Faith as Lived in Private Life and Public Space: A Lisu Village Christian Church in Fugong

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Research Article

Abstract: In the Lisu village of Fugong, Yunnan, Christianity does not merely serve as a theological resource with which villagers seek personal redemption. It also saturates every corner of their private and family lives, engaging directly with various issues including important ceremonies of life and other daily matters. More important, as a community itself, the local church becomes a public place. It is also an organizational foundation and resource for communal interaction and rural governance.

Keywords: Lisu people, Christian church, private life, public space, rural governance

An anthropological study often attaches its importance to the findings of cultural rules in daily life. That also explains why one of the disciplinary requirements for its researchers is to engage in long-term interaction with the culture and groups of people that are the subjects of study. Anthropologists believe that such a research method, whose ultimate goal is “an insider’s perspective,” can help researchers to have the most appropriate knowledge of a culture. Consequently, detailed descriptions of minutiae can often be found in some classic ethnography works. However, we are also aware that some other disciplines have made outstanding contributions based on their close examinations of daily life, such as history, literature, and even law (e.g., Ewick and Silbey 1998).

This article is based on intensive anthropological fieldwork in a village in Fugong County, Yunnan Province, southwestern China. We first visited in 2007 and stayed for a few weeks, interviewing villagers. We lived in their houses and observed their everyday life, trying to understand what it means for them to be Christians in their interactions within their households and in the village. Though we visited again in 2011, the ethnographic data appearing in this article were mostly recorded during our first visit.

After his major contribution The Flow of Gifts (Yan 1996), Yan Yunxiang continued his study of a village in Heilongjiang Province, northeastern China, and published another important work, Private Life under Socialism (2003), which prompted us to have another look at private life in rural societies within the larger context of social and political transition.

If Yan’s work inspires us to pay more attention to the everyday life of the common people, He Xuefeng’s comments on rural religious development and the role of the state (2006) lead us to another concern in this article—namely, what role the state should play in (rural) people’s private life, and what implications a “new” religious revival has for the private and public life in a rural community, with a particular focus on people’s religious affiliation and especially practices in everyday life.

In the field of rural study, we noticed an interesting shift of research topics and concerns. As one of the most prominent scholars in this field (see, e.g., He 2002; 2003), He notes that researchers have changed their subjects of study twice since the 1990s. The first change was from villagers’ autonomy to rural governance. Recently, their research interest has shifted to the social relationships and situations that constitute the social foundation for rural governance. Such a foundation can be divided into two aspects: the open and formal foundation and the concealed and informal one. He argues that in present Chinese rural areas, the transformations of Chinese modern society have produced “gray” rural societies, and this requires researchers to closely examine the “gray” aspects instead of merely focusing on public institutions and relations in the study of rural governance. He also mentions that the social foundation of rural governance depends on individuals and their private relationships. Both public and private relations also vary according to the situation. Thus, with the study of each individual strengthened, the study of private relationships can give more insights into rural governance (He 2006).
Besides the rural-study literature, our research is also part of the large emerging literature of the empirical study of Chinese Christianity (for an overview, see Huang 2009, 345–66). Though the existing studies mainly discuss Christian churches in rural areas, there is little examination of questions such as what aspects of Christianity influence the individual’s private life and the village’s public life. Meanwhile, in the studies of Christianity among China’s minority groups, particularly the Lisu and Nu peoples in the Fugong area, many have only outlined the local history and given some rough descriptions (e.g., Han 2003).

As He Xuefeng indicates, when rapid social change occurs in rural areas, the very significance of inquiring into villagers’ beliefs and their meanings should underpin the study of rural governance (2006). That is the aim of our study here, focusing on how Christianity expresses itself in the private and public lives of Lisu people in a village in Fugong County, Yunnan Province.

In short, by describing a Christian church and the lives of local Christians in a village, this article discusses the religious practices of the villagers and their impact on the private lives of villagers and the public life of the village, with a theoretical aim of entering into dialogue with He and other scholars in rural study on the issue of religion and local public life.

“The Gospel Valley”: Christian Presence in Fugong

A few years ago, a book titled The Gospel Valley (Lin 2003) was very popular among common readers. Strictly speaking, it is not an academic work. Rather, it is a travelogue that records the author’s impressions of Christians and churches among the Lisu people. The book is full of the taste of nostalgia and primitivism, as the author makes no secret of his reverence, even admiration, for the poor locals made glorious with nobility and respect through the power of Christian belief. He introduces this remote area to the public, especially to tourists, while in the past it was known only to scholars whose research interests were in ethnic issues and national border issues and to people¹ (especially Christian missionaries) interested in the Chinese development of Christianity (see, e.g., Yamamori and Chan 1998).

Christianity has been widely accepted among the Lisu and Nu peoples since the English missionary James O. Fraser from the China Inland Mission (CIM) preached “behind the ranges” (to borrow the title of Taylor 1944) between the Nu River and the Bi River early in the twentieth century. According to Pastor Li Guihua (interviewed in October 2013), the chairman of the Fugong County Christian Council, more than 70 percent of the hundred thousand people (80 percent Lisu) in Fugong (Yang Yi 2013) are Christians. That makes Fugong’s area a real “Gospel valley.”

The huge difference in life conditions and social environment between Fugong, with a large Christian population, and other areas in China is not surprising. In fact, according to some descriptions from the late 1980s and 1990s, many areas in Fugong rarely saw noisy bazaars on Sundays. Instead, the gathering of Christians from neighboring small villages was common. Lin Ci notes that in many villages of Fugong, it is appealing to see the barefoot Lisu people dressed in shreds and tatters, singing chants and worshiping God in their chapel on Sundays (2003, 19–23).

As some researchers indicate (Qian 2000, 25–28; Shen Jian 2006, 17–18; Shen Xiaohu 2011, 64–65), the spread of Christianity brought about many social and cultural changes in the Chinese southwestern minority groups, particularly among the Lisu people. The most profound and direct impacts were brought by the Lisu written language² created by Fraser and other missionaries and the Lisu-language version of the Bible, translated by the American missionary Allyn B. Cooke.³

In other words, the presence of Christianity in the area is a social fact that can be proved by its involvement in people’s daily life and the local culture. Now the question is, how can we have a more detailed understanding of Lisu Christians; particularly, in what aspects of the villagers’ private lives and the village’s public life does Christianity have an impact?

¹ The research on Lisu Minority has been mostly carried out within the framework of minority and ethnic group researches. More material can be found from the biography and diaries of the missionaries. Among which the most important work regarding the Christian missions is, Tetsuao Yamamori & Kim-kwong Chan, “Missiological Ramifications of the Social Impact of Christianity on the Lisu of China”, in Missiology: an International Review (Oct. 1998).

² The written language of Lisu, created by Fraser, is still in use in Fugong. In early years of the People’s Republic of China, the central government has decided to introduce a whole new language system for Lisu people, but it was not widely accepted.

³ Samuel Pollard was so respected by the Miao, that they called him the “King of Miao”, so are Mr. and Mrs. B. Cooke. They are called “Ayida” which means respected elder brother and “Azida”, respected elder sister. Besides, there are folk stories spread generation by generation in memorizing them.
Christianity Practiced in Private Life

Although we also look at Christianity as preached by Western missionaries and Christianity as perceived by locals, both believers and unbelievers, this article mainly examines Christianity as practiced (and as not practiced) in believers’ daily life. In other words, it deals with the issue of the Lisus’ Christian belief and the Lisu Church from the perspectives of neither missiology (and theology) nor the impact-response mode in studies of the Chinese history of Christianity. Rather, it mainly explores the locality of Christianity and the agency of local Christians and the church.

This article also addresses the issue of Christian presence, viewing individuals as part of family networks and the local community rather than simply focusing on their lives.

Bearing this in mind, we spent four weeks in Fugong in the summer of 2007. During that time, we participated in the gatherings of some local churches. In particular, we lived in Chihengdi, a village about eight kilometers from Fugong Town, with a population of 1,687, 91 percent of whom are Christians. Given such a high proportion, it is no wonder that Christianity plays an important part in the daily life of locals.

According to our observations, it is in life ceremonies (such as weddings and funerals) and in the critical moments of life that the local church represents itself. The most obvious example is the wedding ceremony, which clearly demonstrates the importance of the church in the life course of every local individual. Traditionally, a Lisu’s marriage was arranged by his or her parents, while these days the church takes that role. There are two main kinds of wedding ceremonies: the one in the church and the traditional one. In Chihengdi village, the majority are of the first kind. Two conditions must be fulfilled for a wedding to be held in the church: First, the bride and groom must be Christians. Given such a high proportion, it is no wonder that Christianity plays an important part in the daily life of locals.

According to the church, the ideal process from proposal to wedding is as follows. If either the groom-to-be or his parents takes a fancy to a woman, they will inform the chief clergyperson, known to Lisu as mizhipa (Yang and Ying 2004, 302–4). If they get the mizhipa’s approval, the man’s family is then permitted to write a letter to the woman’s family. Accompanied by a member of the clergy, a representative from the man’s family will take this letter to the woman’s family. If she and her family accept this proposal, they will reply with a letter, which means an engagement is made. After this, the bride-to-be and groom-to-be are not permitted to have further contact. On the wedding day, the choir will sing to welcome the bride, whom the groom’s family will escort to the church. The clergy will witness the marriage, and the couple will be blessed by all the people. A banquet held for relatives and friends is the last part of the whole wedding ceremony.

It is important to notice that a man and his family have no right to make a marriage proposal by themselves. A clergyperson must be the messenger and has a duty to accompany the man’s family when they ask for the response of the woman or her family. Moreover, instead of an expensive dowry, some tea or milk powder is sufficient for the engagement gift, which is a great relief for the man’s family and renders most people willing to make an engagement through the church. Interestingly, even if a man does not have any beloved one in mind but desires to get married, he can ask for help from the church. The church then will act like a traditional matchmaker, trying to find someone for him.

The church’s rule that Christian must marry Christian is not compulsory and has yet to become a coercive regulation. There is no mention of what the punishment will be if anyone violates the rule; however, in the villagers’ minds, they still make clear distinctions between “free love” and “marriage made by the church.” As mentioned before, the rule of the church suggests that groom and bride are not permitted to have too much contact before marriage. If the bride is not from the local village, it is possible that they may not even see each other before the wedding. As the local area has increasingly opened up, some young people, mostly unbelievers, have begun to have doubts about this restricted love mode. They are becoming more likely to pursue “free love,” as some may fall in love when they work outside their villages or hang out together. Despite this tendency toward “free love,” it is hard to find a similar phenomenon among Christians, most of whom still follow the rules of the church. If a Christian and a non-Christian are in a “free love” relationship, there are only three possible results. First, the Christian will leave the church. Second, the Christian will renounce the relationship under the pressure of family and the church. Or third, the Christian will stay in the relationship while bearing criticism from the church and others. No matter which way is chosen, a happy ending seems unlikely. To
some extent, the church controls the public opinion of morality, through which it exerts its influence on marriage and restricts behavior violating its rules.

Apart from marriage, the role and function of the church can be seen in funerals, another important life ceremony. The death of either a Christian or a non-Christian is a big concern to the village. In accordance with custom, every family should have one representative to visit the family whose member has passed away. Some money or another gift will be given as a form of consolation, and the representatives will try to help the family to handle daily matters if necessary. However, for a Christian, the funeral will be different. During the procession of the dead from the home to the graveyard, church members will sing chants all the way, and mapa (other clergy members; see Yang and Ying 2004, 302–4) will walk in front of the crowd, holding up a cross. After the burial, the singing will start again, followed by the clergy praying for the dead. When a non-Christian passes away, these procedures are not be conducted. If the family still believes in the traditional concepts of ghosts and gods, they will even invite nipa (local wizards, in the traditional Lisu belief) to chant sutras and practice sorcery.6

Another noteworthy fact is the everyday assistance the church gives in the Lisu people’s personal and family lives. It can be divided into two kinds: material support and spiritual help. If any Christian’s family meets some short-term financial problem resulting from the death of a member or any other matter, the church will give some of the followers’ donations (for example, one or two hundred yuan) to help him or her overcome the difficulties. Moreover, in the busy farming season, if a Christian family cannot get their work done on time, perhaps because they have children to take care of at home, the church will mobilize other Christians to share the responsibility of the farmwork. In this respect, the church plays the role of a mutual aid association, making the good deed into a moral responsibility. From

Under normal circumstances, the process of praying will be repeated continuously until the sick one recovers. In addition to sickness, another issue that requires prayer is building a house. If the owner (most likely a man) of the house is a Christian, he will ask the clergy to help him pray for its purity and the blessing of his family. Giving birth and having anxiety, though not as commonly as the previous examples, can also be subjects of prayer. When we posed the question of why they cannot pray for themselves instead of inviting the clergy or other church members to pray for them, almost everyone gave the same answer: “I cannot pray. Only those who believe well can.” Putting aside theology, this answer reflects the respect and trust they have for the clergy, as well as the contact they have with one another. According to tradition, when the church organizes believers to go to a family to pray, the family must provide them with a

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5 Mapa, phonetic translation of Lisu language for person, who takes charge of things, like Bible instructions, explaining the Bible and educating the followers. (Yang and Ying 2004, 302-4)

6 It is said by a local Christian Believer that traditionally after the dead have been buried, all who came to give their condolences and to help should have a so called “shouzhuafan” meal. But if the family of the dead person asked the “nipa”, local wizard to perform the god dance, then the Christians could not eat this meal, because they think the food is not clean anymore. Apparently, there are direct conflicts between the Christian beliefs and the traditional beliefs of Lisu people, which bears a close similarity to the conflict between Christian beliefs and the local beliefs of the Majority Han society.

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rich meal. Payment in cash is not always necessary and depends on the family’s economic condition.

In fact, praying for followers who are in need is the main responsibility of the clergy and even becomes a burden sometimes. Take the clergyman from the church in Chihengdi village as an example. He once told us that because of the large size of this village and its large proportion of Christians, the need is so great that it often takes him three or four nights per week to go to different believers’ homes to pray, not to mention “the extremely busy Sundays.” As a consequence, he hardly has any time for himself or his other work. The effectiveness of prayer is not the topic of this article; however, the anxious need for prayer indicates that the church is deeply involved in the daily lives of individuals in this area.

The Church as a Public Space

In his book Private Life under Socialism: Love, Intimacy and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949–1999, Yan Yunxiang expresses concern over the lack of public life in Chinese rural areas (2003). He notes that social movements in the twentieth century destroyed the power institutions in these areas together with their moral values: when national power retreated from various aspects of Chinese social life after the 1980s, the moral consciousness of socialism collapsed as a consequence. Afterward, farmers who had become entangled in the commercial economy and market soon accepted the ethical doctrines of late capitalism, emphasizing the right of individual enjoyment and the rationalization of desire. Yan wrote, “If there were autonomous societal organizations and if villagers were able to participate in public life, a more balanced individualism might have developed, in which the individual obligations to the public and other people could be emphasized as well. But just the opposite has happened” (2003, 234). Yan’s book’s labels them “uncivil individuals,” but up to the present, the villagers have been facing a moral and ideological vacuum in the postcollective era.

In our observation, in most villages of Fugong the church has replaced the vacancy of public space noted in Yan’s writings. Although the size of the churches and the number of Christians in different villages varies, the churches have one thing in common: they all hold services five times a week (Wednesday evening, Saturday evening, and Sunday morning, noon, and evening). The clergy require the believers to participate in all five services. However, for reasons such as “too tired” or “too busy,” the followers do not strictly obey this rule. From what we have seen, more people attend services on Sunday, especially at noon. Almost every believer attends the noon services on Sunday, while the attendance at morning and evening services on Sunday is slightly less. The services on Wednesday and Saturday evenings usually do not attract many people. The main reason for this apparent distinction is that Sunday is “the Sabbath Day” named by the church, on which Christians are not allowed to farm in the fields or do business, leaving them nothing to do but attend services in the church. In fact, resting on Sundays is a distinct sign of a Christian. Some non-Christians may complain about this: “Those Christians do this only to find an excuse to rest.” However, the Christians have their own, biblical explanations.

Regardless of the criticism these services suffer, they create a public space that repeats itself periodically and continuously. In addition to the five meetings every week, the churches organize grand ceremonies for the three big festivals each year: Easter, Autumn Harvest (Thanksgiving), and Christmas. In our interviews, almost all the interviewees said, “You should come here at Christmas. It is very lively.” As far as we know, the villagers in Fugong do not celebrate Spring Festival, the biggest festival of the year for Han people. For them, their “Spring Festival” is Christmas. The place to celebrate Christmas alternates among villages year by year. For instance, Chihengdi, where we did most of our fieldwork, has six “natural villages” (each much smaller than the administrative unit of “the village,” which they are all part of), each with its own church. Each villages takes the responsibility of organizing a Christmas celebration in turn once every six years. All the Christians in the other natural villages in this group will go on the day before to the village in whose church Christmas will be celebrated. The Christians there will hold receptions for them, and the visitors will sleep in their homes. During the festival, they will dance, sing, and hold some sport competitions day and night, and such lively scenes will last for three days.

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7 There are no restrictions to the time of the meal. No matter if it is morning, noon, afternoon or evening, as long as the person who prays for the family arrives, he needs to eat. One day, the author went with the person in charge of the church to pray for two families within an hour. They both had rich food. Even though there was only a short period in between, the church person ate two meals without having been surprised.

8 As there are intermarriages between the villages, it is natural for the visitors to first choose their relatives to stay with, but if they don’t have a relative, then they will just choose any family.
until all the followers have fully enjoyed themselves and returned home.9

In fact, given the mountainous topography of this area, the distance between villages is quite large. It may take two or three hours to climb from one village to another. Normally, in either the busy or the slack season, people seldom visit relatives or friends in other villages. Thus, the Christmas celebrations no doubt strengthen the loosened social network. All the members of the village, whether knowing it or not, have devoted themselves to a “communitas” (Turner 1969, 132) for three days. Conversely, they all feel the power of this community, which their own activity actually creates.

At Easter and the Festival of the Autumn Harvest, every village organizes its own celebrations. Though not as grand as Christmas, these also provide both a break from everyday life and a sense of community. Through the regular services and every year’s carnivals, the church connects every dispersive individual or family. Here they can make friends, chat with relatives, or even develop crushes on girls from other families. When asked, “How did you meet each other?,” many couples said, “We are in the same church, so we know each other naturally.” This is an example of the function of the public space that the church provides.

More important, there are a series of moral requirements and commandments in this space. Besides “No smoking or drinking,” villagers often mention rules such as “No fighting, no cursing, no lies, and no dirty words.” As villagers become more involved in the activities that the church organizes, the public space that it creates will play a more important role in local villages. As a consequence, these moral norms will be internalized in villagers’ minds and lived out in their daily lives.

For scholars whose research interest is rural governance, the interactions between Christianity and local national power should be very interesting. In fact, the relationship between the church and the village committee is quite subtle, as they are separate and close at the same time. Sometimes they compete with each other, but most of the time they seek to cooperate.

In the contemporary bureaucratic system, the legitimacy of local administrative power stems more from higher authorities than from the local base. According to the regulations of the Fugong government, the local cadres cannot have any religious belief. Therefore, the four Chihengdi village cadres who receive salaries from the government are not Christians, at least not for now. However, they allow, if not encourage, their family members, such as their wives and children, to be Christians, and at least one of them told us he was planning to “believe in Christianity” after he retired.

Given the role the church plays in the village and the good impression that local cadres have of it, it is no wonder that it and the village committee cooperate widely in many matters. For example, the local church often takes an active role in the construction of village infrastructure that is the responsibility of the village administration. In the 1980s, the local church spent its own funds to construct a cement road in place of a dirt road. Since the new road connects three villager groups of the village, it is now more convenient for Christians from different areas to attend services in this church. Though the motivation for such funding was to promote Christian activities, it provided a community service as well. Besides, in the past two years, the government has decided to resolve Chihengdi’s poverty problem by establishing a “new village” near the river for the resettlement of villagers living in the mountainous area. During the resettlement process, it was the church rather than the village committee that organized villagers to voluntarily assist the committee. As the villagers’ own organization that has financial and mobilizing abilities, the church plays a significant role in local development.

On the other hand, the local cadres do not place any blame on the church for taking over authority that is supposed to belong to the government; instead, they are more than willing to take advantage of the public space that the church has created for villagers, using it to publicize policies and give notifications. The local village cadre said that the first choice for announcing notices was in the church. After receiving permission from the clergy, the cadre can take a few minutes to announce some notices from the government when Sunday service is over. By doing this instead of visiting villagers one by one, the cadre can save a lot of time. Furthermore, if villagers have any discontent or doubts concerning national policies, the cadre will spend that period explaining and asking for help from the church. For instance, when the birth control policy was first implemented in the 1980s, some villagers found it difficult to accept, for it violated the traditional view of a big family. The village cadres dealt with this in two ways. On the one hand, they tried to clarify some points to villagers on their own. On the other hand, they asked the clergy to help villagers understand this policy in the regular religious services, which later proved to be quite effective.

9 As mentioned before, in Chihengdi, the Christian followers take up a very high proportion of the whole population. That is why the church activity is almost an activity for the whole village. In fact, even those who are not Christian believers, also took part in this grand activity.
Another interesting and symbolic example of the interaction between the local village cadre and the church is the use of the loudspeaker in the village. In a Lisu village, without internet or telephone service, the loudspeaker is the best choice for announcing notices and summoning villagers. In Chihengdi village, every villager group has its own loudspeaker, and the group leader always owns the broadcaster. Additionally, one loudspeaker is right outside the church, with a broadcaster inside. These loudspeakers are supposed to have different functions; however, according to our observations, villagers use them without much distinction. Sometimes the church might use the village group’s loudspeaker to give out notices of church affairs, which the villagers take for granted, and if the village cadres have something to announce to the whole village, they will use the church’s loudspeaker as well. The use of loudspeakers, which can be seen as one form of taking over the public space, is here more like cooperation than competition between the local village cadre and the church. By taking advantage of the other group’s loudspeaker, they both successfully mobilize villagers to accomplish their own tasks.

When it comes to dispute resolution, the subtle relationship between the church and the government can be seen more clearly. The most common disputes in Chihengdi village are about family trifles and land. Regardless of the intensity of the dispute, the clergy first tries to resolve it if both sides are Christian. In fact, if any dispute is not mediated by the church but sent directly to the government, which is considered more official, both of the sides involved and the church will feel that they have “lost face.” When a case is brought to a clergyman, he will mediate under the principle of biblical doctrines. If the result is accepted, the dispute will come to an end. If one side does not accept the result, there are two options. One is to ask for help from higher authorities of the church, such as a member of the clergy on a village or county level, and the other is to send the case to the village committee or a higher level of government, hoping to get a satisfactory result through the compulsive power of officials. According to our observations, the latter is more commonly chosen, but even in that case the dispute will still go back to the church in the end. Take divorce as an example. If a clergyperson failed to mediate between a couple, they would then appeal to the village committee. Then if the committee’s mediation were not successful either, the officials would begin the necessary procedures for divorce. After the village committee handled the divorce case, it would return to the clergyperson for further examination. According to the Bible and the tradition of the local church, this member of the clergy would judge who was wrong and criticize him or her. Punishment in such cases may include prohibition from receiving sacraments and participating in services for two or three months.

If one or both sides of the dispute are not Christian, they can still seek help from the church. Though they are not required to, if they ask for help from the church, the church will never turn them down. More often, disputes between non-Christians are brought directly to the village committee. Zhao Xudong has categorized the authorities of a village as being of two kinds: institutionalized or noninstitutionalized (Zhao 2003). He argues that when a dispute occurs, villagers will first seek help from the local authority whom people recognize. The power of this kind of authority lies in persuasion rather than in a verdict. Methods of persuasion include expressions such as “You have to think about it from a wider perspective” and “Give me some face.” In the disputes of Chihengdi village, the church plays the part of local authority that Zhao describes. Since the mediation of a dispute does not require an investigation of evidence, a clergyperson will neither pay much attention to the details of the disputes nor judge the trifle on its own sake; instead, he will rely on the moral standards of Christians and the face of the church to persuade each side to step back a little. As far as we know, on most occasions the church proves to be the most effective and acceptable authority to solve the disputes. Only when it fails is the institutional authority turned to.

In short, the church performs important social and organizational functions in Lisu villages on two levels—namely, the life cycle and everyday living of believers, and the public affairs of the village. As a form of social organization, the church is essential for the discussion of rural governance.

Conclusion and Discussion

Our study of the Lisu Christian Church is not confined to the issue of Christianity. Rather, it draws attention to a question with a wider implication—that is, what and how
in general a religion contributes to the construction and reconstruction of individual moral life and rural public life. As a start for discussions under a wider thesis in rural areas of China, this article mainly discusses the example of a minority group, the Lisu people, most of whom are Christian.

Our observations in the Lisu villages revealed that Christianity not only provides villagers opportunities for redemption in a theological sense but also saturates their private and family lives by attaining a direct presence in important life ceremonies and daily life. More important, as a spiritual community, the church constitutes a public space, which is hardly found in many other rural areas in China today. It is an organizational foundation and resource for communal interaction and governance in rural societies.

He Xuefeng said, “Everyone lives with a life meaning. Nevertheless, when ideas and practices of ghosts and gods, ancestor worship, were eliminated as superstitions in China and where there is no abstract belief system, the Chinese farmers are in an ontological crisis. Thus, the study of the meaning of farmers’ private lives is equally important to the study of their social relationships” (2006, 133). We agree with most of this argument, though we still have serious doubts about whether the “ideas and practices of ghosts and gods, ancestor worship,” have been eliminated. He goes on to say that as a result of the elimination of traditional Chinese religious practices, Christianity has been growing too rapidly, even to the extent of insane (or irrational) “explosion,” in many rural areas in China (133).

Though we don’t share his concerns that come out of his nationalistic sentiments, we do agree that the growth of Christianity, particularly Protestantism, is a major social phenomenon that demands more careful study. However, his proposition to resolve this “problem” is in question. And we cannot agree at all.

He claims, “The state cannot be only a night watchman in modern society. Against the backdrop of rapid social changes in China, the state needs to more positively get involved in public and private lives in rural areas, even in the aspect of personal belief, which will provide possibilities for the fulfillment of national interest” (2006, 133).

Quite to the contrary, we hold the view that the local community, such as the Christian church in Lisu people’s villages, is essential for the governance and positive functioning of rural societies. National involvement should not include intervention with individuals, especially in the aspect of personal belief. If so, it will be a serious historical retreat, back to the Cultural Revolution period, 1966–76, when people were required to constantly experience revolutions in their minds. It is difficult not to connect such a dismal social picture to the totalitarian society depicted in Nineteen Eighty-Four (Orwell 1949). For those supporters who favor the strengthening of national or state control over individual and society, a quote from Gerald Ford (from his address to a joint session of Congress on August 12, 1974) is an appropriate reminder: “A government big enough to give you everything you need is a government big enough to take away everything that you have.” In other words, we don’t want Big Brother.

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私人生活、公共空间与信仰实践——以云南福贡基督教会为中心的考察

[文 / 黄剑波、刘 琪]

人类学研究一贯重视在日常生活中寻找和发现文化规则，而这也是为什么人类学要求其研究者长期参与到被观察的人群和文化中，从而使其对于该文化的了解乃是一种更为贴近的认识，并力图达到所谓“内部人视角”的程度。也正是因为在一些经典民族志中，常常可以看到一些近琐碎的细部描写。不过，对于日常生活关注显然并非人类学的专利，在社会研究、文学研究以至法律研究中，我们同样可以看到一些相当杰出的研究。当然，对我们来说，阎云翔的《私人生活的变迁》无疑直接提供了一个思考的起点，至少是引发了我们对于乡村社会的私人生活之重新关注。尽管我们其实更为关注乡村公共生活的空间。

在乡村研究领域中，我们则注意到一部分学者的一个有意的研究关注的转向。贺雪峰提到，自20世纪90年代以来，他们从最初的村民自治研究，转到乡村治理研究，乃至到近来的乡村治理的研究基础，也就是研究构成乡村治理的基础的那些社会关系和社会状况。而乡村社会治理的社会基础可以分为两个部分：一是公开的正式的面的基础；二是非正式的隐蔽的面的基础。

他指出，在当前的中国乡村，社会转型所造成的影响社会结构变化，使乡村治理研究不能局限在那些公开的制度和关系的研究中，而应从整体和系统的角度进行研究。他还提到，乡村治理的社会基础还涉及要涉及具体的人，以及他们的私人关系。而私人关系和公共关系，都要以具体个体的状况为基础。因此，研究私人关系，可以加深对个体状况的理解，从而加深对乡村治理的理解。

贺雪峰进一步提到，研究当前农村快速变迁中的农民个人信仰及其价值问题，将为乡村治理提供更加深入的基础。正是在这个意义上，我们展开了这项研究，考察基督教在傈僳村寨中的个人生活以及公共生活的表达，尽管我们也意识到作为少数民族的傈僳村寨与乡村研究学者主要关注的汉人村庄有一定的差别。

关于中国社会中的基督教的经验性研究，尽管目前多见的研究集中于乡村教会，但对于基督教在什么样的实际层面上影响了个人的私人生活以及村庄公共生活却讨论不多。另外，关于少数民族，特别是傈僳族和怒族的基督教研究，大多停留在历史过程梳理和现状的简单描述上。因此，我们在福贡将以云南福贡基督教会为中心，集中讨论在信徒个人生活以及村寨公共生活中的信仰实践，并试图对乡村治理研究中对于信仰与村庄公共空间的讨论有所回应。

一、“福音谷”：基督教在福贡的在场

五年前，一本名叫《福音谷》的图文书籍受到不少普通读者的热捧。尽管这本书并不是严格意义上的学术著作，而是作者个人的游记，但它却记录了作者对于怒江大峡谷深处的傈僳基督徒和教会的深刻印象。这本书带有强烈的原始论的思乡情怀，作者毫不掩饰地表达了对于这种几近赤贫的生活因着信仰而焕发出高贵和尊严的敬仰，甚至羡慕，但在客观上帮助了这个偏远的地区得到了普通大众，特别是游客的广泛关注，而这里以往基本上只被研究这个地区的学者所关注。

3 贺雪峰：“私人生活与乡村治理研究”，载《读书》2006年第11期。
4 同上。尽管他的言论中对于宗教，至少是基督教有强烈的排斥和疑虑，他说：“最近十多年来，中国农村地下基督教的疯狂传播，正是要引起我们注意的一个问题。”
5 例如，[美]帕特里夏·尤伊克、苏珊·西尔贝：《法律的公共空间——日常生活中的故事》，陆益龙译，北京：商务印书馆2005年版；[法]菲利普·阿利埃斯、乔治·杜比主编：《私人生活史Ⅳ：演员与舞台》，周鑫等译，哈尔滨：北方文艺出版社2008年版。
6 阎云翔：《私人生活的变迁——一个中国村庄里的爱情、家庭与亲密关系（1949—1999）》，龚小夏译，上海书店出版社2006年版。
教发展的人士所报道。

从1910年内地会英国宣教士傅能仁（J.O. Fraser）进入"大山之后"的泸水、碧江一带传教以来，基督教在傈僳人及怒族人中被广泛接受。根据福贡县宗教局的统计数据，截止2007年6月30日，全县基督徒人数为55940人，占全县总人口一半以上，福贡所在的峡谷地带成为名副其实的"福音谷"。而福贡地区的主体居民傈僳人的基督徒比例也高达70%，并且有的地区估计超过80%。另外，怒族中的基督徒人口比例更是高达90%以上。

不难想象，具有这么高比例基督徒人口的福贡地区的民众生活以及社会环境有着与中国其他地区相当大的差别。事实上，根据一些20世纪80年代晚期和90年代的描述，福贡的很多市场和集市并不是那种喧闹的集镇，而是从远处和村庄赶来的基督徒的聚集地。而根据林保的描写，在福贡的很多村寨中，赤脚破衣的傈僳人在自己的礼拜堂中吟唱赞美诗和主日崇拜成为最令人神往的宗教场景。

一些研究者已经提到，基督教在西南少数民族中的传播带来了大量的社会和文化变迁，在傈僳人中尤其如此。其中，傅能仁和巴东创制的傈僳文字8，以及后来美国宣教士库克（Allyn B.Cooke，中文名为杨思慧）夫妇所译的《圣经新约全书》傈僳文译本可以说影响最为深远和直接。10（图2）换言之，无论是在日常民众生活中，还是在民族文化以及地方社会场景中，基督教在福贡地区的在场已经是一个毋庸置疑的事实，问题是我们如何能更细致地了解它在什么层面和意义上进入民众生活以及村寨公共生活中。

二、私人生活中的信仰实践

尽管我们也关注被传讲的基督教，也就是西方传教士所传讲的信仰内容，以及被本地信徒以及传道人所领受的基督教，但至少在这里我们所强调的乃是在信徒生活中所实践出来的信仰，以及那些没有被实践出来的信仰。11换言之，我们讨论傈僳人中的基督教信仰和教会，不是从宣教学（和神学）的角度，也不是遵照长久以来研究基督教历史的影响－回应（impact-response）的模式，而是更为强调基督教的地方性，以及地方基督徒和教会的主体性或能动性（agent）。另外，我们对福贡地区傈僳人的基督教信仰生活的考察不是从纯粹的个体生活层面上，而更多的是从生活在家庭及社区关系网络中的个体这个层面上去观察基督教信仰以及教会的"在场"，以及又是如何的"在场"或实际的运作。

2007年8月至9月，带着这样的疑问，笔者在云南省福贡县展开了为期一个月的田野调查。在调查过程中，笔者参加了福贡县城及周边几所教堂的聚会活动，并着重以赤恒底村为例，考察了基督教信仰在日常生活中体现。根据笔者的观察所见，基督教会在福贡地区民众生活的重要角色的方面就是婚姻。传统傈僳族的婚姻以父母包办为主，而到了今天，"包办"的实施者则转变为了教会，只不过包办程度有所减轻，方式也有所不同。从总体上来看，当地的婚礼分为两种：在教堂里举行的和按照传统方式举行的，笔者所调查的赤恒底村，前者占据了绝大多数比例。在教堂里举行婚礼需要满足两个条件：第一，男女双方都是教徒；第二，婚姻的介绍人是教会。在这两个条件中，后者其实又包含了前者，因为如果男女有一方是非教徒，教会就不会为他们牵线搭桥。

如果完全遵循教会的要求，那么，男女双方从提亲到结婚的程序应该如下文所述：首先，如果某个男子（或者他的家长）看中了某个女子，那么，这个男子（或者他的家长）就会到教会的管理人员（通常是"密支扒"12）那里汇报。其次，如果密支扒觉得没有什么不妥，就会让男方家写一封信，教会管理人员的陪同之下，让男方家庭的代表送到女方家；女方家长如果同意，就会给男方家回一封信，这样，就表示双方已经定亲了。接下来要做的，就是选定日期和筹备婚礼，而这一切工作也是由教会完成。在结婚之前，新郎和新娘被要求不再有更多的见面和接触，婚礼当天，在教会唱诗班的歌声中，男方家迎亲的人将新娘带到教堂，由教会负责人证婚，接受众人的祝福。之后，需要请亲戚好友吃一顿饭，婚礼就此完成。在这个过程中，有两点尤其需要注意。第一，男方看到某个女子之后，他们并不能自作主张自己去提亲，而是必须要通过教会管理人员作为中介；第二，在教会管理人员带着男方家人去提亲的时候，不需要准备昂贵的彩礼，一些简单的礼物，如茶叶、奶粉等就已够用了。

9 傅能仁创制的傈僳文字在今天仍旧在福贡县通用。中华人民共和国成立初期，中央政府曾经决定推行一套新的傈僳文字，但没有得到傈僳人的广泛采用。

10 如同柏格理（Samuel Pollard）在一些苗族人中被称为“苗王”一样，杨思慧夫妇在傈僳人中也深受尊敬，分别被称为“阿孔吉”（即“尊敬的大哥”）和“阿子打”（即“尊敬的大姐”），并流传着种种怀念他们的故事。


11 参考黄剑波：《地方性、历史场景与信仰表达——宗教人类学研究论集》，北京：中国戏剧出版社2008年版。
几年，几乎已经没有人再进行这种传统的祭祀。在婚丧之外，另一个值得关注的就是教会在傈僳村
民的个人和家庭生活中的帮扶，这主要体现在两个方
面，一为实际的物质帮助，二为“属灵”上的帮助。从
物质上而言，如果某位教徒由于家里死了人或者其它原
因遇到了短期的经济困难，教会通常会从平时收到的教
徒奉献中拿出一部分（如一两百块钱）给他，以帮助他
渡过难关。另外，在农忙时节，如果某位教徒因为要带
孩子之类的杂务没法去地里干活，教会便会发动其它教
徒一人分担一点，帮他把农活干完。在这方面，教会起
到的作用类似于互助组，同时，从道德层面上而言，它
也使互帮互助成为了一种义务。村民们从成为教徒的那
一天起，就一方面可以得到教会的帮助，一方面又需要
承担起帮助他人的责任。一位教徒在访谈中告诉笔者，
村子里的教徒都是“一家人”，这种与传统基督教教义
相符的教会家庭观，为村民之间的相互帮扶奠定了牢固
的基础。

相对于物质方面，教会在“属灵”方面的帮助则比
较微妙难言。通常情况下，这种帮助体现在为生病的教
徒祷告之上。在当地，如果有人生病，那么，一方面需
要去医院看医生，另一方面，也需要请教会那些“会祷
告的人”来帮他祷告。后者虽然不是必须，但几乎已经
成为了一种习惯，尤其是如果出现久病不治或者病因不
明的情况，祷告的重要性就会高过吃药看病。例如，笔
者在赤恒底村的调查过程中，有一个15岁的男孩去乡里
上中学，刚去了没几天就开始发疯，不得不被送回家。
笔者第一次在他家里看到他的时候，他一直满地乱滚，
胡言乱语，甚至口吐白沫，他的父母在一旁担心地看着
他，但却无计可施。后来，他的父母去请教会的负责人
帮他祷告，一个周日的下午，教会召集了7位教徒（都是
弟兄）去了他家，围着那个男孩唱诗，大声祷告。祷告
完后，虽然没有立刻见效，但男孩的父母仍旧非常感激
地和每一个教徒握手，并一人塞给了十块钱。通常情况下，这种祷告的过程会不断重复，直到病
愈为止。除了生病之外，当地人反复提到的另外一件需
要祷告的事是建房子。在房子盖好落成以后，如果房主
是教徒，则需要请教会的负责人去帮忙祷告，以使房子
得到洁净，家人得到祝福。除生病和建房子以外，其它
需要祷告的事还有生孩子、心里不安的时候等，但并没
有前两项那样普遍。当笔者询问为什么不能自己祷告，
一定要请教会的负责人去的时候，几乎所有人都表示自
己不会祷告，要那些信得好的人才会，这从一个侧面体
现了他们对教会负责人的信任和肯定。按照惯例，当教
会组织教徒去某家祷告的时候，那家人一定要请他们吃
饭。据当地一位教徒介绍，按照习俗，在死者下葬之后，所有前去
慰问和帮忙的人要死者家吃一顿“手抓饭”，而如果死者的家属
请了“尼扒”来跳神念经，那么，基督教徒就不能吃这顿饭，因为他们
认为这是不洁净的食物。显然，基督教与傈僳族传统信仰之间在
此有直接的冲突，这在很大程度也和基督教与汉人社会的民间信仰之
间的冲突的性质类似。
一顿丰盛的饭\(^{17}\)。至于是否给钱，倒并没有硬性规定，主要视那家人的经济情况而定。事实上，有困难的教徒祷告是当地教会负责人的主要责任之一，甚至有教徒成为了一种负担。例如，赤恒底村教堂的执事告诉笔者，因为村子大，教徒人多，有需要的人也多，他每个星期几乎都有三、四个晚上需要出去帮人祷告，周日更是应接不暇，这使他不得不放弃一部分自己的生活和工作。祷告的效验不是笔者所要讨论的问题，但这种祷告的需求和回应本身，则直接体现了教会在个人和家庭日常生活层面上的全方位的介入。

三、作为一种公共空间的教会生活

在《私人生活的变革》一书中，阎云翔表达了对农村公共生活的缺失的极大担忧。阎云翔指出，20世纪的种种社会运动摧毁了农村传统的社会权力机制以及与之相伴的道德观念，然而，自80年代以来，国家力量从社会生活的多个方面撤出以后，社会的道德观念也随之崩溃。从此，被卷入商品经济和市场的农民很快接受了晚期资本主义的道德观念，强调个人享受的权利，追求个人欲望的合理化，使农村出现了道德与意识形态的真空。

阎云翔写道：“如果中国存在独立的社会组织，如果农民能够参与公众生活，或许这有可能产生另外一种在强调个人权利的同时也强调个人对公众与他人之义务的个人主义。可惜现实并非如此。……农民无法参与任何政治与公众生活，只得闭门家中，对道德滑坡、自我中心主义盛行等社会问题采取视而不见和曲意逢迎的应对态度。最终，无论是在公共领域还是在私人领域，他们对群体其他个人的义务与责任感也就日渐消亡。”\(^{18}\)

阎云翔把这种个体称为“无公德的个人”，认为这是当今农村生活中急需解决的问题。

在福贡县的村寨中，阎云翔笔下公众生活的空白恰好由教会加以了填充。虽然每个村寨教堂的大小、教徒的人数都有所不同，但共同的一点是，各个教堂都拥有一周五次的聚会——周三晚、周六晚、周日早晨、周日中午、周日晚上。（图4）原则上，教会要求信徒这五次聚会都需要参加，但实际上，因为“太忙”或者“太累”，信徒不会严格遵守这一规定。根据笔者了解到的情况，在这五次聚会中，参加周日，尤其是周日中午聚会的人最多，几乎每个信徒都表示这场聚会一定会到场。其次，参加周日另外两场聚会的人数也会较多，而周三和周六晚上的聚会人数则相对较少。这种现象主要的原因在于，根据当地教会的规定，周日都是“安息日”，在这个大，教徒不允许下地劳作，也不允许出门做生意，而是需要“安息”，并参加一天三次的聚会。事实上，据笔者所了解的情况而言，除了是否抽烟喝酒以外，周日是否干活也是区分教徒和非教徒的显性标志之一。有些非教徒在谈到这一点的时候颇有微词，认为“他们（即教徒）只是找一个借口休息”，而教徒则拥有自己的圣经解释。

无论评价如何，这种聚会的确在客观上创造了一种公共生活的空间，并且惯常而周期性的重复。除了周日五次的日常聚会以外，在每年的“三大节庆”——复活节、秋收节（感恩节）、圣诞节，教会更是会组织盛大的庆祝活动。在笔者的访谈过程中，几乎每位村民都告诉笔者：“你应该圣诞节的时候来，那个时候很热闹。”据介绍，当地没有过春节的习俗，他们的“春节”就是圣诞节。过圣诞节是以行政村为单位的，在每个行政村的不同教堂中轮流。例如，笔者所在的赤恒底村一共有六个自然村，每一个自然村都拥有一所自己的教堂，即共六所教堂。这六所教堂轮流负责一次圣诞节的活动，每年更换一次，即每所教堂每六年轮到一次。

如果今年的圣诞节在A村教堂过，那么，所有的信徒在圣诞节前一天就会来到A村，由A村的信徒负责接待。\(^{19}\)他们打地铺睡在A村信徒的家中，白天唱歌、跳舞，或者进行一些趣味体育比赛，晚上则席地而卧。这种欢乐热闹的场面将一直持续三天，直到每一个人都尽兴而归为止。\(^{20}\)

事实上，由于当地几乎都是山地，各个自然村之间的距离并不算近，有一些甚至要爬两三个小时的山路才能到达。平时，无论是农忙还是农闲季节，去较远的村子走亲访友的人并不多，因此，圣诞节的狂欢，无疑在极大程度上加强了平时松散的社会网络。一个行政村里的人，无论认识还是不认识，无论是久为好友还是素未谋面，在这三天里，都不自觉地将自己投入在了一个共同体之中。从一定意义上说，正是他们自己创造了这种共同体，而反过来，又感受到了共同体的力量。

除了圣诞节以外，在复活节、秋收节的时候，每个自然村也会举行自己的庆祝活动。虽然规模和场面没有圣诞节那么恢宏，但也能够起到类似的作用。可以说，无论是周期性的聚会还是每年一度的狂欢，在以教会为媒介创造的公共空间之中，一个个分散的家庭和个人被联合在一起。在这里，他们可以结交朋友，可以和亲戚叙旧，也可以偷偷看中某家的姑娘。事实上，在笔者询问当地夫妻“你们怎么认识的”时候，有很多人的回答都是“都在教会里，自然就认识了”。这从一个侧面印证了这种公共空间存在的范围和深度。更为重要的，由于各个自然村之间都存在着通婚的关系，所以接待的人首先是来访者的亲戚，如果没有亲戚，则随意选择一家人。\(^{20}\)正如前文所述，在赤恒底村，信徒在全村人口中所占比例极高，因此，教会的活动基本上就是全村村民的活动。事实上，即使不是信徒的人，也通常会参与到这种大型活动之中。

17 一顿丰盛的饭，至于是否给钱，则并没有硬性规定，主要视那家人的经济情况而定。事实上，有困难的教徒祷告是当地教会负责人的主要责任之一，甚至有教徒成为了一种负担。例如，赤恒底村教堂的执事就告诉笔者，因为村子大，教徒人多，有需要的人也多，他每个星期几乎都有三、四个晚上需要出去帮人祷告，周日更是应接不暇，这使他不得不放弃一部分自己的生活和工作。祷告的效验不是笔者所要讨论的问题，但这种祷告的需求和回应本身，则直接体现了教会在个人和家庭日常生活层面上的全方位的介入。

18 阎云翔：《私人生活的变革——一个中国村庄里的爱情、家庭与亲密关系（1949—1999）》，第260～261页。
堂聚会的时候给村民解释,起到了很好的效果。

一个值得一提的象征性的例子是村子里的喇叭。在没有电话和网络的傈僳村寨,高音喇叭是通知事项和召集村民最好的方法。在赤恒底村,每一个村民小组都拥有自己的喇叭,播音器安在小组组长家里;而教会也安了自己的喇叭,播音器设在教堂。然而,就笔者观察到的情况而言,这两种本应该用作不同用途的喇叭事实上并没有明显的区分,有时候,教会遇到事情需要通知,也会借用各村民小组的喇叭,而村民们对此也似乎习以为常,如果把喇叭的使用也视为公共空间的一种,那么,可以说,教会和政府在这里的关系是合作而非争斗,彼此借用对方调动村民的力量和工具,完成自己的本份工作。

在涉及到纠纷解决的时候,教会和政府之间的关系就更加微妙。赤恒底村经常出现的纠纷有两种,一是家庭纠纷,二是土地纠纷。无论纠纷事件大小,只要产生纠纷的双方都是教徒,那么,首先介入解决的都是教会管理人员,事实上,如果教徒之间的纠纷没有通过教会直接闹到了政府那里,无论是纠纷当事双方还是教会,都会觉得“很没有面子”。通常情况下,教会负责人会根据圣经的原则对双方进行调解,如果双方接受,纠纷就到此结束。如果有一方不接受教会的调解,另外一方接下来的选择有两种,一种是继续沿教会系统上告到村长老、乡长老乃至县两会,一种是上告到村委会、乡政府乃至县政府,通过强制性的行政力量进行解决。根据笔者了解到的情况,选择后一条道路的人通常较多,例如,如果有一对夫妻想要离婚,经教会负责人调解无效,那么,双方就会选择去村委会,村委会首先的选择仍然是调解,如果还是没有任何作用,就会为双方办理离婚手续。

有意思的是,正如前文所述,教会为当地村民创造了一个重要的公共空间,而政府则经常利用这个现成的空间,进行政策宣传和事项通知。例如,当地村支书告诉笔者,每当他们有什么事情需要通知的时候,首要的选择就是去教堂。在事先跟教堂负责人打好招呼之后,周日聚会结束后,便给他们留出一段时间进行宣传。事实上,这个时候也是村民聚集的最齐最全的时候,避免了挨家挨户去传达,省去了很多麻烦。此外,在村民对国家一些政策表示不满和抵触的时候,村政府也利用教堂聚会之后的时间进行解释,并且团结教会的力量动员教徒。例如,在20世纪80年代实行计划生育政策的时候,由于与傈僳族传统的大家庭观念有一些冲突,有些村民难以接受。这时,村政府一方面出面劝导村民,另一方面又发动教会的负责人帮忙,在教堂聚会的时候给村民解释,起到了很好的效果。

一个值得一提的象征性的例子是村子里的喇叭。在没有电话和网络的傈僳村寨,高音喇叭是通知事项和召集村民最好的方法。在赤恒底村,每一个村民小组都拥有自己的喇叭,播音器安在小组组长家里;而教会也安了自己的喇叭,播音器设在教堂。然而,就笔者观察到的情况而言,这两种本应该用作不同用途的喇叭事实上并没有明显的区分,有时候,教会遇到事情需要通知,也会借用各村民小组的喇叭,而村民们对此也似乎习以为常。如果把喇叭的使用也视为公共空间的一种,那么,可以说,教会和政府在这里的关系是合作而非争斗,彼此借用对方调动村民的力量和工具,完成自己的本份工作。

21 在福贡,每个村政府中有四个所谓“吃皇粮”的人,即村长、副村长、村党支部书记、武装干事,他们每个月可以拿到400块钱的补助。

22 在中国的宗教管理体制下,被国家认可的基督教会也有着一套大致与行政管理体制平行的层级制度,即从国家以至省、市、县的各级三级爱国委员会和基督教协会(通常称为“两会”)。尽管县以下不再设置“两会”机构,但通常也会参照行政体制的上下层级施行权力。

23 参见赵旭东:《权力与公正——乡土社会的纠纷解决与权威多元》,天津古籍出版社2003年版。
现在劝说上，并不具有裁决的效力，调解的理由多是“要从长处着想”，“给我一个面子”之类的话语。可
以说，在赤恒底的纠纷调解中，教会扮演的就是这种民
间权威的角色。由于不是法律取证，教会的负责人通常
并不关注事情的细节，也并不就事论事，而是以基督徒
的道德准则和教会的面子作为调解筹码，从教义的角度
劝说纠纷双方，让他们从更为宏观的角度出发，放弃个
人恩怨。就笔者了解到的情况而言，这几乎是所有纠纷
出现后需要通过的首要程序，只有当教会这种“民间权
威”无法压制住纠纷当事人怒火的时候，才会由制度性
权威出场。

简言之，无论在教会作为一个信徒共同体本身这个
层面上所创造出来的公共生活空间，还是教会对于村寨
公共事务的参与甚至推动，都可以看到，基督教在傈僳
村寨中承担了社区组织和运作的重要社会功能，是不可
忽视和甚至不可或缺的讨论当地乡村治理的社会基础。

四、结论与讨论

需要再次提及的是，我们对于基督教的研究并不限于基
督教本身，而是更为关注一个更具有广泛意义的问题，
即普遍意义上的宗教对于个人道德生活以及乡村公共生
活的重建的意义。在这里，我们主要讨论了一个在基督
教占有极高比例的少数民族村寨的个案，不过是作为一
个在更大范围内展开讨论的参照。

从我们在傈僳村寨中的观察来看，基督教不仅为傈
僳村民提供了神学意义上的个人救赎，更为实际的是全
面浸入了他们的个体和家庭生活中。在中国重要的人文
和日常生活中有着直接的参与。或许更为重要的是，作
为一个社群的基督会本身就构成了一个乡村社会中日
益稀缺的公共生活空间，并在乡村社会的具体运作中构
成了社区互动和治理的组织基础和资源。

贺雪峰提到，“每个人都是生活在意义之中的。在
缺乏抽象信仰的中国，当鬼神观念、祖先崇拜等被当作
迷信扫除掉了之后，中国农民的本体价值问题就凸现出来
了。也因此，研究农民私人生活中的意义，而非仅仅
是家庭成员间的相互关系，就变得同样重要了。”我们
基本同意这个表述。尽管我们对于鬼神观念及祖先崇拜
是否真的被“扫除掉了”有所怀疑，但是，我们完全不
能同意他对于解决这个问题所提出的方案，“在现代社
会，国家不应再仅仅是守夜人的角色。现代中国快速转
型背景下，国家更应该积极介入到农村的公共及私人生
活中，甚至介入到个人信仰领域，从而为中国实现战
略目标提供可能。”24

与此相反，我们认为，正是像傈僳村寨中的基督教
会这样的民间社群的存在为乡村社会的治理和良性运行
提供了基本的社会背景和组织资源，国家的调控不能演
变为对个人及（特别是）信仰领域的介入。事实上，那