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Harnessing Indigenous Knowledge and Endogenous Potential for Peasant-led Rural Development: A case study in Jika Village, Sichuan, China

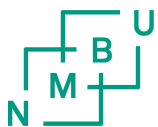
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[tərmimŋo kəmej olon]ba kənjam thintin]

A valley with few inhabitants is very quiet.



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1 Abstract

In an economy where the chasm between rural and urban life widens further each day, many Chinese farmers still struggle to maintain ecologically sound farming systems that can also support socially and financially robust livelihoods. Shrinking farm sizes, rural-to-urban migration, and generally low profits from agricultural product sales shape the rural landscape. While governmental initiatives aimed at developing rural infrastructure, protecting vulnerable ecosystems, and/or alleviating financial burdens on farmers do exist, many have been shown to further marginalize China's most vulnerable communities. As a result, existing strategies emphasize rural-to-urban migration and relocation as the inevitable solution to these complex problems. This case study from Jika Village, Danba County, Sichuan, examines how residents of a remote mountain community are mobilizing endogenous physical and knowledge-based resources to help reach self-identified development goals. The theory of endogenous development is used to assess various processes of change. The study considers aspects of rural experience often neglected in development discourse by documenting the motivations that catalyze the local community's desire for action. It also describes various mechanisms identified as integral to carrying out development efforts, including: 1) the construction of collective confidence and ethnic identity; 2) organized systems for decision-making and record keeping; 3) empowerment of women; 4) inclusion of multiple generations in development processes; and 5) support of extra-village partners. In doing so, the case study contributes to a discussion of bottom-up development that has been largely restricted to Western locales.

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3 Abbreviations & Translations

AFN	Alternative Food Network
ED	Endogenous Development
FPC	Farmer-Professional Cooperative
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRC	People's Republic of China
TXG	Tian Xia Gu Center for Arts and Culture (see below)
—	
半扇门乡腊月山三村	Third Village
半扇门乡腊月山二村一组	Jika Village (吉卡村)
三农问题	The “Three Rural Issues” of agriculture, villages, and farmers
天下谷文化艺术交流中心	Tian Xia Gu Center for Arts and Culture, founded by Yang Zhengqing
退耕还林	Grain for Green Program
微信	WeChat
为村	WeCountry
幸福美丽新村建设	“Happy and Beautiful New Village” Program

4 Introduction

If one wished to visit the small village known as Jika, she would likely embark from the sprawling metropolis of Chengdu by bus. Transecting the misty paddy lands of the Sichuan Basin, the bus first traces ancient waterways carved out by Li Bing over two centuries ago. Soon, an ominous wall of mountains rises abruptly from the plains. The bus passes through tunnel after tunnel, punctuated by brief glimpses of the cliffs towering above. The traveler's lids grow heavy at Balang pass, 4,375 meters (14,354 feet) up, but the bus quickly descends again. It winds its way down to a unmarked bridge lined with prayer flags, a spot forlorn and unremarkable were it not for the narrow side road extending from its flank. The bus continues on but the traveler disembarks, heading up the dusty side road on foot. A mangled and abandoned van is its only signpost, and indeed the only indication that life exists up the narrow valley ahead. After over an hour of walking, a smattering of old stone houses comes into view. Woodsmoke rises from the chimney even as the sun beats down, hot and persistent. Jika Village has nothing resembling a center, no boundaries and no walls. Everything and everyone is scattered: structures, fields, graves, paths, the bent backs of a few peasants toiling in the fields. Against the backdrop of the mountains their human forms appear diminutive, their efforts futile. The power is probably out, and summer rains have washed out the road in places. Houses are large but empty. Our traveler stands at the wobbly footbridge connecting one side of the valley to another, wondering whether to cross at all.

This is also the view of rural China we so often paint, as the chasm between rural and urban life widens and farmers struggle to maintain ecologically sound farming systems that can support socially and financially robust livelihoods. Since its de-collectivization in the early 1980s, the Chinese agricultural sector has scrambled to overcome evolving concerns over food safety, environmental degradation, and agricultural production capacity. Efforts to alleviate poverty for the estimated half-billion Chinese citizens living in rural areas are largely dominated by land consolidation, industrial-scale production, and the eventual “liberation” of peasants into urban workforces (Ye, 2015; Long et al., 2011). But to some residents of rural China, a move to the city is far from liberation. While alternative models do exist, many projects fail to exemplify viable solutions for the entire array of diverse peasant collectivities in China. Furthermore, millions of Chinese peasants remain unable to connect with the global “agrarian revolution” occurring in Latin America and elsewhere thanks to unique political and logistical constraints (Altieri & Toledo, 2011). Left with the sole option of forging their own path, the people of one tiny village are exploring how exactly to face the myriad challenges of life in rural China head-on by honoring—rather than abandoning—their agrarian roots.

Research Questions

This case study from Jika Village, Danba County, Sichuan, examines how residents of a remote mountain community are mobilizing endogenous physical and knowledge-based resources to help reach self-identified development goals. The study site suffers from several issues common to Sichuan province and Chinese farming communities at large. While these phenomena have been explored at length in literature, few papers have identified solutions to—or facilitated *action* towards—such problems from the bottom-up. Participatory action research (PAR) methodology guided the inquiry. With the three tenets of PAR—*research*, *education* and *action*—in mind, the primary research question refers to the development process, while two secondary questions encourage an analysis of the research process itself.

- How can indigenous knowledge and endogenous potential contribute to livelihood improvement in rural China, and to what extent can the change processes in Jika Village be considered examples of endogenous development?
 - How can the PAR process contribute to lasting frameworks for community-driven change in rural China?
 - What are the major assets and challenges for using participatory change processes in rural China?

These questions are ultimately aimed at documenting and analyzing the various change processes that occurred in Jika Village during the course of research. In the Context and Methodology sections, more background will be provided on the context and circumstances leading to the choice of PAR and methods used during the course of this project. The Theory section provides an overview of endogenous development theory and its relationship to the concepts of agroecology and PAR. In the Results section, evidence is presented to indicate that change processes in Jika Village do resemble the early stages of endogenous development as described by various scholars. The study considers aspects of rural experience often neglected in top-down discourse by detailing the motivations catalyzing the local community and the mechanisms that aided endogenous development efforts. The Discussion section includes commentary on the various limitations of the research and overall significance of findings.

5 Context



Figure 1 (left) Sichuan Province (in red). Figure 2 (right) Pins indicating the position of the field site (La Yue Village) in relation to the provincial capital (Chengdu).

Group 1 of the 2nd Village of La Yue Mountain in Banshanmen Town, Danba County (丹巴县半扇门乡 腊月山二村一组) is generally referred to by outsiders as La Yue Village, a Mandarin Chinese name it

The rGyalrong

There are around 300,000 Jiarong (rGyalrong) people in China, residing primarily in two states of western Sichuan. The Jiarong are officially considered Tibetan, although their language and culture differ from other Tibetans in significant ways. These distinctions place the Jiarong people in a precarious position: other Tibetans tend to regard them as “fake,” their Qiang (another officially-recognized minority) neighbors refer to them as “barbarians,” and the Han (ethnic majority) tend to regard them with the same scrutiny as they do all Tibetans—as “ungrateful and rebellious” (Jinba, 2017). Thus, their marginality in Chinese society is firmly secured.



shares with the several other natural villages that surround it.¹ In the local Situ language, it is called *Jika*, meaning “river valley.” It straddles a fertile canyon in western Sichuan Province, a 320km drive from the provincial capital of Chengdu. Jika’s residents are members of a small ethnic minority group known as Jiarong (rGyalrong) Tibetans, who traditionally engage in subsistence agriculture and agroforestry. The community is comprised of 17 households, only 14 of which had one or more members residing permanently in the village at the time of research.

Jika Village exhibits signs of several overarching trends currently afflicting the Chinese countryside. Shrinking farm sizes, rural-to-urban migration, and generally low profits from agricultural product sales shape the rural landscape, and many communities like Jika struggle to make ends meet in the modern market economy. Understanding the complexity of these issues and the policy trends and/or alternative schemes commonly aimed at addressing them is key to conceptualizing the Jika Village case study as a viable model for peasant-driven rural transformation.

A Complex Rural Landscape

The problem of rural-to-urban migration in China is often characterized as a disequilibrium between the “centripetal” forces luring peasants to thriving urban economies and the “centrifugal” forces tying them to the countryside (Liu et al., 2010). To some, the “problem” of rural-to-urban migration should not be viewed as a problem at all, but rather an inevitable solution to population growth and environmental degradation caused by increasing land pressure in rural areas (Mullan et al., 2011). Whatever the implications, it is widely acknowledged that a diverse array of both rural “push” and urban “pull” factors contribute to the phenomenon, especially in Western China (Mullan et al., 2011; Hu et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2010; Zhao, 1999). Commonly cited “pull” factors drawing rural *hukou* holders to cities include the availability of temporary employment in urban areas, relative prosperity of urban economies, and gradual relaxation of institutional barriers to migration via the *hukou* system (Xu et al., 2015; Zhao, 1999; Shen, 2013).² “Push” factors acting to thrust peasants out of the countryside tend to vary across regions, but may include increased land pressure and comparatively stagnant rural economies (Xu et al., 2015; Mullan et al., 2011).

¹ The term “natural village” is used to describe villages formed as a result of long-term settlement, and often implies that residents share common ancestry or belong to the same historical clan. In “administrative villages,” boundaries are set by the government. In this case, several natural villages were combined to form the administrative designation of La Yue Mountain Village. La Yue Mountain Village is composed of three sections, which are further subdivided into “teams.” There, teams match up generally with existing natural villages.

² The *hukou* is a system of household registration often described as an internal passport. *Hukous* designate families as urban or rural residents based on birthplace. Access to public services is often tied to this distinction, leaving many rural-to-urban migrants barred from critical needs in cities (Sheehan, 2017).

Discussions and interviews with participants over the course of research unearthed a number of self-identified push/pull factors specific to Jika Village.

Table 1 Push and pull factors for migration identified by residents of Jika Village

(Rural) “Push” Factors	(Urban) “Pull” Factors
Lack of opportunity for adequate income generation	Urban job availability; availability of non-agricultural or manual labor (especially important for younger generations)
Land pressure resulting from the ‘Grain for Green’ Program*	Higher incomes from labor
Low level of access to social services and low standard of living	Comparatively “fun” urban lifestyle
Social stigmas associated with agricultural labor/rural lifestyle	Convenience/higher standards of living
	Access/proximity to educational institutions**
	Existing social networks, especially from previous educational experience

*The ‘Grain for Green’ Program (退耕还林, *tuigeng huanlin*), also referred to as the ‘Sloping Land Conversion’ or ‘Returning Farmland to Forest’ Program, is often considered the largest program facilitating payment for ecosystem services in the world (Trac et al., 2013). With the intention of alleviating soil erosion issues, from 1999 to 2015 the Chinese government compensated farmers for the conversion of sloping cropland into forest. In Jika Village, a huge portion of fields were converted using state-provided saplings and other materials. The degree to which this succeeded in achieving actual forest coverage and preventing soil erosion is highly questioned, both by villagers and in broader academic discourse (Trac et al., 2013; Gutiérrez Rodríguez et al., 2016).

**Prior to around 2007, the villages known collectively as La Yue Mountain Village had an operating elementary school. Today, the village’s young people must attend schools in larger towns along the main road or even several hours away. The majority of students live on school campuses, while the relatives of many other—especially younger—children relocate to cities and towns specifically to care for them while they attend school.

The push and pull factors described by residents of Jika are common to many agricultural communities. However, the diversity of rural contexts across China can cause radically divergent effects. Liu & Henningsen found that land loss resulting from the Grain for Green program significantly reduced agricultural production and reduced self-sufficiency of agricultural communities overall (2014). However, the degree to which this affected livelihoods and migration decisions was inconsistent across regions. In areas with access to off-farm work opportunities, land pressure was shown to reduce poverty by shifting the workforce to off-farm income sources. Communities lacking access to off-farm work opportunities did not enjoy the same benefits (Liu & Henningsen, 2014). As Chinese farm sizes continue to shrink as a whole, farmers maintaining small plots remain vulnerable to market fluctuations, environmental instability, low prices for agricultural goods, and labor shortages, further incentivizing their migration to urban areas (Lowder et al., 2016; Deng et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2015; Long et al., 2011; Song & Vernooy, 2010). As a result, many have argued for land consolidation and increased mechanization as the way to alleviate these issues and bolster production efficiency (Zhao, 1999; Long, 2014; Zhang et al., 2015). While these strategies have succeeded in many areas, research shows that they often fail to provide long-term solutions to remote and/or mountainous communities like Jika Village (Deng et al., 2010; Yan & Chen, 2013; Scott et al., 2014; Si et al., 2015; Song & Vernooy, 2010). In both research and practice, the complexity of these issues eludes generalization. Advocates have emerged calling for place-based, bottom-up development strategies that acknowledge the heterogeneity of the Chinese countryside (Li et al., 2013; Trac et al., 2013). Unfortunately, many of the most far-reaching government programs meant to tackle these issues fail to utilize such models.

Government Response

The PRC's attention to rural regions has remained strong in the nearly four decades since China's economic reform and opening.

Since 2004, the Chinese central government has recognized the importance of rural development, and it devoted its Number One Policy Document to rural issues for each of the next seven years... these policy actions contributed to the overarching goal of "building a new countryside", which targeted five major objectives: advanced production; improved livelihoods; cultural and ethical progress; clean and tidy villages; and efficient management. (Long et al., 2011: 1095)

The government has consistently focused its rhetoric on these and, more generally, the "three rural problems" (三农问题) of agriculture, villages, and farmers. Many wide-sweeping policies have been issued in order to help combat rural poverty and lessen the severity of various "push" factors in agricultural communities. Despite this dedication, state policies have failed to bring prosperity to the research site and many other villages like it.

Analyzing rural transformation development across China from 2000 to 2008, Long et al. depict Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the administrative region where Jika Village sits, as part of a larger territory characterized by "stagnation development," displaying the lowest levels of rural development and transformation nationwide due to "extreme environmental conditions and low socioeconomic status" (2011: 1102). In their 2013 case study on a mountainous community in Sichuan, Li et al. found that governmental initiatives aimed at developing rural infrastructure, protecting vulnerable ecosystems, and/or alleviating financial burdens on farmers have further marginalized small communities like Jika Village. De Janvry et al. suggest that rural poverty has been influenced far more by non-farm employment opportunities than official poverty alleviation programs (2005). The authors conclude that trends lead to a more "egalitarian" rise in rural incomes, as incomes of poorest households benefitted most from off-farm income opportunities. At the same time, the agricultural system was benefitted by a natural selection of the "best" farmers to remain farming. These results—somewhat callous in their failure to consider the cultural, familial, social, and other factors involved in widespread migration—nevertheless reflect another common narrative on rural development in China: that rural-to-urban migration is a beneficial and inevitable phenomenon. The government has likewise embraced this version of the story.

Recent political events indicate a strategy of systematized migration may predominate in the coming years. "Crisis narratives" tend to pit peasants against modernizing forces in rural development and view smallholder farming as an obstacle to land consolidation and, thus, agricultural efficiency (Schneider, 2014). Writing on the decades-long process of agricultural "modernization" in China, Ye writes, "Peasants and peasant agriculture have never been the goal or ideal of the nation's modernization project, but are seen more as ways of living and farming that should be abolished or transformed" (2015: 331). Following the momentous National Party Congress in October 2017, president Xi Jinping has ramped up ambitious efforts to eliminate poverty in China by 2020 (China Plus, 2017; Schmitz, 2017). While government-run poverty alleviation programs may take many forms, for rural communities such as Jika Village, the answer to the complex circumstances of rural poverty could very well be relocation. Reports have indicated that over two million rural residents of the Western provinces of Guizhou, Sichuan, Gansu, Guangxi, and Yunnan—many belonging to ethnic minorities—have already or will be relocated to larger, planned villages (Phillips, 2018). For communities whose collective identities are intricately tied to place, recent efforts may be viewed as

the latest step in the systematic dismantling of ethnic identities. For communities where relocation is implausible or unwanted, this case study offers a model for alternative processes of change.

Third Village

Gazing up the ridge line from Jika, more whitewashed houses sit within the folds of the mountains. Scars of landslides emanate from the winding mountain road. In Third Village, another section of La Yue Mountain, a government program aims to improve rural livelihoods not through forced migration, but by using a place-based development strategy that is decidedly top-down.

In 2015, the Sichuan Department of Land and Resources selected Third Village as a special “poverty village,” one of twenty-two in the county that receive preferential support (Zhong, 2017). Since 2015, the government has initiated three main production schemes aimed at poverty alleviation: the construction of a centralized pig-raising facility, large-scale poultry production for selected families, and medicinal plant cultivation.

In interviews, residents of Third Village were open about the difficulties they had encountered so far, but were still optimistic about potential results. The pig-raising facility was intended to boost production, but villagers found it too small to be of any use aside from raising piglets, which they did for two seasons. This year, due to space constrictions and the difficulty of transporting feed and collecting manure, they found it easier to keep piglets at home as they had before. At least three especially impoverished

households in the village were selected for targeted support, and were provided materials for raising around 100 chickens each. Unfortunately, government-sponsored shelters were unable to protect chickens against native Siberian weasels, and the scheme failed.

Medicinal crops were planted this year, and the government provided seeds, training, fertilizer and pesticides. Villagers had a choice between several medicinal varieties and finally settled on medicinal rhubarb and *qianghuo*, two species deemed suitable for the growing conditions. In the meantime, space for corn production (used to feed the pigs) is severely diminished. The government guarantees buyback of the final product through cooperation with a private pharmaceutical company, but cannot set prices until the harvest. As both medicinal crops are harvested at intervals at 3-5 years, villagers hope they will be able to cooperate with the other stakeholders to set fair prices.

In the meantime, villagers are anxious but hopeful. One noted that the government agents’ enthusiasm for increasing pork production has placed increased pressure on the pastureland above Third Village, where pigs graze after reaching an appropriate size. Construction projects have caused minor landslides and disruption to the natural landscape. In deciding the direction of action, officials solicited some input from the villagers, but decision-making power rests primarily with the government.



The pig-raising facility in Third Village (left) and road leading to it (right),

Alternative Strategies

China is not devoid of efforts to buck migration trends and provide positive opportunities in rural areas. One institutional strategy that fits the bill of being both adaptable to diverse contexts and potentially beneficial for smallholders is the eagerly-supported farmer-professional cooperative (FPC) system. The potential for FPCs to alleviate various issues facing smallholder farmers is widely

recognized, and evidence suggests that FPCs act as innovation “spark plugs” for farmers who may otherwise struggle to cultivate broad connections beyond the farm level (Chen & Scott, 2014; Yang, H. et al., 2014). On the grassroots level, alternative food networks (AFNs)—including community supported agriculture projects, farmers’ markets, garden plot rentals, buying clubs, and other direct-to-consumer marketing streams—exist in small but growing numbers (Si et al., 2015). Unfortunately, many scholars have pointed out the inability of both FPCs and AFNs to fully represent the needs of peasants (Yan & Chen, 2013; Yang, H. et al., 2014; Scott et al., 2014; Krul & Ho, 2017; Si et al., 2015). Yan & Chen warn that unlike those in other East Asian nations, many Chinese FPCs suffer from a phenomenon of “fakeness,” promoting the interests of wealthy families and/or dragon-head enterprises rather than the majority of other “members” working under them (2013). Similarly, many Chinese AFNs fail to adequately represent the interests of “real” peasants, and have instead been formed and operated by elite community members, NGOs or other outside interest groups (Si et al., 2015). The proposed research is not meant to delegitimize or argue against the existence of AFN or FPC models as a means of sustaining agricultural livelihoods. Instead, the actions proposed are seen as a complementary set of strategies that could be used in tandem with—or apart from—FPC or AFN structures. In the voluntary formation of its own FPC in May 2017, Jika Village intends to join a small minority of FPCs using the framework to pursue holistic goals of endogenous agroecological development.

6 Methodology

The project in Jika Village employed participatory action research in a descriptive case study model. Data collection took place between August 2017 and July 2018. This use of these methodologies was carefully considered, and shortcomings inherent to the research design are duly acknowledged. Nevertheless, the advantages these strategies offered in exploring the dynamics of complex change processes in Jika Village vastly outweighed their limitations. Factors underlying the decision included the complex and interdisciplinary nature of the research subject, community need and preference, and desire to contribute evidence from “on the ground” rather than through broad, shallow data sets, and the desire to subvert existing and historical power structures through participatory change making and knowledge production.

The roots of PAR as a research strategy stretch well back into the mid-20th century. In Kurt Lewin’s foundational paper, it was suggested that action research bridges a gap between theory and action that had been previously insurmountable (1946). “Participatory action research has a dual purpose: creating positive social/environmental change, and contributing to scientific knowledge” (Bacon et al., 2005). Comparing wide ranging definitions of action research in the 1970s and 80s to Lewin’s original description, Peters & Robinson conclude that though differences abound, three central tenets remain consistent throughout: focus on a problem (rather than theoretical inquiry), iterative cycles of action and evaluation, and collaborative participation (1984). Iterative cycles allow for participation, flexibility, and insight into the interplay between research and action (Bacon et al., 2005). Burns et al. emphasize the importance of community participation in everything from identifying problem areas, to design and implementation of the action plan, to final analysis and interpretation of results (2011). These components not only empower participants and leave a meaningful impact on communities, but also enhance validity and translatability. In the case of Jika Village, a participatory, action-oriented strategy was exactly what they were seeking.

Prior to the start of the project, the researcher had visited the research site on one occasion, while leading a foreign student group in 2016. One of the primary stakeholders, Yang Zhengqing, is a close personal friend and former colleague, and thus the researcher had been aware of changes taking place prior to her involvement. At that time, Jika Village had already instigated various change processes—FPC formation, tourism activities, infrastructure development, etc. Initial talks indicated that most changes had been carried out with significant support from Yang Zhengqing. Zhengqing felt that the village cooperative might benefit from a participatory relationship to the research. He reported that cooperative members did not lack enthusiasm or motivation, but that they often had trouble approaching tasks and ideas systematically. If an emphasis on skill-building and self-reliance could somehow be incorporated into the research design, the village might be not only able to succeed independently in their efforts, but might also be able to support other, nearby villages in undertaking similar pursuits. As a result, the researcher's desire to use PAR strategies meshed well with the community's perceived needs.

However, like many PAR projects, the research is, in a sense, one study embedded within another. The research questions posed here demanded answers that were exploratory and descriptive in nature. Questions posed by participants targeting local development needs sometimes required an entirely different mode of inquiry. For example, villagers were interested in increasing the use of heirloom seed varieties due to their cultural significance, educational value, and potentially higher market value. Participants followed their own lines of inquiry by conferring with local elders and farmers outside the community to collect data relevant to their inquiry. In contrast, the research questions outlined here are concerned with the reasons why and processes through which these investigations were conducted, their results, and related experiences along the way. Though these dual layers of inquiry are intrinsically and inescapably linked, it is not the specific inquiries identified by the community in reference to their own development goals but rather an analysis of them that may contribute to a broader understanding of development processes.

The research questions targeted a number of aspects of the research inquiry, including both specific experiences in the village and the project embedded in a larger context of rural development and agricultural development. In order to avoid one common pitfall in case studies, which are often criticized for their broad and unwieldy accumulations of data, categories were identified to help organize results. These categories were selected for their ability to respond to the research questions while also allowing the natural, narrative flow of the research experience to remain intact.

- The **motivations for taking action** in Jika Village, including:
 - Current physical/financial circumstances and perceived problems in the village
 - Participants' collective vision and goals for the future
- The **mechanisms through which action took place**, gauged by:
 - The process and experience of development
 - Tangible (physical/financial) changes
 - Participants' feelings and reflections on change processes (and potential/perceived results)
- The process and **experience of participatory action research**, including:
 - Reflections from local participants and external researcher
 - Assets and challenges, as identified by the external researcher
 - Potential for reproduction/adaptation of the resulting development model by the participant community or others

The first two categories will be covered in the Results section, while the latter will be covered in the Discussion and Appendix I.

Methods

By nature, the methodology outlined here has certain limitations. While case studies catch flak for their use of purposive sampling and lack of experimental replicability, they can provide a depth of understanding on issues not otherwise quantifiable or even accessible to researchers conducting surveys or one-time interviews. In keeping with Robert Yin's foundational definition of the case study method, this project "investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (2009: 18). In other words, it would be impossible to divorce the changes documented in Jika Village from their context. In the previous sections we have seen that existing trends within the rural landscape include migration as an unavoidable byproduct of dire circumstances and forced relocation as a governmental strategy for poverty alleviation. In Jika, migration is framed as a necessary evil, its prevention identified as a primary goal of the community. The case study model not only allowed for detailed documentation of the attempted prevention process, but also for exploring the community's compelling motivations for doing so.

Strategies for data collection included a combination of facilitated participatory activities, group meetings, interviews, participatory observation, surveys and analysis of digital materials published by the cooperative and its partners. Data was documented in detailed written notes, ethnographic journaling, and audio recordings. Incorporated into the research design was an intentional increase in the researcher's distance from decision-making operations and other events. While preliminary activities involve heavy facilitation from the researcher, these responsibilities were gradually transferred to the villagers themselves. Recordings or portions of audio recordings identified as especially important to the research objectives were transcribed in Mandarin. Otherwise, English notes were taken on recordings and quotes were translated for inclusion in this paper. A detailed list of fieldwork dates and samples of transcripts and notes on audio recordings are provided in Appendix II. It should also be noted that not all data collection took place onsite during the course of fieldwork, as communication via phone or WeChat was common between visits.

The decision to utilize qualitative data collection methods almost exclusively for this study was not made lightly. Achieving the goals of the research required documenting the natural course of village events in a manner that could maintain flexibility and gain insight from a broad, holistic scope. Limiting lines of inquiry to quantitative or even more formal qualitative data collection strategies might have caused the researcher to miss or leave out important events, ideas, and insights. Data collection strategies more often



Figure 3 An informal interview with village women and visiting students.

resembled those of ethnographic research, as it quickly became clear that my own immersion into village life was the most failsafe strategy for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the unfolding and ever-changing development process. The vast array of practical, cultural, and political challenges endemic to Jika Village further emphasized a need for qualitative methods. Detailed record keeping strategies were not prevalent in the village prior to research, and were not specifically emphasized in the process of community goal-setting. Thus, even if detailed quantitative data was to be collected during the course of research, historical information that might be useful for monitoring change over time would be inescapably absent. Furthermore, the timeline (spanning only one year) and (gradual) rate of change expected during the course of research indicated that any observed changes in quantitative data collected were not only highly unlikely, but a valid correlation between this and research activities was also unlikely to be proven. The research site is located in a very politically sensitive region of western China, where collecting detailed data on income, demographic information, and other statistics could be viewed as a potential threat to political stability and, ultimately, counterproductive to research goals. The researcher's position as a foreign scholar also made it legally/logistically impossible to stay in the field site continuously during the course of research. The system of monthly visits, consistent remote communication, and immersive participation in both daily life and important village events during visits was able to satisfy research needs without jeopardizing the community's relationship with political institutions.

The depth and diversity of methods allowed results to be triangulated across data sources and data types. Being present for discussions and group meetings—though not failsafe in ensuring truthfulness or validity—also allowed for multiple perspectives to be shared on a single claim. Integrated into my daily practice were various formal and informal systems of member checking, or sharing my interpretations of various phenomena with research participants. Though this ensures the “dependability” of data, it does not take away from the fact that my own involvement as an embedded researcher has inevitably influenced the research process in various ways.

Validity & Implications

The choice of research methods has much to do with my own epistemological position. This case study remains grounded in the constructivist paradigm, “built upon the premise of a social construction of reality” (Baxter & Jack, 2008: 545). Critical theory also informs the approach to engaged research used here.³ Though ‘participation’ and reflexivity are not exclusive to critical theorists’ approaches, it is important to recognize their firm grounding in the radical change-oriented critical theorist tradition. Cohen and Crabtree (2006) cite dialogic methodology as one of the signature characteristics of critical theoretical methodology, “methods combining observation and interviewing with approaches that foster conversation and reflection” (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006: 1). At the same time, it is interesting to remember that even the early positivists were explicitly concerned with linking “‘real elements of the truth’ with ‘the great social problems of the day’” (Christians, 2000: 141). In other words, the aim of the social sciences has always been, in some way, to positively benefit humanity. Where physics and chemistry are ‘hard’ and unmoving, dictated by universally applicable “laws” of how the world behaves, conclusions drawn from ethnography and other qualitative inquiries are seen as difficult to replicate, largely unreliable, and vulnerable to manipulation. The field is ‘soft,’

³ Engaged research is used here as an umbrella term for research efforts focused on empowering communities to solve community-defined problems (Fitzgerald, 2006).

though whether the characterization diminishes the field's validity depends on how willing you are to admit to its inherent (and virtuous) malleability.

If we, as social scientists, are willing to acknowledge the powerful claims of Linda Tuhiwai Smith, who states that, “research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized,” then we must hope that it may be possible to reverse these tendencies, to use the “softness” of anthropology and other social sciences to our (and our study populations’) advantage (1999: 7). To not strive for this and embrace the malleability of our position would be tragic. Appadurai stresses the importance of opening up the unevenly distributed “capacity to produce globally useful knowledge” in our increasingly globalized world (2006: 173). PAR has proven an effective tool for peasant-driven knowledge production and change in various agricultural communities throughout the world (Guzmán et al., 2013; Bacon et al., 2005).

The research project, designed as it was, could not have existed without one foundational principal: widespread community buy-in. Without the support and interest of each and every village resident, endogenous development processes would be impossible to instigate and maintain. By pure luck, I entered the research community at a time when their ideas were already formed enough to not be heavily influenced by my involvement, but not so developed that formative parts of the process could not be observed and documented throughout the course of research. The likelihood of happening upon similar stages in other communities is unfortunately quite small. At the same time, the notion of conducting research without such preconditions may be considered unjust. Recognizing that I must be transparent about my intentions and the level of influence I exerted over the research community, this case study aims to place power in the hands of villagers, to examine how they utilize local resources to meet their own stated goals.

7 Theory

In September 2017 I sat in on a village cooperative meeting to (re-)introduce myself, gauge members’ interest in participating in a PAR project, and gain an understanding of the cooperative agenda. In keeping with Yang Zhengqing’s preliminary accounts, the cooperative covered a broad array of topics, including cooperative organization, tourism development, Sichuan peppercorn sales, and other opportunities for income generation. From the very beginning, villagers showed a determined interest in using the externalities of their traditional way of life to improve their conditions. Because of this, endogenous development theory (ED) became a critical framework for analyzing research results. Though its usage as a development theory has been largely confined to cases within the EU, elements of endogenous development can be found just about anywhere. It places the journey of one small village into broader conversations on rural development and global capitalism. At the same time, the theoretical foundation of the research project is also inescapably tied to its methodology (PAR), and the field of study that serves as my primary lens as a researcher (agroecology). Many of the concepts inherent to the practice of PAR and the study/movement/practice of agroecology overlap with the theory and practice of endogenous development. In all three practices, participation from the local community, systems thinking, self-reliance, and holistic improvement of wellbeing in local society are emphasized.

Endogenous Development Theory

In Europe, so-called “exogenous” development processes, such as attracting firms to rural areas, dominated territorial development strategies in the 1960s and 70s (Vázquez-Barquero, 2002). After Reform and Opening, China experienced a boom in township and village enterprises, market-oriented public enterprises based in rural areas that, in the 1990s, were mostly transitioned to private ownership (Long et al., 2011). The perceived failure of these strategies, firmly based in neoclassical economic theory, led to the emergence of ED, which describes change both by and for the local communities where change occurs. Endogenous development mobilizes locally available resources, be they ecological, human, knowledge-based or organizational—to stimulate economic growth in the local economy. Revenue generated as a result remains firmly within in the community (Long & van der Ploeg, 1994). In practice, ED may creatively take advantage of local resources that would otherwise disappear or become superfluous in other development schemes, such as traditional farming techniques or handicrafts (Long & van der Ploeg, 1994). The formation of local cooperatives or “place branding” to revitalize rural areas are also basic examples of ED (Theodosiou et al., 2010; Pasquinelli, 2010; Marsden, 2009). It has also been used to describe instances where the elements of a subsistence economy are improved and reorganized by local actors to create a sustainable market economy (Vázquez-Barquero, 2002). In part, the case study of Jika Village offers a unique opportunity to see what happens when a traditional (or, at most, a “transitional” (as described by Altieri & Toledo, 2011: 595) peasant community attempts such a feat.

<i>Endogenous development characteristics</i>	<i>The high theory of development</i>	<i>Dualistic growth theory</i>	<i>Dependence theory</i>	<i>Territorial development theory</i>
Development potential				
Resources	×	×	×	×
Indivisibilities	×	-	-	-
Capital accumulation				
Application of surplus	×	×	×	-
Innovation	×	×	×	-
Flexible labor market	-	×	×	×
External economies of scale				
Organization of production	×	-	-	-
Networking	-	-	-	-
Urban relations	-	-	×	-
Institutional context				
Institutional flexibility	-	×	×	-
Organization of society	-	×	×	-
Local action				
Local initiatives	-	-	-	×
Local control of development	-	-	-	×

× = Convergence between the main development paradigms and the endogenous development theory.

Figure 4 ED’s relationship to other development theories (from Vázquez-Barquero, 2002: 51).

For decades scholars have questioned ED’s relationship to extra-local entities and broader economic trends. Ray coins the term “neo-endogenous development” to account for the inevitable interactions that occur between local and extra-local actors (such as support from NGOs or government entities) in practice (2001). Others reject the idea that ED is anything other than a slight deviation from the typical mechanisms of global capitalism. “Whilst it may appear that the adjustment strategies of simple commodity producers appear to comprise endogenous development it should be recalled that both their past survival and future prospects depend on their incorporation within a wider framework of capitalism” (Slee, 1994: 193). In a “constructive critique,” Margarian points to endogenous development’s reactionary origins, casting doubt on ED’s theoretical underpinnings (2013). For this reason, Margarian views it as a “second-best” option for peripheral areas underserved by dominant economic trends. Similarly, Slee calls for a more rigorous assessment of the economics of ED projects in order to validate ED as a standalone theory (1994). Both critics frame ED as a reactionary strategy used in areas disadvantaged by the natural unevenness of capitalist development, effectively rejecting the significance of ED’s less tangible benefits. At the same time, discussions within the fields of agroecology, sustainable development, and indigenous studies call for ED as a means of mobilizing and protecting countless intangible resources. After assessing whether or not the changes in Jika Village can truly be considered part of an endogenous development paradigm, the hope is that many of these harder-to-quantify benefits—such as cultural preservation or community empowerment—may be illuminated in the process.

Overlapping Agendas

In practice, principles of PAR, agroecology, and ED often overlap, especially in their commitment to grassroots participation and the empowerment of local communities. Perhaps confusingly, agroecology is considered by many to be a science, a movement, and a practice, the latter sometimes including “creating and sustaining endogenous potentialities” as a key feature (Wezel et al., 2009; Marsden, 2009: 1). The principles of agroecology are used primarily to analyze the existing and desired systems of livelihood generation in Jika Village. While stakeholders and influence are not always restricted to the hyper-local in agroecology, many agroecologists make it clear that the predominant tendency—or preference—in the field is for farmer- or citizen-driven change processes that follow the principles of endogenous development quite closely (Gliessman, 2015; Wezel et al., 2009; Altieri, 1989). Similarly, certain concepts from agroecology and PAR—such as multi- or trans-disciplinarity—come up often in examples of ED but are not explicitly articulated in definitions of the theory. Nor are these overlaps are not limited to the concepts outlined here. Comparable cases have undoubtedly arisen under the guise of “sustainable,” “community,” “self-determined,” “peasant-driven,” “participatory,” and “bottom-up” development. Recognizing the fluidity of these concepts, it is prudent to remember that ED is explicitly rooted in the capitalist mode of production, governed by increasing returns, capital accumulation and economic growth (Vázquez-Barquero, 2002). While this does not exclude the possibility of similar examples in agroecology or any other discipline, it is nevertheless important to denote what is meant by these often overlapping terms within the context of the proposed research project.

Agroecology applies the principles of ecological science to “the study, design and management of sustainable agroecosystems,” and as a result, traditional farming practices are sometimes mobilized to transform or replace modern agroindustrial ones (Altieri & Toledo, 2011: 588; Altieri et al., 1983). While this process of “repeasantization” is celebrated by some, a debate over the appropriateness of such tactics still rages among many academics (Jansen, 2014). Despite the pride villagers take in their farming systems, Jika sits within a booming market economy. Pride is not enough to sustain them financially, to send their children to school or to keep young people and working-aged men from migrating to cities in search of supplemental income. Villagers see the stasis of their current livelihood as a death sentence for the village: without thoughtful, innovative change, future generations may have no choice but to abandon their traditional ways in search of a better life. Analyzing these efforts under the broader theory of ED may also make advocacy, analysis, replicability, and targeted policy suggestions much easier.

8 Results

Eleven months of qualitative data collection led to a massive agglomeration of field notes, audio recordings, and other materials for analysis. The categories for analysis identified during the course of data collection acted as a guide for organizing results. In this way, answers to the research questions could be clearly and systematically articulated. The first section covers existing patterns of life and motivations for taking action in Jika Village. Gaining a holistic understanding of the research community is often considered a prerequisite for PAR, and is particularly helpful in forming a baseline from which to gauge change processes (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). Furthermore, the community’s explicit articulation of visions and goals formed the foundation for further work. This body of evidence

provides insight into why existing forms of top-down rural development may prove undesirable or inadequate for some rural communities in China. Moving to the mechanisms of action, I offer answers to the primary research question by examining the *how* of the change process—what worked in the village and why.

Motivations

Data collected during the course of research included accounts of not only the steps taken to boost livelihood improvement in Jika Village, but also the reasons for taking them in the first place. In order to clearly identify these motivations, a series of meetings (referred to here as the “goal-setting meetings”) was held with community members in Autumn 2017. Participants were invited to consider what problems existed in their community and what they envisioned as an “ideal” situation five years into the future. The concrete goals that would guide the remainder of the research process were then extracted from the future vision. The aim was to collaboratively articulate community goals and ensure that research questions satisfied the needs of both the external researcher (myself) and local participants (community members) directly affected by potential change processes. Instead of dwelling on the negative aspects of village life, participants were encouraged to frame their motivations in a positive light through exercises such as resource mapping, visioning five years into the future, and goal-setting (See Appendix III for a full account of activities). While results from the goal-setting meetings formed the basis for understanding these motives, additional descriptions naturally arose throughout the entire span of the research through participatory observation, in casual conversation with villagers, in crafting promotional materials and analyzing texts from the village blog, etc.

Naturally, priorities varied from person to person in Jika Village. Middle-aged heads of household were often more concerned with matters of income than their elderly parents, who were disproportionately concerned with the loss of traditional knowledge in younger generations. Younger villagers tended to view issues of waste management and environmental degradation more acutely than their elders, while female villagers grappled with the heartbreaking tension of ensuring proper education for their children by sending them far away from their own homes. These slight variations in emphasis across individuals and social groups reinforced the need for involving a diverse array of voices in research activities and decision-making. The collective voice of the village was nevertheless remarkably uniform across time and place. Specific observations or desires voiced in cooperative meetings would be echoed later in conversations with members not in attendance. The following sections outline key aspects of the village’s condition at and prior to the start of research, as well as the environmental (Planet), economic (Profit) and social (People) motivations for initiating change.

Planet

Jika Village is situated in Danba County, a territory whose dramatic topography and rich natural resources have helped shape its residents’ ways of life. The Hengduan Mountains make up a rugged transition zone between the bowl-like Sichuan Basin to the east and the high plains of the Qinghai-Tibetan plateau to the west. Danba County alone ranges in altitude from 1,700 to 5,820 meters (5,577 to 19,094 feet). Its peaks and valleys create a vast diversity of microclimates, making it one of the world’s hotspots for biodiversity, especially in flowering plants. The Hengduan range is home to around 12,000 species of plants, over 3000 of which are endemic (NASA, 2007). Unfortunately, it is estimated that only 8% of the area’s original forest cover remains (CEPF, 2018). From their lookouts in

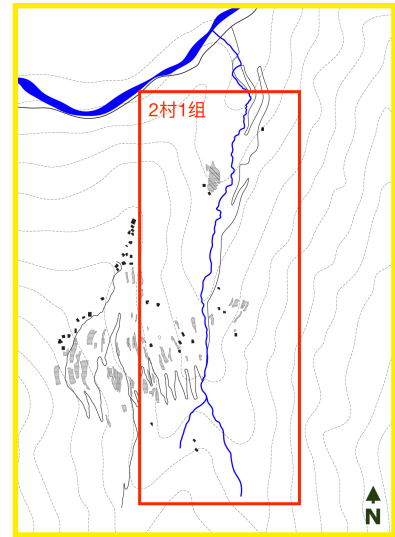


Figure 5 (left) The village's position within the Hengduan Mountains. Figure 6 (right) A detailed map of the field site.

the narrow river valley, residents of Jika Village can easily see the changes time has brought to their environment. To understand the complexity of reaching environmental goals, it is important to first understand the villagers' complex relationship to the land.

Table 2 The community's 5-year environmental goals

Environmental Visions and Goals
See 'verdant hills and crystalline waters'; the natural environment is pristine.
The village and its houses look beautiful.
Plant flowers, fruit along roads and paths.
The scenery is beautiful.
Objective #5: Protect the forest and vegetation, restore and beautify the local environment (plant flowers, etc.) → Shift responsibility to each household or individual; manage garbage/waste collection.

During the goal-setting meetings, the community articulated several visions for the future that indicated their desire for a healthy environment. Waste collection was also discussed at length. Having lived for many years as subsistence farmers, residents of Jika are not in denial about the intimate and yet sometimes exploitative relationship they maintain with their surroundings. Though firearms are now illegal throughout China, villagers often

recall the days of hunting (and eating) native black bears and other wild creatures. While residents recognize a historical lack of environmental awareness, the research process brought new intentions to the fore. During the goal-setting meetings, one elder stated, "It doesn't matter how many trees we plant along the roadside. What matters most is that we build up our [environmental] consciousness." The following excerpt comes from a set of promotional materials written collaboratively by cooperative members and intended to teach prospective visitors about their efforts:

Our native place is remote, hidden deep in the mountains. Because of this, Jika Village has had a difficult time breaking out of poverty. Household incomes have stalled at around 20,000 yuan (USD \$2,930) per year. Our principal sources of income are from selling Sichuan peppercorn and leaving the village to engage in migrant labor. At the same time, our ability to prevent cultural loss and environmental degradation has grown weaker. Over the years we've watched as cultural practices slowly die out: stone towers crumble away; traditional grain mills fall into ruin. We've stood by as the nature that surrounds us is relentlessly defiled: snow white plastic bags are dispatched without a thought; glass bottles litter the mountainsides. Faced with these issues, the people of Jika resolved to form a cooperative. We strive to independently lift ourselves out of poverty. Through efforts like online sales of agricultural products and creating new income sources for women, such as selling traditional woven textiles, we hope to tackle problems of both culture and environment. We are exploring our own path to resilient

livelihoods: one that allows us to raise living standards while protecting our local ecology at the same time. (from *Introducing Jika Village*, an internal promotional document)

Awareness around these issues is growing, but traditional practices still reign supreme. Helping with reconstruction after a landslide in July 2018, I discovered a non-venomous snake in a rock pile. Villagers swiftly captured and steeped it in alcohol for medicinal purposes. A venomous one, discovered shortly afterward, was captured and killed. Though they acknowledge that they have been part of the problem—primary threats to the ecosystem include rampant firewood collection, poaching, overgrazing, and development—villagers still rely heavily on the local ecosystem for food, fodder, firewood, medicine, building materials, water, and energy (hydropower and solar).



Figure 7 (left) A villager transports pig grass collected from the field edge. Figure 8 (right) The pig pen at harvest time.

The contribution of wild and semi-wild⁴ plants, trees, and fungi to village life should not be underestimated. Firewood for cooking is collected from the nearby slopes in winter. Wild vegetables and mushrooms, as well as the occasional “wild chicken” or pheasant, are frequently collected for human consumption. Animal husbandry relies heavily on the natural environment. In the wet summer season, tender herbaceous plants and grasses carpet the mountain slopes. During the day, chickens and cows are sent out to graze along the fields and roads. Pigs are sometimes allowed to graze freely as well, but are kept primarily in pens underneath the houses. During the summer season, villagers (mostly women) collect wild “pig grass” from the slopes not only for immediate feeding, but also to chop and dry for winter feed.



Figure 8 Wild-harvested *Gastrodia elata* drying on a rainy day.

The surrounding environment is also rich with herbal medicines, which are occasionally collected for commercial sale but more often harvested for personal use. The species is listed as ‘Vulnerable’ by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (CPSG, 2004). The degree to which harvesting activities are

⁴ Many wild trees and plants are strategically ‘managed,’ by protecting or encouraging growth in certain areas. Wild species are sometimes transplanted or sown in strategic locations.

monitored is unknown, and though villagers are aware of their historical impact on wildlife (through hunting) and tree species, there appears to be little concern around current foraging practices. Unfortunately, the village's isolated position makes it nearly impossible to access other forms of preventative or routine medical care. Challenges like these highlight the complexity of reaching the village's self-identified environmental goals. The collection of wild food and medicines were often seen as matters of survival, and in many cases also hold tremendous cultural significance. Beautification efforts, such as planting trees, would "require consistent attention," one participant stated at the goal-setting meeting. This requirement is complicated by the fact that many villagers may spend part or most of the year away, and those that remained are heavily burdened with agricultural and social tasks. Though environmental motivations and goals remained secondary to economic and social ones, cooperative members recognized the many benefits that may come from their attainment: improving their own quality of life, protecting the local ecology, and potentially benefitting their tourism business.

People

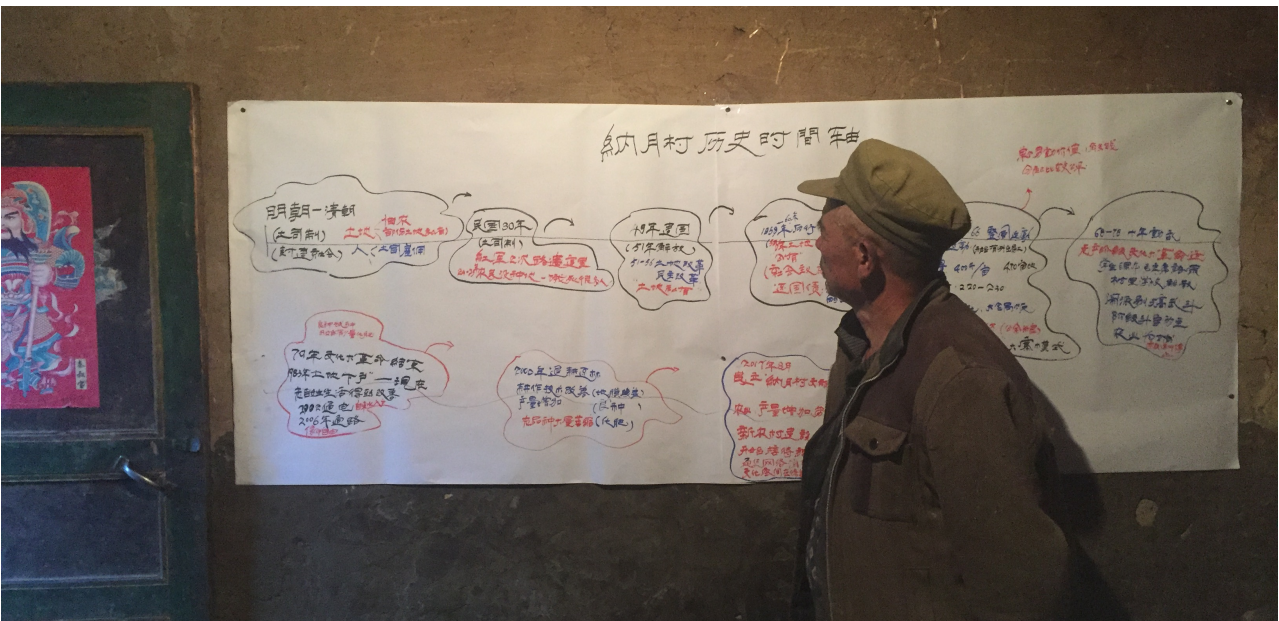


Figure 9 Yang Zhengqing's father goes over the result of the historical timeline activity.

Understanding Jika Village's long history is key to understanding its condition today. Despite its remoteness, La Yue Mountain did not manage to evade the tumultuous events that shaped China in the past century. For villagers, these changes took various forms of loss and gain: loss of traditional knowledge and culturally-significant artifacts; gain of modern conveniences and innovations. The latter has been key in connecting Jika Village to the outside world, but the former is their motivation for change. "In the past we had so many folk tales. But during the Cultural Revolution this place... it didn't matter if it was our own local superstitions or Tibetan Buddhism, none of them were tolerated. In that generation, everyone who remembered the old stories didn't dare speak of them. They didn't pass them down to us. I guess you could say that the chain of our history missed a link there," says Yang Sangen, who was only a little boy when the Cultural Revolution swept through the village.

Table 3 The community's 5-year social goals

Social Visions and Goals
There is a public space (also for hosting guests, doing handicrafts).
There is an activity center for the elderly. The elders have stability and entertainment.
There is a medical center.
The villagers have a good mental outlook.
The quality of education for children has been improved.
Herbal medicine is cultivated or collected for multiple functions (personal use, education and sales).
Quality of life and culture among women has improved.
Public transportation reaches the village.
Overarching Goal: Preserve traditional culture.
Objective #2: Public infrastructure should include an area for traditional <i>guozhuang</i> dancing, an activity center for the elderly, medical center, guesthouse, and multipurpose classroom.
Objective #6: Develop collective activities for the elderly.

One of the central goals of change processes was to restore and preserve traditional Jiarong culture. Cooperative members recognized that this effort was intricately tied to native place, for if villagers were removed from their mountain home, they were likewise removed from their cultural context. Many visions and goals were thus aimed at improving quality of life and infrastructure in their native place, effectively incentivizing residents to remain there.

Under normal circumstances, the village does not have any personal vehicle available for transport. One resident works as a “wild taxi” driver, but typically works routes outside the village. A few villagers have children who own cars but live elsewhere in the province, returning home only occasionally. Typically, villagers hike to the main road on foot, where they can then catch wild taxis or public buses to major cities. The journey often takes a full day. Once at the main road, the county seats of Danba and Xiaojin (towns of around 8,000 and 12,000 people, respectively) are each around 1 hour away by car. Kangding, a midsize city of around 134,000 people, is 4-5 hours away, while the provincial capital, Chengdu, is 6 hours away. More often than not, construction and poor road conditions add to these travel times. Access to these routes is also sporadic and expensive. During the visioning session, participants struggled with whether or not to list public transportation as part of the village’s future. “It’s not very realistic,” said one villager, “we’re so few people up here.” Yang Zhengqing facilitated. “Look,” he said, “if we want to sell more agricultural products, if we want to host tourists, how can we do this without transportation? The cooperative needs to be able to send out goods. Our houses are spread so far apart, how else can we operate?” A few months later, Zhengqing bought a van. Unfortunately, it must stay with him at his home in Chengdu. He has used it only a few times to travel to the village. In the end, cooperative members kept



Figure 10 Villagers hike home from a shopping trip.



Figure 11 Government subsidies supported this home's new paint job, shower house (roof at bottom right), and solar hot water heater proudly bearing the full name of the government program.

their future vision optimistic. Both a village medical center and public transportation access were added to the list.

While public services such as medicine and transportation remain elusive, the village does receive support from government entities for infrastructure development and improvement. These grants and subsidies are often viewed with mixed feelings. On my first research visit, in September 2017, households were busy constructing shower rooms and making other requisite changes to kitchens and outhouses.

The provincial government's "Happy and Beautiful New Village" program, a massive rural development project aimed at alleviating

poverty, provides grants for infrastructure development and is also one of the main drivers of relocation. The program is set to run from 2017 to 2020, and focuses on three revitalization strategies for rural areas.

The combination of new construction, renovation, and protection efforts will not be carried out through large-scale demolition and rebuilding. From the plains to the hills and mountains, all the way to ethnic minority areas, the combination of new construction, renovation and protective renovation of homes will be based on the following mantra: if it is proper to build then build, if it is proper to renovate then renovate, and if it is proper to protect then protect... Considerations for new construction include needs for combining villages together or onsite urbanization. If it is suitable to build new structures in place, then new structures will be built in place. If it is suitable to consolidate, then we will consolidate. (PGSP, 2017)

The program's impact on Jika Village falls firmly within the category of renovation, and has included incentives for improving household infrastructure. Villagers report that grants provided to cover construction projects failed to cover the cost of materials, let alone the opportunity costs associated with staying home to build. Nevertheless, they acknowledge that the improvements are helpful for making visitors feel more comfortable.

During the course of research, both government-supported and independent renovation efforts were nearly continuous. Though more and more building materials, such as concrete, are sourced from outside the village, its residents still utilize local stone from the river and clay from the slopes for many building projects. In this way, costs for materials are kept to a minimum and traditional architecture is preserved. Villagers do not exchange money for labor. As with many other village activities I bore witness to throughout the year—harvesting corn, slaughtering pigs, moving composted manure from homes to fields, sowing corn and potatoes, unearthing paths and fields from landslides, etc.—construction projects are often viewed as community matters rather than household ones. Compensation comes at mealtimes, in the form of food, drink, and good company.

Journal Entry: September 10, 2017

Yesterday A'bi (Grandma) Songbu left for the funeral of a relative over the mountain. It rained for most of the day, but it seemed like the three of us [Zhengqing, Ammi (Grandpa), and I] had fun anyway. I didn't get to help with construction as much as the day before, but I still kept them company. A'bi returned in the evening with candy and alcohol. Also two garish, flower-patterned stools she was very proud of. In the middle of the day a man came selling cabinets off the back of a pickup truck, and Ammi bought one.



In the evening Zhengqing left to talk with some farmers up the hill. I should have gone, but it was raining and very slippery. I find that my presence may also make people uncomfortable if they think that they must speak Sichuanese [rather than Tibetan] together. So I stayed home, and while I washed my feet A'bi came into the kitchen with her [wool-spinning] spool and spoke with me about all sorts—her health issues, her childhood, having children, etc. Life is difficult now still, but getting better.

Profit

After identifying many environmental, social, and economic objectives for the community in the goal-setting meetings, Yang Zhengqing, other cooperative members, and I engaged in a dialogue to identify goals that were both pressing and that could benefit from direct incorporation into the PAR inquiry.⁵ The two economic goals of standardizing tourism activities and increasing the value of agricultural products, outlined in bold in Table 4, were selected. These generated lines of questioning for the villagers' "internal" PAR inquiry, as described in the Methodology section. During the goal-setting meetings, specific themes and tasks were assigned to various cooperative members. Some tasks, such as the establishment of online marketing platforms, were already underway. Throughout the course of research, meetings were held to reflect on progress and plan new cycles of action. Some examples from the results of these internal inquiries will be shared later on in the Results & Discussion section. This section will provide an overview of existing economic conditions in the village and motivations behind the perceived need for economic development.

Table 4 The community's 5-year economic goals

Economic Visions and Goals
No one has to leave the village to do migrant labor.
There is an appropriate balance between household income and expenditures.
There is a standard model for hosting tourists (trained guides, sights, viewing platforms, hiking paths, activities with the stupa and grain mill).
There is agricultural biodiversity, there are multiple (digital) sales and marketing channels for agricultural products, product value is maximized).
The value of agricultural products is maximized to lessen the burdens of labor.

⁵ To do this, each goal could be rephrased in the following fashion:

3. Standardize tourism activities → *How can we utilize existing resources to standardize tourism activities?*

4. Increase value of agricultural products → *How can we utilize existing resources to increase the value of agricultural products?*

Economic Visions and Goals

Younger generations are incentivized to stay in the village.

Objective #1: After five years, the average incomes should be at RMB 10,000 per person per year.

Objective #3: Standardize tourism activities:

- a. Train ten official guides.
- b. Develop one set of explanatory materials about Jika Village.**
- c. Design introductions to notable village sites and hiking routes.**

Objective #4: Increase value of agricultural products:

- a. Select heirloom seed varieties with high yields and market value.**
- b. Use ecological farming practices.**
- c. Establish online sales and marketing platforms (WeChat shop, Taobao page, other public platforms).**

Today, incomes in Jika Village rely heavily on migrant labor. While efforts to collect data on household income proved difficult, community members commonly cite 20,000 yuan (USD \$2,930) as the average annual household income.⁶ Though this likely places villagers slightly above the official Chinese poverty line of 2,300 yuan (USD \$335) per person per year, significant portions of their income go to school and medical fees. In addition, many existing income sources are seen as unsafe and inconsistent. Migrant labor is typically physical, in construction or on large-scale farms. Throughout the meeting, villagers repeated the complaint that old men were still doing hard physical labor. For these reasons, the urge to create or improve revenue sources was not necessarily to increase revenue (at least not immediately), but to create livelihoods that were healthy, resilient, and allowed villagers to work toward other cultural, environmental, and social goals at the same time.

In recent years, Danba County has seen a boom in rural tourism. Visitors went from 2,000 in 2000 to 340,000 in 2012, lured by the landscape, architecture, and Danba's reputation as the "Valley of Beauties" (Jinba, 2013). Nearby villages like Jiaju and Suopo charge entrance fees to peruse their distinctive Jiarong architecture, particularly the mysterious stone watchtowers of the Jiarong people. Jika Village is far more difficult to access than the county's more famous tourist towns, and not a single stone tower remains. Their destruction is thought to have begun during the Jinchuan



Figure 12 (left) A view of Suopo Village and its watchtowers from afar. Figure 13 (right) Jiaju Village in winter.

⁶ While individual households were more than willing to share their own estimates for annual income, data was collected unevenly across respondents, with some households including the incomes of their permanently urban-dwelling children in their calculations and others not. Information on the actual distribution of that type of income was not collected. Though the average still landed quite close to 20,000 yuan, the small number of respondents prevents complete confidence in survey information, as any statistical anomalies could considerably skew results.

Campaigns of the 18th century, when the Qing Empire attacked Jiarong rebel leaders to the north. Those that remained were dismantled for building materials during the Mao era. Though such events have catalyzed the loss of both physical and cultural resources, villagers are determined to preserve what they have and recover as much as they can of what has been lost.

Prior to the start of research, villagers in Jika had already hosted a several groups of foreign and domestic tourists, typically with an emphasis on service, outdoor, or experiential education. Villagers viewed this fun and relatively easy way of generating revenue inside the village, but worried about their guests' overall experience. They felt that they could improve their hosting skills, primarily by "standardizing" their approach. To clarify the use of this term, their desire was not to make each trip identical or adopt the commercial models of successful nearby towns. The desire was rather to get more organized, and to streamline the process of customization for was visiting group. Developing a set of explanatory materials on cultural activities, local ecology, traditional handicrafts, herbal medicines and other local features would serve as a powerful promotional tool and act as an internal guide for villagers on how to lead classes and activities for visitors. Designing introductions for notable village sites and hiking routes would ensure that even recreational activities could be educational, and would emphasize the unique charms of Jika. In meetings, the cooperative expressed a hope that tourism activities and agricultural sales may be mutually beneficial—that tourists visiting the village may continue to support the village by buying crops, and that consumers might be interested in seeing where their food came from.

Dispatch from the Field: October 9, 2017*



Today is the last day of the construction of the stupa in Jika Village. The builders donned fine clothing honor fellow villagers and guests alike. Last night the women had already started preparing a picnic, carefully boiling the smoked meat and transferring the lovingly-brewed barley wine into bottles for transport. Homegrown popcorn was popped, noodles fried, and steamed buns stuffed with pickled vegetables. All of our customary Tibetan foods were prepared. In accordance with tradition, after the completion of a stupa everyone must paint Mani stones and make tsa tsa using the best clay. Once the clay is properly mixed, grain is added and it is pinched into a cone. It is

then put into a mold and pressed with the 4 Buddha images or 108 Buddhas. Of course, this is not simply for looks. When we make the tsa tsas, we must contemplate the scriptures with a sincere heart, and pray to Buddha to protect the village, for peace and abundant harvests. The villagers circled the stupa three times, reciting the appropriate scripture. A representatives of the village elders of the village appealed to the gods for peace and led everyone in a prayer to the Buddha.

In the evening, the men, women, old and young people gathered together to celebrate dance guozhuang. After dancing for a time, the men and women sat in two rows facing one another and began to sing Jiarong folk songs. Some were songs to be sung in the fields. Others were to be sung at the time of marriage. . . Sometimes their sound makes one feel a bit melancholy. A professor at The Sichuan Conservatory of Music once told me, "There are still folk songs out there, but they cannot grow anymore. If we don't collect them, they may truly disappear within our lifetime." The villagers of Jika are certainly not willing to let them leave us. Not only will we rescue them and record them, but we will also let their splendor radiate well into the future.

The event is both solemn and full of life, allowing the spirits of everyone involved to be washed and promoted. From today on and from generation to generation, today is now the auspicious date for worshipping the stupa.

*Written by Yang Zhengqing and shared via WeChat. The post describes part of a service trip to Jika Village with schoolchildren and parents from Chengdu. The mostly Han Chinese visitors learned about Jiarong culture and helped villagers construct a stupa in the site where a previous one had been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

Unlike their plateau-dwelling counterparts, Jiarong Tibetans maintain diverse farming systems. Altitudes range from 2,300 to 2,800 m (7,546 to 9,186 ft) at the study site, and the subtropical highland climate fosters a diverse agricultural system combining agroforestry, row cropping, home-based animal husbandry and, occasionally, pastoralism. Today, the residents of Jika Village believe that they still farm much as their ancestors did, albeit with less land.⁷ The constriction has affected variety selection, farming practices, and general self-sufficiency. Data from a January 2018 survey of households in Jika Village and interviews provide an overview of crop production and food self-sufficiency in 2018.⁸

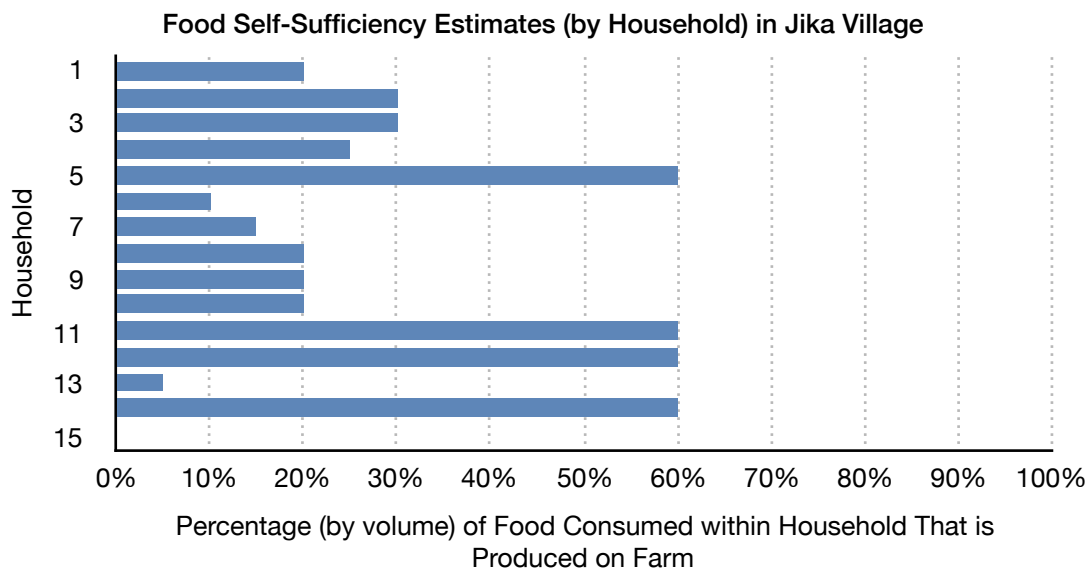


Figure 14 Self-reported estimates of food self-sufficiency. Survey respondents indicated that staple goods such as rice and wheat flour were typically purchased from outside the village, along with vegetable oil, tea, salt, soy sauce, and other condiments.

From an agroecological perspective, the farm system does not exhibit much potential for intensification or expansion. Villagers are staunchly opposed to buying in commercial feed, and therefore raise only as many animals as they feel the land can sustain. This typically means 2-3 cows, 2-3 pigs, and several laying hens, whose numbers tend to vary widely due to predation from wild cats, birds of prey, and Siberian weasels. Corn husks and stalks are saved for wintering the dairy cows. Corn and other grain is fed to animals as needed, and kitchen waste is fed to pigs year-round. Livestock rearing is also constrained by labor availability. Villagers grow a diverse array of crops for various purposes (see Table 5), and employ intercropping and agroforestry techniques to maximize arable land efficiency. For these reasons, the villagers focused not on increases in overall production, but rather on the *value* of their existing crops.

⁷ As a result of the Grain for Green program, cultivated land area was severely diminished in the year 2000. For example, Yang Zhengqing's family reported giving up 16.1 mu (1.07 ha; 2.65 acres) of cropland to the government program. They now cultivate around 3 mu (0.2 ha; 0.5 acres).

⁸ Data collected from 15 of 17 households, as two households living permanently in nearby cities were unavailable for response.

Table 5 Crops grown in Jika Village and their typical uses

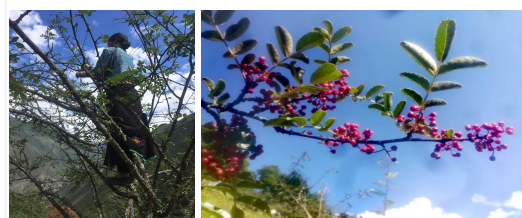
Primary Usage	Crops
Feed for livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corn - Potatoes - Oats - Summer squash (南瓜)
Commercial sale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sichuan pepper - Walnuts - Goats & sheep (meat and/or wool) - Honey (also for personal consumption, important for gifting)
Personal consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other bean varieties (including green beans, bing beans, fava beans, runner beans, white beans, erji beans, little hua beans, large hua beans) - Soybeans - Apples - Pears - Wheat - Tibetan barley - Barley - Sorghum - Cucumbers - Luffa gourd - Winter squash/Pumpkin - Various brassicas (Cabbage, bok choy, etc.) - Various alliums (Spring onions, garlic, etc.) - Peas - Chili peppers - Tomatoes - Eggplant - Herbs (Cilantro, Agastache, fennel, etc.) - Pigs - Cows (primarily for dairy, never meat) - Chickens (primarily for eggs)

With limited access to transportation and urban markets, villagers have typically relied upon agricultural brokers—traveling middle men—to collect their salable crops. Sichuan peppercorn is their most important agricultural product. Though villagers use only ecological growing practices (no synthetic fertilizers, chemical pesticides, herbicides, etc.) and pick the entire crop by hand, brokers have a flat market rate of 55 yuan (USD \$8) per jin (500 g).⁹ Villagers believe that their agricultural products are high quality and extremely safe, and that they are thus grossly undervalued when sold in this manner.

Prior to the start of research, a plan was already underway to reserve 100 jin of Sichuan pepper for a crowdfunding experiment, as a way to raise money for the establishment of other online platforms. In Fall 2017, the Dapeng Youth Volunteer Team sold that 100 jin at around 100 yuan per jin through the crowdfunding site, not including the cost of packaging and postal fees.

Sichuan Pepper

The iconic cuisine of Sichuan Province is dominated by two flavors: 麻辣 or “spicy and numbing.” The spicy, of course, comes from chili peppers, but the “numbing” comes from *huajiao*, Sichuan pepper or peppercorn. Its genus, *Zanthoxylum*, is in the citrus family. The seed husk provides a unique flavor to Sichuanese dishes and also causes a curious vibrating or “numbing” sensation in the mouth. It grows on very thorny, bramble-like trees all across Asia.



⁹ As of Autumn 2017.

The cooperative also identified the continued use and improvement of ecological farming practices, as well as the preservation and sale of selected heirloom (open-pollinated) crop varieties as additional objectives during the research process. While the main motivation may have been economic, these strategies held additional environmental and cultural benefits.

The November 2017 goal-setting meetings utilized two tools of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) commonly employed in engaged research: community resource mapping and a historical timeline activity. On the surface, these tools are useful for researchers to gain broad understandings of their research sites. However, the collaborative nature of these activities also hold other advantages. Participatory modeling asks community members to articulate their everyday reality in new and novel ways. The collective process of articulation allows research participants to construct a common understanding of the situation, and can be a powerful tool for self-esteem building and mobilization (Narayanasamy, 2009). It also helps to reframe everyday experiences or knowledge in ways which can make solution-planning much more manageable (Cavestro, 2003). The results of these activities, particularly resource-mapping, became a sort of toolbox for development processes that took place over the course of research. Fueled by perceived issues, motivated by future visions, and equipped with collectively-identified instruments, the villagers entered the winter months with an eye for action.



Figure 15 Results of the collaborative resource mapping activity.

Journal Entry: November 18, 2017

A'bi Songbu's eyes are trained on my bowl as she waits for me to place it back on the low table. When I do, she hastily pours the steaming butter tea up to its brim. Even if I've taken only one small sip from the tin bowl, it must always be full. My vegetarianism is a persistent struggle for A'bi Songbu. The first time I came to the village, she prepared the cured pork fat in about six different ways before finally announcing—wok brimming with pork cracklin's—"if you don't eat it this way, I give up."

After the meeting tonight, lazy-eyed and full of noodles, our thoughts lingered on the meeting's historical timeline activity. The Great Famine, the Cultural Revolution; the Yang family is full of stories from these disastrous times. "When I was a girl," A'bi says, "there were two wild plum trees on the mountain. I remember the exact location of each of them. In the hungry times, we would run to the trees. The fruit that dropped to the ground was rotting. We'd wipe off the dirt and pop them into our mouths. Even one tiny plum was enough to make us forget that we were starving." Each time A'bi Songbu moves to fill my bowl, however full I am, I try to accept or deny her with grace—with respect to the elders who've lived through days when choice was not a matter of preference but a matter of survival.



Mechanisms

With a clear understanding of the village's motivations for initiating change processes, we now turn our attention to the development process itself. The changes that took place during the course of research defied my own initial expectations. New infrastructure, marketing channels, promotional materials, and tourism activities have been developed. At the time of writing, villagers are busy planning a music festival for the dual purpose of generating revenue and "awakening the villagers' cultural awareness by celebrating and preserving a local song and dance tradition on the verge of extinction."¹⁰ In the village's personal chat group, videos of young people learning to weave, milking cows, and harvesting Sichuan peppercorn are shared and received with delight. Recognizing that continuity is key to reaching the village's goals, Gengzhe Zhima has personally resolved to stay in the village for two full years, placing all of her energy into development efforts. In a little less than one year, the village has seen more changes than is possible to catalogue here. Instead, representative examples will be used to illustrate the key aspects of *how* change processes occurred.

The primary research question is concerned with how indigenous knowledge and endogenous potential contribute to agroecological development and livelihood improvement in the research community. Assessing the full extent of agroecological development and livelihood improvement in study site is beyond the scope of this research, although positive steps have certainly been detected. It is important, however, to deconstruct the use of the terms "endogenous potential" and "indigenous knowledge" in this case study. Here, the latter can be considered a key component of the former. Endogenous potential captures a broad range of existing physical and knowledge-based assets held by the local community. For example, the beautiful landscape, skill in "organic" agricultural practices,

¹⁰ Quoted from an internal proposal.

tight social networks, spacious houses, hiking trails, and reverence for folk customs can all be considered to hold a great deal of endogenous potential. The concept of indigenous knowledge is a bit stickier.

Are the Jiarong “indigenous”?

My use of the term “indigenous” to describe traditional Jiarong knowledge is highly contested in the broader context of Tibetan sovereignty. China officially recognizes 56 separate ethnic groups: the Han majority, and 55 ethnic minorities that make up around 8.5% of the total population (PRC Census, 2010). The PRC voted in support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007, but does not recognize any of its own ethnic minorities as indigenous groups. Despite matching closely with general conceptions of indigenous people across the world, in the 1990s Tibetans rejected the use of the term to describe themselves, worried that it undermined their struggle for sovereignty by framing them as simply a “tribe” in need of rights (Lokyitsang, 2017). Today, more and more Tibetans are embracing the term in order to leverage calls for human rights and to express solidarity with other populations actively resisting their oppressors (Davis, 2014; Lokyitsang, 2017). The real answer? “It depends,” writes one Tibetan scholar (Lokyitsang, 2017). In this paper, use of the term “indigenous knowledge” should be considered a nod to the lengthy history of Jiarong people in their native place, currently marginalized status in Chinese society, and distinct culture and language.



Dominant narratives have repeatedly diminished the potential contributions of traditional knowledge to global development trends. Indeed, it may appear counterintuitive to the bearers of such wisdom that the tools for positive change have been right at their feet all along. When confronted by researchers, one Tanzanian farmer asks, “If indigenous knowledge is so good, why is my farm so poor?” (Briggs, 2005). The farmer was onto something—the mere existence of so-called “indigenous knowledge” does not guarantee its successful employment in any development scheme. Compartmentalizing it is also problematic. For years, scholars conceived of indigenous knowledge as something separate from western scientific knowledge, but this division is neither realistic nor helpful for incorporation into development practices.

In reality, few farmers compartmentalise knowledge into such separate, self-contained entities, but rather develop knowledge as something that is hybridised, mediated and local. Farmers are nothing if not pragmatic and utilitarian in how they assess and use knowledge. If a particular piece of knowledge works for her/him, and it makes economic and socio-cultural sense, then it will be used, regardless of whether it is drawn from western science, a repertoire of local knowledge or some other source. (Briggs, 2005)

In this way, efforts to extract “indigenous knowledge” from a community requires one to freeze a “fundamentally dynamic entity—cultural knowledge” in time and space (Agrawal, 1995). By including of both terms—indigenous knowledge and endogenous potential—in the research inquiry, the importance and contribution of all local knowledge to the development process can be honored without falling into the intricacies of this debate. To understand how these endogenous—particularly knowledge-based—potentials can contribute to positive change, we must analyze the mechanisms through which they were recognized and deployed. In other words, what conditions existed during the course of research that allowed for differences in how local knowledge was recognized and

deployed? By analyzing data and reflecting together with participants, the following conditions were identified: 1) *the construction of collective confidence, particularly through ethnic identity*; 2) *establishment of organized systems for decision-making and record keeping*; 3) *empowerment of women*; 4) *inclusion of multiple generations*; and 5) *support of extra-village partners*.

1) *The construction of collective confidence* over the course of research came up in both surface-level observations and profound matters of cultural identity. The subject arose as early as the first stakeholder meetings with Yang Zhengqing. Prior to the start of research, the villagers had hosted visitors a few times, mainly foreign student groups engaged in service learning. Zhengqing had helped facilitate most of these visits. He observed that seeing their native place through the eyes of visitors seemed to be a transformational experience for villagers, many of whom have not traveled widely outside the village. Residents often shared with me that before hosting outsiders, they had never thought of the views from their homes as particularly beautiful. They were simply too familiar. “In the past, the thought of hosting guests never even crossed our minds,” one resident shared. “We looked at Four Sisters Mountain, all those other places nearby, and we thought, ‘those are the places with tourism potential.’ Who would have ever thought foreigners would want to come all the way here to check this place out?!” Hearing guests from the other side of the world wax poetic about landscape changed the way they saw it as well, and allowed them to look past some of the shortfalls they had identified in their hosting abilities.

Though the idea of assigning value to local resources based on the views of outsiders may have landed them in dangerous territory, villagers quickly moved past this somewhat passive, externally-driven form of confidence-building to assigning their own values to resources and practices. A very concrete form of change this brought was the incentive to make more traditional clothing for men in the village. In earlier cooperative meetings it had been discussed that many men, who previously had very rarely wore traditional Jiarong dress outside holidays and other important ceremonies, were lacking proper outfits for *guozhuang* parties. The village made it a habit to dress up their guests too, often leaving their men without proper attire. “Out here, you can’t dance *guozhuang* in your normal clothes,” said one villager. “It’s just not right.” The effort became a powerful means of reclaiming cultural identity.

These findings are consistent with other accounts of endogenous development from across the world. When a negative narrative that has been internalized by the community can be flipped, the community gains confidence. For instance, after Dutch farmers who had long been framed as ‘environmental criminals’ were invited to the table and taken seriously during multi-stakeholder debates about sustainability, the farmers gained the confidence to try out new resource management strategies (de Bruin, 1995). Both Christopher Ray and Antonio Vázquez-Barquero write extensively on the interplay between identity and endogenous development in Europe, likening the process to psychotherapy (Ray, 2001; Vázquez-Barquero, 2002). Just as individuals cannot be expected to perform at their best in the middle of an identity crisis, many communities can only reach their full potential when a sense of belonging or common pride in territorial culture has been established. “The local who stayed at home is re-cast from the ‘failure’, the person ‘not clever enough to escape’, but someone who has chosen to stay and to affirm this part of his/her identity” (Ray, 2001: 118). In the first few months of research in Jika Village, comments were often made about the village’s marginal status as poor, small, and lacking in modern conveniences. Conversations routinely ended in rants about the local government—an elected body whose jurisdiction includes both Jika Village (Group 1 of La Yue 2nd Village) and the significantly larger Group 2 of La Yue 2nd Village—with whom villagers

were continually dissatisfied. Their relationship with the local government led to feelings of disenfranchisement and lack of agency, as they felt their needs and opinions were never taken into consideration. At the same time, cooperative members felt that the complex interpersonal dynamics at play in the jurisdiction made it impossible to elect anyone better. While these unfortunate circumstances continued to create roadblocks throughout the entire course of research, the villagers' narrative soon flipped as they realized they could also go through with their own decisions and initiate action without support from the local government.

Journal Entry: February 19, 2018 (Tibetan New Year)

Today we woke up early after a night of drinking, snacking, and basketball strategizing at Xiuhua's house. We ate breakfast quickly and items were packed in bags and loaded up in a couple of cars. It was bright and sunny. We headed up the mountain and parked on the roadside. We commenced on foot past another family's stupa, all the way to the very top of the mountain. There was still snow on the paths, but we managed to make our way up without incident. Other members of the extended Yang family were already there, young men perched in the trees hanging prayer flags, elders lighting incense and pine boughs in the ancestral stoves. Fresh eggs were placed precipitously on the edges of the stupa, along with candles and other offerings. We circumambulated the stupa three times, clockwise, then crouched at the edges of the forest clearing to chat and take turns praying and offering to the ancestors. Family members had to 'ketou' three times each, and a continuous flow of incense wood and sticks was maintained throughout.

After some time, the younger kids—middle school or high school age—and some adults came around the edges with baijiu [Chinese grain alcohol] from each family and copious snacks and candies. Baijiu was sipped from the bottle cap or a small glass goblet—communally, of course. Peanuts, crackers, sweets, rice puffs, and all other sorts were hastily dumped into the hands or laps of all those sitting on the margins. The smallest children ran around creating moderate levels of chaos until one of them started to cry or slid down the mountainside. A pudgy 土狗 [mutt dog] was at times mobilized to calm the tears. It was impossible to tell whose babies were whose, as the collective 'mothering' instinct is strong throughout all members of the community, regardless of gender or age. After the parade of drinks and snacks subsided, the families gathered in small circles for lunch—stuffed steamed buns, slices of pork fat doused in chili flakes, barley wine, momo [plain steamed buns]. We picnicked until it was time to head down the slope for the final day of the basketball games.



Another place we see this evolution is on the village's own WeChat blog¹¹. Used as a platform for publicity and also as a tool for recording changes in the village, posts are written by young people (primarily Zhima, as this became one of her tasks upon returning to the village). It is also explicitly used as a way to teach its wider audience about the village and its traditions, and has evolved into an important platform for expressing pride in Jiarong culture. Topics range from rare flowers found on the mountain slopes to communal ceremonies held after the birth of each new calf. Practices that may be viewed as 'backwards' in today's society are instead celebrated. In an article about traditional farming practices, Zhima writes, "The spring planting is always done collectively. Each day, the residents of all fifteen households collect at one or two households work the land. Doing the math, we see that at

11 Referred to generally here as a "blog," the publication is actually an "Official Account," a platform for publishing small online articles that may then be shared and read. Anyone may read the articles, but WeChat users must subscribe to the feed in order to see new content as it's published. The account currently has a few hundred subscribers.

minimum this requires eight full days of labor. This may look like the sort of collective farming we see in history books, except that at the end of the season, the fruits of the land are all ours” (LYJV A, 2018). More recent blogs also begin to incorporate terms from the native Situ dialect, however the lack of Situ script complicates this, as approximated pronunciations must use either Mandarin characters or the Latin alphabet. Nevertheless a growing feeling of pride can be detected in all types of data collected.

2) *The establishment of organized systems for decision-making and record keeping* began prior to the start of the research project, with the establishment of the village cooperative (informally in 2016 and officially in 2017). In September 2017, I was re-introduced¹² to villagers and sat in on a cooperative meeting. It was the first meeting they had had in several weeks, and was instigated and facilitated by Yang Zhengqing¹³, who was back in the village briefly to help his family with a construction project. Nine other members (all men) attended. During the meeting, the discussion was wide-ranging, and participants openly recognized the need for organizational systems to bring their ideas to fruition, not only for their own internal usage, but to also improve outsiders’ perception of their work. The following are taken from transcripts of the meeting.

Yang: “You might be able to help us with that... What do we have that we can actually sell, Including foraged crops, etc.?”

Me: “Right, right.”

Yang: “Wild vegetables, fruit...”

Me: “You’ve never done [a survey on] that?”

Yang: “No, we’ve never done that. We should record all of that information.”

...

Yang: “We should start communicating [with outsiders] through the cooperative, in a more organized way.”

Participant: “Oh yeah, that way people will find us more reliable and trustworthy. They’ll feel that this is a work unit, that there are people managing and organizing and recording. That there are firm rules.”

Though the village cooperative existed previously as a system of group decision-making, the practice of record keeping was not as mature. Many of the goals set by the community—such as the standardization of tourism activities—intrinsically required data collection and documentation. In the pursuit of agricultural goals, internal data collection strategies were designed and implemented for the assessment of elements such as heirloom seed varieties. Toward the standardization of tourism activities, the need for proper record keeping and developing organized sets of materials for presentation to outside actors was even more explicit. During the course of research, promotional materials and internal documents, such as a catalogue of educational and other activities that could be offered to visiting groups, were crafted by individuals, small working groups, or collaboratively in cooperative meetings. Examples of these materials are provided in Appendix IV.

Involvement in the PAR process, with its iterative cycles of action and reflection, was also key in encouraging this kind of documentation throughout the course of research. From April to June 2018, three tour groups visited the village. Prior to these visits, the villagers and I co-developed a system

12 My first visit to Jika Village was as an experiential education instructor in July 2016.

13 At its official founding, Yang Zhengqing was voted General Director and Chairman of the Board of the village cooperative, however his work Chengdu does not allow him to spend much time in the village.

that would require the cooperative to first reflect independently on their hosting experience, and then go over feedback that had been collected from visitors. These reflections would then inform planning processes and matters of hosting for the next group. Though reflecting on the experiences of hosting was not a new activity for the cooperative, the act of documenting those reflections in writing was new. Collecting written feedback from guests was also a practice for which evaluation questions and materials had to be designed from scratch. Using these standard and iterative cycles of action and reflection accelerated the change process in small but perceptible ways. For example, certain activities planned for a visiting group in April were jeopardized by bad weather. Not wishing to veer from the agreed-upon itinerary, the villagers led their guests in an outdoor activity for which participants were somewhat ill-equipped. Though the visitors themselves made no great mention of this in their feedback, reflecting on this experience led villagers to incorporate “rainy-day alternatives” into their itineraries for future groups, a huge improvement in organization and progress toward the ultimate goal of improving and creating “standard” systems of tourism management. Examples of these reflection and feedback materials are provided in Appendix V.

3) *The empowerment of women* was a slow and deliberate process that, once underway, proved instrumental in catalyzing change processes. After the November 2017 planning meeting, I was personally uncomfortable about the absence of female voices in decisions that would guide the entire research project. Yang Zhengqing agreed that this situation was not ideal, but that if I wanted women to speak frankly about their own visions and goals for the village, it would be most productive to meet with them separately. In December 2017, I conducted an informal group interview with female villagers¹⁴ with the following goals in mind: stress the importance of their position in the village and voice in village affairs, inform them directly of the results of the goal-setting meeting, and solicit additional and/or alternative viewpoints on those results. Their viewpoints were then relayed back to the rest of the cooperative and incorporated into development processes. This strategy of holding separate meetings was cumbersome at best. Slowly, with the help of Gengzhe Zhima, a 22-year-old resident who graduated from college and returned to the village at the beginning of 2018, we found other strategies to overcome this problematic issue.



Figure 16 Gengzhe Zhima on the mountain.

Many major changes in the mechanisms at play in change processes coincided with the return of Gengzhe Zhima. Beginning in March 2018, Yang Zhengqing and his NGO began sponsoring Zhima for her work in the village, receiving 1,000 yuan (around \$150 USD) per month. Zhima personally committed to spending two full years in the village, taking on a coordinating role in the change processes at work, becoming my own primary partner in research activities and ensuring that change processes could be continued sustainably

after my own departure from the community. In March, many responsibilities that Yang Zhengqing or I had previously shouldered (organizing and facilitating meetings, acting as interpreter, communicating

14 A few male villagers were also present, including Yang Zhengqing, to explicate the results of their meeting, but the purpose of the gathering was made very clear.

with cooperative members, etc.) were transferred to Zhima. As a young woman herself and steadfast advocate for equity in collective decision-making, she eagerly took on the challenge of bringing more female voices into the research process. As a permanent resident and active member of the community, Zhima also had firsthand insight into the reasons behind many of the issues we struggled with, and we were soon able to use these to our advantage.



Figure 16 The village cooperative meeting between work sessions.

Sichuanese people have a reputation for their relaxed attitude toward punctuality, and the people of Jika Village are often no exception. Zhenggqing, Zhima, and I knew to schedule meetings not just minutes, but *hours* ahead. We generally expected that for meetings scheduled for noon, participants might begin to arrive at around 3pm and the meeting could commence around 6pm. We once finished a meeting and ate dinner around midnight. Understanding this cultural quirk made it slightly easier to manage, but it still led to frustration, inefficiency, and inconvenience for many involved. In March, as Zhima and I strategized for an important meeting, we decided to try something new: not scheduling it. The collective nature of work meant that households were already routinely “hosting”¹⁵ other villagers for work tasks. During the month of March, the main task was to “dig out” the rich layer of composted manure and hay that had gathered throughout the year in the animal pens beneath the houses and transport it closer to the family’s fields for spring planting. In order to not exclude anyone, Zhima notified each household that we would be holding a cooperative meeting after lunch at the house Chirbuk.¹⁶ To our surprise, we found that not only did we eliminate the punctuality issue, but that holding meetings in this fashion also carried another unexpected benefit. At such events, *all* villagers participate however they can. This means that women typically work side by side with men, carrying heavy loads and cracking jokes all day long. After lunch, the entire group typically relaxes, gossips, and recreates for a time before continuing the physical work. By holding a meeting in this space, where any traditional expectations around gender felt least apparent, women were relaxed and far more eager to participate than in any other meeting we had ever hosted. The exclusive spaces we had inadvertently

15 The Mandarin term “请客” or “to host guests” is used in Jika Village to denote either hosting others for a celebration or for assistance with work (often an agricultural task or construction project). Large lunches and dinners are typically prepared for the helpers, and guests often help by taking on cooking duties while their hosts work. At these events, tasks are taken on so fluidly by the community that an outsider may find it difficult to distinguish who the actual ‘hosts’ are.

16 Each house has its own traditional name, which in some cases also serves as the surname of its residents. Most likely because of the lack of appropriate script for Situ, the government does not recognize these local names, and thus, the official Mandarin names of many villagers are completely different from names they commonly use amongst friends and family.

created during previous meetings felt off-limits to many villagers, and thus Zhima and I committed to this new configuration for the remainder of the project.

By the end of the research period, many of the most integral actors in change processes within the village were women. Embroidering and weaving had long been on the list of activities the cooperative was interested in teaching to tourists, as it is a point of historical pride for Jika Village, and also a skill its residents feel is in great need of preservation and perpetuation. Zhima and I, however, worked with women to imagine how weaving might generate even more income in the low seasons. Because the most easily marketable crops (Sichuan peppercorn, walnuts, honey, etc.) all come around the same time in late summer and autumn, Zhima felt the village could benefit greatly from the addition of non-seasonal products. Woven goods could be produced at little upfront cost, and were time-consuming but flexible. It was also a creative, culturally significant skill dominated by women. In spring and early summer, the women were busy weaving wool for men's outfits and accessories for those lacking. In June, the Chinese-American teacher of a visiting student group fell in love with the "*dshitei*," an intricately woven belt worn by Jiarong people. After a class on the subject, she asked the village's most prolific weaver whether or not she'd ever sold any. Auntie Si'mer sheepishly confirmed that she'd only ever sold one, also to a visiting teacher. Si'mer said she'd be happy to sell one, but she and the other women refused to name a price. When the teacher asked my opinion, I suggested that we go over the estimated price for raw materials and the number of days it took Si'mer to weave the piece. In this way, we came to a sum that everyone felt was fair, and the *dshitei* was sold.

Auntie Si'mer's belt sale was not the only time a villager had trouble conducting business face-to-face. Reflecting on that and many other interactions, Zhima and I discussed ways in which we could prevent discomfort but also encourage villagers to earn money. In early meetings, cooperative members were interested in the mutual benefits of conducting tourism activities and selling farm products. They felt that visitors would naturally be interested in purchasing their products. Unfortunately, the majority of their visitors were foreigners, many of whom would be unable to carry their products home through customs, and would be unable to buy their products through online platforms. At the same time, the cooperative was unified in its commitment to making visitors feel like guests. They insisted on a two-tiered, flat daily rate for visitors regardless of the number of activities and classes they chose. This way, they figured, they could talk about money as little as possible, and focus instead on getting to know each other. They were true to their word. When visitors left, their hosts would lavish gifts of Sichuan pepper, walnuts or barley wine upon them in the same way they would their own personal guests. One of the first foreign groups they had ever hosted felt that they must compensate for the villager's generosity, and just before their departure left small amounts of cash under their dish ware. Upon discovering the money, villagers called Yang Zhengqing in a panic, insisting that they take it back. Clearly, any face-to-face commercial transaction was an impossibility for villagers. The genuine relationships they maintained with guests were also part of the village's unique pull as a tourism destination. When the women of the village began to mobilize around salable textiles, I asked how they might feel about having a place in the village where



Figure 17 Zhima and I presenting on women's empowerment strategies at an academic conference in Yunnan Province.

guests could go unaccompanied to purchase these items—a “store” of sorts, where items were labeled ahead of time and payments were made on the honors system. Zhima and the others were delighted with this idea, and within weeks the Village Museum (see inset box) was created for this and other purposes.

The Village Museum

“On the first day, I notified the others that we were going to renovate the small shed. The second day, they came with their tools and food. The young people are almost absent—there’s only me, one other young person, and a 7-year-old boy. Everyone else is middle-aged or older, and mostly female. But we get the work done. Those who can carry the clay on our backs fetch the clay. Those who can spread it upon the walls spread it upon the walls. Those who can bring water bring the water. In the process, there is no lack of jokes or laughter, and there’s even a little wine. We work full-on for two days, each of us covered in mud, until the original color of our shoes becomes a mystery.



the original color of our shoes becomes a mystery.



Our work is pretty much over now, we’re just waiting for the mud on the walls to dry. Our Village Museum is as follows: the traditional stone walls were completed 15 years ago, topped with a cement roof to prevent leaks. The interior walls are done in the traditional way, by combining pine needles and local clay. This is spread on in three separate layers. The floor is dirt pounded and flattened with great force. The outside is whitewashed with lime, blending in nicely with the natural environment and nearby houses. Some of the villagers donated the antique door and windows. And in this way, the little structure was fixed” (LYJV B, 2018).

Finding ways to include village women in cooperative meetings and acknowledging the cultural and financial value they had to contribute to the process proved a key mechanism for engaging in endogenous development in Jika Village. The engagement of young people in change processes helped to break down gender-based expectations across generations, and gave female leaders like Zhima the opportunity help to steer the ship. Women became the focal point of a 2018 crowdfunding campaign for Sichuan peppercorn sales. Highlighting both the challenges and successes of women in Jika Village sheds light on their condition.

4) *The inclusion of multiple generations* in development processes not only contributed unique benefits and skills to the effort, but also hit upon one of the cooperative’s primary goals. In the December 2017 meeting held to gather development perspectives from female cooperative members, women voiced approval for decisions made during the previous meeting, but, as one elder put it, “Our concerns are many, but one of the most central is hoping that our children do not have to make their money outside of the village. If we were able to provide good opportunities here at home, well, that would be wonderful.” For women, the concern was twofold. Not only did the migration of young people to cities erode their cultural identity. For rural youth, work outside the village was often grueling. Later in the meeting, a male participant voiced frustration toward the public education system that prevents many young people from the village from getting good jobs. “We work and work our whole lives. We earn money through blood and sweat. You can go get an education, but it only pays off if your test scores are high. If you don’t test well, it’s all a waste. It’s an incredibly

difficult way to live.” While many younger people from the village have gone on to thrive in nearby cities and towns, many others who have made significant investments in higher education are effectively barred from their chosen profession by rigorous professional testing standards (Hou, 2017). Older villagers felt that if they were able to create a thriving economy at home, it might convince young people not to leave. Whenever possible, young people were encouraged to get involved in project activities and to contribute their voices to village decision making.

Indigenous or otherwise socially marginalized groups all across the world face challenges in the transfer of traditional knowledge to younger generations (Tauli-Corpuz, 2010; Paül, 2013). In Jika Village, this transfer is likely threatened by common social stigmas around Tibetan and other minority peoples, but also by physical barriers. Constrained by distance and the academic calendar, most children and young adults return to the village only twice per year, during the Spring Festival holiday (usually in or around February) and summer vacation. One article on the village blog explains and celebrates the time-consuming practice of weaving *dshitei*, a tradition passed down mainly along female lines. “In the past, this skill was seen by women as an important symbol of whether or not she could become a woman. From an early age, [the girls] sat at the edge of the creek, learning the skills while the cattle and sheep grazed. Who knows how many days and months must have passed between apprenticeship and mastery.” At the end of the article, Zhima writes, “Traditional artisanal needs are in urgent need of protection. Today, many children are reluctant to learn this kind of craftsmanship. This article is a call for Jiarong youth to inherit and protect our culture and traditional skills.” While some evidence of renewed interest has been detected, not all youth must participate in the acts themselves in order to contribute to this effort. In other documented examples of endogenous development, this issue has been addressed with formalized training programs, such as “People Schools” in Galicia, Spain, where elders are tasked with teaching local schoolchildren skills of cultural significance (Paül, 2013: 182). During the course of research, other skills prevalent in younger generations proved integral in these efforts as well.

The Dapeng Youth Volunteer Team was formed in 2016, and takes on specific tasks in the village such as fundraising for and organizing the annual La Yue Mountain basketball tournament and organizing Jika Village’s crowdfunding campaign for Sichuan peppercorn sales. During holidays and breaks, the group worked onsite. During the school year, when members scattered all across the province, those who were able to worked remotely. Since the main strategy for boosting the value of agricultural crops was through online direct marketing channels, this also offered young people an important opportunity to support their elders, very few of whom have regular internet access on their own cell phones. Young people and family members who live outside the village may also act as valuable catalyzers for tourism marketing and product sales. Zhima runs the village WeChat blog and communicates with a wide array of other actors including consumers, potential visitors, and other actors via online platforms each day. Mao Zhonglin, in his 30s, spends most of his year working as a chef in a nearby town. Anxious to get the ball rolling on agricultural sales, Zhonglin established both an online store and a profile on WeCountry, an app used as a



Figure 18 Dapeng Youth Volunteer Team training.

platform for connecting rural communities with access to markets and other assistance. These new technologies—grasped easily by the younger generations—offer new opportunities to reach village goals. On the endogenous transformations of a rural area in Galicia, Spain, Paül writes, “these actions have transcended the tangible dimension in such a way that they have helped people to (re)identify with their local area and have somehow become symbols for rural life by showing that tradition and history do not belong only to the past but also to the present and future” (2013: 185). This notion is emphasized in many conceptions of endogenous development, and also addresses a critique of some schools of thought in the field of agroecology. Rather than romanticizing agrarian or indigenous cultures—which can sometimes lead to perpetuating cycles of poverty—endogenous development instead advocates for “culture economies.” The culture economy, as Christopher Ray describes in his eponymous book, is a “vibrant economy, engaging with globalization, and yet [nurturing] a sense of local identity and a humanistic view of ‘development’” (2001: 1). With Chinese technology advancing and being adopted at an astounding speed, the involvement of young people is key in the effort to create a “vibrant” culture economy in Jika Village.

The high rate of mobility in village youth, though detrimental in many ways, can also provide other benefits. The research design initially included the goal of taking villagers on “field trips” to connect them to other communities or individuals grappling with similar development goals. Despite keen interest from village women, who were generally less bound by formal job contracts and obligations than men, logistical factors proved too difficult to overcome. Funding was a major constraint, but a severe propensity toward carsickness and the inconvenience of having to transfer household chores (such as daily milking, feeding livestock, etc.) to other villagers in a participant’s absence prevented us from taking such a trip. During the course of research, however, Gengzhe Zhima took two personal trips to nearby provinces with prominent minority populations. There, she was able to speak to members of many other communities engaged in educational tourism, cultural preservation, and rural development efforts. Through those trips, the village’s connectivity to external networks widened considerably.

5) *The support of extra-village partners* is an important component in endogenous development practice. Much has been written about the role of extra-local partners in endogenous development practice. The theory of endogenous development is not used to describe self-sustaining communities isolated from the global economy. Scholars generally agree that there is a requisite interplay between endogenous and exogenous forces in endogenous development practice (Ray, 2001; Paül, 2013; Vázquez-Barquero, 2002; Long & van der Ploeg, 1994; Tödtling, 2006). However, the relationships between these forces are highly debated. In most cases, authors stress the importance of local participation, local resources, local control over decision making. Long and van der Ploeg describe their conception of the distinction between exogenous and endogenous strategies in rural areas:

What turns out decisive, for those who follow the exogenous development pattern, is that it is the outside or external elements that compose the conceptual model from which the eventual utility of local resources is judged. If the latter ‘fit’ with the former, they are integrated according to the rationale of the established model. If not, they will increasingly be considered as ‘outdated’, ‘worthless’, or as a ‘hindrance’ to change. In endogenous development patterns, on the other hand, a different balance is encountered: It is local resources, as combined and developed in local styles of farming, that figure as the starting point as well as the yardstick for the evaluation of the eventual utility of ‘external’ elements. (1994: 4).

While this may be true for Jika Village as efforts mature, it does not entirely explain the relationship between extra-local actors it enjoyed at the outset of development efforts. Noting this discrepancy in European cases, Christopher Ray uses the term *neo-endogenous* to propose that while local communities still hold the power, development processes can indeed be “animated” by extra-local actors such as governments or NGOs (2001: 9). Lowe et al. assert that the discourse itself should be altered, from a question of geographic boundaries to an analysis of power relations tackled on a case by case basis: “If endogenous development has any meaning it must refer to a local developmental potential which state agencies may be able to stimulate and channel, but which exists independently of them” (1995: 92). Due to the fuzzy boundaries between local and “extra-local” actors in Jika Village, Lowe et al.’s treatment of the matter may be the most suitable lens through which to analyze the situation in Jika Village.

Existing literature on ED is largely focused on examples from Europe, where in the 1990s the European Commission’s LEADER program denoted a somewhat controversial shift from the “exogenous” developmental paradigm to community-based approaches (Ray, 2001). In those examples, policy and governmental support plays a major role in endogenous development schemes. In Jika Village, the local government played a significantly more passive role. As previously described, the provincial government’s “Happy and Beautiful New Village” program has brought changes that are not part of the village’s own development efforts, but that inadvertently benefit them. For example, villagers recognize that grants for the construction of shower facilities and solar hot water heaters meet an underlying need for hosting tourists. The question of local agency in decisions to participate in such programs, however, is a slippery one. Many villagers reported that the cost (considering both time and materials) of making the required changes well exceeded the 5,000 yuan (around \$730 USD) grant, which was not provided until after a thorough inspection of changes was conducted. In order to receive the funds, the full participation of every village household was required, including that of the two families who no longer live permanently in the village and thus do not serve to benefit as much from participation. One could imagine the pressure this places on local decision making structures and the potential for local discord in the event of uneven interest in participation. The harmony enjoyed between residents of Jika Village made this particular example a non-issue. During the course of research, villagers were approached with other opportunities that were eventually refused. In March 2018, government officials accompanied representatives of a private company to Jika Village for a “training” on new pruning techniques for their Sichuan peppercorn trees. The training purportedly ended with an offer to collaborate with the company in Sichuan peppercorn sales. These examples indicate that local control is still—albeit tenuously—in the hands of community members. However, accounts from nearby communities, such as Third Village (see inset box in previous section) indicate that these power relations will continue to deserve careful scrutiny.

Perhaps the most significant “extra-local” actor in Jika’s development processes was Tian Xia Gu Center for Cultural Preservation (TXG), the NGO based in Chengdu and headed by Yang Zhengqing. The question of whether the organization truly constitutes as “extra-local” is complicated by Zhengqing’s position as native of Jika Village, cooperative leader, and NGO founder whose parents still reside permanently in the village. However, due to its geographical separation and the fact the majority of TXG’s projects are in urban communities, TXG cannot be considered a purely “local” actor. TXG’s funding comes from a variety of Chinese charitable foundations as well as governmental bodies in the urban districts where they work. Currently, TXG does not receive funding explicitly for rural projects, although its staff is interested in doing so in the future. During the research project, its

roles in the village included providing facilitation services in early meetings, running a free project management training for the Dapeng Youth Volunteer Team, contributing to a monthly stipend for Gengzhe Zhima, and offering assistance in administrative tasks, such as proofreading blog posts, promoting and sharing articles, and connecting the village to other networks that may prove useful for funding, marketing, and training purposes in the future. Much as Ray's conception of "neo-endogeneity" suggests, it was clear from interviews with Zhengqing and other villagers that TXG—Yang Zhengqing in particular—was instrumental in inspiring the community to forge their own path to resilient livelihoods. TXG, in partnership with a private outdoor education company, coordinated the very first visits from foreign students in 2015 and 2016. Yang Zhengqing managed the village's application for official FPC status in 2017 and frequently assists in The line between Yang Zhengqing's personal contributions to village affairs and assistance on behalf of TXG is impossible to demarcate, further bolstering Lowe et al.'s argument for a careful analysis of power dynamics at play in the village's network. In cases where Zhima (or others) and Zhengqing disagreed on certain details of village participation, a dialogue was employed to reach a suitable solution. In any case, during the course of research reflective components inherent to the PAR process helped ensure that these dynamics remained acceptable to villagers.

Journal Entry: July 8, 2018

With the rains and a logistical mix-up it took me a day and a half—including the usual two hour hike up from the road—to get to the village. I am so happy to be back. I ran into Teacher Yang and Grandma and Grandpa on the way up to Auntie Senem's house. They were collecting pig grass together. Teacher Yang lamented about how he must have lost a young chicken to a yellow weasel the previous night, but that if I see it, it's his. Grandma and Grandpa tried their best to persuade me to eat lunch at their house, but I knew that Renzhenmtsu and Senem were waiting on me as well. When I finally wriggled out of Songbu's persistent grasp, I caught Teacher Yang on the path. I told him I wanted his input on the first draft of the village introduction that Zhima had written. He said of course, to come down tomorrow with it and he'd be happy to take a look. I can't remember how it came up, but I asked him about the status of the Guozhuang [traditional song and dance] square. I knew we were waiting on the village government to start construction on the road before we could pave the square, but I still wasn't sure why.

Senem and I were visiting Nemtar's house for the day, so Teacher Yang came up to the roof to give input on the draft of the village introduction Zhima had sent to me. Her introduction included a description of how most of the gudiao [traditional stone defensive towers] in their area had been destroyed in the Jinchuan campaigns of the Qing dynasty or in the Cultural Revolution. Teacher Yang said that when he was young they knew of the base of a stone tower still remaining in the woods up the mountain. "They have very small doors," he said, "actually all of the old houses had very small doors too. You can still find some of them." He pointed to a very old abandoned house across the valley. "It was because of the wild people." Yang Sangen tells me that high up on the mountain slope the ruins of some stone towers still exist, obscured by trees. He stumbled across one when he was younger. "The door was so small. Every old house in the village had an incredibly small front door. There's a reason for that. In the past we had... 'wild people' living in the forest... they looked just like people, except what they really wanted was to eat us. So each house made their doors very short. Those wild people couldn't bend at the waist, you know. If one started chasing you, you could just run into the house. Anyway, that's our explanation for the small doors."



9 Discussion

The research project in Jika Village was guided by specific questions around how development processes occurred over the eleven months of research. The motivations and mechanisms described in the Results section provide a snapshot of changes that occurred in one tiny corner of rural China. However, it is no secret that these inquiries were aimed at contributing to a body of evidence on the potential for and/or performance of endogenous development practices across rural China and beyond. The prospect of generalizing results or replicating this experience in other communities is tempered by a number of considerations particular to the research site, including the interest and experience of the villagers, the nature of the community, the research timeline, resources, and my own role as a researcher in change processes. Efforts to address the secondary research questions—*How can the PAR process contribute to lasting frameworks for community-driven change in rural China?* and *What are the major assets and challenges for using participatory change processes in rural China?*—may be the most closely constrained by these elements. Nevertheless, considerations around these topics will be addressed and concrete suggestions for future research and/or action are also provided in Appendix I.

It is important to note here that the case of Jika Village does not represent a ‘typical’ PAR project. A firm commitment to incorporating participants into the design process meant that prior to entering the community, I had only a rough idea of potential research interests in the community. After entering, I found that participants were far less interested in more easily digestible, technical questions such as how to improve the quality of a certain crop, how to strengthen relationships between communities and institutions, or how best to approach environmental conservation a given region or farming community. Part of my commitment as a PAR practitioner—to empower research communities and to attempt to flip historical power dynamics that ensure research institutions retain knowledge, power, and control—meant that I was committed to listening to the needs of the community. In this case, the community was confident that they could tackle most of their existing technical concerns (such as the use of agricultural plastic mulch or the health of their walnut trees) on their own. Areas they felt they could use assistance in were far more daunting, such as, “How do we make the village into a place that our children can/want to come back to?” and “How can we use our source of livelihood to prevent the loss of local culture?” These larger inquiries also included many smaller, concrete questions. However, it is important to remember that the units of analysis I employed in the case study were not necessarily the degree to which villagers did or did not succeed in reaching their goals, but in why and how they approached their own journey.

Jika Village holds unique qualities that are by no means widespread in other potential research communities, and undeniably influenced their approach to the development journey. The village has a permanent population of around 15 households, which is certainly small by Chinese standards. Furthermore, each household in the village is connected along family lines, and the intimacy and collective spirit of the community is certainly unrivaled by any other village I’ve worked in previously. For example, any project undertaken by one household is supported, without monetary compensation or other expected gain, by representatives of the others. When it is time to plant corn, large groups of villagers move collectively from house to house to plant corn. The same goes for the annual spreading of composted manure, construction projects, pig harvesting, and all other labor-intensive agricultural activities. Funerals, holidays, traditional celebrations of calving and the return of cow’s milk, and other cultural events also necessitate large gatherings. As a whole, this means that

the villagers spend an inordinate amount of time together, and cooperation is already a core function of their livelihoods. It is prudent to assume that if this model for facilitating and documenting endogenous development were to be used in other scenarios, much more time and effort would need to be taken for exercises in group dynamics and decision-making. Many of the processes that were naturally undertaken apart from the researcher's supervision might need to be facilitated more directly. While the process was not devoid of snags, I could not have asked for a more ideal community for this type of work. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the qualities which made my experience so seamless are quite rare in the vast potentiality of research sites.

The research timeline, spanning just under a year of direct involvement in Jika Village, allowed for the PAR process to fully unfold in certain areas, such as tourism development. In progress toward the tourism goals outlined at the start of research, villagers were able to experience three full cycles of planning, action and reflection by hosting three separate sets of guests. However, the unfortunate misalignment of the research timeline with the growing season and short duration of research meant that other goals, in the realm of agriculture, had yet to undergo rigorous iterative transformation by the close of the project in July 2018. For example, villagers were interested in seeing if there was a market for their heirloom (open-pollinated) crop varieties. They spent the winter collecting seeds, even inquiring in nearby villages when they realized that no one in Jika had the old variety of white corn in their seed stocks. In Spring 2018, Zhima catalogued the varieties planted at each house, quantities, and expected yield. Though it was still too early to assess the success of the finished crops at the close of the research, Zhima and I reflected that the mere recording of such data was a significant improvement from the previous season, and the record would serve as a convenient tool for assessing and recording crop quality, yield and commercial performance during the busy harvest season.

Because of limitations like these, there may seem to be glaring lack of post-process data on the concrete progress made towards various goals, and toward income generation in particular. One of the village's primary internal motivations was to decrease the reliance on migrant labor and lure younger generations back home by improving prospects for revenue generation within the village. Though it would be lovely to see data on any changes in income over time, the research design simply did not allow for this type of data collection. Evidence does suggest that the village's collective confidence in change processes is high. Recent investments in time and energy on infrastructure development, such as the construction of the village museum and plans for constructing a classroom space on the second floor, demonstrate the villagers' long-term view toward change processes. At a cooperative meeting in late spring, members decided to raise the contribution of revenue from tourism activities to the cooperative from 10% to 20%. Though I was not in attendance, participants later reported that it was decided that these communal funds were to be used for purchasing, creating or otherwise acquiring items of cultural significance that would "last 100 years," and that could be passed down to future generations to celebrate and perpetuate the Jiarong heritage. On the part of villagers, this shows a great level of optimism toward change processes. At the same time, it is important to remember that the contribution of this paper to the academic canon was not in documenting concrete changes in income over time, but in analyzing the various mechanisms of attempted change. From this perspective, we see many signs of endogenous development being employed in the study site.

With the research project designed as it was—starting with a process of visioning and goal-setting in the local community, then facilitating strategic movements toward those goals—it is also prudent to

question the my role in actually making this process *into* an example of endogenous development. Prior to approaching the community in September 2017, I had thought to do things like SWOT analysis or other more hands-on approaches to problem-solving, but the community seemed to already have a clear picture of what they wanted to happen, and this picture closely matched the existing theory of endogenous development. Thus, it was discussed with research participants and seen by all as a suitable framework through which to view change processes in Jika.

The unintentional correlation between my own professional pursuits and the goals of the villagers meant that I was able to support the village's efforts in ways that may not have been possible in any context.¹⁷ While it is plausible that any researcher would have connections or expertise in the line of development pursued by their research community, the close match in this particular case meant that a high level of support and access was given to the community due to the researcher's freelance work. For example, feedback could easily be solicited from student groups and transferred to the research community. Informational materials about the village were often requested from colleagues or personal contacts who were aware of the research project. The connections between the village and the international (English-speaking) community were often key to attracting more student groups and, thus, undeniably affected the success of the research project. This is not meant to call into question the validity of the research findings, but it is certainly worth considering how these complex dynamics between researcher and participants played out on the ground.

My involvement in the research project as an outsider and Yang Zhengqing's involvement as both villager and permanent city-dweller were concerns that required constant reflexivity throughout the research process. In the early stages of research villagers required significant prodding before ideas—even ones that everyone was quite excited about during meetings—were put into action. As Yang Zhengqing and I reflected together on initial cooperative meetings, I voiced my concerns about his position with respect to the cooperative. The cooperative's "office," where the meeting took place, was in Zhengqing's family home. Not only did he facilitate the meeting, but he also took up the majority of talking time. He assigned specific action items to other members. There was no regular schedule for meetings, and their occurrence was overwhelmingly dependent on Zhengqing's presence in the village. Zhengqing expressed his existing anxieties on this subject: that more permanent residents may not be motivated or organized enough to manage cooperative activities; that he had tried to involve the women in meetings but that various cultural and logistical constraints prevented them from participating; that nothing gets done unless he's in the village, but he can't be there often enough. Like Zhengqing, I was aware that conducting engaged research could lead to an unsustainable level of reliance on my role in change processes within the village. Though Zhengqing remained skeptical, we made an agreement that tackling these issues could become our own personal goals in the research process, and thus, the research design incorporated our own gradual withdrawal from administrative tasks, such as facilitating meetings and communicating with cooperative members about their responsibilities. By the end of research Zhengqing and I reflected that villagers were so independent, they were routinely and seamlessly planning and executing huge tasks without consulting either of us.

¹⁷ I hold a freelance position as a travel-based experiential educator, and personally organized two of the visiting groups that came to Jika during the course of research. Ethically, this may put me in sticky territory. However, as the main points of analysis were not concerned with the actual *increase* of tourism activity in Jika Village, the effect this had on results is considered marginal. The village often attracts and hosts educational tour groups independently, but in these cases my level of access as a researcher was considerably higher than if I had not been involved in a managerial capacity.

Another obvious limitation that presented itself at every turn was the fluid bilingualism of the research community. As I understood only one of the two commonly spoken languages of the village (Sichuanese Mandarin), I was often confronted with surprises and breakthroughs that research participants simply forgot to report but that may have otherwise been overheard if I was also fluent in the local Situ dialect. Nevertheless, the qualitative and flexible nature of research methods combined with the length of the process (and, perhaps, similar sense of humor across all participants) yielded an intimacy between the researcher and her co-researchers that would very possibly have proven impossible to foster any other way. My immersion in village life was key to extracting as much information as possible from a community that was otherwise often sheepish and brief in the context of formal meetings, surveys, or other targeted questioning.

Considered together, the various implications elucidated here do not appear to jeopardize the applicability of results elsewhere. The research itself is founded on the claim that sweeping, top-down development policies cannot meet the needs of an inherently diverse Chinese countryside. Peasant-driven change efforts place power directly in the hands of those affected by change, and are thus meant to reflect the individuality of each community. Given more time, funding, and person power, a set of multiple case studies for comparison would, of course, be ideal for ensuring the validity and generalizability of results across diverse development contexts. However, this single case study is a step in that direction.

9 Conclusion

In July 2018, the villagers and I met for a final reflection on the research process. All materials used in goal-setting, planning and facilitation, were translated to Mandarin and handed over to the village cooperative at the end of research.¹⁸ Members reported a keen interest in using these techniques to instigate and support change processes in nearby villages or wherever their assistance is desired, however, their own process of endogenous development is still underway. The degree to which PAR, and particularly this case study, contributes to “lasting frameworks” for community-driven change in rural China is dependent on time. Thus far, evidence suggests that villagers are optimistic, driven by powerful and complex personal motivations, and that various changes have already been carried out. But in community-driven efforts, the change is gradual. Innovations are incremental, and must be adapted to the unique requirements of place. Accordingly, few conclusions can be made on the long-term prospects of such change.

In discussion on endogenous development, academics continually debate the question of whether local production systems can thrive “in a world in which development is increasingly global and where there are great forces at work that tend toward concentration and integration” (Vázquez-Barquero, 2002: 37). In July, as villagers and I reflected together on the entire experience of development, villagers repeated one phrase in particular. By conducting the research with them in Jika, they said, I helped them “pave a road.” In my own reflection on the matter, it feels quite clear that we may have paved the road together, but villagers did and will remain firmly in the driver’s seat. “For local production systems to be innovative, they must be able to introduce and develop new productive paradigms within the local productive system. For this reason, local firm systems must behave

¹⁸ I provided all translations from English to Mandarin and Mandarin to English used throughout the research process and in this paper. Input from native speakers was solicited wherever possible or necessary.

creatively and deploy their learning capacity, something not all territories are able to do.” (Vázquez-Barquero, 2002). The research process uncovered a number of mechanisms that indicate the capacity and continued potential for dynamic, creative change making in Jika Village: 1) the construction of collective confidence and ethnic identity; 2) organized systems for decision-making and record keeping; 3) empowerment of women; 4) inclusion of multiple generations; and 5) support of extra-village partners. A latent commitment to learning and self-improvement was harnessed in PAR processes. Recognizing its various limitations, this study offers an intimate set of insights on peasant-led rural development to a body of literature lacking in China-specific examples. In its employment of PAR (which calls for both knowledge production and action), this study supported positive, placed-based changes in a development landscape otherwise characterized by detachment from place.

Our journey began with a lone traveler at the river bridge in Jika Village. After a moment of contemplation, she continues up the mountain slope, heading west. She is met by Grandma Songbu, who urges her to rest in the shaded courtyard. Neighbors, all somehow related, drop in and out with favors to ask or harvests to share. When they try to tiptoe out of the courtyard before mealtime, Songbu grabs them firmly by the arm and tries to wrestle them back in. She manages to catch a few, —all but the ones who must fetch their cows tranquilly grazing up the slope before sundown. It is difficult not to romanticize the scene, but important to remember that it is not a static one. The narrative of the bleak and forgotten village still pervades throughout China. But change has come, almost imperceptibly, to where it wasn't meant to. She sees it in the silent strength of Gengzhe Zhima, and it appears in the little storeroom converted into something more. It shows in the jar of peanut butter on the counter, brought by a friend from afar. She hears it in the chorus of voices drifting up from the fields, and in turn of the grinding stone at the restored mill. She feels it in the newly-woven wool jacket that she borrows for the cold. She tastes it in a hearty lump of *tsampa*. In Jika Village, the changes come not as a tidal wave, but as a number of small mountain streams that, having flowed down into the verdant valley, converge in a mighty and unceasing river.



Figure 19 The final reflection session, at the stupa overlooking the river.

10 References

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Appendices

I Suggestions for Future Work

Prior to this research, I found it very difficult to assess the historical performance of PAR in China. Many researchers argued that PAR is a natural fit in China, where traditional livelihoods still often rely on intimate, reciprocal collaborations within communities (Hughes & Lin, 2005). Song & Vernooy's work on participatory plant breeding in three Chinese provinces suggest that participatory research processes can contribute positively to efforts at both farmer and institution level (2010). However, the majority of previously documented PAR efforts in China targeted problems identified by outside parties, such as academic researchers or NGOs. The Jika Village case study contributes a primarily peasant-driven inquiry to the literature. The benefits of using PAR have been described in various ways throughout the paper, including empowering villagers in the articulation and pursuit of their own goals, in contributing useful frameworks for organizational action and reflection, and by allowing for positive change processes to occur concurrently with scientific knowledge production. In order to maximize the impact of this contribution, a number of challenges to conducting PAR in China will also be addressed in the form of suggestions for further work.

1) *Get government involved—or not.* Local policy support for Jika's efforts toward an endogenous development paradigm proved somewhat happenstance, and as we saw in the account of the "Happy and Beautiful New Village" program, such benefits are sometimes disproportionately distributed (in other words, some villages get to keep their historical identity relatively intact, others do not). Unfortunately, government policies dictating territorial development may be at odds with efforts to maintain local control. This is also not to say that policies in support of ED do not currently exist. From a practical standpoint, PAR—and other explicitly participatory—models helps empower communities to exert local control over decision-making, but negotiations may need to be made with government officials at various levels, especially in China. Government involvement in local affairs varies widely across China. In Jika specifically, villagers often felt that their voices were not heard at the local government level. Some government agencies were made aware of research and change processes underway, but in general, the cooperative chose not to involve government bodies heavily in their process. At the time of writing, the Jika Village cooperative had invited government officials at the county level to review their progress and, potentially, offer financial support for further efforts. In reflecting on the process, I feel that involving local governmental bodies from the outset may have helped certain aspects of the process: in concrete ways, such as soliciting financial support, and in building a model that might be more replicable in contexts beyond Jika.

2) *Remain flexible, and embrace the mistakes.* Reflecting on a project in El Salvador, revered PAR practitioner Ernesto Mendez suggests that PAR should, "be committed to the learning process of local actors, allowing them to take leading roles, even when they make mistakes" (Bacon et al., 2005: 8). Mistakes certainly existed throughout the process in Jika Village. One such "mistake" led to a lack of quantifiable data I had anticipated including in the final report, but its value may not have lain solely in this form. In January 2018, I planned to administer a survey and set of semi-structured interviews with each household in the village. Following a series of trainings provided by Tian Xia Gu to the Dapeng Youth Volunteer Team, it was decided that members of the volunteer team would complete the process instead. Unfortunately, despite holding a three-hour-long training session briefing the youth on each question, many of the survey responses were unusable due to inadequate or

inconsistent data collection. Nevertheless, the survey still held power in giving the youth a responsibility to participate in change processes and by showing elders that the next generation was invested in the process. It may have even given the youth a new perspective on their own community, or ideas on how to help meet their community's needs. In the same vein, we sometimes found ourselves traveling down paths that eventually proved unproductive or in need of alteration. PAR's emphasis on reflection and flexibility toward community needs was a great asset in ensuring that the process worked for everyone involved.

3) *Make materials accessible to all participants.* Since PAR is not as commonly practiced in China as it is in other countries, I found that I often lacked the proper (Chinese) vocabulary, mentors, and examples for engaging in PAR in a Chinese context. As a result, much of my time was spent translating materials and concepts from English into Chinese, or thinking of how to adapt certain methods to the context of the field site. For example, many of the research participants are illiterate and/or did not stay in the formal education system beyond elementary or middle school, so I often worked with Zhima, Zhengqing, or other participants to devise inclusive vocabulary and research strategies. The hope is that this case study adds to a small but present body of knowledge on the method's use in China, and that it will thus contribute to a more robust and generalizable body of evidence in the future. Materials created and adapted during the course of research may be reused and further adapted for use by the community or anyone else interested in doing PAR in China.

II Samples from Fieldwork

Fieldwork Dates and Tasks

Dates of (Onsite) Fieldwork

Dates	Principle Tasks	Notes	Materials
September 9-13, 2017	Participatory Observation, Informal Interviews, (Re-)Introduction to Community	The primary tasks included sitting in on a village cooperative meeting, engaging directly in village life and gaining preliminary insight on the history, operation style, and desires of the village cooperative.	- Notes
November 18-20, 2017	Participatory Observation, Informal Interviews, (Facilitated) Group Interview(s), Participatory Mapping, Visioning and Goal-Setting	After a period of initial research design and development of research materials, two lengthy visioning and goal-setting meetings were conducted during this visit. The insights collected formed the basis of the village's research inquiry as a whole.	- Vision - Goals - Historical Timeline - Community Resources/Map
December 15-18, 2017	Participatory Observation, Informal Interviews, (Facilitated) Group Interview(s), Informal Group Interview(s)	The whole-village event of harvesting pigs allowed for informal gatherings of cooperative members to further discuss ideas and plans for the future. A meeting with the women of the village also occurred to gather feedback on the results of the visioning sessions.	- Notes
January 25-27, 2018	Participatory Observation, Informal Interviews, (Facilitated) Group Interview(s), Survey	This visit was accompanied by members of the NGO founded by Yang Zhengqing. The visit held a dual purpose of hosting a organizational training for the village's student volunteer group as well as a briefing on how to conduct the household research surveys.	- Community Surveys
February 18-24, 2018	Participatory Observation, Informal Interviews, Informal Group Interview(s)	The Tibetan New Year.	- Community Resources/Map
March 19-24, 2018	Participatory Observation, Informal Interviews, (Facilitated) Group Interview(s)	Meeting with cooperative to establish the tourism activity list.	- Tourism Activity List

Dates	Principle Tasks	Notes	Materials
April 5-7, 2018	Participatory Observation, Informal Interviews	Action Cycle 1. Qing Ming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action Cycle 1 feedback (visitor-generated) - Action Cycle 1 recap (cooperative-generated)
May 5-8, 2018	Participatory Observation, Informal Interviews, Informal Group Interview(s)	Action Cycle 2. Meeting with women to check in about their experience in the development process, how to get them more involved. Preparation for participation in academic conference in June.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes - Action Cycle 2 feedback (visitor-generated) - Action Cycle 2 recap (cooperative-generated)
June 17-21, 2018	Participatory Observation, Informal Interviews	Action Cycle 3. Trial of more activities from class offerings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heirloom seed list - Action Cycle 3 feedback (visitor-generated) - Action Cycle 3 recap (cooperative-generated) <p>[Zhima travels to Yunnan]</p>
July 7-12, 2018	Participatory Observation, Informal Interviews, Informal Group Interview(s)	Check-in on marketing outlets, Sichuan peppercorn harvest, etc. Gain cooperative input on publicity materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Village Introduction (incl. map) <p>[Zhima travels to Qinghai]</p>
July 16-20, 2018	Participatory Observation, Informal Interviews, (Facilitated) Group Interview(s), Informal Group Interview(s)	Final research meeting/debrief/celebration and presentation of preliminary results. Interview with resident(s) of La Yue Third Village.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Binder (Chinese and English) explaining process and results

Voice Memo Guide

Date/Name	Content
2017.09.09 早上吃谈退耕	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 20:00 Heirloom seeds. ZQ talks about how they still had the old (white) corn variety when he was little, but yields were too low. - 21:40 Most heirloom seeds started disappearing after tuigeng. - Arguing for awhile about when tuigeng started. - 24:30 YZQ complaining about the lack of agroforestry options, unfair to farmers. - 26:00 1 mu of land gave around 260kuai - 28:00 planting non-native tree species - 28:30 ZQ's family gave up 16.1 mu (2.65 acres) of land, today they only have a little over 3 mu. - 29:00 visitor comes, nothing substantial after.
2017.12.17 女人1	<p>[See separate file for written transcript]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 13:00 Hosting foreign guests - thoughts and challenges. - 15:00 Talking about farming practices, fertilizer, etc. - 17:00 Crop diversity, heirloom varieties, - 18:00 There's an old man over the mountain who grows almost entirely heirloom crops. - 21:00 Start talking about women's perspective on future. - 24:00 Quote about working for your entire life. "We work and work and work our whole lives. We earn money through blood and sweat. You can go get an education, but it only pays off if your test scores are high. If you don't test well, it's all a waste. It's incredibly difficult way to live." - 26:00 Young people losing respect for local culture, language. - 29:00 The farming tradition is rich, but if you plant things and the results can't sustain you, young people will not choose to do it.
2017.12.17 女人2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1:00 Huajiao sales, packaging, etc. - 3:00 YZQ switches conversation to tourism. - 6:00 Convo about wearing Tibetan clothing during guozhuang. Men not having as many outfits as women. - 7:00 Needing different outfits for different seasons. - 15:00 Planning for record keeping on open-pollinated crops. - 18:00 Talking about tourism activities - winemaking class, etc. Seasonality of certain activities. - 20:00 Tourism fatigue? No. - 21:00 "In the past, the thought of hosting guests never even crossed our minds. We looked at Four Sisters Mountain, all those other places nearby, and we thought, 'those are the places with tourism potential.' Who would have ever thought foreigners would want to come all the way here to check us out!" - 22:00 Differences between foreign and domestic tourists. - Remainder all about crops, herbal medicine.

Sample Audio Transcript

0-3

范竹丽：上次开会全都是男的嘛，但是我还是要【笑】除了我以外【笑】但是我们都谈到了一些，只是我们未来，比如说腊月村5年后的一些目标啊，一些愿望。上次有几个想法我还是觉得挺好的嘛，就是希望5年后尽量不要本地的这些男的到外出打工。这是一个目标嘛。然后也要提供我们的。。。你们的这个，就是收入嘛。有一点点提供那个收入。还有，有一些农业方面的一些，就是你们的农产品价值要高一些嘛。就是说，像今年做的花椒，花椒的那个众筹嘛，就可以多试一下那个方式。不一定是那个方式来做嘛，但是价值要高一些嘛。可能在微店或者在。。。接待客人的时候也可以推广那个产品。还有一个是接待客人这个，这个活动嘛，要规范，要规范一下。就是我们能够提供，能够做的一些活动，像做手工的，徒步的，都可以规范出来。然后明年，有客人来的话，我们就有一个比较规范的一个安排来做这些。明白了么？就大概这样嘛。但是我不知道，因为特别是农产品的这一方面，因为妇女人也是负责这一块儿的，很多事，所以我不知道你们有没有想法，就是昨天晚上提出了一些很好的一些方法。比如说，李子，本地的这些李子产量也是相当高的嘛，也没有打过化肥农药，这个是一个很好的机会，但是现在可能不知道怎么卖，因为他们是新鲜的一种水果嘛。价格可能也不是很高嘛。但是如果我们能够加工，加一点工，然后提高它的那个价值，就这个也是一个很好的想法。像这种，我不知道有没有其他的想法，或者有没有其他的愿望，就是5年后你们腊月村是什么样子的？【笑】或者你同不同意我们说的这个5年后希望就是不要外出打工，这个目标啊。

4

男的：这个就是就是，什么，我们的愿望就是这些。真的。他们提到的啥子，比如说，像农产品这些了，还是把价值来继续提升一哈，但是也，今后他们的。。。我们现在看这些李子，这些是基本上-多得很-但是产也变不到（？））。本来是很好地，这些地方（？）苹果是基本上就烂完了。

4

竹丽：还有一个就是上次提出的老种子这件事，这个事情嘛。就是很多，像玉米，种玉米的时候基本上都适用买过来的一些种子，是吗？

4

男的：哦，对对对。

4

竹丽：但是如果我们能过找到一些老品种，这个就很好啊。这个也是一个很好的机会，客人来的时候你可以给他们讲一个那个老品种的这个故事。好美啊。

5

男的：这个很好。

5

大家：玉米，豆子，主要是玉米啊。。。

5

男的：诶，我们之前的老品种应该是找得到的。现在全都是我们，是我们外面买的种子现在。种的那些。

5

杨正清：所以说那个，上次我们的愿望的那个部分...

...

21

范竹丽：那妇女们最关心的一些问题是什么呢？愿意说吗？【笑】就是，有哪些愿望？觉得现在最关心的，担心的一些问题是...？

III Goal-Setting Meetings

Overview of Participatory Mapping and Timeline Activities | 共同地图与时间轴活动

Thank you everyone for agreeing to participate in this research! Now I do not have to continue worrying! The activities we are doing tonight are very simple, and while their main purpose is to help me understand La Yue Village's history and present situation, I hope they will also help remind you of some interesting details about your homeland. In the course of this research, we will be doing a lot of collaboration, so this is good practice. I hope everyone can contribute to the activities in their own way and with their own words.

谢谢大家同意要参加这个研究，现在我可以放心了！我们今晚要做的活动很简单。虽然它主要的目的是帮我多了解一下你们腊月村的历史和现状，但是我也希望通过这两个活动，可以提醒大家故乡有哪些特点。在研究的过程中，我们也经常需要一起合作，所以这也是一个很好的学习机会。希望大家可以为这个项目多出主意多发言。

共同历史时间轴

Our first activity is a historical timeline of the village. Before, when I have visited, I have heard some amazing stories about the village. I know everyone could probably tell stories for days, so we will try to list the most significant events in village history. We may need our most experienced elders to help us out with the earliest parts. Where should we begin? Can I have a volunteer help me write?

我们第一个活动是要做一个腊月村的历史时间轴。我前几次来到你们村子，都听说了一些超有意思的故事。我估计各位都可以讲半天的好故事，所以呢，我们尽量只说一下腊月村历史上最重要的一些事件。最早的这段历史可能要请我们经验最丰富的老年人来帮忙。我们从什么时候开始呢？有没有愿意帮我写的？

Questions to ask during the activity:

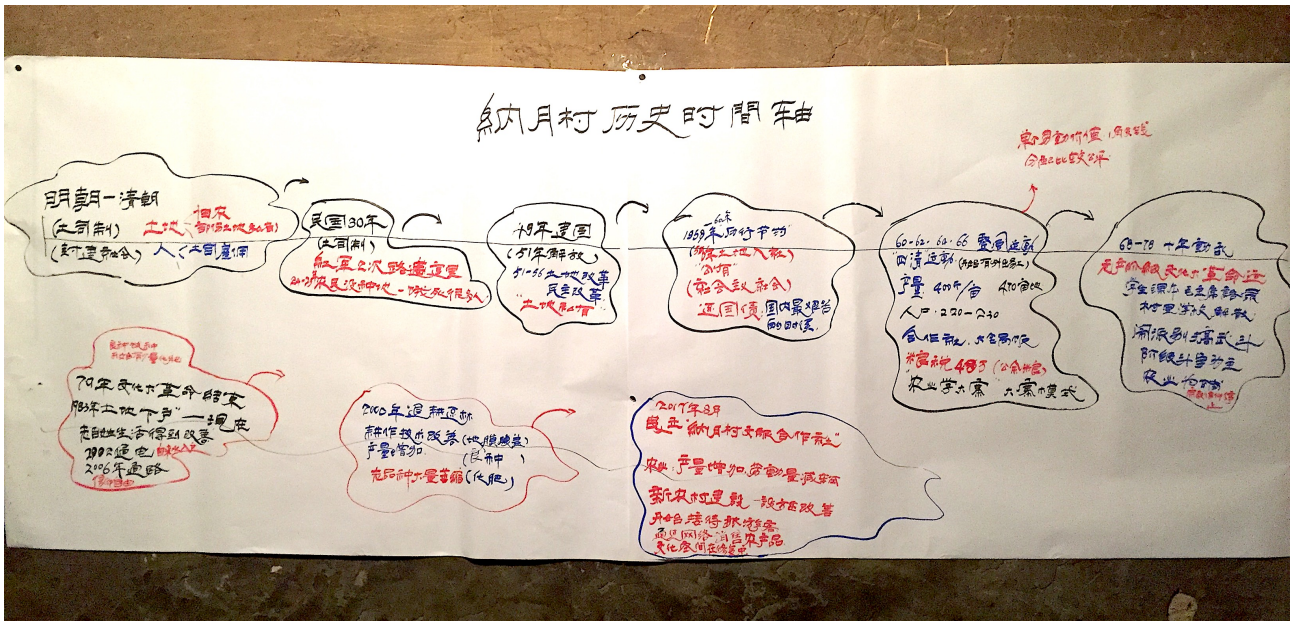
- At that time, what were the main problems in the village?
- At that time, what was the governance structure like?
- Were there any big innovations during this period?
- How did you eventually overcome that problem?
- When did you begin to make money? How?
- How did people receive education?
- At that time, did people ever leave the village?
- How did the day to day lifestyle differ from today?

活动中可以提出的问题：

- 当时村里主要有哪些问题？
- 当时的政治结构是什么？
- 当时有没有比较重要的技术创新/社会创新？
- 到最后，那个问题是怎么解决的？
- 什么时候开始赚钱？当时靠什么赚钱过日子？
- 小孩子受到教育了吗？
- 当时村民会不会离开家乡，比如说外出打工或者搬家到外地生活？

- 当时的日常生活方式跟现在有什么区别？

Historical Timeline Activity Results



Ming to Qing Dynasty

(Tusi [Native Chieftain] System, Feudal Society)

Land: Tenant farming, land privately owned.

People: Employed by chieftains

Republican Era - 30 years

(Tusi System)

Red Army passed through the region twice.

1924-1925 peasants did not farm, resulting in a famine that killed many people.

1949 Founding of the People's Republic (Liberation in 1951)

1951-1956 land reform, democratic reform.

Land "privately-owned."

1959-1960 Economic Austerity

(Socialism)

1956年 land collectivization, "commonly-owned."

Reducing national debt.

Most arduous time period in contemporary China and in the village.

1960s Rectification Movements

"Four Cleanups" movement to remove reactionary elements.

(At this time, residents started leaving the village to find work in other areas.)

Grain output extremely low at 400 jin per mu (470 mu altogether)

Entire village population around 220-230 people.

Village cooperative, communal canteen in Second Village, Second Team (on top of the hill).

Grain tax on excess grain
“Learn from Dazhai in Agriculture” directive.
Manual labor prices at fractions of *yuan*; distribution rather fair.

1968–78 Ten-Year Turmoil

Proletarian Cultural Revolution.
School textbooks changed to Quotations from Chairman Mao.
Village school eventually “liberated.”
Violent clashes between political factions.
Primary focus on class struggle, secondary focus on agricultural production.

1979 Cultural Revolution Ends

1983 farmland turned over to households — living standards of common people improved considerably.
2002 village connected to power grid, households receive running water.
2006 road suitable for cars reaches village.
Freedom to practice spiritual beliefs restored.

2000 “Return the Farmland to Forest” Program

Significant agricultural improvements (primarily due to availability of plastic mulch).
Agricultural yields increase (primarily due to improvements in crop breeding/variety selection).
Loss of heirloom seed varieties, introduction of chemical fertilizers.

August 2017 Established Na Yue Village Cooperative

In agriculture: increased yields, decreased labor demand.
New Socialist Countryside Movement, infrastructure improvement.
Village begins hosting tourists.
Village begins selling products through online outlets.
Cultural spaces and traditions (stupa, grain mills, etc.) undergo restoration.

共同地图

Our second activity is a community mapping activity. This is really very simple. Here we have a giant piece of paper, and on it we will map out the physical characteristics of the village: the river, houses, public spaces, the road, trails, resources, forest and farmland. I also have some funny little photos of you all that I stole from WeChat. If I've left anyone out, don't worry, I will capture you later. We can paste them on the map to help me remember who lives in which house! Okay, now who is the best artist here? Remember, if you help me draw you won't have to talk as much!

我们的第二个活动是要做一个共同地图。这个真的很简单。这儿我们有一大张纸，纸上我们要一起画一下腊月村的物理特征：比如河流，房子，公共空间，公路，小路，资源，森林，农田等等。我还有一些从微信里悄悄偷来的你们的图片。没拍到你们吗？放心，等一下给你拍。我们可以把已有的图片都贴在地图上，请大家帮我记住谁住在哪个房子里。好吧，谁是最会画画儿的？愿意帮忙画画儿的，待会儿就不用费劲儿去发言了哈！

Questions to ask during the activity:

- What do the women think? Are there other resources you use that are important to note (firewood, medicine, pig fodder, clothing supplies, etc.)?
- How many people live permanently in each house? How many people live permanently outside the village? How many people live there seasonally?
- Where does the drinking water come from? Who shares it?

- Are there any irrigated fields in the village?
- Are there commonly-used paths used to interact with other villages?
- Where do the village “experts” live (fortune tellers, health care providers, weavers, teachers, handicraft experts, singers, artists, carpenters, etc.)?

活动中可以提出的问题：

- 女生怎么觉得呢？还有没有值得提出的资源呢（像火柴，草药，猪草，做衣服的材料等）？
- 每个房子有几口常住的？还有几个常住在外边儿的？经常到外面去打工的？
- 饮用水是从哪里来的？有几户在用？
- 村子里有没有灌溉的土地？
- 有没有到其他村子的小山路？
- 我们本地的“专家”住在哪里（比如老师，木匠，算命的，治病的，织布的，做手工的，唱歌跳舞的，画画儿的等等）？

Thank you for participating in today's activities! Now we all have a clear picture of what the village looked like in the past and how it looks in the present. Tomorrow evening we will focus on how we would ideally like the village to look in the future. Please take the day to think about your dream of the village in 5 years. You can think of all aspects—people, culture, livelihood, environment, agriculture, education, etc. I know that earlier in the year you did an activity focusing on problems you currently see in the village. With those also in mind, we will focus on positive objectives that will bring us closer to our collective vision. Once this is complete, we should have a good foundation upon which to formulate our own research question(s). Thanks everyone! See you again tomorrow night.

非常感谢大家都来参加今天的活动。现在我们都对腊月村的历史和现在有一个共同的印象了。我们明天晚上以未来的愿景和目标为主题。请大家明天抽一点时间想一想你们对村子五年以后的梦想。可以想到很多方面的东西—人民，文化，生计，环境，农业，教育等等。我知道你们今年已经做了一个活动，提出了现在在村里能看到的一些问题。这些大问题我们可以记在心中，但我们也要把有效的精力放在目标上。把这个做好了，我们就会有一个很好的基础来讨论我们自己的研究问题。谢谢大家，明天晚上见！

Community Resource Mapping Activity Results

Nature	Local Experts	Culture
Forest	Masonry skills	<i>Guozhuang</i> (traditional song and dance)
Water	Carpentry skills	Folk songs
Wild [herbal] medicines	Tibetan medicine (traditional recipes, treatment of liver disease)	Ceremonial prayer/speech
Wild vegetables	Jiarong embroidery	Storytelling
Wildlife	Weaving [textiles]	
Stone	[Basket] weaving	
	Children's toymaking	
	Brewer's yeast - winemaking	
	Traditional agricultural skill	
	Ceramics	
	Veterinary medicine	

—

Visioning Exercise Script | 共同愿景活动脚本

我们为什么想建立一个共同的愿景？ / Why visioning?

建立共同愿景这个活动主要是有几个目的：

- 能够帮我们回答这个问题：我们想创造什么？（什么样的生活，什么样的未来等）
- 可以让我们离开我们常用的思维方式，一起开发出许多新的可能性
- 可以使研究者能更加深刻地理解村民的想法，希望与愿景
- 村民之间会向彼此表达他们的想法
- 参与者可以学会如何作为一个整体一起合作，发挥创造力
- 参与者可以学会怎么设计与指导建立共同愿景的活动

A Shared Visioning exercise is mainly used for the following:

- Helps us answer the question: What do we want to create (type of life, future, etc.)?
- Makes us leave our typical thought patterns and explore new possibilities together
- Helps the researcher gain deeper understanding of villagers' thoughts, hopes, visions
- Allows villagers to communicate their ideas to one another
- Teaches participants how to collaborate and work creatively together
- Teaches participants how to design and facilitate shared visioning activities

活动脚本 / Visioning Script

Close your eyes. [Don't do this if it's late or there is a risk of participants falling asleep.]

请找到一个舒服的位置，也可以闭上眼睛 [如果担心大家有点困的话，就不要闭着眼睛...]

I want you to imagine that you are alone, walking from this room onto the roof terrace. When you walk out, it is daytime. The sun beats down, and fluffy clouds drift across the blue sky. Suddenly you feel very light, and you realize that your feet are leaving the ground.

现在要大家一起来想象一下，你一个人从这个房间走出去，到屋顶。想象你一走出去就是白天了，有大太阳晒着，懒散的白云在淡蓝色的天空飘荡。突然浑身感到轻松，你慢慢地意识到双脚离开了地面，整个人慢慢地飘了起来。

The Yangs' rooftop is somehow becoming smaller and smaller. All of its edges are now clear to you. You look directly in front of you and see Teacher Yang's home. The persistent sound of the river grows quieter. You realize that you are slowly floating higher and higher into the air.

不知怎么的，杨家屋顶看起来越来越小，看得到它所有的边缘。你看前面，就是杨老师家。你飘得越高，河水多年不断的声音就变得越小。

Soon the spot where you started is barely perceptible. You can see almost all of the homes in the village at once now. Everything is quiet and beautiful.

刚开始那个位置正慢慢从你的视线中消失。村里的每一家房子差不多都能看得到了。风景q清静优美，心里也踏实。

You feel a rush of cold, wet air. Your vision is blurred momentarily. You pass through a low, fluffy cloud. When you emerge above it, you can see all the way to Four Sisters Mountain. Liberated from the steep valley where you started, the mountain range stretches out on all sides like soft wrinkles in a green blanket.

一下子感觉到冷湿的一股空气，视力几秒钟模糊了。你穿过一层白云。出来时，就能够看得到四姑娘山的高峰。从狭窄山谷被解放出来了，山座好像在你面前无限伸展开来，一望无际铺上一层青绿色得锦毯。

Your ascent gently slows, and, very calmly, you begin to float downward, as if protected by a broad parachute above.

你的升空变慢了，轻轻松松的开始下降，感觉像被上面的一个宽宽的降落伞保护。

You float down through the soft clouds, and see you're headed for the same spot as before, on the Yangs' roof. This time, though, the village looks a bit different. You see signs of movement—warm light from inside the houses, fragrant wisps of smoke from the cooking stoves. You hear the faint sound of laughter echoing across the narrow canyon. The sound of the river grows louder, and gently your feet touch down on the colorful rooftop once again.

慢慢地往下飘，穿过淡淡的白云，看你还是往刚开始的同一个地点那个方向飘。但是这时候，村子看得跟刚才起飞有点不同。好像小屋里还是充满了温暖的光线，炊烟袅袅升起了。听到笑声在山谷回荡。河水奔腾而过大圆石的声音越来越大了。双脚在杨家屋顶上再一次着陆。

You turn toward the office. A calendar hangs on the office wall—a tiger. It is five years in the future, autumn 2022. You calmly realize that you've traveled into the dream of your own ideal future. Five summers have come and gone since your feet left the roof. You follow the echoes of laughter ...

你转身向办公室看。一张日历挂在墙上...一幅老虎的肖像...这就是五年后的未来，2022年。你终于到你未来最理想的梦想里了。自从你起飞时，已经过了五个生长期了。真神奇...你跟着笑声的回荡走...

Go down to the river.

先到河边去。

Wind up the road.

循着公路上去。

Pass through farmland.

走到农田里。

Enter your house.

进你自己家的房子。

[在每一个地点可以问一些问题，但参与者不要口头回答：

What do you see?

你看什么？

Farming

农业方面的，

Social Life

社会生活方面的，

Economics / Infrastructure

生计，设施等方面的.]

This image, made from your own dreams, is more beautiful than you ever could have imagined. You begin to feel sleepy. You head to the spot where you most like to have your afternoon nap. There, you smile to yourself as you fall into sweet sleep.

When you wake up, you are here again, in 2017, in the little office room where you began.

这个心中的生动意象是你梦想做出来了，比你以为能想象的还要美。走得这么远，你都困了，慢慢地找到你最喜欢睡午觉的那个地方去，躺下来。安然入睡，睡得香甜的。你醒了才发现你又在原来的这个办公室里，又是2017年，秋天凉爽的一个夜晚。

Open your eyes.

请睁开眼睛。

[After this is over, open up a discussion or initiate non-verbal reflection time (drawing, writing?). 这一段结束了，就可以请各位发言，分享一下他们的愿景。

Then dialogue? Add to the map? 可以有一个共同对话，也可以把提的意见画在共同地图上.]

La Yue Village's Collective Vision and Objectives

La Yue Village in 5 Years



After a brief recap of the previous night's activities—documenting village history and current assets and characteristics—participants were guided through a visioning exercise. Facilitators (Yang Zhengqing and myself) instructed the participants to imagine that they had been miraculously transported five years into the future. Exploring this future iteration of their own homeland, they were asked to consider all aspects of village life, livelihood, and natural environment. Their observations are recorded here:

Environmental	Social	Economic
See 'verdant hills and crystalline waters'; the natural environment is pristine.	There is a public space (also for hosting guests, doing handicrafts).	No one has to leave the village to do migrant labor.
The village and its houses look beautiful.	There is an activity center for the elderly.	There is an appropriate balance between household income and expenditures.
Plant flowers, fruit along roads and paths.	There is a medical center.	There is a standard model for hosting tourists (trained guides, sights, viewing platforms, hiking paths, activities with the stupa and grain mill).
The scenery is beautiful.	The villagers have a good mental outlook.	There is agricultural biodiversity, there are multiple (digital) sales and marketing channels for agricultural products, product value is maximized).
	The elders have stability and entertainment.	Herbal medicine is cultivated or collected for multiple functions (personal use, education and sales).
	The quality of education for children has been improved.	The value of agricultural products is maximized to lessen the burdens of labor.
	Quality of life and culture among women has improved.	Public transportation reaches the village.

After this exercise, the perspective was then shifted to identify objectives that could realistically guide the cooperative toward their shared vision.

5-Year Objectives

1. After five years, the average incomes should be at RMB 10,000 per person per year.
2. Public infrastructure should include an area for traditional *guozhuang* dancing, an activity center for the elderly, medical center, guesthouse, and multipurpose classroom.
- 3. Standardization of tourism activities:**
 - a. Train ten official guides.
 - b. Develop one set of explanatory materials about La Yue Village (including culture, ecology, traditional handicrafts, and herbal medicine).**
 - c. Design introductions to notable village sights and hiking routes.**
- 4. Increase value of agricultural products:**
 - a. Select heirloom seed varieties with high yields and market value.**
 - b. Use ecological farming practices.**
 - c. Establish online sales and marketing platforms (WeChat shop, Taobao page, other public platforms).**
5. Protect the forest and vegetation, restore and beautify the local environment (plant flowers, etc.) → shift responsibility to each household or individual; manage garbage/waste collection.
6. Develop collective activities for the elderly.

While these objectives may be useful for the cooperative's overall planning strategy, members in attendance were asked to select the one or two most pressing objectives, taking into consideration the research timeline and assumed capabilities. Through this discussion, the main priorities set for completion during the PAR process were objectives 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b, and 4c (although tasks related to 4c have already been taken on by a motivated group of young people from the village).

IV Samples of Cooperative Record-Keeping

Tourism Activities

纳月村游客体验活动

	Activity	Content	Approx. Duration	Number of Participants	Person(s) Responsible
Introduction Activities	Introduction to the Natural Environment	Guided listening, observing, and nature walk.	4h	No limit	小杨三根 王石全
	Introduction to La Yue Village	Introduction to village, history and folk tales.	1-3h	Varies	杨开云
Traditional Handicrafts	Hand-Sewn Bags	Use natural hemp cloth to sew your own bag.	1h	4	泽郎哈姆 杨浩兰
	Handmade Woven Goods	Learn how to weave intricate patterned belts and other traditional wool cloth.	2h	Varies	毛四妹 泽郎初 杨开术
	Model Water Wheel	Work with local carpenters to construct a miniature water wheel.	3h	Varies	小杨三根 王彭措
	Traditional Carpentry: Toys	Construct traditional toys such as a natural gas "gun," toys made using local walnuts, and bows.	1h	Varies	孙泽云 杨开云 王彭措
	Basketry	Use local materials to weave your own small basket.	Half-day	Varies	王石全 兰正福 兰海才
	Traditional Carpentry: Home Goods	Collect materials and construct your own custom made clothes hanger.	1h	Varies	王彭措
	Traditional Carpentry: Kitchen Utensils	Learn to carve your own chopsticks, spoons, etc.	1h	Varies	兰友才
Hiking & Trekking	The Pilgrimage	Hike to a sacred Tibetan mountain for worship and washing the spirit clean.	1d	No limit	拥中初 王石全
	Peaks & Waters Route	Cross mountains and waters on a half-day hiking route.	Half-day	No limit	兰国平 杨扎西
	Stupa Route	Learn about local Buddhist traditions by traveling to various important religious monuments.	Half-day	No limit	王成富
	3500m Challenge	Hike from Jika Village all the way over the mountain to the grasslands. Experience the <i>Cordyceps</i> harvest in May and June or camp under the stars during the summer season.	4h from Jika to Grassland (one way)	No limit	王大鹏 杨正福 王成福
	Traditional Farming	Engage in weeding, sowing, harvesting, or other activities depending on the time of visit.	2h	Varies	拥树秀 王成束 冬妹
	Hydropower Mill Activity	Learn about traditional milling technology and mill corn, wheat, and/or Tibetan barley flour.	1h	Varies	小杨三根 兰海才
	Tibetan Script	Learn how to write in Tibetan script.		Varies	
Cultural Activities	The Situ Dialect	Study Situ, the local language of Jiarong Tibetans.	0.5h daily	Varies	王秀花 色能
	Tibetan Song	Learn and sing traditional folk songs.	Based on interest	Varies	泽郎初 杨开云 杨浩兰 王成束 王成福
	Guozhuang Party	Enjoy and participate in a night of traditional <i>guozhuang</i> singing and dancing.	3h	Varies	当地居民
	Tibetan Cuisine: Fire Bread	Make a traditional roasted flatbread in the wood-fired stove.		Varies	色能 安松布 毛四妹 王成贵
	Tibetan Cuisine: Tibetan Hot Pot	Charm your tastebuds by preparing and enjoying Tibetan-style hotpot.		Varies	色能 安松布 毛四妹 王成贵
	Tibetan Cuisine: Butter Tea	Experience the entire process of preparing butter tea.		Varies	色能 安松布 毛四妹 王成贵
	Herbal Medicine	Learn to identify and collect wild herbal medicines.		Varies	毛中军 青妹
	Guides for Activities			Varies	志愿者团队 合作社
	Itinerary Design			Varies	王石全, 色能 杨开云
	Car Pickup			Varies	王大春

Heirloom Seed Varieties

2018老品种种植表						
家庭	主人	老品种	种子数量/面积	估计产量	作用/销售方式	其它信息
1	王成贵	豆类(豌豆.黄豆.兵豆)	共五斤种子	共七八十斤左右	自用, 部分可以出售	
		南瓜	十几颗种子	五十斤	自己食用或家畜食用	
2	王大春					
3	兰海强	豆类(豌豆.胡豆)	共两斤种子	七十到一百斤	自己食用部分可销售	
		南瓜	十几颗种子	五十斤	自己食用或家畜食用	
		麻子子	一斤种子			
4	兰海才	豆类(花生.四季豆.兵豆.黄豆)	共十斤种子	共一百斤到一百五十斤	自己食用部分可销售	
		青稞	三斤	二十斤左右	自己食用	
5	兰有才	豆类(兵豆.花生)	一斤种子	二十斤左右	自己食用部分可销售	
		大麦	三斤种子	二十斤左右	自己食用部分可销售	
		麻子子	半斤种子	十斤左右	自己食用部分可销售	
6	孙泽云	豆类(兵豆, 黄豆, 胡豆)	两斤种子	三十斤		
		青稞	一斤种子	十斤左右		
7	王彭措					
8	王勇	豆类(黄豆.白豆.豌豆.兵豆)	四斤	五十斤		
9	毛忠军	豆类(花生.黄豆.兵豆)	两斤	三十斤		
		青稞	五斤	三十左右	自己食用部分可销售	
10	王成付	豆类(豌豆.胡豆.花生.黄豆)	共一斤种子	共五十斤	自己食用可部分销售	
		青稞	共一斤种子			
11	王石全	豆类(四季豆, 兵豆, 豌豆, 黄豆)	共四斤种子	五十斤左右	自己食用可部分销售	
		青稞	五斤种子	三十斤		
		燕麦	一斤种子	十斤		
12	兰正付	豆类(黄豆.胡豆.兵豆.花生)	三斤种子	五十斤左右		
		青稞	两斤种子	二十斤左右		
		大麦	一斤种子	十斤		
13	杨正付	豆类(兵豆.黄豆.豌豆.白豆)	三斤种子	五十斤		
14	杨三根	豆类(黄豆.豌豆.兵豆.胡豆)	两斤种子	三十斤		
		青稞	一斤种子	十五斤左右		
15	杨开云	豆类(小花豆.大花豆.黄豆.白豆)	二斤种子	五十斤左右		
		高粱	二斤种子	十几斤		
		南瓜				
16	王大富					
17	王大秀					

La Yue Village April Tourism Summary (Translation)

During the Tomb-Sweeping Festival holiday, La Yue Village hosted a group of nine foreigners, 4 men and 5 women. Their stay lasted for two days, from the afternoon of April 5th to the morning of April 7th. Food and accommodation was provided by the households of Wang Shiquan and Little Yang Sangen.

Hosting Process

Preparation

On April 2nd, communication with the trip organizer (Julie Farrell) commenced. Needs and requests for accommodation preferences were expressed. After reviewing the expressed needs, the village cooperative began discussing details of hosting on April 3rd. Topics included food and accommodation, activities, a location for a large evening gathering, fees, etc. The discussion led to concrete decisions around which houses should host guests, the mode of hosting and activities, and the decision to charge RMB150 per person per day for all activities. At that time, the result was sent to Julie for further discussion and approval. For the group's transportation to the village, local drivers were contacted.

Hosting Process

Day 1

On the afternoon of April 5th, the group arrived to the hosting location. Lunch and rooms were prepared ahead of time. After lunch, the group participated in farming activities, planting soybeans and potatoes. The other household prepared dinner for the group.

Day 2

On the morning of the 6th, guests got up at 10am for breakfast. After breakfast, residents of the village guided visitors on a 10km hike. This hiking route was decided upon for its views of the surrounding area. Visitors completed the hike at around 3 in the afternoon. After eating a meal and resting, visitors borrowed traditional clothes from their hosts and all participated in an evening party that lasted until around midnight.

Day 3

On the morning of the 7th, visitors joined other villagers in the traditional Jiarong corn sowing at a nearby household. Due to time constraints, five members of the visiting group departed for Chengdu at 11am. Four others remained in the village until the afternoon and departed with another local driver.

Follow-up

Visitors expressed high praise for the visit, and many expressed their desire to come back again.

Positives and Negatives of the Visit

Positives

1. For this visit, communication and discussion between members of the village cooperative was very harmonious. The discussion led to highly effective results and planning for the guests went smoothly.
2. Activities during the visit were rather substantial.
3. Just as they have been before, hosts were warm and inviting. They had cheerful and positive interactions with the visitors.

April Trip Reviews - ENG

1. Which aspect(s) of the trip did you enjoy most?	2. Which aspect(s) of the trip did you enjoy least? How could these parts be improved?	3. During the three day trip, we engaged in the following activities: welcome ceremony, farming, hiking, group meals, and traditional guozhuang (song and dance) ceremony. If given more time, which of the following activities might you choose in addition to or to replace the activities conducted?	4. Please feel free to provide any other thoughts on the trip you think we should know!
<p>1 Genuine immersion in the village community, staying in family home and establishing bond with incumbents, hiking, guozhuang, welcoming ceremony (overwhelming emotional, an instant snapshot into the togetherness of the community)</p>	<p>Transport to village was great though slightly terrifying at times. Visitors less familiar to Chinese driving styles may be perturbed. Return journey swift though some waiting around. Again, people new to China may find this difficult to deal with.</p>	<p>Would not replace any activities, though others may not have enjoyed farming as much as myself. Especially enjoyed as I felt as though we were contributing towards day-to-day village life, as opposed to the hike and other proposed activities. Hike was great, would do again. Would definitely enjoy a cooking class as this is a relatively transferrable skill. Would be intrigued to hear more about the mill. Both discussion and handicrafts sound terrific. I would propose an option-based approach in the future to maximize inclusivity.</p>	<p>I really enjoyed the experience and am super grateful for the opportunity.</p>
<p>2 I enjoyed the farming and the dance party the most.</p>	<p>The toilet was the least fun. It can't really be improved. Lol. I struggled, obviously with communication. If you are taking others there, maybe set up some time to have someone translate. It would kinda be a forced and unauthentic situation but it might help some people.</p>	<p>I would love the handicrafts, cooking and the history and legends.</p>	
<p>3 It was the best holidays I've ever had! I have been to many places ,cities, islands and so on, but... This village, people, culture, traditions, their lives and light in their hearts, captivated my soul and my heart!!! I like the most: welcome ceremony, farming, hiking, meals, traditional songs and dancing!</p>	<p>Nothing to improve (just to spend more time there next time)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional handicrafts (basketry, carpentry/wood carving, embroidery, etc.) ✓✓✓ - More challenging/different hikes✓ - Cooking classes✓✓✓ - Local language lessons✓ - Water mill activity✓✓ - Dism on Jiarong history, legends, and traditions ✓ 	<p>Shower would be perfect if possible, if no it's ok.</p>
<p>4 The four activities I enjoyed the most were farming, eating Tibetan hot pot, the long hike, and the drinking! I have ranked the four activities above in order based on my personal preferences.</p>	<p>For me there were not any aspects I disliked. I thoroughly enjoyed every part of the three day trip.</p>	<p>I liked every one of the activities we did during those three days. I felt they were meaningful and interesting, as so I wouldn't choose to "subtract" any part! I hope that in the future there will only be "addition" and not "subtraction!" 😊 I would be extremely willing to add in the activities below, and have ranked them from what I love most to least. 1. Teaching or display of traditional handicrafts, and of course we should be made to try this out ourselves. 2. Water mill activity 3. Discussion on Jiarong history, legends, and tradition.</p>	<p>I loved the dancing part, but I felt like the dancing part was also a little—just a little—too long. 😊 Because there were so many parts to the dance, all of the parts together took a rather long time. We also couldn't understand the local language, so there was no way to sing along. We could only follow along dancing and laughing. If the dancing part is too long then it starts to make me feel rather obvious. 😊 Hahaha—the words above are spoken from my truest heart. 😊 I will add one last thing. I absolutely love the people of La Yue Village. They are the purest, most down-to-earth, cutest, most hardworking working people!</p>
<p>5 I've been to western Sichuan many times but never had quite a trip like this. The most fascinating part that stood out from any other trip I've taken out there was how emotionally close we were able to get to the locals. Because of their close relationship with Julie, they welcomed us with open arms and hearts without hesitation. We weren't seen as tourists or people who were there to take pictures; we were able to interact with them on a deeper level than I was used to.</p>	<p>There was honestly nothing that I didn't enjoy about the trip other than wishing it could have been longer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional handicrafts (basketry, carpentry/wood carving, embroidery, etc.) *Most important - More challenging/different hikes* - Cooking classes** - Local language lessons*** - Water mill activity - Discussion on Jiarong history, legends, and traditions 	<p>This trip was seriously awesome. It was a great combination of friends from Chengdu and great people that we met in the village. Again, the villagers were all extremely welcoming and loving. I look forward to going back!</p>
<p>6 I enjoyed staying with the Tibetan family. They were so nice and interesting to talk to. I also enjoyed the hike. Probably the best part was the dance that we did on the last night.</p>	<p>The part I enjoyed least on the trip was the driving situation. The first driver was really inexperienced and quite unprofessional.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local language lessons - Water mill activity - Discussion on Jiarong history, legends, and traditions 	<p>It was a great trip and I had a great time. I noticed that the houses seem to have hot water and showers. Maybe if that is an option to use them it might be good to let people take turns taking showers throughout the day or weekend. I think it is difficult for certain people to not take showers. People like me sweat a lot and honestly we are completely nasty after about 24 hours.</p>
<p>7 Really enjoyed all activities – welcome ceremony, dancing and singing, hiking or just hanging out with locals was really fun. Drinking a bit while chatting was definitely ice breaker for those whose Chinese is poor. Not to forget never ending snacks supply. Coming to the village with a mixed group of people, with minimal knowledge of Mandarin is definitely a big plus. It was much easier for those who understood language. Farming was pretty entertaining – even rain didn't change our plans. It is definitely one of the top 3 activities in the village.</p>	<p>The only thing that was uncomfortable was not being able to take shower, or not having privacy while washing. It can be easily fixed just putting lock on the shower room and reorganizing washing area.</p>	<p>A. Overall it was unforgettable experience. For me it would be interesting to learn how to make local food, as well local drink 'youjiu'. It would be nice to prepare special corner for visitors, where everyone can wash their dishes after a meal. If there are visitors from different countries – nice to introduce their national dish/drink for the community (Ingredients should be bought in advance). Cooking it together would be great fun. Villagers can try something tasty and maybe unusual for them. B. While cooking, or just during the time being in the village good to learn few phrases in local language. In the end of the trip all can play game-test, and check who have remembered the most. C. I'm also interested in traditional handicrafts – it would be interesting to learn some local embroidery/ basketry/ carpentry techniques etc. D. Another idea is to help locals with household. It would be nice to cooperate with architects/artists/ students, to develop few ideas how to improve current state of village houses with minimal expenses. For example, villagers are using corn cob as a handle to switch on light. Using local materials for daily life is a first step. Renovating old objects, designing new ways to make things simple can overall improve current state of the houses. Taking into account local design traditions, visitors can develop few ideas how to make house more sustainable, how to improve insulation, floors, wall covering and paint, door handles, hinges and locks, yards etc.</p>	<p>I loved people, the most sincere and open people I've ever met. I was impressed with a strong bond in community.</p>

VI Research Consent Form

La Yue Village Research Consent Form | 腊月村研究同意书

As members of an indigenous population, each person has a right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). No matter what country you live in, all humans hold certain inalienable rights from birth. In accordance with these rights, all participants must fully understand the demands and potential of this Participatory Action Research (PAR) study.

作为原住民，每一位都有自由，优先和知情同意的权利。从出生起，人类就有不能被剥夺的权利。不管你来自哪个国家，这权利对我们所有的人都适用。实施本研究项目之前，大家都要彻底地了解“参与式行动研究项目”的要求与潜能。

1. The nature, size, pace, duration, reversibility and scope of any proposed project:

The participatory segment of this research project will take place from November 2011 through April 2018, and perhaps longer if desired by the community. Participants will be invited to provide input on goals, visions, and concrete actions toward community objectives.

Participants will be invited to participate in 5 to 8 meetings throughout the course of research (at least one per month). Meeting time, location, and length will be determined collaboratively based on the needs of all participants. Besides these, each participant will be invited to do two individual or joint interviews. Other activities will be determined together based on collective needs.

Meetings and interviews will be recorded for research purposes. Additional publications, such as WeChat articles, comments, correspondence, and/or photos may be cited in the final research paper. The researcher guarantees a professional code of ethics and respects each participant's right to privacy. If there are any concerns regarding the use of these materials, please contact the researcher directly.

1. 研究项目性质，规模，进度，时间与范围：

研究项目参与式的那一部分会在2017年11月进行，一直到2018年4月才完成。参与者有兴趣的话，也可以扩展并稍微延长项目的时间。过程中会邀请村民来决定研究的目标，愿景，采取行动的措施和实施变革的方法。

欢迎参与者在研究过程中参加5到8个集体大会（至少每月1次）。大会时间，地点，时长都会尽量按照村民的需求来决定。除此之外，每位参与者还会有两次被请来单独或双方面谈的机会。其他活动都会按共同的需求一起来决定。

为了达到研究目的，会议与面谈将被录音并且被研究者使用。其他材料，比如微信上的文章、沟通内容、图片等也有可能被引述。研究者担保遵守职业道德，并尊重每一个参与者的隐私权。如有对资料使用的疑问，请跟研究者直接联系。

2. The reason(s) or purpose of the project:

PAR has two primary intentions: to expand scientific knowledge and to promote positive change in communities. So when do we use this method? Researchers use PAR when there is a determined interest in changing a community's current situation. Researchers will work with the community to analyze and reflect on their current condition, and in the course of study, new ideas or plans can be implemented or adapted at any time.

Normally, research questions are decided by researchers alone using the academic canon, government data, or other formal scientific knowledge to explore problems. Of course, using these methods to ponder over real-world issues can be quite limiting. PAR invites community members to participate in question formulation. This way, the orientation of research has great potential to satisfy local requirements and desires.

2. 研究项目的目的：

“参与式行动研究”有两个主要的目的：一个是要壮大科学知识，一个是要对社会或环境促进积极的改变。那我们在哪种情况下使用呢？在大家决心改变社区现状的情况下，就可以选择参加“参与式行动研究项目”。研究者就会跟社区合作，对社区状况进行分析与思考。在研究的过程中，随时都可以适应新思想或实施新计划。

研究问题通常是研究者单独来决定的。研究者会使用学术研究、政府数据、科学意识等资料来决定研究方向。当然，用这种方式决定的研究问题不一定能够完全与现实生活中的实际问题相吻合。因此，“参与式行动研究”邀请本地人参加对研究问题的讨论，这样的研究方向才可以最大地满足本地的需求与愿望。

3. The possible economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts on the community and their lands and resources, including potential risks and realistic benefits:

Risks:

- Planning and implementation of community goals may lead to unintended results
- Disagreement within the cooperative/community during decision-making processes
- Increased demand on time may affect participants' livelihoods

Benefits:

- Learning a systematic, concrete method for creating change
- Increasing capacity for collaboration
- Collectively improving quality of life and/or reaching collective goals
- Gaining skills in community organizing that may be used in other contexts or shared with neighboring communities

3. 对本村生计，社会，文化，土地，资源和总体环境可能产生的影响，包括潜在的风险与可能带来的好处：

风险：

- 计划与实现村民的新目标可能导致意外的结果
- 参与决策的过程中，参与者之间有可能发生不达成协议的状况
- 参加相关的活动有可能影响到个人的日常生活与工作安排

好处：

- 参与者可以学会一种促进改变的系统性的方法
- 可以提高促进合作的能力
- 可以集体提高生活质量，达到共同目标
- 可以学会与团体合作的技巧，今后在其他情况下使用或者跟别村分享

4. Persons likely to be involved in the implementation of the project:

Participants include Julie Farrell, as well as official cooperative members. Any other resident of La Yue Mountain Village who wishes to participate in activities and is invited by members to participate or observe is also welcome. However, participants will ideally be available for the entirety of the research process.

4. 将会参与的人员：

- 研究者范竹丽（Julie Farrell）
- 丹巴县腊月山乡村旅游专业合作社的成员
- 只要以上参与者同意，欢迎对研究项目感兴趣的丹巴县腊月二村村民前来参加或旁听（但请注意，参与者最好能够从始至终地参加所有的研究活动）

5. The rights of the community:

Participants may, at any time, voice concerns or pose questions to Yang Zhengqing (head of village cooperative) or Julie Farrell (outside researcher). Participation in this research is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the process at any time.

5. 社区所有的权利：

参与者可随时表达对研究项目的关切，也可以向杨正清（合作社理事长）或范竹丽（研究者）提出问题。参与者进行研究项目的所有活动都本着自愿的原则，也可随时终止。

All participants understand the terms of conditions of participatory action research described above. (Signature and seal of approving representative)

全体参与者能够一致了解以上“参与式行动研究项目”的各项条件（合作社代表签名，盖章）

All participants unanimously agree to participate in the participatory action research project. (Signature and seal of approving representative)

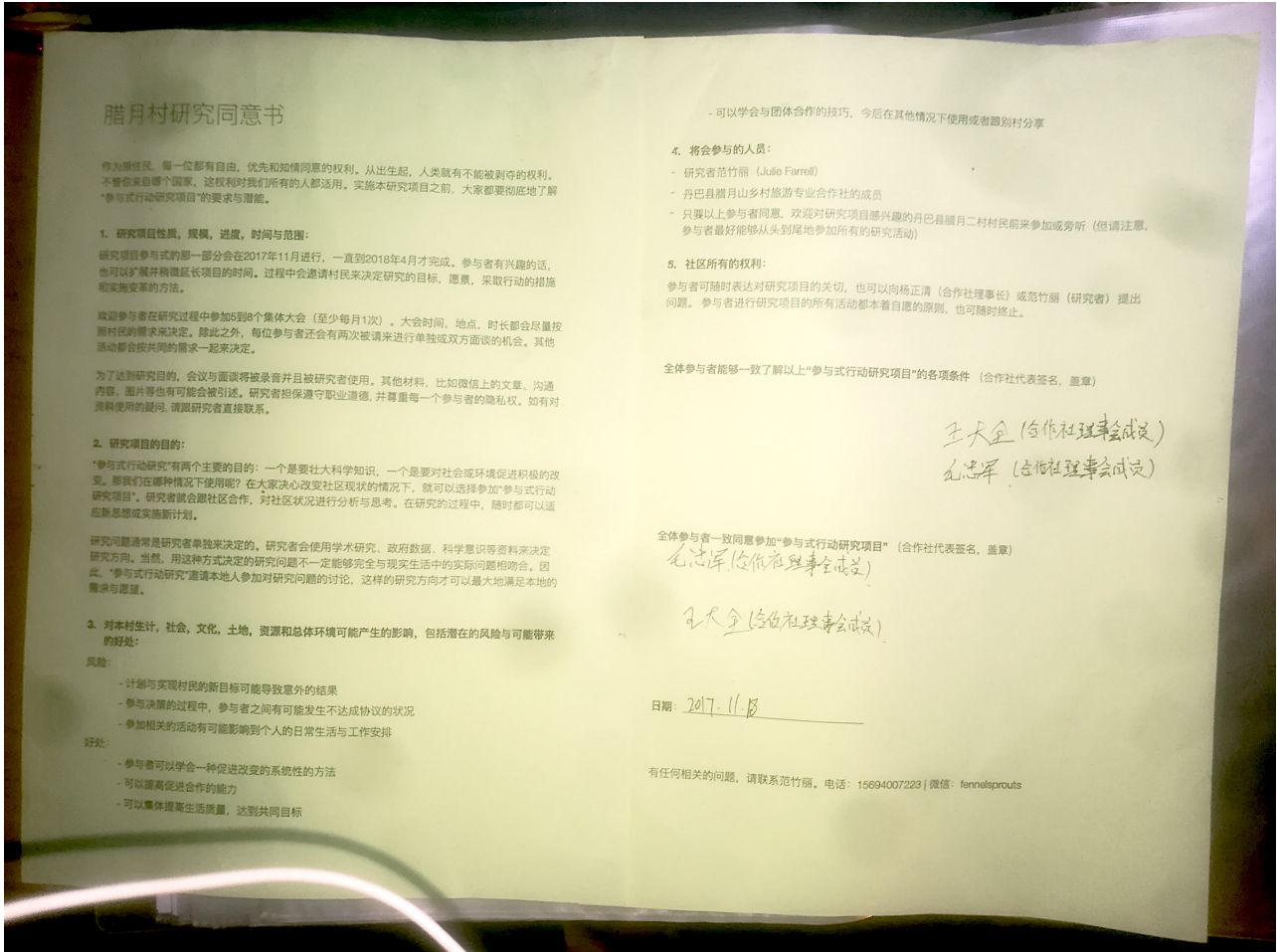
全体参与者一致同意参加“参与式行动研究项目”（合作社代表签名，盖章）

Date: _____

日期: _____

For any related questions, please contact Julie Farrell. Phone: 15694007223 | WeChat: fennelsprouts

有任何相关问题, 请联系范竹丽。电话: 15694007223 | 微信: fennelsprouts





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