

# **Tenure Institutions and the Management of Common Property Resources among the Zang (tiebtan, Malimasa, Lisu and Local Government in Tacheng**

**Proponent: He Jianhua**

**Institutional Affiliation: Institute of Ethnic Literature, Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences**

## **1. Background**

Tacheng is a locality inhabited by various ethnic groups: the Zang, Malimasa and Lisu. Existing data on Tacheng includes only the statistics issued by the county and township governments, on the proportions of forest areas, timber growth, tree species, grassland area, and the proportion of livestock production and forestry in cash incomes. Although reports on natural resource management exist for each of these groups from other sites, to date no research has examined how forest, rangeland and other resources are managed in this multi-ethnic setting. Many research reports from other ethnic minority areas in Yunnan report that customary land tenure and management practices have been greatly impacted by government-driven tenure institutions, but that traditional tenure and management practices many also persist alongside government-recognized institutions.

In this research, we will examine the interaction between the government resource management and tenure policies and customary tenure in the management of grassland and forest resources in Tacheng from the perspective of different actors, including both sexes, and local government officials.

## **2. Research Aim**

To understand the views, roles and practices of Zang, Malimasa, Lisu and the government in Tacheng in the management of forests and grassland resources

## **3. Specific Objectives and research methods**

- (i) Understand the general history and culture of these three groups in this area
  - a. Secondary materials analysis;
  - b. Individual interviews, especially with older people who know their history, culture and customs well;
  - c. Semi-structured group interviews with small groups to discuss cultural features of each group.
  
- (ii) Understand resource distribution, customary and official tenure zonation and rights, and roles in the management of forest and grassland resources
  - a. Participatory mapping with different groups and participant observation (inspecting tenure zonation on the spot);

- b. Individual interviews with people of different sexes and social status, on classification of forests and grassland, tenure zonation, rights and management practices, and their change over time
- c. Semi-structured group interviews on the above topics.

(iii) Understand the interaction of official (government) tenure and resource management policies and customary tenure and management of forest and grassland resources.

- a. Individual interviews with officials on the process of policy-making and implementation;
- b. Semi-structured group interviews on the impact of governmental tenure on customary tenure institutions;
- c. Key event case analysis: document and analyze cases of the introduction of new tenure laws and resource management policies, and cases of conflicts over resources.

#### **4. Work Plan**

April 2002: One-month investigation in Tacheng, in five to six specific sites

May 2002: Secondary material analysis

June 2002: Produce initial report, and prepare for workshop in July 2002

July-August 2002: Supplementary investigations in Tacheng

September 2002: Submit final report

#### **Introduction to the main researcher:**

Name: HE Jianhua

Nationality: Bai

Experience: Works at the Institute of Ethnic Literature at the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences, mainly researching the culture of the Zang (Tibetan) people, as well as other local ethnic groups in NW Yunnan. Can speak Zang, Bai, Lisu and Chinese. Publications include, among others, "Tibetan Bon Religion" in "The Encyclopedia of the Religions of the Ethnic Minorities of China" (2002), "In Praise of Kawargabo" [a book on a Tibetan holy mountain] (1997), "Language of the Body" [a translation of an ancient Tibetan story] (2000), "Gesa'er and 'Gesa'er' in Ancient Tibetan Stories" (1997), "The Dragon in Tibetan and Dongba Religions" (1995) and "The Traditional Agroecosystem of the Nama people in Tuoluo Village, Weixi" (2001).