

**Modernity, tourism and the geographies of religious
change in a Bon region of Tibet**

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the processes of religious change in a Tibetan region of China that has experienced relative economic prosperity stemming from a government-led tourism initiative. This research challenges and complements the traditional research on religious change which is based on quantitative analysis and macro-scale statistics and generally lacks in-depth and systemic empirical examination of the reasons and process in diverse (particularly non-western) contexts. It adopts a spatially-sensitive qualitative approach to researching religious change, focusing on both micro- and meso-scales, as well as institutional and non-institutional forms of religion. This research has used a case study approach, focusing on Jiuzhaigou with some contextual comparisons being provided by additional empirical research in nearby Anbei. Ethnographic methods including participant observation and in-depth interview with both laypeople and monks have been adopted for generating in-depth and meaningful data.

In specific, it addresses the issues of religious change from three angles to reveal its complexity and nuances. Firstly, it looks at the changing religious landscape with a special focus on the shifting balance between institutional and non-institutional forms of religious expression. It argues that alongside dramatic political, economic, social and cultural changes in contemporary Tibet, religious change presents a shift toward non-institutional expression of religion. Secondly, it explores the changing geographies of the intergenerational transmission of religion by focusing on laypeople and the spaces of home and school. It argues that religious practices and religious belief are not equally and uniformly transmitted intergenerationally. Thirdly, it examines the changing imaginative geographies of religion and religious 'authenticity' with a particular focus on monks' religious identities. It argues that the state othering process actually contributes to Tibetans' religious and ethnic awareness, by reinforcing Tibetans' difference from the Han and their ethnic identity, rather than homogenising ethnic minorities.

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Glossary

Bon – It is generally agreed that Bon is an ancient religion in Tibet which existed before Buddhism.

Hanification (Hanization) – This term is usually used among ethnic minorities and by some scholars in Chinese studies to describe the widespread influence of Han culture and Han people upon ethnic minorities and their cultures.

Jiuzhaigou Administration Bureau (JAB) – A bureau specifically set up to administer tourist resorts.

Monastery Management Committee (MMC) – Designed by the government to administer and supervise monasteries, constituted by monks and one government official.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Tourism, a pillar industry for Tibet, has recently become the target of criticism as one of Beijing's development strategies which results in commodification and downgrading of Tibetan religion, and a dilution of Tibetan culture (Sydenstricker, 2014; Dreyer, 2003; Murakami and Cochrane, 2008). However, in the few studies on tourism and Tibet, Tibetans were found to be actively engaging in the construction of their ethnic and religious identity rather than passive bearers of tourism outcomes, and tourism was found to be raising their ethnic consciousness and cultural pride (Hillman, 2009; Kolas, 2007; Tenzin, 2013; Kang, 2009). In Tibet religion was found to be becoming more powerful and influential because of tourism. For example, monasteries as a main tourist attraction have gained increasing influence among local authorities and in public opinion (Kolas, 2007). This result is actually contrary to the state's intention of promoting secular aspects of Tibetan culture and relegating religion "simply to a flavour of 'Tibetanness'" (Murakami and Cochrane, 2008: 65).

These studies, while few in number, reflect the complexities and richness of tourism's impact on religious change and add to our limited understanding of religion in contemporary Tibet. They refute the narrow picture and overarching claims of the status of religion in contemporary China as simply being depressed, claims pressed in the west and among exiled Tibetans (Choesang, 2013; Sydenstricker, 2014; Kapstein, 2004: 230) or as being revitalized as claimed by the Chinese government (People.cn, 2011; Kapstein, 2004).

They also show the significance of investigating contradictions on the ground and the necessity of hearing the voices of Tibetans inside Tibet, other than only from Tibetans in exile, westerners and the Chinese government. Tibetans in Tibet are the subjects of religious, social and cultural change. Their voices can reveal how tourism economies influence their religious and ethnic identities, how they live their everyday lives and practice religion, how they perceive relationships between tourism and religion, how they interact with Han Chinese and so on. As a response to this need for grounded perspectives on Tibetan issues, this thesis investigates the relationships between tourism and religious change by examining in depth the case of a Tibetan-inhabited tourist destination, Jiuzhaigou National Park (abbreviated as Jiuzhaigou in the remaining of the thesis) in Aba Tibetan and Qiang¹ Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province, China. What I am interested in is the changing everyday religious practices and beliefs of

¹ The Qiang is an ethnic minority group mainly inhabited in Aba Prefecture.

Tibetan laypeople and monks under conditions of tourism development. I investigate this from three angles: the changing religious landscape (with a focus on the shifting balance between institutional and non-institutional forms of religious expression), changing geographies of the intergenerational transmission of religion (focusing on laypeople and the spaces of home and school), and changing imaginative geographies of religion and religious ‘authenticity’ (with a particular focus on monks’ religious identities).

In this introductory chapter, I begin by reflecting the current simplified and sometimes biased understanding of Tibet (Section 1.1) and continue by contextualizing the Tibetans in Jiuzhaigou National Park in the context of Chinese state involvement, which can be seen in state-led modernisation projects and tourism initiatives, ethnic majority/minority divisions and religious policies (Section 1.2). Then I point out the gap in the existing studies in order to situate my own research (Section 1.3). Finally, I present the research aims and questions and outline the thesis structure (Section 1.4).

1.1 Imagining Tibet and going beyond the fixed perceptions

Remoteness and isolation make Tibet extremely hard to access. Its location and topography have generated considerable outside curiosity about this, the highest land on earth. Tibet has been constantly imagined through outsiders’ eyes (Dodin and R  ther, 2001; Hessler, 1999; Schell, 2000; Bishop, 1993; Bishop, 2001; Hilton, 1960).

Despite various representations of Tibet in literature, films, news reports, songs and paintings, both in westerners’ and Chinese people’s eyes, Tibet still retains an over-simplified and stereotypical image: a land ascribed with purity, authenticity, simplicity, primordiality and spirituality (Barnett, 2001; Heberer, 2001; Norbu, 2001). Even though these two dominant strands of representation of Tibet (western and Chinese) are formed and treated in different ways, these fantasies of Tibet lead to one result. That is:

To deny Tibet its history, to exclude Tibet from a real world of which it has always been a part, and to deny Tibetans their role as agents participating in the creation of a contested quotidian reality (Lopez, 1994: 43).

In the remaining of the section, I discuss how the two imaginations have monopolised the space of understanding Tibet and call for a need to go beyond the two fixed perceptions of Tibet.

In the west, the success of Hollywood film *Seven Years in Tibet* contributed to making the general public more aware of Tibet as a “mysterious and definitely impenetrable world” (in the words given to the actor playing Henrich Harrer, author of the book on

which the film was based). In this film Tibet and its people are depicted as underdeveloped, primitive, religious, idealized and nonviolent, whereas the westerners are knowledgeable, civilised and helping Tibet against China's 'intrusion'.

In the west Tibet is generally regarded as a 'Shangri-la' (Hilton, 1960) and a "zone of specialness, uniqueness, distinctiveness, or excellence, that has been threatened, violated or abused" by China (Barnett, 2001: 273). This attitude has become mostly apparent since Tibet's incorporation into the People's Republic of China in 1950. Wide media attention has been attracted, most of it critical of China. This further generated widespread sympathy in the western world. China is constructed as an evil power harming and contaminating this 'pure' and untouched land. A general sentiment is raised: westerners have the responsibility to protect the weak, innocent Tibetans from China (Heberer, 2001). The Tibet independence movement (Davies, 2009), the Dalai Lama as a Nobel-Prize winner and a world-renowned spiritual figure and the prevalence of Tibetan Buddhism and New Age spiritualism in the West have jointly contributed to enhancing this perception and the sympathy it engenders.

In academia, westerners' romanticized view of Tibet has attracted numerous critiques (Lopez, 1999; Dreyfus, 2005). It is considered a form of Orientalism (Dreyfus, 2005), ignoring the complex realities of Tibet (Bishop, 2001; Lopez, 1999) and obscuring the issues Tibetans are really experiencing (Norbu, 2001). Tibet is far more diverse than the simplifications of a Shangri-la. The sympathy raised from these distorted imaginations does not have a concrete grounding. Norbu (1997) even argued on a commentary of the Frontline that Western sympathy is "a very fuzzy kind of sympathy, because it never touches on the reality".

It is interesting to note that China has a very similar representation of Tibet (Barnett, 2001; Frangville, 2009; Heberer, 2001). Since the 1980s, Tibet has appeared in the works and policies of Chinese writers, singers, painters, film directors and politicians as "a heaven for spirituality and purity" (Frangville, 2009). In addition, Tibetans as well as other ethnic minorities have also been 'otherised' with qualities of incivility, backwardness, barbarity, exoticism and spiritualism in contrast to the civilised and advanced Han (Upton, 2002; Bass, 2005; Mackerras, 1999). Thus civilising Tibetans became a mission of the Han (Heberer, 2001) and Tibetans and other minorities are considered to be in need of protection, education and modernisation (Harrell, 1995b). Tourism further reinforces the stereotype of 'authentic' Tibet as a place of natural and spiritual purity, but replaces earlier images of backwardness and uncleanness for attracting China's new middle class who "looks for escape from the competition and congestion of their urban working lives" (Hillman, 2009: 3; Kolas, 2004).

The Chinese version of Tibetan representation has also been criticized for merely justifying the Chinese government's legitimate involvement in Tibetan economic, cultural, social and environmental affairs (Heberer, 2001), for assisting an Orientalist approach on the part of the Han towards ethnic minorities (Schein, 1997). Furthermore, and in apparent contrast state-led modernisation is accused of actually damaging Tibetan culture and the Tibetan environment (Barnett, 2001; Frangville, 2009).

Despite different implications, in the eyes of both westerners and Han Chinese, Tibetans are uncivilised, ignorant, 'savage', 'pure', 'simple', 'innocent', 'backward', and spiritual whereas both of them are civilised, advanced and responsible for helping Tibetans. This simplified perception of Tibet is inevitably questionable and problematic (Frangville, 2009).

In the context of these representations, Tibetans are merely seen as "objects in stories of heroic achievement by outsiders, or as victims of abuse incapable of agency" (Barnett, 2001: 272). Tibetans as the represented, never have a chance to be really known, as the Tibetan 'other' is only used to construct the western and the Han 'self'. Under this construction, Tibet has been deprived of presenting their real history and situation (Norbu, 2001).

These images have considerable political implications and connotations. The image of a 'virgin Tibet' lends strength to both 'pro-Tibet' and 'pro-Chinese' political arguments (Frangville, 2009). However, I argue that this black-or-white perspective problematically dominates the space of understanding Tibet. It not only prevents the general public knowing the everyday realities of Tibetan people's lives on the ground, but also depresses other voices. For example, Tibetans' political identities and their relationships with the Chinese state are actually more dynamic and complex than the western and Chinese homogeneous narratives (Sperling, 2004). More concrete knowledge on Tibet is needed in future, rather than a simplistic reliance on imagination and fixed representations.

If one wishes to accept Tibet as a real part of the global community instead of a dreamland on the 'roof of the world', maybe allowing for some disillusionment would be a more sensible approach and would help us appreciate the human face of Tibet in all its richness and vitality, rather than dreaming of a lost wonderland. (Dodin and Rather, 2001: 413)

Thus, there is an urgent need to go beyond the fixed dual framework in thinking through Tibet as a diverse, meaningful, complex and dynamic place. Academic research, regardless of its political persuasion, has been less susceptible to using and reproducing

these simplistic, fixed representations of Tibet than the wider fields of popular and political discourse (Kvaerne, 2001). However, limited research attention has been given to the everyday lives of Tibetans in contemporary China. Thus some scholars have called for going beyond the over-simplified perceptions and the black-and-white perspective of Tibet (Barnett, 2001; Norbu, 2001).

In all, Tibet is 'special', but not in the way most westerners and Chinese people imagine. Tibet is not a Shangri-la in fantasy, but a society facing similar political, economic, social and cultural issues as any other society. Tibet is special in the sense that its religion, culture, history, geographic and political position, and language are experiencing rapid change in contemporary China. It is this specialness that is worthy of academic attention.

1.2 Context: why study religious change and tourism in contemporary Tibet?

As noted above, religion is a major point of dispute between westerners and exiled Tibetans, who accuse the authorities of suppressing religion, and China's claim of religious revival and liberty (Kapstein, 2004). However, the existing academic research has not contributed greatly to resolving this dispute because it has not given enough attention to a systematic and concrete investigation of the actual religious situation in contemporary China. As a response to this lacuna, this research hopes to provide a clear picture of how Tibetan laypeople and monks live their lives and believe and practice their religion in contemporary China.

Tibet was once a Buddhist-dominated country where the Dalai Lama was both the spiritual and the political leader. Since the 1950s the general trend of Tibetan religion has largely been decided by the political climate, especially the forced secularisation during the Cultural Revolution and the subsequent mass return to religion with the advent of the reform and opening-up period. At the societal level, religion has become a sensitive topic. At the meso level, Tibet has experienced a functional differentiation which has meant that the political power, education, medical treatment and capital which were once mainly controlled by religious institutions have become independent of monasteries and lamas. At present, monasteries only deal with religious issues. They cannot expand as freely as before as a result of certain policy restrictions, such as the one-child policy, the policy that monasteries should be self-supporting, and restrictions on the recruiting of monks (see Chapter 3).

At an individual level, religious ideas have been in contention with scientific, communist and market thoughts as the new sources forming their understandings of the world. In

addition, being exposed to secular education, economic development projects and a variety of popular culture has further imperilled religion's traditional dominant position. Even the Dalai Lama has turned into an advocate of a democratic Tibetan society and of secular ethics (Jinpa, 2003: 82). On several occasions he has acknowledged the importance of secular ethics and claimed that secular and non-sectarian ethics and principles such as warm-heartedness, compassion and altruism are crucial in achieving enlightenment (Hickert, 2013; Central Tibetan Administration, 2013). Recently, religious commodification and monks' involvement in secular affairs have further heated the debate on secularisation in Tibet. At the moment, the Tibetan religion is involved in various new developments under a certain level of control from the authorities; these include its connection to Chinese popular culture, its influence on young Han people, monks' involvement in the secular world, and young laypeople's increasing readiness to speak their mind over religious affairs (see Chapter 3). These conflicts between religion and modernisation are increasingly emerging at macro, meso and micro levels. Despite this, little research attention has been paid to them.

Any study of Tibetan religion firstly needs to place it within the larger framework of Chinese politics and economics which to a great extent shape Tibetan society and generate rapid economic, political, social, and cultural change (Kolas and Thowsen, 2005: 29). In other words, China's ethnic minority policies, development logic and modernisation projects have played the most important roles in reshaping patterns of religious change.

According to the system of "ethnic identification" (*minzu shibie*) devised in the 1950s, Tibetans are categorised as one of 55 ethnic minority (*shaoshu minzu*) groups coexisting with the Han ethnic majority group. As mentioned before, in general public discourse in China, ethnic minorities are constructed as uncivilised, backward, inferior and barbaric in contrary to the civilised, advanced, superior and modern Han. Thus ethnic minorities need the Han to help them to achieve modernisation and civilisation. Various modernisation and civilisation projects have been carried out in minority areas with the basic aim of consolidating the power of the Chinese state (Yeh, 2013). Economic development is set as the principle of all these projects. In terms of Tibet, since the start of reform and opening-up in 1978, economic development and modernisation became the principal elements of Chinese rhetoric on Tibet (Barnett, 2001: 295). Tourism, as an integral part of modernisation in minority areas (Oakes, 1998), tends to enhance Chinese national identity and integration of ethnic minorities. In order to attract tourists, who are mainly Han, the hegemonic representations of 'ethnic minorities' are reinforced while ethnic culture is negotiated and reconstructed. Many scholars have argued that tourism imperils ethnic culture (Mackerras, 2003; Oakes, 1998; Murakami and Cochrane, 2008;

Su and Teo, 2009). However, others argue that tourism does not decrease the difference between ethnic minorities and the Han, but raises ethnic consciousness and pride of Tibetans (Hillman, 2003). Religion in ethnic minority tourist areas, unlike in other parts of China, is constructed as a selling point of ethnic culture, for example in Tibet, tourism gives religion opportunities such as state funding, tourism revenue and an increasing profile as well as challenges such as decreasing appeal and a shrinking sense of sacredness (Hillman, 2003; Kolas, 2007; Schrempf and Patrick Hayes, 2009; Sutton and Kang, 2010a).

Jiuzhaigou National Park is a Tibetan tourist place of this kind and was chosen as my primary case study site. It is one of the most visited Tibetan places. Thirty years of tourism development has made Jiuzhaigou a mature tourist destination. Thus it can be expected that Jiuzhaigou have experienced the greatest influence from outside and the dramatic change in many aspects. This makes it an interesting case for exploring the dynamic geographies of religious continuity, discontinuity and transformation.

As shown above, for contemporary Tibet, which is going through a period of rapid political, economic, social and cultural change, religious change is not a simple process. A variety of factors and issues are involved in redrawing the map of religious change and many questions are waiting to be addressed. For example, how do Tibetans practice religion? What are their attitudes to religion? What is the meaning of religion to their lives? How do Tibetans see the Han Chinese and their impact on their ethnic identity and tourism? How do monks practice religion and get involved in tourism? Is tourism enhancing or diluting ethnic/religious identity? These questions will all be addressed in this thesis.

1.3 Why study religious change and tourism in contemporary Tibet?

First and foremost, it has to be acknowledged that little English-language research has been conducted specifically on Tibet, tourism and religion. Perhaps the most important explanation for this is that for many researchers Tibet is not readily accessible because of its remote location, the difficulties in mastering the language and the political tension that has been engendered. The sparse literature examining tourism and religion in Tibet has generally focused on monasteries and monks and their involvement in tourism (Kang, 2009; Sutton and Kang, 2010a; Schrempf and Hayes, 2009; Hillman, 2005). Interestingly, the first three articles discuss issues in Songpan, which is very near my research area of Jiuzhaigou (see Chapter 4). These papers generally speaking find that both local government and monasteries are actively involved in tourism from which local

government seeks economic development and enhanced national identity, and the monasteries aim to empower themselves without necessarily admitting tourists to their rituals. The conflicts generated by the commodification of monasteries stemming from tourism are also identified. However, these studies do not set out to consider the perspectives of monks and monasteries on religious commodification and their attitude and reactions to local discontent and criticism. As a result, their discussion of the politics of monastery commodification fails to reflect the religious practices and religious belief of Tibetan laypeople and monks.

Other relevant findings on tourism and religion in Tibet have been sporadically identified in a handful of studies which broadly concern ethnic tourism and politics (Hillman, 2009), tourism and place making (Kolas, 2007; Kolas, 2004), tourism development and propaganda (Murakami and Cochrane, 2008), tourism and cultural identity (Hillman, 2003), and religious tourism (Shackley, 1999). It seems that the body of studies on the socio-cultural impacts of tourism in Tibet, while still small, is growing (Hayes, 2013; Wu, 2012; Epstein and Wenbin, 1994), even if the religious life of Tibetan laypeople is not their focus.

In contrast, considerable Chinese academic literature focuses on tourism and religion in Tibet. However, the majority of this literature considers themes which are irrelevant to religious change in the host community, but instead looks at such issues as religious tourism and its development and planning (Tian, 2011), resources and marketing (Zhang, 2012), and the experiences of pilgrims (Zhong and Zhang, 2012). Probably for political reasons, little Chinese-language research examines the socio-cultural impacts of tourism on Tibetan religions. One exception is a Chinese article written by Baimacuo (2004), who focuses on tourism commodification in three Bon monasteries in Songpan, although her research is descriptive. In sum, the existing research on tourism and religion in Tibet is sparse, regardless of language, and ignores the local people's involvement in tourism and its influence on their religious practices and beliefs.

Given the limited amount of studies specifically examining religion and tourism in Tibet, I felt I needed to seek theoretical guidance from relevant disciplines and research fields. I turned first to Tibetan studies. In the tenth seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies in 2003, Robert Barnett stated that Tibetan studies had just experienced an evolution of study locale, shifting from exiled communities back to Tibet, and of research themes shifting from "Tibetans as victims of oppression to agents of change" (Childs, 2010: 128). This second shift is evident in the active engagement of Tibetans in constructing the image of an 'authentic' Tibetanness through reproducing and playing the scripts produced by the dominant western and Chinese narratives (Adams, 1996). For

example, the Dalai Lama (1995) and Tibetan government-in-exile portray Tibet as a place with sincerity, peace and beautiful natural landscapes seeking political and public support and sympathy from the west (Barnett, 2001) even though their adoption of western imagery mainly remains at a superficial level (Shakya, 2001). In China, Tibetans have been seen not only to resist the official representation of them, but also simultaneously to react and adapt to the idealised image proposed by the state (Hillman and Henfry, 2006). This is sometimes particularly conspicuous amongst Tibetans who are trying to use this image of 'pure', 'spiritual' and 'isolated' Tibet as a selling point of tourism (Hillman, 2003; Kolas, 2007). More studies are needed to examine how Tibetans are actively involved in tourism, how their religious practices and beliefs change with tourism and how the dominant image of Tibetans affects their understanding of self.

Turning to tourism studies and in particular studies of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism, relatively little literature has considered the impact of tourism on Tibetan religion from the perspective of local people in tourism destinations (Mustafa, 2014). Moreover, the views and experiences of religious professionals need more attention in studies on tourism and religion (Olsen, 2011).

In religious studies, there has been little work on whether and, if so, how secularisation theory, which is after all a theory that originated in the west and that speaks to the relationship between religion and modernity, might be adopted and examined in the context of the religions of, broadly speaking, East Asia. This thesis tries to examine religious change in Tibet at a meso and micro scale using qualitative methods to add a new context to current debates on secularisation and religious change.

The spatial perspective has proved to be a useful lens for the study of religion, and yet it has not been sufficiently used (Kong, 2001a; Knott, 2005a). This study adopts a spatial perspective to generate meaningful knowledge on religion, an approach that remains a relative rarity in religious studies. For example, what kind of religious meanings and functions do monastery and home have for laypeople and monks? How do they practice religion in different officially and unofficially religious spaces?

Having said that, in recent years the subfield of geographies of religion has expanded rapidly, with a higher profile in both geography and the wider field of interdisciplinary religious research (Knott, 2005b; Park, 2004; Kong, 2010). This has been facilitated in part by growing attention paid by politicians and policy makers to religion, as well as new research funding streams including the joint Arts and Humanities Council / Economic and Social Research Council programme entitled 'Religion and Society Research Programme' launched in 2007 (Buffetrille, 1999: 2). Nevertheless, so far the attention of

geographers of religion has mainly been focused on Christianity and Islam. More geographical understanding on non-western contexts and religions are needed.

The theme of intergenerational transmission of religion has been mainly conducted in the field of the sociology of religion. However, recently geographers have called for more attention to be given to intergenerational aspects of religious transmission (Vanderbeck, 2007; Hopkins et al., 2011). The existing research has generally emphasised the lineal, uniform, unidirectional transmission from parents to children. I argue that the intergenerational transmission of religion is a complex, multi-directional process with many factors playing a role, and with different forms of transmission. For example, secularist state schooling might interrupt transmission and young people's religiosity, but not in entirely straightforward ways. Apart from the parent-to-child transmission (the emphasis of most literature), grandparents/grandchildren, teacher/students are also likely to change the transmission. Furthermore, religious beliefs, practices and affiliations are not necessarily transmitted together uniformly (see Chapter 6).

Overall, the thesis demonstrates the value of using a spatially sensitive perspective for gaining original insights into the changing nature of Tibetan laypeople's and monks' religious practices and belief in the context of a rapidly modernising China.

1.4 Research aims and thesis structure

1.4.1 Aims and research questions

In order to get at the complexity of religious change in contemporary Tibet, this thesis has one overall aim, which I divide into three sub-aims, each with related questions that cover my research interests and provide the framework for data collection and analysis.

Overall aim: To deepen our understanding of the changing religious practices and beliefs of Tibetans, both laypeople and monks, against the backdrop of state-led tourism initiatives in contemporary China.

Sub-aim 1: To explore the changing religious landscape by focusing on spatial transformations of institutional and non-institutional religion.

1. How are local people involved in tourism and how do they relate this involvement to their religious beliefs?
2. What is the changing physical spatial expression of religion?

3. How do the roles of monastic and non-monastic religious forces change?
4. How do the meanings and the making of monasteries change?

Sub-aim 2: To investigate the changing patterns of laypeople's intergenerational transmission of religion from a spatial and temporal perspective.

1. How is the Bon religion transmitted intergenerationally at home and in school?
2. How do the experiences at school of young people influence the intergenerational transmission of religion?
3. How do young Tibetans transmit religion intergenerationally after school?

Sub-aim 3: To explore the changing religious identity of monks.

1. How are monks involved in tourism?
2. What kind of conflicts do they have about their religious identity?
3. How do local people perceive the changing religious identity of monks?
4. How do they negotiate their religious identity?

These aims and questions were used to inform my data collection. My thesis structure was formed based on the analysis of the data (see Chapter 4 for details on data collection and data analysis). The following section will outline the thesis structure.

1.4.2 Structure of the thesis

In pursuing these aims and questions, the remainder of the thesis proceeds as follows.

Chapter 2 situates the thesis in four strands of literature which inform my understanding of religious change in Tibet. I start with a critical reflection on secularisation debates, from which I identify a lack of geographical insights into secularisation theory. In the process of doing this, my overall approach to religious change in Tibet is articulated. I continue by discussing the significance and usages of a spatial approach in studying religion. I also consider the relationships between tourism and modernisation and the impacts of tourism on the religious beliefs and practices of local people, looking particularly at issues of religious commodification and cultural authenticity and their connection to tourism. Finally, I critically review the literature on religious identity and intergenerationality with a specific focus on the relationships between religious identity

and ethnic identity, intergenerational transmission of religion, and the influence of school education on young people's religiosity. The value of a spatial perspective in enriching our understanding of intergenerational transmission of religion is highlighted.

Chapter 3 provides a contextual discussion of the ways in which dimensions of modernity and religion are intertwined in Tibet. Firstly I delineate the process of modernisation in Tibet since 1950 with different parts of it consecutively incorporated into China. Special attention is given to minority policies, the state-led tourism project and the government's development logic. Secondly, I discuss the history of religion in Tibet and the complex relationship between Bon and Tibetan Buddhism with particular focus on the period after 1950. Finally I provide more localised information on the history and geography of Jiuzhaigou.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological approach of this project. I discuss the process of research design, data collection and analysis. Given the similarities and differences between my participants and I (a young Tibetan academic but a not very religious Buddhist), I particularly reflect upon the ethical issues and my positionality in influencing the thesis and reshaping my own ethnic identity.

Chapter 5 starts the empirical analysis of this thesis by exploring the changing religious landscape in Jiuzhaigou. I pay attention to the institutional (monastery) and non-institutional (non-monastery) religious forces and practices and their changes after tourism development. I argue that the central change of religion is not best described as 'secularisation' but rather as a specific form of the deinstitutionalisation of religion. The non-institutional expression of religion is growing in relation to the monastery's decreasing authority and appeal, a trend to which the tourism economy contributes considerably.

Chapter 6 focuses on the changing patterns of intergenerational transmission of religion, emphasising spatial and temporal analytical dimensions which have been missed in existing studies. More specifically, intergenerational transmission of religion is examined in the spaces of home and school, as well as in pre-school and after-school life stages. Educational opportunities in public schools outside Tibet interrupt the experience that young Tibetans have of the intergenerational transmission of religion. I argue that young people tend to come to treat religion from a 'rational' perspective by understanding it as an ethnic cultural norm. I argue that—working, as it were, counter to this—under the Chinese communist and scientific ideological climate, ethnicity becomes an umbrella reinforcing their religious identity. In terms of the intergenerational transmission of religion, I further argue that the intergenerational transmission of religion is not linear and

unidirectional, but varies under different spatial and temporal locations. Religious beliefs were found not to be uniformly transmitted together with religious practices.

Chapter 7 is the final analytical chapter where I examine the changing imaginative geographies of religion with a special focus on monks' authenticity. I argue that both hanification (*hanhua* in Chinese, Han-assimilation) and economic modernisation contribute to the authenticity crisis of Tibetanness and monks' religious identity. The dominant image of Han/Tibetan division is embodied and internalised in Jiuzhaigou Tibetans' understanding of what I call 'inauthentic self' compared to other authentic Tibetan places with little or no hanified culture and modernised economy.

Chapter 8 closes the thesis by linking back to my research aims and questions and drawing together the empirical and theoretical findings and contributions to scholarship on the relationships between modernity and religion, the impacts of tourism on religion, the intergenerational transmission of religion, and religious authenticity.

Overall, the thesis makes original empirical and theoretical contributions to illuminating the understudied and poorly-understood everyday religious practices and beliefs of Tibetans in contemporary Tibet.

Chapter 2 Theorising the geographies of religious change in Tibet

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a theoretical framework for my research on geographies of religious change in Tibet. Specifically, this chapter situates the thesis within geographies of religion and broadly in the ambit of socio-cultural studies of religious change, providing theoretical background and support for the forthcoming analytical chapters through four strands of literatures. With these theoretical reflections, my research seeks to contribute to the current limited, western-dominated and over-generalized understanding of religious change and also to add some new knowledge on the state of Tibetan religion in contemporary modernising China.

In 1970, Robert Bellah (1970: 72) claimed that “it has been impossible for religion to remain entirely indifferent to modernisation”. Given the intense processes of modernisation and globalisation experienced by East Asian (and other non-western) economies and societies since that time, his words now seem like a considerable understatement. The advent of modernisation has generated various forms of religious change in the world with different directions, patterns and dynamics. Among many explanations of religious change, secularisation theory has been the most salient and pertinent strand (e.g. Berger, 1967; Wilson, 1998; Bruce, 2002), even though it also has been heavily critiqued (Davie, 2013; Martin, 1991; Stark, 1999) with the evidence of flourishing religious belief and practice in North and South America, the Middle-East and Asia. New concepts such as ‘sacralisation’, ‘de-secularisation’ (Berger, 1999), and post-secularism (Habermas, 2008) have emerged to explain the increasing visibility of religion in public life. However, in general the diversity, complexity and nuance of religious change in modern societies have not been fully revealed in the existing research (Stark and Finke, 2000; Norris and Inglehart, 2004; Davie, 2013), because:(1) it is place biased (Proctor, 2006), since it generally was derived from evidence from Europe and North America and ignored the rising religious adherence in other countries of the world. The sporadic attention given to the non-western world was normally hidden as ornaments in the major debates about the west;

(2) it is culturally biased, with a disproportionate amount of focus given to Christians and Muslims;

(3) it is mostly based on quantitative analysis and macro-scale statistics; and

(4) it generally has rested upon flimsy empirical evidence, and lacks in-depth and systemic, empirical examination of the reasons and process of religious change in diverse (particularly non-western) contexts (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 215).

Therefore, I argue that exploring religious change needs more attention to be given to non-western societies and religions and to in-depth qualitative analysis at the meso and micro scales. This overarching understanding navigates me to approach religious change in a Tibetan Bon area which is experiencing rapid economic modernisation from tourism, at the institutional and individual level, using in-depth qualitative methods.

In the following sections, four strands of literatures which have informed and shaped my understanding of religious change in Tibet will be reviewed. First, the relationships between modernity and religious change will be broadly discussed (Section 2.2). Among various ways of understanding the relationships between modernity and religion, I will mainly focus on secularisation theory and, and I will further explain how the secularisation debates have informed my thinking on religious change. In Section 2.3, the spatiality of religious practices and belief will be explored. Special focus will be given geographic studies on religion. In section 2.4, particular attention will be given to the interrelationships between modernity, tourism and religion. Tourism, as a vehicle of modernisation in many countries, has had diverse impacts on religion. As I discuss, the development of tourist economies has been a key trigger for debates over the nature of religious commodification and cultural authenticity. Section 2.5 will examine the issues around religious identity and intergenerationality. In specific, studies on interactions between religious identity and ethnic identity, intergenerational transmission of religion, and the mutual-influence of school education and religion will be considered. The concluding section (2.6) will draw together these four strands for making a case for my overall theoretical and methodological approach in this research.

2.2 Modernisation and religious change

The relationships between religion and modernity have long been a major field of inquiry for researchers working on religious change in modern societies. There are many different expressions of religious change and different ways of understanding it. Among them, secularisation and the debates surrounding the concept have been seen the most conspicuous and important. Modernisation has been conceptualized as the fuse for the explosion of secularisation and as a source of problems for religion (Duffy et al., 2009: 2). Therefore, to better understand the nature of contemporary religious change in Tibet, I provide an examination of the relationship between modernity and religion.

I will begin by focusing on various debates on secularisation, de-secularisation and post-secularity (Section 2.2.1), and then I will specifically review studies on deinstitutionalisation of religion (Section 2.2.2). Following this, in Section 2.2.3 geographical perspectives on secularisation will be expounded. . 2.2.1 Modernisation, secularisation and more

Modernisation is one of the most ambiguous and multifaceted concepts in the vocabulary of sociology. According to Bruce (2009: 2), modernisation “encompasses the industrialization of work; the shift from villages to towns and cities; the replacement of the small community by the society; the rise of individualism; the rise of egalitarianism; and the rationalisation both of thought and of social organization”. Seeing religion was declining in the western world, the founders of sociology such as Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber asserted that modernisation would lead to a process of disenchantment. From the historical point of view, the concept of secularism is nothing new and has existed since the 19th century. It originated in the Enlightenment critique of religion, and was considered to stem from an inevitable differentiation of the secular from the religious, and a differentiation of religion from the social system. Since then, secularisation has become an essential term in the lexicon of modernisation. Theories of secularisation have become a heated topic both in and beyond the sociology of religion and religious studies. The decline of religious practices and organizations in the context of modernisation started to be taken for granted by most researchers (Norris and Inglehart, 2004). However, it needs to acknowledge that secularisation does not simply refer to religious decline. There are other concurrent processes and understandings.

Even though there are different ways of understanding secularisation, secularisation has generally been explained from two perspectives: the demand side (believers) and the supply side (church and clergy) (Norris and Inglehart, 2004). From the demand side, religion is considered having declining influence on people’ social life. Modernity has been considered bringing rationality, scientific thinking, and managerial strategies to people and expelling superstitious thoughts and deeds. Some scholars (e.g. Bruce, 1992; Bruce, 1998; Bruce, 2002) put the focus on individualisation as it is considered to disturb the communal nature of religion which acts as the basis of religious belief and behaviour. Apart from that, privatisation is also thought to constrain conventional religious practices and increase privatised and localised religious practices (Bruce, 1998: 129). Berger (quoted in Cairangtai, 2009: 3) even predicted that “by the 21st century, religious believers are likely to be found only in small sects, huddled together to resist a worldwide secular culture”.

From the supply side, secularisation is considered to be “the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols” (Berger, 1967: 107). Functional differentiation and religious pluralism are singled out as two important factors resulting declining religious authority. In terms of pluralism, it is thought that providing religious alternatives erodes the status of monopolistic religion (Wilson, 1998). As far as differentiation is considered, it is claimed that many social spheres, such as education, health care and welfare, which were traditionally controlled by the religious authority have been functionally differentiated and distributed to non-religious offshoots (Duffy et al., 2009: 8; Wilson, 1982). Casanova (1994: 18) even argues that the “theory of secularisation is nothing more than a sub-theory of general theories of differentiation”.

However the explanations listed above have limited explanatory power in understanding other trends and processes of religious change happening in the world. For example, pluralism does not necessarily lead to the demise of religion as a whole, but could generate counter-secular movements (Herbert, 2000: 1-18). Religion might instead be stimulated and exists in more diverse and vibrant ways. As various de-secularisation phenomenon came forth in recent years, scholars started to rethink the theory of secularisation and posited refutations. De-secularisation was developed to explain the wide revival of modern religion in areas like America, Middle East and Asia. Scholars such as Rodney Stark (1999), Roger Finke (2000) and Grace Davie (2013: 2) think that secularisation is an ultimately false assumption and should be put into the “graveyard of failed theories” (Stark and Finke, 2000: 79). Even the strongest proponent of secularisation, Peter Berger, found a great mismatch between the facts and the theory he had promoted and ultimately denied his previous assumption, admitting that secularisation theory is based on a false assumption that modernisation will necessarily bring about religious decline. Proctor (2006: 429-456) argued that religion is experiencing revival (sect formation) and innovation (cult formation), rather than decline or demise. Habermas (2008) argued that we are in a post-secular age in which religion has a high visibility in the public sphere of post-secular societies. However, it has been argued that post-secularity is a concept that is speculative and lacks empirical evidence (Beckford, 2012). Even in the case of Britain, post-secularity has been considered problematic and not helpful in explaining actual situation of public religion (Beckford, 2012). The concept applies with difficulty in Tibet, where religion regulated in very different ways to the Western context, in which Habermas writes.

Some have neutral view toward religious change contending that religion is adapting to and negotiating with modern societies. Religion and modernity are not necessarily conflicting concepts (Douglas, 1982; Taylor, 2007). Hervieu-Leger (2000) argues that

modernity itself can create religious demand rather than necessarily suppressing religious growth. New religious demands are created under the conditions of industrialisation, urbanisation, pluralism, individualism, rationalisation and autonomy which make people living in modernity eager to search for a religion to cope with the uncertainties grown in the modern world. On the one hand, modernity damaged the conditions for traditional communal and mass religion; on the other hand, it creates a need for new forms of religion. Thus, in this view, secularisation does not imply the decline of religion altogether, but rather refers to a process of adapting the nature and forms of religion to make them compatible with modern living. This is echoed by Borchert (2008) who claims that Buddhists should not be seen as necessarily in opposition to and passively bearing modernity. Stepping into the modern society does not mean abandoning the Buddhist traditions, but rather engaging in constant negotiations between state and non-state actors over what constitutes a legitimate and national form of Buddhism.

However, in recent years cases of terror attacks and unrest related to religious fundamentalists demonstrate that significant conflicts still exist between religion and modernity, especially in Europe and the US with varying religious ideas and secularist thoughts competing. The conflict between the sacred and the secular is exemplified by the recent terror attack on the Paris magazine Charlie Hebdo in one of the most secularist states. Secularism is usually understood in a narrow sense as a political attitude or policy (Berkes, 2013: 7) that promotes the separation of government and religion and leaves both being independent of each other. Many studies existed and focused on the role of modern states in promoting religious change, especially in those Islamist countries where religion has always had a close relationship with the state.

The concept of 'secularisation' is "so multidimensional, so ironically reversible in its contradictory connotations, and so loaded with the wide range of meanings it has accumulated through its history" (Casanova, 1994: 12). Various ideas and threads are embedded in this concept (Davie, 2013: 49). Even though the secularisation paradigm has various interpretations and critics, it is still regarded as an effective approach to religious change in the modern world (Casanova, 1994: 211; Davie, 2013: 51). It provides a "powerful set of description and explanation that remain useful even to its detractors" (Wilford, 2010: 330). What is needed is a concrete and accurate way to analyse religious change in different parts of the world. Some scholars suggest refining secularisation as a multi-dimensional, multi-scalar concept which has different expressions at different scales in order to regenerate new thinking and imagination (Casanova, 1994; Luckmann, 1967; Dobbelaere, 1981; Davie, 2013; Wilford, 2010). Dobbelaere (1981; 2002) and Chaves (1994) agreed that secularisation has three levels:

societal secularisation at the macro level, organizational secularisation at the meso-level and individual secularisation at the micro level. This perspective is clear and useful for the sort of empirical investigation of religious change that has been largely missing in existing studies.

Religious change at individual level and institutional level are usually interconnected and inter-responsive. For example, individuals' departure from church could reflect religious change at the institutional level. Debates on deinstitutionalisation of religion (which will be discussed in the following section) particularly capture the dynamic religious change at the institutional and individual level.

2.2.2 Deinstitutionalisation of religion

According to Davie (2013:4), in modern societies, "institutional religion at least in its traditional forms is in trouble". The deinstitutionalisation of religion was borne out of secularisation theory and was argued to be an important indicator of meso-level secularisation. Berger (1967) firstly defined secularisation as the declining plausibility and legitimacy of religious institutions. Chaves (1994) also stated that secularisation demonstrates in declining scope of religious authority.

Luckmann (1967) found that religion becomes invisible when it is deinstitutionalised. It does not necessarily disappear, but is more evident in new religious practices and spiritualities such as yoga, Zen meditation, magic, astrology, reincarnation, and private beliefs, values and rituals other than in conventional religious affiliations. Similar findings could be found elsewhere (Stark and Bainbridge, 1985: 429-56; Roof, 2001). Pollack and Pickel (2007) specifically used deinstitutionalisation to describe declining number of church members, and declining attendance of services in Germany. Some forms of religiosity which have no obvious connection with established religion were also found growing. However, they noted that self-determined non-church religiosity cannot compensate for the losses of institutionalised religiosity. Non-church religiosity remains marginal and is interwoven with traditional Christian religiosity.

Losing authority of religious institution also demonstrates in its losing influence on individuals' beliefs. Wright Mills (1959: 33) claimed that "in due course, the sacred shall disappear altogether except, possibly, in the private realm". Even though this has clearly not yet happened, religious privatisation, from this perspective, makes the private sphere the last place for religion to exist. Hervieu-Leger (2000) argued that:

Modernity has deconstructed the traditional systems of believing, but has not forsaken belief. Believing finds expression in an individualised, subjective and

diffused form, and resolves into a multiplicity of combinations and orderings of meaning which are elaborated independently of control by institutions of believing, by religious institutions in particular (2000: 74).

Individual secularisation could also be manifested in the decline of church attendance, new sets of personal beliefs and practices freed from the guidance of church, and the compartmentalization of meaning systems. From 1945 to 1990s Britain had experienced declining religious participation in Church and a relatively strong religious belief which Davie has notably termed “believing without belonging” (Davie, 1990; Davie, 1994). However, the changes of institutional and individual religion have different expressions in Europe. A large number of Europeans still claim themselves as ‘Christian’ although they do not believe it, which is named “belonging without believing” (Hervieu-Léger, 2003). Concerning a specific group of people, Wilcox etc (2012) found that institutional religion is declining among the American working class, as they do not have money to support their religious activities. The bourgeois and familial moral logics which promoted in church are less influential among working class whites than before, which is accounting for their declining religious attendance.

Thus deinstitutionalisation is a plausible concept for describing laypeople’s departure from religious institutions and the declining significance of contemporary religion in the public domain (Pollack and Pickel, 2007; Streib, 2007).

So far, although secularisation debates have greatly enriched our understanding of religious change, various threads have not reached an agreement as each thread still has its drawbacks being critiqued. I identify four drawbacks of the current debates and argue that these could be generally interpreted in geographical perspectives. The following section will make an elaboration on these four drawbacks.

2.2.3 Geographical thinking on secularisation

Geographers have rarely used secularisation theories in explaining modern religious expressions (Wilford, 2010: 328). Most research done by geographers of religion tends to ignore the secularisation or just treated it as a broad socio-religious context without practical meanings. Wilford (2010: 331) has recently criticized these tendencies, arguing that geographers have typically either: “(1) used the concept of secularisation minimally and unproblematically; (2) smuggled the concept in through an unexamined equation of religion with non-western identity; or (3) ignored secularisation altogether.”

However, as Wilford (2010) argues, geographical insights are potentially very useful for filling the gaps and overcoming the shortcomings of secularisation theory. I argue that

the drawbacks of secularisation theory are mainly demonstrated in four geographical aspects. Reflecting on these drawbacks, I identify the approach of my research concerning the questions of how and why religious change happens in contemporary Tibet at a local scale.

Firstly, the secularisation debate is place biased and highly place-dependent (Proctor, 2006). The current secularisation theory is “incompatible with nuanced and complex geography of religion” (Wilford, 2010: 330). Although church has lost appeal in Europe, in the America, some African and Asian countries it found fertile soil to grow. However, there is a huge gap between secularisation studies in the west and the non-west. Both proponents and critics of secularisation theory rely too heavily on evidence from the United States and Europe, but have failed to compare the rising religious adherence in other countries of the world (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 4). The sporadic attention given to the non-western world was normally treated as an ornament in the major debates about the west. Davie (2013: 52) even argues that our understanding of the relationship between religion and modernity “is just a European phenomenon with a European explanation; it is not an axiomatic connection between religion and the modern world taken as a whole”.

The two primary camps of secularisation theorists tend to be associated with place. Specifically, the secularisation defendants such as Steve Bruce, Bryan Wilson, and Karel Dobbelear are all from Europe; in contrast, critics such as Peter Berger and Rodney Stark are Americans. Both groups made claims based on the experience of the regions in which they lived. However, there are some exceptions, for example, the British scholars David Martin and Grace Davie do not see the inevitability of secularisation and even suggested to abandon it completely. Others adopted more inclusive view by suggesting that secularisation should not be simplified into a problem of rise or fall.

There was a notion embedded in many western scholars’ attitudes toward secularisation processes that what is happening in the west will eventually and inevitably take place in other parts of the world (Davie, 2013). However, the plausibility and applicability of the western experience and theories to the non-Western areas still remain a question. Secularisation in the non-Western world might practically be greatly different from the West for two reasons. Firstly, the religious system is enormously different. For instance, Buddhism, Islamism or Hinduism in the East has different religious traditions and organizations from the western religions. Secondly, the West and the East are going through greatly different political, social, economic modernisation processes and phases, which might generate different patterns of relationships between religion and modernity.

Therefore, when interrogating the religious change, particularities in different countries should be taken into account (Szonyi, 2009).

“The field of secularisation is littered with exceptionalisms” (Iqtidar, 2011). With Europe and the US as exceptional cases for counter-secularisation and secularisation, Iqtidar (2011) claimed that the third world countries which are characteristic of state intervention in religious affairs were also seen as an exception of the field of secularisation. Islam with its prominent presence in the political sphere has been proved remaining strong or even stronger (Gellner, 1992: 5-22). The political involvement of Islam generated another kind of (de)secularisation in Turkey, Israel, and India. For example, in Pakistan, forces stemming right from the Islam itself facilitated secularisation (Iqtidar, 2011). Iqtidar claimed that in Pakistan those against secularism, such as the Islamists were actually inadvertently facilitating secularisation.

East Asia also has shown strong state engagement in religion. The political driven secularisation of East Asian religions has been at the front of scholars’ interest in religious change, but the non-state driven forms of secularisation in everyday life of East Asian culture have been scarcely studied (Gentz, 2009: 244). By investigating the survey data of Asian religion, Reed (2007) found East Asia is more secular than South Asia based on their religious memberships and frequency of religious attendance. However Reed’s measures of secularisation was criticized by Szonyi (2009) who contended that neither church attendance nor the quantified religious beliefs can fully reflect Chinese people’s religiosity. Gentz (2009) identified elements of both secularisation and counter-secularisation in China, Japan and Korea. Specifically in China, while the state leads the secularisation, both traditional religions and new religious movements remained vital in maintaining socio-political order at the local level, in particular places such as the Southwest China. Japan has been widely assumed as an example of non-western nation experiencing secularisation (Bruce, 1996). However, under the secular surface at the macro level, at the meso and micro levels religious beliefs and practices were remained important aspects of Japanese everyday life (Roemer, 2009). Most of Japanese identify their spiritual practices and beliefs under categories of tradition and custom, other than religion. Japan’s supposed non-religious situation is actually a lack of church religion (Stark et al., 2005).

Secondly, secularisation debate is culturally biased. The current secularisation theory almost equals theories of Christian secularisation. Considerable focus has been given to churches, Catholics, Christians in secularisation discussions, other than temples, mosques, Buddhists and Muslims. It is thought that secularisation should be examined more in non-Western cultures and non-Christian religions (Gorski and Altinordu, 2008),

because the western-originated secularisation theory has its limitations in fully exploring some aspects of non-western religions, such as the relationality of religion, collective religious experience, ritual (Spickard, 1998: 188). Moreover, even the similar civilisation might generate different extents and forms of secularism under different social, economic and political conditions.

There might be two reasons for less scholarly engagement in non-western religions in secularisation discussion: firstly secularisation sprouted from and developed in the West which provides accessible facts for western scholars; secondly the language barrier confines the discussions in the western circle and leaves no much space for scholars with non-western background speaking out the situation of religion in their places. With the research focus shifting to the Eastern religions and increased proficiency of English language among eastern scholars, secularisation theory will receive regeneration in this new area.

Thirdly, evidence for secularisation has primarily been derived from quantitative analysis and macro-scale statistics. Even sociologists of religion often confined their domain in regional or national scale, failing to touch the (non)secularisation facts and details on a small scale (Wilford, 2010: 331). Secularisation at the macro scale does not necessarily imply religious decline on the micro scale. Sometimes religious vitality was vibrantly maintained at micro level, or as Wilford suggested at socio-spatially differentiated places or “sacred archipelagos” (Wilford, 2010).

Moreover, a large amount of quantitative research based on macro-scale data might lead to over overgeneralization of secularisation theory. Most early research detected secularisation by simply counting the numbers of adherents and times of attending church services. Instead of care about the question of more or less, we should concern more about why and how religious change happens in qualitative way. Nonetheless, due to its wide range of meanings and contradictions, the concept secularisation is “practically nonoperational for the dominant modes of empirical scientific analysis” (Casanova, 1994: 12). The macro survey data cannot give insightful details.

For exploring the complex process of secularisation, qualitative approach and micro level studies might generate fresh understandings at different scales and penetrable and powerful insights into the theories of secularisation. Macro-level secularisation cannot represent the secularisation of individuals’ consciousness (Herbert, 2000: 1-18). Secularisation at the nation-state scale does not inevitably evince secularisation at the body, home or community scales (Wilford, 2010). In the future, Wilford (2010: 331) argues, the “embodied, material, and local responses to abstract, large-scale forces”

should be given particular attention. It is a new direction of studies on religious change which could broaden the current secularisation debates.

Finally, secularisation debate lacks systemic examination and generally has rested upon flimsy empirical evidence, and lacks in-depth and systemic examination on the reasons and process of religious change of the empirical cases from different countries. The reasons for the decline of religion explained by secularisation theorists were not very clear (Norris and Inglehart, 2004). Only a handful of case studies were picked up to evidence the secularisation thesis.

The complex process of religious change which involves many factors and actors has not been fully analysed. Streib (2007) suggested broadening the focus on deinstitutionalisation to the “biographical dimension, individual’s faith, its diversity of forms and its dynamics of change”. In addition, when religion is bound up with forces such as ethnicity and nationalism, it sometimes is imbued with power against secularisation (Duffy et al., 2009: 1-43), something which has recently been evident in some Islamic nations. Specifically in addressing the religious change in Tibet, there is a need to consider how Tibetan religion is treated under the political framework of the Chinese state, as the Chinese state has wide scope of administering religious affairs and modernisation projects.

So far I have positioned my research in the studies on relationship between modernity and religion and pointed out a way forward. In the following sections, I will connect to my research aims and keep on discussing the changing landscape of religion and the various specific relations between religion and modernity, such as economic modernisation, education, scientific thinking.

In Section 2.3, I will examine religious change through investigating the changing landscape of religion.

2.3 Spatial understanding of religion

According to Knott’s (2005a: 163) spatial approach, religion can be thought of as “a consequence of spatial practice in its physical presence, social orderings, and cultural forms, though it is the attribution of meaning that gives such practice its character as ‘religious’”. Thus the changing landscape of religion could be reflected through the changing religious spaces, religious practices and religious meanings.

The section first tries to define sacred space by reviewing different ways of understanding sacred space (Section 2.3.1). Secondly, the geographical studies on

sacred space will be reflected for informing my spatial understanding of religion (Section 2.3.2).

2.3.1 Defining sacred space

There have been a great number of scholars analysing religion or 'the sacred' using a spatial approach.

In contrast to earlier theoretical approaches which tended to represent sacred space as fixed, bounded and absolutely relative to the profane (Wheatley, 1971; Smith, 1992; 1993; Eliade, 1959), it is now widely argued that the meanings of spatial terms such as 'space', 'place' and 'location' are unclear, contested and unfixed (Massey, 1992; Knott, 2005a). The term 'sacred space' has been used extensively in academic writings due to its unfixed, broad, diverse and ambiguous definition. This flexibility and ambiguity can be a strength but also a source of confusion.

In their book on interpreting American sacred space, Chidester and Linenthal (1995) posed the question, 'What is the sacred?'. Following the argument of Durkheim, who held that the sacred is not substantial but situational, they (Chidester and Linenthal, 1995: 6) argued that 'nothing is inherently sacred'. Quoting Levi Strauss, they suggested that 'not full of meaning, the sacred, from this perspective, is an empty signifier' that is 'susceptible to the reception of any meaning whatsoever' (as quoted in Chidester and Linenthal, 1995: 6). Here, the meanings are obtained from the 'nexus of human practices and social projects' (Chidester and Linenthal, 1995) and 'social and political relationships' (Kong, 2001a).

Chester and Linenthal (1995: 15) assert that "[a] sacred space is not merely discovered, or founded, or constructed; it is claimed, owned, and operated by people advancing specific interests". Specifically from a substantive perspective, sacred space is:

not just the overtly religious places, but also other spaces of everyday life that may occasionally take on religious function and meanings (such as the museum and roadside) or be infused and shaped by religious values but which are neither overtly nor primarily about religion (such as home spaces or the Islamic banking system) (Kong, 2010: 15).

2.3.2 Reflections on the geographical studies of sacred space

My interpretation of sacred space has been informed by a number of recent developments in the geographical literature. I will focus here on four particular themes from recent research that have particular salience for this thesis: 1) the importance of considering the 'unofficially sacred'; 2) the importance of considering the intersections of other dimensions of diversity with religion; 3) the need to consider the complex entanglements between 'secular' and 'sacred'; and 4) the significance of spatial politics in producing meanings and constructing religious spaces.

2.3.2.1 'Unofficially' sacred space

'Officially sacred space' which refers to the formal religious built environment, such as churches, temples, mosques and shrines was once the main space of concern with the 'geography of religion' (Kong, 2001a). The bias towards studying officially sacred spaces consequently limited the attention invested in understanding the relationship between the religious and the secular and obscured the need to look beyond the purely sacred space across multiple scales (Gökarıksel, 2009). Recently, religious scholars have been expanding their domain by extending the meaning of the traditional 'sacred space' to spaces which are not normally understood to be within the 'secular' realm. Thus, a range of more 'unofficially' sacred spaces which serve to reinforce religious identities and facilitate religious practices have been incorporated within the lexicon of 'sacred space'. These spaces include historical monuments, museums, "religious schools, the premises of religious organizations (communal halls), pilgrimage routes (apart from the site themselves), religious memorials and roadside shrines, domestic shrines religious procession routes, festival places and other secular spaces used for worship" (Grimes, 1992; 2002: 1573). More recently, media spaces, street spaces, sites of financial practice and home spaces which exist in 'everyday, informal, and often banal practices' have also gradually attracted greater attention (Chidester and Linenthal, 1995; Kong, 2010; Brace et al., 2006: 28).

For example, museum was found invested with religious meanings (Grimes, 1992) and transformed into sacred spaces having effects on Jewish identity (Kong, 2005). Secular home could become a sacred 'house church' in Singapore (Kong, 2002). Technological 'sites' with religious significance were also introduced into religious research, for example, research on how American religious broadcasting has had substantial effects on the international state of religion (Stump, 1991). Cyberspace is conceptualised as

potentially a kind of sacred space which affects people's religious lives and identities (Kong, 2001b; O'Leary, 1996; Kinney, 1995).

Given the importance of the home for Bon religious practice (as I discuss in greater detail in Chapters 5-7), it is worth exploring recent insights into home as an 'unofficially' sacred space. There are a number of studies that demonstrate that the home as a religious space should not be perceived as simply a passive container for religious belief and practice; rather, the home is actively involved in the meaning making of religion (Campo, 1991; Kiong and Kong, 2000; Kong and Nair, 2012; Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 1993; McDannell, 1995; Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 2009; Prorok, 2000).

Different parts of home could become places for religious use or with religious meanings. Based on an ethnographical research on Hindu immigrants in Southern California, Mazumdar and Mazumdar (1993; 2009) explored the ways in which the Hindu house was made as a sacred space and its relations with identity. Individuals or the family are actively engaging in the making of micro sacred spaces through everyday practices. Home gardens were found religiously significant for Buddhist and Hindu immigrants (Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 2012).

Home is also an important site for intergenerational transmission of religion and cultural identity (1993; 2009) (see more discussion on intergenerational transmission of religion in Section 2.5.2). Ganapathy-Coleman (2014) found that for keeping their children's cultural and religious identity, Indian migrant parents deliberately socialize their children into Hinduism through various religious settings, rituals, routines and religious teachings in domestic spaces. For some Christians, home is not only a setting for prayers, but also a place for teaching Christian values.

Home sometimes has stronger religious influence than congregational religious place, such as for Buddhism and Hinduism which emphasises private prayers and rituals at home (Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 2012). Min (2010: 202) found Indian Hindus practice religion more at home which have stronger impact on retaining younger generation's religiosity and ethnicity than religious practices in congregations. McDannell (1995), in research on the home schooling of Christians, shows how the home space serves to separate family members from the profane outside while cultivating virtues which were considered desirable. From this point of view, the private space of the home is the most significantly religious space, posing a form of challenge to churches (McDannell, 1995: 209).

2.3.2.2 Towards intersectionality

Religion always had profound interactions with various identities (Gale, 2007). Instead of thinking various categories of self independently, Valentine (2007) emphasised that multiple categories of identities are interconnected and experienced simultaneously by individuals in everyday life and she called for more empirically grounded research about the experience of intersectionality. She discussed the interconnections between race, gender, class and sexuality, but did not mention an important category: religion and its intersections with other categories.

Within geographies of religion, there have been quite a few studies recently focusing on relationships between religion and other identities such as gender (Mazumdar, 1999; Tobler, 2000; Dwyer, 1999), generation (Dwyer and Shah, 2009; Hopkins et al., 2011; Hemming and Madge, 2012), race (Kong, 1999; Gardner and Shukur, 1994), sexuality (Valentine and Waite, 2012; Vanderbeck et al., 2011), and ethnicity (Baumann, 1996; Bhardwaj and Rao, 1998; Prorok, 1998). For example, Kong (1999) found that patriarchy, racism and classism were strengthened by religious buildings in Singapore.

As seen before, people in socio-culturally marginal places especially became the main focus of these studies. Kong (2001a) has called for greater attention of geographies of religion to groups that are considered vulnerable, disadvantaged, excluded, and oppressed. Migrant Muslim communities in Britain and elsewhere in Europe have been particularly examined in terms of the complex intersections of gender, generation, and religion. Muslim women's various identities and embodied spatial practices have been the research focus (Dwyer, 1999; Secor, 2002). In addition, young people's religiosity and spirituality was paid more attentions lately (Dwyer, 1999; Dwyer, 2000; Hopkins, 2006; Hopkins, 2007a).

The existing intersectional research on religion has greatly enhanced our understanding of relationships between religion and other categories of self. However, groups like children, the elderly were reluctant to be included into geographical research on religion (Kong, 2010). Furthermore, Christianity and Islam remain the primary foci for geographical research on religions, with more attention needed to traditions including Buddhism, Confucianism etc.

2.3.2.3 Entanglements between the sacred and the secular

The religious should not be interpreted purely without considering the secular context. More and more research suggests that the religious and the secular are mutually

constituted and interact dynamically within the context of everyday life (Kong, 2001a; Holloway, 2003; Gökarıksel, 2009). The traditional rigid binary of the sacred and the profane proposed by Eliade in 1950s is problematic (Yorgason and della Dora, 2009). “Entrepreneurial, social, political and other ‘profane’ forces” (Chidester and Linenthal, 1995: 17) are necessary and important factors for construction of sacred space. Religion also has significant role for understanding the secular society (Holloway and Valins, 2002). Many rituals and prayers need to be practiced every day, for example, a Muslim is requested to pray five times a day, and Tibetan Buddhism believers regularly chant sutras and make pilgrimages to temples, monasteries, holy mountains and lakes. These religious practices are tightly bonded to everyday life, and there is not necessarily a clear separation between ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’ space. The sacred/secular binary is too rigid to use at the moment when the sacred is fluid, contested and unbounded.

2.3.2.4 Spatial politics

As mentioned before, no space is inherently sacred; rather, spaces undergo processes of sacralisation (Chidester and Linenthal, 1995). Religious meanings could be created and inscribed to a space. For example, Grime (1992) examined religious objects in museum and argued that religious objects could sacralise a specific space and the space in turn could change viewers’ interpretation of these objects.

It is widely acknowledged that sacred space is contested space (Chidester and Linenthal, 1995; Kong, 1993). Van der Leeuw (1938) found four kinds of politics involved in the construction of sacred space:

a politics of position, whereby every establishment of a sacred place is a conquest of space; a politics of property, whereby a sacred place is ‘appropriated, possessed and, owned’, its sacredness maintained through claims and counter-claims on its ownership; a politics of exclusion, whereby the sanctity of sacred place is preserved by maintaining boundaries, carving the inside from the outside; and a politics of exile, which takes the form of a modern loss of or nostalgia for the sacred (quoted in Kong, 2002).

The politics of exclusion is most obviously demonstrated in the gender difference. For example, in Tibetan Buddhism and in Hinduism menstruating women are not permitted to enter some particular sacred spaces as they are considered polluting.

In a similar vein, Chidester and Linenthal (1995: 19) proposed four strategies of symbolic engagement in the production of sacred space which include strategies of appropriation, exclusion, inversion and hybridization. From Johnson’s (1986) point of view, construction

of sacred place is just one part of “a circuit of culture” which consists of the construction as well as the contestation and consumption of sacred place.

Developed from the previous understanding of spatial politics, Kong (2002) suggested a new everyday politics of place making including politics of inclusion whereby non-church members and non-Christians are incorporated, politics of hybridization and in-betweenness which fuse sacred and secular, public and private, politics of appropriation and nationalisation whereby a particular religion is officially sanctioned and supported by a secular state and politics of permanence and impermanence that balance the wish of permanent sense of place and the reality of being relocated.

In sum, construction of religious spaces involves different forces with different purposes and attitudes, such as the state, laypeople, religious professionals, the non-religious groups exerting different politics. Apart from the Christianity in modern urban context, different religions in different contexts which might have different ways of space making need to be given more attention.

This section has mainly focused on the spatial nature and characteristics of religion. The following section is going to place religion in a specific context with modernising forces: tourism.

2.4 Modernity, tourism and religion

Tourism is an important vehicle of modernisation which can bring various dimensions of modernity, such as urbanism, market rationality, specialism, individualism. This would further influence the religion. According to Oakes (1998), modernity should be considered “paradoxical processes” in which socioeconomic change creates new practices and discourses and alters the ways of being human. This section will discuss how socioeconomic changes created by tourism influence a destination’s religious faiths and organizations.

Section 2.4.1 will provide a general discussion of the relationship between tourism and modernisation. In Section 2.4.2, the relationship between tourism and religion will be explored in relation to three specific areas: tourism impacts on local religion, religious commodification as a part of modernisation and cultural authenticity.

2.4.1 Tourism and modernisation

Tourism is one of the major social and economic phenomena of modern times (Sharpley and Telfer, 2002). It has become a significant and integral development strategy for both developed and developing countries of the world. As Roche (1992: 566) states, “the development of tourism has long been seen as both a vehicle and a symbol at least of westernisation, but also, more importantly, of 'progress' and 'modernisation’”. In academia, considerable attention has been given to tourism in less developed countries. Tourism before 1970s was often represented as a blessing for the developing world, attracting foreign exchange earnings, creating job opportunities, generating infrastructure construction, improving social services while causing relatively little pollution, all for a small amount of pre-investment (Britton, 1982; Cater, 1987). Tourism was viewed as facilitating economic modernisation while also promoting modern ways of life with western values (Harrison, 1992). However, since 1970s a number of critical voices have attested to the multiple social, cultural and environmental costs of tourism which were not initially recognized or acknowledged, including unequal benefits distribution, spoiling of nature, cultural commodification, disruption of social structure, crimes, consumerism and so on (Young, 1973; Erisman, 1983; De Kadt, 1979; Wall and Mathieson, 2006; Wood, 1997; Liu and Var, 1986).

For achieving economic modernisation, tourism is considered an effective development strategy worldwide (Jamal and Robinson, 2009: 157). For the state, tourism is not only a means of economic booster, but also a way of assisting government policies and strategies and enhancing national unity (Wood, 1997). For example, Buddhism was promoted in the international tourist market by Burmese government for legitimating its military regime (Philp and Mercer, 1999). Indian heritages were represented by the government in a way to consolidate its secular and nationalist basis (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2008). In China, the state manipulates tourism development for national goal: boosting economy and realising socialist modernisation (Su and Teo, 2009; Oakes, 1998; Xie, 2011). However, it has been criticized that many countries including the Chinese state have paid more attention to economic modernisation and ignored socio-cultural modernisation. The following section will look at tourism impacts on a socio-cultural phenomenon: religion.

2.4.2 Tourism and religion

Religion figures prominently in promoting tourism. Even the Muslim world began to respond to tourism in order to attract both religious and non-religious tourists to their

countries (Al-Hamarnah and Steiner, 2004). There are a great amount of studies focusing on tourism and religion. However, a large number of these are primarily concerned with the practice of pilgrimage, essence of pilgrimage and its conceptual relationship with tourism and cared much about pilgrims (tourists) and their attitudes, experiences and spirituality (Shoval, 2000: 253; Turner, 1973; MacCannell, 1973; Turner and Turner, 1978; Grabum, 1977; 1983; 1989). It has argued that this kind of studies did not contribute to empirically understanding the relationships between tourism and religion (Stausberg, 2014: 350), for example how tourism influence religious belief and practices, how the religious objects are commodified into tourist products, and how the religious meanings change after commodification. In addition, the existing studies on relationships between tourism and religion have not given enough attention to the destination site and its people (Mustafa, 2014).

The following section (Section 2.4.2.1) begins by discussing some important exceptions of research on tourism impacts on religion in destination sites. Then the emphasis moves to tourism-led religious commodification (Section 2.4.2.2). Finally, it reflects on an important issue arise from religious commodification: cultural authenticity.

2.4.2.1 Tourism impacts on religion

Relatively little literature has considered the impacts of tourism on religion from the perspective of local people in tourism destinations. There remains a considerable need to ask how their religious lives are being affected by (and in turn, influence) the growth of tourist economies.

One area of scholarly interest has been the impacts of 'religious tourism', in which religious sites become attractions of pilgrimage and ultimately develop forms of mass tourism. For example, Nolan and Nolan (1992) have explored how the normal religious functions of some important Christian religious sites have largely ceased as a result of mass forms of tourism. In this literature, there has been a seeming consensus that tourism serves as a secularising force which has weakened the religiosity of local communities and their belief in the sacredness and efficacy of religious sites, rituals and customs (Cohen, 1998: 7; Beckerleg, 1995).

Research on the reaction of local people to tourism's impacts on religion has provided evidence of often ambivalent feelings of both appreciation for and dislike of tourism. In their investigation into a sacred centre Pushkar in India, Joseph and Kavoori (2001) found that although local residents were economically dependent on tourism, they still perceived tourism as a threat to their tradition and religion. In contrast, the Balinese,

according to Noronha (1979), adopted an active role in negotiating tourism and their traditional religion. Although traditional religious rituals were performed for tourists, the Balinese in the 1970s strictly differentiated rituals for tourists from those that they performed for themselves. Elsewhere, studies in sacred places such as Jerusalem or Mecca have found that local people or devout believers thought that tourism presents a great threat to their religion and belief because their spiritual experiences are affected by crowds of tourists and their behaviours (Rinschede, 1992). In some Muslim countries non-Muslim tourists are not very welcomed as tourism is considered violating Islamic cultural values (Robinson and Meaton, 2005; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson, 2010). However, in places like Baptismal Site of Jesus in Jordan where tourists and local people have little interactions, local people barely perceived negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism as their economic benefits outweigh any concerns (Mustafa, 2014).

In terms of the religious professionals' views and participation in tourism, the relevant research is scarce and provides different results. Focusing on a Buddhist pilgrimage site, Pu-Tuo-Shan in China, Wong et.al (2013) found through Buddhist perspective local monks and nuns see tourism positively as tourism could be a good platform to promote Buddhism and to help people. However, Hobbs (1992) and Shackley (1998) claimed that tourism is considered by monks/nuns having negative influence on the spiritual life of monks and the sacredness of the Monastery of St. Catherine in Egypt. Monks' religious duties were interrupted by taking care of tourists. In her research on two Christian holy sites in Greece, Mount Meteora opening to the tourists and Mount Athos to genuine pilgrims, della-Dora (2012) found local villagers and tourists thought tourism somewhat diminishes the spiritual significance of the monastery in the Mount Meteora even though monks and nuns actually do not have much interaction with tourists. In all, the existing research has only concerned about tourists' experience of religious tourism or in religious site, but largely ignored the views and experience of the religious leaders and groups. Furthermore, reading through numerous studies on the management and planning of religious sites (Henderson, 2011; Olsen, 2009; Shackley, 2012), it is surprising to find that the views and tourism involvement of religious professionals who are important in making and maintaining the sacred sites have not even been taken into account. Therefore, in future the views and experience of religious professionals should be given more attention in studies on tourism and religion (Olsen, 2011).

A number of studies of the impacts of tourism on religion have focused specifically on the Himalayas region. It has been generally agreed that even though tourism to some extent change the traditional ways of religious practices and violates the sanctity of Buddhist monasteries (Singh, 2004), the religiosity has not been weakened at all (Stevens, 1993; Shackley, 1999). In some places, tourism even contributes to the religious growth

(Stevens, 1991: 50). According to Shackley (1999), people living in the Himalayas differentiate the adapted religious festivals and rituals presenting for tourists from the ones of their own. In Khumbu, Nepal, Stevens (1993) also had not found religious decline with tourism development. Sherpas used the money earned from tourism to support their religion by refurbishing monasteries and temples, building new shrines and family scripture rooms, introducing new rituals, pilgrimaging to India and Tibet, purchasing new scriptures and conducting more household religious practices. Christopher von Furer-Haimendorf (cited in Stevens, 1991: 50) found during the period between 1957 and 1971, the number of monks greatly dropped, and some monks left monastery to get into trekking and mountaineering work. However, Stevens (1991: 50) found that during the 1980s religion prospered because the wealth generated from tourism were used to “support local monasteries, temples, building of shrines, and other religious gestures in a highly visible way”. In 1990, the number of (future) monks reached the highest level in the institution’s history. There were even several new novices from rich families joining the monastery. Meanwhile, local people also showed great concern about the potential loss of Sherpa culture, because talented and bright men emigrated to Kathmandu, and children were sent to boarding schools in Kathmandu or abroad. The studies listed above provided a holistic description of economic, environmental and cultural consequences; however, they lack in-depth exploration of the diverse potential dimensions of religious change. Moreover, small-scale tourism such as mountaineering and trekking is the major type of tourism in all of the case studies mentioned above. Places with mass tourism might have different influence on religion. Stevens (1991) also stated that future change in the scale of tourism would also greatly increase tensions and the extent of cultural change.

Critical research on tourism impacts has given particular attention to two particular issues: religious commodification and the question of authenticity/inauthenticity (Stausberg, 2014). I critically explore these each in turn below.

2.4.2.2 Tourism and religious commodification

Religious commodification has been seen as an increasingly prominent phenomenon around the world. The connection between the market economy and religion was established based on the “market mechanism, technological advancement, and global flow of people, capital, and information, including religious symbols and institutions” (Kitiarsa, 2010: 564). Religious symbols and institutions entered into market in forms of marketable and consumable products. Religious commodification marks the shift of adherents’ (at both individual and collective level) attitudes toward religion from

obligation to consumption (Davie, 2013: 144). The process of religious commodification to some extent even poses a challenge for the secularisation thesis (Turner, 2010: 569), because the production of religious goods and enormous marketing efforts show the prosperity of religion even in the secular world. Religious commodification is very much a feature of many religious sites in Western Europe. Churches which have hosted tourists/pilgrims for centuries (Stausberg, 2011; Miller, 2005). Nowadays we still could see churches welcome tourists or pilgrims for sightseeing, purchasing religious souvenirs and attending religious ceremonies.

Religious commodification generates tensions and debates among the religious communities and between religious and non-religious groups as religion is not supposed to be used as commodities and to be marketised in money-making business. However, the reality is that market forces have breached the walls of most religions in the world (Kitiarsa, 2008).

Previous analyses of tourism commodification have expressed concerns about the number of western tourists who have poured into developing countries and degrading the once 'pure' and 'authentic' cultures and places (Wood, 1997; Cohen, 1988). Tourism-religion encounters have often been assumed to produce negative outcomes because of their perceived incompatibility (Stausberg, 2014: 349): religion and the spiritual were represented as incompatible with economics and the material (Vukonic, 2002). The consumption of religious sites and experiences by tourists (as opposed to pilgrims) was thought to transform the very nature of religious tourism from appreciating and learning religious teaching to hedonistic indulgence (Vukonić, 1998). This view is echoed by Shepherd (2002: 192) who claimed that the most authentic cultural practices and objects should be reproduced outside of the exchange process and the calculative rationality of the market. Many scholars (Urbanowicz, 1989; Boorstin, 1971; MacCannell, 1973; Brunt and Courtney, 1999; Tomaselli and Wang, 2001) have expressed deep concerns of the risks of culture vanishing, normalizing and standardizing.

In the Himalayan area, economic benefits are the main reasons why religious groups tolerate the potential negative impacts of tourism on religion. Because of the funding from tourism, Buddhist monks have been found to make their religious festivals fit tourists' needs (Shackley, 1999). Dissenting from the taken-for-granted view of religious leaders and communities that commodification degrades and damages religions, Kitiarsa (2010) argued that religious commodification opens new fields of discussion around the role of religious traditions in tension-filled, fragmented modern/postmodern societies. Market and religion are not necessarily opposed to one another (Einstein, 2007: 12). Thai Buddhism is marketised as a prosperity religion (Kitiarsa, 2008). In Japan,

Buddhism promises worldly benefits (Reader and Tanabe, 1998). The rapidly rising levels of religious commodification around the world (with the exception of western and northern Europe) provides one grounds on which scholars (Moore, 1994) can potentially counter the assumptions of secularisation theory. In terms of commodifying religion, different religious traditions and societies have different methods. In many places such as Bali (McKean, 1989), Hainan in China (Xie, 2003), and Burma (Philp and Mercer, 1999), religious commodification was found to help preserve and regenerate traditional cultural forms by providing material benefits and cultural products.

In short, as an emergent, ever increasing religious phenomenon, religious commodification has not yet received sufficient attention in academia, especially in relation to the spread of tourist economies. Much more attention needs to be given to local believers' involvement in religious commodification and their attitudes and negotiations.

Local cultures are transformed into tourist products. This not only opens commodification discussion, but also brings forward debates about cultural authenticity. Religion is perceived less authentic because of tourist commodification, for example in Schadler's (1979) research on religious artefacts in Africa and in Shoval's (2000) study on the 'Holy Land' Israel.

2.4.2.3 Cultural authenticity

The desire for authenticity now occupies a central position in contemporary culture. Whether in our search for selfhood, leisure experience, or in our material purchases, we search for the real, the genuine (Fine, 2003: 153).

Exploration of authenticity in the field of tourism and travel studies has comprised a big portion of authenticity research. Apart from tourism studies, research on authenticity is generally concentrated in studies on art (Fine, 2006), music (Peterson, 2005), food/restaurant (Lu and Fine, 1995), leadership (Eagly, 2005), and theoretical examinations of self (Erickson, 1995). However, there is very limited research focused on relationships between authenticity and social positions (Vannini and Williams, 2009: 8), such as ethnicity (Bramadat, 2005; Nagel, 2000), gender (Ashley, 2009), sexuality (Mason-Schrock, 1996), class (Reay, 2002), religion (Charme, 2000).

In tourism research, studies of religious authenticity have mainly tourist-centric, concerning tourists and their perceptions on authenticity of tourist products, tourist attractions and tourist experiences (Zhu, 2012; Belhassen et al., 2008; Kim and Jamal,

2007; MacCannell, 1976). The views of local people regarding the authenticity of their own place, culture and religious practices has been relatively neglected.

Three main approaches have been used to interpret the authenticity of tourist products and experiences (Wang, 1999): objectivism (Hughes, 1995), constructivism (Cohen, 1988) and existentialism (Belhassen et al., 2008: 671).

Touristic authenticity should be understood both from tourists' and locals' perspectives (Cohen, 1979). Given my concern in this experience with the experiences of Tibetan Bon believers in a tourist destination, it is necessary to ask if and how the pursuit of authenticity by tourists affects local people's perceptions of themselves and their communities? Much research has suggested that local people have been actively negotiating and adapting their perceptions of authenticity. Through his investigation in a Thai village, Cohen (1979) found local villagers wearing their daily costumes are misunderstood as performing by tourists. Sometimes, for earning tourism income, local people adapted their traditions for tourists' appetite. Evans-Pritchard (1989) discussed how a Native American woman considered making herself look more 'Indian' in order to demonstrate her authenticity to tourists. However, local people have also resisted and refuted the adapted culture.

Culture is dynamic and fluid (Cohen, 1988). There is no original moment (Castañeda, 1996). "As culture change – and with it, tastes, beliefs, values, and practices – so too do definitions of what constitutes the authentic" (Vannini and Williams, 2009: 3). There can be no universal answer regarding what constitutes authenticity, as different people have different attitudes. However, I argue that even though authenticity is subject to change in different situations, there are essential elements which mark the basic differences between the authentic and the others remaining immutable. Some authenticity has basic rules and elements needing to be strictly complied with, for example an authentic English breakfast must have sausages or bacon, and authentic Sichuan food must include chilli and pepper. No matter what interpretations of being an authentic Jew different groups have, the core element is not negotiable and compromisable: adhering to Judaism (Charme, 2000). If the core elements of authenticity change, authenticity is meaningless. Appiah's interpretation of authenticity below explains this with pertinence:

[N]either the picture in which there is just an authentic nugget of selfhood, the core that is distinctively me, waiting to be dug out, nor the notion that I can simply make up any self I choose, should tempt us. We make up selves from a tool kit of options made available by our culture and society. We do make choices, but we do not determine the options among which we choose (Appiah, 2011: 155).

Responding to the complexity and fluidity of authenticity, Shepherd (2002: 195) suggested that we can escape this trap of simply looking for what has been lost through commodification and rather focus on how authenticity is constructed. In a similar vein, Cohen and Cohen (2012) suggested that researchers direct attention from authenticity of tourist experience to the 'authentication' of tourist attractions. The question of who is qualified to authenticate tourist attraction thus comes to the fore in this perspective. From the locals' perspective, Xie (2003) found Li dancers' understandings of authenticity are shaped by other tourism stakeholders including the state, the business community and tourists. In Lijiang, China, by investigating the life story of a dongba (a ritual practitioner) named Fuhua, Zhu (2012) argued that being an authentic dongba for Fuhua is based on his ongoing interaction with reality which not only includes his on-stage performance for the tourists, but also comprises his previous memory and life experience in his home village, dongba training institute and his workplace, the Wedding Courtyard. Even though his ritual performance might be regarded as a commercial product by tourists, Fuhua himself insisted in being a real dongba.

The search for authenticity is a rational and emotional response to the deeply inauthentic world (Erickson, 1994). The large-scale quest for authenticity could reflect the deep social and cultural issues of a society. For example, tourism is regarded an escape from the modern world filled with inauthentic elements (Wang, 1999). In a study already mentioned, tourists to the two Christian holy sites in Greece, Mount Meteora and Mount Athos, do not want to see the presence of other tourists because firstly they are the reminders of the everyday modern life they want to escape, secondly they are thought to be 'contaminating' the pristinity of the holy site. Thus, tourists think Mount Athos with limited attendance is more authentic comparing to Mount Meteora with many more tourists (della Dora, 2012). The similar authenticity quest in response to modernisation is also identified in my research, but with different subjects and motivations (see Chapter 7).

The example above shows authenticity is interpreted geographically and tourists have a particular ideology: rejecting the modern and embracing the non-modern. For attracting tourists, local authorities, institutions and people tend to depict their place as authentically non-modern (Hughes, 1992; Qian et al., 2012). Xie (2003: 12) found in the tourist brochures, the poorest and remote villages are presented as the most 'authentic' communities. Locals' geographies of authenticity can thus manifest in these terms: the longer the distance from the main centres and transport used to reach the locations, the more authentic the place is.

Authenticity is sometimes discursive and geographically imagined and constructed. People could establish a sense of authenticity simply by imagination which might be

informed by books, TV programs, films, internet, other people's narration and so on. For example, for many Anglican parishioners, the distant Communion existed mainly as a 'concept' or abstraction without concrete meaning (Vanderbeck et al., 2010: 10).

Without needing to travel to a destination, people have already accumulated ideas of what the authenticity would be like. The notion of imaginative geographies could be a constructive notion of thinking through the imagined geographies of authenticity. According to Gregory (1997: 271), "imaginative geographies describe not only representations of other places - peoples, landscapes and cultures - but also the ways in which these representations project the desires, fantasies and preconceptions of their authors and the grids of power between them and their subjects" (see Chapter 7 for the discussion of monks' and local laypeople's perception of religious authenticity). For example, from the authentic and racially benign Yankee whiteness to liberal and 'special' whiteness, the imaginative geographies of Vermont whiteness have been greatly influenced by American politics in different periods (Vanderbeck, 2006).

Imaginative geographies are fundamentally shaped by unequal relations of power (Gregory, 1995: 474). Edward W. Said (2003) used Orientalism to describe the biased and problematic imaginative geographies of 'the Orient' represented by Europe and the United States. For Said, Orientalism has multiple meanings. He claimed that "[Orientalism is] a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience...a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'... a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient...a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical and philological texts... and is particularly valuable for a sign of European-Atlantic power over Orient than it is as a verdict discourse about the Orient." (Said, 2003: 1, 2, 3, 12, 6)

Gregory (1997: 271) said Orientalism is an "identity making machine". This grand geographic imagination relies on binary concepts of us/them, here/there and inside/outside. Through comparisons between us and them, here and there and inside and outside, the identity of self is constructed. It is often associated with ethnocentric bias in representation which is always based on barriers of different language, culture, institution and political ambience. The discourse of Orientalism as an othering process, defined the modern, masculine and normal West in reference to the backward, feminine and different East (Johnson and Coleman, 2012). The generalised and stereotypical images of the East are circulated to and among westerners who otherwise have little knowledge or experience of the East. This kind of representation is even accepted and

internalized by the Arab elites and serves as a justification for the colonial and imperial history of the West.

While the concept of Orientalism has most often been applied to imaginative geographies of western people viewing distant places in the east, there have been attempts to extend it to consider how people construct others within the same geographical, cultural or political community. 'Internal Orientalism' has been proposed as a valuable approach for investigating these internal perceptions. However, internal Orientalism has not obtained enough attention in and beyond geographical discipline (Schein, 1997; Gladney, 1994; Piterberg, 1996). A few geographers carefully expounded the geographical dynamics of internal Orientalism in the US (Jansson, 2010; Jansson, 2003), in Italy and Germany (Johnson and Coleman, 2012) and in Sweden (Eriksson, 2008; Eriksson, 2010). In all, existing research on internal Orientalism has mainly focused on the ways in which the other is constructed, but failed to give more voice to the 'suppressed' and 'imagined' by considering their attitudes and active reactions.

Looking at Tibet, as stated in Chapter 1.1, particular imaginative geographies of Tibet have been constructed by forces both outside and inside China. The Chinese internal Orientalism (Harrell, 1995b; Baranovitch, 2010; McCarthy, 2000; Schein, 1997) and western Orientalism has both been exerted over Tibet.

Most religious traditions are not inherently a hindrance to modernisation and economic development (Kitiarsa, 2010: 567); however, modernisation and tourism-based economic development can pose considerable challenges to religion. The following section will discuss how tourism and modern education influence religion.

2.5 Religious identities and intergenerationality

In this section I argue for the importance of adopting an intergenerational perspective for understanding processes of religious change within the context of economic modernisation. Wider literatures in sociology, geography, and beyond have emphasised the value of an intergenerational perspective for thinking through processes of social change (Pilcher, 1994; Valentine, 2003; Vanderbeck, 2007). Through comparing different generations' socio-cultural conditions, we can gain insight into the characteristics, directions and mechanism of social change. Building on this kind of thinking, for example, Valentine et al. (2010b) compared attitudes towards and practices of alcohol consumption amongst three generations during their youth and identified patterns of cultural change in youths' drinking behaviour. This provides insight into the linkages between personal change at the micro level and social change at the macro level. As I

show through a review of literature on the intergenerational transmission of religion, this perspective has much to offer understandings of patterns of religious change because all religions rely upon the reproduction of their systems of belief and practice to survive.

Before proceeding, however, it is necessary to reflect on the competing meanings of the term 'generation', something which has proven confusing in the social sciences and been a source of critique (Vanderbeck, 2007). Broadly, three specific usages of generation have been identified "life stages, membership of a birth cohort and positions within a family structure". In practice, these three dimensions of generation are usually coexistent, intertwined and difficult to differentiate in everyday life (Vanderbeck and Worth, 2014; Biggs et al., 2011). The intergenerationality discussed in this section does not confine to a particular usage, as religion is transmitted through all lines of generation including kinships, birth cohort and lifecourse. Different kinds of generational consciousness and relationships jointly influence people's religious belief and practices. In different contexts, particular generational identities are more prominent than others. For example, in schools, young people might have stronger influence from classmates within similar birth cohort and lifestage and from teachers with different birth cohort and lifestage, than from families.

The remainder of this section will proceed as follows. I will first explore relationships between religion, ethnic/cultural identity and generational change (Section 2.5.1). Then, intergenerational transmission of religion will be discussed (Section 2.5.2). In Section 2.5.3, the role of education in religious change will be examined.

2.5.1 Religion and ethnic identity

For groups with a particular religious belief and ethnic background, such as the Koreans migrants, Jews and Hindus religious identity and ethnic identity usually closely interact and are mutually influenced and constructed (Mitchell, 2006; Kim, 2011; Min, 2010). Changing ethnicity has important influence on religious change.

As discussed in section 2.3.2.2, intersectional perspective should be adopted in studying religion. In this subsection, I examine how the relationships between religion and the maintenance of ethnic identities have been conceptualised. This is particularly pertinent in a context like Tibet, where Tibetans are a minority ethnic and religious group experiencing pressures of Han-assimilation.

As two important sources of identities, their relationships have been given considerable attention in and beyond academia. It has been widely argued that religion could reinforce

ethnic identity through various ways such as building a mosque (Naylor and Ryan, 2002), a Christian literal work (Palmer, 2002) and in different contexts, such as the ethnic minorities in China (Mackerras, 1995), the African Pentecostals in Britain (Hunt, 2002). Ethnicity could also be transmitted intergenerationally with and through religion (Min, 2010; Chong, 1998) (See Section 2.5.2 for more discussion).

However, it is also argued that religious identities sometimes are actually essentially ethnic and devoid of religious content (Gans, 1994; Mitchell, 2006). Religious identity is just a subordinate element of ethnicity which exists simply for signifying, constituting and reinforcing the primary category of ethnicity (Mitchell, 2006: 1136-7). Gans (1994) used 'symbolic religiosity' to describe Jews' (especially immigrant descendants) belief condition that they consume religious symbols but not engage in church activities.

Contrary to this 'religion-support-ethnicity' understanding, it has also been found that religious identity sometimes is manifested stronger and more meaningful than ethnic identity, such as for the young British Pakistanis (Jacobson, 1997), for the young British Hindus (Raj, 2000).

However, these are not the only forms of relationships between religion and ethnicity. Ethnic identity and religious identity are mutually influenced and constituted and dynamically change over time and place. Mitchell (2011: 53) used 'push and pull' to describe the bumpy road of (non-)simultaneous rise and fall of religion and ethnicity. Additionally, he claimed that social and political changes are important for influencing individuals' religious journey (Mitchell, 2006).

Ethnic maintenance and religion are usually associated with issues such as integration, assimilation, resistance, adaptation. Immigrants, as a conspicuous category facing these issues, have attracted considerable scholarly attention (Min, 2010; Kim, 2011), especially the young and second-generation immigrants (Jacobson, 1997; Zhou and Bankston, 1998; Raj, 2000; Chong, 1998).

Through various case studies, it has been found that different generations within different religious traditions have different ways of handling ethnicity and religion (Min, 2010; Min and Kim, 2005). For example, Min's (2010) research reveals that even though religion help to maintain the ethnicity of Korean protestant and India Hindus in America, both ethnicities are enhanced in different ways. Religious congregations for the Koreans and home for the Hindus mainly contributed to enhancing their ethnicity. For Hindus religious and ethnic identities are integrally complementary. For Korean Christians, they prefer Christian to Korean as their primary identity. But it is not the case for the second generation Koreans, it was found that they separate religion from ethnic culture and think

that church is only established for religious purposes (Min and Kim, 2005). However, their research has not given enough attention to the wider political, social and cultural influence on the patterns of religious transmission.

The previous case about American Koreans and Hindus does not show strong state's involvement in reshaping the ethnic identity and religious identity. Elsewhere, state plays important role in influencing ethnicity and religion. For example, China's ethnic minority policies have actually enhanced the bonds between minorities' ethnic identity and religion (Mackerras, 1995: see more discussion on China's minority policies). Public education has always been considered state's most effective way of giving rise to assimilation (Deyhle and Swisher, 1997). Adams (1995) found Indian students in boarding school strategically and consciously adapted the white ideologies and negotiated their Indianness in the face of relentless hegemonic forces.

In all, religion is only supporting or subordinate to ethnicity. A more dynamic view should be adopted in considering relationships between religion and ethnic identity. Despite much research on religious and ethnic identities, how much they are mutually enhanced/weakened remains a question. Apart from the immigrants, more attention could be given to non-immigrant groups. Additionally, even though state sometimes is powerful in reshaping ethnicity and religious identity, it needs to be acknowledged that ethnic groups are not passively bearing state's influence, but actively involving ethnic and religious negotiation.

2.5.2 Intergenerational transmission of religion

If religious and spiritual identities have undergone something of a seachange in terms of when, where and how they are constituted, this is likely to be most significant for younger generations. Nonetheless, it also affects religiosity among other generations in interesting ways, through and beyond contact with young people." (Hopkins et al., 2011: 317)

In the quotation above, Hopkins and colleagues specified the significance of understanding young people's religiosity in terms of its significance not only for the young themselves but also for the religiosity of older generations. This shows the crucial role of intergenerational perspective in thinking through religious change. The weak/strong and positive/negative intergenerational transmission of religion indicates the vitality of religion. However, this perspective has been neglected by geographers. The existing research has mainly discussed different generations' religious experiences separately, especially on children and young people (e.g. Hemming, 2009; Hopkins,

2007b; 2009a; Dwyer, 1999; 2009). The older and middle generation is largely ignored (Vanderbeck, 2007; Valentine et al., 2009: 287).

With regard to research on intergenerational transmission of religion, it has been generally agreed that parents have big influence on children's religious belief and practices. Vermeer et al. (2012) studied the religious transmission in Netherland and found that juvenile church attendance is greatly affected by parental, especially maternal church attendance and is the main reasons of adult church attendance. In a similar vein, Dutch children's God concepts were found largely informed by parents and teachers in religious schools (De Roos et al., 2001). In the United States, parents were also found playing as positive guides for youth's religious orientation, behaviour and involvement (Cnaan et al., 2004). Moreover, the more educated and more affluent the parent(s) were found, the more likely that the youth will engage in religious practices. Religion was also used by parents to educate children in social values and was regarded as a kind of "social capital". Korean Protestant immigrants in the United States were also found having been successful in transmitting their religion to their children (Min and Kim, 2005), even though not traditional Korean culture (discussed in section 2.5.1).

Apart from the positive results listed above, it is also found parental transmission sometimes does not lead to children's increasing religiosity or religious practices. While they (2005: 12) positively asserted that "faith may change shape but does not fade away", through examining the religious situation in Britain, Voas and Crockett (2005) found that believing and belonging are declining at the same rate and generational transmission of religion is weak.

The ways of intergenerational transmission of religion is deeply influenced by the religious and cultural traditions. Imitating parents is a main way of developing religiosity among the youth. In Peek's (2005) research on second-generation young Muslims in the United States, formation of their religious identity has three stages: religion as ascribed identity, as chosen identity and as declared identity. The first stage is marked by young Muslims' imitation of their parents, unconditional acceptance without introspection, limited knowledge on Islam, and unclear sense of religious identity when they are children and adolescents. During this stage, their religious identity was ascribed with their birth in the Muslim families and their religious identity was taken for granted (Peek, 2005: 223-230). It is evidenced in Min's (2010) research that second generation Indian Hindus conduct many fewer religious practices than their parents and than peer Korean Christians. However, according to Min (2010) Indian Hindu immigrants do better in transmitting their cultural traditions and identity than Korean Christians. He further (Min, 2010: 211) argued that the groups with indigenous religions such as Indian Hindus, have

stronger foundation to transmit religious traditions among generations because they are motivated by the idea of preserving ethnic heritage. Indian Hinduism is quite similar to Tibetan Bon in many aspects. Firstly, both of them are quite tolerant to other thoughts and flexible in religious practices; secondly, they are practiced more at home, less in congregations; thirdly, they have a lot of deities and beliefs, and do not have a core scripture like the Bible for Christianity which is easy to access for ordinary laypeople.

Apart from ethnicity, values and world views can be intergenerationally transmitted through religion. Haynie and Pearce (2004) found that moral codes and social regulations could be transmitted to children through parental religious influence.

In all, 'parents-to-children' has been generally assumed the solely pattern of intergenerational transmission of religion. In actuality, the intergenerational transmission is not linear, uniform and unidirectional, but bumpy, mutual and multidirectional, and partial. Children also actively engage in accepting, rejecting or negotiating and generating the generational transmission. They even could influence the religious practices and beliefs of their parents, grandparents, siblings and friends. Religious beliefs might not be transmitted uniformly with religious practices. Other pairs of intergenerational transmissions of religion have not been given enough attention, such as grandparents/children, youth/youth, mother/children, father/children, teacher/students. Different pairs of intergenerational transmission of religion usually coexistent. Thus there is a need to compare different sources of religious transmission, such as the religious influence from father and mother, from non-familial age cohorts (such as teachers, schoolmates).

Young people's sensitivity to changing locations might greatly change patterns of intergenerational transmission of religion, thus investigating the interruptions is particularly helpful in thinking through changing patterns of intergenerational transmission of religion. School education is one of crucial interruptions of the familial religious transmissions (see following section).

2.5.3 Religion and education

Similar to many parts of the west (Davie, 2000), religious institutions once dominated education in Tibet (Bass, 1998). However, Chinese secularised state schooling has become Tibetans' main means of education under the guide of modernisation projects and communist ideology (see Chapter 3).

Compulsory schooling, as an important element of modernisation, potentially can have important secularising impacts (Casanova, 1994; Stark, 1999). Schools became the fronts of exposure to secular theories and methods, scientific and rational thinking, plural cultures and liberal ideas. In early research, education, especially higher education was found a barrier for religion. It was widely assumed that higher education is a “breeding ground for apostasy” (Caplovitz and Sherrow, 1977: 109) and a “zone relatively free of religion” (Wilson, 2000: 9). However, despite frequent assumption about the secularising influence of modern forms of schooling, research from a variety of contexts shows a more complex picture. Mayrl and Oeur (2009: 264) claimed that “college is not as much of a ‘faith-killer’ as was previously thought”. Lee (2002) contended that more college students’ religious conviction is strengthened rather than weakened. Using survey data on Mormon populations in the United States, Albrecht and Heaton (1984) found at the national level the most educated are the least religious, whereas the relationship between church attendance and education is positive among Mormons at the denominational level. Two decades later, it was still found that education has positive influence for Mormons’ religiosity (Merrill et al., 2003). Focusing on denominational differences, McFarland et al. (2011) found that in the United States educational attainment does not have uniform impacts on different religious traditions, which is echoed by Schwadel (2011). It was found that increased education has positive contribution to religiosity among evangelical Protestants, black Protestants, and Catholics, but not among mainline Protestants and the non-affiliated. Schwadel (2011) claimed that education does not lead to uniformly decline of religion, but influence some parts of religion. In specific, he found that education positively affects belief in God or the afterlife, religious participation, devotional activities, daily religious life, religious conversion and scepticism, whilst negatively affects exclusivist religious viewpoints and biblical literalism. Also in the United States, Hill (2011) showed that education does not substantially change the religious beliefs of most college students, but do increased students’ scepticism toward supernatural religious beliefs. The elite universities have the biggest influence on students’ scepticism.

Even though public education has been differentiated from religions, religion is still influencing and being influenced by the public education through political interventions. This is particularly evident in countries where national identity is strongly related to a particular religion, such as Orthodoxy in Greece (Zambeta, 2000), Islamism in Turkey (Agai, 2007), In addition to Greece and Turkey, in Europe the proximity of religion and public education has been legally acknowledged in countries such as Britain, Germany, Italy (Willaime, 2007: 81). Apart from France which has no religious education in schools, all the other European countries have various confessional and non-confessional courses in schools (Willaime, 2007: 85), although the ongoing presence of religious

education in the curriculum remains a source of controversy. Most of these countries introduce religious instruction in schools for preparing students to be responsible citizens in a pluralist society (Willaime, 2007: 87). In the United States, there has been fierce discussion and debate regarding the extent to which religion should have a presence in public schools, given the constitutional principle of separation of church and state (Fraser, 1999). These debates have also involved the extent to which religious ideas should be allowed to influence teaching in schools, perhaps most notably in relation to the science curriculum. In particular, many evangelical and fundamentalist Christian groups have argued that the teaching of evolution as a scientific truth (as opposed to Biblical creationism or so-called 'intelligent design') is destroying Christian children's faith in God (Fraser, 1999; Greenwalt, 2003). Contrary to views of religious groups, recently it is argued that spiritual and religious dimensions of education should be included in American university education (Braskamp et al., 2006; Jacobsen and Jacobsen, 2008).

One major element which is thought considerably destroying the base of religion is science. In secularisation thesis, the rise of science is assumed contributing to the decline of religion (Eliade, 1959). Since the Enlightenment, scientific worldview has gradually replaced the religious understanding of the world. Rationalism and positivism has grown to be a problem for religion. Wallace (2004) even claimed that religion is doomed to fade away with increasing scientific knowledge. The very existence of religion was challenged with rational or scientific thinking which is largely generated in schools.

Wilson explained how science confronted religion as follows:

The growth of the scientific world view means that the natural (and, later the social) world becomes the object of systematic scrutiny, for the purposes of which canons of procedure are agreed upon... The scientific world view is largely incompatible with a belief that there are supernatural powers. Science is valued not only for its practicality but also for its universalism, impartiality, and scepticism. The contrast between religion and science is one of values as well as technique (Wilson, 1978: 412-13).

It is commonly assumed that religion and science make different claims about truth and reality, so it is sometimes taken for granted that they are in conflict (Stark et al., 1996). As mentioned before, creationists made political influences attempting to abandon or to downplay the evolution curriculum (Fraser, 1999; Lugg, 2004). However, it was also argued that the conflict between religion and science might be exaggerated (Stark et al., 1996). According to Scheitle (2011), as the religion recently has become more and more individualistic and private, most US college students found no conflict between religion

and science. The same conclusion has been reached in research regarding the views of academic scientists (Ecklund and Park, 2009).

A considerable body of research discussing religion and education has adopted a quantitative approach. Some general trends and conclusions have been reached by using this approach. However, the grand claims derived from these are lack of empirical justification (Mayrl and Oeur, 2009: 260). It neglects dynamic interactions and why and how these interactions happen. For example, how education affects students' religious engagement? In addition, the quantitative survey ignored the specific educational, socio-cultural and political contexts in which students are placed (Mayrl and Oeur, 2009: 271).

For articulating specifically how and why school experiences might have altered students' belief trajectories, in-depth data from interviews, observations or qualitative methods need to be incorporated into future studies. Additionally, the contextual influence should also be considered. Apart from higher education which has attracted major scholarly attention, other forms of education should be taken into account.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have critically reviewed prior research and theory that has informed my understanding of religious change in contemporary Tibet and how I specifically approach religious change.

Firstly, the primary concern of this thesis with religious change in a Bon region of contemporary Tibet requires an understanding of the relationships between modernity and religion. The 'secularisation debates' have been the most pertinent and prominent strand of theory concerning the relationships between modernity and religion. This body of theory allows me to situate my research in studies on religious change and points out a useful perspective in understanding religious change. I argued that the non-western places, non-western religions, micro-level analysis and qualitative approach are needed to complement our current limited understanding of processes of religious change, challenging some of the simplistic and over-generalized assumptions of some strands of secularisation theory. As I have shown, understanding religious change involves examining the beliefs and practices of a diverse range of institutional, state, and other actors. I found individual and institutional level analysis could offer me richer and highly nuanced insights on the dynamics and process of religious change which cannot be achieved by macro level analysis.

I also critically examined recent debates about the nature of 'religious space' from both within the geographies of religion and beyond. A spatial approach to religion (such as advocated by Knott, 2009) can provide concrete and solid evidence of religious change. The research diversity has been greatly enhanced by more focus on relationships between religion and gender, generation, race and ethnicity; however the intersectional eyes have not been adequately casted for geographical understanding of religion. The sacred/secular binary is too rigid to use at the moment when the sacred is fluid, contested and unbounded. More research focus should be given to other religions apart from Christianity and Islam.

In many parts of the world, tourism is a significant force pushing religion to confront modernity, especially in economically less developed areas. The growth of tourist economies has raised concerns about processes of religious commodification and the loss of cultural 'authenticity'. However, in tourism studies on religion, local perspectives and reactions have been under-examined, particularly in relation to eastern religions. Hence, a study such as the one conducted here offers a potentially important and novel contribution to research in this area.

As I argued in the final section, the perspective of intergenerationality provides an important lens through which to examine processes of religious change. The intergenerational transmission of religion is not straightforward and linear from parents to children. Young people are not passive recipients of religious ideas and practices. They are particularly vulnerable to the outside interruptions on their religion. Education as one of those interruptions might contribute to assimilation of religious and ethnic minorities by the state. How and why education influences religion still understudied.

Chapter 3 Religion in modern Tibet since 1950

3.1 Introduction

Grounding discussions of religious change in specific places allows for a deeper understanding of the interplay between religion, society, politics and economy (Knott, 2009). This chapter provides a critical discussion of this dynamic interplay in Tibet, in order to enhance our understanding of the nature of contemporary of religious change in the primary case study area of Jiuzhaigou. For example, the Chinese state plays an important role in shaping Tibetans' ethnic identity and religiosity in an era when Tibet is going through rapid social, economic, political and cultural changes. More specifically, in the case of state-led tourism development initiatives, minority-civilising projects as well as religious policies jointly influence Jiuzhaigou people's perceptions about Han-Tibetan relations, as well as their ethnic identity, their religious belief and practices.

Before the specific discussions on modernity and religion in contemporary Tibet, it is necessary to delimit the meaning and extent of 'Tibet' and my usage of the term in the thesis. On account of the long term disputes over and alterations of Tibetan territory, the term 'Tibet' has been often used with different connotations, especially since its incorporation into the People's Republic of China in 1950. Before 1950, Tibet had three large traditional cultural regions, called Ü-Tsang, Kham and Amdo (see Fig. 3.1), which cover today's Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), as well as 10 autonomous prefectures and 2 autonomous counties distributed in Qinghai Province, in the western part of Sichuan Province and in a little corner of Yunnan province and of Gansu province (Guo and Mao, 2009). Based on the current administrative division, 'Tibet' usually merely refers to the Tibet Autonomous Region (*Xizang Zizhiqu* in Chinese), especially in Chinese texts. In this usage, the peripheral Tibetan areas in the four surrounding provinces are largely ignored. However, in much western literature 'Tibet' refers to the traditional Tibetan cultural area or ethnographic area mainly inhabited by Tibetans and dominated by Tibetan culture in China (Kapstein, 2013: 32; Kolas and Thowsen, 2005; Neuhaus, 2012). In this chapter, I will adopt the second usage, as the whole Tibetan cultural area has much religious interaction and cultural homogeneity which make different parts of it comparable when experiencing same influences and trends. Thus 'Tibet' in this thesis means the Tibetan cultural area rather than solely TAR. In Chinese, 'Xizang' refers to TAR and '*zangqu*' literally means Tibetan cultural area. Thus in the cases when quoting Chinese documents, 'Xizang' will be translated as TAR and 'Zangqu' will be translated as Tibet.



Figure 3.1 Three Tibetan cultural regions in China (made by Alison Manson)

Ü-Tsang, Amdo and Kham were the three traditional provinces of Tibet. The central regions with capitals of Lhasa and Xigaze are U and Tsang which is in today's TAR. The south-eastern part is Kham, today divided among the Sichuan Province, TAR and Yunnan Province. Amdo is at the north of Kham, located in today's Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan provinces (Grunfeld, 1996).

According to the sixth National Population Census, in 2010 there were 6,282,200 Tibetans in China which accounts for 0.5% of the Chinese population. There were 2,716,389 Tibetans out of a total of 3,002,166 people living in TAR. The other 3.5 million Tibetans were distributed in the neighbouring provinces. Tibetans constitute the tenth largest of 55 ethnic minorities in China (see Section 3.2.1 for more information on ethnic minorities). This relatively small population inhabits an area covering about 2,200,000 square kilometres, which accounts for around 23% of Chinese land. In this vast region, dozens of Tibetan dialects coexist and are generally not mutually intelligible, whereas written Tibetan has been unified. Tibet's economy has always been much below the national average. For example, in 2013 the annual per-capita income of urban residents and rural residents in TAR was 20,023 CNY (Chinese New CNY, or Renminbi) and 6,578

CNY respectively. The averages for China as a whole were 26,955 CNY and 8,896 CNY. Based on the GDP per capita of urban and rural residents, TAR's 26,039 CNY meant that it was ranked 28th among 31 provinces and municipalities in 2013 (National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China, 2014). Compared to TAR, Aba Prefecture is relatively better off. In 2013 the annual per-capita income of urban and rural residents in Aba were respectively 23,115 CNY and 6,793 CNY (Abazhou zhengfu xinxi gongkai gongzuo bangongshi, 2014). These figures show a great disparity between the urban and rural areas. The majority of Tibetans are rural residents who are living in extreme poverty. In 2013 there were 740,000 urban residents and 2,380,000 rural residents in TAR (People's Government of Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, 2014). The same figures in Aba were 316,000 and 594,000 (Abazhou zhengfu xinxi gongkai gongzuo bangongshi, 2014).

The remainder of the chapter is composed of three primary sections. The first section (Section 3.2) provides details of modernisation and economic development in Tibet since 1950 with a special focus on minority policies, tourism and the Chinese government's development logic. Section 3.3 delineates the history of religion in Tibet and the relationship between Bon and Tibetan Buddhism, with a particular focus on the period after 1950. Then more localised information about Jiuzhaigou National Park, such as demographics, administration system, social structure, and religious composition, will be given in Section 3.4.

3.2 Ethnic minority, tourism, government, Tibet since 1950

The policies of the Chinese government have significant influences on the expressions and meanings of minority cultures and ethnic identities, including those of Tibetans (Kolas and Thowsen, 2005: 29). In order to understand religious change in modernising Tibet, China's various policies and civilising projects for the minorities need to be considered.

In this section, I will discuss the situation of Tibet and Tibetans in China's political and economic framework. To be specific, in Section 3.2.1, ethnic minority policies and projects will be examined as Tibetans are firstly treated in the minority-majority framework in China. This framework directs and influences Tibetan society, culture and identities. In Section 3.2.2, attention will turn to tourism in ethnic areas of China for a better understanding the role of tourism in Jiuzhaigou. In Section 3.2.3, the development logic of the Chinese government in Tibet will be explored.

3.2.1 Ethnic minorities and the Tibetan

3.2.1.1 Ethnic minorities

Learning from the Soviet Union, in 1950s the categorisation of nationalities (*minzu* in Chinese) took place based on the material stages of social progress. The classification criteria came from Stalin who thought that a nation should have a common language, territory, economic life and psychological condition (Lee, 2001: 23). Fifty-six nationalities were identified in China based on their perceived distance from civilisation. Many of these 56 nationalities had literally not existed before the 1950s and were just created at that time (Wu, 2014: 969). Nevertheless there are still some groups who claimed that they were unrecognised or wrongly recognised. Except for a few unrecognised groups, every Chinese citizen belongs to a particular group which is considered closer or more distant to the 'civilisers'. According to Harrell (1995b: 9), the process of nationality identification was essentially "one of both objectification and scaling which classified people into a scale from the uncivilised to the civilised". On this scale, fifty-six state-recognised nationalities are divided into fifty-five ethnic minorities (*shaoshu minzu*) accounting for about 8% of China's population and the majority Han making up nearly 92% of China's population. It was hoped that through civilising projects various ethnicities, especially the 'uncivilised minorities' would finally achieve socialism on the road of historical progress.

China has long had the 'civilised self'/'uncivilised other' division. In the history of China, "the world was divided into the 'civilised' Chinese and their 'uncivilised' neighbours, among whom were the nomadic peoples of the grasslands (Kolas and Thowsen, 2005)." As the Han have always been the majority nationality in China's history, they have been most closely associated with 'the Chinese'. The identification of nationalities is another process to separate the Han, the 'pure' ethnic Chinese, from the non-Han, ethnic minorities (Lee, 2001: 21). Looking back through history, Chinese policies have intentionally or unintentionally created discursive and practical distinctions between the majority Han and the minorities. Minorities always play the role of opposite 'other' to the Han majority. The Han as the majority are constructed as mainstream, superior, advanced, modern, and civilised in every aspect. On the contrary, the ethnic minorities are peripheral, inferior, backward, barbaric and uncivilised. Even the schools construct two strands of culture: "advanced Han culture and less-advanced non-Han culture" (Hansen, 1999: 70). There are also two kinds of educational institutions, the ordinary schools and universities and minority schools and universities which mainly enrol minority students (Yi, 2007).

The Han-minority distinction could also be found in the linguistic interpretation of nationality (*minzu*). The usage of the word nationality (*minzu*) is problematic as it breeds meanings that contradict its official definition. According to the Chinese government's classification and definition of *minzu*, it literally includes all 56 ethnic nationalities in China, of which the Han is one. However, in practice it only refers to ethnic minorities (Hansen, 1999: xii). The Han are usually consciously or unconsciously excluded from how Chinese people (both Han and minorities) understand 'nationality' (*minzu*). It is taken for granted that ethnic affairs (*minzu shiwu*) are actually minority affairs, having no business with the mainstream Han. The so-called State Ethnic Affairs Commission (*minzu shiwu weiyuanhui*) mainly deals with minority issues and aims for better minority-majority integration. A reading of the duties of this department of state (State Ethnic Affairs Commission, 2010) confirms that minorities are its only concern. *Minzu shiwu* (ethnic affairs) and *minzu diqu* (ethnic areas) which appear on almost every official document actually denote ethnic-minority affairs and ethnic minority areas. The state nationality policies (*minzu zhengce*) actually refer to minority affairs, not all ethnic nationalities. Ethnology (*minzu xue*) in China is actually the study of ethnic minorities, and not of all ethnic groups. China's Ethnic Statistical Book (*Zhongguo minzu tongji nianjian*) describes the social and economic achievements of ethnic minorities, even though it is named *minzu*.

Even many Chinese and western scholars are consciously or unconsciously aware that the meaning of *minzu* in China has narrowed to refer only to ethnic minorities, rather than the Chinese state's definition. This can be evidenced by looking at examples from their work. For Yi (2007: 935), *minzu* and *minzu diqu* respectively refer to ethnic minorities and minority areas. Yi translated *minzu*, a term that appears on all government documents, academic works, and news, directly into 'ethnic minorities', for example, "*guanyu shenhua gaige jiaokui fazhan minzu jiaoyu de jue ding*" as "Resolution of deepening reform and speeding up development of minority education", "*Woguo minzu diqu jiaoyu fazhan de xianzhuang yu weila*" as "Present situation and future of education development in minority areas in our country", and "*Zhongguo bufen bianjiang minzu diqu chuoxue qingkuang diaocha*" as "An investigation of dropout in some frontier minority areas". The same issue occurs in Wu (2014), Harrell (1995a) and Gladney (2013). They see no problem in their interpretation of the term *minzu* to mean 'ethnic minority'. The contradictory usage of *minzu* and its connotation of a minority/majority division have barely been taken into account and questioned by academics. Schein (1997: 93) once acknowledged that there are several senses of *minzu* when used as an adjective in a name, and she explained that *minzu* is usually used as shorthand for the term *shaoshu minzu*. However, she failed to note the consequences resulting from different uses of the word *minzu*. It is taken for granted on most occasions in China that

the category of *minzu* only includes minorities, and not the Han. It reflects a view that the Han are too mainstream to be included under the *minzu* category and receive the consequent special treatment. These special treatments are for minorities, not for the Han. Since its birth, *minzu* has been constructed politically and culturally as a popular concept which on the one hand stresses the equality and unity between 56 ethnic groups especially in political discourses; on the other hand its usage actually differentiates the mainstream Han and the minorities and reshapes their perceptions of self. For example, Schein (1997) found minorities are important in shaping Han people's perception of self as civilised comparing to the uncivilised minorities.

For the 'good' of minorities, many attempts by the Chinese state have been carried out to transform and to civilise them into people like the Han (Harrell, 1995b). Preferential policies (*youhui zhengce*) implemented since 1980s are one example. These policies aim to improve the living standards of minorities and to enhance integration among minorities and between minorities and majority Han (Mackerras, 1994). Minority students can be given extra marks in university/college entrance examinations (Wang and Zhou, 2003: 87). Minorities can have two children, which is not possible for the Han. Han Chinese have to pay a large fine or face the risk of being dismissed from their positions in public sector jobs for having a second child. Some official positions are specifically reserved for minorities. For example, there must be a certain number of minority officials in the leadership of certain government departments. Some economic investments are particularly for ethnic groups. Political, material and educational benefits of being a minority have made people eager to be identified in a minority group, even though minorities are seen as uncivilised. The privileges also encourage additional calls for state recognition from other ethnic groups (Mackerras, 2003: 40). Many Han people want to alter their nationality status into minority (Lee, 2001: 24). Children of mixed families often choose ethnic identification. As a result of the preferential policies, being ethnically minority in China is not only a situation of straightforward disadvantage, as is sometimes assumed. Preferential policies have been shown to be instrumental in creating ethnic elites (Sautman, 1999: 196) and in reinforcing Tibetan identity (Postiglione et al., 2004).

From Wu's (1990) perspective, the identification of ethnic minorities was a means of reinterpreting minority culture rather than a way to preserve tradition. Nationality identification helps both the minorities and the Han have new understandings of their cultures. Before this nationality classification, those recognised as belonging to a minority had no strong awareness that they were different from others and the majority Han (Lee, 2001: 24). After the identification, the minorities have been passively ethnicised through the process of differentiating the Han and the minorities (Yi, 2007). The Nuosu people identify themselves through distinction from the Han; the Hui also

have a clear boundary between themselves and the Han; the Nuosu and the Hui felt closer as they are classified within the same category: ethnic minorities (Harrell, 2002: 321). For Tibetans, Tibetan culture and identity are also “undergoing a continuous process of negotiation and reconstruction... Tibetan culture is negotiated not only by Tibetans and Han but through the use of the categories Tibetan and Han, in the acceptance of certain definitions of culture...” (Kolas and Thowsen, 2005: 43). The identification of ethnic groups also reinforced a unified Tibetan identity (Upton, 1996); in the past Tibetans had been more segregated between each other based on the areas they inhabited and the language they spoke. There are also a few exceptional situations where religious identity comes before ethnic identity. As Gladney found in her research, Muslims in China simply divided people into Muslim and non-Muslim (Gladney, 2013: 148-149). Religion blurred the ethnic boundaries between different ethnic Muslims in China, such as the Hui, the Dongxiang, and the Baonan, who were each designated as different ethnic minorities by the Chinese government. They thought of themselves in the first place as Muslims. For some Uyghurs in north-western China, ethnic identity associated with religion jointly contributed to acts of violence and an independence movement (Dwyer, 2005).

China is claimed by the Chinese government to be a unified multi-national socialist country. The minority-inhabited areas are mainly located near the country's borders, which makes minorities especially significant in terms of national defence and geopolitics. Although the areas where ethnic minorities predominantly live are sparsely populated in contrast to the overcrowded areas of inland China, they cover an expanse of about 64% of the country, with 5 autonomous regions, 30 autonomous prefectures, 120 autonomous counties as well as 1,256 ethnic townships. Thus unity is the supreme principle of China's ethnic minority policies. All the other policies cannot conflict with national unity. The ultimate goal of establishing the government agency called the State Ethnic Affairs Committee is to integrate minorities and the Han through various administrative, economic, social and cultural means. Minorities have a certain degree of autonomy but not the right of secession. A large number of Han cadres, workers and companies have been sent to minority areas to assist in their development. Nevertheless, this has turned out to generate negative feelings from the minorities, who feel that Han people are taking their jobs and resources (Yeh, 2013). Han tourists are often seen as violating their cultural and religious traditions (Han, 2011) by, for example, washing their feet in the sacred lakes from which Tibetans get water to drink. Newly built hotels in Lhasa are considered by many Tibetans to be incompatible with the religious atmosphere of the city. Minorities and scholars use ‘hanization’ (or hanification) to describe the overwhelming influence of the Han. In Lijiang, the hegemonic hanification process was found to be intensified by tourism with the help of the Chinese government (Oakes, 1998; Su and

Teo, 2009: 85-88). Oakes considers hanification in Guizhou as a form of 'inner colonialism'. Hanification intentionally or unintentionally implemented through tourism has become an ideological instrument for maintaining the CCP's hegemony. Thus minority policies can be seen to have greatly strengthened ethnic awareness amongst most minorities (Mackerras, 2003: 39). In the section below I show how this division is specifically embodied in Tibet.

3.2.1.2 Tibetan vis-à-vis the Han Chinese

Tibetans, whether rich or poor, monk or layman, Easterner or Westerner, now more than ever before defined their identity primarily in terms of political nationalism, as Tibetan vis-à-vis the Han Chinese. (Goldstein, 1998b: 42)

Goldstein's comment on Tibetan *vis-à-vis the Han Chinese* in 1998 is only partially applicable in today's China. Although Tibetans still use the Han as a reference to define their ethnic identity, politics is not always the reason for forming this distinction. Chinese minority policies have played an important role in reinforcing a sense of Tibetan distinction from Han Chinese since Tibet's incorporation into China in 1950. Being ethnic minority in China places Tibetans in a framework with certain set relationships with the majority nationality, the Han and the other 54 minorities (Yeh, 2007a). Marx's social evolution theory was introduced and developed as the CCP's basic ideology in which Tibetans are thought of in the lower stage of social progress hence as inferior people mired in poverty and ignorance (Yi, 2007: 941). The Tibetans and other minority groups are representatives of 'backwardness' in contrast to the more 'modern' Han (Kolas, 2007: 50) and are considered in need of help from the Han to be civilised (Zhu, 2007). Meanwhile all nationalities should be in harmonious and united relationships.

In practice, some Tibetan students are made to believe that they are backward groups comparing to the Han (Zhu, 2007). In Lhasa, a widely held view among Tibetans is that Han people are diligent and hard-working in contrast to the indolent and spoilt Tibetans (Yeh, 2007b). However, it is acknowledged that the Han/minority dichotomy is not the only cause of social division in Tibet. Hu and Salazar (2008) found that class and *hukou*² (household registration) are more important than ethnicity in causing social division in Lhasa.

² A *hukou* is a document containing a household's registration. It is used to assign a family to a specific place of residence. Information such as name, gender, date of birth, parents, spouse and children is included in this record. There are two types of *hukou*, agricultural and non-agricultural, often referred to as rural and urban.

Children are often considered the best objects for accomplishing civilising projects (Harrell, 1995b). The basic goals of public schools are transmitting culture and socialising youths (Garcia, 1978: 8). Apart from these, public schools in China play the role of promoting national unity and economic development (Johnson and Chhetri, 2000). For minority education, achieving integration is the ultimate goal. Bass (2008) even said the purpose of state-schooling in minority areas is moulding the other 55 ethnic minorities into a unified single nation dominated by advanced Chinese language and culture.

Since the late 1970s, policies on education have been implemented for assisting modernisation and national integration. China has a uniform national curriculum which is mainly drawn from Han culture (Lee, 2001: 40). A compulsory course named Ideology and Morality is taught in primary and secondary schools. The main content of this course involves modernity, patriotism and socialism (Bass, 2008). In the history and politics textbooks of primary schools, the main theme is the close relationship between Han and other ethnic minorities, which builds on timely and generous help provided by the advanced, civilised and superior Han to the primitive, backward and helpless minorities (Hansen, 1999: 68-74). As for all the other ethnic minorities, education in Tibet has also been greatly influenced by national policies (Bass, 1998). In the school curriculum, China's ancient traditions are celebrated, but Tibet's pre-1950s history is depicted as backward and oppressive, with a slave state governed by the autocratic lamas and aristocracies before 'Chinese liberation' (Bass, 2008). Religious belief and ethnic awareness are regarded as barriers to the integration of ethnic groups and unity of the nation-state, but especially for Tibetans and Uyghurs religion greatly reinforces their sense of ethnicity. In terms of the specific ways in which religion is treated, Tibetan Buddhism was dissociated from Tibetan culture in school textbooks by leaving no space for Buddhist philosophies and context (Bass, 2008: 42-43). Atheism, materialism and science have been propagated in schools and the public (Yi, 2005). Buddhist related contents are interpreted in the context of common Chinese heritage traits, independent of religious heritage, and are used to promote socialist moralities and patriotic ideas. Religion is also blamed for hindering the economic development of Tibet (Bass, 2008). As also evidenced by the journalist Peter Hessler (1999), in Tibetan schools, even the elementary schools were found to have a heavy politicized and nationalist climate. Students were urged to serve nationalist goals in economics and politics.

State education has not always had the expected results. Through an investigation into China's minority higher education situation and policies, Lee (2001: 42) concluded that two aims of higher education, integration and modernisation, have been partly achieved, but with two unexpected consequences: "a resurgence of ethnic identity and a dilution of

distinctive features of minority groups". Upton (1996) found in Songpan, a Tibetan county, that Tibetan educators in Tibetan schools realised a need to strengthen students' awareness of their ethnic identity and culture. Pursuing formal, state education also disrupts minority students' understanding of their ethnic identity. Yi (2005) found that Tibetan students felt a sense of backwardness compared to the Han.

Apart from state education which serves to civilise the minorities, the Chinese state has also initiated various economic projects to realise its version of modernity. Tourism is one of those projects. As mentioned before, tourism was found to intensify hanification. The following section will discuss the ways in which tourism interacts with ethnic minorities in China.

3.2.2 Tourism and ethnic minorities

Tourism has been an important force for modernisation in minority areas (Mackerras, 2003). In 1978, Deng Xiaoping declared that tourism could be an effective way of realising economic development in China. Responding to this call, like in other developing countries which put hope in tourism for economic growth, in China tourism has become a major strategy to boost economy, to encourage international communications and to enhance national unity among many growth options (Xiao, 2006: 803). Tourism development was marked as a signifier of reform and opening-up policies (Xiao, 2006: 812). Foreign tourists were the first travellers coming to ethnic inhabited areas. With the foreign tourism creating more income and tourist facilities, domestic tourism was encouraged by the authorities. Since then tourist numbers have surged and tourism has become one of the largest industries in China (CCTV, 2014). China has become the biggest market for domestic tourism and the fourth largest destination for international tourism. In 2011 the number of domestic tourists reached 2.64 billion person-times and the revenue of domestic tourism was 1,930 billion CNY. Tourism's value added accounted for about 4% of China's GDP in 2013 (People.cn, 2014). The rapid growth in the tourism industry has been accompanied by a great expansion in the geographical reach of tourism (Bao and Ma, 2010; Oakes, 1992).

In 1990, developing ethnic culture came to be treated as a way to better showcase the fruits of socialism (Sofield and Li, 1998: 373) and the extent of integration of the minorities (Matthews and Richter, 1991: 127). Tourism was developed to preserve cultural traditions and to boost the economies of the minority-inhabited areas. Many tourist projects and ethnic tourism routes have been promoted by the government.

The development of tourism in ethnic areas of China brought both positive and negative results. It has encouraged the construction of infrastructure, an increase in incomes and greater gender equality. In the meantime, tourism has introduced host/guest conflicts, the transformation of cultural forms, diseases etc. Even though tourism has some negative consequences, Mackerras (2003: 73) believes that minorities in China greatly welcome tourism as it could really improve the standard of living of minorities.

Furthermore, the influence of tourism cannot simply be considered in terms of good or bad. Although tourism reinforces the hegemonic representations of “ethnic minorities”, it also provides a new space for negotiating and reconstructing ethnic identity and the meaning of ‘minority areas’. Tim Oakes (1998) found that in the process of developing tourism in order to modernise Miao-inhabited areas, the Miao were represented as primitive, exotic and the opposite of modernity. He used the term “false modernity” to describe the contradiction between the aim of preserving ethnic cultures and the practice of damaging ethnic cultures through economic development (Oakes, 1998: 186-7). On the other hand, Hillman (2003) found that ethnic tourism in China has been shown to raise ethnic consciousness and pride in ethnic cultural heritage.

This chapter now moves on to discuss how tourism developed specifically in Tibet under the government’s development logic for ethnic minorities.

3.2.3 Government, development and tourism in Tibet

Even though different parts of Tibet had been consecutively incorporated into China from 1950 to 1954, efforts to modernise Tibet actually only started at the beginning of the reform period in 1978. During the years from 1950 to 1978, Tibet, and indeed the whole of China, experienced serious convulsions. In the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th CCP Central Committee in 1978, Deng Xiaoping declared that economic development is the party’s principal aim in the pursuit of modernisation and socialism. Since then, “development is hard theory” (*fazhan cai shi ying daoli*) has become a national discourse and belief.

In Tibet, development is also a hegemonic state project which follows a particular logic, complexly negotiated and contested (Beckwith, 1993: 605). In the ideologies of the CCP, Tibet was always depicted as a place of backwardness and barrenness, being closed, seeking to become prosperous, modern and advanced, in need of urgent development especially economic development (Yeh, 2007b: 593-4). Economic development is considered as a panacea addressing peripheral peoples and realising modernity and progress in Tibet (Zhu, 2007: 284). Thus, in the report entitled *Sixty Years Since Peaceful*

Liberation of Tibet (referring to TAR here), published in 2011 (GOV.cn, 2014), “launching Tibet’s drive to modernisation” was especially written as one of Chinese government’s successes in Tibetan affairs. Another success claimed by the CCP was “implementing reform and opening up, promoting Tibetan economy to change from a closed one into an open one and from a planned one to a market one.” The Chinese government believes that modernisation and a market economy are crucial to and the right direction for the development of Tibet. From 18 to 20 January 2010, Hu Jintao (the then president of the People’s Republic of China) laid out the guidelines for the development strategy of Tibet in the Fifth TAR Work Forum. Economic development was still set as the central task of future work in Tibet (People.com.cn, 2014). This development logic is also considered helpful for defusing political tensions and strengthening unification through establishing closer economic ties with the inner lands of China (Hessler, 1999). Mackerras (2003: 38) found that the focus on economic development and social welfare of ethnic groups had improved ethnic issues and shifted people’s attention from rebellious movements.

Deng Xiaoping specially pointed out that Tibet should be open to tourists and foreigners. Tourism was expected to contribute to the economic modernisation of China and Tibet. With the continuous efforts of Deng’s successors, tourism is regarded by government as an efficient way of realising economic development in Tibet. Making Tibet into a world important tourist destination was listed as one of the goals of the strategy in the Fifth TAR Work Forum. The Secretary of Communist Party of Aba Prefecture emphasised at the Meeting of Prefectural Tourism Work in 2012 that tourism has always been and should still be the leading industry of Aba Prefecture. Cultural tourism, including religious tourism, he maintained, should be made a priority of tourism development (Abazhou.gov.cn, 2012; 2013).

However, development is not always welcomed by its subjects. Hu and Wen (2001) criticized that the modernisation strategy in Tibet was always putting a focus on the growth of economy and the speed of GDP increase and ignored the needs of Tibetans and the actualities of Tibet. Makley (2007: 224) warned that “the danger for all Tibetans, men and women, was that the exotic appeal of a Han-mediated modernity substituted consumption for local autonomy and power, and diverted attention from the ongoing emasculation of all Tibetans in intensifying state efforts to exploit the frontier in the drive to capitalist modernisation”. In Yeh’s (1993: 603) research, one of her interviewees complained about the pervasiveness of the talk of “economic development” in Tibet, saying he got “a headache whenever someone starts to talk about economic development”. In Jiuzhaigou, some old people, especially women expressed their nostalgia for the people’s commune period. They liked the fact that people lived simple lives without plotting and fighting for money. The market economy made them feel

exhausted mentally, even though it brought them substantially more money than before (see discussion in Chapter 7).

Sometimes development, however, is seen as coming at the cost of culture. The Potala Palace was made a museum open to domestic and international tourists some time ago. This invited criticism from some Tibetans in and out of Tibet as tourists sometimes appear to be disrespectful of Tibetan culture. The accusation that tourists lacked respect for Tibetan religion is also evidenced by Kolas (2007) in his research on Shangri-la. Modernisation is seen by some as a force threatening Tibet and leading to a diminution of the differences among nationalities and between minorities and the Han (Mackerras, 1994: 270-271). Hessler (1999) describes how modernisation, along with Han influence, has had effects on Tibetans and Han migrants in TAR. He found that economic development per se was regarded by some Tibetans as a major barrier to the preservation of Tibetan culture, no matter whether there is Han influence at play or not. In my case study site, Jiuzhaigou, excessive development of tourism sometimes caused annoyance to local people. In “golden week”³ (*huangjin zhou*) in October 2013, hundreds and thousands of tourists (mainly Han tourists from mainland China) poured into Jiuzhaigou, which caused serious traffic jams in the park (FlorCruz, 2013). Some annoyed tourists had fights with the locals who were trying to maintain order. Locals were further irritated by piles of rubbish and human excrement left in the park (as documented by local people’s Weibo feeds⁴).

3.3 Religion in Tibet since 1950

The previous section discussed state-led modernisation approaches in Tibet since 1950, which have had profound consequences for the Tibetans. This section aims to provide background information on Bon and the history of religion in Tibet to provide the context for a better understanding of the religious changes currently happening in Jiuzhaigou. In section 3.3.1, a brief history of religion in Tibet will be given with particular attention to the period after the 1978 reform and opening-up. Following that, I will briefly explain Bon religion and its relationships with Buddhism (Section 3.3.2).

³ October golden week (1 October to 7 October) is one of the two national holiday weeks in China. Another one is in May (1 May to 7 May). The golden week is the only chance working people having a long holiday, so in every golden holiday all tourist sites in China are filled with visitors.

⁴ Weibo literally means ‘microblog’ in Chinese. It is an equivalent to Twitter in China on which people could share texts, audios, videos and other materials.

3.3.1 Religion in the history of Tibet and of China as a whole

Religious policies of the CCP have been through three periods (Mackerras, 2013: 30): 1949 to the start of the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution, the Cultural Revolution, and the period since then. Tibetan religions had grown on Tibetan soil for more than a thousand years before 1950. Even though the focus will be put on the post-1950 era, there is a need to briefly introduce the history of religion in Tibet before 1950.

3.3.1.1 The era before 1950

The indigenous religion of Bon is argued to have existed in Tibet from before the arrival of Buddhism (Snellgrove and Richardson, 1980). The Bon religion originated from primitive nature worship and prospered until King Songsten-gampo prohibited it in the 7th century CE. Despite the significant influence of Buddhism, the Bon religion has been still in existence (Tucci and Samuel, 1988). To survive despite the spread of Buddhism, the Bon religion incorporated a great number of ideas, concepts and teachings from Buddhism (Snellgrove and Richardson, 1980). Nowadays, Bon monasteries and shrines are scattered around the whole of Tibet, and are especially numerous in East Tibet (Tucci and Samuel, 1988: 213).

Buddhism was introduced into Tibet in the 5th century CE. There were severe struggles both between Bon and Buddhism and amongst different political parties who supported different religious currents. Buddhism gradually pervaded Tibetan society. Under the reign of king Trisong Detsen in the 8th century, Buddhism successfully became the official state religion whose power and benefits were confirmed by law (Grunfeld, 1996). Monks constituted the privileged estate and were protected by the King and the law. There was even a law that stated that each monk should be supported by seven peasant families (Chen, 2002).

Against the background of disputes between various local power-holders from the mid 9th century to mid 13th century, different Buddhist monasteries aligned with these local power-holders, and contributed to the formation of several Buddhist sects, including the Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, Jonang and Gelug sects. In the meantime, serfdom gradually came to prevail in Tibet.

From 1206, the Mongol Empire started to gain suzerainty over Tibet (Chen, 2002; Snellgrove and Richardson, 1980). The Mongolian ruling class were attracted to the ideas of Buddhism. With regard to the social structure, "the best single description of pre-1950 Tibetan society is 'feudal'" (Grunfeld, 1996: 8). A small group consisting of lamas

and nobility predominated in exercising political power, both at times when power was centralized form and when it was decentralized (Grunfeld, 1996). The Dalai Lama was the supreme spiritual and political leader in the whole area, while local power was distributed among monasteries and nobility. Apart from these members of the privileged estate, the majority of Tibetans were serfs. They provided a service (including cultivating their lords' fields, repairing his house, transporting his crops, collecting firewood, cooking, etc.) for the masters (local aristocrats and monasteries) in return for military protection (Bell, 1992).

As in other mainly pastoral and partly agricultural societies, land was extremely significant and had great value in Tibetan society. But land was controlled and used by manorial estates composed either of monastic estates or of the estates of the lay nobility, although they were officially claimed to be the property of the government (Zeng, 2004; Grunfeld, 1996). Land was farmed by a labour force of serfs (Goldstein, 1989: 3). As Goldstein explains:

For the manorial estate system and the political and monastic system, serfdom was the foundation. It was an efficient system of economic exploitation that guaranteed to the country's religious and secular elites a permanent and secure labour force to cultivate their landholdings without burdening them either with any direct day-to-day responsibility for the serfs' subsistence or with the need to compete for labour in a market context (Goldstein, 1989: 5).

However, this strategy greatly expanded the privileges of monastery estates, whose lamas and monks could be fed without having themselves to work. Besides, a monk could step into the upper class no matter how low he was by birth, but this was not possible for a layman. Thus, a large number of men and women swarmed into monasteries which significantly enlarged the monastic body. For the Tibetans, "It is an ordinary event in a family for a little daughter to leave the house and enter a nunnery; and one son at least, while still young, is likely to go off and take the vows of monkhood" (Bell, 1931: 169).

3.3.1.2 1950 – Cultural Revolution

Over the period from 1950 to 1954, different parts of Tibet were consecutively incorporated into China. In 1955 land reform was initiated breaking up the estates and liberating the serfs. At the same time, each household was categorised into one of eight classes which includes chieftains (*tusi*), slave owners (*nuli zhu*), serf owners (*nongnu zhu*), land owners (*dizhu*), wealthy farmers (*fu nong*), middle farmers (*zhong nong*), poor

farmers (*pin nong*), serfs (*nongnu*) and slaves (*nuli*) (Kolas, 2007: 42-43). A large number of people were identified as poor farmers, serfs and slaves. The first five classes were the target of criticism, political teaching and land confiscation. Monastery land was treated in the same way. Monks were told to work in the fields like other lay people. Then communes were established in 1958 for people to work and eat collectively. All the products made in the communes were managed and redistributed collectively. Food was spread to each family based on the number of workers. This however led to mass starvation across China as productivity fell really low.

Under Marxism-Leninism, religion found little space to survive. According to Marxist theory, religion is a tool of the dominant class suppressing the lower class and an illusory tool of the working class for escaping poverty and misery. It has no place in socialist society, where the exploiting class no longer exist and where science, political consciousness and human cognition continue to develop (Hansen, 1999). During this period, another important thing happened and changed the direction of Tibetan history and religion. In 1959, the fourteenth Dalai Lama fled to India, and this became the main cause of the Tibetans' campaign for independence, freedom of belief and autonomy. Nowadays, the Dalai Lama, the supreme religious leader of Tibet retains a wide-ranging religious influence in Tibet.

3.3.1.3 The Cultural Revolution

Political programmes of laicization greatly spurred on societal secularisation (Dobbelaere, 2002). During the Cultural Revolution, from 1966 to 1976, political force completely crushed religion. It was initiated by Mao and later perpetuated by the Gang of Four to protect and uphold Maoism. Students and workers were the major force in this movement.

The 'Four Olds', which refers to old ideas, culture, customs and habits, were targets of attacks in this period of totalitarian iconoclasm. Religions were seen as harmful feudal remnants to be completely banned and crushed. Monasteries, temples, shrines and Buddha statues were demolished (Mackerras, 2013: 31). Monks and people who were engaging in religious and cultural activities were attacked as well. They were forced to leave their monasteries to 'live a normal life', while those who resisted were imprisoned. The 'normal life' here means to marry and to live a life like other laypeople.

The Cultural Revolution also created a generational gap between old monks and young monks. Today the middle-aged monks, who are supposed to be the supporting power

behind religious transmission, are much fewer and less educated because of the 10-year religious prohibition.

It is noteworthy that according to 1975 Constitution, every citizen of China was allowed to “enjoy freedom to believe in religion and freedom not to believe in religion and to propagate atheism”.

3.3.1.4 Reform and opening-up

At the historic 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1978, the Chinese government decided to shift its focus from the political struggle to economic development and market economy. At the same time, it adopted a policy of opening-up toward other countries. These are altogether termed *gaige kaifang zhengce* (reform and opening-up policies), which has become a household term in China. Economic modernisation was set as the central task. At the same time, controls on religious belief were relaxed.

In the 1982 Constitution, people were officially allowed to believe freely in China (Mackerras, 2003: 115). After 1984 policies and practices which emphasised freedom of religious belief and respect of traditional ethnic culture were added into the Constitution. Religious beliefs and practices in China witnessed great growth and considerable revival. As for Tibet, Tibetan monks who were expelled in the Cultural Revolution went back to monasteries, in the meantime, a considerable number of young people joined monasteries. Tibetan laypeople also restarted their various religious practices. However, not all kinds of spiritual beliefs are encouraged. Being recognised by the state is crucial in deciding the future of a particular religion or belief. For the Chinese state, the concept religion is a western construct which was introduced into China in the late nineteenth century from Japan (Gladney, 2013: 61). Religion officially refers to “a formally constituted social organization associated with a body of written doctrine that expressed both a cosmology and an ethical system (Szonyi, 2009: 317)”. For fitting into the state’s definition, Buddhism, Islam, Daoism and Confucianism have reworked their traditions. At the same time, based on socialist ideology, traditional cultures, especially certain cultural practices, are criticized for being unscientific, feudal, anti-modern and anti-socialist (Sofield and Li, 1998: 367).

Moreover, a number of independence demonstrations in 1987, 1988 and 1989 in Tibet and Xinjiang made the atmosphere around religion tenser. Religious practitioners and institutions were sometimes over-regulated and tightly controlled by the state (Sofield and Li, 1998: 372). The CCP still strongly opposes what it calls ‘superstition’ and has

kept some control over established religious bodies to maintain its own power (Mackerras, 2003). Religion might be tolerated if it is linked to economic development, and it is believed by the government that as the minorities become better educated, they will be less 'superstitious' (Sutton and Kang, 2010b: 103-4).

Religion is always regarded as a political issue rather than as a simple spiritual issue by the CCP (Mackerras, 2003: 116). In the summer of 1996, a 'patriotic education' campaign was implemented in monasteries as well as lay societies in Tibet with the aim of strengthening Tibetans' Chinese national identity and enhancing control over opposition powers. Goldstein (1998b: 48) quoted a paragraph from a document of patriotism education in Sera monastery as follows:

The time has arrived for patriotic education to take place in Sera monastery by means of Comprehensive Propaganda Education. The purpose of carrying out this education session is to implement the Party's policy on religion totally and correctly, to stress the management of religious affairs according to law, and to initiate efforts for the harmonious coexistence between the religious and socialist societies. It is also aimed at creating the thought of patriotism and implanting in the masses of the monks the view of the government, the political view and the legal view. The campaign is also for the purpose of educating [monks] to oppose completely any activities aimed at splitting the motherland. (Goldstein, 1998b: 48)

However, in 2008 a series of riots, protests and demonstrations started in Lhasa and soon spread to other parts of Tibet. Monks associated with some protesting Tibetans got involved in the unrest. It was thought that social discrimination, ethnic hostility and religious control were factors contributing to the uprising (Miles, 2008). In the following years, more than 100 self-immolations happened in Tibet, in Eastern Tibet in particular. More and more young laypeople got involved in this kind of protest, and are regarded as the new force of protest in addition to protests issuing from the monastic (Terrone, 2014). These protesters mainly concerned issues such as the return of the Dalai Lama, ethnic unity, and the disappearing traditional Tibetan clothing and Tibetan language (Terrone, 2014).

Religion, as a 'positive' official construct has always been closely associated with superstition, its 'negative' counterpart, in Communist China. Superstition is associated with other characteristics such as being backward, uncivilised, poor and isolated, all seen as features of minority peoples (Kolas, 2007: 80). The negative and anti-science characteristics of superstition have been widely propagated in schools, media and government documents in China. However, no clear distinction between religion and

superstition is given by the government. Thus, minorities' religions are sometimes regarded as superstitions and become the targets of elimination during the civilisation process. Some Han people have sceptical attitudes toward minority religions, which they think of as superstition and lacking in scientific grounding (Yi, 2008: 57-63), although in theory the state recognised religion is acknowledged as generally playing a positive role in the mainstream discourse.

Even though there is no clear differentiation between religion and superstition, the state has an official list of *xiejiao* (literally meaning evil cult), which is a political concept in China (Xi, 2001). Once defined by the government as a *xiejiao*, a religion will be seriously suppressed. For example, the state identified *xiejiao*, Falun Gong once considered a great challenge to Chinese authority in 1990s. Thus all these various implicit and explicit relationships and reasons have made religion a sensitive topic in this officially atheistic country.

In contemporary China, some new trends in Tibetan religion have appeared alongside the modernisation process. The first one is the successful dissemination of Tibetan Buddhism to non-Tibetan areas. Many people, especially young people, have converted to Tibetan Buddhism and follow the teaching of distinguished lamas (Lin, 2014). In non-Tibetan areas, lamas have become especially popular in the lay world. They have opened blogs, Weibo accounts and Wechat⁵ accounts to share their life and thoughts on Buddhism and other matters. They have celebrity adherents who make Tibetan Buddhism a fashion among young people and help to spread their name in the lay world (Lin, 2014). From Lin's interviews with young Han people, we can see that for them practicing Tibetan Buddhism is considered cool and trendy. Lamas give talks in universities. To some extent, some of them can even be regarded as religious celebrities. However, according to an article from ifeng.com (a Chinese news agency) (Yu, 2013), some fraudsters pretend to be reincarnated lamas and swindle people of their money. People are persuaded to buy religious objects or to donate money. This has generated some suspicion toward Tibetan Buddhism.

In her article, Lin Meilian raises another pressing issue, that of monks' involvement in secular life. She writes that some reincarnated lamas are accused of being deeply involved in secular life, and to be straying therefore from their accepted duties (Lin, 2014). Apart from Buddhist scripts, it is said that they even learn computer skills, driving, English and urban development. Some work for record albums which combine pop

⁵ Wechat is a Chinese version of Whatsapp, a mobile messaging application on which people could broadcast their life experience, thoughts etc.

music and Buddhist scripts. Some are directors and writers. Some get married. Monks now have a variety of new roles and jobs to do. What it means to be a monk and what a monk's life should be like have become questions that are much debated.

Monks, especially young monks now have different ways of existence in the world. I still remember two young novices in Zharu Monastery in Jiuzhaigou secretly going off to an internet bar to play computer games and watch TV dramas at night. The contradictions between the modern and the traditional are shown here. All these new trends impel us to think how the monks situate themselves in the overwhelming process of secularisation (see Chapter 7, where I focus on this theme). Mills (2003: 80) argued that the world that monks are supposed to renounce is essentially 'society' itself, so monks' renunciation is necessarily incomplete. From this discussion of general perceptions of religion in mind, the following section will narrow down the focus to two religions on the Tibetan plateau: Bon and Tibetan Buddhism.

3.3.2 Bon and Tibetan Buddhism

3.3.2.1 What is Bon?

The historical nature and meaning of 'Bon' religion is contested amongst scholars. As mentioned previously, Bon is believed by many to be a religion which had existed for centuries before the arrival of Buddhism in the 7th century (Snellgrove and Richardson, 1980). Tonpa Shenrap, the founder of Bon, later came to be regarded as the 'true Buddha of our world age' (Kværne, 1993). It grew first in ancient Kingdom Shangshung in the west of Tibet, which was once the centre of the Bon religion and was conquered and brought into the Tibetan empire in the 7th century (Kværne, 1995: 13). Since then, Bon has experienced constant adaptations, transformations, and struggles and mutual learning with Buddhism.

Western scholars have characterised Bon as a religion with three main significations (Kværne, 1993: 9-10). Kværne's summary below is particularly cogent:

1. The pre-Buddhist religion which was gradually suppressed by Buddhism in the eighth and ninth centuries....
2. A religion, so most scholars believe, which developed in Tibet at the same time that Buddhism became dominant, and which manifestly has many points of similarity with Buddhism. The fact that the adherents of this religion, of whom there are many thousands in Tibet and in exile even today, maintain that their faith is anterior to Buddhism in Tibet, and, in fact, identical with the pre

Buddhist Bon religion, has tended to be either contradicted or ignored by Western scholars...

3. A vast and somewhat amorphous body of popular beliefs, including divination, the cult of local deities, and concepts of the soul. However, Tibetan usage does not traditionally designate such beliefs 'Bon', and since they do not form an essential part of Buddhism or of Bon (in the sense of the word outlined under point 2 above) – although such beliefs are to a large extent sanctioned by and integrated into both religious – a more appropriate term is that coined by R. A. Stein, viz, 'the nameless religion'. (Kværne, 1993: 9-10)

In 2000, Bon and its significant role in Tibetan society were acknowledged by the 14th Dalai Lama by saying:

Bon is Tibet's oldest spiritual tradition and the indigenous source of Tibetan culture, played a significant role in shaping unique identity [of Tibetans]. Consequently, I have often stressed the importance of preserving this tradition (the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 2007).

By stressing the importance of Bon as an identifier of Tibetans, Dalai Lama actually implied the unity between the Bonpos (Bon adherents) and the Buddhists as a whole. This view of unity, rather than discrimination or struggle was also expressed by some people I talked to in my case study areas. The following section will particularly look at the relationships between Bon and Buddhism.

3.3.2.2 Relationships between Bon and Buddhism

Bon is deemed identical with Buddhism in many respects, such as in its "rituals and other religious practices, as well as meditational and metaphysical traditions" (Kværne, 2013: 187). For example, both Bon and Buddhism conduct practices like turning prayer wheels, circumambulating sacred places such as monasteries and holy mountains, raising prayer flags, chanting sacred scriptures and carving them on stones or cliffs (Kværne, 1995: 12). Its believers "follow the same path of virtue and have resource to the same meditational practices as Buddhist Tibetans" (Kværne, 1993: 12). Some scholars found that Buddhism and Bon influenced each other mutually; it was not one-way traffic. The establishment of Bonpo monasteries and the monastic life were significantly influenced by Buddhist traditions and rules, especially those of the Gelug sect of Buddhism (Kværne, 1993: 12; Bell, 1931: 15). The images and pictures in the Bon monastery seemed like those in the Buddhist monastery, but had different name, for instance, the Gautama Buddha of Buddhism was also called 'Teacher Shenrap', the founder of Bon (Bell, 1931: 17). Moreover, "books in the Bon monastery appeared also to be Buddhist,

but the titles were different and the contents were altered to some extent to suit Pon [Bon]" (Bell, 1931: 17). Furthermore, in regard to their doctrines, "the view of the world as suffering, belief in the law of moral causality (the 'law of karma') and the corresponding concept of rebirth in the six states of existence, and the ideal of enlightenment and Buddhahood, are basic doctrinal elements not only of Buddhism, but also of Bon" (Kværne, 1995: 13). Kværne holds that it is hard to distinguish between contemporary Bon believers and Buddhists for the casual observer. However, there are some conspicuous differences. For example, the ritual movement for Bon is counter-clockwise, but is the reverse in Buddhism; in addition, according to Bell's research, some Bonpos, or adherents of Bon, asserted that their "religion comes from Shang-shung. The Buddhists pray 'Om Ma-ni Pe-me Hun', but we pray 'Om Ma-tre Mu-ye Sa-le Du'" (Bell, 1931: 17). Moreover, Kværne (2013: 183) claimed that even though there are many similarities in rituals, monastic system and metaphysical traditions, "key differences lie in their concepts of sacred history and sources of religious authority " which refer to "Bon tradition's claim[s] that it predated Buddhism in Tibet by several centuries... in Shangshung [as opposed to Buddhism's origin, India]... [and that] Tonpa Shenrap (as opposed to the Buddha, Sakyamuni) is the source [also founder] of Bon religion".

Tucci (1980: 245-248) found that Bon and Buddhism have become more and more similar to each other both in religious practices and in doctrines. Kapstein (2013: 205) even claims that Tibetan Bon is a form of Buddhism in its organized and clerical dimension. This view also resonates with those of my monk respondents (which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 7). It was also said by my respondents that parents of the founder of the first Buddhist sect (Ningmapa) were Bonpos. There have been close and frequent interactions and communications between Bon and Buddhist monasteries and monks. The relationship between the Bon and the Tibetan Buddhism is usually described as "Bon inside Buddhism, Buddhism inside Bon" (Li, 2005). From the insider's perspective, especially among the monks both Bonpos and Buddhists assert their differences in history, deities and practices, but still admit that they have many fundamental similarities. Thar (2006a) even found followers of Bon and Buddhism go to each other's temples on some occasions. Speaking of the attitudes toward these similarities, Bonpos seemed to be proud of the similarity. One chief priest of Bon delightedly told Bell that "Bon was nearly the same as Buddhism" (Bell, 1931: 18).

The close relations between Bon and Tibetan Buddhism are also evidenced in the mixed usage of the religious terminologies. The word "Bon" (*Benbojjiao* in Chinese, Bonpo in Tibetan) is not a commonly used concept. Jiuzhaigou people prefer to use Buddhist terminology like Buddha (*fo*) and Buddhism (*fojjiao*) to refer to their own god and religion. This mixing usage shows very close relations between Tibetan Buddhism and Bon. Like

a monk in Gami Monastery, Agu Jiaco said “we are all Tibetans. Buddhism and Bon are the same.” Nevertheless, some of local laypeople, especially the young people even have no or little idea that their religion is called Bon or there are differences between Bon and Buddhism.

Despite the positive attitudes of Bonpos and the Dalai Lama’s official acknowledgement, Bon has been and still is looked down upon by some Buddhists. This happened in Suopo township in Danba, where some Tibetans are despised by other Tibetans and their Bon religion is in a marginal position which might obstruct their ‘authentic’ Tibetan identity (Tenzin, 2013). Some Bonpos still wish to walk out of the shadow of Buddhism and to see their rightful place being recognised in the international spiritual community (Bellezza, 2014).

3.3.2.3 Monastic development

Monasteries were, and despite changed circumstances still are, at the heart of institutional religion (Kapstein, 2013: 219). Mass monasticism was widely supported by Tibetan families through sending their sons and making donations to monasteries. These deeds, it is believed, bestow merit and help avoid evil.

Before 1950 in Tibet, mass monasticism was popular. Monasteries accommodated a large number of monks. Monasteries and monks had always lived a life of abundance. They had strong support from central or local governments. They had their own estates and businesses. They also received a large amount in donations and alms from laypeople. Goldstein (1998a: 35) described the financial situation of the famous Drepung Monastery in Lhasa like this: “In the old society, Drepung’s income primarily came from the monastery’s own resources – its manorial estates and its money lending operations – and from the government. For the individual monks, alms from donors were also an important source.” This helps demonstrate the wealth of Tibetan monasteries before their incorporation into People’s Republic of China. Even though monks traditionally received no salary or alms from their monastery, they were better off than laypeople. What needs to be clarified here is that only a small number of monks were involved in running the monasteries and their businesses, the majority of them focused on religious studies and practice.

Since 1950, in order to be socio-politically compatible with the realities of socialist society, monasteries in Tibet have been through a process of adaptation of their traditional values, customs and beliefs. Three policies have had an undue influence on monastic

development in contemporary Tibet: the one-child policy, a change in recruitment age and self-support policy.

The one-child policy, as well as controlling the population has also led to a reduction in the number of monks. In the past, a Tibetan family normally had more than 3 children. Each family sent at least one child to the monastery in order to show support and respect. As members of a national minority, Tibetans have been allowed to have two children, but this has nonetheless had a damaging effect on the supply of monks.

In 1982, Chinese government issued an official document “The Basic Views and Policies of Religious Issues in Socialist Period” which ruled that only people over 18 could become monks (State Administration for Religious Affairs of P.R.C, 2005). In the past, monks were sent to a monastery by their parents when they were very young, aged 7 or 8. But senior monks think that when children are 18, they have already been influenced by the outside world and the Chinese language, making it more difficult for them to become accustomed to a monastic life.

In the same document, the government also asked religious institutions to “resolve their own problems” and start “self-management and self-support” (*zizhi ziyang*) (Ran, 1999; State Administration for Religious Affairs of P.R.C, 2005; 2010). This means monasteries not only lost traditional sources of huge financial support from the Tibetan government and nobles but also were not allowed to solicit large donations from laypeople. They were encouraged to participate in economic activities to generate income in support of the monastery and their own life. Since then, a large number of monasteries have started their ‘self-support’ activities, including commerce, transportation, farming, and stockbreeding etc. (Ran, 1999). For example, in the early 1980s Drepung monastery started various ventures involving activities such as tourism, selling apples, herding yaks and selling butter and yogurt, operating grocery stores and a restaurant, hiring trucks, selling tree branches and ceremonial scarves to pilgrims (Goldstein, 1998b: 35). In the meantime, the Chinese government also provides some financial subsistence, even though this cannot be compared to the traditional support monasteries had obtained. For example, each monk receives a minimum subsistence from the government of 120 CNY a month. In addition, they still have donations from their families which might also be in destitution and patrons of religious services. In all, the ‘self-support’ policy has contributed to the transformation of monastic economies and enhanced monks’ involvement in economic activities, even though not all monasteries have successful experience of running businesses. Meanwhile, monks’ standard of living cannot comparable to the period with mass monasticism. According to Adams (1996: 523-525),

religious oppression or cultural museumification were not the prior worry for monks, but the financial hardship constitute their major concern.

As discussed previously, in the past being a monk was seen as honourable and a merit for both the monk himself and his family. Once a man had become a monk, he could enjoy a respectable and relatively prosperous life. Monasteries therefore tended to attract men of talent. Nowadays, laypeople do not donate such large amounts of money anymore; and monasteries generally lack financial means. Monks have to perform religious services for laypeople to earn alms. Thus the monastery is no longer as appealing for potential monks as it once was. For most parents, their first choice is to send their children to Chinese schools for a better future. Monasteries only have a limited number of recruits.

3.3.2.4 Geographical distribution of Bon

Generally, Bonpos in Tibet are a significant minority and can be mainly found in some eastern parts of the Himalayas (Bell, 1931: 19). According to Kværne (1995: 22), there are two main Bonpo areas, the Sharkhog area in eastern Tibet in Sichuan province (where my two case study sites are located) and the region of Gyarong, also in Sichuan province. In addition, some scattered communities adhering to Bon can be found in central and western Tibet, north of Nepal and exiled Tibetan diasporas in India. Mount Kailash in southwestern Tibet and Mount Bonri in the southeastern district of Kongpo are the major sacred mountains for Bon.

As for the distribution of Bon monasteries, Bon monasteries are mainly distributed in eastern and north-eastern Tibet (Kværne, 1995: 17). After a comprehensive investigation of Bon monasteries conducted between 1996 and 2000, the Tibetan scholar Tsering Thar (2006b) reported that there were 218 registered Bon monasteries -- that are on the official temple list. He estimated that there were nearly 300 temples and monasteries in total including unregistered ones on the Qinghai-Tibet plateau. Among them, 40 Bon monasteries were located in Aba Prefecture, including my case study monasteries, twelve of them in Songpan County and five in Jiuzhaigou County (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Distribution of Bon monasteries in Aba Prefecture (case study monasteries are highlighted)

Province	Prefecture	County	No. of monastery
Sichuan	Aba	Aba	4
Sichuan	Aba	Ma'erkang	5
Sichuan	Aba	Jinchuan	5
Sichuan	Aba	Hongyuan	2
Sichuan	Aba	Ruo'ergai	5
Sichuan	Aba	Songpan	12
Sichuan	Aba	Jiuzhaigou	5
Sichuan	Aba	Wenchuan	2

Source: from Thar (2006b)

Tibetan scholar Thar (2006b) also classified two kinds of Bon adherents, pure Bonpos and Bon believers who worshipped Buddhism too. Therefore, the population of Bonpos is around 40 to 50 thousand but there are 400 to 500 thousand Bon believers (Vevien, 2005).

3.4 History and geography of Jiuzhaigou National Park

My primary case study is located in one of China's most visited national parks, the Jiuzhaigou National Park. This section aims to delineate the localised background information of Jiuzhaigou National Park. Section 3.4.1 discusses the special location of Jiuzhaigou on the border of Han and Tibetan cultural influences. Following this, Section 3.4.2 examines the trajectory of Jiuzhaigou, growing to become a well-known tourist destination and its characteristics. Brief information about Zharu Monastery, religious centrepiece of the park, will be provided in Section 3.4.3. Section 3.4.4 will explore the relationship between Jiuzhaigou and nearby Songpan (the site of my secondary case study site which is used to contextualise my findings in Jiuzhaigou).

3.4.1 On the margins of the Tibetan and Han cultural spheres

Over half of the Tibetan population lives near the border with ethnic Han areas. These regions are almost as large as the TAR. Jiuzhaigou sits on the frontier between Tibetan influence from the west and Han influence from the east. Fei Xiaotong, the distinguished Chinese sociologist and ethnologist proposed in 1979 the concept of a “Tibet-Yi Corridor” which lines the borders between the Han and the many ethnic minorities living west of that line drawn from northwest to southwest China (Fei, 1982; Shi, 2005). These ethnic groups have special languages, cultures and identities. A similar concept, the “Han-Tibet Corridor”, had been named by Stein (1992) to describe the peripheral Tibetan area distributed along the border of Sichuan and Gansu provinces on the one side and Qinghai Province and Tibet Autonomous Region on the other. This area can be seen to have had complicated and intimate relations between the Han and the Tibetans, as is copiously evidenced in this thesis. Wang (2010) found that people living in this area were influenced by and also despised as being a part of the periphery by both Tibetans and Han people. Through his ethnographic research on the Sino-Tibet borderlands in Danba County, Sichuan Province, Tenzin (2013) found both culture and identity in this peripheral area to be products of hybridisation and creolisation of both Tibetan and Han cultural centres. Tibetan people living here are a subgroup of Tibetans called Gyarongwa and practicing Bon. They are defined by the author as “non-Tibetan non-Han; Tibetan as well as Han” (Tenzin, 2013: 23). Their ethnic identity and religion are frequently disputed and not recognised by the big neighbouring Khampa subgroup in the west. Local Gyarongwa felt the Bon religion to be a marginalised religion that formed a barrier to their claim to an authentic Tibetan identity. In order to diminish prejudice and defend their Tibetan identity, local elites constantly emphasise that Bon is a religion of inclusiveness and openness and is in harmony with Buddhism. Living in this Han-Tibet Corridor, the Jiuzhaigou people I talked to experienced similar issues over the authenticity of their ethnic identity (see Chapter 7).

3.4.2 The making of the Jiuzhaigou National Park

In order to understand local sense of identity and understandings of religion, it is essential to know the nature, characteristics and particularities of Jiuzhaigou National Park.

Jiuzhaigou National Park is a part of Jiuzhaigou County which sits in the north-eastern region of Aba Prefecture in Sichuan Province. In Jiuzhaigou National Park, there are four Tibetan villages and one Bon monastery (Zharu monastery), and these are my main

research areas. At the moment, there are two main routes for tourists to get into Jiuzhaigou: one involves a 6 to 8 hour drive from Chengdu to Jiuzhaigou; the other one, a 40-minute flight from Chengdu airport to Jiuzhaigou-Huanglong Airport and about a 2 hour drive from the airport to Jiuzhaigou.

Jiuzhaigou National Park covers 720 square kilometres. According to the official web site for the park: “It is best known for its fabled blue and green lakes, spectacular waterfalls, narrow conic karst land forms and its unique wildlife” (Jiuzhaigou National Park, 2014). Jiuzhaigou was named a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site in 1992 and joined the Man and Biosphere Conservation Network in 1997. Figures 3.2 – 3.5 from the official website of Jiuzhaigou National Park illustrate the magnificent and beautiful scenery in Jiuzhaigou which are the main attractions.

Jiuzhaigou in Chinese means Nine Village Valley, so named because it was home to nine Tibetan villages (see Fig. 3.6-3.8 for the images of the villages). Although nine villages had been recomposed into four villages, the name is still kept. There are 1189 residents and 334 families in the park, 95% of who are Tibetans (Jiuzhaigou Administration Bureau, 2012a). They were living a farming and herding life before the start of tourism.

Tourism started in Jiuzhaigou in 1984. Since then, Jiuzhaigou has become a mature tourist destination. Local residents (including laypeople and monks) have been involved in tourism to a greater and greater extent. Tourism could be considered Jiuzhaigou’s sole means of living creating huge fortune for them. According to data provided by the Jiuzhaigou Administration Bureau (local level government specifically managing the Jiuzhaigou; abbreviated as JAB), apart from young people who are studying, almost all local people directly or indirectly work in tourism. The majority of locals let Tibetan costumes out to, take instant photos for, and sell souvenirs to tourists. In addition, some run family inns and hotels. Some local people are working in the JAB. Both women and men at different ages have taken part in these various forms of tourism business. For those who are not formally employed in public sectors, as a dividend they can split the total amount of 7 CNY from each ticket sold (the ticket price is 220 CNY in peak season; 80 CNY in off-season). According to statistics from the JAB, in 2005 every qualified Jiuzhaigou resident⁶ got 14,000 CNY dividend (Jiuzhaigou Administration Bureau, 2012a). In comparison with the whole Aba, in 2005 the average annual income of urban and rural residents were respectively 7,830 CNY and 1,881 CNY (Aba Statistics Bureau,

⁶ Qualified Jiuzhaigou residents are people with their *hukou* registered in Jiuzhaigou National Park.

2006). The income from the tourism dividend only in Jiuzhaigou is far more than other areas in Aba Prefecture, not to mention the income from the tourism business. According to the latest statistics (Abazhou.gov.cn, 2010), in 2010 the average annual income of urban and rural residents in Aba rose to 15,939 CNY and 3,741 CNY. But according to an estimate provided by a government official, the annual income of a Jiuzhaigou resident was at least 50,000 to 60,000 CNY.

Apart from their economic status, their *hukou* status has changed as well. In 1992, their *hukou* was changed from agricultural to non-agricultural. In 2000, in order to protect the environment and sustain tourism, the central and local government required local people to convert their farm land into forest. In 2003, Jiuzhaigou people were forced to get rid of nearly 2000 livestock, which signified that their traditional ways of production were to be completely abandoned. They turned from farmers and herders into 'urban' residents, even though they still live in the four 'villages'. Some local people complained to me that they do not feel secure without their fields by saying "We are now turned into urban residents without any welfare... I would rather be a farmer"; and "Now we lost our land, tourism is our only choice". They felt confused about their role as urban *hukou* holders because they can enjoy neither privileges of those who hold urban *hukou* nor those who hold rural *hukou*.

The number of tourists has rapidly increased with local people's increasing wealth. Since 2001, Jiuzhaigou has had more than 1 million tourists every year. In 2011 and 2012, there were about 2,830,000 (Aba Tourism Bureau, 2012) and 3,860,000 tourists visiting Jiuzhaigou respectively (Jiuzhai.com.cn, 2013). The gross revenue from ticket sales reached 539,000,000 CNY and 654,000,000 CNY. From 1984 to 2011, Jiuzhaigou received about 223.9 million visitors in total. Jiuzhaigou tourism has become the leading industry of Aba Prefecture. Mass tourism is the main type of tourism in Jiuzhaigou and tourists are mostly Han Chinese. Tourists come to Jiuzhaigou mainly to view the beautiful natural sites. Most of them just stay in Jiuzhaigou for one day (Jiuzhaigou National Park is open from 07:00 to 18:00) rushing between the waters, forests and Tibetan villages. Most tourists are on package tours run by tourist agencies which leave only one day for Jiuzhaigou National Park. The ticket price is comparatively high, 310 CNY including gate ticket and shuttle bus ticket. This also prevents tourists from staying longer than one day in the park. Tourists stay outside the park as accommodation is not permitted inside. Tourists and residents do not have abundant contact between each other. Their encounters are superficial, limited to the 'businesses' of tourism.

In the following paragraphs, four prominent characteristics of Jiuzhaigou, namely its nature as a gated, economically constricted, socially inward-looking and religiously confined space, will be examined.

3.4.2.1 A gated park

In order to preserve the natural environment and to manage tourism effectively, Jiuzhaigou as well as local people are enclosed into a 62-square-kilometre area. Both for tourists and local residents, there is only one entrance into the Jiuzhaigou Valley. The gate regulations are very strict not only for tourists, but also for the local residents. According to the gate policies, the park opens from 7:00 to 18:00 to tourists. Except for this period, tourists are not allowed to stay in the park. As to the local residents in Jiuzhaigou, a tourist shuttle in the park is their only means of public transportation and this only runs in the daytime (7:00-18:00). They are only allowed to use their own vehicles in the tourist off-peak time (12:00-14:00) and at night and early morning (from 18:00 to 7:00 on the following day) to move around in the park or drive out of it. For the non-tourist outsiders, it is extremely hard and complicated to go into the park. Anyone including relatives and friends of the local residents who visit the park, needs to buy a ticket or get a permit from the Administration Bureau in order to get in. Every resident has a quota of people they can invite each year. At the moment, it is 3 persons a year.

These gate regulations cause inconvenience for the life of people living in Jiuzhaigou. They are not free to go back home. Some young people who come back only in summer and winter holidays are often stopped at the entrance because they are not recognised by the guards. Friends and relatives of local people are not easily invited home. At the same time, tourism development as well as the gate regulations, make the park feel as if it is endowed with exclusive social and economic characteristics.

3.4.2.2 An economically-constricted park

Tourism is the only economy which local people in Jiuzhaigou can be directly or indirectly involved in. Almost all of the locals are working inside the park and could be economically self-sufficient with little connection to the outside.

Not only are the older and middle generations deeply enmeshed in Jiuzhaigou tourism, the younger generation is also attracted back home by tourism after graduation from college or university. For young people, working in the tourism business back home is a comparatively good and easy career choice from which they can get a decent income

and flexible working hours. Like their parents, they are running tourist souvenir shops, photographing for tourists, renting Tibetan costumes to tourists, working in the Jiuzhaigou Administration Bureau, and so on. Contrary to the description of “lazy” and “spoiled” Tibetans in Lhasa in Yeh’s (2007b) study, most Tibetans in Jiuzhaigou are working hard in tourism.

In order to efficiently preserve the environment and manage tourism, the JAB has adopted a series of strategies of regulating the types of economies in the park. The traditional economic activities that were considered damaging environment and causing disorders were forbidden, such as food-stalls and yak-photographing. There are fixed jobs within the tourism business which are allowed by the JAB. A quota is given to each family in the park for renting Tibetan costumes and taking photos for tourists every day. Even though working opportunities are exclusively for Jiuzhaigou *hukou* holders, there are some exceptions; for example, local people can rent out their shops or stalls to outsiders; the monastery was once leased out (see Chapter 5 for full story).

In 2013, JAB undertook a project identifying people who could get the Basic Living Allowance. For locals, this is a way of officially identifying Jiuzhaigou people. This project originated in complaints from Jiuzhaigou people about the current dividend policy. As I mentioned earlier, the dividend is the gross of 7 CNY from each ticket sold at Jiuzhaigou. In 2012, this dividend was called the Basic Living Allowance to make it clear it was meant to help Jiuzhaigou people⁷ who have no official job and stable monthly salary, such as self-employed couriers in the tourism business, students, and the unemployed. Workers in public or private organizations like the government sector, national corporations and the public sector JAB are not qualified to receive the allowance. Some complain that their salary is far lower than that of many self-employed people working in the tourism business and saying that they should be given the allowance. People who married an outside woman/man tend to think that their spouse and children are Jiuzhaigou people as well and it is unfair that they cannot be enlisted in the Basic Living Allowance system. In these ways, the current way of identifying and treating Jiuzhaigou people is challenged and questioned by local residents. The economic benefit becomes one of the elements constituting local people’s sense of their identity. Furthermore, whether or not you hold a Jiuzhaigou *hukou* in Jiuzhaigou has a series of consequences. In Jiuzhaigou there are some collective investments which only allow official Jiuzhaigou *hukou* holders to take part in. For example, one of the main issues around the newest hotel development project in Jiuzhaigou is to decide who is qualified to buy shares in this

⁷ Here Jiuzhaigou people mean people with *hukou* registered in Jiuzhaigou National Park.

project and how many shares each person can buy. This raised difficult questions about who a 'proper' Jiuzhaigou person is. This project was carried out among four villages. The main stakeholder, who is a current allowance receiver, had conducted a poll regarding the main question of who could receive the Basic Living Allowance attached to this project. They decided that their own and relatives' families should benefit. They asked, for example, if people agreed that their daughters-in-law, sons-in-law and their grandchildren should obtain the allowance and if they are happy to see residents with official jobs getting the allowance. Getting a *hukou* in Jiuzhaigou turns out to be like obtaining citizenship in another country. They even designed a question in the poll asking after how many years of marriage the spouse could start to enjoy the allowance.

The enclosure of Jiuzhaigou National Park changed the form and nature of the economy in Jiuzhaigou. Moreover, the significance of a specific Jiuzhaigou identity has been significantly enhanced.

3.4.2.3 A socially-inward-looking park

As stated before, tourism provides locals opportunities and privileges. These factors greatly influence local people's decisions on marriage. They prefer to marry someone inside so that the couple can enjoy the working opportunities and dividends in Jiuzhaigou. At the same time, their families can help each other in various ways inside Jiuzhaigou. Women are not very willing to marry a husband from outside. Even when they do marry a man from outside, they still keep their *hukou* registration in the park and come back inside to do business. In these ways, Jiuzhaigou people share a lot of communal relatives. The *hukou* of an outside woman who marries an inside man cannot be moved to the park.

3.4.2.4 A religiously-confined space

In Jiuzhaigou, there are two important sacred sites with regional religious appeal, Zharu monastery and Zhayizhaga sacred mountain. Zharu monastery provides religious services to laypeople in Jiuzhaigou National Park as well as in some other towns and villages nearby. However, the gate of Jiuzhaigou National Park sets an invisible barrier between the outside laypeople and the religious sites in Jiuzhaigou. People from nearby places do not have easy access to the Zharu Monastery and Mount Zhayizhaga. They are only allowed to get into Jiuzhaigou freely on important religious days, such as the fifteenth day of every lunar month. The inconveniences caused by the gate regulations affect the religious involvement and enthusiasm of outside people for Zharu monastery.

Some chooses other monasteries or sacred mountains to which to make pilgrimages and devotions instead.

3.4.3 Locating Zharu Monastery

As the only religious institution in Jiuzhaigou, it is necessary to locate Zharu Monastery within the broader religious sphere, in Jiuzhaigou tourism and in the local area first, to better understand the nature and characteristics of the monastery.

In terms of scale and religious status, Zharu Monastery is a local level monastery in Tibet and in Bon. Zharu Monastery itself does not have broad religious appeal and is at the lower level of the Bon monastic hierarchy. It has a relatively small 'parish' which occupies the most part of Zhangzha Township, including Jiuzhaigou National Park, Pengfeng Village, Congya Village, Longkang Village, Yazha Village, Shaba Village and Zhangzha Village. There are about 6,000 Tibetan and Han Chinese living in this area. In the monastery a total of 63 monks are registered at the moment and they all come from monastery's 'parish' (see Fig. 3.9-3.12 for images of Zharu Monastery).

The Zharu Monastery has been reshaped in various ways by the tourism economy. For tourism purposes, it is necessary to elaborate on the uniqueness of Zharu Monastery. Differing from other Bon monasteries in Tibet, Zharu Monastery has some unique characteristics due to its special geographical location in Jiuzhaigou National Park. Compared to other Tibetan monasteries, Zharu monastery has more space for development allowed by the government. Given the recent tense relationship between Tibetan monasteries and the Chinese government, monasteries in Tibet have not been encouraged to freely develop and expand by the government. Monastery-related issues tend to be seen as headaches by local government officials who fear getting into trouble as a result of any major changes to the monastery. Zharu Monastery not only avoids much interference from government, but also is publicly encouraged to develop tourism. It is regarded as an integral part of Jiuzhaigou National Park and its tourism. It has always been considered as one of the important tourist sites in Jiuzhaigou and one which needs to be integrated into the whole tourist product in Jiuzhaigou. Cultural tourism is propagated as an important strategy for future tourism development in Jiuzhaigou (Abazhou.gov.cn, 2012). Zharu monastery is an important component in this plan. This means it is easier of access for tourists, and secures easier and bigger funds from government for maintenance purposes and tourism development. However, tourism has also brought Zharu Monastery disputes and contestations. During 1999-2002, Zharu Monastery was firstly included in tourism industry by some Han business men. But the religious commodification generated numerous complaints among tourists, local people.

The monastery contraction was banned by prefectural and county governments. Meanwhile, the governments also ruled that the monastery can only be managed by the Monastery Administration Committee. From 2002 to 2005, monastery continued its tourism operation. All monks have also involved in similar tourism-related jobs to laypeople. All these forms of tourism involvement have played a significant role in reshaping Zharu Monastery (this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5) and monks (see more detailed discussion in Chapter 7).

So far Zharu Monastery has gained more prestige and funding from the secular world but obtained little increase in renown in the world of Bon. Zharu monastery is trying to expand its influence and scale both in the secular and sacred sense by constructing new buildings and recruiting more monks (Fig. 3.13 for the construction plan). The expansion plan started in around 2006. It was planned to use 12,000,000 CNY for fulfilling the whole project. It received 8 million CNY from the JAB. The remaining funding will be sought from other sources. They aim to build it into a religious and tourism centre. According to the plan, there will be several Bon temples, the biggest stupa in Tibet (which has finished, see Chapter 5), a big dormitory for monks, a Bon and Buddhism scripture library and a residential care home for the elderly. Functionally, it is hoped that Zharu Monastery could become a religious centre, an important cultural tourist site in Jiuzhaigou, a Bon school having a complete system of Bon teaching and a home for old people in Jiuzhaigou. Tourism will be its main source of income through entrance tickets, donations and souvenir sales. The revenue from tourism is planned to be used in religious development.

However, its location also gives it more restrictions compared to other monasteries. It is administered and supervised by the Bureau of Religious Affairs and national park related government sectors at local, prefectural, provincial and national levels. No one has sole authority over the monastery. For example, building a new house in the monastery grounds cannot only decided by the JAB. It needs to be approved by the national level government sectors.

As a World Heritage Site, national park and nature reserve, there are a number of laws and regulations implemented at national, provincial and prefectural levels for the sustainable preservation and management of Jiuzhaigou (UNESCO, 1992). To name just the main laws and regulations: the Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics, Law of the People's Republic of China on Environment Protection, Environment Protection, Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Scenic and Historic Areas, Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Nature Reserves, Regulations of Sichuan Province on World Heritage Protection, Regulations of

Sichuan Province on Scenic and Historic Areas and Regulations on Implementing Sichuan Provincial Regulation on World Heritage Protection in Aba Autonomous Prefecture. Most of the activities in Jiuzhaigou are strictly controlled under these regulations and laws. Most big planning and construction must be reported to and approved by four levels of government, namely JAB, Aba Prefecture, Sichuan Province and the national government.

3.4.4 Relations with Anbei Village and Gami Monastery in Songpan

The previous sections have elaborated on my main case study area, Jiuzhaigou National Park. This section will briefly discuss Anbei and its social, cultural, economic and religious relations with Jiuzhaigou. In Chapter 4 I will specify the reasons for choosing Anbei and Gami Monastery as my supporting case study.

Geographically, they are neighbouring areas (Fig. 3.14 – 3.16). Anbei is on the only tourist route from Chengdu to Jiuzhaigou. Anbei and its surrounding villages in Songpan have close social, economic and religious connections with Jiuzhaigou. Songpan is one of Aba's 13 counties and is next to Jiuzhaigou County. It takes about 3 hours to drive from Jiuzhaigou National Park to the main settlement in Songpan County. Songpan occupies a strategic location that tourists coming from Chengdu must pass through. This advantage greatly helps Songpan in developing its tourism industry.

Generally in the past, Songpan was an economic and religious centre attracting Jiuzhaigou people to go and work there and visit on pilgrimage. Songpan has played an important role in Tibet's history, in defence, economics and cultural integration. Many Muslims living side by side with Tibetans in Songpan reinforces a sense of its traditional role as political, economic and cultural centre. Songpan people have a long tradition of trade and herding, but not farming. They exchanged their butter and meat for salt, grain and tea with outsiders. According to my respondents, Jiuzhaigou people once worked in Songpan for money. In terms of religion, Anbei has always been a religious centre for the surrounding area, first because there is a very important Bon sacred mountain behind it, Mount Xiao Xitian. Many Jiuzhaigou pilgrims make devotions here. Secondly, there are some educated and learned monks in Gami Monastery who have attracted many young monks and novices to come to learn from them, one of whom is now abbot of Zharu Monastery, Jiuzhaigou. Thirdly, Gami Monastery is the chief monastery for the nearby monasteries. It holds many big religious ceremonies every year.

However, the economic and religious positions of the two monasteries have changed after tourism. Songpan people now go to Jiuzhaigou seeking work and business opportunities (see Chapter 5 and 7). As for religion, as tourism has grown quickly in Jiuzhaigou, a new counter-directional religious move from Anbei to Jiuzhaigou has sprung up. Due to the shortage of Jiuzhaigou monks to fulfil religious services, the demand for monks in Jiuzhaigou attracted many monks from Anbei to perform religious

rituals and scripture chanting for laypeople both outside and in Zhuru Monastery.

3.5 Conclusion

Modernisation in Tibet is largely a state project. The development logic of minorities and the Han/minorities division have served as the guidelines for dealing with minority issues in China. According to the Han/minorities division and development logic, the backward, uncivilised minorities need the support of the advanced, civilised Han to achieve modernisation like the Han. Minority policies are supposed to strengthen integration between the Han and the minorities. However, the Han/minorities division is reinforced and the distinct ethnic identity of the minorities is enhanced. State education and tourism provide two examples of the ways in which ethnic identities of the minorities have been strengthened rather than diluted.

I argued that the politically constructed category of *minzu* is essentially problematic in its usage, a point that has been ignored both in and out of academia. The problematic usage of *minzu* has demonstrated and further reinforced minority/Han division, the othering practices. Each ethnic minority is now having a newly constructed and shared panethnic identity: *shaoshu minzu*. The ideas about *minzu* and *shaoshu minzu* have been deeply woven into the identity system of both the ethnic minorities and the Han. Both minorities and Han people's perceptions of self and of each other have been shaped by the Han/minority division.

For the minorities in China, modernisation has ethnic implications. It is associated with the Han, or hanified society. It has deep bonds with the Han conceptually and practically, because modernisation in minority areas is initiated, organized, regulated and managed by the majority, 'advanced' Han.

The development and modernisation discourse and practices in minority areas also provided chances for minorities to promote their particular ethnic identity and culture. Economic modernisation might reduce cultural differences between ethnic groups, but these cultures have yet to be homogenized or eliminated (Mackerras, 2003: 76). From Mackerras' (2003: 46) long term observation of Tibet from 1980 to 2002, Tibet has experienced a strong cultural revival.

What also needs to be emphasised (as is also evident in Chapters 5-7) is that minorities and Tibetans are not simply passive receivers of the results of modernisation, they also have actively involved in those processes mentioned before.

Chapter 4 Methodological issues

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological approach employed in the thesis. As Silverman (2005: 120) argues, "Decisions about methodology are always theoretically loaded". The methodological approach adopted here responds to the recognition (explored in Chapter 2) that there is a need for more in-depth, qualitative research at the micro-scale for understanding patterns of religious change in the context of economic modernisation. In this research, for obtaining in-depth understandings of the changing patterns of religious belief, religious practices and religious institution at the local level, I employed ethnographic research methods within a case study design to generate a unique body of first-hand qualitative data. Conventional methods of survey based quantitative research were judged to be inadequate to the task of reflecting the meanings attributed to the religious space, religious practices, and religious identity which I was interested in.

During the research process, I encountered a variety of methodological challenges, which is common in forms of ethnographic research. These included challenges accessing informants (in part due to the sensitivity of discussing religious issues in this context), my positionality influencing fieldwork, and the fieldwork in turn reshaping my understanding of religion and ethnic identity. This chapter provides discussion of (and critical reflection on) the methodological approaches and techniques that were adopted for this research. The chapter is organised as follows. I begin by discussing issues of research design, with particular attention to the choice of a qualitative approach and the decision to use a case study design (Section 4.2). Following this, I will present the relevant methods of data collection, and the process of data analysis (Section 4.3). In Section 4.4, the ethical issues that arose in the research process and the reflections on my positionality will be considered. In the conclusion (Section 4.5), I will draw out some further methodological insights I obtained through the research process.

4.2 Research design

As Bradshaw and Stratford (2010: 69) assert, "Research that is poorly conceived results in research that is poorly executed and in findings that do not stand up to scrutiny." This section addresses the choices that were made to develop a research design that would best facilitate achieving the research aims while also being practical within the practical

constraints of doctoral research. In specific, I will explain why a case study approach was chosen (Section 4.2.1), the rationale for choosing Jiuzhaigou as the primary case study area (with Anbei providing important context for comparison) (Section 4.2.2), and how I accessed and sampled research participants (Section 4.2.3).

4.2.1 Use of case study and qualitative method

By comparing different ways of researching religious change, case study method was found most effective and plausible in accessing data and creating new and pertinent understanding of the dynamics of religious change in contemporary Tibet. There are three reasons for undertaking case study approach. Firstly, case study method is generally acknowledged enabling researchers to “retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” which cannot be obtained from theory or a large-sample study (Yin, 2003: 2; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Baxter, 2010). Secondly, different from large-scale quantitative research which has been widely used in examining religious change in the field of religious studies, a case study approach aims to provide a detailed focus on the underlying social processes within a particular context. The third reason concerns the practical aspect. There is little readily-used source of survey data on Tibetan religion. Case study is more practical and easier to handle for generating first-hand data.

Rather than multiple case studies, I adopted single case study for three reasons. Firstly, my primary case study area Jiuzhaigou is a revelatory case which is one of the first explorations into contemporary Tibetans’ everyday religious practices and belief. As I stated in chapter 1, this provides grounded information onto once obscure and biased understanding of Tibetan people’s religious practices and beliefs. Secondly, even though Jiuzhaigou is not a typical community in Tibet in the sense that it is one of a few Tibetan communities that is richer than other Tibetan places and developing tourism, it is because of its frontier location to tourism, modernisation and hanification that has accelerated Jiuzhaigou’s religious change and makes religious change easier to identify. The dramatic change makes Jiuzhaigou an ideal case for capturing the relationships between religion and modernisation in Tibet. Thirdly, for minimising the misrepresentation, Anbei was chosen for providing context for comparison and various sources of data have also been adopted.

As I stated before, Tibetans’ religious belief and practices cannot be well detected by simply counting the numbers and calculating the percentages. Qualitative approach was set as the central approach to my thesis. Recently qualitative method has experienced general renaissance in studies on religion after long term dominance of quantitative

method. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, much research on secularisation and religious change has mainly taken a macro-scale, quantitative approach. This method potentially provide general understandings of large scale shifts and relationships between variables, but are less effective at explaining the 'whys' and 'hows' of particular phenomena. One of its limitations is its incapability of interrogating the small scale social-cultural phenomena and providing highly nuanced, dynamic and detailed nature of human practices and meanings. Thus, quantitative method is of limited use for exploring the key issues of interest for this thesis, which involve issues of religious belief and the meanings of religious practices and religious spaces. Overall, qualitative approaches have more potential to elucidate the meanings, processes and relationships that are of importance for this research (Marks, 2004: 219).

Specifically, this research adopted an ethnographic approach which combined in-depth interviews and observation/participant observation as methods of data collection. This choice was made because this study needed the researcher to spend time immersed in the everyday life of people in the research sites, investigating their life routines, everyday religious practices and the meanings of the religious (see Section 4.3 for a more detailed discussion of these specific techniques of data collection and how they were deployed).

In Chapter 3, I provided a brief introduction to the primary case study site, Jiuzhaigou. I was partially inspired to conduct doctoral research here based on prior research experience that I had gained in this area. I first developed an interest in Jiuzhaigou during fieldwork in 2009 for a master's dissertation project on general impacts of tourism on religion (which did not go deep into the research questions I explored in this thesis). Before that I had never been to Jiuzhaigou, even though my hometown, Maerkang County, the capital county of Aba Prefecture, was very "near" Jiuzhaigou (it takes about 7 hours to drive from Maerkang to Jiuzhaigou). Prior to 2009, Jiuzhaigou was only known to me as one of the most important tourist sites in China. There is a widely known saying in China complimenting the beauty of Jiuzhaigou's lakes: "There is no need to see waters when you come back from Jiuzhaigou". It means once you had seen Jiuzhaigou's lakes, you would not want to see other bodies of water, which will be less beautiful. After two periods of fieldwork in 2009, it was not only Jiuzhaigou's beautiful waters that had caught my attention, but also the local people's ambivalent feelings toward culture preservation and economic development that generated a sense of research curiosity. It is this curiosity which has been suggested by Phillips and Johns (2012: 190) for its efficiency in generating "new ideas and lines of enquiry" that has driven me to conduct my doctoral research and to be an "explorer" (see 2012: 188-207) on the familiar and strange land of Jiuzhaigou (it was strange because of my previous limited knowledge on Tibetan religion and culture and Jiuzhaigou). As a Tibetan

researcher, I felt an urgent need to shift the research focus from the ancient traditions, texts (although of course I acknowledge that they are always very important part of Tibetan culture) to the contemporary situation of Tibetan society and culture. Reflecting what Tibetan people are currently doing and thinking is as significant as wandering through historical materials and sacred texts. Thus in my PhD research, I decided to significantly extend and deepen my investigation and to keep on exploring the current situation of Tibetan religion, an integral part of Tibetan culture. My master's research (an investigation which I now realise was quite rudimentary compared to the more theoretically and empirically ambitious project I have completed here) only touched on a small portion of the dimensions of religious change. A number of questions and intriguing issues were waiting to be addressed, such as the meanings of various religious spaces for local people and tourists, the embodied religious practices, the relationships between everyday religious life and non-religious life, the ways in which local people of different generations and genders confronting the economic modernisation, negotiating religious needs and economic demands, adapting their tradition. Research in Jiuzhaigou, I felt, could provide a broad in-depth and fresh insight into the contemporary social-cultural condition of Tibet.

Bearing in mind the issues I mentioned above, the final formation of my research aims and questions had been accomplished through rounds of negotiations and amendments during the processes of literature review, fieldwork, data analysis and writing up. During fieldwork, I found that monastery and home were the two most important religious spaces for Jiuzhaigou people. To provide greater clarity, I chose to give particular attention to these two types of space in my research design. As I elaborate in Section 4.2.3 and 4.3 I specifically built an intergenerational perspective into the research both through my sampling of respondents and my approach to designing interview questions. However, the authenticity issue (which I discussed theoretically in Chapter 2) is a theme that emerged saliently in the fieldwork and the process of data analysis. In the first fieldwork, the minority-majority ethnic issue arose and was further assured by a number of literatures on China's minorities and their development. Thus, although some of the issues discussed in Chapters 5-7 were anticipated prior to the research, there were also unanticipated themes and dimensions that emerged.

4.2.2 Choice of case study sites

I chose Jiuzhaigou National Park as my primary case study and Anbei Village (see Fig. 3.14) as a supporting case study to explore the religious change in current Tibet. The focus was on the four villages (Shuzheng Village, Zezhawa Village, Zharu Village and

Heye Village) and a Zharu Bon Monastery in Jiuzhaigou. Anbei Village and the Gami Bon Monastery were chosen to provide some comparisons from a site with linkages to Jiuzhaigou but which is rarely directly affected by tourism. Thus even though I conducted research at two sites, I do not portray this research as a systematic comparative study. Rather, Anbei served to further my understandings of religious change in Jiuzhaigou itself. Tibetan Bon people in Anbei have had close (and changing) relationships with Jiuzhaigou over the years (as discussed in Chapter 3, and in the empirical chapters), and as such the insights and experiences of people there helped me to understand Jiuzhaigou's position within the region and the perceptions of other Tibetans.

There are three specific reasons to choose these two places. Firstly, these two places are located in Tibetan-Han culturally bordering area, which renders tremendous economic, cultural interactions between Tibetans and the Han. These cases are really helpful in demonstrating Tibetan-Han relations. Secondly, geographically these two places are very close (see Chapter 3). Thirdly, these two places have a long history of religious, cultural and economic connections (see Chapter 3). They have very similar religious and cultural traditions. People in both places are Amdo Tibetans⁸. Bon has been the dominant religion in these places for centuries.

Before starting fieldwork in 2011, Anbei Village and Gami Monastery were not on my original plan. Instead, I initially considered using the Langyi Bon Monastery and its surrounding Amdo Tibetan villages in Wa'erma Township in Aba County, to see if it is an appropriate site to provide wider context for my study of Jiuzhaigou. However, when I went back for fieldwork in 2011, I was told by one of my friends who was working in Aba County that it was not a good time to conduct fieldwork there, especially about religion. At that time, Aba County was a focal point of government surveillance, because there have been dozens of self-immolations there in recent years which are primarily focused on the Tibetan Buddhist monastery Kirti. The Kirti Rinpoche, the head of Kirti monastery is in exile in India. In the whole Aba Prefecture, 44 out of 131 self-immolations have occurred since 2009 (International Campaign for Tibet, 2014). When I was back in 2011, I was told that in order to prevent more immolation from happening, the government working groups have been sent there to each monastery to do patriotic education. The internet was cut. All foreign tourists were forbidden to get into Aba County as well as many other Tibetan counties. Considering the tense religious and political situation in Aba County, I decided to not use this site. After many conversations with Jiuzhaigou

⁸ Amdo Tibetan is a branch of Tibetans who mainly lives in northeast part of Tibetan area, which is composed of Qinghai Province, some parts of Sichuan province and Gansu Province.

people, Anbei Village emerged as an appropriate site (in fact, in retrospect, far more appropriate than Wa'erma Township) due to Jiuzhaigou and Anbei having had very close relations in religious, cultural and economic aspects.

Anbei has 53 households and 363 people, most of whom are Tibetan Bon believers. Most of the women and older generation in Anbei Village spoke no or little Chinese. Their fluency in Chinese was far less than the norm amongst Jiuzhaigou people. Their overall education level was much lower than Jiuzhaigou. Most people had finished only primary school or junior middle school. Children and teenagers went to village level and county level schools. Unlike children in Jiuzhaigou, their parents could not afford to send them to big cities for schooling.

People living here were less influenced by and connected to the outside world compared to Jiuzhaigou. Farming and herding were still one of their main sources of income. In June 2012, some households of Anbei started a tourism business which is managed by a large Chinese corporation. One room of each household was rented to the company. The Han tour guides pretended to be Tibetans selling silver products to tourists.

Religion remained vibrant even though it did not have as many magnificent religious buildings as Jiuzhaigou people had. The domestic religious rituals were seemingly also less frequently practiced than Jiuzhaigou, but Anbei people did more pilgrimages to the sacred mountains. Older generation regularly attend the Gami Monastery for doing prayer. Young people expressed having more knowledge of religious belief and practices. Some of them chose to go to the monastery. The Gami Monastery played an important role in maintaining the religious atmosphere in Anbei. Many monks lives in the monastery and are ready to fulfil laypeople's religious demands.

4.2.3 Access and sampling

Based on my prior experience working in the area, it was relatively straightforward for me to gain good access to Jiuzhaigou. In Jiuzhaigou, I had several close contacts. Apart from this, I had friends and relatives working and living in Jiuzhaigou and surrounding areas. Two friends are residents of Jiuzhaigou and Tibetan Bon believers. As Jiuzhaigou is not open to outsiders, I needed to apply for a permit from JAB. I presented JAB the information sheet for my research, my student identity and the confirmation letter of my scholarship status from the Chinese Scholarship Council. I also verbally introduced myself and explained my research. I was accompanied by my cousin to process the whole application, which helped make the process faster. Then I was issued a permit allowing me to freely enter Jiuzhaigou during my fieldwork. I was asked to directly

contact the Department of Science and Research of JAB if I had any problems and inquiries in my fieldwork. In exchange I was asked to work on a small cultural planning project. I spent seven days in the department conducting this project, during which I established close relationships with some JAB officials and locals. Through these acquaintances, I was introduced to more local people, monks and officials.

In relation to Anbei Village, I did not have prior acquaintances with people there before the fieldwork. I asked two of my participants in Jiuzhaigou to introduce me to their friends in Anbei and in Gami Monastery. They did so, and I was treated in a friendly and welcoming way. I succeeded in finding a local family to live with. Through this family, I had opportunities to get to know more local people and to attend local events. This snowball method is potentially well suited for gaining trust of the potential interviewees, particularly when aspects of the research can be sensitive.

However, there were also various difficulties in being fully accepted by the local people. Firstly, my Tibetan dialect differs from theirs. This created some distance between us. In order to be better embraced by the community, I learnt some local expressions and used them in my conversations with local people. It appeared that this was a successful strategy. Secondly, during the fieldwork I attended many get-togethers with local people to establish rapport. Social relations sometimes are established through close interactions. To be accepted by the young people, I was invited by my friends to attend informal settings of local people, such as dinners and karaoke parties. Sometimes local people's hospitality made drinking (barley wine or beer) unavoidable (as it would have been perceived as rude to decline). Thirdly, political tensions made them cautious to talk to any stranger. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, it is not encouraged that religious issues be talked about openly in China. In Tibet, the religious professionals (i.e. monks and nuns) are the main force in support of independence. Cases of self-immolation conducted in the name of Tibetan independence and appeals for the return of the Dalai Lama made religious topics even more sensitive to discuss. In order to alleviate their suspicion, I always stressed the social scientific side of my research and my interest in Tibetan culture rather than the issue of Tibetan independence. Considering my safety and my participants' safety, I rarely initiated talk about issues such as self-immolations (which had not taken place in Anbei or Jiuzhaigou) with my interviewees.

The sample of informants I developed included Bon monks and Bon laypeople living in the research sites. They provided direct insight into their daily lives and religious practices. In order to obtain a full picture of the same "reality", different people's perspectives were considered based on characteristics such as gender, age, and occupation. Other people who work or temporarily live in Jiuzhaigou and Anbei, such as

tourists, government officials, migrating monks, Han Chinese etc. were also investigated. They provided some background information and their opinions about religious practices and beliefs in the study areas.

When sampling participants, I sought to include both men and women of diverse ages. Using purposive sampling approach rather than random sampling approach was largely determined by my research concern on intergenerational transmission of religion and the nature of different patterns of religious practices and beliefs between people with different genders, generations and occupations. For example, local people who work in JAB might have different attitudes toward tourism and religion, because of their particular education background, personal interests and relations to government. Although it was not a random sample, my participant observation helped corroborate the findings from the interviews.

Specifically, I have conducted 71 semi-structured interviews in Jiuzhaigou and 26 semi-structured interviews in Anbei from three generations (see Table 4.1; I break these down in greater detail in Section 4.3.2). Originally I had hoped to capture generational change by conducting interviews based on the family unit, which means to interview a grandparent, a parent and a child from each family. In practice, however, this proved to be difficult because firstly there are not many families with three generations and secondly for various reasons (language, shyness, unwillingness etc.) it was hard to get all three generations together to participate. Thus, I instead included a range of younger, middle, and older generation in the sample to explore the generational nature of change. This strategy meant that people who did not live in a household with grandchild, parent, and grandparent present were not excluded, nor were people who wanted to participate excluded if other members of the family were not interested, willing or able to be interviewed.

Table 4.1 Interviewees by location, gender and generation group

Jiuzhaigou	Lay women: 23 Older: 4; middle: 8; younger: 11
	Lay men: 28 Older: 4; middle: 9; younger: 15
	Monks: 15 Older: 1; middle: 8; younger: 6
	Government officials: 5
Anbei	Lay women: 7 Older: 2; middle: 2; younger: 3
	Lay men: 7 Older: 2; middle: 2; younger: 3
	Monks: 10 Middle: 4; younger: 6 (including 3 young novices)
	Government officials: 2

4.3 Methods of data collection and analysis

This section discusses the specific data generating methods and techniques which will be used in my research. I will describe the ways in which data were gathered and generated through participant observation (Section 4.3.1), in-depth interviews (Section 4.3.2), archival/documentary research and web searching (Section 4.3.3). I will also provide a discussion of the process of qualitative data analysis that I employed (Section 4.3.4).

I stayed in Jiuzhaigou for fieldwork for 8 months in total. This was divided into several different periods. As I mentioned above, my first fieldwork in Jiuzhaigou, for a Master's degree, took place over eight weeks in 2009. I do not reproduce this earlier data in this thesis; rather, I discuss this fieldwork period here because it provided both important background information for this research and allowed me to work quickly in the field when I revisited Jiuzhaigou to conduct doctoral research. By contacting some of my friends in Jiuzhaigou, I succeeded to live in a friend's home in Jiuzhaigou National Park. During this period of fieldwork, I conducted preparatory investigations of my case area, aiming to get familiar with local residents (laypersons and monks) and officials in JAB, and to gain general information about research subjects. Because of my Tibetan cultural

background, I successfully engaged in the everyday life of the field site relatively easily. By participating in the daily lives of Bon laypeople (including helping them with tourism business, attending some of their religious practices and short-term work for Jiuzhaigou National Park Administration) I attained detailed information, for instance, regarding the nature of people's religious practices both before and after tourism development, and how have their roles changed.

For my doctoral research I planned to spend further six months in the region of my field sites for data collection. However because of the rules of the Chinese Scholarship Council, it was necessary to break this into two discrete periods (the Council does not allow funded students to spend this many months consecutively in China for their research). I broke the fieldwork period into two trips in the summers of 2011 and 2012. The reason for choosing summer was to allow me to have access to young students who only stay at home during summer and winter holidays. Summer holiday was better firstly because some residents in Jiuzhaigou leave for other places like Chengdu to have holiday in the winter, and also because there are many more tourists in summer which provides good chance for seeing tourist-host interactions. Splitting into the fieldwork into two periods also gave me the opportunity and time to re-evaluate my research plan after the first fieldwork period and to intentionally seek out data that I realised I would need to complement and extend the analysis I had started to develop.

In summer 2011 I conducted a period of fieldwork in Jiuzhaigou and Anbei. This period was very important for me to be re-familiarise myself with the fieldwork setting in Jiuzhaigou. I gained a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural-economical background of two research areas. I also managed to live with a local family taking part in their daily lives and religious practices. I did interviews with a sample of both laypeople and monks. People in Jiuzhaigou quickly recognised me as the young woman conducting research fieldwork two years ago. Someone had even kept business card I gave to them in 2009. I told them I was not in Sun Yat-sen University anymore, but doing a PhD in University of Leeds, UK. They were surprised and often gave me compliments for studying at a foreign university (which is also happened in Anbei). In this period, I did 25 interviews with laypeople and 10 interviews with monks and also conducted many informal chats with local people. I also observed their everyday life, religious and non-religious practices.

My next trip to the fieldsites was in summer 2012, spending approximately 8 weeks in Jiuzhaigou and 5 weeks in Anbei. Given my previous experiences in the region, this period of fieldwork felt like the most purposeful and efficient. Most of the people of Jiuzhaigou knew me as a Maerkang Tibetan girl, a UK student and a researcher. People

who I had not met directly before often had already heard my time. I would clearly figure out what I need and how to do. In this period, I managed to conduct 40 interviews with laypeople and 15 interviews with monks (45 minutes – 1.5 hour long). Seven government officials were also interviewed. I attended three public religious practices and several private religious practices, including a funeral, a wedding ceremony, a monastery ritual and some familial rituals in Jiuzhaigou. Unfortunately, I did not see any public religious practices in Anbei during that time because most of their public religious events were conducted during winter and there were no weddings or funerals held during my stay in Anbei. But I have been told the details of some important public religious events, such as Mazhi Festival, wedding and funeral from interviews and talks. In addition, I also took part in some private religious practices like familial chanting.

4.3.1 Participant observation

The data gathered from interviews were supplemented with participant observation.

Participant observation can “provide unreplicable insight into the processes and meanings that sustain and motivate social groups” (Herbert, 2000: 550). Through participation and observation, detailed and deeply embedded experiences and meanings will be easily enacted. By examining and contrasting what people say and what people do (the relationship between discourse and practice), participant observation allows for observation of both discourse and practice and could double-check the second-hand data. Another advantage of participant observation is that it is neither overly indulgent in, nor excessively detached from the research field (Van Maanen, 1988).

In order to explore the nature of religious change in detail, this research adopted ethnographic techniques to interrogate everyday life, religious practices, and the elusive nature of religion of particular social groups with richness and complexity. To minimise some of potential criticisms that can be made of research that relies on participant observation alone, different data sources including interviews and documentary sources (discussed in more detail below) were used to allow for a form of triangulation (Flick, 2004). During the process of data collection and emergent analysis, I frequently communicated my ideas and discoveries with participants, my peers and supervisors to enhance reflexivity about my observation and representation.

In comparison to interviewing or documentary analysing, participant observation provides a different way of interpreting and presenting data which can in some ways be more grounded, concrete and intensive (Watson and Till, 2010). It allows the researcher to observe and capture non-verbal behaviours and practices which are not accountable and

articulable from words or texts. Through observation, people's daily routines, behaviours, actions, conversations and interactions can be examined in greater detail than possible with simply oral accounts gathered from interviews. Additionally, because the research in some ways gets to experience some of the same events and share feelings, participant observation can provide multiple viewpoints and provide deeper insights into people's retrospective accounts which may be partial, incomplete or misleading.

The term participant observation can obscure the varying balances between 'participation' and 'observation' that can occur in different research projects, or at different times during the same research project (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011: 19-40). More active forms of participation were mainly used to understand everyday lives, patterns and meanings of religious practices of laypeople in the fieldsites. As I stated earlier, I lived in a local people's home and attended their family activities, such as doing household chores, helping with tourism businesses and participating in their religious practices. I became acquainted with more people when I was introduced into their social networks attending more ceremonies and gatherings, such as weddings, funerals, religious rituals, dinners, Karaoke parties. Generally, young people were comparatively easier to approach. This is probably because I was of a similar age as my young participants, which meant that we had certain common memories, interests and attitudes to share. Specifically in my fieldwork, I participated in the Bon laypersons' everyday lives through attending activities of men and women of different generations and attending their religious practices (pilgrimages, rituals, rites, ceremonies and daily religious behaviours such as praying, chanting).

Non-participant observation was used to study religious and non-religious activities of Bon monks of the two monasteries (Zharu and Gami). Monks normally live in isolated monasteries. It was impracticable for me as a woman to live in the monastery. Therefore, I lived in the villages and visited monasteries every day from dawn until dark. Jiuzhaigou monks live at home, but not at the monastery (see Chapter 7 for the explanation and discussion), so I had more chances to meet them through various public and private events. Monks from Gami Monastery often came to Jiuzhaigou to conduct religious services. I got to know some Gami monks on these occasions. We chatted about various things, such as the origin of Bon, the history of Tibetans, the relationships between Bon and my Buddhist sect, Nyingmapa, and the religious relationships between Jiuzhaigou and Songpan, and many other issues related to religion.

In addition, I used observation to record the religious settings of various religious practices. These included physical settings such as monastery and home, as well as religious events such as home prayer and the village rite (these kinds of public religious

ceremonies carried out are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5). Table 4.2 below provides a summary of the observational research I conducted during fieldwork.

During observation, both shorter and longer field notes were written to assist my constant reflections about research process and my role and position as a researcher and friend.

Although participant observation has many advantages, one does not straightforwardly move from being an outsider to an insider. The process of employing participant observation involves negotiating complex identities and relationships between the researcher and the researched (Dawson, 2010). In carrying out participant observation, I inevitably encountered some difficulties.

Table 4.2 What I observed

The observed	Detailed information
Religious practices	Different religious events (e.g. public and private rituals, religious ceremonies, pilgrimage); embodied religious practices
	Time; location; people and their appearance; organization; procedure; interactions; social relations; behaviour; environment
Religious spaces	Temple, monastery, home, shrine, sacred mountain etc.
	Location; Layout; shape; style; space users; ways of using space
Everyday life	Religious and non-religious daily routines of each family members (grandparents; parents; children); their engagement in tourism

First and foremost, gaining trust in a relatively sensitive place was not easy at the beginning. Suspicion was often apparent during my first contacts with local people. Previously I mentioned that the pressurised religious and political atmosphere increased the difficulties of gaining trust and discussing religious issues. People often felt cautious around me at the beginning. I was even asked “are you sent by the JAB?” Jiuzhaigou people did not have a good relationship with the JAB because of many conflicting opinions on Jiuzhaigou management. When they heard I was conducting research, they thought I was a spy from JAB to collecting their complaints. To ease their suspicions, I showed them my student ID and my information sheet. My friends in Jiuzhaigou also helped to explain my role and fieldwork to local people. My name was quickly spread

among many villagers. As time went by, they gradually trusted me as a researcher. Local people were also cautious in talking about religious issues. In order to decrease their suspicion, I normally directly showed my information sheet and stated that my purpose was to investigate everyday life and local culture (rather than Tibetan politics). This to a great extent alleviated their doubts. My identity as an Aba resident and a Tibetan also helped considerably in gaining their trust. My hometown is Maerkang County, which is near Jiuzhaigou, and hence we shared a place attachment to Aba Prefecture. Most of them had known and been to my hometown. My Tibetan identity further let them treat me as an insider, which encouraged them to share Tibetan things (religion, culture, history) with me and created common ground. My actual knowledge on Tibetan culture and religion, my Sichuan dialect and my life experience in Aba helped me to start conversations and to find topics fluently. Therefore, talking about religious issues was like sharing similar feelings with someone who understands. For example, I compared the substantial number of religious buildings in Jiuzhaigou to the situation in my hometown (which has far fewer religious buildings), and asked them to express their views and feelings on the contrast and change.

Another technique I used to reduce the sensitivity in my interviews and chats with local people was to use the term “*xinyang*” (belief) to replace “*zongjiao*” (religion). In Tibetan, there is no direct equivalent to the concept of religion (or *zongjiao*), superstition (*mixin*) and nationality (*minzu*). The Tibetan language even contained no word for Buddhism. Tibetans, traditionally, did not think of themselves as Buddhists (Stein, 1972: 192; Kvaerne, 1972: 22; Bishop, 1993: 17). In Chinese, “*zongjiao*” and “*xinyang*” to some extent are interchangeable. When I spoke about “*xinyang*”, they could understand it refers to their Bon religion. Most of the time “*zongjiao*” appears in political discourses and government documents other than daily discourses, so speaking about “*zongjiao*” has more formal and political implications. If I wanted to say “*zongjiao*”, I normally used “*zongjiao wenhua*” (religious culture). When religion is connected with culture, the political connotations of “*zongjiao*” are greatly decreased.

Secondly, participant observation involved issues of power relations between the researchers and the participants (Valentine, 1997). The researcher has ‘analytical power’ which allows her to determine the direction of fieldwork, what to ask, what to present and how to interpret data (Rose, 1997: 311). In my fieldwork, power was present in relationships between me and participants. My identity as a PhD student created some obstruction for my communication with local people in the first place. I was regarded by the local people as a knowledgeable person who has a certain kind of authority. Sometimes I encountered remarks such as, “*You are a PhD. You must know much more than us.*” In actuality, many people had little idea what a PhD actually is. It was often

assumed that I would have complete knowledge of Tibetan religion and culture. The researcher-researched relationship could influence the ways in which data are produced or presented. To lessen the differences, I stressed their local knowledge which I do not have. In my self-introductions, I always stated this as well as my wish to learn about local religion and culture.

4.3.2 In-depth interview

Qualitative interviewing can reveal people's knowledge, views, understandings and interpretations which can be hard to acquire by observation alone (Dunn, 2000). Therefore, in addition to observation, in-depth interviews were also an essential method for examining the Bon believers' religious practices and their attitudes to religion through their narratives and discourses.

To generate high quality data of this kind, it is necessary "to talk interactively with people, to ask them questions, to listen to them, to gain access to their accounts and articulations, or to analyse their use of language and construction of discourse" (Mason, 2002: 64). Drawing on the interview strategies proposed by Mason (2002: 68-73), my interview questions and topics were designed to ensure that I was collecting data that would contribute to achieving my research aims.

Questions of sampling for interviews are based on the nature of the research projects on which gender, age, class, ethnicity, race and other forms of difference have bearings (Valentine, 1997). Based on knowledge gained from my previous fieldwork experience and my personal experience as a Buddhist believer, I designed the research knowing that gender and generational difference could to a great extent reflect the changes in religious belief and practices (as stated in Section 4.2.3). Based on generation and gender difference, I classified my potential interviewees of laypeople into 6 groups (women and men, each from three broad generational groups), and for monks into 3 groups (three generations) (see Table 4.1). As discussed in Chapter 2, defining a 'generation' in practical terms can be a complex process. I defined three generational groups based on different significant patterns of life experience related to changing patterns of education and also the timing of the development of the tourism economy in Jiuzhaigou. I classified the three generational groups as follows:

Younger generation: This group consisted of people age 16-35, who were born around the time that tourism was introduced, and thus have lived most or all of their lives during the period of tourism growth. In Jiuzhaigou they tend to be well-educated and are

becoming a new force of tourism development. They normally have boarding school experience and have finished college or university education.

Middle generation: This group consisted of people aged 35-55. They have experienced and remember traditional religious practices prior to the growth of tourism in Jiuzhaigou. They did not have many educational opportunities and are the major force of tourism development;

Older generation: Consisting of people over fifty-five years old, this group had been through the Cultural Revolution, were primarily illiterate, and once the major force of tourism and have been less and less involved in tourism with age growing. Now most of the older generation just stay at home.

My semi-structured interview questions were informed by the existing literature and my previous research experience in Jiuzhaigou. They were adapted to some extent during the fieldwork, particularly between the first and second periods of research in 2011/2012, which provided time to reflect on the data and to adapt questions to make sure that I was fully addressing the research aims and could fill gaps in my understanding. Through interview questions, I hoped to get richer and thicker understandings of three particular types of issues: the role of tourism, religious practices, and the nature of spiritual belief. My interviewees concerned the three major elements of religion: religious professionals (monks), laypeople and religious space, any one of which cannot be dismissed to form a religion. Particular attention was given to gender and generational aspects of religion. Table 4.3 lists the main interview topics covered in my interviews with the laypeople and monks. The translated, detailed interview questions are attached in Appendix B.

The interview topics listed above are the main points for guiding my interviewing. My interview questions were not fixed to this schedule. Based on the actual interview process, I added new questions, reduced irrelevant ones, and also changed the question orders. For example, in Anbei I asked them to describe their interactions with Jiuzhaigou people and monks and their attitudes towards them. And I also ask Jiuzhaigou people about Anbei.

In my 2011 and 2012 fieldworks, I interviewed 97 persons in total, with lengths varying from 30 minutes to 2 hours. Five of these 97 people were interviewed on more than one occasion. For example, I did two interviews with a young monk in Jiuzhaigou, once in 2011 and again in 2012. The average length of interview was around one hour. All of them were recorded. In Jiuzhaigou, I interviewed 51 laypeople, 15 monks and 5 government officials; In Anbei Village, I interviewed 14 laypeople, 10 monks and 2 government officials (see Table 4.1). Apart from the interviews, I also had informal chats

with tourists, people and monks from other places for complementing my understanding of religion in Jiuzhaigou and Anbei. Most interviews were conducted in places like the interviewee's home, office, their work place (souvenir stalls, shops) for their convenience, because summer is their busy time in doing tourist businesses. On a few occasions, I encountered someone without a prescheduled appointment and we spontaneously chose grassland or a quiet outdoor place nearby to sit and start our interview.

Table 4.3 Interview topics for laypeople and monks

Research questions	Interview topics and questions
Role of tourism for local people	Oral history of Jiuzhaigou and Anbei in past 50 years; history of tourism development; tourism impacts in general and on religion in specific; tourism involvement; meaning of tourism; interactions with and attitudes toward tourism and tourists
Religious practices	Everyday religious practices, and their characteristics and patterns; meanings of religious practices; important religious events; Gender and generational difference in religious practices; intergenerational transmission of religion.
Spiritual belief	Knowledge of Bon; strength of belief in Bon; relationships between laypeople, monks and the local monastery; laypeople's and monks' attitudes to each other; spiritual experiences in different public and private religious spaces; meanings of different religious spaces; ways of using space; religious practices in specific spaces; life experience as a monk (for monks)
Non-religious life of monks	Leisure activities; connection with the original home; future plans

Chinese (specifically, the Sichuan dialect⁹) was used in all my interviews and my communication with locals. Language was also a barrier sometimes, especially in interviews with old people. Many of the old people, especially old women barely speak Chinese or just speak a little, so they sometimes could not fully understand what I said. In these situations, I invited local people as translators when I interviewed old people who do not speak Chinese. There was some information loss because translators cannot translate accurately and word by word. Hence, some interview questions which are not easy to understand were given up. For example, it is extremely hard for old people to

⁹ The Sichuan dialect is a kind of Mandarin dialect mainly spoken by people living in Sichuan Province. Tibetans in Sichuan also speak the Sichuan dialect.

use three words to describe their feelings of their belief. This probably is because most of them are illiterate. Thus I give up this question and replace it with the question “how much do you believe in Bon”. I admitted that language barrier might create a bias towards the people who can speak Chinese. Those who can only speak the local Tibetan dialect are therefore somewhat underrepresented in the research, despite efforts that were made to include them. However, apart from the old people and a few women in Anbei, most of the people could speak fluent or passable Chinese. Furthermore, from my observation, I found for majority of local people Sichuan dialect is usually interchangeably spoken with the local Tibetan dialect in their daily life. In particular many young people and children prefer to use Sichuan dialect in their daily conversation among themselves. Doing interviews with the middle-aged people (especially women) was a bit difficult. As I mentioned before, the main reason is the tense political ambience which made people not dare to talk too much about religion to someone they did not know much. Women seemed more cautious and reserved in talking. However, as I stayed longer, people saw me often in their villages, in many of their events and get-togethers, I became familiar to them. Some of them even said to me “you are becoming a Jiuzhaigou person now.”

English-Chinese language differences also created difficulties in interviewing. For example, space is not a daily used word in Tibet. It is used mostly in formal occasions. Thus in my interviews and informal conversations, I gave examples or rephrased questions where necessary to provide a clearer understanding for interviewees. For instance, when I asked them to tell me the most sacred religious space in their mind, I normally provided examples helping them to understand, such as monastery, temple, home chanting room, sacred mountain. Sometimes I used place (*difang*) instead of space (*kongjian*), because place is a more apprehensible word.

4.3.3 Other sources of data

Apart from the primary data derived from participant observation and interviewing, there were some second-hand data collected from other sources such as documents (academic literatures, Statistical Yearbooks, government documents, personal books from local people etc.), pictures (photos, paintings etc.), web pages (blog articles, Wechat, Weibo, news etc.) which will help to supplement the information I obtained and provide greater context for the research. For example, from their Weibo, young laypeople seem concerning their religion and culture as they often post religion and cultural related materials in the public internet space. In addition, rather than a solitary image, young monks present their diverse life styles, such as fancying celebrities, following TV dramas.

4.3.4 Data analysis

All my interviews were transcribed by using the software Expressscribe. In some cases material that was not deemed to be relevant (such as conversation that obviously did not relate to the research aims) was not fully transcribed. Transcribing 102 recorded interviews was a large undertaking. Field notes from participant observation, which were originally written by hand, were also typed up. The whole process of typing up materials, though time consuming, was useful for re-familiarise me with the data before conducting systematic analysis.

After finishing the transcription of interviews, I started analysis of each interview and my research notes. These transcribed talks were in Chinese. I read and coded them in the original language and translated into English those extracts that I thought I would be likely to quote as evidence in the final write up.

By searching for and identifying patterns, themes, similarities and differences I conducted a form of open coding for my data analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) to identify emergent themes. Firstly, I went through each interview for analysis one by one, which allowed me to understand each individual participant. For each interview, I analysed sentence by sentence. Field notes were helpful in identifying key themes before analysis. In this process, I was consistently comparing and contrasting the new interview analysis and the previous ones. Once I finished all the interview analysis, I had achieved a clearer view of the important themes which were evident in the data. Using the open coding to develop a final set of interview themes, I then systematically reviewed data from all interviews again to identify where the themes occurred in the data. I tried to understand why and how these things are meaningful for the participants. I then organised the codes into larger central themes which form the basis of the empirical chapters (Chapters 5-7).

I considered using the software NVivo to assist in managing the data and conducting analysis. However, as Flick (2002) noted, qualitative analysis software might lead to data loss or modification because of the mechanical abstraction of data, and further interrupt the usual reflexive process of qualitative research. With this in mind (and based on experience experimenting with NVivo), I decided to use manual coding throughout the whole process of analysis.

4.4 Research ethics and positionality

The whole research process requires researchers to be constantly reflective upon ethical issues and to be reflexive about their positionalities. These are not an “unnecessary chore” (Silverman, 2005: 159), but an indispensable step for reassuring and validating the research. This section is composed of two parts: Section 4.4.1 explains the ethical issues which arose the research; in Section 4.4.2 I discuss the various problems revolving my positionalities.

4.4.1 Main ethical issues in my research

This research was conducted in adherence with the principles of the Framework for Research Ethics (ESRC, 2012) produced by the Economic and Social Research Council. Key principles of ethical research include informed consent; protecting confidentiality; and minimizing potential risk and harm for both the researched and the researcher.

To ensure informed consent, potential research participants need to be made as aware as possible of the nature of the research. To facilitate this, an information sheet (see Appendix C) which was translated was given or read to my participants and interviewees before interviewing. After a brief introduction about my research, the information sheets clearly set forth what interview participants will be asked to do, how I will use and store data and their rights to withdraw research etc. I always gave a detailed verbal explanation of my research, because on the one hand some my participants were illiterate, on the other hand for some participants paper work made my research too formal to let me get close to them. In contrast, in other cases the existence of formal-looking paperwork (including information sheets helped to a great extent to demonstrate the legitimacy of my research and proved helpful for winning the trust of government officials and some cautious local people.

With regard to the consent of interviewees, verbal consent was considered more feasible than written consent in my case area (and this was agreed by the relevant University of Leeds research ethics committee which approved the research), because firstly the independence movement of some Tibetans has generated political tension in the Tibetan area (although the level of tension can differ considerably in different parts of Tibet); secondly many older Jiuzhaigou Tibetans are illiterate. Such conditions can make them feel insecure and highly self-conscious and protective about participating in social research. Most of them are afraid of being trapped into trouble based on things they might say, especially women. For them, a signed document represents an extremely formal agreement or contract which has unavoidable legal responsibilities and

consequences. They were afraid of paper work. This is not uncommon in places where people are poorly educated or have no/little knowledge of law, especially in developing countries. To avoid generating unnecessary suspicion and scaring them off, I chose to employ verbal consent rather than written consent. Hence, I orally described my research to them first and requested their consent to interview them.

Audio recording were accepted generally by my close acquaintances and those who are open-minded and well-educated, such as young people. For those who refused to be recorded, I sometimes took written notes or just gave up the interview if I found the participant was not very willing or hesitant to talk. But this just happened occasionally to the people I came across without appointments in advance.

All the participants were told that they were free to withdraw their consent anytime during and after fieldwork. All the data were stored by myself under locked and password-protected personal laptop. Once it reaches 5-year storage limit for further academic writing and dissemination, the data will be destroyed. No one besides me has access to them.

The confidentiality of my research subjects has been strictly protected. Before starting analysis, all the names were changed pseudonyms. In the thesis, people can only see the pseudonyms with their home place, gender and generational group. In a few cases, minor details about a respondent have been obscured to protect anonymity.

Researchers also have moral and ethical obligations to the people we have observed (Kearns, 2010: 255-6). I am still keeping in touch with many of my participants through internet and phones and keep them updated with my work progress and life experience. For me it is not only the research obligation, but also my will that makes me to maintain the ties with people I met in Jiuzhaigou.

4.4.2 My positionality

Researchers' positionality is highly consequential to the outcomes, process and direction of the research (England, 1994). Positionality "refers to aspects of identity in terms of race, class, gender, caste, sexuality and other attributes that are markers of relational positions in society, rather than intrinsic qualities" (Chacko, 2004: 52). It concerns the complex nature of the researcher-researched interaction (Dawson, 2010). The contested and contingent nature of positionality can raise issues relating to issues such as "the disclosure of personal information and the politics of representation of the Other, unequal

relations of power and possible exploitation, and even lead to ethical problems for the researcher” (Chacko, 2004: 52).

As a Tibetan born into a Buddhist family, my positionality of course affected the data collection and thesis formation on a project about Tibetan religion (as I discussed in the section above). As for my personal religious belief, I often felt that I was in a similar position to many young people in Jiuzhaigou. I always replied to people who asked about my religion as follows: “I was born in a Buddhist family, but I don’t claim myself to be a Buddhist. The reason is I just practice religion with my parents’ guidance and have little knowledge on theories and principles of Buddhism”. I believe in Buddhism, but with some doubts, which prevents me from fully adhering to it. My feeling was echoed by Jiuzhaigou young people who have been exposed to formal school-based education since a very young age, similar to myself. Some other issues I found in the fieldwork also resonated with my feelings and experience, such as the concern of the future of Tibetan culture, their ethnic pride as Tibetans, and the questioning of current monks’ identity (see Chapter 7).

In terms of positionality, Vanderbeck (2005) has explored how experiences in the field can influence how we view ourselves as scholars. I found the fieldwork experience also shapes my understanding of ethnic identity and religious identity. I had been through struggles in positioning myself in Tibetan research cohort or in Chinese research cohort, and as a participant or as a researcher.

Based on different attitudes toward Tibet, scholars on Tibetan studies have some different interpretations on Tibetan issues from Han Chinese scholars. Chinese scholars are secretly criticised for lacking full understanding of Tibetan culture and issues. This is sometimes demonstrated through the usage of language in writing names. Using Tibetan words means being predisposed towards Tibet. Using Chinese words is often not recognised as good research by ethnic Tibetan scholars. Being a Tibetan but writing in Chinese made me feel ashamed at times. I thought I should use Tibetan words to express my ethnic identity, even though I have never formally studied Tibetan language in school, but rather learned it informally at home. Therefore in the reports I wrote at the early stage, I adopted Tibetan names, such as Ngawa Prefecture and Barkam County, instead of their Chinese names, Aba Prefecture and Maerkang County. I thought being too Chinese might diminish my legitimacy in writing about Tibet. However, I found it was not convenient as my first instinct was always Chinese. I realised it does not matter whether I use Tibetan words or use Chinese words, because this is my way of understanding and communicating with my respondents and the field, and most of the

young people in Jiuzhaigou also are very likely to use Chinese in their everyday communication.

On account of its more empathetic and flexible qualities, ethnographic methods require the emotional input of the researcher. My emotions did affect my thoughts on my thesis. In the first stage, I struggled with what I should present to the audience. My pride as a Tibetan did not want me to present Jiuzhaigou monks who were opposed to the traditionally assumed image as isolated, religious, and non-commercial. However, as I heard and saw criticism and worries about Tibetan monks' and monastery's changing roles in the modern society both within and outside of Tibetan group, I realised this is an issue I really want to confront as it is a current issue for Tibet. To face and to write about this issue is, for me, actually a way to address this issue. Now I am proud of my research as it reflects the current Tibet, and I am also proud of myself being a Tibetan researcher as I have the chance to write about Tibet.

My identity as a Tibetan has disadvantages. Insider positionality and knowledge sometimes result in omissions of important issues and failing to step back to get a full picture (Kitchin and Tate, 2013: 29). For myself, I sometimes took some important findings for granted. After my first fieldwork, I found this was a problem for furthering my understandings and posing questions. For example, I at first did not recognise the importance of a frequently deployed discourse of the local people. They frequently mentioned 'hanification' (see Chapters 3, 5 and 6 for detailed discussion about hanification) when we talked about the current situation of Tibetan religion. I soon realised this was a very important point as a part of my thesis.

The identity as an insider sometimes is challenged and doubted by the participants. Even though Sikic-Micanovic (2010) was a mother and wife, her femininity was questioned by her female informants in Croatia, as she was perceived to be not properly doing the jobs ascribed to mothers/wives, such as ironing her children/husband's clothes and staying mostly with children. I came across the similar situation. Sometimes my ethnic identity was doubted when I asked them to tell me issues about Tibet. They replied by asking "Are you a Tibetan? You should have known these." I would then explain that the traditions in my hometown were a little different from the ones in Jiuzhaigou and Anbei, and I was interested in knowing the differences and the situation there.

As Hopkins (2009b) noted, even though as researchers we will never exhaust our positionalities and how they influence the research (including questions, study design, attitudes of participants and data interpretation), being reflective about our positionalities could encourage researchers to realise the importance of their research and methods. In

order to decrease their biases, researchers need to be careful in choosing methods and sources of data. When I came across the problems above, I tried to be a friend with rapport and as a researcher with reflexivity for minimising my bias, and the influence of my presence on their ways of life, behaviour and talk etc. Apart from this, triangulation of data sources and methods (as listed previously) were used to increase reliability of my findings. Additionally, continuous conversation and discussion with extant literatures, scholars and my research participants helped to enhance my reflexivity and to make me more self-critical about my practices of observation and representation.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the key methodological issues involved in conducting this research, including choosing a case study design, accessing and sampling participants, conducting participant observation and in-depth interviews, analyzing data, and ensuring good ethical practice and reflexivity about my positionality.

Later, sharing the same ethnic identity was the key for accessing and gaining trust of my informants, especially when my project is about Tibetan culture, namely our shared tradition, memory and identity. This put us in a similar position under the particular political and cultural climate of China and thus greatly decreased their cautiousness and distance to me. In other words, on the one hand, the current political climate in China construct barriers to approaching my potential participants who had strong sense of self-protection; on the other hand, it to some extent helped me to be closer with my participants once I was accepted as an ethnic insider. And this kind of rapport cannot easily be achieved by people with other ethnic backgrounds.

I argued that the fieldwork experience and the researcher's positionalities are mutually influenced and shaped by each other, especially for the researcher who is in the similar position as the researched. My ethnic identity and the whole research process are mutually affected. My ethnic identity and my life experience have constantly affected the orientation and forms of representation of my research. The process of making this thesis also reshaped my understandings of my own ethnic identity.

Chapter 5 Tourism and changing landscape of religion in Jiuzhaigou

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to explore the transformation of the institutional and non-institutional religious landscape of Jiuzhaigou, with particular attention to two key spaces: the monastery and the home. I argue that deinstitutionalisation is a prominent feature of the spatial transformation of religion in Jiuzhaigou. Deinstitutionalisation of religion, by focusing on both institutional and non-institutional change, describes laypeople's departure from religious institutions and the declining significance of established religion in the public domain (Pollack and Pickel, 2007; Streib, 2007), however the concept has not been well studied and used outside of the western context.

Existing research on deinstitutionalisation of religion has mainly adopted the quantitative approach to describe the general and macro trends of rise and fall of religious institutions. However, simply examining attendance at church and the size of church membership, for example, cannot fully demonstrate the nuanced, complicated reasons and dynamics of institutional religious change (Streib, 2007: 152). Additionally, to date most research on deinstitutionalisation has focused on western countries. However, the institutional expressions of religion are different from country to country, culture to culture and religion to religion and hence there is a need to consider deinstitutionalisation in non-Christian religions and non-western countries (Gorski and Altinordu, 2008).

As seen above, there are still blanks in portraying a solid and detailed picture of institutional change in a religion (Streib, 2007: 152). This chapter aims to explain 'how' and 'why' of institutional change happening in the Bon religion at meso and micro level to "allow us to refine our account of exactly what has happened" (Taylor, 2007: 427). In specific I begin by investigating the ways in which Zharu monastery is contested in the tourist destination, Jiuzhaigou and suffers from declining appeal (section 5.2). The spatial transformation of Bon would be poorly understood without mentioning the domestic religious space. Section 5.3 provides an examination of the strong growth of non-institutional religious spaces.

5.2 The monastery: ‘public’ religious space as contested space

5.2.1 Introduction

With tourism development and the rapid and broad economic, political and social changes in contemporary Tibet, Zharu Monastery has been through a complex transformation. The whole of Section 5.2 will discuss how the public nature of Zharu Monastery is contested. Specifically, it will start by defining Bon monastery and its public nature (Section 5.2.2). In Section 5.2.3 and in Section 5.2.4, the monastery as a commodity and a holy space will be explored. Then in section 5.2.5 I will focus on the ways in which the public nature of the monastery has been challenged by different forces claiming ownership to the monastery and by its declining public role. In the following section (Section 5.2.6), I will explore the gendered difference in monastery life.

5.2.2 What is a Tibetan Bon monastery?

“Religious space is not uniform: it is multi-dimensional, incorporating both the material and the metaphysical” (Livingstone et al., 1998: 146). Physically, a proper Tibetan monastery should have at least a temple and a residential area housing monks. In addition, some monasteries have colleges and medical houses. Traditionally Tibetan monasteries (including both Buddhist and Bon) had multiple functions. They were not only religious centres, but also served as educational, cultural and medical centres (Goldstein, 1998a). Monasteries were once the only place for learning language, history, medicine, philosophies of Bon, astrology and so on. They had a substantial influence on every aspect of Tibetan life, such as politics, economy, science, education, culture and social structure. Mass monasticism made the monastery the biggest institution in Tibet. The functions, forms and organisations of Tibetan monasteries have been through constant changes (see Section 3.3), especially after 1950. Since then the traditional economic, educational, medical functions of monasteries have been differentiated, replaced, and transformed. Monasteries are supposed to be the main place for practicing institutionalised religion, teaching religious knowledge and providing religious services. However, in contemporary Tibet, some monasteries are inevitably involved in new fields, such as tourism and cultural industries, and Zharu Monastery is clearly one of these.

Chidester and Linenthal (1995: 15) argue that “a sacred space is not merely discovered, or founded, or constructed; it is claimed, owned, and operated by people advancing specific interests”. Thus, for different people, a sacred space is imbued with different meanings through contestation, declaration of ownership and operation. The meaning of

the sacred space is not static but contested and changing. For monks, a monastery is the place where they live and study. For laypeople, a monastery is a place for prayer, meditation and taking part in public religious practices. Tibetan monasteries have always been regarded as an ostensibly public religious space. However, they have both public and private attributes. Monasteries are not simply temples, that is to say, a public space for laypeople to pray in and also take part in religious ceremonies, but also serve a home for monks. They therefore combine elements of public and private space.

There is therefore no fixed answer to the question of the nature of a Tibetan Bon monastery. People in Jiuzhaigou would have their own understanding and ways of using and producing this meaningful space. These will be discussed in the following sections. I start by examining the boundary at Zharu Monastery between tourist product and holy space as set by government.

5.2.3 The boundary between tourist product and holy space for the government

Although the beauty of the natural landscape is the primary tourist draw for Jiuzhaigou, religion has also increasingly been used as a commodity to attract tourists in connection with many religious spaces, such as Zharu Monastery, the Stupa, Zhayizhaga Sacred Mountain and laypeople's home shrines. Of these, the religious commodification of Zharu Monastery has generated most discussion and disputes among local people. In considering the process of change of the monastery, we should look first at the role of government because of its considerable power of influence over the monastery (see Section 3.4.3).

In contemporary China, it is not rare to find temples involved in business. Some temples are even set up as commercial entities. It has been reported that specific sticks of incense can sell for as much as 300 CNY (Ji, 2012). The widespread commercialisation and commodification of religion in China have attracted broad attention and ignited serious criticism in some circles (Yin, 2013; BBC Chinese, 2011). People are quoted as saying, "It's excessive. It's looting" (Ji, 2012). Whatever the critics might say, there are also a few voices claiming that commercialisation is understandable because they have no other way of making a living. Nevertheless, responding to the wide-range criticisms, the central government in Beijing issued a notice on 8 October 2012 banning profiteering in temples throughout the PRC and enjoying them "not to let money be their mantra" (State Administration for Religious Affairs, 2012). The following quote from the notice illustrates the government's view.

Since the Reform and Opening-up... most Buddhist and Taoist temples have been administered properly with correct religious atmosphere, solemnity and seclusion. However, some places are motivated by economic profit, allowing 'religion to build a stage, economy to play on it'. There are some abnormal phenomena emerging which manifest themselves mainly in the following ways: some places, companies and individuals invest in building or contracting temples in order to make money promoting traditional culture and local economy as an excuse.... Some registered temples, especially ones in scenic spots, are accepting investments and are [commercially] managed; some are becoming a public company; some coerce or tempt tourists and adherents to pay a high price to burn incense and have their fortunes told. These phenomena seriously violate the religious policies of the Communist Party and the State's laws and regulations, disturb normal religious activities, harm the rights and image of religious groups, hurt the feelings of adherents, damage the lawful rights of tourists and, further, have deleterious social impact which attracts wide attention. (State Administration for Religious Affairs, 2012)

In this notice, the government made the point that Buddhist and Taoist temples should have an appropriate religious atmosphere of solemnity and seclusion. The 'correct religious atmosphere' is a vague idea without clear and specific explanation here. But the notion of solemnity and seclusion helps to elaborate what is meant by a 'proper' Buddhist temple as defined by the government. Solemnity and seclusion are qualities of Buddhist temples. But some elements of commodification which are clearly stated in this notice are not compatible with these qualities. However, as noted by Ji (2012), we can see from this notice that the boundary between commercialism and profiteering drawn by government is vague and ambiguous. Even though the government criticized profiteering in Buddhist temples, new regulations do not specify what profiteering is. Rather they simply listed some examples which should be prohibited. Nevertheless, what is certain is that tourism is not the target of the government's ire and is still permitted in temples.

When we look at the JAB, religion as a tourist commodity was ostensibly supported and explicitly included in the tourism development planning of Jiuzhaigou (see Fig. 5.1-5.2 for tourists conducting religious practices). In the 2005 general plan of Jiuzhaigou National Park, Zharu monastery was named as one of the seven most important tour sites in Zharu Scenic Valley (Jiuzhaigou Administration Bureau, 2005). Tibetan monasteries and temples are one of its selling points. Echoing a proposal put forward by the general secretaries of Sichuan Province and Aba Prefecture who emphasised in recent speeches the strategic role of cultural tourism in Sichuan Province and Aba Prefecture, a new company called Jiuzhaigou Tourism and Cultural Industries Company was set up in 2012 as part of the Jiuzhaigou Administration Bureau to promote cultural tourism. In the

meantime, A Planning of Cultural Tourism Projects (Jiuzhaigou Administration Bureau, 2012b) was published. Culture was elevated to an equal position as nature in Jiuzhaigou. A Tibetan Cultural Experience Tourist Area is depicted in this planning document which includes five functional areas: the entertainment area, the museum and exhibition area, the religion and folklore area, the traditional artefacts area and the revitalised Tibetan village area. In it, Zharu monastery is named as the Zharu Monastery Bon Cultural Centre and planned as an integral part of the Jiuzhaigou tour. According to the planning of the functional areas (Jiuzhaigou Administration Bureau, 2012c), Zharu Monastery Bon Cultural Centre will be jointly developed by the government and other non-governmental religious organisations. Profits will come from single activity charges and shopping¹⁰. The beneficiaries will be Zharu Monastery and the residents of Jiuzhaigou.

A JAB official, Qinjiang, briefly described their plan of making Zharu Monastery a tourist commodity and expressed their views toward it.

Ying: Will Zharu Monastery be one of the scenic sites in your future development?

Qinjiang: Yes.

Ying: How would you do this specifically?

Qinjiang: It is a monastery. [It] must be open to tourists, arranging some Buddhist activities [for them]¹¹. Among things talked about by local people, there will be a nursing home, no, no, no, an Activity Centre for the elderly [where they could] spin prayer wheels and do stuff like that.

Ying: The Zharu Monastery is preparing to open for tourists?

Qinjiang: Yes. Opening to tourists cannot be like that, [like] some religious places, cheating the tourists. [The monastery] cannot do things like that. This is very important. [It] cannot be commercialised. [It] cannot be too commercialised.

¹⁰ In this document, 'single activity' is not specified and remains to be determined. But according to officials from JAB, single activity refers to tourism activities for which charges apply, such as entrance to the monastery.

¹¹ The conversation was in Mandarin. The speaker here used the Mandarin words *foshi huodong*, which literally means Buddhist activities. There is no equivalent Tibetan word referring to general activities of Bon or Buddhism. Most of the Mandarin terminology for Bon is borrowed from Buddhist terminology. In Jiuzhaigou, *foshi huodong* is used to describe the overall activities of both Bon and Buddhism. There are many other examples of this kind of mixed usage. Another example is the character for *fo*, which in Mandarin means Buddha but is also used to refer to the Buddha or Buddhas in Bon by local people in Jiuzhaigou.

Zharu monastery is considered to be a strategic part of their tourism development by the JAB. Religion-themed tourist products are permitted and promoted by the bureau. However, it does not specify the boundary between being commercialised and being too commercialised. It rather presents a vaguely defined idea that cheating the tourists is not good and not permitted.

As for the religious meanings of the Zharu Monastery, the bureau adopts an intricate view as is evident in the following interview with an official of the JAB.

Ying: What is your [JAB's] attitude to religion when you decide to develop cultural tourism products?

Zuojian: Inclusiveness.

Ying: How do you understand inclusiveness?

Zuojian: Er...Religion, the positive sides must be promoted. But [it] cannot be too much.

Ying: Cannot be too much? Does that mean that it cannot be over-publicised? Why is it that it cannot be too much?

Zuojian: There should be like, no conflict with laws and regulations. In our country, like in minority areas, there should be no so-called Tibet-independence issues here... like us, our place is a scenic spot, [we] should be more like this [no dependent issues mentioned before].

Generally speaking, from the government's perspective religion should not be over-publicised and should be practiced according to the laws that regulate it. Tourist resorts in particular should be more cautious and low-key about the prominence they give to religious manifestations. This is particularly the case in Tibet, where religion, especially Tibetan religions, is a sensitive issue which has generated various conflicts (see Chapter 3). The Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader for many Tibetans is regarded as a separatist and a traitor by the Chinese government (China.org.cn, 2005). Therefore, Tibetan Buddhism and Bon are regarded as factors inducing instability to which special attention needs to be paid and special treatment given. The JAB official's view reflects Chinese state's conflicting cultural attitudes toward ethnic minorities which promote cultures of ethnic minorities while simultaneously playing down the religious (spiritual) aspects (Sofield and Li, 1998).

On the one hand, the JAB is promoting Zharu monastery as an important cultural tourism product, while on the other hand there is an understanding that religion cannot be over-promoted. Zharu Monastery is seen more as a tourist commodity which is characterised by its religious meaning and as a representation of Tibetan culture. For the JAB, it has a crucial role to play in forming the whole development of tourist product in Jiuzhaigou. However, the religious meaning of the institution is not seen as entirely relevant by the

JAB. Local government operates according to the principle of 'obeying central state laws and regulations'. However, the central state itself does not give a clear guide, which leaves local government with a lack of certainty. Facing the call to develop cultural tourism (including temples) from provincial and prefectural leaders as well as the central government's consistent suspicious attitude to religion, the local government is trying to find a balance.

It is clear from the above that there is an ambiguous boundary between what is acceptable to government and what is not. In the words of Mary Bergstrom, a marketing consultancy in Shanghai, quoted in Ji (2012): "There aren't the established checks and balances in China that exist in other countries, so people are more willing and able to test the boundaries of what is acceptable, especially if the end result of these tests is potential profit".

5.2.4 The boundary between tourist product and holy space for local people

It is because there is no clear boundary set by the government that Zharu Monastery is testing the limit itself. The following section will examine the boundary for local people. It will first address how the monastery was commodified into a tourist product, and, second, how local people react to this commodification.

5.2.4.1 The process of commodification

From interviews and conversations with local people who witnessed the emergence and growth of the tourism business in monasteries around Jiuzhaigou, I have reconstructed the following account of the history of the Zharu monastery's involvement in tourism. In 1999, some Bon monasteries in Songpan which are on the only tourist highway from Chengdu to Jiuzhaigou leased themselves out to Han Chinese businessmen (Sutton and Kang, 2010b: 105). Without any experience of tourism operations, Zharu monastery joined this trend and contracted itself out at that time as well. In the following paragraphs I will explain what this leasing entailed.

As various informants told me, it was the first time these monasteries had been involved in tourism. At that time, they had no idea what tourism could bring them and how tourism works. They did not know how to attract tourists, how to organise a tour, how to manage their relationships with tour agents, tour guides and tourists and how to show the history and stories about the monastery and Bon in Chinese. "At that time [people are] silly.

[They] know nothing about the outside world” (Agu Yongzhong¹², a middle-aged monk in the Gami Monastery). They simply knew that the Han Chinese businessmen promised to refurbish the monastery, to give them a small amount of money for maintenance, expansion of the monastery and monks’ salaries. As they were experiencing some financial difficulties, they accepted the offer.

However, the nature of the business-centred tourism operations was not acceptable to laypeople and some monks. The monasteries drew criticism from laypeople as well as monks (Sutton and Kang, 2010b; Baimacuo, 2004). According to the recollections of monks and laypeople from my interviews and research from Sutton and Kang (2010b) and Baimacuo (2004), all the monasteries were subjected to the same practices as the Han businessmen were coming together as a group from the same place. The Han boss hired Han workers (female and male) and a few monks pretending to be Tibetan tour guides and high-ranking lamas. They wore Tibetan costumes telling tourists that they are Tibetans and showcasing Tibetan culture and religion to tourists, while tour guides tried to persuade tourists to purchase religious objects such as Buddha statues and *thangka*¹³, and make donations. There was always an older monk around pretending to be a prestigious lama who was said to have supernatural power.

This was a profitable business. The Han contractor made a deal with tourist agencies promising to give them sales commission (of about 50%) as long as they took their tourists to the monasteries. The tourism business at Zharu and the other monasteries was greatly boosted with the help of tourist agencies. Apart from this, tour guides working in the monastery were also offered commission related to their total sales, which motivated them to adopt commercial behaviour. Agu Wuden, a middle-aged monk in Zharu monastery, described the way tourists were charged as follows:

They [a group of workers of the Han contractor] sold Buddha statues and incense to tourists. Tourists were also led to stand in front of the ‘lama’. If a tourist looked wealthy, the lama would tell the tourist that they were in bad luck, and suggested they buy a big Buddha statue and donate some money to do a religious ritual [to get rid of the bad luck].

From this description, we can see how tourists were persuaded to purchase things from the monastery. Setting the scene with an ‘authentic’ Tibetan religious atmosphere was the first priority. The entrepreneurs used Mandarin-speaking Han Chinese who were

¹² Agu is the title of monks and used before the name for respect.

¹³ *Thangka* is a religious painting on cloth or paper and sometimes embroidered on silk depicting a Buddhist/Bon deity, scene or mandala of some sort.

skilled at impersonating Tibetan tour guides. In fact they were sales persons selling religious objects like incense and Buddha statues and religious activities which came with high price tags. They used scripts designed to help their sales, scripts that were criticised by locals for being misleading.

The whole tourism business in Zharu monastery stirred up complaints and objections among the local people and tourists. Local people were not happy with what the tourist business brought to the monastery, such as the introduction of female tour guides (see Section 5.2.5). Tourists found themselves coaxed into buying overpriced religious products.

In 2002, complaints from local people and tourists prompted the prefectural and county governments to stop the contract business in monasteries. But monasteries were still encouraged by the government to run tourism by themselves in order to be self-sufficient. From then on, monks and lamas were requested to wear an ID when they worked with the tourists. The prefectural Bureau of Religious Affairs and Bureau of Pricing regulated the price of all the commodities and entrance tickets to monasteries. Here the government considered religion a tourist commodity (Sutton and Kang, 2010a: 106).

From 2002 to 2005, Zharu Monastery Administration Committee started to operate a tourism business by itself without the profiteering of the Han businessmen. In 2005, Zharu Monastery knocked down some of its old buildings and initiated a reconstruction plan. Since then, the monastery has been undergoing a large reconstruction project (see Section 3.4.3). Tourism is set as one of the important strategies in the monastery development agenda. Even though the monastery secured funding worth 8 million CNY from JAB, it still ran up a big deficit in order to complete the reconstruction. Indeed, it has not been able to open to tourists for the past 8 years. Public religious practices ceased for 7 years from 2005 to 2011. A few religious ceremonies have been held in the monastery since 2011 as some of the building work is finished.

At present, Zharu Monastery is regarded as an important point in the future cultural tourism route and in the development of Zharu Valley (an undeveloped valley in Jiuzhaigou). In the near future the newly refurbished monastery will reopen to laypeople and tourists. There will be more chances for interaction with tourism, which might continue to make a significant impact on the monastery and monks.

Even though the extreme religious commodification at Zharu monastery introduced by the Han businessmen is a thing of the past, it has had profound consequences for the current status of the monastery. For example, laypeople lost their loyalty and trust in the

monastery because of this. Local laypeople started to actively get involved in the reconstruction of Zharu Monastery by donating/investing money for the reconstruction project in order to avoid the previous unhappy experience and have a say in the monastery's affairs (which will be discussed in Section 5.2.5).

5.2.4.2 The reactions of local people

As tourism was very new for monks and laypeople, the changes it caused in the monastery had a big influence on both of them. A sense of disappointment and unhappiness was a common theme expressed when local people recalled the period before the closure for refurbishment of Zharu Monastery.

In Tibet, the monastery is home to celibate monks who are supposed to renounce worldly love, desire and wealth (Goldstein and Tsarong, 1985). Therefore, monks are thought to be solitary, staying away from the secular economic, social and emotional entanglements and monasteries are deemed to be appropriate places for a life of renunciation. Local people in successive interviews with me expressed their unhappiness at what they saw as excessive profit-making activities at Zharu Monastery. For them, what happened at Zharu Monastery challenged the ideal of monastic life and was contrary to the expectation for a monastery, which should be detached from the rest of the world. They noted that the monastery had been transformed into a market or a shop selling religion, and no longer felt like a sacred space. The sacredness of Bon was challenged and harmed by market economy ideas which emphasise the significance of worldly pursuits (see also Sutton and Kang, 2010a). A middle-aged layman, Xila, gave me his views on Zharu Monastery's engagement with tourism. "The monastery is a sacred place. It is a place for deities and buddhas, not for these things and people. These will displease the buddhas." It was clear from the context that his reference to things and people denoted the commodification of religion, the Han Chinese businessmen and the female tour guides. These views were voiced at the start of most of the interviews that I conducted. Time after time, my interviewees insisted that, "the monastery is a sacred place".

As local people sensed that the Zharu Monastery was losing its sacred quality, they adopted a direct way of showing their discontent and disagreement. According to Agu Caidan, a young monk in Zharu Monastery, they began donating money to monasteries outside Jiuzhaigou. They were, he said, driven to attend religious events away from Zharu Monastery at other nearby tourist-free monasteries. Sutton and Kang (2010a) also found that commodification in some Songpan monasteries made local people turn to smaller temples. Despite the discontent of local people with Zharu Monastery, many of

them preferred to adopt a pragmatic stance of compromise. They did not directly complain to the monastery, but complained indirectly. A middle-aged layman, Qudeng, told me, when I asked if he had told the people at the monastery about his feelings:

Impossible. They [the Monastery Administration Committee] had rented it [monastery] out. How can I say things like “I’m not happy with that” to them? Besides, we live in Jiuzhaigou together. It is not wise to say bad words. Villagers who are not happy with this just gossiped about it amongst each other.

His answer suggests that even though they did not agree with the monastery’s tourism business, they chose to express their disagreement in a private way rather than make their views public. The crucial factor here is that religious commodification is seen as an affront and a threat to the deep social ties between the monastery and local community. The Tibetan monastery has always been deeply embedded in local community, its monks coming from local families, while the monastery itself provides religious services for the members of the community.

Apart from the sacred quality, Zharu Monastery was stressed as a ‘Tibetan’ monastery and not a Han space repeatedly by local people. As I argued in Chapter 3, Han Chinese-ness has become an important element in defining and shaping the identity of ethnic minorities in China, such as Tibetans (Yi, 2007; Yeh, 2007b), Uyghurs (Gladney, 2005), Miao (Schein, 2000) and Naxi and Dai (Hansen, 1999). One middle-aged layman, Basang showed his dissatisfaction with the way Han Chinese had pretended to be Tibetans in order to make money out of tourism at Zharu monastery. “At that time”, Basang said, “the monastery was rented to a Han businessman. They employed a lot of Han tour guides. They wore Tibetan clothes selling pricy religious objects and asking for large donations from tourists.” For them, a sense of Tibetanness became more pronounced as a result of Han businessmen’s pretention of Tibetans. The activities of the Han Chinese in Zharu Monastery became an act of transgression. The episode appears to have reinforced Tibetans’ feeling of otherness from the Han Chinese, strengthening a Han/Tibetan dichotomy which deeply shapes the Tibetans’ idea of self (this theme will be developed in Chapters 6 and 7).

These sentiments were voiced by Wangzen, a middle-aged layman in Jiuzhaigou, who told me that, “it is these Han Chinese who made the monastery reek.” I asked Kangzhu, a middle-aged laywoman in Jiuzhaigou, whether there would be any difference if the businessman had been a Tibetan. She replied that, “Tibetans wouldn’t do these things. We Tibetans have religion. [We] won’t blaspheme Buddha.” This kind of expression frequently appeared in my conversations with local people. From what they said to me, an underlying sense could be identified that for them Tibetans are generally morally good

because they have religion. Religion became the source bringing them pride and differentiates them from the Han. Yeh (2007b) studied the self-formulated tropes of indolence about Tibetans in Lhasa which partly originate by perceiving the hard work of the Han Chinese around them. The Han Chinese are the Others against whom Tibetans measure themselves. It should not, however, be thought that Tibetan ethnic identity is always uppermost in the minds of most people. It is only conspicuous around certain issues central to this identity such as religion.

During my fieldwork, I occasionally wondered whether my respondents would have said the same things to me if I had been Han Chinese. Since I identified myself as Tibetan when I was doing fieldwork, it is possible that the emphasis on the Tibetan was sometimes a performative act in front of me, a fellow Tibetan. However, I not only undertook formal interviews in my fieldwork, I also conducted participant observation in the local community, staying there as a friend with local people. In other words, even if sometimes they might have been performing their Tibetanness, they could not always have been acting in front of me. Hence I have interpreted their invocation of the Han Chinese as their counterpart as an ingrained way to show their difference and identity.

However, notwithstanding their disapproval of the monastery's commodification, local people's belief in Bon and buddhas appears not to be substantially undermined by the perceived failings of the local monastery (a point evidenced by the burgeoning growth of domestic religion, see Section 5.3).

In summary, the previous two sections examined the boundary between a tourist commodity and a holy space. In order to avoid political controversies, the local government has an ambivalent attitude towards whether monasteries should be treated as tourist products or holy space. In Jiuzhaigou it is more inclined to see the monastery as a tourist product used to complement the nature-centred tourist attraction that is the national park. For local people, the commodification diminishes the sacredness which was taken as the core of the monastery's meaning in their lives. In addition to contestations around the meaning of the monastery as a tourist product or a holy space, another attribute of the monastery is being challenged too, its public nature, and this will be elaborated in the following section.

5.2.5 The contested public nature of the monastery

In Tibetan, '*dgon-pa*' means a monastery or hermitage, traditionally isolated from the nearest village by the distance that the sound from a human voice carries (Keown, 2003). The root *dgon* means essentially 'isolated' or 'remote'. Here, the monastery is an

isolated and remote place for monks. From this definition, it has nothing to do with laypeople. Nowadays, in the contemporary context of Tibet, *dgon-pa* not only means monastery, but also refers to a religious centre (not necessarily of celibate monks) (Samuel, 2012). It is a place welcoming all believers and non-believers (according to the Bon idea of love and compassion for all sentient beings). Therefore, the monastery is supposed to be a public place. In Jiuzhaigou, many of my respondents have expressed in practice and discourse their different understandings about the monastery as a public space.

In this section, I discuss four ways in which the public nature of Zharu Monastery is contested. Firstly, on account of the commodification of the monastery, I found a tendency for local people to think the monastery's public nature was being violated. Secondly, many of my respondents claim ownership of the monastery and a prominent local stupa in order to have a say in the monastery's affairs. Thirdly, some of them have bought up 'fragments' of the monastery, which has privatised the monastery in portions. Last but not least, a significant number of them accuse the monastery of failing to fulfil its public role.

5.2.5.1 A monastery for Jiuzhaigou people?

As I described earlier in Chapter 3 and in Section 5.2.3, local people generally were not happy about the commodification of Zharu Monastery. They expressed their disapproval of the commodification because it went against the sacredness of the Bon religion and their understandings about the function of a monastery.

Moreover, the question of who should 'own' the monastery also generated substantial discussion under-surface. For laypeople, Zharu Monastery is considered as a place which belongs to all Jiuzhaigou people, not to a group of monk managers. Almost all of my respondents stated that they found the idea that the monastery was used for making profits for some monks unacceptable. They see the monastery as a communal property of Jiuzhaigou people. In the words of Zhayang, a middle-aged layman from Jiuzhaigou, "It is not good that some monks used the monastery to make money for their own sake". For him, the monastery belongs to all local people as they built it out of nothing after the Cultural Revolution. Zezhen, an elderly female resident of Jiuzhaigou, recalled this process:

At that time, we had no money. [We] looked for wild medicines [in the forest to sell for money]. Once we get some money [from that], we gave it to the

monastery. Each family had [at least] one family member to help build [the monastery].

The perception that the monastery belongs to the wider people of Jiuzhaigou for their benefit is challenged not only by the making of profit by monks but also by new trends whereby elites seek to influence the monastery with money, which I turn to below.

5.2.5.2 Claiming ownership of the Yongzhong Laze Stupa

The construction of the Yongzhong Laze Stupa¹⁴ (abbreviated as the Stupa) in the grounds of Zharu Monastery initiated a round of ownership competition between different forces. The Stupa was the first building finished in 2012 as part of the wider refurbishment of the monastery (see Fig. 3.12 for the appearance). According to local monks, it is one of the biggest stupa in the whole Tibet. It has been opened to local people to conduct religious practices since 2012, and, as I was informed by monk managers that it was planned to be opened to tourists in the near future.

As mentioned above, my respondents overwhelmingly saw themselves as the legitimate owners of the monastery. They did not like to see the monastery being used as a means of making profit for some monks and its sacredness being degraded as a consequence. Indeed, there was an active response from local people. In order to have more say in monastery affairs, some rich members of the local elite started to interfere in the new construction plan of the monastery by donating a large amount of money to the construction of the Stupa. When I asked Zega, a Jiuzhaigou middle-aged man, why he donated to the monastery, he explained as follows:

The monastery is the most important place for local people for worship. We must help. And this is doing good deeds as well.... You know, the monastery was not properly run in the past, which affected the monastery's image. Now we are donating some money just so as to tell the monastery the way forward. ... The monastery is a sacred place. And [it] should do religious things. I hope in the future the monastery could do tourism properly in accordance with national laws and regulations, concerning itself more about local people, not just making money.

For him, donating money was simultaneously both a way to do good deeds and show his reverence to the Buddha while also becoming involved in monastery affairs to help

¹⁴ A stupa is a Buddhist or Bon religious monument imbued with special religious significance, often dedicated to the memory of a buddha or bodhisattva. It houses scriptures, religious objects and sacred relics of the holy persons or buddhas.

ensure the monastery avoids repeating its former practices. According to other local people who talked to me, local elite residents tried to use this approach to raise their profile and voice in monastery affairs. They thought, I was told, that if you donate more, you will have a bigger say in monastery affairs. They want the income from tourism to be used for monastery development or be distributed among local people. But some people argued that for rich people donating money was like buying shares. Once the Stupa opens to tourists, they may profit.

With regard to the government, the investment in the Stupa is also part of their strategy for being involved in the monastery's affairs. The monastery is a special place on which JAB cannot have sole claim. JAB does not directly take part in monastery affairs, because the monastery is directly administered by the Bureau of Religious Affairs. However, as the monastery is set to become a strategic tourist spot as soon as it reopens fully, JAB needs to make sure the monastery is run and developed in accordance with tourism purpose and laws and regulations.

By connecting with tourism, the ownership of the monastery becomes penetrable and contested for different non-monastic forces. For the time being, however, and despite still being partially closed while refurbishment is completed, Zharu Monastery remains a contested space, with laypeople, local elites, monastery officials and local government all looking to have a say in the way the monastery is run.

5.2.5.3 Privatising public religious spaces

There are other means by which the monastery is experiencing new forms of privatisation which challenge the perception that it is a resource for everyone in Jiuzhaigou.

In 2012, when the Stupa was finished, the Monastery Administration Committee initiated a programme according to which worshippers would pay 1,000 CNY for a small buddha statue and a small cuboid space within the stupa into which the statue could be placed. It was claimed that within a very short period of time several hundred buddha statues had been sold. I was told that almost every household in Jiuzhaigou donated at least one small statue. A few wealthy local people donated big statues of buddhas each worth from 100,000 to 500,000 CNY. All the buddha statues have their donor's name on the front.

In this sense, the public space of the Zharu Monastery through its patronage of the Stupa was partly transformed into private space. Donors will from now on, have their own spiritual space to claim in the monastery. In interviews, laypeople expressed strong

views about their enthusiasm for donating Buddha statues. As Cuomo, a middle-aged lay woman from Jiuzhaigou, explained:

Buying a statue is good for your soul. It is your gewa¹⁵. And the statue will be there [in the Stupa] forever, blessing you all the time... It belongs to yourself. Putting your statue in the monastery could make you enjoy all the monastery worshippers' gewa.

The statue has been regarded as their private property.

An opening ceremony was held for the Stupa during 2012 Mazhi Festival¹⁶. Even though the monastery and religious festival were open to the public, only donors received an invitation to attend the ceremony. This otherwise public religious event was privatised for the limited number of patrons. During the ceremony, Gasang, a young layman in Jiuzhaigou, described the scene of the ceremony in the following words:

The people who donated were being given special hospitality by the monastery. During the ceremony, they were given a Hada¹⁷. Monks sounded trumpet for them. At the same time they were led to see the Buddha statue they donated with their name on it in the Yongzhong Laze Stupa. At that time, everyone was looking for and pointing at their own Buddha statue.

Here, the ceremony gave each person who made a donation a special and exclusive honour in front of the public which made it an individualised ceremony for each person. Apart from that, it could be argued that placing a name tag on each buddha statue carves the stupa up into piecemeal privatised fragments.

5.2.5.4 Failing to fulfil a public role: fewer religious services

As mentioned previously, Zharu Monastery, like other Bon monasteries, has a public role to play. It is supposed to fulfil religious needs for its 'parish', including teaching, chanting, performing rituals, leading religious ceremonies, conducting prayers and so on. However, the monastery is still for the most part closed for reconstruction and most of

¹⁵ It refers to religious merit one got from doing good things to sentient beings or devoutly serving Buddha and gods. As can be seen from this stupa, Bon is a syncretic religion and buddhas form an important part of its pantheon.

¹⁶ One of most important religious events in Zharu Monastery

¹⁷ A strip of cloth (normally white or yellow) is used to give distinguished guests for showing high respect.

the monastery's monks are involved in the tourism business or related work in Jiuzhaigou. Furthermore, as we will see in Chapter 7, local people maintained that monks involved in tourism businesses and rarely performed religious practices for laypeople. They say monks make choices from a pragmatic and economic perspective. This is how Zewang, a middle-aged layman from Jiuzhaigou, put it:

They do business and have no time for chanting. Think about it. They only earn 100 CNY per day for chanting, but they can earn 400-500 CNY or [even] 700-800 CNY per day for taking photographs for tourists. They certainly don't want to come to chant for you.

Bearing this in mind, local laypeople have turned to other nearby monasteries in the Songpan area where monks receive less in alms from religious services compared to Jiuzhaigou. Repeatedly during my field stays, I was told that Zharu Monastery had failed to meet its public religious functions and that these had been replaced by monasteries in Songpan. Many Jiuzhaigou people, I was told, would rather go to nearby monasteries rather than their local monastery. There was little sympathy for the fact that during the past several years, most of the religious practices which are supposed to be held in Zharu Monastery have had to be stopped due to the reconstruction work there with no proper space and no monks available for holding big public religious events.

Another consequence of the long closure of Zharu Monastery is that laypeople and monks alike have been denied the opportunities for religious teaching. This too has caused unhappiness among local people, as testified by the words of the monk Agu Wuden, who was quoted below:

We haven't had anyone teach us for 7 or 8 years. Zharu Monastery has always been under construction for the last few years. So there is no place for public teaching. People only perform religious practices, without knowing the reasons why they are doing them and understanding the meanings and principles behind them. Many young people don't have correct knowledge about Bon. Teaching is very important for maintaining the religion.

To summarise this section, both monastery and monks engage in tourism business without fulfilling laypeople's public and private religious demands and this forces Jiuzhaigou people to go to nearby monasteries in Songpan.

5.2.6 Gendered space

Gender attributes have an important bearing on how the monastery is seen. From the point of view of my respondents and other local people, the monastery should be a male space. The following comment from a middle-aged layman, Xila, about female tour guides living in Zharu Monastery reflects the attitudes of both laymen and laywomen:

Xila: In particular, some tour guides were women. And they were even living in the monastery.

Ying: What do you think about that?

Xila: Of course it is not good. The monastery is not a place to accommodate women. It desecrated the monastery.

All my respondents reckoned that accommodating female tour guides was an act of desecration to the gods of Bon. They were not happy with the existence of women in the monastery, which they consider a sacred and male dominated space. The word used in the Tibetan language for “woman” literally means “born low”. The idea that “femaleness is an ‘inferior or unfortunate birth’ is so deeply ingrained, so taken for granted” (Gross, 1993: 82) in the everyday discourse of Tibetan people. Especially during menstruation and pregnancy, women are considered unclean. Even in the religious world, nuns are generally less respected and supported than monks.

In many societies “sacred things and places are to be protected from defilement. Holiness and impurity are at opposite poles” (Douglas, 2002: 9). In the religious sphere, women’s bodies have often been associated with taboos because they are thought to symbolise pollution. According to Douglas (2002: 35), “Where there is dirt there is a system”. Behind the understanding of women’s body as polluting and the practices of excluding women from centres of Bon religion lies the fact that women have always had a marginal place in Tibetan society, even in current modern Jiuzhaigou where women are better educated and are more economically independent, a point I return to later in this chapter, when I discuss women’s role in domestic religion (section 5.3.5).

The gender difference is obviously demonstrated in Tibetan religion. Once when I was chatting with Agu Sanlang, a middle-aged monk from Zharu monastery, he complimented me for studying Bon seriously saying, “after your study, you could practice to become a bodhisattva.” According to Ohnuma (2001: 73), the bodhisattva’s body is constructed as feminine in order to contrast the Buddha’s body gendered as masculine. For him, this was a well-intentioned wish for me, because women can only practice to be a bodhisattva but men can practice to attain the buddhahood. He wished I could reach the highest level of practice among women. Buddhahood, which is the highest level of

practice, in Bon is regarded as exclusively male. Another middle-aged monk, Agu Sangji in Jiuzhaigou reaffirmed the gender difference in and out of religion. He asserted that, “modern society promotes equality between women and men. The Bon religion emphasises equality of all sentient beings.” Gender equality as a worldwide value in modern society is highlighted firstly here as the baseline of the gender perspective of Bon. I asked if women are allowed to attend all the religious practices. He admitted that there are some places like Dharmapala Palace and Tonpa Shenrab Palace into which women are not allowed to enter. He then acknowledged the gender inequalities and used the Han Chinese as yardstick to describe the gender difference within Tibetan society: “Tibetans’ tradition has this -- always putting women’s position a little low. It is simple [to see]. Men do nothing [and] just sit there waiting to eat. Women do all the things. Han Chinese are not like this,” indicating that he believes that Han Chinese are better in terms of gender equality. This again shows that Tibetan ethnic identity is often subconsciously defined through reference to Han Chinese. He attributed the view about ‘lazy men and hard-working women’ to the tradition of the whole of Tibetan society that Tibetan women have a lower position.

What he described reflected a general gender division in Jiuzhaigou. The gender-based labour division is, in his characterisation, “men do nothing” and “women do all the things”. In Jiuzhaigou, women not only take part in the tourism business, but also are bound to do all the housework and major domestic religious practices (see also Section 5.3.5).

I personally also experienced the obvious gendered division of labour on multiple occasions, such as when I was attending a funeral in Jiuzhaigou. The following is an excerpt from my field diary documenting the situation on the day I attended the funeral in 2012.

Today I was lead by Laji [a young woman in Jiuzhaigou] to a funeral in *** Village. I met her at noon in her place of work. She said she is going to help the family with the funeral going on this afternoon. She has some blood relations with this family, so she needs to go there.

We then went to the house of the family she referred to. I was surprised seeing so many monks chanting in the living room. This was the biggest funeral ceremony I had ever seen. Someone told me there were about 40 monks invited there. They said it had started for two days ago. That day was the last day of the funeral. And after that, there would be about 6 monks left continuing the chanting ceremony for the deceased for 49 (7 x 7) days.

I was led by Laji directly to the kitchen area where all the women stay. Some women were busy preparing food for the monks and guests coming to pay their condolences. Others were sitting on the benches outside the kitchen cracking

sunflower seeds. I asked a middle-aged woman why they didn't go into the house where the men were having tea, chatting and playing cards. She said, "We women have work to do here. There might be a need to help later here." They, [the Jiuzhaigou women] did not think it was unfair at all that they had to stay in the kitchen while men rested in the house. They told me it was always like this. It seems they thought this was natural. When I asked Laji whether I could go into the house to look at what the men were doing and chat with them, she told me that it was better not to as it was not good for women to go inside. I did in fact get a chance to go inside when I was helping serve the food to the men. There were no women inside. All the men were sitting around smoking, drinking, playing cards and chatting. The women here strike me as being very efficient in doing their housework. They were able quickly to decide what was needed, what to cook, who was in charge of what, how to organise the delivery of the food and serve it. Every woman quickly found her role and worked in the team. I really felt like I was a part of the team when I was helping serve the food. I needed to bow my body a little as I served the food on the table. I had to wait to see if someone asked for food. I need to react quickly to provide food.

It was considered normal for local women to think that they are bound to take the gender role set by 'Tibetan tradition'. In my diary, I asked myself if women think this gender-based labour division is natural. On the basis of my observations and interviews in Jiuzhaigou, both women and men seem to take it for granted. In this funeral, women clearly know where their place is and what they need to do. The kitchen is a space for women vis-à-vis men's space in the living room of the house. Cooking, serving food, and other aspects of traditionally-defined domestic work are thought of as a woman's job. I myself was even influenced by the atmosphere of this team. I needed to behave like them in these conditions, so I let myself bow a bit and quickly react to the requests for food from guests. In many other public events I attended, women always put themselves behind the men. They belonged to the kitchen, and to the back stage. There is a distinct line between men's and women's space. This does not just concern of old and middle-aged women but also young women too. Laji is a young woman with a college degree and a decent job. She dissuaded me from going inside the house into men's space. None of my female respondents felt they were put in a position of inequality in terms of their role in public and domestic situations. Zeduo, a young woman told me as follows when I asked how she felt about women's role in religious practices:

I don't have any opinions. I think it should be like this, because women have a stronger Yin¹⁸ aura. For example, women must wear a coat and mouth mask to go into the Buddha hall. If they don't, their aura will displease the Buddha.”

This young woman also has a college degree. For her (as for the larger majority of women), the differentiation between gender roles is not a problem. As she sees it, it is because women have a stronger Yin aura which is not compatible with the Yang (male) religious atmosphere. This simple Yin-Yang explanation reflects the view widely accepted among women and men that women have a specific aura or quality which is not completely compatible with the Yang religion. Gross (1993: 84) found that in Buddhism a woman's body is regarded as impure. This idea is borne out in Bon by many of my respondents, even if they did not always express it out loud or were reluctant to admit it. The reason why women are refused access to some religious spaces and religious practices is because of their perceived embodiment. These special qualities or auras of women's body are used to justify the gender inequality.

The examples above of the funeral is of course an event in domestic space and not the monastery (I return to the issue of domestic space subsequently), but it does illustrate the lasting power of gendered prohibition in relation to the religious life. Speaking about women's role in religious space, Agu Yongzhong, the middle-aged monk in Gami Monastery, made a comparison between the present and the past:

In the past the monastery was not like this [allowing women into the temple]; women were not allowed to get into the main hall of the monastery. Rules were strict. In the past, everywhere was like this. Once [the doors were] opened, [women] could come in whenever they wanted. A monastery is a very sacred place. [In the past], women only took a peek standing by the temple gate when they came to the monastery. They didn't dare go inside. Now they don't care. This to some extent decreases the authority and identity of monks. Now [women] are just forbidden on the second floor. The first floor is open. Now, if the Dharmapāla Hall¹⁹ [on the second floor] is open, women will go inside; that is meaningless. [The hall] turns into an exhibition hall, without authority. [It is better] keeping a sense of mystery.

Agu Yongzhong compared the situation of women's role in the monastery between the present and the past. He spoke nostalgically about how and why women were not

¹⁸ Yin is a concept originated from Taoism in China. It implies feminine qualities which contrasted to yang relating to masculine qualities.

¹⁹ Dharmapāla is a type of deity and the name of law protectors in Bon. Dharmapāla hall is installed with statues or paintings of dharmapāla.

allowed to go into the monastery. He stressed that rules of the monastery excluding women should be strictly observed everywhere. The situation in the past was acknowledged by Agu Yongzhong as women were strictly prohibited from entering. He thinks that keeping women away from the monastery is a way to maintain the monks' authority and the monastery's sense of mystery. This further demonstrates that the Tibetan monastery is a male-centred religious space. In the past, women were conscious of keeping their distance from the temple, and they just "took a peek standing by the gate of the temple". But now, women dare to step inside, which Agu Yongzhong sees as degrading the masculinity, sacredness and mystery of the monastery and the authority of monks. In this way, it might be thought that the exclusion of women is to some extent used to strengthen the authority of monks.

To sum up, Zharu Monastery, a public religious space of the Bon religion has been through dramatic changes alongside the social, economic and politic changes of contemporary Tibetan society in China since the development of tourism in the early 1980s. The general meaning of a monastery as a sacred, public and male-dominant space has been greatly challenged and contested with different levels of spatial politics placed on it. In this process, the monastery gradually lost its appeal.

From this discussion of public religious space, the focus moves to domestic religious space examining how the Bon religion has been revitalised in domestic space.

5.3 Rising non-institutional religious spaces

The transformations in the importance of the monastery in the religious life of Jiuzhaigou should not be interpreted to suggest that there has necessarily been a decline in religious belief and practice. Rather, I argue that there has been a transformation in its forms and expression. In this section examines the revitalisation of domestic religious spaces and the growth of family and community-led practices. In Section 5.3.1, I will draw a picture of the increasing number of religious structures. Following that, I will describe the thriving domestic religious practices (Section 5.3.2) and the revival of chanting of the Prosperity Sutra (Section 5.3.3). Then Section 5.3.4 will examine a family-based bottom-up religious festival organised by non-monastic forces. Right after this, the gender politics evident in domestic religious space will be explored (Section 5.3.5).

5.3.1 Spectacular constructions of private religious spaces

Religious buildings and their compounds like temples, churches and mosques are the most obvious representation of religion in space which can provide believers with a sensual experience of religion. For Hindus, by placing appropriate religious materials and artefacts around the house, many parts of home can be sanctified (Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 2009: 260-262). As it suggests, home is a very important religious space which is more private, family-oriented and non-institutional. For Tibetans, at home there are ostensible religious objects such as chanting rooms²⁰, altars and prayer wheels. When I asked my interviewees which religious space was most meaningful for them, home and the Zhayizhaga sacred mountain were the two most frequently mentioned places apart from institutional spaces such as monasteries and temples.

When I arrived at Jiuzhaigou for the first time, I was astonished by the density and scale of religious constructions erected by local people. There are far more domestic religious constructions in Jiuzhaigou than other Tibetan areas that I have visited. Almost every family has a big stupa in their courtyard and several prayer flags surrounding their house. Agu Yidan, a migratory monk from Anbei who sometimes comes to Jiuzhaigou shared the same feeling as mine: "People here [in Jiuzhaigou] spend more money on religion. Every family builds a stupa in front of their house; this doesn't happen in my hometown." He was surprised to see a stupa erected in front of every house because in Anbei there are just a few village stupas in communal areas. Agu Yidan thinks the reason for the large scale religious construction is that Jiuzhaigou people are enjoying a better economic life and hence have more money to spend on religious constructions. In Anbei people cannot afford a stupa for each household. Apart from the stupas and prayer flags which can be seen everywhere, most families now have a separate, refurbished chanting room, something that was not affordable before. This provides physical space for more domestic religious practices. According to Zewang, a middle-aged layman expressed the changes resulted from better economic condition below:

We do sutra chantings far more than before. Chanting 2 or 3 times a year is reasonable. But we do it 7 or 8 times a year. It is like this when economic conditions are better. ...This is related to the economy. Han people build houses when they get rich, Tibetans do sutra-chanting when they get rich. It is

²⁰ A chanting room in Tibet is a separate room/hall for placing statues of Buddha/gods, scriptures and other religious objects like drums, gongs and bells. This room should be specifically for religious use. Most of the domestic religious ceremonies are done here, such as chanting by monks and family prayers. In most places, the chanting room is on the highest floor of a house in order to keep it away from earthly defilements.

the same all over the Tibetan area. Now there are many rich people chanting sutras every day in Shuzheng and in Zharu villages. There is a saying here, 'Tibetans do more chanting when richer, Han people build more houses when richer.'

However, some new domestic religious practices and religious buildings and objects are emerging for replacing the older practices such as circumambulating Mount Zhayizhaga. When I asked her to describe the changes in religious belief and practice from the end of the Cultural Revolution to the present, Zhuoga, a middle-aged woman, concurred that the emergence of large scale religious buildings is the result of better economic conditions that have been in place since the development of tourism in Jiuzhaigou. She also talked about people's stronger enthusiasm for circumambulation around the sacred mountain in the past. Then she described the present condition as follows:

Now people are lazy. [They] have many [other] ways of doing these [religious] things, or replacing them. [We] can make prayer wheels to represent them. [We] can make prayer flags in place of undertaking other more strenuous activities We don't need to chant [by ourselves]. Monks can chant [on our behalf]. Look at now, we use electronic prayer wheels, which can automatically chant for us. Modernisation gradually comes out like this. Then people are becoming lazy. Once upon a time, there was no modernisation. We retained our belief through [personal] effort. That is true [belief]. But even though it looks like [our belief] is weaker, in our heart it hasn't changed.

Zhuoga maintains that because people are lazy now, they are using many more religious objects as alternatives to fulfil the same religious purpose as circumambulating the mountain. As she sees it, it is modernisation that changes their ways of practicing religion and leads to more religious objects and fewer religious practices. She believes modernisation brings more modern techniques, which makes people more lazy. In her comments on the changes of religious practices, bodily effort was praised and labelled as emblems of true belief, especially in contrast to current times, when many religious practices have been watered down. She was clear that religion is still important in people's hearts even though the religious atmosphere is weaker. Despite the increasing religious constructions, the element of 'true' religion, bodily efforts is replaced and weakened.

Many people I talked to mentioned that they do not circumambulate their sacred mountain, Zhayizhaga Mountain as often as before because they think they have become lazy. This wide-ranging similar response reflects the fact that in people's thoughts being lazy is the main reason for undertaking fewer bodily challenging religious practices. As a matter of fact, Jiuzhaigou people are not lazy when it comes to doing

religious prayers and rituals at home. A considerable revival of domestic religious practices in Jiuzhaigou testifies to the diligence of locals in practicing religion. Thus what they mean by “lazy” appears to be that they have less involvement in religious practices that are more strenuous.

Bodily effort is an important quality which is highly praised in Bon both among laypeople and monks (see Chapter 7 for the importance of bodily effort in religious practices for monks). The body is a significant element in Bon practice. Bon and Buddhism focus on bodily practices such as meditation and yoga, which eventually enable the fulfilment of Dharma practice. For example, meditation requires one to break through the body’s pains and tensions in order to achieve peace and gain clarity of thought. The greater the bodily effort one makes, the higher the degree of one’s practice. Nowadays, Jiuzhaigou people acknowledge that they are doing fewer religious practices which consume bodily effort than before and fewer than people in Anbei. The main reasons cited for this relate to their new working and living patterns which make them less capable of intense labour-consuming activities and afford them less flexibility with their spare time. They are engaged in tourism which is far less labour-demanding than their former activities of farming and herding. In the past almost everyone was physically strong as they honed their bodies by cultivating the land and herding stocks. Therefore, bodily religious practices were easy for them. Zhuoma, an older woman in Jiuzhaigou, recollected her experience of circumambulating Mount Zhayizhaga during the Cultural Revolution. She told me that, “At that time, religious practices were forbidden, but we still very much wanted to go to circumambulate the [Zhayizhaga] mountain.” She drew a comparison with young people of today:

Young people nowadays aren’t like us. They are lazy when it comes to circumambulating the mountain. My son has just done the circumambulation a few times. When I was young, [I] went to circumambulate the mountain every now and then.... [During the Cultural Revolution] I would finish circumambulating overnight, starting at about 8 at night, finishing the whole circle at about 4 or 5 the next morning. Sometimes it was too dark to find the road. I didn’t feel tired or cold at all. After circumambulation [I] kept on doing farming work in the day time. [I was] full of energy at that time. Now young people need one whole day or two days to finish the walk.

When I asked my interviewees which religious practices do they liked most, most of them answered walking around Mount Zhayizhaga rather than any other institutional ceremonies or domestic chanting. The reasons varied. Many of them said things like circumambulating the mountain “could purify your mind and body”, “is a way of practicing religion”, and “a good exercise for health”. However almost all of them emphasised that

the most important reason was that “[I] put great effort in the whole process, and did it on my own in person”. This reflects the way that people cherish religious practice into which they put bodily effort. There lies a paradox that even though Jiuzhaigou people say that they like walking around the sacred mountain most, but they do it less.

As we have seen, a large amount of money has been put into domestic religious constructions in Jiuzhaigou thanks to funds from tourism, which provides local people with ways of earning a good living. This is compatible with Gentz’s (2009) broader claim that economic growth has facilitated an increase in the number of temples and religious professionals in China. These domestic religious constructions also give people an excuse for not visiting public religious spaces. One middle-aged woman named Gexicuo explained why she was not walking around the Zhayizhaga Sacred Mountain as follows:

Walking round the Zhayizhaga Mountain is very exhausting. I did it several times when I was young. But I can’t do it now. Staying at home burning incense and prostrating before the Buddha is the same [as circumambulating the sacred mountain]. Once you are devout to Buddha, doing everything is the same.

Gexicuo’s argument that domestic religious practices can be a replacement for visiting public religious space is shared among local people in Jiuzhaigou. However, in Anbei people have different views, as can be seen from a response made by Diki, a middle-aged woman from Anbei, when I asked her if chanting and burning incense at home could replace circumambulating the sacred mountain.

No! Circumambulating the [sacred] mountain is much more important. It is very good for driving away bad karma, [and being] better blessed. Merely burning incense is not that good [for gaining merit].... What Jiuzhaigou people said is their excuse for laziness. We circumbulate the [Xiaoxitian]²¹ Mountain 3 to 4 times every year. Some young people do it even more.

This understanding of circumambulation is different from that of Jiuzhaigou people. Diki made a clear distinction between circumambulation and domestic religious activities. The spectacular construction of private religious spaces in Jiuzhaigou to some extent reveals a rise in domestic religion that in part involves changes in attitudes about the relative importance of different kinds of practices taking place away from the home.

²¹ The nearest sacred mountain to Anbei village

5.3.2 The non-stop sound of chanting

Constructing physical space helping to generate religious feelings is an important aspect of space-making, but it is not the whole story. Religious practices are crucial in making religious space as well. With the huge increase in domestic religious spaces, domestic religious practices have also vigorously grown in Jiuzhaigou.

According to my communications with local people, it is normal that each family hold religious ceremonies several times a year. Families with older generation and monks particularly engage more in domestic religious practices. Older generation put most of their time and money into various domestic religious practices (see Chapter 6). I was surprised when I first got to know the high frequency of private religious practices in Jiuzhaigou compared to my hometown. Agu Langsang, a monk from Songpan who frequently performs religious services in Jiuzhaigou, told me that, “They are doing a lot of religious rituals. Basically the sound of sutra-chanting in this village [Shuzheng Village] never stops. Every day there is at least one family doing religious rituals.” This description depicts a picture of vigorous domestic religion in Jiuzhaigou. The sound of sutra chanting is used as a prominent signifier of religion. This ceaseless sound of chanting in a village with only about 40 families means that on average each family has at least 9 days each year when they invite monks to conduct familial rituals and ceremonies.

Locals generally felt proud of this non-stop sound of chanting, as they consider this a sign of their strong religious commitment. The following account, from Nuobu, a middle-aged Jiuzhaigou man, provides an example:

We might not be as pious as Songpan people, but [we] definitely do more chanting than them. The sound of chanting here never stops. You’ve been here for long enough. [You] must know [this]. At least judging from this, Jiuzhaigou’s religious enthusiasm is not low. Even in the whole of Aba, Jiuzhaigou does well.

Nuobu and I discussed the differences in the religious situation in Jiuzhaigou and Songpan. He acknowledged that Jiuzhaigou generally is not as religious as Songpan; he felt that Songpan people do more religious practices and are more spiritually devout. For him, the strength of Jiuzhaigou lay in the high frequency with which chanting was conducted.

This non-stop sound of chanting also generates competition for monks. As is easily imagined, there is an extremely high demand for monks conducting rituals for laypeople, but local monks are involved in the tourism business. The supply of monks becomes a

large problem for Jiuzhaigou people. I once conducted an interview with a grandmother in Jiuzhaigou during which there was a monk chanting for her family. She said it was very hard to invite monks nowadays, because there was high demand and limited supply. After a tough process, the monk who was at the time in her house was successfully obtained. She called him several times in order to make a booking in advance. Her son drove about two hours to pick him up from Songpan. Once a monk gets into Jiuzhaigou, he normally has a tight schedule. People have learned to listen keenly to hear if there is a monk at a nearby house. The news of his arrival will be quickly spread by local laypeople. Other families will come and extend an invitation. In order to ensure that the monk concentrated fully on his chanting without disturbance, the grandmother had the ritual performed in secret and asked the monk to chant in a low voice so that he would not be heard by neighbours.

The significant rise of domestic practices provides more evidence that locals' religious enthusiasm is not declining in a linear way but rather is transforming. Contrary to the decreased appeal of the monastery discussed in Section 5.2, domestic religious practices as well as domestic religious buildings have experienced a significant increase. Among many domestic religious practices, chanting of the Prosperity Sutra²² has become more popular; this sutra is more relevant to the individual pursuit of fortune and has been particularly regenerated since the introduction of tourism.

5.3.3 The revival of chanting of the Prosperity Sutra

Tourism not only boosts the growth of both domestic religious spaces and practices, it has also led to the revival of an old sutra, the Prosperity Sutra, known as *yogu* in Tibetan.

Agu Caidan, the young monk from Zharu Monastery whom I quoted earlier, told me that one of the direct impacts of tourism on religion was the prevalence of the chanting of the Prosperity Sutra, which he insisted was done for economic reasons. The Prosperity Sutra is a short Bon sutra mainly used for blessing people and wishing they have good fortune and make money. In the past the Prosperity Sutra was not popular at all, and the old monks in Jiuzhaigou were not able to chant this sutra as they had not learnt it. This meant that young and middle-aged monks were the only people who had mastered this sutra.

²² The purpose for chanting the Prosperity-Scripture is to bless people have good fortune and make money.

Monks normally learn the sutras which are in demand. Before the development of tourism, people in Jiuzhaigou earned a living by farming and herding, which is highly dependent on the weather and the nature of the land. Making money for a cash economy was not their priority and was not even on their minds. Agu Caidan commented that he had heard from the old monks that, "In the past, people in Jiuzhaigou were praying for a good harvest, but now they are praying for tourism and getting money from tourism." As we saw in Chapter 3, since the introduction of tourism in 1984, Jiuzhaigou people have gradually given up farming and herding. At the moment, they do not have any arable land or livestock. Tourism has become their dominant source of income. To make this source of income secure, they turned to their religion to ask for blessings for their tourism business. In these conditions, the Prosperity Sutra has been revived as a result of the high level of demand from local people. Tourism is now one of the key themes that shapes the agenda for prayer.

5.3.4 Risang Festival: a grassroots bottom-up religious event

Individuals and communities now claim direct access to the sacred, without mediation by religious professionals or a clerical elite. This new immediacy allows individuals and communities to construct the sacred in ways that are more democratic, egalitarian, playful, inventive and potentially subversive than in the recent past. (Fenn, 2001: 3)

With the decreasing influence of the monastery, in Jiuzhaigou laypeople play the leading role in initiating and organising a big religious ceremony, the Risang Festival. Monks and the monastery just assist with religious issues in this festival.

In 2012 local laypeople in Jiuzhaigou initiated a new annual Jiuzhaigou-wide religious festival, Risang Festival. In the past, it was just a small scale religious ritual conducted in each village. In the summer of 2012, the heads of three villages decided to expand it into a Jiuzhaigou-wide religious festival. The reasons they gave were threefold. Firstly, serving Buddha and gods is beneficial for gaining good fortune for Jiuzhaigou and all sentient beings, as well as for preserving the waters and mountains. Secondly, the festival could become a cultural tourist product attracting tourists and spreading Tibetan culture. Thirdly, they said that locals need this festival because of the closure of the monastery and its decline as a dominant power in organising religious events in the past few years. One of the festival organisers, Norbu, a middle-aged layman from Jiuzhaigou, told me that the festival is organised because of demand from local people. He said that,

We feel people need this kind of event. Since Zharu Monastery closed, there has been no big religious event for a long time. Sometimes people here have

to go to other nearby monasteries to attend big events. Without teaching from lamas, people don't know their beliefs very well, especially young people. Inviting prestigious lamas to give sermons would actually help them to know more about our religion.

People have big demand for this kind of big religious events. Norbu especially emphasised young people's lack of knowledge in their religion which could be complemented somewhat through having the Risang Festival. Norbu and his fellow organisers managed the whole festival, including inviting lamas and monks to teach, chant and perform rituals, getting permission and support from Jiuzhaigou JAB and raising money and arranging for every family to provide logistic support. The family is the basic unit of the festival's organisation. Each family was assigned to help in running of the festival and providing food.

In this festival, the role of monks and the monastery is diminished. Although there is no official involvement from Zharu monastery in festival management, Risang Festival has received positive feedback from laypeople, monks and JAB. The teaching element was the most welcomed and memorable part of the festival for the laypeople who have not experienced this for many years. For young people, they have been able to gain a new understanding of their religion. Xiuying, a young laywoman from Jiuzhaigou, put it in the following words:

The teaching was impressive. I have never seen this before. Even though the lamas were just talking about issues like not smoking and gambling, I felt things about Bon are close to me and easy to understand. It is not as complicated as I imagined before. In the past, I knew nothing about Bon; I just practiced what my parents told me to. I hope there will be more events like this.

Because the Tibetan Bon sutras are not easily accessible to laypeople as they are written in Tibetan which only a small proportion of Tibetans recognise, Tibetan laypeople need guidance to understand them, and that guidance needs to come from monks. Xiuying does not know the Tibetan language. She explained to me that, before the festival, the religious ideas she derived were mainly from her parents who themselves were not properly taught. Therefore, religious ideas were abstract and complicated for her. She said that after the festival she felt much closer to her religion. Many other people told me they had a positive experience of the festival. Unlike the traditional monastery-organised Mazhi Festival (see Section 5.2.5.3) which receives mixed reviews, Risang Festival obtained unanimous praise.

This religious festival is also supported by JAB. I asked how they obtained support and approval from the JAB to Zerenzhu, a middle-aged man. He answered me as follows:

Our Risang Festival is not only a religious activity, but also an important [kind of] ethnic culture. ... We reported to JAB that this could be developed as [a product of] cultural tourism and folk tourism. And this could attract tourists. [So] the JAB approved this activity and gave us money.

For gaining the support to hold this festival, local people adopted some tactics. Firstly, they connected it to tourism and make it a cultural tourist product for expanding their product-line; Secondly, it is promoted as a kind of ethnic culture and its religious aspect was deliberately deemphasised. Through these strategies, Risang Festival not only was permitted, but also received funding from JAB.

Because of Zharu Monastery's current lack of visibility in religious affairs, community power actively takes on the role of fulfilling the religious needs of Jiuzhaigou people. This is possible not only because of the latent enthusiasm of Jiuzhaigou people for Bon but also because Zharu Monastery cannot easily host a wide range of religious activities given current political tensions.

5.3.5 Gendered space: gender politics in domestic religious spaces

Home is often given religious and spiritual meaning. Women in a range of cultures have traditionally been regarded as the people who are responsible for maintaining and making the home (Valentine, 2001: 63-104). For Chinese families in Singapore, domestic religious rituals are taken care of by the matriarchs (Kiong and Kong, 2000: 42). For Muslim women, non-institutional domestic spaces, as their main sites of religious practice, enhances women's social interaction and identity (Mazumdar, 1999). Compared with the monastery and other public spaces, the gender role in domestic religious space has a different significance. In Jiuzhaigou, women play a leading role in domestic religious practices which are important (yet accorded lesser significance than tasks performed by men).

Cuomo, the middle-aged local woman whom I quoted above told me that, "Normally women undertake most of the domestic religious work. The formal religious activities are done by men, and during that time women stay aside. For example, the big chanting ceremony every winter and things like this are done by men. The small things like cooking and cleaning are done by women." This suggests that a general classification of religious practices is based on gender difference. The formal and big religious activities are assigned to men; the domestic and small religious practices are for women. This clear gender division of religious work is also in men's minds. At home, religion becomes for them a trivial thing which is in the charge of women. Men normally are not much

involved in domestic religion. Xila, a middle-aged man from Jiuzhaigou quoted above, spoke for this gender difference.

Xila: At home, religious activities are mostly taken care of by my wife. I don't involve myself in these things. I believe her, she can manage these [affairs] well.

Ying: Why?

Xila: Normally these things are taken care of by women. I just need to drive a car taking the monk here and send him home."

Xila leaves his wife to do domestic religious practices. The everyday routine of burning incense in the morning is mainly conducted by his wife. He said, "-I always feel at ease when my wife is in charge of this". In familial rituals, men always sit in front of women. Yidan, the wandering monk from Anbei, explained that this "shows respect to men. Women can sit in the front if men are not there. If men are there, both a wife and other women should respect men." In the family, men still have a relatively higher position than women, something that is taken for granted by men and women in most households.

What needs to be emphasised here is that nowadays women contribute as much as (sometimes even more than) men to the domestic income, as tourism provides them almost equal job opportunities. Women's rising role in the family economy has not yet however made much change to their status in terms of dealing with trivial things in and out of the religious sphere.

5.4 Conclusion

"Religious landscapes may reveal symbolically and literally a local politics, or local structure of power and authority" (Kong, 2002: 1574). In this chapter, I examined transformations of the religious landscape in Jiuzhaigou, with a focus on changes to the two most prominent institutional and non-institutional religious spaces: the monastery and the home before and after the advent of tourists. More specifically, I discussed the challenges and contestations to the traditional meaning of the monastery as sacred, public, Tibetan-exclusive and male-dominant, and the revitalisation of domestic religious space since tourism development. In Section 5.2, I examined contestations and the politics of place-making in Zharu Monastery. Firstly, I discussed how the government and local people perceive the boundary between the monastery as tourist product and as holy space. The government prefers to see the monastery as a tourist product and play down its religious significance. Local people regard it as a holy space whose sanctity should not be defiled by profiteering. Secondly, we saw how the public nature of the

monastery is being challenged by ownership-claims from non-religious institutions (laypeople, local government), by fragmentising and privatising the Stupa, by monastery's failure to fulfil its public role. Thirdly, after the affair of the fraudulent Han tourist business, the monastery has become a place that demonstrates Tibetan identity in contradistinction to Han Chinese identity. Lastly, the monastery is also a space with serious gender divisions in which women and their bodies are seen as vectors of pollution. Through these, the monastery somewhat loses its appeal and significance.

In section 5.3, I explored the revival of domestic religious space. Jiuzhaigou people have greatly increased their capital investment in religious buildings, objects and practices thanks to tourism, which has fundamentally changed their work and living style (see Chapter 4 for a detailed description of local people's close relationships with tourism). The high demand for domestic religious observances also leads to competition for the services of monks, and a revival of the Prosperity Sutra and a family-based bottom-up religious festival organised by laypeople. It seems domestic religion somehow supplements the loss in institutional or public religion. While on the one hand, they are able to invest more in religious practices and structures such as chantings and stupas, on the other hand, some people regret that Jiuzhaigou people are less likely to exert themselves in pursuit of religious practices. Modernisation, which brings new labour-saving technology, can be seen as one factor contributing to the increasing use of domestic religious space. Women, who are assigned to domestic religious duties of lesser significance, still have a relatively lower position than men in the family.

The first concluding point that can be drawn from this chapter is a shift toward a non-institutional expression of religion. Before I began my fieldwork, I had a pre-supposition that Jiuzhaigou is experiencing secularisation. Through careful examination of the transformation of religious spaces in the light of secularisation theories, I found that the central change is not towards secularisation but specifically towards the deinstitutionalisation of religion. To quote Peter Berger (1999: 10), "a shift in the institutional location of religion" would be more accurate in describing religious change in Jiuzhaigou than secularisation. Religious commitment and affiliation with religious institutions have become less relevant in assessing the vitality of a religion (Dobbelaere, 2002: 38-44). In Jiuzhaigou, religious change takes on a path that is not simply unidirectional. The role and meaning of the monastery have been diversified and contested, which makes it harder for its monks to perform their religious duties and transmit religious ideas to laypeople. The monastery's significance is declining. Monasticism is under threat, given that Zharu Monastery has gradually failed functionally and lost its appeal and reputation among laypeople in Jiuzhaigou. The decline of institutional religion under these conditions has not been accompanied by the decline in

religious belief among laypeople. On the contrary, laypeople have moved their practice of religion outside of the institutional sphere.

The second conclusion is that the tourism economy is now a fundamental factor in reshaping religion in Jiuzhaigou. It dissolved the traditional authority and power of the monastery, but not Tibetans' enthusiasm toward Bon. It generated new burgeoning religious demands and facilitated the material realisation of these demands. Based on large-scale quantitative data, Norris and Inglehart (2004: 25) claimed that the rich societies in the world are becoming less religious; in contrast poor societies with growing population still have vital religious expressions. From my study, it would be hard to conclude that the economically advanced Jiuzhaigou is less religious than the economically backward Anbei. Even though they generally see themselves as less religious than the people of Anbei because of less bodily effort of themselves in practicing religion, the physical presence, high demand of religion have been thriving. Just as Jiuzhaigou people themselves argued, the non-stop sound of chanting is a point evidencing their strong religious feelings. Sometimes religious vitality has been vibrantly maintained at micro level rather than at macro level (Wilford, 2010). My study suggests religiosity is related in a more nuanced way to a complex set of elements, rather than simply determined by monastery membership, or self-claimed piety on a scale of 1 to 5. Responding to Norris and Inglehart's claim, I would argue that economic conditions are not the sole consideration in determining the strength of religious feeling in a specific place.

The process of modernisation will not necessarily lead to the decline of religion in social life, but rather to transformations in its social forms (Pollack and Pickel, 2007: 604). For example, the Christian church accommodates itself to attract more membership, especially in America; and it becomes a place to socialise and to meet friends. In Jiuzhaigou, Zharu Monastery has been re-designed as a crucial tourist product, and this generates struggles and conflicts between local people and the government, amongst the local laypeople themselves, between local laypeople and the monks, between Tibetans and Han Chinese. According to the new construction plan for Zharu Monastery, the monastery compound will house an activity centre for the elderly as well as being a tourist site. Tourists, laypeople and monks will have more interactions in the monastery. Its physical space, social forms and social-spiritual meanings will have further changes. It will be worth following up these changes in the future to add to our understanding of religious change at the macro level.

Secularisation as a trend is of relevance to the extent that Tibetans find themselves confronted by the secular and powerful Han China and this serves to reinforce ethno-religious identity among Tibetans (which will be further evidenced in Chapter 6 and 7).

Although the conclusions I have made are drawn from one case, Jiuzhaigou and Zharu Monastery are singled out among many other places which have common sets of issues confronted by ethnic and religious minority groups throughout the China. Many of these groups are, for example, encouraged to develop tourism by the government; local religions in many areas where minorities live are used as a tourist resource; in all of these places, there is secular pressure from Han China (Oakes and Sutton, 2010). Many Tibetan monasteries are experiencing pressures stemming from tourism and other forms of economic development, and will have to face similar challenges. While the focus is often on the macro level, this analysis of religious change in Jiuzhaigou presents a different, more detailed and vivid picture.

Chapter 6 Intergenerationality and religious change: religious and ethnic identities in schools and at home

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on processes of religious change in Jiuzhaigou through the lens of intergenerational relations. An intergenerational perspective is particularly useful for understanding processes of religious change because all religions rely upon the reproduction of their systems of belief and practice for their survival – no religion can persist if it does not produce new generations of believers and practitioners. As discussed in Chapter 2, the mechanism through which religions reproduce themselves has conventionally been conceptualised as a process of intergenerational transmission, whereby an older generation transmits its beliefs and practices to younger generations. However, recent scholarship on intergenerationality and religion has critiqued notions of straightforward intergenerational transmission, recognising that younger generations often adapt and rework religious ideas and practices in relation to their contexts and circumstances (Hopkins et al., 2011). Periods of rapid economic, political and social change can disrupt established patterns of intergenerational religious transmission. Research on minority religions and cultures in a range of different contexts has also shown that states that are seeking to assimilate minority groups often view children and young people as especially vulnerable to assimilative policies and practices. In particular, states have often adopted educational practices that seek (as least partially) to separate children and young people from the influence of parents for the purpose of instilling particular dominant values and belief systems. In the case of Jiuzhaigou, as a result of increased economic prosperity caused by tourism, parents could afford to send their children to boarding schools (unlike in Anbei), and hence parents chose to engage in a practice that potentially contributed to further Han assimilation and religious change. This chapter seeks to understand the intergenerational dimensions of religious continuity and change at a time of rapid economic modernisation in Jiuzhaigou and pressures of Han assimilation on people of Tibetan ethnicity.

Over the course of 30 years of tourism development, Jiuzhaigou has grown to be a frontier of modernisation and Han-assimilation in Tibet. In the western academic discourse, modernity has been widely considered as a damaging force for traditional religion (Wilson, 1982; Bruce, 1992; Lambert, 1999; Dobbelaere, 2002; Weber, 2009). However, drawing on qualitative data from members of different generations in Jiuzhaigou, I argue that the story of religious change in this context is not one simply of a

linear trajectory of religious decline despite the changing economic landscape and the pressures of Han assimilation. In particular, it is younger generations who have experienced the deepest and most comprehensive contacts with modernity. I argue that younger generations who are experiencing new forms of educational practice compared to older generations (such as being sent to Han-dominated boarding schools outside of Jiuzhaigou) are producing a new synthesis of 'traditional' Bon ideas and the atheist ideologies encountered during their educational experiences. Young people's religious and ethnic identities show evidence of fluidity, change and adaptation in different times and spaces. State schools have played a key role in reshaping their patterns of religious practices and of understandings of religion and Tibetan identity. Traditional patterns of intergenerational religious transmission have in some ways been interrupted, but this interruption is far from complete or total. Modernist and atheist ideas such as superstition, rationality and science provide a basis for their critical attitudes toward religion. However, when they return home, they adopt a more accepting attitude toward religion. Young Jiuzhaigou Tibetans seem to adopt a more critical attitude towards religion when they are attending boarding school and acquiring formal education; however, they seemingly adopted a more accommodating view when returning home and taking on more familial duties, feeling it important to pass Bon religion to their own children.

Home serves as a hub for maintaining and developing patterns of religious transmission and exchange for both younger and older generations. The process of becoming parents and feelings of parental love seemingly stimulated a strong wish in Jiuzhaigou young laypeople to be more involved in - and also to involve their children in - religious practices. In other words, children to a great extent contributed to the increasing/rejuvenated religiosity of parents and grandparents. Transmitting Bon values and practices to children/grandchildren is considered to be women's familial duty, thus marriage seems to serve as an important turning point for women to have stronger attachment to religion.

As stated in Chapter 2, the term 'generation' is used in varied ways both colloquially and in academic discourse (Vanderbeck and Worth, 2014). The term is used in this chapter to refer both to a particular peer cohort of similar age and to a particular kinship status in a family. More specifically, generation refers to children/parents/grandparents when it is discussed in a setting like home, while it denotes a particular cohort in a specific age range when it is discussed in a setting like school.

The chapter will proceed as follows. I will begin with a discussion of Jiuzhaigou laypeople's general understanding of religion and its relationships with language and ethnicity (Section 6.2). Although this section does not deal directly with

intergenerationality, it is important for understanding the wider religious environment in Jiuzhaigou. And then, I will focus on young people who obtain education opportunities in state boarding schools thanks to the wealth brought by tourism, exploring the ways in which young people's religious and ethnic identity is reshaped in state schools, a multi-ethnic and atheist space (Section 6.3). In Section 6.4, the focus will shift to home, a hub of intergenerational religious transmission and exchange. I will examine how religious values and practices are transmitted among younger and older generations.

6.2 Changing religion, language and ethnic identity

In this section, I will explore how local young people generally understand religion in relation to language and ethnic identity for setting the scene for the later discussions on young people's changing religiosity and ethnic identity, intergenerational transmission of religion.

A prominent response I encountered during my fieldwork is that Jiuzhaigou Tibetans often link religion with wider issues of Tibetan culture, illustrating the extent to which religion was not necessarily conceptualised as a clearly separate sphere of Tibetan life (see also Chapter 4 for a discussion of my choice of terminology when discussing issues of religion with respondents). When I spoke about religion in Jiuzhaigou, the conversation would very often naturally lead to broader issues of Tibetan culture and, more specifically, Tibetan language. For Jiuzhaigou Tibetans, ideas about religion and language are significantly linked in people's minds. Religion and language are crucial indicators of Tibetan ethnic identity. As found by Zhu's (2007) study on ethnic identity of Tibetan students in *neidi* schools²³, Tibetan language is a central feature of Tibetan ethnicity. This is illustrated in the following example, which demonstrates the close connections and flowing transitions between ideas of religion and language in the narratives of Jiuzhaigou Tibetans:

²³ *Neidi* literally means inner land and geographically refers to non-peripheral areas of China. *Neidi* schools/classes are a type of boarding school located in inland China and established specially for providing students from TAR and Xinjiang Province free secondary level and secondary vocational education since 1984. The *neidi* schools/classes are distributed in big cities in inland China. According to 2010 "China's Ethnic Statistical Yearbook" (Guojia Minzu Shiwu Weiyuanhui Jingjifazhansi and Guojia Tongjiju Guominjingji Zonghetongjisi, 2011), in 2008 there were 13689 junior middle-school students and 4401 senior middle-school students from TAR studying in *neidi* schools/classes. According to news report from a state sponsored website "Tibet.cn", in 2012 there were 46789 students in Tibet attending junior secondary entrance examination, among them there were 15020 wishing to be enrolled in the *neidi* Schools (Wang, 2012). As reported by the Tibet Daily (Liu, 2013), in 2012 there were 1540 students from TAR enrolled in *neidi* schools.

Ying: Compared to your younger sisters and brothers, do you think that your religiosity when you were young was similar to theirs?

Gaxi: Of course different.

Ying: Why?

Gaxi: Nowadays children stay in Chengdu. They barely speak Tibetan. Economic conditions are good. All [parents] send their children outside [to big cities such as Chengdu and Mianyang] to study. We were different. We were sent out when our economic conditions had just begun improving. But [we] still experienced some influence [in terms of social and cultural changes]. [Nowadays] they always study outside and come back to stay for a one-month holiday and leave. Many aspects [of religious life] can't be seen by them. They just know that they are Tibetan, but know nothing of what they should know. (Gaxi, a young layperson in Jiuzhaigou)

When Gaxi explained the reasons why he perceives his level of religiosity to differ from that of other (younger) young people, his very first response was related to language. For Gaxi, religious change and changes in patterns of linguistic acquisition were closely linked together. This form of discourse was not unique to Gaxi but rather was widely shared by almost all of my respondents. Religion and language served jointly as signifiers of Tibetan ethnic identity. Gaxi claimed that, as a result of their ignorance of Tibetan language and religious practices, contemporary people nowadays were not aware of the meaning of being Tibetan. This weakening of language ability was thought by Gaxi and others to be linked to young people's seeming decreasing involvement in religious practices (I return to this issue of the relationship between ethnic identity and religion for young people in Section 6.3.2).

The fact that language and ethnic identity were consistently invoked in discussions of Bon religion by my respondents also meant that issues related to the influence of the Han Chinese frequently featured in our conversations. The situation of Tibetan religion and culture could not be understood without reference to the influence of the Han Chinese (also see Section 5.2 for discussion of Tibetaness in the monastery in contrast to Han identity). Zezhen, a middle-aged woman in Jiuzhaigou, expressed her concerns on language loss of Jiuzhaigou young people in these terms:

Ying: Have any children recently been sent to the monastery in Jiuzhaigou to become monks?

Zezhen: Longkang [a town near Jiuzhaigou National Park] is good at holding onto religion. There are some children [from Longkang] studying Bon [in Zharu Monastery]. There is no one from Jiuzhaigou. It is like a Han place now. Older people say 'children are studying outside, barely know Tibetan. They are turning into Han Chinese.' They are called Tibetans. But they can't

speak even one word of Tibetan. My sister's children are all in Chengdu. She bought an apartment and is taking care of her children in Chengdu. They [her sister's children] don't know Tibetan at all. When we speak Tibetan, they will say 'ah...! Speak in Chinese. I don't understand at all.' My Mom, who speaks little Chinese, cannot talk with them.

Ying: Since when have they been studying Chengdu?

Zezen: Since they started at kindergarten. I told my sister to speak Tibetan to them. But they never stay here [in Jiuzhaigou] for a long time. They can learn nothing.

Ying: As far as I know, there are many children like this.

Zezen: [They] don't speak Tibetan anymore. It's like [speaking] Chinese is easier for them. They just don't speak Tibetan. Older folk say "speak [in Tibetan] to them even though [they don't know the language], or they will turn into Han.

Although schooling was considered the primary reason for young people's lack of knowledge of the Tibetan language, over-exposure to tourism was considered another important factor. This was illustrated with a combination of humour and dismay in the account of Wangcuo, a young woman in Jiuzhaigou:

Once upon a time some friends and I went to circumambulate the Xiaoxitian Sacred Mountain. We normally use Tibetan to do prayers. But one of my friends used Chinese to say 'please bless me'. We then said to her 'you are really influenced by the Han. You can't even speak Tibetan.' She replied 'don't you know that because of tourism development, sacred mountains now can understand Chinese.' We are supposed to chant a mantra on our way to the sacred mountain. But we started to sing [Chinese] pop songs on our way.

Tourism brings millions of tourists to Jiuzhaigou every year, most of whom are Han Chinese. It has become an important factor contributing to Han assimilation and the increasing popularity of Chinese language among young people. Even religious activities somehow relate to Han, as Chinese is used in many Tibetan religious occasions nowadays, especially among young Tibetans.

Many parents expressed frustration about the current state of affairs, but found that these efforts to promote the use of the Tibetan language had limited success. Bamu (a young woman in Jiuzhaigou) told me regretfully that "the Tibetan language is going to disappear soon. Tibetan culture is almost totally assimilated by Han culture." She then talked about her two-year-old daughter:

She is young. I speak Tibetan to her all the time. But she hears other people speaking Chinese, she speaks Chinese most of the time. I didn't teach her

Chinese. But she learnt it from many sources, such as from tourists living in our house. Now she can say words like sit down, eat, go and bring in Chinese.

Bamu wants to keep her daughter's sense of ethnic identity by intentionally creating an environment conducive to speaking Tibetan. However, her attempts to intentionally cultivate use of the Tibetan language by her daughter appear to be failing as the influence of the Chinese language seemingly proved too powerful to resist. Her daughter is already choosing to speak the language which has more influence on her life.

Cuomo (a middle-aged woman in Jiuzhaigou), a mother with a teenage son also found that her son responds to her in Chinese even though she speaks Tibetan to him. Like Bamu, she tries to speak Tibetan as much as possible at home with her son. She explained her reasons for this as follows:

It is necessary to learn the language of our ethnic group. As a Tibetan, [we] should at least know how to speak, even though we can't read and write. It is simple to learn. Just speak with parents [in Tibetan]. Many [Han] women who married here can speak our language now. How come we can't speak Tibetan? ... Sometimes I just want to laugh when my husband speaks Chinese to me. I say to him, 'I'm not a Han wife. Why speak Chinese?'

Cuomo has the same wish to keep the Tibetan language alive for her son to raise his awareness.

Even though it is widely accepted that the Tibetan language is important in maintaining Tibetan identity in Jiuzhaigou, in practice most parents are not willing to send their children to Tibetan language schools or monasteries, which are the only institutions providing Tibetan language education (See Section 7.3.1). The following account of a monk's attitudes to language from Bamu provides insight into the difference between the ideal and the practice.

He didn't want to learn Tibetan. He wanted to learn Chinese. He still blames his grandfather [for sending him to the monastery]. He once said 'if I learnt Chinese, I could be different [from what I am now]'. He barely recognises Chinese words. He can only write his name in Chinese. He also cannot clearly express his thoughts in Chinese. He envies his friends who accepted Chinese language education. He yearned to study Chinese in schools. One feels more regret for what he can't obtain. He's like this. In terms of identity and social status, it seems to me that he isn't willing to admit his identity, because he has always yearned to learn Chinese. His friends are successful now. Because he didn't learn Chinese, he feels his status is a bit lower [than his friends'].

It is noteworthy that for this monk (at least in Bamu's interpretation) the Tibetan language was not something in which he had much pride. On the contrary, this account suggests feelings of regret for having learnt Tibetan and not having learnt Chinese. This difference is particularly demonstrated by communication skills and social status which he lacks, compared to friends who have stable jobs and incomes from which he is excluded by his inability to speak Chinese.

Thus, language is not simply related to people's ideal of maintaining ethnic identity, but it is crucial to social and economic aspects of life. Another account from a young monk in Gami Monastery echoed this fact. Like most other monks, Agu Qujian was sent to the monastery when he was a child. Since then he has started to learn Tibetan and Bon scripture.

What I regret most is that I haven't learnt Chinese. Now it is very hard not knowing Chinese. On Wechat I can't send [text] messages to my friends. [I] don't recognise messages sent by my friends. ... [When I] go out [to other places], I can't find my way around. Everything is in Chinese. [I] don't know [how to take] a bus. Every time I take a taxi I feel as if I'm lost.

This young monk expressed his regret at not learning Chinese. He detailed the inconveniences he has experienced because of language. He cannot efficiently communicate with others through social networks. Knowing little Chinese creates problems for his social life and basic life skills. Because of language, young monks are somehow marginalised in today's society (see Chapter 7 for further discussion).

In sum, for laypeople religion is closely associated with language contributing to the retention of Tibetan ethnic identity. Older generations showed deep concern at the gradual loss of language and religion among the younger generations. They tried to change this situation by for example intentionally speaking Tibetan to young people. However, in practice the Chinese language seems more practically useful and pervasive than Tibetan. This constitutes an important reason why Tibetan parents send children to public schools rather than monasteries in contemporary Tibet (see Chapter 7 for more discussion).

As shown above, public education is considered one factor changing young Tibetans' knowledge of religion and Tibetan language. The following section will discuss in detail how state schooling influences young Tibetans' ethnic and religious identities.

6.3 Religion, ethnic identity, state schooling: exploring Tibetan identity among young Tibetans

Building on the previous discussion of religion, ethnicity, and language, this section examines how the religious and ethnic identities of young Jiuzhaigou Tibetans are constructed within a modern Chinese school environment. To be specific, what will be explored is young people's understandings of religion and the meanings of religion for them. In Section 6.3.1 the relevance of ethnic identity to young people's religious identity will be discussed. This is followed by a discussion of how young people's religious identities and ethnic identities are influenced by their interactions with the Han and other minority students (Section 6.3.2). In Section 6.3.3 particular attention will be given to young people's attitudes to 'superstition' which greatly influenced their religious identity.

6.3.1 Religion just comes naturally to Tibetans

In Peek's (2005) research on second-generation young Muslims in the United States, formation of their religious identity was argued to have three stages: religion as ascribed identity, as chosen identity and as declared identity. The first stage is marked by young Muslims' imitation of their parents, unconditional acceptance without introspection, limited knowledge of Islam, and unclear sense of religious identity when they are children and adolescents. During this stage, their religious identity was ascribed by their birth into Muslim families and their religious identity was taken for granted (Peek, 2005: 223-230). Similar to these young Muslims, my young Tibetan respondents in Jiuzhaigou also feel religion is an ascribed identity coming with birth. It is a common sense view in Tibet that "all Tibetans believe in Tibetan Buddhism or Bon." Kolås (1996) argued that Tibetan culture is a religion-induced culture. Religion provides emotional power and sustenance for Tibetans seeking to maintain and strengthen their ethnic identity. She found that in exiled Tibetan communities, religion is integral to defining Tibetanness. For Tibetans, whether or not to believe (in Bon/Buddhism) seems to be a question never considered by Tibetans, because their ethnic identity has already decided their religious identity (Epstein and Peng, 1998).

Ethnic identity constantly and naturally appeared in my conversations about religion with Jiuzhaigou Tibetans, just as the Tibetan language did. From the following conversations with Cuomo (the middle-aged woman quoted above), we can see how she connects religious pilgrimage with her identity as a Tibetan.

Ying: Why do you want to go to Lhasa or Guanyinqiao²⁴ for pilgrimage?

Cuomo: If you are a Tibetan, you always want to go to Lhasa! You want to have a look at what it is like, and to pay your respects to the Buddhas.

As it did with Cuomo, the close bond between religion and ethnicity implicitly showed up on many occasions in my conversations with local people. I asked Jamyang (a young man in Jiuzhaigou) if he intends to teach his children about Bon religion. He replied that “There is no need to teach. They will believe. They are born in this place. They will believe [this]. Not possible to believe anything else. This is tradition.” Jamyang and many others did not seem to worry about their children’s understanding of their religion. From Jamyang’s perspective, the place of birth and the culture of origin decide his children’s religious orientation. He felt it was natural and unquestionable that his children would believe in Bon like him and other Tibetans in Jiuzhaigou. Most of the younger respondents in this study expressed the same view that formation of religiosity is a natural process that is related to Tibetan identity and Tibetan cultural environment. Even though they think religion as a crucial Tibetan tradition should be transmitted, they are open to letting their children make decisions. Nevertheless, they believe their children will choose their Tibetan religion. In response to the same question, another young woman, Suonan, replied in an assertive tone. She said, “Of course [I] will teach. It’s not Tibetan if having no knowledge of this.... This must be transmitted.” Even though she expressed the same opinion that religious identity and ethnic identity are closely bonded, she is one of a few respondents who have definite attitude toward the need to intentionally transmit religion from parents to children in order to maintain Tibetan ethnic identity.

Another question which derived similar answers from most of the young respondents was: “Who has the greatest influence on your belief?” Family members were highlighted by most respondents as the most influential person(s). Gaxi (a young man in Jiuzhaigou) answer in the following terms: “Definitely family. [I] have been educated since I was very young to burn incense in the mornings. A Tibetan must burn incense in the morning.” Gaxi pointed out that he was influenced to be familiar with religion by his family since he was very young. His very first contact with Bon was through his family. His religiosity was first formed at home when he was a little child. Like Peek’s (2005) findings on ascribed identity, Gaxi was given a taken-for-granted religious identity with his birth into his family. This ascribed identity had been reinforced through regular daily rituals like incense burning.

²⁴ Guanyinqiao is a well-known pilgrimage centre located in Ganzi, near Aba Prefecture.

All in all, Bon has many similarities to religions such as Indian Hinduism and American Judaism which inscribe into people a particular religious belonging and ethnic consciousness at birth (Bramadat, 2009). This religious identity is undoubtedly highly intertwined with ethnic identity and is experienced by people at a deep level. The following section will explore how state education reshapes the mutually inscribed young people's religious identity and ethnic identity.

6.3.2 Ethnic identity and religious identity in schools

Mainstream education is an arena for the discussion and explication of values and moral issues, of national virtues and dilemmas, of national accomplishments and shortcomings, of supra-national dedication, aspiration and concern. (Fisherman, as quoted in Hansen, 1999: xi)

The school as a formal place of socialisation serves to forge the value systems and identity systems of students. According to Peek (2005: 226-230), going to college for the young Muslims in the US is a significant turning point for their religiosity and religious identity. Their religious identities are strengthened in college by getting a chance to meet with the wider Muslim community, and to gain specific knowledge of Islam and being a Muslim through religious organisations. However, as they learn more about Islam (a religion which discourages national segregation), they are more likely to reject their ethnic identity.

While schooling for young Tibetans in this study did not lead to a rejection of ethnic identity, state education did serve to recast their initial understandings of Bon and Tibetan identity, which had been formed in the family prior to school. As discussed in Chapter 3, state schooling is the dominant means of formal education in China. Unified and standardised textbooks are used in every public elementary school, secondary school, college and university throughout China. Does school education have an influence on young Tibetan students? If yes, what kind of influences does it have, especially on religion? And how does it form these influences? These questions, which I explore below, have only been partially answered by previous studies focusing on education and ethnic minorities in China.

For Han people who have interactions with Tibetan students in both ordinary (or mainstream) schools²⁵ and in *neidi* schools, Tibetan students are generally considered

²⁵ Ordinary school is used here in relation to *neidi* school (see explanation below) and not specifically for particular ethnic minorities. It mixes ethnic minority students with Han students.

uncultivated, less restrained, less self-disciplined, disruptive, violent, and having less intellectual capacity compared to their Han counterparts (Yi, 2007: 945; Zhu, 2007). In comparison to Tibetans in *neidi* schools, even though those accepting education in mainstream schools are seen as less “typically” Tibetan (Yi, 2005), they were also generally considered to be less easy to communicate with and less able to fit into modern society. Nevertheless school education was perceived as an effective way to make Tibetans like the more ‘cultivated’ Han. This argument is echoed by Postiglione (2008), who agreed that state schooling has remodelled ethnic identity of Tibetans and has made Tibetans more like Han Chinese, in terms of the national mainstream ways of thinking, feeling and acting (Postiglione, 2009: 140-141).

In order to achieve a high degree of cultural and political homogenisation, minorities in China have been educated to accept “the message of national commitment, love of the ruling CCP, and cultural homogeneity” (Hansen, 1999: xii). However, many studies of Chinese minorities have suggested that school education is self-contradictory and fails to realise the aim of homogenisation (Yi, 2007). Postiglione (2009) contends that the experience of studying in *neidi* schools enhances Tibetan students’ ethnic identity and ethnic consciousness. This argument is also evidenced in my research on young Tibetans in ordinary schools. Similar observations have also been made in relation to other ethnic minorities in China, such as the Naxi and the Tai (Hansen, 1999), as well as various Muslim ethnic minorities (Gladney, 2013).

The ways in which education enhances ethnic identity are sometimes different. In his study of minority education for the Naxi in Lijiang and the Tai in Pana Prefecture in Southwest China, Hansen (1999) argued that state education has helped the Naxi to establish a stronger and more forcefully expressed ethnic identity (Hansen, 1999: 61-86). The educated Naxi people have successfully strengthened their ethnic identity by promoting their traditional Dongba culture to the mainstream public. In contrast, Tai students found that anti-religious teaching affects their self-esteem and feelings of their own religion (Buddhism) and customs (Hansen, 1999: 137). Students are educated with a communist interpretation of “why religions still exist in the socialist society, how they will eventually disappear, why the government allows freedom of religion, and what this freedom implies” (Hansen, 1999: 138) Tai students, according to Hansen, feel relieved to some extent when their religion is officially acknowledged as ‘real’ religion rather than superstition, which is considered ‘backward’ in schools and not publicly tolerated.

Similar to what Tai young people had encountered in relation to their religion in schools, Tibetan students are taught that Tibet’s poor educational levels and social-economical performance are attributed to religion and the monastic system (Bass, 1998). Tibetan

culture and history were found by Bass (2008) to be disconnected from Tibetan Buddhism in school curriculum. Zhu (2007) investigated neidi schools and found neidi schools function to transmit state ideologies including patriotism, state unification, ethnic unity and atheism. Postiglione (2009: 901) also suggested that Tibetan neidi schooling heavily emphasises state ideology: “[Chinese] patriotism, love of Tibet, Han-Tibetan relations, civilised behaviour, and revolutionary traditions”.

With these restrictions on Tibetan religion in schools, Zhu (2007: 180) suggested that even though Tibetan students study and live in atheist schools and Han-populated environments, they still believe in Tibetan Buddhism because it was thought of as the identifier of differences between Tibetans and the Han. In similar vein, Postiglione et al. (2004) argued that even though the neidi Tibetan schools reinterpreted and represented Tibetan religion and culture, Tibetan students did not lose their cultural pride and strong sense of ethnic identity. USUS

Previous research mostly focuses on education’s influence on the ethnic identity of ethnic minorities, and religion has been discussed as a small component of the whole study. In addition, most of the research focuses on Tibetan neidi schools where Tibetan young people do not have much interaction with their peers of other ethnic backgrounds. The influence of classmates from the Han or from other minorities has been given little attention. The ordinary school (where my young respondents study) has a different education system from the neidi schools. In the ordinary schools, what do schools teach? How do schools remake Tibetan identities and Tibetan understandings of their religion? What are students’ views? How are Tibetans being educated? These questions will be discussed in the following sections.

6.3.2.1 No religion-related teaching at school

In order to explore questions related to the influence of state education, we first need to examine what is taught in schools about religion. When asked what have they learnt about religion in schools, in his research on minority students in south-western China Hansen (1999: 138) found minority students generally answered that they have learnt nothing.

For Tibetans, prior to 1950 the monastery was the main place where young Tibetans were educated about Tibetan religion and history. Even though knowledge was confined to monks and nuns, mass monasticism assured that a certain amount of people had detailed knowledge of Tibetan religion. After 1950, mass monasticism had greatly contracted. For those attending state schools, a question emerges: how much and what

do they learn regarding Tibetan religion and culture at school? According to Zhu (2007: 269), Tibetan history is not included in the standardised school textbooks. Tibetan students also felt they have limited knowledge of their own language, culture and history (Postiglione et al., 2009: 140). This resonates with what I found amongst Jiuzhaigou Tibetans. When I asked young people in Jiuzhaigou if they have learnt anything about Tibetan religion or culture at school, they normally replied “no” or “I can’t remember”. The following conversation with Gasang, a young man in Jiuzhaigou, illustrates how young people have not been educated at school about their religion and culture.

Ying: Do you know anything about Bon?

Gasang: Persons like me know about the richness and significance of Chinese culture. In terms of Bon, I don’t even know how many sects [of Tibetan Buddhism] there are.

This excerpt from our conversation illustrates how little knowledge Gasang had of aspects of Tibetan culture and Bon. In contrast, he felt that he had deep awareness of Chinese culture. He thought that he knew more about Chinese culture than his own religion, Bon, and he showed no awareness of Bon as being different from Buddhism. Young people like Gasang are educated to know Chinese culture. In this sense, Tibetans have become more like Han Chinese.

Another young Jiuzhaigou man, Jianzan, replied as follows when I asked if he knows anything about Tibetan culture.

I’m ashamed as a Tibetan, [as] I barely know Tibetan culture. I don’t know what to talk about.

This response was not a unique case, but was widely echoed by other young people I spoke with in Jiuzhaigou. They felt unconfident in talking about Tibetan culture and religion. All of my young respondents expressed their regrets for not having learnt Tibetan culture and their wish to learn some Tibetan culture soon. Zhu (2007: 269) found similarly that the absence of Tibetan knowledge and history in school education enhances Tibetan students’ desire to learn more about their own culture, potentially contributing to the construction of ethnic identity.

6.3.2.2 Studying and living with the Han and with other minority students

Most of the Jiuzhaigou Tibetan students live in mainstream boarding schools with students and teachers of other ethnic origins who are mostly Han Chinese. In this

section, I will examine the interactions between young Tibetans and other students to explore in greater depth how their ethnic identity and religious identity are forged.

Ethnicity

My interviews with students explored how they perceived their interactions with others at their boarding schools. The previously mentioned stereotypical understanding of Han people is also felt by my respondents. Jamyang, a young man from Jiuzhaigou, recalled his experience with classmates in boarding schools when I asked if he had felt ethnic difference when he interacted with other students. He felt that being from an ethnic minority group affected his interactions with his classmates, who perceived him as different.

I'm minority. They are the majority [referring to the Han]. I felt that many classmates viewed me as different. [They] thought Tibetans are like this and that. [They] were curious about Tibetans. They felt I'm different from them. They thought Tibetans are strange. Maybe because they are students staying in school [who don't therefore have other chances to meet Tibetans and go to Tibetan areas], they were ignorant. They have many questions. They have heard that Tibetans are barbaric and uncivilised.

It is apparent that the minority-majority difference that is broadly stressed in official discourses from the government and in schools was clearly felt by Jamyang. He believed that Han students have preconceived notions of Tibetans as different, strange, barbaric and uncivilised. This image echoed what Zhu (2007) and Yi (2007) found in their broader studies of Han people's stereotypical perceptions of young Tibetan students. Zhu (2007) found that as a result of the influence of government discourses about the 'superior' Han and the 'inferior' minorities, Han people thought themselves to be more civilised than Tibetans, who were perceived as backward culturally and economically. Education in China conveys the state sanctioned definition of ethnic minorities as backward (Hansen, 1999). Jamyang stressed that the misunderstandings of the Han students about Tibetans served to illustrate the ignorance of Han students concerning Tibetans and Tibetan society. Even though the state's ultimate purpose is to reinforce homogeneity and unity through practices of schooling, in reality it is in schools that the differentiation between groups is created and reinforced. Even Tibetan students themselves absorbed the state discourse that they have a "poor and backward status in Tibet" (Zhu, 2007).

The previous quotation from Jamyang suggests what Jamyang felt about majority students' perception of Tibetans. The following two accounts from Suonan, a young woman in Jiuzhaigou, and Duoji, a young man in Jiuzhaigou, illustrate specific

interactions between themselves and the Han students. Suonan described her experience as follows:

When I first went to do my secondary school outside, the Han students asked me, 'Do you Tibetans take three baths in a whole life?' This was the question I was asked most often. I was thinking how they could be so foolish.

Suonan was surprised and upset that the Han students know so little about Tibetans. Duoji, a young man in Jiuzhaigou, faced a similar situation when he first went outside to study.

Duoji: In Aba Prefecture, when I was in my secondary school, there were many minority students, so there was no difference. But when I went to Chengdu, I was the only Tibetan. There were only a few students from Aba. At that time I felt more deeply that other students were curious about, feared and stayed away from me.

Ying: How could you feel that?

Duoji: They respect me. And sometimes when we got closer, they ask questions which made me feel they are naïve.

Ying: What questions?

Duoji: Is it okay for you Tibetans to kill people? How many wives could you, a Tibetan, have? Do you ride horses to go to schools?

Ying: Then how did you reply?

Duoji: Sometimes I told them that it isn't like that. Sometimes I felt they are so ignorant so I joked and exaggerated [their conjectures].

From his recollection, he sensed his ethnic difference when he went to a Han-dominated school. He was feared by and kept his distance from Han students. The context of his talk and other young people's responses is consistent with evidence that Tibetans are normally thought to be barbaric and violent. This is reflected in the questions the Han people asked. Because of these factors that are characterised as uncivilised, he was also 'respected' by his classmates. Here, 'respect' was actually based on the imagined intimidating physical strength of Tibetans, and hence 'respect' stemmed from fear rather than admiration. For Duoji the curiosity and the questions they asked showed the naivety of Han students.

Most Tibetan students were misunderstood by Han students when they first encountered one another. In spite of that, a degree of commonality among young people made them reach at least partial mutual understandings when they got to know each other more. Young Tibetans made friends with Han students once they got involved within the whole

class. Gaxi, a young man in Jiuzhaigou, told me his experience with Han students eventually changed from being strange to being familiar.

Ying: Have you felt any inconveniences caused by the ethnic difference between you and other classmates?

Gaxi: No. Normally they [the Han students] fear Tibetans.

Ying: Fear? Why?

Gaxi: When I went out to study for the first time, they asked me where I came from and I said Aba Prefecture. I was the only one from Aba. ... The [Han] locals thought Tibetans are not very sensible and kind. After one or two months, I got involved with them. We could then talk much more.

Ying: What did you talk about?

Gaxi: Things like on-line games. We played basketball together and drank together sometimes.

Ying: Would you intentionally expose your ethnic identity as a Tibetan?

Gaxi: Normally not. Our class was a tight-knit class.

Gaxi felt and experienced Han students' fear of him at the beginning, because Tibetans were imagined to be physically strong but lacking sensibility and kindness. Hillman and Henry (2006: 266-267) have suggested that Tibetans' physical strength and masculine ideals have a wide reputation in China and are used as a way of showing their superiority. Even though my respondents (including both young women and men) did not directly state this, their facial expressions, speaking tones, postures and body language during interviews conveyed that they did consider that Tibetan physical strength was a source of superiority over the Han students. However, despite differences and some mutual stereotyping, the misunderstanding did not serve as an insurmountable barrier to further interactions between the Han and the Tibetan students. Common interests shared by young people helped to dissolve misunderstandings and make them closer, which resonates with the findings of Zhu (2007: 265). In their early interactions with Tibetan students, Han people think Tibetan students are "barbaric, utterly unreasonable, bold, and unconstrained". Later on, Tibetan students were perceived as "lovely and unsophisticated, brave, good-mannered, rule-abiding, and having a good relationship" with the Han, even though this might just be a new form of stereotyping.

Nevertheless, Zhu (2007) concluded that school education, whether intended or not, created an environment of Han superiority which could contribute to the construction of Tibetan ethnic identity. Young Jiuzhaigou Tibetans in this research were mostly happy to show their ethnic identity at school rather than attempting to hide it.

Ying: Did you expose your ethnic identity to other Han classmates or just keep it a secret?

Jianzan: Of course I told them I'm a Tibetan forthrightly. Even if I didn't say, they could easily tell from my name.

Ying: Why did you tell them forthrightly?

Jianzan: A sense of ethnic pride. This is a must-have.

Ying: Why do you have such a strong sense of ethnic pride?

Jianzan: I'm a Tibetan. I'm proud of my culture.

Jianzan so strongly felt ethnic pride that he wanted to disclose his ethnic identity to his classmates. This ethnic pride was also shared by other young Tibetans and made an important reason for young people to expose their Tibetan identity, even if some of them were not as forthright or confident as Jianzan about showing their ethnic identity.

Apart from their willingness to reveal their ethnic identity in schools, some young Tibetans were motivated to search for their ethnic identity by their school experience.

Zewang, a middle-aged layperson in Jiuzhaigou, recounted the experience of a young Tibetan man approaching him and searching for his ethnic roots as follows:

I knew a young guy who is a Tibetan. One of his parents is a Jiuzhaigou Tibetan, and the other is a Han Chinese. ... [Some information has been adapted or deleted to maintain confidentiality] He has been raised in a Chinese environment. His friends are Chinese. He speaks Chinese since he was born. He cannot speak Tibetan. He said when he was in school in Chengdu, his friends often asked him to speak Tibetan and to tell them something about Tibet and his religion, but he could not. He felt so depressed and ashamed because of his ignorance. After that, he asked his father to teach him Tibetan and tell him something about Tibet. He kind of had a sense of seeking his roots. Then he came to me to learn the Tibetan language and history.

The process of searching for ethnic identity and "roots" firstly showed that school education enhances Tibetans' ethnic identity in a way that school interactions with other students motivated young Tibetans to learn more about the Tibetan language, culture and history. This wish of searching for roots was expressed by many other young respondents. As mentioned earlier, Han students have many misunderstandings and a great deal of curiosity about Tibetans. They have various questions to ask when they meet Tibetan classmates, who are something of a rarity. Young Tibetans encountered difficulties in answer some of their Han classmates' inquiries because they found that they have little awareness of many of the issues themselves. For the Tibetans who faced these inquiries for the first time, like the boy mentioned in Zewang's story, their motivation to learn the Tibetan language, culture and religion was often activated. Secondly, this process revealed that ethnic identity changes in different contexts. This is

clear from the case of this boy, who has been raised in a Chinese environment. When he was in an ethnically homogeneous environment, his ethnic identity was not something on which he reflected very often; when he met Han Chinese students with little knowledge about Tibetans, his ethnic identity was activated, making him more aware of it and creating a sense of pride.

Religious identity

In the previous section, I focused on how young Tibetans' ethnic identity is influenced by the process of schooling. In this section, I explore how state education impacts upon young Tibetans' thoughts on religion.

From interviews and fieldwork it became apparent that when young people were away at school, they barely conducted Bon religious practices. The majority of religious practices are conducted when they are with their families at home. Even though they infrequently conducted religious practices while at school, they sometimes experienced misunderstandings from their classmates who have different attitudes toward religion.

Gasang: I believe in Bon. If you believe something, you believe with your whole heart. You feel it is your consolation. Your prayer definitely will be repaid. But if you are denied by those who don't believe, this makes you upset.

Ying: Have you experienced this?

Gasang: Yes. Those atheists. Some classmates, they don't believe, and feel some of your acts are funny, such as doing prayers, bowing in front of the Buddhas. For example, we once went to [a Han Buddhist temple on] the Tiantai Mountain. I was praying wholeheartedly. But my friends [mainly Han] thought I was acting funny.

Ying: How did you react?

Gasang: What reaction? We are classmates after all. They were not very serious. But I just said to them that 'We [Tibetans] have religion since a young age. It's okay if you don't believe. But please show a little respect as we use our heart to believe in this.

Ying: Did this affect your belief or religious practices?

Gasang: No. I still practiced as I wish. My belief won't be affected because of this little thing.

Ying: So you did prayers in the Tiantai Mountain as well?

Gasang: Yes. There is a Buddhist temple in the Tiantai Mountain. It serves the Mile Buddha.

Ying: A Han temple?

Gasang: Yes. I think Han temple and Tibetan temple are the same. Both are Buddhist. Buddhas are almost the same.

Gasang and his classmates went to Tiantai Mountain as tourists. In this rare experience of religious practices conducted during school time, Gasang was teased by his classmates. Even though there were some misunderstandings about belief and the possibility of being made fun of, he still insisted on practicing religion in front of his friends. Gasang's reactions showed his strong commitment to the Bon religion, but he also went to a Han temple to pray. From his perspective, there was no major difference because both the Tibetan temple and Han temple are Buddhist temples (as discussed in Chapter 3, local laypeople generally consider Bon to be similar to Buddhism). It is also possible that Gasang intentionally practiced religion in front of his classmates to demonstrate his ethnic difference.

Apart from influence of classmates, young Tibetans' religious understanding is also influenced by their teachers. The following account of Kunchen reflects how education influences young people's perception of the relationship between their religion and superstition.

Kunchen: A history teacher once said most of the people who believe in Buddha are inclined to favour superstition. He then said to me that 'yours is definitely not [superstition]. Yours is religion not superstition. There is big difference [between your religion and superstition]'.
Ying: So he thought your belief is religion, not superstition?

Kunchen: Yes.

Ying: What did you feel when you heard this?

Kunchen: Very pleased. Because he said this to the whole class.

Kunchen did not want to see his religion being categorised as a superstition, because superstition is legally prohibited. The approval from his teacher was like an official acknowledgement of the legitimate status of his religion, even though his teacher assumed he was a Buddhist rather than a Bonpo. Declaring this in front of the whole class, he felt, further increased the legitimacy of his religion. Elsewhere, Hansen (1999) also found Tai minority students felt relieved when their religion was officially acknowledged as religion, not superstition.

So far in this section I have attempted to provide a picture of the complex relationship between young people's ethnic and religious identities in schools. However, religiosity can be affected by both changes in time and environment. Religious identities, in common with other identities, might change when young people go to work, go abroad or return home. In her discussion of lesbian identities in the United Kingdom, Valentine (1993) described how lesbians strategically present, negotiate and maintain their multiple identities in different places and times within a heterosexual and patriarchic society.

Young people performed their identities differently in different contexts, and their beliefs evolved as they aged and changed places of residence. The following conversation with Xiangba, a young man in his early 30s in Jiuzhaigou, illustrates how his religiosity changed after he left school.

Xiangba: When I was in school, I was a pure atheist and didn't believe in any religion. I liked materialism and was sceptical about idealist things. I learned physics and chemistry which made me much more likely to think that superstitious things are nonsense. But when I came back and knew more about Bon and Buddhism, I changed my mind. I think there are reasons why religion has existed for such a long time. It can give people peace and comfort, especially older people.

Ying: What made you change so much?

Xiangba: I think it is because I live in this environment. When I was in school, I had little time to spend at home. But now everyone around is doing that. And also it is because of my marriage and my child. Now I would like to do some religious practices because I feel I have a responsibility to do that in order to bless my child.

Like some other young Tibetans discussed in previous sections, Xiangba was educated to be an atheist in school. However, when he went back home, he reconsidered the meaning and importance of religion. Upon returning home, he had more opportunities to come to know religion, which influenced his perceptions of Bon religion. He dropped the exclusively materialist or scientific view he had developed at school to better understand religion, demonstrating how the influence of school education on young people's religiosity is partial and varies in different places and at different times.

His hometown in Jiuzhaigou provided a different set of opportunities to cultivate and explore his religiosity. In contrast to Han-dominated schools that might be seen as propagating homogenised secular ideologies and creating minority-majority disparity, being at home in Jiuzhaigou contributed to religious growth and ethnic awareness in a context with a large number of believers of same ethnic origin.

Marriage and the process of having children were stressed as the turning points of Xiangba's religiosity. His perception of familial needs encouraged him to treat religion seriously, with family bonds serving as a key to the intergenerational transmission of religious practices.

In this section, I have provided an overview of key dimensions of young people's experiences of state education and how it relates to their ethnic and religious identities. In Section 6.3.3, I explore in greater detail how young people reconciled and negotiated

the rational and socialist understanding of religion taught in schools, and I explore the issue of religious transformation after leaving school in more depth in 6.4.

6.3.3 Religion and superstition

6.3.3.1 Reconciling science, religion and superstition

As discussed in Chapter 3, religion in China is a highly politicised concept which needs to be compatible with the state's ideology. Marx said "religion is the opium" of the people. China as a party-state, upholds atheist ideologies of dialectic materialism and historical materialism. These ideologies are written into the 1992 "Curriculum Plan of Full-Time Primary and Junior Secondary Nine-Year Compulsory Education" (Chinese Education Committee, 1992) as guidelines for spiritual education as follows:

Subjects and activities need to connect theory and practice, to provide education on dialectic materialism, historical materialism and atheism.

It also sets "loving country, loving people, loving work, loving science and loving socialism" as one of the purposes of primary education, and further adds "knowing the basic ideas of dialectic materialism and historical materialism" as another objective for junior-secondary-school students. For most Tibetan children in China, this Chinese secular education system is the only educational option. Religion is described in a negative way in the common curriculum (Mackerras, 2013: 38). It is prohibited to conduct religious activities in schools (Zhu, 2007: 61). The principle of secularity is strictly implemented in state sponsored schools, in which superstition is seriously criticised. According to political materials in schools, superstition is depicted as obstructing the development of modern science and making people ignorant and poor (Hansen, 1999: 137). Hansen (1999: 138) found that Akha, Blang and Jinuo minority students in Southwest China become embarrassed about their religious practices back home, which they come to think of as superstition. Negative constructions of superstition which circulate in schools and in public rhetoric greatly influence the understanding of their religion held by Jiuzhaigou people, especially young people who have been through the state school system.

As an exercise to get people to describe their degree of religiosity, I asked them to describe in quantitative terms how this had been affected by the process of schooling.

Ying: If you use a percentage to describe the degree of your adherence to Bon, how much would it be?

Renqing: After education, it was about 90%.

Ying: Why [90%]?

Renqing: Because it is a cultural tradition. All my family believe in it. I have been raised believing it since I was born.

Ying: How about the remaining 10%?

Renqing:[That is because] I have been affected since I went [outside] to be educated. Because I believed in the Communist Party, [and was] an atheist.

Ying: What did the textbooks or education tell you?

Renqing: Atheism.

Ying: What did you act like when you were an atheist?

Renqing: I told my parents not to chant prayers any more. [I told them] ‘This is hopeless. Go to hospital when you are ill. Work hard if you need money.

Renqing acknowledged the influence of school education on his religious piety, even though the influence was not deep. When he studied at school, he was influenced to believe in the Communist Party and atheism. During that period, he asked his parents to stop doing religious practices, because he thought they are of no use in solving problems in practice. When he went back to work in his hometown, he regained aspects of his belief in Bon because of the strong familial religious influence. He even thinks his opinion of and ways of dealing with religion was ridiculous. He now self-consciously views his religion as a cultural tradition. This newly added meaning contributes to him maintaining a relatively high degree of religious commitment.

Apart from the atheism and communist secularist ideology, schools also promote science, which is thought to oppose superstition.

Zeren: But I think sometimes we need to believe in science. I think it [my religion] is a superstition. But I have to do it, because it's a habit, a tradition.

Ying: So you don't believe it [your religion] can protect you. You do it just because it's a tradition and custom.

Zeren: Yes. When I was at school, my politics teacher talked about superstition and science.

For Zeren, a young woman in Jiuzhaigou, school education is a site where science and superstition are brought into confrontation. She believed in the truth of science and accepted her religion as a superstition. It is noteworthy that religion was once again regarded as a cultural tradition or a custom, and it was in these terms that religion was considered meaningful by these young people. In terms of her degree of religious believing, Zeren half believed in Bon as she insisted that “superstition is not right. We need to believe in science”. Compared to Zeren, her younger sister, Zeji, had spent less time in school and identified herself as believing in Bon “80 percent” because she said “I always feel it is a bit useful but for no special reason. I feel that I am protected by the

deities when I have good luck.” Differing from Zeren who adopted a discourse of rationalism, Zeji did not make as clear a differentiation between science and superstition.

Some young people attempt to maintain a clear conceptual differentiation between their religion and superstition, and they seek to prevent their religion from being labelled as superstition. A young girl, Meiduo, once told me: “My history teacher told us that Chinese beliefs tend to be like superstition; foreigners’ beliefs tend to be like real religion.” She to some extent agreed with her teacher and explained that “it is probably because Chinese belief has ghosts and deities.” When I asked if she thought Bon is a superstition, she answered “Bon is not [a superstition]! Ours is religion.” “But it has ghosts and deities”, I said. She fell silent. Certainly, Christianity has its ghosts too. The history teacher’s perception of foreign religion reflects the aims of the Chinese state to make its definition consistent with other religions around the world. This conversation also reflects the clash between ideas on superstition taught at school and the experience of their own religion, with many Tibetan graduates criticizing the superstitious aspects of Tibetan religion. Elsewhere, Tibetan students in neidi schools were found to have even directly abandoned their belief in Buddhism and denied the existence of Buddhas, deities and ghosts. They adopted a “scientific and humanistic point of view” when considering Tibetan religion, which they thought is “psychological medicine for some people” (Postiglione et al., 2009: 138-9). This understanding of Tibetan religion is evident among some of my respondents. Meiduo was taught in school by her teacher to have a vague idea of superstition. She was convinced that Chinese beliefs are superstition being characterised by belief in ghosts and deities. But, without perceiving a contradiction until challenged, she directly denied that Bon constituted superstition, even though she knows there are concepts of ghosts and deities in Bon as well. As far as I know, elements of ghosts and deities constantly appear in Jiuzhaigou people’s religious practices. For example, Bon believes that there are deities inhabiting in and controlling the sacred mountains and waters. In addition, several people told me that Jiuzhaigou has a particular ritual for telling people’s fortune. People participating will go into a trance which explained by local people that their bodies are inhabited by deities.

In contrast to Meiduo, Renqing had a more clearly defined understanding of the differences between superstition and religion.

Renqing: I think sometimes they [schools] mixed superstition and religion.

Ying: Do you think your belief is religion or superstition?

Renqing: There is a big difference between superstition and religion. Mine is certainly religion, not superstition.

Ying: So what is the difference between superstition and religion in your mind?

Renqing: Superstition is more about the things about ghosts and deities which are not real. According to the textbooks, superstition should be resisted. Religion is more serious. It is in your heart.

Renqing's firm denial that Bon constitutes superstition is based on his emotional attachment to his religion, something which he suggests that believers in superstition do not experience. For him, religion exists in his heart and should be seriously treated. It is this emotional attachment that differentiates religion from superstition.

For the ones who have graduated from schools, with richer life experience they have formed a reconciled and neutral attitude toward relationships between science and religion. Bamu, a young woman in Jiuzhaigou, described her experience of the impacts of education on her understanding of religion in detail.

I doubted our religion once. At that time teachers told us 'superstition superstition, more believe more enchanted'²⁶. This was obviously against our religion. But at home, I was instilled to do good deeds and asked to do this and that [religious practices]. I feel the essence of Bon is that everything has spirits and involves doing good deeds. But according to scientific ways of thought, it is like 'superstition superstition, more believe more enchanted'. It feels as if superstition cannot be believed. Once you believe, you will have aberrations. It is what teachers instilled in us. That's why we doubt [our religion] and have dialectic views. We need to make sure whether what we believe is true or not. After rich life experiences, [I found that] many things cannot be explained by science. At a certain point, for example when we graduated from college, we suddenly started to doubt science. There is no proof [to say religion is superstition]. Now we have two ideologies to control our thought on one thing. For the ones who didn't accept education, they have one point of view. They firmly think [religion is good], like [people] in Ruoergai [one of thirteen counties in Aba Prefecture]. For them, if someone says bad things about their religion, they will instantly fight back. [They will think] my holy religion cannot be violated. But we are different. We have our own views. We have two ways of evaluating things. We know what is important and what is not. So we are very rational. We don't mention Tibetan independence. We have our own views that we need to calm down. For the people who are not educated, they would say go, go. If we are not educated, we would go [like them]. But now [I] feel a need to protect ourselves. So education has a big impact.

²⁶ It is a local idiom which means the more you believe, the more you will be enchanted and confused. The original Chinese saying is "*mixin mixin, yue xin yue mi*". *Mixin* which means superstition is composed of two Chinese characters: *mi* (means enchant and confuse) and *xin* (means believe).

Bamu detailed her experience from doubting religion to doubting science and how she had a dialectic views toward religion. It is evident that teachers from her school used 'science' as a contradictory concept in an attempt to get her to reject religion. She was made to believe superstition is dangerous and will lead her to aberrations. At the same time, she was influenced by familial religious education. She inclined to believe science and to doubt religion. When she went back home after graduation, she started to doubt science because it cannot prove everything. It should be mentioned that there is another factor affecting her changing attitude that did not appear in this quote, the influence of religious environment at home. This reflects the significance of environment in maintaining religion. As the second half of her account shows, she seems to be happy to have two ideologies, rational thinking obtained from school and religious thinking from home, which makes her to have a neutral view to see issues like Tibet independence. As a matter of fact, these two ideologies create conflicting attitudes toward ethnic identity. In her mind, radical actions for Tibet independence such as self-immolation are irrational and would not be conducted by educated people. But this does not suggest she has no strong sense of ethnic and religious identity. Under the current political state, her neutral position is a way of protecting herself.

6.3.3.2 Rational thinking

The conflicting thinking on religion brought about by school education is not a unique case. Postiglione (2009: 138-139) found that some young Tibetan students who had been educated under the state schooling system had a strong sense of ethnic identity but had completely turned into atheists. They differentiated Tibetan religion from their ethnic identity. Religion was thought of as a crucial element of Tibetan culture, not a belief. It reflects how the national educational policies affect a generation of religiosity and ethnic identity of minority groups in two different ways. The conflicting experiences were evidenced by other respondents of mine as well. I asked Duga if he believed in religion's capacity to realise people's wishes and to bless adherents. He answered:

To be honest I very much doubt it. Actually many things [things igniting doubt] are a part of belief. You don't need to prove it using your rationality, because once you use rationality, it is not belief.

He thought that religion is essentially contradictory with rationality. If someone wants to believe, just put rationality aside. Based on this, he adopted a new attitude toward religion, just seeing it as a tradition:

In the past I felt there are many irrational things in our religion which cannot be explained in a scientific way. Now I think it's wrong to understand it that way.

You just practice many rituals, following [others, especially parents]. Don't think too much. It's just an ethnic tradition.

For Duga, religion does not need to be thought out. It just needs practice. This is his way of dealing with the contradictions of rational thinking and religious thinking. He equates religion with tradition. In a similar vein, young Hindus in the USUS are found to be more religious than some of the literature suggests (Min, 2010: 202). The cultural and philosophical values of Hinduism are acknowledged by the majority of the young generation. It is thought good in promoting humanity, nonviolence and compassion. The non-supernatural aspects of Hinduism, such as meditation and scripture reading are given more attention and emphasis than supernatural rituals. Zewang, a middle-aged man in Jiuzhaigou, echoed Duga's opinion on the cultural basis of religion when I asked him to define Bonpo.

Bonpo firstly is an inheritance of our ethnic culture. And then, Bon has a deep and rich basis, for example, various legends transmitted from generation to generation. I don't think Bon is ignorant and benighted. I think these are Tibetan traditions and folk customs inherited from my ancestors. I feel this is an inheritance.

Zewang did not answer this question by referring to, for example, the scriptures a Bonpo should read, the principles a Bonpo should know or the practices a Bonpo should conduct. Similar to a number of respondents' perception, he thought Bon is a tradition and folk custom and a Bonpo is someone inheriting this ethnic culture. Religion was once again equated with culture and ethnicity, even though they considered themselves Bonpos. This opinion suggests "belonging without believing", a different trajectory from Davies' (1994) "believing without belonging", drawn from the Britain context. Religion needs to be transmitted generation by generation in order to maintain its vigour (intergenerational transmission of religion will be discussion in Section 6.4).

In sum, we can see school education on superstition and science has nurtured in young Tibetans a rational ideology of reconciliation between religion, science and superstition and to further recast their religious and ethnic identities. However, with regard to the future of their religion, Nuobu, a middle-aged man in Jiuzhaigou, had a positive view. He said:

Even if there are more people accepting higher education, religion will still exist. And I do think even if all Bon believers accept higher education, this religion will still exist. Just with more rational explanations.

As can be seen from the many respondents quoted above, when they go back home, they adopt an inclusive and neutral understanding their religion and ethnicity (see discussion in Section 6.4).

6.3.4 Summary

Mackerras (1995) argued that the education policies of the Chinese state failed to control the enthusiasm of ethnic minorities toward their culture and language even though young Tibetans are seen to be growing more similar to the Han. Religion, it seems, still plays a significant role in forming ethnic identity among minorities in China. This conclusion has also been reached in research on other ethnic minorities in China besides Tibetans (Hansen, 1999; Gladney, 2013). Education plays an important role in reshaping young Tibetan's religious and ethnic identities. For young people, their religious identity is closely connected with and greatly enhanced by their ethnic identity. Being a Tibetan means being born to Bon religion. Their ethnicity is reinterpreted and represented to them in schools. Chinese standardised education teaches what it means to be a member of a minority group and of the Chinese nation. To reach national homogenisation, little is taught in school about Tibetan religion, language, culture and history. This, however, tends to encourage young people in their search for their ethnic identity. In environment of state schooling, Tibetans are differentiated. They are thought of as different, backward, barbaric, and uncultivated. This creates tensions between Tibetan students and Han students. After a period, some young Tibetans can find a comparatively harmonious balance with Han students.

In terms of religion, young people's religious identity is especially volatile and variable. Their identity is easily influenced by the atheist education they encounter at school. They start to critically think about religion, using the secular ideologies instilled in school. Superstition, science and rationality are frequently mentioned perspectives gained from school and applied to the understanding of religion. Compared to their strong sense of ethnic identity, young people do not have a strong religious identity. In the process of identity shifting and construction, young people move from home, an ethnically and religiously homogenous environment to school, a multi-ethnic and atheist environment. At home, their religious identity is taken for granted and not reflected upon critically (See Section 6.4). In school, their taken-for-granted identity formed at home is challenged by atheist views. The whole process shows young people's religious identity varies according to the setting.

They adopt a neutral and reconciled view towards religion and ethnicity, believing that with critical thinking they can uphold ethnic pride through rational behaviour (2007: 176-180; 2009: 138-139).

6.4 Intergenerational transmission of religion and home

In the previous section, we have looked at young Tibetans' religiosity and ethnic identity in school. It was also stressed that religiosity and religious identity change spatially and temporally. In this section, the focus is on home and processes of intergenerational religious transmission and exchange. Specifically, I explore the ways in which religion and ethnic identities are transmitted between the older and younger generations. The analysis addresses questions regarding the kinds of religious ideas and practices that are transmitted between generations, the means through which this happens, and potential enduring characteristics of intergenerational religious transmission.

In order to address these issues, this section will start with a broad, schematic contrasting of the younger generation's understanding of religion with those of the middle and older generations (Section 6.4.1). This is followed by an examination specifically of gender and women's role in religious transmission (Section 6.4.2). I next focus on three important factors influencing religious transmission: the power of imitation (Section 6.4.3), parental love (Section 6.4.4), and marriage (Section 6.4.5). Following this, the mutual understandings and misunderstandings between generations will be examined (Section 6.4.6). Then the challenges of religious transmission will be discussed (Section 6.4.7).

6.4.1 Meanings of religion for older and younger generations

This section provides some broad contrasts between older, middle and younger generations and the meaning of religion for them. Members of the older and middle generations in Jiuzhaigou tend to lead lives that are comparatively fixed with a stable family (spouse/children/parents), regular work, stable income and similar social circle. Because of these factors, the older and middle generations have relatively similar and stable patterns of belief and religious practice -- although there are some differences as well. In contrast, the younger generation is subject to various sources of external influence, many of them ultimately related to the relative prosperity brought by tourism and (as discussed in the previous section) contemporary practices of state education.

6.4.1.1 The older and middle generations

The older generation in Jiuzhaigou has experienced the people's commune system (1958-1981), the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the household responsibility system of rural land (1981-), and tourism development (1984-present). They have witnessed the demolition of monasteries and the banning of religion in the Cultural Revolution, the re-opening of monasteries after the Cultural Revolution and rapid economic growth from the development of tourism.

Most of the older generation have little if any formal education. A few older men learnt a little Tibetan when they were monk-candidates. Many older women are illiterate both in Tibetan and in Chinese. Only a few can understand Chinese, and the ability to speak the language has seldom been mastered by older people. As for the middle-aged, under the household responsibility system they were withdrawn from schools by their parents to work in the fields as their families were allocated contracted land to farm (Postiglione et al., 2004: 201). Almost all of them failed to even complete primary school. At the same time the tide of enthusiasm for religion after the Cultural Revolution resulted in many children attending monasteries rather than Chinese state schools (Bass, 1998: 215).

As discussed in Chapter 5, a considerable number of religious practices are carried out in Jiuzhaigou. As Yidan, a middle-aged man in Jiuzhaigou, said, "We are doing lots of chantings here. Some families do this 20 times a year. I just do about 10 times a year" (20 times would be considered quite a large number for religious rituals). These chantings are mainly initiated by members of the older generation and organised by the middle generation. If a family has an older member, he or she is likely to conduct most of the religious activities. Yidan explained that "those [families] with older people [do more religious practices]. Older people have nothing [else] to do. They put all their energy into religious things." Older people are widely recognised as the leading force contributing to religious practices in Jiuzhaigou. Families with older people do more religious practices as the older people usually urge other younger family members to practice religion. The grandfather in the family of Cuomo, a middle-aged woman, plays this role:

[I] should attend all of them (religious practices). They all have their own reasons. For the ones which you should attend, you just do what you are asked to do, always listening to decrees [from grandfather].

For Cuomo, attending religious practices is her routine rather than something she enthusiastically involves herself in. In her family. Religious practices are mostly guided by her father-in-law who plays a central role in organising familial religious practices. Older people know clearly when to do religious practices, what they should do, who to

invite and how to proceed. Other family members typically just follow the older people's lead. For families without older people, the eldest will naturally take on this role.

Religion is the primary thing they are dedicated to do. The following quotation provides an illustration of older people's dedication to religion. Pema, an older woman in Jiuzhaigou, complained that her sons did not take care of her and her husband:

I'm old and why I am still going to rent [Tibetan] costumes [for tourists] to make money. Because I need to make money to invite monks to come and chant and pray for our family. I spend all of my money on it. If I don't take care of us, how could we live?

Like other older people in Jiuzhaigou, Pema contributes most of her income to religious practices. Unlike the middle-aged, older people do not have the pressure of supporting their family. Religion provides the primary motivation for her to work hard in tourism even though she is over 60 years old. She practices religion for the whole family's well-being and also for her and her husband's health and for the afterlife. She puts her hope of having a good this-life and a good afterlife in religion, and she expects her son to take care of her.

Similar to Pema, religion is the only reason that motivates Yama, an older woman in Jiuzhaigou, to rent costumes to make money, even though her children are supporting her:

My children give me money every month which is enough for me. But the reason why I am renting Tibetan costumes is to invite monks to chant for us. Besides, I need money to invite many monks to pray and do religious rituals for me when I die.

Yama either spends all of her money on religious activity or saves it, as she believes that a large religious ceremony for her funeral will be a significant expense. Like many older people, religion is closely connected with her life in every aspect and is seen as connected to familial prosperity, health, and the afterlife.

As for the middle-aged, their dedication to religion is not expressed as strongly as is evident among older people, even though they are actually central to organising, financing, and participating in religious practices. Compared to the older generation, the middle-aged generation have more this-worldly concerns, such as their tourism business, their jobs, their families' health, their children's performance in schools. However, they rarely expressed direct doubt about their religion in the language of rationality, in contrast to the younger generation, whom I turn to below.

6.4.1.2 The younger generation

Young people were born after the introduction of tourism when the fortunes of Jiuzhaigou people rapidly increased. They are also more fully exposed to the outside world, having gone away from Jiuzhaigou to be educated. They can afford to send their children to receive education in big cities outside Jiuzhaigou and even abroad. The majority of young people have college or university degrees. They have been sent to boarding schools or Han-Chinese homestay families outside since they were teenagers or even little children.

Most of my younger generation respondents did not appear to have a deep understanding of the meaning of attending religious practices, especially teenagers and those in their early twenties. I asked Zeren if she likes attending religious chanting sessions. She replied “We must attend. We can’t dislike it.” In terms of her feelings, she said, “I just finish the tasks [given to me].” Zeren does all the religious practices that her parents ask her to do. But she expresses little awareness of the meanings of these practices. For her, these are the tasks she has to finish. She does not have special feelings and emotional attachments to these religious practices like her parents and grandparents. The emotional detachment toward religion suggests that for young people religious practices are like routines which do not generate special feelings.

Some young people do not believe the supernatural aspects of Bon. They have a realist view of Bon religion. As discussed in section 6.3.4, this rational attitude toward religion comes in part from the influence of school education. Meiduo (a young woman in Jiuzhaigou) provided the following account of her apprehension of religion:

I don’t like the parts about ghosts or deities [in Bon]. I don’t believe it is true. And I don’t believe the myths in the history of Bon. I think they are not real. So I think you don’t need to care much about the mysterious parts [in Bon]. It mostly provides you philosophies of how to practice Bon. It makes you calm and comfortable; gives you peace and happiness.

Meiduo understood Bon in a realist way. To her, Bon creates a sense of peace and contentment through the practices that she conducts.

Even though many young people realistically considered that “praying or chanting scriptures is just a consolation” (Suonan, a young girl in Jiuzhaigou) without supernatural functions, they still expect religion to bring them good luck, in exams, for example. I asked Suonan if she conducts religious practices in schools. She answered as follows:

For example, if I feel I am having bad luck or I want to achieve something, like for an exam, I will tell my mom to chant for me. My mom will also burn incense praying to Buddha.

Religion is something she will turn to when she is out of luck or has a wish to realise, even though she knows it might not be useful. This is the case for other young respondents as well, as I heard from Zeji, a young woman in Jiuzhaigou:

I will chant mantras when I'm in danger. For instance, [if I] watch a horror film before going to bed, I will chant. I won't think about it [the film] while I'm chanting.

Members of the younger generation also let their parents do religious practices when they have exams, have babies or get ill etc. It shows that even though young people stay in school most of the time and do not practice religion, they still have bonds with their religion through their parents (see also Section 6.4.4).

Why do young people seem to pursue the blessings of Bon even though there might be no actual results? Duga, a young man in Jiuzhaigou, thinks these rituals and ceremonies are necessary but not essential. For him, it is because of the existence of these rituals and ceremonies that Bon becomes accessible to laypeople. In his words:

Buddhism [note: Duga uses Buddhism and Bon interchangeably] takes much account of sentient beings. Humans are all sentient beings. Why did they believe this [Bon] at the very beginning? For the wise men, [most of] the sentient beings are ignorant [of philosophies of Bon]. In order to make them believe this, Bon needs to satisfy their needs. They ask for blessings for themselves and their families [from Bon]. But this is not the core of Bon, even though it is necessary.

Duga provided an explanation of why people conduct religious practices from a historical and theological perspective. From Duga's understanding, unlike the wise men who are enlightened by Bon ideas, most laypeople are ignorant of the philosophies of Bon. In order to make Bon accessible to laypeople, some Bon practices were designed to meet their basic life demands. He has a very pragmatic perception of Bon which echoes previous accounts that emphasise the inner peace and consolation provided by Bon.

Religion not only matters because it is seen as providing spiritual peace and consolation, it is also important in enhancing Tibetan ethnic identity as discussed in Sections 6.2 and 6.3.2. For young people, religion is also a mark of ethnic identity. "As Tibetans, we must keep our religion." I heard this expression very often during my conversations with young

people in Jiuzhaigou, whom I found to be particularly inclined to understand religion in the sense of ethnic identity. Duga went on:

Many things are in your blood. It can't be wiped away. [We were] born with Bon. ... It is a culture or a tradition.

Here Bon is again identified as fundamentally intertwined with Tibetan ethnic identity. The linking of religiosity with ethnic identity by young Tibetans appears to stem in large part from their school education as they will have had frequent and deep contacts with Han Chinese since they were very young.

Some young people take their religiosity further and think Bon is good for establishing ethical standards for young people. Jamyang, a young man in Jiuzhaigou, provided an explanation of this when I asked him why Bon is meaningful for him:

People should do good deeds throughout their whole lives. The advantage of our belief lies here. It tells you not to do bad things, or there will be bad consequences.

The moral advantages of Bon were emphasised by many respondents. They are proud of the ethical models Bon has established for young people. The models require them to perform good acts.

6.4.2 Women and religion

In this section, I turn to an examination of women's important role in maintaining the intergenerational transmission of religion. As found by Mazumdar (1999), Muslim women play a pivotal role in sustaining and transmitting religious practices in the non-institutional domestic spaces. Women in Jiuzhaigou also play a major role in organising religious practices (see Fig. 6.1 for a woman praying).

In Chapter 5, I discussed a number of gendered aspects of religious space (see Sections 5.2.6 and 5.3.5). This discussion illustrated that in the religious sphere, women are ascribed an inherently lower status than men. This is evidenced by public religious events in which "women do everything, men do nothing". The following comments made by Zezhen, a middle-aged woman in Jiuzhaigou illustrate the general familial position of women.

Zezhen: Our Tibetan men do nothing [in terms of housework]. Women do it all. If men do the housework, grandparents will speak to their daughter-in-law and ask her why she had her man do the work.

Ying: Do women have a say in big familial decisions?

Zezen: Women speak a lot. But decisions are mostly made by men. In the past, people will make fun of men who do the laundry and cook, saying 'you [are] a soft ear²⁷. You are useless.' ... My sister earns more than her husband. She often jokes to her husband that 'you come back home to take care of the children. I go outside to do business.' But as a matter of fact, she still does all the housework.

Even though women in some cases make bigger economic contributions to the family, men are still in charge of big family decisions and refrain from housework. Women normally seem to accept this unequal status. Differing from the young female Korean-American Christians who oppose their status as "second-class citizens" in the church (Chong, 1998: 281), Jiuzhaigou young women rarely voiced clear oppositional ideas concerning their unequal gender status. However, the joke made by Zezen's sister implied that there is potential now for Tibetan women in Jiuzhaigou to have their social status changed, as women started to at least think about role swapping with men. This is mostly attributed to the increasing economic independence and success of women. However, this process seemed to still be in its infancy in Jiuzhaigou.

According to my interviewees, women, especially older women, were normally identified as the most pious believers in the whole family, organising most of the familial religious rituals and conducting religious practices. Diki, a young woman in Jiuzhaigou, said her mother is the most pious person in her family as she insists on chanting mantras and burning incense every day:

Ying: Who's the most pious person in your family?

Diki: Of course it's my mom.

Ying: Why do you think so?

Diki: Because she chants every day. Chanting [the Bon mantra] 'Om Mazhi Meyi Salangdu' every day. Burning incense in the scripture room every day.

With few exceptions, all my respondents agreed that their mothers or grandmothers were the most religious people in their families. Bamu, a middle-aged woman in Jiuzhaigou, described her mother as more professional than monks:

Bamu: My mom is much more professional than monks.

Ying: Why do you think she is more professional?

Bamu: My mom's study has reached a significant level. Her degree of belief is deeply ingrained. She herself not only believes, but she also tells us that, 'The

²⁷ Soft ear refers to a man who likes to listen to and heed his wife's decisions.

spirit of Buddha is very great. You should do this, this, that. Then we said 'yes, yes, yes'. Sometimes we feel she nags us too much.

Like other older people in Jiuzhaigou, Bamu's mother spends most of her time and money on religion. Older women not only conduct religious practices, but also in many ways become the centre of influence on younger generations. The issue of how older people influence young people will be further discussed in Section 6.4.3.

Compared to women's major role in organising and sustaining religious practices, men do not have much religious work to do. However, some vital rituals cannot be done without men. Even though women do most of the work to make religious practices happen, men are still regarded as more important than women. Zeduo, a young woman in Jiuzhaigou, explained that her father wished she had been a son rather than a daughter since a son could do certain religious practices that women are not allowed to do.

My Dad once said 'It would be great if you were a son. Then you could do some rituals.' I know my father loves me very much. But he regrets not having a son. Some familial rituals need sons to perform them. For example, a son is responsible for taking swords and the treasury box to the sacred mountain.

This reveals the different roles of women and men in religion: men as dominant and women as subordinate. Daughters in Muslim families were also found to be held back from taking part in many activities than Muslim sons (Ijaz and Abbas, 2010: 319). This differential treatment is associated with ideas of shame and pollution concerning women (see Sections 5.2.6 and 5.3.5).

Duoji, a young man in Jiuzhaigou, shared his thoughts with me on his parents' differentiation in the religious education they gave him compared to his sisters. Sons occasionally are even specially educated at home as they are perceived to have greater religious importance.

Ying: Did your parents give you a different religious education to you and your sisters?

Duoji: Yes. I don't think they taught my sisters anything special. They [my sisters] don't need to learn. Now my brother is learning. I'm still young, so I don't need to do any of these things. My parents are old. Some rituals need to be done by men. So we need to start to learn some Tibetan toast songs and some words needed to be chanted by men in rituals. My brother is recording these materials from my parents and is trying to learn by himself.

Duoji knows and accepts women's and men's different roles in Tibetan religion. He and his brother are trying to fulfil their religious responsibility as a man in Jiuzhaigou, which cannot be achieved by his sisters. The gender difference still exists in religious transmission among generations.

6.4.3 The power of imitation: learning from parents

For people who were born in religious families, religious identity was normally firstly formed at home through parents' influence. Young second-generation Muslim immigrants in the US were found to follow what their parents required them to do without knowing the reasons (Peek, 2005). This type identity was termed "ascribed identity" by Peek (we briefly discussed the meaning of ascribed identity for young Tibetans in Section 6.3).

Practicing religion at home is the main mechanism for transmitting religion among generations in Jiuzhaigou as well. Min (2010: 202) found that Indian Hindus practice religion more at home than elsewhere and that this has a stronger impact in retaining the younger generation's religiosity and ethnicity compared with religious practice in congregations. In Jiuzhaigou, Tibetan parents do not often specifically teach their children about religion. For young Tibetans, there are no accessible sacred texts like the Bible or Qu'ran to learn from. The main source of their knowledge on religion comes from their parents who mostly have little formal knowledge of theories and writings of Bon. Thus both Bon and Tibetan Buddhism are very much practice-inclined religions. Knowledge and patterns of (practicing) religion are transmitted through practice-imitation from parents.

Wangcuo, a young woman in Jiuzhaigou, emphasised the importance of imitating her mother on the formation of her religiosity:

I didn't ask my mother questions about religion specially. But I gradually understood it in the process of imitating my mom. I just followed what my mom did and asked me to do. Now my daughter is the same, influenced by my mother. My daughter tries to learn from my mom and is curious about some religious practices my mother does. She once reminded me to prostrate when we were in a temple, because she saw this being done by her grandma.

This view was widely acknowledged by other people I talked to in Jiuzhaigou. There was only a single exception to this pattern in my interviews.

Ying: Who has the biggest influence on your belief?

Zeren: My parents.

Zeji: The Panchen Lama²⁸ [here she means the 11th Panchen Lama]

Ying: Why do you think the Panchen Lama has the greatest influence on your belief?

Zeji: Because since the Dalai incident [referring to the Dalai Lama's escape from Tibet to India], he kind of appears to be the chief of our Tibetans.

Ying: Why do you think so? And when did you have this thought?

Zeji: I'm not sure. I always have this feeling.

Ying: You think he is great and holy?

Zeji: Yes.

Zeren: Really? What does he do for you? I don't think so.

Zeji: No. I mean in a TV news programme I saw the Panchen Lama host a meeting with people who are not Tibetans and talk about Buddhism. There were many famous people there. And he used English through the whole meeting. He spoke very well and he is so young.

This conversation with sisters Zeren and Zeji suggests, even though it may be just an anomaly, that there can be a difference in people's understanding of religion between older teenagers and comparatively mature young people. Debates between Zeji and Zezhen might suggest different religious understanding caused by the age difference²⁹. The Panchen Lama is one of the most important religious figures in Tibet, and is publicly recognised and publicized by the Chinese government. The reason the Panchen Lama is regarded as influential is because he was considered young and knowledgeable about Buddhism, rubbing shoulders with stars and good at English.

As discussed in Chapter 5, tourism plays a significant role in transforming religious spaces in Jiuzhaigou. In Section 6.3, tourism was argued to be providing young people with education opportunities in state boarding schools, which further contributes to reshaping laypeople's religious and ethnic identities and patterns of intergenerational transmission of religion. Tourism is also the main cause attracting young college graduates back home as it offers them easier means of income and becomes a factor reinforcing the power of imitation and helping young people to create a habit of

²⁸ Panchen Lama is the highest ranking Lama after the Dalai Lama in the Gelugpa (Dge-lugs-pa) lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. The 11th Panchen Lama Gyaincain Norbu is acknowledged and publicized by Chinese government. He is also the vice president of the Buddhist Association of China and a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

²⁹ Actually Zeji was the youngest person I interviewed. My original plan was to interview her elder sister Zeren, but Zeji wanted to stay with her sister during the interview. Given she was over 16, I decided to interview them together.

conducting religious practices regularly. In the words of Zeduo, a young woman in Jiuzhaigou:

I started to willingly practice religion when I was in my sixth grade of elementary school [about 12 years old]. I went to rent costumes with my mom. At first, I just followed mom to throw prayer papers. She walked around the Stupa then I followed. After a while, I automatically got used to it. I took prayer papers every morning, even though my mom didn't go. Now this becomes my habit if I go to do business. I think it could bless me.

Tourism was the reason that motivated Zeduo's mother to start praying in the mornings before the tourism business took off. Now it is also an important reason for Zeduo to follow her mother's routine of religious practice. Tourism encourages Jiuzhaigou young people to create a habit of constantly conducting religious practice. Tourism made her willing to do religious practices as a young teenager. Tourism became a force in forming a new religious habit and having it transmitted.

Apart from this example, young people also follow their parents and pray in other shrines near their business location every morning with other community members. As I stated in Section 5.3, tourism has become a major theme of religious practices in Jiuzhaigou, the young people also mainly ask for blessing of more earnings from tourism on that day.

6.4.4 Parental love as a key of intergenerational transmission of religion

As young people mature, they seem to become more introspective about their beliefs and values. As Peek argues, "Individuals absorb and internalise many norms, values and behaviours when they understand them intellectually" (Peek, 2005: 225). In this section, I examine how the process of becoming a parent was significant for encouraging people (particularly younger people who had been educated away from Jiuzhaigou) to become more reflective about their religious belief. I argue that parents viewed the intergenerational transmission of religion as an act of love, and as such this played an important role in maintaining this form of transmission. Chong (1998) had similar findings in his research on young Korean-American Christians. He found they went to church not only for religious purpose, but also to preserve their ethnicity and culture for their children. But the ways of showing parental love through religion are slightly different between Korean parents in Chong's finding and Jiuzhaigou young parents. Jiuzhaigou parents conduct more religious practices for Children by themselves, whereas Korean parents encourage their children to actively be involved in religion.

In my interviews and conversations with younger parents, I found that they often expressed the view that it was love of their children that encouraged them to reconsider religion and to take part in more religious practices. The following account of a young woman, Wangcuo, illustrates this phenomenon:

Every time when we see a big lama [a particularly important lama], the thing I hope most is to take my daughter there. I think my daughter should not miss the head-touching ceremony [by the lama]. This reflects changes in my belief. I didn't believe so much in the first place. But now, because of my daughter, I believe [in Bon] more.

The head-touching ceremony was considered a way to make Wangcuo's daughter blessed by the big lama. Parental love embedded in the simple wish that she wanted to make her daughter blessed changed her attitudes toward religion which had been influenced by parents and school education. In this process of religious transmission, both parents' and children's religiosity was strengthened. Another middle-aged mom also similarly recollected her experience of taking children to religious practices:

Zhuoga: When I was young, I often took my children to walk around the sacred mountain in Songpan. I took my oldest son and the second son while he was still in his mother's womb. It was hard. We saw monks' dancing and performing religious ceremonies. I was young at that time, [so I] didn't feel tired.

Ying: Why did you take your children given it's a hard journey?

Zhuoga: Just for the good of my children. I want to make wishes in the sacred mountain and let the lama touch my children's heads to bless them to be healthy and safe.

In this instance, a mother's strong love of her children helps the sustenance of religion. When she made the pilgrimage, Zhuoga made her children's well-being the priority. This is her most important motivation for conducting religious practices and overcoming the hardship involved.

This process was evident not only among mothers but also fathers. Nuobu, a middle-aged man in Jiuzhaigou, described his changing religiosity before and after having children.

Nuobu: I think it is the love of children that makes religion.

Ying: Why?

Nuobu: This is my personal experience. When I was in secondary school, I was strongly against religion. There was a moment I resisted everything religious. But when my mom passed away, suddenly, I felt her spirit had gone with her body. ... So I think religion must originate within close relationships with this

emotion. There must be relations, [between religion and] remembrance, a sense of absence and love for the people you love most. My sensibility tells me [there are] no [relations]. But according to my experience with my mother, I suddenly felt that my mother's spirit left her body.

Ying: So your mom's death is a turning point?

Nuobu: Yes. This is the reason. And my love for children is another reason. Because of my love, I prefer to believe in religion. I hope he could have this religion. If I burn incense, I would pray for him. I hope it really exists. I think this might be the reason that religion persists.

It is noteworthy that Nuobu pointed out that love of children was a key force that helped his transformation from an atheist into a believer. As mentioned earlier, young people might turn to be believers again once they leave secular school and go back to their sacred home. Moving from the sacred home that initiated his religion feeling to schools that criticise religion, Nuobu also changed from a religious follower to a complete atheist in school. As discussed in Section 6.3, young people's ascribed identity is variable with place and time. Being exposed to a different environment would reshape young people's volatile religious identity. It is apparent that when they were at home, religion was not fully internalised and they did not even have much knowledge of their religion, which was mostly taken for granted. Strictly speaking, they were more like followers, and might not be called believers. Their religious identity was a superficially ascribed identity. Nuobu's experience in school created for him chances to reflect and to form fresh understandings on his religion.

When Nuobu went back home, he experienced another change. His personal life experiences enriched his understandings of religion and brought about a new change in his religious identity. The love for his mother and his children were marked as another factor transforming his religiosity. The death of his mother and the birth of his children both influenced Nuobu to reflect upon his religious beliefs. He found religion to be meaningful in transmitting his love to the people he cared about most. Now he takes part in religious practices and hopes that the Buddha exists. He then finally claims that love is the reason that religion sustains him.

Apart from blessing children, some parents expressed a desire to transmit religion because it teaches children some moral codes. Xila, a middle-aged man in Jiuzhaigou, made this claim:

I have stronger religious responsibilities. Now my family often do religious chanting. This makes our children have religious feelings. This is good for the nurturing of a good heart and suppressing qualities like brutality and

maliciousness. This is the best result. So children are influenced [to have moral standards] since they were young. It's good for people having a belief, really.

Xila felt stronger religious responsibilities than before as he thought religious practices are valuable for teaching children moral codes and giving them a good 'heart'. Positive moral qualities of religion were claimed by most of my other Jiuzhaigou respondents as something making religion important to pass on from older generations to younger generations.

Children, for their part, are willing to seek religious help from their parents. Parents were considered by young respondents to be the most reliable people to assist with children's religious needs and requests. The following quotation from Zhuoga, a middle-aged woman in Jiuzhaigou, illustrates this form of religious reliance on parents:

My elder sister was very religious. Every time she felt something wrong with her health, she said to me, 'I'm ill. Medicines don't work. Is there something wrong with our house? Is something in the wrong place?' Then I said 'Don't be mysterious. Take some medicines. You will be fine.' She then replied 'No. There must be something wrong. I have to ask mom to invite someone to look at it.' Every time she ended up asking for [religious] help from mom. Mom is in charge of everyone's religious affairs.

Religious expression of parents' love for their children is not unidirectional. In response, children are also willing to seek for religious assistance from their parents. Zhuoga's sister had got used to the help from her mother and religion. Her mother is the medium connecting her and religion. She did not intend to find monks by herself to resolve her problem. In contrast, she turned to her mother who always plays a professional role in her family's religious affairs. She trusted her mother's knowledge of religion and her capacity to resolve this problem using a religious method. It again shows that older people are always supposed to take the leading role in religious practices.

It is necessary to point out that Zhuoga's sister was like this when she was living with her mother. But after she married, her religious role was transformed. In the following section, the importance of marriage for religious transmission will be explored.

6.4.5 Marriage and religion

As indicated in the previous section, Zhuoga's sister was highly dependent on her mother's religious help before she got married. Her mother conducted religious practices on her behalf. However, marriage changed her attitudes toward religion. After marriage,

she was expected to step forward and fulfil her religious responsibilities to the whole family (although these responsibilities were moderated by the fact that her husband's parents live with them, lessening the pressure on her to undertake all the family's religious practices).

Marriage was considered by respondents as an important turning point at which both young Tibetans, especially women, become closer to religion. In Jiuzhaigou, women are expected to take on household duties, including religious duties. One of the most important parts of 'managing the family' is taking charge of domestic religious affairs. Therefore, parents, especially very religious ones, hope their son can find a wife who can continue their religion.

A young man, Duoqi, told me his mother wanted him to marry a woman who could keep up religious practices at home. He said:

In the past, my mom expressed her wish that my future wife should be able to continue the religious line [of the whole family]. This is important for the long-term prosperity of the whole family.

This implies that parents' first priority is for their son to marry a Tibetan woman who has some religious background. Parents have this gendered expectation that daughters/daughters-in-law should remain guardians of the family's prosperity and religious inheritance. In Dwyer's (2003) research Pakistani Muslim women in Britain were found to be expected to teach their children about Pakistani culture.

Parents show particular preferences regarding the marriage partners of their sons. In terms of daughters, as they are assumed to leave home when they get married, parents do not have specific requirements on religious awareness of their spouses. But how do the sons think about it? I subsequently asked Duoqi for his perspective on the issue:

Ying: Have you personally considered this a criterion of your wife-to-be?

Duoqi: Not really. I mean I hope to find a Tibetan girl. We would have the same religion. It's good for the family. But if I can't find a Tibetan girl, I have no way.

Ying: Then how to keep the religion?

Duoqi: En... My future wife could learn from my mom, or other aunts and elder sisters.

Duoqi did not take the religious transmission from his mother to his wife as seriously as his mother did. He had a comparatively relaxed attitude. Having a Tibetan wife was an ideal result, but he did not only consider Tibetan women. The reason he did not restrict himself to Tibetan women was that it was felt that religious practices could be learnt by a

non-Tibetan wife from other elder women. This implied that Duoji still held the traditional view on the gendered division of labour in which women are supposed to carry on the familial religion. Regardless of whether his wife is Tibetan or not, religious or not, she will be expected to practice his religion and to be able to manage religious affairs. This was evidenced by a few cases in which non-Tibetan wives learned to practice religion after a long-term stay in Jiuzhaigou. A few non-Tibetan and non-Jiuzhaigou wives I met seemed very familiar with how to do religious practices.

From the following account of another middle-aged woman, Gexicuo, the importance of marrying a Tibetan woman was emphasised again.

My children don't know much about religion. They just feel scripture-chanting ceremony is too complicated. It is possible that they won't chant in future if they have no idea of it now. Some older people like my mom said 'Our generation do scripture-chanting ritual. But how about future generations?' If my younger brother marries a Han wife, how can we keep on the scripture-chantings given she is a Han knowing nothing about our religion. ... My father likes to scold us for not obeying the family rules. Once my sister made fun of him saying 'if your son finds you a Han daughter-in-law, I want to see how you would scold her.'

The stories about generational conflicts over religion as in Gexicuo's family are not exceptional. The following section will explore the issue of mutual misunderstandings and understandings between generations in greater depth.

6.4.6 Mutual misunderstandings/understandings and compromise between generations

In the process of religious transmission, there can also be tensions and conflicts. For the young people who have been educated with atheist and rationalist views, religious tensions mostly happen between them and the older generations who have grown up almost exclusively in the local religious environment.

Based on observations and interviews, these conflicts in Jiuzhaigou seemed mostly to be of a relatively small scale nature. For example, parental goodwill expressed through religion was not always accepted or welcomed by young people. In the quotation below Xiuying describes her clashes with her mother-in-law and her interpretation of her mother-in-law's behaviour.

My mother-in-law is a very religious person. Once my child was sick and coughing, she immediately called a monk to do the fortune-telling for my son. And the monk asked us to do a ritual to expel ghosts. To be honest, I don't

believe in this very much. I think this is an irrational part in Bon. I was against this decision and she was very unhappy. I know she believes [in Bon] from her bones... I think this is a consolation for older people, even though it doesn't have much effect.

This description of Xiuying's mother-in-law is also typical of other older people in Jiuzhaigou who have religious belief 'from their bones' and who have internalised religion both in their body and mind (see Section 6.4.1.1). Xiuying, who went to state school, was not as religious as her mother-in-law and doubted the irrational parts of Bon religion. As such, she resisted her mother-in-law's approach to helping her unhealthy child. In the end, however, Xiuying conceded and allowed her to have say in religious affairs about her children, as she realised the significance of religion for the older people.

Similarly, other generational conflicts regarding religion also seemed to be resolved through compromise on the part of younger people, who deferred to older people's strength of feeling. The brother of Laji, a young woman in Jiuzhaigou, had been through a process of transformation from being a religious rebel to a religious adherent. She recounted his transformation as follows:

Religious practices are a bit annoying for my brother, but he doesn't really resist it or get angry. I think deep in his heart, he has already understood the meaning of religion. In the past, he liked to say to parents 'What are you doing all these days? It's a waste of money! Does it really make you healthy or bring you money?' -- things which we [others] never say. ... My brother was a rebel.... After he got married and had a baby, he was different. When he had the first child, he ask mom to chant for him. Now he calls my mom to do something for him every time when he has problems. It means he has understood mom and religion, or he won't ask for consolation [from religion]. People like to find something to rely on when helpless, to find a spiritual pillar. I think all the people I know are like this.

I have never seen conflicts around religion between old and young last a long time. The tensions surrounding religion are resolvable and subject to compromise, with young people's deeper understandings of their parents and their religion. Actually, as shown above, even though young people have critical thinking toward religion, the supernatural side of religion is not considered non-acceptable. Young people's compromises on the one hand show that religion, generally reckoned as a way of maintaining ethnicity and expressing generational love, plays an important part in their lives; on the other hand the negative results are controllable and acceptable. Additionally, filial duties also require young people to respect and please their parents. Young people are supposed to understand and support parents' primary activities in life: religious practices.

6.4.7 New challenges to religious transmission

As discussed previously, intergenerational transmission of religion is maintained in that children immersed in religious environment imitating parents and parents saw the practice of religion as an expression of love for their children. However, at the moment, Jiuzhaigou is facing a challenge of religious transmission as more and more children are sent to study outside since they were very young. This threatens the intergenerational religious transmission by displacing children from local religious place to outside secular place, cutting them off from the religious teaching of parents.

Zewang, a middle-aged man in Jiuzhaigou, talked about perceived differences between contemporary young people and young people during the time of his youth.

Ying: Compared to your youth, what do you think about young people's religiosity today?

Zewang: It is different. Nowadays young people easily feel tired when you ask them to do something [religious]. They just say no. But we were very active in the past. We did what our elders asked us to do.

Ying: So young people are not as religious as before?

Zewang: Yes. They have become the Han. Haha... They don't believe in this [Bon] very much.

Ying: What's the reason?

Zewang: It's mainly because in the past [we] stayed with our parents every day. They asked us to practice religion and said it is good for us. Nowadays children don't have time to learn. They come back to stay for only about ten to twenty days [in each holiday].

The results of this disconnection are conspicuous. Older generations sigh that "children cannot speak Tibetan", and "they barely know Tibetan culture". The following conversation with Gaxi, a young man in Jiuzhaigou demonstrates this perception of the differences of religiosity between teenagers, and those in their twenties, suggesting that the generational difference might be becoming even more pronounced:

Ying: Is there a difference between your religiosity when you were young and the religiosity of young people today?

Gaxi: There definitely is. I even doubt if they still have belief.

Ying: Who are you referring to?

Gaxi: Those teenagers.

Ying: Did you have belief when you were at the same age?

Gaxi: Of course I did. How couldn't I have? At least I know those basic things. I know what I should do. ... When we performed the dragon ritual, women could

not stay under the dragon and touch it. But nowadays children know nothing about these things.

According to Gaxi, who is in his late twenties, young teenagers have little knowledge of religion. He even claimed that young teenagers do not have belief of their religion at all, because they do not even have some very basic religious knowledge. Most of these young teenagers and children are sent to big cities for education from kindergarten or primary school. It is foreseeable that intergenerational transmission of religion will be further affected in the future.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, attention has been placed on relationships between intergenerationality and religion, which has been suggested as an effective approach to understanding religious change and young people's changing religiosities (Hopkins et al., 2011; Vanderbeck, 2007). More specifically, the chapter centred on the younger generation and explored the changing patterns of intergenerational transmission of religion and its impact on them. Among the various official and unofficial religious spaces which have the potential to reshape religiosities of young people (Vincett et al., 2012), school and home spaces were identified as the two most important sites of transformation and were examined in more detail.

I first examined relationships between religion, language and ethnic identity from young people's perspective to gain a better understanding of their changing religiosities. Religion is normally mentioned together with language as an important signifier of Tibetan ethnic identity. Rather than making a clear distinction between religion and culture, the two tend to be bundled together. Religious identity is closely intertwined with ethnic identity.

I then explored the ways in which state schooling, as a significant interruption of intergenerational transmission of religion, recasts young people's religious and ethnic identities. Thanks to the wealth brought by tourism, young people in Jiuzhaigou are given educational opportunities in big Han-populated cities. Young Tibetans' volatile and variable religious identity is challenged by school education which encourages them to critically and rationally consider their religion. In response, their attitude toward religion is neither simply one of rejection nor of acceptance. They adopt a neutral way by treating it as an ethnic cultural norm which is compatible with the state's construction of religion as 'a flavour of ethnic culture'. Facing these challenges, ethnic identity emerges crucially to strengthen religious identity, especially when the state discourse, schooling practices

and Han students come together to raise tensions between Tibetan and Han to reinforce young Tibetans' feeling of difference. I argue that in the Chinese communist and scientific ideological climate, ethnicity becomes an umbrella maintaining their religious identity.

Following the discussion of school as an atheist and multi-ethnic space, I turned to intergenerational transmission of religion at home, a comparatively homogeneous religious and ethnic space. For young college graduates, it is the economic benefits of tourism that attract them back to the place their religion originated, to the traditional environment of religious transmission. They on the one hand encounter conflicts over religious practices with middle-aged and older people who "believe from the bone" and constantly mediate between religion and young people. On the other hand, they gradually take religion more seriously with their changing familial roles. Marriage urges young people, especially women, to take on traditional familial religious duties. Having children further ignites young people's religious awareness and enthusiasm in involving themselves and their children more in religious practices. As their parents did for them, they start to more actively conduct religious practices on behalf of their children. Parental love for their children can change people's attitudes toward religion. Some of my interviewees told me that they had even become religious having been completely atheist once they became parents.

The first concluding point that can be drawn from this chapter is that religious practices and religious belief are not together equally and uniformly transmitted intergenerationally. In the whole process of intergenerational transmission of religion, doing religion has been given much more weight than thinking religion. It is religious practices that are more stressed in the process of learning from imitation and as an expression of parents' love for their children. Moreover, the main conflicts and anxieties concerning religion also mainly lie in the maintenance of religious practices. The result is that when young people's religious belief is challenged and questioned by scientific and rational ideas, they choose to "just practice, don't think too much" (as reported by Duga in Section 6.3.3.2). The second result is that when young people do not have a clear understanding of their religion, ethnic identity emerges as a significant factor maintaining and enhancing their religious identity. This also partly explains why young people treat religion as a cultural tradition, which to them is a legitimate standpoint in the mainstream Chinese context of viewing religion as superstition. This echoes local people's interpretation of Risang Festival (Chapter 5) more as a cultural festival in order to acquire support from Jiuzhaigou Administrative Bureau.

The second conclusion is that intergenerational transmission of religion is a complex and nuanced process rather than the previously assumed unidirectional and linear process (Hopkins et al., 2011; Vanderbeck, 2007). Young people are not passive recipients of religious influence. They have their own reflections and choices. Children can also be the source of a strengthening of parents' religious practices and beliefs (Gallagher, 2007). Furthermore, other intergenerational processes which have been under-examined in traditional intergenerational studies, including grandparents-to-grandchildren, teacher-to-student, and classmates-to-classmates, also play a significant role in reshaping young people's religious understanding in complex ways.

Thirdly, if intergenerational transmission of religion is placed in the long term, as a whole life experience, the means of religious transmission vary in time and space. If in the school stage, young people's religious identity is volatile, subject to change and largely upheld by ethnic identity, in the post-school stage at home, their religious identity becomes more stable and mainly maintained by their internal demand of religion.

The fourth conclusion is that national homogenisation as the main purpose of school education has not been as successful as expected. The "Tibetan vis-à-vis the Han" dichotomy is reinforced. The ethnic difference becomes a factor enhancing young people's religious awareness.

Finally, I conclude that tourism has played an important role in transforming the trajectory and patterns of intergenerational transmission of religion through directly becoming an important element of religious practice and indirectly changing local people's economic status, for example, blessing tourism prosperity through chanting.

In sum, religious practices and religious belief among laypeople in Jiuzhaigou still maintain well to different extents through continual intergenerational transmission, even though rationalist and scientific thinking creates some obstruction in the transmission. However, there are big challenges to keeping the intergenerational religious transmission in Jiuzhaigou. With more and more children removed from home to the outside world at a younger and younger age, the connection between children and home, children and parents might become cut off in a more dramatic and fundamental way. This has posed great worries. In future, the problems of intergenerational transmission of religion might grow bigger.

Chapter 7 Monks and religious identity – seeking authenticity in Bon religion

7.1 Introduction

Research in religious studies has often tended to ignore religious professionals, for whom “religion is not just a label but is the centre of their lives, a major investment and commitment” (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 2014: 63). They are all too easily regarded by social scientists studying religion as taken-for-granted background for understanding laypeople’s religious beliefs and practices. Religious professionals, however, are people with power, authority, expertise, religious knowledge, and a distinct lifestyle. Religious change cannot be fully understood without considering the changes occurring to them. This chapter focuses specifically on how monks have been involved in and affected by processes of religious change, with particular attention to debates that have become prominent at my research site regarding the authenticity of Jiuzhaigou monks’ religious identities. The chapter prefaces its consideration of the lives and experiences of monks with a discussion of what authenticity means to ordinary laypeople in Jiuzhaigou and how it is linked to a sense of ‘pure’ Tibetan-ness, to better understand the identity issues confronting monks in contemporary Jiuzhaigou.

Reflecting on questions of authenticity, Erickson (1995: 140) did not see “the primary question as being whether people are authentic or inauthentic per se, but rather under what conditions or contexts the experience of inauthenticity becomes a problem”. Authenticity is not only of importance for highly individualised and industrialised Europe, but also of relevance for reform-era China in which people have deep concerns over various forms of counterfeits, such as fake merchants, fake money, and fake souvenirs (Notar, 2006). In China, the explosive growth of the market economy and consumerism has encouraged the rise of inauthentic products, people, performances, etc. As for Tibet, there is a need to consider why and how issues around authenticity have become a concern in the contemporary rapidly changing political, economic, social and cultural environment and how authenticity is perceived, reflected and negotiated.

Authenticity is of importance because it reflects societal and cultural transformations (Erickson, 1995). In contemporary Tibet, Bon is facing challenges which have been obviously demonstrated in Jiuzhaigou, a frontier of modernisation in Tibet (see Chapters 5 and 6). In the process of situating themselves in this challenging society, monks have been through rounds of identity negotiation and adaptation. This chapter aims to

examine the issues of 'authenticity' in the context of modern Tibet in China. In other words, this chapter will focus on the identity and the meaning of self for Tibetan Bon monks. As Delyser (1999) argued "Authenticity is not simply a condition inherent in an object, awaiting discovery, but a term that has different meanings in different contexts, in different places, to different people, and even to the same person at different times". What I want to explore is how the meaning of authenticity is constructed and negotiated by monks, as well as by local people in Jiuzhaigou, and how this is more broadly significant for understanding religious and ethnic identity. These are all areas which have been under-researched (Vannini and Williams, 2009).

Tourism greatly improved Tibetans' material life by creating job opportunities and increasing incomes. Tibetan monks who are supposed to stay in their monastery have had their whole life changed because of tourism. Monks in Zharu Monastery have in many ways left their sacred sphere; they have become involved in the tourism business, selling souvenirs, renting Tibetan costumes, taking photographs for tourists and running hotels; taking up secular identities as fathers, husbands, sons and business men. These new patterns of life have provoked criticism from some quarters -- for example, from some fellow monks -- but have elicited understanding from others such as family members. Thus it is worth exploring how this special religious group adapted themselves and their lives to the development of tourism. However, few studies focus on tourism impacts on destination and its people's religion (Mustafa, 2014), and fewer give real attention in these circumstances to religious professionals' lives in non-western contexts.

The chapter proceeds as follows. Section 7.2 will provide a broader discussion of the imaginative geographies of authenticity and religion among both laypeople and monks. Section 7.3 will explore the meanings of tourism and religion to Jiuzhaigou monks. In doing so, a picture of how the livelihoods of monks are changing will be presented. Section 7.4 will examine people's understandings of authenticity and the ways in which monks negotiate their identities. The articulation of authenticity in monks' identities in the local context of Jiuzhaigou exemplifies a wider discourse of "inauthentic self, authentic other", a concept which provides one of the major themes of this chapter.

7.2 Imagined geographies of authenticity: inauthentic self, authentic other

When I was undertaking my fieldwork in Jiuzhaigou, I was struck by how the people I spoke to during my fieldwork in Jiuzhaigou tended to think that religion was authentic in other parts of Tibet but not in their own place. In this section, I will discuss and reflect on this perception entertained by so many Jiuzhaigou people.

In Jiuzhaigou, when I asked local people to talk about what religion meant to them, they often gave me answers similar to this one, supplied by Zewang, a middle-aged man in Jiuzhaigou:

If you want to know about Bon, you should go to TAR [Tibet Autonomous Region] or Aba County. Religion and belief in these places is still pure and authentic. Places like these can let you truly know about the history of Bon, about how it originated and developed. Our places are impure now, almost hanified. You have a look; our children cannot even speak Tibetan anymore. Do not even mention the [importance of] religion or belief [among children].

In their answers to me, it became clear that Jiuzhaigou people generally thought I could not come to know Bon well from my experiences in Jiuzhaigou alone. In their mind, their own place is not a proper place to know Bon, because it is hanified and not pure anymore. Hanification is a term widely used by people I talked to in Jiuzhaigou and Anbei, and has also been widely identified as a prominent process underway among ethnic minorities in other parts of China, such as the Miao in Guizhou (Oakes, 1998), the Naxi in Yunan (Su and Teo, 2009), the Uighur in Xinjiang (Bovingdon, 2004) and the Yao in South China (Alberts, 2006). From the point of view of people in Jiuzhaigou, modernisation associated with hanification is a key reason why their place is becoming less authentic and less 'pure'. Here, being 'pure' is considered a quality of authenticity. This is similar to Paine's (2000: 82-86) research in which 'pure' was used to represent the authenticity of aboriginality and was equated with 'simple'. In China this quality of 'pure' is usually associated with simplicity, remoteness, backwardness, primitiveness, etc., which characterise Han people's general perception of ethnic minorities in China (Gladney, 1994, see also chapter 3). This echoes Paine's (2000: 84) claim that aboriginality is "an act of distancing" through which the aboriginal was constructed as a spatial and temporal stereotypic other. Through this 'pure' logic the minorities are differentiated from the sophisticated, civilised and advanced Han.

Tibet has always been constructed as ethnically 'pure', religiously sacred and materially insufficient in the mainstream discourse in China (see Chapter 3). This image somehow coincides with Tibet's image in westerners' eyes (Hilton, 1960; Lopez, 1999) as well as in the mind of Tibetans themselves (the Dalai Lama, 1995), even though this western romanticised view has been also criticised for its Orientalism and its colonialist and imperialist aspersions (Lopez, 1999; Dreyfus, 2005).

Power is exerted through the imaginative geographies over the imagined 'other'. As discussed in chapter 2, this set of discourses and state development projects on ethnic minorities is a kind of internal Orientalism for maintaining the state's purpose of

achieving a homogenised nation. Under this influence, many minorities – but not all – feel the need to develop and become ‘civilised’, a perception enhanced by state education (see Chapter 6). In the case of Tibetans, the logic of ‘purity’ is also partly accepted and used, especially by students, in differentiating themselves from Han Chinese (Bass, 2008; Zhu, 2007). That is to say, Tibetans are not simply passively distinguished by the dominant ideology of Han/minority; they also actively differentiate themselves from the Han based on the same ideology. This further helps to show that the stereotypic understanding of minorities is internalised by the Tibetans and shapes Tibetans’ understanding of self (see Chapter 3), as does the Han/Tibetan dichotomy constantly appearing in locals’ everyday discourses (see also the discussion in Chapters 5 and 6). Moreover, as we can see from the comment quoted above, this same logic of purity was accepted and adopted by Jiuzhaigou people in differentiating themselves not only from Han Chinese but also from other Tibetans. The Jiuzhaigou Tibetans I spoke to considered themselves impure and inauthentic in the cultural sense, in relation to their underdeveloped, remote Tibetan counterparts, because Jiuzhaigou has become developed and hanified. The religiously authentic, pure Tibetan places were considered comparatively backward and undeveloped. A similar logic was also evidenced by Xie (2003: 12) who found that in the tourist brochures in Hainan the poorest and most remote villages were presented as the most ‘authentic’ communities.

TAR and Aba County appeared many times in my conversations with Jiuzhaigou people. Despite the high frequency with which these places were mentioned by local people as widely accepted models of religiously and culturally authentic places, many of my respondents had never been to either, despite the relative proximity of Aba County. They simply imagine that TAR and Aba County are ‘authentic’ based on this logic of purity. These perceptions are no doubt due to TAR’s long importance in the history of Tibetan politics, religion, culture and economy. For many Tibetans, especially those living outside of the TAR, TAR is their religious centre because of its many well-known Bon and Buddhist pilgrimage sites such as monasteries, sacred mountains and lakes. These places have a long history and wide reputation. TAR is the place that everyone “must go to at least once in their life” (Laji, a young woman in Jiuzhaigou) and that “Tibetans most wish to travel to” (Caidan, a middle-aged man in Jiuzhaigou). Making a pilgrimage to TAR is a way of showing Tibetan ethnic identity. Zeduo, a young woman in Jiuzhaigou, told me that, “As a Tibetan, I of course want to go [to TAR]. Once I have time, I will go.” Many other respondents expressed a similar view that going to TAR was connected to their ethnic identity. Jiuzhaigou people’s geographies of authenticity might also be partly attributed to the culturally peripheral position of Jiuzhaigou. As Tenzin (2013) found in Danba County, which is also on the Sino-Tibet border, the Han-influenced ethnicity of

Tibetans there and their Bon religion were also disputed and not acknowledged by neighbouring Tibetans.

As Peterson (Peterson, 2005: 1083) writes, “Issues of authenticity most often come into play when authenticity has been put in doubt” for certain reasons and under certain conditions. For Jiuzhaigou people, hanification and modernisation are the two major causes of what amounts to an identity crisis stemming from their distinction between authentic TAR and inauthentic Jiuzhaigou. Hanification was usually coupled with modernisation for Jiuzhaigou people when they were reflecting to me on their culture and religion. As Su and Teo (2009: 86) suggest, hanification, as a state-driven process, is assisted by Chinese capital and political administration. Under the consistent pressure of enhancing Chinese nationalism (Oakes, 1998), both hanification and modernisation are actually mutually reinforced. Through their study in Lijiang in the north of Yunnan province, Su and Teo (2009: 88) asserted that hanification was further reinforced through tourism in minority areas. This mutual relationship was also sensed by Jiuzhaigou people for whom being modernised means being like the Han mainly in cultural and economic aspects. Hanification in general was thought to be changing Jiuzhaigou people’s economic condition and cultural integrity.

This is echoed in the way that another Jiuzhaigou person perceived ‘purity’. Zeren, a young layman, maintained that Jiuzhaigou culture is not pure, and “the purer places are those that are undeveloped”. He explained this view by stating that “Because it is undeveloped, it is pure. Once a place is developed, it will be destroyed, I believe.” Zeren and Zewang shared similar thoughts that ‘pure’ is associated with ‘undeveloped’. For my other Jiuzhaigou respondents, the criterion of authenticity for Tibetan religion and culture hinges on the state of development. Undeveloped places are those that have not been through modernisation and hanification, which encourages cultural and economic homogeneity. For them, development sabotages their cultural particularity and integrity. Therefore, as an economically better-off and culturally hanified place, Jiuzhaigou was considered inauthentic in terms of the Bon religion and Tibetan culture.

Hereby now, we have got a rough map of religious authenticity in the minds of Jiuzhaigou people. This map categorises places with a scarcity of material goods and with little Han influence as religiously authentic, while places with an abundance of material goods and with strong Han influence as religiously inauthentic. Jiuzhaigou people’s geographies of authenticity reflect the fact that religious centre is still located in inner Tibet, to which eastern Tibet is still peripheral. The central-peripheral juxtaposition is also positively connected to the extent of Han influence.

According to Derek Gregory (1997: 271), “Imaginative geographies describe not only representations of other places -- peoples, landscapes and cultures -- but also the ways in which these representations project the desires, fantasies and preconceptions of their authors and the grids of power between them and their subjects”. Authenticity has become something in Jiuzhaigou that shows the uncertainties and struggles about identity and culture in contemporary modernising Tibet. Two levels of imaginative geographies of authenticity have been found forming Jiuzhaigou people’s understanding of self and other. The first is at the inter-ethnic group level; Tibetans are ‘pure’, simple, backward, undeveloped and uncivilised compared to the sophisticated, advanced, developed and civilised Han. The second is at the intra-ethnic group level, Tibetans in undeveloped, remote places are ‘pure’ and authentic compared to Tibetans in developed and hanified Jiuzhaigou. The intra-group level is influenced by the inter-group level. That is to say, Jiuzhaigou Tibetans’ perceptions of other Tibetans is influenced and heavily shaped by the civilisation discourse of China and the broader majority/minority ideology. It seems both levels have a similar logic. However it is exerted differently with different meanings and power relations. At the inter-ethnic group level, the ‘pure’ logic functions in justifying a series of civilisation and development projects in the ethnic minority areas and further differentiates the Tibetans from the Han. The boundaries between self and the imagined other are set by the Chinese state. At the intra-ethnic group level, the ‘pure’ logic shows the strength of the sense of Tibetan identity. The boundary between self and the imagined other is set by Tibetans themselves to stress their ethnic difference from the Han. These intra-group imaginative geographies of authenticity are actually a reaction to and the result of the inter-group imaginative geographies of authenticity.

Chapters 5 and 6 have discussed the ways in which Jiuzhaigou laypeople’s religiosity, ethnic identity, religious practice and language change with hanification and modernisation. The preceding section looked at the sense of authenticity among lay people in Jiuzhaigou. In the following sections, we will focus on monks’ understanding of religion and their identity.

7.3 “Tourism provides my physical food; religion gives me spiritual food”

Chapter 5 provided a picture of the ways in which Zharu Monastery and the monks were involved in local religious life and tourism. In this section, I further explore the lives of Jiuzhaigou monks and the ways in which they are intertwined with tourism and religion. Specifically, this section will explore monks’ involvement in and feelings about tourism and will construct a picture of monks facing an identity crisis, which I will discuss in the

remaining parts of the chapter. Firstly, the difficulties involved in continuing the monastic life and monasticism in Jiuzhaigou will be discussed in Section 7.3.1; Section 7.3.2 will discuss monks' involvement in tourism; following that, Section 7.3.3 will examine monks' familial roles; finally, an assessment of the importance of tourism for Jiuzhaigou monks will be provided in Section 7.3.4.

The views of Agu Caidan, a young monk in Zharu Monastery, on tourism and religion offers a clear introduction to what tourism and religion mean to many of the monks I spoke to:

Ying: Which one is more important for you, religion or tourism?

Agu Caidan: Both of them are very important.

Ying: What do religion and tourism respectively mean for you?

Agu Caidan: Tourism provides me with my physical food; religion gives me spiritual food. Without tourism, I cannot live. And of course I cannot live without religion.

While not all the other monks in Jiuzhaigou whom I interviewed spoke so unequivocally, these words from Agu Caidan capture what it seems to me that most Jiuzhaigou monks think about tourism and religion. For them, both tourism and religion are as important as food. Tourism is a crucial mean of making a living; religion is the source of spiritual satisfaction. Tourism and religion are intimately interwoven within the lives of Jiuzhaigou monks.

7.3.1 Difficulties of monasticism in Jiuzhaigou

In order to better understand the sense that Jiuzhaigou monks have as to what is authentic, this section will briefly discuss the current situation of Zharu Monastery and its struggle to maintain its membership.

As discussed in chapter 3, the monastery was once the supreme spiritual 'holy land' in Tibet. Being a part of it made people spiritually and materially superior to their lay counterparts (Goldstein, 2010). Becoming a monk was a good thing both for the monk and his family in Tibetan society. It offered the monk a worry-free future. He was free of intensive labour and worries about subsistence. For the parents, it brought religious merit and a way of showing love to their children. Because of these factors, mass monasticism has existed in Tibet for several hundred years. In 1951 about 10% to 15% of the population were monks (Goldstein, 2010: 3). It was normally the parents who decided a child's future as a monk. The following comments were made by Caidan, a middle-aged

layman in Jiuzhaigou (not to be confused with the monk Agu Caidan quoted above), illustrate the biggest motivation for going into the monastic life:

We should realise that it was a parents' dream [that their child should become a monk]. [Monasteries] provided children with a good environment for study. [Monks] were knowledgeable people. The old generation told us that if you study hard, then you don't need to do physical work and you can be a monk. Being a monk actually equals being a government official now. You [as a monk] just sit in other people's house and eat delicious food. There are even people specially coming to [your house] to invite you [to chant sutras].

At present, Tibetans at school are much more likely to study to become government officials than they are to become monks. This shift not only shows the declining importance of monasticism, but also represents the rising influence of the state in Tibet.

Candidates to become a monk normally come from within the parish. The monastery and its parish have reciprocal relationships. The monastery is responsible for various religious services and spiritual needs for the surrounding villages. The parish provides novices and donations for the monastery. Any layman in this area who wants to become a monk must enter his local monastery. Zharu Monastery is a local monastery of this kind.

Zharu Monastery is gradually losing its appeal to local Tibetans (see Chapter 5). Only about 10% of the monks were aged under 30 in 2012. Fewer and fewer young people have chosen to take up a monastic life during the past several decades. From my interviews and discussions with local people, it became clear that parents prefer to send their children for education at school rather than at the monastery because they think finishing university can give children "a good future", whereas the monastery cannot guarantee "a good future" any more. Here, "a good future" refers to "getting a good job and earning an easy living", in the words of Zerenzhu, middle-aged layman. On the one hand, as religion has been differentiated from the political and social spheres, the monastery no longer enjoys the highest prestige in Tibetan society, and has lost its exclusive position as the only way of getting educated and being superior to others; on the other hand, tourism has become an easy way of earning a good living with little effort. Most university and college undergraduates in Jiuzhaigou came back home selling souvenirs, running family inns, photographing for tourists or joining the JAB. As a result, going into the monastery has become a last resort for parents and young people.

Nearly all the current newly recruited young monks in Zharu monastery are from areas outside of Jiuzhaigou where there are far fewer working opportunities than in Jiuzhaigou. They attended normal schools before coming to the monastery. The monastery was their

choice of last resort simply because, the words of Agu Zhaxi, a young monk in Zharu monastery, they “don’t like maths... [Maths] is very hard”; or, according to Agu Cairang, a young monk in Zharu monastery, they “don’t have good results in exams” and they “can’t catch up with others”. Muslim mosques in China also face the same challenge in enrolling students as Tibetan monasteries do. In 1980s in Northwest China, learning the Koran and becoming an ahong³⁰ guaranteed high social status and a decent income. Nowadays, however, many manla³¹ leave the mosque and move into the secular life to achieve their ultimate purpose, to have a good life materially and spiritually (Hong, 2013: 168). Wang and Yang (2011) also found that Muslim manla left mosques because of financial problems. However, by transforming the aim from creating ahong to transmitting basic Islamic culture and practices, religious education is still vibrant in many Muslim communities. In Yunnan, Tai people are also inclined to let their children study longer in public schools other than monasteries (Hansen, 1999).

By providing other life choices, tourism has greatly increased difficulties in recruiting new monks in Jiuzhaigou. For people in other Tibetan areas, being a monk might still be a comparatively good choice. For Jiuzhaigou people, however, tourism provides them with far more choices; and in any case all of the Jiuzhaigou monks are more or less involved in tourism at the moment. The following three sections will explain the ways in which Jiuzhaigou monks interact with tourism.

7.3.2 Being a monk and working in tourism

Monks in Jiuzhaigou are operating hostels, running souvenir shops, guarding tourist sites, photographing for tourists and working in the tourism bureau. Although they are monks, they are neither living in the monastery nor regularly conducting religious practices.

As described in Sections 3.4.3 and 5.2.5, monks in Jiuzhaigou were barely providing religious services for local people. They only attended three routine religious events organised by Zharu Monastery every year. These events are Mazhi Festival in June, Niangmei Dejing Ceremony in the first month of the lunar year and Guduo Ceremony also in the first month of the lunar year. The three festivals account for 16 days in total. These are the biggest public religious events in which all monks are supposed to gather in Zharu Monastery chanting scriptures and conducting rituals together. As a matter of

³⁰ Ahong (imam in Islam), refers to the clergy in Muslim mosques who teach the Koran and serve in Muslim religious practices.

³¹ Manla are students who are studying in the mosque to becoming ahong in the future.

fact, monks were free to be excused from attending these ceremonies. I asked the reason why they participate in these events rather than just quitting everything. Agu Duoji, a middle-aged monk in Zharu Monastery, replied as follows:

I'm still a monk in Zharu Monastery. I go to Zharu Monastery merely out of a sense of responsibility and obligation. These [three annual religious] events have to be participated in. [But] Attending them is enough.

Clearly, monks regard attendance at these three ceremonies as their only obligation as a monk in Zharu Monastery -- an occasional duty to fulfil. During the rest of the time, they take the sort of tourism-related jobs mentioned above. It is worth noting that going to the monastery to attend these three festivals would not affect their daily business a great deal as these events are in the off-season, a time during which, in the words of Agu Wuden, a middle-aged monk in Zharu Monastery, "there are no tourists, so it's okay to stay in the monastery.... Normally we just eat and drink at home".

The monks' infrequent participation in religious practices has made them rusty in conducting religious practices, and, as Agu Luorang, a middle-aged monk in Zharu Monastery, states, they no longer feel they enjoy them:

I haven't worn a monk's robes for a long time.... The robe is very long, and inconvenient. Sitting still for a whole day is unendurable [when doing religious practices]... It is rather difficult to get used to the chanting again.

Similar feelings were also mentioned by other monk respondents in Jiuzhaigou. However, Agu Jiacao in Gami monastery told me that, "Taking off my robes is like wearing no clothes at all". These two distinct attitudes to robes reflect how far Jiuzhaigou monks have moved from religious life.

The direct result of the infrequent religious participation by local monks is a large number of monks from outside the area coming to Jiuzhaigou. Given that Jiuzhaigou monks are engaging in the tourism business every day, local laypeople turn to Gami Monastery as well as other nearby monasteries in Songpan and Jiuzhaigou inviting their monks over. They know, in the words of Qudeng, a middle-aged man in Jiuzhaigou, that, "Monks here don't have time to chant for you. They are busy with doing [tourism] business and earning money." If people need religious services, they will directly contact outside monks without even bothering to ask local monks.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, monks from outside areas have been attracted to Jiuzhaigou and have become the main force in satisfying locals' religious needs. They are attracted here firstly because they are paid more in Jiuzhaigou than in their hometowns. In

Jiuzhaigou, monks are normally paid about 100 CNY per day. In comparison, the daily salary for a monk in Anbei Village is about 60 CNY. Secondly, transportation which was the main obstacle for communication is becoming more and more convenient. On the one hand, all Jiuzhaigou families have their own cars which allow them to pick up the monks; on the other hand there are many kinds of public transportation available now. It only costs about 10-20 CNY between Jiuzhaigou and Gami Monastery. Each family has the telephone numbers of several monks. In particular, older people normally establish a long-term relationship with at least one monk from an outside monastery as they have far more demand for religious services than younger people. This enables these families to have stable and regular religious practices without having to worry about obtaining the services of local monks.

With a large number of monks coming to Jiuzhaigou, the standing of local monks in the community is directly threatened by being exposed to comparisons with outside monks. Agu Caidan, the young monk from Zharu Monastery quoted earlier, recounted to me a conversation he had with Agu Dongzhu, a senior Jiuzhaigou monk, about the threats he felt from outside monks:

Although there are many monks who are more knowledgeable [now], but for a small place like Jiuzhaigou, Agu Dongzhu was once the best [before the advent of tourism]. He said to me once that “a person like me was highly respectable in my time”... [However] since Songpan monks started coming over, there has been more communication [between the two places], and he [Agu Dongzhu] began to feel he was useless.

As a senior monk in Jiuzhaigou, Agu Dongzhu was considered a learned and knowledgeable man capable of chanting many kinds of sutras, even though he learned fewer sutras than monks do today. He enjoyed a high reputation among the locals before tourism began, but he felt he was not good anymore because Songpan monks were better trained. As a result, Agu Caidan told me, Agu Dongzhu decided to start working in tourism himself.

7.3.3 Being a monk and living as a husband/ father/son/brother

Tourism is important for local monks mainly in a material sense. As explained at the start of Section 7.3, Agu Caidan metaphorically regards tourism as physical food. The ‘physical food’ is mainly produced for monks’ families.

Because of the influence of the way that religion and tourism have developed since the Cultural Revolution, Jiuzhaigou monks are not only monks and tourism workers, but also

husbands/fathers/sons/brothers. In Jiuzhaigou, all monks have close connections with their family. They live at home with their wife, children, parents and siblings. They shoulder responsibility as a family member, a responsibility which they feel tourism best helps them fulfil.

When I asked monks what tourism meant for them, they often stressed a good quality of life. Agu Gongbo, a young monk in Zharu Monastery, answered with these words:

I need to feed my wife and children. Is chanting enough [to feed my wife and children]? I must do business. I must think about this [family].

Feeding his family is Agu Gongbo's main motivation for working in the tourism business, as he clearly thinks income from chanting sutras is not enough. This reluctance to perform sutra-chanting is not accepted among many monks from outside who criticise these split identities.

A few monks from outside Jiuzhaigou, however, do express their understanding for the situation in which the monks of Zharu Monastery find themselves. When we were talking about the involvement of Jiuzhaigou monks in the tourism business, an 'outside monk', Agu Quden, expressed his understanding, saying that, "It is not easy for monks here. There is big economic pressure here". Among the many critical voices, Agu Quden expressed his understanding from an economic perspective. As a matter of fact, however, Jiuzhaigou people are economically better off than people in most other Tibetan areas, so "the economic pressure" he refers to is actually in large part caused by mental competition pressure from the surrounding environment and comparisons that Jiuzhaigou people draw.

The economic pressure is not just felt by monks, but also experienced by laypeople as well. According to local people, the economic pressure has become a prominent factor since the introduction of tourism. Before tourism, they had land to farm and stock to feed which enabled them to have a relatively stable and economically equal and sustainable life. Older generation who witnessed the economic and social transformation before and after tourism have the most profound personal experience of the economic pressure. An old woman Quzhen told me that she was under a lot of pressure as a result of severe business competition from her neighbours. She told me of her feelings about the life she led before the advent of tourism and now:

Quzhen: In the past, we didn't have food and clothes. Life was hard. But I didn't feel tired at all. Now I have everything. But I feel tired. Tired in my heart.

Ying: Why do you feel tired in your heart now?

Quzhen: (I) worry about my business every day. The competition is too great now.

This feeling is widely shared by many other older people and some middle-aged people I talked to in Jiuzhaigou. Economic development has not only brought them wealth, but also caused uneasy feelings which have given rise to a sense of nostalgia for the old days. An account from a middle-aged woman, Cuomo, helps to explain Quzhen's feeling. She told me why she left the Mazhi Festival very early to attend to her souvenir stall: "Tourism is different from farming. By doing (tourist) business one day we earn money one day. Without doing [tourism business], we have no income." Tourism for her is not as stable a business as farming. She left the most important religious event in the calendar and rushed back to her stall as she felt the daily stress of earning a living. In the past, she said, she "normally stayed in the monastery until [the ceremony] finished, but now I leave once I get the mazhi³²". Hers is not the only case. I observed many other women leaving the ceremony early to look after their business. This kind of perception of tourism engenders a very competitive and stressful environment.

Monks' familial obligations further increase the pressure on them. Even though the young monks I spoke with did not have clear ideas of what having a family would be like, they still thought, in the words of Agu Zhaxi, a young monk in Zharu Monastery, that they, "Probably could [get married]. The monks here are all married".

In Gami Monastery, monks had different attitudes to families. Having a family is regarded as a burden. The Gami monks like their celibate life because being a monk means being free without concerns about family and money. Agu Qiongji, a young monk in Gami Monastery described the reason why he likes his current life as a monk as follows:

I really like to go and have a look at the outside world. I want to travel to as many places as I can. My current lifestyle [as a monk] gives me perfect convenience [for doing this]. I can do whatever I want to do and go whenever I want with no concerns.

For Agu Qiongji, having a family would prevent him from travelling. Agu Qupei, a young monk in Gami Monastery, also thinks that, "Having a family is a huge burden. You are not free and cannot go anywhere. And you need to look after kids and wife. Being a monk is truly good."

³² A *mazhi* is a barley seed which is blessed and sanctified by lamas and monks.

Apart from these negative attitudes towards a secular life, I also heard many positive aspects about being a monk in Gami Monastery. For Agu Yongzhong, being a monk provided him happiness, comfort and respect.

Ying: Is there anything which makes you proud?

Agu Yongzhong: Not especially. I think I am happy now. If a monk can concentrate on religious practice, he then catches the very meaning of being a monk. Even if he fails to do religious practice, he enjoys the happiness and comfort.

Ying: So you think being a monk is enjoyable?

Agu Yongzhong: Why should it not be enjoyable? You just rest and eat every day [as a monk]. If you are a government official or a successful person, you will be led to sit in the most important spot when you visit a family in a village. If you are a monk and invited to do chanting for a family, you will be served with a woollen carpet as your cushion, various soft drinks and fruits in front of you. Everyone shows a high level of respect for you. When you leave, you get remuneration. They greet you politely saying “How are you, Agu Yongzhong”. If you are a carpenter or a builder, you can expect to haggle even fight over the price. If you are a monk, even though you are young, you will be invited to sit in the place of honour. And you are always the first one to be served food.

From Agu Yongzhong’s understanding, a monk can enjoy happiness and comfort by just resting and eating every day, receiving a high level of respect in Tibetan society. What he depicted is a simple life without pressure and concerns for basic needs. A monk’s social position is as important as that of a government official or a successful person in any other walk of life. Unlike a carpenter or a builder who might need to argue with his employers or his customers, a monk earns money with dignity and high respect. It was indeed this vision of a simple life which Agu Yongzhong described that was being valued and portrayed as authentic by Jiuzhaigou monks (see Section 7.4).

7.3.4 The importance of tourism in the lives of monks in Jiuzhaigou

The identities we claim for ourselves engender certain modes of behaviour. Based on these, loose norms and models are established and further shape “the life plan of those who make these collective identities central to their individual identities” (Appiah, 2011: 159).

In Jiuzhaigou, older and middle-aged monks, for whom tourism has become an essential part of their lives, have become models reshaping the way in which young monks pursue their vision of monkhood. When I asked a young monk, Agu Zhaxi, about his future plans,

he replied as follows: “I don’t know. [A five second pause.] Before too long, [Zharu] monastery should have been rebuilt. I could stay in the monastery guiding the tourists”. Agu Zhaxi’s expectation about his future life is closely connected with tourism. Guiding tourists in the newly rebuilt monastery has become his career expectation. When I asked why he wanted to do this, he explained that, “Agu Wangzha [a senior monk in Zharu Monastery] said that we are going to introduce tourism here when the monastery construction work finishes. They said it’s easy to earn money by doing that.” This comment sheds light on the influence exerted by the older generation of monks, many of whom consider tourism as an easy way to earn money. Agu Zhaxi further reflected that he did not want to continue his religious studies, as “Being a student is hard. It’s hard to learn so many things. I can’t understand them.” For the young monks, one of their reasons for stopping religious study is because of the hardship in learning Bon.

In comparison, many young monks in Gami Monastery put their future expectation in religion, even though they are facing the same hardship in religious study. I talked to two young monks, Agu Jianpa and Agu Wangdui in Gami Monastery about their future plans.

Ying: What’s your biggest dream now?

Agu Jianpa: To be a Gexi³³;

Agu Wangdui: To become a buddha.

Ying: So you want to be a Gexi and you want to become a buddha?

Agu Jianpa: Yes. Becoming a buddha means you could gain a better afterlife. But being a Gexi means that you remain a monk in the afterlife.

Agu Wangdui: If you are a Gexi, you understand the meanings of all the sutras.

These two young monks, although contemporaries of Agu Zhaxi, have completely different plans, clearly wishing to pursue and get achieved in their religious studies. Agu Jianpa’s wish is deeply connected with his understanding of the principle idea of Bon: transmigration. He even wanted to be a monk in the afterlife. Both monks would appear to be undergoing systematic religious training and have a much deeper religious understanding compared to their counterparts in Jiuzhaigou.

Through comparison, we can see that tourism has been critical for and has made a huge impact on young monks in Jiuzhaigou. This contrasts with young monks in Gami Monastery, who seem more dedicated to religious study.

³³ Gexi is the highest level of attainment in Bon and Tibetan Buddhism.

So far in this chapter, we have looked at the interactions between tourism and religion in the lives of monks. The following section will specifically explore how Jiuzhaigou monks approach issues of authenticity.

7.4 Authenticity negotiation: being a Bon monk

This section will pay special attention to the authenticity of monks in Jiuzhaigou, examining what it means to be an authentic monk and how to become one.

“Ethnic identity is the result of a dialectical process involving internal and external opinions and processes, as well as the individual’s self-identification and outsiders’ ethnic designations – that is, what you think is your ethnicity, versus what they think is your ethnicity” (Nagel, 2000: 83). In accord with Nagel’s perception of ethnic identity, the formation of Jiuzhaigou monks’ identity has also been affected by internal and external opinions and processes.

Here, therefore we will examine both the perception of outsiders on what makes for an authentic monk and the self-reflection of monks. More specifically, this section will start with an exploration of other people’s understanding of what it means to be an authentic monk through their questioning of this issue (Section 7.4.1); this will be followed by a discussion of other people’s practical understandings of issues of authenticity (Section 7.4.2). From there we move to a discussion of how Jiuzhaigou monks negotiate their own sense of authenticity (Section 7.4.3).

Tsering Woesser (2013), a well-known Tibetan activist, blogger, poet and essayist in China, published in her blog a speech made by a Tibetan scholar called Byangkar in a conference of Tibetan scholars. The speech was entitled “Reform of the Monastic Management System – Improving the Function of the Monastic Community and Leading Secular Society Toward a Better Road”, and in it Byangkar urged Tibetan monks to rethink their identity and called for reform in the monastery. She placed the reincarnation system at the centre of this urgently needed reform. She argued that:

Nowadays, one hardly finds a reincarnated Lama who does not get involved with worldly desires and attention and some reincarnated lamas and their families are involved with economic exploitation from the monastery and monopolized privileges.

Byangkar did not specifically explain what he meant by worldly desires and attention, but according to the rest of this speech and my understanding, worldly desires refers to desire for money while worldly attention refers to the publicity from medias like blogs and

Weibo. He further blamed the “inappropriate behaviour of the reincarnated Lamas” for leading to deterioration in “the morals of the people in the three provinces of Tibet”. The reasons were not explained in the speech. It might be because the reincarnated Lama should be a spiritual model and because there are not enough religious teachings from learned reincarnated Lama as some reincarnated Lamas are not well educated. Byangkar even pointed out that this inappropriate behaviour is “very harmful both for the reputation of Tibetan society and for Buddhism as a whole”. He argues, therefore, that there is a compelling need to reform the management system of the monastery to regulate monks under rules “based on the Buddhist teachings and the principles of modern democracy”.

This speech also gave a definition of a reincarnated Lama. Reincarnated Lamas should “act according to the regulations of the monastery” and should “bear the qualities of wisdom, discipline and goodness”. Even though the speech is mainly targeted at reincarnated Lamas, other normal monks also have monastic rules to obey. According to Byangkar’s speech, monks should have “renounced the secular world. Therefore, the monastic community is supposed to be very different from our secular society”. “In order for the monastery to function in a proper way, it needs fixed regulations, which is a part of the Vinaya Sutra of the monastery. ... based on the Buddhist teachings and the principles of modern democracy.” The role of monastery regulations is stressed in maintaining the image of monks and should be strictly obeyed. Byangkar argues that there is no doubt that secular desire and attention are contradictory to monks’ life.

Debates about monks’ misbehaving by ignoring monastery rules have not only occurred among Tibetan scholars, but also take place among Jiuzhaigou people. Local people as well as monks have questioned and negotiated the meaning of ‘authentic monkhood’.

7.4.1 Authenticity questioned – the ideal of an authentic monk

“[Authenticity does] not inhere in the object, person or performance said to be authentic. Rather, authenticity is a claim made by or for someone, thing or performance and either accepted or rejected by relevant others” (Peterson, 2005).

With regard to the question “what does it mean to be an authentic monk”, different people in Jiuzhaigou have their own perceptions. Similarly, what it means to be an authentic Jew could be interpreted differently by traditionalist, “feminist, progressive, gay/lesbian, environmentalist, secular and many other kinds of Jews” and non-Jews (Charme, 2000: 133-135).

Generally, the authenticity of Jiuzhaigou monks has been questioned from different perspectives. In this section, I will mainly discuss the external opinions of what it means to be an authentic monk from the views of the families and relatives of monks, from laypeople and from fellow monks.

As mentioned before, Jiuzhaigou monks live at home with their families and occasionally take part in events at the monastery. I talked to the families and relatives of some monks. They clearly feel that their fathers or brothers are different from their vision of an authentic monk. A young man, Renqing, gave me a distinctive view of his father's identity as a monk. When I interviewed him, I expressed my intention to talk to his father because his father is a monk. But he directly refused and said:

There is no need to talk to my Dad. He knows nothing [about religion]. My father is a fake monk. He drinks alcohol and smokes cigarettes. You can see that he stays at home and does not go to monastery.

Renqing mentioned three criteria – proper knowledge of the Bon religion, abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, and residence in a monastery, each of which his father failed to meet – constitute his understanding about what it means to be an authentic monk, even though these criteria might only form part of his vision. Drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes are regarded as worldly things which monks are banned from. Living in a monastery is another standard prerequisite in determining a monk's authenticity. Renqing went on to say, however, that his father being a fake monk is “normal here. My dad is not the only one like that. All monks here are like that.... – getting married, smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol.” Renqing was thus almost absolving his father in his own eyes by maintaining that his father was no different from other Jiuzhaigou monks.

As well as the families and relatives of monks, other laypeople who share the same religious and social space have also questioned the authenticity of Jiuzhaigou monks. A local young man called Gaxi spoke to me of his perception about monks as follows:

Ying: Do you respect them as monks?

Gaxi: We respect them, but don't show special respect to them. Because we are too close. We are their friends, their relatives. And we often hang out and drink alcohol together. So I don't think they are different from us. Sometimes I forget they are monks.

Ying: What do you think about that -- being so similar to you and close to you?

Gaxi: Sometimes I feel it's a little bit strange, because a monk is supposed to keep away from the secular world, staying in the monastery. So sometimes I tease them and ask, 'How can a monk drink alcohol and smoke cigarettes?'

From this conversation, we can see that because some monks are too close to local people and secular life, they become little different to laypeople. This makes them lose respect among laypeople and even being teased for breaking monastic rules such as drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes. The requirements of an authentic monk mentioned by the previous respondent are emphasised here again. The laypeople I spoke to generally had consistent views on what it means to be an authentic monk. The meaning of authenticity for monks is constructed in discrete details, such as no alcohol, no cigarettes, no marriage, living in a monastery. Using these details, the general image of authentic monk is constructed. Another thing that needs to be stressed here is that difference is a key characteristic of authenticity. Being different from laypeople is usually used to define an authentic monk. In our conversation, Gaxi emphasised that monks should be special and be different from laypeople. This difference and specialness make monks authentic and deserving of respect and authority. In other words, the key point differentiating monks from others is their detached lifestyle. However, in Jiuzhaigou, the difference is diminishing.

Monks themselves also agree that being different and detached from laypeople is important in preserving a sense of authenticity. Agu Wuden, the middle-aged monk in Jiuzhaigou whom we met earlier, thought monks should not “mix with others”, as mixing with others would be “a kind of ‘communication’”. Monks will drink alcohol if the others are drinking. Monks will smoke cigarettes if the others are smoking.” From Agu Wuden’s understanding, this ‘communication’ makes monks “no longer special. Then laypeople will think, ‘we are equal, because they do the same thing as we do’.” From Agu Wuden’s point of view, monks should stay away from the lay world in order to avoid being affected in negative ways. They need to keep their specialness through their distance from the lay world. Doing the same thing as laypeople do degrades monks, who should be spiritually superior to laypeople.

Criticisms of Jiuzhaigou monks for their apparent inauthenticity come not only from laypeople but also monks from other places. When I asked his opinion of the way of life of Jiuzhaigou monks, Agu Yongzhong, the middle-aged monk in Gami Monastery who is quoted earlier, was severely critical: “It’s totally contrary to the rules and laws for monks. They should not do these things. If they break the rules and laws, they are not monks anymore.” Agu Yongzhong made it quite clear in conversation with me that it is not acceptable to be like Jiuzhaigou monks. If monks behave like this, he added, they should be expelled from the monastery. In this way, the views of fellow monks differed from those of laypeople, who focused on basic requirements rather than monastic rules and laws.

Professional knowledge is another criterion used to identify the authentic monk. Agu Dunzhu, a middle-aged monk in a monastery outside Jiuzhaigou, told me that, “They [Jiuzhaigou monks] are fake monks. They can’t [read and] chant sutras...They only know a few sutras. And they can’t chant properly.” Being able to read and chant sutras is a yardstick used to evaluate whether one is an authentic monk or not. Jiuzhaigou monks were considered inauthentic based on this criterion. Agu Pengcuo, a middle-aged in Gami Monastery, also criticised Jiuzhaigou monks for their ignorance of Bon.

Ying: I have heard Jiuzhaigou monks say that even though they have to earn money to feed their family now, they plan to go back to live in the monastery when they are old.

Agu Pengcuo: This is only what they say. This proves that their knowledge of [religion] is very shallow.... If [they really] practice Bon, they know life is uncertain. [They should] practice one step more today, and a second tomorrow. They should not consider [earning money] at all. If they do think about this, it demonstrates that [they] know nothing about Bon at all. ... It is just an excuse.

Among Bon monks from areas near to Jiuzhaigou, Jiuzhaigou monks and Zharu Monastery have usually been regarded as a bad example to be looked down upon. Agu Jiacao, a middle-aged monk in Gami Monastery quoted earlier told me that, “We just make jokes when we chat, saying ‘if we don’t administer the monastery properly, we will end up being like Zharu Monastery’”. He explained how this joke came about. He said “monks there do not do a monk’s jobs but get married instead. They break the monks’ laws.” The laws are important because, “Rules and laws are the root of a monastery. If a monastery does not have a strong root and base, it’s meaningless no matter how fine a building is built on this base.”

Speaking of the monks’ role in maintaining a good monastery, Agu Yongzhong was not optimistic. He told me in a regretful tone that:

In future, Buddhism [he said ‘*fojiao*’ in Chinese which means Buddhism, but he was referring to Bon and Buddhism as a whole] would just be an outer covering without inner things. Just making monasteries majestic and magnificent. Monks who are really qualified would be very few, not to mention religious achievers.

Agu Yongzhong was concerned about the absence of qualified monks even in a splendidly built monastery. He told me that the Jiuzhaigou case even made him convinced that, “Some Bon ideas are not compatible with modern society”.

Agu Caidan, a young monk in Zharu Monastery, experienced contempt because of his identity as a Jiuzhaigou monk when he studied Bon in Gami Monastery Songpan. He recounted that:

They [monks in Gami Monastery] look down upon monks from Jiuzhaigou. When I first went to Gami Monastery, they recognized by my accent that I was from Jiuzhaigou. They just despised me. They think Jiuzhaigou monks are not good, getting married, smoking and drinking alcohol and so on. Because of that, I spent a long time trying to learn their accent and study hard.

Agu Caidan told me that he did not complain about the treatment he received because he too did not agree with the behaviour of Jiuzhaigou monks. Thus he studied very hard to not to be looked down upon.

The comments we have heard bear out the thoughts of Vannini and Williams (2009: 3) that, “Authenticity may be seen as some sort of ideal, highly valued and sought by individuals and groups as part of the process of becoming”. So far we have seen how the ideal of an authentic monk is built up by monks’ families and relatives, by laypeople, and by fellow monks in other places: an authentic monk is supposed to be learned, refraining from alcohol and cigarettes, celibate and keeping his distance from the secular world. However, the difficulties in reality make this ideal hard to achieve. This will be discussed in the following section.

7.4.2 Understanding the practical difficulties of being an authentic monk

Constructionists believe that authenticity is shaped by specific social and cultural conditions (Fine, 1996) and goes through compromises and negotiations (Vannini and Williams, 2009: 8). In Jiuzhaigou, even though people have a clear sense of an authentic monk, in reality what it means to be a monk is negotiable and the inauthentic is understandable. In a similar vein, Valentine et al. (2010a) found that abstinence as a traditional Muslim culture is able to be negotiated in contemporary society.

Zewang, a middle-aged lay man from Jiuzhaigou whom I quoted earlier, expressed his understanding of Jiuzhaigou monks as follows:

Zewang: I understand monks getting involved in the tourism business. Because it is their way of earning a living. They learned Tibetan and Bon scripture, but found they are useless and cannot provide them with a stable way of living in today’s society. So I can understand why some monks said they want to go

back to the monastery when they are 60 because they need to earn enough money before 60 for their old age. When they raise enough money, they have no worries when they are old.

Ying: Do you feel disappointed about these changes [in the way monks live]?

Zewang: They have no choice. Anyway, as long as they still attend some religious activities and chanting, it's alright.

Zewang's views differ markedly from those of Agu Pengcuo, who criticised the monks for their ignorance of Bon. Zewang reminded me that parents are not willing to send their children to monastery, because learning Chinese in regular schools provides them with more job opportunities and a more stable life. Most of the young children who are sent to monastery cannot proceed normally in Chinese-language schools for whatever reason. In this sense, modern Chinese-language schools win, and monasteries (traditional Tibetan education) lose. Given these practical reasons, it seems local people's expectations of monks have suddenly been reduced to a basic requirement to attend some religious activities. The ambivalent attitudes of local people and monks to the question of authenticity reflect the confrontation between modern Han education and traditional Tibetan education and the difficulties Tibetan society faces in adapting to modernity.

Paine (2000) thinks that differentiating between 'authentic' and 'counterfeit' is an issue of acceptance of claims of authenticity. Acceptance is an issue of relative power. Those in positions of relative power define authenticity. In Jiuzhaigou, monks as people in high demand are in a position of power, so it is hard for laypeople and monasteries to sustain a strong critique. The 'inauthentic monks' are seldom publicly criticised or punished. According to Agu Jaicuo, the middle-aged monk from Gami Monastery, the practicalities and difficulties in recruiting monks made it hard for monasteries to punish misbehaving monks who were not strictly obeying the rules and laws because otherwise "there will be many fewer monks". Most of the time monasteries just open one eye and close the other, so to speak. On the one hand, monks promote the significance of laws and rules; on the other hand, they acknowledge and understand their own day-by-day difficulties. Even the faithful supporter of monastery rules like Agu Jiacao expressed his understanding in the face of practicalities. In other words, accepting the existence of the less-than-authentic monks is a pragmatic compromise, an accommodation to various changes in society.

Agu Yongzhong from Gami Monastery further explained monks' difficulties in remaining authentic:

Agu Yongzhong: [In] places with better [economic] development, there are no good monks. Just as in Jiuzhaigou, if this place [Anbei Village] could be developed like Jiuzhaigou, monks would go back to the village doing tourism.

Ying: Are you sure?

Agu Yongzhong: [I'm] sure. Why? Because they [Jiuzhaigou monks] have this economy [meaning tourism], plus they don't practice [Bon] well, they see the outside world as very important and religious practice as unimportant. Once they have money, they can eat, drink, and even gamble.... Here [the monastery] is a place without enough food to eat and clothes to get warm. If the monastery could guarantee [monks] a living, giving them enough food to eat and clothes to wear, then everyone would come to the monastery, even if only for food and clothes. So the difference is so big [between the monastery and outside world]. You get only 10 Yuan in a monastery, but you get 100 Yuan outside. They prefer to go to the place with 100 Yuan.

Agu Yongzhong is clearly suggesting that a good monk and a strong economic performance contradict each other. Good economic conditions will affect monks and spoil them by tempting them to leave for the outside world and to give up their religious practice, which stressed a detached life and bodily effort. He further explained the shortage of monks from a pragmatic view. This echoes the previous respondent, Zewang's view of the difficulties faced by Jiuzhaigou monks. However, under the imbalanced power relations between the monks and laypeople and the practical difficulties, these only suggest that Jiuzhaigou monks' behaviour are understood, but are not accepted as authentic.

7.4.3 Monks' self-negotiation

"The contents or meanings underlying a social identity that others attribute to an actor may not be the same as those meanings that the actor attributes to self" (Erickson, 1995: 126). In the previous two sections, I have discussed outsiders' views on the meaning of what it means to be an authentic monk. In this section, I will examine how Jiuzhaigou monks define and compromise their authenticity.

In her conceptualisation of authenticity, Erickson (1995: 131) claimed two important points: "self-values as stable and unchanging standards for self-evaluation, social comparison; and feelings of relative inauthenticity as violations of commitment to the self-values".

In order to understand monks' understanding of authenticity, first of all, I explore monks' self-values, which are established based upon relationships between self and others

(Section 7.4.3.1). Then the focus shifts to their self-reflection on and compromises of authenticity, in other words, the ways in which they actually react to the evaluated (in)authenticity (See Section 7.4.3.2 and 7.4.3.3). Authenticity is contested in many circumstances (Cohen, 1988). As shown for example in research by Olson et al. (2012), young people in Glasgow has been through reconciliation between their understandings of authentic Christianity and external inscriptions of what it means to be Christian. They have little basic knowledge of Christianity such as the sectarian affiliation of their church. They face challenges in individual transcendence from friends, schoolmates, workmates which force them to adapt their ways of embodying Christianity.

7.4.3.1 Authentic other

The 'other' is an important term in this particular language of the self. 'Authentic others' are usually used as examples and references of authenticity. For American Jews the traditional shtetl life in East Europe has been idealised and regarded as a contrast with the American Jews' inauthentic, assimilated, suburban life (Charme, 2000). Authentic other has also constantly appeared in Jiuzhaigou people's discourses on religion (see Section 7.2). In this section, I will focus on the view of monks themselves on an authentic monk based on the relationships between self and other.

Studying hard was generally seen as the basic requirement for an authentic monk. This was stressed to me by all monks. It shows that monks understand their role as Bon scholars first and foremost. They need to dedicate their lives to Bon study. On top of this, living in an austere and simple environment is another important requirement. Agu Sanlang and Agu Luorang, both middle-aged monks in Zharu Monastery, gave clear accounts of their understanding of authentic monkhood through comparisons with laypeople and other monks. This is how Agu Sanlang saw it:

Our society is better than before. [However] we cannot compare with other worldly people, even though religious practitioners are a part of this society. We must study hard and live a simple and austere life. If you can't do this, you will not succeed [in achieving enlightenment].

Agu Sanlang firstly stressed that society is better in a material sense, as Jiuzhaigou people are having an economically better life than before. However, this better society to some extent contradicts the "simple and austere life" monks should be living. For Agu Sanlang, the differences between monks and laypeople were stressed as an important quality of monkhood, and are mainly expressed in scripture study and life style. This difference determines if they could achieve ultimate enlightenment.

Agu Luorang had a similar understanding about what makes for authenticity in monks, but he explained it by comparing himself with other monks. We were talking about a well-known and prestigious Tibetan Buddhist college, Serda Buddhist College.

Agu Luorang: The belief in those places is different. For the monks there, being a monk is just being a monk, living in the monastery. If you truly want to be a monk, you just don't come out with a bowl like we do. Some monks just live in a cave, only hearing the sound of the birds.

Ying: Why should you be like them?

Agu Luorang: Being like them is good; [you can] fully concentrate on scripture study.

Authenticity is “a struggle, a social process” (Bruner, 1994: 408). Even though Agu Luorang had never been to Serda, through words told by others he imagined this place as a sacred place quite different from Jiuzhaigou. For Agu Luorang, Jiuzhaigou monks are not authentic monks. For him, proper monks should live in a monastery, concentrating on scripture study. The example of monks who live in caves was used to further illustrate what the living conditions of a true monk should be. Talking about cave-living in this way is prevalent both among Tibetan laypeople and monks. Even though few people might actually have come across monks living in caves, it is believed to be true and set as an ideal monk's image. This is a further elaboration of the “simple and austere life” mentioned by Agu Luorang. Living in a cave and hearing the sound of birds vividly depicts the ideal living environment for monks, which should be materially simple, detached from the secular world, austere and even crude. It also echoes the previous account from Agu Sanlang, who thought that a “better society” might be an obstacle to being an authentic monk. Being authentic necessitates monks drawing a clear boundary between their simple living space and the materially better society.

From my interviews with monks, two matters always cropped up in discussions about authenticity with monks: concentrating on scripture study and living “a simple life”. This implied that a materially simple life was the most effective way to guarantee for monks concentration on scripture study. Therefore, the wider surroundings have a determining role in influencing a monk's life. In terms of the influence of a “better society”, Agu Yongzhong from Gami Monastery claimed that contemporary society is a source of distractions which have a considerable negative influence on the religious achievement of monks. He told me wistfully that, “In the past there are many big achievers. But nowadays there are only a few.” And he explained that because of the “influence of societal development”, monks do not practice religion as properly as before.

You see, playing on mobile phones is [a demonstration of] lack of resistance to the colourful world. History records how Bon beads and scriptures were used by great monks in the past. But now there are nothing like these. After a few decades, people will talk about the cars and phones which great monks once used.

Yongzhong used the term “a colourful world” to describe his perception of the contemporary society. It is this “colourful world” that was the reason why monks are different from before. For him, playing on a mobile phone and owning a car are negative results of the current colourful world which are irresistible for monks. Bon beads and scriptures represent a plain lifestyle which was once promoted among monks. Bon beads and scripture also imply that monks are Bon scholars, whereas mobile phones and cars which represent a life of extravagance are contradictory to the austere image of an authentic monk. Great monks who have a plain lifestyle and work hard would leave a good name for posterity. At the end of this conversation, Yongzhong claimed that this change is absolutely not good. He said that, “If it continues like this, Bon will become history, gradually become history. Nowadays monks can barely resist temptations.”

Like these three monks, most local Jiuzhaigou monks share the same feelings about the incompatibility between contemporary society and monks’ authenticity.

Authentic others as examples might just be those who one has heard of (such as Serda monks for Agu Luorang, great monks in history for Agu Yongzhong). It could also be familiar monks. In the following quotation, Agu Sangji, a middle-aged monk in Zharu Monastery, describes his teacher, a monk who was an example from whom he learnt much.

I have a teacher who is really a living Buddha. He was teaching me when I was 22 or 23 years old. It is very hard to find a person like him now. At that time, there were about 70 young guys studying together under him. He taught us in the day time. Apart from teaching, he practiced Bon every night from 8 pm to 12 am. He just practiced alone in his room and didn’t have any connections with others during that time. What accompanied him? Just a pot of grass. He didn’t have money, assets and home [family]. He distributed all the donated food he got from laypeople among his students, and didn’t leave any for himself. The only assets he had were scriptures and books which filled his bookcase.

Agu Sangji saw his teacher as “really a living Buddha”, dedicated to Bon study without any earthly desires. Being regarded as a living Buddha is a supreme compliment as this is the ultimate goal of Bonpos and Buddhists. Agu Sangji went on to say that, “Nowadays

monks are different from before.” Like him, other older and middle-aged monks whom I interviewed are nostalgic for the old time, when, so they state, monks had the virtues of studying hard, living simply and enjoying respect. Being affluent and selfish, they told me, is contrary to being an authentic monk, who needs to have the qualities of generosity, wisdom, simplicity and obedience.

Agu Dawa, also a middle-aged monk from Jiuzhaigou, used Songpan monks as examples once again. He emphasised the basic requirement for being an authentic monk, which is chanting scriptures and studying Bon: “Monks in Songpan are different. Monks should only do monks’ job. No matter whether they chant sutras or study Bon, they are doing monks’ job exclusively. But it’s different here.” To explain the difference, he added that, “Like here, monks are supposed to do monks’ job, but we [monks] do not have time. We are busy doing this and that”. I further asked if Agu Dawa thought the ideal way of being a monk was to be like the monks in Songpan. To my surprise, he demurred, and then answered negatively: “Um... It’s also fine to do a little bit of other things. It’s relatively free [to be like this]. Just staying in the monastery every day is not so free.”

This comment suggests that for the reality of his own life, he does not insist on the authenticity he just claimed. He excused himself from conforming to the standard he claimed for an authentic monk and thought that doing a little bit of other things is acceptable. Here, other things refer to secular things which are not relevant to religion. Like Agu Dawa, monks in Jiuzhaigou have got used to their current lifestyle, which contradicts the requirements of an authentic monk in their mind. In psychology, the contradicting beliefs occurring to an individual are called cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962). When facing this dissonance, Jiuzhaigou monks chose to make a compromise. Despite of the ideal authentic image of a monk, in practice monks do not strictly obey this ideal.

The next section will show the specific compromises that monks have made in order to meet the requirements of being an authentic monk.

7.4.3.2 Compromises made on monks’ identity

The maroon robe is the most prominent feature of Tibetan monks. However, Jiuzhaigou monks are not willing to physically show their religious identity. As we mentioned before, Jiuzhaigou monks only occasionally attend religious practices. Agu Duoji, (Zharu monastery middle-aged monk) only wears his monk’s robe during the main public religious ceremonies. He said wearing a robe is “not convenient. I have to do business

every day. It's not possible wearing monk's robe to take photos for tourists. They will not come to me. And I haven't worn it for a long time. I can't get used to it any longer." Wearing a monk's robe gets in the way of carrying out tourism business. Agu Duoji's identity as a monk prevents him from doing business properly. Wearing his robe is not a comfortable experience, and so he chooses to conceal his identity as a monk. Agu Luoyi expressed the same feeling that he does not wear his robe everyday because he cannot get used to it. The robe is inconvenient and long, and makes him "feel a bit embarrassed" when wearing it. In particular, when he goes to the town and to big cities like Chengdu, he feels embarrassed as it makes him think that "I'm different from others". His uncertainties about wearing a monk's robe show that he is not fully confident of being a monk. To the colleagues working with him together, he does not like to expose his identity willingly. As a result, his colleagues were shocked to recognise him among the monks during a religious ceremony in Jiuzhaigou. He claimed to me that, "I have been a monk since childhood. If you ask, I will not deny it." Yet, he chose to strategically hide his identity as being a monk conflicts with his secular life.

In contrast, monks in Gami monastery have completely different views toward wearing robes. Agu Qujian is a young monk whom I interviewed at Gami monastery. He was quick to say that his monk's robe is already a part of him.

Ying: Have you ever taken off your monk's robe and worn other clothes?

Agu Qujian: Certainly not. My monk's robe is already a part of me. I'll feel uncomfortable if I take it off, just as if I lost something. Even my legs would feel colder.

Ying: Do you feel uncomfortable when you wear your monk's robe in Chengdu?

Agu Qujian: No. I didn't take it off even during the crisis in 2008.

Agu Qujian was referring the tense situation that prevailed after the disturbances that occurred in Lhasa in that year. At that time, the political situation was very tense. According to the monks I talked to, all of them agreed that it was a hard time for them as monks. Because of the disturbances, many Han Chinese were hostile towards Tibetans, and Tibetan monks reported that they were not accepted by hotels in Chengdu. Wearing a monk's robe is the easiest way to expose one's identity. In order to avoid inconveniences, a few monks changed to normal clothes at that time. However, Agu Qujian showed his strong identity by insisting on wearing his robe.

Through comparison, it is apparent that Jiuzhaigou monks have a weaker sense of identity as they have compromised their religious visibility for the sake of their businesses. They also made compromises in religious practices because of their familial

responsibilities. As mentioned in Section 7.3.3, monks are under significant economic pressure to feed their families. They take up tourism-related jobs and cut back considerably on their religious practices. The young Zharu monk Agu Caidan ceased his Bon studies in the monastery and started a tourism business in order to earn money for his family. He said “I have no choice.... We need the money.” Agu Caidan undertook familial responsibilities which are not supposed to belong to a monk. Financial pressure forced him to reduce his religious practices. He knows that “it is not good for a monk to do business” and promised to go back to his studies once his family issues had been resolved. However, as far as I know he is still staying at home and working in the tourism business. During a recent conversation I had with him, Agu Caidan said, “I felt the past years are valuable. [I] not only have earned money, but also have made many friends from different places.” When we talked about his return to monastery, he said: “Um... I don’t know. [I] probably cannot go back now. Because my family still needs me. This is the only income for our family now. I have to keep on doing it. Going back has to be considered later. But I insist on attending all religious ceremonies.”

Agu Caidan has gained pleasure and profit from his business, which he told me he enjoyed. Facing the contradictory pull between a monk’s duty and family responsibilities, Agu Caidan postponed his returning plan even though he also stroke a balance by insisting on “attending all religious ceremonies”.

These questions become all the more pertinent when one recalls that there is a lack of home space in Zharu Monastery, and this is given as another reason why monks stay away. The following section will discuss the problems monks have in going back to the monastery.

7.4.3.3 No home in monastery, how can I go back?

Building a house in the monastery’s compound signifies the formal separation of monks from original home and establishment in the monastery. Goldstein (1985: 21) compared a monk to “a single stick of incense standing alone, burning slowly and steadily in a world of chaos and suffering”. This vividly echoes the way monks and laypeople quoted above imagine the solitary and detached life of an authentic monk. An important part of this detachment is that each monk should have his separate house detached from the secular world to retreat to. The “compartmentalized apartment cell” (Goldstein and Tsarong, 1985: 21) in the monastery is the physical assurance of their solitary life. Building a house in the monastery is a tradition and a requirement for a monk in Tibet, as it signifies a monk’s separation from their original home. The following conversation with

a middle-aged monk, Agu Deqin, in Gami Monastery explains the meanings of home for him.

Agu Deqin: If you don't build a house, where can you live? Everyone should have a house. It's a home. What can you do when you are old, if you don't have a house. You just go around on the streets? It's impossible. So when you have a house, you can happily live in it without any concerns.

Ying: So having no house had made you concerned?

Agu Deqin: Yes, certainly. I've left my original home, [so] I needed to build a home of my own. And every monk has their own house in the monastery. So my family helped me build one. Having a house makes me feel at ease. I know I have a place to go finally.

Having a home in the monastery for Agu Deqin means both physically and emotionally having a home. Building a house is one of the most important things for a monk. A house means a shelter to retreat to when he is old. Home in a monastery is an emotional comfort which provides monks a sense of security, ease, and happiness. Building a house of his own signifies his formal separation from the original home. It is generally agreed among scholars that home offers "security, familiarity and nurture" (Tuan, 2004) but also conflict, violence and exclusion (Brickell, 2012; Johnston and Valentine, 1995). Home is also seen in a 'Western' context as being closely connected to sense of self through a process of belonging or alienation (Blunt and Varley, 2004). For monks who are supposed to live in isolation from their original families and the secular world, home must to some extent have different meanings from the conventional ones. However, there is little research conducted on this particular group, on their understandings, use and negotiations of home.

Home is "highly fluid and contested" (Blunt, 2005: 512). For example, Johnston and Valentine (1995) argued that the meaning of home for gay women is contradictory and fluid. Comparing to the parental home, the 'lesbian home' sometimes provides a stronger sense of home. Without a house in a monastery, the word 'home' does not have special meanings for monks. For Agu Caidan, home is fluid, and could even be any place with the person who is closest to him.

Ying: Which place do you think gives you a sense of belonging, your monastery (Zharu Monastery) or your original home?

Agu Caidan: I think I don't have a concept of 'home' in my mind now.

Ying: Why?

Agu Caidan: I don't know. Because I have always drifted.

Ying: Okay. Which place do you have strong attachment to, monastery or your original home?

Agu Caidan: I feel stronger attachment to my master.

Ying: To you master?

Agu Caidan: Yes. Monastery is meaningless to me, because I had just stayed there for a very short time. And I haven't built a house there either.

Ying: How about your original home and your family?

Agu Caidan: Not so strong. Because on the day I became a monk, I decided not to have a close relationship with my original home. A monk doesn't have a family.

Ying: Okay.

Agu Caidan: In the past, my original home was strange for me every time I went back. I felt it was not my house, and not my home.

Ying: Why?

Agu Caidan: Because I have nothing to say to or communicate with my parents, brothers and sisters. I felt they cannot understand me. But my master can. I mostly share my thoughts with my master.

Ying: Why do you feel you have nothing to say to your family?

Agu Caidan: Because I think we are living in different worlds. My living environment is different from theirs.

Ying: Where do you feel most comfortable?

Agu Caidan: Staying with my master.

Agu Caidan has been mentioned several times before in this section for his involvement in the tourism business. He was studying in Gami Monastery, which he regarded as his home as he thought home is where he lived. There had been no specific concept of home formed in his mind, as he had 'drifted' for a long time. Neither his original home nor Zharu Monastery provided a meaning of home for him.

Agu Caidan's life experience might help to give him a stronger feeling of attachment to his master Home for him here is not fixed in a specific time or space, but changeable and entails alteration. As for his original home, he insisted that as a monk there should be a distinct line drawn between him and his family. He has lived in a monastery since he was very young and his family has lived in the secular world. The concept of home cannot be sourced neither from his original family nor from his monastery, Zharu Monastery.

In a recent phone interview after my fieldwork in 2012, Agu Caidan said, "Home should be in the monastery, but there is no room for me to build a house in Zharu Monastery. What can I do? I don't know. Whatever will be will be." He believes that his home should be in the monastery. But when he wants to be settled, the current situation of Zharu monastery leaves him no choice. The monastery cannot provide monks land for a house anymore because it is in Jiuzhaigou where there is limited land and strict rules on land use. In order to preserve the environment and natural resources in Jiuzhaigou, all

construction work and land use require strict inspections. Monks are not likely to get permission to build their houses in a monastery. Building a house is not as easy as it is in many other monasteries. Agu Wuden, middle-aged monk in Jiuzhaigou, saw no way he could go back and live in the monastery when I asked if he wanted to go back to Zharu Monastery:

It's not possible. Because, you see, there is no land left for us to build our houses on in the monastery. The new constructions have occupied all the land in the monastery. Besides, the Tourism Administration Bureau has very strict rules on using new land and building new houses. It will not allow us to build a house there.

However, a monastery is not considered a proper monastery without houses and monks. Based on the new construction plan, Zharu Monastery has built a two-storey dormitory for monks. Commenting on this development, Agu Wuden said:

It's impossible for us to move into the dormitory. It is okay for young monks, but it's definitely not fine for middle-aged and older monks. A dormitory is not a house. It is not your house. They can let you go at any time.

The new construction plan of Zharu Monastery also leaves no space for the traditional compartmentalised house. A two-storey dormitory built in Zharu Monastery as a place of residence for the monks is contrary to the traditional idea of a detached house. Monks are expected to live in one building together. This essentially changes their patterns of living which might affect qualities of independence and detachment and sabotage monks' sense of home and security. The dormitory cannot provide Agu Wuden with a sense of belonging. This new plan is likely to further change the religious landscape and reshape monks' relationship with their monastery.

7.5 Conclusion

Concerns about authenticity do not only exist in a Europe where so many people are pursuing individualism, but also happens in reform-era China with "increased commodification, the intensified circulation of unfamiliar people and objects, and the profit" (Notar, 2006: 72). Authenticity became problematic for Jiuzhaigou Tibetans, because they are in the forefront of Han influence and economic modernisation. Their collective pursuit of 'authenticity' in religion on the one hand shows their deep belief in Bon, and on the other hand reflects their difficulties in positioning themselves within current trends.

Generally, Jiuzhaigou people's sense of religious authenticity is geographically imagined and has two levels. At the inter-ethnic group level, Jiuzhaigou people use the logic of purity to differentiate themselves as 'pure', simple, backward, undeveloped and uncivilised from the sophisticated, advanced, developed and civilised Han. At the intra-ethnic groups level, contrary to the conventional understanding that people should be proud of their ethnic culture and religion, Jiuzhaigou people generally think their culture and religion is inauthentic and impure compared to other undeveloped and non-hanified Tibetan places. I argue that the internal-Orientalist logic of 'purity' and development and minority/majority ideology of the Chinese state frame the imaginative geographies of Tibetan laypeople and monks, even though the result is actually that Tibetan identity has been enhanced. The line between the Han and the Tibetans demarcated by the state has been further reinforced by Tibetans. What needs to be emphasised is that the issues of authenticity could have arisen simply because of modernisation, with hanification being the vehicle bringing modernisation to Tibet.

In terms of monks' identity in particular, tourism not only directly and greatly changed the hosts' economic, social and cultural lives, but also accelerated an identity crisis felt by monks. Both laypeople and monks have formed the same overall perception of what it means to be an authentic monk. For both these groups, being an authentic monk is an ideal which generally involves a loose ideal image of a monk living a humble and isolated life, with little material wealth, staying away from the secular world (including having a wife and children, communicating with their family, drinking, smoking and entertaining) and focusing on Bon studies and practices. Based on these, Jiuzhaigou monks are generally not considered authentic. Even though the changes in a monk's identity were perceived in some ways to degrade religious tradition because their embodiment of religion is completely different from their imagined view of authenticity, in practice, local people reached a silent agreement to discount their ideal and accept this situation. As I argued in Chapter 2, both the essentialist view of authenticity as not negotiable and achievable (Vannini and Williams, 2009) and the constructionist perspective of authenticity as constantly changing are insufficient conceptual tools to explain some manifestations of authenticity. Based on my research, I argue that authenticity is essentially an ideal which consists of two broad parts: a non-negotiable part and a negotiable part. To be perceived as an authentic monk, the non-negotiable part is adherence to the basic rules and regulations, such as celibacy and abstinence from tobacco and alcohol; the negotiable part is represented by qualities such as generosity and learnedness. Jiuzhaigou monks violate the non-negotiable components of authenticity. Thus even though they are still thought as monks, but are not considered authentic.

Nowadays being an authentic monk becomes an unachievable ideal. This reflects the inevitable conflicts and gaps between the modern and the 'traditional'. From the case of Jiuzhaigou monks, we can see that the traditional has in some way to accommodate the modern. This results in the monks' departure from the monastery, which accelerates the deinstitutionalisation of religion (see Chapter 5). An important issue with which I wish to conclude this chapter is the controversy and the compatibility between Bon tradition and modern society. Habermas (2008) declared that we had entered a "post-secular age" in which as Gorski and Altinordu (2008: 56) argue that the religious and secular world views are coexisting and communicating with each other. Is this really the case? This could only be assured partially. The identity crisis of monks reflects the incompatibilities between religious traditions and the modern society. Traditionally, a Buddhist or Bon monk does not join the secular world. The entire notion of the Buddhist/ Bon monk is leaving behind all worldly possessions to undertake a life of spiritual purity. The idea of authentic monks is a historical, social and religious construction which needs to be re-examined in the modern context. The requirements for being an authentic monk have given rise to many contradictions with modern society. This makes us think about the need for reform of the monastic system. Suggestions have been proposed to solve the 'inappropriate' behavior of monks. Woesser (2013) has argued that "It is crucial to design regulations which are not influenced by negative traditional ideas and do not contradict the fundamental principles of Buddhism... With this effort, the learned monks can finally restore the good moral image of the Tibetan people". However, there is perhaps no need for monastic reformation. Speaking back to the intergenerational change discussed in Chapter 6, there might be another possibility that with the passage of time younger generations will not have the same distinction between authentic/inauthentic monks, and may come to see the 'inauthentic' monks as simply normal.

As to the extent to which it is possible to generalise from my case study, I would say that in one sense Jiuzhaigou is a unique case, but in another, it captures a wider picture of Tibet's confrontation with modernity and Han-Chinese style. I acknowledge that in some other Tibetan areas, monks are also involved in different kinds of business apart from their religious duties. They are facing the challenges to their traditional perceptions of religion as a result of political and economic changes to society. What is happening in Jiuzhaigou is a crystallized reflection of this phenomenon. What Jiuzhaigou monks have been through is an example of what many other Tibetan monks have experienced as a result of their confrontation with a modernised Hanified world. Meanwhile, because of its uniqueness, Jiuzhaigou might represent a new frontier of religious change and hence is different from many other places, and could represent new forms of religious division. In this small place, tourism has accelerated the change in traditional Tibetan society and completely altered local people's (monks and laypeople) lives. By examining Jiuzhaigou

as a case study area, I hope to have revealed some ways which Tibetans negotiate the difficulties and contradictions they have faced, and to present the new trends of religious change in contemporary Tibet.

Chapter 8 Conclusions

This thesis has investigated processes of religious change in a Tibetan region of China that has experienced relative economic prosperity stemming from a government-led tourism initiative. The research has used a case study approach, focusing on Jiuzhaigou with some contextual comparisons being provided by additional empirical research in nearby Anbei. I have used a spatially-sensitive qualitative approach to researching religious change, focusing on both micro- and meso-scales, as well as both institutional and non-institutional forms of religious practice. In this concluding chapter, I seek to review the main findings of the thesis, stress the original empirical and theoretical contributions of the research, and suggest directions for further research.

8.1 Tourism and changing religious spaces

In Chapter 5, I explored the forces driving changes in the religious landscape of Jiuzhaigou, with a particular focus on the dynamics of institutional and non-institutional religious change in Jiuzhaigou. Specifically, I discussed the contested nature and role of monastery as the main religious institution and a public religious space and the changing expression of domestic religion as the main non-institutional religious force. Tourism, as a vehicle of modernisation in Tibet plays a fundamental role in reshaping the institutional and non-institutional religious landscape of Jiuzhaigou. Local government, laypeople, and monks have jointly involved in this process of religious transformation.

The qualities, meanings and functions of Zharu Monastery and monasticism have been highly contested. This resonates with Davie's (2013) argument (made primarily in relation to western contexts) that in modern societies "institutional religion at least in its traditional forms is in trouble", although in the context of Jiuzhaigou this change is not necessarily being driven by the same forces that contribute to deinstitutionalisation in the west. The traditional quality of a monastery as a sacred, public and male-dominant space, which upholds monastery's authority is being challenged and transformed. In particular, the government treats the monastery as a tourist product which is contrary to local people's perception of monastery as a holy space. Religious commodification generates forms of resistance (some active, some of a more passive variety) and critiques among the local people who generally consider it violating the holy nature of monastery. In terms of its public nature, the position of the monastery has been challenged in three ways: local government and laypeople compete for the ownership of monastery with monk managers; laypeople buy up parts of the stupa, leading to privatisation and fragmentation of religion;

and the monastery is not considered by local people to be fulfilling its public role by providing public services. Moreover, the male dominated monastery is transgressed by female tour guides and laywomen whose bodies are regarded as polluting and having a lower position than men in religious sense. Finally, in confrontation of Han businessmen and tour guides, Tibetanness is emerging and ascribed as a new quality of the monastery for differentiating Tibetans from the Han. All these downgrade Zharu Monastery's reputation, appeal and significance among the laypeople. This in turn drives local people away to other monasteries in Songpan.

In contrast to the monastery which has faced challenges and contestations, domestic religion in Jiuzhaigou has flourished in many respects since the start of tourism. Domestic religious buildings and objects such as stupas, home chanting rooms, shrines, prayer flags have been seen dramatic increase. Meanwhile, the religious chantings and ceremonies have been hugely revitalized and been conducted with very high frequency. This leads to huge competition for the services of monks. Moreover, the Prosperity Sutra and the Risang Festival which were relatively marginal have been revived among the local laypeople. By strategically emphasising the cultural and touristic significance of and downgrading the religious implication of the Risang Festival, laypeople successfully acquired JAB's permission and support. However, the religious practices which require greater bodily efforts such as the circumambulation of the sacred Mount Zhayizhaga have decreased. To save bodily effort, laypeople use new technology reforming their traditional ways of religious practices.

Key theoretical contributions

Based on these findings, some key theoretical contributions can be noted. Firstly, this research tries to speak back to western-dominated theories of secularisation and religious change. As stated in Chapter 2, secularisation theory, despite its limitations, provides some useful tools for understanding how religious change in modernising Tibet is (and is not) occurring. I argued that more attention should be given to changes of non-western religions at meso and micro scales with qualitative methods. By adopting this approach, which stresses micro and meso scales of analysis, a more concrete and nuanced picture of religious change has been presented in three analytical chapters.

Secondly, I have contributed to debates around secularisation theory by arguing that the traditional one-sided explanation of religious change, namely merely considering either the institutional religion (supply side) or non-institutional religion (demand side), mechanically cut off the natural connections between the two and lead to simplified and over-generalised secularisation claim. This cannot reflect the full picture of religious change, because institutional and non-institutional religion are actually mutually

influenced and complexly connected in a very dynamic way. Thus by considering changes of both institutional (monastery and monks) and non-institutional religions (laypeople), this research provides a better understanding of how religious change happens. Overall, in this thesis both institutional and non-institutional religions present complex expressions of change alongside dramatic political, economic, social and cultural changes in contemporary Tibet. A shift toward non-institutional expression of religion can be identified. But this does not mean that institutional religion and non-institutional religion are simply push-and-pull relationships. The whole picture of religious change is complicated with contestations and negotiations among monastery, local laypeople, and government. This perspective is also useful in investigating small-scale religious change and those religions which religious institutions and believers have close relationships.

This research further challenges the previous over-generalised secularisation claim which is simply based on the declining authority (Chaves, 1994), plausibility, and legitimacy (Berger, 1967) of religious institutions. Although arguably Jiuzhaigou has experienced all three of these phenomena to some degree, there has been no straightforward overall secularisation in the sense of a decline in religious identity, belief or practice both among the laypeople and monks (although there have of course been transformations, as I have documented). My findings also have resonances with research on deinstitutionalisation which witnessed the established religion is shrinking while new forms of religiosity are emerging (Luckmann, 1967; Pollack and Pickel, 2007; Roof, 2001). However, the form of deinstitutionalisation in Jiuzhaigou is different from these findings in that Bon adherents neither convert to other sects or cults nor practice religion completely independent of monks and monastery. The maintenance, practice of non-institutional religion still links in important ways to institutional religion, further stressing the theoretical need to consider the dynamic interplay between the two in order to understand the nature of religious change.

Thirdly, in terms of the relationships between religion and economy, I contribute to ongoing discussion regarding the relationship between the 'sacred' and the 'profane' by stressing how these categories are not mutually exclusive from one another. Sometimes the profane is helpful for religion's growth. In the case of Jiuzhaigou, despite the conflicts and critiques it generated, religious commodification is accepted both by the believers and government under certain conditions, rather than absolutely denied. Tourism creates new space both for institutional religion's growth in the sense that it neutralises the sensitivity of its religious nature (by emphasising its 'cultural' aspect) while also leading to financial and policy support from the government and for non-institutional religion's growth as tourism economy provides laypeople financial resources of religious

revitalization. Contrary to Norris and Inglehart's (2004: 25) claim that the rich societies in the world are becoming less religious whereas poor societies are more religious, from the local level, Jiuzhaigou as a rich place in Tibet is experiencing flourishing forms of religious expression. Economic development does not necessarily lead to religious decline. This conclusion also speaks back to the question of the existence of Tibetan religion in China and refutes the general assumption that the story of Tibetan religion in China is only one of repression and decline.

Finally, this research makes a broader contribution to understanding the nature of Chinese modernity. I argue that the internal ambivalence of Chinese modernity actually makes different levels of Chinese governments have ambiguous and ambivalent views toward religious issues in Tibet. On the one hand, they want to promote religious tourism to realise economic development, on the other hand, they do not want to over-publicise religion as it is regarded as a potential threat to integration between ethnic groups. This is related to the particular form of Chinese modernity in ethnic minority areas. Integration and economic development are its two overriding principles. China, as Oakes (1998: 7) suggests, is obsessed with modernity. Chinese modernity in minority areas is imbued with a logic of economic development, minority/majority division and the goal of integration. Chinese modernisation is government oriented and mainly for improving the economic condition of 'backward' Tibet and for civilising 'uncivilised' Tibetans and enhancing integration. Within the tense political atmosphere, Tibetan religion is considered a threat to state security.

8.2 Intergenerational transmission of religion, laypeople

With an understanding of the general religious situation and its relationships with tourism in Jiuzhaigou, the second analytical chapter (Chapter 6) focused on another important aspect of religious change: intergenerational transmission of religion among laypeople. This is particularly relevant for understanding if and how religion is surviving in contemporary Tibet. Strong mechanisms of intergenerational transmission and exchange can reflect religion's vitality. Building on recent work on intergenerational geographies, this thesis demonstrates how the intergenerational transmission of religion is variable in different time and spaces. Focusing on a fixed environment (Hopkins et al., 2011; Min and Kim, 2005; Roest et al., 2010) cannot fully explain the changing process of transmission. Thus, by adopting an approach that is both spatially and temporally sensitive, Chapter 6 has helped trace the dynamic and multi-directional change of intergenerational transmission of religion.

The chapter particularly centred on young people and explores the patterns of intergenerational transmission of religion happens to them along their different spatial and temporal life stages. It particularly looks at spaces of home and school and pre- and post-schooling periods as schooling experience is important in reshaping religious identity. For young Tibetans, home is an ethnically and religiously homogenous environment which fosters their initial perceptions on what it means to be a Tibetan and how to practice and believe in Bon. For them, religion is ascribed with their ethnic identity when they were born in a Tibetan Bon family. Their ethnic affiliation largely determines their religious orientation. Older and middle generations are the major source of initiating and maintaining children's religion. Before going to school, young people primarily learn religion through imitating their parents as well as grandparents, without teaching much on religious ideas. At this stage, both their religious identity and ethnicity are taken for granted and subject to influence.

Education significantly interrupts the intergenerational transmission of religion at home. Young people's religious and ethnic identities are reshaped in public schools which promote atheist, patriotic, national ideologies and permeate stereotypes of minorities. Perhaps paradoxically, young Tibetans' ethnic awareness is enhanced by schools' lack of teaching on Tibetan language, culture and history, and by the Han schoolmates' stereotypical understanding of Tibetans as different, backward, barbaric and uncultivated. In the meantime, young people's religious identity is challenged by the ideas of superstition, science and rationality emphasised in the curriculum of state schools. This leads them to start questioning their religion. However, religious identity is mutually enhanced with ethnic identity. Jiuzhaigou young people rationalise and legitimise their religion by considering it a manifestation of ethnic culture.

Upon leaving school, the economic benefits of tourism attract young people back to home, a comparatively homogeneous religious and ethnic space. They on the one hand, encounter differences about the ways of religious practices with middle and older generations who "believe from the bone", on the other hand, they gradually take religion more seriously with their changing familial roles. Parents describe their love for their children as motivating their efforts to pass on the Bon religion to them. As a result young parents are more motivated to be involved in religious practices themselves. In this stage, the religious identity becomes stable and internalised after reflections and negotiations.

Key theoretical contributions

This research has extended and challenged conventional approaches to understanding intergenerational religious transmission in several ways. Firstly, I argue that religious practices and religious belief are not equally and uniformly transmitted

intergenerationally. In the whole process of intergenerational transmission of religion, for particular religions doing religion sometimes is more important than thinking religion. In this thesis, school education which nurtures scientific and rational ideas further pushes young people to, in the words of one respondent previously quoted, “just practice, don’t think too much”. Furthermore, apart from the transmissions from older generation to younger generation, there are other important transmissions and exchange between grandparents and grandchildren, teacher and student and classmates and classmates.

Secondly, I argue that children are not passively bearing, unconditionally accepting and internalising their parents’ religious influence, but with strong agency of partially accepting, reflecting, doubting, negotiating and self-adjusting older generations’ religious influence. They sometimes even seek to correct their (grand)parents’ religious ideas and practices which they consider as superstitious, irrational and unscientific. They tactically treat religion as important cultural norm to rationalise the superstitious aspects of religion.

Thirdly, I argue that education’s influence on young people’s religiosity has its temporality. In the long run education does not necessarily have lasting effects on young people’s religiosity that the Chinese government desire and that researchers might presume. The previous research has ignored the post-school effects of education. In this case, education interrupts young people’s religiosity by nurturing young people’s rational thinking, scepticism and reflections about religion (McFarland et al., 2011; Schwadel, 2011; Hill, 2011) when they are in school, but when they leave school education these university/college graduates go home, the religious seed planted in their childhood and teenage period is reactivated and grows. Even though they use rational and scientific ideas in thinking through religion, they still consider themselves to believe relatively strongly.

Fourthly, the research speaks directly to debates about the relationships between religious and ethnic identities. I argue that it is actually partly Tibetans’ deliberate action of connecting religious identity to ethnic identity, because ‘ethnic culture’, as a state-recognised category provides them an umbrella under the dominant Chinese communist and scientific ideological climate. This resonates with local people’s tactical promotion of Risang Festival (see Section 8.1). For Tibetans, especially young people, their religious identity is closely connected with and greatly enhanced by their ethnic identity.

Finally, in response to the secularisation theory, this research suggests the need for a temporal and spatial sensitive approach to examine religion’s intergenerational transmission which is significant for religion’s reproduction. In Jiuzhaigou religion is growing through transforming yet persistent intergenerational transmission of religion in which home and ethnic identity play crucial roles.

8.3 Monks and religious authenticity

Chapter 7 provided original insights into the changes in the lives of monks and their ambiguous understanding of religious authenticity which has emerged since the development of the local tourism industry. The chapter prefaced its consideration of the lives and attitudes of monks with a discussion about what authenticity means to ordinary laypeople in Jiuzhaigou and how it is linked to a sense of 'pure' Tibetanness. Contrary to the conventional understanding that people should be proud of their ethnic culture and religion, Jiuzhaigou people generally think their culture and religion are not as 'authentic' and 'pure' as other remote Tibetan places, as their place is exposed more to Han influence and modernisation. Hanified and economically developed Jiuzhaigou is considered inauthentic compared to those remote and undeveloped Tibetan places. This is only one level of Jiuzhaigou people's understanding of self which I termed the intra-ethnic group level. At the inter-ethnic group level, Jiuzhaigou people use the same logic of purity to differentiate themselves as 'pure', simple, backward, undeveloped and uncivilised from the sophisticated, advanced, developed and civilised Han.

I continued the discussion on this understanding of "inauthentic self and authentic other" by focusing on monks who have experienced similar authenticity issues in their understanding of self. The lure of the tourism industry has played a pivotal role in moving monks from the sacred and solitary life to the secular world and accelerating the identity crisis felt by Jiuzhaigou monks. For both laypeople and monks, their understanding of what it means to be a monk has two levels: the ideal and the practical. Being an authentic monk is an ideal that involves living a humble and isolated life, with little material wealth, staying away from the secular world (including having a wife, and children, communicating with their family, drinking, smoking and entertaining, secular entertainment), and focusing on Bon studies and practices. In practice, the changes in a monk's identity were perceived in some ways to degrade religious tradition because their embodiment of religion is completely different from their imagined view of authenticity. Thus, even though local people reached a silent agreement to discount their ideal and accept this situation, Jiuzhaigou monks are still generally not considered authentic.

Key theoretical contributions

Firstly, this study offers an important complement to the existing body of research on the othering of Chinese ethnic minorities as forms of internal colonialism and internal Orientalism (Gladney, 2005; Oakes, 1998; Schein, 1997; Harrell, 1995b) which has given limited attention in geography discipline, and to the 'suppressed' and 'imagined', in this case minorities', especially Tibetans' understanding and reaction to this dominant image

of themselves. I argue that a group could simultaneously be both imaginers and the imagined, both of which constitute their understanding of self. They could be in two simultaneous othering processes, namely an Orientalist process and an internal Orientalist process. In this case, Jiuzhaigou Tibetans are the imagined for the Han and the imaginers of other Tibetans. This double othering processes is deeply influenced by the state minority/majority ideology which is internalised by Tibetans and deeply shapes their understanding of self and other (including non-Tibetan other and Tibetan other). Imaginative geographies of authenticity thus constitute a framework for differentiating themselves from others at two levels. I argued that the result of this double othering processes is contrary to the state's expectation of homogenising ethnic minorities. It actually reinforces Tibetans' difference from the Han and their ethnic identity. Secondly, I argue that even though authenticity is subject to change in different situations, there are essential elements which mark the basic differences between the authentic and the others remaining immutable. If the core elements of authenticity change, authenticity is meaningless (Appiah, 2011). Purely objectivist (Hughes, 1995), constructivist (Cohen, 1988) and existentialist (Belhassen et al., 2008: 671) views cannot reflect both the fluidity and essence of authenticity. Thus I propose that authenticity has two parts: a non-negotiable part and a negotiable part. The non-negotiable part is related to the basic regulations and rules such as celibacy and abstinence from tobacco and alcohol; the negotiable part is represented by qualities such as generosity, learnedness. It is because Jiuzhaigou monks fundamentally transgress the non-negotiable part, that they are considered inauthentic.

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Appendix A: Figuration



Figure 3.2 Nuorilang Waterfall in autumn By Yu Ning, 2008

From: <http://www.jiuzhai.com/language/english/photos.html>



Figure 3.3 Shuzheng Lakes in winter By Yu Ning, 2008

From: <http://www.jiuzhai.com/language/english/photos.html>



Figure 3.4 Tiger Lake in spring By Kieran Fitzgerald, 2008

From: <http://www.jiuzhai.com/language/english/photos.html>



Figure 3.5 Virgin Forests By Simon Perrin, 2008

From: <http://www.jiuzhai.com/language/english/photos.html>

This forest is named so because it has rarely been approached by outside people.



Figure 3.6 Map of Jiuzhaigou National Park (self-annotated)

Base map from: http://www.gogocn.com/article/2005123132618_337.htm

This is a tour map produced by a tourist agency. All tourist spots are labelled on the map.



Figure 3.7 Shuzheng Village in Jiuzhaigou

From: Y. Nan, 2012, Aug. 2009



Figure 3.8 A Tibetan house

From: Y. Nan, Aug. 2009



Figure 3.9 The old temple in Zharu Monastery

From: Y. Nan, 2012



Figure 3.10 The new temple in construction

From: Y. Nan, 2012

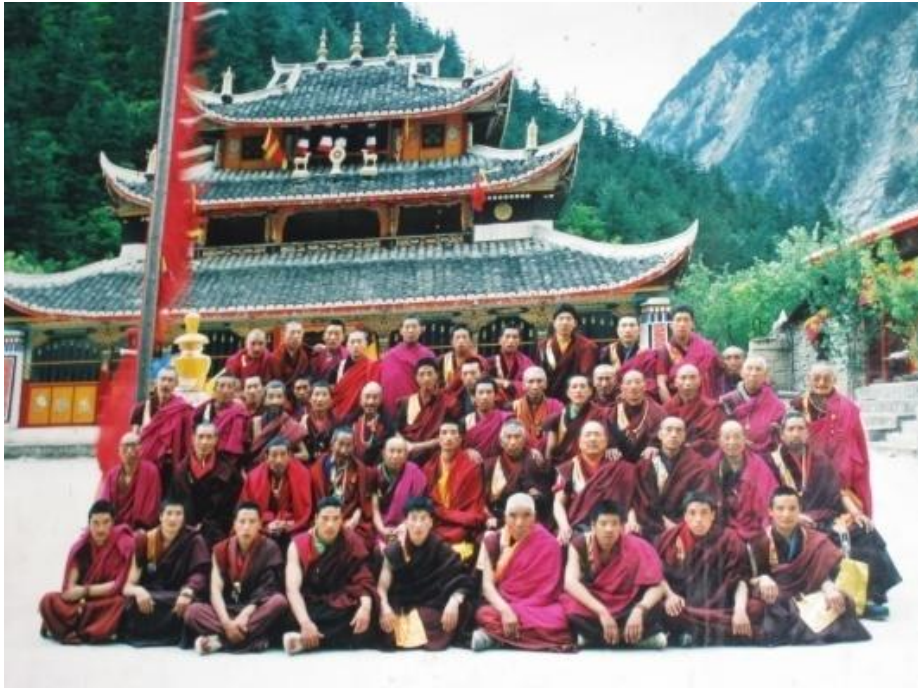


Figure 3.11 Monks of Zharu Monastery

From: the photo collection of Zharu Monastery



Figure 3.12 The Stupa

From: Y. Nan, 2012



Figure 3.13 The construction plan of Zharu Monastery

From: Y. Nan, 2012

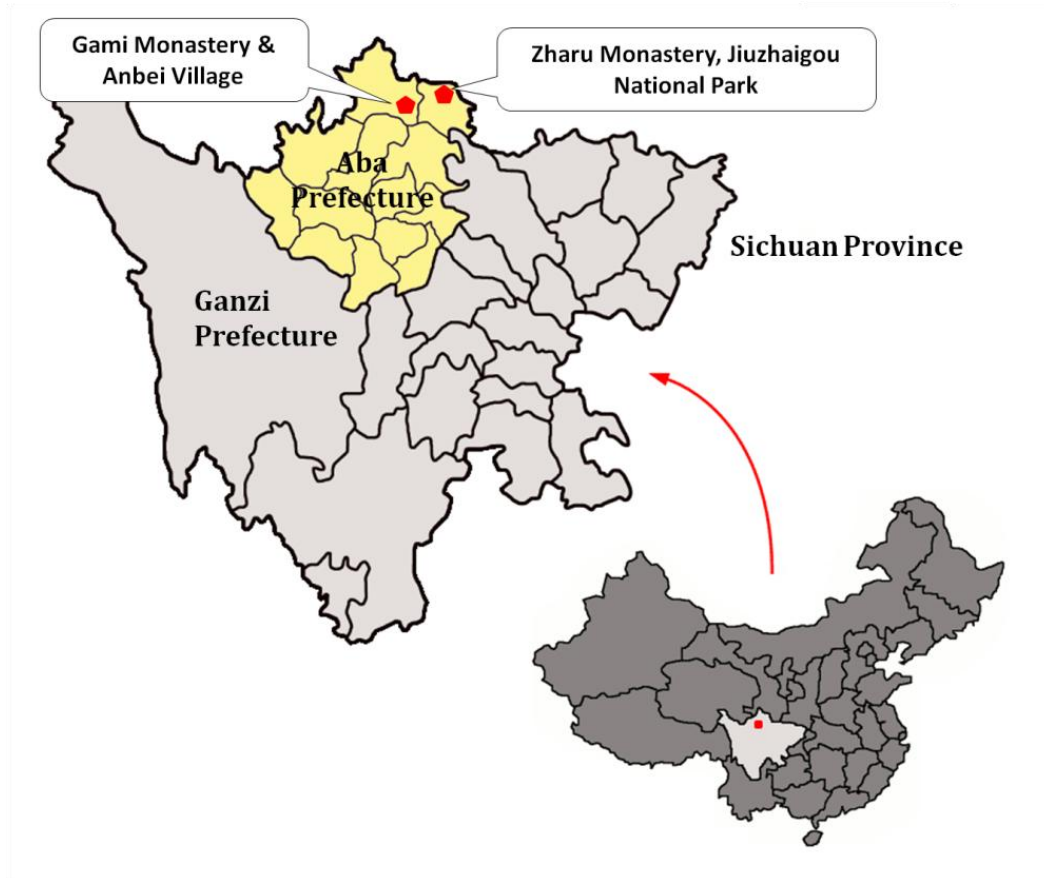


Figure 3.14 Locations of Jiuzhaigou and Anbei

Base map from:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Location_of_Ngawa_Prefecture_within_Sichuan_%28China%29.png (self-annotated)



Figure 3.15 The gate of the Gami Monastery

From: Y. Nan, 2012



Figure 3.16 The main temple of the Gami Monastery

From: Y. Nan, 2012



Figure 5.1 Tourists spinning the prayer wheel in front of a white tower

From: Y. Nan, 2012



Figure 5.2 Tourists praying in front of Jiubaolianhua Stupas

From: Y. Nan, 2012



Figure 6.1 A Tibetan woman praying

From: Y. Nan, 2012

Appendix B: Interview schedule

1) Bon laypeople interview schedule

Introductions and their family constitution

Role of tourism

- How has tourism grown in this area? (for older and middle-aged people)
- What does tourism mean for you? Can you use three words to describe your feelings about tourism? (explain or examples)
- Can you please tell me your experience during the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake? How did you feel about it?
- Where do the tourists like to go and when? What do they normally do?
- Do you have any interactions with tourists? If yes, describe them. How do you think about the tourists?
- Do you mind letting tourists have a look at your chanting room? Why? Do you mind to do religious practices with tourists at present?
- Has tourism changed your life (economic, social and political living conditions)? If yes, describe the changes. What is its impact on religious belief?

Religious practices

- Do you often conduct religious practices? If yes, what kinds of religious practices do you do? Please describe the details. For example when, where, with whom, how and how often do you do these religious practices? If no, why?
- What do these religious practices mean for you? Which aspects do you like and dislike about them?
- What kinds of religious practices do you like or dislike? Do you like to attend public religious practices? Which one is more meaningful for you, public or private religious practice? Please give me an example.
- Is there anything you don't like about doing a prayer? If yes, what are they?
- Can you tell me two most impressed or memorable religious experiences for you?
- Can you please tell me what you know about gendered regulations in your religion? For example, what kinds of religious practices do men do? What kinds of religious practices do women do? Are there any differences between men's and women's religious practices? If yes, please describe. (examples)
- What kind of role does your family play for your belief? For example, does your mother or father mainly organize the religious events and activities? How and why?

- Do your parents have any instructions on your belief? For example, rules of suggestions about how to do or how to think religion.
- How did you start to know about Bon religion? Who has the greatest influence on your belief in and out of family? Why? What did that person teach or tell you?
- Who hold the strongest persistence for Bon belief in your family? Why? Who plays the leading role in religious practices? What does he/she do for religious practices?
- Did you teach your children/grandchildren how to do or think religion? If yes, how and why? (for parents and grandparents)
- Did your parents teach you how to practice or think about religion?
- Compared to the current young people's religious practices, can you please tell me how did you do religion when you were young? What is the difference between the young people in your age and the current youngsters? (middle-aged and old people)
- Can you please tell me your experience and feelings about the Cultural Revolution, especially the religious aspect? Did you practicing religion at that time? How?

Spirituality and religiosity

- What do you know about Bon? Do you know the differences between Bon and Tibetan Buddhism?
- How much do you believe in Bon? Why do you think so? Can you use three words to describe your feelings about your belief?
- Did you involve in the monastery reconstruction during the Cultural Revolution? How and why?
- How much do you know about Reconstruction Plan? How do you feel about the reconstruction plan of the Zharu Monastery? Did (will) you provide some support? Why? (for Jiuzhaigou people)
- What are the differences between monks now and before in your mind? Why do you have this feeling?
- How do you feel monks' involvement in tourism? (for Jiuzhaigou people)
- Can you please describe your attitudes toward monks?
- Do you identify yourself as a Bon believer? Why?
- Where do you feel most sacred in Jiuzhaigou? Why?
- Does the chanting room (and sacred mountain) have any spiritual meanings for you? If yes, what are they?

2) Bon monks interview schedule

Introduction and their brief information, such as their age and role in monastery

Role of tourism

- Can you please tell me how has the Zharu monastery/Gami monastery developed? (for older and middle-aged monks)
- Can you please recall the monastery's involvement in tourism in the past? How has this changed?
- Have/are you involved in tourist business? If yes, please specify how and why. What benefits do you gain? Has it had any negative consequences for you?
- What does tourism mean for you? Can you use three words describing your feelings about tourism?
- Does tourism have any impacts on your personal life, esp. religious life? If yes, describe them.
- What do you think the impact of tourism is in this area? What is its impact on religious belief?
- Do you have any interactions with tourists? If yes, describe them. Negative examples?
- Have you heard about the new Monastery Tourism Development Plan? What do you think about this? Positive/negative? Probing for likely benefits and risks.
- Will you mind that tourists coming to the monastery and viewing you?

Religious practices

- What are your everyday religious practices? Describe the details about with whom, when, where, how and how often are these religious practices conducted. How have they changed with time? How and why?
- What do these religious practices mean for you? Which parts do you like or dislike?
- What kinds of religious practices do you like or dislike? Do you like to attend public religious practices? Which one is more meaningful for you, public or private religious practice?
- When do you do chanting, do you enjoy doing it? Why?
- Can you tell me two most impressed or memorable religious experiences for you? Please specify.
- Can you please tell me what you know about different rules for men & women in your religion? For example, what kinds of religious practices do men do? What kinds of religious practices do women do? Are there any differences between men's and women's religious practices? If yes, please describe.
- What did you learn from older monks? How?
- What do you teach younger monks? How?
- How did you start to develop your belief and do religious practices? Who have the greatest influence on your belief before and now?

- Compared to the current young people's religious practices, can you please tell me how did you do religion when you were young? What is the difference between the young people in your age and the current youngsters? (middle-aged and old people) What stayed the same? Changed?
- How were religious traditions practiced in Cultural Revolution?
- Can you please tell me the new monastery reconstruction plan? How is this plan implemented? (managerial monks)
- How do you feel about the new monastery reconstruction? Likely benefits/impacts?
- How has the Bon religion adjusted to tourism? How have you personally adjusted your religious practices?

Spirituality and religiosity

- What do you know about Bon? Can you tell me the differences between Bon and Tibetan Buddhism?
- How much do you believe in Bon? Why do you think so? Can you use three words to describe your feelings about your belief?
- What are the differences between laypeople now and before in your mind? Why do you think so? How do you think their adherence to Bon?
- Can you please tell me when and why did you become a monk?
- Is there anything you like or don't like about being a monk?
- When and under what circumstances do you feel proud to be a monk?
- Where do you feel most sacred? What do monastery and your home of origin mean for you? Why?
- Where do you feel most comfortable? Why?
- How has tourism affected when/where you feel most sacred?

Non-religious life

- Except the religious related practices, what do you normally do in your spare time? Please describe details.
- Do you still have bonds with your home of origin? What kinds of connections do you have?
- What is your future life plan?

3) Government officials interview schedule

- Introduction and their working experience
- Can you please tell me general social, cultural, economical situations here?

- Are there any religious related rules or acts enacting or have the government contributed to any religious issues? If yes, describe details about them.
- Have you seen or attended religious practices in study area? If yes, describe the details of and feelings about your experiences.
- How do you think about religious change here? Have you found any signs of it? If yes, what are they?
- How has the government (Jiuzhaigou Administrative Bureau) contributed to tourism development? How the local people involved in tourism? (for officials in Jiuzhaigou)
- How do you think about tourism? Have you found any influences on local culture made by tourism, especially on religion? (for officials in Jiuzhaigou)
- Can you please tell me the Reconstruction Plan of Zharu Monastery? (for officials in Jiuzhaigou)
- What is your future tourism plan in terms of Tibetan culture and religion? Explain. (for officials in Jiuzhaigou)

4) Tourists interview schedule (for tourists in Jiuzhaigou)

Introduction and their age and origin

- Have you seen or attended religious practices in study area? If yes, tell me the reasons why you attend these practices and describe the details of and feelings about your experiences.
- What kinds of effects do you think tourism makes on the locals?
- Do you have any interactions with locals? If yes, please specify details and your feelings.

5) Others interview schedule

(Migrating Bon monks³⁴, Workers inside, Han Chinese inside³⁵ and Bon monks and laypersons outside in Jiuzhaigou)

- Introduction and their individual information, such as religious orientation, experience in Jiuzhaigou and work

³⁴ There are some monks who belong to other monasteries migrating to the research area for long-term and short-term stay for conducting rite for local laymen and learning as a visiting scholar.

³⁵ There should be a few Han Chinese living in the study areas. For example, in Jiuzhaigou there are roughly 10-20 Han Chinese who has lived there for years and some of whom changed their nationality into Tibetan on their identity card.

- What are the purposes for your migrating behaviour? Why do you come here? (for migrating Bon monks)
- What are the differences and similarities of religious practices and social, economical and spiritual conditions between the study areas and your home monastery? (for migrating Bon monks)
- Have you adopted Bon as your belief in order to integrate into Tibetan majority society? (for Han Chinese inside)
- Have you seen or attended religious practices in study area? If yes, describe the details of and feelings about your experiences.
- How do you think about religious change here? Have you found any signs of it? If yes, what are they?
- How do you think about monks'/monastery's involvement in tourism?

Appendix C: Information sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research project titled, '**Construction of religious spaces and religious change of Tibetan Bon religion**'. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project about?

This project is a three-year doctoral research project being undertaken by Ying Nan at School of Geography of the University of Leeds. The project aims to understand the dynamics of religious change of Bon religion by examining the religious practices in Bon believers' (monks'/laypersons') everyday lives, meanwhile exploring the mechanisms of construction of religious spaces, such as monastery or home shrine.

Why Bon religion?

Tibetan religions (Tibetan Bon and Buddhism) are facing strong challenges from globalisation and modernization. Bon is an ancient religion which has a very small number of believers at present. It is significant and timely to figure out how to preserve Bon religion in this very situation. So far very little attention has been paid to Bon religion and the dynamics of its change. It is rarely known about the everyday religious practices and their implications for dynamics of religious change.

What would I do?

Helping out with the research would consist of an interview (of about 1 hour) with each interviewee, including children and/or young people, to talk about their everyday religious practices and attitudes to religious change. The interviews will take place in a venue and at a time convenient to the participants. If you are willing, an audio recording may be

made of your interview. Please inform me if you feel uneasy about this and I will not record the interview.

How is the information going to be used?

All answers will be kept strictly confidential and pseudonyms will be used for each participants in all the written articles produced for the project. The information will be used to write a thesis and academic articles. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

I would be very grateful if you decide to take part in the research. Questions or concerns about the research can be addressed to: Ying Nan, School of Geography, University of Leeds, LS2 9JT or to my supervisor: Prof. Gill Valentine, School of Geography, University of Leeds, LS2 9JT, UK. You may also contact me at 07715398858 or gyyn@leeds.ac.uk or Prof. Gill Valentine at +44 (0 in UK) 113 34 33396 or g.valentine@leeds.ac.uk.

Thank you for your attention.

Ying Nan

University of Leeds

Appendix D: A sample of an interview transcript

Agu Luorang is a middle-aged monk in Jiuzhaigou. In this transcript, confidential information and some irrelevant chats are left out.

YING: What kinds of religious practices do you do most?

AGU LUORANG: We mainly chant Zezhu [a kind of sutra], for blessing long life.

Ying: Chant each year?

Agu Luorang: several times every year. And Nongba Jiewa [a kind of religious festival]. Normally we chant according to the season. We chant when the dragon in the sky roars. The dragon doesn't roars in winter, so we don't chant when the dragon doesn't roar. [The dragon normally roars] in the middle of the May.

Ying: What does this ritual mean?

Agu Luorang: Mainly for feeding the dragon. Taking hada and going at the river, and feeding the dragon.

Ying: Do you mean water god?

Agu Luorang: Yes. Feeding the water god. It is good for making fortune.

Ying: Apart from this what others do you let monks chant?

Agu Luorang: We have Boa [a kind of sutra], for blessing the safe and peace. It needs one day if you chant fast, two days if you chant slowly.

Ying: How many times do you have chantings a year?

Agu Luorang: Seven or eight times, or ten times.

Ying: Where do you find monks for chanting?

Agu Luorang: Most from Songpan.

Ying: Why don't you invite local monks?

Agu Luorang: Not many now. Most are not too busy. Songpan monks are specifically for being monks. Being monks here, [means] busy with this and that [non-religious things]. In winter monks are busy. But most of time in summer it is a bit easier for inviting monks.

Ying: How do you contact monks?

Agu Luorang: We normally have a few contact numbers. We normally call someone who is easier to invite.

Ying: How do you organise?

Agu Luorang: We call them and let them to find the auspicious date when we could chant. Then they come or we go to invite them

Ying: Apart from chanting sutra, what other religious activities do you participate in?

Agu Luorang: No others.

Ying: For example, circumambulating the sacred mountain, burning incense or throwing longda³⁶?

³⁶ Longda is the Tibetan name for the prayer flags and prayer papers on which prints sacred animals and objects. It is used to get blessed.

Agu Luorang: We still sometimes walk around the sacred mountain. [We] throw longda every day. My wife throws longda every morning. We also throw longda on our way out near the sacred mountain.

Ying: Near the Zhayizhaga mountain?

Agu Luorang: Jiawu [Mountain] is also a sacred mountain. It is efficacious for blessing safety, [so] we go there when we go out every time.

Ying: So aunt is the one who constantly insists on belief?

Agu Luorang: Yes.

Ying: Do you circumambulate often?

Agu Luorang: [We] did it more in the past. [Even though] the policies were strict, we did it secretly with adults. [I was] 8 or 9 years old. In the day time we were working, and at night [we were] circumambulating the mountain. At that time, we were more eager to walk around the mountain even though [policies were] strict. It [policy] is more relaxed now, but [there are] fewer people doing this.

Ying: Why?

Agu Luorang: Probably because we are too busy now.

Ying: What different religious practices mean for you? Such as chanting the sutra?

Agu Luorang: Sometimes we are ill and sutra-chanting may alleviate the illness. Now most of us believe science for curing [illness]. Chanting is our old tradition and is also very efficacious.

Ying: Is it okay without chanting?

Agu Luorang: No. We must do it. It makes us feel assured. [And] we always [have] had this tradition.

Ying: What does circumambulation mean?

Agu Luorang: The hardships from circumambulation are good. It is specifically for making you feel the bodily tiredness [through which you could have greater merit].

Ying: How about throwing longda?

Agu Luorang: It is for blessing whole family's safety. Everything will be alright [by doing this], such as doing business.

Ying: Are there any practices you particularly like or dislike?

Agu Luorang: No. They are all the same.

Ying: Can you tell me the process of Mazhi Festival?

Agu Luorang: In the past there were many big festivals. There are just a few now. On that day [of Mazhi Festival] the biggest lama and many other lamas chanted sutra for a couple of days and sanctified the mazhi. If you put the mazhi in the water for washing your face, your eyes won't be painful and sore.

Ying: Did you go to chant the sutra in the festival?

Agu Luorang: Yes.

Ying: Didn't you reluctant to go?

Agu Luorang: Normally not. That's just once a year. And monastery has been in construction, so I haven't gone for years.

Ying: Is there difference between the festival this year and before?

Agu Luorang: Monks normally attend the same as before.

Ying: How about laypeople's enthusiasm?

Agu Luorang: They are involving in this less.

Ying: Why?

Agu Luorang: Probably because they are too busy [with tourism businesses].

Ying: Do you [personally] like to chant sutra now?

Agu Luorang: I can't chant all the sutras. I can only chant a little. [But I can't] make the barley dough [which is for mimicking the devils].

Ying: Then how did you participate in [the Mazhi Festival]?

Agu Luorang: Just follow others to chant. Tibetan [language] is hard to learn, needing at least ten years. We didn't learn well, so we can't chant properly.

Ying: Do you have to attend this festival?

Agu Luorang: Yes. According to the rules, we need to go. But we have jobs now, so we can't go there. [During these times] we request a leave.

Ying: So you still listen to what the monastery ask?

Agu Luorang: Of course. The monastery administers strictly, just like in military. Rules and regulations are strict. We need to ask for a leave from the monk managers. If we don't go, we need to pay the fine.

Ying: Have you considered leaving the monastery?

Agu Luorang: No. I'm thinking that I've been a monk since I was only a teenager. It is not good for quitting now.

Ying: Why it is not good?

Agu Luorang: Of course it's not good. You were so sensible to choose to go to the monastery when you were young. You should not suddenly stop going.

Ying: Is it because of the gossips or critiques from the monastery and the community?

Agu Luorang: [They] would definitely say [these]. People would say that you were monks, and now you don't go. You would feel embarrassed yourself. So usually we will go [to attend monastery affairs] if we are free. And quitting the monastery is not good for your gewa. You've already become the person of the monastery. It's not reversible.

Ying: Agu, why did you become a monk? Because of your parents or it is your own will?

Agu Luorang: It's commune period. [I had] several siblings. I'm the youngest one, so parents let me go to the monastery. And they thought it's good for you. Once you become a monk, you eat well and even have salary without effort.

Ying: So being a monk was a respectable and comfortable work?

Agu Luorang: Certainly. Even your family could be respected.

Ying: Did you have your own opinions [about becoming a monk]?

Agu Luorang: Adults said so then I just listened to them. At that time [after the Commune period], we split cows and sheep. I needed to herd the stocks and stopped my study.

Ying: How was the monastery constructed?

Agu Luorang: It was all constructed by the villages. All villagers gave money to the monastery. And they even went in person to help to construct the monastery.

Ying: Is it different from the reconstruction carrying on at the moment?

Agu Luorang: Almost the same. You see every family donates buddha statues in the Stupa.

Ying: Have you felt the differences of your life before and after the development of tourism?

Agu Luorang: Of course there are differences. In the past our lives were very hard. We didn't have rice to eat. Then we exchanged rice with some Han people and then we could make some porridge to eat.

...

Ying: Are there different rules about religion?

Agu Luorang: For example, in the past women cannot sit in the major seats. Now they could sit anywhere. In the past, when women serve meals for monks, they need to take a bow with respect. Now it is Chinese style. It is the same in temple. Women were not normally allowed to get into the temple. Now they go to the temple.

Ying: Is the difference related to tourism?

Agu Luorang: Yes. Now we see more than before. In the past, we were much closed.

Ying: How do you think about the gender differences?

Agu Luorang: It is good now. Gender equality is good.

...

Ying: Do you feel enjoyable and pleasant when chanting?

Agu Luorang: I felt a bit afflictive when sitting for a long time. I'm a little scared of sitting cross-legged the whole day.

...

Ying: Why did you stop learning in monastery?

Agu Luorang: As I grew up, I had businesses to do and had a family, so the religious side has been gradually dropped.

Ying: So your focus is not on religion now?

Agu Luorang: Yes. I have no time to learn religious things now.

Ying: Have you taught your children something about religion?

Agu Luorang: Not specifically. They always learn Chinese and haven't learnt any [written] Tibetan. We haven't thought of teaching them.

Ying: They didn't want to learn?

Agu Luorang: They don't have time to learn. They were sent to schools [outside Jiuzhaigou] when they were two or three years old.

Ying: In boarding schools?

Agu Luorang: When they were little children, they were living in Han teachers' house and we gave [teachers] maintenance fees every month. Now they are living in boarding schools.

Ying: Do you talk about knowledge of Bon with them?

Agu Luorang: Sometimes when they ask I would tell them. We normally have nothing to teach. They naturally know.

Ying: Why do you think they naturally know?

Agu Luorang: Because they gradually learn by themselves. For example, they would learn the meanings and the ways of practicing religion when they see us doing [religious practices].

Ying: Who has the biggest influence on your belief?

Agu Luorang: My mom. My mom sent me to the monastery. She was always very pious.

...

Ying: Do you have any expectations about the reconstruction of Zharu Monastery?

Agu Luorang: I have no idea about [what is going on] in the monastery. We go [to the monastery] when we are asked to go. In the past the monastery was united together. After tourism contracting, people don't feel comfortable with the monastery. Some families earned money by themselves [from the monastery] without informing [and consulting] the [whole] monastery. We are uneasy with this. Now we don't bother. We don't eat this money, [and] we don't involve in this kind of thing [profiteering from monastery which was said not good for one's gewa].

Ying: Is this influencing the role of the monastery in your heart?

Agu Luorang: Yes. Now we are not united. Someone is selfish, only thinking about earning money from the monastery.

Ying: Will the monastery keep on running tourism business?

Agu Luorang: Probably yes.

Ying: How do you think about that?

Agu Luorang: I don't have a say. I'm not a manager. I just go to the monastery when I'm asked to go. I believe in the monastery, other than those [monk managers].

Ying: If the monastery continue to do tourism in future, do you consider this undermine monastery's reputation?

Agu Luorang: Of course. In the past, we voluntarily donate money if we had. That's best. Now we have tourism and we don't believe [in the monastery] as much as before.

Ying: You're not as loyal as before to the monastery?

Agu Luorang: Yes.

Ying: But I saw a lot of people donating budda statues.

Agu Luorang: Yes. But that [decreasing loyalty to monastery] isn't relevant to our belief. It's not possible for not believing in Buddhism just because of the deeds of monastery. We still believe in Buddha, but it's not good for monastery being running like this. People pay much money buying pricey incense sticks, but the monastery [managers] took the money.

Ying: Does this affect laypeople's enthusiasm to the monastery?

Agu Luorang: Yes. In a village meeting one year, we said [in the past] we all believed in the monastery with respect. Everybody donated money for constructing the monastery. Now the monastery had been finished, but it's used to earn money for a certain groups of people and contracted to those Han people from Mianyang. Since that time local people have had discontents. Although we monks haven't said anything, all local people know and gossip about these things.

Ying: Is there influence on Bon religion?

Agu Luorang: Most of us [local people] say that outside people are not allowed to develop tourism [in the monastery]. The monastery needs to be a clean place, not being developed. This is what we want.

Ying: You don't want the monastery being developed?

Agu Luorang: Monastery is specifically for burning incense and worshiping the Buddha. It is okay for someone to donate money for monks' salary. [But] other things relating to tourism development are not good. Many tourists believe [in buddhas] and think that Tibetan monastery is good. They donate lots of money and burning pricey incense. Using the donated money [for someone's own sake] is not good.

...

Ying: Do you have stronger belief after marriage?

Agu Luorang: Yes. I have children and they are usually [studying and living] outside. So we chant more sutras to bless their safety and study.

Ying: How about your belief before your marriage?

Agu Luorang: [I] hadn't particularly thought about chanting sutras before. Now it became my responsibility.

Ying: Do you know the difference between Bon and Buddhism?

Agu Luorang: Almost the same. Just have different ways of chanting.

...

Ying: Have you been to any other places for pilgrimage?

Agu Luorang: We studied scriptures in Zharu Monastery when we were teenagers. We said we need to go to TAR at least once in a life, so we [including other monks and laypeople] rented a coach and went to TAR. ...

Ying: Went with other monks in your monastery or with laypeople?

Agu Luorang: Most are young monks. ... At that time tourism developed. I earned some money from selling the firewood and used that money to make that trip.

Ying: Do you think laypeople's belief has changed?

Agu Luorang: No. [It's] the same. They [still] believe.

Ying: Someone from Jiuzhaigou told me your belief is becoming weaker.

Agu Luorang: Um. We are now following the science side. This develops faster than our monastery. For example, in our place monks are very busy with other things and having no time to do monks' jobs. So it must be weaker than before. In the past, the belief was stronger.

...

Ying: How's your living standard change?

Agu Luorang: The best time was when we opened hostels [in Jiuzhaigou] in the past. My family had ** beds and [we could] earn about 30,000 – 40,000 Yuan a year. Plus some other businesses including barbeque restaurant and souvenir shops, we could earn about 50,000 – 60,000 Yuan a year in total. ... Now we don't have hostels hence life is not as well as before. ... Only the tuition and maintenance for my children cost about 30,000 Yuan a year.

...

Ying: You do chantings many times. My family only does this twice a year.

Agu Luorang: We do about a dozen or two dozen times in the village. My family does about ten times a year.

...

Agu Luorang: Many monks from Songpan also said they do less than us, only once or twice in a year. They only do once in winter and another one in early spring.

...

Ying: Agu, who is the most pious person in your family?

Agu Luorang: My wife.

Ying: Why?

Agu Luorang: She usually organises most religious practices in my family.

Ying: She knows how to do all the religious practices?

Agu Luorang: Yes.

Ying: Haven't you taught her how to do?

Agu Luorang: Just a little. Her parents also believe. They took her to do religious practices. My mother-in-law believes in religion very much.

Ying: So aunt's parents have big influence on her belief?

Agu Luorang: Yes. Her parents had strong belief. ... In a word, everyone is the same [in the way that] once they get married, they get matured and have different views [on religion].

Ying: Do you think which place is the most sacred place in Jiuzhaigou?

Agu Luorang: Almost the same. The most important [practice] is circumambulating the sacred mountain. The more you feel exhausted [from circumambulation], the better for your gewa. Nowadays people just drive here having a look and then leave. Circumambulation needs you to patiently walk around the whole mountain. People in Songpan walk around the mountain for hundreds of, even thousands of times a year.

...

Ying: Agu, tourism has developed for many years. Do you think if it has impacts on local culture?

Agu Luorang: Almost the same. No big changes.

Ying: How about your belief?

Agu Luorang: It's fine now, [because] policies allow [us to believe]. When I was young, there were restrictions, so we did secretly at nights. We even can't see the roads when we walk around the sacred mountain.

Ying: Did you go with your parents?

Agu Luorang: Yes. We followed our parents.

Ying: Did you understand circumambulation?

Agu Luorang: Parents just told us that doing this is good. I also wanted to go with my parents. It's very dark and we didn't have any flash light. We just walk in the dark.

Ying: Are the current young people different from your young age in religious belief?

Agu Luorang: Yes, it is different. Young people at the moment are easy to feel tired [when they are asked to attend religious practices]. They usually say one word 'I don't go'. In the past, we did what our parents ask and were willing to participate in.

Ying: So nowadays young people are not as pious as before?

Agu Luorang: No. They are Han people now. Haha...

Ying: Why?

Agu Luorang: Nowadays children don't speak Tibetan. And you see, they are reluctant to attend religious practices when you ask them.

Ying: Do girls believe more than boys?

Agu Luorang: Now all children are the same. Young people generally believe less than before.

Ying: Is it because parents don't teach much about religion?

Agu Luorang: It is mainly because children don't have time to learn [religion]. They just come back to stay for about 20 days every holiday. In the past we stayed with parents and follow them to practice religion.

Ying: Tourism and religion, which is more important?

Agu Luorang: Both are important.

Ying: Why?

Agu Luorang: Belief cannot be abandoned. It is tradition and rule. Our jobs need to be done as well, for making a living. Both are important.

Ying: Do you think tourism has positive influence on religion?

Agu Luorang: Chanting Nongba Jiewa sutra is good for tourism. If the waters are blessed, all the scenic spots will continue to be very beautiful. Feeding the dragon is beneficial for waters and everything. [By chanting this sutra], you could earn a lot of fortune if you do business. You can get college degree if you study.

....

Ying: Are tourists allowed to get into your chanting room?

Agu Luorang: We normally close the chanting room. It is only used for burning incense for ourselves. It needs to be clean.

Ying: Tourists are not clean?

Agu Luorang: A little bit.

Ying: What do you normally do in your chanting room?

Agu Luorang: Burning incense. We must do this every morning.

Ying: Who normally does this?

Agu Luorang: Mainly my wife. I'm assured when she is in charge.

Ying: Is it okay if tourists want to see your familial chanting?

Agu Luorang: Normally they are allowed to have a look. They might want to see how Tibetans and monks practice religion.

Ying: Do you think tourists have influence on your culture?

Agu Luorang: I think no.

Ying: Have you found tourists offended your religion?

Agu Luorang: No.

Ying: What's your general impression of tourists?

Agu Luorang: They are fine.

...

Ying: Agu, do you only wear monk robe in monastery?

Agu Luorang: Yes.

Ying: Why?

Agu Luorang: I haven't worn a monk's robes for a long time.... The robe is very long, and inconvenient. Sitting still for a whole day is unendurable [when doing religious practices]... It is rather difficult to get used to the chanting again.

Ying: Do you wear your robe going to other places, like Chengdu?

Agu Luorang: No. It is a bit embarrassed.

Ying: Would you introduce yourself as a monk?

Agu Luorang: Yes, if I'm asked.

...

Ying: Do you children speak Tibetan?

Agu Luorang: Yes. I always speak Tibetan with them. It is not acceptable as a Tibetan for not speaking Tibetan.

...

Agu Luorang: The belief in those places is different. For the monks there, being a monk is just being a monk, living in the monastery. If you truly want to be a monk, you just don't come out with a bowl like we do. Some monks just live in a cave, only hearing the sound of the birds.

Ying: Why should you be like them?

Agu Luorang: Being like them is good; [you can] fully concentrate on scripture study.

...

Ying: Who make decisions about your familial things?

Agu Luorang: It is me making decisions.

Ying: Oh. Is it different from the situation before?

Agu Luorang: Almost the same. In our place normally men make decisions. But if women have acceptable reasons, we could do according to them.