

# **Multicultural Convergence and Modernization: An Anthropological Investigation of the Commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken in Klu-Nang, Tibet**

**Yang Minghong**  
Yunnan University

**Liu Jianxia**  
Sichuan University

**Tu Kaijun**  
Sichuan Province Government Office

**Xu Zhen**  
Sichuan Normal University

*From "Medog stone pot" to "Klu-Nang stone pot chicken", a geographically iconic restaurant has been formed in Nyingchi in Tibet. This article investigates and analyzes the commercialization process of Stone Pot Chicken and reveals that the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken is the result of the integration of the local catering culture in Tibet and the inland catering cultures. This process shows that the formation of catering culture is related to the local ecology. Religion, economy and other factors are inseparable from each other. The formation of Stone Pot Chicken culture integrates elements of Tibetan and Han culture, revealing the historical logic of the formation of specific ethnic cultures. At the same time, the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken shows the process of Tibet's economic modernization from one aspect. This process reflects the complex interaction of many social actors.*

*Keywords: stone pot chicken, commercialization, modernization, Tibet*

## **INTRODUCTION**

While walking in Klu-Nang Town of Ninychi, Tibet, you can feel that Stone Pot Chicken is a unique restaurant here, which is difficult to be seen elsewhere in China. There are more than 30 specializing Stone Pot Chicken restaurants in the town alone. In addition to them, there are hundreds of inns that are also operated as Stone Pot Chicken, which entertain a stream of visitors waiting outside. As a cooking tool, the stone pot was originally produced in Medog and later it was introduced to Klu-Nang. It was combined with hot pot cooking from Chongqing, and the local ingredients in Nyingchi, forming a Stone Pot Chicken. From "Medog stone pot" to "Klu-Nang stone pot chicken", it undoubtedly demonstrates its commercialization process that is regarded as a success. It has become a local geographical indicator product of Klu-Nang,

and a local competitive industry. In fact, many stone pot chicken or other meat restaurants in other parts of China, far away from Klu-Nang, either are branches of Stone Pot Chicken of Klu-Nang or they could have been inspired by it. However, as food, its emerging and commercialization reflects not only the marketization process of a commodity but also its cultural development. As Professor Waston of Harvard University pointed out, through the "lens" of food, almost all aspects of social and cultural characteristics and their changes can be observed (Guo 2006). From the perspective of the historical, background of Tibet with a strong traditional culture moving towards modernization, it is not difficult to see that the commercialization of "Stone Pot Chicken" of Klu-Nang is the epitome of Tibet's economic modernization. So what is the commercialization process of Stone Pot Chicken? As a "lens", can we observe the process of Tibet's modernization from its commercialization process? Is the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken a process of adapting to local ecology, culture and economy? These are the questions that this article will address.

Chinese anthropological research focused on food and beverage culture that sprang upon in the 1990s. It initially focused on food and beverage in a cultural sense, such as Wang Zhusheng (1998) on the Jingpo people's food and culture (Wang 1998). And then, the social significance of food and beverage was explored. For example, Zhang Zhanhong (2001) focused on the changes in traditional food against the impact of globalization, and the changes in Hong Kong's lifestyle reflected in the production and sales of local traditional food represented by Hakka restaurants after World War II (Zhang 2001). Later there are regional historical research that trace foods, such as research on salt (Huang 2006; Su 2009), sugar (Mu 2009), and tea (Xiao 2009). In recent years, research has focused on the use of food to explain regional cultural and social changes, such as Bouyei festival food and rice culture (Wei and Zhang 2018), roasted meat for ghosts used in Liangshan Yi religious rituals, and newly emerging barbecue banquet that reflects the process of homogenization and heterogeneity of the Yi people's dietary culture (Wu 2017). Zhao Ya (2011) studied the cultural changes and development of Tibetan rural areas from the perspective of diet by field ethnography approach (Zhao 2001). Liu Zhiyang (2012) took the diet structure and customs of Tibetan rural communities as the starting point to explore the relationship between traditional culture and modernization that emerged in Tibetan rural communities in the process of multicultural interaction and modernization. Qiang Ge (2015) explored the process of modernization of Tibet and changes in Tibetan food culture from the phenomenon that wheat gradually occupied the position of the staple food at dinner. However, as a product of cultural fusion, Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken, which has developed into a new symbol of local food culture, has not yet been studied. The commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken is an important research topic from an anthropological perspective.

To fully understand the detailed process of the emergence and commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken, the authors visited Klu-Nang Town in Nyingchi in June 2019. The field survey work was conducted in three ways. The first way is to interview operators of Stone Pot Chicken. The operators are the main market players that promote the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken and they could better understand the needs and market trends of customers in the commercial circle and grasp the various economic and non-economic factors that have been aggregated around the Stone Pot Chicken to the customer's table. These factors are the key factors for us to understand the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken. These interviewees mainly came from Klu-Nang Town and the nearby villages of Tsahisgang Village, Norbu Village, and DumpaTshal Village. The second way is to visit local officials, including both local cadres and aiding Tibet cadres and technical personnel. The former has his own experience and observations of the whole process of commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken, while the latter came from inland provinces of China and were dispatched to Tibet to work on a one- to three-year rotation, and observed various local commercial activities and other economic activities from "others'" perspective. . The third way is to interview personnel engaged in tourism, transportation and other activities in the local area. Although, they are not directly involved in the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken, but they have heard the story of Stone Pot Chicken, or have tasted Stone Pot Chicken as customers, and sometimes they are more capable to convey real information. From 2015 to 2018, the authors conducted surveys in Klu-Nang, and accumulated a lot of first-hand information on the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken.

## THE ORIGIN AND COMMERCIALIZATION STAGES OF STONE POT CHICKEN

### The Origin of Stone Pot Chicken and Its Emerging of Commercialization

Generally speaking, utensils, cooking methods, and ingredients are the three basic elements in food making. Stone Pot Chicken was firstly named after "Medog Stone Pot". As a starting point, "Medog stone pot" was used to cook local food ingredients with specific cooking methods. There was a very long history of using a stone pot as a cooking utensil in Medog. According to the "Ethnic Dictionary", the stone pot is "a kind of cooking utensil commonly used by the Monba people, which is hand-chiseled. It is generally 20-30 cm high, and 20-40 cm in diameter. The highest can reach 50 cm. It is approximately barrel-shaped, white and clean on the outside and hollow inside. The stewed food is delicious and be kept warm. The cauldron is mostly used for steaming and filtering wine." (Editorial Board of Ethnic Dictionary 1987). The stone pot is made of Medog's unique soapstone. This type of soapstone is mainly found in the three towns of Bangxin, Reesa, and Beibeng in Medog County. In these three towns, the cliffs on both sides of the Yarlung Zangbo Basin have soapstones at an altitude of 400 meters to 2000 meters. It is off-white, with the soft texture and strong plasticity. So it is fit for making living utensils. Although archaeologists discovered Neolithic polished stone tools in Medog in 1973, there is still no record of the time when the first stone pot appeared (Shang, et. al.1978). According to the local legend, the modern stone pot was moved to Medog in the late 18th century. It was invented by the Moinba tribe. It is said that the ancestors of the locals moved from Menu and Tawang to Pemagang, which is now Medog, because they could not bear the oppression and exploitation of the nobles at that time and were also hit by natural disasters such as strong earthquakes (Wu 1987). After the Monba people moved to Medog, they used the local soapstone to make stone pots. In addition to stone pots, they also make stone bowls, stone basins, stone buckets and other living utensils. Cooking utensils made of this soapstone can withstand high temperatures of 2000°C, and have natural characteristics such as fast heat transfer, non-stick pan, and color change, and are very popular among Medog.

The transition from "Medog stone pot" to "Klu-Nang stone pot chicken" is due to the integration of Chongqing hot pot culture. The local people depicted that it was He Daiyun, a person from Chongqing who combined the Chongqing hot pot cooking method with the Medog stone pot to form the Stone Pot Chicken. We have talked with He Daiyun many times and knew that he followed his relatives to Klu-Nang for business in 1986. At first, he opened a casserole tofu shop in Klu-Nang, and the business was good. In 1997, when he traveled to Medog and was a guest at a villager's home, he tasted deliciously cakes and soup cooked in a stone pot. He immediately bought a pot from the villager. It was transported back to Klu-Nang and used as a cooking utensil to cook the ingredients in Chongqing hot pot to form a dish. This is the first trial. Because He Daiyun opened a tofu shop, he originally used "Medog Stone Pot" to stew tofu to form "Stone Pot Tofu" instead of the previous "casserole tofu". The casserole tofu was also very popular with customers because of its good taste. Its popularity is related to the local natural environment. On the section of the 318 State Road (Klu-Nang and Nyingchi through the Sejila Pass) which is 4,728 meters above sea level, traffic jams are common around the year. So in order to avoid traffic jams at Sejila Pass, most of travelers choose to rest and eat in Klu-Nang. Passing business travelers have high calorie requirements for food, so the casserole tofu became very popular. But it was unable to satisfy customers with the growing demands, and then the "Stone Pot Tofu" appeared. Since He Daiyun replaced the casserole with the stone pot, the restaurant he runs has put other ingredients into the stone pot, such as trotters, fish, Tibetan chicken, etc. It was found that the local Tibetan chicken in Klu-Nang was stewed as an ingredient and tasted better, and it was more popular with diners. Moreover, Tibetan chicken is a special local product of Klu-Nang and is easy to buy. Based on the availability of ingredients, the requirements of "food" and "flavor" in the diet, Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken was finally formed. Since the Klu-Nang area is densely forested, there are various edible fungi such as palm ginseng and mats growing in the forest, which are more delicious after being added to the Stone Pot Chicken. So, the Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken uses Tibetan chicken as the main ingredient and wild mushrooms, palm ginseng, corymbs, and red dates as supplements. Later, it has become the geographical indicator of Nyingchi in Tibet.

## **The Stage of Commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken**

The commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken, formed by the integration and development of multiple cultures, has gone through the following three stages:

The first stage is the initial stage of commercialization. Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken as a commodity sold to customers is the starting point of its commercialization. The national highway "318" is the basis for the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken, and the communication and interactions between Tibet and the interior of China are the "engines". Because the "318" national highway built in 1954 connects Tibet with the mainland, most of the passing vehicles from Chengdu choose Klu-Nang to stay overnight or take a rest. As a result, the catering industry and hotel service industry in Klu-Nang Town have become the pillar industries there. However, at this stage, the economic value of Stone Pot Chicken has not been revealed, but like other foods, it was just used to fill the stomach. For non-local people, including truck drivers, migrant workers, and soldiers, eating Stone Pot Chicken is just a natural choice after a day's hard work or driving. Therefore, Stone Pot Chicken only meets the needs of diners passing Klu-Nang, and this state has continued until around 2006. The number of local Stone Pot Chicken businesses is small and the scale is not large, but Stone Pot Chicken "Guoji" has gained a little reputation.

The second stage is the initial development stage of Stone Pot Chicken. In 2006, Nyingchi Airport was completed and opened. The reconstruction and expansion of the National Highway "318" led to the rapid development of tourism in Tibet. Tourism to Tibet has shown an explosive growth, and tourists to Klu-Nang regard Stone Pot Chicken as an object that satisfies their curiosity. In this context, the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken has got initial development, which, on the one hand, it is reflected in the continuous expansion of the business scale of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken, and on the other hand, it is reflected in the gradual transformation of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken from popularization food to a tourism cultural symbol. It is not only a piece of food, but also has additional cultural value. Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken has become the necessary item in various cultural tourism festivals and the 318 National Road exploring trip. From the field investigation in Klu-Nang, it is confirmed by the fact that there are more customers and higher rents operating stone pot chicken restaurants along the 318 National Road in Klu-Nang Town.<sup>1</sup> Through the 318 national highway and the tourists' exploration tour, locals are scrambling to show this "original" lifestyle to tourists and obtain transaction value from it. As a result, a series of changes have taken place in local residents' livelihoods. They have shifted from primitive and traditional livelihoods to commercial livelihoods, and the local economic development model has shifted from collection in forest to eco-cultural tourism. Occupation choices have changed from self-sufficient traditional agriculture and animal husbandry to a modern market economy, and the modernity of economic growth has been rapidly improved. This situation continued until the eve of the construction of the "Klu-Nang International Tourist Town", which was based on the emergence of the Stone Pot Chicken as a cultural symbol of tourism, coupled with the excellent natural scenery of Klu-Nang.

The third stage is that the Stone Pot Chicken has been regarded as a geographically iconic food in Nyingchi. This is the finalized stage of commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken. As the largest single-investment and aid project in Tibet,<sup>2</sup> "Klu-Nang International Tourist Town" played a "catalyst" role in the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken, and the symbol of its finalization is that Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken has been rearranged in cooking methods to combine Medog's stoneware culture, Klu-Nang foraging culture and inland culinary cultures, making it have both the taste and consumption level preferred by high-end consumers and ordinary people, thus forming the geographical landmark in food and beverage

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<sup>1</sup> Xinguang Stone Pot Restaurant and Luklang Stone Pot Chicken Headquarters in Luklang Town Large-scale stone pot chicken restaurants such as Luklang Shiguo wang Main Store, some small and medium-sized restaurants with better business in the town, and Luklang ethnic characteristic restaurants at the entrance of Tashigang Village are all opened on both sides of the 318 National Highway.

<sup>2</sup> The project has invested more than 3 billion yuan. See Yang Minghong: "The Large-scale Development of Tourism Resources and the Conversion of Farmers' Livelihoods: A Case Study Based on Tibet's "International Tourist Town", " *Journal of Ethnology*, Issue 3, 2017.

of Klu-Nang Town. Through Guangdong's support to Nyingchi's, local business environment has been improved and developed. The "Klu-Nang International Tourism Town" was completed and put into operation, and the Klu-Nang Tourism Management Committee, which was exclusively responsible for Klu-Nang business management, was established and operated. This has created excellent conditions for the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken, which has entered the finalized stage of development. At this stage, the large-scale, standardized production and operation of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken and its integration with the festival economy, all reflect the characteristics of modern production and management. With the commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken, the stone cooking pot and ingredients have been commercialized at the same time. The establishment of the Stone Pot Cultural Industry Company marked the completion of the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken (and Stone Pot), which indicates that an industrial chain has been formed.

In short, the starting point of Stone Pot Chicken is the "Medog Stone Pot" that is an ordinary cooking utensil for the locals in Medog. It was passed to Klu-Nang and combined with Chongqing hot pot cooking technology to form the Stone Pot Chicken. After decades of commercialization, it has become a geographical indicator of food culture in Nyingchi. This process shows the details of the generation of catering culture, especially the combination of traditional culture and modernization. It also shows the Tibet's economic modernization process from one perspective.

## **CHARACTERIZATION OF KLU-NANG STONE POT CHICKEN COMMERCIALIZATION**

The commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken has combined the Medog's stone pot and Chongqing's hot pot cooking methods with the ingredients represented by Tibetan chicken to form a geographically iconic catering. Through this historical process, it can be observed that the commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken is manifested in the trend of standardization in operation and production. At the same time, the complete industry chain has been formed on the basis of the commercialization of Stone Pot and food materials. The commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken has the following characteristics.

### **The Localization of the Stone Pot Chicken Development**

Commercialization based on localization is the "code". Although the "initiators" who promoted the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken were outsiders, the initiation and promotion of its commercialization reflected the local characteristics. The Stone Pot Chicken created by Chongqing native He Daiyun became popular in Klu-Nang, attracting diners. As the number of diners increased, He Daiyun's stores continued to expand, and his relatives and friends from Chongqing were also hired to participate in the business. Initially, these relatives and friends only participated in the operation of Stone Pot Chicken as assistants. Later, driven by considerable profits and market prospects, these people were separated and gradually developed to be independent Stone Pot Chicken restaurant operators. According to Liu Yang, manager of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken head office,<sup>3</sup> many people who open stone pot chicken restaurants in the town are their relatives and friends, accounting for about 1/3 of the total number of stone pot chicken restaurants in Klu-Nang Town. This kind of business proliferation based on geographical and kinship relationship has enabled the first wave of the development of Klu-Nang Town's Stone Pot Chicken catering market.

The economic prosperity and increase in employment brought about by the Stone Pot Chicken restaurants has attracted the attention of the local government, and the local government has adopted the strategy to promote the Stone Pot Chicken business among local people. The training of Stone Pot Chicken cooking provided to farmers and herdsmen is the result. Since 2013, He Daiyun, the founder of Stone Pot Chicken, has been entrusted by the local government to hold two training courses of cooking stone pot chicken for farmers and herdsmen in Nyingchi. Farmers and herdsmen, from Tashigang villages, Zhongmai

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<sup>3</sup> Liu Yang is the nephew and partner of He Daiyun, the founder of Luklang's Stone Pot Chicken.

villages, and Narmai villages, who run family hotels, have received training. At the same time, farmers and herdsmen in the villages of Klu-Nang Town in Bayi District of Bayi Town received a one-month training in tourism services,<sup>4</sup> which also included training in Stone Pot Chicken cooking techniques. So, Stone Pot Chicken began its second market expansion based on family hotels. In addition to organizing training for local farmers and herdsmen, the local government also invites national media for interviews and reports. After being interviewed and reported by CCTV's food-related programs, Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken has become more and more influential in the market, and it has become a special delicacy that tourists must eat in Tibet. Driving factors such as the potential market demand and considerable commercial profits have prompted more local people to open Stone Pot Chicken restaurants. Correspondingly, Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken market scale expanded for the third time. This scale expansion is actually the result of the localization of Stone Pot Chicken operations. In 2017, the "Klu-Nang International Tourist Town" was completed. The operators of Stone Pot Chicken were uniformly moved to the "Food Street" of the new town. Localized Stone Pot Chicken operators opened stores here one after another, and they have more advantages in terms of employment, ingredients and corresponding dining culture, which greatly promote the localization of the Stone Pot Chicken management. Local operators and out-of-town operators live in harmony and compete with each other at the same time, thus improving the cooking level of Stone Pot Chicken.

The localization of the commercial development of Stone Pot Chicken is also reflected in the localization of food supply. The main ingredient of stone pot chicken has always been the local special Tibetan chicken, and other auxiliary ingredients include mushrooms, vegetables, tofu, etc, which have long been local sources. Since the local area does not produce vegetables, many vegetables must be purchased from the urban area of Nyingchi that is dozens of kilometers away. In recent years, Klu-Nang Town has begun to develop greenhouse vegetable cultivation, and the supply of potatoes, cabbage, radish and other vegetables has gradually been provided by local people. Initially, due to the small amount of food ingredients, the procurement method was mainly farmers' door-to-door sales. Larger Tibetan chicken restaurants would go directly to the village to purchase the ingredients. Later, with the rapid increase in the number of Stone Pot Chicken restaurants in Klu-Nang Town, the sales of Tibetan chicken and mushrooms has increased rapidly, and batch purchases of Tibetan chicken and mushrooms from farmers have become the norm. In June 2019, according to Liu Yang, the manager of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken main store, when the local Tibetan chicken and mushrooms are in short supply during the tourist season, they need to go to Lhasa and Shannan to buy them. At present, the Tibetan chicken, vegetables and other ingredients used in these Stone Pot Chicken restaurants basically comes from local people.

### **Standardization of Stone Pot Chicken Production**

There is standardization behind commercialization, because standardized production is not only convenient for forming a brand, but also for the implementation of specialized division of labor, which saves costs and expands the scale of operations. In the process of the commercialization, Stone Pot Chicken, under the sustainable promotion of customer needs and localization of ingredients, has gradually matured in production, and a certain standard cooking process has been formed. The cooking process and the selection of ingredients and stone pots are the accumulation of long-term experience of the chef. The "Klu-Nang Training Course for Farmers and Herdsmen in Nyingchi Prefecture" is the catalyst for the standardization of the production of "stone pot chicken". It provides trainees a series of standards such as material standards, cooking process standards, stone pot standards, tableware standards, etc. According to the requirements of the local government, the instructor should compile his lectures into handouts or teaching materials. The instructor improves and summarizes the past experience, and actually further regulates the production of Stone Pot Chicken.

In addition to the standardization of cooking technology, the first step to standardize Stone Pot Chicken production is the standardization of stone pot production. The original "Medog stone pot" was produced by

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<sup>4</sup> In 2015, the State Council agreed to rename Nyingchi County to Bayi District.

local farmers and herdsmen by hand. Therefore, there is no uniform standard for stone pots produced in this way. The standardization of Stone Pot Chicken is bound to require standardization of stone pot production, which appeared with the introduction of machine tools into the stone pot production process. In 2013, Medog County established the Shiguo Professional Cooperative in Bangxin Township, Medog County. In December 2017, Medog County Metuo Shiguo Cultural Industry Co. Ltd. was established. It not only enables large-scale production, but also makes standardization of pot production come true. The standardization of Stone Pot Chicken production has promoted the standardization of food ingredient production. The raising of Tibetan chickens is a good example. Since 2017, the Tibetan chicken raising in Klu-Nang Town has changed from free-range style by villagers to collective style by chicken farms. The chicken farms have been established at fixed-point places, and chickens are raised together at the base according to the standard. Stongmjug and Lagdong, were the two villages mainly engaged in Tibetan chicken production and they set up two new standard sites for raising Tibetan chicken in 2019.

### **Integration of Stone Pot Chicken Industry Chain**

The formation of an industrial chain is the result of the industrial development. Through the integration of the industrial chain, economies of scale can be formed for greater profits. In the Stone Pot Chicken industrial chain, the production and operation of ingredients including "Medog Stone Pot" and Tibetan fragrant chicken have been integrated into an industrial chain. This is an important characterization of the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken. The industrialization of Medog stone pot is actually a process from individual labor to socialized production. At the beginning, the stone pot was only used as a local non-consumable daily necessity with little market demand. It was produced by Medog local craftsmen of the Monba ethnic group who used stone pot production as a sideline for their own use. On the one hand, the commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken expanded the demand for stone pot. Shopkeepers of Stone Pot Chicken from Klu-Nang began to place bulk orders to stone pot producers in Medog County. On the other hand, it endows the stone pot as a key component with additional commercial value. Moreover, with the further excavation and dissemination of the functional value of Medog stone pots such as heat preservation and health care, the potential consumer market of stone pots has been further expanded. Individual labor is difficult to meet the expansion of unsocialized needs, and the production of stone pots has begun to have the division of labor and cooperation in the form of production organizations. For example, Gongjiu, a stone pot manufacturer, and his family opened a "Medog stone pot" company in Bayi Town. Nine brothers in his family are engaged in stone pot production and operation, each respectively responsible for soapstone mining, stone pot production and processing, transportation and sales, etc. The continuous expansion and market segmentation of the stone pot market have made machine processing widely used in stone pot production, and large-scale production of stone pots has come, which has brought innovations in the organization of production and management of stone pots. For example, the Shiguo Professional Cooperative of Bangxin Township, Medog County, and Medogite Culture Industry Co., Ltd. signed a soapstone agreement. This integrated business model of supply, production and marketing of stone pots with the "farmers + cooperatives + companies" model marks the maturity of the industrialization of stone pots.

The industrialization of Stone Pot Chicken ingredients is the result of the integration of the Stone Pot Chicken industrial chain. The development of the stone pot chicken catering industry has directly promoted the large-scale development of the breeding industry of Tibetan chicken, Tibetan pig, forest crops, and organic vegetables in Klu-Nang Town. The industrialization of Tibetan chicken also brought about the development of agricultural equipment and technology. Taking vegetable cultivation as an example. Greenhouse facilities and technologies have been widely used in Klu-Nang Town. At the end of 2017, Lagdong Village, Klu-Nang Town, completed the construction of 12 collective greenhouses with a total area of 4,000 square meters. At the end of 2018, with Stongmjug Village and Lagdong Village taking the lead, Klu-Nang town had 45 greenhouses covering an area of 35.5 acres. In the process of industrialization of foodstuffs, various business models such as "company + cooperative + farmer" and "catering association + cooperative" have emerged, providing a foundation for the integrated development of agricultural and animal husbandry with local special products. According to our investigation, since 2017, Stongmjug

Village and Lagdong Village of Klu-Nang Town have planted vegetables in greenhouses and have contracted with the Klu-Nang Town Catering Association to set up “farming by orders”.

### Normalization of the Selling Price of Stone Pot Chicken

With the standardization of the cooking process, the sales price of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken has gradually become standardized. According to our investigation, the operators of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken now use small, medium, and large pots as the general specifications for stone pot chickens as quoted by a number of consumers. The small pot is suitable for 1-3 people; the middle pot for 4-6 people; the large pot for more than 6 people, and the price is corresponding to the specifications. Currently, there are two main business models of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken, namely, the exclusive operation model of Stone Pot Chicken Restaurant and the concurrent operation model with family hotels. For the first model, the basic price varies slightly according to the restaurant grade, but it is basically stable at the standard of small pot/280 yuan, medium pot/380 yuan, and large pot/480 yuan. In the family hotel mode, the price is slightly lower than the first mode. As shown in Table 1, among the 17 family hotels in Klu-Nang Town randomly surveyed, 14 of them sold stone pot chickens, 11 of which have the same price. The prices of small pot, medium pot, and large pot are respectively 180, 280 and 380 yuan. Of course, this specification is relative, because there will be certain differences in price under different business models. In general, the operation of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken has formed a standard that is commonly used in the industry.

Name of Family Hotel	Operating stone pot chicken (Yes/No)	The price of stone pot chicken(yuan/pot) (Small/Middle/Large)
Tianfu clause	No	-
Tired inn	Yes	180/280/380
Dabian Bus Family Hotel	Yes	300/500
Dean of the inn	Yes	180/280/380
Yang Jin Family Hotel	Yes	180/280/380
Degi Family Hotel	No	—
Dragon Valley Inn	Yes	200/300/400
Baima Joe Family Hotel	Yes	180/280/380
Punima Family Hotel	Yes	180/280/380
Zhuo Family Hotel	No	—
The Argachimei Family Hotel	Yes	180/280/380
SanjiZhuoma Family Hotel	Yes	180/280/380
CangJie Family Hotel	Yes	180/280/380
Pingcuo Smart Family Inn	Yes	180/280/380
Lamb Family Hotel	Yes	200/300/400
The Pinso Family Hotel	Yes	180/280/380
Zhong Mai Family Hotel	Yes	180/280/380

Source: Compiled based on the authors' field survey data from June 20, 2019 to June 24, 2019.

### Branding of Stone Pot Chicken Management

Branding food ingredients is the primary form of Stone Pot Chicken management. Driven by the local catering industry represented by stone pot chicken, special agriculture and animal husbandry in Stongmjug, Lagdong, Balmo, Badkar, Klum and other villages in Klu-Nang Town are gradually forming an integrated local market system for agricultural products and green supply of catering industry. Klu-Nang has formed a self-circulating economic cycle with Stone Pot Chicken as the core. Its agricultural and livestock production and sales are expanding, and external markets are being explored or exploited on the basis of branding process. According to the mayor of Klu-Nang Town, the local government regards geographical



indicator certification as a breakthrough to promote the brand effect of Klu-Nang agricultural and animal husbandry products. To achieve this goal, locally produced organic vegetables are uniformly printed with the Klu-Nang IP logo, and some products with local characteristics such as forest resources, Tibetan medicine, agricultural and livestock products, natural drinking water, fruits, tea and other products are also actively involved in the trademark strategy, striving to establish a brand with regional characteristics so as to comprehensively enhance the added value and influence of Klu-Nang agricultural and animal husbandry products. The external export of brands is a reflection of the advanced stage of branding of Stone Pot Chicken management. After the stone pot chicken was launched in Klu-Nang Town, it quickly became popular in Nyingchi area.

At present, there are three major ways of exporting Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken to other places: one is that outsiders learn Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken cooking skills by themselves, and independently operate stone pot chicken restaurants in other places, such as the restaurant in the urban area of Nyingchi; second, the local operator in Klu-Nang opened another stone pot chicken restaurant outside of Klu-Nang, such as He Daiyun who opened a branch of stone pot chicken in Chongqing; third, outsiders join the operation of stone pot chicken, such as the franchise store of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken head office in Shanghai. According to the data of Dianping.com visited on July, 2019, there were 124 Stone Pot Chicken stores just in the urban area of Nyingchi. The commercial coverage of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken is not only in the Nyingchi area, but has appeared in inland cities such as Chongqing, Chengdu, and Shanghai in recent years. According to Liu Yang, the current business focus of He Daiyun, the founder of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken, has begun to shift. The stone pot chicken shop in Klu-Nang Town is mainly operated by his son, and He Daiyun brought Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken to Chongqing, starting a new commercial layout. They not only directly operate the Stone Pot Chicken branch in Chongqing, but also participate in the franchise preparation of Stone Pot Chicken restaurants in Shandong, Shanghai, Xinjiang. At present, 3 restaurants have successfully joined the operation. He Daiyun and Liu Yang provide authorization on the use of trademarks, guidance on cooking methods, and stone pot equipment and ingredients.

## **THE INHERENT ADAPTABILITY OF THE COMMERCIALIZATION PROCESS OF STONE POT CHICKEN**

When studying the inheritance of dietary cultures in Asian societies and the localization of foreign diets, Appadurai et al. emphasized that the production, manufacturing, and marketing aspects of diet reflect the inclusive and complex relationship between global integration and localization (Appadurai & Arjun, 1988; Allison & Anne, 1991; Wu & Tan, 2001; Bestor, 2004). The emergence and development process of Klu-Nang "Stone Pot Chicken" also has a complex relationship of compatibility and tension between modernization and localization, which is associated with the adaptability in commercial development process from "Stone Pot" to Stone Pot Chicken.

### **Cultural Adaptation of Stone Pot Chicken Commercialization Process**

Catering is not only a part of people's material life, but also a kind of culture. Take cooking utensils as an example. The emergence of cooking utensils gives food the two opposite concepts of "raw" and "cooked". Levi-Strauss pointed out that the former belongs to the category of "natural" and the latter belongs to the category of "cultural". For human beings, the container is not only a tool, but also an object with cultural significance (Levi-Strauss 1978). Therefore, as a diet, the inherent adaptability arising from the emergence and development of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken must be reflected in a certain social culture. In fact, Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken itself is a product of multicultural integration, and this process itself is a manifestation of cultural adaptability. As a multicultural diet, it can be accepted by local residents, which also requires corresponding cultural adaptation. This reveals the important reason why Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken, as an "omnivorous food" that integrates multiple cultures, stands out from many local traditional foods and becomes an important geographical landmark in Nyingchi area.

Firstly, it interacts with other food culture. As mentioned earlier, although Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken is named Klu-Nang, it is a meal formed by using Medog stone pot as a cooking utensil, using the Chongqing

hot pot cooking method and cooking ingredients grown in Klu-Nang Town. "Medog stone pot" is the representative of Medog cooking culture, and the cooking method is the embodiment of Sichuan and Chongqing food culture. Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken is the result of multi-cultural integration, and the smooth progress of cultural interaction and integration stem from the openness and tolerance of culture in the process of Tibet's modernization. After China's reform and opening up in the early 1980s, the number of merchants entering Tibet to engage in commerce and trade activities continued to increase, especially those from the Sichuan-Chongqing area adjacent to Tibet (Liu 1989). Cultural communication and blending are actually based on human beings, and the food culture is based on human material needs. Therefore, the population flow between the inland China and Tibet driven by economic development also promotes the flow and integration of the food culture of the two places. The process of the formation of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken implies a process from the closed to the open presented by local residents with the development of the economy. The increase in openness and inclusiveness makes the local culture willing to accept and absorb foreign culture, which reflects the modernity of local residents.

Secondly, the religious adaptability in food culture has increased. Among the many folk cultural items, food culture has the dual characteristics of material culture and spiritual culture. At the same time, food folklore is also the most lively. When people talk about food culture tradition, it is not a dogma, but the result of people adapting to a specific environment under a certain time and space background (Wu 2001). Like the commercial development trend of Stone Pot Chicken, Klu-Nang local food culture has also experienced the integration of "tradition" and "modern" in time and space of modernity. Among them, the part that conforms to the value orientation of modernity will be retained or naturally developed, and the part that contradicts it will gradually disappear or be consciously downplayed by people.

Of course, this process is not a simple replacement of tradition by modernity, but rather that people continue to improve their openness of thought and tolerance to different cultures in the time and space environment that has been developed. On this basis, we need to compare the "other" and examine the "self", reposition one's material and spiritual needs, to re-evaluate the value of traditional culture, and then make new choices.

As we all know, the production of Stone Pot Chicken involves the slaughter of live chickens, which conflicts with the taboo of killing in Tibetan Buddhism tradition. After the Stone Pot Chicken Catering Management Training Course was offered to farmers and herdsmen, local residents of Klu-Nang continuously enter the business of Stone Pot Chicken catering. It made local residents to choose between "making money" and conservative religious dogma. Especially the family hotel and Stone Pot Chicken operator are mainly local Tibetan farmers. The religious adaptability they embodied in the process of operating Stone Pot Chicken is divided into two types: one is to adapt to the commercial development of Stone Pot Chicken by breaking religious precepts to a certain degree. Take the Da Pemba Family Hotel in Narmai Village, Klu-Nang Town as an example. The hotel owner Pemba believes in the Yellow Sect of Buddhism, which has the strictest precept on killing. His approach is to avoid killing chicken in religious holidays. Pemba said that according to the Yellow Sect, they neither kill nor eat meat during the whole month of April in the Tibetan calendar. Once April is over, it is allowed to kill, eat, and sell "Stone Pot Chicken". The other is to resolve the conflict between religious beliefs and commercial profits through modern business methods. As mentioned above, starting in 2017, Klu-Nang Town established a chicken farm to raise Tibetan chickens at designated locations. Under this model, the farm is responsible for slaughtering chickens and then uniformly delivering them to family hotels. As far as the local Tibetans are concerned and as long as the Tibetan chickens were not killed by themselves, they did not violate the religious precepts, thus solving the contradiction between religious beliefs and commercial profits.

The above two situations are manifestations of religious adaptation shown in the modernization process. The former uses religious breakthroughs to dilute the influence of religious beliefs on modern production methods, while the latter separates religious beliefs from the production methods to avoid conflict between the two. Both of these situations are the examples of adaptability and development when the regional community's religious culture and modernization collide in the process of modernization. Of course, there are also local residents who choose to simplify the way of observing religious precepts. For example, they choose the method of no killing when the date is "1, 3, 5" and its multiples. In the commercialization of

Stone Pot Chicken, sporadic breakthroughs have converged into a secularized transformation of the religious life of local Tibetan residents. This is one of the impacts of the commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken.

Thirdly, there are memories in food culture. Some dietary anthropology researchers regard food as a kind of memory. For example, "the memory of food is the so-called 'habit memory', a special 'memory on the tip of the tongue'" (Peng 2013). Food is the result of a nation's historical and cultural choices, but at the same time, for individuals, food let them participate body feelings and construction of experience through sense organs. No matter how the folklore subjects change in space, once the memory of food is formed, it will be run through one's whole life like a shadow (Wang 2016). The local special-featured catering is the "physical image" of the local food culture. When tourists try to perceive and experience local culture through catering, specialty food products related to the place become local catering culture, at the same time; food memory will further deepen the "food image" of food into culture. Thus the local catering culture would be transited to commercialization, "forming a series of commercial economic activities with catering as the core, culture as the expression, and ethnicity as the characteristic, for the purpose of promoting tourism." For the locals, the eating memory contained in food makes it easier to accept and promote it as a local culture. Therefore, the Stone Pot Chicken, which has evolved from the integration and development of multiple cultures, can be regarded as the representative of local food culture recognized by the locals with the stone pot, Tibetan fragrant chicken and mushroom with the memory of Tibetan special diets.

In short, the emergence of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken and its commercialization process both reflect the enhancement of cultural adaptability in the process of Tibet's modernization. This not only shows the gradual increase in cultural tolerance and openness, and the interaction, integration and development of food culture, but also the secularization of local people's religious life in the process of modern economy, and the transition of local food and beverage culture to commercialization.

### **Ecological Adaptation of Stone Pot Chicken Commercialization Process**

The food system is not only a choice system for material survival, but also a special cognitive system, or a cooperative system that complements the ecological environment (Peng and Xiao 2011). In other words, choices of related material including food, utensils, cooking methods must be compatible with the local natural environment and have ecological adaptability so that social reproduction with natural resources can be achieved. Klu-Nang Town is located in the southeast corner of Tibet, with an average elevation of 3,700 meters, cold climate, and thin air. The special geographical location and harsh climatic conditions to a certain extent determine the unique eating habits of the local Tibetans. Therefore, the commercialization process of Stone Pot Chicken shows a certain ecological adaptation.

On the one hand, the emergence of Stone Pot Chicken is a manifestation of the ecological adaptability of the local people in the choice of life tools. Due to the restrictions in high-altitude areas, the boiling point of water is lower than 100°C so the ordinary cooking tools cannot cook food. The stone pot can cook ingredients that can only be cooked in a pressure cooker. In addition, saponite, the raw material of stone pot, is rich in a variety of microelements required by the human body, and has certain health-preserving properties (Huang, and Lv 2011), which can meet people's needs for a healthy diet. The soapstone pot, which has fast heat transfer, slow heat dissipation, and pressure cooker performance is a manifestation of the ecological adaptation of local residents.

On the other hand, the commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken stems from the sustainable supply of food resources. As the main material, the stone pot chicken is unique to the local area and can be raised in large numbers in local forests, which ensures the availability and sustainability of the supply of this food material and the existence and sustainability of the Stone Pot Chicken as a cultural symbol. This is the basis for the commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken. Therefore, stone pot, Tibetan fragrant chicken and mushrooms have become the three standard items of Klu-Nang "stone pot chicken" deriving from the ecological adaptability that matches the local natural environment.

### **Economic Adaptation of Stone Pot Chicken Commercialization**

Anthony Giddens believes that the emergence of modernity is first of all a modern economic order (Luo 2007). From a relative perspective, economic modernity can be seen as the changes in the external economic environment of mankind. Economic adaptation is the adaptability and development of local communities under the impact of changes in the external economic environment during the modernization process. Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken is both a delicacy and a commodity. It appeared in the early 1990s and entered the market as a commodity and began to be commercialized in pace with China's reform and opening up. Therefore, the commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken is also a process for local residents and local migrants to adapt to changes in the external economic environment and the construction of a modern economic order.

The first economic adaptation is to comply with the general trend of Tibet's opening to the outside world. In the 1980s, many people from Sichuan, Chongqing and other places entered Tibet for work and business. Due to low capital investment, low technical thresholds, and low cultural requirements, wholesale and retail, transportation and other business services have become the preferred industries for many migrant workers in Tibet. The regional agglomeration of population has caused rapid growth in consumer demand, thus creating conditions for the commercialization of stone pot chicken. The business experience of He Daiyun in Tibet from "casserole tofu" to Stone Pot Chicken illustrates this point. When he entered Nyingchi in early 1986, there were few restaurants on the 230-kilometer highway from Bomi County to Bayi Town, and his customers were only truck drivers running along National Highway 318. Owing to Tibet's opening to the outside world, Klu-Nang Town, which is uniquely located, has become a good location for catering operations.

The second adaptation is the interaction of culture and tourism. In the new century, the main customers of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken have shifted from truck drivers to tourists, which means that Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken has transformed from serving specific types of consumer groups to serving mass diners, and thus entered the commercialization stage. Through local commercial packaging and promotion, it is regarded as a part of the local food culture and presented to the public as a local business place card embodied with local characteristics. After decades of market selection and competition, it has been developed from an original soup pot restaurant to a large-scale industry that now spreads throughout Klu-Nang town and the famous Nyingchi Street market. This is inseparable from the development of the local tourism.

Guangdong and Fujian provinces were arranged by the central government to provide assistance to Nyingchi since 1994. They were optimistic about the prospects of Nyingchi's tourism development and focused their efforts on this area. Especially in 2011, as the largest province in China that assist Nyingchi, Guangdong Province implemented the "Klu-Nang International Tourist Town" construction project. After its completion in March 2017, it received 110,000 tourists and achieved a total tourism income of 6.45 million yuan in that year. In 2018, Klu-Nang Town received 240,000 tourists and realized a total tourism income of 6.97 million yuan. The prosperity of the tourism industry has provided a relatively stable source of tourists for the commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken.

The third adaptation is the implementation of industrialized production methods. As a commodity, Klu-Nang "Stone Pot Chicken" displays scale and standardization of commercialized production and management. Its economic adaptation can be found in the formation of its industrial chain, which demonstrates modern industrialized production thoughts. Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken has evolved from the initial hand-made and small-scale operation to the large-scale operation with standardized cooking procedures and brand management, and later it became a local leading industry. This shows that its commercialization process is the infiltration of modern industrial ideas. The commercialization of Stone Pot Chicken has led to the industrial development of Medog Stone Pot and Stone Pot Chicken ingredients, and has formed the integrated industrialization of supply, production and marketing of Stone Pot with the model of "farmers + cooperatives + companies". The Tibetan chicken and other food materials have also been industrialized, promoting the advancement of planting and feeding technology in local farming and animal husbandry. These characteristics that embody the thought of industrialization clearly indicates that the operators of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken adapt to the development of the market economy.

In short, the commercialization process of Klu-Nang stone pot chicken is a microcosm of the development of Tibet's economic modernization, and is a result of its adaptation to the modern development of Tibet's economy. On the one hand, the transformation of production methods has turned diet activities from family basis into commercial one. On the other hand, the flow of people and logistics in the development of the market economy provide the necessary material conditions and markets for its commercialization, which enables it to interact with market and tourism consumers. Therefore, the commercial performance of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken also carries the characteristics of Tibet's economic modernization.

## **CONCLUSION**

Through a panoramic display of the commercialization process of Klu-Nang "stone pot chicken" and a clear demonstration of the social adaptability of the local community in the face of external impact. Therefore we can see that the transformation from "Medog stone pot" to "Klu-Nang stone pot chicken" is the process of economic modernization in Tibet. In the process of modernization, the interaction between "old" and "new", "tradition" and "modern" is constantly increasing, and the collision and adaption within the society continue to occur in the daily life, which constitutes the history of social change. Food is closely related to human survival and social development. By tracking the trade and flow of food between regions, anthropologists can combine observations of communities with the penetration of external capitalism, looking for collisions of external forces, the adaptive changes and development of communities in such collisions (Peng and Xiao 2011). The emergence and commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken is a projection of this process in reality.

Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken is a reproduction of food culture. From the "stone pot" embodied in the traditional stoneware culture of Nyingchi to the Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken, which is one of the current symbols of Nyingchi food culture, it reflects the fluidity nature of food culture, which is the result of cultural convergence. The flow and aggregation of culture is an unstoppable historical torrent, but the specific picture presented in this process is based on the background of social development and presents different manifestations. The emergence and commercialization of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken is based on the historical background of Tibet's economic modernization, which makes its commercialization with obvious characteristics of commercialization under the conditions of Chinese socialist market economy. Similarly, in the interactive process of modernization and localization, the commercialization process of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken is more embodied in the inherent adaptability of a society rather than exclusion. Based on diet, the social adaptation and development of culture, ecology, and economy constitute not only the commercialization of Klu-Nang stone pot chicken, but also a corner of the process of modern social changes in Tibet. This shows the reality that in the process of modernization, social development promotes multicultural interaction, aggregation and development, and the result of cultural aggregation and development further promotes economic and social development under the effect of its inherent adaptability. The aggregation of multiple cultures and social development promote each other. The commercialization process of Klu-Nang Stone Pot Chicken not only shows the process of interaction and aggregation of multiple dietary cultures, but at the same time, being a primary local specific cultural form, it reveals the logic of the formation of specific ethnic cultures.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This article builds on site investigations which were conducted by Liu Jianxia, a Ph.D candidate at School of Economics, Sichuan University, Tu Kaijun, an official at the Public Security Department of Sichuan Province Government, Xu Zhen, an associate professor at School of Economics, Sichuan Normal University. They also contributed their academic view. Yang Minghong is a professor at the Research Center for Southwestern Borderlands Minorities Studies, Yunann University, Kunming, China and in the Institute of Tibetan Studies, Sichuan University, Chengdu, China. His research focus has been on Tibetan Studies, especially on economic-social development and political issues in Tibet as well as China's Tibet

policy. This research was supported by Ethnology Discipline Construction Fund of Yunnan University (Grant No. 2019SY044).

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