ideology that inter-personal relations are smoothest when people live with maternal kin (rather than, say, their mothers-in-law). Conversely, their everyday lived experience in the absence of in-laws has confirmed that household harmony is maintained whenever Moso reside with just their close relatives in the mother's line.

These findings give rise to an important question for cross-cultural comparison: besides "household harmony," what ideals might underpin the social institutions of neighbouring groups in Southwest China or further afield? Significantly, household harmony echoes the sentiment of "conviviality" which is prevalent in the ethnography of Amazonia, where people collectively downplay – or even dramatically invert – the terms and condition of being an affine/outsider to the household. I suggest that another valued notion in Southwest China would be the "fullness of life," which holds in common with "household harmony" some salient characteristics, such as the emphasis on a life-course where people ideally becomes ancestors (or possibly reincarnated beings) who benefit the family line.

Rhetoric about the fullness of life, however, often *valorizes accumulation* through the marrying-in of affines, the propagation of one's own lineage and attachments to it, and the competitive amassing of heroic strength, lengthy genealogies of ancestors, etc. To give a brief example, my fieldwork among the patrilineal Nuosu (called *Liangshan Yizu* in Chinese) of Yunnan Province revealed that there is a mutually enhancing relation between the fullness of life and capturing resources from "outsiders" to the household and lineage ("The captive guest: spider webs of hospitality among the Nuosu of Southwest China" in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, in press for 2012). In this sense, Nuosu morals surrounding the fullness of life are near-inversions of Moso morals about household harmony. And indeed, in my observation, the Nuosu emphasis on the fullness of life often led to family dynamics that fell short of being fairly called "harmonious."

Tellingly, at the end of his book, Shih presents some very recent findings about present-day Moso, who (like the Nuosu) increasingly draw links between accumulation, the fullness of life, and the condition of being an outsider to the household. Nowadays, Shih says, as Moso profit from economic opportunities in larger Chinese society, they try to secure *exclusive tisese* relationships, which entail traditional residence in matrilineal grand households, coupled with new paternal obligations for child support. The Moso shift from prioritizing household harmony to prioritizing the fullness of life thus seems evident. How this social change might pan out, though, awaits confirmation from Shih's exciting new volume which, we read, will follow closely on the heels of *Quest for Harmony*.

KATHERINE SWANCUTT

Passage to Manhood: Youth Migration, Heroin and AIDS in Southwest China
SHAO-HUA LIU
Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011
xiv + 232 pp. $22.95
ISBN 978-0-8047-7025-5 doi:10.1017/S0305741011001275

Anthropologist Shao-Hua Liu has put together a highly readable and interesting analysis of the Nuosu community in Limu Township of Zhaojue County in Sichuan's Liangshan Prefecture (population four million; 60,000 square kilometres). It investigates, among other things, heroin use and HIV infection, which in recent

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times has spread quickly throughout all of Liangshan's 16 counties. Limu Township, an impoverished mountainous community (sitting at a height of 1,900 metres), was identified by the district and township governments as an early rural HIV hotspot (about 1.9 per cent prevalence in 2005 [p. 11]). As such, it has been at the frontline of China's battle with HIV/AIDS and the lessons from its recent experience are important. Liu investigates the reasons behind the failure of some of the policies introduced in Limu and discusses more generally the "rites of passage" experienced by Nuosu youth as they migrate to cities and engage in drug use.

Liu's account is based upon extensive fieldwork in the region. Liu first visited Limu in 2002 (as a graduate student), followed by further visits in 2003 and 2004 before returning for a "fruitful yet heart-wrenching" year in 2005 (p. 196). She undertook detailed interviews with 56 people, including drug users, dealers and local officials and outlines her work in six chapters. As an anthropologist, she draws extensively from the accounts of "key informants." From this she develops six chapters. The first two chapters present background on Liangshan's development, including the impact of national development policies and "modernity" and the growing problem of youth migration. The second chapter looks at the "rites of passage" for the marginalized youth of Limu, as well as the increasing use of drugs by them. The third and fourth chapters look at the response of Limu's community leaders to the growing problem of heroin use, as well as the way in which the state has undermined these approaches. The different experiences of four brothers are looked at to illustrate the limitations of kinship solidarity. The next two chapters provide more insights into the failings of state policy, by looking at the China–UK HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Project as well as the problem of stigmatization – encouraged by the very state policies designed to reduce such stigmatization.

Who or what has been responsible for the devastating HIV outbreak on the Nuosu? Liu argues drug consumption and youth migration to cities have fuelled the epidemic. Drug use, she suggests, is part of an attempt to "claim a part in China's blossoming modernity" (p. 20). More importantly, the movement towards a market economy has been coupled with the "intrusion" and "inadequacy of state practices." She argues these have contributed in important ways towards the problem and she focuses considerably upon these. The lack of sensitivity to local practices and customs by state policy, she argues, has been far from adequate. She describes how the "reckless leap into global modernity" has been met with a "chaotic patchwork of intervention efforts" (p. 197). The lives and activities of the local population, she suggests, have "continually been hindered by external forces" (p. 196). She argues that if the state were "to change its problematic practices during local crises and provide proper inducements," the social activism of the Nuosu could also be revived – and more successful outcomes achieved. Successful policy action, she suggests, should not involve changing the local people but instead changing "the state agents' attitudes and provide them with proper training in regard to local culture and economic conditions" (p. 196). Liu is therefore highly critical of the recent efforts of policy-makers to address the HIV/AIDS problem in Limu.

While not everyone will agree with these arguments, and some may place the part of individual agency higher up on the list of factors leading to HIV infection, this book is far more than an account of Limu's drug use and HIV problem. It provides great insights into the lives of the Nuosu and the political, economic and social forces shaping their existence. It also does so through the very vivid life stories of the key informants that it uses. This also makes it an insightful and useful text for those with a more general interest in contemporary Chinese society and development. For many students of contemporary China, I suspect, the stories of the key

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informants will be as interesting as the critiques of government policy and the insights into drug use and community action. Coupled with a fluid and readable writing style, this makes it a valuable contribution to the fields of Chinese studies and anthropology. I suspect it will be used by undergraduate and postgraduate students of both. As with many good books, Liu's study raises a number of further questions for the engaged reader, and we come away with a desire to know even more about the Nuosu, the current problems they face in Limu and what the future holds for the general population of Liangshan Prefecture.

DYLAN SUTHERLAND

Catastrophe and Contention in Rural China: Mao's Great Leap Forward. Famine and the Origins of Righteous Resistance in Da Fo Village
RALPH A. THAXTON
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008
xxii + 383 pp. £17.99; $27.99
ISBN 978-0-521-72230-8 doi:10.1017/S0305741011001287

In this long-awaited monograph, Ralph A. Thaxton, Jr. offers a compelling and original analysis of the causes and consequences of the Great Leap Forward famine (1959–1961). Unlike the vast majority of scholarship on the famine, which has tended towards a macro treatment of the event, this work focuses on the experiences of people who experienced the famine first hand: in this case, the inhabitants of a village, "Da Fo," in Northern Henan. Based upon some 400 interviews undertaken over a period of 20 years, the author thoughtfully shows how the institutional foundations of the local Chinese Communist Party (CCP), laid years prior to the famine, made Da Fo more susceptible to food scarcity during the Great Leap Forward (GLF), and how the famine has continued to impact the physical, cultural, and political constitution of this community well into the present day.

Similar to other Western scholars who have studied the famine, Thaxton lays blame for much of the catastrophe at the feet of Mao Zedong. And yet, Thaxton offers an original contribution by showing how local institutional dynamics, many of which were in place years before the GLF, exacerbated the misconceived policies being dictated by the centre. In Da Fo we learn, for example, that the local leadership took shape during the violent period of the anti-Japanese war and the civil war. It was the brutality of these earlier conflicts that fostered the authoritarian work style so prevalent among local CCP leaders before and during the GLF. These hardened militia men demanded exorbitant sacrifices from the people in their charge, and were largely indifferent to local suffering when the crisis began to take hold in 1959.

A historical, path-dependent approach to explaining how the local leadership exacerbated the crisis is similarly useful for understanding why Da Fo's residents did not rise up when faced with endemic hunger. Many local farmers believed in the benevolence of the CCP because of its effectiveness as an agent of aid in previous times of crisis. Indeed, when famine beset the region in 1942, it was the efforts of the CCP that largely alleviated some of the worst of the hunger. The conception of the CCP as saviour was reinforced again in 1956, when it provided aid in the wake of a major river flood. This strong belief that the CCP would come to the rescue, Thaxton argues, prevented contention in the earliest days of the GLF famine crisis. Only when it became clear that help was not forthcoming did villagers choose to

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