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The Making of Reverse Ethnographic Dreams: On Dream-Wishes, Guardian Spirits, and Indigeneity in Southwest China

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Ethnographic dreams have long been envisaged as the prerogative of Euro-American (and chiefly Anglophone) anthropologists, but what happens when their research partners unleash a world of reverse ethnographic dreaming? Growing numbers of visionary scholars among the Nuosu, a Tibeto-Burman group of Southwest China, allow their dream-wishes and reverse ethnographic dreams to sow the seeds for new ways of imagining indigeneity. Many Nuosu scholars promote their visions by pointing to what lies mysteriously behind them—including the protection they receive from guardian spirits encountered in dreams, the waking world, and the stories of others. In this talk, I offer new ethnography on how Nuosu scholars, their Anglophone anthropologists, and the world of anthropology itself are shaped 'in reverse' by guardian spirits and all manner of dreams.

Katherine Swancutt is Senior Researcher and Founder of the Sichuan-Yunnan Corridor & Inner Asia Network (SCIAN) at the Department of Ecological Anthropology, Institute of Ethnology, Czech Academy of Sciences. She has conducted anthropological fieldwork across Inner Asia for more than twenty-five years, writing extensively on shamanism and animism in China and Mongolia. She is Project Lead of the European Research Council Synergy Grant 'Cosmological Visionaries: Shamans, Scientists, and Climate Change at the Ethnic Borderlands of China and Russia'. Her recent edited works include *Demons and Gods on Display: The Anthropology of Display and Worldmaking (Asian Ethnology,* special issue, 2023), *Crafting Chinese Memories: The Art and Materiality of Storytelling* (Berghahn 2021), and *Animism Beyond the Soul: Ontology, Reflexivity, and the Making of Anthropological Knowledge* co-edited with Mireille Mazard (*Social Analysis*, special issue 2016, and Berghahn 2018). She is also author of *Fortune and the Cursed: The Sliding Scale of Time in Mongolian Divination* (Berghahn 2012).

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