

Welcome to the 4th Machik Khabda! This Discussion Guide suggests some topics and activities for your Khabda conversations. As Machik Khabda is locally organized, we encourage you as Khabda hosts to use this guide as needed, while you pursue your own group's questions and exercises. It is important to us at Machik that your Khabda is an open, exploratory platform for continued learning and engagement with the work of dynamic cultural producers and creatives from Tibet. We look forward to hearing about each local conversation and to sharing with the global Machik community the notes and reflections you send to us. Have a splendid Khabda!

GENERAL

The charismatic duo of ANU are Gonpa and Payag, two young Tibetans from Nangchen, Kham (near Jyekundo). Known widely for their creative and catchy songs, ANU is the force behind the phenomenally popular Tibetan song འཕུར། (en:Fly) which has positioned them as leading hip hop artists in contemporary Tibet. Having gained popularity across Tibet and in the global Tibetan diaspora, they also recently competed on the 2019 season of Singer, a mainstream PRC singing competition show with millions of viewers on television and other digital platforms.

If you are already familiar with ANU before this Khabda, did you learn anything new about them?

If you are new to ANU's music, what were some of your expectations of them before this Khabda? What is your perception of the duo now?

How does ANU's music make you feel? What message or messages do you think they are expressing through their music?

CULTURE AND REPRESENTATION

If someone with no familiarity with Tibet saw an ANU video for the first time, what would their impressions on Tibet be? Would those impressions differ from other prevailing perceptions about Tibet and/or Tibetans?

What do you think informs ANU's artistic choices around the use of Tibetan language and various traditional Tibetan cultural elements?

What is ANU's impact on Tibetan representation?

If you are familiar with other contemporary Tibetan music, how does ANU's musical approach compare to other artists you know?

IMPACT OF MUSIC

What is an example of a song, musician or musical genre you enjoy and why? When you listen to this music, what is that experience like?

In general, how does music build social connections? What sort of social impact does ANU's music have on you?

Both Tibetan and Chinese hip hop artists borrow greatly from American hip hop culture in their style of dress, music, and more. Given hip hop's specific roots in a largely urban African American experience, why might so many artists in Tibet be drawing upon this art form? For more context on the history of hip hop, please see our suggested readings online at www.machikkhabda.org.

ANU's wide reach beyond the Tibetan community both inside and outside Tibet is one of the remarkable aspects of their evolving career. With this in mind, what might performers like ANU experience as they gain popularity beyond the communities where they originate?

GENDER

ANU and other popular Tibetan contemporary musicians appear to be mostly men. Do you know of women performers in Tibet who are creating music in non-traditional styles like ANU? If not, why might this be the case?

What would need to change for more women to take part in this musical moment?

Can you name at least five contemporary Tibetan women musicians, or specifically women hip hop and rap artists? Who are your favorites and what draws you to their music?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Video Analysis: At your Khabda gathering, select one or more of ANU's music videos or performances to watch. After viewing, go through the following questions as a group.

What visual elements (images, visual effects, scenes, clothing, etc.) stood out to you in this video and why? What do you think these elements were meant to express?

Were there any visual elements that felt familiar to you? Did you notice any symbols that made you curious? Why do you think that ANU chose to use these symbols?

How do ANU's videos compare with other hip hop music videos from Tibet, China and the world?

Lyrics Analysis: ANU's songs are catchy in their beats and tunes while the lyrics are rich with meaning! Looking more closely at Anu Ranglug's lyrics and use of language, here are some guiding questions for your discussion.

What is the first thing you notice about the lyrics?

What words stand out to you? How do you understand the meaning of these words?

Read two of Anu's songs one after another. Do you notice any similarities or differences in the tone, mood and use of language between the two?

Do you have a favorite ANU song? And why is that your favorite?

Interview Questions: Like many other emerging Tibetan artists from Tibet, ANU has yet to perform outside Tibet and China, and despite their popularity, there is relatively little coverage of their careers in English and other languages. If you had the chance to meet the duo for dinner, what would you most like to know about ANU?