THE COMMODIFICATION OF TIBETAN SPIRITUALITY IN
CONTEMPORARY CHINESE POPULAR MUSIC

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By

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Note on Romanization

The Romanization of Chinese names and places in this thesis uses the *Hanyu Pinyin* system, which was adopted in China in 1958. Some spelling of Tibetan names appearing in the thesis are based on the interviewees' preference of either *Pinyin* or the Roman system.
Abstract

This thesis explores how music constructs spirituality and a sense of belonging in both the physical and spiritual world for young Han Chinese in the post-Mao era. Since the 1980s, a new generation of Chinese youth has grown up in an era when the communist political ideology has been replaced by a new social reality defined by materialism, consumerism, wealth, and affluence. The crumbling of a former politicized social structure and shifting of social values has generated a quest for spirituality in the millennium. Public and private religious institutions, temples, and monasteries have emerged in large numbers throughout the country. The market demand for religious activities such as ritual, meditation, and pilgrimage, and religious paraphernalia such as ritual objects, charms, talisman, and religion-inspired music have sky-rocketed.

In this study, I focus on the music produced and consumed in the historical Tibetan region Zhongdian, also known as Shangri-la, in the northwestern mountains of Yunnan Province. Because of Zhongdian’s fictional mythical origin and the close association of Tibetan culture with Buddhism, many domestic tourists and in particular the urban youth began to visit Zhongdian as part of their spiritual journey. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Zhongdian of Yunnan Province in the summer of 2013, I focus on the music of Reshi Tsering Tan, the Shangri-la Band, the Mani Stone Band, and musical activity in the area. By analyzing music, musical activities, and the symbolic meaning of music by these Tibetan musicians, I argue that the music produced in Zhongdian and the music’s implied religiosity provides a
spiritual mooring for the urban Han youth to counteract the increasing societal craving for material life as a result of the post-Mao market reform and economic development. In the process they also rely on the symbolic spiritual world constructed by the Tibetan musicians as the basis for constructing their personal inner harmony. The collective consumption of music by Tibetan musicians in Zhongdian as spiritual practice has become the key ingredient in developing a real and perceived camaraderie and community among diverse China’s new generation.
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<tr>
<td>CCP</td>
<td>Chinese Communist Party</td>
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<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
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<td>SFMPA</td>
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<td>TAR</td>
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CD Track List


CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

(i) Purpose of Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how local Tibetan musicians in Yunnan market their music in response to young Han Chinese who are attracted to the former city of Zhongdian and its culture. Since its official renaming to “Shangri La” in 2002, its development as a tour destination has re-signified it as a mythical and spiritual Tibetan place for both outsiders and insiders. Understanding this recent cultural phenomenon will provide a complex and often ethnicized picture of the domestic cultural tourism industry in China during the recent period of intensive social and economic change. My focus will be on the marketing and reception of Tibetan traditional music, stimulated by tourism as the new economic base of Shangri La. My own positionality in examining these issues is being one of the 80s-born urban Han Chinese who comprise the majority of tourists to Shangri La. I want to study their attraction to Tibetan culture in the context of Chinese tourism in general, especially tourism to minority areas, and the part music and other arts play in representing these cultures to tourists, as well as the effects of tourism and marketing on these traditions. I will also examine the particular interest of young Chinese in Tibetan religion in the light of its historic relationships to Chinese Buddhism, and enduring elements of that Buddhism among Han Chinese even during the years of religion officially being banned in China.

The response of Tibetan musicians in Yunnan to opportunities for marketing their music to young Han Chinese tourists demonstrates a convergence of the Chinese
government’s development of minority areas and performers with the current interests and passions of the post-Mao generation. Much of this is due to their recent immersion in pop and media sources of Tibetan culture, its rituals and music. The earlier media sources, as well as Shangri La musicians, have recontextualized Tibetan Buddhist representations and performances, and these have had great appeal because of: This generation’s family pressures of being only children, as well as being suffocated by city life and their jobs; generational conflict and being misunderstood due to their generation’s rapidly changing values, in contrast with those of the previous generation; and a deep yearning for emotional and spiritual meaning, and a sharing of intimacy and love.

With increasing access to more remote areas, tourist attraction to minority areas became more focused on “tourism as pilgrimage”, to search for Buddhist wisdom, and the rapid development of a middle class with economic power to afford cars, together with the improvement of roads, provided the opportunity to make such pilgrimage journeys. Certain aspects of Tibetan Buddhism were selected and framed by a new generation of Tibetan musicians, highlighting the music itself, nature, and space in the mountains.

*(ii) Choice of Research Site*

Before I even considered locations in China for my ethnomusicology research, like others of my generation, the term “Shangri La” had associations of being something like a *shiwai taoyuan* (Chinese term for utopia 世外桃源). And like
others of my generation, I had a desire to escape the pressures of school life and other personal life stresses. Following two years of graduate study in Hawaii, I returned to China for a family visit in the summer of 2012. Many things in China had changed since I had left. My very first encounter with music describing Tibetan places was from the MP3 player in my dad’s car. My father, a musician himself, commented on the singing by a famous popular singer, Mixian （米线--not a Tibetan but of the Hani minority group). Although sung in Mandarin, the music seemed to convey a certain mysticism in describing the sacred places in the mountain ranges of northwest China, names which I recognized from the Monkey King story of my childhood.

My first visit to Shangri La was really a coincidence. A University of Hawai‘i Chinese friend and I decided to visit Yunnan province that first summer, because my fellow ethnomusicology graduate student, Jonathan Richter, had received a year’s Fulbright funding for his research in Yunnan. We decided to visit him at his research site, and although this proved impossible due to his health and other obligations, our one-day visit with him in Kunming resulted in the recommendation from him and a local friend that we visit Shangri La. Traveling by train, we stopped briefly in Lijiang, another tourist destination featuring minority culture, then continued on to Shangri La. When we first arrived in Shangri La, I expected to see a very primitive, undeveloped place, but was surprised at a very different scene. The town had been changing rapidly, and already had a wide main street with power lines on both sides. I saw a large cement dealer sign, recognizing a business from my hometown (considered the best cement factory in China).
We were fortunate to find a Tibetan-owned guest house three miles from the old town Dokar Dzong (Du Kezhong 独克宗 in Mandarin), which had just opened the year before. The family home was next door, and they also own adjacent farm land which they rent to a Han family. I was curious about the owner, Nomnom’s, sophistication and worldliness, until I learned that his background was very different from the other members of his family. Born in 1983, he went to India with his uncle at age 9 to study Buddhism and live as a monk for 14 years. At 23, he decided to leave the monastery and return to his home in Shangri La. In India, he had studied Hindi and English, which greatly helped his business success. His Tibetan name, “Nomnom,” means “youngest son”, and his family were thrilled when he returned. His first Shangri La job was as a trekking guide for a Singaporean-owned five-star hotel. Because he had been gone for many years and only recently left his life as a monk, his parents were very concerned that he was still single. In Tibetan tradition, boys usually marry around 13 or 14. When I met him, Nomnom was already 29. He jokes about his single status, and says he really wants to marry someone. When I asked him whether his parents would approve a Han girl as their daughter-in-law, he said the ethnic background didn’t matter.

The tenth anniversary celebration of the town’s name change was being held during my first visit, with staged minority dances to recorded music, followed by three days of horse races (a previous annual event). Many visitors had arrived from other areas, and the celebration was heavily guarded by military forces and regular police patrols.
Just a few days before the end of my seven-day visit, I accidentally found myself outside a Tibetan-style house in the old town with a large red sign stating that it was the Shangri La Folk Music Preservation Association (香格里拉民间音乐保护协会--SFMPA). My academic instincts told me that it was very important to check it out, and I was fortunate to meet Reshi Tsering Tan, founder of SFMPA, who told me that he had just returned from a month of field recording of Tibetan folk musicians in the Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Region in Sichuan province, north of Shangri La. I was intrigued by his personality and his great passion for traditional Tibetan folk music, which convinced me to make this place the focus of my thesis research. I bought a CD he had released in 2007, entitled Shangri La, and collected other information about SFMPA. Even though my first visit was so brief, and not focused on research, it shaped my thesis direction.

Inspired by the findings from my brief 2012 summer visit, I returned to my graduate studies, prepared an annotated bibliography on Tibetan music, and shaped a research proposal for more extensive research during the next summer holiday. Especially significant to my preparation was a research paper on the 80s generation written for a course in modern Chinese history, the substance of which forms Chapter II of this thesis. With my fieldwork proposal approved, not only did I receive partial support from the Arts & Sciences Student Research Awards and the Chung-Fong & Grace Ning Travel fund, but I also submitted a proposal to present my preliminary findings and research plans for the July, 2013 conference of the International Council on Traditional Music in Shanghai.
(iii) **Background**

During the last ten years, the western Yunnan county of Zhongdian has revitalized its economy through tourism. Ever since government officials banned commercial logging in 1998 (the previous major source of revenue for the area; over-logging caused flooding in the Yangtze river basin in 1998), the development of tourism has become the area’s main hope for recovery.

The emphasis of this tourism development has been a showcasing of Tibetan culture. (In 2001, the county had a registered Tibetan population of 38 percent, followed by Han Chinese comprising 28 percent and other minorities, including Naxi, Lisu, Yi, Bai, Miao, Hui, Pumi, and Zhuang comprising the remaining 34 percent—Kolas, 2008, 2). In competition with other tourist destinations in the area (such as Lijiang and Lugu Lake), enterpreneurs and local government have taken advantage of the region’s large population of Tibetans, their traditional buildings, and distinctive religious practices, as well as the remarkable natural environment. Also significant in attracting tourists to Tibetan culture has been a major change in the predominant attitude of Han Chinese, from an earlier initiative to “civilize” the group (especially their religion), to a current yearning for the spirituality in their culture (Baranovitch, 2003). The majority of the tourists pouring into the area (~94% in 2000, Kolas, 2008, 11) are Chinese, with tourism to this area in some ways resembling, and in other ways differing greatly from previous tourism to other minority areas.

China has become a far more secular nation since the Communist take-over in 1949, and urbanization has profoundly changed people’s living environment. The
country’s rapid economic development and the materialization of the modern urban environment have been at the cost of creating a spiritual and moral vacuum. This has increased the attraction of the younger generation of urban Chinese to the spirituality of certain minority groups, especially Tibetan, through popular music created by them.

Tibetan Buddhism has long been a factor in state policy making during China’s history, ever since the Yuan dynasty attempt to incorporate Tibet into China’s territory. Gray Tuttle’s study, *Faith and Nation: Tibetan Buddhism in the Making of Modern China*, examines the role of Tibetan Buddhism during both the Nationalist era and the Communists era, demonstrating that “the religious traditions of Tibetan Buddhists have been a potent cultural force in Asian history, with which the rulers of China have had to reckon since the rise of the Mongol empire in the thirteenth century to this day” (2005:2).

During the social transition of China to a modern society, Tuttle argues that neither the modern concepts of nationalism nor of racial unity could be simply transformed and implemented throughout society, but that religion was the “crucial link” between the dynastic empire and the modern nation-state (3). “The modern conception of Buddhism as a world religion allowed a handful of Buddhists--both Chinese and Tibetan--to join forces in an effort to remain relevant within the modern nation-state” (9). In my research of Tibetan musicians in Shangri La, as well as in the larger area of China, this concept of Tibetan Buddhism as a world religion continued to function as a social glue joining young Chinese and Tibetans Buddhists.
in keeping Tibetan Buddhism relevant as part of the national imagination since the
beginning of economic reform. Commodification processes accompanying recent
socio-economic changes has provided new incentives for the proliferation of Tibetan
Buddhism.

My interest has been to examine the increasing attraction of young Han Chinese
to the Tibetan spiritual world, and how Tibetan musicians in Shangri La are
responding to a new outlet for cultural expression, in terms of rethinking and
reframing, as well as marketing, representations of their ethnic musical identity. The
terms “authenticity” and “traditional” both become somewhat relative, depending on
whose point of view is being considered, and will be discussed briefly in the
conclusions for Chapter V. Yet commonalities are seen in the desire of the young
Han visitors to find a “heavenly place”, as Kolas discusses under “framing tourism as
pilgrimage” (2008), and the desire of the Tibetan musicians to preserve some of their
past religious traditions. This research will add to previous research on the effects
tourism has on traditional music in cultures where it is specifically marketed for
tourism. In this case, it also shows an increasing sense of commonality and
“pan-Chineseness” among the many ethnicities of young Chinese, partly fostered by
the government.

China officially recognizes 56 ethnic groups (including the Han ethnic majority
which makes up almost ninety percent of the population). The music and dance of
minority groups is increasingly featured, not only in their tourist attractions, but in
symbolic national performances. In his study of minority popular music in China,
Nimrod Baranovitch indicates that main-streaming such music began in the early 1980s. Early minority popular music, including Tibetan, was shaped by use of synthesizer--electronic instruments influenced by gangtai pop music (music from Hong Kong and Taiwan), usually using Mandarin lyrics (2003). My study will demonstrate the changes in instrumentation and language used in contemporary Tibetan pop music. Although, the special spirituality of Tibetans in their mountain environment, and their historic connections with Chinese Buddhism, produce an even greater attraction than that to other minorities, which has been increased by the appearance of Tibetan-based popular music among the young Han. It has always reinforced the image of a certain mysteriousness to the gaze of the outside world. But the ways in which contemporary Yunnan Tibetans have exploited these concepts for tourists fulfills Peter Worsely’s statement that “cultural traits are not absolutes or simply intellectual categories, but are invoked to provide identities which legitimize claims to rights. They are strategies or weapons in competitions over scarce social goods” (1981). An examination of the production and consumption of Tibetan music may shed light on further discussion of the changes in Han society, in terms of how the majority’s perception of minorities has changed over time, and what perceptions have remained. I will be examining the development of tourism in Shangri La in the context of previous efforts by the Chinese government to develop domestic tourism in minority areas, and comparing the various economic and cultural effects in Shangri La with those of two earlier projects.

In the current situation, whether for Tibetans living in China or those in exile, the
quest for Tibetan independence sets a general social and political backdrop. Gray Tuttle (2005) and Robert Barnett (2006) have both demonstrated that Tibet’s “problem” or Tibet and China’s “problems” were never a dispute between two parties but rather the subject of international political interactions shaped by the beliefs and agendas of various institutional and governmental entities. Incidents including the 2008 Tibetan uprising in Lhasa and the immolation of Tibetan monks have intensified the political relationship between Beijing and Lhasa, and ultimately motivated the government to implement more severe social restrictions on Tibetans’ daily lives. The intertwined nature of religion and politics in Tibetan society has been the result of Lamaism influence in developing the Tibetan empire. The memory of this among Tibetans continues to shape current Tibetan identity, and ways in which how they perceive and navigate themselves in the life of modern China.

(iv) Literature Review:

I have been fortunate to find extensive work on tourism at minority sites in China, both in English and Chinese. Works on tourism in other minority areas include those on the Miao in Guizhou, including Louisa Schein’s 2000 volume, Minority Rules: the Miao and the Feminine in China’s Cultural Politics; and Tim Oakes and Donald Sutton’s 2010 volume, Faiths on Display: Religion, Tourism, and the Chinese State. Studies of the Naxi in Lijiang and their music have been helpful in drawing comparisons with the later tourism development in Shangri La, and the different sorts of attractions for young Han. Most significant has been the 2000
work by UCLA ethnomusicologist Helen Rees: *Echoes of History: Naxi Music in Modern China*, both for comparing another minority group’s attraction to Han tourists, and also the Lijiang historic/religious attraction, as compared with that of Shangri La Tibetans. Although there has been considerable research on Tibetan culture, I do not know of any studies on the relationship of current popular music to the Tibetan religion. Tibetan cultural studies focus on Tibetan ethnic identity and the conflicting perspectives on nationalism from Tibetan or Chinese perspectives, the impact of modernization, and the effects of globalization on Tibetan traditions, particularly religious tradition. The most prominent is Gray Tuttle’s 2005 book, *Faith and Nation: Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, examining the Tibet/China relationships from an historic perspective. Robert Barnett’s book *Lhasa: Streets with Memories* (2006) focuses on the history of Lhasa and how social, economic, and political changes impact the city landscape. He states that “this book is an attempt to scrape off a little of the topsoil from the affective history of a City” (xii). Some of the most important research on Yunnan Tibetans and Shangri La specifically has been conducted by two notable researchers: Ashild Kolas, a Norwegian scholar, did previous work in Nepal, India, and Tibet before her 2008 landmark study *Tourism and Tibetan Culture in Transition: A Place Called Shangri La*. Ben Hillman, political scientist and anthropologist at Australian National University, has published many articles on Tibetans in Shangri La during his many years of research there. His most recent publication, “The Causes and Consequences of Rapid Urbanisation in an Ethnically Diverse Region: Case Study of a County Town in Yunnan” in *China*
Perspectives, 2013, summarizes the cumulative effects of the tourism industry in Shangri La on Tibetans.

**(v) Significance of Study**

The effects of globalization and modernization on traditional cultures, including music cultures, is a basic focus of ethnomusicological research. The specific effects of tourism on the music and dance of a minority culture, especially in nations where a government of majority ethnicity seeks to present the cultures of minorities for certain image values, are frequent topics of research in ethnomusicology. There is an interplay of political, economic, social, and cultural forces operating on minority communities in their cultural presentation, preservation, and accommodation in these instances. China provides many different examples of such communities, and Shangri La reflects not only acculturation of the minority into the majority culture, but also a long-time historic religious connection and current adaptation of the young Han majority into Tibetan values. The significance of my study will deal with all the above issues, in the fascinating, frequent, and tumultuous historical interactions between China and Tibet, and demonstrate how music in Shangri La constructs spirituality through ritual settings, language and style of lyrics, instruments, and the role of performers as mediators of spiritual and cultural experience.

**(vi) Fieldwork and Methodology**

After discovering the Tibetan music being performed in Shangri La, as well as
the music research and preservation group organized by Reshi Tsering Tan, I planned
a month-long research trip for the summer of 2013. During this period, I conducted
ethnographic interviews of musicians and audiences, as well as other Shangri La
Tibetans, attended performances, made some audio recordings, and took numerous
photos of performance occasions. I also acquired recordings previously released by
some of the groups I studied, for later transcription and translation of lyrics. My
goal was to examine some of the changes made in traditional Tibetan musical
elements (including instruments, musical textures, vocal styles, and performance
settings) in current popularized music.

(vii) Overview of Thesis

Chapter I describes some of the main issues I intend to discuss, the significance
of my research in the field of ethnomusicology and a retrospective description of my
fieldwork experience.

Chapter II examines the Post-Mao generation as a cohort—the economic, social,
and cultural elements of their childhood, youth, and education, and how these differed
from their parents’ generation, often creating great emotional pressure and frustrated
desires.

Chapter III describes the development of domestic tourism in China, beginning
with tours to scenic areas, and continuing to develop in more remote minority areas as
transportation and other infrastructure was created to attract Han Chinese to these
“exotic” areas. Tourism showcasing the Miao in Guizhou province and the Naxi in
Lijiang is described, earlier examples of minority cultures attracting Han tourists in what Louisa Schein (2001) describes as “internal orientalism.” The chapter concludes with a description of how tourism in Shangri La began, stimulated (as in Lijiang) by a natural disaster.

Chapter IV describes my specific research experiences with two prominent musicians and their audiences in Shangri La, as well as interactions with other Tibetans.

The introduction of Chapter V notes previous media exposure of young Chinese to Tibetan-source music, both through Tibetan-setting films, and through the widely known performer Sa Dingding. This is followed by my music and text analyses of music I recorded or provided to me on CDs by Reshi Tsering Tan and the Mani Stone Band, as well as a brief discussion of their opinions on “authenticity”, as compared with those of visitors and government groups.

The concluding chapter summarizes the reasons for the passionate attraction of the post-Mao generation to Shangri La and its music, and reviews the many types of childhood and youth exposure they had to some of its cultural values.
Chapter II: The Post-Mao Generation

(i) Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the background of China’s generation born in the 1980s (first post-Mao and the first single-child generation), and consider this cohort’s commonalities and dominance in influencing contemporary China’s economic and social changes. Because the basis of my research is the attraction of so many in this generation to Shangri La, due to many elements in their backgrounds, I want to look at the issues of their childhood and youth in a very detailed way. As part of this, I will be looking at their increasing affluence and consumption of music and media sources.

Dramatic changes occurred in China following the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) and US President Richard Nixon’s 1972 visit. The most significant impacts on China’s economic and social structures were brought about by the implementation of two major state policies after 1979. The “Open Door Policy” was a major economic and political change, resulting from the decision by China’s leadership that optimal economic development could only be accomplished by opening to trade agreements with other nations. At the same time, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) realized that the rapidly increasing population of China, both rural and urban, was undermining all efforts to expand modernization nationwide, and diluting efforts to raise a “quality” (highly educated and skilled) generation. To achieve population control more rapidly, the “One-Child Policy” was implemented, motivated by these economic and quality generation goals.
American scholar Vanessa Fong (2004) has done extensive research on China’s one-child policy, highlighting not only the dramatic demographic changes but the intensive psychological pressures resulting from a family’s economic concentration on a single heir. It was widely hoped that the single child policy would bring first the family and then the country into first-world status. Chinese values began to shift from the traditional Confucian filial piety to a new family dynamic, centered around the single child, resulting in a unique post-Mao generational identity and a completely new sense of Chineseness. Although developing very individual personalities through their varying family backgrounds and gender differences, this generation has completely recontextualized Chinese cultural, social, and political identity.

Although my research focuses on a specific aspect of this generation’s mature lives, I will briefly discuss their childhoods and evolving values, from previous studies and from my own experience.

(ii) Defining the Post-Mao Generation

My research interest in this generation strongly relates to my being a part of it. The term *baling hou* （80s generation 八零后）first appeared in 2004, conceived by a famous Chinese writer, Gong Xiaobing 龚小兵 (1982-), to describe the first generation born in the decade following the introduction of the One-Child Policy in 1979. Although Gong’s original purpose was literary--to mark writers born after 1980--the introduction of the term generated a new social focus on the group as they began entering China’s workforce.
The term was appropriated by social scientists, reinforced through the media, and began to appear in academic writing. It accompanied an increased interest in dazhong wenhua (popular culture 大众文化), as a result of rapid technological development. A 2013 poem “Youth Mobilized” by Zhang Mian 张冕 (1986- ) captures the generation’s deep desires and determination to change, suggesting that their past has been both bitter and sweet; with their unforgettable youth over, they will work harder, and move forward, as it is their turn to bring China new hope. The poet dedicates the poem to all the 80s generation in their effort to become “established by thirty.”

(iii) A Post-Mao Childhood: Danwei 单位 and Yuanzi 院子

The danwei (smallest socioeconomic work unit), which originated during World War II, was a self-reliant economic group designed to solve economic problems during the Japanese occupation, when more extensive economic and trade activities were limited and the local economy had to support the army. After the CCP took over China, party socioeconomic and political control over the multifunctional danwei system became the main determiner of people’s life experiences. Lü Xiaobo and Elizabeth J. Perry 1997 study (mentioned in the Chapter I), describes the varied functions of the danwei. The authors noted that the system constrained personal freedom in every aspect of social and economic activities (including employment, housing and even marriage). Most of the urban 80s generation grew up and lived with their parents in danwei-provided housing, although the system had declined by the
time some of the younger members of the generation were born.

Not only were danwei established for production, the party also established “Song and Dance Groups” danwei, often (but not always) associated with the military. As will be seen in this thesis, such a group was not only the occupation of my parents and the setting of my childhood, but the support for many minority performers (see Chapter Three section on the Miao singer, Song Zuying), and an element in the Party’s public performances promoting the unity of the country’s ethnic groups.

An important part of danwei life for the children was the yuanzi (courtyard), an open space within the compound shared by all danwei families. Most often it was used by the children of the compound as their private playground, as well as the common “backyard”. This relatively “public” space of the danwei contrasted with the individual family’s living quarters, and differed radically from the school space where children spent the majority of their time. Children’s life experiences were therefore formed in three major settings: the private family living quarters in the danwei, the yuanzi, and the school. In the yuanzi, children had a freedom and sense of self that they had nowhere else, creating strong memories not shared with their parents or other elders. Even there, however, they were subject to their parents’ supervision, and when called, they had to go inside. The feelings about the yuanzi expressed by an 80s friend of mine is typical of that generation’s memories:

My mom used to make me practice piano all the time when I was not in school. I really tried to concentrate, but hearing so much shouting and laughter coming from the yuanzi made me feel sad and trapped in the endless practicing. (Zhang Dian, age 29, personal communication, 2007)
It was mostly younger children who played in the yuanzi—when they reached junior high age, school hours were much longer and their homework increased, leaving little time for play. And as the danwei system began disintegrating, the fond memories of this childhood freedom were replaced by a new social/working space shaped by privatization and commercialization.

(iv) Contrast of Schooling Style with Parents’ Generation

The Chinese education system, like the American, consists of six years of elementary school, three years of middle (junior high) school, and three years of senior high school. However, only those who could pass the high school entrance exam and whose parents could afford the cost of textbooks, supplies, and registration fees could attend high school. The government considered at least nine years of education for everyone essential for developing modern production, as well as the sign of a progressive civilization\(^5\). Although parents made education a high priority, rural and urban areas differed greatly in resources (some rural students, however, did well in the exams in spite meager resources). No matter the location or type of school, the final goal was a quality education as measured by the college entrance exam ( gaokao 高考). Until very recently, doing well on this examination was the only way to access a college education\(^6\).

High school study and preparation for the gaokao marked a huge generational difference for the 80s children. Their parents had no opportunity to study or to take
the gaokao (it was banned in 1966), due to the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Most of them were already in the work force, or had to drop out of school at a very early age. Regretting their lost opportunities, many projected their frustrated ambitions onto the lives of their children, causing them great stress, as educational investment became the most important family expense. Children also realized that enjoyment of newly available material things depended on their high academic achievement.

From the time of a child’s birth, the family was planning on his/her college entrance exams. When the entrance exams were banned, all of China’s academic activities were paralyzed, resulting in serious damage to the culture and moral values. Long after their reinstatement in 1977, scholars have noted problems in the examination system including regional discrimination (see Zhou 2005) and corruption (see Xing 2004); other researchers focused on the psychological pressures resulting in physical symptoms (see Fong 2004). Cockain (2012: 107) describes the bitterness that young Chinese students felt about school and life under the system, feeling subject to both the family and the state. My personal experience, however, reflects also the nostalgia we students felt in remembering our companionship with fellow sufferers (all preparing for gaokao), and our pleasure in being reunited with them (which Cockain also observes).

To me, the gaokao-focused school life seemed to be organized like a student version of the danwei work unit, although I did not observe this noted in any previous research: (1) The gaokao was the final production goal for all students’ work.
Students were assigned to homerooms, with the teachers rather than the students moving from one classroom to another, as in the *danwei*, where workers had very limited mobility in the workplace. (2) The schools provided breakfast for the students as well as health examinations and mandatory physical exercise, similar to parallel benefits in the *danwei*. (3) The school created and held all the student’s personal and academic records (dossier), similar to the *danwei*. (4) The political function of the school was reinforced by children’s political organizations such as the Little Red Pioneers and the Communist Youth League. (5) The teachers and school had supreme power over students’ personal lives, eliminating most activities except study. These are parallel to the workers relationship to their *danwei*, both in benefits and control.

Jia Wei (2011) has noted that the limitation of individual freedom imposed in every aspect and at every stage of the 80s generation’s lives—by their families, schools and for their nation’s needs and ambitions of having a “first world” generation—formed an invisible concrete wall just waiting to be transcended. And the simultaneous rapid development of consumerism accompanied by China’s increasing globalization created an interface for this breakthrough. Students dreamed of their post-*gaokao* life, free of pressures. They looked forward to the freedom of a college campus and dormitory life, new friends to interact with, and more financial freedom for discretionary spending. An American teacher at a Chinese university termed these optimistic visions “going to Disneyland” (personal communication, Anthony Gonzales, 2008). In this sense, college seemed like a
dreamland fulfilling all fantasies and desires.

Both teachers and parents worried about the increasing influence of popular culture from Taiwan and Hong Kong. Popular movies and TV dramas were easily limited by parents because the television was usually in the parents’ bedroom. Popular music, however, was more personally accessible and harder to detect, because of the invention of the Walkman and CD players, and later the MP3. Watching TV and listening to a Walkman, were extremely attractive entertainment for 80s adolescents. (While the so-called “television generation” in the United States started in the 1960s, television only began to be popularized in China in the 80s. In that decade, having a TV was so important that it was said when many couples married, the bride’s dowry was a TV.) In his 2011 work *Memories of the 80s Generation*, Yang Liu states that:

Television was not only for watching dramas. *Gangtai* pop music began to be played on TV from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, and *gangtai* singers became popular. Not only could they sing and dance, they were all good looking with fashionable clothing, and their songs were mostly about love. How could we not be moved by that? After the inconvenient experience of waiting for dramas, music, or gala shows, and less freedom for [our] “chasing stars,” we finally reached the era of the Walkman. A little machine (now it may look pretty big), with which we could walk anywhere to music being played . . . but first we had to have money to buy cassettes (81)

**(v) Religion in Post-Mao China**

Although it is popularly believed outside China that all religions were suppressed after 1949 (many citing the Marx statement that religion was the “opiate” of the people.) But works such as Fenggang Yang’s *Religion in China: Survival and Revival Under Communist Rule* (2011) provide details contesting this assumption.
Part of the misunderstanding results from the effort to classify “religion” and its role in society in the same way as it is done in the West. Especially enlightening in this matter is *The Religious Question in Modern China*, a 2007 work by Vincent Goossaert, a history professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and David A. Palmer, an anthropologist at the University of Hong Kong. These two approach the topic as far more complex than often realized, with no clearcut distinction between “religious” and “secular”. Particularly important in their work, and also examined by Nancy Chen in her study “Embodying Qi and Masculinities in Post Mao China” (in the 2002 Susan Brownell and Wasserstrom volume), is the topic of *qigong*, a practice which an became immensely popular form of exercise and healing in urban China in the 1980s and early 90s.

More immediately memorable to those who grew up in the 1980s and 90s was the popularity of TV dramas about the Monkey King. *Xi You Ji (Journey to the West)*, a 16th century tale was written by Wu Cheng’en (1500-1582) during the Ming Dynasty and is based on the true story of Buddhist monk Xuan Zang’s pilgrimage to India to obtain sacred texts (*sutra*). It was considered one of the four greatest classical novels of Chinese literature (and also widely known in the West as “Monkey,” translated in 1942 by Arthur Waley). The fictional character of the Monkey King, born from a stone, acquires supernatural power through Daoist practice, qualifying him to accompany the monk Xuan Zang on his pilgrimage, which Chinese perceived to be a journey towards enlightenment for individuals. The first TV drama was released in 1986, with additional episodes released between 1998 and 1999. Its high ratings (89.4 percent viewership) and thousands of rebroadcasts suggest that
almost anyone living at that time has seen it. Not only did it feature various magnificent natural landscapes of inner Mongolia, Sichuan, Guizhou and Xinjiang, the 80s generation loved it because the comical Monkey King Sun Wukong, used his superpowers to protect Xuan Zang from various demons and monsters. Children also identified with his often being misunderstood and treated unjustly by Xuan Zang, and watching *Journey to the West* has become part of the cultural memory of the 80 hou.8

**(vi) Decline of the Danwei System in the Late 1990s: Economic Challenges**

When the State privatized the *danwei* in the late 1990s, many families were affected; many *danwei* could not offer enough positions for all their former employees, resulting in mass lay-offs of parents who had spent their lives working for the *danwei*. For the most part, they were not highly educated, as noted above. Such abrupt changes created enormous financial and psychological pressures within the families. Even those not directly affected, whose work units were still profitable worried, that they might be closed down.

The parents of one of my classmates were laid off from their factory jobs, and could hardly survive. They had both worked for a steel factory, the largest government-owned *danwei*, which even owned schools, a hospital, and recreational facilities. When privatizing began, the steel factory began to offer retirement packages to the unneeded workers. Their options were to receive a lump sum payout, with no further responsibility on the part of the *danwei*, or receive a lifelong very
small salary, increasing when the retirement age of sixty was reached. My father had a similar experience, when during my second year of high school the Song and Dance Troupe danwei he worked for asked him to retire, what they termed neitui (informal retirement for people under sixty 内退). If he had not been able to teach private music students, my family could not have survived on his 680 RMB monthly pension (equivalent to less than 100 dollars today). But privatization not only eroded the old economic organization; for some such as my father, it ironically created a new source of income. He earned five or six times more through teaching.

Lü Xiaobo and Elizabeth J. Perry noted that by 1997, the government was concentrating on “accounting and systematic registration of work unit assets”(10). The authors agreed that if the project had succeeded, it would be “the first time in PRC history that a legally defined distinction between state and danwei assets [ownership of anything that is belongs to individual or family] in a public unit had been enforced” (10). This was important to most workers and their families because the majority of danwei adopted the strategy of selling the danwei-owned apartments to their current employees at a very affordable cost. So the parents of teenagers born in the 80s were able to maintain their homes, providing a small safety net and enabling them to use any other savings for college costs. However, they could not afford all the imported luxuries such as Coca Cola, KFC, McDonald’s, and increasingly high-tech electronic devices, starting with the “walkman” and cassette tapes, followed by color TV, CDs, MP3 players, etc.
Adulthood is Not a Fairy Tale

For most of the 80s generation whose parents had no experience of college, the image of college as Disneyland kept both children and parents motivated. However, there was a major letdown when students actually graduated and began to seek work. Gao Jianhua, the author of Yong Xingshang de Yanguang Kandai 80-hou (Treat the 80s Generation with Appreciation—2011) summarizes the anxieties this group had in adulthood: “They are the drifter generation; they are the generation who find their lives without meaning; they are the resentful generation; they are the open-minded generation; they are the self-inquiring generation; they are the selfish generation; they are the self-centered generation.” Gao writes a short chapter for each characteristic. The criteria he suggests for defining the 80s generation (although not all must be met) reflect the collision of the social reality of their adult experiences with their idealized expected life. This had been suggested by Fong (2004), as she predicted that many of the Chinese singletons would end up over-qualified for their jobs. Gao’s 2011 book looks backwards from current problems. One outcome stands out over all the others—China’s hope to become a strong political and economic nation has been achieved at the expense of a “misled” and “misunderstood” 80s generation. Much of the criticism of this group was from the perspective of the previous generation, and could be evaluated by the labels applied to them: ‘Little Emperor’ 小皇帝, spoiled 宠坏了, spendthrift (月光族), and wasteful of family resources (啃老族)⁹.

With so much expectation from society, Gao notes that a very small percent were successful. Of the approximately five million young Chinese who graduated
from college each year, only around 1.2 million could be considered successful, suggesting that only this group contributed to making the country a better nation, and implying that the other seventy-five percent did not contribute much. However, the following poem shows the very different way in which the baling hou see themselves:

“The Pitiful 80s”: The Most Sacrificing Generation

When we were studying in elementary school, going to college was free
When we were studying in college, going to elementary school was free
When we were too young to work, jobs were allocated [through danwei system]
When we were old enough to work, finding a job was like fighting a war, and we could barely feed ourselves

When we were too young to make money, housing was allocated
When we were old enough to make money, we could not afford to buy one (apartment)
When we finally had some money to invest in the stock market, idiots were making money
When we finally had money to invest, we realized that we were the idiots.

Of the group considered most successful, the most common occupations are represented in the chart below (from the same source as the poem above) 38% are employed in sports and 29% as writers. 17% are employed in the entertainment field (including the film and music industries.) Interestingly, the majority of these “most successful” are engaged with the cultural aspects of social production, specifically in “popular culture”. These new areas of production resulted from the rapid expansion of popular culture and marketing of its products. (It can be noted that none of the most successful are engaged in politics)
Figure 1: The most common and successful career occupations for the post-Mao generation.

Interest in consumerism and popular culture represent the generation’s main sociocultural characteristics. As many more young Chinese, not exclusively Han, became not only performers, but producers of popular cultural products, this generation best represents the contemporary Chinese identity.

(viii) The Development of Consumerism in the 80s Generation: Music as Dazhong Wenhua (Vernacular Culture) 大众文化

Since the 1980s, popular music in China, especially gangtai music (music from Hong Kong and Taiwan), has spread widely, resulting from China’s increased openness to outside influences. (Foreign-influenced Chinese popular music, however, dates from the Republic of China era when jazz was first played in the foreign settlements of Shanghai, Jones, 2001). Following Japan’s loss of World War II and the KMT exile to Taiwan, China’s popular culture was brought to Taiwan along with the republican Chinese troops, and later returned to Mainland China. Mark Moskowitz
noted in his 2010 book *Cries of Joy, Song of Sorrow* that Taiwan’s mandopop represented 80 percent of Chinese-language music sales. This may have changed by now, but it reflects the development of consumerism in the 80s generation in spite of the strong social pressures on them throughout childhood to resist distractions (including mandopop) that might interfere with their becoming economically successful. But this did not prevent their learning and imitating this imported pop culture. The evolution of modern playing and recording devices made this much more convenient.

(ix) Media Evolution: Changes in Music Consumption and Transmission

The graph in the previous section showed that the 80s generation have been more successful in popular culture production (entertainment, sports, music, etc.) than in other areas. They have been major consumers themselves, and have observed the evolution of media representing a major new business opportunity with the possibility of huge profits. Recording technology progressed from cassette tapes to today’s MP3 players; imported Japanese manga, previously in magazines, is now online. New television transmission technology brought not only inexpensive entertainment to this generation, but many employment opportunities. China’s first reality show was an annual singing competition, The China National Young Singer’s Competition, hosted by CCTV (Central China Television) beginning in 2000. In 2005, the Super Girl Competition was hosted by Hunan Satellite Television company, and the most recent reality shows include China’s Got Talent (2011) and China’s Voices (2012). The majority of the participants have been 80s generation performers. Their creative
imaginations and expression of their desires are simultaneously reflected in their memories of the past.

*(x) Desire for Emotional Expression in Music and Romantic Love*

In spite of the dramatic political liberalization of PRC and Taiwan, their economic growth, and the expanded freedom that youth enjoyed, there seemed also to be increasing loneliness among these youth. Emotions such as loneliness, sorrow, and heartbreak have always been difficult to express in Chinese and Taiwanese cultures, which idealize stoic endurance and emphasize indirectness in order to maintain social harmony.

Moskowitz (2010) notes that economic growth has not changed the fact that loneliness and sorrow are still difficult to express in Chinese culture. But this is probably due not to Chinese indifference to human emotions, but rather the lack of efficient means for expressing them. For the 80s generation, listening to *gangtai* pop music was a means of maintaining inner balance as they experienced the stresses of adolescence. Idol worship (偶像崇拜) of a particular Taiwanese popular music star was described by an 80s generation member as “a natural phenomenon” (自然而然就发生了) 12.

Sex education and romantic love were never discussed by Chinese parents, creating a major generational disconnect. The concept of “romantic love” was never fully expressed or articulated in parents’ private lives (the only music they had heard was about revolution and love for Chairmen Mao, which filled them with bitterness
under the socialist regime.) With such differences between parents and children, as well as the lack of intimacy available in society, Chinese popular music provided a significant outlet for people to express their bitterness, as well as to vent their desires for romantic love and intimacy.

(xi) Summary

Over the past three decades, China’s socioeconomic and political changes have been imprinted on the baling hou generation. They were born with a designated future, to modernize China, and were China’s first single children. Though the rapid economic development enriched their material world and created a more enjoyable external environment, their psychological and emotional development have been neglected for economic success. Parents could see the image of themselves in their children and attempted to compensate for their deprivation by sending their children to college. The government seemed to be indifferent to any other aims but those of technology for modernization. Parental and government interest intersected on the issue of children’s school success and their performance on the gaokao. The significance of the gaokao, ever since its 1977 reinstatement, has surpassed its literal meaning of college entrance exam, and conquering it has represented a social utopia, a magic land. The life of a Chinese adult, however, is not a fairy tale; it is full of questions and anxieties. Economic development and the free market have generated new production activities foregrounded in mass culture, popular media and the fashion world. The chart I created from Baike Wikipedia statistics shows that that the 80s
generation are more likely to achieve high social and economic status in the cultural production domain, demonstrating that the *baling hou* are not only a consumer culture but also a production culture. Louisa Schein suggests that consumerism is a cultural production which relies on consumers’ desires (2000). The expansion of the entertainment world has mainly focused on love, romance, family intimacy and individual anxieties related to these emotional needs. The kind of country China will become in thirty years will be the kind of China the 80s generation wants it to be.
Chapter III: Government Development of Tourism and its Marketing

A. Introduction and Background

In this chapter I examine the government’s development of domestic tourism in China’s minority areas. Starting with the early tourism development in ethnic Miao areas of Guizhou, I then look at tourism featuring the Naxi people of Lijiang, one of the early popular destinations in Yunnan province, as background for my personal research of tourism in Zhongdian. I will describe some of the musical and religious aspects featured among each group, as well as the growth and decline of tourism among these peoples, for the purpose of comparison with my observations of tourism development in Shangri La, which will conclude the chapter.

(i) Beginnings of Domestic Tourism

The earliest types of China’s domestic tours were for sightseeing, to view the diverse physical landscapes and rural scenes. Before the improvement of transportation, short regional tours were organized for danwei tour groups, with special accommodations for them in the most popular destinations. With higher middle class income and increase in consumer spending, Chinese began to travel in rapidly increasing numbers, as soon as the infrastructure was developed to support this expanded travel. As access to more remote regions improved, attraction to minority areas, not only for scenery but to observe the exotic customs of these rural peoples, became increasingly important.
(ii) Early Classification of Minorities

The early 1950’s CCP classification of Chinese minorities has provided the foundation for tourism development during the post-Mao era--a basis for featuring diverse cultures--and it has become especially useful when a local government seeks to market its culture to tourists for local economic development. Chinese ethnic minorities were called *nanyi*--southern barbarians-- during the Qing dynasty, even before the Red Army first arrived at these interior lands. Average Chinese continued to use this term, implying cultural stereotypes and certain geographic landscapes associated with the cultures there. The PRC Constitution and laws guarantee equal rights for all ethnic groups in China, and help promote economic and cultural development among ethnic minority groups. One notable preferential treatment they enjoy is exemption from the One-Child Policy. Some groups live in what are called “ethnic autonomous areas,” in which minorities are guaranteed the freedom to use and develop their ethnic languages and to maintain their own cultural and social customs.

Timothy Oakes (1997) comments on the ethnic identification project (*minzu* shibie) that “this turn to the non-Han periphery was institutionalized and rendered scientific”(44), and minority areas were declared to be an inseparable part of the PRC. Policies toward minorities and the areas where they lived were primarily determined by a desire to establish Chinese national unity and the ultimate goal of socialism. He suggests that “more than anything, *minzu* groups were defined according to cultural distance from the Han” (46). How radically this attitude changed with the development of tourism in the Miao areas can be seen in the remainder of this chapter.
Rees (2000) provides considerable detail on the ethnic classification project (*minzu shibie*), which she considers the “cornerstone of the Communist government’s minorities policy,” and notes that although government statistics present clear-cut categories, “ethnic classification has often been a contentious business. . . with real political, economic, and social ramifications for the parties involved.” She sees China’s basis for the understanding of “nationality” (*minzu*) as Stalin’s definition of nation as a “historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture,” and further states that this definition coincided with acceptance of “a linear theory of social evolution based on the writings of Morgan and Engels in which “humans progress from primitivism through slave, feudal, and capitalist stages, to the pinnacle of socialism; at the same time, their family structures progress from promiscuity to group marriage and matriliney, and eventually to patriliney and monogamy, the marriage arrangement endorsed by the socialist state”(17). Increasing efforts were implemented to educate minority children to adopt Han values and to learn Mandarin, preparing them for leadership in their minority communities and loyalty to the central government, with at best a paternalistic toward their development.

Part of the CCP’s classification of minorities included expanded research in regional folk songs, previously considered inferior, to play a role in developing the party’s unity in diversity ideology. Following the Cultural Revolution, the government saw folk music as an important means of gaining support for its political legitimacy and justification for its being the true representative of the Chinese people.
Although there had been earlier government interest in regional folk music, there was now an expansion of the collection and standardization of folk music throughout China, fostered in government-established conservatories and support of music researchers and performers. Indigenous lyrics were usually “Mandarinized,” (written in standard Han Mandarin words) and were often modified to reflect the party's ideology and its desired public image, realizing how effective performances could be in unifying the multi-ethnic nation. Although today’s regional-origin songs usually retain indigenous melody or form, they are arranged in modern style, with instrumentation often including electronic sources. The performers are formally trained in music and bel canto singing style, and songs are mostly disseminated through national television broadcasts, large regional government-sponsored events, and school celebrations during national holidays.

Much of China’s general public as well as the government have considered most minorities to be primitive and backward, as well as culturally inferior to the Han. With the government portraying itself as the benefactor of minorities, those less willing to assimilate (with government help) are portrayed as masculine, violent, and unreasonable —including Tibetans, Uyghurs, and the Mongols (Hillman, 2006). Those more willing to accept the help of the government and assimilate are often portrayed as feminine and sexual, including the Miao, Tujia, and the Dai (Gladney, 1994.) Ethnic women have often been seen as sexually desirable by Han males, and therefore were often featured in ethnic cultural representation, which Louisa Schein termed “internal orientalism” (101).
Between 1949 and 1976, not only had China been closed off to most foreigners, but domestic tourism hardly existed. To Chairman Mao, leisure travel was considered a capitalistic activity and was therefore forbidden under Marxian principles. However, shortly after his death, Deng Xiaoping saw the economic potential in tourism and began to promote it intensely. During the 1990s, the central government issued new policies encouraging Chinese citizens to explore their own country, as a means of stimulating consumption. As many Han acquired enough money to travel, one of their favorite travel experiences was visiting the home regions of minority peoples to see their exotic rituals.

Although the processes of implementing socialism had sought to decrease ethnic distinctions, the reform brought new interest in distinctive cultural features, with the state now wishing to maintain these distinctive features. Very specific cultural markers of minzu groups were “standardized and circulated in China’s burgeoning industry of cultural commodity production . . . a selective preservation and discarding of local culture has been the pervasive approach to promoting cultural diversity and multi-ethnic unity in China” (see Schein: 48). In addition, distinctive architecture was featured in tourist theme parks, and other cultural markers featured in TV, film, and other media.

Responding to this interest, many minority entrepreneurs, despite themselves perhaps never having grown up practicing the dances, rituals, or songs, themselves, began to cater to these tourists by performing acts similar to what had been shown on the media. This caused a sort of homogenization of previously diverse members of a
single designated ethnic group, as they began to have more in common with their fellow co-ethnics, adopting similar self conceptions in response to the economic demand of consumers for their performances, in what Schein terms “staging authenticity”\textsuperscript{13}.

\textit{(iii) The Miao in Guizhou}

Timothy Oakes’ 1995 study of tourism in Guizhou examines the legacy of what he terms “internal colonialism,” exploring the role of tourism as a development and modernization strategy. He notes that Guizhou province had long been stigmatized as one of China’s most backward and impoverished regions, and was avoided by Chinese settlers due to the high incidence of malaria and the “hostile rebellious natives”. During the Mao period, the Miao areas were regarded as areas of abject poverty and lawlessness—but in the Great Leap Forward, they became a center for extraction of vast coal and iron reserves to fuel the rapid industrial development. This caused the people to decrease their agricultural productivity, becoming more dependent on outside financing, which led to economic and political chaos. With the increasing in-migration and the economy now based on resource extraction, there was repressive administrative rule and taxation.

In the 1990s, it was hoped that tourism might attract investment and transform local thinking from subsistence to commercial activity. But the previous exploitative development and continuing representations of local culture as remote, wild, and primitive remained the most enticing images. Tourism was then promoted as part of the broader effort to commercialize the rural economy in the province, although Oakes
notes the “lingering political economy of internal colonialism” being reinforced by tourism development, and illustrates this in two ways: 1) Tourism encouraged the geographical concentration of its income in urban centers—almost entirely state-owned; while locally-initiated commercialism, especially in rural areas, remained undeveloped, due to the powerful urban bureaucratic control of tourism planning, investment, and development. This simply perpetuated the urban-rural gap. 2) Particular images and experiences of places were constructed and sold to the tourists—informed by dominant representations inherited from the regions’ internal colonial and frontier histories. These suggested a remote, backward, culturally exotic, even erotic place. He suggests that this “false modernity” based on materialism was “a tense and paradoxical process through which people produce, confront, and negotiate a particular kind of socio-economic change” (7), and suggests that how these efforts were accommodated or resisted by the locals would condition the benefit they received from tourism development.

Louise Schein uses the term “internal orientalism” in her studies of tourism in the Miao areas, noting the fascination of more cosmopolitan Chinese with “exotic” minority cultures in “an array of polychromatic and titillating forms...in which minorities were most commonly represented by rural women, particularly emphasizing the exoticization of Miao women.” A good example of this was Song Zuying, a prominent post-Mao period minge (folk song) performer.

In spite of Rees’ criticism of government stereotyping of all ethnic minorities as being fervent “song and dance participants”14, the featuring of Song, an
ethnic Miao woman, in significant national events is important for illustrating more subtle reasons for government support of minority musics. Song became nationally famous performing for the 1990 Chinese New Year Gala, a government produced national TV program. Her performance of “Xiao Beilou” (Little Back Basket) made her nationally famous, and the song became her signature song. The lyrics of the song depict a scenario common in most Miao women’s daily lives--the “little back basket” of the title is the carrier for Xiangxi Miao women’s babies or work implements. However, the government’s choice to feature Song’s performance of that song at the Gala was not an innocent display of minority culture, but a deliberate attempt to represent the party in a more benign public image following its sudden violent actions during the 1989 Tiananmen Square student protests. Song’s image epitomizes the prototype of women’s beauty from the perspective of male Han Chinese during a time when most parts of China were still remote from the rest of world, and in a period of considerable government censorship of outside information and prior to the expansion of television and internet. On this occasion, Song functioned as an interpreter and mediator between the regime and the people, with the song emphasizing her femininity and a maternal tenderness, essentialized into an irresistible personal charisma, and considerably softening the party’s public image of being a violent controlling force.

In 2008, Beijing hosted the Olympic Games, and took advantage of the international spotlight to demonstrate a new Chinese national identity of ethnic identity and a harmonious society under the Party’s rule. A concert the following
year, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the PRC was held at a stadium built in Beijing for the Olympics, and featured the previously mentioned Song, nationally prominent and popular ethnic Miao woman who had participated in a military Song and Dance danwei, and been selected for training at the China Conservatory of Music. With the world watching the “Glamour China” concert at Bird’s Nest National Stadium, Song Zuying was the central performer, together with a large orchestra and a chorus of minority children from Qiang (a province where many homes had been lost in the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake). The concert was to depict visually, as well as in the song texts, the unity of China’s diverse minorities, and included familiar folksongs as well of some newly composed for the occasion. The climax of the concert was the performance by Song and the children of Song’s signature song (which had been composed for her by Peidong Xu with lyrics by Yu Qiao for the Fourth National Minority Games in 1991. Although sung in Mandarin, the song has many Miao musical elements).

Ai wo zhong hua 爱我中华 “Our Love for China”

The text cited below illustrates the huge political effect of the performers and performance on a world stage:

Like 56 constellations, like 56 flowers
The 56 ethnic groups are one family
The 56 tongues all utter, our love for China

Our love for China
Inspires our march forward
Drives us to build the country
Rejuvenates our nation
(iv) Development of Tourism in Yunnan-the Naxi People of Lijiang

Although less accessible than Guizhou, natural and cultural tourism were identified as a major industry to rehabilitate Yunnan’s rural areas in 1991. By 2001, the Yunnan Statistical Bureau recorded 1 million foreign and 38 million domestic tourists to the region in the previous year (see Dong 2003: 166). Dong attributes some of the popularity of the area to art produced by poets, artists, and scholars in exile during the Cultural Revolution describing the wonders of the regions. He notes that ethnic tourism continued to expand to more geographically remote areas as travel options and infrastructure improved. In 1991, the industry was thriving in Lijiang and only being explored in Shangri La.

Lijiang is located in northwest Yunnan province, the region where the Qinghai-Tibet plateau and Yunnan-Guizhou plateau converge. It is noted scenically for the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain and the Tiger Leaping Gorge, one of the world’s biggest gorges. Three thousand miles away from Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan province, Lijiang is the home of Naxi people. The culture of the Naxi is also called “Dongba” culture. Today’s Lijiang has become one of the most famous tourist destinations in China. What first brought it to China’s wider attention, however, was not the culture or the natural scenery, but a natural disaster, the Lijiang earthquake in 1996 (7.0 magnitude on the Richter scale). This earthquake did massive damage throughout an extensive area --17,366 people were injured in addition to 309 killed. To rebuild was a huge challenge to both local and central officials. Therefore the decision to pursue tourism development was not just a
random initiative or political decision, but a necessary economic response to the disaster\(^\text{17}\). As a result, the place was reconstructed and expanded to accommodate the increasing numbers of visiting tourists.

There are fewer than 300,000 Naxi people, most living in Yunnan province. Naxi historic cultural identity is much more closely linked to Han culture than that of the Miao in Guizhou, as are their musics. Their most important urban center is Lijiang, and their language is distantly related to Tibetan. Their religious leaders are called Dongba, and they use a unique form of picture writing to record the stories and myths central to their religion. The ancient town of Dayanzhen was designated a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site in 1997. It has a remarkable layout with willow-lined stream flowing alongside the gate of every household. Villagers there are forbidden from making major changes to their traditional homes and are paid to perform a daily water-splashing ritual for which they are famous.

Helen Rees notes that there has been considerable two-way assimilation in Lijiang between Han and Naxi, with many people who currently consider themselves Naxi actually descended from military and artisan immigrants who came from eastern China during the Ming and Qing dynasties (30). According to Rees, Naxi music can be defined in two categories: one is the sinicized Dongjing music (洞经音乐) (generally referred to as Naxi ancient music (纳西古乐)), and the other is the indigenous form of Naxi music. The status of Dongjing music has become a symbol for defining Naxi culture, and its “oldness” (古老) is what has drawn tourists to Lijiang to experience something of the Han past. It is known as a “living music
fossil” derived from ancient Han music culture, which however had undergone a process of localization and internalization of local aesthetic values (see Du 1999). The music is primarily associated with religious ritual in which it combines elements of Daoist, Confucian and Buddhist values.

Although there were many Dongjing music associations in Yunnan, the presence of one in Lijiang’s old town caused it to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage site, endorsing a degree of superiority over other associations. This group was invited to perform in Beijing in 1993, England in 1995, and Italy in 1998. Apparently, it was big news in China and stimulated a range of socially conditioned intellectual responses when the group was invited to England perform in 1993 (Wu). Through its music culture, the Naxi achieved a high status due to its mostly Han historical music. The attraction of tourists to Lijiang and designation of the old town as a UNESCO World Heritage site to stimulated tourists to experience ancient Han culture, rather than an exotic ethnic minority. This was in keeping with previous World Heritage sites in China, including The Great Wall and the Potala Palace in Lhasa.

Following the earthquake, there had been disagreement as to whether tourism should be the means sought for recovery (see McKhann 2001). Locals were not the primary input for the decision—it was mostly various levels of government officials who sought the UNESCO designation. Although money flowed into the town, it was at the expense of completely changing the social and community character, as well as the people’s moral values18. McKhann points out that there was tension
between locals and non-locals. He asserts that the preservation of local culture should be designed by local people. Twelve years after McKhann’s observations, I visited the town in 2013 and discovered that deterioration was even worse than what he had suggested. My impressions can be summarized by my horse trading route tour experience. I had a feeling that I had been zai le “ripped off” in a conspiracy between the owner of the guest house where I was staying and the local entrepreneur for the trading route tours (which many tourists knew about). The most interesting detail, however, was not the fact that I had been deceived, but the conversation I had with the tour guide leading my tour. He said: “Those who haven’t visited Lijiang regret [that they did not come]; those who have come regret [that they did come].” I found his casual statement to demonstrate the increasingly cynical attitude of locals toward the tourist enterprise.

This attitude of taking advantage of visitors suggests the negative influence of urban tourists and that the government-initiated development of tourism is responsible for the dramatic changes in local tradition and culture.

**B. Tourism in the Tibetan Town of Zhongdian**

In the remaining part of this chapter, I look at the economic history (based on agriculture and logging) of the area of my research, the natural disaster which accelerated a new focus on tourism, the renaming of the town, the development of infrastructure to support tourism, and the exploitation of Tibetan culture and its special attraction to domestic tourists. It can be seen that many unique qualities
about the area, most important of which were the cultural characteristics of its majority residents, in addition to the timing with which tourism began to be investigated as a supportive enterprise, resulted in a very different trajectory of tourism development from those seen above in Guizhou and Lijiang.

(i) Location and Previous Economy

Ben Hillman provides helpful background, noting that slightly less than half of China’s ethnic Tibetans live in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), known to the world as “Tibet,” and that just over half “live outside this region in territories that have been incorporated into the Chinese provinces of Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan”. He also says that “while the Tibetan government in exile claims jurisdiction over this entire territory, not since the eighth century have Tibetan rulers exercised administrative control beyond the borders of the present-day Tibetan Autonomous Region, although the Lhasa-based Dalai Lamas have been influential throughout Tibetan regions in previous centuries” (2010: 269).
Because ethnic Tibetans are distributed over a wide geographic area, and have very different local histories as well as resources, government policies have also varied considerably, which Hillman observes have led to “a high degree of diversity in local Tibetan societies and economies.” Diqing borders other Tibet areas, and is
itself one of the most ethnically diverse prefectures in China, with 2008 figures showing that Tibetans made up 33% of the total population, and total minorities 83%. However, since most of the non-Tibetans are concentrated in the southwestern part of the prefecture, Diqing, has a distinctive Tibetan identity, which made it ideal for the development of tourism (271).

![Figure 3: Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. (Hillman, 2010, 271)](image)

Located at the intersection of Yunnan, Sichuan, and Tibet, Zhongdian’s beautiful landscape stretches from the highest altitude of 3000 meters to the 4000-meter Yungui plateau. The cooler temperatures make it a very attractive escape from the lowlands heat of summer, and with its milder winters than many other areas
of Tibetan China, most people cultivated agricultural crops and raised cattle. 65% of the prefecture was forested, and forestry was its main industry for more than 20 years prior to being banned in 1998. However, lumber prices had begun to fall by the mid-1990s, and local authorities had already begun to explore other means of development, with distance and difficulty in transport to the coastal areas being major obstacles.

(ii) Beginnings of Tourism Planning

At the same time, the growing wealth of China’s eastern areas and new middle class, as well as the strong tourism industry a few hours to the south in Lijiang, caused the local government to look into tourism development as a possible new economic base. First, restrictions on travel to the area had to be removed by the central government—they were partially lifted in 1994, and completely removed by 1997.

The prefecture had already attracted 35,000 domestic tourists by 1995, mostly arriving from Lijiang to view the scenery and to visit monasteries. The local government officials realized that these overnight tourists would stay longer if local facilities and infrastructure were improved, and in 1995 established a Tourism Bureau, planning three key development projects: 1) the restoration of the county’s largest monastery; (2) the renovation of the prefecture government’s guesthouse; and (3) building a second hotel in the county capital. During the following two years, they applied to the province for funds to improve roads, tourist facilities, and build an airport. Since their plans coincided with provincial economic development
(iii) The 1998 Disaster and Government Ban

At this time, nature intervened in a very providential way, playing a role similar to that of the Lijiang earthquake. While China was still celebrating Hong Kong’s 1997 return to the PRC, extensive flooding occurred throughout the lower Yangtze river basin. The annual rainy season in the mountainous areas of northwest Yunnan is between May and August, and soil erosion caused by depletion of upriver forests was identified as a primary cause of the downriver flooding (Kolas, 2008). Previously forestry had provided nearly 75 percent of prefecture revenue. Millions downriver suffered from this disaster, and my home town Huangshi was affected. I remember flooding of the lake area near my school, resulting in classes being cancelled. (Even so, many of us had to go for private lessons because of the high school entrance exams the next year.) Our parents had to take shifts on duty watching the river bank every night. We teenagers enjoyed walking in the water-filled streets, seeing lake fish swimming around us, a pleasant relief from our pressured school work.

(iv) The Magic of a Name

Even earlier, the local Tourism Bureau, like other Himalayan sites, had been using the name “Shangri La” to promote tourism. James Hilton’s 1933 novel Lost Horizon existed in three different Chinese translations, and Frank Capra’s 1937 film was extremely popular in China during World War II. The story made the name
synonymous with an earthly paradise. But Diqing officials went much further—from 1996 they began to collect evidence for Diqing being the “true” Shangri La, hosting conferences, inviting historians, linguists, and anthropologists, and eliciting a report from experts to provide evidence. With this report and support of the prefecture and provincial governments, Zhongdian County applied to the State Council—the highest decision-making body in China—requesting that Zhongdian County’s name be officially changed to ‘Shangri-la’ (Xianggelila) County (the English is used in tourism promotion literature). In competition with several other tourist destinations, they argued that the name change would help make Diqing a ‘leading’ Tibetan area in China, and that “the name represented . . . a desire that among people and between people and nature there would be no conflict, no chaos, only economic prosperity, national unity and social stability” (Hillman 2010, 273).

Ashild Kolas (2008), who first visited Shangri La in 2002, comments on this: “The planners . . . apparently regard biological, cultural and landscape diversity as equivalent, in effect treating ‘ethnic group’ as a part of this environment. It also appears that the economic potential of this environment, and of ‘traditional villages’ lies in their value as tourist attractions” (24).

Kolas notes that Tibetan culture is associated closely with Tibetan Buddhism, “often presented as an important feature of ‘ancient Chinese civilization’” (2008: 106). She notes that the huge Songtseling Monastery, home to 700 monks, is one of Shangri La’s most important tourist attractions. She further cites observers that encounters
with ethnic tourism “involve travel away from modernity and into the past,” and that this motive is particularly typical of the young urban Chinese who visit Shangri La. She cites Oakes 1997 observation that “tourism in China is thriving on ‘the experience of anxiety, ambivalence, and disorientation brought by modernity’ that the need to ‘travel’ into the past is a response to problems related to rapid modernization, and particularly anxieties about the contradiction between modernizing and maintaining continuity with the past” (2008: 42).

Following the 2008 Tibetan unrest incident, Diqing officials further sought to represent their community as a “Model Minority”. This has helped considerably in increasing central government funding, demonstrating that here there was neither potential threat to the party’s power nor any desire among Tibetans to jeopardize their greatly improved material welfare. Diqing government proposed a policy “To establish one of nation’s best Tibetan communities” and organized the first “Convention for Establishing Ethnic Unity and Progress in Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province”. In hosting the country’s first Ethnic Unity Festival, the organizers also sent ‘thousands of cadres going to every family to promote the concept’, and [Diqing] has therefore become a model community nationwide to demonstrate this unity” (Ni: 2).

(v) New Initiatives and Benefits

Although there had already been some government investment in infrastructure before the logging ban, including road and power stations, after it these efforts were
greatly accelerated. Work began almost immediately on an airport and improved road link to Lijiang. The airport was completed in 1999—during that same year, the Tourism Bureau gave a large sum of money to the Songzanlin Monastery, used for a new parking area and a new gilded rooftop. There was then even increased investment from the central and provincial governments for infrastructure—Hillman noted that as of 2002, thirty new companies had moved into the area and 50 hotels had been built (2002: 546-547). The county ordered that all street and shop signs in Dukezong (the “Old Town”) had to be in Tibetan script as well as Chinese. Work began on a new main street that was to house the county government and other state agencies—the architecture had to be in Tibetan style. The county commissioned Shanghai-based architects to develop a new plan for the town center completed in 2008 that included “a large paved square reminiscent of China’s grand cities flanked by a new theatre and shopping center ” (see Hillman 2013: 26). New hotels sprang up imitating the Tibetan architecture style. Hillman notes that even with these beginning efforts, the total number of tourists visiting doubled to over one million between 1998 and 1999, and reached 1.24 million in 2001, up from 43,000 visits in 1995 (2013: 26).

In 2002, an Englishman rented an abandoned farmhouse in Dukezong and converted it into a bar—although not immediately profitable, it and a couple of other foreign-run enterprises caught the attention of local authorities who saw the potential. County leaders took visiting officials to the bar as an example of what could be done with the old houses, and within two years Dukezong was transformed—streets paved
with cobblestones, sewage pipes, running water, and electricity installed, old-fashioned street lights erected. Soon nearly every property had been rented by small businesspeople from other parts of China and abroad. During the next ten years, land values increased exponentially, and the county government generated huge sums of land revenue in three ways: (1) by selling use rights of county-controlled land to private developers (at several hundred times the price at which the county had originally purchased it from local farmers); (2) through fees charged for land title conversions and by using their influence to arrange transfer to a private enterprise at much below the market value, and/or speculating on land; and (3) through increased taxation. Many local officials became rich, despite receiving only modest salaries. They were also able to achieve “city status” for their county, bringing many benefits in control, as well as monetary and political power, by counting migrant workers and tourists in population statistics (2013: 27-28).

(vi) Unequal Benefits

The real beneficiaries were not local, but outsiders bringing experience and capital and gaining the profits. As of 2002, officials admitted that 30-40% of those with jobs in the tourist industry were non-locals, with the highest paying jobs in the hotels held mostly by Han from different parts of the province and country and Naxi from Lijiang, who had a higher level of education than the local minorities. The local, mostly minority, workers held jobs as cleaners and wait staff, although if they passed a Chinese language test, they might be hired as guides (2002: 550). Hillman
observed that tourism-driven development frequently diverts the bulk of rural investment toward infrastructure projects at the expense of other social services, such as education and health care for minorities, although both have improved in recent times with the help of several NGOs.

*(vii) Summary:*

This chapter has demonstrated the diverse motives and influences of China’s central government, local government, local people of various ethnicities, and immigrant entrepreneurs in the development of tourism in Guizhou, Lijiang, and Zhongdian. Probably this story will never be finished. The following chapter will describe my personal involvement with people in Shangri La, particularly with the Tibetan people who so graciously hosted me, and the Tibetan musicians on whom my research was focused.
Chapter IV: Tibetan Music in Shangri La

(i) Tibetan Musician--Reshi Tsering Tan

Born in 1978, Reshi grew up in the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAR) of Gansu province in northwestern China. When he was 15, he became a dancer for the Song and Dance Troupe of Quman county. He studied dance at the Northwest University for Nationalities in Lanzhou from age 18, and at age 21 continued his studies of dance and also voice in Beijing, during which time he was asked to participate in a production expressing the meanings of Tibetan Buddhism through popular music. This led him to realize that researching his people’s music was what he really wanted to do.

After Reshi had visited Shangri La several times, he decided that it would be a good place to open a folk music bar (note mention of earlier successful bars in Shangri La in Chapter 4), and made Shangri La his primary home. Bars in Lijiang were very popular with international backpackers and brought considerable income to the local economy. He later founded the Shangri La Folk Music Preservation Association (SFMPA), with approval of the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Ministry of Culture -- “to preserve the cultural heritage of Tibetan music through collecting music, interviewing performers, taping performances, and providing financial support for folk musicians and instrument craftsmen.” The former bar became the headquarters for SFMPA, appropriately in an old Tibetan house. When I first visited the Association, I could see its previous use as a bar (leftover liquor on the shelves).
Although it was no longer an active bar, Reshi still kept closely in touch with other bars nearby, which were significant venues for visiting music groups to perform.

Figure 4: Shangri La Folk Music Preservation Association

(ii) **Research Projects of the Shangri La Folk Music Preservation Association**

During several recent years, Reshi and his research group (mostly volunteer) have organized month-long fieldwork trips to sites in Sichuan, Yunnan and Gansu provinces. He explained to me that each time his team (including photographer, sound engineer, Tibetan language specialists, and filming crew) would focus on one area, and research every village in that area. The fieldwork team prepares carefully, and uses various methods of documenting, including three different formats of recording, filming, and writing. They observe a firm code of ethics, using a consent form. They
endeavor to collect and document as many materials as possible before the music or culture vanishes due to death of musicians or the modernization pace of the Tibetan areas (because the Association is still compiling and editing the materials, they are not currently accessible to outside researchers). “We are racing against time [the development of infrastructure] 我们在跟时间赛跑” said Jiangyong. Tsering has been a daily witness to his culture’s disappearing musical legacy in the Tibetan areas. His association’s strong drive to preserve and protect the past from rapidly changing society is expressed in its pamphlet statement that “At least one traditional form of folk music goes extinct each year in China,” and “those of us in cities and large towns let it slip by; unaware of the emptiness left behind by its loss”. Reshi and Jiangyong both told me that they want to save “endangered” folk music for the sake of all China, not only for Tibet. Jiangyong especially reminded me that “if [modernization] changes everything into the same cultural expression, then there is no meaning and fun [in life]”

Reshi reported that he and his team work in two groups, one preliminary research team of mostly Tibetan speakers, followed by the documentation team. On the first two days in a new village, the team asks locals for information to help locate the “real” local musicians. Once they determine which musicians to study, they first visit them without bringing any equipment. Following a few days of casual interaction, they request permission to bring the rest of the technical team for recording. The Association brochure states the following philosophy for their collecting and classification:
We catalog the collected folk music and instrument samples according to international standards in the form of audio, video, graph and text. In addition, we plan to build the Chinese Folk Music Museum to showcase the rich and varied tradition of Chinese folk music.

Figure 5: SLFMA 2013 Fieldwork Notes

Reshi takes advantage of new technologies for documenting fieldwork, online researching and posting news, as well as maintaining social interactions with friends on different social media. Their preference is for Apple products such as the iPhone, and Macintosh over PC—because they have Tibetan language capacity. Norbu, an ethnic Tibetan, was born in Sichuan province, but grew up in Nepal. He returned to China in 2010, and is now the secretary of SFMPA. Trilingual in Tibetan, Chinese and English, he does most of the documenting of fieldwork notes, as well as providing other written descriptions of the Association’s work. Most of these are done in at least two languages- Tibetan and Chinese.
Figure 6: A SFMPA fieldwork note documented June 28\textsuperscript{th}, 2013
In the above, Norbu is on the right, recording the conversation. Since most informants speak Tibetan few ethnomusicologists in China are able to document their fieldwork notes in Tibetan. Reshi and Norbu feel that this is crucial for allowing informants to critique the accuracy of the notes. Although neither of them have had formal academic training in ethnomusicology, they realize the importance of language to the fieldwork quality. Because most PC products silence the presence of Tibetan identity, the Mac book and “I” products are appreciated by the researchers for the way that they permit Tibetans to communicate accurately with the rest of society.

Through many years of hard work and continuous negotiating, the association has been able to survive financially, as well as politically.

(iii) The Shangri La Band

I noted above that although no longer running his SFMPA as a bar, Reshi still kept closely in touch with nearby bars featuring traditional music. One was the home base for the “Shangri La Band,” members of which I was able to become acquainted with and will describe in more detail. This band had taken conscious advantage of new tourism marketing techniques, branding themselves with the new city name. This represented an opportunity for two Tibetans and two Lisu 傈僳族 men. All were former employees of the Diqing Song and Dance troupe, trained both in their traditional musical instruments and western musical instruments, as well as music theory.
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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ETHNICITY</th>
<th>INSTRUMENT &amp; Musical Skills</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE &amp; WINNING TITLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lurong nongbu</td>
<td>Tibetan</td>
<td>Piwang, Drum</td>
<td>The best performance of the 11th CCTV National Young Singer’s Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damo Luzhuo</td>
<td>Tibetan</td>
<td>Piwang, Drum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feng Yuehong</td>
<td>Lisu</td>
<td>Keyboard, song arranger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu Minghui</td>
<td>Lisu</td>
<td>Bass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Shangri La band members

The group had won titles in 2005 and 2006 at two of China’s many national TV competitions. After the band’s name became known nationally, they opened their Shangri La Club (bar) in the center of the old town.

A Han woman volunteer for SFMPA told me that the place was famous for the yuan shengtai or “authenticity” of its Tibetan traditional music. (The term yuan shengtai 原生态, abbreviated YST, began to be used at the beginning of the new millennium by “a new artistic movement…[to signify] a high level of ‘authenticity’ in new forms of ethnic minority music representations in the mass media”--Yang, 2009:40). This had been previously demonstrated by the visits of government officials showing it off.
to as an example of the harmonious unity of the region. The club is located in a Tibetan-style two-story house, with interior a mixture of modern and traditional. It has an elevator permitting the stage to be raised to the second floor when not in use for traditional performance, so that audiences can socialize with friends between performances. The audience demonstrate their appreciation by draping white scarves (katag—the Tibetan white silk prayer scarves, considered auspicious) around performer’s necks following a favorite performance, rather than giving flowers.

Unlike the city’s outsider-owned bars featuring modern electronic bands, on its website and in national competitions, the Shangri La club marketed itself as featuring only Tibetan music played by Tibetan performers on traditional Tibetan instruments (information on performers and instruments in the table above was from a Chinese website). However, I found the live performance I attended to be very contradictory to these claims. Formerly most songs performed by popular Tibetan groups, including the Shangri La Band, were newly composed with lyrics in Mandarin, with mostly electronic music instrumentation, including drum set, bass, guitar and synthesizer. Later, they were also influenced by the increasing success and popularity of Tibetan groups featuring ritual-related performance, traditional instruments, and Tibetan lyrics. Because the Shangri La Band had been popular for nearly fifteen years, they seemed to have been considerably influenced by the later groups, and so I heard a mixture of styles.
(iv) The Mani Stone Band

Because this type of music is so popular with young travelers, occasionally, the club featured Tibetan bands from outside the prefecture, such as the Mani Stone Band which I was able to hear during my 2013 field work visit. Formed in 2008, Mani Shi (玛尼石 Mani Stone Band) claims to be China’s earliest yuan shengtai (authentic) Tibetan band. In 2011, the band won the championship in the Zhongguo Zangge Hui (中国藏歌会, Chinese Tibetan Song Contest) sponsored by Sichuan Weishi (四川卫视, Sichuan Province Television Company.) The summary of the band’s history on a CD insert states:

The Mani Stone band was invited by CCTV music channel (Central China Television) for a special performance in 2012. The band has held many charity concerts to help fundraising for Renai Guer Yuan (仁爱孤儿院, Mercy Orphanage). The four members of the band come from different Tibetan autonomous regions (at the prefecture level). The instruments they use also come from those regions, Xuanzi (弦子, biwang) from Yunnan Shangri La region and Sichuan Batang 巴塘 region; the Liuxian Qin (六弦琴, damyn) from the Tibetan Autonomous Region and Ando region; and the Mantuo Ling (曼陀铃, mandolin) which is originally from Italy and has recently been popularized in the Ando region. The unique characteristic of the Mani Stone band is the combination of the ancient sound of the dyan and melodic sound of the biwang, and the ringing sound of the mandolin, together with the modern guitar together; in addition to the incorporation of Tibetan Buddhist instruments, such as bell, cymbals, and drum. The band aims to carry on traditional Tibetan music culture while incorporating global musical elements 19

The ethnicity, age, and instruments of the performers are shown in the chart below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Other Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dege Ye 德格叶</td>
<td>Tibetan</td>
<td>Mandolin</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Main singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayi Erta 巴依尔塔</td>
<td>Mongolian</td>
<td>Guitar</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Music arranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puqiong Ciren 普琼次仁</td>
<td>Tibetan</td>
<td>dramyin</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Drayam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerong Nongbu 格茸农布</td>
<td>Tibetan</td>
<td>Biwang</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Piwang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Figure 9: Mani Stone Band Musicians**

The three Tibetan musicians come from different Tibetan areas. Dege Ye from Qinghai province is the main singer; Puqiong Ciren is from Lhasa and Gerong Nongbu is from Shangri La. I learned that Nongbu was also the piwang player on Reshi’s 2007 *Shangri La* album. Despite their various geographic origins, they are united in a strong sense of pan-Buddhist identity, which is shared not only among the musicians, but also by the manager/agent of the band, as well as reflected in the works they perform. I was fortunate to attend two different Shangri La performances by the band, and was able to arrange with their manager/agent Ms. Zang Xiaoyu 藏晓玉, an 80s generation ethnic Han, to interview the musicians. I learned that Ms. Zang was actually married to Dege Ye, the main singer, and she told me how they met. She owned a restaurant where Dege worked as a singer. She first saw him only as a young Tibetan boy who was really passionate about singing. Although it wasn’t necessary for him to come to the restaurant during the daytime, she said that he frequently came and sometimes even helped clean up and prepare the food. Their
relationship got more serious when Zang’s business began to have unexpected problems:

I am glad my religion comforted me and helped me get through that whole terrible experience. After one year of successfully managing my restaurant business and when everything was just starting to go great, my landlord told me to move out immediately because my one year contract was going to expire. I could not believe that the friend who introduced me to this place was conspiring with the landlord the whole time. All my life savings and investment to decorate the place were gone…I looked everywhere for legal help but found nothing. Later I heard that the owner had already used his connections with the local legal system to make sure that my case would not be reviewed. Thanks so much to my husband [Dege Ye] for his emotional support in tirelessly accompanying me place to place looking for help. (Zang, Xiaoyu, personal communication, July 2013).

She looked so at peace while telling of her terrible experience. Then she described how she decorated the restaurant, with prints from the stories of Buddhist teachings. She explained the meaning of each symbol, animal and individual characters on that wall, and her husband listened with the same peaceful expression.

Apparently Zang Xiaoyu was the only person in the band that is not Tibetan. The guitarist Bayi Erta 巴依尔塔, an ethnic Mongolian, was also included because he believes in Tibetan Buddhism, which brought the group together. In Beijing, a community of artists interested in Tibetan culture has resulted in cultural representatives of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Zang says that all Mani Stone members met at a popular Beijing Tibetan restaurant and bar called Makye Ame20. Many Tibetan musicians performed there, including Reshi. The significance of the Mani Stone Band in presenting a “new” sound of Tibetan popular music based on
performing ritualistic aspects and incorporating traditional instruments, as well as Tibetan Buddhist lyrics. The Beijing Tibetan restaurant and bar mentioned above was a popular gathering place for those seeking to promote these changes.

(v) Reshi Tsering Tan’s Ritual Performances

Besides his work with the Association, Reshi is also active in conducting meditation and rituals for both insiders and outsiders. During the second week of my second visit to Shangri La, he invited me to a private performance organized for a visiting Japanese businessman and other friends of SLPFMA vice president Jiangyong, held at SFMPA. I did not request permission to record the performance, as I had learned that the association was extremely sensitive regarding the possibility of outsiders using recordings for their own profit, and was concerned that making such a request might jeopardize my developing relationship with the group. Even without recording, my opportunity to witness and photograph this performance was very valuable for understanding the context of such ritual, conducted at SFMPA. In many ways, the room became a temple. When I arrived, the sounds of a 2013 CD produced by Lama Ogyn Chophel Rimpoche could be heard. The scent of tanxiang 檀香 (sandalwood—burned as incense for meditation) filled the room. Not only Reshi and several Association colleagues, but even the Japanese guest, were wearing traditional Tibetan costumes (Jiangyong wore traditional Chinese dress associated with religious figures). The lighting in the room was dim, from a few candles and the fire pit.
Traditional Tibetan Buddhist symbols were displayed behind the performing area. Other ritual and religious objects included a statue of Buddha, pictures of other deities, and a shrine. Also significant was the fact that the SFMPA building itself was one of the older traditional Tibetan houses.

Just before the performance, Reshi sat writing in his little notebook and humming softly. When I asked him afterwards whether he was listing the songs he planned to perform, he said that he was actually meditating on the audience and their spiritual needs, which he could sense. The performance began with the striking of the *ting sering* (cymbal), a Tibetan Buddhist ritual instrument for meditation, which has been adopted by many Tibetan folk musicians. After striking the cymbal three times, Reshi picked up the fan-shaped drum, decorated with a religious symbol, and began singing in Tibetan while beating it for more than six minutes. I was not familiar with any part of what he sang. SFMPA colleagues then joined in, some by joining in what he sang and others by drumming. The audience was asked to join in the last song, the
lyrics of which I recognized as belonging to the “heart sutra” (see Chapter VI).

Figure 11: Reshi with *ting sering* (cymbal)

Figure 12: Reshi with Ritual Drum Dooland Magazine website.
Although there are no longer performances at the former bar which is now the SFMPA, Reshi occasionally grants requests for presenting ritual music such as the above, in exchange for contributions, as well as occasional private sector events. One of latter was held in Beijing in April, 2013. Reshi was featured with two American performers, a pianist and a cellist, at a private event sponsored by BMW headquarters for the promotion of its new BMW series, Model 7. Peter Buffet, pianist, and Michael Kott, Native American cellist, are currently touring the world in support of Buffet’s philanthropic NoVo Foundation, dedicated to transformation in global society to create a caring and balanced world. Buffet is the son of Warren Buffet (US multi-billionaire and successful businessman, known to the Chinese as Gushen 股神, the god of the stock markets), which is probably a major reason why the organizers chose him and Reshi for their auspicious and spiritualistic qualities. Buffet has composed a lot of music based on native American traditions, including a scene for the film Dances with Wolves and a 1999 PBS special Spirit--A Journey in Dance Drums and Song in 1999. The three performed together, in a sort of pastiche of musical styles, with Reshi mostly singing vocables.
(vi) Participation in International Folk Music Festivals

Four years ago, Reshi began to achieve considerable national and international recognition. He was featured in the Beijing International Music Festival in 2010, and was invited to the Stanford University Pan-Asian Festival (inaugurated in 2004) in 2011 and 2014, without the mediation of the government. SFMPA also has become a major presence on social media. As principles for cultural protection and preservation were gradually shaped by international agencies such as UNESCO and the festival event hosted by Stanford University, the importance of SFMPA and Reshi himself was increasingly recognized, and this recognition reshaped the way locals perceived their culture and themselves. Part of this was because Reshi always considered how the “products” he put together were “authentic” representations of his culture, which also relates to his Buddhist beliefs. The website for the Stanford
The festival states that:

The festival is dedicated to promoting an understanding and appreciation of music in contemporary Asia through an annual series of concerts and academic activities. It combines innovative programming with performances of the highest artistic caliber featuring renowned international guest artists, faculty members of the Stanford Music Department and the university’s own outstanding student performers.

The festival represented a vastly broadened opportunity for Reshi to share Tibetan expression and exchange information with other groups internationally. Its multicultural approach promoted communication among participants, to increase their understanding of each other’s cultures. Its statement regarding Reshi’s presentations was:

A modernizing world means that time moves faster, giving Tibet’s cultural heritage more of a chance to slip into the dark past and blink swiftly out of existence. Tsering has made it the mission of the SFMPA to salvage Tibet’s musical heritage, prepare its delivery for a new generation and excavate what has already been lost. A new path is being blazed for the promotion of traditional folk music, a path that will light the way for the greater international appreciation and awareness of China’s rich musical heritage.²²
(vii) Summary:

My visits to Shangri La during the summers of 2012 and 2013 provided me with the opportunity to become acquainted with a variety of Tibetans living there, visiting Tibetan performers, and the many young who travel to Shangri La to experience its scenic and cultural opportunities. In experiencing performances of Tibetan music by several different performers/groups, I observed their varying interpretations of Tibetan music, as well as their concepts of “authenticity”. The following chapter will provide more technical aspects of the musical performances—instruments used, transcriptions, and lyrics—and I will also analyze popular CD recordings, both by the groups I heard live in Shangri La and other groups recording “Tibetan” music.
(i) Introduction: Earlier Sources of Tibetan-related Popular Music

In this chapter, I first describe a famous performer of Tibetan-derived popular music, then will discuss a song by this performer, followed by discussion of five other songs by the musicians I studied in Shangri La. As mentioned in Chapter 2, young Chinese increasingly took advantage of media available to them for listening to music. Radio and TV (where reception was available), CDs and portable CD players were very popular. Tibetan-theme music on car CD players provided atmosphere while these young Chinese were driving to the newly accessible mountain areas.

By 2000, an increasing number of high income youth in the cities were able to travel to China’s most remote areas such as Lijiang and Shangri La by car. At that time, car ownership was considered a significant sign of a person’s success. The popularity of this travel style (known in Chinese as zijia you or “self-driving travel”) was mostly inspired by media images of Americans traveling all over their country to remote areas for vacations. Exploring Tibetan areas had been popularized by earlier films and performances, and CD producers and ethnic performers saw great opportunity in producing musical products in background settings of mountain landscapes associated with ethnic sounds of the areas. The long hours of and driving while listening to this music, and previous associations, provided a rich travel experience.23

The 1999 movie “Himalaya” (directed by the Frenchman Eric Valli, with a cast almost entirely of Tibetans, and popular worldwide) had considerable influence on
young Tibetans and Chinese. This film was made in the Dolpo region of Nepal, a Tibetan area where the director had lived for over 15 years, with sound track in Dolpo and German. It was the first Nepalese nominee for best foreign film at the 72nd Academy Awards. Although the music for the movie was composed by Bruno Coulais, also French, both the Mani Stone Band and Reshi included a song from it, “Karma,” in their albums under the title “Himalayas”. The lyrics were sung in Tibetan on both and were translated into both Chinese and English in Reshi’s album.

Other sources of Tibetan-influenced music popular with 80s generation youth included the first performer to use traditional Tibetan materials in Chinese popular music --a non-Tibetan singer, born Zhou Peng in 1983 to a Han Chinese father and Mongolian mother. She lived in Inner Mongolia with her grandmother until age 6, and later became interested in Buddhism and taught herself Tibetan and Sanskrit. Studying at the People’s Liberation Army Academy of Arts in Beijing, she produced her first song album in 2001, and then was able to travel extensively. Her fame spread through the popular 2006 film “Prince of the Himalayas,” for which she composed the song “Holy Incense”. Part of the text of this song was the six-syllable Sanskrit mantra considered by Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese, as well as Tibetan Buddhists to be the most central mantra of Buddhism. The words *om mani padme hum* (translated and interpreted differently in various beliefs) refer to the image of the Buddha holding a jewel and a lotus, representing wisdom. (Several previous popular Western and Asian songs contained this mantra, and both Reshi and the Mani Stone Band recorded it as well).
In 2007, Zhou Peng’s desire to find deeper values motivated her to change her name to Sa Dingding and adopt a completely different performing persona incorporating ethnic minority cultural elements. Her composed songs on the album *Alive* that she released that year were still mostly in Mandarin, but two (including “Holy Incense”) had Tibetan versions and two were in Sanskrit. Her popularity spread to Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong, as well as to Europe and the US. In 2008, she won the BBC Radio 3 World Music Award for the Asia-Pacific region and the opportunity to perform in the Royal Albert Hall.

Many young Chinese had seen the film “Prince of the Himalayas,” and heard her recorded songs on TV or radio. One of the very significant songs on the album *Alive* was the “Heart Sutra,” which had been recorded by many other artists. As a female singer, her appearance was more elaborate than that of male performers of Tibetan music. She is accompanied by synthesizer providing four-part “orchestral” harmonic foundation, plus the pop music elements of drum sets and electronic bass as rhythmic foundation. Chinese instruments are also incorporated for color, including the *guzheng* (Chinese 21-string zither), *pipa* (Chinese four-string lute), *dizi* (bamboo flute played horizontally), and *erhu* (two-string fiddle). She sings with a somewhat nasal timbre and frequent use of falsetto, similar to Tibetan singing. The mix of Western pop, traditional Han, and ethnic Tibetan is also reflected in the arrangement of the lyrics of the song. Three different languages appear in the text: Chinese, Sanskrit, and *ziyu* (literally, “self-language”)—non-lexical vocables phonetically similar to Tibetan syllables. The Chinese and Sanskrit portions are taken directly from
the “heart sutra,” although she sings only the mantra part in Sanskrit.

The form can be analyzed in three sections for the music and six sections for the lyrics, as seen in the chart below (S.D. stands for Sa Dingding’s recited or sung portions):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Guzheng, Flute, Pipa, Wind sound</td>
<td>Erhu, Electronic orchestral (EO) and pop music elements</td>
<td>EO pop music element</td>
<td>EO Bell Mongolian Throat singing</td>
<td>Erhu Electronic full orchestral and pop music elements</td>
<td>Erhu EO, Pop music elements</td>
<td>EO Pop music elements</td>
<td>Guzheng Flute,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocal</td>
<td>Reciting S. D.</td>
<td>singing S. D.</td>
<td>singing S. D.</td>
<td>reciting male (low)</td>
<td>singing S. D.</td>
<td>chorus female</td>
<td>singing S. D.</td>
<td>reciting S. D.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15: Transcription of Sa Dingding’s Heart Sutra.

Short transition sections connect the main music sections, providing additional effects associated with Tibetan homelands and ritual. For example, at the beginning of the Chinese lyrics, a synthesizer blowing wind effect is added over Sa Dingding’s recited section with echo chamber effects on the vocal. On the first transition section, as the drum and bass are faded out, a low-pitched male voice recites short phrases like a Tibetan monk, and another voice produces Mongolian overtone singing effects. The second transition is sung by a female chorus in harmony accompanied by
synthesizer full orchestra to highlight climax of the song.

Lyrics of Sa Dingding’s sutra:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 1</th>
<th>PART 2</th>
<th>PART 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>观自在菩萨 行深波若波罗蜜多时 照见五蕴皆空 度一切苦厄 舍利子 色不异空 空不异色 色即是空 空即是色 受想行识 亦复如是 舍利子 是诸法空相 不生不灭 不垢不净 不增不减 是故空中无色 无受想行识 无眼耳鼻舌身意 无色声香味触法 无眼界 乃至无意识界 无无明 亦无无明尽 无苦集灭道 无智亦无得 以无所得故 菩提萨埵 依波若波罗蜜多故 心无碍 无碍故 无有恐怖 远离颠倒梦想 究竟涅槃</td>
<td>Seng Ji De Na Jo Sou Seng Ji De Na Jo Oma Ya Seng Ji De Na Jo Om Na Ya Seng Ji De Na Jo Ni Dem Ma Ne Jo Ni Na Mo Ni Na Seng Ji De Na Jo Ni Dem Ma Ne Jo Ni I Ya I Ya Seng Ji De Na Jo Ni Dem Ma Ne Jo Ni De Yo Ni Na Seng Ji De Na Jo Ni Dem Ma Ne Jo Ni I Ya I Ya</td>
<td>揭谛揭谛 波罗揭谛波罗僧揭谛 菩提婆娑诃</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 3</th>
<th>PART 4</th>
<th>PART 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>心无碍 无碍故 无有恐怖 远离颠倒梦想 究竟涅槃</td>
<td>Sang Ji Da Sang Ji A No Da Sang Ji Da Sang Ji A No Da Sang Ji Ge Na Xie Ji Da Do Um Bu Jia Ni Ou Jo Na No Yo Ne Sang Ji Xiang Ji Sang Ji Na Sang Ji Go No Jo Di A Ji Na Xiao Di Na A Ya... Sa Di Na Ya... Yi Ya</td>
<td>三世诸佛 依波若波罗蜜多故 得阿耨多罗三藐三菩提 故知波若波罗蜜多 是大神咒 是大明咒 是无上咒 是无等等咒 能除一切苦 真实不虚</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16: Lyrics of Sa Dingding’s sutra
Sa Dingding’s Heart Sutra is an example of the popularity with the 80s generation of Buddhist teachings which seem to address sexual pleasure. Her album *Alive* has gained a lot of fame, as well as both national and international awards. However, she has also been criticized by many Tibetans for wearing costumes decorated with the image of the Bodhisattva (female Buddha). Displaying this religious symbol on her person in a public performance (see figure 16) not only violates Tibetan religious code of conduct, but is considered especially sacrilegious as she is not only not a nun but not even of Tibetan ethnicity. The most serious offense above all is that she is female, although there have been some highly respected Tibetan nun musicians, including Ani
Choying Drolma. The Tibetan monastic institution itself, however, is almost entirely dominated by males, and this male hegemony is also reflected in Tibetan popular music (see Figure 18).

![Tibetan Popular Music Chart]

Figure 18: The chart shows the numbers of Tibetan pop singers (categorized by gender) and bands performing Tibetan pop music, between 2003 and 2013 (most performers listed are current). Information from a website called Tibetan Music in China website (中国藏族音乐网)²⁴.

Ani Choying Drolma [in Chinese Qiongying Zhuoma (琼英卓玛)] was famous for her 2006 album Inner Peace. The album is available both online and in many Shangri La CD shops. Drolma was born in June 4th 1987 in Kathmandu, Nepal. At age thirteen she joined the Nagi Gompa convent to escape an abusive father. In the convent, she had formal music training and became known as the Nagi Gompa nun musician. Even though Ani Choying Drolma was portrayed as a world-renowned representative
of Tibetan Buddhist culture, a National Public Radio (NPR) reporter, Megan Meline, commented on her “unconventionality”: “So far, Drolma has recorded 10 albums, including her latest, *Inner Peace II*. Some monks have made it big with chanting, but few, if any, nuns have”\(^\text{25}\).

![Figure 19: Ani Choying Drolma and her 2006 Album *Inner Peace*](image)

In contrast with the devout image of Choying Drolma, the controversy over Sa Dingding’s performing career can be seen more clearly, in terms of her body image, dress, and also musical style—all establish a different narrative of female as a spiritual being in Tibetan religion. Sa Dingding’s *Heart Sutra* performance emphasizes her slim body shape, with bare arms and neck. Her vocal timbre and body movements are distinctly feminine. These major contrasts between the two women can be seen,
although both of them used their female persona to remind their audiences of the association with the female Buddha, Bodhisattva (度母).

(ii) Reshi’s Performances/Recordings

In the same year that Sa Ding Ding produced her Alive album (2007), Reshi produced a CD of Tibetan-derived popular music entitled Shangri La. Very appealing to the 80s generation of travelers, the song lyrics in Reshi’s album describe the natural landscape and clearly articulate Tibetan cultural values.

Figure 20: Reshi Tsering Tan
Most of the songs I examined have a visual referral to Tibetan geographic landmarks associated with the tourist industry and the unique travel experience to Tibetan areas.

(a) Three Flowers

Visual imagery is central to the text of the song “Three Flowers,” which refers to the scenic setting of Tibet. Snow-covered mountains, blue sky, and white flowers are described, the white flower as a reflection of the snow-covered mountains and the blue as a reflection of the river. The mention of the auspicious white silk prayer scarves (katag) and “the roof of the world” are uniquely associated with Tibetan culture. These iconic symbols build a background for the concluding lines: “But my heart is more white than the snow-covered mountain”; “But my heart is more clear than the river”; and “But my heart is more white than the katag”.

On his CD, Reshi provides lyrics for many of the songs in three languages, translations of which have subtle differences. The Tibetan section is followed by Chinese and English printed side by side.

Figure 21: Album lyrics layout.
I will discuss the Chinese and English of “Three Flowers,” as my knowledge of the Tibetan is quite limited.

“Three flowers”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>白色的花绽放在雪山之巅,</td>
<td>The white flowers are growing on the snow-covered mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我们的心胜过雪山的纯净,</td>
<td>But my heart is more white than the snowy mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蓝色的花绽放在溪水之畔</td>
<td>The blue flowers are growing beside the river,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我们的心胜过河水</td>
<td>But my heart is more clear than the river.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>白色的哈达兴起在雪域藏土,</td>
<td>The katag prevails on the roof of the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我们的心胜过哈达的纯净</td>
<td>But my heart is more white than the katag</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The general meaning of the English and Chinese translations match both Chinese and English are translations of the original Tibetan text. The most obvious difference between Chinese and English is the possessive “my” vs. “our”. The Chinese text uses plural term women de (our 我们的); the English text uses the singular term. This highlights the Chinese cultural perspective based on family, kinship, and communal values versus the western cultural perspective of individualism. Second, the Chinese text is continually implying the idea of a clean environment of “whiteness,” in contrast to the pollution in the cities: baise de hua (white flower 白色的花), baise de xueshan (white snow mountain 白色的雪山) and baise de hada (white katag 白色的哈达). These could also be translated as purified, simple, or clean. The Chinese uses other more expressive terms than English, in the first verse using zhanfang (burst into bloom 绽放) as compared with “growing”; and xueshan zhidian (summit of the snow mountain 之巅) rather than just “the snow mountain”. The English translation seems
to focus on the spiritual aspect of Tibetan culture, while “My heart is more clear” places more emphasis on the Buddhist concept of self-realization rather than the conquering sense of the Chinese text shengguo (surpass, excel or be better than 胜过). Different historical perspectives of geography include the Chinese term for Tibetan plateau land xueyu zangtu (snow-covered region 雪域藏土 and Tibetan soul) contrasted with the English text “the roof of the world”. Referring to Tibetan “soul” can be considered a critique of the environmental issues in China’s urban cities dense with high-rise buildings.

The vocal line is accompanied by a hybrid group of Tibetan traditional instruments, and western pop instruments. These include the piwang, a two-string fiddle, which is the lead instrument, with a traditional Tibetan sound. This instrument alternates with the singer in carrying the melody. The dramyin is a fretless plucked long-neck lute with seven strings associated with traditional Himalayan folk music, used primarily to accompany singing in the Drukpa/Red hat sect of Buddhism in Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim, and Himalayan West Bengal. The western popular musical instruments include a drum set playing a triplet pattern, typical neither of traditional or newly-composed Tibetan songs, guitar, and electronic bass. The vocal melody is pentatonic in duple meter and the sound is somewhat nasal and high in range. Vocal ornamentation is in imitation of the piwang instrumental tremolo technic, which makes the sound more emotional.

Joyous exclaimations bazhahei are set to cadential rhythmic/melodic patterns at the end of each line. These cadential patterns are typical not only in traditional Tibetan
songs, but also in those newly-composed or sung in Mandarin. They immediately identify a song as “Tibetan” to Chinese audiences. They can even be found in the song *Beijing jinshanshang* “On the Golden Mountain in Beijing” composed during the Cultural Revolution to praise the regime.

The integration of three different music styles can be heard—African drumming, traditional Tibetan folk style, and western pop, through the repetition of the same melodic motive introduced sequentially. Each time a new layer of instrumentation is added, enriching the musical texture, and providing a diverse cultural soundscape. The guitar, bass and drum set expand the pitch range into both the higher and lower register and create the harmonic foundation and sense of space.
In contrast, Reshi performed the song “Himalayas” with only piano accompaniment.
Because of the major impression the film had made world-wide, as well as on young Chinese and Tibetans, a song from the film was ensured of popularity, and this is the reason that both Reshi and the Mani Stone Band included it on their CDs.

(iii) Mani Stone Band

(a) Himalayas

The song entitled Xima Laya (喜马拉雅, Himalayas)\(^{26}\) is introduced with the Tibetan ritual *suzu gongs* (Tibetan singing bowl) and *dril bu* (Tibetan hand bell). The sustained ringing sound is followed by the guitarist strumming a dissonant chord (see transcription).
HIMALAYAS

2013 Mani Stone recording

Composer: Bruno Coulais
Transcribe by Xi Yang

Tibetan Singing Bowl

Duration: 1"-11"

ringing

Ting Song

Drum Set

Main Vocalist

Background Vocal

Pieron

Guitar

^{4}p_{4}^{3} Roll

p 13/5 - 20/8

\text{mm.}
Figure 23: Transcription of Xi Ma La Ya (“Himalayas”)
The live performance of the song I recorded was slightly different from the CD version. It was elaborated and extended by adding a new section to the introduction, maximizing the musical materials. This added part suggested a spacious pasture through two musical motifs: a rubato section featuring the hand bell, reminding of the brass bell worn by Tibetan ponies, as well as drum and vocal sounds suggesting herding of livestock. This was followed by a rhythmic and melodic section, falling into a regular drum pattern and guitar strumming, together with exclamatory vocal line.

Echo effects were added to the sound system, creating a sound image of vast open grassland (see transcription).
Figure 27: Transcription of the concert version of “Himalayas”.
The musicians’ upper garments were white, symbolizing the white *katag*, and the snow-covered mountains of Tibet. (For this year’s special tour, the band also included an Ugyur performer, Keli Mu, a percussionist—not shown in the picture. According to their agent Zang, Keli Mu graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, and the band recruited him recently). I asked Mu whether he felt “uncomfortable” playing with the band as he is of a different religion, and he responded that “as long as they respect my religion, it is ok for me. Everyone in the band is very nice to me, and they try to make me feel comfortable in the band.” This expresses the basic value of inclusiveness in Tibetan religion, where difference is not only tolerated but embraced.

[The poster, in the blue Chinese characters, reads: “The first Tibetan Yuansheng
Tai band, Mani Stone Band, Shangri La stop”). Since Tibetan YST music started later than that of other minorities, this may suggest that the whole discourse of YST music in China has changed with the addition of Tibetan cultural values.

(b) “The Six True Words”

The Mani Stone band performs a composition in the Mani Diaoj category of sutra called Liuzi Zhenyan (六字真言“The six true words”), which I was able to hear in their Shangri La performance, and which is also included on their CD called Mani Stone Band. Liuzi zhenyan refers to the six syllables of the Sanskrit mantra “om mani padme hum,” and the name of the band (Mani Stone) refers to a stone plate inscribed with these six syllables. This piece was also included in Reshi’s album Shangri La. According to University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa professor, Dr. Anna Stirr, the song was composed by a group of Nepali musicians who had not yet actually formed a band. But because the song became widely popular, people began to refer to the band as the “One-hit Wonder Band”.

The song lyrics are in two parts, with the beginning and ending six syllables in Sanskrit, and the middle in Nepali. Although it may not have the usual musical content and form of most of the genre of mani diao songs, the use of the six syllable mantra supports categorizing it with this group.
Figure 29: Chord Progression of the “Six Syllable Mantra”

The transcription shows that the harmonic structure of the music is the major difference from the traditional songs of this genre, which have only a single melodic line. The performance of the song suggests two major changes in Tibetan traditional music: (1) new Western compositional techniques including changes in performing style, such as singing in harmony and/or adding harmonic accompaniment; and (2) incorporating new technology such as electronic sound effects. Similar modifications can also be observed in Reshi’s Shangri La recording of the same song, using guitar and bass.

The “One-Hit Wonder” Nepali version of this song was very popular among many young Chinese-Tibetans. Reshi noted that it was considered a classic which Tibetan musicians would include in their repertoire, in spite of the Nepali lyrics (which were not always correctly pronounced, according to Dr. Anna Stirr). A promotional website of another Tibetan band’s album containing the song discloses an
additional dimension of mani diao.

“Six syllables” is a Nepali folk song, and Nepali Buddhist believers integrate religion into their everyday life. The song reflects Nepalis’ living philosophy, which is reflected in the song of a young man expressing his genuine affection for a girl”  [尼玛乐队 2013 原生音乐大碟《那一世的情歌》

Obviously most Chinese or Tibetan audiences, as well as performers, were not proficient in the Nepali language. But what has made the song so popular is the “fresh” sound of the music and the spiritualized romantic content of the song. As noted in Chapter III, the 80’s generation’s psychological development was neglected for financial success, and material success was central to ability to marry, subjugating the value of romantic love, the concept of zhenai (true love 真爱) that young Chinese saw expressed in Korean dramas. The song content expresses a young man’s affection for a girl, and by adding the mantra at the beginning gives divine value to human love. Hence, the traditional use of the mantra is transformed from a way of gaining status in the life cycle of rebirth into a better situation, to use for problem solving in the present.

(c) Tsangyang Gyatso Love Song

The song was performed in the intermission of the Mani Stone band concert in Shangri La by guitarist Bayi of the band and Mongolian female singer Ba Yin 八音27. It was the first time I had heard the song, which was very familiar to most of the audience (as I could tell by their cheering and singing along). Tsangyang Gyatso28
(1683-1706) was the sixth Dalai Lama during the Qing dynasty era of emperor Kang Xi 康熙 (1654-1722). I first heard of him from the secretary of SFMPA, Norbu, and other SFMPA associates. The sixth Dalai Lama has recently become very popular through the media and is now considered the representation of romance for the younger generation. I was fascinated to learn his personal story and popular “love” poems he composed. Norbu was critical about the commercialization of Tsangyang Gyatso’s image as a “lover,” feeling that his purity and spiritual elements were not sufficiently emphasized. His mysterious death at 25, as well as the fragmentation of historical records, added more to his mystique. His songs and poems frequently contradict the principles of the Yellow Hat sect, and he was especially known for the Cangyang Jiacuo Qingshi (Tsangyang Gyatso Love Poem, 仓央嘉措情诗), which was performed at the intermission of the event I attended.

The lyrics were from one of Tsangyang Gyatso’s poems, although the music composer is not clear—partly this is because the terms “poem” and “song” often refer to the same thing in Chinese, and also it is common practice for most Tibetan music productions to omit composer information. Like Himalayas, this song has become extremely popular and currently is one of the “standards”.

There is a legend that Tsangyang Gyatso actually asked his teacher to “undo” the ritual that had made him become a monk, because he was in love. The song text expresses his romantic nature, relevant to young Chinese in today’s society. The song was minor, in the pentatonic scale of most Chinese folk songs, accompanied by guitar, in ballad style. The tempo was relatively slow, accommodating the duple meter sung
narrative. The overall imagery of the performance shared some similarities with representations of the troubadours during the European middle ages (1100-1350). Troubadour music had some rhetorical, musical, and poetic similarities with its subject matter of romance and courtly love, and plucked lute being the preferred accompanying instrument. This presentational style increases the recognition of Tsangyang Gyatso as a symbol of romantic love.

Lyrics:

那一天，我转动所有的经筒不为超度不为来生只为你的温暖
那一世，我转山转水只为途中与你相见，啊~转山转水转佛塔只为途中与你相见
你那美丽的脸庞
That day, I was turning all the prayer wheels, but not praying for chaodu (a ritual performance after a person’s death in order to help the person to a better world) or rebirth, but for your warmth.
In that life, I was circling around the mountains, rivers, and Buddha tower (pagoda), and I met yo, ai~ just from meeting you on the way and seeing your beautiful face.

The lyrics reflect his rebellion from the standardized social norm of Tibetan religious traditions. He believes in this life and yearns for emotional expression of love, with which the 80s generation deeply identified. He feels a strong sense of being “misplaced” reflected in the lyrics “like turning the prayer wheels not praying for chaodu or reincarnation but for your warmth”. He would gladly relinquish the responsibilities of the Dalai Lama for the romance he most yearns for. The 80s generation identify with his short and dramatic life experience. They also felt deeply “misunderstood” and lack of free will, with responsibilities forced on them by the
dominant society during a period of dramatic social change. Many popular writings, both fiction and semi-fiction, portrayed him as the “saint” of romance. “Maji Ami” depicted in one of Tsangyang Gyatso’s poems was popularly contextualized as the beautiful girl he imagined, or possibly his secret lover.

This sort of song, extremely popular with the young post-Mao generation, differed greatly from romantic songs throughout the history of gang-tai music. They greatly desired songs that would express their collective memories, love, and emotional feelings, but coming from Tibetan sources, especially a Dalai Lama who had his own generational conflicts and romances, brought it to a higher spiritual realm, conveying the philosophical quality of compassion. Tibetan religion uniquely fit this new expression of romance. Steve Brown states that “music serves principally as a cooperative device within social groups to foster both internal harmony for its own sake and group solidarity in the face of intergroup conflict” (Brown 2006: 3). Tsangyang Gyatso was commodified and disseminated mainly through this pop music genre, and provided internal solidarity and clearer self identity within the post-Mao generation, in the face of the generational conflict previously discussed.

(iv) Summary: Whose Authenticity?

This chapter has demonstrated many modifications in performance style and interpretation of Tibetan-source music. From most Tibetans’ perspective, authenticity is understood to be closely related to their religion. To be authentic, music must be connected with spirituality. Tibetan musicologist Wangxiu Cai Dan
summarized that the primary characteristic of Tibetan pop music is taking out the source of Traditional Tibetan music and culture elements (2008). Authenticity is perceived from a Buddhist point of view that "performing good moral and devotional acts would insure one of rebirth in more favorable circumstances in the future, and in this way gradually raising one's level of spiritual attainment" (Burton 1993). Such spiritual attainment is evaluated by its high moral and ethical values, rather than being just a YST artistic work. This is reflected in the setting of Tibetan musicians’ performances, and the importance of the framing of their representations, different from other Chinese minority groups. Reshi considers himself somewhat a "gate keeper" of his culture, constantly insisting on spiritual and moral values in evaluating YST performance, as well as in the values of his research organization, the SFMPA, and in his album. Many Tibetan musicians may consider Sa Dingding less authentic, even though her audiences thought she was authentic, because her performances did not fulfill Tibetan Buddhist moral and ethical values. In addition, Sa Dingding violated a Tibetan code of conduct by wearing a Buddha figure on her clothes for commercial purposes. See figure 17.

However, Reshi also says that, "Tibetan culture and religion need to adapt new forms in a new manifestation, otherwise it will die out." But I also note his concerns regarding tourism development, not only in Shangri La but also in other Tibetan areas. Commercialization helps to support revitalization and valorization of the Tibetan Buddhist culture, in addition to re-establishing the significance of Tibetan culture for all Chinese society. The Tibetan folk musicians’ concerns were more for the
appropriate atmosphere/setting for a performance, rather the question of whether or not the music was "authentic". Most Tibetan folk musicians realize how traditions and folk culture are vulnerable to outside influences caused by commodification. One picture Reshi included in his *Shangrila* album brochure is a big red sign for the "Ganden Sumtseing Gompa Jewellery Agency" inside the Ganden Sumtseing Gompa monastery, juxtaposed with a traditional Tibetan *tanka* painting. His comment is: the "Ganden Sumtseing Gompa Jewellery Agency, a parasite, lives on the [Tibetan] religion"

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 30**: A Picture From Reshi’s *Shangrila* Album.

demonstrated in other images he chose to include in expressing his somewhat sympathetic critique. On the next page is a ruined wall from the debris of an old Tibetan home. A comment on the top of left side says “a ruined wall behind the Ganden Sumtseing Gompa monastery is also part of the monastery”.

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Modernization has had a considerable effect on Tibetans, even though they seem to live far away from the urban Han. Some of this is illustrated through Reshi’s album pictures, contrasting with the album music which conveys moral and spiritual values. Musicians like Reshi and Dege Ye, as well as the rest of Mani Stone members, understand the best way of living is neither full rejection of modern conveniences, nor full embracing of modernity without critical thinking. This demonstrates their Buddhist identity, which is the acceptance of reality, yet with continuing mindfulness of oneself.

The problem with commercialization was also what attracted the young city professionals to Shangri La. Reshi’s music and its associations provided a space to let
them express their feelings. Another album picture features a stop sign with the backdrop of a distant snow-covered mountain. A young city friend’s comment was included: “The Yulong mountain is the left side, not far away, yet always the same distance from us, as if we could never reach it. . . city people like me carries too many mundane things, and no pure heart. I am afraid our presence would only offend the holy spirit of the mountain.”

Figure 32: Picture from Reshi’s Shangrila album.

The symbolic meaning of this picture is clear—a juxtaposition of modernity and nature, city and rural, majority and minority, impure and pure, as well as mundane and divine.

In this sense, the question of whose authenticity, the focus of this section,
becomes somewhat ironic as the nature of Tibetan popular music as many juxtapositions begins to be seen. These many juxtapositions are the result of many years of market-oriented learning and developing experiences of Tibetan pop musicians and their music. In order to be recognized as a genre, it had to find a position in the Chinese market, emphasizing the continuation of Tibet as part of China. Wangxiu states that in the 21st century, this, “together with the rapid increase in popularity of Tibetan culture, Tibetan cultural studies, and increasing demand for Tibetan tourism etc., had influence on the development of Tibetan popular music and its dissemination” (4). From China’s historical perspective, Tibet and Tibetan culture are inseparable from their Buddhist religious roots. These have been reinterpreted by most Tibetan musicians based on their spiritually-attained ethnic identity. Often identity and authenticity have been paired like yin and yang in the economic contention for legitimacy. As Dave Laing states in his concept of “imagined Markets”-- “such a music market can involve consumers of musical goods and services, employers of musicians’ labor power, and/or businesses that use music” (2003: 309). In his definition, the music marketed as Tibetan music from Tibet, must be recognized as part of this imagined “Chinese market” consisting of Tibet and China as one historical entity.
Chapter VI: Conclusion

i) Summary of Research

The response of Tibetan musicians in Yunnan to opportunities for marketing their music to young Han Chinese tourists demonstrates a convergence of the Chinese government’s development of minority areas and performers with the current interests and passions of the post-Mao generation.

Much of this is due to their recent immersion in pop and media sources of Tibetan culture, its rituals and music. The earlier media sources, as well as Shangri La musicians, have recontextualized Tibetan Buddhist representations and performances, and these have had great appeal because of:

With increasing access to more remote areas, tourist attraction to minority areas (earlier focused on observing the exotic customs of rural peoples) became more focused on “tourism as pilgrimage”, a reflection of the post-Mao generation’s collective memories of the fictional Monkey King in the Journey to the West in their travel to the “west” of China. The purpose of the story’s journey was to search for Buddhist wisdom, which resembles the motives of young travelers today. At the same time, the rapid development of a middle class with economic power to afford cars, together with the improvement of roads, provided the opportunity to make such pilgrimage journeys.

In a way, repackaging of Tibetan Buddhism has undergone a process of “gentrification” fueled by tourism development and the demands of a new generation of consumers. Therefore certain aspects of Tibetan Buddhism were selected and
framed by a new generation of Tibetan musicians, highlighting the music itself, nature, and space in the mountains.

The post-Mao generation, both Han and Tibetan, were yearning for spirituality due to the lack of intimacy in their modern lives—both physical and psychological. Pop culture and the internet have provided significant outlets for people to express their bitterness, as well as to vent their desires for romantic love and intimacy.

As noted in Chapter Three, government policies towards economic development of minority areas based on tourism have changed a lot over the past three decades, from an earlier desire to civilize their “backwards” cultures to the current attitude of preserving and protecting. As part of economic survival, local governments in the minority areas began to exploit the unique characteristics of local minority culture based on new tourism development models, often shaped by international influences such as UNESCO, as well as international entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, increasing numbers of Han entrepreneurs, driven by the intensified economic competition in urban areas, moved to the less competitive rural, often minority, areas seeking economic success. These external influences all worked together to shape the changing physical, social, and cultural landscapes of these areas, as exemplified in Lijiang and Shangri La.

Tim Oakes (academic researcher in China’s tourism development) concludes that “tourism in China is thriving on ‘the experience of anxiety, ambivalence, and disorientation brought by modernity’ and [that] the need to ‘travel’ into the past is a response to problems related to rapid modernization, and particularly anxieties about
the contradiction between modernizing and maintaining continuity with the past” (42). This observation was certainly verified through my studies of Tibetan musicians and other Tibetan-derived pop music production. The relating of musical sound to the land, to a culture that is shaped by the environment, and above all to ritual, was essential to Tibetan musician Reshi Tsering Tan and members of the Mani Stone Band. Appealing to the current social anxieties of the post-Mao generation, their music is associated with a particular past, a past that speaks clearly to this generation—embodied in the Chinese utopia of shiwai taoyuan (or the foreign term for that utopia, Shangri La). The music performed in Shangri La constructs spirituality through its ritualistic stage setting, musicians’ costumes, burning incense, and the use of instruments associated with meditation—all elements adding to the atmosphere of ritual meditation. This continuity with the past has not been defined by the government, but by the sensitive performers. The financial achievements of the post-Mao generation, both Han and minority, have given many the freedom to choose, consume, and to support cultural values of importance to them, as well as to choose and critique social issues.

(ii) Contemporary Urban Consumption of Tibetan-based Meditation and Music

Increasing numbers of urban “Han” or sinicized peoples are practicing Tibetan Buddhism in their daily city lives, drawing on its spiritual and religious aspects as relief from their aggregated social problems and environmental issues which have resulted from the intensified economic development and modernization34. Many
different modern media facilitate this. In both monastery Buddhist practice and lay remote participation, music is the center that integrates rituals, performances, and individual meditation, and many Tibetan musicians collaborate with the monks and masters in production of Tibetan Buddhist music for such consumption.

In the Jushi (lay community 居士), there are many methods for group practice, not only private or public locations, but most significantly online resources. One participant introduced me to several online sources which I could join, such as YY Yuyin (YY 语音), a major Chinese video-based social network with over 300 million members.\(^{35}\) YY includes an online broadcasting function which allows any individual to either establish or participate in a community-based social channel. The individual identification among members is unlike a conventional social network in which members cannot identify each other, although YY does limit this access somewhat.

Following the instructions provided, I joined a Buddhist channel called *Chiming nianfo tang* (Chiming Buddhist reciting room 持明念佛堂) which broadcasts a variety of Buddhist-related music—including sutra and mantra sung in either Sanskrit or Mandarin. The majority of these use popular music technology and play twenty-four hours a day. The interface allows you to see others who are simultaneously online and provides their general location. There is also a chat function, and other functions permitting many different communal activities.
The creator of Chiming uses the combination of the auspicious emblem from Tibetan Buddhism for its channel icon (on the top-left corner). The cosmological symbol of a white moon and golden sun above a lotus flower occupies the middle portion of the icon. In Vajrayana Buddhism, the moon and sun represent the male aspect of method or compassion embodied in the white moon symbol and feminine aspect of wisdom embodied in the golden sun\(^3\)\(^{36}\) (Beer, 2003, 80). A notice states that “this place is for gongxiu (practice of Buddhism) purposes”. The top right portion is a bulletin board announcing various online Buddhist activities, such as live broadcasts of masters lectures.

YY is only one example of what is available online. Another social network Weixin (Wechat 微信) also shares Tibetan Buddhist information in interactive and personalized communication modes. It is more personalized than YY and is usually shared with friends. “Many different lay communities share the chatting room and
maintain active communication among group members with the same master.”

Figure 34: Wei Xin (Wechat in English)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender ratio</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 above</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The popularity of Wechat allows information to be circulated throughout a large segment of society, and facilitates more enhanced social interaction unlimited by space and time constraints. Significantly this site has functioned to alleviate social anxiety regarding marriage, due to this generation’s major gender imbalance numbers (far more young men seeking spouses than eligible women). The chart clearly demonstrates the dominance of male Wechat users between the ages of 20 and 30.
good demonstration of social interaction in Wechat is information shared on the recent unfortunate fire in Shangri La.

**(iii) Nationalism in and Chinese National Identity of the Post-Mao Generation**

In many ways, a new articulation of nationalism and the assessing-reassessing Chinese national identity can be seen through the approaches of both Reshi and the Mani Stone Band to marketing their music, which fit into the broader context of Chinese national identity, and specifically, the problematic place of Tibet in that context. This is seen not only in how the Tibetans in Shangri La are very actively trying to portray themselves as “model” Tibetans, but also in their full immersion in the consumerism and capitalism that the Chinese government has sought since the beginnings of economic reform. Some of this was suggested in Reshi’s performance for the Beijing BMW. Parallel to the ambiguous nature of the Tibetan music these musicians perform, the fragmented ideas about nationalism and Chinese national identity can be seen in this case study. With “money control” rather than “ideology control” (emphasized by previous Maoist or Deng Xiaoping ideologies), the current government’s ideology can be interpreted in various ways, which has been the main incentive for Reshi and other Tibetan musicians to continue to play a role in this larger nationalism context.

**(iv) A Shangri La Disaster and its Future**

In January 11th 2014, a fire destroyed the ancient Tibetan old town Dekuzong in
Shangri La where I did my fieldwork over the summer of 2013. Through Wechat I discovered the news from my friend, Nomnom (owner of the Shangri La guest house where I stayed). He sent me many pictures via the private message channel, and also shared his feelings with the pictures he took (similar to Facebook’s timeline).

Figure 36: Picture of Shangri La old town posted by Nomnom, with the comment: “Shangrila old town almost burnt down very sad” with six crying faces.

Three days later, another notice was posted about an upcoming fundraising music concert in Beijing by a Tibetan musician Zhaxi, and the news was circulated among other mutual friends.
Figure 37: Message: “On January 11th, 2014, a fire destroyed much of the Dukezong old town in Shangrila, Yunnan province, burning down many historical buildings, and a lot of people lost their homes. There is an urgent need for help, and we call upon everyone to support [the recovery of the town]. Riyue Lika, together with the Blue Sky Rescue Team, are hosting “Everlasting Light: Shangrila Dukezong old town fundraising concert” on January 17th, 2014, January 17th at 7:30 pm.”

Wechat moment permits video clips and music to be uploaded and shared. Dege Ye (of the Mani Stone Band) shared his own song “Foshuo” (佛说  Buddha Says) as a way of responding to the unexpected news with great sympathy. When I listened to the song, it was a Tsangyang Gaytso love song, sung in Mandarin with Morin Khuur playing the lead and also including cymbal, drum set, guitar and bass to provide rhythmic and harmonic structure throughout the song.
Even though the concert was held in Beijing with a relatively a small stage, it was reported in great detail through Wechat by the participants, both performers and audience.
Furthermore in terms of the music and performers, through close examination of the music product that the organizer intended to deliver from the carefully selected program, it was noticeable that the music was compartmentalized into four transcendental and progressive religious themes (suffering, enlightenment, hope and perpetuity). The presentation of Tibetan music and musicians was articulated in an embraceable social image that indicates its significant position in this large social drama that has been playing out in China since the new millennium.
In his research of popular music culture, Nimrod Baranovitch notes that “popular music is one of the largest and richest public spheres in China today . . . popular music often crosses sociocultural and political lines and constitutes a site where intense interaction between different sociocultural and political forces takes place and multiple voices are heard” (2003:2). The market demand for Tibetan religious-inspired popular music conveying spirituality is demonstrated in this thesis. Baranovitch’s observation seems to acknowledge the major political and sociocultural influence of popular music in China. However, I would argue that Tibetan music and musicians go far beyond only this—to deeply influence those things that humans need most—nurturing of their emotional and spiritual lives, and the gaining of ultimate wisdom.
Endnotes

1 Although this family structure represents a general profile of the post-Mao generation, it does not
2 Because there is some overlap with those born in the late 70s or early 90s, I will use the more
inclusive term “Post-Mao generation” interchangeably with baling hou.
3 The poem was circulated on different internet portals. My source is:
http://tieba.baidu.com/p/2301005317
4 The term “thirty to established” (三十而立) is a common Chinese idiom expressing that one should
be able to establish oneself in adult roles and success by age thirty. The concept came from Confucius’
5 The source is Baike website “九年义务教育”
http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=ywKihsr-vvFCsxb8_oD4ej40iiphPbztqkBPA1N2De7zNoOJJDnlSQ
WJKTw4mWzug6rv7jJ-d-cwxcMZLv9wa(Accessed November, 2012)
6 The significance of the gaokao has decreased somewhat in recent years as overseas education has
become possible and affordable. For this reason, since 2004 many students sit for the SAT or ACT
exams, to qualify for admission to American universities. This is another difference between 80s
and later generations.
7 Xiabo notes that possession of the personal dossier giving the danwei power over their employees for
any job transfer.
8 The Monkey King tales have become such a symbol of this generation of Chinese, not only in China
but throughout the diaspora, that an exhibit originating at the Children’s Museum of Manhattan is
touring the country for the second time in eight years. The executive director of the museum told
China Daily that the curators worked with New York City’s Flushing community (high proportion of
Chinese) to develop the idea for the exhibit. “We asked one simple question: If you’re growing up in
China, or you’re Chinese American, how do you learn about your own culture? And the Monkey King
came up over and over again.” The museum sent a team to China to view cave etchings of the legend,
and consulted Chinese scholar Anthony Yu, who translated the original text of the 16th century novel.
In the Monkey King story, value is placed on teamwork and keeping every member of the team safe.
This touring exhibit was to be featured at the Children’s Discovery Center in Honolulu during late 2013
and early 2014.
9 I note that Vanessa Fong does not discuss this much in her book Only Hope (2004). Because she
discusses hiring tutors (an expensive luxury) for the only children, I am assuming that the parents of
the 80s singletons she interviewed had not suffered extreme financial loss in the privatizing of the
danwei.
10 This poem was found from a Baike Wikipedia search on baling hou (accessed November, 2012).
11 I created this graph from figures obtained from the same Baike Wikipedia search on baling hou
13 I did my undergraduate degree in musicology at the Xinghai Conservatory of Music. Every summer
the department’s instructors would take students to a rural area of China for fieldwork. In 2003,
twelve of us visited a Miao village in Guizhou province. This place was “very experienced” (老手)
with tourists’ interests, and adapted their performances accordingly. Although I looked far more like
my subjects than did Oakes and Schein, some of my observations were similar to theirs. Our group
missed the usual lanlaju (road-block wine greeting), bypassing the main village entrance to enter via a
I heard a recording of a famous Hong Kong pop singer, Zhang Xueyou, being played. When we reached the center of the village, where most rituals, performances and annual meetings were held, an ethnic performance (which Schein would have identified as “staging authenticity”) was presented. However I noticed a modern touch among the performers—a middle school Miao boy was holding his English textbook, prepared to rush home to study after the final performance. It was the same English textbook I had used in middle school.

Despite the desire to stage authenticity in developing ethnic tourism, Miao also want a good education for their children, showing their desire for modernity. If they must commodify their ethnic identity for profit to get this modernity, that is what they will do. I was not surprised that the boy would rush home to do his English homework after participating in a traditional performance. These young minority children are natural performers, living double lives, both traditional and modern, “other” and “Chinese,” in this complex singular-in-pluralized Chinese society.

Rees cites Kofi Agawu’s description of European researchers’ “motif of the music-making African (1992, 248) as a model for this essentialist view that China’s minorities are “song and dance” peoples, noting that one of the most common types of scholarly publication on Chinese music, both Han and minority, is the song or instrumental anthology (24).

In 2003, Erwei Dong, a PhD candidate at Penn State, reported on a survey of various tourist destinations in Yunnan, measuring their stage of development against Butler’s 1980 model of tourist destination lifecycles. “Ethnic Tourism Development in Yunnan, China: Revisiting Butler’s Tourist Area Lifecycle,” Proceedings of the 2003 Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium. His conclusion was that the theoretical model was not adequate to explain the geographic progression of ethnic tourism to ever more remote areas. According to the model, tourist destinations progress through six stages of development: exploration, involvement, consolidation, stagnation, and decline or rejuvenation. He also quoted Cohen, 1999, in a definition of Ethnic tourism as: (1) a variety of “site-seeing” tourism that (2) targets groups that do not fully belong culturally, socially, or politically to the majority population of the state within whose boundaries they live and that are (3) touristically “marked” owing to their alleged ecological boundedness or cultural distinctiveness, uniqueness, or “otherness.” He goes on to say that ethnic tourism differs from traditional forms of tourism because it is based on the conflict between the dominating government’s intent to control the unassimilated ethnic tribes and the tourists’ motivation to experience authentic and marginal ethnic cultures.

Some locals thought that tourism actually caused the earthquake, because their local mountain god Saddo, deity of Lijiang basin, was upset with the intrusion of tourists pouring in and construction, cable cars, roads, and power lines around the mountain. McKhann notes that the old town is no longer inhabitable for local residents, because of the great demand of changing it to accommodate the large number of domestic tourists. Homes have been turned into hotels, guest houses, souvenir shops, restaurants, and bars. The old town has become a very inconvenient place to live.

This is a translation of the notes on the back of the demo CD “Manishi Yuetuan” (Mani Stone Band)

The origin of the term can be traced back to the poem written by the Sixth Dalai Lama.

The source is the https://panasianmusicfestival.stanford.edu/about.html (accessed in April 2014)
The song “Karma” was part of the sound track of the 1999 film “Himalayas” directed by Eric Valli. Bruno Coulais was the composer.

They got married in 2014.

Tsangyang Gaytso’s birthplace was Tawang, India (claimed by China as south Tibet).

The social construction of Tsangyang Gaytso’s image as “Qing sheng” (The Saint of Romance 情圣) was deeply ingrained in popular thinking, beyond the scope of what he had actually become. Ifeng.com http://culture.ifeng.com/whrd/detail_2011_01/14/4277503_0.shtml. (accessed in April, 2014)

Tsangyang Gyetso: The Sixth Dalai Lama, written by Ping Gao

The sixth Dalai Lama radically differed in his beliefs from the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism (Yellow Hat Sect), which had begun to have strong political influence during the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama.

The name of this Tibetan restaurant in Beijing was mentioned in the previous chapter.

“Zijia You” (自驾游) means to drive oneself on a tour, popular since 2000. Baidu baike.

According to a 2007 report “Research on the Demographic Composition of Chinese Religion in Contemporary China” by Liu Zhongyu, a professor in Chinese cultural religion studies at East China Normal University, 63 percent of Buddhist believers were between the ages of 16 and 35. “The investigation shows that three billion Chinese have a religion, and Buddhism is more likely chosen by the elite.”


Only a small proportion of those who use the Buddhist sites are devotees of Tibetan Buddhism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glossary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Du kezhong or Dokar Dzong</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ancient town in Shangri La</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gang-Tai pop</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music from Hong Kong (Xiang Gang) and Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>當前和台灣. The term is only heard in the PRC because people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and other regions outside of</td>
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<tr>
<td>China proper see large distinctions between Hong Kong</td>
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<tr>
<td>and Taiwan pop. In most cases, the use of the term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gang-Tai therefore represents the opinions of people in</td>
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<tr>
<td>the PRC about Mandopop produced outside of its borders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mantra</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A sacred utterance, a group of words believed to have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some psychological and spiritual power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neitui</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal retirement for people under sixty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shiwei taoyuan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese term for utopia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sutra</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An aphorism or a collection of aphorisms in a manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or, more broadly a Buddhist or Hindu text.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Xuan Zang</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(602-664), a Chinese Buddhist monk, scholar, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traveler who travelled to India from China during the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tang dynasty. He translated the Heart Sutra into</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese, the most popular version of the sutra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognized by most of Chinese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yuan shengtai</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese term for authentic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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