

# BOULDER-LHASA SISTER CITY PROJECT

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## Boulder-Lhasa Sister City Exchange Boulder, Colorado 25-28 July 2025

### Tibetan Names

Tibetan names can be romanized by transcription of the spoken language or by transliteration of the written text. In China, Pinyin is the official transcription system for the Tibetan language and is based on the pronunciation of the Lhasa dialect. Wylie transliteration of Tibetan script is a widely used method. This report is primarily for Westerners, for whom Pinyin is usually confusing. **Therefore, in this report Tibetan names are written using the common spelling of the Wylie transliteration.** For example, the Pinyin name of the interpreter for the Lhasa delegation is Deji Qunzhen; her Wylie name is Dekyi Chodron.

### Proposal from Lhasa

On 14 April 2025, I (Bill Warnock) received an email from the Lhasa Foreign Affairs Office with an exchange proposal for further enhancing the traditional friendship between Boulder and Lhasa. I learned that the governments of Xizang Autonomous Region (XAR) [now the official name of this province-level administrative division] and Lhasa were planning to organize a delegation to Boulder for a cultural performance and meetings with Mayor Brockett, me, and others. We were asked if it would be convenient for us to make arrangements to receive the delegation.

We were immediately very interested in the proposal and formed a working group to develop and plan the exchange, consisting primarily of Aaron Brockett, Mayor of Boulder; Tina Marquis, Boulder City Council Member & Council Liaison with BLSCP; Stefan Goldberg, BLSCP Secretary-Treasurer, and myself. As with many previous Boulder-Lhasa exchanges, the Lhasa Foreign Affairs Office was the point of contact for Tibet, and I was the point of contact for Boulder. Through many emails and WeChat texts, we exchanged relevant information and successfully developed the exchange. As we agreed, the Lhasa delegation would be responsible for the expenses of its trip.

The Lhasa delegation was composed of a Official Group and a Performers Group:

No.	Name	Gender	Ethnicity	Title
1	Liu Lin	Male	Han	Deputy Director of Foreign Affairs Office, XAR
2	Dekyi Chodron	Female	Tibetan	Section Chief of Foreign Affairs Office, XAR (interpreter )
3	Liu Fuping	Male	Han	Director of Lhasa Foreign Affairs Office
4	Ge Tongrong	Male	Han	Deputy Director of Lhasa Sports Bureau

No.	Name	Gender	Ethnicity	Title
1	Yan Wei	Male	Han	Director of Lhasa Culture and Tourism Bureau
2	Namgyal Gyaltsso	Male	Tibetan	Dance Actor of Lhasa Song and Dance Troupe
3	Nyima Dorje	Male	Tibetan	
4	Ngawang Lodroe	Male	Tibetan	
5	Jigme Namgyal	Male	Tibetan	
6	Kalsang Tsomo	Female	Tibetan	
7	Dekyi Yangzom	Female	Tibetan	
8	Gardron	Female	Tibetan	
9	Phuntsok Yuldon	Female	Tibetan	
10	Pu Tenzin	Male	Tibetan	Vocal Actor of Lhasa Song and Dance Troupe
11	Dolma Lhamo	Female	Tibetan	



**front row: Kalsang Tsomo, Gardron, Dekyi Yangzom, Phuntsok Yuldon, Dolma Lhamo**

**middle row: Pu Tenzin, Stefan Goldberg, Bill Warnock, Tina Marquis. Tara Winer, Aaron Brockett, Liu Lin, Liu Fuping, Yan Wei, Dekyi Chodron, Ge Tongrong**

**back row: Jigme Namgyal, Namgyal Gyaltsso, Nyima Dorje, Ngawang Lodroe**

The Lhasa delegation hired a Chinese tourism company, China Travel Group, to make all of their ground arrangements. An American tourism company, Shine Tours, collaborated with China Travel Group and provided two local travel guides. My entire exchange experience with travel agents Liu Mingzhe & Joseph Chi and local travel guides David Dai & Flora Wang was very pleasant and gave me more time to enjoy making friends with the Lhasa delegates.

**July 26 11:00 am - brunch at Chautauqua Dining Hall**

Nothing in life is perfect, but the venue, the weather, the food, and meeting the Performers Group were (OK, nearly) perfect! I thoroughly enjoyed presenting my BLSCP card to each member and doing my best to pronounce their names correctly!



**front row: Dekyi Yangzom, Phuntsok Yuldon, Gardron, Kalsang Tsomo, Dolma Lhamo**

**middle row: Ngawang Lodroe, Yan Wei, Bill Warnock, Aaron Brockett, Stefan Goldberg, Nyima Dorje**

**back row: Pu Tenzin, Namgyal Gyaltsso, Jigme Namgyal**

**July 26 2:00 pm - Canyon Theatre inspection**

For the Special Cultural Performance, we booked the Canyon Theater at the Boulder Public Library. The Canyon Theater is a 190-seat venue, that is available free of charge for community events that are free and open to the public. Sam, the theater coordinator, was available to answer all technical questions from the performers. This allowed them to use the setup time on July 27 for rehearsal!

**July 26 6:13 pm - Official Group arrives at Denver International Airport**

I was invited to ride to DIA to welcome the Official Group, whom we met at the top of the escalator. They were immediately engaging in spite of their long travel time from Lhasa. Dekyi Chodron, the Lhasa delegation interpreter, and I enjoyed a captivating conversation during the entire trip to Boulder. I accepted an invitation to join the group for dinner at the Oak Restaurant for delicious food and further discussions.



### **July 27 11:30 am - lunch at Zoe Ma Ma restaurant**

The Official Group, Tina Marquis (Boulder City Council Member), Stefan Goldberg, and I all enjoyed the Chinese food. Then Dr. Goldberg presented a one-page summary of his concept, "Lhasa presents a unique and valuable opportunity to contribute to the global control of tuberculosis (TB)." He is a long-time expert on TB and has also been very active in mountaineering for many years. His summary explains how mountaineering activities have a good record for providing financial support for medical research and treatment. Therefore, it is possible that a mountaineering program could be developed to help support TB research. The entire Official Group liked Dr. Goldberg's concept.

Mr. Liu Lin, Deputy Director of the XAR Foreign Affairs Office, invited Mayor Brockett to lead a Boulder Mayoral Delegation to Lhasa in 2026 and welcomed TB control research and mountaineering tourism as exchange topics. He indicated that he would connect us with the relevant ministries in Lhasa, starting with email communications later in 2025.

### **July 27 2:00 pm - Special Cultural Performance**

The Lhasa Song and Dance Troupe performed "Traditional Tibetan Opera, Dances, and Songs" at the Canyon Theater at the Boulder Public Library. This event was free and open to the public for all ages. Sam, the theater coordinator, texted me that his "rough count" of the audience was 97. Since the audience included 15 Lhasa delegates and 5 Boulder representatives, our guests totaled around 77. Each of the ten programs (numbers) was excellent and appreciated by the audience. The enthusiasm, energy, skills, and costumes of the performers were absolutely outstanding and delightful.

The following descriptions of the ten numbers are examples of how Tibetan folk songs and dances explore various themes, including the beauty of the Tibetan landscape, love and personal life, and labor and community. The photos were taken by me from my front-row seat. If you would like to have the actual audio that was played for each number, just let me know. Then I will send you a Google Drive link that will allow you to download the entire 55 minutes of performance audio (189.5 MB) to your device.

#### **1. Lhamo • Tashi Sholpak *Auspicious Ode* - Tibetan Opera (Four men and four women dance actors)**

A journey into the legendary world created by the 15th-century master Thangtong Gyalpo: With vividly colored masks, the performers portray distinct identities and personalities, conveying the historical essence and cultural significance of Tibetan people. Lhamo, often hailed as the "living fossil" of Tibetan culture, boasts a history of over 600 years. Like a radiant beam of light across the plateau, it illuminates our shared cultural memory and connects us through the timeless power of art.



2. Song: *Snow Land Ancient City, Sacred Lhasa* (Dolma Lhamo)

Through the beauty of song, Lhasa no longer feels distant. As the night gently fades, the ancient city awakens to another form of classical splendor.

3. Dance • Nangma: *Ancient Rhythms of Lhasa, Flying Steps* (Four women and four men dance actors)

"Nangma" is a traditional Tibetan art form that blends song, dance, and instrumental music. With its refined elegance and distinct ethnic character, it has long flourished in Lhasa and is celebrated as "classical song and dance". The dance is full of subtle beauty, graceful and poised, marked by slow, rhythmic movements. In 2008, Nangma was included in the National Intangible Cultural Heritage List and has been systematically protected and passed down.



4. Song (Tibetan version): *Auspiciousness* (Pu Tenzin)

With a soaring voice, the male singer brings to life the vibrant spirit of the Tibetan people - their unwavering belief in a better life burns as brightly as the sun over the plateau, igniting in us the courage to embrace the future.

5. Dance: *Love of Eastern Tibet* (Four men and four women dance actors)

Dancers draw from the thrilling vigor of the Reba dance and the graceful elegance of the Xianzi dance to express the fiery spirit of Tibet's Kham region. The dynamic spins and leaps of Tengchen's Reba, paired with the flowing long sleeves of Batang's Xianzi, embody a perfect balance of strength and softness, celebrating the zest for life and the joy of living. Recognized as a National Intangible Cultural Heritage, this tradition burns like a sacred flame on the plateau, illuminating the path of the preservation and transmission for Tibetan culture.







6. Song: *Longing for Home* (Dolma Lhamo)

A Sherpa love song, which outlines the whispers of love and allows the soul to settle amid its soothing notes.

7. Dance: *Tsona Dreshon* (Four women dance actors)

A traditional dance.



8. Song: *I Love the Beautiful Night Scene of Lhasa* (Pu Tenzin)

9. Song: *Love Songs of Tsangyang Gyatso* (Pu Tenzin and Dolma Lhamo)



10. Dance: *Dance of the Heavenly Lake* (Four men and four women dance actors)

A song of labor rises from the shores of Heavenly Lake: All artistic treasures are born from the fertile soil of life and nourished by the sweat of labor. The inspiration for the *Dance of the Heavenly Lake* is deeply rooted in the vast landscapes of Palgon County, in western Nakchu, Tibet. This piece is not only an ode to the beauty of labor and life: it captures the serenity of the lake at dawn, the tireless efforts of the herdsmen, and the peaceful stillness of twilight. Through dance, we hope to express a deep love for this land, and to honor the enduring spirit of diligence and resilience.



**July 27 7:00 pm - dinner at Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse**

The Official Group, Yan Wei, Aaron Brockett (Mayor of Boulder), Tina Marquis (Boulder City Council Member), Stefan Goldberg, and I all enjoyed the Teahouse experience.



**Liu Fuping and Aaron Brockett**





**Natasha Steinmann, Liu Fuping, Melanie Gonglach,  
Dekyi Chodron, Ge Tongrong**

### **July 28 9:30 am - Open Space & Mountain Parks site visit**

Boulder's Open Space and Mountain Parks are a very special place. The open space lands teem with native plants and wildlife and are home to threatened and endangered species. They serve as a buffer between Boulder and nearby development. They sustain agriculture uses and add untold benefits to the natural environment - clean air, water, and earth. The lands shape the urban mosaic of the Boulder Valley and provide residents with passive recreation opportunities. Trails are used by walkers, hikers, bicyclists, horseback riders, dog walkers, and others.

The Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) Department of the City of Boulder preserves and protects the natural environment and land resources that characterize Boulder. We foster appreciation and use that sustain the natural values of the land for current and future generations. Natasha Steinmann and Melanie Gonglach, OSMP staff members, very much enjoyed sharing the Flatirons, Chautauqua, and the Open Space and Mountain Parks public lands with the Official Group.

### **July 2026 - Boulder Mayoral Delegation to Lhasa**

I believe that every activity during the entire exchange was very successful! Mayor Brockett and I will soon begin to form a delegation and plans for a Boulder Mayoral Delegation visit to Lhasa during July 2026. We look forward to meeting all of our new Lhasa friends again and conducting exchanges on friendship, tuberculosis control research, mountaineering, and (maybe) music.

Bill Warnock, President  
18 September 2025