative behavior consistent with Confucian values; “bù”: one of the six departments of the central court).

The establishment of the People's Republic of China (in 1949) and the project of recognizing ethnic groups according to Stalin's definition of nationality (“mínzúshíbié”, 民族识别, 1955-1984) caused a great historical break regarding state craft and inter-ethnic relationships within a uniform political system. 56 ethnic groups were officially identified. Each was endowed with quota in the national congress proportional to its respective population. They were recognized as politically equal but *culturally different*. Since then, identity construction of ethnic minorities has become a focus in history and anthropology of China. As the state has successfully established and enhanced its

legitimacy and authority over ethnic minorities throughout history, and currently the state forcefully launches the agenda of nation-state building (Townsend 1992), most scholars treat the ethnicity of minorities as a way to reflect modern China transformations or to “annotate” contemporary China reform (Davies 1970; Gladney 2004; Hansen 1999; Harrel 1994, 2001; Mueggler 1997). For instance, Litzinger considers ethnicity as a way of being marginalized. He “write[s] the ethnic margins not as a space of authentic resistance, but as a social practice where different ideas about identity, power, the state, culture, and modernity are inscribed, resisted, embrace, and denied” (Litzinger 1995: 27). Schein (2000) argues how Miáo are represented as feminine by Hàn Chinese. They struggle with their subaltern status by displacing it in the spreading-out of modernization and market.

Scholars with a Southeast Asia perspective consider Yunnan a politico-economic and socio-cultural intersection between China and mainland Southeast Asia (Chit Hlaing 2007; Dean 1997; Evans *et al.* 2000; Giersch 2001; Hill 1998; Sturgeon 2005; Sun 2000; Yang B. 2004). They critique the above two approaches as focusing only on the relations between the Chinese government and ethnic minorities and so neglecting that the Chinese government’s exploration of Yunnan was always driven by their need to explore mainland Southeast Asia. Scholars taking the third approach explore how some peoples in Yunnan play the role of middlemen. Hill (1998) explores how the Yunnanese engage in long-distance trade from China into mainland Southeast Asia and interact with local peoples in mainland Southeast Asia. Chit Hlaing analyzes Dai/Shan as “cultural Brokers” in the inter-ethnic China-Burma border trade – they “think like Burmese, like Chinese and like Thai having regard to their understanding of the market, so that they are often in a good position to mediate amongst competing bases for evaluating (and then pricing) stones” (Chit Hlaing 2007: 6).

The scholarship on Jinghpo was heavily influenced by these three theoretical approaches. Scholars focus on interactions either between Chinese government and Jinghpo, or between Jinghpo and other Southeast Asian peoples. They explored how Jinghpo in China were politically, economically, and culturally controlled by Chinese owing to their intermediary position in caravan-trade among China, Tibet, and Southeast Asian (Ho 1997; Nugent 1982; Wang 1997), and their dissociative relations with the states/kingdoms in Southeast Asia largely in the times of wars (Fernquest 2006). From the late eighteenth century, major Chinese caravan-trade routes passed right through the Jinghpo Hills (Leach 1954; Robbine and Sadan 2007). The trade, largely attributed to the rise of kingdoms in Yunnan such as Nanzhao and Dali (6th – 13th century AD), has shaped ethnic configurations of the region since then (Backus 1981). As a result, the Jinghpo traditional ritual-based chieftainship was changed to the wealth-based chieftainship from the nineteenth century (Lehman 1989; Maran 1967, 2007a; Nugent 1984). The rise of the wealth-based chieftainship makes Christian ideas of equality before God attractive as they justify permanent renunciation of chiefly privileges and preserve the jural order (Lehman 1989). The Kachin State in Burma established Christianity as the state religion in the 1960s. Christians set up reciprocal networks for preaching and training, extending from villages to the provincial level, and connected Christians from various ethnic groups. The networks even span the China-Burma border and connect the Jinghpo with mainland Southeast Asians. More effectively, the Jinghpo Christians in Burma have established a syncretism between animal sacrifice and Christianity, providing a conceptual and practical basis for their communication with peoples in mainland Southeast Asia (Robinne 2007; Sadan 2004, 2007). These two directions of interactions, one with the Chinese government and the other with Southeast Asian peoples, are

interwoven, but in a specific research only one direction is emphasized with the other being neglected or simplified. I will offer an integrated framework that deal with these two directions simultaneously.

Fieldwork and Methodological Concerns

My focus case of Jinghpo is not a privileged case. That is, the same exploration can be conducted in many other ethnic contexts in which people negotiate with various knowledge systems. In my fieldwork base, the four knowledge systems -- Jinghpo animal sacrifice, Christianity, the Chinese government policy, and the Chinese folk religions – have been interacting with each other for decades, even centuries, with certain patterns of interactions having been formulated. This situation of interaction is common throughout the world. However, I should highlight that my focus on the current crisis of HIV/AIDS and drug use among Jinghpo will serve as a precondition for my theoretical exploration of social complexity and chaos. It provides a chance for all the four knowledge systems to be brought into novel, and sometimes radical, interactions. That is, the crisis complicates interactions and elicits social-complexity, and such complexity preconditions my application of chaos theory for exploring the socio-cognitive dynamics of knowledge circulation.

During fieldwork, I lived with villagers, participated in healing rituals and medical treatment, observed ritual participants' behaviors, interviewed and gathered their interpretations of diseases, record religious chanting and participants' story-telling vis-à-vis drugs/AIDS, and joined villagers' daily conversations. I conducted 29 months of fieldwork from 2003, mostly in Sama and its four neighboring villages (Luding, Lagat Ya, Big and Small Maru) in Tongbiguan Village Tract, Yingjiang County, Yunnan Province. These villages have been inter-connected by marriage for hundreds of years. There are about 500 adults total, with over 90% as the ethnic Jinghpo. I also traveled to Kachang

Township. For all Jinghpo in China, Tongbiguan Village Tract and Kachang Township are special because the Jinghpo population exceeds that of Chinese and others⁸.



Map 3: Yingjiang County in Dehong Prefecture

Sama is widely considered a Jinghpo cultural center in China. One of the two greatest sacrifice specialists and the only great dance leader for the “feast-of-merit” in Tongbiguan Village Tract live in Sama. Before 1953 when the Chinese Communists took the Jinghpo Hills, Sama was the headquarters of the most powerful Jinghpo chief in China (*Nhkum³¹ Du³³ Wa³³*), who controlled most areas of today’s Yingjiang and Longchuan Counties. Currently, the Jianbian Administrative Office (the local lowest governmental office) is set in Sama. It controls Sama and its four neighboring villages. From the early 1990s, a road for trade from Yingjiang County seat to the border city of *Laiza* traversed Sama. Most male villagers engaged in cross-border trade of timber and precious stones. The road and trade brought money to villagers, and stimulated more than half of villagers to speak Chinese, with

one-third speaking fluently. In the 1980s, a Chinese primary school was established in Sama. By 2010, about one-third of villagers have been Christianized, with one clergymen instated and one church established. In 2008, the Village Tract Government set up a clinic in Sama and allocated a medical practitioner to reside in it. All these make Sama an excellent site for observing interactions among the four knowledge systems.

The sampling pool of 500 adults gave me an adequate picture of Jinghpo's learning and enactment of knowledge about drugs/AIDS due to local networks of marriage systems that connect thousands of individuals. Among Jinghpo, a kin group A takes wives from group B, and group B from group C, and group C in turn from group A (Leach 1961, 1964; Maran 2007a; Zhang 2004). Such marriage relations usually last for several generations. Villagers in my fieldwork base are engaged in about 10 such marriage cycles, and such alliance networks bring tens of thousands of individuals into close and generation-long interactions. Therefore, *via* the examined 500 individuals, we can get information of about 5,000, though not through direct interviews or observations.

Throughout the fieldwork, I gained information *via* three channels to ensure its quality: formal interviews on what people say in public, informal interviews on what they say privately, and systematic observation of how they act on their knowledge. The discrepancies and convergences among information received from these channels enable me to investigate local modes of circulation and use of effective personal knowledge. Interviewee selection for formal interviews reflects local institutional arenas of knowledge circulation. I recruited subjects from well defined religious, political, educational, and linguistic sub-communities⁹. I have (formally) interviewed approximately 150 adults individually (men: women = 3:2, and non-Christians: Christians = 2:1. And a few non-Jinghpo). This sample size allows for finding patterns of people's understandings of ideas and for cross-checking

information and evaluating gaps between interview answers and observed behavior. The ratio of men to women is based on the fact that traditionally only men engaged in long-distance trade that brought back novel knowledge about the outside world. Currently a few women have started to do so. The ratio of Christians to non-Christians reflects local population segmentation of sacrifice makers and Christians. In addition, I paid periodic informal visits to informants in which villagers volunteered helpful information. I also attended to intra-village conversations in public spaces such as the village convenience stores to assess information received from interviews.

My wife Shiping Li provided essential help in fieldwork. She filmed key rituals and interviews, which makes available instant re-viewing and allows me to work with informants for understanding fine details of behavior in complex events. Moreover, filming enables me to explore the emergence of social consensus by tracing possible details of knowledge circulation through dialogue and non-verbal communications. She also interviewed female villagers on issues concerning sex (Warren 1988). She is fluent in the local Chinese dialect, and learned a certain amount of Jinghpo. She holds a Bachelor's degree in literature and has been trained for one semester on ethnographic film by a leading visual anthropologist, Professor Yang Hui, in Yunnan University. In spring 2009, Professor Chit Hlaing gave her formal training on anthropological fieldwork methods, especially on in-depth interviewing.

This research works on sensitive topics and encounters serious ethical concerns. In 2005, I worked with Professor Yang Hui in Yunnan University who studied the Jinghpo for preventing AIDS. I also worked with Professor Shi Rui in Yunnan Nationalities University, a Jinghpo from Sama and a member of the Yunnan Political Consultants' Committee searching for support to prevent AIDS for his people¹⁰. My blood brother in Sama was unofficially surveilling drug use of the region. These ties with local scholars and villagers provide a context in which interviews about sensitive issues of sex,

drugs, and AIDS can be safely and confidentially conducted. In the face of villager /state contestations surrounding AIDS/drugs, I always placed my first priority on protecting informants/ consultants, by coding their names and keep the master list in a secure place to insure informants are not identifiable.

An outline of the Dissertation

The dissertation consists of five chapters, in addition to the Introduction. In Chapter one I analyze macro patterns of interaction among the four knowledge systems. Jinghpo sacrifice serves as the primary arena. Chinese folk religion fuses with Jinghpo sacrifice from the bottom. Christianity pushes and pulls the sacrifice from the side so as to convert people. And modern bio-medicine introduced by the Chinese government suppress the above three systems from the top. Individuals learn and exchange their knowledge within such established macro patterns.

To pin down the micro-level dynamics of knowledge circulation and acquisition so as to test my hypotheses, I will consider three basic factors. First, initial conditions, such as in what situations what knowledge should or should not be circulated. Second, structural forces, namely, the four knowledge systems, which govern individuals' behavior and understandings. Third, contextual particularities and contingencies. I will analyze how a consensus derives from interactions among these three factors in nine cases of knowledge circulation. Among the three factors, initial conditions and contextual contingencies are straightforward, but the notion of structural force needs to be defined within an ethnographic context. I treat a cultural knowledge system as a structural force by adopting cognitive and psychological anthropologist's view of treating a culture as a system of tacit rules that constrain the meaningful interpretation of events and serve as a guide to action (e.g. Gladwin 1970; Hutchins 1980; Quinn 1987). For instance, Hutchins (1980) explores how cultural rules are *applied* to a specific event, and specifies the relevance between the actual result of a real event and the logical result of

how cultural rules define an event. In the present dissertation, I do not intend to compare to what extent the actual result of an event matches the predicted result of cultural rules. Instead, I will argue that the emergence of the result of an actual event is not defined simply by application of a rule. Rules are considered as only a reference resource by individuals, who combine rules with contextual contingencies and initial situations to generate a result that may or may not well-defined by the existing cultural rules (e.g. Strauss and D'Andrade 1992; Strauss and Quinn 1997). I aim to examine the micro-level process of such generation.

The nine cases that will be examined are representative in their respective domains, or if they are particular to specific individuals, they contain general issues that apply to others. In particular, cases regarding knowledge about AIDS/drugs, as a representative example for exploring local dynamics of knowledge acquisition, circulation, and enactment, stands out from all other knowledge. It is new and controversial within the four knowledge systems. It represents the most condensed form of local dynamics of knowledge circulation and transformation. To tackle such dynamics, I begin with simple cases regarding other kinds of knowledge about such things as general diseases and health, individual pre-given fate and daily life efforts, adultery, and so forth. I pin down parts and aspects of the dynamics, integrate and consolidate them in cases about AIDS/drugs. Taking the nine cases together, I explore the general dynamics of knowledge acquisition and circulation across a large variety of knowledge domains in my fieldwork base. These dynamics, instead of being particular to knowledge about AIDS/drugs, are situated within the functioning of the whole local society.

Most cases last months, even years, much longer than my fieldwork. What I explore is only a vignette (or vignettes) of each case taking place during my fieldwork. I followed the flow of each case with complementation from interviews and filming. At certain moments, a balance of interactions will

occur, by which one can predict what interactions would be in the future. More often, a balance is broken, leading to a different or unexpected balance or maintaining a state of disorder. Using the concept of an “attractor” I analyze how the micro-level chaotic interactions generate such a balance.

I classify the 9 cases into three categories according to the extent to which structural forces influence the processes. Cases in the first category deal with diseases and healing rituals, in which the process and final result are defined by one or two structural forces and finalized by contingencies (Chapter Two). Cases in the second category are influenced by competing structural forces, in which villagers negotiate with these forces to figure out a momentary combination for a best benefit (Chapter Three). Cases in the third category are about attributions of diseases to AIDS/drugs (Chapter Four). No structural forces shape people’s understandings. Often several interactive “attractors” are generated, and the evolution of and interactions among them are open to unpredictable forces.

The derivation of an “attractor” demonstrates how an “attractor” represents a momentary balance among knowledge systems, and how it contains novelty that has potential to modify knowledge systems. Each “attractor” captures one portion of the macro interactional patterns among knowledge systems described in chapter one. Dozens of “attractors” derived from the nine cases cover all aspects of the patterns. In chapter five, I will analyze how these “attractors” are consolidated into the specified macro patterns, or interact with each other and evolve into different patterns. On such basis, I will specify three dynamics of social-historical changes, globalization, syncretism and pluralism. More generally, based on my analysis of the nine cases studies using the concept of an “attractor”, I will specify the micro-level dynamics of the derivation of a social consensus, and propose an inter-disciplinary framework for understanding the socio-cultural complexity of quasi-infinite individual diversities and randomness.

Chapter One

Interactions among the Four Knowledge Systems

In the three years of living with Jinghpo villagers, I came to understand how local oral history serves as the ultimate source for legitimizing villagers' daily life. It marks supposed historical achievements of Jinghpo and their aspirations for the future, and legitimizes various means for realizing these aspirations. Oral history is sacred and should be honored. For history-tellers, history is a genealogy of a series of couples consisting of spirits and/or humans who created everything in the world and peoples all over the world. History-telling aims to specify how all peoples in the world are derived from the same ancestors, it also documents how Jinghpo encountered people of different cultural origins and interacted with them and their knowledge systems. In this sense, oral history provides a platform for understanding, and a tool and space for maneuvering, interactions among Jinghpo and others. In this first chapter, I will demonstrate how oral history mediates interactions among four knowledge systems: southwest Chinese folk belief, the Chinese government, Christianity, and Jinghpo animal sacrifice. I will specify the macro-interactional pattern among these systems, which will frame my exploration in the following three chapters of the derivation of social consensus from chaotic interactions among individuals, who are differentially influenced by these systems.

Oral history is not taught to anyone who wants to learn it. A learner candidate, exclusively a male, should demonstrate his genuine interest in and strong attachment to history. And I, as a non-Jinghpo, worked hard to win people's trust and interest to teach me. During my first fieldwork in 2003, many elders considered me a journalist who stayed only briefly and did not really want to learn history. They told me only superficial anecdotes and enjoyed the fun in seeing me taking their words seriously and making notes. Only time changed their minds. Three months later when I chatted with villagers

about the hard life in the rainy season – too much rain, too many leeches, muddy roads, and so forth.

La Hkyi Yo, a well-thought-of history-teller, pointed at me and said: “He is not a journalist! No journalist will endure the rainy season for learning history!” He agreed to tell me history.

From 2003, I developed close relations with him, learned his life history and his knowledge of oral history. He loved oral history and learned it whenever possible. His grandfather, *Manau Yo*, was a legendary-hero-like commoner. Having accumulated a great fortune, *Manau Yo* held two “feasts-of-merit” (*ma³¹nau³¹*) upon approval from the local chief, which was traditionally held only by a chief. By holding the feast, *Manau Yo* demonstrated his unexampled wealth and knowledge of history. He was then named after the feast. My informant *Yo* is proud of his grandfather and prefers to be called *Manau Yo*’s grandson, rather than by his real name *La Hkyi Yo*. His father and father’s eldest brother were great religious specialists. All great religious specialists know a large amount of Jinghpo genesis legends in their service, *Yo* learned the genesis from them. In the early 1960s, he worked in Tongbiguan Village Tract government in charge of a soldier team. As Jinghpo had been identified by the government as one of the nation’s 55 officially identified minorities, Chinese workers and scholars came to study the Jinghpo language and culture¹¹. *Yo* had close contact with them and learned how Jinghpo had been imagined in the Chinese historical records as one offspring of the ancient barbarians of Dǐ-Qiāng (氐羌) in north China. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), *Yo* and his wife ran into Burma to avoid persecutions that might come to them. His grandfather *Manau Yo* had been the wealthiest commoner of the region and he would probably be targeted by communists as an exploitative landlord. In the Kachin State, he worked as a secretary owing to his talent in writing Jinghpo. He met descendents of previous Jinghpo chiefs and learned their history. As most Jinghpo in the Kachin State had been converted to Christianity by the 1960s, he converted. In the 1980s when the

Kachin State fought with the Burmese government and compulsively recruited most adult males, he took his family back to Sama. There, he had become the first Christian for about ten years, he then led the local Christian community and often read the Jinghpo version of the Bible.

His life exhibits the result of interactions among several knowledge systems: Jinghpo animal sacrifice, Chinese government, and Christianity. Gradually he accumulated vast knowledge of oral history and won great reverence. Often many turned to *Yo* for the historical origin of long-term problems like inter-clan conflicts of the region. Such reverence is a reward to his hard study of history. History is not told at one's pleasure but rather in the late night in an ambience wreathed in smoke from the hearth or tobacco and tinged by large amount alcohol. History-telling was quasi-sacred. "Learning history in the first place means to sit up the whole night, prepare wine and make fire for elders. Elders reveal history only to the youth who really love history", *Yo* told me. Even when elders start to tell history, they will never tell all that they know at one time but rather a little bit of it; as they usually say: "Do not grind the whole knife at one time; enough for the current use is enough". "You need to learn tricks to induce elders to open their mouths", *Yo* taught me.

In working with *Yo*, I gradually realize that he, as he believed, is not simply a peasant, but a sensitive intellectual. He does not care much about what gift people will give him in asking for history, rather, "I told everyone who ask for history that he should remember him. He should told people that he learned such knowledge from me!" He is small and thin, "but my name will become big". In interviews, he emphasized that he knows many details of oral history others do not, and is proud of his erudition. "I can tell history from the origin of the world to the present, and backward, with equal fluency and clarity in both directions. Many others can do it in only one direction".

As a Christian good at writing in Jinghpo, he was not pleased with the traditional way of learning

history from mouth-to-ear through apprenticeship. That requires too much time and patience of both the master and the apprentice, and has caused considerable amount of knowledge loss. “This convention has been out of date in the modern times of writing and computers, and I want my knowledge to be passed on to many individuals”. In 2005, he handwrote two copies of oral history, including genealogies and migration histories of four major surnames of the region. He asked his son to print them in the Nationality News Paper Office at Mangshi municipality (the prefecture capital city), but was asked to pay several thousand RMB – too expensive for him!

In 2009-11, I had over forty interviews with him regarding oral history. My wife Shiping Li filmed his history-telling. He handwrote 55 pages of oral history, and asked me to print five copies of his text for him and his brothers’ sons. His eyesight was not good and misspellings occurred here and there in the text. He wanted his text to be perfect. “My name will be in print. People I never meet will know me.” Every time I printed out a copy, he enjoyed reading his own words again and again, identified misspellings here and there, and found something crucial to add or change. It took us almost a year to complete a satisfactory version after four times of printing, double-checking and editions of content. In October 2010, I printed ten copies for him. He attached one of his photos to each copy. “From now on, my house would be the place where the complete Jinghpo oral history is stored in print”¹². He urged that I should not show his text to people who do not really love history.

His text is compiled from four sources: 1) the Jinghpo genesis legends chanted in the “feast-of-merit” and oral histories contained in religious chanting; 2) the Jinghpo version of the Bible; 3) Chinese historical records he learned from Chinese scholars and; 4) anecdotes circulated in the region but not included in the other above three sources. He excluded most stories in the Jinghpo genesis legends regarding animal sacrifice, except for those about wedding and funeral. The genesis

contains too many things particular to Jinghpo. “I want to tell the history of all humans and the world, not simply of Jinghpo”. Stories in the Bible are used to complement the uniform genealogy of all peoples in the world and to legitimize conversion. Stories taken from the Chinese historical records are used to enhance the genealogical relation between Chinese and Jinghpo, and to justify the current politico-economic imbalance between them. *Yo*’s text thus illustrates interactions among four knowledge systems in my fieldwork base: Chinese folk beliefs, Chinese government, Christianity, and Jinghpo animal sacrifice. In interactions, Jinghpo oral history serves as the ultimate legitimacy.

In fieldwork I used *Yo*’s text as a clue for my exploration of interactions among knowledge systems. I learned how villagers attribute their notions and practices to oral history, and how knowledge from knowledge systems is incorporated into, or changed by, oral history. I came to learn that oral history is a miniature of local society. In particular, oral history implies the Jinghpo traditional time and space schemes, which provide a neat organization of my understanding of villagers’ daily life, and so an outline for describing interactions among knowledge systems.

First of all, the overwhelming importance of oral history in villagers’ daily life makes villagers feel stuck in a time scheme. The scheme captures mythological connections among all things in the world, local alternation of the dry and rainy seasons, and period division within a day and night. According to this, an individual’s life and death, sickness and health, and fortunes and fate are all closely related to, and planned by, temporal features of their activities. In the present chapter I will describe such a time scheme, in terms of which I will formulate people’s view of life and death, which in turn facilitates my discussion of interactions among the four knowledge systems.

The Jinghpo genesis legends end when humans lost the ability to communicate with spirits through language. From then on, mythological connections between humans and spirits were blocked,

and animal sacrifice became the only way for humans to communicate with spirits. Accordingly, oral history thereafter narrates the separations of clans and lineages. The history of the whole Jinghpo society was then diversified into histories of migration and alliance of clans, and of negotiation between spirits and humans through animal sacrifice. These histories were passed on by generation in the clan's funeral chanting for sending the soul back to the "old home" (a mythological village in which the Jinghpo originated), and in wedding chanting for connecting a new couple to ancestors of the groom's family genealogy (Zhang 2004). Since then, relations among humans and between humans and spirits have been re-formulated in terms of the spatial distributions of, and alliance among, kin groups. In the present chapter, I will describe the space scheme in terms of a triangular configuration and a sandwich configuration. The former models the relations among humans, and the latter, the relations between humans and spirits. Again, like the time scheme, the space scheme facilitates my discussion of interactions among the four knowledge systems.

In terms of local time and space schemes, I will specify macro-patterns of interaction among the four knowledge systems. Specifically, I will explore how Christians sophisticate the Jinghpo view of life and death to legitimize conversion, and how southwest Chinese folk religion fuses with Jinghpo sacrifice. Both Christianity and Chinese folk religion interact with Jinghpo sacrifice on the level of the time scheme. I will also explore how the Chinese government governs villagers in defiance of cultural difference. Such governmentation transforms local practices associated with the space scheme.

The Time Scheme: Genealogy of Everything and the Divination Table

I will first define local time scheme by examining the essentials of the standard genesis legends. I intend to demonstrate how the time scheme regulates villagers' practices regarding life and death, and formulates their fortune and disaster. The scheme, I argue, sets the basic tone for understanding

villagers' daily life details in all cases that will be examined throughout the dissertation.

In Jinghpo, history is called *la³¹bau⁵⁵*. History-telling is to trace the origin of things (*la³¹bau⁵⁵ hkai³¹; hkai³¹*: “to tell by tracing the origin”). Specifically, *la³¹bau⁵⁵* means a family genealogy that records souls of ancestors who meet both the following two criteria. First, the deceased should have died of old age at home (at least 70 years old), with his/her spouse either living in good health or having passed away at home at an great age. Second, the deceased should have at least three sons and three daughters, and at least one paternal and one maternal grandchild. The two criteria, respectively, represent two values of a Jinghpo's dream of life: longevity and good fortune. Ancestors recorded in a family genealogy are thus “heroic – they guarantee social reproduction and material achievements of descendents. In this sense, history as a family genealogy is sacred and should be honored.

More generally, the genesis chanted by the specialist of the highest rank in the “feasts-of-merit” is referred to as “history from the beginning to the present” (*gin³¹ru³¹ gin³¹sa³¹ la³¹bau⁵⁵*). Lasting three days and nights with interruptions only for eating and drinking, it narrates the creation of the sky, the earth, and everything in between. Each phase of creation is marked by procreation of a couple consisting of spirits and/or humans. Accordingly, the genesis is essentially a Genealogy of Everything; everything is hung on a certain position in the Genealogy and so is set in a web of relations with everything else. As all things are genealogically, or mythologically, connected, history as genesis is considered the source of human development. It possesses power that legitimizes practices and reason that justifies current life conditions,. Therefore, villagers are prone to attributing everything to history, tracing back to its position in, and relations with, all other things within the Genealogy of Everything.

Only a specialist of the highest rank (*jai³¹wa³¹*) could narrate the complete Genealogy of Everything and so identify relations among everything. But genesis legends are not open to ordinary

villagers. And chanting in classical Jinghpo is abstruse, due to the preponderant use of archaic expressions and mythical entity terms that are never used in daily language. In the genesis, relations between any two things are defined by the time distance of each to the point where they separated. Distance calculation is complicated since the genesis is not marked by numeric time measurement but by generational and episodic relations that recursively bifurcate. Time distance is thus not a convenient variable for defining relations¹³. In daily life, villagers resort to the divination table, a categorical elaboration of the Genealogy of Everything (table 1.1).

This table classifies relations among everything into five categories. Each category is represented by a symbol (one circle, two circles, a cross, four circles, and a blank), and each symbol is associated with an unlimited number of properties, meanings, or relations, such as time, directions, colors, shapes, spirits, order, and numbers, etc¹⁴. The five symbols represent five sets of relations prescribed for all possible existences in the world. A real-life event results from a specific configuration of these factors. As associated factors are unlimited, the number of their configurations is infinite because the number of permutations among factors increases at a more than an exponential rate as the number of factors increases. The table thus provides a categorical outline that classifies countless real-life events in the Jinghpo cultural world into five kinds of interactional patterns and correlations.

In addition, the table maps the recurrence of the five categories onto the cycles of five days of the lunar calendar (without considering months and years). A cell represents a period of time, a column represents a day and night, and a row represents the period of about two hours and a half. A day and night is further divided into two sets of five periods (one set from the first row to the fifth, and the other, from the fifth to the first)¹⁵. In reading the table, the diviner sits facing East, the direction of the life and of sunrise, as apposed to the West of “going back to the old home (of ancestors)”. The order

of the reading starts as follows: in one column from bottom to top, and then top back to bottom, then you move to the immediately right column, iteratively. It starts from the cell 11 (about 08:00 of the first day of each month. The first number represents row number and the second, column number), moves up to the cell 51 (20:00 of the same day), and down again to the cell 11 (before 08:00 of the following day). The time of 08:00 of the following day starts from the cell 12, and so on iterative. Once a cycle of five-day has been completed, the calculation starts again from the cell 11.

				West		
	Date	1 st , 6 th , 11 th , 16 th , 21 st , 26 th	2 nd , 7 th , 12 th , 17 th , 22 nd , 27 th	3 rd , 8 th , 13 th , 18 th , 23 rd , 28 th	4 th , 9 th , 14 th , 19 th , 24 th , 19 th	5 th , 10 th , 15 th , 20 th , 25 th , 30 th
	Time					
5	17:36 – 20:00 20:00 – 22:24	<i>Hpung</i> O <i>Chyut Ten</i> Time for asking each other to go home	<i>Hka Long</i> OO <i>Ginsup Ten</i> Time for hurting people by using sorcery	<i>Tsa Na Ten</i> Drunken time	<i>Hkai Li</i> X <i>Hkai Ten</i> Time for planting seeds	<i>Ding Hku</i> OO <i>Li Ten</i> OO Time for being pregnant
4	15:12 – 17:36 22:24 – 24:48	OO <i>Baren Num</i> <i>Lu Ten</i> Time for having a dragon wife	<i>Hpyen Sum</i> Ten Time for being defeated	X <i>Lu Sat</i> <i>Ten</i> Time to kill	OO <i>Shingai Lu</i> OO <i>Ten</i> Time for baby- delivery	<i>Lawa Shan</i> O <i>Sha Ten</i> Time when wild people eat meat
3	12:48 – 15:12 24:48 – 3:12	<i>Htong Hkat Ten</i> Time to be imprisoned	<i>Jo Sat</i> X <i>Ten</i> Time to kill by using poison	<i>Hka shaton</i> OO <i>Ten</i> OO Time when water is level in all directions (in a balanced state)	<i>Mason Chyu</i> O <i>Ten</i> Time to be jabbed by a spear	<i>Hkring Ga</i> OO <i>Nong Ten</i> Time for religious chanting
2	10:24 – 12:48 3:12 – 5:36	<i>Hpyen</i> X <i>Rot Ten</i> Starting time for a war	OO <i>Hko Hkam</i> OO <i>Mying Lu</i> OO <i>Ten</i> Time for naming a prince	<i>Sharo Shan</i> O <i>Sha Ten</i> time when a tiger eats meat	<i>Ganu Gawa</i> OO <i>Hkong ten</i> Time for meeting parents	<i>Nam Dum</i> <i>Hkrat Ten</i> time for falling into a latrine
1	8:00 – 10:24 5:36 – 8:00	OO <i>HkoYa</i> OO <i>Hko La</i> OO <i>Ten</i> Time for giving each other benefit	<i>Hko Hkam</i> O <i>Tai Ten</i> time for enthroning a prince	<i>Gunhproi</i> OO <i>Bum</i> silver mountains	<i>Nta Du Wa Ten</i> Time for going home	X <i>Htung</i> <i>Pru Ten</i> time for being set free from a prison
		1	2	3 East	4	5

Table 1.1 The divination table

Each cell is associated with a symbol and a cell meaning (expressed by words contained in the cell). A symbol meaning is fixed. It represents the recurrence of five sets of relations. Cell meanings, by contrast, were added long after the table was created. They are subject to personal interpretations. As a future event is programmed in terms of known factors associated with a symbol, the table provides a means for divination, or for identifying a proper time for activities. Once the purpose of an activity matches relations and properties of a symbol and a cell meaning, and people carry out the activity in a period associated with that symbol and cell meaning, they will gain benefit and avoid bad fortune. The table therefore outlines the Jinghpo conception of the world known and of that not yet known. Enabled by it, people infer future events from known patterns of event occurrence. Such inference is both rigorous (fixed symbol meanings) and contingent (personal interpretations)¹⁶.

The Jinghpo View of Life and Death in terms of the Time Scheme

The time scheme provides a framework for my discussion of the Jinghpo notion of life and death and of the properties a person inherits at birth. These properties evolve in time. In appropriating these properties, villagers make use of the force of life and death provided by their belief systems. Based on such properties, I will organize my understanding of interactions among knowledge systems.

Sama villagers consider that a subject gains four life components at birth: the visible body, the imperceptible cord of life (*sum³¹ri³¹ sum³¹dam³³*), the “soul” (*num³¹la³³*)¹⁷, and the *woi³³nyi³¹* (the power to maintain life and keep a person conscious). The latter three are contained within the body, though none can identify accurate locations. The cord of life connects the body to the soul, and the *woi³³nyi³¹* makes a subject conscious. An individual’s cord of life has a given length; it shortens on its own as time evolves. When it breaks, either owing to its running out on its own or being broken by violence, the *woi³³nyi³¹* and soul will leave the body and a person will die. At death, the body and cord

of life will dissipate, whereas the *woi³³nyi³¹* and soul will persist in the afterworld.

These life components are manifested in all aspects of daily life, like sickness and health, and fortune and fate. Everyone has experience with, and understanding of, them. But none could clearly tell me these four components and the relations among them. I learned such knowledge with great difficulty. I participated in twenty-odd kinds of rituals, including weddings, funerals, and healing rituals. In each ritual I tried to figure out how it works on humans. In a specific ritual context, a religious specialist could easily tell me that this type of ritual aims to console the deceased's soul that is reluctant to leave this world owing to its bad or early death. That type of ritual aims to strengthen an individual's cord of life, by praying for longevity from the omniscient spirit. And yet another kind of ritual is intended to call back the lost soul that had been caught by spirits, and so on. Such categorization of rituals enabled me to glimpse into a complete picture of a person. I then worked with religious specialists and history-tellers to pin down connections among these components. Three kinds of rituals helped me specify how these components are inter-related. In funeral rituals, different components of human life are treated differently. In local views and practices regarding human procreation, all these components a new-born acquires are meant to play different roles throughout his/her life. In wedding rituals, the souls of the new couple are connected to the souls of groom's ancestors in family genealogy. Within the framework of the local time scheme, I will synthesize below my understandings of the *woi³³nyi³¹*, the soul, and the cord of life gleaned from various rituals.

1) *Woi³³nyi³¹*, the power that maintains life in both this and the other world

Woi³³nyi³¹ lasts forever. In the living world, it directs an individual to pursue life. If a seriously sick person dreams of his/her late spouse/friends, the recovery will depend on how strong the patient's *woi³³nyi³¹* is. The deceased is said to come to invite the patient to the afterworld. Without a strong

woi³³nyi³¹, the soul of the patient will go with the deceased and the patient will die soon, though his/her body still biologically functions well at a certain period. In the afterworld, the *woi³³nyi³¹* directs a soul to deny its death. After accepting death, it strives to be remembered by the living by either of the following two means.

First, if the deceased is eligible to be included into family genealogy, it will become a source for a kin group's reproduction and material achievements. It is thus considered as a heroic ancestor and remembered forever. In the wedding the living pray for blessing from these heroic ancestors on behalf of a new couple. Being recorded into family genealogy is thus the ideal realization of the power of *woi³³nyi³¹*, and so it is the dream of a living person and the best end-result for the deceased. Second, if the deceased dies badly (dying young, dying far from home, dying in violence, or a woman dying in childbirth and so forth)¹⁸, its *woi³³nyi³¹* will feel it has not yet had a real life and refuses its death. Worse, its ancestors refuse to accept it because it did not consume its cord of life naturally. It would suffer the way it dies for years until its cord of life (its assigned duration span) is supposed to run out naturally. For instance, flood will wipe out its food whenever a deceased dying from drowning starts to eat. Although such an unfortunate soul has been sent to the "old home", it is not considered as a member of community of ancestors, which is believed to be the source of the fortune of the living¹⁹. Sending it to the "old home" makes it no longer a wondering and dangerous spirit, but this does not guarantee its status as a proper ancestor that should be worshiped. Accordingly, it will frequently come back to the living world asking for food and solace from offspring. Each time the living should make animal sacrifice to soothe it. Sometimes, it becomes so desperate that it "bites" the living to death in the same way it died itself. When it cannot be consoled, the living should worship it as a household spirit and make regular sacrifice to it²⁰. In daily conversation, villagers refer to the ideal

death as “going back to the old home”, but simply call the other types of death death. They say a soul from the latter is not “passed” -- it does not fulfill the requirements of becoming a proper ancestor.

These two means of remembering ancestors realize the *wol³³nyi³¹* of the deceased. Family genealogy conveys people’s dream of continuing life forever by preserving good fortune of social reproduction for offspring. These souls live in the memory of the living forever. Sacrifice to household spirits conveys souls’ dream of continuing life by causing diseases, or death, to the living so as to force the latter to remember them. Unfortunate souls are remembered at the expense of the living’s welfare²¹.

2) Soul and its conjunction with the Genealogy of Everything

The soul resides in the body, though none could identify its location. Some believe that a person has only one soul while others say one has several, but all believe that people possessed by the witch spirit have one more soul than ordinary people. When the soul leaves the body, people will fall ill though not die immediately. No one, except a specialist in divination, could identify from bodily symptoms whether the soul is still in the body or not. Sometimes, though the person still acts normally, the soul has gone to the afterworld and the person will die soon. By contrast, if the body is severely damaged but the soul still resides in it, the patient might recover with diligent care. Other than at death, the soul might wander outside the body owing to sudden fright or spirits.

Unlike the body and cord of life that wear out at death, the soul exists in both the living and the other world though in different forms. One form is *num³¹la³³* (the soul of the living), and the other, *tsu³¹ nat⁵⁵* (the soul of the deceased. *Tsu³¹* is the ritual name for the after world and *nat⁵⁵* refers to all spiritual existence). The former is attached to the body while the latter is independent and essentially the same with all other spirits. The former becomes the latter at death when the body dissolves, and the life fortune of the latter gives life to the former when it gains a body at birth. Such bi-directional

transformation implies the co-substance between humans and spirits. The soul is thus the connection of a human individual to spirits, and more generally, to the Genealogy of Everything. On such a basis, a religious specialist in his chanting speaks alternatively on the part of the living when representing the soul of the living, and of the spirit when representing the soul of the deceased. The duality of his soul mediates communication between spirits and humans.

Such connection between humans and spirits is highlighted in both wedding and funeral rituals. These two kinds of rituals represent bi-directional transformations between the two forms of human souls. They pave ways by which a human individual relates with many other things in the Genealogy of Everything. The wedding rituals are designed to legitimize the arrival of new life from the world of ancestors. In particular, the ritual of genesis-chanting relates the souls of the new couple to the souls in groom's family genealogy. The chanting narrates how today's marriage is a continuation of previous marriages of humans and/or spirits who produced today's human and natural worlds. Souls in the groom's family genealogy will be extolled and asked for beatifications on behalf of the bride. Such beatification represents the groom's family's fortune and vitality for social reproduction, with which the bride is supposed to produce new life to continue the family.

By contrast, the funeral rituals are designed to absorb the living into the world of ancestors. The soul of the deceased will be sent to the "old home". In the chanting, the soul of the specialist escorts the soul of the deceased to go back to the "old home" along the migration route of the family. When arriving at the foot of the Jinghpo origin mountain, they find ten turnoffs respectively for souls from different types of death. The specialist warns the soul that the anterior nine turnoffs are for souls of bad death that are not consoled by proper rites, and it should take the tenth. In crossing the first eight turnoffs, the soul comes out in turn with wild long hair, long teeth, tail, turning blue in the face, and so

on. At the ninth, the soul loses all its human features and “jumps across the turnoff like an animal” (cited from the chanting. C.f. Shi 2002). From then on, the soul of the deceased becomes a spirit.

3) The cord of life and individual fate according to the divination table

Unlike the soul and *woi³³nyi³¹* that persist forever, the body and the cord of life (*sumri*) will dissipate at death. The word *sumri* is a polyphone: [*sum³³ri³³*] meaning a weaving cord by which a woman weaves cloth, and [*sum³¹ri³¹*], the cord of life. Precisely, *sum³¹ri³¹* is an abbreviation of a ritual expression of *sum³¹ri³¹ sum³¹dam³³: sum³¹ri³¹* means a chord or tether, whereas *sum³¹dam³³* means linkages or connections to other chords or entities²². Individuals' cord of life is their connection to the mysterious or mythological power in the other world that influences their welfare. Such connection defines an individuals' fortune in this world in terms of a given length of life.

The cord of life connects the body and soul. It shortens on its own as time progresses, or is broken by violence such as serious physical damage to the body or the soul leaving the body for too long. When it breaks, death will occur. It can become thin, making people strangely ill or making their life troublesome. When divination indicates that the cord of life becomes too thin, people need to pray for longevity from the sky spirit (*Hpan³³ Sa³¹gya³¹*) to strength the cord.

The cord of life is a term used only by specialists. Ordinary villagers talk about it in terms of fate (*hpung³¹ gam³¹*). *Hpung³¹ gam³¹* essentially is the default value of a person for any given circumstance. It indicates one's relation with spirits, what material and social achievement one will have, and how strong one's life fortune is. A good fate indicates an individual's good life fortune and social achievements, and a bad fate indicates the opposite. Except for being good or bad, fate can also be too tough or weak. A very tough fate (*hpung³¹ ja³¹*) means an individual will have strong vitality but it suppresses other's fate and so brings them misfortunes (in particular to family members). By contrast,

an individual with a very soft fate (*hpung³¹ kya³¹*) will encounter various diseases and bad luck.

Fate is not completely fixed. To a certain extent, it varies with an individual's efforts and with stage in the life cycle. In fieldwork, I strove to identify factors that influence fate and its variations. I found that villagers differentiate two kinds of fates. The first is bad and inherited within a family. Some bad spirits (like the witch spirit and the bad death spirit) follow a family forever, and endow people born in it with bad fate²³. And there is no way out! Such a family is said to have a polluted genealogy (*shing³¹ du³¹ la³ bau⁵⁵*). No one with a good genealogy wants to marry them. They so have to marry only with those of the same kind. Second, individuals have their own born fates. People born in the night of the fifteenth of a lunar month, when the moon is full and bright, might be very clever or stupid depending on the fortune of the specific birth time. Unlike an inherited bad fate, a bad birth fate can be corrected to a certain extent by rituals. Based on such superficial understanding, I conducted intensive interviews with specialists regarding correlations between individual fate and birth time. Usually, specialists took out the divination table and told me how a birth time defines a fate.

The divination table formulates the fortune of each of the 25 periods of a five-day cycle. Each period is associated with a symbol and cell meaning, which defines the fate of people born in that period. A person born in a period of good fortune will be endowed with a good fate, and *vice versa*. A person with a too strong or soft fate is believed to be born at a wrong time, because spirits postpone or bring forward the birth. If it is supposed to be born at a good time while changed to another good time, its good fate will be doubled by the good fortune of the two periods, and *vice versa*. More specifically, each symbol has a fixed meaning and is associated with a birth order and a group of spirits, and cell meaning is more closely attuned to people's expectation of social achievements. In addition, as a cell refers to two periods of the same day, one during the day and the other at night, people believe that the

period during the day is better because the sun is in the sky nourishing the life²⁴.

As cell meaning is subject to personal interpretations, the divination table does not prescribe fixed fates. Individuals are given certain freedom to make sense of and use their pre-given fate and so direct their behaviors. In addition, fate defined by birth time is not permanent, as its influence varies with either stage of the life cycle or the subject's efforts. One might have a soft born fate at birth, but strong will (*woi³³nyi³¹*) can enable one to, through rituals or proper activity plans, slightly change it without letting it hurt him/her according to the divination table. Usually, a person with a bad fate is frequently bothered by bad spirits. As each symbol in the divination table is associated with a group of spirits, the table defines the rhythm of activity of spirits. Enabled by the table, the person can avoid encounters with bad spirits by not doing important things during the activity periods of bad spirits. As villagers said, spirits give up bothering proficient users of the divination table.

Below, I will describe and analyze how Christianity and Chinese folk belief interact with Jinghpo animal sacrifice by making use of the conventional time scheme and the four life components of a person. These components provide a basis for understanding healing dynamics through animal sacrifice. For a healthy person, all these components are working in harmony. But if the body is physically harmed, the soul has strayed from the body, or the cord of life has become too soft, people will fall ill. Jinghpo have designed various means of healing, through herbal medicine or healing rituals. However, all diseases caused by a wrong or destroyed *woi³³nyi³¹* were traditionally held to be incurable. Such a configuration between diseases and life components serves as a platform for people of different knowledge systems to change or transform Jinghpo animal sacrifice by changing their basic notions of, and practices associated with, life and death. Roughly speaking, Christians focus on the Genealogy of everything to legitimize conversion and on the power of *woi³³nyi³¹* to mold a perfect

Christian, and Chinese folk beliefs focuses on a shared notion of pre-given fate by providing a more effective means for divination than the Jinghpo divination table. The time scheme hence provides a platform for understanding interactions among several knowledge systems.

Christian sophistication of the Jinghpo time scheme

1) Soul and body as created by God

Christians intend to convert each Jinghpo into a child of God, irrespective of cultural differences among His children all over the world²⁵. As sacrifice makers attribute everything to history, Christians convert Jinghpo by sophisticating the Genealogy of Everything. Such sophistication legitimizes conversion, and provides an alternative history that serves as final attribution for Christians. It is symbiotic with the Genealogy of Everything but, ultimately, is intended to triumph over the latter.

The history written to me by my key informant *Yo* started with a combination of the genesis legends in the Bible and that in the Genealogy of Everything. The Jinghpo genesis narrates the creation of hundreds of things critical for the Jinghpo way of life, like the divination tools and the bad death spirit. *Yo* described the creation of only nine categories of essential things for human beings, such as knowledge, medicine, crops and corns, and animals and plants. These categories roughly correspond to what is told in the Bible. Then comes the creation of first human by God. As *Yo*'s wrote: "Having created the sun, the moon, animals, and plants, etc., God thought He should create a species to farm the land and to raise animals. He had been worn out by previous creation. He sat down and sighed to get rid of fatigue. The air blown from His mouth raised up dust. He collected all flying particles of dust, pinched them into an object following His own image, and blew a gust of His breath into its nose and so gave it life. He also applied procreative medicine on the top of its genitals. He named it Adam, the first human being. Adam is called *N-gon*³³ *Du*³³ in the Jinghpo genesis legends.

Seeing that *N-gon³³ Du³³*, as the only one of his kind, felt lonely, God made him sleep and took one of his right ribs out and made it into the first human female, Eve. Eve is called *Hku³¹ Tung³³ Ning³¹ Mai³³* in the Jinghpo genesis, who later became the wife of Adam.”²⁶

This story is obviously modified from the Bible. The procreative medicine was added to illustrate the Jinghpo view of life-giving. In the Jinghpo genesis, the primordial ancestral couple of everything (male, *Hpung³¹ Gam³³ Chya⁵⁵ nun³¹*; female, *Hpung³¹ Jan³¹ Woi³³ shun³¹*) died and relived four times. Each time they gave birth to various kinds of spirits or objects, which were named by the omniscient spirit. In their last reliving, they gave birth to *N-gon³³ Du³³*, the youngest among his male siblings, and to his only sister, *Hku³¹ Tung³³ Ning³¹ Mai³³*, who later became his wife. They also gave birth to a melon and did not know what it was²⁷. They turned to the omniscient spirit, who cut the melon into two halves and fixed to each hair, eyes, nose, mouth, heart, guts, liver, arms, and legs, etc. He then fixed the male genital to one half, applied male procreative substance (*yu³³ ma³¹ ya³³ tsi³¹ dung³³*) on the top of the genital, and gave the half the name *da³¹ ru³¹ gum³¹ sa³¹*, the first man. The substance made his sexual desire last no longer than the time of climbing up a stairway, because he hunts and trades far from home. The spirit fixed the female genital to the other half, applied female procreative substance (*ma³¹ yat³¹ ma³¹ ya³³ tsi³¹ hkong³³*) throughout the genital, and gave the half the name *ma³¹ gam³¹ gum³³ hpan³³*, the first woman. The substance made her sexual desire last a whole morning, because she stayed at home taking care of children and household chores.

Comparing the two versions of creation of the first human couple, we find that *Yo* emphasized the origin of life-giving by blending the Christian genesis and that of the animal sacrifice makers. Christians claim that humans were given life by God’s breath blowing into the nose of Adam. When humans die, their body, made from dust, will be returned to earth, and their life essence, made of

God's breath, to God. Humans share a consubstantial and spiritual basis with God. They are prone to acting on what God once taught them and believing in Christianity. However, animal sacrifice makers believe that the primordial ancestors created most spirits and humans. Spirits are related to, and share substance with, humans. Human social reproduction is attributed to the procreative medicines given by the omniscient spirit. Humans thus should worship all spirits named by this spirit.

To further persuade animal sacrifice makers, Christians fabricated an origin story of all non-Christian beliefs. As *Yo* narrates, when humans were created, they all believed in Christianity. When Moses, the emissary of God, retreated into the forest, Satan, the king of all spirits that opposed God, enticed people to abandon God and believe in him. From then, Burmese and the Tai-speaking peoples converted to Buddhism and the Jinghpo started animal sacrifice. When Moses returned from retreat, only a few kept believing in God. He then led them to migrate westward into today's Europe. Thereafter, Christians have considered all non-Christian beliefs as paganism. All spirits worshiped by non-Christians, like that named in the Jinghpo genesis, are Satan's followers, therewith evil.

Ordinary Christians do not know details of the stories told by *Yo*, but all share the basic idea that animal sacrifice makers are followers of Satan and Christianity is the only legitimate religion. To strengthen such argument, the clergyman in Sama village interprets the Christian notion of sin as derived from the Jinghpo abandonment of Christianity. The sin made Jinghpo encounter various disasters, which culminated in the Nineteenth Century when syphilis almost wiped out the whole population. Thanks to the Christian missionaries! They gave out modern medicine and led the Jinghpo to resume their lost belief of Christianity. The clergyman emphasized, in one of his Sunday sermons, when missionaries had given out the Jinghpo version of the Bible, they had urged again and again the Jinghpo to obey the Bible; otherwise other disasters would fall upon them. Unfortunately, most

Jinghpo did not listen. Now the disaster of AIDS/drugs has started to overcome the Jinghpo.

2) Power of *woi³³nyi³¹*

Christians establish new relations between the human body/soul and God to legitimize conversion. To further differentiate Christianity from animal sacrifice, they emphasize the power of *woi³³nyi³¹* but associate it with a new meaning. Humans are born with the faculty of *woi³³nyi³¹*. An animal sacrifice maker's *woi³³nyi³¹* transforms him/her at death into a soul among either household spirits or in family genealogy, and so shapes descendents' fortune. That is, *woi³³nyi³¹* of ancestors defines an individual's fate. By contrast, a Christian, no matter if s/he believes in God or not, no matter what degree of piety to God s/he has, or in what way s/he dies, s/he would inevitably face the final judgment vis-à-vis God. Anyone who is pious to God will be saved and endowed with a permanent good life after death, while others will be abandoned. A Christian's *woi³³nyi³¹* determines his/her fate after death. *Woi³³nyi³¹* is thus interpreted as piety to God.

Christians are in charge of their own fates. This contrasts with the Jinghpo traditional notion of fate as determined by ancestor's *woi³³nyi³¹*. Ultimately, Christians aim to marginalize the influence of ancestors over descendents and replace such influence by brotherhood among all Christians in the shadow of God. An ideal Christian, as a child of God, needs neither family genealogy nor household spirits²⁸. Unlike animal sacrifice makers, who differentiate themselves from each other by ancestors' *woi³³nyi³¹* that defines the inherited family fate and an individual's born fate, Christians differentiate among themselves according to their respective *woi³³nyi³¹*s (degrees of piety to God).

The contrast between Christian and Jinghpo notions of fates highlights the difference between the Jinghpo view of soul and *woi³³nyi³¹*. The essence of *woi³³nyi³¹* is the positive force of life, while soul represents the human spirits irregardless of life and death. Animal sacrifice makers emphasize the

influence of ancestors' *woi³³nyi³¹* over the living through the function of souls of ancestors (in family genealogy and those souls among household spirits). By contrast, Christians emphasize the power of *woi³³nyi³¹* of the living, which determines the life of the living person's soul after death.

Considering Christian sophistication of the Jinghpo view of life and death, I argue that Christianity pushes and pulls the Jinghpo animal sacrifice aiming to replace it and create a new system for a new kind of people²⁹. Christians abandon the Jinghpo traditional scheme of everything being related to everything else, and replace it by relations between God and humans and among Christians. The soul relates animal sacrifice makers to everything else, whereas it marks a Christian's connection to God. Christian transformation from relations of everything to relations between God and humans highlights individual status and efforts. A Christian's *woi³³nyi³¹* shapes one's future while the future of an animal sacrifice maker is shaped by their ancestors' *woi³³nyi³¹*.

Chinese fusing of the Jinghpo notions of fate

Contrary to Christianity that abandons all spirits worshiped by sacrifice makers and aims to transform Jinghpo into a new kind of people, Southwest Chinese folk belief fuses with Jinghpo sacrifice. The syncretism between Christianity and animal sacrifice aims to provide an alternative and competitive belief system. It ultimately aims to triumph over animal sacrifice. The syncretism between Chinese folk belief and Jinghpo animal sacrifice, by contrast, fuses the two systems without one monopolizing the other. Villagers understand such difference according to their traditional genesis legends. Christianity is foreign, while Jinghpo and Chinese descended from the same ancestor³⁰.

The most salient example of the syncretism of Jinghpo sacrifice and Chinese folk belief lies in the shared notion of pre-given fate. For both, fates are shaped by ancestors and birth time, and are not completely fixed. Chinese provide more elaborate means for formulating fate, and design complicated

means for adjusting a pre-given fate to accommodate individual aspirations and efforts. Among all these means, the Chinese animal calendar (see Eade 1995) and tomb geomancy are widely adopted by Jinghpo villagers to better understand and make use of both their inherited and born fate.

1) Inherited fate in terms of tomb geomancy

Geomancy (“风水” fēngshuǐ) establishes correlations between geographical and topographical features of places and fortune and moral forces of activities of humans who reside in those places. A good place represents benign convergence of these three factors. In particular, tomb geomancy specifies the influence of a tomb site over fortune of offspring and thus mediates ancestors’ influence over the latter (Bruun 2008). Geomancy is widely practiced in southwest China. In particular, Hàn Chinese worship most ancestors they can remember and materialize memory of ancestors by tomb geomancy. Traditionally, Jinghpo did not pay much attention to tomb geomancy. Although they highlighted influence of ancestors over descendents through family genealogy and household spirits, the tomb did not mediate such influence. Nowadays, most villagers have been attracted by what Hàn Chinese have told them regarding an good tomb site: “ten persons working at a field will not accomplish as much as one corpse lying in a good tomb”. Animal sacrifice makers have learned to deliberately choose a proper tomb site, especially for an ancestor included in family genealogy, to intensify the influence of the fortune of those heroic ancestors by that of a good site. In addition to family genealogy and household spirits, a carefully chosen tomb site becomes another means that mediates ancestors’ influence over descendents. In other words, a tomb represents a family’s inherited fate.

A tomb site is associated with two novel values by Jinghpo animal sacrifice makers. The first is a relation between a tomb site and “old home”. In general, an altar in a ritual is a temporary projection of a spirit’ divine residence in the living world. The spirit is called from its divine residence to

temporarily reside in the altar for receiving sacrifice. Traditionally, villagers did not make regular sacrifice to ancestors in front of a tomb, and a tomb was not connected to ancestors' divine residence (the "old home"). Nowadays, villagers make annual sacrifice to ancestors in front of the tomb. The sacrifice creates an additional way for communicating with ancestors. The tomb, accordingly, becomes a projection in the living world of ancestors' "old home". Secondly, unlike most other altars that are made of easily decomposable bamboo and wood, a tomb is almost permanent. It, in the eyes of cultural intellectuals who strive to preserve the Jinghpo culture, rebuts the criticism that blames the Jinghpo for not having timeless cultural relics and so being primitive.

Specifically, villagers blend the Jinghpo and Chinese tomb geomancy to mediate the influence of ancestors, and the geomancy of their tomb site, over descendents. Both traditions highlight a triangular configuration among three hillsides regarding a tomb site: the hillside in which a tomb will be located, and neighboring hillsides to the left and right. Each tradition allocates different meanings to the three hillsides. For Chinese, the middle hillside represents ancestors, the hillside on the left represents male offspring, and the one on the right, female offspring. For Jinghpo, the middle represents the wife-givers, the hillside on the left represents real and classificatory brothers, and the one on the right, the wife-takers. The middle one represents the source of social reproduction of descendents for both Chinese and Jinghpo, since Chinese attribute social reproduction to (male) ancestors and Jinghpo to the wife-givers (See Zhang 2004). Accordingly, both Chinese and Jinghpo highlight almost the same geographical and topographical requirements for the middle hillside. It should be lofty and grand with flourishing forest to guarantee social reproduction of descendents.

2) Individual born fate in terms of the Chinese Animal Calendar

The Chinese animal calendar associates one of the 12 animals (rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake,

horse, goat, monkey, chicken, dog, and pig) with the year, day, and time within a day and night (divided into 12 equidistant periods) simultaneously. Each two-hour period is associated with three animals: one for the period, one for the day in which the period falls, and one for the year in which the day falls. Being associated with one animal means being endowed with attributes of that animal. The animal calendar thus defines the abstract temporal properties of a period in terms of concrete animal attributes. The fortune of human activities conducted in a certain period will be shaped by the temporal properties of that period. The animal calendar is hence a device for divination.

Jinghpö have learned the Chinese animal calendar for no less than a century. The eldest generation in Sama, now in their late seventies, remembered that their parents had, though rarely, used the animal calendar. But only recently have villagers, including Christians and sacrifice makers, used it intensively. They modify the calendar to their needs in two regards. First, animal attributes are not fixed to Chinese meanings, but adjusted by the Jinghpö understandings of the animals. Second, they consider the animal attribution of the year and day, and neglect that of periods within a day and night.

In addition to its calendric function, villagers use the animal calendar for divination in the same way they apply their traditional divination table. Specifically, the animal attribution of the day is used for identifying an appropriate date for conducting certain activities, and that of the year for understanding individual born fate. For the former, if the purpose of an activity matches the animal attribution of the day, the fortune of the activity will be enhanced by the animal attributes; otherwise, humans or their affairs will be harmed. For instance, no sacrifice rituals can be conducted on a day with pig, chicken, ox, or tiger attributions, because killing the former three domestic animals/fowls on the day of the same attribution or of tiger (that eats most animals) will preclude their growth. For the latter, the animal calendar, being intuitive and concrete, provides villagers a more understandable

means for talking about and using individual fate defined by birth time. Most villagers do not know how to observe the divination table for identifying individual fate. A given fate indicates a certain relation to spirits. To enhance the fortune and to avoid bad encounters with spirits, one should observe certain taboos particular to one's fate; otherwise, disaster will fall upon one.

For instance, in the morning following *Tu*'s death in 2008, his neighbor *Nan*'s wife came to cry in front of the corpse, saying "you said I would die before you. But how could you die first?" But shortly after her returning home, she fell into ill suddenly and died before the end of *Tu*'s funeral. This tragedy did not surprise people. They believe one's fate is really soft on one's birthday and one had better not go to a funeral. *Nan*'s wife breached this taboo because she and *Tu* shared the same birthday, and *Tu* died one day before it. And villagers have heard of several such cases of death. However, this principle fails to explain many other cases of death following a funeral when the two deceased do not share the same birthday. In this regard, the Chinese animal calendar provides a better interpretation.

The greatest religious specialist in Sama village provided me with two principles regarding whether it is proper for one to go to a funeral or not. First, people whose animal attribution is the same with that of the year of the funeral and of the day of taking the corpse out are absolutely forbidden to participate in the funeral; otherwise, their souls will be taken by the deceased. Second, if one's animal attribution coincides with the year of the funeral event, while differing from that of the day of taking the corpse out, one can participate in the funeral except on the day of taking the corpse out. The specialist claimed that these two principles explained all cases of death following a funeral he had heard of. Most villagers did not articulate these two principles. But when I explained these to them, most found that the two principles are reasonable and explain similar cases they have heard of.

Taking the Jinghpo adoption of Chinese tomb geomancy and the animal calendar together, I

argue that these two Chinese systems have merged with Jinghpo daily life. The mergence offers more effective means for understanding and making use of the Jinghpo notion of fate. However, the syncretism between Chinese folk beliefs and Jinghpo animal sacrifice co-exists with the Chinese government's transformation of Jinghpo. As illustrated by the following two sections regarding the Jinghpo space scheme and its transformation by the Chinese government, such transformation is simultaneously welcomed and resisted by villagers.

The space scheme: the triangle configuration and the sandwich configuration

In the previous sections, I argue that the local time scheme provides a framework for discussing interactions among Jinghpo sacrifice, Christianity, and Chinese folk belief. In a similar manner, I will describe and analyze how the local space scheme provides a framework for understanding interactions among Jinghpo sacrifice, the Chinese government, and Christianity. As I briefly describe at the beginning of the present chapter, relations among humans and between humans and spirits are formulated in terms of the spatial distributions of, and alliance among, kin groups. Such distribution implies the local space scheme, by which the space scheme captures social relations. Here I focus on two kinds of relations: that among humans, and that between humans and spirits. The former is modeled by a triangular configuration, and the latter, by a sandwich configuration.

The triangular model is based on the widely practiced asymmetrical alliance system. In Sama village, three patrilineal kin groups have formed a marriage cycle for over three hundred years: the *Nhkum*³³ gives wife to the *Ma³¹ran³¹*, the *Ma³¹ran³¹* to the *N-ji³¹ La³¹ma³¹*, and the *N-ji³¹ La³¹ma³¹* to the *Nhkum*³³ (Both *Ma³¹ran³¹* and *Nhkum*³³ are two Jinghpo clans, and *N-ji³¹ La³¹ma³¹* is a branch of the *Ma³¹rip³¹* clan)³¹. In Jinghpo, such a marriage cycle is called *hku³¹ wang³¹ ma³¹ gam³³*. *Hku³¹* means “relatives connected by marriage”, *wang³¹* means “to make ... into a circle”, *ma³¹ gam³³* means a

domain; *hku³¹ wang³¹ ma³¹ gam³³* means “a circumscription in which relatives are connected by a circle of marriage”. In daily life, villagers say “connecting relatives into a circle, we will have a marriage cycle [when the circle continues generation by generation]” (*Jing³¹ hku³¹ hku³¹ wang³¹ ai³³, hku¹ wang³¹ magam³¹*)³². Based on the cycle, relatives are classified into three categories: brothers who share the same ancestors with you, your wife-givers, and your wife-takers (see diagram I). Scholars have extensively discussed this alliance system by embedding it within the local political settings (c.f. Leach 1961, 1964; Maran 2007a where the system is referred to as *hkau³³ wang³¹ ma³¹ gam³³*). In reality, each kin group joins several cycles simultaneously. The Jinghpo population of a given region, usually consisting of a number of kin groups of different surnames, is connected into a complicated network of a number of such cycles. Each network connects thousands of individuals into long-term alliance. In this sense, the cycle serves as an elementary unit for local social organization³³. It is further a basic scheme in villagers’ daily life and thinking, serving as a model for classifying relatives and strangers and for regulating relations between ancestors and offspring. To understand that, let me explain internal relations among the three kin groups within a marriage cycle.

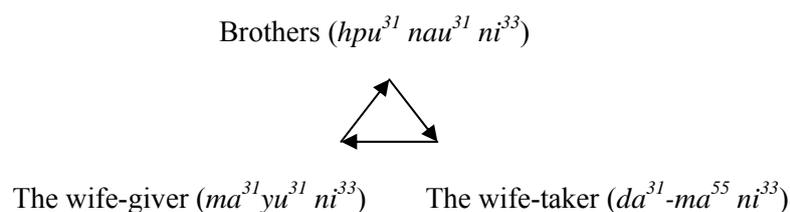


Diagram 1.1 local marriage cycle

Take any side in the triangle, it relates a pair of the wife-taker and wife-giver. The wife-giver gives out a woman, who brings essential procreative substance and so offspring to the wife-taker. The life-giving of the wife-giver is represented by the most important item of dowry, a weaving cord (*sumri*). Remember the word *sumri* is a polyphone: *sum³³ ri³³* means a weaving cord by which a

woman weaves for her husband's family, and *sum³¹ri³¹* means the cord of life. A wife brings to the wife-taker substance not only for making a living but, metaphorically, for (re-)producing human life. A successful marriage that produces children will stimulate people to continue the alliance in the next generation – a boy will marry one of his mother's (real or classificatory) brothers' daughters. The wife-giver is thus the origin of social reproduction³⁴. In exchange for a wife, the wife-taker should pay a large bride-price. The wife-taker is considered as the source of wealth. In genesis stories, to hold a “feast-of-merit” praying for wealth from the Jinghpo greatest spirit, people had to sacrifice mithans (*Bos frontalis*)³⁵. But mithans were raised and kept by the host's sisters thereby belonging to the wife-taker. That is, the ability to pray for wealth depends on the wife-taker's property.

The inter-dependence between the wife-taker and wife-giver is based on the Jinghpo view of a male's and a female's different contributions to life-giving. Human procreation results from a harmonious working of male and female procreative substance, with the female's playing a central role³⁶. According to the Jinghpo genesis legends, when the first human couples were created, the female was endowed with the essential procreative substance (*ma³¹yat³¹ ma³¹ya³³ tsi³¹hkong³³*: *ma³¹yat³¹ ma³¹ya³³*, social reproduction; *tsi³¹hkong³³*, a ritual name for the daily word — *tsi³¹*, medicine), and the male with the subsidiary procreative substance that nourishes the female substance (*yu³³ ma³¹ya³¹ tsi³¹dung³³*: *yu³³ ma³¹ya³³*, “ordinary”; *tsi³¹dung³³*, another ritual name for medicine).

The independence between the wife-taker (/male) and the wife-giver (/female) is mapped onto the spatial arrangement of the pair of left and right. The triangular arrangement of the three hillsides of a tomb site and their respective associations with relatives (see the immediately above section on tomb geomancy) illustrates a formulaic expression of social relations established by marriage: male: female :: the wife-taker : the wife-giver :: left: right. This formula is also represented in many other

aspects of local community. In a funeral, a buffalo head will be bound with a wooden doll carved from a newly cut stake. The buffalo is the emblem of property, and erecting a buffalo head doll in front of the tomb before its natural decomposition extols the deceased and expresses the gratitude of the living. Decoration of the doll reflects the spatial arrangement of male and female: if the husband is still alive, only the right side of a doll will be dyed; and if the wife, only the left side. Only when both of the couple pass away, will the two sides be dyed. Similarly, sacrificed animals will be cut and wrapped properly as offering to the deceased. The cutting reflects the spatial arrangement of male and female. Only when both of the couple pass away, will a whole sacrificed animal be cut; otherwise, only the left half for the male deceased, and the right for the female.

Different from human relations that are expressed by alliance, humans and spirits are considered sharing the same ancestors in the Genealogy of Everything, and related in a mythological sense. As alliance among humans are mapped onto the spatial distribution of kin groups, relations between humans and spirits are expressed by the mythologically spatial arrangement between human residence and spirits' divine residence. Humans reside only on the earth while spirits inhabit every part of the space. Each spirit has a specific divine residence allocated in the Genealogy of Everything; without knowing it, a religious specialist cannot call on it to receive sacrifice. According to the spatial distribution of spirits' residence, religious specialists classify spirits into three categories: the spirits whose residence is in the heaven (such as the thunder spirit); the spirits whose residence is below the floor of a house (like the land spirit. A traditional Jinghpo house is a rectangular, shed-like wooden structure with its floor about one meter above the ground), and the spirits whose residence is in-between (such as human souls and the spirits closely related to humans). All sky spirits are considered as the source of fortune and power, and the land spirit as the origin of the land's

productivity. They should be exalted. By contrast, spirits on the earth are real or mythological relatives to humans. The floor of a house, then, marks the distinction between spirits that possess mighty power taking charge of human development and spirits that are human counterparts in the spirit world. This distinction is evidenced by where spirits receive sacrifice. All spirits on the land that receive sacrifice in a house come into and leave a house through apertures in the floor. Sky spirits receive sacrifice either on the top of a house or its altar is located on a place higher than a house. Sacrificed food to the land spirit, by contrast, should be buried under earth. The house, then, models relations between humans and spirits by a three-layered sandwich configuration (the sky, the land, and in-between. C.f. Leach 1968; Lehman 1977).

According to the great specialist in Sama, such a sandwich configuration derives from the residential arrangement of the primordial couple who came back to life four times and generated most things in the world. Most sky spirits came into being before this couple, while most spirits on the earth were produced by this couple. In their last coming back to life, they gave birth to the first human couple. when they passed away, the male ascended up to the sky and became a heaven spirit governing the world below, the female became the land spirit governing the land and its production, and their youngest mythological son *N-gon³³ Du³³* (*N-gon³³ Wa³³* or *N-gon³³ Wa³³ Ma³¹ gam³³* in the literature), became the first orthodox human chief in history and governed the world between the sky and land. All Jinghpo orthodox chiefs were considered as offspring of *N-gon³³ Du³³* following the youngest son line (ultimogeniture). They are mundane representative of the sky and land spirits. youngest son became an orthodox chief who governs people on the earth.

Accordingly, each year a chief organizes his followers to conduct two communal rituals. The first is to the sky spirit, killing dozens of mithans and feeding hundreds of people. Only a chief can make

sacrifice, through specialists, to sky spirits praying for blessing on behalf of his followers. The sacrifice endows a chief with merit from the greatest sky spirit (*ma³¹ dai³³*), which establishes a client-ship between commoners and a chief and so legitimizes his chiefly status and power (Kammerer and Tannenbaum 1996). The latter is intended to transfer merit to his followers by imploring the land spirit to produce food. Only a chief who receives merit from the sky spirit can organize such a sacrifice. The sacrifice establishes a chief as the nominal owner of the land of his domain (Tannenbaum and Kammerer 2003). Through these two rituals, a chief and his followers are blessed by sky spirits and nourished by the land spirit, and a chief puts his followers into a status of “indebtedness”, and they have to pay the debt by, for instance, paying a hindquarter of a big animal, either wild or domestic (hence a Jinghpo chief is known in the literature as a thigh-eating chief).

At the end of the second ritual, the specialist buries dried fish under a stone slab, respectively at the two village gates to protect the village from bad spirits. Village gates serve as a threshold for classifying spirits on the land into inside and outside categories. The former are good, including household spirits and spirits closely related to humans, and the latter are bad bringing disasters like bad death and stillbirth³⁷. Villagers pray for blessing from the former and avoid bad encounters with the latter. The classification thus regulates villagers’ relations to spirits, formulates details of sacrifice, and serves as a guideline for daily life³⁸. For ordinary villagers, these spirits are mythological or real relatives. They influence every aspect of villagers’ daily life, as living relatives do.

Transformations of the space scheme by Christians and the Chinese government

The space scheme formulates relations among humans and between humans and spirits in spatial terms. It frames interactions among Jinghpo sacrifice, Christianity, and the Chinese government. On the one hand, Christians strive to abandon all spirits worshiped by sacrifice makers. On the other,

they maintain local marriage cycles, though they prefer to marry Christians. Under the Chinese policy of marriage freedom, many Christians marry non-Christians and should fulfill all responsibilities they owe to their non-Christian affines. In Sama, 14 out of 23 Christian households consist of people of different beliefs, with the husband believing in animal sacrifice and wife in Christianity. As a result, Christians preserve the triangular configuration but abandon the sandwich one.

Interactions between Jinghpo and the Chinese government in terms of the space scheme are more complicated. As development is currently the primary aim of the Chinese government, ethnic cultures/religions are barriers to development in the eyes of government. But the government cannot brazenly attempt to erase cultures, as the policy of religious freedom has been written into the National Constitution. It accordingly emphasizes ethnic minorities as poor Chinese citizens and overlooks the characterization of different culture holders. Such emphasis highlights the spatial difference between Hân Chinese and ethnic minorities, because most Hân Chinese live in wealthy coastal and eastern areas whereas most ethnic minorities live in poor inland areas and in the West. Such rephrasing of the Hân Chinese / minorities relations in spatial terms displays a coincidence between government policies and their resultant transformations: what is transformed by government is the Jinghpo scheme of space, though this might not be necessarily attributed to the government's rephrasing in spatial terms. Specifically, the family-control policy disrupts local marriage cycles and thus the triangular configuration, and development projects change local humans/land relations and thus the sandwich configuration. All these have brought the Jinghpo to face modern evils (like drugs) while dismantling their conventional means of defense without providing any modern alternatives.

1) The triangular configuration on the edge of collapse

Traditionally, to maintain a marriage cycle a boy's marriage was arranged to one of the daughters

of his mother's real or classificatory brothers. The arrangement guarantees that the wife-giver, from which the boy's father, paternal uncles, and elder brothers have taken wives, do not have an inherited bad fate, such as the witch spirit that pollutes family blood, or the bad death spirit that precludes social reproduction. The Jinghpo believe that social reproduction derives from the the working together of the male and female procreative substances. Previous marriages have produced many children and so demonstrated the compatibility of the procreative substances of the two groups. A new couple will definitely have children. In this sense, opening marriage with a brand-new wife-giver might pollute one's family genealogy. It was rare before the Chinese government's taking the Jinghpo land in 1953. Based on my genealogical survey of about 500 living adults in 2003, over ninety percent of males older than in their thirties had married their mother's brother's daughters.

Under the Chinese policy of marriage freedom, the youth found lovers by themselves. The policy outstrips the control of conventional marriage preference with one's mother's brothers' daughters and taboos regarding opening marriage with a brand-new wife-giver. Among 31 cases of marriage in Sama village from 2003 to 2010, 14 boys did not marry the daughters of their mother's real or classificatory brothers, but rather found lovers by themselves. Such free choice of marriage considerably reduces the number of marriages that are needed to maintain local marriage cycles. The family control policy imposes more severe threats to the cycles. The policy requires each rural family to have no more than two children (three for ethnic people living across the border in 2010). This brings the cycle to the edge of collapse. To maintain all cycles in which a kin group is involved, a given number of children should be produced and required to marry within the cycle. The policy thus allows for few children needed for maintaining the local networks of marriage cycles.

Consider the *Ma³¹ ran³¹* in Sama. This sub-clan has been involved in at least ten marriage cycles

in Tongbiguan Village Tract, and at least twenty throughout Dehong Prefecture in China and the Kachin State in Burma. To maintain a minimum functioning of the alliances, the sub-clan has to produce at least twenty daughters and twenty sons in every generation. To make the alliance stable, each marriage cycle requires no less than three cases of marriage given the possibility of divorce and infertility. That means, in every generation 26 *Ma³¹ran³¹* households in Sama should produce at least 120 children (about 4 or 5 children per household) to maintain a stable alliance network, and 40 (at least one or two children per household) to maintain the minimum functioning of the alliance network. Obviously the current policy of family control allows for only the latter.

In addition, many boys take wives from brand-new wife-givers, which, as believed by elders, will potentially pollute the genealogies within cycles. One kin group being polluted means all its alliance groups might be polluted too *via* marriage. In Sama among 14 cases of marriage not with mother's brothers' daughters from 2003, 8 were with ethnic non-Jinghpο. Many Jinghpο girls do not like to marry Jinghpο men as many of them are either alcohol or drug addicted. Whenever they get drunk or do not have money for purchasing drugs/alcohol, they would probably beat their wives. Girls heard that most Hàn Chinese in wealthy places do not beat wives.

Before the 1990s, girls did not have a chance to marry Chinese from distant places. But currently, a large number of rural Hàn Chinese males in the three provinces of Northeastern China, Shandong province in central China, and Fujian province in Southeastern China have come to find wives among ethnic minorities in southwest China. In these provinces, people incurred a serious male/female imbalance following twenty-odd years of family control and owing to the wide-spread traditional ideal of cherishing a male child for maintaining the genealogy. By 2009, three girls in Sama had married out respectively to Jilin province, Shandong province, and Fujian province. The fourth

daughter of the greatest chanter married to Shandong province in 2001 and visited her parents in 2010.

I asked her whether she could find any chance to speak Jinghpo in Shandong. To my surprise, she speaks it everyday because there are at least five Jinghpo married in almost every village there³⁹.

In interviews, many girls prefer to marry Chinese from wealthy eastern China; if not, from Kunming (capital city of Yunnan province) or Mangshi (capital city of Dehong Prefecture). They told me and my wife that we must have noticed that many girls had married into China from Burma because Jinghpo in China have a better life than their fellow people do in Burma. Likewise, they want to marry Chinese from wealthier places. Parents who did not want their daughters to marry to distant places now have started to change their attitudes. Their daughters have a better life, and sometimes their Chinese sons-in-law can provide big financial support too. The only regret is that they are no longer able to maintain marriage alliance with many of their old wife-givers and wife-takers⁴⁰.

2) Broken sandwich configuration: exploitation of the mother land

The Chinese government's transformation of the Jingho sandwich configuration derives from its disruption of traditional human/land relation. It abolished traditional chiefs, the human representative of the land, and replaced them by government officials who have nothing to do with the land. It also intensively exploited mountain resources and so severed villagers from their mother land.

From 1953 when the Chinese communists took the Jinghpo Hills, many former chiefs became members of the Political Consultative Committee in local government and left their home villages. Officials of a Marxist materialistic and atheistic government then resided in villages and established their power and prestige among villagers. Compared with chiefs, who are mundane representatives of the sky and land spirits, officials are representatives of a remote and foreign power entity that has nothing to do with the land. In addition, officials' relation to their birth places is cut off as the Chinese

government regulation requires that one cannot serve as a high official in his birth place. The demise of chieftaincy and the intensified governmental control disrupted the traditional human/land relation.

Accordingly, relations between a chief and his followers in terms of the sandwich configuration, have been transformed into a staircase-like hierarchical administration. Villagers stand at the bottom of the staircase. The system of registered residence further ties people to the local administration. It allocates each individual a permanent residence in a given place, and thus the status of a Chinese citizen. But it limits people's freedom to work and live in other places. Although people still live in the same land, they are no longer related to their mother land, both ritually and emotionally.

Administrative control further gives the government convenience to exploit effectively resources in the Jinghpo Hills. Such exploitation, in villagers' eyes, breaks the vitality of the mother land and forces villagers to leave their favorite place protected by the mother land⁴¹. Moreover, development projects in the 2000s further harmed relations between villagers and their mother land. Jinghpo are considered as poor Chinese citizens who need help for removing poverty. Local governments launched a series of development projects for helping villagers remove poverty. In Sama village, the cooperative team allocated government-owned mountain sides to households, with each getting about 200 hundred "mǔ" (a Chinese unit of area, 1 mǔ= 1/15 hectares) in 2007. Local government encouraged villagers to cultivate cash crops (such as walnut and coffee) and commercial woods (like the Chinese fir) by providing them free seedlings. In 2008, the County government issued usufruct certificates to ensure villagers' possession of what they had planted on mountains.

In a short time, the allocation changed the local cycle of work and relaxation. Before the allocation, the rainy season was the time for the mother land to produce, and the dry season for cultivation, harvest, and trading products of the mother land. After the allocation, villagers became

extremely busy with cultivation during the rainy season. They do not leave time for the mother land to produce and restore her vitality. Worse, allocation and cultivation stimulated people to extract money and profits from the mother land in all possible ways. Villagers take the mother land as their own and deprived all other creatures' dependence on her. Whenever they feel it necessary, all trees in a field would be felled and shrubs will be burned with only a small amount of cash crops left. Big animals have run into Burma and small ones become fewer and fewer. Pesticides have become widely used. Villagers were surprised to find that one single sick plant might wipe out all plants in a plot, whereas they had seen in the old days one type of dying plant would not harm all others around it⁴².

Religious specialists and other elders started to lament the demise of their mother land – the cradle for the Jinghpo heroic leaders and of the Jinghpo way of life. The mother land is no longer honored and thanked for her products and protection over people. She stopped producing heroic leaders, without whom ordinary villagers could not predict and find the best chance of development. They just follow others. Many years after Hàn Chinese had gained money in cultivating the Chinese fir and coffee, villagers followed but the price has already fallen. Worse, without instruction from heroic leaders, villagers lost a clear mind to judge what is good or not, and lost the strong will that was previously supported by the balance among humans, animals and the natural surroundings. They were committed to more money and a more comfortable material life, and were captivated by their expanding desires that have reached out of their control. They become more vulnerable to instant gratification provided by alcohol and drugs. Desperately, only elders and a few others have realized how development led them to the tragedy of irretrievable physical and intellectual degeneration, and how the government has destroyed the vitality of the mother land, and so of their culture!⁴³

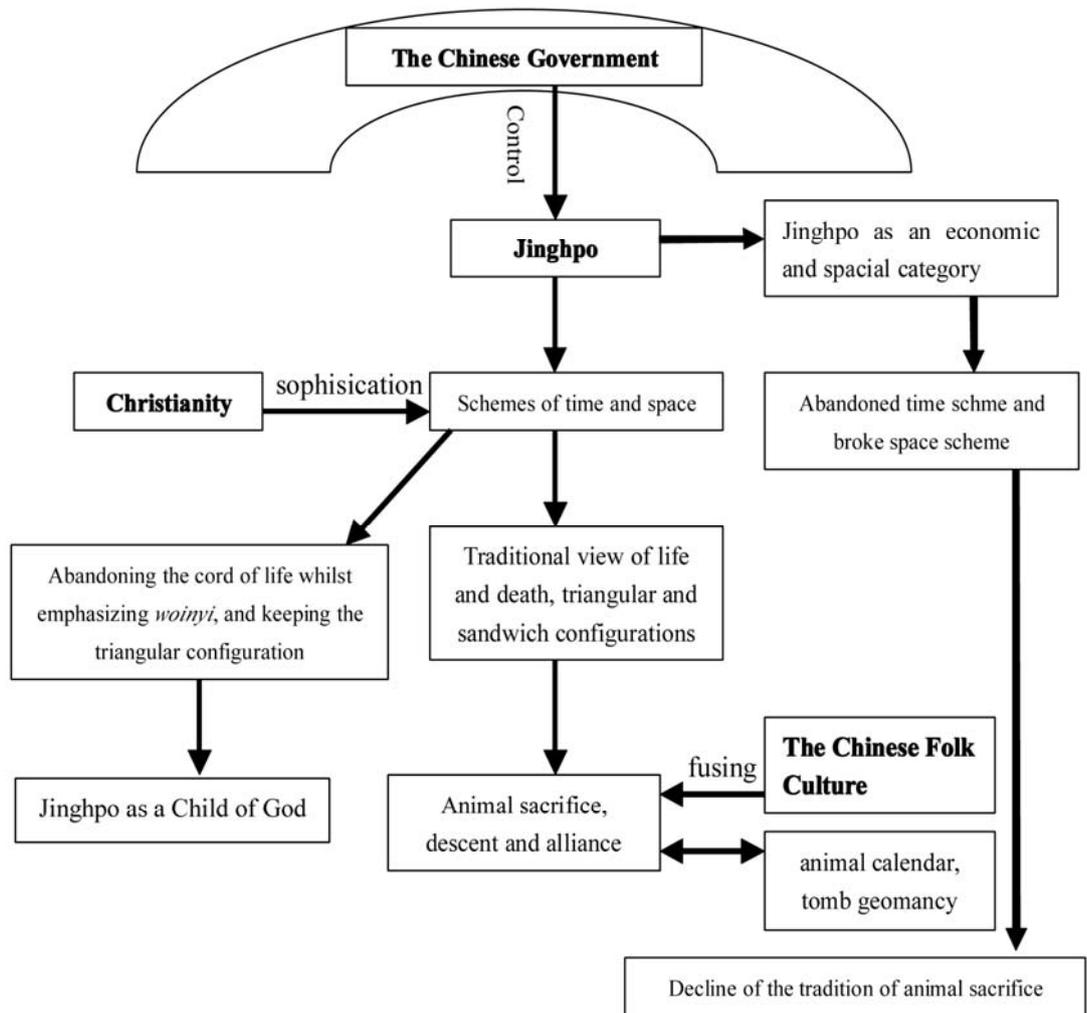
Interactional Pattern among the four Knowledge Systems

To conclude the present chapter, I characterize the interactional patterns among the four knowledge systems. Jinghpo animal sacrifice (represented by the time and space schemes) functions as an interactional platform in the process. Christianity, the Chinese government, and Chinese folk belief, interact with Jinghpo animal sacrifice in its different aspects and on different levels (see diagram 1.2). Interactions among the former three systems are mediated by Jinghpo sacrifice.

As shown by the diagram, the interactions display multi-directional propensities. The Chinese government suppresses the other three systems *from the top*. It treats Jinghpo as an economically poor people in interior and Western China and de-emphasizes its cultural differences from ethnic Chinese. Its naked power breaks the Jinghpo space scheme from the top down. Christianity pushes and pulls animal sacrifice *from the side*. Christians create a new time scheme of life and death by reinterpreting the human soul as a connection to God and *woi³³nyi³¹* as piety to God, and abandoning the Jinghpo notion of pre-given fate. They preserve almost all aspects of the triangular configuration of the wife-giver/ wife-taker relations and completely cast away the sandwich configuration of human/spirit relations. Ultimately, it aims to transform the Jinghpo fundamentally from its roots. Currently, at least in China, Christian transformations have only gone half way compared to what happened to Jinghpo in Burma (c.f. Maran 2007b). The Chinese folk belief fuses with Jinghpo animal sacrifice *from the bottom*. Instead of intending to transform anything, the Chinese folk religion provides new means for re-interpreting and making use of the Jinghpo idea of fate. Chinese introduce new elements into Jinghpo animal sacrifice without attempting to change Jinghpo meanings.

This interactional pattern will serve two functions throughout the rest of the dissertation. First, it provides a platform for nine detailed case studies in chapters two, three and four. Within the structural

forces of the interactional pattern shown here, each case provides an elaborated illustration of interactions among at least one or two knowledge systems. And in each case, I explore how a social consensus derives from chaotic micro-level interactions among individuals who are differentially influenced by several knowledge systems. Second, the pattern serves as a baseline that will be manifested, tested, deconstructed, reconstructed and transformed in the real cases in the following three chapters. Novelty will emerge in each case. Putting all kinds of novelty together, I explore in chapter five how the pattern discussed here will evolve under the influence of novelty.



Macro Pattern of Interactions among the Four Knowledge Systems

Chapter Two

Capricious Diseases and a Fading Tradition of Healing: A “Regular Attractor” and Consensus

From this chapter on, I will explain how a social consensus derives from micro-level interactions among individuals, and so test my hypotheses. I will examine nine cases of knowledge circulation by tracing how individuals learn and exchange ideas in daily life. Individuals are differentially influenced by several knowledge systems. Interactions among them and their ideas will complicate the circulation of their ideas. When many individuals are involved, the micro-level process of interactions becomes presumably chaotic. And a social consensus, if any, derives from such interactions.

As specified in the Introduction, I will consider three basic factors for specifying the dynamics. First, initial conditions, like in what situations what knowledge should, or should not, be circulated. Second, structural forces that regulate individual behaviors and underpin their ideas. Third, contextual particularities and contingencies. In each case, I analyze how a consensus may derive from interactions among these three factors. At certain moments, a balance among these factors occurs, by which one can predict what interactions should be in future periods. More often, a momentary balance is broken, leading to a different and unexpected balance or maintaining a state of disorder. Using the concept of an “attractor”, I analyze how micro-level chaos generates such a momentary balance.

Following these guidelines, I examine three cases of knowledge circulation regarding local practices of healing through animal sacrifice and its dynamics. They are relatively simple as there exists an apparently dominating structural force (animal sacrifice). It shapes individuals’ activities, regulates their interactions, and underpins their ideas. It further consolidates initial conditions and contextual contingencies, and so formulates the whole process of knowledge circulation in the way it operates. That is, it maintains a self-contained space that circumscribes the circulation. A possible

consensus results from such a self-contained space. I will specify such dynamics of consolidation and formation, and test the applicability of the notion of an “attractor”. In addition, these simple cases allow me to identify the conditions in which a consensus may emerge, and the limitations of applying the notion of an “attractor”. They provide a baseline against which I will analyze more complicated cases in the next two chapters, where these conditions and limitations will be elaborated.

Healing dynamics of animal sacrifice and its decline

Currently animal sacrifice has declined. The three cases in the present chapter illustrate how and in what sense animal sacrifice has declined. They cover different aspects of the fading tradition: less devotional faith, incomplete grasp of religious specialty, and failure to observe taboos. The decline means animal sacrifice as a structural force cannot maintain a well-defined and self-contained space. The decline further becomes an initial situation that allows other initial conditions, contextual contingencies, and other knowledge systems to actively engage in knowledge circulation. These factors or forces influence an event in a way unexpected by animal sacrifice. Analyzing such engagement will help specify how the decline of animal sacrifice allows initial conditions, situational contingencies, and other knowledge systems to contribute to the derivation of a consensus.

To better understand the influence of the decline, let me first elaborate on the healing dynamics of animal sacrifice, and specify how it has been declining. The structuring force of animal sacrifice derives from its being the most effective disease treatment among sacrifice makers. People classify diseases according to the life components that are affected. Accordingly, healing rituals are classified into three categories based on what life components they function on (the body, the soul, or the cord of life; remember that diseases associated with *woi*³³*nyi*³¹ are held to be incurable). First, bodily harm by physical factors such as bad weather, burning, and drowning, etc., can be cured by herbal medicine

or hospital treatment. But symptoms that come and go after taking medicine must be caused by spirits. To recover, people have to make animal sacrifice to soothe the spirits. There does not exist any one-to-one correspondence between bodily symptoms and particular spirits⁴⁴, and people resort to divination to identify the spirits. In divination, a specialist communicates with spirits to figure out why they are annoyed and make people ill, and what sacrifice they expect from humans to relieve their discontentment. The requested sacrifice should be made. It aims to recover a healthy human body at the expense of animal life. Such an idea of exchange is indicated by the Jinghpo term for such kind of sacrifice: *Sha³¹gu³¹hkum³¹ma³¹lai⁵⁵*, in which *sha³¹gu³¹hkum³¹* is a ritual name for the life of the sacrificed animals, and *ma³¹lai⁵⁵* means to exchange.⁴⁵ Second, when a patient does not have apparent symptoms or is in a coma, divination may tell that his/her soul is lost owing to fright or having been arrested by spirits. If the soul leaves the body for too long (the length depends on individual life fortune), the patient will die. A ritual of calling-back-the-soul (*num³¹la³³sha³¹ga⁵⁵*) should be conducted in time to get back the soul from spirits by setting free a live goose or dog in the forest. Third, divination sometimes cannot specify any spirit, though a patient keeps encountering troubles in daily life and suffering slightly bodily discomforts. His/her life fortune is believed to be dissipated, and the cord of life becomes too soft to maintain a regular life. The specialist then divines to identify means for strengthening the cord or changing the bad fate.

A sacrifice is intended to reconstitute an ideal harmony between a patient and spirits. If spirits are satisfied with the sacrifice, a patient will recover. The sacrifice provides a virtual space in which humans communicate with spirits. It needs three specialists: a chanter to communicate with spirits, a cutter to dismember and prepare the sacrificial animal, and a cook. In creating a virtual space, people consider three factors: the time of conducting sacrifice, the improvisation of a chanter in creating the virtual space,

and perfection of a cutter's obeying regulations to meet the spirits' request.

First of all, the effect of a ritual can be enhanced or weakened by the fortune of ritual time. To gain the best benefit, the fortune of ritual time should match the purpose of the ritual. If people aim to pray for blessing from spirits, the ritual will consist of bi-directional activities: humans give out sacrificial food and pray for blessing, meanwhile spirits take sacrificial food and give out blessing. According to the divination table, most spirits that give out blessing are active in periods associated with two or four circles on an even-numbered date of the lunar month. The ritual should be conducted accordingly. The cell meaning of a period further helps choose between periods associated with two or four circles, as these periods might be associated with bad meanings. By contrast, a ritual for driving off bad spirits is one-directional; the driving is not accompanied by anything returned. The ritual is then conducted in a period associated one circle or a cross on an odd-numbered date⁴⁶.

During an identified time, the chanter creates a virtual communicative space by his chanting. He narrates the origin story of the spirit, tracing it back to the time when spirits separated from humans and where humans shared essence (*via* the two forms of human soul) with spirits. The chanting brings the chanter and spirits back to the historical period when humans and spirits communicated directly through the universal language. It eliminates distance and opposition, or at least estrangement, between humans and spirits. Within such a virtual space, the chanting becomes a dialogue between the dual existences of the chanter: one represents the ritual sponsor to pray for blessing from spirits, and the other embodies spirits to negotiate with humans. Such duality is based on the two forms of the human soul: one represents the living, and the other, the spirit. The chanter asks spirits to relieve their discontentment, by promising to offer well-prepared sacrificial food. To make the spirits happy, he praises them with all the good words he can improvise. The more talented a chanter is in his

improvisation, the better observers perceive that a ritual realizes its purpose.

In this virtual space, words are not simply words; they constitute effective actions⁴⁷; what the chanter promises to offer to spirit(s) should be enacted by the cutter⁴⁸. This contrasts with the human world, which is no longer a self-contained world and in which humans cannot realize what they want simply by speaking out their purpose and accordingly enacting it. The chanting temporarily resumes such a lost, self-contained world that the Jinghpo have yearned for since their separation from spirits. In this world, healing through animal sacrifice is anticipatable and straightforward: you do faultlessly what you promise. The spirit leaves signs on sacrificial food regarding its acceptance or rejection of the sacrifice, based on how what the chanter has promised matches what animal cutter has done. Such healing dynamics underpin animal sacrifice as a structural force.

However, sacrifice is currently no longer held to be so effective. The decline is not simply attributed to the persecutions from the Chinese communists during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) who strove to eliminate all religions in China, or to the intellectual degeneration brought by development projects sponsored by the Chinese government from the early 2000s. The dynamics collapse from their internal core in two regards. First, Jinghpo now live in a different time scheme that breaks the basis of animal sacrifice. The conventional time scheme, based on the Genealogy of Everything and the divination table, formulates individual fates and regulates spirits' and people's activities in terms of the fortune of time periods. The divination table is designed according to the Jinghpo traditional calendar, by which a year was evenly apportioned into 12 months with each having 30 days, and dates are differentiated according to the phases of the moon and its locations in the sky⁴⁹. This calendar classifies its twelve months into six units, with three in the dry season and the rest in the rainy season. Such classification fits in the context of the local agricultural cycle within

local alternation of the dry and the rainy seasons. But Jinghpo nowadays have uniformly adopted the Chinese lunar calendar, which fits more with the alternation of four seasons and generates a different time scheme. Relations between humans and spirits according to the Jinghpo scheme do not fit with the novel one based on the Chinese calendar. Accordingly, people lose the ability to anticipate spirits' activities, and fail to plan their activities accordingly. For instance, the Chinese lunar months have different numbers of days, and create discrepancies between the calendar and the Jinghpo divination table. Diviners often told me that they are not sure, for a month of 29 days, what column the 1st of the following month corresponds to people are. If it corresponds to the fifth column, the second date will be one day delayed; if to the first column, the fifth will be skipped before completing a five-day cycle. The Chinese calendar breaks the synchronization of the table with the natural rhythm of the world and so deprives it of its power for divination.

Second, another basis of the synchronization of the divination table is also undermined, and the table loses its power to embody the power of life and death and so for divination. The former is realized by the way the table is drawn. Each cell should be drawn in the period it represents so as to embody the fortune of that period. Drawing a table thus takes 5 days. This synchronizes the table with the fortune of a five-day cycle, by which the table embodies the (mis-)fortune of the world. The latter is realized by the table's association with the power of death *via* the material on which it is drawn. An effective table should be drawn on a particular part of the skull of a bad-death person. The deceased is touched by the power of death, and the part of his/her skull that will be used should not touch the earth when s/he dies and falls to the ground. That part is touched by the power of death while not yet belonging to the afterworld. It mediates between the living world and the afterworld⁵⁰. However, many specialists today do not understand the origin of the power of the table. They draw the table on paper

at their convenience and deprive it of its power for divination.

Healing through sacrifice is hence no longer held to be so effective. To gain the best healing effect, villagers combine sacrifice with all other methods available (Chinese rituals, herbal medicine, hospital treatment, and Christian prayer). As villagers believe, the more honestly they try everything available, the more chance of recovery they gain. Sincere efforts and mysterious interactions among methods influence the result. For instance, a ritual may facilitate hospital treatment by driving off bad spirits thus alleviating the reluctance of the patient's body to accept injections. Sometimes doctors also suggest a patient conduct sacrifice to complement treatment. The outcome of healing is thus beyond people's control. It is no longer well-defined and anticipated, but opportunistic. The three cases examined below will demonstrate how, under a fading tradition of animal sacrifice, healing rituals work through the certainty of ritual legitimacy and the opportunity of healing. A possible consensus derives from a contingent combination of such certainty and opportunity. It then, presumably, fits with the determinacy and contingency of an "attractor". The three cases will so test the applicability of the concept of an "attractor" to analyzing the derivation of a consensus.

The following ethnographic accounts of the three cases are based on my interviews and open-ended conversations with villagers, and on my wife's filming of rituals and interviews. In most cases, I use villagers' own words in my descriptions, though I do not put these words into linguistic discourse. Without referring to details of discourse, I trace the possible paths of how ideas circulate among villagers until, in some cases, people reach a consensus. Such a focus on the circulation of ideas also means that I cannot put all villagers' words in the quotation marks, except for the widely circulated instances. I thus differentiate my interpretations and observations from villagers' by the phrases like "I came to understand that ..." or "I saw that ..." and so forth. At the end of the

ethnographic account of each case, I analyze how the concept of an “attractor” enables me to understand the derivation of a consensus, or why people could not reach a consensus.

The following ethnographic accounts are detail-specific, long and delicate. I aim to preserve the cases of the complexity of dynamic processes in the described cases, by demonstrating how seemingly trivial details at the moment when they occur might later become predominate factors that shape the development of ideas and the formation of a possible consensus. In this sense, my exploration of the derivation of a social consensus using the concept of an “attractor” is not teleological. I do not intend to make a consensus simply an end of a well-formed process of interactions. Rather, I aim to analyze how contextual daily life details elicit a possible consensus. The phenomenon of how a tiny change might result in a great transformation has been well known by scientists since the establishment of chaos theory in the 1960s. Although most ordinary people do not understand the details of chaos theory, they may hear of its various exaggerated descriptions. For instance, a butterfly flaps its wing in the forest of Brazil and causes a tiny change of local movement of the air. Although such a trivial change can be easily ignored, it might later result in a tornado in Texas (Lorenz 1963; Nelson 2011).

The influence of the apparently minor details I specify in the following ethnographic accounts is not as dramatic as the wing-flapping of the butterfly in Brazil, but these details play a critical role in knowledge circulation. They either make an idea attractive to more people or solicit more ideas. I therefore expect readers’ patience with details in my account, such as the details regarding divination, the temporal and spatial properties of people’s activities, the elaborate development of ideas in discussion, the way coincidence is interpreted, and so forth. The following ethnographic accounts might seem to be too long and sometimes distract readers, but I believe this is the way it should be if I want to preserve the meaning and dynamics the socio-cultural complexity in people’s daily life.

Case 2.1: Life Competition between a Father and a Daughter

The first case examines how villagers conceive the correlation of a daughter's fate to her father's alcohol addiction. The addiction ruins the father's health, breaks the family economy, and exerts a heavy psychological and moral burden on the family. In particular, the daughter's erratic alternation of sickness and recovery in 2010 is attributed to his addiction. I trace the development of villagers' tentative understandings of the daughter's fate from her first falling ill in February to her death in November. During the period, odd episodes take place now and then, and these are taken by some villagers to imply that the daughter would encounter the bad fate of early death. But no one seems to, or is willing to, take that message. Only the death forces people to understand.

La, is a morbidly thin and dark-skinned man, with his hair becoming white in his late fifties. He has a fluctuating life trajectory. His father was the first Sama villager literate in Jinghpo. With his father's efforts, he was admitted to Yunnan Nationalities Institute in the 1960s. College students were rare at that time when communist China started its modernization program. A college student from an ethnic minority would take an important position in a local autonomous government. As expected, he worked in the Dehong Dai and Jinghpo Autonomous Prefecture government after graduation and had a decent life in the city. He was the pride of his family and admired by his fellow villagers.

However, he and his family ruined his presumably flourishing future. He fell in love with a Dai girl, but his parents forced him to marry a Jinghpo girl in order to maintain alliance with their long-term wife-giver. He was reluctant and kept a messy relation with the Dai girl for years and then abandoned her. This love tragedy was then recorded by his competitors into his personal archives as a big black spot. It blocked all his chance for promotion and ruined his career in a communist government. He was gradually pushed out of important positions. He then went to Burma to pursue a

new career. Owing to his proficiency in speaking and writing Chinese and Jinghpo, he became a middle-ranked official in the Kachin State, a state within the Union of Burma. The state was established in the 1960s and needed specialists. But he became seriously addicted to alcohol – so serious that even smelling alcohol made him drunk. During most of the time he was drunk and talking nonsense. The Kachin State dismissed and sent him back to Sama. His life then slid into a misery little by little. He could not reconcile himself to life as a peasant, and tried to demonstrate his ability beyond a peasant's, like helping outsiders with things other villagers could not do.

During my fieldwork from 2003, I became a favorite source for his demonstration. He talked to me almost every day, repeating things that only he could do – all that belonged to his lost dream life. “When I worked in government, my applications were easily approved by provincial, even central government, officials. Most of others’ were rejected”, he was very proud of his past. He liked to discuss anthropology with me, “I was a college student. I know that anthropology studies ethnic minorities’ cultures. I am the only villager who understands it. I will help you”, he assured me. He even recommended that I should investigate why Jinghpo had a high rate of love tragedy under an arranged marriage system before. “I have written a film play book regarding that. In it, I was the major protagonist”, he emphasized. He believed that if his parents had not rejected his marriage with the Dai girl, he would never have had a black spot in his archives and so have ruined his life.

“Guānyīn sǐjiàn, shíguāng rú liúshuǐ, yíqù bù fùfǎn!” (Time flies like an arrow. Time flows like water, never returning back), he once sighed in Mandarin when other villagers were around. He cited Chinese idioms most villagers did not understand. When others spoke to me in either the local Chinese dialect or in Jinghpo, he spoke in Mandarin that few could speak. When facing religious specialists, he kept repeating that his father was the first man literate in Jinghpo. “The father of the

great specialist in our village learned to write Jinghpo from my father”, he repeated.

I felt great pity for him. In somber times he was extraordinarily articulate. He knew a lot regarding oral history and animal sacrifice. With him, I could discuss subtle questions that require rigorous thinking. When he was drunk, he lived in an imagined and virtual life. He was lonely! No one understood him and most did not sympathize with him. Villagers believed that his life was over, and all his fortune had been “looted and eaten by a dog”. I witnessed how his son, a village officer, scolded him in public as if he were a spoiled child. “I have tried all methods available to help him quit liquor, but nothing worked. I have been desperate. The only thing I could do is when he dies in his beloved drunken state, I can hold a proper funeral for him”, he said that to me in the presence of *La*. Hearing that, *La* kept silent. But one minute later, he *La* repeated his favorite thing to me “I know what you are doing here, I can help you. Others do not understand us. We both are graduate students. They are only peasants!” He deliberately enthralled himself in a drunken state, and so was entitled to care for things beyond a peasant’s life. Liquor was not the thing; what he wanted is the drunken state!

His tragedy became a great economic and psychological burden to his family. All had been fed up with horrible resentments. His only daughter, *Yam*, dropped out of school and went to work in Mangshi city at 16 and rarely came back home. No one knew what she did in the city. To villagers, her future was kind of certain: like other girls, she would probably live in the city if marrying a Chinese there, or come back to village if not. But during the Chinese Spring Festival in 2010 (February), she caught villagers’ attention. She and her father fell ill at home simultaneously. He lost the ability to talk, and alternatively she passed out or went mad. Mysteriously their sickness was connected. Repetitively, when she got a little better, he would become worse, and *vice versa*. As she resisted animal sacrifice, the family sold a buffalo and sent the two patients to the County hospital.

There, she was diagnosed as having terminal hepatocirrhosis owing to her long-term hepatitis. But the doctors emphasized all known treatments can only prevent the symptoms from getting worse. As doctors could not identify *La*'s diseases, the family sponsored a ritual to pray for longevity for him and made a sacrifice to the mountain spirit. The rituals seemed to work and facilitate treatment. *La* gradually recovered, and strove to quit liquor. Ten days after his recovery, the family had used up its money and *Yam* checked out of the hospital. She then kept taking Chinese herbal medicine during the following three months. In April, she recovered and returned to work in Mangshi immediately.

Villagers thought both *La* and his daughter had a strong fate, but *La* and his wife were not reassured by their daughter's recovery. "We want to figure out whether spirits were bothering our daughter", they resorted to a Chinese religious specialist. The specialist lit a wax candle and chanted over a bowl of rice taken from *La*'s house. During her three minutes of chanting, the candle fell down three times. As soon as she finished the chanting, she found many footprint-like signs on the rice. "These are dangerous signs. They are made by spirits that had bothered *Yam*! I conjured them up and negotiated with them", the specialist explained. In about ten minutes of trance, she identified seven spirits, like an irrigated Dai village protection spirit because *Yam* had once peed under a banyan tree, and a fire spirit that had made *Yam*'s face swell and caused difficulty breathing, and so on. What the specialist said matched *Yam*'s symptoms; she also disclosed that *Yam* had hysteritis that the family had tried to keep secret. "*Yam* is 24 in 2010 and is supposed to pass the death threshold", the specialist concluded. The threshold marks an individual's first great fortune or disaster: passing it one will get great fortune, otherwise one will die. An individual with good fortune will pass it easily, whereas an unfortunate one will be bothered by spirits. Now, spirits were bothering *Yam*.

The divination made the parents very anxious. They tried to sponsor rituals for her suggested by

the specialist, but she refused to come back. After many requests, she came back on August 20th (the tiger day in the year of the tiger according to the Chinese animal calendar). In less than one hour after arriving home, she went into the forest to look for mushrooms. That day, the parents' worry became a real nightmare. She fell ill after returning from the forest. Sometimes she even spoke ghostly language: "Let me leave! Let me leave. I have been in the other world ... I will leave you ..."

Villagers tried to figure out what had happened to her. "*Yam* should not have gone out that day. That was her birthday (she has the softest fortune on that day)!" On April 28th, the great specialist in Sama was invited to divine to figure out whether spirits were bothering her. But the divination displayed oddness that did not make sense. The spirit of *ma³¹ ro³³* (a spiritual existence converged from people's months of remarks and conversations over *Yam*'s diseases) kept interfering with the divination and requested that a chicken should be sacrificed to it tomorrow⁵¹. On the 29th following the sacrifice, the diviner got a weird result. No matter what he asked, the divination indicated that things had been going on smoothly and people did not need to help *Yam*. No spirit was bothering her and no healing methods would work either. "*Yam* had been dead though her body still lives, or a hidden spirit should be soothed first before I can identify the real reason", the specialist concluded. No one wanted to believe in the former, and all tried to work on the latter. It took the specialist almost two hours until he finally found out that the soul of *Yam*'s late youngest brother, who had been bitten to death by the witch spirit at the age of 3, wanted to take her, or requested its parents to help sever him from the witch spirit. That spirit had never let him alone since his death.

Once this soul was promised to be soothed, the divination indicated that the mountain spirit had kidnapped *Yam*'s soul when she had been in the forest. And people should also pray for longevity for her. But again, the specialist was surprised. The sacrifice to the mountain spirit, consisting of

bi-directional interactions between humans and spirits, is supposed to be conducted on an even-numbered date of the lunar month. But the divination indicated that it should be conducted on the 21st of the seventh lunar month (August 30th).

No matter how weird things were, a funeral for the *Yam*'s brother's soul and two other rituals were conducted. They went on well except for one weird episode in the funeral. When the specialist divined to identify what the soul wanted from its living relatives before being sent to the "old home", it rejected all people's suggestions. Following the three hours of guessing, a Christian suggested, in a joking tone, "It might want a live chicken!" "Impossible!" the specialist and other sacrifice makers rejected, "A live chicken is used only for recent elder deceased!" But to everyone's surprise, the soul accepted a live chicken. More weird, it (a male soul) asked for a hen instead of a rooster! After all these rituals, *Yam* recovered little by little, though sometimes she could not help going mad, like feeling a sudden impulse to break bottles in the middle of the road. Encouraged by the effect of sacrifice, her parents made one more sacrifice to the soul of her aborted baby. In two months, impulses that had caught her gradually went away. She started to behave like a healthy person, except for being weak. Little by little, life moved on. *Yam*'s parents held a long-delayed wedding for her brother in October, whose lover had been in the eighth month of pregnancy. The wedding cheered everyone up, and seven days later a boy baby was born.

However, disaster seized *Yam* all of a sudden when people almost forgot it. Around noon on November 13th (the 8th of the tenth lunar month), villagers heard a blast of firecrackers, which announced *Yam*'s death. She finally had not passed her death threshold! She died during "the time when a tiger eats meat" according to the divination table, a time period in which she had the softest fortune because she was born on a tiger day of the tiger year. During her funeral, a series of weird coincidences

continued to appear. *Yam*'s father's youngest brother fell down from upstairs and seriously wounded his head. "He had many quarrels with *Yam*'s family before", some villagers explained. Then, a man from *Yam*'s natal family's wife-giver in Sama got drunk. "I don't want to be here. My parents' house burned on its own forty years ago. On that day, *Yam*'s parents celebrated the completion of their current house!"⁵² he shouted. The burned house was the longest house in Sama (about 40 meters long). For a long time, villagers had come to believe, though no one dared not to spell out, that the two houses were mysteriously connected, with the long house representing the good fortune and the other bad. In addition, when the specialist divined to ask *Yam*'s soul to which ancestors it wanted to be sent, it preferred the ancestors to whom her late brother had been sent two months before.

The death stimulated people to guess the meaning of all weird episodes. In retrospect, many told *Yam*'s parents, "You should have made sacrifice for her as soon as possible when the Chinese specialist had figured out that *Yam* was bothered by many spirits. That would probably have saved her". When she had suddenly fallen ill in August, "her soul had already gone, as she had told us", the religious specialist claimed. He further suggested that since the Chinese Spring Festival (the beginning of the tiger year), she and her father had been caught by a dead loop of "life competition". A spirit has made a strong decision to take either her or her father. The only way to save them is to sacrifice a big buffalo. But every time there is always something unknown preventing people remembering this solution. Only after tragedy happens, will people remember it. "The dead loop was broken by *Yam*'s departed soul and her father's recovery in August! But it is weird that she has survived another three months without the soul in her body!"

This interpretation convinced villagers, who then proposed various explanations for *Yam*'s bad fate. Some attributed it to a girl in *La*'s great grandparents' generation, who had been eaten by a tiger

and brought an inherited bad fate to *La*'s family. It sometimes caused unmarried girls in this family to die badly. Other villagers, reminded by the drunkard in *Yam*'s funeral, suggested that maybe *La*'s current house site was bad. It faces the west, the direction of the sunset and of ghosts. It may deplete people's fortune. Worse, a bad death had taken place in it. About thirty years before, a Tai man had died in *La*'s house on his trip to Burma. *La* had held a funeral for him. As none of his relatives had come, *La* kept his tea pot. The soul now had come back to ask for the tea pot and bitten *Yam*.

The Jinghpo specialist who had made sacrifice for *Yam* in August offered a more convincing interpretation. "Only when I heard of her death, did I understand why I had difficulty in divination. No spirits had bitten her; her soul had gone with the mountain spirit, rather than being kidnapped by it". This explained why sacrifice to the mountain spirit should be conducted on an odd-numbered date of the lunar month. "The ritual (an one- directional activity) simply marked her soul's departure". In the funeral for her late brother, "it was her soul, not her brother's, who had asked for a hen". In addition, "During my chanting in her funeral, I could not help feeling ironic. It seemed that I were trying to tell the fact of death to a soul that had already realized its death long before!" Jinghpo believe that a newly deceased still considers itself alive, and a specialist should inform it of death again and again until it realizes its death. Then, the specialist conducts a series of rituals to mark the death and so separates the deceased from the living⁵³.

The specialist's words reminded my fieldwork assistant of his late brother *Sha*. *Sha* was once ill and divination had indicated that he had been bitten by his second brother who had died in a war. A funeral then had been conducted to send off the latter's soul. However, in divination for identifying to what ancestors the soul wanted to be sent, many times the specialist had gotten a message that two souls had already gone. All participants were puzzled: there was only one soul (*Sha*'s brother's) that

needed to be sent! Three days later, *Sha* had died abruptly. People had then realized that the divination had indicated that *Sha*'s soul had gone with his brother's, while he had survived for three days without a soul in the body. Now, *Yam* had survived three months without her soul in the body.

But at least, the specialist claimed, "*Yam*'s parents should have some consolation". Although their daughter died young, her soul, unlike others from the same death type, would probably not come back often, because they had done a lot for it since August. "All the five rituals were for her departed soul!" But the bad fate of *La*'s family did not go away with *Yam*'s death. *La* resumed indulging in liquor at the funeral, spoiling all his hard efforts at restraint in the last half year. *Yam*'s death broke the dead loop of "life competition" and saved *La*'s life, but brought him back to the misery of alcohol addiction: "My daughter has gone, but I have to live. So I just drink a small amount of liquor", he came to repeat to me.

§§§

This case illustrates how villagers went through a devious process to come up with a consensual understanding of *Yam*'s bad fate. Before her death, these understandings were obscure, tentative, and diverse. The death elicited the emergence a consensus. I will specify the derivation of the consensus by analyzing the interactions among initial conditions, structural force, and situational contingencies.

First of all, all understandings throughout the event, from *Yam*'s falling ill in February and dying in November 2010, were underpinned largely by two general principles: the Jinghpo belief in a soft fate on the birthday, and the Chinese belief about the death threshold. These principles serve as a structural force. They derive, respectively, from the Jinghpo notion of pre-given fate and the Chinese notion of age 24 as a death threshold. As I demonstrate in Chapter one, these two principles can be easily blended because of the shared notion of a pre-given fate by both Chinese and Jinghpo. However, this force was not strong enough to define villagers' understandings and so formulated a consensus.

They were challenged by herbal medicine, bio-medicine, and unknown factors that escaped people's control like erratic alternation of *Yam*'s illness and recovery. Such weak structuring force allowed other factors, like initial conditions and contingencies, to contribute to people's understandings.

Three initial conditions bring three knowledge systems into interplay. *La*'s alcohol addiction strongly indicated the bad inherited fate in his family. The divination by the Chinese specialist further related the fate to the bad death of a girl in family history. The addiction and divination brought forth the Jinghpo belief about the inherited bad family fate and of "life competition". *Yam*'s being 24 years old in 2010 cast shadow over the whole process. It brought forth the Chinese belief about death threshold, and provided a meaningful context for "life competition" and explained *Yam*'s death. *Yam* did not believe in animal sacrifice, and so preferred to receive hospital treatment and herbal medicine. These initial conditions bring the three knowledge systems into interaction.

A series of odd episodes constitutes situational contingencies. They finalize interactions among knowledge systems and direct people's understandings into particular forms. For instance, *Yam*'s going out to look for mushrooms on the tiger day of the tiger year brings together the Jinghpo notion of soft fate on the birthday and Chinese notion of death threshold. The erratic alternation of *Yam*'s illness and sickness complicates the interactions among the knowledge systems. Hospital treatments failed to heal *Yam*, while herbal medicine and animal sacrifice seemed to work effectively.

The interplay among a structural force, initial conditions, and contingencies does not finalize people's understandings regarding *Yam*'s bad fate and does not lead to a consensus. Villagers attributed her illness to the inherited bad fate in her family or a bad house base, and her recovery to herbal medicine, bio-medicine, or sacrifice. Each individual proposed his/her understanding according to his/her belief in one or other of the knowledge systems. All these understandings were labile and

competitive with each other. Interactions among them were hence *chaotic*. In addition, odd episodes in rituals strongly suggested *Yam*'s fate of bad death. But no one was willing to accept that message and all endeavored to neglect or marginalize it. Without such a message, all interpretations were not convincing enough to evolve into a consensus. There needed to be a critical point to encourage people to take the implication of the oddness and so weave diverse interpretations into a single argument.

Then her death, a critical point, came; it reduced chaos by endowing all odd episodes with meanings and helps formulate a powerful argument: *Yam had failed in "life competition" with her father and her soul had already gone long before her death!* Before her death, no one was allowed to bring forth the argument of "life competition" and her departed soul to explain the odd episodes. Her death broke the limit and encouraged the previously prohibited argument. The argument explained all odd episodes. These derived from the lapse between her soul's departure and her death. Her erratic alternation of recovery and sickness thus became understandable. I treat this argument as an "attractor".

An "attractor" derives from a combination of structural force, initial conditions and contingencies. A critical point consolidates all odd episodes into the structural force. To understand the above argument as an "attractor", I demonstrate its precondition of chaotic interactions among individuals. The argument also displays four characteristics of an "attractor" (see the the Introduction of the present dissertation). First, it is partially determined by the initial conditions and the structural force, and partially by contingencies. All odd episodes seem to accumulate a strong propensity. Second, it incorporates oddness and so is novel to the structural force: when a soul is gone, healing rituals will exhibit abnormality. Third, together with the structural force, it provides a guideline for understanding other similar cases, like the death of my assistant's brother. Eventually, it will be consolidated into the structural force. Fourth, it was contingent – it would never have existed if death,

its critical point, does not take place. *Yam*'s death in 2010 was only a possibility, but never pre-defined.

Case 2.2: Learning to be a Religious Specialist

The second case traces a few vignettes of a religious apprentice's many years of learning. He learns the specialty diligently and follows the traditional learning routes. Six years later, he becomes qualified to preside over simple rituals. But under the fading tradition of animal sacrifice, he cannot not learn the specialty in the same way that his ancestors did. He makes a lot of errors in his service, but people tolerate them easily. By accident, my fieldwork assistant learns the details of cutting a sacrificial animal in assisting my interviews, and discovers the apprentice's errors, makes them known, and stimulates a long discussion in the village. Ordinary sacrifice makers, advanced specialists, local officials, and Christians propose different arguments regarding the unqualified performance of an apprentice. I trace the process of how people argue with each other, and how one argument eventually stands out.

No is a good-looking man, and always has a charming smile on his face. In his early forties, he is known for his extra-ordinary articulateness and improvisation in negotiations. He has succeeded in proposing wives for over 30 boys throughout the Tongbiguan Village Tract. In the early 2000s, he started to learn the religious specialty. "I devoted myself to the learning. Often I dreamed myself practicing the chanting!" After six years of hard learning, he was considered as qualified and invited to serve in simple rituals. Compared with other apprentices who usually take at least ten years' learning before becoming qualified for independently presiding over a ritual, *No* learned fast and is proud of that. "I am the kind of person who is *yǒuzhǒng* (有种)", he told me in Chinese. "*Yǒuzhǒng*" means a male coming from a family with excellent vitality, has great spunk and verve.

Although any male in principle can learn the religious specialty, only those chosen by the patron spirit of religious specialty (*htau*³¹*chyi*³³) can eventually upgrade to be a great one. The spirit sits

behind a specialist during his service, shapening his mind and enabling extraordinary memory. He is then able to keep chanting or cutting sacrificed animals for days and nights without making errors. To be chosen, an apprentice should have strong volition, charming character, competence in his specialty, and more importantly, a good fate. He should be born in a good period according to the divination table and in a family with a tradition of religious specialty⁵⁴. *No* was lucky. According to the divination table, he was born in “the time of being enthroned”, a period associated with four circles on the 12th of the lunar month. The four (even) circles indicate that he is talented for communication (bi-directional activities). He has demonstrated that ability in marital negotiations, and is talented in communicating with spirits. He was born in a family with an excellent tradition. His parents have been included into the genealogy, becoming the fortune for offspring. His father was a religious apprentice before becoming an official, and the father’s sixth younger brother was a great chanter. In addition, living in Sama also facilitates his learning. He was proud of his village as one of the two cultural centers of the region, where animal sacrifice is well preserved.

No also attributed his talent to another spirit-like existence not shared by other apprentices. He has been a member of the Chinese Communist Party since the 1980s, and was given an award as a communist paragon in 1997. The award demonstrated his volition and talent. He put the certificate on the altar for household spirits (the right-hand back corner of a house). For him, becoming a communist paragon does not interfere with his religious service. “I worship the communist ancestors in the same way I worship my ancestors! With the same enthusiasm and piety!” Both require strong volition of worshiping ancestors (Marx for the former and family ancestors for the latter).⁵⁵

No followed the conventional route of becoming a specialist, from cooking sacrificial food (the *hpu³¹lum⁵⁵*), to cutting sacrificial animals (the *hking³¹jong³¹*), and to the chanting (the *dum³¹sa³³* and

eventually to the *jai³¹wa³¹*). A cook does not need help from the patron spirit. A cutter needs to remember complicated regulations for cutting and wrapping sacrificial food. Without the patron spirit, he will make errors. More importantly, only with aid from the spirit, can he upgrade to a great specialist and learn to chant. “A chanter should be a great cutter in the first place. All details of the cutting and wrapping should be chanted clearly to spirit” *No* emphasized. “I have grasped all details of the cutting, and is now learning the chanting”. Cutting is much easier than the chanting. It is fixed, easy to observe and repeat, whereas the chanting is improvisational. “I can grasp the cutting for a given spirit by participating in the same ritual three times, but the chanting requires at least ten times”.

From 2003, I had about thirty interviews with him. I once suggested to him that he record and study the chanting carefully. He did not think that was a good idea. “The chanting was given to humans by the omniscient spirit and therefore sacred!” “You should devote your heart to the chanting and conjure up all your aspiration. You should learn to cultivate a strong impetus to repeat and to improvise”. Without many instances of learning the same chanting in real sacrifice, such an impetus will never fall upon him. Ultimately, a chanter aims to identify his spiritual power with the knowledge regarding spirits. In *No*’s words, this aims to “identify your *woi³³nyi³¹* with the knowledge. So, what I learned will become my practice, and my service will embody the efficiency of the knowledge”⁵⁶.

He has a keen analytical mind and always tries to organize his knowledge into categories. In interviews, I have learned that I did not need to prepare any question list, but only a topic, he then kept talking about all relevant things or cases. Interviews looked more like his prompted speeches. When he finished what he thought he needed to tell me, I just chatted with him, though I had a lot of questions regarding what he had told me. I left my questions for the future, not trying to drag him off his train of thought. Often, after a few minutes of digression, he would come back to the topic on his

own and tell me more that I might never have asked. We enjoyed most of our excursive interviews, in which he put together details he had not paid enough attention to⁵⁷. Often at the end of each interview, he told me: “Come to talk with me whenever you are free. There is a lot of fun talking to you”.

For villagers, *No* was an excellent apprentice. From 2009 to 2011, he was invited about 17 times to serve as a cutter. Most sponsors were pleased with his service and he was proud of his performance. “I not only completed what I was supposed to do, but tried to learn the chanting”. In June 2010, my assistant’s eldest brother invited a specialist from Sumhkri to preside over a sacrifice to the thunder spirit. The specialist requested *No* to cut sacrificial animals for him. The family did not invite the great specialist in Sama, who always gave *No* detailed instruction. The specialist in Sama had presided over a funeral days before, and within a month he had better not do any ritual. My assistant observed every detail of *No*’s cutting, aiming to intensify what he had learned in aiding my interview with a great cutter days before. The ritual was intended to pray for blessing for my assistant’s brother’s daughter-in-law regarding her pregnancy. She had been properly betrothed, but had not yet gone through the wedding. Her fiancé was not appropriate for the wedding in 2010 because he had to pass the death threshold at the age of 24 (see Case 2.1). Therefore, the ritual should be properly conducted; otherwise, it would bring misfortune to both the pregnant girl and her fiancé.

According to the greatest cutter in Sama, the preparation of the sacrificial food for the thunder spirit is extremely complicated. It often takes an experienced cutter at least two hours to finish cutting, wrapping, and cooking a sacrificial pig. Specifically, five flesh packets and five innards packets should be prepared. Each packet contains different pieces of the sacrificed pig, and should be put on different places on the altar on behalf, respectively, of ritual sponsor, elders, and people who have carried the pig. The five packets of each category should be put in front of the cutter in a row and

prepared following a fixed order of priority, and the flesh packets should be prepared first (see tables 2.1 and 2.2 for details). These packets, containing pieces from all parts of a pig, represent the whole sacrificial pig. All pieces are cut and arranged into packets by following complex regulations. They represent humans' efforts of trying to please the spirit in exchange for its blessing.

packet	contents	on behalf of	on the altar platform
F1 st	The brain, liver, and spleen	elder participants	Right side
F2 nd	The intestines and shoulders	The host	Right side
F3 rd	The tongue, the lower lip and jaw, attachment of the liver	people who carry and lead the sacrificed pig	Left side
F4 th	Same with F1 st	rest participants	Left side
F5 th	Same with F3 rd	rest participants	Together with the packet I5 th , in the middle
The order in front of the cutter: F4 th , F1 st , F2 nd , F3 rd , F5 th (from left to right)			

Table 2.1 Five flesh packets ("F" stands for flesh packet)

packet	contents	on the altar platform
I1 st	blood, sticky rice, meat and skin on both the lower and upper parts of the cord and on the lower belly, heart, lung, meat and skin on the two shoulder, intestines and bowels	left side
I2 nd	Same with I1 st	Right side
I3 rd	In addition to a piece of skin and meat taken from the forehead, same with I1 st ,	Right side
I4 th	Same with I1 st	Left side
I5 th	Same with I1 st	Together with F5 th , in the middle
The order in front of the cutter: I1 st , I2 nd , I3 rd , I4 th , I5 th (from left to right)		

Table 2.2 Five Innards packets ("I" stands for innards)

To his surprise, my assistant found that *No* prepared the packets very differently. For instance, he cut pieces only from the half pig (lengthways). He prepared only three flesh packets and one innards packet, and forgot to include two pieces of skin and meat from the lower belly and one piece of forehead skin into the innards packet. He also wrongly included pieces of intestines, which are supposed to be included in the packet F2nd, into the innards packet. And he did not follow the order of

priority in preparing the packets, and put the three flesh packets arbitrarily on the altar platform.

My assistant was puzzled, and asked the greatest cutter, *Nhtum*, about these in assisting my interview days later. *Nhtum* said he had heard of the ritual and thought the host might invite *Seng*, the only great cutter in the village after *Nhtum*'s conversion to Christianity. "*No* really had made errors, and the thunder spirit might be annoyed. ... At least, the sacrifice will be wasted, if it does not bring trouble to the sponsor", he claimed. He continued to comment "You should be very careful in selecting a specialist. Apprentices today are not as careful as people in my generation, because they did not learn the specialty properly! ... Often I had to correct others' mistakes on behalf of sponsors, though I had converted". Unfortunately, "most people do not know knowledge about sacrifice to judge whether a specialist is qualified or not. They even do not understand how errors made by a specialist might cause danger to them". My assistant then felt annoyed at *No*. He remembered that last year *No* had also served as a cutter in his eldest brother's sacrifice and must have also made errors. "This is why the previous year my brother's family had so much misfortune!" he claimed.

Days later in an interview with the great cutter *Seng*, my assistant brought forth *No*'s errors again. *Seng* believed that *No* really had made errors such as forgetting to include a piece of the forehead skin into the innards packet. "But cutting only the half body is not wrong!" His master once had told him that some specialists in Kachang Township and Burma do that and spirits accept it. "The problem is whether *No* really followed regulations for that way of cutting or not". The only case in which Sama villagers cut the half animal is in a funeral for the deceased whose spouse is still alive. To confirm *Seng*'s comments, I interviewed *No*. He claimed that spirits accept both ways of cutting under different chanting. "I learned the cutting of the half body in other places. I wanted to try it in that ritual, so I can organize his knowledge neatly". Before he had done that, he had asked the chanter

which way he preferred, and the chanter replied it was up to him.

My assistant kept talking about his discontentment in the following two months. In August Sama was awarded RMB 1 million (USD 154,559) by the Yingjiang County government for reconstructing intra-village roads. Before the construction, the land and mountain spirits should be soothed, and cooperative team leaders invited two sets of specialists to conduct the ritual. All agreed that the great cutter *Seng* would serve in the first set, but my assistant (one of the leaders) disagreed with many others' recommendation of *No*'s service in the second set. As there was no other qualified cutter available, the great chanter decided to invite *No* and promised he would instruct *No* carefully. "It's a pity! You should learn to be a specialist. You have learned almost all details of the cutting in assisting Xiao Zhang's interviews (most villagers call me Xiao Zhang)", he consoled my assistant. My assistant's new-born was younger than one month, and he could not practice the cutting.

Such discussion was then known in the village, and villagers developed different views regarding *No*'s errors. Many believed that this was not simply *No*'s fault. He was after all honest, reliable, and has learned the specialty carefully. He just could not learn the specialty as completely as his masters had done given the decline of animal sacrifice. "He was even the best among many apprentices of the region", many claimed. He followed the conventional learning procedure starting from a cook, to a cutter, and finally to a chanter, whereas most others began with the chanting. Such unconventional learning was encouraged and supported by the cooperative team leaders, who tried to preserve animal sacrifice. Compared with the conventional means, this means takes less time. As a consequence, many apprentices could not grasp the specialty well and make plenty of errors. "Spirits seem to accept many rituals by these unqualified apprentices. So, why not simply let the errors go!"

However, advanced specialists and other elders insisted that an apprentice should learn the

specialty properly. He would otherwise waste the ritual, or worse, bring disasters to both the sponsor and himself. The converted former cutter, *Nhkum*, argued that his neighbor *San* had almost killed himself when falling down from his motor cycle just days after the latter's sacrifice to household spirits in 2008. "I was not surprised at the disaster, because I found that the invited cutter had not handled desjecta of the sacrificed pig properly". The cutter had cleaned bowels in the visible neighborhood of the altar. Worse, feces splattered on his sword used for cutting sacrificed food⁵⁸. All these must have annoyed the spirits, who then had left signs of their dissatisfaction on the sacrificed pig liver. In general, if they are pleased, the two tips of the liver should slightly roll upwards when being horizontally placed on a plane. Its surface should be smooth and shiny without gaps along its two side edges. But people found an apparent gap on both side edges of the liver, a sign of possible disaster. And the two tips drooped down, indicating that the sacrifice had been wasted.

Christians also participated in the discussion. The clergyman argued that "there is no hope for animal sacrifice today". God solicited the Chinese Communists to persecute religious specialists during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) and caused a considerable decline of animal sacrifice. As a result, few advanced specialists exist today, and many apprentices lose strong volition to follow all required taboos. "It is hard to find a specialist like my late grandfather. My grandfather rigorously followed all taboos. He never let children, females and drunkards touch his sword that is used only for cutting sacrificed animals!" By contrast, the clergyman found that most apprentices today do things at their convenience, rather than at spirits'. Rituals conducted by them have lost the power to convince spirits; worse, animal sacrifice sometimes brought people disasters, rather than blessing. "We should not rely for their welfare on those unqualified apprentices!" He concluded.

These arguments competed with each other during October and November, and villagers strove to

persuade each other. The competition encouraged advanced specialists to feel at ease to point out errors made by apprentices and resultant disasters. Without such discussion, pointing out these will offend, or at least, discourage an apprentice. Specialists attributed many cases of current plight to noticeable errors in previous rituals. Gradually, more villagers came to realize that they had been affected by apprentices' errors. Without such discussion, they would never have realized that. Little by little, many villagers came to believe that apprentice should learn the specialty properly. "This does not mean to blame apprentices", they emphasized. Although errors might have caused disaster, they are understandable given the decline of animal sacrifice. What people should do is not to blame, but to stimulate apprentices to improve their service so as to avoid future errors. "Otherwise, the future of animal sacrifice would be what Christians had expected: people simply abandon sacrifice or convert to Christianity". Christians' argument thus served as a stimulus for sacrifice makers to preserve their tradition.

Such an agreement gradually won out and exerted influence over villagers. On November 21st, 2010, *No*'s brother held a sacrifice to the thunder spirit and *No* served as a cutter. To improve his service, *No* asked his brother to invite *Nhtum*, the converted former specialist to instruct him carefully. I participated in the ritual and observed the instruction. I found out that *No*, despite his many years of practice, did not know a lot of details that I had learned from interviews. For instance, the thunder spirit eats ginger, so the sacrificed food should be put on the surface of the banana leaf that faces the earth. In addition, the thunder spirit lives in the heaven, so the handle part of the leaf should be folded up and bound by bamboo strips, while its tip part is left open towards the sky. That way, the spirit can take the food to its heavenly palace. "Before", he said, "I just had most of these done at random".

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This case illustrates how a consensus regarding an apprentice's errors emerges from several

competitive arguments. Although errors occur here and there in an apprentice's service, no one pays serious attention to them. *No*'s errors catch villagers' attention and cultivate a months-long discussion. It breaks people's indifference to errors, stimulates various arguments, and finally elicits a consensus. The consensus blends all competitive arguments, and highlights a quality of concern to most villagers therefore attracts them – every sacrifice maker will sponsor a ritual and will be affected by an apprentice's unqualified performance. I will now analyze the derivation of this consensus by analyzing the interactions among structural force, initial conditions, and situational contingencies.

Animal sacrifice serves as the structural force. It determines *No*'s career by local notions of pre-given fate and the patron spirit, and defines his path of becoming a specialist from a cook to a cutter and finally to a chanter. It shapes people's understanding of a qualified apprentice, and defines taboos and regulations for his service. But animal sacrifice has declined. It neither determines *No*'s path of becoming a specialist, nor formulates villagers' understanding of his errors. Other knowledge systems also influenced his learning. He considers Chinese Communist the Party as another source that enables his learning. Christianity also competes with animal sacrifice, alluring sacrifice makers to convert by highlighting resultant disasters caused by an apprentice's errors.

The decline of animal sacrifice constitutes an essential initial situation. It confines *No*'s learning and brings competitive knowledge systems into play. First, the decline poses a great obstacle for *No*'s learning the specialty as completely and properly as his masters had done. Most of his errors derived from this obstacle. The decline discourages advanced specialists from pointing out the possible resultant disasters of errors. They worry this would otherwise harm an apprentice's enthusiasm. The decline also stimulates ordinary sacrifice makers to propose competitive arguments regarding errors, and to overlook errors due to their inadequate understanding of the outcome of errors. *No*'s cognitive inclination of an

analytical mind constitutes another initial situation. It stimulates him to organize his knowledge neatly. Otherwise, he would never pay attention to the ways of cutting the half body, and never think of trying it in the ritual sponsored by my assistant's brother. Eventually, the whole discussion over his errors would not come about. Finally, my interviews further encouraged him to develop such inclination.

The particular episode in which his errors are caught and made public is contingent. Stimulated by his cognitive inclination, he wants to try a different way of cutting in that particular ritual. My assistant learns the details of the cutting days before, and wants to verify what he has learned by observing *No*'s cutting. Without his keen consideration of *No*'s errors, these errors might be forgotten in a short time, and the long discussion would never occur. In addition, the great specialist in Sama was not invited owing to a taboo. If he had been invited, he would not allow *No*'s experiment.

This episode can be considered as a critical point. It initiates the whole discussion and disputes regarding an apprentice's incomplete learning and unqualified service in relation to the ritual sponsor's welfare. It breaks some limits and creates a space in which practices that are previously prohibited, or at least frowned upon, are encouraged. Following the episode, advanced specialists feel at ease, or legitimate, to talk in public about an apprentice's unqualified performance and resultant harms. This thus transforms people's indifference to an apprentice's errors, and so forces them to understand these errors within the framework of the structural force. Three arguments are proposed and compete with each other. Each argument represents the influence from a particular knowledge system: the Chinese government, animal sacrifice, and Christianity. The minuscule details and process of the competition were *not traceable* because villagers simply do not agree with each other.

When more cases regarding the bad outcome of unqualified performance of an apprentice are brought forth, the three arguments seem to be blended together. Villagers come to agree that

apprentices should work hard to improve their specialty so as to avoid future errors and harms, though they should not simply be blamed for their errors. I treat this agreement as an “attractor”. To understand it as an “attractor”, I have demonstrated its precondition of chaotic interactions among diverse understandings. It also displays four characteristics of an “attractor”. First, it derives from interactions among initial conditions, structural force, and contingencies. Second, it reduces chaos in the process. Third, it exerts a novel force over villagers’ learning of sacrifice, like learning from a converted former specialist. Fourth, it is contingent – without my fieldwork and my assistant’s acquisition of details of cutting, the whole discussion regarding *No*’s errors would never happen.

Both cases 2.1 and 2.2 generate a consensus, and the dynamics of generation are similar though each highlights two different aspects. First, each case and its resultant consensus illustrate interactions among different knowledge systems. Three knowledge systems are involved in case 2.1: animal sacrifice, Chinese folk belief, and herbal or bio-medicine, whereas animal sacrifice, the Chinese government, and Christianity shape case 2.2. Second, the two cases display two slightly different relations between a critical point and a resultant “attractor”. Case 2.1 demonstrates how a critical point formulates an “attractor” *immediately* by endowing all contingencies with meanings and so incorporating them into the structural force. Case 2.2 demonstrates how an “attractor” is *gradually* formed following a critical point. The lapse between the emergence of a critical point and of an “attractor” highlights the function of the critical point. It allows factors other than the structural force to play more roles, and the resultant “attractor” displays novelty compared with the structural force.

Case 2.3: Health and Fortune of a Religious Specialist

The third case examines the competition between two arguments regarding health and fortune of the greatest religious specialist (*Hka*) in Sama. *Hka* had been well before his upgrade to a great

specialist in 2007, but had been sick for two years after that. Villagers associated his sickness with his profession as a specialist, but emphasized different aspects. Advanced specialists understand that a specialist has close and frequent contact with spirits, and so is endowed with both fortune and danger. To maintain the balance, he and ritual participants should observe rigorous taboos. Accordingly, advanced specialists attributed *Hka*'s sickness to the breach of taboos, by either himself or other ritual participants. However, ordinary villagers only saw that a specialist was required to use large quantities of liquor. Meanwhile, factory-produced liquor has currently overwhelmed the family-brewed rice wine and caused a lot of health issues. Accordingly, most villagers attributed *Hka*'s bad health to the overuse of factory-produced liquor in his religious service. The two arguments competed with each other without one triumphing over the other. Throughout my 18 months of fieldwork, no consensus was formed. I will analyze why a consensus was not formed, and specify the condition that should be met for its emergence. The case, therefore, highlights the necessary condition for a consensus.

Hka, now in his sixties, is one of the two greatest specialists in the Tongbiguan Village Tract. Villagers widely considered him as honest, reliable, but slightly timid. He was born in “the time when a religious specialist chants” (with two circles associated) on the 20th of the lunar month in the divination table, and in a family with an excellent tradition of religious specialty. At birth, his father's elder brother, a great chanter, had anticipated that he would become a great specialist someday. *Hka*'s grandfather was a hero-like man, known for having sponsored two feasts-of-merit – the greatest achievement a Jingpo could expect before the communist time (1953). Both *Hka*'s father and paternal uncle were great specialists and his third elder brother too. From childhood, he had developed interest in animal sacrifice and many had believed he was about to be a great specialist.

He met people's expectations. During my first fieldwork in 2003, he was an apprentice chanter,

with about ten years of service as a cutter. In 2007, he presided over a sacrifice to the thunder spirit with a buffalo and was upgraded to a great specialist. The key to the upgrade is to articulate dozens of staircase names from the land to the thunder spirit's palace. That way, he could ask for the specialty and blessing from the spirit. The blessing will protect him in communicating with bad spirits, and the specialty will guarantee his fortune to serve as a great specialist. To articulate these names, an apprentice should be aided by the patron spirit, whose will is un-predictable. "I have memorized these names clearly in the early 2000s. But each time when I tried to articulate them in sacrifice, I choked because the patron spirit did not help".... "I kept working hard, and finally I won its support. I succeeded in articulate these names in 2007". "In that sacrifice I felt an increasing fear in my heart ... It seemed that something was pushing me from the back. I believe my patron spirit was sitting behind me ... It is this spirit, rather than myself, that actually chanted".

"Upgrading to a great specialist is both fortunate and dangerous", *Hka* explained. "Successful upgrade will bring a great fortune to me. But errors in articulating these names will solicit disaster". He told me a few cases of such disaster. For instance, an apprentice *Hpogyo* in Shabye village (about one and half hour's walk away) had once pretended that he had articulated the staircases, but in fact omitted those that he was not able to speak out. A few days later, he had suddenly fallen ill and divination had indicated that his soul had been hung in the sky, on the way to the palace of the thunder spirit. People had conducted a ritual trying to call back his soul. But his soul could not descend as the stairs he had omitted could not be re-connected. He had then died within a few days.

"I did not make any mistake in the upgrading ritual. But the misfortune kept falling upon me thereafter". For no reason, he almost cut off his left thumb and cut open his right knee during his work. When the wounds healed, he had suffered from stomachache for two years. Divination could not

identify any spirit that might be bothering him, and all healing methods, including Jinghpo and Chinese sacrifice, herbal medicine, and hospital treatment failed to work either. Worse, the misfortune spread to his family members. In 2008, his only son broke his waist bone. Although a Chinese herbal doctor healed him, the son, still in his early forties, lost the ability to do heavy work. In 2009, his eight-years-old grandson frequently fell ill, and his wife, in her late fifties, always felt cold and weak without known reasons. Divination could not identify any spirit that might be bothering them. “Their cords of life had become too soft. I divined for them and figured out that ask we should make a bridge on behalf of my son⁵⁹, and a prayer under a banyan tree on behalf of my wife. That will strengthen their soft fate!” “We should also identify a new ‘father’ for my grandson”. The time of identification is considered the boy’s second birth time and so associated with a new fate. To verify the result, *Hka* asked another great diviner to re-divine and got the same result. Three rituals were then conducted, which seemed to work and the three patients gradually recovered in 2010.

Hka and his family members had tried to figure out the reason for their bad fortune. But respectively, they gave me two interpretations that are not compatible with each other. And I later found out that these interpretations represent two general attitudes among villagers towards specialists. “I am not sure why I have been so misfortunate in the past two years”, *Hka* was frank. “When I was chosen by the patron spirit, my life and fate were no longer in my hand. I should do things at spirits’ convenience, rather than at my own”... “The more I conducted the rituals, the more I realized its risk.... I have close and frequent contact with spirits...” His good life fortune and excellent family tradition endowed him with a chance to win support from the patron spirit. Such endowment further enhanced his spiritual and physical power in communication with spirits. He is thus the apotheosis of a Jinghpo man, as the source of respect and fame and as the emblem of intelligence and honesty. This

is the bright side of his profession. However, there is the dark side of the profession – “I am deeply exposed to evils of the spirit world ... I might be blessed or cursed by spirits, depending on how spirits are served”. Worse, his family members might also suffer from it⁶⁰. In most cases, such suffering is not caused by any specific spirit, and it affects people’s fortune in a mysterious way. The only way out is to accumulate fortune and overcome it. This is what *Hka* and his family members had done in the last three years. “I believe we have almost ended the misfortune in late 2010”.

“I should maintain a balance between the fortune and disaster through obeying taboos and conducting rituals properly”. A ritual might harm or empower a specialist, depending on how rigorously he and other ritual participants observe taboos. The taboos are intended to maintain the separation between humans and spirits, to ensure that the patron spirit would protect a specialist, and to avoid him losing the fortune too much. They cover all aspects of a specialist’s life from daily food (such as that he should not eat dirty food like animal bowels) to the way he conducts a ritual (such as that he should not preside over a funeral more than twice in one year)⁶¹. They are complicated and meticulous, and will take a specialist a few years to make them automatic in his daily life and service. In this process, a specialist will learn to maintain a balance between accumulating the fortune in serving others and depleting it in close contact with spirits. However, as a consequence of the decline of animal sacrifice, most people do not have enough knowledge about taboos that vary with rituals, whereas a specialist cannot guarantee all participants will obey taboos all the time. It is rather common that, though a specialist obeys taboos rigorously, others breach them, which sometimes ruins the sacrifice. “Their errors might also bring misfortune to me too!” ... “It is really tricky. I try my best to pray for blessing or drive disaster off for people. Sometimes I do this at the expense of my and my family members’ fortune!” For instance, he presided over a funeral in 2008 for someone dying of

violence. Such a funeral should be conducted outside the village. Participants are not allowed to eat any meat before the cutter gets all necessary parts of sacrificial animals and offers them to the soul. However, the funeral site was far from any water source, and the youth started to eat meat in washing the sacrificial pig at a distant source. The soul was annoyed and left the message in *Hka*'s divination, indicating that it would come back to the living world frequently to bite people. Worse, *Hka* and his assistants would probably encounter misfortune. "This kind of misconduct might contribute to my misfortune in the last three years. But I cannot identify which misconduct caused which misfortune".

I talked about the correlation between a specialist's fortune and his profession with other great specialists. They offered similar interpretations to *Hka*'s with different emphasis. *Hpaga*, the son of a late great specialist and himself a principal dance leader in the Jinghpo feast-of-merit, told me that "*Hka* actually breached a taboo and so incurred misfortune!" *Hpaga* was one of *Hka*'s elder brothers from the same grandfather. He had learned almost all details of animal sacrifice, though he did not practice it. "I spent three days and nights to teach *Hka* before his upgrading ritual. I wanted to make sure that he would conduct the ritual properly". After *Hka* succeeded in the upgrade, *Hpaga* warned him "You should not preside over any funeral within a year. You need that time to consolidate your fortune received from the thunder spirit! And at the end of the year, he should sacrifice a big pig to the thunder spirit! Then, you will be safe in your service. You win protection from the thunder spirit!" *Hka* listened to *Hpaga*. But in the seventh month following the upgrade, one of his sons-in-law's mother died and he was invited to preside over the funeral. He declined. But his daughter had difficulty in inviting a specialist and came to beg him many times. He finally went. "*Hka* should not go. As a real Jinghpo specialist, he should not listen to a woman! ... That funeral initiated *Hka*'s misfortune" because *Hka*'s fortune and blessing received from the thunder spirit had not been

consolidated, and “he must have been harmed by the afterworld evils in that funeral!”

In addition, *Hka* also made other mistakes. *Hpaga* reminded me of a ritual in which *Hka* improperly mixed Jinghpo and Chinese sacrifice. In April 2010, *Hka* found a hole on his mother’s tomb. As a tomb has gained increasing importance in villagers’ minds regarding the descendants’ fortune, the hole horrified *Hka* and his brothers. “This must have harmed our ancestors and depleted our fortune! And I guess this would be the reason for my misfortune in the past three years!” *Hka* told me. He should fill up the hole and resume the lost fortune immediately. But Jinghpo do not have any ritual to deal with such a situation. As most notions and practices regarding a tomb are learned from Chinese, *Hka* turned to a Chinese specialist, who divined and recommended him to conduct a sacrifice to the land spirit in the Chinese style. Like a Jinghpo sacrifice, the ritual is intended to resume harmony between the deceased and the land spirit. But a Chinese ritual further aims to soothe twenty-odd other spirits associated with the land spirit so as to accumulate fortune for the living. The Chinese specialist was busy with others’ rituals and asked *Hka* to conduct the ritual by himself.

But Jinghpo do not worship these spirits and so do not have corresponding Jinghpo names. To conjure up the right spirits, *Hka* should chant these names in Chinese, but he does not speak Chinese. “Xiao Zhang, you jot down these names and translate them to me when I chant!” he told me when I accompanied him in the divination. During the ritual, I transliterated each name into Jinghpo, and he repeated it with his Jinghpo accent. For each spirit, he also chanted what is standard for a Jinghpo spirit. “The ritual went well!” *Hka* was pleased. But *Hpaga*, who speaks Chinese well, was not. He noticed a couple of pronunciation errors in *Hka*’s chanting of these names, in particular for sounds absent in Jinghpo. “Mixing Jinghpo and Chinese styles of sacrifice is acceptable. But *Hka* should pronounce the Chinese names correctly; otherwise, the desired spirits will not be conjured up while

evil spirits might be called on”. “Errors like this”, *Hpaga* concluded, “caused *Hka*’s misfortune!”

Hka and *Hpaga*’s idea of the correlation between a specialist’s fortune and his profession represents many other great specialists’ understandings. As animal sacrifice has declined and ordinary people do not take taboos seriously, a specialist is easily harmed by others’ breach of taboos.

Accordingly, specialists who do not want to take responsibility for others’ errors either abandon the profession or convert to Christianity. *Nhkum*, a former great cutter, told me “The profession has become dangerous. This is why I converted to Christianity in 2004”. In interviews, he analogized the current fate of a specialist to the relation between a woman and ancestral souls. Jinghpo believe that a woman gives birth by receiving beatifications from ancestors in her husband’s family genealogy. Her life-giving is endowed by her being touched by the power of death. Paradoxically, such close contact with the power of death also endows her with a bad fate; as villagers say, “nine women out of ten are preordained with a bad fate”. Accordingly, she has potential disasters not shared by males. For instance, during her pregnancy and childbearing, she would probably be bothered, or even killed, by souls who died in childbearing. In addition, she lives in her husband house and so is influenced by household spirits in both her natal and her husband’s families, and has double chance to be afflicted. Currently, as taboos regarding spirits have been neglected, she is frequently harmed by the bad fate. Unfortunately, “this is also true for a religious specialist!” *Nhtum* concluded.

To support his conversion, he reminded me of a well-known story of a late great specialist *Gam* in a nearby village. In the 1990s, months after *Gam* had conducted a big ritual, his wife had gone mad and wandered in the forest for days. Divination indicated that her diseases might be attributed to errors by other participants in the big ritual months before. The spirit had been annoyed and tried to bring disaster to him. But he had a strong fate that resisted the disaster, which was then transferred to

his wife. Although seemingly incredible, this argument was accepted by many specialists. Then *Gam*'s eldest son, an apprentice chanter at that time, had quitted his learning. And *Gam*'s youngest brother, already an experienced apprentice, had converted and become the first Christian in the village.

The idea that attributes *Hka*'s bad health and misfortune to his close contact with spirits and the breach of taboos is shared only by great specialists. Other villagers, including his family members, cared about *Hka*'s health but attributed his illness to his overuse of liquor. He is the only great chanter and is responsible for training apprentices in the village. Without good health, he could not serve villagers. In fieldwork, I noticed that villagers had a long discussion regarding his health and fortune. Most associated his health with the use of liquor. Liquor and its use are an essential component of a proper ritual. On the one hand, it is the only real drink for most spirits. To respect spirits, a specialist should drink liquor throughout a ritual. He uses liquor to ask for protection from his patron spirit, to clean his mouth before the chanting, to conjure up the spirit to temporarily reside on the altar for receiving sacrifice, to mark the completion of certain phases of a ritual, and finally to celebrate the completion of the ritual. To respect the specialist, the sponsor also serves him with liquor many times. A specialist is likely to overuse liquor. And in fact, many have serious alcoholism. On the other hand, a specialist is prone to using liquor. I understand that through my experience. I drink neither beer nor liquor. *Hka* once told me "Xiao Zhang, you have learned everything about our tradition, but you would never become a Jinghpo specialist! You do not drink liquor! ...Spirits would laugh at you if you drink non-alcoholic beverage in presiding over a ritual". "We specialist and spirits and specialists need something *hot* to mark our agreement!" Without liquor, a ritual would become insipid, lacking sparks that kindle a specialist's enthusiasm for his profession. In an ambience full of liquor, "I feel I am closely attached to spirits". Using liquor is thus not only required and necessary for a ritual, but also a

source of a specialist's pleasure. No specialist wanted to associate it with their bad health.

Hka's family members did not understand the necessity liquor use, they rather saw how liquor had eroded *Hka's* health. "Once *Hka* stopped using liquor for a few days, his symptoms would be considerably alleviated!" ... "Xiao Zhang, as you have noticed, many specialists have alcoholism. In Sama, 4 out of 7 specialists had been more or less addicted!" They had striven to help him reduce liquor use. His wife, a great wine maker, had stopped making wine for years. And I had witnessed many instances of their quarrel regarding that. I once heard *Hka* refuted "Liquor is important for me to get support from spirits. It has nothing to do with my illness!" His son, the head of the cooperative team, has persuaded the team and most villagers to pass a ban on selling liquor in the convenience stores in Sama since 2005. Most females and Christians welcome the ban because alcohol addiction has become a serious problem since the 1990s. Most households had stopped making wine when factory-produced liquor became available at a low price. Thereafter, more drunkards appeared. Many times, villagers had told me: "The factory-produced wine is an evil. It makes you drunk easily! It makes you become a jerk!" The problem is that, though people know its harm, they have to use it in all rituals and other situations of social gathering. "For us Jinghpo, no liquor means no gathering". To save drunkards, household wives and Christians have, though in vain, striven to at least control, if not prohibit, the use of wine. The ban achieves that. It reduces the number of instances of drunkards' going mad by cutting the source of liquor – any one who wants liquor should go to Tongbiguan Village Tract market, that is twenty kilometers away, a long distance for villagers without cars.

In conversation, I noticed that most villagers accepted the argument that the use of liquor has ruined *Hka's* health. They saw only two things about a specialist: he has the fame and specialty, and he should use a lot of liquor in his service. Most had only a vague idea of what is supposed to be

appropriate in a ritual, and so did not know when and why they have breached a taboo or not. Without a keen concern with taboos, they did not understand the correlation between a specialist's fortune and his profession. In interviews with villagers, I talked about the correlation held by great specialists. Most found it to be interesting, but far from critical for understanding a specialist's health and fortune.

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This case illustrates how a consensus fails to emerge from competition between two arguments. The first argument is held by religious specialists. It relates a specialist's and his family members' health and fortune to his close and frequent contact with spirits. It claims that if taboos, which are intended to protect a specialist, are breached, spirits will blame him. The second argument attributes a specialist's bad health to his overuse of liquor. Villagers have witnessed how much liquor a specialist takes in rituals, and how factory-produced liquor has ruined villagers' health. The argument has persuaded most villagers and stimulated the cooperative team leaders to pass a ban on selling liquor.

During my fieldwork, the competition between the two arguments continued without generating a consensus. They share one basic idea that *Hka*'s health status is closely associated with his profession. Apart from that, they compete with each other, without one triumphing over the other. The first argument is supported by great specialists who have great influence in the village. They resist the second argument, believing that the use of liquor is not only required and necessary for a proper ritual, but the source of a specialist's pleasure in his service. Although liquor use might sometimes hurt their health, it has nothing to do with their misfortune, especially with that of their family members. By contrast, other villagers lack basic knowledge of animal sacrifice and do not understand the argument proposed by specialists. They attribute *Hka*'s bad health to his liquor use. Their argument is supported by administrative officers who have politico-economic power and by the majority of villagers.

The competition illustrates the interactions among initial conditions, structural force and contingencies. To understand how a consensus fails to emerge in the present case, I follow the same analytical procedure adopted in cases 2.1 and 2.2 to identify the roles of these three factors. First of all, animal sacrifice serves as the structural force. It defines a specialist's relation to spirits, his fortune and danger in the service. It sets up taboos for him and other ritual participants for maintaining a balance between a specialist's fortune and danger. It also makes the use of liquor not only a necessity for a proper ritual but also a pleasure for a specialist. In addition, it underpins the two arguments that highlight the double sides of a specialist's profession: he prays for blessing on behalf of others and accumulates his own fortune in the service, meanwhile his close contact with spirits and overuse of liquor expose him to illness and misfortune. He probably conducts his service at the expense of his health and fortune. To protect him, he should have strong fortune, and he and others should obey taboos. That way, as great specialists recalled, in the old days the two sides could maintain a balance and the two arguments, respectively derived from these two sides, would be negotiable.

However, two critical initial conditions break such balance and thus the possibility of negotiation between the two arguments. First, animal sacrifice has declined, and the influence of taboos is weakened. Ordinary villagers have lost basic knowledge of, and keen concern with, taboos. They do not know when and how they have breached a taboo or not, and this makes a specialist's life risky. An advanced specialist understands the delicacy and risk of the profession, whereas ordinary sacrifice makers' ignorance of the taboos puts a specialist in danger. Second, the triumph of factory-produced liquor over family-made wine has definitely ruined a specialist's health. The two arguments, therefore, are respectively well-supported in villagers' daily life and belief systems.

These two initial conditions also allow other knowledge systems to interact with the structural

force. First, the decline of animal sacrifice stimulates some specialists to convert to Christianity. They do not want to take responsibility for others' errors in rituals. As I demonstrate in chapter one, Christians abandon the Jinghpo traditional notion of pre-given fate. Christians are in charge of their own fate. This helps the former specialists, like *Nhkum*, escape the possible bad fate acquired in religious service. Second, compared with family-made wine, factory-produced liquor is inexpensive and easily accessible. Following the latter's prevalence, alcohol addiction has ruined many villagers' health. Christians and village administrative officials then work together to control the use of liquor.

Situational contingencies support both arguments. *Hka* breached the taboo within a year following his upgrading ritual. As all other specialists in nearby villages were inaccessible, he had presided over a funeral though he understood that he should not. Then, in 2010 my assistance in his chanting of Chinese names in front of his mother's tomb is both acceptable and inappropriate, because *Hka* cannot pronounce some Chinese names correctly. These two contingencies enhanced the first argument. Finally, his son became an administrative official when his health went bad. Such temporal coincidence precipitates the ban on selling liquor in the village and supports the second argument.

However, interactions among initial conditions, structural force, and situational contingencies do not generate a critical point for bridging the separation between the two arguments, or enhance either of them to triumph over the other. Both arguments are meaningful and convincing only to their respective holders. Moreover, each focuses only on one aspect of the profession, and therefore lacks a critical point for creating a virtual space in which the two arguments can communicate.

Both arguments are only *tentative and hypothetical*. The first explains why a specialist might incur bad health or misfortune, but fails to establish a one-to-one correspondence between the breach of a taboo and a particular kind of misfortune. The second highlights the harm of a specialist's overuse

of liquor, but fails to explain why his family members also incur the misfortune. For a specialist, the argument regarding alcohol will harm his profession, and alcohol abstinence will drain his enthusiasm up. For ordinary villagers, the specialist's argument is abstruse. The two arguments thus contrast with each other. There does not exist shared knowledge on which the specialists' argument may possess a kind of quality that could be generalized to be a concern of non-specialists.

The lack of sharedness precludes a critical point that might connect the two arguments. And no critical point, no consensus. The present case, then, highlights the pre-condition of a critical point: a quality that can be widely shared. Such quality enables a critical point to generate a virtual space in which arguments can be blended. For instance, in the case 2.1, *Yam*'s death endows the shared notion of bad fate with power to consolidate competing arguments. In the case 2.2, the episode in which *No*'s errors were made public breaks specialists' reluctance to talk about, and so enhance, the shared notion of bad outcome of an apprentice's errors. With these critical points, a consensus is elicited.

Conclusion

The three cases examined in the present chapter aim to demonstrate how a consensus derives from micro-level chaotic interactions among many individuals, when the declined tradition of animal sacrifice serves as a *weak* structural force. This structural force is neither strong enough to define details of interactions among individuals, nor stable enough to formulate the development of ideas. It allows initial conditions, situational contingencies, and other knowledge systems to contribute to the formation of a possible consensus. Interactions among these factors, among individuals, and among diverse individual ideas are chaotic. A consensus derives from apparently minor changes of the micro-level interactions. Such derivation is complex and dynamic, and so preconditions the applicability of the concept of an "attractor" for understanding the emergence of a consensus.

To apply the concept of an “attractor”, I define the respective contributions of structural force, initial conditions, situational contingencies, and of interactions among them. An “attractor” derives from a particular combination of these factors. To specify such a combination, I focus on the critical point. A critical point breaks the limits and creates a virtual space in which behaviors or ideas that are previously impossible, or at least prohibited, are encouraged. It creates a novel and contingent combination of structural force, initial conditions and situational contingencies⁶².

To understand how a consensus arises as an “attractor”, I define an “attractor” in knowledge circulation as *a convincing argument that blends the structural force with random factors and so exerts influence over future events*. It is implicit at the beginning and specified by the contingencies in the process. Once it appears, it gradually eliminates chaos by consolidating the chaotic situations into a regularity well-defined by a structural force. In addition, as animal sacrifice has declined and several knowledge systems are involved, an “attractor” usually blends influence from these several systems.

Two consensuses are formed in cases 2.1 and 2.2, and I demonstrate how they arise as “attractors”. The “attractor” in case 2.1 combines arguments regarding the bad fate of *Yam*. Each argument represents influence respectively from sacrifice, bio-medicine, and Chinese folk beliefs. Similarly, the “attractor” in case 2.2 combines three arguments regarding an apprentice’s errors. Each argument represents the influence respectively from sacrifice, Christianity, and the Chinese government. These two “attractors” are not simply a common ground among knowledge systems, but a contingent combination of such common ground and situational contingencies.

A critical point opens space for the interactions of such common ground and situational contingencies. It solicits an “attractor”. The lapse between the emergence of a critical point and that of an “attractor” varies with cases. And it highlights the function of a critical point. Specifically, case 2.1

analyzes how a critical point immediately formulates an “attractor”, and case 2.2 demonstrates how an “attractor” is formed gradually following a critical point.

Neither a critical point nor an “attractor” emerges from case 2.3. This case highlights, as a proof by contraries, the necessary condition for the formation of a critical point and an “attractor” – a proper state of sharedness by which an argument may possess the quality that could be generalized to become a concern for many individuals. Without such a quality, structural force, initial conditions, and contingencies cannot be put into a particular configuration, and the common ground among several knowledge systems cannot become persuasive and so evolve into an “attractor”.

The two “attractors” display two features. First, they are stable; once they are formed, they will maintain and exert influence over future events. Second, they are compatible with, and so could be consolidated into structural force. In fact, they modify structural force within a certain context. These two features originate from the property of their critical points. The two critical points in the cases 2.1 and 2.2 share one essential feature: they are *local*. They break limits of only a small area of a specific life domain, or only a certain period of the process. Accordingly, they are still under the surveillance of a *global* structural force. Therefore, the “attractors” derived are stable and compatible with the structural force. In other words, these “attractors” are “regular attractors”. However, if a critical point influences the overall process or a complete domain, that is, it is global, either because there exist only local structural forces (chapter 3) or there does not exist any structural forces in the process (chapter 4), an “attractor” derived from such a critical point will be unstable and novel enough that it will generate, in the long run, a new kind of knowledge system. That is, it is a “strange attractor”.

Chapter Three

A World in Competition: A “Strange Attractor” and Consensus

Along with the decline of animal sacrifice, influences from the Chinese government, southwest Chinese folk beliefs, and Christianity have intensified as elements of villagers' lives. Since the 2000s development projects sponsored by the Chinese government have transformed villagers' economic life, thus villagers' relations with the Hà Chinese, other ethnic minorities of the region, and even with distant places where villagers had never contacted in history. Aspects of Chinese folk beliefs have gradually become part and parcel in villagers' daily behavior and thinking. Moreover Christians strive to expand their community and aim to provide a belief system alternative to, and ultimately replacing, animal sacrifice. These three knowledge systems (Chinese government, Christianity, and Chinese folk beliefs) compete with animal sacrifice to dominate villagers' daily life. Accordingly, villagers negotiate among these four knowledge systems to figure out the best combination that might bring them a good result in daily life. Or in bad situations, villagers are simply thrown into a spontaneous competition among these systems and thus are obliged to respond to such competition. The three cases in the present chapter will demonstrate how villagers' strategies of searching for a best result or their response are derived from a particular combination among several knowledge systems.

Some strategies or other can be considered as a consensus in-the-making. I aim to demonstrate the derivation of a consensus from the competition of several knowledge systems. Seen from this perspective, the three cases in the present chapter will demonstrate a different aspect of the dynamics of the derivation of a consensus from that discussed in Chapter Two. In the latter, animal sacrifice serves as the global structural force while all other forces complement, rather than independently compete with, it. A consensus derives from a particular competition among ideas underpinned by

animal sacrifice, and from a specific combination of the structural force, initial conditions and situational contingencies, with the structural force consolidating the latter two. Such a consensus thus results from a particular manifestation, with slight modification, of the structural force in a specific context. By contrast, at least two structural forces independently compete to serve as the global structural force for the three cases in the present chapter. These forces are *local*; each dominates only aspects, or phases, of the process. I intend to explore how several local structural forces are brought together to precondition a consensus. Such a result is simultaneously well-defined (by the local structural forces) and contingent (owing to contingencies that sometimes cannot be consolidated by the structural forces). Such duality internal to the process of achieving a consensus preconditions the application of the notion of an “attractor” for analyzing its derivation.

As I demonstrate in Chapter Two, in an event where it is dominated by a global structural force, that is, the force that outlines the derivation of an “attractor”, initial conditions and situational contingencies will finalize the details of the “attractor”. Without a global structural force, the outline of the derivation of an “attractor” might be pre-defined or contingent, depending on how the competing structural forces are brought together. If factors that bring systems into competition are pre-given, influence from different systems will be well-defined, and interactions among them will be formulaic. A “regular attractor” might emerge (case 3.1), when situational contingencies are consolidated into either of the structural forces or a combination of them. By contrast if such factors are contingent, influence from different systems will be un-predictable, interactions among them will be contingent, and a combination of them will be randomly formed. Contingencies will escape the control of the local structural forces or of their combination. An “attractor”, if any, will be a strange one (case 3.2). More generally, several knowledge systems are brought into tentative interactions by

several factors (both pre-given and contingent). Each interaction might generate an “attractor”, either a strange or regular one (case 3.3). In the present chapter, I will indicate how, in the long run, these “attractors” interact with other, either leading to new “attractors” or disappear on their own. The following chapter four will focus on interactions among several “attractors” and their development.

Accordingly, the major aim of the present chapter is to define the dynamics of the derivation of a “strange attractor”, and to identify how their dynamics are different from that of a “regular attractor”. The cases in Chapter Two are relatively simple as the global structural force outlines the process, whereas the cases in the present chapter are subject to contingent combinations of several knowledge systems. These systems influence only certain aspects or phases of an event, and so serve as local structural forces. But within these certain aspects or phases, these local structural forces function as global forces exerting immediate effect (being global to these aspects or phases). In Chapter Two, I demonstrate the dynamics of the derivation of a “regular attractor” under the influence of a global structural force. Accordingly, in the present chapter I will then treat these dynamics of the derivation of a “regular attractor” as a base line against which I analyze the dynamics of a “strange attractor”, because all local structural forces will function as a global force in the aspects or phases where they have immediate effects. Like a “regular attractor”, a “strange attractor” derives from a particular combination of the structural forces, initial conditions and situational contingencies. But unlike a “regular attractor”, it escapes the control of any given structural forces.

Case 3.1: The Household Economy of a Jinghpo Family

The three ethnographic accounts of the three cases in the present chapter follows the same standards described in chapter two. The first case examines how one of the two inherited talents (agriculture and musical performance) of my landlord stood out when the force of modernization

started to dominate villagers' economic life. The two talents are defined by the Jinghpo notion of fate. The notion endows all people with the same chance and resources for development, and my landlord maintained a balance between his two talents for making a living by sometimes acting as a musician and sometimes farming. Since the 2000s development projects sponsored by the Chinese government have brought villagers into closer contact with the modern market. Businessmen swarmed into the Jinghpo land to exploit mountain resources and mobilized villagers to cultivate cash crops and commercial timber. Economic development stimulated my landlord to invest with businessmen to cultivate a herbal medicine that currently has an increasing market. However, he aborted the cooperation owing to an inadequate understanding of the modern market (see below). Meanwhile economic development stimulated villagers to preserve their tradition of music. My landlord set up a musical troupe and economically relied on it. That is, development provided chance for both of his talents to earn income, but eventually favored his musical talent. I will trace how his musical talent stood out from the competition among the Jinghpo belief in fate and the market force. In terms of my analytical tools (see introductory section of Chapter Two), I will argue that the two structural forces in this case are the Jinghpo belief in fate and the market force, and the critical point is the two episodes that break my landlord's balanced development of his two talents. These two structural forces interact with initial conditions and situational contingencies when a critical point emerges, and consequently, a consensus (my landlord's musical talent stood out) emerges from such interactions.

My landlord, a handsome man in many people's eyes, is tall and black with impressive whiskers. "I had two fates!" he was proud to tell me. He is believed to have been born with an "earth fate" (good at agriculture), and he is talented in musical performance. Both talents are believed to be inherited. "Xiao Zhang (my name used by villagers), you have seen that my mom is talented in

agriculture. And I want to tell you that my late grandfather was known for musical performance⁶³.

You can verify these from all villagers”. From his early twenties, he strove to make a living by combining his two talents. During the rainy season, he stayed in village taking care of his cultivation. And during the dry season when there is little agricultural work, he sang Jinghpo songs in a music bar in the Yingjiang County seat. There, he also learned to play the electronic keyboard.

Unfortunately, his first wife died of leukemia in 1993 and he had to stay in the village to take care of his nine-year-old son. He worked in his fields and also strove to utilize his musical talent. With support from the village cooperative team, he set up a musical troupe, teaching the youth to sing Jinghpo songs and to play musical instruments. He trained the youth effectively, and in a few years his troupe was qualified to entertain guests in ceremonial rituals. Villagers enjoyed singing songs with his accompaniment by an electronical organ and with rhythmic sounds by others’ beating plastic boards. He was satisfied with his performance and pleased with his life as a folk artist.

Consequently Sama village has come to be known as a center for music performance. He also won a lot of awards for his performance from the local government, and his troupe was invited to perform throughout the County. “I have been known by my nickname, *Pakistan*, throughout the Yingjiang County. I am a well-known artist” He looks more like a Pakistani rather than a Chinese, owing to his dark complexion and whiskers. To develop his troupe and preserve Jinghpo songs, he searched for sponsorship to purchase modern musical instruments. In 2005, the Tongbiguan Village Tract government sponsored Sama with RMB 60,000 (USD 9,273) and two businessmen, both born in Sama, donated RMB 150,000 (USD 23,183) for building a village center for cultural life and for purchasing a complicated electronical organ, a set of electronic drums, a set of saxophones, and a sound system. My landlord invited Burmese teachers to teach his troupe members to play instruments.

Thereafter, their performance won fame, and little by little, the troupe started to make a profit. From October to December in 2009, it has been invited almost 30 times, each time earning at least RMB 300 (USD 44). My landlord's household economy has come to rely heavily on this income. He kept maintaining a balance between his two talents. During the rainy season when rituals are rarely conducted, he stays at home taking care of his field plots, while during the dry he performs for others.

Since the 2000s, development projects sponsored by the Chinese government provided chance for further developing his two talents. On the one hand, the mountains were allocated to households for cultivation, with each household getting about 15 hectares. This brought more money and more comfortable material life to villagers (see chapter one). Mountain resources were also noticed by businessmen from inland China, who swarmed into the forest to rent mountain plots for cultivation and collect herbs. Riding this wave of development, some villagers, including my landlord, searched for cooperation with businessmen⁶⁴. On the other hand, economic development stimulated villagers to preserve their culture. During the dry season, villagers hold spectacular new-house celebrations or weddings. Both the local government and village cooperative team leaders support my landlord's troupe. My landlord found his two talents could be profitable in both the rainy and dry seasons. He searched for investment to cultivate his mountain plots in the rainy season, and expanded his musical performance to other Counties during the dry season. "In a few years, I will reach my talents in agriculture and meet my enthusiasm in music. And I will have a wealthy life."

However, two episodes broke his plan and the balance between his two talents. The first collapsed his troupe and stimulated him to run musical performance independently. It set him free from obligations of managing the troupe and enabled him to gain more profit. The second episode was his failure in cultivation. As a consequence, his talent in agriculture seemed to be suppressed while

that in musical performance thrived. “I am sorry that I did not get much from cultivation. But I am proud that I will have a thriving development of my music performance. Thanks to the government!”

The first episode took place in 2009, when his musical troupe was thriving. One of his troupe members, the son of the cooperative team head, wanted to replace my landlord. The head prompted other leaders to accuse my landlord of using communal instruments to make profit for himself. In addition, he was behind the times because he read neither Chinese nor musical scores. It was claimed he was not qualified to lead the troupe. These leaders have persuaded those villagers who had jealously witnessed how my landlord got money in musical performance. They agreed that my landlord should surrender his control of the troupe and instruments.

My landlord did not want to lose the troupe. He proposed that he would rent the instruments at the rate of RMB 1,000 per year, in addition to paying fees for machine wear. Meanwhile, he would serve Sama villagers for free whenever needed. Most villagers accepted his proposal; “He has served us for many years for free, and he did well”, some claimed. But the head wanted his son to control the troupe, and managed to persuade over one third of team leaders to reject the proposal. Worse, they forced my landlord to “retire” from the troupe in March 2010. This hurt my landlord a lot. “You people are heartless and selfish! ... In the past twenty years, I have performed for all of you for free in all your ceremonious rituals! ... And I made this troupe possible ... Without me, there troupe even will never exist! ...” he shouted at one meeting of the troupe. He also complained to his family members: “I do not want to lose the troupe. .. It is my baby! ...”. He told me the story that how he strove to save the troupe in difficulty times. In 2008 when the great businessman *Mai* who sponsored the troupe had died, his wife had taken back the expensive electronical organ he had donated. My landlord had then searched for sponsorship for purchasing another one by making applications to the

local government and talking to many Jinghpo businessmen. He had succeeded. Without him, the troupe, the instruments, and the fame would not have existed. “Now they simply abandoned me!”

The leaders’ decision also annoyed those who contributed to the fame of Sama as a center of Jinghpo music. For instance, *Gyi* had been a principal singer in the troupe who can sing for a whole night without repetition. But he quit the troupe in May 2010. “I am with you. Without your leading the troupe, I do not want to stay in it”, he told my landlord. “You had better not perform for villagers any more unless they pay you! They are heartless forgetting your contribution and service for about twenty years”, he suggested. “And you will enhance your song accompaniment and push the troupe out of competition!” Taking *Gyi*’s advice, my landlord rented instruments in Yanghanhe village (RMB 800/year, a village about forty minutes’ walk from Sama) with a condition that he would perform for that village for free whenever needed. When all these were set, the rainy season returned and he waited for the next dry season to start his business of musical performance.

This first event stimulated my landlord to run musical performance on his own, and required more of his devotion. It dragged him off the balance between his two talents by leaning toward musical performance. Such imbalance was strengthened by the following second episode. Since 2009, he had planned to cultivate *herba dendrobii*, an herbal medicine recently discovered as containing an invaluable element for longevity⁶⁵. In the 2000s, a giant market for *herba dendrobii* had been fostered and the price rocketed up, from RMB 60/kg (USD 9.28) in September 2009 to almost RMB 300/kg (USD 46.37) in January 2010 in villages. In particular, its most valuable type, *dendrobium candidum*, was advertised as “the divine panacea”. Its price in 2010 rocketed up to RMB 2,000 / kg (US \$ 296) in villages and RMB 20,000 / kg (US \$ 2,962) in Zhèjiāng province in coastal China. Collecting it in the forest has brought villagers profit. However, villagers then found out that wild *herba dendrobii*

had become so rare that it would probably go extinct soon, especially owing to the abnormal drought in 2009-10 in Southwest China. To gain stable profit, a few villagers started to cultivate it. In 2009, my landlord had cultivated what his son had collected, and found out that the techniques were simple. He tied the root of the herb on a wood stake that has thin bark, and slightly shaded the herb, aiming to recreate its natural habitat in the forest. “This plant enables longevity, it obviously has incredible vitality; once it grows, it will keep generating new wattles for about ten years. And I can sell these wattles”. The cultivation requires work only during cultivation. Thereafter, the only concern will be regular watering and theft prevention. Due to the large profit, theft has become a serious problem. Villagers heard that all the *herba dendrobii* worth RMB 300,000 (US \$ 46,367) cultivated by the chair of the People’s Consultant’s Committee of the prefecture government had been stolen.

The biggest difficulty villagers had is the cost. They understood that the profit depends on the area of the cultivated plot, but most could invest in a plot of only a few square meters. No villagers had been approved any loan from the local credit cooperative since the late 1990s, because three of Sama villagers had failed to repay the loans⁶⁶. To solve the cost problem, my landlord expected to co-invest with me in 2009. According to him, I would purchase *herba dendrobii* and he would take care of all cultivation. However, I did not have money except for my research funding. As a compromise, I advanced him ten months of rental, by which he purchased and cultivated a plot of about 50 m². In March 2010, two of my friends went to Sama hoping to invest in the cultivation of *herba dendrobii*. Unlike others who came to rent plots and employ villagers, they wanted to cooperate with my landlord, and I served as, in my landlord’s words, a go-between. In one week’s investigation and discussion, they found out that no one knew how many wild wattles could be collected at what price for the cultivation in September 2010. My landlord had been tied up in musical performance in

the dry season – the critical period for the theft prevention. He stayed at home for less than one week each month, and his current wife always forgot to water their already cultivated plot. Apart from these inadequacies, my friends were pleased with my landlord's conditions for cultivation. His techniques were good. He had been awarded a title as a communist party member paragon, and all his other family members were pious Christians. They are all reliable. In addition, he had a big courtyard, where cultivation will be made and it is perfect for the theft prevention.

My friends and landlord decided that the first year of their cooperation would be a trial. The issue is to decide how to divide profit based on their respective input. My friends invest at money of RMB 80,000 (USD 11,851), and my landlord's input includes his land (about 500 m²), labor, techniques and social networks for cultivation, and his cultivated plot (less than 50 m²). Both sides were pleased to convert my landlord's input into the cash equivalence of RMB 40,000. They then proposed two schemes for dividing the profit. First, if all of my fiends' RMB 80,000 is used only for purchasing wild wattles and my landlord pays all other costs involved such as buying wood stakes (up to RMB 8,000) and paying wages for labor (RMB 40/day.person), each side would get half the profit. Second, if my fiends' RMB 80,000 is also used for purchasing necessary materials and paying wages, they should get two-thirds. After one week's negotiation, both sides signed a contract based on the second scheme. My landlord promised that he should take care of cultivation during the dry season. That meant sometimes he might have to give up musical performance. My friends left promising to come back when *herba dendrobii* was ready to be collected.

Two weeks later, my landlord believed that he did not get enough from the contract. "I should not include my cultivated plot into the investment. I have worked hard to cultivate that by myself, and I want to have all profit of that plot for 2010. Thereafter, I will be happy to include that plot into the

cooperation”. My friends agreed; they understood that my landlord wanted to compensate for his work in 2009. But they emphasized that converting his input into RMB 40,000 was very favorable to him. And “the cultivation requires only two months of work, then during the dry season your mother can watch over the plot for the theft prevention since she stays at home all the time”.

Then again in August, my landlord found new dissatisfaction: “Other villagers who have cooperated with the bosses got half profit, but I will get only one-third!” I asked how much the bosses invested in the mentioned cases. About RMB 40,000, he replied. Only half of my friends’ investment! It is reasonable that the profit is divided evenly. I explained to him the correlation between input percentage and profit percentage, but he did not give up asking for more percentage of the profit. This annoyed my friends and they did not want to concede: “He cares too much about what he would get, but forgets what he should contribute and what others should get”. “OK, that way, I would not like to cooperate”, my landlord replied. He did not care that once he had made a contract he should manage to follow it. And the cooperation was aborted.

I talked about this aborted investment with a Chinese shopkeeper, who had run a convenience store in Sama for seven years. He believed that most villagers lack basic knowledge about the modern market. As a son-in-law in Sama, he told me stories of how many villagers, considering them as his wife-givers, bought things on credit but never paid back. When he asked for repayment, they would get angry, telling him “you have allowed me to get your things! They are then mine”. They seemed not to understand the difference between a real purchase and a purchase on credit. “They thought credit is for me, rather than for themselves! I believed them, so I gave them the thing; once they got the thing, it was theirs. They do not need to pay a thing that belongs to them”, the shopkeeper said⁶⁷.

For me, the aborted cooperation indicated that my landlord was not able to maintain a balance

between his desire and effort in the modern market. More importantly, I found that most of his passion was devoted to music performance. When the rainy season was not yet over, he started to receive invitations for performance. During the latter half of 2010, his business grew rapidly and he earned RMB 6,000 / month (USD 889). In weddings and house celebration rituals, his performance boosted the festive ambience and attracted guests, who otherwise idled around and returned only for meals. Guests were impressed and many promised to invite him whenever they might hold rituals.

Contrastively, the troupe in Sama collapsed. In 2010, it received only a few invitations to welcome guests. And they were not pleased with their income. Each time they were paid as a group (14 individuals) about RMB 200 (USD 30), with each member getting less than RMB 15. They then started to reject invitations, claiming falsely that some members had gone out to work in cities. Sama villagers also felt annoyed at the troupe. In three weddings and one new-house-celebration from late 2009 to early 2010, the troupe simply played CDs with expensive instruments. Many villagers thirsted for singing to celebrate, but no one could accompany for them. During the rainy season in 2010, instruments went rotten without proper maintenance. Villagers then remembered how busy my landlord had been in maintaining instruments in the old days. They complained to the cooperative team leaders hoping to re-instate my landlord.

Meanwhile, forces from the outside reinforced such support. In July when villagers elected the new term of cooperative team leaders, officials from the Tongbiguan Village Tract government came to supervise the election. They were surprised that villagers did not hold a music party for them. They had sponsored the purchase of musical instruments and should be honored. When figuring out the reason, officials, though not saying anything straightforward, implied their disappointment with the outcome of their sponsorship. Days later, the new team leaders and my landlord gathered to discuss

how to make up the mistake of losing my landlord in the troupe. This mistake had harmed Sama villagers' fame and would limit their future funding from the local government. The troupe should be re-set up under the direction of my landlord. To compensate him, Sama villagers had to pay him at least RMB 100 whenever he performed.

What urged the leaders to re-instate my landlord is that he had been recognized by the Village Tract government as one of the three persons with special talent in the Jinghpo culture. In 2010, he was elected to set up a village tract troupe by selecting girls and boys from over twenty villages. He was assigned an office and allocated funds. Officials promised that he would be recruited as a government worker when the troupe thrives. In addition, a businessman who ran a Jinghpo tourist site hired my landlord's new troupe to perform Jinghpo songs and dance in 2011. The businessman claimed to invest RMB 9 billion for Jinghpo cultural tourism, aiming to make Tongbiguan Village Tract a world center for Jinghpo culture. My landlord was very happy to tell me: "The officials promised me that I will be recognized as a government official taking charge of Jinghpo cultural development in a few years, and the businessman like my performance".

§§§

This case illustrates how a balance between my landlord's two talents is broken and leads to the dominance of just one of them. Economic development drives villagers into the modern market and stimulates them to fully plant their mountain plots. It also offers revenue for preserving Jinghpo music. My landlord's two talents fit with these two opportunities for cultivation and preservation. And he strives to develop the two talents. His development of either talent is subject to competition between the Jinghpo belief in fate and the modern market. Two events break the balance between his two talents, and eventually the music talent wins out. I will consider this process of winning out to be

achieving a consensus among my landlord, villagers, government officials, and businessmen, by exploring the interactions among structural forces, initial conditions, and situational contingencies.

Two local structural forces (the Jinghpo belief in fate and the modern market) compete to dominate my landlord's livelihood⁶⁸. They both function on the balance between the two talents, but each aims to dominate my landlord's development. The Jinghpo belief in fate defines the two talents in balance, and the modern market provides opportunities to develop both talents independently.

Initial conditions and situational contingencies shape my landlord's strategy of choosing between the two talents or combining them. Initial conditions endow the two structural forces with equal chance in regulating my landlord's decisions for maintaining his household economy. His talents fit with the two structural forces. The thriving market on mountain resources and development projects enable him to develop his talent in agriculture. But as illustrated by the first episode described above, his inadequate understanding about the modern market confines the development of his talent in agriculture. Meanwhile, economic development facilitates villagers' effort of preserving Jinghpo music and so enables him to develop his talent in musical performance.

Situational contingencies (the two episodes) drive the balance between the two talents to lean toward musical performance. The first is the youths' success in controlling instruments. This hurts my landlord and stimulates him to enhance his fame and run his musical performance independently. The second episode is his aborted cooperation in cultivating *herba dendrobii*. It limits his chance to profit from his talent in agriculture, and intensifies, negatively, the outcome of the first episode to develop his musical performance. These two episodes finally break the balance between the two talents, and so give the two structural forces different momenta in shaping his development. The Jinghpo belief in fate slips into the background while the market force stands out.

Accordingly, I treat these two episodes as the critical point for understanding how the talent in musical performance becomes privileged. This point breaks the balance and pushes my landlord to his musical talent. It allows him to devote himself *completely* to musical performance. Such a propensity is intensified by contingencies such as the village election and the Tongbiguan Village Tract government's support of establishing a village tract troupe. I therefore treat the propensity for my landlord's devoting himself completely to musical performance as an "attractor". It enables him to make a better living, to meet the village tract government's aspiration for preserving the Jinghpo music, and to realize his aspiration for and talents in musical performance. It displays four features of an "attractor". First, it is partially determined by the competition between the two local structural forces, and partially by the two episodes (the critical point) that break the balance between the two talents defined by the structural forces. Second, it incorporates contingent support from government and so is novel to the structural forces (the Jinghpo belief in fate and the modern market). Third, together with the structural forces, it facilitates his subsequent development, such as his future position in the local government and his employment in a tourist situation. Fourth, it was contingent – it would never had existed if the two contingent episodes had not taken place. Obviously, it is a regular "attractor" as it is stable and compatible with at least one of the two local structural forces.

The critical condition breaks the balance between my landlord's two talents and makes it lean toward musical performance. The two episodes each contribute to the emergence of the "attractor" differently: the first elicits it while the second reinforces it negatively. This regular "attractor" is thus a fully-developed form of the critical point, and the critical point is a necessary and sufficient condition of a regular "attractor". "Attractors" derived from cases 2.1 and 2.2 also display such correlation between a critical point and its derived regular "attractor". I will argue in the case 3.2 that this

correlation is a characteristic feature to differentiate a regular “attractor” from a strange “attractor”.

Case 3.2: An Adultery Payment Negotiation

The second case examines how a momentary agreement (consensus) about payment for adultery emerges from the competition of two regulations. The first regulation is derived from the Jinghpo traditional convention. It blames only the adulterer and asks him to take all responsibility. The adulteress’ family strives to settle the adultery according to this convention. The second regulation is the government law on adultery. It requires differentiating the respective responsibilities of adulterer and adulteress. The adulterer’s family prefers this second regulation. Both the Jinghpo convention and the government law, as two local structural forces, are equally accepted by most villagers. The final payment plan derives from either of them, or their combination, depending on contingencies such as how the adulterer or adulteress succeeds in persuading other participants. Although village cooperative team leaders, who represent the influence from the government regulations, are invited to preside over the negotiation, they take a neutral position not leaning towards either side. However, when the adulteress’ family achieves overwhelming success in persuading most participants to accept a payment plan based on the Jinghpo convention, an episode breaks the leaders’ neutrality and stimulates them to support the adulterer. The leaders offer powerful arguments and persuade most villagers to propose a payment plan that blends both the Jinghpo convention and the governmental regulations. In analyzing how such a plan emerges, I aim to illustrate the dynamics of how the two structural forces are blended to generate a *momentary* consensus by a contingent episode (a critical point). Compared with other consensuses examined in Chapter Two and case 3.1, consensus in the present case is labile and hard to consolidate into the structural forces. I will define such difference by specifying different dynamics of the emergence of these consensuses.

Before I start the case, I shall describe the Jinghpo meaning of adultery and the two regulations regarding adultery. Adultery took place rarely before the Chinese communists' arrival in the 1950s because a marriage contracted *via* rituals should not be violated. Marriage is believed to bring the essential procreative medicine from the wife-giver to the wife-taker, which is incorporated into and enhanced by the fortune preserved in the wife-taker's family genealogy. Social reproduction of the wife-taker results from the harmonious working of the wife-giver's essential procreative medicine and the wife-taker's fortune (see chapter one for a more detailed description). A disrupted marriage will bring disasters to both the wife-takers and wife-givers. The former will be cursed by spirits that have been invited at the wedding to protect marriage, and the latter will lose the fortune of social reproduction preserved in their family genealogy (Zhang 2004).

Jinghpo strive to avoid marriage disruption. Adultery would probably disrupt a marriage and so is heavily penalized. At least, the adulterer would be fined many times the bride-price that the adulteress' husband had paid. In Jinghpo, adultery, rape, and seduction are all called *num³³ sho³¹*. Literally, it means to "drag" a woman, who is "at home and timid", off her husband. Accordingly, the adulterer is required to take all responsibility, no matter if he initiates the adultery or not. The adulteress' village should be ritually "washed" by sacrificing a buffalo to drive off all consequent bad spirits at the expense of the adulterer. Among all involved spirits, the spirit of *ma³¹ ro³³* derives from public remarks and conversations over the adultery. Once public opinion is accumulated enough and converged into a *ma³¹ ro³³*, it will exert malignant force over both the adulterer and adulteress. More importantly, adultery is more than a severe humiliation to the adulteress' husband. Before the Chinese communists' arrival in 1953, the husband was entitled to kill the adulterer because adultery is considered equivalent to the murder of the husband. The death would then cause war between the kin

group of the husband and that of the adulterer. As villagers always say “whenever a woman is dragged off her husband, all people in the adulterer’s village should be wiped out” (*ma³¹sha³¹jan³³sho³¹ai³³hpe⁵⁵sat³¹shing⁵⁵tung³¹ma³¹re³³hpe⁵⁵go³¹nat⁵⁵*), or when a female makes mistake (conducts adultery) her husband will die” (*ma³¹rang³³htu³¹yang³³ga⁵¹ma³¹di³¹, num³³ra³³yang³³la³³si³³*).

After the Chinese communists’ arrival, wars have been eradicated and compensation payment has become the preferred choice. Village officials set regulations regarding marriage and adultery according to the Chinese government’s laws. Different from the Jinghpo convention that blames only the adulterer, these regulations require identifying who initiates the adultery by which people determine who should take the major responsibility. The ritual for washing the village is transformed into a fine of both the adulteress and adulterer, which will be used for village development. The village cooperative team leaders are said to represent the force from the government, and they are invited to preside over the settlement of adultery. Most villagers consider that both governmental regulations and Jinghpo convention are acceptable for settling adultery. And the payment for a given adultery will be arranged according to either of them or a combination of them, depending on contingencies. In fieldwork, I observed how a payment arrangement is generated from a combination of the governmental regulations and Jinghpo convention.

La, a businessman in his late thirties, was always out during the major part of the year. His wife (in her early thirties) took care of their two children (respectively twelve and three years old) at home. From the view of an outsider, they look like many other ordinary couples in the village. But in May 2010, the wife ran off with *H pang*, a son of one of *La*’s classificatory brothers. Their children, without any one taking care of them, wandered in the village and had lunch here and dinner there. Most villagers believed that *La*’s wife was shameless and sympathized with the two children. “Look at this

shameless woman, and look at those two poor kids! *La* should stop the adultery as soon as possible, take his wife back, and beat the adulterer to death!” villagers gossiped around the village. But to their surprise, *La* simply let her go and continued his almost broken trade. He did not pay attention to his two uncared-for children. “He is a coward. No matter how successful he was in trade, he was a failed man!” *Gyi*, a man in his early forties, claimed. “If my wife did that, I would abandon her, and beat and cripple the adulterer. Only in that way would I maintain my dignity as a male. I do not want compensation payment from the adulterer. Money could not save my dignity as a man!” More broadly, most males agreed that *La*’s wife should be abandoned; she is shameless as a wife and heartless as a mother. My assistant boasted: “If *La* was a real man, he should do what I had done before. Three years ago, when I knew my wife had had relations with others, I abandoned her immediately”.

La finally returned in July, but only for competing for village officialdom in the Chinese government’s new cycle of elections, rather than to settle the adultery. He wanted to be the associate head of the village administrative office and managed to win a number of supporters. But he failed in the last cycle of the election. “He has failed to stop his wife’s adultery and to punish her adulterer. Since he was not able to lead a small family, how could he be qualified for leading a village?” some villagers argued. They had heard that his wife had had secret relation with her sister’s husband before marrying *La*. Her sister had then rushed to marry her off⁶⁹. Although this was not *La*’s fault, he should have educated her how to become a good wife. It proved that *La* was inept, and she had had secret relation with *H pang* for years. The argument won most villagers and *La* failed in the election.

The failure in the election seemed to stimulate *La* to take steps to settle the adultery. On July 20th when I chatted with villagers in a convenience store, *La*’s wife and her adulterer passed by the village riding the same motorcycle. She waved to villagers saying that they were going to *Laiza* (the nearest

border city) for small business. This made *La*'s second elder brother's wife angry. "Bitch! Die to shame!" She shouted at her. She phoned *La* immediately, urging him to cut *Hpang* to death. *La* replied that he was busy with persuading people to demand payment from *Hpang*. That night, *La*'s eldest brother, a member of the People's Representatives' Committee of the Yingjiang County government, came back to the village to preside over the negotiation about the adultery. He called together all his siblings and three Sama village officials to discuss how to demand payment from *Hpang*. *La*'s wife's brother was also invited, because *Hpang* had sexually gotten to *La*'s wife without permission from her natal family. They evaluated both the advantages and disadvantages of two possible payment plans respectively based on the governmental regulations and Jinghpo convention. *La*'s eldest brother emphasized that nowadays the traditional way of killing or heavily fining the adulterer would not work. It would otherwise deprive them of all advantages and make *La* an accused criminal. Meanwhile, taking the adultery to court would reduce *La*'s benefit because the governmental regulations require both the adulterer and adulteress to take responsibility. To ensure their best benefit, *La* should invite village officials to preside over the negotiation, and persuade villagers to combine the governmental regulations and Jinghpo convention while emphasizing the latter.

To achieve such a combination, *La* should adopt a delicate strategy. *La* would threaten *Hpang* that if he does not compensate enough, *La* would bring him to court, where *La*'s eldest brother can dominate the proceedings. Meanwhile, *La* should consider one disadvantage – his wife had had secret relations with *Hpang* for years and he had not acted to stop it. If he demanded too much payment, that would be considered a trap for swindling money. Therefore, the payment amount is delicate; it should exempt *La* from the accusation of cheating *Hpang* while covering what *La* had lost in recent years owing to the misfortune brought by the adultery, such as failed trade, a lost pistol and car, leaving

children uncared for, and losing all his “face”. “We can ask for RMB 100,000 (US\$ 14,814)” *La*’s siblings agreed. This amount is almost six times an ordinary bride-price in 2010, while the adultery payment set by Sama village officials was roughly equivalent with an ordinary bride-price⁷⁰.

After many times’ request, *Hpang* and *La*’s wife returned around 23:00 on the 25th. When she entered *La*’s house, no one welcomed her, including her three-year-old daughter. For about three hours, she sat alone near the door, except for being called into an inner room to be taught by *La*’s brothers’ wives that she should attribute all fault to *Hpang*. Her brother’s wife accompanied her, representing her natal family’s support to *La*, as the adultery is a humiliation not only to *La* but to his wife-giver. The negotiation was held in *Hpang*’s house. Over one hundred villagers, at least one from each household, participated in the negotiation, and three cooperative team leaders were invited to preside over the negotiation. The governmental regulations regarding adultery seemed to be preferred at the beginning of the negotiation. The leaders asked *Hpang* and *La*’s wife to state the reasons and process of the adultery, by which people would judge who should take the major responsibility. *Hpang* went first but did not say anything except for confessing he was wrong to have seduced his classificatory father’s wife. His narrative seemed to lead people to believe that he should take all responsibility for the adultery, indicating that *La*’s wife was innocent.

La’s wife seized on this message immediately and described, in considerable detail, how *Hpang* had bought roasted meat for her and invited her to play cards when her husband was out. Having played cards a few times, he had insisted on going into her house at night. She had refused, but he had promised to take her to big cities, which her husband had seldom done. “I was as alone at home. I wanted to see the world outside”. So she let him in. “I should not let him in. I hurt my husband and my kids! ... I am one of the classificatory mothers of *Hpang*. ... I lost all my ‘face’” she regretted,

accompanied by tears, she condemned *H pang*: “if you really wanted a female other than your wife, why look at me, rather than an unmarried girl!” At this moment, her brother’s wife stood up to support her. She felt ashamed for *H pang*’s having seduced one of his classificatory mothers, and angry, representing *La*’s wife-givers, for *H pang*’s seduction of their woman.

The two women’s tears won over many villagers, despite the fact that *H pang* kept interrupting and arguing that *La*’s wife had also seduced him to buy things. No one seemed to believe him; rather, many felt annoyed that he had not told anything in his turn but tried to deny a woman’s regret – stupid and devoid of male dignity! Many requested *H pang* to stop interrupting the two women’s narration. But *H pang* did not listen. His interruption and non-cooperation seemed to push the negotiation to favor *La*’s wife. No matter what he said, people simply neglected it. Finally, *H pang*’s late father’s fifth brother, one of the cooperative team leaders who was supposed to support *H pang*, scolded *H pang*: “Bastard! You shut up! Behave like a man! You lose ‘face’ for the whole family!” The scolding decisively led the negotiation to favor *La*’s wife, and none of *H pang*’s supporters could provide any effective defense. Many had expected *H pang*’s grandfather’s seventh brother, an articulate man, to help exempt *H pang* from certain responsibility. But he kept silent throughout the negotiation.

La’s wife had gotten overwhelming success in negotiation⁷¹. But her supporters must have gotten dizzy with the success, and started to claim that *H pang* should take all responsibility of the adultery. Worse, the wives of *La*’s brothers even claimed that the Jinghpo convention of fining an adulterer many times the bride-price should be adopted. This suggestion suggested that villagers should push aside the governmental regulations and completely rely on the Jinghpo convention. Hearing this, the cooperative team leaders, who had planned to simply witness the process neither intending to impose the governmental regulations on the negotiation nor willing to argue for either side, stood up to

support *Hpang* so as to balance the influences of the governmental regulations and of the Jinghpo convention in the negotiation. My assistant, one of the leaders, claimed that “In this modern time, we Jinghpo should have some modern knowledge of law, instead of simply relying on our tradition”. For instance, he had learned such knowledge from a film of lawsuit, in which an adulteress had insisted she was completely innocent and had requested the male to take all responsibility. To contradict her, the judge had pulled out a needle and a thread, and showed how the former could not go through the eye of the latter if the two had not cooperated with each other. If we consider a female as the needle and a man as the thread, the judge had argued, adultery would not occur if the two did not cooperate. “It takes two to make the adultery possible!” my assistant concluded.

This powerful metaphor made people laugh, and stimulated *Hpang*'s supporters to refute *La*. My landlord, who shared a great grandfather with *Hpang*'s father, claimed that people also needed to recognize that *Hpang*'s wife was hurt and should be compensated by *La*'s wife. *Hpang*'s sister also added that many knew the adultery had lasted for years while *La* had not educated his wife properly. *La* should also take responsibility. These counter-arguments helped *La*'s eldest brother realize that his people had become too arrogant. He conceded that both sides should take responsibility, with *Hpang* taking the major part. Officials and most villagers accepted his suggestion.

Now, the problem was how to define a specific combination of the Jinghpo convention of heavily fining the adulterer and the governmental regulations of differentially fining the adulterer and the adulteress. *La* asked for RMB 100,000 from *Hpang*, though he agreed that *Hpang*'s wife should be mildly compensated. Officials believed this was too much. Education of *Hpang* should be the primary aim since he had confessed his fault. And *La*, as one of *Hpang*'s late father's classificatory brothers, needed to consider that *Hpang* was really a jerk, and the payment would fall upon his mother, a poor

widow who strove to raise three children since her husband's death. In addition, *La's* lost car and pistol should not be attributed to the adultery. They then proposed the following amounts: *H pang* should pay RMB 10,000 (US\$ 1,481) for "washing *La's* face", RMB 2,000 (US\$ 296) for making sacrifice to *La's* household spirits, and RMB 1,000 (US\$ 148) for "washing the village", and *La's* wife should pay *H pang's* wife RMB 4,000 (US\$ 592) for "washing the latter's face" and RMB 1,000 for "washing the village". This plan combined the governmental regulations and Jinghpo convention. According to the former, both adulterer and adulteress were fined, with the adulterer taking the major responsibility as he had initiated the adultery. The total amount *H pang* should pay was roughly equivalent to an ordinary bride-price in 2010. According to the latter, payments for making sacrifice to *La's* household spirits and for "washing the village" were requested.

La was reluctant to accept the officials' proposal, but officials had persuaded his eldest brother that *La* would otherwise do worse in the court. Officials and most villagers agreed that *La* and his brothers, by accepting the proposed amounts, have done a great favor to *H pang*. But *H pang's* mother complained that none had helped educate *H pang*. They rather brought her a great financial burden. She whined "I had been heart-struck! No one help beat *H pang* down. He has been corrupted". She begged participants to persuade officials and *La's* brothers to reduce the amounts. *La's* eldest brother got angry. He threatened that he, as one of the classificatory brothers of her late husband, had conceded too much. "I will take the case to the court. I know people there!" he threatened her. This frightened her. She kept weeping without saying anything. All then agreed with the officials' proposal, and *H pang* and *La's* wife were asked to sign a guaranty promising they would never make the same mistake again and would pay the amounts in a week.

The negotiations lasted almost eight hours. Although an agreement was reached, most villagers

were not satisfied with it. Many believed that *La* and his brothers had conceded too much. A few, like my assistant, considered *H pang* and his family members were too stupid. “They know nothing about the modern world.... If I were *H pang*, I would invite people to demand payment from *La*’s wife on behalf of *H pang*’s wife. I would even ask *La*’s wife to take the major responsibility.... At least, both sides would pay each other an equal amount ... They are just too stupid, not understanding that it takes two to make adultery happen!”

In the following three months, the payments, though written into the guaranty, were not paid in time. They were reduced a couple of times through private negotiation between the two families. In December 2010, the total amount *H pang* needed to pay was reduced to RMB 5,000 (US\$ 740), about one-third of the agreed amount. Worse, *H pang* and *La*’s wife did not take the guaranty seriously. When *La* was out for business again, *H pang* and *La*’s wife got to play Mahjong together, making villagers guess whether they had secret relations again.

§§§

This case illustrates how a labile consensus emerges from a specific combination of two competing regulations regarding adultery. The governmental regulations and Jinghpo convention compete to serve as the global structural force to dominate the negotiation and its result. The former requires both the adulterer and adulteress to take responsibility and the latter blames only the adulterer. As expected, the adulteress’ family prefers the latter while the adulterer’s prefers the former. Before the two regulations are combined, they are local structural forces affecting only portions of participants. The cooperative team leaders are invited to preside over the negotiation and are supposed to maintain a neutral position. The adulteress’ family achieves an overwhelming advantage over the adulterer’s, but also annoys the leaders, stimulating them to lean toward the adulterer. The leaders

provide powerful counter-argument and win over many participants. As a result, an agreement emerges from a specific combination of the two local structural forces.

Initial conditions bring the two local structural forces into competition. The adultery has lasted for years, and requires a negotiation, for which both governmental regulations and Jinghpo convention can be equally applied. Villagers believe in both. The adulteress' family prefers the latter while the adulterer's prefers the former. That means, the initial situations give equal chance to the two local structural forces. These two forces are brought into an evenhanded competition, a balance.

Contingencies generated in the process break the balance. The adulterer's family wants the payment to be arranged according to the Jinghpo convention. They carefully prepare the negotiation, provide a powerful argument, and win an overwhelming advantage. To facilitate their success, they invite the adulteress' natal family member and the cooperative team leaders to support them. In negotiation, they highlight the factors that favor them. For instance, the fact that the adulteress is a classificatory mother of the adulterer morally burdens the adulterer and helps the adulteress win people's sympathy. During the first half of the negotiation, the adulteress' family convinces most villagers and tries to seduce them to speak out that the payment should be arranged according to Jinghpo convention. At this stage of negotiation, the governmental regulations are simply pushed aside and the balance between the two local structural forces is broken.

One episode restores the balance and specifies how the two local structural forces are combined. Males from the adulteress' side do not expect their females to become arrogant. These females not only speak out that payment should be set according to the Jinghpo convention, but say it in a way that annoys the cooperative team leaders. These females completely push aside the governmental regulations. Before this point, the leaders limit themselves only to witness and judge, rather than to

steer, the negotiation. Those females' arrogance stimulates the leaders to leave their neutral position and lean towards the adulterer. In particular, my assistant offers an argument by borrowing a lawsuit of adultery from the modern world, which instantly convinces many participants. His argument further inspires the adulterer's supporters to propose powerful arguments against the adulteress' family. In other words, this episode breaks the overwhelming advantage of the adulteress' family. It creates a space that motivates and initializes arguments against the adulteress' family. People argue that, according to the governmental regulations, the adulteress should also take certain responsibility. The governmental regulations that were pushed aside are brought forth again.

I consider the females' arrogance and my assistant's argument as a critical point. It solicits a consensus. Following it, most participants accept that both the governmental regulations and Jinghpo convention should be combined. I treat this agreement as an "attractor", which generates a payment plan: the former outlines the payment plan and the latter specifies its details.

Different from the "attractors" in cases 2.1, 2.2, and 3.1 in which the influence of these "attractors" continues well beyond the specific events discussed in the present dissertation, the "attractor" generated in the present case influences only this particular negotiation. It dissolves when the negotiation ends. For instance, although villagers agree with the payment plan, most feel this is not an ideal model for future negotiations of adultery. My assistant believes that the negotiation would be different if he were a protagonist. In addition, the payment plan is not carried out after the negotiation; it is effective only during the negotiation. In other words, the "attractor" generated in the present case is labile. It is contingent to this particular negotiation and not prone to being consolidated into either of the two structural forces. It is a "strange attractor".

A "strange attractor" differs from a "regular attractor" in two regards. First, it more sensitively

depends on initial conditions and contingencies. In the present case, the initial situations give equal chance to the two local structural forces to dominate the negotiation. And contingencies further drive the two forces into a particular combination, from which the “attractor” derives. Second, it is labile and effective only in the current event. A consensus deriving from a “strange attractor” will be temporarily accepted by people, while that from a “regular attractor” influences people more or less permanently. As a result, a “strange attractor” does not exert influence over the future, while a “regular attractor” will be eventually consolidated into the structural forces and underpin future events.

Taking cases 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, and 3.2 together, I will now distinguish one defining criterion for identifying whether a regular or strange “attractor” will arise in a given case. These two kinds of “attractors” have different relations with their respective critical points. A critical point represents contingencies that escape the control of a structural force. As demonstrated by the three “regular attractors” in cases 2.1, 2.2, and 3.1, if a critical point is *local*, influencing only certain aspects, or phases, of the whole process, an “attractor” that will arise is probably a fully-developed form of the critical point. Take the case 2.1. *Yam*’s death serves as a critical point. It influences interpretations proposed after her death over her bad fate and re-formulates people’s understanding of her erratic alternation of sickness and recovery. It also endows meaning to all odd episodes (contingencies). It elicits an “attractor” – *Yam* had failed in “life competition” with her father and her soul had already gone long before her death. This “attractor” absorbs the message indicated by all odd episodes and hence specifies the meaning and details of her death. That is, the “attractor” is a fully-developed critical point. In other words, the critical point serves as the necessary and sufficient condition for the emergence of a “regular attractor”, and a “regular attractor” *results from influences of the structural force(s) over contingencies*. A necessary condition gives the outline whereas a sufficient condition

finalizes the outline. A “regular attractor” is thus easily consolidated into the structural force(s).

However, the critical point in the case 3.2 (the arrogance of the adulteress’ family and my assistant’s argument) does not outline the “attractor” (the agreement that both governmental regulations and Jinghpo convention should be combined to specify a payment plan). They are heterogeneous with each other. The critical point provides only a virtual space for the emergence of an “attractor”. The influence of such a critical point is *global*, intending to modify structural forces. The critical point in the case 3.2 modifies the initial interactional pattern between the two local structural forces so that the new pattern directs the negotiation. Such a critical point functions as only a necessary, far from a sufficient, condition for the emergence of a “strange attractor”. And a “strange attractor” *results from the influences of contingencies over the structural forces*. It is hard to be consolidated. In other words, once a local critical point occurs, a “regular attractor” will appear, while the presence of a global critical point does not suffice the emergence of a “strange attractor”.

To sum up, the emergence of a “strange attractor” requires two conditions additional to that of a “regular attractor”. First, there lacks a global structural force, which precludes that the global structural force consolidating all contingencies. A “strange attractor” derives from a contingent combination of the local structural forces. Second, influences of contingences are strong enough to modify the initial interactional pattern among the local structural forces.

Case 3.3: The Interlacing of Individual Fates

The third case examines how two “attractors” emerge from the complicated interactions among three knowledge systems: Jinghpo theory of individual born fate, the Chinese animal calendar and divination theory, and the Burmese-Tai divination theory. The three systems serve as the local structural forces for understanding the interlacing of individual fates. When a global structural force is

absent, these local structural forces and their combinations generate two convincing arguments regarding different aspects of the interlacing of fates. Each argument can be considered as a potential “attractor”, representing a propensity that might shape people’s understanding.

To illustrate such dynamics, the present case traces the life trajectory of my landlord’s mother. She is believed to have great life fortune. Her good fortune benefits many others, but paradoxically, seems to bring bad fortune to some of her family members. The Jinghpo have a good theory for understanding individual fates but lack systematic theory for specifying the result of the interlacing of individual fates. In this regard, the Chinese folk beliefs provide a powerful resource. The combination of Chinese folk belief and Jinghpo theory explains how her fate influences some of her family members’ fortune, from which a “regular attractor” has been formulated for years. However, such combination does not explain why she, other than someone else, affects people so much. An episode stimulates her to combine Jinghpo theory, Chinese folk beliefs, and Burmese-Tai divination to make sense of her particularity in affecting others’ fortune, from which a “strange attractor” emerges. These two “attractors” explain different aspects of the interfacing of her fates with others’. They are not interacting with each other. A brief examination of such relation leads me to glimpse into the development of and interactions among the two “attractors”.

Before starting the case, let me remind readers of the Jinghpo theory of individual born fate (for details see Chapter One). One’s fate is pre-given by one’s birth time and family tradition. The Jinghpo divination table specifies born fates according to the birth time, and villagers have learned to use the Chinese tomb geomancy and animal calendar to make better sense of their born fates. But these known theories explain only fate itself and its variation in time. None enables people to understand the interlacing of fates, namely, how individuals of different fates influence each other. Although

villagers seem to know something about the interlacing of fates based on personal experience and random hearsay, none could claim that they understand even a single case of the interlacing. A thorough understanding requires a scientific mind that focuses on the topic for years, collects and analyzes cases to figure out the basic patterns. Obviously, no villagers could, or would, do that.

In almost three years of fieldwork since 2003, I had gotten a sense of the interlacing of fates by paying intensive attention to the life history of my landlord's mother *Ko* (the name indicates that she is the eldest among her female siblings from the same father). I have established good relations with her, and lived in the same house for over one year and a half during 2009-10. Many times she told me that she considered me as a member of her family, and told me her past in extraordinarily vivid details. She, as the eldest person in the village, had a clear mind and possessed vast knowledge of the Jinghpo way of life. I had a lot of interviews and daily conversations with her. In retrospect, I realized that these intensive interviews reminded her of many things that she would not otherwise ponder upon. In particular, we had intensive discussion about her understanding of why some people seemed to incur bad fortune while others got good luck in interacting with her.

She is widely recognized a woman with good fate. When she was 19 years old, a Tai diviner in Burma told her fate by observing her palm lines. The palm line divination (chiromancy), practiced by the Chinese and the Tai-speaking people, is believed to tell the life-long fortune. The specialist claimed that *Ko* has a paradoxical fate. On the one hand, she would have supreme life fortune. She would have many friends and children, be good at taking care of children and talented in craftwork. Her fortune would bring good luck to many others. Accordingly, she should restrain herself from saying bad things to children. A person with a very good fate is like a great specialist; what they say would more likely to come to be true. Also, she would be frequently invited to cut the umbilical cord

for babies, as the Jinghpo believe that a baby will be endowed with the same personality and temperament with the person who cuts the umbilical cord. The specialist suggested that she had better simply cut the umbilical cord but not name babies; otherwise, her good fortune will dissipate in naming too many children. On the other hand, her excellent fate would sometimes become a trouble to others. She would have a tough life and not get along with her daughters-in-law in her forties. Worse, the fortune of some of her family members might be harmed by her great fortune. However, the specialist insisted that she should not think of leaving her sons when she has trouble with her daughters-in-law. She should persist and life would become better as her age grows.

The divination revealed the truth of *Ko*'s life. At the age of nineteen, she was arranged to marry *Mai*, whom she had never met before. During the first important ritual of the wedding, she was supposed to cross a bridge made of a piece of wood plank and flanked by a kind of grass used in animal sacrifice. This ritual aims to include a bride into the groom's family; metaphorically, crossing the bridge means crossing the limits between the wife-giver and wife-taker. And events taking place during the bride's crossing the bridge tell her fortune. When *Ko* crossed the bridge, by accident her left foot first stepped on the plank, indicating that her first baby would be a boy. In fact, she had eight children in an alternating order of male then female.

She had a good life with her husband for about 13 years before a disaster fell upon them. *Mai* loved hunting, which had brought him a lot of fun and food, but eventually a disaster. One morning in 1961, just a few hours before dawn, *Mai* wanted to hunt. *Ko*, already in the third month of pregnancy of their fifth child, dreamed that a snake had bitten her on the heel that night. "That is a bad omen! You better not go hunting today", she suggested. But *Mai* did not listen to her and went into the forest. He sat on a tree and shot a tiger, which he misrecognized as a deer. The tiger did not die but waited for

Mai to come closer. When *Mai* got down to check whether the “deer” died, it jumped and bit him on the neck. *Mai* pulled out his dagger immediately and jabbed holes in the tiger’s belly, wanting to force it to open its mouth. Unfortunately, the tiger did not till its death. *Mai* bled a lot and could not walk. He crept on the way back, but was worn out soon and waited in despair.

Probably *Ko* had unconsciously anticipated the disaster that morning. “I was absent-minded in preparing breakfast! ... My heart was beating too fast when it almost dawned ... Something bad must have happened... I worried a lot about *Mai*”. She asked a few male neighbors to help look for him. On their way into the forest, *Ko* felt her heart was broken, her legs lost all strength and she could not move a single pace. She sat down on the road, “Go! look for him! ... He must have met something bad!” she cried to others. One hour later when people finally found *Mai*, he had become too weak to speak. People carried *Ko* to *Mai*, who told her that he would not survive owing to too much bleeding. “If you had found me a little earlier, I would probably have survived!” He asked his unmarried youngest brother to cohabite with *Ko* and so take care of her and her children until he found his own wife⁷². But before the brother answered, *Mai* expired. Six months later, my landlord was born, in the year of tiger. He was named “*lai*” (to change), meaning his future siblings would have a different father. *Ko* worked very hard to raise her children. Her late husband’s third brother helped her; with him she had three more children. When all her children got married, she was supposed to live with her youngest son according to the local custom. But she could not get along with his wife, and she loved the former wife of my landlord. She then lived with my landlord and had a happy life for eight years.

“But my husband’s death did not leave us alone. When I thought it has gone, it struck us again!” In 1997, *Ko* and my landlord’s wife fell ill simultaneously. Repetitively, when one got a little better, the other would become worse. Such a dead loop was broken by my landlord’s wife’s death. In

Jinghpo, such a phenomenon is called “competing for life” (*go³¹kan³¹ ga³¹sun⁵⁵*): a spirit has made a strong decision to take one person from the family. The death of her beloved daughter-in-law carried her away. “The bad death fate of my husband falls upon my daughter-in-law, my beloved daughter-in-law! ” *Mai* died when *Ko* was in her early pregnancy, thus his death belonged to the worst and most painful type (*ndang³¹ si³³*). The soul of the deceased will never be consoled because it had a strong will of not leaving this world. It kept wandering in the forest, following its natal family, or moving into its natal family’s wife-taker and causing difficult child-bearing there. Worse, such a death will be passed down to offspring, making some of them die badly. “*Mai*’s bad death caused my beloved daughter-in-law’s death. My poor daughter-in-law! We encountered the same bad fortune due to the same reason!” She explained the reason in terms of the Chinese animal calendar. Both *Ko* and *Mai* had good fates, but their marriage brought a bad luck to them owing to the incompatibility of their animal attributions. *Ko* was born in the year of chicken, and *Mai* of buffalo. The day on which *Mai*’s parents made a marriage proposal to *Ko* was of buffalo attribution, and the wedding day was of tiger attribution. Their marriage broke two taboos about the Chinese animal calendar. First, people of buffalo and chicken attributions are not suitable to each other as the former will suppress the latter. Second, a tiger subjugates both a buffalo and a chicken and thus the wedding should not be conducted on the day of tiger. Unfortunately, nobody at that time had cared about animal calendar, and had not known how to preserve their best fortune according to it. As a result, *Mai* died in the year of buffalo, the year of his animal attribution in which he had the softest fate⁷³. “I was so desperate! We made the same mistake in arranging a marriage between my third son and my beloved daughter-in-law! ...My son was born in the year of tiger, and my daughter-in-law was born in the year of horse. And their wedding was held on the day of tiger!”

Ko did not remember exactly when she had started to believe in this interpretation. But the Chinese animal calendar had won people's trust in recent years. From my first fieldwork in 2003, I have noticed that villagers have learned to attribute their current plight to previous ignorance or misuse of the Chinese animal calendar. For instance, my fieldwork assistant was born in the year of the tiger. Five years after his mother's death, he and his three brothers all suffered various problems. His marriage was disrupted in 2008 and his youngest brother lost promotion in the local government. He wanted to figure out the reason and a way out. In assisting me with an interview, he asked my informants (a Christian couple) whether his current plight was caused by his late mother's misuse of the animal calendar, who had preferred to conduct important rituals (like the weddings and rituals of celebrating the new house) on the day of tiger. "You are right," the couple confirmed his guess, "because our son *Nu* suffered from our wrong use of the Chinese animal calendar". *Nu* had been born, and had married, in the year of the horse. In Jinghpo, the word for horse ends with $-ra^{31}$ ($gum^{31}ra^{31}$) meaning "to make a mistake", thereby the year and day of horse attribution are considered inappropriate for rituals except for planting crops (a horse has a long tail, figuratively, crops might have long heads). "We are Christians, but we have learned to believe in the Chinese animal calendar. Aft first, we preferred not to hold the wedding for *Nu* in the year of horse. But a Chinese persuaded us. He said that that the double horse attributions would sweep bad lucks and bring wealth because a horse is tough in work and docile to the host". "Now, we felt regretful to listen to that Chinese man! A horse is good at hard work, so our son worked very diligently. But like a docile horse, he was too docile to his wife, who had become very lazy while controlling everything in the family!"

The Chinese animal calendar enables *Ko* to understand the disaster that had happened to her, but it does not explain one other aspect of her life – she had great life fortune and had brought many

villagers good luck. She was the best weaver in the village, but had stopped weaving for years owing to her bad health. From March 2010, she started to weave again. During her weaving I chatted with her, and she told me many of her stories that we had missed in previous interviews. After her husband's death, food supplies were very short for raising her eight children. During the past thirty odd years, her primary concern was to find enough food for her eight children. Every five days, she had conducted small-scale trade to complement the cultivation. She had carried a heavy basket of Chinese cloth and utensils on the back and a baby in the front to the *Dauphum* market in Burma (about two hours' walk away by mountain shortcut). There she had exchanged about sixty kilograms of rice and other things. On her way back, the basket had become too heavy, and every time her first and second sons, already teenagers at that time, had gone to the border to fetch her. She had sold half the rice in the market in today's Tongbiguan Village Tract, and purchased cloth and utensils for another cycle of trading. She had kept half the rice for the consumption for a family of nine. The rice was far from enough, and she had found all kinds of edible wild vegetables and yams to mix with it.

In hard life she had gradually developed and accumulated strong vitality. "I have raised eight children and helped them have a decent life", she was very proud. None of these children had wrong or bad habit like using drugs and having alcohol addiction. Her eldest son was a great diviner. Her second son graduated from college and became the associate editor of the official newspaper house in the Prefecture capital in Mangshi municipality. Her third son, my landlord, was talented in musical performance and now organizing a musical troupe under the support from the Tongbiguan Village Tract government. In addition, these children have developed a big family. By 2010, they have brought her over twenty grandchildren and four great grandsons. "I am proud of them. I am pleased with my hard work, which is worthwhile". Without her, all these would not exist. Now in her late

seventies, she strongly believed in one thing: “No matter what happens, I should not give up!”... “Holding up, I can change everything!”. That is, one should always keep one’s strongest *woi³³nyi³¹*, the power that maintains life and makes people conscious.

To illustrate her point, she told me how she had almost left this world in 2008 when she had been sick for almost a half year. Her strong *woi³³nyi³¹* had saved her. Three times she had dreamed that her two late friends had come to invite her to a place that she had never heard of. She had gone with them and walked a long way. Suddenly, she had realized that the friends had passed away for years; she should not go with them, otherwise she would never come back. “I told myself again and again that I should not give up life and should go back to my house. I had eight children, each having a few children and even grandchildren. I wanted to stay with my big family”. But the two friends’ invitation had been so seductive, and their voice had been so dulcet mixing with a slightly ululant feeling, “I just really wanted to go with them! Really really wanted to go!” she said. In the former two dreams, she had kept hesitating till she had woken up with tense anxiety, finding herself heavily sweating. But in the last dream, she had managed to leave the two friends and go home, without turning her head back to take a final look at them. Since then, she had stopped dreaming the two friends and gradually recovered. “Without a strong *woi³³nyi³¹*”, she emphasized, “I would have gone with them!”

In addition, one particular episode stimulated her to relate her strong *woi³³nyi³¹* to the influence of her life fortune over others’. In November 2010, I sometimes had interviews with other villagers around her weaving site in her courtyard. She heard, and sometimes joined, our conversation. She was a highly intelligent woman, with interest in religious issues that most females do not have. She had close contact with a few great religious specialists. Her father was a great diviner, not only good at Jinghpo ways of divination but also expertise in Chinese chiromancy. Her late husband’s youngest

brother was now one of the two greatest religious specialists in Tongbiguan Village Tract, and her eldest son had grasped almost everything of animal sacrifice, and was talented in using the Jinghpo divination table and observing the Chinese chiromancy⁷⁴. In particular, she was interested in my interview with a professional diviner regarding how to figure out a best time for certain activities. The diviner combined the fortune recognized and formulated by Chinese, Jinghpo Christians and non-Christians. At minimum, he intended to figure out a best match among the purposes of activities, one's born fate (according to the Jinghpo divination table and the Chinese animal calendar), and one's fate varying with the year, the month (according to the Chinese animal calendar), and the day (according to the Burmese horoscope)⁷⁵, the fortune of periods within a day (according to the Jinghpo divination table and the Chinese animal calendar), and finally but the most importantly, the fortune of the combination of involved individuals' fates (according to the Chinese animal calendar). For instance in choosing a period and a specific person to dig the first few hoes of clay for initiating the house construction, the diviner should identify a digger whose fate goes along with, or is better than, the host's during an identified period. But the diviner emphasized that the digger should not have too strong *woi³³nyi³¹*; otherwise, he would suppress the host's fortune.

At this moment, I noticed that *Ko*, sitting and weaving in front of us, stopped weaving and looked at us for a few moments. It seemed what the diviner had said gave her a break and stimulated her to realize something important. As I expected, when the diviner left she told me, in an almost weeping tone, "maybe my husband's and my daughter-in-law's tragedies are caused by my too strong *woi³³nyi³¹*.... I suppressed them!" I was startled! Intuitively I found this idea extremely convincing, though sad. It reminded me that villagers do have a wide-spread idea of how one's fortune can be suppressed by some other things/persons that have very strong fortune. I remembered a story about

how the strong vitality of the divination stone suppressed people's fortune. The stone is considered the origin of the power for all divination tools (like a kind of slim bamboo, the leave of *ja³¹ba⁵⁵lap³¹*, and so forth). It is animate and has strong vitality. It thus brings good fortune to people with strong fate and *woi³³nyi³¹*, but will otherwise suppress people with weak fate. It moves in the soil and leaves channels, but only a very lucky man can find it by tracing the channels. About forty years before, a miner in Burma once had found such a stone by accident in the mining. But his family members had always fallen ill thereafter, and sacrifice rituals had only temporally healed them. He had resorted to a great diviner, who had told him that there had been a live thing in his house. All his family members' fates were not strong enough to tame it and thus it had suppressed them. To avoid further misfortune, he should give it to someone who needed it and whose fate was strong enough. The divination had also indicated that the miner did not need to look for such a man; he would come to ask for it soon. As the apprentice's eldest brother, who had been a great specialist then, had heard of the stone, and he had gone to ask for it. Then the miner's family members all had recovered soon.

On that day, *Ko* was seized by her idea that her very strong *woi³³nyi³¹* suppressed her husband's and her daughter-in-law's fortune. She finished that day's weaving much earlier than before and became very sad. I sympathized with her, but I also realized that her idea was well-supported by villagers' notions regarding of individual pre-given fate. I asked the greatest specialist in Sama, her late husband's youngest brother, what he thought about her idea. "What she thought is possible", he said, "and we Jinghpo have a specific means to test such suppression through chicken bone divination". To do that, the diviner place the cartilages taken from between two eyes and a three-fork cartilage structure taken from the upper beak on a plane, let their tips face each other and judge their relative height. If the tip of the former is higher than that of the latter, family members will be in good

shape throughout the year. Otherwise, people will fall sick and their property will be lost, because the supposedly lower part (the beak) is higher than the supposedly higher part (the eyes). Such a situation indicates that something unfortunate will suppress people. “According to the same principle, it was possible that *Ko*’s too strong *woi*³³*nyi*³¹ suppressed her family members’ fortune”, the specialist told me. However, he emphasized that *Ko*’s idea was only a possible interpretation. Nobody had done the proper chicken bone divination when the tragedy had taken place. Now with almost half century having passed, none can ensure whether what *Ko* had thought was true or not.

To verify the specialist’s suspicion, I asked many villagers in my subsequent interviews whether an individual’s too strong *woi*³³*nyi*³¹ would bother others. Some believed that it can, some did not. But almost all emphasized that they were not certain about what they told me. However, they also reminded me that *Ko*’s strong *woi*³³*nyi*³¹ really saved people. They told me two stories regarding how she had saved two boys in the village, which I had heard of in interviews with *Ko. Ding*, now in his late forties, had falling sickness (epilepsy). At the age eight, he incurred his first attack when he was cooking without anybody at home. He had passed out and fallen down, with his two hands being burned in the hearth. At that time *Ko* had come back from the field and felt something unusual when passing *Ding*’s house. She had gone into the house and saved him, though his two hands had been destroyed. Years later, a boy *Tong*, a classificatory son of *Ko*, had been deathly sick regardless of sacrifice and hospital treatments. His parents had begged *Ko* to bless the boy so as to change his bad fate. *Ko* had renamed him as *Mai* after her late husband, hoping the latter’s bad fate would fight with the boy’s and in fight the two bad fates would be worn out. That way, the boy would survive. As she expected, the boy recovered and now has become one of the greatest businessmen of the region.

In particular, a man told me a story about how his late father had benefited from *Ko*’s good

fortune. His father had been surprised to find out that whenever he had met *Ko* on the way to hunting, he would definitely get big game. Many times, he had waken *Ko* up at midnight and brought her the first and best part of the game to thank her for bringing him good luck. Regarding this, *Ko*'s late husband's youngest brother, an excellent hunter, told me that hunters usually plant a herb (*tsi*³¹ *lap*³¹) in a secrete place. It is supposed to protect a hunter from being bitten by animals and to bring them good luck. When a hunter sets off for hunting, he will spray some clay on the leaves of the herb calling it to follow him. However, the spirit of the herb will be scared and run off if the hunter meets a woman with a bad fate, while it will be happy and acute if it meets a woman with a good fate⁷⁶.

§§§

This case illustrates how two arguments are proposed to explain the interlacing of fates under the influence of three knowledge systems. *Ko*'s good fate and strong *woi*³³*nyi*³¹ bring misfortune to some of her family members but good luck to many other villagers. The two arguments explain, respectively, these two contrastive influences of her fate in terms of combinations of the three knowledge systems. Following the same analytical procedure adopted in this chapter, I will analyze how these arguments emerge from the interactions among structural forces, initial conditions, and situational contingencies.

First of all, these two arguments derive partially from well-defined ideas and partially from emergent ideas. This suffices for my application of the notion of an “attractor” for analyzing their emergence. The Jinghpo have a strong theory for understanding individual fates, but lack any systematic theory that specifies the interlacing of fates. The Chinese animal calendar and the Burmese divination help villagers understand such interlacing, but villagers do not grasp these theories well. These three kinds of theories influence people's understandings but do not formulate any default theory regarding the interlacing of fates. The two arguments are emergent. Before their emergence,

there exist indefinitely many possibilities, or no possibility at all, regarding people's understandings of the interlacing of fates. Therefore, these knowledge systems are only *local* structural forces.

Different from the situations in the other cases discussed in Chapter Two and the present chapter, these structural forces do not compete with each other. The interlacing of fates has been observed by people, but people do not consider it serious enough to create proper theories. In understanding a given case, people draw on ideas from available knowledge systems, which do not generate any general theory for the future reference. That is, knowledge systems are only usable or convenient, rather than competing, tools. In the present case, the three knowledge systems are woven into two combinations for explaining two aspects of *Ko*'s fate, with each combination generating an argument.

Such combinations are subject to initial conditions and situational contingencies. For instance, the prevalence of the Chinese animal calendar serves as an initial condition that nourishes the first argument. My interview with the diviner serves as a contingency that elicits the second argument. By combining the knowledge systems with initial conditions and contingencies, each argument represents a particular propensity of people's understandings of the interlacing of *Ko*'s and others' fates. The two arguments are thus not competing with each other. I will treat them as two "attractors".

The first "attractor" explains the Jinghpo notion of life competition among family members in terms of the mismatch of their animal attributions. Although the time when it was formed is not identifiable, it has been intensified little by little whenever a new tragedy resulting from the mismatch of animal attributions takes place. All such tragedies serve as the critical point that intensifies the "attractor". It is thus a "regular attractor". The second "attractor" is a tentative idea: *Ko*'s good fate and strong *woi*³³*nyi*³¹ brings some of her family members bad fortune but good luck to many other villagers. My interviews with her regarding her strong *woi*³³*nyi*³¹, as an initial condition, reinforce her

reflection over her past. My interview with the diviner serves as the critical point. The diviner's claim of not choosing a digger with good fate but too strong $woi^{33}nyi^{31}$ for initiating house construction stimulates her to think about her experience by the same logic. This interview provides a necessary, far from a sufficient, condition for the emergence *Ko*'s idea. That is, *Ko*'s idea is a "strange attractor".

In addition, her idea is convincing only to a few individuals (like *Ko*, me, and the great specialist in Sama). It does not exert mandatory force over others. It goes beyond the Jinghpo notion of fates, which assigns one's fate by the $woi^{33}nyi^{31}$ of one's ancestors and one's birth time. *Ko*'s idea of her strong $woi^{33}nyi^{31}$ influencing others implies that one's fate is defined, or at least influenced, by one's or others' $woi^{33}nyi^{31}$. Such an implication is similar to the Christian sophistication of the Jinghpo notion of $woi^{33}nyi^{31}$ – one's $woi^{33}nyi^{31}$ defines one's fate. But Christians believe that one's $woi^{33}nyi^{31}$ defines one's fate after death, while *Ko*'s idea suggests that one's $woi^{33}nyi^{31}$ influences others' fortune in daily life. In fact, such implication is more prone to the Chinese folk belief. It is novel to the Jinghpo notion of fate and is used to interpret the Jinghpo notions of life competition.

Readers might wonder that though two arguments are generated in the case 2.3, I claim that no "attractor" emerges there, whereas I treat the two arguments in the present case as "attractors". The reason lies in whether a global structural force is present or not. In the case 2.3, a global structural force outlines people's understandings regarding the health and fortune of a great religious specialist. Under its influence, any convincing argument that is eligible to be treated as an "attractor" should have the global influence over the examined case. That is, it should represent the propensity of the case under the influence of a global structural force and contingencies. Its being convincing is only a necessary condition for its being treated as an "attractor". Obviously the two arguments in the case 2.3 represent only two parallel propensities of people's understandings of a specialist's health and fortune.

By contrast, when a global structural force is absent as in the present case, any convincing argument can be treated as an “attractor”. Without a global structural force outlining the process of an event, the development of the event is not well-defined. Under the influence of the local structural forces, the event displays multiple propensities propelled by various forces or combinations among them. Each convincing argument represents a propensity. An examined event might generate a global development trajectory if the multiple propensities are unified, or be diversified by the propensities.

Conclusion

The three cases in the present chapter illustrate the dynamics of how a consensus, or a couple of them, is (are) generated by the co-functioning of several local structural forces. Without a global structural force outlining the process, the local structural forces are combined to generate a global propensity of the process (cases 3.1 and 3.2 in which the local structural forces are competing with each other), or to diversify the process into parallel propensities (case 3.3 in which the local structural forces are parallel to each other). Initial conditions or contingencies generated in the processes bring the structural forces into a particular combination. And such combination matters most for understanding the dynamics of the micro-level processes. Each combination will generate a powerful argument, which can be treated as an “attractor”. It represents a particular propensity of the process, be it a “regular attractor” (case 3.1), a “strange attractor” (case 3.2), or a combination of both (case 3.3). A “strange attractor” differs from a “regular attractor” in two regards: 1) it sensitively depends on initial conditions; 2) it is labile and does not exert influence over the future.

One defining criterion for identifying whether a regular or strange “attractor” will arise is the critical point and its relation to the “attractor”. A critical point represents the influence of contingencies that escape the structural force. As demonstrated by the cases 2.1, 2.2, and 3.1, if a

critical point is *local*, influencing only aspects, or phases, of the whole process, an “attractor” that will arise is probably a fully-developed form of the critical point. The critical point serves as the necessary and sufficient condition for the emergence of a “regular attractor”, which results from influences of the structural force(s) over contingencies.

However, the critical point in the case 3.2 and that for the second “attractor” in the case 3.3 do not outline the “attractor”. The critical point and the derivative “attractor” are heterogeneous with each other. The former provides a virtual space for the emergence of the latter. The influence of such a critical point is *global*, intending to modify the structural forces. It functions as only a necessary, far from a sufficient, condition for the emergence of a “strange attractor”. And a “strange attractor” results from the influences of contingencies over the structural forces, and is thus hard to be consolidated. More generally, the emergence of a “strange attractor” requires two conditions additional to that of a “regular attractor”. First, there is lacking a global structural force, which precludes the global structural force consolidating all contingencies. A “strange attractor” derives from a contingent combination of the local structural forces. Second, influences of contingencies are strong enough to modify the initial interactional pattern among the local structural forces.

One major difference between the cases in the present chapter and those in Chapter Two is that the former is regulated by a global structural force while the latter is by a few local structural forces. Under a global structural force, any convincing argument eligible to be treated as an “attractor” should have the global influence over the examined case. That is, it should represent the propensity of the examined event as outlined by a global structural force and finalized by contingencies. Its being convincing is only a necessary condition for its being treated as an “attractor”. By contrast, when a global structural force is absent, any convincing argument can be treated as an “attractor”. Without a

global structural force, the development of the event is not well-defined. Under the local structural forces, the event might display multiple propensities propelled by these structural forces or combinations among them. Each convincing argument represents such a particular propensity.

Case 3.3 is relatively open because it leaves space for the evolution of and interactions among the two “attractors”. The emergence of several “attractors” in a particular case requires a long time span to allow more threads of socio-cultural life and more individuals to be involved to complicate the event and gestate its propensities. Case 3.3 is potentially useful for illustrating how multiple “attractors” generate a global propensity if these “attractors” are unified, or diversify the development of the event if these “attractors” are parallel to each other. The case spans over fifty years and generates two parallel “attractors”. They address different aspects of the interlacing of fates. Both “attractors” are novel and require time for consolidation. It takes the first “attractor” decades to be widely accepted by villagers. The second “attractor” is formed in December 2010 and dissipated on its own till summer 2011. However, case 3.3 is not adequate for me to observe and examine the evolution of a “strange attractor” and its interactions with other “regular attractors”. The concerned issue (the interlacing of fates) is so specialized that few have enough knowledge to understand and enough passion to pursue it. Most villagers understand the importance of the issue, but their culture does not provide them any default theory. The issue is novel; it requires rigorous research for a thorough understanding. It interests only a limited number of specialists. Accordingly, the “strange attractor” formed in the case 3.3 dissipates on its own soon after its emergence. To fully explore the dynamics of the evolution of a “strange attractor” and its interactions with other “regular attractors”, the three cases in Chapter Four will demonstrate the long-term evolution of an issue central to most villagers – the development and degeneration of the Jinghpo society.

Chapter Four

Fate and Opportunity, Development and Degeneration: Development of “Attractors” and a Self-organizing Process

For decades, economic and socio-cultural development has become the primary concern of the Jinghpo in my fieldwork region. Sama villagers recognize two lines of development, one from Christianity and the other from the Chinese government. On the one hand, Jinghpo Christians since the late 1890s have set development and modernization of the ethnic Jinghpo as the primary reason for conversion. To achieve that, Christians created the Jinghpo writing system, converted sacrifice makers, and set up Christian organizations all over the Jinghpo Hills (Sumlut 1996; Maru Tangbau 1995; Wang 1997). By 2010, almost all Jinghpo in Burma and about half Jinghpo population in China have converted. On the other hand, economic development has become the primary aim of the Chinese government since the 1980s. The government dragged all its ethnic minorities into modernization. As all ethnic minorities are relatively under-developed, the government sponsors various development projects to help them remove poverty. These two lines of development influence all aspects of villagers' daily life. Accordingly, the issue of development meets the condition proposed at the end of Chapter Three: a long-term issue that most villagers are keenly concerned with.

As villagers are differentially influenced by the four knowledge systems, they associate development and modernization with different psychological and spiritual meanings. According to the Chinese government, development and modernization are simply legal and politico-economic matters. Such a view provides a baseline for villagers to make sense of the various development projects. Accordingly, the first meaning of development for villagers is to comply with the government's policies that have transformed them. As I briefly analyze in Chapter One, three policies are

particularly important here. The policy of family control maintains only the minimum functioning of the local marriage cycles by reducing the number of children and so of marriage contracts among alliance parties. The government's administration in villages, together with the system of registered residence, limits villagers' freedom of mobility. And development projects of removing poverty have alienated villagers from spirits and broken the balance between humans and their surroundings.

Moreover, according to such a view of development, ethnic cultures or religions are barriers to modernization. Because of the policy of religious freedom, the government cannot attempt to brazenly erase cultures. It then emphasizes ethnic minorities as poor Chinese citizens and overlooks those peoples as bearers of different cultures. Such emphasis on economic development and neglect of cultural development stimulate villagers to develop an ambivalent view of transformations brought by the government. They welcome transformations that have brought them a more comfortable material life, but they also believe that transformations can lead them to irretrievable intellectual degeneration because the motherland has stopped generating cultural heroes (details see Chapter One).

To drag themselves off the tragedies, villagers have tried to preserve animal sacrifice thereby resuming a psychic end-result of animal sacrifice by associating a psychological meaning to the government agenda of development. In particular, development projects of removing poverty indicate that, as long as ethnic minorities could keep up with the Chinese pace of modernization, they make their own decision to preserve, or allow decline of, their cultures. Aided by the projects of removing poverty, villagers have accumulated confidence to develop animal sacrifice that had been disrupted by the Chinese communists since the 1950s. In particular, the policy of tourism of ethnic cultures in Yunnan Province encourages villagers to preserve animal sacrifice. In addition, villagers also learn from the southwest Chinese folk religion to resuscitate animal sacrifice, assigning it equal status with

the Jinghpo sacrifice in dealing with relations between the living and spirits.

Different from the government, Christians associate a spiritual implication with development and propose a middle-way of development that leads to both modernization and spiritual emancipation.

Christians deprecate animal sacrifice as backward and superstitious, as opposed to Christianity that originated from the world where modern science thrives and where people have the best material life.

For Christians, conversion is a short cut to modernization.

All these meanings associated with development suggest the existence of competitive means to realize the proposed goals of development. The government sets policies to achieve its legal, politico-economical development. Christians and animal sacrifice makers formulate their hope and plans for a spiritual and psychic development. However, all these proposed means are only attempts, plans, or even aspirations, and thus are tentative and hypothetical. According to these means, people can anticipate, but not predict, the process of development and its result. Their influences and results are pending and subject to unknown factors. Compared with the global structural forces discussed in Chapter Two and the local structural forces in Chapter Three, these means are only structural forces in-the-making, far from the established forces that outline the process of development. In other words, they cannot be treated as structural forces for understanding villagers' roads to development.

It follows that the realization of development is a self-organizing process. Self-organization, as indicated by its name, means a process that is made on its own. Without a structural force outlining the process and underpinning people's behaviors and understandings, there does not exist any default means for realizing development. Initial conditions and situational contingencies, therefore, will play more critical roles in shaping the process of development. A combination of them will generate a means of realizing development. As initial situations and contingencies are essentially opportunistic,

the derivative means are usually contingent. Being contingent also indicates that in the given period, there must exist a few means, either simultaneously or consecutively.

Each of such means can be considered as an argument regarding development. As I demonstrate in Chapter Three, without a global structural force any convincing argument can be considered as an “attractor”. Similarly, any convincing argument generated in a self-organizing process is eligible to be considered as an “attractor”. The three cases in the present chapter will illustrate how the self-organizing processes in different life domains generate “attractors”. During the last few decades, these “attractors” have interacted with each other. Therefore, the goal of the present chapter is to demonstrate the dynamics of the emergence of and interactions among “attractors”.

In addition, the three cases respectively illustrate three kinds of dynamics of self-organization. The first illustrates the dynamics of linear intensification: an “attractor” serves as a primary starting-point that is continuously intensified in future events and based on which new “attractors” are formulated. In the long run, this primary “attractor” will evolve into a novel quasi-structural force. The second case analyzes parallel development of “attractors”, with each representing an aspect of the interactions among various knowledge systems. The third case demonstrates the competition among “attractors”, which represent the tensions among the knowledge systems.

Case 4.1: Drug Use, HIV/AIDS, and Broken Family Traditions

The first case examines the causes and consequences of one of the catastrophic results of socio-economic development among the Jinghpo: the crisis of drug use and HIV/AIDS. The crisis has lasted over two decades, and has affected almost every aspect of villagers’ life. Enabled by the four knowledge systems, villagers proposed a series of interpretations of, and preventive means for dealing

with, drug use and HIV/AIDS⁷⁷. Each interpretation and its derivative means are underpinned by certain local structural forces (knowledge systems), and represent villagers' particular hope of, and road to, development. The four knowledge systems associate different ethical, religious, and moral implications with drug use and HIV/AIDS. Jinghpo animal sacrifice and Chinese folk beliefs consider drug use and AIDS a novel kind of inherited bad fate. Jinghpo Christians associate drug use and AIDS with moral degeneration and unrighteousness. Modern bio-medicine introduced by the Chinese government stigmatizes drug users and AIDS-bearers and considers them unethical Chinese citizens (e.g. Shao 2006; Zhang et al 2005; Zhou 1999). In making sense of drug use and HIV/AIDS, individuals draw upon all available knowledge systems and so negotiate among being ethical citizens, righteous persons, and un-stigmatized patients. However, all these interpretations are only tentative and hypothetical. None dominates villagers' understandings of, and efforts for, development. These interpretations and means are combined and revised by individuals in their interaction and reflection. There does not exist any structural force regulating the interactions among these interpretations. That is, the interactions are self-organizing (c.f. Bolender 2010; Foley 1997; Humphrey 2002).

The following case study first examines a general tendency shared among sacrifice makers (see case 4.3 for Christians' understandings of, and proposals, to development). Sacrifice makers attribute drug use and HIV/AIDS to a broken family tradition. This attribution was established long before my fieldwork. But it is far from a structural force. It has not yet set a default interpretative model for future episodes, but is rather intensified and modified by future episodes. It is a structural force in-the-making. I then examine three episodes that happened during my fieldwork, in which the established attribution is reinforced, re-interpreted, and modified. Each episode represents a specific interaction among several knowledge systems that generates an argument regarding drugs/HIV and

development. And each argument can be treated as a modified manifestation of the established attribution. This first case, then, is intended to examine how these arguments interact with each other in the form of a subsequent one intensifying and modifying an antecedent one.

Before I start the case, I need to introduce the situations of AIDS/drugs among Jinghpo before my fieldwork (July 2009). I aim to set an ethnographic background for the three episodes examined below, and establish a baseline for argumentation. The Jinghpo have been connected with opium for centuries. In the Eighteenth Century, the Jinghpo Hills were discovered as being suited to the production of opium, and Yunnan and Upper Burma then became important opium producers. Opium was used to alleviate pain and served several of the functions of money — as a means of payment, a medium of exchange, and a standard of value (Nugent 1982). The production and use of opium did not generate a crisis of drug use then. According to villagers' recollection, only a few in the grandparents' generation of the eldest villagers had slight addiction to opium.

However, a thriving China-Burma border trade since the 1990s has exposed the Jinghpo to other types of drugs and HIV/AIDS infection (Hyde 2007; Yang R. *et al.* 2003; Yu *et al.* 2003). Exposure does not necessarily mean a high rate of HIV infection and drug abuse. According to villagers, people with good fortune will not use drugs. The problem is that Jinghpo have lost the fortune previously endowed by their motherland, owing to the development projects (see Chapter One). Without such fortune, many villagers were caught by the evil of drugs. In Sama village, such misfortune was initiated by a project of constructing a system for tap water in the 1990s. The project eased the hard work of carrying water for daily use, which had taken females at least a couple of hours everyday. But the construction of the cistern blocked the fortune of the village, because Chinese workers built it on the middle of the ridge in which the village is located. The middle of a ridge is considered the source

of the fortune for all creatures below the ridge. The cistern is understood to compromise the futures and the fortunes of all creatures that are geographically below it (including Sama villagers).

Such misfortune was further intensified by government-sponsored projects initiated in the late 1990s and designed to eradicate poverty. In 2003, the Chinese government encouraged Sama villagers to cultivate walnuts and Chinese fir in the mountains. From 2005, the government-owned mountains were allocated to households for cultivation under governmental subsidy. By 2008 each Sama household was allotted at least 15 hectares. Cultivation brought villagers a limited amount of money, which is insufficient to adequately plant these plots. Some brave villagers borrowed from the local credit cooperative union by mortgaging the usufruct certificate of the plots. But in 2009, a few lost their certificates as they had failed to repay the loans. Such failure of investment stimulated villagers to search for other ways that could bring them instant money. Accordingly, contrary to what government had expected, most villagers rented out half, or even three-fourths, of their plots for fifty or seventy years to Chinese businessmen who came to exploit mountain resources. At once, villagers gained about one hundred thousands RMB (about USD 14,814).

This is an unprecedented amount for most villagers! They had never seen such sums, let alone possessed them. Holding such money, they felt their hands become hot. They did not make a reasonable plan for developing and spending, but only found it so enjoyable to spend money at their pleasure, especially for purchasing alcohol and drugs that give them instant gratification. For most villagers, the two years of 2007 and 2008 were the happiest time. As a Chinese storekeeper in Sama told me, he got a lot from his convenience store in 2008; everyday, people bought beer and cigarettes without ordinary restraint. In retrospect, some told me that if they had not had money at hand, they would not have been able to use drugs. This sounds like an excuse, but it is the reality for many.

However, everyone faces the decline of fortune and not everyone becomes a drug user. And few females in my fieldwork base use drugs⁷⁸. Upon my questioning why some can resist the lure of drugs while others cannot, many told me that a drug user must have had a destroyed and wrong *woi³³nyi³¹*, that is, the power that maintains a subject alive is destroyed or misled. The problems caused by a destroyed and misdirected *woi³³nyi³¹* are not only physical, but moral and psychological. They undermine the basis of a person's humanity. Within the tradition of animal sacrifice, no healing method could cure a destroyed *woi³³nyi³¹*. Accordingly, sacrifice makers attributed drug addiction /AIDS, which is almost/ definitely incurable, to a compromised *woi³³nyi³¹*.⁷⁹

The correlation between drug addiction/AIDS and a wrong or destroyed *woi³³nyi³¹* is illustrated by villagers' attitudes towards hospital treatment. There is an elementary clinic in Sama with a resident doctor who received three years of bio-medical training following her 9th-grade education. The clinic is about one minute's walk from my landlord's house, and I had a lot of conversations with the doctor and patients. Villagers told me that what she did was simple – if a patient is in fever, she will use febrifuge; otherwise, she uses medicine for warming. Although doctors in the Village Tract Hospital are more advanced, what a patient gets there is only a disease name, a few packets of medicine and some injections. Villagers learned little about the healing dynamics of bio-medical treatment. For most villagers, hospital treatment works for diseases that can be observed and identified on the human body. They go to the clinic only for diseases they know exact reasons for (like bodily wounds). For diseases of unknown origins, most resort to animal sacrifice or Christian healing prayer first. In particular, they rarely go to the clinic for diseases associated with drug use, as these are caused by a compromised *woi³³nyi³¹* and no medicine is believed to work on *woi³³nyi³¹*.

More importantly, a wrong or destroyed *woi³³nyi³¹* is an inescapable fate (*a³¹yu³¹*). Advanced

religious specialists of animal sacrifice and other elders who know oral history believe that one's destroyed and wrong *woi³³nyi³¹* is caused by one's broken family tradition, and *vice versa*. Such a compromised *woi³³nyi³¹* will transmit across generations, just like HIV/AIDS and the habit of drug use are transmitted among family members. Drug users are thus considered as having a new kind of hereditary bad fate. As there is no way to change an inherited bad fate, there is no way to cure a destroyed and wrong *woi³³nyi³¹* and concomitant drug use and HIV/AIDS within a family (for a detailed discussion of the Jinghpo notion of inherited bad fate, see Chapter One)⁸⁰.

Accordingly, though the situation of drug use was volatile in the early 2000s, animal sacrifice makers, who count for the two-thirds of the populations in Sama village, simply believed there was nothing they could do for it. They just let it go! Drugs/AIDS flowed in from outside through government projects. These projects undermined the Jinghpo's fortune, broke the family traditions, and compromised the *woi³³nyi³¹* of individuals who then started to use drugs. Worse, the drugs/AIDS have become a new kind of hereditary bad fate. Therefore, drugs/AIDS should be put down by governmental *violence* such as imprisoning the drug users. In interviews when I tried to bring issues regarding AIDS/drug into the conversation, I could tell that people really did not have much to say except for specific examples. Even in private conversations with those who had been used to telling me "underground truth" in the village, I could not motivate people to talk. There was just not much people could say about an inherited bad fate. Drugs/AIDS came to villagers by accident. They existed, caused death, broke families, and that was all!

Accordingly, almost all efforts at control relied on the government. Beginning in 2005, the government established extremely strict measures. Every five days during local market meetings, lookout posts were set at major crossings and policemen forced passer-bys who look like drug users

(being morbidly black and thin) to receive urine tests. Those who had a positive result would be sent to prison, where they would be beaten seriously. People coming back from prison were deadly sick, with wounds throughout the body. Some even died soon after. In Sama from 2005 to 2009, 15 males (of about 80 adult men) died of drug use, and most after their returning from prison.

The Sama village leaders actively responded to the government's policy and set up strict punishment for drug users as a means of prevention. In 2009, they passed two effective regulations regarding drug use. First, if they caught a drug user, they would confiscate at least half of his mountain plot. This worked effectively as most villagers had rented out most of their plot and there did not exist free mountains to reclaim. Second, a drug user would be deprived of all benefits from the government projects.⁸¹ Other practical factors also contributed to reducing drug use. By September 2009, most villagers had run out of the money gained from renting out plots. And the price of drugs rocketed. For instance, as opium cultivation has been recently prohibited in the Kachin State, opium became expensive. In Laiza, 1 "liǎng" (a Chinese weight unit, 1 liǎng = 50 grams) cost no more than RMB 50 (USD 7.4) before 2009, while in late 2010 it cost at least RMB 300 (USD 44.4).

As a consequence, the volatile situations of drug use that I had observed in 2003 and 2005 in Sama had been roughly controlled, with less than ten secret-users left. However in neighboring villages, about one-third of the males still used drugs. The situations were worse in other counties in Dehong Prefecture. Sama villagers were proud of their success.⁸²

Here I summarize the patterns of drug use, HIV/AIDS and people's understandings before 2009. Most animal sacrifice makers believed that a drug user has a compromised *woi³³nyi³¹*, and a few (religious specialists and other elders) related a specific individual's compromised *woi³³nyi³¹* to his broken family tradition. A broken family tradition brought people a hereditary bad fate, and drug use

and HIV/AIDS were a new kind of hereditary bad fate. Like other traditional bad fates, there is no way out except for violence that destroys the population. During my 18 months of fieldwork, such a basic understanding appeared again and again and gradually intensifying. In the following text, I will analyze how this understanding is manifested, intensified, and modified in three episodes.

The first episode took place in early 2008 when *Tong*, a great businessman, died of AIDS. He had had a hard childhood. His father was a muddle-headed drunkard, and he had learned to be independent as a teenager, and had helped his mother support a family of 11. At that time, his family had been so poor that he could not get married even in his thirties. This was unusual as most boys married around twenty. His failure to marry in timely fashion delayed the marriages of all other boys of his generation in all *A Tong* families because he, as the eldest, was supposed to marry first. His father's brothers had then helped accumulate bride-price and finally enabled his marriage.

In the 1990s, when a trade road connecting Yingjiang County seat and Burma traversed Sama, *Tong* had started his small-scale timber trade. To everyone's surprise, he had displayed extraordinary talent in trade and gradually accumulated wealth. In the early 2000s, he had constructed a big house, purchased a grand home video system, two jeeps, and cultivated hundreds of hectares of mountain plots with cash crops (like amomum *tsao-ko*, coffee, walnut, and macadamia) and commercial woods (like teak and Chinese fir). In about ten years his business had expanded so much that even the Yingjiang County government had pawned one half of the border city of Laiza to him to repay debt. Gradually, he had been considered one of the greatest Jinghpo businessmen in Yingjiang County.

Villagers envied him and believed that his achievements were blessed by his grandmother, whose tomb site rigorously meets all criteria of both Jinghpo and Chinese tomb geomancy (see Chapter One for these criteria). In addition, he remembered what villagers had helped him. He had served as the

head of the cooperative team for over ten years, and trained youths in trade. He had also sponsored the building of a village cultural life center and the purchase of a set of musical instruments for the village troupe. More broadly, he had promoted Jinghpo cultural development by organizing people to investigate and collect the complete genealogy of the clan he belonged to (the *Ma³¹ran³¹*). In the 2000s, when the Jinghpo “feast-of-merit” (*ma³¹nau³¹*) was officially identified as the emblem of the Jinghpo culture, he had donated a lot to construct the dance center in Yingjiang County seat.

However, big money corrupted him. All villagers knew that he had many mistresses in Burma and had even taken a minor wife. Since the early 2000s, he had rarely come home, though he guaranteed his major wife and her children a wealthy life. His fourth brother, a drug user, kept asking for money from him for purchasing drugs. The brother’s mind had been disrupted by drugs, and he did not care that his wife had eloped with a Chinese man. Villagers believed that his days were numbered, and I also noticed that he always walked as if he was high on drugs; as villagers said “he is always about to fly”.

The degeneration of this family has consequences for other villagers as well. In 2007, *Tong*’s second brother bought a car with a loan from the local credit cooperative through *Tong*’s relations. The brother did not have any business to use the car for but showed off everywhere. In 2008, he destroyed his car in a traffic accident and forever deferred repaying the loan. Leaders in the credit cooperative then believed that Sama villagers did not have good credit and denied all of their loan applications in 2009-10. This hurt those villagers who had planned to invest to cultivate their mountain plots.

In 2007, *Tong* held a luxurious funeral for his mother – so luxurious that most villagers had never seen one like it. He invited a Chinese specialist from Tengchong County to identify a tomb site for her and spent RMB tens of thousands to build a luxurious tomb. The site followed all criteria of tomb geomancy except that it was located on the same hillside but was geographically above his

grandmother's tomb. The Chinese specialist seemed not to consider the relative height of the tombs a problem, but for Jingpho it is a taboo to bury people of the children's generation in a tomb that is geographically above the parents'. Otherwise, as villagers believed, the living will be dragged into the afterworld by the maltreated ancestors. Many elder warned *Tong* of the possible disaster of that site. But *Tong* did not listen. "He just wanted to build a grand tomb that none could match", they told me.

As predicted, *Tong* and his brother all met disasters thereafter. In 2008, *Tong* was diagnosed as HIV positive and died soon after. Villagers later learned that his minor wife had died of AIDS before him. Two months later, his fourth brother died of drug use. During his funeral the second brother had a heated quarrel with his own wife and was cut by her severely. Although he survived after surgery, he had to stay in bed thereafter. The wounds kept becoming inflamed, but the family did not have money for further surgeries because of their debt to the local credit cooperative. In 2009, he died. "They had wrong and destroyed *woi*³³*nyi*³¹ before", villagers commented⁸³. Moreover "the breach of the taboo by *Tong* and his brothers eroded their fortune!" That meant, such erosion would continue. For instance, during the earthquake in March 2011, *Tong*'s late fourth brother's only daughter was killed in a boarding school in the Yingjiang County seat, while the other 6 school children from Sama were safe. "You see that, her family's tradition had been broken!" some told me in summer 2011.

I did not witness all these disasters, but the symmetry between the good and bad fortune of *Tong*'s grandmother's and mother's tomb sites impressed villagers so much that I was told of it many times. Considering villagers' basic understanding that considers HIV/drugs as a new kind of hereditary bad fate, I argue that the breach of a taboo regarding tomb geomancy materialized the bad fate. This bad fate derived from AIDS and drug use, which brought destroyed and wrong *woi*³³*nyi*³¹ to *Tong* and his brothers. The decline of these brothers and their rising arrogance began years before

their disasters. The breach of the taboo intensified the effect of the compromised *woi³³nyi³¹* and elicited the disasters, which then became a hereditary bad fate.

As time went by, *Tong* and his brothers' disasters would be forgotten, but the correlation between a bad tomb site and HIV/ drugs seemed to persist and crop up in other episodes. On December 20th, 2009, *Tong*'s widow held a wedding banquet for her eldest daughter and invited about one thousand guests. *Ren*, a drug user and a classificatory brother of *Tong*, met his friends from Burma whom he had not seen for years. They drank liquor for a whole night and the friends took out drugs and invited *Ren* to enjoy. That excited *Ren*, who had not been able to afford drugs for months. His last time of drug use had been caught by the cooperative team leaders, who had confiscated most of his mountain plot and warned him that they would send him to prison if he continued to use drugs. That night, *Ren* became madly happy. He wandered around the village and sang songs that no one understood. Shortly before dawn, he felt horribly sick and died at about 10am on the 21st in the wedding house.

Villagers had a long discussion to assess the relative harm of taking the corpse out of house and bury it on the day of buffalo (the 21st), tiger (the 22nd), or rabbit (the 23rd). "He died badly. We should bury his corpse as soon as possible". Otherwise, as villagers believed, the soul would bring bad fortune to the whole village. But he was born in a buffalo year. Both the year of 2009 and the 21st of December were of buffalo attribution, and the 22nd, of the tiger attribution. "He has a very soft fate on the day of buffalo, especially in the year of buffalo ... We should not bury his corpse on the 21st. As a tiger eats a buffalo, we should not do that on the 22nd either."... "For *Ren*, the best date was the 23rd. Both the 21st and 22nd would have worsen his tragedy, and he would not have a peaceful life in the afterworld! But for us the 23rd was too late. It would have brought bad fortune to us". Villagers came to agree that it would be better to intensify *Ren*'s individual tragedy than to bring bad fortune to the

whole village; accordingly, the 22nd was better than the 21st.

However, *Ren*'s father's brother's only son, *Sut*, the current eldest in *Ren*'s lineage, shouted in the negotiation "I have been fed up with such stupid death! I don't have any patience to hold a proper funeral for one more stupid drug user!" He complained that in recent years too many people in his lineage had died of drug use. *Ren* and his four brothers were drug users, three of whom had died early of that drug use without producing any sons to continue their families. Now following *Ren*'s death, a would-be populous family went almost extinct. "I want to bury *Ren* as soon as possible. I want to wipe out such bad fortune as soon as possible!" He claimed. Hearing that, *Ren*'s mother wept in front of the corpse, lamenting that she had lived too long, so long that four of her sons had died before her!

Elders sighed that "the family would lose its tradition of using herbal medicine forever!" The only surviving son knew nothing about it. Elders told me that in *Ren*'s grandfather's generation, the family has been known for their use of medical medicine. But since *Ren*'s father's generation, their medicine had been not so effective. One of their relatives, a wicked man, had come to ask for medicine from *Ren*'s father for healing a child. But in fact he had used it on a buffalo. "This must have annoyed the spirit of herbal medicine. Herbal medicine was sacred and should be given great reverence. If you do not respect it enough, the spirit of medicine would leave and the same medicine would become ineffective". Worse, *Ren*'s father died early, and none of his five sons had learned anything about the medicine. In telling the story, elders helped me understand that such loss was partially doomed. On the one hand, Jinghpo elders do not reveal the most critical parts of their specialty until the last moments of their life, while they are often unable to tell that at all before death. On the other hand, though such convention of transmission had caused loss of knowledge, many still practice it. "Knowledge is sacred. Its efficacy is based on its being kept secret. If it is made public, it

will lose its power”. As a result, “A master often takes his powerful knowledge into the tomb!”

In *Ren*’s family, the tragedy of loss was doubled: the loss of the specialty of herbal medicine was in conjunction with the desperate population decrease. Upon my questioning why such bad fate was falling upon *Ren*’s family, a geomancer proposed that it might be attributed to the bad tomb site of *Ren*’s grandfather. Near the geomancer’s house, he found an excellent tomb site that he had planned to reserve for himself. A wide plain area lies in front of the site, indicating a great space for future development of offspring. *Ren*’s grandfather’s tomb is located on the same hillside but with its back facing the plain – a bad sign for social reproduction. A tomb should be backed up by a lofty ridge, which represents the host’s wife-giver who is considered the source of social reproduction⁸⁴.

All the above discussion regarding *Ren*’s family’s bad fortune ended when the religious specialist came in the late afternoon of the 22nd. When people took the corpse out of the house, I sat with elders around the main hearth, asking for customs of taking a corpse out. The corpse from a bad death at home should not be taken out of the house through the door that people take. People should take the wall apart. *Ren* had died outside so people did not need to take the wall apart. I then asked whether in Sama there had existed such a recent case, and elders told me the story of *Shan*, who killed himself at home in 2006. However, in his narration the teller suddenly stopped with a strange expression on the face. It seemed that he realized something important regarding the disaster of *Ren*. Almost all elders noticed his hesitation and all seemed to understand why he stopped. They kept silent, and I noticed they were exchanging something through expressions in their eyes. I even noticed people’s almost unnoticeable nodding. Nobody wanted to tell me what was going on. They all seemed to lose interests in conversation, but only smoked and thought in silence. I sensed a dull and oppressive atmosphere.

The dull atmosphere lasted till the specialist started to divine in the courtyard to ask *Ren*’s soul

what compensation he wanted from his living relatives and to what ancestors it would like to be sent. The divination needs *Ren*'s family genealogy and so elders sat around the specialist to inform him of necessary information. But it took the specialist over two hours to figure out from whom else, except for his mother, the soul wanted compensation. The specialist and all elders enumerated almost all living relatives and friends of the deceased, but that did not satisfy the soul. Finally, the elder who had told the story of *Shan* proposed that the soul might want compensation from his late eldest brother, the first drug user in their family who had died about seven years before. This was quite unusual because a newly deceased almost never asks for compensation from people who had died long before. But to everyone's surprise, the soul was pleased with the proposal.

Quite unusually again, most elders who were supposed to stay and assist the specialist with the soul-sending left for home after the divination. Only the deceased's eldest classificatory brother, who did not know the complete immigration routes of their families, stayed and assisted the specialist. "I do not care that the routes used in the soul-sending is fragmentary", and others seemed not to care that either, though that would probably cause troubles for the living in the future. "I have been fed up with misfortunes and do not care whether there would be more or not", the brother complained,

Ren's funeral was unusual and I tried to figure out why. In an interview with my landlord's mother a few days later, she believed that the elders in the funeral must have thought about how *Shan* had destroyed *Ren*'s family's fortune. "*Shan* has such a bad fate that it was even transmitted to his identified parent's family!" she claimed. During childhood *Shan* had been deathly ill many times. Divination had indicated that his fate had not suited all his family members'. He should search for a new parent to have a "second birth" and a new fate. Although searching for a new parent for a child with a bad fate is common, people do not want to be identified as new parents, because the

identification will dissipate their own fortune. But one could not refuse if asked. To ease people's embarrassment, a new parent is chosen at random. For instance, people identify the first visitor during a selected good period, leaving spirits and people's own fortune to choose. Supposedly, *Shan's* parents should have searched for a new parent for *Shan* in this way. But they had simply brought gifts to, and asked, *Ren's* grandfather to be a new parent without informing the latter in advance.

After the identification, *Ren's* grandfather's family had started to encounter disasters. A few months later, *Ren's* grandfather's youngest brother, an excellent hunter, had shot a Sama villager to death in the forest. He had mistaken the latter for a deer. The death required a large amount of compensation and impoverished their family. Then, in a few years, *Ren's* grandfather's fifth brother had died for unknown reasons in the forest. And *Ren's* father, though he kept working hard, could not maintain an average living standard. Worse, from him their family's herbal medicine started to lose efficacy. Now, *Ren* and his three other brothers all died of drug use. Many villagers had come to believe, though none had spoken out in public, that these disasters were caused by *Shan's* bad fate. In 2006, *Shan's* bad death by suicide reconfirmed such correlation. In fieldwork, I also noticed villagers' latent but strong disgust and fear towards *Shan's* family. One night in November 2010, I wanted to ask for something in *Shan's* son's house and asked my landlord's son to go with me. He, a pious Christian, told me that he dared not to go there at night because that family had a really bad fortune. "Ask my dad to go with you. He is a Communist Party Member. He will be safe with you!" He suggested.

To summarize the second episode, I observed in public conversations that *Ren's* and his brothers' drug use and their deaths were attributed to their wrong and destroyed *woi³³nyi³¹*. Villagers further attributed the compromised *woi³³nyi³¹* of these brothers to the extinction of their family's medical tradition, their grandfather's bad tomb site, or alcohol addiction. Each attribution represented one

particular bad fate that can transmit itself among family members and be passed down by generation. All these attributions had been well accepted long before *Ren*'s death. The death reconfirmed people's understanding of the correlation of *Ren*'s wrong and destroyed *wol³³nyi³¹* with his broken family tradition. In particular, my asking for recent examples of taking a corpse out of a house by taking the wall apart reminded people of the bad death of *Shan*. The narration of *Shan*'s story in *Ren*'s funeral, together with a long discussion of the reason of the bad fate of *Ren*'s family, stimulated villagers to bring forth a latent correlation between *Shan*'s identifying *Ren*'s grandfather as his new parent and *Ren*'s family's disasters. My asking thus served as a critical point for bringing such correlation into *Ren*'s disaster, though this point is not strong enough to break villagers' reluctance to talk about such correlation in public. The correlation was further reconfirmed by the oddity of the divination, for instance, *Ren* asked for compensation from his late brother. Among all attributions proposed by villagers (the bad tomb site, alcohol addiction, and the extinction of the medicinal tradition), the correlation between *Ren*'s family's disasters and *Shan*'s bad fate exerted decisive influence over people's understanding of *Ren*'s family's disasters. This correlation was contingent and novel. In fieldwork, I encountered dozens of cases regarding the influence from a bad tomb site, or alcohol addiction, but I did not find another similar case regarding bad fate acquired from being identified as a new parent. Such a correlation would not be spoken about in public.

This second episode intensified and modified villagers' understanding that considered drug use a new kind of hereditary bad fate. It materialized the fate in four forms: the bad tomb site, the extinction of family tradition, the correlation between *Shan*'s bad fate and *Ren*'s family's disasters, and alcohol addiction. The first was intensified in the first episode. The second and third forms were contingent with the present episode and hard to be generalized. The fourth was general and I witnessed other

cases of attributing drug use and the extinction of family tradition to alcohol addiction⁸⁵. Since 2003, I have witnessed the degeneration of a family owing to alcohol and drug addiction, and the degeneration of this family is representative in Sama. The *Hpaga* house, a branch of the *Maran* clan in Sama, had a great tradition of religious specialty and oral history. The grandfather of the current eldest male, *Manau Yo*, was a legendary-hero-like man. *Yo* had accumulated a great fortune and held two “feasts-of-merit” with approval from the local chief. Holding a “feast-of-merit” was traditionally one of the most important powers of a chief, and a commoner who accumulated wealth and acquired approval from a chief to hold a “feast-of-merit” was a hero. *Yo*’s two sons were great religious specialists, with the eldest a chanter and the second an animal cutter. The chanter had eight sons, with the second again a great chanter, the seventh a great history teller, and the youngest a professor in Yunnan Nationalities University. The cutter had seven sons, with the eldest the former head of the Tongbiguan Village Tract government, the sixth a great history teller, and the youngest a greatest chanter. In the 1980s, the eight sons of the chanter built a traditional Jinghpo longhouse. It was over twenty meters long, and had been the longest and grandest Jinghpo house in Sama since the dismantling of the chief’s house in the 1950s (by the Chinese communists). It represented the fame and excellent tradition of the family. From the 1990s, the seventh son, *Hpaga*, was known as one of the most knowledgeable men of Jinghpo oral history in Yingjiang County. As history played an irreplaceable role among Jinghpo, he accumulated great fame. In 2003, he was recognized as one of the three persons with special talents by Tongbiguan Village Tract government, because he was the only one who could lead dance in the Jinghpo “feast-of-merit”.

However, such great tradition started to degenerate in the early 1990s. The longhouse burned on its own in 1997. The eight brothers (and their sons) had then officially separated and established 9

households in Sama and over ten in Burma (the second, third and fifth brothers had fled to Burma during the Chinese communist movements in the 1950s and stayed there permanently). For many villagers, the burning of the house and the separation of households seemed to initiate the decline of the family's tradition of religious specialty. Following the death of the second brother, none of his brothers and their sons had learned the religious specialty. Worse, his eldest son had become seriously addicted to alcohol and killed himself in 2006. Three sons of the fifth brother had been drug/alcohol addicted and died in their late thirties. In 2010, a grandson of the sixth brother had an adulterous affair with the wife of one of the sixth's classificatory brothers (see case 3.2). The affair shamed the *Hpaga* families and required a communal payment negotiation, the first intra-village adultery negotiation that involved all households since the 1970s. Four sons of the seventh brother were all bad, with the eldest dying young, the second as a drug dealer who had been ordered repeatedly to be arrested as a criminal in China, the third and fourth as secret drug users and incurable drunkards. Both wives of the latter two were Christians and had persuaded them to convert. The two men hoped that God would help them quit drugs and alcohol. But they seemed to drink more liquor after conversion.

In addition, people in the eight brothers' generation also started to degenerate. The seventh brother had great fame in history-telling and dance-leading, but he was no longer trusted by villagers from the mid-2000s. He had abandoned his wife and cohabitated with the widow of one of his classificatory sons. This caused a great dispute in the village. Worse, he converted his traditional fees for performance from gifts into money when people asked for information about local customs. I was one to suffer from that. I never paid informants by cash, aiming not to stimulate people to think that I hired them for collecting data. The cash payment would estrange me from villagers and turn our relation into a commercial transaction. Instead, I brought villagers gifts, and did what they did when

they consulted the elders for history. Villagers were pleased with my gifts and considered my effort an indication of friendship and reciprocity. In their eyes I was a youth learning the Jinghpo tradition. But *Hpaga* was not pleased and was reluctant to teach me. He also made his dissatisfaction known to all villagers. In January 2010, my dissertation supervisor F. K. Lehman visited me in fieldwork and I arranged a group interview with all the religious specialists in Sama in my landlord's house. I had planned that after the interview we would have dinner together. However, I had not known that it was the birthday of the greatest chanter, who did not want to leave his house. I then invited all others to his house. I had not invited *Hpaga*, but he had stayed in the chanter's house. I brought cookies and beer for people to enjoy during interview. The interview went on well and we had a great time.

That night a recently married girl returned to visit her natal family and invited elders to enjoy sticky rice and family-brewed beer. To my surprise, my landlord came back to tell me that *Hpaga* had been angry at me, because I had not taken him to dinner after asking for precious knowledge. "Xiao Zhang (my name used by villagers) will make money from such knowledge. He should pay us", *Hpaga* claimed. My landlord had argued that almost all villagers had treated me as a Sama villager. They understood that I did not make money from the Jinghpo tradition. But *Hpaga* was so annoyed: "We all should not tell Xiao Zhang anything hereafter unless he pays us daily wages". One of the sons of his fifth brother responded that if he was not pleased with what Xiao Zhang had done, he should stop telling Xiao Zhang anything thereafter. "It is shameful to claim aloud that you should get wages from Xiao Zhang" ... "And you should not tell others what they should do with Xiao Zhang".

Next morning, many villagers knew of the incident. Some agreed that *Hpaga* was reasonable to be angry because I should at least have asked him to dinner. However, he should not be that angry. It was even shameful to ask for daily wages. One of the sons of *Hpaga*'s brothers told us, "'*Hpaga* was

not that bad before. But in 2007, two officials from Dehong Prefecture government came to interview him regarding local history. They gave him RMB 200 (about USD 30) after the interview. From then, He started to ask for money from villagers when they consulted him"... "His mind was corrupted; this was why all his sons got alcohol and drug addiction", the son concluded. Worse, some villagers told me, such degeneration was not limited in his family. Most sons of his brothers were drunkards or drug users. "Their minds were corrupted by alcohol and drugs. None learned their tradition of oral history and religious specialty. Worse, they brought shame (like the adultery) to their families". Although their ancestor *Manau Yo* was a legendary hero and many in their father's generation were respectable religious specialists or history-tellers, "many of us do not believe and respect them any more!"

Other villagers disagreed with such an argument. Although religious specialty had ended in the *Hpaga* house, "the *Hpaga* people now get a different chance of development". *Hpaga*'s three daughters all had graduated from high school in the late 1980s, had decent jobs in Yingjiang County seat, and married to government officials. "And their ancestors still bless them!" In 2009, *Hpaga* slaughtered a buffalo and made a grand sacrifice in front of his father's tomb, asking for beatifications for one of his grandsons who would take the college entrance examination. The boy was later admitted by the Yunnan Nationalities University. In April 2010, in an annual sacrifice to *Hpaga*'s mother in front of the tomb, *Hpaga* told me that he had planned to slaughter a buffalo for his mother, if she would bless one of his granddaughters for her college entrance examination in 2011.

To summarize the third episode, I argue that the episode intensified and modified villagers' basic understanding of drug use as a new kind of hereditary bad fate. *Hpaga*'s family fate materialized the correlation between drug use, alcoholic addiction, and the broken family tradition. Sons in the *Hpaga* house had a destroyed and wrong *woi*³³*nyi*³¹ and became drug users or drunkards. Such destroyed and

wrong *woi³³nyi³¹* was related to the decline of the family tradition of religious specialty and oral history. However, villagers cannot specify whether the decline of family tradition caused the destroyed and wrong *woi³³nyi³¹* or the other way round in this particular episode.

§§§

This first case documents the derivation of four arguments regarding HIV/AIDS and drugs. They are only tentative and hypothetical, and none dominates villagers' understandings and behavior. Each argument is underpinned by at least one knowledge system in my fieldwork base (Jinghpoo animal sacrifice, Chinese folk beliefs, or modern science about HIV/AIDS and drugs). But there does not exist any structural force governing the interactions among these arguments. Rather, the interactions are influenced by forces in-the-making – the interests of various parties put forth as attempts, proposals, or only aspirations for development – the influences of which are pending and subject to unknown factors. That is, interactions among different arguments are self-organizing. Without a structural force regulating the development of arguments, any convincing argument can be considered as an “attractor”. It represents a possible mode of understanding for villagers. The absence of a structural force sets up an open space for the emergence of and interaction among several “attractors” through social events and individual reflections.

The emergence of several competing “attractors” requires two conditions. First, there should exist at least one general issue that concerns many people; second, a long time span that allows more threads of socio-cultural life and more individuals to be involved to complicate an event and gestate its several propensities. The present case meets these two conditions. It spanned decades and caught all villagers' attention and destroyed many villagers' life. In addition, a sufficient time length is not fixed owing to three reasons. First, if a regular “attractor” emerges, it needs time to be consolidated.

Second, if a strange “attractor” emerges, it needs time to evolve, either converting to a regular “attractor” or simply dissipating. Third, if several “attractors” emerge, they will be thrust into social engagements in which the several attractors are introduced. The needed time span depends on how deeply one wants to understand what is going on.

In the cases I have presented, four “attractors” are generated. The first is villagers’ basic understanding that a drug user has a wrong and destroyed *woi³³nyi³¹* that results from a broken family tradition. It was established long before my fieldwork and blends issues from three knowledge systems: the Jinghpo notion of a broken family tradition, modern knowledge about drugs and HIV/AIDS, and transformations brought by the Chinese government that destroy people’s fortune. However, it has not yet been established as the default and exclusive guideline or interpretative model for future episodes regarding HIV/AIDS and drug use. That is, its influences and manifestations in daily life are pending and subject to contingencies. It serves as a latent, quasi-structural force. I consider it as a primary “regular attractor”, which is prone to be reconfirmed and will probably convert to a structural force in the long run.

In the episode of *Tong*, this primary “regular attractor” is converted into the influence of the breach of a taboo of tomb geomancy. Such conversion is well accepted partly because the Chinese tomb geomancy has been well accepted, and partly because the symmetry between the bad and good fortune of *Tong*’s mother’s and grandmother’s tombs impresses villagers. The episode represents a specific interaction among Jinghpo animal sacrifice, modern science about AIDS/drugs, and Chinese folk belief. The breach of a taboo regarding tomb geomancy materializes the hereditary bad fate. This episode thus intensifies and modifies villagers’ basic understanding that considers HIV/drugs as a new kind of hereditary bad fate. I treat the correlation among a bad tomb site, AIDS/drugs, and a broken

family tradition as a “regular attractor”. During my fieldwork, it was often brought forth

In the episode of *Ren*, the primary “attractor” is materialized in four forms: the bad tomb site, the extinction of the medical tradition in that family, the correlation between *Shan*’s bad fate and *Ren*’s family’s disasters, and alcohol addiction. The first form is already intensified in the first episode. The second form seems to catch people’s attention, and the third underpins many villagers’ behavior in the funeral. It is labile, and more importantly, is not supposed to be talked about in public. Without my question about recent examples of bad death, it would probably have not been brought to the surface. It is contingent only to *Ren*’s episode. It is a “strange attractor”.

The fourth form is general and reoccurs in the episode of *Hpaga*. The primary “attractor” is materialized by the correlation between drug use, alcoholic addiction, and broken family tradition. I treat this correlation as a “regular attractor”, partly owing to the wide acknowledgement of the evil of alcoholic addiction, and partly to the decline of the *Hpaga* family’s tradition of religious specialty.

Taking the four “attractors” together, the present case demonstrates the dynamics of intensification among “attractors” in a self-organizing process: a primary “attractor” is intensified by and modified in its subsequent “attractors”. The primary “attractor” serves as a structural force in-the-making. In the long run, it might eventually evolve into a structural force for villagers’ understandings of, and response to, HIV/AIDS and drugs.

Case 4.2: Split Faith and the Fate of Animal Sacrifice

The second case examines the contexts in which several arguments are brought into interaction regarding the fate of Jinghpo animal sacrifice. Currently, animal sacrifice encounters a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, it has declined and is considered by the Chinese government a barrier for

Jinghpö modernization. On the other hand, the local Chinese government's policy regarding ethnic tourism and the government-sponsored development projects provide a chance for preserving animal sacrifice. Accordingly, villagers' attitudes toward animal sacrifice have been diversified and generate diverse strategies for preserving and developing animal sacrifice. I will discuss three of these attitudes and resultant strategies. 1) Ordinary sacrifice makers practice animal sacrifice without a clear understanding of its future. 2) The local cooperative team leaders take advantage of ethnic tourism and economic development to develop animal sacrifice. 3) Religious specialists hold a strong belief that the fate of sacrifice is in charge of spirits rather than of humans.

Different from the relations among the four arguments in case 4.1, the three arguments in the present case are parallel to each other. Each is held by a section of local population. Moreover, the interactions among these sections of population are not strong enough to blend these arguments into a single coherent one. As a consequence, these arguments evolve on their own, or individuals develop their ideas without knowing where the ideas go. There does not exist any structural force shaping the interactions among these arguments. The fate of sacrifice is thus a self-organizing process. And this case provides different dynamics of self-organization from those in case 4.1.

I begin this second case with three villagers' views regarding animal sacrifice and its future, which represent the views of the majority of the local population. Although most sacrifice makers still sponsor sacrifice, they do not have enough knowledge of it. Their faith in animal sacrifice depends on how much actual benefit they gain from rituals. They simply accept the decline of animal sacrifice and keep sponsoring sacrifice without thinking about its future. For instance, *Chyi's* family was considered as having a bad inherited fate. Villagers knew that several generations ago, one girl in *Chyi's* family had dreamed during her nap in her family's field hut that a scarecrow came into the hut

and took her necklace. That night, she had gone mad, run into the forest and disappeared. Villagers believed that the scarecrow, by taking her necklace, had married her. According to villagers, the girl had brought a bad inherited fate to the family, causing *Chyi's* eldest and third brother to die badly in a war in the 1980s. In 2003, these latter two souls had driven *Chyi's* second brother mad, wander in the forest, and almost kill himself. The brother then died badly in 2006. In 2010 I witnessed, as described in the Introduction of the present dissertation, how these two souls tried to recruit *Chyi's* youngest son into their ghost army. On April 16th, 2010, a Chinese specialist was invited to conduct a ritual to change the bad fate of the youngest son. After the ritual, the boy gradually recovered.

Many villagers attributed the boy's recovery to animal sacrifice, but *Chyi's* second brother's son, *Li*, who took charge of all the *Chyi* families in Sama, did not believe that spirits had saved the boy. *Li* had been a communist party member for over twenty years and a cooperative team leader for eight years. Before his father's tragedy of bad death, he had made regular sacrifice to a spirit from his wife-givers that had followed his wife. But his father's death had made him feel discouraged with animal sacrifice. He had then destroyed all altars in his house, and had not made a single ritual in the past seven years. During my fieldwork, he was proud that "I have been freed from my family's fate, and spirits have not come to bother me". He believed that animal sacrifice resembles drug addiction. As he put it, "the more you make sacrifice, the more deeply the spirits will rely on you". Contrary to other villagers who believe that one's fortune relies on spirits (see Chapter One), he insisted that spirits rely on people: "if you stop making sacrifice to spirits, you will become strong and independent and the spirits cannot cheat you and make you attached to them". "Animal sacrifice is about the psychological consolation. ... Spirits do not have magical power". To support his argument, he claimed that his understanding is based on both science and ordinary common sense. Science has

proved that there does not exist any spirit, and everyone has experienced that diseases vary with one's feelings and moods. A happy man recovers from diseases more quickly and better than others.

Many times, *Li*, as my fieldwork assistant, tried to persuade me and others to believe that animal sacrifice is based on neither science nor blessings/curse of spirits, but rather on people's attachment to spirits, and there does not exist any spirit. I once responded that I remembered he and others had told me a story regarding spirits. According to the Jinghpo custom, in the seventh night following the soul-sending villagers will gather in the house of the deceased, because the soul would come back to take a final look at its living relatives. In that night following my landlord's late wife's funeral, *Li* and others had claimed that they had seen how she had stood beside the pig pen in her beloved costume, wanting to enter the house. In a different context, *Li* had also claimed that he had seen a soul in a funeral was ready to be sent off. It waited the specialist, leading the buffalo and holding chicken that the living had sacrificed to it. Hearing my response, *Li* shut up. Days later, he told me that in the past seven years he had sponsored rituals, not independently but together with his youngest brother.

The discrepancy between *Li*'s behaviors and his words was shared by many villagers, which illustrates ambivalence regarding their animal sacrifice⁸⁶. Even religious apprentices shared such ambivalence. *Lang*, an apprentice in his late fifties, told me that nowadays the number of worshiped spirits decreases and their influences fade. Many rituals he had seen in his childhood had already disappeared. "We do not need many spirits and so forget them". But sometimes, divination reveals things that are reasonable to villagers, while at other times it reveals things that seem to be irrelevant, or that people want to forget or do not want to face. But once these are revealed, they have to be dealt with. As he emphasized: "If you do not resort to divination, you would not have such trouble".

He told me his road of becoming an apprentice. During childhood when he had been able to see

many rituals, he had not paid attention to them. When he had gained interest and started to learn the specialty, the Cultural Revolution had come. Only from the late 1980s when the Chinese government had carried out the policy of freedom of belief, had Jinghpo started to revitalize animal sacrifice and had he begun to learn the specialty. But his mnemonic ability had declined, and he had to work hard to marry his three sons. “I do not understand how a sacrifice works”, he admitted, “and I believe no one has ever seen a real spirit”. To heal, people resort to all available methods, like animal sacrifice, herbal medicine, and hospital treatment. In most cases, “you just cannot tell which one really works!” To support his idea, he told me his own experience. He once had gone to work in a gemstone mining factory in Burma. There he had fallen ill seriously. Many times he had dreamed that his late mother had followed him wherever he had gone, or he had seen her in the great pain that had killed her. His father had sponsored a ritual to separate his late mother’s soul from him. Meanwhile, he had been given herbal medicine. Slowly, he had recovered and stopped dreaming of his mother. In retrospect, he told me that “I do not know whether the recovery should be attributed to the medicine or the ritual. Medicine might alleviate illness and so I became stronger to get rid of bad dreams. Or the ritual separated my mother’s soul from me and so the medicine started to work. I don’t know. Both explanations are reasonable”. “I come to realize that animal sacrifice is not the only legitimate knowledge that we Jinghpo should learn”. He then strove to become a non- traditional kind of specialist: “I am eager to learn other things that help healing, like herbal medicine and science.”

Lang’s attitudes are representative among sacrifice makers, who had no choice but to accept the decline of animal sacrifice. In interviews, I often heard villagers say “we are now not pure”, meaning that they now live in a mixed world that apportions their faith into pieces with only one piece devoted to animal sacrifice. The previous deterministic world in which the complete faith was devoted to

animal sacrifice has now become opportunistic, and various knowledge systems compete to claim people's faith. Villagers' reactions to a plague that affected pigs in 2010 illustrate such a split state of faith. Before, pigs were fed twice each day and set free for foraging. This made the village dirty. In 2006, the cooperative team passed a regulation that required all pigs to be confined in the pig pen to keep the village clean. Feeding in the pig pen is perfect for the cross-bred pigs, which enables them to grow much bigger and faster than the old breed of pigs do. Gradually, over ninety percent of villagers abandoned the old breed. However, in the rainy season of 2010, following eight months of severe drought⁸⁷, most cross-bred pigs died during the first few rains of the year, whereas all old breed pigs were fine. All five cross-bred pigs in my landlord's pig pen died in one week. This depressed him because these pigs were supported by a small loan from the local government. Regarding this, he told me that he, as communist party member, is supposed to believe in science, but he had found that "science, like animal sacrifice, is opportunistic". The fact that all cross-bred pigs had died while few of the old breed had died demonstrated that science from the outside does not really fit the local world. "Science is not advantageous over animal sacrifice or Christianity". "Believing in myself is the most important thing. Neither science, Christianity, nor animal sacrifice can save me", he learned.

The views of *Li, Lang*, and my landlord illustrate the split faith among sacrifice makers in Sama. For them, animal sacrifice is still an important, but far from the default, means for dealing with various daily life situations. It is just one of the available means. But for cooperative team leaders, who represent not only themselves but the local Jinghpo community at the interface with the Chinese government and other ethnic peoples, animal sacrifice represents the Jinghpo culture. Such an attitude was cultivated by ethnic tourism in Yunnan province from the 2000s. Local officials, cultural intellectuals, and the cooperative team leaders formally claimed that animal sacrifice should be

preserved through, paradoxically, government-sponsored projects that had caused its decline.

In August 2010, the county government sponsored Sama village RMB 1 million for intra-village road construction and agricultural development. To guarantee the best development, the cooperative leaders decided that they should follow the tradition of animal sacrifice by asking village protection spirits to allow road reconstruction and the mountain spirit to protect cultivated crops and domestic animals that wander in the forest. They then organized two rituals respectively to these spirits. Then in the following three months, they organized twenty-odd meetings to specify the budget and to plan development. They invited individuals who were born in Sama and now had decent jobs in the city and set two goals for the development in Sama. First, villagers should not simply build roads for the current use, they should rather build *right* roads that meet future needs. Second, villagers should consider this project a chance to resume the lost balance among economic development, environmental harmony, and cultural transmission (see Chapter One). The government policy requires that as long as villagers keep up with Chinese modernization, government will agree that part of the fund could be used to develop ethnic cultures. Consequently, leaders and villagers came to agree that “We have to build our Sama into a Jinghpo cultural center”⁸⁸.

At minimum, villagers concluded, the road construction should avoid disasters brought by the previous government-sponsored project for constructing a tap water system (see Case 4.1). The most important part of the construction is the village shrine – the origin of the village’s fortune, which should be designed carefully according to the tradition of animal sacrifice. On November 30th, two religious specialists and three other knowledgeable elders were invited to identify the best site for the village shrine temple. The identified site meets the criteria of Jinghpo geomancy (see Chapter One). It is backed by a lofty ridge and encircled by lofty left and right ridges, which indicate support from the

land spirit. Right across back ridge, a small hillside serves as a “dining table” for the protection spirits. A rivulet runs to the left feet of the “table” and makes a small pool -- a “dragon pool” in which spirits can drink during eating. Four ridges stand behind the “dining table”, with one a little higher than its immediately right one, indicating that the village would be blessed with the increasing fortune.

The event of road construction illustrates how Jinghpo cultural intellectuals and team leaders conceive the fate of animal sacrifice. Their view derives from their status in the local community and aspirations for maintaining their Jinghpo identity. They accept the decline of animal sacrifice and aim to revitalize it under the financial support from government, though they do not understand how animal sacrifice works and what a future it will have. However, unlike ordinary sacrifice makers and team leaders, religious specialists believe that the fate of animal sacrifice is in the hand of spirits. They notice that animal sacrifice declines owing to the current loose relations between humans and spirits and to the weakened power of the tools that people use to contact the other world (see Chapter Two). But they believe that as long as the patron spirit of religious specialty is well worshiped, it will continue to create advanced specialists. Although the decline of animal sacrifice has created an obstacle for an apprentice to cultivate a sublimate state in his service (see case 2.1 in Chapter Two), the patron spirit can easily transform an apprentice into an advanced specialist.

Most villagers have heard of the legendary story of an apprentice in Sumkri (about one hour’s walk from Sama). None in his father’s generation had been a religious specialist, though his family had a long tradition of the specialty. He was born with a pair of long buck teeth, owing to which, as villagers had believed, he often had been bitten by spirits. When he was sixteen, he had pulled out his buck teeth and gone into the forest for seven days (the number seven marks a threshold among Jinghpo, see endnote # 62). Nobody could find him and none had known what had happened to him.

When he had returned, he could, to everyone's surprise, perform religious chanting that nobody had taught him – so fluently that even advanced specialists admired him. “The patron spirit had taught him”, villagers told me, “he had been ‘marked’ through his buck teeth by the spirit at birth!” The great specialist in Sama once told me, in telling this story, “like me, an advanced specialist is selected by the patron spirit. As long as the spirit is worshiped, animal sacrifice will not die”.

This great specialist also told me that divination always reveals unbelievable things that attract people and enables them to deal with hard situations or things beyond their daily imagination. For instance, *Tu*, a late diviner in *Lagat Ya* village (about one hour's walk from Sama) whom I met in 2003, was recognized as the best diviner of the region. Everyday, he could not leave his house because so many people had come to ask for divination. His family had been known for divination for generations and the Jinghpo word divination (*ning³¹wot⁵⁵*) had become their surname. I heard of many of his remarkable divination cases. For instance, in the late 1990s a Christian in Sama had been seriously ill. His family had tried all available healing methods except animal sacrifice, but none had worked. His son had then asked *Tu* to figure out whether spirits had bothered the patient. At the very moment when *Tu* had started to chant to his professional divination stone, the cord that hangs the stone had broken on its own. And this repeated three times. *Tu* had then concluded that there was no need to divine; the patient's cord of life had been broken! In a few minutes, they had heard the gun-firing in Sama that announced the death.

I also witnessed such accuracy of divination. On November 11th, 2010, I interviewed the great specialist in Sama regarding how to practice divination by the leaves of *ja⁵⁵ba⁵⁵lap³¹*. He explained by optionally making patterns of the leaves. For the last time of demonstration, he said he would divine to see the fortune of himself, my assistant and myself during the coming dry season. He made a

simple sacrifice to the patron spirit, washed his mouth out with liquor, and chanted the story of how *ja⁵⁵ba⁵⁵lap³¹* had been used as a divination tool. He then chanted our names and consulted our fortune. The pattern revealed that we all would have good fortune, but would separate in about one month. He was puzzled but I was shocked; I had not told anyone I would be leaving soon.

To understand this result, let me explain the way of divination. The diviner divides a piece of *ja⁵⁵ba⁵⁵lap³¹* into six strings with all still attached to the stem (see the figure 4.1). He twists part of the strings on the head stem and chants over them. During the chanting, he randomly ties two strings together. He ties twice and then releases all strings. The pattern of knots indicates the result, and interpretations vary with the purpose of divination. When asking for fortune, the stem serves as the threshold between the human and spirit worlds, its side near the diviner representing the human world, and the other side, the spirit world. If the strings 2 and/or 3 in the figure 4.1 are not tied together or with any other strings, people will have good fortune. If each of them is tied with any string on the other side (strings 4, 5, or 6), people will be disturbed by spirits. If the strings 2 and 5 are tied together, spirits will bother people only slightly because the two strings are not immediately neighboring to each other, whereas a knot made from the strings 3 and 4 indicates a dangerous situation.

That night, the diviner got the pattern illustrated by the figure 4.1: the strings 2 and 5 were loose, and the strings 1 and 3, 4 and 6, respectively formed two knots. Since the string 2 was loose, we would have good fortune. Spirits would not bother us because the strings from either sides of the stem were not tied, and as I was from the outside, the stem also marked the difference between Jinghpo and non-Jinghpo. Accordingly, the strings in the two sides not being tied indicated their separation.

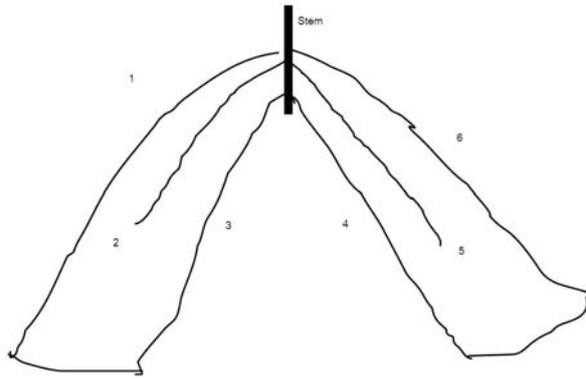


Figure 4.1 Divination using $ja^{31}ba^{55}lap^{31}$

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This second case documents the three views regarding the fate of animal sacrifice. Animal sacrifice has declined, and people in different relations with animal sacrifice anticipated different fates for animal sacrifice. Ordinary sacrifice makers accept the decline and keep practicing sacrifice without knowing its fate. Animal sacrifice is no longer the default, but only one of the available means for dealing with life situations. Cultural intellectuals and cooperative team leaders represent the Jingpho community at the interface with the government and other ethnic peoples. They need to create a future for animal sacrifice, the emblem of the Jingpho way of life, with financial aid from the Chinese government. Religious specialists understand the working of animal sacrifice. For them, the fate of animal sacrifice is not up to human choice, but at the mercy of spirits. I treat these three views as three available “attractors” about the fate of animal sacrifice. The first and third are “regular attractors”, while the second is a strange one because the alliance between the Chinese government and the preservation of animal sacrifice is only opportunistic.

Different from the three “attractors” formed in Case 4.1, there does not exist a primary “attractor” in the present case that serves as a quasi-structural force for the subsequent “attractors”. The three “attractors” represent three parallel propensities of animal sacrifice, respectively anticipated

by three different segments of local population. The decline of animal sacrifice breaks the status of animal sacrifice as a default knowledge system. People's faith is split, generating parallel views regarding the fate of animal sacrifice. More importantly, there lacks an underpinning force that outlines the interactions among these views and formulates a relatively uniform understanding⁸⁹.

Case 4.3: the Future of Christianity

The third case examines three arguments in conflict with each other regarding the future of Christianity. They derive from people's different relations with Christianity and so from different segments of the local population: sacrifice makers, less committed Christians, and pious Christians. Sacrifice makers worked to eliminate the influence of Christianity in the village. Less committed Christians sway between animal sacrifice and Christianity. Pious Christians have strong confidence in themselves for developing Christianity. These sections propose three competing views regarding the development of Christianity, aiming to forge it into the direction that they expect. Interactions among these arguments are not regulated or underpinned by any knowledge systems or structural forces; they are contingent on contexts in which knowledge systems are brought into interactions. In this sense, the development of, and interactions among, these three arguments constitute a self-organizing process. The present case, then, will demonstrate different dynamics of self-organization.

I will begin the present case with a brief history of Christianity in Sama. Since the late Nineteenth Century when American missionaries, the Hansons, created the Jinghpo orthography, Christians have missionized Jinghpo systematically. They translated the Bible into Jinghpo, taught the orthography, organized training courses for clergymen and educational conferences for ordinary Christians, and produced a large quantity of propaganda materials in Jinghpo (Maru Tangbau 1995; Tegenfeldt 1974). They also established Christian organizations at all administrative levels from the

central government to natural villages. Accordingly, the Jinghpo Christian population grew quickly; by 2003, almost all Jinghpo in the Kachin State and over half in China have been converted (Sadan 2004; Robbine 2007; Wang 1997). In Yingjiang County where almost half the Jinghpo in China reside, most Jinghpo except those in Tongbiguan Village Tract and Kachang Township have converted. There were no Christians in Sama till 1988 when *Yo* and his family members, who had fled to Burma in 1958 for escaping persecutions during the Chinese Communist movements and converted to Christianity there, returned to the village. They continued to be the only Christian household for about eight years. In 1995, a missionary team from Dazhai village, the Christian center in Tongbiguan Village Tract then, organized a ceremonial exhibition of reading the Bible at *Yo*'s house and invited villagers to attend. Four households were then converted, and half the villagers were converted in a few years. Christians anticipated that in a few years all villagers would convert.

However, the head of the village officials hated Christianity, who threatened villagers that if they converted, the government would not allocate jobs for their children graduating from school. His words worked effectively and in a short time the number of converted households declined to 15. In the 2000s, the development projects brought money to villagers, with which non-Christians were able to conduct animal sacrifice without harming family economy. Christian complaints of animal sacrifice impoverishing Jinghpo became invalid, and villagers felt more confident to revive animal sacrifice. More recently, the Yunnan Provincial government launched ethnic tourism, encouraging ethnic minorities to preserve their cultures. This policy stimulated officials in the Kachin State to realize that they now had only Christianity. To resume authentic Jinghpo, some officials tried to revive animal sacrifice, which in turn stimulated Jinghpo in China to cherish animal sacrifice. Gradually, most non-Christians lost interest in conversion; by 2003 only five more households had converted, and by

2009 only two more. In 2010, there existed 23 Christian households out of 78. Meanwhile, the local Christian community started to lose its members. From 2003 to 2009, 9 Christian girls married into Sama from Burma, and by 2010, 5 of them have abandoned Christianity owing to their husbands' animal sacrifice. Meanwhile, although 3 men were persuaded by their Christian wives to convert, they rarely participated in Sunday services but sponsored animal sacrifice.

In fieldwork, I had a lot of interviews and daily conversations with the clergyman *Nu*, who was also a cooperative team leader. "Christianity has been excluded from all development projects, while animal sacrifice has been supported", He told me. In 2010 when Sama was awarded RMB 1 million for intra-village road construction and agricultural development, *Nu* participated in all meetings for planning and organizing the construction. The reconstruction was designed only according to advice from animal sacrifice. "This made me depressed. It reminded me of my many times of failure in applying for governmental sponsorship to reconstruct the village church. The government did not sponsor our church one single penny". Worse, team leaders decided that during the road reconstruction, Christians should follow the tradition of animal sacrifice. For instance, on November 21st, leaders and a few elders patrolled the village to negotiate with villagers whose courtyards or gardens would be partially taken by new roads. All, except *Lun*, a Christian, were happy to concede on behalf of the village. They believed that without governmental aid they would never be able to rebuild intra-village roads. But *Lun* did not want people to take part of his garden for the road to the village shrine. "Fell two giant banyan trees near the shrine! That will save us a lot of money. Those big trees are useless", he told the leaders. This annoyed many villagers because banyan trees, in particular those in the village shrine, are considered as a source of good fortune. To condemn *Lun*, about fifty villagers (including Christians) gathered in his house and threatened *Lun* "we will take

your house base back if you do not concede!” *Lun*’s current house site belongs to the cooperative team; he had been permitted to build a house there because team leaders had sympathized with him as an orphan, whose late father had sold out all their land for buying drugs.

The policy of ethnic tourism and the development projects stimulated sacrifice makers to believe that they were backed up by the Chinese government⁹⁰. The policy further intensified the tension between Christians and sacrifice makers. Christians deprecate animal sacrifice as backward and superstitious, and sacrifice makers laugh at such criticism by pointing out that God is also a spirit without essential difference from, say, the thunder spirit. “Christians are stingy because following every prayer chickens are slaughtered only for food, rather than offered to God from whom Christians pray for beatifications”, my assistant claimed. Although Christ teaches people to accumulate merit of their activities, which, many sacrifice makers admit, is beneficial, “few Christians could follow these instructions! Worse, most male Christians’ alcoholic addiction became more serious after conversion”. “Christianity is far from pragmatic. Christians are disingenuous. They claim that they should be honest and follow the Bible, but in reality, they do not!” ... “We sacrifice makers really follow what our ancestors told us to do”... “Most importantly, we sacrifice makers always feel furious at Christians because they abandon their family genealogy and so forget their ancestors!” “They are renegades of Jinghpo; they are ‘Jinghpo jiān’”, some sacrifice zealots claimed in public, even in front of Christians. They compared Jinghpo Christians with Chinese traitors (“hàn jiān” in Chinese: hàn refers to the majority of the Chinese people and jiān means traitor) in the anti-Japan war in the 1930s and 40s who betrayed China, and coined the term “Jinghpo jiān”. To avoid their offspring’s conversion, sacrifice makers intentionally cultivate their sons’ attachment to animal sacrifice. However, they leave their daughters out, who will marry out and be included in other’s families.

Sacrifice makers came to believe that the government's policy and animal sacrifice have been allied to force Christians to follow animal sacrifice in many aspects of daily life. I witnessed many of those instances. For instance, my landlord's second elder sister's family members had been converted to Christianity, while three of her four brothers were sacrifice makers. In November 2010, her son married a Tibetan girl and my landlord's youngest brother *Tu*, representing her natal family, was invited to consort with the Tibetan wife-giver. *Tu* and the Tibetan wife-giver should be given the greatest reverence in the wedding, and all wedding rituals should be approved by them in advance. The Tibetan wife-giver was easy-going, saying that they do not know the Jinghpo customs and so *Tu* could preside over the process. The wedding was then carried out according to animal sacrifice except for skipping sacrifice rituals. However, three days later when the Tibetan wife-giver left, *Tu* came to complained to his mother "they did not respect me! I am their old wife-giver!" According to the tradition, his sister's son's marriage belongs to a dangerous kind; it establishes alliance with a brand-new wife-giver. No one could guarantee whether such a wife-giver has the witch spirit that pollutes family blood or the bad death spirit that precludes social reproduction (Zhang 2004). But the government's policy of freedom of love and marriage supports such marriage. To avoid bad fate, the groom's family should observe various taboos. "They should formally introduce the Tibetan wife-giver to my family. Their new wife-giver and we old wife-giver will become brothers. Our fortune will help drive off all possible bad fortune!" *Tu* explained. He and his brothers had prepared for the introduction by carrying four baskets of gifts to the Tibetan wife-giver, which required a return of a similar amount of gifts. "Since the Tibetan wife-giver do not known the Jinghpo custom, we just want a simplest introduction. Only a few bottles of liquor from them will make us happy!" But *Tu*'s sisters' family members had converted and had not considered the marriage dangerous, and the

supposed formal introduction had been omitted. This had annoyed *Tu*, “They seemed to forget their old wife-giver when having a new Tibetan one!” He told his mother. Three days later, *Tu*’s sister and her husband rushed to Sama and begged *Tu*’s forgiveness with a basket of sticky rice and family-brewed beer. “We are Christians, but we had not wanted to disrespect our old wife-giver!”

More effectively, some Christians do things according to the Jinghpo tradition on their own. *Yo*, the first Christian in Sama and the former head of the local Christian community, was erudite in Jinghpo oral history and expert in observing the divination table. In 2010, he held a wedding for his son (with a non-Christian female). Such a marriage between Christians and non-Christians should negotiate between two different aims of Christian and non-Christian weddings. Sacrifice makers arrange everything according to spirits’ preference *via* divination, putting the new couple under the shadow of the groom’s ancestors, while Christians highlight their own preference and convenience. But *Yo* planned everything of the wedding according to the divination table, namely, according to the tradition of animal sacrifice. The wedding was set on February 1st, 2010. On January 30th (the 16th of the lunar calendar), the bride-fetching team set out at 15 : 30, “the time for getting a dragon wife” with two circles associated, and entered into the wife-giver’s house between 22:24 and 24:48, also “the time for getting a dragon wife”. The bride is supposed to enter the groom’s village one day before the wedding. But *Yo* learned from Chinese that “one should neither enter on the seventh nor go out on the eighth”, and so she should not arrive on January 31st (the 17th of the lunar calendar) but had better leave her natal family by 8:00 on February 1st (by the 18th of the lunar calendar). Before her arrival, *Yo* invited a clergyman to pray for safety and smoothness for the wedding, which was a counterpart of sacrifice ritual for driving off bad spirits allured by the ceremony.

The bride arrived at about 7:00 on February 1st and was temporarily settled in *Yo*’s brother’s

house. *Yo* negotiated with the wife-giver what rituals and customs, of Christianity or animal sacrifice, should be adopted. The wife-giver was accommodating, agreeing that *Yo* could do whatever is proper in Sama. *Yo* then followed all conventions of a Jinghpo wedding except for those directly related to spirits. The wife-taker and wife-giver should be formally introduced to each other between 8:00 and 10:24, “time of silver mountains” with two circles associated, though they had known each other before. Thereafter, the feast started between 10:24 and 12:48, “the time for a tiger eating meat”. The most critical is that all rituals should be completed by 15:00 (“the time when water level was even in all directions” with four circles associated). Any ritual after 15:00 would bring misfortune to the new couple, because that was “the time for killing” with one cross associated.

For most villagers, such syncretism between Christianity and animal sacrifice is understandable. “We are Christians, but more importantly, we are Jinghpo!” the clergyman *Nu* said, “We should follow the Jinghpo tradition except for sacrifice rituals”. Such syncretism will not harm the future of Christianity and he did not worry about it. However, what had worried *Nu* most was the failure of Christian efforts in controlling alcohol and drug addiction. Like sacrifice makers, they believed that drug addiction is caused by a wrong and destroyed *woi³³nyi³¹*, but unlike sacrifice makers, Christians claimed that Christ’s teaching can help cure such a *woi³³nyi³¹*. As opposed to sacrifice makers, who attribute a person’s compromised *woi³³nyi³¹* to his broken family tradition, Christians blame drug users for their stupid behavior and wrong life habit. As I demonstrate in Chapter One, Christians interpret the Jinghpo notion of *woi³³nyi³¹* as piety to God, which determines one’s fate after death. That is, one’s fate is determined by one’s credit of activities *vis-à-vis* God. By re-turning people’s behavior and life habit back to the track taught by Christ, Christians would correct drug users’ *woi³³nyi³¹* and eventually erase drug use and reduce HIV infection. Towards the end of the Nineteenth

Century Christianity had saved Jinghpo from syphilis that had almost wiped out the Jinghpo; it will also save Jinghpo from the crisis in drugs/alcohol addiction if people follow Christ's teaching.

However, many had come to realize that what Christians claimed is only a dream. Christian drug users suffer all the same disasters with sacrifice makers: broken families, death, wasted property and so forth. I witnessed how a family strove to quit drugs by converting to Christianity and then vacillating between Christianity and animal sacrifice. In the 2000s, the third, fourth, and fifth sons of the *Nhkum* family started to use drugs. In 2003, the third son was seriously ill. Under his Christian wife's persuasion, he converted. But Christianity did not help him and he died in August 2003. In the following three years, the fourth and fifth sons married Christians from Burma and were persuaded to convert. But they kept using drugs, and their wives also lost faith in Christianity. When their family members fell ill, they alternately resorted to hospital treatment, animal sacrifice, and Christian prayers.

In February 2010, the fourth son *Seng* started to sell drugs to about 20 boys and initiated another surge of drug use in the village. Members of the Village Female Association caught *Seng* on the spot. *Seng* threatened the women by pulling out his sword and then ran into the forest. That night, village leaders went into the forest, bound him with ropes, and took him back to the village. A congress meeting was then organized to discuss how to help the youths quit drugs. The leaders proposed to confine the youth in the village cultural life center till they quit drugs. "This is your last chance to quit drug use. If you do not cooperate, we will call policemen to imprison you. If you could not manage to quit drug use with your help, we will let the government to punish you!" the leaders told the drug users. In the following two weeks, females from village households were allocated to watch over the youths alternately—males were not supposed to do that as they would fight with the youths.

All the youths behaved well. Some had serious withdrawal attacks and endured great pain. They

were persuaded, and forced, to sustain. As time went by, the pain was gradually relieved and it was possible that they would succeed in quitting drugs. Most youths, after enduring the great pain during the first few days, came to realize that they can quit drugs. They told females who were watching over them that without the latter's help, they would not be able to endure the pain. "We will succeed in quitting drugs", one boy said, "and I will suggest that the next step the cooperative team leaders should take is to control alcohol addiction and gambling in the village". He even suggested me that "Xiao Zhang, why not come to take a commemorative photo for us. We were drug users, but do not look down on us. You see, we are quitting drugs. We have made great progress!"

During the surveillance period, *Seng* kept silent. His withdrawal attack was so serious that females were frightened and called other males to help guard him. Little by little, people were happy to find that his symptoms were alleviated. On the last day of the two weeks, a urine test showed that most, except three boys, had a negative result. The leaders held a party, praised the youths' hard efforts, and asked them to finger-print a guaranty of not using drugs any more. In particular, they praised *Seng* for his good behavior during the surveillance period, though he had initiated drug use in the village. "You are doing well. Now you have succeeded in quitting drugs. We see you as a good boy and will not blame you for initiating drug use again in the village!" But to the surprise of all, *Seng* went into Burma on the next morning and did not come back for a whole month. When he came back, he was very enthusiastic, and many guessed that he might have used drugs again.

Seng's case was not alone in the village. To many villagers, this suggested that the Christian claim of saving people from the crisis of drug use was only a dream. But the clergyman believed that villagers did not really understand Christianity. "God will not help those who are not pious to Him", he said, "And as we learned from the Chinese, no pain no gains – what you get from Christianity

depends on how hard you follow Christ teachings”. Or “You first need to give yourself a chance to save yourself, then, God will help!” Contrary to most villagers’ disappointment in Christianity, the clergyman was still enthusiastic about the future of Christianity. He believed that the development of Christianity depends on people’s hard efforts and strong piety. “And there are people who are always pious to God”, he emphasized. Hearing this, I always thought he was one of those people; I have observed that most villagers always considered him a Christian apotheosis.

To demonstrate his argument, he told me how Christians in Sama had striven to build the church by themselves. Every Christian household had donated according to the financial situation of each and participated in the construction. Although the government did not help Christians, they had cultivated their ability of self-dependence. “We are standing on our own feet!” Moreover, the Jinghpo orthography was taught during every Sunday service, which helped spread the sacred knowledge about God and Christ’s teachings. “We will have a thriving future, because we can spread our sacred knowledge. But, Xiao Zhang, you have seen how sacrifice makers have lost their knowledge”,

The clergyman also understood that making knowledge accessible is only the first step; knowledge should be understandable to villagers. To help people, he often explained Christian notions by contrasting or comparing them with already familiar notions of animal sacrifice. For instance, he interpreted the Christian notion of sin as the Jinghpo ancestors’ abandonment of Christianity. He believed that all people were born with a belief in Christianity, but Jinghpo ancestors had abandoned it and converted to animal sacrifice under the persuasion of Satan. Owing to such sin, Jinghpo had incurred syphilis in the Nineteenth Century and the current crisis in AIDS/drugs. Missionaries had saved Jinghpo from syphilis by returning the Jinghpo back to Christianity. Now, the only way to survive the crisis in AIDS/drugs is to act on Christ’s teachings. “Christianity provides us with a benign

and humane way of expiation. On the contrary, animal sacrifice provides only an evil means to expiate sacrifice makers' view of sin". *Nu's* great father was once a great animal sacrifice specialist, and *Nu* had learned that animal sacrifice originated from Jinghpo ancestors' effort to eliminate the sin of incest. Spirits had never bitten people before. But at the Jinghpo origin mountain people had punished two incestuous siblings with death. The two youths had complained: "Our ancestor did the same thing, why should we die? We would come back to bite you after death." To recover from the biting, people had then had to slaughter animals for spirits. "I believe such means of expiation for the sin of incest is villainous. It is dangerous, because people kept killing innocent animals", *Nu* argued.

During my fieldwork, I attended about forty Sunday services and noticed that the clergyman and other pious Christians believed that Christianity will have a thriving future, which is guaranteed by Christians' own efforts. They insisted that current pressure from sacrifice makers and the Chinese government will not persist long, because the alliance between the former two was far from stable. In the past, there had existed severe antagonism between them. "God had instructed Chinese communists to demolish animal sacrifice during the Cultural Revolution. God will find another chance to destroy animal sacrifice if people keep pious to Him", *Nu's* mother told me.

I also observed how Christians have established influence over sacrifice makers by setting up the Thanksgiving as a communal ritual for all villagers. Before the 2000s, individual households had conducted an annual ritual of "eating-the-new-rice" to celebrate the harvest. But development projects made villagers extremely busy during the rainy season. Most then did not cultivate paddy, consequently most families did not hold the ritual of "eating-the-new-rice". From 2007, Christians congregated with all villagers to celebrate the Thanksgiving, which gradually replaced individual households' ritual of "eating-the-new-rice". "This was a great achievement!" said the clergyman.

“Christians have established the Thanksgiving a Christian counterpart to the annual communal sacrifice to the village protection spirits”, *Lang*, a religious apprentice of animal sacrifice, told me, “We sacrifice makers lead Christians to pray for blessing from spirits on behalf of the village. Now, Christians get a chance to lead sacrifice makers to pray for blessing from God in the Thanksgiving.

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This third case documents how three competing views regarding the future of Christianity are brought into interaction during my fieldwork. The first view can be seen as a “strange attractor” – a contingent alliance between the Chinese government and animal sacrifice for suppressing Christianity. Such alliance depended on an opportunistic award to Sama in 2010, and exerted influence only in the examined case. The other two can be considered as “regular attractors”: 1) Christianity failed to control drug/alcohol addiction owing to Christians’ inherent degeneration; 2) for pious Christians, the development of Christianity depended on their own efforts and piety to God. These three “attractors” influenced different portions of the local population: animal sacrifice makers, less committed Christians, and pious Christians. They also represented influences from different knowledge systems: the first represented a combination of the Chinese government and animal sacrifice, the second, a combination of animal sacrifice and Christianity, and the third, Christianity. The competition among these views derived from tensions among the knowledge systems: animal sacrifice makers rallied with the government to suppress Christianity, and Christianity aimed to wipe out animal sacrifice.

I need to highlight a common thread that runs through the three views, which, however, is not emphasized in either of the arguments. I observed, and villagers also admitted, that most female Christians had genuine piety to God. Christian reinterpretation of *woi³³nyi³¹* matters most to females. It abandons the conventional view of females’ bad fate and endows them with an equal status with

males vis-à-vis God. In addition, Christians make expert knowledge about religion, which was previously controlled by males, available to females. Powered by such knowledge, females can participate, even take charge, in Christian affairs. During my fieldwork, most female Christians had complained to me how miserable their life and religious restrictions had been before conversion. Except for being a female spirit medium, they were literally excluded from ritual performance. “Christianity gives me a chance. It ignites my passion. Xiao Zhang, you are not a Christian; you cannot imagine how pious I am to God”, the clergyman’s wife said to me. Christianity ignites females’ religious fervor and they become extremely devout in rigorously following Christ’s teachings. And according to the clergyman, God will save only these pious people.

Interestingly, as opposed to females’ piety, most baptized males do not take Christ’s teaching seriously. Most of them were drunkards before conversion and knew that as a drunkard would likely become a drug user. They converted under persuasion of their Christian wives, hoping to quit alcohol with the help of Christ. To their surprise, they drank even more after conversion, because they had lost many of the special occasions for drinking in sacrifice rituals and so just drank every day. However, if a male converts on his own and is pious to God, in many cases he will become a spiritual leader in the local Christian community. Such a man is usually from a family with a good tradition of animal sacrifice. The clergyman *Nu* in Sama is a good example, whose grandfather was a well-known great animal cutter. As a consequence, though females maintain and control Christian daily activities, pious male Christians still serve as the spiritual leaders.

Following the logic of the Christian interpretation of *woi³³nyi³¹*, females’ piety will potentially become an “attractor” that eventually integrates competing views regarding the future of Christianity into a coherent one. But in fieldwork, I did not observe that female Christians’ piety influenced

people's views. These females do not lead the development of Christianity.

Conclusion

The three cases in the present chapter explore interactions among villagers' various aspirations of and attempts at development as related to the crisis of AIDS/drugs and the future of their traditions. Each aspiration or attempt is underpinned by one or two knowledge systems, but there does not exist any structural force that formulates the interactions among these attempts or aspirations, which are self regulated, initiated or intensified by contingencies, and led by free interactions among themselves. The absence of a structural force indicates a self-organizing process.

As demonstrated in chapters 2 and 3, under the influence of a structural force an "attractor" is not simply a convincing argument, whereas I argue in the present chapter that any convincing argument, without the influence from a structural force, can be treated as a potential "attractor" that will either be intensified in future events or dissipate on its own. "Attractors" described in the present chapter mark critical propensities of local processes that are beyond people's control. The development of and interactions among these "attractors" demonstrate the dynamics of self-organization.

The three cases demonstrate three kinds of the dynamics of self-organization. Case 4.1 explores linear intensification: an "attractor" serves as a starting-point that is continuously intensified in future events and based on which new "attractors" are formulated. As each "attractor" derives from a combination of knowledge systems, linear intensification displays integration of common grounds among knowledge systems. In the long run, a primary "attractor" has the potential to evolve into a structural force. Case 4.2 analyzes parallel development of self-organization regarding the fate of animal sacrifice, with each "attractor" representing a particular aspect of knowledge systems, which is in parallel with other aspects. Case 4.3 demonstrates competition among "attractors" that represent

tensions among knowledge systems regarding the future of Christianity.

Chapter Five

After “Attractors”: Discussion and Conclusion

The nine cases analyzed in Chapters Two, Three, and Four demonstrate the dynamics of individual participation in the world, in which individuals negotiate politico-economic structures, socio-cultural logics, socio-historical heritages, randomness, and individual cognitive inclinations, aspirations and situated backgrounds. Such negotiation is a recursive alternation between order and chaos, and between predictable occurrence and unpredictable contingencies. Any slight change might cause a great outcome (c.f. Keller and Keller 1996; Lave 2011), just like an innocuous comment by one individual might become the hell of another. A well-known saying in Chinese, “to govern a big country is like to cook a delicate dish” (Zhì dàguó rú pēng xiǎoxiān, 治大国如烹小鲜), by Lǎozǐ (the founder of the Daoism as a thought system) captures such delicacy – any slight factor might change the whole situation and direction of a country, just like a trivial change of temperature, ingredients combination, cooking time, and even the mood of the cooker and so his/her way of stirring dishes, might change the texture, color, and taste of, and so the whole dish!

In 2010 as my fieldwork progressed in southwest China, I gradually became a foreign but local intellectual who seemed to know almost everything of local way of life and sometimes knew things better than most villagers. Based on my understandings, I sometimes made predictions and expectations of certain events in a way that most villagers would have never thought about and would dispute. My predictions and expectations were based on my tentative understanding rather than an intuitive and integrated understanding of villagers’ life. Sometimes my predictions or suggestions were simply wrong; other times, they were interesting to villagers, especially to those who have intellectual inclination. Those villagers seemed to accept what I have proposed regarding new

connections among villagers' daily life details that they had never occurred to them. For me and for them, knowledge about their way of life was neither fixed nor pre-given and ready to learn. Rather, it should be explored all the time. Now in concluding my research, I want to emphasize that cognitive and psychological anthropologies require intense and close intellectual collaboration between villagers and the anthropologist in order to identify what villagers really understand and think. In most cases in our discussions, they did not understand what they were trying to tell me, or they just did not know how to talk about something they presumed they had understood. I needed to work with them to dig out what they really understood by proposing my understanding of what they had said, which in turn solicited elaborate discussions. What I finally present here is a result of an agreed understanding of villagers' life by the researcher and villagers. In this sense, my fieldwork consisted of such intellectual interactions between me and villagers, rather than a closed set of interviews with villagers. As I have demonstrated, many "attractors" I was able to identify (for instance "attractors" 2.2, 3.3 2, and 4.1.3) are a result of my intellectual collaboration with villagers. They are contingent and labile. My research thus served as a critical initial situation and contingent driving force for their emergence.

Through such intellectual collaboration, I also made sense of recursive construction of order from chaos and the breakdown of order into chaos by experiencing the process that I was studying! When I gradually gained an overall understanding of villagers' life, I also learned that I should caution myself again and again that such an overall understanding was only tentative. In some cases, such an understanding proved to be only an illusion and was later blurred or decomposed by a single new detail! In other times, it served an impulse for discovery if I keep probing into more details.

The delight to such exploration became the deepest drive that resuscitated me again and again for living in remote mountains, to walk at midnight through mountain footpaths alone where unknown or

imaginary dangers always stalked me, to endure in 2009 the most severe drought since the last century in Southwest China, and to suffer serious asthma attacks in the unbearable humidity during the rainy season! As an ordinary researcher, I came to understand what Albert Einstein's said "Anyone who fully understands the principle of relativity will forever not be able to break away from the captivation of its bewitchment!" The difference is he was bewitched by a fundamental principle of the world, and I was by the intellectual creativity of thousands of individuals in remote mountains. Now, at the end of my exploration, I will specify what my "bewitchment" means to cognitive/psychological anthropology, medical anthropology, the study of globalization, and the study of Southwest China.

A New View on Cross-border Information flow: Southwest China as an active space that drives China and mainland Southeast Asia into interaction

In the present dissertation I examine four knowledge systems representing forces respectively derived from central China, mainland Southeast Asia, and Southwest China. The Chinese government represents the continued process of historical incorporation of ethnic minorities into the central court (see Chapter Five). Chinese folk religion (and marginally Burmese culture through the Tai-speaking peoples) represents cross-ethnic cultural communication of the region (see cases 2.1, 3.3, and 4.2). Christianity and current crisis in drugs/AIDS represent modern influences from Southeast Asia (see cases 4.1 and 4.3). By focusing on the interactions among these four knowledge systems, this research integrates three approaches to understanding Southwest China in anthropological and historical literature by examining contemporary interactions among the four knowledge systems in a Jinghpo community. First, Chinese historians explore the historical process of politico-economic incorporation of ethnic minorities in Yunnan into the imperial Chinese court (Fang 2001; Lin 1989). Second,

contemporary anthropologists in the US analyze the Chinese government's current agenda of nation-state building that is intended to lump ethnic minorities into a culturally uniform Chinese nationality (Gladney 2004; Harrel 2001; Litzinger 1995; Mueggler 1997; McCarthy 2000; Schein 2000; Wang 1997; Townsend 1992). Third, scholars of southwest China and mainland Southeast Asia investigate cultural communications among Jinghpo, Chinese and many other peoples of the region (Chit Hlaing 2009; Dean 1997; Evans et al. 2000; Fiskesjö 2000; Giersch 2001; Hill 1998; Ho 1997; Robbine and Sadan 2007; Sun 2000; Tagliacozzo and Chang 2011; Yang B. 2004).

Interactions among these four knowledge systems bring forth many of the critical issues in the above three theoretical approaches – socio-historical process of political and economic incorporation (cases 3.2, 4.1, and 4.2), cultural preservation *via* political and economic interactions with the Chinese government (cases 3.1 and 4.2), and Chinese folk religion and Christianity mediate the spread of local understandings of AIDS/drugs (cases 2.1, 3.3 and 4.1). My research also explores issues absent in these three approaches – a contingent alliance between the Chinese government and Jinghpo animal sacrifice for suppressing the development of Christianity (cases 4.3), and the Chinese government, Christianity, Jinghpo animal sacrifice and Chinese folk religion are all enacted to understand AIDS/drugs (case 4.1). I therefore demonstrate, through the nine cases examined in Chapters Two, Three, and Four, how a Jinghpo community provides a miniature of the socio-cultural and historico-economic interactions among peoples of the region and, more generally, between China and Southeast Asia. Such a focus on interactions among knowledge systems further provides a processual / dynamic view that looks at Yunnan as not only an intersection between China and Southeast Asia, but as an active space that drives China and mainland Southeast Asia into interactions.

Three dynamics of social-historical changes, globalization, syncretism and pluralism

As demonstrated in Chapter One, interactions among the four knowledge systems display multi-directional propensities (see diagram 1.2): 1) the Chinese government suppresses the three other systems *from the top*; 2) Christianity pushes and pulls animal sacrifice *from the side*; 3) Chinese folk religion fuses with Jinghpo animal sacrifice *from the bottom*. In Chapters Two, Three, and Four, I have demonstrated how an “attractor” represents a momentary balance (propensity) among knowledge systems, and contains novelty that has potential to modify them. An “attractor” captures one portion of the multi-directional propensities among the knowledge systems, and 16 “attractors” generated in the 9 cases examined in Chapters Two, Three, and Four cover all aspects of the macro patterns described in Chapter One. In the present chapter, I will put these “attractors” together and outline the differentiation, deconstruction, and reconfiguration of the described macro patterns.

The dynamics of such differentiation, deconstruction and reconfiguration have been extensively analyzed by anthropologists in terms of modernity and the (re-/)invention of culture/tradition (e.g. Aung-Thwin 2005; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1984; Prickett 2009; Wagner 1981), syncretism or pluralism (e.g. Banchoff 2008; Hogarth 2002; Leopold and Jensen 2005; Lindenfeld and Richardson 2012), cross-border capital and information flow (De Genova 2005; Evans et al. 2000), localized globalization (Appadurai 1996; Elyachar 2005; Mazarella 2003), the entanglement of the local and the global (e.g. orta 2002, 2004; e.g. Tsing 2004). These concepts capture the differentiation and reconfiguration of a cultural system in the face of modernity and globalization, and specify the interactions among a number of factors involved such as global spread of capital/information, local aspiration for modernization and development, local cultural logic, and local and global socio-political processes. However, the processes of entanglement and interactions within a cultural

tradition or between the global and the local take different levels of depth in terms of how a tradition is modified/ reconfigured or the balance between the local and the global is set up on different levels of influence of one on the other. These concepts are not apt to differentiate different levels, and probably, different dynamics, of the (re-/)invention of culture/tradition, of the capital and information flow, and the entanglement of the local and the global.

I will argue here that my approach using the concept of an “attractor” to analyze the micro-level process of interactions among different knowledge systems (respectively represents forces from the local, the regional, and the global) will specify three different levels, and so dynamics, of the (re-/)invention of culture/tradition, of the capital and information flow, and the entanglement of the local and the global. Specifically, I will analyze three situations: 1) when an event progresses according to one or two knowledge systems; 2) when a regular “attractor” is generated, which can be incorporated into knowledge systems; and 3) when a strange “attractor” is generated, which resists incorporation. They display three mechanisms of how knowledge/cultural systems will be used/ brought online, elaborated, or changed in the face of the local and the global.

1) Structuration in the Ideal Situations

In ideal situations when subjects feel they have complete control over their behavior and understandings according to one or two knowledge systems, micro-level interactions and final results of the process will be *governed* by the knowledge systems. This ideal situation is a variety of perturbation, that is, the outcome of changes in a process is still well-defined by the knowledge system (as the structural force). Cognitive anthropologists and linguists have defined such phenomenon of perturbation in terms of rule/knowledge governing practice, by which practices are outlined by knowledge and adjusted to situations and individual interests (e.g. Chomsky 1995;

Hatfield 1991). Using the language adopted in this dissertation by which I analyze the emergence of an “attractor”, I claim that such governing rule/knowledge exerts a *global* influence over the micro-level process of the event, and formulates initial conditions and contextual contingencies exactly in the way predicted by the rule/knowledge. Since the final result of a specific event derives from a contingent combination of the structural force (rule/knowledge), contextual contingencies, and initial situations, such a combination is actually a process of the structural force regulating initial situations and contextual contingencies into the scope of the functioning of the structural force. Accordingly, the “structuring” force of the structural force over the micro-level process is the reverse of the process of how a final result derives from the micro-level process. Such *symmetry* suggests the convergence between people’s knowledge and behavior, and between socio-cultural logic and its materialization in people’s real life.

2) **Incorporation and Consolidation: Regular “Attractors”**

Different from the ideal situations in which initial conditions and random factors manifest structural forces or are absorbed by the latter, people often encounter situations in which they lack complete control over an event. That means, initial conditions or random factors will gain increasing momentum in shaping micro-level details of an event, making them deviate from the track defined by default knowledge systems. The process of the event and its final result then become unpredictable according to these systems. A regular “attractor” generated in such a process will contain novelty, which, if incorporated into the knowledge systems eventually, will enhance or complement the latter therefore underpinning future similar events.

Eleven regular “attractors” derive from the nine cases examined in Chapters Two, Three, and Four (for convenient reference, I will use the case number to label “attractors” formulated in that case).

Six of them are about the dynamics and development of Jinghpo animal sacrifice. They derive from ideas of, and practices associated with, animal sacrifice and bring new elements into it. For instance, “attractor” 2.2 (apprentices should work hard to improve their specialty so as to avoid future errors and harm, though they should not be blamed for their errors) brings a new element into animal sacrifice: one’s learning of religious specialty can be enhanced by one’s strong belief in communism and by learning from a former religious specialist who has converted to Christianity. “Attractor” 3.1 (my landlord devoted himself completely to musical performance, which enabled him to make a living and to meet the local village tract government’s efforts of preserving Jinghpo musical tradition by putting it in the market) is novel in the sense that market profit of, and local government’s efforts for preserving, the Jinghpo tradition drive my landlord to choose between his two talents/fates. This way, the Jinghpo old belief in fates is instantiated by and best materialized in modern contexts. “Attractor” 4.1.1 (a drug user has a wrong and destroyed *woi*³³ *nyi*³¹ that results from a broken family tradition) establishes a correlation between drug use (a recent crisis) and a traditional belief of inherited bad fate. It attributes the bad fate of drug use to a broken family tradition, and so brings a new element into animal sacrifice: drug use as a new type of inherited bad fate. Finally, “attractor” 4.1.4 (alcohol addiction is highlighted as a result of bad personality and broken family tradition, and a reason for drug addiction) establishes a new kind of bad fate – drug addiction that derives from alcohol addiction. Alcohol addiction has existed for centuries, while drug addiction is only a recent phenomenon. The “attractor” thus establishes correlations among drug addiction, alcohol addiction, and broken family tradition, which were disparate in animal sacrifice.

At the first glance, two of the six “attractors” regarding the dynamics and development of Jinghpo animal sacrifice have nothing novel, but they highlight aspects not emphasized before. In

“attractor” 4.2.2 (animal sacrifice will not go extinct because the patron spirit is always well-worshiped), the belief that the patron spirit guides animal sacrifice is a long established idea, and the “attractor” seems to be only an inference from that belief. But considering the current decline of animal sacrifice, such an inference highlights the role of the patron spirit not previously emphasized. Similarly, “attractor” 4.2.1 (ordinary villagers’ faith was split into pieces, with only one piece to animal sacrifice, and the fate of sacrifice is unknown) highlights the decline of animal sacrifice by demonstrating that the integrated faith, which was previously devoted to animal sacrifice, is split.

Two of the eleven “attractors” are about the development of Christianity. “Attractor” 4.3.1 (Christianity failed to control drug/alcohol addiction owing to Christians’ degeneration) stimulates Christians to realize the inadequacy of Christianity – it is far from pragmatic and makes its believers disingenuous. “Attractor” 4.3.3 (for pious Christians, the development of Christianity depends on their own efforts and piety to God [*woi³³nyi³¹*]) is an inference of Christian sophistication in comparison with the Jinghpo notion of *woi³³nyi³¹*. It is novel in the sense that the inference is highlighted so as to enable Christians to be independent when facing the alliance between animal sacrifice makers and government officials that suppresses Christianity.

Three of the eleven “attractors” enhance the fusing between Jinghpo animal sacrifice and Chinese folk religion by creating new items of syncretism regarding beliefs of and practices associated with the notion of pre-given fate. I have described in Chapter One how the Chinese animal calendar provides effective means for better understanding individual born fate, and how the Chinese tomb geomancy better expresses the inherited fate of a family. On such a basis, “attractor” 2.1 (*Yam* had failed in “life competition” with her father and her soul had already gone long before her death) interprets the Jinghpo notion of “life competition” in terms of the Chinese notion of death threshold.

“Attractor” 3.3.1 uses the Chinese notion of the mismatch of animal attributions of family members, which will cause great misfortune, to explain the Jinghpoo traditional notion of “life competition” among family members that will bring disaster. And “attractor” 4.1.2 (The correlation between tomb site and AIDS/drugs as well as a broken family tradition) interprets a novel inherited bad fate (AIDS/drugs) in terms of the Chinese notion of the misfortune of a bad tomb site.

As demonstrated in Chapters Two to Four, a regular “attractor” is a fully developed form of its critical point, resulting from *influences of structural forces over contingencies*. It thus can be consolidated into a structural force. In addition, such a critical point is *local*, influencing only aspects, or phases, of the whole process. In this regard, a regular “attractor” resembles three concepts developed by anthropologists: schema, habitus, and structure of the conjuncture, by which scholars explore how individuals create novel knowledge by negotiating received cultural knowledge with individual autobiographic particularities / socio-historical contingencies. Bartlett (1976[1932]) proposes the concept of schema as a constantly developing outline of certain domains of experience attuned to a present task. This notion enables scholars to explore how individuals construct their knowledge/memory by combining previous knowledge and autobiographic particularities. However, the individual in Bartlett’s view is studied largely in isolation from his/her socio-cultural contexts. To address this inadequacy, cognitive anthropologists have tailored Bartlett’s concept of schema to investigate cultural knowledge systems by embedding individuals in their socio-cultural contexts (Bennardo 2009; D’Andrade 1995; Keller 1992, 1996). For example, Quinn examines an American schema of marriage as supposed to be lasting, shared and mutually beneficial (1997: 161). This schema serves as the prototypical or idealized sequence of marital events, and real marital events put different emphasis on these three expectations about marriage. Independent of Bartlett’s notion of

schemata, Bourdieu (1977) proposed the notion of habitus as the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, practices attuned to the contexts. As a result of history, the habitus replays the continuous exercise of cultural laws with individual necessities.

More elaborately, anthropologist Sahlins proposes the notion of “structure of the conjuncture”. It captures the realization of cultural categories in a specific historical context by incorporating contingencies (1985). In incorporation, individuals slightly change their cultural categories so that a socio-cultural system perpetuates itself in a slightly altered way. The crux is to tackle the process of how small-scale individual changes are turned into large-scale transformations of nations or kingdoms. To explain such process, Sahlins (2005) proposes the mechanism of “elementary form of structural amplification”. A nation abstracts individual situations and amplifies their significance to the collective. An individual then becomes a miniature of the society. Changes to the former will accordingly be transferred to the latter. To illustrate this mechanism, Sahlins analyzes micro-sociological process of the encounter between Captain Cook and Hawaiians in the Eighteenth Century (1981, 1985). The European arrival broke the Hawaiian distinctions between man and woman (as female Hawaiians flirted in public with European sailors), chief and commoners (they contacted with sailors in similar ways). To compensate for this social derailment, Hawaiians associated Cook with Lono, a spirit of both procreation and demolition. Lono was annually celebrated for praying for fertility and sent away for avoiding disaster. Cook’s his first arrival accidentally converged with the annual arriving time of Lono. He was celebrated as a personification of Lono of procreation by Hawaiians. Such identification made the derailment acceptable. Hawaiian contact with Cook and his sailors was conceived as between humans and spirit and so beyond social rules. Cook received worship and was sent away. He was not supposed to come back within a year. But an accidental

hurricane forced Cook to re-land on Hawaiian soil soon. Hawaiian interpreted his second arrival as the arrival of Lono of demolition, namely, as a disaster. The only way to escape it was to drive away Cook, who was then killed. In addition, the association between Cook and Lono brought new values to received Hawaiian cultural categories. The killing of Cook is conceived as a victory of humans' defeat over spirits and of the aristocrat over the royal succession. Such new values were further appropriated by aristocrats to justify dynastic wars; they claimed that the kings have given Cook and his crew to land Hawaiian soil and cause social derailment. In this way, aristocrats' rebellion turned into a mechanism that changed the basis of local society. And political wars gained a new implication not traditionally held: Lono as a vanquished king.

However, the concepts of schema, habitus, structure of conjuncture, though powerful in describing the result and pattern of how individuals create novel knowledge, lack a processual and operable means for understanding the derivation of the result and pattern. In other words, I argue that they are only the final/static result of a regular "attractor". As I demonstrate in the nine cases analyzed in the present dissertation, the notion of a strange "attractor" provides an operable means for identifying the micro-level process of the emergence of schemata, habitus, and structure of conjuncture by specifying interactions among initial conditions, contingencies, and structural forces.

3) Revolution and Strange "Attractors"

The macro interactional pattern described in Chapter One is maintained and reinforced in the above two situations. But the pattern will be considerably changed when a persistent strange "attractor" appears. A strange "attractor" results from influences of contingencies over structural forces and will have potential to change the existing structures. It represents a brand-new object, domain, or relation among the existing structural forces, and will, in the long run, evolve into a new

kind of structural force. Or, they will potentially revolutionize the existing knowledge systems. Five strange “attractors” are formed in the nine cases examined in the last three chapters. They represent two types of interactions among the four knowledge systems: 1) the interlacing of individual fates that brings together Jinghpo animal sacrifice and Chinese folk religion; and 2) a contingent alliance between the government and animal sacrifice. I will discuss these two types in the present section, aiming to specify the dynamics of revolution of a knowledge system in terms of a strange “attractor”.

The first type brings Jinghpo new knowledge about the interlacing of individual fates. Although Jinghpo have an elaborate theory about individual fates, they lack a systematic understanding of the interlacing of fates. Meanwhile, the Chinese have developed a delicate theory for calculating the interlacing of fates, and Jinghpo now are learning such specialty and creating a new means of divination in animal sacrifice. Such dynamics of borrowing from other knowledge systems for developing one’s own system is far from new to scholars. Cognitive scientists Michalski (1994), Holyoak and Thagard (1989) develop “abduction theory” to explain the result of how a novel structure borrowed from a domain can change existing structures of another domain. A strange “attractor” explicates the complicated course of borrowing, reconfiguration, and evolution of the novel knowledge. “Attractor” 3.3.2 illustrates how *Ko*’s good fate and strong *woi³³nyi³¹* brought some of her family members bad fortune but good luck to many non-family members. It solves a problem that has puzzled her for a long time. “Attractor” 4.1.3 establishes the correlation between *Shan*’s identifying *Ren*’s grandfather as a new parent and the decline of *Ren*’s family tradition. It expands the interlacing of individual fates to that of individual fate and family tradition.

This first type of “attractors” is labile not only because of the contingent situations from which they derive, but also because such knowledge borrowed from Chinese is too abstruse for ordinary

villagers who have only fragmentary knowledge regarding Chinese notion and theory of individual fate. In my fieldwork base, the most systematic effort of learning the Chinese theory of the interlacing of individual fates is made by *Sara La*, who focuses on time divination. In Jinghpo animal sacrifice, time defines the fortune of everything and time divination is used to figure out a best mach of all relevant factors to achieve the best benefit for certain activities (see Chapter One). *Sara La* started to learn time divination in the late 1970s, and by 2010 he, already in his late seventies, has gained renown as a great diviner of the region. He was considered as even more advanced than many Chinese specialists by both local Jinghpo and Chinese villagers. During fieldwork I had tens of interviews with him, in which he told me how he had come to learn time divination. When he was young, none of his family members had believed in time divination and they done things solely at their own convenience. As a consequence, they had encountered various kinds of misfortune. For instance, *Sara La* had gone into Burma searching for wealth at jade mining sites and gotten money in the late 1950s. But soon the Kachin State was set up, which had abandoned the previous currency and made all the money he had earned become useless paper. He had then returned to China and become a teacher in the local Primary School in 1965. In the same year, his parents had built a new house. But shortly after the new house celebration, his youngest sister had been told by a Tai specialist in Burma that her parents had built the house and celebrated it on bad days – probably, people living in it would incur disasters. To avoid that, they should move all things out and re-enter the house on a good day. Unfortunately, his parents had only laughed at that advice. Then, in one year following the completion of the house, the house had burned for unknown reasons, and his parents and his eldest and fifth brothers all had died one after another in the same year. These tragedies stimulated him to learn time divination. He also observed that such tragedies were common among his fellow villagers. “During the past fifty years, I

have witnessed that 22 households in Sama go extinct! But Xiao Zhang, you Chinese cherished time divination, you families rarely went extinct!” Gradually, he had become a specialist who blends the traditions of Chinese, Jinghpo, and Tai. Unlike a Jinghpo specialist who memorizes everything, he writes everything down and uses books in divination. But like a Jinghpo specialist, he observes all taboos regarding animal sacrifice, such as not eating dirty things (such as food fallen to the ground or given by a pregnant woman). I have worked with him since 2003, and he wants to pass his knowledge on me. He expects me to follow all taboos and so make my knowledge the source of my dignity and reverence. “Xiao Zhang, you are learning sacred knowledge, you should be careful with food so as to guarantee that your words will become effective”, he told me during a dinner.

The second type of interactions among the four knowledge systems generates three “strange attractors” regarding a contingent alliance between government-sponsored development projects and the Jinghpo animal sacrifice in the nine cases examined in the present dissertation. The alliance creates a new thing: to develop the economy by preserving traditional culture and to preserve traditional culture by developing the economy. “Attractor” 3.2 combines governmental regulations and Jinghpo convention to solve an adultery affair. It converts part of the adultery compensation payment for village development and locates the Jinghpo customary laws within the government’s elementary administrative level. “Attractor” 4.2.3 combines a development project and animal sacrifice for realizing two aims – economic development and cultural preservation. “Attractor” 4.3.1 illustrates how an alliance between government and animal sacrifice is used to suppress Christianity.

As I described in cases 3.2, 4.2, and 4.3, the alliance between Chinese government and Jinghpo animal sacrifice is labile and contingent, which can be further attributed to unstable, both historically and in the present, relation between the Chinese government and ethnic minorities in Yunnan Province

in Southwest China. Before the Ming dynastic period (1368–1644 CE), the majority of the Yunnan population was non- Hân indigenes, with Hân Chinese immigrants being absorbed into native societies. From the Fourteenth Century the Ming Court, aiming to transform Yunnan into a Chinese-dominated administrative unit, launched five massive Hân Chinese resettlement campaigns by relocating Hân Chinese from Eastern and Northern China to Yunnan. These campaigns changed the demographic pattern of Yunnan from an area of non- Hân indigenes into a Han-dominated place by the end of the Ming dynasty (Sun 2000; Yang B. 2004). The Hân influx was accompanied by Chinese administrative rule, the expansion of arable land, the introduction of new agricultural techniques, the establishment of new urban centers, and the construction of irrigation systems, new roads, schools, and so forth. The dominance of Hân Chinese and the economic incorporation of Yunnan into the central Chinese court provided a basis for the spread of Chinese folk culture in Yunnan to "civilize" the minds of the indigenes (Yang 2004), which was also adopted according to indigenous cultures, local climate, topography, and native economic practices (Jiang 1997). Historical incorporation of Yunnan into the central Chinese administrative system thus displays two simultaneous processes: mandatory politico-economic control and spontaneous syncretism among cultures. The former considers minorities as an object and the latter as a subject.

The incorporation is recorded in both Chinese historical records and local oral histories, with the former characterizing the government's victory and the latter capturing vignettes of antagonism, violence, and compromise. The victory narration has been well documented in the literature (Fang 2001; Jiang 1997; Sun 2000; Yang 2004), and anthropologists also started to record such oral histories (Fiskesjö 2000; Litzinger 1996; Zhou 1999). Among Kachin, one of my key informants, *Yo*, who wrote 55 pages of oral history for me, projects the incorporation back to a war between Chinese and

Jinghpo in the mythological period when ancestors of all peoples in today's Asia, as sons of the primordial ancestors, separated from each other. Yo blends the Jinghpo genesis legends with the Chinese historical records aiming to create a genealogy of how all peoples in today's world derived from the same ancestors. According to his genealogy, ancestors of today's peoples in Asia, such as Hàn Chinese, Jinghpo, Tai, Burmese, were real brothers from the same father. As *Yo* wrote:

“Following a ritual of breaking-up-the-house, the primordial ancestors of today's peoples in Southeast Asia and Southwest China sent their sons to reclaim new areas. The three elder brothers, *Mung Hpang Gam*, *Wa Hkye No* and *Mung Hkye No* (ancestors of today's various Hàn Chinese), left first. They found an excellent place in today's Mongol Plain (*Ka A Li Ya* in Jinghpo), settled down there, and had an affluent life by raising animals and hunting. Years later, the five younger brothers (ancestors of today's Burmese, Jinghpo, Indians, Tai, and other minorities in Burma) arrived at the Mongol Plain. The three elder brothers did not want to share the place, and conflicts broke out now and then, which were finally exacerbated into a war. The three elder brothers, having settled down for a long time and gathered enough weapons and food, defeated their other brothers and drove them out of the Plain.

The elder brothers chased the younger brothers aiming to eradicate them. During the younger brothers' fleeing, the big Luding River blocked them. They made sling bridges using bamboo strips. After crossing the river, they cut all bridges, which stopped the elder brothers, who did not know how to make sling bridges having lived too long in the plain. This story of crossing the Luding River was important in the history of the Jinghpo. In modern times, a similar episode took place when the Chinese Communist

Party was defeated and chased by the Chinese Nationalist Party in the 1920s. The communists learned from the Jinghpo ancestors and crossed the Luding River and so threw off the Nationalist pursuit. Having thrown off the elder brothers' pursuit, the younger brothers arrived at the edge of today's Tibet, where they started to plant red corn and crops and to hunt using gun and bow. Year by year, they migrated southward and finally arrived at *N-gon Byi Sa N-gon Htingnu*, a sacred place in the Jinghpo genesis legends where the Jinghpo mythological hero *N-gon Du* had lived. There the population started to grow due to the peace and stable food supply.

But the elder brothers finally found them, and, to the younger brothers' surprise, invited the younger brothers to go back to Mongol Plain to hold a peace feast for resuming their brotherhood. In the feast, the head of the three elder brothers, *Li A Di*, gave each younger brother a kingly costume, a sword for commanding an army, and a fan made of red deer fur. He asked them to take over the rest of the world. The fan was used to recognize the younger brothers as kings in their domains; as it is made of innumerable hairs, a king holding it will have innumerable followers. The feast endowed the five younger brothers with power from the mighty Han Chinese king to govern the rest of the world. Following the feast, the five brothers started to establish their own domains. Gradually Burmese, Tai, and Indians established their own countries, while Jinghpo and Ginyin haven't been able to do that till today and had to live in countries of others.

The war and peace feast were known in Chinese as the War between 'Huángdì' and 'Yándì' that opened the history of China. Huángdì, called in Jinghpo *Li A Di*, won the war and governed today's China. Yándì, ancestor of various minorities in today's South

China, fled southward.”

Yo and I had numerous discussion regarding his writing. In this excerpt, he blends the Jinghpo migration history with the Chinese historical records and interprets the current politico-economic imbalance between Jinghpo and Chinese in terms of a war in history. In Chinese historical documents and essays, Jinghpo is imaged as one of the descendents of an ancient ethnic group in north China, and the war between Huángdi (黄帝, the ancestor of Hàn Chinese) and Yándì (炎帝, the ancestors of today’s minorities in South China) is considered as the starting point of the demarcation between South and North China (Wáng *et al.* 1997). *Yo* goes along with such Chinese imagination of minorities in south China; Yándì’s being defeated is a figurative expression of the minorities’ secondary position to Chinese. Different from the victory narrative in the Chinese historical records, *Yo* fabricates a peace feast to imply the cultural syncretism between Jinghpo and Hàn Chinese. His writing thus implies the two sides of the historical process of the Chinese court’s incorporation of ethnic minorities – politico-economic suppression and cultural syncretism.

The current Chinese government inherited the double sidedness of historical incorporation through its two policies: the policy of religious freedom (based on three successive constitutions in 1954, 1975, and 1982), and the policy of ethnic integration. The former illustrates the cultural syncretism while the latter intensifies politico-economic incorporation. The policy of integration asserts that all economically underdeveloped minorities have political equality with the Hàn Chinese and are endowed with certain political and economic privileges, such as extensive state allocations in terms of relief funds, loans, subsidies, and tax relief. However, the government does not attribute equal importance to the two policies. Since the mid-1980s, when the government set economic development as its primary aim, it intended to lump all ethnic identities into one internally diversified

category (“zhōng huá mín zú”, 中华民族 “the people of China”) by highlighting minorities as poor Chinese citizens (Anderson 1983; Townsend 1992). Accordingly, the tension between ethnic groups’ identification and negotiation with their categorization by the government and government’s construction of a national identity at the expense of cultural differences have increased the complexity and subtlety of identity construction (c.f. Litzinger 2000; Harrell 2001; Schein 2000). From the 1950s, more Han Chinese moved into minority areas to control and transform local minorities from the grass-roots. The second and third generations of these Chinese, born and raised in minority areas, consider themselves as part of local society rather than as Han Chinese that came from places outside Yunnan. Such belongingness facilitates local societies to accept Chinese government’s efforts of constructing Chinese nationality more smoothly (Hansen 2004). Under such conditions of economic development, nation-state building, and cultural identity negotiation, it is inevitable that the combination of the Jinghpo animal sacrifice and Chinese government is contingent and labile.

Taking the five strange “attractors” together, I argue that they will potentially revolutionize Jinghpo animal sacrifice by creating a brand-new object, domain, or relation with other knowledge systems. But this process will take a long time, during which these new objects /domains will interact with other “attractors”, transform into a regular “attractor”, then into a quasi-structural force, and finally a new knowledge system in the long run. Obviously, my 29 months of fieldwork is not long enough for observing this process, and all the five strange “attractors” I identified in the present dissertation are unprecedented in my fieldwork base and contingent in their respective contexts. To fully understand these processes among Jinghpo whose history is not documented, the only way is to live with them for decades, or even longer. What I can do now is to anticipate the development of these strange “attractors” based on ethnographic data provided in this section. The first type of strange

“attractors”, the interlacing of individual fates, will probably persist and evolve into a novel and default theory, due to people’s increasing interests in Chinese folk religion and the importance of the interlacing of fates. But the second type, the combination between animal sacrifice and government, is doomed to be labile and will probably disappear.

An alternative way to explore the evolution of a strange “attractor” is to explore the paradigm shift in science (Kuhn 1962) where the historical process of knowledge production and development are well-documented (c.f. Bohm and Peat 1987; Wise 2004). Such exploration will provide clues for specifying a means for testing and expanding the dynamics of how a “strange attractor” revolutionizes a knowledge system in daily life ethnographic contexts. To extend the current dissertation research, I plan to explore whether and how a paradigm shift in science illustrates the dynamics of how a strange “attractor” (a revolutionary idea, such as quantum, relativity, chaos, and DNA) evolves into a regular “attractor” (a thriving subfield within a specific discipline), and eventually a novel knowledge system (a dominating theory that directs researches in many disciplines, such as the quantum theories, relativity theories, complexity theories, and genetic engineering).

A Dynamics View of Socio-cultural Complexity and of the Alternation of Order and Chaos

The nine cases examined in the dissertation demonstrate what can be identified as an “attractor” in knowledge circulation and how to identify it. My analysis sets up a framework for understanding the dynamics of the micro-level processes of knowledge circulation and interactions among knowledge systems. By dynamics, I mean the evolution in time, as opposed to the structure as result of the evolution.

To define an “attractor”, I identify structural force(s), initial conditions, contingencies, and a critical point. A critical point represents the influence exerted by contingencies over the process,

which escape the complete control of a structural force. It breaks the determination of the process by structural forces, thereby creating a virtual space in which a structural force, initial conditions, and contingencies are re-configured. In other words, a critical point represents the relations between contingencies and a structural force. If a structural force dominates the contingencies, a critical point is local, influencing only aspects, or phases, of the whole process, and an “attractor” that will arise is a fully-developed form of the critical point. That is, the critical point serves as the necessary and sufficient condition for the emergence of an “attractor”. Such an “attractor” is a regular one, *resulting from influences of a global structural force over contingencies*. A regular “attractor” is thus easily consolidated into a structural force. By contrast, if a critical point represents the influence of contingencies over a structural force, it will provide a virtual space for, and function as only a necessary condition for, the emergence of an “attractor”. A resulting “attractor” will be heterogeneous with its critical point. The influence of such a critical point is *global* and prone to modifying a structural force. A resulting “attractor” is thus a strange one, *resulting from influences of contingencies over structural forces*, and so is hard to be consolidated into a structural force. Accordingly, one major difference between a strange and a regular “attractor” is that the latter is, to some extent, predictable in future events, while the former is completely contingent and impossible to be predictable.

Accordingly, an “attractor” in knowledge circulation is defined as a convincing argument that attracts people, reduces micro-level interactional chaos, absorbs controversies, and creates novel uniformity. It differs from a structural force as it is only a contingent argument that exerts influence over future events, while a structural force is the default and exclusive guideline. When there exists a structural force, an “attractor” is a convincing argument that contains influence, either of a structural force over contingencies or of contingencies over a structural force. When there does not exist any

structural force, any convincing argument can be considered as an “attractor” (see Chapter Four).

In complicated cases where more individuals and more socio-cultural issues are involved, several “attractors” might be generated with each marking an aspect or potential direction of the process. When a structural force is absent, the development of and interactions among these “attractors” demonstrates the dynamics of *self-organization*. The three cases in Chapter Four demonstrate three dynamics of self-organization as a result of spontaneous, rather than well-defined by received cultural knowledge systems, interactions among subjects: 1) linear intensification in which an “attractor” serves as a starting-point that is continuously intensified in future events, based on which new “attractors” are formulated. Consequently, in the long run a primary “attractor” might evolve into a quasi-structural force. 2) Several but parallel developments in which “attractors” are independent of each other. 3) Competitive “attractors” when any one might subjugate another.

An “attractor” thus defined is a derivative from, rather than a statistical description of, the micro-level chaos. In this sense, my use of chaos theory in socially dynamic processes avoids two inadequacies of previous applications of chaos theory in social science (e.g. Eglash 1999; Hawkins 1995; Lansing 2006; Strathern 2001; Taylor 1990; Wagner 2001; Williams and Arrigo 2002), which use chaos theory i) for exploring structural rather than processual implications of a social phenomenon (Mosko and Damon 2005:25); or ii) metaphorically, and thus fail to deal with subjective intention / agency (Ingham 2007).

Taking the nine cases together, I claim that they verify my major hypothesis that a social consensus arises as an “attractor”. My research thus contributes to the broader currents in the cognitive sciences and anthropology by providing the cognitive dynamics of achieving social consensus in real-life contexts rather than in the restricted contexts of artificial modeling (Romney *et*

al. 1986, 1987; Hutchins 1995). Among the Jinghpo in my fieldwork base, each “attractor” is a particular combination of several knowledge systems. The dynamics of the derivation of consensus can also be treated as the dynamics of interactions among several knowledge systems. In addition, the nine cases also verify my alternative hypothesis – power relation function as an “attractor” in knowledge circulation regarding the formation of a social consensus. Power and its function are actually an alliance among socio-cultural logics, institutional forces, situational contingencies, and individual aspirations and desires. An “attractor” represents a general and abstract combination of all these factors – power and its function are only an instantiation of an “attractor”.

Taking the two hypotheses together, I argue that the source of a social consensus and function of power relations can be treated as two instantiations of an “attractor” in knowledge circulation. My research thus unifies the socio-cognitive process of a social consensus and the socio-political process of power. It *bridges* cognitive and psychological anthropology and anthropological studies of power relations, which have been separated for long without real communication and reconciliation (e.g. Bloch 1985; Leach 1954; Mintz 1985). Scholars either subjugate power relations under the cognitive function of a cultural system (e.g. Dumont 1977; Sahlins 1976, 2000), or distort cognitions as a function of power relations (Asad 1993; Bourdieu 1991; Foucault 1980; Gupta and Ferguson 1997). My argument treats both the function of power and cognition as two independent instantiations of an “attractor” in knowledge circulation, and so incorporates cognitive anthropology and the studies of power relations into a more general framework, in which power relations and cognition may evolve independently of (cases 2.2, 2.3, and 3.2), or interact with (cases 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3), each other.

Having verified both hypotheses, I set up a formal framework for understanding social complexity derived from quasi-infinite individual diversities and inherent randomness of

socio-historical processes. Socio-cultural complexity is a critical yet under-addressed issue in anthropology (for instance, see Orta 2002, 2004 for complexity of locality). Scholars of “writing culture” first systematically argue that subjective diversities will inevitably dissolve all structural descriptions of culture as a system (e.g. Abu-Lughod 1993; Clifford and Marcus 1986), and raise the challenge of how to understand complex subjective diversities. However, by denying culture as a system, these scholars explore details for the sake of the detail. These scholars argue that there does not exist such a notion of culture as a system, but rather that everything is only emergent. My argument of a social consensus arising as an “attractor” demonstrates how a consensus emerges from a combination of structure/system and contingencies. Without denying culture as a system, other scholars take up this challenge and explore the interactions between culture and subjective interpretations in terms of dialogues between structure and event (e.g., Ortner 1984; Sahlins 1985, 2005) or between micro- and macro-histories (e.g., Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1992). However, these studies reduce the complexity involved to simple interactions among a few individuals. My research on the dynamics of how a social consensus arises from the micro-level chaotic interactions among many subjects provides a means for formulating quasi-infinite individual particularities and interactions among them by an “attractor”, which tames untraceable differences into traceable regularities and so reduces chaos. An “attractor” represents a contingent combination of socio-cultural logics / structures, power relations, socio-historical contingencies, individual particularities, and human agency. My framework thus enables us to explore the delicacy of alternation of order and chaos, of predictability of logics and randomness of contingencies and particularities.

Cognition and Culture: Integrating Computational and Non-computational Approaches

The dynamics of a social consensus arising as an “attractor” offers insight to integrate two parallel, though sometimes connected, approaches to understanding human cognition: the computational approach that treats cognition as a Turing Machine of information input and output (Hirschfeld and Gelman 1994; Hutchins 1995; Lehman 1985; Pfeifer and Bongard 2007; Thagard 1996; Wells 2006), and the non-computational approach to knowledge acquisition through bodily learning, the senses, and the imagination, etc. (Csordas 1994; Gibbs 2006; Gillet 1994; Holtzman 2006; Keller and Keller 1996; Shore 1996, 2008; Varela 2000).

“A computation is the action of a Turing machine” (Penrose 1994; see also Yourgrau 2005), by which certain algorithm determines the relation between the input and output. A computational action can be transformed among its different states. That is, computability keeps transformative morphism among different states of the action. Hutchins’ study of sailors’ learning and cooperation illustrates this (1995). What happens in learning is that people interact with others so that the computational properties of their cultural knowledge system, not just any kind of explicit representations of the system, might be shared, copied, and distributed among members of a community. Human cognition works like a Turing machine that operates upon the computational properties of knowledge systems.

What is inadequate in the computational approach is that cognition does not always operate upon the computational properties of the world, but upon the corporeal properties through body, senses, and imagination. If the computational properties are accessible to researchers who don’t acquire competence in what they study, the corporeal properties will probably not be open to researchers who don’t acquire a certain degree of competence. In a computational world, there always exists structural conservation between the mind and the world (knowledge governs practice), whereas in the corporeal

world, novel practice that goes beyond the scope of knowledge as structural underpinnings of practice emerge in the process of knowing and practicing. During their apprenticeship of blacksmith, Keller and Keller (1996) examine how cognition operates upon the corporeal properties of the world in situated learning through imagination. Drawing on the phenomenology of Schutz and the psychology of L. S. Vygotsky, Keller and Keller specify two facets of cognition and one mode of interaction among them: partially structure conservation (the computational property of the world) and partially creativity (the corporeal property), and the sedimentation that incorporates creativity into structural conservation.

Basso (1996) provides another illustration of non-computational cognition in terms of synaesthesia. Western Apache people speak with place-names so that the speaker seems to be talking for ancestors associated with that place in legends. Story-telling is a synthesis of several senses: “Every occasion of ‘speaking’ provides tangible evidence of ‘thinking’, and thinking occurs in the form of ‘picture[s]’ that persons ‘see’ in their mind[s]” (Basso 1996: 84). In the story of a man chasing two girls, hearing, bodily movement (“walking back and forth”), smelling (“smell enough burning piss”), seeing (“for a while I couldn’t see”), work together to re-create the whole ambience of past events by creating a virtual space in which the audience was taken back to the past by their synaesthetic experience with the told story – the audience, thereby, understands the told story as if they had experienced it personally. Sutton (2001) further specifies the mechanism of synaesthesia by asking what is it specifically about food that makes it a powerful source of memory. Taste and smell (the olfactory and gustatory properties of food), he finds. To validate this, he turns to Sperber: synaesthesia creates synchronicity among things in different time-spaces, a synchronous convergence, i.e. the association of diverse things occurring at the same moment. In addition, synaesthesia means that a certain smell may simultaneously bring forth a synthesis of other senses, because smell is a

prototypical symbol that is the part for the whole (Sperber 1975). That is, memory works through the mechanism of synchronicity (of past and present) and isomorphism (smell isomorphically represents several senses) so that the synaesthesia of food can bring the experience of the past into the present.

Keller and Keller, Basso, and Sutton's studies taken together make us see that knowledge learned through the non-computational modes of cognition is partially computational (knowledge that partially underpins practices) and partially non-deterministic (e.g. synaesthesia that takes a Western Apache back to the past ambience of the told story, smells of food relive memory).

Non-computational modes of cognition – senses, body, and imagination – bring novel and indefinite elements into the computational world of action and mind (Churchland Grush 1997) .

Taking both the computational and non-computational approaches together, we need to understand how the Turing-machine-based mode of cognition (that deals with formal, abstract properties of the world) works in phase with the sense/ synaesthesia- based mode of cognition (that deals with sensual and imaginary properties of the world). The former is predictable, while the latter is contingent and subject to individual maneuvering. Regarding this, the physicist and cognitive scientist Penrose suggests that the brain is indeed acting as some kind of computer – albeit a computer with *built-in* random ingredients (Penrose 1994 - my emphasis). These random ingredients are not just inherent in the human brain; they are part of the human and natural world we live in⁹¹. A satisfactory theory of human cognition should take this randomness into consideration so as to deal with naturally situated cognition in people's daily life, rather than only in simulated and ideal contexts. In other words, an integrative cognitive theory should enable us to explore how the order (computational property of the world and the transformational representations the world by the mind) exist vis-a-vis inherent contingencies emerging in human cognition and the world (the corporeal property of the

world and non-deterministic as well as non- transformative relations between the mind and the world). Cognition operates upon the links among bodily movement, senses/ synaesthesias, language use, and the computational properties of the world. This view of cognition incorporates the computer metaphor of the mind and the synaesthesia/transference model of the mind but go beyond both models. The network discussed here is not simply the one discussed in Hutchins' book as a network of human communication and communicative media, but rather a network of different modes of human acquisition of culture: bodily movements, senses, language use, imagination, and cognition that functions as a Turing machine, etc (Barabási 2002).

In this regard, my framework provides us with a new vision for exploring cognition in order to understand how the explicit structure and order of human actions create, consolidate, and incapsulate inherent randomness. It provides an operable means to identify the delicate alternation between predictability of computer arithmetic of the computational approach and the randomness of the synaesthesia/transference model. Specifically speaking, I propose that human cognition functions (as illustrated by the cognitive dynamics of the derivation of a social consensus) as an "attractor", its computational mechanism serves as a structural force, and synaesthesia/transference serves as contingencies. Calling the non-computational modes of cognition contingencies does not imply any disparagement of them. These modes function only in contingent contexts and generate results that are hard to be copied in other contexts and by other subjects. In routine daily life when things are explicitly influenced by articulated knowledge, a structural force (computational modes of cognition) might dominate knowledge acquisition and enactment and also absorb novel knowledge from contingent experience. In situations when things are only implicitly influenced or formulated by articulated knowledge, a structural force might be absent and non-computational modes of cognition

will take precedence and so creates novel knowledge that can be (as discussed by Keller and Keller in terms of sedimentation), or is hard to be, incorporated into existing knowledge.

To illustrate how cognition functions as an “attractor”, with the computational mechanism serving as a structural force and synaesthesia/transference as contingencies, let me discuss how consciousness derives from embodiment⁹². Scholars have proposed two approaches to understanding embodiment. First, the body functions as a “text” representing, or as instrument carrying out, mind/consciousness, and is subject to either power (Bourdieu 1980; Comaroff 1985; Foucault 1978; Mauss 1935) or cosmological relations (Hertz 1909; Douglas 1966; Lakoff and Johnson 2003). The second approach treats the body positively as an initiator, rather than as a mere bearer, of mind/consciousness so that the body presents, rather than represents, mind/consciousness (Csordas 1994; Gatewood 1985; Holtzman 2006; Merleau-Ponty 1962; Seremetakis 1994; Stoller 1995; Sutton 2001). Following this approach, Geurts argues, in his study of the Anlo (in Western Africa) people’s sensory system, “the fetal position” into which Anlo storytellers always curl up when they are telling of their ancestor’s hardships could influence or shape one’s consciousness of culturally as well as materially constituted place. The action or of folding into oneself does not in any literal sense produce an accompanying sound, but it synaesthetically creates an “experiential feel” of roundness or an inward-spiraling kinesthetic return to the center (Geurts 1996).

However, scholars often describe, in literary terms, how the body gives rise to consciousness, and few account for how physical existence of the body interacts with cultural elaboration of human faculty of the body to generate consciousness/ unarticulated knowledge. To explore the physical and/or socio-cultural processes of the body generating consciousness, neurologist Valera (2000) draws on Buddhist mindfulness exercises, which aims to experience what one’s mind is doing as it does it –

to render the mind able to be present with itself long enough to gain insight into its own nature and functioning. These exercises would potentially provide a means for exploring human experience within the cognitive sciences, as human experience is excluded in cognitive science owing to its resistance to the computational approach to cognition.

Taking Valera's use of human experience, my proposal of treating cognition as an "attractor" provides a more effective means to explore the real physical and/or socio-cultural processes of the body generating consciousness. I treat embodiment as the process of the novel consciousness emerging, computational cognition as a structural force, experience as contingencies, and a particular participation of the body with the world as the critical point. The derivation of a social consensus illustrates how novel consciousness derives from interactions between computational cognition and human experience. The "attractor" 3.3.2 (*Ko's* good fate and strong *woi³³nyi³¹* brought some of her closest family members bad fortune but good luck to many others) derives from a contingent combination of *Ko's* life experience with the Chinese theory about the interlacing of individual fates, in which the Chinese theory serve as a structural force, *Ko's* experience as contingency (the experience itself is clear while its meaning is obscure), and my interview as a critical point.

As a conclusion, I should emphasize that what I have achieved is only an argument for understanding human cognition as an "attractor" (with the computational mechanism as a structural force and the non-computational modes as contingencies). What is needed is an ethnographical study that applies my argument to practices and knowledge in naturally situated daily life for specifying principles and dynamics of cognition.

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Jinghpo Glossary

a³¹yu³¹: inherited bad fate.

ama⁵⁵gai³¹. a ritual to change the bad fate.

Da³¹ru³¹Gum³¹sa³¹ and *Ma³¹gam³¹Gum³³hpan³³*: the first human couple.

dum³¹sa³³: a religious chanter.

go³¹kan³¹ga³¹sun⁵⁵: life competition among family members

gom³³: a glass

gum³¹ra³¹: horse

hka³¹: to tell by tracing the origin.

hkring³¹tong³¹: a tradition of certain specialty.

hking³¹jong³¹: an animal cutter.

hku³¹wang³¹ma³¹gam³³: local marriage cycle.

Hku³¹Tung³³Ning³¹Mai³³: the only sister of *N-gon³³Du³³*, and Eva for Jinghpo Christians.

hpan³³wa³³ning³¹sang³³chye³³wa³³ning³¹chyang³³: the omniscient spirit.

hpu³¹lum⁵⁵: an assistant of the lowest level who will cook for the chanter in a ritual.

Hpung³¹Gam³³Chya⁵⁵nun³¹ (male) and *Hpung³¹Jan³¹Woi³³shun³¹* (female): the primordial ancestors

who created most of the things in the world.

jai³¹wa³¹: the religious chanter of the highest rank.

la³¹bau⁵⁵: family genealogy, and more generally, the Jinghpo genesis legends

laijong³³lai³¹ka³³htau³¹chyi³³: the patron spirit of religious specialists.

ma³¹lai⁵⁵: to exchange

ma³¹nau³¹: the Jinghpo “feasts-of-merit”. Its two common types are *sut³¹ma³¹nau³¹* for praying for

wealth and *kum³³ ran⁵⁵ ma³¹ nau³¹* for breaking an extended family into houses.

ma³¹ ro³³: a spiritual existence converged from public remarks and conversations over an event.

ma³¹ yat³¹ ma³¹ ya³³ tsi³¹ hkong³³ and *yu³³ ma³¹ ya³³ tsi³¹ dung³³*: female and male procreative substance

nat⁵⁵: a collective noun referring to all kinds of entity that do not have a fixed physical appearance

mu⁵⁵: the thunder spirit. It can be classified as a household spirit (*mu⁵⁵ gun⁵⁵*), a relative (*Mu⁵⁵*

jing³¹ hku³¹), a guest (*mu⁵⁵ nam⁵⁵*), or a wild spirit (*mu³¹ gyin³³*).

nat⁵⁵ jo³¹: sacrifice to spirits

N-gon³³ Du³³: the mythological hero who created mountains and rivers in the land in the Jinghpo

genesis legends, and Adam in Jinghpo Christian legends.

Nhkum³³ du³³ wa³³: the most powerful Jinghpo chief in China before 1953, who controlled most areas

of today's Yingjiang and Longchuan Counties.

num³¹ la³³: the "soul" of the living

num³¹ la³³ sha³¹ ga⁵⁵: A ritual of calling-back-the-soul.

num³³ sho³¹: adultery, rape, and seduction.

hpung³¹ gam³¹: individual born fate.

hpung³¹ ja³¹ means a too tough fate;

hpung kya³¹ means a too soft fate.

sha³¹ gu³¹ hkum³: a ritual name for the life of sacrificed animals.

shing³¹ du³¹ la³ bau⁵⁵: a polluted family genealogy.

sum³¹ ri³¹ sum³¹ dam³³: cord of life.

tsu³¹ nat⁵⁵: the soul of the deceased.

woi³³ nyi³¹: the power to maintain life and keep a person conscious

Endnotes

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- ¹ All names used in the dissertation are pseudonyms except for my key informant La Hkyi Yo who insisted that I should use his real name in the dissertation. In addition, I have to use the real name of Sama village because all other information I provided regarding the village in the dissertation, like its being the headquarters for the most powerful chief in China before 1953, makes it identifiable.
 - ² It is common that ethnic minorities in southwest China project their current disasters to communist movements in modern China, in which Chinese communists were projected as wild/bad ghosts, foreign and bad, and should be soothed. For instance, Mueggler (2001) encapsulates the Lo`lop`o` (one branch of Yi) villagers' view of the violent interventions of the state in everyday life beginning with the Great Leap Forward (1958 — 1960) and continuing into the 1990s, showing how upland villagers folded fanatic cadres into a world inhabited by raging, implacable ghosts, dangerous outsiders who took possession of people's bodies and speech, resulting in illness and death. Most of these cadres were local people, sometimes kin, but individuals whose power and legitimacy were traced to chairman Mao in Beijing. Mueggler conveys the villagers' experience of disruption and devastation that emanated from the outside yet penetrated to the heart of their society.
 - ³ In Burma, Jinghpo is known as Kachin with a population of 600,000. Kachin includes various subgroups that include Jinghpo, where Jinghpo is spelled as *Jinghpaw*. In China, they are known as Jingpo with a population of 100,000 or so and as one of the nation's 55 officially identified ethnic minorities. In India, they are known as Singhpo with a population of several thousand. For the classical ethnographies about Jinghpo in English see Carrapiett 1929; Gilhodes 1929; Hanson 1913, and in Chinese see YNSBJZ 1985-86.
 - ⁴ The term *nat*⁵⁵ is a word widespread among Tibeto-Burma languages. In particular, it is cognate to Burmese word *nat*⁵⁵ where it refers to spirits with particular power and domain. Similarly, in Tai languages there is terminological distinction between spirits of *phi* (who do not have a particular power and domain) and spirits of *cao* (who do not have a particular power and domain). So the word *cao* is equally applied to peoples who have power (king and rulers), and it is the case for the Burmese word *nat*⁵⁵. Personal communication with U Chit Hlaing.
 - ⁵ It is a very widely distributed idea among many up-land peoples in southwest China and northern Southeast Asia that at a time when human societies were created according to people's genesis legends, some deities distributed writing and other amenities among ancestors. But most uplander lost their writing and had to gain it from low-landers. For instance, ancestors of Burmans were given writing recorded on the bamboo and mulberry leave paper, while ancestors of Chin were given writing on the leather. When the ancestors were on their way home, ancestors of Chin were hungry and ate up the leather and so lost the writing. In particular, these wide-spread kind of legends among the uplanders indicate an ambivalent attitude towards low-land civilizations. Chit Hlaing has entitled such legends as "where was our ancestors when God gave out the brains". See Lehman 2003.
 - ⁶ In my research proposal I also formulate a third hypothesis for understanding the convergence and divergence between knowledge and actions by drawing on the concept of "fractal furcations" from chaos theory. It turns out that if I want to fully demonstrate this third hypothesis, I need another book length analysis. In addition, I find the major and alternative hypotheses in the present dissertation are self-contained for explaining my data. I have then decided to leave my borrowing of the concept of "fractal furcations" in my manuscript revised from my MA thesis, in which I explore the dynamics of

how the Jinghpo alliance system transforms itself by incorporating various unusual conditions. I have now completed the manuscript and am looking for publication.

- ⁷ From the Court's perspective, non-Chinese in the North and East were relatively simple and easy to be dealt with and incorporated, whereas that in the Southwest and Northwest were complicated. The latter could not be easily classified into categories and any misconduct might cause serious result. Non-Chinese in the southwest were close connected with peoples in Southeast Asia and India, and so played a central role for China's exploration of resources and relations with the South (Sun 2000; Yang 2004), while non-Chinese in northwest had similar implication regarding China's relations with Inner Asia. In addition, one should notice that economy and market are topologically different in central China from that in northwest and southwest China. In the former, they were area-based, consecutive (on the plain) and well-formulated by the central court (Skinner 1977), while in the latter, they were line-shaped according to caravan trade routes (c.f. silk road on the north and southern silk road) and restricted by mountains and rivers (c.f. Foret and Kaplony 2008; Giersch 2001; Yang 2004).
- ⁸ Generally speaking, the ladders of Chinese administration are (from the lowest to the highest) village office, township/village tract, prefecture/area, province/ municipality directly under the Central Government /ethnic autonomous area, and central court. Village tract and township are ambiguous. Sometime they are equivalent administrative levels, like the Tongbiguan Village Tract and Kachang Township. The latter always has a well-developed town and the former does not. In other cases, a township is a higher administrative level and controls a couple of village tracts. For instance, my hometown Dali Township controls three village tracts.
- ⁹ I could not gather enough people for conducting group interviews as intensively as I planned during August to November 2010. Since April 2010, the local Chinese government has encouraged villagers to cultivate coffee by providing seedlings for free. Villagers were extremely busy during the major part of my planned time for group interviews. In August 2010, Sama village (my fieldwork base) was awarded RMB one million (USD 14,814) by the Yingjiang County government for reconstructing intra-village roads and developing cultivation. Villagers postponed their annual sacrifice till the completion of the construction in February 2011, and so I was not able to organize informal group interviews as well during these rituals. Fortunately, cooperative team leaders organized tens of meetings for planning and organizing the construction and cultivation. These meetings provided me a chance to observe knowledge circulation *via* conversations.
- ¹⁰ The Chinese Communist Party is the only legitimate governing party. It allows eight other parties to assist it in governing China. Active members in these other eight parties and communist party members from ethnic minorities are recruited into the People's Consultative Committee in all levels of administration, to provide formal suggestions and comments on the communist party's policies.
- ¹¹ The communist Chinese government applies the definition of nationality by Joseph Stalin to determine what people could be identified as a nationality. Stalin delineated four characteristics of a nationality: shared history, culture, language and living area. In Chinese translation, the two terms of "nationality" and "ethnic group" are roughly treated as the same, both referring to people of different cultural and historical origins. However, the Chinese government preferred the term "nationality", as it indicates that one nation has only one nationality. Such indication complies with the government's nation-state building agenda that ultimately aims to lump all ethnic peoples into a uniform Chinese nationality irregardless of cultural differences among them. More details see Harrel 2001 and Gladney 2004.
- ¹² Most villagers do not have the notion of authorship, but *Yo* has a strong desire to put his name on his text. In 2008, the chief editor of the Mangshi Nationality News Paper Office and the chairman of the

Mangshi Political Consultative Committee had a long interview with him regarding oral history. They aimed to publish a comprehensive Jinghpo oral history, and took two copies of oral history written by Yo. They also gave Yo RMB 200 (USD 32) as compensation, and promised to acknowledge his contribution and give him a copy of the book. But one year after the publication, he had not received anything. In interviews, he complained to me that he did not know whether these two men made it clear what was told by him in the book. I tried to find a copy for him in Mangshi but failed.

¹³ Following a descent line, the time difference between two events/persons, call them A and B, is defined by the difference between the number of generations from A and B respectively to the same ancestor. By contrast, time difference in two different lines is not measurable, owing to the difference in the two lines of the number of the putative generations in which ancestors are not recorded in *la³¹bau⁵⁵*.

¹⁴ Categories and relations associated with symbols are specified as the following.

Symbols	Meaning	color	Birth-order	shape	spirits
blank	nothing	white	1 st	quadrate	Spirits from a died human baby at or shortly after birth (<i>nbya nat</i>)
o	Single	Greyish red	2 nd , 3 rd	spherical	Wide spirits such as <i>maro</i> , mountain spirits in the forest, etc.
o o	A few	green	2 nd , 3 rd	long	Spirit from a stillbirth, mountain spirits around village, the thunder spirit
o o o o	Many and complex	Black, green	4 th and above	Round with a Raised surface	Household spirits, the witch spirit, the mountain spirits
X	Mostly bad	red	1 st	scraggly	Bad death spirits from a bloody death

These associations are essential for using the table for divination. I do not need to explain all these in the text. I prefer to explain only necessary associations for understanding certain details of a specific divination cited in the text. I provide all associations here as a reference for interested readers.

¹⁵ Precisely, these ten periods of a day and night are: 1) *ma³¹nap³¹* (sunrise, 8:00 – 10:24); 2) *Chying³³ Lo³¹ Tsan³¹* (near noon, 10:24 – 12:48); 3) *Shing³³ Tung³³* (noon, 12:48 -- 15:12); 4) *Jan³³ Ga³¹yau³¹* (the sun leans toward mountains, 15:12 – 17:36); 5) *Jan³³ Shang³¹* (the sun falls into mountains, 17:36 – 20:00); 6) *ning³¹rim³¹* (evening into dark; 20:00 – 22:24); 7) *ning³¹rim³¹ ga³¹ba³¹* (evening proper, 22:24 -- 24:48); 8) *yup³¹ tung³³ ga³³* (late night, 24:48 – 3:12); 9) *hpung³¹ tsing³³ ganon³³ wa³¹ sai³³* (rooster will crow, 3:12 – 5:36); 10) *nhtoi⁵⁵ ma³¹hka³¹* (daybreak; 5:36 – 8:00).

¹⁶ As professor Maran La Raw pointed out to me, the divination table is like the DNA codes of Jinghpo epistemology. In Genomic biology, the unit of analysis and description in genomic biology is the DNA, and mutation causes changes in the codes in the DNA molecules and this has the effect of changing inherited information/instruction, hence the expression is altered. Analogically, in the Jinghpo epistemology, when sustained pressure from external factors brings about change, the reading of affected cell blocks in the divination table changes, just like successive generations of mutation causes successive generations of offspring hybrid expression. In genomic biology, the phenomenon of genetic information in the DNA and mutations causing changes hence the expression being changed is called "hybrid expressions". This term captures changes to the Jinghpo animal sacrifice by the other knowledge systems described in Chapter One.

¹⁷ In English, the word “soul” is ingrained with Christian connotation as one’s true self. Whenever I use

the word soul, I do not intend its Christian connotation. I use it to refer to a part of human that might leave the body when one is alive, and that permanently lives without the body when people die.

¹⁸ This is the Jingpho version of good death spirit and bad death spirits that are widespread in Southeast Asia. Literature on this is scattered, for an instance, see Lehman 1963.

¹⁹ All souls have to be sent to the “old home” except the following three kinds: 1) a woman dying in childbirth; 2) a baby dying before, during, or shortly after its birth; 3) a husband dying during his wife’s pregnancy.

²⁰ However, I should emphasize that only the deceased who have produced offsprings can be worshipped as household spirits by offsprings; otherwise they will become wild ghosts. Worshiping such a household spirit as a household spirit makes it less dangerous because it has been given a place and a function. It does not need to wander around and cause problems for the living. This is a widely held idea in the all of the mainland Southeast Asia. For instance, among Burmese prisoners that were sentenced to death were believed to become bad death spirits and so would cause problem for the living. The king thus appointed these unfortunate spirits to the so-called the domain of Thirty Seven Lords that constitutes the potential protective spirits of the whole country. These spirits were so assigned with job and serve to the kingdom. They are thus become less dangerous.

²¹ In personal communication with Maran La Raw, I realize that “*woi³³nyi³¹*” is more generally a belief that runs through the entire range of Jingpho-Kachin culture, including those in northeast India (mostly Buddhist) and Burma (mostly Christian). The term came as a loan-word from Shan who in turn received it from the Burman-Pali *wi-nyan*. Its original Pali meaning is consciousness. Among the Kachin in Burma this word became the non-generic “spirit of God”. The subjects in my study are predominantly non-Christians, and hence it expresses the concept of the positive power of life spirit. The important thing is that everywhere among Jingpho-Kachins *woi³³nyi³¹* resides in the living person.

²² No one in my fieldwork village could explain the meaning of the word *sum³¹dam³³*. What I provided here is explained by Doctor Maran La Raw.

²³ Such inheritance is not continuous by generation, and its occurrence is not periodic either. Identifying its inheritance pattern requires continuous observation of hundreds of cases that span generations. No villagers have done that, and none could tell me any general patterns. They have certain experience, but only few specialists could summarize their experience into some incomplete patterns. For instance, the great specialist in Sama once told me that according to his observation of dozens of cases, he believed that such bad fate is usually passed down from male to male, and female to female.

²⁴ More specifically, understanding one’s born fate by the divination table considers five factors: 1) the fixed meaning of a symbol associated with the birth time; 2) the numerical meaning of the symbol and its correspondence to one’s birth order among his same-gender siblings from the same father; 3) spirits associated with the symbol; and 4) the cell meaning of the birth time and its implication for the gender; 5) whether one is born during the day or at night. A perfect match of these factors generates a perfect fate. For instance, a male who is second among his male siblings from the same father and born in “the time when a religious specialist chants” (from noon to 3pm of the fifth day of each lunar month, cell 35) will have the best fate. The period is during the day. It is associated with the symbol of two circles, which corresponds to the second birth order. The symbol means bi-directional communication and perfectly matches the cell meaning of “the time when a religious specialist chants” for communicating with spirits. The cell meaning is propitious, especially for a male as traditionally only a male can serve as a great religious specialist, except in the case of a spirit medium. Owing to such a propitious cell meaning and the birth time during the day, the virtuous thunder spirit is more active than other spirits associated with that period. The man will probably become a great religious specialist because the

thunder spirit plays a decisive role when an apprentice upgrades to a great specialist (for the distinction between a great specialist and an apprentice, see chapter two) Sometimes the fixed meaning of a symbol uniquely defines the fate born in that period. For instance, the symbol of a cross usually means the hardest and the symbol of a circle means the greatest. People born in these periods will have a very strong fate regardless of cell meanings of the periods and of the correspondence of birth order and numerical meaning of the symbol. Moreover, such a strong fate might subjugate the fate of one's consecutively next sibling of the same sex.

25 Almost all Christians in my fieldwork area are Baptists, while in the Kachin States some Jinghpo are Roman Catholic.

26 Throughout his writing, *Yo* keeps using *N-gon*³³ *Du*³³ to refer to Adam. The word *du*³³ refers to a chief. And *Yo* emphasizes *N-gon*³³ *Du*³³ as the archetype of all Jinghpo chiefs. Such syncretism illustrates how his version of human history is viewed through the Jinghpo animal sacrifice.

27 This notion that the first human couple is made from a gourd or melon is widespread among the region, especially among the Tai-speaking peoples.

28 In reality, Christians are only on the half way in their transformation of Jinghpo into a Child of God. Although they have abandoned all spirits worshiped by animal sacrifice makers, they still keep most practices of kinship and alliance that are not directly related to spirits. For details see the following section on the transformation of the space scheme in the present chapter, and case 4.3 in chapter Four.

29 Christianity is often praised as an agent of Chinese modernization or damned as a form of cultural and religious imperialism. In both cases, Christianity's foreignness and the social isolation of converts have dominated this debate. But Menegon (2009) tells another story. In the sixteenth century, European missionaries brought a foreign and global religion to China. Converts then transformed this new religion into a local one. He suggests that Christianity became part of a pre-existing pluralistic, local religious space. And obviously, Jinghpo Christians aim to achieve two aims: modernization of the Jinghpo through Christians, and localization of Christians among the Jinghpo.

30 Oral history by *Yo* provides a uniform genealogical connection between all peoples in the world by tracing them back to the first human couple, *N-gon*³³ *Du*³³ and his two wives. Peoples in today's America and Europe are traced back to the three sons of his first wife (*Hku*³¹ *Tung*³³ *Ning*³¹ *Mai*³³, his only sister in the Jinghpo genesis legends and the first human female in *Yo*'s writing), and people in today's Asia and Africa, to the three sons of his second wife (the dragon daughter). In particular, the eldest son by the second wife (*Shan*³¹ *Htoi*³¹ *Gam*³¹, literally, the eldest with yellow skin), had 7 sons who later became ancestors of peoples in East and Southeast Asia: 1) The eldest, *Mung*³³ *H pang*³³ *Gam*³¹, the primordial ancestor of Chinese living in the low land; 2) The second, *Mung*³³ *Hkye*³³ *No*³³, of Chinese living in mountains; 3) The third, *Da*³¹ *ban*³¹ *La*³¹, of Gayin (Karen) in Burma; 4) The fourth, *Myen*³¹ *Wa*³³ *Gum*³¹ *Lau*³³ *Tu*⁵⁵ *Lawt*³¹, of Burmese; 5) The fifth, *Tang*³³ *Sam*³³ *Wa*³³ *Tang*³³ *Nyeng*³³, of Tai; 6) The sixth, *Sha*³³ *pong*³³ *Yong*³³ *Wa*³³, of Jinghpo; 7) The seventh, *Hka*⁵⁵ *Num*³³ *Bu*³¹ *Lut*⁵¹, of Indians. Such mythological genealogy is shared by many elders in my fieldwork region, though most could not provide such a "neat" genealogy as *Yo* does.

31 The Jinghpo have at least nine named clans. In the literature, only five of them are mentioned, who also had orthodox chiefly status before the 1950s. The Jinghpo ancestor (*Wa*³¹ *Hkyer*³¹ *Wa*³³ *Sing*³³ *Gong*³³ *Ma*³¹ *gam*³¹) had nine sons, who later became ancestors of different clans: the eldest, *Marip Wa Kum Ja Magam*; the second, *Lahto Wa No Non*; the third, *Lahpai Wa Dai Na La*; the fourth, *Tsit Wa Tu Hkum*; the fifth, *Maran Wa Nchang*; the sixth, *Yong Hkum Yong Den*; the seventh, *Hka Shu Hka Sha*; the eighth, *Hpo Nam Wa Ro Doi*; the ninth, *Hkying Nang Hkying Htang*. The first five become the five

great orthodox chiefs (*gumchyng gumsa du*) and the other four lived together with their elder brothers.

³² A kin group is a patrilineal group in which males will be included into its genealogy if they meet the criteria (see the section of the time scheme in Chapter One), while females born in it will be included into the genealogies of their husbands' agnatic descentance (if they meet the criteria).

More precisely, a kin group involved in such a cycle must meet the following conditions: 1) people born in it share the same blood and the bride-price of their daughters, and jointly prepare the bride-price for their sons. 2) Men keep taking wivee from their mothers' natal group but are forbidden to take wives from their wife-taker's group. 3) It has its proper surname and a set number of wife-givers and wife-takers. 4) Two such kin groups of the same clan, though being brothers to each other, have been separated in family genealogy for at least seven generations. Marriage among their individual families is permissible but disliked. Details see Zhang 2004. Similarly, Lehman (1963) has referred such a kin group as a Unit of Alliance in his study of the neighboring Chin version of the asymmetrical marriage alliance, and briefly discussed its parallel in Jinghpo (1970).

³³ Although the model of kin-based society has been severely criticized (see Schneider 1984), in societies like Jinghpo who attributes everything to history, the model is still a nice description of their society as kinship relation is the elementary history for a human individual.

³⁴ If infertility happens, a couple would bring gifts to the wife's natal family or her mother's natal family to ask for beatification. In many cases, they would have children after the latter gives beatification and yarn (literally, *sum³³ri³¹*; figuratively, *sum³¹ri³¹*). Such practice is called "to continue the cord of life" (*sum³¹ri³¹ sum³¹dai³³ ma³¹tut⁵⁵*).

³⁵ *Bos Frontalis* is a species of a Southeast Asia cattle that is domestic but not for work, see Simoons 19?, also see Lehman 1963. A pure bred mithan has white stocking, and a cross-bred one does not necessarily have that. According to Jinghpo sacrifice, only a pure bred one can be used for sacrifice.

³⁶ The importance of a woman in this patrilineal system derives from the fact that she represents not only herself, but her natal patrilineal group, the wife-giver. This is also the origin of the wife-giver having certain ritual advantage over the wife-taker. c.f. Lehman 1970.

³⁷ Similarly, upon the completion of a new house, the specialist buries dried fish on its two sides to keep all spirits other than household spirits outside. Inside a house, the main hearth divides a house into the upper part (the back part of the house) for spirits and activities concerning life, death and sacrifice, and the lower part (the front part) for daily life. Household spirits are worshipped in different places according to their genealogical distance from the host. Ancestors will be worshiped in the upper part, and spirits from the wife-giver and the patron spirit of the household of the religious specialists (these two spirits are considered relatives or gate guardians) will be worshiped in the lower part.

³⁸ Sacrifice to these two types of spirits are contrastive to each other. Sacrifice to inside spirits consists of two-directional activities: humans give out sacrifice food and pray for blesses or longevity, the spirits take sacrifice food and give out blessings. By contrast, sacrifice to outside spirits is one directional: humans give out sacrifice and spirits accept them and leave. Such differences are manifested by all details of a sacrifice, varying from preparing the altar to ways of cutting and wrapping sacrificed food. For instance, in a sacrifice to inside spirits, the specialist first selects a piece of sacrificed meat and cuts it into two halves. He then cuts the meat into small pieces from the two inner sides of the two halves, namely, from where the two halves are separated from each other. In wrapping well-cut sacrificed food with banana leaves, he folds the edges of the leaves inwards preventing the scent of food from leaking out. By contrast, in a sacrifice to outside spirits, the specialist cuts directly from a whole piece of sacrificed meat from its left and right edges respectively. And sacrificed food is usually

placed on the leaves without wrapping.

- ³⁹ The need of Hàn Chinese males to find a wife in northeast and south China has created a situation for female kidnapping and false marriage. The only daughter of a religious apprentice in Sama village married to Jilin Province in Northeast China in 2003. Gradually, she became an informal broker for her husband's relatives for finding wives in her hometown. By 2010, she has taken three of her husband's cousins to find a Jinghpo wife. In 2009, I met the third one. The man, already in his early forties, had not planned to marry following his many times of failure to find a suitable wife. But his only brother had died shortly before wedding in a traffic accident and he had had to marry to continue the family. He and the daughter of the apprentice had first found a Jinghpo girl in the neighboring Taiping Village Tract and had paid her family about RMB 20,000 (USD 3,091) as betrothal gift. When I met him, he had been preparing for the wedding. But days before the wedding, the girl ran away. They called the local police but were told that this girl had been married for years and involved in about twenty similar cases of taking money from Hàn Chinese males searching for a wife from north China.
- ⁴⁰ The particularity of marrying a Hàn Chinese male from a distant place is the payment of brideprice. It is usually forbidden for a Jinghpo wife-taker to fully pay the brideprice, because the alliance is supposed to last for generations. But a Hàn Chinese from a distant place should fully pay the brideprice before wedding. Most villagers do not consider marrying a Hàn Chinese from a distant place a normal marriage, but rather a trade-off. There will probably be no future marriage in the next generation. Once this marriage is done, alliance is completed. No one could guarantee a son-in-law from a place several kilometers away would come to help when the wife-giver is in need. To compensate for the loss of future aid, the brideprice is at least two times that of an ordinary marriage among the Jinghpo.
- ⁴¹ For instance, *Sumkri* (one hour's walk from Sama) is a center of animal sacrifice. All villagers (roughly 200) were sacrifice makers by 2010, of which about twenty are religious specialists. Villagers attribute such good tradition to the excellent village site protected by the mother land. In 2009, the government claimed that there is an iron lode under the village and tried to "persuade" the villagers to move. When "persuasion" failed, police arrested villagers who resisted intensively under fabricated excuse and forced them to sign a relocation agreement. In 2010, all villagers have "agreed" to move.
- ⁴² Villagers also realized that their monopoly of the mother land has created problems for them. For instance, allocation puts agriculture and raising animals into conflict. Before allocation, big animals like buffaloes and pigs roamed in forests searching for food, and came back home regularly for salt and an additional meal. After allocation, plots are fenced and animals cannot find enough grazing places. They frequently break fence, eat commercial crops, and trample seedlings. From August 2009 to December 2010, I have heard of hundreds of cases regarding buffaloes eating seedlings and crops. In particular, my landlord's field has been eaten and trampled almost ten times. Each time, the owner of field and that of buffaloes invited their relatives and friends to argue against each other. The former accused the latter of not looking after their buffaloes properly and the latter defended that it is impossible to regulate the behaviors of buffaloes. Village administrative officials were invited to judge a proper payment. For a few cases in which crops were seriously trampled and buffaloes were cut by field owners, policemen in the Tongbiguan village tract were invited to appease the two furious sides.

Gradually villagers came to realize that they, previously as a typical mountain people, now resemble valley peoples more and more, who have neither many animal friends nor plenty of plants for food and medicine. They, like valley people, pay attention to only cash income and neglect all other benefits from the mother land. Their life expectancy has been reduced to that of the valley people. Few can live one hundred years and most elders in their seventies, or even sixties, are not in good shape.

Before, as elders recalled with much nostalgia, some lived over one hundred years, because the mother land gave them strong vitality and excellent nutrition from innumerable animals and plants.

⁴³ For instance, *Tang*, a leader of the cooperative team in Sama village, is pessimistic about the future of the Jinghpo. He was the most intelligent man I met in my fieldwork base. His grandfather was a great religious specialist, and his eldest brother, a great businessman. In his ten years of working as a cooperative leader mediating between villagers and local government, he had noticed that the vitality of a culture largely depends on intelligent individuals, or heroic leaders, to lead people to choose their way of life and to strive for the future. However, the cradle for the Jinghpo heroic leaders, the mother land, has been destroyed. Although allocating mountains and intensive cultivation brought more money to villagers, income increase does not match the expansion of desires. Worse, many villagers do not want to cultivate their plots. They rent them to outside businessmen for instant money. Meanwhile, government continuously enlarges the scope of national forests and preserves. Gradually, as *Tang* believes, the mother land will have fallen into the hands of Hà Chinese and government. In addition, *Tang* has noticed although Dehong prefecture is an ethnic autonomous area in which ethnic leaders should take major positions in the prefecture government, Hà Chinese have recently taken important positions in both the Prefecture and County governments. Jinghpo officials were gradually squeezed out from crucial departments that make decisive policies.

⁴⁴ Some spirits bite people on a certain part of the body and cause certain symptoms. For instance, the thunder spirit leaves wounds on the skin and joints, the mountain spirit makes people feel hot and cold alternately, and the household spirits make people slightly uncomfortable throughout the body or cut themselves regularly when working with a knife. In addition, some spirits can be identified according to context. For instance, whenever people suffer stomachache or diarrhea after eating food, they have probably been bitten by wondering spirits that want a share of food (*lan*³¹ *bung*³³ *nat*⁵⁵, literally, spirits that wonder aimlessly as wind blows along a road). Or, if people eat sacrificed food such as chicken used in the name-changing ritual in a funeral, or a packet of food buried in the earth for protecting a village, their souls will be taken by the deceased in the former and by the land spirit in the latter.

However, many spirits might cause the same symptom. More importantly, diseases and bodily symptoms are contingent to individuals and the time of biting. One may suffer different symptoms if being bitten by the same spirit in different periods. Or within a similar context, a spirit bites different persons and causes different symptoms to them. That is, symptoms depend on people's fate and the fortune of the biting time. Accordingly, bodily symptoms are not characteristic for identifying spirits.

⁴⁵ The Jinghpo genesis legends provide an origin story to justify the rationale for saving human life by sacrificing animal life. Once, the sun spirit gave out *jan*³³ *tsi*³¹ (the divine panacea, *jan*³³ means the sun, *tsi*³¹, medicine) to protect people from all kinds of sufferings. But humans did not know where to grow it: pigs and buffalos ate it in the garden; chickens ate it on the roof, and fish ate it along the river bank. The sun spirit thought humans did not cherish *jan*³³ *tsi*³¹ and took it back. Thereafter, humans suffered diseases. At that time, they could communicate with spirits through the universal language. They complained to animals that had eaten *jan*³³ *tsi*³¹. The animals felt guilty and agreed that humans could use them to make sacrifice to spirits for curing diseases. From then, humans began animal sacrifice. In particular for specialists, the sacrifice aims to take back the panacea from animals who once ate it.

⁴⁶ People seldom conduct sacrifice in a blank period because all efforts will be wasted. Only activities that require little investment or efforts but gain a lot, such as stealing or trading opium, are supposed to take place in such a period. In addition, people also have to make sure that the specialists who preside over the ritual should have a good fortune during the identified ritual time.

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- ⁴⁷ In Austin's terms (1962), they are performative. For ethnographic study of the effectiveness of words, see Malinowski 1935; Rosaldo 1982; Tambiah 1968.
- ⁴⁸ All sacrificed food should be prepared exactly in the way spirits expect. For instance, a cutter chooses different leaves to wrap sacrificed food, and follows meticulous regulations such as what side of the leaves (that faces the sky or the earth) should touch the sacrificed food. During the wrapping, he should know in what situations the handle of the leaf faces toward him, the sky, or the earth. During the binding, he should know for what spirits he binds the packet how many times with bamboo strips, and to what direction (up and down) he inserts the rest of bamboo strips into the binding. In particular, he should not make any mistake regarding regulations that differentiate affairs in the human world from those in the spirit world. Any error will irritate the spirit and waste the sacrifice, or even bring disaster to both the ritual sponsor and specialists. For instance when a cutter wraps sacrificed food with banana leaves for spirits, the handle should face the direction of his left side, whereas the same part faces right in wrapping food for the living. In the same big packet for spirits the meat/vegetable packets are put on the right of the rice packets, and *vice versa* is for the living.
- ⁴⁹ The sky is accordingly described in Jinghpo as "the sky on which the moon is glued". The date of the 15th is called *sha³¹ gong³¹*, the mid point. Dates before this are prefixed with *pro⁵⁵* meaning the moon waxes, and dates after, with *si³¹* meaning the moon wanes. The dates of the 28th, 29th, and 30th are called *myin³³*, meaning things are ripe and will fall down to the ground soon. People avoided doing important things concerning development and growth on these final days.
- ⁵⁰ Before being taken into the specialist's house, the skull should be hidden outside for seven days. And the person taking the skull in should step on a piece of grass put in front of the doorsill before entering the house to avoid the soul of bad death following him into the house. The number seven marks the separation of life and death, and humans and spirits.
- ⁵¹ The spirit of *ma³¹ ro³³* is omnipresent. Once an event takes place, public remarks and conversations about it will create a spiritual existence that exerts mandatory force over people. Every promise made in public will be automatically followed by a small *ma³¹ ro³³*, or a big *ma³¹ ro³³* will be conjured up to guarantee it. If it is not realized, these spirits will bring misfortune to the promise-maker. Accordingly, these spirits are always conjured up to guarantee a contract, like a marriage or a negotiation agreement. It is said that there exist 72 kinds of big *ma³¹ ro³³* that cause disasters, and incountable small *ma³¹ ro³³* that cause slight discomfort. A sacrifice should be conducted to drive off the spirit. All sacrifice food should be thrown away. Anyone eating it will be bitten by that *ma³¹ ro³³*.
- ⁵² A Jinghpo long house is designed for a big extended family, including all married sons' families. It is a rectangular, shed-like wooden structure with its floor almost one-meter above the ground. Inside a house, there are rooms and hearths for each nuclear family and unmarried child on the two sides of a corridor in the middle. Details see Leach 1954 and Zhang 2004.
- ⁵³ In the chanting, the specialist should lead it to cross six rivers on the way to the afterworld. At each river, the specialist tells the soul of its death but each time the soul refuses to recognize its death. At the sixth river (*num³³ shin⁵¹ hka³¹*, literally, the sweat-washing river), the specialist washes away human sweat from the soul. And at the seventh river (*nhpro³¹ hka³¹*, a white river, the boundary river between the afterworld and the living world), the soul finally realizes its death when seeing the afterworld across the river. The specialist then fetches water from the boundary river with a bamboo section, with its opening facing the direction of in which water runs, and washes the face of the soul. The washing removes all its human characteristics such as weight and breath, and turns it into a mist-like spirit.
- ⁵⁴ The patron spirit prefers to help people from the same family, making religious specialty a kind of

inheritance (*hkring³¹tong³¹*), though not continuously. In daily conversation, people say a family has *dum³¹sa³³hking³¹tong³¹* if it had great chanters (*dum³¹sa³³*) in history, or *ning³¹wot⁵⁵hking³¹tong³¹* if it had a great diviners (*ning³¹wot⁵⁵*), or *hking³¹jong³¹hking³¹tong³¹* if it had great cutters (*hking³¹jong³¹*). The expressions also imply that from now on the family will have more great specialists.

- ⁵⁵ I should emphasize that the government's influence over *No* is ambivalent. *No* equated the worship to communism with the worship to household spirits, rather than with worship to ancestors in family genealogy. Household spirits are those of ancestors who died badly and came back to ask for solace and food frequently so as to force the living to worship them as household spirit. Such worship, based on fear, is conditional. By contrast, ancestors in family genealogy are heroic, serving as the source of social reproduction and material achievements for the descendents. The living's worship of them is genuine and unlimited. In fieldwork I noticed that many villagers treat the Chinese government in the same way as *No* does. They welcome transformations brought by the government, but fear the tragedy of irretrievable physical and intellectual degeneration induced by such transformations.
- ⁵⁶ Although modern techniques like writing and recording may facilitate memory and shorten the years of learning, they do not help develop a strong sense of being attached to the learned knowledge. Animal sacrifice makers believe that memorizing everything in mind is more advanced than writing it down. Jinghpo ancestors were allocated a writing system recorded on a piece of cowhide by the mythological ancestors. They ate it up during the migration, and so gained a powerful mnemonic talent. Figuratively, everything is "inscribed" in a great specialist's mind. He is therefore more advanced than a Chinese or Tai specialist, because the latter could not conduct a ritual without a text. *No* thus claimed that many apprentices, like him, never regret the loss of the Jinghpo writing. Only Christians, who knew nothing about the sacred knowledge passed down from ancestors, kept complaining that ancestors had lost the Jinghpo writing system and so kept them primitive until Christians came.
- ⁵⁷ For instance, he has served as a cutter over ten times in sacrifice to the thunder spirit (*mu⁵⁵*). He knew the spirit can be classified as a household spirit (*mu⁵⁵gun³³*: *gun³³* is a suffix indicating the things within a family), a relative (*mu⁵⁵jing³¹hku³¹*: *jing³¹hku³¹* means relatives), a guest (*mu⁵⁵nam⁵⁵*: *nam⁵⁵* is an inflexion of *-nam³¹* in *ma³¹nam³¹* meaning guest), or a wild spirit (*mu⁵⁵tsin³³*: *tsin³³* means raw). He knew their divine residences and ritual details. The former three are inside spirits and so the place around the altar where people prepare sacrificed food should be encircled by a long bamboo-strip cord. The fourth is an outside spirit, and sacrifice should be conducted in the forest without any enclosure.
- But there is an exception. During the eighth lunar month in 2010, the great specialist in Sama sponsored a sacrifice to the first type of the thunder spirit in his courtyard. This was rare as people seldom conduct sacrifice in this month, and I was surprised to find that the specialist stopped the youths who tried to enclose the ritual field. On that day I did not get a chance to ask the specialist why. I then asked *No*. He knew that in this month all spirits, except the bad ones like the bad death spirit, are invited to the palace of the sun spirit to participate in a feast-of-merit. This is why sacrifice in this month is rare. But he did not understand why no closure. We later learned that in this month no inside spirits reside in the house, though they can be called back temporarily to receive a sacrifice. The space for the sacrifice should not be enclosed because the spirit will leave after the sacrifice.
- ⁵⁸ There are detailed and rigorous regulations for a cutter in his service. I have collected, though incompletely, over three hundred of these regulations. Failure to follow them will bring misfortune or even disaster to both the specialists and the ritual sponsors.
- ⁵⁹ It is a ritual in which people build a bridge over a small stream, where people cross frequently. Building such a bridge will benefit the community and so solicit the omniscient spirit to bless a patient.

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- ⁶⁰ The transference of such bad fate from a specialist to his family members is mysterious. Villagers have a good theory for understanding the bad born fate of a particular individual, and they have learned from Chinese to understand the interlacing of individual fates (see case 3.3). But they do not have any theory that helps understand how an acquired fate from one's profession affects one's family members. In interviews, some relate such transference to the inherited bad fate, like the witch spirit. But they pointed out that the analogy is not satisfactory. The most reasonable interpretation, I believe, is implied by *Hka*. Family members of a great specialist are required to follow certain taboos. These taboos derive from those for the specialist. That is, the two sets of taboos are essentially the same, and the breach of any of them, either by the specialist or his family members, can bring misfortune to both.
- ⁶¹ In the old days, a specialist would observe all taboos rigorously; otherwise he would fail in the sacrifice. A failed sacrifice would ruin his career; worse, it would bring misfortune, even disaster, to him and the sponsor. All taboos are intended to either protect the specialist from evils or maintain guidance from the patron spirit. The former regulates how a specialist should, or should not, act so as to preserve his fortune. For instance, he should not conduct any sacrifice on his birthday or within a month after presiding over a funeral. The latter directs a specialist to keep himself both ritually and physically clean so as to reserve guidance from the patron spirit. For instance, he should not eat animals dying for unknown reasons, otherwise he cannot ascend to the palace of the thunder spirit.
- ⁶² A critical point resembles the liminality of a ritual, a virtual space in which ritual symbols are subject to personal manipulation of disparate elements in responding to individual experience and situated contingencies (Houseman 2005; Turner 1967, 1969). Subjects' interpretations are thus not ultimately reducible to the socio-political and psychological world outside the ritual context (Kapferer 2005). One advantage of the concept of an "attractor" over the ritual liminality is that it not only highlights the state of the liminality, but also specifies a means for pinning down how an "attractor" could derive from a contingent combination of the structural force and random factors. The notion of ritual liminality specifies only a precondition (the critical point) of an "attractor".
- ⁶³ It is widely held that talents, such as weaving, music performance, hunting, and so on, can be inherited within a family, but not always consecutively. Except for the religious specialty that requires apprenticeship, most talents are simply innate. Villagers did not have proper theory for explaining such inheritance. Currently they have learned to understand it in terms of the Chinese animal calendar. For instance, my landlord's father and father's youngest brothers were excellent hunters, while among four of his brothers, only the eldest is good at hunting. The eldest was born in the year of tiger so good at hunting. My landlord was born in the year of buffalo, and he never succeeded in getting big games.
- ⁶⁴ Mountain peoples like Jinghpo, Lisu, Lahu and Wa welcomed businessmen. They worked for businessmen and earned a salary. Although their ancestors have kept mountain resources for thousands of years, ancestors earned nothing but maintained only a minimum level of life owing to the shortage of capital and modern technology. Businessmen brought new technologies and capital, with which mountain peoples started to earn more than their ancestors did from mountain resources, though such income was trivial compared with businessmen's profit.
- ⁶⁵ The Chinese government had recognized *herba dendrobii* as one of the rare species that need special protection. Without special permission no one could trade in it. Ordinary villagers could not get the permission. Accordingly, most searched for it in the forest and sold it to businessmen. However, as it lives on the top of giant trees, the collection is dangerous. In 2009, I heard of three individuals dying of falling from trees, and one Sama village broke his legs. A few villagers also started to cultivate a small plot of it. But they were not allowed to sell it them in cities but had to wait for businessman to

buy their herb. This ban reduced at least half of their profit.

- 66 Over half of *herba dendrobii* in China is provided by the cultivation in Dehong Prefecture. Most plots are invested in by Inland Chinese businessmen, and cultivated by local peoples. Recently, as wild *herba dendrobii* has become rare, most people cultivate seedlings bred in the valley. Sama villagers understood that purchasing seedlings, rather than wild plants, would cost less, but that would take at least five years before gaining profit and no one knows what the market will be. More critically, no one can guarantee whether seedlings bred in the valley would grow well in cooler mountains.
- 67 His argument is based on his not understanding the importance of wife-givers among the Jinghpo, who are, in principle, entitled to take everything they want from the wife-takers.
- 68 The influence from Christianity is relatively weak in this case. Christians claim that Christianity is modern and promises that conversion would bring people closer to the modern way of life. But it in fact provides only a claim without specifying any effective means to empower villagers with modern knowledge and skills. In this case, it serves as a background, rather than a competing structural force.
- 69 It is common among ethnic peoples of the region that elder siblings can behave as if they were parents of their younger siblings, especially when the parents have passed away.
- 70 Bride-price (*hpu³¹ ja³¹: hpu³¹*, a ritual name for marriage; *ja³¹*: gold) is very high compared with an ordinary family's living standard. The wife-taker should pay the following eight items to the wife-giver before, during, and after the wedding: 1) the first part of the brideprice paid in the marriage proposal (*nsin³³ ja³¹*: the brideprice paid at night as the proposal is always made at night); 2) the emblem for identifying the girl as the boy's fiancée, usually a necklace or a bracelet (*ma³¹htan³³ ja³¹: ma³¹htan³³*: to be engaged); 3) the real part of brideprice, for the girl's relatives including her parents, their brothers and sisters, and her mother's natal family (*hpu³¹ ja³¹*); 4) gift or cash for dressing up the bride (*Sha³¹yi³³ Sa³¹trom³¹*); 5) the goods or money the wife-taker helps the wife-giver with for holding the banquet for marrying out the daughter (*num³¹rot³¹ poi⁵⁵ ja³¹*, literally, the money for the banquet that enables the girl to stand up and leave the wife-giver); 6) the payment to the girl's mother for her nursing the girl (*ta⁵⁵ ma³¹yan³³*); 7) the repayment for the dowry after the wedding (*sha³¹ro³¹ lat³¹*); 8) the baskets of gifts to send off the bride-escorting group from the wife-giver at the end of the wedding (*hking³¹ting³³ ka⁵¹*). In particular, if the girl is the youngest (*hpung³¹dim³¹*), there will be a ninth item (*hpung³¹dim³¹ ja³¹*), usually a few hundred RMB. In a wedding in which I participated in 2009, all these items are represented by their cash equivalent. They are 1) RMB 600; 2) RMB 7,600; 3) RMB 12,600; 4) RMB 10,060; 5) RMB 6,000; 6) RMB 460; 7) RMB 3,200; 8) RMB 1,200. The total, RMB 48,520 (USD 7,188), is at least five times an ordinary family's annual cash income.
- 71 In subsequent interviews with *La*'s brothers, they also attributed their success in the negotiation to their purposeful use of the divination table in such a way that the spirits helped them. *La*'s brothers and supporters entered *H pang*'s house at "the time of being jabbed by a spear" (of the 14th of the sixth lunar month, cell 34 in the divination table), a bad time associated with a bad connotation according to the divination table, meaning that the negotiation would be harmed by the bad temporal fortune of that period. The period is associated with only *one* circle, indicating that the negotiation, a bi-directional activity, might not go along well. But *La*'s eldest brother believed that it was bad only for *H pang* -- who would be blamed, figuratively, "be jabbed by a spear". In a period associated with a circle, he would be simply requested to pay (one-directional activity), rather than to negotiate (two-directional activity). In addition, *H pang*'s house was located to the east of *La*'s. According to the divination table *La*'s brothers would be supported by a cross behind (in cell 54) when they walk to *H pang*'s house. Being supported by a cross behind means that spirits will favor them. To further bless them in

negotiation, *La*'s second brother, a religious apprentice, made a simple sacrifice to household spirits asking for support. He promised that part of the payment *La* would get would be sacrificed to these spirits if they support *La* in negotiation.

⁷² Traditionally, a widow was required to cohabit with one of her late husband's unmarried brothers, real or classificatory. In rare cases in which she was allowed to live with people not in her husband's lineage, two payments should be made by her cohabit, respectively, to her late husband's real brothers and to her father (or brothers). For details see Zhang 2004.

⁷³ One year after *Ko* had attributed her husband's death to the incompatibility of animal attributions, she provided another interpretation on July 29th, 2011. I asked her about what people will do to help a lying-in woman with a difficult birth. She said that villagers will gather to drive away the spirit *ndang*³¹ (the spirit that died of childbirth and so comes to bother childbearing). Then, she remembered that one year before her husband's death, he had helped drive such a spirit on behalf of a lying-in woman. He had used a slingshot to shoot an invisible thing that had been chased by dogs. Such a spirit does not fear the gun, but will be scared and driven away by the powder and shot made from hail and mud. After *Mai* had shot the invisible thing, dogs had stopped the chasing. Many had believed that he should be credited with driving the spirit away, because the baby had been born soon. But one year later when *Mai* had the softest fate in the year of his animal attribution, he had died. *Ko* told me that the spirit had made a strong decision to take either the baby or the mother, but it had been driven away by *Mai*. It had come to take *Mai* when he had the softest fortune. In Jinghpo, this is called "to exchange the life (*go*³¹*kan*³¹ *ga*³¹*lai*⁵⁵).

This interpretation is equally convincing compared with the one regarding animal attribution. According to the same analytical procedure used in the present dissertation, this interpretation can be treated as an "attractor". It derives from a combination of the Jinghpo notion of "life exchange" and the softest fate on the year of one's animal attribution, and might be resorted to for explaining other similar cases of death in the future. But here I will not analyze this "attractor" and its influence, because I did not have chance to observe how it influences people.

⁷⁴ However, her eldest son, already in his late fifties in 2010, is not supposed to practice religious specialty. His father's youngest brother still practices the religious specialty. To show his homage to the latter, he has to postpone his religious service until the death of the latter. Similar regulations exist in other domains of daily life. For instance one should not preside over all kinds of negotiations if one's father or father's brothers are good at the negotiation.

⁷⁵ Horoscope defines fortune in terms of a combination of a period and the aspect of the planets and stars. Individuals born in a given period will be associated with a certain aspect of the planets and stars, and thus be endowed with a given fate. The Jinghpo learned the Burmese horoscope *via* Shan. For details regarding the Burmese horoscope see Eade 1995.

⁷⁶ *Ko*'s good fortune brings some hunters good luck, but does not affect others. No one understands why. People believe that this might result from the interlacing of the life fortunes of *Ko*'s and the hunters', but none could explain how this happens. The Jinghpo do not have a proper theory for understanding the interlacing of fates. All understandings are particular to given cases.

⁷⁷ The data in case 4.1 are collected and analyzed based on the three principles of cognitive anthropology that explore cognition as situated in socio-cultural contexts (D'Andrade 1995). First, modern biology-based knowledge of disease and non-western folk knowledge of disease often compete with and are complementary to each other. Introducing biology-based knowledge to non-western peoples requires investigating folk patterns and strategies of how people alternatively resort to these sets of

knowledge. Second, the ability to recite knowledge itself does not necessarily mean that people understand it (Strauss and D'Andrade 1992). Understanding how non-western people learn and use science requires understanding how foreign *information* becomes localized knowledge capable of motivating one to act (Ishikawa and Yano 2008; Pavlovic *et al.* 2007). Third, individual knowledge is constructed by negotiating personal particularities (e.g. gender, experience and access to knowledge etc.) with the collective traditions of one's community (Strauss and Quinn 1997), which requires investigating local patterns of interactions between knowledge systems and individual particularities.

⁷⁸ However in Jinghpo villages near the Yingjiang county seat, such as in the Taiping Village Tract, females also use drugs. They are often involved in prostitution. I learned this from the youth in my landlord's music troupe who came from villages in Taiping Village Tract. But I did not have statistical data to assess the situations of female drug users there.

⁷⁹ Most villagers had very vague ideas about HIV/AIDS. Almost all would not go to hospital for an accurate diagnosis when they suffered strange chronic diseases. When a drug user became deathly ill, many would consider he must have AIDS. In addition, in the eyes of most villagers, AIDS is caused by profligate sex, as illustrated by the two known cases of AIDS-bearers in the village. Although doctors explained to villagers that AIDS could be caused by blood transmission or transmitted from mother to baby, villagers did not have experience of that. It is interesting to notice that although drug use, sex, and HIV/AIDS are closely related in the China-Burma border region, villagers did not take such combination seriously. As I explained in the Introduction of the present dissertation, the combination is both the matter of fact and a result of the Chinese government propaganda. It is more apparent in border cities than in mountain villages. For ordinary villagers, HIV/AIDS might be caused by intravenous injection of heroin, and for big businessman, it is by profligate sex.

⁸⁰ Take the witch spirit as an example of the hereditary bad fate. It transmits from parents to children and between sex partners. Possessed people are said to have evil eyes or hands, and the possessed families have a hereditary bad fate. When a possessed person envies others, by pointing at, or watching, people or something else with interest, the witch spirit will "bite" the envied person or kill his/her livestock at night, either spontaneously or sent by its medium. To recover, the victim has to make a secret sacrifice to it at midnight in the forest. However, the sacrifice only temporarily relieves diseases. It cannot remove the spirit's surveillance. To sever the surveillance means to kill the whole possessed population, which the Jinghpo ancestors had tried to do but failed. As the anecdotes go, each time when people massacred the possessed population, a beautiful girl would be hidden by, and later married with, one of the slaughters. The possessed population thus grew again. The only way to eschew the spirit while not provoking it is to prohibit marriage with the possessed people. In daily life, though all know who is possessed, no one dares to speak that out loud.

⁸¹ For instance, the government subsidized RMB 2,000/household (USD 296) for alleviating damages by the earthquake in March 10th, 2011. All drug users who did not attend the program for quitting drugs organized by the two cooperative teams in July 2011 were denied this money. This regulation stimulated some drug users to think about quitting drugs. As villagers said, these drug users' eyes became "red" when seeing others getting money from the government.

The two cooperative teams in Sama are widely considered as the best teams among about sixty teams in Tongbiguan Village Tract. They have made great contribution to controlling drug use in Sama. In other villages, the teams are not really working for villagers and the leaders dare not offence drug users by taking strong measures. The leaders do not devote their time and energy to the development of the village, but only to their own households. For instance, the head of the primary school in Sama

told me that Sama had become the “cleanest” natural village out of hundreds of Jinghpo villages throughout the County. The leaders took effective measures and most villagers supported the leaders. The school head, a Chinese married to a Jinghpo, complained that his wife’s natal village in the same village tract was horrible. Most males were drug users, and all were selfish, not supporting leaders in controlling drug use. Worse, drug users stole within the village almost every day.

⁸² In December 2010, an official from the County government came to the village to distribute propaganda regarding HIV/AIDS and drug use written in three languages: Chinese, Tai, and Zaiwa (a branch of the ethnic Jinghpo) ⁸². Villagers were pleased to find that the materials were not written in Jinghpo. They believed that the government had realized that drug use among the Jinghpo branch had been well controlled, while that among the Zaiwa branch was still as serious as that among the Jinghpo branch in 2003. “There was no need to publish the materials in Jinghpo” They happily claimed!

⁸³ Villagers who had close contact with Chinese even proposed that Jinghpo, though definitely needing to learn from Chinese, should be more careful in dealing with Chinese. Some Chinese have a wicked mind and do not want Jinghpo to develop well. When such a geomancer finds an excellent tomb site, often they turn the tomb slightly away from the most propitious direction so that Jinghpo will not fully benefit from the site. Worse, he chooses a site that seems to meet all criteria, except for a hidden but potentially fatal element that most others could not recognize. This view illustrates that the fusing between Jinghpo sacrifice and Chinese folk beliefs is not perfect. There is antagonism inherited from the historical process of incorporating Jinghpo into the Chinese court. For details see Chapter Five.

⁸⁴ Meanwhile, the youth and the middle-aged in the courtyard were warning *Ren*’s only surviving brother, *Seng*, not to use drugs anymore. *Seng* was a serious drunkard and drug user. His wife was very tough and carefully controlled his expense and so saved him. Otherwise, he would have followed his late brothers into the tomb. I asked *Seng* whether he could use herbal medicine. He gave me an awkward smile and did not reply. “He knows liquor and drugs better than medicine!” the people standing around laughed. They reminded me that *Seng*’s late father-in-law was also a herbal specialist, whose two sons did not learn any of that either. The medical tradition of both families has gone.

In conversation with the youth in the courtyard, people joked at *Seng* that his unprecedented marriage saved him. He was the only Sama villager in his generation to take a wife from his family’s wife-taker. His wife was unusual; she controlled his use of drugs and alcohol. A reversed marriage resulted from personal love is not conducted through proper rituals, but rather, as villagers said, by “the wind that makes the bamboo tops meet together”. It was rare. In my genealogical survey (conducted in 2003) that involved about 2,500 individuals (including the living and the dead), I found only 2 cases among live Sama villagers and 10 cases in history. Traditionally, such a reversed marriage is a shame to both families. In addition, it seemed that a reversed marriage owing to personal love would often cause problems. For instance, one reversed marriage owing to personal love in *Seng*’s above generation in Sama was proved to be unfortunate. The husband suffered amnesia after a serious malaria attack and could not take care of himself. His wife ran off with a Burmese man. Based on such understanding of reversed marriage, I guessed that the decline of medical tradition of *Seng*’s and his father-in-law’s families’ might be attributed to the reversed marriage. I talked about my guess with elders after *Ren*’s funeral, some found it interesting but others considered it nonsense.

⁸⁵ Since the 1990s, alcoholic addiction has become a serious problem. Factory-produced liquor is available to villagers at a low price, and most households stopped making liquor by themselves. Soon, villagers found that more drunkards had appeared. Alcoholic addiction has caused a lot of household and social problems, such as domestic violence, intra-village fighting, stealing, and so forth.

“Factory-produced liquor was an evil”, many came to realize. It destroyed villagers’ minds and bodies quickly and naturally turned a drunkard into a drug user. Villagers encountered a dilemma. They understood that factory-produced liquor was an evil, but they had to use it everywhere; otherwise, they could not be counted as Jinghpo because liquor is required in all rituals and ceremonies. To control liquor use, the cooperative team leaders prohibited the three convenience stores in Sama from selling liquor from 2005. The ban effectively reduced the instances of drunkards’ going mad by cutting off the source of alcohol – the nearest store selling liquor is about twenty kilometers away.

⁸⁶ Such ambivalence is salient when villagers talk to outsiders regarding their animal sacrifice. Through the past fifty-odd years of communist education and propaganda, villagers were forced, at least officially, to accept the Marxist view of societal evolution that deprecates Jinghpo and other ethnic minorities as primitive peoples. The political and economic gap between minorities and Hân Chinese reinforced such inferiority. As a consequence, villagers unconsciously put themselves in an inferior position in talking with Chinese of higher socio-economic background, claiming their animal sacrifice as backward and superstitious. However, such talk is only a camouflaged and negative defense that hides villagers’ real value and exempts them from the mock and censure of atheist Chinese. As an illustration of such ambivalence, I witnessed that leaders of the cooperative teams and other government officials always talked with Chinese from wealthy areas in a way that indicates animal sacrifice is something practiced only by mere villagers. When I asked whether they themselves make sacrifice, they said since their ancestors and neighbors do that, they had better follow.

⁸⁷ In 2009-10, the five provinces in Southwest China (Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, Chongqing, and Sichuan) incurred the most serious drought since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (1949). According to a report by the China Foundation for Removing Poverty, up to May 20th, 2010 the drought had caused economic damage for more than 2.3 billion hectares of arable land and influenced over 58 million people (<http://news.sohu.com/20100521/n272247152.shtml>). Southwest China was one of the most important production centers for vegetables and cash crops (like cane, walnut, and rape). The drought affected ordinary Chinese daily life and caused a great inflation. For instance, my hometown Dali in Yunnan Province is a vegetable center. During the drought, businessmen collected potato and garlic respectively at the prices of RMB 0.5/kg and RMB 2.2/kg (USD 0.04 and 0.32. RMB is the unit of standard Chinese currency -- *renminbi*) and sold them in my wife’s home province in Hunnan (about 30 hours by train from Dali) respectively at the prices of RMB 3.6/kg and RMB 7.5/kg (USD 0.53 and 1.1). Worse, the drought in 2009-10 was not unusual in recent years, but is the result of recent deterioration of climate in south China. In 2000, about 40 million hectares of arable land in south China had been affected by drought. In 2006, Chongqing Municipality encountered 53 days of unbearably scorching sunshine, which brought two-month water scarcity to about 8 million urban people. In 2008, about 19,000 hectares of arable land had irrigation problems around the capital city, Kunming, of Yunnan province, and 13,000 urban people suffered from water scarcity (<http://news.163.com/special/00014868/drought2010.html>).

⁸⁸ In these meetings, leaders realized that females should take an active role in preserving Jinghpo tradition, because female skills and knowledge play a primary role in the Jinghpo world. The Jinghpo notion of “tradition” (*htong*³¹ *hkring*³¹: *htong*³¹ means things/utensils used in daily life situations, and *hkring*³¹ refers to costumes) refers to the material aspect of the Jinghpo way of life that is mainly in the charge of females. Such material meaning enables Jinghpo cultural intellectuals and leaders to put material representation of Jinghpo culture in the first place in their preservation. They also emphasized how all other aspects of life are attached to, associated with, and (re-)presented by materials.

However, females skills and knowledge, mostly concerning the weaving and wine-brewing, have been largely lost. In my fieldwork base, the last woman good at herbal-wine-making that enhances health passed away in 2007, and most females even did not make rice liquor by themselves. Although there are three elder women good at weaving Jinghpo costume, they are not strong enough to do that. In many other villages I visited, most females now in their twenties and thirties even had not seen weaving in their lives, as none in their parent's generation knew how to weave.

⁸⁹ Such parallel development of the three views regarding the fate of animal sacrifice is different from the distributed theory of cognition (e.g. Hutchins 1995; Keller and Keller 1996; Wertsch 2002). These three views are three propensities formed in the past few decades and will evolve on their own, without knowing what they would become in the future. Nothing can be treated as a default in these processes. The distributed theory of cognition describes how a general or even default idea/principle gets diversified in different situations by different people. The same argument will apply to case 4.3.

⁹⁰ Some sacrifice makers complained that Christianity is a barrier to reviving animal sacrifice by utilizing the outdated ideological claim. As Christians considered Burma the headquarters of Christianity and strove to maintain close relations with Churches there, sacrifice makers considered Christianity a means by which Capitalism erodes China. "This is why our Chinese government strictly censures all efforts of communication with churches outside China", they claimed. For instance, as they pointed out and I also observed, whenever a clergyman from Burma is invited to preach, every detail of his trip and of the preaching content should be approved by the local Chinese government in advance.

⁹¹ This has been mathematically proved. Mathematician Kurt Gödel's incompleteness proof (for an elegant introduction to his argument, see Nagel & Newman 2001) demonstrates that all systems contain inherently undecidable (from the axioms of the system) propositions. It follows that every system contains both laws of causality that describe the structure and dynamic of events in the system, and inherent probability that describes external influences and inherent factors both of which are indeducible to the axioms of the system (e.g., regarding a cultural system, see Lehman 2005).

⁹² For a review of discussions of the formation of novelty/intention in cognitive sciences, see Gorman and Carlson 1990, and Hennessey and Amabile 2010.