

Studying the Tibetan Performing Arts: A Bibliographic Introduction (1986-2017)

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The original idea that prompted this special issue of *Revue d'études tibétaines* (RET) was to publish the papers presented at the conference "Tibetan Performance, Past and present: Multidisciplinary avenues of research" held at Columbia University in New York on 12 November 2012. This one-day conference was organized by Kati Fitzgerald and Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy, with the help of Tashi Tsering (Amnye Machen Institute), and benefitted from the support of the Center for Ethnomusicology at Columbia University (through Ana Ochoa) and Columbia University's Department for East Asian Languages and Cultures (through Gray Tuttle), as well as the Rubin Foundation.¹ Unfortunately, only a third of the nine papers presented at the conference finally made their way into this issue: those of Kati Fitzgerald, Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy and Michael Monhart. Given the absolute rarity of academic events devoted to the Tibetan performing arts, it is valuable to mention here the six presentations that could unfortunately not make it into this issue. They testify to the broad scope of the contributions, addressing the vast category of 'performing arts' in the Tibetan context by looking at terminological history, music, monastic dance, religious ritual, film and even television shows:

Pema Bhum & Kristina Dy-Liacco, "Tibetan Performing Arts in Trace Foundation's Latse Library's Audio-visual Collections".

Robert Barnett, "Tibetan religious dance and ritual in socialist cinema and television dramas, 1928 to the present day".

Luo Wenhua, "Cham Performance in Emperor Qianlong's Court".

Mona Schrempf, "Not only for the Tourist Gaze: Performing the State and Monastic Power at the Gomphu Kora Tsechu Festival". This was followed by a Screening of the ethnographic film 'Gomphu Kora Tsechu, a pilgrimage festival in Eastern Bhutan' (30 min., 2012) by Mona Schrempf.

¹ For a review of this conference, see Kathy Foley, 2013, "Tibetan Performance, Past and present: Multidisciplinary avenues of research", *Asian Theatre Journal*, 30 (2), pp. 520-525.

Jessie Amelia Wallner, "'Tracking' Tibetan Music: The Evolution of Sound Recording Technology and its Impact on Tibetan Communities".

Tashi Tsering (Amnye Machen Institute), "*Rtsed-sna, zlos-gar, rig-rtsal*. A discussion of performance terminology through history and thoughts for future research".

Three Asian scholars also contributed to the completion of this issue. They have extensively researched Tibetan performing arts, either by examining their treatment in Buddhist classical literature (Cuilan Liu), by following the vicissitudes of exile pop music in India and Nepal (Tatsuya Yamamoto), or by surveying, as a researcher in a government work unit, many traditional Tibetan drama and performance traditions within the People's Republic of China (Sangye Dondhup).

1 – The Scope of 'Performing Arts'

As was the case at the Columbia University Conference mentioned above, this RET issue rests on a very wide understanding of the category of 'performing arts'. These are usually thought to comprise three elements: music/song, dance, and drama. In the Tibetan context, song and dance are deeply connected (most dances are sung to, but not all songs are danced to), and instrumental music is marginal. Drama traditions (*a lce lha mo*, *rnam thar*) feature prominent singing and dancing components. But each of these three elements brings immediately to mind adjacent, or interrelated, cultural practices that lead us to broaden the category of 'performing arts':

- Songs are closely related to verbal arts, or the public demonstration of beautiful speech—beautiful in both content and form—, such as the recitation of eulogies, genealogies, poetry, proverbs, folk tales and of course the celebrated Gesar epic.² What has come to be summed up in 'oral literature' is, in turn, deeply interwoven with literary styles, particularly the *mgur/mgul* 'songs' of ecstatic meditators, or those of the 6th Dalai Lama. In performing arts, as elsewhere in Tibetan studies, frontiers are porous.
- Dances are not only done for entertainment. Several religious

² In 2009, the Gesar epic has been inscribed on UNESCO's list of Humanity's Intangible Cultural Heritage, alongside other Tibetan traditions such as the drama tradition of *a lce lha mo*.

ritual traditions, such as *'cham*—that Tibetans adamantly keep in the category of 'religion', separate from 'mundane' activities and shows—rely on distinctive uses of the body and can constitute elaborate 'spectacles' in their own right. Performance studies have long looked at questions of techniques of the body, presence, learning, preparation (including techniques of the mind), transmission and bodies in social and religious context. Therefore, it makes sense from a western scholarly point of view, to carefully depart from Tibetan emic classifications and include selected ritual activities in the category of 'performing arts', namely those 'spectacles', Buddhist or pagan—such as the well-studied *klu rol* in Reb gong—, that attract a substantial amount of onlookers.

- Drama was a significant and far-ranging cultural form in pre-1950s Tibet, but nowadays it seems confined to 'tradition'. Fiction and dramatic techniques have carried over to more 'modern' expressive formats (sometimes with the same drama people involved), such as cinema, videos and even television shows. I believe that these selected cultural productions, usually associated with media studies, can also be included in the wide spectrum of 'Tibetan performing arts', although they are not 'live', in the sense of performers doing something in front of an audience.

Clearly, I am advocating for a large and loose understanding of the scope of 'Tibetan³ performing arts', but it seems fair to leave aside the elements that pertain more specifically to art history and visual studies, such as paintings, murals, statues, jewellery, architectural constructions and photographs, first because their 'tangible' component outdoes the 'intangible' quality that is highlighted in the study of 'performing arts'⁴; and second because, in the Tibetan

³ The complex category of 'Tibetan', and how it has evolved over time, deserves of course a substantial discussion, but it goes well beyond the scope of this introduction. In this context, I shall opt for a rather flexible understanding of 'Tibetan' as including all the people who speak Tibetic languages, also those in the western, southern and eastern margins of the Tibetan plateau. It is important to stress here, though, that the use of a single adjective, 'Tibetan', does not entail a cultural uniformity across the whole category. Diversity and friction within Tibetans are huge and should be accounted for in research much more than they presently are.

⁴ That being said, intangible performances do actually rely on 'material culture', for instance costumes and textiles, masks, props, votive objects used by the performers (thangkas, statues, reliquaries) as well as technological devices used in learning and transmission (librettos, texts, drawings, recordings and recording

studies context, art history does already exist as a field in its own right and has garnered a substantial amount of attention and publications.

2 – A Relatively Neglected Field

So, what does the field of 'Tibetan performing arts' look like in western academia?⁵ Secular aspects of Tibetan expressive culture, such as songs and dances, have long held a marginal, even neglected, place in Tibetan studies. One reason may be the ideological focus, within Tibetan culture itself, on spiritual liberation, looking down on activities that are not conducive to enlightenment. To the exception of a few authors, Tibetan religious masters and historians have paid little attention to music, dance or drama, considering them neither a worthwhile area of study, nor an enviable activity to engage in. However, in practice, these activities are everywhere in the social fabric of Tibetans. They denote happiness and are associated with each and every celebration, even religious festivities. They are extremely significant vectors of culture, at least in the way anthropologists understand and value 'culture', sometimes at odds with Buddhist orthodoxy about what is worthwhile and what is not. They allow for a deep and wide gaze into the preoccupations and practices of Tibetans. They convey a sense of history, knowledge, values, and can express creatively current predicaments and sometimes even criticism. Just considering the emotional and political impact of modern songs today, especially in Tibet, or the cultural impact of movies among the youth, testifies to the relevance of these cultural productions to understand contemporary Tibetan issues.

Surprisingly, academic events dedicated to Tibetan performing arts have been rare. Nearly all of them consist of panels convened at the successive seminars of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (IATS), and many of them have unfortunately not been published. Most recently, there have been IATS panels entitled "Music", "Gesar", and "Ritual, ceremony and performance" (2003); "New investigations on the epic of King Gesar" and "Modern Tibetan culture" (2006); "Religious and Secular Performance" (2010); "Performing arts and musical traditions", "New research on the

instruments). These aspects all qualify to the scope of 'performing arts' studies. These material dimensions are, as a matter of fact, the most lacking in the extant research on the performing arts.

⁵ Ses Sangye Dondhup's contribution in this issue for an overview of research on the performing arts done by Tibetans in the People's Republic of China.

Gesar epic in Tibet”, and “Tibetan and Mongolian ritual dance” (2013)—no panel was convened on the topic at the last IATS seminar in 2016, not even on Gesar. There have been a couple of conferences on Tibetan rituals, the proceedings of which are now edited as books,⁶ examining solely ‘religious’ rituals, and not looking at the performative, sensuous, visual, or musical dimensions of these practices. Tibetans in Asia, whether in Dharamsala or in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) have held multiple meetings on music or drama since the 1980s, yet these events mostly attended by performers and were geared towards a folkloristic compiling approach, rather than a contextual and critical appraisal of performance.

In other words, since the landmark publication of the book edited by Jamyang Norbu in 1986,⁷ bringing together eleven contributions on “*Zlos gar: The Performing Traditions of Tibet*” by the most prominent scholars of the topic at the time, the field of Tibetan performing arts has still not taken off. Research appears scattered: a few scholars, especially ethnomusicologists, among whom Mireille Helffer and Anna Morcom,⁸ as well as myself for drama and some music styles, have tried to write consistently about one form or other of Tibetan performance; but many publications are ‘occasional’ contributions by scholars whose main, or more recent, interests lie outside the realm of performances.

To further describe the field, we should say that knowledge is not only scattered, and even sometimes difficult to get hold of if one is not aware of specific publications, but also *fragmented*. As is the case for the whole of Tibetan studies, research on the performing arts is marked by a form of insularity stemming from two factors. First, the difficulty in gaining access to many Tibetan areas within the PRC entails that western researchers converge to relatively more open areas, such as northern Amdo since the 2000s, while research in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), that used to be at the forefront of Tibetan studies, has since shrunk significantly. That explains why there are multiple studies on a single ritual (e.g. the *klu rol* in Reb

⁶ Cabezon José I. (ed.), 2010, *Tibetan Ritual*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
Buffetrille Katia (ed.), 2012, *Revisiting Rituals in a Changing Tibetan World*. Leiden, Brill.

⁷ Jamyang Norbu (ed.), 1986, *Zlos-Gar. Performing traditions of Tibet. Commemorative issue on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the founding of Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (1959-84)*. Dharamsala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.

⁸ The previous generation of ethnomusicologists of Tibet, such as Ter Ellingson and Ricardo Canzio, who were prolific until the mid-1980s, has not continued to publish on the topic. Mireille Helffer, whose publications since the mid-1960s span a stunning 50 years, is the most persistent and prolific researcher of the whole field.

gong, Amdo, which has attracted at least seven researchers, who have produced over ten articles on the subject), while studies of performances and rituals in other parts of Amdo, and all the more in Central Tibet and in Kham, are painfully lacking. Second, all researchers are steeped in their own social networks, that shape decisively the scope of their experience of Tibetan culture in general—in the PRC as in exile, experiences and expressions of Tibetanness vary greatly across geographic, subcultural and social factors. Researchers tend to see things, not “from the native’s point of view”, as Bronislaw Malinowski famously phrased anthropology’s project,⁹ but more modestly from their friends’ point of view. This is common to all the social sciences, but there is also a certain degree of parochialism within Tibetan societies themselves. Therefore, friendships and loyalties cultivated by researchers over long stays in a given *milieu* do colour in strong ways their analysis and resulting publications. Parochialism is known among Tibetans mostly on religious or regional grounds, but it may take other forms as well. For example, if one relies on, let’s say, an Amdowa research partner from a particular region, from a specific generation (age), with a given education background, and with precise views on the current Tibetan predicament, to write about the whole of Tibetan music, and if that person has not had extensive experiences in other Tibetan regions, the account will unavoidably be biased towards favouring the Amdo traditions he knows about—likewise for any other type of positionality of our research partners and informants. Overall publications available in the PRC, which frequently copy and recycle simplifications produced by Chinese and Tibetan state folklorists, are not a reliable way to go around the lack of a direct experience of the realities discussed; one has to know how to choose and how to read those publications. In sum, in its present state, the field of Tibetan performing arts consists of a series of fragmented depictions and investigations gathered at various times and places by variously positioned researchers, and it is still premature to produce a satisfying and fair overall picture.

Furthermore, Tibetan performing arts is a field characterised by a large number of unpublished B.A. research papers,¹⁰ and M.A. and Ph.D. dissertations: after their completion, many young scholars have chosen to either not pursue an academic career, or to reorient their

⁹ See Clifford Geertz’ (1974) appraisal of Malinowski’s phrase in his well-known essay “From the Native’s Point of View”: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding”, in *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 28 (1) (Oct., 1974), pp. 26-45.

¹⁰ I have included many SIT (Student International training) study abroad program research papers available online.

attention towards topics closer to mainstream Tibetology, Anthropology or Buddhism. It may be the case that, for early career anthropologists, studying Tibetan performing arts is perceived more as a challenge than as a viable option. To be successful, one has to juggle with, on one side, being productive with publications that respond to the theoretical expectations of the discipline—fashionable key concepts that are all the rage in other cultural settings, but that don't seem to work so well in the complex Tibetan case—and on the other side, a marked strain in gathering research data—because of the linguistic requirements imposed on researchers, who have to go through a long training to master Tibetan and Chinese;¹¹ and because of the increasing difficulty, in the current PRC political climate, to carry out meaningful fieldwork.¹² To make matters worse, I shall add that the 'standard' (observation, experience, interview) methods of the anthropologist are often insufficient to give a grounded account of Tibetan songs, dances and drama, especially at a time when, in a quickly shifting society, young informants have not had first-hand experience of the social and cultural 'traditions' of their elders, and may provide the visiting researcher with questionable statements and explanations, repeating simplistic ideas circulating around, sometimes even State propaganda. Ideally, the anthropologist of the Tibetan performing arts should seek to practice some of the historian's rigour and depth of field, and a lot of the philologist's vigilant grasp of subtle, situated, multiple and shifting meanings of what is said and written. It is especially true for contemporary Tibetan cultural production within the PRC. It is tempting for some scholars to display their analytic skills and readily propose sweeping interpretations of Tibetan identity, resistance, agency, or assimilation within China, but caution, and situating the discussion within geographic, subcultural and social limits should be explicit at all times.

This leads onto another important question when dealing with cultural production by Tibetans in the PRC: it is indeed a thriving industry, but given the current repressive conditions weighing on intellectuals and artists, especially singers, is it wise, let alone ethical, to be transparent and tell it all out in western publications? These

¹¹ Or, for the researchers working in exile, the local languages spoken in the host society: Hindi, Punjabi, Nepali, German, French,...

¹² This refers not only to troubles in getting visas and gaining access to Tibetan areas as foreign nationals, but also the difficulty to carry out immersive fieldworks over long periods of time (the hallmark of anthropology's methodology), to build trust and have relaxed and informative conversations with local people, especially in the Tibet Autonomous Region. But restrictions are growing in all Tibetan regions.

productions are surely in the 'public' space, but making them research cases in the West, and locking their interpretation in antagonising (resistance, defiance, even protest?) political positions, attracts much attention by local and national authorities onto local practices that fare best when they are kept low-profile.

For all of these reasons of access, information, fragmentation, interpretation and ethics in navigating political sensitivities within the PRC, it seems that valuable research opportunities today lie within the emerging pool of Tibetan researchers within the PRC. Some of them have acquired additional academic training abroad. It is also, of course, high time Tibetan scholars reclaimed their own heritage. The ideological and methodological gap between how research is carried out in the PRC and in western countries is still challenging at this point, but fruitful discussions are bound to develop as the Tibetan research will be coming out.

3 - In this issue

The following collection of articles falls short of addressing comprehensively any of the complications listed above. But they testify to the vitality and ingenuity of the field, most of the contributors being young innovative scholars.

The issue opens with two articles rooted in religious texts and Buddhist deliberations, which have been a trademark of the field of Tibetan performance studies since the start. Cuilan Liu surveys a vast body of Buddhist Indic and Tibetan literature to see how Buddhist regulations have attempted to control the consumption and performance of music, dance and drama by ordained monks. These practices are condemned in Canon law, yet they came to be accepted in Tibetan society, so, how has the contradiction been resolved? Michael Monhart attempts to open a black box: what happens in the mind of the religious practitioner when he offers ritual music to the gods? Looking first at aesthetics and notions of the 'beautiful', he then uses Paul Ricœur's theories of emplotment and 'being-as' to investigate the motivations and state of mind of the performer.

Sangye Dondhup proposes a retrospective and contextualization of nearly forty years of research about Tibetan performing arts carried out by Tibetan researchers in the PRC. He presents the strengths and challenges of the most noteworthy publications in Tibetan and Chinese and concludes with what he considers a promising approach for future studies. Tatsuya Yamamoto shifts the focus over to the Tibetan exiles of India and Nepal. He looks at the current production of pop songs, and analyses how the quality and

the mode of writing of the lyrics has evolved over the last twenty years. That brings him to reflect on the specific agency of both refugee singers and audiences, and how it has brought about unintended consequences.

The last two articles are written by researchers first trained in western drama before researching *a lce lha mo*. Kati Fitzgerald examines, in Kathmandu and Lhasa, how new technologies such as mobile phones and digital recordings have affected the transmission of knowledge between teacher and actor, and how this comes to challenge assumptions about lineage within the drama tradition. Finally, Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy reconsiders the work *lha mo* actors on the stage in the light of her training in drama school and western theories and assumptions about acting, presence and embodiment.

4 – A Retrospective Overview (1986-2017)

To close this introduction, it may be of worth to offer the following bibliography summing up the “state of research” on Tibetan performing arts, to quote part of the title of Peter Crossley’s 1967 well-known essay.¹³ The next milestone came a little less than twenty years later, with Jamyang Norbu’s edited book (1986) mentioned above, “*Zlos-Gar. Performing traditions of Tibet*”. More than thirty years have since passed: an update is long overdue. I have thus set 1986 as a starting date and tried to survey the major pieces produced in Western languages¹⁴ until the current year, dividing the data into twelve headings:

- 1) General presentations of Tibetan music or performing arts
- 2) Music in a religious context
- 3) Monastic dances (*cham[s]*)
- 4) Literary ‘songs’: *mgur* by Milarepa, mad yogins, the 6th Dalai Lama and other meditative ‘song’-poems
- 5) Verbal arts: speeches, proverbs, folk tales, comedy, *lama mani*
- 6) The Gesar epic

¹³ Crossley-Holland Peter, 1967, "The State of Research in Tibetan Folk Music", in *Journal of the society for ethnomusicology*, Vol. XI - n° 2, pp. 170-187 [reprinted in Jamyang Norbu (ed.), 1986. *Zlos-Gar. Performing traditions of Tibet. Commemorative issue on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the founding of Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (1959-84)*. Dharamsala : Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, pp. 105-124].

¹⁴ See Sangye Dondhup’s contribution in this issue for a contrasting review of the scholarship on performing arts produced by Tibetans in the People’s Republic of China, in both Tibetan and Chinese.

- 7) Drama, *a lce lha mo*
- 8) Descriptions of 'spectacular' lay rituals, *klu rol*
- 9) Traditional/folk music and dance
- 10) Pop music, world music and contemporary genres
- 11) Cinema, films, videos
- 12) Broadcast media: television, radio

I have introduced each section with short comments.

These sources are scattered, sometimes hard to come by, and many of them are unpublished dissertations. I believe there is worth in bringing together studies in these twelve areas of research, hoping that it will entice future scholars to read more widely than their specialised topic and enrich their analysis. It may also help young scholars, who may at times overlook the valuable research done in a not-so-distant past, or carried out in other areas of the Tibetan cultural world.

I have tried to be exhaustive, but any endeavour of this kind is of course doomed to fail. I have left out countless unpublished conference papers, numerous blog entries and newspaper articles, that are often less than a page long, and don't provide much informative content. I was limited by my linguistic skills and looked mainly at sources accessible to me, in English, French, German or Italian. I apologize to the authors whose work I have missed, and I invite them to join the conversation and renew the field of Tibetan performance studies.

Thematic Bibliography (1986-2017)¹⁵

1. General presentations of Tibetan music or performing arts

Helffer has provided the only book (2000-b, transl. 2004) on the whole range of Tibetan music and performance traditions, and it is the most useful start, for those who can read Italian or French. Writing a fair and representative encyclopaedia article is a challenging mission, given the fragmented nature of the accessible data. Combining the expertise of several scholars may be the best option: the 2001 'Tibet' entry in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and musicians*, featuring 13 sections written by 9 scholars still stands as most detailed and balanced description, especially in comparison with the PRC-biased article by Mao Jizeng (2002-b), with

¹⁵ All of the URLs mentioned in the bibliography have last been accessed in late May 2017.

unrecognizable Tibetan terminology given in pinyin, and with classifications that are absent from Tibetan understandings. Temple's online bibliography (2012) is very useful, especially for finding old materials—the oldest one dated 1896—but it is neither systematic nor complete, especially for recent research materials.

2001, "Tibet", in Stanley Sadie (ed.), the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and musicians*. London, Macmillan, Vol. 25, pp. 441-460.

Sections by multiple authors:

- "I. Background, History and Research", Carole Pegg p. 441.
- "II. Monastic music—1. Liturgical Chant and Music. i. Bön", Ricardo Canzio, pp. 441-443.
- "II. Monastic music—1. Liturgical Chant and Music. ii. Buddhist Schools—3. Instruments—4. Notation", Mireille Helffer, pp. 441-449.
- "II. Monastic music—2. 'Cham", Mona Schrempf, pp. 444-445.
- "III. Traditional Music—1. Folk Music—6. Instruments", Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy & Tsereng Dondhup, pp. 449-460.
- "III. Traditional Music—2. *Gar*", Mark Trewin, p. 452.
- "III. Traditional Music—4. The Gesar Epic", Geoffrey Samuel, pp. 455-456.
- "III. Traditional Music—3. Nangma—5. *Lha-mo*", Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy, pp. 452-457.
- "IV. Contemporary Music", Laetitia Luzi, p. 458.

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Helffer Mireille, 2000-a, "Tibetan culture in Southeast Asia", in A. Arnold (ed.), *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Vol. 5, South Asia, pp. 709-717.

Helffer Mireille, 2000-b, *Musiche dal Tetto del mondo*. Turin, Testo &

immagine.

Helfffer Mireille, 2004, *Musiques du toit du monde: l'univers sonore des populations de culture tibétaine*. Paris, L'Harmattan.

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Roche Gerald & Rinchen Khar, forthcoming, "Tibet and Tibetans", *SAGE Encyclopaedia of Music and Culture*. Draft accessible https://www.academia.edu/21430905/Tibet_and_Tibetans_SAGE_Encyclopaedia_of_Music_and_Culture

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https://www.academia.edu/4357074/Erwan_Temple_Short_Bibliography_on_Tibetan_Performing_Arts_and_Religious_Dances

Trewin Mark, 2000, "Raising the roof", in Simon Broughton, Mark Ellingham & Richard Trillo (eds.), *World Music, the Rough guide* (Vol. 2: Latin & North America, Caribbean, India, Asia and Pacific). London, Penguin, pp. 254-261.

2. Music in a religious context

This subfield is still one of the most prolific of the twelve sections proposed in this bibliographic essay. Topics include music in/as ritual, musical lineages, vocal and instrumental music, organology and instruments, notation, fieldwork methods, the social role of monasteries in the preservation of musical heritage, music played by nuns, as well as music in Buddhist regulations. Helfffer's work stands

out as being the most prolific, touching on virtually all of these subjects.

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Elford Christopher, 2008, "Sit Like a Bell: Sound and the Body in Tibetan Buddhism". *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*, Paper 59. URL: http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/59

- Gordon Gabriel, 2009, "Churning the Ocean of Milk: The Role of Vocal Composition in Tibetan Buddhist Ritual Music". *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*, Paper 797. URL: http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/797
- Helfffer Mireille, 1986, "Preliminary Remarks concerning the use of Musical Notation in Tibet", in Jamyang Norbu (ed.), *Zlos-Gar. Performing traditions of Tibet. Commemorative issue on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the founding of Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (1959-84)*. Dharamsala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, pp. 69-90.
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3. Monastic dances ('cham[s])¹⁶

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4. Literary 'songs': *mgur* by Milarepa¹⁷, mad yogins¹⁸, the 6th Dalai Lama and other meditative 'song'-poems

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5. Verbal arts: speeches, proverbs, folk tales, comedy, lama mani

¹⁹ Let us mention here important and not so well-known source materials prior to 1986, since folk tales were an important topic of research before Westerner researchers could travel to Tibet in the 1980s: O'Connor W.F.T. (transl.), 1977 [1906], *Folk tales from Tibet, with illustrations by a Tibetan artist & some verses from Tibetan love-songs*. Kathmandu, RPB (Bibliotheca Himalayica series 2, v.11), Rinjing Dorjee (ed.), 1975, *Tales of Uncle Tompa: The legendary rascal of Tibet*. S.I., Dorje-Ling. Norbu Chophel, 1984, *Folk Tales of Tibet*. Dharamsala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. Thurlow Clifford, 1975, *Stories from beyond the clouds. An anthology of Tibetan folk tales*. Dharamsala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. And finally the seven volumes published under: 1982, *Märchen, Sagen und Schwänke vom Dach der Welt : Tibetisches Erzählgut in Deutscher Fassung*. Sankt Augustin, VGH Wissenschaftsverlag (Beiträge zur Tibetischen Erzählforschung).
 V.1.: D. Schuh, *Erzählgut aus Zentral und Osttibet erzählt in der Sprache von Lhasa*.
 V.2 : M. Kretschmer, *Erzählungen westtibetischer Viehzüchter*.
 V.3 : R. Bielmeyer & S. Herrmann, *Viehzüchtererzählungen sowie Erzählgut aus sKyid-grong und Ding-ri*.

The heading lists out the content of this section. Many publications are dedicated to Bhutan: I have kept them in a separate section. There are numerous folk tales and stories published in *Asian Highland Perspectives*. I have compiled here the most extensive ones, in book format. Professors heading the ETP (English Tibetan program) at the Qinghai Normal University in Xining (first Kevin Stuart, joined by Gerald Roche), have spearheaded an impressive number of local folk culture data collection projects by their students, mostly from Amdo, that have resulted in joint or single-authored publications (lately, in *Asian Highland Perspectives*). The database of the 'Plateau Culture Heritage Protection Group' (PCHP, formerly the Plateau Music Project) holds very rich "Collections from the Tibetan Plateau 2006-2012".²⁰ Note the very few reference on *lama mani* (Gelle, Tashi Tsering) and the related *bu chen* of Spiti (Sutherland, Dolffus, Kalantari). I have added two articles on playing (Murakami, Loseries), since they are rare accounts of folk culture that does feature speech elements.

Asian Highland Perspectives 47, 2017: collection of folk tales (pp. 106-153) and A khu Thon pa stories (pp. 161-261).

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V.4 : J.K. Phukhang & P. Schwieger, Erzählgut A-mdo und Brag-g. gyab.

V.5 : S. Herrmann, *Die tibetische Version des Papageienbuches*.

V.6 : M. Kretschman, *Märchen und Schwänke aus Mustang (Nepal)*.

V.7 : R. Bielmeier, *Das Märchen vom Prinzen Co bzang. Eine tibetische Erzählung aus Baltistan*.

²⁰ <http://www.oralliterature.org/collections/pchpgcollections.html>. Information from the website : "PCHP trains young people from across the Tibetan Plateau to use mobile digital technologies to collect oral traditions within their communities. These materials are then repatriated back to communities in locally appropriate forms, typically VCDs or DVDs. In 2011, a partnership between PCHP and the World Oral Literature Project allowed for the hosting of a significant portion of the PCHP archive. The supporting metadata are available in Tibetan, Chinese, and English."

Perspectives.

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8. Descriptions of 'spectacular' lay rituals, klu rol

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9. Traditional/folk songs and dances

This section compiles publications on very diverse folk song traditions, very few are about dance. The list concludes with two important documentary movies short by Tibetans on folk song traditions or on a famous performer of the *nang ma'i skyid sdug* (*nang ma* music society in pre-1950s Lhasa). Let us finally mention the collecting endeavour carried out by the 'Tibetan Endangered Music Project', renamed 'Plateau Music Project' (Mooney 2007, Tsering Bum & Gerald Roche, n.d.), from 2005 to 2014. The Plateau Cultural

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10. Pop music, world music and contemporary genres

Most of the publications examine pop music in Tibet, but a few

authors also look at the politics of performances in or from the PRC (Makley 1997, House, s.d., Wang s.d., Bangsbo 2013, International Campaign for Tibet 2013). Some researchers worked among Tibetan exiles (Diehl 1997, 2002; Conrad, 2000, Mouquod 2001, Tardif-Turcotte 2009, Tenzin Nyiwoe 2011, Yamamoto 2013, Morcom 2015-a, forthcoming-a, Cupchik, forthcoming-a,) or wrote about the invented tradition of singing bowls (Joffe 2015, Yamamoto 2015-a). Political repression is also addressed (Dechen Pemba, s.d., 2014)²⁵. Other studies have focused on Amdo (Mouquod 2001, 2003; Cromphout 2005, Ellwanger 2005, Savolainen s.d., Lama Jabb 2011) or on Chinese appropriations of Tibetan culture and music (Upton 2002, Baranovitch 2009, 2016; Yang 2014), or similar processes in the USA (Congdon 2007).

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