

TIBET: An Odyssey in Sound

Welcome to an aural pilgrimage into the land, life and spirit of Tibet. This soundscape is a montage of Tibetan sacred chants, tantric and archaic rituals, folk songs and dances, woven together with pilgrimage journal narratives written by Peter Gold.

The soundscape's music guides us into the highly-spirited yet peaceful landscape of the Tibetan Plateau. Its vastness and power are echoed in the high litanies of the Tibetan opera; in pulsating temple horns, cymbals and drums; in dance songs and hammered dulcimer tunes, and in morning monastic prayers accompanied by horns and the songs of birds. Peter's journal narratives range from the Buddhist vision of the world's creation, to nomads in high mountain passes and villages set in deep glacial valleys; from the clarity of sacred lakes and the silence of the Tibetan Plateau's awesome landscape, to the clear light of awareness within.

Our soundscape journey continues with some of the most archaic sounds and practices in Tibetan life. We hear the voices of an oracle and shaman - both in trance; ritual invocations to the indigenous protector gods of the Tibetan people and of their land; chants to dispel misfortune and barrages of sound for hastening a lunar eclipse. These are joined by parallel spoken narratives to convey the powerful earth spirituality and life force of the people living atop Earth's highest plateau lands.

Finally, on the wings of sound, we arrive in the realm of the spirit and the sacred tones of Tibetan Buddhism. Monks in Tibet's holiest shrine, the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, invoke compassion in the world; others engage in spirited vocal debates; the Dalai Lama and his disciples chant prayers and hymns at tantric initiation ceremonies, and young nuns call upon their inspirational female buddha through chants - again accompanied by birds. These sacred sounds are interwoven with spoken passages, originally written down as the soundscape's recordings and events were taking place.

Tibet: An Odyssey in Sound is the result of many years of recording music and aural environments in Tibetan communities throughout India, Nepal and in Tibet itself. The spoken portions of this soundscape were edited from essays and poems, published in three books on Tibetan culture by musician and educator Peter Gold: *Tibetan Reflections* (1984); *Altar of the Earth* (1987) and *Tibetan Pilgrimage* (1988). This soundscape was originally produced by Peter Gold, Jane Heaven and Andrew Phillips for Radio Australia, on the occasion of the Dalai Lama's first visit "down under."

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Soundscape Concept and Music

Band 1: REGARDING TIBET

Prologue by Jane Heaven

Band 2: LAND

Che Norsang - libational song, sung by Madame Chamchungla, Dharamsala, India

Shanag - Black Hat Dance music, played by monastery orchestra, Tashi Jong, India

Aria - from the Tibetan opera *Norsang*, sung by Tenzin Gampo and Tashi Dhondup, Dharamsala

Aria - from the Tibetan opera, *Norsang*, sung by Sonam Choeden, Tsering Chöekyi and Migmar Chozom, Dharamsala

Round Dance Song - sung by people of Southern Tibet, Dharamsala

Morning Prayers - by monks of Bon Yundrungling Monastery, Dolandji, India

Shar Gyatso - hammered dulcimer tune, played by Sonam Tsering, Dharamsala

Che Norsang - sung by Madame Chamchungla, Dharamsala (continued)

Band 3: LIFE

Amaleho - classical song/rebirth prophesy by Sixth Dalai Lama, performed by members of TIPA (Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts), Dharamsala

Shaman in Trance - healing rite by Pawo Wangchuk, Sarnath, India

Torgyak - new year's obstacle-dispelling rite at Namgyal Monastery, Dharamsala

Sangsol - protector gods' invocation by residents and Buddhist clergy, Dharamsala

Protector Chant - by monks of Nechung Monastery, Dharamsala

Sangsol - barley flour offering to protectors by Dharamsala residents (continued)

Chod Song - purification chant by Atsce Lama, Dharamsala

Oracle in Trance - Yudronma oracle, Dharamsala (multiple segments)

Nyi Da Kar Sum - East Tibetan folk song performed by TIPA members, Dharamsala

Banishing the Eclipse Demon - by residents of Dharamsala

Band 4: SPIRIT

Daily Prayers - by monks of the Jokhang Temple, Lhasa, Tibet

Monastic Debating Practice - by monks at Institute of Buddhist Dialectics, Dharamsala

Tantric Prayer - by the Dalai Lama at the Kalachakra Initiation, Bodh Gaya, India

Offering Mandala Hymn - Dalai Lama and Namgyal Monastery monks, Dharamsala

Offering Mandala Prelude - by the chantmaster of Namgyal Monastery, Dharamsala

Vajra Yogini Invocation - by nuns and laypeople at Gedun Chöeling Nunnery, Dharamsala

Tantric Hymn - "Om Ah Hung," by the Dalai Lama and his disciples at the

Kalachakra Initiation, Sarnath

Band 5: CREDITS

All spoken passages, read by Alan Snitow, are excerpted from Peter Gold's books: *Tibetan Reflections* (Wisdom Publications), *Altar of the Earth* and *Tibetan Pilgrimage* (both Snow Lion Publications)