

Emerging Modernity in a Periodic Marketplace of Southwest China

Shao-hua Liu

Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica

This paper examines the effects of a periodic market in the post-socialist transition of China's Nuosu (Yi) minority in Liangshan, Sichuan Province, in light of G. William Skinner's (1964-5) insights on the peasant market system and its significance in social change. The two analytic perspectives I use are, first, how have the Nuosu's cultural and historical particularities shaped their adjustment to the market system, and, second, how have the Nuosu fared in their post-socialist transition as seen in their activities in the marketplace. Unlike other post-socialist societies, the Nuosu's manner of entry into capitalist modernity is historically unprecedented. They had scant experience with either the use of money or the market system before the 1980s. In the current reform era, they have ironically stepped into capitalist modernity via a throwback institution, the periodic market, which was long a fixture in Han Chinese rural communities. The Nuosu, however, have not just passively assimilated to the market system, they have adapted the periodic market to meet their own social needs. Moreover, they are formulating a post-traditional identity expressly in terms of an ever-expanding capitalist modernity.

Keywords: Periodic Market, Post-socialist transition, Modernity, China, Nuosu

Positioning the Nuosu Periodic Market in Post-reform China

This paper examines the ramifications of a periodic market established among the Nuosu, a minority group in Sichuan Province, as an example of rural China's dramatic transition from socialism to capitalism, which began in 1978.¹ While studying heroin use and HIV/AIDS in 2005 in the basin area of Limu Township in Zhaojue County, Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture (Figure 1), I became aware of a bustling local market held every ten days.² Besides briefly flashing back to the famous essays by G. William Skinner (1964-65) on Han peasant markets in the Sichuan Basin, I did not at first give it much thought; the appearance of this archaic institution, nonetheless a fairly recent introduction in the Nuosu region, I took to be merely a state-initiated effort to pull the Nuosu peasants into the ever-expanding capitalist consumerism that marked China's market reform era.

However, as my comings and goings in the Limu basin³ brought me into routine contact with the market, I came to appreciate how its periodicity and spatiality have altered the local life style, and how both merchants and consumers—as well as the other social actors who congregate there—handle social encounters with new spatial and temporal perspectives. When I *did* begin to reflect on the market's ramifications in Limu, I realized the continued importance of Skinner's research on social change through market expansion. Despite the historical and ethno-geographic differences between our two projects, over time I found myself relying on Skinner's insights about post-dynastic social change as I began to unravel the meanings of Nuosu peasants' participation in the post-socialist market.

Skinner (1985) predicted the end of the periodic market as a result of China's social and economic development toward the end of the twentieth century. He may have been right to point to the demise of such markets in Han areas, but this institution, ironically, still plays an important role in connecting the Limu people to the larger external market system even today. But how and why are Nuosu locals relying on a rudimentary ten-day market cycle, nearly the rarest form of periodic market, for their marketing involvement?

¹ Classified as "Yi" in a state-sponsored ethnic identification project that took place in the 1950s, the group living in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province uses the term "Nuosu" to refer to themselves (Harrell 2001). I have used the autonym to distinguish the Yi of Liangshan from other Yi groups in Yunnan and Guizhou.

² Throughout this paper I have used pseudonyms for the Nuosu township, clans and lineages, and individuals.

³ This basin is at an elevation of 1,900 meters and ringed by higher mountains.

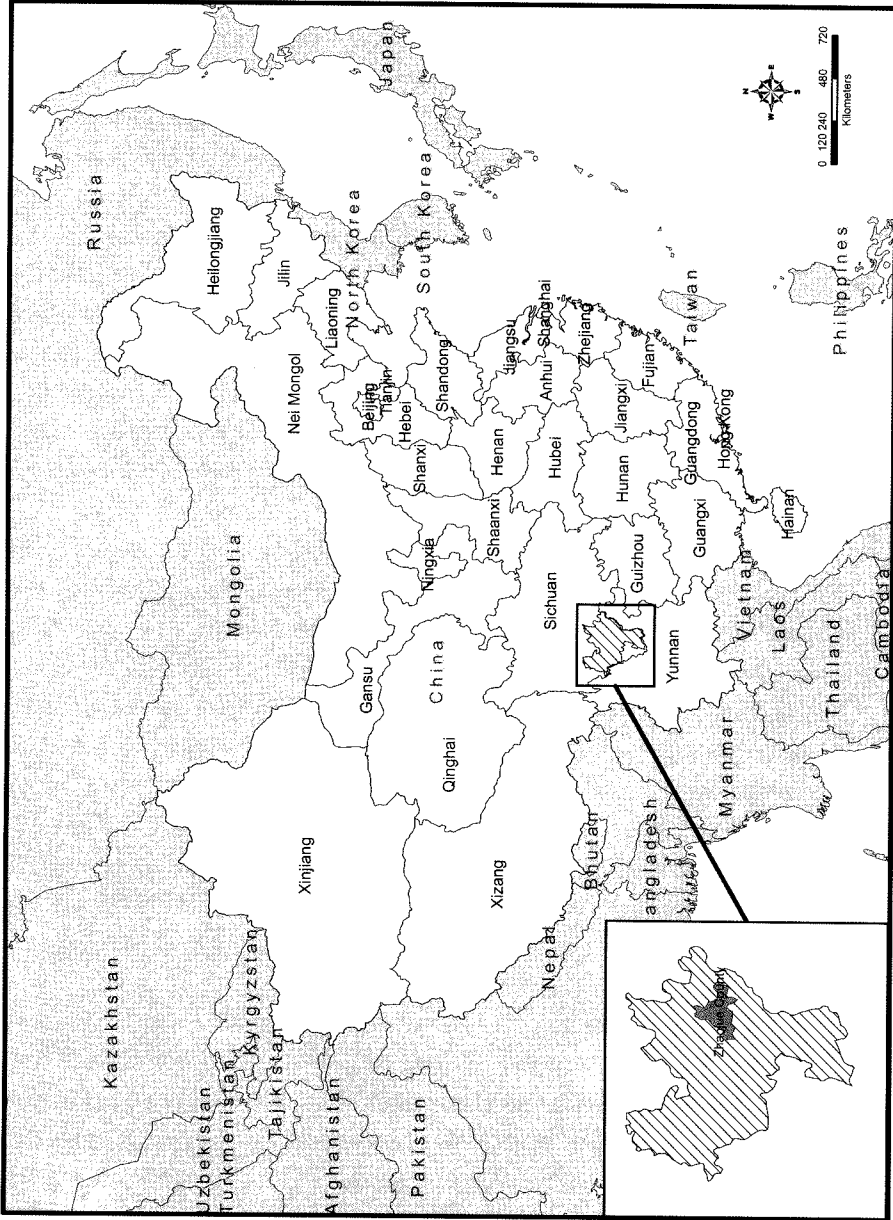


Figure 1 Zhaojue County, Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

When we consider how the Nuosu have been incorporated into the Chinese state in recent years, we may begin to fully appreciate the crucial importance of the market in orienting the Nuosu toward the new capitalist modernity. Scholars of post-socialist Eastern Europe have asked questions such as “What comes next, after socialism?” (Verdery 1996). They have pointed out that the retrenchment of the state in controlling all aspects of society has brought about qualitative changes in people’s daily life, such as their rising work ethic, the distribution of scarce resources, the acceptance of increased social inequality, emerging entrepreneurship and social mobility, and an increased commodification of social relations and values (e.g., Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Humphrey 1998; Kovács 1994; Mandel and Humphrey 2002; Nee 1989). In the post-socialist landscape, China differs significantly from the former Soviet Union and its old Eastern Bloc allies because the latter have since 1989 enacted privatization policies. But in China the public sector has been firmly sustained by the party-state, even in the market reform era (Szelenyi and Kostello 1996). This critical difference points to the nature of the Nuosu market: the state initiated it as a key move toward economic development of Nuosu rural communities.

To understand the multiple roles and influences of this institution in Limu, we should review the particularities of the Nuosu in relation to the periodic market. First, the Nuosu have experienced drastic and dramatic social change over the past half-century (circa 1956–2005) since they were absorbed into the Chinese state. Second, distinctively Nuosu social structures and cultural practices allow them to re-orient their activities according to the rhythms of the market. The reach of the periodic local market, then, goes beyond the commercial activities of those involved in trade to fundamentally reshape the lives of the local people. The marketplace provides an especially good vantage from which we can observe local peasants’ behavioral changes in tandem with the penetration of the capitalist economy; it is also the locus of the revival of specific local cultural practices.

Let me begin with a cursory overview of recent Nuosu social history, emphasizing their positionality in the Chinese nation-state in order to contextualize particularly Nuosu characteristics. I then offer a comparative portrait of life in this minority township before and after the 1980s, showing how the periodic market has broadened the Nuosu economic involvement and world-view. An ethnographic account of the market and the people who use it will show how changing economic factors have affected local morality, rationality, and sense of identity.

The Incorporation of the Nuosu into the Chinese Nation-state

Within a mere half-century, Nuosu society has leapfrogged through three distinct societal formations: non-state autonomy (pre-1956), socialist collectivism (1956–1978), and market capitalism (1978—present). Historically, Liangshan was an independent and autonomous region to the far southwest of Chinese territory, which had never been conquered by either China or Tibet. The Nuosu inhabited a peripheral zone that imperial China’s central authorities rarely fussed with.⁴

Before 1956 Nuosu society had no consistent political organization or power structure above *cyvi* (extended lineages and clan organizations) (Lin 1961).⁵ Liangshan, which spreads over 63,000 square kilometers and is inhabited by a population of approximately 1.8 million, is home to only a few dozen large clans (Ma 1999). Kinship-based organizations form stable units for economic activities, spirit cults, and social solidarity (Heberer 2005). Although *cyvi* may include distantly related kin, traditionally its members treated each other as close kin regardless of their actual degree of relation. Mutual help and support, be it material, emotional, or spiritual, continues to be seen as obligatory among all close and distant kin. Traditionally, a Nuosu’s identity was framed and defined by his/her *cyvi* rather than by ethnicity or nationality (Heberer 2005). Kinship principles dictated social classifications, marital options, and places of residence. Individual rights and obligations, as well as hereditary professions and public authority, were couched in kinship terms and determined at birth. All social strata in Nuosu society—*nzyimo* (*tusi* 土司, ruler), *nuo* (*heiyi* 黑彝, aristocrat), *qunuo* (*baiyi* 白彝, commoner), and *mgajie*

⁴ Until the 1950s, the Nuosu in Liangshan were called “Lolo” (儺儺), “independent Lolo” (獨立儺儺), and “Yi” (夷, a general term usually translated as “barbarians”) by Han Chinese. A small group that resided closer to Han areas assimilated to certain Han ways of life and came to be called “cooked Yi” (熟夷, a generic term that referred to non-Han groups that took on attributes of the Han) in contrast to the great majority of “raw Yi” (生夷) (Lin 1961).

⁵ *Cyvi* is generally translated as “patrilineal clan” or “lineage” (compare Harrell ed. 2001 and Hill 2001). I use these terms according to circumstances. Usually, I use the term lineage when discussing everyday interactions among close kin. For example, lineage members who reside in close proximity usually have an annual meeting at the end of the year. Once in a while, however, these year-end meetings can be expanded and may combine several lineages that belong to the same clan, especially when members encountered major social problems. Additionally, all lineages that belong to a single clan may meet once every few years.

or *gaxy* (*wazi huo nuli* 娃子或奴隸, slaves)⁶—were equally defined by such kinship rules. Cosmological beliefs and social morality were also generally associated with kinship organizations. In a word, the bedrock of the Nuosu moral economy has been kinship, but this situation has been destabilized with externally imposed “social change and the economization of society” (Heberer 2005:412).

In premodern times, the Nuosu relationship with the Chinese state had been both easy and tense due to, on the one hand, their political autonomy and, on the other, their practice of capturing Han Chinese as slaves. It was virtually impossible for outsiders to visit the Nuosu hinterland without the protection of powerful *nzyimo* or *nuo* (Goullart 1959; Lin 1961; Winnington 1959). The Nuosu hinterland is nowadays called the core area (*foxin diqu* 腹心地區); this denotes present-day Zhaojue, Meigu, and Butuo counties, as well as part of Xide, Puge and Jinyang counties, where the majority of local populace has been Nuosu. (see Figure 2) Only rarely did Nuosu trade with Han merchants before 1956, and those who did were mostly *nzyimo* and *nuo* or their servants, who lived at the margins of Liangshan, mainly in northern sector and areas along Jinsha River (金沙江), an upper branch of the Yangtze (長江) that traces a sharp curve on the border of Sichuan and Yunnan. Han people had gradually settled at the margins of Liangshan owing to reasons of trade, war, or exile since the Qing dynasty (Ma 2005). Occasionally, markets sprang up on the borders between Nuosu and Han settlements (Leng and Ma 1992; Sichuan 1985; Sichuan 1999). Han merchants came mainly to trade for the opium the Nuosu produced.

Opium was introduced into Nuosu society around 1910, when Han Chinese, with the assistance of *nzyimo* and *nuo*, began planting poppies in isolated Liangshan to evade the anti-opium campaign launched by the Qing court (Lin 1961; Zhou 1999). In subsequent decades opium planting became widespread among the Nuosu. In 1948 historian Doak Barnett traveled to the borderland of Tibet and Nuosu areas in what is today Sichuan Province and made the following observation: “Most Yi [i.e., Nuosu] were farmers, and one of their principal crops was opium” (1993:415). Those poppy farms generally belonged to a small group of powerful *nzyimo* and *nuo* who used opium to

⁶ Not all locales had all five social strata. Some areas even only had commoners and slaves, and carried on independent of the rule of *nzyimo* and *nuo*. In most parts of the core areas, the *nzyimo* was often a noble but only nominally ruling stratum. For example, Limu was nominally a territory that belonged to the *nzyimo* lineage of Lili, while the de facto ruler was the resident *nuo* Ma lineage. Lili *nzyimo* were at one time the dominant rulers in some Nuosu-dominant areas. Their power was usurped by an array of *nuo* lineages. In Ming dynasty (14th–17th century), the Lili *nzyimo*, like other *nzyimo* lineages, were driven from the core areas by *nuo* to the Liangshan margins. Ever since, the *nuo* have remained de facto rulers in many parts of the core areas (Ma 1989).

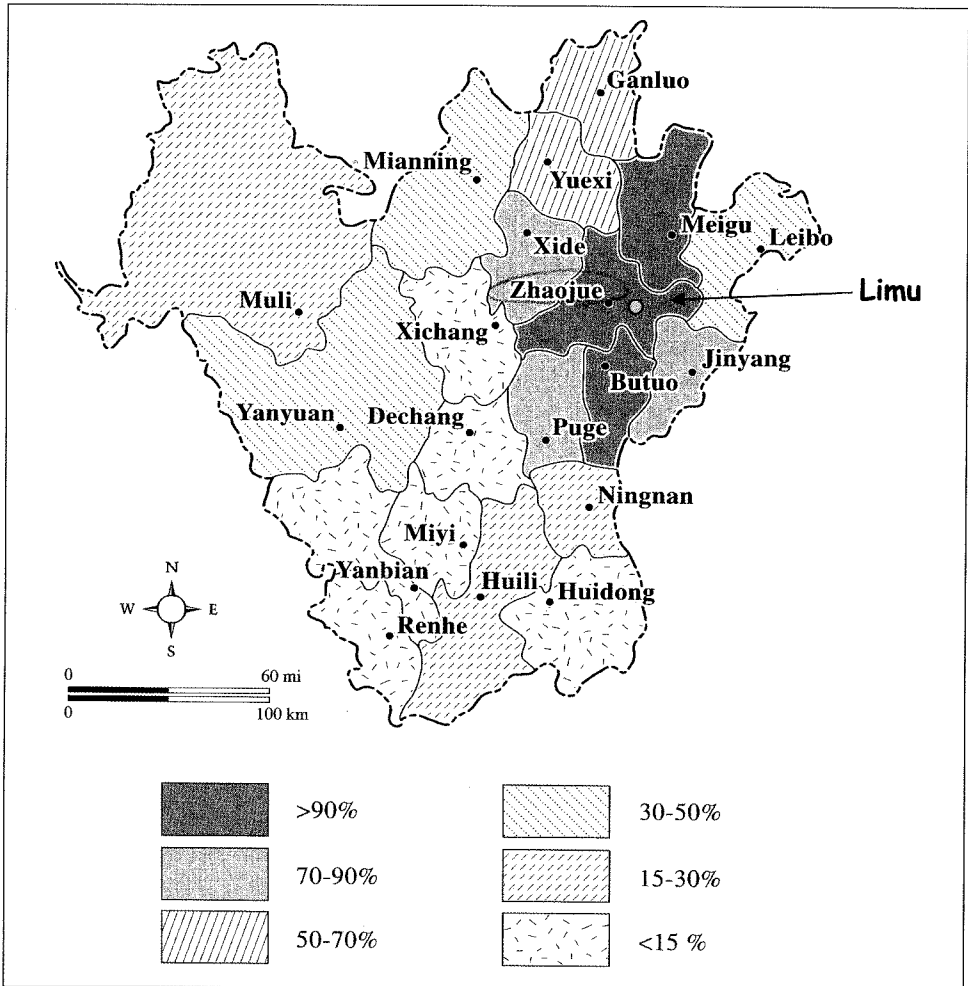


Figure 2 Percentage of Nuosu Population by County in Liangshan Prefecture and Panzhihua City (Adapted from Harrell 2001:65)

trade with the Han.

Opium changed relations between the upper echelon of the Nuosu and the Han Chinese. For the first time Nuosu landowners—mostly *nzymo* and *nuo*—had a cash crop to sell the Han for silver dollars (*tuotuo yin* 砵砵銀 or *bai yin* 白銀) or to barter for guns, cloth, salt, and other commodities.⁷ The volume of opium traded could be considerable. For instance, Tianba hosted one famous market every second, fifth, and eighth day of a ten-day cycle, based on the lunar calendar; between 1938 and 1949, traders who visited the Tianba

⁷ Nuosu in Limu called silver dollars *tuotuo yin* (silver ingots). Archival documents may use the phrase *bai yin* (white silver); see, for example, Lin 1961.

marketplace from outside Liangshan spent approximately 12,000 *liang* of *bai yin* (about 12,000 ounces of silver) on opium. Tianba is located in Ganluo, Liangshan's northernmost county, and at that time had a large Han Chinese population. The opium trade was especially hectic during the annual *yanhui* (opium and tobacco fair) held during the second and the fourth lunar months (Leng and Ma 1992). In the core Nuosuland, beyond the ethnic borders, opium was also increasingly bartered among the Nuosu themselves, mainly among the upper classes but sometimes also among wealthy commoners, in exchange for slaves. However, the core region had nothing comparable to the fixed marketplaces on the border for such exchanges.⁸ The trade that occurred on the borders between Han and Nuosu areas where the Han had long had a significant presence was qualitatively different from the occasional minor barter that took place in the heart of Nuosu-dominant areas in Liangshan. The great majority of Nuosu people in their hinterland had no experience with market mechanisms and the marketplace until quite recently.

A typical Nuosu-dominant community in the core area, Limu Township, where the present periodic market is located, is imbued with both strong lineage ties and a strict social hierarchy. The traditional Nuosu way of life relied largely on subsistence agriculture, and in the basin area poppy production was nonexistent. Barter was the rule for obtaining goods and services in both the non-state (pre-1956) and the socialist (1956-78) eras. Strictly speaking, no market economy mediated trade in Limu during these two periods. The main crops Limu residents relied on as staples were buckwheat, corn, and potatoes. Unlike other Nuosu-dominant areas, paddy rice could be readily grown in Limu's relatively warm basin topography. Rice was first introduced by the Qing army during its brief stay in Zhaojue County and subsequently became popular in the basin area in the late nineteenth century (Sichuan 1999).

A year after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the People's Liberation Army officially "liberated" Liangshan. The socialist state, relying on the Morganian evolutionary paradigm that saw mankind moving from primitive communal society through the stages of slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and to socialism, relegated the Nuosu to the lowest rung of social development. The Nuosu, according to the state's ethnic classification, was the only remaining "slave society" in China by the 1950s. Armed with its socialist blueprint for civilizing "backward" nationalities, the state forcibly incorporated the Nuosu into the Chinese polity (Harrell 1995, 1996).

Two years later, in 1952, the Communist government made the Zhaojue

⁸ One annual market, organized by a Han opium merchant in 1944, gathered for 20-30 days in the core area of Meigu. This market lasted for only three years (Sichuan 1985:16).

county seat the capital of Liangshan Prefecture and began its push toward socialist modernity.⁹ It promoted modern science, egalitarianism, redistribution of land, collectivism, state-regulated consumption, and careful monitoring of the public and private realms to create a diverse (i.e., multinational) but unified nation-state. As elements of the capitalist market economy were gradually removed elsewhere in China, their elimination from Liangshan also took place; the Nuosu as a whole were for the first time linked to a global socialist modernity project that proceeded from the myriad revolutions and liberation movements that occurred worldwide in the 1950s.

The independence of the Nuosu, particularly in core areas, lessened considerably after the three-year Democratic Reform launched by the Chinese government in 1956. The state initiated this reform with the explicit goal of removing the Nuosu's indigenous religious system—considered “superstitious”—and their kinship-based social structure—considered “feudalistic.” The imposition of state authority was rapidly and drastically altered Nuosu social structure and its relationship with the Han Chinese. The traditional Nuosu moral economy was forcibly reframed in tandem with China's socialist transformation: the new bedrock of social morality, in Liangshan as elsewhere, became Maoist ideology.

Limu, with its close proximity to the Zhaojue county seat, was one of the first Nuosu-dominant localities to experience the socialist reforms. This experience extended Nuosu horizons beyond their kinship-based world. People who had previously identified themselves exclusively as members of lineages and clans had come to combine their kinship identification with residential categories in the state-defined administrative hierarchy, which worked in descending order: state, province, prefecture, county, township, and village. Socialist modernization projects virtually overnight introduced the Nuosu to a whole new conception of spatiality—by erecting a distant state to which they suddenly owed allegiance.¹⁰

After the Democratic Reform came collectivization. During the era of the Peoples' Communes, from 1958 to 1978, Nuosu peasants were shepherded into

⁹ China's attempt to achieve modernization through its centralized development projects before 1978, such as the Great Leap Forward, was a kind of *de facto* modernity. Arnason (2002) argues that Western modernization theorists and scholars in the field of the Soviet studies tend to neglect the Soviet development model as a version of modernity. In the present paper I have described different types of modernity as “socialist” or “capitalist” to avoid this oversight.

¹⁰ The reoriented worldview of pre-state minorities, beginning in the socialist collective era, is treated thoroughly in Erik Mueggler's (2001) vivid portrayal of an Yi (Lòlop' ò) community in Yunnan Province.

a centrally planned economy and distributional infrastructure defined by the Maoists who shared an “anti-market mentality” (Skinner 1985). Yearly production plans drawn up at the state level and disseminated down the administrative hierarchy guided local cadres’ productive activities and the allocation of basic resources. Cash-based trade, newly introduced to local Nuosu peasants, was instituted mainly in state-run collective stores (*yingye bu* 營業部) and remained limited in scale. People acquired foodstuffs and goods mainly by work points earned at assigned workplaces. In the collective era, by and large, few Nuosu peasants had much exposure to either the use of currency for trade or commodity markets. In terms of their spatial and temporal orientations, the Nuosu of Limu remained largely restricted to their traditional territory both because of the confining nature of the communes and state-imposed restrictions on geographic and social mobility.

This situation finally changed in the wake of China’s market reforms. Skinner saw peasant marketing as an evolutionary departure from subsistence-oriented societies, a development that signaled “the onset of the transformation of a traditional agrarian society into a modern industrial society” (Skinner 1964:3). Beginning in the mid-1980s, with the introduction of an “anachronistic” commercial institution long familiar to Han Chinese peasants, the Nuosu peasants took up the march toward capitalist modernity. Ever since the advent of the periodic market, local Nuosu social life has been changed in this transition to a new economic mode and the phenomenon can best be glimpsed at the marketplace.

The Periodic Market and Changing Social Life

The resurrection of rural markets in China after 1977 was a critical element of Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms and followed on nationwide efforts to scale down or close such markets during the collective era. The “historical catching-up exercise” of reviving rural markets aimed at “bringing the economy very quickly to where it would have been had the Maoist experiments not intervened” (Skinner 1985:412). By the mid-1980s, many restrictions once placed on marketing had been removed and a myriad rural markets with various periodicities have been extended to peripheral regions where the market never existed before (Skinner 1985). The Limu market opening in the mid-1980s was part of this effort ordained from above, and it introduced a new experience to local Nuosu.

The Zhaojue county government instituted the Limu market to facilitate rural trade after implementation of the “redistributed farmland” policy (*baochan daohu* 包產到戶), which designated each household a tenant of state-

owned lands in the early 1980s. In most cases, the rural Han and their minority neighbors did not find markets completely novel. Han Chinese had long relied on market mechanisms for trade (Gates 1996), so marketplace practices and experiences were hardly a shock. Studies of nuanced market effects in post-socialist Eastern Europe also show that before the socialist era these areas had already developed a variety of money-based and profit-oriented economic practices (Mandel and Humphrey 2002). But the initiation of Limu's Nuosu people into market ways was not similarly grounded in previous experience.

The Limu marketplace is located on open ground about the size of a standard basketball court. The market meets, according to the Gregorian calendar, on the ninth day in the ten-day cycle. In the month of February in non-leap-years, the market is rescheduled to March 1. Other periodic markets in neighboring Nuosu-dominant townships follow different schedules, also based on a ten-day cycle, so they do not compete for customers.

The network presented by Limu market and others in the region is fairly rudimentary, according to Skinner's model. Skinner's research reveals that the periodic markets of Han peasants featured a hierarchical and sophisticated socioeconomic mechanism; their periodicity and spatial distribution exhibited an advanced economic rationality that maximized efficiency and profitability for both the itinerant retailers and their rural customers. One of the most interesting findings in Skinner's analysis was the spatial distribution of markets in the Sichuan Basin: a roughly hexagonal market area featured a central market town surrounded by an inner ring of six and an outer ring of twelve villages. This pattern allows the most even distribution of markets over the landscape. Skinner also shows how the markets made necessary adjustments for the seasonality of agriculture, as well as for topographical features in the landscape that affected travel distances and the general capacity for trade among Han peasants.

Once I had mapped the dates and locales of the markets in Limu and neighboring townships, I found neither the hierarchical relationships nor the hexagonal distribution pattern Skinner had discovered in Sichuan. The reason was immediately evident: the Nuosu markets were organized quickly by state officials who lacked any real knowledge of the sophisticated efficiencies that had evolved with Han peasant markets over the centuries. In addition, pervasive poverty in rural Liangshan (annual per capita income was under 730 yuan, or US\$91, in 2004)¹¹ has set limits on the scale of these markets, providing little incentive for merchants to sell their goods and services beyond their

¹¹ Zhaojue County Report to the Third Liangshan NGO Conference, Xichang, Sichuan, China, September 27, 2005.

immediate neighborhoods. Nuosu peasants in general cannot afford to purchase commodities in large quantities or at high prices. The geographical characteristics of the Liangshan region, with its high mountains and tortuous roads, also place limits on the development of markets like those found in lowland plains.

Though the scale of the periodic market is modest in Limu, nowadays the marketplace is a magnetic scene in the local landscape, and market day has become something akin to the weekend in most modern societies. Hundreds of local people converge in Limu's marketplace every ten days. The market enables people from neighboring communities to meet their needs and provides them an opportunity to exchange their own domestic products for money. The concept of fixed leisure or rest days at regular intervals, besides the slack seasons in the agricultural cycle and inauspicious days based on the traditional Nuosu day-counting system¹², has taken hold since the initiation of the periodic market. People go to the market not only to buy and sell goods but also for pleasure. The same phenomenon we find in other Chinese markets, the essential feature of "heat and noise" (*renao* 熱鬧), makes the Limu marketplace a social space of enjoyment and personal engagement (Yu 2004).

In Limu, as elsewhere in the region, market day follows a predictable pattern. Beginning at about nine o'clock in the morning, itinerant merchants arrive at the trading grounds, where they arrange their goods for display. About one and a half hours later, once peasants from the surrounding hills have arrived, the market buzzes. Men and women, children and adults, arrive on foot and horseback, and hitch their animals along nearby thoroughfares. The market ends at three o'clock, giving people enough time to walk back to their homes in the surrounding mountains before dusk.

The growth of Limu's market has followed the protracted development of Liangshan's infrastructure. In the 1980s merchants packed their limited goods on horses and bicycles and rode to the marketplace. Starting in the 1990s, as public transportation became more convenient and reliable, many merchants came to rely on buses. Some even bought their own vans. In recent years, trucks used as mobile stores have begun to appear.

To improve marketing opportunities and accommodate more people, the county office in charge of the Limu market paved the grounds with cement in 2004. This innovation has made Limu's marketplace one of the best in the region, according to the itinerant merchants and wholesalers I talked to. Most other periodic markets in the region are still held in the woods or on packed

¹² Nuosu peasants still use their traditional twelve-day cycle, with an animal assigned to each day.

earth grounds.

The Limu market is divided into several broad sections for various trade activities, with some small merchants carrying their goods around the marketplace to find customers. Goods sold vary from agricultural produce, to hand-made products, to mass-produced commodities imported from large cities or even foreign countries. On sale are new and used clothes, shoes, videotapes, pirated compact discs, household goods, seeds, pesticides, and popsicles. The market also draws barbers, cobblers, and tinkers. Entertainment is provided in the form of video-viewing stalls.

The current popularity of the Limu market was not achieved overnight. It took over a decade for local Nuosu people to become fully accustomed to the market's rhythms, its amenities, and the calculation of profit margins in trade. The market experience has tremendously influenced the lives of local Nuosu in at least three major aspects. First, it has introduced new exchange mediums (i.e., the marketplace for trade and the use of money) and the circulation of goods and services above and beyond traditional subsistence-oriented ways of life. Most local people began using money only after the market opened. This has encouraged new economic rationalities (e.g., the maximization of personal gains and profit margins in terms of cash), with interesting effects on the local moral economy. The kinship-based consciousness previously used for reckoning personal interests and distribution of goods and services has been gradually fused with an impersonal market rationality. Second, the periodic market has shaped or reshaped the identity of the local people. Learning to trade in and living near to the marketplace has become associated with a new pride of being "modern" and capable of a new way of life. Marketization and commodification have expanded local people's desires and inspired new types of behavior. Third, the market has engendered new temporal and spatial constructs within which new social gatherings and hierarchies are embedded.

Developing a New Morality and a New Rationality

Nuosu's transition from a moral economy, be it traditional or socialist, to a market economy reminds us of the classic debate in the 1950s and 1960s, between substantivism and formalism over the utility of capitalist economic theories. Karl Polanyi (1957) represented the substantivist approach when he argued that premodern economy is embedded in non-market institutions such as family, kinship and religious organizations, and its operation is based on principles different from those of the market economy. In contrast, the formalists argue that even in so-called primitive societies, all human beings share basically the same set of rationales in decision making: maximizing the alloca-

tion of scarce resources among alternative ends. Given the fact that almost all populations around the world are involving in some cash economy, the formalists refute the substantivist perspectives as irrelevant.

The debate between these two positions has never been resolved. Anthropologists have sidestepped the issue since the 1970s, since most anthropologists can agree that people all engage in exchange in both material and symbolic forms, in Bourdieu's (1977) terms, and that they also calculate gains and losses in rational ways. Various forms of capital, goods, or social relationships are exchanged in diverse local political economies. As Richard Wilk cogently points out, substantivist and formalist premises are not mutually exclusive. Both could be right and wrong. Part of the contention comes from their analytical perspectives: the substantivists compare social institutions and the formalists investigate individual decision-making behaviors (Wilk 1996:12).

Accordingly, this section will concentrate on the social process in which individual behaviors are altered in sync with changing social institutions, instead of arguing one or the other perspective. Periodic markets as a new institutionalized venue of social exchange demonstrate how people's economic rationality and livelihood have come to be reckoned chiefly through market mechanisms and market-recognized money.

Limu people's engagement in the periodic market is never moral-free. After being exposed for decades to the negative stereotypes about commerce disseminated by the Communist government's propaganda offices, local Nuosu people have learned to trade in the market only with some ambivalence. This is further complicated by their traditional taboo against intra-Nuosu trading, particularly of foodstuffs: home-grown produce was to be used either for domestic consumption or for purposes of cementing kinship and community ties. These combined reasons explain why peasants rarely sold or bought anything when the market was first organized in Limu in the mid-1980s. The market space was only thinly occupied, and the local government had to draw crowds with a kickoff ceremony that resembled the traditional Torch Festival (*huoba jie* 火把節).

At first people sold and purchased only basic necessities such as matches, needles and thread, cigarettes, and homegrown vegetables in the Limu market. A local woman, approximately thirty years old, told me of her initial shame at buying chili pepper at the market in the late 1980s: "I felt very embarrassed to be seen buying something at the market. We Yizu [i.e., Nuosu] never traded there. So I hid the pepper in my pocket and left right away."

But the market began to grow fast in the 1990s. So fast that Limu's state-run collective store closed its doors for good in 1996, because it simply could

not compete. At approximately the same time, state-owned enterprises were being privatized, leading to massive layoffs, both in this region and elsewhere. Many of those laid-off workers became itinerant merchants who made a living by trading at various markets across the region.

In the Limu market, most of the itinerant merchants are Nuosu from elsewhere, with only a small number of Han Chinese who work as smiths and barbers. I reckon that if Han Chinese had sufficient capital to engage in wholesale trades, they would consider the Nuosu markets too small to be of interest. Only those with insufficient capital or skills consider working in a remote Nuosu market.

Local Nuosu people have not only adapted to shopping in the market, they have also learned to become sellers. Some Limu residents have set up food stalls where they sell Han Chinese foods such as cold rice noodles (*liang-fen* 涼粉) and fried dough sticks (*youtiao* 油條). People sell surplus livestock—pigs, cattle, sheep, goats, and domestic fowl—and dried sheepskins or goat-skins they make after killing the animals in rituals. In recent years, one man has also begun selling pork, an unusual phenomenon since in most Nuosu villages meat is still exchanged not in trade but according to reciprocal kinship principles. Poorer peasants sell hand-made bamboo brooms, chicken and duck eggs, corn spirits, and even pheasants and herbs taken from the wild. Most of the vendors and peddlers are Nuosu children, young women, and elderly men and women.

Local Nuosu culture frowns on men who are preoccupied with menial jobs that generate only small profits—although many young men readily admitted to me that they simply did not have opportunities to find good jobs or make much money. Many of Limu's young men expressed mixed feelings about the Han smiths and the Nuosu petty merchants in the market: they had contempt at their wasting time on meager gains, but also appreciated their willingness to work hard and their ability to incrementally accumulate wealth. In fact, more and more of these young Nuosu men are beginning to earn “minor” money. In the past only Han people provided semi-skilled services, such as the outdoor barbershop or shoe and utensil repair, which require only small amounts of capital. In recent years, two Nuosu smiths and one Nuosu barber have joined the ranks of small businessmen at the market.

The pricing and differential taxing practiced at the market reveal a conflation of local Nuosu cohesion and division. In rural Liangshan, kinship principles have recently been revived to define socio-political alliances and divisions. Extensive kinship reckoning guarantees that nearly everyone is a member of the same lineage or related to everyone else in the same community through marriage. Kinship ties in some cases exist among itinerant entrepre-

neurs and between small peddlers and local buyers. These multiple relationships help keep price fluctuations to a minimum because people will not compete through strategic pricing. That is, sellers will not use price differentials either to compete with each other or to increase profit margins against only certain buyers.

In contrast, the different rates at which local governments tax local merchants and outsiders reveal another division based on local ties and administrative rationality. The governing committee of the village where the Limu market is located imposes a hygiene tax on outside entrepreneurs but leaves local small-time peddlers and village sellers untaxed. The village cadres in charge explained this differentiation by emphasizing that “*we* are all relatives and acquaintances.” A few market participants also told me that, following the same principle, officials in a neighboring county also applied lower tax rates to merchants who resided in that county. It is interesting that these agencies issue no official permits to distinguish local merchants from outside ones; the distinction rests on people’s social relationships and the merchants’ accents, which give away their places of origin.¹³

China’s liberalization through market reforms has permitted the revival of ritual healing. Between 1956 and 1978, under the socialist modernization project, the Chinese government set out to achieve a national socialist transformation by converting “traditional” cultures and societies into “advanced” ones. Ritual specialists—in Liangshan that meant *bimo* (priests) and *sunyi* (shamans)—were criticized for using allegedly superstitious tricks to prey on “ignorant and backward” peasants. In the current reform era, given the freedom to choose, people often rely on more than one therapeutic approach for a given illness, and they may use them either simultaneously or in succession. This is in line with research that has found that, under usual circumstances, medical pluralism is the norm rather than the exception in complex societies (Durkin-Longley 1984). In Liangshan, with the advance of market reforms and the revival of ritual healing, medical pluralism is now publicly sanctioned.

To the Nuosu locals, the commodification of ritual healing is an infringement of their traditional values. A few *bimo* and *sunyi* sell their ritual healing and soothsaying services in Limu’s marketplace, and most of their customers are women. *Sunyi* can be either males or females and do not need to master ritual texts. Like the spirit mediums (*tang-ki* 乩童) in Taiwanese folk religion, usually only people with a history of mental illness become *sunyi* (Liu 2001). Given this, I asked my local friends why *sunyi* often do better business than *bimo*. One replied, “Those *bimo* are crooked [*waide* 歪的].” According to my

¹³ There are three major Nuosu dialects represented in Liangshan.

interpretation of this and similar comments, most Nuosu people believe that *bimo* are spiritual adepts and experts in traditional ritual texts (Bamo 2001). Hence, their special skills are not as appropriately sold in the marketplace, although *bimo* have always been paid for their services. It seems to me that the commodification of the supposedly sacred *bimo* skills in the marketplace has made people feel uncomfortable, and the *bimo* who offer their services there may damage their reputation. I asked two *bimo* who did not practice at the market what they thought of those who did, but they were reluctant to pass judgment: "We *bimo* cannot speak ill of the others."

In addition to the ritual healers, there are stands displaying Nuosu herbal medicine and Tibetan potions alongside antibiotic capsules. The Limu market also provides unlicensed dental services, mainly tooth extracting and filling, and at the market's edge is a government-run clinic usually staffed by four health workers.

The market has contributed to the Nuosu's acceptance of, and even increasing dependence on, biomedicine over the past two decades. For adults, the market days are also "doctor-seeing," or, more precisely, "medicine-buying" days. Intravenous injections are popular, as are medications for common pains such as headaches, arthritis, and stomach aches. The nearly instant relief provided by these has changed people's attitudes toward Western medicine. People often purchase antibiotics and painkillers without first consulting health workers, and most health workers do not bother to ask why the medications are needed. The township clinic's revenue on market days can be twenty times greater than on ordinary days. A former "barefoot doctor" (now called a "country doctor") who worked at the clinic explained to me that before the mid-1980s most Nuosu peasants were reluctant to try Western medicine, but that has changed because people have been coming to the clinic on market days.

The market has become an indispensable instrument that Nuosu peasants now use to fashion a modern way of life for themselves. As their resistance to buying and selling in the market has faded, they have developed a new attitude toward doing business. In some nearby villages a few better-off people have opened small grocery stores and trade with their close neighbors every day. The market has brought the moral economy based on reciprocal kinship principles into a complementary relationship with the impersonal trade rationality. Recent research on Nuosu entrepreneurs in Liangshan cities also observes the destabilization of the traditional moral economy and the weakening of kinship-based identities under the current marketization drive (Heberer 2005). Although Limu is still far more structured in terms of kinship ties than the cities of Liangshan, the identities of local residents, as well as their recip-

rocal rights and obligations, have unquestionably been extended beyond kinship ties.

New Local Identity and New Yearning in the Market Reform Era

The presence of the periodic market has made the Limu basin a relative center of sophistication in the mountains. One meets friends, greets strangers, shops at a variety of stalls, and explores novelties on market days. As a variety of people from different localities gather in the marketplace, identities take shape along new vectors. Residents of the Limu basin view themselves as “more modern” than people from the surrounding high hills. This identity shift has everything to do with living near the marketplace, more actively participating in trade, and enjoying a better material living standard. Basin residents now look at the mountain people as “dirty” and “backward”—an ironic twist, since the Han Chinese once used these same terms to describe the Nuosu of Liangshan as a whole. One often sees basin residents gather to stare with amused expressions at mountain dwellers on their way to the marketplace, even though many of these visitors may actually be their kinsmen.

The new “modern” mentality has influenced what people wear and eat—consumption decisions that go beyond utility. As Giddens notes, “Modernity is a post-traditional order, in which the question, ‘How shall I live?’ has to be answered in day-to-day decisions about how to behave, what to wear, and what to eat—and many other things—as well as interpreted within the temporal unfolding of self-identity” (1991:14). Capitalist modernity has instilled a yearning among local Nuosu people, especially the young, for the appurtenances of the Han Chinese way of life. Since the late 1980s, nearly all of the young men from Limu and surrounding high hills have abandoned their ear-rings, traditionally worn in the left ear, because Han Chinese men do not wear such things. Research suggests that self-decoration is a means through which the dynamics of social identities are expressed (Strathern and Strathern 1971), and giving up self-decoration may signal identity change. The clothes for men sold in the marketplace are all Han style (actually Western-style clothing, but adopted by Han Chinese earlier). Nowadays Nuosu men all wear sport jackets and T-shirts, plus the *vala*, a traditional woolen cloak, an outer layer of clothing they wear only at home rather than beyond Liangshan. As in many modernizing societies, most women and small children continue to wear traditional clothing. The farther a woman lives from the market, the more fully she follows tradition: in Limu women generally combine traditional blouses with modern pants. Clothes sold in the marketplace for women and children are

also mixed in styles.

Another index of modernity is food. Mary Douglas observed that “when everything else changes, food systems are stable” (1982:88). Foodways are thus a powerful form of cultural preservation. On the other hand, food preference can also indicate identity change. In Limu a mixture of local ethnic traditions and Han foods has gradually become visible. The Limu basin is famous for its productivity in rice. Nuosu peasants in the basin and the surrounding hills generally consider rice a better crop than their traditional staple, buckwheat. Therefore, when they come to the market, people from the hills like to eat Han Chinese food at the modest market stands or in small restaurants near the marketplace run by Han Chinese from Yuexi County and who, in Liangshan, enjoy a reputation for their business acumen. Traditionally, the Nuosu despised eating beyond their cultural sphere such as in a restaurant. Even nowadays, many Nuosu peasants, especially elders and women, are reluctant to frequent them. They say, “We Nuosu don’t eat at restaurants.”

Despite the general continued resistance to eating out, enjoying Han-style food has become part of many people’s activities in the marketplace. As another research points out, eating out means being “different from the everyday, getting a break from cooking and serving, relaxing, having a treat, socializing...” for ordinary people (Warde and Martens 2000:47). For these reasons, the restaurants do most of their business on market days. To please Limu customers and make greater profits, restaurant owners have a two-tiered pricing system: Limu residents pay 1 yuan for unlimited bowls of steamed rice, while people from the high hills pay 0.5 yuan for each bowl. The explanation: “Those from the mountains are too eager for steamed rice. If the price is set low, they will simply eat too many bowls of rice.” This observation came to me from both restaurant owners and local residents.

Youths may have been more profoundly influenced by the periodic market than any other segment of Nuosu society. The marketplace has become a regularly occurring social occasion in which they may satisfy their youthful craving for fun, socializing with peers, exploring novelties, and acquiring information. Young women shop in small groups, while young men like to gather in bigger groups and spend a lot of time drinking liquor or beer after the market ends. One occasionally sees conflicts break out within and between these groups of men. Sometimes, young people, especially men, look for potential mates on market days because it is less embarrassing to do so in a crowd. This is why local young people jokingly call market days “lovers’ days.” They may seek partners through the introductions of friends, cousins, sisters, or brothers. It is amusing to watch groups of same-sex companions prod each other and giggle as they watch potential girlfriends or boyfriends on the other

side of the marketplace. Meetings between potential mates usually involve reciprocal treats: young men buy candies for young women, and young women buy liquor for young men. It is widely believed that sexual encounters are common on the evenings of market days. These dating practices follow the same rules as traditional Nuosu coupling: she or he may later on have to compensate the opposite number for around 500 yuan, if one is not interested in the other.

Conventionally, marriages are arranged in rural Nuosu society. Privately pursued courtship is, even today, not widely accepted. Previously, only on the occasion of weddings and funerals were young people allowed to meet and socialize across sexual boundaries. Now, the markets provide new, predictable venues for courtship, and increasing romantic involvement among the youth has become a part of Limu's modernization.

Transforming the Marketplace into a Cultural Arena

So far I have considered the influence of the periodic market on a tiny corner of China that is coming to look more and more like any other part of the country. But the Nuosu peasants are not just passively being incorporated into market operations and capitalist modernity; they are also shaping the market in accordance with their own way of living. The periodic market is not merely a site for commercial activities. Local Nuosu people have availed themselves of its temporal and spatial characteristics and transformed the market into an arena well suited to their social activities, much the same as Han Chinese peasants did in the Sichuan Basin markets that Skinner studied in the 1940s.

The market has turned the dispersed villages sprinkled around the Limu basin and its surrounding hills into a face-to-face community. People from different localities meet more easily and more frequently than before. For example, a few well-known *bimo* residing in the high hills above the Limu basin sometimes bring goatskins and sheepskins they receive as payment for their ritual services to the market. People seek these *bimo* in the marketplace and make appointments with them for ritual practices in their homes.

More creatively, local Nuosu people have appropriated the market by holding important community events there. The periodic market has obliged them to adopt a new schedule for these events, because "everybody comes to the market." Since the early 1980s, with the liberalization of China's market reform policy, the Nuosu have revived most of their kinship networks and activities that were abolished during the collective era. Simultaneously as the market reshapes the material living conditions of the local people, it has also

expedited some of their efforts to reclaim specific markers of Nuosu ethnic identity and social solidarity. Nuosu peasants now hold major clan and lineage meetings at the end of the year, when the harvest is completed, and often on market days. Occasionally, for lineages that have fewer members or that are encountering emerging troubles, kinsmen may hold ad hoc meetings as necessary and these meetings are also normally set on market days.

Besides lineage meetings, local Nuosu often hold dispute mediations on market days in the marketplace itself, along the stream by the market, or in the woods nearby. Prior research indicates that between 60 and 80 percent of local disputes among Nuosu lineages in Zhaojue County were settled by *ndegg* (traditional judges or mediators) rather than by the state's courts (Wu 1985; Zhongguo 1999). A successful traditional mediation generally produces no formal written agreement. Local Nuosu people consider drinking liquor together a friendly gesture that seals an agreement reached at the conclusion of a successful mediation. But if the opposing parties have a long history of enmity, one or both sides may kill a chicken to signal the end of conflict. A curse is allegedly sealed in the chicken blood: should either party betray the agreement, its members will die like the chicken. Let me describe two cases that illustrate how Limu residents have used the market in conflict resolution.

I. Case #1: Qubi Lineage from Hagu Township vs. Hielie Lineage in Limu Township

A young man from Hagu, Zhaojue County, died in a motorcycle accident. He was a member of the Qubi lineage. His widow's kin, members of the Hielie lineage, requested that the Qubi lineage arrange for her marriage to one of the dead man's kin brothers, a Nuosu custom known as a "levirate" marriage.¹⁴ The two parties decided to meet on a market day and the meeting duly took place in a vacant rice field by the marketplace on a cold day in March 2005. Two *ndegg* were invited to oversee the proceedings, and a village cadre loitering around the marketplace was invited to join the negotiation as well. The case took about four hours to settle. A Nuosu idiom mentioned during the mediation runs: "*Vy sy nyi zzi; nyi sy ho zzi*" (an older brother has died but his younger brother is alive; an ox has died but its pen remains). Both parties in the end agreed to follow the traditional practice of asking the widow to

¹⁴ Arranging the levirate marriage for a widow is seen as both an obligation and a right by each of the two involved lineages; failure to come to a timely arrangement can easily lead to hostility or fighting. Before 1956, feuding was common between lineages in Liangshan (Hill 2004; Lin 1961). This sort of behavior has been largely suppressed by the modern state, but small-scale inter-lineage fighting still takes place when conflicts remain unresolved.

marry an agnatic cousin of her deceased husband. The widow requested that the house in which she was living be given to her as compensation—a sort of dowry. At the end of the market day, the parties concluded their agreement and shared drinks.

II. Case #2: Peasant Muga vs. Peasant Lati

This story begins in May 2005. A peasant named Muga, who lived in the high hills, borrowed a horse from his neighbor to convey bags of fertilizer up from the market. He hitched the horse to a tree near the marketplace. A second peasant, named Lati, who hailed from a village in the basin area, was kicked twice by this horse as he passed by. A well-known middle-aged *ndeggu* from the *nuo* class and a young man witnessed the incident, so Lati immediately invited them to attend the mediation he assumed would follow. The three then waited for Muga to return.

When Muga came back, the two mediators suggested that Lati should have his injury examined at the Zhaojue County Hospital. Lati made a counter-demand: he wanted 100 yuan from Muga so that he could pay for a *bimo* ritual to remove his bad luck. Muga paid the sum and figured the incident was over.

But on the following day a senior member of Lati's lineage visited the two mediators for further negotiations. He said that Lati, upon returning home, could not walk and quickly grew very ill. He wanted Muga to pay for Lati's medication and informed the mediators that if Lati died from the injuries, his lineage members would carry his body to Muga's house in protest. At the suggestion of the two mediators, Lati underwent an X-ray examination at the county hospital, which indicated that Lati's illness was the result not of the horse kick but tuberculosis, a preexisting condition. The *ndeggu* declared that if Lati died within a month Muga should shoulder the responsibility, but if not then Muga should bear no responsibility.

Lati recovered in that month and was often seen strolling around Limu, until he fell sick again the following month. On another market day, Lati's kinsmen requested that the *ndeggu* mediate again. The *ndeggu* turned down their request, declaring that the case had already been settled. But Lati's kinsmen refused to let it rest and requested that two other *ndeggu* mediate. Lati's kinsmen, one of them a village cadre, demanded that Muga pay 500 yuan as a final settlement. The only form of settlement to which Muga and his kinsmen would agree was to provide liquor as a final form of apology. The two *ndeggu* then suggested that Muga offer Lati a sacrificial pig as a formal apology. This motion was rejected by both parties and the case remained unsettled at the end of 2005.

When all of these attempts at mediation fizzled, some of Lati's kinsmen threatened to break the legs of Muga's kinsmen if they saw the latter passing through their village on their way to market. The hostility between the two lineages escalated. Muga's kinsmen, angry and scared, finally took the matter to court, where the presiding judge refused to hear the case, insisting that it had already been settled "in society" and the court's decision would only be redundant.

These two cases illustrate some of the complicated factors that shape the reputation of the periodic market and the multilayered effects it has on people's lives in the Limu basin. First, it has transformed local people's lives and they have adopted it as a key feature their spatial and temporal arrangement of social gatherings. This has been especially true in cases that involve marital discord, divorce, or levirate marriage, all important concerns for the lineages in rural Nuosu society. In the past, it took much longer time for lineages to inform their members about the nature of the issues and to arrange meetings among them and with the opposing lineage. The periodic market now offers a fixed locale and time slots so that parties involved can meet expeditiously to handle these common social problems promptly and conveniently.

Moreover, the establishment of the periodic market in Nuosu society has changed people's concepts of and need for money as the lubricant of social relationships. Here Polanyi's (1957) concept of all-purpose money may help us understand how the state-issued currency has changed the nature and measurement of Limu people's exchange of goods, services and comportment—including expressing apology and appreciation.¹⁵ With its permeation of the market, money (i.e., paper currency, *renminbi* 人民幣), rather than other forms of compensation, has become the principal evaluative criterion during dispute settlements. In the past, several forms of compensation were used when settling disputes, including Han Chinese silver dollars, livestock, and woolen cloaks. Occasionally people used nonmaterial compensation, such as a formal apology accompanied by an exchange of toasts with liquor. Assigning a settlement appropriate to a case was the duty of the *ndeggu*, in accordance with

¹⁵ According to Polanyi, in a substantive economic system, which emphasizes the roles of non-market institutions, money is special-purpose—"different kinds of objects are employed in the different money uses" depending on the circumstances (Polanyi 1957:266). In contrast, in a formal economic institution, that is, a modern capitalist system, which emphasizes the impersonal market relations and rational decision-making, money is all-purpose—serving equally well for monetary functions such as exchange, payment, hoarding, and standard of value "depending upon the existence of markets" (Polanyi 1957:264). Despite the unsettled debates between substantivism and formalism, Polanyi's idea of all-purpose money still provides an instrument by which we can examine the role of money in contemporary rural Nuosu society.

Nuosu customary laws. Established rules also governed the distribution of compensation among the victim's kinsmen and the mediators. These customary laws have undergone changes in recent years, and largely in response to market expansion the content and the form of compensation have also evolved.

As I have tried to convey in this paper, the periodic market has itself produced a new sense of identity among the residents of the Limu basin, a sense of being "modern" and "superior." If one reads the case of the kicking horse with this in mind, it becomes evident that the plaintiffs, based in the basin, had a strong sense of superiority over the more provincial defendants, which made it easier for them to utter threats. The market has become a marker distinguishing core from periphery, in one of the most remote corners of the Chinese capitalist development.

Conclusion

Scholars have pointed out that ethnographies of the globalizing world must be comprehended in terms of the forces, connections, and imaginations mediating amongst the micro and the macro realms (Marcus 1998; Burawoy 2000). The incorporation of the Nuosu universe into the Chinese cultural orbit was only partial until the implementation of the Reform and Opening Policy. Beginning in the mid-1980s, the Nuosu's momentous shift from socialist modernity to capitalist modernity was leveraged in part by the anachronistic device of the periodic market. Once again the Nuosu had to learn to live with a new, externally imposed institution. The sudden availability of money, novel commodities, trade, and previously unavailable opportunities, have had unforeseen consequences in a subsistence-based community where humans and animals are still the quintessential forces in a largely agricultural way of life.

Though this is capitalism in its most rudimentary form, the Limu periodic market entails a phenomenon akin to what Harvey calls the "time-space compression" (1989:147). Harvey's idea refers to the shrinking of the time horizons for decision-making as high-tech communications and declining transport costs have facilitated the spread of decisions across a wide and variegated space. Here I modify his meaning, using it to exemplify the compression of late capitalist modernity within the portal of the periodic market. The expanded horizon represented by the marketplace shows Nuosu peasants that "what structures the locale is not simply that which is present on the scene; the 'visible' form of the locale conceals the distanced relations which determine its nature" (Giddens 1990:19).

Nuosu peasants stand at the low end of China's new political and eco-

conomic hierarchy as the reform-era state plays catch-up with the globalizing market economy. The periodic market, despite its traditional *modus operandi*, provides Limu people a glimpse of what lies beyond their village, beyond the Nuosu world, even beyond China, owing to the diverse walks of life and commodities gathered in the local marketplace. This broadened worldview represents a far more complex interweaving of space and time and distinguishes today's Limu from its previously centralized or mobility-restricted livelihood under the collective system. With the formal establishment of the periodic market, the Nuosu became in many ways post-agrarian (Skinner 1964:3) and began to reconfigure into a post-traditional order (Giddens 1991:20).

Social change facilitated by the periodic market broadens the collective vision of the world in which local people live—a quantum leap that makes them feel more sophisticated than ever before, although their living environment remains generally underdeveloped in comparison with that of the cities. It is in this post-traditional order that “the self becomes a *reflexive project*” (Giddens 1991:32, italics in original). The effect of the periodic market on the local Nuosu society thus goes beyond its purely economic significance. Preexisting modes of social interaction, dictated largely by indigenous Nuosu kinship networks and party-state administrative systems, are being modified by market participants' new, voluntary, and contractual rationality. In addition to converting people's daily use items, including ritual services, into commodities, the market also influences people's work ethic, value judgments, tastes, desires, leisure, intimacy, and imaginations (Yan 2003). Local Nuosu people, especially the young, have gradually developed new types of identity and new yearnings with respect to capitalist modernity.

Two decades after the state initiated Limu's periodic market, Nuosu peasants' lives have become enmeshed in an ever-expanding system that extends beyond the mountains that ring their basin. The globalizing market, however, is not monolithic. When we examine how a tiny minority group, the Nuosu people, stands up against the omnipotent global system, we see that they craft a market that comports with local particularities. People's practices in the market display a dynamic syncretism between tradition and modernity. The Nuosu's rapid transition to capitalist modernity is bound to have long-lasting implications for local Nuosu culture, as may be seen even now with their increased integration into the Chinese nation-state and the global market. In this sense, the social change engendered by Limu's market is simultaneously spatial and temporal, as well as economic and political.

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Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan minzu yanjiusuo 中國社會科學院民族研究所

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Shao-hua Liu

Institute of Ethnology

Academia Sinica

Nankang, Taipei, Taiwan 11529

shaohualiu@gmail.com

中國西南諾蘇地區集市與現代性

劉紹華

中央研究院民族學研究所

本文受到 William Skinner 半世紀前在中國漢族地區所做定期集市研究的啓發，考察從 1980 年代以來引進的新興農村定期集市，如何引起中國四川涼山地區一個諾蘇（彝族）社區的變遷。本文採用兩個分析觀點：第一是從諾蘇的文化與歷史特殊性為切入點，以便瞭解當地人與市場制度的互動產生的影響；第二則是透過定期市場上呈現出的日常生活面貌，來瞭解諾蘇人在後社會主義轉型中的生活方式改變。諾蘇人和大部分後社會主義社會最大的不同之處在於，他們當前所經歷的資本主義現代性，在其社會發展過程中是史無前例的。1980 年代以前，無論是在前國家的部落自主時期或社會主義集體公社制度時期，涼山核心地區的諾蘇人絕少接觸到貨幣交易與市場制度。在中國當前的市場改開放革政策之下，諾蘇人則是透過一個古老的、在漢區農村存在已久的制度，來體驗資本主義的現代性。有趣的是，諾蘇人並非只是被動地捲入市場機制之中。他們在很短的時間之內，利用這前所未有的經濟制度及其在時間與空間上的特性，巧妙地將之與其原有的社會需求相結合。此外，經由此定期集市，他們也逐漸建構出在資本主義現代性影響下的後傳統自我認同。

關鍵詞：定期集市，後社會主義轉型，現代性，中國，諾蘇（涼山彝族）
