BEING ANYTHING AND GOING ANYWHERE
AN A MDO TIBETAN AUTO-SONG-OGRAPHY

by

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**Asian Highlands Perspectives (AHP)** is a trans-disciplinary journal focused on the Tibetan Plateau and surrounding regions, including the Southeast Asian Massif, Himalayan Massif, the Extended Eastern Himalayas, the Mongolian Plateau, and other contiguous areas.

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**KEYWORDS:** A mdo Tibetan folksongs, *dmangs glu, glu shags, la gzhags*, oral performance, *rdung len*

**BACK COVER:** Sangs rgyas bkra shis throws wind horses on Dar lcog འདར་ལིོག 'Prayer Flag' Hill near his family's winter home on the first day of the first lunar month in 2015 (Gcod pa don 'grub ལ་གཅོདཔདོན་2015).

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Sangs rgyas bkra shis stands between his father (Rin chen rgyal, b. 1963) and mother (Klu mo tshe ring, b. 1963) outside their winter home (Ban de rgyal, 2015).
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Rin chen mkhar རིན་ཆེན་མཁར།
Rose Hyson
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Map. Gcan tsha (Jianzha) County, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province.¹

¹ This is an altered version of Croquant (2007), http://tinyurl.com/o6azwco), accessed 26 June 2015.
I feel very free, relaxed, and comfortable when I sing traditional songs. Somehow, their lyrics and melodies are fixed in my mind and they come very naturally. I don't need to think about them. When you understand the lyrics and melodies really well, you don't need to think about them, and so you are free to completely blend into your song. You can deeply feel your song.

I enjoy singing very much, because I can be anything and I can go anywhere when I am singing. For example, if I am singing about a bird, I feel like I am the bird. Any worries and depression vanish and I am no longer in the place where I am. I sort of disappear. Also, the fact that many people like to listen to my songs, naturally encourages me to keep singing.

Singing is very important. It is a wonderful and effective way to communicate with others. While there are many ways to express our emotions, singing is the most peaceful and beautiful way I have to show and share my feelings. For instance, when I am happy or sad, I choose a song that matches my emotion, and I automatically follow the song and imagine that I am showing my feelings to whomever I want. It feels real. Singing is a very important part of my life.

When I do not sing for some time, I am not as happy as when I do sing. It is like lying on a grassland without flowers around me. Singing brings a feeling of many beautiful flowers in the grassland. My life is happier and more colorful when I sing.

From my experience, worlds created by songs are quiet and peaceful. When I am in that world, I feel strong, like I am on top of everything. Nothing obstructs me. It is a world that completely belongs to me.

Songs create as many different worlds for our minds to enjoy as we can imagine. That is why such worlds are so free and why there are so many of them. The type of world depends on the song's lyrics and its melody. Songs are like mirrors that reflect our lives. The world a Tibetan traditional song creates is different from a modern, urban world and it will be impossible for traditional songs to survive once the traditional world in which they were born dies. The songs we enjoy listening to and singing are deeply rooted in our lives. Once our lives have gone, younger generations will create new songs reflecting their lives and will

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2 I thank Tim Thurston, Tshe ring rdo rje, Gabriela Samcewicz, Snying lcags rgyal, and Rose Hyson for assistance in writing this foreword.
not continue our songs because those songs will no longer match their lives. This is the normal way of things. For this reason I have documented the cultural singing practices and songs of my life, so that at least a record remains,

--Sangs rgyas bkra shis

I first met Sangs rgyas bkra shis in 2011, but it was another six months during a boisterous social gathering before I realized that he could sing very well. Time passed and I slowly learned more about his experiences as a singer and the songs he had learned while growing up in a community of yak and sheep herders whose lives were rapidly being transformed in response to government policy that promises resettlement in a town where herding yaks and sheep will no longer be a livelihood option.

More time passed.

We discussed writing an article that would feature transcriptions of the songs he could remember and perform, music notation for those songs, and provide a richly contextualized setting in which to place the songs. Sangs rgyas bkra shis then sang, and recorded, the songs from memory in an apartment in Xi'an City. After transcribing and translating them, he concentrated on describing how he had learned and performed them. Over a period of several months, Sangs rgyas bkra shis and I sat together in front of a computer as I elicited more information. This often reminded him of other information he wanted included, which he typed out, I edited, and which we then incorporated into the growing manuscript. Through this somewhat haphazard, organic process, we completed Part One of this book.

In 2014, I contacted Dr. Qi Huimin, a native of Qinghai Province and a former teaching colleague at Qinghai Junior Teachers College, with whom I had collaborated previously (Dai et al. 1999; Libu Lakhi et al. 2010; Qi et al. 1998, 1999; and Zhu et al. 1997). She agreed to write the music notation for the songs and began corresponding with Sangs rgyas bkra shis. In the autumn of 2015, Dr. Qi visited Xi'an City and worked intensively with Sangs rgyas bkra shis to refine music notation that she had already prepared from the recorded versions he had provided.
The result is this book in which Sangs rgyas bkra shis traces his life as the youngest child of a herding couple who were both known as skilled local singers, his struggle to enter school against the wishes of his parents, enrollment in a private, secular school at a monastery in Qinghai, and eventual further education at a university in Xi’an City for college-level English major study.

Sangs rgyas bkra shis informs us early on that terms used in this book are not meant to be representative of the vast Tibetan cultural area, but rather are illustrated and explained according to local realities.


The 'Introduction' provides information on the location of Sangs rgyas bkra shis's homeland and its current administrative boundaries, as well as introducing his family members and circumstances as herders, e.g., seasonal movement, dwellings, and group activities.

'Songs' describes what responsibilities, benefits, and worries accompany being labeled a good singer. Songs presented in this book are also classified (dmangs glu, glu shags, la gzhas, and rdung len) and illustrated with particularized examples, including singing at Sangs rgyas bkra shis's maternal grandparents' home that involved gatherings of ten to twenty relatives and joyous singing sessions that lasted for hours.

'Weddings' gives ritually contextualized materials drawn from performances that offer insight into gendered seating arrangements and the serving and consumption of food and drink. Sangs rgyas bkra shis recalls attending a wedding as a child and seeing a beautifully dressed and ornamented woman singing while maneuvering between rows of assembled guests, who were quietly listening to her songs. He was astonished to realize that this very beautiful, amazing singer was his own mother - a woman often invited to sing at weddings because of her singing skill.

In 'Power Transformations' the reader is told that Sangs rgyas bkra shis's family first obtained a radio in the year 2000 and soon
after a solar electricity generating unit and a cassette tape player (traded for a two year old sheep) that proved so novel that many locals visited the home at night to enjoy the solar lighting and the songs on cassettes played on the tape player. The inevitable subsequent acquisitions of a television, VCD/ DVD player, and multiple cell phones collectively offered access to an unprecedented variety of songs.

'A Dmangs glu Singing Competition' in the winter of 2013 features an event attended by 500 or so locals that lasted for hours. Thanks to the availability of electricity and the television that provides examples of singing gatherings that people watch and imitate in their own local communities, this song-fest featured a male and female MC, microphones, and loudspeakers. This section valuably illustrates how public song events were framed and carried out in the early twenty-first century.

'Informal Gatherings at My Home' describes a time when Sangs rgyas bkra shis's home was, for a brief period, a local center for singing in the evening and into the night. This provided both a venue and opportunities for him to further develop his vocal abilities:

Whenever my family had a visitor, my parents urged me to sing. Those around me also encouraged me to sing, and I saw enjoyment in their eyes and on their faces. I felt my voice had no limits when I was singing.

Reasons for Sangs rgyas bkra shis's father ending these gatherings are also explored.

'Changing Song Practices and Preferences' explains how Sangs rgyas bkra shis, after moving to Xi'an City, became interested in Chinese and English language songs, an interest facilitated by the ease with which songs could be downloaded onto his cell phone. Additionally, Xi'an, although a huge city of nine million inhabitants provided few opportunities for performing traditional Tibetan songs.

'Part Two' is devoted to music notation and Tibetan texts of twenty-six songs. It points out that "the songs in this text give a micro history of changes in local Tibetan songs including style alterations in terms of melody and a singer's individual preference."
'Part Three' provides photographs with detailed explanations of singing occasions in the local community - wedding ceremonies, a horse race, a three year old boy's birthday, and a party held by a local organization to recognize families who live in black yak hair tents during summer. Information for the photographs provides new details, e.g., when and how microphones and loud speakers entered the local community and that by 2015, they were de rigueur for most public singing occasions.

Materials related to "Tibetan music" are plentiful. A Google search on 24 October 2015 for "Tibetan music" provided 366,000 entries and a Youtube search delivered "about 60,900" returns. Studies with related bibliographies include Lama Jabb (2015), Skal bzang norbu (2015), Craun (2011), and Wu (1998). Tibetan-language publishing includes Ban de tshe ring and Bsod nams tshe brtan (2009), Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (2005), Stag 'bum thar and Skal bzang (2004), Bkra shis rgyal mtshan and Dkon mchog (1997), Bsam gtan rdo rje and Bkra rgyal (1994), and Qinghai sheng (1987). There is also a growing body of archived materials.3

Sangs rgyas bkra shis comments:

Tibetan traditional songs have a much broader range, poetically describing people, horses, insects, the earth and sky, the history of the universe, rivers, trees, religion and various deities, Tibetan history, tea, bread, Ge sar, the affection between family members and teachers and students, and so on. Romantic relationships are also described, and sometimes in very explicit terms, but this is not a topic that dominates. In sum, Tibetan traditional songs encapsulate the world Tibetans live and think in, and also, to a greater or lesser extent, offer advice on how to enjoy a good and meaningful life.

In 2015, songs are much less important in dating, teasing, and other realms of life, as fewer and fewer Tibetans who have spent some years in state sponsored education are able to sing a variety of traditional

songs. Furthermore, Amdo traditional songs are "evolving as time passes" with, for example, the increasing use of Chinese words such as "plastic," "vehicle," "telephone," and "bomb" "commonly used in daily Amdo Tibetan dialect" (Skal bzang norbu 2015:31, 33). Testimony to the extent to which traditional songs are endangered is found in the number of youth who speak Tibetan well, but have difficulty comprehending the words once they become song lyrics. This is partly due to the ubiquity of formalized schooling that steers people away from the oral language.

Despite the plethora of materials available or alluded to on the Internet, detailed expositions of singing in the life of a young Tibetan man, how his songs were learned and sung, and their status today are few to nonexistent.

In announcing the 2015 Nobel Prize in Literature, the permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy described the winner, Svetlana Alexievich (b. 1948), as a writer busy charting the Soviet and post-Soviet individual who had gone beyond events to a history of a human being, a history of emotions, a history of the soul (Charles 2015). The exceptional text within these covers traverses similar territory as it charts Sangs rgyas bkra shis's early history with songs and the individuals that breathed life and meaning into these expressions. In its attempt to better illuminate one Tibetan soul it speaks to the lack of detailed explorations of the individual amid the "ocean of Tibetan songs."

CK Stuart
Xi’an City
2015

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4 For such expressions see, for example, Honko (1990:473): "The Tibetans are a nationality renowned for their singing and dancing and renowned as "an ocean of songs and dances.""
PART ONE
LIFE WITH SONG
INTRODUCTION

When a good singer sang, the song echoed from valley to valley and yaks and sheep raised their heads and listened.

Sangs rgyas bkra shis

I was born in 1991 to Tibetan parents in Gcan tsha thang, a pastoral community in Gcan tsha thang (Jianzhatan) Township, Gcan tsha (Jianzha) County, Rma lho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province. I have introduced this township in detail elsewhere (Sangs rgyas bkra shis and CK Stuart, 2015). Briefly, with current township boundaries designated in 1954, the township has a land area of 642 square kilometers, an average elevation of 3,300 meters above sea level, and a population of 4,000, of which ninety-nine percent is Tibetan. Within the township, agriculture is only practiced in the Gle gzhug community, where locals cultivate barley, wheat, and canola. Nearly all families in the township, including those in Gle gzhug, raise yaks, sheep, horses, and a few goats.

I am from Lo ba Pastoral Community which, in 2015, had approximately 115 households and consisted of two subgroups – the Lho ba and Lo ba tribes. I belong to the Lho ba Tribe, which had about fifty households. Every household in Lo ba Pastoral Community had a fixed winter house.

In 1997, when I was about six years old, my pastoral community moved four times a year. Our winter home was located about 1.3 kilometers east of the boundary with Khri ka (Guide) County, Mtsho lho (Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, at the foot of Ban de ma Mountain. From our dgun sa 'winter place', we moved northeast to rdza mgo 'mountain top' pasture on Sras chen Mountain during the fifth lunar month, which took about eight hours on foot as we herded our yaks and flocks of sheep. After about a

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5 pastoral community = 'brog sde.
8 Some Gle gzhug families living on mountains own livestock and do not practice agriculture. Farming families generally own a few head of livestock.
month, we moved to our dbyar **sa** 'summer pasture', where we spent another month. Our next camp was ston **sa** 'autumn pasture', where we stayed for about two months before moving back to the winter pasture. At that time, we lived in a black yak hair tent, except for the time spent in our winter home, an adobe-wood house.9

In terms of my schooling, I started attending the local primary school in 2001, when I was ten years old. After three years, I moved to another primary school located in Dar mtsho (Brag dkar; Xinghai) County and stayed there for one term. I then studied for six years at Shes rig nor bu'i slob gling,10 located in Mgo log Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, before graduating in 2011. In 2012, I enrolled in an Associate Degree program at Xi'an International Studies University in Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province.

In 2015, my family had about thirty-seven yaks, 250 sheep, four goats, and one horse. By this time, all our pastures had been fenced in compliance with government rules, except for the grassland on Sras chen Mountain. Additionally, my family moved only three times. We no longer camped on the summer pasture. The map11 at the beginning of this book shows the location of my home area.

In this text, I focus on songs and singing in my life, describing when and where I heard songs, how I learned to sing, who I learned from, descriptions of dmangs **glu**, glu shags, la gzhas, and rdung len and examples of the songs that I sang and heard. My descriptions of the songs and other aspects of Tibetan culture are based on the local area and may not apply to other culturally Tibetan areas and populations.

Locally, two general terms are used for songs. M**gur** refers to chants sung by nuns, monks, and others as a form of religious devotion. Glu refers to songs sung by the laity that are not sung by practicing nuns and monks. Instead, glu are generally sung by those thirteen to sixty years of age, although there are no real age...

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9 In about 1967, Father’s family built a gur ’khyog - a simple one-room house - in a location about forty-five minutes by motorcycle from the site of our current winter house. Later, Father and his family moved near our current winter house and built another house. In 2006, Father hired several Tibetan workers who built a new multi-room wood-adobe house for our family.

10 Also know as 'Jigs med rgyal mtshan Nationalities Vocational School.

limitations. This is partially explained by the idea that one is "old" at the age of sixty and should spend more time chanting and, in order to maintain a sense of propriety, to sing only when urged by others. *Glu* are generally not sung near monasteries and nunneries, or during religious rituals and funerals.

If locals say you are a good (secular) singer, you are treated positively in the community. You are noticed and respected whenever there are gatherings. For example, if there is a wedding ceremony in a relative's home, family members are generally expected to do various chores to help such as greet visitors, offer them food such as *chob*, yogurt, *gro ma* (silverweed roots, *Argentina anserina*) 'wild baby yams', fried mutton or beef with green chili and vermicelli; and drinks (Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Sprite, and Glang dmar 'Red Bull'). However, if you are a "singer," your duty is to sing and you are not expected to do anything else. You also receive cash and *kha btags* 'strips of ceremonial silk' at parties.

Being a singer gives you more chances to attend wedding parties and social activities related to singing. When the bride's attendants are chosen, many youths want to go because the groom's side will treat them very well, offer them the good food mentioned earlier, and give them *skon* that was historically a gift of cloth, but which today has been replaced by cash ranging in amounts from thirty to one hundred *yuan*. The occasion also offers a chance to meet other young people. The parents of young singers also readily give permission for their child to attend social gatherings to sing, especially wedding ceremonies, reasoning that it is a good way for their child to gain local recognition, which reflects positively on the larger family.

At the same time, a singer has worries. For example, if you go to a different community as a bride's attendant and you sing badly or the groom's side's singers defeat you, gossip will circulate. Some will say that your poor singing ruined your home community's reputation. How well or badly you sang will become a topic of general local conversation. This encourages singers to prepare well.

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12 In the local dialect, *chob* refers to a bowl of dumplings that are stuffed with either chopped mutton or yak meat mixed with green onion. They are boiled in mutton or yak meat soup. In addition, the bowl contains soup and chunks of meat, chopped green onion, a few slices of turnip, and vermicelli.
In terms of instrumental accompaniment for secular songs, boys and men historically played the *gling bu* 'flute'. Local flutes were bought from shops in Mar khu thang (the county seat town) and peddlers. Flutes were also made by locals from bamboo purchased in the county town. Grandmother (Pa lo skyid, b. 1940) told me that the flute was the only musical instrument she saw when she was a child. However, in those times the flute never accompanied singing.

The second musical instrument played locally is called *pi wang*, commonly referred to in other areas as *sgra snyan* 'Tibetan mandolin'. Father (Rin chen rgyal, b. 1964) told me that the first time he saw a Tibetan mandolin was in 1977 in a shop near Bla brang Monastery. In 2015, you could still find a few local men and women aged fifteen to thirty who played the Tibetan mandolin while singing.

A singer might often sing *dmangs glu* and *glu shags* when alone, herding livestock, at weddings, during Lo sar 'Tibetan New Year', and *go bzhugs* 'visits made to neighbors after supper'. During *go bzhugs*, people drink, sing, play cards, chat, and more recently, watch television.

Mourning taboos affect the singing of songs. In 2015, locals observed a forty-nine day mourning period during which neither the deceased's relatives nor visitors to the home are allowed to sing. This contrasts with the early years of the twenty-first century when mourning periods of about one year were observed. This changed in about 2004 when Bla ma Blo bzang lung rtogs stan pa'i rgyal mtshan (A lags Blo bzang, b. 1940), of Gsang sgrog Monastery (Skya rgya Township) taught that observing a one year mourning period benefitted neither the deceased nor the deceased’s relatives. He also emphasized that the tradition of not washing or cutting hair, and not washing clothing ¹³ during the mourning period should be discontinued.

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¹³ Other mourning customs include not wearing colorful clothing, knotting the sash in front of the robe (the knot is normally at the back), and men wearing hats turned inside out. If the hat cannot be turned inside out, then a strip of cloth about 1.5 centimeters wide is sewn to the front of the hat. The color might be white, red, or yellow.
I should also mention my parents and their background as singers. Mother's (Klu mo tshe ring, b. 1963) peers explained that women did not often ride horses, but instead they walked. They added that as long as Mother was with them, they did not mind the length of the journey because she would sing. For example, every year on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, many local women would walk for about three hours to Bde chen Monastery to participate in religious activities, such as 'cham' 'religious dance'. Mother's friends said, "We asked your mother to sing and we didn't feel exhausted if she sang."

Father was a good singer and occasionally sang at parties. Others told me that when he was younger he sang often and very well. In 2015 he would sing when he was alone, but would not otherwise unless encouraged by others. He boasted to my brother (Ban de rgyal, b. 1986) and me about how well he sang when he was our age and complained, "Nobody had to tell me to sing! I just kept singing when I was your age. There were hundreds of songs in my mind."
SONGS

The singing of the local herders deeply affected me. Until I was about eight, I learned many songs from other herders by listening to them in the community as they sang *dmangs glu*, *glu shags*, and *la gzhas*, which were the most popular songs at that time. In this book, I give examples for each of these three song types. These songs are from my memory, not from any text. I sang these songs and then transcribed them in Tibetan script that honors the oral form of the language. In Part Two, I present the songs in literary Tibetan as well as the oral form.

I did not learn to sing other types of songs that are sung in the local community, for example, *byis glu* 'lullabies', *bzho glu* 'milking songs', and songs sung while holding a ewe to encourage it to allow its lamb to nurse.

**DMANGS GLU**

*Dmangs glu* are not related to courtship and are not accompanied by musical instruments. The content of *dmangs glu* might include:

- the hope that others will have good health
- the hope that livestock will multiply
- praise of people, horses, great leaders (e.g., Srong btsan sgam po (617-650), Rgyal ba paN chen, and other *bla ma*), clothing, and land/territory
- appreciation to parents, teachers, yaks, sheep, and horses
- prayers to Buddha, mountain deities, and incarnate *bla ma*

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14 The songs are archived at http://tinyurl.com/pwahrla, accessed 5 October 2015.
**GLU SHAGS**

_Glu shags_ are generally sung by people fifteen to fifty years old. They are sung antiphonally, and tease, insult, and embarrass those they are sung to. The content might include the appearance of an individual, a family, or a community; clothing; being impoverished; and a poor singing voice. Curses, overt sexual language, and family ancestry are avoided. The lack of sexual content means that _glu shags_ are often sung at wedding parties, singing competitions, and other secular gatherings.

Men and women more commonly sing these songs antiphonally, but a man may sing to another man and, rarely, a woman may sing to another woman. Below is an account of two men singing antiphonally:

During the 2013 Lo sar period, I and my older brother attended a wedding ceremony that was held in my tribe and in my community. We both wore dark orange _tsha ru_ 'lambskin robes'.

We rode our family's newer motorcycle and, after a thirty minute ride, we arrived to find around 150 people gathered at the groom's home. Eleven people had come with the bride. Unfortunately, someone had died recently in the bride's tribe. Consequently, it was taboo for her attendants to sing. Singers from the groom's side sang _dmangs glu_ in the morning.

At noon, some elders asked Uncle Dkon mchog rgyal (b. ~1970) and Lha mgon skyabs (b. ~1981), both of whom are from my tribe, to sing _glu shags_. Uncle Lha mgon skyabs held a white _kha btags_ and started to sing. Uncle Dkon mchog rgyal refused to sing on the grounds that he had not sung for a long time and couldn't remember any songs. However, after repeated urging, he began and sang well, surprising many. They sang about twenty songs in total and then stopped, because Uncle Lha mgon skyabs said he couldn't remember more songs.

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15 The outside of _tsha ru_ are covered with cloth. For men, the cloth is usually light brown and for women, the color of choice is usually dark blue.
LA GZHAS

Romantic relationships are often the subject of la gzhas and consequently, there are restrictions on their performance. They are generally taboo when family members, mixed genders of old and young people, and/or parents and their children are together. 

La gzhas have two sections. The first consists of a metaphor (e.g., water and fish) and the second features a simile. Most la gzhas have two stanzas, which are often equal in length, with each line commonly having seven, eight, or nine words. Certain melodies are used only for la gzhas. I do not know how many such melodies exist locally. At one time, I knew about twenty different la gzhas melodies, but by 2015, as the result of not singing very often, I knew only about ten.

In general, herders sing any time while herding livestock. However, as mentioned earlier, la gzhas are not sung if relatives are near.

The pasture was not fenced in my community until 2003, except for some small pastures near our house in the winter place. We herded wherever and whenever we wanted in spring, summer, and autumn. But in winter, every tribe prepared fenced pastures and established a herding schedule. We then took our livestock into fenced pastures at around nine AM and brought them back home between five-thirty and six PM.

Once the pasture was fenced, la gzhas were not sung because local pastures were generally shared between five to ten families. These families were often relatives, thus it was taboo to sing la gzhas.

Dgu tshig 'nine lines' is a particular la gzhas that usually has nine lines per stanza, with each line featuring nine words. However, there are also dgu tshig with seven or eight lines each of which has nine words. Dgu tshig is considered the best la gzhas, because it is difficult to remember and difficult to create. The following example of seven lines is what a man might sing to his lover. This is the only complete dgu tshig that I could remember.
Song One

1 Upper verdant land of horses
2 Excellent horses resemble wild asses
3 Horses' black hair resembles Zi ling\textsuperscript{16}\ otterskin
4 Run as fast as the wind
5 When you, excellent horse, leave
6 Keep this lower place \textit{se la drug khra} (me) in your heart
7 Goodbye, horse, this time

8 Singing festival in the lower, big community
9 Excellent lover's figure, straight as bamboo
10 Our affection for each other is as deep as the ocean
11 Your sweet words are like a song of Tara
12 When I leave here
13 Keep heroic me in your heart
14 Goodbye, lover, this time

\textit{La gzhas} are generally sung between men and women, but there are exceptions. For example, while a man and woman sing \textit{la gzhas} to each other, another man might sing to the woman, trying to entice her away from the other man. The two men might then use a \textit{la gzhas} melody to argue over who has the right to sing to the woman. Women could also do the same thing, i.e., if a man and woman are singing, a second woman could begin singing to entice the man away.

If a singer (either male or female) exhausts their songs, another person might help by singing, thereby declaring that they are better than the person who has just finished. They try to persuade the other singer to sing with them by saying that they know countless songs and are better looking than the singer who has just finished.

There are various types of \textit{la gzhas} that include a general introduction, choosing a partner, the two singers falling in love, being lovers, how they miss each other after separating, how they lost each other, were then reunited, and so on. For the introduction, each person would generally sing only one or two songs. For the other types, the number of songs sung depends on the singers and might go on for hours. In the example mentioned above, where two people

\textsuperscript{16} Zi ling (Xining) is the capital of Mtsho sngon Province.
compete to gain the affection of the loved one and where three singers might be involved, *la gzhas* might continue for hours.

Here are six examples of *la gzhas* often sung in my community.

Song Two: Introduction
1. I sing the beginning of the love song
2. I sing the beginning of the love song to the blue sky
3. Sing many songs to fill the wide blue sky
4. To delight the dragon
5. There's no meaning if we don't sing that way

6. I sing the last part of the love song
7. I sing it to the large community
8. Sing to the large community
9. To delight friends
10. There's no meaning if [we] don't sing that way

Song Three: Choosing a Partner
1. Into hundreds of horses
2. I will toss these reins
3. Don't know which horse the reins will land on
4. If they land on you, horse
5. Don't lose my reins

6. I will sing love songs
7. Walking among hundreds of people
8. I don't know who I sing to
9. If I sing to you, lover
10. Don't lose my love song

Song Four: Choosing a Partner
1. In the nest on the upper red rock
2. Birds fly two by two
3. I don't have a flying partner
4. Can you be my flying partner, female eagle?
During the singing festival of the large community
Lovers sing love songs two by two
I don't have a love song partner
Can you be my love song partner?

Song Five: Missing Each Other After Separation
In the middle of this big grassland
My riding horse is cheap
Has little freedom with three legs hobbled together
I feel sorry for a horse with so little freedom

During the singing festival of this big community
My lover shares my feeling
Has little freedom from respected parents
I feel sorry for my lover with so little freedom

Song Six: Reunion
Long, long ago
Look up, on the white grassland
I lost my light-gray gyi ling steed
I found it this year
Someone changed the reins
I don't care about changing the reins
It's fine as long as the horse's legs aren't hurt

Long, long ago
In the community of friends in the lower place
I lost my young lover
I found her this year
Someone pulled down her pants
I don't care about that
As long as she wasn't hurt

\[17\] Father told me that the mother of a gyi ling was a female mule thus, because female mules do not usually give birth, it is very special. Blo brtan rdo rje and Stuart (2008:133) write that a gyi ling horse is fast, strong, and a good breed from A mdo.
Song Seven: Deep Attachment

1. When circumambulating the outside stupa
2. Don't look back because you are thinking of me
3. You'll forget the number of circumambulations while prostrating
4. It's a sin if you forget
5. I'm also guilty because you were thinking of me

6. When circumambulating the Jo bo
7. Don't sigh thinking of me
8. Or your breath will reach the Jo bo
9. You will have sinned if it reaches the Jo bo
10. I'm also guilty because you were thinking of me

In 1997, when I was about six years old, I went with Brother, who is four years older than me, to herd yak calves on the grassland and hills at the foot of the mountains near my home. We watched the calves and brought them back if they strayed. We also herded them back home before the mother yaks returned in the evening. We ate lunch at home.

When I was eight years old, Elder Brother was twelve and considered old enough to herd sheep on the mountains. He often told me how much fun it was to herd sheep there. I was excited at the thought of going there with other herders. When I was ten, I began attending a public boarding primary school and then only herded livestock during holidays.

In summer, I was eager to go with Brother and herd yaks and sheep on the mountains. Many herdsmen were on the mountains at that time. We played card games, competed to see who could hit a target (generally a stone or a glass bottle) by throwing rocks at it, and competed to see who was brave enough to ride the wildest yak.

We herded our sheep and yaks on mountains bordering other communities. We generally reached the border area at around noon, when the livestock were full from eating grass. The herders got together and chatted. Neither side wanted the other to graze livestock

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18 The Ra mo che gtsug lag khang is a temple in northwest Lha sa that was, according to tradition, first constructed by Srong btsan sgam po (605-650) to house the image of the Jo bo rin po che brought by Princess Wencheng (d. 680) (Powers and Templeman 2012:545).
on their land.

If we saw herders from other communities, we sang *la gzhas* or *glu shags* to them. If the other herders were women, we chose men among us, who then sang to them. If the other herders were men, we chose women among us and asked them to sing. It was shameful if one side of the group did not have a singer or, since lyrics were extemporaneously composed, a singer could no longer reply to a song. To compete in singing was a local tradition. When a good singer sang, the song echoed from valley to valley and yaks and sheep raised their heads and listened.

One summer holiday when I was about eleven, at around eight AM, after Mother had finished milking and my family had eaten breakfast together, I took our family yaks to the mountains. Two neighbors and I herded our yaks together. They were older than me - around sixteen or seventeen - and did not bring food with them. The accepted idea was that you should be able to endure hunger when you were that age and so it was considered embarrassing for someone fifteen or older to bring food. When I expressed concern to Mother, she said that it was not shameful for someone my age to take food. I then took a one-liter plastic Coco-Cola bottle filled with milk tea and a big piece of bread that Mother had baked.

Herding the yaks in summer was easy. We just followed them slowly as they grazed and encouraged them to go to whichever valley we wanted to take them to. We used our *ur cha* 'slingshots' to shoot stones at them to change the way they were headed.

Mgon po (b. 1984), one of my herder friends and my paternal grandfather's brother's youngest son, often had his brown wooden flute with him. We encouraged him to play it and tried to learn from him.

It was often around twelve noon when we reached the mountaintop where our land bordered that of other pastoral communities. The yaks were full and tired by the time they arrived and lay on the ground. From here we could see everyone's livestock. Herders from the neighboring community also drove their livestock to the mountaintop, because both pastoral communities did not want others to herd livestock on the land they considered part of their

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19 It was about 1.5 *chi* long and had eight holes. The second hole was covered with adhesive tape.
territory. In different valleys there were different groups of herders with about five or six people in each group, though sometimes there were more. Yaks were herded separately because they prefer different grasses from sheep. But sometimes when herded in the same places, sheep herders and yak herders stayed together.

The herders sang whenever and however they liked - while walking, standing, or lying on the ground. On special occasions such as wedding parties, singers would put one hand by their right ear to sing, but this was rarely done while herding. I cannot explain this.

My herding companions sang la gzhas to women herders from the neighboring pastoral community when they were near us. Mgon po often started the singing and the women sang back. However, they would not sing if there were no gifted singers among them. Mgon po's first song usually invited the women to sing, expressed the idea that singing was very enjoyable, and then waited for an answer. If the women did not sing back, Mgon po would sing again, asking why they did not sing back. He gave up if he did not receive a reply after singing three or four times.

About half the time, if there was singing back and forth, the female group might have initiated the singing. But in my own, admittedly limited experience, most of my herding companions were unable to sing, or at least were unable to sing well enough and did not know enough songs to engage others in song.

Some good singers were married and sang because they enjoyed it. The others did not gossip about married people singing la gzhas while herding. Their main purpose was not singing in order to initiate a romantic encounter, but rather to sing because their companions encouraged them to, in order to demonstrate their ability as a singer, and simply to sing because they enjoyed singing.

One time when Mgon po, two other herders, and I were sitting on a hill, discussing where we should herd our yaks the next day, three girls from a neighboring pastoral community were herding their yaks opposite us. My fellow herders were excited when they saw those girls and sang la gzhas to them. The girls sang back and sang well. A girl and Mgon po continued la gzhas back and forth for about an hour. When Mgon po could no longer find proper responses to what the girl had sung, we were all embarrassed and at a loss.

I do not remember the exact question he could not sing an
answer to. It might have been that the girl sang that Mgon po was not handsome enough or rich enough to be worth still singing to. An acceptable response would have been something like, "I'm rich because my family has thousands of sheep, horses, and yaks. I am tall, my eyes are like stars, and I am a hero..."

The girl sang again and again. I remember her last two songs:

Song Eight
1 You cute little cuckoo
2 It's said that you chirp in other forests
3 You don't chirp in this forest
4 Is it because I'm not a thick forest?
5 Or you just don't want to chirp?

6 You, my cute young lover
7 It's said that you sing elsewhere
8 But you don't sing here
9 Is it because I'm not attractive enough?
10 Or you just don't want to sing?

Song Nine
1 Upper verdant land of horses
2 You, beloved horse
3 It doesn't matter if you're skinny
4 It's fine if you're fast

5 In the singing festival of the great lower community
6 You, beloved sweetheart
7 It doesn't matter if you have no love songs
8 It's enough if you are pretty

After she sang these two songs, Mgon po and the other two herders had a discussion and decided to go over and talk to the girls. In such an encounter, they would usually ask each others' names first, which tribe they belonged to, and where their families' camps were. If any of the girls were interested in any of the males, they would answer truthfully. If they were not interested, they would lie or run away.
My fellow herders asked me to take care of the yaks. I agreed and watched as they walked over to the girls, who laughed loudly and ran away as Mgon po and the other fellows approached. They then pursued the girls into a valley. When they returned a few hours later, Mgon po held a red scarf, which belonged to the girl who had sung to him. He said that he had asked her to meet him in the same place the next day, but was afraid the girls would not come so had forced the girl to give him the scarf and had promised her he would return it the next day if she came.

We collected our yaks, herded them back near our homes at around four, and then returned to our own homes.

In the several hours that my fellow herders were with the girls, I am sure they did not have intimate relations, because it was during the daytime and there were many herders in the area. It would have been extremely embarrassing to have been seen making love. More generally, having sex during the daytime is unusual because at least three generations often live together and sexual activity would be noticed and embarrassing for everyone.

I do not know what happened the next day, because I did not herd.

I also want to describe the only time I sang la gzhas with a woman. When I was about thirteen years old, Father borrowed a TV, a VCD, and an electricity generator from Grandmother's youngest brother and showed movies for about two months in order to earn extra income. Those older than about ten were charged one yuan each while younger audience members were free. My family showed films such as the dubbed Tibetan language version of *Journey to the West*,¹⁰ which was very popular locally. Father tired of this, however, because people sang until very late in the night and also it caused problems because young men sometimes fought when they got drunk.

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¹⁰ This television series was adapted from the classic Chinese novel of the same name. It was first broadcast in 1986 (in Chinese) and was later dubbed in Tibetan. It was very popular with Tibetan audiences. Locally, this program is known as Tang San Bla ma and also as Sun Wukong, after characters in the series.
After my family stopped showing movies, another family, which lived about one kilometer away from my home, began showing movies for an admission fee. Sometimes they paid well-known singers from other local communities to come and sing. Singers competed to see who knew more songs, whose voice was more beautiful, and whose lyrics were funnier and more meaningful.

One time when I was at this home, none of the men present could sing well. The women singers sang la gzhas to the men, insulting them for their inability to sing. All the men were embarrassed and at a loss. I then started to sing, amazing everyone. The men shouted "Ye!" and laughed loudly in delight. As I sang, some men put five or ten RMB notes in my robe pouch. I had to alter and compose lyrics according to what my opponent sang. For example, change mo 'female' to pho 'male', change place names, and change numbers in the songs. Finally at around three AM, we stopped singing because people had to get up early in the morning and care for their livestock. When ending a la gzhas singing session, the two sides say goodbye by singing, for example:

Goodbye, goodbye
Golden sun, goodbye
Not only to the sun
But also to all the planets

Goodbye, goodbye
My dear lover goodbye
Not only to her
But also to all friends

Lha mo skyid (b. 1990), who lives near my home and was my primary school classmate, replied to my songs. Later she discontinued her education and when she was around nineteen her parents arranged her marriage. As I mentioned above, this was the only time I sang la gzhas with a woman.

After this experience, I asked my parents, my father's sisters, and herder friends to teach me songs every day. I often counted how many songs I knew. It was shameful if you ran out of songs or could not give a proper answer to something your partner sang. Gifted la
gzhas singers created lyrics and cleverly altered lyrics when they were replying to their opponents’ songs.

In 2006 when I was fifteen years old, I knew about 120 la gzhas.
VISITING MY MATERNAL GRANDPARENTS

I am my parents’ youngest child and Mother took me with her when she visited the home of her parents (Pa bo, 1929-2011; Lcags ris, 1929-2004). We would wear our colorful Tibetan robes, which were only worn on special days such as during the Lo sar period. In bags over our shoulders, we would carry gifts for my grandparents - candies, glass jars containing oranges, pears, and other fruit. It would take us about two hours on foot. We often visited in the afternoon, stayed a night, and then returned to our own home late the next morning.

When we had walked a fair way from our home, Mother often sang *dmangs glu* as we continued walking. (*La gzhas* are not sung when parents and children are together. *Glu shags* are usually not sung unless it is a gathering of a number of people, for example, at a wedding or a Lo sar party.) Mother truly enjoyed singing and her songs made us feel relaxed and relieved our exhaustion. She was also very good at chanting scriptures. For example, she sometimes loudly chanted *Sgrol ma,* 21 *Ltung bshags,* 22 and *Bzang spyod* 23 as we walked. Here are some songs she sang on the way:

Song Ten

1. The blue sky resembles the eight-spoked Dharma Wheel
2. I sing a song of the eight spokes
3. The earth resembles the eight-petalled lotus
4. I sing a song of the eight petals
5. The house has four pillars and eight beams
6. I sing a song of the eight beams

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21 *Sgrol ma* is the Tibetan name for the Goddess Tara, and also the name of a short text dedicated to the same goddess.
22 A short text recited for the purpose of confession and atonement.
23 "...a prayer scripture promoting a universal wish to bring happiness to all beings" (Dkon mchog dge legs and Stuart 2009:303); a short text recited for the purpose of good moral conduct.
Song Eleven
1. If I don’t give a srung\textsuperscript{24} to the white horse
2. My ancestors’ birth deity won’t be happy
3. If I don’t sing a song in this home
4. Those gathered here won’t be happy

Song Twelve
1. Snow-covered mountain summit
2. Densely forested mid-mountain
3. Rivers at the foot of the forested mountain
4. Such a happy mountain
5. I pray that this happiness will be eternal
6. Upper rows of fathers and uncles
7. Mid rows of local fellows
8. Lower rows of mothers and daughters
9. Such a happy tribe
10. I pray this will be everlasting

At the times Mother and I visited, there were about twelve people in my maternal grandparents’ home - my grandparents; Mother’s brother and his wife, and their three sons and daughter; and Mother’s two sisters, who were married, each having two sons.

My grandparents would greet us warmly. It was an exciting, intense experience. Sometimes we had not seen each other for months. My maternal grandparents would prepare tshod ma 'steamed stuffed dumplings',\textsuperscript{25} noodles,\textsuperscript{26} mutton, and beef.

As was customary in many homes at that time, we would

\textsuperscript{24} A srung is string made of spun wool. Each end of the string has a tuft of wool. Two strips of yellow are also tied to the srung and butter is then applied. The srung is purified in juniper smoke and tied on the right shoulder of the sheep, yak, horse, or goat on the third or thirteenth day of the lunar month. The srung tied to the animal signifies that it is an offering to deities and not to be sold nor killed.

\textsuperscript{25} Generally, chopped up mutton or yak meat is mixed with grated potato.

\textsuperscript{26} These were generally two types of noodles - ‘then thug’ short flat noodles' and hub. The latter refers to dough that is rolled with a rolling pin, cut into strips, and cooked in beef or mutton soup. Chopped onions, salt, and sometimes black pepper are added.
chant *Skyabs 'gro,*\(^{27}\) *Sgro\{l ma,* ma *Ni,*\(^{28}\) *Bzang spyod,* and *Ltung bshags* together for about an hour after dinner. Next, Mother’s brother's wife might have asked Mother and me to sing. My maternal grandfather particularly enjoyed listening to our songs.

Singing might have begun with me, Uncle's sons, Uncle, or Mother. After the first singer finished, the person they were sitting next to would sing. The shortest song took about three minutes and the longest song about six or seven minutes. After everybody had sung one song, we would ask those among us who were good singers to sing again. Everybody was encouraged to sing except my grandparents. If a person really would not sing, then the person was punished by having to bark like a dog or imitate the sounds of a horse, goat, sheep, or other animal. Punishment might also have included drinking a small cup of *chang* 'liquor'. My grandparents were not forced to sing because of their age and respected position in our extended family, but sometimes they willingly sang.

We only sang *dmangs glu* when all the family members were present. If three or four men were present, they would sit on the *hu tse* 'heatable bed platform' and drink during the singing. Women would sit around the adobe stove and sip tea, eat fruits, candies, and pieces of apples. There was little fruit at that time.

Mother and Uncle's daughter sang well so we asked them to sing again and again. We often sang from about nine PM to one AM. When children felt sleepy, Grandfather told us to go to bed.

I asked Uncle's daughter to teach me songs and learned many songs from her.

Below is the first *rdung len* Uncle's daughter and Mother taught me. *Rdung len* are usually accompanied by the Tibetan mandolin or guitar. The content of these songs covers a wide range of topics, except romance and sex. The vocal range is moderate – neither very high nor very low. I am unable to give further examples

\(^{27}\) *Skyabs 'gro* may be translated as 'taking refuge' and may refer to any one of several different texts" (Sa mtsho skyid and Roche 2011:252). *Skyabs 'gro* may be recited preceding a recitation ritual.

\(^{28}\) ma *Ni* (oM ma *Ni Pad+me hUM) refers to the six syllable mantra devoted to Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion.
of how *rdung len* differs from the other traditional song types that I describe.

Song Thirteen
1 The sun shines from the blue sky
2 Sunbeams illuminate the *bla ma*’s house
3 The *bla ma*’s house is filled with incense
4 Buddha’s and the *bla ma*’s teachings spread widely

5 Sun shines from the blue sky.
6 Sunbeams illuminate the chieftain’s house.
7 The chieftain’s house is filled with silver
8 The chieftain’s followers have a better life.

9 Sun shines from the blue sky
10 Sunbeams illuminate the meeting house
11 The meeting house is filled with liquor
12 Friends become more intimate

In 2005, when I was about fourteen years old, *rdung len* were becoming very popular. Local youth began listening to and learning such songs. Subsequently, the number of youths who sang *dmangs glu*, *la gzhas*, and *glu shags* declined because they preferred to sing *rdung len* and other modern songs.
In about 1998, I attended a wedding party with my parents. The wedding was held in the home of a maternal relative who was relatively prosperous in the local community. The bride was from Sprel nag, located administratively in Gcan tsha Township Center, about one hundred kilometers from the groom's home.

In my community at this time the number of bride's attendants was generally ten to fifteen. Contrary to usual practice, if the bride was from outside the local area, many attendants would come and spend the night in the groom's home.

At this particular wedding, there were fifty bride attendants and they spent the night in the groom's home. Many guests came to the wedding party because the family had a good reputation, the bride was from a different community, and because there were many attendants. In total, there were around 400 people at the wedding party.

In the morning, the singing began in the family's large yak enclosure, just in front of the house. This location was chosen because there were too many people to be accommodated in the house. The attendants sat at the head of the yak enclosure, in order of age, on two or three layers of white felt and a colorful carpet. The men from the groom's side sat next to the attendants. Women and children stood in front of the men, although some elderly women were able to sit. Bottles of liquor were in front of the rows of men. Women did not drink.

At an appropriate time, an older man asked the singers to begin. The groom's side often sang *dmangs glu* first to the bride's side. Then singers among the bride's attendants sang *dmangs glu* to the groom's side. The songs generally praised both sides, prayed for a successful marriage, described how wonderful the wedding was and how attractive the groom and bride were, and so on. The singers walked slowly between the rows of seating while singing.

A singer from the bride's attendants sang a *rdung len* while playing the mandolin. It was the first time I had seen such an instrument and I really admired the singer.

Here are examples of *dmangs glu* that were often sung at
wedding parties. I remember these particular songs (songs Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen, and Seven) not only because they were commonly sung at weddings, but also because they could be performed at other gatherings, for example, when a group of friends got together to eat and drink together. I have sung these songs in both of these contexts, as well as while I was herding.

Song Fourteen
1 It is the blue sky’s feast
2 I, a little dragon, came to the feast
3 When should I roar if I don't roar now?
4 It is the perfect time to roar

5 It is this family's feast
6 I, a little boy, came to the feast
7 Have a chance to sing
8 When should I sing if I don't sing now?

Song Fifteen
1 This family is a pavilion of deities
2 I sing a song as majestic as the pavilion
3 This liquor is a cool elixir
4 I sing a song as refreshing as fruit
5 Those gathered here are heroes of deities
6 I sing a song as strong as a hero's castle

Song Sixteen
1 Those who have silk and lamb fleece robes
2 Don't just leave such clothes hanging up - wear them often
3 No one wears clothes in the next life

4 Those with horses in the enclosure
5 Don't leave your horses there - ride them often
6 No one rides horses in the next life

7 Those who have songs in their mind
8 Don't leave your songs there - sing them often
9 No one sings in the next life
Song Seventeen
1. The blue sky is high and the clouds are low
2. The little dragon is happy between high and low
3. Pray for its eternal happiness

4. The brown yak tent is high, the white mat is low
5. Those assembled between the two are happy
6. Pray for their eternal happiness

At about one PM, at the urging of several older people, two men from the bride's attendants started to sing *glu shags*. Two women singers from the groom's side responded. The lyrics were about how terribly the opponents sang, how ugly they were, how poor they were, and so on. The songs were so funny that everyone was soon laughing loudly. There was strong competition between the two sides. It would have been very shameful if one side had lacked singers, run out of songs, or had improperly responded to a song.

Generally, men and women sang *glu shags* to each other. If no women were present who could, or were willing to sing *glu shags*, then two men might sing *glu shags*. When one side (A) had no more songs to sing, someone else (C) might have helped them by offering to sing more songs on their behalf. C would try to persuade A's opponent (B) for permission to take A's place, telling them that they sang very well. This would all be done in song. B might have refused to give permission and continued singing to A, insulting A in song. Generally, B would sing two or three more songs to A, e.g., "You are not a good singer, I defeated you..." At this point, B might then have sung with the third party (C).

Another possibility was for still another person to suggest that A and B were finished, and that it was now time for two new singers to compete in song.

Men and women sat separately when they sang *glu shags*, which helped them notice the key words that cued the next stanza, and allowed them to teach a singer new lyrics while the other (opponent) singer was singing.

The audience would participate regardless of the quality of their singing. Many, including drunk men, sang even if they were bad singers, and were hushed by others. The two sides would be very
competitive, shouting and laughing at each other as they sang. When one singer gave a very humorous, clever answer to a question sung by the other singer, the audience would shout and laugh in appreciation.

Often, when there was competition between singers, male audience members offered good singers rewards of kha btags or cash. A gift of either or both is termed bka' dpang.\(^2^9\) Five to fifty RMB or one kha btags were typical gifts.

If the singer was a man, the person who was giving the bka' dpang would ask, "Glu ba 'dir bka' dpang zhig 'bab ga? Does this man singer deserve bka' dpang?"

"Glu ma 'dir bka' dpang zhig 'bab ga. Does this woman singer deserve bka' dpang?" was the question if the singer was a woman.

The audience would shout, "'Bab gi! 'Bab gi. Yes! Yes!" and the man offering cash would put it in the singer's robe pouch, jacket pocket, or under the singer's hat band in such a way that the audience could see part of the money. A kha btags would be placed around the singer's neck. The singers kept whatever they were given and took it home with them. The singers could not acknowledge gifts because they were busy singing at the time the gifts were presented.

The following example illustrates what I have been describing. About fifteen years later, during the 2013 Lo sar, I attended a wedding at which the groom was one of my maternal grandmother's cousins of the Ka rgya Tribe. I accompanied my father's youngest brother, Uncle Skal bzang rdo rje (b. 1988), who had borrowed a four-door Ford that belonged to Uncle Rdo rje (b. 1976). Both wearing tsha ru, we set out at about twelve noon. Uncle drove for twenty minutes along a dirt track and, for part of the way, down a concrete road. Arriving at about one PM, we parked in a big yard with twenty other cars and hundreds of motorcycles. Four young men about twenty years old and a man around sixty greeted us warmly. "Please come inside," they said, taking us into the main room where the banquet would be held.

The house had a corridor with walls of paneled, varnished wood. Green carpet covered the hu tse and white felt was on the floor. Five wooden tables were on the hu tse and another five were on the floor. On each wooden table was a large rectangular wooden tray with

\(^2^9\) Perhaps from the Chinese gua hong.
mostly fried, red bread and various Tibetan cakes arranged one on top of the other to resemble a stupa. Platters of fruit (pears, apples, bananas, and oranges) were also on the tables arranged in stupa-like structures with the support of sheets of paper and toothpicks. Plastic platters resembling lotus flowers held candies, raisins, sunflower seeds, and peanuts. Zhun ka ra 'large containers made from sugar' containing fruit or candies were also on display. Uncle and I sat on the hu tse and were immediately served milk tea and boiled 'wild baby yams' with butter, sugar, and yogurt in individual bowls.

The groom's mother (Bod phrug ma, b. 1950; maternal grandfather's sister's daughter) greeted us, expressing her happiness that we had come. She asked Uncle who I was.

I explained that I was Rin chen rgyal's youngest son and still in school.

She said she had seen me several times when I was around eight years old but could no longer recognize me. She then inquired about my paternal grandmother.

We replied that Grandmother was very well. Uncle and I each gave one hundred RMB to Bod phrug ma for her son's wedding, further delighting her.

Young men served chob.

After some time, Bod phrug ma suggested we go to the ma khang 'ewe shed' where people were singing there, and the same young men who had led us into the home escorted us.

All the men were sitting at the back of the ewe shed (see corner circle, Figure 2 below) in order of age.
There were two rows of seating - an outside and an inside row. All those seated were male. In the outside row, in the area indicated by the circle at the top right in the diagram above, the elder men attending the wedding sat. This seating arrangement allowed the elders to conveniently chat. The bride's twelve attendants sat in the middle of the top outside row. Other, younger male guests who were not directly associated with the bride sat elsewhere in the outside row. The groom's family and guests sat in the inside row. Beverages were placed between the two rows. The men in both rows sat cross-legged, facing each other. Women stood about fifteen meters away, opposite the men. There were approximately 200 people present.

Some young men stood and offered us their seats, so we sat. Two men sang *dmangs glu* in turn as they walked between the rows holding a white *kha btags* placed across their right palm. Two women sang next. Some held a *kha btags*, while some held their right palm against their chin under their right ear.

A few minutes later, three of my former primary school classmates from the Ka rgya Tribe approached asking me to sing. Some other people near me chimed in, encouraging me, so I sang two *dmangs glu*. As I was singing, people from the Ka rgya Tribe put four or five *kha btags* around my neck.

Uncle could not stay very long because he had to return home to care for his livestock so after about an hour, we decided to leave. As
we were leaving, people began singing *la gzhas*. Two young men standing at the yard gate pulled our hands, urging us to go inside the house and have a drink, but we refused. They then gave us *lam chang* 'road drink' which could be any kind of drink the family gives to the men as they leave.

Uncle and I were each given a plastic bottle of Coca-Cola.

Bod phrug ma ran after us and gave us a cloth bag containing candies, fruit, and drinks. She said that it was a gift for my grandmother. We thanked her and left.

Here are examples of *glu shags* that were often sung in my community.

**Song Eighteen**
1. Caragana blossoms
2. It's time to cultivate the land
3. The banks of the Yellow River begin to freeze
4. It's time to saddle the horses in preparation for thievery
5. People congregate in a gathering place
6. It's time to sing *glu shags*

**Song Nineteen**
1. The dragon roars in the sky
2. Giving precious cool rain
3. Lightning is the objective
4. I the singer came to this row of seating
5. With countless songs
6. Singing *glu shags* is my objective

**Song Twenty**
1. Colorful mountain, home of the wild yak
2. The wild yak has horns one *chi* long
3. Wild yaks have killed countless hunters
4. Leave, don't wander on mountain paths
To the right of the tall red rock
Red-black eagle claws are one finger span long
The number of lambs killed is countless
Herd your sheep from here, don't scatter them on the mountain

The middle row of gathered singers
My *glu shags* is a Ge sar故事 song
Countless defeated singers
Flee, don't even try to sing *glu shags*

Song Twenty-one
Tell a story of a cowardly boy
Who didn't stay home but became a thief
When he reached the yard of a rich home
A dog with a yellow head bit his leg
His heart trembled and he ran away
Angry with his horse
That's how cowardly boys are

Tell a story of a clumsy woman
Didn't stay home but wandered among other families
When a visitor from faraway came
The tea boiled over and dripped down into the stove
Feeling bad, she hit the pot with a scoop
Angry with her mother
That's what clumsy women do

Song Twenty-two
Your *glu shags* is a single tree
My answer is a black iron saw
No way to join the wood once it's cut
I'm like the saw ready to destroy you and your few songs

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30 Ge sar refers to an epic by the same name that recounts the exploits of the fearless King Gesar.
Your *glu shags* is like a clear glass vase
My answer is a dark golden ladle
No way to put the vase back together after it shatters
I'm like the ladle ready to destroy you and your few songs

Song Twenty-three
1 You should be very careful
2 You should take care of the chicken egg
3 It was laid this morning
4 You should be very careful
5 You should take care of your single song
6 You learned this morning

Song Twenty-four
1 There is a sleepy shepherd up there
2 There is a mad hungry wolf after him
3 You know what will happen
4 There is a singer with a few songs down there
5 There is another singer who has defeated a million other singers
6 You know what will happen

I now want to return to and further describe the wedding I attended in 1998 with my parents. At about five PM, most guests left for dinner. These included guests over the age of fifty-five, children, and those from distant places. My parents and I stayed because my parents were expected to help serve tea, noodles, and bread; give each man a bottle of liquor; and give three apples and five pieces of candy to each woman and child. In truth, the only thing I did was to try to get as many apples and pieces of candy as I could for myself.

At about eight PM, people gathered again in the family's large home. Generally, older people and young children do not return. The home, considered the best house in the local community, was nicely decorated with wooden cabinets against the walls, carpets, and a brick floor. Dishes of beef and mutton, liquor, fruit, candy, glass jars of fruit, peanuts, and cookies were on low tables that had been placed on the *hu tse* and the floor. Men from the bride's side sat on the *hu tse* and other men sat next to them. Women stood near the *hu tse*.
men from the bride and groom's sides went to bed in other rooms and homes. Others continued to chat.

Two singers were taking turns singing *dmangs glu*. The room was very crowded. I looked around for Mother as I stood near Mother's younger sister, Sgrol 'tsho (b. 1975).

"Where's Mother?" I asked.

"Stay with me quietly, OK? Your mother is singing. Can't you hear? That's her," said Sgrol 'tsho, who was standing near the adobe stove in the center of the room. She picked me up and put me on her shoulders so I could have a better view.

I then saw a woman wearing a beautiful colored multifold *tsha ru* with a colorful sash. Two big earrings tinkled on her shoulders.31 She was wearing five coral necklaces, a medium-sized silver *nyi zla*,32 a silver *bzho bzung*,33 and a small *glo gzur*.34

I did not believe this woman was my mother. In my experience, Mother was a person who mostly wore simple clothes and sang quietly. I had never seen her dressed like this before. This singer was walking between different rows of people as her beautiful melody echoed in the big room. The crowd quietly listened to her songs.

I jumped down from Sgrol 'tsho and rushed in front of the singer. She was really my mother! I was astonished! She seemed to be a completely different person. Until that night I had not realized that Mother was a very beautiful woman and an amazing singer. Meanwhile, Mother ignored me and continued singing. I later learned that Mother was often invited to sing at wedding parties because she sang very well.

That night, after singing *dmangs glu*, people began singing *la gzhas*. They crowded into the room to better enjoy the songs, but I

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31These particular earrings were decorated with coral and turquoise, and featured four chains. At the end of each chain was a small metal cage encasing a small ball. The earrings tinkle when moved.
32A silver crescent-moon-shaped ornament worn by women on their chest. It is decorated with coral and turquoise with several dangling small silver chains. At the end of each chain is a small metal cage encasing a small ball. This ornament emanates a tinkling sound when moved.
33A silver, ornamental milk hook worn by a woman in front of the robe below the waist. It is often decorated with coral and turquoise.
34A two-piece silver ornament decorated with coral and turquoise. The top piece resembles the sun and the bottom piece resembles a crescent moon. It is attached to the sash and worn on the left side.
was feeling sleepy after listening to several hours of singing. Sgrol 'tsho then took me to another room where I fell asleep immediately.

The next day, I heard that two singers among the bride's attendants were unable to sing many la gzhas and the women from the groom's side seriously insulted them. However, three other singers among the bride's attendants knew many songs and sang well. After the bride's attendants left the next morning, people in my community continued to praise the three good singers, mentioning that they sang well and knew many songs.
POWER TRANSFORMATIONS

My family did not have a radio until about the year 2000, when Father bought one in Zi ling. Although a few families had acquired radios earlier, radio listeners generally only listened to *dmangs glu* and *glu shags*. In my memory, the radio station (Mtsho sngon Tibetan Broadcast Station) I often listened to based in Zi ling did not regularly play *la gzhas* until about 2013, and even then *la gzhas* were only played after nine PM.

In about 1999, Father bought a solar electricity generating unit in Zi ling. At that time, no other family in my tribe had solar powered light except mine and a maternal relative’s family. The solar lighting system amazed everyone. People commented that the solar light at night made the inside of our house as bright as daytime. Neighbors came to my home in the evening and, thanks to the solar light, were able to soften animal skins, spin thread, and make ropes with wool and yak hair. Women braided their hair and men drank.

In about 2001, Father went to Khri ka County with two of his Han Chinese friends and returned with a big, black cassette tape player. He had traded a two year old sheep for it. This was one of the first cassette tape players in my community. It had two cassette tape slots, two large loudspeakers on each side, and required six (size D) batteries. We enjoyed listening to music cassettes and also to the tape player's built-in radio. Our visitors also regularly sang along with the songs played on the tape player. I enjoyed imitating them.

By 2004, cassette tape players had become very popular in my community. Locals enjoyed listening to music cassette tapes because they could listen to what they wanted when they wanted. While a few elders continued to listen to the radio for its music, news, Ge sar stories, and other programs, most young people stopped listening to the radio entirely. However, we were unable to take our solar panels to the mountain so we used batteries when we herded there.

In 2005, the government connected electricity to our community, which encouraged families to purchase televisions and VCD/ DVD players. The cassette tape player quickly became obsolete. Gradually people began buying cell phones and by 2015, listening to songs on cell phones was very common across generations. All my
family members had a cell phone, except Grandmother, who said she did not know how to operate one. Music was also used to lull children. For example, when my nephew (Rdo rje rab brtan, b. 2014) cried, he would soon stop wailing once a cell phone playing music was placed by him.
A *DMANGS GLU* SINGING COMPETITION

In the winter of 2013, a singing competition aimed at strengthening knowledge of traditional local songs was held in the local community. The competition focused only on *dmangs glu* and was open to everyone. It was organized and managed by about ten volunteers all in their forties, who had also prepared cash prizes from their donations. The organizers were concerned that as young people learned modern Tibetan songs from television, VCDs, DVDs, and cell phones, the number of locals who could sing local traditional songs was rapidly declining.

With my brother and sister-in-law (Gser mtsho skyid, b. 1994), I attended this competition held in an empty yard in ma Ni thang where local community-wide gatherings are generally held. This location features eight or nine shops, three or four restaurants, and Bca’ sdod School (primary grades one to four). At that time, my family had two motorcycles. I rode one, and my brother and sister-in-law the other. We set out at about eight-thirty in the morning and arrived some twenty minutes later.

The competition started at around ten AM. Five hundred or so people had gathered from Rkang tsha,\(^{35}\) G.yon ru, Sprel nag, and Bde chen. People older than forty were sitting on carpets and cloth mats on the ground. Most young women in the audience stood, as did about half of the men. Ten men and five women sat in the middle of the rows. They were all twenty to thirty years of age, and all wore *rtseg pa*\(^ {36}\) 'sheep skin robes without a cloth cover' and *tsha ru*. Nearly all the audience wore various types of robes. Only a few were in modern clothing. Two big loudspeakers were positioned on two tables.

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\(^{35}\) Rkang tsha is a neighbor community in Khri ka County.

\(^{36}\) *Rtseg pa* is made from sheep skin. The collar and the edges are trimmed with red cloth (~fifteen centimeters), horse skin (~three centimeters), and *prug khra* (~two centimeters). As a side note, horse skin is collected from dead horses and used to make robe trim and ropes used to secure packs to yaks. Although rope skin ropes are prized for their durability and strength, I never saw them being made, although Father talked about making horse leather ropes when he was younger.
at the front of the yard. A young man (Bsod nams rgyal kho, b. 1981) and a young woman (Sgrol ma ’tsho, b. 1993) held microphones and served as MCs.

The singers were judged on the clarity, beauty, and volume of their singing, and also how compelling their lyrics were in terms of language and imagery. They were not judged on the number of songs they sang.

The ten sponsors were also the judges. They listened as the singers, holding kha btags, walked a little in front of them and the audience as they sang. The two MCs announced the name of each singer and, after each singer's performance, they announced that singer's score.

Five tribes attended. Each tribe was eager for their singers to win. When a singer finished their performance, audience members clapped, and shouted "Ye yin!"

There was a two-hour break around noon. Most attendees went home for lunch while the rest went to nearby eateries. Brother, Sister-in-law, and I went to a local Tibetan home where, in one room, four or five tables had been prepared. We enjoyed steamed, meat-stuffed dumplings, costing ten yuan for fifteen dumplings. We were also served black tea. This home generally served food as a business only during local gatherings. After I finished eating, I went outside and got in a car with three young men I knew. We chatted until the singing resumed. Meanwhile, Brother and Sister-in-law went somewhere else.

The competition eventually finished at around five-thirty p.m. A man from the Kargya Tribe was named the overall winner. Seven other singers also received awards of cash, blankets, and certificates.

We then returned home and helped feed the ewes and mother yaks. As we were having a supper of noodles and mutton, my parents asked us about the singing competition. Brother and Sister-in-law described it. I was tired from spending so much time in a crowd and went to bed early on the hu tse that I share with my parents when I am at home.
INFORMAL GATHERINGS
AT MY HOME

After Grandfather's death from illness around 1988, my father became the head of my family. He was twenty-five. Grandmother never criticized Father's decisions after he became head of the family. A number of men eighteen to thirty years old frequently came to my home at night after dinner and drank under the light of butter lamps. Father often served them liquor and some visitors brought bottles of liquor. Young neighbors also came and chatted.

Mother is talkative and generous. Women would sit around my home's adobe stove. Rin chen 'tsho (b. 1980), a young female neighbor - as head of the party - encouraged others to sing. Though she did not sing well, she sang often. My home slowly became a house of singing with people singing almost every night. Grandmother, Father, and Mother were all very sociable and considered generous and hospitable, which attracted more visitors. Such a family is considered a "good family" by others in the community, however, there was a downside to this. Some men who sat on our hu tse, would become drunk, would vomit, and sometimes fight. It was difficult for my parents to deal with this situation. Furthermore, the host family would be criticized and blamed if someone became seriously injured or killed in a fight, or seriously quarreled.

One night, my family's yaks were in the yard, untethered. Visitors to our home had to pass through the yard gate. At around twelve-thirty AM, Father went outside to go to the toilet and noticed that all the yaks were gone. Thinking that they might have been stolen, he called the men in our home to help search for them. Fortunately, the moon was bright in a cloudless sky so were soon able to locate the missing yaks grazing inside a fenced pasture. We then knew that someone had not closed the yard gate.

When bringing our yaks back, we noticed that a young man had passed out and fallen on the ground in the yard. The yaks were jumping over him. Brother carried him inside, put him on the hu tse, and covered him with a quilt. When he woke up the next morning, he
asked why he was in our home. Brother explained, which so embarrassed our young guest that he left hastily without having breakfast.

Whenever my family had a visitor, my parents would urge me to sing. Those around me would also encourage me, and I would see the enjoyment in their eyes and on their faces. I felt my voice had no limits when I was singing. In addition, when we were herding on the mountains my fellow herders would ask me to sing. Even my brother asked me to sing when just the two of us were herding. For these reasons, I believed that my voice was beautiful and I sang whenever I was asked to do so. I performed at wedding parties and school activities. Other people said that it was understandable for me to sing well because both my parents sang very well. They said that I would become a good singer in the future if I attended a school where I could learn to sing professionally and to play the Tibetan mandolin.

After I began attending the local primary school in 2001, I no longer could sing whenever and wherever I wanted. The number of songs I could recall began to decline. I then almost never sang *la gzhas*, *glu shags*, and *dmangs glu* because students and teachers preferred modern songs.

I did not have a chance to go to a school to learn how to sing and play the Tibetan mandolin. Instead, I studied hard in the local primary school and, in the process, forgot many of my songs. When I was about sixteen, my voice started changing. It became rough and I could no longer sing well. I disappointed myself and other people when I sang. My parents had promised to buy me a Tibetan mandolin, but when they heard my voice cracking, they said they would not buy it because I no longer was able to sing well. I also believed that my singing life was gone and would never return.

Fortunately, when I was about nineteen, my voice stabilized and I started to sing again. I thought I sang even better than when I was a child. I often sang when I was alone. One time while I was attending Shes rig nor bu'i slob gling, my math teacher asked me to sing a song. He and the students liked my song. My class monitor chose me to attend a singing competition in the school and I won. The teachers and the students then considered me to be a "singer." With their encouragement, I started to enjoy singing again, but I almost never sang *dmangs glu*, *la gzhas*, and *glu shags*. Instead, I
sang *rdung len* and *glu dbyangs*\(^{37}\) because that is what my audience generally preferred.

I sang two songs at the school graduation party in 2011, using a *rdung len* melody (Song Twenty-five) with lyrics that I created. I used a different *rdung len* melody for the second song I sang on this occasion (Song Twenty-six). I also composed lyrics describing the sadness of leaving school after six years together. This second song brought tears to my eyes and the eyes of many in the audience. After my performance, I received many compliments, convincing me that I could still sing well.

Here are the two songs that I sang at that time:

Song Twenty-five

1. Friends leave from the road
2. Classmates in my heart begin to leave
3. For months and years after their departure
4. Hearts ache
5. Dear friend, I will be alone after you leave
6. This is the loneliness of life

7. Friends leave school
8. Classmates in my heart begin to leave
9. For days and nights after departure
10. Hearts ache
11. Dear classmates, I will be lonely after you leave
12. This is the loneliness of life
13. I will be lonely after you leave
14. The loneliness of life

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\(^{37}\) *Glu dbyangs* are often sung with various stringed musical instruments, the flute, and piano, and may also be accompanied by electronic music. Such songs became popular after *rdung len* had emerged on the song landscape. In 2015, young people in the local community were very fond of *glu dbyangs*, e.g., see the well-known singer, Gun dga, at [http://tinyurl.com/o694sta](http://tinyurl.com/o694sta), accessed 22 June 2015.
Song Twenty-six
1. You are a great teacher
2. I am a clever student
3. We grew up in different places
4. Gathered in the same school
6. Gathered in the same school

7. Unplanned, fortunate meeting
8. My dear classmates
9. Have different roads to travel
10. Have the same destination
12. Have the same destination

13. Affection from being together a long time
14. Deeper than the ocean
15. Must separate now
16. Hearts filled with sadness
18. Hearts filled with sadness
After enrolling in university studies in Xi’an City, Shaanxi Province, I rarely sang traditional Tibetan songs. I also spent much less time listening to traditional songs. I became interested in Chinese and English language songs because they helped me learn those languages, and were easy to download onto my cell phone. Specific traditional Tibetan songs were difficult to download. Furthermore, while in Xi'an City, I had few social opportunities that included singing. I have also observed that many Tibetans in their early twenties who live in cities are unable to sing more than a few lines of Tibetan traditional songs.

Many modern Chinese and English songs seem to be about sexual desire, romances, and personal relationships. This focus is very narrow. In contrast, Tibetan traditional songs have a much broader range, poetically describing people, horses, insects, the earth and sky, the history of the universe, rivers, trees, religion and various deities, Tibetan history, tea, bread, Ge sar, the affection between family members and teachers and students, and so on. Romantic relationships are also described, and sometimes in very explicit terms, but this is not a topic that dominates. In summary, Tibetan traditional songs encapsulate the world Tibetans live and think in, and also, to a greater or lesser extent, offer advice on how to enjoy a good and meaningful life.

Singers learn new songs from Skad 'phrin (Weixin) 'WeChat', and So sngon (Lanya) 'Bluetooth'. Locals also visit shops in Mar khu thang where VCDs and DVDS are sold. These shops have computers, sell copies of songs in video and/ or audio format, and copy them onto a phone if requested. Songs can also be directly downloaded from internet sources such as Kugou Music and QQ Music.

Mtsho sngon bod skad brnyan 'phrin khang gi lo sar spro tshogs 'Mtsho sngon Tibetan TV's Annual Lo sar Program' airs once a

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38Bluetooth is a technology that links a phone to headsets. In addition, songs can be sent from one device to another using this technology, as long as both devices are in the same Bluetooth coverage area and are within a few meters of each other.
year and features performances by famous Tibetan singers. During the fifteen-day Lo sar period, songs and singers are frequent topics of conversation. Most locals born before 1980 said that the 2015 Lo sar television program was less interesting, because there were fewer traditional songs. In contrast, those born after 1990 generally agreed that they enjoyed the Lo sar television program because of the many modern songs.

These days, when young people visit community elders to give gifts, the elders are usually sitting in a room with the TV on. The young visitors then tend to focus on watching the TV, generally not engaging in much conversation, which upsets the elders.

Before about 2005, visitors and their hosts generally chatted and sang during Losar. For example, before about 2005, I took gifts to our neighbor (Father's sister's home) at about three AM on the first day of the New Year. When I approached their house, their dog barked, alerting the family I was approaching. All six members of the family (husband, wife, three children, and the husband's father) came out to welcome me with loud "Lo sar bzang! 'Happy New Year!" greetings and escorted me inside where I was seated on their hu tse. I was immediately served milk tea and warm, steamed dumplings. After saying I couldn't eat more, the men in the family invited me to drink liquor and sing. After drinking a cup of liquor I sang a dmangs glu and then usually left because I had to visit other homes.

My family members did much the same when young people aged ten to thirty visited our family. We did not ask people aged above thirty-five to sing. The younger people enjoyed watching famous singers, who were greatly admired, imagining that they, too, might somehow become a famous singer. However, by the time a person was around thirty-five such dreams had vanished and they were no longer very interested in singing.

In contrast to my experience in 2005, when I visited Father's sister's home in 2015 at three AM, my aunt's family's television was on. While I was given the usual milk tea and dumplings, I was not offered liquor and nobody asked me to sing. Instead, we chatted for a few minutes about the 2015 Lo sar television program.

The changes in this ten-year period from 2005-2015 were not sudden. As mentioned earlier, electricity came to our community in about 2005 after which nearly all individual families purchased TV
sets and VCD/ DVD players. Programs available through these media were seen as better and more entertaining than family members and guests chatting and singing together. During this time, the number of singers of traditional songs steadily decreased. In 2015, if you do sing such songs, most audience members pay little attention. This is partly explained by easy access to the performances of such outstanding singers as Sher brtan, Bsam grub tshe ring, Klu mo 'tsho, and others whose performances are easily viewed on TV and DVD and on mobile phone playback features. For example, every time I go home, Father, Mother, Brother, and Sister-in-law ask me to copy songs onto their phones, which I do from my laptop computer.

My parents and brother are typical of many older, local Tibetans. They are generally interested in traditional Tibetan singing and singers such as Lu gu rgyal from Rma chu, Rdo rje tshe brtan from Dar mtsho, Gu ru from Reb gong, and Nam mkha'39 from 'Ba rdzong (Tongde County). They also enjoy certain modern Tibetan songs such as Mthun sgril gyi rang sgra 'Voice of Unity'40 as performed by the Mgo log singer, Sher bstan.41 They generally dislike modern songs that are sung quickly, preferring instead modern songs that are sung slowly and feature a wide vocal range. They have little interest in Tibetan rap, typically commenting, "It isn't singing."

In 2015, few people born after 1990 were able to sing more than a few lines of local songs. At wedding parties, young people were busy with WeChat and often paid scant attention to the wedding party activity. From about 2008, most school age children attended school.42 Those who attend school for even a few years are generally far more interested in modern Tibetan songs than local traditional songs.

I have thought about this, and cannot explain my own interest in modern Tibetan songs very well. These modern songs are often imitative of the style of Western melodies and the lyrics are frequently disconnected. For example, the singer might take a phrase from a well-known Tibetan text and repeat it, while adding other lines. The relationship between such lyrics may be unclear. I have

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42 In 2015, the age when children started school was generally seven to eight.
sung modern Tibetan songs at the occasional social event that I have attended in Xi’an City because they were better received than any of the traditional songs that I knew. I am also attracted to modern Tibetan songs because they are relatively creative and offer melodies and a style of singing that is generally absent in traditional songs.

In contrast, those born before 1990 - most of whom are illiterate - enjoy listening to local traditional songs. Many modern Tibetan songs are sung in dialects that differ from the Tibetan spoken locally consequently, locals find them difficult to understand. Furthermore, while videos of Tibetan songs often have Tibetan subtitles, illiteracy prevents this from being helpful. At a wedding party, younger people appreciate the modern songs while older people do not react, indicating they do not like them. In contrast, when local songs are sung, elders praise the singer by making such comments as, "How nice that singer sang!"

In the past, it was also very common for male community members who drank publicly, to sing regardless of their age. For example, in 2005, my family held a wedding party for my elder brother at our winter home. Around 200 people attended. It was a sunny day and, after everybody had lunch of milk tea, chob, and red bread (no meat was served other than what was in the chob) we spread carpets and woven mats on the grass inside a fenced grassy area near our home. Beverages, fruit, and commercially prepared cookies were placed on tables among the guests. Attendants from the bride's side sat in the first row. Guests from other tribes sat next to them. Women and children stood in front of the men.

Men from my tribe aged between seventeen and twenty-eight, helped my family. They carried hundreds of bottles of beer and liquor

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43 Before about 1981, families hosting weddings killed a number of sheep and yaks to prepare meat for guests. Meat was boiled and tshang ra were prepared. This term refers to a single piece of meat consisting of the chump, loin, and attached tail. Tshang ra were stacked, often three or four high, on shing sder 'wooden serving trays'. Some wealthy families might have stacked tshang ra nine high. One way to judge the quality of a wedding was the number of tshang ra a family offered guests. At this time, close relatives and neighbors commonly brought meat as a wedding gift. Dmar ston 'red banquet', or 'meat banquet' describes the wedding banquets at this time. In about 1981, A lags Blo bzang taught that this practice should end. Thereafter, wedding banquets no longer featured chunks of meat. Such banquets are locally called gar ston 'white banquet' or 'meatless banquet'.
to the middle of the row, opened the bottles, and then offered each person a bottle and cigarettes. Each young man from my tribe took turns playing finger drinking games with the bride's attendants and the guests. About one and a half hours later, nearly all the men were drunkenly talking loudly and singing. At some point, nearly every person started singing on their own. No individual song could be easily understood.

At around six PM, attendants from the bride's side and about half of the guests from other tribes departed. This left about half the men drinking, vomiting, singing, and/or playing finger drinking games. After sunset, we brought all the guests who were conscious and interested in eating, inside our house, and served a meal of chob. Following dinner, some men continued to drink.

Women also went home around six PM to take care of livestock. Some young women, between fifteen to twenty-five years old, returned to sing at around eight in the evening. The singing continued until about midnight. In fact, some men did not leave until the next morning.

After alcohol consumption decreased in about 2009 in response to A lags Blo bzang’s teaching that emphasized how drinking led to violence, conflict, and accidents, older people were reluctant to sing, claiming to be too old. To get them to sing, young people had to repeatedly urge them. The lack of liquor and fewer songs sung at wedding parties, partially explains why gatherings now are much shorter and less energetic than before.

I wonder for how much longer yaks and sheep on Plateau rangelands will continue to pause in their grazing, raise their heads, and listen to songs resounding from valley to valley?

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44 Finger guessing games involve two people pointing a certain finger or fingers at each other. Each finger has a certain value and losers drink as punishment.
PART TWO
MUSIC AND TEXTS
INTRODUCTION

Sangs rgyas bkra shis performed and filmed the twenty-six songs presented here in early 2015 using his i-Phone 5S and a tripod in an apartment in Xi’an City. The videos have been archived on Archive.org.45 Figure 3 gives the names of the songs, the duration of each song in minutes and seconds, and song type.

Figure 3. Song Names, Duration, and Type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song Names</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Song One</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>la gzhas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Two: Introduction</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>la gzhas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Three: Choosing a Partner</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>la gzhas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.17</td>
<td>la gzhas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Song Five: Missing Each Other After Separation</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>la gzhas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Six: Reunion</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>la gzhas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Seven: Deep Attachment</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>la gzhas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Song Eight</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>la gzhas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Song Nine</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>la gzhas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Ten</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>dmangs glu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Eleven</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>dmangs glu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Twelve</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>dmangs glu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Thirteen</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>rdung len</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Fourteen</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>dmangs glu</td>
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<td>Song Fifteen</td>
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<td>dmangs glu</td>
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<td>Song Sixteen</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>dmangs glu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Seventeen</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>dmangs glu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Eighteen</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>glu shags</td>
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<tr>
<td>Song Nineteen</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>glu shags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Twenty</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>glu shags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Twenty-one</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>glu shags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Twenty-two</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>glu shags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Twenty-three</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>glu shags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Twenty-four</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>glu shags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Twenty-five</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>rdung len</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Twenty-six</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>rdung len</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The A mdo Tibetan folksongs presented here are noninstrumental. They are divided into four categories each with its own style and form: *dmangs glu, glu shags, la gzhas*, and *rdung len*. The music notation for the songs demonstrates the characteristics of each category and also their relationships with each other.

**DMANGS GLU**

Seven of the songs listed - Ten, Eleven, Twelve, Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen, and Seventeen - belong to the *dmangs glu* category. Songs Fifteen and Sixteen differ from others in this category in terms of rhythm. The rhythm of the other five songs is free. Long, rich variable notes give the singers much latitude to display their vocal skills and ability to express emotion. Songs Ten, Eleven, Twelve, Fourteen, and Seventeen employ varied rhythms and are welcomed by singers and audiences because of their use of long, freely added ornamental notes. Such characteristics in the introductory lines notify the informed listener that this is a Tibetan folksong.

**GLU SHAGS**

*Glu shags* songs include seven songs, numbers Eighteen, Nineteen, Twenty, Twenty-one, Twenty-two, Twenty-three, and Twenty-four. They use a single introductory phrase characterized by a variety of rhythm changes. The introductory phrases show much variation, after which they display a largely fixed rhythm, which varies between songs.

**LA GZHAS**

For each of the nine songs in the *la gzhas* group (songs One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, and Nine), Sang rgyas bkra shis used the same introductory phrase, which is very different from the introductory phrase in the *dmangs glu* songs.

Aside from the introductory phrase, the *la gzhas* songs have little in common in terms of musical characteristics.

Songs Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, and Seven describe a romantic relationship: introduction (Two), choosing a partner (Three), choosing a partner (Four), the two lovers missing each other after separation (Five), reunion (Six), and deep attachment (Seven). The narrative that develops through these six songs is clear and predictable to those familiar with this genre. However, the musical characteristics of these songs are very different and unpredictable.
Individual singers may use whatever *la gzhas* they like when performing *la gzhas*.

The style of songs One, Eight, and Nine resembles the *dmangs glu* style and therefore their style is quite different from that of the other six songs.

**RDUNG LEN**

The three songs of the *rdung len* category are songs Thirteen, Twenty-five, and Twenty-six. They are very different from the other groups of songs. Their style and form are typical of modern Tibetan songs, which clearly originated from outside the local area. Obvious distinguishing characteristics are the time signatures 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 and the predictable repetition of stanzas of music.

**Song One**

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\[\text{Musical notation and text here.}\]
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Song One: Song Text as Performed

1a la ye dgo dgo ya la ya la dgo
2ya 'grogs dga' lo dgo lo lo lo re dgo
3a la stod phyogs g.yu lo'i dgo rta ra gong ma nas
4'do rig rta bo'i dgo skyes lus rkyang nga 'gugs
5a la spu mdog nag go dgo zi ling sram ma 'gugs

46 Lines one, two, and ten are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
6gom lag bde mo dgo skyi bser rlung la 'gugs
7a la 'do bas spang ri dgo brgyud nas 'gro dus su

8smad phyogs se la dgo drug khra sems ma bzung
9'do ba da thengs dgo 'di nas bde mo byos
10a la rogs ye dgo dgo ya la ya la dgo
11smad phyogs sde chen dgo rtsed ra'i rtsed grong nas
12a la 'dang chen rogs lo'i dgo skyes lus smyug la 'gugs
13kha tshig snyan mo dgo rje btsun mgur ra 'gugs
14a la zhe 'dang zab mo dgo rgya mtsho'i klong la 'gugs
15rogs lo sde nas dgo brgyud las 'gro dus su
16a la stag shar bu lo dgo ma brjed sems ma bzung
17rogs lo da thengs dgo sde nas bde mo byos

Song One: Literary Poetic Text

1'pho phyogs se la dgo rtsed ra'i rtsed grong nas
2a la 'dang chen rogs lo'i dgo skyes lus smyug la 'gugs
3kha tshig snyan mo dgo rje btsun mgur ra 'gugs
4a la zhe 'dang zab mo dgo rgya mtsho'i klong la 'gugs
5rogs lo sde nas dgo brgyud las 'gro dus su
6a la stag shar bu lo dgo ma brjed sems ma bzung
7rogs lo da thengs dgo sde nas bde mo byos

1'stod phyogs g.yu lo'i rta ra gong ma nas
2'do rig rta bo'i skyes lus rkyang la 'gug
6spu mdog nag po zi ling sram la 'gug
4gom lag bde mo skyi bser rlung la 'gug
5'do bas spang ri brgyud nas 'gro dus su
6smad phyogs se la drug khra sems la bzung
7'do ba da thangs 'di nas bde mo byos

8smad phyogs sde chen rtsed ra'i rtsed grong nas
9'dang chen rogs lo'i skyes lus smyug la 'gug
10kha tshig snyan mo rje btsun mgur la 'gug
11zhe 'dang zab mo rgya mtsho'i klong la 'gug
12rogs lo sde nas brgyud de 'gro dus su
13stag shar bu lo ma brjed sems la bzung
14rogs lo da thangs sde nas bde mo byos

Song Two

---

Song Two: Song Text as Performed

---

47 Lines one, two, and eight are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
1. a la rogs ye la bso ya la dgo re ya la ya la dgo
2. nga'i rogs 'dang chen dgo re lo lo lo re dgo
3. a la ye ngas rtsed 'go dgo re len na rtsed 'go len
4. ye 'di rtsed 'go dgo re dgung sngon gnam ma len
5. a la ye dgung a sngon dgo re kha zheng che ni len
6. ye 'brug pho khyung dgo re thugs la ran ni len
7. a la ye de min na dgo re blangs no don med red

8. a la rogs ye la bso a la dgo re ya la ya la dgo
9. da ngas rtsed(rnga dgo re len na rtsed(rnga len
10. a la ye ngas rtsed(rnga dgo re sde chen grong nga len
11. ye sde chen po dgo re kha zheng che ni len
12. a la ye nang na zla'i dgo re thugs la ran ni len
13. ye de min na dgo re blangs no don med red

Song Two: Literary Poetic Text

1. འཇིག་གི་ཤེས་རབ་ཞིང་ཤེས་པའི་སྲིད་་ཛེ་བཞིན།
2. འཇིག་གི་ཤེས་རབ་ཞིང་པ་ཚུལ་བཞིན།
3. རོང་ཁ། བཞིན་པའི་སྲིད་་ཛེ་བཞིན།
1. rtsed 'go len na rtsed 'go len
2. rtsed 'go dgung sgon gnal la len
3. dgung a sgon kha zheng che ni len
4. brug pho khyung thugs la ran ni len
5. de min na blangs no don med red

6. rtsed rnga len na rtsed rnga len
7. rtsed rnga sde chen grong la len
8. sde chen po kha zheng che ni len
9. nang na zla'i thugs la 'bab ni len
10. de min na blangs no don med red

Song Three
Song Three: Song Text as Performed

1. 69
2. 67
3. 67
4. 67
5. 67
6. 67
7. 67
8. 67
9. 67
10. 67
11. 67
12. 67
13. 67

Lines one, two, and eight are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
1a la rogs ye dgo yang re ya la bso ya la dgo
2rogs la gi dgo yang re dga' lo da lo lo re
3a la ye ngas rta brgya dgo yang re rta mang bso dkyil ba dgo
4ngas srab mda' dgo yang re bskor 'phen bso byed kyi re
5a la ye rta su bso dgo yang re thug 'dug bso mi shes dgo
6rta khyed bso dgo yang re thug re yang song na dgo
7nga'i srab mda' dgo yang re 'bor gi da ma 'jug re zer

8a la rogs ye dgo yang re ya la bso ya la dgo
9ngas rogs brgya dgo yang re rogs mang da dkyil la dgo
10a la ye kha la la dgo yang re bskor len bso byed rgyu dgo
11rogs su bso dgo yang re thug 'dug da mi shes dgo
12rogs khyed bso dgo yang re thug re da song na dgo
13a la nga'i la la dgo yang re 'bor gi da ma 'jug re

Song Three: Literary Poetic Text

1ngas rta brgya rta mang dkyil la
2srab mda' bskor 'phen byed rgyu
3rta su la thug 'dug mi shes
4rta khyed la thug re song na
5nga'i srab mda' 'bor gi da ma 'jug
6ngas rogs brgya rogs mang dkyil la
7kha la la bskor len byed rgyu
8rogs su la thug 'dug mi shes
9rogs khyed la thug re song na
10nga'i la la 'bor gi ma 'jug

Song Four
Song Four: Song Text as Performed

1. a la rogs ye la a la dgo yang re ya la bso ya la dgo

49 Lines one, two, and seven are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
2 rogs la gi dgo yang re dga’ lo bso lo lo dgo
3 la stod brag dmar dgo yang re bya tshang bso nang nas dgo
4 bya gnyis re dgo yang re gnyis re bso ’phur gi dgo
5 la nga ’phur rogs dgo yang re med la bso bsdad yod go
6 nga’i ’phur rogs dgo yang re glag mo bso khyed byos re
7a la rogs ye dgo yang re ya la bso ya la dgo
8 mar bltas ki dgo yang re sde chen bso grong nas dgo
9 la rogs gnyis re dgo yang re gnyis re bso rtsed gi dgo
10 nga rtsed rogs dgo yang re med la bso bsdad yod go
11 nga’i rtsed rogs dgo yang re zhi mo bso khyed byos re

Song Four: Literary Poetic Text

1 stod brag dmar bya tshang nang nas
2 bya gnyis re gnyis re ’phur gi
3 nga ’phur rogs med la bsdad yod
4 nga’i ’phur rogs glag mo khyed byos

5 sde chen po’i rtsed ra’i nang nas
6 rogs gnyis re gnyis re rtsed ki
7 nga rtsed rogs med la bsdad yod
8 nga’i rtsed rogs zhi mo khyed byos
Song Five

Song Five: Song Text as Performed

1. [Translation]
2. [Translation]
3. [Translation]
4. [Translation]
5. [Translation]
6. [Translation]

50 Lines one, two, and seven are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
1. a la rogs ye dgo o dgo yang re ya la bso ya la dgo
2. nga'i rogs 'dang chen dgo dgo yang re lo lo bso lo re dgo
3. a la ye sa chen po'i dgo dgo yang re thang dkyil bso 'di nas dgo
4. ye nga zhon gi dgo dgo yang re 'do ba bso gong bde gi
5. a la ye sgrog sum tshigs dgo dgo yang re bar nas bso dbang chung gi
6. ye dbang chung gi dgo dgo yang re 'do ba bso snying rje gi

7. a la rogs ye dgo dgo yang re ya la bso ya la dgo
8. a la ye sde chen po'i dgo dgo yang re rtsed ra bso nang nas dgo
9. ye nga 'grogs gi dgo dgo yang re rogs lor bso zhe mthun gi
10. a la ye drin ma lo'i dgo dgo yang re rtsib nas bso dbang chung gi
11. ye dbang chung gi dgo dgo yang re rogs lo bso snying rje gi

Song Five: Literary Poetic Text

1. sa chen po'i thang dkyil 'di nas
2. ngas zhon gi 'do ba gong bde
3. sgrog sum tshigs bar nas dbang chung
4dbang chung gi 'do ba snying rje

5sde chen po'i rtsed ra'i nang nas
6nga 'grogs gi rogs lor zhe mthun
7drin pha ma'i rtsib nas dbang chung
8dbang chung gi rogs lo snying rje

Song Six
Song Six: Song Text as Performed

1. a la la bso a la dgo ya la ya la dgo
2. nga'i rogs 'dang chen bso lo lo lo re dgo
3. ye gna' deng ma'i bso deng ma gzig la dgo
4. da yar bltas ki bso spang dkar klad nas dgo
5. ye nga'i gyi ling bso gyo rgya bor song nga
6. ye lo do tshigs bso phyir ra rnyed dang nga
7. da mgo srab thur bso cig gis bsor dang gzig
8. ye mgo srab thur bso cig gis bsor na bsor

51 Lines one, two, ten, and eleven are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not be included in the English translation.
9da rkang sug bzhi bso 'tshams no de shod dra

10a la rogs ye ya la ya la dgo
11ye rogs la gi bso dga' lo lo lo dgo
12a la ye gna' deng ma'i bso deng ma gzig la dgo
13da mar bltas ki bso na zla'i grong nas dgo
14ye nga'i chung gcig bso rogs lo bor song nga
15a la ye lo do tshigs bso phyir ra rnyed dang gzig
16ye rkang bug 'bus bso cig gis hud dang gzig
17a la ye rkang bug 'bus bso cig gis hud na hud
18ye lus 'byung bzhi bso 'tshams no de shod dra

Song Six: Literary Poetic Text

1'gna' deng ma'i deng ma zhig la
2yar bltas kyi spang dkar klad nas
3nga'i gyi ling gyo rgya bor song
4lo do tshigs phyir la rnyed dang
mgo srab thur cig gis bsor gzig
mgo srab thur cig gis bsor na'ang
rkang sug bzhi 'tshams ni de shod

gna' deng ma'i deng ma zhig la
mar bltas kyi na zla'i grong nas
nga'i chung gcig rogs lo bor song
lo do tshigs phyir la thug dang
rkang dor ma cig gis phud gzig
rkang dor ma cig gis phud na'ang
lus 'byung bzhi 'tshams no de shod

Song Seven
Song Seven: Song Text as Performed

1. HH
2. HH
3. HH
4. HH

52 Lines one, two, and eight are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
1a la rogs ye dgo dgo ya la ya la dgo
2ye rogs dga’ lo dgo lo lo re dgo zer
3la ye khyod phyi skor dgo skor ra 'gro dus dgo
4ye nga bsam nas dgo phyir ra ma bIta dgo
5la ye phyag bskor ba’i dgo kha grangs brjed 'gro
6ye brjed song na dgo nyes pa khyod yod go
7ye de’i zhor ra dgo sdig ga nga che go zer

8a la rogs ye dgo dgo ya la ya la dgo
9ye nang jo bor dgo chos mjal byed dus dgo zer
10a la ye nga bsam nas dgo rngam pa ma 'then go
11ye lha jo bor dgo kha rlangs brgyab 'gro dgo zer
12a la ye brgyab dang na dgo nyes pa khyod yod go
13ye de’i zhor ra dgo sdig ga nga che re

Song Seven: Literary Poetic Text
6phyi bskor skor ra 'gro dus
7nga bsam nas phyir lta ma byed
8phyag bskor ba'i kha grangs brjed 'gro
9brjed song na nyes pa khyod yod
10de'i zhor la sdig pa nga che

6nang jo bor chos mjal byed dus
7nga bsam nas rngam pa ma 'then
8lha jo bor kha rlangs brgyab 'gro
9brgyab dang na nyes pa khyod yod
10de'i zhor la sdig pa nga che

Song Eight
Song Eight: Song Text as Performed

1 a la rogs ye la a la dgo yang re ya la bso ya la dgo
2 rogs la gi dgo yang re dga’ lo bso lo lo ya
3 bya khu lo dgo yang re snying la bso rje bo dgo
4 nags gzhan nas ye ye dgo yang re grags rabs bso zer gi dgo
5 a la nags 'di nas dgo yang re grags rgyu bso med no dgo
6 nga nags shugs rdzong dgo yang re med nas bso la kha dgo
7 khyod byung grags 'dod da dgo yang re med ni bso e red dgo

8 ya la rogs ye dgo yang re ya la bso ya la dgo
9 rogs chung lo da dgo yang re snying la bso rje bo dgo
10 a la khyod sde gzhan nas da dgo yang re rtsed rabs bso zer gi dgo
11 sde 'di nas e da dgo yang re rtsed rgyu bso med no dgo
12 a la nga yag ho sgo da dgo yang re med nas bso la kha dgo
13 khyod byung rtsed 'dod da dgo yang re med ni bso e red dgo

53 Lines one, two, and eight are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not be included in the English translation.
Song Eight: Literary Poetic Text

1bya khu lo snying la rje bo khyod
2nags gzhan nas grags rabs zer gi
3nags 'di nas grags rgyu med no
4nga nags shugs rdzong med pa'i la kha
5khyod byung grags 'dod med ni e red

6rogs chung lo snying la rje bo khyod
7sde gzhan nas rtsed rabs bshad gi
8sde 'di nas rtsed rgyu med no
9nga yag pho sgo med nas la kha
10khyod byung rtsed 'dod med ni e red
Song Nine
Song Nine: Song Text as Performed

1. a la dgo yang re ya la bso ya la a dgo
2. rogs 'dang chen na dgo yang re lo lo gzig lo re e dgo
3. a la ye stod g.yu lo'i dgo yang re rta ra gzig gong ma a nas
4. rta 'do ba dgo yang re snying la gzig rje bo a khyod
5. sha grug na dgo yang re med rung bso skyon med a gi
6. a la ye rgyugs gom lag dgo yang re yod na bso des chog go

7. a la rogs ye dgo yang re ya la bso ya la a dgo
8. ye sde chen po'i dgo yang re rtsed ra bso zhol ma nas
9. a la ye rogs chung lo dgo yang re snying la bso rje bo a khyod

55 Lines one, two, and seven are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
ye kha la gzhas dgo yang re med rung bso skyon med a ki

da yag mo sgo dgo yang re yod na bso des chog a go

Song Nine: Literary Poetic Text

1stod g.yu lo'i rta ra gong ma nas
2rt 'do ba snying la rje bo khyod
3sha grug na med rung skyon med gi
4rgyugs gom lag yod na des chog gi

sde chen po'i rtsed ra zhol ma nas
2rogs chung lo snying la rje bo khyod
3kha la gzhas med rung skyon med gi
4yag mo sgo yod na des chog gi
Song Ten
Song Ten: Song Text as Performed

1. 'Nam bar pa nor du rgya nor zo sna pe phrengsho
2. 'Phreng sho rgya nor du rgya nor zo sna pe dpe khrebs dbyor dmar don
3. sna pe dpe khrebs dbyor dmar don 'phreng sho nor rgya nor zo sna pe
4. 'Phe drung 'phreng sho rgya nor du 'phreng sho rgya nor zo sna pe phreng sho
5. nor rgya nor du rgya nor zo sna pe dpe khrebs dbyor dmar don 'phreng sho
6. nor rgya nor du rgya nor zo sna pe dpe khrebs dbyor dmar don 'phreng sho

56 Line one is composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and has not been included in the English translation.
1. o ye 'khor ya re bso 'khor bo 'khor re glu ye ye gzig len ya
2. dgung sgon po 'khor lo yang rtsibs brgyad red go 'khor ya re bso 'khor a 'khor re glu gzig len ya
3. o ngas rtsibs ma brgyad gi yang glu zhig len go 'khor ya re bso 'khor a 'khor re glu ye ye gzig len ya
4. o sa dog mo pad ma yang 'dab brgyad red go 'khor ya re bso 'khor a 'khor re glu ye ye gzig len ya
5. o ngas 'dab ma brgyad gi yang glu gzig len go 'khor ya re bso 'khor a 'khor re glu ye ye gzig len ya
6. o mgo'i khang ba ka bzhi yang gdung brgyad red go 'khor ya re bso 'khor a 'khor re glu ye ye gzig len ya
7. o ngas gdung ma brgyad gi yang glu gzig len go 'khor ya re bso 'khor a 'khor re glu ye ye gzig len ya

Song Ten: Literary Poetic Text

1. dgung a sgon 'khor lo rtsibs brgyad red
2. ngas rtsibs ma brgyad kyi glu zhig len
3. sa dog mo pad ma 'dab brgyad red
4. ngas 'dab ma brgyad kyi glu zhig len
5. mgo'i khang ba kwa bzhi gdung brgyad red
6. ngas gdung ma brgyad kyi glu zhig len
Song Eleven
Song Eleven: Song Text as Performed

1. o ye ya re len go o zhang a yang ye 'gyogs ba ye ye o a zhang lo lo ngas glu gzig ye ye ye len re
2. o rta dkar bor srung gzig ye ye yi ma 'then na ye dgo
3. o rdza dkar bo'i gzhi bdag ye ye o a zhang lo lo 'di mi dga' gi ye ye ye dgo
4. o ye ya re len go o zhang a yang zer ra ye ye ye o a zhang lo lo ngas glu gzig len ye ye ye re
5 o khyim 'di nas glu gzig ye ye ye yi ma blangs na ye dgo
6 o khyim 'dir 'tshogs khrom pa ye ye o a zhang lo lo mi dga' gi ye ye ye ya

Song Eleven: Literary Poetic Text

1 rta dkar bo srung zhig ma 'then na
2 nga'i a khu'i skies lha mi dga' gi
3 khyim 'di nas glu zhig ma blangs na
4 khyim 'dir 'tshogs khrom pa mi dga' gi

Song Twelve
Song Twelve: Song Text as Performed

1. Lines one and seven are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.

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57 Lines one and seven are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
1. 'di rdza mgo bso ri mgo yang gangs gis ye gcig bzung go ya glu ba lo lo ngas glu gzig len ya
2. 'di'i rdza sked bso ri sked yang nags gis ye gcig bzung go ya glu ba lo lo ngas glu gzig len ya
3. 'di'i rdza rnga bso ri rnga yang chu yis ye gcig bzung go ya glu ba lo lo ngas glu gzig len ya
4. 'di'i rdza 'dra'i bso mgo yang skyid po ye gcig gzig go ya glu ba lo lo ngas glu gzig len ya
5. ci 'dra 'dra'i bso rdza mgo yang skyid po ye gcig gzig go ya glu ba lo lo ngas glu gzig len ya
6. 'di yang yang bso skyid pa'i yang smon lam ye gcig 'debs go ya glu ba lo lo ngas glu gzig len ya
7. ye ya glu ba lo lo ngas glu gzig len ya
8. 'di'i gral mgo bso ha ra yang a khus o gcig bzung go ya glu ba lo lo ngas glu gzig len ya
9. 'di'i gral sked bso nang ra yang na zlas ye gcig bzung go ya glu ba lo lo ngas glu gzig len ya
10. 'di'i gral rnga bso ma ra yang bu mos ye gcig bzung go ya glu ba lo lo ngas glu gzig len ya
11. ci 'dra 'dra'i bso tsho ba yang skyid po a gcig gzig go ya glu ba lo lo ngas glu gzig len ya
12. 'di yang yang bso skyid pa'i yang smon lam ye gcig 'debs go ya glu ba lo lo yang glu gzig len ya

Song Twelve: Literary Poetic Text

1. དང་ཚེ་དགེ་སྟགས་གྱིས་བཤད།
2. དང་ཚེ་དགེ་ལོ་མོག་བཞི་བཅོས།
3. དང་ཚེ་དགེ་ལོ་ཚྭས་བཅོས།
4. དང་ཚེ་དགེ་ལོ་ཆབོ་བཅོས།
5. དང་ཚེ་དགེ་ལོ་ཐོབ་བཅོས།
6. དང་ཚེ་དགེ་ལོ་གཞོན་བཅོས།
7. དང་ཚེ་དགེ་ལོ་མེད་པ་བཅོས།
8. དང་ཚེ་དགེ་ལོ་གསུམ་བཅོས།
1. rdza mgo ri mgo gangs kyis bzung
2. rdza sked ri sked nags kyis bzung
3. rdza rnga ri rnga chu yis bzung
4. ci 'dra 'dra'i rdza mgo skyid po zhig
5. di yang yang skyid pa'i smon lam 'debs

6. gral mgo pha dang a khus bzung
7. gral sked nang dang na zlas bzung
8. gral rnga ma dang bu mos bzung
9. ci 'dra 'dra'i tsho ba skyid po zhig
10. di yang yang skyid pa'i smon lam 'debs

Song Thirteen
Song Thirteen: Song Text as Performed

1. bkra ya ya shis ye ye nyi ma shar sa a sngon nas la
2. so nyi rtse rgyag sa bla ma'i nas gzim chung nga
3. bla ma'i gzim chung spos kyis ye byugs
4. so lha dang bla ma'i bstan pa nas yar a dar

5. bkra shis ye ye nyi ma shar sa a sngon nas la
6. so nyi rtse rgyag sa dpon po'i gzim chung nga
7. dpon po'i gzim chung dngul gyis ye byugs
8. so 'bangs dang sde ba'i 'tsho ba nas yar a dar
9bkra shis ye ye ye nyi ma shar sa a sngon nas la
10so nyi rtse rgyag sa khrom pa'i gzim chung nga
11khrom pa'i gzim chung chang gis ye byugs
12so spun dang na zla'i brtse ba nas yar a dar

Song Thirteen: Literary Poetic Text

1nyi ma 'char sa a sngon la
2nyi rtse rgyag sa bla ma'i gzim chung
3bla ma'i gzim chung spos kyis byugs
4lha dang bla ma'i bstan pa yar dar

5nyi ma 'char sa a sngon la
6nyi rtse rgyag sa dpon po'i gzim chung
7dpon po'i gzim chung dngul gyis byugs
8bangs dang sde ba'i 'tsho ba yar dar
9nyi ma 'char sa a sngon la
10nyi rtse rgyag sa khrom pa'i gzim chung
11khrom pa'i gzim chung chang gis byugs
12spun dang na zla'i brtse ba yar dar

Song Fourteen
Song Fourteen: Song Text as Performed

Line one is composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and has not been included in the English translation.
1. o ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye bso ya re o ngas ya re len dgo 'gro ba'i zhing mchog ye ye 'tsho ba'i glu gzig len ye
2. o dgung bso sngon po ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye bso tshang gi a yang ston mo red go 'gro ba'i zhing mchog ye ye 'tsho ba'i glu gzig len ye
3. o nga bso 'brug chung ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye bso ston mor a yang yong ni yin go 'gro ba'i zhing mchog ye ye ye 'tsho ba'i glu gzig len
4. o 'brug bso da re ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye bso mi grags o yang nam re grags go 'gro ba'i zhing mchog ye ye ye 'tsho ba'i glu gzig len
5. o 'brug bso grags gi ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye ye bso bskal ba o yang ldan ni red go 'gro ba'i zhing mchog ye ye ye 'tsho ba'i glu gzig len

6. o khyim bso 'di ba ye bso tshang gi a yang ston mo red go 'gro ba'i zhing mchog ye 'tsho ba'i glu gzig len
7. o nga bso bu chung ye bso ston mor a yong ni yin go 'gro ba'i zhing mchog ye 'tsho ba'i glu gzig len
8. o glu bso da re ye mi len o yang nam re len go 'gro ba'i zhing mchog ye 'tsho ba'i glu gzig len
9. o glu bso len gi ye bso bskal ba o yang ldan ni red go 'gro ba'i zhing mchog ye 'tsho ba'i glu gzig len

Song Fourteen: Literary Poetic Text
1. "dgung sgon po tshang gi ston mo red
2. nga 'brug chung ston mor yong ni yin
3. 'brug da re mi grags nam re grags
4. 'brug grag gi bskal ba ldan ni red

5. khyim 'di ba tshang gi ston mo red
6. nga bu chung ston mor yong ni yin
7. glu da re mi len nam re len
8. glu len pa'i bskal ba ldan ni red

Song Fifteen
Song Fifteen: Song Text as Performed

1. o ye 'ba' la yang la mo la yang ye yang len ya
2. o zhang a yang zer ra glu gzig ye ngas len dgo 'ba' la yang la mo la yang ye yang len ya
3. o khyim 'di bso lha khyim gur khyim ye yang red dgo 'ba' la yang la mo la yang ye yang len ya
4. o ngas gur khang 'dra yi glu gzig ye yang len dgo 'ba' la yang la mo la yang ye yang len ya

5. o ye 'ba' la yang la mo la yang ye yang len ya
6. o chang 'di bso bdud rtsi bsil ma ye yang red dgo 'ba' la yang la mo la yang ye yang len go
7. o ngas sil tog 'dra yi glu zhig ye yang len dgo 'ba' la yang la mo la yang ye yang len ya

8. o ye 'ba' la yang la mo la yang ye yang len ya
9. o myi 'di bso lha myi dpa' myi ye yang red go 'ba' la yang la mo la yang ye yang len dgo

59 Lines one, two, five, and eight are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
o ngas dpa' mkhar 'dra yi glu gzig ye yang len go 'ba' la yang la mo la yang ye yang len dgo

Song Fifteen: Literary Poetic Text

1. khyim 'di ni lha khyim gur khyim red
2. ngas gur khang 'dra ba'i glu zhig len
3. chang 'di ni bdud rtsi bsil ma red
4. ngas sil tog 'dra ba'i glu zhig len
5. mi 'di ni lha mi dpa' mi red
6. ngas dpa' mkhar 'dra ba'i glu zhig len

Song Sixteen
Song Sixteen: Song Text as Performed

1. o ye sdong la re len dgo glu gzig len dgo sdong la re len ya
2. o gos tsha ru rdang na sdong la re len dgo yod ni tsho dgo sdong la re len dgo
3. o gos rdang nas ma bskyur sdong la re len dgo yon gi sdod go sdong la re len ya
4. o tshe phyi ma'i yul na sdong la re len dgo gos gon med go sdong la re len ya

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60 Lines one, five, and nine are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
5. o ye sdong la re len dgo glu gzig len dgo sdong la re len ya
6. o rta 'do ba lhas na sdong la re len go yod ni tsho dgo sdong la re len ya
7. o rta lhas nas ma bskyur sdong la re len go zhon gi sdod go sdong la re len ya
8. o tshe phyi ma'i yul na sdong la re len dgo rgyugs med go sdong la re len ya

9. o ye sdong la re len go glu gzig len dgo sdong la re len ya
10. o glu kha mtshar khog na sdong la re len dgo yod ni tsho go sdong la re len ya
11. o glu khog nas ma bskyur sdong la re len dgo len gi sdod go sdong la re len ya
12. o tshe phyi ma'i yul na sdong la re len go glu len med go sdong la re len ya

Song Sixteen: Literary Poetic Text

1. གོས་ཚ་རུ་རྩང་ན་ཡོད་ནི་ཚོ།
2. གོས་རྩང་ནས་མ་བིྱེད་དེ་ཡོད་ནི།
3. མཚེ་ཕྱི་མ་འི་ཡུལ་ན་རྩང་ན་དགོ་རྒྱུགས་མེད་རྩང་ན་རྩེ་སྤྲོད་པ།

4. གོས་ཚ་རུ་རྩང་ན་ཡོད་ནི་ཚོ།
5. གོས་རྩང་ནས་མ་བིྱེད་དེ་ཡོད་ནི།
6. མཚེ་ཕྱི་མ་འི་ཡུལ་ན་དགོ་རྒྱུགས་མེད་རྩང་ན་རྩེ་སྤྲོད་པ།

7. གོས་ཚ་རུ་རྩང་ན་ཡོད་ནི་ཚོ།
8. གོས་རྩང་ནས་མ་བིྱེད་དེ་ཡོད་ནི།
9. མཚེ་ཕྱི་མ་འི་ཡུལ་ན་དགོ་རྒྱུགས་མེད་རྩང་ན་རྩེ་སྤྲོད་པ།

1. 'gos tsha ru rdang na yod ni tsho
2. 'gos rdang nas ma bskyur gon gi sdod
3. tshe phyi ma'i yul na gos gon med

4. rta 'do ba lhas na yod ni tsho
5rta lhas nas ma bskyur zhon gi sdod
6tshe phyi ma'i yul na rta rgyugs med

7glu kha mtshar khog na yod ni tsho
8glu khog nas ma bskyur len gi sdod
9tshe phyi ma'i yul na glu len med

Song Seventeen
Song Seventeen: Song Text as Performed

1. o ye ya re len dgo o zhang a yang 'gyogs ba ye ye o a zhang lo lo ngas glu gzig len dgo
2. o dgung sgon po mtho ra ye sprin dkar dma' a dgo
3. o 'di'i mtho dma' bar nas ye o a zhang lo lo bo 'di 'brug chung ye ye skyid
4. o 'di yang yang skyid gi ye smon lam 'debs go
5. o 'di yang yang skyid gi ye o a zhang lo lo ngas smon lam 'debs ye ya

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61 Lines one and six are composed primarily of vocabularies without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
6 o ye ya re len go o zhang a yang 'gyogs ba ye o a zhang lo lo ngas glu 
gzig len re
7 o sbra mthing smug mtho ra ye gnad dkar dma' dgo
8 o 'di'i mtho dma' bar nas ye o a zhang lo lo 'di khrom pa ye skyid
9 o 'di yang yang skyid gi ye smon lam 'debs dgo
10 o 'di yang yang skyid gi ye o zhang lo lo ngas smon lam 'debs re

Song Seventeen: Literary Poetic Text

1 'dgung sngon po mtho ra sprin dkar dma'
2 'di'i mtho dma' bar nas 'brug chung skyid
3 'di yang yang skyid pa'i smon lam 'debs

4 sbra mthing smug mtho ra gdan dkar dma'
5 'di'i mtho dma' bar nas khrom pa skyid
6 'di yang yang skyid pa'i smon lam 'debs

Song Eighteen
Song Eighteen: Song Text as Performed⁶²

\[\text{o ye ya re len ya na zla cha bo}\]
\[\text{o zhang a yang zer ra glu gzig len ya na zla cha bo}\]
\[\text{o shing bra ma'i me tog bzhad dang tha ya na zla cha bo}\]
\[\text{o zhing chu ma 'debs gi skabs gzig red ya na zla cha bo}\]

\[\text{o ye ya re len ya na zla cha bo}\]
\[\text{o chu rma chur 'gram dar chags dang tha ya na zla cha bo}\]
\[\text{o rta jag sga stod gi skabs gzig red ya na zla cha bo}\]

\[\text{o ye ya re len ya na zla cha bo}\]
\[\text{o nang khrom pa gral ya tshogs dang tha ya na zla cha bo}\]
\[\text{o glu shags la 'gro ba'i skabs gzig red ya na zla cha bo}\]

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⁶² Lines one, two, five, and eight are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
1shing bra ma'i me tog bzhad dang thal
2zhing chu ma 'debs pa'i skabs shig red
3chu rma chur 'gram dar chags dang thal
4rta jag sga stod pa'i skabs shig red
5nang khrom pa gral la tshogs dang thal
6glu shags la 'gro ba'i skabs shig red
Song Nineteen: Song Text as Performed

1. o ye ya re len ya rtsed la khrom pa
2. o zhang a yang zer ra glu gzig len ya rtsed la khrom pa
3. o 'brug pho chung dgung nas grags nge yod ya rtsed la khrom pa
4. o char bsil ma'i dngos grub gnang gi yod ya rtsed la khrom pa
5. o de'i zhor ra thog cig 'phen na 'dod ya rtsed la khrom pa

6. o ye ya re len ya rtsed la khrom pa
7. o nga glu ba gral ya thon nas yod ya rtsed la khrom pa
8. glu kha mtshar kha rgyangs brtsegs nas yod ya rtsed la khrom pa
9. o de'i zhor ra shags gzig blangs na 'dod ya rtsed la khrom pa

Song Nineteen: Literary Poetic Text

1. 0 ye ya re len ya rtsed la khrom pa
2. 0 zhang a yang zer ra glu gzig len ya rtsed la khrom pa
3. 0 'brug pho chung dgung nas grags nge yod ya rtsed la khrom pa
4. 0 char bsil ma'i dngos grub gnang gi yod ya rtsed la khrom pa
5. 0 de'i zhor ra thog cig 'phen na 'dod ya rtsed la khrom pa
"brug pho chung dgung na grags kyin yod
"char bsil ma'i dngos grub gnang bzhin yod
"de'i zhor la thog cig 'phen na 'dod

"nga glu ba gral la thon nas yod
"glu kha mtshar kha grangs brtsegs nas yod
"de'i zhor la shags shig blangs na 'dod

Song Twenty
Song Twenty: Song Text as Performed\(^{63}\)

\(^1\) o ye lo kho ngas ya re len dgo
\(^2\) ye zhang a yang zer ra ye ye lo kho ngas glu gzig len ya
\(^3\) o rdza khra yag bso 'brong gi ye ye lo kho yang pha sa nas dgo
\(^4\) ye 'brong ru dmar bso rwa kha ye ye lo kho yang khru gang can go
\(^5\) o bu rngon pa bso bsad no ye ye lo kho bso grangs med yin dgo
\(^6\) ye rdza srang lam bso ma nyul ye ye lo kho da phyir ra song ya
\(^7\) o ye lo kho ngas ya re len dgo

\(^{63}\) Lines one, two, seven, eight, and thirteen are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
8ye zhang a yang bso zer ra ye lo kho ngas glu gzig len ya
9o brag dmar ro bso mtho gi ye lo kho yang g.yas gzar nas dgo
10ye glag rag mo'i bso sder mo ye lo kho yang mtho gang yin ya
11'ba' lu gu bso bsad no ye lo kho grangs med yin dgo
12ye lug ri mgor bso ma bkram ye lo kho yang phyir ra thed ya

13o ye lo kho ngas ya re len dgo
14ye grong glu ba bso tshogs gi ye lo kho yang gral rked nas ya
15o nga'i glu shags ge sar ye lo kho yang sgrung glu yin dgo
16ye khyod glu med spig no ye lo kho yang brgya stong yin ya
17o shags srid pa bso ma len ye lo kho yang phyir ra song ya

Song Twenty: Literary Poetic Text

1 rdza khra yag 'brong gi pha sa nas
2 'brong ru dmar rwa co khri gang can
3 bu rngon pa bsad ni grangs med yin
4 rdza srang lam ma nyul phyir la song
5 brag dmar po mtho ba'i g.yas gzar nas
6 glag rag mo'i sder mo mtho gang yin
7 'ba' lu gu bsad ni grangs med yin
8 lug ri mgor ma bkram phyir la thed

9 grong glu ba tshogs pa'i gral rked nas
10 nga'i glu shags ge sar sgrung glu yin
11 khyod glu med spig no brgya stong yin
12 shags srid pa ma len phyir la phros

Song Twenty-one
Song Twenty-one: Song Text as Performed

1. བོད་པ་བོད་ཕུན་་་
2. མ་ཆེི་གྱི་ཕུན་་་
3. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་་
4. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་་
5. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་་
6. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་་
7. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་་
8. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་་
9. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་་
10. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་
11. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་
12. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་
13. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་
14. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་
15. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་
16. མོ་ལུང་བོད་ཕུན་་

64 Lines one, two, and ten are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
'o ye ya re len go glu ma cha bo
2zhang a yang zer ra glu gzig len go glu ma cha bo
3o bu dpa’ med zhig gi lo rgyus bshad go glu ma cha bo
4rang yul nas ma bdad jag la song go glu u ma cha bo
5khyim phyug po’i lhas la thon dus na go glu u ma cha bo
6o khyi rgya lu rgyugs nas sgyid pa’i bzung go glu u ma cha bo
7sems snying rtsa 'dar nas phyir ra bros dgo glu u ma cha bo
8sdug rta rgan la ga zhe sdang langs dgo glu u ma cha bo
9o 'di bu dpa' med cig gi las srol red go glu ma cha bo
10o ye ya re len go glu ma cha bo
11ma g.yug med gzig gi lo rgyus bshad go glu ma cha bo
12rang yul nas ma bdad ri kha nyul go glu ma cha bo
13ye sa thag ring mgon po thon dus na dgo glu ma cha bo
14sems ma dga' zangs rgyag thom rgyag byas dgo glu ma cha bo
15ja 'phyur nas thab gsur gzhob gsur byas dgo glu ma cha bo
16ye sdug ma lo'i la ga zhe sdang langs dgo glu ma cha bo
17'di ma g.yug med cig gi las srol red go glu ma cha bo

Song Twenty-one: Literary Poetic Text

17

119
1. bu dpa’ med zhig gi lo rgyus bshad
2. rang yul nas ma bsdad jag la song
3. khyim phyug po’i lhas la thon dus na
4. khyi rgya lu rgyugs nas sgyid pa’i bzung
5. sms snying rtsa ’dar nas phyir la bros
6. sdu rta rgan thog la zhe sdang langs
7. bu dpa’ med cig gi las srol red
8. ma g.yug med cig gi lo rgyus bshad
9. rang yul nas ma bsdad ri kha nyul
10. sa thag ring mgron po thon dus na
11. sms ma dga’ zangs rgyag thom rgyag byas
12. ja ’phyur nas thab gsur gzhob gsur byas
13. sdu ma lo’i thog la zhe sdang langs
14. ma g.yug med cig gi las srol red

Song Twenty-two
Song Twenty-two: Song Text as Performed

1. o ye ya re len ya na zla cha bo
2. o zhang a yang zer ra glu gzig len ya na zla cha bo
3. o khyo’i glu shags shing sdong rkang gcig red ya na zla cha bo
4. nga’i shags lan lcags nag sog le red ya na zla cha bo
5. o shing seg se btang re mthud srol med ya na zla cha bo
6. dper bzhag nas bshad na ’di mo red ya na zla cha bo

7. o ye ya re len ya na zla cha bo

65 Lines one, two, and seven are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
8o khyo'i glu shags shel dkar bum pa red ya na zla cha bo
9nga'i shags lan gser nag thom bu red ya na zla cha bo
10o shel sang se btang re sbyor srol med ya na zla cha bo
11dper bzhag nas bshad na ’di mo red ya na zla cha bo

Song Twenty-two: Literary Poetic Text

1khyo'i glu shags shing sdong rkang gcig red
2nga'i shags lan lcags nag sog le red
3shing seg se btang na mthud srol med
4dper bzhag nas bshad na de ’dra red
5khyo'i glu shags shel dkar bum pa red
6nga'i shags lan gser nag thom bu red
7shel sang se btang dus sbyor srol med
8dper bzhag nas bshad na ’di ’dra red

Song Twenty-three
Song Twenty-three: Song Text as Performed\(^{66}\)

1. o ye ye ya re len go ling ling gi ling
2. o zhang a yang 'gyogs ba glu gzig len go go ling ling gi ling ya re len
3. o khyos sems chung gcig la sems chung byos go go ling ling gi ling ya re len
4. khyos bya bo'i sgo nga sems chung byos go go ling ling gi ling ya re len
5. de da nangs so ma btang ni red go go ling ling gi ling ya re len
6. o ye go ling ling gi ling ya re len
7. khyos sems chung gcig la sems byos go go ling ling gi ling ya re len
8. khyo'i glu shags kher mo sems chung byos go go ling ling gi ling ya re len
9. de da nangs so ma rtsab ni yin mo go ling ling gi ling ya re len

\(^{66}\) Lines one, two, and six are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.
Song Twenty-three: Literary Poetic Text

1. khyos sems chung gcig la sems chung byos
2. khyos bya bo'i sgong ba sems chung byos
3. de da nangs so ma btang ni red
4. khyos sems chung gcig la sems byos
5. khyo'i glu shags gcig por sems chung byos
6. de da nangs so ma bslabs ni red

Song Twenty-four
Song Twenty-four: Song Text as Performed

\[\text{Lines one and two are composed primarily of vocables without lexical meaning and have not been included in the English translation.}\]
1. o ye ya re ya a re a 'gro ba spun kho ya re len ya
2. stod gan na lug ye rdzi a 'gro ba spun kho gnyid rkyal gzig ya
3. de'i rjes na spyang ltoqs a 'gro ba spun kho smyon pa gzig ya
4. mthar ci byed rang gis a 'gro ba spun kho shes rgyu red ya

5. o ye 'gro ba spun kho ya re len ya
6. smad gan na glu med a 'gro ba spun kho zhi lu gzig ya
7. de'i rjes na stong brgya a 'gro ba spun kho 'bum thub gzig ya
8. mthar ci byed rang gis a 'gro ba spun kho shes rgyu red ya

Song Twenty-four: Literary Poetic Text

5. o ye ya re ya a re a 'gro ba spun kho ya re len ya
2. stod gan na lug ye rdzi a 'gro ba spun kho gnyid rkyal gzig ya
3. de'i rjes na spyang ltoqs a 'gro ba spun kho smyon pa gzig ya
4. mthar ci byed rang gis a 'gro ba spun kho shes rgyu red ya

5. o ye 'gro ba spun kho ya re len ya
6. smad gan na glu med a 'gro ba spun kho zhi lu gzig ya
7. de'i rjes na stong brgya a 'gro ba spun kho 'bum thub gzig ya
8. mthar ci byed rang gis a 'gro ba spun kho shes rgyu red ya
Song Twenty-five
Song Twenty-five: Song Text as Performed

1lam sne 'di nas ye grogs po lam la chas ye
2 nga'i sems kyi slob bo grogs lam la chas 'gro ye
3 chas song ba'i ye lo zla yi bar nas ye
4 sems pa zhig la na zug bzhag 'gro ye
5 grogs po lags khyod ye dang bral la rjes nga rang kher rkyang yin ye
6 kher rkyang gi mi tshe yin ye
7 slob gling 'di ye nas ye grogs po lam la chas ye
8nga'i snying gi slob grogs lam la chas 'gro ye
9chas song ba'i ye nyin zhag gi bar la
10sems pa zhig la na zug bzhag 'gro ye
11slob grogs lags khyod la dang bral la rjes nga rang kher rkyang yin ye
12kher rkyang gi 'tsho ba yin ye
13khyod dang bral rjes nga rang kher rkyang yin ye
14kher rkyang gi 'tsho ba yin ye

Song Twenty-five: Literary Poetic Text

1lam sne 'di nas grogs po lam la chas
2nga'i sems kyi slob grogs lam la chas 'gro
3chas song ba'i lo zla yi bar nas
4sems pa zhig la na zug bzhag 'gro
5grogs po lags khyod rang bral rjes nga rang kher rkyang yin
6kher rkyang gi mi tshe yin
7slob gling 'di nas grogs po lam la chas
8ngai snying gi slob grogs lam la chas 'gro
9chas song ba'i nyin zhag gi bar la
10sems pa zhig la na zug bzhag 'gro
11slob grogs lagskhyod dang bral rjes nga rang kher rkyang yin
12kher rkyang gi 'tsho ba yin
13khyod dang bral rjes nga rang kher rkyang yin
14kher rkyang gi 'tsho ba yin

Song Twenty-six
Song Twenty-six: Song Text as Performed

1khyod ni slob dpon dam pa ye
2nga ni slob bu rig bzang ye
3skyes sa'i gnas yul mi gcig
4'dzoms sa'i slob gling gcig yin ye
5'o ho ho o ho ho o ho ho bo
6'dzoms sa'i slob gling gcig yin ye

68 The song was performed in literary Tibetan.
CONCLUSION

The songs in this text give a micro history of changes in local Tibetan songs including style alterations in terms of melody and a singer's individual preference. The most important characteristic is the variation in rhythm. Changing time signatures and rhythmic patterns are typical. For example,

\[\text{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} \] is commonly found. However, in the songs that are our focus, 

lyrics appear as 

and its many variations, for example,
First, this shows variation in the time signature, which occurs in almost every bar, e.g., Song Eleven. Secondly, stanzas are repeated irregularly, for example, songs Eight and Three. The pentatonic scale and Chinese key signatures *yu, zhi,* and *shang* are commonly used in writing A mdo Tibetan folksongs.
PHOTOGRAPHS
A wedding ceremony in Rkang mo Community in Gcan tsha thang Township (2015).
It was difficult for me to take better photographs at this gathering because I was a guest and it is considered inappropriate for guests to move around taking pictures.

About 200 people gathered at the groom's home. I took these pictures after lunch at about one PM. Except for the cooks, who were preparing supper, other guests and relatives gathered on the grassland behind the groom's family's house and started to sing and listen to *dmangs glu* while drinking Red Bull, Coca-Cola, Sprite, Pepsi, bottled commercial tea drinks, and various fruit juices.

Those sitting on the right side include ten people from the bride's side. A local rule dictates that only ten people should accompany the bride. This contrasts with the past when the bride's entourage was larger. For example, when Father's elder brother married in 1996, the bride's group consisted of twenty-five. In around 2007 to make it easier for the groom's side, Bla ma Blo bzang said that only ten people should accompany the bride.

Those sitting to the left and all the women standing at the back are from the groom's side. Behind the other women but not visible is a woman singing *dmangs glu*. Women are often somewhat reticent and reluctant to walk around in the middle of the rows when they sing. In fact, I have seen only a few women walk between the rows of guests while singing. In contrast, I have never seen a man who does not walk between the rows of guests while they are singing.

Only *dmangs glu* and *la gzhas* were sung on this wedding day. As mentioned earlier, Bla ma Blo bzang's rule that local people should no longer drink meant that liquor was not served nor drunk at this wedding, therefore, guests were not very energetic or talkative. The bride's group left at around five PM.
A horse race is held annually on the fifteenth day of the sixth lunar month. In 2014 the government built a horse racecourse. That year the race lasted three days. Attendees included local people and visitors from Gcan tsha, Khri ka, and Reb gong. Only local horses were allowed to race. Each day at around five PM, after the race had finished, people gathered, made a circle, and started singing.

On the first day, a man from Ka rgya Community gave a speech encouraging everyone to sing happily and enjoy themselves. Afterwards the man in the center of the photograph (from Khri ka County) wearing a red shirt and bowing, began to sing *la gzhas* to a woman. The next two and half hours were filled with songs from two men (including the man bowing) singing to two women. Laughter and shouts rang out after each song finished. Then security guards responsible for the horse race competition came and spoiled the merriment and the crowd left disappointed.
My family on the autumn pasture in 2014.

Several of my family members moved here after living in tents and herding livestock on the mountain for about six weeks. Before 2007 the autumn pasture was considered the finest place in my home area. This was before the land was divided and fenced. All the communities in Gcan tsha thang moved here and pitched white tents and black tents in lines at the bottom of the mountains. There was a great sense of excitement about the move to the autumn pasture. Nice clothes were worn and numerous shops sold a range of goods. Herders took their livestock wherever they wanted and often sang while herding.

After the grassland was divided and fenced in 2007, locals had to herd their livestock down narrow lanes to get water. These lanes that were once healthy grassland quickly became dusty livestock trails. The livestock were also stressed at being forced to live in small fenced enclosures. Livestock had to herded carefully to ensure that they did not graze on others' fenced pastures. Such changed conditions meant that there was then little time or enthusiasm to sing.
A birthday party for a three year old boy.

Sgrol ma skyabs (b. 1980) from the Lo ba Tribe sang *dmangs glu* during his three year old son's (b. 2012) birthday party, held on the third day of the first lunar month in 2015. His wife is Father's youngest sister. Sgrol ma skyabs invited Uncle Rdo rje thar (b. 1972) to cut his son's hair early in the morning of the day of the party.

A barber is chosen very carefully. He should be a local man who is healthy, successful, important, and respected. He cuts the child's hair carefully and in a distinctive way. Tribal members often ask who the barber was.

Hairstyles for children vary among families in the Lo ba Tribe. Most girls have a single braid while boys have a square block of hair on top of their head. It is my family's tradition, however, to cut girls' hair the same as boys for their birthday party when they are three years old. There are other families who choose a single braid decorated with red string, turquoise, and coral for both their sons and daughters. When the barber finishes the haircut, he makes a wish that the child will be healthy, have a long life, and be successful and wealthy.

I was unable to attend the party at Sgrol ma skyabs's home so I asked Father about it. It was a big party, attended by about a hundred people who brought gifts of cloth, clothes, silk, and toys. The host family offered the guests mutton, beef, noodles, steamed stuffed dumplings, green chili fried with mutton, cabbage and eggplant fried together, red bread, apples, pears, raisins, bananas, various snacks, and drinks (but no liquor).

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69 Photos 5 and 6 by Rta mgrin skyabs (2015).
Sgrolm sa skyabs borrowed an amplifier and two microphones that belonged to the entire Lo ba community. This equipment was purchased in Reb gong Town in 2013. Its most common use is during tribal gatherings devoted to religious chanting.

Amplifiers and microphones were purchased after the Kargya Tribe bought such equipment and used it when chanting. Locally, amplifiers and microphones are also used at weddings and other gatherings. One reason for their popularity is the example of famous singers using them during televised performances. Not everyone likes this amplified singing, however. My grandmother (along with most elders), for example, complains that it is too loud and unclear.

Singers typically hold kha btgas while singing in a large group setting. After singing, the singer passes the kha btgas to another person who is then expected to sing.

Sgrolm sa skyabs said every guest had to sing and most did, except those who were observing a mourning period after the death of a relative. Elders sang dmangs glu while those aged thirteen to nineteen sang rdung len and glu dbyangs.

After taking care of their livestock that night, Sgrolm sa skyabs' neighbors and relatives reassembled at his home and enjoyed food, singing, and chatting until two AM.

Sangs rgyas (b. 1982) (with microphone) and Lcags byams thar (b. 1983) (seated, wearing a dark cap) sang glu shags at Sgrolm sa skyabs' son's birthday party at night. Both are Sgrolm sa skyabs' relatives and both are good singers. Lcags byams thar is particularly recognized as a gifted singer. They sang glu shags to each other for around three hours. The songs were so humorous that there was much laughter. Father commented that he enjoyed the party a great deal and that such big parties were now quite rare.

70 Kha btgas are for sale in local shops and in the county town.
Singing to Commend families maintaining community traditions - the black yak hair tent.

Tshe ring rgyal (b. 1986) sang *dmangs glu* at a party held by a local organization - 'Gcan tsha' rig gnas yar skul tshogs pa 'Gcan tsha Education Encouragement Organization' (GEEO) - for families who live in black yak hair tents during summer. The party was recognition for these families for maintaining the community’s tradition. GEEO representatives came in four cars and gave each family a *kha btags* and two black tea bricks. They brought drinks and fruit, and locals offered food. There were about 110 attendees, some of whom sang *dmangs glu* at the party. GEEO representatives (in the picture above) brought an amplifier and microphones which were also used for speeches commending the families and praising traditional tents on the grassland as beautiful and comfortable. This was the third year that such a gathering was held. About fifteen families lived in black yak hair tents in 2014, but only ten in 2015.

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71 Photo by Rta mgrim skyabs (2015).
Dkon mchog rgyal (b. 1965) sang *dmangs glu* to the groom and his companions at a wedding ceremony held by G.yang drung's family in their (the bride's) home for the groom in the Lho ba Tribe on 26 September 2015. About 150 people attended. A wedding ceremony held by the bride's side for the groom is usually smaller than the ceremony at the groom's homes. Generally, the groom and his two or three companions arrive early in the morning and leave after about two and a half hours. On this occasion, the bride and her companions get ready to go to the groom's home. Given the relatively short time at the bride's home, only *dmangs glu* and *rdung len* were sung.

In this particular case, the groom had two companions. The groom sits on the right between his two companions. They were from the Ka rgya Tribe. Often a good singer and an eloquent speaker accompany the groom.

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Tshe ring rdo rje (b. 1970) sang *dmangs glu* to the groom and his companions.

Lhun po (b. 1982) sang *dmangs glu* at the same wedding ceremony.

Sha bo rgyal (b. 1977), one of the groom's companions, sang *dmangs glu* to the bride's side.
REFERENCES


Sangs rgyas bkra shis (Sangjiezhaxi) and CK Stuart. 2015. Tibetan Daily Life on the gCan tsha thang Grassland. Himalayan Discoveries 2(1), forthcoming.


NON-ENGLISH TERMS

'ba' rdzong (Tongde 同德)
'bab gi (同德)
'brog sde (同德)
'cham (同德)
'jigs med rgyal mtshan (同德)
'then thug (同德)
'ur cha (同德)
A
a lags blo bzang (同德)
a mdo (同德)
B
ban de ma (同德)
ban de rgyal (同德)
bc'a' sdom (同德)
bd sho (同德)
bd chen (同德)
bka' dpang (同德)
bla brang (同德)
bla ma (同德)
blo bbrtan rdo rje (同德)
blo bzang lung rtogs bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (同德)
bod phrug ma (同德)
brag dkar (同德)
bsam 'grub tshe ring (同德)
bsod nams rgyal kho (同德)
byis glu (同德)
bzang spyod བཙང་སྩོད།
bzho bzung བཛོད་བོན།
bzho glu བོན་དབུ།
C
chang གཞི།
chi ངོ།
chob གཞི།
D
dar mtsho ཤིམས་ཀྱི།
dbyar sa བདོར་སྐྱ།
dgu tshig ཀྱུན་ཆོས།
dgun sa ཀྱུན་སྐྱ།
dkon mchog rgyal ཀྱི་ཆོས་རྒྱལ།
dmangs glu དབངས་སྐྱ།
dmar ston དར་སྐོན།
G
g.yang drung གཡུང་འབྲོོང།
g.yon ru གཡོན་རུ།
gar ston གར་སྐོན།
gcan tsha ཁྱི་ཞི། (Jianzha 尖扎)
gcan tsha thang ཁྱི་ཞི་ཐང་། (Jianzhatan 尖扎滩)
gcan tsha'i rig gnas yar skul tshogs pa ཁྱེ་ཞིའི་རིགས་ཡར་སྐུལ་ཚོགས་པ།
ge sar འཇོགས།
glang dmar ཀླང་དཔར།
gle gzhug གྱུན་གཞུང་།
gling bu ཁྲིང་བུ།
glo gzur ཁྱེ་ཞི་བུ།
glu གླུ།
glu ba 'dir bka' dpang zhig 'bab ga གླུ་འབྲི་མི་སྐད་དཔང་གཞི་བཱ་།
glu dbyangs ལྕ་དབྱངས།
glu ma 'dir bka' dpang zhig 'bab ga ལྕ་མ་'དིར་བཀاء་དཔང་དབིག་'བབ་ག

glu shags ལྕ་ཤིགས།
go bzhugs བཞུགས།
gro ma རྒྱུད།

gsang sgrog བྱ་ཤེས་གླིངས།
gser mtsho skyid ཤིས་ཤེས་བོད།

gua hong 挂红

gun dga' གུན་དག་།
gu ru དགུ་རུ།
gur 'khyog སྤྱེུས་འཁྱོད།
gyi ling རྒྱུ་གིང་།

H
Han 汉
hub རུ་བ
hu tse རུ་ཚེ།

J
jo bo བོ་ཆོས།
jo bo rin po che བོ་ཆོས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་།

K
ka rgya ཀ་རྒྱ་།
kha btags རྒྱལ་སྔགས།
khri ka གཞི་ཀ (Guide 贡德)

klu mo 'tsho རུ་མོའི་ཚོ།
klu mo tshe ring རུ་མོའི་ཚེ་རིང་།
Kugou 酷狗

L

la gzhas ཞལ་གཟེས།
lam chang མོང་ཐང་།
lcags byams thar རྩ་མ་བོད་ལམ་
lcags ris རྩ་མ་ཞིག
lha mo skyid རྩ་མ་ཞིག
lha mgon skybs རྩ་མ་བོད་
lho ba རྩ་ཐ་
lhun po རྩ་ཐ་
lo ba རྩ་ཐ་
lo sar རྩ་ཐ་
lo sar bzang རྩ་ཐ་ཞེན
ltung bshags རྩ་མ་གསུམ
lu gu rgyal རྩ་མ་སྤྱིར
M
ma Ni རྩ་མ་ཐཱི་
ma Ni thang རྩ་མ་ཐཱི་ཐང
mar khu thang རྩ་མ་ཐཱི་ཐང
ma thang རྩ་མ་ཐང
mgo log རྩ་མ་ཞིག
mgon po རྩ་མ་ཞིག
mgur རྩ་མ་ཞིག
mo རྩ་མ་ཞིག
mthun sgril gyi rang sgra རྩ་མ་ཞིག་ཐ་ཐང་སྤྱིར
mtsho lho རྩ་མ་ཐཱི་ཐང་ (Hainan 海南)
mtsho sngon རྩ་མ་ཐཱི་ཐང་ (Qinghai 青海)
mtsho sngon bod skad brnyan 'phrin khang gi lo sar spro tshogs རྩ་མ་ཐཱི་ཐང་བོད་སྤྱིར་ཁང་གི་ཐ་ཐང་སྤྱིར་ཐ་ཐང་སྤྱིར
N
nam mkha' རྩ་མ་ཐཱི་ཐང
Ningbo University, Ning bo da xue 宁波大学
nyi zla རྩ་མ་ཐཱི་ཐང

150
P
pa bo मर्याडा
pa lo skyid गतिशील
pho ཤ
pi wang 高峰
prug khra 空
Q
Qi Huimin 祁慧民
R
ra mo che gtsug lag khang 卡爾基阿爾庫-阿爾庫
rdo rje རྡོ་རྨེ
rdo rje thar རྡོ་རྨེ་ཐར།
rdo rje rab brtan རྡོ་རྨེ་རབ་བྲླན།
rdo rje tshe brtan རྡོ་རྨེ་ཚེ་བྲླན།
rdung len 博多
rdza mgo 博多
reb gong 博多
rgyal ba paN chen 博多
rin chen rgyal 博多
rin chen ’tsho 博多
rkang tsha 竜
rma chu 龍
rma lho 博多 (Huangnan 黄南)
rta mgrin skyabs 福建
rtsag pa 福建
S
sangs rgyas शंग्राज
sangs rgyas bkra shis शंग्राज
se la drug khra शंग्राज

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skad 'phrin (Weixin 微信)
skal bzang rdo rje
skya rgya
skyabs 'gro
skon
so sngon (lanya 蓝牙)
srel nag
sras chen
srung sa
T
Tshe ring rgyal
Tshe ring rdo rje

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tsha ru རྩ་བུ།
tshang ra རྣ་བུ།
tshod ma རྣ་དམ།
W
Wencheng 文成
X
Xi'an 西安
Xi'an International Studies University, Xi an wai guo yu da xue 西安
外国语大学
Y
Ye 羽
ye yin 翼音
yu 羽
yuan 元
Z
zhi 徵
zhun ka ra ང་ོ་ཀ་ར་
zi ling བི་གི་གྲིང་ (Xining 西宁)
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