Changing Wedding Traditions in an Amdo Tibetan Community

by

Nyangchakja
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SUMMARY: Bon skor is an Amdo, agro-pastoral Tibetan village. This book introduces the village's history, population, education, economy, religion, language, housing, death, divination, conflict, and clothing. This is followed by a detailed ethnographic study of village weddings focusing on marriage norms, the spouse selection process, and the spouse trial period. Details are provided on pre-wedding activities, preparation of clothes for the bride, negotiations, abducting the bride, discussion of the bridewealth and dowry, speeches, orations, songs, rituals, the bride's mother's instructions to the bride, and the actual wedding rituals. Summaries of speeches and English translation of songs are also provided.

COVERS: Sang rgyas don 'grub.

To my beloved sister, Dorjee Paljor (Rdo rje dpal 'byor), and to the bright memory of a departed, much loved childhood companion.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank Dr. CK Stuart, Dr. Gerald Roche, Ms. Gabriela Samcewicz, and Gaye Sargent for their invaluable help; my grandparents, parents, and fellow community members for providing information and support; and Bya mdo’i rab rgyas and Rin chen rdo rje for proofreading the Tibetan texts.
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¹ Nyangchakja took the photographs featured in this book. Non-English terms in the captions are explained in the relevant sections.
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Khe bhe (b. 1972) is my paternal grandmother's relative. He married at the age of seventeen. He sporadically attended primary school at the former villager farming location in Bon po'i zhing kha and sings traditional songs. He is well known for his mellifluous voice, mandolin playing, folksong repertoire, and sash-tying speech.

Lha sgron (b. 1946) is my paternal grandmother and a devoted Buddhist. Grandmother sang traditional songs and gave examples of speeches and instructions given to the bride before she leaves her parents' home for the groom's home.

Lha rgya (b. 1957) of Ra dza Village was the first headmaster of Bon skor Village Primary School from 1987-1994.

Mkhas bha (b. 1936) is a paternal relative. He described felt making.

Rgya mtsho (b. 1938) is a local elder. He contributed information on the economy, and the school and school attendance.

Gsang sgrog (b. 1945), my paternal grandfather, was born in Bon skor Village and is familiar with village history. Locally well known for his eloquent speeches, he is often invited as a matchmaker and wedding orator.

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Thar re rgyal (b. 1958) was the local Communist Party secretary in 2014, a position he had occupied since 2000. He provided general information on the local economy, education, and government policies.

Thin tsi (b. 1940) was the local village leader between 1986 and 1995 and the local Communist Party secretary from 1995 to 2000.

Thub bstan lhun grub (b. 1944), a local lay tantric practitioner originally from Sgo me Village, married a woman in Bon skor and moved into her home.

Tshogs phud (b. 1928), a local elder, spent much of his time chanting and practicing religious rituals. He provided information about local rituals.
Tshul khrims (b. 1941), a local elder, provided information on Yul lha and various rituals.

An expanding desert in Mu ge thang, part of a Bon skor herding area.

Local pasture divided among local families and fenced.

Two households are sandwiched between deserts in the village herding area. Locals say there was little desert in this area in about 1990.

Desert and the Yellow River in the local herding area.

Soil erosion adjacent to the farming area. Flooding erodes an area of about eighty meters wide and two to fifteen meters deep annually.

Camels can carry more than yaks, donkeys, and horses. They were historically used to haul items that local households use in daily life.

Camels are kept in herding areas for transporting items in the mountains.

A couple from the Bon skor herding area prepares to use this camel to fetch water. Locals use old inner tubes as water containers, which are easy to be put on a camel's back. Donkeys are also used for this purpose.

Two local women with their camels in 2010.

The Yellow River near the Bon skor herding area.

Chinese fishermen seen from the local herding area.

Locals drive sheep to the Yellow River for water.

The Yellow River near the local herding area.

The Yellow River near the local herding area.

Locals celebrate at Sgro ri Lab rtse in 2014.

The Bon skor Village lab rtse - Sgro ri rab brtan thogs med.

Ho dung are wooden sticks that are considered auspicious and put on lab rtse.

Arrows on the local lab rtse.

Bla ma Yi sgar 'Jam dbyangs 'phrin las rgya mtsho.

Part of a clay pot, found by a local herdsman in the Bon skor herding area.

Bon and Buddhist scriptures that survived the Cultural Revolution.

A Bon scripture.

Tree roots by the Yellow River bank.

A local herdsman found this item in the herding area. Locals believe it is a centuries old tsha tsha.
1. **Mchong** - the white round gem next to the right of the red bead (bottom) - was found by a local herder from a desert area in the Bon skor pasture.

2. The Yellow River rose and forced a section of Bon skor Village to resettle in 2007.

3. The Yellow River rose and forced a section of Bon skor Village to resettle in 2007.

4. A resettled section of Bon skor Village near Mgomang Township Town in 2013.

5. **Sngags pa** chant at a local home.

6. Two **sngags pa** chant while one makes **gtor ma**.

7. A **sngags pa** blows a **rkan sóng dung** 'thighbone trumpet' when performing a religious ritual at a local home.

8. A **sngags pa** chants with his religious implements at a local home.

9. A mural of Mnyam med shes rab rgyal mtshan featured in the Assembly Hall of Victorious Wisdom Holder and Spiritual Warrior Gshen in Bon skor.

10. A mural of Kun bzang gshen lha 'od dkar featured in the Assembly Hall of Victorious Wisdom Holder and Spiritual Warrior Gshen in Bon skor.

11. An image of Rnam mkhyen rgyal ba in the Assembly Hall of Victorious Wisdom Holder and Spiritual Warrior Gshen in Bon skor.

12. **Lha bshos**, a type of **gtor ma**.

13. Bon **sngags pa** wear **dkar mo rtse rgyal** and chant in a local Bon assembly hall - Bon skor rgyal gshen rig 'dzin sms dpai' gling.


15. Tho le dgon nram rgyal phun tshogs chos rdzong gling in 2013.

16. The assembly hall of Go ra'i mdo mtshams khang dga' ldan dben gnas yid dga' chos 'dzin gling in 2013.

17. The assembly hall of Ba kya'i grwa tshang phun tshogs dar rgyas gling in 2013.

18. **Mchod rten** in Ba kya'i grwa tshang phun tshogs dar rgyas gling.

19. Locals participating in a **sbyin sreg** ritual.

20. Both males and females attend the ritual and chant with their **dbang chas** tied around their heads.

21. Locals gather at a **ma Ni** hall to perform **sbyin bsreg**.

22. Locals perform **tshogs** at a local **ma Ni** hall.

23. Yul lha is enshrined along with images of Shan pa rwa mgo on the right and Shan pa tsi thung on the left in the local Yul lha Temple.
Shan pa tsi thung in the local Yul lha Temple.  
Shan pa rwa mgo in the local Yul lha Temple.  
Bla ma Kho tshe.  
A new painting of Sgro ri rab brtan thogs med painted after the Cultural Revolution in the Yul lha Temple.  
An old thang ga that has has been passed down for generations, survived the destruction of 1958.  
A new painting of Yul lha at the new Yul lha Temple in the resettled fifth section of Bon skor Village in 2014.  
The new Su me Lab rtse in Rgya thog Village in 2013.  
Ja bag 'brick tea' is used for drinking and gifts. Brick tea is given tobla ma, leaders, A zhang, relatives, and friends, along with kha btags as gifts.  
Ja bag 'brick tea' used for drinking and gifts in 2014. This tea was produced in Hunan Province.  
Ja bag 'brick tea' used for drinking and gifts. The package features Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese scripts.  
Tsha gsur is a burned offering made to water deities. Barley flour is placed on a fire to smolder. Drops of pure water are added.  
Bsang rtsi 'incense materials' usually consist of barley, grain, barley flour, coniferous foliage, and herbs.  
A local sngags pa makes materials for conducting a gto ritual to expel misfortunes.  
This item represents a castle. Gtor ma are placed near it to attract evils into the castle as sngags pa chant. Someone from the home where the ritual is performed takes the castle and gtor ma (collectively known as gto) to a designated site and leaves them.  
In 1987, the local township government sold a three-ton metal oil drum to the village for 700 RMB. It was used to store water while constructing the local primary school.  
Local students receive awards after a teaching program.  
Local students during a teaching program in Bon skor Village Primary School.  
Students dance after class.  
Local students.  
Local students participate in a teaching program.  
Local students take an exam during a summer teaching program.  
A local student takes an exam.
Bon skor Primary School in 2010.  
Bon skor Primary School library books.  
An irrigation ditch shared with Tsha rnga Village.  
Cropland and an irrigation ditch in 2013.  
Local cropland and an irrigation ditch in 2012.  
A reservoir for drinking and irrigation water for Bon skor and Tsha rnga villages.  
Pipes from a reservoir move water to a cistern.  
A spindle.  
Two local women weave thags from sheep wool to make fabric used for cushion covers and bags.  
Local women make thags.  
Weaving thags.  
This sbra was used in Sha rgya Village in 2014.  
A butter lamp.  
Bsang on a bsang platform.  
Bsang khri on the corner of a wall.  
A plate used to burn bsang in the past.  
House construction in 2014.  
Prayer beads.  
Pebbles used in divination.  
Handmade wood dice are used for divination.  
The back side of a sog pa.  
The front side of a sog pa.  
Sog pa bottom.  
Local houses within adobe courtyard walls in 2013.  
Mtshan are short sticks or divination chopsticks with numbers (2013).  
Gos lwa for women in a local shop in 2014.  
Tshar lwa is a cloth-covered robe with sheepskin.  
A bride wears phrug lwa over tshar lwa in 2013.  
Glo gzur. Local women hang it on the left or right side of a robe, tied with the sash as a decoration (2013).  
Glo gzur.  
A local woman wearing a glo gzur.  
Bzho bzung is hung on the front of a robe as an ornament.  
Bzho bzung - an ornament on a robe decorated with spe byur and coral.  
In this necklace, the yellow pieces, except the bottom two, are spe byur. The two yellow pieces at the bottom are called spe no. The red ones are coral.  
Rna thog 'silver earrings'.  
Ga'u. Women wear it around the neck. It hangs in front of their chest as a decoration. Some ga'u contain a protective amulet (2013).
A smaller ga'u that a local woman kept at home. Such ga'u were rare in Bon skor Village in 2016.

Skag beings 'belt' decorated with silver, coral, and turquoise.

A ra 'dogs is a round silver piece with two holes and decorated with coral. It is placed on the back of a woman's neck to hold ra mgo, the red coral-like beads, and false hair.

Ra 'dogs.

Dngul dung or dung are made of silver and are shell-shaped. Women wear such ornaments on the back of their robes.

This dmar gdan features many tiny dung in the center.

Lany+dza is the symbol on this round silver piece. Women fasten it on dmar gdan as a hair decoration.

Dung.

Ja la and ja gdan.

Byu ru 'coral' is used as a valuable, decorative ornament.

Yul lha Temple, where a Yul lha image is enshrined.

Sets of phrug for making phrug lwa.

Zhun is made of barley flour, cheese, butter, and sugar.

Two girls plait the bride's hair in 'brog mgo' 'nomad hairstyle' consisting of many long, thin plaits (2013).

Hair after braiding.

Some women select the color of rgyab dar for the bride.

The bride's female relatives dress her up.

Rgyab dar on the back of a bride.

A new bride prepares to go to the groom's home.

A local sngags pa chants g.yang 'bod during a wedding ceremony.

Some local women stand at the gate of a groom's home. They wait to sing sgo 'gyogs upon the arrival of the A zhang.

Two of the bride's relatives accompany her to the room where the A zhang sit.

Two bridesmaids from the gnyen tshang accompany the bride when she enters the room.

The bridesmaids carefully escort the bride to her tent.

Deep-fried bread of different shapes.

Go re skya phyag, baked wheat bread.

Drying gro 'wheat' after harvest.
Tshod ma 'dumplings' are often made in the local village.

Tshod ma 'dumplings'.

Two local women carry beer to a wedding ceremony.

Fruits and other food prepared for the A zhang prior to a wedding ceremony.

Fruits on a hu tse table.

Elder A zhang sitting on a hu tse. Younger men sit on the floor.

Younger A zhang sit on the floor during a wedding.

A zhang sitting at a wedding ceremony.

A wife of the groom's relative makes ja mchod 'tea offering' and gives a tea speech. She offers tea to the local Yul lha and lab rtse.

Bag ras 'bridal tent' is for a bride with two maids.

The bridesmaids take care of the bride.

A bowl wrapped with a piece of wool is provided for the bride to drink tea from.

Liquor bought from Huzhu County is poured in a bowl wrapped with a piece of sheep wool and marked with butter prior to a liquor speech. The liquor bowl is held by the orator.

A local man prepares liquor for the A zhang to drink during a wedding.

Two men from the groom's side prepare tea for the A zhang.

A man from the gnyen tshang group hospitably encourages A zhang to drink more.

Local women's hair decorations.

Some local women with wool hats during a wedding ceremony.

Local women's hair decoration — ra mgo and ja la. 

Ra mgo decorate the hair.

Ja la are hung at the end of plaited hair.

This wool or felt hat was very popular five to ten years ago. It was rare for a man to wear it in 2016. Women wear such hats at special gatherings in Bon skor.

Locals use gos made in inner China to make gos lwa.

Locals' motorcycles in 2014.

In Stong skor Village, some women prepare to sing love songs with some A zhang in the sheep enclosure, which is shielded from their relatives.

Local sngags pa annually chant bskang ba, a Buddhist recitation, at the local Yul lha Temple.

Monks chant in a family shrine.
Bon gshen chant at Gze ma'i lha khang - a Bon assembly hall in Stong che Village. Bon practitioners from Bon skor Village occasionally attend and sponsor the rituals.

Local elders turn ma Ni wheels at the local ma Ni hall.

Gtor ma are offerings or sacrificial objects - cones of rtsam pa cake colored red, symbolizing blood.

A ga'u is a container for amulet scriptures, blessed clothing, or pieces of wood.

Rdo rje 'vajra' and dril bu 'bell' that local sngags pa and monks use while chanting.

Tsha rkong are used to make clay images of deities - tsha tsha.

Nang mchod store offerings in a shrine.

Dzam lha 'Fortune Deity' in a shrine. It was placed in a water-filled copper bowl.

Clay image of the Three Lords.

Rnga 'drum' used by local monks and sngags pa.

Drum stick.

Clay image of Slob dpon pad ma 'byung gnas.

Phur bu used by sngags pa during rituals.

Smyug khrog, a case for pens.

maN Dal 'mandala' in a family shrine.

Smyug khrog, a case for pens.

Sa sku, printed images of Buddhas and Buddhist deities.

Dung phor 'copper bowls' used to offer pure water in a shrine.

Tsha tsha are made of clay, molded with tsha rkong, and may feature images of the Buddha and various other Buddhist deities.

A copper dung used at the local Yul lha Temple.

A metal platform for making fire kept by a local family for several generations.

A metal bowl kept by a local family for generations.

Mtshon srung, like ga'u, store amulets and pictures of bla ma.

Inside a mtshon srung.

Dung dkar 'white conch shell' blown when burning bsang.

A silver decorated dung dkar used in the local Yul lha Temple.

A me long is a bronze mirror used during sbyin sreg 'burning ritual'.
210  *G.yang mda'* 'fortune arrow' is used when chanting *g.yang 'bod*.
211  *G.yang mda'* 'fortune arrow' is used when chanting *g.yang 'bod*.
212  A *me long* hangs on a *g.yang mda*.
213  Back side of a *me long*.
214  Round copper objects are considered to be *me long* and hung on *g.yang mda*.
215  Coral and turquoise hung on a *g.yang mda*.
216  Tsha rkong.
217  Tsha rkong.
218  Wood block for printing *rlung rta*.
219  A Buddhist wood block.
220  Wood block used by local *sngags pa*.
221  Wood block used by local *sngags pa*.
222  Wood block used by local *sngags pa*.
223  A *rkang dung* is a human thigh-bone trumpet blown by monks and *sngags pa*.
224  Locals burn such items as boiled butter with beans and herbs during burned offering rituals in the belief that this delights the local deities, who will then ensure good health.
225  Locals burn such items as butter with beans and herbs during offering rituals, in the belief that this delights the local deities, who will then ensure good health.
226  A leather *srab* 'bridle' for a horse.
227  Yob chen 'stirrup'.
228  Sga 'saddle'.
229  Sga thag 'saddle straps'.
230  Sga yog, carpet placed under a saddle.
231  Zor ba 'sickle'.
232  Tsheb, a harvesting tool.
233  Shing khem 'wooden shovel' used to move straw.
234  Lcags khem 'shovel' used to move earth.
235  Sta re 'axe'.
236  Sta re 'axe'.
237  Sog le 'saw'.
238  Rgya ma 'scale' 'steelyard beam'.
239  Rgya rdo, weight used on a scale beam.
240  'Khrab ma 'winnowing tray'.
241  Rtsua phyags is a broom made of straw.
242  A used oil tank used to store water.
243  *G.yos this* are used to pave and smooth mud and cement on walls and the ground.
244  Dried yak and cow dung for fuel.
Wood for fuel.

Rdo ril 'threshing stone' pulled by mules, donkeys, and tractors before threshing machines were used in the village.

Mig mang nas tshags, a grain sieve.

Threshing machine in 2014.

Diesel powered tractor used in a local village.

Butter.

Stone grinder given by a Tibetan doctor to grind medicinal herbs. Later, it was used to grind barley to make rtsam pa.

A pan for baking bread.

Kitchen utensils and a wooden box to store flour.

Wooden box for rtsam pa and dried cheese, with butter and sugar.
INTRODUCTION
CONSULTANTS

A kha (b. 1934) is a local elder, a dedicated Buddhist, and a former monk. He described funeral processes.

\(^2\) Much of the information in this book is based on what my consultants told me. Certain informants' names are fictitious.
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\(^3\) This tsho ba is known for its number of leaders. The tribe's name translates as 'Leader Family'.
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Thar re rgyal (b. 1958) was the local Communist Party secretary in 2014, a position he had occupied since 2000. He provided general information on the local economy, education, and government policies.
Thin tsi (b. 1940) was the local village leader between 1986 and 1995 and the local Communist Party secretary between 1995 and 2000.
Thub bstan lhun grub (b. 1944), a local tantric practitioner originally from Sgo me Village, married a woman in Bon skor and moved into her home.
Tshogs phud (b. 1928), a local elder, spent much of his time on chanting and practicing religious rituals. He provided information about local rituals.
Tshul khrims (b. 1941), a local elder whose original name was Rdo rje thar, became a monk at the age of seven. He was then given a new name - Tshul khrims. Forced out of the monastery in 1958, he later studied at Mtsho lho Normal High School in Chab cha for one year. From 1965-1971, he was part of the Lanzhou Military Command and was sent to Yul shul (Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. While in the military, he was known as Caizhamu. In 1971, he began receiving a stipend for his military service. In 2014, he received 2,060 RMB per year from the local County Finance Bureau. The local village appointed him to be the local Yul lha⁴ Temple caretaker in 2003, a duty he continued to carry out in 2016. Tshul khrims provided information on Yul lha and various rituals.

⁴ Yul = 'place' 'designated place'; lha = 'deity'. A yul lha is understood to be male. Local laymen pray to and worship him, beseeching help in matters related to herding, farming, traveling, and wealth (Karmay 2010:250).
'Brug thar rgyal (b. 1987) is from Bon skor Village and attended the local primary school. His uncle ordered him to marry and move into his bride's home when he was ten years old, because he had no father to support him. A keen interest in local culture led him to collect many local folksongs that were later published ('Brug thar rgyal 2008).

Bod pu de (b. 1933), a local elder, married, divorced, and is now single. He provided accounts of his divorce and described the suicide of a former wife.

Don grub (b. 1981) divorced a local woman less than a year after their marriage. He then married another local woman. They divorced about two years later.

G.yang byams skyid (b. 1995) never attended school. She married in February 2013 and then herded sheep at her natal home. Though her parents did not fully approve, she and her boyfriend were in love and married.

Lha mtsho (b. 1946) is a local woman who married at the age of eighteen and never attended school. She is well known locally as a gifted singer and orator. She provided orations and told me lyrics, which I transcribed.

Pad ma skyid (b. 1982), a local woman, graduated from middle school and then married a teacher. She eloped with an unemployed man and did not have a job at the time this book was written.
BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

This study examines weddings in Bon skor Village, Bya mdo\(^5\) (Shagou) Township, Mang ra\(^6\) (Guinan) County, Mtsho lho (Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, China. I begin by introducing my consultants who provided much of the information I used. An overall introduction to village history, religion, education, economy, death, housing, language, clothing, and conflicts is given to provide a general context. Five selected wedding accounts are provided. The body of the book describes marriage norms, spouse selection process, spouse trial period, and divination for spouse selection.

Pre-wedding activities are detailed, including the groom’s side preparing clothes for the bride, choosing matchmakers, negotiation, abducting the bride, discussion of bridewealth and dowry, clothing requirement, rituals, rumors, the mother’s instruction to the bride, speeches, songs, and rituals.

The wedding ceremony includes speeches, recitations, orations, and songs. Examples of competitive songs during the wedding are provided. Summaries of speeches and English translation for songs are provided throughout the book. Childbearing and divorce are also described.

I particularly focus on local elders' experiences and narratives, songs, orations, negotiation between the bride and groom's families, the bride's clothing and ornaments, bride abduction, bridewealth and dowries, and preparation for the wedding at the homes of both the bride and groom. Inherent in this presentation is the notion of a 'normal' wedding that, in actuality, never really exists, as Thurston and Tsering Samdrup (2012) note in the context of their description

\(^{5}\) Bya = literally 'bird'; mdo = lower part of a valley or intersection. Bya mdo was historically refered to as one of the three abbreviated names of Mang 'ba' bya gsum. Shortened forms include Mang ra, 'Ba' rdzong, and Bya mdo, which are often used by local elders and in texts. Bya mdo is derived from Bya drug gzhung or Bya drug gzhongs 'Six Bird Valley', which consists of six hills that are named after six different birds: khya chen 'crested goshawk', glag 'eagle', go'u mo 'snowcock', rgod 'vulture', khyung 'garuda', and khra 'hawk'. The lower part of this valley is Bya mdo (Tshe lo 2010:497).

\(^{6}\) Mang ra County/ Mang rdzong was established in 1953. Ye shes bzang po (2001:5), Mkha’’gro skyabs (2009:12), and LA mo'i yongs 'dzin blo bzang mkhas grub rgya mtsho (1993) write that Mang ra was named after a scholar, Mang ra ba seng ge rgyal mtshan, from Dbus gtsang in the early twelfth century.
of Tibetan New Year observances in Stong skor Village that neighbors Bon skor Village:

First, studies of Tibetan weddings often attempt to recreate, or tell the story of a typical wedding, but it was difficult to find a 'typical' example in Stong skor Village. During this New Year's period, three weddings were held in Bon families, while two were within the Buddhist U Sin Clan. Two weddings featured a mag pa 'groom' marrying matrilocally while one wedding featured a horse race sponsored for villagers by the groom's family. Other weddings had no horse race. All the weddings were arranged marriages.

I describe the sequence of wedding events for an "ideal" wedding in chronological order, i.e., from the time young people find romantic partners, or are assigned a spouse by parents, to the end of the wedding ritual. Oral recitations (speeches, orations, songs) and detailed accounts of marriages by locals, often in a historical context, provide further insight into local realities. Of particular value is the detail provided for a particular oral recitation given at a certain time and location during the matchmaking and wedding processes. For all oral recitations, I also provide information as to the consultant (interviewee) who provided the information.

I began this study in January 2008, soon after finishing a two-year Associate Degree in the English Training Program (ETP), at the Chab cha (Qiabuqia) Campus of the Nationalities Teacher's College of Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Normal University. I had earlier completed a book about my childhood that, while providing an opportunity to improve my English, described local life and offered an example of what others might do with their lived experiences and the life of their respective villages (Nyangchakja 2011).

As my English improved, I noticed some of Dr. Stuart's students researching and writing about marriage, the Tibetan New Year, and other locally important cultural events. As I started researching marriage in my own village and reading published accounts of Tibetan weddings, I realized that marriage customs in my local village have special features and, sadly, that this unique culture was rapidly disappearing, a process that is only accelerating in 2016. I further realized that I could document local marriage practices as had others. In this context, this study is significant in recording examples of local marriage songs, gtam dpe 'proverbs', bshad pa 'speeches', rituals, and narratives.

During the processes of collecting data from locals, some elders were uncooperative, saying:

"You are so young! What will you do with such information?"
"Students don't need to know such thing. Learn something in
school."
"Study hard at school. Such things as traditional speeches and songs are worthless for students."

Nevertheless, I encouraged elders to describe the wedding process, to sing, and give wedding speeches. I gave them such gifts as bottles of liquor while explaining the significance of local traditional wedding custom. This was persuasive in certain cases. Some singers were reluctant to sing into a microphone. It sometimes took several days to convince them to do so. Elders often withheld speeches and proverbs thinking I would 'steal' them in order to improve my own reputation. I got the best information from relatives and family members who trusted me.

At first, I ambitiously thought that I could easily translate the proverbs and songs into English, but this soon proved challenging, requiring additional consultation and interpretation from elders.

An excellent future research project would be to study a specific marriage, detailing how the couple met, or how and why their relatives arranged for them to marry, that involved pre-wedding negotiation, and the actual details of rituals and oral recitations at the homes of both the groom and bride. Selection of spouses, matchmaking, and wedding rituals are fluid, consequently, documenting specific weddings at a certain point in time has great value.

Certain oral recitations featured in this work are available on-line in video and audio format. I have noted the relevant links in the text.

Finally, the Tibetan language materials are written as closely to the colloquial, as-delivered form as possible. However, there were times when I was puzzled as to how to render colloquial terms. Literary spelling and colloquial grammar/speech styles are not necessarily mutually exclusive, therefore, I resorted to accepted literary terms in order to more effectively communicate with more people who can read Tibetan. I estimate that five to ten percent of the language presented here has been so altered. Some younger consultants learned their speeches and songs from VCDs/DVDs, television, and books, as well as from elders consequently, the younger consultants utilize oral forms that tend to be more literary than the forms they have learned from elders.
**TERMS**

*Tsho ba* is often translated as 'tribe'. In the Bon skor context, *tsho ba* is a group of people who have had a kinship relationship, either matrilineally or patrilineally, over the past four to five generations. Some *tsho ba* in Bon skor have fifteen families/households and some have seventy to eighty.

Bon skor originally had three *tsho ba* - Bon po, A rig, and Thar shul. In 2016, there were about twenty. The Bon po *tsho ba* founded Bon skor Village. Its lineage traces mostly to Dpon tshang *tsho ba* 'Leader's Tribe'. It was the largest community *tsho ba* in 2016.

During early times, there may have been intermarriage between the three *tsho ba*. Over time, people from outside these three *tsho ba* married local *tsho ba* members, resided in the village, and families grew larger and branched into different *tsho ba*. Although the paternal or maternal side of the extended *tsho ba* was related to the original three *tsho ba*, they came to be considered new *tsho ba*.

*Tsho ba* formation occurs in various ways. Snying dkar (b. ~1700), for example, was originally from the Bon po *tsho ba* and the leader of Bon skor Village. He was known as Bon po Snying dkar and sometimes as Dpon po 'Leader'. When he was about fifteen, his father arranged for him to marry a girl from one of the other two *tsho ba* in Bon skor. In time, Snying dkar had several sons and daughters. Eventually, some married into other villages and others married into the local village. When Snying dkar became very old, he was much respected for his good leadership. People referred to his children and relatives as the people of Dpon tshang 'Leader's Family', and sometimes Snying dkar 'Kind Heart' and 'White Chest Hair'. The latter suggests he had white hair on the right side of his chest above the heart. After Snying dkar died, locals referred to his descendants interchangeably as the people of Dpon tshang and Snying dkar. In time, both of these names became the name of one *tsho ba*.

A *tsho ba*’s name may also be traced to a man’s nickname and background. For example, in the mid-nineteenth century, a farmer came to Bon skor to herd for a family and later married a woman from one of the local *tsho ba*. The bride’s father gave them a tent and some livestock. They lived separately, but near the bride’s parents' home. They later moved to the next valley to have better pasture for their growing number of livestock. They also cultivated barley and wheat. They had several children and became very independent. After their children matured, some married into other villages and some married into the local village. The father of this family was referred to

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7 Tuttle (2013) uses 'division'.
8 Bon = Bon religion; skor = encampment, groups.
9 Chinese is given in parentheses where appropriate.
as Zhing ba 'Farmer' and, when he became very old, his family was known as Zhing ba. Other villagers occasionally referred to their children's families as Zhing ba. After the father died, locals referred to his descendants as Zhing ba, which became a tsho ba. Today, Zhing ba is the name of a tsho ba that was matrilineally related to one of the three original tsho ba in Bon skor.

Another example dates to the early nineteenth century. A man from the Bon po tsho ba was well respected for his good deeds and was known as A zla, an honorific in the local dialect meaning 'Uncle' or 'Elder'. His real name was forgotten. In time, his relatives were referred to as A zla's children or relatives. A zla was well known and his relatives were immediately recognized when they mentioned their connection to A zla. Later, A zla's relatives and descendants were collectively called as A zla in the sense of a tsho ba.

A tsho ba's name may also derive from a person's appearance and identity. For example, in the late nineteenth century, a farmer from outside Bon skor married a local woman. This farmer had white hair, though he was a young man and was known as Mgo dkar 'White Head' in a teasing way. Gradually, he was referred to as Mgo dkar, which became a name for his children's families and relatives, and the name of a tsho ba.

For the sake of simplicity, I have reluctantly chosen to use the term 'village' (Chinese = cun; Tibetan = sde ba) to refer to Bon skor. 'Village' does not accurately frame the Bon skor area and administrative jurisdiction that includes a settled, farming area, deserts, and vast herding lands.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Marriage in Tibetan regions is generally monogamous, though certain areas practice polyandry (Rgyang 'khor tshe phun 2009:80). Polyandry is practiced especially in western Central Tibet (Tenzin 2008), and has attracted the attention of Western scholars (Aziz 1978, Fjeld 2007, Goldstein 1971, Levine 1988, and Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark 1963). Benjiao (2001), who was trained in the USA, has also studied polyandry.

This study focuses on monogamous marriage specifically in Bon skor Tibetan Village, where polyandry is not practiced. There are few publications in Tibetan, Chinese, and English about Tibetan marriage in east-central Mtsho sngon Province that focus on the ritual at the village level. Similarly, no studies have been done previously on the structure, process, songs, recitations, speech, proverbs, and food in the context of marriage in Bon skor Tibetan Village.

A few studies in English about Tibetan weddings deserve particular mention. Studies by Blo brtan rdo rje and Stuart (2007) and Tshe dbang rdo rje et al. (2010) describe weddings in their home places in Mtsho sngon – Skya rgya and Ne'u na villages respectively. Both provide considerable detail about oral recitations, processes, food, and other aspects of marriage and weddings. 'Brug mo skyid (2010), G.yu lha (2012), Bkra shis bzang po (2012), and Lcags byams tshe ring (2012) also provide details of original local accounts, speeches, songs, and proverbs from Tibetan villages in Mtsho sngon, Sichuan, and Gansu provinces. These focused studies provide valuable insight into marriage in the context of rural Tibetan life.

In contrast, there is a large corpus of materials dealing with the same topic in Tibetan and Chinese languages. Unfortunately, these studies are generalized, mixing details and general statements based on what may or may not take place at Tibetan marriages in many villages, ignoring the details of wedding rituals that may vary significantly from one village to another. Furthermore, processes, speeches, and customs as expressed in wedding ceremonies show many differences between pastoral and agricultural villages within one county or even township.

Various Tibetan handwritten wedding orations from across Amdo have been presented by Bka' ma mkha' 'bum and Tshe rgyal (2012), who collected examples from Rkang tsha (Gangca) County, Mtsho byang (Haibei) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture; Gcan tsha

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10 One of three Tibetan regions that encompasses much of Mtsho sngon and Gansu provinces.
(Jianzha) County, Rma lho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture; and Gro tshang (Ledu) County, Mtsho shar (Haidong) District. Rta lo thar (2012:124) collected wedding orations from farming villages of Mang ra County. Tshe dbang rdo rje et al. (2010:110) provide wedding orations from Ne'u na Village, Khri ka County. Zon thar 'bum and Yan tson khrims (2010:12-108) collected wedding orations from about fifteen counties in Mtsho sngon Province. Bskal bzang blo gsal (2005) collected orations across Kan lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. However, with the exception of Tshe dbang rdo rje et al. (2010:110), none of the above collections provide dates, specific locations, nor information related to audio recordings and orators.
PART ONE

THE CONTEXT
VILLAGE LOCATION

Bon skor is an agro-pastoral village in Bya mdo Township, Mang ra County, Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province. Bya mdo Township\(^{11}\) has fourteen Tibetan villages\(^{12}\) and one Han village.\(^{13}\) The Bon skor Village farming area is situated at a latitude of 35°53'10.71"N and a longitude of 100°51'49.42"E. It is approximately eight kilometers north of Bya mdo Township Town and 112 kilometers south of Mang ra County Town, in southeastern Mtsho lho. The prefecture capital is 160 kilometers away and Zi ling (Xining) City, the capital of Mtsho sngon, is 202 kilometers away.

Bon skor Village consists of a farming section and a herding section. The farming area is located in a flat-bottomed valley, bordering Chos tsha Village in the southeast; Tsha rnga\(^{14}\) Village in the east; Go rai mdo, Sde mang, Ra rdza, Gur lhas, Grog ra, Dgon thang, Gdong ring, and Rdo ra villages to the northeast; and Stong skor Village to the south. The Yellow River is northwest of Bon skor Village.

Bon skor Village cultivates 7,900 \textit{mu}\(^{15}\) of non-irrigated farmland and 1,860 \textit{mu} of irrigated farmland. To the southwest and north are 415,000 \textit{mu} of pastureland.\(^{16}\) In addition, there are 2,500 \textit{mu} of forest. Desert and eroded areas are excluded from the total land area.

Part of the local village farming area has been eroded by flooding. A construction project was implemented by the local government to reduce erosion and flood, but the construction site was flooded in July 2001. In early 2015, the government provided 37.29 million RMB to construct a new concrete flood water canal to limit erosion. A large part of the herding area is increasingly encroached on by an expanding desert. Main factors for increased

\(^{11}\) According to the Guinan Compilation Committee (1996:45), Bya mdo Township was first established as a \textit{gongshe} 'commune' in 1958, administering Bon skor and Rab 'og villages. It became a \textit{xiang} 'township' in 1965.

\(^{12}\) The Tibetan villages are Ba lang gad pa, Bser thang, Bon skor, Dgon thang, Go rai mdo, Gur lhas, Glegs shing, Grog ra, Gdong ring, and Rdo ra villages to the northeast; and Stong skor Village to the south. The Yellow River is northwest of Bon skor Village.

\(^{13}\) The Han village is Tsha rnga (Chana). About ten Tibetan families reside in this village and speak Tibetan and the Mtsho sngon Chinese dialect.

\(^{14}\) 'Tshal rnga' is an alternative spelling.

\(^{15}\) One \textit{mu} = 0.067 hectares.

\(^{16}\) These pastures include Mu ge thang, ShAng shur, Rgya nur, Khun 'dus, 'Gyam ring, Ha ra, Mo mgo tho log, Gru bzhi, Bzhugs khri, Thur rgan, Ha bzhug ske, Er rgod, 'Ur khyog, and Mo hor.
desertification include climate factors (high wind velocity and an increase in annual temperature, combined with low precipitation and high evaporation) as well as unsustainable human activities and inappropriate policy measures (Yan et al. 2009:112).

MAP 1. Bon skor Village

17 Locations of Bon skor Village, desert, and Yellow River (Jin et al. 1989). Changes were made to the original map in naming. Bon skor area is indicated by 'B'.

-54-
1 = Chab cha (Gonghe) County; 2 = 'Ba' rdzong (Tongde) County; 3 = Khri kha (Guide) County; 4 = Brag dkar (Xinghai) County; 5 = Mang ra (Guinan) County.  

MAP 3

POPULATION

In 2011, Mang ra County’s population was 77,230 of which about seventeen percent were Han (Yang 2012:2). In 2016, Bon skor Village had the largest population with 2,135 residents (508 households) of the fifteen villages in Bya mdo Township. In 2000, locals owned 57,000 head of livestock, which were mainly sheep, goats, and cattle.

According to Gsang sgrog, some families each owned 400-500 sheep and goats prior to 1958. Locals herded all the sheep and goats together on communal land. There were few conflicts between families. A policy implemented in 2000 (Dong et al. 2010:46) led to the grassland being divided among households based on the number of family members and livestock. Many families struggled to survive because the grassland allocated per family was too limited to generate adequate income. Locals then needed more livestock as basic living expenses continued to increase. Many families sold livestock due to a shortage of grass, rented or sold their pastureland to other families, and eventually moved to the local farming area. Others moved to local towns. Some locals believe that living in towns conveys high social status, while others denigrate them as their children lose fluency in Tibetan, are deeply influenced by Han language and culture, and know little about their own culture.

Grassland division directly contributed to the number of herding households decreasing by about fifty percent in 2016 compared to the year 2000. However, the number of livestock increased because herding households bought more livestock and leased grassland from other villages. In 2014, in order to protect the grassland, the government annually provided 10.38 RMB per mu of grassland to local herders. Four people in Bon skor Village each received 8,000 RMB a year to look after the grassland and control the number of livestock. In 2013, the local government provided new metal fences and posts valued at about 3.7 million RMB in the Bon skor herding area. Similar projects were implemented in neighboring herding villages. This project also aimed to protect 50,000 mu of fenced grassland, where the local government forbids livestock to graze. However, locals occasionally herded inside fenced pastures. The four locals hired to look after the grassland were unconcerned and reported to the local government the numbers of local livestock and grassland status expected by local officials, despite the significant increase in the actual number of local livestock.
Photo 24. Desert grows in Mu ge thang, part of a Bon skor herding area.

Photo 25. Local pasture divided among local families and fenced.
Photo 26. Two households are sandwiched between deserts in the village herding area. Locals say there was no such desert in this area in about 1990.

Photo 27. Desert and the Yellow River in the local herding area.
Photo 28. Soil erosion adjacent to the farming area. Flooding erodes an area of about eighty meters wide and two to fifteen meters deep annually.

CAMELS

In 2015, Bon skor was the only local village in Mang ra County that had camels. Locals were reluctant to sell them because they were considered important and special. A few locals sold their camels to local Hui 'Chinese Muslims' in nearby towns. Sometimes, buyers came to local villages to buy camels. Locals historically transported materials with camels, which can carry four or five times more than a horse. Most camels had two humps. As recently as the 1940s, some locals used camels for transporting materials to and from Lhasa.

Camels eat salt, grass, bushes, and willow tree bark and branches. Consultants said the camel's gestation period is a year. A camel lives around thirty years. Locals historically used camel hair to stuff quilts and some sold the hair to Muslims and Han. Camel mane hair and leather were used to make ropes. Locals milked camels to make milk tea and did not kill them. An exception was in the early 1960s during a time of famine.

Bun khreng (1950-2011) said some camel equipment had Mongolian names:

- saddle = cu su
- carpet under saddle = khu lu su

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20 Locals consider camels special because they can carry over 250 kilograms and can go without food and water for many days. Gsang sgrog said that a camel represents the twelve animals of a year because its neck resembles that of a dragon, eyes those of a bird, nostrils those of a mouse, mouth that of a rabbit, tail that of a pig, hips those of an ox, nose that of a horse, the part of its head from the chin to the forehead resembles a sheep's, its teeth resembles a tiger's, its face that of a monkey, feet those of a dog, and its body resembles a snake's. Other locals provide variations, e.g., some say the camel's neck resembles a snake.
- two two-meter long sticks placed on the sides of a camel's humps = *sha tho*
- hoof = *tha 'og*
- hump = *nog*
- carpet between the humps = *'e bug*
- nostrils = *ha mar*
- head = *cog ldan*

Some Mongolian commands were used:
- to sit = *tshugs*
- to get up/ go = *he gu kyo*
- to catch the camel = *ke su*

There were 200-300 camels before 1958 and twenty to thirty camels on village pastures in 1994. However, there were only five camels (four females and one old male) in Bon skor Village in 2012. The male camel died in 2013. The camel number declined because of infrequent breeding caused by fencing that isolated the camels.

Photo 29. Camels can carry more than yaks, donkeys, and horses, and were historically used to transport daily use household items.
Photo 30. Camels kept in herding areas and used to transport items in the mountains.
Photo 31. A couple from the Bon skor herding area prepares to use this camel to fetch water. Locals use old inner tubes as water containers, which can easily be put on a camel's back. Donkeys are also used for this purpose.

Photo 32. Two local women with their camels in 2010.
HISTORY

Lha sgron and Gsang sgrog were both present when telling this narrative.21 While one person was doing most of the talking, the other supplemented the narrative when they felt something was missing.

About 700 years ago, a woman from Sgrom Village in Khri ka22 married a man in Tsha nag Village23 and later had seven sons. The youngest was called Bon po rtse bo. His parents sent him to Stongche Village,24 where he learned Spyi ‘dul and Dbal gsas,25 two Bon recitations practitioners chant in local homes.

In time he fell in love with the wife of a man of the Dpon tshang Tribe in Smad pa’i gshung pa Village.26 Bon po rtse bo and this woman fled to Blue Lake27 where the area was controlled by Bang A ma, a Mongol king. This area had the Sog po mda’ tshan bdun, or Seven Groups of Mongolians and Seven Kings. Bon skor Village was part of this area.

Two of King Bang A ma’s sons died when they reached the age of three. Another of his sons was ill. When the king asked a fortuneteller for advice, the fortuneteller said, "There are probably two people from the east near us. One is probably an exorcist. You should try to meet these two people as soon as possible; otherwise, no one can solve this problem."

The king ordered his ministers to look for two such people. A day later, Bon po rtse bo and his wife were in the area controlled by the king. The ministers saw Bon po rtse bo, realized he was an exorcist from the red cloth wrapped around his head, and then reported what they had seen to the king.

The king told the ministers to find out where Bon po rtse bo

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21 An abridged version of Nyangchakja (2011:5-10).
22 Khri ka County is located in Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Sgrom villagers contend that they were originally from the ‘Brom Lineage from Dbus gtsang more than a thousand years ago, and were sent to Khri ka as soldiers (Khri skal bzang brtson ’grus 2012:35).
23 Tsha nag (Chanahai) Village is located in Mgo mang (Guomaying) Township, Mang ra County, about fifty kilometers northeast of Bon skor Village.
24 This village in Khri ka County had many Bon followers in 2016.
25 Gsang sgrog told me that the equivalent Buddhist mantras are Rta mgrin and Seng gdong, which are also names of deities. Dbal gsas refers to Dbal gsas rnam pa, an alternative name for Che mchog he ru ka.
26 In Khri ka County.
27 Mtsho sngon po, Koknor, Kokonor, Qinghai Lake.
was from. Bon portse bo and his wife, when questioned, said they were from the east. The ministers pressed them for further details and asked Bon portse bo what religious knowledge he had.

He replied that he knew nothing.

The ministers thought that he knew something and encouraged him to tell more. They said that the king's son was ill, and asked him if he could cure him.

Bon portse bo said that he only knew Spyi 'dul and Dbal gsas. The ministers did not know what these were. When they reported to the king, he explained Spyi 'dul and Dbal gsas were religious recitations and told the ministers to bring the couple to his home.

The ministers returned to Bon portse bo and his wife and told them that they had to go to the king's place.

Bon portse bo answered that he knew nothing and could not solve the problem. As the king had ordered the ministers to bring Bon portse bo to his home they encouraged him to go. However, he didn't go. Instead, he gave three beads from his string of sandalwood prayer beads to the ministers and told them to put them in water, boil the water, and have the son drink it. If the fever abated a little at midnight they should return the next day and then he would go. Otherwise, he would not.

The son's fever broke at midnight. Early the next morning, the king himself came to see Bon portse bo and his wife and invited them to his home. They then went to the king's home, where Bon portse bo chanted the two mantras for seven days. The son recovered.

In appreciation for saving his son's life, the king asked Bon portse bo what he needed and offered him half of his land and power. Bon portse bo answered that he only needed a place to plant barley.

The king told him he would give him the best land available.

Bon portse bo went looking for good land and went first to Stong skor (Huangyuan),28 where he predicted that many Han Chinese would come and integrate with locals. He stayed in Ba yan thang,29 unhappily thinking about what he had predicted. He then selected another place called Rgod ma'i thang,30 which is now submerged in Tshal rnga Reservoir.31

28 Stong skor County was a subdivision of Zi ling City in 2016. The county town is about forty kilometers from the center of Zi ling City.
29 Ba yan thang is in Dpal kha Township, Brag dkar (Xinghai) County, Mtsho lho Prefecture.
30 Rgod ma'i thang = 'mare's place'. It is located near Tsha rnga, sixty-five kilometers from Chab cha County Town, Mtso lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and 147 kilometers from Zi ling City.
31 Locals call it Tsha rnga and Lung yangs 'Spacious Valley' Reservoir. The Chinese 'Longyang Xia', literally means 'Longyang Gorge', and derives from
To confirm Bon po rtse bo's ownership of the land, the king cut a piece of wood into two pieces, colored them at the cut edges, and gave one to Bon po rtse bo as proof.

Bon po rtse bo planted barley there and, for several years, stayed with the woman he had eloped with. He then told the king that he wanted to move. The king agreed, so Bon po rtse bo chose a place called Bon po'i zhing kha, Bon skor's former location, which is now submerged under the dammed water of the Yellow River.

Photo 33. The Yellow River near the Bon skor herding area.

Photo 34. Chinese fishermen seen from the local herding area.

the Tibetan lung yangs. In 1985, in order to balance water distribution within the watershed and generate electric power, Longyangxia Reservoir was completed along the Yellow River's main channel (Xu and Cheng 2002:365). Construction began in February 1976. The sluice gate was completed in 1986 and local villages were resettled in 1986 (Guinan Compilation Committee 1996). Another source states that the first hydropower generator was installed in September 1987. The project was completed in 1989 (http://www.gov.cn/lssdj/ht/content_401968.htm, accessed 21 February 2015).
Photo 35. Locals drive sheep to the Yellow River for water.
Photo 36. The Yellow River near the local herding area.

Photo 37. The Yellow River near the local herding area.
Later, Bon po rtse bo had three sons and two neighbors. The two neighbors belonged to the Thar shul and A rig tribes. These two tribes were given to Bon po rtse bo by the Mongol king. As the members in each family increased, Bon po rtse bo's family was called the Bon po Tribe.

One day, Bon po rtse bo went to locate a site to build a lab rtse. He put a coin underground on top of a hill that had two smaller, nearby hills. Later, he told his two sons to choose a place to build a lab rtse without mentioning the location he had chosen. The two sons chose the two small hills near the taller hill, and then the three went together to choose again. Bon po rtse bo said, "If we select the small hill behind the taller one, our place will be controlled by others in the future. If we choose the small hill in front of the taller one, our future generations won't be prosperous."

The tallest hill – the one he had already chosen – was the best place to build a lab rtse because it would ensure a wealthy, secure future for locals. They then built the lab rtse overlooking the local village and facing Glang chen Mountain in the distance. The mountain, Khyung gzar sgang, in front of the lab rtse was located across a valley. Bon po rtse bo foretold that the local village would not have incarnation bla ma, since Mount De'u mgo gser zhwa, which was near the lab rtse, resembled a bla ma removing his hat. However,

32 lab rtse 'mountain deity altar' 'cairn', I give a description that I provided earlier (Nyangchakja 2011:8) with some editing:

Locals consider lab rtse to be a sacred place of worship. Lab rtse are located on mountain peaks, at the mid-part of mountains, and at the feet of mountains. Rmu thag (rope made from white sheep wool that joins humans and Heaven and protects local villagers' livestock) and kha btags (auspicious silk scarves strip of silk embodying purity and good fortune given to guests, religious personages, and others to show respect) are placed on the site. Very large, handmade wood arrows with fletching are placed in the center of the lab rtse. In addition, gold and silver-colored spears, knives, ho dung (wooden stickes that are considered to be auspicious and put on lab rtse to construct the lab rtse), gems, grain (barley, rice, and beans), and sutra streamers are placed on the site. Lab rtse are believed to maintain a village and tribe's security and prosperity and are visited on the eleventh day of the fourth lunar month (construction date) and on the nineteenth day of the seventh lunar month (completion date of construction) for relatively large scale rituals. A sheep was sacrificed on the lab rtse construction day, which became a tradition each time locals held the ritual annually on the nineteenth day of the fourth lunar month. In 2016, the sacrifice of a sheep was no longer made.

33 Bla ma = teacher, master.
‘Jam dbyangs ’phrin las rgya mtsho was recognized as the third reincarnation bla ma of Yu gur 34 in Bon skor Village on 25 August 2011.

Photo 38. Locals celebrate at Sgro ri lab rtse in 2014.

34 Yi sgar and Yil ger are alternative spellings.
Photo 39. Bon skor Village lab rtse – Sgro ri rab brtan thogs med.

Photo 40. Ho dung are wooden sticks that are considered auspicious and put on lab rtse.
Photo 41. Arrows on the local *lab rtse.*
There might have been seven families there at that time since seven white clay pots were later found inside the lab rtse, where rituals are held twice annually. Most Bon skor residents believe that they are the descendants of Bon po rtse bo.

The Thar shul, A rig, and Bon po tribes were the largest and most important Bon skor tribes. Snying dkar of the Bon po Tribe was appointed as the local leader by Bon po rtse bo. Later, his name became a tribe's name and all the leaders were appointed from his descendants. Families of these descendants are called dpon tshang. Over time, outsiders came and the number of extended families and population increased from the three original tribes. Today the village has a total of about twenty tribes.35

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35 Bon po, A rig, Thar shul, Snying dkar, Sma ra, Gur, Gur rgan gur gzhis, Gur che, Nyag ka, A zla, Shing skor, A khu, Bu bsdu, Zhing ba, Rgya phyug, Ra kho, Mgo dkar, Skya shing, and Sdong ra.
Before 1958, locals invited *bon gshen* and *Bon po'i dpon* every year from Stong che bon mang in Khri ka to chant. At that time, a village leader, Dpon po rgya ldang, established good relations between Bon skor and Stong che. There was also a Bon specialist group in the local village. After 1958, the yearly chanting ended and the number of specialists in the local village dramatically decreased. In 2016, about ten Bon specialists chanted and performed traditional rituals.

The Mongol king, Bang A ma, was from one of the seven Mongol groups at Blue Lake. He brought many Mongols to Bon Skor. All these groups left after staying for about seven years. None married local people. Why they left is unknown. Evidence of a Mongol presence is obvious from the Mongol names given to local hills, valleys and landscape features, names such as Khu khu cim, Ha ra, ShAng shur, Har ha nag thes, Thu zhug ge, Ba han da ba, Chu hor, ShA+or wo, Khun 'dus, Er rgod, Mo hor, and Rgya nur.

Photo. 43. Part of a clay pot, found by a local herdsman in the Bon skor herding area.

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36 *Bon gshen* 'Bon practitioner' or 'Bon monk'. Gshen is the clan name of Gshen rab mi bo chen, the founder of G.yung drung Bon.
37 Bon po tantric practitioners are locally called *dpon* as individuals and Bon mang as a group. Stong che bon mang of Khri ka is the second largest Bon mang in the Koknor area (Tsering Thar 2008:534, 546).
38 See Nyangchakja (2011) for a discussion of local Mongol place names.
A few Bon skor elders believe that they are Mongols and, as proof, mention local Mongol place names. They claim that the village historically had many camels and *gur*, and mention that some elders can say some numbers in Mongolian. They think Mongols stayed in the local area centuries ago and that some of them married Bon skor residents. Some locals believe that their ancestors included both Tibetan and Mongols. However, most locals think they are Tibetan, citing ancestors’ accounts that Bon skor residents descended from Bon po rtse bo, who was Tibetan and did not have a Mongol wife. Today, Bon skor residents speak Tibetan. Only a very few elders can say a few numbers, the names of some items related to camels, and place names in Mongol. Certain people from a few neighboring villages call Bon skor residents 'Mongols' during disputes to disparage them. Many Bon skor residents think such titles are denigrating because locals (Lha sgron, Gsang sgrog, Thin tsi) think of themselves as 'pure' Tibetans.

Many locals believe that the Mongol king gave locals a salt source – Lbo yi tshwa mtsho 'Salt Lake', located about 155 kilometers southwest of Blue Lake, and about 250 kilometers from the local village. Locals transported salt by horses and camels until the early 1900s.

Rdo rje 'bum (b. 1980), a local villager who had been to Lbo yi tshwa mtsho, talked to elders who had been there and shared his memories (Wenchangjia with CK Stuart 2014:114):

Many decades ago, many Tibetan tribes in Amdo had their own *tshwa sgo* 'salt station' around Lbu yi tshwa mtsho Lake. Religious rituals such as burning *bsang*,1 fllicking lake water into the sky, and so on, were done to venerate this lake, which was believed to be a lake

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1 Today, the township nearest the lake is Tshwa kha 'Salt Source'. The Chinese 'Chaka' is derived from the Tibetan. It is administered by Dbus lam/Lbo lam (Wulan) County, Mtsho nub (Haixi) Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Alternative names for the lake include Dbus tshwa mtsho dkar mo, Lbo yi tshwa mtsho, and Lbu yi tshwa mtsho.

40 *Bsang* is an important offering to divine spirits. Historically, *bsang* represents purifying defilement in the human world and inviting deities. *Bsang* usually consists of juniper leaves, barley, wheat, beans, small rhododendron bush flowers, and other medicinal shrubs that are burned with a bit of liquor. Some *bsang* include such things as yogurt, milk, sweets, fruits, barley flour, blossoms, and incense with tea and liquor (Mkhar rtse rgyal 2009:128). Chab spel tshe brtan phun tshogs (1993:822) contends that *bsang* was mentioned in Bon texts prior to the time of the first Tibetan King. *Bsang* originates from the verb *bsang ba* 'purify'. *Bsang ba* and *sang pa* 'awaken' are etymologically connected. *Bsang ba* derives from a ritual related to fire, rather than a ritual related to smell and taste (Samten Karmay 2010:254).
where 1,000 goddesses lived. Such ritual was thought to delight the goddesses, who would then give more salt.

Each time water wells were ready for the salt to be extracted, bubbles appeared on the surface. The lake was then praised to also please the goddesses. The praise was an offering to the deities. However, today machines collect the salt.

The Mongols occupied Tibetan areas in Mtscho sngon in 1227, 1510, 1559, and 1639 (Rin chen nor bu 2004:22). In the late sixteenth century, the third Dalai Lama sent his representative, LA mo tshogs gnyis rgya mtsho, to Mtscho sngon as requested by A than rgyal bo 'Altan Khan', a Mongol king, who occupied eastern Mtscho sngon and the Kokonor region (LA mo'i yongs 'dzin blo bzang mkhas grub rgya mtsho 1993:251). This representative was a bla ma and his reincarnations are best known as Zhabs drung dkar po, who helped prevent conflicts between Mongols and Tibetans. Before 1958, Tibetan villages, including Bon skor, had occasional land disputes with Zhabs drung dkar po. According to locals, in the late 1800s, Zhabs drung dkar po also visited Bon skor and held religious rituals. Evidence for the history of a Zhabs drung dkar po connection with Bon skor Village is provided by a local herding area known as Bzhugs khri 'throne', which locals refer to as a place where Zhabs drung dkar po once stayed. Further histories related to Bon skor, Mang ra, and the Mongols are addressed by Bla ko 'jigs med 'phrin las rgya mtsho (1987), Blo bzang bstan pa rgya mtsho and dge 'dun dar rgyas (1994), Bya gzhung blo bzang (2006), Dkon mchog skyabs (2009), Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (1982), Kang Furong (1968:59), LA mo'i yongs 'dzin blo bzang mkhas grub rgya mtsho (1993), Mkha' 'gro skyabs (2009), Rin chen nor bu (2004), Sum pa ye shes dpal 'byor (1982), and Ye shes bzang po (2001). Locals believe that eighteen to twenty generations have inhabited Bon skor Village from the time of Bon po rtse bo to the present day. The local village is called Bon skor 'Bon encampment' and the presence of many local Bon adherents is used as evidence by locals to assert that they are Bon po rtse bo's descendants. Other locals claim that Bon skor residents historically practiced both Bon and Buddhism, still others believe their ancestors practiced only Bon. In 2015, Bon and Buddhist scriptures more than 200 years old were kept in some households. These scriptures were buried by locals during the time of great social chaos and thus survived.

41 Also known as LA mo tsa kan no mon han and Zhabs drung dkar po. A reincarnated bla ma, the ninth incarnation lived in Thar shul Monastery in Mang ra County in 2015.
The Year 1958

The year 1958 saw the start of a period of social chaos in Bon skor Village and surrounding villages. In 2016, local elders still had vivid memories of beloved ones who lost their lives during this period. Lha mtsho recalled:

Early in 1958, Chinese local officials collected all the rifles from the local village. Local herdsmen used these rifles to hunt and protect livestock from wolves. After a couple of months, disputes between militiamen and locals erupted. Locals escaped to the Kye phur Mountains. Soldiers followed and arrested rich people and the leader of Bon skor Village. Many men, women, and children lost their lives during this time. I recall the sounds of guns firing and a couple of airplanes flying back and forth in the sky. We were terrified. Many of our relatives were shot dead right beside us. Luckily, many of us survived by hiding or by fleeing to other mountains.

Fighting went on for two months or so. Many locals were arrested after we returned to the Bon skor Village farming area. Relatives of the rich and dpon po had to wear paper hats, which meant they were guilty of being related to the rich and leaders. The government often made a case that chaos happened because of rich people and dpon po. Anyway, locals were also influenced by such propaganda and consequently hated rich people and former leaders.

Later, some imprisoned locals were released while some died in prison. Most people were wrongly arrested. The government apologized to these people in September 1981.

According to the Guinan Compilation Committee (1996:19):

From 17 June to 20 August 1958, over 7,587 people in Mang ra rebelled against the government. The local army cracked down by executing seventy-one people and injuring, forcing the surrender of, and arresting 1,616 others. Additionally, seventy-two officials lost their lives, including a Mang ra County leader. In this process, local officials also made ‘aggravating’ mistakes. Apologies were offered in late 1958 for the killing of eighty-six innocent people, whose reputations were restored and subsidies were given to their surviving relatives. Over 780 people who were falsely arrested and sentenced for committing crimes were rechecked and their cases corrected.

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42 Kye phur refers to a mountain range between Mang ra and Brag dkar counties, Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.
From late 1958 to late 1962 (or early 1963), the famine in China also affected Bon skor Village. Lha mtsho described her experience:

There was nothing to eat starting in 1960. It was the same everywhere. There was no *rtsam pa*\(^{43}\) or other food. Most of our community members, including me, ate roasted edible wild plant seeds mixed with wheat husks and water. We ate it like *rtsam pa*, but of course there was no butter or cheese. It was very spicy and hard to eat. I did not eat it often and could endure hunger for a couple of days without eating anything. Locals were not allowed to have adequate portions of food nor could we cook at home. If someone saw a family with adequate food, they immediately reported it to local authorities. Rule breakers were punished, forfeiting everything their family still owned. Anyway, my mother got a bag of flour from somewhere and buried it in a pile of sheep dung by the stove. My family secretly made tiny pieces of bread and soup with bits of noodles at home once every couple of days. Most other villagers went to a communal canteen for food, but none of my family members were allowed to do so because we were descendants of the Leader's Tribe. After 1958, we and 'rich' families were considered criminals. Many starved to death. I personally saw more than ten people starve to death. Families with no men or strong young men were subject to starvation and death. Families with men ultimately survived. Men secretly hunted and stole livestock. Some ate the flesh of dead camels, while others stole and killed camels to eat. Once some people who stole a camel were later discovered by the Village Committee and beaten. Some ate dead *rkyang* 'wild ass', and some ate donkey meat, cats, and birds. I only ate camel and wild ass meat when the bag of flour at my home was empty.

During the Cultural Revolution, religious sites were destroyed and the rhythm of mantra chanting paused. Lha mtsho said:

From 1966 to 1976, descendants of leaders and rich families were assigned extra labor and were subjected to criticism.

Before that, just after 1958, several of my uncles were imprisoned. I had to wear a paper hat signifying that I was guilty of

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\(^{43}\) Hot tea is poured into a bowl. Butter is added. When it melts, roasted barley flour, dried cheese, and (depending on personal preference) sugar is added. This mixture is mixed and then eaten once it is the texture of stiff cookie dough.
crimes. Those considered guilty because of the 1958 chaos were made to stand the whole day in the fields while wearing a white paper hat. Uncle Mgo ne rgyal, who had some sort of leader's position at the county level, was the only person from the Leader's Tribe who was considered innocent. Village Committee officials frequently organized locals to shout such slogans as 'Defeat Deities and Demons!' and 'Defeat the Four Kinds of Bad People'.

I don't know who organized it, but during this time the local Yul lha Temple and lab rtse were burnt to the ground. Spies among locals reported to the local government. Nobody was allowed to practice any form of religious activity, including chanting and worshipping. Engaging in any form of religious activity was punishable by extra labor and beatings.

**COLLECTIVIZATION AND DECOLLECTIVIZATION**

From 1958, locals' farmland and livestock were confiscated by the state. Meanwhile, policies such as Unified Purchase and Sale were implemented across the country. A collective property movement was also applied in Bon skor Village. Locals could not own a single sheep or piece of farmland. Instead, the state created nine shengchandui 'Production Teams' in Bon skor Village that also included Bde mang and Mo dbal villages. Bon skor Village was later separated from the other two villages and four teams were formed. The village was popularly referred to as dadui 'Big Team', which also refers to the village committee.

According to locals, the state collected wheat from Bon skor Village from 1958 to 1983. The Village Committee controlled cropland and livestock. Local residents plowed, sowed, grew, and harvested crops. Production Team and Village Committee heads strictly monitored farming work. Heads of Bya mdo Gongshe 'commune' also regularly visited to check agricultural activities. A certain amount of the harvest given to the state was called liangshui 'grain tax'. Remaining wheat was stored in Tshal rnga Monastery. Monasteries were used as storage sites. Some wheat was distributed to locals based on gongfen 'work points' in a household. Children, elders, and the disabled did not receive this portion. Those who were able to work supported their families. The government transported most locally produced wheat outside the local area.

Several herdsmen collectively herded the local livestock, which were all owned by the state. Some herdsmen were the only ones to receive portions of meat.

44 Starting in 1953, a policy of unified purchase and unified sales, especially for agricultural production, temporarily solved China's food shortage crisis (Cheng 2006:207).
In 1983, the Baochan Daohu "contracting responsibility to the household" policy was implemented in the local village. It had been applied nationwide in the late 1970s prior to the central government's formal recognition in early 1983 (Larson 1998:839). Bon skor residents dismantled the communal farming system and gained individual control over local farmland and livestock. Locals then cultivated their own farmland and grew what they wanted.

After the early 1980s, tax included:

- **Bzo zhing** 'agro-industrial' tax: Out of a hundred sheep and goats per household, seven to eight sheep were required by the state as livestock taxes. The Village Committee collected these livestock and gave them to the local township and county government. This tax was abolished in the late 1990s.
- Sheep wool and goat hair had to be sold to the local township government for three to five RMB per jin\(^{45}\) (goat wool) and 1.50–2.0 RMB per jin (sheep wool).
- **Nang btsong** 'internal business': Five to six sheep per household were required annually by the local township government to support the township officials. This tax ended in about 2003.
- **Khyim lug** 'household sheep': One sheep from each household was annually given to the Village Committee, who butchered the sheep and cooked the meat for leaders to consume when they visited the village. This tax ended in the late 1990s.
- Cash tax: Cash was collected from each household by the Village Committee to cover their expenses. It ended in the early 2000s.
- Cash tax for livestock. Each head of livestock was taxed annually at about 3.50 RMB between 2001–2005.
- Wool tax: A certain amount of wool was taxed per household by the local government. This tax ended in the early 2000s.
- Water tax: Irrigation water taxes were collected based on field size. In 2014, 16.70 RMB per mu for cropland per year was charged and 12.70 RMB per mu for field land planted to bushes was charged. Taxes were also applied to drinking water.

According to locals, in the 1990s, the local township government annually sold a certain amount of wheat at a reduced price. Many Bon skor residents purchased such wheat from the local government liangzhan 'grain distribution station', supplementing local wheat supplies.

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\(^{45}\) 1 jin = 500 grams.
Photo 44. Bon and Buddhist scriptures that survived the Cultural Revolution.

Photo 45. A Bon scripture.
LEADERSHIP

Before 1958, locals were governed by a system of dpon rgyud 'hereditary leadership'. A leader's eldest or most capable son was appointed leader without much villager involvement. According to locals, this system had continued since the time of Bon po rtse bo. In 1958, former local leaders and wealthy people were arrested and the Communist Party system replaced traditional leadership in Bon skor Village.

From 1957 to early 1958, Bon skor Village was named Bon skor Township (xiang) and administered under Bya stod chu. Gsor rgyal, a local villager, was the Party secretary of this township. Gcod pa, a local villager, was appointed the first xiangzhang 'township head' for a year. He died in about 1959. The second head was 'Gyu bha, who was killed in 1958. The third head was Mgo ne rgyal.

After 1958, Bon skor Village was named Bon skor Dadui under the administration of Shagou Gongshe, which later became Shagou Township.

Gsang sgrog provided the following names of leaders for each of the Production Teams in Bon skor Dadui in the early 1960s.

Table 1. Production Team Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Number</th>
<th>Name of Leader</th>
<th>Number of Years in Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>'Bum me'</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Dpa'bzang</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Mgon rgya</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Gsang sgrog</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two dadui duizhang 'Committee Team Leaders' were Mchog bha (b. 1941) and Thin tsi (b. 1940).

From 1958 to the late 1960s, the local government arranged leaders from other villages to manage Bon skor, except two in the 1970s. Gsang sgrog remembers the following village shuji 'secretaries' into the early 1970s.

Table 2. Bon skor Village Party Secretaries (1958-1970s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Communist Party Secretaries</th>
<th>Secretary's Home Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gdugs bha</td>
<td>Sprel nag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bkra kho</td>
<td>Grog ra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phag mo don 'grub</td>
<td>Ko ra’i mdo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bun khreng</td>
<td>Mo dbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mkhar lo</td>
<td>Bon skor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bsod kho</td>
<td>Bon skor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the late 1950s into the early 1960s, the village financial accountant was a Han man surnamed Wang from Tsha rnga Village. 'Brug 'bum rgyal (1946-2012), a local man, also held the position of financial accountant.

In the early 1960s, the dadui was equivalent to the Village Committee. A couple of locals were appointed as 'dadui zhuren' Team Director. The dadui was later replaced with geweihui 'Revolutionary Committee'. Committee directors were appointed by the government. These titles changed in the early 1970s when a formal Party committee was established in the village. At the same time, one local was selected to take the position of local village Party secretary. The local township government officially appointed the local village Party secretary and the village head.

From 1972 to 2014, Bon skor had four committee secretaries and five village heads. As of 2012, the longest held position was twenty-two years and the shortest was three years. In 2014, the Party secretary (b. 1958) and village head (b. 1967) had held their positions for fourteen years and ten years, respectively. Neither leader had attended school. These two leaders finished their terms in December 2014 and new leaders were appointed.

From the early 1960s, a leader was not necessarily chosen from a dpon tshang 'leader's family'. Instead, the leader was chosen by the local township government and local Party members. Locals, however, considered the male descendants of dpon tshang to be the true village leaders. Many locals encouraged a dpon tshang member to be the local Party leader. The local village Party secretary from 2003-2014 was a dpon tshang descendant. The new Party secretary in 2016 was also a dpon tshang descendant.

Table 3. Bon skor Village Communist Party secretaries (~1960-2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Dpon tshang Descendant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mkhar lo</td>
<td>~1930</td>
<td>late 1960s-early 1970s</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dpa’ kho</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>1972-1992</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lcags li</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>1993-1995</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thin tsi</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1995-2000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thar re rgyal</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>2000-2014</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dpa’ rtse ’bum</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Dec 2014-present</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Bon skor Village heads (~1960-2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Dpon tshang Descendant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rko lo</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Late 1960s</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mkhar rtse</td>
<td>~1944-2001</td>
<td>1970-1986</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thin tsi</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1986-1995</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dpa' bumrgyal</td>
<td>1947-2009</td>
<td>1995-2000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dpa' kho</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>2000-2003</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gnam byams 'bum</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>2003-2014</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tshe brtan</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Dec 2014-present</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Locals could not remember the names of the earliest village heads in the early 1960s. No female had ever been chosen as leader as of 2016.

In 2000, the village head and Party secretary created serious conflict by competing for the committee secretary position. In the early 1970s, there were three to four local Party members while in 2000 there were about ten. In their struggle for the secretary position, the two candidates involved their own tribal members and the village was almost split into two groups. Following intervention by the local government and other tribes, two new leaders were appointed and tensions surrounding this issue gradually diminished. Some locals consider leader status to be highly desirable. Many locals think that these leaders sought these positions to get more power and thus able to access money, such as subsidies from the local government and village income from local land.

In 2015, there were about forty Communist Party members in the village. During elections every three years, local Communist Party members chose the village leaders. In practice, election results were predetermined. Leaders usually bribed locals in order to be elected. In recent years, most leaders have not held meetings with locals other than the Party members, which has led to infrequent communication and misunderstandings. Many Bon skor residents despair that the village leaders would ever actually serve the village and have occasionally spread rumors that leaders appropriated money from the village committee income, from the local government, and so on. As a result, Bon skor Village lacked leadership in 2014 that could effectively guide the village. Most villagers were hopeful with the new leadership in 2015.

In 2015, the local government funded 2.7 million RMB to build an office building with a yard for the Village Committee.
**Resettlement**

According to local elders, village farm land was situated along the Yellow River in Bon po'i zhing kha and Rab 'og ske, Bya mdo Township prior to 1986. In 1986, the government ordered locals to move to the present location – Be len – about twenty kilometers from the former location of Bon po'i zhing kha. This relocation site was designated by the local government. Even though locals move periodically from place to place in herding areas, the farming site is fixed. 'Resettlement area' as used here refers to the farming area.

Photo 46. Tree roots by the Yellow River.

Prior to village resettlement in the early 1980s, locals found tombs in Rab 'og ske and Dgon thang. A team from the Mtsho sngon Cultural Relics and Archeaology Research Bureau excavated the tombs in Rab 'og ske in 1980, yielding over 1,478 items including microblade cores, choppers, grinding tools, bone needles, and stone beads. A radiocarbon date of 6,745 ± 85 BP was determined, suggesting that this site is from Mesolithic age (Gai and Wang 1983:49).
Photo 47. A local herdsman found this item in the herding area. Locals believe it is a centuries old *tsha tsha*.

Photo 48. *Mchong* – the white round gem next to the right of the red bead (bottom) – was found by a local herder from a desert area in the Bon skor pasture.
There were five *ru khag* 'sections' when the village was relocated. One section moved near Dgon thang Village, which was closer to the Yellow River but on higher ground. The other four units moved to Be len. All sections were administered by a single village committee. The dammed Yellow River continued to rise in 2007. The local government then moved the last section of Bon skor near Mgo mang Town and moved Dgon thang Village to a site near Khri ka County Town.

Photo 49. The Yellow River rose and forced a section of Bon skor Village to resettle in 2007.
Photo 50. The Yellow River rose and forced a section of Bon skor Village to resettle in 2007.

Photo 51. A resettled section of Bon skor Village near Mgo mang Township Town in 2013.
Locals practice both Buddhism and Bon and find it hard to make a distinction, other than naming designated temples, direction of circumambulation, and scriptures for each. About two dozen locals within the Bon tradition occasionally gather at the assembly hall – Bon skor rgyal gshen rig 'dzin sms sdpag'i gling 'The Assembly Hall of Victorious Wisdom Holder and Spiritual Warrior Gshen' in Bon skor, which was built in 1997. Most other locals practice Tibetan Buddhism and do not participate directly in Bon rituals and chanting at the Bon Assembly Hall. However, many of their rituals and practices are similar to those of the Bon followers. The Bon practitioners planned to establish the Bon assembly hall as early as 1993, however, this was unsuccessful due to disagreements. At that time all nearby monasteries and many locals practiced Tibetan Buddhism. Bon was considered an unacceptable practice. The Bon practitioners had to overcome many obstacles before completing the assembly hall in 1997.

Before 1958, most locals chanted Bon recitations, practiced Bon rituals, and annually invited Bon practitioners from Gze ma'i lha khang, Stong che Village. Bon gshen and dpon were invited from Stong che bon mang and Stong che khyung mo dgon g.yung drung phun tshog gling, a Bon monastery in Stong che Village. These Bon practitioners joined those in Bon skor Village for rituals and chanting. Before 1958, some Bon skor villagers also went to Stong che Village to chant and participate in such rituals as Srung ba and Gze ma stong 'don, rituals not observed in 2014. Local Bon practitioners now chant such mantras as Dbal gsas, Khro bo, Spyi 'dul, and Zhi ba.

Photo 52. Sngags pa chant at a local home.

46 A ritual to prevent harm.
47 Reciting Gze ma, a mantra, a thousand times at a ritual.
In 2014, the Bon assembly hall featured paintings and images of Mnyam med shes rab rgyal mtshan, Rnam mkhyen rgyal ba, and Kun bzang gshen lha 'od dkar, as well as volumes of the Bka' 'gyur. On the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, local Bon practitioners hold the Tshogs brgya 'Hundred Merits' ritual, which includes chanting recitations a hundred times each of Kun bzang gshen lha

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48 The translated words of Gshen rab mi bo che, the founder of G.yung drung Bon.
'od dkar,Spyi 'dul, and several others. Each recitation ranges from ten to fifty pages of traditional block-print copy and handwritten texts. In the sixth lunar month, local Bon practitioners hold the Tshogs stong 'Thousand Merits' ritual, chanting about five different recitations, with each chanted a thousand times. This concludes with zlog pa,49 which is also called Drug ci ba 'sixties'. This usually features more than sixty gtor ma.50

Photo 55. A sngags pa chants with his religious implements at a local home.

49 Zlog pa literally translates as 'expel' 'reverse' and refers to rituals to expel evils from homes and villages.
50 Sacrificial objects include rtsam pa cake cones colored red, symbolizing blood. Various gtor ma are ceremonially presented to deities or spiritual beings for various purposes. Mkhar rtse rgyal (2009:138) writes that while some contend this ritual has Buddhist origins, certain Bon texts and current Bon practices suggest that gtor ma rituals were practiced in Bon in a pre-Buddhist era in Tibet.
Photo 56. A mural of Mnyam med shes rab rgyal mtshan featured in the Bon skor Assembly Hall of Victorious Wisdom Holder and Spiritual Warrior Gshen.

Photo 57. A mural of Kun bzang gshen lha 'od dkar featured in the Assembly Hall of Victorious Wisdom Holder and Spiritual Warrior Gshen in Bon skor.
Photo 58. An image of Rnam mkhyen rgyal ba in the Assembly Hall of Victorious Wisdom Holder and Spiritual Warrior Gshen in Bon skor.

Photo 59. *Lha bshos*, a type of *gtor ma*.
Local Buddhists refer to the twenty-fifth day of the tenth lunar month as Lnga mchod, which commemorates the death of Rje tsong kha pa.\textsuperscript{51} Local Bon practitioners hold a ritual known as Gdung mchod from the twenty-fifth to the twenty-ninth of the tenth lunar month, commemorating the death of Gshen rab mi bo che, the founder of G.yung drung Bon. On this occasion, local Bon practitioners chant Dbal gsas mantras and several other recitations a hundred times.

Photo 60. Bon sngags pa wear dkar mo rtse rgyal and chant in the Bon skor Assembly Hall of Victorious Wisdom Holder and Spiritual Warrior Gshen.

Locals believe boys and men becoming Buddhist monks, or Bon practitioners, brings security and good luck. A monk in the family brings more merit to the family because he will chant mantras and will occasionally chant at the family home. Parents, especially those with several sons, may send one or two boys to a monastery to become monks. Some families may arrange for a son to become a monk at around the age of ten. Some families first send their children to the local primary school and then, after graduation, send them to such local monasteries as:\textsuperscript{52}

- Ba kya’i grwa tshang phun tshogs dar rgyas gling was founded by the second ’Ja’ mo Dkon mchog bstan ’dzin nyi ma bla ma (1791-1854). This Dge lugs monastery is located in Ba kya Village, Hexi Town, sixteen kilometers from Khri ka County Town.

\textsuperscript{51} The founder of the Dge lugs Sect.

\textsuperscript{52} Dates related to monastery founders are from Rdo rje tshe ring (1999:192, 306, 553, 565, 577).

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- Go ra'i mdo mtshams khang dga' ldan dben gnas yid dga' chos 'dzin gling, founded by the sixth Yar kha lung rtogs nyi ma bla ma (?-1976) in 1925. This Dge lugs monastery is located three kilometers from Bya mdo Township Town, Mang ra County.

- Klu tshang dgon bshad sgrub dar rgyas dge 'phel gling, founded by the fourth Rnye blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1850-1909) in 1889. This Dge lugs monastery is located two kilometers from Mang chu Township Town, Mang ra County.

- Stong che khyung mo dgon g.yung drung phun tshog gling was founded by Sog btsun ston pa ye shes in 1351. This G.yung drung Bon monastery is located in Dong che Village, Hexi Town, thirteen kilometers from Khri ka County Town.

- Tho le\(^5\) dgon rnam rgyal phun tshogs chos rdzong gling, was founded by Bla ma yul phur dge 'dun bstan pa rab rgyas (1834-1911) in 1878.\(^5\) This Dge lugs monastery is located in Tho le Village, Mang chu Township, thirty-nine kilometers from Mang ra County Town.

- Tshal rnga dgon dga' ldan dar rgyas gling, founded by the seventh Lwa mo zhabs drung dkar po Dge 'dun bstan 'dzin nor bu dpal bzang (1872-1927 or 1873-1937), in 1902. This Dge lugs monastery is located in Gur lhas Village, seven kilometers from Bya mdo Township Town, Mang ra County.

Photo 61. The assembly hall of Tshal rnga dgon dga' ldan dar rgyas gling in 2012.

\(^{53}\) Mtho las is an alternative spelling.

\(^{54}\) Some local monks contend that it was founded by LA mo dge 'dun bstan 'dzin nor bu (1873-1937).

Photo 63. The assembly hall of Go ra'i mdo mtshams khang dga' ldan dben gnas yid dga' chos 'dzin gling in 2013.
Photo 64. The assembly hall of Ba kya'i grwa tshang phun tshogs dar rgyas gling in 2013.

Photo 65. *Mchod rt'en* in Ba kya'i grwa tshang phun tshogs dar rgyas gling.
After several years of study at such monasteries, monks may go to Lha sa to enter such prestigious monasteries as Se ra, 'Bras spungs, and Dga' ldan for further study. In 2016, there were nearly a hundred monks from Bon skor. Some spend their entire life at monasteries studying and practicing Buddhism. Others return to their former monasteries to become teachers and monastic leaders. A few monks attend schools in India.

Although there were undisciplined monks prior to the 1990s, modernisation has increasingly eroded monastic discipline and provided new, alluring lifestyle options. For instance, monks now have cell phones that allow easy contact with outsiders. The availability of motorcycles and cars has made travel easy. Monks can now easily meet women if they desire. Many monks have become laymen. For example, twelve Bon skor monks became laymen in 2008.

Many villagers, especially elders, are fervently religious. Elders use prayer beads to chant mantras each morning and evening. They also encourage family members to chant, and may scold them when they do not. They believe chanting and practicing the dharma brings them and others a better life. Consequently, adults and even many young children know how to recite mantras. People who regularly chant are respected.

The former village ma Ni hall was destroyed in 1958. Local people rebuilt in its current location after the village relocated to its present site. It was expanded in 2007 with the addition of three, two-meter high ma Ni wheels and later with brick courtyard. The hall contains several Buddhist images and volumes of the Bka' gyur and the Bstan 'gyur. In 2015, the local government provided 180,000 RMB to rebuild the local village ma Ni Hall. Most elders go to the ma Ni hall daily to turn the ma Ni wheels, pray, and chant. Most local Bon followers participate in activities at the ma Ni Hall. After installing the new prayer wheels, a schedule was made to ensure that the wheels are kept rotating twenty-four hours a day.

Villagers gather at the ma Ni Hall on the fifteenth day of the fourth lunar month and on the twenty-second day of the ninth lunar month. During each of these three-day periods, participants fast and recite ma Ni aloud.

Every year on the third to tenth days of the sixth lunar month,

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55 A short form of oM ma Ni pad+me hU~M, the six syllable mantra of Avalokiteshvara.
56 A hall where locals daily turn ma Ni wheels.
57 The translated words of Buddha.
58 The collection of commentaries on the Buddha's teachings that were later translated into Tibetan.
sbyin sreg\(^{59}\) 'burned offerings' is held. Monks are invited from surrounding monasteries to chant. However, few monks have done this in recent years because most monasteries forbid monks to chant at homes. Much of the monastery's current income is derived from individual donors and government subsidies. They no longer rely on local villagers. Most local elders who frequently chant various mantras participate in sbyin sreg.

Photo 66. Locals participating in a sbyin sreg ritual.

Photo 67. Both males and females attend the ritual and chant with their dbang chas\(^{60}\) tied around their heads.

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\(^{59}\) Monks burn such items as melted butter with beans and herbs in the belief that doing so delights the local deities, who then ensure good health for locals.

\(^{60}\) The red cloth tied around the head given to mantra practitioners who have received certain permissions from their bla ma.
Local s gather at a ma Ni hall to perform sbyin bsreg.

On the eighth, tenth, and fifteenth days of each lunar month, groups of local elders and adults perform tshogs. During the ritual, locals gather to chant mantras transmitted by a bla ma. This is called dbang lung and is a form of giving permission for chanting the mantras. At the end of each tshogs, locals receive fruit (e.g., apples and peaches), bread, and candy that are referred to as tshogs zas. These items are considered blessed by the chanting. Tshogs refers to the general ritual where dbang lung is performed and where mantras are chanted.

Tshogs literally means ‘merit’ and, as used here, refers to a ritual. Participants believe that they acquire merit by chanting at this ritual.
The Yul lha Temple in Bon skor Village enshrines a Yul lha image in the center, along with Shan pa rwa mgo on the right and Shan pa tsi thung on the left. This temple's predecessor was in the former village farming location. It was established by locals at the instruction of Rje gser khang pa, a bla ma (1780-1848), who meditated in the local area (Rnye blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan 1996:98). Gsang sgrog gave this account of the temple’s origin:

In the 1800s, a bla ma was in seclusion in a cave not far from the Yul lha Temple location in the former local village in Bon po'i zhing kha. One day while crossing Bon po'i zhing kha, he saw a woman milking a cow that was tied to her with a chain. When the bla ma asked why she had chained herself to the cow, she said that the cow could easily be stolen by thieves from Chos tsha Village. The woman then heated some milk and offered it to the bla ma. Understanding her difficult situation, the bla ma asked her if he could help. When he was leaving, he used blood from his nose to write on a cloth, gave her the cloth, and told her to build a Yul lha temple there with other locals in the fields of the A rig Tribe. This woman was from the A rig Tribe, which lived adjacent to the Bon po Tribe in Bon po'i zhing kha. The term A rig Lha khang 'A rig Temple' is also used to refer to the Yul lha Temple.

Photo 70. Yul lha is enshrined along with images of Shan pa rwa mgo on the right and Shan pa tsi thung on the left in the local Yul lha Temple.
Photo 71. Shan pa tsi thung in the local Yul Iha Temple.

Photo 72. Shan pa rwa mgo in the local Yul Iha Temple.
When Bon skor residents were few in number, neighboring Chos tsha villagers persistently bullied them by riding their horses through their fields and over cheese spread out to dry on the ground. Locals then beseeched Yul lha for protection and built a temple. This temple is a branch of Yul lha Temple in Khri ka County, where locals burn incense to pray for prosperity and protection.

According to Gsang sgrog, Yul lha was a Han man born from an egg in a nest on a rocky mountain. One day, when a hermit was meditating in the mountains, he saw something in a nest. He curiously approached and saw that it was an egg. He chanted the mantra of 'Jam dbyangs nag po62 and the sun began to shine over the egg in the nest. In time, the egg hatched and a human baby emerged. Since the hermit was in an isolated area, he lacked food, but he had a red cow that he milked to feed the baby. The hermit sent the baby to a school in Sichuan Province when he was older. As soon as he finished school, he was ordered by the Chinese emperor to go to Mtsho sngon and mediate between Tibetans and Han. He then came to Khri ka, where the main Yul lha Temple is now located.63

Some locals say that he later became a general on the border between Sichuan and Mtsho sngon. Because of his power, locals enshrined his image after his death and prostrated to it. He thus became the deity – Yul lha. Others say that Yul lha was once a minister to the Chinese emperor. His colleagues disliked him and killed him. He then became the powerful deity Yul lha in his next life.

62 Black Manjushri is a wrathful healing deity and one of the various emanations of Manjushri, the Buddha of Wisdom. This practice is aimed at healing mental and physical suffering and is considered particularly useful for counteracting virulent disease, malevolent forces, and forms of disharmony in the environment (http://tinyurl.com/9jyj2rs, accessed 20 February 2015).

63 According to Rta mgrin rgyal (2013:31), A myes yulha, or Khri ka’i yul lha, is the Tibetan name of this deity, who is called Wenchangye or Zitong in Chinese. Yul lha is enshrined in the Yul lha Temple in Khri ka and is a Chinese deity from Zitong County, Sichuan Province. It was originally enshrined in a temple on Sme bdun (Qiqu) Mountain. From the Tang Dynasty (618-907) to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), this deity was beseeched and prostrated to by emperors and locals. One of the eight Tibetan senior Qing Dynasty imperial tutors, the second LA mo gser khri/’Jam dbyangs bstan pa’i nyi ma (1689-1738) incarnation, also prostrated to Yul lha and wrote a bsang yig ‘incense scripture’ for Yul lha. He realized the importance of unified belief in Yul lha in the Mtsho sngon po area. Later reincarnations of this bla ma worshipped Khri ka’i yul lha as a srung ma ‘guardian deity’, which continued in 2016. Tibetans began worshipping this deity from Khri ka over 400 years ago. Gradually, many Tibetans across Mtsho sngon and Gansu, regardless of sect, worshipped Yul lha. In 2015, there are nearly fifty Yul lha temples in Tibetan villages in Mtsho sngon, Gansu, and Sichuan.
The Yul lha Temple in Bon skor Village is a branch of the one in Khri ka.

Locals believe that Yul lha comes whenever incense is burned to call him. Many summon him as indicated by such local sayings as, "Yul lha wears out a pair of metal shoes and a set of metal clothes every day," and "Yul lha rides thousands of horses per day, one after the other, to save people's lives." Today, locals burn incense for Yul lha every morning and evening. A village caretaker ensures that incense at the temple burns continuously. Whenever locals need help, regardless of religious affiliation, they first burn incense in the temple and ask for Yul lha's assistance. For example, if a student will soon take a school examination, the student's parents go to the temple and ask the deity for help, hoping their child will make a good score. If a local buys a car or motorcycle, they visit the temple and ask Yul lha for good luck while operating the vehicle. Furthermore, when a local finds a spouse, the couple goes to the temple to better ensure good luck in the marriage.

While burning incense and reciting the bsang yig 'incense scripture' at the Yul lha Temple, locals also invoke their own srung ma 'guardian deity', who is usually Dpal ldan lha mo.64

A wooden image Yul lha was in the Yul lha Temple at the village's old location. The temple was destroyed in 1958. It was not until about 1986 that locals rebuilt it. At that time, Bla ma Kho tshe65 blessed its reconstruction. Gsang sgrog66 assisted in building the temple and became its caretaker. The Yul lha image was made of wood and was located in Be len.

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64 Most villagers venerate this deity. Families venerating Dpal ldan lha mo generally rarely intermarry with families who do not.
65 This bla ma from Khri ka County oversees both the Yul lha Temple and lab rtse. He was forced to become a layman in 1958 and later married. Locals respect him as much as a bla ma who wears a monk's robe.
66 Gsang sgrog provided information about Yul lha.
Lab rtse were also destroyed in 1958. In 1989, Gsang sgrog and Rka lo asked three bla ma for permission to build a lab rtse. Bla ma Kho tshe told them to build it. No one was allowed to touch or move the Yul lha image or make significant changes to the lab rtse without consulting Bla ma Kho tshe, the only person able to directly communicate with and control Yul lha, and the lab rtse deity, A myes sgro ri rab brtan thogs med.

To construct the lab rtse, a three-meter deep hole was dug and filled with two metric tons of grain and a copper vase filled with butter. Elders said that the butter ensured the village's future wealth. A srog shing 'main beam' or 'life-tree' was also placed vertically in the center of the hole with coral and silver around the beam at ground level. These articles remained under the lab rtse in 2016. According to locals, the lab rtse previously had a srog shing inscribed with Bon religious mantras, however, locals replaced it in 1989 during reconstruction, with Tibetan Buddhist mantras. The local Bon practitioners wanted the lab rtse reconstructed in the Bon tradition, however, most locals wanted to reconstruct it in a Buddhist tradition.

67 The three bla ma were Kho tshe (b. 1949), the sixth Rje zhwa dmar pa (1953-1986), and Gung ri mkha’ gro ma (1935-2011). The current Rje zhwa dmar pa reincarnation was identified in about 1994.
because they believed that the Bon tradition was inauspicious. Afterward, many local Bon sngags pa did not go to the lab rtse. Local concepts of Bon and Buddhism were vague and, at that time, largely influenced by nearby Buddhist monasteries. A painting of the lab rtse deity was also destroyed in 1958. A new one was created later, however, locals believe it differs from the previous painting in terms of style, color, and size.

Photo 74. A new painting of Sgro ri rab brtan thogs med painted after the Cultural Revolution in the Yul Iha Temple.
Photo 75. An old *thang ga* that has has been passed down for generations, survived the destruction of 1958.

Photo 76. A new painting of Yul Iha at the new Yul Iha Temple in the resettled fifth section of Bon skor Village in 2014.
The local *lab rtse*’s deity is Sgro ri ‘Feather Mountain’, which Gsang sgrog explained:

A woman once put a feather in her vagina, where it was moved by the blowing wind. She then became pregnant and eventually gave birth. The baby grew up and became a great Bon practitioner. After he died, Bon po rtse bo began construction of Sgro ri lab rste on the eleventh day of the fourth lunar month. It was completed on the nineteenth day of the seventh lunar month. Bon po rtse bo then built the *lab rtse*, enshrined a Sgro ri image, and prostrated to it as a deity. Afterwards, locals called it Sgro ri lab rste.

Every year on the nineteenth day of the seventh lunar month, a sheep was sacrificed to the *lab rtse*, and to A myes brag dkar.68 However, from the 1990s, people sometimes sacrificed the sheep and sometimes they did not. Bla ma Kho tshe decided not to sacrifice sheep, as some locals considered sacrificing animals was sinful. The top of the *lab rtse* bends slightly inside. Elders say that Bon po rtse bo did this after assuming the shape of a Bon practitioner’s *dkar mo rtse rgyal* hat.

Bon skor Village has another *lab rtse* called Su me,70 located in Rab ’og ske, a part of the village’s former location. Rin bzang explained this *lab rtse*:

After horses belonging to Phyug bdag ma of the Rgya phyug Tribe in Bon skor Village were stolen, a family member pursued the thieves and found the g.yang ra or srung rtags ‘protection symbol’ on a thorny bush on the road. This family later established a *lab rtse* at the site where the Protection Symbol was found. In addition, twelve smaller *lab rtse* were established on adjacent hills - children of the first *lab rtse*. They are collectively called Su me lab rtse ma bu bcu gsum ‘Su me lab rtse of twelve children and the mother’. Locals

68 Brag dkar was powerful during his lifetime. After his death, he became a deity who dwelt in the mountains of Brag dkar rdza in the east of Mang ra County.
69 The cap worn by Bon gshen.
70 Locals believe it is a goddess. The area of the *lab rtse* is also called Su me. It is unknown if the name Su me was first given to the *lab rtse* or the location.
71 After chanting mantras, a tuft of sheep wool is tied on the neck of a horse or to its mane, to bless and protect it. Such horses are not casually ridden. They are offered as mounts to holy and respected people. Sheep and horses with such symbols are considered protected through a ritual called Tshe thar ‘sparing life’, which is intended to save or prolong people’s life (Gcan tsha bkra bho 2011:327). Locals also hold this ritual when someone is seriously ill. Afterwards, such livestock are never sold or killed.
mention that 'Su me' is a Mongol word for 'spacious valley' and also the name of a Mongol woman who had twelve children.

This lab rtse is locally believed to protect and bring wealth to the village and also help give birth to girls who will become beautiful, eloquent women. Bon skor residents, especially the Rgya phyug Tribe, annually held this lab rtse ritual on the first day of the sixth lunar month until 1958. Locals burnt bsang, offered milk, and held horse races during the ritual. Women also participated in this ritual by burning incense. The lab rtse was covered by reservoir water in the late 1980s. Rig grol of the Rgya phyug Tribe relocated the lab rtse to higher ground in the early 1990s. Certain Bon skor residents offered bsang and prayed at the lab rtse, but did not repeat the annual ritual after 1958, except once in the early 1990s. Some people believe that the female deity to which the lab rtse is dedicated is occasionally too wrathful toward locals who make mistakes and thus they are reluctant to hold the ritual.

Su me Lab rtse was near Rgya thog Village. Over time, these villagers joined the annual Su me Lab rtse festival. From 2000, as the government implemented land division policies, local villages became entangled in various disputes. In the course of these conflicts, Bon skor Village lost a sizeable piece of land to Rgya thog Village, including the site where the lab rtse was located. Rgya thog villagers created a new Su me Lab rtse and conducted lab rtse rituals there. However, few Bon skor residents participated and the previous lab rtse was abandoned.

Photo 77. The new Su me Lab rtse in Rgya thog Village in 2013.
DEATH

There are four ways of dealing with a human corpse, each related to the five natural elements – earth, water, fire, wind, and sky: *sbyin sreg* 'cremation', *rlung la spur ba/ bya la g.yeng ba* 'sky burial', *sar bjol ba* 'earth burial', and *chu la beol ba* 'water burial'.

The deceased's family consults a local *bla ma* known as the *sngas mgo'i bla ma* near the corpse', who may come and chant for the corpse. This *bla ma*, *grwa ba* 'monk', or *sngags pa* chants *Smon lam*,72 'Pho ba' 'transference of consciousness',73 and *Bar do* 'intermediate state'74 by the ear of the corpse before most funeral activities start.

A corpse should not be touched before a *bla ma* or a monk makes recitations, especially 'Pho ba, otherwise, the *rnam shes* 'consciousness' of the deceased will be unable to leave the corpse (Rin chen 2011:2). Meanwhile, the family prepares *ba chu skor gsum*, a package containing *rtsam pa*, butter, cheese, bread, salt, tea, and other necessities including a pot, bowl, knife, needle, thread, and cloth. The family puts these articles in a *ta len*75 and gives it to the *sngas mgo'i bla ma*. The *bla ma* is thought to be able to give these items to the deceased.

The family sometimes takes tea bricks, *kha btags*, and cash (100–500 RMB), depending on the financial condition of the family, to as many as seven *bla ma* and asks them to pray for the deceased. This activity is called *bsngo zhu*.

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72 *Smon lam* 'wishes' 'aspiration' 'prayers' as used here, suggests Tibetan Buddhist scriptures. There are many *smon lam* recitations. However, in the local village, *Phags pa bzang po spyod pa'i smon lam gyi rgyal po*, a Dge lugs recitation (Nor brang O rgyan 2011:621), is chanted.

73 A technique in Tibetan Buddhism of transferring consciousness at the time of death.

74 A state of suspended reality in which the deceased has the opportunity to realize the true nature of reality. If the deceased is capable of recognizing the confusing, frightening *bar do* visions as their own mental projections reflecting their previous life's thoughts and karma, the ongoing cycle of birth and death will be overcome. Failure leads to rebirth and further suffering in samsara. To help the deceased understand this ambiguous situation, a spiritual teacher recites inspirational prayers and instructions from funeral texts - the first stage in the ritual of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (http://explore.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/show/dead/texts/transitions1, accessed 9 June 2015).

75 *Saddlebags* woven from wool.
Photo 78. *Ja bag* 'brick tea' is used for drinking and gifts. Brick tea is given to *bla ma*, leaders, *A zhang*, relatives, and friends, along with *kha btags* as gifts.

Photo 79. *Ja bag* 'brick tea' used for drinking and gifts in 2014. This tea was produced in Hunan Province.
Among the bla ma, the sngas mgo’i bla ma is the most important. The sngas mgo’i bla ma divines, and states the way the corpse will be disposed of and the specific date. The longest time a corpse can stay in a home is seven nights. In 2016, a corpse was generally dealt with within a day or two. However, locals may consider keeping the corpse longer, because it is thought that the corpse might return to life. The person is thought to be dead when the corpse is considered to be very cold. Experienced elders or bla ma decide if the person is truly dead. At this time, a mature man from the family uses a white rope or cloth to bind the corpse in a fetal position, with hands palm to palm held near the heart, as if praying. Barley or other grain wrapped in wool are placed between the palms. Locals tie the corpse in a fetal position to express their wish for the deceased to be reborn as a human.

The cloth rope is pulled tight around the throat to prevent sounds emerging from the corpse’s mouth. The man doing the tying stays behind the corpse, to avoid seeing the face. A mature man from the family may wash the corpse before tying it, but only for cremation. Finally, the entire body is wrapped in white cloth or placed in a bum khug ‘vase sack’. The corpse’s hair is tied together at the top of the head to resemble the top of a bum khug. Four one-meter long phur ba ‘wooden poles’ are placed around the corpse to support it. A white cloth hung around the phur ba covers the corpse to prevent others from seeing it.

About twenty-five years ago, corpses were transported by horses and people, at which time tying and wrapping a corpse were essential. However, not all families do this today, because vehicles are often used to transfer corpses to the site of final disposal.

If the deceased is a meritorious person such as a reincarnated
bla ma, he may naturally sit cross-legged and palm-to-palm, as if meditating during death. This is called thugs dam 'spiritual vow'. At such times, family members ensure that the room has a peaceful atmosphere. They do not touch the corpse until thugs dam is complete. In the case of thugs dam, though the person has died, the chest area around the heart remains warm. Thugs dam sometimes takes a few hours, but may last one to seven days, though this is rare among ordinary people. Signs of ending thugs dam include the corpse bleeding from the nose or hanging its head.

After the funeral, a wealthy family invites ten to fourteen monks, while poor families invite one to seven. The actual number depends on the family's economic condition and the availability of monks. Monks hold the bdun 'dad pa 'seven funeral prayer' or 'funeral virtuous acts' ritual generally for seven days, though some families hold it for fourteen days. An A mchod (a monk who performs death ceremonies or chants for families) chants Thar mdo for forty-nine days. This period is called dgung zhag zhe dgu. Relatives, friends, and neighbors visit and offer myig sngun 'condolences' with tea bricks, kha btags, butter for lamps, and cash of around twenty to 500 RMB. The amount of cash depends on their relationship and family circumstances.

Most close relatives, especially elders, fast for some time and chant ma Ni during this period. Relatives may cry after a death, however, this is thought to hinder rather than help the rnam shes of the deceased from leaving this world. Women fetch water, cook for visitors, make butter lamps, burn tsha gsur 'rtsam pa offerings', and chant ma Ni. Females are culturally forbidden to touch the corpse unless there is no man in the home, in which case women must handle the corpse. Children are not allowed to go near the body or into the room where it lies to avoid being frightened.

76 During this period, the monks chant Khrus chog, Sa lam dkar gsum, Smon lam, Bde mchog, Kun rig, and Stong mchod.
77 Thar mdo is a short form of 'Phags pa thar pa chen po phyogs su rgyas pa zhes bya ba thag pa chen po' mdo.
78 Barley flour is placed in a fire to smoulder. Drops of pure water are offered as an offering to the naga 'water deities'.
Photo 81. *Tsha gsur* is a burned offering made to water deities. Barley flour is placed on a fire to smolder and drops of pure water are added.

Photo 82. *Bsang rtsi* 'incense materials' usually consist of barley, grain, barley flour, coniferous foliage, and herbs.
The process of taking a corpse to the funeral site is called *skar ma*, and is usually done in the evening when stars are shining. Only men are involved. If people or animals carry a corpse, it must not rest on the ground in fear the deceased's soul will linger there. After the corpse is taken away, a plowshare, knife, or piece of metal is placed where the corpse was kept in the home in order to repel negative emanations from the deceased. Traditionally, it is considered auspicious if someone meets or sees people taking the corpse to a disposal site as epitomized in the local saying, "A fortunate person meets corpses and an unfortunate person meets *gto*." The latter is considered unfortunate as it symbolizes misfortunes.

Photo 83. A local *sngags pa* makes materials for conducting a *gto* ritual to expel misfortunes.

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79 Literally 'star'. The funeral time is decided after a *bla ma* or other knowledgeable person consults the Tibetan calendar. *Skar ma* refers to time and, locally, *skar ma* indicates the time to conduct the funeral.

80 *Gto* is a healing ritual, or a ritual to expel misfortune.
Photo 84. This item represents a castle. Gtor ma are placed by it to attract evils into the castle as sngags pa chant. Eventually, someone from the home where the ritual is performed takes the castle and gtor ma (collectively known as gto) to a designated site where it is left.

Cremation and sky burial are common locally. Water disposal and earth burial are rare. For those who die naturally, their corpse is taken to the dur khrod ‘charnel ground’,\(^81\) where a new phur ba is commonly thrust into the ground. The white cloth and ropes from the body are removed. The corpse is tied to the phur ba with a rope looped around its neck. The corpse is placed on its stomach or, sometimes, on the right side.

The family also brings a knife from the home that will not be returned. Someone who is not related to the deceased uses the knife to cut open the skin of the back, buttocks, and legs. A monk from a nearby monastery usually assists. When the flesh has been exposed,

\(^81\) In the past, Bon skor Tibetan Village had several dur khrod within its territory. However, local government policy implemented in 2000 required that fences be built. Afterwards, dur khrod locations are no longer used. Instead, locals use the dur khrod near Ra rgya Monastery, Rgyul mgo Township, Rma chen County, Mgo log Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.
people retreat as vultures immediately come and feed. The first vulture that touches the corpse is the bla bya 'spirit bird', the one deserving of the first offering. There are usually hundreds of vultures at the dur khrod. When the vultures finish eating the flesh, which is usually in a little less than an hour, the skeleton and skull are left attached to the phur ba with the rope. The caretaker shoos the vultures away, and collects and crushes the bones. The brain is removed from the skull, which is then crushed. The caretaker then stays at a distance while vultures eat the pulverized bones. Finally, the vultures eat the brain and fly away. Locals consider providing the corpse to vultures as a final offering to sentient beings.

Vultures may be reluctant to eat the corpse of an unclean or very old person. In such cases, the family invites bla ma and monks to the home to do additional chanting, burn tsha gsur, and put dar leog 'prayer flags', and rmu thag on hilltops near the dur khrod. If vultures still refuse to eat the corpse, the bla ma advises the family to cremate or bury it. Locals rarely kill vultures. A local saying goes, "Bya chen la rdo dang mi chen la tshig" No stone to vultures and no bad words for great men.

After the corpse has been consumed, the deceased's clothes, hair, and shoes are burned near the dur khrod. Other personal belongings such as metal items are buried.

Corpses may be cremated in a monastery or town. Cremation is considered to be offering the corpse to deities in Heaven. Locals believe that cremation is more appropriate for monks and nuns because they are considered more meritorious than laymen. Cremating laymen, especially women, is considered inauspicious and polluting to deities in Heaven. However, given its convenience, cremation of women has become more common. Sometimes a cremation takes place in a family courtyard, although most home cremations are for monks or highly respected elders. The location is decided by a bla ma. Afterwards, family members take the ashes to holy mountains and lakes. Taking ashes to Dbus gtsang is considered ideal because placing and scattering the ashes in holy areas helps bring about a better reincarnation.

Such activities as washing, tying, and wrapping the corpse are also done for burial. Elders may be buried. Young children who die without identifiable cause are commonly buried. A bla ma makes

82 Dar leog gradually became related to certain mantras and recitations as Buddhism influenced Tibet (Karmay 2010:304).
83 Coarsely woven sheep-wool yarn. It is believed that the first seven kings in Tibet were attached to a rmu thag 'cord' and went to Heaven after their deaths. Their corpses then disappeared like rainbows (Nam mkha’i nor bu 1994:325).
84 Two locations in central Tibet.
such decisions and identifies a burial site. A family also buries the corpses of family members if it has historically done so for generations with a bla ma's guidance. However, if several people have died from the same or similar cause, the family or a bla ma generally suggests cremation or sky burial.

Water burial is only practiced in the case of drowning or suicide. For drowning, the body is recovered from the water, wrapped, and then put back into the water.

When the corpse bearers return to the deceased's home, they wash their hands and faces with water outside the household gate, near a small fire made on dark stones. Drops of water touch the stones and sizzle purifying the corpse bearers. The soul of the deceased is no longer attached to the m.

Such activities as bdun 'dad pa continue after burial. The A mchod chants Thar mdo at the family home or in a monastery for forty-nine days after the day of death. Locals believe that the deceased's soul will stay in bar do for up to forty-nine days, although a meritorious soul may reincarnate in as little as seven days. It is crucial to chant ma Nì, burn tsha gsur and bsang, and fast because these activities help the soul easily reincarnate. Such activities during the forty-nine days are collectively called 'dun 'hope for' or mya ngan 'grief'.

During this period, the deceased's relatives do not wear new clothes, sing, wash, cut their hair, hold weddings, wear ornaments or colorful clothing, and do not kill animals. They also avoid mentioning the deceased by name. Women tie white wool string to the end of their braids and men wear a white string around their hat, or wear it inside out. After forty-nine days, most such activities stop. The family does not celebrate Lo sar 'New Year', but others may visit them during this period.

The deceased's name is commonly never said in the presence of their close relatives to avoid distressing them. Instead, such euphemisms as ma drin chen or ma dge ldan ma 'loving mother', pha drin chen or pha dge ldan po 'loving father', drin chen po 'gracious one', or de 'that', 'him', 'her' are used. Consequently, many young family members do not know the names of older generations. Nonetheless, a local saying goes, "Mi shi yang ming brjed mi rung, rta shi yang sgrog 'bor mi rung" Do not forget the name though they are deceased; do not lose the fetter, though the horse is dead.
EDUCATION

There was no school when the village farming site was in Bon po'i zhing kha. Prior to 1958, local village leaders arranged for Rka lo\(^85\) to teach the Tibetan alphabet to locals. Then, in about 1967, a primary school was built in Dgon thang, a kilometer from Bon po'i zhing kha. In the mid 1970s, Tshul khrims\(^86\) taught the Tibetan alphabet and math to local children. Later, another villager, Rgya kho,\(^87\) taught Tibetan. Several local children enrolled. However, locals were reluctant to send their children to school because their daily life was overwhelmed with family chores and attending a formal school was something new. Local teachers treated students badly whenever they made mistakes. Beatings were common. Many children stayed at home and tended livestock. Only four or five Bon skor children attended the school, and only irregularly. None graduated.

In September 1981, the government apologized in writing to certain local families for some who were imprisoned and killed in 1958. As partial compensation, the relatives of those who had been killed, despite their limited literacy, were offered positions in local government, including police work and accompanying leaders on business trips. However, no locals accepted because they thought herding and farming were more reliable forms of livelihood.

In the early 1980s, the local township government announced that anyone with a primary school education could obtain an official job in the local government. People with limited literacy in Tibetan, but who had never been to school, were even encouraged to take such jobs. Though such jobs paid relatively well, locals preferred to herd and farm. In contrast, certain neighboring agricultural villages enthusiastically sent their children to school. Most got official jobs later. As a result, the number of government employees in neighboring villages increased. In 2005, Bon skor Village had only two government employees – a doctor and a primary school teacher. Another local received a teacher's position in 2006 and another four received teacher positions in 2010, 2011, and 2012. By 2013, about seven locals in total had received official jobs.

Most current Tibetan local government workers are from farming villages. Few are from pastoral villages. However, in 2016, pastoralists increasingly value education and official jobs because school conditions and policies have improved. Additionally, local government implemented pastureland division and resettlement

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\(^{85}\) The former Yul lha temple caretaker (~1929-1979) after 1958.

\(^{86}\) Yul lha temple caretaker in 2016.

\(^{87}\) A local villager (b. 1951).
policies that decreased the sustainability of a pastoral lifestyle. As a result, education was seen as providing a better future.

After locals were resettled in Be len in 1987, the local Education Bureau began a primary school project in Bon skor. Lha rgya (b. 1957), a Tibetan teacher from the Bya mdo Township Primary School, was designated as headmaster for the new school. Rdo rje phun tshogs, from the County Education Bureau, assisted Lha rgya from 1987 to 1990 during the school construction phase. In 1987, the school location was selected by Lha rgya and two local village heads. The headmaster lived in a tent during the construction phase, which ended in 1989. Lack of water and fuel were problems. Lha rgya and the village leader, Dpa' kho (b. 1942), suggested that the local township government provide a water container. The government then sold a three-ton metal oil drum to the village for 700 RMB. Bun khreng (b. 1947) and 'Brug 'bum rgyal (1945-2012) used a truck to fetch water in the drum until 1991.88

Photo 85. In 1987, the local township government sold a three-ton metal oil drum to the village for 700 RMB to store water while constructing the local primary school.

Kun thub rgyal (b. 1963) a local man, taught basic Tibetan to students in a tent in one herding area – Mu ge thang. Kun thub rgyal studied Tibetan independently while he was herding and was also taught by a local monk, Tshul khrims.

88 Running water reached Bon skor in 1992 from Tsha rnga Village, which had running water from 1981, the year it was resettled.
On 29 September 1990, Bon skor Village Primary School opened and ninety students enrolled. Grade Six was added in 1998. There were four teachers, two cooks, one headmaster, and one manager. Each student was required to give seven and a half kilos of mutton or yak meat, one hundred kilos of grain, and 500 kilos of sheep droppings and cow dung for fuel. In addition, each student paid thirty to fifty RMB per semester. These requirements continued until 2006.

The fourth headmaster, ’Brug lha rgya, recalls:

Students wore old clothes, stayed in unrepaired leaking dormrooms, and slept under torn quilts and sheets. The local County Town Property Bureau gave eleven RMB per month for each of eighty students. Flour was bought with this money.

In June 2012 there were seven Bon skor university graduates and six students in college. Twenty-five students took the university entrance exam in 2012: eight were admitted to Bachelor of Arts programs, two enrolled in college preparatory programs, and fifteen were admitted into Associate Degree programs. In 2012, three had graduated with MA and MBA degrees. In 2013, one graduate was a PhD candidate at Minzu University of China in Beijing. In 2013, sixteen students took the college entrance examination. Five were enrolled in preparatory programs and eight enrolled in Associate Degree programs at Mtsho sngon Nationalities University and Northwestern Nationalities University. Three students did not enroll in colleges and planned to retake the entrance exam in 2014. A total of twenty-three local students took the college entrance examination in 2014. Six passed and enrolled in four-year BA programs. Others enrolled in preparatory classes for BA programs, vocational schools, and three-year BA programs. One student pursued a MA in Linguistics at Qinghai Nationalities University and another was pursuing a MA in Sustainable International Development at Brandeis University (USA) in 2014. In 2015, about sixteen local students took the college entrance examination. Of this number, three were admitted into formal BA university programs, one was admitted into a one-year preparatory program leading to a four-year BA degree, one to a MA program, and the others were admitted into self-study higher education programs.
Table 5. Students and Staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Junior Middle School Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Cooks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>173</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>304</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Home Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lha rgya</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1987-1994</td>
<td>Ra dza Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bstan rgyal</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1994-2001</td>
<td>Gur lhas Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tshe brtan rgyal</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>Gur lhas Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Brug lha rgyal(^89)</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>2002-2009</td>
<td>Ske ba Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Brug rgya</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>2009-2011</td>
<td>Rdzong mgo Village(^90)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first headmaster established the school and the fourth headmaster, 'Brug lha rgyal, developed the infrastructure and teaching quality at the school, made effective changes in school facilities, and brought qualified teachers to the local primary school. His dedication resulted in much improvement.

\(^{89}\) He has a BA in Tibetan Literature from Mtsho sngon Nationalities University.

\(^{90}\) Lha khang thang Township, Khri ka County.
'Brug lha rgyal stated in 2008:

Every year, the number of students increases. On average, students are doing better and better. We see this through their exam results each year on both official exams and our local school exams. For instance, this year, the sixth grade is the top for one subject among all the township schools. The school has changed a great deal since I came here as headmaster. The school facilities, environment, teaching methods, and education have all improved and the number of students has increased. This is because most locals now understand the importance of education, parents support the school, and because of government investment in education.

Table 7. School managers (1990-2016).91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rgya mtsho</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rgya mtsho</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Bum me</td>
<td>~1948</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dbang bha</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
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</table>

While student attendance increased overall, only a few continued schooling after graduation because junior and senior middle school tuition and living expenses were expensive and parents insisted that their children marry or become monks. Arranged marriage had been common but was infrequent in 2016. Many early primary school graduates are now married and have children, some are divorced and have remarried, while others herd and farm.

**IMPORTANT EVENTS**

In 2004 the school received 56,000 RMB as part of the government policy of Returning Degraded Pasture to Grass 92 on the school-owned grassland.

The headmaster discussed the problems of local students’ attendance with the local government in 2004. They then cooperatively announced that locals must send their children to school or face a 500 RMB fine per child. As student numbers subsequently increased, the headmaster asked the local County Education Bureau to build adequate school classrooms and dormitories to accommodate more students. In 2004-2005 many

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91 'School managers’ refers to staff who oversee operation of the kitchen, facilities, food, and fuel.

92 Tuimuhtuancao.
students were taught in a tent. Soon classrooms and dormitories were built, beginning with twelve brick rooms. In 2014, the local village committee provided the school with 1,500 mu of grassland. This grassland was leased and from 2012 was earning 10,000 RMB annually for the school.

In terms of teaching methodology, teachers used a traditional teacher-centered approach with the teacher talking for most of the class time. In 2006, the school established a library.

Many students found school boring and were afraid of teachers who beat them with bamboo sticks and plastic rulers. This was a primary reason many students dropped out. Locals were discouraged by such an educational system.

In 2004, the local primary school started an English training program, an idea initiated by a local student, Kha ba rnam rgyal (my uncle) who obtained an MA in Sociology from the Ateneo de Manila University in Manila in 2007. This program was continued by the Friendship Charity Association (which I directed), from 2004 to 2014. It was held twice a year during school holiday periods. Initially, eighty percent of locals were reluctant to send children to school, preferring that they herded and farmed at home. This teaching program was expanded to include Tibetan and Chinese languages. It was a great success, as indicated by the students' keen interest and higher exam scores. In August 2012, twenty-five students, some of whom were from the first groups to participate in the holiday program, enrolled in colleges. Over time parents became increasingly positive about this program.

Photo 86. Local students receive awards after a teaching program.

Photo 87. Local students during a teaching program in Bon skor Village Primary School.

Photo 88. Students dance after class.
Photo 89. Local students.

Photo 90. Local students participate in a teaching program.
Photo 91. Local students take an exam during a summer teaching program.

Photo 92. A local student takes an exam.
Photo 93. Bon skor Primary School in 2010.

Photo 94. Bon skor Primary School library books.
In 2006 the classroom buildings were completed and began to be used. However, more classrooms were needed due to the rapidly increasing student population. Another project to build more classrooms was then funded by the local Education Bureau.

In 2005, the Lillian Kirby Tuttle Fund provided funds for a library book project for the school. In 2006, I applied to the German Embassy and received further funds to service the increasing number of students.

The school earned 18,000 RMB in 2006 from leasing pasture and cropland. In 2007, the classroom buildings built before 2000 were repaired by a project funded by the County Education Bureau. Additionally, the school earned 11,000 RMB from grassland rent.

In 2009, headmaster 'Brug lha rgyal was transferred to another school as headmaster and worked there until 2011. He was then assigned as supervisor of a county kindergarten in Mang ra County Town until 2014.

In August 2011, government policy required all local primary school students to move to township and county town primary schools. Bon skor Primary School then became a kindergarten. In January 2015, there were four teachers and seventy-six children aged four to six at the kindergarten. Two teachers were subsidized by the local government and two by the local village committee.

While delivering better school infrastructure conditions, the policy of consolidating local schools meant children above the age of eight were able to meet their grandparents, parents, and relatives for only four to eight days per month. Students far from home often missed their parents and grandparents and, at the beginning of each semester, some dormitory rooms were filled for an hour or so with the sounds of children crying. These arrangements interfered with the traditional relationships between children and family members. Opportunities for children to listen to elders tell riddles, stories, folktales, and their own oral histories were limited. In the new classrooms, fifty to sixty students, sometimes of different ethnicities, were placed in a classroom. These students no longer had opportunities to learn customs and traditions from their families. In fact, many children increasingly spoke Chinese better than Tibetan in their homes.

In March 2015, the local government announced a new plan of 7.7 million RMB to build new school buildings with three floors of classrooms in Bon skor Village, primarily for kindergarten children.

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95 A final report may be viewed at http://tinyurl.com/k7dalgv, accessed 21 February 2015.
However, according to the village leader, this plan also implied that grade one to three in primary school that were previously consolidated in local township and county central schools would be moved back to the new school.

The centralized Tibetan primary schools provided bilingual education with Tibetan language as the primary medium of instruction. Nevertheless, the government periodically encouraged these schools to emphasize Chinese language. Tibetan textbooks were designed and unified with other Tibetan primary, junior middle, and senior middle schools at township, county, and prefecture levels within Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Contents of textbooks from outside the local prefecture were somewhat different from those in Mtsho lho. There were a limited number of culturally relevant contexts in the Tibetan textbooks both in Mtsho lho and elsewhere. Some Tibetan schools designed self-published textbooks to supplement the official ones.

Local school enrollment rates increased exponentially after 2004. Students were exposed to mainstream society and the outside world through learning Chinese, some English, and through social media using mobile phones with various applications. Gaining a practical level of both Tibetan and Chinese languages with a solid background in math, physics, and chemistry became a challenge due to poor teaching quality. Nationalities universities and colleges in the Tibetan areas of Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan provinces, and the Tibet Autonomous Region focused on providing majors in Tibetan language and literature. Jobs were extremely competitive for Tibetan college graduates because most students majored in the same field. Mang ra County had few official jobs for graduates. When graduates faced obstacles in gaining employment, parents questioned the value of formal education in leading to stable employment providing a decent income. There were very few vocational schools that prepared students to find well-paying employment. As graduates were often in school and separated from their villages, their knowledge of local customs and traditions became increasingly limited. Local elders and youths who were not educated in state schools and, as a result, more strongly retained local traditions, often questioned the value of school graduates. Meanwhile, the local herding lifestyle changed rapidly with resettlement policies. Most locals hoped their children became well educated and earned a good income, but the restrictive job market was a puzzle.
In 2000, Bon skor Village had 57,000 sheep, goats, and cows. Locals earned income by selling sheep wool, goat hair, and animal skins, and surplus rapeseed and wheat. Prices fluctuated. In 2014, the local market price per kilo for mutton was fifty-four RMB, twenty-four RMB for pork, and sixty RMB for beef. In 2012 and 2013, beef was seventeen to thirty-six RMB per kilogram. Hui and Han buy livestock from local herdsmen. Most locals think it is a great sin to sell livestock to buyers, who take the livestock to slaughterhouses and then sell the meat in local towns. Some bla ma have encouraged locals not to sell and kill many livestock. Some have asked local herdsmen to stop killing sheep and eating meat. However, herding has been the key income source for locals and many were unable to quit, given the lack of alternative income sources and the important role of meat in the local diet. In 2015, an increased number of Tibetans bought livestock from local herdsmen and sold them to Hui and Han. These Tibetan middlemen were mostly from resettled villages near local towns and were able to do this business easily and quickly before outsiders were able to reach the remote herding villages. Local Tibetan businessmen also often sell livestock to Hui and Han buyers in town. Much of the meat from the local township slaughterhouse is ultimately purchased by local Tibetans.

In December 2015, the price for a sheep was much lower than in the past three years as a result of increased sales of sheep. A sheepskin sold for five to ten RMB and many local herdsmen decided not to sell, choosing instead to make sheepskin robes.

Lha mchog (b. 1984), a local herdsman recorded the prices for sheep, sheepskin, tea, salt, and sugar (below). He expressed concern over unpredictable price fluctuations of animal products in local markets.

Table 8. Sheep and Sheepskin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ordinary Sheep RMB</th>
<th>Fat Sheep RMB</th>
<th>Sheepskin RMB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>300-650</td>
<td>850-900</td>
<td>5-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>800-950</td>
<td>1,000-1,300</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>1,000-1,400</td>
<td>60-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>800-1,000</td>
<td>1,000-1,500</td>
<td>60-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>800-1,000</td>
<td>1,000-1,500</td>
<td>50-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>600-700</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>40-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>500-600</td>
<td>800-900</td>
<td>30-35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9. Salt, Tea, and Sugar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Price RMB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-2015</td>
<td>salt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>salt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2014</td>
<td>tea brick</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2011</td>
<td>tea brick</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>sugar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>sugar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2010</td>
<td>sugar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Bon skor grassland of 415,000 mu was divided from 2000–2003 among households according to the number of family members and livestock. In 2013, 155 mu of grassland was allocated per person, while a sheep or goat was allocated one mu. In 2014, the area of grassland per household ranged from 400 to 1,200 mu. Locals received 10.38 RMB per mu per year from the local government as a subsidy from the Returning Degraded Pasture to Grass Policy.

The local government announced Returning Degraded Pasture to Grass and Returning Cropland to Forest\(^9\) in 2000. Bon skor Village had 2,200 mu of cropland diverted to this project. The government gave 160 RMB per mu to locals in 2007, which increased to 200 RMB per mu in 2008. Each family had fields where they plant grass and trees. A family's income from this project depended on how many mu of trees and grass they planted. Initially this project was slated to continue for ten to fifteen years. At first, birch trees were provided by the local Forestry Bureau. Afterwards, locals purchased and planted trees on both local cropland and arid areas. Most of the trees survived, however, this project ended in Bon skor after two years. In 2015, another tree planting project was funded by the government and implemented in a local desert area. The village lacked an organizer and had little contact with the local Forestry Bureau. Without subsidies from the local government and environmental awareness training, most locals and local township officials lacked an incentive to plant trees for anti-desertification.

When introduced in 2000, the national policy of Returning Degraded Pasture to Grassland was officially represented as a program to protect the environment by reducing the number of livestock. Fencing and dividing pasture among households limited the number of livestock that each household could own. This reduced locals' income, which depended on herding. For example, in 2002 my family gave up herding, which required much effort and time and produced relatively little income, and moved to the farming area. Many herders gradually focused on planting barley, wheat, and

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\(^9\) Tuigenghuanlin.
potatoes. Some sold their livestock and also relocated to the farming land. Each herding household had been assigned farmland and generated income by selling surplus rapeseed and wheat. From 1987 to 2003, my family grew rapeseed and wheat on fourteen mu of cropland in Be len. Father recalled that the best harvest produced about 450 kg of wheat per mu of cropland. The worst year saw about one hundred kg of wheat per mu. Prices for wheat over the years fluctuated, but sold for about 0.5 RMB per kilo. My family had 1,500-2,000 kilograms of surplus wheat after storing wheat for a couple of years in the early 1990s.

Beginning in 2003, locals who provided cropland to the Returning Cropland to Forest Policy received one hundred kilograms of wheat per mu as a local government subsidy for three years. My family provided about eleven mu of arable cropland for this project and kept about three mu to grow wheat until 2014. In 2015, local government funded and implemented a health clinic project for Bon skor Village on this three mu of cropland.

From 2006 to 2012, locals received 160 RMB per mu of cropland instead of 100 kilo of wheat. Some grew grass on the cropland instead of trees. The local government first provided 160 RMB per mu of cropland to those who grew grass. This was later reduced to ninety RMB. In 2012, it was nineteen RMB per mu.

By 2012, implementation of the Policy of Returning Cropland to Forest had resulted in a seventy percent reduction in the amount of local farmland. In 2015, most locals depended on government subsidies for food. There was no written contract between the local government and local households on the duration of this subsidy.

In 2013, the entire local farmland irrigation system and 1,500 mu of irrigated farmland was reconstructed, therefore, nothing was planted nor grown. Locals purchased food from the local township and county towns and also received a subsidy of 160 RMB per mu as part of the project. In 2014 and 2015, locals grew wheat and grass on their farmland.

Photo 95. An irrigation ditch shared with Tsha rnga Village.
Photo 96. Cropland and an irrigation ditch in 2013.

Photo 97. Local cropland and an irrigation ditch in 2012.
In 2015, the village had 7,900 mu of non-irrigated farm land, 1,860 mu of irrigated fields, and 2,500 mu of forestland.

The local farming area has sandy soils and shallow topsoil. Harvest depends on irrigation water, which is available in unpredictable amounts. Consequently, harvest yields are occasionally inadequate for locals to meet their own needs, let alone sell.

In 1992, the pipe bringing running water to Bon skor Village broke. When finally replaced in 1998, taps were installed in most households. Originally Tsha rnga and Bon skor shared one pipe from a cistern, which created water shortages in both villages due to the volume of water decreasing over distance. Consequently, Bon skor Village lacked adequate running water until 2010. Even in 2015, no household in the herding or farming areas had a bathing facility. In order to shower, locals had to travel about seventy kilometers roundtrip to the nearest town by vehicles and motorcycles.97 Most locals bathe once a year or never. To heat water at home, they use sheep and cow dung and coal. Over time, the poisonous fumes from burning these fuels negatively impact health. Some families do not heat water to wash either clothes or their hands. Because of a lack of warm water, many wash their clothes only once every two to three months; others wash at longer intervals or never. Lack of sanitation and poor hygiene awareness and practices cause illness. Women pay little attention to their health, partly because they have received very little instruction about health and hygiene. Even when they are unwell, they feel they must wake up early and work hard all day.98

In 2010 a water project funded by the Canada Fund and implemented by Friendship Charity Association provided a separate water pipe to Bon skor.99 Beforehand, because of insufficient water from the source reservoir, water did not reach each family’s courtyard. However, from 2014, with an additional cistern provided by the local government, the water supply from a central water tap proved adequate.

97 The nearest township town is Mgo mang Township Town. A one way trip cost ten to fifteen RMB in 2015.
98 Refer to the final report of a project (http://tinyurl.com/m5avgb3, accessed 30 January 2015) implemented in the resettled part of Bon skor Village.
99 The final report for this project may be viewed at http://tinyurl.com/pgs7x6e (accessed 30 January 2015).
Photo 98. A reservoir for drinking and irrigation water for Bon skor and Tsha rnga villages.

Photo 99. Pipes from a reservoir move water to a cistern.
In 1964, part of the local herding area was cultivated by the Horse-Military Station. In the early 1960s, Bun khreng and Sko lo were each dadui zhuren 'Team Director' in charge of village issues. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Mkhar lo was the first local village Party secretary. In about 1989, Bla ma Kho tshe and the local village Party leader, Dpa' kho, and the village head, Thin tsi, negotiated with the Horse-Military Station for payment to cultivate part of the herding land. Afterwards, 10,000 mu of non-irrigated field land owned by the local village committee earned 70,000 RMB, 17,500 kilograms of barley, and 17,500 kilograms of wheat per year as rental fees from the Horse-Military Station. The same amount of income was paid in 2014.

From 1997-1999, most locals were in debt to the township government for failing to return loans used for purchasing three years of crop seeds and fertilizer. Eventually the village committee returned the loan. Beginning in 1999, most local village income from grassland rent went to the village committee and was used for wages and stipends for the supervisors of local cropland, drinking and irrigation water, and pastureland.

Locals have poor Chinese language skills and many are illiterate in both Tibetan and Chinese. For these reasons, they have been slow to undertake migrant labor. However, in recent years, some locals have traveled to neighboring counties and prefectures to collect and sell caterpillar fungus. Some seek to earn income by driving, waitressing, singing and dancing in clubs, and as laborers at construction sites. Largely because of few vocational skills and limited education, household income is low. In 2012, a household of six family members earned about 4,500 RMB in cash, excluding the subsidy described below.

From 2007, each local family member who was registered in the government household record before 2002, received 300 RMB per year (increased to 600 RMB in 2008) as a subsidy for village resettlement in 1986. Unregistered households did not receive this subsidy. Using this income and sheep, houses, goats, and farmland as collateral, local households began borrowing from the local Rural

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100 A designated site to raise horses for the military was begun in about 1938 by Ma Bufang (1903-1975), a Muslin wordlord in Mtsho sngon during China's Republican period. Over ten such stations became clusters of households. Today, Chinese farmers reside in these stations. These farmers are hired by the Guinan County Prataculture Development Limited Liability Corporation. This company administers the farmland (http://tinyurl.com/q5sxhwa, accessed 21 February 2015). Locals refer to such stations as machang or madui 'horse station'.

101 Bon skor Village former Party leader, Dpa' kho, provided much of this information.
Credit Cooperatives in 2009. The interest rate was six percent. The loan amount was equal to the amount of annual resettlement subsidy the family received. For example, if each family member received 600 RMB and a family had six members, they could receive a loan of 3,600 RMB.

In October 2010, the loan policy changed. A group of five to ten households could borrow money collectively, while fewer than five households could not. The five to ten households were required to borrow and return money at the same time. In this case, each family could borrow 10,000-50,000 RMB and the interest rate increased to about twelve percent. The bank recorded the number of livestock, amount of government subsidies, and houses per household, which was collateral for the loan. If a household within the group did not return funds within a year, no household in the group could borrow again until the money was repaid. Government subsidies for the household that did not repay were taken by the bank. Locals consider loan procedures and regulations to be complex, further compounded by banks exclusively using Chinese language. Chinese-Tibetan translation services for oral exchanges and written forms related to bank business have never been provided.

In 2013, according to the village head, the entire village borrowed seven million RMB for one year from the Bya mdo Township Rural Credit Cooperative. In total, thirteen million RMB was borrowed in 2014 and another thirteen million RMB in 2015. Loans pay for student tuition, house construction, food purchase, medical cost, and debt repayment. Very few locals start enterprises and make profits. Younger family members sometimes collect and sell caterpillar fungus or work at construction sites throughout the year to repay the loan. Some purchase vehicles and derive income from driving passengers between the village and local towns. However, the number of vehicles has increased in the past two to three years so drivers do not earn much.

The local government constructed a paved road between Tsha rnga Village and Bon skor Village in about 2009, but it soon deteriorated due to very poor construction quality. In 2015, the government had a budget of six to seven million RMB to construct a new paved road from Tsha rnga Village to the end of Bon skor Village and an unpaved stone road from the local village to the Mu ge thang herding area.

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102 The Bon skor Village head in 2014 provided much of this information.
**LANGUAGE**

Bon skor residents speak an A mdo Tibetan nomad dialect. It is the only village in Bya mdo Township where this nomad dialect is spoken. Other villages in the township speak A mdo Tibetan farming dialect and Mtsho sngon Chinese dialect. As mentioned earlier, several elders speak a few words of Mongol.

Through migration and intermarriage, other A mdo Tibetan sub-dialects and the Mtsho sngon Chinese dialect have influenced the local Tibetan dialect. Some locals speak the local dialect mixed with Mtsho sngon Chinese, especially for names of new products, e.g., *diansi* (*dianshi*) 'television' and *dianhua* 'telephone'.

In 2010, a group of local youths, monks, students, and teachers, began holding an annual village meeting to emphasize the importance of speaking an unmixed language in order to preserve the local language. In 2012, some educated local monks and students donated ten to 1,000 RMB each and purchased illustrated books featuring Tibetan terms for new items that were distributed to locals. A second meeting was held in 2013 to test locals, who ranged in age from twenty to fifty. Awards were given to the best learners. As a result, local adults began to recognize the importance of speaking their own language. In 2015, locals considered mixing Tibetan with Chinese to be shameful.

From 2003, the Bon skor Tibetan Village Primary School periodically published a journal *Bya chu'i 'gyur khugs 'The Rhythm of Bya chu River'* with locally raised funds. However, the funds ran out, threatening the end of the journal. Fortunately, in 2011 a donor provided 10,000 RMB that allowed for the publication of 500 copies (in 2011) and for two more issues to be published in 2012 and in 2013. The journal publishes non-political poetic and literary works, non-fiction essays, and short stories translated from Chinese and English. A major goal is to encourage students to study and write in Tibetan. Local writers are encouraged to contribute to the publication. A new journal editorship hopes locals will take an interest in seeing their children's works published and thus, better appreciate the value of education, and encourage their children to attend school.104

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103 An example of speech given by a local elder is available at: (http://tinyurl.com/q6cqouq, accessed 21 February 2015)
104 The journal may be viewed at (http://tinyurl.com/kbbmk2w, accessed 21 February 2015).
HOUSING

Bon skor residents traditionally lived in *sbra nag*. The short form is *sbra*\(^{105}\), which literally translates as 'coarse yak tent' or 'goat hair cloth tent'. *Nag* means black. This 'black tent' is made of black *rtsid pa* 'coarse yak hair'. Locals spin this hair with a *phang*\(^{106}\) 'spindle' into *thags* 'yarn' using a traditional technique called *thags chas*. Cloth is woven from this yarn by women. Panels of such cloth are stitched together by men to make the *sbra*.

Photo 100. A spindle.

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\(^{105}\) In local dialect, *sbra* is usually pronounced 'ra'.

\(^{106}\) About thirteen centimeters long, the *phang shing* 'spindle' is the width of a thumb. The *phang shing's* end is narrower than the middle and top. The *phang lo* 'round stone' features a thumbsize hole in the center, where the *phang shing* is inserted. The *phang lo* remains in the center of the *phang shing*, which is used as a wheel to turn the *phang shing*. These two items together are the *phang*. 
Photo 101. Two local women weave *thags* from sheep wool to make fabric used for cushion covers and bags.

Photo 102. Local women make *thags*. 
Sbra were very common in the village before 1995. However, in 2014, I could not find a single family using one in Bon skor, although some neighbor villages used sbra at the direction of certain bla ma. Sbra were usually stored at their owner’s home where, after years of storage, many were decayed. As recently as the 1980s, when locals spun, wove, and pitched tents, riddles similar to those of other herding villages were asked and answered (Nam mkha'i nor bu 1994:166):

1. གཡག་བརྒྱ་ལ་སྣ་ཐིག་གཅིག་ཅི་རེད།
2. ཅུན་ལོ་གྱི་ལས།
3. གཡག་གཅིག་ལ་སྣ་ཐིག་བརྒྱ་ཐེ་དེ།
4. བཤད་ལྷ་གྱི་ལས་
`g.yag brgya la sna thig gcig ci red
2 de phreng ba red
3 g.yag gcig la sna thig brgya ci red
4 de sbra nag red

1 Question: What is a hundred yaks with one nose rope?
2 Answer: Prayer beads.
3 Question: What is a yak with one hundred nose ropes?
4 Answer: Sbra.

The largest sbra was known as sbra leb. Medium and small ones were variously called ra nag, sbre’u mtshes, re tho, and ho log. Ras translates as 'cloth' and re means 'yak hair felt'.

All the sbra were square and shared the same features other than size. For a large sbra, each side was about four and a half arm spans (about nine meters) up to about fifty-six square meters (Tshe brtan rgyal 2010:26). Since the 1980s, most sbra in Bon skor Village gradually became smaller because locals used light canvas tents – ras gur – that were easier to transport and pitch. Many locals made ras gur, while others purchased them in the local township market. In 2014, the most recently made sbra from a neighbor village, Sha rgya, were about twenty-six square meters in size.

Photo 104. A sbra in Sha rgya Village in 2014.

Large sbra had eight nang kwa 'internal poles': one at each corner, two from the upper part of the tent or far edge coming from the door, and two poles by the door.
The *phug kwa* 'upper poles' were made of birch wood to create stability and permanence. The *sgo kwa* 'poles by the door' were made of cypress wood and were thought to bring wealth to the family. The other four poles were made from willow or juniper, depending on availability. Medium sized tents had seven poles with only one pole at the upper rear part of the tent, and one by the door supporting a *gzhung kwa* 'beam' above.

A gap about forty centimeters wide ran down the center of the tent roof from the top of the rear pole to the door pole. Fifteen *zung nga* 'straps' with juniper *cha ru* 'wooden buttons' or ' pegs' were on one side. The other fifteen *A lung* 'buttonholes' or 'loops' were on the other side. The gap was bridged by the fifteen straps. This *kha tshub* 'gap' was above the *brog thab* or *sgyid pu* 'adobe stove' and was both a skylight and smokehole. A piece of white yak or goat hair cloth on the roof was used to cover the *kha tshub* during rain and snow.

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107 Drawings of tents and yurts in this book were made by Yao Danrong (b. 1983).

108 A *cha ru* was considered a *pho sgrog* 'male button' and featured a button or peg. An *A lung* had the buttonhole and was referred to as *mo sgrog* 'female button'.

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There were twenty-four textile cords inside the sbra, which were all made of yak or goat hair: four thad thig 'side cords', four gru thig 'corner cords', eight thur thig 'declining cords',\(^\text{109}\) and eight ngo thig 'ceiling cords'.\(^\text{110}\)

The four gru thig and two ngo thig ended in loops outside the sbra. Some chon thag 'tent ropes' outside the sbra were linked to these loops. The tent had four corner ropes and five sa 'dogs 'ground ties'. A large sbra usually had nine to eleven chon thag that stretched the tent outward. These included four chon thag from the four corners of the tent, two from the middle of the two sides, two from the door, and one from the phug chon 'rear pole'. These nine chon thag were stretched around the sbra and tied to phur ba, wooden stakes about forty or more centimeters long pegged into the ground. The middle of each chon thag was raised by a chon kwa 'cypress or birch pole' about one and a half meters long. In the process of pitching a sbra, the nang kwa 'internal poles' were positioned after the sbra was lifted and stretched upward and outward by the chon thag and chon kwa.

A man who was considered lucky and not a widower pegged the phug chon and sgo chon 'door pole' when a new sbra was pitched. A long white cloth with rectangular pieces of different-colored

\(^{109}\) Cords on the four sides of the inner tent.

\(^{110}\) Cords on the tent ceiling.
cloth, printed with rgyal mtshan rtse mo'i dpung rgyan\textsuperscript{111} and rlung rta\textsuperscript{112} was attached at one edge and hung or tied along the phug chon and sgo chon to form a sgo dar 'door banner' / 'silk'.

The sgyid pu 'stove' was made of stone and adobe and was at the center of a sbra. The sgyid pu had three hearths: two mar sgyid 'lower hearths', and one yar sgyid 'upper hearth'. The latter was connected to the bang kha 'fuel store', which was partly supported by two bang shing 'wooden blocks', and contained yak or sheep dung for fuel. This stove had two small holes, one on each side, for ash removal.

The right side of the sbra, when looking inwards from the door, was for males while the left was for females. Women usually did not go to the male side and vice versa. The male side is considered the lha sa 'holy place' and the female side was considered the g.yang sa 'place of fortune'. During a wedding, the bride usually sat on the female side while a local sngags pa or monk chanted g.yang 'bod\textsuperscript{113}' on the male side. Guests, elders, and respected males sat on the upper male side, furthest from the door. Most gdan 'seats or cushions' were made of sheep wool and phying ba 'felt'. Behind the seat on the male side was a wooden cabinet inside of which were a thang ga of Rgyal ba rin po che His Holiness the Dalai Lama, ShAky thub pa 'Shakyamuni', Sman bla 'Medicine Buddha', and 'Od dpag med 'Amitabha'. Many locals placed their chos skyong srung ma 'protective deity' and local deity thang ga here as well. Mchod me 'butter lamps' and other shrine articles were placed on or inside the cabinet. Along with these cabinets, sgyo 'sacks' of flour or rtsam pa were placed neatly on the upper and inside edge of the sbra. These sacks were covered with phya ra 'yak hair' or 'wool interwoven cloth'.

\textsuperscript{111} A recitation from Gzungs 'to hold' 'maintain', a ritual speech similar to a mantra.
\textsuperscript{112} Rlung rta 'wind horse', are pieces of thin rectangular paper printed with Buddhist scriptures; a horse in the center; and in each of the four corners one of the following - a garuda, a dragon, a tiger, or a lion. Rlung rta variants include rlung rta 'wind horse' and klung rta 'water horse' (Samten Karmay 2010:304). Klung rta = klung 'five elements' or 'space'; rta 'horse'. Klung rta represents the elements: the tiger represents wood; the lion, earth; the garuda, fire; the dragon, water; and the horse, wind (Nam mkha'i nor bu 1994:318). Tossing these papers into the wind while atop sacred mountains is thought to bring good fortune. In some areas, rlung rta means 'reputation' 'fortune'.
\textsuperscript{113} A Buddhist recitation for calling auspiciousness.
The female side featured cooking utensils, butter, *rtsam pa* containers, milk buckets, bowls, and vegetarian food. A small amount of meat was also placed on the female side while large pieces of fresh meat were placed on the male side. The women's side were considered to have *klu* 'water deities', which find fresh meat unacceptable. Putting a large amount of meat there was avoided in order to not bring bad fortune to the family.

Behind the *sbra* was a *bsang khri* 'platform for burning *bsang* ' made from stones and adobe. It was built on a hilltop or a hillside higher than the tent. A *dar shing* 'flag pole' five or six meters tall, from which prayer flags fluttered, was raised near the *bsang khri*. 
Photo 106. Bsang on a bsang platform.

Photo 107. Bsang khri on the corner of a wall.
Photo 108. A plate that in the past was used to burn bsang.

A sbra was usually pitched fronting a spring or river to invite wealth and happiness.\textsuperscript{114} Sites facing a cliff or rocky mountain were avoided because they obstructed good fortune. A good sbra is resistant to water, snow, and wind for years. A sbra resembling a tortoise also protected against earthquakes and floods. This belief is related to the local idea that a tortoise can live up to 500 years, thus symbolizing longevity and good fortune.

\textsuperscript{114} Refers to rten 'brel, which in this context, accords with the translation 'fortune' (Sa mtsho skyid and Roche 2011:240).
The lyrics of a local *glu* 'folksong' sung by Lha sgron depict a tent's ideal location:

1. སྦྲ འཀྲ་བུག་ཅོན་དབུས་གཙང་ཡུལ་ལ།
2. ཇྷེས་བོད་དང་བོད་ཕྱེ་སྐྱེལ་ལོ།

1. sbra'i phug chon dbus gtsang yul la 'then
2. chos bstan pa dar ba'i rten 'brel yin

1. The tent's innermost pole, pulled towards Dbus gtsang,
2. Is a sign Buddhism will flourish.

3. སྦྲ འཀྲ་དཀྱིལ་ཅོན་གླིང་དཀར་ཡུལ་ལ།
4. ཆུ་དཔ་rtsal rgyas pa'i rten 'brel yin

3. The tent's central pole, pulled toward Gling dkar,¹¹⁵
4. Is a sign that men will be courageous.

5. སྦྲ འཀྲ་སྤོ་ཅོན་རྒྱ་དགུ་ཡུལ།
6. གྲོས་དཔའ་ལོ་བོ།

5. sbra'i sgo chon rgya nag yul la 'then
6. gos mdzod la len pa'i rten 'brel yin

5. The tent's door-pole, pulled toward China,
6. Is a sign that fine clothes will be brought to the treasure house.

In a wedding oration performed by Gsang sgrog, the *sbra* is described as follows:

1. སྦྲ འཀྲ་མོ་ལོ་བུག་ཅོན་དབུས་གཙང་ཡུལ།
2. ཇྷེས་བོད་དང་བོད་ཕྱེ་སྐྱེལ་ལོ།
3. སྦྲ འཀྲ་པོ་ལྡོན་པ་དབུས་གཙང་ཡུལ།

¹¹⁵ A legendary Tibetan kingdom ruled by the mythic hero Ge sar. According to Thub bstan lhun grub, it was located in today's Mgo log Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province.
First, King Ral pa arrived in Tibet, and established borders with India and China, The black tent originated then.

The innermost pole was pulled by Brahma, pulled to the feet of snowy mountains, Pulled the straps towards the sky.

The sky-wide door was established, The lion-like white eagle pulled the edges, And the earth was made the foundation.

Lha chen tshang ba.
The four great kings lifted the four corners,\textsuperscript{117} The four harmonious brothers\textsuperscript{118} beckoned fortune, The four poles were pulled in the four directions by four tent pegs, And thus the four evils were defeated.

The outer door made of sacred juniper, Allows the earth to be covered with variegated livestock, The inner door made of sacred birchwood, Allows the elders to live long.

\textsuperscript{117} The four great guardians of the four directions are Dhritarastra (Yul ’khor bsrungs) of the east, Virudhaka (’Phags skyes po) of the south, Virupaksha (Spyan mi bsang) of the west, and Vaishravana (Rnam thos sras) of the north (http://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=159, accessed 13 April 2013).

\textsuperscript{118} The four brothers of harmony refer to a bird, rabbit, monkey, and an elephant who lived peacefully together.
The *ngo thig* are made of silver,
The rope pegs are made of coral,
The upper part is 400 men's armspans long,
Is adequate space for young men to hold a horse race,
And if horses are raced, there is enough room to attain victory.

The lower part of the tent is 900 women's armspans long,
Is adequate space for women to sing,
And if songs are sung, there is enough room to dance,
It has archery ranges on the four sides,
And if archery contests are held, there is enough room to attain victory.

The *Thang yig rnying ma*\(^\text{119}\) states that *sbra* were used for military camps; the *sgo dar* was used as a *dmag dar* 'military banner'; and aristocrats stayed in large *sbra*.

Locals compare the shape of a tent to a turtle, garuda, spider, and Mt. Meru.

Square white tents with symbols of the Bkra shis rtags rgyad 'the Eight Auspicious Symbols',\(^\text{120}\) *khyung 'brug kha sprod*
'confrontation of a garuda and a dragon', and \textit{rlung rta sde bzhi},\textsuperscript{121} featuring the symbol of the sun and moon atop the tent, were only used for \textit{rin po che} and \textit{bla ma}.

The bride's or groom's family provided a small new \textit{sbra} for newlyweds, who stayed near the parents' \textit{sbra}. The new \textit{sbra} was called \textit{ras mtshes} 'tent twin'. If two families were relatives or shared the same lineage, it was also called \textit{sbra sgo gcig} 'same tent door'.

In addition to black goat and yak-hair tents, some locals lived in Mongol \textit{gur} 'yurt' as recently as 1998. A \textit{gur} was traditionally covered with felt. Processing felt was more difficult than processing coarse yak-hair used for \textit{sbra} and was done during warm weather. Sheep were shorn, thorns and droppings from the wool were removed by hand, the wool was placed on the ground, and the wool was wetted. A smooth stick was rolled back and forth over the wool on the ground by one or two people as they sat. As the wool became dense, more was added. Locals counted the number of rolls in Mongol as they made the felt that would be used to cover the \textit{gur}. In 2016, only a few people were able to count in Mongol. The wool needed to be rolled 500 to 600 times to make a piece of felt. The following is an example of counting in Mongol from Pa thos skyid (1918-2011) and Lha sgron:

\begin{itemize}
\item 1 \text{\textit{co na ne he}}
\item 2 \text{\textit{co na 'ar bu}}
\item 3 \text{\textit{co na 'do lo}}
\item 4 \text{\textit{\ldots}}
\item 5 \text{\textit{\ldots}}
\item 6 \text{\textit{\ldots}}
\item 7 \text{\textit{\ldots}}
\end{itemize}

Dharma, parasol, an endless knot, two fish, a banner of victory, and a treasure vase.

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Rlung rta} suggests 'reputation' 'fame'. \textit{Sde bzhi} refers to the four creatures printed on a \textit{rlung rta}. Some interpret these four symbols representing longevity, good health, power, and auspiciousness, respectively.
In 2016, locals said *ther me* 'wall section', *'u ni* 'roof poles', and *ha ra ci* 'skylight' for *gur* sections. These are Mongol terms. The yurt frame was covered with felt. Rich families had three layers of felt on their *gur* in winter while other families had only one layer. As in the black tent, an adobe stove was built inside the *gur*. Locations for pitching *gur* and the mode of living were the same as for a black tent.

Sketch 3. A *gur*.

An interview conducted in Bon skor Village, about yurts, follows (Wenchangjia with Stuart 2014:113):

I lived in a yurt. We had seven yurts until 1958. After that, there was social chaos and we lost the yurts. It took a lot of wood to make a yurt. Poplar wood isn't good for yurts. After 1958 many people came here and cut down all the trees. Also, before 1958 there were many carpenters and after that there were none. All the trees were gone so we couldn't make yurts.

Yurts are much better than tents. When you are in a yurt and it is windy, you just hear the wind blow. But when you are in a tent, you feel the wind blow.
We used these words to describe the parts of the yurt:

*termi* - wall sections
*harach* - skylight
*une* - roof poles

Prior to 1958, there were hundreds of *gur* in Bon skor village. The Gur Tribe was so called because it had the most *gur* among villagers. In 2015, there was not a single household that used a *gur*. A stored, badly decayed modern *gur* with non-felt fabric and metal *ther me*, 'u *ni*, and *ha ra ci* was stored in one household.

Sketch 4. A *gur*.

*Ras gur* were commonly used from May to September in herding areas in 2015. However, many families moved from the grassland to the farmland sites and lived in adobe or brick houses that are more resistant to water, wind, and snow than tents.

122 Juha Janhunen comments:

*harach* - skylight = /xarac/ < xaraac < xaraaci 'smoke hole in tent';
*une* - roof poles = /ün/ ~ /uny/ < uni 'roof pole'; *termi* - wall sections = /term/ < terem ~ *termi* 'wall section' < 'wall'. Moreover, these are specifically Western Mongolian/ Oirat words. Only *uni* 'roof pole' is widely used in other Mongolian dialects, while the other two concepts are expressed by the words *xan* < *xana* 'wall section' and *toon* < *toono* 'smoke hole'. The words used by Rin chen skyid are, however, well documented in, for example, the Oirat (Kalmuck) dictionary of GJ Ramstedt. As the Mongols of Mtsho sngon are all originally Oirat, it is understandable that they use Oirat words. (Wenchangjia with CK Stuart 2014:114).
Sketch 5. A common *ras gur*.

Sketch 6. A decorated *ras gur*. 
In 2014, the local government provided one brick house per household in the Bon skor Village farming area. The government provided about 60,000 RMB per brick house with a contribution of 25,000-30,000 RMB required from each local household. Some locals could not afford this and stayed in their old adobe houses.


Diagram 1. New housing designs provided by the local government.
Diagram 2. New housing designs provided by the local government.
CLOTHING

Bon skor residents mostly wear *gos lwa* 'robes made of thin cloth or silk' in summer. *Phrug lwa* 'wool robes' are thicker than *gos lwa* and are also worn. *Phrug lwa* and *gos lwa* feature different decorations. Historically, *phrug lwa* were hemmed with about seven centimeters of beaver or otter skin. Collars were lined with leopard, tiger, or fox skin. Following an influential **bla ma**'s teachings on environmental protection, locals stopped wearing beaver and otter hemmed robes from about 2006. Robes were sometimes lined with *khu lang* and *ja* 'drug, which were made of soft red, yellow, blue, purple, or pink cloth. *Tshar lwa* and *slog pa* are made of sheepskin and goatskin. They were worn in winter in 2016. *Tshar lwa* is decorated in the same way as summer clothes, and sometimes worn under *gos lwa* in winter. Locals make these robes with skills learned from elders. Materials such as felt, sheepskin, and goatskin are available to most families. Some families who no longer herd livestock purchase such materials in Zi ling after resettling in the farming area.

Robes may be worn with such decorations as *byu ru* 'coral', *g.yu* 'turquoise', *ba so* 'ivory', *dmah gdan* *dngul gyi ga'u*, *dung*, *glo gzur*, *bzho bzung*, *srung 'khor*, *me cha*, and *ral gri*. Descriptions and photographs of these items are provided in the following pages.

In 2016, only a few elders regularly wore traditional robes and decorations. Young people wore such clothes only during such special occasions as **Lo sar** 'New Year', wedding ceremonies, and archery contests. They wore modern clothes at other times. Many families have sold or lost most of their traditional ornaments.
DIVINATION

Locals consult mo ba 'fortune tellers', bla ma, and sngags pa for divinations. Some use prayer beads and some use mo rde'u\(^{123}\) in fortune-telling. Locals might also use the divination book Rab rno sum 'dzoms (Chos bzang O dpal 2000:128). Many locals believe that a mo ba can judge positives and negatives and predict the future. If negatives such as accidents are predicted, the mo ba may advise chanting mantras or holding religious rituals to avoid difficulties. Many locals conduct divination, although some consider it nonsense. Rtsis 'fortune-telling based on Tibetan astrology' is favored, but rare because only bla ma, monks, or someone with proper training may conduct this divination. There are few such locals.

Photo 110. Prayer beads are used to make divinations.

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\(^{123}\) Mo rde'u are pebbles, wood dice, or sheep droppings.
Sog mo 'shoulder blades fortune-telling' is an increasingly rare method of divination. Local herdors historically burned sheep or goat's sog pa 'shoulder blades' to divine. When a sog pa is burned or removed from the fire, all in attendance should be quiet. A family elder then examines the back and front sides to divine good and bad fortune.
- Black spots on the sog pa front side portend bad luck, but a ligament in this position is positive.
- A large front side shape indicates good fortune because it is a site of men and horses.
- The higher the middle bone the better, indicating the status of a person and a place of deities.
- Red spots on the blade predict a child will be born.
- A toothed sog pa edge means sons and horses will come.
- Black spots portend ominous events.
- A curved, crooked blade means the family will lose g.yang 'sacredness' 'fortune'. Therefore, locals conduct the ritual of calling sacredness or fortune.
- Black inside the sog pa is negative. White is positive. These colors indicate the family's future.
- Black on the back side of the sog pa is favorable.
- Zigzag cracks after burning is a good portent, symbolizing a sheep's path. Straight cracks are negative.

A man from the family takes the shoulder blade near a neighbor's door, surreptitiously listens, notes the first thing he hears, and uses this information to further interpret signs on the shoulder blade.

After fortune-telling, the sog pa and other bones were put on mountains or high places – never with trash. Some locals wrote mantras on sog pa with black ink and put them on mountain and hill tops, hoping for good fortune.

As locals resettled near towns and no longer had livestock such activities became rare.

Photo 113. The back side of a sog pa.
Photo 114. The front side of a sog pa.

Photo 115. Sog pa bottom.
CONFLICT

Historically, serious conflicts resulted from robberies and killings. According to locals, stealing livestock was common in the early 1930s and often resulted in fighting to recover the livestock. Killing was unusual. Killing someone outside the village was a serious matter, as Lha sgron's account illustrates:

In the 1930s, a local villager unfortunately killed a farmer from Snang ra in Gcan tsha County in Bon po'i zhung kha. After some time, locals realized that this dead person was a relative of Snang ra'i dpon tshang 'Leader's Family of Snang ra'. Hundreds of people from Snang ra wanted revenge and started to our village from Gcan tsha County. At this point, the dpon po of Stong che Village, who had good relations with Bon skor, clashed with the Snang ra group at the midway point, leaving many dead and injured. The dpon po of Snang ra claimed stong 'a thousand' head of livestock from Bon skor for killing the farmer. This claim was later given to Stong che'i dpon tshang. For several years, many goats and sheep were annually given to this dpon po from each Bon skor household. The relationship between dpon po of Stong che Village and dpon po of Snang ra remains cold today.

Disputes over grazing rights increased after land division and the Returning Degraded Pasture to Grass Policy. Land division created a sense of personal ownership. If a neighbor's livestock wandered onto another family's property the land owner felt obliged to respond by appropriating or harming the trespassing livestock. Such events often initiated an increasingly violent cycle of retribution. In 2000 and 2001, the local village quarreled over land ownership with two neighboring villages that resulted in several serious injuries. Another dispute with a neighboring farming village occurred in 2002, but without physical confrontation. In 2003, Bon skor Village had a land dispute with Chos tsha Village, with many serious injuries. Thirteen Bon skor residents and thirteen Chos tsha residents were detained for fifteen days by the local police. Similar disputes happened in about 2009 with a neighbor village, and again in 2013 between another two villages resulting in five locals being hospitalized.

Another source of conflict is elopement, which has become more common since about 1998. Divorce rates have also increased. There are cases of married women eloping. In such instances, the family of the woman's husband brings a gyod 'law suit' against the family of the man who eloped. Usually, the man's family compensates to solve the conflict between the families by inviting local elders to be
gzu ba 'mediators'. A century ago, the family of the husband whose wife had eloped claimed bag stong 'bride compensation' or stong 'jal ba 'compensate a thousand' — compensation of a thousand head of livestock. Such demands were usually for horses, sheep, silver, and cash. In 2016, such cases were solved with payments of 3,000-20,000 RMB. Over time, village elders have reduced the amount to lessen the burden on the families involved.
NEW TECHNOLOGY

In 2016, Bon skor Tibetan Village households lived in clusters and many residents engaged in agro-pastoralism. Their daily lives were historically permeated with songs, rituals, ceremonies, and many other cultural activities. However, the loss of such cultural treasures as folksongs, orations, clothing, and traditional wedding ceremonies is accelerating as locals increasingly use radios, televisions, DVD/VCD players, and mobile phones, which are commonly referred to by their Chinese names. With children increasingly educated in the Chinese language and bombarded on every side by the notion that 'modern is best', there is little place for traditional songs. In 2016, many locals had phones (iPhone, Samsung, Oppo) with 3G service. Weibo and WeChat were popular. WeChat was the most popular software allowing illiterates to communicate voice messages and share photos and videos. In 2015, a broadband internet cable was provided to the farming area of Bon skor Community. Three internet speeds were made available: 600 RMB for browsing the internet and using WeChat; 900 RMB for watching online television; and 1,700 RMB for both, plus a new Huawei cellphone. The net result of this over time has been a break in transmission of traditions from older to younger generations. The latter find the traditional store of music less attractive compared to what they see on television and mobile devices. As a result, teenagers are generally unfamiliar with their parents' and grandparents' store of songs, proverbs, riddles, and jokes.

Traditions that are not practiced disappear. For example, as time passes, weddings in Bon skor Village have become dramatically abbreviated because people are 'too busy' and less interested in such rituals. In 2014, several families held weddings in restaurants in the local township town. Few wedding songs were sung. One or two large TV screens played DVDs and VCDs of Tibetan and Chinese performers, and were used by youths to sing karaoke.

Each year that a song is not sung increases the chance that it will never be heard again. Songs need to be sung to be remembered, but they are not sung unless there is an audience. Each time an aged tradition-bearer dies, their knowledge of songs, festival details, and so on goes with them. This is an irreversible cultural loss.

What will Tibetan culture be in two decades in such areas as Bon skor? Preserving traditional indigenous knowledge is crucial to ensure that future generations will be familiar with the culture of their forebears.
PART TWO
THE WEDDING
INTRODUCTION

In this section, five Bon skor residents summarize their marriage experiences. The first account illustrates how Lha sgron's husband treated her and her children after he left to live with his lover. After several years, he returned home and stayed with Lha sgron and their children.

The second account explains how Don grub's marriage was mandated by his parents, and the divorce that soon followed. Afterwards, he found a woman on his own and married her. They had a child together. Four years after marriage they divorced.

The third account tells how Pad ma skyid left school and married a local Tibetan teacher. Unable to give birth, she eloped with another man and did not return home for about two years until 2011. Later, she married the man she had eloped with.

The fourth account reveals another form of marriage in the local village: fatherless 'Brug thar rgyal was forced to leave school. He was then sent as a bridegroom to the home of a young woman chosen by his relatives. Though he wanted to continue schooling, he had no choice.

The fifth account describes Bod pu de's first fiancée committing suicide while he was incarcerated for illegal logging. When he returned home, he married, but later divorced. They had had four children. He was single in 2016.

VOICE ONE: LHA SGRON (B. 1946)

I was eighteen when I married Gsang sgrog (b. 1945). We were both from Bon skor Village, but from different tribes. The village was in the former location at that time. I herded sheep. When I returned home one day, my parents told me that a family was asking for me as a bride. "Today, a matchmaker came and negotiated the whole day. Finally we agreed, and you will be sent to the Sma ra Tribe," they announced. I was both surprised and excited. Everyone says that becoming a bride is the greatest thing in a woman's life. Only later did I realize that my intended husband was from my village. In fact I had seen him once.

THE WEDDING CEREMONY

It was summer. My family and Gsang sgrog's family arranged the bag ston 'bride festivity' or 'wedding ceremony'. I was very excited about
the clothes the groom's family had provided. At that time, otter skin was a precious treasure. There was about forty centimeters of otter skin trim on my cloth robe. As the wedding approached, Mother instructed me on how to be a good bride in the groom’s home and told me to be very polite with the groom's relatives.

Early on the morning of the wedding day, my uncles escorted me on horseback to the groom's family’s tent. When we reached our destination, I was sent to another tent to stay with two girls, while my uncles stayed in another big tent where the wedding ceremony was held. I couldn't observe the wedding ceremony because I was confined to the tent with those two girls, but I heard the songs being sung in the other tent. I heard two familiar songs:

Song One

1 nga dgung a sgnon tshang gi ston mo yin
2 ngas 'brug pho chung ston mor bos nas yod
3 'di bos nas mi tshad thon nas yod
4 ngas char zim ma zhig gis bsu ma byed

I am this Azure Sky Family's banquet,
I invited the young dragon to the banquet,
Now he has been invited and arrived,
I welcome him with light rain.

5 nga rdza khra yag tshang gi ston mo yin
6 ngas 'brong bre lo ston mor bos nas yin
7 'di bos nas mi tshad thon nas yod
8 ngas na me tog zhig gis bsu ma byed
I am this Fine Rocky Mountain Family's banquet,
I invited the nose-ringed yak to the banquet,
Now it has been invited and arrived,
I welcome it with a flowery meadow.

I am this groom's family's wedding ceremony,
I invited all the villagers,
Now they have been invited and arrived,
I welcome them with a few songs.

Song Two

Under the dark brown, upper lab rtse,
There are 9,900 youths.
Though most carry long rifles,
Only a few are true heroes.
In that dark tent,
There are 9,900 girls.
Though their ornaments are identical,
Only a few will go to be brides.

The two girls and I talked and later we became very good friends. When the A zhang 'the bride's male relatives' were returning home, they took me with them. At my natal home, I heard uncles say that there were many singers and plenty of meat, and that the wedding had gone very well.

RETURNING TO THE GROOM'S HOME TO STAY

Five days later, Uncle escorted me to the groom's home. Before leaving that same day he entrusted me to the groom's family and my husband. I was shy and speechless for the first few days because I was unfamiliar with most of the groom's family members. I was very homesick, but never mentioned it. Everyone was kind so I got along with them well. Besides, neighboring families and relatives invited me to chat and eat. In less than a month, I knew almost everyone who lived near my husband's home. By this time, I was doing most of the housework. Since there were hundreds of sheep, I sometimes helped my husband herd. As time passed, New Year approached and my husband promised to let me visit my natal home. I was excited because I really missed my family.

A NEW YEAR VISIT

On the third day of the New Year, my husband and I went home to visit my natal family. It was in frozen winter. Everything was gray and dull. Mother wept when I met her at the door because we had not met for a long while. We talked a lot. Mother had visibly aged. That was the time when sheep gave birth and I couldn't stay more than three

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124 A dung gor is a shell-shaped hair decoration women wear on the back of their robes.
days because I had to return to my husband's home to work.

A Horrible Event

In 1958, all the villagers escaped to the Kye phur Mountains to hide. I heard gunfire almost every day. Uncle was the village leader and he was terribly sick that time.

When I heard that Uncle had died in prison, I became ill for a long time. There was no medicine and very little food. My husband and one of his relatives – a strong man – often secretly hunted in the mountains and brought us food. After several years, everything calmed down and we resettled in the village. I felt very lonely when Father never returned home and later passed away.

My husband was with me when I gave birth to my first son during the Cultural Revolution. Luckily, we were safe, though frightened. Some locals betrayed other people and destroyed local temples, religious scriptures, and lab rtse.

Another Shock

Time peacefully passed and I gave birth to five children. Shamefully, my husband found a lover nearby and lived with her. He sporadically returned once every month or two. He had two children with that woman, which terribly humiliated me, since all the locals knew about the stupid thing he was doing. This made my children and me shed tears almost every evening when we had supper. I asked my relatives and his relatives to solve the problem. However, my children would not let me divorce since they truly loved their father. He occasionally took them to that woman’s home. They stayed there a while, but they had many conflicts with her children. My son once told me that when he was with his father at that woman’s home, her children wanted to sit on his lap and did not let him sit. That woman also kicked my son.

When my son was twelve, he was forced to butcher a sheep because there was nobody else who could do it in our home. When he tried to catch the sheep, he was so small that it dragged him along the ground. At that time, my son sometimes held my youngest daughter and churned milk, even though he was so young. Although my husband rejected me and stayed with another woman, my son helped with the family work. My oldest son and I worked very hard. During that time, I had only hatred for that woman, but I no longer have such hatred now.

A Peaceful Life Again

Later, without explanation, my husband returned home and stayed with me and my children. It has been years since he last stayed with
the other woman. I do not know why he returned, but I am sure that he missed his children. At that time, the village was about to move to our current location because the Yellow River had been dammed.

When my son was eighteen, he abducted a local girl to be his wife. He abducted her seven times, since the bride’s family refused to negotiate. After a long time, we successfully negotiated and she became my son’s wife. As the village was about to relocate, my husband and daughters moved to the mountains with the family livestock in the herding area, while my son and his wife went to the current village location to farm and build rooms. My son’s wife soon gave birth to a son. After my husband returned and stayed with me, we had another two daughters and one son. Today, all my daughters and sons are married and have their own families. My husband and I live with my youngest son and occasionally with the oldest son.

**VOICE TWO: DON GRUB (B. 1981)**

Don grub is a local herdsman. To his surprise, at the age of seventeen, his parents arranged his marriage. He had never seen the girl before. He expressed surprise, but did not object.

**THE WEDDING CEREMONY**

All the neighboring families and relatives came to help with the wedding ceremony. They helped make dumplings, cook meat, and clean the rooms. In addition, mutton and drinks such as beer and liquor were offered at the ceremony.

There were about thirteen A zhang at the wedding ceremony, which took place in my home. Elders gave speeches and sang, which unfortunately I could hardly hear. A middle-aged A zhang called me over to hear the sash-tying speech. Wearing my phrug robe I went over to the A zhang group to await their speech. Meanwhile, I was both nervous and shy since many people, including unfamiliar A zhang, were there. It took about half an hour for the A zhang to finish his speech. A group of my female relatives came in at that point and started singing songs that I knew because I often sang them while herding. I knew many songs and when the singers sang, I recognized the lyrics. For example, one song went:

1. ཚོང་ཇོ་མ་འཐོད་དམ་གསུམ།
2. ལན་ཐོག་བཀྟོད་པའི་ཐོན་པ།
3. དབུས་ཡོས་པའི་དབུན་མཆོད་

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125 Wool material for making a Tibetan robe.
Offer thrice at the beginning of drinking liquor.\textsuperscript{126}  
In the Buddha field\textsuperscript{127} in the East,  
For the crown of the Buddhist Teachings in the Central Tibet.\textsuperscript{128}

Offer thrice in the middle of drinking liquor.  
At the conch-covered doors in the west,  
For the four classes of rlung rta of young men.

Offer thrice at the end of drinking liquor.  
At the Lake of Milk in the north,  
Make offerings to the self-created deities of food of ma sru.

\textsuperscript{126} Refers to chang, which locals historically distilled from barley. However, in 2014, no locals whom I interviewed said that they knew how to make chang. Chang, as used here, refers to barley liquor that locals buy from local shops. Most local barley wines are produced from Qinghai Huzhu Barley Wine Ltd.  
	extsuperscript{127} General name for places where the Buddha gave teachings.  
	extsuperscript{128} Dbus refers to one of two traditional regions in Central Tibet with the other being Gtsang.
The A zhang and bride left in the afternoon. As soon as the A zhang were gone, I felt relieved because I no longer needed to wait on nor impress them. After their departure, I thought that the girl must be fine, since the family was reputable. Happily, I called my friends to come and drink with me. That was the happiest night of drinking for me. After we got drunk, we took some girls to a friend's house and sang love songs with them.

**A BRIDE FOR A FEW DAYS**

Several days later, the bride's father escorted her to my home. At first she was too shy to look at any of my family members but, later when she did, I was shocked to realize that she was very plain. The bride's father returned home as evening approached. A room had been prepared for my wife and I to sleep in. She had an odd personality that sometimes made me feel stupid. I never liked her, starting from that night. The next day, I privately told Father that I didn’t want to be with her because of her odd personality. He just scolded me. I was so angry that I did not eat supper the next night. For three to four days, I repeatedly talked about this to my parents. Five days later, I swore I would run away if she stayed as my wife. Father then sent her back to her home and negotiated a divorce. Finally the matter was settled: the bride's family took all the bride’s clothes and some cash, including the bridewealth/ dowry. In total, it came to about 30,000 RMB. Afterwards, my family swore never to arrange another wedding for me.

**ANOTHER MARRIAGE**

After a couple of years, I fell in love with a pretty local girl. After about a year her family members realized I was her boyfriend and, gradually, I moved into their home without a wedding. My parents scolded me for moving into her home. About a year later, Father wanted us to live in his home. The girl's parents resisted for a while, but finally agreed. They took 1,000 RMB as bridewealth and both my family and hers helped us build a courtyard and a house where we could live separately from my family. Eventually, we had a wedding after our house was completed. It was a simple wedding with only a few A zhang and guests in attendance. Everything went smoothly.

**ANOTHER LIFE TRANSITION**

It was my responsibility to manage my new family. I was tired of herding sheep. Instead, I was interested in driving. I bought a car and even though I had no driver's license, I drove villagers to Mgo mang Township and other places. My wife tended our domestic animals
while I drove. I met many people and my ideas about earning income changed. I gave most of the money I earned to my wife, but instead of saving it, she gave most of it to her family. She became pregnant about four years later and continued to give money to her family. Many of her friends and relatives gossiped that my wife had lovers and was spending money on them. I then decided to divorce her and asked Father to solve the problem. My wife’s family agreed and we divorced. I am now tired of marriage and won’t find another wife. I am planning to ask a friend who is a poet, to write a poem describing how meaningless marriage is.

**Voice Three: Pad ma skyid (b. 1982)**

Pad ma skyid’s brother sent her to Khri kha County Junior Middle School, which no locals had ever attended before. Although it was expensive, he insisted on paying her tuition and other schooling expenses, because he respected and supported students. One day, however, Pad ma skyid stayed with a man in Mgo mang Town and did not return home. It seemed he had abducted her. One day before she returned home, matchmakers visited, but were rejected by her father and by other family members.

On the following day, one matchmaker escorted Pad ma skyid back home with some new robes and ornaments that the youth’s family had prepared. When her parents asked her if she really wanted to live in that home as a bride, she said she was willing and had agreed to do so. Pad ma skyid then stopped her schooling.

**The Wedding Ceremony**

Early one morning on the third day of the New Year period, four A zhang plus Pad ma skyid went to the groom’s home in a jeep. They had a simple, cheerful wedding. Many singers came from the groom’s village and sang. In the A zhang group, there were only two singers, but they had a seemingly inexhaustible store of songs. Pad ma skyid stayed at the groom’s home after the A zhang left. A week or so later, she returned to her natal home for several days.

**After the Wedding**

Pad ma skyid’s husband was a teacher. Being a teacher was considered a good job, and her parents were proud of their daughter’s marriage. Pad ma skyid’s husband soon bought a house in Mgo mang Town where they lived happily. Pad ma skyid controlled her husband’s teaching salary, saving most of it and spending little. Her husband sometimes wanted money to go out with his colleagues to parties and gatherings, but she did not give him money for such
things. Conflict ensued. Additional problems were caused by the fact that after becoming pregnant once and experiencing a stillbirth, Pad ma skyid did not conceive again.

Later, without her husband’s knowledge, Pad ma skyid took a lover. She was at home while her husband was at work, and had much time to be outside the home, which is how she met her lover. They eventually ran away, though they did not go far. Her brother found them and beat the man, who was hospitalized.

Pad ma skyid was in a difficult situation. She no longer cared about her husband, but still took his money. When her family tried to solve the problem her husband took her back, ignoring her previous behavior. For most locals, once a wife runs away, her husband will not take her back and will also request compensation from his wife's family.

Most people said that Pad ma skyid's husband was foolish to air his private life in public when he drank, which is why Pad ma skyid limited his spending.

**DIVORCE**

After three years, Pad ma skyid found another lover, an unemployed herdsman. She went to live with him and divorced her husband.

**VOICE FOUR: 'BRUG THAR RGYAL (B. 1987)**

I am fatherless. I attended primary school but didn't finish because my uncle wanted me to move to another home and live there as a bridegroom. I loved school, but Uncle was the only person who looked after my mother and family. I respected him as my father and had to obey him. When I was seventeen, two matchmakers came to my home and asked me to marry Gu bha's daughter, Lcags mo byams (b. 1987). At first, Uncle refused, however, after three rounds of negotiation, the matchmakers were successful. Uncle asked for 500 RMB as the groom's price. They asked me to agree, and reluctantly did so. I had been promised and also, my family was poor while hers was better off and had a good reputation.

**THE WEDDING DAY AND NIGHT**

Just after the New Year, Uncle and another relative accompanied me to the bride's home for a simple *mag ston* 'bridegroom festivity' or 'wedding ceremony' with about thirty guests. Uncle gave a short speech, though he was not an eloquent speaker. He entrusted me to the bride's home. I was with Uncle and other relatives in the same house and wrapped my face in my robe sleeves just like a shy new
bride. It was a short winter day. After some tea, a group of about fifteen women entered the room and began asking for *chu dar*. Uncle soon gave them the *chu dar*.

**CHU DAR**

Ma sru: 1 Ya, now, 2 I offer water to the upper row. 3 It is the saliva of a blue dragon, 4 and is the sign of plenteous summer rain. 5 I offer water to the middle row. 6 It is white lion's milk, 7 and represents snow touching the sky. 8 I offer water to the lower row. 9 It represents the Savior of the World, 10 and all the gathered guests.

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129 *Chu dar* is *phrug* or *kha btags* given by *A zhang* to the bride's family. This presentation is accompanied by argumentative and teasing speeches from the *A zhang* and *gnyen tshang* when the *mag pa* is sent to the bride’s home. Similarly, *bu ras* is given to the groom's family when a bride is sent to the groom's family. Women from the bride’s side ask for *chu dar* from the *A zhang*.

130 Provided by Lha sgron.

131 An alternative name for the Buddha.
Ya, now, I have something to say to the *gnyen tshang.* As they said, they need the bridegroom's *chu dar.* They need a *phrug* from the upper region. Although it is the same (as what we have locally), the points (pattern on it) should not be the same. They need cloth from the lower region (China). Although the cloth is the same (as that we have locally), its patterns should be different. A tamed horse from the central region (Nepal), and hemmed white clothing are also needed. We require (these gifts) that people from far away will hear about and that people from nearby can see. Our family has gotten used to eating with big mouths, and taking with big hands. We never leave without getting what we want, and are never dissatisfied with the *chu dar* we get. This is the way the Tibetan bridegroom's *chu dar* should be requested.

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1 Ya, now, I have something to say to the *gnyen tshang.*
2 As they said, they need the bridegroom's *chu dar.*
3 Although it is the same (as what we have locally), the points (pattern on it) should not be the same.
4 They need cloth from the lower region (China).
5 Although the cloth is the same (as that we have locally), its patterns should be different.
6 A tamed horse from the central region (Nepal), and hemmed white clothing are also needed.
7 We require (these gifts) that people from far away will hear about and that people from nearby can see.
8 Our family has gotten used to eating with big mouths, and taking with big hands.
9 We never leave without getting what we want, and are never dissatisfied with the *chu dar* we get.
10 This is the way the Tibetan bridegroom's *chu dar* should be requested.

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*gnyen tshang* ya da de ring ngas gnyen tshang tshang gi gral dkyil nas zhwa thod khar 'then te a zhang tshang gi mgon gyi sngun nas rdzu rjes su 'phangs te bod kha ba can gyi rten 'brel bshad bdag gzhi mgon gnyis kyi 'dod pa ltar du ma srub tshang gi re ba bskang ngas rin pa can po rum nas blangs te rtsa ba can po rtsibs nas bzhag ste rin thang gong tshod rjes nas bshad bod kyi mag pa'i chu dar zer ba de ma siz tshang gis cig slong dgos ba a zhang tshang gis cig ster dgos ba de srid pa chags pa'i dpe red

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132 The husband's relatives are collectively called *gnyen tshang.*
133 In this context, this refers to Dbus gtsang
Gnyen tshang: 1 Ya, now, today, from the middle row among the gnyen tshang, 2 I hold back my hat from my forehead, 3 in front of gnyen tshang and guests. 4 I leave shyness behind, 5 to talk about our Tibetan rten 'brel, 6 in accordance with our guests' wish, 7 I will fulfill the ma sru group's wish. 8 I take things of great value from my robe, and put valuable things by them. 9 We will discuss the price of it later. 10 The Tibetan bridegroom's chu dar should be requested by the ma sru group, 11 and the A zhang should give it to them. This has been our tradition for generations.

If you unfold this white kha btags in my hand from a high mountain peak, it can be a ru dar of the small mountains. 2 Your fortune will be like blazing flames. 3 If you unfold this by a huge river, it will become a giant bridge. 4 Your rlung rta will go like a racing horse. 5 It will make the monastery's golden roof ornament. 6 It can be used for taking refuge in golden-hatted bla ma. 7 It can be used for telling the joys and sorrows of life in front of a decorated high-ranking leader. 8 Even though it doesn't have a price, it has great value. 9 Even though it doesn't have an inside or outside, it is the thing with great blessing

Interconnection of auspiciousness.

Strips of cloth or silk locals put atop mountains to mark a village's borders. It was originally taken by Tibetan soldiers across mountains after conquering a place, and put on moutaintops as a territorial marker.
power. Do not denigrate it. Do not dirty it or receive misfortunes.  
12 Ya, now, if you have asked for it without shame, I will give it to you here.

Ma sru: 1 The Tibetan chu dar should have many colorful cloth patterns, 2 and the bright colors should be in layers. 3 It still needs a kha btags on it, 4 which was previously used by a hundred goddesses, and originally woven by a hundred female nagas. 5 This kha btags isn't worthy of my family's name.

A zhang: 1 Ya, now, it is said it is not enough to just give this kha btags, but we should also praise it. 2 Firstly, it became mjäls dar that appeared in Dbus gtsang. 3 Secondly, it became khrims dar that appeared in China. 4 Thirdly, it became the bridegroom's chu dar in the snowland of Tibet. 5 Give this to those who held out their
hands. Please say there is no more to those who only watch and do not hold out their hands.

Ma sru: 1 Our *chu dar* should be for a stack of golden coins, 2 and white silver weighed by a scale. 3 If our speech doesn't persuade you to give it, we will use physical force.

Matchmaker: 1 Ya, now, both of our families have set out to form a close tie of relationship and friendly road of trade. Therefore, 2 A *zhang*, please do not be like that, 3 but instead give the *chu dar* to the *ma sru*. 4 And you the *ma sru*, although you cannot get much, please do not feel it's inadequate.
big mountains and to be a bridge over a big river. However, we have a local Tibetan custom to follow and the earth has a road to follow. As that's the case, here are three layers of cloth for you as *chu dar*. Please do not feel this is insufficient. Except this, I am unable to bring anything of great worth.

As soon as the *chu dar* was given, another group of women came and sang to my uncle and relatives. Since the *A zhang* were a bit drunk, they responded enthusiastically and could not be subdued by my uncle and relatives.

When the sun was about to set, my uncles and other relatives returned home, but I stayed. I was shy, but the bride's father and all the family members, except my wife, talked to me. I had never seen her before; I had only heard about her. Time passed quickly and after dinner, a room was arranged for my wife and me. I was nervous the first time I entered the room. I didn't know what to say to my new wife. Nonetheless, we started talking and continued deep into the night. Finally, we slept together.

In the next few days, I was told to stay at my wife's home and not do any work. Guests came, and the whole family stayed at home. Sometimes they sang together, but I didn't join in.

**RETURNING HOME**

Eight days later, my wife and her father, and I visited my natal home. Her father rode a motorcycle with my wife behind him, while I rode another new motorcycle that my wife's family had bought for me as *mag rta* 'bridegroom's horse'. When we reached my home, my family had prepared a small party, called *bag bod* 'inviting the bride'. We stayed at my home one day and then returned to my wife's home. We married in 2003 and my wife gave birth to our son in 2006. She is very kind to him and to me.

**A DREAM CAME TRUE**

I always regretted marrying because I wanted to study Tibetan. I took books with me to read when I was herding. In 2007, I got the idea of collecting local folksongs and proverbs, and then publishing a book. I held on to this dream for a year, during which I met many local elders and asked them to recite lyrics and proverbs. In the summer of 2008, I published a book with the support and assistance of several friends. Without them, my book, *Gangs 'dab kyi rang mdangs 'The Natural Expression of the Snowland*', would never have been published.

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138 The husband's family asks the wife to visit his home, hence the name of the party.
Bod pu de lived alone in 2016. When he lived with his mother (his father died early) in Bon po'i zhirg kha, he had a girlfriend named Lha res. They were kind to each other. In 1956, when they were both about to marry, Bod pu de was arrested by the government and convicted of logging in government forests. After Bod pu de was arrested, Lha res worried about him and finally committed suicide. Bod pu de stayed in jail for five years. During his incarceration, the 1958 revolution came and went. Life was again peaceful when he came home in 1961. In 1973 he married a local divorcee, 'Bum mtsho skyid. Bod pu de's family was very poor when he married. Other villagers collected sheep and cash to help him hold the wedding ceremony.

FAMILY CONFLICT

Eventually, he and his wife had three daughters and one son. As time passed, Bod pu de's short temper resulted in conflict with his wife. He often scolded her and their children. Neighboring families heard quarreling every morning and evening. After about twenty-eight years, his wife asked for some lumber and sheep from villagers and relatives so that she could separate from her husband. As soon as she separated, she became a nun. One of her daughters stayed with her while another married. The son became a monk. Bod pu de remained single afterwards.

In 2016, Bod pu de was in his early eighties. He was active, healthy, and often chanted scriptures. He had about forty sheep and goats and also received flour annually from the local government. One of the poorest villagers, he spent most of his time herding. He attributed his good health to a combination of vigorous herding activity and daily religious practice.
MARRIAGE

MARRIAGE NORMS

Marriage usually takes place between different tribes. Locals define incest as marriage between any relatives. Sexual relationships within the same tribe are considered incestuous and are taboo. All marriages are monogamous.

Bon skor residents did not traditionally marry Han nor Hui (Chinese Muslims). In 2015, about three locals had Han spouses. No Hui were married to locals in 2015.

WEDDING SCHEDULE

Non-English terms used in this list are explained in the relevant sections. The chronological activities listed here are normative accounts that are assumed to be part of a patrilocal marriage. Matrilocal and other forms of marriages are possible, in which case this list would show some variation.

- Seek a spouse
- Identify a spouse
- Couple’s trial period begins
- Divination
- Research family lineage
- Finalize the choice of a spouse
- Groom's family prepares clothes for the bride
- Choose a matchmaker(s)
- First negotiation with the spouse's family
- Second negotiation
- Abduct the bride
- Return the bride to her parents
- Third negotiation follows abduction
- Bride's relatives gather and discuss
- Negotiation achieves agreement, liquor is offered to the deities,
  - Chant *bsang* scripture
  - Discuss the bride’s clothes
  - Agree on the bridewealth and dowry
  - Set the wedding date
  - Deal with rumors

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140 The wording in this list is more descriptive than the abbreviated section titles in the body of the text.
The groom's family prepares for the wedding: slaughters sheep and yaks; purchases snacks; fries bread; prepares stuffed dumplings, vegetables, liquor, cigarettes, and soft drinks;

- Relatives, neighbors, and friends are invited
- The bride is instructed by her mother
- Bride's brother or cousin gives the hair speech as female relatives plait the bride's hair
- Wedding begins
- Bride leaves her home for the groom's home as her mother laments
- **G.yang 'bod** is chanted as the bride leaves her natal home
- Relatives and friends bring gifts to the bride's natal home
- **A zhang** escort the bride to the groom's home
- The groom's family welcome the bride and **A zhang**
- The bride and **A zhang** are greeted with songs
- The groom's family takes the **A zhang** into the home and welcomes them with food and liquor
- A representative of the groom's family gives a tea speech; the **A zhang** begin having tea
- A representative of the groom's family gives a liquor speech; the **A zhang** begin drinking liquor
- The bride's father gives a general speech
- Other **A zhang** give speeches
- **Ma sru** sing for the **A zhang**
- A **ma sru** gives a speech about receiving **bu ras** from the **A zhang**
- An **A zhang** gives a sash-tying speech to the bridegroom
- An **A zhang** gives the wedding oration
- Songs to enliven the banquet
- **A zhang** and **ma sru** sing antiphonal songs competitively
- The groom's family provides a farewell meal for the **A zhang**
- The bride laments as the **A zhang** depart
- The **A zhang** or bride's brothers comfort the bride
- The groom's family provides liquor to the **A zhang** before they leave
- The groom's female relatives accompany the bride in the **bag ras** 'bridal tent'
- Love songs are sung between **A zhang** and women from the **gnyen tshang** after the wedding
- The bride returns to her parents' home for a few days after spending several days at the groom's home
**Spouse Selection**

Before about 2002, most spouses were selected by parents at around the age of fourteen. Youths rarely had the right to choose their spouses. By 2016, the average age of spouses had increased to between sixteen and twenty.

Bon skor residents normally judge a prospective spouse in terms of their *khyim rgyud* 'lineage', *sha rus pa* 'patriline and matriline', *srung ma* 'guardian deity', how hardworking the prospective spouse is thought to be, and the spouse’s age.

Lineage is key and is investigated by asking those familiar with the family, or information is acquired simply by hearsay. Lineage is traced back three to five generations. If all ancestors were hardworking and avoided wrongdoing, it is believed to be a suitable lineage. Additionally, the family’s wealth is investigated – the wealthier the better.

*Sha rus pa* are important. Bones are traced patrilineally while flesh is traced matrilineally. People are asked and hearsay is noted regarding the family’s *sha rus pa*. Those with *gses dri* 'body odor' are believed to be unclean, a condition thought to arise from *sha rus pa*. In Bon skor Village, most residents do not have *gses dri*, which manifests as a pungent odor that is easily detected, while some odors are not very noticeable unless the body is uncovered. People without *gses dri* consider people with *gses dri* to be biologically polluted, while locals with *gses dri* do not consider themselves as such and become upset if they are belittled because they have this condition. Having both unclean bones and flesh is considered the worst possible condition. People with *gses dri* generally marry people with *gses dri*. There is little mixing between these two types, except when lovers disobey their family and tribe. Gsang sgrog gives the following account:

> My youngest son had a lover from a tribe in our village that maternally has *gses dri*. All my family members and relatives furiously opposed their romance over an eight year (2003-2011) period. About five years ago, I convinced him to find another girl with a clean background and marry her. I finally arranged a marriage which he agreed to. The wedding went successfully. However, after about ten days, he left his new bride and ran away with his former girlfriend who has *gses dri*. We searched for a month and couldn’t find them until the local police helped and found them herding to make a living in a remote area in Mgo log. We paid about 5,000 RMB as compensation to the bride he had deserted. About three years later, my son and the woman with

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141 'Bones' refers to the patriline while 'flesh' is a metaphor for the matriline.
gseb dri were still together. A new bride is essential to my family since my wife and I are old and can't do much work. Gradually, we had to accept his girlfriend, even though there is gseb dri in her family. In 2011, they were married. My relatives and even family members denigrate this marriage, but there is no other choice.

Srong ma is the most significant religious element in spouse selection. Each family is believed to be guarded by one to three srung ma and if the spouse's srung ma differs from their prospective partner's, they are reluctant to marry. When spouses are engaged, though their srung ma are different, the gnyen tshang family must be very careful to not upset the members of the marriage partner's family. It may bring misfortune. Sometimes srung ma brings good luck even though they are different, as long as the couple get along well and there are no disputes between the bride's and groom's relatives. Some srung ma are considered evil, while others are considered good, as demonstrated by this account by Lha sgron:

A new bride once came to a groom's home. After several days, the bride was alone at home doing housework. Early in the morning, she offered liquor in the offering bowls in the family shrine, and then she swept the shrine floor. As she was leaving, she realized that the offering bowls she had just filled were empty. She filled them again and left. She later visited the shrine and, to her surprise, the liquor was gone. She noticed a single-footed cat by the offering bowls drinking the liquor. She threw it into the stove, where it died. When she reported this to the groom's family, she was surprised to learn that the one-footed cat was the family's srung ma – The'u rang rkang gcig 'Single-foot Guardian Deity'. The groom's family was very upset and forced her to leave their home. She died in an accident soon after returning to her parents' home.

Srong ma in the area include Dpal ldan lha mo, Mgon po phyag drug, Mgon po zhal bzhi, Chos rgyal, Rnam sras, Lcam sring, Gza’ khyab ’jug, and The'u rang. Local Bon followers venerate Ma gcig srid pa’i rgyal mo.

The bride's ability and willingness to work hard is assessed by directly asking her relatives and consulting locals familiar with the bride. If the families are neighbors and know each other well, the male's family members may go to the girl's home with the excuse of helping them or borrowing something and then carefully observe how the daughter does family chores. This plays a critical role in the spouse selection process, since locals depend on physical labor to survive.
Finally, matching the spouses' age is important. A girl older than the boy is considered unacceptable. The girl should be younger, or at least the same age as the boy.

Parents plan to find a spouse for their son or daughter in order to bring a new laborer to the home. Therefore, they encourage their child to marry between the ages of sixteen and twenty, so that the new member may begin contributing to the family.

Teenagers begin to be sexually active around the age of sixteen and earlier. Not sleeping at home is believed to be an honor for males; sleeping at home is considered shameful. Young men, therefore, look for partners and return home early in the morning before their family members rise. Confronting any female family members early in the morning, especially one's mother, is embarrassing. Youths then catch up on their sleep during the day while herding. To further explore this point, I chatted with my uncle Bsod nams (b. 1985). He gave me the following account of his sexual history:

Before I married, I went to visit girls about five times a week and sometimes every night. I occasionally had several girlfriends at the same time but mostly visited one. Men from our village visit girls at night. There were many occasions when I overslept at my girlfriend's home. It was very embarrassing if someone saw me in the morning returning from my girlfriend's home. People often spread rumors. It was even more embarrassing if I ran into my mother or sisters. This is the reason that I tried to return home before dawn. I was then very sleepy and tired during the day while working in the fields or herding. My brother and parents often scolded me for not working well during the daytime.

Once a spouse is chosen for the son, his father and brothers encourage him to sleep with the girl. Though he may have fallen in love with other girls, he reluctantly obeys. In extreme cases, youths who subject to such pressures may commit suicide. When a young man first goes to visit a girl, he climbs over the adobe courtyard wall, often four meters high, with the dog beater he has brought along to thwart the family watchdogs. After a girl turns fourteen or fifteen, she sleeps alone or in a room she does not share with her parents. This may be due to labor demands such as a need to guard livestock at night, or because a shared room is crowded. A girl sleeping alone also facilitates a boy's visit.

Boys often pursue girls who are above fifteen or sixteen. Girls often cherish their first love and reject others. Language skill is key in pursuing a girl. If a girl and boy meet while herding, they both tease each other, using various forms of language. Sexually suggestive jokes are occasionally made and love songs are sung. The boy tries to
skillfully express his intention to visit her at night. If the boy takes the girl's scarf or a finger ring before they separate, the boy confidently visits her that night. In most cases, the girl expects him to come. Sometimes, however, the girl does not want the boy to visit, though he may anyway. Rings or bracelets exchanged or gifted between girls and boys are cherished tokens of love.

Photo 116. Local houses within adobe courtyard walls in 2013.

If a young woman becomes pregnant before marriage, abortion is usually not considered. Locals believe abortion is a sin. In the 1970s, many local unmarried women had children. However, the numbers dropped after the One Child Policy was enforced in the late 1970s and early 1980s. With the One Child Policy, condoms were introduced to villagers through local clinics. However, many locals were reluctant to use them because many believed condoms prevented natural feelings. In contrast, the intrauterine contraceptive ring was increasingly used. In 2016, the intrauterine contraceptive ring was common. Girls as young as fourteen might be brought to a clinic by older female relatives for insertion of the rings. The family understood that the girl was, or probably would soon be, sexually active. Avoiding pregnancy at a young age for an unmarried girl or young woman was highly desirable.

According to local doctors, sexually transmitted diseases are common in Bon skor Village, however, women generally consult doctors only when their illness becomes serious.

By 2016, the tradition of arranged marriage was much less common than even a decade earlier. Convenient transportation means that some villagers now left the local area to do migrant labor, facilitating encounters with outsiders and new ideas. Furthermore, government marriage law was applied in the local area and locals can no longer force their children to marry whom and when the parents prefer. By 2016, local youths mostly chose their own spouses. No matter how a spouse is chosen, villagers are still insistent on the importance of family background, bones and flesh, srung ma, and work ethic.

Selecting a spouse from neighboring villages is more challenging than selecting one locally. Other Tibetan villages are far
away and thus forming relationships is difficult. Local young men used to think that if local girls slept with outsiders it humiliated them, that it stripped them of their pride because it is considered shameful when locals hear outsiders describe their experiences of sleeping with women in the other village. This has changed due to interaction between villages. Young men from Bon skor also now travel to visit girls in other villages.

A local Summer Festival, often referred to as Bayi in Chinese 'the first day of the eighth lunar month', provides an occasion for youths to find partners. All fifteen villages in the township assemble for three days at a grassland site one kilometer from the township town and five kilometers from Bon skor Village. The festival is held annually, although there are times the local government may cancel it. Festival participants dance and sing competitively. Prizes are awarded by the township government. Most villagers consider singing *la gzhas* 'love songs' the main attraction. Many groups gather and sing *la gzhas* competitively, providing an important opportunity to meet prospective spouses. Some locals recall that this festival started about two decades ago.

Many villagers join the crowd and listen to the singing, while relatives of the opposite sex of the singer avoid the group. Both males and females glance around the audience and, when they find someone they find attractive, they may sing *la gzhas* to them. When a male youth starts singing, he holds a *kha btags* in both hands and sways slowly and slightly back and forth. After finishing the song, he gives the *kha btags* to the girl who must respond or be embarrassed. The lyrics are usually romantic. When the singing ends, the youth pursues the girl and tries to become acquainted with her.

**TRIAL PERIOD**

A couple often sleeps together after forming a relationship. They inform their families if they think they are compatible. The boy only informs his brother, father, and other male relatives, while a girl only informs her female relatives. The family then investigates the girl's family condition, lineage, and the girl's work ethic. The family carefully asks questions and tries their best to not let non-relatives know what they are doing, because villagers easily become jealous and may interfere.

Another frustration occurs when other youths try to sleep with the girl when she is herding or alone at home. The youth who has chosen her as his future wife does his best to not miss a night of sleeping with her and makes her promise that she will be faithful.

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142 A video of locals singing *la gzhas* is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=euiN6gFa7Pg.
DIVINATION

After investigating the girl's background, the families go to a *bla ma*, to temples to draw *mtshan*, or to see fortunetellers, to interpret the new couple's prospects. The bride's clothes are also readied and if the outcome of divination is positive, a matchmaker or two are chosen. If the divination is negative the family denies or delays the preparation of clothes as they try to change their son's mind. Although strongly believing in divination, locals occasionally ignore the divination and arrange marriage anyway if the girl is from a wealthy, reputable family, or is regarded as hardworking. Additionally, it is hard to separate youths if they have a close, long-standing relationship. Fearing the couple will elope, the parents may accept such marriages. The parents also may accept the marriage if the girl becomes pregnant during this trial period.

Photo 1.17. *Mtshan* are short sticks or divination chopsticks with numbers. They are often in boxes in temples. People pray to the temple deity, ask for advice about the future, and draw one stick from the box after shaking it several times. A Tibetan book with information corresponding to the numbers on the sticks is kept in the temple. People consider this information to be instructions or messages from the temple deity (2013).

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PREPARING THE BRIDE'S CLOTHING AND ORNAMENTS

Making clothes for the bride is one of the first things done once a spouse is selected. The groom's family prepares *gos lwa*, *phrug lwa*, and *tshar lwa* for the bride. Some locals prepare the clothes even before the son has met a girl, while others leave this until after the son meets a girl. Some locals are skilled at sewing and making robes. Consequently, most locals do not buy clothes for the wedding.

Photo 118. *Gos lwa* for women in a local shop in 2014.

Photo 119. *Tshar lwa* is a cloth-covered robe with sheepskin.
Photo 120. A bride wears *phrug lwa* over *tshar lwa* (2013).
Ornaments such as bzho bzung, glo gzur, rna thog, ra 'dogs, ske gor, ga'u, rgyab dar, ra mgo, dmar gdan, dung, skag beings, and ra leb are also prepared for the bride. Bzho bzung is a silver ornament with two hooks at the bottom that women hang from the sash in the front. Glo gzur is a silver crescent moon above a sun decorated with coral that hangs from the sash at the left hip. Rna thog are silver earrings with long thin chains that end in small bells and are decorated with coral. The ra 'dogs is a silver disc with three holes that is put on the crown of the bride's head when she plaits her hair. Ske gor is a flat, crescent moon-shaped sheet of silver decorated with coral hung under the bride's chest and tied behind the neck. The rgyab dar is a cloth panel featuring coral or ra mgo that is hung around the bride's back over her long, plaited hair. A dmar gdan is comprised of two or three strips of red cloth on which twenty or so silver bowls are strung. It hangs down the bride's back. Ra leb is a triangular cloth on which many coral beads are strung and is hung at the end of the bride's plaited hair. Photographs in this book illustrate these ornaments.

Photo 121. Glo gzur. Local women hang it on the left or right side of a robe, tied with the robe sash, as a decoration. Some people wear it in front of a robe beneath the sash today. There are many sizes and types of glo gzur. It has three main parts: shape of the sun, shape of the crescent moon, and the end, which is called khab shubs 'sewing needle case', with tiny chains and bells (2013).

144 Pieces of coral as large as chicken eggs.
Photo 122. Glo gzur.

Photo 123. A local woman wearing a glo gzur.
Photo 124. *Bzho bzung* is hung on the front of a robe as an ornament. According to locals, women used it to hold the milk bucket while milking livestock in the past. There are many sizes and types of *bzho bzung*. These women wear *skag bcings* 'belt', made of animal skin decorated with silver, coral, and turquoise. Belts became popular beginning in about 2005. This photo was taken in 2013.

Photo 125. *Bzho bzung* – an ornament on a robe decorated with *spe byur* and coral. Locals believe that the engravings are of water spirits or animals such as whales and fish. Some feature the Eight Auspicious Symbols.
Photo 126. In this necklace, the yellow pieces except the bottom two, are *spe byur*. The two yellow pieces at the bottom are called *spe no*. The red ones are coral.

Photo 127. *Rna thog* 'silver earrings'.
Photo 128. Ga’u. Women wear it around the neck and hang it in front of their chest as a decoration. Some ga’u contain a protective amulet.

Photo 129. A smaller ga’u that a local woman kept at home. Such ga’u were rare in Bon skor Village in 2016.
Photo 130. Skag bcings 'belt' decorated with silver, coral, and turquoise.

Photo 131. A ra 'dogs is a round silver piece with two holes and decorated with coral. It is placed on the back of a woman's neck to hold ra mgo, the red coral-like beads, and false hair (2013).

Photo 132. Ra 'dogs.
Photo 133. *Dngul dung* or *dung* are made of silver and are shell-shaped. Women wear such ornaments on the back of their robes. The cloth where the *dung* are hung is called *dmar gdan*. There are usually twelve *dung* on a *dmar gdan* in three columns and four rows. When someone has died in a family, the relatives only wear two columns and four rows of *dung*. The four smaller silver circles above the *dung* — two on the right and two on the left are called *lany+dza*. The red cloth they are stuck to is *thong thig*. Three to four smaller *dung* in the middle lining up to the neck are called *tha na*. The red cloth, which they are stuck is called *ra chung*. The strips of red cloth underneath the *dung* are called *ja la*. The entire thing including *ja la* and the colorful cloth that connects it to *dmar gdan* is called *ja gdan*. *Dung* was rarely seen in Bon skor in 2016. Locals were forced to stop wearing such ornaments in 1958.
Photo 134. This *dmar gdan* features many tiny *dung* in the center.

![Photo 134](image1)

Photo 135. *Lany+dza* is the symbol on this round silver piece. Women stick it on *dmar gdan* as a hair decoration.

![Photo 135](image2)

Photo 136. *Dung*.

![Photo 136](image3)
Photo 137. Ja la and ja gdan.

Photo 138. Byu ru 'coral' is used as a valuable, decorative ornament and usually worn as a necklace. Coral pieces vary in size. Larger pieces are very expensive. However, the popularity of wearing coral necklaces has declined. Locals think coral is expensive and some say that coral is nothing more than stones and thus not worth the expense.
THE MATCHMAKER

The matchmaker is always male and represents the male youth's family if the girl is marrying into the groom's family, while he represents the female youth's family if the groom is marrying into the bride's family. He should be an articulate, fluent orator. He may be a relative or friend of the youth's family. The youth's father very rarely serves as the matchmaker. Locals usually choose two or three matchmakers when they think negotiation might be challenging, and choose only one when they think a family will be easier to negotiate with. If a family has more than two or three daughters and the chosen spouse is not the youngest, it is easier to negotiate the marriage. However, if the girl is the youngest or only daughter and her elder sisters have married and moved into other homes, the negotiation is more challenging. When the family has chosen the matchmaker(s), they do not change them throughout the entire negotiation and marriage process, unless the negotiation becomes unexpectedly difficult.

THE FIRST NEGOTIATION

It is important to choose an auspicious day according to the Tibetan Calendar for the negotiations. The male youth’s family asks a rtsis pa 'astrologer', usually a Buddhist monk in the local area, to choose such a date. It is considered disrespectful and inauspicious for the matchmakers to arrive at the spouse's home in the afternoon, therefore, the matchmakers go early in the morning for the first negotiation with the intended bride's family. They prepare what they will say and how they will persuade the other family. They must be confident. They rode horses in the past, but now arrive on motorcycles.

Regardless of the intended bride's family's familiarity with the matchmakers, they greet them warmly and offer tea. Meanwhile, the boy's family burns incense at home or in the Yul lha Temple to pray for good luck in the negotiation.
Photo 139. Yul Iha Temple, where a Yul Iha image is enshrined along with images of Shan pa rwa mgo on the right and Shan pa tsi thung on the left side. This temple was originally in the former village location.

The bride's father usually makes various excuses in order to refuse the proposal, for example, the daughter is a key person in the family, she is not mature enough for marriage, and so on. Few locals agree the first time. It is customary to disagree, even if the father actually agrees, otherwise the negotiation is considered too easy. The matchmakers give many reasons to persuade the bride's father and other family representatives to accept the proposal. If the families are friends and the matchmakers are the bride's relatives, negotiating an agreement is simplified. If the negotiation fails, the matchmakers come again to negotiate.

AN EXAMPLE OF A FIRST NEGOTIATION

Gsang sgrog provided examples of speeches used in this book, which he partly learned from a wedding DVD published by Kun grub rgyal (2005). Throughout the negotiation, Grags pa is a hypothetical name chosen for the male youth's father. Sangs rgyas refers to the female youth's father. Similarly, Shes rab and Bkra shis were chosen as the matchmaker names. For the sake of simplicity, "first matchmaker" and "second matchmaker" were used in English.
The first matchmaker's speech:\textsuperscript{145}

1 ya 'di grags pa tshang gi bu zla ba dang khyod sangs rgyas tshang gi bu mo sgrol ma gnyis kyis

2 sngun na bshad pa'i tshig yod
3 rkang pa spos sa'i rjes yod

4 rtags rten 'brel gnyis kyi 'go red
5 zla bzhi ba tshes pa'i rtags red

6 gcig nas rang dbang rang 'thad kyi gnyen sgrig
7 gnyis nas deng gi srid jus dang mthun pa

8 gsum nas grags pa dang sangs rgyas gnyis
9 nye bo dgu'i nye rabs yod
10 khis kha dgu'i lab rtse yod

\textsuperscript{145} Summaries in English are provided at the end of speeches.
11 phyi skor nas 'dang brgyab
12 nang skor nas rtsis byas pas

11 ཁྲོད་སྟོན།
12 རྒྱས་སྟོན།
13 རྒྱུད་སྟོན།

11 khyod sangs rgyas zhe na
12 smug por chags pa'i gzung rgyud red
13 g.yu mtshor chad pa'i ra lag red

14 གཡུ་མཚོར་ཆད་པའི་ལ་རྒྱུད་ཆད
15 ནགྲ་གཉིས་ཆགས་པའི་ལ་རྒྱུད
16 གཡུ་མཚོར་བར་སང་གི་སང་པའི་ལ་རྒྱུད

14 mgo gser zhwa can gyi bla ma 'khrungs sa
15 tog tham ka can gyi dpon po skyes sa
16 mgo bar sngags can gyi sngags pa 'khrungs sa

17 གཡུ་ཏོག་ཐམ་ཅན་གཉིས་ཀར།
18 སྟོད་དང་ཐམ་ཅན་གཉིས་ཀར།
19 དམ་རྒྱ་བར་སང་ལམ་གཉིས་ཀར།

17 'jig rten so rnying gnyis kar
18 stod gangs ri'i dbu rtse mtho sa
19 smad rgya mtsho'i chu gting zab sa

20 བཤད་ཕ་རྒྱུད་དེའི་སྟོབས་པ།
21 གཡོན་མི་ལུང་མཁྱེན་པོའི་སྟོབས་པ།
22 སྨད་དཔེ་བན་མཚོའི་འཕོ་བའི་སྟོབས་པ།

20 nga shes rab ces na yang
21 pha rgyud ded na sha bo'i rdza rgyud 'ded rgyu yod
22 ma rgyud ded na yu mo'i gsang lam nyul sa yod

23 བཤེས་ནས་བལྟ་སྟོབས་པ།
24 སྨད་དཔེ་བན་མཚོའི་འཕོ་བའི་སྟོབས་པ།
23 g.yas pha lung nags mo phyugs lung 'dra 'dra
24 g.yon ma lung mar khu'i mtsho mo 'dra 'dra

25 རྩྭ་ཡ རྫོང ་ གི་འཐུང་ས ་ ཡིན། །
26 དུ་མཆུ་རྟོགས་ཀྱི་ཟབ་སྐྱེས། །

27 དར་པའི་ཆུང་ ༊ ་ ཀྲི་ལུ ག་སྟོང་ ལྭ་ཁ ་ དུ་གྲི་སྐྱེས། །
28 ༊ ་ ཉུ་།། །
29 ༊ ་ ཉུ་།། །
30 ༊ ་ ཉུ་།། །
31 ༊ ་ ཉུ་།། །

27 bu bu mo 'di gnyis
28 sha rus bu rgyud la mo btab
29 lo rgan drug cur rtsis byas
30 kho gnyis kyi spar kha 'grig gi
31 bdag zhang 'dzin gnyis kyi kha sems mthun gi

32 དསརྒྱུད་ཀྱི་ཐུབ་པའི་གཡུ་མོ་ནོར་བ་རྒྱུ་དེ་དོ།།
33 ༊ ་ ཉུ་།། །
34 ༊ ་ ཉུ་།། །

32 'di gnyis kyi steng nas
33 pha rgyud thub pa'i yid bzhin nor bu red
34 ma rgyud thub pa'i lha mo'i g.yu mtsho red

35 དབྱང་མ་བཅོས་བཏང་།།
36 ༊ ་ ཉུ་།། །
37 ༊ ་ ཉུ་།། །
38 ༊ ་ ཉུ་།། །

35 brgya lug stong la 'bud
36 stong lug rwa kha dngul gyis shan
37 stong lug khri la 'bud
38 khri lug rwa kha gser gyis shan

39 ངྲོང་ཁྲི་ལ་འབྲུ་
40 བསྟོན་ལོག་ལ་འབྲུ་

39 gnyen gyi thod pa'i kha yig red
40 rgan pos btab pa'i zhing sa red

41 ལྟས་འབྲུ་
42 གྲུབ་སྟེང་འབྲུ
43 སྣོང་བཙུན་གྲེར་

41 ngas thag nye sa'i nye po ma rnyed
42 nye po kun la ma 'grig
43 de 'dra ma red

44 རྟོན་ཁྲི་ལ་འབྲུ་
45 སྟག་སྟེང་འབྲུ་

44 bu gces phrug rtsib la gces ma btsal nas
45 khyed tshang gi sgo khar bud nas go khar tsog na

46 རྟོན་ཁྲི་ལ་
47 རྟོན་ཁྲི་ལ་འབྲུ་
48 ལྟས་འབྲུ་

46 khyed tshang gis
47 mkhas ba'i tshig gis rang shes dang
48 smug po gnyen la rang 'dzul zhig byed rgyu

49 ལྟས་འབྲུ་
50 ཨྲོང་ཁྲི་ལ་

49 bu bsam shes yod gi
50 sman gzigs shes yod gi
The prospective bride's father's speech:

1 spyir de ring
2 khyed shes rab dang bkra shis gnyis kyi nga'i sgo khar bud nas bu mo'i gnyen gyi thod pa bskor rgyu yin zhes bshad kyin yod gi

3 nga la mtshon na
4 la kha'i nyi ma dang la rting gi grib ma
5 dgung nyi shar gyi phyi dro dang lo tshe stod shor ba'i tshe smad

6 bu mo gcig pu ngas lag rten byed bsam yod
7 bu tsha mtshon na sbra nag sgo shar
8 ras gur sgo nub byas yod
9 bu mo nga'i ya thod kyi mig
10 ya chung gi sems

11 ཇོ་མེད་ལི་ཐེག་པ་བྱོགས་པ།
12 ས་བོད་འི་ཐེག་པ་གྱིས་སོ།

11 nam yar lang mig gis blta sa
12 sa mar rub sems kyi chags shing

13 ཉིན་ཐོ་ཧི་ཞེས་པ་དེ་ཡི་ན་མ་རྟེན་པའི་བསམ་པ་ང་
14 ཁ་ལྷག་ཁི་ལ་ཕོ་བ་དེ་གཏན་ནས

13 de ring mi lhag mi la ster rgyu
14 sha lhag khyi la 'phen rgyu zer ba de 'dra gtan nas yod ni ma red

15 ཉིན་ཐོ་ཧི་ཞེས་པ་དེ་ཡི་ན་མ་རྟེན་པའི་བསམ་པ་ང་
16 སྤྱོད་ཐོ་ཞེས་རབ་དང་བཀྲ་ཤིས་གཉིས་།
17 དྲེ་རྒྱུད་སྟོན་མ་ཡིན།

15 la ring por 'go ba'i lag rten
16 tshe phyi mar 'gro ba'i yul srung
17 mun pa'i nang gi sgron me yin

18 ཉིན་ཐོ་ཧི་ཞེས་པ་དེ་ཡི་ན་མ་རྟེན་པའི་བསམ་པ་ང་

18 bu mo de ring gnas la ster ba'i bsam pa nga la yod ni ma red

19 ཉིན་ཐོ་ཧི་ཞེས་པ་དེ་ཡི་ན་མ་རྟེན་པའི་བསམ་པ་ང་
20 རྒྱུད་ཐོ་ཞེས་རབ་དང་བཀྲ་ཤིས་གཉིས་།
21 དྲེ་རྒྱུད་སྟོན་མ་ཡིན།
22 ཉིན་ཐོ་ཧི་ཞེས་པ་དེ་ཡི་ན་མ་རྟེན་པའི་བསམ་པ་ང་

19 khyod shes rab dang bkra shis gnyis
20 ya chung la sgo chung phye yod gi
21 gangs dkar la srubs ka bkyags yod ni red
22 de ring mi ster na'ang ster dgos zhes mi zer bar zhu
The second matchmaker's speech:

1. སིང་རྒྱན་ཚང་གེ་བུ་མོ་དང་རྒྱས་པ་ཚང་གེ་བུ་ཚ་གཉིས་།
2. ལྟོ་རྟོ་དུས་གོམ་པ་ ལྟོ་ཕྲོགས་gcig
3. བཤོལ་མའི་དཔོན་

4. spyir
5. རང་དབང་རང་'ཐད
6. རང་བློར་དྲན་ན་བཤོལ་med
7. སྤྱིར་རང་dbang

8. khyed སྤིན་པ་མི་རིང་
9. bskal སྤིན་པ་འདི་

10. སྐྱེད་སིད་པ་མི་རིང་
11. སྐྱིད་བཅོལ་
12. སྐྱིད་བཅོལ་
13. སྐྱིད་བཅོལ་
khyed tshang la mtshon na
stod gangs ri'i dbu rtse mtho sa red
smad rgya mtsho'i chu gting zab sa red
pha rgyud sha bo'i rdza rgyud 'ded rgyu yod ni red
ma rgyud yu mo'i gsang lam nyul rgyu yod ni red
bu dang bu mo'i gnyen sgrig gi steng 'di nas
rta ra ra gzhug la khrid de
dar dkar po lag tu bzung nas
pha a khu dag la 'dri dgos na
gnyen phu nu dag gis thos dgos na
nged gnyis kyis khas blangs nas phrag tu blangs ni yin
The bride's father's second speech:

1. དམགྱེ་ཡི་རྒྱལ་མཚན།
2. རྣ་མ་འགྲུ་མཚན་མི་བཤད
3. དརི་དཔེ་གཞན་སྤྱོད་འབྲི་འབྲི་བཤད།
4. མི་བཤད།
5. དརི་དཔེ་གཞན་སྤྱོད་འབྲི་འབྲི་བཤད།
6. དེ་འདི་ཡག་དབང་ལྡན་བསྟན་ནས་ལྷ་དང་རུ་བཅུག་ནི་ཡིན།
7. ལེགས་མི་སྣ་ཚོགས་བསན་ནས་དང་བཤད།
8. དེ་འདི་ཡག་དབང་ལྡན་བསྟན་ནས་ལྷ་དང་རུ་བཅུག་ནི་ཡིན།
9. ལེགས་མི་སྣ་ཚོགས་བསན་ནས་དང་བཤད།
10. དེ་འདི་ཡག་དབང་ལྡན་བསྟན་ནས་ལྷ་དང་རུ་བཅུག་ནི་ཡིན།
11. ལེགས་མི་སྣ་ཚོགས་བསན་ནས་དང་བཤད།
12. ལེགས་མི་སྣ་ཚོགས་བསན་ནས་དང་བཤད།

25. de ring khyed tshang gis
26. pha lo ma los gros shig byos
27. bu lo mi sdug thabs shig 'then
28. wa mo rna bzhi'i zhwa zhig bzos
29. rna bo mi grang thabs shig 'then
de ni rnam bcu dbang ldan bstan nas lha dga' ru bcug ni yin
sna ma sna tshogs bstan nas mi dga' ru bcug ni yin
ka ra bu ram byin nas kha mngar du bcug ni yin

rang dbang rang 'thad min pa nga pha ma dang bu phrug gis shes pa kho thag yin mi zhig la ster ba'i bsam pa gtan nas med

The first matchmaker's second speech:

1 de ring nga khyod kyi sgo lam srang mdor yong nas
2 bco lnga min na yin dgos
3 gnam gang med na yod dgos
4 ster dgos bshad na khyod kyis thag gis mi chod pa ngas shes ni red
5 khyod sangs rgyas mtshon na
6 pha zhang gram pa'i rdo 'dra 'dra
7 ma zhang gtsang bo'i chu 'dra 'dra
8 ngas gser zo'i nang la gser thom 'phen khyos sil sgra e grag ltos
9 ngas dngul zo'i nang la dngul thom 'phen khyos khrog sgra e grag ltos
10 nga gang la 'gro dgos na
11 bla mas ci gsungs chos yin
12 mdzub mo gang bstan shar yin

13 de ring khyed kyis
14 rta 'do ba'i gom kha la ru bskor rgyu
15 sga be seng thod pa nga la bskor rgyu
16 sman bu mo'i thod pa gnas su bskor rgyu

17 nga sa ka chur song ba ming zhig yod du chug
18 mdzo khyung dkar ded par don zhig yod du chug

19 nga shes rab yang
20 mgo nag rkang grangs nyung rung phu nu mang
21 dog mo kha zheng chung rung pha sa yod

22 de ring nga mi rgyud ded nas nye bo btsal du yong ni yin
23 rta ri phrug sa nas tshong med
24 sa de ga'i sa nas nye med
25 zhes bshad mi nyan

26 lag chag g.yo mas gnas dran nas
27 ston gyi mdzo mos zhiing dran na

28 'jig rten bod kyi 'gro lugs red
29 mgo nag dpe brgya dpe stong red
30 sa nag lam brgya lam stong red

31 deng phyi rol gyi rjes su
32 stag sha ras rang bya rang gis bsgrubs nas
33 sman bu mos rang mgo rang gis bslas

34 rang blor dris dang sa nas
35 yul pha mas ma khogs shor song
36 lam skya mor ma zhugs byol btang dus
The bride's father's third speech:

1. ཏུགས་བཟང་པོའི་སྐད།
2. ཏུགས་བཟང་པོའི་སྐད།

37. དུང་ྲླ་བའི་ངོ་ན་མུན་པ་དང
38. ད་གུང་ཉི་མ་ཉི་ངོས་ན་གི་ཡོད་དུས
39. ཉི་མ་ཉི་དམ་ཉི་བྱེད་མི་གྱི་ལྟ
40. 'དིའི་སྟེང་ལ་སྒོ་བེ་དགོས་མི་དགོས
41. ཉི་ཤེས་རབ་ལ་མཚོན་ན།
42. དེ་རིང་ས་ལམ་ཐག་མ་དུས།
43. དགེ་སྟོག་མ་རུང་།
44. དགེ་སྟོག་མ་རུང་།
45. ཕྱེད་ཀྱིས་རྒྱུ་མཚོན་འདི་ལ་འཛིན་ཅིག
46. ཕྱེད་ཀྱིས་རྒྱུ་མཚོན་ཅིག
47. ཉི་ལ་རུམ་དུ་ཕྲས་རྒྱུ་འཇིག་དང
48. དེ་སྟོིན་རྒྱུ་འཇིག་ཐོ་དགོས

The bride's father's third speech:
The first matchmaker's third speech:

1. 'u kha gnyis
2. mi brgya bo'i bsam pa gcig la 'khor te
3. mdzo brgya bo'i rwa kha gcig la gzad nas

4. bu bu mo'i don dag 'di
5. 'grig ni zhig bcos na zer ba de yin
6. yin na'ang spyir de ring ma gnangs mod skyon mi 'dug
SUMMARY

In this example, the first matchmaker's speech declares the auspiciousness of the timing of the proposal, and states that the couple voluntarily agreed to marry and to comply with relevant marriage laws. He emphasizes the positive relations between the two families and goes on to praise Sangs rgyas, the bride's father, as being from a pure, prestigious lineage that includes bla ma, leaders, and
The family of the groom's father is similarly described as having an excellent background. The matchmaker claims that the young couple, according to divinations, are destined for each other and that their marriage will bring good fortune to both families. Finally, the matchmaker requests the bride's father to respond.

The bride's father begins by stating that he is now elderly, and all his other children have married. He explains that his daughter is now the only child left at home and that, because he depends on her, he disagrees with her marrying and moving to another home. When he finishes, the second matchmaker speaks about the two youths' agreeable fate to be wed. He explains that they have known each other since childhood, and then extols the bride's family and all the positive impressions their lineage has made in the village. He points out that both the matchmakers were assigned to carry out this negotiation and have promised to take full responsibility for anything the bride's father might ask them to do, such as traveling long distances to consult the bride's uncles and other relatives. Finally, he suggests that the bride's father hold a family discussion and reconsider the proposal.

The bride's father continues to reject the proposal, emphasizing that his daughter is a key family member who contributes much to household labor. He says that there is no possibility that he would allow her to marry and leave the home.

The first matchmaker then states that he understands that there is no immediate, decisive answer to the proposal. He agrees to listen to and do as the bride's father commands, but also expresses hope that the result will eventually be fruitful. He also suggests that if the youths do what they want in the future (i.e., elope) it will not be the matchmakers' fault. He urges the father to reconsider, in order to create a happy future for the young couple and both families.

The bride's father concludes by saying that he will not repeat what he has already said, and emphasizes that he will not agree to the proposal.

The first matchmaker then concludes by stating that everyone has discussed the marriage of the two youths, however, despite the fact that the youths' relationship was arranged by karma and not by people, they have not reached a successful conclusion. He stresses that if the two youths do whatever they want there is nothing anyone can do about it so long as it complies with the law. Finally, he bids goodbye to the bride's father.

**BRIDE ABDUCTION**

Brides may be abducted formally or informally. Informal abduction

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146 Tantric practitioners, usually affiliated with the Rnying ma Sect.
occurs before negotiation. I focus on formal abduction, which usually occurs if the first or second negotiation fails.

Shortly after an unsuccessful negotiation, the boy and his male relatives plan the abduction. The boy informs his lover and the boy's family prepares a *kha btags* and clothes for the bride. The girl agrees to escape with the boy. Discovery of the plan is very embarrassing.

After sunset, the youth rides a motorcycle while a male friend or relative rides another motorcycle. Late at night, when the girl's family are all in bed, the youth comes to fetch his lover, who has probably waited for him without sleeping. When the couple exits the girl's family compound, the companion is waiting at the gate on which he has already hung the *kha btags*, signaling that the girl has been abducted. At this time, worrying that they may be discovered, the three quickly mount their motorcycles, and leave. Before reaching the male youth's home, the boy asks the girl to put on the new Tibetan robe he brought from his home. They enter his home together.

Meanwhile, the boy's family has been burning incense, waiting expectantly for the arrival of the couple. The family prepares tea and food for them and the companion. Immediate family members and matchmakers are called to the home. The family's female members stay with the bride, talking to her, urging her to stay. On this night the family members, particularly the boy's parents, are happy. The bride is not allowed to return home until the second negotiation starts. If the second negotiation fails, the girl is sometimes not allowed to return home until her family gives an acceptable reply. If the girl's family still refuses to consent to the marriage, the boy's family sends her back and later abducts her again.

**THE SECOND NEGOTIATION**

A second negotiation follows the abduction. The matchmakers go as early as possible, otherwise, the girl's family is offended and the matchmakers are criticized. This negotiation is more challenging than the first. The matchmakers must be modest and behave in a guilty manner, because the family they represent has abducted the girl. They should be persuasive and responsive to each speech.

Upon the arrival of the matchmakers, the female members come out and stop the barking watchdogs. The matchmakers hold *kha btags* and bolts of colorful silk to give as an apology to the girl's family. Unlike the first negotiation, the men, especially the bride's father, do not come out to meet the matchmakers. The girl's mother or other female relatives ask the matchmakers to come inside the home where the girl's father appears upset and, at first, refuses to speak to the matchmakers.
Though the girl's mother or other females may be upset, they still serve milk tea and food to the matchmakers.

Earlier in the day, the girl's important male relatives have been called to participate in the negotiation.

AN EXAMPLE OF A SECOND NEGOTIATION

The first matchmaker's speech:

1 de ring nga mi bo sngangs lang mgo na zhwa med la
2 rta pho bang rgyugs mgo na srab med par
3 de ring yong don yang bu bu mo'i don dag red

4 dgung a sgon mtho rung
5 nga tsa ge tsi ge sgur gyin yod
6 sa dog mo'i kha zheng che rung
7 nga tsa ge tsi ge 'jab kyin yod

8 khyodongs rgyas la mtshon na
9 chu rma chu'i 'go khungs rma rgyud red
10 rdo g.ya' ma'i 'go khungs rdza rgyud red

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pha yab kyi gong thang ded na
ma yum gyi gdong rgyud ded na

rgyab ri mthon po brag yod ni red
glag rog mo ma gtogs 'phur myong med
mdun ri zab mo nags yod ni red
bya khu byug ma gtogs grag myong med

ngas bshad gi skad mgo dma' mo byed
'gro ba'i gom pa thung len byed

bu bu mos 'di ltar rang dbang rang 'thad yin zhes
smag langs brgyab btang na
khyod kyi ngo na rdul zhig yod na
sems na sdug cig yod na
nga de ring de bshag gi yong ni yin

de ring khyed khyim tshang gang pos bu bu mo'i don dag 'dir gros shig byed par mkhyen
The bride's father's speech:

1 spyir
2 nye byed na snga dro dang
3 tshong rgyag na phyi dro
4 nam lang gi dang po
5 nyi shar gyi rtse mor
6 khyed tshang ci zhig la ma yong ni yin
7 da nangs nged rgan rgon gnyis
8 la rgyugs lung rgyugs byas
9 ki lung pa gang btab nas
10 phe gzhong pa gang btab nas
The bride's father's brother's speech:

1. grags pa tshang dang sangs rgyas tshang gnyis
2. gna' mi rnying ba'i ring nas bzung
3. deng mi gsar ba nas bzung

4. phling dkar bya ra'i gling sgrigs sgrigs byas yod
5. phying dkar bya ra'i gling sgrigs sgrigs byas yod
6. ཉེ་ཐོག་ཉེ་དང་ཉེ་ཐོག་གི་རྣོ།
7. ཉེ་པོའི་ཉེ་ལམ་དང་ཉེ་ཤག་པོའི་ཤག་ལམ

8. ཡིན་ནའང་བུ་མོ་གཅིག་པུ།
9. ཞྱིེ་བུའི་ཞྱི་དབང་མཁན་ཡིན།
10. འོག་རྱེན་ཡིན།
11. ཁྱེའུ་མ་རྒྱོ་བརྱེད།
12. དཔྱག་པ་ཚང་ལ་མཆོན་གྱིས་རྟོན་ཡིན།
13. བུ་མོ་ཁྲིད་།
14. ཏྦོད་གྲངས་པ་ཚང་ལ་མཆོན་གྱིས་རྟོན་ཡིན།
15. ཁྲ་ཁྲ་ཟྦོག་གི་རྫྲ་ཡིན།
16. མངོན་པོ་དང་འབྲོད་དང་འབྲོད་དང་འབྲོད་དང་
17. bu gcig pu red
18. gces phrug rogs la gces ma len dgos
19. khra khra zog gi rdzi bo yin
20. mgo sbra smug po'i nang 'dzin yin
21. zhes bshad na bden gi
22. rgan rgon gnyis la yang bu mo kher mo red
23. gcig mtshungs red

24. khyed tshang gis
25. rum nang rig gi bzhag na chog
26. khyim la go gi bzhag na chog

27. nga blo bzang zhe na
28. phu nu gcig gi phu rtsa yin
29. stag mo gcig gi tshang rtsa yin

30. tog sngon po can gyi dpon po 'khrungs sa
31. gos gser khang can gyi bla ma 'khrungs sa
46 rta thor bu zhig gis ma ser gong

47 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

48 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

47 gos gong bas ma go glu blangs
48 dung bos ni ma go bro 'chams

49 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

50 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

51 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

49 khyed tshos 'dang zhig rgyobs
50 de ring bya khu byug gi gsung snyan grags nas
51 'bu sna brgya 'khor nas glu dbyangs len zer ba'i rgyu mtshan yod ni ma red

52 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

53 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

54 khyod tshos sems rten pha ma'i gces phrug blangs te
55 khyung dkar mdzo yi rdang mgo blangs nas bud song na

56 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

57 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

58 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

59 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

54 gros 'cham ni ma red
55 pha a khu'i yan na dbang chen med
56 rdo pha bong yan na ljid mo med

57 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

58 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

59 ཡོད་འགྲོས་ཡོད་ལྕགས་བསྟན་པ།

57 de ring khyod bar ba tshor mtshon na
58 'di sman bu mos gnas yul brgyud thal
'bri thul mas zhing kha nyul thal zhe na

bu mo ster ba'i skad cha yod ni ma red
tshig bshad kyin bshad kyin phyir nur mi byed
ba ngur bzhin ngur bzhin lhas mtha' mi nyul

'u tsho rta yi lo rgyus rta bdag la gsal
mdzo yi lo rgyus mdzo bdag la gsal

nga'i tsha mo sgrol ma zhe na
khyim m'i nang gi gees ma zhig yin
zog gi nang gi g.yang chen zhig yin

gos tshar lwa'i nang la btums te bzhag
phrug theb brgya'i dkyil la bskyil nas bzhag
g.yu byu ru gnyis kyis mnan nas bzhag

mkhar skya mo'i khug gi nang 'dzin la dgos
phyugs khra khra'i khug gi khyu rgyan la dgos
mo lo bco lnga ma bud gong
drug gsum bco bryad ma lon gong
myin nas myi btag bud myong
srib nas gnas btag bud myong
dkar po chos la ma brje
smug po gnyen la ma byin
de ring ngo dkar res dmar res byas na mi bzang gi
khyed gnyis ka
mi yar skyes nang gi bzang skyes shig dang
shing yar skyes nang gi drang skyes shig yin
de ring ster pa'i dpe yod ni ma red
bu mo'ang kha chen ri na yod
dbang chen yul na yod
The second matchmaker responds:

1. བོད་ལ་འབུ་ལྟ་སྲོང་གསུ་གཞི་ལྷ་
2. ལྷས་སྲོང་འབུ་ལྟ་སྲོང་
3. བོད་ལ་འབུ་ལྟ་སྲོང་གསུ་གཞི་ལྷ
4. བོད་ལ་འབུ་ལྟ་སྲོང་གསུ་གཞི་ལྷ

3. བོད་ལ་འབུ་ལྟ་སྲོང་གསུ་གཞི་ལྷ
4. བོད་ལ་འབུ་ལྟ་སྲོང་གསུ་གཞི་ལྷ

5. བོད་ལ་འབུ་ལྟ་སྲོང་གསུ་གཞི་ལྷ
6. བོད་ལ་འབུ་ལྟ་སྲོང་གསུ་གཞི་ལྷ
7. བོད་ལ་འབུ་ལྟ་སྲོང་གསུ་གཞི་ལྷ
8. བོད་ལ་འབུ་ལྟ་སྲོང་གསུ་གཞི་ལྷ

6. པྱིན་བསང་བསྐྱབ། བསྐྱེད་བྱེད་པར་བཀའ་
7. བོད་ལ་འབུ་ལྟ་སྲོང་གསུ་གཞི་ལྷ
8. བོད་ལ་འབུ་ལྟ་སྲོང་གསུ་གཞི་ལྷ
9 de ring yin na khyed tshos nyi ma skar ma re bshad nas 10 gang rung la 'dang brgyab par ngas snying thag pa nas bka' drin che zhu

11 brgya yis brgya bshad rung
12 stong gis stong bshad rung

13 sman bu mos gnas yul brgyud ni red
14 'bri thul ma zhing khar nyul ni red

15 stag sha ras rang bya rang gis las ni red
16 sman bu mos rang don rang gis sgrub ni red

17 rang don rang gis las na le bda' med
18 rang rta rang gis ded na ra mda' med

19 nye yod na chog gi med na chog gi
20 sha ba sha khrag la brda brgyag'u tshos gros byed

The bride's father's speech:

1 ཞབས་ིན་གས་མགོན་པོ།
2 ཞབས་ིན་གས་མགོན་པོ།
Summary

The first matchmaker begins by stating that he got up early and came urgently to discuss the issue of the two youths. He humbly expresses sympathy for the girl’s family. He states that the two youths have obviously made up their minds and eloped, so he has come to apologize on behalf of the boy’s family. The matchmaker strongly encourages further discussion.

The bride’s father replies pejoratively and aggressively, mentioning that such discussions should take place early in the day, and expresses anger at the matchmaker’s late arrival. He explains how he and his wife were busy with household chores in the morning and have been worried because their daughter was missing. He claims that Grags pa, the boy’s father, must be deliberately making trouble, and makes reference to the fact that despite the customary ways to propose a marriage, Grags pa has instead stolen his daughter. He concludes by refusing to agree to the marriage.

The bride’s father’s brother then states that both families have a history of good relations extending across several generations. He emphasizes that, despite the families’ good relations, Sgrol ma, the girl, is the only daughter remaining in the home and thus must stay home to care for her elderly parents. He says that if Grags pa had wanted to propose marriage for his son, he should have let everyone know and negotiated openly. The uncle signals that he had not heard anything about the proposal until then, and that he is upset. He also briefly describes his family lineage and says that they are not a family that can easily be bullied. He says that now that the girl has been abducted, he will not agree to the proposal, even though the matchmakers may say that the couple is acting on their own. He states that he is the one who has the most authority over this decision,147 and goes on to describe how his niece, Sgrol ma, is the most beloved person in their family and has been taken good care of and raised well. The uncle continues saying that the matchmakers are

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147 Traditionally, the girl’s paternal uncles or paternal grandfather are the most respected and decide the marriage.
good people, so he will not go on and make them uncomfortable, and then reiterates that their marriage proposal is unacceptable. Finally, he mentions that there are many additional relatives in the family who must be consulted on such things, and asks the matchmakers to return on the fifteenth day of the fourth lunar month.\textsuperscript{148}

The second matchmaker responds, saying that he understands how important the daughter is to the family. He repeats that the youths have made their own decision and no one is to blame. He also explains apologetically that the matchmakers arrived somewhat late due to the long distance between their homes. He expresses his gratitude to the uncle for setting a time for another negotiation. He finishes by saying that even though an agreement is not assured, it is good to have further negotiation.

The bride's father then says that it is his daughter's fate, and he is unsure what decision to make, but that he will gather important relatives and discuss it with them.

Finally, it is agreed that the matchmakers will return for a third negotiation. At that time, many of the boy's male relatives gather and negotiate. The matchmakers agree to let the bride return home as soon as there is any indication of agreement, at which time the bride is escorted back to her natal home by a matchmaker.

**MATCHMAKERS ESCORT THE BRIDE HOME**

Early the following morning, a matchmaker escorts the bride back to her parents' home. As she leaves, the boy's family ties a white \textit{kha btags} to the bride's hair, indicating that she is an abducted bride. Only abducted brides wear such a sign. She also wears the clothes and ornaments given by the boy's family, who are now confident that she will not have a change of heart.

The whole family comes outside as soon as the matchmaker and bride reach the bride's home. The bride's mother embraces her and weeps. The matchmaker is warmly taken into the house while the mother and other female members accompany the bride to another room. This time, the bride's father and the matchmaker mostly discuss matters unrelated to the engagement. The matchmaker does not stay longer than an hour.

The second matchmaker's speech:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}བོད་དུ་བུར་བཅོམ་པ་བཐོག་པ་ན།
  \item \textsuperscript{2}བོད་དུ་བུར་བཅོམ་པ་བཐོག་པ་ན།
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{148} Auspicious days are chosen based on the Tibetan calendar.
The bride's father's speech:

SUMMARY

When the bride is brought back home as requested, the matchmaker reminds the bride's father that abduction is a local custom, so he should not scold his daughter.

In return, the bride's father says today is the day his daughter returned home, and now that she is back, he will not scold anyone.

Concluding the speech, the bride's father remind the matchmaker that he must now solicit opinions about the negotiation from his key relatives, most of whom are elders. Since these elders have experienced many negotiations, they do not talk much. Instead, they directly say if they agree or not. Finally, the matchmaker suggests that the matchmakers return for the next negotiation.

Before the 1980s, most locals traveled long distance several times to negotiate, however, this has changed because of cell phones. Many issues are decided over the phone and long periods of travel are avoided unless it is the first negotiation or an important issue arises, such as the youths' changing their mind or someone from either side refusing.
When the matchmaker leaves, mostly female relatives cluster around the daughter who was abducted and ask her about the boy’s family and her impressions.

**DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE BRIDE'S RELATIVES**

After no more than a week, the bride's father invites his important elder relatives to his home. Maternal relatives usually do not participate. The bride’s brother says that Grags pa's family proposed to Sangs rgyas's daughter, but it was not agreed to. He then states that because they were unsure of what to do next, they asked all the relatives to meet for a discussion.

The bride's father's brother's speech:

1. འཛིན་རིང་སྦོད་ིས་བུ་ཅིག་འལ་མཁུལ།
2. བཟའ་བོད་ཡོན་ཏན་འདུས་འལ་མཁུལ།
3. གས་ལེ་སྦོང་ཞིག་བཤད་དག་ན།
4. གི་རིག་གང་ལ་མཐོན་ན།
5. རྒན་རོབ་སྦོང་ལ་དུས་ཀྱིས་མ་འདུ་དང་།
6. རྒན་་སྦོང་ལ་དུས་ཀྱི་འགན་དུ་དམ་ལ།
7. གས་ལེ་སྦོང་ཞིག་བཤད་དག་ན།
8. གི་རིག་གང་ལ་མཐོན་ན།
9. དམ་བྱེད་ལ་ཐོན་ཞིང་བསམ་ལ་ཐོན་ཞིང་།
10. ཚུ་ལྷུ་གྱི་དཔག་སྦོང་དུ་མཐོན་ན།
9. rgan rgon gnyis la mtshon na'ang khag med
10. rta bor gyi sga dang ma bor gyi sems

11. khyed tshos bshad pa tshang ma go song 'u tsho su yin yang
12. mi don mig gis rig myong
13. rang bya don du babs myong

13. bu mor rgan gnyis kyis re bzhag yod ni red yin yang
14. 'di bsam sar ma song bsags thal
15. mos tsho ba mang po 'di tsho'i nang nas
16. grags pa tshang la 'gro rgyu zer na
17. ngas bltas na nye po'i nye rgyud can zhig red
18. mched pa'i lo rgyus can zhig red

19. 'di rang dbang rang 'thad yin pa'i cha nas
20. 'di 'dra 'dra'i sems su mda' bzhag nas
21. mi 'dra'i sems su sdug bzhag na ma red bsam
22 'u tsho yang rgad po bsam shes red
23 spyir bu bu mo la gnyen dang thod pa'i kha yig yod nas
24 tshong dang srid pa'i skal gnas yod na

25 བ་ ཁུ་ བྱུག་གྲ ག་ན་ རྒྱལ་ཁམས་སྐྱེ་དགོས།
26 ཟླ་བཞི་པ་ཚེས་ན་སྒྲི་དོ་གསོས།

25 bya khu byug grag na rgyal kham skyid dgos
26 zla bzhi pa tshes na sa gzhi dro dgos

27 རིགས་སྲིད་གང་སྐྱེ་དགོས།
28 དབུ་ཕྲུག་གང་སྐེ་ར་བམ་རྱེད།

27 rigs drug gang skyes bla ma red
28 bu phrug gang ster pha ma red

29 དབུ་ཕྲུག་གང་སྐེ་ར་བམ་རྱེད།
30 དབུ་ཕྲུག་གང་སྐེ་ར་བམ་རྱེད།

29 gos gong bas ma 'thum bro 'chams
30 yul pha mas ma go gnyen bsgrigs

31 དངོས་གོང་བས་མ།
32 རྒྱལ་ཁམས་སྐྱེ་དགོས།
33 དབུ་ཕྲུག་གང་སྐེ་ར་བམ་རྱེད།
34 བུ་ལོ་འཆོག་པའི་མགོན་པོ་དཀར་པོ་གཉེན་པོ།

31 goms pa'i lam 'di btsal btang na
32 rang dbang rang 'thad 'di gal che ni red
33 srid jus la shugs che ni red
34 mtha' 'jug 'u tshos ngo log byas kyang thub ni ma red

35 བཉམ་ཚོའི་བཞི་ཐོག་པའི་མགོན་པོ་དཀར་པོ་གཉེན་པོ།
36 བཐུམ་ཆོས་དཔོན།
37 བོད་ཀྱི་བཞི་ཐོག་པའི་མགོན་པོ་དཀར་པོ་གཉེན་པོ།
38 བོད་ཀྱི་བཞི་ཐོག་པའི་མགོན་པོ་དཀར་པོ་གཉེན་པོ།
The bride's father's agreement:

1. ngo ma red khyod tsho'i yan na dbang chen dang
2. rdo'i yan na ljid mo yod ni ma red da yin na kha thog der 'jog ya
SUMMARY

The girl's father's brother says that at a fundamental level, girls' minds are fickle, and it is therefore excusable that the daughter left her parents to marry a man from the family of a good tribe with whom they have good relations. He goes on to argue that since the two youths have already eloped, scolding is useless. He reminds everyone that the couple are old enough, and that as voluntary marriage complies with the law, nobody can successfully oppose it. He laments that it is unlikely for a groom to marry and move into his wife's home nowadays because many boys are alcoholics and gamblers. In the end, he explains that he will not oppose the marriage.

The bride's father briefly says that he agrees with the uncle. If the matchmakers have spoken persuasively, the relatives are very likely to unanimously agree.

Prior to the 1980s, families did not give away their daughters easily. Sometimes the matchmakers had to negotiate up to sixteen times. However, the number of negotiations has gradually diminished so that, in 2015, one to two rounds of negotiation were sufficient, largely because marriage laws give youths the right to choose their own spouses. If two youths are willing to marry, their parents cannot prevent them.

The bride's mother and other relatives listen, while the bride avoids the discussion with such excuses as needing to herd the sheep, sweep the floors of other rooms, go to a neighbor's home to chat, and so on.

The bride's mother usually sheds tears if the discussion has a positive outcome. Her relatives comfort her by saying, for example, that brides always leave their parents' homes.

The negotiation concludes once the bride's father and paternal relatives approve. Finally, the bride's father tells the relatives to return for the third negotiation with the matchmakers.

THE THIRD NEGOTIATION

On the designated day, the matchmakers arrive in the morning, soon followed by relatives of the bride's father and a third negotiation ensues.

AN EXAMPLE OF A THIRD NEGOTIATION

This is an example of the matchmaker's speech:
2 de ring nyin bzang skar bzang
3 bkra shis don 'grub kyi nyi ma red
4 'u tshos bu bu mo'i rang dbang rang 'thad kyi don dag 'di gros bsdur zhig byed bsam ni red

5 'di dus gsum gyi me tog 'khrungs na
6 dus bzhi yi rgyal mos rig dgos

7 dbus ser po bsam yes bzhengs na
8 smad lung pas go dgos ni red

9 grags pa tshang dang sangs rgyas tshang gnyis la mtshon na
10 lha mi'i bar na 'phrin pa yod
11 lha shing bar na 'byor rtsi yod

12 sngon Chad gsum la yang
13 nye byas na 'phregs sa 'phrod sa yin
14 lo btab na 'khrungs sa skye sa yin
rgyu mtshan 'di nga yin na bshad mi dgos gangs dkar sems na yod
'bri mi dgos yig chung ngos na yod ni red

spyir 'jig rten gyi bu bu mo'i don dag cig bcos na'ang
sbra mthing smug kha ru lhor bskor dgos
sman bu mo'i gros mgo gnas skor rgyu
'di'i steng la sems bzhag nas
da khyed tshos skad cha 'ga' re bshad rgyu byos dang

The bride's father's brother's speech:

sangs rgyas tshang dang grags pa gnyis
sprin dkar po thod la bzung nas
tstag bser bu thong la blang nas
rta 'do ba thong rngul phud nas
sangs rgyas tshang gi sgo khar yong ni red yin na'ang bu mo ma byin
ni red
The speech by another close older male relative of the bride:

1. སངས རྒྱ་མཚན་པ་གཉིས
2. དགུན་རྒྱལ་མཚན་སྟེང་སྤྱོད་ནི་འར་དང་དུ་ལོག
3. གསར་བུམ་པའི་མ་ཤིས་འཇེན་དང་།
4. བསལ་བའི་འར་ལན་ཅོད་པ།།
5. ལས་བཅོལ་དང་དུ་བལངས་།།
6. ཐག་ཆེན་རྡུལ་གསོད་དང་དྱེ་།།
7. དུ་ཆེན་ཁིས་བསྒྱུར་ནས་།།
8. རྒྱལ་ང་སྟོང་ཕྱིར་ལ་བལངས་།།
9. སོ་མི་ཟེར་དང་།།
10. གློ་རྱི་ང་སྟོང་བཤད་དང་སྟེང་དུ་ཙོག་ན།

The speech by another close older male relative of the bride:
11 sangs rgyas dang grags pa gnyis
12 bskal ba'i ring gi nye ya yin
13 srid pa'i ring gi zhang 'dzin yin

14 སྲིད ལྟ་རིང་གི་བོད
15 ལ་ཁང་གི་འོག་ནུས་སེམས་དཔའ།
16 མཆོག་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་སྤྲོད་ཡིན།

14 nga rgad por mtshon na
15 mgo btsog rung bla ma mjal byed yin
16 kha btsog rung za ma za byed yin

17 གསར་རི་ལྟ་རིང་གི་བོད
18 ང་ལྟ་ཆུར་དགེ་འབྲེལ
19 ང་ལྟ་རིང་ན་བོད

17 khyed grags pa tshang gi
18 khar skyes kyi kha spu yin
19 lus skyes kyi ba spu yin

20 གསར་ལའང་ཐེག་མཆོག་རྟ་བོད
21 གསར་ལའང་ཐེག་མཆོག་ནུས་སེམས
22 གསར་ལའང་ཐེག་མཆོག་མཆོག་རྟ་བོད

20 nga sangs rgyas tshang gi mag rgan zhig yin
21 nga dkar po ri rgyud gangs chags yin
22 sems dkar po 'o ma zho chags yin

23 གསར་ལའང་ཐེག་མཆོག་རྟ་བོད
24 གསར་ལའང་ཐེག་མཆོག་ནུས་སེམས

23 chu gnyis bar gyi zam pa yin
24 sde gnyis bar gyi 'phrin pa yin
25 ngas gang rung la 'dang brgyab ni yin
de ma gtogs nged sangs rgyas tshang zhes na

27 spyi tshogs gsar rnying gang la mtshon na
28 rgya la 'phyar rgyu yod
29 spun la ngom rgyu yod

30 bu bu mos
31 rang lor kha bkal nas
32 rang rtar sga bstad na bu
33 bu mo'i don dag mi rdzob
34 khyod sangs rgyas dang grags pa gnyis
35 sa ka cur thon pa don yod
36 mdzo khyung dkar ded pa ming yod

37 ཨོ་བོ་ི་ཤེས།
38 ངེ་ནོ་ཁ་མ་ཉེ་ནོ་
39 ངེ་ནོ་ཁ་མ་ཉེ་ནོ་
40 ངེ་ནོ་ཁ་མ་ཉེ་ནོ་
41 ངེ་ནོ་ཁ་མ་ཉེ་ནོ་
The first matchmaker's reply:

1. སོང་གསོར་མོག་ཏུ་བཤད།
2. ཀྲུང་གོ་ཞབས་མོང་།
3. དབང་བཞི་བོད་པ་ཁྲིམས་རྟགྟོང་མ།

4. བུ་མོ་སྟོལ་མ་ཉི་མ་གྲོས་པ་ཚང་ལ་བསྒྲོལ་བ།
5. གྲངས་ཤིག་བིན་ན།
6. ཉི་མ་རྐྱ་དོ།

7. སྙན་དུས།
8. རོང་པོ་དུས།
9. བུ་མོ་གཡང་བློ་ནས།

10. གསེར་སྣང་ཞེན་བོད་ཤིང་བོད།
11. ཆོང་གོ་ཞིང་བོད་ཤིང་བོད།
12. ཐོ་བཅད་བོད་ཤིང་བོད་ཤིང་བོད།

13. ཕེས་རྒྱ་བོད་ཤིང་བོད་ཤིང་བོད།
14. རིང་ལོང་བོད་ཤིང་བོད་ཤིང་བོད།
15. དྲུག་པོ་དུས།
12 gong bcad nas khug song zer rgyu yod ni ma red

13 yin na'ang bod kha ba can la dpe lam 'phrang gsum zhig yod gi

14 bu bu mo'i gnyen ston zer ba 'di
15 rta ra ra jag pas ma thub ni zhig
16 mdzo khyung dkar gos kyis ma non ni zhig

17 yin dgos ni red mod
18 nged tshang la mtshon na
19 rgad po da lta lag pa sring 'dod kyi phu rung thung bas cha rkyen de
  'dra ma ldan thal
20 de ring khyed rnam pa dgongs pa tshoms mi nyan

21 'di na gos steng 'og bzhi dang phrug bzo mgo zhig
22 ba gdan gnyis dang chang shog sgam gang yod pa 'di
23 bu mo sgrol ma g.yang blangs nas byin pa ma gtogs
24 ngas rin byin nas nyos dang ni 'dra 'dra yin ni ma red
The second matchmaker's reply:

1 ཞེས་ོན་ཅེས་པ་ཐེ་སྟོད་ནས་གཞི་བར

2 a zhang tshos da gyon chas kyi phyogs nas cig bshad na

A zhang's response:

1 བཞེང་ཅེས་སྟོད་ནས་བཞིན་པ་ཐེ་སྟོད་ནས་གཞི་བར

1 kha gyon chas kyi steng nas 'di rgan rgon gnyis la mtshon na bu mo gcig pu red
2. de mig khra ril nang gi rno yin
3. so sum bcu'i steng gi 'ice yin

4. grags pa tshang dang sangs rgyas tshang la mtshon na
5. phag na blta ni brtag ni yod
6. khyed tshang la bshad dgos ni ma red
7. bu mo yin na da bar du khyim geig la'ang ma byin par khyed tshang la byin ni red

8. phyir mig gi blta sa yin
9. lag pa khen sa yin

10. bu mos 'di ltar lam btsal btang na
11. nga yin na yang tshe geig gi a zhang red
12. ngas dkar po chos la yar dad byed
13. smug po gnyen la yar rto gs brgyag
14. gyon pa'i steng nas de ring 'di ltar bshad na 'u kha gnyis la
15 མི་ཐམས་ཅད་ཐག་ནྱེ་པོ་མི་ཡིན།
16 ཐག་རིང་པ་རྣྫོད་ཡིན།
17 དངོས་རྒྱས་ཚང་བཅས།
18 མ་ཡི་དཀྱིལ་གཞི་ཡིན།
19 གཞོ་ཡི་གཞོང་གཞི་ཡིན།
20 དབྱུར་རུ་དབྱུང་འཐོབ་ལ་བུའི་སྒྲ་བ་
21 དོན་དང་སྦྱོར་བའི་མྱེ་དག་ཡིན།
22 དེ་ཡིན་ན་ང་བོ་སྟོར་མ་དང་།
23 དབྱུར་ཐུ་མ་ཞེས་བསྐྱུབ་དང་།
24 དབྱུར་འཐོབ་དམ་རྐྱེ་དབུས་།
25 དབྱུར་ཐུ་རྒྱུད་ཀྱི་ནང་གསུང་།
26 དེ་ཡིན་ན་ང་བོ་སྟོར་མ་དང་།
27 དབྱུར་ཐུ་འི་སྡེ་མ་གཤེ།
The first matchmaker's reply:

1. བཙོས་བཤད་ལས་ཚར་ཐལ།
2. བི་འུ་ཞར་མ་ཚར་ལས་ད་པ་ཞིག་པ་སྟོན་པའི་སྟེར་ཡོན་ཏོ་ཉེ་ཆོག
3. དཔའ་རྒྱོད་ཁུང་ཞིག་ལ་ཅི་ཐང་།

A zhang's reply:

1. ཆོག་ནི་རྱེ་ད་ཡིན་བཟང་བཟང་ཞིག་རྱེ་ད་

The first matchmaker's reply:

2. བསམ་ཆར་རྱེ་ཡོད་ན་བཤད་རྒྱ་གལ་
3. དབྱ་རྒྱོད་པ་ཅི་ཚང་ན།
4. ལས་བཅར་ཁོན་ལས་ཚུལ་

4. བསམ་'ཆར་རེ་ཡོད་་བཤད་རྒྱ་གལ་

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The matchmaker describes the brightness and auspiciousness of the day, states that the Grags pa and Sangs rgyas families have a long history of positive relations, and encourages the members of the bride's family to further discuss the possibility of this marriage.

The A zhang says that although several discussions were held and the matchmakers attempted to negotiate several times, the daughter was not yet given in marriage. He emphasizes that even though many people are gathered, he has not yet approved anything.

Next, another older male relative of the bride's father reaffirms the good relationship between the families. He says that both families have negotiated and discussed the pros and cons of the marriage proposal many times. He states that he has negotiated between the two families with a pure mind, and finally approves the marriage.

The matchmaker replies that he is thankful that all the significant relatives have gathered to make the decision and declares that a daughter cannot be purchased and, if she could, the price would be too high anyway. He goes on to state that, according to traditional custom, he has brought four different types of gos 'clothing', a set of phrug 'wool fabric', two felt carpets, and a bottle of liquor as gifts, but not as payment for the bride. He thanks the family for agreeing to accept such simple gifts, and finally asks them if they have further comments.
The second matchmaker reminds the *A zhang* to stipulate the clothing requirements for the new bride.

An *A zhang* then replies that Sgrol ma is the only, and much-cherished daughter in the groom's family. He also reminds everyone that many people will be watching what happens between their families and gossiping about it. He states that since Srgol ma is to be engaged, and because he strongly supports the marriage, he does not demand many expensive ornaments and clothes. He concludes by emphasizing that nonetheless, the clothes that they give should be acceptable and not something that others would denigrate.

The first matchmaker replies, saying that the negotiation has now been successfully concluded. He requests that the bride's clothing be provided on the fifth day of the tenth lunar month.

The *A zhang* agrees, as that is an auspicious day, and because the matchmaker stated that the family will provide acceptable clothes. He asks others for comments.

The other *A zhang* states that there are no more comments and confirm that they would like to hold the wedding on the third day of the first lunar month.

**AN AGREEMENT RITUAL**

If the negotiation is successful, both families agree to the marriage. Traditionally, incense is burned by a member of the bride's family, and a bottle of liquor is poured into a bowl and then liquor is flung in
the directions of local holy mountains. This bottle of liquor should be from the bride’s home. If the boy is moving into the bride’s home, the bottle of alcohol should be from his natal family. It is opened by the oldest man from the bride’s family. The liquor is then aspersed in the directions where local mountain deities are believed to dwell. Meanwhile, men loudly chant the following incense scripture:

CLEANSING OFFERING

Cleansing Offering

1 mchod oM AH hU~M mchod oM AH hU~M mchod oM AH hU~M
2 mchod bla ma yi dam 3 sangs rgyas byang sems 4 dpa' bo mkha' 'gro
5 chos skyong srung ma 6 yul lha gzhi bdag 7 dbu mgo nag gi skyabs re
8 sa 8 gnam gong ma rgyal mo 9 gnam sa pha ma rgan rgon 10 sa bcu ba
thob ki sangs rgyas a myes rma chen 11 rma mgo stong dang Inga brgya
12 rma rigs sum brgya drug cu 13 rma ngos kyi dgra lha bcu gsum 14 rma
sgon mo yul gru bar gsum gyi gnas yul gzhi bdag

1 rdza gangs ri dkar mo'i rtse yi dbus na bzhugs nas 2 g.ya' ma sngon
mo'i gdan steng na bzhugs nas 3 pha' bong dkar po'i khri steng na
bzhugs nas 4 rta ra ra'i chibs pa bcibs nas 5 gos rmang nag gi na bza'
mnabs nas 6 khams gsum dbang du sdud nas 7 dgra bgegs choms la
phab nas 8 dgra srin po dam la 'dogs pa 9 byad 'dul gyi rgyal bo brag
dkar 10 rma 'dabs kyi rgyal bo brag dkar

149 Liquor is poured in a bowl and flung. Sometimes it is flicked with the
fingers in the directions of local deities.
150 Provided by Gsang sgrog.
nub phyogs pha bong lung ba'i sku mkhar na bzhugs nas 2 'ja' tshon sna lnga'i gur khang na bzhugs nas 3 rdo yid bzhin nor bu'i khri steng na bzhugs nas 4 sa gser phye ma 'bab pa'i do khug na bzhugs nas 5 gnam lcags thog gi mkhar nang na bzhugs nas 6 pho chung 'brug gi rwa bar na bzhugs nas 7 dam can skyes bu chen po 8 skyes mchog rdo rje legs pa 9 skyes mchog mgar ba nag po dam can rdor legs 10 pha khu'i skyes lha rim sum bsang ri mthon po las dge bsnyen dung ri dkar po 11 rta mang bo'i chibs pa bcibs nas 12 khyed rnam pa tsho'i zhal du mchod nas mchod 13 oM AH hU-M

pha khu'i bla ri 2 ma gcig dpal ldan lha mo 3 bstan pa'i chos skyong srung ma 4 ban 'bru brgya yi bdag po 5 bon 'bru stong gi bdag po 6 'khor btsal dmag bye b 'bum sde pha khu'i bla ri 7 ma gcig dpal ldan lha mo 8 bstan pa'i chos skyong srung ma 9 sa 'di'i sa bdag mchod gnas 'di'i 10 gnas bdag mchod

chu chen gyi kha na bzhugs nas 2 sde chen gyi grong na bzhugs nas 3 rgya bod gnyis kyi sa mtshams na bzhugs nas 4 pho brang dkar po'i nang shul na bzhugs nas 5 drel dkar zhabs la bcibs nas 6 rlung 'khor gyi gshog pa thog nas 7 skal cig gi yid la thon nas 8 g.yas na shan pa
rwa mgo 9 g.yon na shan pa tsi thung 10 myur mgyogs kyi bdag po yul lha 11 kha sha mthil na gnas pa’i yul lha 12 khri ka’i pho brang na gnas pa’i yul lha

1 stong gsum stong gi bdag po 2 stong gsum srog gi khen ma 3 stong che a myes rgya thang 4 rje gser khang rdo rje ’ching gis bka’ bsgos dam bzhag yod pa’i 5 lha ’jams dbyang nag po’i 6 thugs sprul thugs sprul shing ma thun ’dzi 7 dgra mi thub pa’i dpung ba khyed la bstad nas 8 sgrub mi thub pa’i dpung ba khyed la bstad nas 9 rgan sri gzhon sri 10 nad sna 11 god sna 12 byur sna 13 gdon sna yod na khyed kyis pha rol rgyang grags bar du mtshams gcod dgos 14 bstan pa’i lha mkha’ ’gro chos skyong srung ma 15 yi dam chos skyong srung ma 16 khyed rnam pa tsho’i zhal du mchod 17 mchod oM AH hU~M 18 mchod oM AH hU~M

SUMMARY

The speaker asperses liquor in the direction of the local deities, then praises them and beseeches them for their protection. The speaker first praises bla ma, Buddha, srung ma, and then both Bon and Buddhism, mentioning their locations, sources of power, and features. He praises the deities A myes rma chen,151 A myes brag dkar,152 Dpal ldan lha mo,153 and A myes yul lha.154 Finally, he asks these deities to protect locals from disasters, illnesses, and other misfortunes.

Most local Bon practitioners use the following incense scripture when they hold the cleansing offering. The following incense scripture was provided in 2014 by G.yung drung rgyal (b. ~1980), a local Bon adherent.

151 A holy snow mountain in Mgo log Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.
152 A holy mountain located in Mang ra County.
153 A guardian deity.
154 A local deity enshrined in the Yul lha Temple.
32 sa bcu'i dbang phyug chen po 33 skyes mchog rma chen spom ra
34 yab rma ri ther 'dzong 35 yum chen se ri ngang yag 36 btsun mo gung sman rgyal mo 37 sras po sras mo dgu dgu sogs rma rigs sum brgya drug cu 38 rma 'khor stong dang bcas ba rma sngon mo nyin srib bar gsum la gnas pa'i gzhi bdag

39 pho lha'i dung khyung dkar po 40 sgra bla'i gsas mkhar gnyan po 41 sgro ri rab brtan thogs med 42 ban ru brgya yi bdag po 43 bon ru stong gi bdag po 44 'khor btsan dmag bye ba 'bum gyi bdag po 45 lus dge bsnyen gyi dung ri dkar po 46 pha ku'i ring gi skyes lha

47 rdza gangs ri dkar po'i rtse na bzhugs pa'i 48 rtse mo brgyad kyi dbu na bzhugs pa'i 49 byad 'dul gyi rgyal bo brag dkar 50 dmag 'dul gyi rgyal po brag dkar 51 sgo rtsa khyad par can gyi brag dkar

52 shar phyogs rdza ri'i nang shul nas 53 g.ya' ma sngon mo'i mkhar nang na bzhugs pa'i 54 'khor mi nag rta nag stong gi bdag po 55 mthu rtsal gnam lcags thogs las myur pa'i 56 gnyan chen po pho ba rog po

57 rma chu chen mo'i rab kyi kha na bzhugs pa'i 58 rgya bod gnyis kyi sa mtshams nas 59 dre'u dkar rkang la bcibs nas 60 rlung 'khor gyi gshogs pa thogs nas 61 skad cig nyid la thon nas 62 g.yas na shan pa rwa 'go 63 g.yon na shan pa tsi thung 64 mdun du blon chen sde bzhi 65 'khor du bran g.yog sum bcu 66 las byed ri lang bcu gsum 67 myur
mgyogs can gyi a myes yul lha

68 ri sde stong gi bdag po 69 dgra bgegs cham la phab pa'i 70 spyan gsum can gyi stong che'i a myes rgya thang 71 khyped rnam lha gson po 72 thugs dron po yin 73 pha ma bzhin du bkur na 74 bu phrug bzhin du skyongs dgos

75 btsan po'i tshig rjes 'ded mi nyan 76 phyug po'i snod ngor 'go mi nyan 77 lag pa'i phyi nang brje mi nyan 78 lus dang grib ma brje mi nyan 79 kha lag pa bzhin du kha 'dzin byed dgos 80 lus grib ma bzhin du mgon skyabs byed dgos 81 ma rig khra chen mig byed dgos 82 ma go mgo zur rna byed dgos 83 ma shes gangs dkar sems byed dgos 84 bshad gi nyin dkar lce byed dgos 85 'thab kyi nyin dkar dpung byed dgos 86 rgyug gi nyin dkar bang byed dgos

87 bos na ang ring mi nyan 88 bskul na m+wa chung mi nyan 89 bslang na skal chung mi nyan 90 mi'i nad tsha phyugs kyi god kha 91 dgra sna gyod sna 92 byad phur rbod gtong 93 kha smras gleng gzhi 94 'thab rtsod khrug slong sogs byung mi nyan 95 bsam pa'i don 'grub dgos 96 'dod pa'i rtse gang dgos 97 kha las dar rgud yong mi nyan 98 rlung rta chag 'jig yong mi nyan 99 bcas kyi bya lam la 'gro dgos 100 dran pa'i blo lam la 'gro dgos
The speaker asperses liquor in the direction of local deities, and then praises them and beseeches their protection. Similar to the first incense scripture, the speaker firstly praises bla ma, the founder of Bon, srung ma, and then both Bon and Buddhism, introducing the locations, sources of power, and features of these glorified ones. Most deity names provided in this recitation are related to Bon and differ from the names in the first recitation. Finally, he asks the deities to protect locals from disasters, illnesses, and other misfortunes.

Another incense scripture historically given for the local lab rtse previously published by Lcam rig sras (2011:262) is presented below. In 2015, only a few elders could give such a incense scripture.

sgro ri rab brtan thogs med kyi bsang mchod bzhugs so

1 kye lhun 'grub bde ba chen po'i pho brang nas 2 bla ma yi dam mchog gsum srung ma'i tshogs 3 ma lus bsang mchod mgon du spyan 'dren na 4 ma thog rdzu 'phrul shugs kyis gnas 'dir byon 5 tshe ring mched lnga bstan ma bcu gnyis sogs 6 bod kham skyongs ba'i lha klu gzhi bdag dang 7 yul lha gnyan po rab bstan thogs med sogs 8 stong gsum gzhi bdag ma lus gnas 'dir byon

1 བྱེ་ལྷུན་འགྲུབ་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཕོ་བྲང་ནས། 2 བླ་མ་ཡི་དམ་མཆོག་གསུམ་སྙྣོ་མ་འི་ཚོགས། 3 ལྷུན་། 4 སྐྱེབས་ཀྱིས་བརྙནས་བཟོད་མ་དོན་དུ་སྤྱན་གྱིས་གམ་ལ་དོན། 5 འབྲུལ་ཤུགས་ཀྱི་བསང་རྟ་མ་དོན། 6 བོད་ཁམས་སྦྱོགས་བའི་ལྷ་ཀླུ་གཅིག་དང་། 7 ཡུལ་ལྷ་གགས་པོ་རབ་བསྟན་མཐོང་མོའི་དབང་། 8 སྟོང་གསུམ་བྱི་དབང་ལ་སུར་གནས་'དེ་བོན།
1. tding 'dzin sngags dang phyag rgyas byin rlabs pa'i 2. mchod gtor spyan gzigs thub pa'i bsang rdzas tshogs 3. sa dang bar snang nam mkha'i khyon gang ba 4. 'bul lo bzhes nas 'dod dgu'i char chen phobs 5. sman sna 'bru sna shing sna gos sna sogs 6. bsregs pa'i dri zhim dud pa'i sprin phung 'dis 7. byin rlabs gter mdzod rtsa brgyud bla ma bsang 8. gtan gyi skyabs gnas dkon mchog rnam gsum bsang 9. dngos grub kun stsol yi dam lha tshogs bsang 10. rnam 'byor 'phrin las sgrub pa'i chos skyogs bsang 11. yul phyogs skyong ba'i gzhis bdag thams cad bsang

1. khyad par rin chen spungs ri la gnas shing 2. rdzu 'phrul shugs ldan rta mchog ngang bar chibs 3. ngur smig zol gyis rgyal khamchos bzhin skyongs 4. lha rdzas tshul gyi nad gdon zhi mdzad pa'I 5. yul lha rab bstan thogs med 'khor bcas bsang 6. zag med bde ba'i dpal gyis tshim gyur nas 7. phan bde legs tshogs ma lus 'byung ba'i gzhis 8. phab pa'i bstan pa yun ring gnas pa dang 9. bstan pa 'dzin pa'i skyes bu dam pa rnams 10. zhab pad btra zhi mdzad 'phrin rgyas par mdzod 11. 'dzam gling yangs pa'i rgyal khams mtha' dag tu 12. nad mug 'thab rtsod sad ser than pa soggs 13. mi shes mtshan ma 'ga' yang mi 'byung zhing 14. 'jig rten bde legs chen pos khyab par mdzod 15. snying nas re ltos byed pa bdag cag rnams 16. gzhis lam byes gsum gang du 'dug kyang rung 17. g.yel ba med par rtag tu grogs mdzad nas 18. gal rkyen kun sel mthun r'kyen ma lus bsgrubs

1. 'btsun snying rgya ma 'bya ba'i dngos gru dpal 'jug mchog dge bzhin skyongs 2. rta dpal 'jug mchog dge bzhin skyongs 3. 'jug mchog dge bzhin skyongs.
zhes rin chen spungs ri brag ri'i gnas bdag la bsang mchod 'bul tshul bkris char gyis re ba kun skong zhes bya ba 'di ni 2 bon skor dge 'dun bstan 'dzin gyis lha rdzas bcas bskul ngor 3 sgo mang mkhan chen sprul ming ni dge 'dun bstan pa dar rgyas kyis gsal phral tshig tu bris pa'o

**SUMMARY**

Similar to the first two recitations, the speaker praises bla ma, srung ma, and local deities, beseeching them for their protection. He also asks protection from the deities and water spirits. Plants such as barley and wheat are offered to the lab rtse. The speaker strongly encourages such offerings as milk and yogurt to the deities. Finally, he asks these deities to protect locals from disasters, illnesses, and other misfortunes.

... The incense scripture below is a much shorter, more concise version of the above (Lcam rig sras 2011:262) and more commonly offered by locals.

1 kye 2 sa brtan sa 'dzin glang chen 'gying 'dra ba'I 3 rin chen spungs ri khyung sman la sogs bsang 4 dkar phyogs skyong ba'i gzi bdag mthu bo che 5 gnas pa'i dge bsnyen 'khor dang bcas tshur byon 6 mkhan shug phye mar 'o zho ja chang sogs 7 rab 'bar me la bsreg pa'i dud sprin 'dis 8 rgyal bo khyod dang btsun mo sras blon bcas 9 zhal bzhin nas 'dod don ma las bsgrubs 10 zhes pa 'di yang sgo mang mkhan sprul dge 'dun bstan pa dar rgyas kyis bris pa'o
BRIDEWALTHE

Traditionally the bride's family asks for *rgyu rin* 'bridewealth' from the groom's family. Locals asked for horses and cash in the past, but now they ask only for cash. In 2015, middle-class families requested approximately 4,000 RMB, lower-class families 1,000 RMB, and wealthy families 5,000-10,000 RMB.

Matchmakers mention the bridewealth before the *A zhang* do, but never mention the amount that will be given. The *A zhang* discuss the amount they expect to receive. Their decision depends primarily on the matchmakers' attitudes, their relationship with the groom's family, and the closeness of the relationship between the bride's family and the matchmakers. If the amount seems unfair to the matchmakers, they bargain to reduce it. The matchmakers then ask the *A zhang* to specify a day on which to deliver the bridewealth cash.

THE BRIDE'S FAMILY'S CLOTHING REQUIREMENT

In the past, the bride's family required the bride's clothes to be better than those of other families and demanded more than the groom's family had prepared. For example, they demanded longer and larger otter skins, different colored robes, larger *bzho bzung, glo gzur*, and so on. However, such demands are rare today. Instead, locals request gold necklaces and earrings.

SETTING THE WEDDING DAY

Most locals arrange weddings just after New Year celebrations, believing this period to be auspicious. In some cases both families might ask an astrologer to determine an auspicious day for the wedding. Once the wedding date is set, a key relative of the bride's father decides how many *A zhang* will attend the wedding. In fact, the bride's family largely decides the wedding, including the number of *A zhang* who will attend. The groom's family must comply with the bride's family's decisions. In 2012, the largest number of *A zhang* was about ten and the fewest was two. In contrast, in the 1970s and earlier, the number of *A zhang* might have exceeded one hundred. The number has gradually decreased as many locals have simplified weddings, making them smaller and cheaper.

RUMORS

Sometimes negative rumors about the bride are spread either by non-relatives who have a quarrel with either family, or by relatives who oppose the marriage. Such rumors usually concern the bride's family rather than the bride herself. If a member of the bride's family
hears that a relative or member of the groom's family has commented negatively on the bride's family lineage or bones and flesh, the bride's family members furiously confront the groom's family and might even cancel the marriage. The groom's family then locates the person who initiated the rumors and in this way eventually resolves the matter. The person who spread the rumor generally admits that the rumor is false. The matter now resolved, honor is restored and the marriage proceeds.

THE MOTHER'S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE BRIDE

Following the completion of negotiations, the bride's mother instructs her daughter on a number of matters: how to be polite to the groom's family members at the groom's home, how to respond to the groom's relatives, especially the husband's parents and elders, and how to work hard.

If the bride does not work hard, for example, if she does not get up before others to make breakfast, villagers consider her lazy and the bride's parents and relatives will be upset. Quarrels and even divorce may ensue.

THE BRIDE EATS VERY LITTLE

As the day approaches for the bride to be escorted to the groom's home, her family members encourage her to eat less than usual. This custom might originate in the following account from Lha sgron:

A bride was about to be sent to the groom's home for her wedding. Before the wedding day, the bride ate a lot, thinking that, on the wedding day, she would be unable to eat much because she would not be allowed to walk around, including going to the toilet during her first visit to the groom's home. On the wedding day, the A zhang and bride rode horses. On the way to the wedding, she had diarrhea, and defecated in her pants. When the groom's relatives asked her to dismount, she refused. Finally, she whispered to her brother (one of the A zhang), telling him about her accident. The clever brother then demanded that the groom's relatives take the bride inside on her horse saddle.

Today, the bride is reminded, "Remember the bride with the saddle," so she will limit her eating. Some brides fast on the day before their wedding. Locals refer to this as bag ma'i kha 'gugs pa 'limit bride's eating'.
THE BRIDE'S DEPARTURE

When the day of the wedding arrives, villagers escort the bride to the groom's home before dawn. Reaching the groom's before sunrise is considered auspicious (Gcan tsha bka bho 2008:248), regardless of the distance between the bride's and groom's homes.

On the night before, the A zhang come to the bride's family and stay. That night, the A zhang drink a small amount of beer or liquor and practice songs and speeches they will present the next day.

The family prepares rang 'gifts to the groom's family for the bride', on this night or earlier. A rang includes mutton, one or two bags of candy, fruits such as apples and peaches, zhun,155 and thud.156 The mutton is usually a whole sheep carcass. A juniper twig and tufts of wool are placed on top. Some locals say this provides fortune and wealth, with the wool acting as a purifying agent and the juniper protecting from evils. When the groom's family receives rang, small portions are given to relatives and neighboring families.

The bride will have few chances to meet friends and relatives after her departure the next morning. Her friends come with gifts and talk to her while her hair is being plaited. Each friend gives her a bolt of cloth and one hundred to 200 RMB.

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155 Zhun is made of barley flour, cheese, butter, and sugar. It is identical to rtsam pa, except that more butter is used and thus it forms a solid cake when it cools.

156 Thud is made of cooked dough mixed with cheese, butter, and sugar to form a cake.
Photo 141. Zhun is made of barley flour, cheese, butter, and sugar. It is similar to rtsam pa, except that more butter is used and thus it forms a solid cake when it cools. This photo was taken in 2014.

Photo 142. Two women plait the bride's hair in a style called 'brog mgo 'nomad hairstyle' consisting of many long, thin plaits (2013).
Photo 143. Hair after braiding.

A HAIR SPEECH

During the departure night, in the same room as the A zhang, the bride is surrounded by female relatives and friends. Two girls plait the bride's hair in 'brog mgo. Meanwhile, an A zhang or the bride's brother sings the skra bshad 'hair speech' while holding a white kha btags and a ra mgo that he gives to the hairdressers to attach to the bride's head. However, in 2015, it was difficult to locate someone who could fluently give this speech. Khe bhe provided the following:

1ya 2sring chung lo lo don 'grub ma 3sring chung lo lo bsam 'grub ma 4bsam don gnas nas 'grub rgyu ma 5nga'i sring chung ma ngu yar la longs 6nga spun chung zhi lus skra zhig shad 7thog dang po srid pa'i gsung rab yod 8nam skya rengs bkyags na skra bshig zer 9dgung nyi rtse bryab na skra bsla zer 10skra bslas na dbang thang dar zhes zer 11skra gzhong gser gzhong phra mo yin 12skra chu rdza chu bsil ma yin 13skra skud 'bri mar ser po yin 14skra lam dgar spyan gser thur yin 15skra lkar ris sngo ris yin 16sring chung tshe thag ring rgyu ma 17sring chung tshe thag ring rgyu ma 18skra g.yas sa shad gser so dgos 19gser ser po'i so mang cha zhig dgos 20skra g.yon sa shad spyad dngul so dgos 21dngul dkar po'i so mang cha zhig dgos 22skra ral ba shad spyad dngul so dgos 23dung dkar po'i so mang cha zhig dgos

1a 2sring chung lo lo bsam 'grub ma 3a 4sring chung lo lo don 'grub ma 5skra g.yas sa sla ni sru mo yin 6sru mo che pa lha mo yin 7skra g.yon sa sla ni sru mo yin 8sru mo chung ba klu mo yin 9skra ral ba sla ni spun chung yin 10nga spun chung zhi lur sla skal yod 11skra g.yas sa mi 'phar gong gnon la 12byu ru rgyal mo'i lag g.yas yod 13skra
In this speech, a brother of the bride's or paternal cousin wishes his sister a successful marriage. He asks her to stand up to have her hair combed and begins by stating that according to oral tradition, her hair should be plaited at dawn and sunrise to bring good fortune because the plaited hair resembles gold. He continues, explaining how the hair is washed in fresh spring water, and that the middle plait resembles yellow yak butter. He describes how the plaits should be separated by gold chopsticks. Those on the right side should be combed with a pair of gold combs while those on the left with a pair.
of silver combs. He suggests that the middle plaits should be combed with a pair of conchshell combs. He then nominates the hairdressers – elder Aunt Lha mo 'Goddess' for the right side, younger Aunt Klu mo 'Female Water Deity' for the left side, and the younger brother for the middle. He describes the hair ornaments: coral on the right, turquoise on the left, and seven pieces of silver in the middle. He claims that no other families have such ornaments stored in their treasure houses and then declares that a new bride should wear eighteen types of garments.

He admonishes the bride to take great care of her husband's father, as if he were her own father, and to always use both hands when she hands him a bowl of tea. She is also advised to similarly take care of her husband's mother. He reassures the bride that her A zhang will visit monthly and take her home annually. Finally, he tells her that, as the sun rises, the A zhang will escort her to the wedding, and wishes her a successful, happy marriage.

Photo 144. Women select the color of rgyab dar for the bride.
Photo 145. The bride's female relatives dress her up.

Photo 146. *Rgyab dar* on the back of a bride.
Photo 147. A new bride prepares to go to the groom’s family.
G.YANG 'BOD

Just before dawn, the bride's family members and relatives get up, dress in their best robes, and leave soon after breakfast. The bride is escorted by the A zhang. No female relative escorts her. As they start off, a monk or sngags pa chants G.yang 'bod 'calling fortune'. G.yang refers to family members' fortune or luck. When a member leaves to join another family through marriage, G.yang 'bod is chanted to call their fortune back, which locals think belongs to their natal family. Both the bride and groom's families do this. The groom's family invites a monk or sngags pa to chant when the bride and the A zhang reach the groom's home. For the bride's natal family, this ritual calls fortune back to the bride's home, since she is leaving for another home, whereas, the groom's family calls the fortune brought by the bride to them.

Photo 148. A local sngags pa chants g.yang 'bod during a wedding ceremony.

\[157\] A Buddhist recitation for calling fortune.
An example of a *g.yang 'bod* recitation follows:

1 sgrol ma'i g.yang 'gugs dkar mo g.yang 'khyil zhes bya ba bzhugs so

2 kye rgyal ba kun gyi 'phrin las rnams
3 gcig bsdu mc la rje btsun mar
4 gus pa chen pos gsol 'debs na
5 byin rlabs dngos grub btsal du gsol

6 dbu rgyan 'od kyi phreng ba yis
7 steng phyogs lha yi g.yang khug cig
8 glog dang 'dra ba'i spyan gnyis kyis
9 bar gyi mi yi g.yang khug cig

10 g.yang bskums g.yang bskyangs zhabs gnyis kyis
11 'og phyogs glu yi g.yang khug cig

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158 Lha sgron provided this orally. This script also appears in other old scriptures and chanted by monks and tantric practitioners. This recording is available at: https://archive.org/details/SongsChantsSpeeches, accessed 21 February 2015.
mchog sbyin skyabs sbyin phyag rgya yis
mchog mthun dngos grub g.yang khug cig

rin po che yi rgyan mang gis
'dod dg'u' longs spyod g.yang khug cig
lha rdzas dar gyi na bza' yis
tshul khrims dag pa'i g.yang khug cig

rigs bdag tshe dpag med mgon gyis
'chi med tshe yi g.yang khug cig
nyer gcig lha mo'i tshogs rnam kyi
'phrin las sna tshogs g.yang khug cig

kye tshangs pa brgya byin la sogs pa
lha yi bsod nam g.yang dpal 'byor g.yang
dar dkar g.yab cing spyan 'dren na
gnas 'dir phywa dang g.yang la byon

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29 གནས་འདིར་བཟོན།།
30 'khor los sgyur ba'i rgyal bo sogs
31 bar gyi mi yi phyug g.yang de
32 dar dkar g.yab cing spyan 'dren na
33 gnas 'dir phywa dang g.yang la byon

34 ཐོ་ར་བཟོས།།
35 རྐང་ཕུག་པ།།
36 རྐང་ཕུག་པ།།
37 རྐང་ཕུག་པ།།
38 གསེར་དངུལ་དར་ཟབ་ལ་སོགས་པ།།
39 ཕྱུག་རྡོ་རྗེས་དཔོན་པ།།
40 རྐང་ཕུག་པ།།
41 རྐང་ཕུག་པ།།
bu dang tsha bo yang tsha sogs
bar na mgo nag mi yi g.yang
dar dkar g.yab cing spyan 'dren na
gnas 'dir phywa dang g.yang la byon

pha rol mi mthun dpung 'joms pa'i
snying stobs ldan pa'i dpa' rtsal g.yang
dar dkar g.yab cing spyan 'dren na
gnas 'dir phywa dang g.yang la byon

mi mthun zhi ba'i bkra shis g.yang
mthun rkyen 'dzoms pa'i phun tshogs g.yang
dar dkar g.yab cing spyan 'dren na
gnas 'dir phywa dang g.yang la byon
This chanting starts with the wish that all sentient beings be blessed by Sgrol ma 'Tara', and continues by wishing that various beings be blessed.

While G.yang 'bod is chanted, two A zhang hold the bride by the arms and escort her to circumambulate the bsang khri in the courtyard three times while they burn incense and offer liquor in the direction of local temples and deities. If there is no bsang khri in the courtyard, A zhang burn incense outside the family bsang khri, which is usually near the home, while another group of A zhang escort the bride without circumambulating.

As they circumambulate a bsang khri or, when the bride leaves her natal home, the bride's mother or a relative stand at the doorway and call the bride. The A zhang and bride reply. There are three rounds of calling and answering.

Mother:

1 A deity.
2 A platform made of adobe or bricks where incense is burned.
3 Lha sgron.
A zhang (together):

While calling fortune, the bride’s mother laments that her daughter is leaving for the groom’s home. The A zhang and bride circle the bsang khri three times and then depart for the groom’s home. Historically they rode a horse but in the past few years, they have gone by motorcycle. At this moment, the bride should not look back. To do so portends divorce.

On the way to the groom’s home, the bride and A zhang perform mchod kha 'offering water/ liquor to deities' in three different locations previously selected by the groom’s family and considered sacred. Some of the gnyen tshang 'groom’s relatives' or 'family members' come by motorcycle or vehicle and greet the A zhang at predetermined locations. There are three groups of gnyen tshang, one for each of the three locations.

Upon meeting, the A zhang sometimes include people from the gnyen tshang as A zhang, if they are originally from the bride’s tribe and married relatives of the gnyen tshang.

At each place, the gnyen tshang should have a bottle of liquor, which they pour into the bowls and asperse in the directions of local deities and other holy mountains and places, e.g., Lha sa, A myes rma chen Mountain, and local lab rtse while reciting the bsang scripture.

Before reaching the gate of the groom’s home, a ritual called 'bab rtse 'dismounting base' is performed by the groom’s family. Two people from the gnyen tshang hold a long kha btags high in the air and the A zhang pass under it. Meanwhile, an A zhang takes the kha btags. This communicates that both sides welcome the wedding
ceremony and the A zhang agree to enter the groom's home.

Finally, the A zhang approach the gate of the groom's home compound and dismount. The A zhang and bride usually approach from the lower side of the groom's home and enter at the front. One or two women from the gnyen tshang give a kha btags to the driver of the bride's vehicle or motorcycle. In the past, a kha btags was tied to the bride's horse's neck. Afterwards, two A zhang slowly assist the bride from the horse/ motorcycle/ vehicle to the ground as the bride conceals her face with her robe sleeve. This is called tshu'u 'hiding shyness' or 'showing respect'. Locals interpret this as the bride showing respect to the gnyen tshang and encourage her not to be shy. However, an account by Lha sgron provides an alternative interpretation:

When King Srong btsan sgam po (617-650) married Princess Rgya bza' gong jo (625-680) (the niece of Tang Taizong Li Shimin (599-649), second Emperor of the Tang Dynasty), Minister 'Gar stong btsan lied to the princess that the King had gseb dri. The princess then covered her nose with her sleeve. The minister also lied to the king that the princess covered her face because she had no nose. Since then, local brides cover their faces on their wedding day.

As soon as the bride dismounts, two or several women from the groom's family sing the sgo 'gyogs 'door raising' song as a greeting. Since she cannot see others and cannot let others see her, her two A zhang companions guide her. Gnyen tshang members then lead the A zhang into the groom's home while the bride is escorted by two bag rogs 'bridesmaids' from the groom's family.

Photo 149. Local women stand at the gate of a groom's home, waiting to sing sgo 'gyogs at the arrival of the A zhang.

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162 It refers to opening the door for or welcoming the A zhang by singing at the door.
Photo 150. Two of the bride's relatives accompany her to the room where the A zhang sit.

Photo 151. Two bridesmaids from the gnyen tshang accompany the bride when she enters the room. The bride bows her head and hides her face. She is taken to the room where all the A zhang sit when everyone enters the groom's home.
Photo 152. The bridesmaids carefully and slowly escort the bride to her tent.

*Sgo 'gyogs Song*163

1 ངན་པའི་ལམ་ལ་ཡིན། 2 དབྱ་མཚོ་མ་ལམ་དཀར་པོ་བཞེང་སོགས།
3 ངན་པའི་སྐོ་ལམ་ལ་ཡིན། 4 ཕྱེད་ཀྱིས་ལམ་དཀར་པོ་བཞེང་སོགས།
5 ངན་པའི་ལམ་ལ་ཡིན། 6 བཀྲ་ོར་བེན་པོ་ལྡན་ལོ་བོ་བཀུར་སོགས།

1 'nged kha'i lam 'di lha lam yin 2 khyed kyis lha lam dkar po spo shes byos
3 'nged kha'i sgo 'di lha sgo yin 4 khyed kyis lha sgo dkar po phye shes byos
5 'nged kha'i lha 'di lha mo yin 6 ma dpal ldan lha mo bkur shes byos

1 Our family's path is a pure divine path, 2 please follow it carefully.
3 Our family's door is a pure divine door, 4 please open it carefully.
5 Our family's deity is a pure female divinity, 6 please respect her genuinely.

163 Provided by Lha sgron. A recording of this song sung by several women at a Bon skor wedding ceremony in 2013 is available at https://archive.org/details/SongsChantsSpeeches, accessed 21 February 2015.
**WEDDING CEREMONY PREPARATION**

**THE GROOM'S FAMILY PREPARATION**

Much preparation is required to hold a wedding. Bon skor residents prepare by cleaning their homes and washing all the clothes, bed sheets, and curtains. Meanwhile, family men go to Mgo mang Town, the nearest market, and purchase vegetables, fruit, candy, biscuits, and drink. They also slaughter three to five of the family's sheep. Prior to 2000, most wedding food was mutton and ten to fifteen sheep were butchered. The number of sheep slaughtered was perceived as directly reflecting the family's wealth. However, the number of livestock butchered has gradually decreased because many people believe it to be sinful and wasteful. Since 2006, locals have stopped using meat so prominently as a marker of social status. Consequently, wedding ceremonies cost less than in the past.

Today, villagers make meat dumplings and bread, buy various fruit and biscuits, and make *rtsam pa*, yogurt, and noodles. Small plates of boiled and fried mutton are also prepared. Locals buy one hundred to 300 bottles of beer, barley liquor, Pepsi, and other beverages.

Photo 153. Deep-fried bread of different shapes. The top layer is *go re gcus ris ma*, the middle layer is *go re sog sog*, and the bottom layer is *go re nang lung ma*.
Photo 154. Go re skya phyag, baked wheat bread.

Photo 155. Drying gro 'wheat' after harvest.
Photo 156. Locally, *tshod ma* 'dumplings' are often stuffed with mutton, yak meat, turnip, and leek.

Photo 157. *Tshod ma*.
Photo 158. Two local women carry beer to a wedding ceremony.
Photo 159. Food and fruit prepared on tables for the A zhang prior to a wedding ceremony.

Photo 160. Fruits on a hu tse\(^{164}\) table.

\(^{164}\) The *hu tse* is a hollow platform made of adobe or brick that is heated by smoldering dung or straw inside. It is a place for chatting, sleeping, eating, drinking, and entertaining guests.
WEDDING CEREMONY

THE A ZHANG ASSEMBLY

The older A zhang sit on the hu tse or at the head of the row and the youngest sits at the end of the row. The head of a row is usually by a wall, but sometimes by the window. When the A zhang sit on the hu tse, the gnyen tshang assume a lower position near the door.

Photo 161. Elder A zhang sitting on a hu tse. Younger men sit on the floor.

Everyone smiles and speaks politely. As soon as the A zhang are seated, an articulate gnyen tshang man or matchmaker, asks the A zhang how their journey was, to which they almost always reply positively. Since the A zhang have now assembled, the wedding ceremony has begun.
Photo 162. Younger A zhang sit on the floor during a wedding.

Photo 163. A zhang sitting at a wedding ceremony.
A Tea Speech

Shortly after the A zhang are seated on the hu tse, a large kettle of milk tea is boiled on the adobe stove in the same room. Before anyone drinks tea, a female from the gnyen tshang, who is usually the wife of someone in the gnyen tshang, receives a kha btags or piece of long gos from the A zhang and another from a gnyen tshang, which are tied around her shoulders. Afterwards, she takes a scoop (the handle is wrapped with a kha btags and strands of sheep wool) and asperses tea in the direction of each local deity. She gives the tea speech.

Photo 164. A wife of the groom's relative makes ja mchod ‘tea offering’ and gives a tea speech. She offers tea to the local Yul Iha and lab rtse.
In 2015, very few people could give the tea speech. Lha sgron provided the following version.

1. 2. སྤེལ་བོད་ཤིས་འདོད། 3. ཉི་སྐད་དཀར་མཁན་ 4. ཉི་སྐད་དཀར་མཁན་སི་བོ་ དཀར་མཁན་མ་སྲིད་པའི་གཤེན་ 5. སྤེལ་བོད་ཤིས་འདོད། 6. ཉི་སྐད་དཀར་མཁན་ 7. ཉི་སྐད་དཀར་མཁན་ 8. སྤེལ་བོད་ཤིས་འདོད། 9. ཉི་སྐད་དཀར་མཁན་

10. དབུ་ བོད། 11. དབུ་ བོད། (ཨ་ཞང་དང་ རང་བོད།)

1. ya གདུང་དུན་བོད། 2. da nam langs ཕོ་ལ་ 3. nyi shar ཤེས་པའི་ 4. a ce gser mo 'tsho སྤེལ་བོད་ 5. dang dngul mo 'tsho gnyis kyis chu btsal gyn btsal gyn nags la song 6. nags nas bud de rdza ru song 7. rdza yi rdza chu bsil ma rnyed 8. rdza yi rdza chu bsil ma 'di kha nas bcus na g.ya' dri dro 9. zhabs nas bcus na 'dam dri dro 10. bar gyi rdza chu bsil ma len dgos zer

10. lags so 11. lags so (a zhang dang gnyen tshang tshang mas mnyam du)

1. ya 2. bar gyi rdza chu bsil ma 'di gser gyi thom bu'i nang du blugs nas 3. gser zo'i nang du shag rgyun blugs nas 4. gser thig phra mos ska rags 5. beings te 6. pus mo 'phang lo'i mtshams su blangs nas 6. gad pa g.yung 7. drung steng du bzhag steb rked pa rdo rje gdan la khur

1. ya 2. སྤེལ་ག་སྔོན་ལ་ 3. ཉི་སྐད་དཀར་མཁན་པའི་ 4. ཉི་སྐད་དཀར་མཁན་སི་བོ་ 5. ཨ་ཞང་དང་ 6. ཉི་སྐད་དཀར་མཁན་ 7. ཉི་སྐད་དཀར་མཁན་

9. དབུ་ བོད། 10. དབུ་ བོད།

1. ya 2. yar la ga ma gog gi langs 3. mar la lda ma lding gi babs nas 4. gnyen tshang tshang gi khyim du thon dus 5. thab ka sum thog ces pa'i khri yod 6. thab ka sum thog zhes ba'i khri steng na 7. mkhar zangs kha dmar zhes pa'i rgyan yod 8. mkhar zangs kha dmar ces pa'i rgyan nang

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la sngon mo gtsang chab chu 'di blugs thal zer

lags so

1 la sngon mo gtsang chab chu 'di blugs thal zer
2 nyung gi zer nas thom gsum bsnan
3 ja ma mang ma nyung leb gsum 'phangs
4 nyung gi zer nas spar gsum bsnan

lags so

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

1 'di dpyid zla gsum la btab tshul yag gi
dbyar zla gsum la skye tshul yag gi
ston zla gsum la smin tshul yag gi
rgya mo thor cog can gyis
bsdu tshul yag gi 5 rgya ral ba can gyis btsong tshul yag gi 6 ja bsnyal dang bsnyal dang zer na 7 a mas gces phrug snyol snyol byos 8 ja lang dang lang dang zer na rdza mango'i smug pa lang lang byos 9 dpar bgru bzhi'i nang du dpar no yag 10 ja tog ser po'i na bza' yag 11 ja la dmar po'i ska rags yag

12 lags so 13 lags so

1. btsong dpon nying gi 2. ba can gyis btsong tshul yag gi 3. bsnyal dang bsnyal dang zer na 4. mas gces phrug snyol snyol byos 5. dpar bgru bzhi'i nang du dpar no yag 6. ngo'i smug pa lang lang byos 7. rdza dngul tham bgru

12 lags so 13 lags so

ja bkal nas rgya gar yul la song 2 rgya gar rgyal bo'i phyag la bzhag 3 rgya gar rgyal bos gser tham bgrya 4 ja bkal nas rgya nag yul la 'gro gi 5 rgya nag rgyal bo'i phyag la bzhag 6 rgya nag rgyal bos dngul tham bgrya 7 ja bkal nas gangs can bod du yong 8 gangs can bod kyi lag tu bzhag 9 gangs can bod kyis dung tham bgrya 11 ja tham sna gsum de nas byung

12 lags so 13 lags so

ja btsong mkhan mi mtho nyo mkhan mtho 2 ja btsong mkhan tshong dpon nyi ma yin 3 ja nyo mkhan kha ba can 'di yin 4 gong gtam thal zer na pha a khu bgrya yis rin gong gcod gi 5 lug g.yang dkar

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bgya dang cha zhig bshad 6 pha de tsho lug 'dang che nas zer gi 7 gong da dung cung tsam dma' 'dug zer 8 ma sru mo bgya yis rin gong geod gi 9 'bri thul ma bgya dang cha zhig zer gi 10 gong da dung cung tsam dma' 'dug zer gi 11 sman de tsho 'bri 'dang che nas zer gi 12 bu stag phrug bgya yis rin gong geod gi 13 rta 'do ba bgya dang cha zhig zer gi 14 bu de tsho rta 'dang che nas zer gi 15 gong bcad dang bcad dang zer na 16 rnon po mtshon gyis bcad 'dra red 17 sil dur rer sgor mo phar la brtsi gi 18 shog dur rer ja nag tshur la ster gi 19 ma ja rtsis che ba de'i don yin zer

20 lags so 21 lags so

1 me 'bar dang 'bar dang zer na 2 shug pa lha shing gshag na 'bar gi 3 bra ma dgra rtsub mnan na 'bar gi 4 spen ma dgra bo thug na 'bar gi 5 tsher ma dgra sgong bcag na 'bar gi 6 lci ba g.yung drung sgong na 'bar gi 7 ril ma the'u rang gtor na 'bar gi 8 dud pa lho sprin 'khrug 'khrug byed gi 9 me lee klog dmar 'khyug 'khyug byed gi 10 me yi 'bar sgra 'brug sgra ldir ldir byed gi

11 lags so 12 lags so

1 ja khol thal khol thal zer na 2 ja long smug long 'thib 'thib byed gi 3 ja zegs rba rlabs 'phyur 'phyur byed gi 4 ja ldong lu gu rtsed rtsed byed gi 5 ja lo kha la yang se g.yeng gi 6 ja ro zhabs su gtugs se 'bab gi 7 ja dri phyogs bzhir bzung nge 'thul gi

8 lags so 9 lags so

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The Tea Speech tells the story of two women who, as the sun rose, looked for water. They searched through forests and mountains and finally found a fresh spring. They did not fetch water from the surface of the spring, as it was defiled, and they did not fetch water from the bottom of the spring, as it smelled of mud — they fetched water from the center of the spring, because it was clean. The two women scooped the water with a gold ladle and poured it into a gold bucket tied with a gold sash. One woman lifted it onto her lap and finally put it on the other woman's back.

The women, almost crawling under the weight of their buckets, reached the groom's home, and poured the water into the red-mouthed pot on the three-headed adobe stove. Three buckets of...
water were poured and considered adequate. Three scoops were added and it was considered inadequate. Three tea-bricks were added and it was considered adequate. Three handfuls of tea were added and it was considered inadequate.

The speaker then describes the origin of this tea that came from China, from the tops of both white and black zuṅg tea\textsuperscript{165} trees in the sunny fields. Remarkably, it was planted in the three spring months, grew in the three summer months, and ripened in the three fall months. It was collected by Chinese women with topknots and sold by Chinese men with single plaits. The tea was then brewed.

Three stamps were imprinted on the tea, which was transported to the hands of the King of India and stamped with a golden stamp. Then it was transported to the hands of the Emperor of China and stamped with a silver stamp. Then it was transported to the hands of the King of Tibet and stamped with a conch shell stamp.

The tea buyers were from Tibet and the price was negotiated by a hundred uncles. Though they valued their sheep, they traded a hundred sheep for a brick of tea and considered it cheap. A hundred women negotiated a low price. Though they valued their yaks, they traded a hundred female yaks for a brick of tea and considered it cheap. A hundred men negotiated the price. Though they valued their horses, they traded a hundred horses for a brick of tea and considered it cheap.

Cash was given to the Chinese, who returned bricks of tea. Women thus care about tea. The tea was boiled over a fire made from juniper, dry tamarisk, thorns, yak dung, and sheep droppings. Smoke was produced as if clouds had been stirred up. Crimson flames sparkled.

Vapors wafted out of the kettle, waves of boiling water crashed, tea leaves played like little lambs, a fragrant odor spread, and finally the tea was boiled. Mixing milk with the tea turned it a beautiful color. Aunts then offered tea to the deities.

Finally, a woman took a dragon-decorated bowl in her right hand. The bowl had the Eight-spoked Wheel\textsuperscript{166} on top, the Eight

\textsuperscript{165} Locals believe that horses were traded for brick tea from China during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). Brick tea received during that time was called zuṅg and traded in today’s Zung chu (Songpan) County, Rnga ba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, which lay between Tibet and China. It later became a main station on the Tea and Horse Route along which horses from Tibet were traded for tea.

\textsuperscript{166} The eight spokes represent the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism that are able to cut through ignorance (http://www.buddhism-guide.com/buddhism/dharma_wheel.htm #The_eight-spoked_wheel_in_Buddhism, accessed 18 July 2014).
Auspicious Symbols in the middle, and the Eight Petaled Lotus\textsuperscript{167} on the bottom. Red Chinese tea was inside and yellow yak butter was on top. This is the celebratory tea and a hope is expressed that all guests will drink it.

When the tea speech is finished, several women from the \textit{gyen tshang} escort the bride to another room – her \textit{bag ras}. The woman who gave the tea speech now carefully scoops tea for the \textit{A zhang} into bowls decorated with dragons or the Eight Auspicious Symbols. As the bowls are filled with tea and passed to the \textit{A zhang} with both hands,\textsuperscript{168} an articulate man from the \textit{gnyen tshang} warmly urges the \textit{A zhang} to drink.

Photo 165. The \textit{bag ras} 'bridal tent' is for a bride with two maids.

\textsuperscript{167} The eight-petalled lotus used in Buddhist mandalas symbolizes cosmic harmony.

\textsuperscript{168} Both hands are used to emphasize respect.
Steamed dumplings stuffed with meat, fried vegetables, mutton, beef, pork, fried and baked bread, and noodles are served to the A zhang. Meanwhile, certain men from the gnyen tshang politely urge the A zhang to eat more. Women from the gnyen tshang busily prepare food for the A zhang. The dishes are served at intervals of about thirty minutes.
A LIQUOR SPEECH

Another ritual begins when the A zhang have eaten their fill. As with the preparation for the tea speech, the A zhang first provide a kha btags or long piece of gos to the gnyen tshang, then the gnyen tshang provide similar items to someone in their group who will give a liquor speech. The gnyen tshang enter the room in a group. An eloquent woman or a man stands in front of the A zhang with a bowl of chang in their left hand and a kha btags in the right. The kha btags and gos received from the A zhang and gnyen tshang are tied around their upper body. They give a liquor speech while aspersing liquor. Khe bhe gave the following liquor speech in 2005.

Photo 168. Liquor from Huzhu County is poured in a bowl wrapped with a piece of sheep wool and marked with butter prior to a liquor speech. The liquor bowl is held by the orator.

1 bdud rtsi chang gi 'byung khungs bshad na
2 chang bdud rtsi'i 'byung khungs nas yin nas zer gi
3 nas dkar drug ma'i bcud yin nas zer gi
4 nas dang po lha yul khams la btsal nas zer gi
bar nas 'jig rten khams la btsal nas zer gi
mtha' ma klu yul khams nad rnyes nas zer gi

7 sa dog mo drod kyis dros dus na
8 chu gtsang bo chab rom bzhu dus na
9 lud rdzas sman sna sdebs debs byas nas zer gi
10 sa bon char ba 'bab 'bab byas nas zer gi
11 chu gtsang bo gsol ja 'dren 'dren byas nas zer gi

12 dpyid zla gsum la 'bus srol yag nas zer gi
13 gos ljung smug thang la bting bting byas nas zer gi
14 dbyar zla gsum la skyes srol yag nas zer gi
15 ljung myug rba rlabs 'phyur 'phyur byas nas zer gi
16 ston zla gsum la smin srol yag nas zer gi
17 gser gzhong mar khus bkang 'dra yin nas zer gi

18 gos ljang smug thang la bting bting byas nas zer gi
19 dbyar zla gsum la skyes srol yag nas zer gi
20 ljung myug rba rlabs 'phyur 'phyur byas nas zer gi
21 ston zla gsum la smin srol yag nas zer gi
22 gser gzhong mar khus bkang 'dra yin nas zer gi
23 gos ljang smug thang la bting bting byas nas zer gi

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rgya zor gor mo'i khug la blangs nas
thang me long 'dra ba'i g.yul thog nas
skyi bser mthun pa'i rlung la sprad nas
rdzun ma thams cad rlung la bskur nas
bden pa thams cad mdzod la bceu nas
chang snyal ba'i stabs kha de nas 'grig nas zer gi

lag las ka can gyi ma sru ma tshos
mkhar ba dmar po'i zangs nga'i nang la
chu dwangs ma blugs nas gad dar byed gi
shing shug pa bdug nas dag gtsang byed gi
rgya thab gru bzhi'i khri la bskyon nas
nas sngon mo blugs nas rlangs btsos byed gi

stod rgya gar yul gyi sman bsres gi
smad rgya nag yul gyi phab bsres gi
khyon yangs g.yu rdza mdung mor bsnyal thal
lo la bsnyal nas lo chang btsags thal
lo chang bdud rtsi kham pa btsags thal
35 zla la bsnyal nas zla chang btsags thal
36 zla chang bdud rtsi bsil ma btsags thal
37 zhag la bsnyal nas zhag chang btsags thal
38 de yi nying khu dron mo btsags thal

39 ཕྱི་བཟོ་མ་བཞག་པའི་བཞག་དྲུག་མཚན་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།
40 ཕྱི་བཟོ་མ་བཞག་པའི་ཕྱིུ་བཟོ་མ་བཞག་པའི་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།
41 ཕྱི་བཟོ་མ་བཞག་པའི་ཕྱིུ་བཟོ་ཞི་ཆེ་བཞག་པའི་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།
42 ཕྱི་བཟོ་མ་བཞག་པའི་ཕྱིུ་བཟོ་ཅི་ལྟ་ཞི་ཆེ་བཞག་པའི་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།
43 ཕྱི་བཟོ་མ་བཞག་པའི་ཕྱིུ་བཟོ་ཞི་ཆེ་བཞག་པའི་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།

39 chang 'go ma'i 'go ma 'bab dus na
40 shing tsan dan 'dra ba'i dri zhig yod nas zer gi
41 mu tig 'dra ba'i mdog cig yod nas zer gi
42 chang 'go ma'i 'go ma lha la mchod nas zer gi
43 gong ma lha yi mgon skyabs mdzad nas zer gi

44 ཕྱི་བཟོ་མ་བཞག་པའི་བཞག་དྲུག་མཚན་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།
45 ཕྱི་བཟོ་མ་བཞག་པའི་ཕྱིུ་བཟོ་མ་བཞག་པའི་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།
46 ཕྱི་བཟོ་མ་བཞག་པའི་ཕྱིུ་བཟོ་ཅི་ལྟ་ཞི་ཆེ་བཞག་པའི་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།
47 ཕྱི་བཟོ་མ་བཞག་པའི་ཕྱིུ་བཟོ་ཞི་ཆེ་བཞག་པའི་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།
48 ཕྱི་བཟོ་མ་བཞག་པའི་ཕྱིུ་བཟོ་ཅི་ལྟ་ཞི་ཆེ་བཞག་པའི་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།

44 chang bar ma'i bar ma 'bab dus na
45 zas bu ram 'dra ba'i dri zhig yod nas zer gi
46 g.yu drug dkar 'dra ba'i mdog cig yod nas zer gi
47 chang b.rama'i bar ma gnyan la mchod nas zer gi
48 bar ma gnyan gi gdong grogs mdzad nas zer gi

49 རྣམ་པ་པོ་ཞི་བཟོ་ཞི་ཚུལ་བཞག་པའི་བཞག་དྲུག་མཚན་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།
50 རྣམ་པ་པོ་ཞི་བཟོ་ཞི་ཚུལ་བཞག་པའི་ཕྱིུ་བཟོ་མ་བཞག་པའི་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།
51 རྣམ་པ་པོ་ཞི་བཟོ་ཞི་ཚུལ་བཞག་པའི་ཕྱིུ་བཟོ་ཅི་ལྟ་ཞི་ཆེ་བཞག་པའི་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།
52 རྣམ་པ་པོ་ཞི་བཟོ་ཞི་ཚུལ་བཞག་པའི་ཕྱིུ་བཟོ་ཞི་ཆེ་བཞག་པའི་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།
53 རྣམ་པ་པོ་ཞི་བཟོ་ཞི་ཚུལ་བཞག་པའི་ཕྱིུ་བཟོ་ཅི་ལྟ་ཞི་ཆེ་བཞག་པའི་ཐང་ཐིབ་མིང་།

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The Liquor Speech begins with the story of the origin of the nectar called chang made from barley. The heavens were searched for the first barley, then the human world, and finally it was found in the underworld of the naga. As the ground warmed and water became
plentiful, barley was planted and fertilized. It was planted in the three months of spring and grew in the three months of summer when the waves of green plants resembled waves of green water. It ripened in the three months of autumn, resembling a full container of yellow butter. It was harvested and threshed in the wind to obtain the best barley grain, which was used for brewing. With clean pots, women steamed the barley grain, that was then brewed with herbs from China and India, and mixed with fresh spring water. It was brewed yearly, monthly, and daily.

When the first chang was produced, it smelled like sandalwood and had the color of pearls. The first chang was offered as gser skyems 'golden drink' to heavenly deities, who bestowed blessings in return. The second chang was produced and tasted sweet, and had the color of white turquoise. It was offered to mountain deities who became friendly to locals. The third chang was produced and tasted like fruit, and had the color of crystal glass. It was offered to the naga who bestowed blessings in return. This chang became an offering to heavenly deities - ambrosia offered to mountain deities, and nectar offered to naga. It initiates laughter, welcomes dance and song, and is the beauty of celebrations. The speaker ends by entreating the honored guests to take time to enjoy chang.

As soon as the speech concludes, small decorated bowls are handed to every A zhang. Many bottles of liquor are brought to fill the cups. Now the time for the A zhang to drink has come, while the gnyen tshang are ushered into other rooms or into the courtyard to eat and drink. Eating too much at a wedding is considered to be impolite both for the gnyen tshang and A zhang. Families who cannot afford it do not offer food for all the gnyen tshang, but honoring the A zhang is of paramount importance, as reflected by the local saying, "Though the wedding may be prestigious, guests' hunger is terrible." Therefore, parents encourage children to eat at home before attending wedding ceremonies. Another proverb emphasizes the importance of A zhang that day, "A zhang for a day, parents for life."

Shortly after the A zhang have sipped some chang, a short speech is given by a man from the gnyen tshang. Next, a few A zhang give short speeches.

A speech from the gnyen tshang follows:

1 བོད་ཉིད་འོག
2 སྡེ་ཚིག་བོད་ལས་དུས་ཚིག་བོད་}
1. ya de ring yin na
2. rtags rten 'brel gnyis kyi 'go red
3. ja me tog gnyis kyi yo red
4. 'di grags pa dang sangs rgyas gnyis ka
5. gna' nas bzung
6. nye dgu'i nye bo yin
7. khis dgu'i lab rtse yin
8. kha sang de ring
9. grags pa tshang gi bu zla ba dang nged sangs rgyas tshang gi bu mo
10. sgrol ma gnyis kyis
11. rang dbang rang 'thud kyis gnyen bsgrigs nas
12. rang blor dran na bshol med dang
13. rmed mdo chad na mthud med yin zhes
14. yul pha mas ma khogs shor song zig
15. lam skya mor ma zhugs gzhol btang na
16. "གཞི་སློབ་སྦྱོར་"
15 khyed sangs rgyas tshang gis
16 nye bor nye ’dang brgyab ste
17 shag por shag 'dang brgyab pa shes ni red

18 དེ་རིང་ཁྱེད་རྒྱུད་ཀྱི་དགོང་ནས་དེ
19 དྲོ་འདེུག་བརྙེ་ཐོང་རྒྱུལ་ཕུད་དེ
20 སྤྲིིན་ནག་འདེུག་ལ་དེ་
21 ས་རིང་འདེུག་ལ་འ་ལ་

18 de ring khyed rnam pas sa thag ring nas bud de
19 rta 'do bar thong rngul phud nas
20 sprin nag po thod la bzung nas
21 sa ring po 'dom la 'jal de thon na

22 ལང་དོ་གནས་པ་ཚང་ས་ཡང་།
23 དི་གང་གི་སྟེ་བ་ལུས་ཅན་བཞི་ལ།
24 རྗོག་གི་བུར་ལུས་ཅན།
25 འོཉ་ཐོ་པི་ཁྱབ་ལུས་ཅན་ལི་།
26 ས་རིང་འདུག་ལ་སོགས་སྤྱིི་ལ།
27 སུར་བཿ་མཛེས་པ་ལུས་ཅན་ལ།
28 སུན་གཤིག་མཛེས་པ་ལུས་ཅན་ལ།
29 ས་རིང་ལུས་ཅན་ལི་།

22 nged grags pa tshang gis yang
23 khis chen gsum la kha btags 'then yod
24 lam chen gsum la 'bab gtan 'then yod
25 khyod rta ra'i gong nas 'bab spyad yin
26 gdan gru bzhi'i steng nas bzhugs spyad yin
27 khyed sangs rgyas tshang zhe na
28 smug por mched pa'i gdung rgyud red
29 g.yu mtshor mched pa'i ra lag red

30 ལང་དོ་གནས་པ་ཚང་ས་ཡང་།
31 དི་གང་གི་སྟེ་བ་ལུས་ཅན་བཞི་ལ།
32 སུན་གཤིག་མཛེས་པ་ལུས་ཅན་ལ།
30 nged sangs rgyas tshang la mtshon na'ang
31 mi rabs brgyad kyi dpon rabs yod ni red
32 mi rgyun gsum gyi mi rabs yod ni red

33 ཨོཾ་མེདོག་ཤིག་ལོ་བསོད་པོ་
34 རོད་དུ་བསོད་པོ་འོཾ་

33 srid pa chags pa'i gangs ri yod
34 mi ngo dpon phrug grags pa yod

35 ལོ་བ་དང་ལོ་
36 སྐྱེས་ས་
37 ཕྱིན་ལོ་བ་དང་ལོ་
38 ཚིག་ཆོས་ལོ་བ་དང་ལོ་

35 gang nas bshad rung
36 'u kha gnyis ka
37 stod gangs ri'i dbu rtse mtho sa yin
38 smad rgya mtsho'i chu gting zab sa yin

39 བསྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་
40 བསྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་
41 བསྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་

39 ri rgyud ded nas lab rtse brtsigs yod
40 mi rgyud ded nas nye ya btsal yod
41 chu rgyud ded nas mtsho mo bskyil yod

42 བསྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་
43 བསྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་
44 བསྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་
45 བསྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་
46 བསྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་
47 བསྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་
48 བསྟོད་སོགས་པོ་སྟོད་སོགས་པོ་
The speech announces the start of an auspicious day. The Grags pa and Sangs rgyas families have a long history of cordial relations that continues today. The two youths decided voluntarily to marry and Sangs rgyas has agreed to the marriage, taking into consideration the long period of good relations between the two families. The gnyen tshang men provided kha btags at three different hilltops and provided 'bab gtan at three different intersections. These were traditionally provided for the A zhang when they dismounted their horses, and square pieces of felt were provided to sit on in this home.

The gnyen tshang spokesman then emphasizes that both families have successful, long family lineages, by naming the records of tribal leaders and bla ma in each family. He concludes the speech
by pointing out the importance of respecting the A zhang, especially on the wedding day.

The A zhang's speech follows:

1 དབུ་བུ་བོའི་ཟེག་གུ་མ་པའི་དབེན་པའི་མི་

2 དབུ་བུ་བོའི་ཟེག་གུ་མ་པའི་དབེན་པའི་མི་

3 ཡ་དཀའ་བོ་སྒྲོན་པ་བོད་ལ་བོད་

4 འདི་བརྟེན་པའི་བོད་ལ་བོད་

5 འདི་བརྟེན་པའི་བོད་ལ་བོད་

6 འདི་བརྟེན་པའི་བོད་ལ་བོད་

7 ཡ་དཀའ་བོ་སྒྲོན་པ་བོད་ལ་བོད་

8 འདི་བརྟེན་པའི་བོད་ལ་བོད་

9 འདི་བརྟེན་པའི་བོད་ལ་བོད་

10 འདི་བརྟེན་པའི་བོད་ལ་བོད་

3 དེ་རིང་མདོ་དྲ་ལྷ་'ཁོར་བའི་གྲོས་

4 ཐོགས་གསར་རིང་གསོ་ཡང་

5 ཐོགས་གསར་རིང་གསོ་ཡང་

6 ཐོགས་གསར་རིང་གསོ་ཡང་

7 ཐོགས་གསར་རིང་གསོ་ཡང་

8 ཐོགས་གསར་རིང་གསོ་ཡང་

9 ཐོགས་གསར་རིང་གསོ་ཡང་

10 ཐོགས་གསར་རིང་གསོ་ཡང་

11 འདི་བརྟེན་པའི་བོད་ལ་བོད་

12 འདི་བརྟེན་པའི་བོད་ལ་བོད་

13 འདི་བརྟེན་པའི་བོད་ལ་བོད་

14 འདི་བརྟེན་པའི་བོད་ལ་བོད་

15 འདི་བརྟེན་པའི་བོད་ལ་བོད་

16 འདི་བརྟེན་པའི་བོད་ལ་བོད་
11 bu bu mo'i steng nas nga la bshad rgyu'i tshig gsum yod
12 spyi tshogs gsar rnying gang la mtshon yang
13 rang blor dran na bshol med
14 rmed mdo chad na mthud med
15 rang blor kha bkal
16 rang rtar sga bstad de

17 skabs der mtshon na
18 khyod bar ba gnyis kas
19 dar dkar po'i kha btags 'dom la 'jal nas
20 rta ra' i srab mda' dar la brgyus nas
21 tsag ser bu'i thong rtsa phud nas
22 rta 'do ba'i thong rngul phud de
23 nged sangs rgyas tshang gi sgo khar bud de go khar tsog thal

24 mgo phyag gi snga ma yin
25 nywa gug gug phyag gi gzhug ma yin
26 khyed rnam pa tshang mar de ring
27 ngo na rdul zhig yod na
28 sems na sdog cig yod na
29 ngas de ring bshags ni yin
SUMMARY

The A zhang declares that this auspicious day was destined for the youths to be married. Now the friendship of the two families has been settled. Even though this marriage was not arranged by the parents, the matchmakers tried their best throughout the negotiations. He apologizes if anything was said during negotiations that made the matchmakers uncomfortable. Finally, the A zhang describes how cheerful the wedding is and gives the gnyen tshang eight different bolts of cloth and bundles of phrug.

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After the speeches, a man from the *gnyen tshang* politely urges the *A zhang* to drink more *chang*.

Photo 169. A local man prepares liquor for *A zhang* to drink during a wedding.
Photo 170. Two men from the groom's side prepare tea for A zhang.

Photo 171. A man from the gnyen tshang group hospitably encourages the A zhang to drink more.
SONGS TO ENLIVEN THE BANQUET

A group of three to six gnyen tshang women enter the room with the A zhang or, if there are many gnyen tshang women, the groom's family arranges for the A zhang and everyone else to come sit in the courtyard, where the ground is covered with cushions. A woman begins singing a glu 'folksong' while holding a white kha btags. After finishing her glu, she usually gives the kha btags to a younger A zhang. The chosen A zhang responds by singing glu. The singing continues in this fashion. The following songs are from Khe bhe and 'Jam dbyangs skyabs.

Song One

1. glu 'go ma nyin kha'i mchod rten red
2. 'di bzhengs na sdig grib 'dag ni red

1. The beginning of the song is a stupa in the sunshine.
2. It erases sins if we build it.

3. glu bar ma khis chen lab rtse red
4. 'di bstad na dgra lha 'khor ni red

3. The middle of the song is a lab rtse above the valley.
4. It brings the warrior deity if we hold the lab rtse ritual.

5. glu gzhug ma chu chen zam pa red
6. 'di bskrun na bsam don 'grub ni red

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169 Songs beginning at this point in the text to the end of this book were provided by Khe bhe, 'Jam dbyangs skyabs, Lha sgron, and 'Brug thar rgyal, unless otherwise indicated.
The end of the song is a bridge over a big river.
It fulfills wishes if we build it.

Song Two

1 glu len na lha chen mdun nas len
2 nang lha phrug dgod kha shor ni len
1 (Let me) sing before the holy deities.
2 (Let me) sing to make the deities' children laugh.

3 glu len na dpon chen mdun nas len
4 dpon chen pos gnang spyin byed ni len
3 (Let me) sing before the great leader.
4 (Let me) sing to encourage the leaders to present rewards.

5 glu len na khrom pa'i gral nas len
6 nang khrom pa'i glu len rdzogs ni len
5 (Let me) sing among the crowd.
6 (Let me) sing to make the crowd run out of songs.

Song Three

1 chang 'thung na rma byas 'thung 'thung byed
2 bya rma bya chang gis bzi rgyu med
Drink *chang* like peacocks drink,
Peacocks are never drunk drinking *chang*.

Eat meat like vultures eat,
Look how perfectly vultures eat.

Sing like cuckoos sing,
Look how perfectly cuckoos sing.

The sun and moon gathered in the mid-sky,
And predawn comes as a companion from the east,
The world is warmed by the companion.
4 'di bar snang kham dang dog mo sa
5 sbrang char bsil ma'i 'dun ma yong
6 'di 'dun ma yong na sems can skyid

4 The spacious sky and narrow earth,
5 Drizzling rains come as a companion,
6 All sentient beings are pleased by the companion.

7 de ring khrom la na zla 'dzoms
8 kha mtshar glu yi 'dun ma yong
9 'di 'dun ma yong na khrom pa skyid

7 Peers gathered in this crowded place today,
8 Humorous songs came as a companion,
9 The crowd is delighted by the companion.

Song Five

1 chang 'go ma 'thung nas mchod pa 'phen
2 ngas mchod pa lha yul khams la 'phen
3 stod lha chen tshangs ba'i pho brang red
4 lha lha mos mgon skyabs byed sa red

1 (Let me) offer chang when drinking starts,
2 I offer chang to the realm of the gods,
3 It is the palace of great Brahma above,
4 It is the place where the gods and goddesses protect us.
5 chang bar ma 'thung nas mchod pa 'phen
6 ngas mchod pa klu yul khams la 'phen
7 klu dung skyong dkar po'i pho brang red
8 klu klu mos dngos grub gnang sa red

5 (Let me) offer chang in the middle of drinking,
6 I offer chang to the naga domains,
7 It is the palace of the naga king, Dung skyong,
8 It is the place where the nagas and naginis offer great accomplishments.

9 chang gzhug ma 'thung nas mchod pa 'phen
10 ngas mchod pa sku rgyal bod la 'phen
11 pha a khu'i sku tshe brtan sa red
12 nang na zlas glu dbyangs len sa red

9 (Let me) offer chang as drinking ends,
10 I offer chang to Tibet,
11 The place where fathers and paternal uncles have long lives,
12 The place where young friends sing.

Song Six

1 stod rgya gar yul gyi sa cha na
2 wA ra nA si'i grong khyer yod
In India, the upper land,
It is the city of Varanasi,
It is the seat of Buddha Dharma,
Shakyamuni turned the Dharma Wheel,
(Let me) sing in the hope it will be turned again and again.

In Dbus gtsang, the upper land,
Is the holy place of the Potala Palace,
It is the seat of Avalokiteśvara,
Tsong kha pa turned the Dharma Wheel,
(Let me) sing in the hope that it will be turned again and again.

smad rgya nag yul gyi sa cha na
rgya nag ri bo rtse lnga yod
lha 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyi gdan sa yin

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170 Spyan ras gzigs in Tibetan.
14 gsung yi ge drug mas chos 'khor bskor
15 ngas yang yang bskor ba'i glu zhig len

11 In China, the lower land,
12 Is Mount Wutai,\(^{171}\)
13 It is the seat Mañjushri,\(^{172}\)
14 The Dharma Wheel of the Six Syllable Mantra was turned,
15 (Let me) sing in the hope that it will be turned again and again.

Song Seven

1 stod gangs dkar ti se seng ge'i rdzong
2 seng g.yu ral rgyas pa'i glu zhig len

1 The Kailash Snow Mountain in the Upper Land is the castle of lions,
2 (Let me) sing a song that makes the snow lion's turquoise mane grow.

3 smad mtha' yas rgya mtsho nya sram rdzong
4 nya gser ma 'khyil ba'i glu zhig len

3 The endless ocean in a lower place abounds in fish and otters,
4 (Let me) sing a song that will gather the golden fish.

5 yul 'dir tshogs khrom pa glu yi rdzong
6 kha ja chang 'dzoms pa'i glu zhig len

5 The crowd of people here abounds in songs,
6 (Let me) sing a song that will make everyone drink plenty of tea and liquor.

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\(^{171}\) A sacred Buddhist site in Wutai County, Shanxi Province.
\(^{172}\) 'Jam pa'i dbyangs, a bodhisattva associated with transcendent wisdom.
CEREMONY PARTICIPANTS AND CONGRATULATORY GIFTS

The songs finish and the wedding continues. The families living near the groom’s home and the groom’s relatives bring gifts and join the wedding. Locals call these gifts kha ru.

As recently as 1992, prior to the wedding day, locals helped the family with the wedding celebrations. Cooked mutton was placed on the table for the A zhang and other guests. In about 1998, locals reduced the amount of mutton acceptable as a gift in deference to the belief that it is sinful to excessively slaughter sheep and that it also places a heavy burden on relatives and friends. Subsequently, locals brought beer and candy to the wedding ceremony as gifts. Around 2007, gifts were mostly tea bricks and gos.

Some families hang a line in the courtyard on which the gifts of clothes or gos are displayed so that guests, and most importantly, the A zhang, can easily see what has been offered. This display provides a measure of the gnyen tshang’s prestige. In 2015, common gifts were clothing, chang, and sometimes, tea bricks. Also cash, in amounts of ten to one hundred RMB, was becoming an increasingly popular gift.

A MA SRU SPEECH ABOUT RECEIVING BU RAS

Women from the gynen tshang group demand bu ras ‘bride clothes' from the A zhang. Bu ras demonstrates that the bride now belongs to the gynen tshang. A zhang reluctantly give the bu ras. Before giving it to the gnyen tsang, they make taunting, vulgar speeches to the ma sru. They say, for instance, that they meant to bring bu ras but forgot it. These are key speeches in a wedding ceremony and still feature in most weddings unless a special circumstance has occurred, such as the death of a relative of the bride or groom in the same year. This speech is also not given when a wedding is deliberately small with relatively few in attendance. Khe bhe provided the following speech in 2008.
1 gnyen tshang 2 ya 3 ngas gral 'go skor nas chu zhig mchod 4 seng ge dkar mo'i 'o ma yin 5 gral sked skor nas chu zhig mchod 6 g.yu 'brug sngon mo'i kha chu yin 7 gral rnga skor nas chu zhig mchod 8 jig rten mgon po'i rten 'brel yin 9 ya 10 a zhang tshang 11 ma sru tshang mas bshad rgyur 12 srid pa'i kha mig zer ba de bod kha ba can la dpe yod pa zhig 13 sa nag thang na lam yod pa zhig red 14 nged tshang la mtshon na 15 kha chen la za lobs dang lag rgan la len lobs yod ni red 16 ma sru ma tshang mas de ring stod dbus gtsang yul gyi phrug cig dgos 17 phrug gcig rung thig le mi gcig ni zhig 18 smad rgya nag yul gyi gos shig dgos 19 gos gcig rung ri mo mi 'dra ni zhig 20 bod kha ba can gyi dar zhig dgos 21 dar gcig rung kha mtshon mi 'dra ni zhig 22 ras kha dar kha dang kha btags zad po sogs mi len zer gi

1 a zhang tshang 2 ya 3 ma sru tshang gral gang bor shod dang 4 sku rgyal bod kyi bu ras zer pa de spyir de ring khed tshang la phrug thig le ma zhig ston rgyu dgos ni red 5 gos phyi nang can zhig gshom rgyu dgos ni red 6 'di ri chen zhig gi 'go nas 'phyangs na dkris rgyag ni dang 7 chu chen zhig gi 'gram nas bshig na zam pa nyan ni zhig dgos ni red mod 8 khed tshang la kha gang gis chog ni ma red 9 kha rgan la za lobs yod ni red 10 spar gang gis chog ni ma red 11 lag rgan la len lobs yod ni red 12 da nangs zhi lu tshor 13 khyod tshos theg tshad cig btegs te 14 long tshod cig bkal nas thog la kha btags lha dgu ma zhig 'phongs zhes bshad mod 15 nga sngangs ma sngangs kyis lam la bud sa nas 16 brel ma brel gyis rtar zhon sa nas brjed song zig 17 ya 18 da kha btags 'di gur kum chung rung lha rdzas yin 19 me tog chung rung sman rdzas kyi tshab tu 20 ma sru tshang 'khang mi nyan par blang na e chog

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གཉེ ན་ཚང་།

མ ི་ ཆྟོག

ཁྟོད་སྲུ་མས་བོད་དང་བས།

ཁྱེད ཡཞང་ཚང་།

ཁྱེད ལྷ་དང་མདངས་མི་པོ་ཏོང་ས་རྒྱུན་པོ་ལ་ཆུ་མེད་ན།

ཁ་ཚད་བཞིག་་བུ་རས་ཐམས་ཅད་ས་རྒྱུན་པོ་ལ་ཆུ་མེད་ན།

བཤར་གནས་ཀྱི་འབྲོད་གཉིས་པོ་ལ་ཆུ་མེད་ན།

ཁྱེད་ལས་ཁྱེད་ཁྱེད་བས།
1. ལག་པའི་འདི་ལེགས་བཀུལ་བོ་འདོད་
2. སྟོག་ལབ་རྒྱན་གྱིས་བདེ་རིང་
3. ལས་དོན་གཉན་མ་སྣ་བརྒྱ་འཆོམ་སྟོད་
4. ལྡེ་བོ་དུས་ཀྱི་མྱོང་པོ་
5. རྒྱ་ཡིན་དགོས་ནས་ལེགས་བཀུལ་བོ་
6. མགོ་ལྟར་དབྱིབས་
7. ིག་བུ་ར་དྲུན་
8. རྒྱུ་དུས་འང་རྒན་གྱི་མྱོང་པོ་
9. གྲངས་འཁོར་ལེགས་བཀུལ་བོ་
10. བོད་ཁྲིམས་སྐྱེ་སྐྱོ་
11. ལྟོགས་མོའི་གྲངས་འཁོར་ལེགས་བཀུལ་བོ་
12. བོད་ཁྲིམས་སྐྱེ་སྐྱོ་
13. བོད་ཁྲིམས་སྐྱེ་སྐྱོ་

1. ལག་པའི་འདི་ལེགས་བཀུལ་བོ་འདོད་
2. སྟོག་ལབ་རྒྱན་གྱིས་བདེ་རིང་
3. སྟོག་ལབ་རྒྱན་གྱིས་བདེ་རིང་
4. རྒྱ་ཡིན་དགོས་ནས་ལེགས་བཀུལ་བོ་
5. བོད་ཁྲིམས་སྐྱེ་སྐྱོ་
6. བོད་ཁྲིམས་སྐྱེ་སྐྱོ་
7. ིག་བུ་ར་དྲུན་
8. རྒྱ་ཡིན་དགོས་ནས་ལེགས་བཀུལ་བོ་
9. བོད་ཁྲིམས་སྐྱེ་སྐྱོ་
10. ་སྟོག་ལབ་རྒྱན་གྱིས་བདེ་རིང་
11. དི་འཚི掣་
12. དི་འཚི掣་
13. དི་འཚི掣་
14. ལོ་ཁྲིམས་སྐྱེ་སྐྱོ་
15. ལོ་ཁྲིམས་སྐྱེ་སྐྱོ་

1. ལག་པའི་འདི་ལེགས་བཀུལ་བོ་འདོད་
2. སྟོག་ལབ་རྒྱན་གྱིས་བདེ་རིང་
3. ལས་དོན་གཉན་མ་སྣ་བརྒྱ་འཆོམ་
4. ལྡེ་བོ་དུས་ཀྱི་མྱོང་པོ་
5. རྒྱ་ཡིན་དགོས་ནས་ལེགས་བཀུལ་བོ་
6. བོད་ཁྲིམས་སྐྱེ་སྐྱོ་
7. ིག་བུ་ར་དྲུན་
8. རྒྱ་ཡིན་དགོས་ནས་ལེགས་བཀུལ་བོ་
9. བོད་ཁྲིམས་སྐྱེ་སྐྱོ་
10. ་སྟོག་ལབ་རྒྱན་གྱིས་བདེ་རིང་
11. དི་འཚི掣་
12. དི་འཚི掣་
13. དི་འཚི掣་
14. ལོ་ཁྲིམས་སྐྱེ་སྐྱོ་
15. ལོ་ཁྲིམས་སྐྱེ་སྐྱོ་
1 a zhang tshang 2 ma bsru gnam gyis srung rgyu ma tsho 3 nga'i lag gi kha btags 'di stod dbus gtsang yul gyi lha dar byed chog 4 smad rgya nag yul gyi khrims dar byed chog 5 bod kha ba can gyi gnyen dar byed chog 6 'di'i steng na bkra shis rtags brgyad kyi ri mo tshang 7 rgyal srid sna bdun gyi rten 'brel tshang 8 stag seng khyung 'brug gi bstod pa tshang 9 'di dkar pochos kyi zhu rten byas na chog 10 smug po gnyen gyi bsu rten byas na chog 11 'di mi chen la thug na kha brda byed spyed byas na chog 12 bag ma tsho lam la 'phud spyd byas na chog 13 de ring glu ma yi gral nas 'khor spyd byas na chog 14 kha btags lha brgya ma 'di len rgyu min na 15 nga rgad po khyed tshos khur te 'gro rgyu min na thabs gzhan yod ni ma red

1 རྒྱུ་མདོ། 2 སྨུག་པྟོ་ 3 ལྡན།

1 gnyen tshang 2 ma sru tsho 'drud ya 3 'drud
The bu ras begins with the entreaty: "Offer water to the top row of the A zhang; it is the milk of a white snow lion. Offer water to the middle of the row; it is dragon’s saliva. Offer water to the end of the row; it is the sign of Buddha". 

Afterwards, an articulate woman from the gnyen tshang requests bu ras on behalf of the gnyen tshang. She states that it is a Tibetan custom to request a set of phrug from Dbus gtsang made from special fabric, a set of gos with special patterns from China, and a dar with special colors from Tibet. She says that old or used fabric is unacceptable.

A man from the A zhang group replies with humor and sarcasm that the Tibetan bu ras should be like a set of specially marked phrug to wear; a gos with outer layer and inner layer for the gnyen tshang. "It should be enough to wrap around a massive mountain three times or to make a bridge over a big river. It is unacceptable if it is only the length of an arm. Though an adequate amount of bu ras was prepared, we A zhang neglected to bring it when we left home. Thus, we hope the gnyen tshang will accept a kha btags instead."

The gnyen tshang women giggle and refuse in unison. A woman encourages the A zhang to return and fetch the bu ras. She says that the kha btags is not even long enough to tie around one of the A zhang's heads or to tie around the waist of a woman from the gnyen tshang (the speaker might be quite plump). She continues, "Bu ras should include phrug that is the color of brick tea, gos that is the color of the sky, woolen cloth from India, and silk cloth from China."
The woman states that they are accustomed to receiving the best materials as the bu ras, while the worn-out kha btags (even though it is actually a new one) is inadequate to cover even a face, is so flimsy it could not resist the wind, and is not even waterproof. Finally, the women throw the kha btags back to the A zhang amid peals of laughter from the audience.

The A zhang representative replies, "This kha btags does not show beauty because it looks like someone wiped their mouth on it and does not show brightness because it looks like someone wiped their nose on it. The gnyen tshang group is accustomed to receiving luxurious bu ras and is, therefore, expecting another perfect bu ras this time." He claims that unfortunately, the women do not deserve it, thus this kha btags is the only choice for the bu ras, at which point everyone bursts into laughter.

A woman from the gnyen tshang states that if the A zhang clean their mouth with the kha btags, they will become more articulate, and if they clean their nose with it, they will appear younger. She emphasizes that the bu ras they requested should be something worth looking at as it is unfolded, and something worth showing as it is exhibited. She continuously refuses the kha btags. Finally, she warns that if the A zhang cannot be persuaded through discussion to give the bu ras, then the gnyen tshang will come pull them out of their seats.

An A zhang replies that when he was young, he was active, and it was a big challenge for others to take the bu ras from him, regardless of what they said or did. However, he admits that now, in his sixties, his body is less active, less responsive even when he wants to move, so he chooses a speaking contest instead.

In reply, the woman argues that the bu ras should be silver bowls, sufficient in number to divide among the gnyen tshang. She describes the bowls, "They should be ornamented with turquoise on top. Their value should be greater than gold." She then concludes with the threat, "If these requirements are not met, you will be pulled out of your seats."

An A zhang says that his kha btags can be the lha dar 'deity flag' in Dbus gtsang, the khrims dar in China, and the gnyen dar 'wedding sash' in Tibet. It features the Eight Auspicious Symbols, the sign of the Seven Royal Possessions, and praises tigers, lions, garudas, and dragons. It can be used in religion, welcoming weddings, communicating with leaders, sending off brides, and can be used to sing songs today. He finally says that A zhang have nothing else — only this.

\[173\] Rgyal srid sna bdun refers to the seven attributes of kingship: the precious wheel of the Dharma, jewels, a queen, an elephant, a minister, a horse, and a general.
At this point, the *gnyen tshang* women approach the *A zhang* to drag them from their seats. A male from the *gnyen tshang* or a matchmaker stops them and speaks for both sides, advising the *gnyen tshang* and *A zhang* to avoid conflict. He appeals to everyone to listen to him for a moment (the women are still talking loudly), and says that the *A zhang* came early in the morning from far away and must be tired. "You *gnyen tshang* are supposed to listen to whatever the *A zhang*'s command on this day. *Bu ras* originated when Tibetan marriage customs began. Although it is something to argue, joke, and speak about, it is not worth dividing everyone." He adds that the *gnyen tshang* must already know this. He also says that the *A zhang* must also know that *bu ras* is more than a *kha btags* and they should no longer hide it. Finally, he encourages the *gnyen tshang* to accept the *bu ras* and then suggests that they sing.

**A Sash-tying Speech**

A man from the *A zhang* stands up with a bowl of *chang* and a white *kha btags* draped across his arms and recites a sash-tying speech, wishing good luck to the new couple. The main content of the speech is similar to the sash-tying speech from Skya rgya Village, Gcan tsha County provided by Blo rtan rdo rje and Stuart (2007:214). During the speech, the groom stands facing the center of the house with his head bowed in front of the *A zhang* and others. During the speech, different colors of sashes are given to the groom by the *gnyen tshang*.

In 2016, many weddings lacked a sash-tying speech and many *gnyen tshang* and *A zhang* did not bring sashes. Instead, the bride's relatives each brought ten to fifty RMB. 'Brug thar rgyal provided the following speech:174

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1 mchod oM AH hU~M 2 mchod oM AH hU~M 3 mchod 4 mchod mchod la dgung sngon mchod 5 mgo klad ris can gya bstod khri beol sa yin 6 mchod mchod mchod la bar snang mchod 7 bar snang yangs pa 'di ma mchod ma bkur na 8 sked 'khor gsum gya bstod khri beol sa yin 9 mchod mchod mchod la dog mo sa mchod 10 sa dog mo 'di ma mchod ma bkur na 11 rkang srag lham gya bstad ri beol sa yin 12 mchod mchod mchod la pha lha mchod 13 pha lha phrag pa'i g.yas nas mchod 14 mchod mchod mchod la mha mchod ma lha mchod 15 ma lha phrag pa'i g.yon nas mchod 16 mchod mchod mchod la zhang lha mchod 17 zhang lha klad pa'i gtsug nas mchod 18 mchod mchod mchod la rang lha mchod rang lha ro stod rgyab nas mchod 19 mchod mchod mchod la mag pa mchod 20 mag pa'i pho lha dgra lha mchod 21 stod stod la mchod cig 'phang na 22 stod kyi mnga' ris skor gsum mchod 23 bar bar la mchod cig 'phangs na 24 bar kyi dbus gtsang ru bzhi mchod 25 smad smad la mchod cig 'phangs na 26 smad kyi mdo khams sgang drug mchod 27 mchod oM AH hU~M

1. ya 2. 'di'i nang gi bdud rtsi bsil ma 'dir bstod pa rnam gsum zhig byas na 3. sa dog mo gser gzhong la 4. nas dkar drug mo zhing la btab nas zer gi 5. zhing la btab nas chang la bsnyal nas zer gi 6. zhing ri ma gsum gyi ri phud yin 7. chu ma gsum gyi chu phud yin 8. g.yul kha gsum gyi g.yul phud yin 9. sngon mo nas kyi bdud rtsi yin 10. kha nas bltas na dkar dkar po 11. seng ge dkar mo'i 'o ma yin 12. bar nas bltas na ljang nag po g.yu 'brug sngon mo'i kha chu yin 13. zhabz nas bltas na dmar po bo 14. rgya khrim dmar po'i sha khrag 'dres ni yin 15. pha a khus 'thung na dbu 'phangs bstod la 16. stag sha ras 'thung na dpa' rtsal rgyas 17. sman bu mos 'thung la sha mdangs dkar 18. khar khyer na kha las dge 19. mag pa tshe ring lo brgya a zharg gis chang res 'jog 20. khyos ya kha gser lo yin pas bshad shes byos 21. ma kha dngul lo yin pas skyor shig byos 21. mid thag ril bu yin pas 'dren shes byos 22. rtsa lam rin chen yin pas 'gram shes byos 23. e dgos

1. ya 2. mag pa tshe ring lo brgya 3. skyid kyi lha khyim gru bzhi'i nang nas 4. khyos skyil krong rdo rje mdud pa grol nas 5. shig se bshig nas thag se longs ra 6. a zharg gis ska rags bcings ya

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1. 'di smad rgya nag yul gyi gos shig yin 2. gos ri mo'i steng na 'brug cig yod 3. grag na g.yu 'brug sngon mo yin 4. khyod kha las g.yu 'brug grag grag byed 5. e dgos 6. sku rgyal bod kyi ras shig yin 7. ras kha thel steng na rta zhig yod 8. gling rta rta mgrin dmar po yin 9. khyod kha las rlung rta de nas dar 10. e dgos 11. mag pa tshe ring lo brgya 12. dgung sngon po 'dra ba'i a zhang gis 13. 'brug pho khyung 'dra ba'i mag pa btsal nas 14. sprin dkar po 'dra ba'i ska rags bcings na 15. char bsil ma 'dra ba'i bsod nams dar 16. rdza khra yag 'dra ba'i a zhang gi 17. 'brong bre lo 'dra ba'i mag pa btsal nas 18. rtswa ram dkar 'dra ba'i ska rags bcings na 19. na me tog 'dra ba'i bsod nams dar 20. nags rgya rdzong 'dra ba'i a zhang gis 21. stag dar ma 'dra ba'i mag pa btsal nas 22. stag thig le 'dra ba'i ska rags bcings na 23. stag 'dzum drug 'dra ba'i bsod nams rgyas 24. e dgos 25. nga chu rma chu 'dra ba'i a zhang gi 26. nya gser ma 'dra ba'i mag pa btsal nas 27. dar dkar po 'dra ba'i ska rags bcings na 28. gser ser po 'dra ba'i bsod nams dar 29. e dgos
1 nga'i ska rags 'di stod ri chen zhig gi sgang nas grol na 2 ri chung zhig la dkris gsum rgyag 3 chu chen zhig gi kha nas grol na 4 chu chung zhig la zam pa nyen na 5 de ring khrom pa'i gral nas grol na 6 mag pa zhi lur dkris gsum rgyob ba 7 a zhang tshang gis bshad na 8 kha las rlung rta dar 9 bsod nams dbang thang dar 10 ska rags 'di'i khug 'go dgung sngon gnam la cig khyer zer gi 11 khug 'go dgung sngon gnam la cig khyer na 12 dgung sngon po 'dra ba'i mdog cig 'bud la 13 'brug pho khyung nag nil la cha bzhag na 14 nag kha ra ring 'dra ba'i ska rags yin zer gi 15 a zhang tshang gis bshad gi ra 16 'di'i sked pa bar snang khams la cig khyer zer g 17 sked pa bar snang khams la cig khyer na 'od ser po 'dra ba'i mdog zcig 'bud la zer gi 18 bya khyung chen mag phrug la cha bzhag na 19 sgro smug po 'dra ba'i ska rags yin zer gi 20 a zhang tshang gis bshad gi ra 21 'di'i kha tshar dog mo sa la cig khyer zer gi 22 kha tshar dog mo sa la cig khyer na spang me tog 'dra ba'i mdog cig 'bud
la zer gi 23 stod ri chen mag phrug la cha bzhag na 24 lam skya mo 'dra ba'i ska rags yin 25 mag pa tshe ring lo brgya 26 ska rags bcings bcings stod nas bcing dgos 27 pha a khu'i dgra lha bcu gsum bstod dgos 28 ska rags bcings bcings smad nas bcing dgos 29 ma sru mo'i zas lha bcu gsum bstod dgos 30 ska rags bcings bcings rked nas bcing dgos 31 khyod mag pa'i pho lha dgra lha bstod dgos 32 ngas dpe gcig len na thengs gcig bstod 33 mtho dgung sngon gnam la dpe zhig len na 34 'brug pho khyung 'dra ba'i mag pa yong nas 35 char zim ma 'dra ba'i rten 'brel 'grig 36 gangs dkar tse mor dpe zhig len na 37 seng dkar mo 'dra ba'i mag pa yong nas 38 mgo g.yu ral 'dra ba'i rten 'brel 'grig 39 phar rgya rdzong rags la dpe zhig len na 40 stag dar ma 'dra ba'i mag pa yong nas 41 rgyab thig le 'dra ba'i rten 'brel 'grig 42 nang khrom pa'i gral la dpe zhig len na 43 khyod mag pa yid bzhiin nor bu yong nas 44 bdag gzhi mgon gnyis kyi bsam don 'grub

1 ya 2 ngas bsam don 'grub pa'i ska rags shig bcings 3 'di'i mgo ma g.yon nas blangs te g.yas nas mdud na 4 stod dbus gtsang bla ma'i chos mdud yin 5 'di g.yas nas blangs te g.yon nas mdud na 6 smad rgya nag rgyal bo'i dpa' mdud yin 7 bu dpa' bos ral gri g.yug tshul yin 8 'di gzhug nas blangs te sngun nas mdud na 9 lha dgra lha sngon mo'i sms mdud yin 10 sman bu mos ja kha sde tshul yin 11 'di sngun nas blangs te gzhug nas mdud na 12 rin chen dpa' mkhar gcig mdud yin 13 dar tshon dar gyi mdud pa yin 14 sku rgyal bod kyi 'ching lugs yin 15 ska rags shub shub kyis bcings na 16 khyod bu dgu'i a pha nyan 17 bu dgu re 'dra zhig gang la gnang mod 18 khyod rig pa can gyi bu gsum 'khrungs 19 e dgos
1 mag pa tshe ring lo brgya 2 nga bu chung chung kha las dge ni zhig yin 3 rta chung chung gom lag bde ni zhig yin 4 bdag zhang 'dzin gnyis kyi re ba ltar du 5 ngas mag pa tshe ring lo brgyar kha g.yang dang bkra shis 'bod 6 nga'i tsha mo 'di'i ring du 7 khyod kyi nor sa rdza ri smug po nor gyis gang 8 rta sa 'jag ri sum 'do rta yis gang 9 lug sa spang ri sngon mo lug gis gang 10 zhing sa gser gzhung ring mo nas kyis gang 11 khyod skyid kyi mgo sbra gru bzhis nom gyis gang 12 sbra mthing smug gi kha ru lhor rkyongs 13 phyugs khra khra 'go lo'i rdzi byos 14 khyod btsan lo lam la grag 15 phyugs rdza lam la dgram 16 e dgos

1 རུང་འདུས་བྱོན་པ་ 2 དཔལ་ཙྦེ་ཉེར་འཇིག་ཟིང་བོ་ 3 ཁྱིད་ཀུན་ལུང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 4 སྣེ་ཚོགས་ཕྱིན་ལུང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 5 ལྷོན་པར་བོད་མེད་ཤིང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 6 ཕྲག་ཏུ་བོད་མེད་ཤིང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 7 ཚིང་ལུང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 8 ལོ་རྒྱུང་བོད་མེད་ཤིང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 9 དཔལ་ཙྦེ ལྷོན་པར་བོད་མེད་ཤིང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 10 མཆོག་འཇིག་འདུས་བྱོན་པ་ 11 ཞེ་ཚོགས་ཕེན་པོ་ 12 བོད་མེད་ཤིང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 13 མཆོག་འཇིག་འདུས་བྱོན་པ་ 14 ཕྲག་ཏུ་བོད་མེད་ཤིང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 15 དཔལ་ཙྦེ ཞེ་ཚོགས་ཕེན་པོ 16 ཕྲག་ཏུ་བོད་མེད་ཤིང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 17 བོད་མེད་ཤིང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 18 ཞེ་ཚོགས་ཕེན་པོ 19 ཕྲག་ཏུ་བོད་མེད་ཤིང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 20 ཕྲག་ཏུ་བོད་མེད་ཤིང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 21 ཞེ་ཚོགས་ཕེན་པོ 22 བོད་མེད་ཤིང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 23 ཞེ་ཚོགས་ཕེན་པོ 24 ཕྲག་ཏུ་བོད་མེད་ཤིང་ཕན་གཞི་ཡོན་ཏན་ 25 ཞེ་ཚོགས་ཕེན་པོ
This orator begins by aspersing liquor to the sky while praising the earth, local deities, deities of the ancestors, deities of the A zhang, deities of the self, deities of the bridegroom, and all the deities of all the regions of Tibet. Secondly, he praises the dragon-decorated bowl that he holds. He explains the Eight Auspicious Symbols that decorate the bowl and how those symbols originated in Tibet. He then describes how the bowl was made in China and then sold back to Tibet, being transported from China to Tibet by mules. Thirdly, he praises the barley liquor inside the bowl, stating that its origin is in Tibet, and outlining the difficulties involved with growing and harvesting barley, and then brewing the liquor. He describes how the liquor glorifies the A zhang as they drink, emboldens young men, enlivens young women, and brings good fortune to all. Finally, he proposes that the bridegroom have a drink.

The A zhang orator then asks the groom to stand up and ties a sash around him while continuing the speech. He praises the various colored sashes, including blue, red, yellow, and purple and then wishes the bridegroom good luck. He praises colorful sashes from India that brought the groom-protecting deities; sashes from China with dragon symbols that brought the groom good fortune; and sashes from Tibet with symbols of Ge sar’s horses that brought the groom good luck. He wishes the groom good fortune.

As he ties more sashes around the groom’s waist, the A zhang continues to speak metaphorically. The first sash is tied from the left to the right side, and is described as the religious tie from Dbus gtsang. The second is tied from the right and is described as the heroic tie from China. The third is tied from back to front, and is described as the sash of defeating enemies and women carrying tea bricks. The fourth is tied from front to back, and is described as a way of unifying treasure castles. The orator says that tying the sashes loosely would bring the bridegroom nine children, but he wishes him to have only three wise sons, so he ties them tightly.

The A zhang next wishes that his niece, the bride, will bring wealth: yaks, many horses and sheep, abundant barley, and prestige to the family. Finally, he wishes that the groom will be brave, humble, wise, knowledgeable, tolerant, reputable, and achieve whatever he wishes.
A Wedding Oration

Wedding orations were historically an important part of wedding speeches displaying much variation. They give context for Tibetan belief, myths, customs, wealth, places, people, deities, and weddings. Sadly, in 2014, it was difficult to find local people capable of giving a complete wedding oration.

This oration is an overview of the wedding and may be given by an articulate orator from either the A zhang group or gnyen tshang group. The oration requires approximately half an hour and should be recited fluently. In 2014 it was difficult to find more than one or two people who could give this speech fluently in Bon skor Village. Khe bhe provided the following speech in 2008:

1 ya 2 mchod oM AH hU~M 3 lan gsum 4 mchod bla ma yi dam mchod 5 sangs rgyas byang sems mchod 6 dpa' bo mkha' 'gro mchod 7 chos skyong srung ma mchod 8 yul lha gzhi bdag mchod 9 bka' srung dam can mchod 10 yul rigs kyi rgyal bo mchod 11 gnas rigs kyi srung ma mchod 12 sa'i lte ba rgya gar rdo rje gdan mchod 13 gnas dam pa bya rgod phung po ri mchod
1 ya 2 mgo smug po gangs kyi yar bud nas 3 dgung them pa bcu gsum yan chad nas 4 stod lha chen tshangs pa dkar po mchod 5 yum a ne gong ma rgyal mo mchod 6 lha rigs thod kyi rgyal po mchod 7 lha rigs nyis khri dgu 'bum mchod 8 lha dmag phye ba dung phyur mchod 9 gos 'khor gsum gang gi phar bud nas 10 ban byang phyogs sku lo'i mtshams gzhas mchod 11 byang mo dung skyong dkar mo mchod 12 byang dmag phye ba dung phyur mchod 13 rkang sug lham gangs kyi mar bud nas 14 sa them pa bcu gsum man chad nas 15 sa la gnas ba'i klu mchod 16 klu rgyal gtsug na rin chen mchod 17 klu mo dung skyong dkar mo mchod 18 klu phrug nyes khri dgu 'bum mchod 19 klu dmag phye ba dung phyur mchod 20 stong gsum gang gi yar bud nas 21 stong gsum mgo lha dkar po mchod 22 bskal ba stong gi yar bud nas 23 skal bzang sangs rgyas stong sku mchod 24 d+h na ko sha'i mtsho gling nas 25 sngags pa'i pad ma 'byung gnas mchod 26 g.yu lo bkod pa'i zhung bkod nas 27 rje btsun 'phags ma sgrol ma mchod 28 pha rgyud gsang ba 'dus pa mchod 29 ma rgyud bde mchod 'khor lo mchod 30 yi dam rdo rje 'jigs byed mchod 31 khro rgyal rta mchog rol ba mchod 32 myur mdzad ye shes kyi mgon po mgon rgan k+She tra pA la mchod 33 dbang phyug 'dzin na'i trA mchod 34 gshin rje tra ki rA dza mchod 35 bdud mgon drag shed nag po mchod 36 gtsang ris kyi mgon po bdun beu don lnga mchod 37 bstan srung dam can chos rgyal mchod 38 ma srung ma dpal ldan lha mo mchod 39 'dod khams skyong ba'i bstan ma beu gnyis mchod 40 mchod oM AH hU~M

1 stod kyi mnga' ris skor gsum mchod 2 bar kyi dbus gtsang ru bzhi mchod 3 smad kyi mdo khams sgang drug mchod 4 ri yi rgyal po ri rab mchod 5 ma ha gser gyi rus sbal mchod 6 srid pa chags pa'i lha dgu mchod 7 'dzam gling bstan ma beu gnyis mchod 8 ri stobs can glang chen 'gying ri mchod 9 gnas 'gangs chen jo mo bla ri mchod 10 mchod

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oM AH hU~M

1. shar phyogs rdo rje sems dpa' mchod 2 lho phyogs rin chen 'byung gnas mchod 3 nub phyogs snang ba mtha' yas mchod 4 dus gsum gyi sangs rgyas mchod 5 rigs gsum gyi mgon po mchod 6 de ring mgon po'i mgon lha mchod 7 khyim 'di la gnas pa'i srung ma mchod 8 bu rang la 'khor ba'i lus lha mchod 9 mchod oM AH hU~M

1. dgu brgya thob pa'i nye byas na 2 sha rus bu rgyud la mo btab na 3 lo rgan drug bcur brtis byas na 4 de ring bkra shis don 'grub kyi nyi ma 5 phun sun tshogs ba'i nyi ma 6 bya ba yar 'gro'i nyi ma 7 skud pa yar 'khen gyi nyi ma 8 bde legs 'dzoms pa'i nyi ma 'dir 9 a chen gang sri dkar po'i yan chad nas 10 khyod mi chen seng ge 'dra 'dra rig gi 11 seng g.yu ral ldem me rjes nas 'gyings na 12 nga gzhon pa nags kyi stag mo 'dra 'dra rig gi 13 stag 'dzum gyi thig le khra lam mer sngun nas bsus na 14 ngo gyen la rta ma tshogs 15 la thur du sga ma tshigs pa 16 sga lhu bzh'i'i gong nas mi ma tshigs pa'i bdag gzhis mgon gnyis ka bde mo yin na

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1 nga'i phrag gi kha btags lha dgu ma 'dir bstod pa rnam gsum zhig byas na 2 'di lha yul kham kyi lha dar yin 3 klu yul kham kyi klu dar yin 4 yar lha mo brgya yis bkal ni yin 5 bar srmo mo brgya yis drangs ni yin 6 mar klu mo brgya yis btags ni yin 7 'di'i phang shing tsan dan dkar po yin 8 phang lo gser rdo ser po yin 9 mgo sdom 'bru shug rtse brgya yin 10 phang sug gya rta dmar po yin 11 yar rdal tsan dan dmar po yin 12 mar rdal tsan dan dmar po yin 13 su rug dbus mig khra mo yin 14 'di'i sku re'i nang na sku re yod 15 sku re rer ming re yod mod 16 ngas de 'dra mang po zhig mi shes kyang 17 'di stod dbus gtsang bla ma'i mjal dar nyan 18 smad gya nag dpon po'i thugs rten nyan 19 sku rgyal bod kyi nge dar nyan 20 gnyen a khu gnyis kyi bsam don 'grub 21 de ring bu bu mo gnyis kyi spar kha skor byed yin

1 'di lha yul kham kyi lha dar yin 2 'di lha yul kham kyi lha dar yin 3 klu yul kham kyi klu dar yin 4 yar lha mo brgya yis bkal ni yin 5 bar srmo mo brgya yis drangs ni yin 6 mar klu mo brgya yis btags ni yin 7 'di'i phang shing tsan dan dkar po yin 8 phang lo gser rdo ser po yin 9 mgo sdom 'bru shug rtse brgya yin 10 phang sug gya rta dmar po yin 11 yar rdal tsan dan dmar po yin 12 mar rdal tsan dan dmar po yin 13 su rug dbus mig khra mo yin 14 'di'i sku re'i nang na sku re yod 15 sku re rer ming re yod mod 16 ngas de 'dra mang po zhig mi shes kyang 17 'di stod dbus gtsang bla ma'i mjal dar nyan 18 smad gya nag dpon po'i thugs rten nyan 19 sku rgyal bod kyi nge dar nyan 20 gnyen a khu gnyis kyi bsam don 'grub 21 de ring bu bu mo gnyis kyi spar kha skor byed yin
1 nga rta chung chung rgyug dga' che ni min mod 2 rgya sras bslil mas bka' 'bab gi 3 rgya lcags phra mos tshags btsugs na 4 mi bryug thabs med las babs nas 5 nga mi chung chung bshad dga' che ni min mod 6 gral 'go'i a khu sma ra can gyis bka' 'bab gi 7 gral sked kyi bu chung gri chung can gyis tshags btsugs na 8 ngas mi bshad thabs med las babs nas 9 ya 10 da nangs nam mkha' yar lang 'dir 11 de ring nyi ma'i rtse shar 'dir 12 bkra shis rtags bryad 'dra ba'i mgon 'tshogs 13 ja' kha mdog sna lnga 'dra ba'i dar 'then 14 bya khu byug sngon mo 'dra ba'i glu len 15 gral g.yas gral bltas na g.yas gral yag gi 16 g.yas gral nyl ma shar 'dra red 17 g.yon gral bltas na g.yon gral yag gi 18 g.yon gral g.yang drung 'khyil 'dra red 19 gdong gral bltas na gdong gral yag gi 20 gdong gral zla ba tshes 'dra red 21 mtha' gral ltas na mtha' gral yag gi 22 mtha' gral skar tshogs bkram 'dra red 23 dkyil gral bltas na dkyil gral yag gi 24 dkyil gral a long 'khyil 'dra red 25 a long nang nas glu len gi 26 skad snyan mo khu byug grag 'dra red 27 zas ka ra bu ram gyi sder kha sgrig 'dra red 28 chang bdud rtsi bslil mas mtsho mo 'khyil ba 29 glu len dang gar rtsed byed pa 30 ku res dang kha rgyal rtsed pa 31 de ring 'tshogs pa'i khrom pa 'jigs she gi 32 nga bshad pa'i zhi lu'i snying chung gi 33 nga gangs dkar sems su 'char dka' bas 34 tshig gcig gis 'chug na 35 gral 'go'i a khu sma ra can gyis nga kha log dang bshad log ma bryag 36 tshig gnyis kyi 'chug na 37 gral sked kyi bu chung gri chung can gyis nga kha 'phyas dang snying 'phyas ma gtong 38 tshig gsum 'chug na 39 gral rnga'i bu mo dung ral can gyis nga kha dgod dang khung dgod ma byed

1 dang po lha klu gnyis kyi nye byas nas 2 lha'i dbang bo bryag byin gyi bu mo lha dbang tshe sgron klu'i yul la mna' mar byin 3 rgyal chen sde bzhis bar byas 4 bag ma'i bar ba de nas dar zig 5 lha g.yag ka ba rwa ring po'i rtsar byin 6 bag ma'i bar rtsa de nas dar 7 slob dpon pad mas sna 'khrus byas 8 bag ma'i sna 'khrus de nas dar 9 gos 'gu dbang pad ma stong ldan rna kheb tu byin 10 bag ma'i rna kheb de nas dar 11 lha rta dkar po bag rta byas 12 bag ma'i bag rta de nas dar 13 smin

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drug khra mos bag rogs byas 14 bag ma'i bag rogs de nas dar 15 shar nyi zla skar gsum bag bskyel byas 16 bag ma'i bag bskyel de nas dar 17 'ja' tshon sna lngas gos bskon brgyab 18 bag ma'i gos bskon de nas dar 19 gser dngul dar gsum gyis rdzongs pa byas 20 bag ma'i rdzongs pa de nas dar 21 mchod oM AH hU~M

dang po chos dam tshig gi 'brel ba 2 slob dpon dang slob ma'i 'brel ba 3 gnam sa gnyis char chu'i 'brel ba 4 shar nub gnyis nyi zla'i 'brel ba 5 lho byang gnyis skyi bser gyi 'brel ba 6 srid sde gnyen gyi 'brel ba 7 'brel ba la sogs kyi khungs su bshad na 8 dgung mthon po nyi zla shar sa yin 9 thang chen po rta chen rgyug sa yin 10 khrom chen po mi chen 'tshogs sa yin 11 kha rje gnam gyis gnang zig 12 mgon skyabs lhas byas zig 13 mdzes pa'i gnyen bsgrigs 14 mthun pa'i tshig smras 15 dga' ba'i gar 'khrab 16 skyid pa'i glu blangs

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1 nyê lam nyi ma'i ra mdag 2 rdza lam gangs kyi them pa 3 skye mthun brag dang shug pa 4 ja mthun chu dang 'o ma 5 shar khri sdug gi nyi ma 6 shar na smag min pa'i smug lam dungs 7 lho g.yu 'brug sngon mo grag nas 8 dbyar dgon gnyis kyis shar 'then 9 byang skyi bser gyi ri bos 10 lho sprin gyi gong ba brgyan 11 dngug bya chen gyi gshog pa bsdams na 12 'og klu sdig dang sdig pa thams cad thabs kyis gnon 13 stod na sna tshogs gser gyi ri bo bcu gsum 14 smad na dam tshig shel gyi phreng ba 15 phyi nang btsan sum bcu'lo ma 16 rgyu mtshan gyi gtam re bshad na 17 nam mkhar skar tshogs shar ba lta bu'i mang 'gro 18 mang song na bsdu dka' 19 nyung nyung don chung gi gtam re bshad na 20 rin chen gser gyi sa gzhi'i steng du 21 mu tig gi tshom bu bkod pa lta bu nyung 'gro 22 nyung song na 'du dka' 23 ngas mi mang mi nyung ba'i gtam zhig bshad na 24 dang po chos rgyal ral ba can po bod du byon 25 rgya dkar nag gnyis sa mtshams phye 26 sbrad smug po'i mgo sbra de nas dar 27 'di'i phug chon lha chen tshangs bas 'then 28 gangs dkar po'i 'dabs su 'then 29 dngug sngon gnam la 'ju thag 'then 30 sgo chen dngug sngon rgyan nas sprad 31 seng thang dkar yag gis gong ba 'then 32 dog mo sa gzhi lte bar sprad 33 gru bzhis rgyal chen sde bzhis bkyags 34 mthun pa sphi bzhis kha g.yang bos 35 chon bzhis phyogs bzhir 'then nas phur bzhis sar bsdab 36 dgra bzhis pham par btan 37 'di'i phyis sgo lha shing shug pa yin 38 phyugs khra khras sa gzhi khebs rgyu yin 39 nang sgo lha shing rtag pa yin 40 pha a khu'i tshe brtan rgyu yin 41 ngo thig thams cad dngul thag yin 42 cha ru thams cad byu ru yin 43 sbra'i ya lag na pho 'dom bzhis brya yod 44 stag sa ras rta rgyug byed sa yod 45 rta rgyug na rting ma len sa yod 46 sbra'i ma lag na mo 'dom dgu brya yod 47 ma bu mos glu len byed sa yod 48 glu blangs na gar yang 'khrab sa yod 49 mtshams bzhis na skyen po'i mda' ra yod 50 mda' 'phang na dpa' dar len sa yod 51 phyi ki ldir byas te yod 52 nang yang ldir byas te yod 53 glu gar 'khrab na sa mi 'gul 54 gos rtsa chen gyon na rdul mi 'gos 55 mchod oM AH hU ~ M
1 da nangs nam langs kyi dang po 2 nyi shar gyi rtse mo 3 rtan 'brel gyi 'go ma' dir 4 spang thang dkar yag gi gong ba nas 5 mkhar skyo mo'i gser sgo lho ru bskor nas 6 stag dang gzig gi thig le bsgrigs na 7 rtags dang ston mo de nas 'jigs 8 bdag gzhis mgon gnyis ka gral la 'tshogs na 9 gral g.yas sa gser gyi nyi ma shar 'dra yin 10 g.yon sa dung gi zla ba tshes 'dra yin 11 rgyab ri rgyal lhun po la 12 bu dpa' bos dpa' dar gshar 'dra yin 13 gsungs yangs pa'i ba dan glu dbyangs kyi snyan cha dang 'dra 14 skya mi yi gzu thon rag bar 15 g.yag zhon gyi kh thon ni min mod


1 a zhang tshang gis bshad rgyur 2 khong gi bu mo 'di pha dgung sgon 'dra ba'i bu mo yin 3 pha rta jo bo g.yu sgong dgos 4 ma 'brug mo 'dra ba'i bu mo yin 5 ma rta gzhis mo lag dkar dgos 6 zhang rgya stag 'dra ba'i tsha mo yin 7 zanggr rta kham pa rngog ring dgos 8 ming khu byug 'dra ba'i sring mo dgos 9 ming rta nang chung gser mgo dgos 10 khong gi bu mo 'di yid bzhin gyi nor bu yin 11 yid bzhin nor bu nor la brje
dgos 12 nor sa na lung gong ma nas 13 nor nor mo dgu brgya dgu stong
dgos 14 nor khyur bre ser 'brong zhig dgos 15 'brong la sna lo btul nas
dgos 16 khang gi bu mo 'di rta mgrim dmar po yin 17 rta mgrim dmar po
rta ru brje dgos zer 18 rta sa 'jag ru sum mdo nas 19 rta 'do ba dgu brgya
dgu stong dgos 20 rta khyur kha dkar rkyang zhig dgos zer 21 rkyang
kha dkar kha lo btul nas dgos zer 22 khang gi bu mo g.yung drung lug
rgyud yin 23 g.yung drung lug rgyud lug la brje dgos zer 24 lug sa spang
ri thod dkar nas 25 lug stong lug cig dang lnga brgya dgos zer
26 lug khyur smug ril dgo zhig dgos zer 27 dgo smug ril g.yung la phab
nas dgos zer 28 khang tshang thang chen rdul gyis bkang dgos 29 lam
chen kha sha bshig spyad dgos

1 gnyen tshang tshang gis bshad rgyur 2 khong dkar po chos la dad pa
che zer 3 smug po gnyen la zhe brtsa che zer 4 nag po dgra la zhe sdang
che 5 khang la nor sa na lung gong ma na 6 nor stong nor dang lnga
brgya yod 7 khyu na lha g.yag ka ba rwa ring yod 8 ban gyis btags pa
g.yas na yod 9 bon gyis btags pa g.yon na yod 10 sngags pa'i dril chung
ske na yod 11 mi 'dzin zhang lha khyed tshang ster zer 12 zhang khyed
shang gis len shes shig dang khyer shes byos 13 rta sa 'jag ru sum mdo

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This oration begins by praising and making offerings to various deities, holy personages, and to Buddhist sites in India. The orator further praises and makes offerings to such important religious figures as Brahma, the naga king, the founder of Buddhism and all the followers, and the guardian deities.

Secondly, he praises and makes offerings to the areas of Tibet, holy mountains, to the spiritual guardians of Buddhism, and to
Mount Jo mo glang ma (Chomolungma, Everest).

Thirdly, he praises and makes offerings to the Buddhas of the three ages,\textsuperscript{175} to the lords of the Rig gsum mgon po,\textsuperscript{176} to today's divine guests, to the family's guardian deities, and to individuals' deities.

Afterwards, the orator speaks about the auspicious date diviners selected for the wedding ceremony and continues by praising the \textit{kha btags} – its materials, origin, and many uses. He states that he has been commanded by the \textit{A zhang} to give the oration, even though he lacks eloquence. He continues praising and metaphorically describing the start of the wedding day with the sunrise, rhythmic songs, colorful \textit{kha btags}, orderly rows of seats, plates of sweets and fruits, an ocean of barley liquor, entertainment with jokes and dances, and finally asks for forgiveness in case he made mistakes in the oration.

He then begins to describe the origin of marriage: "First, Princess Lha dbang tshe sgron of mighty Indra\textsuperscript{177} was sent to the naga world to marry. The four great kings\textsuperscript{178} were the matchmakers, and the custom of matchmakers originated then. Master Padmasambhava\textsuperscript{179} washed the bride's face. Pad ma stong ldan\textsuperscript{180} veiled her face and a holy white horse was given as \textit{bag rta}. The Pleiades served as the bridesmaids and the sun, moon, and stars served as \textit{bag bskyal}. Colorful rainbows provided \textit{gos bskon} and gold and silver were provided as \textit{rdzong ba}. Thus, these customs were formed and brought happy marriages." He also describes the beautiful mountains, landscape, and briefly describes how tents were created during the reign of King Khri ral pa can.\textsuperscript{181} The orator briefly re-emphasises the wedding day's auspiciousness and then describes the brideprice. He outlines the bride's family's requests of wealth – horses, yaks, sheep, mules, and so on – for each of the bride's important relatives, such as her uncle, father, and mother. Finally, the orator restates that the wedding on that particular day is derived from the original wedding as previously described, and encourages

\textsuperscript{175} The Buddhas of the three ages, or Dus gsum sangs rgyas, are the Past Buddha (Mar me mdzad; Dipankara), Current Buddha (shAkya thub pa; Shakyamuni), and Future Buddha (Byams pa mgon po; Maitreya).

\textsuperscript{176} Rigs gsum mgon po: 'Jam dpal dbyangs, Spyan ras gzigs, and Gsang bdag phyag na rdo rje.

\textsuperscript{177} This princess is the daughter of Lha'i dbang bo brgya byin, whom locals believe is king of all the deities.

\textsuperscript{178} The four great kings are Yul 'khor srung, 'Phags skyes po, Spyan mi bzang, and Rnam thos sras.

\textsuperscript{179} Slob dpon pad ma 'byung gnas.

\textsuperscript{180} A deity.

\textsuperscript{181} Khri ral pa can or Khri gtsug lde btsan, the forty-first Tibetan King (806–841).
the *A zhang* and *ma sru* to sing competitively.

Photo 172. Local women's hair decorations.

Photo 173. Local women wear felt hats during a wedding ceremony.
Photo 174. Local women's hair decoration – *ra mgo* and *ja la*.
Photo 175. Ra mgo decorate the hair.
Photo 176. *Ja la* are hung at the end of plaited hair.

Photo 177. This felt hat was popular five to ten years ago. It was rare for men to wear such hats in 2016. Women wear such hats at special local gatherings.
A ZHANG AND MA SRU COMPETITIVELY SING ANTIPHONAL SONGS

After the wedding oration, most people join in competitive singing. If many people are outside the tent or house, the A zhang and ma sru go outside to sing. This is the climax of the singing so many listeners gather.

After some time, when the A zhang appear drunk, an elder (usually not drinking) from among either the gnyen tshang or the A zhang, concludes the singing and drinking with a short speech. Afterward, the atmosphere calms. If the A zhang are outside the room, they are ushered back inside.

Singers stop singing at this point. Some go home, although most wait to watch the A zhang’s departure. The following songs are from Khe bhe, 'Jam dbyangs skyabs, and Lha sgron.

PRAISE SONGS

Song One

1 dgung a sngon bstod bstod char gyis bstod
2 char ma ’dzoms dus su sprin gyis bstod

1 The azure sky is praised, praised, praised by rain,
2 When rain is lacking, praised by the clouds.

3 nang pha khu bstod bstod chang gis bstod
4 chang ma ’dzoms dus su glu yis bstod

3 The father and paternal uncles are praised, praised, praised with liquor,
4 When liquor is lacking, praised by songs.
Song Two

1 dgung a sngon yag gi gur khang nas
2 dgung nyi zla yag gi 'od zer bstod

1 In the dome of the azure sky,
2 (Let me) praise the shiny rays of the sun and moon.

3 nags tsan dan yag gi rtse mo nas
4 bya khu byug yag gi gsung snyan bstod

3 At the top of the sandalwood forest,
4 (Let me) praise the pleasant sound of cuckoo.

5 nang mes rgyal yag gi khyim dkyil nas
6 rigs mi dmangs yongs kyi mthun sgril bstod

5 In the center of the beautiful home of our motherland,
6 (Let me) praise the solidarity of all the races.

Song Three

1 gral 'go skor nas gser khri brgyag
2 gser khri'i steng la gser yig phab
3 'di rig ni mang mod 'don ni dkon
4 'di 'don mkhan dga' ldan gser khri yin

1 (Let me) place a golden throne at the head of the row,
2 Write golden letters on the golden throne,
3 Though many see them, few will read them,
4 The only reader is the holder of the Dga’ ldan Monastery Golden Throne.\(^\text{182}\)

5 gral rked skor nas dngul khri bgyag
6 dngul khri'i steng la dngul yig phab
7 'di rig ni mang mod 'don ni dkon
8 'di 'don mkhan gong ma rgyal po yin

5 (Let me) place a silver throne in the center of the row,
6 Write silver letters on the silver throne,
7 Though many see them, few will read them,
8 The only reader is the exalted king.

13 gral rnga skor nas dung khri bgrgyag
14 dung khri'i steng la dung yig phab
15 'di rig ni mang mod 'don ni dka'
16 'di 'don mkhan sde chen dpon po yin

13 (Let me) place a white dung throne at the end of the row,
14 Write dung letters on the conch shell throne,
15 Though many see them, few will read them,
16 The only reader is the leader of the great village.

\(^\text{182}\) Dga’ ldan gser khri is the title of a Dge lugs spiritual leader, the abbot of Dga’ ldan Monastery.
Song Four

1 khyim ya rabs tshang gi yar rgyud na
2 gser gyi mchod rten rang byung yod
3 'dir blta sa mjal sa gnyis ka yod

1 Above the respectable household,
2 A golden stupa has arisen,
3 To both behold and worship.

4 khyim ya rabs tshang gi zhing thog na
5 nas dkar drug mo gang yag yod
6 'dir za rgyu bsogs rgyu gnyis ka yod

4 In the field of the respectable household,
5 Abundant fine white barley grows,
6 To both consume and to store.

7 khyim ya rabs tshang gi sgo kha na
8 rgyugs che ba'i rta pho gang yag yod
9 'dir zhon rgyu 'ded rgyu gnyis ka yod

7 At the door of the respectable household,
8 Many fast-running stallions live,
9 To both ride and to herd.
Song Five

1. The highlands belong to herdsmen,
2. Every herdsman owns a horse,
3. And thus the herdsmen are skilled riders.

4. The midlands belong to farmers,
5. Every farmer carries a bow and arrow,
6. And thus the farmers are skilled archers.

7. The lowlands belong to the Chinese,
8. Every Chinese has an abacus,
9. And thus the Chinese are skilled mathematicians.
Song Six

1. 

dgung a sngon sku bsod che ni red

2. 'brug sprin gyi nang na skag skag skag

3. char bar snang khams na stobs stobs stobs stobs

1. The azure sky is highly blessed,
2. Dragons thunder in the clouds,
3. Heavy rain falls from the sky.

1. 

rdza khra yag sku bsod che ni red

2. 'brong na yi nang na 'jo lo lo

3. 'brong 'brong mos ngur byang di ri ri

1. The multicolored mountains are richly blessed,
2. Wild yaks enjoy the marshy grass,
3. Both male and female moo loudly.

4. 

nang pha khu sku bsod che ni red

5. chang dkar yol nang na item item item

6. nang glu ba gral na sing sing sing

4. The elders are richly blessed,
5. The liquor ripples in bowls,
6. Singers are boisterous in the rows of seating.
I will describe the process of pitching a black tent,
Its innermost part is pulled toward Dbus gtsang,
Blessed with spiritual wealth by the bla ma of Dbus gtsang, the Upper Land,
And thus Tibetans are blessed with Dharma.

Its central tent-rope is pulled toward China,
Blessed with trade by the people of China, the Lower Land,
And thus Tibetans are skilled in trade.
Its door tent-rope is pulled toward Tibet,
The leaders of the Tibetan people sought good fortune,
And thus Tibetans are fortunate.

_Rten 'brel_ (Fortune)

Song One

1 stod dbus gtsang 'du khang na ning bzhengs
2 mgo gser thog ser po da lo sprad
3 'di 'grub pa'i 'grub ston de ring red

1 Last year, an assembly hall was built in Dbus gtsang, the Upper Land,
2 The golden roof ornament was installed this year,
3 We celebrate this achievement today.

4 bod kha bas gnye rtags na ning brgyab
5 rtags dang ston mo da lo bshad
6 'di 'grub pa'i 'grub ston de ring red

4 Last year, the marriage engagement was approved,
5 The wedding ceremony was set for this year,
6 We celebrate this achievement today.

Song Two

1 dngag grub pa'i sbya brtan ba
2 rtags dang ston mo da lo bshad
3 'di 'grub pa'i 'grub ston de ring red
1. First, the dragon in the azure sky,
2. Second, the great garuda in space,
3. The two flying in the same direction,
4. Signify that soft rain will fall.

5. First, the snow lion in the snow mountains,
6. Second, the tigress in the sandalwood forest,
7. The two leaping in the same direction,
8. Signify that dark enemies will be conquered.

9. First, good A zhang of a good family,
10. Second, the honorable marriage partner's family,
11. Marriage between these two,
12. Signify that the sun of happiness will rise.
Song Three

1. A 'brug yul' is where dark brown mules are bred,
2. The confluence of three valleys is where they display their strong build,
3. May the bla ma prevent mules from going to Hell,
4. How pitiful they are when they shake their heads.

5. White Ling, the Upper Land, is where white mdzo are bred,
6. Shar ba is where they carry tea bricks from,
7. May Shar ba not chain the mdzo's legs,
8. How pitiful they are when they shake their horns.

183 A mdo and 'brug' = 'Brug yul, a farming area in east A mdo.
184 A yak-cow hybrid.
185 Literally = 'eastern people' and refers to tea traders originally from Zung chu located in modern Rnga ba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture.
Mothers are whom daughters are raised by,
The groom's home is where they ornament with turquoise and coral,
May the groom's relatives not speak unpleasantly,
How pitiful they are when they shake their ornamented heads.

Song Four

The white mdzo with golden horns,
Carried tea bricks to Dbus,
Looked back at its calves on the way to Dbus,
The calves' eyes brimmed with tears,
Do not shed tears, strongly emotional calves,
The departure is the white mdzo's aspiration.
The girl with *dung* ornaments on her head,
Was escorted to the groom's family wearing round *dung*,
Looked back at the door of her natal family,
Her mother's eyes brimmed with tears,
Do not shed tears, strongly emotional mother,
This has long been a worldly custom.

**Song Five**

1 The devout monk goes to Dbus,
2 Where the noble Shakyamuni is,
3 Where the image that gives blessings is.

4 *bu rig pa can po rgya la 'gro*
5 *rgyu rin chen tshong ra rgya na yod*
6 tshong khe bzang len rgyu de na yod

4 The intelligent man goes to China,
5 Where valuable market goods are,
6 Where the profit of trade is.

7 sman shes rgya can po gnas la 'gro
8 rgas drin chen pha ma yul na yod
9 skyid mig gis rig rgyu de na yod

7 The intelligent girl goes to her groom’s home,
8 Where the old loving parents are,
9 Where happiness is visible.

Song Six

1 sman shes rgya can po gnas la 'gro
2 rgyas ston pha ma yul na yod
3 skyid mig gis rig rgyu de na yod

7 The intelligent girl goes to her groom’s home,
8 Where the old loving parents are,
9 Where happiness is visible.

1 I levied taxes of feathers from the white vultures,
2 Feathers for 1,900 arrows,
3 Are required when Ge sar comes to conquer demons.

4 sman shes rgya can po gnas la 'gro
5 rgyas ston pha ma yul na yod
6 skyid mig gis rig rgyu de na yod

7 The intelligent girl goes to her groom’s home,
8 Where the old loving parents are,
9 Where happiness is visible.

1 I levied taxes of feathers from the white vultures,
2 Feathers for 1,900 arrows,
3 Are required when Ge sar comes to conquer demons.

4 sman shes rgya can po gnas la 'gro
5 rgyas ston pha ma yul na yod
6 skyid mig gis rig rgyu de na yod

7 The intelligent girl goes to her groom’s home,
8 Where the old loving parents are,
9 Where happiness is visible.

1 I levied taxes of feathers from the white vultures,
2 Feathers for 1,900 arrows,
3 Are required when Ge sar comes to conquer demons.
4 I levied taxes of meat from ewes,
5 Meat of 1,900 kilos,
6 Is required when 'Brug mo\textsuperscript{186} marries.

Song Seven

1 ban ser mo dbus 'gro gnam gyis bsrung
2 dbus 'gro 'gro gnam gyis gang gang bsrung
3 ban chos med 'gro mkhan gnam gyis bsrung

1 May monks who go to Dbus be protected by Heaven,
3 How could they all be protected by Heaven?
4 May the ones that lack Buddhist knowledge be protected by Heaven.

5 stag sha ra jag 'gro gnam gyis bsrung
6 jag 'gro 'gro gnam gyis gang gang bsrung
7 pho rgyu med 'gro mkhan gnam gyis bsrung

5 May youths who become bandits be protected by Heaven,
6 How could they all be protected by Heaven?
7 May the ones lacking wealth be protected.

5 sman bu mo gnas 'gro gnam gyis bsrung
6 gnas 'gro 'gro gnam gyis gang gang bsrung
7 sman ma med 'gro mkhan gnam gyis bsrung

\textsuperscript{186} King Ge sar's wife.
May girls who go to the groom's home be protected by Heaven,
How could they all be protected by Heaven?
May those without mothers be protected by Heaven.

Song Eight

On the porch (below the eaves) of an assembly hall in Dbus gtsang, the Upper Land,
Are 9,900 monks,
Where else are teachings given if not there?

Below the lab rtse of the mountain peak of the Upper Land,
Are 9,900 youths,
Where else are heroes seated if not there?
Below the tent-rope of a black tent,
Are 9,900 women,
Where else are songs sung if not there?

Song Nine

The happy sky is downward,
The happy earth is upward,
The bright sun bears abundant happiness,
May happiness come again and again.

The happy dark brown tent looks downward,
The happy square cushion looks upward,
The A zhang bear abundant happiness,
May happiness come again and again.

Song Ten
The gold and sand arise together,
And are separated by the summer rainwater.

Wheat and grain ears arise together,
And are separated by autumn's breeze.

Brothers and sisters are born together,
And are separated by marriage exchanges.

Song Eleven

At the end of autumn's three months,
Butterflies are killed by frost,
Thousands of birds watch them die,
While white vultures abide in sorrow.

Since the world was formed,
Rich fathers' daughters have married,
Many youths watched the celebration,
While the parents abide in sorrow.

Song Twelve

On the yellow golden throne,
Sits the wise bla ma,
May he sit there again and again.
On the excellent pacing horse,
The athletic boy enjoys himself,
May he enjoy again and again.

In patterned clothing,
The precious girl enjoys herself,
I sing a song hoping she enjoys again and again.

Song Thirteen

1 དཔའ་བོ་མདུང་བཟོང་བི་བོད
2 དཔའ་སྡར་ཚོ་གྲུང་ལགས།
3 དཔོན་ཆེན་པོས་གོ་བཞི་ལས།

1 The spear-bearing hero lives in the mountains,
2 His heroic reputation is widespread among all the tribes (the six tribes),
3 And is pleasant to the ears of great leaders.

4 སྨན་བཟང་མཐོ་གནས་ཡུལ་ཁམས་བོད
5 ’ཤི་བཟང་ངན་ཁྱིམ་མར་བུ་ལས།
6 དྲིན་ཕ་མས་གོ་བཞི་རེ་བོད

4 sman bzang mo gnas yul khams na yod
5 ’di’i bzang ngan khyim mtshes bar la grags
6 drin pha mas go na seims re skyid
The good girl lives in the groom's home,
Whether she is a good or bad bride is widely known among her neighbors,
And is pleasant to the ears of her parents.

Song Fourteen

1. rta 'do ba dgos dgos sha zhig dgos
2. sha gru gu'i tshod cig grug nas dgos
3. rgyug lhag ma med rung nyams re dga'

1. It is essential for horses to have a strong body,
2. Their rumps should have strong muscles as large as balls of yarn,
3. Which gives joy, even though they are not particularly fast.

4. stag sha ra dgos dgos spun zhig dgos
5. spun stag phrug 'dra zhig rtsib nas dgos
6. dpa' lhag ma med rung nyams re dga'

4. It is essential for a young man to have a brother,
5. He requires a brother like a tiger cub beside him,
6. Which gives joy, even though his brother is not particularly brave.

7. sman bu mor dgos dgos ma zhig dgos
8. ma drin mo che zhig rtsib nas dgos
9. g.yug lhag ma med rung nyams re dga'

7. It is essential for a girl to have a mother,
She requires a loving mother beside her,
Which gives joy, even though her mother is not particularly hard working.

Song Fifteen

1 ban ser mo dbus su 'gro ni tsho
2 dbus phar 'gro sla yang tshur yong dka'
3 tshur yong sngun na chos shig dgos
4 chos med na ngang ba ser po 'dra
5 ser tsog ge tsog ger gang la 'gro

Monks who go to Dbus,
Go easily but return with difficulty,
Returning requires spiritual achievement,
Lacking achievement makes one no different than a yellow waterfowl.
Where would a yellow waterfowl go?

The youths who go for banditry,
Go easily but return with difficulty,
Returning requires wealth,
Lacking wealth makes one no different than a black crow.
Where would a black crow go?

Girls who go to a groom's home,
Go easily but return with difficulty,
Returning requires wealth,
Lacking wealth makes one no different than a magpie.
Where would a magpie go?

Song Sixteen

Two waterfowls that circled the lake,
Are the souls of two bla ma,
The result of insufficient practice of the Dharma.
bya pho rog gnyis kyis sbra mtha' skor
stag sha ra gnyis kyi rnam shes red
bu jag la song ba'i rnam smin red

Two crows that circled the black tent,
Are the souls of two youths,
The result of banditry.

Two cuckoos that circled the forest,
Are the souls of two girls,
The result of preparing food poorly.

Song Seventeen

dgung a sngon srubs ka bkar mtshams nas
nga da longs zer ba'i pha zhig dgos
pha med na a khu pha 'dra dgos
'di pha spun a khu yod rabs med

As the azure sky lights up,
A father who urges me to get up is essential,
If such a father is lacking, a father-like uncle is essential,
However, no such father-like uncle exists.
As hunger and thirst appear,
A mother to give me something to drink is essential,
If such a mother is lacking, a mother-like sister is essential,
However, no such mother-like sister exists.

Song Eighteen

1 The sun is the bla ma of the sky,
2 White clouds are the bla ma’s heart,
3 A golden hat is unnecessary as it forms naturally.

4 The moon is the leader of the sky,
5 Naturally shining among hundreds of stars,
6 A symbolic seal is unnecessary as it forms naturally.
7 dkar chen dgung gi bag ma red
8 smin drug bag ma'i bag rogs red
9 dung gor mo mi dgos rang 'grub red

7 Venus is the bride of the sky,
8 Pleiades are the bridesmaids,
9 Round dung are unnecessary as they form naturally.

Song Nineteen

1 bya ngang ba 'khrungs sa rgya gar red
2 bya 'dug sa'i pha yul mtsho kha red
3 bya ngang ba'i smon lam 'debs phyogs red

1 Waterfowl born in India,
2 Live at the lake shore,
3 And this is as the waterfowl wish.

4 lug tsher dkar skyes sa spang lung red
5 bal tsha ru 'tshong sa rgya nag red
6 lug tsher mo'i smon lam 'debs phyogs red

4 White sheep born in grassy valleys,
5 Their sheepskins are sold in China,
6 And this is as the sheep wish.
7 sman bu mo skyes sa pha ma'i rtsib
8 lag las ka las sa gnas yul red
9 sman bu mo'i smon lam 'debs phyogs red

7 Girls born beside their mothers,
8 Toil in grooms’ homes,
9 And this is as the girls wish.

Song Twenty

1 'dzam gling nyi ma kun la mkho
2 nang dgos su thag ring mgron por mkho

1 The universal sun is essential for everyone,
2 But especially for guests from afar.

3 'do rig rta pho kun la mkho
4 nang dgos su jag pa'i bu la mkho

3 A strong horse is essential for everyone,
4 But especially for sons of bandits.

5 drin chen pha ma kun la mkho
6 nang dgos su gnas 'gro bu mor mkho

5 Loving parents are essential for everyone,
6 But especially for new brides.
Song Twenty-One

7 bya brgya 'tshogs nas gros shig byas
8 bya ngang ba'i chags sa mtsho la gtad
9 de bgos te thems pa min na'ang
10 bya ngang ba rang gi sngon las red

7 Hundreds of birds gathered for a discussion,
8 The waterfowl were sent for the lake to be their habitat,
9 Even though the lake was not assigned to them,
10 It is due to their own karma.

Song Twenty-Two

1 khyim bza' tshang 'tshogs nas gros shig byas
2 sman bu mo gzhan yul gnas la gtad
3 de bgos te thems pa min na'ang
4 sman bu mo rang gi sngon las red

11 Family members gathered for a discussion,
12 The young woman was sent to the groom's home,
13 Even though the groom's home was not assigned to her,
14 It is due to her own karma.
When a monk goes to Dbus,
His mind is filled with sorrow,
Do not feel sad – Dbus is the home of the Dharma,
The Land of Dbus is the Pure Land.

When a bride goes to the groom's home,
Her glittering eyes brim with tears,
Do not cry – it is a home appropriate for a couple,
The good groom's home is just like your own natal home.

Song Twenty-Three

The little monks' repute resounded from Dbus,
Resounded from Dbus to his former monastery,
Making their bla ma proud when they heard it.
The young bandits' reputation resounded from the mountains, 
Resounded from the mountains to his family, 
Making brothers and peers happy when they heard it.

The bride's reputation for hard work resounded from the groom's family, 
Resounded from the groom's family to her natal family, 
Making their parents proud when they heard it.

**ASPIRATIONAL SONGS**

**Song One**

I spread *phrug* carpet at the head of the row,
The *phrug* contains 360 patterns,
Uncles sit on the 360 patterns,
I hope they may sit again and again,

I spread gos-covered cushions in the center of the row,
The gos contains 360 patterns,
Youths enjoy themselves on the 360 patterns,
I hope they may enjoy themselves again and again.

I spread wool cushions at the end of the row,
The wool contains 360 wool chunks,
Ma sru enjoy themselves on these wool cushions,
I hope they enjoy themselves again and again.

Song Two
nang mtsho chen yag gi rdzong nang na
klu dung skyong dkar po khri la bzhugs
nang nya sram mang pos sku g.yog bsgrubs
ngas yang yang sgrub pa'i smon lam 'debs

In the depth of a beautiful enormous lake,
The white conch-protecting naga king is enthroned,
Fish and otter within the lake serve the king,
I hope they may serve him again and again.

nang khrom pa yag gi rdzong nang na
nang pha khu bzang po khri la bzhugs
nang bu tsha mang pos zhabs g.yog bsgrubs
ngas yang yang sgrub pa'i smon lam 'debs

Among the beautiful crowd,
The good fathers and paternal uncles are enthroned,
Many sons and cousins serve them,
I hope they serve them again and again.

Song Three

dgung a sngon dkyil nas 'ja' gsum shar
rje bla ma 'khrungs pa'i rten 'brel red
'ja' kha dog sna lnga tshang ba 'di
tshe phyi ma mkhyen pa'i rten 'brel red

Three rainbows shine in the center of the azure sky,
A sign that a *bla ma* will be born,

All five colors of the rainbow,

A sign of knowledge of the next life.

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A sign that great leaders will be born,

White mist covers the tops of rocky mountains,

A sign that a leader will command great power.

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The great vulture descends on layers of red cliffs,

A sign that fathers and paternal uncles will be happy,

The vulture flies high into the sky,

A sign of longevity for the elderly people.

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Song Four
1 With the efforts of great *bla ma,*
2 The white paper was printed with Dharma,
3 And ready for chanting whenever a hundred monks gather.

4 With the efforts of great fathers and paternal uncles,
5 Wild yak horns were made into bows,
6 And ready for archery as the sons and cousins grow up.

7 With the efforts of great mothers and maternal aunts,
8 Blue barley was distilled into liquor,
9 And ready for drinking when the guests gather.

Song Five
Both above and below are mountains,
Wild yaks grazing on the same rocky mountain,
It is beautiful that wild yaks with horns graze above,
It is beautiful that wild yak calves play below,
I hope they play again and again.

Both above and below are villages,
The peers gathering at the same village,
It is beautiful that fathers and paternal uncles sit above,
It is beautiful that peers sing below,
I hope they sing again and again.

SHAGS (ANTIPHONAL SONGS)

Song One

The beginning of my song is in Dbus gtsang,
The master bla ma was unable to obtain it,
You, monk, will never obtain it,
Return home before making trouble.

The center of my song is at the bottom of the ocean,
The golden fish was unable to obtain it,
You, frog, will never obtain it,
Return home before your mouth is filled with mud.

My song’s end is in the gathering of people,
The champion with over a thousand songs was unable to obtain it,
You, songless singer, will never obtain it,
12 Return home before you are embarrassed.

Song Two

1 ngā'i glu 'go shwa bde dgo bde yin
2 bda' thub par 'dod na bda' ru song

1 The beginning of my song is as smooth as the gait of running deer and antelope,
2 Try to catch it if you think you can.

3 ngā'i glu sked chu chen yur mo yin
4 brgal thub par 'dod na brgal du song

3 The center of my song flows like water in a great irrigation channel,
4 Wade through it if you think you can.

5 ngā'i glu rnga srid pa'i sgrung chen yin
6 len thub par 'dod na mu mthud longs

5 The end of my song is the story of the entire universe,
6 Continue if you think you can.
The Chinese written language is a chain,
Truly, the master bla ma was unable to learn it,
It will be impossible for the monks to learn it.

The pass over Gdang la Mountain is long,
Truly, strong horses were unable to cross it,
It is impossible for a poor donkey to cross.

The end of my song is the story of the entire universe,
Truly, the gathered singers are unable to comprehend it,
It is impossible for songless singers to comprehend it.

Song Four

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1 A mountain pass located between Mtsho sngon Province and the Tibet Autonomous Region.
It is appropriate that the small dragon come only with a rumbling sound, 
It doesn't matter even if the dragon issues a thunderbolt, 
I keep the sacred white mustard seeds,
That may take down the mottled green dragon.

It is appropriate that the singers come singing, 
It doesn't matter if they sing shags, 
I keep the legendary folk songs about the universe, 
That may defeat you, the songless.

Song Five

Both the learned and unlearned in the Dharma go to Dbus,

189 Mustard seeds are used by tantric practitioners in rituals to suppress storms, which are thought to be the embodiment of dragons. See, for example, Rdo rje don grub (2012:83) for a photograph of white mustard seeds used in hail prevention rituals.
2 It is an attribute if one is learned in the Dharma,
3 It is a shame if one is not learned in the Dharma.

4 pho dpa' yod dpa' med gnyis ka jag la 'gro
5 dpa' yod na rang gi rgyan cha yin
6 dpa' med na ngo tsha nyo byed yin

4 Both brave and cowardly men go as bandits,
5 It is an attribute to have bravery,
6 It is a shame to lack bravery.

7 glu yod glu med gnyis ka shags la 'gro
8 shags yod na rang gi rgyan cha yin
9 shags med na ngo tsha nyo byed yin

7 Both with shags singing skills and without shags singing skills sing shang,
8 It is an attribute to be able to sing shags,
9 It is a shame if one cannot sing shags.

Song Six
1 At the peak of the snowy mountain of the Upper Land,
2 We two wild yaks are exactly the same.
3 With horns of the same length,
4 If you are unable to catch me on the multicolored mountain,
5 You will be dehorned and sent to live with the calves,
6 And you will be called Bald Calf.

7 On the beautiful plain of lotus flowers,
8 We, two horses, exactly the same,
9 With the same number of hooves,
10 If you are unable to catch me on the yellow meadow,
11 Your mane will be cut off and you’ll be sent to live with the donkeys,
12 And you will be called Gray Donkey.
Among this crowd of gathered people,
We both are exactly the same,
With equal skills in singing,
If you are unable to compete with me today,
Your sleeves will be cut off and you'll become a monk,
You will be called Old Bald Monk.

Song Seven

1. When my great father was alive,
2. He tamed a hundred horses with one fetter,
3. The horses have not escaped, but still live in the meadow.

4. When my great mother was alive,
5. She boiled a hundred kettles of tea with one piece of yak dung,
The fire has not died out, but still burns in the stove.

When I, the singer, was born,

I defeated a hundred singers with one shags,

The songs are not finished, but still remain within me (in my mind).

Song Eight

I went to Dbus gtsang singing songs,
And met the bla ma of Dbus gtsang,
"Sing for me," the bla ma said,
"I'll give you a mule for your song," he said,
"And what should be put on its back? Let me load the Dharma," he said,
I then brought the Dharma to A mdo.
I went to China singing songs,
And met the Emperor of China,
"Sing for me," said the Emperor of China,
"I'll give you a mdzo for your song," he said,
"And what should be put on its back? Let me load some tea," he said,
I then brought tea back to Tibet,
This is my, the singer's, background.

Song Nine

1 'brong ru dmar mgo na rwa gcig yod
2 rwa gcig pu thig rwa rtse brgyad yin

1 The wild yak has only one horn,
2 This single horn has eight branches.
I, the singer have only one *shags*,
That only *shags* is the wheel of life.

Song Ten

I, the white rooster on the wall,
Do not speak of me as an evil rooster,
I am the an intelligent god.

I, the black pig by the wall,
Do not speak of me as a ghost,
I am a god rich in both meat and fat.
7 I, the eloquent man at the end of the row, 
8 Do not speak of me as lacking shags, 
9 I am the grandson of an ancient man.

Song Eleven

1 ངོ་ལྡེ་མོའི་དྲི་བོའི་དར་པོའི་སྡུག
2 ཤེས་བྲན་དབྱངས་ཀྱི་དཔོན་པ་མི་ནམ་མཁྱེན།

1 nga’i pha khu dam chen mgar ba yin 
2 mda’ thod pa’i dkyil la ’dzer na thang

1 My father and paternal uncles are Dam can, the Blacksmith, 
2 They may shoot an arrow at the center of your forehead.

3 གཞུན་རླབ་གྲུབ་པ་མཐོང་།
4 རྟོལ་ཁྲི།

3 nga glu ba srid pa’i bu rgyud yin 
4 khyod thang chen khug la bda’ na thang

3 I, the singer, am of the lineage of an ancient lineage, 
4 I may chase you across a massive plain.

Song Twelve

1 རྣམ་པོ་ཐུངས་ཀྱི་ཐོག་གཅིག
2 རྡོ་བཟང་གི་ཐོག་གཅིག

1 rwa rnon po ’brong gi mgo na yod 
2 des rdung gi zer ba go ni med

1 Sharp horns exist on the heads of wild yaks, 
2 They have never been known to harm people.

3 སྐྲོན་དབང་པོ་ཐུངས་ཀྱི་ཐོག་གཅིག
4 ཐོག་གཅིག་ཐོག་གཅིག

3 mche rnon po gla bo’i kha na yod 
4 so ’debs gi zer ba go ni med
3 Sharp tusks exist in the mouth of elephants,  
4 They have never been known to bite people.

5  རགྱུགས་བཞུར་ཞིབས་ཐེག་ཆེན་
6  བཟང་ཐོབ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཞིབས་

5 glu snyan mo glu ba'i ngag na yod  
6 des thub gi zer ba go ni med

5 Beautiful songs exist in the voice of singers,  
6 They have never been heard to be challenged.

Song Thirteen

1  རྡོ་རྗེས་ཀྱི་ཐང་ལ་རིང་ ཐུབ་
2  རྡོ་རྗེས་ཀྱི་ཐང་ལ་ཞེ་
3  གཞི་ལྷ་ཐང་ལ་བོད་
4  གཞི་ལྷ་ཐང་ལ་ཁབ་

1 rta gro ril sngo ril jag la 'gro 
2 rta sngo ril srab kyis mi thub gi 
3 khyod gro ril lam nas thang chad song 
4 khyod 'dug rgyu yin na skyong rgyu yin

1 You, the dark horse, and the gray horse, go as bandits,  
2 The gray horse is too strong to restrain with reins,  
3 The dark horse is exhausted on the way,  
4 Will you give up or continue?

5 རྡོ་རྗེས་ཀྱི་ཐང་ལ་རིང་ ཐུབ་
6 རྡོ་རྗེས་ཀྱི་ཐང་ལ་ཞེ་
7 གཞི་ལྷ་ཐང་ལ་བོད་
8 གཞི་ལྷ་ཐང་ལ་ཁབ་

5 zhi lu zhi mo shags la 'gro  
6 nga'i glu kha mtshar khog la mi chud gi  
7 khyos glu shags yid nas brjed yod gi  
8 khyos len rgyu yin na bskyur rgyu yin
Men and women compete at *shags*,
I have so many *shags* in mind,
Have you forgotten your *shags*,
Will you give up or continue?

**Song Fourteen**

1. nga byi la dkar mo med shul nas
2. khyod tsi gu mang pos tsig ldir byed
3. nga zhi la dkar mo thon dus na
4. khyod do ru do la bda’ rgyu yin
5. ngas do bar zhig nas ’dzin rgyu yin
6. khyod bag gdan ngos nas za rgyu yin

1. When I, the white cat, am not at home,
2. You, the many mice, make noise,
3. When I return home,
4. I will chase you all over the sacks,
5. I will catch you somewhere under them,
6. And eat you on the carpet.

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190 Bags made of sheep skin and yak skin containing barley flour or grain.
When I, the champion of a thousand singers, am not at home,
You, the man lacking songs, are very proud,
When I arrive amid the gathered singers,
I will chase you all over the rows of seating,
I will catch you somewhere among the rows,
And you'll be completely done when you are voiceless.

Song Fifteen

When I, the wild dog, appeared atop a pass,
You, the musk deer, spewed out dung uncontrollably,
Do not be scared – just stay where you are,
I won't kill you, I will just look at you.

nga stong rgyal 'bum thub med shul nas
khyod glu med zhi lu nga rgyal che
nga glu ba gral la thon dus su
khyod gral ru gral la bda' rgyu yin
gral bar zhig nas 'dzin rgyu yin
kha khug mas btang dus tshar ni red

When I, the champion of a thousand singers, am not at home,
You, the man lacking songs, are very proud,
When I arrive amid the gathered singers,
I will chase you all over the rows of seating,
I will catch you somewhere among the rows,
And you'll be completely done when you are voiceless.

Song Fifteen

nga 'phar ba dmar chung khis nas bud na
khyod brag thog gla bas ril ma 'phyor gi
skrag mi dgos gla bo dal mor sdod
gla gsod 'dod min mod blta 'dod yin

When I, the wild dog, appeared atop a pass,
You, the musk deer, spewed out dung uncontrollably,
Do not be scared – just stay where you are,
I won't kill you, I will just look at you.

nga khrom chen glu ba gral nas 'khor na
khyod glu med zhi lu'i snying rtsa 'dar gi
skrag mi dgos glu ba dal mor sdod dang
khyod bda' 'dod che yin len 'dod yin

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When I turn around singing amid the gathered singers,
You, the man without songs, have a trembling heart,
Do not be scared, just stay where you are,
I won't chase you – I just want to sing.

Song Sixteen

On the barren land of the dry desert,
Is a sharp-tailed dark horse,
Surely you cannot even compete with a bicycle,
Be my family's water-packing horse.

Inside the newly pitched tent,
Is a short man with broad shoulders,
Surely you lack glu shags,
Go back home and herd the ewes.
CONCLUDING SONGS

Song One

1 stod gan na 'dzam gling ge ser phebs
2 stag sha ra 'bum gyis bskor nas yod
3 gos rmang nag 'bum gyis bkra shis 'jog

1 Ge sar traveled to the upper region,
2 A hundred thousands of youths surrounded him,
3 Bringing auspiciousness with a hundred thousands of dark brown gos.

4 bar gan na seng lcam 'brug mo phebs
5 ma co thogs 'bum gyis bskor nas yod
6 dung gor mo 'bum gyis bkra shis 'jog

4 Ge sar's wife, 'Brug mo, traveled to the middle region,
5 A hundred thousands of girls surrounded her,
6 Bringing auspiciousness with a hundred thousands of round dung.

7 smad gan na 'dzam gling rkyang yer phebs
8 rta 'do ba 'bum gyis bskor nas yod
9 sga be sang 'bum gyis bkra shis 'jog

7 Ge sar's horse traveled to the lower region,
8 A hundred thousands of strong horses surrounded it,
9 Bringing auspiciousness with a hundred thousands of saddles.
Song Two

1 nga gser gyi yul nas yong ni yin
2 nga dngul gyi yul nas 'dug rgyu yin
3 ngas gser dngul 'dzoms pa'i bkra shis 'jog

1 I come from the land of gold,
2 And will stay in the land of silver,
3 Bringing auspiciousness with abundant gold and silver.

4 nga gos kyi yul nas yong ni yin
5 nga phrug gi yul nas 'dug rgyu yin
6 ngas gos phrug 'dzoms pa'i bkra shis 'jog

4 I come from the land of gos,
5 And will stay in the land of phrug,
6 Bringing auspiciousness with abundant gos and phrug.

7 nga glu yi yul nas yong ni yin
8 nga shags kyi yul nas 'dug rgyu yin
9 ngas glu shags 'dzoms pa'i bkra shis 'jog

7 I come from the land of glu,
8 And will stay in the land of shags,
9 Bringing auspiciousness with abundant glu and shags.
Song Three

1 bkra shis g.yang chang dgung la 'khyer
2 'brug rgan pa rnams kyis mchod pa 'phangs
3 gzhon pa rnams kyis rtsed chang byas
4 ngas brtse ba 'dzoms pa'i bkra shis 'jog

1 (Let me) take the auspicious liquor to the sky,
2 Old dragons make offerings,
3 Young dragons use liquor for playing,
4 Bringing auspiciousness to the singers.

5 bkra shis g.yang chang gral la 'khyer
6 dpon chen po rnams kyis mchod pa 'phangs
7 'di gzhon pa rnams kyis rtsed chang byas
8 ngas glu ba 'dzoms pa'i bkra shis 'jog

5 (Let me) take the auspicious liquor into the rows of people,
6 The great leaders make offerings,
7 The young leaders use liquor for singing,
8 Bringing auspiciousness to the singers.

**A Farewell Meal**

The antiphonal singing continues for approximately two hours. When the *A zhang* are finally escorted inside, they are offered a farewell meal that the *gnyen tshang* family has prepared. Some *A zhang* may stay at the groom's home for two days and enjoy themselves, though they commonly leave sooner. The groom's family provides mutton, bread, vegetables, soup, noodles, cakes, and many fruit, though impoverished families may only provide meat, bread, and noodles.
Before or after the farewell meal, the eldest A zhang or the bride's father concludes the wedding with a gentle speech telling the groom's family to take care of the bride.

The gnyen tshang's conclusion follows:

1 de ring spyir bu bu mo'i don dag gi thad nas
2 brgya bshad de bgyad la gtugs
3 bgyad bshad de gcig la gtugs te
4 don dag 'grub song ni red

5 khyod sangs rgyas tshang zhe na
6 khra yag rdza 'dra 'dra
7 'brong mo'i rwa 'dra 'dra

8 'di stsa mo bde mo byas pa dang
9 chung chung nyung nyung byas pa
10 nyung nyung go bde byas ni red

11 'dir stod dbus gtsang yul gyi phrug yod
12 smad rgya nag yul gyi gos yod
SUMMARY

A male speaker from the groom's side declares that Sangs rgyas's family was very cooperative with Grags pa's family and did their best to simplify the process. Therefore, as a gift, he offers a bundle of phrug from Dbus gtsang and gos from China, with a kha btags decorated with the Eight Auspicious Symbols. He encourages the A zhang to speak if they have further comments regarding the bride.

Photo 178. Locals use gos made in inner China to make gos lwa.
The A zhang’s conclusion follows:

1. ngas las dka’ mo zhig yang mo byed
2. gtam mang po zhig bsdu ma byed
3. tshig gsum gyis las bcol byed

4. nga'i tsha ngan ma ’dir mtshon na
5. myir byin gyi mi yin
6. brag la ’phang ba'i mda' yin

7. bsang kun shes med
8. yag mo sgo med
9. yin yang bu bu mos mig chen gyis gzugs chen la bltas
10. ’dir bshad rgyu mang po yod ni ma red

11. g.yug las ka med pa’i steng ’di nas
12. tso drug gling la las bcol byas ni yin
13. a ma ’gag bzar bu bcol byas ni yin
14. de ma gtogs bshad rgyu chen po med
SUMMARY

The A zhang states that he will conclude with a few lines. He says that his niece, the bride, does not yet know how to behave properly, is not beautiful, and not diligent at her chores. However, the couple decided to marry and he thus entrusts the bride to the groom's family.

THE A ZHANG’S DEPARTURE

If the bride was not previously abducted, she is taken to her natal home by the A zhang on the wedding day when the A zhang depart. She returns to the groom's home a few days later. This is 'phral gyis bskyal ba. If the bride was abducted, she stays at the groom's home. The bridesmaids accompany the bride outside to see the A zhang off. The bride usually cries as the A zhang depart. This is called bag gis bskyal ba. In the latter case, the bride returns to her natal home about three days later.

COMFORTING THE BRIDE

If the A zhang see that the bride has not come out to bid farewell, they go inside and see her. As she laments, her father and relatives reassure her, saying, for example, that staying with the groom’s family will be fine and her relatives will see her every month, or will take her back home for a visit at least once a year. The bridesmaids also comfort her.

FAREWELL LIQUOR

The A zhang now set off for home. Before leaving, the gnyen tshang give them bskon – clothing, tea, and bottles of liquor — packing these things into the A zhang’s ta len 'bags'. The groom's family also provides gifts for the bride's mother. This is called rgyab brje and includes clothing and tea bricks. In the past, specific gifts were given to other close relatives of the bride. For instance, the zhang rta 'A zhang's horse' was a horse given to the bride's uncle and mying rta 'brother's horse' was a horse given to the bride's brother. However, in 2014 this was uncommon as the number of horses in the village was much reduced compared to twenty or thirty years earlier. It is more common to give cash in the amounts of one hundred to 200 RMB to these relatives instead.

The matchmaker is given a gift that might include bottles of liquor, kha btags, and cash, instead of, as in the past, a yak.

When the A zhang step outside, many gnyen tshang approach and urge them to drink lam chang 'liquor for the road'. Under most circumstances, A zhang willingly drink the toasts offered; to refuse is

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considered rude. Sometimes A zhang resist drinking and groups of gnyen tshang women start singing taunting, vulgar songs to embarrass the A zhang. If no A zhang replies effectively, they eventually drink the liquor.

**SEEING OFF THE A ZHANG**

In the past, A zhang rode horses, however, in 2016, almost all locals ride motorcycles or drive cars. When all the A zhang are in their cars, the gnyen tshang hold the rear of the car to prevent it from leaving. To secure their departure, A zhang must drink as much liquor as the gnyen tshang offer. Finally, the A zhang depart.

Photo 179. Horses, donkeys, camels, and yaks were seldom ridden in 2014. Instead, people rode Haojiang, Wuyang, Jialing, Jialong, Yinxiang, Xinganjue, and other motorcycles. Prices ranged from 2,000–6,000 RMB.

**ACTIVITIES AFTER THE A ZHANG'S DEPARTURE**

After the A zhang depart, many male relatives and neighbors stay and continue drinking, while a few females stay with them to sing. Most guests and relatives have now gone home, but may later return to sing songs that differ from those sung with the A zhang earlier.

**LOVE SONGS SUNG COMPETITIVELY AT NIGHT**

After the neighbors have eaten supper, they excitedly return to the groom's home in groups and organize the singing of la gzhas 'love
songs. Because the lyrics contain romantic and sexual allusions, relatives of the opposite sex over the age of six or seven never listen together.

As singing continues, elders and drunk men come listen and sit in a circle with the singer in the center. Some people put money in a singer's hair or under their hatband as a reward. Singers compete for money. This singing continues until late at night, and sometimes even until the next morning. After the singing ends, the male singers sometimes pursue the female singers in hopes they can sleep with them.

The following is an example of love songs provided by Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (2005:2):

BEGINNING

Song One (Male)

1) kha la gzas len na la gzas len
2) kha la gzas dgung sngon gnam la len
3) 'brug pho chung thugs la ldan ni len
4) char zil ma'i dngos grub gnang ni len

1) (Let me) sing love songs,
2) (Let me) sing to the azure sky,
3) That young dragons will be glad to hear,
4) And bestow the fulfillment of rainfall.

5) kha la gzas len na la gzas len
6) kha la gzas rtsed ra'i nang la len
7) sman bu mo'i thugs la ldan ni len
8) tshig snyan mo'i 'bras bu yod ni len
(Let me) sing love songs,
(Let me) sing to the gathering place for lovers,
That will gladden the young girls' hearts,
And attain the fruit of praise.

Song Two (Female)

1 kha la gzhas len na la gzhas len
2 kha la gzhas khra yag rdza la len
3 'brong bre ser thugs la ldan ni len
4 kha skom pa rdza chu yod ni len

1 (Let me) sing love songs,
2 (Let me) sing to the multicolored mountain,
3 That the wild yaks with brown hair will be glad to hear,
4 And that will be like thirst-quenching water.

5 kha la gzhas len na la gzhas len
6 kha la gzhas sde chen grong la len
7 pho khyod kyi thugs la ldan ni len
8 rogs 'u gnyis snang ba mthun ni len

5 (Let me) sing love songs,
6 (Let me) sing to the great village,
7 That you will be glad to hear,
8 And that brings our hearts together.
ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP

Song One (Male)

1 sa 'di nas 'u tsho cha med red
2 cha yod pa'i sa zhi ggang na yod
3 'gro gom gsum spos na cha yod red

1 We are strangers in this place,
2 Where can we find a familiar place?
3 We become familiar as we walk three paces.

4 rogs khyod dang 'u gnyis cha med red
5 cha yod pa'i rogs shig ggang na yod
6 kha tshig gsum shod dang cha yod red

4 Companions, you and I, are strangers,
5 Where can we find a familiar companion?
6 We become familiar as soon as we utter three words.

Song Two (Female)

1 sa bla brang bkra shis 'khyil ba nas
2 brag mgon po lha sku rang byon red
3 nga sngon chad mjal ni med mod
In Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil,\(^{191}\)
There is a self-arisen statue of the protector deity on the rock,
Even though I have never seen it,
Hearing the story of the monastery's gilded roof ornaments,
Makes me yearn to take my hat off and prostrate.

CLOSE RELATIONSHIP

Song One (Male)

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\(^{191}\) A monastery in the northwest of Kan lho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province.
1 In a horse pen in Mongolia, the Upper Land,
2 Among hundreds of horses,
3 Is the so-called fine brownish horse,
4 The saddle is strapped on, waiting for a race,
5 The horse could not race because its reins are held,
6 On the four legs of the fine horse,
7 I pray that the horse will be able to race.

8 In the village across the Yellow River,
9 Among youths of the same age,
10 I found a true-hearted lover,
11 I spoke three words as a wish to be together,
12 But we could not be together because rumors interceded,
If the young lover lives longer,
I pray that we will be able to be together.

Song Two (Female)

1. sa spang dkar klad kyi me tog
2. khangs ba mo bsam pa nag pos
3. da thug tshe gad dbang med gi
4. sa deng sang dbyar zla thon thal
5. khyod gad na 'gad ran da red
6. ngas e 'gad re ba byas yod

Flowers on the white meadow,
Due to evil-intentioned frost,
Could not blossom until today,
Summer has approached today,
It is time to blossom if you want,
I expect you to blossom.

7. sde chen po dkyil gyi rogs lo
8. sde mi kha'i bsam pa ngan nas
9. da thug tshe rtsed dbang med gi
10. sa de ring sde nas thug thal
11. khyod rtsed na rtsed skabs da red
12. ngas e rtsed re ba byas yod
My lover in the great village,
Due to evil-intentioned rumors,
Could not be with me until today,
We meet in the village today,
It’s time if you want (us to) be together.
I hope you want to be with me.

Song Three (Male)

1 stod dbus gtsang lha la mjal 'dod red
2 mjal 'dod phyag gsum 'tshal btang

1 It is (my) wish to prostrate to the deity in Dbus gtsang,
2 And I prostrated three times.

Song Four (Female)

1 ngas 'dod pa 'do rig rta red
2 khyos 'dod pa lhu bzhi sga red
3 'u gnyi ga’i 'dod pa gcig red
4 de yin na 'dod thog der 'jog

192 It is most likely refers to Jo bo, the image of Shakyamuni in Jo khang Temple in Lha sa.
What I want is a fine horse,
What you want is a square saddle,
Our desires are the same,
Thus, let's agree.

What I want is you, the young man,
What you want is me, the young woman,
Our desires are the same,
Thus, let's agree.

Promising

Song One (Male)
Lovely cuckoo,
When you come from India,
I'll wait for you without having the leaves dried on the top,
I'll wait for you without the fruits having gone in the middle,
If you hesitate,
I make a vow in the name of Lord Maitreya in the holy Golden Temple of Snang ra,

In the great village,
When you come from there,
I will wait for you without talking to others,
I will wait for you without being with others,
If you hesitate,
I'll make the vow in the name of the Golden Jo bo at the Jo khang in Lhasa.

Song Two (Female)
On the clockwise patterned land and counterclockwise patterned valley, 
The tips of ram pa grass curl clockwise, 
The knot of long jag ma grass can not be untied, 
The wind wants to untie it, 
It has to be next autumn if it has to be unfolded.

In the right side village and the left side valley, 
The young lover lives like a great mountain, 
Our strong vow is unbreakable. 
Though rumors attempt to break them, 
It has to be the next lifetime if it has to be broken.
IN LOVE

Song One (Male)

1 sbra mthing smug sgo dar can po
2 sbra phub shes 'then shes byos dang
3 tshe gang bo'i mgo sbra los nyan

1 Dark brown tent with a door cloth,
2 Learn to pitch well,
3 It may become your lifelong home.

4 rogs chung lo snying la rje bo
5 tshig bshad shes gtam shes byos dang
6 tshe gang bo'i tshe grogs los nyan

4 Lovely darling,
5 Learn to speak appropriately,
6 We may become lifelong partners.

Song Two (Female)

1 rgod thang dkar snying la rje bo
2 yar 'phur te nam 'phangs stod dang
3 gser nyi ma'i thob bya med rung
4 brag bya tshang thob byar los yod
Lovely white vulture,
Fly up in the sky,
Even though you will not be rewarded with the sun,
You will be rewarded with at least a nest on the cliff.

Lovely darling,
Speak three words,
Even though we cannot become husband and wife,
We are fated to be lovers.

Photo 180. In Stong skor Village, women from the gnyen tshang family prepares to sing love songs with A zhang in the sheep enclosure, shielded from their relatives.
AFTER THE WEDDING CEREMONY

DIISPENSATION OF LEFTOVERS

Eventually the A zhang, relatives, and visitors depart. Only the gnyen tshang remains. Usually a great deal of food remains. In the past, families kept the leftover meat in bags hung on a wall in the house or in caves, shielded from light and heat. However, in 2016, many families in the farming settlement had refrigerators and were able to store leftovers more easily. However, those in herding areas lacked refrigerators. Some families share leftovers with their relatives and neighbors.

GNYEN TSHANG FEMALES APPROACH THE BRIDE

After the wedding ceremony and after the A zhang leave, the girl stays at the groom's home for several days. During this time, the groom's female relatives and neighbor girls visit the bride. Some elders or girls who did not attend the wedding ceremony visit the next day or two after the wedding. When they are with the bride, they talk gently and joke with her in order to get to know her better. Visiting females invite the bride to visit their homes for a meal. When the bride is about to depart, the family that invited her gives her money and clothing, even if they had earlier given gifts to the groom's family at the wedding ceremony.

ESCORTING THE BRIDE TO HER NATAL HOME

Less than a week after the wedding, one or two of the groom's male relatives – often the matchmakers – escort the bride back to her parents' home to stay for a few days. The escort usually returns to the groom's home on the same day.

On this and future occasions, the bride's visits home last no more than two weeks. It is considered irresponsible to stay too long because a new bride contributes valuable labor to a household. Women who stay for long periods in their natal home are thought to be shirking their responsibilities in their husband's home.
**RDZONG BA (DOWRY)**

The bride is given a dowry one to several months after the wedding, when she becomes pregnant, or when she gives birth after the marriage. Dowry items include clothing, five to ten sheep or goats, and cash with the amount depending on the family’s financial condition. Thirty to fifty years ago, sheep and goats and one or two horses were given.
OTHER ISSUES

DIVORCE

Like marriage, divorce is rarely carried out through legal channels. When either the husband or wife wants a divorce, family members gather and discuss the issue. If the family cannot reach an agreement they invite village elders and leaders. The party who disagrees to the divorce tends to demand more compensation, including cash, livestock, and motorcycles. If the other family is willing to make amends, the divorce process goes smoothly.

Elders follow a carefully judged divorce process. If the husband has a lover and plans to marry her, nearly all of the couple's property is given as compensation to the wife. Once both parties agree, compensation is given to the wife based on how many years she stayed at the groom's home and the amount of property that the groom's family has. If the wife has a lover or wants a divorce, she is not entitled to anything from the husband, however, the groom's family usually gives her cash or property.

When demands are not agreed to, the unhappy spouse pursues legal recourse. Such disagreements often lead to animosity between the two families.

If a divorce proceeds, the wife usually takes the children. It is very rare for a man to take children. If a man does take any of the children, he takes the sons leaving the daughters with the former wife.

After a divorce, men usually take another wife and women take another husband. However, divorced women are generally denigrated. Finding a spouse is more difficult for divorced women than it is for a divorced man. Some divorced women may find a lover soon after the divorce, and some may have multiple lovers.

CHILDBEARING

Childbearing is a significant, collective hope. Some couples divorce if the wife does not conceive. When a family realizes that a couple cannot conceive, they advise the man to divorce. However, if the couple are very much in love and the woman does housework well, the couple might adopt a child from a relative.

If a wife does not conceive, she is taken to a bla ma and to worship at temples, which is also done if the woman has given birth only to daughters. Men are rarely identified as being infertile.

Women return to their natal home for their first birth and stay for one to two months. Locals do not commonly see doctors. Instead,
female elders assist pregnant women by providing vegetables and nutritious foods, which they believe strengthen a woman. After the birth the new mother is encouraged to eat sheep or goat blood sausage and drink boiled sheep or goat blood. She wears warm clothes, such as a sheepskin robe which is thought to prevent diseases women are susceptible to after giving birth. A friend, who worked at a local clinic, gave the following account:

One night, I was working overtime with another colleague in the clinic. At about midnight, a man burst in through the office door. "Please come quickly!" he said.

We had no idea what was going on. He just grabbed me and my colleague, a young woman, to go with him. "What's happening?" I asked.

"A woman is giving birth on the road and needs your help," he said.

I took some portable equipment and followed him. We three rode one motorbike. I was still wearing my slippers. We reached a small vehicle stopped by the road a few minutes later. To my surprise, a mature woman was using two black stones, collected by the road, to cut the umbilical cord. The child's mother was kneeling in the car. It was quite embarrassing for me to suddenly supervise the situation because the mother wasn't in the proper position to give birth. We took the mother and infant to the clinic and the mother and infant did not have any serious problems.

MARRIED PEOPLE AND THEIR LOVERS

If a husband realizes that his wife has a lover, he generally seeks a divorce, especially if this happens shortly after the wedding. Both the man and his family typically express anger.

In contrast, husbands usually have lovers. Men often leave Bon skor Village to collect caterpillar fungus and are away for some weeks while their wife stays at home. Men believe that they are entitled to have lovers outside their home.

WIDOWS AND WIDowers

Locals believe widows and widowers are unfortunate and most such people often remain single for the remainder of their life. Having relationships with widows is seen as bad luck, but many men do develop relationships with widows.
According to locals, there were many unmarried village adults prior to 2000, including unmarried women with several children. Most were from poor families and experienced difficulty finding a spouse. Some males married matrilocally, even though this was considered dishonorable as reflected in the saying, "Mag pa sit in a low place in the family; donkeys are tied separately from other animals." Some poor families forced their sons to go to monasteries to become monks where they could at least chant for the family who provided food in return.

In 2016, there were many unmarried women, but fewer had children than in the past. The frequency of divorce had increased. Fewer males married matrilocally than in the past and the number of boys forced to become monks was also fewer because many young monks increasingly became laymen in the previous decade.
CONCLUSION
The descriptions in this book are based on interviews and conversations with local consultants and include descriptions of how weddings were held in the past and how locals think weddings should be held today.

In 2016, weddings in Bon skor retained the general structure and cultural context of traditional weddings, however, processes are increasingly simplified. For example, speeches with many proverbs are considered eloquent when a conversation about marriage takes place between families. However, it is increasingly difficult to find a person who knows more than ten proverbs that he can put into such a conversation during the marriage process.\textsuperscript{196}

With rapid changes in local life in terms of the economy, education, culture, and technology, many aspects of wedding ceremonies in Bon skor Village are endangered. Speeches, recitations, songs, clothing, seating, gifts, and food are dramatically changing. The tendency is to make speeches, recitations, and songs shorter with little regard to their original length and complexity. Now a number of songs with short lyrics mixed with Chinese have appeared among some of the young locals. Below are examples of short love songs, that I overheard in 2013 from some local herdsmen, which many locals think are humorous and practical:

\begin{verbatim}
1 rogs khyod ni 联通公司 红
2 rogs nga ni 移动公司 红
3 zhe snang ba bar gyi 信号 红
4 zhe mthun na 一打一通 红
5 zhe med na 无法接通 红
\end{verbatim}

1 You, the partner, are China Unicom\textsuperscript{197}
2 I, the partner, am China Mobile\textsuperscript{198}
3 Our passion is the reception 'xinhao'
4 The phones easily connect if our passion grows

\textsuperscript{197} Short form for China United Telecommunications Co. Ltd.
\textsuperscript{198} Short form for China Mobile Communications Corporation.
The phones disconnect if we lack passion

This song metaphorically references the male and female singers by using names of the telecom companies, which are pronounced in Chinese, while the rest of the sentences are in Tibetan. In the third line, the name for phone reception is pronounced in Chinese. These two different communication companies (the two singers) hope to get along well as long as they are connected, regardless of the reception. In Tibetan areas, the telecom services that locals are able to access varies between locations. In some areas only China Mobile can be accessed, in others only China Unicom, and in some areas both services can be accessed. The singer suggests that there are times that they most probably do not like each other. Consequently, the relationship between the two is unbalanced, similar to the access that the two telecom corporations provide.

Many locals think that this song is humorous because the song has particular words and metaphors in Chinese, which is rare in most songs.

Currently, many young villagers do not understand the lyrics of folksongs and love songs, let alone their meaning. This is especially true for locals who have spent little time herding, farming, and participating in local song festivals. A story a friend told me that locals consider extremely humorous illustrates this:

A couple had been together for some time. The girl was from a herding village and boy was from an agricultural village. The boy did not know how to sing folksongs and did not understand the meaning of songs others sang, though they spoke the same Amdo dialect. One day the couple was at a singing festival where the girl sang love songs antiphonally to a man standing by her boyfriend. The longer the two sang, the more they were attracted to each other and, in their songs, eventually expressed love for each other. The girl’s boyfriend did not understand any of this, felt very bored, and napped for a while. When he woke up, the two singers had left to have a romantic encounter.

The humor in this account stems partly from the boyfriend not understanding what was being sung, though he was very much physically present.

Changes in many aspects related to weddings are rapid and on-going. For example, during a wedding ceremony that I observed in 2014 in Bon skor Village, no A zhang could give a wedding oration and nobody from the local village could give a speech that exceeded ten minutes in length. Folksongs were sung between the A zhang and gnyen tshang groups. Furthermore, the A zhang left the groom’s home on the same day that they arrived. A zhang and gnyen tshang
were both busy with cell phones and video cameras, recording songs and speeches.

Though *A zhang* were honored with special seating at the groom's home, some young *A zhang* behaved like other wedding participants and used cameras and recorders in their cell phones to take photos to document the wedding ceremony. Some *gnyen tshang* also moved around the room with small video cameras. Various attendees were recording and sending this material online through WeChat.

A general point that locals, especially elders, make for a wedding is that it should be simple, small, not feature an excessive amount of meat, and have relatively few *A zhang*. Contemporary wedding celebrations no longer feature platters of meat but, instead, plenty of fruits, bread, and other such foods. Providing a lot of meat is costly and many locals believe it is sinful.

Although general folksongs are endangered and locals do not sing as often as five years ago, weddings held in Bon skor Village still feature song competitions between the *A zhang* and *gnyen tshang*. However, as before, this is not the case if the bride's family requests the groom's family not to sing much because, for example, a relative from the bride's family recently died.

In 2013, I was one of thirty *A zhang* who attended a wedding in neighboring Stong skor Village. At this wedding ceremony, about an hour was provided for *A zhang* to sing love songs with women of the *gnyen tshang*. This was not common for Bon skor Village, unless the *A zhang* were urged to do so.199

While, in 2016, it was rare in Bon skor Village to hold weddings at local county and town restaurants, it was becoming an increasingly common choice in certain local villages, especially in agricultural villages. Choosing such a venue is more common if one spouse has an official government job, or lives in a city. Some locals think holding weddings in a town restaurant demonstrates high social status and wealth, and is far simpler and quicker than the more traditional wedding held in the countryside. This trend was obvious in Stong che Village, Khri ka County in 2013 and 2014.

I also want to note wedding differences between Bon skor Village (agropastoral) and Rkyang rtsa (Jiangzha) Village (agricultural), Dhi tsha (Zhizha) Township, Ba yan (Hualong) County, in Mtsho shar (Haidong) City. *A zhang* in Rkyang rtsa Village arrive at the groom’s family late in the afternoon, the wedding ceremony takes place at night, and the *A zhang* depart early in the morning. In contrast, *A zhang* in Bon skor arrive at the groom’s family early in the morning and depart in the afternoon or the next morning. There is

similarity in singing between two villages. After the A zhang and gnyen tshang sing a few songs back and forth, several competitors sing at the same time, but they are not singing the same songs. It is thus hard for the audience to hear any particular song clearly.

Many Bon skor villagers born in the mid-1970s and earlier found spouses by singing, but by 2016, this way of finding a spouse was rare.

There is very little detailed study of Tibetan marriage customs at the village level. Oral traditions vary widely between villages and valuable details within each tradition are endangered. Few people will remember what a local Tibetan marriage process was like and how a traditional song was sung a decade later. I hope my studies and records on marriage in Bon skor Village have made a small contribution to Tibetan studies.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nyangchakja (Snying lcags rgyal, Niang Jijia) was born in 1988 in an agro-pastoral family living near the Yellow River and China’s largest inland saline lake, Koknor/Mtsho sngon Lake, in Mtsho sngon Province.

His childhood was spent herding in mountain pastureland. At the age of ten, he was taken to the village farming site to attend the local primary school. His first class consisted of twenty-four students that had dwindled to four students by graduation in 2002.

Attending Mtsho sngon Normal University in 2006 was a life changing experience for him. He took courses taught in English in Linguistics, Cultural Anthropology, World Literature, Teaching Methodology, and Writing. Meanwhile, an English teacher encouraged him to write about his childhood so that readers could better understand his homeland culture. The result was *A Mang rzdong Tibetan Life.*

In college, he learned how to do small-scale development work. Gradually Nyangchakja successfully obtained funding from embassies, foundations, and individuals. These projects are related to rural health clinics, running water, rural school libraries, scholarship, training programs, solar energy, and small social enterprise.

Experiences from implementing projects, establishing social connections with locals and learning of their poverty and isolation from the outside world, and the limited flow of funds into villages with critical needs persuaded him to register the Friendship Charity Association (FCA), a local NGO, in October 2008 with the Mang ra County Civil Affairs Bureau (www.friendshipcharity.org).

FCA’s vision was to help build a better future for the impoverished people of east-central Mtsho sngon Province (A mdo). FCA focused on basic education, water and sanitation, environmental protection, cultural preservation, and social enterprise. From 2005 to December 2014, Nyangchakja implemented 139 projects (value of 8,341,492 RMB) benefiting 81,520 impoverished people.

Attending national and international conferences allowed him to witness the breadth, depth, and maturity of the non-profit sector, particularly in comparison to the NGOs of west China. This inspired him to learn more and do more in facilitating programs that are sustainable, educational, and have a long-term impact.

Nyangchakja is also the founder of Ganglha (www.ganglha.org; www.ganglha.com). In 2016, he was pursuing a MA in Sustainable International Development at Brandeis University.

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GLOSSARY

'bab rtön རོ་བརུཏན། a white scarf
two gnyen tshang offer and the A
zhang accept before entering a home

'bras spungs བྲེས་བུ་སྤུངས། Monastery, Lha sa City

'brog mgo བོད་མོ་། a woman's 'nomad hairstyle' consisting of many
long, thin plaits

'brog thab བོད་ཐབ། 'nomad stove'; adobe stove in a tent

'brug lha rgyal བྲུའི་ལྷ་རྒྱལ། a person's name

'brug mo བྲུའི་མྟོ། a person's name

'brug 'bum rgyal བྲུའི་འབུམ་རྒྱལ། a person's name

'brug rgya བྲུའི་རྒྱ། a person's name

'brug thar rgyal བྲུའི་ཐར་རྒྱལ། a person's name

'bum me བུམ་མེ། a person's name

'bum mtsho skyid བུམ་མཚོ་སྦྱིད། a person's name

'dun དུན། 'longing', 'wish for'; post-death ritual that includes
chanting, and inviting monks and bla ma to a home to
conduct bdun

'e bug དགུ། carpet placed between the humps of a camel

'gyam ring གྱམ་རིང། name of a place facing the Bon skor Tibetan
Village farming area

'gyu bha དབྱེ་བགས། a person's name

'ja' drug དབྱེ་བསྟོད། red, yellow, blue, purple, or pink cloth

'jag ma བྲས་། name of a grass

'jam pa'i dbyangs བདགས་འཇམ་པའི། an alternative name of 'Jam dpal
dbyangs
'Jam dbyangs 'phrin las rgya mtsho བོད་དཔལ་འཕྲིན་ལས་རྒྱ་མཚོ།  the name
of a bla ma

'Jam dbyangs nag po བོད་དཔལ་འཕྲིན་ལས་རྒྱ་མཚོ།  the name of a deity

'Jam dbyangs skyabs བོད་དཔལ་འཕྲིན་ལས་རྒྱ་མཚོ།  a consultant's name

'Jam dpal dbyangs བོད་དཔལ་འཕྲིན་ལས་རྒྱ་མཚོ།  the name of a deity

'khel རྒྱལ།  spin

'khrab ma ེླ་བ།  a tool used to clean grains and seeds

'Od dpag med བོད་དཔར་བོད།  Amitabha

'Phags skyes po བོད་ཕག་སྐྱེས་པ།  one of the Four Great Kings/ Guardians of
the Four Directions

'phang བོད།  spindles for making wool strings

'phang shing བོད་ིི།  spindle stick

'phang lo བོད།  'round stone' for spindle

'Pho ba བོད།  technique in Tibetan Buddhism of transferring
consciousness at the time of death directly to one of the Pure
Lands

'phral gyis bskyal ba བོད་ཕྲལ་གཡིས་བསལ།  the activity of the A zhang taking
the bride to her natal home on the wedding day (if she was not
previously abducted) and her return to the groom's home
three days later

'thag pa བོད།  weave

'u ni དུ་གེ།  Mongol-based word that refers to a section in a gur

'Ur khyog དུ་སྐོད།  a local place name

A

A 'brug yul འབྲུའི་ཡུལ།  the name of a farming area in eastern A mdo

A kha འཁ གཏུ།  (Lcags 'bum rgyal འཁ་ལྕགས་བུམ་རྒྱལ།)  a person's name

A khu འཁ་ཞི།  Tribe, Bon skor Village
a lung སྒྲུབ། buttonholes or loops that are considered mo sgrog
'female buttons'

A mchod ཕྱོན། a monk who chants Thar mdo for forty-nine days after a death

A mdo རྩོམ། one of three Tibetan regions that encompasses much of Mtsho sngon and Gansu provinces

A myes brag dkar ཀྲུང་མདོ། a sacred mountain and a deity in Mgo mang Township, Mang ra County

A myes rma chen མཐྱེེ་རྒྱལ། a holy mountain and deity in Rma chen County, Mgo log Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture

A myes sgro ri rab brtan thogs med རྣམ་ཐབས་ཁྱེངས་སྦྱོངས། a local deity

A myes Yul lha སྙེམས་ལྷ། a local deity

A rig རྩོལ། Tribe, Bon skor Village

A than rgyal bo སྐེལ། a king’s name

A tho སྒྲ། ('Gyur med rdo rje གྱུར་མ་དྲོ་རྨེ།) a person's name

A zhang བཞིན། the bride's male relatives are individually and collectively called A zhang

A zla ཁྲུག་པ། Tribe, Bon skor Village

B

ba chu skor gsum གསུམ། a package of provisions consisting of rtsam pa, butter, cheese, bread, salt, and tea, and such other necessities as a pot, bowl, knife, needle, thread, and clothing prepared after the death of a family member

Ba han da ba སྤོད་པ། a local place name

Ba kya'i grwa tshang phun tshogs dar rgyas gling བཀྲ་པ་དང་པོ་བཅིང་པོ་སྦེ་རྒྱས། Monastery, Khri ka County Town

Ba lang gad pa གྲངས་པ། Village, Bya mdo Township
*ba so* बासो ivory

*Ba yan thang* बायांठाङ an area near the Yellow River

*Ba yan* बायां (Hualong 化隆) Hui Autonomous County

*bag 'bod* बाग्खोद refers to a party held at the groom's home after the bride is invited and arrives at the home

*bag bskyal* बाग्खोयल the bride's escort

*bag gis bskyal ba* बाग्खोश्यालबा term describing a previously abducted bride staying at the groom's home on the wedding day when the *A zhang* depart.

*bag ma'i kha 'gugs* बाग्खोमाईखोगु खु खु the bride's fast

*bag ras* बाग्रास tent

*bag rogs* बाग्खोग्स the bride's female companion

*bag rta* बाग्र्ताभ्रूड 'bride's horse'; a horse historically given to the bride by the groom's family when the groom's family held a wedding ceremony

*bag ston* बागस्तोन 'bride festivity'; a marriage in which a woman marries and moves to her husband's home

Bang A ma बाङा मा a Mongolian king

*bang kha* बाङखा 'fuel store'

*bang shing* बाङ्झिङ wooden pieces positioned so as to hold yak or sheep dung used for fuel

Baochan Daohu 包产到户 a policy of returning property to local households by the state

*Bar do* बार्दो state of suspended reality in which the deceased are presented with a series of opportunities for recognition of the true nature of reality
Bayi 八一 a festival held on the first day of the eighth lunar month that allows youths to find lovers. On this day, all fifteen villages in the township assemble for three days in a meadow one kilometer from the township town and five kilometers from Bon skor Village.

_bde mchog_ བདྨོེ་ཆོག the name of a Buddhist recitation

_bdun 'dad pa_ བདུན་འདད་པ་ 'nectar'

_bdun_ བདུན a funeral activity; the affected family invites monks to chant for seven days, though certain families hold it for fourteen days

_Be len_ བེ་ལེན current location of Bon skor Tibetan Village

_Bka' 'gyur_ བཀའ་འギャུར translated teachings of Buddha

_Bka' 'gyur_ བཀའ་འギャུར translated teachings of Gshen rab mi bo che, the founder of G.yung drung Bon

_Bkra kho_ བཀྲ་ཁོ་ a local person

_Bkra shis rtags rgyad_ བཀྲ་ཤིསི་རིགས་རྒྱུད Eight Auspicious Symbols - a conch shell, a lotus, wheel of the dharma, a parasol, an endless knot, a pair of golden fish, a banner proclaiming victory, and a treasure vase

_bla_ བླ། soul, spirit

_Bla brang_ བླ་བང་ location in the northwest of Kan lho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province

_bla bya_ བླ་བྱ་ 'spirit bird'; corpses placed on the _dur khrod_ are eaten by vultures. The first vulture that touches the corpse is the _bla bya_ 'spirit bird'

_Bla ko 'jigs med 'phrin las rgya mtsho_ བླ་ཀོ་འཇིགས་མེད་འཕྲིན་ལས་རྒྱ་མཚོ (1866-1948) a bla ma's name

_bla ma_ བླ་མ་ teacher, master
Bla ma 'ja' mo Dkon mchog bstan 'dzin nyi ma (1791-1854) the founder of Ba kya'i grwa tshang phun tshogs dar rgyas gling
Bla ma yul gur dge 'dun bstan pa rab rgyas (1834-1911) the founder of Tho le dgon rnam rgyal phun tshogs chos rdzong gling
Blo bzang bstan pa rgya mtsho an author's name
Bod pu de a person's name
Bon early religion in Tibet
bon gshen a Bon specialist or Bon practitioner
Bon po a Bon religious practitioner
Bon po rtse bo the founder of Bon skor Tibetan Village
Bon po'i dpon Bon tantric specialists
Bon po'i zhing kha the former location of Bon skor Tibetan Village
Bon skor rgyal gshen rig 'dzin sems dpa' gling the name of the Bon skor Bon assembly hall
Bon skor Village, Bya mdo Township
Brag dbar rdza sacred mountain on the border of Mang ra and Khri ka counties
Brag dbar (Xinghai County, Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
bsang incense-burning offering
bsang ba 'purify'
bsang khri an incense-burning platform made of adobe or brick
bsang rtsi incense-burning materials
bsang yig an incense scripture
Bser thang Village, Bya mdo Township

*bshad pa* speech

*bskang ba* a Buddhist recitation

*bskon* gifts such as clothing, tea, and bottles of *chang* and, in 2014, ten to thirty RMB, given to the *A zhang*

*bsngo zhu* a funeral ritual

Bsod kho a person's name

*bstan 'gyur* Sanskrit commentaries on the Buddha's teaching translated into Tibetan

Bstan rgyal a former Bon skor Tibetan Village Primary School headmaster

Btsan mgon a person's name

Bu bsdu Tribe, Bon skor Village

*bu ras* refers to cloth that the *A zhang* bring with them to the wedding that the *gnyen tshang* ask for using eloquent speeches

*bum khug* white sack into which a corpse is placed

Bun khreng a person's name

Bun khreng Bon skor Village school manager

Bya bho a person's name

*bya chu'i 'gyur khugs* The Rhythm of Byachu, a periodical published from 2003 by Bon skor Primary School

Bya drug gzhongs a place name

Bya drug gzhung a place name

Bya gzhung blo bzang an author's name

*bya la g.yeng ba* 'spreading for birds'; sky burial rituals

Bya mdo Township Town, Mang ra County

Bya mdo'i rab rgyas a person's name
Bya rgod phung po'i ri  བ་ རྒྟོད བྟོའི་ རི། Vulture Peak Mountain, near Rajgir in Bihar where the Buddha taught the Prajnaparamita sutras

Bya stod chu  བ་ སྟོད ཆུ། a place name

byu ru དུ་ རུ། coral

bzho bzung  བཞོ་ བཟུང་ a silver ornament with two hooks at the bottom that women hang from the sash in the front

Bzhugs khri  བཞུགས་ ཁྲི། a place name in the herding area of Bon skor Tibetan Village

bzo zhing  བཞིང་ a herding and farming tax

C

Caizhamu སྤི་ རུ། a person's name

cha ru རུ། wooden buttons

Chab cha བཞིན། the capital of Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture

Chana ོ རོ། Village

chang རང་ liquor

Che mchog he ru ka གནས་ཞིག་ཧ ྱེ རུ ཀ a Buddhist deity equivalent to Dbal gsas rngam pa

chon kwa དོན་ བུད་ cypress or birch pole

chon thag རྒྱལ་ ཝོ་ tent ropes

Chos dbangs ཕྱིན་ རྒྱལ། the name of a local sngags pa

Chos rgyal རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ། the Dharma king

chos skyong srung ma རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ། protector deities

Chos tsha གྲེས། Village

chu dar ངས་ similar to bu ras and might consist of gifts of clothing, phrug, and kha btags that women ask the bride or groom's family for
Chu hor ཆུ་ཧོར། a place name in Bon skor
*chu la beol ba* ཆུ་ལ་བེལ་བ། 'water depository'; water burial
_cog ldan_ ཆོག་ལྡན། head of a camel
_cong_ ཆོང། a metal bell
_cu su_ ཀྱུས། a saddle

D

_Dhi tsha_ ཆི་ཚ། (Zhizha 支扎) Township

_dadui_ དྲེ་འབྲུལ། 'big team'; community administrative division

_dadui duizhang_ དྲེ་འབྲུལ་འཛིན་གྱི་ 'Committee Team Leaders'

_dadui zhuren_ དྲེ་འབྲུལ་ཞུ་རུན 'local committee leader title

_dar lcog_ ཇ་རྒོད། prayer flags

_dar shing_ ཇ་སྙིང་། flag pole, to which prayer flags are attached

_dar_ ཐུ་། silk, cloth banner

_Dbal gsas rngam pa_ ཇབལ་གསེ་རུང་མ་ a Bon deity

_Dbal gsas_ ཇབལ་གསེ། a Bon religious recitation that practitioners chant

_at homes.

_dbang chas_ ང་རོ། a red cloth strip worn around the head by mantra practitioners

_dbang lung_ ང་རོ། permission given by _bla ma_ for locals to chant mantras

_Dbang bha_ ང་རོ། a former Bon skor Village Primary School manager

_Dbus gtsang_ ཇྲུ་སྒང་། the name of two places in central Tibet

_Dbus lam_ ཇྲུས་ལམ། County, Mtsho nub (Haixi) Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture

_Dbus tshwa mtsho dkar mo_ ཇྲུས་ཙྭ་མཐོ་དཀར་མོ། Salt Lake; _Lbo yi tshwa mtsho_ བོད་ཡི་ཙྭ་མཐོ།

_de_ དེ། 'that'; word used as a substitute for a deceased person's name

_De'u mgo gser zhwa_ ཇུ་མོ་གྲེས་རྒྱ་པོ་ Hill, Bon skor Village
Dga' ldan gser khri 'Ganden Golden Throne'; the spiritual leader of the Dge lugs Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, who is also the abbot of Dga' ldan Monastery

Dga' ldan a large monastery in central Tibet

Dge ldan zhwa ser a Tibetan Buddhist sect

Dge lugs pa followers of the Yellow Hat Sect

Dgon thang Village, Bya mdo Township

dzung zhag zhe dgu the forty-nine day period after a person's death

dianhua telephone
dianshi television
dkar mo rtse rgyal a hat worn by Bon practitioners
dmag dar a military banner
dmar gdan two or three strips of red cloth on which twenty or so silver bowls are attached to the bride's back as hair decoration
dngul dung silver bowls used as hair decorations
dngul gyi ga'u silver, bowl-shaped ornaments put on the back of women's robes

Don grub a person's name

Dorjee Paljor (Rdo rje dpal 'byor)

Dpa' 'bum rgyal a former village head

Dpa' bzang a person's name

Dpa' kho the first Communist Party secretary of Bon skor Village

Dpa' rtse 'bum a Communist Party secretary of Bon skor Village
Dpal kha Township Town, Brag dkar County, Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
Dpal ldan lha mo a guardian deity
Dpon phrug 'Leader's son'
Dpon po rgya ldang a leader of Bon skor Village in the 1900s
dpon po 'leader'
Dpon rgyud 'generation of leaders'; before 1958, a leader's son inherited his father's position
Dpon tshang 'Leaders' Tribe'
dpon an alternative name for sngags pa
dril bu hand bell used in religious ritual
drin chen po 'the gracious one'; euphemism used to refer to a deceased person
Drug ci ba 'sixties'; a religious ritual done to expel evils from homes and villages
dung a shell-shaped hair decoration worn by women on the back of their robes
dung dkar a white conch shell blown when burning bsang
dung phor copper bowls used to offer water to deities
dung skyong a naga king
dur khrod charnal ground, sky burial location
Dus gsum sangs rgyas Buddhas of the Three Ages
Dzam lha Deity of Fortune

E
Er rgod Hill located behind Bon skor Village

G
Gangs 'dab kyi rang mdangs a book's name
g.yang 'bod a Buddhist recitation for calling fortune
G.yang byams skyid a person's name

g.yang mda' an arrow used while chanting g.yang 'bod

g.yang ra a tuft of wool tied on horses as a protective measure

g.yang sa 'fortune place', the females' place in a tent

g.yos this a tool used to smooth mud and cement

g.yu turquoise

G.yung drung Bon 'everlasting Bon'; a Bon sect founded by Gshen rab mi bo che

G.yung drung rgyal a person's name

ga'u a container to store an amulet and worn as an ornament
Gcan tsha a place name
Gcod pa a person's name

gdan seats, cushions

Gdung mchod the name of a ritual held from the twenty-fifth to twenty-ninth days of the tenth lunar month commemorating the death of Gshen rab mi bo.

Gdugs bha a person's name

Ge sar legendary King of Gling

Geweihui 'Revolutionary Committee'

glag eagle
Glang chen Mountain
Glegs shing Village, Bya mdo Township
Gling dkar stod an area where King Ge sar was thought to reign

glo gzur a silver crescent moon above a sun decorated with coral that hangs from the sash at the right or left hip

glu folk song
Gnam byams 'bum the fifth official village head
Gnam sras a guardian deity
gnyen dar a wedding sash
gnyen tshang the groom's entourage is collectively called
gnyen tshang

Go ra'i mdo mtshams khang dga' ldan dben gnas yid dga' chos 'dzin
gling Monastery, Bya mdo Township Town
Go ra'i mdo Village, Bya mdo Township
go re gcus ris ma twisted, deep-fried bread
go re nang lung ma deep-fried bread with varied patterns
go re skya phyag thin baked wheat bread
go re sog sog deep-fried bread the thickness of a chopstick but longer

go'u mo snowcock
gongfen work points
gongshe commune
gor dmar deep-fried bread
gos bskon clothing wear; clothing given as gifts
gos lwa a robe made of thin cloth
Grags pa a person's name
gro wheat

Gru bzhi a place name on the Bon skor grassland
gru lag the ropes at the four corners of a tent that strengthen the tent poles
gru thig a corner cord used in tents
grwa ba monk, student
Gsang bdag phyag na rdo rje ལོངས་བོད་ཕྲག་གནས་རྟོ་རྒྱེ a deity in Rig gsum mgon po
Gsang sgrog བདག་གུག་རྟོ་རྒྱེ a person's name
\textit{gseb dri} བདེ་བའི 'body odor'; a pungent body odor that locals believe is inherited
\textit{gser skyems} རྡོ་རྜུས་ལུམ་liquor offered to mountain deities
\textit{gser tog} རྡོ་རྜུས་སྐྱེས་པ། copper or gold plated ornaments on temples and monastery roofs
Gshen rab mi bo che དབུ་མི་བོ་ཆེ། the founder of G.yung drung Bon
Gsor rgya རྒྱས་རྒྱ་a person's name
\textit{gtam dpe} རྡོ་རྗེ། proverb
\textit{gto} རྒྱུ་a Bon religious ritual conducted to expel misfortunes
\textit{gtor ma} རྒྱུ་རྫོགས་sacrificial items such as cones of \textit{rtsam pa} cake that are colored red, symbolizing blood
\textit{gtor sgams} རྒྱུ་རྫོགས་ཁམས་a wooden box to store \textit{gtor ma}
Gu bha དབྱ་a person's name
Guinan 貴南 (Mang ra) County, Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
Gung ri mkha' སྒྲུ་མཁའ་a dakini who lived in Rgya yas Village until 2011
Guomaying 过马营 (Mgo mang) Township
Gur གུར། Tribe, Bon skor Village
\textit{gur} གུར། yurt
Gur che གུར་ཆེ། Tribe, Bon skor Village
Gur rgan gzhis གུར་རྒན་གུར་ཆེ། Tribe, Bon skor Village
Gur lhas གུར་ལྷས། Village, Bya mdo Township Town
\textit{gyod} རྗུད། law
Gza' khyab 'jug རྗུའ་རྒྱུབ་a guardian deity
**Gze ma** གཟྱེ ་ མ ། a mantra

gze ma stong 'don གཟྱེ ་ མ ་ ས ྟོང ་ འ ད ྟོན། chanting the Gze ma mantra more than a thousand times

Gze ma'i lha khang གཟྱེ ་ མ འ ི་ ལྷ་ཁ ང ། a Bon assembly hall in Stong che Village, Hexi Township, Khri ka County

gzhung kwa རུ་་ a beam

gzu ba རུ་དམ། mediators

**H**

Ha bzhug ske རབ་གུག་སྐད། a Bon skor place name

ha mar རབ་མ ། nostrils

Ha ra ར་ a Bon skor place name

ha ra ci ར་ཅི། the name of a column in a gur

Hainan 海南 (Mtsho lho) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture

Haojiang 滠江 a motorcycle

Har ha nag thes རྒྱ་སྒྲ་དེས། a Bon skor place name

he gu kyo རྒྱུ་སྒྲུན། to get up/ go

Hexi Town 河西镇 Town, Khri ka County

ho dung རུ་དུང་ wooden sticks put in the lab rtse when constructing and renewing a lab rtse

ho log རུ་ལོག་ a type of tent

Huangyuan 湟源 County, Zi ling (Xining) City

hu tse ར་ཚེ། a platform made of adobe or brick that can be heated and used for sleeping, entertaining guests, chatting, and eating

Huzhu 互助 Mongghul (Tu) Autnomous County

**J**

ja bag བོད་པོར་ brick tea

ja mchod གཞི་ཁད། 'tea offering'

ja gdan གོ་དོན། a hair decoration for women
ja la ཚ་ལ། a hair decoration for women
Jialing嘉陵 a motorcycle
jin斤 500 grams
Jo bo གཞི། the gold Buddha in the Jo khang Temple in Lhasa
Jo bo ser po གཞི་བཞེ་བོ། the gold Buddha in the Jo khang Temple
Jo khang གཞི་ཁང་། Temple, Lha sa City
Jo mo glang ma གཞི་མོ་གླང་མ། Mount Everest; Chomolungma

K
Kan lho ཁན་ལོ། (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
ke su མི་་ ད་ to catch a camel
Kha ba rnam rgyal མདངས་རྩལ། a person's name
kha btags མདངས། auspicious strips of silk
kha las མདངས་། 'mouth karma', suggesting a person's reputation
kha ru མདངས་། gifts from a groom's neighbor families and relatives
kha tshub མདངས་། the light and smoke hole in a tent
khab shubs མདངས། a sewing case
Khe bheཁྲེ་ (Khe yag 'bum མདངས།) a person's name
Kho tsheཁོ་ཚེ། reincarnation bla ma's name
khraཁྲ། hawk
Khri kaཁྲི་ (Guide) County, Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
Khri ral pa canཁྲི་རལ་པ་ཅན། (Khri gtsug lde btsanཁྲི་གཙུག་ལྡེབས།), the forty-first Tibetan King
khrims darཁོ་རིམས་དར། 'law silk'; the scarves locals traditionally used to greet Chinese leaders
Khro boཁྲོ་བོ the name of a mantra and a Bon deity
Khrus chogཁྲེས་ཆོག a Buddhist recitation
Khu khu cimཁུ་ཁུ་ཆིམ། a Bon skor place name

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**khu lang** (‘ja’ drug), red, yellow, blue, purple, or pink cloth used to decorate robes

**khu lu su** the carpet under a saddle

Khun ’dus a Bon skor place name

**khya chen** crested goshawk

**khyim lug** sheep tax

**khyim rgyud** 'lineage'

**khyung ’brug kha sprod** confrontation between a garuda and a dragon

Khyung gzar sgang Mountain, Bon skor Village

**khyung** garuda

**klu** naga, water deity

**klu mo** nage, female water deity

Klu tshang dgon bshad sgrub dar rgyas dge 'phel gling Monastery, Mang chu Township Town

**klung rta** see rlung rta

Koknor Mtsho sngon po, Mtsho sngon Lake

**ku sha** a type of grass

Kun bzang gshen lha ’od dkar the name of a mantra and a Bon deity

Kun grub rgyal a person's name

**Kun rig** the name of a Buddhist recitation

Kun thub rgyal a person's name

Kye phur the high mountain range between Mang ra and Brag dkar counties, Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture

LA mo gser khri 'Jam dbyangs bstan pa’i nyi ma the name of a bla ma
LA mo tsa kan no mon han ལཱ་མོ་ཐྲ་མ་བཀོད་པ་ the title of a bla ma
LA mo tshogs gnyis rgya mtsho ལཱ་མོ་སྟོགས་གཉིས་རྒྱ་མཚོ the name of a bla ma
LA mo zhabs drung dkar po dge 'dun bstan 'dzin nor bu dpal bzang ལཱ་མོ་ཞབས་གྲུང་དཀར་པོ་དགེ་འདུན་བསྟན་འཛིན་ནོར་བུ་བོས་ལོང་བཟང་ the founder of the Dge lugs Tshal rnga dgon dga' ldan dar rgyas gling, located seven kilometers from Bya mdo Township in Mang ra County
la gzhas ལ་གཟེས love songs
lab rtse ལབ་རྩེ mountain deities and sacred places of worship located on mountain peaks, at the mid-part of mountains, and at the feet of mountains
lam chang བཞིན 'road liquor'; the gnyen tshang usually brings bottles of beer or liquor to the A zhang to drink at the courtyard gate of the groom's home before they leave
lany+dza རྔ་ a pattern on a silver dung
Lbo yi tshwa mtsho བོ་ཡི་ཐོབ་མཚོ Salt Lake
Lbo lam བོ་ལམ (Wulan) County
Lbu yi tshwa mtsho བུ་ཡི་ཐོབ་མཚོ Salt Lake
lcags khem ལྕགས་ཁེམས a metal shovel
Lcags li ལྕགས་ཤིས a person's name
Lcags mo byams ལྕགས་མོ་བཟོམས a person's name
Lcam sring ལྕམ་སྟིང a guardian deity
lha bshos ལྷ་བཤོས a type of gtor ma
Lha chen tshangs ba ལྷ་ཆེན་ཚངས་བས Brahma
lha dar ལྷ་དར a strip of silk dedicated to deities
Lha dbang tshe sgron ལྷ་དབང་ཚེ་སྟོན a person's name
Lha khang thang ལྷ་ཁང་ཐང Township, Khri ka County
Lha mo ལྷ་མོ the name of a goddess
Lha mchog a person's name
Lha mtsho a person's name
Lha res a person's name
Lha rgya the first local headmaster of Bon skor Village School
Lha sa City, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region
Lha sgron a person's name
Lha tshangs ba Brahma
Lha'i dbang bo brgya byin the king of all deities
liangshui a grain tax
liangzhan a grain distribution station
Liu Xu the author of the *Old Tang Book/ Tang Annals*
Lnga mchod the name of a ritual held on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth lunar month commemorating the death of Rje tsong kha pa
lo rgya baked rgya bo taken when visiting a family or given to a visitor during Lo sar
Lo sar New Year
Lung yangs Reservior (Tshal rnga/ Longyang Xia Reservior), Chab cha County

M
Ma Bufang a Muslim warlord in Mtsho sngon Province during the Republic of China (1912-1949)
ma dge ldan ma 'virtuous mother'; a euphemistic reference to a deceased person
ma drin chen 'thankful or respectable mother'; a euphemistic reference to a deceased person
*ma Ni* མ སི། the short form of oM ma Ni pad+me hU-M, the six syllable Mantra of Avalokiteshvara.

*ma sru* མ སྲུ། *ma* is for 'mother' and *sru* is for 'maternal aunt'; may refer to all females in a family

*machang* 马场 horse station

*madui* 马队 horse station

*mag pa* མ ག་པ། men married matrilocally

*mag rta* མ ག་ར། 'bridegroom's horse'; refers to ritual of the bride's family giving a horse to the *mag pa* during the wedding

*mag ston* མ ག་ས ྟོན། a wedding in which the man marries and moves into the bride's home

Ma gcig srid pa'i rgyal mo མ གཅིག་ སིད བ འ ི་ རྒྱལ ་ མ ྟོ། a Bon guardian deity

*maN Dal* མ ཎ ཊལ། mandala

Mang 'ba' bya gsum མ ང ་ བའ ་ བ་ གསུམ ། a place name in Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture

Mang chu མ ང ་ ཐུ། River, Mang ra County; a township in Mang ra

Mang ra ba seng ge rgyal mtshan མ ང ་ བ་ས ྱེ ང ་ གྱེ་ རྒྱལ ་ མ ཚན། a person's name

Mang ra མ ང ་ a place name; a term for Mang ra County Town

Mang rzdong མ ང ་ རྫ ྟོང ་ ། (Guinan) County

Manjushri འ ཇམ ་ ད བང ས ་ རག་པྟོ། 'Jam dbyangs nag po

*mar sgyl* མ མ ་ བ་ གསྐྱིད ། a tent's lower hearth

*mchod kha* མ ཆྟོད ་ ཁ ། water or liquor offered to deities

*mchod me* མ ཆོད ་ མ ྱེ ། butter lamps

*mchod rten* མ ཆོད ་ ར ྱེ ན། a stupa

*mchod sgam* མ ཆོད ་ ས མ ། a wooden box where shrine items are kept

Mchog bha མ ཆོག ་ བྷ། a local person

*mchong* མ ཆོང ་ a gem

*mda' ra* མ ཀ ་ a bullet belt local men tie on their sash as an ornament
mdzo ལྷོན། a yak-cow cross

*me cha* ལྷན། a traditional, flint and steel lighter

*me long* ལྷན། mirror

Mgo dkar མོ་སྦྱར། Tribe, Bon skor Village

Mgo log མོ་སློ་ཁ་ Tibeat Autonomous Prefecture

Mgo mang མོ་སྨངས། Town, Mang ra County

Mgo ne rgyal མོ་ནས་དཔལ། a person's name

Mgon po phyag drug མོག་པོ་ཕག་དྲུག། a guardian deity

Mgon po zhal bzhi མོག་པོ་ཞལ་བཞི། a guardian deity

Mgon rgya མོག་རྒྱས། a person's name

*mig mang nas tshags* མིག་མང་ནས་ཚགས། a grain sieve

*mjal dar* མིྱལ་དར། 'meeting silk'; a strip of silk, usually yellow in color, presented to *bla ma* and leaders

*mkha' gro ma* མཁས་ཀྱི་གྲོ་མ་ dakini

Mkhar lo མཁར་ལོ། a person's name

Mkhar rtse མཁར་རྩེ། a person's name

Mkhas bha མཁས་བོ། a person's name

Mnyam med shes rab rgyal mtshan མཉམ་མེད་ཤེས་རབ་རྒྱལ་མཚན། a well-known Bon scholar who is considered a deity by Bon skor villagers who chant his teachings

*mo ba* མོ་བ་ fortuneteller

Mo dbal མོ་དབལ། Village, Bya mdo Township, Mang ra County

Mo hor མོ་ཧོར། Valley, Bon skor

Mo mgo tho log མོ་མགོ་ཐོ་ལྟོ་གུམ་ an area in the Bon skor herding area

*mo rde'u* མོ་རྩེའུ། pebbles, small wood dice, or sheep droppings used in divination

mo sgrog མི་སྒྲོག a button hole

Mtho las མཐོ་ལས། an alternative spelling of Tho le Monastery
Mthun pa spun bzhi ལ་ལུ་བུ་ཐུབ་ 'Four Harmonious Brothers'; the story of a bird, rabbit, monkey, and an elephant symbolic of how friends can use their different abilities to live together harmoniously

mtshan སྤུན། the numbered divination sticks in boxes in temples
Mtsho lho བོད། (Hainan 海南) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
Mtsho nub བོད། (Haixi 海西) Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province
Mtsho shar བོད། (Haidong 海东) a district name
Mtsho sngon Lake བོད། the largest and highest inland salt lake in China, located in southwest Mtsho sngon Province
Mtsho sngon dge thon slob chen བོད། Qinghai Normal University

mtshon srung སྲུང་། similar to a ga'u where amulets and pictures of bla ma are kept
Mu ge thang ིགུ་ཁང་ a herding area in Bon skor Tibetan Village
mu ལུ a unit of area equivalent to 0.67 hectares
mya ngan སྣང་། grief
myig sngun སྣྱུའུ། offering condolences
mying rta སྣིང་། 'brother's horse'; a gift of a horse to the bride's brother

N
nang kwa བྲེ་ཐང་ tent's interior poles
nang mchod ཚོས་འཁོར་ a container where offering articles are stored in a shrine
nang btsong ཚོས་འཁོར། an internal tax
Nationalities Teacher's College, Mtsho sngon Normal University བོད།
ngo thig བྲིས་ a cord inside a tent
Niang Jijia (Nyangchakja), a person's name

Nygak Tribe, Bon skor Village

Nyangchakja a person's name

O

OM ma Ni pad+me hU~M the six syllable mantra of Avalokiteshvara.

P

Pa thos skyid a person's name

Pad ma skyid a person's name

Pad ma stong Idan a deity

Padmasambhava (Slob dpon pad ma 'byung gnas)

pha dge ldan po 'virtuous father'; euphemism for a deceased person

pha drin chen 'thankful father'; euphemism for a deceased person

Phag mo don 'grub a person's name

pho sgrog buttons

phrug lwa a wool robe a bit thicker than gos lwa

phrug wool material for making phrug lwa

phug chon the tent rear pole

phug kwa the tent upper pole

phur ba a wooden pole

phur bu a dagger used by sngags pa during rituals

phya ra yak hair or wool interwoven cloth

phying ba felt

Po ta la Palace
Qing Dynasty (1644-1912)

Qinghai Normal University (Mtsho sngon dge thon slob chen) a university in Mtsho sngon Province.

Qinghai Lake (Mtsho sngon po) the largest and highest inland salt lake in China, located in southwest Mtsho sngon Province.

ra ར། the local pronunciation of 'sbra'
ra 'dogs ར་ལེགས། a decorative silver disc with two to three holes placed on the crown of the bride's head
ra chung ར་འཆུང། a hair decoration for women
Ra kho ར་ཁོ། Tribe, Bon skor Village
ra leb ར་ལེབ། a triangular cloth strung with many coral beads that is hung at the end of the bride's plaited hair
ra mgo ར་མོ། a piece of coral as large as a chicken egg used as personal adornment
ra nag ར་ནག། a medium- or small-sized sbra
Ra rdza ར་རྩ་ Village, Bya mdo Township
Ra rgya ར་རྒྱ་ Monastery
Rab 'og ske ར་བའི་སྦེ། the name of a location in the former Bon skor Village
Rab rno sum 'dzoms ར་བའི་སུམ་འཛོམས། Book
ral gri རལ་གྲི། a sword
ram pa རམ་པ། name of a grass
rang རང gifts from the bride to the groom's family including mutton, one or two small sacks of candy, and fruits such as apples and peaches

ras gur རས་གུར a tent made of white fabric

Rdo ra རྲོ་རེ་ Village, Mgo mang Township

rdo rje རྲོ་རྐྱེ a vajra

rdo ril རྲོ་རིལ་ a round threshing stone pulled by mules, donkeys, or tractors

rdzong ba རྫོང་བ་ the bride's dowry

Rdzong mgo རྫོང་མོ་ Village, Lha khang thang Township, Khri ka County

re tho རེ་ཐོ་ a medium or small-sized sbra

Rgod ma'i thang རྒྱེད་མ་འི་ཐང་ a location in Bon skor Village

rgod རྒྱེད་ a vulture

rgya ma རྒྱ་མ་ a scale or steelyard beam

Rgya mtsho རྒྱ་མཚོ a person's name

Rgya nur རྒྱ་ནུ་ a place name in Bon skor Village

Rgya phyug རྒྱ་ཕྱུག་ Tribe, Bon skor Village

rgya rdo རྒྱ་རྒྷོ་ a weight used on a scale beam

Rgya thog རྒྱ་ཐོག་ Village, Mang chu Township, Mang ra County

Rgya yas རྒྱ་ཡས་ Village

rgyab brje རྒྱབ་བྲེ་ gifts provided by groom's family for the bride's mother that include clothing and tea bricks

rgyab dar རྒྱབ་དར་ a panel of cloth covered with coral or ra mgo hung on the bride's back over her long plaits

Rgyal ba rin po che རྒྱལ་བརིན་པོ་ཆེ་ His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Rgyal chen sde bzhi རྒྱལ་ཆེན་སྡེ་བཞི། The Four Great Kings - Yul 'khor srung, 'Phags skyes po, Spyan mi bzang, and Rnam thos sras
rgyal mtshan rtse mo'i dpung rgyan རྒྱལ ་ མ ཚོང་ འི་ དཔོུང་ རྒྱན། a recitation from the Tibetan Buddhist scripture Gzungs; a type of ritual speech similar to a mantra meaning 'to hold' or 'maintain'

Rgyal srid sna bdun རྒྱལ ་ སྡིར ་ སྡན་ བདུན། the Seven Royal Possessions

rgyu rin རྒྱུ ་ རིན། the bridewealth/ dowry

Rig groi རིག་ ་ རྒྱེན། a person's name

Rigs gsum mgon po རིགས་ ་ གསུམ་ མགོན་ བོ། the Lords of the Three Families - 'Jam dpal dbyangs, Spyan ras gzigs, and Gsang bdag phyag na

rdo rje

Rin bzang རིན་ ་ བཟང་། a person's name

rin po che རིན་ ་ བོད་ སྐྱེབས། 'precious'; term for a knowledgeable person

Rje blo bzang grags pa རྐྱེ་ བློ་ བྲང་ ་ རྒྱརུས་ བཞེན། (1357-1419) the founder of the Dge lugs Sect

Rje byams pa རྐྱེ་ བམས་ ་ བཞེན། the Future Buddha, Maitreya

Rje gser khang pa རྐྱེ་ སྐྱེས་ ་ བཞེན། the founder of Bon skor Yul lha Temple

Rje tsong kha pa རྐྱེ་ སྐོང་ བཀྲག་ ་ བཞེན། alternative name of Rje blo bzang grags pa

Rje zhwa dmar pa རྐྱེ་ བཟྱ་ བདོ་ ་ རྒྱས། the name of a reincarnated bla ma

Rka lo རྗུ་ ་ བཞེན། the name of a Yul lha temple caretaker

rkang dung རྐང་ དུང་། a thighbone trumpet blown by monks and sngags pa during rituals

Rkyang rtsa རྒྱལ་ ་ རྡོ་ ་ བཞེན། (Jiangzha 江扎) Village

rkyang རྒྱལ་། a wild ass

rlung la spur ba རླུང་ སྤུ་ རུ། 'dispose by wind'; sky burial ritual

rlung rta རླུང་ ་ རྲ ་ རཏ། 'wind horses', pieces of thin square paper printed with a horse and Buddhist formulations

rlung rta sde bzhi རླུང་ སྐྱེ་ བཞི། 'the four classes of fortune'

Rma chu རྒྱ་ ་ དུ། a river's name
rmu thag a rope made from white sheep wool that locals believe joins humans and Heaven and is thought to protect local villagers' livestock

rna thog women's silver earrings that feature long thin chains that end in small bells and are decorated with coral

Rnam mkhyen rgyal ba a Bon deity

rnam shes consciousness; the soul

Rnam sras a guardian deity

Rnam thos sras one of the Four Great Kings/Gurdians of the Four Directions

rnga a drum

Rta mgrin the name of a deity

reten 'brel 'fortune', 'interdependent connection', 'cause', 'omen', a term defining things as dependently linked or circumstantially interconnected

rtsam pa hot tea is poured into a bowl, butter is added and, after the butter melts, roasted barley flour, dried cheese, and (depending on personal preference) sugar are added. This is mixed so that it has the texture of stiff cookie dough and is then eaten

rtsis pa an astrologer

rtsid pa yak or goat hair

rtsis telling fortunes based on Tibetan astrology

rtswa phyags a common straw broom

ru dar the cloth locals traditionally put on the top of mountains to indicate the community's borders. They were originally put on mountaintops by Tibetan soldiers as territorial markers

ru khag a unit/section. Bon skor Village had five units in 2016
sa 'dogs ས་འདེགས། ground ties; the ropes on a tent tied to pegs in the ground

Sa lam dkar gsum ས་ལམ་དཀར་གསུམ་ the name of a Buddhist recitation

sa sku ས་་ུ། images of Buddha and deities painted on clay

Sangs rgyas སངས་རྒྱས། a person's name

Sang rgyas don 'grub སངས་རྒྱས་འགྲུབ། a person's name

sar bjol ba སར་བོན་པ། 'earth depository'; earth internment of a corpse

sbra སྲ། a tent made of coarse black yak hair and goat hair

sbra leb སྲེབས། name of a large sbra

sbra nag སྲྭ་དག། often called sbra for short, sbra literally translates as 'coarse yak', 'goat hair cloth' 'tent'. 'Nag' means 'black'.

sbra sgo gcig སྲྭ་གཅིག 'same tent door'; refers to a family's relatives and neighbors

sbre'u mtshes སྲྭ་ུ་མཚེས། 'tent twin', an extended tent

sbyin sreg སྲིན་སྐྱེད་ 'burned offerings'; monks burn such items as boiled butter with beans and herbs to delight the deities, who then ensure locals' well-being

Sde mang སྐད་མང ད་ Village, Bya mdo Township

Sdong gzhongs སྟོང་གཞོནས་ Village, Bya mdo Township Town

Sdong ra སྟོང་ར ཁྱིན། Tribe, Bon skor Village

Se ra སྐད་ཐོན། Monastery, Lha sa City

seng gdong སེང་དཀོན། the name of a Buddhist recitation that monks and local villagers chant at homes

sga སྐ། a saddle

sga thag སྐབས་ a saddle's ropes or straps

sga yog སྐལ་ཡོངས། the pad under a saddle
sgo 'gyogs སྟོ་གོང་ 'door raising'; the song sung to greet the bride and
A zhang when they reach the door of the groom's home or
tent
sgo chon སྟོ་ཆོང་ a tent 'door pole'
sgo dar སྟོ་དར་ a door banner/ pieces of silk cloth hung at the entrance
of a tent
sgo kwa སྟོ་ཁའི་ the poles by the entrance of a tent
Sgo mang mkhan sprul dge 'dun bstan pa dar rgyas སྟོད་མང་མཁན་སྤྲུལ་འདོད་པ་དར་རྒྱས་' a bla ma
Sgo me སྟོ་མས་ Village, Chab cha County, Mtsho lho Tibetan
Autonomous Prefecture
Sgro ri སྟོ་རི། 'Feather Mountain'; the name of a lab rtse in Bon skor
Village
Sgro ri སྟོ་རི། Village, Chab cha County
Sgrol ma སྟོལ་མ་ Tara
Sgrom སྟོ་མ་ Village, Khri ka County
sgyid pu སིད་ཕུ། adobe stove
sgyo སྟོ། sheepskin bags
ShA kya thub ba ཤཱཀ་ཐུབ་པ། Shakyamuni
Sha rgya ཤ་རྒྱལ་ Village
sha rus pa ཤ་རུས་པ་ similar to sha rus
sha rus ཤ་རུས་ 'flesh and bones'; blood relationships
sha tho ཤ་ཐོ། two two-meter long sticks placed on the sides of a camel's
humps
ShA+or wo ཤཱ་ཐོ་ a Bon skor place name
Shagou ཤཱ་གོུ། (Bya mdo) Township
shags ཤིས་ antiphonal songs sung in a humorous, bantering way
Shan pa rwa mgo ཤིན་པ་རྒྱ་མོ་ a deity
Shan pa tsi thung ཤིན་ཚི་ཐུང་ a deity
Shar ba 'eastern people' and refers to tea traders originally from Zung chu County

ShAng shur a Bon skor Village place name

She'u nyal Village, Bya mdo Township

shengchandui 生产队 production teams

shing khem a wooden shovel

Shing ma then tsi a deity

Shing skor Tribe, Bon skor Village

shuji 书记 secretary

Ska lo a person's name

skag beings a belt

skar ma 'star' 'minute'; process of transporting a corpse to the funeral site. Locally, skar ma also suggests going to a funeral or the time for final disposition of a corpse

Ske ba Village, Mang chu Township, Mang ra County

ske gor a flat, crescent-moon-shaped sheet of silver decorated with coral hung under the bride's chin and tied behind the neck

skra bshad 'hair speech'; the speech given by the bride's brother using a particular rhythm as women in the family plait the bride's hair

Skya shing Tribe, Bon skor Village

Slob dpon pad ma 'byung gnas Master Padmasambhava

slog pa a robe made of sheepskin/goatskin and felt

Sma ra Tribe, Bon skor Village

Smad pa'i gshung pa Village, Khri ka County

Sman bla the Medicine Buddha
Sme bdun ri bo སྨེ་བདུན་ི་བོ a location in Sichuan Province
Smon lam སྨོན་ལམ 'wishes' 'aspiration prayers'; Tibetan Buddhist scriptures
smyug khrog སྨྲུག་ཁྱོད a case for pens
sna 'khrus སྔ་'མྷརུ 'nose washing'; the act of covering the nose or face of a bride. An alternative spelling is zhal 'khrus 'face washing'.
sna khab སྔ་ཁབ 'nose cover'; a cloth that covers the face, usually of a bride
Snang ra སྤང་ར་ a place name
Snang ra'i dpon tshang སྤང་རི་དོན་ཐོང་ the leader family of a tribe in Gcan tsha
sngags pa སྣད་གས་པ། lay tantric practitioner
sngas mgo'i bla ma སྣད་གས་མོའི་'མ། 'bla ma near the corpse'; the bla ma who chants near a corpse
Snying dkar སྤྱིང་དཀར Tribe, Bon skor Village
Snying lcags rgyal སྤྱིང་ལུགས་རྒྱལ a person's name
Sog btsun ston pa ye shes སོག་བཙུན་བསྟོན་པ་ཡེ་ཤེས the founder of the Bon monastery, Stong che khyung mo dgon g.yung drung phun tshog gling, Hexi Township, Khri ka County
sog le སོག་ལེ a saw
sog mo སོག་མོ divination using a sheep clavicle
sog pa སོག་པ་ a sheep's shoulder blade
Sog po mda' tshan bdun སོག་པོ་མདའ་ཐོན་བདུན seven groups of Mongols who occupied the Blue Lake area, including parts of the contemporary Bon skor Village about 700 years ago
Songpan 松潘 Zung chu County
spe byur སྨེ་བྱུར་ colorful beads used as necklaces and hair decorations for women
spe no [ཟེ སྟོར] colorful beads used as necklaces and hair decorations for women

Sprel nag [སྲེལ སྟོད] Village, Bya mdo Township

Spyan mi bzang [སྲིད། རྡོ་རྗེ་] one of the Four Great Kings/Guardians of the Four Directions

Spyan ras gzigs [སྲིད། རྡོ་རྗེ་ ཕྱིན] a deity

Spyi 'dul [སྲིད། དུལ] a Bon religious recitation

srab [སྦྱར] a bridle

srang [སྦྱང] a unit of weight equal to 0.05 kilograms

srog shing [སྲོག། གཟིང] the 'life-tree' 'main beam' in the center of a lab rtse

srung 'khor [སྲུང། རྒྱུར] an amulet

srung ba [སྲུང། བ] 'protecting from evils', a Bon skor Village religious ritual

srung ma [སྲུང། མ] guardian deity

srung rtags [སྲུང། རྒྱུར། རིན་མོ།] a protection symbol

sta re [སྟད་རི།] an axe

Stag lha [སྟག་ལྷ] a person's name

stong 'jal ba [སྟོང། ལོ་བ] 'compensate a thousand'; providing a thousand sheep, goats, and yaks as compensation after a dispute, e.g., in the case of a killing

Stong che bon mang [སྟོང་ཆེ་བོན་མང] a group of Bon practitioners in Stong che Village

Stong che khyung mo dgon g.yung drung phun tshogs gling [སྟོང་ཆེ་ཁྱུང་མོ་དོན་གཡུང་དྲུང་ཕུན་ཚོགས་གིང] Monastery, Khri ka County

Stong che [སྟོང་ཆེ] Village, Hexi Township, Khri ka County

Stong che'i dpon tshang [སྟོང་ཆེའི་དཔོན་ཐིང] Tribe of Leaders

stong mchod [སྟོང་མོཆོད] a religious ritual

Stong skor [སྟོང་སྟོད] (Huangyuan) County
Stong skor Village, Bya mdo Township
Su me lab rtse
Su me lab rtse lab rtse
Sum me lab rtse ma bu cu gsum lab rtse

T

ta len a yak hair or woven wool bag used to hold food and belongings
Tang Dynasty (618-907)
tha 'og a hoof
tha na a silver dung used as a hair decoration
thad thig a tent side cord
thags bran a step in preparing the loom for weaving
thags chas a weaving technique
thags yarn
thang ga a traditional Tibetan painting that often features deity images and religious symbols that may be embroidered, painted, or appliqued
Thang yig rnying ma the Old Tang Book/ Tang Annals
Thar mdo a sutra name, short for 'Phags pa thar pa chen po phyogs su rgyas pa zhes bya ba thag pa chen po' mdo'
Thar re rgyal the fourth Communist Party secretary of Bon skor Village
Thar shul Tribe, Bon skor Village
The'u rang a guardian spirit
The'u rang rkang gcig a guardian spirit
ther me the name of a pole in a gur
Thin tsi a person's name
Tho le dgon rnam rgyal phun tshogs chos rdzong gling Monastery, Mang ra County

thong thig part of a hair decoration for women
Thu zhug ge a place name in Bon skor
Thub bstan lhun grub a local sngags pa
thud cooked dough or rtsam pa flour mixed with cheese, butter, and sugar to form a cake

thugs dam a spiritual vow or meditation
Thur rgan a place name in Bon skor
thur thig tent cord that stabilize a tent
tog 'top'; indicating the roof ornament of a monastery hall
tsha gsur barley flour placed on a fire to smoulder as an offering to water deities

Tsha nag Village, Mgo mang Township
tsha rkong mold for making tsha tsha
Tsha rnga Village, Bya mdo Township Town
tsha tsha images of deities printed by tsha rkong
Tshal rnga dgon dga' ldan dar rgyas gling Monastery, Bya mdo Township Town

Tshal rnga Reservoir Lung yangs Reservior, Chab cha County
Tshal rnga Village, Bya mdo Township Town
tshar lwa cloth-covered robes made of sheepskin, felt, and goatskin for winter

Tshe brtan rgyal a person's name
Tshe brtan a person's name
Tshe thar a ritual
tshe thar a ritual to save or prolong life
tsheb བ། a harvesting tool

tsho ba བ། a tribe

tshod ma བ། steamed dumplings

tshogs བ། 'merit', a religious ritual believed to help participants acquire merit through chanting

Tshogs brgya བ། 'a hundred merits'; a Bon ritual in which local sngags pa chant various mantras a hundred times

Tshogs phud བ། a person's name

Tshogs stong བ། 'a thousand merits'; during a Bon ritual, each sngags pa chants various mantras a thousand times each

Tshogs zas བ། snacks given at the end of tshogs that locals believe are blessed by what has been chanted

tshu'u བ། the ritual of the bride covering her face with her robe sleeves on the wedding day

tshugs བ། to sit

Tshul khrims བ། a person's name

tshwa sgo བ། a salt source

Tsi thung བ། a place name in Sichuan Province

Tuigenghuanlin 返耕还林 Returning Cropland to Forest, a policy locally implemented in 2000

Tuimuhuancao 返牧还草 Returning Degraded Pasture to Grass, a locally implemented policy implemented in 2000

W

Wangshike 汪什科 (Bon skor) Tibetan Village

Wang 王 a person's surname

Wenchang Laoye 文昌老爷 the name of a deity

Wulan County 乌兰 County, Mtsho nub (Haixi) Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
Wutaishan 五台山 a sacred Buddhist site in Wutai County, Shanxi Province

X

xiang 乡 township

xiangzhang 乡长 the township head

xinhao 信号 reception

Xining 西宁 Zi ling, the capital of Mtsho sngon Province

Y

Yao Danrong 姚丹溶 a person's name

Yar kha lung rtogs nyi ma Ṭogs nyi ma the founder of Go ra'i mdo

mtshams khang dga' ldan dben gnas yid dga' chos 'dzin gling

yar sgyid ཁྲིབ་པ་ the upper hearth

Yil ger འབྲས་པ། an alternative name of a local bla ma

Yi sgar འབྲས་པ་ an alternative name of a local bla ma

yob chen འབྲས་པ་ an iron stirrup

Yul 'khor bsrung འཁོར་བསྲུང་ one of the Four Great Kings/ Guardians of the Four Directions

Yul lha འཁོར་ལྷ། a deity

Yul shul འཁོར་ཤུལ། Yushu 玉树 Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture

Z

Zha ra རྩ་ར། Tribe, Bon skor Village

Zhab drung dkar po ལྷབ་ད་སྒོམ་པར། a bla ma

zhang rta རྨུ་ལ་ 'A zhang's horse'; refers to the horse given to the bride's A zhang by the groom's family.

Zhi ba བཞི་བ། a Bon mantra and the name of a deity

Zhing ba བཞིང་བ། Tribe, Bon skor Village
Zhongguo lianhe wangluo tongxin jituan youxian gongsi  中国联合网络通信集团有限公司 China United Telecommunications Co. Ltd.

Zhongguo yidong tongxin jituan gongsi  中国移动通信集团公司

China Mobile Communications Corporation

zhun རུན། a mixture of barley flour, cheese, butter, and sugar identical to rtsam pa, except that more butter is used.

Zi ling རི་ིང། (Xining 西宁) the capital of Mtsho sngon Province

Zi tong 椋潼 County

zlog pa མཉའ། 'expel' 'reverse'; rituals conducted to expel evils from homes or villages

zor ba སྣོར་བ། a sickle

Zung chu གུང་ཆུ། County

zung nga གུང་ང། straps

zung tea གུང་ཝ། tea from Zung chu County
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