

1. This week's writing assignment asks you to write about these changes. In your essay select two examples of particular changes to Tibetan culture, livelihoods, religion, environment, and so on, that are the result of the abovementioned forces. Ask questions such as: what are the sources of these disruptive forces; how do the Tibetans experience and interpret the changes (according to the book); how much control or autonomy do the nomads in this book seem to have in directing these powerful forces; did you notice any signs of rejection or resistance to the new economy and its values? You are invited to make reference to Friday's movie, Summer Pasture; it would also be good to make a reference to My Tibetan Childhood at some point in your paper.
 - a. First: Caterpillar Fungus (movie: was guy's livelihood, went to market to sell them)
 - i. Sources? More tibetans rely on monetary income than before (Summer Pasture, Tan) (previously relying on their herd, MTC), and so try to gain as much cash as possible. They scrounge in the summer for caterpillar fungus, and some have already sold their herd and moved to the towns, where they barely survive.
 - ii. Tibetans experience and interpret changes?
 1. They enjoy the changes because "enjoyed the sociality of these excursions" Tan 26, and it gives extra money
 - iii. How much control or autonomy do the nomads have?
 1. Complete control. But they embrace these changes because of extra cash.
 - iv. Signs of rejection or resistance?
 1. There does not seem to be. Although some people lament that others that go to Tibet barely eke out a living (Summer Pastures)
 - b. Next: Motorcycles
 - i. Sources? It makes travelling across vast distances easier, and makes it so that you don't need to care for horses. Emblematic of modernity on grasslands
 - ii. "A motorcycle was called an 'iron horse' in Dora Karmo, and it was regarded as both necessary and convenient"
 - iii. "However, for most men, it was neither a status symbol nor an object in which they took particular pride"
 - iv. Tibetans experience? ^^
 1. They think it is just another method for transportation that is more durable and easier than horses
 - v. Control/autonomy? It becomes required at a certain point because of the amount of times a Tibetan has to travel across the country. But it is still optional.
 - vi. Rejection/resistance? No

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Throughout all the sources studied in this class so far, we have seen many examples of modernity creeping into the lives of everyday Tibetan nomads. Perhaps the two most glaring examples of these new changes, from the perspective of outsiders, are those of caterpillar fungi and motorcycles. These serve as an excellent representation of how most Tibetans do not want to give up their nomadic life, but increasingly rely on external amenities that could potentially make their lives easier, creating a dependence on cash.

The practise of scavenging of caterpillar fungi clearly began sometime after the Chinese invasion of Tibet. This is because it was unheard of in the days of Naktsang Nulo's *My Tibetan Childhood*, where the author and his family lived almost entirely off their herd. Tibet's annexation by the PRC led to a closer economic dependence between the two, and as caterpillar fungi was extremely valuable to the Chinese due to its use in traditional medicines, many Tibetans decided to sell it to them in order to earn cash. In fact, caterpillar fungi now play a more central role in the lives of modern Tibetans, as evidenced in *Summer Pasture* where Locho declared his box of the fungus one of his most valuable items. Many Tibetans have been mostly welcome and receptive to this change in economy, as it not only brings in extra income, but also because they "enjoy...the sociality of these excursions" (Tan 26). However, there are a portion of Tibetans who don't like this change, and lament the fact that nomadic overdependence on cash

has led many of them to sell their herd and move to the cities permanently, where the language and skill barriers prevent them from doing much other than the most menial labor.

On the other hand, motorcycles are regarded by almost all Tibetans to be a welcome addition in their lives. The motorcycle makes travelling across vast distances much faster and far easier than it would with horses, and has become emblematic of modernity on the Tibetan grasslands. According to Tan, Tibetans do not regard the motorcycle as a status symbol, unlike the make of their tents and the quantity of their herd, and it is mostly regarded as a tool that is necessary and convenient. They are also called “iron horses”, representative of the fact that most Tibetans simply consider them to be upgrades to their horses when crossing large areas. A trip from Amdo to Lhasa, which took Naktsang Nulo around a year round trip, now has the potential to be completed in less than a week. As such, there is barely any resistance to this new tool.

The need for many individuals to travel across Tibet has led to a need for motorcycles, and thus a need for cash; scavenging for caterpillar fungi is the best way to generate funds without actually working in the county centers. Thus, doing both has become almost a necessity for modern Tibetans, even if they can subsist on their herd alone almost as well as Tibetans during Nulo’s time were able to do. Thus, these ‘disruptive forces’ may not be really ‘disruptive’, at least in a greater sense than changing the way Tibetans traditionally went about their livelihood; they instead serve to simplify and facilitate the nomadic trade. And while many nomads choose to give up their lifestyle and move to the cities, there are far more that simply take these changes and incorporate them into their traditional lifestyle. The blending of modern technology with Tibetan tradition both helps and harms Tibetans in various ways, but does not seem to be overly one or the other.