AN A mdo TIBETAN WEDDING SPEECH
FROM NE'U NA VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT
This article introduces the background to a Tibetan wedding speech in A mdo, including its textual history, the village from which it was taken, and our practices and goals in translating the text. We then provide a translation, side-by-side with the Tibetan original, of a 547 line Tibetan Wedding speech from Ne'u na (Ch: Nina) Village, Khri ka (Ch: Guide) County, Mtsho lho (Ch: Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.

KEYWORDS
A mdo, oratory, ston bshad, Tibetan wedding speeches, translation, verbal art

INTRODUCTION

A man stands slightly inebriated in front of a crowd. He begins to intone in a rapid cadence, raising his voice in volume and intensity as he races towards the climax of each line, and then dropping abruptly with the last two syllables. At the end of each section, the audience encourages him with a loud ye! In response to this encouragement, the orator spurs himself to ever-greater rhetorical heights. This is a wedding after all, and the wedding speech is important because it not only describes the auspicious conditions (and festive atmosphere) of the wedding, but helps to create them.

The orator artfully links this wedding with a tradition of weddings dating back to the weddings of the great King Srong btsan sgam po (d. 649), and links the village itself to the most auspicious of places in the Tibetan cosmological world. In doing so, he uses the poetic and referential idiom of Tibetan folk traditions to their fullest effect, not only describing the auspicious circumstances of that day, but actually creating this auspiciousness.

Below we present a bilingual version of a Tibetan wedding speech from Ne'u na Village. This represents the culmination of an on-again off-again collaboration that has continued for about five years. It presents a form of Tibetan secular oratory that is no longer extensively practiced on the Tibetan Plateau, even in its original context: the wedding. A longer explication of this particular speech is forthcoming in a new volume on Tibetan Folk Literature (see Thurston 2015). With the permission of the editors of both volumes, we have overlapped much of the same information in the two publications.

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See Thurston (2012) and Thurston (forthcoming).
TEXTUAL HISTORY

Ne'u na Village is located along the Yellow River (T: Rma chu, Ch: Huanghe) in Khrika (Ch: Guide) County, Mtsho lho (Ch: Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, in western China's Qinghai (T: Mtsho sngon) Province. The town is located approximately 130 kilometers to the southwest of Qinghai's capital, Xining (T: Zi ling) City, and sits at the confluence of the Yellow River and a winding stream: the Mang ra. The name Ne'u na 'head of a small meadow' derives from the geographical feature related to the winding stream (Tshe dbang rdo rje et al. 2005:2 n3). Located along the river and at an elevation of approximately 2,200 meters above sea level, the majority of Ne'u na residents traditionally engaged in agricultural work, while many also raised some livestock.

Ne'u na villagers were historically mostly Tibetans. By 2004, however, large numbers of migrant Han had come to the area to work on the construction of Laxiwa (which went into operation in 2009) and Nina hydroelectric (built between 1996 and 2000) dams. The village is also home to a number of Chinese Muslims, all of whom belong to the Hui ethnic group. Religiously, the Tibetan and Han residents of Ne'u na are primarily Buddhist. The area's largest summer festival (T: drug pa'i lha rtsed) is held during the sixth month of the lunar calendar. It is a multi-ethnic affair with Tibetan, Han, and even Hui residents of Khrika and the surrounding area coming to offer money to two deities (Khri ka'i yul lha and Ri lang) in hopes of obtaining good fortune in the coming year. While Tibetans in Ne’u na Village self-identify as Buddhist the wedding speech translated below also expresses the pronounced influence of the animistic Bon religion. This might be related to the influence of

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3 This sketch of Ne'u na Village provides only a brief introduction to its demographic, economic, and cultural situation. A more extensive ethnography of Ne'u na may be found in Tshe dbang rdo rje et al. (2005).
4 From the Chinese er lang
5 For more on Khri ka'i yul lha, see Buffetrille (2002).
Bon in this area, as evidenced by the presence of a nearby village that is primarily Bon po.\(^6\)

Culturally, the Tibetans in this area are from the ethnolinguistic Tibetan region called A mdo. They speak the A mdo dialect, and several Hui residents have historically been able to communicate in both Tibetan and Chinese. Now, however, an increasing number of children, regardless of ethnic group, are growing up without speaking Tibetan, and many traditions are vanishing rapidly. The wedding speech is just one such tradition.

It is useful to think of this speech's life in terms of the entextualization process outlined in the introduction to Lauri Honko's (2000) *Textualization of Oral Epics*, wherein a work of verbal art moves from a "pool of tradition" that includes knowledge of register, appropriate multiforms, and meter.

The pool holds a multiplicity of traditions, a coexistence of expressive forms and genres, mostly in a latent state, only parts of it becoming activated by the individual user (Honko 2000:18-19).

It is a dynamic space that only reaches textual finalization (Bakhtin 1986:76) in performances during which the speaker's knowledge, history of performances, and the audience's knowledge, interact to create a single text out of the amorphous pool. In some cases, the speech's textual life may continue, for example, if a performer writes some form of *aide de memoire*; or a scholar may record the performance and later publish it.

Before this particular speech was codified in text, it was first very much a part of the pool of Tibetan oral traditions. It relied on the speaker's knowledge of the meter, multiforms, metaphors, and register appropriate to the formal oratory that once occurred on

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\(^6\)The Bon religion is "the indigenous religion of Tibet" (Tucci 1980:213). The nearby Bon village, known as Mdzo sna, was originally located near Ne'u na Village. Their relative locations have changed due to recent relocations associated with the construction of hydroelectric power stations. Bon is also associated with nearby pastoralist areas within the county, e.g., Stong che and Ser gya (Tsering Thar 2008:533).
many occasions throughout A mdo. It was part of a subgenre that occurs specifically at festival occasions such as hair changing rituals and weddings. In describing this form of secular but formal speechmaking, Ekvall notes that it:

is extremely stylized, has a prestige rating high above the less artificial form of speech-making, and is very frequently used by acknowledged orators—whether ecclesiastics, chiefs, or men of recognized eloquence. It is quite difficult to acquire and practice, and, on first hearing, is hard to understand...[it is] characterized by a steady, uninterrupted flow of words uttered at a uniform rate, with no pauses to function as nature punctuation (1964:143).

This characterization applies to the wedding speech at the center of this paper. However, its journey from pool of tradition, to handwritten libretto, to printed text, to English translation deserves a brief exposition.

This wedding speech was originally published by Tshe dbang rdo rje et al. in 2005 as part of a book describing weddings in Tshe dbang rdo rje's home village. This work provides three versions of the speech itself: "Oral A mdo Tibetan," IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet), and Modern Literary Tibetan transcriptions. The oral version presents the text as it was written in the performer's own speech book while the Modern Literary Tibetan version presents the Oral A mdo version in a form conforming with more traditional Tibetan spelling practices.

Prior to 2003, this wedding speech was often given at weddings. It is attributed to Bstan ’dzin (b. 1963), from Rdzong 'go Village. When Tshe dbang rdo rje first recorded it, the speaker was inebriated and his speech was unclear. However, later he provided Tshe dbang rdo rje with the notebook on which his performances

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7 For more on hair changing in A mdo, see Tshe dpal rdo rje et al; (2009), 'Brug mo skyid et al. (2010), and Blo bzang tshe ring et al. (2012).
8 This village is very close to Ne’u na. Ne’u na and Rdzong ’go may once have been a single village (Tshe dbang rdo rje et al. 2005:20 n57).
were based. The speech translated here was copied directly from Bstan 'dzin's notebook on 27 February 2003 and published in Tshe dbang rdo rje et al. (2005:110-179).9

Lacking an orator, this written libretto is now silent. Although we can recreate some of the paralinguistic features associated with the genre, this speech will likely never be performed again - one of a growing number of silenced traditional voices. Nonetheless, we can learn much about the nature of the poetic rules of Tibetan secular oratory from this text, as well as some of the larger cultural expectations that frequently accompany such a project.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

The unique history of the speech itself and the status of this particular text as an ideal text rather than as a record of performance, complicates both the translation process and the considerations that go into its presentation. The speech itself is meant to be orally performed, and bears several important keys of the Tibetan performance tradition. These include the extensive use of figurative language, special formulae, appeals to tradition, parallelism, and disclaimers of performance (see Bauman 1977). These keys notify the culturally informed audience that a performance is occurring and so things should not necessarily be taken literally. They also clue the audience into specific meanings that may accompany the performance. Here, the translators attempt to preserve these types of meaning while taking the text itself yet another step away from its original performance context.

There is no choice when dealing with a metonymically referential text other than to move the reader towards the writer (or in this case, the performer and the performance tradition), for

[0]nly when the text has been made to yield the kind of augmented discourse that mirrors a traditional oral performance in the highly focused mode of signification... identified as

9 For a more complete description of how Tshe dbang rdo rje obtained this wedding speech, see Tshe dbang rdo rje et al. (2005:109-110).
communicative economy can the message be faithfully received (Foley 1995:81).

The problem is, however, that such a translation requires a reader or an audience that understands the heavily referential nature of the traditional speech register.

The translators face a number of conundrums in making the text both readable and understandable to an audience that is unfamiliar with this tradition. How might the translators move readers toward the performer and the performance tradition while preserving the traditional and highly referential register? One solution is to include extensive contextualizing remarks to help the foreign reader enter into what Foley (1995) calls the performance arena and approach the text on its own uniquely cultural terms. Another solution is to become more transparent about the translation process.

This introduction seeks to provide the audience with the cultural knowledge necessary to facilitate reception of the wedding speech. In addition to the placing the Tibetan text side-by-side with the English translation, we also include a glossary that gives descriptions of all terms and names that have been Romanized, but otherwise untranslated. This requires the reader to move towards the original culture. Such a presentation finds precedent in the work of Honko (1932-2002), who used a similar method in his translation of the Siri epic of India (Honko 1998). We deem it best to proceed along such lines here.

With these goals in mind, we have chosen to provide a translation that approximates the original Tibetan as much as possible, which requires the reader to engage the culture on its own terms. We have also attempted to keep the words as close to their actual meanings as possible, and have sought to change the Tibetan line order only when necessary. This has included resisting the urge to make the text conform to prose conventions, and maintaining as many of the keys of performance as possible. For the names of deities, we have chosen to use the Extended Wylie transcription method (Anton-Luca 2006), unless the deity is well known by another name. For example, the Tibetan may read Thugs rje chen po,
but we provide Avalokitesvara because the Sanskrit has far more currency in English.

In addition to issues in the translation of Tibetan religious terms as mentioned above, this wedding speech brims with imagery and metaphor indicating the nature of the event. The extensive use of animals such as dragons, vultures, cuckoos, hawks, and tigers, in addition to the sun, the sky, the moon, and other inanimate objects is indicative of a rich cultural heritage and a somewhat rigid set of icons. We have chosen not to change these.

Throughout the speech, certain terminology and certain metaphors make frequent appearances. Many of these are culturally bound to the idea of marriage and, indeed, to the performance event itself. These cultural metaphors recall Foley's ideas of traditional referentiality and communicative economy, e.g.:

An oral traditional register is marked in some tradition- and genre-dependent way as an idiom dedicated to the special purpose of communicating through a particular channel. The narrow focus—or dense encoding—of this idiom permits a correspondingly economical conveyance of meaning, as the performer and audience employ a highly resonant species of linguistic, paralinguistic, and nonlinguistic cues to co-create a rich and complex work with relatively few expressive integers (Foley 1995:93).

The wedding speech text translated here as a static document retains few of Foley's paralinguistic and nonlinguistic cues. This in tandem with the extensive use of religious examples (discussed below) and cultural idioms creates a communicative economy even within the text. Through comparing a person to a vulture, a hawk, or other bird of prey, or through mentioning the snow lion, the performer references a wide range of attributes associated with those particular creatures. This is not limited to animal references. Famous locations such as Mt. Tise/Kailash can be used to indicate the holiness and auspiciousness of the wedding occasion.

For the moment, the key question regarding these culturally bound idioms is how, for example, one can adequately convey the
notion that a venue of vultures indicates the guests at the wedding party. These metaphors are highly referential and often require extensive contextualization and background for the reader to fully understand them. There are at least two ways to approach this issue. One can provide footnotes - an unwieldy option that can make the text difficult to read - or make the work more transparent, by replacing dense metaphors with an appropriate metaphor in English. Both methods are flawed. The authors have attempted to avoid both by placing historical and religious references in a glossary rather than in footnote format, and by providing this introduction to the text. Combining the two will hopefully providing relative newcomers to Tibetan culture entrance to the many-layers of meaning in this speech.

CONCLUSION

As noted in the corresponding publication for this translation (Thurston forthcoming), weddings are an important context for verbal artistic performance, with the wedding speech being only one of several genres of verbal art prevalent in the wedding. Moreover, that article suggested that wedding speeches are integral to the creation of auspiciousness on the festive occasion of the wedding and introduced certain performance "keys" preserved in the entextualized wedding speech. This introduction, however, is limited more to the context of this particular wedding speech, and the speech itself.
THE NE’U NA WEDDING SPEECH

1Ya! Praise Om a hum, praise Om a hum, praise Om a hum!

2From the pureland Dharmadatu,

3Worship the father Dharmakaya Samantabdra.

4From the glorious pureland in the south,

5Worship Sambhogakaya, the Great Compassionate One.

6From Vulture Peak Mountain,

7Worship the victorious Bhagavan Sakyamuni.

8From mountain palace of the golden land of Guru Rinpoche,

9Worship the Lord Or gy an Padmasambhava.

10From atop the lotus and moon seat,

11Worship the compassionate root bla ma.

12From the burial ground of Blazing Mountain,

13Worship the yi dam and the array of peaceful and wrathful deities.

14From the Paradise arrayed in Turquoise Petals,

15Worship the Arya Tara.

16From the lion, dragon, and tiger fortress,

17Worship Seng chen nor bu dgra 'dul.

18From the charnel ground of the Malaya Mountains,

19Worship the glorious deity Ma hA ka la and his brothers and sisters.
From atop clouds like a crouching white snow lion,
Worship the Queen Goddess Aunt Gong sman.
From the Thirty-Three heaven realms above,
Worship the great deity Tshangs pa.
From within the naga region's conch fortress below,
Worship the naga king, Gtsug na rin chen.
From the expanse of thickening clouds in the middle,
Worship the father deity, Gter bdag gnyen po.
From the upper caves of both the holy mountain and the monastery,
Worship the protector of the lineage.
From the meeting place of the host and guests,
Worship the deities of happiness.
From inside the house and outside in the yard,
Worship the deities of fortune and food.
From among the people gathered like stars, and arrayed like colors of the rainbow,
Worship one's own tutelary and warrior deities.
Praise Om a hum!

Ya! worship Om a hum,
Worship! Worship! Worship! Worship the blue sky again and
A mdo Tibetan Wedding Speech

39. Should we not worship and venerate this blue sky?
40. The blue sky is the place where the high holy mountain is worshipped.
41. Worship! Worship! Worship! Worship the vast heavens again and again.
42. Should we not worship and venerate the heavens?
43. The abode of the heavens is the place where three-wheeled silk clothing is worshipped.
44. Worship! Worship! Worship! Worship the solid earth again and again.
45. Should we not worship and venerate the solid earth?
46. The abode of the earth is the place where the green leather boot is worshipped.
47. Worship! Worship! Worship! Worship the house deity, Ke’u thung, again and again.
48. Should we not praise and venerate Ke’u thung?
49. He is the family protector.
50. Worship! Worship! Worship! Worship the hearth deity, Yor mo, again and again.
51. Should we not worship and venerate the hearth deity, Yor mo?
52. He is the perfect food protector.
53. Worship! Worship! Worship! Worship the door deity, Stag yag, again and again,
Should we not worship and venerate the door deity, Stag yag?

He is the whole stable's livestock protector.

Ya! I worship the male ancestral deity above my right shoulder,

I worship the mother deity above my left shoulder,

And I worship the maternal uncle's deity above my forehead.

For those gathered in this home, I worship the paternal deities of those possessing paternal deities,

Worship the paternal deity, a white naga king.

I worship the warrior deities of those who have them,

I worship the warrior deity's turquoise blue dragon.

I worship the warrior deity that lives in me,

I worship the warrior deity's white stallion.

Ya! Praise Om a hum!

Ya! The tantric practitioners regard today as a sunny day.

Having invited Gong tshe, the dwelling, clothing, and rugs are spread out.

In a year, one month is regarded thus;

In a month, one day is regarded thus;

In a day, one morning is regarded thus;

According to the eight-spoked
Amdo Tibetan Wedding Speech

dharma wheel, today is good.
72 According to the eight-petal lotus, today is good.
73 According to the Tibetan calendar, then today is good.
74 According to the nine astrological squares and the zodiac, today is good.
75 According to the eight trigrams, then today is a good day.
76 As for today, it is an auspicious day.
77 It should be said that today is the moment of long life, the perfect time that is the completion of the 108.

78 Ya! [At] today's first rays of light, 
79 [As] the sun begins to rise, 
80 [At] the beginning of the watch, 
81 You, daughter of good parentage, 
82 And niece of good uncles, are dressed in festive clothing. 
83 When you put on gold and silver ornaments, 
84 Wear glittering jewels. 
85 Ride a horse with a smooth gait. 
86 The white clouds bleach the sky, 
87 The hem of the sable clothing brushes the ground, 
88 And the gleaming blue cuckoos squawk. 
89 To the hair on the left, that is fixed in place, 
90 Attach a turquoise Blue Tara. 
91 To the hair on the right, that is fixed in place,
92. Attach a naturally smooth piece of coral.
93. To the hair on the temples, that is fixed in place.
94. Attach a golden hair-piece.
95. To the top of her head, that is fixed in place,
96. Attach a wool-white conch hair ornament,
97. Attach many stunning pieces of turquoise,
98. Attach the coral-like antler of a deer,
99. And attach pearl and crystal prayer beads.
100. Wear a red fox fur hat on [your] head,
101. Wear a brocade robe decorated with coiling dragons on [your] body,
102. Tie red and white sashes around [your] waist,
103. And cover [your] feet with green leather boots decorated with four flaming mountains.
104. [Your] father and uncles, like Mt. Meru, escort you as you come.
105. [Your] mother and aunts come, like the myriad southern clouds.
106. And if clever boys and nephews come escorting you, say it is good!

107. Ya! Today the clothing of the guests of your father's side is good.
108. The groom's side's welcome is good.
109. Go to receive the guests as soon as you see them,
Divide the white door curtain,
The first group of greeters takes
the reins and stirrups.
The next group of greeters spreads
the red and white cushions,
Arranges many plates of foods,
Serves auspicious boiled tea with
butter,
And serves the finest barley liquor.
It should be said that this need to
have conversations about history,
meat, and liquor,
Is an archetypal Tibetan event.

Ya! If the eastern throne of the sun
does not rise,
Then the darkness of western
Bsam yas does not clear.
If the southern turquoise dragon
does not roar,
Then summer and winter will not
be differentiated.
If the cuckoo does not sing,
The measures of the four seasons
will not be grasped.
If I do not tell the basis for this
speech's nature,
The faces of the hosts and guests
cannot be clearly recognized.

Ya! The guests that gather in this
house are frightening,
And I, like other young speakers,
am cowardly,
So words are lost between my
mouth and my tongue
129 གང་དཀར་ཡོལ་ནས་ཕོ་འོ།
130 མཁན་ལ་བོའི་ང་ན་དཀོན་གི།
131 ལ་རེ་བའི་མཁན་ལ་བོའི་
132 གི་པ་བཤད་པ་ང་ཡི་ན་དཀའ་གི།
133 དཔལ་ཉི་མ་ཡར་ཤར་གཡས་
134 དར་མའི་མད་པ་ལོལ་
135 ལ།།
136 བ་བོ་ཤོལ་འབབ་
137 འདིར་མ་ཚགས་པ་གཅིག་
138 དི་ནམ་མཁའ་འཁོར་ལོ་
139 ཚེགས་ན།།
140 བ་དིང་བབས་འ0་ཅན་
141 ཐོམ་ཟོམ་ཐོམ་ཐོམས་
142 དུན་མོ་པོ་ལ་
143 བ་དིང་བབས་འ0་ཅན་
144 བ་དིང་བབས་འ0་ཅན་
145 དུན་ཐོམ་ཐོམ་ཐོམ་ཐོམ་
146 བ་དིང་བབས་འ0་ཅན་
129 And liquor falls out of my cup.
130 The one who praises each group is rare in the king's court.
131 And the speech which praises speeches comes with difficulty into my mind.
132 [But] if I give a speech of how it comes to my anxious mind, 
133 And of how it is managed with thought and knowledge, 
134 And how it frees my knotted tongue, then:
135 Ya! Beneath the eight-spoked wheel in the sky,
136 On the earth, the eight-petal lotus,
137 At the right edge, where the happy sun rises; 
138 At the left edge, where excess water falls; 
139 And at the foot of the white-capped mountain, 
140 [People] gather inside a house with four pillars and eight beams. 
141 When the important guests gather in groups, 
142 There is also not one who doesn't gather here. 
143 [At today's wedding] there are people who are like the king of birds, the great garuda. 
144 There are people who are like circling hawks and vultures 
145 There are people who are like white snow lions tossing their turquoise manes on their shoulders. 
146 There are people who are like
strong red-striped tigers.

There are people who are like the turquoise dragon's coral belly.

There are people who are like the blue cuckoo's sweet considerate call.

There are people who are like the blue peacock's auspicious plumage.

Today if the right-hand row of guests gather in groups,

Then this right-hand row is like the golden sun rising

If the left-hand row gathers in groups,

Then this left hand row is like a waxing conch shell moon.

If the men with powerful warrior deities gather in the front row,

Then they take up residence in the Great Assembly Hall.

When the sun and moon rise from the east, they are the ornaments of the world.

When water falls from the clear spring above, it is the valley's nectar.

When hair on both sides of the head is gathered in braids, the bunches [of braids] are the bride's ornaments.

When the horse steps gracefully, it is the essence of the guests.

When hundreds gather in the cave, they are the marketplace's ornaments.

This morning, we first eat good food,

And second, if I relate each of the ensuing speeches:
In Stod, the four ranges and the eight sub-ranges,
The Superior Region, the southern Continent, Jambudvipa.
In Smad, the four ranges and eight sub-ranges,
The superior Mount Zal mo of Mdo kham,
In the center of the middle place, is Bodhghaya of India,
Beneath the clear blue lapis sky,
On top of the golden ground's elegant mandala,
Gathered in the middle of the Eight Auspicious Symbols,
Where the virtuous dharma is promoted
Is the great region of Vulture Peak Mountain.
The morning birth place of the Bhagavan,
And the center of Jambudvipa,
is the home of the glorious Tibetan kings.
The dream place of heroes
Is the region in which Tibetan teachings flourish.
This home of Tibetan kings, full of a variety of foods,
is the place where the 84,000 paths to the Dharma increase.
The high blue sky is the rising path of the sun and moon,
and the flowing path of the little stars.
this expansive sky is the rising path of the southern clouds,
and the place where the turquoise southern dragons roar.

This Mt. Meru is the place where white snow falls,

And the place where the great snow lions reside.

This densely forested mountain is where the tigers lurk.

This red crag is the vultures' flight path.

These rocky heights are marches of wild yaks and their calves.

This great ocean is where rivers gather.

This expansive plain is the departure path of deer and wild ass.

This fearsome mountain base is the place where snow waters flow.

This vast courtyard is the guests' gathering place.

And it should be said that today this great assembly is the place for conversation,

where clever youths sing and dance,

and the place to which wealth and auspiciousness are called.

Ya! Now I speak a little about how things flourished in the world:

In the upper region, Dbus gtsang, religion flourished;

In the lower region, China, business flourished.

And in Royal Tibet, weddings flourished.

The first wedding flourished in
The daughter of the great gods, Brahma and Indra, was called Khyung gshog ldem ma, the upper realm of the gods.

She was given as a bride to the son of the naga king, Gtsug na rinchen.

After the goddess was escorted to the naga realm,

The eight classes of gods and spirits were guests.

At that time, [the custom of] bridal parties flourished.

The maid of honor was the beautiful Pleiades

At that time, [the custom of] bridesmaids flourished.

The galaxy was the bride-wealth;

At that time, the custom of bride-wealth flourished.

Vajrapani was the tea leader;

At that time, the custom of having a bridal tea leader flourished.

The lotus-born Padmasambhava was the outer leader;

At that time the custom of having an outer leader flourished.

Manjusri was the matchmaker;

At the time, [the custom of having] matchmakers flourished.

A dazzling eight-faceted jewel was given [to him].

At that time, the [custom of giving a] bridal gift to the matchmaker flourished.

The god’s steed which was so fast people said it could fly,
Was the horse the groom rode;
At that time, the [custom of] the groom's horse flourished.
The naga's blue hippopotamus was the bridal horse.
At that time, the [custom of the] bridal horse flourished.
Splendid jewels were [her] conch earrings;
And [she] wore a five-colored shirt.
At that time, [the custom of] earrings and shirts flourished.
The clean spring-water was the wedding liquor
And golden-eyed fish were wedding meat;
At that time, the [customs of having] festal meat and festive liquor flourished.
When the gods, nagas, and people gather,
It should be said that the divine son Gsal bo khye'u chung's Thang 'ja' mo was called a speech at that time.

Ya! Now I explain how the middle weddings flourished
The middle wedding flourished in Tibet.
During the time of the Tibetan king, Lha sras btsan po,
The Nepalese princess, Khri lcam, was invited to Tibet,
And opened the Nepalese turquoise treasure door.
When marriage between Nepal
and Tibet flourished,

Tantrikas from Zhang zhung made sacrifices.

The first group's leader was Dran pa nam mkha',

And the eight classes of gods and demons were bound into service.

The latter group's leader was Tshe ring rig 'dzin,

And he grasped the royal lineage of deities and humans.

A scholar named Stong rung mthu chen,

Spoke as the matchmaker between Nepal and Tibet.

A singer named Stong rgyal 'bum thub,

Began the music and games.

The white snows of Mt. Tise in Stod were festive cakes of cheese.

Lake Manarasowar, the glittering blue lake, was the wedding liquor.

The large-mouthed catfish was the festive meat.

The symbols and the feast flourished at that time.

It should be said that the wise Dpyad bu khri shes gave the praise speech at that time.

Ya! Now I will explain how the last weddings flourished;

Weddings flourished between China and Tibet.

The Chinese princess, Kong jo, was invited to Tibet,

And became the daughter-in-law
of the Tibetan [king] Gnam ri srong btsan.

255 Emperor Gong tse did the divination,

256 Minister Mgar stong btsan made the match,

257 King Srong btsan sgam po was the groom,

258 The first group's leader was Avalokitesvara,

259 The later group's leader was Rje brtsun Tara,

260 And the Jobo Shakyamuni was the parting gift.10

261 It came escorted by the Chinese monks' leaders.

262 The wish-fulfilling Chinese deities were the chief guests,11

263 [And with them] 500 Chinese riders also came as guests.

264 China and Tibet held feasts.

265 When I explain the spread of the three types of weddings, it should be said that it was like this.

266 Ya! Now [dear] coral-mustached uncles,

267 Listen to my speech without speaking or murmuring.

268 [Dear] turquoise-maned youths,

269 Listen to my speech without joking and playing.

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10 This refers to the image in the Jo khang in Lhasa that Kongjo (Ch: Wencheng), the Chinese princess (line 253), famously brought to her wedding.

11 Because the monks came, so did their deities.
[Dear] conch shell haired girls

Listen to my speech without blowing conchs.

If an excellent man listens to the speech,

If [he] listens with a pure heart,

Then we'll certainly see if he learns it by heart.

If the average man listens to the speech,

If [he] listens with cocked ears,

Then we'll certainly see if he understands with cocked ears.

If an inferior man listens to the speech,

He opens his mouth,

Opens his eyes,

And listens with snot dangling from his nose, it should be said that these are archetypal examples.

Ya! Now taking the deep azure sky as an example,

If I were to give a speech well known to all,

From the upper part of the eastern river, the Ganges,

To Sri Parvati in the south,

From beneath the western Conch mountain gate,

Up to the gates of Hor in the North

Of the lineage of the former kings

If I were to give a speech of the lineage of countless inhabitants,

The lineage of many ministers.
The way the Gtsug lag khang was built,

The division of the villages and regions,

The way the king and his subjects were connected,

The way the square was built,

The way the five elements came into being,

The way the eight trigrams were deciphered,

And the way the black-headed people were born,

[I] would not finish within one month.

Taking the universal, all-pervasive sun as an example,

If I give a speech possessing meaning and purpose:

First, how the teacher [the Buddha] was born;

Then how the [Buddhist] teachings flourished;

How the wheel of the dharma turned;

And finally, how kindness was nourished.

How the immaculate lambs were given,

How the ma Ni buttons were fastened

And how the upward steps of the white stupa were built

If I were to tell of these,

[I] wouldn't finish in a single day.

Now I am going to give a speech like the endless flowing Mang ra
River:

311 The difficult thing is the dharma;
312 The rare thing is the garuda.
313 The valuable thing is gold;
314 The most desired thing is property;
315 And the thing that flourishes is the wedding.
316 The white silk wedding cloth,
317 The red flag's circles,
318 The white bronze mirror,
319 The white silver bells,
320 The sandalwood Da ru drum,
321 And the long seams of white cloth; taking each as an example and explaining them:
322 If the white silk wedding banners fly, it is good.
323 If the red dots are put on the banners, it is good.
324 If you rub the white bronze mirrors, it is good.
325 If you ring the silver bell, it is good.
326 If you beat the sandalwood Da ru drum, it is good.
327 When these white sheepskin robes' long seams are even, it is good.
328 It should be said that these things, which can be easily made, are Tibetan customs.

329 Ya! Now I will explain the three kinds of praises:
330 The exalted praise the exalted;
The azure blue sky is praised by its companion, the clouds;
The swift praise the swift;
The pace of the excellent horse is praised by the wind;
The dandy praises the dandy;
The lambskin robe's hem is praised by the otter.
Yellow praises yellow
The Yellow-hat monk praises Dbus;
The yellow duck praises the sea;
The yellow bamboo praises the arrow.
Blue praises blue.
The blue crane praises the sky
The blue cuckoo praises the year.
The blue peacock praises the plumage.
Ya! Now I speak of the three great things:
This yellow gold is valuable.
The blue barley is abundant.
The gift-wrapped bottle of chang is important.
Ya! Now I speak of the three types of gatherings:
Monks, whether or not they have religion, gather in Dbus.
Chinese merchants gather in the market, whether or not they have goods.
The hosts and guests both gather at the wedding.
Ya! Now I speak of the three kinds of meetings:
The tiger assembly and the leopard assembly meet in the forest.
The school of fish and the otters meet in the ocean.
The assemblies of fathers and of sons meet in rows.

Ya! Now I speak of the three kinds of belonging:
In the blue azure sky,
The little black ravens are at home in the grass.
On the beautiful mountain, the blue mountain wolves are
customed to being greedy.
Among the groups of guests,
The matchmakers who desire to take a bribe are at home at the wedding.

Ya! Now I speak of the three kinds of happiness:
If the daughter-in-law is good and polite, the grandfather is happy.
If her hands and handiwork are good, her mother-in-law is happy.
If her clothes and ornaments are beautiful, the bride is happy.
If she is a beauty, the groom is happy.

Ya! Now I speak of the three kinds of wedding times:
From the good azure blue sky above,
In the first of the three summer months,
The blue cuckoo, has called pleasantly three times,
And when we see the smiling faces of the stalks of grain, it is a wedding time.
In the first of the three autumn months,
At the edge of the great golden flower,
After the golden petals have bloomed,
When the grain is harvested and brought home, it's a wedding time.
In the first of the three winter months,
After the great river freezes at its banks,
when many fish and otters gather happily, one should call it a wedding time.

Ya! Now today I speak the praises of the Tantric practitioners:
The white skull of the princes,
The divine offering cup,
The self-burning butter lamp,
The vase on top of the head,
And nectar on the tongue,
He lives on the snowy summit of the rocky mountain during the three summer months.
He chases away white clouds to
388[He] chases away black clouds to the right.
389[He] chases away hail like driving sheep,
390And makes it rain like pouring milk.
391During the three autumn months.
392[He] lives half-way up the snow-covered rocky mountain.
393[He] captures a white-mouthed onager and makes it his horse.
394[He] captures wild yaks and domesticates them;
395And [he] captures adult wolves and makes them his watchdogs.
396During the three winter months
397[He] lives at the foot of the snow-covered rocky mountain.
398[He] places the tutelary deity's gtor ma above him;
399[He] places the bdud rtsi sman mchod to his right;
400[He] places the great red rakta to his left;
401[He] places volumes of the Bka' 'gyur in front of him;
402[He] hangs the big ancient drum in the sky;
403[He] raises the drumstick aloft in the sky;
404[He] praises and honors the Three Jewels;
405[He] defends all sentient beings;
406And stops all evil and misfortune;
407A person who has a succession of
lives like that should be called the A khu dpon.

408Ya! Now I speak the praises of the A zhang,
409The bell-holding lama was born in Dbus,
410And the sound of the bell rings in his ears;
411Many young heroes were born,
412And the heroes’ birth is told everywhere;
413Wise, nimble-tongued speakers are born from this lineage,
414And their articulate speeches are heard everywhere.
415The main temple's golden roof ornament is high in the sky,
416And obstructs the rising of both the sun and moon.
417The upper part of the earth-colored wall is covered with cloth,
418And obstructs the path of both the wind and the breeze.
419The fields are full of barley.
420And obstruct the paths of all Chinese, Tibetans, and Mongolians
421If the wind blows on the fox fur hat,
422The wind and breeze will both be punished
423If the rain soaks the silk clothes,
424The sky and the rain will be punished
425If the soles of the leather boots are caught on stones,
The stones will be punished.

When praising the earth instead of the sky,

One should still say that the sky itself is highly praised.

Ya! Now the inferior kinsmen praise themselves.

I don't praise the rotten son, but

Now I will speak of his father's goodness,

And of his mother's worth:

In the Upper region of Dbus gtsang, religious bridges were built,

84,000 religious volumes were brought,

And the main temples were filled with scriptures.

After mercantile bridges were built in lower China,

Great and small bricks of tea were brought on wagons,

And quality brick tea was piled in the homes.

After farmers and nomads built mercantile bridges,

Silver and copper coins were minted in the treasury.

Having planted all kinds of merit-accumulating crops,

Storerooms were filled.

Fields have spread everywhere,

Saddles of horses have been prepared,

Ropes for tethering the white mdzo herd have been prepared,
And multicolored livestock have been penned in the yard.

When praising the earth instead of the sky,

One should say that there is a space the length of a forearm between the earth and sky.

Ya! Now I speak the praises of Gsang sngags bde chen:

In the place where the Eight Auspicious Symbols are gathered,

In front of the auspicious mountain,

In the middle, the earth resembles a mirror,

The multicolored tents are pitched like flowers,

Like the rising yellow sun,

Resembling offerings of clean water.

The one who built that monastery,

The one who took self-liberating vows,

The one who practiced the virtuous dharma,

The one who listens during this life and the next,

The one who leads you to higher realms when you see his face.

The one who purifies iniquities when you prostrate to him,

The one who leads you to Heaven when you say his name,

And the one who leads you to the virtuous land

You should say that it is, for
example, Gsang sngags bde chen.

465Ya! Now I speak the praises of Dus gsum sangs rgyas gling:
466In the east, this tall gray mountain that pierces the sky
467Is like the strong eastern tiger that pounces in the sky;
468This southern wool-white conch mountain
469Is like the southern turquoise blue dragon soaked by rain;
467This western mountain range of Dgra 'dul dbang phyug
467Is like a red bird’s beak submerged in water;
467This tall northern sandy mountain range,
467Is like the northern yellow tortoise, rubbed with gold.
467To the right, the blue Yellow River flows like a turquoise dragon.
467To the left, the clean stream winds like a black snake.
467Nearby, the fields are like a completed mandala of all kinds of grain.
467In front, the forest is dense like southern fog.
467In the center, the road extends like a white silk sash.
467On the peak of the blazing rearward mountain, 
467This golden fortress of the Birth Deity Ban rim mthon po,
467Is like a great garuda flying in the sky.
In front of that there is a village that is like an auspicious swastika.

On the upper part of its holy area, with an outer room built like Mt. Tise, there is a copper-colored fortress.

In the center is Padmasambhava himself.

To his right are the lords of the three families.

To his left are the Buddhas of the three times.

In front of him, voices sound the dharma of the supreme Mahayanist secret tantras.

The bodies of the faithful are like a sun melting the frost:

They rise like a happy sun, without adversity and sickness,

And enjoy the sounds of singing and playing without suffering.

One should say that the place where three happy things are gathered is Ne'u na in Sgo me.

Ya! Now I speak the praises of the tantric practitioners:

The great practitioner controls the weather and the earth:

The sun and moon in the red sky.

[His] blue feathers are as bright as the plumage of three peacocks,

[His] dragon robes are as bright as a rainbow,

[His] voice is as pleasant as a cuckoo's,
His merit is like white clouds in the sky,
And [his] wealth is as abundant as summer rain.
When he frowns, Yama is afraid.
When he speaks, he pacifies the entire village.
And one should say that the one who subdues the violent, and who helps the lowly is the tantric practitioner.

Ya! Now I speak the praises of Sgo me's four clans
Like a bronze arrow fletched with four vulture feathers.
Like an excellent white bow strung with twined copper wires,
After the cunning tigers were born,
They had already developed stripes.
There were some with long braids,
And there were some who tied their braids at the end.
There were some who squashed mountainous devils with their thumbnails,
There were some who controlled the two enemy rakshas,
And there were some who blocked the paths of the two ma mo demons.
There were some like the bright sun above the morning mountain
Who melt the snowy mountain with the golden sun's light.
There are some like the waxing
moon above the evening mountain,
Who expel darkness with the conch shell moon's light.
There are some who rise like bright stars among the elders,
Whose children multiply like the stars of heaven.
The upper part of the white-flowered grassland is full of horses,
The middle part of the grassy valley is filled with yaks.
And the bottom of the high mountains is filled with sheep.
[We] hear about the existence of the dharma in Dbus gtsang,
[We] hear about the existence of wealth in China,
[We] hear about the existence of speeches in A mdo,
[We] do not have to speak of this because it is world-renowned.

Ya! Now today, foods are piled higher than Mt. Meru,
And though the tigers are courageous, they pounce with difficulty.
The drinks are deeper than the sea.
And though they are gold fish, they swim with difficulty.
Rainbow-like prayer flags are pulled taut.
If you pay respect to guests who have accumulated merit,
Then auspiciousness and your prayers will be attained.
If you compliment and toast the elders who possess merit,
Then prosperity and affluence will be invited.
If youths play, sing, and dance,
Then male and female guests will be greatly pleased.
Elders will live longer.
The youths' bravery will increase.
The grandchildren will grow up.
Now, their happiness will be abundant.
In the future, there will be a Buddha.
In one's dwelling there will be auspiciousness,
For us there will be good luck!
Now, pay homage to these things!
An Amdo Tibetan Wedding Speech

GLOSSARY

Line 1 Om, a, and hUM are each one syllable charms that may be used to elevate common speech to religious speech (see Ekvall 1964:115-118).

Line 2 Chos dbyings dag pa, Dharmadhatu, is sometimes translated as the 'realm of truth' or 'realm of phenomena'. The term is translated as Dharmakaya 'body of truth' for those who have attained Buddhahood.

Line 3 Chos sku kun tu bzang po, Dharmakaya Samantabhadra. Kun tu bzang po (Sskt: Samantabhadra) is a tantric deity. "He is termed the Primal Buddha in the Nyingmapa [rnying ma pa] tradition" (Samuel 1993:14). Chos sku may also be translated 'Dharma body', corresponding to Dharmakaya (Sskt).

Line 5 Lha longs sku thugs rje chen po. This Thugs rje chen po 'the great compassionate one' is an alternative name for Avalokitesvara.

Line 6 Bya rgod phung po'i ri is "Grdhrakuta in Sanskrit 'Vulture Hill of Magadha', a resort of S'akyamuni" (Das 1902:880).

Line 7 Bcom ldan rgyal ba shakya thub, the Baghavan Sakyamuni, refers to the Buddha. Sakyamuni is the Sanskrit name of the historical Buddha.

Line 9 O rgyan pad+ma 'byung gnas, Padmasambhava, also known as O rgyan and Guru Rin po che, "tamed the local gods and spirits of Tibet and bound them to the service of the Buddhist teachings" (Samuel 1993:19).

Line 12 Me ri'bar ba 'blazing mountain' is the name of a buddhafield.

Line 13 Yi dam are Buddhist meditational deities.

Line 14 G.yu lo bkod pa'i zhung kham is the name of Tara's (T: Sgrol ma) buddhafield.

Line 15 Rje btsun 'phags ma sgrol ma 'Arya Tara'. Tara (Sgrol ma) is a protective deity "whose help is engaged in order to avert various kinds of evil" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956:388).

Line 16 Seng 'brug stag rtse pho brang refers to the legendary fortress inhabited by King Gesar (Zhang 1985:2936).
Line 17 Seng chen nor bu dgra 'dul is an epithet for the eponymous hero of the Tibetan epic, King Gesar of Gling. For introductions to King Gesar, see Kornman (1997:39-68).

Line 18 The Malaya Mountains are a mountain range in India and are frequently referenced in Indic traditional literature.

Line 19 Ma hA ka la is the Sanskrit from the Tibetan Nag po chen po, the wrathful aspect of Avalokitesvara. "Mahakalas are the chief dharmapalas, protectors of the Dharma" (Kunsang 2003:1485).

Line 19 Lcam dral. The dgra lha and their sisters, the sring mo, are collectively known as the lcam dral bzhi (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956:324 n14).

Line 21 Sman rgyal mo. Sman are a class of goddesses. Ma a ne may refer to Ma ne ne, the mother of King Gesar, who is often included as a sman. The queens of the sman (sman kyi rgyal mo) are an important subdivision of this class (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956:200).

Line 22 Sum cu rtsa gsum lha yul refers to "A heaven where gods who studied the dharma dwell" (Kornman 1997:48).

Line 23 Tshangs pa dkar bo (Sskt: Sita-Brahma). Tshangs pa is the Tibetan term for the Indic deity, Brahma. Brahma assumed the role of a Dharma-protector in Tibetan Buddhism.

Line 24 Kluku"correspond to the Sanskrit naga, 'serpents', and in general indicate the powers of the earth and of the waters on which the prosperity of agriculture is believed to depend" (Tucci 1980:222). Additionally, "in Bonpo belief, the first Tibetans were descended from subterranean water deities" (Stein 1972:243).

Line 25 Gtsug na rin chen, the King of the naga.

Line 27 Gter bdag gnyen po. Gter bdag are masters of hidden treasure teachings (Kunsang 2003:1057). This may be a reference to Gter bdag gnyan chen thang lha (see Nebeskey-Wojkowitz 1956:254)

Line 29 srong ma'guardians', of which there are many classes (Nebeskey-Wojkowitz 1956:3). This speech specifically mentions guardians of the family lineage.
An Amdo Tibetan Wedding Speech

Line 31 *grogs lha* are deities often associated with luck, fortune, and happiness.

Line 32 Houses in Ne'u na Village generally have a main room, with bedrooms and a kitchen adjoining the main room, which opens directly onto a yard enclosed by adobe walls.

Line 33 *G.yang lha, Zas lha, and Grogs lha* are three deities of the class of the nine *dgra lha* (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956:331 n24, Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1976, 2007:105).

Line 33 The Tibetan term *zas* refers to both foods and drinks.

Line 35 *Pho lha* is a protective deity associated with the masculine principle. Pho lha has its seat on the right shoulder of a person (Hummel 1974:6).

Line 35 *Dgra lha*. Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Tucci refer to the *dgra lha* as "enemy deities." The title is usually given to those deities who are believed to be especially capable of protecting their worshippers against enemies, and to help them to increase their property (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956:318).

We translate the term as 'warrior deities'. The warrior deity "has its seat at the top of the head" (Hummel 1974:6).

Line 43 *Gos 'khor gsum* refers to silk cloth with designs of three wheels.

Line 47 *Phug lha* are deities of the home "that control the... prosperity of the families" (Namkhai Norbu 1995:73).

Line 50 *Thab lha* 'Hearth Deity'.

Line 53 *Sgo lha* 'Door Deity'.

Line 57 *Mo lha* is a female protector who has her seat in the abdomen (Hummel 1974:6). It is unclear why the speech associates this with the left shoulder.

Line 58 *Zhang lha* refers to the maternal uncle's protective deity. The *a zhang* 'maternal uncle' is the most important person at a Tibetan wedding. His deity is accorded the greatest respect (Stein 1972:107-108).

Line 58 The groom stands on the right side and the bride stands on the left side. The A zhang 'maternal uncle', is the most
important person at a Tibetan wedding, and his deity is accorded the highest respect (Stein 1972:107-108). It should be noted that, elsewhere in Khri ka County, the a zhang may include any of the bride's male family members ('Brug mo skyid et al. 2010).

Line 66 A khu dpon refers to a sngags pa'tantric practitioner'. In many parts of A mdo, A khu dpon are consulted to choose an auspicious wedding date and recite g.yang 'bod, a text calling prosperity to the wedding occasion.

Line 67 Gong tshe is a deity consulted in astrology and divination (for more, see Namkhai Norbu 1995:151).

Line 70 'Khor lo rtsibs brgyad refer to the the eight spokes of the Dharma wheel representing the Eightfold Path: the Buddha's teaching for ending suffering: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

Line 71 Pad ma 'dab brgyad refers to the eight-petalled lotus, a key symbol in Buddhist and Hindu iconography.

Line 73 Sme ba lo skor refers to the nine squares, a system used in Tibetan astrology. For more on this astrological practice, see Namkhai Norbu (1995:153-155).

Line 74 Spar kha is a transliteration of the Chinese term for the eight trigrams (Ch: ba gua) used in Chinese Taoist divination. For more on the practice of spar kha, see Namkhai Norbu (1995:152-153).

Line 76 According to Buddhist tradition, brgya rtsa brgyad '108' refers to the end of the 108 defilements.

Line 94 A pha ma 'phur shes is an elliptical hair ornament that is often made of silver and decorated with tiny pearls. It resembles a butterfly's colorful spotted wings.

Line 96 A lu gu 'ba' shes is a hair ornament as white as lamb fleece that features four or six holes. Children sometimes put strings through the holes, and use it to make noises by rapidly swinging it in a circle.

Line 100 Fox fur hats were popular in A mdo until a Buddhist teacher discouraged Tibetans from wearing animal furs in 2006 (see Yeh 2013).
An A mdo Tibetan Wedding Speech

Line 103 Ri rgyal lhun po 'Mt. Meru'/ 'Sumeru' is the axis of the universe in the Buddhist worldview. Above are the heavens from which extend the four continents.

Line 109 Sgo dar refers to a white silk kha btags hung on a door during a marriage.

Line 110 Wealthy families have a wide door with a two-piece curtain. White is the color of purity. At weddings, white door curtains are hung, or kha btags are tied, above the door.

Line 116 A Tibetan beer-like drink, traditionally homemade, but now is more frequently commercially purchased. In the context used here, it is more of a general term for alcohol.

Line 118 Bsam yas was a temple complex near Lhasa and was the first monastic Tibetan temple (Samuel 1993:50). It was built during the reign of King Khri srong lde btsan (755-797?) and consecrated after his death by Padmasambhava (Tucci 1980:5).

Line 142 Bya rgyal khyung chen refers to the garuda, a supernatural eagle-like bird that guards Mt. Meru. In the context of the wedding speech, it denotes a very important guest.

Line 162 Stod refers to Mnga’ ris, the westernmost portion of Tibet.

Line 163 'Dzam bu gling is the Tibetan translation for the Sanskrit Jambudvipa, one of the four continents surrounding Mt. Meru in Tibetan Buddhist Cosmology.

Line 165 Mdo khams refers to A mdo and Khams, two of the three major cultural regions of Tibet.

Line 165 Zal mo is one of the six ranges/districts in Mdo khams.

Line 166 Rgya gar rdo rje gdan 'Bodghaya' is the place where the Buddhas of the three times (the past Buddhas; the present Buddha, Shakya thub pa; and future Buddha, Maitreya or Byams pa) attained enlightenment, and is thus an extremely auspicious place.

Line 169 maNDala 'mandala' are symbolic replicas of the universe, as conceived by Buddhist cosmology, complete with Ri Rabs (“excellent mountain”), or Mt. Meru, in the center surrounded by the quarters of the earth, the continents, and the seas (Ekvall 1964:176-177).
For more on mandala, see Tucci (2001) and Stoddard (1999:169-213).

Line 169 Bkra shis rdza brgyad (also written bkra shis brtsags brgyad) 'the Eight Auspicious Symbols', are the gser nga 'golden fish', bum pa 'treasure vase', pad+ma 'lotus flower', the dpal be'u 'endless knot', chos khor' the Dharma-wheel', rgyal mtshan 'victory banner', dung g.yas 'khyl 'conch,' and rin chen gdugs'umbrella'.

Line 174 Stag gzig 'tiger-leopard' is often used to refer to modern-day Iran.

The Bon religion of the royal period (seventh to ninth centuries) is said to have come from [stag gzig] via Shangshung [zhang zhung], and Shangshung is the probable source of other early components of Tibetan civilization (Samuel 1993:50).

Line 196 Stod 'upper' refers here to western Tibet, and particularly Mnga' ris.

Line 196 Dbus gtsang. Dbus and gtsang are two separate cultural regions of Tibet, but the two are commonly written together and may also be written Ü Tsang, referring to Central Tibet, including the major cities of Lha sa and Gzhis ka rtse.

Line 197 Smad 'low'/ 'lower part' as used here refers to the eastern Tibetan area of Kham.

Line 198 Sku rgyal bod is a colloquial term. It refers to A mdo, and sometimes to Tibetan areas more generally. In this speech and its juxtaposition with Dbus gtsang and Smad Khams, it appears to be a highly stylized way of referring specifically to regions in A mdo.

Line 200 Tshangs pa brgya byin refers to the Hindu deities, Brahma and Indra.

Line 200 Khyung gshog ldem ma is the daughter of Brahma and Indra. The name literally means 'crooked garuda's wing'. We were unable to find other references to this deity.

Line 203 Lha srin sde brgyad refers to the eight classes of deities and spirits. The members of the list vary, but generally include gnyan, sa bdag, btsan, lha, and klu. Samuel notes that these gods may "themselves be the objects of regular cult-offerings,
primarily by lay people" (1993:163). Additionally, Tucci (1980:247) notes that *gnyan, sa bdag, btsan,* and *klu* are associated with a domain of the world, i.e., air, earth, under the earth, and water.

Line 205 *Smin drug* refers to Pleiades, and also refers to one of the twenty-eight gods of the constellations.

Line 209 *Phyag na rdo rje* or Vajrapani is one of the *rigs gsum mgon po* 'lords of the three families' (see line 487). Vajrapani "is a fierce emanation of the Buddha and represents powerful and, if necessary, destructive action" (Samuel 1993:282).

Line 213 *'Jam dbyangs* or Manjusri is one of the *rigs gsum mgon po* 'lords of the three families' (see line 487).

Line 213 The *phyi dpon* 'outer manager' oversees seating arrangements.

Line 226 *Li ma* 'bronze' approximates the color of Tibetan barley beer. *Chu li ma* may refer to pure, clean water.

Line 227 Most Tibetans do not eat fish, however, Ne'u na villagers eat fish from the Yellow River under particular circumstances, such as a serious illness or when suffering from malnutrition. We have elsewhere heard of fish being considered efficacious for women having difficult pregnancies. Fish are are also one of the Eight Auspicious Symbols, which may underscore the auspiciousness of this occasion.

Line 229 *Gsal bo khye'u chung* might refer to Khye'u chung lo tsA ba (one of the twenty-five disciples of Guru Rinpoche (see the entry for line 9).

Line 229 Thang 'ja' mo 'rainbow over the plain' is a reference we could not further identify.

Line 232 *Lha sras btsan po* probably refers to Srong btsan sgam po, who famously married the Nepalese Princess. For more on the custom of calling crown princes *lha sras,* see Stein (1972:51).

Line 233 *Bal bza' khri lcam* refers to the Nepalese princess, commonly referred to as Khri btsun or Bhrikuti Devi (Beyer 1973:5), who married Srong btsan sgam po.

Line 236 *Zhang zhung* was an ancient Tibetan kingdom where Bon flourished prior to Buddhism. Most scholars believe it was located in western Tibet.
Line 237 Dran pa nam mkha' was a famous Bon scholar who lived during the eighth century (Tucci 1980:242; Tshering Thar 2008:539).

Line 239 Tshe ring rig 'dzin may refer to Tshe dbang rig 'dzin, the son of Dran pa nam mkha' (see line 236). According to tradition, Dran pa nam mkha' "transmitted Tantric teachings" to Tshe dbang rig 'dzin (Kvaerne 1995:119).

Line 241 Stong rgyung mthu chen may refer to the great Bon scholar, Stong rgyung mthu chen (see McKay 2003:102).

Line 243 Stong rgyal 'bum thub is an epithet that singers often use to mean that they have won 1,000 competitions and can do 100,000 things, i.e., it refers to their great ability as singers.

Line 245 Gangs dkar ti se 'Mt. Tise'/ 'Mt. Kailash', a famous holy mountain in western Tibet sacred to Hindus and Buddhists alike (Kunsang 2003:380).

Line 246 Ma pham g.yu mtsho 'Manarasowar' is a freshwater lake Buddhists and Hindus consider a sacred pilgrimage site. It is 2,000 kilometers from Lhasa and near Mt. Kailash.

Line 249 Dpyad bu khri shes was a famous Bonpo knowledgeable in medicine. His father is reputed to be Ston pa shes rab, the founder of Bon.

Line 253 Kong jo is the Tibetan name for the Tang Dynasty Princess, Wencheng (d. 680), who built the Ramoche Temple (Stein 1972:58).

Line 254 Gnam ri srong btsan (570?-629) was the thirty-second King of Tibet, and the father of Tibetan King Srong btsan sgam po.

Line 255 Gong tse was the father of princess Wencheng, Emperor Tang Taizong (599-649), the founder of the Tang Dynasty (618-901).

Line 256 Mgar stong btsan was a famous minister of King Srong btsan sgam po.

Line 257 Srong btsan sgam po (613-649/650) was the thirty-third King of Tibet, and founder of the Tibetan empire. He is said to have been an incarnation of the Boddhisattva of Compassion, Avalokitesvara (Stein 1972:38).

Line 259 Princess Wencheng was said to be an emanation of White Tara, or Rje brtsun Sgrol ma (Mukherji 1999:182).
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Line 284 Gang+ga refers to the Ganges River in India.
Line 287 Hor is an oft-mentioned kingdom in Tibetan folklore associated with the Monguor (Tu, Hor pa).
Line 291 Gtsug lag khang refers to the main temple in Lhasa.
Line 295 'Byung ba Inga refers to the five elements - wood, fire, earth, metal, and water.
Line 303 Chos kyi 'khor lo (Sskt, Dharmacakra), the wheel of the dharma.
Line 306 Ma Ni is the short form for the six-syllable mantra of Avalokitesvara, oM ma Ni pad+me hUM.
Line 307 Stupa are reliquary structures. "In Tibet this takes the shape of small and tall masonry monuments of settled form crowned with the...emblem of the sun and moon" (Das 1902:438).
Line 310 Mang ra chu bo 'Mangra River' is near Ne'u na Village and a tributary of the Yellow River (T: Rma chu).
Line 320 Da ru refers to a small handheld drum. It features two beaters attached to strings and is used by monks.
Line 327 Great care is taken to ensure that the bottoms of the robes worn by the bride and groom are even at the bottom, particularly where the robe wraps around and there are two levels of hems to worry about.
Line 333 Dbus (see Dbus gtsang, line 196).
Line 337 Yellow-hat monks refers to the Dge lugs pa Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.
Line 346 Nas sngon mo, the barley is blue because it is planted in highland areas with a pure blue sky as background.
Line 398 Gtor ma are dough offerings of various shapes, sizes, and colors that are used for offerings, exorcisms, and divination (see Nebeskey-Wojkowitz 1956:347-354).
Line 399 Bdud rtsi sman mchod refers to "the nectar of immortality" (Kunsang 2003:1369) and often accompanies gtor ma offerings.
Line 400 dmar chen rak+ta 'bright red blood'. The combination with "the nectar of immortality" (line 399) is in keeping with Nebeskey-Wojkowitz's assertion that
a wrathful deity is given a gtor ma consisting of meat and bone, a libation of blood and bile, skull-drums and thigh-bone trumpets are played for its entertainment, etc., while a peaceful protector of religion is presented with such gifts as medicines, sweet and good-tasting food, fragrant incense, and pieces of silk (1956:343).

Line 401 Dpe cha refers to a Tibetan book that is generally long and narrow and traditionally printed from wood blocks.

Line 401 Bka' rgyud refers to the collected sayings of the Buddha. A set of the Bka' rgyud usually comprises 108 volumes.

Line 403 Dkon mchog gsum 'The Three Jewels - the Buddha, Dharma, and the Sangha (the body of monks).

Line 444 Rta 'do ba refers to an excellent horse.

Line 445 Mdzo are yak-cow hybrids. A 'white herd' emphasizes the purity and sanctity of the wedding occasion. The forehead must be white.

Line 449 Gsang sngags bde chen is both the name of a monastery, and the name of the territorial deity of that monastery. This section praises both the monastery and the deity, because of the excellent location. The temple is located in Stag lung Village, Laxiwa Town, Khri ka County.

Line 465 Dus gsum sangs rgyas gling refers to a monastery that was destroyed in Ne'u na Village during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Later, a ma Ni khang 'prayer hall' was built in the village and given the same name.

Line 466 A dpon ri is a mountain so high that it is the leader of other mountains.

Line 468 Ba' tshe dung may be a toponym. We were unable to identify it further.

Line 470 Dgra 'dul dbang phyug is the name of a mountain deity with a fierce face. Dgra 'dul are a class of Bon deities having a "bellicose nature" (Tucci 1980:218).

Line 480 Skyes lha ban ri mthon po: Skyes lhais the "deity of the area of one's birth, or birth deity" (Goldstein 2001:75). Ban ri mthon po is the name of this deity for this part of Ne'u na.

Line 482 G.yung drung refers to a swastika, an auspicious symbol of well-being. "[G].yung drung...is a technical term to indicate
Being in the *Bon* religion [italics in the original]" (Tucci 1980:68). In the context of this speech, its shape is most important.

Line 487 Rigs gsum mgon po refers to the lords of the three families, Manjusri, Avalokitesvara, and Vajrapani (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956:86).

Line 489 Theg chen gsang sngags. *Theg chen* is the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit term 'Mahayana', which refers to the form of Buddhism emphasizing altruistic spiritual practice, embodied in the form of a Bodhisattva. The term *gsang sngags* literally means 'secret tantras'.

Line 501 In Tibetan areas of Qinghai, rain is heaviest during the summer months.

Line 502 Gshin rje refers to Yama, the Lord of Death, who was originally a Hindu deity.

Line 510 *Gsar bu stag 'dra 'dra* is a local saying that a man in his prime is like a tiger. In this village, people are said to be born strong like a tiger that already has its stripes.

Line 513 This action approximates the squashing of a louse, and speaks to the power of the tantric practitioners.

Line 514 *Srin po* are a class of demons that were originally native to Tibet, but have now been conflated with the Indian *raksas* (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956:280).

Line 515 *Btsan ma mo: ma mo* are female protective deities (see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956:6).

Line 529 Ri rab refers to Mt. Meru (see line 103).

Lines 529-532 These four lines suggest that the guests have eaten and drunk much of the prepared good food and beverages.

Line 542 When a child can use their arms and legs well, they are thought to be growing up and increasingly ready to participate in family labor.

Line 544 *Sangs rgyas* refers to Buddha.
REFERENCES


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