

# SONGS AND MUSIC OF TIBET

Recorded in Kathmandu by Howard Kaufman / Ethnic Folkways Library FE 4486



SONGS AND MUSIC OF TIBET / ETHNIC FOLKWAYS LIBRARY FE 4486

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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FOLKWAYS FE 4486

**SIDE I**  
Band 1: GIYALARY  
with Two Large Single-Faced Drums.  
Band 2: RENGOYE GITAWSHELA (Dancing Song)  
Band 3: GARPOKURKIPUSA  
Song of the Home of a Young Bride  
Band 4: KAJYOLA  
Mixed Chorus  
Band 5: LOMJAJUNENGA  
Stringed Instrument  
Band 6: DAESHONGBA  
Rice Song  
Band 7: TWO FLUTE SOLOS  
From Western Tibet  
Band 8: SONG BOO CHERPAH (Chant)  
MAENTEL (Chant)

**SIDE II**  
Band 1: SHI CHUNG JOMO (Western Tibetan Song)  
Solo and Chorus with Drum Beat  
Band 2: GYASHEH  
Mixed Alternating Chorus with Two Drums  
Band 3: TANGSULANGGA  
Tatrien Solo (guitar)  
Band 4: DARAGYALA  
Song of Praise to King and Queen of Tibet  
Band 5: GYANAHRI BUZENA (Mountain Song)  
With Tibetan Six-Stringed Guitar  
Band 6: SONG OF PICO BIRD  
Band 7: GANGJINPUGETAENBA  
Song in Praise of the Lama  
Band 8: DROPA  
Two Shepherd Songs  
Band 9: SONG EXCERPT FROM EPIC OF WESTERN TIBET

**Ethnic Folkways Library FE 4486**

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

# SONGS AND MUSIC OF TIBET



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Recorded and notes by Howard Kaufman





Tibet is the highest country in the world with most of its land lying between three and five miles above sea level. The music on this record was recorded in a camp in Nepal by Tibetan singers and musicians. These people have recently arrived from their snow-clad mountain home bordering northern Nepal. Though living in a settlement on the outskirts of Kathmandu, they maintain their native dress and customs. They may be seen wandering about the streets of the town conspicuous in their tall stature, wearing a turquoise and gold ear-ring in one ear. Both men and women wear their hair in plaits - the men with theirs wrapped around the head. The Tibetans are very religious; sometimes one member of a strolling group may be seen twirling the Tibetan prayer wheel and chanting the "Om Mani Padme Om" (roughly translated as "praises to the Buddha"). Many Tibetans carry a silver prayer box about their waists containing Lama - Buddhist amulets and prayers. The Lama chants (Tibetan Buddhist) and the instrumental invocations were recorded in the Tibetan temple at Bodanath, 15 kilometers from Kathmandu. The music represents excerpts from much longer versions of both eastern and western Tibet.

The above copy was transcribed from the original notes of Howard Kaufman

Notes on the recordings by Howard Kaufman.

#### SIDE I, Band 1:

Giyalary - "Beyond the mountains, there are flowers abundant." This song like many others, alternates singing and dances. Two large single-faced drums are used. The song begins in slow tempo and accelerates in typical Tibetan style. The accompaniment is a large single-faced drum about 30 inches in diameter. It is hit with a stick rather than the hands. This song reminds one of some of our Plains Indian music.

#### Band 2:

Rengoyegitawshela is a dancing song. The men line up on one side with their arms around each other. The women do likewise on the opposite side. The singing is in antiphonal style - the men alternating verses with the women. As each group sings, they perform the typical Tibetan stomp-style dancing, relaxed, and with little variation. The text is roughly as follows: Oh, how yonder mountain is. Let us not dare to build our homes on top, for we would block out the sun's warm rays that heat the valley below. Let us not build a bridge on yonder river, for we may frighten the fishes away and the people of the valley would starve.

#### Band 3:

Garpokurkipusa - "the place of the white tent." This song describes the beautiful home of a young bride. The Yak hair walls, the sturdy poles, the decorations within, the sheepskin cover, etc. The women begin this song, followed by the men. Again there is the change in tempo from slow dirge to fast, and return to the dirge, etc.

#### Band 4:

Kajyola: be happy with what you have, and what you are. Don't wish for riches or power - even kings die. In this too there is the alternating men and women chorus; notice that tempo speeds up in the second chorus.

#### Band 5:

Lomjajunengga. This song is played on a samisen-like instrument containing six strings tuned in pairs at the interval of a third. It tells a story of the wonderful sun. In spring there are five rainbows and as the sun shines upon them, they glow with brilliant colors and the sky is filled with beauty.

#### Band 6:

Daeshongba. The text of this old tune was recently composed by one of the refugees. It merely states that the rice of Kathmandu is sweet and keeps the body healthy. The tune resembles somewhat the preceding song.

#### Band 7:

Two short flute solos. These are songs from western Tibet. A man will play his flute in front of his home after the day's work is completed and while the wife is preparing supper. (An interesting note is that Tibetan women do not play any instruments.)

#### Band 8:

The following recording was made at the Lama temple in Bodanath, 15 miles from Kathmandu, and home of the Chinese Lama. The first number - a, is the introduction to the chant, a calling down of the Gods to participate in the service. This is a purely instrumental incantation using two Tibetan oboes, kaeling, three conch shells, tung, and a drum. Following this there is a short horn and drum introduction, and then b, the Song Boo Cherpah chant which asks God to bring prosperity to the people through his kindness. This is followed immediately by the chant Maentel - a vow to God that the priests will renounce all earthly



possessions and devote their lives to Him. Notice that some of these Lama priests reach the low D, almost two octaves below middle C. The chant continues, but had to be cut off for practical reasons.

## SIDE II

### Band 1:

Shi Chung Jomo. This western Tibetan song begins with a slow drum beat which gradually accelerates. This is followed by voice solo and then chorus. The title is the name of a bird and the text describes its beauty and brilliant black, green, and red coloring.

### Band 2:

Gyasheh. This is only a small portion extracted from the long epic of the same name. Two drums are used and once again we have the alternating choruses of men and women, and the change in tempo.

### Band 3:

Tangsulangga. This is played as a guitar, tratnien, solo. The mountain bearing this name is in eastern Tibet - Its peaks are so high that the crows cannot pass over, and must return. The sides are so steep and the snows so deep that the shepherds must turn back.

### Band 4:

Daragyal. This song sings praises to the old king and queen of Tibet. Notice that the tempo slows down in places, and is descriptive of the strain of trying to walk up the steep mountain en route to the palace.

### Band 5:

Gyanahribuzena is the name of a famous five-peaked mountain in Tibet. This song describes the majesty of this great mountain, and defies it, telling of its virtues and good qualities. Again notice the alternating tempos. The slow introduction and fast verse so typical of Tibetan song-dance style. The song is accompanied by the Tibetan six-stringed guitar.

### Band 6:

Name unknown. The song describes the pico bird in flight.

### Band 7:

Gangjinpugetaenba. This song uses an old tune and sings the praises of the Dalai Lama who is now in India, but will one day again return to Tibet to lead the people in their religion that will live forever.

### Band 8:

These are two very old shepherd songs of northern Tibet called Dropa, the term used for all shepherd songs. They are sung by two old men of about 70 who had learned the song in their youth and had forgotten the titles. Younger members of the group had never heard the song before.

### Band 9:

This Tibetan song is an excerpt from an old epic found among the people of western Tibet. This excerpt describes the feats of Tibetan warriors in days of yore. The voices are imitating the sound made by the long Tibetan horn used by the priests.



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