

AN A MDO TIBETAN FAMILY'S INCOME AND EXPENSES IN 2011

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ABSTRACT

A single A mdo Tibetan family in Brag dmar nang Village, Dkar brjid Township, Khri ka County, Mtsho lho (Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, China is studied in terms of their expenses and income in 2011. The village has a Tibetan population of 254 residents (forty-nine households).

KEYWORDS

A mdo, expenses, income, off-farm income, Tibetan family

INTRODUCTION¹

A single, six-member A mdo Tibetan family in Brag dmar nang Village, Dkar brjid Township, Khri ka County, Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province,² China is described in terms of expenses and income in 2011. The village had a population of 254 residents (all Tibetan) living in forty-nine households in 2011. Data for this paper was collected through interviews conducted by the first author with the family.

THE FAMILY

The family consists of six members: grandmother, father, mother, son, and two daughters:

- GM (female, b. 1936) is a native of Brag dmar nang Village and grew up there. She spent approximately thirty years with her husband in Dar lag County, Mgo log Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province. They returned to Brag dmar nang Village after her husband retired.
- FT (male, b. 1968), GM's son, is a native of Brag dmar nang Village. He completed his early education in Dar lag County and then enrolled in Mtsho sngon Animal Husbandry and Veterinary College in Huangyuan County, where he earned a vocational degree. He was then assigned an official job in Dar lag when he was twenty. He eventually lost this job, returned home when he was twenty-five, and began farming.
- MT (b. 1962), FT's wife, is a native of Brag dmar nang Village who completed grade five in the village elementary school. She married FT when she was twenty years old, according to the arrangement of the two concerned families.
- SN (b. 1988), GM's grandson, and FT and MT's son, is a native of Brag dmar nang Village and earned an MA degree abroad. He

¹ The authors thank Gerald Roche, Rin chen rdo rje, Bkra shis dpal ldan, Timothy Thurston, and Wang Shiyong for helpful comments.

² Zhemeang Village, Garang Township, Guide County, Hainan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.

currently works for an international NGO in Zi ling (Xining), the capital of Mtsho sngon Province.

- OD (b. 1992), GM's granddaughter, and FT and MT's daughter, was born with a congenital heart defect that required two heart operations in May 2009. While the operations were successful, OD cannot do heavy work. She currently paints deity images for a private company in Khri ka County Town.
- YD (b. 1998), GM's granddaughter, and FT and MT's daughter, YD currently studies at Khri ka Primary Boarding School, Khri ka County Town.

RESOURCES

The family has twelve *mu*³ of crop land. In addition, it cultivates four *mu* belonging to a relative who operates a small health clinic in Hexi Township, Khri ka County. The family sees farming as its economic foundation, with wheat as the most important crop, which is sold for cash and provides food (bread and noodles) for the family. Other crops include potatoes, rapeseed, flaxseed, barley,⁴ and beans. Cabbage, carrots, onions, garlic, radish, and leek are also cultivated in a small garden, and are only used for family consumption. All fields are irrigated with water originating from a spring in the Dgo rtse Mountains, which is about two kilometers north of the village.

In terms of livestock, the family sold its mule in the tenth lunar month. The family annually raises two pigs, which are fed wheat husks, rapeseed stalks, and potatoes, and then slaughtered in

³ One *mu* is equal to 0.067 hectares or 0.16 acres.

⁴ The family rarely eats *rtsam pa* 'baked barley flour mixed with hot tea, sugar, and cheese' because of the high price of butter and the limited amount of barley the family grows. Barley is mostly used in such religious rituals as offering *bsang*, and making *gtor ma* 'cone-shaped ritual offering made from barley flour or *rtsam pa*' and when people are invited to the home to chant religious texts. Butter is only used in offering lamps during the first to fifteenth days of each lunar months; at other times rapeseed oil is burned in offering lamps.

the eleventh lunar month.⁵ The family had pork worth about 4,000 RMB in 2011, some of which it consumed and some of which it gave to others. Most pork is stored in a freezer in the home, and the remaining pork is preserved in a clay jar containing water, salt, vinegar, and condiments.

The family regards its tractor and motorcycle as its most useful and valuable property. The tractor is used for plowing,⁶ planting, and harvesting. The motorcycle is used to access health care and to shop in Lo yag Village, about four kilometers north of Brag dmar nang village; Sde tsha Tibetan Autonomous Township Town, approximately thirteen kilometers to the northeast; Dkar brjid Township Town; and in Khri ka County Town. The motorcycle is also used when attending wedding parties, hair changing (coming of age) rituals⁷ for girls, religious ceremonies, and to make Lo sar 'Tibetan New Year' visits in neighboring villages and to both upper and lower Sde tsha (d+hI tsha) monasteries.⁸

The family also owns a freezer (no refrigerator), a television, DVD player, washing machine, and a hand-pushed cart.

LABOR

Three family members earn income to meet family expenses. GM is in her seventies and is physically unable to do hard, heavy work. She

⁵ The butcher is usually a Han Chinese man from Lo yag (Luoyihai) Village, Khri ka County, and two helpers from the local village are also asked to help. The main butcher is given the middle part of the pig neck. Other neck meat is given to the helpers.

⁶ The family owns a rotary plow and a moldboard plow.

⁷ See Tshe dpal rdo rje et al. (2010) for more on this village ritual.

⁸ According to Tuttle (2010), the original d+hI/ Lde tsha Monastery was founded in the seventeenth century by d+hI tsha nang as a branch monastery of Bya khyung Monastery and shortly afterwards became the seat of the First Zhwa dmar Pandita (b. eighteenth century). The New/Upper d+hI tsha Monastery was founded by the Fourth Zhwa dmar Pandita (1729-1796).

offers *bsang*⁹ and *mchod pa*¹⁰ 'holy water' in the morning, lights *mchod me*¹¹ 'butter lamps' every evening, feeds the swine, makes bread, and cooks when MT is busy with fieldwork. OD only returns home for about fifteen days during Lo sar from her job in Khri ka County Town, and for about ten days during the harvest period. YD returns home during the summer and winter holidays and helps with family chores. YD's stay at home is the family's happiest time because she does much of GM's work and assists MT in the fields. SN returns home during Lo sar and on the occasional weekend, when he brings about two kilograms of mutton or beef, which are very limited in the village and expensive if available. In 2011, the cost of mutton was about forty-four RMB per kilogram and the cost of beef was about thirty-six RMB per kilogram.

FT usually leaves the village to do construction or road work in Zi ling, Reb gong,¹² or Yul shul¹³ early in the fourth lunar month, returns home for harvest early in the sixth lunar month, leaves home again in the eighth lunar month after plowing, and returns home in the winter for Lo sar.

MT does household chores, e.g., cooking, feeding swine, making bread, and cleaning; such religious activities as offering *bsang*, *mchod pa*, and *mchod me*; and planting trees in spring. The family has about 500 trees on a one *mu* plot of land and also grows trees along the borders of its fields. The trees that MT planted were the family's – they were not provided by the government.

⁹ A smoke offering to spiritual beings made by burning a mixture of barley flour, sugar, roasted wheat, and conifer needles.

¹⁰ A ritual of offering seven or fourteen copper bowls of water that are filled daily with clean water and placed in front of Buddhist images in the family shrine. The bowls are cleaned and the water is changed early every morning.

¹¹ Oil lamps that are lit daily in front of the Buddhist images at the family shrine. The family uses rapeseed oil for *mchod me* instead of butter because the former is much cheaper than the latter, which the family does not produce. This ritual is one of expiation and amending wrongdoing, appeasing hostile elements, and summoning favorable elements.

¹² Reb gong (Tongren) County is located in Rma lho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province.

¹³ Yul shul Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province.

Family chores require constant attention and farming requires much work, especially when irrigating, fertilizing, and applying pesticides. Irrigation was done at the beginnings of the third, fourth, and fifth lunar months and in the middles of the eighth and tenth months. Eight *mu* of cropland were cultivated for winter wheat and in spring, four *mu* of field for wheat, and the remaining four *mu* of fields were used to cultivate rapeseed, potatoes, barley, and beans. Each irrigation session requires twenty-four to forty-eight hours.

MT collected caterpillar fungus¹⁴ in the Dgo rtse Mountains, about fifteen kilometers to the north. She left the home at about six a.m. and returned at about eight p.m. on foot.

FARM PRODUCTION

In 2011, the family harvested about forty bags of wheat, twenty bags of potatoes, eight bags of rapeseed, four bags of barley, and two bags of beans. Pork production was detailed above. Some numbers are approximate.

¹⁴ *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* results from a parasitic relationship between the larva of the ghost moth of the genus *thitarodes* and the fungus, which germinates in the larvae, kills and mummifies it, and then grows from the body of the larva. It has a high cash value as a medicinal substance.

FIGURE 1. Farm production for an A mdo Tibetan family in 2011.

Item	Cash Value RMB	Sold/ RMB Value	Gave Away/ RMB Value	Traded/ RMB Value	Consumed /RMB Value
4,000 kg wheat	8,000	2,400 kg/ 4,800	425 kg/ 850	250 kg/ 500	925 kg/ 1,850
1,000 kg potatoes	1,000	0	400 kg/ 400	0	600 kg/ 600
400 kg rapeseed	2,080	210 kg/ 1,092	0	0	190 kg/ 988
200 kg barley	520	0	0	0	200 kg/ 520
100 kg beans	400	0	0	0	100 kg/ 400
180 kg vegetables	300	0	0	0	180kg/ 300
160 kg pork	4,000	0	10kg/ 250	0	150kg/ 3,750
Total RMB Value	16,300	5,892	1,500	500	8,408

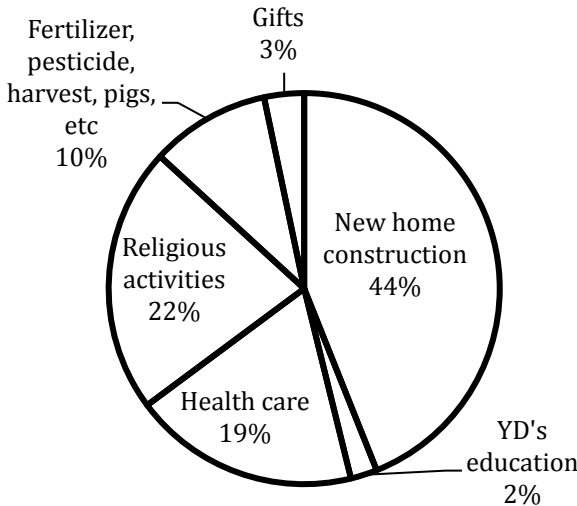
EXPENSES

FIGURE 2. An A mdo family's expenses for 2011.

#	Item	Expense (RMB value)	Lunar Month
Lo sar			
1	Lo sar festivities	600	1 st
YD's Education			
2	YD's education expenses	550	8 th
Gifts			
3	gift for a female relative's coming of age ceremony	50	1 st
4	Children's Day, YD	200	5 th
5	gift: Tibetan clinic opening ceremony	200	5 th
6	funeral gift	1 tea brick + 20 RMB	7 th
7	funeral gift	1 tea brick + 200 RMB	8 th
8	funeral gift	1 tea brick + 100 RMB	10 th
9	relative's wedding party	50	10 th
Cell Phone, Coal, Mutton, Miscellaneous			
10	aluminum pot	90	4 th
11	cell phone bought in Khri ka County Town	300	9 th
12	coal	100	11 th
13	FT: transportation and other expenses to and from work outside the village	600	7 th
14	starch noodles	50	10 th
15	mutton bought in Khri ka County Town	500	10 th
16	miscellaneous	800	2 nd
Fertilizer, Pesticide, Herbicide, Harvest, Pigs, etc.			
17	chemical fertilizer	1,500	2 nd

18	pesticide	50	4 th
19	herbicide	30	6 th
20	harvest	350	6 th
21	diesel for family tractor	50	6 th
22	pigs	850	8 th
23	plastic sacks for wheat storage	60	7 th
24	gasoline	80	12 th
Health Care			
25	medical expenses, OD	600	3 rd
26	medical expenses, GM	5,000	4 th
27	health insurance for FT, MT, OD, and YD	80	
Religious Activities			
28	religious ritual	5 loaves of bread; 300 RMB;	5 th
29	pilgrimage to four monasteries	500	6 th
30	Wutai Mountain pilgrimage	5,000	10 th
31	Skū 'bum Monastery pilgrimage	800	11 th
32	religious ritual	1 loaf of bread; 60 RMB	11 th
New Home Construction			
33	plastic for new room roof	400	2 nd
34	carpenter: new room construction	2,700	2 nd
35	red bricks and cement	2,700	5 th
36	spray painter	500	6 th
37	varnish	400	6 th
38	aluminum window frames and metal doors for new room	3,400	9 th
39	new room finishing (salary)	2,800	9 th
	Total (RMB value)	32,620	

FIGURE 3. An A mdo family's expenses by item and percentage, 2011.



1. About 600 RMB was spent in Khri ka County Town to purchase five bottles of liquor, three kilograms of sunflower seeds, peanuts, candy, apples, mutton, jujubes, biscuits, crackers, vegetables, firecrackers, several bottles of carbonated drinks, fruit-flavored drinks, milk, and new clothing for OD and YD for Lo sar. The family did not purchase clothes for GM, FT, MT, or SN during Lo sar in 2011.
2. MT escorted YD to school after the summer holiday when school resumed in the seventh lunar month. This expense was for transportation, new clothes, notebooks, pens, and pencils.
3. A fifty RMB cash gift was made at a hair changing ritual held by a relative during the first lunar month.
4. On Children's Day in the fifth lunar month, MT visited YD at Khri ka Nationalities Primary Boarding School. Parents customarily give children new clothes, their favorite snacks, and a small amount of cash. Children are also often taken to a restaurant and allowed to order whatever food they like, which is generally a bowl of noodles. The listed 200 RMB expense includes these items, as well as transportation.
5. A small Tibetan clinic was opened by a relative of the family in the fifth lunar month, in Chu nub Township, Khri ka County. A simple ceremony was then held in Chu nub Township Town, attended by close relatives. The family attended the ceremony and

- gave 200 RMB as a gift.
6. Twenty RMB and one tea brick were given at a funeral for a relative.
 7. A tea brick (about ten RMB) and 200 RMB were given at a relative's funeral.
 8. A tea brick and one hundred RMB were given at a relative's funeral in the tenth lunar month.
 9. Fifty RMB was presented as a gift for a relative's wedding in the tenth lunar month.
 10. One aluminum pot was purchased in Khri ka County Town in the fourth lunar month.
 11. A new cell phone was purchased for 300 RMB for OD in Khri ka County Town.
 12. One hundred and five kilograms of coal were purchased in Khri ka County Town in the eleventh lunar month at a cost of about 0.96 RMB per kilogram.
 13. Six hundred RMB was spent on transportation, meals, and other expenses when FT left for construction work in the seventh lunar month.
 14. In the tenth lunar month, a Han Chinese man came to the village to make starch noodles from local potatoes. Processing one bag (about seventy kilograms) of potatoes into starch noodles cost about eight RMB. The family processed about six bags of potatoes, which cost about fifty RMB.
 15. The family spent about 500 RMB to purchase mutton in Khri ka County Town in 2011.
 16. Han Chinese peddlers from Huangzhong¹⁵ and elsewhere come to the village by tractor and small trucks with vegetables, fruit, containers, strainers, pots, bowls, teapots, rice, and farming implements to exchange for wheat. The family's daily expenses included approximately 250 kilograms of grain (cash value ~500 RMB) exchanged for salt, green chilies, starch noodles, brown sugar, salt, oranges, apples, tomatoes, aluminum pots, metal buckets, steamers, and strainers with such businessmen. In addition, approximately 300 RMB was spent for such items as

¹⁵ A county in Zi ling City.

vinegar, soy sauce, electricity, soap, detergent, toothpaste, toothbrushes, facial cream, shampoo, electric bulbs, and mobile phone charges.

17. Chemical fertilizer, pesticide, and herbicide are mainly used for wheat fields. A smaller amount is used for flaxseed and rapeseed. Fertilizers and pesticides are not used in potatoes fields. The family bought *linsuan er'an* (diammonium phosphate $[\text{NH}_4]_2\text{HPO}_4$) and *niaosu* (urea, CON_2H_4). One fifty kilogram bag of diammonium phosphate cost 240 RMB and fertilized about three *mu*. Urea was 120 RMB per fifty kilogram bag and fertilized four to five *mu*. In total, the family spent about 1,500 RMB.
18. The pesticide *xinliulin* (phoxim, $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{15}\text{N}_2\text{O}_3\text{PS}$) was purchased for wheat during the fourth lunar month. One kilogram of phoxim cost twenty RMB in 2011, and about two and a half bags were used on about three *mu*.
19. The herbicide 2, 4-*didingzhi* ($\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{14}\text{Cl}_2\text{O}_3$) was purchased in the sixth lunar month. One kilogram cost thirty RMB and was used on eight to nine *mu*.
20. A combine was used to harvest about six *mu* of wheat in the sixth lunar month. The focus family rented the combine.
21. Diesel for the tractor cost 7.84 RMB per liter.
22. Two three-month old piglets were purchased in Khri ka County Town. One piglet cost 400 RMB and the other cost 450 RMB. In 2012, such piglets were sold for 600-750 RMB.
23. Forty plastic sacks were purchased to store wheat. Each bag cost 1.5 RMB.
24. Eighty RMB was spent on gasoline for the family motorcycle. The gasoline is usually purchased in village shops for about ten RMB per 1.5 liters.
25. OD was ill in the third lunar month. Very small blotches appeared on her body and face. She returned home and was taken to a Tibetan clinic in Sde tsha Tibetan Autonomous Township, Dpa' lung Hui Autonomous County, Mtsho shar Region by her mother for treatment. The listed expenses are only for medical treatment. The distance from the home to the clinic is approximately eight kilometers. MT and OD walked to the clinic.
26. When GM took seriously ill one night in the fourth lunar month, the family hired a car and drove to the county town hospital at

midnight with FT and SN. One night was spent in Khri ka County Hospital. The attending physician was unable to make a diagnosis and suggested going to a hospital in Zi ling (Xining), where kidney stones were diagnosed. GM stayed in the hospital for about twenty days. Listed expenses include transportation, food, and medical treatment.

27. In 2011, the per person cost for health insurance was twenty RMB. By 2012, it had doubled to forty RMB per person. Reimbursements for health care expenses are only made if the patient is treated in Dkar brjid Township Town Clinic or the Khri ka County Hospital. Insurance was not purchased for GM. OD was treated in a Tibetan clinic in Sde tsha Tibetan Autonomous County, Dpa' lung Hui Autonomous County, hence these expenses were not reimbursed.
28. The family invites local tantric practitioners to chant Gcod pa¹⁶ a hundred times every year as instructed by a diviner some years ago, to ensure the well-being of all family members. The family invited five village tantric practitioners to their home, who then chanted Gcod pa the whole day during the fifth lunar month of 2011. Sixty RMB and one loaf of homemade bread were presented to each tantric monk.
29. Villagers traditionally make pilgrimages to Lha sa, and Byang gi dgon chen bzhi 'the Four Northern Monasteries'¹⁷ when they grow older. Other religious sites are also visited if finances allow. GM visited the Four Northern Monasteries with three fellow villagers

¹⁶ Chanted to ensure well-being of the family.

¹⁷ Shel 'byung 'khon thar tshe ring (2005) reports that Byang gi dgon chen bzhi are Bya khyung Monastery located in the west of Tsha phug Township, Dpa' lung County, founded in 1349 by Chos rje don grub rin chen; Chu bzang Monastery in Nanmenxia Township, Huzhu Tu (Mongghul) Autonomous County, Mtsho shar Region, founded in 1649 by Chu bzang sku phreng dang bo rnam rgyal dpal 'byor; Dgon lung Monastery located in Sitan Village, six kilometers northeast of Wushi Township, Huzhu County, founded in 1604 by Khri ba rgyal sras rin po che sku phreng bdun pa don yon chos kyi rgya mtsho; and Gser khog Monastery in Yamen Village, Dongxia Township, Rta thang County, Zi ling City, founded in 1650 by Btsan po don grub rgya mtsho.

in the sixth lunar month. The expense listed here includes transportation, food, and small amounts of cash given at religious sites.

30. During the tenth lunar month, GM visited Wutai Mountain and Dga' ldan byin chags gling¹⁸ with SN. The listed expense includes transportation, hotel, food, and small amounts of cash given at religious sites.
31. During the eleventh lunar month, MT visited Sku 'bum Monastery¹⁹ with two other villagers to make prostrations and circumambulate the monastery for about a week. The listed expenses are for transportation, accommodation, and food.
32. GM complained of very painful feet during the eleventh lunar month. MT consulted Skal bzang,²⁰ who suggested that Bskang ba²¹ be chanted. The family then invited a local tantric monk to come to their home where he chanted Bskang ba for an entire day. He was given sixty RMB and a loaf of homemade bread.
33. The family planned to construct three new rooms early in the first lunar month, and had readied all required wood. Plastic sheeting was then purchased for roofing material. Incorporating plastic into the traditional roof of earth and wood waterproofs the roof.
34. A Han Chinese carpenter from Lo yag Village, Dkar brjid Township, Khri ka County worked for about ten days to construct three rooms.
35. Two truckloads of red brick and cement were purchased for the new rooms.
36. A spray-painter was purchased jointly by three families for 1,500 RMB in Khri ka County Town to paint newly constructed rooms. Each family contributed 500 RMB.

¹⁸ A Buddhist monastery located in Beijing, founded in 1694 during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), better known by its Chinese name, Yonghegong.

¹⁹ Sku 'bum/ Sku 'bum byams pa gling is one of the largest Dge lugs pa monasteries in China. It is located in Ru gсар, situated about twenty-six kilometers from the center of Zi ling City. Founded in 1583 by the third Dalai Lama, Bsod nams rgya mtsho, Sku 'bum is the birthplace of Tsong kha pa (1357-1419), founder of the Dge lugs Sect.

²⁰ Bskal bzang is a well-known diviner from Sdong rgan thang Village, Dkar brjid Township, Khri ka County.

²¹ A Buddhist scripture chanted to please the family's protective deity.

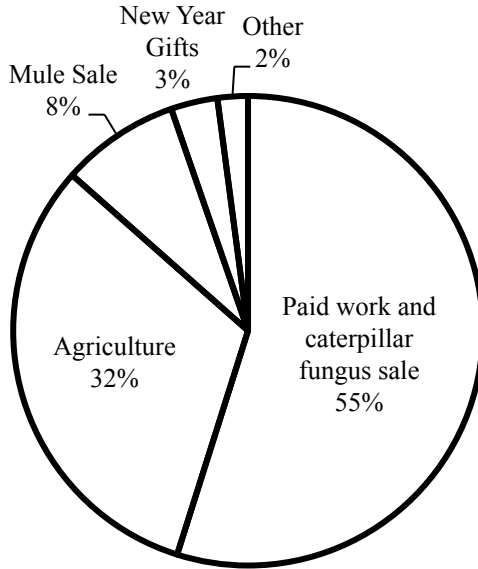
37. After constructing a traditional wood room, the wood is stained yellow and then varnished.
38. Two aluminum window frames and two metal doors were purchased in Qunjia Township, Dpa' lung County, for new rooms constructed in the second lunar month.
39. A Tibetan worker came in the ninth lunar month to finish the three new rooms constructed in the second lunar month. He covered the floors with red bricks, constructed walls with red brick, and added ceramic tiles.

INCOME

FIGURE 4. An A mdo family's income for 2011.

#	Item	Income RMB Value	Lunar Month
Paid Work and Caterpillar Fungus Sale			
1	MT's caterpillar fungus sale	1,300	7
2	FT's construction work income	6,000	7
3	OD's salary	11,500	12
Agriculture			
4	wheat sale	5,000	6
5	wheat sale	4,800	7
6	rapeseed sale	1,000	8
Mule Sale			
7	mule sale	2,800	10
New Year Gifts			
8	Lo sar gifts	1,100	1
Other			
9	twenty-five kg wheat flour	115	6
10	SN's gifts of meat	600	occasional visits
	Total (RMB value)	34,215	

FIGURE 5. An A mdo family's income by percentage for 2011.



1. MT collected sixty caterpillar fungus in the Dgo rtse Mountains during the fourth and fifth lunar months and sold them to a Chinese woman in Khri ka County Town for 1,300 RMB.
2. FT did construction work during the fourth and fifth lunar months in Reb gong County, Rma lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province, and earned about 6,000 RMB. However, the construction boss said he was unable to pay him promptly. FT had not received his salary in early 2012.
3. OD earned 11,500 RMB from her work. Her food, accommodation, and other expenses are deducted from this amount.
4. MT and a villager transported 2,500 kilograms of wheat grain to Khri ka County Town and sold it to a Chinese man in the sixth lunar month for 5,000 RMB. The wheat was that harvested in 2009 and 2010.
5. Chinese men came to the village with a small truck during the seventh lunar month, and bought 2,400 kilograms of wheat from the family for 4,800 RMB.
6. In the eighth lunar month, the family sold about 200 kilograms of rapeseed to a Chinese man who came to the village. One kilogram of rapeseed sold for about 5.20 RMB, thus the income was approximately 1,000 RMB. Chinese men come to the village with

tractors and trailers, and small trucks to purchase rapeseed, wheat, and flaxseed. The majority of village families then sell surplus grain for cash.

7. The family had a mule used to plow, plant, and for transport. However, the family felt the mule was no longer useful since they had a tractor, and sold the mule for 2,800 RMB to a Chinese man who came to the village in the tenth lunar month.
8. On the fourth and sixth day of the first lunar month, two friends of GM visited, bringing some items²² and 1,100 RMB as gifts.
9. The government provides financial support to a few families for building new houses each year. In 2011, one family received 10,900 RMB and two families each received 10,500 RMB. The focus family received twenty-five kilograms of wheat flour.
10. SN brought home gifts of meat on occasional visits on weekends. SN made no other contribution and the family had no expenses related to SN in 2011.

LABOR EXCHANGE

In the seventh lunar month, MT was ill and FT was away from the village doing construction work. MT then asked a nephew and niece to help harvest potatoes and rapeseed. The helpers worked for one day digging potatoes and worked a second day harvesting rapeseed. MT then gave them eight bags (about 400 kilograms) of potatoes with a cash value of about 400 RMB.

LO SAR

On the fourth day of the first lunar month, one of GM's friends visited the home with her three sons and gave about eight kilograms of mutton, three boxes of milk, and 150 RMB to each daughter as gifts. The family then returned gifts of 200 kilograms of wheat flour, eight

²² See the Lo sar and Giving Gifts sections for details of gifts the family received.

loaves of homemade bread, and four small packages of crystal sugar (one package of crystal sugar = 500 grams) as departure gifts.

On the sixth day of the first lunar month, another of GM's friends visited with her three sons bringing twenty-two kilograms of mutton, five kilograms of butter, three kilograms of cheese, three kilograms of *gro ma* 'dried small yams', 600 RMB to GM, and 200 RMB to MT as gifts. The family gave ten kilograms of pork and fifty kilograms of wheat flour as departure gifts.

GIVING GIFTS

During the Tibetan New Year period, a family representative visits the homes of relatives, and all village families with old people. Gifts taken on such visits are commonly a bottle of liquor (~twenty RMB cash value) and a tea brick (seven to fifteen RMB). A box of milk (twenty-five to thirty RMB) is taken as a gift to maternal and paternal uncles and aunts. When visiting other families, a common gift is *sil shog*, which is refined white sugar, brown sugar, and red jujubes placed in a square of folded red and white papers; along with some bread. Return gifts are commonly a double handful of peanuts, sunflower seeds, and candies that are mixed together. Firecrackers are also given to boys, and a package of cigarettes to men as return gifts. Currently, most households give two to five RMB in cash to children as return gifts. We have not detailed such giving and receiving in 2011 because the amounts of Lo sar gifts and return gifts are roughly equal. The chart below shows other gifts:

FIGURE 6. Gifts, excluding cash, given and received by an A mdo Tibetan family in 2011.

Item	Received ~RMB Value	Given ~RMB Value
mutton (~eight kilograms)	352	0
milk (three boxes)	99	0
mutton (~twenty kilograms)	880	0

butter (~five kilograms)	220	0
cheese (~three kilograms)	78	0
<i>gro ma</i> (~three kilograms)	210	0
pork (~ten kilograms)	0	250
wheat flour (~50 kilograms)	0	360
wheat flour (~200 kilograms)	0	1,520
eight loaves of homemade bread	0	64
crystal sugar (three packages)	0	24
Total ~RMB	1,839	2,218

CORVÉE LABOR

During the second lunar month, the village committee assigned irrigation ditch repair work to every family. FT then spent four days on this task. In the second lunar month, MT spent three days to help build village temple walls as required by the village committee.

MANAGEMENT

Discussion of family work, corvée labor, and other duties are usually initiated by MT with FT and GM. Final decisions are then made through discussions by MT, FT, and GM together. SN, OD, and YD are not involved in such discussions. For example, selling the mule was MT's suggestion and FT, who then discussed it with GM. After they all agreed, the mule was sold in the tenth lunar month. GM generally does not oppose FT and MT because she thinks family

business should be decided by MT and FT since they now manage the family.

DISCUSSION

Brag dmar nang villagers measure wealth on the basis of how many government workers are in a family, the number of newly constructed rooms in a home compound, and the amount of a family's cash savings, which is usually accumulated from the collection and sale of caterpillar fungus. The focus family has no members with government jobs, the mother collects and sells little caterpillar fungus, and most of the rooms of the home are not newly built. However, the family has a relatively large amount of land. This, plus its 2011 income, makes it a mid-level family in terms of village wealth.

Agriculture and off-farm work explain most of this Amdo Tibetan family's income and expenses. Fifty-five percent of the family's income was earned by paid work and the collection and sale of caterpillar fungus (sixty-one percent, OD; thirty-two percent, FT; and seven percent, MT); thirty-two percent was from agriculture (ninety-one percent from wheat sale, nine percent from rapeseed sale); eight percent from the sale of a mule; and three percent was from Lo sar gifts.

In terms of expenses, forty percent was spent on new home construction; twenty percent was spent for such religious activities as pilgrimage and chanting; seventeen percent was spent on medical expenses; nine percent was spent on fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, harvesting, and pigs; seven percent was spent for such items as a cell phone, coal, an aluminum pot, FT's transportation to and from construction work, and others; three percent was spent on such ceremonies as weddings, hair changing rituals, and Children's Day; two percent was spent for New Year celebrations; and two percent was spent on YD's education.

Agricultural activities primarily ensure food for the household and needed items through trade and sale for cash. The family feels that the amount of time, labor, and worry spent on farming – plowing, planting, irrigating, weeding, fertilizing, applying pesticides, and

harvesting – is excessive. Though some cash income is earned from selling wheat and rapeseed, prices are comparatively low.

The family's income and expenses in the year 2011 differed significantly from previous years, for example, OD earned no salary in 2009. This sharply contrasts with 11,500 RMB earned in 2011, which is the most cash income the family has ever received. In terms of expenses, the family spent nothing for new construction work in 2009. As the family's income increases, so do their expenses for improving their standard of living. It should also be noted that the sale of the mule is also an uncommon source of income, and a one-time occurrence.

The family's income stream is fragile. If, for example, OD lost her job, it is unlikely that she could find other such work. FT's work accounted for thirty-two percent of the family's income coming from paid work, however, he had not been paid in early 2012, and there are instances of workers never being paid the amount owed by construction bosses. It remains to be seen if the family will be able to maintain or increase its income in the years ahead. The stability associated with government employment is an indication of why village families feel it is ideal.

CONCLUSION

Religious pilgrimage and religious rituals held at home demonstrate the intensity of family religiosity. This and attending funerals, hair changing rituals, wedding parties, and various ceremonies; giving gifts; and consulting diviners reflect local tradition – traditions that cannot be maintained to the same degree if people live outside the village and depend on off-farm work to generate income.

However, the future of the village may be suggested by the example of five village families. Three of these five families bought apartments in Khri ka County Town and live there. One person from each of these families has or had official government jobs. Two are now retired and one continues to work in Mgo log Prefecture. The income from government work allows these families to easily meet their family's basic needs. These families also consider town life to be

more convenient and entertaining than village life. A fourth family rents a small building and owns a small Tibetan medicine clinic in Chu nub Township Town. The fifth family (mother and daughter) bought an apartment in Chu nub Township Town and has lived there since 2007. This family was once one of the wealthiest village families. It should be noted that relatives of these families give them wheat flour, bread, and potatoes when they visit.

The family we focused on would have spent about 10,000 RMB to purchase what they consumed and gave as gifts in 2011 in terms of wheat flour, cooking oil, potatoes, vegetables, and pork. This cash expense was avoided because the family continues to farm and raise swine. Without significant additional outside income, it is unlikely the family will abandon farming within the next few years because agricultural activities provide food security and cash income through sales of wheat and rapeseed.

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NON-ENGLISH TERMS

2, 4-*didingzhi* 2, 4- 滴丁酯

A

A mdo ཨ་མདོ

B

Bkra shis dpal ldan བཀའ་ཤིས་དཔལ་ལྷན།

Brag dmar nang བྲག་དམར་ནང་།

bsang བསང་།

Bskal bzang བསྐལ་བཟང་།

Bskang ba བསྐང་བ།

Bsod nams rgya mtsho བསོད་ནམས་རྒྱ་མཚོ།

Btsan po don grub rgya mtsho བཅོན་པོ་དོན་རྒྱལ་རྒྱ་མཚོ།

Bya khyung བྱ་ཁྱུང་།

Byang gi dgon chen bzhi བྱང་གི་དགོན་ཆེན་བཞི།

C

Chos rje don grub rin chen ཚོས་རྗེ་དོན་རྒྱལ་རིན་ཆེན།

Chu bzang རྒྱ་བཟང་།

Chu bzang sku phreng dang po rnam rgyal dpal 'byor རྒྱ་བཟང་སུ་ཕྱེང་དང་པོ་

རྩམ་རྒྱལ་དཔལ་འབྱོར།

Chu nub རྒྱ་ལུ།

D

d+hI tsha nang so དྲི་ཚ་ནང་སོ།

d+hI/ Lde tsha དྲི་ལྗེ་ཚོ།

Dar lag དར་ལག།

Dga' ldan byin chags gling དགའ་ལྡན་བྱིན་ཆགས་གླིང་། 雍和宮

Dge lugs pa དགེ་ལུགས་པ།

Dgo rtse དགོ་རྩེ།

Dgon lung དགོན་ལུང་།

Dkar brjid དཀར་བརྗེད།

Dongxia 东峡

Dpa' lung དཔལ་ལུང་།

G

Garang གཤམ་

Gcod pa གཙོང་པ།

gro ma གྲོ་མ།

Gser khog གསེར་ཁོག
 gtor ma གཏོར་མ།
 Guide 贵德

H

Hainan 海南
 Han 汉
 Hexi 河西
 Huangnan 黄南
 Huangyuan 湟源
 Huangzhong 湟中
 Hui 回
 Huzhu 互助

K

Khri ba rgyal sras rin po che sku phreng bdun pa don yon chos kyi
 rgya mtsho ཁྲི་བ་རྒྱལ་སྲས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་སྐུ་ཕྲེང་བདུན་པ་དོན་ཡོན་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་མཚོ།
 Khri ka ཁྲི་ཀ

L

Lha sa ལྷ་ས།
 linsuan er'an 磷酸二铵
 Lo sar ལོ་སར།
 Lo yag ལོ་ཡག།
 Luoyihai 洛乙海

M

mchod me མཚོད་མེ།
 mchod pa མཚོད་པ།
 Mgo log མགོ་ལོག།
 Mtsho lho མཚོ་ལྷོ།
 Mtsho shar མཚོ་ཤར།
 Mtsho sngon མཚོ་སྔོན།
 mu ཡུ

N

Nanmenxia 南门峡
 niaosu 尿素

Q

Qing 清 Dynasty
 Qinghai 青海

Qunjia 群加

R

Rdo rje bkra shis རོ་རྗེ་བཀྲ་ཤིས།

Reb gong རེབ་གོང།

Rin chen rdo rje རིན་ཆེན་རོ་རྗེ།

Rma lho མ་ལྷོ།

Rta mgrin bkra shis རྟ་མགྲིན་བཀྲ་ཤིས།

Rta thang རྟ་ཐང།

rtsam pa རུ་མ་པ།

Ru gsar རུ་གསར། 鲁沙儿

S

Sde tsha སྡེ་ཚ།

Sdong rgan thang སྡོང་རྒན་ཐང།

Shaanxi 陕西

Shel 'byung 'khon thar tshe ring ཤེལ་འབྲུང་འཁོན་ཐར་ཚེ་རིང།

sil shog སིལ་ཤོག།

Sitan 寺滩

Skal bzang སྐལ་བཟང།

Sku 'bum སྐུ་འབུམ།

Sku 'bum byams pa gling སྐུ་འབུམ་བྱམས་པ་གླིང།

T

Tongren 同仁

Tsha phug ཚ་ཕུག།

Tshe dpal rdo rje ཚེ་དཔལ་རོ་རྗེ།

Tsong kha pa ཚོང་ཁ་པ།

Tu 土

W

Wang Shiyong 王石勇

Wushi 五十

Wutai 五台 (山)

X

Xining 西宁

xinliulin 辛硫磷

Y

Yamen 衙门

Yonghegong 雍和宫

Yul shul ཡུལ་ཤུལ།

Z

Zhemeang 者么昂

Zhizha 支扎

Zhwa dmar pan+Di ta ལྷ་དམར་པ་རྩི་ཏ།

Zhwa dmar pan+Di ta dge 'dun bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho ལྷ་དམར་པ་རྩི་ཏ་དགེ་

འདུན་བསྐྱེད་འཛིན་རྒྱ་མཚོ།

Zi ling ཟི་ལིང་།