



(LYRCD 7255)

TIBETAN BUDDHIST RITES FROM THE MONASTERIES OF BHUTAN

VOLUME 1: Rituals of the Drukpa Order from Thimphu and Punakha

Recordings, notes and photographs by John Levy.

Cover photograph by P.N. Mehra.

This volume is dedicated to the memory of His Late Majesty, King Jigme Dorje Wangchuk.

“Of the whole enormous area which was once the spirited domain of Tibetan culture and religion . . . now only Bhutan seems to survive as the one resolute and self-contained representative of a fast disappearing civilization.”

This will at once be apparent on hearing the music contained in these four volumes. Especially interesting is the virile style of the monks, both singers and players, of the Drukpa Kagyupa Order of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism, never before heard on disc, and perhaps never before by a western musician. John Levy visited Bhutan in late 1971, the guest of the late King of Bhutan. No one may enter the country unless invited by a member of the royal family or the government. He was afforded every possible facility for recording monastic music in the principle dzongs (great fort-like monasteries) and in the private monasteries of the Nyingmapa (Old) Order; and the different kinds of lay music, instrumental and vocal.

In this first volume, there are several examples of tunes that the monks and nuns of the Drukpa Order obviously enjoy singing. They also chant in the deep, almost monotone, falsetto one has come to associate with Tibetan Buddhist music, but not exclusively. This comes as a pleasurable surprise.

By way of contrast, extracts from a rite performed by nuns are included, with pretty tunes and an interesting accompaniment. There are examples also of the long trumpets that are played high up in the monasteries on special occasions and some beautiful processional music played on shawms and percussion instruments.

TRACKS:

1. Genyen Gi Topa (In Praise of Ge-Nyen) performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 2:34
2. Chham Gi Serkyem Gi Yang performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 1:16
3. Tashi Tseringmai Dzabkul performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 5:00
4. Dung Chen, Gulgyen (Throat Ornament) performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 1:28
5. Dung Chen, Nyithu Panglep performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 0:42
6. Duchog Gonpoi Chendren performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 2:59
7. Chakchen Sondep (Petition to Chakchen) performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 4:20
8. Tshetro Jinbeb performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 3:01
9. Lama Kusum Gi Sondep performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 3:54
10. Dewachen Gi Monlam performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 0:59
11. Druamar Chabdro Sondep performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 1:12
12. Lamai Tenzhug Gi Yang performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 1:10
13. Lay Monk Turns a Large 'Mani-Wheel' and Recites a Mantra performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 1:45
14. Nyungne performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 1:33
15. Nyungne (Interlude) performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 3:02
16. Nyungene performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 2:08
17. Bo Go Gyaling (Tibetan Shawm) performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 1:30
18. Banga Trin Trin performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 3:20
19. Dung Chen (Long Trumpets) performed by Monks In Thimphu / Nuns In Punakha - 2:36

TIBETAN BUDDHIST RITES FROM THE MONASTERIES OF BHUTAN
Volume 1: Rituals of the Drukpa Order, Monks in Thimphu, Nuns in Punakha.

This volume is dedicated to the memory of His Late Majesty King Jigme Dorje Wangchuk.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

To give a background to these four volumes of music recorded in Bhutan in 1971, I shall take the liberty of quoting at some length from the admirable book, "A Cultural History of Tibet", by David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson. "Next to Sikkim (see map) is the kingdom of Bhutan ('Brug pronounced Druk), which since the seventeenth century has become and remained the stronghold of the 'Brug-pa bKa-brgyud-pa (Drukpa Kagyüpa) order, whence the local name of the country is derived. (The meaning of Drukpa Kagyüpa is "The School of Oral Transmission of the Druk Sect," Druk being the name of a monastery in Tibet associated with the sect's origin.) From that time Bhutan was ruled by a succession of reincarnating lamas (abbots) and their regents, just as was Tibet itself until 1959. But earlier this century the Bhutanese line of reincarnating lamas was replaced by a hereditary line of kings, and this lay ordinance in the government may well help Bhutan to come to terms more easily with the outside twentieth-century world, which is just beginning to make its presence felt in the country. At the same time the royal family of Bhutan patronizes generously the traditional cultural and religious life of the land. In Bhutan there are still fort-like monasteries whose inmates can be counted in their hundreds. Both lay and religious buildings, like much else of the national culture of Bhutan, represent special local developments of earlier Tibetan forms. Thus the great fort-like monasteries (rdzong pronounced dzong) in the main valleys seem to take one back to that period in Tibet preceding the dGe-lugs-pa (Gelukpa) domination, when the older religious orders were established in rival monastic strongholds. (The Gelukpas represent the latest of Tibetan religious orders, and since 1642, headed by their grand lama, subsequently nicknamed the Dalai Lama by Chinese and Europeans, they have had political power throughout Tibet.) Likewise the houses of lay officials and farmers, who together with the monks make up almost the whole of the Bhutanese population are manifestly local variations of the Tibetan multistoried house with its massive walls of stone and earth, but distinguished by the far freer use of wood, so plentiful in Bhutan. Meanwhile the great monastic forts, as well as the small temples and simpler domestic architecture, continue to give scope for the crafts of stone-masonry, wood-joinery and carving, painting and traditional decoration." And to complete the picture, "...of the whole enormous area which was once the spirited domain of Tibetan culture and religion, stretching from Ladakh in the west to the borders of the Chinese provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan in the east, from the Himalayas in the south to the Mongolian steppes and the vast wastes of Northern Tibet, now only Bhutan seems to survive as the one resolute and self-contained representative of a fast disappearing civilization".

Bhutanese music, like Bhutanese architecture and the allied arts, is also a local variation of the Tibetan, so far as one can judge from the limited number of recordings available on disc. The most important of these are recordings of Tibetan refugees, so that what obtained in Tibet as a whole before 1959 we shall probably never know.

Often in notes on the music contained in records of this kind a detailed analysis of the scales and rhythms of each piece is provided. I shall make no such analysis since it is of little or no use to the general listener: and musicologists will be free to do this work for themselves, though I must warn them not to indulge in any generalizations, since there is so much that is some musical feature that seems to require notice. However, there are five kinds of tune played by the shawms in the monastic orchestra, and since it is very difficult to make them out from the ensemble, I shall give, in notation, the characteristics

of each. To include the recordings I made of them, without the orchestra, would be to deprive the listener of ten valuable minutes of concerted music. And in this connection, and for the same reason that has decided me not to give a musical analysis of each piece, I shall omit all the usual diacritical marks. They cannot convey much to those who have no Tivet5an or Sanskrit, whereas those who are familiar with these languages will at once recognize the words. Moreover, this collection is not specifically addressed to Tibetologists, so that instead of giving gyaling (shawm) the scholarly spelling rhya-gling, for example, I have spelled all such names and words more or less as they are pronounced, more or less because different dialects have different pronunciations. But I shall sometimes hyphen compound words, especially when they first occur, as in the list of monastic instruments given below, to help those who like the writer have no Tibetan. But one thing about this music must be said; in the monastic music I heard in Bhutan, of both the Drukpa and Nyingmapa (Old Order), the long trumpets (dung chen) very often raise the tonic drone by a near semitone. (The raising of the tonic drone is almost the rule in India, both in the North and the South, when it is given out by a double-reed instrument, in the case of naubat shahna'i and nagaswaram.) This puts the other wind-instruments out of tune – the monks who chant seem generally to adopt the raised tonic as their tonic - and this creates, for western ears, some singular and sometimes beautiful harmonies in the ensemble; it can also create extremely discordant sounds. Neither of these alternatives, I suspect, is noticed by the monks. It should also be said that in Bhutan, the long trumpets almost invariably attack the tonic from the 5th, i.e. from a fourth below the tonic; and as the tonic is raised by a semitone, this forms a tritone, an interval that often occurs in both the monastic chant and in folk-music, arising from the use of a five note scale, made up either of two tetrachords of a major third and a minor second in the lower, and a minor third and a major second in the upper tetrachord. Other pentatonic scales are also in use, and will be heard in these recordings.

The music of Tibetan Buddhism (and I believe in every other form of Buddhism) is not in general heard by the public, except on special occasions, whereas folk-music is heard and performed by almost everyone. The Bhutanese are a musical people. What stands out here, especially in the monastic music of Bhutan, is its great virility. The selection has been made, in both categories, with a view to providing as broad a conspectus as possible within the scope of these four volumes - it could easily have filled six - but I must acknowledge the generosity of the editor, Peter Fritsch, in allowing me even as much as that; and by way of further acknowledgement, I must name above all Michael Aris, whose knowledge of people and things Bhutanese, lay and religious, is unrivalled, and who for seven weeks accompanied and guided me during my travels in Bhutan. Mr. Philip Denwood, of the University of London, has made all the translations given here, with two exceptions, and has helped me in many other ways. And I must thank Dr. David Snellgrove and Mr. Hugh Richardson for permission to quote from their book.

The instruments of the monastic orchestra as heard in the first three volumes.

In the notes to each volume, to be found in the folders, I shall give only the English equivalents of the Tibetan names of the instruments, which are as follows:

Gyaling, shawm; dung-kar, conch-shell trumpets; kang-dung, short trumpets, nowadays made of metal, but originally from a human thigh-bone, which I shall call thigh-bone

trumpets; dung-chen, long, collapsible trumpets, normally 5-6 feet long - the longer sort on the cover of Volume 1 go by the same name, but are about 9 to 12 feet long and are only used outside the temple, mostly at annual monastery festivals; nga-bom, large double-membrane frame drums, usually perched on a handle, as in photograph 1 in folder to Volume 1. Here it is, as most often, struck with a hooked-stick, but sometimes with two straight sticks; nga-chung, a smaller version of the double-membrane frame drum used mostly by monks while dancing, and in some folk-music it is always struck with a hooked-stick; rom, large cymbals with a deep boss, held horizontally one above each other and struck vertically; smaller versions are used in dances; sil-nyen, large cymbals with a shallow boss, held vertically and struck one against another from top to bottom and up (Volume 3), not heard by me in any concerted music, so that "cymbals" in the list given of the instruments used in any particular piece will always mean rom, the ones with a deep boss; damaru or tantri, an hour-glass pellet-drum, made originally from the top half of two human skulls, covered with skin, but nowadays mostly of wood; drib, a small hand-bell. In chham, sacred dance, a vertical barrel-shaped drum struck with a single stick is sometimes used (Volume 3). There are also temple bells, gongs, and wooden sticks with which a monk beats the ground, and the large drums are sometimes suspended from a frame, but not in any of the recordings given here. I have given the names of the instruments as announced in a recording I made of individual instruments in Thimphu.

The Five Melodies for the Shawms as played along with the other instruments of the monastic orchestra of the Drukpa Kagyupa Order in Thimphu.

The transcriptions and analyses of the five melodies were kindly made for me by Miss Lucy Duran of King's College, University of London. The first three are played in unison, while the 4th and 5th are in two parts.

"The first three melodies are sectional, each section consisting of an alternation between two adjacent notes accelerating to a trill.

The sections are written out for the first melody, and afterwards referred to by their corresponding letters (ABCDEF - see list of symbols below). Although melody 2 is in a slightly different scale, this does not affect its construction around adjacent notes.

All the recordings on tracks 1 through 13, and 19, were made at the Monastic College in the Tashicho Dzong in Thimphu (the capital of Bhutan), in the large hall which measures at the centre at least 100 feet in length, breadth and height. In what corresponds to the lantern in a cathedral (the only architectural novelty in this otherwise traditional extension to the old dzong, not long completed), there lives a colony of pigeons, kept within bounds by netting, whose gay cooing and fluttering forms a constant background to the music. It was impossible to exclude these sounds which are noticeable in the quieter passages; and therefore I have often and deliberately left them in both before and after many of the pieces, so that they can be recognized for what they are.

The ritual in Thimphu, and in all the dzongs of Bhutan, is that of the Drukpa Kagyupa Order, introduced into the country from Tibet in the early part of the 13th century. From

the 17th century onwards, it became the established order. Drukpa Kagyupa means “The School of Oral Transmission of the Druk Sect”. The word Druk, meaning Thunder Dragon, comes from the temple of that name in Tibet, originally associated with this sect. It is in many ways akin to the Nyingmapa, the “Old Order”, and both are unreformed’. The Bhutanese call their country Drukyul, the Land of the Thunder-Dragon, from the same word as in the name of the established Order.

ANNOTATED TRACKS:

TRACK 1. GENYEN GI TOPA IN PRAISE OF GE-NYEN.

Chorus of 17 monks, 2 conch-shell trumpets, 2 thigh-bone trumpets, 2 long trumpets, 2 large drums, a pair of cymbals. During the chanting, one of the cymbals is struck with a small block of wood.

Genyen Gi Topa is part of a propitiary rite done daily at 7 a.m. In a previous piece, not given here, inviting Genyen to be present, some of those in attendance whistled: this was to attract the attention of Genyen I was told, because he is deaf in one ear, and this despite the same urgent call by the same instruments as in the Hymn of Praise given here!

Observe how the conch-shell trumpets echo the thigh-bone trumpets at almost a semitone lower, each instrument as usual playing a single note.

Genyen is an unidentified religious protector (Skr. dharmapala). Several of these guardian deities have genyen as a part of their name, this one being apparently specifically Bhutanese, since he is associated with a particular spot in the Thimphu Valley. The word itself signifies a monk of low rank or a novice. Some of these guardian deities were taken over from the pre-Buddhist religion. I give below translations of both the Invitation, Genyen Dorje Dradul Gi Chendren, and of the Hymn of Praise, Topa, because both together give a more immediate impression of an important aspect of Himalayan Buddhism than pages of explanation.

INVITATION TO GENYEN (Music not given.)

O worker in the cause of protecting Buddhism,
Deliverer from and killer of enemies of what is holy,
Bearer and fulfiller of our trust,
Great Genyen, bearer of the lance which is our pledge,
From Dechenphu of the Thimphu valley,
You are invited with your retinue to this place of worship!
By sweet music you are called.
Come here magically and unimpeded!
Om hri sum spring shu tri gur lan a badzra bhyo dza dza!

O red killer, in early times,
Guru Padmasambhava placed a jewel as bone on your head,
And bound the great Genyen (to protect Buddhism),
Knedrup Jamyang Choje
Ordered you to be the protector of a lonely spot.

And the Yongdzin Ngawang/
Confided the tantras of propitiation to your care,/
Since these lamas placed bonds upon you,/
Do not break your bonds/
But do the work I entrust you with!

(It is not possible to explain every name that occurs in the texts of these chants.)

GENYEN GI TOPA, IN PRAISE OF GENYEN.

Kye! Genyen, Vajra-tamer of enemies,/
Red-complexioned and resplendent,/
With fearsome, raging, wrathful face,/
And wearing indestructible armour./
A pestle in your right hand, to pound your foes.

On a fast, red horse that runs like the wind,/
With a fine bridle, threaded with silk,/
And its golden saddle, bordered with turquoises,/
And its throat hung with a jewelled necklet.

Surrounded by a hundred thousand attendant slayers:-/
The mighty beings who summon,/
The demons who deliver,/
The lords of death who kill;/
Obedient to your great pledge,/
We praise you - we praise you!/
Escort us and welcome us,/
Into whatever paths and places we visit;/
All of us who practise yoga.

Present us with good, and combat evil./
Perfect our minds, fulfill our hopes!/
Accept these offerings with blood and meat;/
These holy things, this nectar!/
Bring to fulfillment our trust in you!

TRACK 2. CHHAM GI SERKYEM GI YANG, TUNE FOR OFFERING OF CONSECRATED DRINK.

Unaccompanied chant, part of a ritual dance in worship of the guardian deities (see Band 1), male and female, benign and ferocious. erkyem, literally, golden drink, is beer with grains of corn in it, used as a ritual libation, poured on the ground. Chham means ritual dance.

OFFERING OF CONSECRATED DRINK

To the lamas, tutelary gods, dakinis,/

The consorts of the three blood-drinking kings,
And the gods who appear together in the Sukhavati heaven,
We offer this libation - speak and witness!

To all the family of Mahakala,
The four Reti sisters, supporters of the doors of the four quarters,
And the gods manifested from the heavenly sphere,
We offer this libation - speak and witness!

To the twenty-four forms of Yamantaka,
The four Mamo goddesses, protectors of the four doors,
And the gods manifested from the realm of Tsarang,
We offer this libation - speak and witness!

To the kings of the four quarters,
To the queen Nangmenyen and her army,
And all the spirits produced in this world,
We offer this libation - speak and witness!

TRACK 3. TASHI TSERINGMAI DZABKUL, EXHORTATION TO THE GUARDIAN
GODDESS OF LONG LIFE, which belongs to the category of invocatory prayers to
Guardian Deities called Sokha. Done daily.

Chorus of 17 monks, 2 shawms, 2 long trumpets, 4 large drums, cymbals.

EXHORTATION TO THE GUARDIAN GODDESS OF LONG LIFE.

Om! From the profound heavenly realm of absolute stillness,
The great wheel of undifferentiated bliss,
With limbs of ever-shining gems/
You manifest yourself from the Dharma-body, O great mother.

We shall look on your uncovered face, goddess of self-created wisdom!
Getting together the set of offerings for conjuring you,
And calling on you with longing hearts,
Surely you should bestow on us the four types of realisation?/
Mother of the delights of tantric lamas,
Goddess born in earlier times, yogic consort,
With your compassion and pledge never idle,
Produce for us the milk which satisfies our desire for realisation!

TRACK 4. DUNG CHEN, GULGYEN, "THROAT ORNAMENT".

This music is named after the two long-trumpets, longer than those used indoors (these are about 9 feet), played from high up in the Monastery at Thimphu (and in every other great monastery) to announce one of the periodic tea-breaks for the monks taking part in whatever rite it may be. It is the first of 11 ways of playing in this manner, and is done

throughout the year, while the other 10 are sounded only at the annual festival of sacred dance. These 11 ways are said to have been composed by the first Dharma Raja, or Theocrat, of Bhutan, who entered Bhutan from Tibet in 1616 and died there in 1651. Every year the monks start practising during the week before the festival, which in Thimphu takes place in the 7th lunar month (September). I was told they practise before a waterfall. The Nyingmapas have another style.

TRACK 5. DUNG CHEN, NYITHU PANGLEP, TWO NOTES PROLONGED TO MEDIUM LENGTH, the fifth way of sounding the trumpets. These pieces are played in the intervals between dances as an offering (chopa) to the main guardian deity of the place, in Thimphu, the female deity Pelden Lhamo (Skr. Sri Devi).

TRACK 6. DUCHOG GONPOI CHENDREN, INVITATION TO GONPO (Skr. Mahakala), the Great Black God or Great Time-Keeper, according to how he is viewed. In Tantric Buddhism, he is viewed as the male form of the goddess Kali, i.e. Durga, the consort of Siva. This is part of a rite devoted to Gonpo on the three auspicious days of every month.

The instruments are the same as in Band 1, with the addition of 2 shawms.

INVITATION TO GONPO

Hum! By means of this invitation to Mahakala,
To come from the unchanging heavenly sphere,
From the far-flung heaven of the great Mother,
From his state of secret, excellent enjoyment,
From the place where all the buddhas go,
May the gods, worldly and other-worldly,
Rise up and come here,
In the shape of Yamantaka and Heruka!

By means of this holy invitation to Mahakala,
To come from the wonderful eastern heaven,
Supreme among all realms,
From the ordered land of those who do not return (no rebirth),
From his state of ample endowment,
May sundry gods appear,
In the great mandala of body, speech and mind,
Performing an entrancing dance!

Through this invitation to the manifested Mahakala,
To come from before the Vajra-seat,
In the centre of the myriad universe,
From the place where buddhas are found, and heroes,
From the great meditation - place/
May the one with the bird's name come here,
The pillar of the holy doctrine,

Possessor of all the buddha-powers!

By calling all the protective forms of Mahakala,
Urgently, from Nalanda, and Sridhanyakataka,
From the birthplace of the doctrine,
May the beneficent, foe-slaying gods,
Vanquishing the demons and their allies,
Excellent ones, come here!

By calling the vajra-messengers,
From the slopes of the Vulture-Peak (place where the Buddha preached),
From the cold, fearful grove,
From the land of the eight and the twenty-four graveyards,
And from Lanka, Tibet and China,
May all the local protectors come,
Bearing the nets of the inner, outer and secret dakinis!

Hum! Through this invitation and through our faith,
May there come here, mightily, all these:-
The great gods from the heavens,
The chief of the demons from the land of darkness,
The Dharmaraja from the nine hells,
The noxious planets from the sky,
The naga-demons from beneath the sea,
The God Begtse from the sphere of Nirvana,
The 'uncle and nephew' from the peak of Mount Meru,
The Libyinhara from the circle of the doctrine,
The ten protectors from the ten directions,
The kings of the four quarters, from the outer limits,
All the protectors of the world,
With queens, wives and beasts,
Servants and armed followers.

Om! Vajra Mahakala su tri ya ma du dzam!
Thus we make invitation/
and beg him to be seated!
Hum! O glorious Mahakala,
Surrounded with your retinue of subjects,
Accompanied by the goddesses of existence,
Be seated on the flaming seat laid here!
These inner, outer and secret offerings,
Extraordinary and unsurpassed,
From the purity of our hearts,
We have obtained, and offer to you.
Dza hum pam ho! etc.

O great black one, oath-possessor,
Bound to defend the doctrine/
Of all the Buddhas of the three ages,
We salute you, with your retinue!/
Nama te hum! nama mi hum! namo mama hum!

Note to the above translation: An explanation of every Tibetan and Sanskrit word in these translations would assume the proportions of a small lexicon, which is beyond the scope of this enterprise. However, the Sanskrit word Vajra, Tibetan pronunciation Badzra, often occurs and must be understood. Vajra means thunderbolt and is the symbol of Indra, the god of the atmosphere (thunder and lightning). Its physical symbol is the Dorje, a dumb-bell shaped metal sceptre, some 4-6 inches in length, which the presiding Lama holds in his hand in every rite, sometimes together with the Drib, a small hand-bell.

TRACK 7. CHAKCHEN SONDEP, PETITION TO CHAKCHEN. Unaccompanied chant.

Chakchen is the Mahamudra or Great Symbol, which has reference to high spiritual attainment.

After the first monotone recitation, there is a marvellous rise to a fourth, followed by two others to what is in fact the seventh in the scale G B C D F (G C F D C B G).

PETITION TO CHAKCHEN, THE GREAT SYMBOL OF SPIRITUAL ATTAINMENT

Namo Mahamudraya! (Salutation to the Mahamudra)/
O place where the fruits of the Trikaya ripen,
In the Dharma-palace of the gods' heaven,
We humbly beg you, great Dorji Chang Vajrapani - (The Bodhisattva holding the sceptre) - of the Dharmakaya,
That we may be blessed by coming face to face with our real natures,
And, taking any path which presents itself,
May see that samsara (birth and rebirth) is the same as the Buddha-body.

O place where enlightenment is bestowed in a single lifetime,
Above the sun and moon symbol over your head,
I humbly beg you, my chosen lama,
That I may be blessed by coming face to face with my real nature,
And, taking any path which presents itself,
May see that samsara is the same as the Buddha-body.

TRACK 8. TSHETRO JINBEB, Part of the ritual of Tshetro, done during the three evenings following the annual festival of sacred dance. TSHETRO is the Sanskrit AMITAYUS, The Buddha of Boundless Life, in his wrathful aspect. Chorus of monks, 2 shawms, 2 long trumpets, 2 large drums, cymbals, an hour-glass pellet drum.

INVOKING TSHETRO'S BLESSINGS

Om badzrakhrodha (angry thunderbolt) haya gri wa hu lu hu/ lu hum phags. Om svabhawa shuddha/sarba dharma sva-bhawa shuddho nya-ham.

By ceasing to think of my body and its senses I become merged in the void. Out of that very void, on a lotus stalk bearing 100,000 petals, appears Tshepame (Amitayus), the colour of red lead, his fearful aspect broken slightly by a smile, splendidly adorned with all manner of gems, grasping a vessel made from a skull, seated cross legged.

In his lap is the great 'mother', sixteen years old, full-bodied, smooth and soft-skinned with swelling breasts, holding a lotus in her right hand and in her left a skull filled with ambrosia, clinging to her partner and twined round his body: - means and wisdom united in total equanimity and great bliss.

May wisdom, descending from the Sukhavati heaven like a raging snow-storm, totally possess me.

May this place be blessed by bringing to it whatever great ones, possessors of life and property, are dwelling on this vast earth. May strong ones bestow their strength; consecrated ones their consecration; generous ones their gifts. May the rain of deathlessness fall, life and wealth be bestowed!

TRACK 9. LAMA KUSUM GI SONDEP, SUPPLICATIONS TO THE THREE BUDDHA-BODIES OF THE LAMA.

Chorus of Monks, 2 shawms, 2 long trumpets, 4 large drums, a hand-bell, a pellet-drum, 2 pairs of cymbals.

It may be said in passing that each dzong has its own tradition, both as regards texts and music. In Thumphu, the whawms are pointed downwards, so that they sound less brilliant than in Tongsa where they are held almost horizontal.

SUPPLICATIONS TO THE THREE BUDDHA-BODIES OF THE LAMAS

E ma ho! Supplications to the dharma-body of the lamas,
That body of bliss, self-perfected and divorced from deeds,
Whose compassion lies in all directions like the sky.
That essence, the pure dharma, manifest unceasingly in the three ages,
In the realm of the dharma-sphere which is divorced from activity!

Supplications to the enjoyment-body of the lamas,
That perfected body possessing the five wisdoms:-
Of body, speech, mind, qualities and actions,
And which displays many kinds of compassion,
In the self-created realm of great bliss!

Supplications to the manifested body of the lamas,

That body which comes out of compassion for living beings,
Acting for beings with skill, converting each by appropriate means,
In the three ages - past, present and future!

Then follow 14 more supplications, the last of which is:
Supplications to my own kindly lamas!
I beg you to bestow ordinary and excellent realisation!

TRACK 10. DEWACHEN GI MONLAM, ASPIRATION TO BE REBORN IN THE WESTERN PARADISE.

Chant, accompanied only by a hand-bell, done daily at 8 a.m.

ASPIRATION TO BE REBORN IN THE WESTERN PARADISE

E ma ho! To the wonderful Amitabha Buddha,
And Avolkitesvara to the right,
And great beings to the left:-

As soon as I and others pass away,
May we be born and look on Amitabha's face,
Without intermediate rebirth,
In the realm known as Sukhavat,
Where innumerable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas/
(Enjoy) infinite, wonderful bliss.
I beg the Buddhas of the ten directions and all the Bodhisattvas/
To bless with unimpeded success these words that I utter in prayer.
Tadyatha! pantsa dri ya a wa bo dha na ya sva ha!

TRACK 11. DRUAMAR CHABDRO SONDEP, PETITION TO DRAMAR, THE FIERCE RED ONE.

Unaccompanied chant, sung by 6 or 7 monks.

Dramar is an unidentified dharmapala, in this case a fierce protective deity (see 1, A, 1.). In the first monotone chant, over a central D, a few stray voices give an occasional fourth above, so that to a western ear, there is a feeling of expectancy as if of a 6/4 chord; and then comes the delicious surprise, the tonic is not as expected on G, but at the fifth above on A.

PETITION TO DRAMAR

Amitayus, Avalokitesvara and Padmasambhava,
Established as the three Buddha bodies, are the objects of our praises.
Padmakarpo, Tempe Nymima and Ngawang Namgye/
Are our tutelary lamas.

Become the jewel above my head./

I shall renounce all other protectors/
And take refuge in you, great being./
If you ask why./
It is because you are as the host of Buddhism.

You are all-seeing./
And whatever deeds you do/
I shall learn from them./
Therefore look on me with compassion.

Padmasambhava, who came from India in the 8th century A.D., was the most famous founder of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism. He is revered as much, if not more, than the Buddha himself.

TRACK 12. LAMAI TENZHUG GI YANG, TUNE OF PRAYER FOR THE LONG LIFE OF THE LAMA.

This is chanted, without accompaniment, before the Abbot (lama) gives spiritual instructions (tri) to the assembled monks. (See Band 9 on this side.) The tune is a hemitonic pentatonic melody, i.e. formed of two tetrachords each with a major third and a minor second.

PRAYER FOR THE LONG LIFE OF THE LAMA

May you abide like the changeless swastika!/
May you abide like the continuous song of Brahma!/
May you abide like the unshakeable diamond!/
May you abide like the cosmos!/
May you abide triumphant on all sides!/
We pray that you will be in good health./
We pray that you will have a long life./
We pray that your meritorious deeds will have wide effect./
May we be fortunate in not being parted from you!

TRACK 13. LAY MONK TURNS A LARGE 'MANI-WHEEL' AND RECITES A MANTRA.

This was recorded in the Punakha Dzong. Lay monks take it in turns to recite this mantra. The wheel is nearly 6 feet in height.

NYUNGNE, RITE FOR CURING OR AVERTING DISEASE, WHICH INCLUDES FASTING (NYUNGNE),
chanted by nuns, led by a retired Abbess, Anim Pedren, whose nunnery was in the vicinity of Punakha.

This rite is said to have been revealed to the nun, Gelongma Pemo, daughter of the legendary King Indra Bodhi (who is said to have come to Bhutan from India at about the same time as Padmasambhava) by Avalokitesvara, the Lord who surveys all living beings

with compassion.

The beautiful tunes were composed by a famous Bhutanese Lama, Geshe Sherab Dorje, about 50 years ago. I have the whole Tibetan text, but it has not been possible to locate the words of the three excerpts (Tracks 6, 7 & 8) chosen solely on musical grounds.

Accompanying the 4 nuns (the others were otherwise engaged) are two shawms, 2 conch-shell trumpets, 2 long trumpets, one instead of the usual two large drums, struck here with two straight sticks, and a hand-bell held by the Abbess (see front-page photograph). This, like all the recordings I made in Punakha, was recorded in mono, but rechannelled electronically by me to give a stereo spread. There was a good deal of unavoidable background noise from a fast-flowing river outside the szong where the recording was made.

The shawms deserve special mention. They are of the old type, now scarcely to be heard, being only 36 cm. in length against the usual 52 cm., with the bell measuring 9.5 cm. across against the usual 8 cm. This gives them a sweeter tone. Moreover, the long-trumpets play a true, not a raise tonic, attacked from the fourth below. It should, however, be stated that the monks who played were convoked at short notice and were not the regular monks who play at the Punakha Dzong - the regular monks are those from thimphu already heard, who spend the winter in Punakha. Some, if not all, of those who played came from the little temple at nearby Talo, which was the residence of the Dharmarajas (see notes of Band 9 below). Talo seems to have a musical tradition of its own, as we shall see in Volume 4. I cannot therefore vouch for the regularity of this orchestra, though the manner of their playing seems to me to be perfectly adapted to the small voices of the nuns.

TRACK 14. NYUNGNE, a little unaccompanied chanting followed by an Interlude (Tshamrol), and again some unaccompanied chanting.

TRACK 15. NYUNGNE, some unaccompanied chanting.

TRACK 16. NYUNGNE, some more unaccompanied chanting.

TRACK 17. BO GO GYALING, lit., TIBETAN SHAWM.

The name of this processional music for two shawms without accompaniment has its origin in the Tibetan (Bo) attendants who used to accompany the Dharmarajas (priestly kings or theocrats) of Bhutan whenever they moved from one place to another. With the advent of the present royal dynasty, about 30 years ago, and probably much earlier, the musicians who play this sort of music are no longer Tibetans, but slaves or ex-slaves of Indian or part-Indian origin, whose ancestors were taken prisoner from the Indian plains, to which the southern border of Bhutan descends. They play in antiphony, taking turns to hold the predominant note of the phrase being played by the other. I recorded several of their tunes, all but the present one being folk songs of the She category (see Volume 4). It is the same tune of LAMAI TENSHUK, Track 9, for these musicians, now attached to the Thimphu Dzong, sometimes play instead of the monks' chanting before the delivery

of spiritual instructions by the Chief Lama.

Players: Dophu and Ngodrup, both from Punakha, where they were the retainers of the first King of the present Dynasty.

TRACK 18. BANGA TRIN TRIN (onomatopoeic name), PROCESSIONAL MUSIC FOR TWO SHAWMS, A GONG AND A LARGE BARREL-SHAPED DRUM, played in the Thimphu Dzong either for the King or the Head Lama. The double-reed players are the same as in Track 9. The recordist finds this music, like the previous one, ravishing.

TRACK 19. DUNG CHEN, LONG TRUMPETS, the 11th way of playing (see Tracks 4 & 5), known as TASHI, which means Auspicious Conclusion (Skr. Mangalam), often used as here, to denote the last piece of a series or recital.



Lyrichord Discs Inc.

PO Box 1977 Old Chelsea Station

New York, NY 10011 Ph: 212 404 8290 Fax: 212 404 8291

email: nick@lyrichord.com Web: www.lyrichord.com

© and (P) Lyrichord Discs Inc. These texts (including images) are published under copyright by Lyrichord Discs Inc. All rights are reserved.
The texts, and the music associated, with them, may only be republished, duplicated or sold, with written permission from Lyrichord Discs Inc.