

**LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS
OF TIBET**

by

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INTRODUCTION

The overwhelming majority of these songs and proverbs were compiled through the aid of teachers and friends among the Tibetans during the years of the author's residence in Eastern Tibet from 1921 to 1936. Most of these lines had been memorized during the youth of the people who gave them to him. One woman Kehzang Lhashee who was his wife's personal teacher and also an instructor in the mission school, possessed a marvellous memory. She wrote down more than half of the love songs and also aided in the interpretation and translation of them. A small number of these songs and proverbs were gleaned from published dictionaries and other books; some of these books were in English but others came from books printed in the Tibetan language and brought back by the author. The extracts from languages other than Tibetan were paraphrased orally by him into the Tibetan language and then his teachers would recover the original Tibetan text which would then be translated into the English language.

The author believes he has some special qualifications for undertaking the translation of Tibetan poetry other than a fluent knowledge of Tibetan in speaking and reading. He has always enjoyed reading with appreciation poetry in other languages than English and has published (in 1955) a small volume of his own verses entitled *Light and Serious*. Rhyming and composition of verse come easily to the author although he does not flatter himself that it is of anything but mediocre quality. The author has also spent the last thirty-five years in the study and translation of Tibetan.

Many of the proverbs and a few of the songs were caught during the author's conversational association with the Tibetans while on the trail and the others by requesting his teachers to write down the songs and proverbs they knew. Tibetans frequently quote proverbs in their conversation, and especially on the trail would break into song which permitted the author to immediately ask the teacher or the participant to write down the song or proverb. Later these were corrected, if necessary, and then translated by the author and his Tibetan teacher into English. Such source collection enabled the author to understand the interpretations of the allusions and to make a more correct translation. However the author does not consider that he has done a perfect translation in all cases but falls back on the old Tibetan proverb regarding their most famous

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Prime Minister Gar who secured the Nepalese and Chinese wives for his King of the Tibetan Golden Age Songtsan Gampo, and who has been further immortalized in "Do you make mistakes, so did the famous Gar". Gar made love to the Chinese Princess by whom he had a child enroute home to Lhasa, a trip which took almost two years.

The object of these translations from a broad viewpoint is to give an insight into Tibetan thinking and culture, so that all peoples outside Tibet may better understand and appreciate the Tibetans, who represent in some respects a rather unique civilization which as yet has been little contaminated by any mechanized culture. The deepest and most concealed thoughts of a people usually are found in their songs and proverbs, which express sometimes in veiled forms, that which is too sacred or too revealing, or perhaps at times too dangerous to be expressed in prose.

In the mechanical sense the author has attempted to give an English translation intelligible to the reader while maintaining the flavor and idiomatic quaintness of the Tibetan language. To favor the beauty and originality of Tibetan expression while at the same time rendering Tibetan phraseology into readable English is a difficult task; and may not be as successful from either a literary or a comprehensive standpoint as would be true if only one objective was supported. Indeed these objectives had to be altered too often in order to effect the translation within the limitations of the rhythm. Tibetan poetry has rhythm but not rhyme. Tibetan is difficult to rhyme and the rare rhymes are purely accidental. All songs and proverbs are in blank verse and the translations into English are of the same type. In moments of very intense emotions the Tibetan poet may use an alphabetical acrostic but this form has not been attempted in the English translation.

In translation the author has been handicapped by the briefness of the Tibetan language in expression and the necessity of using a fixed number of syllables to support the Tibetan versification. A further impediment is the burdensome practise of the English language in its use of articles and polysyllabic words. With such obstacles the Tibetan has not been translated into any fixed set of syllables. Eight and nine syllables as indicated at the beginning of the translated sections have been generally utilized for the English but other measures have not been neglected when necessary. Using the same number of syllables in each line for a series of verses has seemed preferable to irregular measures since Tibetan

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poetry is regular and musical. In English when rhythm becomes so irregular as to be discordant, poetry passes into prose. Tibetan poetry is not without harmony and the author hopes he has not passed Tibetan poetry into prose translations.

The true meaning in Tibetan poetry is often deeply concealed within allusions or metaphors which only those steeped in Tibetan thinking and history can understand. At the beginning of one or more quatrains in Chapters four, five and six, are inserted the interpretations in italic letters, while the numbers inserted everywhere indicate explanatory footnotes at the bottom of the pages. Both the interpretations and footnotes are not parts of the original love songs or proverbs but are information notes by the author's Tibetan teachers whose interpretations he felt would be more correct than what he himself could fathom. These individual interpretations may not be the universal or even the correct ones, for the teachers who wrote down these songs stated what the songs meant to them. Such interpretations are worthy of consideration and show at least the depth and frankness of their emotions.

Most of these songs and proverbs are of indefinite age and some may have been handed down for hundreds, maybe thousands of years. Many love songs are credited to the Sixth Dalai Lama who lived from 1681 to 1706 A.D. He was a lover of women and his nightly escapades with his mistresses have been recited in songs since that time. While the author does not dispute that the Sixth Dalai Lama composed many songs yet the author's Tibetan teachers agreed with him that the Dalai Lama was also a collector and compiler of songs which he received. Many of the songs are of greater antiquity than the Sixth Dalai Lama who like Solomon gathered the works of others which were added to his own compositions, and because of his rank and ability, was given credit far in advance of his output. The Tibetan teachers and friends who furnished the songs and proverbs, in most cases, could not state the source of them except that they had learned them from an older generation of singers and reciters.

A few of the songs were composed by companions of the author as they rode the trail together. These songs lampooned another member of the party. In one such contest the party unable to compose even rough verse retorted that since he did not have a goat-head he could not make a proper reply so he countered with oaths. The goat is reputed to be clever at least in contrast to the sheep. The author was never sure but what some of the hundreds

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of stanzas written down by Kehzang Lhashee were composed by her or at least edited or amended. Once the author asked her if she had not composed some of the verses but her denial was with such a laughing voice that he believes she may have been modestly covering up her talents. The author's experience with his companions fortify his opinion that many songs were composed by unknown authors too numerous to mention.

Most of these songs and proverbs were obtained from Eastern Tibet, and thus represent, although maybe incorrectly, what was handed down in that region from remote generations. Whatever variations, from the same stanzas in other areas, are seen in these songs, will be helpful to students, in different fields.

The author has attempted to eliminate duplicates but doubts complete success in this effort. Again some verses vary slightly but such variations were thought worthy of their inclusion in this volume. The following chapter on Some Characteristics of Tibetan Poetry will give a better understanding of these songs and proverbs in their translation.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF TIBETAN POETRY

Tibetan Poetry may be divided into four categories;— (a) Lyrical Love Songs; (b) Dramatic verse found in dramas such as are found in the author's book entitled *Harvest Festival Dramas of Tibet*. These dramas have some prose with poetry predominating; (c) Proverbs which are balanced rhythmic couplets; (d) and Work Chants.

The Lyrical Love Songs may be further classified into what the Tibetans call *Zheh Cham* or Dance Songs, and *Neh Mo* or Home Songs which are chants to console the lonely heart. The Dance Songs are not necessarily, but maybe accompanied by the music of one to three musical instruments—the violin, the flute and the guitar. With musical instruments the chanters dance as they sing. Without instrumental music the songs may be the music for the dancing, or the songs may be sung without dancing. The happy-go-lucky Tibetan youth may suddenly burst into his high falsetto minor key notes as he rides his steed along the trail, or sing a teasing serenade to some pretty girl passing along the road.

Most of the Love Songs appear to be composed for the singing back and forth between a lover and his lass. The lines maybe chanted in a rapid sing-song tone but will always end on the high drawn-out note which the novice does not easily imitate. The affection between lovers is illustrated when one picks the head lice out of the other's hair with the chant, "Off the head of loving mistress, If one picks the tiny head lice; With the nits scattered here and there; To eat they are sweeter than grapes".

However, groups of men and women, separated along sex lines, may sing in answer and reply with verses appropriate to the subject and occasion. Some of the stanzas indicate in a direct reference that they are to be sung only by one sex while others have a hidden allusion or historical reference which applies to but one sex. A Tibetan singing alone on the trail will sing both sides of a love song. In opposition singing, each party may sing but one four line stanza but more may be used if the text permits or the subject requires it; the singing will often continue until one party exhausts its repertoire. In this volume the sequences of the songs are not arbitrarily continuously sung as given nor are they always sung in the order printed; the singers having the right to drop out or add any new verses as they wish.

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Love Songs are usually in quatrains of six syllables to the line. Variations in the six-syllable length especially in colloquial improvisations, or in the Ne Mo home chants, which may not only have seven or eight syllables to the line but be cast into two or three lines to the stanza in place of the regulation four lines. The genitive sign of "i" attached to a Tibetan syllable may or may not count as a syllable, and the same is true of the "u" vowel which may form part of the word as in "Gauh" which means charm-box. In all types of love songs each stanza is capable of standing alone and may qualify in use for a number of answers; each stanza cannot necessarily be considered as part of a long poem; although a series of stanzas may be strung together into what may seem to be a unified long poem. The ability of each stanza to stand alone accounts for some of the repetition of lines and of stanzas in the chanting back and forth. This may show up in these translations although the author has tried to edit out most of the repetitions.

The basic meaning of each stanza may be well hidden, especially in the references to mating, although the Tibetans are more frank than the western individuals in public treatment of sexual statements. Other allusions hover around religion, nature, rank, wealth and politics. Only those conversant with Tibetan life and thought not to mention history and nature of the land can clearly detect the meaning of the allusions. In such allusions the Tibetans demonstrate their essential democracy, for the highest officials including the Dalai Lama may be ridiculed for their evil conduct, their loss of power or rank, as well as any defect in words or in body. Bodily impairments are treated with most consideration, especially if from birth, for then it is the result of one's previous ancestors handed down in transmigration rather than the result of conduct in the present existence. Such democratic criticism has to be accepted by the one criticised; however this is often done behind their back or away from their presence.

An attempt has been made to explain all allusions by annotations at the bottom of each page numbering them consecutively from the beginning. Generally it may be stated that the maiden is most often compared to Drehma (Drolma) who is the Tibetan Diana and credited with being able to deliver one from transmigratory existence; the man may be compared with a warlike deity, to a powerful lord or a celebrated religious personality.

The most frequent religious allusions are to the doctrines of

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Fate and Karma; the latter being the balancing effects of sins and merits in previous existences, for man is reborn again and again until his merits surpass his sins to such an extent that the individual attains Nirvana. Both the rejection and impossibility of love are the result of Fate and Karma over which the individual has no ultimate control. This same attitude is also applied to good fortune and pleasures which result from the number of merits surpassing the number of sins in the transmigratory cycle. Other religious allusions refer to famous temples. As to religious morality the attitude towards sex is more amoral than immoral. Barrenness is a curse and its stigma more piercing than illegitimacy.

Rank and wealth are often alluded to in tones of regret or in words of praise, with an occasional reference to the lover being able to secure the means of livelihood regardless of his poverty. The willow and peach, the lotus and hollyhock, the goose and the thrush, the river and the irrigation canal, the horse and the yak, the rainbow and the clouds are the most frequent references in nature; these are all tied up with lover's trysts and in praise of or slander of the opposite party. Eating peaches and tying rope knots denote mating. Favourite trysting places are water ditches on pretence of repair or diversion of water from the main stream to the ditch; these regions are often in wild and isolated places.

The general trend of the dramatic poetry in plays is religious and political and the poetry is written with the object of being played before the public. The poetry may be in long stanzas the length dependent upon the subject matter. Some are love songs, but others are recitals of events in history, laments over sorrows and hardships, exposition of religious beliefs and any subject which may come up in the unfolding of the play. Usually the meter is nine syllables, but it may be shorter, of seven or eight measures; or longer, of eleven or more. In these dramas there may occur alphabetical acrostic poems in which each line of nine syllables begins with a letter of the Tibetan alphabet in sequence; one party reciting the first half of the alphabet and the other person in replying using the last half.

Proverbs are almost invariably cast into rhythmic poetical couplets, generally in contrasting lines, but sometimes the second line is a reinforcement of the basic idea in the first line. In this latter event the second line may be just another illustration. Proverbs, with rare exceptions, are in two lines with an equal num-

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ber of syllables. The most frequent meters are six, seven or eight syllables; the author knows of none less than four, nor more than fourteen, to each line. Sometimes when the lines seem to be of unequal length it is due to the genitive sign which, when tacked to a noun or pronoun, may be standing for a separate syllable. In such cases this genitive sign is pronounced separately and not by modification of the vowel sound; thus the rhythm is maintained. In a very few proverbs which are written in a single line the conjunction, which means "and" or "or", separates the two balanced parts; however this word is not considered as breaking the rhythm.

The work chants which the Tibetans use at Harvest time or in loading animals are often irregular in rhythm, seemingly having been worked up for the occasion.

PART ONE
LOVE SONGS

CHAPTER I

Love Songs from Kehzang Lhashee's Memory.

The following songs were dedicated to my wife and me by Kehzang Lhashee in lament because we were going to leave Batang for America. They were written in six syllables in Tibetan but have been translated into nine syllables in English.

Lovely friends who go to a far land,
Please tell me precious words of the heart;
On the point of going, two voices—
My mind and heart will not be peaceful.

Those going are about to depart;
On the horse the saddle has been placed.
Oh, Man ! who accords with my own heart,
Day by Day you go farther away;
If you come on this side of heaven,
Please grant that we meet in the next life¹!

A stream has one source for its water,
If it be that you must go this way,
To the shore of the endless ocean,
Please offer prayer that you will reach it.

Now in these days which have arisen,
We will become lower class beggars;
For your young maidens will have no clothes;
Look upon us all with compassion².

Oh parents, who have such a great love,
You will not stay with this young maiden;
So that now with love and compassion,
Please grant of your affection to me.

¹ That is, provided that both are reborn upon this earth as human beings and not in a lower heaven.

² The Christian Mission of which the author and his wife were a part had been ordered closed and this of course left a number of jobless workers, besides an orphanage of boys and girls who had been at one time under the charge of the author's wife and supported by a farm supervised by the author.

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Heart in tune with my friends of this life,
After ascending and crossing the pass,
Your own heart will be changed like the wind³;
Though looking my own eyes will not see.

When you have arrived beyond the pass,
The great high mountain will cover you⁴;
Though I call you I will hear no word.
When you go down into the valley,
Where is the most precious jewelled lake,
You will go down into its waters,
But I the luck exhausted maiden⁵,
Will be left by the side of the sea⁶.

Will this maiden be sad in her heart ?
Please see if her slender little eyes,
Have become filled with fine little tears⁷?
For her heart is stricken with sadness.
You are my great thankful remembrance,
More than what is due to my parents.

Beloved friends, there is one remembrance;
Now because you are going away,
I, all day and night will not meet you,
For that reason learned noble ones,
There will be great sorrow in the world,
So please that you do not forget me,
I give you a not-forgetting ring⁸.

³ This beautiful metaphor means one like the wind must be concerned with the place where one is and not where one has been.

⁴ One will be covered by the shadow of the great mountain.

⁵ Her good karma has run out and now her evil karma begins.

⁶ She will be left behind as we take ship over the ocean or "precious jewelled lake".

⁷ The phrases "slender little eyes" and "fine little tears" are tender phrases used by the Tibetans who like the Chinese have often almond-shaped eyes, or "slender little eyes". Lhashee had to some extent almond-shaped eyes.

⁸ Lhashee gave each of us a ring to wear and she states here the reason for this Tibetan custom when friends part for a long period or forever.

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Also then that we may meet again,
Please give a reflection upon that;
Please forget me not, you understand,
For your own truly beloved friend,
The heart-broken spirit of Lhashee,
For all these reasons has given it⁸.

Now upon all the road you travel
May you certainly meet but with peace;
May you truly meet with loving care;
Now all this is my only prayer.

Here ends what is probably an original composition of Lhashee to her departing American friends.

Here begins songs written down by Lhashee from memory. Italic Types explain the meaning of the succeeding four or more lines. Nine syllables in English to six in Tibetan.

The lover says that if she is good they will dwell together

Now upon the mountain of Yangjyah⁹,
One must not grow the poison grasses.
The wild animal children of gods,
Are assembling on Yangjyah mountain.

At first pleased with one another, now they do not get along

Where appear the clouds in the heavens,
There the cuckoo thinks he is happy;
If there is no slightly falling rain,
The cuckoo has been sent to deceive¹⁰.

⁹ Yangjyah is the name of the mountain near Gaden Monastery (or Gahdan) built by Tsongkhapa in 1409 about thirty miles east of Lhasa.

¹⁰ The cuckoo represents her lover. The cuckoo is a sign of spring and its rains. It is figuratively the "love bird" in some Tibetan songs.

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*Now they are of two households and if they would unite they
must come together*

You are across the big Tsang river,
And I am on this side of the Tsang¹¹,
If we two think of becoming one,
Over the river send the skin boat!

Our happiness will be like the sowing of seed in a field

Would we think of becoming happy?
We must sow the sweet peas in the field.
If we really wish to be happy,
The pea flowers must come to a bloom.

They must come together to unite

I will not sit under the willow,
But go and thrust the pillar in Tsang¹²;
My sweet singing bird do not linger,
But come over to worship in Tsang.

*If in accord they will unite, but if they do not they will be
unhappy*

In what happy place the heart thinks of,
There we will think of pitching our tent,
But if the tent ropes quiver and shake,
Our minds and hearts will not be happy.

This coming year we will not be able to unite

Sadness will come with sorrowful hearts,
This year will be a year of sorrow,
This year and the months within this year,
Will not easily be completed.

¹¹ Tsang is a river and also a province in Central Tibet southwest of Lhasa, the Shigatse area. This is probably the Tsangpo river which is the upper Brahmaputra rather than the smaller tributary.

¹² This is a figure indicative of sex union. Tsang temple is on the Tsang river.

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She is beautiful and if they are not in accord, why ?

By looking upwards at the heavens,
Are new clouds like whirlpool water curls;
The drizzling rain that falls on the earth —
If this is not its source, then what is?

One may be full of desire but the other is not

We'll go up to the Tsang of pleasure¹¹,
We will not come down the sad Tsang stream.
Up Tsang river is perfect pleasure,
Down Tsang river is untold misery.

Even if she is beautiful they must not think of uniting

If we go up three lengths of distance,
We arrive in the flower garden.
Here's the pretty red nose-blood flower
Which we must not think of gathering.

*He says her hips are like a big road, he is the wind and she is a
rock; which signifies their mating*

Why pace back and forth on the big road?
The sun has heated the yellow dye plant;
I look at the yellow dye flower¹³,
And wind strikes fiercely against the rock.

He offers gifts to possess her but does not offer enough

The light of the sun strikes the cottage,
The master is wanting to dwell there,
Presenting as a gift the white scarf;
The white clouds keep floating back and forth¹⁴.

¹³ This is a mating song as the flower of the yellow dye flower closes after the sun has heated it for a while, so she in the end embraces him.

¹⁴ The white scarf called Khatoh must be given with or without any other gift in order to have a request considered but he does not offer enough. She as a white cloud (white cloud is a poetic name for the vagina), just keeps floating by.

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She says they need not say any more, what the heart thinks is sufficient

My own fanciful goddess castle,
Has been set up on the mountain top.
Prostrations and circlings are needless¹⁵,
If there is but faith that will suffice.

He states she may have the desire to unite but he cannot because of evil obstructions

Carrying the round yellow brass dipper,
You go to fetch clean glacier water;
If the water has little black stones,
This will be an evil obstruction¹⁶.

She assures him that although one may go away yet that one will return to the beloved

Do not think that the river has gone¹⁷,
Think not the little bridge has been left,
For the water circles round and round,
And will come out from beneath the bridge.

He says if he cannot possess her beautiful form, it is fate

In the stream is the shaft of the moon,
And this shaft can be grasped by the hand;
In this bordering country of Kham¹⁸,
If I can not love here, it is fate¹⁹.

¹⁵ Prostrations and circlings around sacred objects, natural or man-made, are performed as a ritualistic worship of them.

¹⁶ Water is used in food and in tea from the swift streams but the current is strong and tiny stones are often taken up in the dipper.

¹⁷ Main rivers are classified as female and branch streams as male.

¹⁸ Eastern Tibet next to China is called Kham and is east of the Lhasa area.

¹⁹ Life is dominated by fatalism and all acts, even death, are dictated by fate and one's Karma, so one's will has slight or no effect upon one's course of action.

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So many lovers swarm around her he cannot get near her, so he leaves

Near to this single lotus flower,
The golden bees swarm around thickly;
As I can not reach you at your home,
I will return to my own country.

She says that he must not listen to people's gossip as she is faithful like the lotus flower

Listen not to talk but go to see;
Though four corners of the earth quiver,
I myself am a lotus flower,
That does not consider wavering.

He says she may have a husband but that he will be satisfied with just love union

The river is the stream of Lhasa,
The landlord is Tingjyehling Cloister²⁰,
The oblation that I must offer,
One vessel full will be sufficient.

He meditates that this is not possible

A great river is an obstacle,
A high pass is an adversary,
My own Kham country is far away¹⁸,
My own thought is a foe of my mind.

She concurs and says that they must help one another

When the moon becomes silvery white,
As on the fifteenth day of the month;
Whatever place your heart thinks is good,
There let the night's darkness be dispelled.

²⁰ This is a famous monastery in Lhasa which has supplied a regent during the minority of a Dalai Lama and hence has a certain responsibility over the Dalai Lama's acts.

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She says that someone else talked love to her, but she did not listen

Within the white country of India²¹,
The answer of the peacock did come²¹,
I did not seek love at that one time,
I just let my ears be gently soothed.

She pleads that he, as a great Lord, must help her

The white turquoise and the black turquoise,
Are the master lords of the turquoise;
When your pearls are strung on the silk thread,
Please may I be given your favours.

She continues that he must truly think of her at such a time

When the four corners of earth are dark²²,
And the owls are hooting on the rock;
When the smoke rises in the great town,
The householder thinks of his mother.

He brags that whether she consents or not he will carry her off

If "no" grant that there be a summer,
If "no" grant that there be a winter;
With no summer or winter weather,
Still the frost will take off the flowers.

She replies that we have our likes and dislikes and each season has its qualities

If we say the season is summer,
Fine drizzling misty rain will come down;
If we say the season is winter,
The white scarf will arise on the lake²³.

²¹ The people of India generally wear white clothes so India is called the "vast whites"; here live the peacocks and peahens calling back and forth to each other.

²² The earth is considered as being flat and square.

²³ The white scarf which freezes the lake is the "ice".

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He states that though he may like her, yet if she does not like him she will close the door in his face

The goose thinking of the mother lake²⁴,
Will come to the shores of mother lake;
But the lake does not think of the goose,
And the white scarf rises on the lake²³.

She pleads that since he alone has cared for her he is the only one with power over her

You are the planter of the willow²⁵,
I'm the one watering the willow;
When the willow leaf-wings grow larger,
No one else will have rule over me.

A woman says to her Lama Paramour

In happy times when drinking whiskey,
One can likely have many lovers;
In times of misery when snow falls,
One can not have even one lover.

He says that if lovers are permitted favors then he should have them

You wear yellow gowns on your body,
If you are leader of all beings,
As is the yellow goose of the birds,
Then you must invite this one being.

If sin can be washed away then he should have favors of her

If the face can be washed by water²⁶,
And defilement of sin purified;
All the lady fish in the water,
Whatever stain they have, would be cleansed.

²⁴ Lakes are considered to be of the female gender and in this case represent the female; and the goose is the male.

²⁵ A willow is planted as a life tree for a family, and as long as it lives the family prospers, and if it dies the family decays; the willow is not easily killed so it is chosen in preference to other trees.

²⁶ The face here represents favors she might give.

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She returns home from the arms of her lover

Oh my dear Mother Choshee Padra²⁷,
Please throw open the mother door as
Your young daughter Flower of Good Luck,
Has come back from her pleasure garden.

Both her lovers and her desire are inexhaustible

Since mother is a seller of wine,
The wine never becomes exhausted;
By lifting up the upper grey lid,
It is filled up with grain each morning²⁸.

If each pleases the other they will unite as her body will be like a religious offering so she says

Where the whitest of rice has been sown,
There will come up a flowering stalk;
Now when the temple door is opened,
A religious flower is offered.

He begs her to declare herself and they will be happy

The peacock of the land of India,
To be sure does exist, so they say;
If it is so, make it known afar,
That the heart and mind may be at peace.

Although they have met in love, henceforth their love will be abandoned

The Indian spiritual priest teacher,
Although a priest, I have met with him;
Though if you now were Buddha himself,
I have decided not to meet you.

²⁷ Choshee Padra translated into English means — happy sacrificial bowl.

²⁸ Fresh grain is put into the liquor vat to make a continuous supply.

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*If they are to be happy they will be able to be together but if not
it is their fate and may the most rare ones make them happy*

Thinking of happiness it will come,
If we meet sorrow it is our fate;
The Most Rare Ones — the priests of Heaven²⁹,
Please be like our own loving parents.

*One of the sweethearts bewails that once they were in accord but
later they fell out*

On the fifteenth day of the moon-month³⁰,
The tips of the moon shone upon me;
A black cloud has turned back the moon's face,
And this has created an obstruction³¹.

Although they would like to be together always, it cannot be

High in the heavens the stars gather,
In one's lifetime there is assembling;
On the lawn flowers are collected—
Summer's gathering of the third month.

She desires him above all others

Although the heavens are filled with stars,
Yet none are like to the Six Sisters³²;
The great city is full of people,
Yet none can be compared to parents.

*The Prince of Dege is said to have greeted his bride with these
glad words when she came to him*

Like one coming from the gods above,
Beautiful as the sweet pea flower;
It is wonderful that you have come,
Please abide here with a care-free heart.

²⁹ The Most Rare Ones are the highest of the Buddhas or Gods.

³⁰ Tibetans use the lunar calendar with thirteen months in four years out of seven.

³¹ Anything which darkens, obscures or hinders ones life or course is called an obstruction to the onward cycle of existence.

³² The Six Sisters or Pleiades are given special mention and consideration in the few groups of stars recognised by the Tibetans.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The bride answered her lover-husband the Prince of Dege

Lead me to the banks of Clay River³³,
On the face of its green turquoise banks;
Lover, either by day or by night,
On its grassy bank make love to me.

A maiden expresses her sadness of heart

Is the mountain blockaded by snow ?
All of the lady passes know it³⁴;
Is the heart of the maiden mournful ?
No one whatever knows about it.

One party desires to have the other but the other's rank is too high

The flowers grow tall in the garden,
The glorious hollyhocks are budding;
In my heart I desired to meet you,
I plucked but my hand did not reach you.

It is possible for both to be happy

In the happy country of Bathang³⁵,
There are two crops in the summer time;
Where religion spreads in the cloister,
Whose cedar trees circle to the right³⁶.

*If he does not care for her and seeks other women, she will part
from him. He is the willow and she is the bird*

Willow tree do not sway to and fro,
Else the little bird will crack its brains;
If the willow tree does not like me,
Little bird will drop to the quiet earth.

³³ A river near Dege is called Dza Chu or Clay River—a common name for rivers in Tibet.

³⁴ Passes are labelled as female and, as the central avenue between two slopes, has a sexual significance.

³⁵ Bathang or Batang with two crops a year is considered one of the most pleasant valleys in Eastern Tibet.

³⁶ Tibetans of the Red and Yellow sects circle sacred objects by keeping them on their right hand. Cedar trees surround the large Batang Monastery.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

A woman having a husband is not free to give herself as she desires to her lover

The little birds twittering in flocks
Are often thrust into a bird cage;
They may practice their wings for soaring,
Yet have not power over themselves.

The woman like a peahen desires to be with her lover but the wife and relatives are enemies

On the mountain of Golden Horse Head,
In the celestial turquoise kindom³⁷;
The peahen thinks of descending there,
But the flying bats are enemies.

One sweetheart desires that the other should go with him or her elsewhere

For pleasure Lhasa is most pleasant,
For cost Chahdo is most expensive³⁸;
In a little cottage in Chahdo,
That has been inlaid with turquoise stones.

As friends of long standing they desire to be together

We ourselves are friends of former days,
And as stones laid in a previous world;
When these two stones have merged into rock,
There is no separation of them.

She chants that her home is far away and that her heart will be sad if he is angry

The country of Kham is far away¹⁸,
Let us go to meet for love in Tsang¹¹;
In Tsang do not be cross and angry,
Else your loving mistress will be sad.

³⁷ This is a name for the abode of the goddess Drohma (Drolma) and hence a paradise.

³⁸ Chahdo or Chamdo is located in eastern Tibet on the Mekong river. Due to its high barren location and its comparatively large population it has to import food, especially any luxuries, a long distance.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Let them dwell in unity and unbounded love without separation
Down yonder in our own dwelling place,
Young men and maidens go to chant songs;
The pillars are of most costly gold,
The cross beams are of precious silver.

The chant is continued : He is the vase and she is the flower
On the outside are vases of glass,
Perfumed water is in the vases;
Inside of these are sweet pea flowers;
Ah ! Do not cast the flowers away.

Let them unite in harmony and love : He is the shower : She is the plain
Those who are born on the grassy plain,
Are like the whitish spirit flowers;
May the shower of loving good luck,
Please fall upon the midst of the plain.

Their mating is a perfect union
The right and left hills of the mountains,—
Lotus hills, dovetail like a charm box³⁹,
In the daytime the sun shines warmly,
In the night-time the moon glows brightly.

The candidate Monk lover says he is forsaking the desires of the flesh and taking the Priesthood vows for good
On the shores of the Lake of Yadroh⁴⁰,
Lives the northern diamond sow goddess;
Where no worldly thing enters the mind,
I will receive the priestly hairlock⁴¹.

³⁹ The charm box is roundish and made like a shoe-paste tin-box with a cover that fits snugly and tightly over the bottom portion; or like a pencil box whose top slides into grooves to fit tightly.

⁴⁰ Yadroh or Yamdroh is a lake south of Lhasa where dwells the famous incarnation of the Sow Goddess.

⁴¹ On entering the priest-hood the young man will have his head shaved except for a lock of hair which later will be shaved off when he takes higher vows.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He moans that since she is a woman of high rank she is not accessible to him

You are the daughter of a great chief,
And as the fruit of a tall peach tree;
For only the eyes can behold it;
Hands will not be able to reach it.

Because of her rank it is impossible for them to continue their relations and each must seek another lover on a new road

Within the circling road of Lhasa⁴²,
The lords which have power will sieze me;
We two, like a gift, are powerless;
A new encircling road must be sought.

If one does not listen to parents, matters will be difficult⁴³

Not listening to words of parents
Seizing The Mind Ocean Powered Life⁴⁴;
For wind is strong on the northern plains⁴⁵,
And a landlord with room can't be found.

One says to the other, "What can be done will be done"

If dry wood exists it will be cut,
If green wood exists it will be bent;
The wishing tree that grants all desires⁴⁶,
Whether dry or wet can be gathered.

The lover says to her that he will return later

A Chinese must return to China,
By the command of the great Amban⁴⁷;
Maiden do not sorrow in your heart;
I'll come to the side of the maiden.

⁴² A road completely encircles Lhasa and pilgrims (sometimes by prostrating) use it to circumambulate the city.

⁴³ Among the rich, parents usually arrange marriages of children.

⁴⁴ This is the name of the Sixth Dalai Lama who wrote many of the love songs.

⁴⁵ The vast northern plains of Tibet are cold, windy and uninhabited.

⁴⁶ Tibetans believe a fabulous wishing tree exists which will grant all desires regarding food, drink and jewels, bending to the hand of the lucky person.

⁴⁷ The Chinese resident formerly in Tibet. He controlled both the civil and military persons. The last one left in 1912.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The maiden agrees through the middle woman Ajhala to give herself to her lover

Now this good-fortune-flowering ring,
Which I will present through Ajhala⁴⁸;
Without gossip about the maiden,
Ajhala has knowledge of all this.

He states that they have given their hearts to one another

Lucky one filled with scents that smell good,
Beautiful lotus flower anther⁴⁹;
You are the good fortune of my mind;
We have given each other our hearts.

She affirms that she has not given herself to another lover since it was through the rare deities that they met

I have not gone to lead ditch water,
Nor to irrigate by a side ditch⁵⁰;
By the rare priestly ones of heaven²⁹,
We are fused as one nose of water.

He states the custom of the Chinese

When a Chinese returns to China,
By the order of the great Amban⁴⁷,
He deserts his offspring in Tibet,
Will the Tibetans please cherish them.

She says her lover is like this :-

My beloved precious diamond light,
You say you'll take me to the North Plain⁵¹;
But such words come only from your mouth;
For you truly will not take me there.

⁴⁸ Ajhala is the name of the middle woman who is used in lover as well as marriage and financial transactions. For instance it is not good custom to sleep with the landlady but she is used for securing a sweetheart for that purpose. As the go-between she is given a present to be given to the girl, and she also receives a gift.

⁴⁹ The word "anther" (of a flower) is used as an endearing term for a girl.

⁵⁰ Irrigation ditches lead through wild ravines from mountain streams and are favorite trysting places for lovers.

⁵¹ see ⁴⁵ Here lovers would not be disturbed.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

On the outside one seems to be from a good family but who knows

The birch trees of the birch family,
One trusts that they will be white inside;
Until it has been cut with an axe,
One knows not if it's rotten inside.

He is the willow and she is the little bird

Little bird in the willow tree top,
Forget not but place it in your heart;
For the little bird in the bird cage,
There will be found a road of freedom.

People's station in life are due to deeds of a previous existence

The flowers which fill the earthen pot,
Are of many different sizes;
Either it is the fault of the earth,
Or it is the fault of the water.

Although without wealth or any accomplishments yet she can give service

That produced within the deep ocean,
The wet Kusha plant of the grasses⁵²;
Although without a fruit on its head,
Yet its leaves can render a service.

She suggests a contract that evil talk may not come from their contacts

When a post is set up in the sky,
The base of the post is put on rock;
To prevent the movement of the post,
A top slab is placed beneath its base;
To prevent mistakes in the design,
A seal must be stamped upon the stone⁵³.

⁵² A sacred grass whose leaves thrust into a wart will remove the wart.

⁵³ Sometimes six lines are used to finish the meaning but the author believes that inadvertently Lhashee left out two lines here in what might be his answer.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The lover asks that the other be not angry

The stream is the river of Lhasa,
It is the stream called Shawa Nyamih;
When the skin boat goes through its waters,
Great River please do not be angry.

He would like to live with her but something hinders them

In the midst of sandalwood forests,
Is a turquoise inlaid paradise;
There the peacock thinks of descending,
But the fruit bat is an enemy⁵⁴.

He says she must not find another lover as he will later return

At the head source of the water ditch⁵⁰,
Do not shift but dwell in happiness;
Although the little field is far off,
Yet a time of our meeting will come⁵⁵.

He claims she has not been true, but she says that she has been true to him, although she could have had many lovers

The mother water has not been soiled,
Although you say the water was stained;
If she wished to become polluted,
She could have dirtied her purity.

She asks that they do not unite but if he insists and they have a child then "You say that you will find a way out"

Do not sow in the field, I beg you,
But if you say the field must be sown⁵⁶;
Plead for the sun not to shine hotly;
Yet you say that the clouds will hide it.

⁵⁴ Reputed to be destructive of the young birds, the fruit bat has probably an ill-deserved reputation as it is a fruit-eater.

⁵⁵ He is represented as the field and she as the water to irrigate it.

⁵⁶ An illegitimate child is preferable to the curse of barrenness, but the father has obligations in supporting the child.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

She is teased by someone in the home and if he does not come back she will be sorely grieved

The hairlock is neither long nor short,
The lock like a whip strikes at the eye;
Life-sweetheart if you do not come back,
The heart and mind will be sorrowful.

They must make preparation for a happy home

The stone walls will be built of big stones,
The pebbles are thrust in among them⁵⁷;
Where the Dalai Lama is dwelling,
A new palace will be constructed.

He promises that if she is true to him he will marry her after the new house is built

Four house-posts rise up towards the sky,
Is there a true foundation in you ?
Sweetheart when split wood rafters are laid,
Then I will promise to become yours⁵⁸.

The lover tells of his means not munificent but sufficient

My descent is like that of nomads⁵⁹,
I have no glorious name whatever;
In the lower valley a small cow,
Breakfast tea like a lucky musk deer⁶⁰.

The lover has eyes for her only but cannot see her

Far away on the extensive plain,
The sheep and goats appear everywhere;
But my own silvery goddess sheep,
My two eyes can not see her at all.

⁵⁷ Houses have a stone foundation with tamped clay walls above it, although stone, if plentiful, may be used all the way up to the roof. A new palace or part of a new palace is built at the accession of a new Dalai Lama, as is the case here for a new couple.

⁵⁸ Clay is pounded into the wooden rafters for the roof and often the interior is finished while they live in the house.

⁵⁹ Nomads are frowned upon by city dwellers as they are usually poor with very humble furniture, yet they rarely starve.

⁶⁰ The pouch of the musk deer is valuable; and the tea from China is called lucky musk deer tea which with butter in it makes the early breakfast for the poor.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The lover says that if he cannot keep off foes with his sword he will kill himself

Far away on the extensive plain,
With a sword eighteen measures in length;
If my foes can not be subdued there,
Over here I will take my own life⁶¹.

One party does not desire to get married

Nanking, China, is a happy land⁶²,
One does not think of arriving there;
Bathang is a miserable place⁶²,
One thinks one will not need to come there.

One party does not like the other and will not keep the tryst

Underneath the blue-green turquoise bridge,
One does not think of going at all;
Where the two pillars of the bridge are,
One thinks not of coming together⁶³.

One party continues to refuse to co-operate

Also, to cross the pass, I will not,
Nor will I repair the pass stone-pile⁶⁴;
At the spring between the two passes,
Likewise, to halt for lunch, I will not⁶³.

⁶¹ Taking one's life is a great sin and this indicates the depth of his feeling for her when he takes such an oath.

⁶² The capital of a country is considered a happy place as compared to any other city; in reality Bathang is far superior to Nanking in climate and comfort. Here the distant and unknown is enchanting.

⁶³ These two stanzas here will be sung in answer to any number of requests on the part of the other party if denial is to be indicated. The singer picks out the verse desired for any situation.

⁶⁴ On each pass is a pile of stones as an offering to the deity of the pass and a stone is thrown upon it by those surmounting the pass as their offering.

CHAPTER II

Love Songs from Lhashee's Memory (Contd.)

These love songs are said to have been composed by the Sixth Dalai Lama and have been put into nine syllables from the Tibetan six syllables.

One party states their circumstances and hence their ability to get married

I do not dwell with beloved father,
I do not dwell with beloved mother;
Beloved sweetheart I have no parents.
Shall we circumambulate Tsari⁶⁵.

She says that although the place may be wonderful yet one thinks of home and is sad

On the top floor of Drumo Rinchen⁶⁶,
A better dwelling there cannot be;
Yet one at the voice of the black rook⁶⁷,
Thinks of their dismal cry and is sad.

She says what she can give her lover is not much but she can give herself

On the top floor of Drumo Rinchen;
If one is dwelling at such a place;
One does not need a big hand-present,
One's heart may be sent with the letter⁶⁸.

He says she is a precious jewel

Born on the mountain of good fortune,
A goddess juniper of good luck⁶⁹;
And born out of men of noble birth,
Like King Gesar of Little Island⁷⁰.

⁶⁵ A famous sacred shrine far to the south east of Lhasa.

⁶⁶ A name applied to the residence of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa.

⁶⁷ Sometimes black rooks build their nests above the window frames of a house and this is considered an auspicious sign for the home.

⁶⁸ A small gift is always sent with each letter to any individual; one also sends a present first if one is seeking a favor from a sweetheart.

⁶⁹ The juniper is burnt as incense to deities and is considered to be a tree of fragrance and good fortune.

⁷⁰ Little Island is one of the eight small continents among the four large continents. King Gesar was a fabulous king of north Tibet deified as the God of War.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

She says her lover is a heart breaker and she has lost her heart to him in spite of his low birth

I smoked your fine yellow tobacco,
It has not been for your pleasant food,
But for your lotus-marked silver bowl⁷¹;
I lost my heart after I smoked it.

She tells her lover that she is not accomplished

Like the full moon of the fifteenth day,
Glowing brightly I am not at all;
Like the swelling moon of the third day,
May my own body be suitable⁷¹.

One taunts another about their not being particular regarding sweethearts

For one's own girl-association⁷²,
Are like the flowers at the lake bank,
And the jewels that are in the lake,
Indifferent as to who plucks them.

Lovers need not go to the hot springs for baths and sex play

Does one's own girl association
Need to go to the willow hot springs⁷³?
But we need not go to the hot springs;
If we two can meet it is enough.

The lover says to his proud haughty mistress

In the east there are no high mountains,
In the west there are no low mountains;
For the yellow goose of the bird tribe⁷⁴,
There is no place where he cannot light.

⁷¹ These two verses have a hidden meaning in sexual pleasures.

⁷² Tibetan girls often band together in a sort of "gang" or sorority in which each member aids the other in various ways.

⁷³ A family or a group of friends including both sexes will go up to the hot springs and bathe in the nude especially at New Year's time or other holidays. During the willow budding season in the second month the springs are called Willow Hot Springs.

⁷⁴ The yellow goose is the Brahminy duck.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One is rich and proud needing rich gifts to obtain favors from the other

In the midst of the clouds of heaven,
Is a relic shrine of red coral⁷⁵;
If there is not a sun nor a moon,
There is not a chance of finding it.

The lover also says to his rich proud sweetheart

At the meeting point of sea and sand,
There is a prayer flag of one square cloth;
Think not it is a little prayer flag;
It will attract large lucky prayer flags⁷⁶.

One illustrates one's loneliness

On top of the great eastern mountain
A white clear shining moon will arise;
Not meeting the face of one's mother,
Then the mind turns around and around.

One's loneliness is further illustrated

On the tip of the high mountain top,
One may be called by mother three times;
One knows not that it is one's mother;
Hence an answer cannot be sent back.

A lover illustrates the variableness of love by a drinking song

Where at the least is not a beer drunk ?
Beer is not put in tea or water;
Where is a dance song not completed ?
Dance songs unlike house goods have an end.

⁷⁵ The relic shrine called a Chohten (Chorden) has the general shape of a cone and can be visualized in a cloud formation.

⁷⁶ When a number of stones are piled up and a prayer flag stuck in its top, others passing by will add another prayer flag as well as other stones until it may become a huge pile without any one but the originator knowing why it was started.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Variableness of love further illustrated by pleasure and wisdom

Of the man who is drinking a beer,
Do not say that he has no wisdom;
The dancer, and singer, and speaker,
Where is any such without wisdom ?

*The woman says that when she was young she had other lovers
or sweets but that now she is faithful like a tree*

The time when I was a young maiden,
I only ate the whitest sugar;
Now I am like the persimmon fruit⁷⁷,
So do not be angry in your heart.

*The poor girl bewails her poverty and begs that grief may not
afflict her*

Rain falls on the pass and the country,
Do not fall on the weak young maiden;
The poor maiden has a thread-bare cloak,
Which cannot keep out a drop of rain.

*The lover and his sweetheart have intense desire for each other
but they cannot have each other*

Not seeing, my eyes an enemy;
Seeing you, my heart's an enemy;
If heart and speech do not come to me
In the night-time, sleep's an enemy.

*One need not go far away to seek lovers :— This song is used
when soldier or merchant lovers are at hand seeking them*

Seek not another sweetheart in Tsang⁷⁸,
When old, one cannot travel to Tsang;
Do not wear a spotted serge top-cloak,
When worn out, one cannot get a patch⁷⁹.

⁷⁷ The fruit of the persimmon tree clings tenaciously to the twigs and is often found months after the fruit has ripened (if not gathered by hand); just so she is faithful to him.

⁷⁸ Tsang is a province south east of Lhasa but it is also used loosely by Chinese for Tibet. It is a long journey to its capital Shigatze.

⁷⁹ Because the cloak has so many dyed spots which are hard to match properly.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The lover has praise for his Bathang sweetheart
Goddess tree born out of the rock-top,
Is the mulberry trunk of the rock⁸⁰;
In Bathang on this side of Kham land⁸¹,
If there's no jewel, where is there one ?

She asks that she dwell forever in his heart
On the mountain of white glassy snow,
The holy devoted Lama Dojhe⁸²;
Deities and courageous fairies,
Do dwell in the midst of the glaciers.

*The lover speaks words of endearment to his sweetheart
comparing her to the fragrant juniper*
My very loving little sweetheart,
Above is the goddess juniper;
When seen, handsome like the shining eye;
And when burnt, a sweet-smelling odor.

A servant sweetheart says to her master and her lover also⁸³
Your root is like a trunk of coral,
Your limbs are as branches of turquoise;
When you can produce fruit of white pearls,
Then grant to me your mating favors.

*The girl says she would abandon the world if she has to suffer the
loss of her lover*
I am a very little flower,
If parting misery comes to me;
I will forsake the wheel of this world⁸⁴,
And go to perform religious works.

⁸⁰ Reference is to a mulberry tree growing out of a rock near the author's home and said to be the home of an underground demon.

⁸¹ Kham is eastern Tibet and is the most fertile and populous part of the Tibetan plateau.

⁸² Lama Dojhe is the high mountain of Bathang and is the home of its guardian deity.

⁸³ The Lord of a household may use a servant girl as a sweetheart and if she bears him a child has certain rights in his home and claims for his support.

⁸⁴ The Wheel of Life is one of the sacred symbols of Buddhism. It is a wheel of fleshly desire going round and round from joy to misery from birth to death in an endless succession of life births and rebirths trying to attain Nirvana by good Karmas.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The lover says he will go over the pass with his sweetheart

My very loving little sweetheart,
When you cross the glorious mother pass;
My heart is transformed into a breeze,
And I'll cross the mother pass with you.

She says no one is so sorrow-stricken as she is

In the bazaar, of all the young girls,
No one is so distressed as I am;
Ah ! maidens, my intense suffering,
None whatever can understand it.

The girl bewails her fate in not being his sweetheart

My lover is like Mount Sumeru⁸⁵,
In the wheel that governs life and fate⁸⁴;
But I am the girl whose fate is fixed;
In meeting with such a one as you.

*The girl tells her lover not to be troubled about talk regarding
her unfaithfulness*

Back and forth over the great ocean,
The wind strikes its regular motion;
Golden Bee do not have any doubts⁸⁶,
But come down in the midst of the sea.

The lover laments the absent sweetheart

What help is there when the mouth is dry ?
The spring is over beyond the pass;
What avails for the heart to be sad ?
When my own lover is far away.

⁸⁵ Mount Sumeru or Meru is considered to be the center of the world, and to be the King of all mountains in height and glory, etc.; her lover is like that mountain.

⁸⁶ The lover is called by the apt designation of Golden Bee.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The lover says to his sweetheart

You who are pretty and alluring,
Come quickly to meet me in this place;
Stretch up your nice neck and look at me,
Please do not conceal, but speak to me.

The lover beseeches his sweetheart

You who are pretty and alluring,
If only you will be my mistress;
In this life where one passes away,
There will never be any sorrow.

The lover, although poor, brags of his ability and prowess

I have no brick tea and no silver⁸⁷,
I must go seeking such means from men;
The mother fish, although without feet,
In moving, none renders such service.

The lover laments that the sweetheart cannot be seen or called

I look but my eyes do not see you,
A lofty high mountain conceals you;
I call and yet my voice is not heard,
The wind uses the sound of my voice.

She says that although many lovers crowd around her it is of no use unless her heart consents

By the side of the one female deer,
Do the great bucks gather together;
If the female heart does not consent,
The gathering of bucks is wasted.

⁸⁷ Tea is considered essential to good living and the kind most preferred by the Tibetans comes in the form of bricks about five and one half pounds in weight, and measuring 10 × 7 × 4 inches in size.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The lover says let them be united as he may die in China

The hail is enemy to the plains,
It is the hail of the black man's land⁸⁸;
If I die, from the black man's country,
Please receive the body of this thrush.

The lover says that they should love now as love after death is a mockery

To love before one has passed away,
Is more pleasure than love of the gods;
For after death the bell goes Sing Sing⁸⁹,
And one's own heart has been defrauded.

The lover says their love makes no difference for if they cannot stay here they can go elsewhere

You glow like the moonlight in water,
If I could just grasp you by your hand;
In the borders of this land of Kham,
If we cannot stay, it is our fate¹⁹.

The lover says no word has come from the sweetheart and will the sweetheart please not forget the lover

I have sent down news by the river⁹⁰,
An answer, but not a clear one, came;
My lady fish friend answer clearly;
Don't forget but place it in your heart.

She compares herself to a defenceless bird

On the pleasure garden's grassy lawn,
Please strike me not with stones from a sling;
I am a motherless little bird;
Let me dwell in the midst of the lawn.

⁸⁸ Chinese because they dress commonly in dark clothing, are called the black people; and are compared to hail since they are invaders come to conquer and destroy.

⁸⁹ In the funeral rites after death the lamas recite prayers with much ringing of bells so Sing Sing here indicates death of the lover.

⁹⁰ A favourite poetic expression used in the sending of a message as if their love could be secretly carried by the whispering waters.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

If her lover dies she will bewail his death and she says they will meet hereafter

You came like the gods who dwell on high,
We sweetheart are like sweet pea flowers;
If we cannot go together here;
May we meet on the future life trail.

One says that their affair should be kept quiet

When thirsty do not drink swamp water,
In the end one may become poisoned.
When happy, talk not of heart affairs;
When bankrupt, enemies will spread tales⁹¹.

The lover says that wherever they go they must be in accord

The glacier may be found everywhere,
So that one can drink glacier water⁹²;
Both the glacier and lion nearby⁹³,
Should be asked permission for a drink.

She claims she has not been unfaithful although much evil talk has made her grieve

I have not eaten other peaches,
Although the tree is covered with fruit;
No sweetheart lover has come to me;
And the snow has blocked my heart sorrows⁹⁴.

She says that she will dwell with her lover at the proper time

I have eaten the peach; and the seed
Was thrown away in the fruit garden.
When the year and the month arrived,
The flowers of the peach tree will bloom.

⁹¹ It is more dangerous to spread tales about the wealthy and powerful than those who are poor or lose their riches.

⁹² Such water is pure and quite plentiful.

⁹³ On or near a glacier a mythical lion is supposed to dwell or at least a lion-spirit who look upon the glacier as their special preserve and would be angry if one neglected to pay proper rites to the lion or the lion spirit. The lion does not exist in Tibet now but this is a hint that this beast may have been on the borders of Tibet at least at one time.

⁹⁴ Deep snow keeps people from getting together to gossip.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One says the other is poor and of little importance and whether the other person will amount to anything will be known later

When the peach tree is not two arm's height⁹⁵,
It will produce little white flowers;
Whether fruit will bear on these or not,
Lovers must go later to observe.

She does not know whether her lover is good or evil but may the deities send her a first class lover

With some light and some dark turquoises⁹⁶,
I cannot choose the good from the bad;
The perfect deities of Heaven,
Please make known to me the light turquoise.

A lover says that if they unite untold happiness will come

The irrigation ditch of Ritoh⁹⁷,
And Ruyon Dzongpa barley, — these two⁹⁸
If made into a good tasty beer,
One will not think one is not happy.

One says that silk thread can be untied but two lovers cannot be separated

The knots of the great black land's silk thread⁹⁸,
By teeth and fingers may be untied;
But the knot which ties us two lovers,
There is no untying whatever.

⁹⁵ The Tibetan term can also mean the height of a man which we call six feet or a fathom. This height is the measure of two arms stretched out to full length; cloth is thus measured for sale, and the buyer has the right to use his arms to make the measure.

⁹⁶ Turquoises are classified as light blue-green or white, and as dark blue-green or black. Many Tibetans do not know which are the best gems.

⁹⁷ The glacier fed water from the stream which flows past the small monastery of Ritoh above Bathang is pure.

⁹⁸ The barley which grows in a valley of Ruyon Dzonga, fifty miles south of Bathang, in the Fifteen Tribes country, grows superior grain. Hence water from Ritoh and barley from Ruyon Dzongpa makes the finest beer.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

She flatters her priestly lover by a pleasing simile

From the top of Lhasa's Potala⁹⁹,
There can be blown a golden trumpet;
But it was not a golden trumpet,
It was only your own priestly voice¹⁰⁰.

The lover says they will go where they can love one another as they wish

The golden cock and the golden hen,
Meet at the great dark Elephant's Nose¹⁰¹;
The pretty hen and peacock feathers¹⁰²,
Will go back to the place of desire.

The lover says he wishes that he was a fish so he could cross the river to her

My loving little sweetheart mistress,
You are across the mother river¹⁰³;
I am on this side of the river,
I wish that I was a mother fish¹⁰³.

One must not forget gratitude to one's parents¹⁰⁴

If one thinks of pleasure it will come,
If one meets with sorrow it is fate;
By gratitude to loving parents,
Fate may be overcome by Karma¹⁰⁵.

99 This is the palace of the Dalai Lama.

100 This was the Sixth Dalai Lama a noted lover of women and the alleged writer of these stanzas.

101 Five miles south of Bathang is the range, shaped like an elephant's nose, of course huge in size; here lovers could rendezvous without molestation.

102 The peacock feathers refer to the male who spreads his beautiful fan to attract the female. The lover who is the Sixth Dalai Lama calls himself here the golden cock and his mistress the golden hen.

103 That is a fish from the mother river but not meaning to change his sex

104 Overcoming Karma by caring for one's parents is a favourite belief; parents are supposed to arrange marriages and those who do not listen in this respect try to overcome this evil Karma by other attentions of respect.

105 Enough good Karma will change their fate or rebirth in the next life. See 19.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

*She does not know what she will get in the way of a lover but
may the heavenly gods send her a good sweetheart*

One finding a turquoise will get it¹⁰⁶,
One cannot choose the good from evil;
May the priestly gods of the heavens,
Grant that I obtain a white turquoise¹⁰⁷.

He says he is about to leave her and go afar off

The traveller is about to go,
The riding saddle is on the horse;
She who is in accord with my heart,
Is each day, a day farther away.

*He states that his going is not by his thought and desire but the
result of fate*

It is not completing mystic rites,
It is the type of exorcising¹⁰⁸;
It is not the thought filling the heart,
It is what is built up in one's fate.

She says if her parents censure her, then let her lover soothe her

Against the south door the winds practise,
Against the west door the winds press down¹⁰⁹;
If parents censure in their commands,
Please will you console my heart with love.

One says no matter where they go they will be happy

Wherever we travel in India,
It'll be like building a golden bridge;
Wherever we dwell in a palace,
It'll be like the giving of turquoise¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁶ One who finds a lost object according to Tibetan custom is entitled to keep it unless it is redeemed by a heavy ransom.

¹⁰⁷ White indicates good and black means evil.

¹⁰⁸ In lamaistic religious ritual the propitiation of spirits is the method of controlling them and the type of ritual varies with the spirit as well as the reason for the propitiation and the objective to be attained.

¹⁰⁹ Doors are generally placed to face the east the direction of the rising sun; if placed to face the south, water runs south, or the west — the sun goes west to set, it may mean a declining house.

¹¹⁰ Turquoise means good luck.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One party affirms that if their custom is good, life and luck will be theirs

Within one very white conch sea-shell,
If there is set up one incense lamp;
And oblation of incense offered;
Life and good luck will encircle us.

He says that they are as one and ought not to be separated

I myself am as a yellow thread,
You yourself as a great green needle¹¹¹;
Whether it is well threaded or not,
Do not forget, place me in your heart.

He says that it is a work of fate if they dwell together forever

In a little black skin coracle,
Whether they are united or not;
And can go to the end of the sea,
Will be due to their former Karma¹¹².

Even though others object their union is all right if they love each other

That which is set in five weight of gold,
Are rubies with a colored turquoise;
Street people say it is not proper love,
But we can be lovers if we wish.

He affirms that he will never change but always be faithful although his highborn mistress may have other lovers

The best original figured stripes,
Are stripes of the flesh-eating tiger;
In that manner I will never change,
But; like the paintings in new temples.

¹¹¹ This simile has a male and female significance of mating.

¹¹² The surplus of good deeds over the evil deeds which he has inherited from his former incarnations will determine his fate as to whether they will be together forever. If his Karma is good they will be united forever and if not no one can tell of their fate.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He thinks she is a prized personage

One rainbow penetrates the waters,
A double rainbow strikes on the rocks;
But the three rainbows at Tenggyeling¹¹³,
Can send their rays into its temples.

She says that her lover for not having her high rank should not say there is beauty when there is none, but reject her as a poor humble person. This is a song of dejection

You yourself are the good-luck flower¹¹⁴,
Do not say I am not a flower;
Say I am a humble hollyhock¹¹⁵,
So please place me over to one side.

The lover chants a mating song

Over there is a crooked willow,
Over here is a gnarled willow¹¹⁶;
If we're to be united in heart,
Let us be tied in a willow knot.

When he finds that she does not want him he taunts her that a beautiful maiden is of no value

Of what use is a high mountain top,
If no one erects there a prayer pole¹¹⁷ ?
Of what use is a pretty maiden,
If no one leads her off as a wife ?

¹¹³ Since three rainbows are rare, and Tenggyeling is a sacred temple in Lhasa this is a striking complimentary simile.

¹¹⁴ This is the name often given to the highly prized chrysanthemum flower grown frequently in flower window boxes.

¹¹⁵ The hollyhock is disdained as it grows easily anywhere.

¹¹⁶ The Tibetans recognise two kinds of willows with separate names but both easily twine together and here they are used to represent the male and the female.

¹¹⁷ Prayer flags are usually erected on peaks to propitiate the deity there.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

She loves her husband or lover but hates his parents

Lover you are like a loving god,
But parents of lover are devils;
Love by gods is not better than yours¹¹⁸,
But devils aren't fiercer than parents.

He says they should be happy in this world

Until death what's more pleasing than you,
You know of the most excellent gods;
Dying and getting a god's body¹¹⁹,
One gets but oblations of water¹¹⁹.

He says that he will come to visit the sleeping place of his beautiful mistress

To the clean nook where you go to sleep,
I will come up to your glorious roof¹²⁰;
I myself will come up to see you,
You're a pretty heart-stealing goddess.

The lover says that if their heart is one, they need not fear anyone

The willow thinks of the little bird,
The little bird thinks of willow tree;
And if we two are but one in heart,
They all need not fear the evil hawk¹²¹.

¹¹⁸ Temples usually have copulating figures in which the female is embraced by a deity, some benign, some fierce, in ecstatic union; she claims that his love is better than that represented by these figures.

¹¹⁹ Righteous persons strive to reach godhead in their rebirth; if they do they are remoulded into a god-figure after death as are Dalai Lamas and then worshipped as gods; however he claims that the only satisfaction these persons will get for all their abstinence from pleasures of the flesh is a bowl of water in worship.

¹²⁰ In the summer time the Tibetans sleep on the roof which is much cleaner as well as cooler; and freer from bugs than the inside of the house.

¹²¹ The hawk here represents people and their evil gossip.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Love knows no shame so the wearer of the charm box need not be embarrassed

That which is beaten from five ounces¹²¹,
Charm boxes for the twelve-year cycle¹²²;
The wearer is not a bit ashamed,
Only the others are embarrassed¹²³.

Although he thought that he was not worthy of her, fate has granted her to him as a jewel : he is silver, she is gold

The ring's inner core is of silver,
The outside color is precious gold;
My heart did not think of wearing it,
But previous Karma has created it.

The lover has dreams of attaining her but he is of low birth

One thinks of being a noble lord,
One thinks of being state minister;
But looking and thinking carefully,
One is without pants on one's buttocks¹²⁴.

She says she does not know what her mother will say when he comes on his horse to see her

When your stallion comes clearly stamping,
Coming above or below the house;
I do not know what mother will say,
It is difficult to call "Come in".

He says that when he comes to the top of the pass may a raven circle three times to show that she is well

When my horse arrives at the pass-top,
May the black raven like an arrow;
If the stealer of my heart is well,
Please make three circlings in his flying¹²⁵.

121 Five ounces of gold.

122 The twelve-year cycle here roughly represents the length of life, hence good for a lifetime. Charm boxes protect the wearer from harm.

123 Because they do not have such finery and yet must associate with her.

124 Only the wealthy and official class wear trousers; the poor go without them, wearing only a cloak.

125 The raven is a sign of good luck and their presence is desired.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

They are separated now but hope to meet later

The rivers have one principal source¹²⁶,
Yet each one must go in its own course;
Before they reach the encircling sea¹²⁶;
So one should offer prayer that we meet.

If they once meet they will not separate

Then we ourselves would come together,
If we do unite we shall have joy;
Having met, — what pleasure? what delight?
We will never separate, we think.

Pray that the most rare ones will grant them favors

Praying day and night without ceasing,
Most Rare Ones, on you do we rely²⁹;
Provisions and clothing without end,
Most Rare Ones-yourself, grant to us please.

After separating from one's lover or husband

Cut down the willow; carry it off;
Young maiden in your heart do not grieve;
From the top of the cut willow stump,
The goddess cedar tree will spring up¹²⁷.

¹²⁶ The Tibetans think of their country as the center of the world and that all rivers rise from their great tableland around which is an encircling sea. Since all the great rivers of Asia rise from this mountainous tableland with its extensions to the north and west this is not a too far-fetched idea. If one gets upon a high mountain and looks around the horizon on a clear day there appears to be a vast encircling sea beyond the countless rolling ranges.

¹²⁷ See 25 about the willow. The willow grows up easily if cut down by an enemy but if rooted out completely a cedar or juniper which seeds easily may spring up from the willow stump as it decays; the cedar with its green leaves signify eternal life.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One cannot repay the other's kindness

It will indeed be a great favor,
Such a thoughtful heart can't be repaid;
Not dying if living a long life,
One may repay such deeds of kindness.

Praise is given to the lover or sweetheart

That out of the essence of China,
The jewel that's called Nyisheh Chusheh¹²⁸;
When it comes to the black heads-Tibet¹²⁹,
Then the whole world will fill with delight.

One hopes their noble house will become nobler

Desiring exaltation it is bought,
The yellow Chinese official hat;
For this there's a red coral button¹³⁰,
Which one thinks of putting on the top.

If the lovers are in accord they can do as they wish

A very white cloud is in the east,
Which looks to be as soft as lamb's wool;
If we ourselves think to be as one,
Each one should prepare their own garments¹³¹.

¹²⁸ This is a name for the famous wishing jewel which grants to its wearer or owner any wish and all delights.

¹²⁹ Black heads is a name for the lay people of Tibet to distinguish them from the priesthood who have their heads shaved and hence show a yellow poll. Here it stands for Tibet.

¹³⁰ In the days of the Manchu Dynasty the Emperor of China would grant the button of the red coral as one of the highest insignia which could be worn on the hat. This was supposed to be given for services to the Empire but as hinted here was sometimes given for financial contributions. Even the officials of Tibet took pride in securing it.

¹³¹ Like in most Oriental countries each person must be able to help support the family, so they being poor lovers must prepare their own outfits.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The separation of the lovers is heart-breaking

When one is on the point of going,
One will place the saddle on the horse;
And those whose hearts are in harmony,
Will get farther away every day.

They will eventually get together

The water plant of the wide river,
The young flower of deliverance¹³²;
You must not have despair in your heart,
The fruit of our deeds will circle us¹³³.

¹³² Drogma (Tara) the goddess who can deliver one from the wheel of transmigration is likely represented here by the lotus flower called "the water plant of the wide river." The lotus is a sacred flower of Lamaism and grows in the stagnant inlets of wide rivers.

¹³³ See also 112. Karma, in the working of their good and evil deeds will take care of their love for each other.

CHAPTER III

Bathang Love Songs by Kehzang Lhashee.

The six syllables of Tibetan are translated into nine syllables.

If one's heart is happy it is enough

In the godlike palace of my thoughts,
Over the high mountain top I go;
Prostration circlings are not required,
To have faith only, is sufficient.

He thought of dwelling with her, then decides he will not

For the yellow goose loves the marshlands¹³⁴,
And then thinks to dwell in the mountains;
Yet loving the clear white lady lake,
Decides in his own heart for the lake.

After disagreement or quarrelling the lovers separate

Putting one's hat on top of one's head,
And throwing out one's pigtail behind;
Then one party saying "go slowly",
And the other saying "sit slowly"¹³⁵.

Separation of lovers may be necessary to gain merit

If one would show a mind of beauty,
One must have completed this life's Karma;
If one takes refuge in the desert¹³⁶,
One must part with one's beloved ones.

They are in accord with one another

The good advice of our kind parents,
Is like the voice of the golden grouse¹³⁷;
When you go over the lady pass,
I hear your song coming back to me.

¹³⁴ The yellow goose is the sheldrake or Brahmany duck which is so large that it is called a goose by the Tibetans. It is a sacred bird because of its color, (the yellow of the yellow Lamaistic sect), and as the reincarnation of monks.

¹³⁵ These are the phrases used in saying "goodbye."

¹³⁶ As a hermit.

¹³⁷ This grouse ranges up to 17,500 feet altitude and its welcome voice is heard on the highest passes.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

A song when one's loved one dies

When the eighth month moon has arisen¹³⁸,
The upper plain grass becomes yellow¹³⁹;
The children who are without parents,
Are grieved in the hollow of their hearts.

One grieves when unable to see one's beloved

Far off on the top of the great plain,
Where it is full of the goats and sheep¹⁴⁰;
My very lovely white goddess sheep,
My eyes are unable to perceive.

Each lover must look after themselves as they are poor

In the east is a very white cloud,
Which is softer than a white lamb's wool;
If we our ownelves have but one thought,
Each is allowed to sew one's own clothes.

Being poverty stricken makes it difficult to stay together

When the traveller is ready to go,
He will place the saddle on the horse;
Those who are agreeing in their heart,
Every day will get farther away.

At first their lack of resources were not considered but now their poverty seems important

I have never gone to the rock cave,
And know not the distance to the cave;
Now way down in the lower country¹⁴¹,
I have not been thinking of coming.

¹³⁸ This is about the last of September and the first part of October.

¹³⁹ Killed by the frost.

¹⁴⁰ The Tibetan term for saying goats and sheep is Ra Ma Luh, and this term is also used to designate half-breeds such as half-Chinese and half-Tibetan. The goat is looked upon as tricky though clever and this term when applied to people is not complimentary.

¹⁴¹ The lower lands are more fertile but hotter and farther from the grass pastures of the heights where the people go to feed their flocks; hence is not supposed to be as good a region in which to live.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

They have the same love and desire to see each other

When from the eastern shore there comes up,
The eastern umbrella called the sun¹⁴²;
Do not go from the east to the west,
Please stay in the earth's one central spot¹⁴³.

One's fate is fixed

Prayer flags of the heights flap wildly,
What use to flap wildly, it is fixed;
The green turquoise river is sluggish,
What use to be peaceful, it must move.

No use to seek another lover, you are mine

The master lord of this very lake,
Is a bird which is the yellow goose;
Without purpose you are a small bird,
So why circle around to the right ?¹⁴⁴

*One has a lover who must leave after the spouse returns home
after an absence*

The summer husband (or "lady") river has come,
Winter water lover sit slowly;
My previous life partner has arrived,
Sweetness of my heart please sit slowly¹⁴⁵.

One would be a King but can only be a respectable person

Like to that in the upper heavens,
I myself would come too but cannot;
We two are like two young white vultures,
Which only fly up into the sky.

¹⁴² The sun has many metaphorical names and like an umbrella casts a shadow on both the earth and moon.

¹⁴³ That is-to stay in Tibet which is considered to be the center of the earth.

¹⁴⁴ The yellow sheldrake goose, when it circles, circles to the right which is the sacred mode of going around holy edifices.

¹⁴⁵ The legitimate spouse is compared to a flooded summer river which is less pleasing than the more placid winter river which typifies the lover. "Sit Slowly" is phrase used in saying "goodbye."

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Formerly one had no resources to do things but expects to do such

I have never yet gone to Tibet,¹⁴⁶
I have never sung Tibetan songs;
If I wish to sing Tibetan songs,
Please place Tibetan songs in my heart.

One hopes no barrier will prevent their meeting

The little white rock within this year¹⁴⁷,
Lit up like the scarf of a goddess;
Which young magpies have carried away,
In that omen let no barrier come¹⁴⁸.

Lovers should not be too hurried to get together

When the cloud goes downward so quickly,
The stallion can't erect as quickly¹⁴⁹;
When small talk is thrown without meaning,
The mouth then cannot come up with words.

None can tell the end of their love affair

From the mountain of Golden Horsehead¹⁵⁰,
The foreigners have led down a stream;
On the great plain is a fine harvest,
What will be the finish no one knows.

¹⁴⁶ Tibet here undoubtedly means the inner part of Tibet around Lhasa.

¹⁴⁷ White stones have a special significance and are used in reverential worship such as the pleasing or the propitiation of local spirits.

¹⁴⁸ Magpies are noted for the carrying away of objects and the carrying away of an auspicious white stone might cause the spirit of the locality to bring bad luck which would be a barrier to their love; yet nothing can be done about it as the magpies are beyond human control.

¹⁴⁹ Tibetans are less reticent about sex than occidentals in talk and similes and here the "cloud" which represents the female sex organ indicates the mare is too hurried for the stallion to respond as the mare wishes.

¹⁵⁰ The foreign settlement in Bathang built an irrigation ditch whose source was near an abandoned gold mine and here called Golden Horsehead. This irrigation project produced fine crops but whether the foreigners would be able to hold onto the land was uncertain, as it was leased.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Formerly they found difficulty in meeting but no longer

The shirt made from the white silk serge cloth¹⁵¹,
Will be hidden by red woollen cloth;
Formerly you never dressed in it,
Now you can afford to work in it.

A lascivious song of sexual parts

Your hill-top is maroon in color,
What it is and where, it may be known;
For my own beloved's mountain top,
My own eyes have never yet seen it¹⁵².

They are suited to each other in all respects

Bamboo does go better with bamboo,
The bamboo of the white snowy fields¹⁵³;
When the bamboo tips are thrust in earth,
The bamboo in each year are alike.

Sweetheart is sweet as sugar and they will soon meet

The sweet apricots of upper Tsang !¹¹
Yet will you yourself not be sweeter ?
And when the seventh month moon arises,
The great round sugar half-spheres will come¹⁵⁴.

*The lover sings the song praising the beauty of the girl he cannot
get probably because of her high rank*

From the sky comes the sound of a voice,
The voice of a beautiful goddess;
Transformed into a pretty body,
Hidden by a white silken curtain¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵¹ Only the better class wear these silk serge shirts which are mostly hidden by the red woollen cloaks.

¹⁵² The hill and mountain top are a reference to the woman's privates.

¹⁵³ A poetical name for Tibet where some varieties of bamboo grow wild.

¹⁵⁴ Dried apricots resemble the round sugar half-spheres (called in Chinese Wa-er-tang) and imported from China during the seventh month or our August; these apricots are very sweet and highly desired by the Tibetans whose fruit supply is very limited.

¹⁵⁵ His unobtainable sweetheart is the rebirth of a beautiful goddess and hence he cannot possess her.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

*The lover has difficulty going to see his sweetheart in Tsang*¹¹

When one comes from the pure land of Tsang,
One will be like a goddess of Tsang;
When surmounting the pass of Gangga,
One must be like a monkey of Tsang¹⁵⁶.

*Entrance of Chinese soldiers excites the maidens as the soldiers
will seek mistresses*

My own maiden association⁷²,
Now tremble like fire at Chinese news;
Lovely news of turquoise and corals¹⁵⁷,
Yet think not of becoming a spouse.

*The sex call of the Chinese soldiers is compared to the neigh of a
stallion which some of the girls will answer*

The stallion in the stall neighs and neighs,
If we ourselves would answer such calls;
To search and search need not to be done,
After questions, oneself may do such.

Some parents oppose their daughter's love affairs

My own sweetheart is a god of love,
Loving parents may be like demons;
And not be pleased with my beloved,
My parents are not bad as demons.

His sweetheart Kaseh which means pure white is lovely

Kaseh is like the light of the moon,
With beauty like a daughter of gods;
When rising on the exact south slope,
May her brilliant light strike down on me¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵⁶ Tsang is difficult to reach such as mentioned here because these passes are high; Tsang is also rated as pure because of its religious establishments.

¹⁵⁷ The maiden will receive jewels or means of buying jewelry from their Chinese lovers knowing that when the Chinese soldiers are transferred they will be abandoned; so they rarely think of the alliance as permanent.

¹⁵⁸ His sweetheart lives on a higher slope, so she, like the moon, strikes downward — a double metaphor here.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The Chinese soldiers seduce the Tibetan maidens

The great black-clothed Chinese build a hope,
They are given to this goat of flesh¹⁵⁹;
My own delicate crystal mistress;
And my greenish tears, therefore, flow long¹⁵⁹.

The lover will return to his sweetheart at a fixed time

When the six stars spread hither and yon¹⁶⁰,
The center of the sky is distinct;
Myself on the fifteenth of the month,
Will come back to you "Light of the World".

It will be spring when he returns

At the cave does the glacier obstruct ?¹⁶¹
Now the little field will be seeded;
Will the frost kill in the little field ?
Only the glacier, in its heart, knows.

She must not have him too long lest she have a child

In the sky the white clouds do not stay,
Does one's clothing have its first color ?¹⁶²
For I must not have you my lover,
To bearing of a fair virtuous one.

He states that one must not think of having her

Above the three glaciers are moving,
And will soon arrive within Dareh¹⁶³;
Oh you beautiful nose-blood flower¹⁶⁴!
One must not think to have the flower.

¹⁵⁹ The Chinese soldiers are sly and tricky like the goat and his jealousy causes him tears.

¹⁶⁰ The six stars are the Pleiades in the heavens above.

¹⁶¹ Caves often have water dripping from the roof which freezes in winter to join the frozen advancing glacier outside. In the higher localities the melting of the glaciers indicate the time of sowing as the cold air from them when they are too low, or unmelted, will cause frosts in the valleys.

¹⁶² The clothing fades to lose its first colour.

¹⁶³ Dareh is just a typical village or at least an unknown one to the author.

¹⁶⁴ Several flowers have this name and all are considered of significant beauty and illustrative of a beautiful maiden.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

She will see him at a certain time

Although you may be white in your heart,
The tenth is the date of my own moon¹⁶⁵;
Is it not true the heart is joyous ?
Is it not true that lust is aroused ?

He replies that it is hard for him to wait for her

The heart flutters hither and thither,
Like unto fire spreading on the plain;
Like the spring on the back of the pass,
To control is it not hard to do ?¹⁶⁶

If he has to wait for her perhaps it is better not to get her

If not is it all right not to get ?
The leopard's eye does not seek trouble;
Among the many spotted lineage;
If not, please settle them together¹⁶⁷.

He proposes that they mate

Soft flesh-can your body be arranged ?
If one may not pierce the rug of love;
Then in the dirt one may draw pictures,
Until the stars of heaven vanish.

He promises to return

On the mouth of the thistle flower,
It is a difficult task to work;
But as the vultures to the corpse hill,
Likewise friend, I myself will return¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶⁵ The time of the month when she is willing for him to make love to her.

¹⁶⁶ It is as difficult to control his desire for her as it is to stop a spring from flowing.

¹⁶⁷ If it is hard to control the spring then it may be better not to meet; the leopard does not seek his food from other leopards since they are all of like strength and appetite

¹⁶⁸ Vultures of course soon learn to return to the hill where corpses are cut up. Vultures are highly honored because of their disposal of the dead and this is a good figure of speech to Tibetans; but would not be with occidentals.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He will return if she wants him for he will find a way to get there

The crane should return to the northland,
If not he has no food to digest;
The aged hog within the hog house,
If his plight is concealed is happy.

Is she sure she loves him ?

The willow that is without base roots,
Will not be able to spread its twigs.
So now you who are my little bird;
Is your own heart in a delusion ?

One without the other is not complete

From a tree trunk which has no base roots,
The full color of the leaves depart;
A bush thrush who is without a beak,
The tone of its sweet voice vanishes.

Without love their union is delusion

The bones that are minus eating meat,
Are merely as sticks to cross the pass¹⁶⁹;
If these are made into top buttons¹⁷⁰,
Have not I illusions of fancy ?

Again he suggests that they should mate

For my Great Dragon Bones silk clothing¹⁷¹,
Are not needed at night anyhow;
If a thick thread is forcefully thrust,
It will reach in the needle eye-hole.

¹⁶⁹ Bones devoid of meat are only useful to use as staffs to aid one over the passes.

¹⁷⁰ Bones might be made into top buttons which are an insignia of rank. If bones are not useful he has the imagination to use them otherwise, so he will advise a means of seeing her, no matter what the obstacles.

¹⁷¹ The finest silk clothing has the Dragon design upon it.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

If they mate she says their union must be permanent

The male horse who is chasing, chasing,
Having made the union, then returns;
If after one time they don't approach,
Where on this earth will he be going ?

He states that he wants her forever

The male horse is hot for the wild lands,
He cannot irrigate land by mouth;
When lord he has charge as the master;
When not lord he separates from life¹⁷².

She replies that his words are sweet but not sincere

At the rock titled Phari Dojhe¹⁷³,
One goes to make a heartfelt request;
Of the loving partner for one's life,
I think heart speech need not be spoken.

He states that if she does not believe him he will not come to her

At one place filled with broken pledges,
And the male horse has no place to run;
The little sweetheart will not listen,
And heart language will not be spoken.

She is not sure she can trust that he will not leave her

The male horse is not a Sining horse,
The Sining horse is not well gaited;
And you yourself will not go with him,
The halter will not be firmly grasped¹⁷⁴.

¹⁷² The stallion loves to roam the wild country with its mares and does not like domestication. If he is master of his herd he lives but if challenged by a rival he may be fought to his death.

¹⁷³ Phari Dojhe means diamond or thunderbolt rock which may be in sight, and as such is designated as a trysting place for lovers either in actuality or in fancy.

¹⁷⁴ She is fearful to trust herself to him. Sining horses are generally rated high, but evidently he and his horse are not, although she may be just stalling him off.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

At present they find it difficult to meet near her home

Beneath the little black house gutter¹⁷⁵,
Sweethearts have no opportunity;
If we met at the side of the sea¹²⁶,
It will be because of former deeds¹⁹.

They can put up with hardships if they have each other

Saying "to die" is not to be done,
Saying "to be sick" is not proper;
Although food is very difficult,
We can seek for two icy caverns.

When one loves one does not give up the other easily

The odor that is pleasing in beer
Is not prized by those who wish to fight;
Lest one lose one's life one goes inside,
One thinks one should go but still fighting¹⁷⁶.

She has doubts in her mind or he has doubts in his mind

For beauty, spotted cloth has beauty;
For rustling, raw silk cloth is decreed;
At the raw silk do not be angry,
Just look at the lovely spotted cloth¹⁷⁷.

175 The flat roofs of Tibet have gutters sticking out from the side or the back wall of the houses and here lovers can meet in comparative privacy as doors open only on the front sides of the houses; unless the parents watch closely as sometimes is the case, as he states here.

176 This is the case when one is drinking beer in a home with a host and an enemy is present with whom one has a blood feud demanding revenge.

177 While silk is preferred, lovely spotted wool cloth will do. Marriage is partly a financial arrangement between parents; the girl is given a dowry but also expects the young man to have means to start their married life.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He may be dismayed by her high rank but if he wants her badly enough he will get her

The colored raw silk cloth of Lhasa,
Might at the first be sold at a loss;
The people of the Indian country¹⁷⁸,
If they desire it, it can be sold.

A permanent marriage is desirable but a side affair is dubious

The very lovely turquoise-topped bridge¹⁷⁹,
It will endure for a man's lifetime;
But at bamboo corners of the bridge,
One does not think to be laid hold of¹⁸⁰.

One would like to establish a home

The white tent with a hundred top points¹⁸¹,
One thinks in one's heart of pitching it;
The tent poles, which are of green willow,
Will not themselves be stable enough.

It can be a home of love and happiness even if it is humble

The pillars will not be made of gold,
The beams will not be made of silver ;
But the house can be of fine timbers¹⁸²,
And the floor can be pounded pebbles¹⁸³.

¹⁷⁸ The Tibetan term here can be translated either as Indian or Chinese depending on whether the cloth is transported as exports from the east or south; silk is not created in Tibet but comes from India or China.

¹⁷⁹ Turquoise-topped bridges are those whose roof is covered with blue colored tile.

¹⁸⁰ Bamboo is often found growing at each end of a bridge and here is opportunity for men to lay in wait and capture the bride which was the former method of Tibetan marriage. Capture still has its relics in present day marriage ritual.

¹⁸¹ Points where the poles support the tent and a hundred poles would indicate a very large tent but they do not have the means to erect such a tent as shown in the phrase "green willows."

¹⁸² Tibetans generally secure the aid of friends and relatives to erect their home, all going up the mountains to secure timbers and in pounding the stone floor.

¹⁸³ Pebbles are spread over the clay and pounded in until they form a smooth polished surface.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Karma and fate rule life

At last when we're a human circle¹⁸⁴,
Father and mother will not censure¹⁸⁵;
When we go as one to the north plains,
Both parents become excess for deeds¹⁸⁵.

They will resign themselves to whatever fate has in store

Little sweetheart, we two love as one,
Let's not seek to add up sufferings;
If snowfalls block one in the mountains,
We will store up treasure in our hearts¹⁸⁶.

She affirms that fate will determine and ask if he loves her

My lover when we have met as one,
The two parents will be a burden;
If happy, it is from the Rare Ones²⁹,
If not, it is our former life-deeds¹⁸⁷.

Lack of food will not trouble true love

Darling sweetheart when we become one,
Cramming dry barley flour has brought death¹⁸⁸;
But now if little sweetheart loves me,
The barley bag will not take the eyes¹⁸⁹.

¹⁸⁴ As a united couple they will have children and thus start the cycle of birth, marriage and death with all of its happiness and misery.

¹⁸⁵ The parents will give in and accept their union as inevitable and part of their own fate.

¹⁸⁶ If the paths in the mountains which separate them, forbid contact, they will maintain their love in their hearts.

¹⁸⁷ The old idea of Karma or the transmission of good deeds and misdeeds from one rebirth to another determine happiness or misery in this life. The sins of the fathers are not just carried to the third and fourth generation but endlessly.

¹⁸⁸ Dry parched barley flour is the favourite food ranking with the Tibetans as bread does with Americans.

¹⁸⁹ They will be so in love with each other that short rations will not trouble them and so to speak they will not cram the favorite food of barley flour. They will live on love.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One should not seek the impossible nor beyond one's means

My sweetheart seek not the big river,
By old age one can't reach the river;
Do not wear the fine serge food wrapper¹⁹⁰,
For your old clothes will not go with it.

*Once they are together as spouses things will work out alright
and nothing else matters*

The little bird called Damdree Dronma,
Descends in the midst of branching streams;
If it knows the mother stream is wide;
The bird once descended, what matters¹⁹¹?

He will do anything to win her love

To want the mother fish in the stream,
A large fish hook must at first be cast;
Except that the fish is to be killed,
There's no use in taking out the hook¹⁹².

She says she must be careful lest she be deceived

The weeping source springs of the Salween,
Even if heard only by Ang Choh¹⁹³;
When the mouth of this wild game is dry,
It will not drink by greedy mouthfuls¹⁹³.

¹⁹⁰ Food is wrapped in cloth and placed inside the blouse but its cloth is usually ragged remnants of the person's clothing and if of finer material would be out of class with one's clothing.

¹⁹¹ This bird is probably the water ouzel or dipper which is seen frequently in the swiftest waters walking on the bottom; where two streams join this bird is safer because of the width of the water which deters its enemies.

¹⁹² Life should not be taken uselessly, especially the life of a fish, whose slaughter is more sinful than of other animals because the fish has no voice to protest its killing.

¹⁹³ The wild game here called Ang Choh — a colloquial name for an unknown animal, is wary and will merely sip the water while keeping close watch for a possible enemy. The animal is probably an antelope which lives at the high altitudes of Tibet.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Things seem propitious in union but there are drawbacks

The Tsangpo and Yu rivers may join,
So that these two pillars become one;
If mother fish relies on this fact,
Such a support is a matchless friend¹⁹⁴.

One must always be careful in seeking a mate

Search on hills in sandalwood forests,
A paradise of turquoise substance;
Though the peacock thinks to alight there,
Yet here are mother chick's enemies¹⁹⁵.

This is not a propitious year for marriage

The flower without stem or presence,
Will not appear on pass or valley;
This flower of the cold wind breezes,
In this year will not be coming up¹⁹⁶.

He states that he cannot see where his sweetheart is

The fair meadow's coarse grassy cover,
In the summer are filled with white sheep;
But my very own pure goddess sheep,
My eye can not see where she is placed.

¹⁹⁴ The word Yu which means "turquoise" is a name often applied to streams fed by the bluish-green glacier brooks; and when such streams join the Tsangpo or the upper course of the Brahmaputra it gives width and depth for a fish to swim in safety from fishermen and animal enemies.

¹⁹⁵ Even in the forests of the sacred sandalwood with its blue-green leafy coverage, the mothered chickens will have enemies.

¹⁹⁶ This flower, so obscure and close to the ground, grows on the high plains near the snow line and in some cold summers may not be uncovered by the melting of the snows.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

She hopes they may come together again

The mother goat has climbed the mountains,
The kid has been left back on the steppes;
Oh, perfectly enlightened shepherd¹⁹⁷.
May mother and child come together.

One does not know how to get along

The Chinese have returned to China,
Chinese children are left in Tibet¹⁵⁷;
But left with only five silver coins,
There is no raising of these children¹⁹⁸.

Good often comes out of the most unpromising situations

The plant that is called the Yangtshen bush,
With a shape like the rosebush of Gong¹⁹⁹;
Will produce the fair pure-white blossoms,
With fruit of the color of corals¹⁹⁹.

If they love one another that is most important

The thorny snags of the rosebush shape,
Do not allow use of the handaxe²⁰⁰;
But will produce its pure-white flowers,
And become the creator of red fruit.

One should not aim too high in seeking a spouse

Do not ride the stallion they have warned,
The king's small son is not capable;
A full-grown man can pick a good horse;
Can the heart be satisfied with this?

¹⁹⁷ The term here is the one used in addressing a Bodhisattwa or one who has forsaken the right to enter Nirvana for the purpose of becoming reincarnated again in order to save men from the wheel of misery and of life. These last two lines are a short prayer.

¹⁹⁸ The sums of money left to abandoned wife and children by a Chinese soldier will not last long.

¹⁹⁹ Gong is a province or district of Tibet.

¹⁹⁹ The seed fruit of this plant weighing about two grains, is used as a weight in the weighing of silver and gold.

²⁰⁰ This bush is of no use for timber or fuel; it is of value only for beautiful flowers and small red fruit.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One cannot be too choice in seeking a spouse

Yellow on the body is all kinds,
All living beings are thus burdened;
Even the sheldrake duck has yellow¹³⁴,
But what creatures are not carrying fruit²⁰¹.

One should stay in their own class

The nobles speak with understanding,
The state ministers speak with wisdom;
If one looks into human beings,
To the noble there are no relics²⁰².

One is protected by one's tutelary deity from mistakes

On the top of the great eastern peak²⁰³,
Appearing like a varied white cloud,
Is my tutelary deity;
Was she not sent as a protector²⁰⁴?

All human beings are much alike

Just one cup, Chinese and Tibetan,
Religious guide is Padma Raka;
If one looks at holy-sounding deeds,
The changed water-offerings become warm²⁰⁵.

201 The fruit referred to is either sins or good deeds carried forward by the soul from previous births. Men are reborn as animals, if sinful, before being reborn again as men.

202 Relics are produced from the remains of the noble or high born in body or spirit and are sacred because they were of noble blood, or holy in their actions such as hermits. Those nobly born know that their birth indicates they have good Karma and hence are not interested in relics.

203 The high snow peak east of Bathang.

204 Each person in youth selects a deity to act as their personal god to whom each one prays for protection and aid. Their name is kept secret so enemies may not use the same deity to their harm.

205 Deeds of men not corresponding to their words nor their worship, hence men constantly set forth water oblation-offerings so often and quickly that the water develops heat in the process; yet this will not avail although they have the support of Padma Sambawa (Padma Raka here) who exorcised and drove out demons from Tibet. Chinese and Tibetans who use him are alike in their hypocrisy.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Celestial bodies are much alike also in shining

Just as the two the sun and moon,
Seem to be in the palm of the hand;
The stars scattered wildly here and there,
Likewise seem to shine or not to shine²⁰⁶.

They are two humble people asking the fates to be kind

Lords measure forces on the fierce hills,
And come victorious in the temple !
We two are but youthful golden bees⁸⁶,
Please lead us into lover's meetings²⁰⁷.

One need not trouble about being poor and humble in origin

The lotus flower has been raised up
And made the fabulous white lotus;
It's become the top head ornament¹³⁰,
And is not an indifferent discard²⁰⁸.

She is beautiful on the outside but just a plain person in birth

The outside of the peak is handsome,
The flask's inside things are many kinds;
The flask inside may have just water;
That I think is what I am myself.

²⁰⁶ The sun and moon seem to be small enough to be held in the hand by a man on earth. The Tibetans know little about the actual size of these two bodies and their distance from earth. Likewise to them the shining or not shining of the stars is not understood.

²⁰⁷ This is a petition to the fierce protectors of Buddhism. These fierce demons are often shown in copulation with their female partner.

²⁰⁸ The lotus flower which springs up from the filthy mire of the pond is regarded as the emblem of purity. Various deities are believed to have been born out of a lotus and others with them are pictured as sitting upon a lotus flower. This is especially true of Gautama Buddha.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Once one makes a decision it cannot be revoked

For the tiniest little brooklet,
If its god water must be poured out
Into the upper green Tsang river;
Wherever it goes can it return²⁰⁹?

Their destiny has already been decided and one can't change fate

Of course the five deities of Jah,
Are saluted for pure perfection.
If these five Jah gods are not perfect,
There isn't need to salute the perfect²¹⁰.

Nothing is permanent on the face of the earth

On top of the great plain of Phari,
Is thrown out the dried corpse of a dog;
Though the vulture young die of famine,
The dog bones will not stay on the earth²¹¹.

Good and evil mingle together and one cannot alter it

If the dry tree limb breaks, let it break;
If the green tree limb breaks, let it bend;
For the tree is the thought-wishing tree²¹²;
The dry and green mingle together.

²⁰⁹ The pure clean water which issues from the spring or from a glacier high on the peak must be mingled and transformed into the dirty yellow water of the Tsang river. This Tsang river here as well as elsewhere may refer to the Tsangpo — the upper course of the Brahmaputra which flows almost across southern Tibet from west to east.

²¹⁰ If the five deities found at Jah temple, a place eight miles south-east of Trashilhunpo, have not attained perfection or accomplished the right to enter Nirvana then nothing else has. These five deities are the principal ones shown in most temples but not named here.

²¹¹ Phari is an extensive plain in southern Tibet on the road to Lhasa. Vultures would not likely pick the bones of dogs who chase the vultures away from corpses, but if they did not the corpse would disintegrate even in the dry climate of Phari plain.

²¹² The fabulous tree which grants to anyone their wish of food or drink. It bends to the hand of the gatherer, its leaves yield luscious fruit, its juice nectar, and its fruit are jewels.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love

Why is not the peach tree selected?
Its flowers and buds are counted white;
On these will any fruit be produced?
Now for awhile may we go and see²¹³.

One is not permitted to do as one desires

Do not ride the stallion they have said,
The son of the Minister must not;
For the stallion must be tied, they said;
Is this satisfying to the heart²¹⁴?

The raising of a family is a necessary part of life

For I most likely will need a horse,
The horse likely needs the male organ;
A male horse without a male organ,
For myself to ride such I will not²¹⁵.

Some however are not made for marriage but stay by themselves

On top of the vast plain of Phari²¹¹,
The Jyu Lo flowers grow together;
Hogs do not eat the Jyu Lo flower,
So the Jyu Lo is left to itself²¹⁶.

One must mate with a person of standing not just anyone

The tree that winds and twines all around,
It is a tree of Kongpo valley²¹⁷;
It winds around the paper tree's bark,
It's a tree without good quality.

²¹³ The peach is a love tree with luscious fruit; it blooms in spring with auspicious almost white flowers.

²¹⁴ The minister here is of high rank in government and his son would be guarded from harm.

²¹⁵ It is bad luck and a great curse to be sterile or barren so riding a horse with all of its male organs would be more auspicious; hence a stallion is preferred to a gelding or a mule.

²¹⁶ The author could not identify this Jyu Lo flower; it might be a species of primrose which grows in clumps and does not seem to be disturbed by being eaten by animals.

²¹⁷ Kongpo is a province lying to the southeast of Lhasa and east of Tsethang.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One must keep hope alive although they cannot be together now
If garlic isn't cut off at its base,
The garlic leaves will spring up again;
Speak not about the plain of Lhasa,
Again and again it can be reached²¹⁸.

The girl censures her priestly lover
That which grows under the willow tree,
This flower receives a cooling shade;
Yourself must not speak threateningly,
Such go not into holy orders²¹⁹.

Everything must be done according to custom and propriety
Whiteness harmonizes with the snow;
In this life friends must have heart accord;
In the white glowing of the moonlight,
Where is the forefinger not raised up²²⁰.

Things change and one cannot do as one wishes but must accept fate
Beneath the empty space of heaven,
Where is the stick that was thrown away;
The little bird within the river,
Does not sit on the road to freedom²²¹.

Love affairs must be conducted properly
In proper ranks on the right and left,
The deities are most likely placed;
Oblations offered to their lordships,
Are most likely by youths like ourselves²²².

²¹⁸ The plain of Lhasa is easily entered through several valleys.

²¹⁹ Priests are supposed to be celibate so if one does not live up to his vows and takes a sweetheart he is open to sarcastic comment by both his sweetheart and others.

²²⁰ Pointing the finger indicates scorn, and if a monk does not live up to his vows, this finger of scorn will be pointed even at night.

²²¹ The small water ouzel which seeks its food on the bottom of swift streams, is always in danger of drowning; and how often one wants a stick for use after having carelessly thrown it away; so one must accept what fate decrees for them.

²²² Deities in a temple are placed according to their rank and importance; offerings of water and grain are placed each day as routine jobs by youthful monks who serve the older priests and are delegated to this task by their superiors.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Custom determines what should be done

The aged dog called Achi Gyaoh,
Until midnight he goes sounding "Jang";
When midnight has come, he does not bark;
When daybreak returns he makes no sound²²³.

He asks for aid when he comes to see his sweetheart at night

Darkness has fallen upon the earth,
The little birds have gone to their nests;
Oh, rock-bird owl with the golden eyes,
Please lend to me your golden owl eyes.

She asks that he treat her with consideration

On the one stub of the willow tree²²⁴,
Do not cast any stones with a sling;
The little birds that have no parents,
Can have a nest on this willow stem.

Fate determines everything as to what they do

On the great vast plains north of Lhasa,
The wild ass goes faster than the horse;
Truly the wild ass cannot run fast,
It is most likely hot-hell merit²²⁵.

Love is precious but cannot be grasped as can material things

Bazaars are a market place of gold,
The bazaar drinks are of turquoise hue;
The bazaar waters can not be grasped,
Though market scales are held in the hand²²⁶.

²²³ The name of the bitch Achi Gyaoh means "bearded grandma" rather appropriate as the dogs are heavy maned, and show grey around eyes and mouth when old. The deep throaty bark sounds like "Jang" and they bark, as indicated, making excellent watch dogs against strangers.

²²⁴ Willows naturally prune to a main stub or are broken off for fuel

²²⁵ The different hot and cold hells eighteen in number have the suitable punishment for the different sins. While the wild ass out-distances the horse neither can make top speed because of the high altitude of Tibet.

²²⁶ Bazaars are usually held near a decent-sized stream and naturally water can not be held in the hand and weighed as is gold which may be washed out from the stream's sands.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Good luck cannot be controlled

Bazaars are a market place of gold,
And bazaar drinks are a turquoise tint;
The water pot that has no good luck,
Will never be filled up to the top²²⁷.

Prays that they will not be thwarted in their love

On the highest mountains of Bhutan,
The milk of the lioness is poured out;
Oh, most excellent priest of heaven,
Strike us not with the hot-sawing hells²²⁸.

Even with fate favourable there are doubts in the mind

Through the spirit of the white lion,
Mystery dwells in the glacier peak;
Yet when darkness covers the glacier,
The lion goes with a troubled spirit²²⁹.

Parents have placed obstacles in their way

The parents with the loving spirit,
Will not permit the youth to remain;
So at present learned jackdaw bird,
Please give to me of your compassion²³⁰.

²²⁷ Tibetans believe that various containers have the power to increase any contents placed in them miraculously. Among these are musk-skin money bags and certain types of vessels. The pot of treasures is one of the eight lucky symbols or objects. Only lucky vessels will automatically fill themselves to the top.

²²⁸ This is one of the hot hells where the sinners are sawn assunder as a punishment. Sixteen to eighteen black lines are drawn on their body and burning hot saws cut along these lines.

²²⁹ The lion is a mythological animal reputed to dwell among the glaciers to which he lends charms and mystery. The lion is represented as supporting the throne of some deities and also figure in the torments of people in Hell. The lion represents power and vigor.

²³⁰ Jackdaws often build nests in protected places on the outside of dwellings and are considered to be symbols of good luck. They can be taught to say words and hence they are called learned.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

There is no one to help them in their love affair

Like to the thunder of the heavens,
Is goddess lady Ohzer Dronma;
In monastery Tangyeh Lingma,
There is now no great power dwelling²³¹.

She compares herself to the white vulture

The winged playing of the white vulture,
For I too am without a husband;
So as the great white vulture, we both
Go seeking in the heavenly space²³².

However in the long run fate decides everything

Does the river expand in summer?
The mother fish does not really know;
Three fish may beg for the proper depth,
If it is not produced, it is fate²³³.

Fate is a dominating factor in life

Grass plains and deer are matters of fate,
The deer does not know dogs will chase it;
That in previous lives we were spouses,
By the mouth of men it can't be said²³⁴.

²³¹ Ohzer Dronma is a deity whose name is invoked to ward off snake bites, etc.; but now in the famous monastery of Tangyeh Lingma there is no one to coerce her and force her to do the bidding of suppliants.

²³² The white vulture soaring in the sky seems to be alone as he seeks dead animals for food, so the singer and the vulture appear to be in the same situation.

²³³ Three is a lucky number but expansion or flooding of the river in summer is a matter of fate and beyond human or animal control.

²³⁴ The deer needs the grassy and open plains in order to find food yet in such plains he is easily seen and is sure to be chased by hunting dogs. The lovers may have been spouses in previous incarnations yet no one knows; if so, such would not indicate that they should be spouses now.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

To encourage him she says that a large betrothal pledge will not be demanded

When the pledger comes for the ransom,
Please lead him into the ransom room;
Much redeeming will not be required,
Milk fluid only will be sufficient²³⁵.

Affairs must be handled according to laws and customs

Upon the rock of Phari Dojhe,
The food bowl is smashed, is left behind;
On top of the rock of Nehpa Chen,
Let the man who thinks evil be placed²³⁶.

Things sometimes seem favourable yet often they do not work out

Not able to get one drink of tea,
Yet the tea kettle hasn't been broken;
Though having the orders of parents,
Yet the work has not been completed.

One in performing one work of merit may neglect others which are just as important, so it is in lover relations

On the merit circling Lhasa road,
There is often an old dog lying;
A clay relic is left for merit,
But it's left outside the relic hut²³⁷.

²³⁵ The prospective bridegroom must pay to the bride's parents the "price of the mothers' milk." This is paid by the go-between or other parties to seal the betrothal at the proper time.

²³⁶ The food bowl will be left as an offering to the deity of the rock, and the man may be exposed on the other rock for punishment. Location and significance of these rocks not traced definitely; although Phari Dojhe may be the rocks near or at Phari in southern Tibet.

²³⁷ Around Lhasa is a road used by pilgrims to encircle the city as a work of merit but such pilgrims pay no attention to dogs dead or dying as they pass; likewise those making the small mud cone-shaped objects as a work of merit may leave them to be disintegrated by weather rather than placing them in the clay hut built there to hold the clay relics. These clay relics or Tshatsha are made to hold the remnants of bones of deceased priests or relatives. Shaped like relic shrines or chortens, and as containers for bones, make them sacred.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One says to one's sweetheart

Tomorrow stroll over to my place;
Today my heart is very happy;
Tomorrow I will stroll in the fields;
Sweetheart will you also go strolling?
Shall we two forever and ever,
Everywhere go strolling together?

Please ease my heart sorrow sings the maiden

In the middle of the white moonlight,
There is the rabbit Lodan Sheroh²³⁸,
In a place comfortable to the mind.
Please transform the darkness into light;

If one thinks of becoming happy,
Then in the fields sow the sweet field peas²³⁹.
When joy is desired within the heart,
Then the fragrant pea flower will bloom.

He replies that her rank is too high

You yourself are a lady of rank,
So please sit upon the goddess seat;
I myself am just a mere flower,
I go in summer-winter parting²⁴⁰.

A question and answer love song

She says, "Yesterday I strolled on the mountains,
Two days from now I will stroll again."

He says, "Hiring a good horse will be better,
At what one place will you go strolling?"

She shakes her head and he saves his face by saying,
"Now if you do not exactly know,
By tomorrow you will surely know."

²³⁸ The name of the rabbit which means "wisdom possessing the mind" shows the high regard held by the Tibetans for the rabbit. It is legended that Gautama when born as a hare gave up his body vicariously; so the pious hare or rabbit was placed in the moon.

²³⁹ Peas are a favourite food and their flower is also a symbol of fragrance.

²⁴⁰ The summer-winter parting means "autumn" and this beautiful way of expressing "autumn" is difficult to translate in a shortened English phrase.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

A Bathang sweetheart in alternate lines sings back and forth to the lover using six syllables which have been translated into eight syllables.

Question— Have you finished eating your meal²⁴¹?

Answer— I have finished eating my meal.

Question— When did you come last to see me?

Answer— I came day before yesterday.

Question— Are you really happy and well?

Answer— I am indeed happy and well.

Question— Will you come strolling to my house?

Answer— When the moon rises I will come.

²⁴¹ This is a common form of greeting and not an impertinent question. The answer in the return line is also a proper form of return greeting and not necessarily a true answer to a question. Both are equivalent to the American "How do you do?" This is a typical form of lovers sparring in a greeting at the making of a date.

CHAPTER IV

Lhashee's Tibetan Love Songs for Dancing.

This chapter is translated from six Tibetan syllables to nine English syllables.

The Lama lover addresses the watch dog of his black tent mistress ²⁴².

You barbarous dog Achyi Jheuh²⁴³,
In wisdom wiser than a person;
Speak not when I arrive at midnight,
Speak not when I return at daybreak.

Society censures the lewd Dalai Lama

When one is in Potala Palace,
Then one is Rigdzin Tsangyang Jyatsho²⁴⁴;
When one is in the town of Lhasa,
Then one is the rake Dangzang Wangpo²⁴⁵.

The lover is very fond of his sweetheart

From the head of one's loving mistress,
The lover should pick off the head lice;
Along with nits scattered here and there,
Which are sweeter than grapes to the taste²⁴⁶.

The lover gives his heart to his sweetheart

My heart with its fine ten criss-crossings²⁴⁷,
Beloved mistress sweetheart I give you;
Now when you descend into my mind,
Please tell to me your inner heart thoughts.

²⁴² Some sects permit marriage but other sects are celibate; the celibate monks often have sweethearts.

²⁴³ A common address for a dog whose name is unknown and may mean "Oh, Master Mind."

²⁴⁴ The basic meaning of this name is, "Like the sea in power and mind," a complimentary name.

²⁴⁵ The basic meaning of this name is, "semen controlling the thought" indicative of the state of his conduct.

²⁴⁶ Youths and maidens take turns placing their heads in the opposite sex's lap to have the lice plucked, and cracking them with their teeth. Such persons are recognised as sweethearts. If they cease this act they are considered as no longer lovers.

²⁴⁷ Probably the fine fat lines seen outside the heart and exposed at death when dismembered for the vultures.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

She says to her lover

Now if you yourself are pleased with me,
Please come knocking, knocking at the door;
And if I myself am pleased with you,
I will open up the little door²⁴⁸.

One party bewails their fate

Beloved sweetheart, who is in my heart,
Has gone off, crossing pass after pass;
The sweetheart who is not in my heart,
Is met at the opposite town gate²⁴⁹.

They should unite as they love one another

I myself now look across at you,
And you yourself look over this way;
Thus we two are gazing back and forth,
With no fate barrier what can be done?

*The Lama lover says if he had gone into religion as devotedly as
he has loved her he would become Buddha²⁵⁰*

Just as my heart has gone, gone to you,
So if I had gone to religion,
During this one life and one body,
I would have quickly become Buddha²⁵⁰.

²⁴⁸ Tibetan homes as a rule have only one door a large one which is usually enclosed by a courtyard which makes the home easier to defend. There may be a small door for the large dog to race in and out of the house and as some of the mastiffs are as large as a small donkey a man could easily come through such a door.

²⁴⁹ Marriages being arranged, at least among those with property, by the parents they are not always love matches; and the spouse of either sex may have had or will still have a sweetheart whom they meet clandestinely.

²⁵⁰ Lamas who are holy and devoted enough will be deified after death with the body mummified into an idol which is then worshipped as a god by the faithful.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He likes her but since he cannot have her it is like looking at forbidden fruit which cannot be grasped

Ah, my own loving sweetheart mistress,
Is like the paintings and wall drawings ;
When I ride up there on my stallion,
I'll think of paintings and wall drawings²⁵¹.

She taunts her Lama lover that he was only looking for power over her

My own mind-acceptable sweetheart,
As to Chinese within the painting²⁵²,
Nothing but the eye can gaze at them,
The hand is not able to grasp them.

If people are jealous of a maiden's body it makes no difference since fate gave her this body

Body and birth form are beautiful,
But the town people are not happy;
The displeased town-folk have no power,
For fate has created my own body²⁵³.

She declares that her parents are not pleased that she has a lover

Because I have met with a lover,
Both father and mother are opposed²⁵⁴;
If it is for our joy the gods know;
If our sorrow it's former life-deeds¹⁹.

²⁵¹ Paintings are lifeless and only good to look at; and that is all he is allowed to do with her as he is a celibate monk.

²⁵² The Chinese men are preferred over the Tibetan men as husbands if the Chinese truly marry them for keeps, as the Chinese treat them more kindly; but also there being few Chinese who will really marry, they, like the painting, can only be gazed at.

²⁵³ Beauty is the result of good deeds in a previous life; and ugliness is the result of evil performed in a former existence. Fate determines all these things and one has no choice but to accept.

²⁵⁴ Parents usually arrange the marriage and if children fall in love it may complicate matters as parents wish to accede to the preference of their children; however if the children fall in love with equals in rank and wealth it makes it easier for all concerned.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One desires to see or meet one's sweetheart

Beloved sweetheart who is in my heart,
On the other side of mother pass;
For if I myself were at the pass,
Or at its top I would be happy²⁵⁵.

He praises his sweetheart

Away up in the sky there is seen,
New clouds spreading like streams of water;
My goddess who takes away my heart,
I offer you white goddess incense.

One's lover has gone a long distance so one cannot see or hear the lover

Looking far off the eye can not see,
The great high mountain is hiding you;
Calling you, the voice can not be heard;
The howling wind covers up the sound.

If one can be happy with one's lover, then what others say does not matter

Stallion, saddle, bridle are ready,
For I myself will use them to ride;
Whether gossip, weighted fine like gold,
Is spoken or not, it's all the same.

Sweethearts, husband and family all separate to unite again

The stallion is sent over the hills,
The halter is still held in the hand;
For this time fate will not control one,
At whatever place one has been sent.

²⁵⁵ At the top one can look down and see where the beloved dwells.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

At parting one lover looks back but the other does not

When departing to cross in a boat,
One's head turns to look back with the eye;
Since sweetheart you are without favor,
I will not turn to look with my eyes.

She wants only a lover of rank

If one can—Amban or Treasurer²⁵⁶ and ²⁵⁶
If not a captain or a sergeant,
But to the hostler or to the cook,
The maiden's heart will never respond.

*One cannot trust the heart promise of a very young maiden
although she may be one's sweetheart*

Although you are my beloved sweetheart,
Yet you are now very young in years;
Though you speak three words of your heart's
thoughts²⁵⁷,
Yet one can not trust them in one's mind.

She must forget parents and trust her lover when he calls

The heated beer is the most pleasant,
When the friend who is calling has come;
Then one need not remember parents,
But one's own self must decide such things.

*One lover prays they may meet each other sometime in another
life*

This seems to come from the gods on high,
My beloved sweetheart Yesheh Lhadzeh²⁵⁸;
In this life we can't be together,
But later may we meet in the road²⁵⁹.

²⁵⁶ The Amban was the highest Chinese official in Tibet, a treasurer of either a monastery or of a rich home has a post of high honor and great opportunity for graft to become rich.

²⁵⁷ If one affirms anything three times it is supposed to lend force to the declaration.

²⁵⁸ This name for a girl means "wise and pretty goddess" and is a stock name for a woman as John Doe is in America for a man.

²⁵⁹ The road of future existences as one is reborn and reborn.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Lovers must utilize whatever means are necessary for meeting

Now if snow obstructs in the mountains,
One circles the end of the mountains;
If a lake borders the mountain's end,
By sending a skin boat one can come.

If lovers agree to unite and yet cannot it is fate

Water and fish are in agreement,
If we two come to an agreement,
In this bordering country of Kham¹⁸,
And if we can't unite it is fate¹⁹.

One cannot fight fate if separation is necessary

If one must go it's the lord's command,
If we must separate, it is fate;
One's former Life deeds can be like this;
I think one can not work against it.

One goes away but will return soon to one's sweetheart

I will go far away in this month,
But come back on this month's fifteenth day²⁶⁰;
At the white glow of the lucky moon,
Then let us meet in the month's first half.

A song of censure: this may lead to a quarrel when one says the other is of little value even if the first party admits his own insignificance

You yourself are not a tiger skin,
I, also, am not a leopard skin;
We both are only dog and cat skins,
For which no one will give any price²⁶¹.

²⁶⁰ Because of the bright and lucky moon it is better to start a journey in the beginning of the moon by the fifteenth.

²⁶¹ Tiger and leopard skins are highly valued but dog and cat skins are of value only to beggars.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Another song of criticism in which one tells off the other; in most cases this is spoken by the male, that the other is unable to get a sweetheart either through ill-favour or ill-fortune

The sun of the eastern mountain top,
Sinks behind the western mountain peak;
But the cave's entrance is to the north,
And the sun's brightness never strikes it.

One has nothing to do with the other so let the other not speak evil

The deer run fast on the upper plains,
Just eating the grass of the borders;
Without a cause speak not evil words,
I was not a foe to your harvest²⁶².

At first in perfect agreement but gossip spread them apart

My beloved sweetheart between us two,
Once a fine silk thread could not be thrust;
But by gossip of the town's people,
We have gone to two arm's length apart.

Nothing can separate the lovers

Chinese silken thread tied in a knot,
The teeth and fingers may unloosen;
Dearest sweetheart our own double knot,
There is no way of untying it.

Do not doubt for not anything can part them

Our own two hands are not of great length,
Our own two sleeves are also not short²⁶³;
Our wrist bracelets are as golden sleeves,
There is no fear they will turn to brass.

²⁶² That is, they did not steal or eat from it.

²⁶³ The Tibetan cloaks have sleeves maybe a foot or more longer than the arms and are useful in concealing the sign language used in business when merchants discuss the price of a horse or other high priced goods. They can be used to conceal other transactions by pressure applied to various parts of the fingers and hands. Lovers thus can indicate their meeting without outsiders seeing what they do.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The lover cannot find his sweetheart and if he did the price would be high

In a crack of the clouds of heaven,
Is the red-colored coral chorden⁷⁵;
But if there is no sun or a moon,
There is no hope of meeting by it.

Not having met for a long time they will rejoice when they meet

By the three-Gaden, Sera, Drepung²⁶⁴,
It has been a long time since we met;
At the peak of our meeting this year,
Much semi-religious rain will fall²⁶⁵.

The lover praises his sweetheart and compares her to a peacock

If it is Gaden it is pleasing,
If it is Sera it is comfort;
If Drepung it's religious dancing²⁶⁶,
Being a peacock it is beauty.

The lover suggests that they do their loving secretly lest others find out about them

Do not send a little written note,
The water and the rain will spoil it²⁶⁷.
Do not send a memorized message²⁶⁸,
There will be gossip from the city.

²⁶⁴ These are the three big monasteries of Tibet that are located in Lhasa and are almost semi-sacred in their position being distinguished as training schools, and as places of wealth and comfort

²⁶⁵ Rain because of its blessing to crops has a semi-religious connotation in its falling.

²⁶⁶ These are characteristic qualities of the three monasteries in their attainments and reputation.

²⁶⁷ Messengers carrying letters by hand must face all kinds of weather with no rain equipment and swimming streams since they go on foot.

²⁶⁸ Many messages are oral, delivered to the runner in conversation and may be contrary to the written message, and would supersede it in official cases under certain circumstances. Hence such a message would be subject to gossip by the messenger.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Lovers must hide their signs of desire for each other from the people

Sweetheart Darling, if you do love me,
Just look underneath my eyelashes;
When in front of a crowd of people,
Please make the "don't like refusal face."

Lovers can not be obstructed or separated

If once or twice in heart we agree,
Then obstructing parents can't stop us;
And if the third time the knot is tied,
The great peaceful lords can't hinder us²⁶⁹.

She is a goddess tree and beautiful : He is a jackdaw : He begs for just one sweet word.

On the dried tip of the goddess tree,
A bird called the jackdaw will descend²³⁰;
But not many sweet words are needed,
Just please give but one sweet little word.

The lover says if we can not get together let us separate

Over there the willow bends and sways,
Over here the fine-leaved willow sways²⁷⁰;
If swaying, sway this way and that way;
Not swaying, let the willow roots part.

The lover states that they are very much in accord

Chinese tea is tasty in the mouth,
Whiskey vanishes in the body;
My beloved darling, our own two fates,
Are mingled like the flour in the bowl.

²⁶⁹ The lords would not try to take such a woman as a concubine or mistress since they could not trust her to seek her beloved.

²⁷⁰ The willow in the first line of this quatrain represents the man, and this second line referring to the fine-leaved willow represents the woman; they like the willow will sway toward each other in embrace.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

She says that if he leaves to whom will she give her heart

Not staying in the willow borders,
But returning to the northern plains;
The heart of the little brown thrush bird²⁷¹,
To whose heart will it then be given?

*He says the favored sweetheart has gone and an evil woman has
taken her place so give up love of him*

The one big leaf of the Indian land,
Has returned to the country of Kham¹⁸,
And in the garden of the ruler,
A demon leaf has emerged to shine.
Now since not a fruit has been produced,
Then will you please cut off the main root.

From here to the end of the chapter the songs are called Yitrohma, which means "heartbreaker", or literally "goddess ravishing the heart".

*This is an evil song :- In divination the prognostication was bad so
she can not be his sweetheart*

In Dajheling city of India,
We went begging a divination;
Goddess girl had no luck nor merit,
It said she should not become my mate.

If their hearts are not in accord her being beautiful has no value

If there is not a heart foundation,
Though pretty like the lotus flower;
Like sugar placed in front of the mouth,
If only for show what is its use²⁷²?

²⁷¹ Women are often referred to as little brown thrushes, a bird beloved by the Tibetans.

²⁷² Sugar, especially white granulated sugar mentioned here, is expensive and often placed on the table as a matter of pride before guests; but is to be eaten sparingly if at all by the guests.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He can not prevent his sweetheart from straying and accepting love from another but yet let them dwell together although she is hurting their relationship by such conduct.

In the Indian bazaar of Tsang town,
I will not beseech you not to go;
To eat poison underneath the leaves,
But please let our bodies be agreed²⁷³.

A sweetheart with rank but no money is not as desirable as a sweetheart with no rank but with money

Some are warming to a friend's body,
Such as the woolly skin of white sheep;
But speaking of the fine yellow silk,
It has nothing else but noble rank²⁷⁴.

His passion for her is great, like being drunk before even drinking beer or whiskey at the landlord's bar

Down at the landlords in evenings
Without walking a step, one arrives²⁷⁵,
The beer and whiskey of the landlord,
Even before drinking one is drunk.

Having no parents she asks him to make plans for her

Parents possessed of the loving hearts,
For me little maiden, there is none;
Now as mouth sweetheart and word sweetheart,
Will you please become my dearest love.

²⁷³ That is let them continue to live together as man and wife, or as lovers unite as before, regardless of her straying.

²⁷⁴ In cold Tibet silk is not considered a winter but a summer garment; only wool or skins will keep one warm. The sheepskin refers to the sweetheart with no rank but wealth.

²⁷⁵ The kitchen and main room of the house will generally be large, and here will eat, drink, and sleep those who are staying overnight, including boarders and travellers.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

She states that she is poor and asks him to have pity on her and not to hide from her

The sun which rose early this morning,
Please may it not go beneath the clouds;
I, little maiden, am without clothes,
So please look upon me with pity²⁷⁶.

Only the husky and powerful will get her not those who have only desire for her

On the top of the older table,
Are assembled the sweet and fine foods;
None but the most powerful chieftains,
Not the most desirous will get them²⁷⁷.

He states in this chant of praise that many have lost their hearts to the beautiful maiden

Your aprons like rainbows of heaven
Are triangle-cornered peach flowers²⁷⁸ and ²¹³;
Half the males have lost their hearts to you,
Half of the females are indignant.

One asks of the the other who has just come from their home country if parents have sent a letter

You who have just come from my homeland,
Friend, are you very tired from the trip?
Have my remembering parents sent
A little written letter by you²⁷⁹?

²⁷⁶ It is proper, (especially if the bride is poor) for the groom to provide the fine clothes for her wedding to him.

²⁷⁷ People are fed according to their rank with the finest table reserved for the highest ranking guests who will get the best food and drinks.

²⁷⁸ Tibetan girls of means wear aprons of fine contrasting colors with flowered triangular corners sewn in.

²⁷⁹ Until very recently Tibet had no regular postal service and anyone going to another place might be asked to carry a letter or a word by mouth message. Traders also served this purpose as well as other travellers.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

A lama or priest chants of his failure to receive a degree for his years of study

The official of the assembly,
Did not tap, tap me upon my head,
For my three years religious study²⁸⁰;
So I return to my own country.

The lover's heart has been lost to another

Sun and moon in the midst of the sky,
Are held in the hollow of the palm²⁸¹;
My own beloved most pleasing darling,
Is within the middle of my heart.

He states that medicine can not cure his illness and that only she a beautiful maiden can heal him

An illness has struck at my body,
To get well one must take medicine;
But to heal me pills are of no use,
Only a loving heart is needed.

Lovers now separated are praying to be reunited

A river has but one final source;
Then it must go with many branches,
To the shore of the endless ocean;
So pray that we may come together.

On seeing a beautiful maiden one's desire arises

Building a pile of black Chinese tea²⁸²,
The hand gives to each one the just share;
One's very own coral-set earrings,
Are longer than drops of green water.

²⁸⁰ Monks go to Lhasa to study but if they do not make good use of their time they receive no degree and cannot charge as much for services as those with a degree; but still can command more than those who have not gone to Lhasa.

²⁸¹ Tibetans peer at objects through the hollowed like tube formed by the palm and the fingers; this shuts out some light and they imagine they can see the object better.

²⁸² A load of tea may be bought by several parties, and then a pile of tea is heaped up by the hands and divided by the handfuls.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

If one is not beautiful, then rank is necessary

On one hand there should be lovely hair,
If not, the body must be handsome;
If neither pretty hair nor body,
Then there must be nobleness of birth.

One party directs a song of evil suggestion to the other

When one knows nothing of drinking beer,
Let a woman wine-seller teach him;
Now is the drinking of beer evil?
In one year one will know it or not²⁸³.

At first they were in accord but not now, probably because one was of low birth²⁸⁴

The peach was a peach of much sourness,
Stricken with primary conditions²⁸⁵;
And now I no longer eat peaches
So I say peach tree please sit slowly¹⁴⁶.

With high rank but homely she thinks too highly of herself so it is hard for the stars to be in accord with her ideas

The Seven Star Brothers of the sky²⁸⁶,
Oh, daughter of the heavenly gods;
You must not make yourself too fearful,
One can't be put in the star order.

²⁸³ Wine-selling women are invariably courtezans and in one year (a little longer than the time of a pregnancy) a woman will know whether she is going to have a child to care for or not.

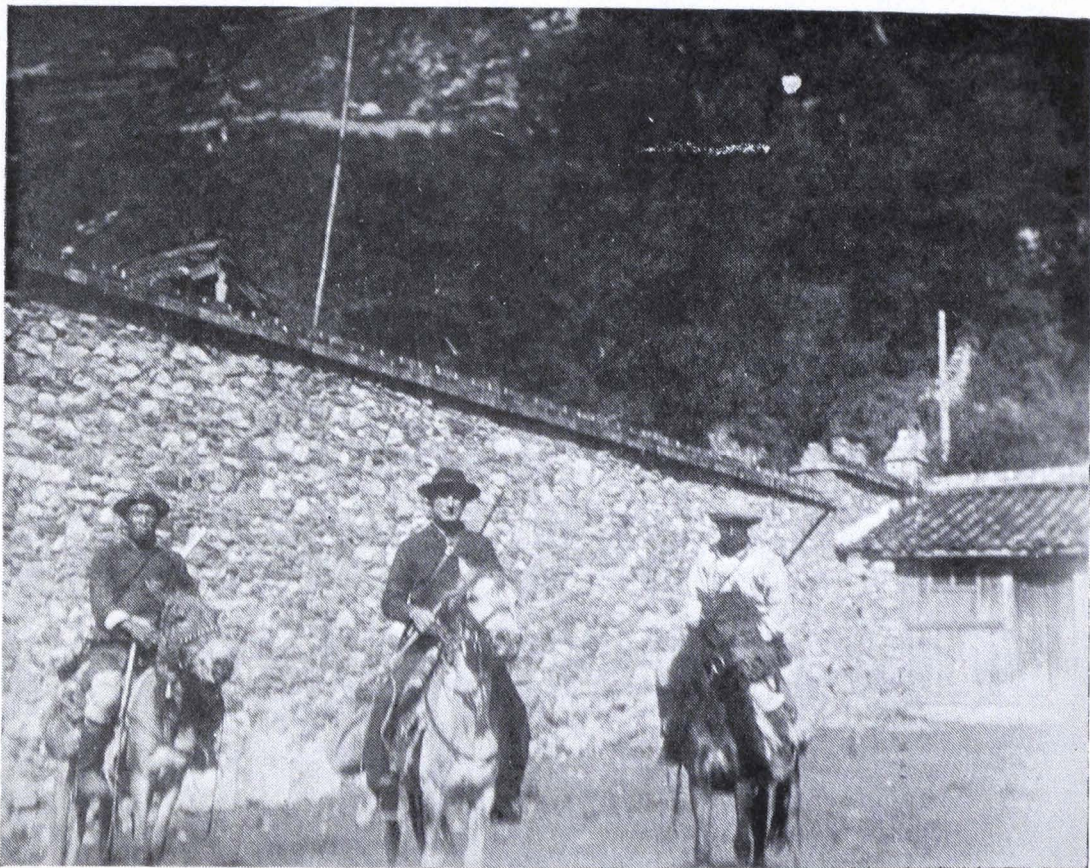
²⁸⁴ Birth is very important in Tibet where in their fuedal system the people are largely of two classes the rich and noble, and the much larger mass of tenants and serfs.

²⁸⁵ The woman is compared to a peach; the primary conditions may be low birth, lack of wealth, etc.

²⁸⁶ The Seven Star Brothers are well known to the Tibetans as our Dipper in the Great Bear Constellation.



Kehzang Lhashee and my wife Louise. Lhashee is the Tibetan teacher of my wife who wrote down hundreds of love songs for the author. My wife was with me thirteen years in Tibet.



The author with Dendruh (left) and Drashee (right) at the end of the trail. From these men a few songs and some proverbs were obtained. Drashee was a monk who had been to Lhasa but relapsed temporarily to a layman.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He states that a beautiful maiden has died but that another has been found

In the flower garden of the king,
A flower of India had blossomed;
An Indian frost has taken her off;
A second love flower has sprung up.

One's beautiful sweetheart having gone, those pleased with her going are very glad and those sad at her departure are very sad

My heart-breaking love-mistress Dronma,
Not staying has returned to India;
The glad ones are filled with happiness,
The sorrowing are downcast with grief.

A chant by the heartbroken swain on how hard it is to her

If one desires a star of heaven,
Place a ladder and one may get it;
If one wants the heart-breaking goddess,
One must use the meaningful love noose²⁸⁷.

Buddha knows what is in the heart so do not put evil in it : A little evil in the mouth is the custom²⁸⁸

Water is not dirty in the depths,
Dirt on the edge is country custom;
Do not let dirt fall deep in the heart,
Will not the Most Rare One himself know²⁸⁸?

²⁸⁷ The love-noose is one of the eight lucky symbols; the other seven are :- (1) precious or jewelled umbrella; (2) the golden fish; (3) the pot of treasures; (4) the excellent lotus; (5) the white conch shell turning to the right; (6) the emblem of royalty which is the standard of victory; (7) the golden wheel; the love noose is a curled one emblematic of love.

²⁸⁸ The Most Rare One is Buddha and with the Creed and with the Church or assemblage of monks and clergy make the Three Most Rare Ones. The Buddha may be the past one or the present Gautama Buddha or the future God of Love. Here it is the present Gautama Buddha. Usually the Tibetan use three but in the song here this additional word would spoil the meter so it may be implied; however the meaning of the petition would not be changed.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

*He thinks of his beautiful goddess but can not dwell with her so
her beauty is wasted on him*

My pretty goddess mistress Dronma,
Prettier than the rainbows of heaven;
When the rainbows form brilliant arches²⁸⁹,
Then I think of my goddess mistress.

He praises his sweetheart as a breaker of hearts

Beneath the might of religious kings²⁹⁰,
There are two thousand five hundred queens;
There comes into religious king's minds,
Princess of the heart-breaking goddess.

*The woman has an owner such as a husband or parents from
whom she must be released before she can go to her lover*

In between the border and the field,
Is laid the foot-rope of the stallion²⁹¹;
If one thinks of riding the stallion,
One must use a sword to cut the rope.

*A great priest with a bad heart can not cleanse sin : A pretty
woman with a bad heart will not be a good wife*

The center of Mt. Rijyehlingpa,
Is hidden by piles of stones and dirt;
By circling around it to the right,
One cannot be cleansed from stain of sin²⁹².

²⁸⁹ Rainbows are frequently seen in the rainy season and sometimes three will be arched at the same time while halos around the sun occur quite frequently.

²⁹⁰ The religious kings include the great propagandists of Lamaism as Songtsen Gampo; this term is also applied to Buddhas, to the Lord of the Dead, and lastly, to any great personage by courtesy.

²⁹¹ Stallions which are used as riding horses are staked by a rope on the grassy plots between fields instead of being turned loose with other animals to graze on the hillsides.

²⁹² Tibetans circle sacred buildings, prayer stone piles, caves of hermits, etc. to overcome the sins of this world and aid their reincarnations to a higher form of existence and eventually Nirvana. However, certain sins cannot be cleansed unless the heart is righteous and repentant.

CHAPTER V.

Lhashee's Love Songs Continued.

These songs are translated from the Tibetan six syllables into eight syllables in English.

Title of Songs— Two Swings around goes the Waist Band²⁹³.

Water and sand can fill the mouth²⁹⁴,
Sakha has a prayer flagstaff²⁹⁵;
Think not the flagstaff is little,
The flag spreads and comes together.

White clouds are seen showing like wool,
There is no slight drizzle of rain;
For the god-tree born on the rock,
Many slight rain-falls are needed²⁹⁶.

In boring its roots have gone deep,
Its one clay rib-way is narrow;
Its heart is thrust like a pillar²⁹⁷,
And its body is not crooked.

The white conch shell's a pure color,
Its hollowed chamber is concealed.
If the coral's color is poor,
Yet it's from the race of jewels.

If the river is not dirty,
Its waters will not cause soiling;
Though its waters become dirty,
Yet at first it was not dirty.

²⁹³ Tibetans wear long belts of silk or wool which are wound at least two times, generally more, around the waist.

²⁹⁴ Although small or fluid, yet if enough sandy water is drunk, sand can fill the mouth.

²⁹⁵ Sakha seems to be a general name for "any place" since prayer flags abound everywhere.

²⁹⁶ A tree coming through a rock crevice has little soil space to absorb rain so frequent rains are needed.

²⁹⁷ The tree rooted in the soil beneath the rock had to grow straight since the rock walls confined it closely. The clay rib-way is a fine poetical expression of the narrow crack or crevice between rocks or a split in the rock in which the tree has grown.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

In the sky there are no white clouds,
Its clothing has the color of green;
I'm not in need of a sweetheart;
For I was born for the white virtue²⁹⁸.

For the vast golden pavilion,
Is set up to be in the heart²⁹⁹;
The flagstaff is green in color,
So it is not very stable³⁰⁰.

The chrysanthemum of my thought,
The frost of the earth has carried off³⁰¹;
The un-thought of rhododendron
Is blooming from the mountain top³⁰².

Within the broad mother river,
The red flowers bunch together;
Here no people's voices resound;
So the flowers are growing up³⁰³.

Whether the hair is long or short,
The hair can thrust into the eye;
Now the husband has not come back,
And sweetheart was turned back by snow.

²⁹⁸ The lama was born to enter the priesthood or if the reference here is to the sixth Dalai Lama he was born to be an incarnation. The term in Tibetan refers to Gelug which means "virtuous way" and by adding the ending Ba the word becomes Gelugba the name of the now dominant Yellow or reformed sect.

²⁹⁹ The pavilion of religious action is set up in the heart.

³⁰⁰ The person who is supposed to be religious has the faults of the flesh and so is not of trustworthy righteousness.

³⁰¹ His sweetheart is compared to a chrysanthemum flower easily killed by the frost or led astray.

³⁰² The rhododendron or the sweetheart not desired still survives.

³⁰³ There are no people around to pluck the flowers as they grow.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

If the cup breaks there is no fault,
One can buy one at the market;
If there is no thought for parents³⁰⁴,
One can't buy them at the market.

If a dried thing breaks, let it break,
If a green thing bends, let it bend;
The tree that's called the wishing tree⁴⁶ and ²¹²,
Though it's perfect, it is unknown.

If the dried thing just does not break,
It is the life tree of the king²⁵;
If the green thing just does not bend,
Then it's the growing, wishing tree.

The beloved Dorjhe Drehma¹³²,
Can lead one into perfection³⁰⁵;
From the bad mouth what is spoken,
Will not lead one into the light.

On the tip of the high mountain,
Where waves the white wind-prayer flag³⁰⁶;
Is a flagstaff a square in size,
And not room enough to thrust in³⁰⁷.

304 That is if no thought is taken to keep them alive when old and unable to work.

305 Drehma as the goddess who can deliver one from the wheel of re-birth and thus lead one to perfection or Nirvana.

306 Cloth usually white has a prayer printed upon it, is flapped by the wind and thus says the prayer for the one who has erected it.

307 This has a sexual connotation in the relationship of lover and sweetheart.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The stud is led out on the plain,
With the tie rope held in the hand;
Now the stud thinks to break the rope,
If the rope is loose, it's enough³⁰⁸.

In hollows of the high valleys,
Concealed bugs can signal the bugs
Who carry the tiny clay pots,
From which bugs are able to drink³⁰⁹.

The grass of the east hill is fine,
The grass of the west hill is good;
But the Dzo cow is without shame³¹⁰,
And defecates where there is grass.

The peaches are like a sour peach,
Now they should be like the Do Shoh³¹¹
Of Ngari Kampo upper Tsang;
But how can they be the Do Shoh ?

At the foot of glory garden³¹²,
There is the seducer's palace³¹³;
With one whose heart is like a friend,
But covered by the walnut leaves³¹⁴.

308 To permit the stallion to function with a mare.

309 This seems to refer to ants which have aphids from whom they secure a fluid for nourishment; the Tibetan term here is not for "ants" but only the general term for "bug."

310 The Dzo is a cross between yak and cattle; it is the common beast found in the nomadic camp rather than either cattle or yaks. The Dzo is larger than cattle but smaller than the yaks. The female produces more and richer milk than the native cattle.

311 Do Shoh seems to be the name of a variety of peach from Ngari Kampo a province in upper Tsang of southwest Tibet. This peach is sweet and she cannot be that kind of a peach since she is sour to him.

312 The Potala home of the Sixth Dalai Lama.

313 The Sixth Dalai Lama erected a trysting place at the foot of the Potala where he could have assignations with his sweethearts.

314 Walnut trees are easily grown and used to conceal parts or all of houses, as they have many thick leaves.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

If floods carry off the walnuts,
Henceforth many will be produced;
If the wind blows off the walnuts,
Not even one reproduces³¹⁵.

If one is without much money,
Go and secure harvest from men³¹⁶;
The mother fish is without feet
And can't get service by walking.

The sun is the sun of Lhasa,
The sunrise place is Dartsendo³¹⁷;
Lord Buddha do not be angry,
East business means there is sunrise.

The corpse bones are washed by water,
Until they are certainly white;
The river is filled up with fish,
How then can the whiteness remain³¹⁸.

Both turquoise and coral jewels,
To which if the price is too high,
We on the hillsides of Tibet,
Are like to the roots of rice straw³¹⁹.

315 Walnuts blown off by the wind will usually land on the earth and be gathered up by men, but those washed away by a flood after landing either on the ground or in water, will be carried elsewhere, and some will be covered by earth and sprout to produce another tree.

316 At harvest time beggars and those with a sorcerer's umbrella go out in the fields to glean or to chant for sheaves of grain.

317 Dartsendo is some five hundred miles to the east of Lhasa but still on the Tibetan highlands.

318 Corpses are thrown in the rivers where they are disintegrated by action of water and attacks of the huge carp which are found in the larger streams.

319 Rice straw roots are of no value as fodder for animals; hence the Tibetans being poor like rice straw roots could not buy expensive jewelry for their loved ones.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The sun at the east and north doors,
With door words in designs of gold;
The sun by striking at the door,
Makes the air dust gold in color.

Compare the fifteenth of the month,
To me there is no consolation;
Compared to moonlight of the third,
My own body light is like this³²⁰.

If there's no nearby river ford,
One may thrust in a gold harvest;
After waiting a little while,
By this gold then, one may travel³²¹.

On the mountain of the red cow,
Let's go honor the great palace³²²;
But sweetheart not having mated,
Says that she will not bind her heart.

The stallion is not from Sining,
The Sining stud can not be matched;
One is like to an untried colt,
And will be no loss to the heart³²³.

³²⁰ The full moon is on the fifteenth of the lunar month and is a very lucky day, but the lover, like the pale quarter moon of the third, has no luster.

³²¹ If there is no river ford nearby thieves cannot ford the river there to steal his grain so he will be able to harvest a golden crop and have means to go.

³²² The great palace on the red cow mountain is the Potala palace of Dalai Lama on the hill.

³²³ Stallions from Sining in northeastern Tibet of Amdo province are considered the finest horses. The lover is like an untried colt and on account of his position will not cause her loss if she is his sweetheart.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The peaches that are sour peaches²⁸⁵,
Will cause a disease to arise;
Now therefore do not eat peaches,
So then, peach tree please sit slowly¹⁴⁵.

Sining has the mallow flower³²⁴,
It is not pictured in my mind;
Circling around the king's palace³²⁵,
I go to find this grass flower.

Wife is a fine little woman,
Such excellence I think not of;
When the householder's mouth is dry,
One must not gulp down the water³²⁶.

Great thankfulness creates merit,
Yet heart comforting has not come;
If one dies not, life will be long;
But recollections become cold.

Poor wheat grains for the Goloh horse³²⁷,
At first will be put in the mash;
If one is not pleased with parents,
A created love brings happiness.

³²⁴ Sining is noted for fine flowers, such as the mallow, as well as for fine horses. Sining is distant and maybe distance leads enchantment to the view.

³²⁵ This is the Potala, as its ruler the Dalai Lama is ruler of the country politically as well as religiously.

³²⁶ One must sip the water slowly so as to enjoy it the more.

³²⁷ Poor mash is given at first to test the stamina of the horse. Goloh is near Sining and the horses would partake by contact of the fine caliber of the Sining horses. Goloh is a tribal group; and Sining-both a city as well as an area idea. Goloh horses, however, are exceptional for stamina as the author can testify by personal ownership and riding experience.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One thinks of one's sorority⁷²,
As a rosary of maidens;
Like strings of turquoise and corals;
One thinks not it is not pretty.

Once on a time I knew not life,
Now I have drunk of all life's fruits;
Those who have eaten of life's fruits,
If untravelled, then think of it.

Once in your own verdant palace,
My own red-threaded sex organ³²⁸;
Didn't it flow out to the fullest?
Don't forget, put it in your heart.

Accordingly my heart-taker,
In this place we will quickly meet;
After strolling around we'll see,
Will we not, my dear beloved?

On the hare-killing lower plain,
The grassed rock-point may be all right;
On the deer-killing upper plain,
One can get the essential fluids³²⁹.

³²⁸ Evidently there is here the relating of a love experience in the palace of the Lama.

³²⁹ The lover is arranging an assignation for their mating.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

We do not want a mountain tip,
A broad mountain top is better;
One needs not a pretty woman,
A heart-attuned girl is better³³⁰.

Lovingly the lambs in summer,
Have not fulfilled their birth cycle;
In this domain of the demons,
Please pray you are not a hermit³³¹.

The hermit has the face of priests,
They, in their thought, mind not the world;
Hermits have not the lover's face,
In their thoughts they are not attached.

In mountain forests of white snows,
Dwells the Lama Dorjhe hermit³³²;
Gods and the chivalrous fairies
Dwell too in the midst of the snow.

With my one most intimate friend,
And with the cuckoo bird, these two,
In the high mountain's topmost space;
There's pleasing delight so they say³³³.

330 These lines are continuation of the previous lascivious verses. Here it is stated a more roomier place is needed than a mountain tip; and a responsive woman is preferred to a pretty face.

331 The Tibetan terms here mean a male or female who is vowed to celibacy and fasting. Tibet is thought of as a country where demons must be kept under control; these demons were first brought under control by Padma Sambawa.

332 A lamaistic devotee who keeps eight vows. He is also the special protector of the Bathang valley.

333 The cuckoo is the harbinger of spring and spring is the time of love; pleasing delight is a reference to intimate relations.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The hilltop's covered with purple,
Peacocks have no unhappy heart;
For good luck cuckoo of the spring,
Will soothe the heart of the peacock³³⁴.

In travelling, circle around,
In your chanting call out Mani³³⁵,
If later you commit three sins³³⁶,
By all it will be understood.

Husband and children are away,
The Lord of Death is in his yard;
The maiden, the mistress Drohma³³²,
Has departed to the heavens³³⁷.

What was sleeping then raises up³³⁸,
Will it come to receive glory³³⁹;
As I myself look upward at
My dearly beloved sweetheart.

The horns of the male deer are long,
But can't reach to stars of the sky;
If the hare has a concealed spot,
Then it can cross the grassy pass³⁴⁰.

334 The peacock is a proud male bird but he is willing to be soothed by the symbolical love call of the cuckoo.

335 Mani is the short word referring to the six syllable prayer phrase "Om Mani Padme Hum."

336 Three is a round, lucky, general number but otherwise the author could not discover what sins or faults were referred to.

337 Death and transmigration are represented respectively by the Lord of Death and Drohma; and with the husband and children away, the woman need not fear; the Sixth Dalai Lama was absolutely depraved. His position lent honor to any woman, whether married or single, who had relations with him; his conduct in general was condemned and so was the sixth Dalai Lama in the long run.

338 A poetic phrase of the male desires.

339 Will it culminate in union ?

340 The lover like the hare must be alert to enemies and both need a concealed place to meet their sweethearts.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

The thought of women's lower parts
Is given on the side of love;
Beloved wherever you go,
Please, oh please, keep me in your heart.

Prayer flags of the finest muslin,
Are given to Paldan Lhamo³⁴¹;
Beloved where you go or dwell,
Please release a good luck wind flag³⁴².

Immediately by looking up,
I think of my fair-faced goddess;
Thirst is of no use to my mouth;
Please dwell in perfect body health³⁴³.

Honey essence in the bee's mouth,
Messengers of the brother winds;
Of both the flowers and the bees,
Who can separate their desires.

Mother saw us on the hilltop,
Sent by her white tutelary god³⁴⁴;
A maiden in the land of men,
What kind of priest can save her ?

³⁴¹ Paldan Lhamo is a blood-thirsty and licentious goddess often chosen as a personal tutelary deity; and thus she is used to aid one in one's personal aims whether good or evil.

³⁴² This is a prayer flag attached to a pole or rope to flap in the wind and thus say prayers for the one who erected it.

³⁴³ Since he cannot satisfy his lustful desires he says to her goodbye and good health.

³⁴⁴ A tutelary god is one chosen to obtain special protection; so the discovery of the lovers by the mother rather than by someone else is ascribed to that protection.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Three horses on the wings of wind,
Three men all making a request³⁴⁵;
We can see the wings of the wind,
We will think about their request.

What of the giving of turquoise ?
Will they be bound for good or bad ?
Oh most perfect priest of heaven,
Please may it be the white turquoise³⁴⁶.

On top of the eastern mountain,
Dwells the potent Dalai Lama.
There is hidden the house of love,
Cut not off my holy fortune¹⁸⁷.

Good luck on the top of the hill³²²,
Good luck when the moon is shining;
Oh protector Kalsam Gyatsho³⁴⁷,
Please make your eye to fall on me.

On the lucky hill of the hills³²²,
Was born the flower of good luck;
The Protector Kalsam Gyatsho³⁴⁷,
Sent as a religious flower.

³⁴⁵ Three men are sent on horseback to request the maiden to come to the betrothal at the groom's home which is really the wedding ceremony; although the maiden goes back home after the ceremony; in due time she is sent for and she comes back permanently to the home of the groom.

³⁴⁶ The white turquoise is considered the most lucky and precious turquoise; and as such is given as a pledge and presented in betrothal ceremonies.

³⁴⁷ One of the many names given to the Dalai Lama who lives on the hill of Potala.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

When the skin boat is sent over³⁴⁸,
It must be brought through the whirlpool;
Where it goes let it be taken,
Please bring it to the meeting place.

The mind of the boat's wise horse-head,
Is given to the green waters³⁴⁹;
Not thinking of those who bore us,
Let us remember our fixed friends.

There's basis for a boat's horsehead,
There are reasons for a horsewhip,
There is cause for mating, sweetheart;
But no basis for love of heart³⁵⁰.

These days when the sun has risen,
Going straight home beneath the clouds;
On me your maiden without clothes,
Please look down with some compassion³⁵¹.

When first the sun has arisen,
There are no clouds in the heavens;
When the sun has reached its zenith,
The sky has become filled with clouds.

348 Skin coracles are used for crossing large streams when only one or two people wish to cross.

349 The large wooden boat ferries at rivers have a wooden horse-head at the prow of the boat. This horse-head is supposed to scan the river waters and by neighing, frighten water demons..

350 The Lama was unable to marry since he was a celibate incarnation; so he could have no true basis for love of the heart but only passion for mating with his sweethearts.

351 Some of the girl sweethearts were poor and unable to dress in fine clothes; hence when they left the lama's quarters in the early morning they felt ashamed of their attire. Sweethearts were often provided with fine clothes by their lovers which made their position bearable.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Some of the water cups are full³⁵²,
Should one make oblations or not ?
God temple without a gold god;
Like us meeting or not meeting³⁵³.

Little sweetheart, please remember,
You are like a sun umbrella,
Or the flowering fifteenth moon;
Remember you must not forget.

On the fifteenth of the fourth month³⁵⁴,
I will strike then at the month's peak;
When the dark cloud has circled once,
I will arrive at the barrier.

The top of yonder grassy hill
Has eighteen connected knife points³⁵⁵;
Over there the foe knows us not,
Over here our life is cut off³⁵⁶.

When thirsty drink not swamp water,
Later a poison will sieze one;
When happy let not the heart speak,
When sad, enemies may grasp one.

352 In temples and on private altars cups of water are set before the idols in offering and this water is changed every morning. Careless attendants might miss some cups, the cups might not be full as required, or they might neglect to do this daily task.

353 A critical statement about the absence of the Lama from his palace and questioning the propriety of worship by cups under such conduct of his in visiting women.

354 On the fifteenth of the lunar month is the full moon and this is a lucky day; the fourth month is also lucky so luck would be doubly theirs if they met on the fifteenth of the fourth month.

355 Eighteen hills or peaks connected in a group or range.

356 Hampered by courtiers and attendants who would naturally frown on his escapades.



Tibetan women ranging from eighteen to forty years old dressed for a dance in the yard of our home. They will sing songs as they dance, songs as in Chapter IV.



Ge Lama and friends some of them teachers in Bathang. Ge Lama is the one pretending to eat tsamba from his bowl. See note (440) on page 132. He was the lama mentioned in this note.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He who is a drinker of beer,
Thinks not of the one who studies;
Play, song and talk are the three things,
What matters if one does not read ?

If one does not know beer drinking,
A beer selling girl can teach him³⁵⁷;
Is beer drinking an evil thing ?
Maybe one does not know for sure.

The landlady who brews the beer,
The beer woman Yeshe Khadro;
If she fulfills her promises,
There won't be three disagreements³⁵⁸.

Among the barmaids of Dogom
One can be kept in beer comfort;
And secretly without a word;
Please make this known to the barmaid³⁵⁹.

On top of the great peak Drumo³⁶⁰,
If one is of the true priesthood,
One needs not a great hand-present³⁶¹;
Just offer a bit of one's heart.

357 In wine-shops and at feasts girls are used to ply the guests with liquor. They are dressed in festival clothing either their own or borrowed. Even girls of high rank serve at such feasts. It is a rare man who can thwart their designs to get the guest or the whole party drunk

358 The landlady furnishing beer is supposed to secure bed-companions so if she fulfils her calling there will not be three people disagreeing, viz.: the lover, the sweetheart and the landlady.

359 The place Dogom is not located but evidently in or near Lhasa and affairs seem to be kept secret in this place.

360 Drumo is the Potala.

361 Presents are usually given in liaisons but only a bit of the heart is required of the lama.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Like the base of cedar mountain,
Alive both summer and winter³⁶²;
When one thinks of yonder area,
Crows will be gathered in the trees.

Please do not rush, Mother River,
You will not need to spread upward;
Of both the fish and the bullfrog,
It is sinful to take their lives³⁶³.

Although born in the swamp below,
Frogs have a previous existence;
While their eyes can not see the sun,
Yet they suffer when burnt by heat³⁶⁴.

The main river spreads in summer;
If it expanded in winter;
For the bridge is an iron bridge,
It might be raised like a hill's waist³⁶⁵.

Little bird eater of berries,
Have you grinding teeth of iron ?
If you have not iron molars,
Then you can only eat berries.

³⁶² Cedars are green all the year round and on that account are used by the birds.

³⁶³ Over and above the sin of taking the life of ordinary animals it is more sinful to take the life of fish and frogs. The river need not flood to protect the fish and bullfrogs.

³⁶⁴ Frogs have a previous existence when as tadpoles they could not see the sun, but would die easily when the flood waters would subside.

³⁶⁵ If the river raised or flooded in winter and then froze, it would raise up in a curve like the curve of a hill and might destroy the bridge.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Settle not in the swampy turf,
On the high uplands make your nest;
Slight rains will collect on the plains,
Dropping like a lion of rain³⁶⁶.

On the road that circles Lhasa,
Is built a turning mill of gold³⁶⁷;
If one has the strength and the weight,
One can revolve this golden mill.

The flower called rhododendron,
Afar it seems of great expanse;
Now when it is seen the third time,
The flowers are aged like its trunk³⁶⁸.

In heart the slander of ten liars,
Will be dipped into one fountain³⁶⁹;
To the amazement of father,
Who will think it is a woman³⁷⁰.

The horse thinks he has wings of wind,
Thoughtless he returns to the plains³⁷¹;
Then seeing the wings of the wind,
He ponders on such a return.

366 The rains on the great high plains come down in short brief spurts; sometimes raining, then sleetng, and finally snowing, all within a half hour.

367 This is a huge prayer barrel so ponderous that only those with strength can turn it on its pivoted axis.

368 The rhododendron flowers fade quickly and turn brown like most flowers living at high altitudes because the seed maturing season is short.

369 The lies will be traced to one source.

370 As usual the source of the slander will be traced to a gossipy woman and father is amazed that ten liars will believe one woman.

371 On the plains the horse finds that the winds are stronger than among the hills.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Among those of the feathered tribe,
Are creatures having sweet voices;
Among those having sweet voices,
Are some whose faces are not seen.

Without only a little love,
Please tell me secrets of your heart;
Along with no food for my mouth,
My heart's pleasure has been cut off.

In the words of the highest ones,
If one thrusts in a prayer pole,
It should always be satinwood,
Because of one's previous life works³⁷².

Like the chrysanthemum flower,
You are my beloved sweetheart;
Not lascivious in summer,
Not fading away in winter.

Do not ascend the high mountains,
For your short body will be pressed;
When yourself comes to midway fields,
If at the base point, it will do.

I'll not sit under the willow,
I'll go get religion in Tsang;
Come little bird do not stay here,
Come, please, get religion in Tsang³⁷³.

³⁷² One has to take care of sins in a previous birth according to the principle of Karma; one of the commonest swear words is "I'll carry your sins" which indicates one is willing to take on a heavy burden.

³⁷³ He will not weep and pine away under the willow tree but go to the most religious place—Tsang where lives the highest religious personage in Tibet—the Panchan Lama, who also is not tainted by affairs of state, as is the Dalai Lama, whose spiritual rank is lower and his piety undercut by his need to govern the state as a secular ruler.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

We are two little willow birds,
We've been raised together from babes;
Are we as one in the willow ?
Only this year we do not know.

The flower that's sown for three days,
If it's prepared for the third month,
Frost and hail won't be enemies³⁷⁴;
I myself can promise that much.

Prepare for a guest from far off,
Will it not be a boon and love ?
The spring that is over the pass,
Will make good-tasting tea and beer.

When guests are seen on the great road,
The sun will be heating water³⁷⁵;
When I myself see this water
Upon the rock, the wind will stop³⁷⁶.

Though the roots are without blemish
As the willow, you may be that;
As to roots I will not be there;
As to the thrush I will be that³⁷⁷.

374 Any flower which ordinarily comes in the third month is naturally able to withstand frost and hail so he is not promising anything.

375 That is in the days of warmth in spring when the hot sun is causing steam to arise from the hitherto frozen rocks.

376 When the sun shines the winds soon stop, but when the sun goes under clouds the winds start up quickly, a phenomenon often experienced by the author on the trail.

377 He prefers to be the thrush which is enclosed and embraced by the branches.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

From the heavens has come a voice,
Dzehdan Lhamo has said a word³⁷⁸,
The heavenly clouds of Dzehdan;
For this white scarf is her cover³⁷⁹.

Tanah district in lower Tsang³⁸⁰,
Has the dancer Panpa Tshering;
Without a mouth and tooth sweetheart³⁸¹;
Likely a body and corpse seller³⁸².

Having washed her face with water,
My lovely sweetheart was coming;
In the stream the otter comes not³⁸³,
Since, Love, we've nowhere to unite.

When the younger son goes to war,
At the command of the earth lord;
Yet the maiden does not weep tears,
Though the younger son may be harmed³⁸⁴.

³⁷⁸ Dzehdan Lhamo is his sweetheart's name.

³⁷⁹ This is a beautiful figure of speech expressing the white clouds as being her only covering. Also the cloud is like the white scarf which is given as a gift and receiving this scarf is approval of the gift, and if possible granting of the request.

³⁸⁰ Tanah is a district in lower Tsang which lies to the southwest of Yu or Yee province of which Lhasa is the capital. The capital of the province of Tsang is Shigatze, with Trashilhunpo nearby being the seat of the Panchen Lama the ruler of Tsang.

³⁸¹ Mouth and tooth refers to kissing on the mouth which is only practised by male and female in intimate union. The dancer Panpa Tshering seems to be a "John Doe" name for any entertainers who are notorious for their love affairs. The lover is like such a dancer who has no sweetheart.

³⁸² Corpse disposers receive the clothing, in which the dead body is wrapped, as their fee which they in most cases will sell. They are outcasts from society in general, and so is one without a sweetheart.

³⁸³ Like the otter in the water who does not come to be seen of men so she is not coming since they have no place to make love.

³⁸⁴ The maiden has married two or more brothers and when one is killed she has another one left to console her.

CHAPTER VI

Love Songs of the Sixth Dalai Lama³⁸⁵.

In eleven English syllables from six Tibetan syllables.

He prepares his mind before he starts on one of his nightly trips

From the very tips of eastern mountain peaks,
There emerges the shining white brilliant moon;
The lovely face of the virginal maiden,
Has revolved around and around in my mind.

He tells what sexual excess has done for the old and young men

The youthful growing shoots of last year's sowing,
This year are but wavering tufts of old straw;
The bodies of both youthful and aged males,
Are bent crooked like arrow bows of the south³⁸⁶.

His heart is lost to her and he wants her for his wife

Oh, one whose very own heart has gone away,
If she will sit down upon the foremost seat³⁸⁷;
It would be like receiving altogether,
A precious jewel from the depths of the sea.

Maidens of her type are not good permanent wives

The promiscuous casual strolling love-sweetheart
Is a maiden that does smell sweet of body;
But is like finding the little white turquoise³⁸⁸,
That is likewise as casually thrown aside..

³⁸⁵ These love songs were taken from Tibetan literature for translation. The Sixth Dalai Lama born between 1681 and 1683 ruled Tibet under the name of Tshang Yang Gya Tsho and was killed by the Oelot (Mongol) forces about 1706. Although incarnated as a celibate monk he lived a life of constant dissipation with numerous women who served as unofficial concubines in a house called Serpent built for them below the Potala. He also conducted other adventures in nightly trips to houses and streets of Lhasa. He is credited with the composition of many love songs but like David probably gathered many from other early sources and received the credit for their composition.

³⁸⁶ Tibetan bows were made of bamboo imported from warmer lands to the south.

³⁸⁷ At the betrothal wedding ceremonies the bride is placed upon the foremost seat mentioned here.

³⁸⁸ The white green turquoises are more numerous than the darker green ones and like the promiscuous maiden more easily discarded.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

She is compared to a fine ripened fruit, but one hard to get

The Princess daughter of a great official,
When beheld is beautiful like a peach fruit
On the very tip of the highest tree twig;
For she has emerged like a fine ripened fruit.

He constantly longs for his sweetheart

Since my heart has fled far away up yonder,
My own night's sound sleep has been all broken up;
In the day I can not hold her in my arms³⁸⁹
So my spirit has become almost worn out.

He tells her not to mourn that the passion of their love is gone

The season of blooming flowers has vanished,
The turquoise-tinted bee no longer worries;
The destined course of our own love has run out³⁹⁰,
Now we must no longer be mournful in heart.

He compares their vanished love to nature

The hoarfrost has frosted on the topmost points,
As the messenger of the pale northern wind;
So are both the flowers and the bumble bee,
By that element truly separated.

³⁸⁹ The Sixth Dalai Lama would visit his sweethearts at night but in the daytime he was busy with religious and political affairs.

³⁹⁰ The Tibetans believe that fate bound up with Karma determine everything so the course of their love, having been determined by fate, they could do nothing about it, but accept whatever developed with resignation.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He states that he is resigned to the loss of her love

Now the goose loved to be in the reedy swamp.
And thought that he would like to stay for awhile;
But the lake covered itself over with ice,
So with a heart of resignation he left.

He laments that she no longer loves him

The ferry boat is without a fleshly mind,
Yet it has a horse's head looking outwards³⁹¹;
My beloved who is without shame within³⁹²,
No longer glances with her eyes toward me³⁹³.

He told her he loved her but oh how he lied

The clerking maiden of the bazaar and I³⁹⁴
Gave a promise with the vow of the three knots³⁹⁵;
But not tied with the wrapping of many colors,
So by itself it came loose in its own place.

He asks that his love be kept sacred

The good-luck producing flag my dear sweetheart,
Is planted on one side of the willow tree³⁹⁶;
Oh, elder brother, master willow keeper;
Please do not let the grey stones be thrown at it.

³⁹¹ On wooden ferryboats of Tibet the figure of a horsehead may be carved on the bow facing the waters so she is not looking at him any more than the horsehead is looking at the rowers.

³⁹² His beloved was a concubine to him a celibate priest and sometime she would be the unfaithful wife of a layman and not a maiden.

³⁹³ This song and many others can be sung by either sex by merely changing the gender in the text.

³⁹⁴ Maidens are often the sellers in the bazaar which is an excellent place for intrigue.

³⁹⁵ The three knots are the married ceremony knots of three scarves tied around the three pillars of the house representing the father, the mother, and the stove or fireplace. The three knots refers to their vows which were not completed by the use of the colored scarves so their love mating was not confirmed by marriage.

³⁹⁶ A prayer flag with its text would be a luck producing flag attached to a life tree, see 25 and 127.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He says he will love her forever and that he can not conceal it

The little black letters that have been written,
Will be blotted out by the drops of water;
But the unwritten impression of the heart,
Can never either be concealed or erased.

Though unable to speak his love yet he wants to be forever in love

The little black seal that makes an impression³⁹⁷,
Does not know how to proceed in making words;
Little black seal with attentive modesty;
Make an imprint on the heart of each of us.

She attracts him like the bee is attracted to the hollyhock

Oh hollyhock flower possessed of power,
If you go into a flower offering;
Then the youthful bee colored like a turquoise,
Can lead me into the temple of the gods³⁹⁸.

He will retire to a hermitage if she does not stay with him

If you who went into my heart do not stay,
But go in for the religion of the gods;
Now then this youthful male will not remain here,
But will enter a hermit's cave in the hills.

³⁹⁷ Seals are used to sign any important document such as marriage contracts and letters. The water made of ink can fade under wetness.

³⁹⁸ This may be a double figure here as temples house both gods and goddesses; and he is led to her like the bee going into the goddess house to visit the flowers. This quatrain probably has a concealed sex act meaning.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He has gone to a divining priest for guidance

Before a priest possessing special knowledge³⁹⁹,
I have gone asking for guidance to my heart;
But then unable to establish my heart,
I fled back to the side of my beloved.

He contrasts his love with his religious duties

In meditation the face of the lama⁴⁰⁰,
Does not become visible to my own mind;
Without meditation the face of my love,
Within my own mind shows up clear and distinct.

He contemplates what is involved in becoming a hermit

If one's own heart is equal to such a thing,
That is-to go into Holy Religion⁴⁰¹,
In this one life, in this one body itself,
Oneself could attain to the crown of Buddha⁴⁰¹.

Our love in holy vows will keep off misfortune

The icy water of the crystal fountain,
With herb's dew-drops to heal demon diseases,
Are fomented in harmful nectared potions,
By the dispenser of wines Yeshe Kandro⁴⁰²;
If we drink because of a pure holy vow,
We need not suffer any more misfortune.

³⁹⁹ He went to a priest to forecast what he should do but the divination was not satisfactory or not definite. This is often done by casting dice.

⁴⁰⁰ Every individual is supposed to choose either a holy Lama or a deity as a tutelary guide and visualise this personage for guidance and help but only the face of his beloved appeared when he did this.

⁴⁰¹ If one crucifies the flesh sufficiently such as incarceration in a darkened cell for life or similar meditation one can overcome one's Karma and attain Nirvana in the present body.

⁴⁰² He is here addressing his sweetheart who serves him wine made by water and herbs but if they drink together as lovers, no misfortune will come to them.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He has love intrigues with girls of the best families because of his rank

Now the wind horse good-luck flag fluttered upward⁴⁰³,
As the luck-producing flag staff was thrust in;
By a maiden of the very highest class,
I will be invited in for the banquet⁴⁰⁴.

He glances at the row of maidens to seek her face

At the smiling faces with white teeth exposed,
Of maidens sitting in rows, I cast a glance;
One maiden with the rolling eyes of a hawk⁴⁰⁵,
Was looking toward the face of this young man.

He proposes that she become his mistress and her reply

Because in my heart my love has gone so far,
I asked if she would be my mating mistress;
"If never separating unless by death,
And not parting while living," was her answer.

He is torn between his heart and his religious duty

If I match myself with the heart of the girl,
The religious merit of my life will cease;
If I wander to the lonely hermit's cave,
It will go contrary to the maiden's heart⁴⁰⁶.

⁴⁰³ Prayer inscribed pieces of paper or cloth cast to the wind for the blessing of travellers are called Wind-horse Flags. See³⁴². Here they are attached to a staff rather than allowed to flutter away freely from a high cliff, etc.

⁴⁰⁴ The Dalai Lama being a Living Buddha and of the highest rank was an honored guest everywhere.

⁴⁰⁵ The maiden modestly rolled her eyes like a hawk as she glanced sideways at the youthful Dalai Lama.

⁴⁰⁶ The Dalai Lamas are taken as children of round four or five years old and raised for their position under rules of conduct foreign to their natural youthful desires and unable to get away from the requirements of their position; hence they can not be condemned too severely for their conduct in a position not selected by them, especially in regard to celibacy.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He compares his position with a similar monk

Like a bumble bee thrust inside of a net,
Was the restlessness of the monk of Kongtruh⁴⁰⁷;
For three days he had had a bed-companion,
Then he thought of his anchorite religion.

She can be unfaithful to him without his knowing it

I'm thinking of you my whole life-long consort,
Now if you are immodest and without shame⁴⁰⁸;
The turquoise of adornment upon your head,
Will not understand what words should be spoken⁴⁰⁹.

She must prove that she loves him by swearing under oath

You are smiling and displaying your white teeth,
And are seducing the heart of this young man⁴¹⁰;
Whether you've affection in your heart or not,
Now you must prove it by swearing in an oath⁴¹¹.

He realizes what may happen in their liaison

Lovers meeting on the road like bird and rock,
Are united by the wine-seller mother⁴¹²;
If misfortune and obligations arise,
I beseech you to please take care of its life⁴¹³.

⁴⁰⁷ This monk had a sweetheart in this place some days southeast of Lhasa.

⁴⁰⁸ Having another lover.

⁴⁰⁹ Head jewels are often the gift of a lover and he has probably given such a jewel, yet the jewel cannot tell him if she is unfaithful to him.

⁴¹⁰ The Dalai Lama identifies himself as a young man which he was.

⁴¹¹ Oaths are held sacred and swearing by them is held of great importance, and any statement made in this fashion is believed for the oath usually says something like this :- "May I die at sunset if I am lying."

⁴¹² The wine-sellers are procurers and such a woman would arrange for a girl to meet him at a prominent point such as a huge rock which is also used as a perch by the birds.

⁴¹³ If offspring result from their union she must take care of it as life is sacred. See⁵⁶.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He finds it impossible to hide his deeds from others

One does not confide heart secrets to parents,
But declares them only to one's own sweethearts;
Through the many rendezvous of one's sweethearts,
One's secrets are perceived by the enemy⁴¹⁴.

Another man of greater attraction has lured his sweetheart from him

The beloved of my heart Yitroh Lhamo,
She was captivated by me a hunter⁴¹⁵,
Then, by an official who has great power
Norzang Jyalee, was she appropriated⁴¹⁶.

He mourns the loss of his sweetheart to another

When a jewel is in one's own possession,
One measures not the jewel's proper value;
But when the jewel is lost to another,
One becomes perfect in melancholy praise⁴¹⁷.

He has lost weight and appetite because she has left him

The sweetheart whom I desired for my own self,
Has become the companion of another;
Wasting disease has undermined my heart health;
Also the flesh of my body has dried up⁴¹⁸.

⁴¹⁴ The enemy could be any Tibetan, few of whom would approve of his conduct since he was head of their religious hierarchy.

⁴¹⁵ He calls himself a hunter.

⁴¹⁶ Any woman who intrigued with the Dalai Lama, knowing his position, would naturally seek a permanent attachment with another man especially if of great power, since she would know the Dalai Lama could not be her husband.

⁴¹⁷ He calls his sweetheart a jewel.

⁴¹⁸ The disease mentioned is translated as tuberculosis at one time and at other times as asthma, but it seems to be more a sort of condition which will affect some lovers when rejected as lack of appetite and general lassitude.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He laments his loss of her to another lover

My darling sweetheart has been lost to a thief,
It's about time to give fortune-telling gifts⁴¹⁹;
You a beautiful animated being,
Is circling around in my sleeping visions.

He meditates on the shortness of life, for even sweethearts die

If a woman does not depart from this life,
It's impossible for wine to be consumed;
As a refuge it is safe for this young man⁴¹⁰,
One can indeed have certain trust in this place⁴²⁰.

He is still thinking of her desertion and leaving him

Was not that maiden born from out of a mother,
And was not the peach produced from the peach tree ?
Does not such fickle passion come to an end,
More quickly than the flowers of the peach tree⁴²¹ ?

His sweetheart was not satisfied with him

The maiden whom I have loved as a mistress,
Is she not of the family of the wolf ?
Although heaps of meat and skin were appearing,
She made preparations for the mountain height⁴²².

⁴¹⁹ Recourse is had to the fortune-telling or divination priest to see in this case whether he will win her back or not; or what course of action should be taken even to praying the other party to death.

⁴²⁰ He can always retreat to his castle-home the Potala where the public as well as scandal can not enter to disturb him.

⁴²¹ The life of an individual as well as any earthly passion is often compared to very transient things such as a passing cloud, the dew upon the grass, etc. So he is resigning himself to his fate and to his Karma which he inherited from previous ancestors.

⁴²² When the wolf has eaten his fill of meat and hide he slinks away up to the mountain heights; and she having had her fill of his caresses runs off with another man; so she is like the wolf.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One's beloved can be controlled only by supernatural powers

When a savage horse charges up the mountain,
He can be captured by a snare and a noose;
But when one's beloved becomes rebellious,
Supernatural powers can not catch her.

His love affair has been full of obstacles

The rocks and the strong winds have joined together,
To wear threadbare the feathers of the vulture;
Men's trickery and false representation⁴²³,
Have caused me to be completely exhausted.

Witchcraft has worked against him a teacher of Buddha

The clouds, pale at the edge and with darkened depths,
Are the prognostication of frost and hail;
A sorcerer is neither layman or monk,
But an enemy of Buddha's teaching⁴²⁴.

He has no one to whom he can confide his troubles

The ground with mushy surface and frozen depths,
Is not the place where a stallion should be used;
In the area of a secret paramour,
Is not the place to relate one's heart secrets⁴²⁵.

⁴²³ To get off the ground vultures have need of a smooth plain free from rocks, and a contrary wind. They will run uphill, suddenly turn and sail downgrade in many instances so as to avoid obstacles until they have reached adequate height. His sweetheart has gone to another which is a rock to him.

⁴²⁴ The sorcerer coerces evil spirits by Tantrik rites which are foreign and hostile to pure Buddhist precepts. Lamaism has however incorporated these ancient divination practises.

⁴²⁵ The stallion cannot fulfil his breeding function on such slippery ground; so he cannot whisper his love to her which will likely be overheard by members of her family or by outsiders in the home. In most homes all members of the household including guests sleep in the kitchen around the fireplace.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He has given up hope of winning her back

The full moons of the fifteenth are the great dates,
And they are most likely about the same kind;
The hares who are in the center of the moons,
Are there with their lives completely exhausted⁴²⁶.

He will come to visit her in the lucky half of the moon

For this very month will fade in the distance,
And the following month will soon appear here;
During the propitious light half of the moon⁴²⁷,
I will come to visit you at its onset.

She should be like Mt. Sumeru in faithfulness to him

Mt. Sumeru the golden central mountain⁴²⁸,
Must be unswerving and remaining steadfast;
So that the outer revolving sun and moon,
Will not be contemplating going astray.

He asks for a date with her

On the third day of the month the moon is light,
And this is decided by its light garments⁴²⁹;
Similar to the night of the fifteenth day,
I beg you will grant me a day-time meeting⁴³⁰.

⁴²⁶ The fifteenth day of the month or the full moon is the most sacred day set apart for confessions, fasting, and listening to the law; on the first and fifteenth no animals should be killed and no food taken. The supposed hares in the moon are exhausted probably in their physical desires.

⁴²⁷ From the first to the fifteenth and he will come when it begins.

⁴²⁸ Sumeru is the fabulous golden mountain 84000 miles high in the center of the world whose prototype is Mt. Kailas near the extreme tip of Nepal's northwest border with Tibet but well inside Tibet. See Waddell's Buddhism page 78.

⁴²⁹ By its brightness.

⁴³⁰ Generally he has been going to see his sweetheart at night but now he wants a day-time visit.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He appeals to Padme Sambawa the famous wizard for help

He, that's in the tenth saintly perfected stage,
The oath-bound thunderbolt religious guardian⁴³¹;
If possessing supernatural power,
Save us from the enemies of religion.

He is happy again with his mistress

When the cuckoo arrives from the land of Mon⁴³²,
The fertility of the season has come;
Now since I and my sweetheart mistress have met,
My body and my mind rises up relaxed.

One must think of the shortness of life in love affairs

If man thinks not of transientness and death,
Although clever he is really like a fool⁴³³.

One can not tame the tigress at home as one can a tiger dog

Whether it's a tiger dog or leopard dog⁴³⁴,
It can be tamed by giving savoury food;
But the hairy tigress which we meet at home,
After taming rises up in viciousness.

⁴³¹ Padme Sambawa had two wives but reached this stage by exorcism of the terrific deities.

⁴³² Mon is the region of the Himalayan tribes embraced now by such lands as Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim.

⁴³³ This one of the few verses of the love songs which have only two lines in this case irregular as the first line has nine syllables and the second line eleven syllables in the Tibetan original.

⁴³⁴ Dogs are held in high esteem in Tibet as they are the night guardians of the herds from marauders both men and animals. They are often given names such as these according to their color and disposition; and perhaps in some cases so they will emulate these animals in defending their master's property. Leopard's are fond of dogs and will attack them at night near a tent.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He can not understand the heart of his beloved

Although familiar with her tender body,
I can not fathom the heart of my sweetheart;
But on the ground a mere drawing can be made,
And the stars of the heavens can be measured.

He beseeches the parrot not to reveal his rendezvous place

The meeting pool of my beloved and me,
Is in dense woods of the dark southern valley;
Outside of the ever talkative parrot⁴³⁵,
No one whatsoever does know about it;
Oh ! loquacious parrot in your perception,
Please disclose it not at the gossip corners⁴³⁶.

The Dalai Lama sings a song of praise for his Chyong Jyeh Gtrl

Among the crowded multitudes of Lhasa,
The maids of Chyong Jyeh are the finest looking;
My sweetheart who is coming to be with me,
Is one who lives in the middle of Chyong Jyeh⁴³⁷.

He appeals to the old dog guarding the house not to reveal him

You old bearded dog with the yellow eye-spots,
Wiser than the intelligence of mankind;
Tell not that I arose to go in the dusk,
Tell not that I came back at the break of day.

⁴³⁵ The parrot is believed to have the gift of speech, and is fancied to be somewhat supernatural in its powers. It is often featured in the dramas as being messengers of deities and saint-prophets.

⁴³⁶ The Sixth Dalai Lama, believing the parrot is able to overhear his love messages and to note his movements, beseeches the parrot not to disclose his movements and particularly where people gather as at cross-roads and market places where news is bandied about and spreads rapidly. This stanza has an unusual six lines instead of the customary four lines.

⁴³⁷ Chyong Jyeh is a district of Lhokha in the southern part of central Tibet.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He tells who he is when in Potala Palace

I went seeking for my mistress at nightfall,
At the breaking of the day snow had fallen;
When I dwell at the palace of Potala³²²,
Then I am known as Rig Dzin Tsang Yang Jya Tsho²⁴⁴.

He tells what he is called down in the city of Lhasa

When I stay down below at Lhasa city³⁸⁵,
I am called the libertine Dang Zang Wang Po²⁴⁵;
Secret or not secret it can not be helped,
For prints of the feet have been left in the snow.

He is not sure he can trust his mistress

Although a soft yielding girl in a good bed,
Are you a sincerity-minded mistress?
Who will not take away the wealth of this youth,
And who will not give deceitful talk to me?

Relates about his departure from his sweetheart

He put his honorable hat on his head⁴³⁸,
He slung his honorable queue on his back⁴³⁹,
"Please go slowly," then she respectfully said;
"Please sit slowly," he respectfully answered⁴⁴⁵;
"Will you not be sorrowful in heart," she said;
"We will quickly meet together," he answered⁴⁴⁰.

⁴³⁸ High honorific language is used regarding the person and personal belongings of the Dalai Lama.

⁴³⁹ He wore a false queue to disguise himself as a layman, for Dalai Lamas must keep their heads shaved.

⁴⁴⁰ Although it was considered a great sin for a lama not to keep his vows yet the women in general considered it an honor to have a Living Buddha consort with them. One Living Buddha known to the author bragged of having had over 200 women before he drank himself to death at about the age of 45 years. See plate facing page 113.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He will always come back to her no matter how far away he is

Oh, you beautiful bird, you silver white crane,
Please lend to me your practised wings for flying;
To a long distance away I will not go,
But having circled Letang, I will come back⁴⁴¹.

He recognizes that he will have to account for his deeds here in the world hereafter

After one's decease, in the valleys of the Hells,
The Lord of Death has a mirror of one's deeds⁴⁴²;
Here one is not required to live perfectly,
But hereafter one must confess completely.

He fell in love with her after meeting her

After the lot-arrow has hit the target⁴⁴³,
Its point will then penetrate into the earth;
After I had met with my mating sweetheart,
My heart itself also followed after her.

Everything and everyone including lovers eventually meet in Lhasa

Peacocks from the eastern area of India,
Parrots from the lower valleys of Kongyul⁴⁴⁴;
Although the lands of their birth are not the same,
They meet at the religious wheel of Lhasa⁴⁴⁵.

⁴⁴¹ Letang lies 400 miles east of Lhasa and is used figuratively here as the Lama went east from the Potala to reach the city homes of his mistresses. Letang was the birthplace of the seventh Dalai Lama.

⁴⁴² The Lord of Death is reputed to have a mirror in which he can see the misdeeds of all mankind as they come before him after their death.

⁴⁴³ The lot-arrow is telling one's fortune by the shooting of an arrow.

⁴⁴⁴ Kongyul is an area southeast of Lhasa, with three districts one of which is Kongpo.

⁴⁴⁵ Lhasa as the religious center of Tibet is sooner or later visited by every inhabitant of Tibet who can get there.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

He must be held responsible even if he goes but a short distance

The things which other people say about me,
In such thought I must be held responsible;
By the three little steps of this gentleman⁴⁴⁶,
I arrived within the home of my mistress.

No one can harm them if they love one another

The willow tree fell in love with the sparrow,
The sparrow lost its heart to the willow tree;
If they are harmonious in mutual love,
The grey spotted hawk can't get the sparrow there⁴⁴⁷.

*He has received much from her in this life and he wonders if they
will meet in the next life*

In the shortened lifetime of these present days,
I have here beseeched only so much from you;
In the years of youthfulness in the next life,
We will see whether we shall come together.

⁴⁴⁶ The three little ceremonial steps are figuratively,—heaven, earth and hell like the seven ceremonial steps taken in place of a long pilgrimage. The three steps may be figurative of the short distance from the Potala on the top of the hill to the Serpent house at the foot of the hill where he met some of his mistresses.

⁴⁴⁷ The hawk with his long wing spread cannot catch the sparrow darting around in the leafed branches of the willow, especially under the swaying of the wind.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

His sweetheart sings to him when others keep still

You parrot who is the garrulous talker,
Please make an attempt to sit with your mouth shut;
Our ladyship thrush within the willow grove,
Is going to sing us a sweet sounding song⁴⁴⁸.

He is not afraid of the consequences and he wishes to have her

The fierce powerful demon in the background,
Whether he is or is not to be dreaded;
The sugared apple that is in the foreground,
In my heart I have made up my mind to have⁴⁴⁹.

He rates the value of seeing and of not seeing his sweetheart

In the first place it is better not to see,
There will be no prospect of falling in love;
Secondly it is best not to be friendly,
There is no prospect of a dejected heart.

⁴⁴⁸ While in the homes of people down in the city it was difficult to be always free from the sound of people's voices. These other people are like the parrot but his mistress was like the thrush with a sweet voice.

⁴⁴⁹ The demon may be visualized as the condemnation of his conduct by other people; or may be the husband or a parent of his sweetheart. However he calls his sweetheart a sugared apple.

CHAPTER VII

Tibetan Nehmo Chants.

These chants called Nehmo which generally means landlady or hostess are probably tied up with the idea of the Tibetans when away from home of using the landlady to secure for them a sleeping companion. It is not good custom to ask the landlady to sleep with one but she is expected to act as a go-between for the guests and the women who are available for short-term pleasure. This relationship may be for a night or for a more extended period, and is a recognized system of concubinage. If a child results the father is supposed to leave varying sums of money, depending upon his financial position, for the consolation of the woman and support of the child. Naturally this money is usually inadequate for the support of a child except for a short time. However, a woman who can produce a child, proves she is fertile and is able to get a husband or another concubinage position. Regardless of whether a child results from the liaison or not the woman is given gifts, and if her lover wishes he can marry her as a permanent wife. Acting as a mistress temporarily does not injure a woman's chances seriously and it may improve them if she bears a child.

These Nehmo songs are in a different rhythm either seven or eight syllables to the line. Partly for this reason and partly to give a more adequate expression of the meaning these quatrains have been translated into English lines of varying syllabication ranging from ten through twelve and fourteen to sixteen syllables to the line. Only two or three lines may be recited by one party to be answered or not answered by the opposite party. These chants are considered to be laments or songs to console the heart.

Until otherwise stated the chants below are in eight Tibetan syllables. The first twelve lines are translated into sixteen English syllables.

The lover's heart is grieved

If one thinks the heart is not mournful, yet the thoughts are
sorrowful.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

If the mind is not wearied, by watching the mind may be worn out.

The other replies that the grief will pass away

When the mother pass is not surmounted then the heart grieves and grieves;

But everything becomes very clear when the pass-top is reached.

The lover calling her a white sheep, pleads for her not to be angry that he does not want her, for she is too good for him

Now on the high upper surface of the great extensive white plain,
My lovely silvery white sheep you have become enraged at me;
Do you understand, do not be angry my silvery white sheep,
I do not think in my heart of your being like the soiled white wool.

They will be in accord. She is the bow and he is the arrow

The ends of the bow are not hidden in shooting at a target;
The sharp pointed arrow flies truly to the holy protector.

The lover bewails his poverty

If we think to go together there is no way to know the road;
If we think of living together we have no city dwelling.

The next four lines are in fourteen English syllables.

The lover calls his sweetheart a little black female yak
In the very middle of the extensive grassy plain,
My little black female yak has become angry at me;
"Be not angry, do you understand, my black female yak?"
I do not think in my heart that I will get milk from you.

Now begins ten and twelve English syllables translated from seven Tibetan syllables.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One is homeless and always moving

Going we have no country to go to,
We two are like the green turquoise waters;
Settling down we have not a dwelling place,
We two are like the barren grey rock stairs⁴⁵⁰.

One will forsake the life-sweetheart or spouse for a lover or a sweetheart

I am as the pleasing flower of the great plain;
Life sweetheart is like the forest and grassy plain⁴⁵¹;
When flowers of the great plain are about to bloom,
I will tell the forest and plain to sit slowly⁴⁵².

One desires the partner of the heart rather than the one given by parents or by fate⁴⁵²

In thought I think of the great irrigated field,
But that granted to me is a grey mountain field;
The grey mountain field that has been granted to me,
Is not as pleasing as the irrigated field⁴⁵³.

Here ends the Tibetan seven syllable lines and now begins the Tibetan eight syllable lines translated into eight up to sixteen English syllables.

She affirms that like the grey road which encircles the mountain she will come to embrace him even if times at home are not easy

The grey road is like a belt around the mountain,
If the mountain changes, let not the belt be changed;
Seeing the grey road I think of going to you,
Seeing the green waters my heart is sad for you.

⁴⁵⁰ Rocky slopes that are like stairs in appearance and steepness.

⁴⁵¹ The forest and great plain are permanent but the flowers fade each season.

⁴⁵² Among wealthy and sometimes among the poor parents arrange marriages but one may have a sweetheart although accepting the parents selected spouse.

⁴⁵³ Irrigated fields are on plains and produce two crops a year in low altitudes but fields on mountains produce one. The irrigated field is the lover and the grey mountain field is the spouse.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

*She does not care what others say for she is sad when she can not
have him*

Those who live in the big city do not like me,
For their dislike young maiden is not sorrowing;
When the cuckoo is calling then the heart is sad¹⁰,
In the fatigue of one's heart one thinks of parents.

One sees many people but her lover is the only one of importance
The great rivers are the Yangtze and the Mekong,
But, in my thought, is the tiny spring of the pass.

One wishes to go to one's lover but the parents hinder one
One thinks of going but clothing hems are weighted with stones,
It is not really stones but remembering one's parents.

The lover prays that no sorrow may mar their happiness
In going, riding a horse is comfortable,
Then let not one be met with a load of sorrow⁴⁵⁴.

When one thinks of the other there is sorrow
When one does not think there is happiness,
But when one thinks there are thoughts of sorrow.

The greeting in parting should be one of peace
The traveller is like the bird in the tree-top,
When he goes no one knows but he says "sit in peace."⁴⁵⁵

The master must not hate one because one does not stay long
Oh, whizzing wind do not hate me,
I will not stay long but will go.

⁴⁵⁴ On leaving one's home on a journey it is good luck to meet a full barrel or load coming in, and bad luck if one meets an empty cask or load.

⁴⁵⁵ The phrase "sit in peace" is used by the departing guest and means "goodbye."

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Like their happy home they will be happy if they are patient

Going up to my land is up to happiness,
Way up in my country is a lawn and flowers.

*A good mistress is better than an evil wife; or a beautiful poor
sweetheart is better than a rich, ugly one⁴⁵⁶*

A plug horse is better riding than a wild ass⁴⁵⁷,
A wooden stick thrusts better than sandalwood staff⁴⁵⁸.

*One swears that one has no sweetheart here although people gossip
otherwise*

I really have no sweetheart in this place,
Although people's mouths say I have one here.

The heart is sad at the prospect of separation

My beloved sweetheart is going on the next day;
At that time half of the city will be empty;
But will the city really be half empty then ?
Only my womanly heart will be half empty.

The sweetheart is beautiful but dumb

Beloved sweetheart you are like a divine goddess;
Have you the divine perception of goddesses ?
Only in body are you like the goddesses.

All are alike and yet not alike

In the number of our years we two are alike,
While alike yet in joy and sorrow not alike.

⁴⁵⁶ Money is an important factor in marriage but not as important to the lover as beauty.

⁴⁵⁷ The wild ass is untameable and cannot be ridden with safety.

⁴⁵⁸ Sandalwood is used to make incense sticks and is not as suitable as a staff made of ordinary wood commonly formed into sticks. This in spite of the fact that sandalwood is the tree and wood for the use of gods.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One says the devotion of the other is of the mouth and that the other's heart is really given to another

I sent a message down in the running water,
But the rising wind did not bring back an answer;
Beloved sweetheart you like me only with the mouth,
Your white tent heart has been given to another⁴⁵⁹.

It is better for him to leave his temporary love and go elsewhere

If you go to the upper country, it is happiness,
Going up to great Dege monastery is pleasing⁴⁶⁰.
Sweetheart I will not stay but go to the monastery.

One expresses pleasure at the other's going and declares he or she will do the same

Going down the country is going down to happiness,
And also going down to Dartsendo is happiness;
Sweetheart I will not remain here but go to Dartsendo⁴⁶¹.

One says "Some are poor, some rich: some are gay, some sad"

The cuckoo is singing on the pass and in the country,
But on Jyapoting of Bathang the cuckoo does not sing;
On the one hand the cuckoo has never become a bride⁴⁶²;
On the other hand Jyapoting has exhausted its life⁴⁶³.

⁴⁵⁹ The tent is looked upon as an enclosure and so one's heart does not enclose the heart of the other.

⁴⁶⁰ Many of the monasteries are looked upon as places of happiness and comfort far beyond their location and condition. Such is Dege lying in a barren dreary valley although it is the center of great learning, has a printery and is the leading monastery of its sect in eastern Tibet.

⁴⁶¹ Dartsendo or Tachienlu is on the extreme eastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau. Its reputation for comfort stems from its numerous shops and its low altitude rather than any inherent change in comfort as compared to other Tibetan localities.

⁴⁶² The cuckoo does not go as a bride for it does not build a nest of its own but uses the nest of other birds, which Tibetans know.

⁴⁶³ Jyapoting hillside at Bathang, until an irrigation ditch had been built there, was a tangle of briars and barren shrubs with neither nesting places nor food for birds; later war and desertion of the place reduced its value.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

One laments that the poor must rise early

Before daylight has appeared one must drink the breakfast tea;
This tea is not tea of comfort but tea of poverty.

One must put on a brave front

In discomfort or pretended comfort one must be a woodsman,
Yet in carrying on, beneath one's burden, one sings a happy song.

*The lover laments that they can not live together in their own
happy land but must go to another less desirable country*

My own fatherland is a country where there is plenty of gold,
But we two, like gold dots on a ring, must move to another land.

*If we agree in talk only and the business of loving is not
completed then all is useless*

In a blue sky without rain may come the voice of thunder,
But if there is no rain, then there is no need for thunder.

*When a Tibetan woman marries a Chinese she should not go back
with him to China for it is a strange land and she will be
sad*

If a Chinese goes back to China it is his homeland,
But his woman should not go there as it is a strange land.

*If one tells a friend one's heart the news is spread abroad to one's
shame and it is a burdensome thing*

If a girl tells all about her heart thoughts to mutual friends,
This talk becomes gossip by which the girl's friends burden her.

CHAPTER VIII

The Peacock and Other Songs.

The Peacock Song is chanted by means of Questions and Answers; Each line is in two parts of six syllables each in the Tibetan language and this has been recast into twelve syllables for each line. The Tibetan has also the words for "question" and "answer" and for clearness this is continued in the English. The peacock is a semi-sacred bird whose feathers are used extensively in decorative temple ritual.

Question— Today the peacock's grand, where is the peacock's place ?

Answer— Today the peacock's fine, it's the Indian peacock.

Question— In eighty Indian towns, what mother did each have ?

Answer— The eighty Indian towns were made by eighty springs.

Question— All these built-up cities, why were they made alike ?

Answer— These Indian-made cities were of green sandalwood⁴⁵⁸.

Question— Food in the peacock's mouth, what kind of food was it?

Answer— Within the peacock's mouth, was leaf of the banyan.

Question— Leaf of the banyan tree ! Why does peacock eat it ?

Answer— Eating poison leaf is good for peacock's body.

Question— What is that one drink in the mouth of the peacock ?

Answer— The drink in peacock's mouth is not poison water.

Question— The one drink in peacock's mouth is of what value ?

Answer— Not drinking bad juice, the peacock speaks pleasantly.

Question— If peacock is wise will he bow the head three times ?

Answer— Peacock not being wise will bow the head three times.

Question— If the peacock is wise will his beak snap three times ?

Answer— Peacock not being wise will snap his beak three times.

Question— If the peacock is wise will he arch neck three times ?

Answer— Peacock not being wise will arch the neck three times.

Question— If the peacock is wise will he flick tail three times ?

Answer— Peacock not being wise will flick the tail three times.

Question— If the peacock is wise will he strut thrice on road ?

Answer— Peacock not being wise will strut three times on road.

Question— If peacock is wise will he stretch his leg three times ?

Answer— Peacock not being wise will stretch his leg three times.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Question— If the peacock is wise will he fly circling thrice ?

Answer— Peacock not being wise will fly circling three times.

Question— In looking and searching do you not go walking ?

Answer— In looking and searching I will not go walking.

Question— In working and praying will you not go walking ?

Answer— In working and praying I will not go walking.

Question— Peacock why are you not likely to take a drink ?

Answer— I am not taking a drink now says the peacock.

Question— If the peacock is wise will he turn around thrice.

Answer— Peacock not being wise will turn around three times.

2. The Happiness Song

Ten syllables in Tibetan and eighteen syllables in English.

In a tiny little country if it's full of gold it is happiness;
When flying in the sky the three golden brother birds are in
happiness;
After flying in the sky and descending to earth it is happiness;
Coming down to the earth, if we will meet at midnight, it is
happiness;
When meeting at midnight, if we get a quart measure, it is
happiness;
Receiving a quart measure, if we will distill liquor, it's happiness;
After distilling a quart, if we meet our boy friend, it is happiness;
On meeting our boy friend, if we will lovingly mate, it is happiness.

3. The Song of Tibetan Love Extent

Seven syllables of Tibetan into ten syllables of English⁴⁶⁴.

Loving not Lhasa, yet loving Lhasa;
Loving Lhasa for its upper waters.

Loving not Drepung, yet loving Drepung;
Loving Drepung for its upper throne seat.

⁴⁶⁴ The love in the first four verses has in it the element of ambition to achieve fame since Lhasa and these three monasteries are the seat of religious and political government; the position of head of these three monasteries can be attained by those of brains who are industrious. Other spelling of the first two are Drepung and Gaden.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Loving not Sera yet loving Sera;
Loving Sera for its upper throne seat.

Loving not Chabdo yet loving Chabdo⁴⁶⁵;
Loving Chabdo lying between two streams.

Loving not Draya yet loving Draya⁴⁶⁶;
Loving Draya lying between two rocks.

Loving not Bawa yet loving Bawa⁴⁶⁷;
Loving Bawa for eagles overhead.

Loving not Letang yet loving Letang⁴⁴¹;
Loving Letang for its upper grasslands.

Loving not China, yet loving China⁴⁶⁸;
Loving China now for its high class bulls.

4. Song of Deities

Six Tibetan syllables into eight English syllables.

Born upon the mountain of gold,
Golden-bodied Vajra Pani⁴⁶⁹,
Golden-bodied Chyahnah Doje⁴⁶⁹;
Give presents to these holy priests.
Are we struck by the three evils⁴⁷⁰?
This is known in the hearts of priests.

⁴⁶⁵ Another spelling is Chamdo, which lies at the junction of the two main streams forming the Mekong in eastern Tibet.

⁴⁶⁶ Draya a district in eastern Tibet lies between the Yangtze and Mekong rivers northwest of Batang.

⁴⁶⁷ Bawa, the Tibetan name for Bathang³⁵ which lies thirty degrees north and ninety-nine degrees east.

⁴⁶⁸ China was importing foreign bulls to improve the cattle in Tibet.

⁴⁶⁹ Vajra Pani, known to Tibetans as Chyahnah or Chag-na Dorje, is the Lord of the Thunderbolt.

⁴⁷⁰ The three evils; old age, sickness and death.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

Born on the mountain of silver,
Silver-bodied Thuhjhe Chenpo⁴⁷¹;
The silver-bodied Jyanrehzih⁴⁷¹;
Give presents to these holy lords.
Now will they give us salvation ?
This is known in the hearts of lords.

Born on the mountains of turquoise,
Self-evolving turquoise Drohma¹³²,
Self-evolving turquoise Tara¹³².
It's given on the other side⁴⁷².
In youth can we be taught of her ?
It is known on the other side.

5. Song of the Seasons

Eight syllables in Tibetan translated in twelve English syllables.

Spring has a first month, a second and a third month,
In the third spring month the cuckoo sings in the fields¹⁰.
Summer has a first month, a second and a third month,
In the third summer month flowers bloom on grasslands.
Autumn has a first month, a second and third month,
In the third autumn month fruit is produced on trees.
Winter has a first month, a second and third month,
In the third winter month white ice is formed on lakes.

6. A Song of Meeting to Love

Eight Tibetan syllables have been put into twelve English ones.

There is one happy place and two happy places;
The most happy place is Lhasa of the sunrise⁴⁷³.

⁴⁷¹ This is the God of Mercy or Chenrezi.

⁴⁷² This refers to the other side of life or death and the next state of existence before rebirth.

⁴⁷³ Lhasa is considered the city of perfection in all things including weather.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

There is one fearful place and two fearful places;
The fearful place is that of Lhasa's Lord Jowo⁴⁷⁴.

Shall we go and go, to meet there Little Sweetheart ?
If you go to meet me, we will be united.
You shall present a meeting scarf of good fortune;
I will offer a blessing prayer of long life⁴⁷⁵.

There is one happy place and two happy places;
Where is the place that is comfortable and warm ?
There is one fearful place and two fearful places;
Most fearful is the religious household of Hell.

Will you go to meet me or not, Little Sweetheart ?
If you go to meet me we will be united.
You must offer a meeting scarf of good fortune;
I will offer a blessing prayer of long life.

There is one happy place and two happy places;
A most happy place is on the top of Gyehdam⁴⁷⁶.
There is one fearful place and two fearful places;
The most fearful place are the mythical mountains.

Shall we go and go, to meet there Little Sweetheart ?
If you go to meet me we will be united.
You must offer a meeting scarf of good fortune;
I will offer a blessing prayer of long life.

⁴⁷⁴ In Lhasa is a temple dedicated to the young Prince Buddha at the age of sixteen and this idol is known as Lord Jowo. Since cleansing of sin is important before entering it makes this temple a fearful place. There are other images of different deities in this temple; it seems to contain a roster of the Lamaistic deities.

⁴⁷⁵ Ceremonial scarfs presented when two persons meet may be later draped around an idol as a prayer is said.

⁴⁷⁶ Gyehdam is also known as Chungtien. It is located southeast of Bathang some fifteen days journey or about three hundred miles.

On top of the mountain like a hill of jewels,
There is to the right and left, groves of sandalwood;
The peacocks flock together to the right and left.
The sandalwood trees are not wafting bad odors.

The peacocks are happy in this pleasant circle;
At the mountain's middle which are like jewelled hills;
Is reached the right and left height of the white willow⁴⁷⁷;
Here young vultures drop, descending to right and left.

On the hill-wings of the high mountains like jewels,
The cuckoo birds gather together right and left;
The leaves of the white willow tree are not disturbed;
The cuckoo flock are happy in their gathering.

7. The Yellow Goose Song.

Six Tibetan syllables translated into eight English syllables.

In the thought of the Holy is
A lake of the redeemed dragon;
A lake loving the white gift scarf⁴⁷⁸;
Do not dispatch the yellow goose,
If nothing else please send a boat;
If not, please relax the boat rope⁴⁷⁹;
For the girl flying on the lake,
Will never be consoled in heart⁴⁸⁰.

⁴⁷⁷ The altitude limit of the white willow is about 13000 feet.

⁴⁷⁸ The lake deity desires a salutation scarf as a token of respect.

⁴⁷⁹ So the lover can use it.

⁴⁸⁰ Perhaps in this poem the girl is compared to a female yellow goose by the lover. The yellow goose or Brahminy duck is a lifetime companion to its mate and such constancy is honored by Tibetans who view its slaughter with horror.

CHAPTER IX

Miscellaneous Songs and Chants.

1. Songs on the Trail.

These songs were sung by men as we were leaving Jyekundo where our expedition had camped for a few months in 1935 and the men were abandoning the temporary sweethearts whom they had secured for their stay while there. They were teasing each other about their love affairs and of course the victims in each case were somewhat embarrassed when I wrote down their love songs; this they could not help as they told on each other.

The Chinese skinner of our birds Tsi Gway Fu was the only one of our eleven Tibetan and Chinese men who did not consort with the women and he was teased about the women in the following stanza. Six syllables in Tibetan.

The grasslands go a long distance,
My sweetheart you are like a hare;
At the first you did not appear,
At last you do not have a tail.

Dingtzin and Dendruh were two of our men who attempted the composition of love songs. Dendruh was probably the cleverer composing the one about Tsi Gway Fu above. Dingtzin indicated he was the less versatile by saying he did not have a goat head (goats are considered clever) like Dendruh.

DINGTZIN'S CHANT ABOUT DENDRUH

(In six Tibetan syllables)

Dendruh at the time of coming⁴⁸¹
Thought a coral would be enough;
Dendruh at the point of going⁴⁸²,
Looking up and down and thinking;
Dendruh thought a child would be coming,
Dendruh gave the girl sixty rupees⁴⁸³.

⁴⁸¹ The time of coming to Jyekundo in March.

⁴⁸² The time of leaving Jyekundo was in June.

⁴⁸³ While Tibetan women who prove fertile usually have little difficulty in securing a husband yet our men recognise their responsibility more than the average Tibetan man. Sixty rupees was over three months wages for a working man; he had also given her money from time to time to support her and this was a farewell gift even if a child was not a certainty.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

DENDRUH'S CHANT ABOUT DINGTZIN

(In six Tibetan syllables)

For Segah was said to be sick⁴⁸⁴,
It was said that she was with child;
Dingtzin from the border of Sining⁴⁸⁵,
Then said that he would quickly return.

DINGTZIN CHANT ABOUT THE EXPEDITION

(In six Tibetan syllables)

Foreigner's servants came to Jyekundo,
They have taken eleven girl sweethearts⁴⁸⁶;
The receptacle of these will expand,
They will enlarge during this coming year.

2. Lhashee's Love Songs of Bathang

Six Tibetan syllables into various measures; probably her own composition.

Title—MY HEART IS BECOMING INSPIRED

Eight English syllables

The master of the lady lake⁴⁸⁷,
The only bird, the golden goose
Without purpose you little bird,
Why are you circling to the left⁴⁸⁸?

Summer rains come to the river,
So winter ice please go slowly⁴⁸⁵;
My previous life partner has come.
So my sweetheart please go slowly⁴⁸⁵.

We are like the lofty heavens,
Whether I myself come or not;
We are as two white-tailed eaglets⁴⁸⁹,
Who'd fly to the middle heavens.

⁴⁸⁴ Segah his girl had morning sickness.

⁴⁸⁵ Plans at first were for the party to go to Sining and then return to Jyekundo.

⁴⁸⁶ Dingtzin was slightly mistaken but eleven made the proper measure.

⁴⁸⁷ Lakes are classified as female.

⁴⁸⁸ The proper religious circling is to the right so the bird like the girl is distressed and circling in the wrong direction.

⁴⁸⁹ Eaglets are in different color than the parents and up to the age of maturity.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

We have never gone to Tibet,
Nor allowed in superb Tibet⁴⁹⁰;
If allowed to go inside it,
We would settle in Tibet's heart⁴⁹¹.

On the top of the small white stone,⁴⁹²
There will flame the scarf of the gods;
The young magpie carries it off⁴⁹³.
Is there any barrier to this ?

The clouds have gone, sliding down-hill⁴⁹⁴;
The male horse has not come quickly⁴⁹⁵;
Sweetheart is cast off unhappy,
For not a word by mouth has come.

On the mountain — "Golden Horsehead"⁴⁹⁶,
The foreigners have led a stream;
On Japong the harvest is good⁴⁹⁷,
What will be the end none can know.

490 The author lived in Chinese Tibet just over a range from the border of independent Tibet and was not allowed to enter, which was also true of Chinese, without special permission. This state of affairs had been true from 1919 onwards.

491 Lhasa the acme of all Tibetan's hopes to visit.

492 The highest tip of the Potala where the Dalai Lama lived.

493 The magpie has a propensity to carry away articles and nothing could prevent one from tearing off the silk scarf atop the prayer flag staff.

494 In a country of mountains, descending clouds seem to be sliding down-hill.

495 The lover is pictured as a stallion seeking out his mate.

496 From streams flowing from this mountain the missionary foreigners had led an irrigation ditch to furnish water for their compound which produced fertile crops out of the once sterile brush covered hillsides. This mountain was the tutelary deity mountain of Bathang and at some angles resembled a horsehead while at its base were abandoned gold mines which the author visited several hundred feet back from the surface.

497 Japong or Japoding was the name of the hillside which the foreign missionaries had watered and where they lived. Naturally what would be the end of such a venture no man could predict.

Title—THE ORPHAN LOVE SONG

This song was chanted for a poor orphan who was raised and educated by one of the foreign Protestant missionaries and enabled to get work; now the orphan seeks a sweetheart.

The white shirt of the orphan child,
Is now servant of the red shirt⁴⁹⁸;
One time I had no ornaments,
Now I have become a worker.

The hilltop purple disperses⁴⁹⁹,
What and where can one look to see;
My dear mountain-top beloved,
My own eyes yet can not see her.

The very best of all bamboos,
The bamboo of the white glacier;
Thrust a bamboo into the earth,
And bamboos will clump in bunches⁵⁰⁰.

Sweet apricots of upper streams⁵⁰¹,
You yourself do not be too sweet⁵⁰²;
When the seventh moon has arisen,
Likiang molasses will arrive⁵⁰³.

⁴⁹⁸ Those who can afford to wear red-colored shirts are more affluent than those who must wear the common white Chinese cloth shirts.

⁴⁹⁹ This refers to the darkness of night or the deep obscurity of clouds which cast a purple haze.

⁵⁰⁰ Bamboos grow together in bunches especially the finer grassy type found in higher altitudes near the glaciers.

⁵⁰¹ Fine sweet apricots grow in the deep valleys of southeastern Tibet even in the Bathang areas and follow up the narrow river tributaries.

⁵⁰² That is— too sweet toward other men.

⁵⁰³ When the seventh month about August—September arrives, brown sugar, used in making syrups or molasses for cooking purposes, will be imported from Likiang in northern Yunnan province of western China.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

THE BATHANG VALLEY LOVE SONGS.

(Six Tibetan Syllables)

For the upper crown of comfortable Bathang,
There is on the one hand the two fruitful harvests;
Also it's crowned by religious monasteries,
With thought of building one in the cedar circle⁵⁰⁴.

Than the wild rose there is nothing much more pleasing⁵⁰⁶,
It is rooted solid in the rock of each wall;
Than the wild rose fruit there is nothing else poorer.
It leaks down below into the dry clay wall cracks⁵⁰⁸.

(Seven Tibetan Syllables)

Religion is because of death, illness and old age,
Illness and old age are of the Lord of Death himself⁵⁰⁷;
Revelling and playing are not without sorrowing,
All this is likewise true of wild animals and birds.

(Six Tibetan Syllables)

The following song is a critical comment on a certain wild and boisterous dance.

This is a dog dance, not the New Year Dance⁵⁰⁸,
These robbers beat the maidens of Bathang;
Pleasure is for the mistress of Heaven¹³²,
But our bones have become softer than flesh⁵⁰⁹.

⁵⁰⁴ This monastery had been burnt by Chao Erh Feng in the rebellion of 1903 but was rebuilt later from 1924 onwards being finished by 1935. It was once surrounded by a row of large cedar trees some of which had later been destroyed.

⁵⁰⁵ The plant mentioned here was called the Serwa belonging to the rose family but the real botanical name is not known to the author.

⁵⁰⁶ The fruit is good to eat but consists mostly of seeds and is difficult to get out of the rock cracks.

⁵⁰⁷ Shinje the Lord of Death and Controller of Rebirths judges each individual weighing their good deeds against their bad; people are warned by illness and old age to prepare for inevitable death.

⁵⁰⁸ The dance here was supposed to be for social pleasure and not to be like the wild boisterous dances of the New Year which is for the exorcising of evil spirits.

⁵⁰⁹ From being abused in the dancing.

Two verses the first of hope and the second of quality.

(Six Tibetan Syllables)

The mother river has swollen greatly,
Do not hinder the water's rushing song;
When we ourselves are promised together,
Mother enemy will not suppress us.

Peach trees are better than castor oil plants,
The fruit of these two are not similar;
If one thought the fruit was the same fineness,
One would display them both in the apron.

3. Work Chants

(a) BATHANG WHEAT & BARLEY HARVEST CHANTS⁵¹⁰

Now prepare altogether,
Now yourself exert some force,
Say Mani and get ready⁵¹¹,
Now Mani Padme prepare,
Now say—Mani Padme La Ho Re⁵¹¹.

Mani Padme La Ho Re,
Together now once more;
Get ready now twice,
Prepare for third welfare;
Mani now once,
Mani now twice,
Mani Padme Ho Re.

(b) BUCKWHEAT HARVEST CHANT⁵¹²

Om Mani,
Padme Ho Re.

⁵¹⁰ The flailers of the grain chant these lines as they beat out the grain.

⁵¹¹ Mani is a part of the famous six syllables prayer Om Mani Padme Hum and Ho Re is a variation of Hum in this prayer.

⁵¹² Chanted in two lines or with a break as indicated while beating out the buckwheat grains.

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(c) Mill Song

The water turns the water wheel⁵¹³,
Bathang flavor comes from the wind⁵¹⁴,
Flour fee will be the hardest parts⁵¹⁵,
I and good luck go together.

(d) Workmen's chant in Bathang when several lift a burden.
One together,
Two together,
And all three together.

(e) The Odobon Tribe east of Bathang chant when they put
their loads on their yak.

Say Ah !
Say Sir !
Say up.

(f) In the vicinity of Dong Ngo Lo, about two days west of
Dartsendo the farmers chant.

Help to prepare,
Say get ready.

(g) Chants of the Timbermen.

The timbermen go up on the high mountain to cut the trees and then they carry the heavy logs on their shoulders to the edge of a mountain torrent where they cast them in to be carried downstream to the valley. Here they are again carried on the shoulder to the site of the building. The logs are so heavy that they cause much pain and suffering. Looking at the breadth means at the level path from the cutting to the torrent. They save their strength by not thinking of women and think purely. Only the strongest men can qualify for this work.

⁵¹³ Mills with huge stones and bucketed wheels grind grain except upon uplands where hand mills are used.

⁵¹⁴ Wind is used to winnow the grain before grinding to take out stones and coarse parts.

⁵¹⁵ The stones are often augmented by some from the stream so the miller can get a larger portion of flour for his fee as the sack of grain is weighed before and after milling. The fee is fixed as one measure per sack of grain. The courser parts and the stones also remain with the miller so it is to his advantage to have more stones. He can steal the extra stone weight.

Happiness comes from suffering,
Comfort will come at the bottom;
Do not look at the mountain's height,
Look at the breadth of the mountains;
Look not on the fairness of flesh,
Look at the purity of mind.

4. Religious Chants

(a) Six line chant of a religious nature.

The tree born from the mountain of the gods,
The wind scatters its sandalwood odor.
This crooked tree if it is now made straight,
And meeting with moisture will go upward;
Also if one's evil nature is healed,
Knowing its causes reveals the healing.

(b) Prayer chants of the three principal sects of Lamaism.

Bonpa (Black Hat)
HOM MA TE MA TSE MA YOR TSA LIN DO
Nyingmapa (Red Hat)
OM BE DZA GHU RU PAH MA SE DHE SHRUM
Gelugpa (Yellow Hat)
OM MA NI PAD ME HUM (OM MA NI PAH MI HUM)

(c) Charm Chants of different deities.

For JYAN REH ZEEH or CHENREZIG it is "Om Mani
Padme Hum"⁵¹⁶

For JHAM PEH YANG it is "Om A Ra Pa Tsa Na Do"⁵¹⁷

For CHAN NA DO JHE it is "Om Dza Pa Na Hum"⁵¹⁸

For DREH MA or DROLMA or DROHMA it is "Om Ta Re
Tu Re Tu Ta Re Tu Re Sa Ha"¹³²

For the teacher—PAH MA SAM BHA WA it is "Om Bhe
Dza Ghu Ru Pah Ma Se Do Hum"⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁶ God of Mercy.

⁵¹⁷ The soft-voiced one the God of Wisdom.

⁵¹⁸ The Lord of the Thunderbolt—Vajra Pani.

⁵¹⁹ The Wizard Master of Magic who invented Tantrik Ritual and coerced demons for Tibet.

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- (d) Gelugpa Chant at the anniversary Festival Celebration of the Death of Tsongkhapa.

(Nine Tibetan Syllables into fourteen English syllables)
By the treasures of basic beginnings,—God of Mercy⁵¹⁶,
By the pure undefiled,—the great perfected soft-voiced God,⁵¹⁷
By the soft-bodied demon Lord of the mystic treasures⁵¹⁸,
To Onion Lord of the great glacier wisdom Tsong Kha pa,
Offer prayers to the honored feet of Lozang Drahpa⁵²⁰.

5. Other chants

- (a) Chant taken from Das's Dictionary on page 50 translated from seven Tibetan syllables into ten English syllables.
That an ascetic's body should be fat,
That a pretty woman should sleep alone,
That a hero should have not one wound scar;
These are three things the mind does not credit.

- (b) Congratulatory words used at New Year's and other occasions of felicitations.
The most perfect peaceful good fortune,
Be permanently received by you.

- (c) A chant said at weddings.
(Five Tibetan syllables)

Brighter than sun and moon,
More numerous than stars,
Greater breadth than the sky,
Higher plain than mountains,
Greater depth than the sea.

6. List of Songs

The following list of songs given by Lhashee at the outbreak of the war in 1932 prevented the writing down of the songs.

These called Bohzeh do not require to be accompanied by a violin.

⁵²⁰ Lozang Drahpa is another name for Tsong Kha Pa who was born in the onion-bank district of Amdo in northeastern Tibet.

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1. In the dwelling.
2. The little black friend.
3. Oh, listen just once.
4. The victorious wand.
5. Look, look, my sweetheart.
6. Bells swing and ringing.
7. To a worldly Prince.
8. The heavenly ferry-boat.
9. Oh, happy island.
10. Sir, one red tea-brick.

These called Rehzeh do require a violin in their singing.

1. Flower on the plain.
2. Sit, rabbit, sit.
3. The cymbal tune.
4. The happy beggar Chohdrah Jyatsho.
5. The highest satisfaction.
6. The young white goddess.
7. Rose-apple goddess.
8. Heart, Heart.
9. Vampire goddess.
10. On twin peaks.
11. Up, up, once more.
12. To the cruel one.
13. On another mountain.
14. To a great perfection.
15. Sweet-tasting beer.
16. To higher refreshment.
17. The Chinese woman's pleasure garden.
18. The white mystical country.
19. Circle right and left.

Note. The author is not satisfied as to the correct translation of these titles since he has not been able to consult a Tibetan on the above list.

PART TWO
PROVERBS

INTRODUCTION

The Tibetan spices his daily conversation with proverbs far more frequently than does the American. Among the more primitive peoples proverbs seem to substitute for the slang phrases and metaphors of the highly civilized countries. These preferences in speech seem to reveal the character of the people and the specialized conditions of their life in the universal struggle for existence.

The civilizations which are comparatively stable retain their ancient proverbs for a longer period, especially if their pithy sayings have not been reduced to writing. The author knows of no collections of indigenous proverbs made by Tibetan authors. Those written down are found scattered in their literature which is mostly religious or dramatic. Brief collections have been made by various outside writers in more than one language. The author believes that this more voluminous collection will reveal many unknown proverbs as the majority of these sayings have come from the mouths of the people in daily conversation while in their homes or on the trails of their land. Such pick-ups by the author have been supplemented by his requests to his teachers and other learned people including women and priests for written lists of the proverbs which they knew. Those lists written in Tibetan and those picked up in conversations were carefully translated with the aid of Tibetan teachers and are the backbone of this collection. Probably a fourth of this collection have been extracted from literature and dictionaries; these will usually reveal themselves by their literary style.

The classification of proverbs is not an easy one; if too broad fine shades of meaning may be lost; if too detailed and profound the meaning may be too subtle. The author consulted the classification systems used by other authors in their lists of Oriental Proverbs with some helpful results; finally through combination and originality in accord with Tibetan thought and life the present list of six hundred and seventy two proverbs has been divided under sixty six headings. Generally the classification has been according to the meaning but if this was not feasible then according to the content. When the meaning has been obvious this has been easy; in many cases it has necessarily been along broad lines and subject to criticism according to one's individual preferences or prejudices. Often the proverb will fit into more than one category but all the author can do is to regret such overlapping. In the proverb "Death in Hell is a long distance off, Hunger in famine is right here now," the placement might be either under Hell, Religion, Death, Hunger, or Poverty. It was placed under Hell to show that Hell was less feared than Hunger which might not be true of some other religious peoples. The main objective in the placing of these proverbs was to enable the reader to discover their whereabouts and

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not to satisfy any whim of the author. Patience and thought in the searching will usually discover the proverb desired. The sixty six headings are alphabetically listed in the Table of Contents with the number of Proverbs in each list, the consecutive numbers of the proverbs, and the page where the proverbs are found under each heading.

Tibetan proverbs are usually cast in the form of poetry with rhyme rarely found and probably accidental in those few instances. Tibetan poetry has only balance and rhythm. These two characteristics have been maintained in the English translations. Tibetan is more terse than English so the translation has more syllables than the Tibetan original. In Tibetan the number of syllables is regular for each line, but the number of syllables in each line of a couplet may vary from two to fourteen syllables with most proverbs falling between four and nine syllables. Usually the proverbs are in balanced couplets and antithetical but occasionally are in a single continuous sentence. In a few instances they run to three or more lines. In all cases their translation into English has been carried in the same general form as the Tibetan.

After living thirteen full years among the Tibetans in home, tent and temple, in and around Bathang (N 30-E 99) the author has devoted much of a sixty year lifetime's leisure hours and some of his working hours to the study of Tibet, its language, its people and their customs. Exclusive of strictly hunting trips, through participation in itineration and scientific expeditions, the author has ridden mules, horses and yaks over six thousand miles in eastern Tibet. He has gathered these proverbs over an area of one hundred thousand square miles. Most of this region is called Kham by the Tibetans and like the proverb, "If one looks to the mouth of a Kham friend, One will come without trouble to the sea; so my Kham friends have given me these proverbs and I have brought them over the sea to America."

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The Proverbs.

The Proverb is stated first and then, if necessary, an explanation is given in parentheses following the proverb.

ON ACHIEVEMENT.

1. How can a people without virtue attain a place of high dignity ?
As a tree not able to get juice for its fruit has a hard existence.
2. Look not on the height of the mountain,
But look at the size of the mountain.
(Tackle the problem where you are)
3. Those who love not comfort, can do a hundred deeds,
Those who cannot love hardship, cannot do one deed.
4. Think not of a dull hand axe when you can attain to a Tibetan gun,
Think not of a poor Tibetan gun when you can get a Chinese rifle.
(Why take the poorest when you can get the best)
5. If one does not cross the doorstep's sill,
One cannot arrive at any place.
6. If you would throw a man in the river,
You must go to the edge of the water.
(One who would do an evil or good deed must take the risk of the deed)
7. If the target is good,
The sharp arrow hits well.
8. To shoot an arrow within a temple,
There is room to draw but no place to shoot.
(Like having tea but no butter to put in it.)

ON AGRICULTURE.

9. There are no stones on top of the pass,
If there are stones they are those of flint.
(Flint is probably camp-fire refuse of robbers)

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10. The cutting of the white harvest proceeds upward,
The cutting of the dark harvest proceeds downward.
(The white harvest are wheat and barley which is the first crop and the dark harvest are buckwheat and millet which are the second crop in the two-crop valleys. The ripening proceeds according to altitude which is the reference to upward and downward; the first crop ripening first in the lower altitudes; and the second because of frost and colder weather, ripens first in the higher altitudes where there is no delay in planting or harvesting as there is in the lower altitudes.)
11. If an irrigated field becomes sour,
It never will recover its sweetness.
12. When the bottom farming country fills up with water,
Then the plough must be taken to the three mountain tops.
(Three is a sacred number and implies "many"; the implication is one must take the next best land)
13. The four crossroads lead everywhere,
Aga soil is found everywhere.
(Aga soil is a kind of limestone soil which is widely found)
14. It's better to trim an old walnut tree,
Than it is to plant a young walnut tree.
(One will get a continuous bearing of walnuts without having to wait for a number of years; old trees send up new shoots easily. This walnut is known in the U.S.A. as the English walnut tree. This proverb is also tied up with the superstition that whoever plants a walnut tree and the tree dies, will also die soon afterwards.)
15. Pleasant turf in summer,
Pitted earth in winter.
(Joy and sorrow must be accepted alike.)

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16. The sun that extends up over the top of the mountain,
Without a man there, it is of no use to the body.
(Don't waste one's strength on useless tasks).

ON ANIMALS AND BIRDS.

17. Hunting for a donkey,
While riding a donkey.
(Absent-minded or perhaps greedy)
18. Thrust it in the mouth of the donkey,
It is the place out of which he brays.
(Make no mistakes).
19. The white-striped-faced horse's stare,
Will bring ruin to a man.
(It is a bad sign for such a horse to stare at a man).
20. A loafing cow with a yak's appetite.
(The yak is much larger than a cow).
21. Dzazo Razo Plains are full of wild yak,
Without wild yak the Zo Plains are empty.
(No people live there.)
22. The bee leaves the wilted flowers alone;
The animals forsake the burnt forest.
23. If there is no cock, the donkey tells the time,
If there is no dog, the hog will get the bones.
(Somebody will get the profit if one makes the best of conditions.)
24. A hundred bird's bills turn upward,
But the hoopoe's bill turns downward.
(There is always a black sheep in the flock.)
25. The brown thrush has a voice but no words,
The snow pheasant has words but no voice.
(The brown thrush sings sweetly but the snow pheasant says
"Ah Rong," or "Yes, myself.")

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26. The mother bird says "Gang,"
The little chicks say "Shrug."
(These are the two sounds as the Tibetans interpret them in their language; each works in unison and according to their nature.)

ON APPEARANCES.

27. Do not put up fancy paper bells,
Wretched clothes are better with riches.
(One is less liable to be robbed; and, it is often silks on the back and no food in the stomach.)
28. If ornaments are tied on the horse, they enhance the rider,
If the sacred grass is excellent, it beautifies the vase.
(This grass is a beautiful kind imported from India to be used as an offering before idols; thrusting two blades of it in a wart will remove the wart.)
29. Cattle dung cake has two sides,
Buckwheat seed has three corners.
(Shape has nothing to do with usefulness; beauty is only skin deep.)
30. The terrible god has a scarred lip,
The fearful demon has a broken nose.
(They must represent their powers and show they have such powers or are capable of performing their duty in protection of the worshipper.)
31. Both flowers and jewelry are lovely if just a few.
(One should be modest and not wear all of one's finery at once, nor all of the time.)
32. Than the Sewa bush there is nothing more pleasant,
On each side it is solidly wedged in the rock.
Than the Sewa fruit there is nothing much poorer,
It leaks down to the clay dirt between the rock cracks.
(The Sewa is like the rose bush and may be of the rose family;

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its fruit is good to eat but small and falls down easily into the boulder cracks where it is hard to recover.)

ON APPRECIATION.

33. Like dark dye on top of a good color,
Like nails pounded into a good saddle.
(One practise is to use a tree bark concoction mixed with black earth which will darken red colors; nails make a good saddle stronger.)
34. Six ounces of gold on a dog's head,
Six ounces of gold on a hog's head.
(Neither appreciate such a gift; gold or sand are alike to them.)
35. The old woman of Lhasa,
Never saw the god Jhowo.
(She had lived there for all of her life and had never touched her forehead to the principal idol of the Jhokhang temple in Lhasa for which thousands make long pilgrimages to see; distance leads enchantment to the view. The god Jhowo had been brought to Lhasa by the Chinese wife of the famous King Songtsen Gampo about 640 A.D.)
36. The young of the magpie has the feathers of the mother,
By its origin one would think this would be remembered.
(Magpies are independent and usually appear only in pairs.)

ON BEGGARS.

37. If questioned there is no reply,
If searched there is nothing obtained.
(Useless to search a beggar.)
38. Although clothing and food are poor one can leave off beggar's manners.
Although the boy may be poor he is indeed his uncle's nephew.
(One's clothing may be poor yet one can act as if they were silk and wool cloth; and even if one is poor, one has a resource in relatives one can fall back on.)

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- 39 One is not a beggar by coming from the country of beggars,
One is a beggar by not having the skill to do the worldly work.
40. If there is no answer to one's speaking, the person is dumb;
If no food return to a food gift, that one is a beggar.
41. The beggar who can obtain tea,
Is also presented tsamba.
(Tea being an expensive importation is less frequently given
to beggars, so if one is clever enough to get tea, one is also
able to obtain tsamba or barley flour for food.)
42. If the country's crop is a good one,
The beggars will have plenty of food.
(It is a work of religious merit to give alms and in times of
plenty it is easy to obtain alms.)

ON BOASTING.

43. The white-tailed vulture is without feathers on its head,
But the falcon-hawk even has feathers on its legs.
(The hawk or small person puts on a big show but the great
man like the huge vulture does not have to do so.)
44. A braggart has no courage,
Muddy water has no depth.
45. If the hand can not catch the flea,
Let not the mouth slay the tiger.
46. If one kills a bear one need not speak of it,
If a bear mauls one, then one must speak of it.
47. Though one's tongue can talk to other persons,
To see one's self there must be a mirror.
(One ought not to boast but look at oneself in a mirror.)
48. If one eats much white honey, it makes the liver sick.
If one talks much, the words are like blowing a goat's horn.

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49. A knife-like ridge is not pleasing to the sight,
White froth is not pleasant tasting in the mouth.
(If one is on a knife-like ridge and looks down a thousand or more feet it is hard on the nerves; this proverb is said of a boasting person who puts out, as it were, white froth.)
50. Kill five men, wound ten and capture twenty.

ON BUDDHAHOOD AND GODS.

51. If Buddha can't do his own business,
The dead can't be invited to Heaven.
52. If there is no religion in Buddha above,
Then there are no stones on the stone pile of the pass.
(When Tibetans cross over a pass they pick up a stone and hurl it on the pile of stones at the topmost point of the pass as an offering to the deity of the pass; and also shout "the gods are victorious" and use the honorific of "Yes, Sir" in a long singsong rumble.)
53. All kinds of deeds are considered by the God of Love,
Because the ears of the Compassionate God burn much.
(Burn means to hear; those who are doing deeds do not know that others are talking about them.)
54. The men of three generations are old,
The gods of three generations are old,
The birth of the world was in the old ice.
(Seek the old for advice; the last line may hark back to the Ice Age.)
55. You don't need to teach the alphabet to Buddha,
Nor do you need to give brilliant light to the sun.
(Buddha knows the alphabet intuitively as he is all-wise.)

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ON BUSINESS AND AFFAIRS.

56. Affairs cannot be handled with a two-pointed mind,
Sewing cannot be done with a two-pointed needle.
57. To increase one's own business, poor appearance is bad,
At first sweet smelling, perfume is useless when exhausted.
58. Thinking of travelling, there is no feed for the stallion,
Thinking of staying home, there is the building of a house.
(Life is one long weariness of the flesh.)
59. Double-minded men cannot handle affairs;
With many tasks nothing is ever finished.
(Too many irons in the fire.)
60. When his own business is concerned,
Even the donkey bears his burden.
61. A saddle can't be put on two horses at the same time.
(A man cannot do two jobs at once.)
62. When the sun sets the bees return to their home.
Those who would like to fly are still quivering.
(The bees are anxious to do something but must stay home now.)
63. Each day brings forth its own day's work,
Each horse each day has his own work.

ON COMPARISON.

64. If you say there is a difference, there is a difference,
As there is a difference between a son and a daughter.
65. When you speak of happiness the rabbit is said to have horns,
When you speak of poverty male antelopes outnumber mules.
(Happiness is as scarce as the proverbial rabbit horns; poverty is plenteous like the buck antelope where the male antelopes equal the number of females; yet one buck can serve ten to fifteen females and the surplus are as useless as sterile mules.)

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66. Wood is light on water,
And stones seem light on wood.
67. Clouds are the mistress of the sky,
Flesh is the softness of the bones.
68. A hundred big birds can rest within a willow tree,
A hundred little birds can rest within a thorn tree.
(Everything has its use.)

ON CO-OPERATION.

69. Having eaten together,
You should agree in counsel.
(Sharing food has special significance of friendship as is true
among other peoples of Asia.)
70. Hot water and milk utilize the copper dipper's mouth,
A dog and a wolf joining together will act alike.
(Birds of a feather flock together.)
71. The hunters of the snowy heights are of the same mind,
The passengers in the skin boat are of the same heart.
(The hunters are all out to get game; the passengers all fear
the water and exercise the same caution.)
72. If the neighbor's cow dies,
The neighbors grieve three days.
(Three is a sacred round number; the neighbors have troubles
of their own besides helping out the neighbor whose cow has
died.)

ON COURTESY.

73. The aloes tree although cut into a hundred pieces yet does not
dispel its fragrance;
A holy man however destitute he may be, yet where does he
lose his good breeding.
74. At the proper time to dismount from a horse, get down;
At the proper time to give obeisance, give homage.

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75. A name for the new-born child,
Ask for the beer to be drunk,
(Everything must be paid for; beer is given to the priest who names the child.)
76. Whether you eat much or little garlic, it makes no difference.
(One's breath will smell just the same; whether little or big an evil deed is a sin.)
77. A request is not granted with an empty hand,
Wet creeping vines will not bring the tea to a boil.
(A ceremonial scarf or a present must always be given with each request.)

ON DEATH.

78. Before death one's thoughts should be white,
After death one's bones will be white.
(Do and be good while you can.)
79. On the day of the father's death,
One is filled as never before.
(Custom dictates an expensive funeral feast which however, is partially or fully paid for by the friends who contribute to its cost and hence are invited to eat of it.)
80. For a hundred years taking medicine,
Near death on but one day taking poison.
(This one day undoes all of the previous days; this may be applied to a lifetime of good deeds ruined by one day's acts.)
81. At the point of one's death, hot on saying of prayers,
At the point of going, strong on feeding the stallion.
(Of little use as one cannot overcome all inherited sin by a few prayers; and neither will the stallion have the strength to carry one if not fed regularly.)
82. When a man goes under the soil, his words are left on the earth,
When a father dies he leaves his testament to his son.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

83. If the son wants the death of the father let him take the father's bow and arrows;
If the son desires to have his father stay alive, let him sleep in his bosom.
(Weapons are necessary for defense in the first instance, and the son could defend him in the second.)
84. When a man dies he is completely dead,
But his dog left behind is forsaken.
(With no home the dog might as well be dead.)
85. The life of all living beings,
Is like the bubbles of water.
86. Dying on the pass it's a bird's cadaver,
Dying in the valley it is a horse corpse.
(Corpse on the pass can be left alone as the wolves and vultures will soon take care of it, but in the valley it must be removed because people live there.)
87. Without a mouth one abandons speaking,
If the body is dead nettles don't sting.
88. If a fish separates from water,
It is separated from its life.
(Men should stay in their own environment.)
89. If water carries away a man,
What was his trouble people will ask.
(Such a death raises questions, as was the case of a merchant who walked into a stream because his daughter had married beneath her social position against his wishes.)
90. If one is going to be sick long,
It is better for death to be near.

ON DRUNKENNESS.

91. One hundred men get drunk as
Compared to one woman drunk.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

92. Whosoever at all times trusts in wine,
Such a one is not steadfast in his mind,
Both crooked and irreligious in heart.
93. When the sun shines then the rains descend,
When drunk with whiskey, one's cheek is struck.
(Everything is awry.)
94. If the noble is drunk with whiskey, it is called the honorific
whiskey drunkenness,
If the servant is drunk with whiskey, it is drinking the blood
of bread impoverishment.
(Sometimes in this proverb the contrast is stated in the terms
of the rich and the poor instead of noble and servant.)

ON EVIL.

95. Desiring to do evil is like being thrown by a horse,
Desiring to do what is good is like falling into sand.
96. Evil talk circling everywhere can't be gathered together with
a broom,
Aseh shot with a poisoned arrow, there is no medicine to heal
him.
(Aseh is just a general name, like John Doe in America.)
97. The evil mouth of men,
Breaks the rod of iron.
(Gossip will kill the best reputation.)
98. All of the good dies,
All evil remains.
99. Ill-luck comes of evil men,
Smoke proceeds from undried wood.
100. If there are a hundred good men, it's but a trifle,
If there is but one evil man it is important.
101. Snake fears man,
Man fears snake.
(Two evil men fear each other when they meet.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

102. Who is struck by a planet,
Has a mouth that is twisting.
(One who faints or falls into a fit is said to have been struck
by a planet-deity and his deeds are said to be evil which is the
meaning of twisting mouth.)
103. By evil gossiping people are killed,
Light and heavy sides tip over the load.
(The two sides of an animal load must be of almost equal
weight to keep the load from tipping over.)
104. Give sweet-sounding soft talk,
To those who are evil.
105. Many impediments come from an evil heart,
Because of this, such should always be forsaken.
106. The coloration of the tiger is outside,
The bitterness of a man is on the inside.
107. The stripes of wild beasts are on the outside,
The stripes of a man are on the inside.
108. If one does not help the willow tree,
Don't pound the willow roots with a stone.
(If you can't help, don't hinder.)
109. A white goat cannot come up to a sheep,
If it does, its hair is still not the same.
(Evil can't be hidden; you know a man by his dress.)
110. A rich woman is equal to a hundred rich men (in evil.)
111. The evil think to eat what they think of,
In all their dreams they dream like the spider.
(Evil people like the spider think only of themselves.)
112. Wherever an evil man goes, evil talk of him fills the place,
No matter where spoiled food is placed, the bad odor of it is
smelled.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

113. While good will come to a good nation,
Evil will come to a bad nation.
114. One cannot seize an evil man,
One cannot stop an evil dog.
115. If the doing of good deeds is finally cast away,
Then one's previous good deeds will become an evil poison.
(One's good deeds will rise up and haunt one.)
116. When fire burns over the great mountain,
Poison is cast into the great sea.
(Evil comes to those who spread evil.)

ON EXAMPLE.

117. When the blind escort the blind,
Both fall into the river.
118. Whatever a man does his dog does,
The dog's tail and man's hand sweep the earth.
(This also has the meaning of "when a man does evil he is leading a dog's life.")
119. Follow good men and one will be good,
Follow bad men and one will be bad.
120. Although a lamp is in his hand,
The blind man cannot see his way.

ON FALSEHOOD.

121. A robber must be familiar with the place he robs,
But a liar need not know the place he talks about.
122. Both lies and the mouse-hares have short tails,
Both truth and valleys have deep channels.
(Lies are soon forgotten but truth is everlasting.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

123. If one does not mix lies in half his sayings, in a long life what will one say.
If one does not mix water with half his food, in a long life what will one eat.
(Lying is very common among Tibetans and food is not plentiful.)

124. Both sky and darkness will become clear in the end,
Both lies and the mouse-hares will be driven away.

(Mouse-hares are *Ocotona* related to the shrews which burrow in the ground just below the grass, and eating the grass roots reduce the grasslands to bare soil, which is easily blown away by the wind; such erosion lessens the fertility of the soil. Truth and death overcome both lies and mouse-hares in the end.)

125. If three persons repeat the same taunt,
The priest will think his goat is a dog.
(If they keep saying his goat is a dog he will finally believe it. They have a parable to that effect.)

126. If the wood has no sweet fragrance, saying that it is sandalwood, is falsehood;
If there are no holy customs, making holy promises has no meaning.

ON FATALISM AND KARMA.

127. Our place in life has been determined beforehand,
But our clean deeds are the product of our own hands.

128. If we are fated to die at home, we will die on our mother's lap,
If we are to escape, we will, even in the face of enemies.

129. Both happiness and sorrow are in one's own hands,
Poverty and length of life are not in one's hands.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

130. The lump of ice in palm of hand causes pain,
The baneful sun rises like the nine planets.
(Whatever a person does it is evil or worthless and one cannot help what takes place.)
131. There is no effigy ransom from dying from all the nine evils,
Those who are ill-born and ugly in body must be clever talkers.
(An effigy is made of a person when sick and used in a sickness-exorcism to entice the evil spirit of disease from the person's body. The nine evils represent all the classes of evil and misery. One cannot overcome the Karma of being ill-born and ugly except through being clever in talking.)
132. For the lotus flower in the water,
Knows not what is the cause of its swaying.
(So man knows not his destiny.)
133. A straight river in a crooked valley,
Must run from side to side of the valley.
(One must put up with what there is.)
134. In this world and also on the other side,
If it is your fate you will be purified.
135. A fishbone in the throat, drink some water;
A chicken bone in your throat, dig your grave.
(A chicken bone is less liable to be dislodged; for some deeds there is a way out but for others there is none.)
136. The father is a horse,
But breeds a donkey son.
(One's Karma cannot be overcome.)
137. Although birds fly up to heaven,
Their shadows strike down on the earth.
(One cannot get away from their deeds—both past and present.)
138. If previously evil works and deeds are done,
Evil talk and gossip will come afterwards.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

139. May it be that you are not born a money lender,
May it be that you are not born as a borrower.
(The lender practises usury, a sinful business; and the borrower is one who is in poverty and hence in misery; both of their Karmas are evil.)
140. The sling made of goat's hair,
Hits the goat on the head.
(What we do or are gets its recompense.)
141. If there is evil thought toward others,
Later rough treatment will come to oneself.
142. Stored treasure is expended in the end;
The end of rising up is to fall down.
143. Joy and sorrow come to the birds of heaven,
Breaking and cracking will happen to all stones.
144. One who does nine kinds of deeds, will get nine kinds of recompense;
One who eats nine kinds of food will get nine kinds of diseases.
(“Nine” is used to indicate “all” in each case above,—this is the Tibetan language custom.)
145. Compassion drops down from the heavens,
The old grey dog looks up at heaven.
(No hope except in rebirth.)
146. A running horse's hooves mark holes in the ground;
A discharged arrow thrusts stones into the ground.
(The arrow after striking the ground pushes the stones farther down. Each action of man or beast creates its own mark or impression.)
147. The meat eaten by a person of mercy,
Has been led on the one way of compassion.
(The meat has been sanctified through Karma.)

ON FOOD.

148. Whether a man is good or evil,
He knows how to divide the horse-feed.
(Any man takes proper care of his own property).
149. He who would eat monk's food,
Must have jaws of iron.
(The food given to priests who perform services in the home is sometimes the poorest, the barley flour having grit in it and the meat being tough; but the poor priest must take what is given without complaint.)
150. The one who eats the barley,
Is the one who bears the bag.
(At least he has the best chance and should have a reward for his labor in carrying it.)
151. In the beginning eat your meal,
Afterwards cut down the fir tree.
(Eat first to have strength for the work).
152. To sustain life food must be eaten,
To say "lift the head" will come later.
153. When you have the food eat as the Chinese,
When you don't have it, sit as the Chinese.
(Eat fast and plenty as do the Chinese, and when out of food sit silently and save your strength.)
154. If one nourishes others, one's household will not have enough;
If one nourishes a wolf, the gate dog will not have enough.
155. With much garlic,
Eat little food.
(The flavor left on your breath indicates you have had something to eat.)
156. A measureful adorns the body,
(Plenty of food makes one fat and healthy.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

157. If the four skirt corners are full of grain, one has food to eat,
If the valley is full of water, one must walk around it.
(The four skirt corners are those of the cloak, and if a recipient has no sack, grain is often carried in the cloak;
Water in abundance is not liked, whereas grain in abundance is desirable.)
158. Eating of one's own meat,
Is like eating one's self.
(Meat is expensive and hard to get in large towns.)

ON FORETHOUGHT AND JUDGEMENT.

159. When snow falls, without clothing;
When famine comes, without food.
160. Before the river floods, build the embankment;
Before misfortune has arrived, obstruct it.
161. Evil brothers should not sit side by side;
Good brothers should not sit in the same boat.
(Evil brothers may fight and end the family line; also good brothers may end the family line if the boat sinks and both drown at once. Do not put all of one's eggs in the same basket.)
162. In buying many earthen pots,
An iron pot is soon squandered.
163. Build the fort on the top of a high hill;
Lay out the fields on the extensive plain.
164. Those without an illness,
Do not call a doctor.
(They might be worse off after calling one especially in view of the prevalent saying that "a first class doctor heals one at once, a second class doctor heals in three months, but a third class doctor brings you nine other ailments.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

165. It is not best to kill a cow,
It is best to get milk from her.
(Do not slaughter the goose that lays the golden egg.)
166. Whether there is brilliance or not, look down;
Whether dancing or not, look at the feet.
(Said of maidens on feast days when they wear bright aprons
and brilliantly colored boots for the men to admire.)
167. After sighting the deer, should the arrow be adorned;
On the point of one's departure, should the horse be fed.
(Adorning or feathering the arrow is the meaning in the first
line; each line admonishes one to be ready for the emergency
or task at hand.)
168. Thinking whether it will be helpful one drinks hot spring
water;
By that time it's of no use, the stomach is already sick.
(Too late with the treatment.)
169. You don't need to kill the two or three year old yak to know
his age;
You can look over the gate and know it by looking at his
head.
170. Whether strong or weak are the northern plain winds, the
sound of the "Go" bird or Lammergeyer is known;
Whether the country's distances are great or small, one must
watch one's step by the blue turquoise waters.
(The Lammergeyer is known because it kills young lambs;
and when one is beside a lake one must watch lest one fall
in and drown.)
171. Hat on the head turns the rain;
Boots on the feet turn the thorns.
172. It is possible to divide food,
But not to divide it inside one.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

173. If the mind does not measure the right amount of food,
Then the frog will think that he has the tiger's belly.
(Eyes bigger than the stomach; and wanting more than one
ought to have.)

ON FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

174. As to friends we like the old;
As to clothes we like the new.
175. If one does not listen to the voices of true friends,
It is like the turtle that lost his hold on the stick.
(A turtle once asked two ducks to carry him a long distance
on a stick which he would hold too as they flew. However,
when aloft, the turtle heard a person exclaim, "See those two
ducks carrying a piece of old leather." This displeased the
turtle who opened his mouth to declare his identity and thus
lost his hold upon the stick to fall to the ground to his death.)
176. Brothers may become as enemies,
Yet their family ties are golden.
177. If one looks to the mouth of a Kham friend,
One will come without trouble to the sea.
(Kham is the eastern part of Tibet and the Kham people are
noted as great talkers and liars; but the sea which surrounds
the earth will eventually be reached no matter what they say.)
178. The magpie goes east,
The raven goes west.
(This proverb was said to me when my Tibetan men and I
parted forever after our expedition, and I was leaving
Dartsendo in eastern Tibet in 1935. The magpie represents
prosperity and such was their thought in my discharging
them and returning to America, while the raven is a bird of
ill-omen and they were going back to their home with no job
and gloomy prospect of employment.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

179. A neighbor is one hundred times better
Than a relative a long distance off.
180. How many enemies will arise when a half-tribe makes friends
with neighbors ?
How much darkness can there be when many windows are
made in a great house ?
(Half or small tribes make friends to strengthen themselves
and in such alliances take on the enemies of their new
friendships. This fact must be considered in making a new
alliance.)
181. If an enemy comes spear points are extended;
If a friend comes the garment's flap is extended.
(The Tibetans wear long cloaks. If they have nothing else
to put on the bare bench or floor for their friends to sit on,
they will extend the long flap of their cloak over the bench.
This is a special honor.)
182. By friendship with wicked men,
A holy man is ruined.
183. If the body is clean one is like the gods,
If the heart is purified one will have friends,
If the master is clean one can get servants.
184. One can watch an enemy on the pass,
But not an enemy beside the stove.
185. In the beginning great friends,
But later great dissensions.
186. A white conch shell baby worm that was nourished on milk,
Will appease the crocodile enemy when he comes.
(Appease the enemy with a gift however small.)
187. In the daytime he is as a little enemy like the bear;
In the night-time he is a destructive enemy like the bear.
(The bear sleeps during the day but at night raids the gardens
and orchards of the people.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

188. Bad food is an enemy of the body,
Bad men are the enemies of the country.
189. Enemies on the outside are like snow,
On the inside they are like a blizzard.
190. Two ants do not accept each other's lineage.
(They touch feelers to ascertain whether friend or enemy.)

ON GLORY.

191. The king sitting on his throne has the fortune of glory.
The flower born on the lawn has the fortune of the gods.
192. You don't need to talk, your reputation is heard afar off,
You don't need to write, the drawing will follow the engraving.
(Designs or pictures are sometimes drawn on letters which show the purpose of the letter.)
193. One needs not to declare the heighth of the Desi snow peak,
all the blackheads know it;
One need not tell the depth of the lower green turquoise lake,
the yellow goose knows it.
(The Desi peak is beside the Manasarowara Lake which is the lower green lake mentioned here; both peak and lake are sacred and there is no dispute regarding their heighth and depth. Blackheads is a term designating Tibetan laymen.)
194. The great male deer feeds from the far-off mountain top.
Eggs of the goose are hidden under her body.
195. Nothing more brilliant than sun and moon,
Nothing more numerous than the stars.

ON GRATITUDE.

196. If one does not give proper gratitude to one's kind parents,
Not remembering them in times of happines and comfort,
At the point of their death there will be shameful words and wailing.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

197. The man who beats the drum at the monastery of Jang Chuh;
By the people giving him no credit has squandered his life.
(The chief priest at this monastery in eastern Tibet had helped the Chinese but received no credit for it from them.)
198. The magpie young plucking its mother's feathers,
Thinks that it is showing gratitude to her.
199. Those who understand what is gratitude,
Will give a return to that gratitude.

ON GREED AND GLUTTONY.

200. A man having wealth, and still seeking it;
Animals having grass, still go farther.
201. If the mind does not measure the right amount of food,
Then the frog will think that he has the tiger's stomach.
(Eyes bigger than the stomach.)
202. It is as hard to reach a new strict official as it is to promise to shoot a flea;
While the newly made rich desire to refine the whey until the ninth time to get richer.
(Bribery is common with officials while the new made rich do not get away immediately from their poverty-stricken ideas.)
203. Eating and eating food but never satisfied;
Water ever circling but never arriving.
204. Eating fodder like a yak,
Urinating like a calf.
(Receiving much but giving out very little.)
205. On the point of eating goat's flesh the mouth waters;
On the point of paying the bill the eye is hot.
(One is glad to eat the flesh but hates to pay the bill.)
206. Although the lord sits on a high seat,
Yet he gives but a painful of gifts.
(A rich man should give liberally and if he does not he is despised because of his stinginess and greed.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

207. If the mouth and stomach are considered first,
Then promises and debts will follow later.
208. By the side of the sea,
The thirst goblin is dry.
(This goblin is said to have a huge belly but only a pin-hole size throat so he can never get enough even though living by the side of the sea—typical of grasping, greedy men.)
209. When you have completed eating,
You are happy thinking of food.
(Never satisfied.)
210. Working like a cow that is lying down;
Eating like a Zo with a bellyful.
(The Zo is a hybrid born of a yak mating with cattle, and much larger than a cow.)
211. On those who still seek, not knowing when they have enough,
Misery will descend like the descending of rain.

ON HAPPINESS AND MISERY.

212. One who is careful to subdue his own anger,
Is one who will be happy here and hereafter.
213. No place is more comfortable than Tshawagong;
No place is more miserable than Goworong.
(Tshawagong is near Lhasa which is considered the most comfortable place in Tibet in which to live, whereas Goworong is a high-altitude place in eastern Tibet near Romi seventy-five miles southeast of Bathang.)
214. The comfortable well-off man has no leisure;
The wretched sit with their legs and arms extended.
(The former must work to keep his wealth and the latter must hold out his hands for alms.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

215. A dullard is without happiness,
Even if his parents are not poor.
(Riches and position do not compensate for dullness.)
216. If happiness comes it is like the spotted color of the magpie;
If misery comes it is like the intense blackness of the raven.
(The magpie is a bird of good omen and is variable in quality;
the raven being a bird of ill-omen is like misery which is
intense in effect.)
217. He who would have peace and comfort in all things,
To receive it, must abandon all falsehoods.
218. When the heart bears much joy,
It stores up happiness.
219. If one is not happy inside,
One's work cannot be done outside.
220. Eaters and drinkers win,
But those weeping will lose.
221. I myself am not comfortable,
However the poor are everywhere.
(Misery loves company.)
222. If one desires misery,
Let him buy an aged horse.

ON HARMONY IN LIFE AND NATURE.

223. In India are invaders and natives;
On the flask are both black and white colors.
(All kinds of people and things must live and exist together.)
224. The greenness of summer and of men are like the cedar
god-tree.
The greyness of winter and of men are like the cedar god-tree.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

225. On the mountains are the three, deer, blue sheep and antelope;
In the water are the three, fish, bull-frogs and rock otters.
226. Little birds sing in the third month,
Larger birds sing in the fourth month.
(Everything in regular, harmonious order.)
227. At midnight there is no rising of the canopied throne;
At midday the assemblage of stars are without brilliance.
(The canopied throne is the sun.)
228. The throat swallows water,
The lips blow up the fire.
(Everything to its rightful purpose.)
229. Teeth come in at eight months;
Crawling is at nine months.
(Everything must be in natural order.)
230. Does the builder construct upward,
Does the bird close its eyes upward.
231. When any birds are caged they say "Bo Bo";
When water is confined it is "Shre Shre".
(Each performs after its own fashion and as before.)
232. Eat in accordance with the times,
Dress according to the weather.
(Eat according to the supply of food, etc.)
233. The great rock is of the river,
The boundary is of the field.
(Neither cannot or should not be moved; everything must be in proper place and serve its proper purpose.)
234. A hoe digs,
A broom sweeps.
(Everything has its proper use.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

235. Fish dwell in the water,
Noon divides the dry earth.
(As to time at least in the second line.)
236. Words are calculated to enter the ear,
Food is measured for stomach capacity.
(Be moderate; all things have their proper function.)

ON HASTE.

237. If one desires to be great one must help the lowly,
If one would go quickly, one must take the longer route.
(The shorter route is likely to be infested with robbers.)
238. If you don't scare the hen, you can get eggs;
If you don't scare the cow, you can get milk.
(Take it easy among animals as well as people.)
239. If he keeps going slowly, slowly,
The donkey will arrive in Lhasa.
240. Travelling very quickly the horse and elephant are worn out,
Travelling very slowly the donkey will circle a kingdom.
(Haste makes waste.)
241. On the day for the wearing of fine clothes, the trunk strap is broken.
At the foot of the pass the horse corpse is left in the valley nook.
(The strap is broken in their haste to get at their fine clothes for the festival; the horse is worn out by rushing him too much, and he did not get over the pass which is the hardest part of the journey.)

ON HEAVEN AND HELL.

242. Beings fettered in the circle of desire,
Is the cause of earth's beings going to hell.
243. Without crime there is no fear of law;
Without sin there is no fear of Hell.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

244. Many beings go into the three spheres of Hell,
But few beings go into the heavenly fields.
(The three spheres of Hell, more strictly speaking of
Damnation, are;— beasts, tantalized ghosts and hells. These
are the three lower regions of rebirth or ways of life. The
three highest regions are those of man, Titans and the highest
—the gods or heavenly fields.)
245. If one himself does not do deeds of wickedness,
One need not fear the horned laws of the Lord of Death.
246. If one is without any soup on earth,
Of what use is a ladle in heaven.
247. If contemplation were equal with heaven,
One's longings would coincide with practises.
248. When a man bows,
Heaven forgives.
249. Death in Hell is a long distance off,
Hunger in famine is right here now.

ON HOME.

250. As is disease to the rats,
Are relatives to the home.
(Relations are like rats eating one out of house and home.)
251. When a man becomes old,
He thinks of his homeland.
252. Set up a tent in the daylight and one is warm for the day,
Set up a tent in the moonlight and one is cold for a month.
(The men quoted this proverb when we arrived late one
evening at the scheduled camping place and had to set up
camp in the dark; in the dark the tent cannot be properly
pegged and the bottom cracks stuffed with baggage to keep
out the cold.)
253. If one does not hire a night's lodging,
One can not say how thick are the fleas.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

254. When the mother and daughter tiger-leopards struggle much,
The dwelling of the mother and daughter-demons is lost.
(When people fight, bystanders are killed.)
255. Away from home no hammer to beat on the anvil,
At home at the pottery-making place are round stones.
(Easy life at home but tough out in the world. Round stones
are used to smooth out the pottery as it is made.)

ON HYPOCRISY.

256. Like fine satin on the outside,
Like barley bag on the inside.
257. Empty in the heart,
Lovely in the mouth.
258. A parish priest living in the home,
Beats the drum with the back of his heel.
(He is hired to say prayers which includes the use of various
instruments, but he also does evil while there in the bosom
of the family.)
259. A white man with a black hat.
(A good man who has done evil.)
260. One mouth,
Two tongues.
(Two-faced.)
261. If the holy customs are not in accord,
Then holy promises are without meaning.
262. If a person does not give the proper alms to the beggars;
For one to say "give alms" is like one's wish to build a
temple.
263. Outside the barley bag is silken;
Inside the bulkiness is tsamba.
If the bulk does not match the outside;
Then the silk will create wonderment.
(Tsamba is barley meal, rather parched and ground barley.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

264. If the inner soul is not deluded,
The outer deeds will not be in error.
265. If one does not have learning and pretends to know, it is evil;
If one does have learning and hides it within himself, it is bad.
(Pretended knowledge is evil and hidden knowledge is useless.)
266. The crow calls the hog black.
(Only black hogs are raised in Tibet, at least in Eastern Tibet; "the pot calls the kettle black" is our saying.)
267. After calling a dog,
One ought not to beat him.
268. When one does good to people, evil are their thoughts;
When one offers to kiss, then the other one bites.
(Evil for good; dog in the manger attitude.)
269. The old horse, at time of burden loading, thinks evil;
The old hog, when the death gruel is poured out, thinks good.
(The hog does not know that he is destined for slaughter.)

ON IMPORTANCE AND INSIGNIFICANCE.

270. Whether the quarrel be great or small,
Yet the ocean is still bright and clear.
271. Although gold lies in the earth;
Yet its light shines in the sky.
(Virtues and knowledge can not be hid.)
272. If gold is poured in the donkey's ear, he shakes it out;
If sand is poured in the donkey's ear, he shakes it out.
(Both are alike to the donkey; cast not your pearls before swine.)
273. Whether the winds be mild or strong on the northern plains,
The raven considers the quality of blackness;
Whether reaches of the valley be distant or near,
One looks to the passage of the green rushing river.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

274. In Lake Manasarowara green as a turquoise, there are a hundred kinds of water;
The glass relic shrine of the snow mountain Desi bind the mountain peak with a hundred knots.
(The above lake is a sacred one in Tibet and the mountain, which is also in western Tibet beside it, is sacred.)
275. If famine kills an elephant, its bones fill the four parts of the earth;
But when a rat dies with a full stomach, it is only a handful.
(Avoid making enemies of the rich and powerful.)
276. On the top of the mountain is deep or shallow snow, one notes the voice of the snow pheasant;
In the country whether the distance is long or short, one notes the path by the turquoise lake.
(Lakes are usually held sacred and the paths around them have been worn by pilgrims, circumambulating the lake as a work of merit; a man is rated by his customs.)

ON IMPOSSIBLE DEEDS.

277. Without wood, then tear down the house and burn it;
Without wood, and one's house in a great forest.
(The first party has no house of his own; and the second idea is inconceivable.)
278. In a country without dirt can you make a mud wall;
In a country without stones can you build a stone wall.
279. In the autumn the deer eats the frogs.
(Do not deceive as one will be detected sooner or later.)
280. The horse can not come,
To the calling bird.
281. There is no struggling with the deep green water;
There is no reaching the flaming heads of fire.
(Few Tibetans can swim and the Tibetan streams are ice-cold.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

282. If the ocean can be set on fire,
There is no water to put it out.
(No resource in a time of extremity.)
283. Can the little rabbit place his paws,
On the beautiful horns of the deer ?
284. If you beat a Chinese can he speak Tibetan ?
If you beat a snake can he show forth hands and feet ?
285. Round stones under round stones will not do.
(Evil or aged men can not work under men of lower rank.)
286. You can not split the hair of a horse's tail;
Nor can you make a handle out of an egg.
287. You can't drive a stake in the top of a hard stone,
You can't grasp a red-hot iron with the bare hand.
288. On the head of the red-grey tiger, dog's hair will grow,
On the head of the grey fox a crown of hair will spread.
(Will the great be degraded and will the mean come to greatness?)
289. If a planet seize the sun and moon who can intervene between
them ?
If water carries away the golden kingfish, who can be of help ?
(Don't try the impossible.)
290. Although you beat the water with a club,
The weight on the fish is not different.
291. Jump into the water !
Your feet are on the bank !
(This was said to a Tibetan who was threatening to commit
suicide.)
292. The blind, although without eyes, yet need to see;
The dumb, although without speech, yet need to speak.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

293. One can pull up the weeds;
But not pull up nettles.
(One can tease a humble person but dare not tease an evil one.)

ON INDUSTRY AND DILIGENCE.

294. If one loafs long during the morning,
One must rush far into the evening.
295. Lofty desire sets a golden desire up to the sky;
If there are not deeds it falls into a hole of black earth.
296. The man's own pace must be governed by himself,
But the bridle must govern the horse's pace.
297. In practising its business, the small bird breaks its leg.
In going around too much, one is bitten by a dog.
298. He who is lazy in learning may desire to be wise, but has no
hope of bearing fruit;
Through the flower which has been destroyed by the frost,
there is no hope of the tree bearing fruit.
299. If a man will practise bending the bow every day,
In a hundred days he can bend it a hundred times.
300. When the sun is hot, knead the felt cape,
When it rains, it will keep off the storm.
301. Rising early in the morning is like obtaining a horse,
Going asleep late at night is like the losing of a cow.
(The early bird gets the worm.)

ON INHERITANCE.

302. My hope is only one time;
Your hope is for a lifetime.
(When one sells to another a precious possession or inherited property.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

303. Although one's homeland is like goat's horns, it is comfortable;
Although one's father's fields may be swampland yet they
must be plowed.
304. If the son is clever he needs no inheritance;
If he is not clever he needs much inheritance.
305. The girth of an empty saddle must be tight;
And a dowerless girl must be beautiful.
306. A son takes the father's place,
The daughter takes mother's place.

ON LAW AND PUNISHMENT.

307. Whenever the axe has sharpness,
Then rotten wood has no firmness.
(Justice will cut out corruption; or anyone with power secures
what is needed or is wanted.)
308. If the words of evil are not reported,
The power of the good mind is impeded.
(Silence makes it difficult for justice to get the facts and hence
justice is impeded.)
309. The word of the Chinese is one speech.
(No way of changing their mind.)
310. Religious laws are as a silken cord; (choking one)
Political laws are a golden yoke, (a burden)
A country's laws are a rope made of straw, (frequently
change.)
311. The judge can not restrain lawbreakers,
The priest can not absolve the sinner.
(One must carry one's sins into the next rebirth.)
312. If the proper order in procedure is not known,
In effect it is like a servant without wages.
(Working to no end or with difficulty.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

313. Any foolish talk is the right of the official lawmaker,
A fool's hat is the bearskin head-band of the harvest exorcist.
(Only the high-ranking are permitted to talk freely but bizarre
clothing may be worn by the sorcerers.)
314. A cow restored whitens the theft of the cow;
A goat restored whitens the theft of a goat.
(Restitution lightens the punishment.)
315. A poor man must not lose anything by theft;
Having lost he must not seek to find the thief.
(The possibility of feuds, or running up against a more
powerful or rich enemy, may cost him more than the value
of the thing stolen.)
316. Can you get two taxes from one man ?
Can you put two saddles on one horse ?
317. If one speaks misleading words which cause
Youth not to go straight, it breaks the law.
318. Having drunk the country's water,
One should obey the country's laws.
319. On a high rock a musk deer starts a stone rolling down;
This breaks the head of a fish swimming in the river;
Both the antelope and wild goat must fix the death fine.
(Even an accidental death must be ransomed or a penalty
paid; and this is fixed by the neighbors and friends in
conference.)

ON LEARNING.

320. If one wavers in the pursuit of learning,
There is no fruitful hope of being learned.
321. A boy having gone to Lhasa has nothing to say;
A girl having gone to fetch water has much to say.
(Lhasa is considered the finest city in the world and the boy
was overwhelmed; since there was nothing more for him to see
or learn.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

322. Giving lessons to one who will not listen,
Is like the tanning a dry skin with the hands.
323. Although the monkey may be taught nine times,
Yet he can not learn to untie a knot.
(Nine is the number used to indicate "any number of times"
or "all").
324. If one has not learned a single thing within three days,
That one has received the body of an animal.
(He has received this at birth as a result of his Karma and it
is not his fault).
325. If a man knows a little, he has the endowment of one eye;
If a man knows much, he has the endowment of a hundred
eyes.
326. It is easy to do the work in a small house;
It is easy to deceive those of little mind.
327. If you do not know, act the manner of knowing;
If you have not possessions, act as if you had.
328. Illegible writing will lead to legible;
Evil reading will bring evil for the reading.
(One will practise writing until it is legible).
329. Speaking, knowing and understanding the meaning,
Is the prerogative or power of the man.
(Intelligent man thus surpasses fools and beasts).
330. Easy to tell but hard to believe the sources of precious facts;
As the round doughy balls are easy to eat but hard to digest.
331. Men by having reasoning powers,
Are distinguished from all other life.

ON MASTER AND SERVANT

332. Upstairs there is the voice of men,
Downstairs there are the tails of beasts.
(Servants often sleep with the stock on the first floor).

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

333. After the dog has gulped his slop,
Then the dog must block the doorway.
(Tibetan mastiffs are tied at the doorway entrance just near enough to make the newcomer believe that he can be seized, yet far enough that the sophisticated can slip by in the daytime; but at night the dog is tied to fully block the doorway).
334. If two girls are both wealthy they are like sisters,
If one is poor the two are like lord and servant.
335. If a servant does not know polite custom,
Then the servant's words will be like the yak's horns.
336. To the horse grain and hay are given to eat,
Into the donkey the straw-stubble is crammed.
(The master gets the good food while the servants the poor).
337. To be a modest servant is better,
Than it is to be a shameless master.
338. Master and servant possess one body odor,
Priest and religion bound in one holy promise.
339. If the master does not like the servant, having given him pay
he is sent off;
If the servant does not like the master, he must leave his
wages behind and go.
(The servant had better like his master as he loses less.)
340. The lord not knowing what to suggest,
Therefore the servant washes his hands.
(The servant does the work without consulting his master.)
341. If the servant does not accomplish what his master commands,
Although the servant has great wisdom, his usefulness is small.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

342. The master has only one hope in the servant;
The servant has a hundred hopes in the master.
(The servant leaving one master can go to another, but a master must have a servant to maintain his rank.)
343. Master gets a basket full,
The servant gets a plate full.
(Refers to the quality and amount of food each gets.)
344. The lord beats the old man,
The old man beats the dog.
(One lords it over the one lower in rank or condition.)
345. An official's servant gets his pay here;
A priest's servant gets his pay hereafter.
(Those who work for a priest get little pay as it is considered a work of merit.)
346. It's better to be the servant of a good master,
Than it is to be the sovereign of evil subjects.
347. Whatever a man does his dog does;
The dog's tail and man's hands sweep the earth.
348. The servant fills up a small dish;
The master fills a flat basket.
(Applies to going on a trip, to a picnic, etc.)
349. On the wide mountain gather the deer and the antelope;
Within the spacious sea gather the fish and the otter.
(Under the protection or wing of the master the subjects gather together.)
350. The goat sends the kid,
The kid sends its tail.
(Everyone wants to boss someone else; and each tries to pass the job on down to one of lower rank.)
351. Where one says to go, there, one must go;
What one says to eat, that, one must eat.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

352. The home priest rises with the crowing of the cock;
While his landlord sleeps until the cow rises up.
(Well-to-do homes often hire a local priest to pray all day or
read scriptures, and they are expected to do so from sunrise to
sunset.)

ON MONKS AND PRIESTS.

353. If a great priest comes into a country, he becomes the central
source of trouble;
If a great lord arrives in a country, he will stir up distress in
the kingdom.
354. The old priest while preaching religion to a person,
Does not know that the devil has come within himself.
355. When the maidens quarrel,
The tribal monks will fight.
(The monks forget their religion with its basic tenet of "life
is sacred and should not be taken.")
356. The place for hope is at the palace of Gaden;
The direction of prayers is to Tsongkhapa.
(Gaden is the one monastery where a priest who is not an
incarnation has hope of preferment to be abbot; for the head
of Gaden is chosen because of his ability and not because of
his rank, wealth or birth. Tsongkhapa living about 1355 to
1417 A.D. was the founder of the now dominant Yellow Hat
sect whose leading incarnation — the Dalai Lama, ruled
Tibet.)
357. Every land has its own speaking dialect;
Every priest has his own religious habits;
Every ruler has his own governing laws.

ON OATHS.

358. If one steals the king's riding horse;
Swearing on an oath will clear one.
(Oaths are held of great significance and importance.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

359. When a man eats man it is by oath;
When a dog eats man it is iron.
(In the first line the man is under oath to kill the man;
but in the second line the dog has no other food.)
360. If talk is not believed, later affirm on oath and it is believed;
If a thing can not be cut, put on a stone base and it can be cut.
361. Red and black are the issuing of blood from the mouth;
The four hundred diseases are the seed of illness.
(This proverb is said in anger as a sort of cursing of another person; Tibetans list four hundred diseases; the statement here is somewhat of a wishing all of them upon the other party.)
362. By the breaking of an oath a family ends;
By the drinking of poison just one person dies.
(A broken oath is the cause of blood revenge feuds when whole families are wiped out.)

ON PARENTS.

363. Not listening to father, one's wisdom is like a sea monster;
On the barren northern windy plain, one can't find an inn-keeper.
(Across northern Tibet is a barren, uninhabited plain whose average level above the sea is about 14,000 feet; and this plain is often used in proverbs to indicate desolate thought and living.)
364. If discouraged think of mother;
Disheartened—sing like the cuckoo.
(The cuckoo sings cheerfully and happily in spring although it builds no nest of its own and forces other birds to raise its offspring.)
365. If the mother scolds, the words of her mouth should be hot;
If she does not scold, then the daughter has great sorrow.
(Spare the rod and spoil the child.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

366. When one does not listen to parents, one is like **Ribdzin Tsheong Gyatsho**,
When the winds of the north blow hard, then one cannot find
an abiding place.
(The party here has an hypothetical name such as **John Doe**;
the northern plain is uninhabited and cold.)
367. A small boy is like a tree branch.
(Easy to get hurt and must be protected by the parents.)

ON PERFECTION.

368. Gold needs no further refinement,
Buttered tea no more seasoning.
369. In a country without highlands and lowlands,
There is no tallness and shortness of the grain.
(The grain is of the same height everywhere.)
370. The pattern is white like paper,
The work is like an ink drawing,
The block is like a colored seal.
(The work was correctly done.)
371. It is better to be a dog in Lhasa,
Than to be a man in any other place.
(Lhasa is considered to be the most holy and perfect place in
the world in which to live.)
372. Finer than a horse-tail hair,
Smaller than white turnip seed.
(The statements are an indication of fine quality.)
373. One who has no afflictions,
Does not show lead for silver.
(Proud of his health and position.)
374. The cedar tree is not green in summer nor grey in winter.
(Always the same; one should do one's work perfectly, and
be impartial to others.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

375. When about completed do not leave a task,
When about to sleep do not drink cold water.
(Cold water will keep one awake; and one should finish what they started to do.)
376. Writing that slants upward is defective,
(Paper is very expensive and Tibetans pride themselves on writing in a straight line, folding their paper line by line as they write.)

ON POVERTY.

377. Although the manure beetle has many relatives,
Yet when he rolls on his back, none teach him to arise.
(The poor have no friends.)
378. When relatives are poor,
Their garment's hems are dung.
379. The horse is butchered in periods of famine necessity,
The horse's saddle is burnt in times of fuel deficiency.
(The horse and his equipment are considered very important in the life of the Tibetan so he has to be very hard up when he sacrifices them. Necessity justifies anything.)
380. A poor dog can drink only water;
A poor man can just make barley balls.
(Reduction to just one food is poverty indeed.)
381. To be bitten by a toothless dog;
To be butted by a hornless yak.
(The poor and timid get abuse from all sides.)
382. Long arms,
Short sleeves.
(A person has great ambition but is poverty-stricken.)
383. It is easy to talk to a poor man;
And easy to cut down a poplar tree.
(The poplar has a soft wood which is easy to cut.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

384. To one who is poverty-stricken,
It's like having a cow die at night.
(Diseased cows which die, are eaten, and such usually die at night, when it is difficult to butcher them, because of the lack of light, as only pine torches are available.)
385. It is better to be a beggar for three years than to die.
386. The poor Chinese wear bedding garments;
I myself wore but Chinese hair shirts.
(Said Drashee who donned light garments for a short trip into China not knowing he would have to use such for bedding; when at the same time the poor Chinese were still wearing their quilted clothes in which they slept at night.)
387. Looking at a poor man one slants the eyes;
Riding a lame horse one goes up and down.
388. If a man's hunger burns like a fire,
He is not governed by the king's laws.
389. If there is discord at first,
There is famine at the end.
390. The poor are treated like a donkey,
But grain is eaten by the stallion.
(Donkeys get chaff but the stallions, which are owned only by the well-to-do, are fed the more expensive grain.)
391. The unchangeable diet is turnip soup and nettle greens;
Unvariable clothing are reddish grey wool and goatskin.
(Those who are very poor often have the above diet for the last two months of spring before the grain harvest; and they also can never afford any other clothing except as listed above.)
392. When the master is without barley flour,
Where will the donkey get barley water.
393. The cuckoo bird is unable to produce one wing;
The muley yak cow can not produce a single horn.
(The cuckoo lays its eggs in other bird's nests; this proverb is said in the fourth month when days are long and food is scarce before the harvest,—then in sight.)

394. A poor man with desire for food,
Is separated from his cow.
(He has had to kill his cow to get something to eat.)

ON QUARRELLING.

395. When the yak plows,
The ox's neck bends.
(Out of sympathy; when two men quarrel others join in.)
396. On departure quarrel not with mother,
At the point of death do not eat yak meat.
(Both are sinful.)
397. Bad men quarrel;
Bad wood has knots.
398. There is no ageing in the power of a quarrelsome man;
And no decay in the spirit of a quarrelsome woman.
399. Put news in another's hands and it gets greater;
Put food in another's hands and it gets smaller.
(Settle things quickly, especially quarrels.)
400. If you sit silent there is no foolish quarrelling;
If you thrust your hand inside your cloak, no wind is felt.
401. When quarrelling no good is spoken;
When begging there is no happiness.
402. The mouth is the door of quarrelling, easy to open but hard
to close;
The tongue is the cause of quarrelling, easy to extend but
hard to hide.
403. When three Bathang people get together,
There will be a fierce quarrel and a fight.
(The people of Kham in which Bathang is located, are noted
for their warlike characters.)

ON RANK AND PLACE.

404. When the fox is installed as the master,
He is hated by all foxes near him.
(A man is not without honor except in his own country.)
405. Who does not say "Yes Sir," has no mouth;
For the head official has great might.
(No one with sense or ability to speak will omit to be polite.)
406. A hornless yak gets the rope's end;
And a poor man gets the back door.
(The yak are staked and the hornless yak is at a disadvantage
when between two yaks with horns.)
407. The hornless yak gets butted;
The toothless dog gets bitten.
408. When travelling ride a horse;
When sitting sit on a rug.
(Assume your proper position or rank.)
409. If food is given give to respectability;
Both the food and gratitude will be returned to you.
(A return gift of equal or greater value will be given.)
410. Leaping where the tiger springs,
The grey fox will break his back.
(Only the able can occupy a king's seat, so keep your seat in
society.)
411. If one is too high in rank he is swayed like tongue flags in the
wind;
If one is too low in rank he is caught like a fish in a hook.
(The too high are purged and the too low are oppressed.)
412. When a brave man of low rank is born, he equals one man in
combat;
When a man of high rank is born he is equal to a hundred
men.
(In feud killings a man of high rank demands that either a
man of the same rank or more than one man of lower rank
must be killed to even the score.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

413. One need not ask whether the beggar has any smell;
One need not measure whether the king has the power.
414. A nobleman is as the son of gods, when he speaks, all listen,
A dog trainer is as the son of dogs, when he complains, all
groan.
415. Even if worms eat the skin of the tiger,
He still remains at the head of the nine rows.
(Said about a degraded or impoverished official who still gets
a high seat because of his former rank; the nine rows refer to
nine rows or degrees of rank.)
416. Although one's top button may be like that of the gods,
One's usages must be in accord with that of men.
(The top button is evidence of rank or distinction and even
if it is of the highest and the person is poor, one must keep up
the rank and act in accordance with common custom in regard
to that rank.)
417. If snow falls it should be on the roof-top;
If guests come they should come in at the door.
418. Whenever the headman speaks,
Those at the foot must listen.
419. If one speaks to a respectable person,
Both the words and the answer will be returned.
(Persons of higher rank are supposed to return more than what
has been given, whether it be courtesy or presents.)
420. The man who has never been a headman is hateful to his
subjects;
The servant who has never ridden a horse is angry with his
steed.
421. The rich should consort with the same kind of butter.
(Rich should marry the rich and the poor the poor; this
proverb is used when a rich man marries a beautiful poor girl;
one should associate with one's equals.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

422. When the lion is dwelling on the glacier he is a lion;
When the lion enters a city he is a wandering dog.
(One in Tibet must maintain their rank and place or they are discredited.)
423. Although mean persons attain rank, yet low usages will continue;
Although a tree grows upward, yet its leaves will continue to hang down.
424. The big white vulture eats the good tasting meat;
The kite hawk carries away the bad portions.
(The vulture is much stronger and bigger; might makes right.)
425. Dogs and thunder must have a voice;
Men and horses must have breeding;
Tea and beer must be sustaining.

ON RELIGIONS IN GENERAL.

426. Dust must not enter the pupil of the eye;
Lies must not go into holy religion.
427. When the pupil of the human eye sees something,
Within the white snowy heart is fused a devil.
(The eyes cause desire and this desire-devil changes the heart.)
428. If comfortable one thinks of religion;
If impoverished one thinks of robbery.
(Comfort among Tibetans implies sufficiency.)
429. When a great pious priest comes into a country,
All six classes of beings turn to religion.
(The six classes of beings are Gods, Titans, Men, Beasts, Tantalized Ghosts and Hell Beings.)
430. It is better to sit silent with a good heart;
Than to pretend religion with an evil heart.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

431. Circling to the left one gets to the godhouse;
Circling to the right one gets to the godhouse.
(The Black Hat Sect circles sacred structures to the left; but the Red Hat and the Yellow Hat Sects of Lamaism circle to the right; yet all arrive at the same place in the end; hence one sect is as good as another.)
432. Put not trust in flesh;
But trust religion.
433. At the fifteenth religious service so great is the crush of people;
That for one to come back alive is of greater wonder than the gods.
(On the fifteenth of the first month of the year is the great prayer dance services for the New Year period when thousands of people crowd into Lhasa and other monastic centers.)
434. Good thought is better than good religion.
(Religion here is thought of as ritualistic observances.)
435. At Dege is there the religion of war ?
In field peas is there the tastiness of beer ?
(Dege or Dorge is a noted religious center and naturally in such a place there is no war or at least there is supposed to be no war; and field peas are of no value in brewing beer.)
436. To preserve one's morals as
The yak takes care of its tail.
(The yak has a lovely bushy tail which he can hold straight upright in the air and so it is kept clean.)
437. For a hundred years of life drinking medicine;
At the point of death in one day drinking poison.
(A whole life of good works wrecked by one evil deed.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

438. The religious when speaking declare prophecies,
But what offering can come from the mouth of fools.
439. If one can not reach the topmost pinnacle;
Giving the body in alms brings great power.

ON RESOURCES AND RESOURCEFULNESS.

440. If there are walnuts,
Why seek the round stones ?
(This proverb probably comes out of the game in which children, who use round stones or preferably walnuts, cast them into a hole in the ground a few feet away; the winner taking those which failed to make the hole.)
441. Who knows how to make a little be enough;
There is no exhaustion of his resources.
442. Place a ladder to heaven;
Dig a hole down in the earth;
Or lead a big stream uphill.
(Find a means of doing things.)
443. If one is the master of one's own soul,
It is like conquering one's enemies.
444. If born entirely without accomplishments, of what use is doing deeds later;
A tree without foliage, even if it is crowned, how can it be beautiful.
445. If one's courage within is not undermined,
One need not fear the God of War's host outside.
446. If a person have confidence in himself,
Can he not attain to the chair of Gaden ?
(This position is open to any monk of ability and is not inherited because of wealth, birth or status as a living incarnation.)
447. The great heights are for the birds of heaven;
Rock fragments are hiding stones for the grouse.
(The grouse can fly only a short distance, but inhabits rocky slopes, where it finds safety.)

ON REVENGE.

448. Having quarrelled and finished fighting,
Humble the heart and seek not revenge.
(Seeking revenge leads to feuds and endless bloodshed.)
449. If one can't get revenge on an enemy,
Then let not the enemy's name be mentioned.
450. Cutting off the tail,
To make a nose rope.
(Yaks are tied with nose ropes braided from their own tail hairs, like cutting off one's nose to spite one's face.)
451. Those in the umbrella of the sun,
Are as the moth who needs no pine torch.
(The umbrella refers to the "circle of light around the sun"; evil persons feel they must seek revenge but the good do not.)
452. By much other reading one forgets the Samdo,
Having given a kiss, a bite is received back.
(The Samdo is a religious scripture or meditation which is considered most important as religious reading for ceremonies, and neglect of it as well as the bite for a kiss exemplify "Don't bite the hand that is feeding you.")
453. A nose blow on a hated enemy is much more pleasing,
Than to listen to the advice of benevolent parents.
454. If the sack of salt does not balance the sack of wool,
Insert the wool in water until they are equal.
(Get a means of evening matters in money or in quarrels with enemies.)
455. When there is a bad man on the top of the mountain,
One knows nothing, one hears nothing, and one says nothing.
(Said principally about robbers for fear of reprisal by them.)
456. If I can not return a favor,
I can return evil done to me.
(Feuds and revenge are common episodes in Tibetan thought and deeds.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

457. Giving to one a kiss,
Receiving back a bite.
458. The bird vulture kills a man;
The man vulture pays ransom.
(The man vulture or killer has to pay ransom to avoid revenge by the relatives of the killed but the bird does not.)
459. Eating lice is not as nourishing as meat,
But the cracking noise sure satisfies the soul.
(Tibetans have lice in their clothing and spend much time hunting down the creatures and then cracking them between their teeth in revenge.)

ON RULERS.

460. Wild yaks of the northern plains are unclaimed property,
The King's granary is also public property.
The King is obligated to take care of his subjects if they are hungry; and the wild yaks, as game, belong to who can take them.)
461. If water fills the land,
No flat stones are left dry.
(Said of a river when it floods down a valley and spoken of a ruler who forces the poor to work and fight for him.)
462. When a country is peaceful,
For King—a nun is enough.
(Even the most humble individual can then rule the land.)
463. From grey houses arise a peaceful people.
Governments are the foundation of trouble.
(The houses of the common people are greyish in color while houses of nobles are usually painted; houses stabilize people as they do not want them destroyed in war through feuds or trouble caused by ambitious governments or rulers.)
464. When a great official comes into a country,
The whole kingdom is put into peaceful order.
(Tribal feuds and quarrels must cease under a great ruler.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

465. When a ruler is about to lose his power, then his commands
burn hotter than fire;
When a country becomes poverty-stricken, its lawlessness
mounts higher than the sky.
466. The red-capped lamas are without religion;
The lord of unoppressed people is troubled.
(The opposing and dominant yellow-capped sect believe that
the earlier red-capped sect believers are not religious; an easy-
going ruler is not listened to by his people who have been
accustomed to stern rulers.)
467. At the crossing of a large river, the ferrymen are harsh;
At the seat of a great king, the ministers are rigorous.
(Ferrymen have a monopoly of the ferry-boat business so
they are exacting in their terms; at the king's residence the
ministers are under the close supervision of the ruler.)
468. Wash your hands and your head,
Where the water is clear.
(Go to an official if you want a thing done properly, he has
the power.)
469. Count on losing in quarrelling with the official;
Count on dying if afflicted with cholera cramps.
(The official has great power and cholera is invariably fatal.)
470. An unclean kingdom is filthier than a great swamp.
471. When a righteous king has crooked ministers,
He falls under the rule of his ministers.
472. Stamping half a seal is more potent,
Than the oral commands of the king.
473. If the hearing of the king is keen he will be ruined;
If a maid-servant's tongue is sharp she will be dismissed.
(The king willing to listen to gossip will be involved in
factional disputes.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

474. If the ruler does not know official customs,
Then the throne-rug of the ruler will be yak-norns.
475. There is no measuring up to a ruler of strength,
There is no talking back to a beggar with a mind.
476. For happiness or misery the ruler must be entreated;
For the hunger of the belly, the parents must be entreated.
477. A king's command is like a landslide down a steep slope,
That has no power except to cling to the great plain.
(The king is only powerful when he has followers to obey him;
and population is greatest on the plains.)
478. If one is clever in dwelling with meekness,
Even the tyrant will have nothing to say.
479. The good grass is eaten by the deer of the snowy heights;
The burden of evil must be carried by goats and kids.
(Any good done is claimed by the leaders or rulers but the
evil done is blamed on the rank and file.)
480. It is troublesome to be the mother of many pigs.
It is difficult to be the ruler of many tribes.

ON SEX.

481. When a little grass and weeds spring up the old donkey goes
crazy;
When hairs of the old man's cheeks turn yellow he goes
crazy with lust.
(The donkey has been on straw all winter and the old man
fears the loss of his virility.)
482. A large penis is like an inheritance for a girl;
A large vagina is like beating wheat in a famine.
(The first is pleasing to a woman but the last is hard to
satisfy.)
483. If one does not become the master of the tongue,
It will be as useful as kissing the round head.
(Kissing is not considered a pleasure except kissing upon the
lips which is done only during intimate relations.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

484. Teach not a woman to mate in the morning,
Teach not a male horse to eat while on the road.
(The woman will not want to get up and go to work, while
the horse eating along the roadside will not make the stage
or day's journey.)
485. One can curl up like a dog if one can not stretch out like a
dog;
There is yet more if one has relations with an older woman.
(One can put up with what there is and be happy.)
486. To know whether food is tasty sample it in the mouth;
To see if she is ardent measure her by the body.
(Said at the time of the weddings.)
487. Sungdromo's vagina had nine rings;
But the Hor King's penis had nine joints.
(The palm finger-joints are the method of measurement. The
wife of Gesar was Sungdromo who was held captive for twelve
years by the King of Hor—central Asian version of Helen of
Troy.)
488. The fallen priest's penis,
Will pierce through a dry skin.
(The fallen priest has great lust else he would not have
renounced his vows.)
489. The life of the snake is in the neck;
The life of the man is in the breasts.
490. The daughter of shame is bought with a price;
The son of shame is cuddled on the lap.
(Indication of the double standard in regard to sex.)
491. The junior husband does not dance from pleasure,
He does the suffering dance of burning feet.
(Under the practise of polyandry the junior husband is the
younger brother of the older who takes the wife and also
provides a living for the younger brother.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

492. If a priest of high rank fornicates he is upheld in it;
If a priest of low rank fornicates he is a reprobate.

ON SHAME.

493. If a person is without shame,
Their clothes are never exhausted.
(They will wear anything or nothing and put up with anything.)
494. If one ties his boots with yak-hair thread,
Both one's face and ones calves are ashamed.
(One uses such yak-hair thread only under the direst poverty.)
495. It is better to die having customs that are honourable,
Than to be an official who is without shame and immodest.
496. If a man lacks wisdom, on attaining high place, he is a cause of shame;
As the lion made out of wood, having no real heart, still trembles with fear.
(Such a man, not being used to handling big-jobs, is often not capable of doing so.)

ON SIN.

497. If there is no slime in the inner heart,
What is there then for one's own god to cleanse.
498. Do you make mistakes,
So did the great Gar.
(Gar a famous minister sent by his master King Songtsen Gampo about 640 A.D. to Peking to bring the Chinese Princess as a bride for the king made a mistake for which he later paid by having his eyes gouged out by the king. Enroute from Peking to Lhasa which took over two years the Chinese Princess bore him a child which however died near Tsongon about sixty miles south of Batang. The child was declared to be the offspring of a demon so a black chorden or relic shrine was erected over the remains. This relic shrine is said to exist to this day.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

499. While the mouth is repeating the name of Buddha,
The eye looking afar off seeks the snow pheasant.
500. Because a fish is without a tongue,
Killing it is unforgiveable.
(The fish has no voice to protest and so cruel advantage is taken of it.)
501. In killing a man there is no cleansing of sin;
In killing a flea there is pleasurable sin.
502. If there were no malicious people,
On whom could one practise forgiveness.
503. Covetousness together with unpleasing language,
Are manifestly allied to pride and evil speech.

ON SINCERITY.

504. Like a sack the same
Inside or outside.
(Impartial to all persons.)
505. Whosoever is kind to his enemy, without deceit doing service
from his heart,
To him thereupon will all his enemies of their ownelves fold
their hands in devotion.
(The last phrases indicate in the Tibetan words that they will
be worshipped.)
506. If one himself does not say Mani prayers,
Don't present another with a rosary.
(Mani prayers are repetitions of the famous Tibetan prayer
"Om Mani Padme Hum" or similar ones for other sects and
in repeating such prayers they use a rosary; one must be
sincere.)
507. Whoever has wealth their words are beautiful;
Without wealth even the truth is rejected.
(One listens to the words of the rich and powerful but not to
the words of the poor and insignificant.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

508. You need all your saddle equipment in riding a black horse;
You must be really fearful when you compress your lower lip.
(Demons ride black horses; your actions must be in accordance
with your words and no halfway measures will do.)
509. If water is clear,
The fish can be seen.
(We will know in time the truth or falsity of talk).

ON SKILL.

510. Who previously could not manage his own affairs;
Later can not handle the affairs of others.
511. It takes four men to go after walnuts;
It takes two men to go after peaches.
(Walnut trees being high two men must climb the trees to
knock off the nuts; each task has its own difficulty and no
more men need be sent than necessary.)
512. That made by the use of skill,
Is quite pleasing to others.
513. The unskilled workman must do it nine times.
514. If oneself is not possessed with skilled knowledge,
Of what use to try to work away from home.
515. If one would gather one's harvest,
Ask for one with the harvest smell.
516. Make a bundle which can be reached around;
Load the donkey with what he can carry.
(Bundles are tied with a rope and carried on back of man or
beast.)
517. Among the nomads of the plains there is no falling off a horse;
Among house dwellers of the valley there is no falling down
stairs.
518. If one is skilled in eating food, there is no end to eating;
If one is skilled in wearing clothes, there is no end to wearing.

ON SLEEP.

519. Dog sleeping,
There's danger.
(Let sleeping dogs lie.)
520. If the man sleeps the man is without wisdom;
If the grandson sleeps, the enemy chief sleeps;
If the watch-guard sleeps, it is a whiskey sleep;
If the stone-bat sleeps, the big rock is broken;
If the tree-trunk lies down, the underhalf rots;
If the priest goes to sleep, then religion sleeps;
If the ruler goes to sleep, then the law sleeps.
(In the second line relatives must help each other; in the fourth line the bat sleeps in the crevice.)
521. The track of one antelope cannot be traced;
The brown bear guards the door of his sleeping place.
(The antelope moves in vast herds so individual tracks are impossible to pick up; one must take care of oneself and be on guard even when sleeping.)
522. The bird's eyes are covered up.
(One does not see the good or evil when too close at hand.)
523. In the daytime if one falls asleep in the sun,
Then in the night-time one must pluck lice by the stars.
(One is kept awake at night by body insects, hence one easily falls asleep in the daytime, which leaves no time for one to get rid of the cooties and lice in the clothes either by sunning the garments or picking out the creatures from clothes or hair.)

ON STEALING.

524. More wicked is the destroyer,
Than the thief who is pilfering.
(The destroyer here means either one who destroys faith in religion or one who maliciously destroys property.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

525. If one will steal one goat,
One will steal a hundred.
526. In the light of day do not go to steal, for eyes are on the top
of the mountains;
Do not have conversation in the night-time for ears can hear
through the partitions.
(In the better homes thin board partitions are often used and
even the mud plastered partitions are of little value in obstruct-
ing sound.)
527. Let the thief be let inside,
And then lock the door outside.
(Sometimes the master of the house in admitting a traveller
to stay over night fastens the outside door not knowing he has
a thief who can easily unbar the outside door which usually
has no key lock. It is difficult to secure admittance into a
Tibetan home after dark.)
528. Life-long rug for the wolf,
Welcome scarfs for the thief.
(Nothing will change such individuals whether one lets the
wolf have the dog's rug or one greets the thief and keeps him
in the home as a guest or not.)
529. The harvests of Trangbo ripens before the big birds come;
But the robbers of Pansi are quicker than the small birds.
(These places are in south-east Tibet near Romi. Here grain
ripens in the third and fourth month (about May and June)
and before most of the other localities. The little birds eat on
it first but the Pansi robbers keep track of the harvest time.)
530. When the son of a man thinks of going out to rob,
The son has trouble making a bundle of his boots.
(The son must take off his boots to deaden the sound of his
feet; and he has had no experience as a robber.)

531. Watch out on the mountain pass;
Be careful in the valley.
(Watch day and night against thieves.)

ON SUFFERING.

532. Delusion is like a happy desire;
Deeds have accomplished only suffering.
533. The cedar leaves though thrust into fire, yet the more it
spreads its odor;
And all holy men in suffering, by this, later achieve greatness.
534. If one would desire to have true happiness,
One must only be perfect in suffering.
(Happiness is accomplished by suffering.)
535. Breaking the common jar all lose;
Breaking one's bowl oneself loses.
536. Burn the hand,
Grab the ear.
(A Tibetan custom if the hand is burnt; one with no other
way out, sells his goods in the home.)
537. On the day to pack the fine clothing,
The trunk's leather straps are broken off.
538. If one has not seen suffering,
How can one experience pleasure ?
539. The hospitals are in the hands of the sick;
Business is in the hands of the doctors.
(Things are in bad shape; this proverb was said during the
relapsing fever epidemic when a hundred persons out of four
thousand inhabitants in our valley died within one year.)
540. If a helper's knee becomes lame you also are in suffering;
But if a helper is sick in the stomach, you are in comfort.
(In the first instance you must do his work but in the second
you can eat his food, or you do not need to feed him.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

541. When having comfort, one is as the daughter of men;
When having sorrow, one must bear the burden oneself.
(Laugh and the world laughs with you; cry and you cry alone.)
542. If there is much talk there is no understanding;
If there is much beating there is no suffering.

ON TALKATIVENESS AND GOSSIP.

543. To be wise in speaking one will mind one's tongue;
To be skilled in walking one will heed one's feet.
544. Mouth talk is like the foam of water;
Deeds of the hand are like drops of gold.
545. Too much talk is rubbish;
A few words have meaning.
546. Great men are like the King of Mountains;
Small gossip touches the mouse-hare's tail.
547. Do not consider what the mouth says;
But consider what deeds have been done.
548. If you do not pour out pleasant tea, it is only muddy tea.
If you are not speech-clever, you will not be able to get it.
(Tibetan tea is often made perforce from muddy water when travelling; the salt used is often encrusted with clay from the clay-lined vats where it is evaporated; in the second line one will be unable to secure what one wants as power, wealth, women, etc.)
549. Too much gossip separates one from friends;
Too many minds lose the inheritance.
550. One's own faults as big as a large pot, are hidden beneath one's buttocks;
Another's faults, as tiny as a little bowl, are spread afar off.
(Mote in your brother's eye and beam in your own eye.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

551. Arrow to the target,
And words to the meaning.
552. Easily spoken,
Hard to understand.
553. The parrot is clever in speaking;
The lizard is clever in running.
554. Why repeat what has been said;
Why rewind the ball of thread.
555. Much talk causes little listening.
Many beatings causes no great pain.
556. When the tongue ascends,
All the parts go up.
(All talk and little else).
557. A vessel will hold water,
But no vessel will hold words.
558. Without a mouth one is dumb;
Without a tongue one stammers.
559. If rumours come into the mind they will be listened to;
If food comes into the mind then the food will be eaten.
560. Gossip is pleasant to listen to;
Short stirrups are easy for riding.
561. Without speech nothing is understood;
Without firing there is no burning.
562. Too much food is poison;
Too much talk is alloy.
563. If one speaks not, it is like a tumor in the bowels;
If one does speak, it is like a whizzing of the breezes.
(Suppressed words cause tension; expression relieves it.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

564. In speech, speak to the daughter;
In hitting, it strikes the wife.
(In gossip one's words strike others although not intended to.)
565. Pay with food are minus meat or parched barley;
The talk on the pay is thicker than one's hairs.
(Many promises but poor fulfillment.)
566. To be free from the three faults of
Too much, too little and mistake.

ON THOUGHT.

567. While the dog is thinking,
The hog gulps down the food.
568. If the thought is good, both the earth and the road will be good;
If the thought is bad, both the earth and the road will be bad.
(As a man thinketh so is he.)
569. If one thinks of a white face, one rubs on lard of the hog;
If one does not think of a white face, the flesh is wretched.
(White is a symbol of goodness; one who thinks of doing evil is more wretched than before.)
570. If we will think, we can think of everything;
If we go slowly we come to all places.
571. Better to dream of the valuable white turquoise,
Than to have received a handful of yellow gold.
(The turquoise is an emblem of good luck in all things and to dream of it is very fortunate.)
572. By the graciousness of one man a hundred men will drink beer;
By remembering one horse a hundred horses will eat hay.
(In drinking beer one sets them up for the house; and seeing one horse is being fed others remember to feed their horse.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

573. Like the fool Ambeh,
Who went to Lodam.
(He did not know the reason or the business of his going
before he went.)

ON TROUBLE.

574. Trouble is like two rabbits
Rising up from one rock-hole.
(One does not know what to do.)
575. Those of the tiger house think it is a tiger;
But to those who pursue it, it is like a fox.
(Do not cross your bridge before you get to it.)
576. Without pattern marking a chorden with charcoal;
Without a country making a place for ashes.
(A chorden is a relic pagoda and black chordens are erected
to confine demons; yet charcoal will wash off with the first rain.
Ashes imply a home, but without land one cannot stay in one
place but must wander on.)
577. "Ah" can be said by the dumb;
To say "Yah" is difficult.
(“Ah” is a question or exclamation; but “Yah” means one
will do what is requested.)
578. Precious words on emerging are easy to speak but hard to
to hear;
The round doughy meat-balls are easy to eat but hard to
digest.
579. A high airless pass wears out the stallion;
A violent river breaks up the skin boat.
580. Where one digs for a marmot,
There one roots out a badger.
(One gets more than one bargains for.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

581. If the old dog raises a racket,
Go elsewhere without explanation.
(Why create unnecessary trouble for yourself.)
582. Gall in the mouth,
Hair in the eye.
583. Fire blazes on the head,
Fire burns in the bosom.
(Trouble on all sides.)
584. The round stone is the troublesome one of the wall;
The bent stick is the bothersome one of the load.
585. The sun passes from the middle of the sky;
The plough breaks when in the middle of the field.
(Key people and key things are hard to replace quickly.)

ON VIRTUE AND TRUSTWORTHINESS.

586. Without eyesight there is no scar film;
Without teeth there is no decay worm.
(Good and evil go together; teeth are believed to decay because of a worm which gets inside the enamel.)
587. The man may think of doing good deeds;
Yet the stallion carries the saddle.
(Each doing their part.)
588. Praise is for the good;
Punish the evil.
589. If virtue is in the heart, a cat can lift an elephant;
If evil is in the heart, a partridge can destroy a fox.
590. You know by the actions whether the man is decent;
You know by the accent where is a man's fatherland.
591. Whether the man be rich or poor he must be trustworthy;
Whether the meat be large or small it must be nourishing.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

592. Rely not on mere words,
Rely on the meaning.

593. Look not on the fair flesh;
But look on the pure mind.

ON WEALTH.

594. If a crow caws,
Wealth will be found.

595. Profits pile up three times;
Losses pile up nine times.
(Hard to get ahead.)

596. No grass is produced on the high mountains;
No hair gathers on the head of the rich.

597. Whosoever lays up riches,
Produces iron in his breast.
(Wealth hardens the heart.)

598. The voice that is like a goose or dragon will possess wealth;
The voice like a bull or a monkey will have great misery.
(The voices of the first line are soothing and soft but those of
the second line are harsh.)

599. If wealthy there will be misfortune;
If poor there will be no misfortune.
(Without fortune there can be no loss of fortune; the rich
sooner or later are pretty sure to be robbed and the poor are
not likely to be robbed.)

600. On foot without a horse, sleep is pleasant.
(One does not worry about robbers stealing the horse.)

601. If the family would become rich the dog must eat grass;
If the family becomes poor the wife is as a thief.
(Grain is expensive to feed the dog; and in the second instance
the wife wastes the family substance.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

602. The deer with long horns can not become a pillar of heaven;
The hare lives in an earth-crack yet roams over the grassy plain.
(Riches and high rank are of little avail as the poor man gets along about as well as the rich.)
603. If a Chinese dwells three days in a place, the place is full of silver;
If a Tibetan dwells three days in a place, it is fouled with feces.
(The Chinese are traders and draw trade, while all the Tibetan does is to foul up the place.)
604. If we did not have debts we would be rich;
If there were no quarrels we would be fierce.
605. Making a bridge of silver.
(Useless display of extravagance.)
606. At all times eating the delicacies of feasts;
In hot and cold seasons wearing the best of clothes.

ON WEATHER.

607. If the wind of the cold north does not blow,
The sandal trees in the south do not sway.
608. When breezes strike the man,
The warmth pierces the soil.
(A comment on the weather in the twelfth month when crops are planted because then the winds begin to blow after a period of comparative stillness; this applies to the Batang valley at an altitude of 8500 feet above the sea. This is probably the reversal of the monsoon which will later bring the rains.)
609. When rain falls on the country's three upper valleys,
The rain drenches the head that has a poor turban.
(Such a head-gear offers poor protection against the cold rains in the higher upper valleys; three upper valleys implying more than one range or peak will have more rain falling on it than just one such feature.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

610. Red clouds in the morning mean rain;
Red clouds in the evening mean heat.
611. Though the wind is without wings,
Yet it fills the air with sound.
(Encouragement should be given in a discouraging task.)

ON WISDOM.

612. Honor a king in his own land;
Honor a wise man everywhere.
613. If wise sayings are not sufficient;
Then the sea-water is not enough.
(There are plenty of both.)
614. The benefits of being without wisdom is
No value to others and a harm to oneself.
615. To the wise, signs are sufficient,
To those not wise, words must be used.
616. When the wise blunder it is two arm's long;
When fools blunder it is a hand's breadth long.
(Mistakes of the wise are so much more disastrous than the blunders of the foolish, as it affects more people who have put their trust in the wisdom of the wise.)
617. If you meet many people you become wise;
If you eat too much food you need medicine.
618. Better than young men's knowledge,
Is the old men's experience.
619. When one gets to be eighty year's old wisdom has been
learned;
When there is said to be no wine, there is wine of wisdom.
620. The wise are the servant of all.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

621. Knowing just one word possessed of Wisdom,
Is like knowing a hundred common words.
622. A small man does not necessarily have little thoughts;
A small horse does not necessarily have a slow gait.
623. The wise pursue wisdom;
The dull follow in faith.
624. Of visible and invisible knowledge;
The roots of it all is absolute wisdom.
625. Rely not on perfect human knowledge,
But rely on perfect divine wisdom.
626. When a wise man utters a prophecy,
One goes to see what blows in the fool's mouth.
(No one believes the wise.)
627. In discoursing if one knows the proper words to say, he is like
a wise man;
In eating if one knows the proper amount of food, he is like a
doctor.
628. Worry destroys the Chinese;
Hope destroys the Tibetans.
629. Move wisely as does the fox;
Sit wisely as a rabbit.
(Wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove.)
630. Do not kill the stag, he only circles through the hills;
Do not kill the fish, he only swims through the water.
(They eat nothing that man needs; to kill such animals is a big
sin as they harm no one. Do not waste time on the un-
important things.)
631. Love and hatred are in the heart of fools;
Sweet and bitterness are lost in the guts.

ON WOMEN.

632. One woman is happy among a hundred men;
One man is happy among a hundred women.
633. Seek a curly-headed man but you will not get him;
But you can't give away a curly-headed woman.
(It is a superstition, the meaning of which could not be secured; but curly headed men are eagerly desired whereas women with curls are not wanted by the men.)
634. The son maintained by the father will become a tiger-man;
The daughter maintained by the mother becomes a courtesan.
635. A woman is happy with an ugly husband.
(Other women will not try to take him away from her.)
636. The middle of the day has come and breakfast has not been
eaten;
The half of a man's life is past and a wife has not been taken.
637. The clouds that have many dragon-sounds are without rain;
The maiden who talks too much will have no wedding feast.
(Dragon-sounds are thunder.)
638. If the old lady raises a racket three times;
Even her very best cronies will not respond.
639. What is said to be the most horrible thing ?
It is the lewd behaviour of the women.
640. A woman who is wise in her talk,
Will make her son an incarnation.
(An incarnation or living Buddha has unusual events in connection with their birth, which the mother can enlarge upon or concoct.)
641. A maiden not yet given is under her own power;
Having been given she is in the power of the man.
(Not yet given refers to marriage and after marriage she no longer has control of her own destiny as before marriage.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

642. If seven girls have but one earring,
On the days of going out they fuss.
(Jewelry is usually inherited and on the going out or festival days they all want to wear the jewelry; common goods cause quarrels.)
643. Does the Lord idol of Lhasa need gold,
The old woman and maiden think alike.
(So they devise schemes to secure the necessary means for the required offering to the idol.)
644. If one wants to drink whiskey, one must get drunk;
If one loves a sweetheart, one must think of her.
645. If you are not happy,
It is all your own fault.
(Said to women as a suggestion that they give intimate favors especially of a sexual nature.)
646. A handsome horse cannot climb over a pass;
And a handsome son cannot secure a wife.
(A horse when handsome is fat and does not have the wind to go over high passes; a handsome son will be chased by every woman, so women in general will not want him for a husband.)
647. A woman's mouth is more accomplished than a man's;
A woman's weaving blade is sharper than a sword.
(A man does not like to fuss or use violence with a woman.)
648. To be the wife of a Chinese is like the burning of thorns;
To be the wife of a Tibetan is like burning oak wood.
(Especially applicable to the Tibetan border where the Chinese who come out there, will take a temporary wife whom they abandon when ordered elsewhere; the Tibetans being rooted in their own land have a longer tenure of marriage.)

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

649. When in one incarnation there are two spouses,
It is two funeral processions for one corpse.
(When one spouse dies and the survivor remarries one finds
the new spouse serves the same purpose as the old one.)
650. If a woman born in the water-snake year opens her mouth;
Every time that she opens it, a husband is cramped in.
(Refers to the belief that the husbands of women born in the
unlucky water-snake year die early; one such woman, known
to the author, had lost three husbands, and was having trouble
securing a fourth mate because of this belief.)

ON WORK.

651. If we don't do hard work,
We can't get easy food.
652. Changzhuh's needle bag;
When wearing it in the sun the color fades;
Wearing it in rain the color washes out.
(Women wear such bags and Changzhun is merely a general-
ized name as John Doe; on trips these needle bags come in
handy in the repair of clothing. The proverb means one is
always dodging work at any price.)
653. The father killed the tiger,
And the son pulled off the skin.
(Father's industry makes life easier for the son.)
654. Many people just talking are an ill-omen;
Many people working with the hands are like gold.
655. If one thinks of not eating food, one's own stomach suffers;
If one thinks of not working, one's own body is debased.
656. It is better if one's work will earn one's living;
Than like a child nursing, with no earning of food.
657. When the three, old men, old dogs and old horses,
Cannot do any work, others are not pleased.

LOVE SONGS AND PROVERBS OF TIBET

658. He who drives logs down the mountain, gets a bowl of barley;
He who sits all day by the wall, gets a bowl of barley.
(The non-worker or poor worker seems to get along about as
as well as the one who works like a slave.)
659. Spit on the hands and the lance must make contact;
The heel-sole and the rock must press together.
(United we stand, divided we fall.)
660. No love for the master;
Only love for the sky.
(Food not only comes through the sky by sunshine and rain
but rain brings rest from field labor.)
661. In winter the villager finds water hard to get;
In summer the snow pheasant finds the earth hard to peck.
(Only snow and ice in winter; the snow pheasant lives among
snow in winter scratching away the snow for food as the snow
softens the earth; but after the snow is gone rain is spasmodic
and the earth is hard most of the time. Each has his own
sorrows.)
662. The young woman works all day long;
The blue sky works just one morning.
(Frost strikes when the sky is clear and blue; and the work
of a long period, or even a year on the farm, can be nullified
by one frost; in Tibet women do most of the work in the
fields.)
663. While the upper millstone turns, the lower does not;
If both should turn, the barley flour does not grind out.
664. Among all the doings of Tibetans,
Depend not on the words, depend on deeds.

ON YOUTH AND STRENGTH.

665. A young man has a desire to speak;
A young horse has a desire to run.
666. If a horse in Amdo country goes to racing,
Even on a great plain it is not exhausted.
(Amdo horses in northeastern Tibet are noted for stamina.
One can achieve what one desires if one has the strength.)
667. Try the yak-ox on Rama Pass;
Try the youth on the Nya river.
(The Rama Pass between Nyachukha or Hokeo and Letang is a triple pass with the highest tip over 15,000 feet above sea-level. The Nya or Yalung River is dangerous to cross even in a wooden ferry boat because it is swift and full of rapids and whirlpools; the yak-ox is a hybrid of ox and yak parentage and is the chief animal used in transport.)
668. The boy will not listen when told not to ride a horse;
The horse will not heed when told not to break the boy's head.
669. A real man does not live in comfort;
A goat does not dwell on level plains.
(Men should not fear hardship; goats live on steep slopes.)
670. If the youth cannot estimate,
The arrow won't strike the wild yak.
(To kill a yak with an arrow one must get close and this is dangerous for the yak will charge if only wounded.)
671. It's not a horse that can't carry the man up a pass;
He is not a man if he cannot walk down the pass.
(Said contemptuously of Chinese who ride down the passes.)
672. With much activity the little bird's leg is broken;
Wandering around too much one is bitten by a dog.
(Do not overdo a thing.)