

9. Appendix

9.1 Interviews

1. Interview with two granduncles¹

Location: Third Unit, Gongqingtuan Farm, Wenxu County, Aksu Region, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region²

Date: 25 July, 2011

Speaker A: Ha Mingzong

Speaker B: Fourth Granduncle – Hu Zhanming, b. 1955

Speaker C: Fifth Granduncle – Hu Zhanquan, b. 1958

Speaker D: my grandfather – Ha Sengzhang, b. 1945

Speaker E: Fourth Grandaunt – Ha Sengxiu, b. 1955

Speaker F: Fifth Grandaunt – Ye Sengmei, b. 1960

Introduction and summary of the interview:

The interviewees, Hu Zhanming and Huzhanquan, left their native village of Kelakou, Tiantang Town, Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province in 1990 to the Second Unit, Gongqingtuan Farm,³ Aksu Region, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. They decided to leave their home-village and move to a totally unfamiliar land after learning the possible job opportunities and annual income expectations in Aksu publicized in an official letter originally sent by the then liaison person between Aksu and Tianzhu County to the Bureau of Civil Affairs in Tianzhu. It was only after they arrived in Aksu that they found out the liaison person hadn't promised anything in the letter and only mentioned if Tianzhu County could export some migrant workers since there was a shortage of labour in Aksu. The Bureau of Civil affairs then embellished the letter and added that there were plenty of job opportunities and the expected

¹ The brothers of my paternal grandmother.

² In Chinese: 新疆维吾尔自治区阿克苏地区温宿县共青团农场三队.

³ Gongqingtuan Farm: the Communist Youth League Farm.

annual income per capita would be about twenty thousand RMB. The incentive of the local Tianzhu government was probably to fuel development and alleviate poverty by export migrant workers as a means of earning income. However, ill fate beset those 27 families, including many local Mongghul and Chinese, that abandoned their homes and moved to Aksu from the beginning. They arrived in Aksu only to find out that they were not expecting so many families all in one group, so they had to take shelters in horse stables and underground cellars for well over a year and half, until they made sun-dried bricks themselves and built simple abodes for themselves. The early years were an ordeal of a series of difficulties, which included starvation, opening up new areas for planting, building drinking water and irrigation/drainage systems, getting used to the new modes of farming and tools, and also the weather. Many families that moved to Xinjiang with them in 1990 returned to Tianzhu and those that stayed, including the interviewees' families, are leading a quite comfortable life finally after 22 years of hard work. The interviewees' families each has about 20 *mu* of land today and are growing walnuts and cotton that bring in forty to fifty thousand RMB annually. Their regrets over the years are that they couldn't send their children to better schools and have them educated well due to limitations on the support from them. At present, one of the interviewees' son still belongs to the population of migrant workers and moves from place to place for better job opportunities, while the other's son works in the local unit administration. He Zhanquan also said that his daughter-in-law has eloped with someone else leaving her own daughter behind.

The interviewees are the first of the author's relatives that left their native land and migrated to Aksu. They were joined after almost ten years by the author's grandfather before more followed in the first decade of the 21st century.

A:	Granduncles and Grandaunts, could you please talk a little about when you moved here and how you led your lives here first?
B:	We left our home village in January 1990, just on the third day of the Chinese Spring Festival. At that time, there was no railway to Aksu, so we first took a train from home to Daheyan in Tulufan. That took us two days and a night. From Tulufan, we went by bus all the way here to Gongqingtuan. The whole trip lasted six days. When we arrived, local people first arranged for us all to stay in the local regiment's office. In the room, there was nothing on the floor and we were given no beds whatsoever. We were lucky that we brought quilts and pillows with us when we left home. Some people had no bedding at all.

	<p>Anyway, we stayed in the office for just three days and then all of the newly arrived people were divided and arranged into separate units in the regiment. We were sent to the second unit and arranged in a big barn, where they used to keep their horses. At that time, the horse dung in the barn was about this thick. Anyway, four families had to stay in the barn, one in each corner. During that month we stayed in the barn, we had to walk to a place about two kilometers (one way) back and forth to dig cellars every day. They were actually ditches dug in the ground with the top covered by wood fixed from one edge of the ditch to the other. They provided some bricks and plastic to use inside the cellars. These underground cellars actually served as our shelter for the year and half to come. By April first that year, after we had just finished building cellars, they gave us the real task to open up new farming areas. First we had to build irrigation canals. Male employees had to finish eight meters in length per day and females had to finish six meters. The channels were 2.5 meters in width and 1.5 meters deep. In a month, we could earn only about a hundred RMB. Even though a bag of flour cost only twenty RMB and cooking oil cost two RMB per kilogram, that wage was really too little. During festivals and other celebrations, older employees, or those people who had arrived earlier, were given some gifts such as rice and oil, but as newcomers, we didn't get anything.</p>
A:	<p>What encouraged you to move to this place in the first place? Was it that the government supported you or was it your own decision to come to a place previously unknown to you?</p>
B:	<p>The reason was that at that time our home township received a letter sent by the local government from here in Aksu that said they were recruiting laborers and promised that the laborers would earn at least 20,000 RMB a year. According to the person, a Tianzhu native who moved to Aksu one year before us that acted as the liaison between Aksu and Tianzhu County, he wrote a letter to the Bureau of Civil Affairs in Tianzhu County, but didn't promise that the laborers' annual income would be that much. The fact was that the bureau in Tianzhu embellished the letter a bit and that attracted our attention.</p>
A:	<p>How many people came here with you that time?</p>
B:	<p>In total twenty-seven families came that time from villages like Dakeshidan, Xiaokeshidan, Kela, Yetu, Kelakou, and Dazongtai. Only after we arrived here did we find out that they were not expecting so many people and that there was miscommunication between the two regional administrations. That was the reason we didn't have places to stay and had to dig underground cellars for ourselves. Most people that came at that time gradually</p>

	returned home.
A:	Were there people in this village before you arrived?
B:	<p>There were people from other places, like Wuwei, but from our county there were only two or three families. All these people officially migrated here with monthly wages. When we came, there were only about 200 <i>mu</i> of plantable fields in this village and there were only around eight laborers. Today, we have more than 5,000 <i>mu</i> in this village and the whole <i>nongchang</i> (farm) has more than 20,000 <i>mu</i>.</p> <p>At that time, life was hard, really hard... We didn't have enough to eat. We had problems with the local Uyghur people. When we were in the underground cellars, at night, you heard rats and lizards running around the cellar, oh, that was scary. We didn't have light, nothing...</p>
A:	What about children's education? Was there a school here?
B:	There was a school, but it was so far away and there was no road to the school, so kids didn't go to school much at that time.
A:	When you came here, there are only few people in this area, right?
B:	Oh, yeah, yeah, very few, only some local Uyghur. Now in this particular unit, there are around eighty households. Most are from Tianzhu and came later towards the end of the 90s. At that time, we had already finished plowing new farmlands.
A:	Granduncles, you are all actually Mongghul, right?
B:	We are all Mongghul.
A:	Are there any people from Qinghai around here?
B:	In the second unit, there are a lot of people from Ledu County and Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County, but I guess most are Chinese. In our unit, there are only three families from Qinghai - two from Ledu and one from Huzhu.
A:	Right, so most of these people came on their own, right?
C:	Yeah, actually all came voluntarily, including us. It is just that we believed in some lies and hoped for dreams when we left. But when we first arrived, well, this place was... well, nothing much to say really, simply just a vast gobi desert. Nowadays, there are more and more people moving into this place after we have turned it into plantable fields and prepared everything for them.
E:	We have done all the hard work. To think back, I can't believe now what we had to do and

	<p>all the things that we had to go through; that when we were trying to open up new areas into cultivation it caused us so much pain. It was hard... Look at the people today, we now have all the resources ready finally, and they come pouring in from all over the country and are benefitting more from our work. That year in 1990, most people moved here in three groups. We were the first group and all these three groups did all the hard work for the people who came later. Before us, only one group of people moved here from our place, and that was between 1988 and 1989. Those people were officially migrated, together with their <i>hukou</i>,⁴ and enjoyed more governmental support than us.</p>
A:	How long did you all work on opening up new areas?
B:	<p>We started on April 1, 1990 and finished for the first year in August that year. We were then told to build our own houses. We all then started making sun-dried bricks and those families that had enough labour built their own simple abodes with two or three rooms by the end of the year, but most people stayed in the cellars through the winter and we had our sun-dried brick abode one and half years after our arrival. The first year we reclaimed some new land for planting, but when we planted the next year, the alkaline content in the fields were so high that there was basically no yield at the end of the year at all. We spent much of the second year doing various temporary jobs to make ends meet. If you made about seven or eight RMB a day, you would be so happy.</p>
A:	Granduncle, this house is actually the second house you have built over the years for yourself, right?
B:	<p>Yeah, let me see, this is the second house. I⁵ built the first one in another unit here, a bit north of here. I actually didn't live in the first house at all and sold it to some other people and moved to the second unit, where it became really hard and I actually decided to go back home to Tianzhu. But neighbors and relatives persuaded me to stay and then I moved to the fourth unit here and started working in a beer factory. This was in the fourth year. I made a little money, around 2,000 RMB, from there and moved finally back to the third unit here. I was allotted a small abode and it was in this house that I lived the eight following years. I built this house with savings accumulated over those eight years, and we have been</p>

⁴ *Hukou*: place of official registration.

⁵ Instead of saying 'we' or 'my family', he said 'I', which is common in rural China because the man in the family, as its head, represents the whole family, and thus 'I' means 'he and his family'.

	living in this house for nine years now.
A:	I see that you are building some new rooms and it seems that the style is the same in all the families around here. Does the local government support you or do you intend to build these rooms at your own expenses?
B:	These are the so-called earthquake-proof buildings. All these should have already been built last year. When the first leader of this county came and indicated we should build these rooms, he promised that the government would provide us with cement, bricks and some subsidy and that we should start building as soon as possible. It's been a year and we have almost finished building the rooms at our own expenses, but we haven't received anything from the government yet. We don't know when we will receive the subsidy, if at all. We have spent more than 43,000 RMB on this.
A:	What is the situation like currently in your family?
B:	Now it is much much better. We have about 19.6 <i>mu</i> of fields. We grow walnuts, cotton, and some apples.
A:	Are these fields now yours?
C:	No, actually all these fields belong to the government. We are just contractors. We have to pay various taxes and what we have left at the end of the year is really just a small amount. Since last year, the situation has become even more complicated when a firm came and bought all the fields that are in Gongqingtuan. We are actually really just like sub-contractors, or the employees of the firm in other words.
B:	Actually the person who got the bid was the ex-secretary of Gongqingtuan, somehow somehow through some so-called reforms, he bought these fields for 30 years, so we are just his hired laborers. Basically, if you pay the taxes and rent on time and want to stay here, you can, but if you don't obey his rules and pay the taxes and rent on time, he can fire us at any time. He has actually made this clear on several occasions and said that he could always find people to replace us.
A:	What are the tax and rent like?
B:	For an A-level field, we have to give him 55 kg of cotton per <i>mu</i> of field. The price of the cotton differs from year to year. Take last year, for instance, it was 5 RMB, so we had to give him about 275 RMB per <i>mu</i> . It is just the rent for the field. Now if you add all other additional fees and rents, we pay more than 500 RMB per <i>mu</i> of field.

D:	This is the case with cotton fields. But with apple orchards, it is a bit different. When the trees are still small, you have to sign a contract that from a certain year you will start paying certain amount of rent and that increased every year as the trees grow bigger. But there is also an agreement that places a limit or a cap on the amount of rent fee. In our case, the cap is in the 15 th year, and the top amount of rent fee they can ask from you is 600 kg of apples per <i>mu</i> . Last year, 1 kg of apple was 1,3 RMB, so you pay about 900 RMB for one <i>mu</i> of apple field to your boss. I don't know what it is like with your walnut fields.
B:	For walnut fields, we start paying rent fee from the seventh year. The first year we pay about 20 kg of walnut per <i>mu</i> and 28 kg the next year, so it increases like this annually for seven years until it reaches the cap. Imagine 1 kg of walnut is worth 35 RMB, so for the first year you have to pay about 700 RMB per <i>mu</i> of walnut field. I think in our place, the cap is about 75 kg per <i>mu</i> .
A:	Granduncle, what crops do you grow here and what is the income like per year?
B:	We mainly grow walnuts. The income differs from unit to unit. In our unit, the income is relatively a bit lower, because there is a high alkaline content in the soil and the yield is not as good. From our own fields, we had about 700 kg of green walnuts, and it was the sixth year. This year I think we will have about three tons, from 19,6 <i>mu</i> of fields. If you sell them after drying, the income will be about 20,000 RMB, I think.
A:	So the main source of income for you is these walnut trees, right?
B:	Yeah, and we also plant cotton in between those trees.
C:	Actually the main source of income is not the walnut trees currently, because they are still small and the yield is quite poor. The main source of income is the cotton we plant in between those trees. That is actually what helps us make ends meet.
A:	Fifth Granduncle, what crops do you have, also trees?
C:	Yeah, we also have walnut trees, now in their fourth year, so not much income from them still. In between the trees, we also plant cotton. We harvest about 200 kg of cotton each year. Last year the price was about 12 per kg.
A:	Fifth Granduncle, what about labourers that work in your fields? How many are there in your family?

C:	It is just the two of us. ⁶ Your uncle goes to different places for temporary jobs. He used to have a motorcycle repairing shop, but now he works in a cotton factory in Ku'aile.
A:	What about the girl's mother? ⁷
C:	She has left us... eloped with someone else...
A:	Fourth Granduncle, in your family, I see that grandaunt is having problems with her leg, so it is only you who is working in the fields?
B:	Yeah, mostly it is just me. Your uncle is working in the unit office. He's been there for four years now and his wife is at home and takes care of the children mostly.
A:	I see. I would say that is all for now.

2. Interview with my grandaunt

Location: Third Unit, Gongqingtuan Farm, Wenxu County, Aksu Region, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

Date: 25 July, 2011

Speaker A: Ha Mingzong

Speaker B: Ha Shengxiu, b. 1955

Commentary:

When the author asked the interviewee to speak Mongghul, she was quite nervous in the beginning and try to persuade me into speaking Chinese with her instead. The author's granduncles sitting beside her were smiling from time to time when they heard her speaking Mongghul.

Ha Shengxiu was born in Hawan and married the author's paternal grandmother's brother. After she and her husband left their home village in 1990 with 26 other families for Aksu, she has only gone back three times until 2012. The first time she went back was the third year after their moving to Xinjiang and the last time was when she went to see her brother for the last time

⁶ He and his wife.

⁷ My aunt.

before he died in 2009. She said to visit her home place again in the future will be very difficult, because her legs are not well to move around any more.

Ha Shengxiu said there were few Mongghul people that she knew around her village, so she spoke Chinese most of the time. Even in their family, nobody speaks Mongghul any more. Her husband understands, but rarely speaks a word in Mongghul. Her son used to speak Mongghul with his parents and grandparents all the time when he was small, but since their move to Xinjiang and his studying at schools, he gradually stopped speaking and today he doesn't even understand. Ha Shengxiu said the only occasions that she would speak Mongghul today in Aksu were when she met with people from Hawan, for example, the author's grandfather and aunt. But such chances were really rare, since they all lived in different places and were engaged in different things. The interviewee's grandchildren grow up speaking only Chinese and it is very possible that they don't even know what the word "Mongghul" means.

Ha Shengxiu also regrets that her children and grandchildren do not speak Mongghul any more and that probably the only thing that keeps them different from others has to stop during her children's generation.

A:	Aagunainai, naadii qi do dirii ghariji ireyaange do dura kudi dii booji xinnuu gui?	Grandaunt, then do you still go back to our home-place often?
B:	Xinnii.	Yeah, I do.
A:	Naa qi muxi nige hui kijii xiiwa, dura?	Then when was the last time you went home?
B:	Ghariji iraa sanniani nige hui xiiwa bai. Dii huino dii kijii xijasa, buda ghoorla nige hui xijaja bai. Do kilesa ghoor hui xijaja.	After moving here, I went back home once in the third year. Then later I forgot which year that was that I went. We went together once, so that makes two times in total.
A:	Qi 90 niansa gharji ireyaange kidi hui xiiwa?	How many times have you visited your home-place since you moved here in 1990?
B:	San hui xijaja. Shdinang aadee narladiiyaange bu xijasa, tensa muxi dii jang ghoor hui xiiwa.	In total three times. Actually last year, when your granduncle (her older brother)

		got sick, I went once, and before that, I went there only twice.
A:	Do dirii qi nenkiji ireyaange do qimula Mongghulla ghuliajin kun do gua ba?	Since you moved here, are there people from our place who talk to you in Mongghul here now?
B:	Mongghulla ghuliajin kun do gua. Te sihoudi Dazongtaigharigu aanee yiigu sihoudini gan muni dirii iresa buga ghoorla zisi Mongghulla ghulianii, aanee guila diiya dii ndala Mongghulla ghuliajin kun do gua zhao. Dii teni aadee liao Xiula aagusgini tirii xiisa Mongghulla nige yii kilesa, dii xuankijin kun gua bai.	There are no people with whom I can speak Mongghul anymore. At that time, when the granny from Dazongtaighar was still around, we would talk to each other in Mongghul when she visited me here, but after she passed away, there are no more people who can speak Mongghul in this place. Then, when I go to visit either your grandfather or aunt Xiulan, I talk to them in Mongghul, but other than that, there are really no people I can speak Mongghul to.
A:	Dii dirii gharji ireyaange dii yizhi qidarlawo bai ao?	Then since you came here, you have been speaking mainly in Chinese, right?
B:	Yizhi qidarlawo bai. Durogu kunsge ghariji iresa dii darong Mongghulla xuankiji iregha shidana.	Yeah, have been speaking Chinese all the time. Sometimes when people from our home-place come visit us here, we can speak some Mongghul though.
A:	Naa, Aagunainai, qi Mongghulla han tigii saininge iregha shdanna, bu dii Mongghulla do saininge adana dii.	Then, Granduncle, you still speak Mongghul so nice. For example, I can't speak Mongghul that well any more.
B:	Dii buda jiu teni Huazangsini aadeesge dianhuamangi iresa dii ghulian ghuliandi jiu jijibaba jiu tigiinga ya, aminkisa qidarla da ghuliadiina, hehe...	Actually even I am also like that. For example, when your granduncles from Huazangsi call me on the phone, I often stammer and become very nervous. From time to time I switch to Chinese as well,

		hehe...
A:	Ao, tenkisa qi Huazangsi liao tirihang dianhua zisi pughana bai?	Right, in that case, you still call your relatives in Huazangsi and so on often, right?
B:	Dianhua ziji pughanii.	Yeah, I do call them often.
A:	Dii shdinang rjiang Huazangsi aadeesgida gharji ireji ujela irejasa?	Last year or the year before that, granduncles from Huazangsi came visit you also, right?
B:	En, ireja. Dii nang naa Baosanni aabani gharji ireyaan, bu darong dirii iremuu kiji, teni aadee ghoorla, dii huino hao gan boo xiijagina bai, kusa. Dii bu sgajida gui dii.	Yes, they came. Actually this year when Baosan's father came here, I thought he was going to visit me as well, with your grandfather, but later I got the news that he had already returned home. I didn't even get to meet him.
A:	En, dii ulon so shdaji gujinna ba dii.	Right, probably he couldn't stay any longer, I guess.
B:	Dii amaguwa hao, kiduudur sowa hao. Gan zhuyao defang langlela ireja bai.	Then I didn't know what happened. I didn't know how long he stayed. He came to just see the place, I guess.
A:	Do dura langlela booji xiiginiuu? Pansuanda niuu?	Then do you want to visit home? Are you planning to?
B:	Do darong xii adaguna, dii ne xighaihi nengaa giisa dii. Gan guzhizengshengnagina, pianzi pailaya. Dii kudida sainingi yiu adana dii. Dii durohang jiu xii adaguna. Dii tirga maa sosa, madaa ghula dii ao, fangbian gua dii, njeena. Do shangi laodonglada adana zhao.	Not in the near future, since I have got this problem with my legs. They told me after a X-ray that it was hyperosteoegeny. I can't even walk well here at home. I guess I won't be able to go visit home at least for some time. It is just so troublesome to get on and off the trains and buses. It is too difficult, not convenient at all, if I am alone. I can't even work well in the fields any more.

A:	Diriigu aaga do Mongghulla kile shdananuu?	Does the uncle ⁸ here speak Mongghul?
B:	Shengfang ma? Kilen gua, yanglanda gua. Durahang han ndahgila kileji yanglana. Weinainailanaa dii zisi Mongghulla ghuliana. Dirii Xinjiang ireyaa dii ghulianjin kun gua, do murshdaadiiyaa yanglanda gua zhao.	You mean Shengfang? He doesn't speak Mongghul, doesn't even understand Mongghul anymore. When he was back home, he spoke to us in Mongghul and could speak Mongghul well. Actually he was talking to his grandmother always in Mongghul, but since we moved here, he didn't have anyone to talk to, so he has forgotten all and now doesn't even understand a thing.
A:	Ao, tenkisa aagani duro turija bai?	Oh, so he was born back home actually?
B:	En, dirii iresa jang wusui haina. Nang do aishiqi wa bai. Dirii ireyaange aishi'ai nianlaja bai tenkisa.	Yes, he was only five when we moved here. This year he is actually twenty seven years old. It's been twenty two years since we moved to this place.
A:	Dii tenkisa ne mulaa xujunsgi yii mudeguna bai?	In that case, these girls don't speak Mongghul either, right?
B:	Zuazhao, nesge dii... Dii surguaghan gua bai. Dirii do jiu bu xigha puxiisa, kan kile gui, kile gua bai.	No, these girls don't even stand a chance. We don't teach them anymore. Who would teach them, it is only me who is speaking Mongghul in this house now. Nobody else can speak.
A:	Ao, naa Jiuye darong yigualani yanglaniisa han saina. Duro Tahalongni Shege Jiuye Mongghulla darong kileji sainai...	Right, then, Granduncle, if you can still understand Mongghul, then it is really good. The granduncle in Tahalong can speak Mongghul so well.
C:	(In Qinghai Chinese Dialect) <i>Naa jiamen zhuangzi li Tumin hai duo bai naa, tuhua zisi fouzhe bai. Zai naomenzi zha hao zai Tumin jiu</i>	Because in his village, there are many Mongghul people. They actually speak Mongghul all the time. But in our unit

⁸ Her son.

	<i>naomen yijiazi a, tuhua zai maorenlia fou bai.</i>	here only our family is Mongghul, so we don't have whom to speak Mongghul to.
A:	Qi tenkisa muxihang kilana bai, hansiq?	In that case, you could also speak Mongghul before, right?
C:	(In Qinghai Chinese Dialect) Zai hatouhao jangjiugao fouzhelia, zha laizhao zai maofouzhaobai.	When I was back home, I used to speak Mongghul sometimes, but since we moved here, I can't speak Mongghul anymore.
B:	Dii jang qianglaji iregha shdana, kileji dii shdan gua zhao.	He actually only understands now. He doesn't speak Mongghul anymore.
A:	Ao, tesgi tura yiigu sihoudi, teni kudi dii aanjinii zhao? Ai jiu yesgini?	Oh, when you were back home, where actually were your houses? To which direction from Second Granduncle's house?
B:	Budasgini kudi dii nedahui Shengzhen ghoorlanaa sojasa, ai, jiu tewa bai. Tirii jang ghuraan fan sowa bai. Wu Jiuyehi dii han te yinshandiwa bai. Huoni dii kundi daldi xiighaja bai.	Our old house is actually the house where Shengzhen lives today. We lived in that courtyard for only three years. Your Fifth Granduncle's house was on the other side of the valley. He sold his house later and moved here.
A:	Do duragu Ai Jiuyela Mongghulla kile shdananuu?	What about Second Granduncle, does he speak Mongghul?
B:	Do qianglaji iregha shdana. Do jang Tahalongni Shge Jiuye dii Mongghulla ghuliaji saina ya. Dii Shge aagunainai gan ghoorla Mongghulla ghuliana bai zisi. Dii teni San Jiunainai gan Mongghulla ghuliaji hudu saina. Gan Mongghul kunna bai. Dii dura tirii haisi ghuliajin kun gua hao kilen gua bai. Yiguala qidarqilalana bai.	He also only understands. Now actually only your First Granduncle from Tahalong speaks Mongghul very well, because he and your grandaunt speak Mongghul all the time to each other. Dii your Third Granduncle's wife speaks Mongghul very well. She is also a Mongghul. But in that village, she does speak Mongghul often, because no one around can speak.

		Everybody speaks only Chinese nowadays.
A:	Do mushdaaji xiina ao, ndani Hawandida shdan gua maa.	Yeah, people are forgetting their own languages. Actually people in our Hawan village can't speak Mongghul that well any more either.
B:	Do bulaisgi yiila xuexiaodi xiisa qidarla ghuliana bai. Do nenea bii mushdaa dii sa saina ao.	Nowadays, children go to school and all started speaking Chinese. Actually it is good that we don't forget these things, right?
A:	Angla, tigiini bii mushdaa diisa, huino xuetangdihang xiisa, youshi yiina ya. Gansge mudesu, aoyao, Mongghul kun yiisa, Mongghulla naa ghulianiisa saina kiji. Bu tirii xinnii, Mongghul kunna, Mongghulni amatigiinge yiihao, yiida mudena kisa dii nigidi xijiighaji. Bu te sihoudi Xining xiiya, Tiwarnida nigidi suraa, dii terog xiaa, Tiwarnida nigidi shdan kisa, kanda saina saina kiji kilena.	Right. We should forget such things, because when you go to later later, this would become an advantage. If other know that you are Mongghul and can speak the language, they will value it, but if you tell them that you are Mongghul and don't know what the language is like, then it is a little intimidating. When I was in Xining, I also learned a little Tibetan. So now when I talk to people at school and say that I also learned some Tibetan, they all say that it is good and it is good.
B:	Budasgi do gharji ireyaa aishi'ai nian xiliu xijia. Dazongtaigharigu aanee yiisa, dirii iresa darong zisi Mongghulla ghulianii, do shihua nigeda gua ao.	It has been more than twenty two years since we moved here. When the grandmother from Dazongtaighar was still alive, she would always talk to me in Mongghul, but now, there really is nobody to speak Mongghul to any more.
A:	Do ndasgini Hawandi ao, shge kunsge darong kanda nigidi ghulia shdanna, bulaisgi do nigidida muden gua dii. Mingxiang,	In our Hawan Village, for example, adults can still speak some Mongghul, but children don't speak Mongghul at all

	Mingwensgi do kanda muden gua ya.	anymore. Mingxiang, Mingwen and others, they don't speak Mongghul at all now.
A:	Yaa, naadii xian nengiya, diinaa huino tesgi ndani kudi iregu dii kao tangxaalaya bai.	Okay, then that is all for now. Let's talk again when you come to our house later.

3. Phone interview with my grandfather

Date: 20 March, 2011

Speaker A: Ha Mingzong

Speaker B: Ha Sengzhang, b. 1945

Introduction and summary of the interview:

Interviewee, Ha Shengzhang, b. 1945, is the author's paternal grandfather. He originally worked in a local coalmine, where he served as a board member and was one of the seven most important decision makers. Having been born in a rural village and worked in a coalmine in the mountains, he always wanted to go out and resettle himself in the city. In the early 90s, he finally managed to have himself transferred from the coalmine to a state-owned firm in the county town. But before he has had enough of the city life, he found himself being laid off by the company that was going bankrupt due to a series of economic reforms and policy changes. With no choice for him to return to the coalmine, which would otherwise have been his career legacy had he not departed in the first place, as said by himself, he moved to Lhasa (Tibet) and engaged in some small-scale businesses. After more than four years in Tibet, in 1999 he moved directly from Tibet to Aksu joining some of his relatives.⁹ He became the first person from his native Hawan village that moved to the region of Aksu. He started working as a repairman at the train station. Five years into his time in Aksu, he bought a piece of land and started growing apples. In 2008, he was finally joined by his son and daughter-in-law, the author's parents, who left their house in Hawan unattended.

⁹ For more information about his relatives, see interview One and Two.

The author's grandfather started talking about his arrival to Xinjiang in this interview. He then talked about the people who moved there before him and the people he took there himself. As a very common feature of migration in China, people often move from one place to a new place to join their relatives and friends. The author's grandfather moved to Xinjiang to join his brothers-in-law. After finally settling himself down in Kekeya, he encouraged young people from his native village to move there as well. During the last decade, at least one member of every household in Hawan has been there and worked minimally one year. Among them, 8 families have permanently settled in Aksu. These include the families of his own, his sister, daughter, cousins, nephews, neice, grand-nephews and friends. Until 2012, 30 of his relatives originally from Hawan have moved to join him, among them, the author's parents as well. From other families of Hawan village, some people go to Xinjiang every year to do temporary works, e.g., picking cotton, driving and doing construction work. Most of the families that moved there now have either apple orchards, or fields. Some have also bought heavy machinery and engage in construction projects on contracts. One has even turned into a millionaire.

The interviewee also mentioned about other people from neighbouring villages and counties that have moved to Aksu. The villages that exported more migrant workers include Dakeshidan, Xiaokeshidan, Taigar and Aitai villages from Tiantang Town, and also Ledu County and Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County in Qinghai Province. While most of these people are Chinese, there are also quite a few Mongghul people. In Aksu, almost all in-migrants speak only Chinese in social life, since the number of Mongghul speakers are very limited and occasions where these Mongghul people meet are few. The interviewee has also compared Aksu and their home places and pointed out that people would never make as much money in their home places in Tianzhu, since the crops cultivated there are not profitable and heavily dependent on the weather, whereas in Aksu, the mode of farming is very scientific with its sophisticated irrigation and drainage systems, machines, fertilizers and pesticides. Furthermore, since Aksu is a fast growing city, there are many job opportunities available. When he was asked if he wanted to return to his native home region, he replied with an assuring tone that he did not like the idea of having to be buried in a foreign land when he passes away and that he would like to go back to his native land in the coming two years.

A:	Aadee, qi Xinjiang tirii ali nige fan xija dai?	Grandpa, which year did you go to Xinjiang, actually?
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B:	Bu 90 nian, ao, 99 nian, Shiyi yuefen xija bai.	I, in the year (19)90, oh no, (it is) 99, in November actually.
A:	Aadee, qi tesihoudi tengaa jiu zhijie xizangsa ghari xija sa?	Grandpa, actually you went directly from Xizang (Tibet) to Xinjiang, right?
B:	Ongla.	Right.
A:	Aadee, qi ghariji xisan tesihoudi ndahgini tiriisa ghariji xisanni kun ulonnanuu quguanna?	Grandpa, where you first arrived there, were there a lot of people from our place?
B:	Te Lianying aadeehgila yi(sh)daa ghariji iresanni yiina, dii gua, niukidi fan do gharjin irejin kun ulon gula hughuawa.	Actually there are those people who came here with your granduncle Lianying, no more than that, but in recent years, there are a lot of people who come here (from our homeplace).
A:	Aadee, nekidi fan do ndahgini tiriisa ghariji xisanni kun ulonna ao?	So, Grandpa, in recent years there are a lot of people coming here from our home village as well, right?
B:	Ndahgini Kurasa ghariji iresanni kun yiixi ulon guajida, Dakushidan Xiaokushidhangsa ghariji iresanni ulonna.	From our Kela village, there are that many, but from our neighbouring villages like Dakushidan and Xiaokushidan, there are many people here now.
A:	Do kilesan ndahgini Hawandisa ghari xisanni da ulonna bai.	Actually there are also a lot of people from our Hawan Village who have moved there, right?
B:	Hawansa dii Yusan ndasgi puxisa gua bai.	From Hawan, except Yusan and us, there are not that many actually.
A:	Ghariji xii, dagonglajin te yigualani suanladiisa ulonna bai na.	But if you count all those who are there for temporary works, for example, construction work and so on, no?
B:	Do Hawansada yiixi ulon gua, jiu Gajira, Gahu'ai ya nehgiwa, Baoshan dai Zhongsan ghoorla zhuangzaijinge awuja bai. Gan ghoorla zhuangzaijinge awuninge Kuche tirii ghajar	(When compare to people from other villages,) from Hawan, there are not that many people lately. Actually, just Gajira, Gahu'ai and these guys. Baoshan and

	tuikiji zenglaji saina bai gansge.	Zhongsan have just bought a shovel loader and are working in the place called Kuche and are doing very well actually.
A:	Aadee, naa Jialong Amani aagunainai liao, Niutu'airagu aagunainaihgini suanladiisa ulonna bai na puja nuu?	Grandpa, yeah, but if you just count our relatives from Jialong Ama village and so on, the number of people who moved there are quite significant, you don't think so?
B:	Ao, te yiguani suanladiisa naadii ulonna ya na.	Oh yeah, if you also count our relatives from these neighbouring villages, then there are a lot of them.
A:	Aadee, te yaan te Kuraamani aagunainaisgi kiji ghariji xja dai? Jiuyehgi, Jiuyehgi kisa gan aagunainaihgigina.	Grandpa, do you know, when actually did our grandaunts, no, I mean granduncles, from Kuraama move there?
B:	90 nian ghariji ireja bai.	They came here in 1990.
A:	90 nian ao?	Oh, in 1990?
A:	Aadee, ganhgi tesihoudi gharijin xijin sihoudi zhengfu guliliji yiughajianuu njeenaa xija tirii?	Grandpa, at that time, did they actually want to move there themselves, or the government has encouragement them to move?
B:	Jiu qianylaji saina kiji gharji ireja, ghariji ireja kunnan ghula jiu gerda gua, ghajardira kengkengzinge manta njeenaa nigidi daala palasanghula tingiji soja, yisgi jianchaglana bai, do ne kidi fan saina bai.	Actually many people had moved there already by that time, and the news around our place was that the place was good, but when they actually arrived here, there were nothing, so to speak. They had to dig holes in the ground as living shelters and open up wasteland for growing crops and so on. It was just at the beginning of the development. But these years they are already doing very well.
A:	En. Tirii ghariji xiisan kun Akesu puxiisa dii	Right. Except Aksu, what other places

	aanjima ghariji xiisan kun ulonna?	have people from our place moved to a lot in number?
B:	Akesuda yiina, aanjida yiinai do.	There are a lot in Aksu, actually people have moved to everywhere now.
A:	Beijiang ulonnanuu si Nanjiang ulonna, Aadee?	More people have moved to Beijiang ¹⁰ or Nanjiang ¹¹ , Grandpa?
B:	Ai Nanjiang ulonna.	Of course there are a lot more in Nanjiang now than in Beijiang.
A:	Bu nang iresa tirihiang yigua nige ujela xiiginii kiji, daiguai kudi ireji.	When I come home this year, I am planning to go to some of these places and take a look.
B:	En.	Okay.
A:	Aadee, qi tengaa ghariji xiiyaange dii Hawandigu kunhgini dugulaji Xinjiangja ghariji xijja sa?	Grandpa, after you have moved there, more and more people from our village and around followed and moved also to Xinjiang, right?
B:	Ongla.	Right.
A:	Do tirii ghariji xiisanni Tianzhuni Dakushidan Xiaokushidanni ulonna, dii Tiantangni ulonnanuu ulon gua?	Among those who have moved there from our county, Tianzhu, I know that there are a lot of people originally from villages like Dakushidan and Xiaokushidan, what about people from our township Tiantang? Are there also a lot?
B:	Tiantang tebiira Shangjialong, Xiajialong, Kuraamanida ulonna bai, Shangjialongni ghariji iresan.	From our Tiantang Township, there are from a lot of people from villages like Shangjialong, Xiajialong, Kuraama and so on.
A:	Shangjialongni ao?	Oh, from Shangjialong as well?
B:	Ongla.	Yes.

¹⁰ Beijiang 北疆: Northern Xinjiang.

¹¹ Nanjiang 南疆: Southern Xinjiang.

A:	Taigaraguni lai?	What about people from Taigar Village ¹² ?
B:	Taigaraguni Baojani ghoor ghuraan jiazi, diijiu Tangwen na. Aitairagu Li Shoucaisgi ghariji ireja. Shge bulaini tiriwa, mulaa bulaini banki ireja. Aitairasa ghoor ghuraan jazi yiina bai. Wahong kiji tehgiwa bai.	From Taigar Village, two or three families have just moved here, then there is Tangwen's family and so on. From Aitai Village, there are also some families here, for example, Li Shoucai and Wahong's families.
A:	Dii Xuelong liao Zanggan liao tirihangni lai?	Then what about from our neighbouring villages like Zanggan and Xuelong, are there also a lot of people?
B:	Zanggan Xuelong yiixi gua.	There aren't that many people from Zanggan and Xuelong villages.
A:	Aadee, ndasgini tiriisa ghariji xiisan kunsge hindilaa soniuu haisi njeenaa njeenaani ghajardi ghari xiina?	Grandpa, when people from our places move there, do you find a place and live together and you choose different places to live?
B:	Dii aanjida yiina ya, jiu ne kidi xiandira aanjida yiina. Kidi rogdi sojaya. Dii Aksu hao dii baxian yishi wa, aanjida yiina ya.	Actually these people are scattered in all these places here, all these counties. We live in many different places actually. You see, in Aksu region, there are eight counties and a <i>shi</i> ¹³ , so we are scattered in all of these places.
A:	Baxian yishi?	Eight counties and a <i>shi</i> ?
B:	Ai, baxian yishi, yishi kisa Longyishi kiji te, shiliugao tuandui yiina bai.	Yes, eight counties and one <i>shi</i> . This <i>shi</i> is called Longyishi, and it is again composed of sixteen regiments.
A:	Ao, Longyishi tura shiliugao bingtuan?	I see, so there are sixteen regiments in this Longyishi, right?

¹² Taigar Village: Chagantai Village 查干太村, in Tiantang Township, Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province, China.

¹³ Shi 师 = a large military unit or formation usually consisted 10,000 to 30,000 soldiers. More see ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Division_\(military\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Division_(military))), last accessed May 12, 2012.

B:	<p>Ai, Longyishi wa bai. Xinjiang yigua aishijigao shi puxjanuu? Jianshe bingtuanna bai. Aksu si Longyishi wa bai. Nige shibura shiliugao tuanchang yiina bai. Shiliugao tuanchangni dii tesihou jiu te jiufangjunsge ghariji ire zhankaagisanna ya dii, ai dii jianshelaji, Jianshe bingtuanna bai. Yigua aibeisishi wan kun lia.</p>	<p>Yes, it is called Longyishi. Don't you know that there are actually more than twenty <i>shis</i> in Xinjiang originally? And in one of these <i>shis</i>, there are some ten regiments. Actually when the People's Liberation Army came to Xinjiang, they settled and named places after their division names. These soldiers actually involved in the early development of Xinjiang. There are actually around two million forty hundred thousand people then.</p>
A:	<p>Tirii amakiji soja? Ghariji xiisanni kun yidaa sojanuu, haisi Weiqukunla huoladiiyaange soja dai?</p>	<p>Now how do the people moved in and local Uyghur live there? Do those that moved in live together, or do they live together with the Uyghur?</p>
B:	<p>Weiqukunsgela huolasannida yiina. Njeenaa njeenaa ghar pusghaji aanjida soja ya. Ne kidi fan dao jighadisa ser ghujin ulonna ya, gan Xinjiang dai Xizangni zhuakiji saina bai. Iresanni kunsge do ger maa pusghaji zhencesgi do ye hudu saina ya.</p>	<p>There are many people who actually live among the Uyghur. They build houses for themselves here and there and live everything. In recent years, the central government has actually focused on a lot of places like Xinjiang and Xizang (Tibet) and given quite a lot of money so people that move in can build houses and so on. The policy has been quite nice.</p>
A:	<p>Aadee, naadii xiisanni kunsge Xinjiang sainanuu laojiadi saina kiji kilena?</p>	<p>Grandpa, what are the people who moved there saying? Is Xinjiang a place better or their homeplace?</p>
B:	<p>Xinjiang saina bai qi. Daibanzi ser zenlajinsge Xinjiangja pudiraana. Xinjiang naa qi jingji lai yuan faamaawa bai.</p>	<p>Of course it is better here. Most people from our place who want to make more money come here, because there many kinds of opportunities.</p>

A:	En, ser zenlajin jihui luanna bai ao? Xijin ghajar luanna bai ao?	Oh, so people have more job opportunities? They have more places to go to, right?
B:	En. Dii ghajarsgeni sainiisa nige fan qi jishiwanjia zenlana bai. Qi laojiadi ser jishiwanja shouwula shidanmuu nige fan?	Yeah. You see now among those who move here, there are many people who can make several hundred thousand RMB here, how can make several hundred thousand RMB in our homeplaces?
A:	Angla ya. Jang tarijin taraanga bai dii shidanmuu. Aadee, ne nige bang kun Xinjiangja zhijie kudinaa banka ghari xiisanni kun ulonnanuu dagonglila iresanni kun ulonna?	Yeah, that is right, in our homeplaces, people can only grow some crops and that is it. Grandpa, among the people who moved there, are there more people who have permanently settled there and more people who come and go and do works like construction work?
B:	Banka ghari iresannida ulonna. Dagonglijinsge nige jiazirasa nige kun gharji iresanni yiina bai. Zhijin banki ghari ire, dura kudinaa do nige kunda guijinni tigiini hudu ulonna bai.	There are more families who have all moved here. For temporary jobs, there are also many people who come here as just the only one from their families. Many people actually move their whole family here and it is now every often that there is nobody in their originally home any more.
A:	Aadee, do te Lianying aadee do Wenxu tirii ganbu danglananuu dangla gua?	Grandpa, what about Granduncle Lianying? Is he still a government official there?
B:	Do tuixiula xija ya, tuixiula liangnian xiliu xija ya. Do zisi guoyuanranaa wulaolana ya.	He has retired now. It has been more than two years now. Currently he is fully engaged in his apple orchard.
A:	Aadee, naa Xinjiang tirii xisanni Qinghaini ulonnanuu ulon gua?	Grandpa, then are there people from Qinghai in Xinjiang as well?
B:	Qinghai kungseni da ulonna. Huzhu liao Luodu	Yeah, there are many people from Qinghai

	tiriihangni. Xiulan aaguni tirii Luodu kun hudu ulonna, shiji jiazi dan yiina.	as well, for example, places like Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County and Ledu County. In your aunt Xiulan's village, there are more than ten families from Ledu County.
A:	Tirii ghariji xiisanni Mongghul kun ulonnanuu?	Are there a lot of Mongghul people who have moved there as well?
B:	Mongghul kun Luoduni yiixi guaji da Huzhuxianni Mongghul hansi ulonna.	Not so many Mongghul people from Ledu County, but from Huzhu County, there are also quite a few families.
A:	Gansge Aksu tirii aanjhang soja?	Where do they live in Aksu?
B:	Jiu Aksu ne nige dao aanjida yiina ya. Mongghul yiixi ulon gua, jiu te kidi jiazi puxiisa, Huzhuxianni qidar yiina.	They are also scattered in all these places in Aksu. But relatively, there are that many Mongghul people here. There are Chinese people from Huzhu County as well.
A:	Do tirii ghari xiisanni Mongghul kun yiisa da, ali Mongghul, ali qidar kiji kileji iregha adaguna ba? Dii yiguala qidarla guleniha?	Even if there are Mongghul people in Xinjiang, we probably can't tell which ones are Mongghul, which ones are Chinese, since they all just speak Chinese, right?
B:	Angla, Mongghulla yiixi gulen gua ya.	Yeah, Mongghul is not spoken much here.
A:	Aadee, dii ghariji xiisanni tiwarsge ulonnanuu quguanna?	Grandpa, what about Tibetan people? Are there a lot?
A:	Tiwar do yiisa da jiu ndasgini tiriiguna ao? Tianzhuni Songshan tiriihangsa iresanni yiisa chuang, dii tirii kilejin qidar ugoni yanglajin jiu diriigu tiwar kunsgi wa ya, nimbaa nuu?	If there are Tibetan people there, I would assume that most are from our county, because they wouldn't have problem with the local Chinese language there in Xinjiang, right?
B:	En, Tiwar dii yiixi ulon gua.	Right, there are not that many Tibetans here.
B:	Muxihang ghariji iresanni kunsge hudu sainiijin	Among those people who came here

	yiina ya. Loufang awugiisanni hudu ulonna ya.	early, there are many who lead a very comfortable life. Many farmers actually bought apartments in the city.
A:	Ao, Aadee, muxi kiduudur Aaba kileji ndasge gerngi pusghagu xijaguna, amakiji pansuandanii?	Oh, Grandpa, just several days ago, Father said that we might need to build ourselves a simple house there, what are the plans exactly?
B:	Dii darong pusgha adaguna, darong serdira aadaguna bai. Dii shdinang tani aabani yanglaojinni jiaokigunii kiji, Zhiqiangni aabani gharsanni aasghuansanni yiiwanni harildiwa. Taimeidi Galaolao aasghuaji ghusanni yiwanni da harildiwa. Dii darong yiixi yaan gua bai. Do jiu te nigiiidi ghajar wa bai. Do daldidiisan sanshiwange daldi shidaguna ya. Daldidiisa bucheng bai.	Actually it is a bit too early still, because we have problems with money now. This year we have just returned Zhiqiang's father the ten thousand RMB we had borrowed from him when we needed to pay for your father's pension. We also returned the ten thousand RMB we had borrowed for your sister's tuition to your uncle Galaolao. So we don't have much left now, except that patch of field, which might worth around thirty thousand RMB, but of course we can't sell it.
A:	Ao, qi kilejin jiu guoyuanni ma?	Right, you mean our apple orchard?
B:	Jiu ghoor rogdiguni daldidiisan sanshiwan shdaguna ya.	I mean the orchard and that piece of land next to it might worth some thirty thousand RMB altogether.
A:	Naadii tesge amahginii kiji maolanii, Xinjiang soginiuu si?	Right. What are actually your plans? Are you all planning to stay in Xinjiang forever?
B:	Naadii tesge kudi iren gua. Do qi yeri maa awugu dii ujeguna.	What else to do if you all (me and my sister) don't return home. I guess we will see when you get married.
A:	Aadee, naadii bu biyelagu dii aanji xiigunii? Xinjiang tirii iregu? Hehe...	Grandpa, where should I go after my graduation here? Should I come to

		Xinjiang? Hehe... (smiling)
B:	Dii qi uje bai. Xinjiang sogu duraalaniisa Xinjiang soguna. Xinjiang saina bai.	That depends on you. If you want to live in Xinjiang, then you can live in Xinjiang. Xinjiang is a nice place.
A:	Aadee, qi xinjiang sogu duraalannanuu? Laojia xiigu duraalanna?	Grandpa, do you want to stay in Xinjiang or return to our home village?
B:	Dii shduala xiisa laojia yii xiisa dii hugu xiisa aanji pulaa gui?	When I get really old, if I don't return home to our home village, where, do you think, should I be buried when I die?
A:	Angla, huinoni kanda laojia xiijinna bai.	Right, everyone wants to go back home eventually I guess.
B:	Dii qi biyelagu dii ujeya bai.	We will see when you graduate.
A:	Aadee, bu diriisa biyela diisa, dan kudi xiigunii kisa, jiangjiu shge hai chengshirahang yii xiisa, ndahini tirii surisan dangxinaa yiixi jari adaguna ya. Hehe...	Grandpa, when I graduate from here, and plan to go back home, maybe I need to go to a bigger city to find jobs, I will probably be of no use with the things I have learned here if I go back to our home place. Hehe...
B:	Dii ujeya bai, aanji xiisa da chengzhi bai.	We will see, actually it is okay no matter where you go in the future (with us).
A:	Aadee, naadii xiandini jiu tigiinga. Qimula nige tangxaalawa juu. Kiduudur liao dii kao dianhua pughaji ireja juu.	Grandpa, let's say that is all for now. It was nice talking to you. I will call you back in just a few days again.

4. Interview with the family of Ha Baoshan:

Location: Hawan Village, Tiantang Town (Township), Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province.

Date: 10 August, 2011

Speaker A: Ha Mingzong

Speaker B: Ha Baoshan, b. 1979

Speaker C: Ha Baoshan's mother, b. 1951

Speaker D: Ha Baoshan's father, b. 1950

Speaker E: My grandfather, b. 1945

Summary:

Interviewee Ha Baoshan's case of movement is special in that he and his brother are both working in Xinjiang with their wives, while leaving their children and parents back home in Hewan. Every year, only one of them goes back home with his wife to reunite with their children and parents during the Chinese Spring Festival, while the other couple stays in Xinjiang and works. They take turns to go visit their children and parents every year.

Before he finally moved to Xinjiang following Ha Shengzhang and decided to stay there, he had also been to Tibet when Ha Shengzhang was there himself, but with no much success achieved there, he was soon forced to come back home and then leave for Xinjiang again. In Xinjiang, he had worked in many different factories before he learned to drive trucks and shovel loaders. These skills qualified him for many job opportunities in construction companies. In 2010, he and his brother bought a shovel loader together and started working on their own signing contracts.

Ha Baoshan's parents stay in Hewan with their two grandchildren aged 8 and 7, respectively. Basically, they took care of everything in the fields, at home and related to the children's upbringing and education.

Just some few years ago, they were still growing wheat, potatoes, beans and rapeseeds in over 8 *mu* of fields in Hewan. During sowing seasons, they either asked for neighbours' help or hired people to help. From their four children (including daughters-in-law), only one, or two at the most, returned briefly in August to help out with harvesting. Ha Shengcai, Ha Baoshan's father, said he could almost handle all the machines used in the village, for example, motorcycles and tractors, and that the work seemed not so difficult. But in recently years, as they grow old into their sixties, such heavy labour work is out of their capacity, so since two years ago, he started experiments in growing saplings in Hewan. At the time of the interview, he revealed that

everything was as planned and if everything turned out right, he would be able to generate quite a moderate amount of money.

When they were asked about their grandchildren, they said these poor children have been much with their parents, especially Ha Mingzheng, the daughter of their younger son. She was born in Aksu eight years ago, but only after eight months, her mother sent her home to live with her grandparents, who have since taken up the role as her “real parents”. In the following eight years, she has never been to Aksu again, while her parents returned home just a few times. Ha Baoshan’s son, Ha Mingjian, had similar experiences when he stopped breastfeeding just seven and half months after birth and his mother moved to join his father in Aksu. Ha Shengcai and his wife said bringing up the children was the most difficult part and the pressure and stress was tremendous. However, they thought that up until that point, they had done a great job with both their grandchildren.

He Shengcai also hoped that his children could eventually return to their home village and spend more time with their families. He always thought that Xinjiang was a good place only for making money and that the best and only place they should lead a life was their native village, Hawan.

A:	Aadee, nang qini nasi amatigiinge gharija, nige kile bai.	Grandpa, could you please tell us what your age is this year?
B:	Liushi silaja bai.	Already sixty four years old.
A:	Yaan jildiwa dai?	You were born in which animal year?
B:	Liuxi jildiwa bai.	It was the year of Rat.
A:	Aadee, qi lai? Haha...	Grandpa, what about you? haha...
B:	Bu nuhuaiwa bai.	I was born in the year of dog.
A:	Nimbanuu? Haha... nasila tenkisa?	Oh, really? Haha... what about your age?
B:	Liushi liuwa bai dii. Haha...	It is sixty six. Haha...
A:	(Qinghai Chinese Dialect) Aanee, naa ni lai? Jinnian suifu amenzigao shaoliao?	Grandma, what about you? What is your age this year?
C:	Nao jinnian 59 bai.	I am 59 this year.
A:	Aaga lai?	What about uncle?
B:	Nao ma? Nao 32 liao bai. Fu yang zi bai.	Me? I am 32 this year. I was born in the year of sheep.

A:	Aaga, qi shihua muxi kiduudur Xinjiangsa booji ireja ao? Qi tirii xiiyaange kidi fanlaja?	Uncle, you have actually just come from Xinjiang a few days ago, right? How long have you been there?
B:	En. Xii diiren fanlaja ba.	Yes, I have been there for four years.
A:	Qi tirii gharjixiiyaange yaanmange warinii?	What all have you been doing there?
B:	Bu tirii dai xiiyaange nige ciliao changdira wariwa bai, dii huino mudi gaikijin tigii changnge dira kidi sara wariwa bai. Dii huino bu jiu zhuangzaiji kaikijinni surija bai, tiriisa dii tirga kaikijinnida surigiwa. Dii jiu nige laobanni ghar dura liangnian duo sannian dagonglawawa bai, jiu tirii Aksu.	When I first got there, I worked in a fodder factory, later moved to a timber factory and worked there for several months. And then later I learned how to drive shovel loader and then in Xinjiang I learned also how to drive a truck. After I got my driving licenses, I worked for a boss there in Aksu for more than two years, almost three years.
A:	Dii huino tesginaa zhuangzaijinge awu uu si? Do amatigiinga?	And then you and your brother bought a shovel loader together, right? How is it going now?
B:	Ai, ghuraan fan tigiinge dagongla diijiu njeenaahnaa zhuangzaijinge awuwa bai. Ne kiduudur do Kuche warinii bai. Do zhong lia.	Yeah, after working for more than three years there. We have bought a shovel loader together and now we are working in Kuche. It is all going quite well.
A:	Ao, dii kudisanaa tesge kanhi Xinjiang warinii?	Right, who all from your family are now working in Xinjiang?
B:	Dii yiguala Xinjiang ghari xijja. Kudi dii jang aadee aanee a dii bulaisge wa bai. Dii Zhongsan ghoorla dii yizhi hezuo huobanna bai dii.	Actually everyone from the family has moved to work in Xinjiang now except my parents and the children. Me and my brother, Zhongsan, we have been cooperating always.
A:	Ao, Aaga, tesgi diirenlananaa yiguala huladi dagonglela ghari xiisa dii bulaisgenaa aadee aanee taada tashda giina bai?	Right, Uncle, since the four of you ¹⁴ are working in Xinjiang, you leave your children back home with their grandfather and grandmather, right?

¹⁴

The four of you: he and his wife, his brother, his brother's wife.

B:	En, dii aadee dai aanee ghoorladi kaola giija bai, budasge jiu zisi ser zhenlela xiina bai. Naa qi huino kuarisa bulaisge xuetangdi xiisa, ser hgiliaguna bai.	Yes, actually we leave the children and elders behind and ask the elders to take care of our children, while we are away making money, so the children can go to school later on.
A:	Aadee, tenkisa te ghoorlanaa jiu zisi kudi soji ghajar diragu lesganida te ghoorla warina, kudiguni lesganida te ghoorla warina bai, bulaisgenida te ghoorla ujena bai?	Grandpa, in that case, you and grandma just stay home and take care all of the work in the fields, all the work at home as well as the children, right?
B:	<p>Ai, jiu tai wa bai. Dii buda ghoorlani xiangfa si do bulaisge yiila ghada dagonglela gharji xiisa, buda ghoorla zhulilaji xiangbanfa dii gansge ser nigidi zhenlaji bayangdiya kiji tenkiji maolana bai. Dii gan diiranlani tiigile xiigha jiu zisi ser zhenlela xiighaja bai. Dii chuangdangjianghulela xijia ya.</p> <p>Xizangda nige zhuang xiighawa, yiixi saini gua, dii yang Xinjiang xiighawa. Nigidi zhonglia, dii bu kilewa, daikuanmanggeda nigidi daila, dailagu tirgenge awu kiji. Sanshi wu wannagina, sanshiwuwan liao sanshiwuwan awu kiji. Dii yeri ghoorlada tiriwa, zhulilaji, miaohuamange nigidi dugulaji, kudi nigidi lingsui ser nigidi zhenla, te ghoorla zisi jiu te benqianni harila jiu tengiwa bai.</p>	<p>Yeah, just as you said. Our thought was to help our children in some way, so they could go out to look for job opportunities and make some money with the hope that we will be financially better off sooner. Yes, so it is for this reason that we let our sons leave home and have them focus on generating more family income.</p> <p>I have sent them to Tibet for some time as well. It was not too good, so I sent them to Xinjiang and they made some money. Then I said, even if we have to borrow money from the bank, we should buy a heavy machine. The kids said that to buy a shovel loader, three hundred thousand RMB is needed. And then I said even if it is that much, get one. And then their wives went to Xinjiang and also worked on cotton fields to make money to maintain the expenses needed at home and the boys concentrated mostly on making money and returning the money to the bank.</p>
A:	Do aanjida jiu tigiinga bai ao, bulaisgenaa kudinaa yii gi, ser zhenlela yii xiisa, dii	Nowadays it is basically like this, yeah, if young people don't leave their children home with

	bucheng bai ao?	their grandparents and don't go out to make some money, it won't work, right?
B:	Yii xiisa, qi diriihang tiraamange tariji sernge zhenla shdamuu? Dirii han yaanda kaotianchifanna ma, baoxian gua maa. Ai, tengaa dii bulaisgeni yiughadii buda ghoor tiraa nigidi tariji gansgeni bulaisgeni ujeji soja bai.	If they don't go and try to make some money off these fields we have here, how can that be possible? You see, here everything is dependent on the weather. Nothing is ever certain. Yeah, so that is why we sent our children to places far away for better chances and we stay home behind and grow some crops and take care of their children for them.
A:	Angla, dii budasge da tigiinge puja nuu? Ndani aadee da gharji xiiyaange, Aadee, kidi fan xiija dai?	Right, is not our family just another example? My grandfather went there for the same kind of reasons. Grandpa, how many years has it been now?
E:	Shijian xiliu xiija bai. 96 nian Xizang xiija bai, 2000 nian Xinjiang kuriya bai. Bu xiisan te nige fan huocher jang tongkija bai. Dai xiiya huocher zhanra tirge xiukiwa bai, zhuangzaiji liao, huocher liao, diaocher liao, cancher liao, wajueji liao tigiisgeni xiukisanna ya. Tenkiji sannian xiiliu xiija. Dii baahala, kudi booji ire, ghariji xiiyaange dii jiu guoyuan awusanna ya kao. 2004 nian guoyuanna awuwa bai. Nangha zhen banianlaya. Shiga xijuusi wumu wa, mulaani liangmu ban ha, dii qimu xiluu wa ya. Do yijin jiu te nigidiwa bai. Do jiu tenkiji chongkina bai. Ai, do benqianni harilidiisa nige fan liangwan xiiliu zhenla giisan tigiinga ya. Guoyuanna daldi xiighadiisa nianian liangwan zhenlana kiji jiu te wa ya. Suanlaiha ye	It's been more than ten years. I went to Xizang in 1996. In 2000, I was already in Xinjiang. The year I went to Aksu was the year when they had first had the railway. After arriving there, I started working at the train station repairing heavy machines like shovel loaders, trains, truck-mounted cranes, loaders, grabs and so on. I worked three years there and then I came back home for some time. When I returned, I bought the apple orchard. That was in 2004. It's been eight years now. The apple orchard was in total seven some <i>mu</i> , let me see, 5 <i>mu</i> of the big trees and a little more than two and half <i>mu</i> of small trees. That is all what I have now. Yeah, so we have been spending our lives like that. If I would sell the apple orchard, then it would be something like I am making around twenty thousand RMB a year, excluding the

	hangzhe lia.	cost, which is not that bad, I think.
B:	Do ndasgini dui dira kileji booji iresa, qi jiu chuankisanni zui shidiewa, dii boojira ndani bulai diirenlada xiji. Ai, bu kilenii, do kileji booji iresa, ndani diirenlada chuankisanni saina. Do yiilela nda surina. Laohanja kudinaa zisi bulaisgenaa idegha uqigha cihoulaji xuetangdi xiigha, te diiren jiu xiahailaji ser nigidi zhenlaji tenkiji dafula ghari xiighasanna ya.	If you take our village for example, you (speaker C) are the first one that went out and started this, and then our four ¹⁵ have followed you. I think, our four have done quite well too. Today more and more people in our village are following our model that the elders in a family stay at home and take care of the children, send them to schools, while young members in the family migrate from place to place to make money. Yeah, this is why and how I sent out the four from my family after work.
A:	Aadee, naadii te ghoorla ghajarigu lesge, kudigu, bulaisgeni ne yiigualani shdamuu?	Granduncle, then you two have to take care of all the things in the fields, at home and the children, can you manage all that well?
B:	Dii adajinni xiilong yiisa da warila xiina bai. Xueshang bulaini bu maotuola kurigiina bai. Xuruudini hao zaila xiina bai. Yii xiisa, bulaisge mulaa yiisa, huraamange uragiisa, dii weixian ghula. Iresa aaneeni shdaa giina. Shdeji han ganzaosheng pusaa yang shdaaji uqighana bai. Kudi luusaa mangi yiisa, shdeji han uladi miilela xiigu xja. Bulaisge xuetangdi ghari xiisa, dii jiu yeri shdiila xiigu, nenkiji gansge gong pughala ghari xiyaange jiu ghoorla nenkiji tuikiwa. Do shdaji gua, nasi ghari xiija hao, hehe... Muxi kidi fan bulaisge guisa, bada	We have to make it work. Sometimes it is even necessary that we work at night. I send the children to school by motorcycle and go to pick them up in the afternoon. If you don't pick them up, it is so dangerous when it rains for example. When they come home, the dinner will already be ready. Their grandmother cooks it for them and prepares breakfast early in the morning before their can be sent off to school. We had mules, so in the morning I had to take them into the mountains. We two have been living like this for several years, while our children were away making money in different places. But lately, it has become really difficult for us,

	<p>ghoorlanaa bamu wu ghajarni tarina bai. Ghajarigu, kudigu yaannida buda ghoorla waridii shdana bai. Bu sanmaazi kaikinii, maotuo funi shdani, huladihangda xii shdana. Bulaisge dii hulaidihang gong pughala ghari xiisa, dii kudi hang dii nigidida gula shdan gua bai.</p>	<p>since we are no longer that young, hehe... Several years ago, we two had 8.5 <i>mu</i> of fields and not only did we finish all the work there in the fields, but also the house chores and everything. I can drive the three-wheel tractors. I ride motorcycle, so I had no problem moving around. When the boys were away from home, they couldn't help us with anything that was happening at home actually.</p>
A:	<p>Zhongsaga aaga Beijingsa dii zhijie Xinjiang ghari xiija nuu?</p>	<p>Did Uncle Zhongsaga go directly from Beijing to Xinjiang?</p>
B:	<p>Beijing Bao'an danglela xiija bai. Kidi fanla dii jiu kudida ireji gua, zhijie jiu Xinjiang ghari xiija bai. Xii sihou daaji gua, jiu kusa huochezhan dira maadai kangladiiwa bai. Tirii maadai rguguni sihoudini dii neni aamaniini teni gijia bai. Dii ghoorla tankaagii booji ire jiehunlesanna bai. Ne xjun do kusa basuileja bai. Tirii turigiisanna bai, jang bagaoyuedira jiu kusa tirii booji ire, buda ghoorladi gijia bai. Jang bagao yue hao jiu kusa kuguaghaji gua. Mingjianni turi qigaoban yue gao aamani kusa dagonglela gharixija bai. Ser nigidi zhenlaginii kiji, wawa lianggao naogao a mao za shang ha ya, hehe...</p>	<p>He was recruited and worked as a security guard in Beijing for several years. After that, he went from there directly to Beijing. And soon, he started loading and unloading the trains at the train station. It was there he met the girl's¹⁶ mother. They became engaged there and then came back home to just get married and returned immediately to Xinjiang. The girl is now eight years already. She was born there in Aksu and just eight months later, she was brought here to us¹⁷ and has lived with us since. Her mother stopped breast-feeding her just eight months after her birth. For Mingjian¹⁸, it was even worse. Just seven and half months after his birth, his mother was already far away from home earning money. For the sake of money, these children can't</p>

¹⁶ The girl = the speaker's younger son's daughter.

¹⁷ Us = the speaker and his wife. The girl's grandparents.

¹⁸ Mingjian = Baoshan's son. The speaker's older son's son.

		even enjoy their mother's milk much, (that is just terrible), hehe...
A:	Aadee, do Xinjiang tirii hang kusa nige zhuan langlaja bai ao?	Granduncle, you have already travelled to Xinjiang, right?
B:	Ai, dii gansgeni gong pughaghaningi gansge da ser nigidi zhenlagiijagina. Bu kilewa, "ghariji iresa nda feijinge sogha," kisa, "soghaya, ghari ire!" tengina hao, dii huoche dira ghari xii, feijira tingerasa nige zhuan boo irewa bai, haha...	Yeah, they have been working for so many years and said that they had some money and would like me to come visit them in Xinjiang. And then I said, "only if you buy me a flight ticket." And they said, "we will buy you a flight ticket, so you can fly here." So, I went there by train and came back home by plane, you know, a journey there and back from the sky, haha...
A:	Zhongsan aagani bu sgeji gui aa do sihou ndaawa. Shiyi nian liao shi'ai nianleja. Aaga, te ghoorla nige fan kudi nige hui ire shdaniuu?	I haven't seen uncle Zhongsan for a long time. I think it's been eleven or twelve years since we last saw each other. Uncle, do you two come home at least once a year?
B:	Nige fan nige hui ire shdani. Ao, nang xiisa do yii mudeguna. Nang bu xiisa gan Zhongsandai yeri ghoorlanaa ghoorla booji ireguna dii. Dii lunliulagu xja. Tirii kun guisa da buchengna. Tirgeni tingkighagiisa bucheng bai.	Yeah, I have been able to come home once a year so far. Oh, but maybe not this year, because when I return, Zhongsan and his wife will come home. We have to take turns. There has to be somebody to keep the loader working.
A:	Angla, dii xiisa dii amakiji pansuanda nii?	Right, what plans do you have for the future?
B:	Dii xiahai kaikiji, fan furaagu dii yang nige tirge awugu xja ba. Yijia nige. Dii ndasge han ghada xii shdaguna bai. Zheng ser zhenlajin sihouwa bai.	We have to work hard this year, and are planning to buy another loader next year. We have to have one each. At this stage, we can still go out and it is just the right moment for us to make some money.
A:	Aaga, naadii tesgi te sihoudi amengha	Uncle, why did you decide to go to Xinjiang in

	Xinjiangja xiiwa zhao dii?	the first place?
B:	Dii teni aadee ghari xiija, sainagina. Ndasgini jiu nige nige laapanla ghari xiisanna bai, hehe... Dii teni aadee daudaji ghariji xiisanni dii zisi njeenaani kudigu kunna bai. Hajja kun wa, qinqisge wa bai. Xiiyaange yiila zhonglana. Dii Chagantairigu liao Jialongriguni ghari xiisanni haoshaozi ma.	Didn't your grandfather go there as the first person? He said the place was good and there were a lot of chances. He actually took us there from here one by one, hehe... The ones that your grandfather took there are all from our clan, the Ha clan and our relatives. Now these people are all doing well. Then, many people from Chagantai and Shangjialong followed, and there are many many people there from here and around.
E:	Naa qi Xinjiang zheng kaifalana. Lesge ulonna bai. Ser zhenlajin faamawa bai qi. Qi maola, jang mianhuange dugulela xiisa, sansishi tian dire yiliang wanja zhenlajinni ulonna bai qi. Diriisa gharji xiisannisge daibanzi guoyuan awuji xjuusi ujeji wulaolana bai.	You see, at that time Xinjiang was just about to develop. There were a lot of job opportunities. People make money more easily. Think about it, those people who go to pick cotton in the summer, for just about thirty or forty days, they can make about ten to twenty thousand RMB. Those that moved there from here and intend to stay a long time have mostly bought fields and orchards.
A:	Aaga, qi ne gerna kiji pusighawa?	Uncle, when did you build this house?
D:	Diiren fan niuu taawan fanlaja kusa. Baosan gerna jang pusgha jiu yang Xinjiang ghari xiiwa bai. Zhuanghuanglaji yiigualani bu kun yeriji shduulawa bai. Zhongsanni gerni haisi bu pusghaji zhuanghuanglaji tengiwa. Angla, te sihoudi hao dii tigiini bu yiigua wari shdan, do dii aadana, paala adana, do shdualaja. Nang tarijin sihoudi kun gulaji tariwa bai. Do huraadilaa dii booji ireguna bai. Nang	It's been four or five years. When Baosan finished building the house, he immediately went back to Xinjiang. I did all the interior decoration and design. It was the same with Zhongsan's house actually as well. I did all the work inside the house. Yeah, at that time, I could do all the work like this, but not anymore. I can't bend any more, guess I am too old now. This year, when we are sowing, they are not here, so I paid some neighbors to do the work

<p>zhuyao taraa tariwa, dii gaizi simu tariwa, dii xjuusi dai nigidi tariwa. Hawandi kileji booji iresa, muni xjuusi gharisanni zui saina. Neni dii toudinian tarinii bai, sidanglanii. Nige xjuusini san mao yiu si mao daldi shdasa, nige fan booji iresa sanwan niuu siwan shdam ba kiji maolanii. Nang ne xjuusisge sainiisa, dii bu fan furaasa siman, qianghuo liao zuoninggen liao songfu tigiisgeni tarigunii dii yaan da yii tari kiji maolanii. Ai, nenkiji xjuusimaa tariji sainiisa, buda ghoorla kunmange gulaji dirii sosan han kidi fan shdaguna. Bulaisge Xinjiang zisi ser zhenlaji soguna. Baahalagula dirii kudinaa ireguna, dirii sosa saina bai. Kunqi you saina. Xinjiang tirii ser zhenlasa zhongle ma, kun sosan halong gula adaguna. Muni xiangfa jiu tigiinga ya. Ne sihou di do taraa tariji sernge zhenlagunii kisa, adaguna. Buda ghoorla nige fan yiqian jin taraa idediina, teni nige fan wulaolaguxja. Te nigidi serni gansge nige sara hao kusa zhenladiina. Buda ghoorla yaanda yii wariji kudinaa sososa yang buchengna, lesge wariji shentinaa duanlianlagu xja, hehe...</p>	<p>for us. I hope they will come home during harvesting season. This year we are growing mainly wheat, some rapeseeds and some saplings. In Hawan, my saplings grow actually the best. But this is the first year we are growing saplings here, so we will see what we can get from them. If we can sell one sapling for 0.3 RMB, I think the income will be around thirty or forty thousand RMB. If the saplings are successful this year, I will be planting herbs and more trees next year. Yeah, if the saplings grow well, then we can still stay at home and work for several years, so the children can focus on making money elsewhere. If someday they can't go on anymore, they can always return home. This is a beautiful place. The weather here is so nice. It is good to make money in Xinjiang, but it is difficult to live in Xinjiang because of the hot weather. Yeah, this is my plan at the moment. Nowadays, it is nearly impossible to make money off planted grains here. Imagine, we two just need 500 kg of wheat to survive, but we have to spend the whole year to get it. Kids make that much money in a month. But if we two don't do anything at home, it is not good for our health, hehe...</p>
<p>D: Diriihang sosa sainaya. Ghajarni do tiitian tuikidiya, yaan warisada fangmianna bai. Dii buda ghoorla kusa yanglao baoxiannaa lingkinii. Shdualasanni kandida yiina bai. Nige kundi nige zhaizi yii bai. Nige sara</p>	<p>It is really good to live here now. They have already made terraces for us. It is easy and convenient to work in the fields now. Plus, we are already receiving pension now. Every person has a bank account and every month,</p>

<p>liuqishi pughaji ireghana bai. Do teni aadee darong lingkiji guisa, nige fanni lingki shdaguna. Haha...</p>	<p>they send us sixty to seventy RMB per person. If your grandfather has not withdrawn his money yet, he automatically has a year's pension in his account already, haha...</p>
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5. Interview with Yang Decang

Location: Third Garden Unit, Kekeya Management Station, Aksu Branch of Tarim River Management Bureau, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region¹⁹

Date: August 1, 2011

Speaker A: Ha Mingzong

Speaker B: Yang Decang, b. 1965.

Speaker C: Ha Shengzhang, b. 1945.

Summary:

The interviewee, Yang Decang, is a native of Xiaokeshidan village²⁰, a neighboring village of Hawan. In 1996, he sold his house, fields and everything in Xiaokeshidan and moved to Aksu in Xinjiang after his parents-in-law. Never had he imagined that some parts of Aksu were totally undeveloped and that he and his family would have to start from utter scratch, to find a place to settle down first and then try to get something to do all the time as labourers to make ends meet at home. Facing the fear of having to go back home unsuccessful, like many others who moved there with him, he literally has done all kinds of work he could name for, and as one of the many who moved into Aksu during that period, he has contributed his part in the early development of the region known to the Uyghur as *Kekeya*, or the “barren/arid land”, into “the land of fruits” famous across China. He talked about how the development carried out in the 80s and 90s has turned Aksu from a small town in the Gobi desert into an oasis and its environment when they built irrigation canals and planted trees. The extreme hardships that they have

¹⁹ In Chinese: 新疆塔里木河流域管理局阿克苏分局柯柯牙管理站园林三队.

²⁰ Xiaokeshidan 小科什旦, a village in Tiantang Town (Township), Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu province.

experienced exceed beyond our imagination. At the end, hard work has paid off, and he got the land he had struggled for and was able to support his son all the way to the university despite of the expensive tuitions in-migrants had to pay due to registration issues. He now has more than 500 *mu* of land growing different economic crops such as cotton, pears, plums, apples and jujubes. He said most people who came early and were able to survive those difficult years have got what they deserve and lead a very comfortable life. A life they couldn't have had had they stayed in their home place in Tianzhu.

He also revealed that he has been in close collaboration with the local Uyghur and thinks that most Uyghur are extremely hospitable and friendly people. Many people from our home place have got married with Uyghur girls and their children grow up speaking both Uyghur and Chinese and adopt interesting customs. For instance, some of these children even eat pork, which is uncharacteristic of their mothers' culture.

The interviewee is also very well informed about the educational and economic policies drawn up for the region. For example, the central government has already enforced the bilingual education policy and also planned to turn the city of Kashgar into a special economic zone like Shenzhen in China.

A:	Uncle, firstly could you please tell me your age and place of origin?
B:	I am 36 ²¹ this year. Originally, I am from Xiaokeshidan, Tiantang Town, Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province.
A:	Right. When did you move here? Why and with whom?
B:	I moved in December 1996. There were several other people that came with me that time, but they didn't manage to stay here return home soon after. I was the only one who sold everything, including my house, and moved the entire family here and didn't plan to go back, even from the beginning. My wife's parents had moved here before us, let me see, that was in 1990, so we came following their footsteps.
A:	Right. What was it like when you first came?
B:	My goodness, at that time, there was nothing here. There were only twenty six households in this unit. Now there are one hundred sixty households. This big road (asphalt paved) now

²¹ The interviewee made a mistake about his age. According to ensuing conversations he should have said forty-six.

	<p>here was very small and there were stone about this big everywhere on the road. The road that leads to this village was covered in dust which was about this thick. When we first came, we didn't have any registration, so local official would always come check us out. It was hard to find someone from our home-place. Now there are so many, we can get around with our native dialect without any problems here. If you happened to meet a fellow from Kouli²², it was more emotional than you meet a relative today.</p> <p>When we first came, it was so difficult to make money. If you were lucky and could get some work somewhere, you were paid only about 15 RMB per day. I was once working in a construction site for several months building one of the tall buildings in the city centre, but at the end of the project, we didn't get any payment. The boss just ran away and was nowhere to be found. Workers got blisters all over their palms. I also learned how to drive here. I did all sorts of works here. I fed pigs. I opened up new areas for planting. You know those years, when I had dreams at night, I was always back in our home place, but in the mornings when I opened my eyes, I hated to realize that I was still in Xinjiang.</p> <p>When we had to open up the land here, it was so hard because of its high alkaline content and so on, even heavy machines had problems, and we only had hand tools. Here in this place, we have experienced all kinds of hardships. We came almost empty handed to a place where there was nothing. We have literally built this place and it is because of us, the earlier ones who moved here, Aksu has become what it is today. I don't know if you have been there already, but here in Kekeya, there is a park. The land in the park hasn't been opened up and touched much by people, and in there they have kept the original land features of Aksu. If you see that, you will understand what we have done here. We have completely changed Kekeya from a barren gobi desert into an oasis, and it is now known for its fruits all over China. Do you know what "Kekeya" means? "Kekeya" is actually Uyghur, in Chinese it means "bu mao zhi di".²³</p>
A:	Yeah, it is really amazing what people can do.
B:	You see, when we first came here. The weather was horrible. There would be sand storms well over half of the time in a year. You couldn't go out. You couldn't see things just several

²² Kouli = mouth-LOC. Certain Xinjiang residents use *kouli* to refer to places outside Xinjiang, or places east of Jiayuguan/ Jiayu Pass, which is the first pass at the west end of the Great Wall and was a key waypoint to Xinjiang and on the ancient Silk Road.

²³ Bu mao zhi di 不毛之地 = barren land.

	<p>meters away. And under such conditions, we lived in cellars covered by tree trunks and things. Compared to those days, today's <i>Kekeya</i> is heaven on earth. Because of the trees we have planted, sand storms are seldom seen now.</p>
A:	<p>Right. What about children's education then? Your child was born in Tianzhu, right?</p>
B:	<p>Yes, he was born in Tianzhu and came here when he was about five. Since we were not registered here, as in-migrants we had to pay much more for the children's education than local people. From kingergarten, I had to pay 1,500 to 1,600 RMB a semester for my son's education. When he was in middle school, the tuition rose to 2,500 RMB, and 3,600 to 3,800 RMB in high school every semester. That excludes accommodation and food. The Nine-year Compulsory Education policy hadn't been enforced at that time. Children's education is the most important task for us parents. Even if you don't have enough to eat, you have to send your children to school.</p>
A:	<p>In about how many years after your arrival were you able to buy your own fields?</p>
B:	<p>Oh, you didn't have to buy fields at that time. If you gave them a deposit, you would get a piece of plantable land as contractors. But even like that, people were not willing to own land, because there was no profit and the investment was too high. There was no yield from the fields at that time. People didn't have money and couldn't buy food. I actually lived near a fellow friend from our home-place. Once his family ran out of flour, so we went to the flour factory to borrow some. After waiting for a whole day, he came out and said, "I can't get any flour. They wouldn't lend me any." I then made a joke saying, "We had a pretty decent life back home. Why did we come to this god-forsaken place?" And then he just started crying.</p>
A:	<p>What about now? How much land do you have? What things do you grow?</p>
B:	<p>Now I have about twenty <i>mu</i> here in <i>Kekeya</i>, where we grow pears, jujubes, and apples. And then I have about 500 <i>mu</i> of cotton in another county. Most are contracted to others. Every year they give me 70 kg per <i>mu</i> as a contract fee.</p>
A:	<p>Wow, you are a big landlord here. I heard that the rich people here are mostly farmers.</p>
B:	<p>Haha... but there are so many more people who have more land here. Yeah, it's true. The real rich people here are farmers who have a lot of land. They have the best apartments in the city center. I don't think even people working in the city like in banks would be able to afford that. Now more and more people want to buy land, but its price has gone so high</p>

	lately. In early years, no one wanted to buy land for 300 RMB per <i>mu</i> even. But the price increased dramatically in the following years. From 300 RMB, it rose to 500 RMB, and then 1,000 RMB, and then 3,000 RMB, and later 8,000 RMB, and then suddenly to 15,000 RMB, and now for one <i>mu</i> of land here in Kekeya you have to pay 30,000 RMB. No one can afford to buy fields anymore. For example, your grandfather bought ten <i>mu</i> with just 7,500 RMB in 2004, but if someone wants to buy it from him now in 2011, he wouldn't get it without paying at least 300,000 RMB. So those who came early and have land now are all doing well. They all have cars and apartments.
A:	Do you still go visit your home place?
B:	Yes, I go there once in a while. It is not that difficult any more. At that time, when we came, the railway was still not in use, so we had to come to Ku'aile first by train. It took us about five days and five nights. And then by bus from Ku'aile to Aksu, it took two more days. A single trip took about a week. But now there's a direct train from here to Tianzhu, so it's really convenient.
A:	When you all moved in, what was the situation like with the local Uyghur?
B:	They had the fields divided to them already from the People's Commune period. ²⁴ They had apricot, apple, and walnut trees. They also grew winter wheat.
A:	What has communication with the local Uyghur been like?
B:	With the language, it is like Tibetan in our place. We have had problems understanding each other. Many people that moved here early actually learned to speak Uyghur, and Uyghur have picked up Chinese pretty quickly recently. Uyghur in the city and near the towns don't have problems communicating with Chinese any more. From two years ago, the government has invested a lot in bilingual education here. When I first came, I was in close contact with the Uyghur for about six years. They are very hospitable and clean. Their notion of saving water and things is much better than ours. That's probably because they lacked water historically.
A:	Is there intermarriage between the Uyghur and the people from our place?
B:	Yes, quite a lot, I would say. The interesting thing is that some of their children grow up eating pork, haha... Actually many people from our place have married Uyghur girls. Some

²⁴ The People's Commune = an administrative level in rural areas of the People's Republic of China from 1952 to 1985. Later, these communes were replaced by townships.

	<p>have even gone back to Tianzhu with their Uyghur wives. Even in your Ha Clan, there is a man who married a Uyghur. It's amazing that these Uyghur women can make noodles on a board only this big for some ten people. You know we would have to use a very big board, haha... Actually Uyghurs are very friendly if you get to know them. They are not like what you hear on TVs. Those people are only a few.</p> <p>Have you been to Kashgar?</p>
A:	<p>No, not yet, but I would like to go see Kashgar.</p>
B:	<p>Oh, my goodness, why haven't you visited Kashgar yet? They say, "If you haven't been to Xinjiang, you don't know how big China is, and if you haven't been to Kashgar, you haven't been to Xinjiang." Now the plan of the government is that they will turn Kashgar into a special economic zone like Shenzhen. The slogan is "There is Shenzhen in the east, and there will be Kashgar in the west." You should go to work in Kashgar when you return. There are so many foreigners.</p>
A:	<p>Haha... that is actually a very good suggestion. I will definitely think about that.</p>