WARMING YOUR HANDS WITH MOONLIGHT

G.yu lha
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Front Cover: Dbyangs 'dzom and her two granddaughters in their home in Siyuewu Village, January 2010.

Back Cover: Siyuewu Village in 2010.

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The images in this book include sacred images of gtor ma, bla ma, and mountain deities and should be treated respectfully.
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I have several names: my mother calls ma G.yu go; my relatives and my community members call me G.yu lha; my official ID card gives Yina; and all my recent friends, classmates, and teachers call me Jody.

I am from Siyuewu Village, Puxi Township, Rangtang ('Dzam thang) County, Aba (Rnga ba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China. All Siyuewu villagers are classified by the government as Tibetan and speak a language that linguists refer to as Lavrung, but for which we have no name. In fact, we never use the word Lavrung.

My family are agro-pastoralists. Nine of us live together: my mother, grandmother, my second oldest uncle (a monk), and I support our other family members: my two younger brothers; my eldest uncle, who is a monk and has been sick with tuberculosis since 2002; my great grandmother (b. 1915), and; my late grandfather's brother, who is the local reincarnate lama. My family is large because we have three monks who did not marry and establish their own households and because we have four generations living together.

I graduated from the local county junior middle school in Rangtang County Town in 2007. I studied in the ETP (English Training Program) at Qinghai Normal University from 2007-2009. For complex reasons, I was unable to continue my study and then started my current

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1 Tibetan (Wylie), Chinese (Pinyin), and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) are used to record non-English terms. All terms with appropriate scripts are given in the Non-English Word List. Tone has been omitted in the IPA rendering of the Lavrung language. See the bibliography for references on this language.
project documenting oral tradition in my village with guidance from Gerald Roche.

Mother was not supportive when I began my research by asking her about childbirth and home remedies, because she thought such things do not constitute serious study. Great Grandmother wanted me to return home to marry if I was not enrolled in school, so my family could see me every day and worry less about me. Most villagers could not understand what I was doing and thought that my project was a strange sort of homework. However, after I explained the purpose of my research to my family and some villagers several times, they began to understand its importance and were eventually proud of me being the first person to document our community's culture. Grandmother still asks me to take the higher education entrance examination and attend college. I understand her and am careful to never directly contradict her. However, my uncles and mother say I can do what I want, since they believe in and trust me. Their support gives me confidence to continue my work.

I and other students doing similar projects were trained in conducting research interviews, data analysis, writing in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), and in using digital audio recorders, digital cameras, and computers.

I learned many things that I never knew about my community before undertaking this research. I had never heard my village's history, or even imagined that my village had a history. I now sincerely want to continue learning about my community in order to better comprehend myself and inform others about my culture.

I was bored and clueless when I conducted my first interview with an old monk, who told me that learning king stories\(^2\) was best when studying oral traditions. It was a hot

\(^2\) *Rgyal po dpe* 'king stories' are oral narratives relating the exploits of unspecified kings. Such narratives may be
August day and the monk suggested we go to the third floor of his house. The interview lasted three hours. Since the third floor lacked an electrical outlet, I extended a power cord from the second floor to my recorder. We then waited for an hour because there was a blackout. I was frustrated because I did not really understand the long, complicated king stories he told. After this rather unsuccessful interview, I questioned the value of further interviews.

I was told many folktales I had never heard during my second interview with an aunt. She was delighted to tell stories and comfortable being recorded. She was digging a drinking pool for her household's seven cows with her twenty-seven year-old son when I visited. He told us to do the interview while he continued digging. After we finished, my aunt asked me to return so she could tell more stories.

Later, the village leader, Reluo, helped me organize a circle dance to be videoed in his hamlet, where there are fifteen households. Everyone dressed in their best Tibetan robes and performed four circle dances. They were all delighted. Kha btags\(^3\) were prepared for me and I was treated like a lama or a leader. A former classmate gave a short speech about my work.

We were classmates as you all know, and I'm really happy that she is doing such wonderful work. Doing such cultural preservation work is important and we should support her however we can. We are not expecting to get anything from her; on the contrary, we will provide whatever we have to support her. Thank you!

\(^3\) A strip of white silk offered to high lama or other respected persons.
After my experiences and interviews, I increasingly felt the impact of continuing this important, multi-faceted work. My villagers' support inspires me.

One day while conducting research, I was taking a walk in the village near Cho Idan's newly built house. He was outside, fixing his hammer. I stopped and asked him about local proverbs.

"ơ yo⁴ Cho Idan, please tell me some proverbs or metaphors," I requested, squatting next to him where he was concentrating on his work.

"You know, I'm not the right person to ask. Asking me is just like warming your hands with moonlight. You should ask someone who knows. I'm just an old man who knows nothing," Cho Idan said.

I later asked my mother what that meant – warming your hands with moonlight. She explained that the phrase meant trying to do something that brings no results. I was astonished that Cho Idan had refused my request for a metaphor with a metaphor, and I had not even noticed. I decided then that Uncle Cho Idan's metaphor would make a good title for my book.

I also made DVDs of audio, photos, and videos for the villagers. Villagers were sincerely amazed when they saw themselves on their TVs. Additionally, a few villagers acknowledged my cultural preservation work and offered their support, reminding me again of this work's importance.

The research for this book was supported by funds from the World Oral Literature Project and private donors. For online examples of materials discussed in this book visit:

http://www.oralliterature.org/collections/gyulha001.html

⁴ Lavrung: uncle. See Appendix Four for more on Lavrung kinship terms.
Figure One. A panorama of Siyuewu Village, February 2009.
PART ONE: INTRODUCTION
Siyuewu Village is located in Puxi Township, Rangtang ('Dzam thang) County, Aba (Rnga ba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China. The village is 220 kilometers northwest of the prefecture capital, Maerkang ('Bar khaps), and 200 kilometers south of the Rangtang County seat. The village consists of several hamlets scattered through a vale\(^5\) on National Highway 317, which runs along the Dadu River\(^6\) through Jinchuan and Rangtang counties, passing through several geographically distinct vales separated by narrow canyons.

Figure Two. Rangtang County (black), in Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province.\(^7\)

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\(^5\) A vale is a natural geographic unit consisting of a valley section bound at each end by narrow canyons.

\(^6\) Locals refer to the Dadu River as rնo mɛn 'river'.

\(^7\) This map was created by Wikimedia user Croquant (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Croquant) and is used under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license.
Locals typically refer to people by locality – hamlet, village, or vale – adding the particle 'vɑ', rather than using ethnonyms. Figure Three gives examples of how people from different localities are locally referred to.

Figure Three. Siyuewu Village terms for selected locations and their inhabitants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Inhabitant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ergali</td>
<td>zəɡæ ne va</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eri</td>
<td>ɬʊənɔ zi va</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guanyinqiao</td>
<td>gəɾəm de va</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shangzhai</td>
<td>ɬʊəjo ne va</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shili</td>
<td>ʃə ni va</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiangyang (Puxi)</td>
<td>xʰɑŋ Jan va</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiaoyili</td>
<td>xʰʌʊ jə ne va</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yourigou</td>
<td>jəɾən cə va</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zongke</td>
<td>ʃəɾəzoŋ koχə va</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Siyuewu lies halfway\(^8\) between Puxi Township\(^9\) (to the west in Rangtang County) and Ergali Township (to the east in Jinchuan County). From east to west along National

---

\(^8\) Siyuewu is approximately twelve kilometers from both township centers.

\(^9\) Puxi Township contains five administrative villages: Yourigou, Xiaoyili, Shangzhai/ Dayili, Xiangyang, and Siyuewu. Only Yourigou residents, who live eighteen kilometers west of Siyuewu Village, are herders. The landscape surrounding Yourigou is similar to that of Siyuewu Village, but the climate is slightly cooler because the elevation is higher. Residents of the other four villages are primarily farmers, though there are approximately ten herding families per village. Residents of all five villages are officially classified as Tibetan, though about three Han Chinese men have married into each village. All these Tibetan-Han families' children are considered Tibetan.
Highway 317 are the following vales: 10 Taiyanghe, 11 Guanyinqiao, Eri, 12 and Ergali in Jinchuan County; and Siyuewu, Puxi, Yourigou, 13 Xiaoyili, Zongke, 14 Shangzhai, and Shili in Rangtang County.

West of Siyuewu (Rangtang County)
The Puxi Township seat is located in a vale that consists of a single administrative village – Xiangyang. Residents of Siyuewu and Xiangyang traditionally have close economic, kin, and social ties. They speak slightly different dialects but can easily understand each other. Sichuan Chinese dialect is now the lingua franca in the township town while the local dialect is spoken in outlying hamlets.

The mouth of Yourigou Vale is north of National Highway 317, about one and a half kilometers from Puxi Township Town. The altitude is higher than the highway. Residents are pastoralists and speak A mdo Tibetan with a pronounced local accent. About fifty percent of Siyuewu villagers can communicate in A mdo Tibetan with Yourigou residents; both parties use Sichuan Chinese dialect if communication in A mdo Tibetan proves challenging.

Approximately ten kilometers west on National Highway 317 from the mouth of Yourigou is Xiaoyili Administrative Village and vale. Villagers speak a dialect

10 In addition to being natural geographic units, each vale is also designated as an officially recognized administrative unit, either village or township.
11 Taiyanghe Township seat is located in a tributary valley south of the Dadu River.
12 This vale lies south of National Highway 317 between Guanyinqiao and Ergali.
13 This vale lies north of National Highway 317 between Puxi and Xiaoyili.
14 This vale lies south of National Highway 317 between Xiaoyili and Shangzhai.
resembling what is spoken in Siyuewu and Xiangyang. Villagers from Siyuewu and Xiaoyili can communicate easily, though certain words are pronounced differently (see Figure Four).

Figure Four. Dialectical differences in the Siyuewu and Xiaoyili dialects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>pig</th>
<th>rock</th>
<th>livestock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siyuewu</td>
<td>pʰoɣɘ</td>
<td>zəɡə me</td>
<td>su</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiaoyili</td>
<td>pɛɣɘ</td>
<td>zəɡə ma</td>
<td>ydzə</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A bridge three kilometers west of the mouth of Xiaoyili Vale leads southwest to Zongke Township and vale. The township town is approximately twenty kilometers southwest of the bridge. A dialect similar to Siyuewu dialect is spoken in Zongke, but Siyuewu villagers communicate with Zongke dialect speakers with difficulty. High altitude pastoralists in this valley speak a variety of A mdo Tibetan.

Shangzhai Vale, locally referred to as Dayili, is approximately six kilometers west of the bridge leading to Zongke. Dayili residents speak a dialect similar to that spoken in Zongke that is also challenging for Siyuewu villagers to comprehend.

The next vale west on National Highway 317 is Shili, which is fifteen kilometers from Shangzhai. A very different language is spoken here. Siyuewu villagers cannot use their own dialect to communicate with Shili residents and thus speak Sichuan Chinese dialect.

*East of Siyuewu (Jinchuan County)*

Ergali Township in Jinchuan County is twenty kilometers east of Siyuewu on National Highway 317. All residents speak a dialect similar to that spoken in Siyuewu, and communicate easily with residents from Siyuewu. Marriage between residents of the two vales was becoming increasingly common in the first decade of the twenty-first
century. In addition to speakers of the respective dialects, there is also a small population of A mdo Tibetan speakers living in high altitude pastoral communities. A mdo Tibetan is the communicative medium between these pastoralists and valley-living agriculturalists.

Two kilometers west of Ergali Township seat and still within Ergali Vale, is Hongqi Bridge. Eight kilometers southwest from the bridge is Eri Township, Jinchuan County. A different dialect from that spoken in Ergali and Siyuewu is spoken here. Two or three pastoral communities speak A mdo Tibetan. Residents of Siyuewu and Eri can understand each other and are linked through kin relations, though people seldom visit each other because of the significant distance between the two communities.

Approximately ten kilometers east of Hongqi Bridge on National Highway 317 is Guanyinqiao Town seat where residents speak a dialect similar to that spoken in Ergali. Siyuewu residents communicate with Guanyinqiao locals, each using their respective dialect, in part because Siyuewu villagers often come to the township on pilgrimage to the township's eponymous monastery, Guanyinqiao. Additionally, many Guanyinqiao businessmen come to Siyuewu Village to trade.

To the east of Guanyinqiao is Taiyanghe Township, where a small number of people speak a dialect similar to that spoken in Guanyinqiao; the majority of residents speak A mdo Tibetan.

Figure Five depicts the distribution of the locations mentioned above along the Dadu River and its tributaries.
Figure Five. Distribution of Lavrung-speaking Communities on the Dadu River and its Tributaries.

SCALE
Approximately ten kilometers
Siyuewu: Territorial Divisions, Population, and Village Name

Siyuewu Village is situated on both sides of the Dadu River in a steep, narrow valley that has several lateral tributary valleys. The shady southern side (ko kar) of the valley is dense with forest, and the sunny northern side (nɔ kar) is covered by grass and shrubs. Hamlets are dispersed from the top to the foot of both. The houses on the shady side of the valley are surrounded by fields, which, in turn, are surrounded by trees. Fields surrounding the houses on the sunny side of the valley are edged with bushes.

The village is officially divided into three dui 'government work brigades': Yi dui, Er dui, and San dui. It is additionally divided into eleven named hamlets and one unnamed hamlet. The hamlet names lack specific meaning.

Yi dui is on the sunny side of the valley and has forty households. Eight households were previously located on the upper mountain slope half a day's walk from the valley floor and four houses were located on each of two ridges. The hamlet on one ridge is called  행사 tsʰə and the other 행사 tsaw. Downslope east of 행사 tsʰə and 행사 tsaw on another ridge are the seven households of kʰɛ ʑə Hamlet. Four

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15 First, Second, and Third Brigade, respectively.
16 There is no term for 'hamlet' in the local language; people refer to specific hamlets by their names. 'Hamlet' is used to denote a localized cluster of houses. Hamlets are not recognized in government administrative toponymy.
17 Six of these households have now built winter houses at the foot of the mountain. One household remains permanently on the high slope, while a remaining household occasionally spends time living with one of the family's sons near Siyuewu Monastery.
18 These names are occasionally used to refer to the ridges on which the hamlets are located.
houses are located in ŋə ʰəyə Hamlet, on a small hill an approximately twenty-minute walk downslope on the same ridge from ʰə kʰɛ زة. About a twenty-minute walk down from ŋə ʰəyə is ʳjæ ʰəyə, where Siyuewu Monastery is located. This hamlet of twenty-two households is nearest the road, which is a fifteen-minute walk downhill. Two households are located together to the east of these twenty-two houses, and a single household is situated to the west.

Er dui is on the shady side of the valley. ℓʰəm du¹⁹ Hamlet with fifteen households faces ʳjæ ʰəyə on the sunny side and is at the same altitude. A single household considered part of ℓʰəm du is situated on a small hill near ℓʰəm du, and is referred to as ℓəgæd.²⁰ Uphill about one hour's walk to the southwest of ℓʰəm du are the four houses of ɣəযə ʳə Hamlet. The thirteen households of :CGRect sbəd Hamlet are located uphill to the southwest of ɣəযə ʳə on a ridge running perpendicular to the Dadu River. There are a total of thirty-two households in Er dui.

San dui has thirty-three households and is also located on the shady side of the valley, west of both Yi dui and Er dui. Southwest of 觚 sbəd, across a gulley and on another ridge running perpendicular to the Dadu River, are 觚 le Hamlet's fifteen households. Six kilometers west from Siyuewu Monastery on the shady side of the vale is a vro .toObject Valley. About one and half hour's walk into the valley are two hamlets – vro with thirteen households and ɣəbrə ʳə with four households. These two hamlets face each other on either side of the valley.

There were 106 households and approximately 580 people in Siyuewu Village in 2006. In the local dialect, vsə jo (Siyue) means 'stone mill'. According to villagers, this

¹⁹ From the Tibetan than rdo 'evil rock'.
²⁰ More than half of the households in Siyuewu are named. Unnamed households were established within the past two generations.
name was given because there was once a large stone mill where the village school is currently located. 穰 is a locative particle used to form place names. Examples of terms using 穰 are given in Figure Six below.

Figure Six. Use of 穰.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ལྕ་ཐུ</td>
<td>a place with grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>རྟ་ཕྲོ་ཐུ</td>
<td>a place with a stone resembling a horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ཤོུ་ཙུ་ཐུ</td>
<td>a place with many fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>སྒྲ་ཟོུ་ལོ་ཐུ</td>
<td>a place with a large tree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The stone mill, located in Yi dui, was accidently destroyed by non-local builders when digging foundations for the village primary school in 1991. Nothing remains of the stone mill today. Elders believe that demolishing the stone mill will bring misfortune to Siyuewu Village because the stone was said to have been used by King Ge sar, the legendary Tibetan king, to sharpen his arrows and hence was considered sacred.
Figure Seven. Hamlets of Siyewu.

Figure Eight. ṅo le Hamlet, Fields, and the Dadu River.
Language

All Siyuewu Villagers speak Lavrung, a Rgyalrongic dialect only spoken in Siyuewu and certain nearby villages in Rangtang and Jinchuan counties. People in Xiaoyili, Shangzhai, and Xiangyang Villages in Puxi Township; Ergali Township; and Guanyinqiao Town, Jinchuan County also speak Lavrung. The Lavrung spoken in these locations are mutually comprehensible. Lavrung is mutually unintelligible with Tibetan, though Lavrung speakers employ certain Tibetan words, particularly religious terms. Seven households in Siyuewu speak A mdo Tibetan as their mother tongue. They were herdsmen prior to the economic reforms of the 1980s, after which they migrated to Siyuewu Village and became farmers. In addition to these seven households, approximately fifteen villagers understand and speak A mdo Tibetan. All the villagers, except some women and people born before about 1955, speak Sichuan Chinese dialect. Students and some teenagers who have dropped out of school speak Lavrung mixed with Chinese. There are no words in Lavrung for such modern items as TV, thresher, iron stove, and light bulb and thus Chinese is employed – dian shi, tuo li ji, huo lu zi, and deng pao, respectively.
In accordance with the national government's compulsory nine-year education policy, a family had to pay a 5,000 RMB fine in 2010 if a child did not attend school. This was a huge sum for local families. Children must attend school in the township center or county town where there are many Han Chinese and where classes are taught in Sichuan Chinese and Modern Standard Chinese. Children watch TV soap operas, Korean movies, and talk shows that are in Chinese, which influences the language they use.

History

Villagers were rebuilding the local monastery when I returned home in January 2010. Each family was required to send at least two people to demolish the old monastery and prepare the site for the new monastery. Many more than the required number of laborers gathered. Since my family home is near the monastery, I joined the work soon after I arrived.

Srong pel, Gnas rgyal, Cangs ko lo, and Zhangs sgyong were having afternoon tea in Bkra shes don 'grub's house near the monastery. I entered the home and was poured a bowl of black tea. I told them about my project and everyone was astonished when I said I would publish a book.

"Your book is going to be about our culture, right? Will you be famous, as many other authors are?" Gnas rgyal said skeptically.

"Yeah, right! I will be famous for sure! Would you like to be my secretary later?" I replied, laughing, making the others laugh too. "I need to know some of our village history. For example, some people say that we are Tibetan while others disagree."

"I don't think anyone really knows our village history. I've never heard anyone talk about such things. But one thing I am sure about is that we are Tibetan. Our belief in Buddhism shows we are Tibetan – and consider our other
beliefs, habits, clothing, worldview, and daily interactions. The only thing that makes us different from other Tibetans is our language," Srong pel said.

"Let me tell you something so you can understand who we are," he continued. "After a conflict between Jiarong\(^{21}\) and the Chinese, the Chinese discovered that the Jiarong stone towers were practically indestructible. They could not conquer us Jiarong people. However, four Jinchuan people were captured and taken to Beijing so the Chinese could learn how the stone towers were built. These four Jinchuan people built three stone towers – two were dismantled and one is still in Beijing. I heard once that there are Jinchuan people still living in Beijing and this explains how they got there – they are the descendants of those four captives."

"What you've just said is probably true. Once Mkhan po Tshul khrum blo gros\(^{22}\) was teaching us Tibetan history and he mentioned the Jinchuan people. Once he heard them sing, 'Nga'ipha yul chu chen\(^{23}\) phyong nas yongs. My homeland is Chu chen', when they performed circle dances," said Cangs ko lo.

\(^{21}\) People from Jinchuan County and Heishui, Xiaojin, and Lixian counties in Aba Prefecture who share a common language are called Jinchuan or Jiarong people and are also considered Tibetans, both by themselves and by Siyuewu villagers. Locals are pleased to refer to themselves as Jiarong people as they consider themselves and Jiarong people to both be Tibetan.

\(^{22}\) Tshul khrum blo gros is a \textit{mkhan po 'abbot} in Gser rta Monastery, Gser rta County, Dkar mdzes Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province. Cangs ko lo studied Tibetan there for two years under this \textit{mkhan po}.

\(^{23}\) Chu chen is a Tibetan name for Jinchuan, which is situated at the confluence of the Khro, Gser, and Bai rivers, hence the name Chu chen 'Big River'.
"Wherever there are stone towers, locals are Jiarong people," Srong pel added.

"There were many stone towers in the time of Gling, and Tibetans slowly spread from Gling to Jinchuan areas, bringing stone tower construction skills to protect themselves from others. This is also why Jiarong people refer to themselves as Tibetans, not an isolated ethnicity, and it also explains why Tibetans are the origin of the Qiang," Gnas rgyal said.

"I agree that Tibetans expanded and came here. There were three stone towers in our village that were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). King Khro skyabs, the king of the eighteen tribes of Jinchuan... Khro skyabs... I think he may have been under Khro thong's leadership," Gnas rgyal said.

This discussion led to Zhangs sgyong (b. 1958) telling the following account of Gling Kingdom armies chasing a monster to Siyuewu Village:

This comes from the *gnas yig* written by Gter ston, a monk who lived in Siyuewu Village for almost ten years. He was said to be from somewhere in Rangtang County, but no one really knows where he was from. He was a *rtsis pa*,

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24 Gling refers to Ge sar's kingdom.
25 Siyuewu villagers consider the Qiang (an ethnic group living in Aba that have a close relationship with nearby Tibetans) to be Jiarong/ Jinchuan people. Siyuewu villagers do not consider themselves Qiang.
26 Khro thong was one of Ge sar's ministers.
27 A *gnas yig* is a book on local history or one that predicts the future and advises what should and should not be done. High status *lama* and *rtsis pa* 'fortune tellers' write *gnas yig*. Two kinds of *gnas yig* are *sa gnas*, which are found under the earth, and *dgong gnas*, which spontaneously arise in a *lama* or *rtsis pa*'s mind and are written down.
an astronomer or fortune teller who predicted the future for villagers. He was highly respected in the village. He later left without saying farewell and never returned. Villagers asked about him to anyone they thought might know. Two years after he left, someone said that he had died. I talked with him about the history of our village twice when he was here. It is said that the gnas yig from Gter ston is kept in Zongke.

Gter ston said that once a monster named Srin mo kha la me 'bar 'Demoness with a Fire Mouth' fled from Gling to Siyuewu, chased by Gling's soldiers. The monster was finally caught, pinned under Zor tsa, a small rocky mountain in Siyuewu, and became part of the mountain. Marks on the rocky mountain testify to where they fought. Later, Srin mo kha la me 'bar planned to set fire to the village from under the rocky mountain. A khu Khro thong made a gsong chabs28 near the small rocky mountain and subdued the srin mo, saving the village.

Afterwards, the Gling soldiers and Khro thongs celebrated the monster's defeat, giving thanks to those who had saved the village.

Village Livelihoods

Siyuewu villagers primarily subsist by agriculture though four families also keep an average of eighty yaks each in addition to their fields. Yaks are herded in a pasture about one day on foot from the village, where two or three family members live in black yak-hair tents year-round, though they also have houses in the village. These families make 2,000 to

28 Gsang chabs are small earth balls that are consecrated by chanting. Containing a high lama's urine, they are considered sacred, and put in water that is drunk to prevent diseases and contamination by evil.
4,000 RMB per year selling about half of the butter and cheese they produce.

Locals grow barley, wheat, soybeans, mung beans, corn, and potatoes that are all locally consumed rather than sold (except for corn – see below). Cabbages, turnips, tomatoes, and spinach are cultivated in outdoor gardens in summer and spring and in homemade greenhouses in autumn and winter. Some families cultivated vegetables in homemade greenhouses in recent years but achieved poor results due to unfamiliarity with greenhouse construction techniques, and so no longer do this.

Some wealthy families previously owned over twenty *mu*\(^{29}\) of land but, in 2000, the government implemented two policies. One was *tuigeng huanlin* (returning cropland to forest) whereby the government gave three annual grain subsidies of barley, wheat, and rice to farmers who planted sloping fields with trees provided by the government. After three years, this changed to 130 kilograms of rice or grain annually per *mu*. The second policy, *tuimu huancao* (returning pasture to grass), was designed to ease the pressure of overgrazing and reverse the damage it causes grassland. Presently, each family has an average of four *mu* of fields.

Shortly after Lo sar,\(^{30}\) villagers fertilize fields with cow manure and then plow in late February or early March. The appearance of wild peach blossoms is taken as a sign to plow. The Tibetan Calendar is also consulted to determine the plowing time. Five to ten cows are kept per household for milking and producing manure. Each family has one to two *mdzo*\(^{31}\) for plowing. Women spread beans and corn selected by hand and potato pieces in rows after men plow

\(^{29}\) An area measurement equal to two-thirds of a hectare.
\(^{30}\) New Year, also referred to by the Chinese term Chunjie.
\(^{31}\) A male cow and female yak hybrid that is larger than a yak and has shorter hair.
with *mdzo*. For barley and wheat, a male or a female first sows the seed and then plows over them. Women never plow, though this is not proscribed. Women are solely responsible for taking care of fields from sowing until harvesting because men leave the village to undertake migrant labor and earn cash income after plowing.

Crops sprout in late March and early April. Villagers then weed, loosen the earth around the base of crops, and keep livestock away from crops. Fencing and scarecrows keep birds and rodents away. Fires are lit in the fields every two days to deter wild pigs and badgers. Harvest is in late July to early August. Normally, one *mu* yields 500 kilograms of corn, 250 kilograms of barley, 400 kilograms of beans or wheat, or 600 kilograms of potatoes. Barley, wheat, and potatoes are for subsistence consumption; corn sold at 1.8 to 2.4 *mao* per kilogram in 2009. Vegetables planted immediately after harvesting ripen before winter. Crops are rotated, e.g., if corn is grown in a field one year, barley or wheat is grown the next year.

Migrant labor is the main income source. Able-bodied men and women younger than fifty spend much of the year collecting caterpillar fungus and other medical substances, repairing roads, and doing construction work. Most villagers go to locations near the village, but younger villagers may go as far as the provincial capital, Chengdu. One or two family members stay at home doing housework while other family members are out working. Five to ten people who are relatives or good friends leave to work together. Daily wages for migrant labor ranged from fifty to 100 RMB in 2011.

**Housing**

Locals build houses from stone, wood, and adobe. If a family plans to build a house and lacks members skilled in design or
construction, they employ local experts to build the four corners of the house, as these are the most challenging part to build. Most middle-aged male villagers know how to build houses.

One house requires at least two or three builders but more makes construction faster. Builders are paid eighty to 100 RMB per day and ten or twenty RMB more is paid to those who build the corners and supervise other builders. Others help the family collect stones, make mud, provide mud and stones to the builders, and cook for the workers. These additional helpers are not paid, but the assisted family takes note of who is there and reciprocates in the future.

Houses typically have four or five floors, each with its own function. One or two floors are built in a year because it is too much work for the family and helpers to build an entire house during one construction season.

Villagers ask the local reincarnate lama to choose an auspicious location before constructing a house. He may also ask the family to invite local monks to chant scriptures or make offerings to the Buddha before laying the foundation. Immediately after determining the foundation's location, stones, earth, and wood are prepared and digging the foundation begins. After the outer walls are finished, wood beams are put across the top of the walls, and boards are laid across. A thick layer of moss is laid on the boards and two types of earth are spread atop the moss. nay læm 'black earth' is laid first, followed by kær læm 'yellow or red earth'. Many neighbors are asked to help cover the floors. The earth is then compressed with wooden threshing flails. Builders leave immediately after the house is built.

The first floor is for livestock and is divided into two or three rooms to separate cows from calves. Manure is gathered from these stables for fertilizer. A notched log ladder leads to the second floor, which is used for eating and sleeping. There are two rooms on this floor. The larger is the main room or jam and has a metal stove in the center of the
room's right side. The family cooks and sleeps around the metal stove on the wood floor. Bedding is laid out at night and then cleared away in the morning. There are four designated seating positions around the stove: *khe yar* is opposite the door and is reserved for such important people as *lama*, esteemed guests, and male family members; *kho syri* is on the right side of the stove (facing in from the door) and is for the housewife or female family member who does the housework; *khe le* is on the left side of the stove and is for ordinary guests and other family members; and *khe sno* is nearest the door and is rarely used, though female family members occasionally sleep there. The *jam* thus functions as a living room, kitchen, and sleeping room.

Adjacent to the main room is the *kho*, a smaller room for storing food, bedding, and a large wood box divided into sections for different grain. The toilet juts out from the second floor. Another ladder leads up to the family's shrine room (*mchod khang*) and a bedroom for monks on the third floor. The fourth floor is used to thresh crops and store straw. Scripture flags are put on a *lab rtse*\(^{32}\) on the roof.

Religion

All villagers follow the Rnying ma sect\(^{33}\) of Tibetan Buddhism and visit the local monastery, Guaniyinqiao, twenty-five kilometers east of Siyuewu Village in Jinchuan

\(^{32}\) *Lab rtse* are sacred cairns consisting of Tibetan scripture flags tied to sticks inserted into a base of stones. *Lab rtse* are considered offerings to deities. Whereas Tibetans in many areas have *lab rtse* only on mountaintops where mountain deities are considered to reside, Siyuewu villagers also have *lab rtse* on the top floors of houses.

\(^{33}\) The oldest sect of Tibetan Buddhism, founded by Padmasambhava.
County. The Guanyin figure enshrined there was unearthed by a local family in their field when plowing in 1987. Locals built a monastery for it a year later. Every year, especially in winter, pilgrims from Maerkang ('Bar kham), Ruorgai (Mdzod dge), Hongyuan (Rka khog), Aba (Rnga ba), and Banma (Pad ma) counties come worship at this monastery. Other deity images are enshrined at Guanyinqiao, but the Guanyin is the most important.

The monastery is situated on the slope of Mount Gnas mdun. There was no motorable road and it took at least three hours to walk from the foot of the mountain to the monastery before 2006. The monastery constructed a dirt road, but sharp turns make the road dangerous. A vehicle from Siyuewu Village drove off the road in 2007, killing one villager and seriously injuring three.

Siyuewu Village has its own monastery, Siyuewu Monastery, near which there is a prayer wheel hall ('khor khang) where villagers worship and perform circumambulations on special occasions, including the fifteenth day of each lunar month and the birth and death days of Bcom ldan 'das, the Buddha. Each hamlet has its own small 'khor khang built by hamlet residents, who also clean and repair it in turn. Mostly women spin prayer wheels in the morning and evening. Young people under twenty do not often spin prayer wheels because they find it boring. One person may spin 700 to 800 revolutions a day. Each family is asked by the local reincarnate lama to spin the prayer wheel a million times per year to ensure their safety.

Many elders who no longer do heavy physical labor live in rooms near the monastery and circumambulate and

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34 Guanyin (Thugs rje chen po) or Avalokiteshvara is a bodhisattva of compassion.
35 The day the Buddha gave his first teaching to his followers. Locals commemorate this day, the beginning of the dissemination of Buddhism.
turn prayer wheels frequently in the hope of attaining a better next life. Some frail elders sit on stools near the wheels and push them while others walk around, spinning the wheels.

When a villager dies, family members take the corpse to Gser rta Monastery to be chopped into pieces and eaten by vultures. One or more relatives from each household help at funerals. Males cut small trees needed to construct prayer banner poles in a flat space in the village. Females console the deceased's family and cook food for the monks who chant in the deceased's home. The deceased's family members bring candies, matches, money, and packets of instant noodles to those spinning prayer wheels in the 'khor khang and ask them to spin the wheels and chant ma Ni\textsuperscript{36} for the deceased.

Families commonly have a room reserved as a family shrine room and put such scriptures as the Bka' chos and Bstan chos,\textsuperscript{37} two Tibetan scriptures purchased in Maerkan that each family keeps as a basic religious observance. Pictures of deities, such famous places as Sku 'bum\textsuperscript{38} and Bla brang\textsuperscript{39} monasteries, and such Buddhist leaders or practitioners as Rje tsong kha pa\textsuperscript{40} and the ninth Pan chen Lama are also enshrined. Male family members put seven small bowls filled with water in front of the deity images every morning. Women do this if the family lacks an appropriate male member. Roasted barley, rice, and a ga ri\textsuperscript{41}

\begin{itemize}
  \item [36] The six sacred syllables, \textit{om ma ni padme hum}.
  \item [37] These two volumes each consist of many scriptures.
  \item [38] Sku 'bum is located in Huangzhong County, Xining City, Qinghai Province, at the birthplace of Tsong kha pa.
  \item [39] Bla brang is located in Gansu Province.
  \item [40] The founder of the Dge lugs sect of Tibetan Buddhism.
  \item [41] In Siyuewu Village, a ga ri shrub leaves are burnt instead of juniper because the latter is locally rare. A ga ri have small, dense leaves, grow about one and a half meters tall, and have a strong bitter smell.
\end{itemize}
are burnt daily as offerings to family deities (*khyim lha*) and mountain deities (*gə χu*) by family monks or male members at the household's incense burner (*bsang khang*) on the third floor, near the ladder leading to the fourth floor.

Monks normally live with their families except during rituals when they chant scriptures in the village monastery, where they stay throughout the chanting period. Forty monks were affiliated with Siyuewu Monastery in 1997, but most had become laymen by 2009. Monks are forbidden to have children, cannot drink liquor, and believe no one will care for them when they are old. After death, local culture stipulates that a child or grandchild must carry the corpse from the upper floor of the home, downstairs, and out of the house. A close male relative does this if the deceased is childless. This helps explains why there were only five or six full-time monks in 2009. Laymen chant when many chanters are required at the local monastery or several funerals occur simultaneously.

Home Remedies

A local doctor, Bsod mgong (b. 1958), began working in the village in 2000. He buys medicines from the prefecture seat and sells them in the village. He does both muscular and intravenous injections. Villagers visit his home near the local monastery for colds, headaches, toothaches, and insect bites. He receives no payment from the government. Villagers pay him when he treats them.

Ill villagers historically depended on home remedies, which are now used less often because access to new health care options has improved. Young people generally think such home remedies are useless superstitions.

I collected the following examples of home remedies from villagers and from personal experience:
• Irritated eyes: a drop of breast milk from a woman with a three-year-old child, particularly if the child is a boy.
• Scalds and burns: immediate application of salt or oil. The affected area may also be warmed near the stove for one to two minutes.
• Snakebites: eat earth immediately after being bitten. After biting someone, a snake burrows into the earth. The bitten person should eat earth before the snake disappears below ground or the cure will be ineffective.
• Toothache: eat a bowl of rtsam pa\textsuperscript{42} mixed with butter and a pinch of salt.
• Mushroom poisoning: immediately drink milk after eating a poisonous mushroom.
• Bleeding wounds: apply burned sheep wool ash.
• A child with white marks on its tongue who cannot breastfeed, or who cries too much: give goats milk.
• Tripping while walking on a road: spit on the road to prevent tripping again.
• Dog bites: put rtsam pa on the wound, leave it for about a minute, then feed it to the offending dog to prevent infection.
• If a person, especially a baby, sees a stranger and subsequently has a headache, feebleness, or nausea: hair from the patient's head is cut and burned, and the sick person or baby smells the burned hair to relieve their symptoms.
• Swollen eyes: pot soot is rubbed on the swollen eyelids; sometimes saliva is also rubbed.
• Bald infant: rub black bear fat on the infant's head everyday for one to three months.

\textsuperscript{42} Roasted barley flour dough that is sometimes mixed with roasted corn flour.
- Constantly crying baby: throw len chags\textsuperscript{43} made with corn, rice, wheat, and peas from a bridge while ma Ni is chanted. The baby must spit into the len cheg or blow in it.
- Frostbite prevention: put chewed G\textcircled{\textomega} le 'walnut'\textsuperscript{44} on the cheeks.
- Joint pain: put fat stored in pig legs for a year on the joint and sit near a fire once a day.
- Headaches: eat m\textcircled{\textomega} je\textsuperscript{45} raw or boil it and drink the broth.

Locals do not have causal explanations for these remedies' efficacy, but trust and use them.

\textit{ji} Loss

"Do not speak to the infant loudly or it will lose its bla (soul)," is commonly heard in Siyuewu. There are no specific symptoms associated with bla loss, nor are there rituals to call back the bla. ji refers to the visible soul whereas bla is invisible. Lost ji must be found and put back in the body, but nothing can be done to call back the ji. Those who lose their ji become ill or progressively weaker until they eventually die. In the same way that bla can be lost, the ji can be lost from a sudden fright, or when alone, afraid, and thinking that something bad will happen. The accounts below are of ji loss:

\textsuperscript{43} Len chags are rtsam pa offerings made to beings called mi ma yin that are not human, deities, or ghosts. A long roll of rtsam pa is squeezed in the hand until a handprint of whoever makes it forms.
\textsuperscript{44} Juglans regia, often referred to as English walnut.
\textsuperscript{45} m\textcircled{\textomega} je is a plant that has small leaves and a fruit encased in a thick green skin. It grows in local pastures where there is dense grass near streams.
Account One. Gnas pos (b. 1947), a retiree of the county electricity management office:

It has been almost thirty-five years since I saw someone’s ji. It was during the time of the Commune System in the 1970s, when we attended meetings almost every night, walking five kilometers to the meetings and returning at night. I was a boy and represented my family. As usual, Bso pa, some neighboring villagers, and I went to the meetings together. We were on our way home after a meeting, swapping stories about bears and leopards all the way. Bso pa led us holding a firebrand to light the rugged path. A dim moon shone on old tree-stumps.

Dbang rgyal was walking behind us and called, "Look, is this yours? Take it quickly!" I turned and saw a sky-colored thing swinging left to right. It seemed alive. It could be held in one cupped hand and was shiny. I had heard my father say we could lose our ji and if we did, we needed to go back to the place where we were frightened, otherwise we would go mad or have hallucinations of ghosts and evil spirits. I picked that shiny thing up and rubbed it on my chest but it spilled everywhere, sticking on my hands and chest. This time it was brighter than before, like the shining stars. It felt cool. I called out to Bso pa, because I thought it must be his. He stretched his hand out and the ji became like beads. It went into his hands and disappeared, including what had been stuck on my hands and chest.

I told this to my mother and she told me that I had seen ji, and that Bso pa would be fine and not become sick, since he got his ji back.
Account Two. Bai Yun (b. 1966):

When we were younger, some villagers and I went to watch movies in the neighboring village. There were about ten of us and we needed to walk through a dense forest where people believed the ghost of a woman murdered by robbers still wandered. We finished watching movies and returned home on that path. Suddenly, Smon lam cried out, "What is this?"

"It's ji. My mother told me about it. You can lose your ji if you are frightened," I said, walking to the front of our group. I asked, "Is this yours, Smon lam? Try to pick it up."

"Maybe it's mine," said Smon lam trying to take it, but it went right through his hand. Then, I picked up the ji and it entered my hand as soon as I touched it.

Account Three. Yid bzhin lo (b. 1920):

I stayed in my aunt's home for some days. One day I was helping my uncle feed livestock on the ground floor. A notched log led to the second floor. The first floor was very dark. I had finished feeding the livestock and was going up to the second floor, holding a wood feeding pail in my hand. It was really dark. I could feel someone staring at me.

Uncle shouted worriedly when I had just about reached the second floor. "You've lost your ji. You must have been afraid of something. Come take it, otherwise you'll get seriously sick!" He told me he had tried to take it but it had slipped between his fingers.

I could see a bright thing moving back and forth. I was a bit afraid, wondering if it was mine or a ghost's. Finally, I

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46 At that time, township workers showed movies in an open square near the village school for two to four consecutive nights about three times a year.
closed my eyes and stretched out my left hand. I felt I had touched butter that had just been taken out from milk. It had vanished when I opened my eyes.

I was thinking about what it was and could not sleep the whole night. It seemed I could still feel that ji in my hand. I felt OK after that night.

ji loss stories are common. Locals say you can get your ji back if you lose it. Once, however, a man lost his ji and did not notice. He went mad, and spoke a language that no one understood. After three years of madness, he killed himself by plunging a sword into his stomach. He smiled as he died.

Love and Marriage

It was traditionally considered appropriate for young people to become aware of romance between the ages of twenty and twenty-four. In recent years, television programs, magazines, and books portraying romantic themes have influenced locals, who now become aware about love at younger ages.

Courtship is conducted carefully. People rarely directly ask a person who they like or love to begin a relationship. If a boy is interested in a girl, he finds a chance to talk to her, perhaps secretly at a party or when she is walking alone. He asks her permission to visit her home secretly that night and goes to her home later if she agrees. He asks one or two of his close friends to accompany him if he is too timid to go alone. The boy enters the girl's bedroom while his friends wait outside. The boy and girl talk about things unrelated to love if they are shy, or discuss their feelings directly. If they are certain that they love each other and want to be together, the boy continues visiting the girl's home at night until she becomes pregnant or they decide to marry. On the other hand, if he comes without her permission, she may shout, "Mother! Father! There's a thief
in our home!" until a parent asks the boy to leave. The boy may be beaten if the family dislikes him.

If a boy likes a girl that his family dislikes, his mother or father asks him to stop seeing her. The same happens with girls.

Romance is considered embarrassing and so feelings related to romance and relationships are not discussed with family members. A girl's uncles and male relatives never ask about her romances, and she never talks about her lover if her brothers might overhear. A boy does not talk with his female relatives about such relationships. This is now changing because of interactions with other people who lack such reluctance and because more children attend school.

Teenagers are currently concerned about their appearance and what the opposite gender thinks about them. Many parents closely monitor such children to ensure they do not have time to be with members of the opposite sex. Teenagers not attending school, however, are allowed to be with members of the opposite sex, and are expected to marry and help support the family as early as possible.

The following account of a young village woman is illustrative. Unmarried Lha sgron (b. 1984) graduated from senior middle school but could not enter college because of low test scores. She does not want to marry or have a family just yet, believing marriage brings much responsibility and raising a family requires hard work. She is the eldest child, and has one sister and two brothers in school.

Lha sgron's mother: Lha sgron, you are getting old. You should find a husband to care for you and our family. You don't want to be childless, do you?
Lha sgron: Come on, Mother. Why are you bringing this up again? I know when I should find a husband. Don't worry about it so much.
Lha sgron's mother: What do you know? Nothing! Nothing! Do you know what neighboring women say about
you? They think you can't find a boyfriend. They often ask me if we need their help to find you a husband.

Lha sgron: Dear Mother, can't you just ignore what others say about me? You know your daughter better than anyone else. I'll bring you a son-in-law later. Just go to sleep. Good night!

Many girls share Lha sgron's ideas. Young women are especially independent, run small businesses, and live by themselves. They do not want to have babies, constantly care for a family, and stay at home all day. They want to travel to urban centers as most men do and earn money independently, rather than depending on others, and so wait until they become older to marry. Marriage is currently less common among young women villagers.

Arranged marriages are rare in Siyuewu. However, parents may influence a youth's decision if they dislike their child's choice of partner. If the couple truly love each other, they may then elope and their families must agree to their marriage. Two or three families have forced their children to marry someone the family liked and the children agreed because they did not want to displease them.

Wedding parties are rare. Generally, a boy visits their partner's family once the couple is sure they want to be together. Neither he nor his family members ever directly ask permission from the girl's parents. The couple typically does not cohabit after publically announcing their relationship. Instead, they visit their partner's home to assist during times of plowing, cutting wood for fuel, and chanting. The couple is publicly acknowledged as ?mau 'husband' and rə jav 'wife' in the village, though these terms are rarely used. Either partner may have relationships and bear children by another partner while married. Children fathered in an extra-marital relationship refer to their mother's husband as ə yo 'uncle' – a term of address applied by children and youths to elder men regardless of kinship. No formal process
terminates a marriage. The person wishing to terminate the relationship simply stops going to assist the other's family when laborers are required.

The traditional marriage form is increasingly uncommon. Younger villagers today, especially those with formal education or official government jobs, are more likely to hold a small party to celebrate their marriage, to cohabit afterwards, and to have fewer extra-marital relationships.
PART TWO: FOLK NARRATIVES
Introduction

Folktales are told in Siyuewu Village in both Lavrun and Amdo Tibetan. All stories are referred to as χə bi ‘story’. Story genres are not distinguished, though humorous stories are referred to as $q^hæd næ to səce$ 'stories that can make you laugh'.

Among a population of approximately 580, four to five villagers still tell stories to their grandchildren, who often impatiently leave before a story is finished.

Folk stories teach lessons about life or are simply for entertainment, using animals and fictional characters. Rabbits, bears, birds, horses, sheep, lice, lions, crows, and wild people (vəcər ɲi)\(^{47}\) appear in the stories.

Storytelling was performed on both informal and formal recreational occasions such as parties, gatherings of friends, and when neighboring families had meals together. Friends told stories when herding on the mountains, harvesting together, or when building a new house. Parents or grandparents told stories to children and grandchildren at bedtime. Villagers also told such stories at religious rituals.

Sometimes a story was told in strained and uncomfortable circumstances. For example, a folktale might have been told when a family invited the relatives of the family's daughter-in-law or son-in-law to a small party in order to get to know each other better. On such occasions storytelling helped relieve the tension.

More stories were told when people knew each other very well and among people who felt comfortable with each other. Few people told stories when meeting someone the first time. People say that storytelling is like a shy girl who is

\(^{47}\) Lavrun for 'wild man'. Villagers tell stories of encounters with vəcər ɲi. There are said to be vəcər ɲi footprints in a valley near Puxi Township seat, suggesting that these creatures once existed near the village in surrounding forests.
embarrassed in front of strangers but feels relaxed with family and friends.

When I was about seven, I enjoyed visiting a neighboring house where my favorite childhood playmate lived. I liked listening to her grandfather's stories. One of my favorite stories, 'Helping Others Will Bring You What You Need', features a poor old man. I summarize the story below without dialogue:

Helping Others Will Bring You What You Need

A very poor old man, despite working hard all his life, had hardly any clothes to wear or a roof to take shelter from the rain and snow. One day he decided to visit the Buddha and ask why he couldn't be rich – why he could never own anything.

On the way he met a pair of birds that couldn't fly away from a tree and bickered constantly with each other. He also met a deer that couldn't stand, because its knees were worn out. Finally, he met a solitary horse that couldn't be with other horses and with whom no one else wanted to be.

When the old man said he was going to question the Buddha, each of the animals asked him to inquire about their situation.

He asked all their questions when he met the Buddha. The Buddha said two thieves had stored a piece of gold under the tree where the two birds perched and if someone dug up that gold then their problem would vanish. As for the deer, a wish-fulfilling jewel grew on the deer's head. If the treasure was removed the deer would walk normally. As for the horse, if it had a master it would be fine.

The old man set off home, met the horse, and conveyed the Buddha's message. The horse asked the old man to be his master. Then, the deer asked the old man to
remove the treasure from atop his head, and the two birds also asked the old man to take the gold after hearing the Buddha's message.

Just as he got home, the old man remembered that he had forgotten to ask the Buddha about himself, but realized that he was now rich.

This story has finished.\textsuperscript{48}

This story teaches the Buddhist belief that helping others brings you what you want – maybe not in this life, but perhaps in a next life.

The storyteller was my friend's grandfather, who has now passed away, but his story is told today and may still be told in the future. Maybe he is now in Heaven,\textsuperscript{49} watching me and listening to his story. He would be very happy to hear his story because he loved telling stories. I really hope that we, as our ancestor's descendants, can preserve these valuable stories.

A unique form of local stories are narratives about Do lo, a local historical figure. The following information was provided in Lavrung by Zhangs skyong (b. 1958) while he was having dinner with his family. I was told not to retell or play the recording of the Do lo, as it might embarrass his living descendants. That was my first time to hear the name Do lo, since people hardly ever tell his stories, even though they know them.

\textsuperscript{48} People normally end stories by saying, "\textit{ņen χbi no you} My story has finished" or "\textit{nae xhe pojær} Was that fun?" as a concluding formula. "\textit{χnà χnà, Long, long ago,}" is an opening formula.

\textsuperscript{49} People think of .Hour jəł 'Heaven' as a peaceful and wonderful place with no suffering, no killing, and no conflict. After death, a person goes to Heaven if they have been good during their life. Bad people go to \textit{χŋeļə} va 'Hell'.

\textbf{48}
Dolo's Life

Do lo ȳɑ ժɷʒ ̣50 was a funny, rather stupid villager who lived in Siyewu Village about 150 years ago. He owned land and worked hard. His father died from a sickness when Do lo was just a year old. All the labor then fell on his mother's shoulders and she died of exhaustion when Do lo was just two years old. One of his mother's elderly aunts who lived alone then cared for him. She could not see well and therefore needed Do lo's help. Although they lived happily together, the deities never supported Do lo — one day his aunt tripped over a stone while fetching water from the river, stumbled, and died.

Poor Do lo was alone again. He lived by collecting mushrooms and roots to eat and by working for other families, who paid him with food. He started hunting in the mountains near the village when he was six years old after learning hunting skills from a hunter in a nearby village.

The days passed and Do lo out-grew the difficulties he had faced. Many times he escaped death while hunting alone. One rainy day he fell off a cliff, landed on a tree, and then crawled down to safety bit by bit.

Despite his hard life, Do lo had been strong since birth. He could easily lift 250 kilograms and was asked to help villagers carry things like timber and stones when they built houses. They fed him but never gave him any other payment, because he had an enormous appetite. He could eat almost two kilograms of rtsam pa at one sitting. One time after helping a family carry logs for a new house, he

50 There is a taboo against saying the names of deceased people, especially females. ȳɑ ժɷʒ 'Heaven' is affixed after a deceased person's name and mentioning their name is thereafter avoided. For example, locals say Do lo ȳɑ ժɷʒ at the beginning of a story but afterwards just say ȳɑ ժɷʒ.
ate the leg of a cow and two loaves of baked bread – a normal man could only eat one such loaf of bread.

He was short-tempered and stubbornly did whatever he wanted at such times. It was impossible to reason with him when he was in a bad mood.

Do lo married a local woman when he was fifteen and they later had a son. If Do lo returned from a day of hunting empty-handed, he became angry with his wife, son, and their livestock. People say that his appearance and simple mind made him like a vocær gi.

More examples of folk narratives follow.

The Leveret, the Sparrow, and the Pig

A leveret, a baby sparrow, and a piglet were friends and lived together. One day, the sparrow said to the leveret, "Lo sar is coming and we have no meat. We must find a way to get some."

"You're right. I also thought that. But how can we get meat now that it has snowed so heavily? We can't even take one step outside," said the sparrow, looking at the leveret suspiciously.

"Tomorrow we will tell the stupid pig that we have to kill one of us to eat for Lo sar. I'll say, 'You could kill me, but I'm too small for both of you to eat.' Then you say, 'You could kill me, but I'm too hairy to eat.' Then the pig will say, 'Kill me!' Then we can kill the pig."

The following day, they met and everything went just as the leveret planned. After the pig agreed to be killed, the leveret asked the sparrow to steal seasoning from their neighbors. The cunning leveret wanted to eat all the pig without sharing it with the sparrow and thus tricked the

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51 Told by Blo bzang (b.1991).
sparrow, who was captured and nearly killed by the neighbor's children when he went to borrow seasoning.

After the leveret killed the pig, he took the pig's tail, stuck it in a crack in the wall, and waited for the sparrow to return.

When the sparrow escaped and finally returned, the leveret said, "The naughty creature went through the stone wall when I was trying to kill him! Now we can only see his tail. What can we do?"

The sparrow pulled on the tail and it came out of the wall. "Now we have lost the delicious pig! What can we do?" cried the leveret, never imagining that the sparrow was smarter than he.

The sparrow saw a piece of pork sticking out from under the leveret's bed. Secretly, he later poisoned the pork and carefully put it back. The leveret ate the poisoned meat and died. Thus, in the end, the sparrow defeated the leveret at his own game.

The Flea and the Louse\(^5\)

A man as cruel as a tiger often tortured and killed various animals. One day when he was cooking his usual lunch of a pot full of insects and snakes, he got tired of waiting for the tiny fire to heat the pot.

At that moment, he saw a louse walking slowly near the stones that surrounded the fireplace, and decided to vent all his anger on the innocent louse. He grabbed a half-burnt stick and smashed the louse. The poor louse's back was singed, which is why lice have black marks on their backs.

Burning the louse still did not sate that cruel man's fury. He looked around and saw a flea struggling to come

\(^5\) Told by Khen thar (b.1953).
out from a crevice in his door. He got up from the fire, rushed to the door, and slammed it shut, squashing the little flea, which explains why fleas are flat.

The Bone in the Meat\textsuperscript{53}

Once a few friends were having a small party in a dark house near the main village road. They cooked a pot of mutton and while eating it, threw the bones out through a window. Saluo threw a sharp bone and hit a man just as he was passing by the window, blinding his right eye.

The blinded person asked very respectfully "Who was so great to aim so precisely?"

"I, Saluo, of course!" Saluo responded proudly.

The Jar Buyer\textsuperscript{54}

Long ago a man had saved money for two years and really wanted to buy a liquor jar.\textsuperscript{55} Finally, after earning enough to buy a jar, he took his money, went to the market, and bought a nice, big jar. He then carried the jar on his head very carefully while loudly chanting, "Buddha bless me so I can take this jar safely home."

Just as he was ready to step over his threshold, he said, "OK, Buddha, I don't need your help now," and stepped inside, accidentally smashing the jar to pieces on the upper doorframe, leaving him holding two pieces of the shattered jar in his hands.

\textsuperscript{53} Told by Bsod nams sgron (b. 1957).
\textsuperscript{54} Told by Tshe ring dpal Idan (b. 1949).
\textsuperscript{55} Clay jars are used for storing liquor that is made by every family in Siyuewu to be consumed at celebrations and in daily life.
Blo ring and zaen tshi\textsuperscript{56}

Long ago, Blo ring and zaen tshi were friends. Blo ring lived in the upper part of a valley and zaen tshi lived at the bottom of the valley.

They shared ownership of a gold Buddha figure. One day, Blo ring decided he wanted the statue all for himself. He told his mother to go to the pine forest opposite their house and say, "Yes Blo ring take it," when she heard Blo ring and zaen tshi’s voices. Then he asked zaen tshi to have dinner with him. After dinner, Blo ring said he had been thinking about a small problem between him and zaen tshi, and he wanted to ask the pine trees to solve the problem. zaen tshi thought this was fair and agreed. They then went outside.

"Who should take the gold statue, zaen tshi or Blo ring? Tell me, pine trees," Blo ring shouted sincerely.

"Blo ring, take it," came the reply from the distant pine trees.

zaen tshi was unconvinced and so indignant that he set fire to the forest, killing Blo ring's mother. Blo ring went to collect her corpse, carried it near the water mill, and propped it up to look as if she was milling. Then he called zaen tshi again. Blo ring shouted several times to his mother, "Mother, I asked you to mill, did you hear me?" He then threw a dʒɐzdoŋ zɡæ ɮæx\textsuperscript{57} at her, knocking over the corpse.

"I have killed my mother. All I can do now is sell her flesh tomorrow," he said, hanging his head.

Blo ring took the corpse and set it outside a local king's home. Then he went inside to ask for something to

\textsuperscript{56} Told by Bsod nams (b.1929).

\textsuperscript{57} dʒɐzdoŋ zɡæ ɮæx is a large pestle used to smash shelled walnuts. The walnut flesh is smashed into small pieces, mixed into rtsam pa dough, and eaten.
eat. The king had many dogs roaming about. When he left the king's house, Blo ring saw that the dogs had eaten his mother, leaving nothing but bones. He wailed sadly and demanded gold, pearls, and livestock in compensation. On the way home he passed by zæn tṣi's home with much new treasure and livestock.

"Where did you get all this?" asked zæn tṣi.

"I sold my mother's flesh," Blo ring said proudly.

zæn tṣi asked where he sold it, thinking that if he killed his own mother he would also get rich. He then killed his mother and went to sell her flesh at the king's home. The king nearly beat him to death when he announced that he was selling his mother's flesh. He returned home angrily and burnt Blo ring's house down.

"I'm going to sell the earth that remains from my house," said Blo ring the following day. On the way to sell the earth, he caught two butterflies and put them in a leather bag with the burned earth. When he reached another local king's home, he told some children playing there not to open the leather bag, or his treasure would escape. He then went inside the king's home and asked for something to eat. Unable to contain their curiosity, the children opened the sack and the two butterflies flew away.

Blo ring returned a bit later and found that his 'treasures' were not in the bag. He told the king that his treasure had turned to earth, cried, and asked for payment and thus got butter, cheese, silk, and livestock. He went home, noisily driving his newly acquired livestock past zæn tṣi's house.

"Where did you get all this?" zæn tṣi asked Blo ring from a window of his house.

"I need to thank you for burning my house down! I sold the earth from my burnt house and got all these," said Blo ring.

zæn tṣi asked how and where he had sold the earth and then burnt his own house down. He then visited the
same king that Blo ring had visited the day before, and that
king also nearly beat him to death.

zęń tṣi returned and bellowed at Blo ring, "I'll kill you,
you liar! You kept the gold statue. I killed my mother and
burnt my house because of you!" He was so angry he
could hardly speak.

Dividing Housework\textsuperscript{58}

Long ago a needle, a turnip, an earth clod, an earthenware
jar, and some butter lived together. One day they divided
the housework. The needle said, "I'll sweep the floor," and
fell into a crack in the floor.

The turnip said, "I'll go feed the cows," and was eaten
by the cows.

The earth clod said, "I'll fetch water," and turned to
mud.

The earthenware jar said, "I'll go atop the cabinet and
be the king," fell, and shattered.

The butter said, "I'll make a fire" and melted.

The story is finished.

The Helpless Nomad\textsuperscript{59}

Long ago a nomad traveled, making pilgrimages here and
there. Once he traveled to an agricultural place and stayed
in the home of a farmer who spoke Tibetan poorly. The
farmer cooked green soybeans\textsuperscript{60} for dinner. The nomad did

\textsuperscript{58} Told by Wang Yong (b.1978).
\textsuperscript{59} Told by 'Brug skyid (b. 1944).
\textsuperscript{60} Green soybeans that are almost ripe and very green are a
favorite dish. The green outer shell and a thin inner white
shell are peeled and then the soft bean is eaten.
not know how to eat the soybeans and was too embarrassed to ask. All he could do was imitate the farmer. The only light in the room was from a feeble butter lamp. In such dim light, the nomad thought the farmer was touching the soybeans to his nose and then throwing them away. The traveler wiped the beans on his nose one by one and then threw them away.

"Dear friend, are you full now?" asked the farmer sincerely.

"No, but my nose aches!" shouted the nomad resentfully.

The poor farmer had no idea what the nomad was talking about and looked at him innocently. They did not talk for a while and then the farmer finally said, "Grogs po lags. Khyed do nub gang la nyal. Khang gcig dang po la nyal nag sha za khrag thung yod. Gnyis pa la nyal na gnam du r dib. Gsum pa la nyal na ro khang yin. I don't know where you want to sleep. If you sleep in the first room, there is a flesh-eating bloodsucker there. In the second room, the sky might fall down, and corpses are stored in the third room."

Hearing the farmer's description of the three rooms, the nomad could hardly believe his ears. He thought that the flesh-eating bloodsucker's room sounded less dangerous than the falling sky and corpses. Besides, he thought, he had his sword to protect himself.

He dared not close his eyes when he went to his room, afraid that the flesh-eating bloodsucker would appear. Suddenly, the nomad heard a small creature moving in the room. Thinking it was a flesh-eating bloodsucker, he took out his sword and slashed in the air, killing the farmer's cat. Terrified, he cried out, "I killed one flesh-eating blood sucker, but I'm not sure if there are more."

"There are many, many more," murmured the half-asleep farmer.
The nomad stayed up the whole night without shutting his eyes once.\textsuperscript{61}

The Hunter and his Wife\textsuperscript{62}

A hunter had two sacred dogs and a wife, who eventually fell in love with a giant and planned to kill the hunter.

One day the wife asked the hunter to go hunting but prevented him from taking his dogs. The giant waited in the forest, caught the hunter, and said he wanted to eat him. The hunter said he needed to give final instructions\textsuperscript{63} to his parents, climbed up a tree, and called his dogs to come save him. The two dogs then came and killed the giant.

The hunter was very angry with his wife and chopped her in two with his sword. He fed one dog one piece and fed the second dog the other half.

Do lo Divides a Mdzo\textsuperscript{64}

Do lo lived on the shadowy side of the Dadu River and shared a \textit{mdzo} with a family that lived on the sunny side of the valley. Almost every household had one or two \textit{mdzo} to plow and transport goods. \textit{Mdzo} were taken to a high

\begin{flushleft}\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{61} 'Flesh-eating, bloodsucker meant 'flea' for the farmer. "If you sleep in the second room, the sky will fall down," meant that the roof leaked. "The third room is where corpses are stored." \textit{Ro} 'corpse' in A mdo Tibetan is identical in pronunciation to the Lavrung for 'granary'.
\textsuperscript{62} Told by Sgrol las (b.1927).
\textsuperscript{63} People leave instructions before they die, including what should be done with their corpse and what they want their family to do in the future.
\textsuperscript{64} Told by Zhangs skyong (b. 1958).
\end{flushleft}
mountain pasture where there was sufficient water and fodder, where they remained until it was time to plow. The mdzo were visited every six months to see if they were still there.

Twice every year, Do lo went to the mountain to get the mdzo before returning to the village to plow. Then he took the mdzo to the zən pa re Family with whom he shared it. The zən pa re Family still lives in Siyuewu today and still tells this story. Do lo's house was very far from theirs – he needed to cross the river and climb up the slope to the other house in order to take the mdzo to them.

Do lo eventually grew tired of taking the mdzo across the river and up the slope over and over again. One day, he took his sword and went to the other family. He asked them where the mdzo was, checking if they had brought it from the mountain. They told Do lo that the mdzo was still on the mountain and he decided to go and get it without telling the zən pa re family why he wanted it, even though it was not yet time to plow. The other family did not bother to ask, thinking that Do lo, as usual, was up to something inexplicable.

The mountain was high and the sun was scorching above Do lo's head as he climbed up. When he saw the mdzo, he took a deep breath, took out his sword, lifted the sword high above his head behind the mdzo, and then swiftly brought the sword down, slicing the mdzo in two. The two halves were exactly the same, except for the tail, and for one white spot on one side of the forehead of the black mdzo. Even Do lo was astonished at his own swordsmanship.

He slung the left side of the mdzo over his shoulder and left the right side on the mountain. When he reached the zən pa re Family home he stood outside and called, "It was so hard for both man and beast to cross the river to my home and then come back to your home. To end this suffering, I divided the mdzo in two and took my portion."
Your half is still on the mountain, please go get it. The poor mdzo would thank me for making his life easier if he could, and you should thank me too!"

The family had no idea what had happened until they saw the half-carcass slung over Do lo's shoulder as he turned to leave. They didn't know whether to thank or scold him, as he happily disappeared into the distance.

Do lo the Hunter

Do lo hunted in the mountains as usual. It rained constantly and he couldn't catch anything. Many times when he was about to get his prey it evaded him. To make matters worse, he had no food and was famished. He became angry at everything he encountered – he even got angry at the trees and bit them. He bit one tree so hard that one of his teeth came out. In fact, he didn't even know that his tooth had fallen out; he thought it was just a piece of wood and spat it out. He was surprised when he saw the tooth and used one of his huge fingers to touch the tender gum where the tooth had fallen out, and then yelped in pain.

As Do lo walked home in a depressed mood, he saw his family's goats grazing near the path. He ran to the goats, grabbed one in his huge left hand, and ripped it in two.

He got used to killing his own goats when he came back from hunting without any prey and the more goats he killed the better he felt. One time he killed three goats and carried two of them on his back with his right hand, dragging the third goat with his left hand. He looked like a vocærl nj walking home with his food. He was almost two meters tall and hair grew up and down his arms and legs, and all over his face.

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65 Told by Khen Iha sgron (b. 1985).
He thought that when villagers saw him bringing something with him, they would think he had killed a wild animal, and would be suitably impressed. But the villagers knew that he had killed his own goats, not wild animals, even though he returned very proudly. He sometimes gave goat meat to the villagers and told them it was the flesh of this or that wild animal. Even though the villagers knew what it was, they played along with Do lo in order to get the meat.

He killed almost twenty goats – almost half his family’s herd. One day when his wife complained about this, Do lo told her to speak to the wild game, not to him. He said that if she could get the game to kill themselves, he wouldn't need to kill the goats.

The villager leader asked him to stop hunting because of all the bad karma he was accumulating, and to herd goats and help his wife in the fields. Do lo responded that, with his strong physique, he was born to hunt. He said that his only enemies were animals who might be stronger than him.

He started drinking as the days passed, and bit his wife and children when he returned from hunting without any meat. Villagers thought he was crazy and therefore shunned him. Everyone thought he and his family were stupid and no one wanted to talk to them. Do lo never realized this – only his wife and child understood. His wife often asked him to act like a normal person and not do things that made villagers think he was an idiot. His response was that he was acting like a normal person and doing what he was supposed to. He got angrier and asked her, "What makes you think I'm abnormal?" then bit her and almost killed her.
A Wild Boar Attacks

I was working in my family's potato field pulling weeds. The entire field had been dug up and all the potatoes had been half-eaten by a disgusting wild pig. The sun was hidden behind a thick cloud. My neighbor, Tshe lo, was also working in his field and called out, "My potatoes were eaten and I don't feel like working in my field. What about your field?" he asked.

"Mine is like yours. What can we do about this pig?" I replied.

Just then, the trees near the field shook and I heard strange sounds. I took my knife out of its sheath in my faded old Tibetan robe. The sound came nearer, and my heartbeat got faster and louder.

Suddenly, a black bristly wild pig appeared among the dense trees. It was so fat that its eyes were invisible. Tshe lo and I were like two trees – we couldn't move.

The pig charged. For a second I was too afraid to run, but then I turned and bolted. The brutish pig chased me like it hadn't eaten for a century. Just when the pig had almost caught up, a tree appeared in front of me. I quickly jumped and grabbed hold of a branch, but the wild pig still tried to catch me. My feet were hanging down and I pulled them up whenever the pig jumped at me. I was holding a knife, but had totally forgotten it. Tshe lo was standing far away. He could see me from where he stood, but dared not approach and help.

After about half an hour, the pig became tired and left. I was just like a fruit hanging from the tree; I couldn't move or speak for a while. I only remembered that I had a knife when I was back on the ground.

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66 This true close-call story was told by Bkra shes don grub (b.1940). He was eleven years old and shaking with fear when these events happened.
I asked Tshe lo why he didn't come help me, but he was even more frightened than I, and couldn't even remember what had just happened.

Conclusion

Prior to the early twenty-first century, people loved to tell stories at night during dinner and at small gatherings, but this has now changed, due to TVs, radios, MP3 players, CDs, VCDs, and DVDs that now play a significant role in villagers' daily lives. Almost all villagers over the age of seventy know many folktales, but there is no audience, as new things are considered more interesting. Electronic stories are more easily visualized. Elders no longer want to tell stories, perhaps because they have lost confidence, are tired of telling them, or have forgotten them.
PART THREE: OTHER ORAL TRADITIONS
Riddles are told in Lavrung while herding on the mountains, building houses, when several women weave a black yak hair tent, when having dinner with grandparents who are asked to tell riddles by their grandchildren, and when neighboring families rest after harvesting together. Children are curious about riddles and enjoy guessing the answers. Those who know riddles are willing to tell them when asked.

If the riddle is not guessed correctly, the guesser must chant *ma Ni*. For each incorrect answer, they must chant the six-syllable mantra *om ma Ni pad+me h+UM* ten times, and may only then ask for the next riddle. Many children dislike chanting *ma Ni* and do not want to wait for more riddles. However, they must chant *ma Ni* if they want to hear more riddles. In this way numerous *ma Ni* are chanted just by guessing riddles. Locals believe that deceased people consume *ma Ni* as food on their long journey from this world to Heaven or Hell.

Riddle One.
Lavrung: *gəәdʒɛɘm thʰaxə, nə læd log pa fsod*
Translation: It can be held in one hand and fills a valley when released.
Answer: A gun.

Riddle Two.
Lavrung: *gə dʒɛ om thʰcaʃə nə læd jəm fsod*
Translation: It can be held in one hand and fills a house when released.
Answer: A butter lamp.

Riddle Three.
Lavrung: *vlɐ ma ɾə pru kə dʒe ne vu vi*
Translation: A monk dances in a cave.
Answer: A tongue.
Riddle Four.
Lavrung: ɣdə ŋgu pʰəd pʰoxə
Translation: The river that goes over a mountain.
Answer: tʰæ mda, a U-shaped metal straw used to drink barley liquor from a jar.

Riddle Five.
Lavrung: sny sny ɣəŋ vde nəe dʒe spi mid
Translation: It is constantly seen but cannot be touched.
Answer: The sky.

Riddle Six.
Lavrung: zgəɾ lə ræ to sənə go əəə var mid ɣəzì ra
Translation: The bent one who travels day and night.
Answer: A river.

Riddle Seven.
Lavrung: rəzə la pʰə tʰəcə
Translation: A rtsam pa ball in the wall around the field.
Answer: ɣə zor, a small bearded animal that is similar to a mouse, normally lives in fields, and eats grass and grain.

Riddle Eight.
Lavrung: se la əəm rədəm
Translation: A long metal stick in the bushes.
Answer: A snake.

Riddle Nine.
Lavrung: je so sərə miə nəe pʰəjə ɣdu cʰə o mo zægə
Translation: Nothing is longer, but it is not tall enough to touch a pig's belly.
Answer: A road.

Riddle Ten.
Lavrung: ku mədə zə vədə
Translation: What has four horns but no head?
Answer: Baskets, made of a local shrub, have four sticks that are taller than the basket itself.

Riddle Eleven.
Lavrug: jo? gav mid yo dod słu
Translation: What has no hands and no head but can dig holes?
Answer: Raindrops.

Riddle Twelve.
Lavrug: pʰərm to ydʰo ko ʃaʃə kə ɬəɡi, nəʃə to ydʰo yo vu ʒəm
Translation: The white one goes over the river and the river carries the black one away.
Answer: Sheep cross the river and their scat floats away with the river.

Riddle Thirteen.
Lavrug: pʰad ræ tʰa vəla ma zə o vo
Translation: A monk climbs up a mountain.
Answer: Fire spreads on a mountain.

Riddle Fourteen.
Lavrug: mo le zə yo je jo ləʃəkə vəɡər, ləʃəkə ɭəɡə æ ma ti je tʰəgi tə gi zəʃə kor ma səʃə zə ʃo?
Translation: On her back, a beautiful slender woman carries her baby, who has its mother's coat and long hair.
Answer: Corn.

Riddles are based on everyday life, however, they are rarely asked today. Knowledge of these riddles will vanish in the near future.
Sngags Secret Chants

Sngags 'secret chants' are recited in Tibetan in Siyuewu Village to treat knife cuts, insect bites, bruises, swollen fingers, and other common ailments. Almost every common complaint has a curative chant.

Secret chants should be taught to a relative the chanter respects. The teacher's chant becomes ineffective once the chant is taught to another person.

The few people who know secret chants have taught them to only a few others. I received some secret chants in Tibetan from my mother's aunt. A village monk also knows secret chants and has written them in Tibetan. I asked him to teach me. He refused at first, but later agreed when I expressed concern about the chants vanishing.

The following account is my experience of being healed by a secret chant:

"Mother! My finger is swollen! Come help me!" I cried from my bed early one morning. Mother was cooking breakfast. She came to my room, looked at my finger closely, and left as if nothing was wrong.

"Yesterday, you must have played in the sacred spring while you were herding sheep," Mother shouted as she returned to the room where I lay. She held a bowl of water, murmured something rhythmically for about a minute, blew on my swollen finger, and then poured the water from the bowl on my finger. I was confused and asked what she had chanted, but she silently left.

The swelling in my finger subsided that afternoon. Again, I asked Mother what she had chanted. She said she would tell me when I grew up. Now, nearly eleven years have passed and she still has not told me.

Chants can be learned by both men and women in their thirties. The shortest chants are three words; the longest
are only two short sentences.

One person may know many chants that cure different illnesses. Furthermore, different people may use the same chant to cure different illnesses.

Lavrung Work Songs

Four work songs are sung in vocables. Elders I asked about work songs could not contextualize them. Some thought they might be in Lavrung, but no one I talked to had ever given serious consideration to the issue. Uncle Rig gnas suggested that the songs sound Tibetan and may once have been sung by Siyuewu villagers' Tibetan ancestors, but over time the pronunciation changed until the songs became unintelligible.

All other songs that villagers sing are in A mdo Tibetan or Chinese. Some people do not know the meaning of the songs but still sing them. They learn Tibetan songs after hearing them from their nomad friends and villagers who speak Tibetan. Communist propaganda and many pop songs are sung in Chinese.

Work songs are sung when threshing, breaking earth clods, when yoking mdzo, plowing fields, and when hoeing fields.

Clod-breaking songs require at least ten people to synchronously beat clods with pełə tso 'mallets' while singing. People may hit each other with mallets if the song is sung incorrectly. There are two clod-breaking songs. One is sung for small, easily broken clods and the second is for large, dense clods. Villagers stand in a line and move through the field following its contours breaking clods.

These songs and related labor occur on the day of plowing. All villagers divide the work on that day. For instance, two or three men plow with mdzo. To sow barley, seeds are scattered and then a man leads an mdzo with a cord through its nose while a second man steers the plow. A third
man is necessary when sowing potatoes, beans, or corn. He follows the man plowing and sows the crops. Five to ten people break the clods after a field is plowed. The more people at work, the more quickly the field is plowed and sowed.

The lyrics of these work songs are primarily vocables that create a rhythm facilitating the work. The rhythm signals when to raise the mallet and bring it down on the clods. Every home has seven to thirteen pehə tsə.

The song for small, easily broken clods consists of two repeated lines of vocables:

\[
\begin{align*}
le & \text{ fo } zgo \text{ mdza } \tilde{h}i \text{ vo } je. \\
zgo & \text{ mdza } \tilde{h}i \text{ vo } jo. \\
le & \text{ fo } zgo \text{ mdza } \tilde{h}i \text{ vo } je. \\
zgo & \text{ mdza } \tilde{h}i \text{ vo } jo.
\end{align*}
\]

It has high volume, a narrow dynamic range, a wide pitch range, and a slow, simple, regular rhythm. It has a soft, warm, smooth texture and is sung antiphonally, in call-and-response style.

The second-clod breaking song consists of two repeated syllables:

\[
\begin{align*}
o & \text{ væ, } o \text{ væ...}
\end{align*}
\]

It is sung very slowly, as villagers concentrate on breaking large earth clods in unison. This song's features are almost the same as the first clod-breaking song but with a wider volume range.

Sometimes a person leads these two songs and other workers repeat what they say, call-and-response. The song leader must be confident and have a loud voice. Both men and women sing and work together. Alternatively, the line of clod breakers may be divided with the first group singing the first sentence and the other repeating. The first group then
sings the next sentence and the other group repeats.

A song is also sung on plowing day when people cultivate the fields by hand using hoes. Such work and the accompanying song may be performed if there are many female helpers, in which case they are asked to turn the soil with xətsəm.\(^{67}\) Also, when there is only one mdzo to plow and there are sufficient people, the fields are turned over by hand using xətsəm. Fields are turned by hand if they are small, sloping, and irregularly shaped, preventing mdzo from plowing them. Both men and women may join the group. The vocables of this hoeing song are:

\[
\text{hə ʐə, hə ʐə, hə hə, hə ʐə, hə ʐə, hə hə.}
\]

and are sung by all the cultivators in unison. Compared to the two clod-breaking songs, it has a harder texture. It has a wide dynamic range and a fast, regular rhythm.

Although work songs only have two words or one to two repeated lines, the songs have melodies that challenge inexperienced singers. These songs have wide dynamic and pitch ranges and fast regular rhythms.

Work songs are sung only while working. Elders say it is improper to sing them while not working, but do not know why.

\(^{67}\) The xətsəm is used to loosen the soil and is made locally from a tree branch and a sharp piece of metal on the head of the handle. It resembles both a hoe and a mattock (Figure Forty-two).
PART FOUR: FIGURATIVE SPEECH
I interviewed over a hundred villagers in researching figurative speech. Most remembered the same elements of figurative speech that are commonly used in daily life and may be in Lavrung, A mdo Tibetan, or Sichuan Chinese dialect. Some villagers speak A mdo Tibetan poorly and a few speak colloquial Sichuan Chinese. Many proverbs are spoken in all three languages.

I had difficulty explaining the meaning of 'figurative speech' during interviews with my consultants, who thought formal oratory contained figurative speech, but not daily conversation. My consultants did not really understand after I made several attempts to explain it, so I asked them to tell me a part of their life story, hoping these narratives would contain examples of figurative speech. However, few such stories used figurative speech, which is mostly employed in daily interaction, rather than during formal speech acts.

There are many metaphors in Lavrung, although both my consultants and I initially thought differently. Villagers know and use metaphors in daily interactions. After over sixty interviews on the topic, I concluded that monks provided the most figurative speech in A mdo Tibetan; middle-aged women provided figurative speech about death, menstruation, and sexual intercourse in Lavrung; and villagers who had received formal education used metaphors in Sichuan Chinese.

Metaphors and proverbs are not used in formal contexts, except during gyod. 68 Certain villagers are renowned for their ability to carry out conflict meditation and their ability to reach gyod settlements. Both Chinese and

68 Negotiation to settle a conflict, for example, when a husband has left his wife and children for another woman. The wife's family may then call for a gyod to negotiate a solution.
Tibetan formal literary proverbs are commonly used among monks and students when enjoying themselves.

Proverbs

Proverbs in Lavrunung

Proverb 1.

\( ne\ p^h_{od}\ sov\ sp^h_{ae\ li} \)

Literally: Cut off your ears to make a patch on your bottom.

Figuratively: To do something unnecessary and stupid; to do something unhelpful.

Example.\(^6^9\) "You used your jacket to wrap up the walnuts that your uncle gave you yesterday, right, Lha mo?"

Mother shouted from the living room.

"Yes, Mother," said Lha mo.

"That's just like \( ne\ p^h_{od}\ sov\ sp^h_{ae\ li} \). Now your jacket is colored with walnut stains," Mother said.

Proverb 2.

\( p^h_{o\ \instance\ p^h_{o\ je\ me\ \etaam}, \ k^h_{e\ \instance\ k^h_{e\ je\ me\ \etaam}} \)

Literally: There should be no pain when pigs bite pigs or dogs bite dogs.

Figuratively: Arguments between friends or relatives should not be taken to heart.

Example: "You should apologize first because you are her brother. Your sister is young and doesn't know as much as you. It is said \( p^h_{o\ \instance\ p^h_{o\ je\ me\ \etaam}, \ k^h_{e\ \instance\ k^h_{e\ je\ me\ \etaam}} \)," Rdo rje's mother said to him.

\(^6^9\) The names in the examples are actual villagers' names, but the relationships and events are fictitious.
Proverb 3.

**fu tce me dzed stce ge snam ce.**

Literally: A mouse tries to pull a barley ear through a place a mouse cannot pass.

Figuratively: Trying to fit somewhere where there is no space, or, more metaphorically, trying to do the impossible.

Example (1): G.yu mtsho and her family were holding a religious ritual at home G.yu mtsho's ten-year-old son tried to sit near her even though the house was already packed with people. She whispered to him, "Dear son, don't **fu tce me dzed stce ge snam ce.** Go out and play with your playmates."

Example (2): Byangs skyid went to the field to loosen the soil between her family's barley seedlings. On the way, she met Mthun skyid, a neighbor who was also going to work in the field. The sun was scorching as if burning the earth. "You should take off your shoes when you work in the field so that you don't press the earth you've loosened," Byangs skyid instructed Mthun skyid.

"I know I should, but it is so hot. Being barefoot is like **fu tce me dzed stce ge snam ce.** It's really impossible," Mthun skyid said impatiently.

Proverb 4.

**skʰe ro je co me bu ræd na, ʰne je mo⁵ me ʰme na.**

Literally: A waist separates an ant's abdomen from its thorax; a pika's eyes do not close.

Figuratively: Give yourself a way out when planning to do something, and always consider the consequences.

Example: "You aren't my teacher anymore! You can never teach me again!" cried Blo bzang when his math teacher scolded him because of his carelessness.

"Don't say such silly things. **skʰe ro je co me bu ræd na, ʰne je mo⁵ me ʰme na** is what you should think about," said the teacher.
Proverb 5.

"næ li ye ʰdzo ʰtid.
Literally: Earthworms worry that earth will run out.
Figuratively: To worry about something too much or to be stingy.
Example: "Can you give me a piece of your wool? I just need a little to tie up this stick," Tshe ring said to a friend.
"No, I don't think I have enough. I need it to knit a sweater," said the friend and walked away.
"ⁿa li ye ʰdzo ʰtid!" shouted Tshe ring.

Proverb 6.

nem ʰkʰo 'ge me o ʰa ɾe næ to, ʰbo ge næ mŋ o te ʰa ɾa ʰa o to.
Literally: Stones tossed to the sky will fall on your face, blowing into a jar returns a face full of air.
Figuratively: Every action has consequences. This is also said to someone who obviously lies and is used to scold someone for doing something stupid.
Example: Bkra shes met an old friend, a heavy drinker, for the first time in over a decade. Bkra shes's friend had fallen from a roof and broken his nose while drunk. Bkra shes shook his head and said, "I've already told you; nem ʰkʰo 'ge me o ʰa ɾe næ to, ʰbo ge næ mŋ o te ʰa ɾa ʰa o to. Drinking too much brings only pain."

Proverb 7.

vably ʰtsem ku ʰna ʰu ʰa de qa ʰa ʰa bag.
Literally: It's not necessarily the crow that stole your rtsam pa bag.
Figuratively: Something or someone that is not necessarily good may not always be wrong.
Example: Dpa' lo was a thief, but had not stolen anything for some time. When he visited a neighbor who had lost an
earring, the neighbor yelled, "Give me the earring back, you thief! "Dpa' lo did not know what to say, because he had once been a thief, and just said "'\textit{tsem ku ñe zu væd me qa di mou,}" and left.

Two days later, the neighbor learned that her daughter had taken her earring.

Proverb 8.
\textit{və jəŋ ə be le kʰcoŋ yu vjæ yzo yzo.}
Literally: Like a sparrow keeping company with garudas.
Figuratively: Said to someone who likes to be with beautiful, wealthy, and important people in order to exploit them.
Example: "Mother, I want to got to town with cousin Lha sgron. She is beautiful and many people will be in town today," shouted Lha mo from her room.

"Ha-ha! Why do you always keep company with beautiful people? I think I have a nice proverb for you. \textit{və jəŋ ə be le kʰcoŋ yu vjæ yzo yzo,"} her mother said.

Proverb 9.
\textit{goy mo jʰəd ta vyi}
Literally: Unable to carry a basket and yet wants to carry a water mill.
Figuratively: Said to someone who attempts something beyond their ability.
Example: "That family has only two members, but they are going to build a new house this year. That's just like \textit{goy mo jʰəd ta vyi,}" some female villagers gossiped while resting in the field.

Proverb 10.
\textit{na rje kmo pʰəjæx, o təo ra bro pʰəru}
Literally: Sitting extinguishes the fire; standing terrifies the horse.
Figuratively: Describes a difficult situation for which there
appears to be no solution. Similar to the English, "Damned if you do, damned if you don't."

Example: "I heard Blo bzang and Sgrol las had a fight last night. Today Sgrol las's family came to ask Sgrol las to divorce Blo bzang," whispered G.yu sgron to her neighbor.

"Again? Why does that couple always fight? I just don't understand. I think both Blo bzang's and Sgrol las' families are in a difficult situation, like ne rje sro bo pʰərəu," responded G.yu sgron's neighbor.

Proverb 11.
sæ rchu sæ sæ lou mjæm səfʰe mə ɤχvid

Literally: Damp wood and dried wood cannot be bound together.

Figuratively: Good and bad things cannot co-exist. This is used to suggest that something is impossible or unacceptable.

Example: "As a saying goes, sæ rchu sæ sæ lou mjæm səfʰe mə ɤχvid. You can't get healthy by smoking," yelled a mother to her son as he lit up a cigarette.

Proverb 12.
sʰæ bo sʰmu sʰmu nəχ tə fəʃe

Literally: A swinging leaf takes children's time.

Figuratively: Said to someone wasting time on trivial things.

Example: Some villagers were playing cards in Don grub's yard while others were watching.

"Don grub, we're going to the monastery. Watching them play cards is like sʰæ bo sʰmu sʰmu nəχ tə fəʃe," said Don grub's friend as he stood to leave.

Proverb 13.
χu mə smə noɣ ɲdæ və ɲdæ və.

Literally: Try to get the brain when the head is not well
cooked.  
Figuratively: Said to someone who is impatient and short-tempered.  
Example: Lha mtsho saw her neighbor Zhes lha checking if her potatoes were ready to be harvested.  
"I don't think you'll have any luck, Zhes lha. It's only the middle of April. What you're doing is χu me sma noy ʰŋdæ ve ʰŋdæ ve," said Lha mtsho to Zhes lha.  

Proverb 14.  
zi ma jʰɔ kæ dzɔr mjɔd ə kʰɑŋ  
Literally: Giving away children like giving away kæ tɕor.⁷⁰  
Figuratively: Implies a good relationship between two people – they are willing to share whatever they have with one another.  
Example: "I had twelve children and my aunt's family did not have any, so I gave two of my children to her like zi ma jʰɔ kæ dzɔr mjɔd ə kʰɑŋ," said an old woman to her granddaughter.  

Proverb 15.  
ʂgoŋ vzɔŋ ba ɔ ɣtɔ ʰχɛl tɔ ʰŋkʰor va ʰŋdæ  
Literally: A diligent man can make (a living) in the middle of the ocean.  
Figuratively: Anything is possible with hard work.  
Example: "Do you know Lo lo's son-in-law? He is extremely hard working. I believe that he is the type of person ʂgoŋ vzɔŋ ba ɔ ɣtɔ ʰχɛl tɔ ʰŋkʰor va ʰŋdæ," exclaimed Zhes lha to her daughter.  

Proverb 16.  
ɣdo xʰæd əbro ɣzdɔ  
Literally: Watering the horse while fetching water.  

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⁷⁰ A local pickled radish leaf used as seasoning and often exchanged among households.
Figuratively: Doing two things simultaneously. Normally said to someone who works hard, and is effective and punctual.

Example: "I told you over a thousand times – take a sickle with you when you herd the cows so you can bring fodder with you when you come home. You have never once listened to my suggestion, but you really should yde xʰæd øbro yzde and not waste so much time," scolded Mtsho mo's mother.

Proverb 17.

\[ yde \ ra \ vde \ kʰö \ mo \ səræv \ o \ dzə \ dzə \ spi \ dzæn, \ deju \ ra \ vde \ kʰö \ mo \ po \ xʰæ \ spi \ dzæn \]

Literally: Remember to pull the halter when approaching a river; remember to flee when you see a ghost.

Figuratively: Said when a person realizes their predicament too late.

Example: At Blo bzang's house-warming party, Bkra shes prepared to leave early because he did not want to drink too much.

"As a saying goes, yde ra vde kʰö mo səræv o dzə dzə spi dzæn, deju ra vde kʰö mo po xʰæ spi dzæn. You shouldn't have come – now I don't think you will be able to escape," murmured his friend who sat next to him.

Proverb 18.

\[ vəcær \ ni \ vəcær \ ni \ yə \ sənəd \]

Literally: vəcær ni imitate humans.

Figuratively: Said to someone who does not think for himself but only follows other people's ideas or imitates what they do.  

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71 People believe that wild men imitate what humans do.
Example: "It is said νένα γε ην συνεδ νεκερ ην γε συνεδ. I saw Blo dpal's family start plowing two or three hours after your family began," said Chos go to Blo ring.

Proverb 19.

rga me næ to sje to pʰrao ηo, zdem o χελα sje to mtsʰu ηo

Literally: Stones are from rocky mountains; clouds are from the ocean.

Figuratively: You must always remember your origins.

Example: "My son, even though you are now an official worker, you should always remember rga me næ to sje to pʰrao ηo, zdem o χελα sje to mtsʰu ηo," said G.yu rgyal to Rgyal mtsho.

Proverb 20.

lu ke sʰto ma pʰram, sʰo kə sʰto ma mnay

Literally: Milk does not seem white and blood does not seem red.

Figuratively: Said when someone does not care what or who is good or bad, and suggests they lack the ability to distinguish good from evil.

Example: "To him, lu ke sʰto ma pʰram, sʰo kə sʰto ma mnay. I have helped him many times in the past, but yesterday he would not even lend me a cooking pot," Bkra shes don grub complained.

Proverb 21.

ybo γε ybo mu sjoy.

Literally: The earthenware vat cannot bless itself.

Figuratively: We are both in the same situation, and you cannot help me.

Example: "You're going to town tomorrow, aren't you? Can you bring me some things, as I am not able to go?" Bai Yun begged her friend.

"I'd love to help but ybo γε ybo mu sjoy. I have so many things to buy and I am worried that I won't be
able to get everything done in a day. Moreover I don't know if I can find a bus or a car," her friend said.

Proverb 22.

\textit{pəro jə mjəd jəvə ska jəvə mə fso, pʰəoy mjəd roz ska roz mə fso.}

Literally: Like a horse, you do not know when to sleep. Like a pig you do not know when to get up.
Figuratively: Describes someone who is lazy and always lies, sleeps, or sits when others work.
Example: "Get up, it's almost ten! \textit{pəro jə mjəd jəvə ska jəvə mə fso, pʰəoy mjəd roz ska roz mə fso}!" the mother yelled into her son's room.

Proverb 23.

\textit{kʰa va ka dzə mo yle smo rjəd}

Literally: To track the rabbit after the snow has melted.
Figuratively: Said when someone constantly delays doing something.
Example: "That damned boar has eaten one third of my corn. I should have harvested my corn when you did," said Lhamo to her neighbor G.yu mtsho.
"I warned you earlier, but you said it didn't matter. Now don't \textit{kʰa va ka dzə mo yle smo rjəd}," G.yu mtsho replied.

Proverb 24.

\textit{χzor j ɣə ənm kʰa vde næ ənm kʰa ɣə χzor mu vde}

Literally: Pikas see the sky but the sky does not see them.
Figuratively: Said to someone who flatters the rich and powerful.
Example: "As the saying goes \textit{χzor j ɣə ənm kʰa vde næ ənm kʰa ɣə χzor mu vde}. You don't need to do this," Bkra shes said to Rgyal mtsho, who was preparing to give all his walnuts to the visiting township leader.
Proverb 25.

\[ \text{bæ ko}\text{yə na moy tə mə fsʰoy}, \text{pə na mao tə jə ŋtçu} \]

Literally: Day breaks as usual when there is no rooster; bulls can plow fields when there is no mdzo.

Figuratively: Said when getting angry with someone who has been of much help in the past but no longer offers help.

Example: Cho ldan refused Zla ba lha mo's request to help cut wood.

"\text{bæ ko}\text{yə na moy tə mə fsʰoy}, \text{pə na mao tə jə ŋtçu.} We can cut our wood by ourselves, we don't need him," said Zla ba lha mo's husband angrily.

Proverb 26.

\[ \text{xʒi yə na vsʰi dar ŋo mnøy kʰɛ sʰcər} \]

Literally: Frightened by a tiger, scared by red cows.

Figuratively: Insults someone who is considered cowardly.

Example: "I really thought that stick was a snake. I've become so jittery since I was chased by a snake last summer," said 'Brug mtsho.

"It is said \text{xʒi yə na vsʰi dar ŋo mnøy kʰɛ sʰcər}," giggled Khen lha sgron.

Proverbs in Sichuan Chinese

Proverb 27.

\[ \text{yi si be dong cao lao ko}\]\text{72}

Literally: You understand nothing and only copy others' ideas.

Figuratively: Someone who agrees with someone even though they do not understand what is being said.

Example: "Wang La had a child and it is said that the father

\[ \text{72 These proverbs are written as spoken using Chinese characters. The pinyin approximates the pronunciation of Sichuan Chinese dialect, though tones are not indicated.} \]
is not going to live with her," said Lo lo, her mother.

"Don't say such yi si be dong cao lao ko things! I met him and he said he is just going to do migrant labor to make money for the family," Lo lo's mother responded angrily.

Proverb 28.
老熊看石板  lao xiong kan si ban
Literally: A bear watches stone slabs.
Figuratively: Said about someone who knows nothing but pretends otherwise.
Example: "Father can you help me study Tibetan for my test?"

"Asking me is lao xiong kan si ban," the father replied.

Proverb 29.
拍马屁  pei ma pi
Literally: Pat a horse's bottom.
Figuratively: Flattering someone to gain benefit.
Example: "He is a person who always likes to pei ma pi. If he met President Hu, he would flatter him till his tongue fell off."

Proverb 30.
老鸦不打枪吃肉，猫儿不砍柴烤火  mer be kan cai kao huo, la wa be da qiang ci ru
Literally: Cats do not chop wood but get warm from the fire, crows do not fire guns but eat meat.
Figuratively: Said to someone who does no work but wants to enjoy the fruits of others' labor.
Example: "You are like mer be kan cai kao huo, la wa be da qiang ci ru. Yesterday, you didn't come help me when I asked you to carry wood, but today you come to my
joked Blo yig to his friend.

Proverb 31.
两天打鱼，三天晒网  
Literal: Spend two days fishing and three days drying the net.
Figuratively: An accident or set-back has occurred. It may also be used to describe a person who is often confused.
Example: "You have been cutting wood for five days. Don't do things like  
niang tian da yu, san tian sai wang. Tomorrow we must go and finish cutting the wood or villagers will ridicule us," a wife scolded her husband.

Proverb 32.
老鼠坐板板还是洋洋得意  
Literal: A mouse sits on a mousetrap in high spirits.
Figuratively: Said to someone who does not realize the bad situation he is in and still enjoys himself.
Example: "I heard that you also were among the accused in the recent theft, but you are  
lao su zuo ban ban hai si yang yang dei yi. I think you should do something before there are consequences," Byangs mo warned her brother.

Proverb 33.
好马不吃路边草  
Literal: A good horse does not eat roadside grass.
Figuratively: Being self-important and disdainful of others. It is used when a girl is pursued by a boy she does not like or thinks is unsuitable for her because of his appearance or social status.
Example: Don't worry, Mother!  
Hao ma be ci lu bian cao, I do not want to be with a man like him.
Proverb 34.
吃地我要盐巴比你吃的糌粑还多 wo ci di yan ba bi ni ci di zan ba hai yao duo
Literally: I have eaten more salt than you have rtsam pa.
Figuratively: Saying that I have had much more experience than you by comparing rtsam pa, the staple food, to salt, a condiment.
Example: "Be careful of thieves when you pass through town on your way to the hospital," warned Don grub to Gnas rgyal.
  
"Wo ci di yan ba bi ni ci di zan ba hai yao duo. Don't think that only you have been to school and I know nothing. I've been to town several times before," Gnas rgyal replied to his son.

Proverb 35.
全家死绝 quan jia si jue
Literally: The whole family dies!
Figuratively: A common oath used by youths twenty and younger when trying to convince someone, or when something surprising happens.
Example: "I did not lie to you. Believe me – your mother is looking for you. Quan jia si jue."

Proverb 36.
你走你的阳光道，我走我的独木桥 ni zou ni di yang guang dao, wo zou wo di du mu qiao
Literally: You go on your shining road and I'll go on my single-plank bridge.
Figuratively: Said by someone who is very angry with a person they have a close relationship with – a best friend, family members, or boyfriend or girlfriend.
Example: "It is said: ni zou ni di yang guang dao, wo zou wo di du mu qiao. Don't ever talk to your selfish friend
Proverb 37.  
山不转水转，人不转路转 san be zuan sui zuan, ren be zuan lu zuan  
Literally: Mountains do not turn but the river turns, people do not turn but the road turns.  
Figuratively: Said to someone who is proud of his own progress and also suggests that the speaker is convincing themself that they will also be successful later.  
Example: "There is a proverb in Chinese that best expresses my feelings now, san be zuan sui zuan, ren be zuan lu zuan! That is so true," thought Skal ldan when he finally received a good hand after ten rounds of losing at cards.

Proverb 38.  
纸包不住火 zi bao bu zu huo  
Literally: Paper cannot hold fire.  
Figuratively: Warning that a lie will sooner or later be discovered and is also said when doing something wrong but trying to hide the mistake.  
Example: "Sister, I'm going to tell Mother about the bird we killed. I'm afraid Mtsho mo will tell her if we don't. Zi bao bu zu huo."

Proverb 39.  
这山望着那山高 zei san wang zuo la san gao  
Literally: Thinking that the other mountain is taller that the one you are on.  
Figuratively: Said to someone who is being selfish and greedy even though they already have enough.  
Example: "Father, I want to buy a nicer gun, like Bkra shes's," said Chos go.  
"It's like zei san wang zuo la san gao. You know
nothing. Your gun is actually much nicer than his," said Rig gnas.

Proverb 40.
兔子的尾巴长不长 tu zi di wei ba zang be cang
Literally: Rabbits' tails never grow longer.
Figuratively: Said to someone who makes no progress, and lacks the desire to improve.
Example: "Beloved daughter, tu zi di wei ba zang be cang. You were born with no beauty, taking after your mother. Nice clothes cannot dress you up."

Proverb 41.
般起石头砸自己的脚 ban qi si tou za zi ji di jo
Literally: To lift a stone and drop it on your foot.
Figuratively: Describes someone who tries to do something that hurts themself. It also insults someone by suggesting they are stupid and do nothing correctly.
Example: "I heard that you fell from your roof, how interesting! You aren't even familiar with your own house. Don't ever do things like ban qi si tou za zi ji di jo."

Proverb 42.
响当半桶水叮 ban tong sui ding dang xiang
Literally: A bucket half-full of water makes much noise.
Figuratively: Describes people who have limited knowledge, have questionable moral character, are short-tempered, and shout at people, or who like to show off.
Example: "There was a guy on TV last night who truly proved the theory of ban tong sui ding dang xiang. His father was a famous singer and taught him music. Every time he was taught a song, he would sing that song in front of his friends to show off."
Proverb 43.
人心隔肚皮 ren xin gei du pi
Literally: Bellies conceal hearts.
Figuratively: We can never truly know what other people's intentions and beliefs are.
Example: "Don't trust anyone in the county town when you attend school. They might steal from you or hurt you. Remember: ren xin gei du pi," Lha mo warned her son.

Proverb 44.
瞎子照电筒，没得用 xia zi zao dian tong, me de yong
Literally: It is useless for a blind person to turn on a flashlight.
Figuratively: Said to someone who does something useless.
Example: Nor bu was trying to pull out a huge stone from a field near his house. Tshe ring nyi ma, his sister-in-law, said, "Nor po, xia zi zao dian tong, me de yong. Go call some helpers."

Proverb 45.
脚踏两只船 jo ta niang zi cuan
Literally: Stepping on two boats.
Figuratively: Said to someone who is promiscuous and has two boyfriends or two girlfriends at the same time.
Example: "People always say about her, jo ta niang zi chuan. Maybe she is beautiful and many men like to be around her."

Proverb 46.
山中无老虎，猴子称霸王 san zong wu lao fu, hou zi cen ba wang
Literally: The monkey is the master when tigers are not in the forest.

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73 Nor bu's nickname.
Figuratively: Said to someone who tries to bully or control others though they lack the power or right.
Example: "Mother, today Sister 'Brug mo bullied me when you were away," said Rig 'dzin, 'Brug mo's little brother innocently.

"Take is easy, boy. It's like san zong wu lao fu, hou zi cen ba wang," responded her mother.

Proverb 47.
火上加油 huo sang jia you
Literally: Adding oil to the fire.
Figuratively: To make a situation worse.
Example: "Your mother is angry at you now. Don't huo sang jia you and ask her for money," Grandmother whispered to her grandson.

A mdo Tibetan Proverbs

Proverb 48.
སྙན་ལ་ཁ་ཏ་ཤར་ར་ར་ར
རང་ལ་མགོ་འཁོར་!་"་།།
Literally: Teaching others with confidence, but knowing nothing themselves.
Figuratively: Said to someone who has a high sense of self-importance but actually knows nothing. It is also given as counsel.
Example: "Stop teaching me, my son! You are really behaving like gzhan la kha ta shar ra ra, rang la mgo ’khor gyi lu lu," said the mother when her son was trying to teach her how to make a ḡe (cake).

Proverb 49.
ཐ་བདེ་ན་'ན་(ི་དཔོན་ཡིན།།
Literally: Having the gift of gab destines one to be a leader, but being skillful destines one to be a servant.
Figuratively: Used to insult or make jokes to those with poor communication skills but good at physical labor. It may be used as an insult.
Example: Padma is very talkative but has no other skills, while his neighbor, Norrgam, is an honest carpenter of few words. Padma always says, "Kha bde na kun kyi dpon po yin, lag bde na kun kyi gyog po yin," when he sees Norrgam.

Proverb 50.
Literal: Speaking like a dragon in the sky, but the main idea is like a rabbit's horn.
Figuratively: Said to someone who talks too much but never gets to the point or lacks a point – like the non-existent rabbit horn.
Example: "You've been talking for almost the entire morning, but I don't think I get you at all. A saying goes, kha bshad nam mkhi'i 'brug, don rtsa ba ri bong rwa," said Gzhan phan to his wife.

Proverb 51.
Literal: You, pika, are elevated only when standing on a rock; I, lion, am elevated when on my throne.
Figuratively: Used when someone benefits by relying on something or someone else.
Example: "Khyod mtho mtho A bra rdo thog mtho, nga mtho mtho seng ge khrig thog mtho! You are nothing
without the villagers' support and trust. Now you have embezzled the village's money but still deny it," said a villager, shaking his fist at the villager leader.

Proverb 52.

Literal: When you consider the work, it seems anyone can do it, but when you undertake the work, even your mother is disappointed.

Figuratively: Said to someone who boasts, but is actually useless.

Example: "My beloved children, never do things like thad du bzhag na glen pa mkhas, lag tu bzhag na ma sems sdug. Always think before you speak."

Proverb 53.

Literal: It's pure when your heart is pure, it's white when the stupa is white.

Figuratively: Used to emphasize the purity and fairness of a heart. Said to someone when they do nothing wrong but are distrusted.

Example: "No matter what other people think about you, the most important thing is that you yourself know you are not the thief. As a saying goes rang sems dag na dag ni yin, rgyab mchod rten dkar na dkar ni yin."

Proverb 54.

Literal: (Denying responsibility like) taking off one's hat and (blaming others like) putting the hat on another's
head.
Figuratively: Said to accuse someone who blames others for their own misdeeds.
Example: "Shes rabs is a bad guy who does nothing good. He does things rang mgo zhwa len len, gzhan mgo zhwa skon skon. When he stole a motorcycle from another village, he slandered one of his friends, but eventually the truth came out."

Proverb 55.

Proverb 56.
to his nephew.

Proverb 57.

Literal: Don't ever make children angry; don't ever open a beggar's bag.

Figuratively: Lavrung culture holds that upsetting children is as offensive as destroying a temple. This proverb is used to caution against playing jokes on children.

Example: "It is said A li'i kha ma rtses, sprang po'i khug ma ma slog. You always play jokes on children and make them cry and then you must deal with them. Such trouble!"

Proverb 58.

Literal: If you wash your face too many times, it will peel.

If you dote on your son too much, he will grieve you.

Figuratively: Said to mothers who spoil their children.

Example: "Mother, I told you not to allow Brother to go to bars every night, but you... Now he has not returned even though one month has passed. It is said ngo physis phyis mang na phyi lpags 'bud, bu gces shed che na dgra ru 'gyur," Lha sgron said worriedly.

Proverb 59.

Literal: The uncle suffers when a nephew is bad; the eye suffers when a horn is ingrown.
Figuratively: Uncles\textsuperscript{74} locally have a special responsibility for nephews and nieces. The ingrown horn is a metaphor for the nephew's bad behavior, the eye a metaphor for the uncle's suffering.

Example: "If you see Uncle Nor bu and his nephew, then you may understand the saying tsha bo ngan pa zhang gi dgra, rwa thur du skyes na mig gi dgra. Nor bu's nephew is a noted thief in the village and all the villagers visit Nor bu and scold him for his nephew's bad behavior."

Proverb 60.

\textit{གཏམ་ཁ་&ོ་(ད་ན་བ!་#ོ།}

\textit{བ!་#ོ་%ད་ན་!ལ་ཁམ།}]

Literally: Once spoken from the mouth, words travel to a hundred doors, then to the world.

Figuratively: Once words are spoken, they spread uncontrollably.

Example: "Bother Dpal mgon, remember last time we took a hammer from some Chinese men who were building a bridge in our village? You didn't tell anyone, did you?" whispered Rdo rje tshe ring.

"Yeah, you know my wife asked several times about where the hammer was from so I only told her," Dpal mgon said, looking worriedly into Rdo rje's eyes.

"Oh, no! \textit{Gtam kha sgo bud na brgya sgo, brgya sgo bud na rgyal khams!}" yelled Dpal mgon at Rdo rje.

\textsuperscript{74} The Tibetan term \textit{zhang}, an abbreviation of \textit{a zhang} 'maternal uncle' is used in this proverb. However, Siyuewu villagers do not distinguish between maternal and paternal uncles, unlike many other Tibetans, and thus we have translated this term as 'uncle'. Uncles are locally important because in matrilineal households uncles, rather than fathers, are the main authority figure.
Proverb 61.

Literal: I send my words on the wind while you keep yours in your robe pouch.

Figuratively: Said to someone who does not share their private affairs with others, even if others have shared with them, suggesting that they do not trust others.

Example: "Why don't you ever talk about yourself, even with your friends? *Kha nas rlung la bshad na, don dam rum la bcug gi.* You really should trust us."

Proverb 62.

Literal: You want to insult those who are vulnerable and you want to discard bent wood.

Figuratively: People tend to look down on reserved people, while holding themselves in high regard.

Example: "See that old widow in her tattered, faded robe in the hut near the water mill? None of the younger villagers speak to her – they won't have anything to do with her. It is said *mi khas dman thog la bshad 'dod, shing sgur bo thog la g.yug 'dod* and in this case it couldn't be truer."

Proverb 63.

Literal: Not everything a person says makes sense, and not all a bird eats is insects.

Figuratively: We cannot believe everything we hear and we should question things that we take for granted. This proverb warns people against being cheated by or lied
to by others.
Example: "Mother, Mthun skyid said that there was a lot of interesting stuff for sale in Uncle Dbang byugs's shop yesterday. Shall we go down the mountain and have a look?" asked Mtsho bde innocently.

"No. We must finish harvesting by tomorrow while the weather is still good. Moreover, I think Mthun skyid just made that up. *Mis bshad bshad gtam min, byas brgum brgum 'bu min,*" said the mother.

Proverb 64.

*Literally: Mushrooms are meat when you don't have meat; a nun is a girlfriend when you don't have a girlfriend.*

*Figuratively: This proverb admonishes against wasting goods and warns of the consequences of using up all one's resources.*

Example: "Uncle bought too many snacks for me from the county town. I don't want the potato chips so I'm just going to throw them away," said G.yu sgron to her mother.

"Just keep them. You'll want them later. *Sha med la sha mo sha red, rog med na jo mo rogs red,*" her mother said angrily.

Proverb 65.

*Literally: A morning changes like a rabbit's upper lip; an evening changes like a brown bear's ankles.*

*Figuratively: Morning passes quickly and evening passes quickly. Morning is as changeable as a rabbit's lips, which are always twitching and the evening may be as*
short as a bear's non-existent ankles.

Example: "It's so true, *dgong snga dro mi bden de ri bong gi ya kha, dgong phyi dro mi bden de dred mong gi phyi rting*. You promised to take me on the summer picnic, but now you say there's no time," said Bsod nams's seven-year-old son.

Proverb 66.

\[\text{ངན་པ་འདོད།} \]
\[\text{ོང་བོ་གསོན་པ་ཤིན་དགའ།} \]

**Literally:** Not even a ghost wants bad things; not even a dog wants shriveled food.

**Figuratively:** Said when trying to give or trying to refuse something bad or useless. It is impolite to say this but it may be said jokingly.

Example: "Here are old shoes I can no longer wear. Maybe they are suitable for you," said the elder brother, handing his old shoes to his younger brother.

"*Ngan pa 'dres mi 'dod, kyong bo khyis mi 'cha'.* Why do I need to wear your worn out shoes?" cried his younger brother.

Proverb 67.

\[\text{མི་འག་མོན་པོ་སོང་ན་དགའ} \]
\[\text{མི་གསོན་ནད་པ་ཤིན་དགའ} \]

**Literally:** It's better for guests who must go to leave earlier; it's better for ill people who cannot escape death to die quickly.

**Figuratively:** Said when someone is going somewhere but is not ready, or when something is certainly going to happen but someone is trying to avoid it.

Example: "Thanks for having me, but here we say *mi 'dug mgron po song na dga', mi gson nad pa shi na dga'. Much housework is waiting for me so I must go,"
insisted Aunt Lha mtsho to her niece, who was trying to convince Aunt Lha mtsho to stay longer.

Proverb 68.

If one thing proves to be true, then it's all true; if one proves to be false, then it's all lies.

Figuratively: People need to consider all the evidence carefully and not jump to conclusions.

Example: "Gcig bden na kun bden, gcig rdzun na kun rdzun! I don't really believe that Tshe dbang rig 'dzin lied and said they had finished building the dam when they hadn't. He's the most trustworthy man in the village."

Proverb 69.

Go to the height of three mountains; go to the depths of the deepest ocean.

Figuratively: Said as an oath when one is doubted.

Example: "I told you that 'Brug mtsho's child is not mine. Why don't you trust me? Mtho ri gsum rtse la 'khyer na khyer, dma' rgya mtsho gting du 'phen na 'phongs! I'm not giving anything to a child who has no blood relationship with me," said Blo bzang bkra shes during negotiations.

Proverb 70.

Your head becomes confused when you talk too much; your liver becomes painful when you drink too
much alcohol.
Figuratively: Said when someone talks to much, drinks too much, or both.
Example: "Father I told you, too much liquor leads only to death. Why won't you listen to me? Gtam mang bshad shes na mgo bo 'khor, chang mang 'thung shes na mchin pa na is what you say when I talk too much. Now I am saying it back to you. I hope you will drink less," the daughter said, her eyes brimming with tears.

Proverb 71.

Literal: Don't drink water when you go to bed; don't break your oath when you are dying. Figuratively: Drinking before bed causes bed-wetting and breaking an oath as death approaches means one will suffer in the after-life. Example: "You are leaving the village tomorrow, maybe forever, to another village. Nyal kha chu ma 'thung, 'chi kha mna' ma za. Don't forget that you made an oath to provide us with running water," said a villager to Rgyal mchog, who had joined the army. As a soldier he might have the ability to help villagers, but he might also never return.

Proverb 72.

Literal: Without even a goat-sized cloud, how could there be thunder? Figuratively: Said when someone is accusing someone without evidence. Example: "Don't be afraid if you didn't steal the yaks. As a
common saying goes, *sprun ra ro tsam zhig med sa nas*, *thog zor ba tsam zhig ’phen don ci*. No one can escape the truth.

Proverb 73.

དུས་བུ་ཞུ་ཞུ་ཡོན་བཤེས།
པོ་ཏ་ཞུ་ཞུ་བཤེས།

Literally: There is sufficient grass and water even in a small valley; there is clarity in even a few words.

Figuratively: Something may be good quality regardless of the quantity.

Example: "I really love this proverb, *lung ba chung rung rtswa chu ’dzoms, skad cha nyung rung mgo sang tshang*. Even though people think I'm short and ugly, I run fast and am a great cook," said 'Jigs med when villagers gossiped about his appearance.

Proverb 74.

ཚི་ཚུལ་ཐུབ་གཞེན་པར་བཞིན་ནོར།
རྱི་ཚུལ་ཐུབ་གཞེན་པར་བཞིན་ནོར།

Literally: Small (i.e., powerless) people cannot convince others; small stones cannot drive a tent peg.

Figuratively: Used in a situation when something or someone is incapable, and also expresses negative ideas about people in low social positions.

Example: "Bkra lo is a candidate in tomorrow's election for village leader. He had three wives in the past twenty years and all of them have died from strange illnesses. He is treated like an evil spirit, even though he is a really great guy."

"I don't want Bkra lo to be our leader. That would be so unlucky! He cannot be the leader. It is said, *mi chung chung gi sde mgo mi gnon, rdo chung chung gi phur mgo mi gnon!*" replied a village woman.
Proverb 75.

བསམ་པ་བཟང་(ེ་*ོད་པ་ངན།
ལག་པ་རི
Literal: Bad behavior, even though you have good motives; long arms but short sleeves.
Figuratively: Said to someone who is not necessarily bad but who often meets mishaps and has persistent bad luck. People sometimes also say it to refer to their own embarrassing situation.
Example: "Today I suffered such embarrassment! I really proved that *bsam pa bzang ste spyod pa ngan, lag pa ring ste phu rung thung*. I walked in front of a group of villagers sitting and chatting quietly. Then I heard someone call out and looked back. Guess what? I was dragging my sash behind me and kicking up a cloud of dust in front of them. I blushed and was momentarily speechless. Then I whispered thanks and fled."

Proverb 76.

མི་$ོན་ཅན་དེ་*ོ།
་ཅན་དེ་འཕག
Literal: Flawed people easily get annoyed; a horse twitches constantly when excited.
Figuratively: Said to someone who is petty and easily angered.
Example: "I'm not having dinner tonight. You didn't let me visit my friend Nyi ma lha mo," said the daughter to her mother, covering herself with a blanket. "My dear, I'm sorry but you mustn't be so stubborn. *Mi skyon can de khro, rta rgyag can de ’phag*. You don't want to be so petty do you?" the mother said.

Proverb 77.

•101•
Literally: Bad people will be judged; rotten meat will stink.
Figuratively: Used to insult those who do not conduct themselves with dignity. Such people are compared to the smell of rotten meat.
Example: "As a proverb says, mi ngan la tshad tshod, sha ngan la bro tshod. The old fellow in that movie did not realize how cruel and violent he was until the end, when he found himself on the wrong end of a policeman's gun."

Proverb 78.

Literally: Rain is expected in summer; the sun is expected in winter.
Figuratively: Rain is needed in summer to help people in the same way that sun is needed in winter.
Example: "Go out and enjoy the sunshine. People say, dbyar dus mkho ba'i sbrang char, dgun dus mkho ba'i nyi ma," the old man said to his wife.

Proverb 79.

Literally: Thirty people have thirty minds, but thirty mdzo have sixty horns.
Figuratively: Everyone has their own idea.
Example: "Last night Grandmother said, mi sum cu bsam pa sum cu, mdzo sum cu rwa co sum cu when I disagreed that youths need to stay at home rather than attend school. What does she mean?" the daughter asked her father.

"Ha-ha! It means that you can have your own
opinion about anything, like thirty people have thirty minds and thirty *mdzo* have sixty horns," explained the father.

Proverb 80.

\[\text{Proverb 80.} \]

Literally: Standing beside an ocean while moistening dried leather with your own saliva.
Figuratively: Said to those who are more determined than intelligent in undertaking a venture.
Example: "You have the hammer, so why use a stone to break the timber? It's really like, *rgya mtsho zur du bzhag, mche mas ko kyong mnyed.*"

Proverb 81.

\[\text{Proverb 81.} \]

Literally: (Build a) dam before a flood; (build a) windbreak before a gale.
Figuratively: Someone is well prepared for any coming challenges.
Example: "You need to repair the tent before the winter comes. It's said, *chu ma yong gong gi chu ra, rlung ma yong gong gi rlung rags.*"

Proverb 82.

\[\text{Proverb 82.} \]

Literally: Bending, it will break; pulling, it will sever.
Figuratively: Said when no solution to a problem is suitable – damned if you do, damned if you don't.
Example: "Will you go to the township tomorrow to see your sick friend? If so, please buy me a pair of shoes," said
Rin chen to Rgyal mtsho.

"Don't bother me! My wife insists on going but I don't want to. I don't know what to do. Bkug bkug na chag 'gro, 'then 'then na chad 'gro." Rgyal mtsho yelled.

Proverb 83.

མི་ནས་ན། ལ་"ན།

LITERALLY: Old people miss their homes, old birds miss their nests.

Figuratively: Elders miss home like birds miss their nests.

Example: "It's so true that, mi rgas na yul dran, bya rgas na tshang dran. I've been away from home for almost five years and my homesickness deepens as I age," said an old man living in the county town.

Proverb 84.

དེར་དཔེ་རོགས་ལ་བཞག

LITERALLY: You expect your friends to follow your example, and put a broken saddle on a yak.

Figuratively: Said when someone tries to hurt others by forcing something on them against their will.

Example: Teachers often say that students should never rang dpe rogs la bzhag, sga chag g.yag la bstad. Everyone deserve fair treatment.

Proverb 85.

ཐོད་དཀར་(ི་*ོན་#་འ%ེ་'་ནག

LITERALLY: The ghost with the black nose in front of the deity with the white forehead.

Figuratively: Contrast makes something more distinct.

Example: "I was the only layman in the monastery during the
chanting yesterday. I was like *lha thod dkar kyi sngon du 'dre sna nag* in front of all the red monks."

Proverb 86.

*སྣ་བོ་ད་དཔོན་པོ་དང་གཡོག་པོ།*  
Literally: The pika feels like a lion when standing on a high rock.  
Figuratively: Said to those who are proud of small accomplishments or otherwise arrogant.  
Example: "It's like *A bra rdo thog bud na seng ge yin pa'i snang ba 'char.* Gnas bzang used to be a farmer like us, working in the fields from morning to night, but now he has an official job. I overheard him talking to his colleagues about how difficult it must be to be a farmer, as if he'd been a government worker all his life," a woman said while chatting with villagers in a courtyard.

Proverb 87.

*ཤིང་གི་ས་ཤིང་བ་ན་ཀ་བ་དང་ག་*  
Literally: When wood supports wood, they become pillars and beams, and when humans flatter each other they become leaders and servants.  
Figuratively: Said in response to flattery. The person being flattered says this proverb to indirectly refuse the praise.  
Example: "I don't want to make people think that I am a brown nose, even though sometimes I have to praise my boss, because you know *shing gis shing bkyags na ka ba dang gdung rda, mis mi bkur na dpon po dang gyog po.*" a township bureaucrat complained to his friend.

Proverb 88.

*ད”ད་ཤེས་ན་གང་*  

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Proverb 89.

Literal: If the race is held on a rock mountain, a goat will defeat a horse.

Figuratively: Context determines the outcome of every competition.
Example: "Yesterday you made me drink a lot of liquor at your home. Today it's my turn. As a saying says, rgyugs sa brag la gtd na, rta ra ma gnyis las ra ma mgyogs," Rigs gnas said to his guest.

Proverb 91.

Proverb 92.

Proverb 93.
Literally: If riding a horse cannot satisfy you, then falling and cracking your head will.
Figuratively: A warning to learn from one's mistakes and not be selfish and greedy.
Example: "You rta rgyug rgyug gi ma rmas na, mgo bcag bcag gi rmas. You really should learn something this time. You almost went blind from drinking! Next time you won't have such luck," Don po said to his friend.

Proverb 94.

Literal: Words fight words and hurt each other.
Figuratively: A verbal argument should not be escalated into a physical fight.
Example: "It is said tshig gis tshig la brgyab, tshig rkang tshig gis bcad. You should have fought back with words, not physically. Moreover, you fought a woman!" laughed Wang Jun when Smon lam told him about his fight with Sgrol ma the day before.

Proverb 95.

Literal: The venison will finish someday, but brothers are still brothers.
Figuratively: Used between people who have a good relationship to say that they cherish their relationship more than anything else.
Example: "I really could not stand it yesterday when you refused to lend me a hundred RMB," said G.yu rgyal to his neighbor, who said nothing and sat quietly.
"There is a saying shwa bo'i sha de zad kyi yin, 'u gnyis bu spun 'grogs rgyu yin, but I am no longer your
friend," continued G.yu rgyal, who then spat on the ground and left.75

Proverb 96.

LITERALLY: The vase on your head; the holy medicine on your tongue.

FIGURATIVELY: Said to someone close, such as children, lovers, or intimate friends.

EXAMPLE: "The worn-out sheep robe is my mother's, mgo thog gi bum pa, lec thog gi bdud rtsi. Whenever I ask her to throw it away, she refuses, and tears fill her eyes."

Proverb 97.

LITERALLY: Humans have long lives, wolves have long claws.

FIGURATIVELY: Said by someone bored with life to indicate that humans live a long time and therefore accumulate much sin.

EXAMPLE: "I am eighty-seven now. As the proverb goes, mi tshe ring bo mi la yod, 'gram pa ring bo spyang la yod. How much misfortune and wrong-doing I've accumulated in my life!" regretted an old man.

Proverb 98.

LITERALLY: Words cannot be believed unless action is taken; crying cannot be believed unless there are tears.

75 Spitting is a common expression of anger or annoyance.
Figuratively: Evidence is required to understand a person's real feelings.

Example: "Mother, remember last time Father promised to give me a toy gun, but he still hasn't!" Nor bu yelled to his mother.

"I told you, bshad ni mi bden bya ba bden, ngu ni mi bden mchi ma bden. He's not buying it for you, I guess," Nor bu's mother said, glaring at her son.

Proverb 99.

Literal: If there were no lies in negotiations, there would be no dust in your eyes.

Figuratively: A warning against lying, especially in conflict mediation.

Example: "It's so true when people say gyod kyi nang du rdzun mi bshad, mig gi nang du rdul mi 'gro. Last time I heard a story from one of my friends who is a lawyer. He was fined 10,000 RMB for telling a small lie in a legal settlement."

Proverb 100.

Literal: Human beauty is inside; a tiger's beauty is outside.

Figuratively: Personality and motives are more important than appearances.

Example: "A great saying goes mi yi ri mo nang na yod, stag gi ri mo phyi la yod. Even though my daughter does not wear beautiful clothes and colorful decorations, I'm proud of her education and her social skills," said a villager defensively when his friend criticized his daughter for always wearing the same clothes.
Proverb 101.

Literal: If there were no conflicts, there would be no good mediators; if there were no property and no poverty, there would be no flattery.

Figuratively: Because everything has two sides, positive and negative, we need not worry too much when something bad happens.

Example: "Don't worry, Father, it's said gyod rkyen gnyis dang ma thug par, kha mkhas can re su yang yin; rgyu tshags gnyis dang ma thug par, kha yag can re su yang yin. You lost your wallet, but maybe it took away your sickness or some other impending disasters," comforted his daughter.

Proverb 102.

Literal: There will be no bad effect if you speak to someone face-to-face; there will be no bruises if you whip the horse's rump.

Figuratively: Talking to someone directly prevents gossip from spreading.

Example: "Mi gtam ngo la bshad na shul med, rta lcags 'phong la brgyab na rjes med. Mtsho bde came just an hour ago and said that you told her that I took her family's corn and stored it in my house. Why did you say that?" Sangs sgron yelled at Dbyangs dkar.
Proverb 103.

Literal: Walking slowly avoids tripping, covering your head with your hands avoids pain.

Figuratively: Insults those who are inattentive or careless.

Example: "You fell in that hole again? Such carelessness. *Ga ler song na 'gyel don med, mgo lag pas bskyor na A na med,*" the mother shouted at her daughter.

Euphemisms and Metaphors

Death

æ nə sæd tsi
He departed.

æ nənən lə jəl si
He went to Heaven.

æ yo do zidyə psəd nə yo si
He departed from suffering.

æ xhæd tsi
He disappeared.

حماس
Heavenly one.

Menstruation

ŋænc vdzə nə si
My companion has come.
My cloth companion has come.

The dirt has come.

Radishes begin growing bigger and rounder on the upper part of the mountain while on the lower part of the mountain, *sɛ sɪ* begin to fall. (The mountain is a metaphor for an adolescent woman: radishes suggest her breasts and *sɛ sɪ* her menses.)

Sexual Intercourse

She and he were friends once.

She and he enjoyed themselves together.

Defecating and Urinating

I need to go to a hole.

I need to go out.

Advice and Reprimands

Literally: Keep your eyes open.
Figuratively: Be careful!

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76 A local wild red fruit.
æ væ sonivo go rōla xo a ngead
Literally: He takes everything in his nose.
Figuratively: He gets angry easily.

jo ?kən ndzen ni.
Literally: Take your hands off!
Figuratively: Do not steal.

ŋənə tənə jæko rə sʃ'ad.
Literally: My face is itchy.
Figuratively: Said when someone does something amusing that makes one laugh, or when one tries to make fun of another.

nəyun jo gavo kʰəje rə xʰə sʃ'ad?
Literally: Do the soles of your feet itch?
Figuratively: Do you want to go somewhere or do something?

ŋæ kʰe mo yo pʰəram kə to sdon.
Literally: Don't show me the whites of your eyes.
Figuratively: Don't be angry with me; don't be unhappy with me.

nəm kʰə na szj.
Literally: To look at the sky.
Figuratively: To be arrogant.

æ væ mo le kə goya ræ ro ŋo.
Literally: She is a bent girl.
Figuratively: She works very hard.

xʰɔy tʰə skʰæd
Literally: Using a sword on a louse.
Figuratively: To do something that is excessive or unnecessary.
æ to mó le to væ xɛzɛ dəm na mGø lọ yu.
Literally: She is like a stick stuck in the ground.
Figuratively: She does not work much.

joγ tʰa xəm nən tsʰə si
Literally: A stick hits the hand.
Figuratively: Said by a recipient to shame someone who gives grudgingly.

xʰə zæ rna pa mjɛm ʂəʃe
Literally: Tying barley and weeds together.
Figuratively: Doing something stupid or useless.

pʰoγ lmi
Literally: Pig tail.
Figuratively: Said about someone, especially a girl, who has short thin hair.

χnɔ moγə
Literally: Pika eyes.
Figuratively: Said to someone who has very small eyes.

jan ju xio ɬe
Literally: Potato cake.\(^{77}\)
Figuratively: Describes someone who has a big, round, ugly face. Also used as a joke among friends.

ku je
Literally: Light head.
Figuratively: Said to someone who emulates others and does nothing independently.

\(^{77}\) Potato cakes made from sliced potatoes are a common food. The cake is thick and round, and is baked in embers.
Go le moy
Literal: Walnut eyes.
Figuratively: Said to someone with large eyes.

xʰəzi jə tʰo rəə
Literal: To wash the pot with soup.
Figuratively: To make something worse. Used to scold those who try to achieve something in an easy, though incorrect way.

tʰo cʰi nəe jəd spi
Literal: Paste you inside a pot bottom.
Figuratively: Said when someone gets angry.

nə ɡə ɣə o tʰa’d
Literal: Make air come out one's ears.
Figuratively: Describes the experience of being scolded.

nu ɣdzəvo pʰəja xə nəe ʐəjen nə ɭə?
Literal: Have you been putting out a fire?
Figuratively: Said to someone who drinks much cold water.

mə nəe tə kə je, mdzəʔ ʐə ɳəɡə dəri.
Literal: It is going to rain, the dragon has started to roar.
Figuratively: Said to a child who is about to cry.

voy kə stin nəə?
Literal: Are you making barley liquor?
Figuratively: Said to someone carrying water or who often carries water.

ɣtə zgə ləy
Literal: (Like a) stone on a riverbed.
Figuratively: This compares a stubborn person to an unmoving stone on a riverbed.
γəm sru mbo łyəə ma go ɬə
Literally: To criticize a family before crossing their threshold.
Figuratively: Describes a person who gossips excessively. They cannot wait to leave a home before starting to gossip about the family.

zdær go kʰə le vra ɕə vra ɕə.
Literally: Dog shit moves on a plate.
Figuratively: Used to insult someone who tries to do things but achieves nothing in the same way that dry dog shit rolls around on a plate.

tsʰæt ɣə se kə ɬə do ro moʃət.
Literally: Like a goat chopping wood.
Figuratively: Describes someone who incompetently chops wood.

χə ʋədax mjəd ʐə gon xʰi.
Literally: You are as busy as a mountain deity.
Figuratively: Describes someone who has much work to do and is constantly busy.

pʰəʊɣə mjəd ɕse ʃəd xʰæ.
Literally: Like a pig rubbing against something.
Figuratively: Describes a restless person.

ɾə næ li.
Literally: Worm!
Figuratively: Said to someone who is physically weak or who tries to secretly do bad things.

nɔɡə go po dza.
Literally: Maggots in the brain.
Figuratively: Describes a man who often has sex and has many children with many women, just like a fly that lays
eggs in many different houses.

?qdzæ skʰo ləm sce ŋgzʰa.
Literally: Cold tea like melted butter.
Figuratively: Tasty. Cold tea is considered tastier than hot tea.
   Cold tea is equated with melted butter, which is also considered delicious.

nu væ voy ypa ræ zdæ.
Literally: You are a wine jar.
Figuratively: Describes someone who likes to drink and can drink much.

kpo jæ vər.
Literally: Chicken feather.
Figuratively: Describes a very skinny person.

sə jər tʰa jɔj næ stɾn ni.
Literally: Put your finger on your heart.
Figuratively: Encourages someone to persist at something.

kɔmr yar pʰə skʰə ʃlæ ɣə.
Literally: To miss your mouth with hot rtsam pa.
Figuratively: To fail when success is very near.

kɔridɔm næ mGə ɬyɔ nɔ ñæ?
Literally: Did you swallow a stick?
Figuratively: Describes a lazy person, especially when doing fieldwork that requires bending.

smaəd kʰçi ɣloʔ næ tʰod də ñæ?
Literally: Is a conch growing under your bottom?
Figuratively: Said to someone who cannot sit still or sit quietly.
ɣbe tʰa snak li mɔ ɾəje.
Literally: Peas cannot stay on a drum.
Figuratively: Describes something that is impossible to do.

Mani khya mkhar.
Literally: Itinerant beggars and monks hold a stick hung with colorful prayers beads or cloth while begging.
Figuratively: Describes a person who likes to wear much jewelry.

Animal Comparatives

ɣzə sjar se yu zi
Literally: A monkey's heart is set on a tree.
Figuratively: Said to someone who is fixated on something.

pʰao ka sŋə sjə ba ŋtsʰər mo
Literally: Pigs only dream about shit.
Figuratively: Said to someone jokingly, suggesting that they have a narrow, shallow mind.

naxɔ xu tsʰa zo ła jəvə
Literally: An angry cat sleeps in the storeroom.
Figuratively: Said to someone who is easily angered and who isolates themselves.

bə le ri ūtʰoy go nu rzo
Literally: A bull stuck his horn into a stone wall.
Figuratively: Said to someone who is stubborn, suggesting that they are crude and wild.

xʰoy tʰa gru
Literally: Looking for a louse's tendon.
Figuratively: Lice are thought to lack tendons, thus this is said to someone who is overly curious.
ɣə ymi
Literally: Monkey's wound.
Figuratively: Said when someone has a minor wound but thinks it is serious and shows it to others, in the same way monkeys are often thought to inspect themselves.

qa ti joyə.
Literally: Crow hands.
Figuratively: Said to someone with very dirty hands.

fco lmi də o ɾə? və tsʰəm
Literally: A mouse's tail is longer and thinner at the end.
Figuratively: Describes something that gets progressively worse, and also suggests that those who did something bad will eventually be found out.

də rid
Literally: Cicada.
Figuratively: Said to someone who talks too much, makes too much noise, or talks nonsensically.

pʰæ ʃə mə ɾə.
Literally: Like a sow.
Figuratively: Women who have had many children may jokingly refer to themselves as a $p^{h \varepsilon} \chi \varepsilon \ m e \ ' s o w ^ \prime$.

ɣə ʒə.
Literally: Monkey!
Figuratively: Describes a short-tempered person.

qa ʃə kʰjəs.
Literaly: Magpie!
Figuratively: Describes a person who likes to dress up.

kʰə də ɾə ʔd go nəe ɕpʰɯ si.
Literally: The old dog falls in its bed.
Figuratively: Describes an old person who lies in bed and cannot get up; death seems imminent.

\( k^h_ə \text{ dzæd.} \)
Literally: Barking dog!
Figuratively: Describes those who make too much noise.

\( pəro \text{ ṣodu.} \)
Literally: To have a horse's stomach.
Figuratively: To have a large appetite.

\( kəsbi \text{ joy skə kə kəsto.} \)
Literally: Turtle's hands grow backward.
Figuratively: Scolds someone who was born lacking skill at something, or who easily forgets after being shown how to do something.

\( ydə \text{ boje zo.} \)
Literally: Like a duck.
Figuratively: Describes a person who bathes often or who is obsessed with cleanliness.

\( yəzo \text{ mjəd çən tə hə o də snən.} \)
Literally: Don't be such a monkey.
Figuratively: Said by parents to boisterous children.

Figurative Speech in Villagers’ Narratives

Example One: Sex and Menstruation

When I was about to finish analyzing the data I had collected over the winter, I realized I had not recorded anything related to sex and romance. I then decided to interview women who liked to joke about such topics; such things are only discussed among people of the same gender.
Bai Yun, Wang Ying, and Dga' skyid were enjoying the sunshine outside Bai Yun's house and were planning to go inside for afternoon tea\(^{78}\) when I arrived. I was very lucky to catch them, as the three of them were known to often talk about sexual matters. I was a bit nervous and did not know how to begin. As we began drinking tea, I finally said,

"Could you tell me something embarrassing?"

The room immediately fell silent. They knew I was there to do interviews and this question astonished them. Such a topic is considered shameful, unworthy, and meaningless.

"You need that kind of thing? Such things are said sometimes between us but cannot be documented in your book. Maybe we can tell you something else instead," giggled Wang Ying, amused at me for making such a foolish suggestion.

"I really need it and I don't think that such things are unworthy. Just tell me, I beg you all!" I persisted and they eventually agreed. They all knew a riddle about penises and agreed to tell me. I switched on my recorder.

"It has existed since humans have existed in the world…" Wang Ying said, laughing, unable to finish her sentence.

Dga' skyid continued, "It has been useful and we are going to tell you a riddle about it… and…" Dga' skyid was then interrupted in the middle of her sentence by Wang Ying.

"It is very important for humans, even though it cannot feed our stomachs," she said.

"Two beggars! What you've been saying has all been recorded," scolded Bai Yun.

"It is ru lugnyis kyu gtan stans na, nag pos dom kyu

\(^{78}\) A meal between four and five o' clock in the afternoon is common.
shan thab can, rgang lag med de cad se langs, nam mkha la gzig It has two pills of ru lu as its base, wears a black bear skin like a monk's shan thabs,⁷⁹ stands without feet and hands, and points straight at the sky," explained Wang Ying.

"What else do you want to know?" Wang Ying asked with a loud laugh.

"How do we refer to that thing that comes to us females?" I asked more comfortably than before, as they were all now enjoying themselves.

"It is called the cloth's companion and also vaginal blood. Sometimes it is red and sometimes white. You can get a baby if you are old enough to have your companion," said Bai Yun. "If you sleep with a boy, the boy's little thing gets harder and the seed of babies goes in too fast sometimes and... sometime he tries hard till he sweats," laughed Wang Ying so hard that she almost could not sit properly.

The tea had become cold when we finished talking, and Bai Yun heated another kettle of tea for us.

pam ba something embarrassing
When people talk about sex and romance, they refer to it as 'something embarrassing'. People of different genders and relatives do not normally talk about such things.

sbera mo ne two beggars
This is used to scold someone when unhappy, in disagreement, or a person who did something wrong. As used here, it meant Bai Yun was embarrassed by what Wang Ying and Dga’ skyid were saying and she was scolding them.

⁷⁹ Shan thabs is the outer, lower part of a monk's garment that resembles a long skirt.
go vdzo the cloth's companion
A term for menstruation commonly used by older women who lacked menstrual pads and whose clothes were thus soiled.

sto si vaginal blood
This refers to menstruation, but is rarely used because it is too direct.

vdzo one's companion
This example contextualizes its use: A mother asked her twenty-year-old daughter, "When will your companion come? Do you need some soft paper? I have some if you need them."

"Thanks Mother. Surely I need it. When did your companion come?"
"It finished yesterday," the mother answered.

rae go rae ko jovo sleep with someone
This term means to have sex with someone but may acquire other meanings depending on context. For example, a mother said to her adolescent daughter, "Listen, Daughter, you cannot sleep with a boy or you'll get pregnant," signifying having sex with a boy. However, the same phrase may have a different meaning in another context, for example, Lhamo's family had relatives staying in their home. Lhamo was seven years old and her aunt was one of the guests. Kun bzang's (the aunt's son) mother asked, "Do you want to sleep with Kun bzang?" This emphasizes the importance of understanding the context of 'sleep with someone'.

This euphemism refers to menstruation.
Example Two: Birth

Dbyangs chen (b. 1973) provided this account. Fifteen neighboring households of a hamlet had a small celebration on the thirteenth day of Lo sar. I visited to collect personal accounts and re-interview a consultant I had interviewed previously and who provided many sayings and examples of figurative speech.

Four middle-aged women and I were sitting some distance away from where most of the villagers were sitting. I took this chance to ask the four women to talk about sex and their experiences giving birth.

They all laughed simultaneously, embarrassing me. I understood that it was improper to ask about such issues. Nonetheless, Dbyangs chen agreed and provided this account:

I started to feel sick on September fourteenth and the baby was born the next day. We had just finished collecting beans in the fields and were drying them on the floor.\(^{80}\) In the very early morning, at about four o'clock, I started feeling uncomfortable. The pain made me curl into a ball and I passed in and out of consciousness. At around seven in the morning, Mother went to the hole and heard me suffering. I said "Mother, I'm sick," in a very low voice.

"It is surely the pain you caused yourself. How often is it?" she said coming into my room.

"About every five minutes. I want to go to our other room away from Father so that I can calm myself a bit," I begged.

"There isn't enough time. Why do you need to be afraid of your father? We also did the same thing to have you. Don't worry my daughter!" she said, smiling broadly.

Mother went to untie the cows and then send them to the pasture near the village. Meanwhile, Father came

\(^{80}\) Crops are dried and threshed on the third floor.
upstairs for the hole. I stifled my cries so Father wouldn't hear, and I gave birth to Zla ba lha mo three minutes later. Mother and Aunt gave me milk tea immediately after the birth, which stopped the baby's companion.

Kun bzangs and someone else went to the township town to call the doctor, who came late in the evening, because she had to first get some medicine from Shangzhai. The doctor gave me an injection but the companion still had not come a half hour later. I complained that the doctor's treatment did not work, but eventually it came. That was even more painful than the child disease.

Zla ba lha mo vomited and almost died from one day's starvation because I couldn't breastfeed after the exhausting birth.

æ mæ kəo ta o tʰəd mother went to the hole
Mother went to the toilet.

ŋə go thu na It is surely the pain you caused yourself.
Her mother was worried and pretended to scold her. It meant that she had caused her own pain by having sex and becoming pregnant.

kəo ta for the hole
See above.

ʒəkəo vəzo to ku dze the baby's companion/ the companion
The placenta is referred to as the baby's companion because it emerges after the baby.

ʒəkəo gevo the child disease
Childbirth is called 'the child disease'.

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Example Three: Illness One

I had been invited to my aunt's home during Lo sar. I had told her that I needed to do many interviews. I also asked people to dance so I could video them. Residents of vro Hamlet, where Aunt lives, are skilled circle dancers. Many older dancers from that hamlet know numerous circle dances that few youths now learn.

When I arrived they were celebrating the sixth day of Lo sar together. The first, second, and third days of the New Year are spent at home and neighbors pool money and celebrate jointly in tents pitched in the fields for the remainder of Lo sar. Generally, Lo sar lasts ten to fifteen days, but sometimes it ends prematurely if a villager dies or plowing begins early if there is an auspicious time.

I went down to where the tents were pitched. It was a ten-minute walk down to the tents and twenty minutes up to the houses. They had made a rule that everyone had to arrive by nine a.m. or pay a one RMB fine if they were even one minute late. My uncle, aunt, two of my cousins, and I were just on time.

I found my old consultant, E bi (b. 1934), who had spent the night in the tent and was washing his face near a small spring.

"Nice to see you again. Did you have a good night?" I shouted, since he is hard of hearing.

"Great, girl. It's good that you visited," he said, looking up at me.

"Later I'd like you to tell me some of your stories if that's OK," I said.

"I'd love to. Last time I remembered many after you left," he said and energetically went straight to his tent.

After ten minutes, everyone was sitting in a circle chatting and eating peanuts, sunflower seeds, and candies. I slowly went over to E bi, bending down to show respect to the entire group as I passed.
About thirty years ago, I was the manager of the village in Ze e tong, a valley near the village where we cut lumber to earn income. It seemed it all started after I ate \$^{k}aK t^{81}\$ for dinner. I started to feel uncomfortable and dizzy. My stomach became so swollen that nails could not scratch it. I could not vomit despite wanting to and nothing came out when I went to the hole. Sweat appeared on my forehead even though it was late autumn, in November. I thought I was going to die. Once, a neighbor had died from such a sickness. Gnas pos\textsuperscript{82} had gone to the local monastery and would not return for a month. I thought that I would die without seeing my son. Tshe ring dpal Idan and Rig 'dzin\textsuperscript{83} took three horses and went to bring a doctor from far away. After a long wait, the doctor arrived and gave me an injection. I felt a bit better half an hour later.

The doctor said that there was something wrong with my upper intestinal track. In the middle of the night I had to call for the doctor every half hour. My eyes were good and I could see that my watch was correct. At that time, I felt my life hanging by a thread. The night was like a drunken man who didn't know when to go home.

The following day I went to the township town to be examined in the clinic. They didn't really know what was wrong with my stomach but were nonetheless able to cure it.

Almost twenty years have passed but this sickness is still with me and I think it will not let me go.

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\textsuperscript{81} This Lavrung term is for \textit{rtsam pa}, cheese, butter, and sugar mixed in a bowl. Tea is poured into the bowl after compacting these ingredients by hand,. The tea is then drunk and the tongue is used to lick up the wet dough at the bottom of the bowl. Tea is added again until the \textit{rtsam pa} is finished. It is villagers' traditional staple food.

\textsuperscript{82} The respondent's son.

\textsuperscript{83} The respondent's friends from the same village.
E bi suggests that his stomach was so swollen and taut that even a nail could not scratch it.

*go to the hole.*
See above.

*my life hanging by a thread.*
People emphasize the fragility of life by saying that it is hanging by a thread when death seems imminent or when suffering from an extremely serious sickness.

*The night was like a drunken man who didn't know when to go home.*
A drunken man is compared to the night, which was unnaturally long. A drunk man may not know when to go home, thus the night was just like the long wait for the drunken man.

*this sickness is still with me and I think it will not let me go*
He continues to be troubled by the sickness.

Example Four: Illness Two

Rig 'phel (b. 1972), a monk, was thirty-eight years old when this account was recorded.

I was about to leave my home for Xining the next day and wanted to collect more life stories featuring figurative speech. "Last year I heard that you were terribly ill. What happened?" I asked as he poured a bowl of black tea.

"It was the time of Byangs chub's wedding. You also attended, right?" he asked.

"No, I wasn't there. I was at school," I replied.
"You were there. Everyone from rjæ xʰæd Hamlet attended together," he said.
"Yeah, maybe they did. But I wasn't there – lha gsum!" I said.
"OK, no need to swear," he said.

It was last year and Byangs chub announced that he was going to marry soon. We had to rent Blo dpal's car to go to the bride's home near the township town. The bride's family hadn't prepared anything for the wedding. The groom was from our village and came with us to the bride's home. I suddenly started feeling cold and uncomfortable after we had given gifts to the bride's family. I asked my companions to leave but they became deaf.

We were in the township town after the wedding finished and were preparing to eat in a restaurant because the bride's family could not prepare enough food for so many people. I could not eat anything because I felt nauseous, but had given money to Sgron dkar to pay for my share of the meal, which my companions refused.

I slept in Blo dpal's car all the way back to our village. Finally we arrived. I took two hours to walk to my house even though it normally only requires fifteen minutes. I was just like a snail, moving extremely slowly. I had a terrible headache and constantly wanted to vomit. My stomach ached slightly, as if an ant was biting it. Afterwards I stayed in bed for about seven days and finally recovered.

It wasn't a good story to tell I guess. You may not want to record something very sad or something unpleasant like this.

*lha gsum* three deities
This Tibetan expression means 'the three deities' and is said to affirm the truth of a statement. It is commonly used in daily conversation. For example, if you say that you saw a
snake with legs and your friend expresses disbelief, you might say 'lha gsum' to convince your friend that what you said is true.

æ jo koŋ npo si they became deaf
The others ignored him.

ŋæ zcae po zcae le mjød na vlenŋ. I was just like a snail, moving extremely slowly.
This metaphorical comparison emphasizes the speaker's slowness.

ŋæn jo ydu do gə rnaə li ræ gc seʰa tsʰə je rə mjəd My stomach ached slightly as if an ant was biting it.
The unusual sensation in his abdomen is described with an expression that is rarely used.

Example Five: Personal Tragedy One

Lha se sgron (b. 1984) provided this account when she was twenty-six years old. She was a junior middle school student in Mashi xiao,⁸⁴ failed the college entrance examination, and at the time of this interview was preparing to retake the exam while working part-time in a teahouse in Maerkang.

She told me a story that happened when she was in her second year of junior middle school in Mashi xiao in the winter of 2009-2010. I stayed in her home for one night while doing fieldwork, sharing a bed with her.

Almost everyone else had gone to sleep but we were still chatting. I was trying to steer the conversation towards my interest in personal experiences. She finally began her story, which she said she had not told anyone before.

⁸⁴ Mashi xiao Middle School is in Maerkang, the Aba Prefecture seat.
You know Chos mtsho, right? We became best friends in the first year of junior middle school, since we were from the same home area. She grew up without a mother and was very weak when she was born. She also had elder brothers and sisters. Among her siblings, the oldest brother had an official job and so cared for her. **She could not be cut from her father's heart** since she was the youngest child. We ate together in the school cafeteria and she did not often spend money. The first year in the new school finished with excitement and joy.

The next year was our second year in Mashi xiao. It **could not be dreamt** that her father became seriously ill and was taken to Aba Prefecture Hospital. We visited him, arranged his meals, and did his laundry, because her other family members were busy. After fifteen days in hospital, he returned home as the doctors said he had recovered.

Chos mtsho called home every day and those who answered the phone told her that her father was fine and encouraged her to study hard. But finally the sad news that **her father had finished** could no longer be hidden from her. She fainted at the pay phone not far from school when she heard. I was standing a little far from her, waiting. I yelled her name but she didn't respond. I ran to her and tried to lift her but I couldn't. **It is true that the dead and unconscious are as heavy as clay statues.** I ran to the school like the wind, spending twenty seconds when normally it took at least ten minutes to walk. **I ran till I vomited from my stomach.** Finally she became Chos mtsho again.

She returned home very early the next day. She said the entire house had become dark, **as if the sky had fallen. It seemed that all the suffering of the world had fallen on her head.** It was impossible for her to continue

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85 A pseudonym.
her schooling without her father. She did not want to stay in the house where she had so many recollections of her father. After a long period of depression, she decided to run away from home.

Eventually her oldest brother brought her back. Her brothers and sisters insisted that she return to school. It had been her father's wish to not tell her about his death till she finished the semester.

She returned to school after the summer holiday and wrote me a letter describing all the events that had happened. I wept for my best friend and encouraged her every day after class. We planned to take the college entrance examination the next semester. Every day after we finished class, we called each other and went to eat together.

Once I was very late and thought that she might have already left so, I left. However, my friend had not left and continued waiting for a long time. She was angry and wrote me a letter the following day saying, "You have denigrated me since I lost my father and you no longer want to be friends with me. I did not want to say this to you but since we have been friends for a long time I must tell you, because you turned out to be such a person. I have done nothing wrong to you and neither have you to me. I'll go my way and you go yours!"

My tears fell like rain. I felt regret and apologized to her even though it wasn't all my fault. It turned out OK eventually. But then later she wrote, "You still do not want to be friends with me. You have so many things to say when you are with your other friends and have nothing to say when you are with me. You do not laugh as much as before. From now on we are no longer friends." This time I was frustrated and did not want to explain myself. We have not spoken since then.

In Chinese class I once wrote about my friendship with Chos mtsho while she was there. Later she wrote a
letter to me saying she wanted to talk to me and that she hoped I passed the examination. But once I am angry with someone there is nothing that can make me forgive them. I didn't accept her apology, and now if I see her, we don't speak much.

could not be cut from her father's heart
If one worries and cares about a person or thing, it is said that they or it can not be cut from one's heart.

Describes something unimaginable or unpredictable.

Her father had finished
The father died.

It is true that the dead and unconscious are as heavy as clay statues.
People are thought to become very heavy when they are unconscious or dead. The image of a clay statue is used to communicate this sense of heaviness. A clay statue may also be used to describe somebody who sits all the time and is too lazy to stand and work.

I ran till I vomited from my stomach.
This hyperbole expresses having run strenuously. It can be used to describe any exertion leading to nausea, for example, "I worked so hard that I vomited from my stomach."

Finally she became Chos mtsho again.
She regained consciousness.

as if the sky had fallen
Describes her bad mood after her father died.

It seemed that all the suffering of the whole world had fallen on her head.

Describes an extremely stressful situation or trivial unpleasantness.

My tears fell like rain.

She was very sad and cried a great deal.

Example Six: Personal Tragedy Two

Dbyangs lo (b. 1916) had three children, one of whom starved to death.

"Great Grandmother, can you tell me about a time when you were very hungry or met difficulties in your life?" I said, moving closer to her.

"My daughter, I have forgotten everything. Nothing can stay in my brain. My brain is full of insects. Now I can only eat and sleep," she said.

"My grandmother always says that they lacked food yet needed to work and almost died and things like that… I'm sure you also had such experiences. It's just a chat, no need to be nervous," I encouraged.

"Yeah, right. Surely I have. But I'm worried that I cannot tell you something that has a head and a tail."

"It's really OK! I know you can. Please!" I encouraged.

Once I almost went to meet the King of Hell when I was a servant in a wealthy home. It all began when the Red Army attacked us. We finished milking and turned the yaks loose.
one sunny morning. My mother shouted, "The soldiers are coming! Everyone get ready to run!" from the entrance of our black yak-hair tent where she was feeding our dog. Neighboring villagers led seven soldiers to our community. Our four homes were attacked. When we fled, my mother forgot to bring the leather bag hung at our black tent entrance that had our jewelry, coral, and ivory.

The soldiers were in the tent by the time she returned. She stole a glance inside and saw the soldiers drinking the milk heating in a pot on the fire with bowls and spoons. Their hands and clothes were covered with milk. They took everything we had. Even the tents were cut into pieces and taken away.

I went to my grandmother's brother's home in a neighboring village. There was also an old servant who milked the mdzo mo and gave the milk to their children. I and another female servant only got watery milk tea. For an entire day of fieldwork, I got nothing but a small bowl of rtsam pa late in the evening. I was so hungry once that I ate tree roots when I was collecting wood.

I often fainted from hunger. Finally I could no longer bear such a life, and secretly went to find my family, who were very far away. I spent ten days walking to my family, a distance that generally needed only two days.

My family had only two yaks since the Red Army had sucked the others. But our neighbor was better off – they had relatives they could depend on. I was constantly asked to drink melted butter and I soon totally recovered.

Nothing can stay in my brain. She is very old and cannot remember what happened in the past. It is a polite way to refuse to tell something.

My brain is full of insects. Suggests forgetfulness.
I cannot tell you something that has a head and a tail.

I told her I was going to write about our culture before I started the interview. She might have thought she was not an appropriate person to provide such information and was thus slightly nervous, feeling that she was unable to tell me something clearly and completely.

Meet the King of Hell

'Meet the King of Hell' is said when something bad almost leads to death.

sucked

Emphasizes the injustice of the property being taken.

Example Seven: Personal Tragedy Three

Yid bzhun lo (b. 1953) gave this account when she was fifty-seven.

"I've heard that you and many other villagers were in a terrible accident. Can you tell me about it?" I said, taking out my recorder and sipping from the bowl of tea they offered.

"Would it be shameful if I told you this?" she said with her head bent, tears filling her eyes.

I was astonished and speechless. My cousin, who was my companion, said, "She is collecting these kinds of life memories. It wasn't your fault. It was an accident." They were from the same hamlet.

She finally agreed and started:

It was on September fourth in a Tiger Year. It was almost twenty-four years ago and was the same year when Zha go was born. Eight of us planned to go to the hot spring. We prepared to leave very early in the morning. Three more
villagers were coming in addition to the eight of us. There were fifteen to sixteen in total who I can remember.

We were **squeezed into the tractor trailer like wood in a basket**. There was no space for us to move at all. Belongings were hanging off the trailer and then the engine started. We had almost reached Sang bze where there were some households near the road. What was that place called? I forget. The tractor was about to start up a small slope. Don grub the Heaven old grandpa moved a bit in the crowded trailer. I said, "Be careful! You'll cause problems for the driver," jokingly, pulling him back down in his seat.

It is said that the driver, Devi Heaven, pressed something on the dashboard and then something went wrong. I don't know what happened. The tractor turned over and fell off the road. We **went down**. Some people fell out on the road because the tractor was going very fast. Some were thrown near the riverbank with the tractor. Most of us died. I was with the ones thrown on the riverbank.

The moment the tractor fell, I felt the shrubs hitting my face and only heard the sound of the shrubs hitting me. It was like I had **drunk lmə də ɕə**. Even I myself do not know what happened. I did not become unconscious. My legs and feet were seriously hurt and that's why I cannot walk well now. I slowly opened my eyes. Two old men were lying by me on rough stones, their heads covered with blood. Both were unconscious. The locals saw us and took a message to our village, carried us to the road, and stood us there till other helpers came.

Seven of us were killed in that terrible accident. It was about five floors high from the road to the riverbank. The rest of us were seriously injured. Fear comes from deep in my heart when I think back. My **heart was really**

---

86 *lmə də ɕə* is a liquid mentioned in folktales that causes the drinker to experience complete memory loss.
cold for people who I saw die. Nor skyid's foot was cut and I could not feel my feet. Your grandmother (my cousin) died on the spot.

We injured ones were transported to Guanyinqiao Hospital and stayed there for three months but needed years to recover.

æ to nu kʰe fshaŋ sbi ẓə œo do di? Would it be shameful if I told you this?

Used to introduce an unpleasant topic.

nan səe guy je zdæ o mjəd squeezed in the tractor trailer like wood put in a basket

Dried branches from small trees are collected and packed tightly in locally made baskets. As used here, it describes people crowded in the trailer.

غا نل the Heaven and Devi heaven

Normally people add their family names, names of the different parts of the village, or 'the Heaven' to refer to a deceased person. Villagers believe people go to Heaven or Hell and calling a dead person 'the Heaven' is polite because Heaven is the most wonderful place to go. Devi is the name of a village family.

lməd dəo thə drunk lməd dəo

The imagery of drinking lməd dəo is used to describe the impact of the trauma. Forgetful people are often scolded by saying, "Have you drunk lməd dəo?"

afa jəl stood us

The helpers did not actually make the accident victims stand. This expression emphasizes the speaker's helplessness.

sjar ne ŋkʰo heart was really cold

Said to describe extreme sadness or anger.
Example Eight: A Story Fragment

Rong snong was born in 1987, graduated from junior middle school, and took the college entrance exam in 2008. She is keenly interested in learning stories and sayings from elders and provided me with many sayings in Chinese, Tibetan, and Lavrung.

"Sister Rong snong, sorry to interrupt you. Would you tell me something about romance or courtship?" I said from her door, glancing in to see if anybody else was there.

"Yeah, let me think! Your sister, I have never had a boyfriend, so there is no courtship to discuss. But I'm sure I know a short story about a man who really wanted a wife. But I'm afraid that my uncle will come and ask me for lunch, so we must hurry," she said, putting her book away, preparing to be recorded.

Asked: Black thing behind the door, what are you doing?
Answered: Waiting for mice.

Asked: Why are you waiting for mice?
Answered: To get mice tendon.

Asked: What do you want to do with mice tendon?
Answered: I will make a trap to kill deer.

Asked: Why do you want to kill deer?
Answered: To take the antlers.

Asked: What will you do with the antlers?
Answered: Snag black and white clouds.

Asked: Why do you want to snag black and white clouds?
Answered: To make rain.

Asked: Why do you want to make it rain?
Answered: To grow radishes.

Asked: Why do you want to grow radishes?
Answered: To raise pigs.

Asked: Why do you want to raise pigs?
Answered: To get a wife!

"Ha-ha. I finished. It's good that my uncle didn't come otherwise I would not be in my own body," she said when I turned the recorder off.

**nunə a tayour sister**
Villagers refer to themselves in the third person employing a relative kinship term in order to affirm the relationship between themselves and the speaker when discussing a topic that might make either feel uncomfortable. In this case, the speaker refers to herself as 'your sister' before beginning a discussion about romantic relationships. Other examples might include, 'your brother', 'your nephew', 'your niece', 'your uncle,' and so on.

**nə je vde rə mop. I would not be in my own body**
Said when experiencing extreme emotions. The speaker expressed that she would have been extremely embarrassed if her uncle had returned and heard her telling such a story, because it is considered inappropriate to tell such stories in the presence of relatives of the opposite sex.

Example Nine: School Life Memory

Lha se sgron (b. 1990) was twenty years old when I interviewed her. She was my junior middle school classmate. She loves to talk about her experiences and has an excellent memory. We had not seen each other since 2007. At the time
I interviewed her, she was is the third class of junior middle school in Mashi xiao in Maerkang.

"My sister, we haven't talked intimately for years. Tell me about your experiences in the years we were not classmates," I said.

"My pleasure, my throat is itching," she said. "I'll tell you that once we were denigrated by the Ma shi xiao schoolmaster and heard spoken something that shouldn't enter our ears.

It was like this! One lunchtime, we were gathered in the school campus for a small meeting. Most students were standing listlessly. The schoolmaster was very frustrated and yelled, "You are all like Rangtang Big Bones." At that very moment, tears filled my eyes. My heart was very cold. I glanced to the right and saw Dbyangs dkar (a classmate) had reacted the same way.

After we were dismissed, all the Rangtang students discussed how unfairly he had jeered at us. We felt that the school leader should treat all students equally.

Rangtang students stirred up one after another and headed to the schoolmaster's office in the afternoon. I called the students who were in the classroom doing their homework to also come. I was so angry that I could have killed a person at that moment. The schoolmaster wasn't there when we arrived, so all of us began explaining our feelings to him. I cried like my mother or father had died. Stag ma (a schoolmate) said, "Ren huo yi zhang lian, shu huo yizhang pi," and asked for an apology from the schoolmaster the following day. Shang Wang talked to us

87 Kashin-Beck disease is a disorder of the bones and joints of the hands and fingers, elbows, knees, and ankles of children and adolescents. Locals in the areas subject to the disorder called it 'big bone disease'. Rangtang County is noted for a relatively high incidence of the disease.
reasonably and said he would talk about this to the schoolmaster.

The following day the schoolmaster left for a weeklong meeting. We slowly forgot the incident as time passed.

cæ lev lev zə sqad my throat is itching
She couldn't wait to talk, emphasizing her eagerness to share her stories. It is also used when someone wants to sing or drink.

ŋə go nə mə və ba something shouldn't enter our ears
Describes something that people do not like to hear or are unwilling to hear, such as something false or insulting. People say, "Don't say something that shouldn't enter my ears," meaning that someone is telling them something they do not believe.

ŋæ sjar ne ʂkʰo me thsed my heart was very cold
Said when very angry or sad.

æ mæ nə sæd nə næ kboŋ I cried like my mother or father had died.
Emphasizing she had been crying a great deal.

人活一张脸, 树活一张皮 ren huo yi zang nian, su huo yi zang pi
Literally means a person lives for his face and a tree lives for its bark, suggesting that honor is to a person what bark is to a tree. Stag ma said it to show that they had honor, which is more important than anything else.
PART FIVE: FIGURES
Figure Two. Siyuewu Monastery is located in rjæ xʰæd Hamlet. The road below the monastery is National Road 317.
Figure Three. Zhangs sgyongs points to marks that are thought to be remnants from a fight between Gling soldiers and Srin mo kha la me 'bar.
Figure Four. Concave marks remain from the fight between the fire-breathing *srin mo* and the Gling soldiers.
Figure Five. This rock held the fire-breathing *srin mo* after the fight with Gling. The small spring (center right) was made by Khro thong to control the monster so that she would not destroy the village with fire.
Figure Six. Cangs ko lo stands in front of my home just before leaving for his own home. He, Srong pel, Gnas rgyal, and Zhangs sgyong provided the information on 'History'.
Figure Seven. My mother (closest to the wall) and I went to help our neighbor, Kho 'dzom, carry manure to her fields. Mother pounds the manure so that it will better nourish the crops. Gzigs lha sgron (left), a friend of Kho 'dzom, also helps. Women frequently help each other. Men also do fertilizing work. Manure is carried to the fields in a basket or plastic bag.
Figure Eight. My cousin, Lha se sgron, carries manure to her family's field early in the morning as we go to her mother's natal hamlet to conduct an interview in late February 2010.
Figure Nine. "Do I look cool with the yaks?" Kun skyongs asks. The winter herding area is a day's walk from the village. Herders occasionally go there to count their yaks in winter while two or three family members stay in a black tent in summer.
Figure Ten. Bsod mgong's family lived on a mountain two hour's walk from the local monastery. They moved closer to the highway for greater convenience. Bsod mgong is making window frames for their new house.
Figure Eleven. "Take a picture of young and handsome Shel ko instead of we wrinkled oldies!" shouted Dar rgyas (top left). Rgyal ko is next to him. Shel ko sits on the ladder near the camera, relaxing from half a day's work building their new house.
Figure Twelve. Moss collected in nearby forests is spread before covering the roof with earth to prevent soil leaking through the ceiling. Fifteen sacks of moss are needed for one floor. Uncle Dpal tho spreads moss on his sister-in-law's new house.
Figure Thirteen. I took this picture from the window of my home. Many helpers carry earth a ten minute walk to Shangs skyid and Spre khos' new house. Families currently prefer to live near the highway rather than on the upper slopes where they previously lived. Families living near the highway renew their houses more frequently as new houses are built around them. Ten families were building new houses in 2009.
Figure Fourteen. Kho 'dzom (b. 1987) was twenty-three years old and had two children in 2010. The older child was six and the younger one four. The first floor of her house was built in 2008 and the second and third floors in 2010. They plan to build a fourth and fifth floor two to four years later.
Figure Fifteen. This village house features four floors. There are also houses with five floors. Two *mdzo* are kept per family for plowing and to haul grain. Households living high in the mountains also use *mdzo* to transport goods they buy from shops.
Figure Sixteen. During the New Year, villagers go to lunch after a morning of spinning the prayer wheel in ḋọ ọ Hamlet. Some village homes are far from the village prayer hall, and have thus built their own small prayer wheel halls in their hamlets. Fifteen households built this small prayer wheel hall in 2009.
Figure Seventeen. I took this picture at night when I was passing by our hamlet's prayer hall with my mother. I had planned to take a photo of the exterior but Mother asked me to take it of the inside instead, because the wheels were more colorful.
Figure Eighteen. A local Jinchuan family in Gunayinqiao Town found the Guanyin image. Siyuewu villagers visit to worship every year. This Guanyin has a significant place in every villager's heart and is said to be the younger sister of the Jo bo deity and image in Lha sa.
Figure Nineteen. Gnas pos said jokingly, "I would like a picture with my lag 'khor 'prayer wheel' so that I look older than I really am." Gnas pos told me he had seen Bso pa's ji while walking home one night.
Figure Twenty. This is where Gnas pos saw Bsod pa's ji, which she lost when frightened by the huge dark stone (top left). My brother looks at the stone after I told him the story.
Figure Twenty-one. "Should I move near the window? Other people who see the picture will say what an ugly old woman I am," said Yid bzhin lo. She lo told me how she once lost her *ji* in the dark near the ladder.
Figure Twenty-two. Yid bzhin lo lost her *ji* when she was climbing up this ladder. Uncle Khen 'thar showed me the ladder and said, "That's probably the ladder Yid bzhin lo talked about."
Figure Twenty-three. Bai Yun assumes a humorous pose for the camera. She feels comfortable with the camera, maybe because I am her niece. She lost her *ji* in the place where a female ghost is believed to roam. She initially thought the *ji* was Smon lam's.
Figure Twenty-four. Bai Yun lost her *ji* in this valley as she and other villagers were walking on the path near the river.
Figure Twenty-five. At my request, villagers wore traditional clothes and performed a circle dance so I could record it. Circle dancing and circle dancing songs were once popular entertainment in Siyuewu, but are now less so. Only a few elders can now sing many such songs.
Figure Twenty-six. "Can you take a picture of us all and bring it back?" I was asked after the dancing finished. Local women typically wear long skirts they buy or make themselves. Tibetan robes are only worn on such special occasions as religious rituals, pilgrimages, and dance performances.
Figure Twenty-seven. Villagers danced in a field between the houses late one afternoon during Lo sar. Anyone who wants may dance, regardless of age or ability. Elders over fifty years old enjoy watching, and encourage youths to dance if they are reluctant.
Figure Twenty-eight. I took this picture during Lo sar after
Figure Twenty-eight. I took this picture during Lo sar after lunch when villagers were preparing for circle dancing near the village where there is a lab rtse. Village men had finished making bsang\(^88\) and had gone to prepare to circle dance when Zhangs sgyongs and Skal ldan asked me to take their picture. "Why don't you take a picture of us with our beautiful clothes under the shining sun?" asked Skal ldan, closest to the camera.

\(^{88}\) An incense offering is normally made by male villagers while offerings prayers to local deities for good fortune and luck.
Figure Twenty-nine. "Take one to show to your friends and teachers, and tell them there is such a handsome boy in your village," said Blo bzang (b. 1991), who told 'The Leveret, the Sparrow, and the Pig'.
Figure Thirty-one. I took this picture while explaining the work I was doing. They asked me to see the picture on my digital camera and said they looked more attractive than usual. Khen thar (b. 1953, left) told 'The Flea and the Louse'.
Figure Thirty-two. Tshe ring dpal ldan's (b. 1948) home had no electricity one night. His two-year-old granddaughter sat near him, her attention focused on my recorder. He told the story 'The Bone in the Meat'.
Figure Thirty-three. "I'm going to do the dishes but I'll have my photo taken first," said Aunt Bsod nams sgron (b. 1957), who provided the story 'The Jar Buyer'. 
Figure Thirty-four. "I don't think that taking pictures is nice when people get old like me, but I suppose it's fine," said Bsod nams (b. 1929) when I asked if I could take his photo. He told the story 'Blo ring and zæn tši'.
Figure Thirty-five. Wang Yong (b. 1978) relaxes after working in the field (background) all day near his house. He told the story 'Dividing Housework'. The tool he holds is used for sweeping snow.
Figure Thirty-six. 'Brug skyid was halfway through her afternoon meal of *rtsam pa* when I visited. The bowl closest to the camera contains butter, the small light blue bowl behind it contains *rtsam pa*, and the square tin to the right contains sugar. 'Brug skyid told 'The Helpless Nomad'.
Figure Thirty-seven. Sgrol las has poor vision. I called out to let her know where I was, so she would know in which direction to face for her picture. She told 'The Hunter and his Wife'.
Figure Thirty-eight. Zhangs skyong was excited when I asked to take his picture. He is hard working, responsible, and understands the importance of cultural preservation. He told me he would help whenever I needed. He first informed me about Do lo and suggested I ask others about sections of the story he had forgotten.
Figure Thirty-nine. Khen lha sgron (b. 1985) said, "Maybe I need to change my clothes if you take a picture? I've got a new coat to wear." She posed in her daily clothes. She told a Do lo story.
Figure Forty. "I love to have my picture taken but it's a bit dark," said Uncle Tshe ldan (b. 1972) as he was about to leave his home after a day of helping his sister collect earth to cover the roof of her new house. He provided the three work songs.
Figure Forty-one. I asked neighbors to sing hoeing songs while demonstrating accompanying actions using xətsəm in our small home garden. They gladly did so.
Figure Forty-two. *xə̓tsəm* are used to loosen the earth while crops are growing and are also used for hoeing.
Figure Forty-three. I asked villagers to pretend to break earth clods to demonstrate how tools are used. I asked them to sing, but they could not stop laughing during the song. Clod-breaking songs are commonly sung at plowing time. People said they feel more relaxed and energetic when they sing such songs while working.
Figure Forty-four. The tool on the left with a flat head and long handle is for breaking earth clods and is called *pełọ̣ tsọ̣.* The other tool is for threshing, is also locally made, and is called *ṣọ́tọ́gọ́.*
Figure Forty-five. Tshe ring lha mo (b. 1934) was a key consultant on Lavrun proverbs. She carries a locally-made basket on her back.
Figure Forty-six. Zhes lha (b. 1940) was a key consultant on Tibetan, Lavrun, and Chinese proverbs. She climbs down the mountain where Guanyin Monastery is located.
Figure Forty-seven. Skal Idan was a key consultant on proverbs in Chinese and Tibetan. My uncle Rgyal mtsho took this photo while I was being warmly offered liquor (right).
Figure Forty-eight. Khams rgyal stands on the newly built first floor of his home. He provided examples of figurative speech.
Figure Forty-nine. Dbyangs ’dzom and her two grandchildren sit on the first floor of their unfinished house, warming tea for lunch. She was a key consultant on euphemisms and metaphors.
Figure Fifty. "Do I need to change my clothes? Maybe not because I am so old that no one cares if I'm good looking," joked Yid she mtsho. She was a key consultant on Lavrung metaphors.
Figure Fifty-one. "My shoes don't look nice," Dga' skyid said. She and some other women provided information for the first example in the section 'Figurative Speech in Villagers' Narratives'.
Figure Fifty-two. This is where villagers celebrate Lo sar together. Dbyangs chen (b. 1973) helped women who were cooking after her picture was taken. She provided an account recalling the birth of her daughter in 'Figurative Speech in Villagers' Narratives'.
Figure Fifty-three. "I'll pretend to chant scriptures because I'm afraid to look at cameras," said Rig 'phel (b. 1972) as I was about to take his picture. He told me about his terrible illness in 2010 that he thought might kill him. See his account 'Illness Two' in the figurative speech section.
Figure Fifty-four. Bai Yun with her daughters, Lha se sgron (right) and Rong snong (left). Rong snong told a story about her best friend in junior middle school. "We three zæ me⁸⁹ are very pretty and those who see our photo will be amazed by our beauty," Bai Yun joked while I focused the camera.

⁸⁹ Mother and daughters. See Appendix Four for more kinship terms.
Figure Fifty-five. I asked my great grandmother, Dbyangs lo (b. 1916), to go outside because it was dark inside her home. She asked me to fix her clothes so they looked good. She told me about being a servant and almost starving to death, see 'Personal Tragedy Two'. 
Figure Fifty-six. Yid bzhin los's (b. 1953) grandson was watching TV so I had to hold my recorder close to her. Her narrative is 'Personal Tragedy Three'.
CONCLUSION

In this book I introduced Lavrung, a previously little-studied language, and the local culture of Lavrung Tibetans. I focused on oral traditions, particularly figurative speech – proverbs, metaphors, and euphemisms – that I collected from villagers in Siyuewu Village, Puxi Township, Rangtang County, Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China.

I first provided a general context to local oral traditions by describing Siyuewu Village's location, ethnolinguistic context, territorial divisions, population, name, history, subsistence, and housing. I also gave background on local religion and home remedies, and provided accounts of ji loss. Finally, I described local customs and attitudes related to love and marriage. I also provided maps showing the distribution of Lavrung-speaking communities and showing the distribution of hamlets in the village, in addition to a diagram showing the layout of a typical hamlet. The maps and information in this section provide the necessary context to understand the oral traditions presented in other portions of this book. Much of what is described in this chapter is now seriously threatened, particularly the Lavrung language.

In the second part, I introduced and provided examples of local oral stories: Helping Others Will Bring You What You Want; Do lo's Life; The Leveret, the Sparrow, and the Pig; The Flea and the Louse; The Bone in Meat; The Jar Buyer; Blo ring and zæn tʃi; Dividing Housework; The Helpless Nomad; The Hunter and His Wife; Do Lo Divides a Mdzo; Do lo the Hunter; and A Wild Boar Attacks. Locally, such stories are considered entertainment rather than moralizing educational devices. People enjoy hearing and telling such stories that are related to their daily life. Humorous stories are most popular. Villagers often make up their own humorous stories about events that happened to other villagers, and those who are the subject of
such stories may never get angry at their creators, because all villagers engage in this sort of creativity. Few elders tell stories to their grandchildren because children now find such stories boring compared to TV. Almost no villagers under the age of thirty tell stories because they think story telling is a waste of time.

In the third part, I introduced further examples of oral traditions from Siyuewu Village: fourteen $k^b\varepsilon d\partial$ 'riddles' in Lavrung, a brief introduction of sngags 'secret chants', and three Lavrung work songs. Sngags are no longer used to cure sicknesses, as their use is considered backward and superstitious. Work songs continue to be sung during plowing time.

In the fourth part of the book, I provided transcriptions and both literal and figurative translations of twenty-six Lavrung proverbs, twenty Sichuan Chinese proverbs, and fifty-five A mdo Tibetan proverbs. This section also provided euphemisms and metaphors related to death, menstruation, sexual intercourse, defecating and urinating, advice and reprimands, and animal comparatives. This section also provided examples of figurative speech within villagers' oral narratives. Villagers typically use figurative speech in daily life, but do not value it or consider it an important part of their culture, consequently, although figurative speech is in common usage, it may disappear in the future because of locals' attitudes.

I chose figurative speech as the focus of my book for two reasons. First, when I began investigating figurative speech, a villager refused my request for an interview using a metaphor to explain that he did not know any metaphors. I was deeply impressed by the irony of this situation. Secondly, I was motivated to document figurative speech because my mother language, Lavrung, has been insufficiently documented and I therefore felt a responsibility to write about it.

The final section of the book presented photographs from my village. I took these photos, which are mostly of my
consultants, in the winter of 2009, because people have more free time in winter. People were delighted and relaxed when I took their photos and they immediately asked me to see their picture. I used quotes from my subjects as captions so that readers could get a sense of how my subjects think and feel. I wanted readers to imagine that they were looking at living people rather than just pictures.

I have not documented these materials in sophisticated English, but the materials themselves are immensely rich and complex.

Perhaps, the person who is now finishing this book is someone from my community, reading this many years after it was written or perhaps even many years after my death. I am sure many things have changed since this was written. I hope this book has been a useful resource for you to study our community's past, and a unique culture that has now perhaps been lost. I hope this book inspires you to do something similar.
# APPENDIX ONE: LAVRUNG SWADESH LIST

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<thead>
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<th>English</th>
<th>Siyuewu Village Lavrung</th>
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<td>1 I</td>
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<td>2 thou (singular)</td>
<td>nu</td>
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<td>3 he</td>
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<td>4 we</td>
<td>ȵə njə</td>
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<td>5 you (plural)</td>
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<td>6 they</td>
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<td>7 this</td>
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<td>8 that</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>wide</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>thick</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>small</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>short</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>narrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>thin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>man (adult male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>man (human being)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>child (a youth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>dog</td>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>louse</td>
</tr>
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<td>49</td>
<td>snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>worm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>stick (of wood)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>leaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>bark (of trees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>rope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>skin (of a person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>meat (as in flesh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>blood</td>
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<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>bone</td>
</tr>
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<td>66</td>
<td>fat (noun)</td>
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<td>egg</td>
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<td>horn</td>
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<td>ear</td>
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<td>74</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
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<td>82</td>
<td>knee</td>
</tr>
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<td>84</td>
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<td>86</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
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</tr>
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<td>88</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>liver</td>
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<td>92</td>
<td>to drink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>to bite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>to suck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>to spit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>to vomit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>to blow (as wind)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>to breathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>to laugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>to see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>to hear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>to know (a fact)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>to think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>to smell (sense odor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>to fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>to sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>to live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>to die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>to kill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>to fight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>to hunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>to hit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>to cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>to split</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>to stab (or stick)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>to scratch (an itch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>to dig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>to swim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>to fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>to walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>to come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>to lie (as on one's side)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>to sit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>to stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>to turn (change direction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>to fall (as in drop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>to give</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>to hold (in one's hand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>to squeeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>to rub</td>
</tr>
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<td>132</td>
<td>to wash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>to wipe</td>
</tr>
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<td>to pull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>to push</td>
</tr>
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<td>136</td>
<td>to throw</td>
</tr>
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<td>137</td>
<td>to tie</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>to sew</td>
</tr>
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<td>139</td>
<td>to count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>to say</td>
</tr>
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<td>141</td>
<td>to sing</td>
</tr>
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<td>142</td>
<td>to play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>to float</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>to flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>to freeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>to swell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td>moon</td>
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</tr>
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<td>water</td>
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<td>151</td>
<td>to rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152</td>
<td>river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153</td>
<td>lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154</td>
<td>sea (as in ocean)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157</td>
<td>sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158</td>
<td>dust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159</td>
<td>earth (as in soil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>cloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161</td>
<td>fog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163</td>
<td>wind (as in breeze)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>165</td>
<td>ice</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>194</td>
<td>wet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>195</td>
<td>dry (adjective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>right (correct)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>197</td>
<td>near</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>198</td>
<td>far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>199</td>
<td>right (side)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>left (side)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201</td>
<td>at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202</td>
<td>in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203</td>
<td>with (accompanying)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204</td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205</td>
<td>if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>206</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207</td>
<td>name</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### APPENDIX TWO: SIYUEWU FESTIVALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 31</td>
<td>Yuan dan, the last day of the year. Villagers have a one-day holiday. Neighbors share a meal together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelfth lunar month</td>
<td>Immediately before New Year, village monks chant the Phub grub scripture for three days. The monks perform 'cham' for two days in the local monastery and all villagers participate on the days the monks dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First lunar month</td>
<td>Lo sar, New Year. Siyewu villagers celebrate New Year by watching TV, cooking, and visiting relatives and friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>Sanba funü jie, Women's Day. Villagers have a one-day holiday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tenth day of the fourth lunar month</td>
<td>Monks chant the Tshe grub scripture in the local monastery for seven days to prevent illnesses and to ensure the community's safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Wuyi laodong jie, Workers Day. Villagers take a one-day holiday and wash their clothes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Liuyi ertong jie, Children's Day. Villagers go to Puxi Township Town and Shangzhang Town to watch performances organized by the schools their children attend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tenth day of the sixth lunar month</td>
<td>Monks in the local monastery chant the Thos sgrol scripture for seven days for people who have died.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

90 A religious dance performed by monks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month and Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In July</td>
<td>Gling zla or Kanhua jie. Each hamlet celebrates this picnic separately for ten days. Each family pitches a tent. People dance, sing, play games, joke, and drink barley liquor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Gouqing National Day. Villagers take a one-day holiday, eat a meal together, and spin prayer wheels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tenth day of the eleventh lunar month</td>
<td>Phub grub lasts seven days and primarily consists of fasting. Monks chant in the local monastery and fast with villagers who also turn prayer wheels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX THREE: MEASUREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mu 亩</td>
<td>An area measurement equal to two-thirds of a hectare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mao 毛</td>
<td>A measurement of Chinese currency. One mao equals 0.1 yuan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX FOUR: LAVRUNG KINSHIP TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Lavrung</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aunt</td>
<td>la la</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brother</td>
<td>?doy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brothers (two or more)</td>
<td>rəmæ stəɣə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daughters</td>
<td>mə le</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>father</td>
<td>a va</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>father and children (normally son)</td>
<td>zæ vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>granddaughter</td>
<td>tsæ mu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grandfather</td>
<td>va vo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grandmother</td>
<td>ma ve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grandparents and grandchildren</td>
<td>svə lə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grandson</td>
<td>tsæ νə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>husband</td>
<td>γmoaɣ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother</td>
<td>æ mæ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother and children (normally daughter)</td>
<td>zæ me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niece or nephew</td>
<td>vlo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>older sibling</td>
<td>a ?da</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sister</td>
<td>snəm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sister</td>
<td>sqi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sisters (two or more)</td>
<td>sqə xʰə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>son</td>
<td>zi lo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncle</td>
<td>o yo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncle with their nieces and nephews</td>
<td>svə zi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wife</td>
<td>zjavə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>younger brother</td>
<td>mo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX FIVE: NON-ENGLISH WORD LIST

ʃou tsu uɭ, *place name
?
?mau, husband

'Bar khams བར་ཁམས། *place name
'Brug mo བྲུག་མོ། *person's name
'Brug mtsho བྲུག་མཚོ། *person's name
'Brug skyid བྲུག་སྦྱོད། *person's name
'cham གཞན། A religious dance performed by monks
'Dzam thang ཆུ་ཚང་། *place name
'Jigs med མིགས་མེད། *person's name
'khor khang མཁྱེན་བཀོད། prayer wheel hall

ɣətəvo ɭe, *place name

A
A mdo འབོད། *place name
Aba 阿坝 *place name
a ga ri, plants with small, dense leaves that grow about one and a half meters tall and have a strong bitter smell
a vro Golo, *place name
a zhang འབྲོག་གཅེས། Tibetan term for maternal uncle

B
Bai 白 *river's name
Bai Yun 白云 *person's name
Banma 班玛 *county name
Bcom ldan 'das བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས། the Buddha
Bka' chos བཀའ་ཆོས། *scripture's name
Bkra lo བཀྲ་བོ། *person's name
Bkra shes བཀྲ་ཤེས། *person's name
Bkra shes don grub བསོད་ནམས་བོན་ །person's name
bla དབ། soul
Bla brang འབྲས་པང། *place name
Blo bzang བོ་བཟང་། *place name
Blo bzang bkra shes བོ་བཟང་བ'ཤེས། *person's name
Blo dpal བོ་དཔལ། *person's name
Blo ring བོ་རིང་། *person's name
Blo yig བོ་ཡི་ག། *person's name
bsang khang བསང་ཁང་། incense burner
Bso pa བསོ་པ་ *person's name
Bsod mgong བསོད་མངོན། *person's name
Bsod nams བསོད་ནམས། *person's name
Bsod nams sgron བསོད་ནམས་འགྲོན། *person's name
Bstan chos བསྟན་ཆོས། *scripture's name
Byangs chub བྱངས་ཆུབ། *person's name
Byangs mo བྱངས་མོ། *person's name
Byangs skyid བྱངས་སྟེད། *person's name
C
Cangs ko lo ཇངས་ཀོ་ལོ། *person's name
Chos go ཇོ་ཁོ་ *person's name
Cho ldan ཇོ་ལོན། *person's name
Chos mtsho ཇོ་མི་ཚོ། *person's name
Chu chen ཇུ་ཆེན། *place name
Chun jie 春节 *festival name
D
Dadu 大渡, *river's name
Dar rgyas ཇར་རྒྱས། *person's name
Dbang byugs དབང་བྱུགས། *person's name
Dbang rgyal དབང་རྒྱལ། *person's name
Dbyangs 'dzom དབྱངས་འཛོམ། *person's name

•272•
Dbyangs chen དབྱངས་ཆེན། *person's name
Dbyangs dkar དབྱངས་དཀར། *person's name
Dbyangs lo དབྱངས་ལོ། *person's name
deng pao 灯泡，light bulb
Devi *family name
Dga' skyid དགའ་ཤིན། *person's name
Dge lugs དགེ་ཐུན། *sect of Tibetan Buddhism
dgong gnas དོགནས་ནས། texts that spontaneously arise in a
lama or rtsis pa's mind
dian shi 电视，television
Dkar mdzes དཀར་མཛེས། *place name
Do lo དོ་ལོ། *person's name
Don grub དོན་གྲུབ། *person's name
Don po དོན་པོ། *person's name
Dpa' lo དཔའ་ལོ། *person's name
Dpal mgon དཔལ་མགོན། *person's name
Dpal tho དཔལ་ཐོ། *person's name
dui 队, work brigade
dzę zdon zgæ ձæx *pestle
E
E bi དབི་*person's name
Er dui 二队 *place name
Ergali 二噶里 *place name
Eri 俄日, *place name
əɡæd, *place name
ə yo, uncle
F
fə kʰe zɛ, *place name
G.yu go [person's name]
G.yu lha [person's name]
G.yu mtsho [person's name]
G.yu rgyal [person's name]
G.yu sgron [person's name]
Gansu [place name]

Go le, walnut (*Juglans regia*)
Ge sar [person's name]

G. yu, mountain deities
Gling [legendary Tibetan kingdom]
Gling zla [festival name]
Gnas bzang [person's name]
Gnas mdun [mountain name]
Gnas pos [person's name]
Gnas rgyal [person's name]

Gnas yig [a book on local history or a book that predicts the future and advises people as to what they should and should not do. High status lama and rtsis pa 'fortune tellers' write gnas yig.]

Goyo no zge, [family name]
Gser [river name]
Gser rta [place name]

Gsong chabs [small earth balls consecrated by chanting that contain a high lama's urine, are considered sacred, and are put in water that is drunk to prevent diseases and contamination by evil]

Gter ston [person's name]
Guanyinqiao [place name]
Guoqing [festival name]
Negotiation to settle a conflict, for example, when a husband has left his wife and children for another woman. The wife's family may then call for a gyod to negotiate a solution.

Gzhan phan ལྷན་ཕན། *person's name
Gzigs lha sgron ལྷིས་ལྷ་སྒྲོན། *person's name

Han 汉, *ethnic group

Heishui 黑水, *place name
Hongqi 红旗, *place name
Hongyuan 红原, *place name
Huangzhong 湟中, *place name

huo lu zi 火炉子, metal stove

jom, the main room of a house
ji, *soul
Jiarong 嘉绒 *place name

jin 斤, 0.5 kilograms
Jinchuan 金川, *place name
Jo bo ཇོ་བོ། *deity
jole yu, *place name

kær læm, red earth

kæ tcær, local pickled radish leaf used as seasoning and often exchanged among households

Kan hua jie 看花节, *festival name

kha btags ཀྲི་བཞགས། strip of white silk offered to high lama or other respected persons

Khams rgyal མཐུན་རྒྱལ། *person's name
Khen lha sgron *person's name
Khen thar *person's name
khé da, riddles
khé le, to the left of a stove
khé sna, near the stove, close to the door
khé yar, opposite the door, behind the stove
khé o, storeroom
Kho 'dzom *person's name
kho syri, to the right of a stove
Khro *river's name
Khro skyabs king of the eighteen tribes of Jinchuan
Khro thong one of King Ge sar's ministers
khyim lha family deity
ko yar, southern (shady) side of a valley
Kun bzang *person's name
Kun skyongs *person's name

Lab rtse are sacred cairns consisting of Tibetan scripture flags tied to sticks inserted into a base of stones. Lab rtse are considered offerings to deities. Whereas Tibetans in many areas have lab rtse only on mountaintops where mountain deities are considered to reside, Siyuewu villagers also have lab rtse on houses' top floors.

Lama monk
len chags Len chags are rtsam pa offerings made to beings called mi ma yin that are neither people, deities, not ghosts. A long roll of rtsam pa is squeezed in the hand making a handprint.

Lha gsum *an oath
Lha mo *person's name
Lha mtsho རྒན་མཚོ། *person's name
Lha sa རྒན་ས། *place name
Lha se sgron རྒན་ོས། *person's name
Lha sgron རྒན་ོན། *person's name
Liuyi ertzong jie 六一 儿童节, *festival name
Lixian 理县, *place name

lmog dce a liquid sometimes mentioned in folktales that causes the drinker to experience complete memory loss
Lo sar གཞི་ལྷ། New Year
Lo lo ཁོ་ལོ། *person's name

Maerkang 马尔康, *place name
mao 毛, *measure word
ma Ni རྒྱུ་Tibetan Buddhist mantra
Mashi xiao 马师校, *school name
mchod khang རྡོ་ཁང་། shrine room
mdzo རྒྱུ a male cow and female yak hybrid that it is larger than a yak and has shorter hair
Mdzo dge རྒྱུ་དགེ། *place name
mo je, this plant has small leaves and a fruit encased in a thick green skin. It grows in pastures where there is dense grass near streams.
mi ma yin རྡོ་བཞིན། spirit beings that are neither people, deities, or ghosts
mkhan po རྒྱན་པོ། abbot
Mkhan po Tshul khrum blo gros རྒྱན་པོ་ཚུལ་ཁྲུམ་བློ་གྲོས། *person's name
My story has finished – a concluding formula for folk narratives

Was that fun? – a concluding formula for folk narratives

black earth

northern (sunny) side of a valley

Nyima lha mo *person's name

mantra of Avalokiteshvara

Padmasambhava, the founder of Rnying ma pa Tibetan Buddhism

a mallet used to break earth clods

sow
Phub grub [scripture name]
Puxi [place name]

Q

qʰæd næ to sæce, stories that can make you laugh
Qiɑŋ [ethnic group]
Qinghai [place name]

R

Rangtang [place name]
Rdo rje [person name]
Rdo rje tshe ring [person name]
ro jav, husband
Reluo 热落, [person name]
rgo pro uqu, [place name]
Rgyal ko [person name]
Rgyal mchog [person name]
Rgyal mtsho [person name]
rgyal po dpe [king stories]
Rig 'dzin [person name]
Rig 'dzin nyi ma [person name]
Rig 'phel [person name]
Rigs gnas [person name]
Rin chen [person name]
rjæ xʰæd, [place name]
Rje tsong kha pa [founder of the Dge lugs pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism]
Rka khog [place name]
Rnga ba [place name]
Rnying ma ba [Buddhist sect]

ro [river's name]

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Rong snong རོང་སྒང་། *person's name

*rtsam pa རྩིམ་པ། roasted barley flour dough sometimes mixed with roasted corn flour

*rtsis pa རྟླིས་པ། an astronomer or fortune teller

Rtsong khag རྟློང་ཁག *place name

*ru lu རུ་ལུ་earth balls blessed by bla ma and considered to have medicinal qualities

Ruoergai 若尔盖, *place name

Sa gnas ས་གནས་ gnas yig that are found under the earth

Saluo 萨罗, *person's name

San dui 三队, *place name

Sanba funü jie 三八妇女节, *festival name

Sang bze སང་བཞེ། *person's name

Sangs sgron སངས་སྟོན། *person's name

Se si, local wild red fruit

*sglce, threshing flail

Sgrol las སྒྲོལ་ཐོས། *person's name

Sgrol ma སྒྲོལ་མ། *person's name

Sgron dkar སྟངས་དཀར། *person's name

Shan thabs གཉིས་ཐབས། the outer, lower part of a monk's garment that resembles a long skirt

Shangs skyid སཞེན་སྡིད། *person's name

Shangzhai 上寨 *place name

Shel ko སྡེལ་ཀོ *person's name

Shes rabs སྤེས་རབས། *person's name

Shili 石里, *place name

Sichuan 四川, *place name

Siyuewu 斯跃武, *place name

Skal ldan སྲྭ་ལྟན། *person's name
Sku 'bum གུམ་དུས། *place name
Smon lam གསོམ་ལམ། *person's name
sngags ལན། secret chants
Spre khos གོ་ཁོས། *person's name
srin mo ལྟོ་མོ། demoness
Srin mo kha la me 'bar ལྟོ་མོ་ཁ་ལ་མེ་འབར། fire-breathing demoness
Strong pel ལོང་པེལ། *person's name
Stag ma ལོ་མ། *person's name
su, *livestock
Su khron རུ་ཁྲོན། *place name

T
Taiyanghe 太阳河 *place name
tɕʰæ mda, U-shaped metal straw used to drink barley liquor from a jar
tʰem du, *place name
Thos sgrol གཟོས་སྒྲོལ། *scripture
Thug rje chen po ལྷོག་རྫོང་ཕོ། Avalokiteshvara, God of Compassion
Tshe ldan ཀྲེ་བ། *person's name
Tshe ldan gtor rjes ཀྲེ་བ་གཏོར་རྒྱས། *person's name
Tshe lo ཀྲེ་ལོ། *person's name
Tshe dbang rig 'dzin ཀྲེ་དབང་རིག་འཛིན། *person's name
Tshe grub ཀྲེ་བུ། *scripture
Tshe ring ཀྲེ་རིང་། *person's name
Tshe ring dpal ldan ཀྲེ་རིང་དཔལ་ཁྲེེ། *person's name
Tshe ring lha mo ཀྲེ་རིང་ལྷ་མོ། *person's name
Tshe ring nyi ma ཀྲེ་རིང་ཉི་མ། *person's name
Tshul khrum blo gros ཚུལ་གྲོས་བློ་གྲོས། *person's name
tuigeng huanlin 退耕还林, policy of returning cropland to
forest
tuimu huancao 退畜放草, policy of returning pasture to
grass
tuo li ji 脱粒机, thresher

V
va, Lavrun particle used to form residents' names
va แฮ่ ทุ่, *place name
vaχo ลอม บุ, *place name
vəcær ่กี, wild man
vro, *place name
ves jo, stone mill

W
Wang Jun 王军, *person's name
Wang La 王腊, *person's name
Wang Ying 王映, *person's name
Wang Yong 王勇, *person's name
Wuyi laodong jie 五一劳动节, *festival name

X
χə bi, story
χə zor, small bearded animal similar to a mouse that
normally lives in fields, and eats grass and grain
xətsəm, a tool used to loosen soil that resembles both a hoe
and a mattock
xʰu zu ยุ, *place name
Xiangyang 襄阳, *place name
Xiaojin 小金, *place name
Xiaoyili 小伊里, *place name
χnæג va, Hell
χna χna, long, long ago – an opening formula for folk
narratives
Y

Yi dui 一队, *place name
Yid bzhin lo ཨིད་བཞིན་ལོ། *person's name
Yid she mtsho ཨིད་ཤེས་མཚོ། *person's name
Yina 依娜, *person's name
Yourigou 尤日沟, *place name
Yuan dan 元旦, *festival name
Yile uqu, *place name

Z

zae me, mothers and daughters
zaen tshi, *person's name
zogo me, rock
zoen pa re, *family's name
Ze e tong སེ་ལོོ་ཏོོ། *place name
Zha go ལོོ། *person's name
zhang སྲོོ། abbreviated form of a zhang, the Tibetan term for maternal uncle
Zhangs sgyong ལོོ་སྒྲོོིེ་ཧེང་། *person's name
Zhes lha བེས་ལོ། *person's name
Zla ba lha mo བབ་ལོོ་མོ། *person's name
Zongke 宗科, *place name
Zor tsa མོ་རྟ་སྲོོ། *place name
Zobrmo རོི་བྲོོ་མོ། *place name