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LING DRO DECHEN ROLMO:

A TIBETAN BUDDHIST DANCE

Submitted as a dissertation to the Union Graduate School,
October 1979, by Linda Ruth Lerner

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Fig. 1. Mandala of Gesar

This paper is dedicated to His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche, the Padma Sambhava of this time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped me to prepare this paper. First I would like to thank Norbu Sangpo and Yangzom, my teachers of Ling Dro, from whom I still continue to learn via the mail, and my spiritual teachers His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche and Ven. Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, without whose teachings the content of this paper would be inaccessible.

Next, I would like to thank my doctoral committee for their helpful advice and support: Dr. Roger Ortmayer, Professor Frederic Lieberman, Cecily Dell, Robin Larsen, Ph.D., and Lucerne Montague Ph.D. Thanks are due also to two invaluable consultants: Jane Marriett and John Reynolds for Labanotation and translation assistance.

I would also like to thank the following lamas who kindly answered my questions: Shega Rinpoche, Nam Kah Trimed Rinpoche, Khamtrul Rinpoche, Kalu Rinpoche, Khamtul Rinpoche. I will always be especially grateful to Anzin Rinpoche, who invited me to Chandrigiri Settlement to study Ling Dro.

Others who have helped me in various essential ways have been no less important than those listed above. Thank you Dorothy Gluck, for moral and financial support; Marc Muhich for typing, editing, and moral support; Rita Cohen for final editing; Lindsay Ardwin, for editing and facilitating the Labanotation by learning the entire dance; Donna Zakowski for costume illustrations; and Genyen and Tashi Tobgye for introducing me to Anzin Rinpoche.

NOTES ON STYLE

All foreign words not in common use will be underlined when they appear. If, however, a given term appears continually and consistently throughout a chapter it will be underlined to establish a precedent but not thereafter.

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Fig. 2. Gesar of Ling

PREFACE

I have been lucky in this life--I have had the opportunity to be adventurous. I see myself as an explorer of three different areas: the world of movement, the world-at-large, and the world of the mind. This particular study includes all three.

At the age of three years I began to study ballet, but soon switched to modern dance. My teacher had studied and taught the technique of Martha Graham. This style of movement has an Oriental feeling about it which, unlike Western dance as typified by ballet, does not try to defy gravity and to look weightless, but is strong and hugs the ground. Graham was influenced by the East, and perhaps this is where my interest in ethnic dance started. I continued to study with the same teacher through high school. Then, later in college, graduate school, and in the dance studios of New York City, I continued to study with teachers of many different styles of modern dance and ballet. One of my favorite classes was Afro-Caribbean dance taught by Sevilla Fort, who was from Haiti. She explained Haitian dance in the context of the intrinsic native rituals.

I became a dance instructor at a college and performed dances choreographed by myself and others in theaters in New York City. The dances I choreographed were rituals or events wherein the body becomes a vehicle for communication, ecstasy, or both. As a performer and a teacher, I was interested in the process that produced a well

choreographed product. This entailed the exploration of all types of movement. I wanted to understand the unity of mind and body, and the dance's particular expression of that union.

I immersed myself in dance, viewed everything from the perspective of space and time, and ran to and from dance classes. That frenetic pace caused me to step back and assess what I was doing. I intuitively felt that I would not be able to understand the nature of movement until I understood the nature of stillness. Thus, I began to attend classes in Zen meditation at a center in New York City. There I found the practice of Buddhism not only calming, but prophetic for the self. The next year on a summer vacation, I traveled to Japan, where I was able to continue for one month the practice and study of meditation in a Zen monastery. The rest of that trip I spent touring the country. While visiting Nara, an ancient Buddhist center, I was awed by the performance of a masked dance called Bugaku. This type of dance had previously been performed in India before statues of the Buddha, and had possibly been transported to Japan via Tibet, and then China (Wolz, 1971, 6).¹ Today it is preserved in Japan's Shinto shrines. I was deeply moved by the strong calmness of this ritual dance and decided to explore more ethnic dances. Later, at Expo '70, The World's Fair, which was in Japan that year, I was drawn to the dynamic dances of India. Having seen these, and wishing to make a pilgrimage to the country where Buddha Shakyamuni was enlightened and taught, I vowed to go to India the following year.

In India, I met Tibetans for the first time and witnessed a rehearsal of monastic dances at the palaces of Chogyal in Gantok, Sikkim. The dance was majestic and powerful, and not so self-contained as the Bugaku. I wanted to learn it, but due to limited time and the responsibilities of traveling with a friend, I left Sikkim to continue our tour. In the years to come I continued to meditate and travel. I observed the dances of East Africa and Indonesia, and of North and Central American Indians. In Bali I engaged in a ten-day meditation retreat in a Buddhist monastery and afterwards observed the beautiful and highly stylized Balinese dance. In New York City I studied Effort-Shape Theory, Laban's system of movement notation and analysis, and I worked on Alan Lomax's Choreometrics Project, studying culture in terms of movement. There I observed, catalogued, and sorted numerous films of dances from all parts of the world. I enjoyed observing these dances; yet I wanted to both observe and study the Tibetan lama dance, cham. The more I meditated, the more I was determined to learn about dance as a ritual practice on the path to Enlightenment.

The dances I performed in New York were rituals of my own invention, yet I was searching to understand the true nature of ritual. One significant performance, entitled "Infinite Bardo," was inspired by the Tibetan Book of the Dead (Evans-Wentz, 1960).² My dance was part of a jazz music concert composed by Richard Youngstein and performed in the spring of 1971. At that time, I commenced the study of Tibetan Buddhism, which I have continued since. I was attracted to Vajrayana Buddhism because of its dynamic, symbolic

peaceful and wrathful deities, who reflect aspects of one's own mind. Tantric Buddhism also encompasses other forms of Buddhism. Tibetan dancing seemed to me to be a link between consciousness and movement. My research led me to India, where the Tibetan lama Khamtrul Rinpoche was cited as the best instructor of lama dancing. As well as being a great teacher of Buddhism, he is renowned as a choreographer and as a performer, and his monastery is famous for its yearly dances. I left my job teaching at Barnard College for a one year sabbatical and headed for Dharamsala, India, the home of the Tibetan Government in Exile.

En route to Dharamsala I met Tashi, a Tibetan official from the Office of Religion and Education of the Tibetan Government. He suggested that his wife Genyen, who was then in Dharamsala, might be able to help me on my quest to learn Tibetan religious dance. I asked for her help but also persisted in visiting Khamtrul Rinpoche in order to request lessons from him. However, he refused to teach me on the grounds that I was not fluent in the Tibetan language, that I was not a monk, and that I was a woman. In truth, I had studied only a smattering of written Tibetan in New York, and had only studied a little of Vajrayana, the form of Buddhism practiced in Tibet.

When I told Genyen of Khamtrul Rinpoche's refusal to teach me, she introduced me to her friend, a lama named Anzin Rinpoche. He kindly invited me to study the religious dance that was performed in the settlement where he lived. This dance is called Ling Dro Dechen

Rolmo. He said it was perfectly acceptable to teach me for it was performed by both lay men and women. After he left, I applied to the Government of India for permission to live in a Tibetan refugee settlement. My karma was good, for soon after, Anzin Rinpoche wrote a letter of invitation, and Tashi spoke to the necessary government officials on my behalf. After three months I obtained the permit and went to Chandragiri Tibetan Settlement, Orissa. Subsequently, I found out that even before I had left America Nam Kah Trimed Rinpoche, the brother of Anzin Rinpoche, had experienced a dream that a foreigner would come to study this dance.



Fig. 3. Gesar

INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION

Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo, or Ling Dro in the shortened form of its title, is a Tibetan Buddhist ritual in dance form, performed to religious poetry for the purpose of invoking the deity, Ling Gesar, and for partaking of his blessings. In order to entice Gesar to enter the dance area, he is offered the beautiful thoughts of mind. The performers mystically identify with and become Gesar, his wife (Princess Drugmo), his thirty warriors, and their wives. The dancers' prayers are answered when they actually realize the profound meaning of the ritual, that their minds are the same as the mind of the deity.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This thesis is intended to examine both the technical aspects of this dance and the mystical/psychological effects obtained by those who perform it. I hope to write about a dance never before described and give a suggestion of the nature of the creative mind behind the ritual and of the people who so generously invited me to learn their dance.

When Tibet was an isolated country, a few Western missionaries, political attachés, and explorers managed to penetrate the country's mountain barriers. In their writing they mentioned exotic rituals and devil dances. When the Chinese seized Tibet in 1959, thousands of Tibetans fled to India, Bhutan, and Nepal. Today, the Tibetans who

escaped live in these countries, mostly in refugee settlements. And now, despite the hardships of poverty, homesickness, and the demands on their energy created by the need to survive by subsistence farming, they continue their practice of the Buddhist religion. Although some practices are lost, others have been maintained. Some of those that are open to the public are in the form of dances, and Westerners who come to visit the East are able to observe them. Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo is one of these dances. It is exceptional, however, in that it is preserved and performed exclusively in one remote camp in Orissa. The text and information concerning the ritual are known only to those who perform it, although it is a favorite dance of His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche, head of the Nyingmapa sect, the oldest of Tibetan Buddhism, and of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, spiritual and temporal ruler of all Tibetan Buddhism and of the Gelugpa, reformed sect. I did not know or hear of the dance until I reached India, and since that time, in all of the books I have researched, I have found only one vague reference to Ling Dro, cited as a Gesar dance practiced by members of the Dzog Chen order of Tibetan Buddhism (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1976, 32).³

The Tibetans have always been reticent about sharing their culture with outsiders. Since the Chinese invasion, however, this attitude has been changing. Now, more books and articles are being written about Tibetan religious dance. The Tibetan Dance and Drama Society has traveled to Europe and America, and many Westerners are becoming avid students of Tibetan Buddhism.

In this thesis, I will write about Tibetan dance in relation to the most significant of Tibetan culture, Vajrayana Buddhism, viewing it through the symbol of the mandala, perhaps the oldest and most basic form by which human nature has sought the divine in itself (see p. 63). I will also present (for the first time in the West) material relevant to this sacred Buddhist ritual dance that I hope will help to perpetuate it. Part of this wish is already answered by the people themselves. With my verbal and financial encouragement, they have now started a children's dance group which is learning and carrying on the tradition.

Since the teaching of the dance is oral and its inner significance is transmitted after some years of study, I am not yet able to explain the complete spectrum of the dance's meanings; what I present here are those which, as a novice, I have gleaned from my teachers, Norbu Sangpo and Yangzom, my dance instructors, and His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche and Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, my spiritual guides.

METHOD OF STUDY

I went to India in 1974 and lived in Orissa Settlement for six months where I studied Ling Dro intensively with my teacher Norbu Sangpo and his daughter Yangzom from December 1974 until June 1975. At that time, my study was limited by my lack of meditative Buddhist practice, my limited amount of knowledge of Buddhism, and my complete ignorance about Ling Gesar, the central deity of the ritual. Other impediments were an imperfect knowledge of colloquial Tibetan, as distinct from the

classical Tibetan language in which the text of the dance is preserved, and my lack of technical skill with tape recorder and camera. However, my sincerity, flexibility, and perseverance saw me through any difficulties and I am making up for what time I lacked by continuing to study now. I am still gathering information in America from Buddhist scholars and Tibetan lamas who have visited the United States. Fall 1977, I went to Nepal, where I met Yangzom and Nam Kah Trimed Rinpoche, a lama from Orissa settlement. These teachers answered my many questions and empowered me through the Gesar initiation ceremony, the ritual necessary for entering into another of the many levels of Gesar practice.



Fig. 4. Gesar

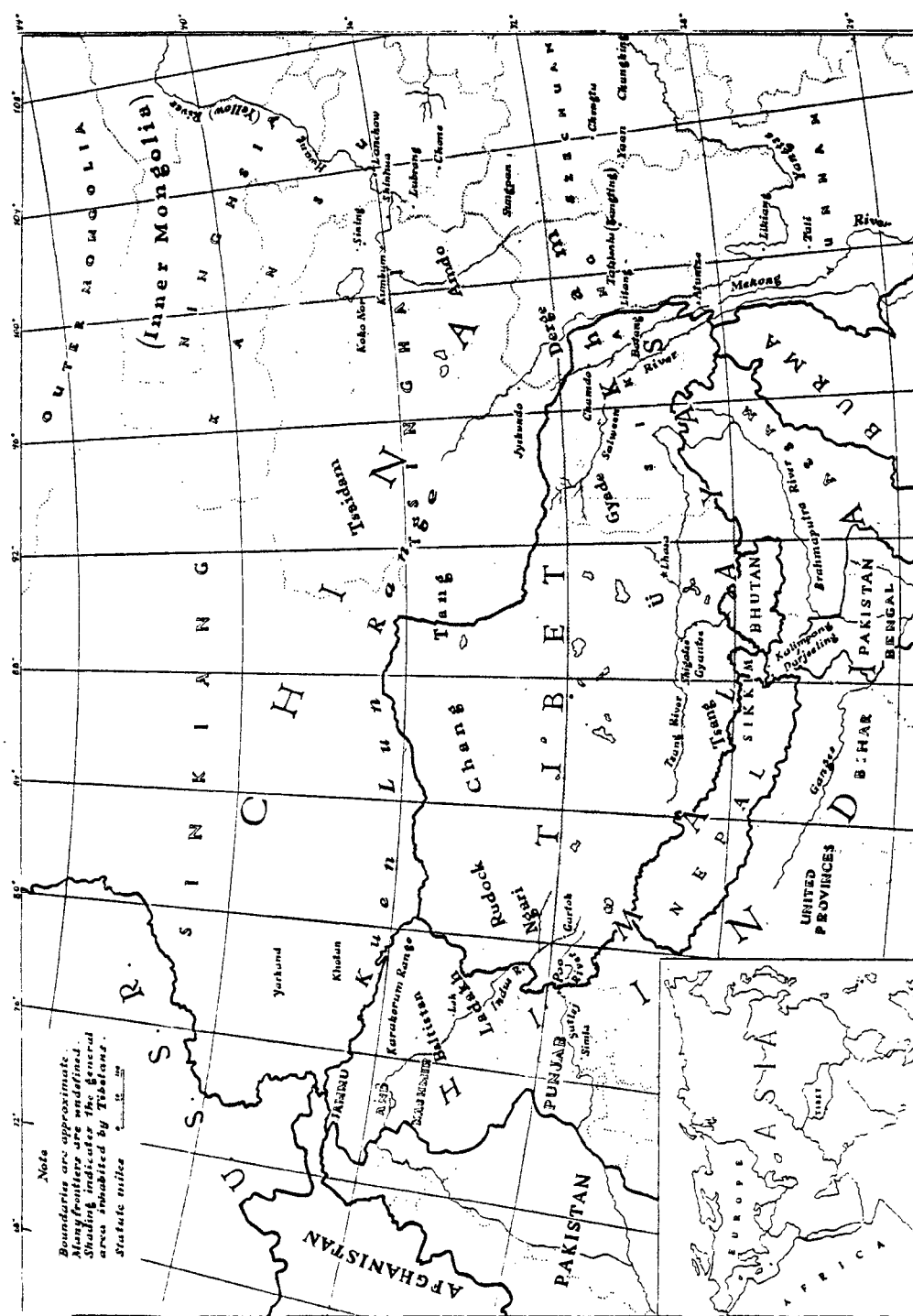


Fig. 5. Tibet and Neighboring Countries

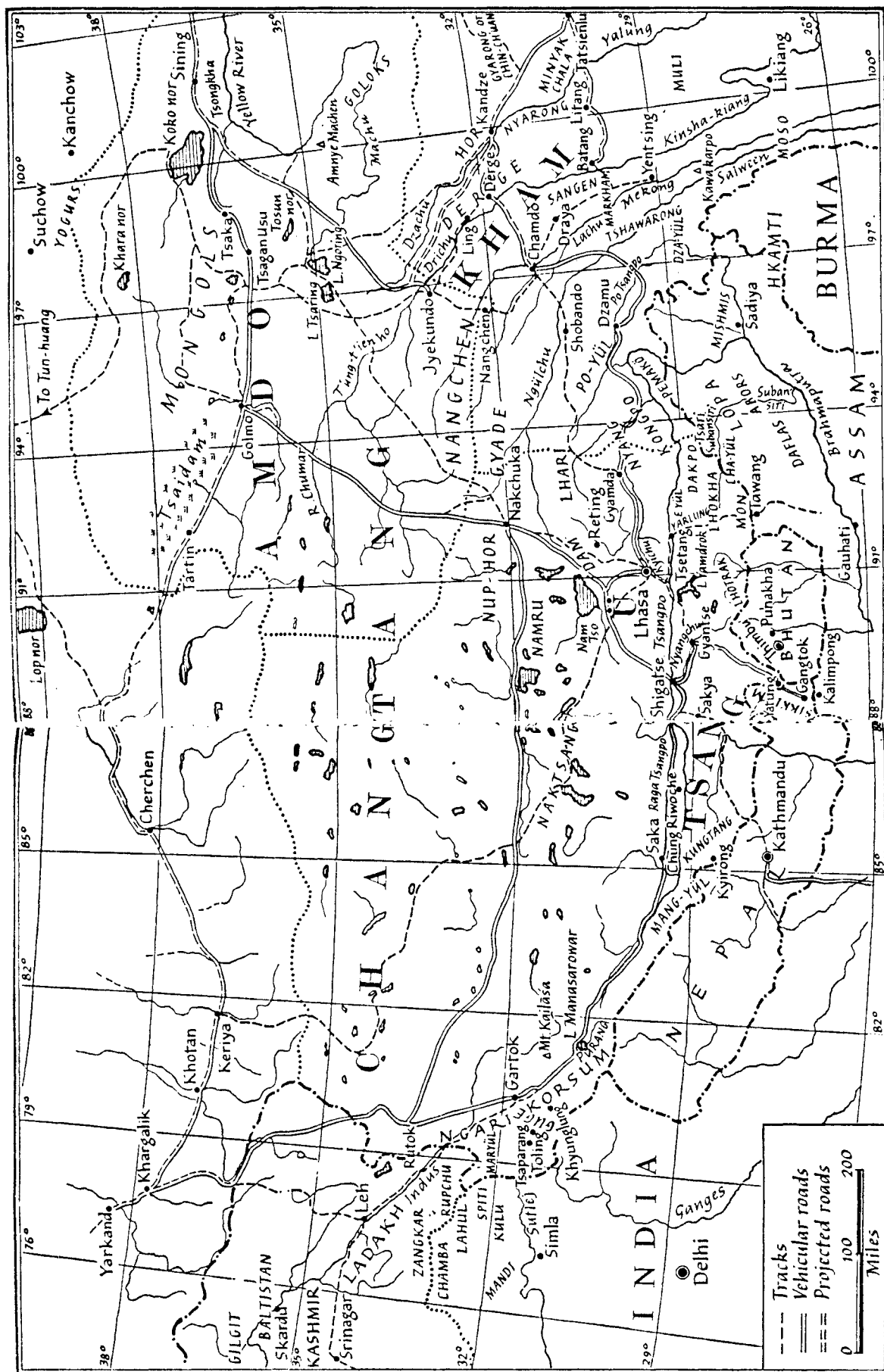


Fig. 6. Map of Tibet

TIBET

History

The early history of Tibet is transmitted mostly through mythology. Legend says that Tibet was initially under water as a result of the flooding of the Tsangpo River. When the Buddha of that time cut through the Himalayan Mountains, the river flowed off, and Tibet rose. Chenrezig (Avalokitesvara, Tib.), god of mercy and patron saint of Tibet, took birth as a monkey and lived with a rock demoness, an incarnation of Tara (Drolma, Tib.), the goddess of compassion. Since they conceived several children (the first ancestors of the Tibetan people) who later played there, that part of Tibet is known as the land of play (Bell, 1967, 9).⁴ To insure that his offspring would prosper, the compassionate monkey provided them with food, the six kinds of grain: barley, wheat, rice, sesame, peas, and buckwheat (Stein, 1972, 46).⁵

According to legend, the first line of Tibetan kings came from heaven. At that time, Tibet was made up of many small kingdoms. There was no strong leadership and few armies; the people saw their country as a mandala, a sacred squared circle surrounded and threatened at its four cardinal points. At the north were Turkey (Drugu) and Uighur (Hor), the lands of horses, weapons, and war; to the south was India, the land of religion. Persia (Ta zig) and Byzantium (Phrom), lands of trade, wealth, and jewels, were on the west, and China, land of divination and calculation, was to the east. Therefore, the Tibetan people

sent messengers to heaven to request assistance; the gods, in response, sent them rulers. These first seven divine kings descended a sacred mountain to earth, and although they exercised earthly functions during the day, the kings returned to their heavenly abode at night. After the seventh king lost this latter ability in a battle, Tibet was ruled by secular dynasties (Stein, 1972, 48-49).⁶ During this period metals were mined, ploughs were made, field irrigation was introduced, and coats of mail were used. A shamanistic and animistic religion prevailed, entailing animal but not human sacrifice, and the people were a "virile race of nomads, from time to time overrunning the territories of their neighbors" (Bell, 1967, 10).⁷

In the fourth century A.D. a golden stupa (chorten, Tib.) and Buddhist texts fell on the roof of King Lha Totori Nyentsen's palace. The King worshiped them, but there was no method of translation. All information was transmitted orally until the seventh century, when Buddhism and subsequently a written language were formally introduced to Tibet. In the seventh century, Tibet was ruled by its thirty-second king, Srongstan Gampo (556-650 A.D.). He married both a Nepalese and a Chinese princess, who arrived in Tibet with treasures from their native countries. Each wife brought a large statue of the Buddha made from precious metals and gems and accompanied by Buddhist texts. However, no means of translating them existed. The king, eager to remedy the situation, dispatched sixteen Tibetan scholars to India for the purpose of studying the language and literature of the Buddha Dharma. Only the

head of the mission, Tommi Sambota, survived the climatic changes. He returned to Tibet with a language precisely translatable from the Sanskrit.

During that period a shamanistic religion, which practiced both animal and human sacrifice, prevailed in Tibet. The people were united into scattered warlike bands and the country was likened to a she demoness lying on her back. The king, wishing to subdue and civilize his people, built a temple in a mandalic series of square concentric zones over the land. The central temple was erected over the demoness' heart, and temples at the four corners of three successive squares held her limbs (Stein, 1972, 38-9).⁸ King Srongtsan Gampo, having thus first instituted Buddhism in Tibet, is considered by the Tibetans an incarnation of Chenrezig (the same Bodhisattva of Compassion who incarnated in the monkey ancestor of the Tibetan people). Yet, although he taught the Dharma to several students and built many temples and chortens, his principal introduction was the moral code of Buddhism prohibiting animal and human sacrifice. This moral code, however, did not exert a powerful influence and the Bon (shamanistic) religion which may also have been introduced at that time, may have presented strong opposition to Buddhism (Stein, 1972, 49).⁹ Contrary to popular belief, Bon was not the shamanistic pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, but an importation from the Kalais region and Persia. The indigenous religion of Tibet was Mi-chos, "religion of men" (Stein, 1972, 192).¹⁰

Buddha Dharma did not take a firm hold and prosper in Tibet until the reign of Srongtsan Gampo's grandson, Trisong Deutsan

(742-804 A.D.). He sent for great teachers of Buddhism from India and established the Dharma as the official state religion. Trisong Deutsan invited the great Indian pandit Shantirakshita to Tibet to teach the Buddha Dharma, but when this quiet gentle monk encountered hostile people and forces opposed to his efforts, he suggested inviting the pandit Padma Sambhava.

According to the Nyingma tradition, Padma Sambhava had been predicted by the Buddha Sakyamuni to be the second Buddha of this time. He was to transmit the sublime Vajrajana teachings of the Buddha at a time of darkness when more powerful teachings would be needed to counteract it. He was famous for his skill as a magician, as well as for being a scholar and yogi. He taught King Trisong Deutsan and his entourage the profound teachings of Tantra, established Samye, the first Tibetan Buddhist monastery, in the shape of a mandala, and subdued and converted many opponents of Buddhism.

The monastery at Samye had previously been destroyed innumerable times by antagonistic local forces. By transforming these negative forces and subduing the demons, Padma Sambhava converted them into protectors of the Dharma. To some he gave religious vows, and to others he promised enlightenment. With these obstacles removed, the Dharma became established and Vajrayana Buddhism began to flourish in Tibet. Since this time it has been inseparable from Tibetan culture.

Under the direction of Padma Sambhava, two queens and three hundred people took religious vows, and King Trisong Deutsan established a system of religious patronage. He offered privileges to those who took the vows and promised them donations. The first official relationship between church and state was then established.

Around the tenth century, one hundred years after the reign of King Trisong Deutsan, a king named Gesar may have lived. Gesar is the subject of a famous Tibetan epic which recounts his exploits and their result: the unifying of Tibet under Buddhism. Gesar is also the central deity invoked in the Ling Dro dance practice. By conquering his enemies and the evil kings of the four directions, he was ostensibly able to expand his empire to Turkey, China, and India. Actually, some authorities date Gesar as early as the fourth century (Bell, 1968, 14),¹¹ which would place him at the time of King Lha Totori Nyentsen. Some date him as late as the fourteenth century (Stein, 1972, 279).¹² However, the lamas consulted personally stated that he lived either in the tenth or the eleventh century.

As Buddhism took a stronger hold, kings and clans aligned themselves with different monasteries. Tibetans made pilgrimages to India and returned with different teachings and different points of view. The growth and development of Tibetan Buddhism eventually gave rise to three other main sects besides the original teachings of Padma Sambhava, embodied in the Nyingmapa sect. These are the Kagyupa, Sakyapa, and Gelugpa. The tradition of the combined spiritual and temporal leader, the

incarnate Dalai Lama, arose in the fourteenth century with the Gelugpas.

The Dalai Lama (being an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Chenrezig) could trace the authority for his leadership back to the incarnate monkey and then to King Srongtsan Gampo. This tradition of incarnate leadership firmly united church and state, elevated the position of religion in Tibet, and superseded the tradition of kingly inheritance. Although small local kings continued to rule, the Dalai Lama ruled all of Tibet.

THE COUNTRY

Tibet, the world's highest country, was situated in the Himalayan Mountains between the larger countries of Russia, China, and India. Today, it is part of the People's Republic of China. Its high plateaus ranged from barren rocky deserts to dense woodlands to lush fertile grasslands. Some settlements were 10,000 feet above sea level. The high altitude produced clear visibility over great distances, colors of glowing brilliance, and clear minds which could concentrate easily. Yet the huge snow mountains that surrounded it were steep and dangerous. The winds could sweep entire caravans to death off a narrow trail or even kill from the cold. Journeys by yak and horse were very slow. It could take months to cross territories overrun by groups of brigands as well as full of natural obstacles. In this country of extremes, a religion such as Tantra flourished. The concept of deities and demons, peaceful and wrathful, could be experienced without dichotomy.

Kham, in Eastern Tibet, is the place where Ling Dro originated. The people of that area were mostly wheat and barley farmers and herders of yak, horses, and dzo (a cross between cattle and yak). The weather was extreme. Three months out of the year are warm and flowers grew everywhere. Yet the winters were so bitter that the earth cracked from the cold. Stockpiles of food and fuel had to be kept, for families were snowed in for three months during immense snowfalls. Bordering on

China, Kham was influenced by Chinese custom, food, and dress. Tanka (scroll) painters painted in Chinese style, and people living near the border spoke both Tibetan and Chinese.

PEOPLE

While feudalism was the political system, religion became the chief determinant of Tibetan culture. Nearly every family sent one son to a monastery to live a religious life, and all classes of people were united in one belief. Prayer flags and stones carved with mantras guarded steep passes and the recitation of mantras filled up long hours of the snowed-in winter months. While traveling across windswept deserts or just while performing any activity, people chanted mantras. Families made libations and said prayers both morning and evening. Besides being a protective refuge and an inspiration, religion served a social function. It gave status to the practitioner and the charitable and provided the most important reason for gathering.

Tibet, being feudalistic, had a class of nobility, and one of peasants who served them. The nobles were gentlemen farmers, merchants, and government officials. They employed serfs as household servants and to farm their land and to herd their yaks. These herders migrated between the higher regions in summer and the lower regions in the winter. They lived in four-sided yak hair tents, generally in clusters of several families with their herds of sheep, goats, and yaks. Their main products were butter, milk, and wool. Farmers grew such grains as wheat, millet, and barley, and some vegetables such as turnips, which they traded with the nomads. A third class or group of people was religious. Huge monasteries of up to 10,000 monks needed food and supplies and offered

education, ceremonies, and prayers in return.

Although traveling was arduous, nomads, traders, and pilgrims (from all parts of society) traversed the country, constantly spreading customs and information.

Each Tibetan was tied to his or her family by duty and either had to accept a lifestyle which was the same as his parents' or was expected to support his family and to marry by arrangement. Many Tibetans became exempt from familial duties because they joined a monastery. However, those living at home could leave their family obligations for long periods of time in order to make pilgrimages or to attend to matters concerning religion.

Generally, Tibetan people are exceedingly friendly and hospitable. It is customary to take in travelers for there were no hotels en route or even in Lhasa, the capital. They are used to having visitors, for traders or craftsmen would stop and show and sell their wares or produce, and then proceed to the next house or tent. A guest is always honored and fed and offered tea or beer. Because nearly every aspect of their lives is permeated by religion, the Tibetans treat even the tiniest details with reverence. My Tibetan friends, talking about relationships, stated, "Isn't it all about caring?" Care is taken by serving others, whether lamas, officials, or guests. It is an art to place dishes properly and to tend to their refilling and removing. Serving tea is of special importance, for so many cups (about twenty) are drunk per day and a visitor must drink at least two full cups before departing. How the pot is carried,

how the cup is lifted, everything is taken into account. It is a more practical service and less artificial than the Japanese tea ceremony, but it is an important Tibetan ritual. With the same skill they apply to making tormas (symbolic religious offering cakes of sculpted beauty), they make momo (steamed meat filled dumplings).

Even when doing tedious chores the Tibetan will smile and often sing. Human life is viewed as a precious commodity, for it is a high rebirth and a time when one can practice the Holy Dharma. All life is sacred, however, for those who are in the animal realm are only in a different stage of existence because of past karma. There are other formless realms where beings reside, such as the hells, the realm of the hungry ghosts, and the realms of the gods and demi-gods. Offerings and prayers are said for them. Since life is seen as a continuum unless Enlightenment is attained, impermanence (the change and flux of things) pervades the attitude of the people. As a result, their minds remain flexible and adaptable. Since their flight from Tibet in 1959, they have integrated into the Indian and Western cultures quite easily.

Tibetans counteract their serious side, which includes their religion, with a ribald sense of humor. Nothing escapes their laughter, neither religion nor profanity, and often they are combined, as in the infamous tales of Uncle Tompa, a figure who pokes fun at sex and religion.

EDUCATION

Tibetan children learn by copying the adults. They are taught by repetition and they are expected to memorize the material they copy. In schools they endlessly repeat their lessons in unison after their teachers. This group dynamic is important. If one feels insecure, the group will carry him or her through. In the monasteries, monks had to memorize entire books. Each word and letter was considered sacred and it was necessary to remember them exactly. Tibet was a country where oral tradition was important for transmitting all kinds of information, the most important being the Dharma. One needed to cultivate good listening skills and an acute memory, for whole bodies of information were conveyed orally. Often the very highest secret teachings were not written in texts but were transmitted by word from the teacher to the student.

Creative thinking was not as important as attention and absorption. If one learned the basic rules thoroughly, however, one could elaborate upon them. For example, a favorite contest was the song contest, in which two people matched wits by alternately composing spontaneous song lines that conformed to exact poetic rules.

For the general populace who lived a life based on faith and survival, the use of intellectual faculties was not necessary. It was important to be practically clever, but not to be analytical. For the monastic community and serious practitioners of Vajrayana Buddhism, however,

it was necessary to be able to analyze the nature of their own minds. Monasteries contained schools of dialectics to train students in Buddhist philosophy (Abidharma, Skt.). As part of their training these students would be required to debate with each other in front of their teacher, other lamas, and other students in order to demonstrate their understanding of the Buddha Dharma.

Generally the Tibetan educational system favors relinquishing personal ego to the group and encourages loss of the ego by means of the endless repetition of lessons. The purpose is to clear a channel in the mind, devoid of ego obstructions, so that knowledge can be acquired and Enlightenment allowed to shine forth.

In Vajrayana Buddhism, by listening to the lama who already has realization, one comes to see all situations as opportunities for practice. The lama is the true teacher, the world is the classroom, and the lesson to be mastered is remaining relaxed and aware.



Fig. 7 (Above). Lhamo Dakini

Fig. 8 (Left). Cham Mask



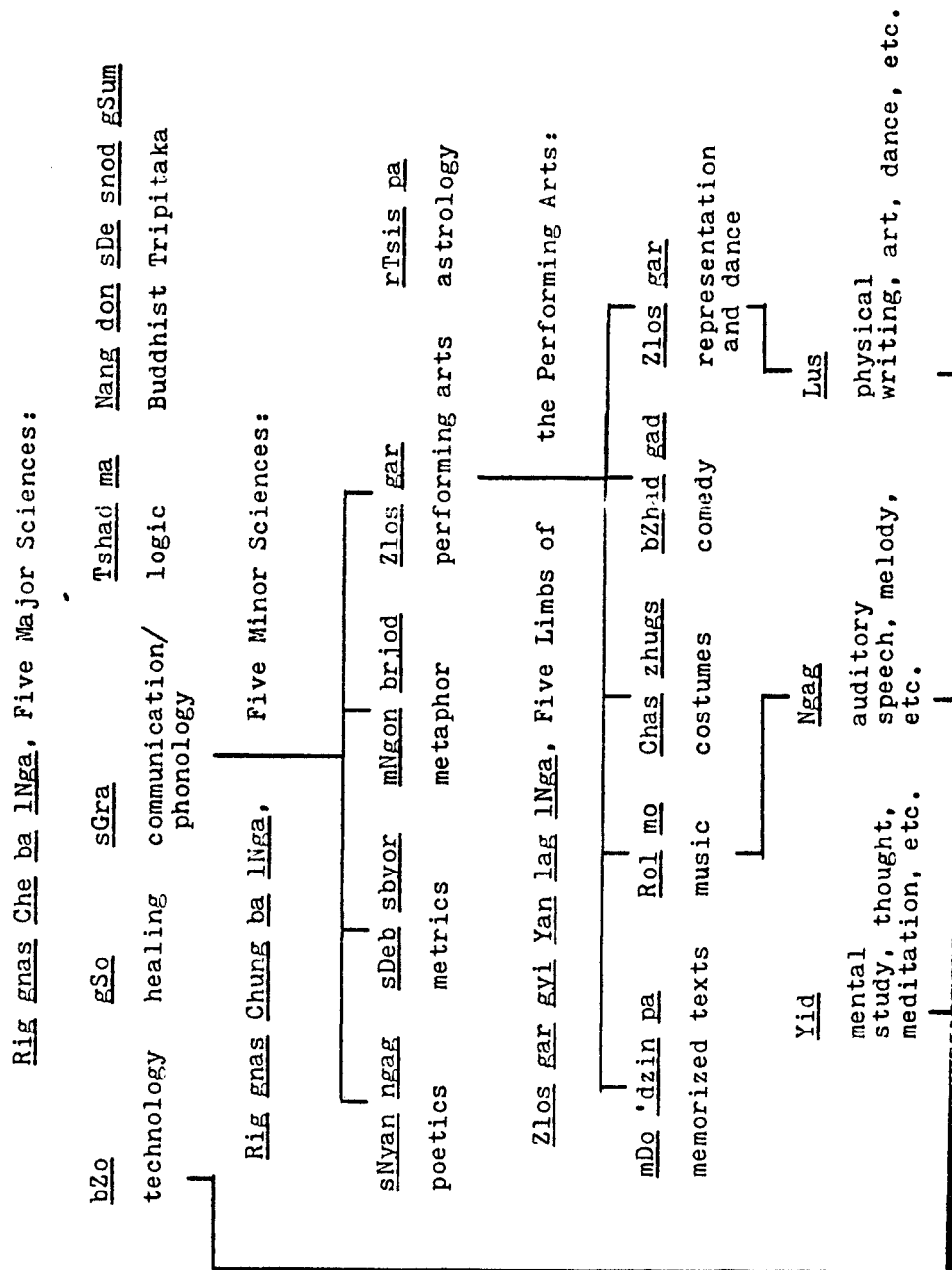
Fig. 9. Black Hat Dancer, Cham



Ma-chig-lag, the great 12th-century Tibetan yogini

Fig. 10. Chod Rite

FIG. 11. MUSIC AND DANCE AMONG THE INDO-TIBETAN SCIENCES (from kLong rdol n.d.)



TIBETAN DANCE

Dance in Tibetan culture is an enjoyable entertainment performed at social functions and a dramatic vehicle for presenting legendary stories (folk opera) and religious information (religious dance). Mimed drama, dance, and opera have been means of transmitting Tibetan history and customs in what was predominantly an illiterate society.

Tibetan dance can generally be categorized into three types: folk, religious, and opera. Although the folk and operatic styles are essentially secular, they often display the religious values that pervade Tibetan society. According to the Tibetan system, the dance can be classified under the five major sciences in the categories of dra (sound communication) and zo (creative technology). Zo includes the five minor sciences, one of which is the performing arts (lo gar). This broad category encompasses both amateur and professional performances of dance music and theater. The forms of lo gar are known as: dropa, folk dance and its accompanying song; gartrugpa, the music and dance performed by young boys for the Dalai Lama and certain members of his government on special occasions; meru ponzang, plays and entertainment presented on the last day of the seventh month; nangma, the music and dance of professional musicians who play light classical music as entertainment at parties; and perhaps cham, the monastic dance. The classification performing arts is then divided into "five limbs," memorized texts, comedy, and improvisation, costumes, presentation and dance, and music (Snyder, 1979, 35-38).¹³

FOLK DANCE

The folk dance known as dro is a spontaneous dance form done by all members of the culture. It has no known composers and is made up of several patterns, which may change and alter as a result of having no rigid form or method of oral or written directives. There is a possibility, therefore, for a small amount of individual expression within this style. Because it is a flexible form which is open to change, folk dance is extremely vital. In Tibet, folk dance style varied from region to region, just as the costumes did. Western and Central Tibetan dances were typified by complex footwork often in syncopated rhythmic patterns. In the East, the style was more flowing and simple, and the phrases were longer and slower. From Western Tibet folk songs were brought by nomads and gypsies to Central and Eastern Tibet (Rakra, 1979, 8).¹⁴ This must have also been true of the dances that often accompany the music. These dances were performed at such festival occasions as the harvest, New Year, and parties or visits from important personages. Today they are performed less frequently by refugees. Themes of their accompanying songs are drawn from such daily activities as traveling, herding, churning butter, or winnowing, or from such universal topics as love and thanksgiving. Some dances are performed exclusively by men, and some by women, while others are performed by both sexes. The floor pattern is either circular or linear. Often the lines cross or intermesh and then unravel. Although the dancers

frequently change directions, they never change levels, except occasionally to bend one knee. Stamps and turns predominate, accentuated by the heavy boots the dancers wear. Their arms seem to flow naturally, trailing extra-long silken sleeves.

The instruments that accompany the folk dance are the dram nyen, a long necked plucked lute, and transverse and vertical flutes, called lingbu. Often minstrels (nang ma), alone and in groups, wandered from town to town playing the dram nyen or the piwang, a small two-stringed fiddle. They sang, and performed the dance as an accompaniment to their own music. Sometimes a troupe composed of an entire family, including children, performed dance, acrobatics, or dramas accompanied by anonymous traditional songs which were more complex in structure than the occupational or performed songs (Kimbell, 1979, 49).¹⁵

RELIGIOUS DANCE

In contrast to the folk dance, ritual dance has been composed by individual great teachers. It is precisely and carefully recorded in texts and has a set pattern that must be performed accurately.

The basic steps, motion and movements of Tibetan sacred dance or "Garcham" as well as the meditation which corresponds to and accompanies these actions are based on writings such as "Yeshe Ngamlog," an early Buddhist text translated and taught in Tibet during the time of Padma Sambhava. (Kunzang, 1975, 79)¹⁶

These dances were first formalized by Padma Sambhava in the eighth century A.D. for the inauguration of Tibet's first Buddhist monastery, Samye.

Each of the four sects of Tibetan Buddhism developed dances particular to its own tradition. These monastic dances can be divided into two types: gar (meaning dance), the more esoteric and complex form which is performed in private within the monastery, and cham, the dance form connected to public rituals. Different dances within these two types are named according to their purpose, and for the different deities that are invoked. The subjects vary from the lives of the saints to the extradition of evil influences. Although all gar and cham symbolically presented esoteric teachings through gesture and dance, their content and style of presentation varied among the four sects and from monastery to monastery. For example, in the Nyingmapa Sect, the style of music and dance is romantic, elaborate and replete with movement. Gelugpa music and dance are classical, traditional, and restrained (Tethong, 1979, 19).¹⁷

In cham, colorful masks and elaborate brocade costumes often

enhanced the spectacle and clarified the action. The masks were larger than the head size, with exaggerated features of wrathful deities, beautiful peaceful ones, or exaggerated human faces. These dances were performed at religious festivals during special times of the year. Different monasteries perform them at different times. Most commonly they are presented at New Year of the lunar calendar. Because of these masks the dances have been mistaken by Westerners as devil dances.

Nothing could be more ill founded. These dances have no connection with magic and still less with sorcery, for they originated in Buddhist India, and they embody the methods of different spiritual masters. (Trungpa, 1971, 92)¹⁸

The performances that contained many dances ranged from one day to a week in duration. Now, however, in India, many monasteries perform shortened versions. Secular comic interludes are interspersed between the ritual sequence of religious dance. These beloved dramatic comedies are performed in mime and are peopled by such stock characters as the stupid servant and the pedantic Indian. The actors' gestures and actions vary according to character, in contrast to the movements of the cham dancers which are performed in unison. A solo dancer represents a deity, and the ensemble represents his retinue. Their costumes are heavy brocade robes of differing symbolic colors. These add weight and majesty to the movement, which is basically a spiraling step-hop-spin on one foot. Often the dancers recite ritual formulas (mantras). These prayers are usually not heard, however, for many of the dancers wear masks, and the accompanying music is quite loud. The masks represent the external form of the deity as well as the wisdom that the deity embodies. Yet,

ultimately the mask signifies illusion, which reveals the absolute reality of emptiness.

In gar, the highest meditative ritual dance, the movements are composed of stylized ritual gestures (mudra, Skt.) which generally are performed slowly and then are increased in momentum. Each movement of the hands or feet symbolizes a divine attribute or a moral or spiritual perfection which the dancer seeks to realize.

According to monastic rules, secular dancing was not permitted, but the Buddhist dancing is a spiritual exercise in awareness. The Lord Buddha is portrayed in sculpture and painting making different gestures (mudra), each of which has its own special significance. And so it is with our dancing; each step and each movement of the hands, arms and head has its own symbolical meaning and brings an increase of understanding both to dancers and spectators. . . .

The form that I was to learn came from Naropa, the "spiritual grandfather" of Milarepa, and expresses the ascent from the level of a beginner to final realization. It is called "The Great Gathering" (Tsogchen) and it is based on the "Wheel of Supreme Bliss" (Khorlo-demchog), which is a mandala of the Sambogakaya or "Bliss body of Buddhahood." This dance is a speciality of Surmang. . . .

It was all a great change; in the monastery my work had all been sedentary, now it was all movement. Thirty-five of us had at first to practice with the hand-drum. Afterwards, when I was in India, I found the identical instrument in old Indian paintings in a museum, and this proved to me that its use originated there. This work with the drums was, in fact, more difficult than the actual dancing for the arms had to be held at full length for over an hour at a time, then as the drum is twisted in the hand, the two weights attached to long cords rap on the vellum. To do this properly is far from easy and most tiring to start with. The drum is held in the right hand and symbolizes Compassion, while the bell in the left hand symbolizes Voidness of ultimate content. We practiced in this way daily from morning till evening with only an hour's break. In the evening we had to memorize the fundamental principles of the dancing and to learn the chants that go with it. . .

The course went on for three and one half months without interruption, for there was a great deal to learn. The dancing had three hundred and sixty different themes symbolic of the number of days in the year, and the same number of worldly thoughts which must be transformed into three hundred and sixty forms of Wisdom. (Trungpa, 1971, 92-93)19

Another cham dance is that of the dakinis (sky goers), or the feminine embodiments of the wisdom activity of the Buddha. They chant and dance as part of a long life ritual. Each unmasked dancer represents the consort of a different Dhyani Buddha (see p. 78), dresses in a different colored chuba and blouse, and carries a bolt of the same colored silk. The five deities dance sensuously with bells and damarus (small two-headed hourglass drums, which, when twisted, are struck by two weighted pellets attached with string). The dancers chant intermittently together or solo. They bring their bolts of cloth to the lama, unraveling these into long streamers as they move away from him. This indicates that they wish to take him on their streamers to their heavenly realm, symbolizing the lama's death. Subsequently they are offered an effigy, which they accept. They then cut their cloth streamers and exit. Their movements are similar to those in other chams but are slower and more gentle. Young girls have performed the dance, but I have seen male yogis dressed in women's clothing perform the dakini roles.

I have been told by a friend who grew up near the border between Western Nepal and Tibet that the monks in his village monastery performed a drum dance. At the time of the full moon they performed ascetic practices which then culminated in the dance.

Solo dances are often performed by eminent esoteric teachers in connection with certain rituals. Not all religious dances were performed in groups and many were not performed in public. (Lhalungpa, 1975, 19)²⁰

Some ritual dances are performed by yogis and yoginis. Chod,

which means "cutting of the ego," is performed in graveyards or in places inhabited by noxious local spirits. Adepts who have accomplished many practices in mind control perform this dance. In the dance, the practitioner offers himself to the demons and hungry ghosts and visualizes himself being devoured by them. Because he is no longer attached to his body or to the phenomenal world, he achieves the state of egolessness. As he dances, he chants a text; visualizes the drama of offering up his body, and accompanies himself with a large drum (damaru, Tib.), a bell (trilbu, Tib.), and thighbone trumpet (kangling, Tib.). His dancing area becomes the mandala of the four continents of the four directions and he dances "in harmony with the wisdom of the Buddha of that direction" (Evans-Wentz, 1972, 282).²¹ A dance may or may not be performed with the practice of chod, for it is the mind of the adept that is most important. Evans-Wentz also writes of another dance, called tulkhor, which is actually a series of exercises performed by novice yogis in front of their lama (Evans-Wentz, 1972, 283).²²

Other ritual dances were performed by lamas in a ceremony to bring about the death of an enemy, by rainmakers to bring rain, and by the state oracle (of the Dalai Lama) who went into trance, danced, and then prophesied (Nebesky Wojkowitz, 1975, 430-431).²³

Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo is unusual as a religious dance because it is performed by lay people, and because its movement style is classified under dro, folk dance which is accompanied by melodious songs. This is in direct contrast to the more classical styles of gar and cham, with their precise movements in the form of mudra. Yet, Ling Dro is a

religious dance because the text of the songs the dancers sing is both a meditational and a devotional practice; the minds of the dancers are focussed in prayer.

FOLK OPERA

Ache Lhamo, Tibetan folk opera, or secular theater which is sung, was created 500 years ago by the great mystic, saint, and deity of the drama, Thantog Gyalpo. Its stories derive from national history and its characters are often pre-Buddhist gods and heroes. The deified characters are distinguished by the wearing of masks, whereas the Tibetan and Chinese characters are not. Naturally, Buddhism, which so pervades Tibetan thought, has been integrated into these plays. Stories of the life of the Buddha and other Buddhist figures are performed by the Lhamo troupes. As in some cham, the main plot is interspersed with satirical skits and parody. The dramatic structure seems to have originated in India, while the style of song, makeup, and gesture harken to the style of Chinese opera. A dance precedes each opera and is performed in between interludes of operatic singing (Stein, 1972, 277-278).²⁴ Each character in the play is introduced by a characteristic musical theme to which he enters performing a dance which reveals his personality. Often two groups of male dancers compete in dancing and execute leaping turns around the performance area which has as its center an altar dedicated to Thantog Gyalpo. This altar indicates the ritual aspect of the performance. Young women playing the roles of dakinis form the main part of the dancing and singing chorus. They are known as the ache lhamo (sister goddesses), for whom the opera is named. Drums, horns, and cymbals accompany these dances, but the singing is unaccompanied. An

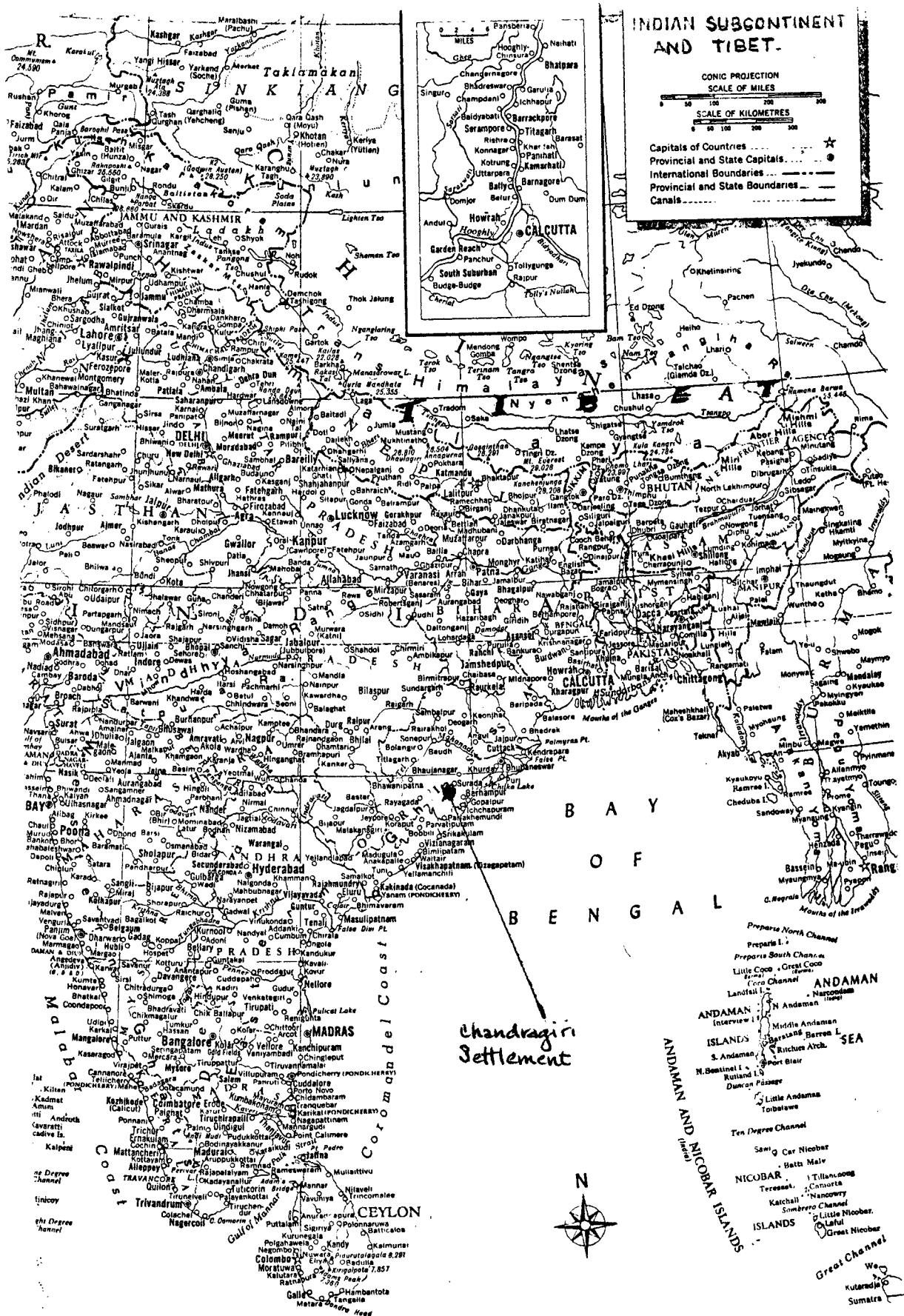
entire performance lasted one day. In Tibet, troupes of Lhamo performers wandered from village to village. However, these dances were performed by the villagers themselves, who closed up shop once or twice each year. Gradually some of these companies developed into professional companies. Professionalism gave rise to different approaches to performance, and style and content gradually were organized into the three different schools of Lhamo. The educated populace was discriminating and appreciated the superior performance of a particular troupe or individual. Certain outstanding performers were acclaimed and given a golden earring by the Dalai Lama (Tibetan Music and Drama Society Newsletter, 1978, 2-7).²⁵

In Tibet until 1959, there was an official theater season lasting about seven weeks during the late summer-early fall, when ten troupes of actors from the Central Tibetan area played in and around Lhasa. The presence of these performers was mandatory and listed as a surtax duty to the central government. Their performance standards were monitored in every detail by a specially appointed official of the treasury office, to which they were under contract. Although these troupes were by no means the only groups in Tibet playing Lhamo, they were the only ones listed in the central government tax-rolls and requested by law to perform at the drama festival in Lhasa each year (Snyder, 1979, 23)²⁶

Performances which were popular entertainments also served the purpose of securing well being and insuring good crops by pleasing the local spirits of the soil.



Fig. 12. Gesar



CHANDRAGIRI SETTLEMENT, ORISSA

Orissa is a state located on the East Coast of India between Calcutta and Madras. Its climate is mostly hot and arid and the majority of the inhabitants, called Oriyas, grow rice by means of irrigation. Although they are poor in terms of material possessions they boast a rich historic and artistic tradition.

The people have proudly preserved their varied and colorful folk dances which differ in style from tribe to tribe. The centuries old classical dance form known as Odissi (named for its place of origin) is still being taught in famous schools in Cuttack and by individual gurus. Statues of dancing girls executing some of the dance steps and postures are carved on beautiful temples built in ancient times by kings. The most famous of these is the sun temple at Konark. In Sambalpur, artisans weave saris of the complex and rich traditional designs.

The Tibetan settlement in Orissa was organized in the early 1960's after the Tibetans had fled into India to escape the Chinese invasion of their country. The land in Orissa was chosen because it was an historical site connected with the Indian Buddhist king, Ashoka. Tibetans were grouped into five different camps according to similar backgrounds and affinities. Generally, this means they shared the same lama or religious sect and came from the same town or village. Camps #3 and #5 are Nyingmapa. Most worship the deity Ling Gesar and are

followers of Dudjom Rinpoche. I stayed first in Camp #3 and then moved to Camp #5 where my Ling Dro teacher lived. The refugees were given separate land in the village of Chandragiri by the Indian government. This was divided into five camps and the people were allotted mud huts for housing, one hut to every five persons. Larger houses were built for larger families, but small families had to "double up" and share the one-room space in order to meet the five-person quota. Most of these, however, built partitions and divided the space into tiny living quarters. Each family was apportioned a certain amount of land "per head" for farming. Lots were drawn to designate whether the location of the land would be near or far from their home, or close to or far from irrigation. Many of the people had been farmers or nomadic herdsmen in Tibet, and these adapted easily to this pastoral way of life. The crops they grow are corn and millet, and many families own goats and cows. The greatest change came to most of the religious community who, of necessity, have had to relinquish their monastic vows. They have been forced to earn their own livings because the community at large is too poor to support them. The few skilled craftsmen who lived in the settlement were accorded a very low status. Smiths of silver and even of gold were considered next in caste to the lowly butcher. The one weaver in Orissa Settlement, who made shoulder bags and was a smith of pots and utensils, was reputed to be a man of unreliable character. Even the man who carved the masks for the ritual dance, cham, and sacred statues was considered a man of dubious powers.

The local painters of religious scrolls (tankas) were away studying, but did have a respected position in the culture. According to my friends, the caste system has been breaking down since their flight from Tibet. Old noble families have become poor and destitute, and anyone can become a soldier and make money.

People with leisure time (those too old to farm, farmers during the off season, or housewives done with their chores of drawing water from the wells, washing clothes in the irrigation ponds or streams, winnowing grains, buying supplies in the local store, and preparing food) turn to religion. They circumambulate either their camp's temple or the chorten (reliquary building) situated between camps three and four, turn the huge six-foot mani prayer wheels (see p. 89) housed next to the temple in some camps, and walk and spin hand-held prayer wheels. Religion, which was the focal point of the people in Tibet, remained the same in Chandragiri even under the difficult conditions of living in a refugee camp. The temple was the center of the mandala of each camp, and religious rituals were performed daily. When I first arrived in Chandragiri Settlement, I lived in Anzin Rinpoche's house, where two members of the family were monks. Every morning and evening they chanted prayers accompanied by a drum. Later, when I moved to my own house in the next camp, I would wake in the middle of any night and hear the shrill sounds of puja horns. Several kinds of horns and percussion instruments, bells, cymbals, and drums comprise the "orchestra" for many religious ceremonies.



Fig. 14 (Above Left). Anzin Rinpoche's Family

Fig. 15 (Above Right). Norbu Sangpo, Ling Dro Teacher, Daughter and Son-in-law

Fig. 16 (Below Left). A Wong in Camp #3

Fig. 17 (Below Right). A Puja



Fig. 18. Chandragiri Settlement, Uprising Day



Fig. 19. Chandragiri Settlement, Uprising Day

OCCASIONS: RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR

I was invited to attend some of the religious ceremonies, one for the remembrance of a deceased teacher, another for the insurance of one's long life. The former was more intimate; it was conducted in a private house and the participants were mainly students of that teacher. The latter was an empowerment given to the entire community and open to people from all camps, although in general followers of a particular sect went to the rituals given by that sect. These empowerments (wongs) were given in a different camp each time by the lama of that camp. They were great social, as well as religious functions. Families of the host camp served lunch to friends and families of the visiting camps. I was invited to, and actually visited ten different houses for lunch in one wong day. According to custom I tasted each dish so as not to offend my host. Young and old benefit socially at these large gatherings; friendships are rekindled and flirtation is not uncommon.

Settlement life was punctuated by several events. The most important of these was Losar (New Year), the holiday in the Tibetan calendar observed by the entire populace. In the settlement temples, the religious community continuously chanted ceremonies for ushering out the old year and any residual negative influences, and for ushering in a healthy and prosperous new year. On a special day, the monastic dance, cham, was performed. Everyone ran to see the whirling masked figures, which depicted wrathful deities, skeletons (symbols of impermanence), and

unmasked tantric practitioners. The culmination of their rites was the stabbing of the dough effigy of a demon, insuring an obstacle-free new year. The Tibetan family I lived with had spent months preparing quantities of beer and whiskey for this season and, just prior to Losar, had made enormous quantities of kupse, delicious twisted fried cookies.

Even though they had changed climates and moved from a meat-eating into a vegetarian culture, the people of Orissa Settlement persisted in eating the general Tibetan fare. These consisted of beef noodle and rice soups (thugpa, Tib.); heavy doughy steamed buns, called ting momos; fried flat bread; yogurt, sho; cellophane noodles, phing; and everyone's favorite, steam meat-filled dumplings, momo. The best momo makers in the family I lived with in Orissa were also the best religious offering cake (torma, Tib.) makers.²⁷ Cow and goat meat (brought from Indian butchers, for the Buddhists do not kill) were used in the thugpa and momos. Sometimes the meat was dried and eaten like beef jerky. My friends never failed to tell me of the inferior quality of the milk and meat they were serving in comparison to the rich yak meat and dri (female yak) milk. In Tibet two of the main staples were tsampa (parched coarse barley flour) and yak butter. Tibetan tea was made from tea bricks, rancid butter, and salt, tasting more like bouillon, and was kneaded into the tsampa to form a dough-like ball. Sometimes hard cheese (which takes one day's sucking or soaking in water to soften) was mixed into this. Nomads relied upon

this food. In Orissa, where barley was scarce and wheat, rice, and corn more plentiful, they made corn and wheat tsampa, and ate a typical Indian lunch of rice and lentils. Tibetans brew two intoxicating drinks from rice, barley, and millet, alone or in any combination. In Orissa, corn and millet were used to make chang, a beer that tastes somewhat like Japanese rice wine. Each house had its own recipe and I could clearly taste the difference between the brew of one camp from that of another camp. Arak is the strong whiskey they make from corn. It looks like water but burnt holes in my tongue. Much time was devoted to maintaining an abundant liquor supply. Members of the family or servants would get up early to boil huge cauldrons of grain and water mixtures. For beer, yeast was added to this mixture and was sealed in large clay pots. When properly fermented, it was stored in bottles and was especially plied upon guests and family members at Losar.

Friends and family were invited to visit, at celebrations such as Losar, and if they lived far away, to stay for the duration of the Losar celebration, which continued both night and day. Those closest to the family came early to help with the preparations and stayed after to help clean up. These people were devotees of the lama in our house. Although they lived in another camp, they helped our family to farm and to build an addition on the house. They stayed with us while they were helping with the building, and at night, after work, they sang sections of the Gesar epic. On the first day of Losar the immediate family celebrates together, but on the second day, we went visiting and others came to visit us. Some of those stayed with us; there were always about

fifty people around. Food and drink were continually served, people played cards and dominoes and, at special times, generally in the cooler evening, they sang and folk danced. For us, Losar lasted one week; in another house nearby they observed three weeks of continuous partying.

Other gatherings of note were the day-long "picnics" or parties given yearly by such groups as workers at the carpet factory, the Tibetan youth organization, and the Ling Dro Party. Dancing and singing always occurred at these parties after enough beer had been consumed.

The presentation of dances, plays, and opera was infrequent. Ling Dro was performed when I first arrived, and we once went to another camp for a day's outing and an excellent performance of Lhamo, the folk opera, by a local group. The only play I saw was on Tibetan Uprising Day. This gathering united the five refugees camps into one homogenous group. March 10, Tibetan Uprising Day, commemorates the official Chinese takeover of Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. On this day innumerable Tibetans marched in the main street of Chandrigiri. Children carried banners, while some people carried an effigy of Mao Tse Tung which they burned in the center of the village. In the evening a play depicting atrocities was presented and many people wept.

ECONOMICS

Tibetans are known to be good traders. In Tibet, merchant traders were part of the wealthy class. When either friends or family came to visit Chandragiri Settlement they always brought along goods to sell. This was of benefit to them and to the settlement members who seldom traveled, except to the small city of Berhampur, where the market was geared only toward Indians. Some settlement members were themselves traders. Either they or people they hired sold sweaters on the streets of most of India's cities or tourist spots. They often bought black market sweaters, sent from abroad for Bangladesh refugees and sold by the Indians, or went to a sweater factory in the north of India. These people were generally wealthier than the farmers. However, wealth was not easily discernible except by an occasional cement house with electricity, a bicycle for each family member, a large number of local tribal Indian servants, especially beautiful ritual objects, or perhaps an extra piece of land bought from the local tribal people.

The entire settlement was run as a cooperative. When the Swiss gave tractors to the corn farmers, they became cooperatively owned and used. Each farmer signed up to use the ploughs in his fields and gave a certain portion of his harvest to the cooperative to be sold in Calcutta to the cookie manufacturers. A representative of the cooperative negotiated this deal and the profits made were divided. The only cooperatively run industry was the carpet factory.

This is Tibetan cottage industry found in every settlement. The Chandragiri carpet factory sells traditional rugs to dealers in Madras and Switzerland.

Each camp has its own cooperative store, which sells such food staples as rice and wheat flour and powdered milk and other necessary supplies: kerosene, notebooks, pens, pencils, cloth, shoes, sweaters, and ribbons. The village of Chandragiri served for bicycle repairs and a more diverse selection of staple goods. It was located up to eight miles away. People went to Berhampur to buy items they could not obtain closer to home. The cooperative had built a mill next to the second camp and the very thrifty Tibetans chose to buy wheat in Berhampur and bring it home to be ground rather than to buy more expensive milled flour. People carried their grains miles to the mill, by slinging a rope under the bag and around their forehead. They then bent over to balance the weight on their backs. This form of human transport was used when there was no beast of burden (yak, horse, or donkey) available. The wheel was seldom used in Tibet for transport because of the rugged terrain and the lack of good roads.

In Orissa, only settlement officials had cars, and one a motorcycle. Bicycles and feet were the main means of local transport and crowded Indian busses were taken over long distances. Once a day these came from and returned to Berhampur, which was five hours away.

Because of the Tibetans' interest in savings and finance, a tiny branch of the Canara Bank of India was opened on the settlement grounds near the head office. The cooperative takes loans and deposits savings, and individuals also have private accounts.

EDUCATION AND HEALTH

The biggest problems in Orissa settlement were education and medical care. Small grade schools staffed by Indian teachers were established in the larger camps, but the rate of attrition was great. There was little incentive to study, the teachers were lethargic and did not speak Tibetan, and most children expected only to become farmers. There was only one junior high school for all five camps. If a family was lucky enough to get financial assistance, they would send their child to either a Tibetan boarding school run by the government in exile or to expensive missionary schools. Both offer schooling from kindergarten through twelfth grade. For religious education students studied under the lamas of the settlement or went away to a monastery or religious college. The majority of the adolescents were away from the settlement when I was there. Some had even joined the Indian army. The remaining ones had dropped out of school to become farmers or sweater sellers.

The poorly staffed and equipped Indian hospital was approximately two to ten miles away from the Tibetans' homes. If someone could not walk there, the Tibetans had to rent the government jeep to transport the sick person. Only one person was trained in the practice of Tibetan medicine. In Orissa settlement 45 percent of the people have tuberculosis.

During the month of January, the temperature is cold, but then it gradually begins to grow warmer. By May it is very hot and the farmers are out in their fields preparing for monsoon. In June,

heavy rains start, all becomes muddy, and bicycles become inoperable. Tibetans come from a high-altitude, cold climate and are physiologically adapted to cold weather, but somehow the survivors have learned to tolerate the heat in India. (Their yaks could not even live below the snow mountains.) They never venture out into the sun unless necessary and some still persist in wearing their old woolen clothes in summer as a matter of pride, custom, or poverty. With the heat comes disease. Mosquitos which transmit malaria and elephantiasis breed in wells which dry up or become stagnant.

Despite the great poverty of the Tibetan refugees and the extraordinary cultural and even biological adaptations that they have had to make in order to survive, they do survive and manage to retain much of their old way of life. Their ability to do this arises from their great spiritual strength, a result of their practice of the Buddha Dharma.



Fig. 20. Gesar



Fig. 21. The Buddha Shakyamuni



Fig. 22. Tara

BUDDHISM

The Buddha Dharma is a vehicle of transport toward a higher consciousness. A popular image is the boat that crosses the river of suffering, carrying one to the other shore of liberation. Then, when the vehicle is no longer necessary, the boat is abandoned.

In the sixth century the Buddha Sakyamuni first turned the wheel of the Dharma by teaching the Four Noble Truths, the basis of all Buddha Dharma. These are: (1) The existence of suffering; (2) The cause of suffering; (3) The extinction of suffering; (4) The path to the extinction of suffering. Suffering is the nature of all phenomenal existence, Samsara, which is caused by dualistic views of self (the grasper) and object (that which is grasped). This notion leads to attachment or aversion (avoiding what frustrates our desire), and these three states, ignorance, desire, and hatred, are known as the Three Poisons. When these three give rise to two more, pride and jealousy, they are known all together as the Five Passions.

All activities in the deluded (dualistic) state produce future situations and the entire universe is created in this way. If one is aware of how to deal with ripening karma, one can benefit by experiencing good future karma. The way to do this and go beyond the Samsaric existence (beyond rebirth and karma) is to practice the Dharma.

The Buddha taught according to the minds and capacities of each individual. These different methods, which originate with the Buddha,

are called Vehicles (Yanas). According to their points of view these have been divided into the Greater (Maha) and the Lesser (Hina) Vehicles.

The Four Noble Truths, which the Buddha taught at Sarnath, India are the basis of the Hinayana (Southern School) teachings. In these teachings (Sutras) the doctrine of Karma is emphasized. This doctrine holds that one must accumulate an ocean of good karma over countless lifetimes by performing meritorious acts and by avoiding those activities that lead to attachment. Good conduct is based upon the adherence to a strict moral code, Vinaya, by which one tames the passions and all worldliness, which otherwise lead to suffering. By following the strict path of the monk, meditating upon the disgusting things to help one turn away from worldly things, renouncing the world, and accumulating meritorious karma and spiritual knowledge one realizes the goal of personal egolessness and Nirvana, the state beyond suffering, birth, and death. This path is a slow gradual path which requires three immeasurable cycles of time to complete.

The Northern School, or Mahayana, derives from the Sutras or the Perfection of Wisdom. The Buddha explained these discourses on the Doctrine of Emptiness (Shunyata) at Vulture's Peak, Rajgir, India. Within the Mahayana it is recognized that all beings contain potential Buddhahood, the seed of Enlightenment (Bodhicitta, Skt.) which is merely obscured by defilements, such as the false notion of an independent self, existing as ego. Therefore, one must follow the path of compassionate Bodhisattva (a future Buddha) who refuses entry into Nirvana until

all other beings have attained it. This path includes the Hinayana, i.e., the accumulation of virtuous deeds which create good karma, but goes one step further with the dedication of this merit to the benefit of all beings. The result is the realization of egolessness (emptiness of self) and the recognition that the voidness is also the essential quality of all others who are all nascent Buddhas. The Bodhisattva, after countless lifetimes (again three immeasurable cycles of times) of working for the enlightenment of all, realizes that both self and phenomena (Samsara), and all relative concepts, such as karma, possess the same essence (emptiness and illusion) and that they are not different. Through recognition of the emptiness inherent in all, the Bodhisattva becomes a Buddha who sees Samsara united with Nirvana in Emptiness.

In the Hinayana the practitioners emulate the historical Buddha Sakyamuni, who is the sole example of the path. In the Mahayana, the pantheon of deities increases, where all beings are viewed as potential Buddhas. Bodhisattvas, who represent the most advanced practitioners, are included in the retinue of the Buddha, who is the guide to Enlightenment. The Vajrayana, the vehicle most practiced by Tibetans, is an offshoot from and an amplification of the Mahayana. In the Vajrayana, all beings are known to be Buddhas already and they need only recognize their Buddha nature by following the Vajrayana path. The Vajrayana pantheon includes countless deities, who like ourselves, reflect the Buddha Nature which is Wisdom Mind. Gesar is one of these deities.

The Vajrayana (the Adamantine, Diamond Vehicle) is an extension of the Mahayana and therefore contains the teachings of the Hinayana and Mahayana, along with teachings which are not included in the general body of Mahayana. It is based on a body of esoteric texts, called tantras, that include ritual practices using mantra (symbolic incantations), mudras (ritual gestures), visualizations (of the deity) and mandala (Douglas, 1971, 5). ²⁸

Tantra literally means to weave. The tantric practice weaves all aspects or dualities (Samsara) into nonduality. The phenomenal world is neither abandoned (as it is in the Hinayana) nor remedied by Emptiness (as it is in the Mahayana). All appearance leads to the realization of the identify of Samsara and Nirvana. Thus all circumstances are seen as the opportunity for practice.

As with Judo, the adept learns to use the antagonist's weight to his own advantage. Obstacles are transmuted into instruments for providing the tremendous momentum needed. (Blofeld, 1970, 31-2)²⁹

Although there is a wealth of techniques in tantric practice, they all aim at experiencing the meditative mind, relaxed and resting in its natural state. This is known as Wisdom Mind, one's own Buddha Nature, which is primordial but unrecognized. It is pure, undefinable, and aware of its own voidness and luminosity, and it recognizes the emptiness of phenomena. Thus, there is neither grasper, nor grasping, nor object to be grasped. Because it has always been, though unrecognized, we need to acquire nothing, as is done in Hinayana, nor do we need to nurture a seed, as is done in Mahayana. We need only be aware of what there is.

The purpose of Vajrayana practice is to develop a pure vision of the world which is perfect as it is. The tantric practitioner constructs through various practices such as visualization, a mandala wherein all beings are deities. The essence is not only empty, like the spaciousness of the sky, but it is luminous, manifesting unobstructedly as pure appearance in the skylike nature of the mind. The open spaciousness is known as the Dharmakaya, the luminosity as the Sambo-gakaya, and the unobstructedness as the Nirmanakaya.

The highest teachings of the Vajrayana, are known as Ati Yoga (Dzog Chen, Tib.), The Great Perfection. Here all phenomena are experienced as intrinsically pure and perfect. This radiant awareness is the mandala of the primordial Buddha, Kuntu Zangpo (Samantabhadra, Skt.), who originally revealed the Vajrayana teachings. One practices tantra in order to recognize that one's self-nature is identical with Kuntu Zangpo's.



Fig. 23. Mandala of Vairocana

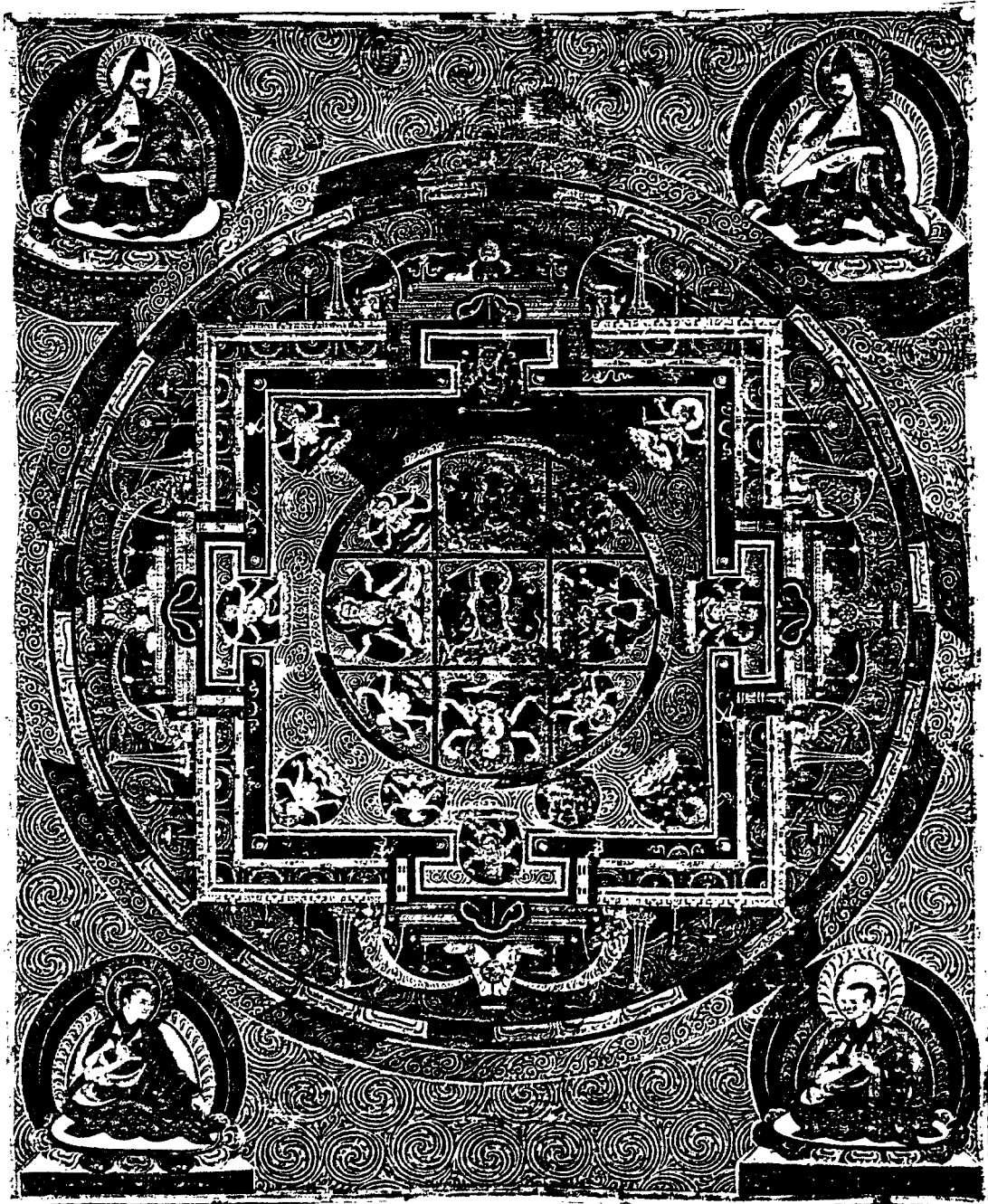


Fig. 24. Mandala of Manjursi

THE MANDALA

Mandala is a Sanskrit term meaning circle and center. The circular form can be universally found in art and ritual from ancient times to the present. C.G. Jung refers to it as "the archetype of wholeness" (Jung, 1972, 4).³⁰ In her study on the art of children, Rhoda Kellog notes that the first human forms children begin to draw are mandaloid (circular) (Kellog, 1966, 30).³¹

The mandala is a symbol of integration and unification. It is a space in which all things become unified and interrelated and where one's psyche becomes integrated and centered (Jung, 1972, 4).³² Tibetans use this symbol in the teaching of Buddha Dharma, the path to Enlightenment. The bond between students and teacher and between students of the same teacher is symbolized by the mandala.

In Vajrayana Buddhism, the mandala represents many things. In its concrete form, it is the palace or realm of the deity (a form of the Buddha) where he or she dwells accompanied by his/her retinue. Forms of this are painted in complex patterns on scrolls called tankas. Some are drawn in colored sand, and some are even constructed three dimensionally. These mazelike patterns of circles within squares within circles symbolize levels of consciousness. The practitioner meditates on them until he realizes the center of the mandala, the deity, to be his own mind.

The mandalic form is also used in tantric ritual and dance.

When a practitioner takes initiation from a lama, he enters into and remains in that mandala by contract with the lama, and all the other initiates in the same mandala are henceforth known to each other as vajra brothers and sisters.

The tantric practitioner creates the world in his visualization and dissolves it. In this way he sees the reality of the universe, its emptiness and impermanence, and he develops this pure vision. For some practices he must visualize an elaborate mandala of the universe with numerous deities which he must create clearly and in detail. Other practices require more simple images. For example, one may cite a mandalic map of the Buddhist cosmos in which Mount Meru, the axis mundi, is surrounded by one large and eight lesser continents at each of the cardinal points on a compass and presided over by the sun and moon. Arguelles states that the properties of a mandala are the four cardinal points as well as symmetry and a central point (Arguelles, 1972, 13).³³

Whereas these are the representational, outer aspects of the mandala, they are merely vehicles to enter into the most subtle concepts of Vajrayana Buddhism. In this profound sense a mandala is a manifestation of some especially significant fact of Reality, which expresses both its essence (beingness) and the way it reveals itself (Crystal Mirror, 1972, 62).³⁴ The surroundings of the central point are seen as intrinsically beautiful emanations of that radiating center, not as part of it. They are expressions of that central point, which when contemplated, reveal the very nature of the central point itself. Thus all things are seen as intrinsically pure and perfect; all thoughts

are deities, all sounds are mantra. The mandala represents the enlightened state in which all things are united in nonduality.

Whereas a mandala can symbolize all things in their unified state, it also can represent a specific place sacred and separate from what Eliade calls the "profane" space surrounding it (Eliade, 1975, 34)³⁵ in which a mandalic event may take place. The object of an event or ritual is to transform the "relative" specific mandala into the greater absolute mandala.



Fig. 25 (Above). Woman with Prayer Wheel



Fig. 26 (Right). Chorten



Fig. 27 (Above). Making Tormas



Fig. 28 (Right). Elaborate Torma Used in Ritual

RITUAL, THE ACTIVITY OF THE MANDALA

The specific nature of ritual concerning mandalas requires further definition. According to Beals and Hoijer,

A ritual may be best defined perhaps as a prescribed way of performing religious acts, that is of praying, singing sacred songs, dancing to the gods, making sacrifices or preparing offerings. (Beals, Hoijer, 1973, 461)³⁶

I would also define ritual as any activity which transforms the mind of the participant and possibly the mind of the spectator. Often there is a strictly prescribed method of performance which should re-create the perfection and freshness of its creation. A ritual of this kind is created by a god, hero, or ancestor or is channeled through a person or persons who have experienced the desired psychic transformation (Eliade, 1972, 134).³⁷

Whereas the mandala is itself a symbol, ritual is the process or activity of the mandala. Arguelles cites the activities of the mandala (and of many rituals) as: "Purification, centering, orientation, construction, destruction, reintegration, and actualization" (Arguelles, 1972, 84).³⁸ Transformation, becoming the mandala, is the desired result of performing the ritual.

Rituals are given sanctification and rationalization in a culture by being referred to as supposedly divine prototypes. Rituals periodically reconfirm the sacredness of their origin and re-establish "sacred" time for the community performing the rituals. (Eliade, 1972, 133)³⁹

Ritual activity is timeless and can even be considered stationary, out of normal time and without temporal confines. Ritual time can even seem to go backwards if it recreates its former time. Eliade refers to the cyclical recreation of a past sacred event as mythic reversible

time, as opposed to historical temporal time (Eliade 1975, 33-35).⁴⁰ Rituals are performed at important changes of the seasons, or at important times in a person's life. They are used to enhance a situation or to change it. Rites celebrate marriages, subdue evil forces, and bring wealth or ruin.

Rites and ceremonies play a significant role in the Vajrayana, because the body in this system is the vehicle for Enlightenment. The Outer Tantra uses rituals, gestures, offerings, etc. The Inner Tantra uses pranayama, the yoga of breath (tso-lung, Tib.).

Tantric rituals can be classified into three types, depending on their purpose: (1) meditational (*sadhana*, Skt.), (2) worship and inward transformation, and (3) those with special goals (*puja*, Skt.) such as eradicating negative forces, increasing wealth, etc. The first two types are designed to enable one to become responsive to the Absolute Truth and are preliminary necessities to meditational practices (Lhalungpa, 1975, 18).⁴¹ Within these rituals, the practitioner, through the five senses, receives appropriate sensations (such as incense, holy water, and pictures of the deity) that are chosen especially to awaken the Enlightened Mind. In goal-oriented ritual (for example, Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo) the practitioner invokes the deity to aid him in one or more of the Four Activities (see p. 93), pacifying, increasing, subduing, and overpowering. After all ceremonies, however, the practitioner dissolves the visualized deity into himself and realizes that the deity is his own mind and that all phenomena in it, including rituals and obstacles, are merely the play of his own mind.

As has been said, tantric ritual takes place within the mandala, and is conducted in the form of a mandala. The first part of a ritual is the creation of the mandala. The sacred space is specially "created" by purifying and protecting it from outside hostile forces by an exorcising ritual, in which offerings, incantations, and ritual gestures are made to pacify the local spirits. Eliade states that a circle of stones surrounding a sacred space is one of the earliest examples of man-made sanctuary (Eliade, 1975, 156).⁴² Once the mandalic ground is sanctified, the ritual of transformation may begin. The ritual of empowerment (wong), is given in the mandalic form.

The lama makes the initiate recognize that from the beginning the true nature of his own mind is the wisdom of the three Kayas. Knowing this one can practice and attain Buddhahood in one lifetime. "According to the system of Tantra, the reason for empowerment is blessing and power . . . to practice and then we can teach others" (Norbu, 1977, 34).⁴³

The disciple is guided through the mandala of a deity by his lama, who in the ritual represents the deity. He proceeds from the outer circles to the innermost center, where the deity resides. Generally, at each successive step, the initiate verbally requests the lama to allow him to enter the next stage. He is taken in, given the signs or symbols of the mind's awakening at that level, and is thereby progressively empowered. At the center, he is empowered by the lama to see his own nature and the nature of the deity to be identical, and to see all others as reflections of that Buddha nature.

I was not required to do Gesar practice nor to receive the Gesar empowerment initiation before learning Ling Dro. However, I had taken refuge, (initiation into Buddhism under the direction of a lama). In this initiation one states faith in the Buddha, in his teachings, the Dharma, and in the exponents of that teaching, the Sangha. As a symbol of this refuge one receives a new Buddhist name from the presiding lama.

OFFERINGS

Ritual offerings are made to the deity who dwells in the mandala in the forms of food and flowers brought by practitioners, and as special ritual cakes (tormas, Tib.). These simple offerings represent innumerable good things contained in the world and are offered with prayer, mudra, and visualization of that world. These are known as the mandala offering. From then on, the form and content of the ritual differs according to purpose. These rites are not only meant to please and propitiate the deities, but they are skillful means that lead the mind to a state of egoless nongrasping, for nonduality is the ultimate offering.

Along with offerings one makes in practices and ceremonies, the Tantric practitioner makes daily offerings to the deities. In the morning he offers seven bowls on his altar filled with substances desirable to the senses. He provides water to drink and to wash hands and feet, flowers to adorn the head and hair, incense to smell, an oil or butter lamp for light to see, perfume to refresh the body, and food, generally rice, to please the taste (Norbu, 1977, 59).⁴⁴ Sometimes an eighth offering, music to please the ear, is added. These oblations which please the deity are called offerings to "accomplish drawing near" (Ekvall, 1962, 166).⁴⁵

The practitioner also offers prayers and a bit of the food he will eat at each meal. At night he empties the offering bowls and fills

a special cup with tea to appease certain protective, but not fully enlightened spirits, known as Dra lhas. He may also set aside food and recite prayers for the inhabitants of all the six realms of Samsara, hoping to benefit them and to hasten their liberation.

Offerings are also made to others in the form of long white silk or cotton scarves (katag, Tib.) which are exchanged when greeting or seeing off a person of equal or higher rank. These are also placed at the foot of statues and around ritual objects. Besides katags, one offers money, food, clothes, service, and devotion to one's lama, who represents the teaching aspect of the deity.

All offerings are made to increase merit, which creates good karma and enables one to proceed toward Enlightenment. Ultimately, however, the practitioner realizes that "all variegated appearances are outer offerings, the spontaneously originated desirable qualities are inner offerings, and nonduality, freedom from grasping is the secret offering" (Dudjom Rinpoche).⁴⁶



Fig. 29. Padma Sambhava

PRELIMINARY PRACTICE: NGONDRO

As an example of Vajrayana practice and how it unites the various elements discussed in the preceding sections, I will write of my own preliminary practices according to the Dudjom Tersar Ngondro⁴⁷ and the experiences I have had with them. The preliminary practices of Tibetan Buddhism are designed to purify one's body, speech, and mind and prepare the ground for more detailed vigorous tantric practices. They progress from the Hinayana to the Mahayana, and into the Vajrayana, which is composed of two stages, Kye Rim, the generative or visualization phase and Dzog Rim, the complete phase dissolving visualization into oneself.

The practitioner performs practices that include prostrations (body), mantra (speech) and visualization (mind) all of which he offers to the Buddha, represented by his lama. For in the Vajrayana he realizes that in order to follow this quick path, he must rely upon the guru, who reveals to him the nature of his own mind. The results of his practice are the accumulation of good karma and spiritual knowledge. Tantric practices like these are not restricted to monks, but are open to all lay people, both men and women. The members of the Ling Dro Party should be Buddhists and devotees of Gesar and have finished their Ngondro before learning any advanced Gesar meditational practices (sadhanas, Skt.) such as Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo. When I wrote to Tulku Nam Kah Trimed in Orissa, I advised him that I was performing my

preliminary practices. He replied that in Orissa they were practicing Ling Dro, for the dance is a sadhana which reveals itself on different levels only after one has studied about those different levels and practiced previous ones.

First, one contemplates the conditions of man, a meditation which brings about four changes of attitude and leads one to renounce Samsara and seek the path of Buddha Dharma. These conditions are: that human birth is most rare and invaluable; that all conditioned things are impermanent since death is inevitable and unpredictable; that every event in this world is the result of Karma, the law of cause and effect; and that this world system is filled with suffering, the state of Samsara. Then one takes refuge, stating belief in the Buddha, the Dharma (the Buddha's teachings), and the Sangha (the Buddha's sublime followers). Then, one generates the Bodhicitta, Enlightenment, by repeating the Bodhisattva vow, not to enter into Nirvana until Samsara is emptied of sentient beings. This engenders compassion towards others which will, however, arise spontaneously with the recognition of voidness. The practitioner performs a full prostration during these two statements. He brings his hands to the top of the head, throat, and heart (signifying body, speech, and mind) and then slides out his hands, prostrating himself fully on the floor. Simultaneously, he visualizes an elaborate mandala completely surrounding him. This mandala includes the Buddha (in my case, Padma Sambhava) his teaching and his followers, a host of other deities, and other sentient beings. Significantly, all those we see as enemies, those we love, and those

toward whom we feel neutral are also included in the mandala. At the end of the practice, the visualization merges into the deity and the deity into the practitioner and the practitioner realizes that the deity's wisdom mind is his own.

All these activities of body (prostrations), speech (recitation of mantra), and mind (visualization) are difficult to coordinate. Yet if one can accomplish it, it becomes truly a vehicle to multi-dimensional consciousness. Just the simple activity of prostrating brought about many changes in my perceptions. The prostration seemed to be the ultimate physical expression of humility and reverence. The focus on the three chakras (top of the head, throat, and heart) seemed to open and energize them. I felt my body changing and becoming more receptive. The visualization seemed to connect with a primordial intuition. I experienced the power of the physical activity united with the focus of prayer in my mind. Compassion is engendered as an experience of openness toward others, beyond concepts of friend or enemy.

The next practice is that of the mandala offering. This symbolizes the world with Mt. Meru in the center, surrounded by seven golden mountains, seven seas, four great and eight lesser continents, an outer ring of iron mountains and presided over by the sun and moon. All one's possessions and all wondrous things, substantial, insubstantial and created by mind, are visualized and contained within this and offered to the precious guru-deity the three kayas and all Buddhas in their Buddha realms. (We actually offer our own thoughts, and the deity is our own wisdom mind.) One chants an offering prayer dedicating the merit to all sentient beings while piling rice upon a plate in mounds that symbolize

Mt. Meru, the four continents, and the sun and the moon. The visualization is the same as in prostration practice, but here the mandala is added. Again activity, visualization, and sound connected me to profound meanings in my life and experience. I saw myself as an isolated human being expanding and sharing with others. Recreating the model of the universe 100,000 times, with the intention of its actually being the universe rather than the symbol, made me see how the mind produces the object and how the mind can alter its object. Spatial relationships are purely conceptual. Ritual gesture and speech clearly appeared to be abbreviated form of a much larger reality.

Two more practices, which are principally concerned with visualization, follow. The first is a purification meditation. The deity symbolizing the tantric teachings purifies the obscurations with white light (amrita). (This is sometimes performed before the mandala offering.) Only when cleansed of past karma can we begin to see the nature of our own minds. For me, this was a time when I opened up to circumstances that I felt were threatening. Objects seem to lose their substantiality, and people said that I glowed.

The last preliminary practice is called Guru Yoga. It intensifies the bond between the teacher and student. In the Vajrayana, the student relies upon his lama, who by his compassion shows him the nature of his own mind. The practitioner visualizes the deity as his teacher and takes initiations in the form of light empowerments. At the end of Guru Yoga the deity dissolves into ourselves, and we, student-teacher-deity, dissolve into the vast expanse of mindful

awareness. When this realization is accomplished the student is ready to proceed to more advanced practices. I felt myself strongly united with the teachings, and more open to receive them from my teacher and from the circumstances that surrounded me.

Ling Dro is a form of the practice of Guru Yoga. Gesar is the deity from whom the dancers take blessings and empowerment. As their lama, he shows them their own mind. After the student has engaged in a series of preliminary practices, he is given a tutelary deity (yidam, Tib.), which reflects a primary emotional aspect of his personality.

Every individual has a propensity toward one of the passions, and by meditating on a deity connected with that passion, he is able to recognize his own basic wisdom energy. By using this form of tantric psychology, the practitioner uses the passions as a path to recognize inherent wisdom nature. The Dhyani Buddha families are:

DEITY	FAMILY	PASSION	DIRECTION	QUALITY	COLORS
Amoghasiddhi	Karma	Jealousy	North	Activity	Green
Ratnasambhava	Ratna	Pride	South	Quality	Yellow
Akshobya	Vajra	Anger	East	Body	White
Amitabha	Padma	Desire	West	Speech	Red
Vairocana	Buddha	Ignorance	Center	Mind	Blue

DEITY	WISDOM	SKANDHA	CHAKRA	MUDRA
Amoghasiddhi	All-accomplishing	Impulse	Genitals	Fearlessness
Ratnasambhava	Equanimitous	Feelings	Abdomen	Giving
Akshobya	Mirror-like	Consciousness	Heart	Earth touching
Amitabha	Discriminating	Perception	Throat	Meditation
Vairocana	Pure absolute	Form	Head	Turning the wheel of the Dharma
(Govinda, 48 1975, 12)				

Within each Buddha family there is an emanation for each Kaya. For instance, according to the Nyingma, in the Padma family Amitabhais the Dharmakaya, Chenrezig is the Sambogakaya, and Padma Sambhava is the Nirmanakaya. Gesar, considered a yidam of the Padma family, is an emanation of the Sambogakaya and Nirmanakaya deities.

The compassion of the Buddha dictates that he appear not once in historical time but many times to help enlighten beings. He uses many forms, known as tulkus, of which the hero-deity Ling Gesar was such an emanation. He appeared in order to help the Tibetans in a time when their country and Buddhism were threatened.

The mind of the Buddha, Dharmakaya, transcends time; it is omnipresent and outside of history. The Sambogakaya, radiant and luminous, manifests to the Bodhisattvas the teachings of the Buddha in any time or place. The emanation body of the Buddha, Nirmanakaya, manifests throughout time and in different places in order to help sentient beings.

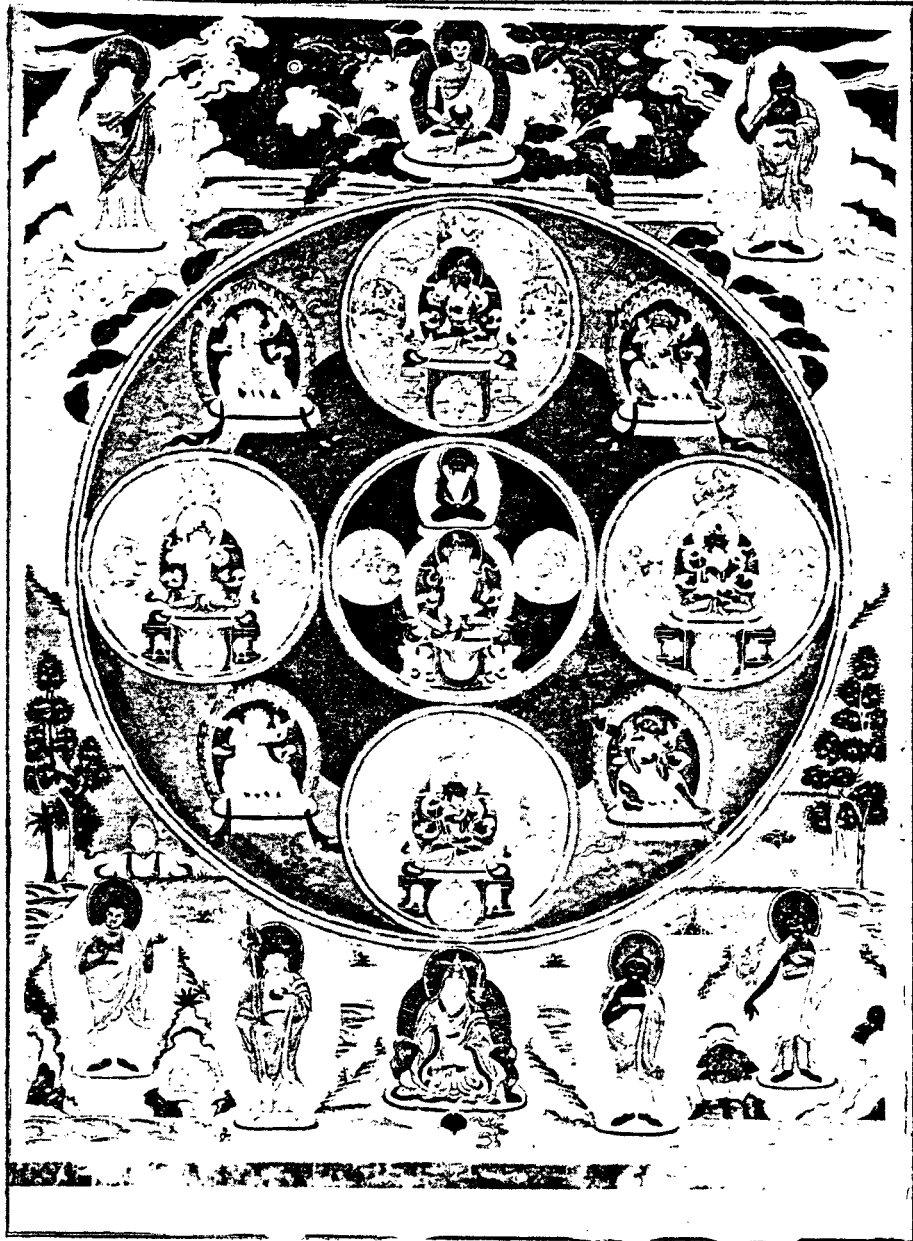


Fig. 30. The Great Mandala of the Peaceful Deities,
The Five Dhyani Buddhas

THE MANDALAS OF BODY, SPEECH AND MIND

To the enlightened mind, whatever appears is the deity (body), all sound is mantra (speech), and all thoughts are the Great Primordial Wisdom (mind) (Dudjom Rinpoche).⁴⁹

In Vajrayana Buddhism, phenomena are a reflection of Buddha Nature. As noted earlier, the goal of Vajrayana practice is to transform all phenomena and ourselves into the body, speech, and mind of the Buddha. Although the body, speech, and mind of every person reflect his absolute wisdom nature, we do not see this because we have forgotten our pure state. The terms body, speech, and mind do not indicate body, mind, and spirit as they are usually understood in the West. The Tibetans indicate this by their psychic centers (chakras, Skt.): the center of the forehead (body); the throat (speech); and the heart (mind). Body implies not only the physical body in its absolute pure state but the subtle "rainbow body." As the body of the Buddha, it is called the Nirmanakaya, or emanation body. It is the physical presence of the Buddha, manifesting compassionately in this world to help living beings. As stated previously, these emanations are called tulkus (Tib.) and are exemplified by Gesar.

Speech is not sound but melodious song, a beautiful expression of natural mind. It is the speech of the Buddha which communicates his teachings to others. It emanates from the Sambogakaya.

The omnipresent Buddha Mind is the Dharmakaya, non-conceptual, openly spacious, undefinable, devoid of qualities, and inseparable from

the awareness that the true nature of all phenomena is inherently pure.

Both actions and qualities arise from the Nirmanakaya. Dharma protectors and dakinis (herukas and khandros, Tib.) embody the Buddha's wisdom activity to help sentient beings and hasten their enlightenment. They perform the four activities of pacifying diseases and evil; increasing life, wealth, good fortune, and Dharma; bringing the two realms (form and formless) under their power; and wrathfully subduing harm-doers, enemies, and interrupting forces. These herukas and dakinis are the Dra lhas (heroes) and Dwang man (dakinis) of Gesar's retinue, the dancers of Ling Dro. The qualities, all desirable attributes, arise as one of the benefits of practice of the Dharma.

The Vajrayana teachings are comprehensive and include a variety of instructions to suit people with different levels of understanding and ability. According to the Nyingmapa sect of Tibetan Buddhism (of which the Ling Dro Party and myself are members), there are six types of tantra (Norbu, 1977, 17-19).⁵⁰ Each one represents a different view, but the results are the realization of Wisdom Mind. To this end different meditative practices, rites, and ceremonies employ body, speech, and mind. These are the tantric practices which combine mudras, prostrations (full bows that symbolize dedication to the Buddha; body), recitation of mantras (speech); and visualization of the deity and the mandala of that deity (mind) in a total concentrated effort toward non-dual awareness.

At the first level, one realizes that by identifying with the Wisdom Mind of the deity, which is compassionate and wise, the

skillful means needed to overcome dualistic, grasping thought arises from one's own mind.

At the next level, one recognizes the Five Passions, to be by their very nature the Five Wisdoms. Although we already possess the Five Wisdoms of the Buddha, we are not able to recognize this and they are obscured. We perceive and experience negative emotions. Moreover, by recognizing the Five Passions to be by their very nature the Five Wisdoms, ignorance is transformed into Pure Absolute Wisdom, desire into Discriminating Wisdom, anger into Mirror-like Wisdom, pride into Equanimitous Wisdom, and jealousy into All-accomplishing Wisdom. These Five Wisdoms are the mandala of the Five Dhyani Buddhas who comprise the Enlightened Mind.

At the highest level, we and all phenomena are experienced as spontaneously enlightened from the very beginning. These three levels are the mandala Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo.

MUDRA: GESTURE

Mudra has been defined as sacred or symbolic gesture of the hands, fingers, and body, but in Sanskrit it means seal. Saunders has interpreted this word to mean symbols of identity; gestures that prove the efficacy of, strengthen, and empower the spoken word; and movements that seal (enclose) the magic of the ritual (Saunders, 1960, 8-9).⁵¹

In the history of Buddhism, gesture has played an important role. A Zen story relates how the Buddha Gautama gave teaching by holding up a flower. Of His disciples, one smiled, knowing the meaning, and was later to bring the teachings to Japan.

Although mudras themselves may have come from pre-Buddhist origins, they became codified under Buddhism. Statues and pictures in specific hand and body postures refer to legendary episodes in the Buddha's life. "Later, under Tantrism, they formed the point of departure for an evolved symbolism. With the development of Esotericism, they became endowed with clearly magico-religious values" (Saunders, 1960, 10).⁵²

In Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism there are numerous deities, each of which has a particular gesture or series of gestures that indicates its nature, distinguishes it from other deities, or shows the difference between different forms of the same deity. "Each of these Mudras represents a particular spiritual attitude" (Govinda, 1975, 12).⁵³ For example, these gestures signify and distinguish the Five Dhyani Buddhas and their corresponding Wisdoms.

In Tibetan Buddhism, gesture is a skillful teaching tool equivalent in its power to the spoken word. It is one of many symbols which communicate concepts beyond words and transmit many levels of thought in one moment. According to the Nyingma School there are three lineages of the transmission of Tantric teachings: (1) The Lineage of Transmission by the Wisdom Mind of the Buddhas (from the Wisdom Mind of the teacher to the Wisdom Mind of the disciple); (2) The Lineage of Transmission by Signs of the Vidyadharas (by mudra or symbol from the teacher to the disciple); and (3) The Lineage of Oral Transmission by Superior Individuals (Norbu, 1977, 3).⁵⁴

In ritual, mudras are a focus of all the senses, indicating a meditative state. Often they accompany words or mantras and are actually the mantras of the body. In the preliminary practices the hands form the mudra of the world mandala, and at that moment become the entire Buddhist world system. In many tantric initiations, gesture plays an important role. It is a part of understanding by seeing. The lama performs ritual mudras and holds up cards with symbols on them. Part of the understanding comes from knowing their context in the ceremony, but sometimes it comes from a spontaneous understanding, for the purpose of the mudra is to achieve a higher state of consciousness.

In Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo the dancing movements symbolize the Four Activities, stamping out evil, and stamping in bliss. At the most profound level of meanings, these movements annihilate the enemies, which are one's own discursive thoughts. The right hand is a symbol of skillful means, the left hand is a symbol of wisdom, while the left and

right feet symbolize compassion and emptiness. The dancers' twisting bodies are realized as empty. Although I asked my teacher if the movements had any meaning, he only mentioned the miming movements in the section, "Lak Ye."



Fig. 31. The Wheel of Life, Symbolizing the Karmic Effects of One's Actions

TURNING AND CIRCLING: MANDALIC MOVEMENTS

Authorities have discussed the significance of the symbol of rotation which pervades all cultures. Govinda discusses the Tibetan culture in terms of mandalic movement:

The profundity and the cosmic parallelism of this [turning] symbol will easily be understood if we realize that the life of the whole universe is dependent on rotation: be it the rotation of planets around a central sun, or the similar movements of atoms. If the mere rotation of dynamo can produce the power of electricity (an altogether inexplicable phenomenon), and if the turning of the human mind a particular subject of his consciousness can produce a state of concentration that can lead to world-shaking discoveries or the realization of higher dimensions of Perfect Enlightenment, it is under such circumstances to be wondered if there is a belief among Tibetans that the beneficial forces which are concentrated in the ritual act of preparing the contents of the prayer-wheel are somehow retained even in its material form and transmitted or activated when they are set in motion? (Govinda, Dharma Press, 23-24)55

Two thousand five hundred years ago Buddha Sakyamuni turned the Wheel of the Dharma. He used the wheel to symbolize the setting into motion of universal and moral law, the Dharma. He preached that the nature of the phenomenal world, Samsara, is suffering. Because of ignorance (a dualistic view) we are bound to karma, the law of cause and effect and are therefore engaged in a continuous cycle of rebirth. By practicing the Dharma (and turning the wheel ourselves) we can be liberated into the enlightened state beyond rebirth, Nirvana.

Samsara itself is described in terms of an endless circular movement of death and rebirth. The Tibetan Wheel of Life mandala depicts the six realms of existence which comprise the samsaric world of suffering. Beings in hell, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, and gods all suffer to differing degrees because of their past activities.

For Tibetans, turning the written word or phrases contained in

prayer wheels activates and empowers them. The revolving motion is supposed to produce the same effect as reciting it. Today it is still common to see elderly Tibetans rotate hand-held prayer wheels as they circumambulate a sacred structure, or as they walk around in daily life. Called Mani wheels (referring to the most commonly recited mantra, OM MANI PADMA HUM), they are specially made cylinders of metal, bone, or wood that contain written scripture, prayers and mantras. In a small Mani wheel the central axis is elongated and becomes a handle. Medium sized wheels are mounted on the sides of sacred buildings or on frames around them so that circumambulators can push and rotate them with their hands as they pass by. Large barrel-sized or bigger wheels are lodged in small Mani houses. The practitioner either walks around pushing the wheel or sits and pushes it.

The oldest form of choral dance is the circle. Even the chimpanzees dance in a circle and people of every continent still do it . . . The circle later takes on a spiritual significance. This is not the result of a development of understanding but of the connection between an idea and its motor reflex--to encircle an object is to take it into possession, to incorporate it, to chain it, or to banish it (ban circle). (Sachs, 19, 144)⁵⁶

In circling an object one gives power to it and is oneself empowered. Circumambulation (korwa, Tib.) is the act of moving in a circle around an object. All Tibetans, young and old, reverently circumambulate clockwise any sacred object. Moving in the same direction that the planets revolve around the sun, they circumambulate temples, monasteries, chortens (reliquary buildings), Mani stones (stones with mantras carved in them), sacred mountains, libraries containing sacred

books, and houses in which lamas reside, or the personage of the lama himself. I was told to visualize my own lama on my right shoulder, so that as I walk, I circumambulate him. In the past, it was appropriate to circumambulate the object of veneration three times with the right hand toward the object (Waddell, 1972, 420).⁵⁷

Turning and circling are typical movements of Tibetan dancing. Often dances are performed in a circular floor pattern and turning steps are found in all dance forms from folk to religious. The most common type of step is a hop turning on a somewhat tilted axis, although the style of turn depends on the type of dance.

Although turning is never mentioned in the text of Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo, the dancers perform turns and circle the dancing area clockwise. The turns are of three types, depending on the number of steps it takes to turn 360 degrees. The fewer the steps, the more the body tilts into the movement. Generally a "dro" turn involves either four step hops (into the four directions) or two step hops. Another turn, which is performed only in one section, is a leap from one foot to the other to complete an entire circle. These turns, which normally are done in place, create a forward movement as the dancers exit.

The dancers in Lhamo folk opera perform a number of consecutive turns that move through space and are more severely tilted on their axis. These are executed by leaping from one foot to the other. In cham, turns are spiraling in movement. Generally, a step-hop initiates the turn, which revolves completely on one foot. One arm follows the spiralling

flow into the diagonal direction of the turn, assisting the movement either by opening or closing the body. The majority of these turns are done in place, using the momentum of the step hop.

SPEECH: MANTRA

Words and even the individual letters of the alphabet are objects of veneration by Tibetans, for they communicate the sacred power of the Buddha's teachings. The written word is treated with such care that even scraps of paper with profane words are discarded carefully where they will not be stepped on or dealt with disrespectfully. Religious writings are never laid on the ground or touched by the foot. They are touched to the top of the head signifying the greatest reverence. Even the misprinted page of a religious book or a tiny scrap of paper with a fragment of a word is deposited and burned in a special oven, generally situated outside the temple or house.

Books are carefully wrapped in cloth and are in themselves important symbols. They are one of three objects of worship, symbolizing the Dharma (the body of teachings), the other two being the Buddha and the Sangha (sublime community of followers). It is interesting that the first account of Buddhism to appear in Tibet during the reign of King Lha Totori Nyentsen (though the texts could not be translated at that time) was through the written word.

The Tibetan is not as primitive as to believe in the independent "life" of a piece of paper or the letters written upon it (as the naive animist might do), but he attaches the greatest importance to the attitude of one's own mind, which finds its expression in each of these actions and had its foundations in the recognition of an everpresent higher reality which is called up and made effective in us by every contact with its symbols. . . . Thus the symbol is never degraded into a mere object of temporary utility, nor is it only reserved for "Sunday use" or occasional worship, but it is a living presence to which all profane

and material things and all necessities of life are subordinated. Indeed, what we call "profane" and "material" is divested of its worldly and material character and becomes the exponent of a reality behind all phenomena--a reality which gives meaning to our life and actions and which integrates even the lowliest and most insignificant things into the great connections of universal happenings. (Govinda, 1969, 20)⁵⁸

Mantras are sacred words that have profound meanings and power for the initiate, but have apparently no meaning to the uninitiated. They are short mystic formulas, the vibrations of which are designed to awaken the Enlightened Mind. Each sound of a mantra also has numerous and awe-inspiring meanings. Once initiated into the mandala of the deity by an empowerment ritual, a person receives the teachings and can recite the mantra. The practice itself brings revelation and even results (for example, if one chants to overcome an illness and subsequently recovers). Each mantra is connected with a deity (an aspect of mind) and in many cases words can be added to perform the four activities of pacifying, increasing, subduing, and overpowering. Otherwise different mantras correspond to different activities.

Mantras are counted by the practitioner in order to focus his attention. Each time he recites a mantra he moves one bead on a rosary of 108 beads, called a mala. The recitation of mantras accrues merit for a better rebirth.

Although there are no specific mantras in Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo, the entire text is a potent meditational prayer. The words contain the directions to lead one to the realization of Buddha Mind. They are more than just enlightened speech; they are the expression of the enlightened view. The singing is described in the text as a playful manifestation of emptiness and bliss.

VISUALIZATION

In Tantra, the visualizations are the creation of the mandala of the deity. In front of the disciple is the deity, inseparable from his lama, who introduces him to the nature of his own mind. At the lowest level of Tantra, the practitioner visualizes the Buddha or yidam outside himself. In higher Tantra he comes to realize his complete mystical identity with the Buddha or yidam. The deity merges into the practitioner and the practitioner rests in the recognition that all thoughts and phenomena are the play of awareness in the luminous void, the mandala of Kuntu Zangpo, who embodies the Buddha in his esoteric aspect, the original nature of our own minds. This is actually an act of recognition, for our Buddha nature has always been present.

As the dancers perform Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo, they sing and visualize what is described by the text. First, they see Gesar and his retinue along with the invited guests in front of them. Then they envision the Five Dhyani Buddhas and they take blessings from Gesar and from the Buddhas and from Kuntu Zangpo. All these deities are the aspects of the one Buddha Mind. Having visualized this the dancers are transformed and see themselves as reflections of Gesar and his retinue and the Five Buddhas. Only in the last dance, when Gesar says that he is sent by Padma Sambhava, do the dancers not ask for blessings but bestow them by dancing. They have visualized themselves as the deity, and the dancing ground as their different realms of the four directions.

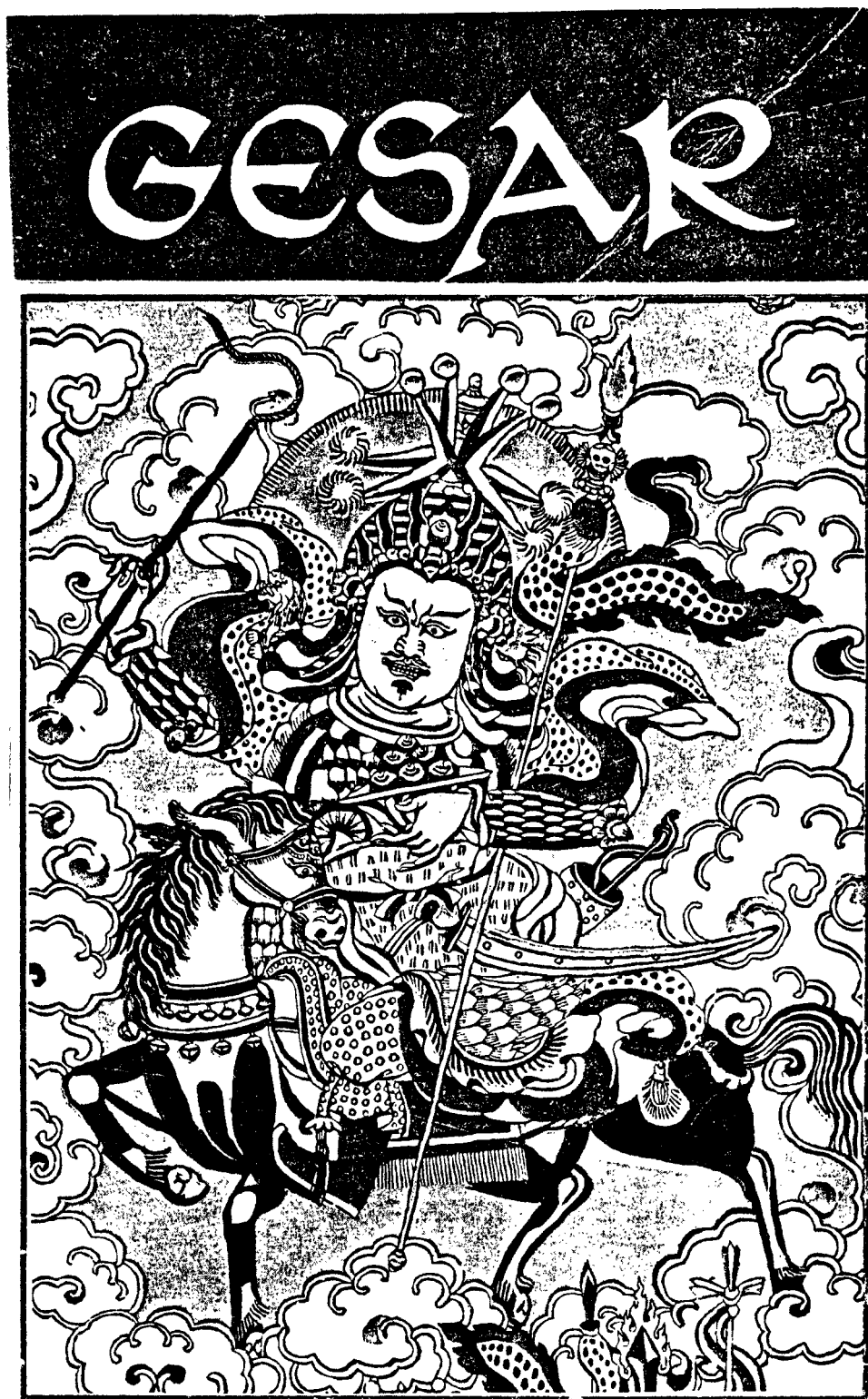


Fig. 32. Gesar



Fig. 33. King Gesar of Ling

GESAR OF LING

Far away in the land of Ling, somewhere in East Tibet, a mythic god-hero was immaculately born of a water spirit (naga, Skt.). His appearance was predicted both by Sakyamuni Buddha in a text called Jambel Sencho, and by Padma Sambhava in a book on the life of King Trisong Deutsan (Shega Rinpoche).⁵⁹ Padma Sambhava sent Gesar to earth to conquer the enemies of the Buddhist religion, to unite Tibet, and to provide the people with a strong leader. He is considered an emanation of the qualities of four deities: the wisdom body of Jampelyang (Tib. Manjusri, Skt.), the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, the compassionate speech of Chenrezig (Tib. Avelokitesvara, Skt.), Bodhisattva of Compassion, the secret wisdom heart of Chana Dorje (Tib., Vajrapani, Skt.), the Bodhisattva who first taught tantra to humans, and the skillful action of the great vajra master, Padma Sambhava (Shega Rinpoche).⁶⁰ However, Gesar is principally recognized as an incarnation of Padma Sambhava.

In his youth he was known as Choris, a name given to the son of a servant and an unknown father, for the true identity of his mother and of himself was still unknown (David-Neel, 1959, 88).⁶¹ Aided by Padma Sambhava and advised by Ma Ne Ne Karmo, a form of Tara (Skt.; Drolma, Tib.), the goddess of compassion, and by several other deities, he was destined to become Ling Gesar, King of Ling. Padma Sambhava sent to him an incarnate god in the form of a magical horse, Kyanshey, to assist him in his dangerous exploits.

Gesar first entered a horse race, an important contest among nomads. The prizes offered were the kingship of Ling and the hand in marriage of the beautiful princess, Drugmo (another incarnation of Tara). Riding Kyanshey, Gesar easily finished first. He became known then as Lion of the World, and gathering his thirty warriors (considered emanations of himself) he set out to annihilate the black magicians and then the evil kings of the Four Directions. He was able to accomplish these feats with the help of the gods. Being an incarnate god himself, he was able to change his shape into many forms such as a magician, a warrior, trickster, and teacher. First he slew the nine-eyed, nine-horned demon King Di Lutsan of the North; then he rescued his wife and killed her abductor, King Kurkah of Hor, to the East. Assuming the shape of a bee with iron wings, he slew King Satham of the South and set aflame the citadel of King Shingtri of the West, who was consumed in flames. Other secondary episodes relate Gesar's descent into Hell and his conquests of the eighteen fortresses, Ladakh, and the treasures of Iran. He had conquered the mandalic world at that time and claimed sovereignty over it.

As in any heroic epic, the theme of Gesar's exploits is the conquest of good over evil. The outer episodes symbolize man's inner struggle toward self realization. The hero is a hero because of his undaunted courage in the face of insurmountable odds.

From a Buddhist point of view, Gesar is a Bodhisattva. When Gesar kills the evil ones in the morning, he sends them to the heavenly Buddha fields at night. He actually helped them to go from a life of suffering to a world beyond suffering. His killing was viewed as

compassionate, both toward those he saved from evil, and toward the evil ones themselves.

Interpreted symbolically, King Gesar representing freedom and liberation from the bondage of ignorance, is the king of the human mind. The Kingdom of Ling is the realm of the restless experience, that must be unified and strengthened. The treasure to win and protect is our own understanding. The enemies that we must conquer are emotionality and ignorance. (Tarthang, Tulku, 1978, 20-21)⁶²

Much of Tibet's literature was transmitted orally, for until the Seventh Century Tibet had no written language. Since writing accompanied the advent of Buddhism, it was taught through the monasteries, was mostly religious in theme, and was produced by monks. Early stories, combined in the form of epics, were sung and often spontaneously composed by wandering bards. Epics were composed in verse songs introduced by a rapidly changed narrative text that set the scene. The songs were a number of set melodies which changed to support emotional changes or situations. Stein (1975, 279)⁶³ cites two known styles of singing, Kham and Hor. Either of these melodic styles could be sung with lyrics. They were composed of set phrases eight or twelve lines each and contained the elements of folk poetry, proverbs and metaphors and interpretation of actions and objects. These thematic elements presented a basis for improvisation.

These epic stories, known as drung, were orally passed on over the centuries by wandering bards who wore special hats with feathers on them. Often they carried scrolls painted with pictures depicting the main stories of the epic. When requested to sing, they would look at

these and then recall the lyrics by heart. Some would go into a trance and could spontaneously recall unknown episodes and even correct and clarify the known versions.

This is not considered oral composition because, for Tibetans, when one is in the mandala of religious experience there is no chronological time or space. There is only sacred time and space in which all time and space are omnipresent. Therefore the recitation of new material is only experienced as the discovery of an older lost version.

These bards would enter into trance, either to see the epic heroes and scenes from their lives in some timeless sphere and describe them in their songs, or so that such and such a hero may embody himself in them and speak through their mouths. In spite of differences, what happens to the bard is, for the Tibetans, essentially the same for a lama. In recitation, both bard and lama are capable of embodying the deity.

First, the bard recites a prayer of purification; then he chants a description of the hero. The epic god-hero moves from a formless (wisdom state) into a phenomenal aspect when he descends upon the bard. When the trance is finished the god dissolves like a rainbow. Gesar, a fully realized Buddha, is beyond this world system and cannot alight on a bard, but his warriors do and generally those who recite the Gesar epic are considered different emanations of the thirty warriors of Gesar, or even of Gesar's enemies (Stein, 1972, 188-189).⁶⁴

Within the last two centuries some of the song-stories have been written down by great religious teachers such as Mipham Rinpoche,

Khamtrul Rinpoche, and Kalu Rinpoche, and several other versions have been collected anonymously. Each compilation only relates a particular episode or episodes, not the entire story. Published books are now available so that Gesar devotees chant these tales regularly as recreational pastimes. The Gesar legend is so widespread that it is found in Turkey, among the Lepchas in Sikkim, and in Hunza in Gilgit. A Mongolian version was published in Peking in 1716 under the Manchurian dynasty which adopted Gesar as their tutelary diety (Stein, 1959, 1).⁶⁵

The three main translated versions are: Ladakhi, Mongolian, and Tibetan. All three peoples lay claim to it. In China, Gesar was ardently worshiped and there were many temples dedicated to him. There, Gesar was connected to the Chinese God of War. More farfetched connections have been inferred between the words "Kaiser," "Caesar," and "Gesar."

Stein speculates that the present Gesar epic derives from an "older unlocalized epic of which we unfortunately only know fragments" (Stein, 1975, 280).⁶⁶ It also elaborated the old Buddhist concept of the Four Sons of Heaven (the four great continents of the Asiatic world: China, India, Iran, and the northern barbarians). Gesar ruled Throm, the North. Stein, however, could not explain how Caesar of Rome (Byzantium at that time) became associated with Ling of East Tibet. He believes that Ling is a shortened form of the Tibetan word dzambuling, which means world and originally referred to India. However, the word ling means an island or a region.

A king named Gesar may have existed. There is a place named Ling in Kham and several called Hor nearby. One king of Ling from the

Kham district claimed descent from Gesar's adopted son. Stories of the legendary kings of Tibet were probably based on real models, although they may have been the composites of several people. Gesar supposedly campaigned as far west as Turkey and Iran, and as far south as India, conquering eighteen or nineteen kingdoms (Khamtul Rinpoche).⁶⁷ The dates I have compiled from reliable sources range from the fourth to the eleventh centuries. Stein says the names of some of his heroes are listed in a genealogy dated 1400 A.D., but that the information is much older (Stein, 1975, 279).⁶⁸ The lamas I consulted dated Gesar in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Duncan writes of evidences of Gesar's existence, when he refers to Gesar as the God of War. Other sources have also chosen this title. Stein writes that Gesar was connected with Kuantî, the Chinese God of War when the Panchen Lama of Tibet had dealings with the Chinese Emperor's counsellor (Stein, 1978, 88).⁶⁹ However, it is Begtse who is the god of war in the Tibetan pantheon.

King Gesar earned his title as God of War by his legendary exploits. He was not satisfied merely with the placid task of distributing jewels, but showed his prowess by shooting three powerful arrows through a grey limestone ridge of the Merchants Pass or Tshongpon La. If one climbs the pass from the east going west toward Batang, one can see the holes to this day. (Duncan, 1964, 17)⁷⁰

Other artifacts linked to Gesar's existence are a huge skull and ring (of Gesar's) found in Hor Ling near Golok (Khamtrul Rinpoche)⁷¹ and a monument over the skull of the demon Di Lutsan whom he had supposedly decapitated in Manali, India.

Oddly enough, none of the Tibetans I have interviewed has described Gesar as the God of War. Duncan's interpretation seems to

contradict Gesar's inherent compassion. To many Tibetans Gesar is considered a deity and as such is invoked for his blessings. In particular, as an emanation of Padma Sambhava, he helps to overcome obstacles and subdue enemies; as an emanation of the deities of Wisdom and Compassion, he imparts these qualities and skillfully helps his devotees. He is a completely enlightened deity who can be viewed and worshipped as a sublime teacher (lama, Tib.), a guardian of the teachings (dharmapala, Skt.) and as a tutelary deity (yidam, Tib.) who represents the special manifestation of the practitioner's Buddha Mind.

One method of invoking a deity is through visualization. Gesar wears a helmet with three white flags, and a long-life robe, which is red outside, then blue inside, and yellow on the innermost layer. Under this he wears a coat of mail, and over it a sword, a bow and arrow, and a mirror for divination. He rides a magical horse and is accompanied by his eight precious animal symbols. All these accoutrements are actually symbols that refer to the inner meaning of the deity. The compassionate sword cuts through ignorance and obstacles, the bow and arrow represent the relative and absolute truth, and the colors of each layer of clothing symbolize levels of attainment of realization.

Another method of invocation is prayer and even praise of the deity. Although the bards chanted the epic professionally, other Tibetans, both men and women, enjoyed chanting it as well. It was particularly popular among the nomads, who chanted it for recreation as well as protection.

In Tibet and particularly in Eastern Tibet, the songs of the Gesar Epic are supposed to have a protective virtue. In the

desert where the plundering tribes of Gologs camp, I happened to come across some travellers who sang as they rode, and upon my questioning them, they told me that they were singing fragments from the story of Gesar. It appeared they expected as a result of these songs to be animated by an invincible strength that would permit them to overcome the brigands, should the latter attack them. (David-Neel 1959, 18-19) ⁷²

Part of the worship of Gesar is connected with divination and the Shambhala myth. Shambhala is a mythical land in the north (of uncertain location, perhaps Russia, Kashmîr, or Mongolia). The esoteric significance is that "Paths to the North lead the yogi to supreme emancipation" (David-Neel, 1959, 33). ⁷³

According to Hindu and Buddhist mythology the world is currently in a period of decline called the Kaliyuga. At the end of this age comes chaos and world destruction. The Buddhist Kalacakra Tantra predicts that King Rigdan Drakpo, who is ruling in Shambhala now with Gesar as his general, will lead a purge against the corrupt forces and save the believers at the time of the world's demise. According to the text of Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo, Gesar is King Rigdan Drakpo himself.

Like the Arthurian cycle and the legends of Charlemagne and Roland, the epic of Gessar is a thinly veiled account of the initiate-priest-king. He is the warrior-Adept who is to conquer the world under the banner of Shambhala. (Hall, 1959, 102) ⁷⁴

In The Superhuman Life of Gesar of Ling, a Mongolian claimed Gesar to be of Mongolian origin. He predicted that Gesar will return to establish world justice and return world power to the Asiatics (David-Neel, 1959, 270). ⁷⁵

The mirror, one of the symbols associated with Gesar, is specially used for divination. Certain naturally gifted people can gaze into it and tell the future. Others know how to recite the empowering

prayers that are necessary accompaniments for a good and reliable reading.

A lama in Orissa Settlement could cast arrows and read the direction of their fall.

mDaa Mo ("arrow divination") involves the use of two arrows, like archery arrows in every respect--length, feathering, and so on--except that they have no metal points. One in each hand, the diviner holds them lightly flat on the table, with the unfeathered ends pointing toward each other. After an intensive recital of spells and meditation, the two arrows will rise and lean toward each other until the two ends touch, after which they will fall forward (favorable) or backward (unfavorable). This form is also known as Ge Sar Mo ("Gesar divination"). It is rarely used but is considered of great authority and true efficacy--sTobs Chen ("great power"). (Ekvall, 1964, 263)⁷⁶

PART TWO: THE DANCE



Fig. 34. Gesar

*Lama Mipham*

Fig. 35. Lama Mipham

LING DRO DECHEN ROLMO:
MUSIC OF GREAT BLISS WHICH IS A DANCE OF LING
ORIGIN

Mipham Jamyang Namgyal Gyatso (The Completely Victorious Ocean of Gentle Voice) known as Mipham Rinpoche and Jamgon 'Ju (1846-1914) was born in Derge Da Chi Ga (in Derge on a high place near a river), Kham in Eastern Tibet. Regarded as an incarnation of Jampelyang, the God of Wisdom, he was known for his curiosity, which led him to become a great eclectic scholar. He wrote thirty-two volumes on such subjects as medicine, sculpture, engineering, philosophy, mathematics, dance, and music. He was, moreover, a discoverer of concealed teaching (terton), and he was an accomplished yogi. As a member of the lineage of Padma Sambhava he taught at some of the great Nyingmapa monasteries in Eastern Tibet such as Katog, Dzog-chen, and Zhe-chen (Tarthang, 1974, 3),⁷⁷ and lived at Do med Karma Tak Tsang.

Teachings concealed in past times are called terma. Ter means treasure, either spiritual or material.

The term gter-ma designates a text of religious context which was concealed by a master of the Buddhist teachings during the first missionary period of Buddhism in Tibet and was later brought to light by a religiously predestined and qualified person. (Darguey, 1977, 62)⁷⁸

Terma texts were hidden so that the teachings would be revealed at the times when they would be best received and most efficacious. There are different types of terma; a book hidden in the earth (sa-ter) is a real

historical item. Either it was found and rehidden for future discovery or its transmission was interrupted (yang-ter). Concealed teachings perceived in meditation are called gong-ter (Dargyey, 1977, 63).⁷⁹

Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo came to Mipham Rinpoche when he was thirty years old. It appeared to him in a vision called dak nang. This is a form of gong-ter. While in meditation, Mipham had a vision in which Gesar and his thirty warriors appeared dancing. Afterward he recorded it. This precious text is preserved today as Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo.

Besides the Ling Dro text, Mipham Rinpoche wrote two episodes of drung; one relating Gesar's miraculous birth and the other on the conquest of Ma Kog. In addition, he wrote a prayer dedicated to Gesar as a protector. Tibetans attribute Mipham Rinpoche's tremendous knowledge of Gesar to the claim that he was Gardi, one of Gesar's ministers. Others claim he was an incarnation of Dema, one of Gesar's warriors. Khamtrul Rinpoche of Tashi Jong Monastery, India (a great cataloguer of Gesar epic songs) said that in Adrak, Northern Tibet, during Gesar's time, it was the custom to sing Ling Dro or a form of pre-Ling Dro at festivals and celebrations. An oral performance was given by seven girls from Adrak and seven boys from Hor. These performances were exclusively singing (Khamtrul Rinpoche).⁸⁰ Gesar dance, Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo, was later introduced through Mipham Rinpoche.

My teacher, Norbu Sangpo, related that Ling Dro was first performed in Aeduk Tsang, where Gesar's minister, Dema, was reputed to have been born. It then progressed to Zogchen Ghon and spread all over Dho Kham. Later, in 1930, it was introduced in Lhasa (Norbu Sangpo, 1979).⁸¹



Fig. 37. The Author and Yangzom

MY ENTRANCE INTO THE MANDALA OF GESAR:

LEARNING LING DRO DECHEN ROLMO

There are basic differences between teaching methods in the East as compared to the West.

In the West, a dancer begins his training by drilling on basic exercises. He then works on movement phrases and combinations and finally learns a complete dance. In the traditional method of instruction in much of Asia, a dancer immediately begins learning a standard repertory piece. He imitates the teacher over and over again until the dance is learned and then begins a new piece. By the time he has learned several dances, he has an understanding of the elements of a given tradition not as isolated entities but in relation to different contexts. This is the basic difference between educational methods in the West and in Japan; the former learns from the parts and the latter from the whole. (Wolz, 1971, 2)⁸²

When I first arrived in Chandragiri settlement, I spent a week without hearing anything about the dance I had come so long a distance to study. Exactly one week after my arrival, I was invited to a performance of Ling Dro, which had been especially arranged for me. That night I was brought to a "godown," a grainary storehouse in the next camp. Tibetans young and old packed the interior, reluctantly leaving a large central space for the dancers. Several men, acting as combination ushers and bouncers, circulated through the crowd maintaining order (for often people would push and argue for a choice space), keeping people off the dance space, and ushering prominent people to the few select chairs set up at the head of the room, farthest from the door. All others sat in a semicircle on the floor. Prominent people consisted of the settlement head, the camp chiefs, heads of the carpet factory, and various lamas in their order of rank. I, as a rare visitor coming

to learn the dance, sat on the secular side next to the settlement head. Before the performance and during it, we were offered Tibetan tea, beer, and whiskey.

In the center of the dance area stood a huge offering table covered with various oblations of food, water and butter lamps, cymbals, and a drum. At the beginning, Lama Dorje Namgyal recited an offering prayer to Ling Gesar and to the Triple Gem, the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

Dancers entered with katags and presented them to the settlement head, Lodro Gyaltsen, and symbolically to Gesar. The tone of the dance had been set; it was an offering. Through the performance I remember noticing that no matter how slowly the movements began, the dancers whirled and stamped at the end of each section, building to a crescendo and exiting. I was impressed by their open turns and the height at which they executed their jumps. The men's hats with flags on them were very striking. On the other hand, I had been waiting to see a masked dance with the majesty and bravura of cham, the monastic dance. Compared to cham I found the simple and nonchalant movements of Ling Dro repetitious and rather boring, and I nearly cried. Several days later I was appointed an interpreter and began attending official parties with various important functionaries. These luncheons consisted of long periods of sitting and eating quantities of food, drinking gallons of tea, and enduring long silences. Finally, after one week of partying, I was informed by Anzin Rinpoche, the lama who invited me to Orissa, that that day was

auspicious to begin my dance studies. My interpreter, Pema Dawa, came to pick me up and to conduct me to my teacher's home in the camp where the performance had been held.

The walk took nearly forty-five minutes, but later, when I got a bicycle, it took only twenty minutes. Pa (father) Norzang, my teacher, lived in a house constructed of clay. It consisted of a kitchen, a porch, and one all-purpose room where we practiced.

When I arrived, Yangzom, my teacher's daughter, served tea, which should always be drunk as an acceptance of the hospitality. After finishing two cups, Yangzom and her father, a spry old man, sang and gestured while I watched. After a while I got up and mimicked him. This was the pattern of every lesson. Arrangements were then made for someone to copy the dance text for me. In Tibet there were no printing presses. Texts were either blockprinted, one page at a time, or written by professional copyists. In India, without typewriters or copy machines, the Tibetans were in much the same position. Because, I was told, the text of the songs was very important I should learn these first. However, I could not understand them and I found them too unintelligible to memorize. The religious meaning was beyond my translator. Therefore, I just learned the movements and the words to the first two songs.

I learned the steps through repetition, the way all Tibetans do. The Ling Dro form helped speed the process of learning, for each line is repeated twice (first by the men and then by the women). The refrains

are also repeated. The entire dance is in the form of theme and variation. So, after I learned the style and basic steps in the beginning sections, the learning process became easier. As in most circular forms, the floor pattern is simple. The most difficult sequences involved changes in direction. I stood behind Pa Norzang to be able to see the steps and their directions, and to copy him.

Pa la never thought to break down the movements into digestible portions, and he was surprised when I asked him to do this. He would teach me a full phrase according to the song, counting in his own meter, and counting the number of steps, not the musical tempo. I would then follow as best I could. He taught me the steps and very few gestures, because he said the arm movements just naturally accompanied the foot pattern.

My first notes on the dance remarked about stamps, turns, and jumps. I wore jeans to class so that I would have free range of movement and could jump high. Pa la taught me the steps and dances in order of sequence. I would copy the steps of one dance until I was able to perform them alone to his vocal accompaniment. Only after accomplishing one dance could I learn the following dance.

Often Yangzom and occasionally two other dance party members came to perform. Pa la was always the dance master. They would always ask him before saying or doing something. Occasionally he would forget a word or step, because of his old age, although they hardly ever corrected him and followed his leadership. Certainly he did not lack

any vigor.

This was my introduction to the concept of teacher as guru. Although Pa la was a layman, he had been chosen by a religious leader to teach the religious dance of Ling. Thereupon he was regarded as somewhat of a spiritual teacher. He was, as are all religious teachers in the East, respected and treated with deference. In learning, the student tries to emulate the teacher, without analyzing and questioning him. He trusts his teacher's knowledge and is aware of the many years of training required to attain proficiency under another great teacher. There is no set fee for being taught by a guru, but his students gladly offer him gifts of money, food, and other suitable objects of worth, as well as their service and veneration. In Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism, the student is bound to the guru by a vow, and in tantra the student relies upon the teacher to conduct him on the quick path to Enlightenment.

My classes were always given privately in Pa la's house. We met regularly, nearly daily from 9:00 a.m. until noon, except on inauspicious days, which were determined by the calendar or divined by lamas. My classes were actually social events, wherein I was invited to tea, lunch, or dinner by my teacher before I actually danced. Contrary to Western belief that one should dance on an empty stomach, the Tibetans seem to feel that one should eat and drink lots of tea to build up energy before dancing. Perhaps this belief comes from their having lived in a cold climate.

At first I was accompanied by a translator, but after two months I occasionally ventured alone. After three months, I moved into my own house, in the same camp as Pa la, and as the days grew hotter, I took lessons from Yangzom at night in their dim, electrically-lit house. At that time it was no longer necessary to have a translator, for I learned by imitation and, by then my Tibetan vocabulary had increased so that I was able to carry on a limited conversation.

Learning Yangzom's style was like learning a new dance. Pa la's jagged, direct, and energetic style emphasized free and large leg movements, such as high knee lifts and hops. Yangzom's curved and flowing arms undulated expansively above her modestly stepping feet, which were mostly hidden by her skirt. Pa la rebounded off the ground, and Yangzom vibrated close to it. The same steps done by one, looked entirely different when performed by the other. Although the dance steps are the same for both men and women, they are clearly altered by style, clothing, and gender. So, in order to move like Yangzom, I discarded my jeans and donned a chuba.

Pa la told me that as the dancers sing the eighth section of the text which praises Gesar's qualities as being like an eagle, a lion, a tiger, etc., the dancers mime the movements of those animals. My teacher never attached any meaning to the other movements of the dance, although I repeatedly requested him to interpret them.

When I wanted to learn about the background of the dance, the costumes, the people, and about Ling Gesar, I needed someone to help me. I spoke not only to Pa la but to his brother Jamtrul Rinpoche, a lama. Their minds seemed to work together like pieces of a puzzle; what one did not know, the other did. Meeting with Jamtrul Rinpoche was a formal affair. I had to make an appointment to meet him in-between his meditations. He told me about Gesar the deity.

The culmination of my learning experience came when I was invited to a party by some friends, and I found it extremely easy to pick up and perform Khampa (Eastern Tibetan) folk dances. And as I watched a final performance of Ling Dro, which I filmed, I knew the dance thoroughly, and its order of sequence. That day the dancers came early with their families and made the day into a picnic outing. The space they chose was a clearing ringed by huge shade trees. It was several miles from the camp, so after we walked in the morning, we ate lunch, rested a bit, and then the performance and the filming began. There was no offering table or katag recipient, but the rest of the dance was the same in the first performance. However, everything looked differently to me, for I was familiar with it, I was friendly with the dancers, and I understood the movements and in part, the significance of the offering.



Fig. 38. Gesar and His Retinue

THE DANCE: INTRODUCTION

Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo is a ritual dance performed to a poetic religious text which invokes the deity Ling Gesar. The dance performance, generally considered an offering of music and a visual offering to please the eye is offered to Gesar as an invitation to enter the dance area and bless the dancers and spectators. The offerings of body, speech, and mind are the dancer's strong and beautiful dance, their melodious song, and their fervent devotional thoughts. In the universal circle of the dance mandala, all wondrous things are offered to the deity Gesar, in order to obtain merit and blessings for all sentient beings. Once the dance is consecrated, it becomes the sacred mandala within which the dancers are blessed by recognizing themselves to be the same as the deities dancing in their Buddha realm.

The dance is a meditational practice that contains constantly shifting levels of realization. It is a mandala in which the phenomenal and the noumenal are united. The dancers first visualize the deities and then become them; they are both practitioners and deities. The dancing takes place in the outer dance ground and is the activity of realization within their own minds. Eventually, the dancers realize the dance is skillful activity dancing in and recognizing its own true nature, the space of Wisdom Mind. The mandalas of the three Kayas, bodies of the Enlightened Mind, are the different

dancing areas and levels of realization. All the dancing areas and the occurrences within them occur simultaneously, for Wisdom Mind and the phenomena that arise from it are nondual.

Through this sadhana, the dancers realize that the whole world, the place where the Nirmanakaya compassionately emanates, is the mandala of Gesar, and that they are the heroes and goddesses of his retinue. Here and now they are mystically identical with Gesar and his time and deeds, and they repeat his triumph over evil: physical (outer), emotional (inner), and intellectual (secret) obstacles. They do this by bestowing the blessings of the Four Activities: pacifying, increasing, subduing, and overpowering. The dancers' feet represent wisdom and skillful means, and their song is a playful manifestation of emptiness and bliss. From this point of view, in this mandala, all obstacles are dispersed.

In the radiant sphere of the Sambogakaya, the dancers are in the mandala of the Five Dhyani Buddhas. They realize their minds are identical with these Buddhas. They perform gestures which symbolize and bestow the Five Wisdoms. Within this mandala the obstacles, which are the Five Poisons, are transmuted into the Five Wisdoms.

In the skylike space of the Dharmakaya, void of multifarious activities, the dancers are the protectors who perform a wrathful empty dance of intrinsic awareness which liberates the host of discursive thoughts and crushes all duality. This is the mandala of Kuntu Zangpo, the deity who symbolizes the Dharmakaya and one's own original mind. He gives them teaching and bestows the blessing of the Four

Phenomena, the sublime view of Ati Yoga. It is this point of view of Ati Yoga, or the Great Perfection, which permeates the text and makes the dance unique and transcendent. Through Kuntu Zangpo the dancers realize their nature has always been the same as his, inherently pure, open like the sky, and luminous. This is ultimate meaning of the dance. All obstacles and poisons are seen as one's own discursive thoughts which are naturally liberated. Nothing more need be done once this sublime state of mind is realized, the dancer is empty, and all is the same as Kuntu Zangpo.

Whereas while the dance outwardly consecrates the ground and brings merit and blessings to all, therefore, it inwardly produces the enlightened, perfect, nondual state.



Fig. 39. Norbu Sangpo as Gesar

PERFORMERS

The performers of Ling Dro have always been members of the lay community. Today they are farmers, several of whom own goats and cows. In Tibet, dancers were chosen from different walks of life according to their ability. The performing group to them is like a club, which they call "party." The Orissa group was organized in 1964. They meet irregularly, because they work, mainly brushing up before performances. They pay minimal dues to the "party" to cover costs of costumes and a yearly day picnic. They have an organizational head, a secretary, and a treasurer. The latter collects the money received for a performance. Just as other religious rites are sponsored by usually one or more people (chindaks, Tib.), Ling Dro performances are requested and sponsored by wealthy community members who gain religious merit as well as community status.

Norbu Sangpo is a spry man, aged seventy-four years old. He dances the role of Gesar and some say that he is Gesar himself. Generally, he is considered an eccentric and colorful figure who is at least convincing when he dances with such spirit and transcendence. He is, however, treated with respect by all, for whether he is the Hero or just a dancer, he is the guru of the dance.

Norbu Sangpo, called Pa la, which means father, was born in Nangchen, Kham, East Tibet, to parents who were ranchers of yaks and horses. He started studying Ling Dro at the age of thirty-five

under two great Ling Dro teachers, Lagar Nyendra, and Derge. Pa la himself was appointed to be a teacher of Ling Dro by Reting Rinpoche, a former regent to the thirteenth Dalai Lama. Reting Rinpoche brought Pa la to Lhasa, where he formed a group of more than one hundred dancers. Pa la was chosen to teach because he was an excellent folk dancer and performer of Ling Dro, and because of his lineage connection with Gesar. He is a descendant of the adopted son of Ling Gesar.⁸³

Stylistically, Pa la shows great verve. Even at his age, he jumps high into the air and stamps and twirls vigorously. The strength he exhibits is truly the dynamic of the great King Gesar. His voice, although rough, is forceful and valiant. In Tibet, he went from house to house auditioning and collecting people for the dance group. He taught the group once a week and was frequently reviewed by Reting Rinpoche. Pa la said it took five years of training to make a good Ling Dro dancer.

His daughter, Yangzom, is thirty-eight years old. She started her study of Ling Dro dance at age sixteen. She is the best female dancer. Her movements flow openly and easily, she has a good voice and she smiles and radiates her enjoyment when performing.

The best male dancer was Pa la's son-in-law, Tashi Dorje. Unlike many of the other male dancers, his arms flowed expansively and elaborately in space, like Yangzom's. His footwork displayed an astounding vitality of stamping, whirling, and hopping.

In Tibet, Pa la's troupe had one hundred dancers. Now, in Orissa, there are thirty-three. These people, except for the ones I have already mentioned, did not know Ling Dro in Tibet. When they met Pa la in Orissa, they requested him to teach them, and he did so.

At my encouragement a new group, composed of children, was formed in Anzin Rinpoche's camp. When I arrived, no young members had been taken into the "party," and the information I have culled from both Pa la and his kind older brother, Shega Jamtrul Rinpoche, was known only to them. I emphasized to Pa la and to his brother the necessity of perpetuating such a valuable and precious tradition.



Fig. 40. Men's Costume



Fig. 4]. Women's Costume



Fig. 42. Costumes and Properties

COSTUME KEY

1. Flowered headdress
2. Chuba blouse
3. Chuba
4. Apron
5. Ornaments worn at the waist
6. Boot
7. Jewelry
8. Gesar's flag hat
9. Chuba
10. Chuba shirt
11. Boot
12. Pema hat worn by white dancer
13. Helmet
14. Mirror
15. Bell
16. Gau
17. Bow and shield
18. Arrows and case
19. Multi-colored streamer belt
20. Sword
21. Flag
22. "Golok" hat
23. Pants



Fig. 43-44. Flag, Gau, Belt, Bell, Mirror

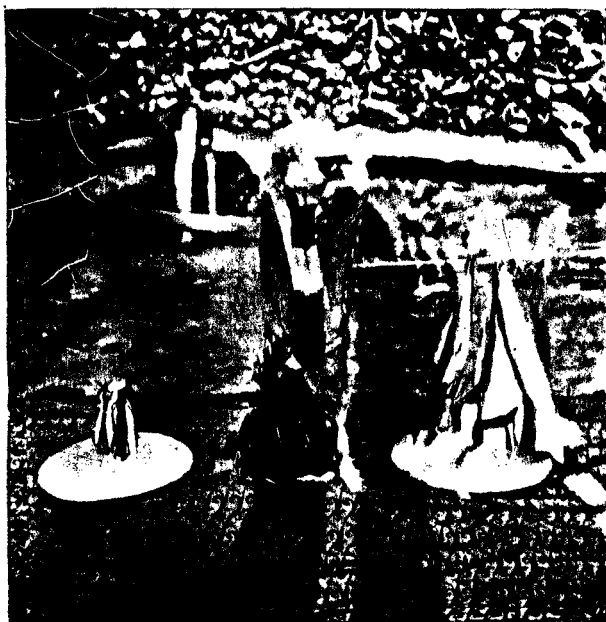


Fig. 45. Men's Hats

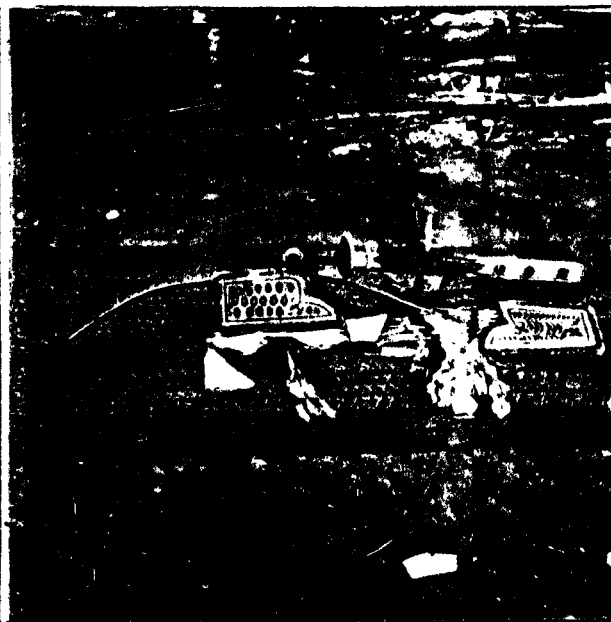


Fig. 46. Sword, Bow, Arrows, and Case

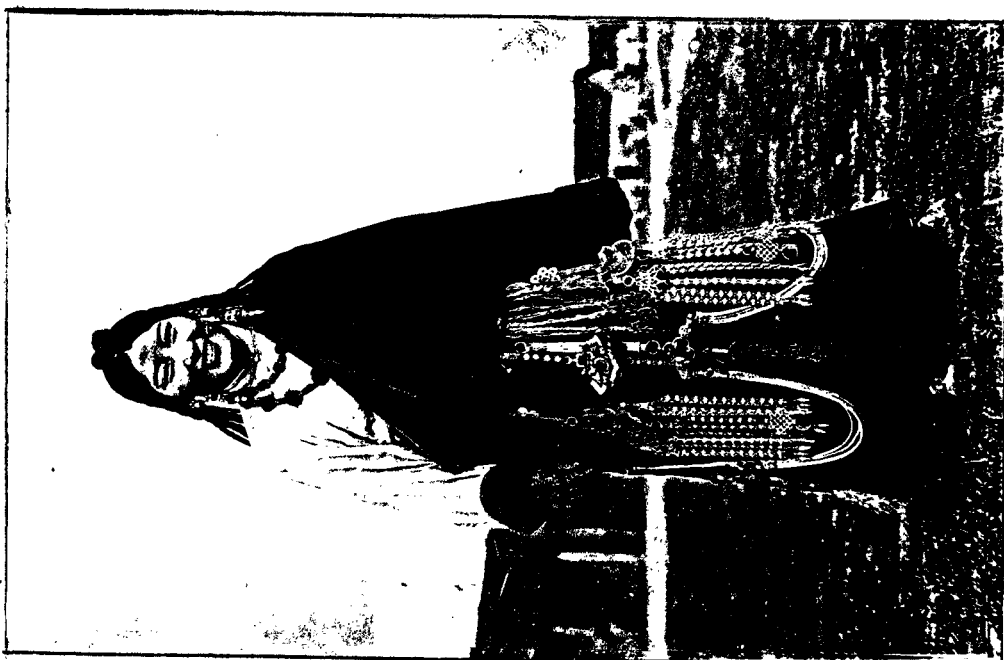
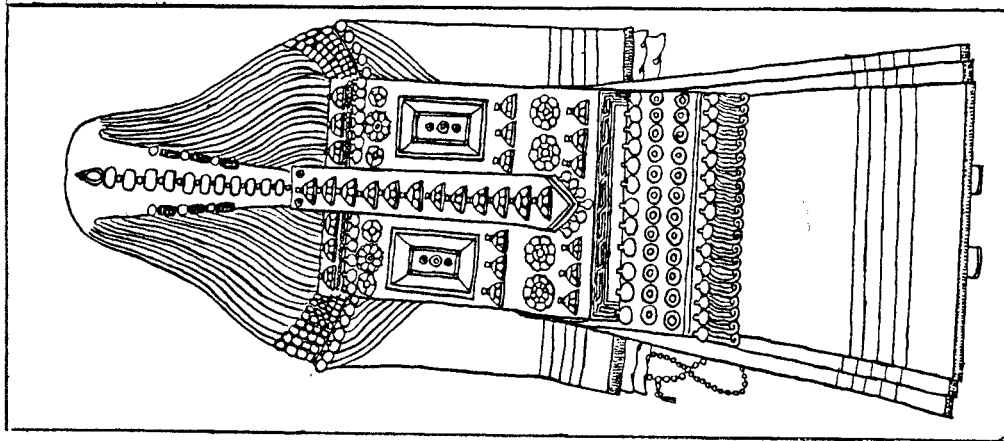
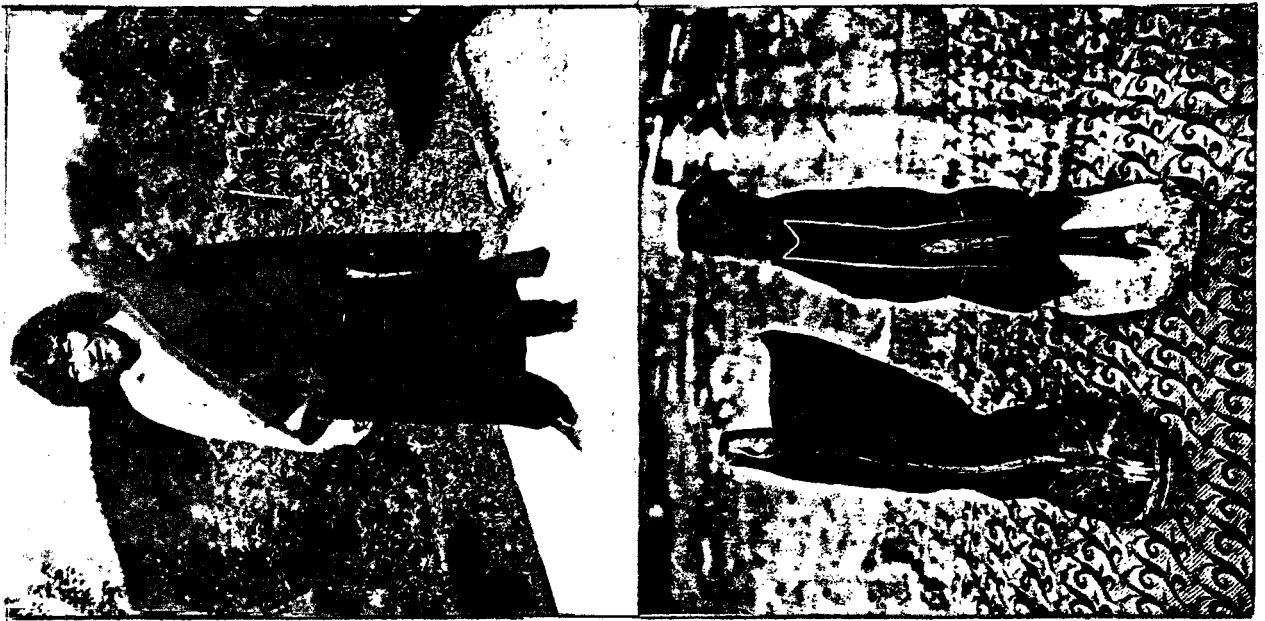


Fig. 47. Khampa Woman
 48. Jeweled Hair Ornament
 49. Khampa Man in Wolf Fur Cap
 50. Tibetan Boots

COSTUME

Color, in Vajrayana Buddhism, is used symbolically. Different colors indicate the four directions: North is green; South, yellow; East, white; and West, red. These basic colors, plus the fifth, blue at center, indicate the Five Dhyani Buddhas, their directions, their wisdoms, and the passions which they transmute. These five colors are the basic costume colors of Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo.

The costumes of Ling Dro are either elaborate versions of daily dress or simulate the clothes of the ancient warrior of Tibet. The female dancers are the wives of Gesar and his thirty warrior ministers. They also are the embodiments of the celestially beautiful feminine dakinis, wisdom aspects of the Buddha Mind. Their costumes are part of their beautiful voluptuous demeanor and should be made of the most brilliantly hued silks imported from China. The design, however, is typical of the dress of all Tibetan women.

The basic Tibetan Woman's dress, the chuba, is like a jumper. It is "V-necked" or made with a mandarin collar, long or short-sleeved, depending on the local style. It is long-skirted, belted at the waist, and gathered to form two pleats, one on either side, in the back. A good practical chuba for daily wear is made of black yak wool, whereas a brocade Chinese silk chuba would have been worn by nobility or for formal dress. Today, in India, synthetic fabrics are popular. The chuba is worn over a blouse that has a rolled collar

or a Chinese collar and has exceedingly long rolled sleeves which are worn long unrolled for dancing. Often, several blouses are worn at one time; the sleeves and collar are specially rolled to exhibit the different layers of color. The blouses are made of cotton, of patterned silk, or of nylon in India. Married women wear aprons of rainbow striped woven fabric of either cotton or wool over these chubas. Often, pieces of gold-threaded embroidery embellish the corners of these aprons.

In Ling Dro the women should wear Chinese silk brocade chubas of the "V-neck" style, of the four colors, including white. Their blouses should be made of thin but rich silk, of the corresponding colors. Over these the women wear their finest jewelry, huge strands of turquoise, coral, amber, and zee (a brown stone with unusual white markings, common only to Tibet). Also, jewelled relic boxes (gau, Tib.) are worn as jewelry. These contain blessings, statues, or relics of the Buddha or of a saint. On their ears the women wear elaborate earrings, normally of gold and semiprecious stones, and although they may not be seen, the dancers' hands should be ornamented with gold and silver jewel-bestudded rings.

In Tibet, women's hair styles varied from village to village. Some, particularly in Central Tibet, were quite elaborate, the hair being piled onto or wound around a large yoke form. However, the most common Tibetan hairstyle is two braids that are worn either down or encircling the head. Many little braids gathered together in the back were also worn. Often Tibetans weave colored threads into their braids.

The hairstyle of dakinis is described as partly knotted partly flowing (Dudjom Rinpoche).⁸⁴ In the first section of the Ling Dro dance, the women wear their hair simply, and unadorned, held near the ends by red and green colored threads. Later, the dancers put on two hair ornaments: a strand of large semiprecious jewels (the same as in their necklaces), which is sewn into a piece of cloth, is worn from the hairline to hairlength in the style of East Tibet; and a flowered headdress (now often plastic) with five colored streamers attached near each ear is worn as the hat of the dakini.

Tibetan footwear consists of boots made of cloth and leather. The female dancers should complete their costumes with boots of multi-colored yak wool.

The male dancers in Ling Dro represent the heroes or dakas (male counterparts of the dakinis), who are Gesar's ministers and warriors. Their costumes should be the rich silk and brocades of kings and ministers, with the coats of mail of warriors. Generally, they wear the former, the most elaborate version of Tibetan dress.

Tibetan men wear wrap around long jackets of the same material (yak wool and silk) as the women's dresses. These jackets, also called chubas, have mandarin collars or collarless V-necks, and rolled long sleeves. Their shirts are cotton or silk, high-collared, and long-sleeved as the women. Although most often white, they sometimes are colored. They wear baggy pants which they tuck into their high leather boots. One or two braids interwoven with red threads is the most common male hairdress. Their hairstyles vary with their social station, however.

In Ling Dro the men should wear V-necked chubas of brocade of the five colors, often trimmed with otter fur. Their shirts of multicolored Chinese silk are worn with their sleeves rolled down. Their boots are of either colored or black leather. Their hair, like that of the women, is worn down in respect to the deity. On their heads they wear the most striking elements of the Ling Dro costumes, their hats. Gesar and his retinue of warriors wear iron-colored helmets with three flags attached to three sticks stuck into their crowns. Three feathers top these sticks, the center feather being where the deity resides. Other times when Gesar's retinue represents his ministers, they wear the hats of Golok (an area of East Tibet) nobility, white poplin with red underbrims and red silken threads falling from the top. They also wear Khampa (East Tibetan) hats of wolf fur. Later in the last dance, Tashi Lam Yag, they change into differently colored turbans, and Gesar, who is known now as "the white dancer," wears a padma lotus hat, which identifies him with Padma Sambhava.

Both men and women, in the style of wealthy Tibetans, wear earrings and men only one earring. Gold and silver adorn their hands. They wear jeweled relic boxes, gaus, over their chubas, along with swords and bows and arrows. These symbolize the sword of compassion, the bow of absolute truth, and the arrow of relative truth.

Fig. 51. Gesar Flag



Fig. 52. GESAR FLAG: DESCRIPTION

Green Garuda Bird Tree	White Dorje Ensign	Blue Dragon Clouds	
Blue Ensign Griffin (lion-bird)	Yellow Gesar	Red Ensign Makara coming from a seashell	
Red Fire mountain Tiger	Green Walking fish Ensign	White Glacial mountain Snow lion	

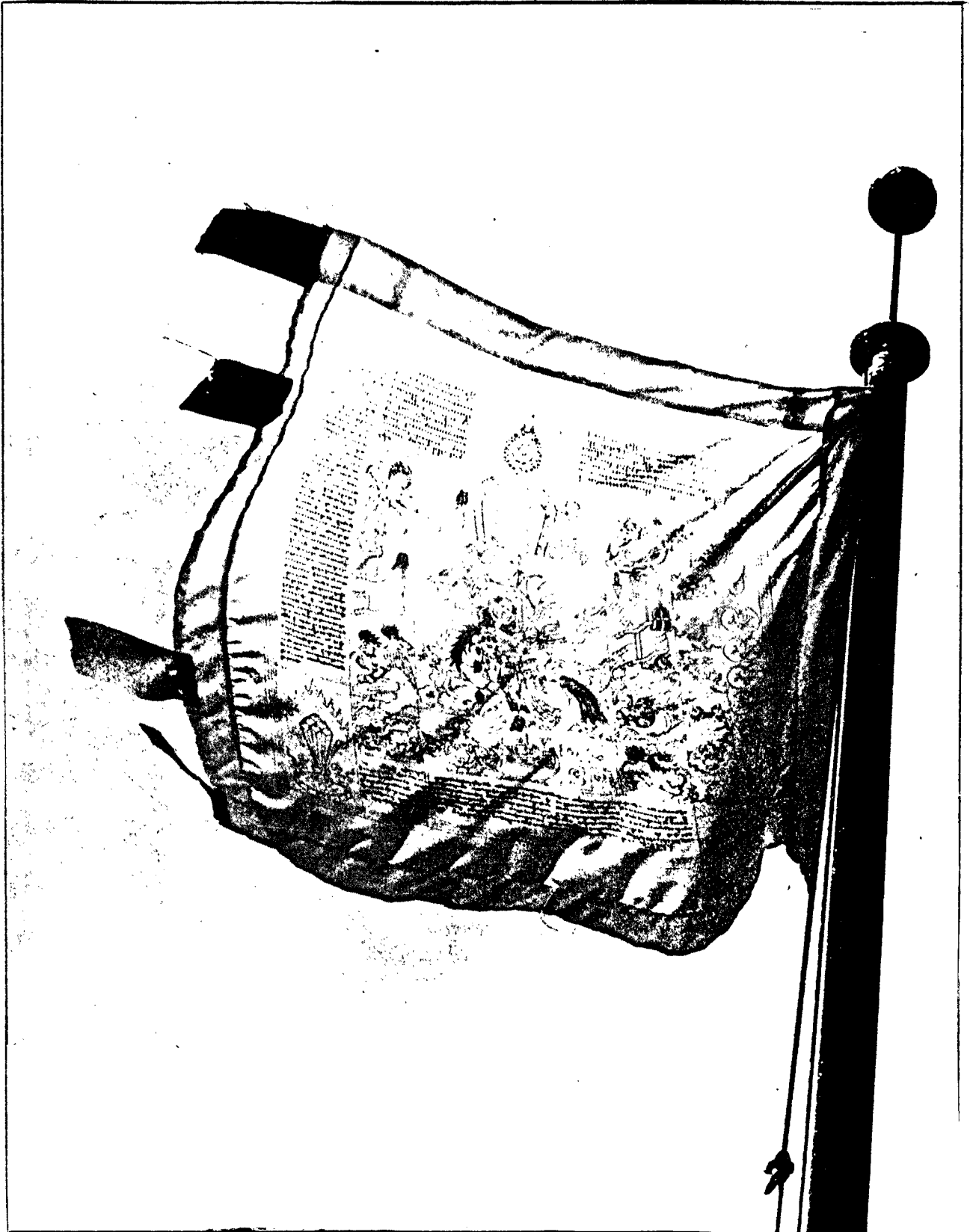


Fig. 53. Gesar Flag

PROPERTIES

Although the male dancers have swords, bows and arrows, and gaus, these are worn as ornaments (symbols) over their garments, and I have included them as part of the costume. The Ling Dro dancers do, however, carry several different properties. In the first dance, they carry ceremonial offering scarves and in the second section (as well as in several later ones) they carry the five-colored flag of Gesar on poles. These poles are three feet long for the men and two feet long for the women. For the sixth dance the men wear shields, called pob (Tib). In the last dance, "Tashe Lam Yag," the dancers carry pole drums (nga, Tib.) which they beat with a curved stick. The white dancer (Gesar) carries a five-foot-long pole decorated with flags and streamers, a mirror (melong, Tib.) and a small bell (trilbu, Tib.).

RELATIONSHIP OF COSTUME TO MOVEMENT

Costume, along with culture, contributes to the molding of a dance style. In Ling Dro, the long silken sleeves of the dancers' blouses and shirts seem to elongate and emphasize the flowing quality of their arms. The extra fabric floats behind their movements. Because of their broad expansive movements, the dancers must get the extra fabric out of the way in order to make a change of direction. This is artfully done by a flick of the wrist. This flowing quality is further enhanced by the streamers, ribbons, and threads the dancers wear

on their hats, in their hair, and on the flags they carry. The poles of the flags on their hats, and the ones they carry in their hands emphasize their vertical posture. The dancers could not tilt or twist their heads, for their headdresses would have fallen off. Although the dancers' blouses and skirts are light, their chubas and ornaments (jewelry and weapons) are of considerable weight. This, plus the weight of their boots, gives them the appearance of hugging the ground. They seem extraordinarily strong as they stamp and whirl. Thus their costumes combine to display the flowing grace of the dakini and the vital strength of the daka.

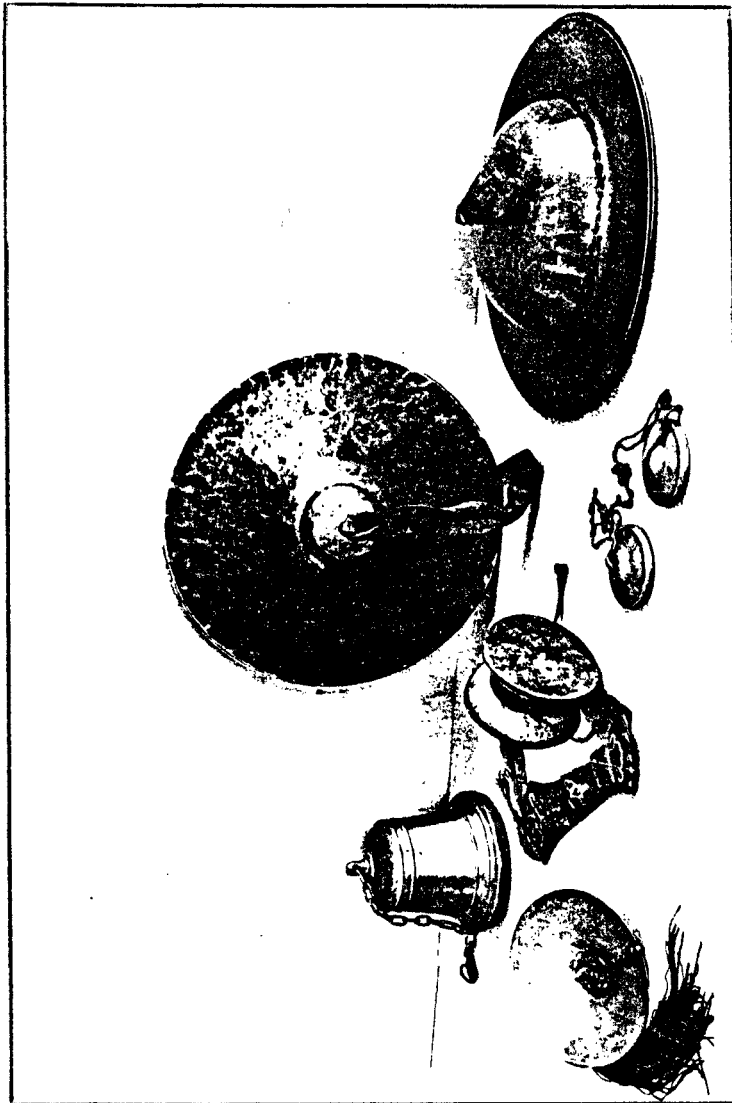
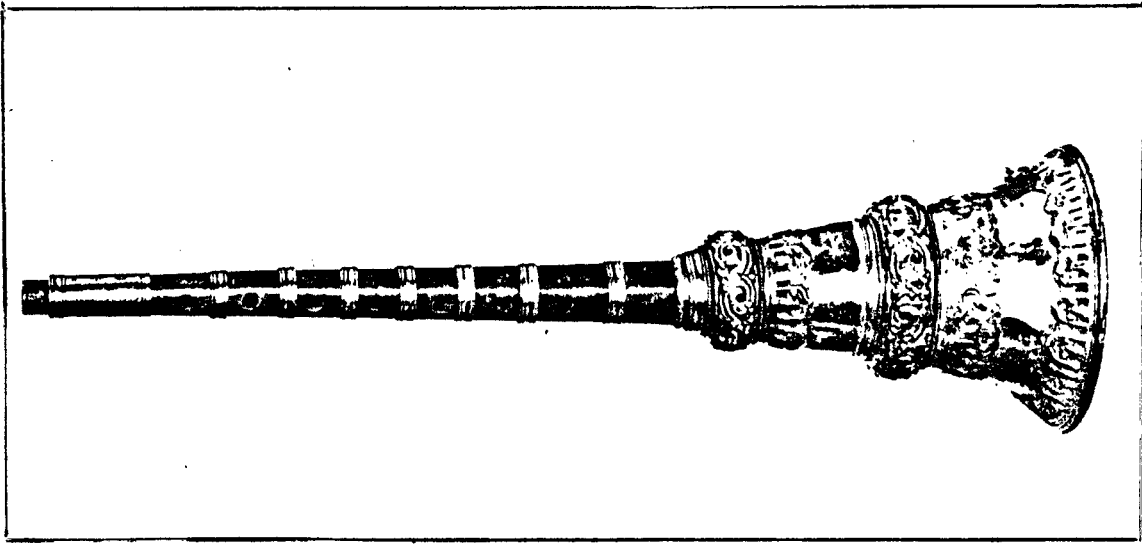
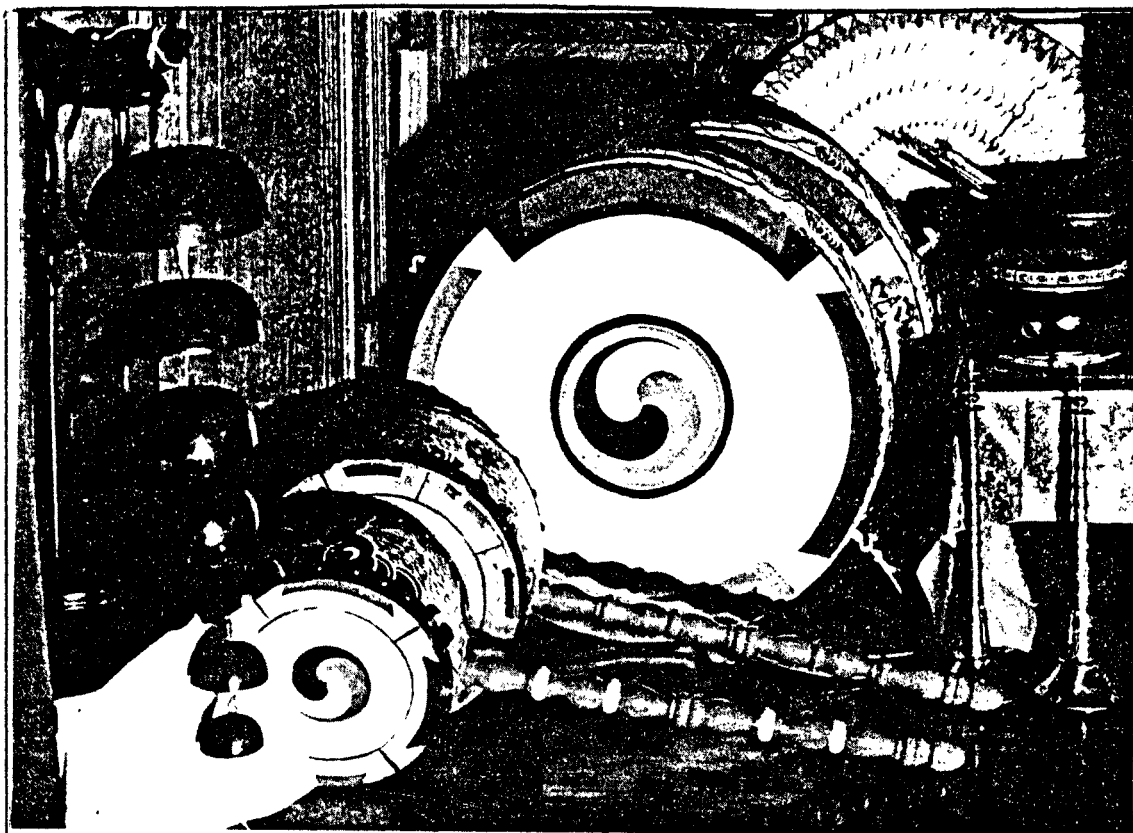


Fig. 54 (Above). Tibetan Ritual Instruments: Gong, Temple Bell, Hand Drum (Damaru), Cymbals

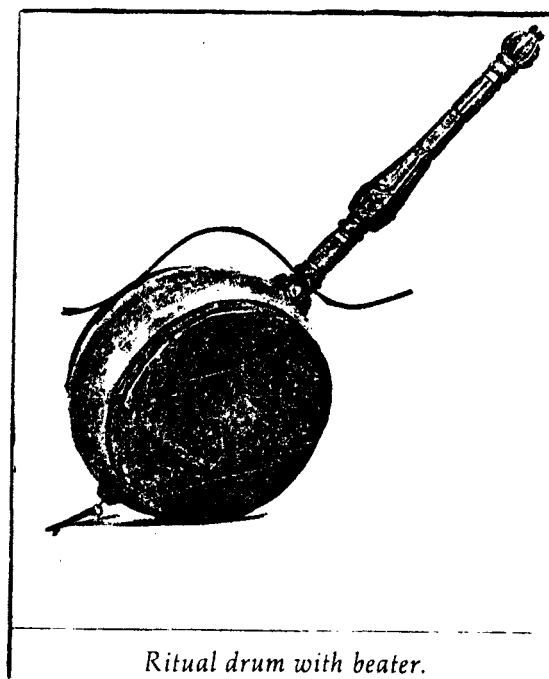
Fig. 55 (Right). The Gyaling, the Most Prominent Instrument of the Orchestra



Gyalings, drums and other percussion instruments used in Tibetan ritual music

Fig. 56 (Above). A Medium sized Hand-held drum with the design of "Norbu Gakhi" painted on the head is played by the dancers in the last dance of Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo, "Tashi Lam Yag."

Fig. 57 (Right). Drum of the type used in "Tashi Lam Yag."



Ritual drum with beater.

MUSIC: ROLMO

Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo is an offering of celestial music. My teacher, Norbu Sangpo, said that rolmo means music, orchestra, or chorus of the gods. The text refers to the songs as pleasant melodious sounds that bring happiness to all who hear them. Yet in their true absolute nature they are the playful manifestations of emptiness and bliss.

The tunes of Ling Dro are not notated. They have been transmitted orally from Mipham Rinpoche to others. Although the Tibetan tradition adheres very strictly to the text or to the spoken word, the tunes that accompany these words seem to be interchangeable. Different monasteries and sects use different chants for the same text. It is the same with Ling Dro, for I have heard Tibetan friends, who did not come from Chandragiri Settlement, sing the Ling Dro songs with different tunes that they learned from sources other than my teacher. The thirteen tunes that I learned are quite "catchy" and melodious. In the two camps in which I lived, people would hum and sing them as popular tunes, and I found myself doing this as well. Whereas the tunes themselves are engaging, certain ornamental and stylistic devices typical of Tibetan poetry--repetition and onomotopoeia--make the text melodic. For example, after describing what they are doing "singing songs pleasant to hear," they make a corresponding sound, "kyu ru ru."

The songs of Ling Dro should be sung sweetly. The greatest difficulty in singing them is that they are always sung while dancing. A good singer should have a loud and flexible voice that can slide up and down a range of more than two octaves. Although projection and flexibility are important, perfect pitch is not required. The women sing in a high nasal manner and the men sing deeply in their chests. Most of the singing is antiphonal. In all the songs except the third, which is sung conversely the men sing the phrase first, and then the women echo it. In the last dance, "Tashi Lam Yag," Gesar chants a sequence alone.

Ling Dro is mostly sung. Instrumental music is never mentioned in the text, but is sparsely used to accompany the dancers when they exit in a crescendo of whirls (after dances 2, 8, and 11) and/or between sections (after dance 2), when the dancers change costumes and during the final dance. The orchestra which accompanies their turning exits and costume changes consists of two flutes (lingbu, Tib.), two drums (dodar, Tib.) beaten with two sticks on either side, sounding either softly or loudly, and one oboe-type, double reed instrument with a thin high sound (sona, Tib.). Because they could not take all their instruments with them when fleeing Tibet, the orchestra section in Orissa improvised with religious instruments: one drum (nga, Tib.), one shawm (gyaling, Tib.), and a pair of cymbals (silnyang, Tib.). The sound in Orissa was like the religious orchestral music, eruptive, percussive, and wailing. In the last dance, the dancers accompany themselves on drums that they hold in their left hands and beat with

curved sticks held in their right hands.

The origin of Tibetan religious instrumental music seems traceable to India where cymbals and hand drums originated, and to China, where ensemble performances predated performances by individual artists. Shawms may have originated in the Middle East (Garfius, 1979).⁸⁵ Tibet emerged as a center for philosophical, artistic, and musical influences in the Far East.

MOVEMENT: STYLE

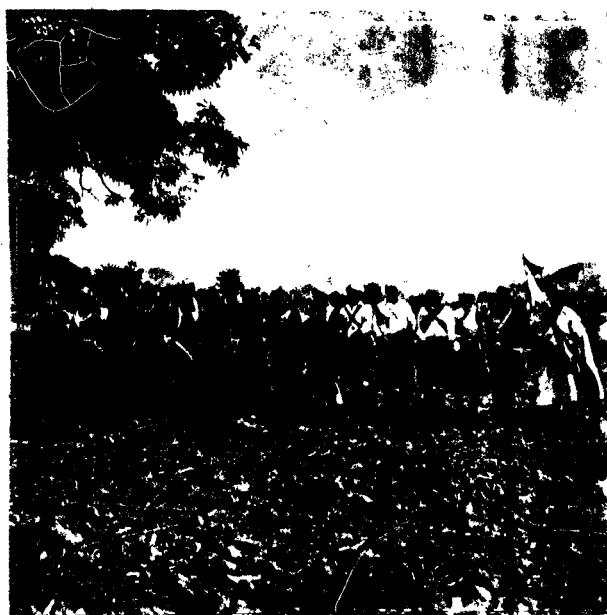
Although the content of Ling Dro is religious, the style derives from Eastern Tibetan folk dance (see p. 27). It is a combination of steps, stamps, hops, draws, and step-hop-turns. The arms swing naturally in accordance with the feet and make wide expansive waves. The movements are strong. The performers are lay people, both male and female, who perform the same steps in unison. However, the men, in the attitude of courageous heroes, hold themselves more firmly and display more vitality, strength, and brilliant footwork. They step and kick broadly, stamp loudly, and rebound off the ground in high hops. The women, as lovely dakinis, move gracefully. They seem to glide across the ground with much smaller steps, which are often hidden by their long dresses. Their rebounds are much softer, flowing, vibratory bounces. Although all dancers shift their weight from side to side, the men swagger while the women sway. A Tibetan friend revealed that a good male dancer is animated, while a good female dancer is recognized by the graceful way her ponytail moves on her back.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

A typical Tibetan audience is a huddled mass of families sitting on the ground craning to see the activity. People are drinking and eating, children are running in different directions (or they are held down), and people often converse. A performance is considered a good cause for a gathering. Usually an outing is planned for one day or longer, depending on the traveling distance to and duration of the performance itself. Preparations are made to take or prepare warm food and drink, for one must travel to and from the performance ground either on horse or by foot, or, if one is lucky, by bicycle (in India). Important personages have chairs in front, while others scramble for their places. Since in Tibet the temperature at the time of the performance was often very cold, everyone bundled up and drank endless quantities of salted butter tea. In India where it is too hot, the people wear light clothes and drink sweet tea. Because they know the performance well, and the outings are infrequent, much of the time is spent in socializing with friends and enjoying the picnic. Also at large gatherings of any importance, such as dances, empowerments, or teachings, merchants spread their wares either in front of the monastery or a little distance away from the dance ground. They sell such things as religious items, cloth, and cups. One woman I knew always brought something to sell, which she insisted paid her traveling expenses and made the journey worthwhile. Her typical attitude was a subject of

humor to her daughter, who commented, "She really does it because she likes it." Other people may make a fire and set up a rudimentary tea stall.

Ling Dro is a short performance of only two and one-half hours duration. The audience is not exceedingly jittery. The dance form is simple, non-dramatic, and repetitious. Most of the people have been attending similar performances since childhood. The audience is easily distracted, knowing that they can leave and return without missing much, for there is no plot line to follow. Since they have come to honor Gesar and receive his blessings merely by attending the performance, they have ample time to renew old friendships and carry on covert flirtations. Many people also watch and listen, enraptured. They love the songs and energetic movements and truly believe the dancers become Gesar and his retinue.



Figs. 58-61. Performance of Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo, Chandragiri Settlement, Orissa



Figs. 62-63. Norbu Sangpo and Yangzom as Gesar (The White Dancer) and Drugmo



Figs. 64-65. Performance of Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo, Chandragiri Settlement, Orissa

PERFORMANCE

In Tibet, performances of Ling Dro were presented three times a year at the most important festivals: Losar, the lunar New Year (the most important festival); Ku Juk Cho Pa in the fourth lunar month, when the birth, death, and enlightenment of Buddha Sakyamuni are celebrated; and at the beginning of the eighth lunar month, when the two and one-half month monastic retreat is ended. Now, in Orissa, performances are presented for visiting dignitaries, either religious or political.

In Orissa, the performance varies somewhat from the Tibetan by the degree of pomp and elegance. There is no beginning pageant. The costumes are made mostly of more simple fabrics. Pa la improvised the hats, coats of mail, swords, etc., by making them of cardboard, cotton, and painted wood. The orchestra also lacks the proper instruments, and the dancers number only one-third of their traditional number.

The performances in Tibet took place on a special ground in front of the Palace of the Regent (Podang) in Lhasa, or on the courtyard of a monastery with Mipham Rinpoche presiding in Derge, Kham.

First, a pageant with flags and beautiful horses was paraded in front of the throne, which originally seated Mipham Rinpoche. Then the Regent was saluted by the dancers in the center of the grounds. After the pageant was completed, offering prayers were made by one or more of the lamas.

The dance begins with a preliminary section, an offering puja (ceremony), in which the dancers offer long white ceremonial katags previously to Mipham or Reting Rinpoche and now to respected guests. At the same time the dance ritual is offered to Gesar and his retinue who are named in the text.

The line of male dancers enters first, singing, and led by the dancer dressed as Gesar, who wears the largest flagged hat. The female dancers closely follow, led by Drugmo, Gesar's wife. They enter from their own line, which converges into the circle at the end of the men's line.

The women wear a spectrum of brilliantly colored brocade short-sleeved dresses over red, blue, and green silk blouses and colorfully striped aprons. Their hair is tied in a loose ponytail at the back with red and green colored threads. On their feet they wear colored wool boots of black, green, and red. The men wear long otter-trimmed, belted chubas in black or various colors, white shirts, wolf fur caps, and thick-soled colored boots. All the dancers hold, in their outstretched arms, long silk offering scarves.

They dance in unison, in a clockwise circular formation, most often in single file, facing the back of the person in front of them. They take two steps (see Glossary of Movement Terms, p.211) stamp twice, and then perform a step-hop lifting one knee and then sliding one foot next to the other. This movement is repeated until they go to the second combination, which embellishes the first, adding a turn and a prance, increasing the tempo

until they exit, women first. The dance has thirteen sections, most of which are divided into two parts; the first part (labeled a) is simple and slower, and the second (labeled b) faster and more complex. This pattern of simple first steps leading into a more complex arrangement of the basic step element and ending in a crescendo, is the format for nearly every section of the dance. Most of the steps in the following sections of the dance are variations on the first steps in this section, entitled for its refrain, "Dro Yi Chod Pa Bul Lo." Each dance is numbered according to its order of sequence and not according to the section number of the text. For example, "Dro Yi Chod Pa Bul Lo," the preliminary section, is 1a and b. Section 1 of the text, in which the main part of Ling Dro begins, contains dance 2 a,b.

The dancers continue to sing antiphonally throughout the entire dance. First the men sing and then the women sing. Singing nearly always accompanies the dance because the words are the support of the true meaning of the ritual.

Next follows the main portion of the dance including 12 sections, requesting the attendance and bestowal of blessings from Gesar and his retinue. It is the consecration of the dance and the time when the blessing are conferred.

In the first section of this second portion, i.e., Section 1 of the Text, called "Mi Je Seng Chen," the dancers invite the gods to attend their dance. Gesar is to them like a father whom they will never forget, and who will never forget them, his sons. The men enter first, followed by the women, all holding the five-colored flag of Gesar in their

right hands, waving to him a welcome. The movements of the second dance are basically the same as those in the first dance. After one complete revolution about the circle, two attendants enter the circle and pick up the flags. Now all the dancers wear hats. The women's hats are made of plastic flowers, and the men's hats are made of white poplin with red silken threads falling from the crowns. The men don their weapons in this section. A long sword is slung on each man's back near his left armpit, and a bow and quiver of arrows on his right. The dancers perform two combinations and end in a whirling crescendo, although they remain in the dance area without exiting.

Next comes the second section of the main portion, section 11, entitled "Ton Nyid Lhamo." It is a song sung first by the women, whom the men echo. While "Mi Je Seng Chen" was directed to Gesar by his sons, this song is directed by Tara's daughters, who will not forget their mother, to Tara, goddess of compassion embodied in Gesar's wife, Drugmo. The dancers ask her to remember them with her blessings.

The movement in this dance becomes more complex. Part 3b combines many of the basic movements and alternates direction. The dancers again exit in a whirling crescendo to instrumental music which continues after their exit.

The third section of the ceremony "Ying Cho Ku" is in response to the devotion of the dancers, and comprises the blessings of the Three Bodies (Kayas) of the Buddha Mind. From Gesar, the dancers receive the blessings of the Four Activities, from the Five Dhyani Buddhas, the Five Wisdoms, and from Kuntu Zangpo they receive the realized nature of their own minds. All of these deities represent aspects of the Buddha Mind and their blessings

represent levels of insight into the nature of that sublime mind. The profound nature of this ritual is revealed in this section. Realizing the mandalas of the Kayas, the dancers' feet represent wisdom and skillful means, their song is a playful manifestation of emptiness and bliss, and their minds rest in nonduality.

The dancers enter for the fourth dance in the regular fashion, men first. They execute a simple lyrical step combination composed of steps and step touches. This then develops into an exciting rhythmical combination in which they jump into the four directions. They do not exit, but start to perform in a smiling and flirtatious manner section IV, the song and hymn of praise "Ku Je Seng Chen." Gesar, the "Well Born Great Lion," and his retinue of protectors (Dralhas, Tib.) and dakas and dakinis (Dwangman, Tib.) are now attending the dance. The dancers are delighted to ask them to remain, to bestow their blessings and to accept the dancers' offerings of body (dance), speech (song), and mind (devotion). A reference is made to Gesar's conquest of Hor.

The dancers again in dance 5, perform steps, hops, and swing and draw movements, to which they add a crossover step. The second combination includes a full turn composed of two hop-swings, which make the dancers appear to skim the ground as they accelerate and exit.

The next section, IVA, "Wang Dzag" is entitled "coincident manifestation or inseparability" (zung juk, Tib.). The dance is an auspicious coincidental occasion that brings good fortune to all those assembled. The dancing heroes and dakinis perform the activities of the Buddha, eradicating the obscurations which cloud Enlightenment, from the viewpoint of Ati

Yoga. The obscurations or enemies which are overcome--one's past karma, passions (emotions), and more profoundly one's own thoughts--are annihilated by intrinsic awareness (the recognition of one's own nature to be pure and perfect), and identical with the expanse of the Dharmadhatu.

For this dance, 6a and 6b, the dancers have changed their costumes. The women wear their hair Khampa style, with a piece of cloth studded with semi-precious stones falling the length of their hair from the crown of their heads. Under this their hair is mostly loose but is tied together near the ends. They wear multi-colored long-sleeved dresses, no aprons, and the same tricolored boots. The men, as warriors, wear iron colored helmets with three flags on the crown, chubas of cloth that looks like metal, and shields, called "pob." They perform two step combinations. The second includes a movement which mimics the drawing of a bow and the shooting of an arrow that is described in the song.

"Tashi Do Yi Dro Ra Ru," IVB follows the section IVA without interruption. Without exiting the dancers stop and then continue to sing about being in the dance area of good fortune. The good fortune is the benefits of the Four Activities, such as increasing the life span of the gurus. The dancers, the text explains, are in this auspicious position because they had previously met at the time of Gesar. In this dance, 6c, the floor pattern changes. The dancers prance in toward and out from the center of the circle, turn, and dance outward again.

Then follows the dance text section V, "Ngon Tse," which describes

the dance as one of the various activities of Gesar and his entourage of heroes. The text refers to episodes in the Gesar epic. To help the side of White Tibet (the phenomenal world) they conquered evil in all forms. On the profound level Gesar reveals himself to his retinue as Kuntu Zangpo and shows them the inherent nature of their own minds.

The dancers' movements combine the same basic step elements in 7a, except that in 7b they perform an exciting leap turn. They do not exit.

After a brief pause, they continue with dance 8, performing movements which mime this part of the text, section V, known as "Lak Ye," a dance of happiness. The dancers walk and then step and raise their right arm (symbolizing skillful means) threateningly to the sky. They then repeat the same motion with the left arm (wisdom) but gesture toward the ground, dismissing the surface of the earth. They walk again, and with arms on hips, twisting their heads from side to side like proud lions. Then they are eagles flapping their arms, and again they are prancing red-pawed tigers. All these gestures vanquish all adversity and bring good fortune. They then in 8b perform a combination in which, after stamping, they bend their knees and lower themselves slightly as in a curtsy. The effect is quite dramatic, for most of the movements hug the ground or lift them off it. They exit to the crash of cymbals and the beat of a drum.

"Non Gyal," section VI, starts by relating the story of Gesar's miraculous birth from a lotus. This refers to his being an emanation of Padma Sambhava (the Lotus Born). Then follows a short description of the

sublime male and female dancers. The sensuously beautiful dakinis are adorned with jewels and silks and have eyes like utpala blossoms. The men possess the youthful body, melodious speech, and unwavering mind of Gesar. The practitioner, by visualizing the deity, is inspired and able to overcome his obstacles. All the gods that attend this dance are described, and the dancers are pleased to throw them tsampa (barley flour) as a good luck offering. Their minds rest in emptiness, blissful, and in single-pointed devotion, their bodies gesture powerfully, and their voices are raised in melodious song.

The dancers perform, in dance 9, yet another variation of the same basic steps: two combinations that reverse directions (going first clockwise and then counterclockwise). However, in 9b, the second combination weaves in toward and out from the center of the circle in a complex pattern.

All the dancers carry the five-colored flag of Gesar in section VII, "Gong Lha Lam," the dance that summons prosperity. They have changed back into the costumes of section I: the women wear sleeveless chubas and flowered hats and the men wear their original chubas and Golok hats. They hold their banners aloft throughout this dance, number 10.

Prosperity, in all its forms, is bestowed by the gods of the three realms (above, on the mountain tops, and below the ocean) and the dancers are pleased.

Section VII, "Pal Dza," is entitled "Delighting the Gods." To this end the dancers are instructed to dance contentedly. Again they offer their body, speech, and mind in this glorious vajra dance festival in order to receive good fortune and prosperity. They praise Gesar, who

in his first emanation defeated the kings of the four directions. In the second emanation during this cycle, Gesar was the being who defeated the enemies of mankind, and in the third emanation, he will return from Shambhala as King Rigdan Drakpo himself. The dancers enter without flags and perform two simple movement combinations 11a and 11b, and then exit to the clash of cymbals, which continue as an interlude before they reenter.

The dancers reenter in dance 12 carrying the flags for the benediction, which is entitled "Tashi," meaning luck. They praise Gesar, the "Great Lion Jewel," who brings them good fortune. They emulate poetically the good fortunes of body, speech, and mind, and activities and qualities. The dancers pray that they may be enlightened. Their dance is performed in an elaborate floor pattern entitled norbu gakhil. The dancers slowly spiral, weaving in and out of the center of the circle.

The last section, "Tashi Lam Yag," presents a glorious ending, the appendix to the main body of Ling Dro. The steps of dance 13 are the most complex of the entire performance, yet they are still composed of the basic elements (step, hop, etc.). The dancing area is the mandala of the Five Dhyani Buddhas. The dancers are divided equally in number into the four directions and wear costumes of the corresponding colors. One-half of the women enter from the east wearing flowered headdresses and sleeveless white chubas and blouses. The other women enter from the west in red costumes. Half of the men enter from the south in yellow chubas and shirts, wearing yellow turbans on their heads. And, from the north, wearing green chubas, shirts, and turbans, the remainder of the men enter. Each of

the dancers carries a drum in his left hand and a stick in his right. Gesar stands in the center, wearing a white chuba and a lotus bud hat (like the hat of Padma Sambhava, except that Gesar's hat is white and not red, and has a mirror on it). He carries in his left hand a staff with streamers and in his right hand a bell. Although they enter from the corners, the dancers again form a circle and proceed in a clockwise direction. They accompany themselves on the hand-held drums, which they beat with sticks. Their arm movements are limited, but the drum accents the power of the stamping and turning. Gesar, standing aside, first chants of his origins. In this form, for this section of the ceremony he is called the white dancer; he explains that he is an emanation of Padma Sambhava, sent to bestow good fortune upon the land. He then joins with the other dancers, who are the heroes and dakinis of the Five Buddha Families, to perform their dance, which bestows the blessing of the Four Activities. They all exit in a whirling frenzy.

TEXT

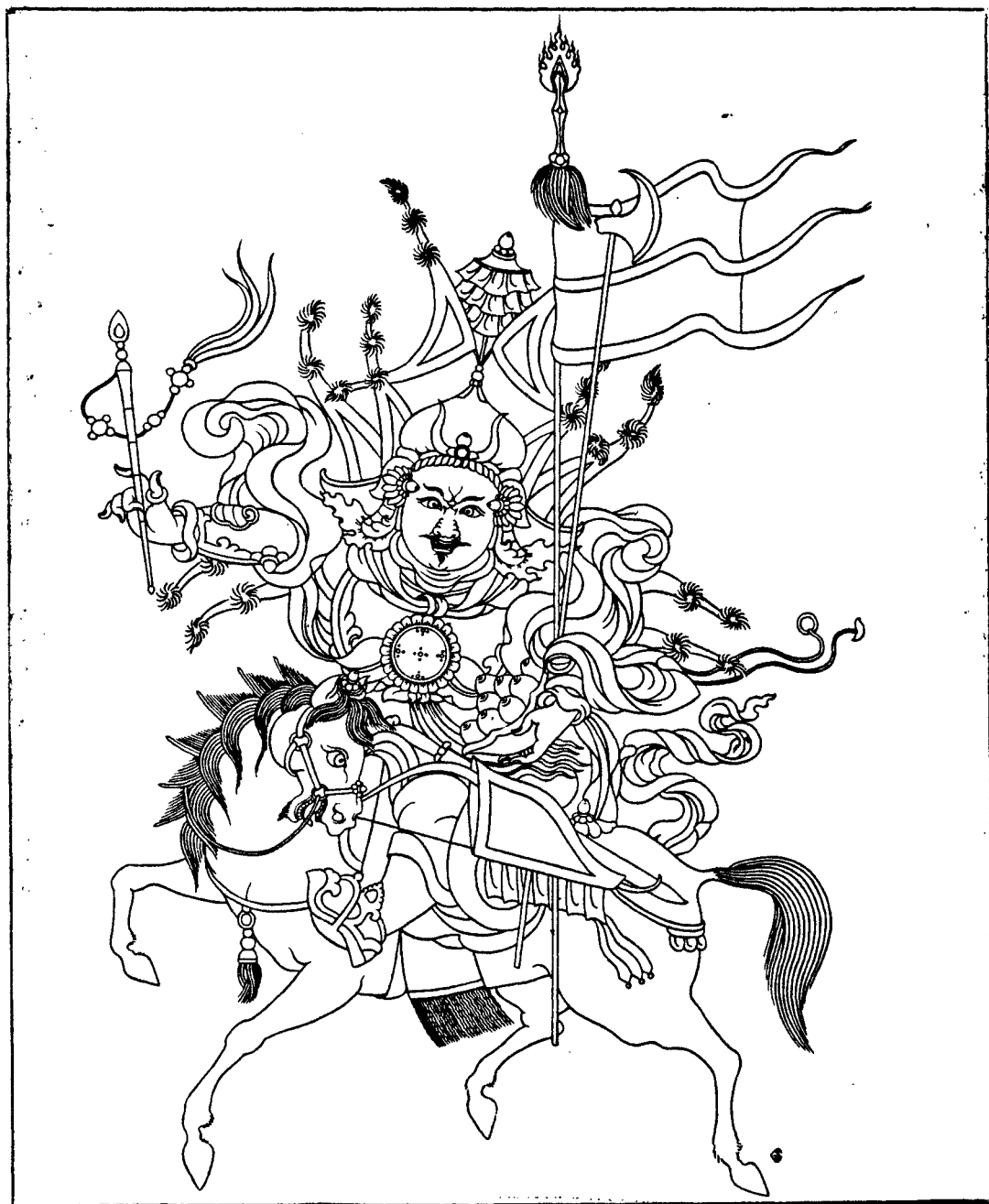


Fig. 66. Gesar

LING DRO DECHEN ROLMO, MUSIC OF GREAT BLISS
WHICH IS A DANCE OF LING

HERE ARE THE DANCES OF LING WHICH DERIVE
FROM THE EVENTS IN "THE CAREER OF GESAR
NORBU DRADUL," CONDENSING INTO ONE THE
THREE SECTIONS WHICH APPEAR IN THE
DHARMA TEXT OF THE PURE VISIONS OF
THE ALL-SEEING MIPHAM JAMYANG
NAMGYAL GYATSO (d. 1912), THE GREAT
CHARIOT OF THE EARLY TRANSLATION
DOCTRINE (THE NYINGMAPA SCHOOL);
WHEREIN THE DISPLAY OF STAMPING
CONTINUOUSLY AT ALL TIMES, ETC.,
REPRESENTS A MANIFESTATION OF THE
GREAT BLISS.....

PRELIMINARY INVOCATION

(FIRSTLY, AS FOR THE PUJA OF THE DANCE:)

OM AH HUM DRO YI CHOD-PA BUL-LO
Om ah hum We offer the Puja of the dance

DRO YI CHOD-PA ZHE-SO
May the Puja of this dance be accepted.

GYUD SUM RIG-DZIN LAMA LA
To the Vidyadhara Gurus of the Three Lineages,

DRO YI CHOD-PA BUL-LO
We offer this puja of the dance.

YI-DAM ZHI-DRO RAB-JAM LA
To the Yidams and the innumerable wrathful Deities.

DRO YI CHOD-PA BUL-LO
We offer this puja of the dance.

NE SUM PA-WO KHANDRO LA
To the Dakas and Dakinis of the three pilgrimage places.

DRO YI CHOD-PA BUL-LO
We offer this puja of the dance.

TAN-SUNG DAM-CHAN GYA-TSO LA
To the oceans of oath-bound guardians of the Doctrine

DRO YI CHOD-PA BUL-LO
We offer this puja of the dance.

DZAM-LING NORBU DRA-DUL LA
To Norbu Dradul, the Jewel of the World, who vanquishes his enemies.

DRO YI CHOD-PA BUL-LO
We offer this puja of the dance.

LHA-CHEN TSANG-PA KAR-PO LA
To the great God Tsang-paKar-po

DRO YI CHOD-PA BUL-LO
We offer this puja of the dance.

NYEN CHEN KU LHA GEM-JO LA
To the great Kinsman Ku-lha Gem-jo,

DRO YI CHOD-PA BUL-LO
We offer this puja of the dance

LU-GYAL TSUK-NA RIN-CHEN LA
To the Naga King Tsukna Rinchen

p. 3 DRO YI CHOD-PA BUL-LO
We offer this puja of the dance.

KU-JE DON-DRUP LHA-SE LA
To the divine son Kuje Dondrup

DRO YI CHOD-PA BUL-LO
We offer this puja of the dance.

PA-THUL DWANG MEN TSOK NAM LA
To the hosts of Pa-Thul and Dwang-men

DRO YI CHOD-PA BUL-LO
We offer this puja of the dance.

LHA LU KAR-CHOK TSOK NAM LA
To the hosts of gods and nagas belonging to the white side

DRO YI CHOD-PA BUL-LO
We offer this puja of the dance.

DIR TSOK RIG-DZIN CHED-CHAM LA
To the Vidyadharas and their consorts who assemble here

DRO YI CHOD-PA BUL-LO
We offer this puja of the dance.

DRO YI CHOD-PA ZHE-SO
May they accept this puja of the dance.

1. Then, in regard to the main text of the dance, first, as for the blessing of the dance:

MO-GU DUNG PE YID CHOK GI
With thoughts of fervent devotion

RAP KUL ZHI ZHING GA WE NYAM
We exhort them in the spirit of peace and happiness

NYAN GYUR TSANG PE YANG TA BU
Like a voice which is pure and pleasant to hear

- p. 4 LU NI DE TAR LANG WAR JA
May this song be likewise accepted.

(The arrow with silk ribbon is held aloft.)

A HO LA MI JE SENG CHEN LHA YI NOR BU
A ho la! The jewel of the gods, the great lion,
the lord of men,

DRA LHA WER ME PUNG DANG CHE TE
Together with the hordes of Dra-lha Wer-mas,

BAK DRO JIN CHEN THIP SE JON NE
Having appeared suddenly bestowing great boons

YA YE YE DRAL LHA YI DRO LA ZHUK SHOK
May they be seated at this dance of the gods
in a row on the right side

YA YE PHO GYUD PA WO JIN CHEN PHOP SHOK
May great boons be granted by the heroes of the
male line.

YA YE BU YI PHA CHEN JED PAR MI SID
That a son may forget his great father is
not possible

YA YE NGE NI MI HED SOL WA DEP SO
We pray to you without forgetting.

YA YE YID LA SENG CHEN GYAL PO DRAN NE
Having recalled in our minds this great king
among lions.

YA YE NGAK GI DUNG YANG Lhang Lhang DROK MA
With our voices this plaintive song is clearly sung.

- p. 5 YA YE KYEN PE NYI MA SAL WE LHA SE
 O divine prince who is the radiant sun of knowledge,
- YA YE TSE WE DA WA GYE PE MI JE
 O Lord among men who are the waxing moon of love,
- YA YE JIN LAP LOK TAR NYUR WE SENG CHEN
 O great lion whose blessing is swift like lightening,
- YA YE KU JE DON DRUP WER MA KAR MO
 O Ku-Je Don-drup and Wer-ma Kar-mo
- YA YE DZUM PE ZHAL RE TON LA JON SHOK
 Show us your smiling faces and come.
- YA YE NYAN PE SUNG YANG DROK LA JON SHOK
 Sound your voices which are pleasant to hear and come.
- YA YE SYE PE THUK KYI GONG LA JON SHOK
 Think of us with a delighted heart and come.
- YA YE JIN LAP DA TAK TON LA JON SHOK
 Display the signs and symbols of your blessing and come.
- YA YE LU NGAK YID SUM CHOD PA BUL LO
 When we offer this puja with our body, speech, and mind.
- YA YE MA YEL THUK KYI GONG SHIK NOR BU
 O Mani! Think of us with a constant heart.
- p. 6 YA YE PHA YI BU DE JED PAR MI SID
 That a son be forgotten by his father is not possible
- YA YE MA JED YOD NA DAN TA PHEP SHOK
 Since there is no such neglect, may you descend among us now.
- YA YE PHEP NE TA SHI JIN LAP DZOD CHIK
 And having descended, may you bestow blessings and benedictions.
- (This is the first section of the dance.)

p. 6 11. Then, as for the women, this song should be likewise performed.

OM OM TON NYID LHA MO KYI TSO MO
OM OM The goddess who is Emptiness itself,
The queen of Dharma,

MA TSOK KHAN DRO KHOR DANG CHE TE
Together with her entourage of Dakinis and hosts of mother
goddesses,

GAK DRO ZI JIN THIP SO JON NE
Having appeared suddenly, bestowing a brilliant radiance,

YON DRAL LHA YI DRO LA ZHUK SHOK
May they be seated at this dance of the gods in a row
on the left side.

MO GY UD DZE ME JIN CHEN PHOP SHOK
May great boons be granted by these beauties of the
female line.

BU MO A MA JED PAR ME SID
That a daughter may forget her mother is not possible.

NGE NI MI JED SOL WA DEP SO
We pray to you without forgetting.

YI DAM DWANG MAN DA KI DRAN NE
Having recalled the Yidams, Dwang-man, and Dakinis,

p. 7 KANG PE DRO DANG LAK PE GAR TAP
With dance with our feet and gesture with our hands.

NGAK GO SUNG YANG Lhang Lhang DROK NE
With our voices this plaintive song is clearly sung.

KYEN PE NYI MA SAL WE KHAN DRO
O Dakini who are the radiant sun of knowledge,

TSE WE DA WA GYE PE YUM CHEN
O Great mother who is the waxing moon of love,

GYAL YUM TA SHI SANG WE LHA MO
O Royal mother, good fortune, the secret goddess,

DZUM PE ZHAL RE TON LA JON SHOK
Show us your smiling faces and come.

NYAN PE SUNG YANG DROK LA JON SHOK

Sound your voices which are pleasant to hear and come.

TRIN LE JIM CHEN PHOP LA JON SHOK

Grant us the great boon of your activities and come.

LU NGAK YID SUM CHOD PA BUL NA

When we offer this puja with our body speech and mind.

MA YEL THUK KYI GONG SHIK DO MA

O Tara! Think of us with a constant heart,

A ME BU MO JED PAR MI SID

That a daughter be forgotten by her mother is not possible

MA JED YOD NA DAN TA PHEP SHOK

Since there is no such neglect, may you descend among us now.

p. 8

PHEP NE TA SHI JIN LAP DZOD CHIK

And having descended, may you bestow blessings and benedictions.

(This is the second section.)

- p. 8 III. Then, as for the blessings from the Three Bodies which represent the coincident manifestations of emptiness and appearance:

YING CHO KU TRO DANG DRAL WA YI
In the space of the Dkarmakaya which is devoid of all
multifarious activity,

CHO KU YI ZHING KHAM DRO RU
In the dance area of the sphere of the Dharmakaya,

PAL TON PA KUN TU ZANG PO YI
The glorious teacher Kuntu Zangpo

LAM NANG ZHI THAR CHIN JIN CHEN PHOP
Bestow the great boon of ultimately realizing the
path of the four phenomena.

ZHI LHUN DRUP GAK PA MED PA YI
In the unobstructed spontaneously produced basis

LONG KU YI ZHING KHAM DRO RA RU
In the dance area of the sphere of the Sambogakaya

PAL NGA DAN LONG CHOD DZOK KU YI
The glorious fivefold perfect Sambogakaya

LAM ZUNG JUK YE SHE JIN CHEN PHOP
Bestows the great boon of wisdom united with the path.

NE RANG NANG NAM PAR DAK PA YI
In the completely pure self-manifested place

TRUL KU YI ZHING KHAM DRO RA RU
In the dance area of the sphere of the Nirmanakaya,

JE KYE CHOK NOR BU DRA DUL GYI
Norbu Dradul, the Lord of excellent birth,

- p. 9 LE TRIN LE NAM ZHI JIN CHEN PHOP
Bestows the great boon of the four kinds of activities.

NE JIN CHAK PHUN SUM TSOK PA YI
In this supremely excellent blessed place,

NYAM GA WAR KYONG WE DRO RA RU
In the dance area where happiness is protected.

LU TRIN LE NAM ZHI TONG TAP KYI

With our bodies in postures and gestures signifying
the four activities

GAR DOR JE YING WE SA ZHI NON

Our haughty vajra dance suppresses the surface of the earth

NGAK DRAK TONG HUM DRA CHOK CHUR DROK

The sound of HUM signifying the emptiness of speech
is roared in the four directions

YID ZIL NON PA WE DENG CHE TE

With a conquering courageous confident mind

THAP SHE RAP KANG DRO DAP PA YI

We stamp our feet in the dance representing wisdom and means,

DUD NAK CHOK TSOK NAM WANG DU DU

Gathering under our power all the hosts of demons of the
dark side.

CHO DE TONG ROL PE LU LEN CHING

Singing our song which is a playful manifestation of
emptiness and bliss.

NYAM TA SHI DE WAR KYONG WE DRO

Our dance protects our happiness and good fortune.

DENG DIR TSOK PA WO NAL JOR ME

Today we heroes and yoginis who are gathered here

DU YANG YANG DRO YI ROL TSED NGOM

Again and again at this time play at dancing.

ZHING DAK PA RAB JAM DRO RA RU

In the dancing area of infinite numbers of pure worlds

p. 10

LU DRO WO ROL PE GAR TAP KYI

Our bodies dance and gesture with wrathful movements,

NGA DRAK TONG NYAM PE LU LEN CHING

Our speech sings pleasant sounding songs of emptiness

YID DZIN MED NGANG NE DRO ZHIK TRAP

And with our minds in a state which is devoid of all
grasping we stamp out the dance.

- IV. Again the dance text. Then the puja and the song which is a hymn of praise. Let the men and women equally sing whatever makes them happy, and hold aloft a dangling silk scarf of good fortune. In a style which is smiling and flirtatious, they should sing with voices appropriate to the thought.

A HO YE A HO YE KU JE SENG CHEN YID ZHIN NOR BU
Ahoye ahoye! The well born the great lion, the wish
granting gem,

TSA SUM DRA LHE TIN PHUNG TRIK SHING
The three roots and the Dra lhas who gather like clouds,

DE CHEN DWANG MAN DA KI TSOK DANG
As well as Dechen Dwang man and the hosts of Dakinis

GYE ZHED CHAK PE NYAM GYUR YO ZHING
Are of handsome appearance, joyous, laughing, and
passionate, as they move about.

A LA LA HO A LA LA HO
Alalaho! Alalaho!

JIN LAP ZI JIN BAR WAR ZHUK LA
May they remain here radiating brilliantly and bestowing
their blessings.

- p. 11 DIR TSOK DANG DAN DAK CHAK NAM KYI
When we who possess faith assemble here

NE LUK LONG CHOD CHOD PA BUL NA
As present as puja offerings all enjoyable things
in reality,

TSE WE THUK KYI ZHE PAR DZOD CHIK
May they graciously accept them with loving hearts.

A LA LA HO A LA LA HO
Alalaho! Alalaho!

DZE DZE LU KYI DRO GAR TANG TAP
Dancing and gesturing with beautiful bodies,

NYAN NYAN NGAH GI LU YANG GYUR KHUK
Singing melodious songs with voices pleasant to hear,

DUNG DUNG SEM KYI DAD GU DUNG SHUK
Reeling about under the power of fervent devotion and thoughts
of faith.

YANG YANG SENG CHEN JE LA CHOD DO
Again and again we make puja offerings to our Lord
The great lion.

DUNG DUNG SEM KYI DAD GU DUNG SHUK
Reeling about under the power of fervent devotion and
thoughts of faith.

YANG YANG SENG CHEN JE LA CHOD DO
Again and again we make puja offerings to our Lord
The great lion.

A LA LA HO A LA LA HO
Alalaho! Alalaho!

NGON TSE SER PO HOR GYI SA NE
At an earlier time in the yellow place of Hor

TONG NYID GAR ZA CHO KYI DOL ME
Garza Cho kyī Dolma the embodiment of Emptiness,

DRA LHE KU CHE KHYED LA SOL WE
Attired you in the body armor of the Dralhas

TAN DRA THUL WE TEN DREL DRIK SO
And the auspicious coincidence of subduing the
enemies of the Doctrine occurred.

p. 12 A LA LA HO A LA LA HO
Alalaho! Alalaho!

NGON TSE DWANG MAN KHAN DRO TSOK DANG
At an earlier time, the Dwang man and hosts of Dakinis

LHA LU MI YI DROK DAN NAM KYI
Those who are the companions of gods, nagas, and men,

NA TSOK JE CHOK KYED LA PHUL WE
Offered to you various kinds of excellent materials.

TRIN LE KUN DRUP TEN DREL DRIK SO
And the auspicious coincidence of all activities
being realized occurred.

A LA LA HO A LA LA HO
Alalaho! Alalaho!

DE ZHIN DAN TA MO DAN NGED KYI
Now, in the same way, we who have devotion

DRA LHE KU CHE TEN DREL JE CHOK
As an auspicious coincidence, together with the body
armor of the Dra lha

NA TSOK TRIN TAR TIP PE CHOD PE
Present puja offerings, like the gathering of clouds,
of various excellent materials.

DRA LHA WER ME U PHANG TOD MA
And sing, praising the exalted status of the Dra lha
Wermas.

A LA LA HO A LA LA HO
Alalaho! Alalaho!

DZUM DZUM CHAN GYI ZIK LA ZHE CHIK
May they look upon us with smiling eyes and accept this

GYE GYE THUK KYI GONG LA ZHE SHIK
May they think of us with a delighted heart and accept this

p. 13 JAM JAM PHA MA TA BU TSUL GYI
In the same manner in which parents love their children

YANG YANG GON KYAP TONG DRAK DZOND CHIK
May they again and again become our companions to guard
and protect us.

This is the third section.

IVA. As for the coincident manifestation:

WANG DZAD DRA LHE MAK TSOK KYI
The militant hosts of powerful Dra lhas

DOR JE TA DRO DI DUNG WE
Dance this wild vajra dance,

SID SUM KYE GU MA LU PA
And all spirits without exception in the three worlds

WANG MED DRAN DE KHOL NE JUNG
Loosing their power become as our servants

CHO YING KHYAP DAL KHA YING SU
In the space of the all pervading sky of the
Dharmadhatu,

TSOK TSOK MA LU DROL WE CHIR
In order to liberate all the hosts of discursive thoughts,

RIK PE TA DRO DI DUNG WE
By the dancing of this wild dance of intrinsic
awareness,

NYI DZIN THAL WAR LAK NE SONG
All seizing at duality is crushed into powder
and dispelled.

WANG CHEN GAR GYI KYIL KHOR DU
In the mandala of the dance of these great
powerful deities,

YE SHE NGA YI DRO DUNG WE
With the performing of the dance of the five wisdoms,

NYON MONG DUG NGE MAK TSOK NAM
The militant hosts of the passions and the five poisons

p. 14 RANG RIK YANG PE LONG DU ZHIK
Are destroyed in the vast expanse of self-originated
intrinsic awareness,

TEN DREL GAK MED DOR JE DRO
We dance this vajra dance which is an auspicious
conjunction of events,

GO NAL JOR DAK CHAK KHOR CHE KYI
And in particular, as for us yogins together with
our entourage,

LE NYON MONG DUD ZHI DUK NGA SOK
Conditions such as bad karma, the passions, the
four Maras, the five poisons, etc.

p. 15 KYEN CHI NANG SANG WE DON GEK NAM
As well as those obstacles and evil spirits
which are outer, inner, or secret,

SA TOP CHEN RI RAP OK TU NAN
May they be crushed beneath Meru, the great
powerful earth.

MA GYA TSO CHEN PO TING DU KYUR
May these lowly entities be case into the depths of
the great ocean.

NGAK KHOR LO BAR WE CHAK GYE DAP
May they be sealed with a burning circle of mantra

DUD NAK CHOK NAM YANG MA DANG CHIK
 So that these demons of the dark side shall
 not rise up again.

DENG DRA LHA WER ME MAK TSOK KYI
 Today, these militant hosts of Dra lha Wermas

KU PA NGAR DOR JE GAR DANG CHE
 Perform vajra dances, having their bodies adorned
 with scarves of valor.

YE TAK DONG ME RI BAR WE NANG
 On their right sides they have quivers which
 are like burning volcanoes.

NGE DA MO THOK GOD YA MED LEN
 Holding arrows which are like countless thunder bolts.

YON ZIK SHUP TRAK TSO KHOL ME NANG
 On their left sides, they have leopard skin
 cases containing boiling lakes of blood.

NE DIR YANG YANG DUNG WA YI
 And since we dance here in this place again and again,

LO BUR LE NYON KYEN NGAN KUN
 Instantly all karma, passions, and evil conditions

CHO NYID CHEN PO LONG DU NAN
 Are suppressed into the vast expanse of the great
 Dharmadhatu.

ROL PE TA DRO CHEM SE CHEM
 The wild dance which is a playful display,
 chem se chem

JIK PE ROL TAP LING SE LING
 The frightening gestures ling se ling

NYON PE LU LEN KYU RU RU
 Singing of songs pleasant to hear, kyu ru ru

GYE PE GAD MO SHA RA RA
 The laughter of delight, sha ra ra

GU WE DRO DUNG TRIK SE TRIK
 Dancing the exhilarating dance trik se trik

KHAM SUM ZIL NON DRO CHIK DUNG
By dancing this single dance, the three worlds
are subdued.

CHIR SANG GYE TAN LA TSE WA DANG
In general, the causing of any harm to the Doctrine
of the Buddha,

ZHU CHOK KAR YU DRUK KHYUK SHE LEN
Holding superb white bows which are like swiftly
running turquoise dragons.

NGE PHO GYUR MED PE DA TONG TRAD
We take up an empty arrow which does not transmigrate

THOK DUK MED PE DA CHIK PHEN
And discharge a single arrow which strikes
like a thunderbolt,

p. 16

DA PHOK GYA DRE LA PHEN
Shooting at the head of a quarrelsome demon,
the arrow strikes.

DRA DAM SI GYA DRE THAL WAR LAK
May these quarrelsome demons and hostile Damsi
spirits be ground into dust.

BOD KAR PO U PHANG GUNG LA TOD
We praise to heaven the exalted dignity of white Tibet,

CHOK KUN NE NAM PAR GYAL GYUR CHIK
On all sides, may she be completely victorious.

TA SHI DRO YI DO RA RU
IV B. In the dancing area of good fortune

PA WO KHANDRO JE WA BUM
Hundreds of thousands of myriads of Heroes and Dakinis

GYE CHAK NYAM GYUR DU MA YI
Joyous, passionate, and of handsome appearance,

DOR JE DRO GAR DI DUNG WE
Stamp out this Vajra dance.

LAME KU TSE TAN PA DANG
Thus the life spans of the bodies of the gurus
are firm

TRIN LE NAM KHE THA DANG NYAM
And their activities are equal in extent to the sky.

GYUD DZIN BU LOP KAR TSOK TRA
Their disciple sons are like multi-colored hosts of stars.

LEK TSOK YAR DAR-DRAN-PAR SHOR
May these excellent hosts come to rival the moon.

NE DIR DZAM-PE CHED-CHAM NAM
These brothers and their consorts who come together here in
this place

NGAR YANG DZOM TE DA YANG DZOM
Had previously met together and now meet together again.

p. 17 DRAL-MED TEN DU DZOM-PA YI
For those who assemble here as the support which is inseparable,

LE MON DAK-PE TEN-DREL SHOK
May the auspicious coincidence of their pure intentions and
deeds be realized.

V. Dance Text:

DE NE NA-TSOK TRIN-LE DRO

Then in a dance of various kinds of activities,

PA JID NGAM-PE TSUL GYI DUNG

We stamp in a manner which is magnificent, lustrous, and courageous.

DRA-LHE PA-CHE GANG DZOM SU

The brilliant lustre of the heroic attire of the Dra-lhas

JIK LA ZIL-CHE NYAN-PE YANG

Inspires the terror of conquest in everyone; may this pleasant singing

RIK-PE TUL-ZHUK CHE TE LANG

Together with the ascetic practice of intrinsic awareness, be accepted.

A-LA-LA-HO A-LA-LA-HO

Alalaho! Alalaho!

NGON TSE DZAM-LING NOR-BU DRA-DUL

At an earlier time, Norbu Dradul, the jewel of the world

DRA-LHE KU-CHE KU LA NAP NE

Putting on the body armor of his Dra-lha,

DUD DANG SIN-PO DUL DU SHEK SONG

Vanquished the Maras and Rakshasas and dispelled them

NAK CHOK HOR DUD DAN LA ZHUK TSE

At the time when the demons of Hor, belonging to the Dark Side, sat on their seats,

DRA-LHA WER-ME MAK-PUNG DU SONG

The militant hordes of Dra lha Werma assembled together.

A-LA-LA-HO A-LA-LA-HO

Alalaho! Alalaho!

JAM-PAL NON-PO SHE-RAP RAL-DRI

With the keen-edged sword of wisdom belonging to Manjushri

NGA PHU GYU-ME DU-WA SHIK NE

Having butchered their entrails and their fine sense organs,

p. 18

SHA TRAK DRA-LHE CHOD TOD GYE SONG

The flesh and blood were offered with praises to the Dra-lha who were delighted.

DRA-LHE PA-WE GAD-GYANG DROK SONG
And the Dra-lha roared with heroic laughter

A-LA-LA-HO A-LA-LA-HO
Alalaho! Alalaho!

SA TENG DUD SIN TAN-PA NUP SONG
Upon the earth, the doctrines of the Maras and the Rakshasas were abolished.

KAR-CHOK GA-WE GYAL-TSAN TRENG SONG
And the joyous victory banner of the White Side was raised high.

A-LA-LA-HO A-LA-LA-HO
Alalaho! Alalaho!

LHA LU KYID-PE DRO GAR DUNG SONG
The gods and nagas danced the dance of happiness

A-LA-LA-HO YANG CHIK DZAM-LING LHA YI NOR-BU
Alalaho! Once again, Norbu, the jewel of the gods of the world,

DRA-LHE KU-CHE KU LA NAP NE
Having put on his body the armor of his Dra-lhas,

DZU-TRUL TA CHUK DZAD-PAR TAN ZHING
With his magical power, he made a display of horses and cattle.

RIN-CHEN SER GYI TRI LA ZHUK TSE
At the Time when he sat on the throne of gold and jewels,

DRA-LHA WER-ME MAK-PUNG DU SONG
The militant hordes of Dra-lha Wermas assembled together

TA CHOK ROL-PA WANG GI NGA-RO
There were the loud cries of excellent horses

A-LA-LA-HO ZHAD-PA GYAD KYI YANG SU TSER-WE
Alalaho! Since they cried out with eight laughs,

p. 19 NANG SID DOD GU WANG DU DU NE
The many desires of phenomenal existence were gathered under his power.

DRA-LHA GYE-PE CHOD-PA DZAD SONG
And he made puja offerings which delighted the Dra-lhas

SA TENG DUD SIN TAN-PA NUP SONG
Upon the earth the doctrines of the Maras and Rakshasas were abolished

A-LA-LA-HO KAR CHOK GA-WE GYAL-TSAN TRENG SONG
Alalaho! And the joyous victory banner of the White Side
was raised high.

LHA LU KYID-PE DRO GAR DUNG SONG
The gods and nagas danced the dance of happiness.

A-LA-LA-HO YANG CHIK SENG-CHEN KYE BU DON DRUP
Alalaho! Once again, the great lion and the well-born son Dondrup,

DRA-LHE DU-CHAP KU LA NAP NE
Having put on their bodies the armor of the Dra-lhas,

NA-TSOK DZAD-PE ROL TSED NGOM NE
Enjoyed themselves, playing at various activities.

THA ZHI CHE GU CHAP OK TSUD SONG
Large numbers in every direction capitulated to them.

A-LA-LA-HO DRA LHA WER-ME MAK-PUNG DU SONG
Alalaho! The militant horde of Dra-lha Wermas assembled together

THU TOP TSUNG PA MED PE TA CHOK
That excellent horse possessing powers without equal,

THOK-MED DOR-JE NU TSAL DAN-PE
The incomparable Dorje Nu-tsal-dan,

GANG DOP TRIN-LE ROL-MO GYUR TSE
At the time when he uttered musical sounds and performed
deeds which overawed everyone,

p. 20 DRA-LHA WER-ME MAK-PUNG DU SONG
The militant hordes of Dra-Lha Wermas assembled together.

A-LA-LA-HO KAR-CHOK GE-WE GYAL-TSAN TRENG SONG
Alalaho! The joyous victory banner of the White Side was raised high.

A-LA-LA-HO LHA LU KYID-PE DRO-RA DUNG SONG
Alalaho! The gods and nagas danced the dance of happiness.

A-LA-KA-HO YANG CHIK KYE CHOK GE-SAR GYAL-PO
Alalaho! Once again, the well-born King Gesar

SAM-DRUP DEM-CHOK NOR-BU PHO-DRANO
In the palace at Samdrup Demchok Norbu,

TA-SHI SER GYI TRI LA ZHUK TE
Sat upon the throne of auspicious gold.

DAD DAM DAK-PA DUL-JE KHOR LA
To his entourage of disciples of pure faith

RANG NANG CHÖ-KU GONG-PA TAD TSE
At the time when he revealed the mind which is the self-manifested
Dharmakaya.

THONG-WA KUN MONG LING KAR YUL DU
Everyone boasted of what they had seen, and in the white country
of Ling

PA-THUL DWANG-MAN DU-PE TSOK KYI
The hosts of Pa-thul and Dwang-man who had assembled together,

RANG RIK KUN-ZANG GONG-PA THONG NE
Having beheld the intention of Kunzang's self-originated awareness,

A-LA-LA-HO CHI-MED OD LU DANG-MA DRUP SONG
Alalaho! Realized the deathless pure body of light.

DE NE TSA SUM SUNG-ME TSOK DANG
Then, the Three Roots and the hosts of guardian spirits

p. 21 YE-SHE DRA-LHA WER-MA NAM KYI
And these Dra-lha Wermas who possessed wisdom,

NGO-TSAR SHI-PE GAD-GYANG DROK SONG
Roared with laughter, both auspicious and marvelous,

A-LA-LA-HO SA TENG DUD SIN TAN-PA NUP SONG
Alalaho! Upon the earth the doctrines of the Māras and Rākshasas
were abolished

A-LA-LA-HO KAR-CHOK GE-WE GYAL-TSAN TRENG SONG
Alalaho! The joyous victory banner of the White Side was raised
high,

A-LA-LA-HO LHA LU KYID-PE DRO-RA DUNG SONG
Alalaho! And the gods and nāgas danced the dance of happiness.

A-LA-LA-HO LAK YE THAP CHEN PA-WO CHAK-GYA
Alalaho! Their right hands making the heroic gesture of great
means

NGAM NGAM NAM-KHE KHAM SU TEK SONG
Are threateningly raised into the sky;

LAK YON SHE-RAP PA-MO CHAK-GYA
Their left hand making the heroic gesture of wisdom,

DZE DZE ZHI NGE LA TANG SONG
Flamboyantly dismiss the surface of the earth.

A-LA-LA-HO KANG-PA YE-YON TONG-NYID NYING-JE
Alalaho! Their right and left feet signify compassion and
emptiness,

DEM DEM YO-WE DRO-RA DRIK SONG
And move up and down within the dancing area.

RO TONG GYE GU YU DRUK KHYUK DRO
Their empty bodies, twisting in many ways, move about like a
swiftly-running turquoise dragon.

p. 22 GO-WO SENG-GE NGAM-PE GYENG TAP
Their heads toss about in the manner of a furious lion.

KANG-PA MAR LAK TAK GI CHONG TAP
And their feet jump in the manner of a red-pawed tiger.

WER-MA LU LA CHAK-PE GYU TSAL
The bodies of the Werma thrash about passionately.

KHAM SUM ZIL-NON DRO YI TAP KYI
Vanquishing the three worlds with the gestures of their dance.

MI DOD DRA DUD CHAM LA PHAP SONG
They overthrow the demons who have hostile desires toward mankind.

YE KOR PHO GYUP DRA-LHE PA NGAR
Surrounded on the right by the fierce heroes who are the Dra-lhas
of the male line,

YON KOR MO GYUD KHAN-DRO PA KYI
And surrounded on the left side by the beautiful Dākinīs of the
female line,

DRO YI ROL TSED DE RING NGOM NE
Having long enjoyed playing at this dance,

DRA-LHA GYE-PE U-PHANG TOD CHING
We praise the exalted dignity of these joyous Dra-lhas.

WER-MA GA-WE NGO-SO THONG-WE
Seeing the joy and happiness of the Wermas,

GA-TON DRO GAR TEN DREL DRIK KYI
By the auspicious coincidence of this dance festival

GYAL KHAM YONG LA TA-SHI GYE SHING
The entire kingdom increases in good fortune.

DIR TSOK KUN LA GE LEK PHEL SHOK
For all who are assembled here may well being increase.

CHOK LE NAM-PAR GYAL-WE TEN-DREL

May the auspicious coincidence of complete victory in every direction.

p. 23 DE-RING LHUN GYI DRUP-PAR SHOK
Be effortlessly realized today.

(Written by Mi Pham.)

- VI. Then the King, the Great Lion of the World, was miraculously
born into a human body:

NON GYAL CHOK MI YI NYI-MA DE
Previously, the Sun of Mankind, the supreme king,

TOP DZU-TRUL PE-MA ZHAL CHE-WE
By his magical power opened the face of the lotus,

DUD NAK-CHOK GYAL RIK MA LU-PA
And all the royal families comprised of demons of the Dark Side.

LO DRAN-DE KU-MUD ZUM-PA JUNG
Came forth as rivals like the closing of the water lily.

TENG LHA YI LUNG-TAN SER-PO HOR
The gods on high prophesied that in Yellow Hor

DUD HOR GYAL DUL-WE TAP SHE CHOK
The supreme wisdom and means for vanquishing the demons of Hor.

MA KHAN-DRO GAR-ZA CHO DRON-ME
Due to the Dākinī Gar-za Cho Dron-ma

PAL DRA-LHE CHE SOL TEN-DREL DRIK
Would occur as an auspicious coincidence, attired in the garb
of the glorious Dra-lhas.

DENG DIR TSOK DAK-CHAK PA-WO TSOK
Today we hosts of heroes who have assembled here,

LU GYU TSAL DRUK-CHU TSA ZHI DAN
Making the sixty-four kinds of bodily movement,

GO RIN-THANG ZHAL KE ZA-OK GYON
Put on garments made of silk whose value is difficult to measure.

- p. 24 PA DRA-LHE GO-TSON LU LA CHAD
Strapping to our bodies the harness and weapons of the glorious
Dra-lhas

LAK DA-DAR NA NGA DZIN-PA YI
With our hands holding arrows with five kinds of silk ribbons

TSE SO-NAM WANG-THANG JOR-PA SOK
Signifying life, merit, dominion, wealth, etc.

PAL DOD GU MA LU LHUN-DRUP-PE
Realizing effortlessly all desires,

NE DI-RU YANG KHUK TEN-DREL DRIK

Here in this place, the auspicious coincidence of summoning prosperity occurs.

LU DZE DUK MIN LEK ZHIN ZANG MA

Those excellent ladies, whose bodies are beautiful, pleasing, and well ripened

MIK UT-PAL ZUR MIK CHOK CHUR YO

Have eyes like utpala blossoms; their side glances move in the ten directions.

TRA NAK NUM LAN-TSE GYAN TENG DU

Their hair is black and oiled, and adorned on top with ornamental script.

DOK WANG ZHUR DRAN-PE ME-TOK GYAN

They are adorned with colorful flowers rivaling a powerful bow,

DAR NA-TSOK GO LUP RIN-CHEN GYAN

And are attired in various kinds of silk and adorned with jewels.

SER NGUL GYI CHANG TRUL DRIL YEL TROL

Little hanging bells of silver and gold twinkle.

YANG KYAN-PO DRI-ZE LING BU YI

These sons of Ling, who are Gandharvas with beautiful voices,

LHA TSA SUM GYE-PE CHOD TRIN BUL

Offer clouds of pūjā offerings which delight the god and the three roots.

p. 25 PHA KYE CHOK NOR-BU DRA-DUL NI

As for our father, the well-born Norbu Dradul,

KU KAR-MAR DE CHAK ZHON-NU TSUL

His body is reddish white in the manner of a happy passionate youth,

SUNG DOR-JE BAR-WE LU YANG TROL

His voice sings melodious sparkling vajra songs,

THUK ZIL-NON TING-DZIN YO-WA MED

And his mind, without wavering, is in the samādhi which conquers,

DAR RIN-CHEN GYAN GYI NAM-PAR TRE

He is attired in rich silks and jewel ornaments.

CHAK YE NA YID ZHIN NOR-BU DANG

In his right hand there is the wish-granting gem

CHAK YON NA CHAK KYI DA ZHU DZIN
And in his left hand he holds an iron bow and arrow.

KU JID-PA SID SUM ZIL GYI NON
The brilliant aura of his body vanquishes the three worlds.

MA KHAN-DRO SANG-WE YUM CHEN ZHI
The Dakinis who are his four secret wives

ZHIN DZE DZE DA-DAR TSE-BUM NAM
Likewise are exceeding beautiful; they hold arrows with silk ribbons
and long life vessels.

YID GYE CHAK NYAM GYUR DU-MA YI
In various manifestations which passionately delight the mind,

JE SANG CHEN LA DUD-PE TSUL GYI ZHUK
They abide here, bowing to the Great Lion, their Lord.

KA NYEN-PO SUNG-MA DOR-JE LEK
The guardian and custodian of the Word Dorje Legpa

p. 26 LHA MAN TSUN TSE-RING CHED NGA
The Man-tsun goddesses and the five sisters of long life,

YUL TER-DAK MA-GYAL POM-RA SOK
The treasure-lord of this country Ma-gyal Pom-ra,

TER-DAK DANG WER-MA TRIN TAR TRIK
As well as the treasure-lords and the Wermas who gather like
clouds,

LING PA-WO PHU NU SUM-SHU DANG
The thirty elder and younger brothers among the heroes of Ling,

LAM DE-CHEN PHO-NYA MO MAN NAM
And the female messengers of great bliss

SUNG NYAN-PE LU LEN DRO RE DUNG
Are dancing and singing songs with voices pleasant to hear,

KU DZU-TRUL ROL TSED LOK TAR KHYUK
And are sporting in magical bodies which run like lightning.

(Written by Mi Pham.)

VII. The summoning of prosperity in the dance:

GUNG LHA LAM DUD-TSI TRIN KAR LA
On a white cloud of amrita in the heavens,

LHA PHU-WO DUNG KHYUNG KAR-PO SOK
The divine elder brother Dung-Khyung Karpo, etc.

TENG LHA KHAM CHA YANG DAK-PO ZHUK
In the realm of the gods on high dwells the lord of prosperity
and good fortune.

TSE YANG GI CHAR-PA THU-LU-LU
Raining down a shower of long life and prosperity, thu-lu-lu!

BAR NANG GI OD KYI DING GUR NA
In a tent floating in the light of the atmosphere,

NYEN GEM-JO KU LHA CHEN-PO SOK
The kinsman Gemjo, the great god, etc.

BAR NYEN KHAM CHA-YANG DAK-PO ZHUK
In the realm of the Nyen in between, dwells as the lord of pros-
perity and good fortune.

p. 27 MA YANG GI NGO-DRUP NYI-LI-LI
Bestowing the attainment of propserity, nyi-li-li!

OK CHU DZIN WANG-PO ZHI KHYIM NA
In the palace of the lord of the moisture-laden clouds below

NU-WO LU DRUL OD DAN SOK
The younger brother Lu-drul Od-dan, etc.

OK LU KHAM CHA YANG DAK-PO ZHUK
In the realm of the nāgas below, dwells as the Lord of prosperity
and good fortune.

OD JUNG-WE NGO-DRUP PUNG-SE-PUNG
Bestowing siddhis which come forth from light, pung-se-pung!

CHOK KUN TSA SUM DRA-LHA WER
In every direction, the Three Roots and the Dra-lha Wermas

PAL NOD-JIN NOR-DAK TRIN TAR TRIK
As well as the glorious Yakshas and wealth-gods who gather like
clouds.

TA-SHI-PE DZE TAK RIN-CHEN DUN
Holding all auspicious things such as the seven precious gems,

GYAL SID DUN SOK LHA MI LU
The seven royal emblems, etc., belonging to gods, men, and nāgas.

CHA YANG DANG DOD GU CHAR TAR BEP
Shower down like rain good luck, prosperity, and all desires.

DENG DIR TSOK DOR-JE CHER CHAM NAM
Those vajra brothers and their consorts who assemble here today,

LU GYU TSAL NAM-GYUR CHIR YANG NGOM
Performing various bodily movements, are contented.

ZHAP DOR-JE DRO DUNG CHEM-SE-CHEM
Their feet dance the vajra dance, chem-se-chem!

p. 28 CHAK TANG TAP DA-DAR KHYUK-SE-KUYUK
Their hands gesture with arrows tied with silk ribbons, khyuk-se-khyuk!

YID DE TONG DANG MO TSE-CHIK GI
Their minds, empty and blissful, are one-pointed with devotion,

NGAK NYAN GYUR NGAM-PE YANG DANG CHE
And their voices sing melodious songs which satisfy and are pleasant to hear.

LHA TSA SUM DRA-LHA WER-MA DANG
To the god, the Three Roots and the Dra-lha Wermas,

PAL NOR-LHA GYA-TSO THUK-DAM KUL
And the oceans of glorious wealth-gods we pray as our daily practice.

LHA GYAL DANG KI-SA U-RU-RU
For the victorious gods, we shout Ururu! and throw handfuls of tsampa,

CHA KHYK DANG YANG GOD DRUK TONG DIR
We summon good fortune and call down prosperity like the roar of thunder.

NE DIR TSOK RIK-DZIN CHED-CHAM LA
To the Vidyādhara and their consorts who assemble here in this place (we pray):

CHI-MED TSE YI YANG KHUK CHIK
May the prosperity of long life without death be summoned.

NAD MED DE-WE YANG KHUK CHIK
May the prosperity of happiness without illness be summoned.

GE MED LANG-TSO YANG KHUK CHIK

May the prosperity of youth without old age be summoned.

DZAD MED NOR GYI YANG KHUK CHIK

May the prosperity of inexhaustible wealth be summoned.

CHOK DAM-PA CHO KYI YANG KHUK CHIK

May the prosperity of the supremely holy Dharma be summoned.

PAL TRIN-LE NAM-ZHI YANG KHUK CHIK

May the prosperity of the four kinds of activities be summoned.

(Written by Mi Pham.)

VIII. Delighting the God. Again one should contentedly perform the dance.

- p. 29 PAL DZAD OZE-PA KYE BU DRO GAR
 With this dance of persons who are handsome and courageous
- YID TROK RIK-ME LU YI CHOD-PE
 And by offering the song of their charming consorts
- TSA SUM DRA-LHA GYE-PAR KANG NGO
 We propitiate and delight the Three Roots and the Dra-lhas.
- NGAM NGAM LU KYI DRO YI TANG TAP
 With our bodies we make threatening gestures in the dance,
- NYAN NYAN NGAY GI LU YI GYUR KHUK
 And with our voices we sing songs pleasant to hear to summon them.
- DUNG DUNG TSE-CHIK MO-GU DRAK-PO
 Longingly with one-pointed fervent devotion,
- YANG YANG GYE-PE CHOD TRIN BUL-LO
 Again and again we present clouds of offerings to delight them.
- DENG DIR TA-SHI JIN YANG CHAK-PE
 Today, in order that good fortune may be bestowed and prosperity
 may arise,
- NGO-TSAR DAK-PE NE CHOK DI-RU
 Here in this supreme place which is pure and marvelous,
- DIR TSOK PA-WO KHAN-DRO NAM KYI
 We Heroes and Dakinis who assemble here
- GA-TON DOR-JE DRO GAR DUNG YONG
 Dance the vajra dance in this festival.
- p. 30 YUL DI LHA LU AHI-DAK NAM KYANG
 Moreover, the gods, nagas, and local spirits of this country,
- GA KYID DRO GAR LU YANG DROK-PE
 Are happy since we dance and sing our songs,
- DU KYI KAL-PA NGAN-PA ZEHI NE
 Having alleviated this evil cycle of time,
- DE KYID YAR DE PAL LA DRAN DZOD
 May we come to rival in glory the waxing moon in our happiness.

NGON TSE DZAM-LING NOR-BU DRA-DUL
In an earlier age, Norbu Dradul the Gem of the World,

MA RUNG DUX ZHI CHAM LA PHAM NE
Having cast down the four deceitful Maras,

DREK-DAN KYE GU WANG DU DU TSE
When he brought many violent entities under his power,

DRA-LHA GYE-PE LHA-GYAL DANG-PO
Became the first divine king who delighted the Dra-lhas.

DAN-TAR LHA-SE TRUL-PE GYAL-PO
In the present cycle, the divine son, that king who was an emanation,

MI DOD DRA DUD CHAM LA PHAP NE
Having cast down the demons who had hostile desires toward mankind,

CHO GYAL U-PHANG GUNG LE THO-WE
When he attained the exalted rank of Dharmaraja,
in the heights of heaven

DRA-LHA GYE-PE LHA GYAL NYI-PA
Became the second divine king who delighted the Dra-lhas.

MA ONG RIK-DAN DRAK-PO KHOR-LO
In the future, the Rik-dan Drak-po Khorlo,

MU-TEK DUD TSOK CHAM LA PHAP NE
Having cast down the hosts of heretical demons,

p. 31 DE KYID DZOK-DAN KAL-PA SHAR TSE
When the cycle of perfect bliss and happiness arises,

DRA-LHA GYE-PE LHA GYAL SUM-PA
Will become the third divine king to delight the Dra-lhas,

BENEDICTION (Tashi)

(As for the benediction for the dance:)

TSA SUM KUN-DU SENG-CHEN GYAL-PO
May our king, the great lion who embodies the Three Roots,

CHOK YUM TA-SHI NYAN-DE NOR-BU
That Norbu who is our thrice great good fortune,

KU-JE DON-DRUP WER-MA KAR-PO
As well as Kuje Dondrup and Werma Karpo,

TA-SHI GE-LEK PHUN-SUM TSOK DZOD
Bring about supreme good fortune and well-being.

E-MA-HO KU YI TA-SHI YID-ONG JIN CHAK
Emaho! Good fortune of body is the blessing of a handsome
appearance,

NAD-MED DE KYID PHEL-WE RANG-ZHIN
Where happiness and joy naturally increase without illness.

MI NUP GYAL-TSAN TA-BU TA-SHI
This good fortune is like the victory banner which never falls.

DIR TSOK YONG LA DZOM-PAR SHOK CHIK
May the entire host come to assemble here.

E-MA-HO SUNG GI TA-SHI GA KYID LU YANG
Emaho! Good fortune of speech in the melodious song of happiness.

NYAN DRAK SA TENG KHYAB-PAR DROK-PA
Where sounds pleasant to hear cover the surface of the earth.

p. 32 GAK-MED DUNG DRA TA-BU TA-SHI
This good fortune is like the unobstructed sound of a conch shell.

DIR TSOK YONG LA DZOM-PAR SHOK CHIK
May the entire host come to assemble here,

E-MA-HO THUK KYI TA-SHI CHO KYI ZHING SA
Emaho! Good fortune of mind is the field of the Dharma,

DE TONG SAL BAR BAK-DRO LHUN CHAK
Which arises spontaneously and easily, radiating clearly
with bliss and emptiness.

MI GYUR NAM-KHA TA-BU TA-SHI
This good fortune is like the unchanging sky.

E-MA-HO YON-TAN TA-SHI GO DOD KUN JUNG
Emaho! Good fortune of quality is the coming forth of whatever
one needs or desires

CHO SID PHUN-TSOK TAN-PA DAR GYE
Where the doctrines both religious and moral spread and increase.

SAM PHEL NOR-BU TA-BU TA-SHI
This good fortune is like a wish-granting gem.

DIR TSOK YONG LA DZOM-PAR SHOK CHIK
May the entire host come to assemble here.

E-MA-HO TRIN-LE TA-SHI THU-TOP PAL BAR
Emaho! Good fortune of activity is radiating gloriously with
magical powers.

CHOK LE NAM GYAL U-PHANG THO-WE
Being of high rank and victorious in every direction.

p. 33 GUNG LA NYI DA TA-BU TA-SHI
This good fortune is like the sun and the moon in the heavens.

DIR TSOK YONG LA DZOM-PAR SHOK CHIK
May the entire host come to assemble here.

E-MA-HO NE DIR KHA-CHOD THONG-WA KUN MON
Emaho! Residing here, our aspiration is to behold the pure land
of Khechara (the Dakini realm).

DIR TSOK PA-THUL DWANG-MAN RIK-DZIN
The Pa-thul, the Dwang-man, and the Vidyadharas,

ME BAR TSOM-BU CHIK TU TSOK NE
Having assembled as a single mass like a blazing fire,

DE-CHEN DRUP-PE TA-SHI SHOK CHIK
May the good fortune of realizing the great bliss come forth!

APPENDIX (Tashi Lam-yak)*

DING DIR TEN-DREL PHUN-SUM TSOK-PAR

Here today, with this supremely auspicious coincidence,

NGA-WA DANG DAN-PA DI NGO-TSAR

There is indeed one who is marvelous

KAL-WA ZANG

And of good fortune.

DAN-TA-BU GAR-JED KAR-PO NGA

Now I, Garjed Karpo ('The white dancer'),

DANG-PO LHA YI YUL YONG

First came from the realm of the Devas,

LHA TSANG-PA DUN NE YONG

And from the presence of the god Brahma

NE ZANG-DOK PAY OYI PHO-DRANG LA

I went to the palace on the holy copper-colored mountain.

LHA UR-GYAN PE-ME DUN DU SONG

And in the presence of the divine Urgyan Padma

p. 34

GON JE-BANG NYER-NGE DUN DU SONG

And before the king and the twenty-five disciples,

WANG DANG MAN-NEAK NGO-DRUP NAM ZHU

I requested initiation, instruction, and siddhi,

KHYAD-PAR-DU TA-SHI LAM-YAK GI MAN-NEAK NAM YONG DZOK THOP

And in particular, I obtained completely the oral instructions of the Tashi Lam-yak.*

LHA UR-GYAN PE-ME DI KAD SUNG

This speech of the divine Urgyan Padma was proclaimed:

DAN-TA BU GAR-JED KAR-PO KHYOD

"At present, you my son, Garjed Karpo,

GAR SONG SA LA TA-RE-SHI

Shall come to dance, bestowing good fortune upon the land,

GAR DAD SA LA DON RE DRUP

And remaining there dancing, shall realize the welfare of all on the earth.

*Tashi Lam-Yak "the auspicious path of benediction," name of this dance puja here performed.

SU THONG GI MI LA DE KYID JUNG

Those people who behold this shall experience happiness and bliss.

KHYOD NI DREL TSAD DON-DAN YIN

As for you, the measure of this karmic link is its possessing this purpose.

GANG-CHAN BOD-YUL CHO KYI ZHING

Indeed, this country of snowy Tibet is a field of Dharma.

LING KAR THONG-WA SU MON LAK

It is your pious aspiration to behold the white country of Ling:

DO KHAM LING TRI GONG MA

From the high throne of Amdo, Kham, and Ling,

MA-TOD THO-WO GU DRIL

Passing along the nine heights of upper Ma,

MA-KAD LHA-THANG RING-PO

Across the long plains of Ma-kay

p. 35

MA-MAD LHA YI KYIL-KHOR

Throughout the divine mandala which is lower Ma,

DU-RA TAK THANG TRA-MO

Through Duratak and Thang Tramo,

ZING PHU-NU TSOK-PE YANG RA

You shall secure the good fortune of the brothers of Ling.

PHO-DRANG SING-TRUK TAK-TSE LA

Then, in the palace of Sing-truk Tak-tse,

GONG-MA LHA NE KO-PE

Since you shall be appointed from among the Devas above,

GE-SAR NOR-BU DRA-DUL KHONG GI CHOK ZHI DUD CHEN

As Gesar Norbu Dradul, you shall bind with oaths the eighteen

CHO-GYAD DAM LA TAK

Great demons on the four sides,

DZONG CHEN CHO-GYAD TANG DU LANG

These eighteen great sentinels shall crowd about

DZONG TRAN TSI-TSI DRANG-MED NAM BAP

And the lesser sentinels shall be present also in numbers beyond counting.

DUD TRAN NAM TOR

Thus the lesser demons shall be scattered.

CHO SANG-GYE KYI TAN-PA TSUK

And the Dharma which is the Doctrine of the Buddha will
become established.

DUD NAK-CHOK-PA NUP

The Dark side represented by the demons shall become diminished.

DA CHO SANG-GYE KYI NAN-PA TSUK-PE GA-TON CHEN MO LA

Now a great festival for establishing the Doctrine of the

LING CHE GYAD RI-GYAL LHUN-PO

Buddha on Sumeru, the king among mountains and on the four great
continents shall be celebrated.

DRING GYUD TAK-MO THANG GANG

In middle Gyud, at Tak-mo Thang-gang,

CHUNG GYUD DUNG SO DRO KHANG

In lower Gyud, at Dung-so Dro-khang,

p. 36

TOD LING SER-PA CHE GYAD

In upper Ling, at the eight Serpa-che,

BAR LING OM-BU TSO DRUK

In middle Ling, at the six lakes of Ombu,

MAD LING MU CHUNG DE ZHI

In lower Ling at the four quarters of Mu-chung,

GA DRU RIN-CHEN TSO DRUK

At the six lakes of Ga-dru Rin-chen,

DE MA LA CHU NYIN SEP

At De-ma and Chu-nyin-seb

GON-JO A-KAR NAK

At Gonjo A-kar Nak,

LING PHA BU RI-GYAL LHUN-PO

At the king among mountains, the father and son of Ling,

MA SU TSO LA DAR CHAK TAK SHAR DA NYUK SIL MA

And at Ma-su-tso, where there are fully developed ice formations
and tinkling reeds,

MAN CHUNG TSO KHE ME-TOK NAM GA-TON CHEN-MO LA
And the flowers of Man-chung Tso-kha; at these great festivals

LING DRO DE-CHEN ROL-MO DANG
The Ling dances which inspire great bliss, together with music

TA-SHI LAM-YAK TRAP TON DZAD-PA LA
Shall be performed with a show of stamping in the Tashi Lam-yak.

DAN-TA BU GAR-JED KAR-PO NGE
Now, O my son Garjed Karpo,

LU LA GO KAR GYOD-PA DI
Wearing this white robe on your body,

CHO KAR CHOK KYI TAN-PA DAR TAK YIN
You shall spread the Dharma which is the doctrine of the white side,

ZHMA PE-MA KHA-BU GYON-PA DI
And wearing this lotus-bud hat,

p. 37

GON PE-MA RING-LUK GYE TAK YIN
You shall propagate the religious system of Gonpo Padma

TSE LA MA-JE DRO GUR YOD
And on its peak there are the feathers of a peacock,

RIK-DZIN LA-ME TA-SHI SHOK
Thus may the benediction of the Vidyadhara Guru be realized!

TEN-DREL DE-RING DRIK LE YIN
Today there is this auspicious coincidence:

BAR LA ME-LONG OD-SAL YOD
Between there are the mirror and the clear light.

ME LONG SAT DRIB MED PA TAK
This mirror is the sign of a clear luminosity without any obscurations

LHA YI DAM JAM YANG TASHI SHOK
May the good fortune of Manjughosha who is the yidam diety come forth.

TEN DREL DERING DRIK LEY YIN
Today there is this auspicious coincidence:

LAK LA SA NYUK THOK PA DI
With sceptres in their hands,

BA DEM LHA YI NOR BU YIN
These divine Guardians, jewels among the gods, flourish them.

LHA SUNG NOO-SO THO WE TAK
As a sign of their exalted joy.

TEN DREL DE RING DRIK LE YIN
Today there is this auspicious coincidence:

DE LA DARI NA TAK PA DI
With these varied silk scarves,

SED PE CHA YANG CHUK MO YOD
They summon prosperity and good luck and call forth riches.

BOD CHING BOD CHING DU PA LA
Summoning them and gesturing them,

p. 38 TEN DREL DE RING DRIK LE YIN
Today there is this auspicious coincidence:

DE LA DRIL CHUNG TAK PA NI
With little tinkling bells tied to them,

LHA SUNG GYE-PE ZHAD DRA YOD
These divine Guardians laugh with delight.

GYAL KHA THO LA THO-WE TAK
As a sign of their exaltation in battle.

TEN-DREL DE-RING DRIK LE YIN
Today there is this auspicious coincidence

TEN-DREL LA NYE ZANG-PO DANG
And this auspicious coincidence is excellent:

TA-SHI LAM-YAK TRAP-PE DU
At the time when they stamp out the Tashi Lam-yak,

SU DANG THUK NA TA-RE-SHI
When they appear, good fortune will follow.

GANG LA THUK KYANG DON RE DRUP
And moreover when they touch anyone, he will realize his purposes.

E-MA-HO DAN-TA BU GAR-JED KAR-PO NGE
Emaho! Now, O my son Garjed Karpo,

RIK NGE PA-WO KHAN-DRO NAM CHAN-DREN
I shall invoke the Heroes and Dakinis of the five families.

LE ZHI TRIN-LE KYI DRO TA-SHI LAM-YAK TRAP TON
That they may perform a display of stamping out the

DZAD-PA LAK-SO
Tashi Lam-yak, which is the dance of the four activities.

E-MA-HO SHAR DOR-JE KHAN-DRO GAR-KHAN NAM
Emaho! In the east are those dancers who are Vajra Dakas

ME-TOK THOR TSUK DEM-SE-SEM
With flowers in their turbans, dem-se-dem!

p. 39 RIN-CHEN GYAN CHA PUNG-SE-PUNG
Adorned with precious jewels, pung-se-pung!

CHAK LA NGA CHUNG Lhang-SE-LHANG
With small drums in their hands, lhang-se-lhang!

LU LEN DRO DUNG TRIK-SE-TRIK
They are singing songs and dancing their dances, trik-se-trik!

DE-RING LHA BU DROK LA JON
Today these divine sons appear as friends

NE DON ZHI-WE TRIN-LE DZOD
And perform the activities of pacifying diseases and evil spirits.

LHO RIN-CHEN GAR-KHAN PA-WO NAM
In the south are the hero dancers who are Ratna Dakas

U LA DAR THOD DEM-SE-DEM
With silk turbans on their heads, dem-se-dem!

RIN-CHEN GYAN CHA PUNG-SE-PUNG
Adorned with precious jewels, pung-se-pung!

LU LEN DRO DUNG TRIK-SE-TRIK
They are singing songs and dancing their dances, trik-se-trik

DE-RING LHA-BU DROK LA JON
Today these divine sons appear as friends

TSE SOD NAM GYE-PE TRIN-LE DZOD
And perform the activities of increasing life span and merit,

NUP PE-MA KHAN-DRO GAR-KHAN NAM
In the west are those dancers who are Padma Dakas,

ME-TOK THOR TSUK DEM-SE-SEM
With flowers in their turbans, dem-se-dem!

p. 40

RIN-CHEN GYAN CHA PUNG-SE-PUNG
Adorned with precious jewels, pung-se-pung!

CHAK LA NGA CHUNG LHAM-SE-LHAM
With small drums in their hands, lhang-se-lhang!

LU LEN DRO DUNG TRIK-SE-TRIK
They sing songs and dance their dance, trik-se-trik!

DE-RING LHA BU DROK LA JON
Today these divine sons appear as friends

NANG SID WANG DU TRIN-LE DZOD
And perform the activities of gathering all phenomenal existence
under their power.

JANG LE KYI GAR-KHAN PA-WO NAM
In the north are those hero dancers who are Karma Dakas.

DAR GYI THOR TSUK DEM-SE-DEM
With turbans of silk, dem-se-dem!

RIN-CHEN GYAN CHA PUNG-SE-PUNG
Adorned with precious jewels, pung-se-pung!

CHAK LA NGA CHUNG LHAM-SE-LHAM
With small drums in their hands, lhang-se-lhang!

LU LEN DRO DUNG TRIK-SE-TRIK
They sing songs and dance their dance, trik-se-trik!

DE-RING LHA-BU DROK LA JON
Today those divine sons appear as friends

DRA GEK TSAR CHOD TRIN-LE DZOD
And perform the activities of annihilating obstacles and enemies

U GAR-KHAN PA-WO KHAN-DRO NAM
In the center are those 'dancers' who are Dakas and Dakinis,

ME-TOK DAR THOD DEM-SE-DEM
With flowers in their silk turbans, dem-se-dem!

p. 41

RIN-CHEN GYAN CHA PUNG-SE-PUNG
Adorned with precious jewels, pung-se-pung!

CHAK NA NGA CHUNG LHAM-SE-LHAM
With small drums in their hands lhang-se-lhang!

LU LEN DRO DUNG TRIK-SE-TRIK
They are singing songs and dancing their dance, trik-se-trik!

DE-RING LHA-BU DROK LA JON
Today these divine sons appear as friends

KHAM SUM YONG DROL TRIN-LE DZOP
And perform the activities of completely liberating the three worlds.

TRIN-LE ZHI SOK LE DON NAM
And these deeds such as the four activities.

DE-RING DRUP-PE TEN-DREL DRIK
Today there is this auspicious coincidence which has been realized.

SHAR LA ZHI-WE DRO CHIK TRAP
In the east they stamp out the single dance of pacification.

SHAR DOR-JE SEM-PE DRO CHIK TRAP
In the east they stamp out the dance of Vajrasattva.

NE DIR TSOK RIK-DZIN CHED TSAM LA
These hosts of Vidyadharas and their consorts who reside there,

ME-LING YE-SHE DON TAK NE
Having understood the meaning of the mirror-like wisdom

NE DON ZHI-WE TRIN-LE DZOD
Perform the activities of pacifying diseases and evil spirits.

NE DON ZHI-WE TA-SHI SHOK
May the good fortune of pacifying diseases and evil spirits come forth!

LHO LA GYE-PE DRO CHIK TRAP
In the south they stamp out the single dance which increases prosperity

LHO RIN-CHEN JUNG-DAN DRO CHIK TRAP
In the south they stamp out the dance of Ratnasambhava

p. 42 NE DIR TSOK RIK-DZIN CHED TSAM LA
The hosts of Vidyadharas and their consorts who reside there

NYAM-NYID YE-SHE DON TOK NE
Having understood the meaning of the wisdom of sameness,

TSE SOD-NAM GYE-PE TRIN-LE DZOD
Perform activities for increasing life span and merit

TSE SOD-NAM GYE-PE TA-SHI SHOK
May the good fortune of increasing life span and merit come forth!

NUPLA WANG GI DRO CHIK TRAP

In the west they stamp out the single dance of enchantment.

NUP NANG-WA THA-YE DRO CHIK TRAP

In the west they stamp out the dance of Amitabha.

SOR-TOK YE-SHE DON TOK NE

Having understood the meaning of the discriminating wisdom

NANG SID WANG DU TRIN-LE DZOD

Perform the activities which gather under their power all phenomenal existence.

NANG SID WANG DU TA-SHI SHOK

May the good fortune of gathering under their power all phenomenal existence come forth!

JANG DRAK-PO DRO CHIK TRAP

In the north they stamp out the single dance of ferociousness

JANG DON-YOD DRUP-PE DRO CHIK TRAP

In the north they stamp out the dance of Amoghasiddhi

NE DIR TSOK RIK-DZIN CHED TSAM LA

These hosts of Vidyadharas and their consorts who reside there.

JA-DRUP YE-SHE DON TOK NE

Having understood the meaning of the all-accomplishing wisdom,

DRA GEK TSAR-CHOD TRIN-LE DZOD

Perform the activities of annihilating obstacles and enemies.

p. 43

DRA GEK TSAR-CHOD TA-SHI SHOK

May the good fortune of annihilating obstacles and enemies come forth!

NGA DI NE DRU-DZIN DAK-PE ZHING

From here I shall go to the pure field of Potala

NE GANG-CHAN BOD KYI U SU DRO

Which abides in the center of snowy Tibet.

LHA CHAN-RE-ZIK WANG DRONG DU DRO

I shall go to the city of the divine Avalokitesvara

NGE TA-SHI LAM-YAK PEL DU DRO

I shall go to propagate this Tashi Lam-yak

LHA KI-KI KE-LA SO-SO-SO

O Gods! kikikela! So So So!

DRA LHA GU-TRI DRA BUM SO

I shall entertain 90,000 and 100,000 Dra-lhas

WER-MA TONG DANG TSA NYI SO

I shall entertain 100,000 and two Wermas."

MOVEMENT ANALYSIS



Fig. 67. Gesar

MOVEMENT ANALYSIS⁸⁶

People: Tibetan

Sex: Male and female

Place: Asia - Tibet; now India - Orissa State

Type of Dance: Religious Ritual

Name: LING DRO DECHEN ROLMO

Length of Performance: Two and one half hours

Choreographer: Mipham Lama

STRUCTURE OF THE DANCE

- A. One step combination is repeated half-way through a song then another is repeated for the last half; thus, AAA etc., BBB etc.
- B. Dynamics increase within each dance, starting to build with the beginning of the third dance and increasing steadily until they reach a rapid crescendo at the end of each dance, usually an exit.
 1. The dynamics also increase gradually throughout the entire performance; i.e., the last dance starts at an obviously faster pace than does the first dance.
 2. Rhythm is derived from a basic fluctuation, i.e., bounces, and points of stress, i.e., stamps.
- D. Correlation of movement to songs is made by the dancers, who sing antiphonally as accompaniment to their own movements. One phrase of movement is continuously repeated by all the dancers in unison, still the men usually sing first and the women echo.
 1. Because the song text is so important, the movement actually is the accompaniment to the singing.
- E. Accompaniment - Self-accompanied by singing and, in the last dance by drums held by the dancers. Instruments consist of horns, cymbals, drums, and flute.
- F. Music - Unwritten, orally transmitted.

- G. Singing Style - Flexible, large range in pitch.
- H. Text - Important for entire meaning; written by Lama Mipham.

MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

- A. In progression, not in place.
- B. Floor Pattern - circular
 - 1. Line of Direction - Mainly clockwise; but also counter-clockwise, toward and from the center, and spiraling in and out from the center (see pp. 262-3).
 - 2. Relationship of One Dancer to Another - mainly single file, facing the back of the person in front; also facing the back of the person in back, and side by side.
 - a. These vary because of turns of differing degrees, 90-360 degrees.
 - b. Movements are performed in unison, however, leg movement is more precise than arm movement.
 - 3. Exits and Entrances - men file in first, then the women follow; women exit first (see p. 219).
 - 4. Leader of the men wears a slightly different costume, the leader of the women does not.
- C. Types of Movement - Step, swing, stamp, hop, prance, draw (slide in), and leap.

STYLE

- A. Body Attitude
 - 1. Spatial Stress, Axis - Vertical, erect, emphasized by hand held flags and flags on hats.
 - 2. Plane - vertical plane - Movement from sagittal through the horizontal to the vertical, thus opening and closing.

3. Body parts:

- a. Torso - One unit, often the sides are divided into halves, i.e., the right arm and right leg move together.
- b. Legs are bent at the hip and knees in differing degrees, more for the men.

B. Body Movement

- 1. Use of Body-extremities more in an arclike fashion.
 - a. Initiation of movement of legs and elbows is central moving out to the peripheral.
 - b. Successive movements in the arms of the best dancers; some dancers flick their wrists.
- 2. Symmetry - bilateral.
- 3. Intensity of Movement - gestural in the first dance becoming more and more postural.
- 4. Body Parts in Synchronization - often the arm and leg on one side move together.
- 5. Stance - medium width.
 - a. Relationship of Foot to Ground - Strong pressure (stamp) into the ground which rebounds strongly off the ground (in the men) or into a hovering bounce and flow for the women.
- 6. Relationship of Dancers to the Earth - all dancers seem strongly earthbound; they use gravity and do not try to defy it.

C. Effort

- 1. Main Effort - Weight, strength; and flow, moderately free.
 - a. The men are stronger, hold their arms in single units, and have a more bound flow.
 - b. The women are less strong; their arms are more successive and free flowing.
- 2. Combination - Bold and outpouring - a dream state.

3. Intensity - High in the men, lower in the women; i.e., a more dynamic range in the men.
4. Effort Sequence, Phrase (refer to the film, Appendix II)
 - a. Initiation or Preparation - Spatial, supported by the breath; Film - Walk has quick up beat.
 - b. Main Statement - Weight and space (lower extremities) weight and flow (upper extremities) - Play between arms and legs; Film - stamps and hop swing.
 - c. Conclusion - Film - step draw - return to center.
 - d. Transition - Spatial.
 - e. Fluctuation: Evenness - fluctuations in weight, space, time and flow.
 - f. Rebounds - Vibratory flow made of tiny rebounds; basis for rebound of hops after stamps.
 - g. Crescendos - Time and space - tempo increases within each dance and throughout entire performance as does movement range.

D. Shaping

1. Kinesphere - Fairly wide.
 - a. Arms have large reach space, the men's legs do.
 - b. Arc-like movements.
 - c. Central and peripheral initiations.
 - d. Some arm movements shape (carve through space) to aid in turning.

E. Performance Style

1. Individual Interpretation - Conforms to the group in unison, although arm movement is more open to variation.
2. Communication and Projection of Performers - Inward focus, but outwardly showing exuberance and happiness.
 - a. Movements are generally abstract, but the entire meaning of the dance is symbolic.

- b. The dancers identify with their roles of heroes and dakinis.
 - c. The men are strong and courageous; the women are sensuous and alluring.
3. Leaders - One male and one female lead but perform the same movements as the other dancers; the male leader is the head of the entire group.

GLOSSARY OF MOVEMENT TERMS

1. Step - Placing the weight on one foot.
2. Walk - A series of steps, locomotion forward or backward wherein the weight is shifted from one foot to the next in succession.
3. Hop - A jump on one foot. If a dancer steps and then leaves the floor on the same foot, it is a hop. If a dancer hops from one foot to the other foot, it is a leap.
4. Prance - A high-stepping movement done by lifting the legs, knees bent, as the dancer steps either in place or moving.
5. Draw - A movement done along the floor, sliding one foot towards the other.
6. Stamp - One foot impacting the ground with force.
7. Leap - Transference of weight from one foot to the next, in-between which the dancer is elevated off the floor.
8. Balancé - Transference of weight from one foot to the ball of the other foot, and back to the original foot.

GRID OF STEPS
LING DRO DECHEN BOLMO

once	Section of Text	20	15	10	5	
1a	I	st	st sw	st sw	st	st
1b			st	st sw	pr	st
2a	II			st st	pr	st
2b		st	st	st sw	pr	st
3a					st	st
3b		st	st sw	balance	st	st
4a	III			st st	st	st
4b			st	st st	st	st
5a	IV	st	st across	st	st	st
5b		st	st	st sw	st	st
6a	IVA	st	st	st sw	st	st
6b		st	st	st	st	st
6c	IVB		st	st	st	st

Key- st = step
sw = hop swing
pr = prince

GRID OF STEPS (contd.)

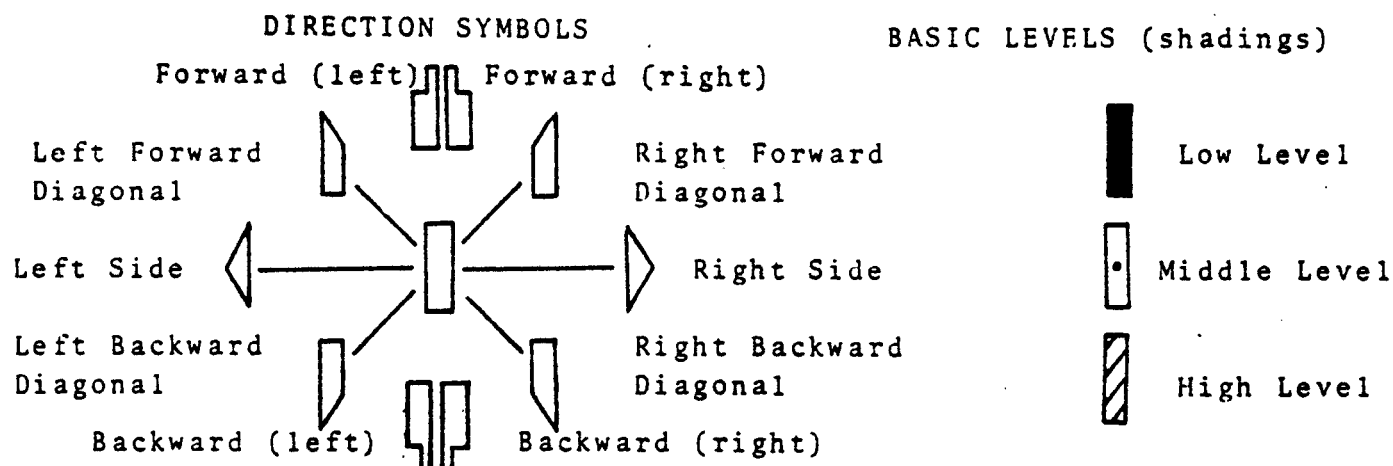
	25	20	15	10	5	
1a		st	st	st	st	st
1b		st	st	st	st	st
2a				st	st	st
2b				st	st	st
3a				st	st	st
3b				st	st	st
4a				st	st	st
4b				st	st	st
5a				st	st	st
5b				st	st	st
6a				st	st	st
6b				st	st	st
7a				st	st	st
7b				st	st	st
8a				st	st	st
8b				st	st	st
9a				st	st	st
9b				st	st	st
10a				st	st	st
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11a				st	st	st
11b				st	st	st
12a				st	st	st
12b				st	st	st
13a				st	st	st
13b				st	st	st
14a				st	st	st
14b				st	st	st
15a				st	st	st
15b				st	st	st
16a				st	st	st
16b				st	st	st
17a				st	st	st
17b				st	st	st
18a				st	st	st
18b				st	st	st
19a				st	st	st
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21a				st	st	st
21b				st	st	st
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27a				st	st	st
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28a				st	st	st
28b				st	st	st
29a				st	st	st
29b				st	st	st
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40b				st	st	st
41a				st	st	st
41b				st	st	st
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60b				st	st	st
61a				st	st	st
61b				st	st	st
62a				st	st	st
62b				st	st	st
63a				st	st	st
63b				st	st	st
64a				st	st	st
64b				st	st	st
65a				st	st	st
65b				st	st	st
66a				st	st	st
66b				st	st	st
67a				st	st	st
67b				st	st	st
68a				st	st	st
68b				st	st	st
69a				st	st	st
69b				st	st	st
70a				st	st	st
70b				st	st	st
71a				st	st	st
71b				st	st	st
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76b				st	st	st
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77b				st	st	st
78a				st	st	st
78b				st	st	st
79a				st	st	st
79b				st	st	st
80a				st	st	st
80b				st	st	st
81a				st	st	st
81b				st	st	st
82a				st	st	st
82b				st	st	st
83a				st	st	st
83b				st	st	st
84a				st	st	st
84b				st	st	st
85a				st	st	st
85b				st	st	st
86a				st	st	st
86b				st	st	st
87a				st	st	st
87b				st	st	st
88a				st	st	st
88b				st	st	st
89a				st	st	st
89b				st	st	st
90a				st	st	st
90b				st	st	st
91a				st	st	st
91b				st	st	st
92a				st	st	st
92b				st	st	st
93a				st	st	st
93b				st	st	st
94a				st	st	st
94b				st	st	st
95a				st	st	st
95b				st	st	st
96a				st	st	st
96b				st	st	st
97a				st	st	st
97b				st	st	st
98a				st	st	st
98b				st	st	st
99a				st	st	st
99b				st	st	st
100a				st	st	st
100b				st	st	st

Labanotation is a system of recording movement invented by Rudolf Von Laban in 1928. Any system of movement notation must solve three basic problems:

1. Where is the body moving in space?
2. What part of the body is moving?
3. How long does it take to complete the movement?

WHERE IS THE BODY MOVING IN SPACE?

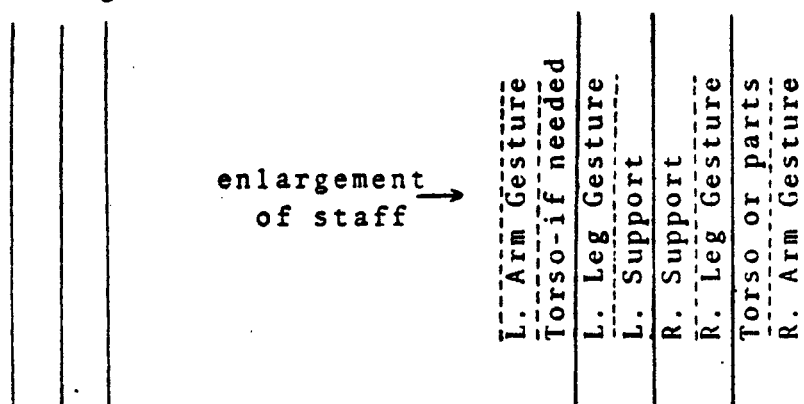
The shape of the movement indicates the direction of movements. By shading the symbol we can simultaneously indicate direction and height (level) of movements.



As you rest this book on the table in front of you, the forward symbol points to your forward direction, the back symbol points to your back direction, and so on. In this way it will be seen that the direction symbols are pictorial, indicating clearly the direction of the desired movement.

WHAT PART OF THE BODY IS MOVING?

The Labanotation staff is basically three vertical lines. The center line separates the right side of the body from the left side, as does your spine. Each column represents a part of the body, and when a movement symbol is placed in that column it will tell what that body part is doing. The staff is read from the bottom to the top.



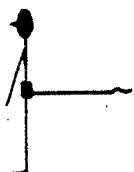
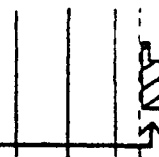
Below are some examples:



The right arm is forward and upward (high level)



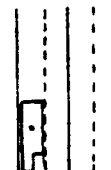
Forward symbol ± shading for high level are written in right arm column



The left leg is back and parallel to floor (middle level)



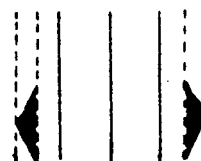
Back symbol ± middle level shading are written in left leg gesture column



Both arms are side and downward (low level)



IMPORTANT--Dancer has her back to you, In this way the dancer, the reader, and the staff all have the same left and right.



The above examples have been for gestures, that is movements which do not bear weight. The support columns immediately to the right and left of the center line of the staff are for steps, standing, kneeling, movements which support the body weight, etc.



Demi-plie (low level) in place on both feet.



is the symbol for "stay in place". "Stay in place", on both supports, in low level.



A forward step on right foot at normal (middle) level.



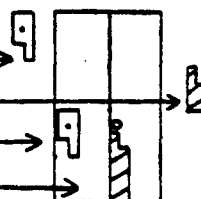
Demi-pointe (high level) in place on both feet.



Pique (pose) to first arabesque would be written as follows:

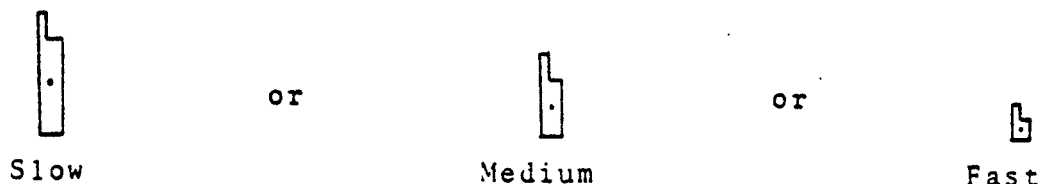
(BE SURE TO READ FROM BOTTOM TO TOP)

4. Left arm moves back middle
3. Right arm moves forward high
2. Left leg moves behind you, parallel to floor
1. Step forward on right foot--demi-pointe



HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO COMPLETE THE MOVEMENT?

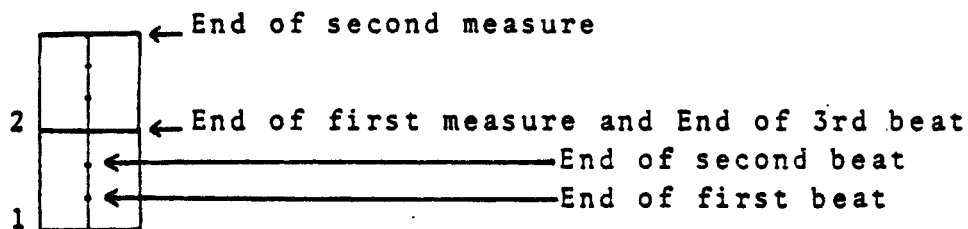
The length of the symbol indicates how long the movement takes.
Long symbol=slow movement, short =quick, or fast movements.



The Labanotation staff is marked off into bars (measures) just as the horizontal music staff is. Bars are numbered to match the numbered bars of the musical score.

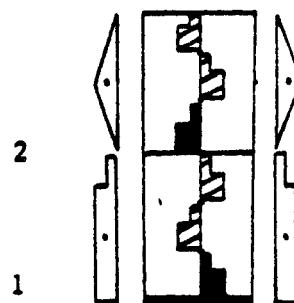
Beats are shown as small strokes on the center line of the staff

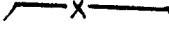
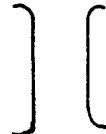






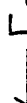




Below is an example of the staff marked off for two measures of 3/4.




Below is an example of two waltz steps forward. Note the slow arm movements while the feet step on each beat.


Read staff from bottom to top. ⁸⁷





‡	knee		grasping support
	whole arm		
┘┐	upper arm		
┘┐	lower arm		
┘┐	hand		
☼☼	hand folds (fist)		
☼	palm facing		
┘┐	thumb facing		
☼	head facing		
☼☼	sides of waist		
- -	heel slightly off the floor		
☼☼	ball of foot		
☼☼	whole foot		
☼☼	heel		
☼	whole torso		
○	return to normal		
◇	space hold (retain spacial direction)		
↪	release		
< >	same part of body		
↪	strong accent		
↪	light accent		
↪	unemphasised		
×	bent (slightly less than a 45 angle)		
			inclusion (upper part of torso included in the arm movement)
			
			lead by the elbow
			small path (do not travel far)
			movement travels back slightly
			
			
			path is indicated on the floor plan
			
			turning on a straight path
			
			curved path


 slightly above


 slightly below


 path deviates
slightly above


 path deviates
slightly below

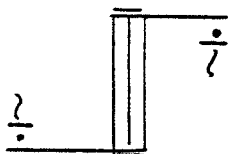
 repeat on the opposite
side

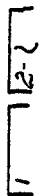
 facing the center
of the circle

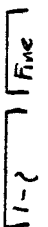
 back to the center
of the circle


 right side to the
center of the circle


 left side to the
center of the circle


 sectional repeat -
repeat the section
ad lib number of times

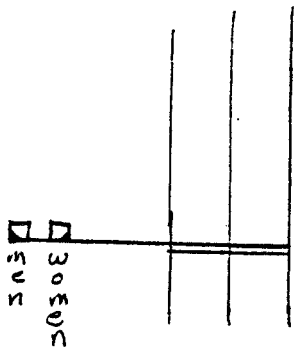
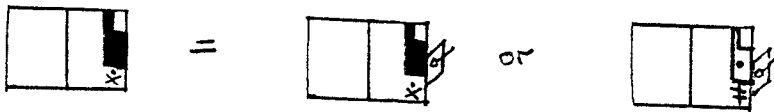
 first and second beginning
the beginning of the first repeated
section is different than the
remainder of the repeats (see 3b)

 first and second ending
on the final repeat of the section
a different ending is performed
(see 12a)

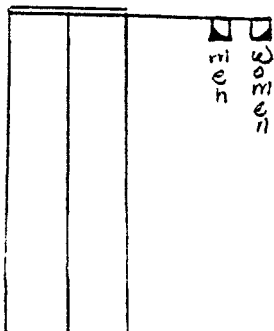
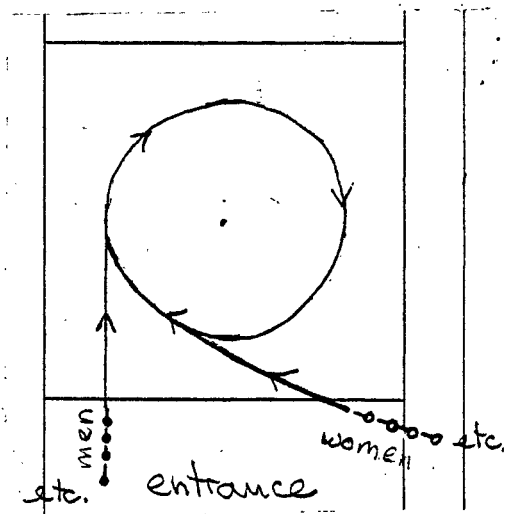
 the indicated body part traces the shape
indicated in the path, beginning at
the dot.

 = flag

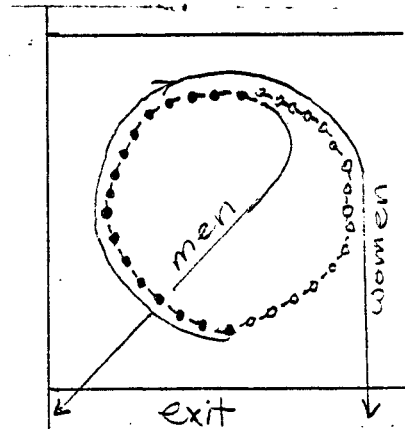
Normal turn out = 



||



||



Additional Information for Score

Ling Dro is performed following the leader, moving in a clockwise circle. Each phrase (i.e., 1a, 1b, etc.) is repeated over and over. The "a" phrase is repeated until the circle is well formed, and then the "b" phrase is repeated, continuing to move around the circle and into the exit (see glossary). As each section progresses, the tempo and energy level build. Therefore, negligible hops, less energetic walks, smaller arm movements, etc. occur at the beginning of the dance and gradually become larger hops, more energetic walks, and larger arm movements near the end of the dance. For example, near the beginning of a dance (the first few repeats of an "a" phrase) a step hop swing (see glossary of steps) would probably be performed with a very small hop. As the dance progressed it would be performed with slightly larger and larger hops, until near the end, full large hops would be seen. Also, the performance as a whole builds in momentum. Therefore, dance 1 will begin in a much more subdued manner than dance 13.

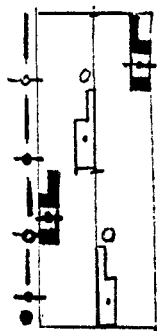
Use of Notation

Ling Dro is done in a folk dance style and is taught by imitation. Therefore, the exact directions, levels, and amounts of turn vary with each dancer. The essence of the movement is flow, rather than precision of steps. Labanotation provides a precise description of the steps. Therefore, the reader must translate these steps back into a nonprecise performance. Because the steps also change as the momentum of the section and the momentum of the dance as a whole builds, any one notation of a step will not suffice. I suggest the reader learn the steps from the glossary of steps, getting a feel for the basic step and some of the acceptable variations on that step. The full notation of the phrase should probably only be used for information on facing and transitions. The chart of steps can then be used as a memory aid.

The arm movements are not taught at all, because the Tibetans believe they are merely natural arm movements that go with the steps. Therefore, a great variety of arm movements is seen. Some dancers use full arms, with expansive range, others tend to hold their arms basically in one position, merely bouncing them with the movement. The arm notation therefore should be read very generally, merely to get a feel for what the Tibetans assume as natural arm movement. I have notated the arm movements of the "best" female dancer. The alternate version indications are the arm movements of the "best" male dancer.

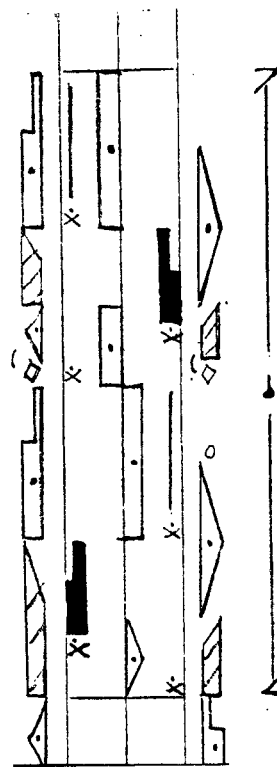
Alternate Versions

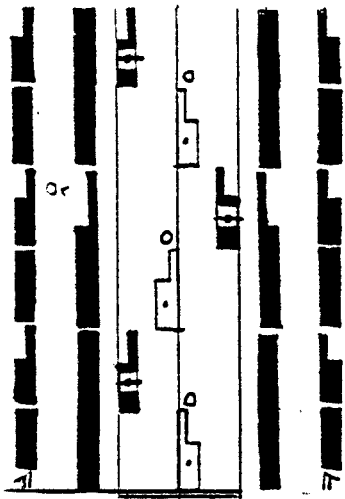
Alternate versions labeled (men) or (women) merely indicate that this version is more prevalent among the men or the women, but does not mean that only men or women may perform this version. The women do tend to move in a more flowing, smooth, rounded way than the men. Throughout the dances, many of the dancers performed a slight bounce:



The sleeves of the costume that is worn extend beyond the hand. Therefore, all arm movements must accommodate the flow of this extra material. Most arm movements (especially arms while walking) are performed with $1/4$ inward rotation, to allow the material to rest on the back of the hand. Often hand or lower arm movements are added to allow the material to flow as the arm moves from one path to the beginning of the next (see glossary of steps - step-hop-swing).

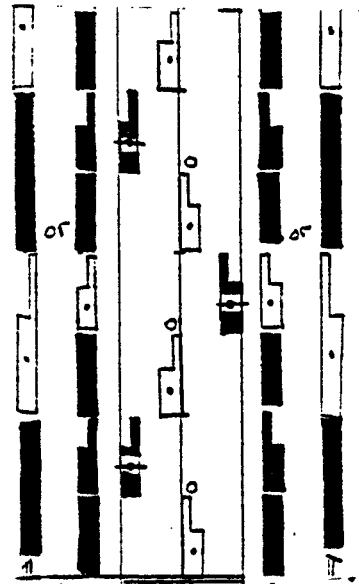
In turning (as in a step-draw or a dro turn) the arms sometimes move successively; ie., if the dancer is turning left, the left arm will move slightly ahead of the right arm, and if the dancer is turning right, the right arm will move slightly ahead of the left arm:



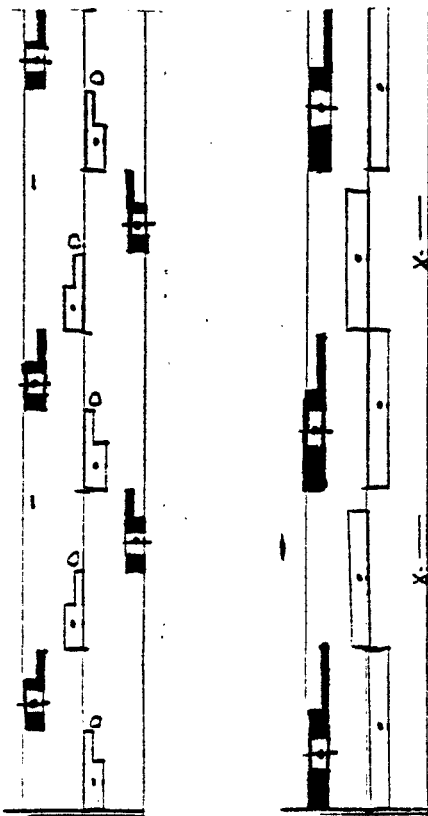


Basic Walk
and
Various
Basic Arms

1a, 1b, 2b, 4a, 4b,
5a, 5b, 6b, 6c,
7a, 7b, 8a, 8b



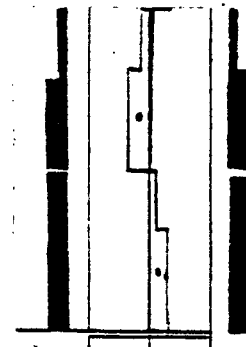
3a, 5a, 6a, 7a,
9a, 9b, 11a



13a

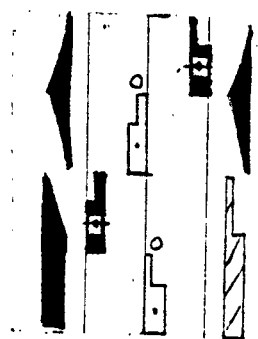
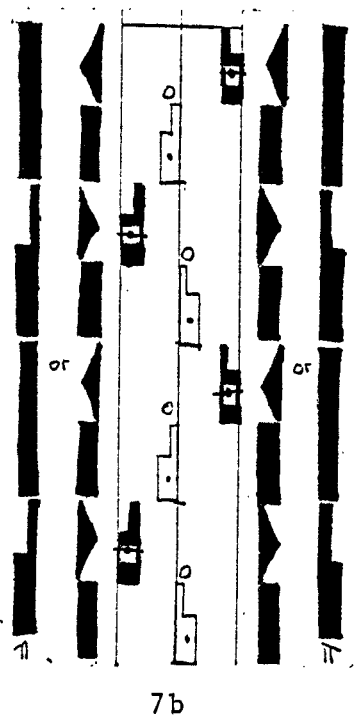
13b

Walks may also
produce a slight leap

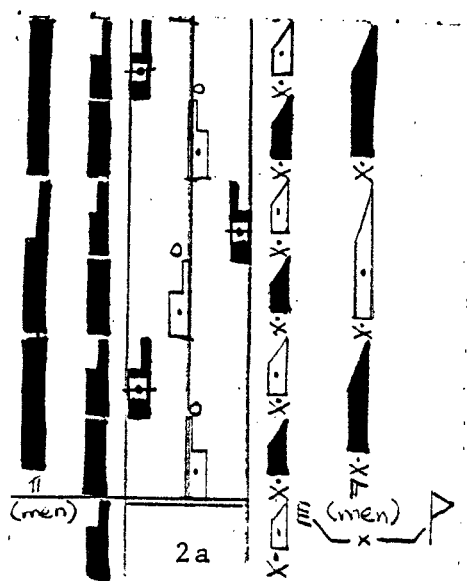


1b, 11b
Walks may have
no noticeable
leg gesture

When walks appear in the middle
of a phrase, arms may vary greatly



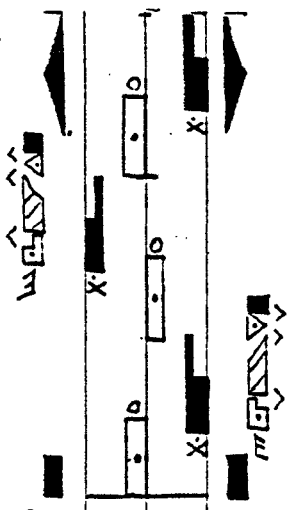
5a, 6a
see also 10 & 12b



see also 1a, 8a, 12a

The use of props
modifies the use
of arms

FRANCE

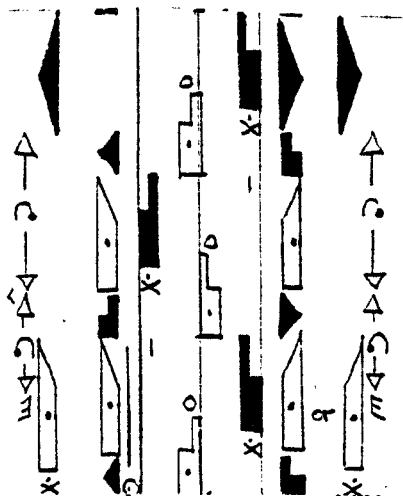


1b

Prances usually appear in a combination of three prances (L-R-L), followed by a stamp, stamp.

In 8b (below) the combination is made up of only two prances, followed by a stamp, stamp.

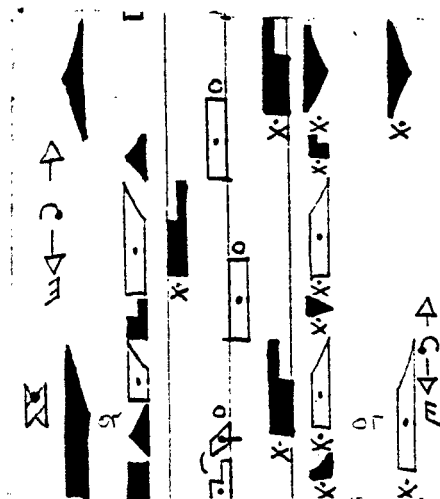
In 6c (see following page) the prance appears in a very different combination.



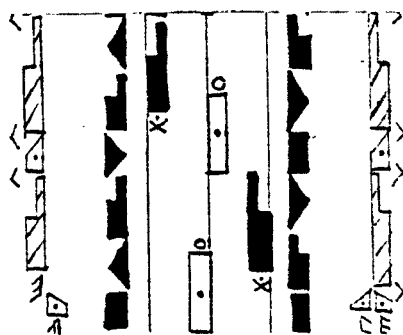
3b

prance goes slightly into air

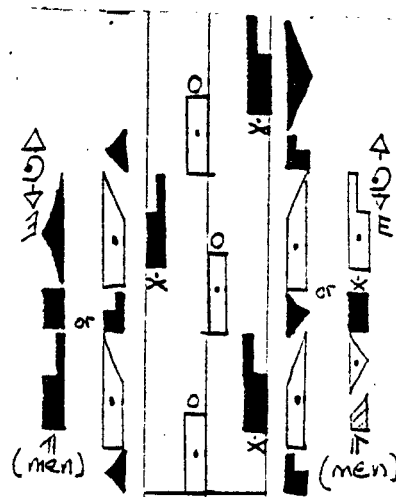
Note the similarity of the various arm movements



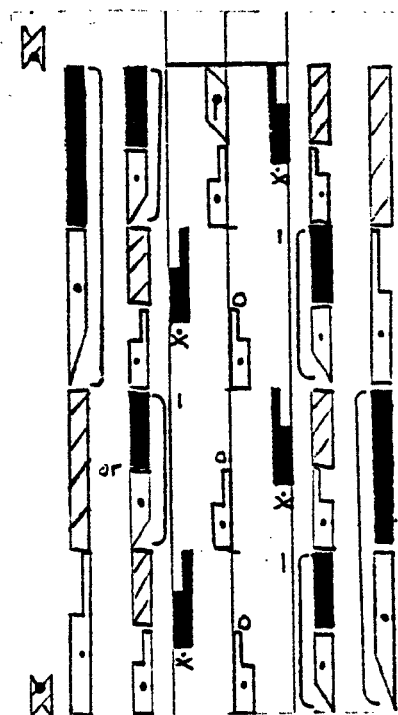
2a



8b



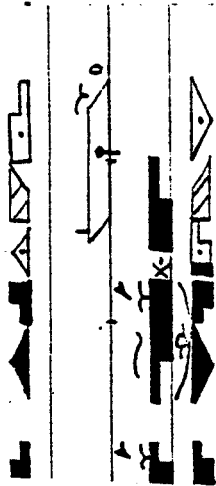
2b



6c

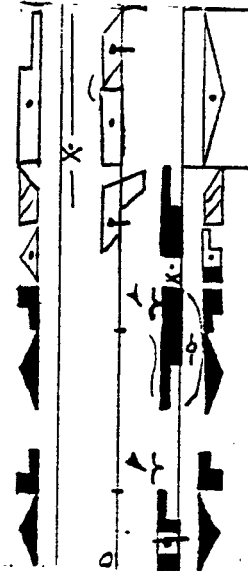
In 6c the prance combination consists of four prances going into the center of the circle, and four prances going away from the center of the circle.

Note how different the arms are for the combination.



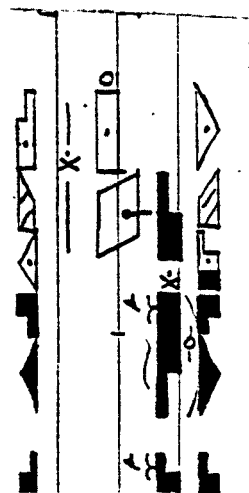
1a, 2a, 3a
(arms for 1a are
slightly different
due to use of prop)

Hop is negligible



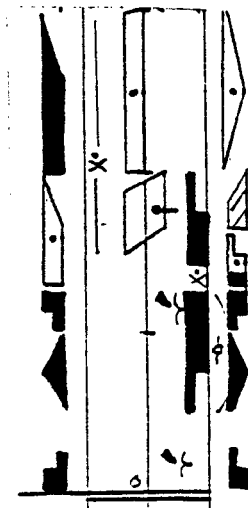
9a (&%), 12a (&%)

Small Hop



1a (after prop is removed)
1b, 2b, 4b, 9b (&%)

Large Hop



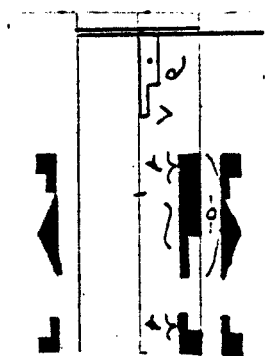
12b

Large Hop

note the slightly
different arm movement

STAMPS

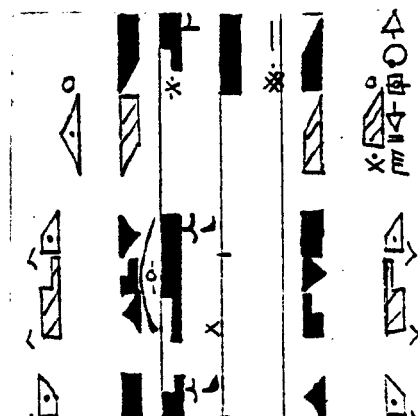
Stamps appear four times in which they are not followed by a hop turn. Note that it is only in these combinations that the arms differ significantly from the usual pattern.



3b

In 3b the stamps are followed by a fudge step, going into a step swing. The usual arms appear.

Note: This is the only time a fudge step appears.

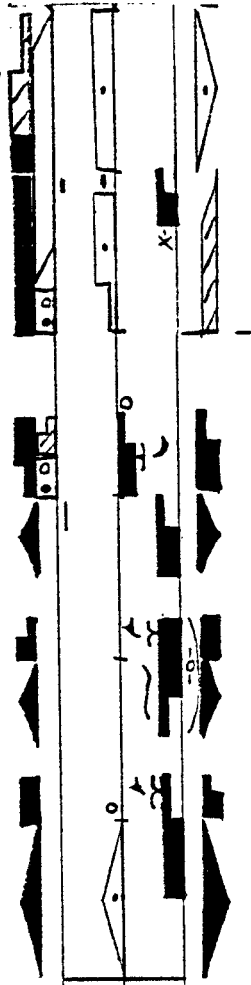


8b

In 8b the stamps are followed by a drop.

Note: This is the only time a drop appears.

Note: This is the only time stamps are done with the left foot when it is not first performed with the right foot.

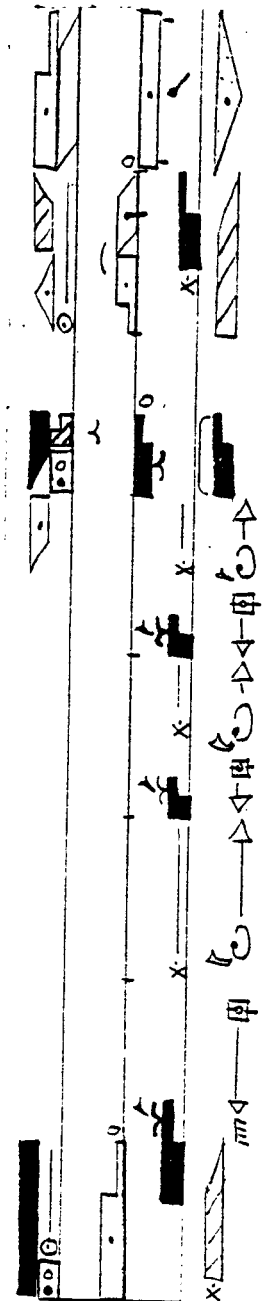


6b

The only time stamps appear not in the usual forward-back combination is in l0.

In 6b the stamps are followed by an across step hop.

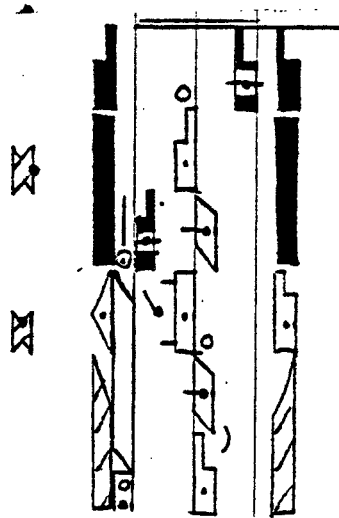
In 10 the stamps are followed by an across step draw.



10

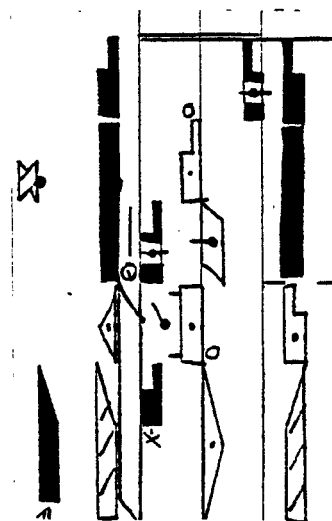
STEP DRAW (Single)

A single step draw always appears as the last step of the phrase, usually followed by a step. The single step draw is begun either with a side step or a forward turning step.



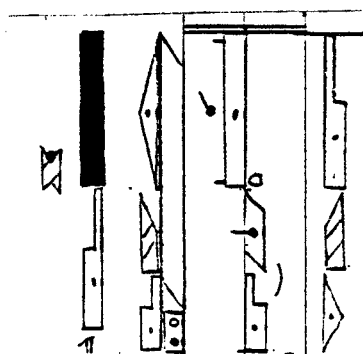
1a, 1b
2a, 2b, 3a

forward turning step



6a, 6b, 7b

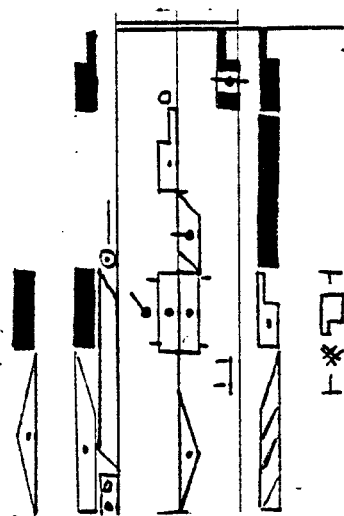
side step and slight
arm variation



10

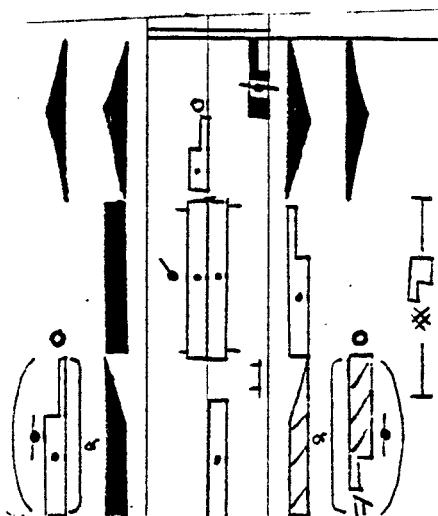
arm variation and
no ending step

STEP DRAW
(with assemble action)

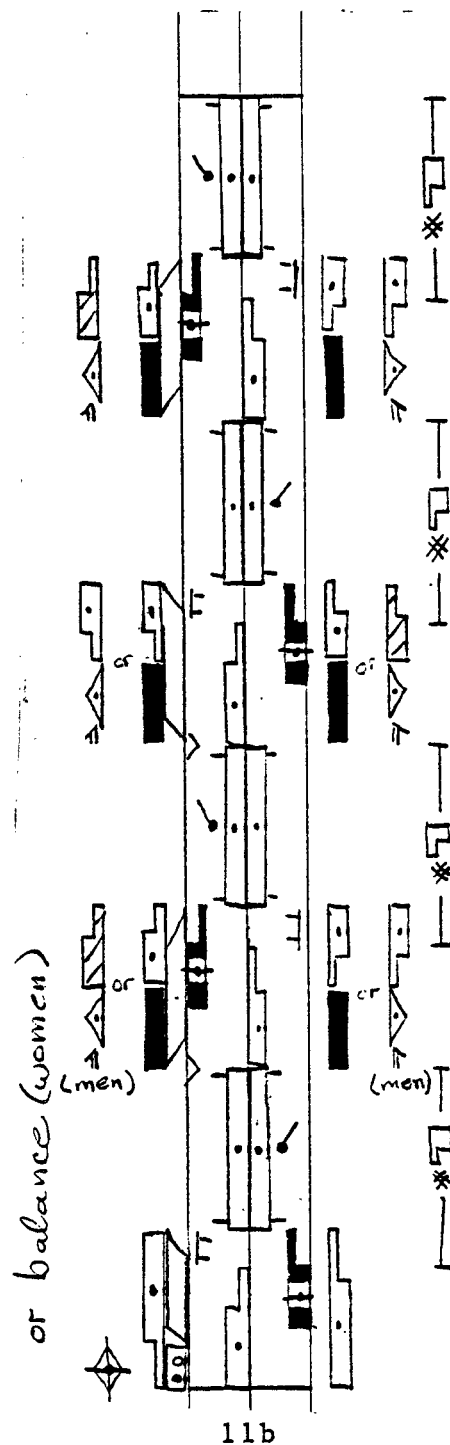


5b

as a single step draw
at the end of the phrase



4b



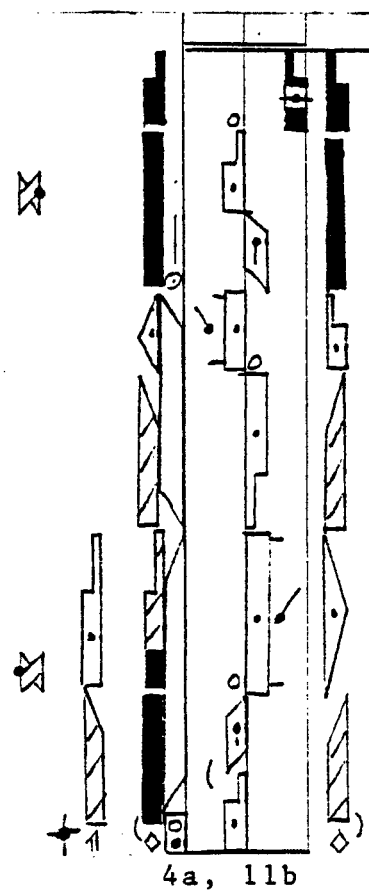
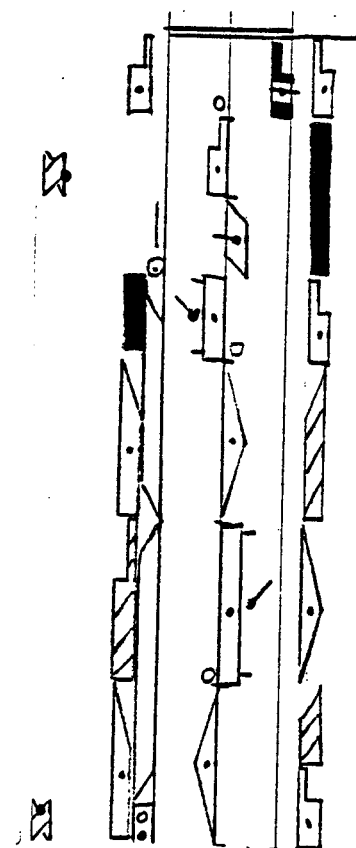
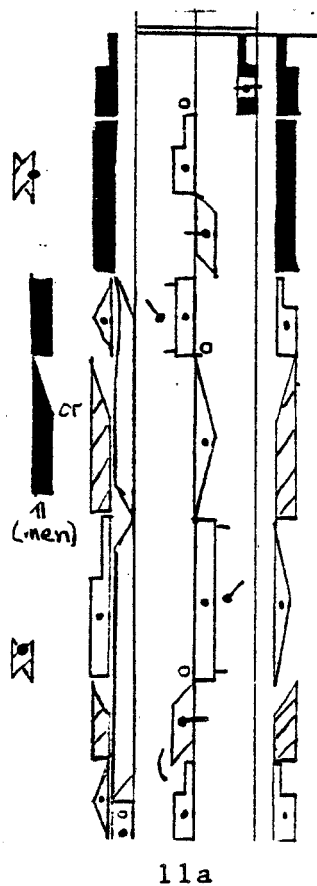
11b

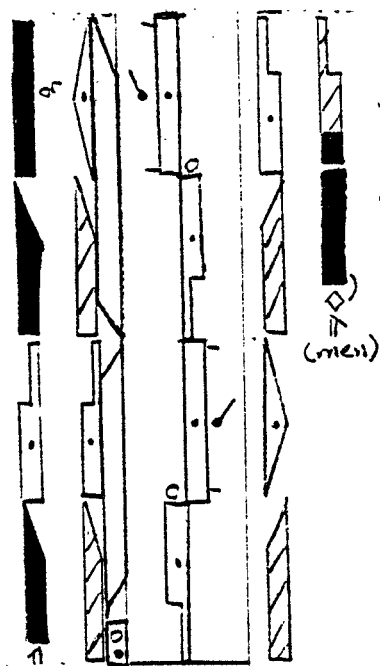
as a continuous
combination

STEP DRAW (Double)

The double step draw appears at the end of a phrase (except 3b) followed by a step.

Note: The right arm performs over curves while the left arm performs various paths.



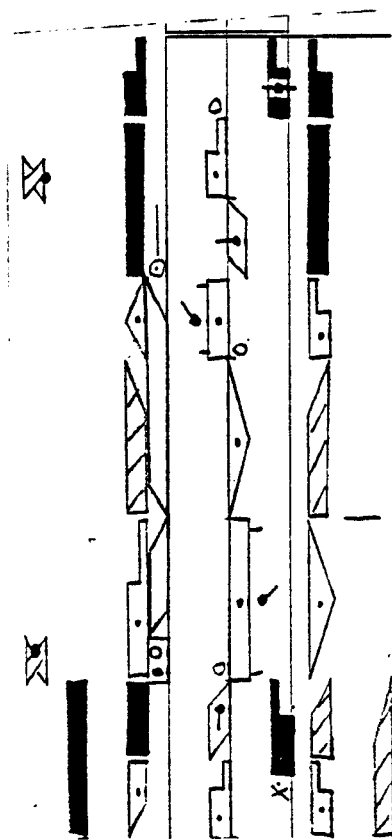


3b

In 3b the double step draw appears in the middle of the phrase.

Note: The right arm may perform an under curve.

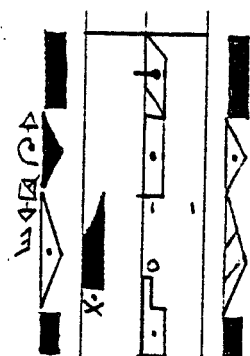
In 6c the first step draw appears as a combination of a step draw and a prance.



6c

STEP HOP SWING (Single)

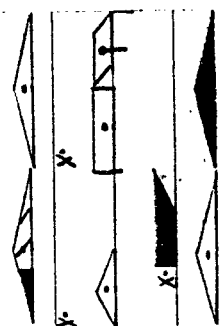
Arms are always the same, with or without the lower arm flourish, which serves to swing the end of the sleeve around.



5a, 6a, 7a
Very Small Hop

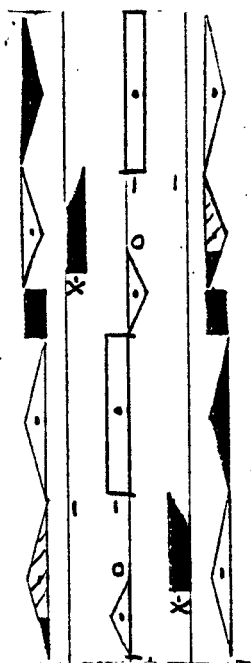


1b
Slightly Larger Hop.



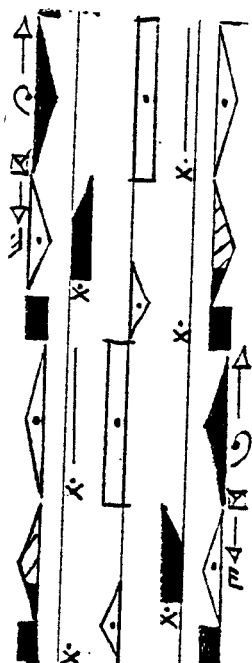
7b (& //)
13a (no arm swing
due to use of prop)
Large Hop

STEP HOP SWING (Double)



8a (repeated)

Small Hop



2b, 3b, 5b

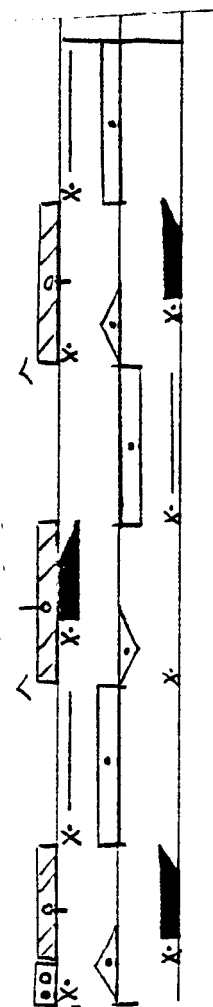
8b (repeated), 11b

Large Hop

Arms appear with
or without arm
flourish

STEP HOP SWING (Triple)

No arm swing due to use
of prop

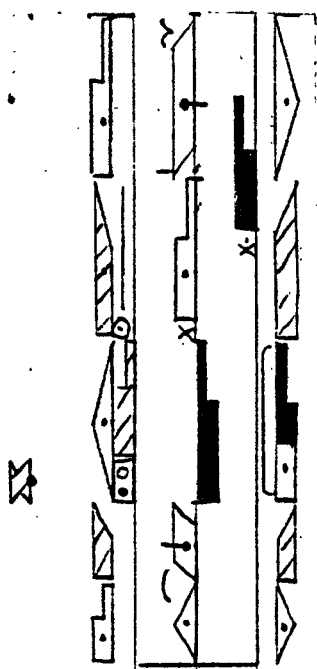


13b (& 14b)

STEP ACROSS STEP HOP

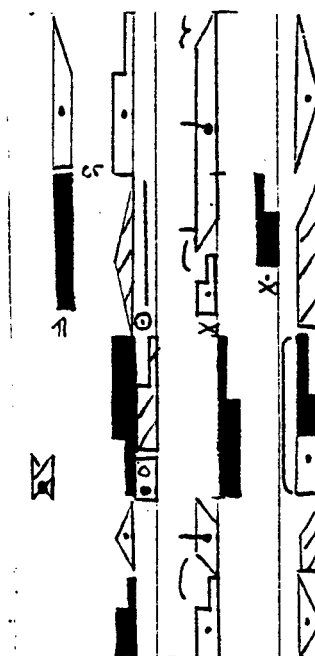
Note: The right arm usually performs two over curves while the left arm performs various paths.

See also: stamps

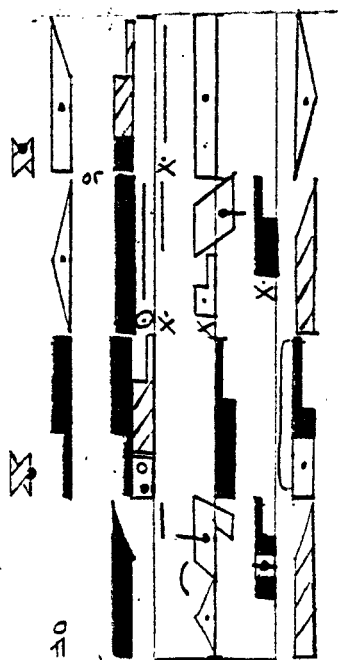


6a

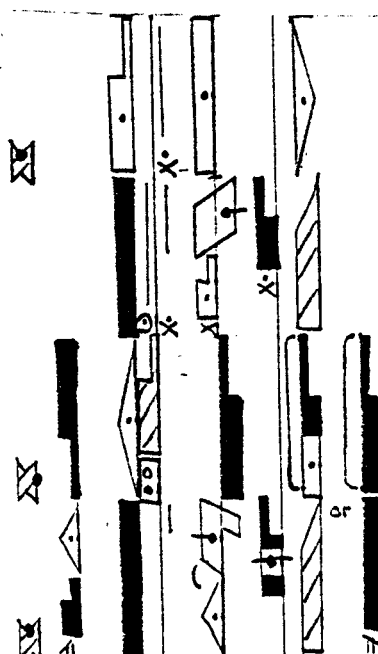
5a, 6a
hop is
negligible



5a, 6a
7a (same except
full hop is
performed)



5b

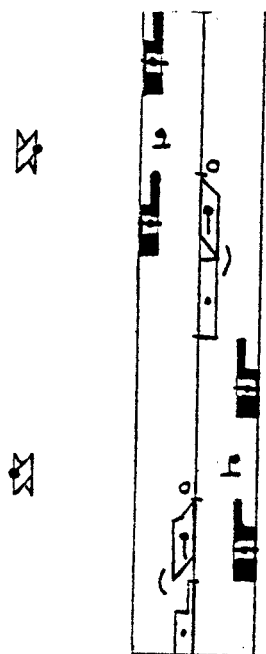


7b

5b, 7b

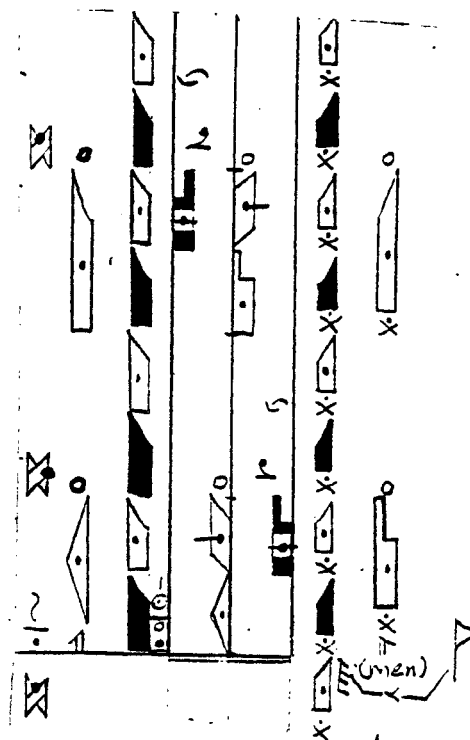
Step and leap
into the
across step

STEP TOUCH

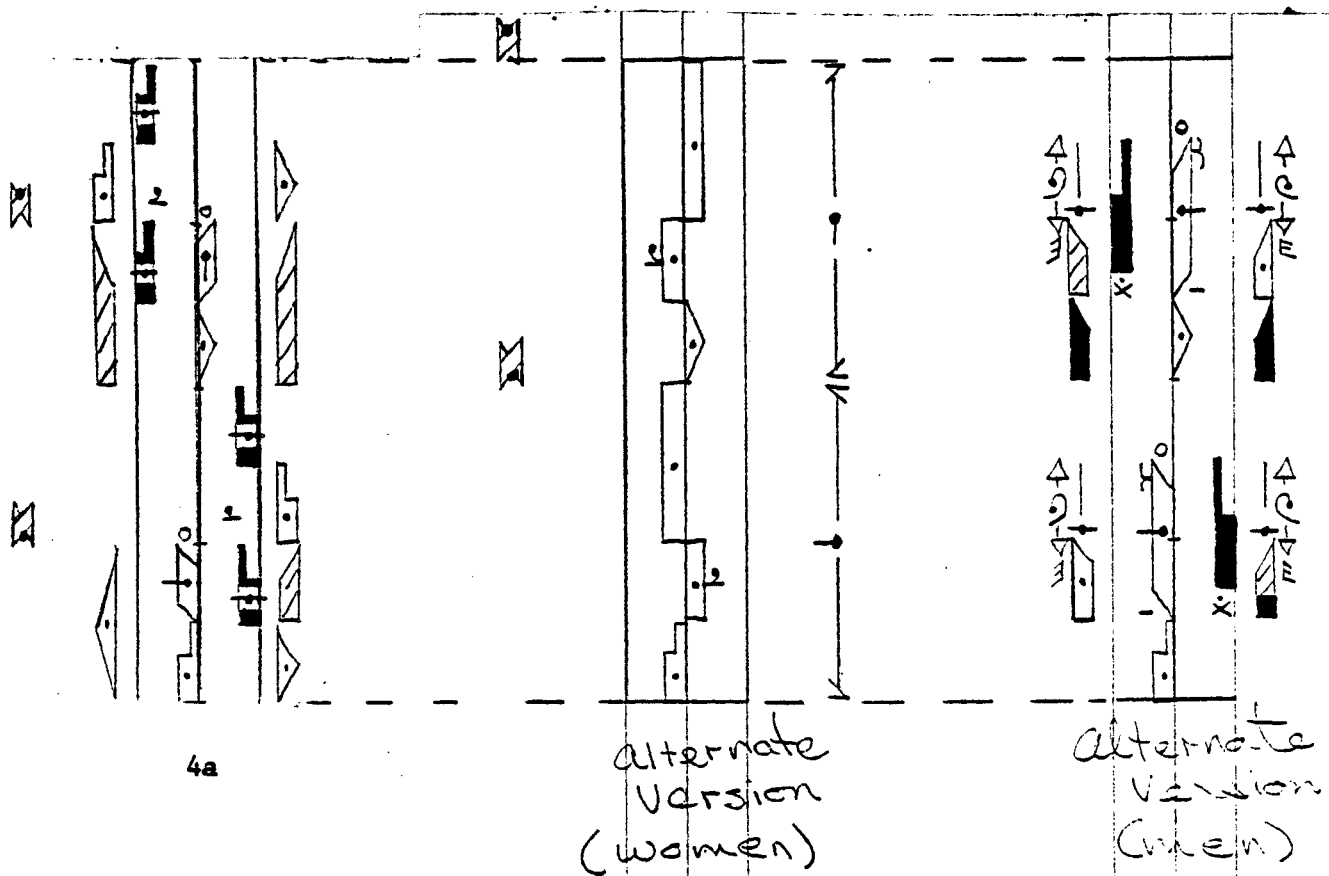


8a (repeated)
mimetic arms

With varying amounts
of turn, step touch
combinations are
similar

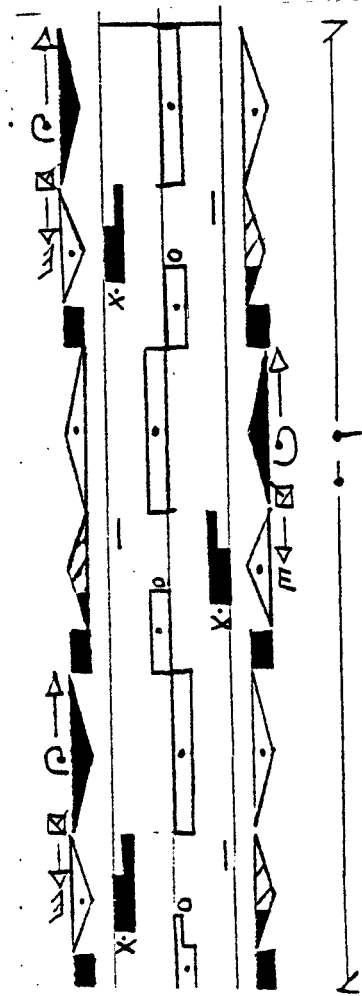


10 (repeated)



DRO TURN

A Dro Turn is a four count turn made up of various combinations of step hop swing, step draw, and balance. Note the wide variety of arm movements.



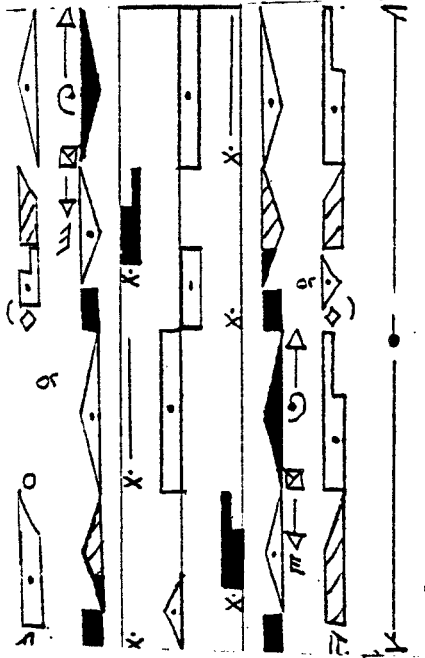
1b

In 1b three step hop swings are used to complete the turn. The combination is four step hop swings but the turn does not begin until the second step hop swing.

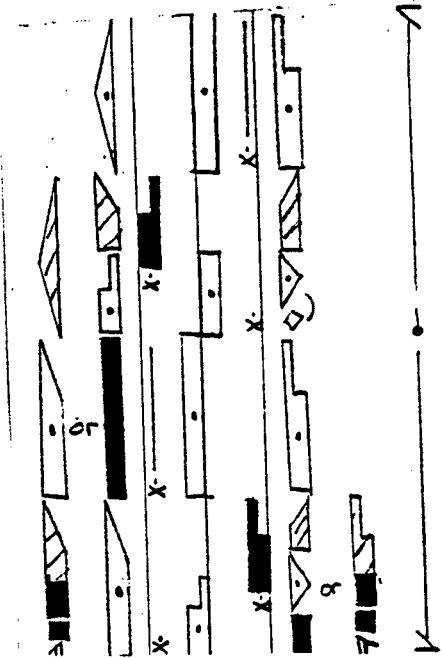
Note: All Dro Turns turning right begin stepping on the right foot. All Dro Turns turning left begin stepping on the left foot.

DRO TURN

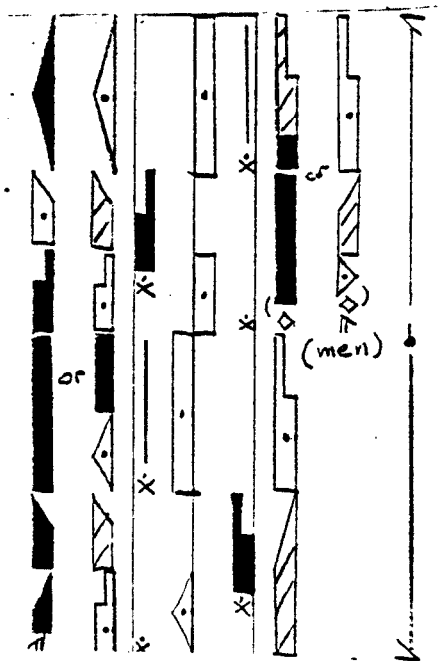
Step Hop Swing, Step Hop Swing



5b

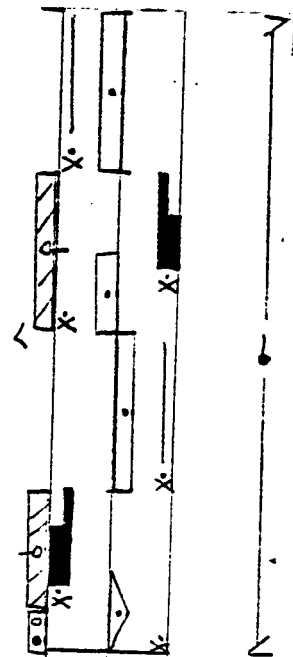


4b



2b

12b (& 1/2)

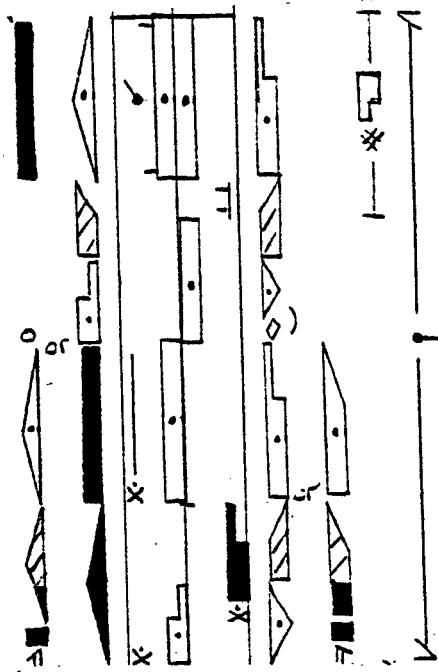


13a (& 1/2)

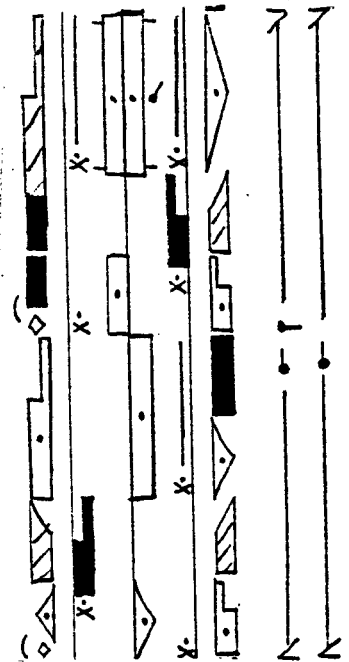
13b (repeated)

DRO TURN

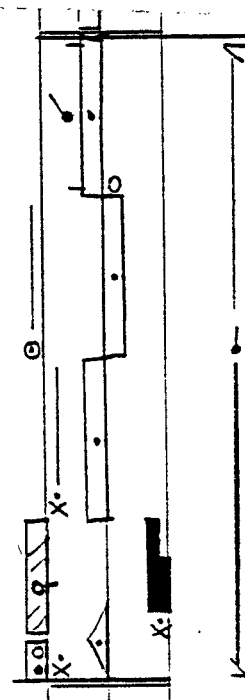
Step Hop Swing, Step Draw



6b



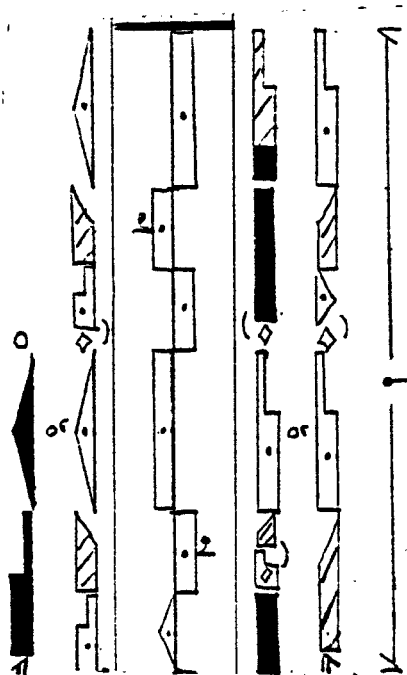
9b (& 1/2)



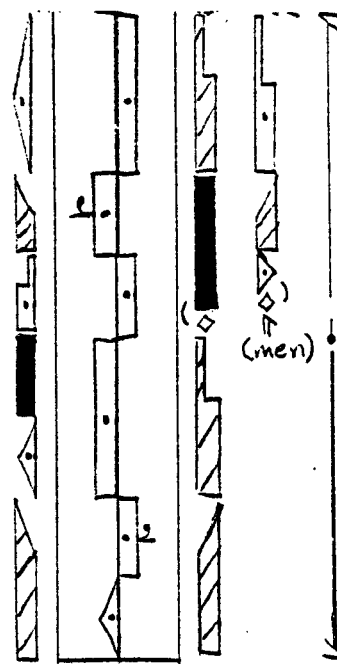
13b (repeated)

DRO TURN

Balance, Balance



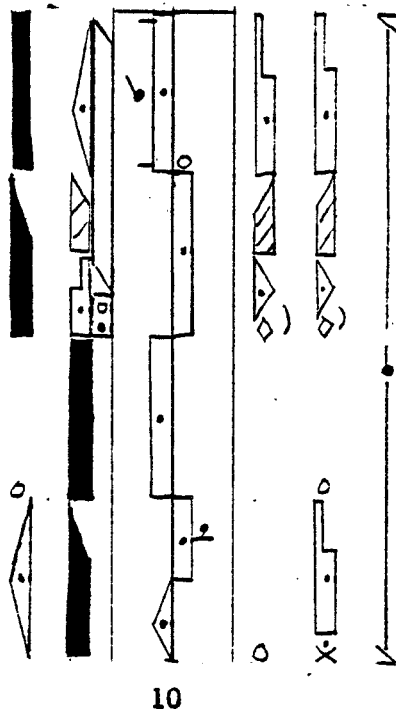
3b



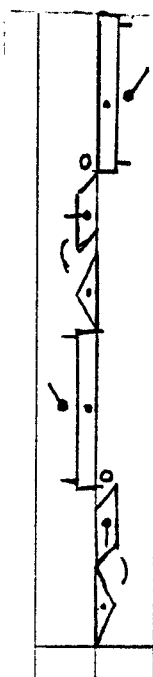
8b

DRO TURN

Balance, Step Draw



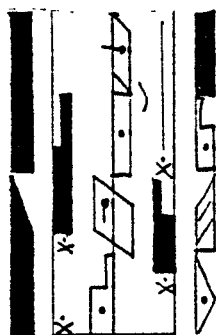
Step Draw, Step Draw



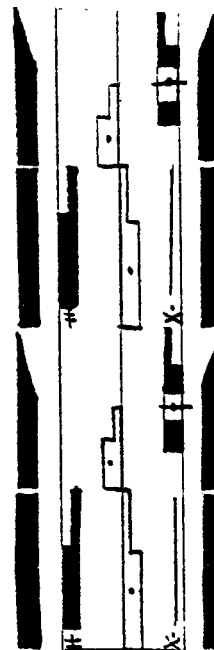
Alternate version
12b (& 1/2)

Steps That Appear Only Once

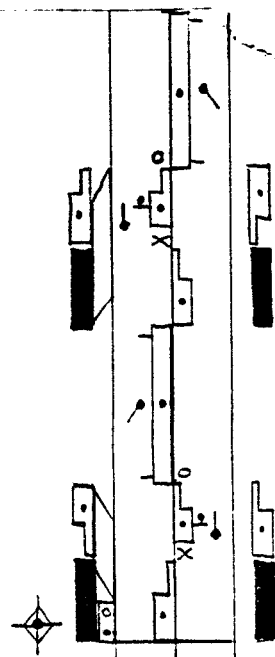
(see also stamps, especially drop of 8b)



7b
Step and
Turning leap



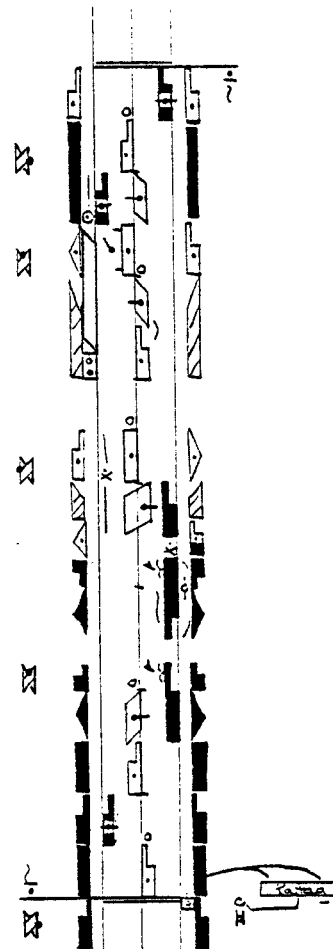
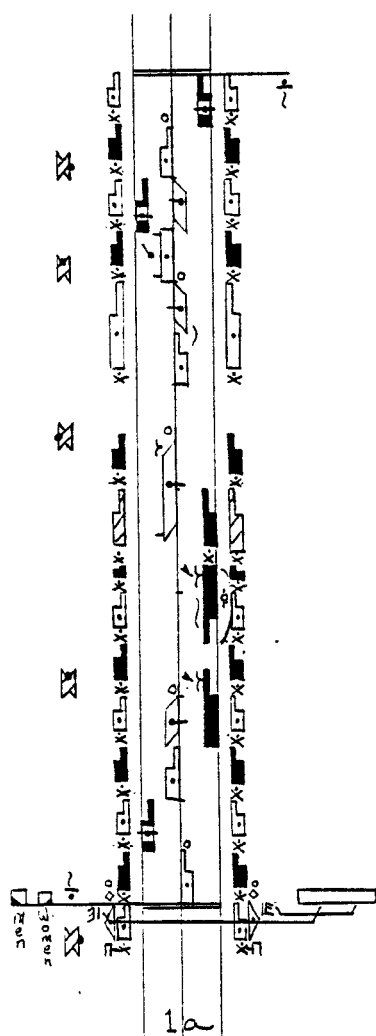
8a
Leaping walk
mimetic



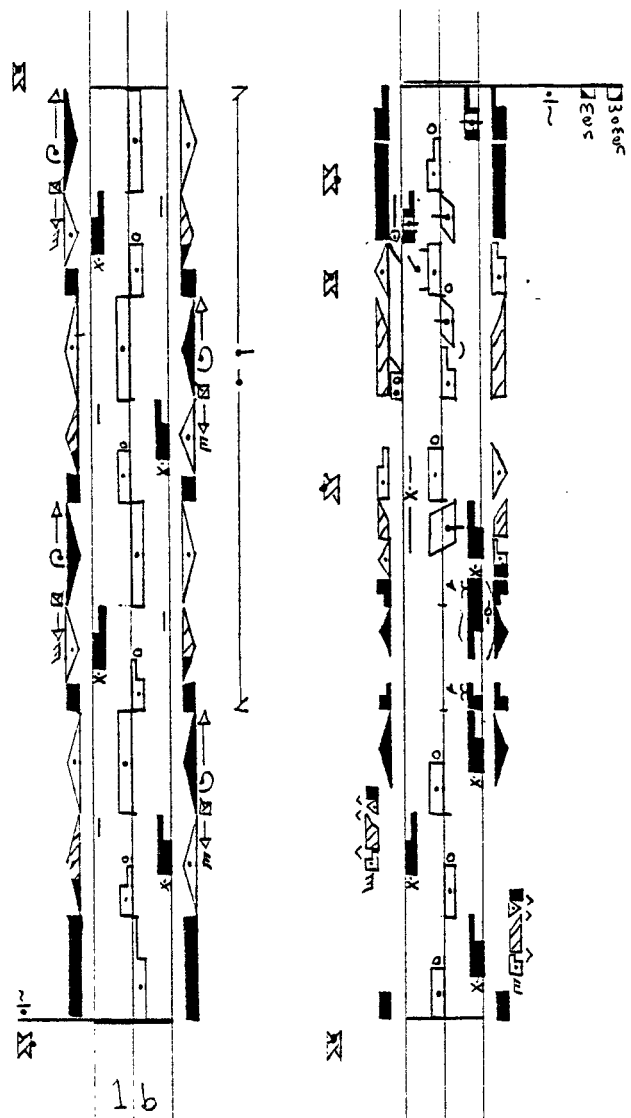
11b

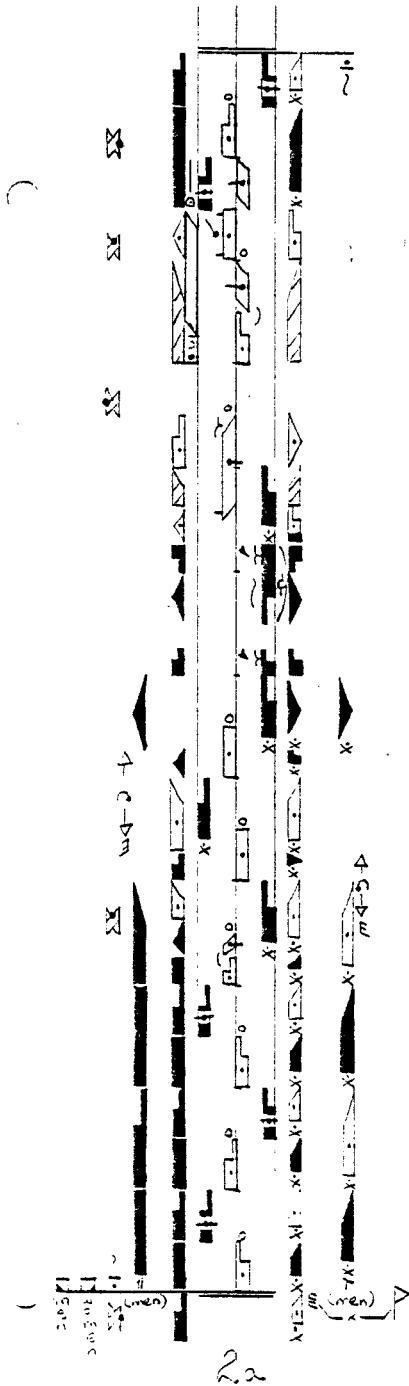
Balance - alternate version for
step draw with assemble action.

Note the similarity to the step touch
alternate version (women) of 4a.



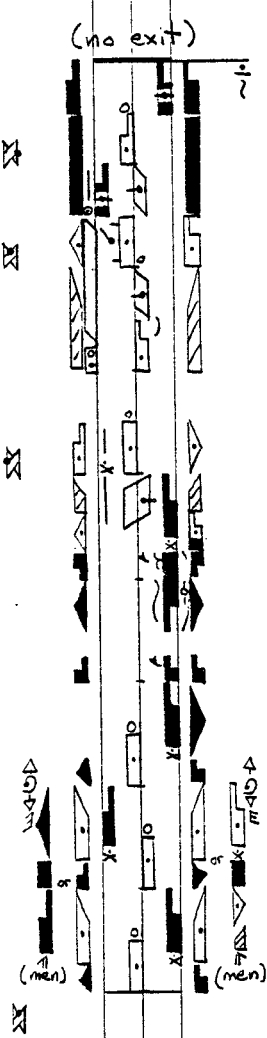
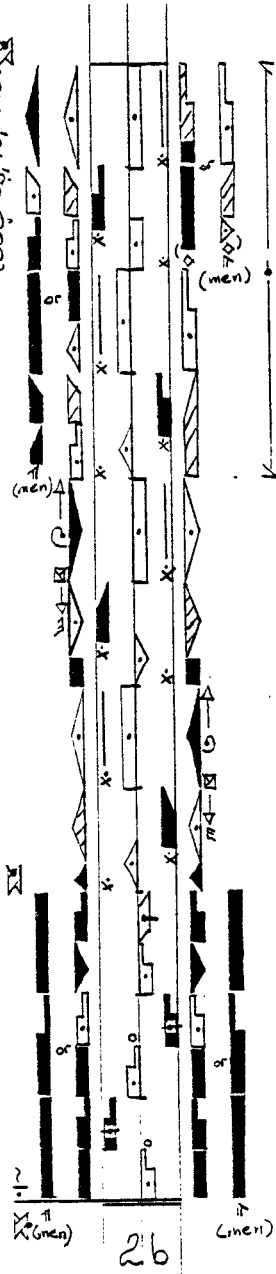
1a
after attendant
has gathered kateag
and placed it around
the dancers neck

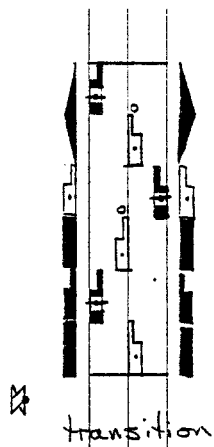
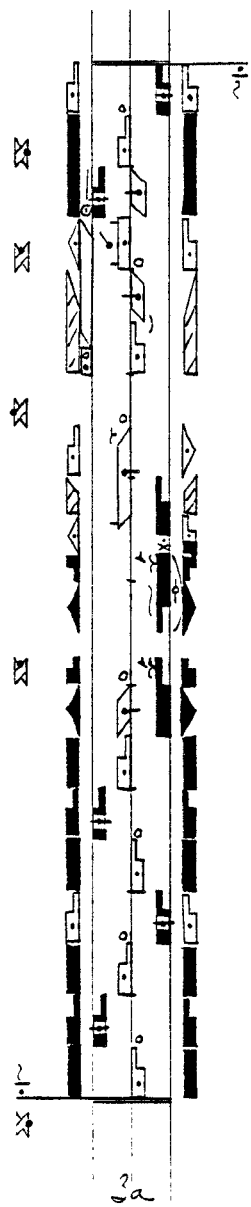




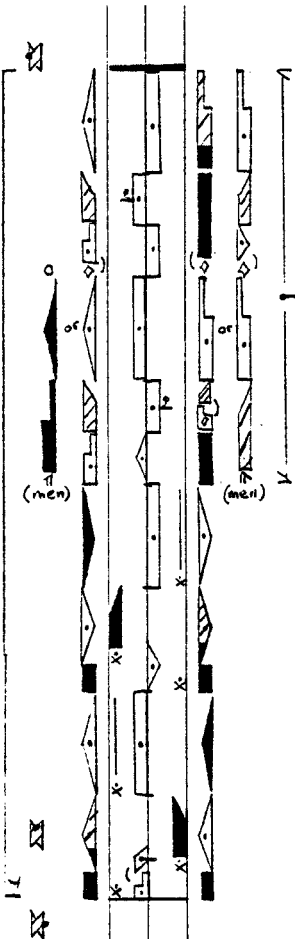
attendant gathers flags
after they have gone
around the full circle
about $1\frac{1}{2}$ times

or step swing step draw.
(see 66, 94, or 134)

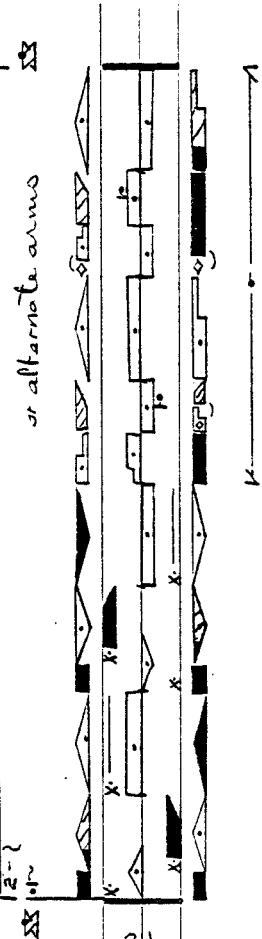




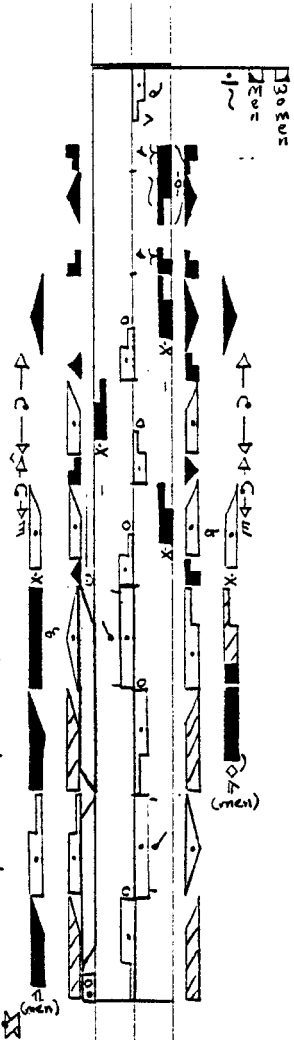
or step swing step swing (see 26)
or balance step draw (see 10)

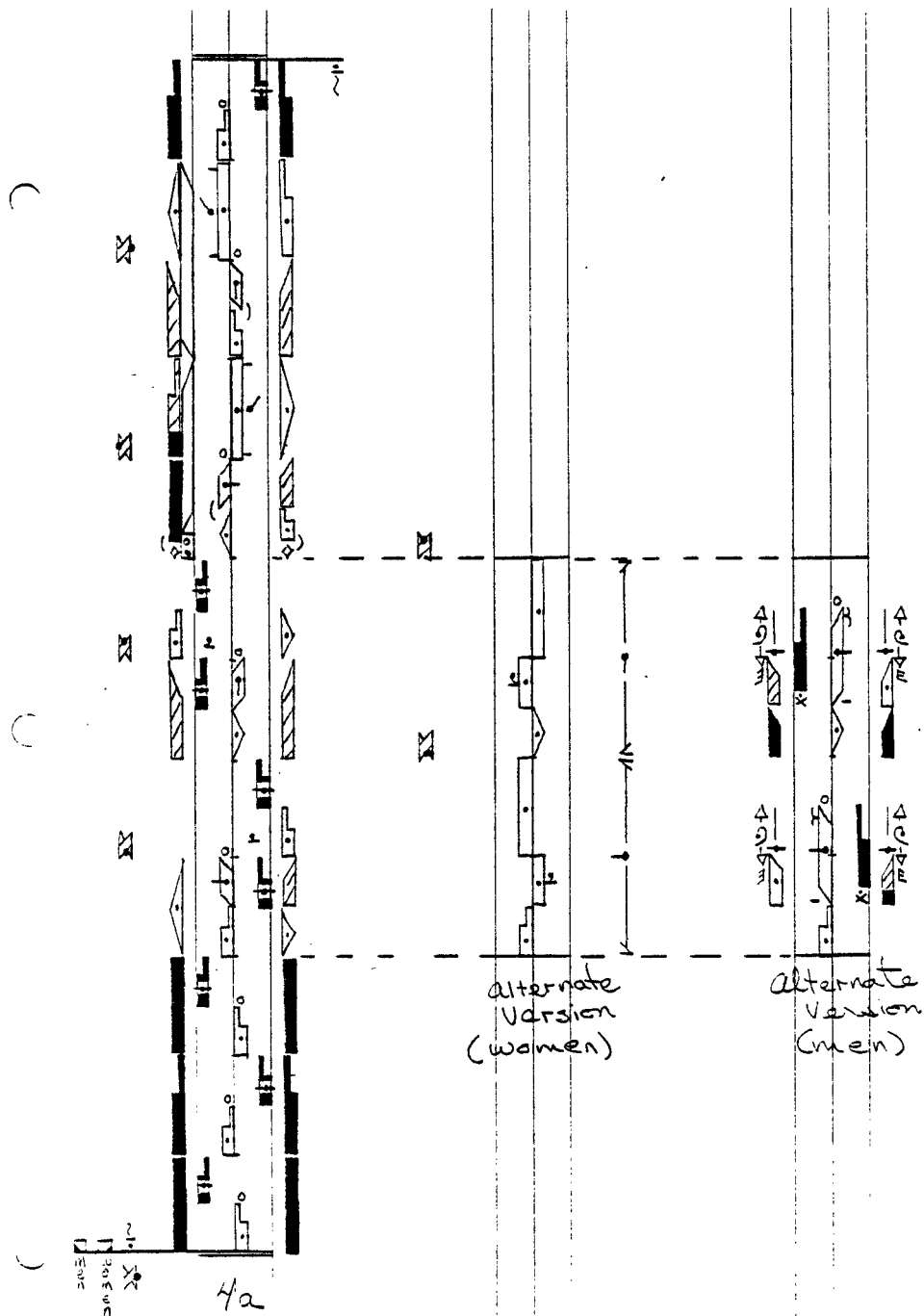


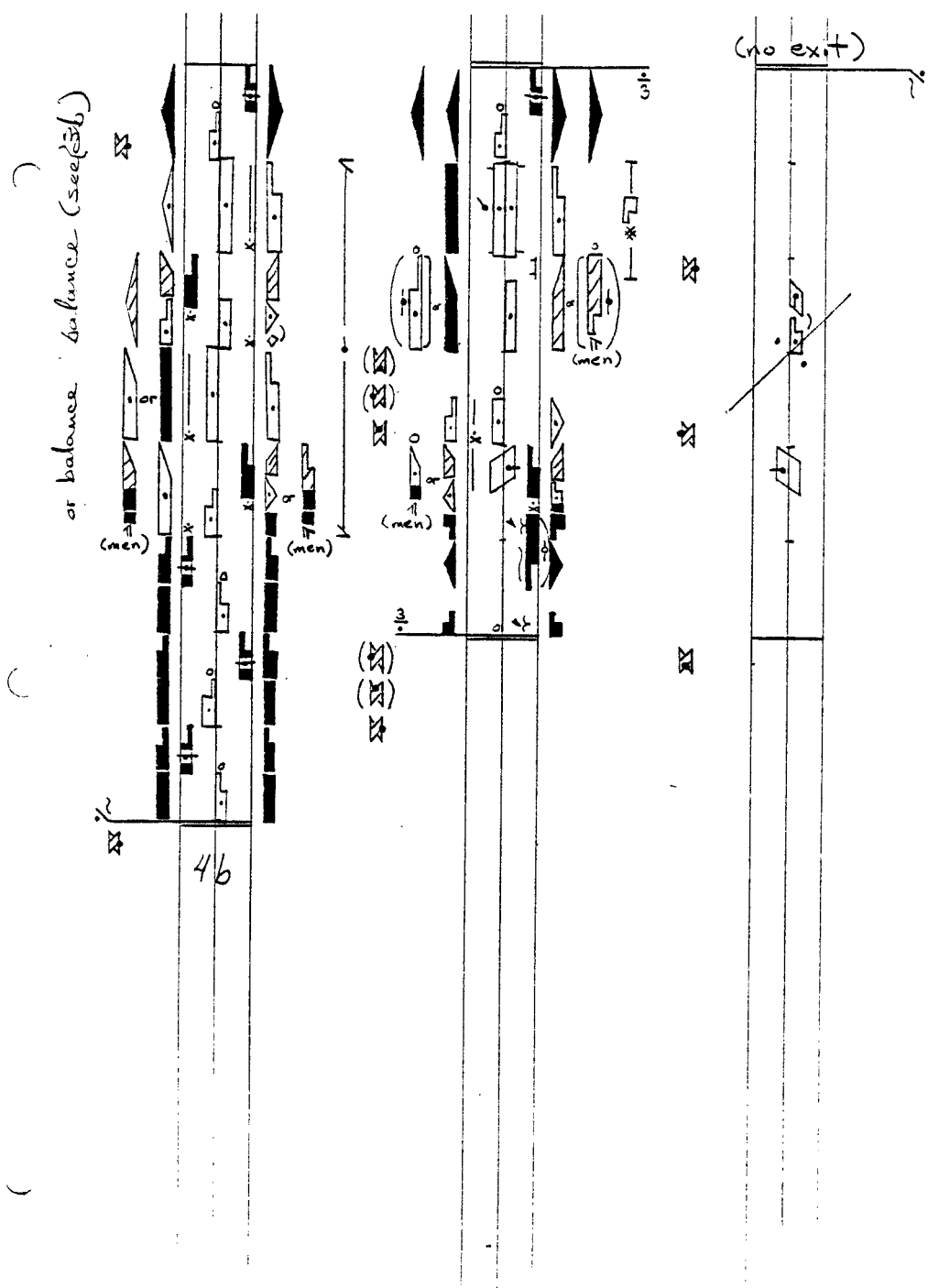
or alternate arms

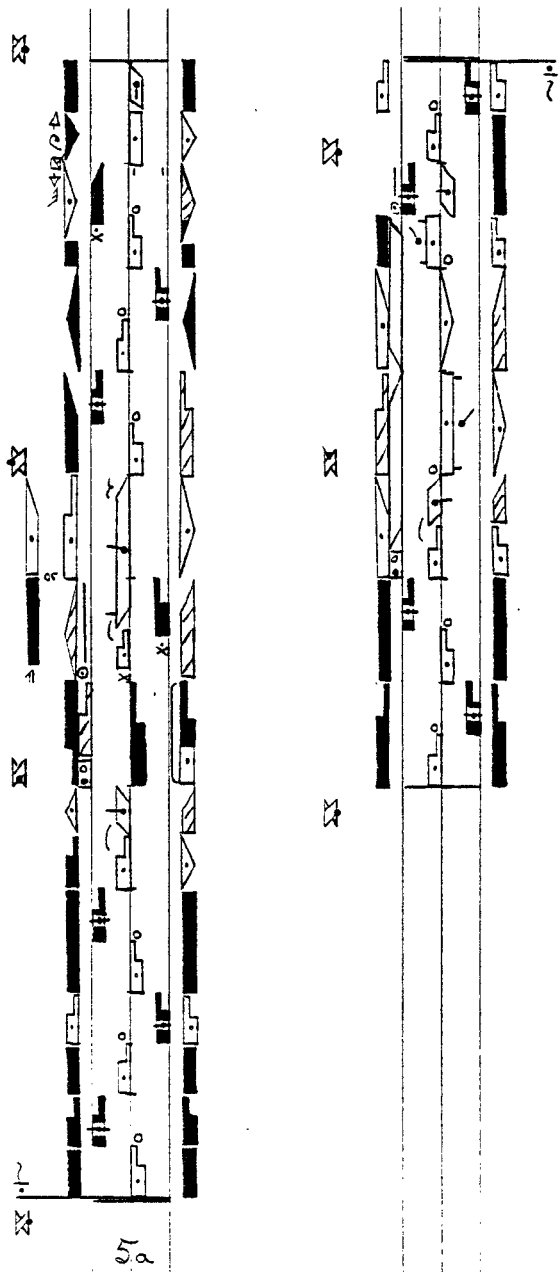


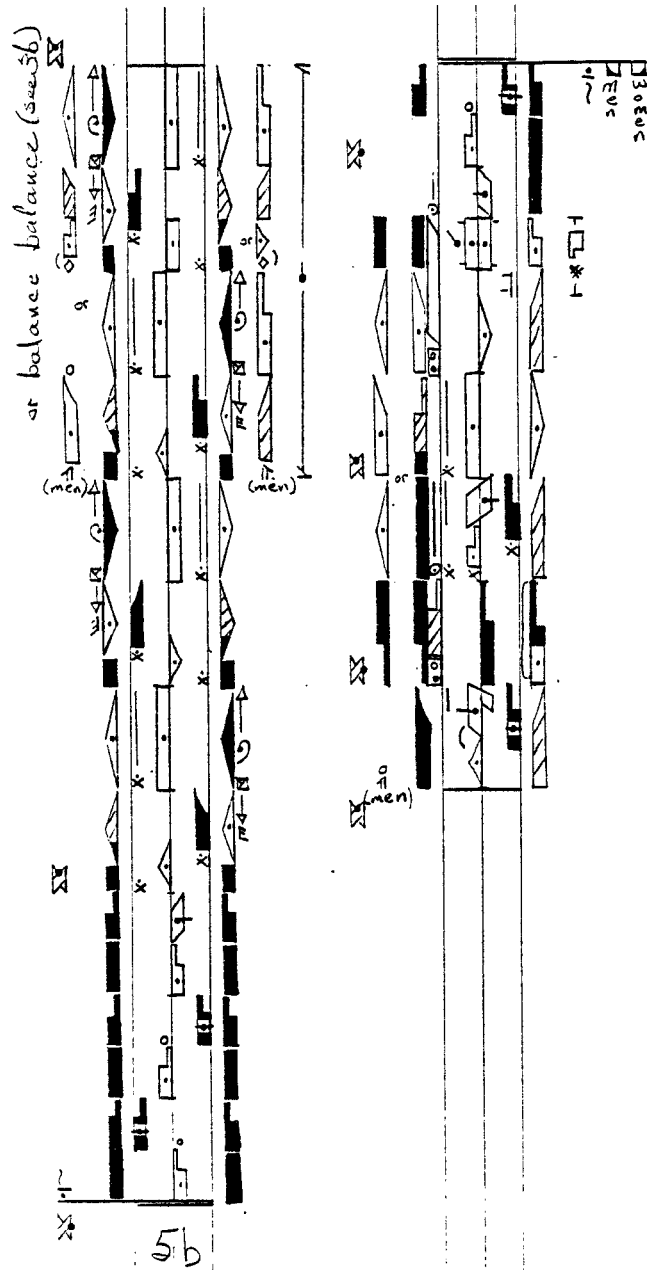
or step hop step hop

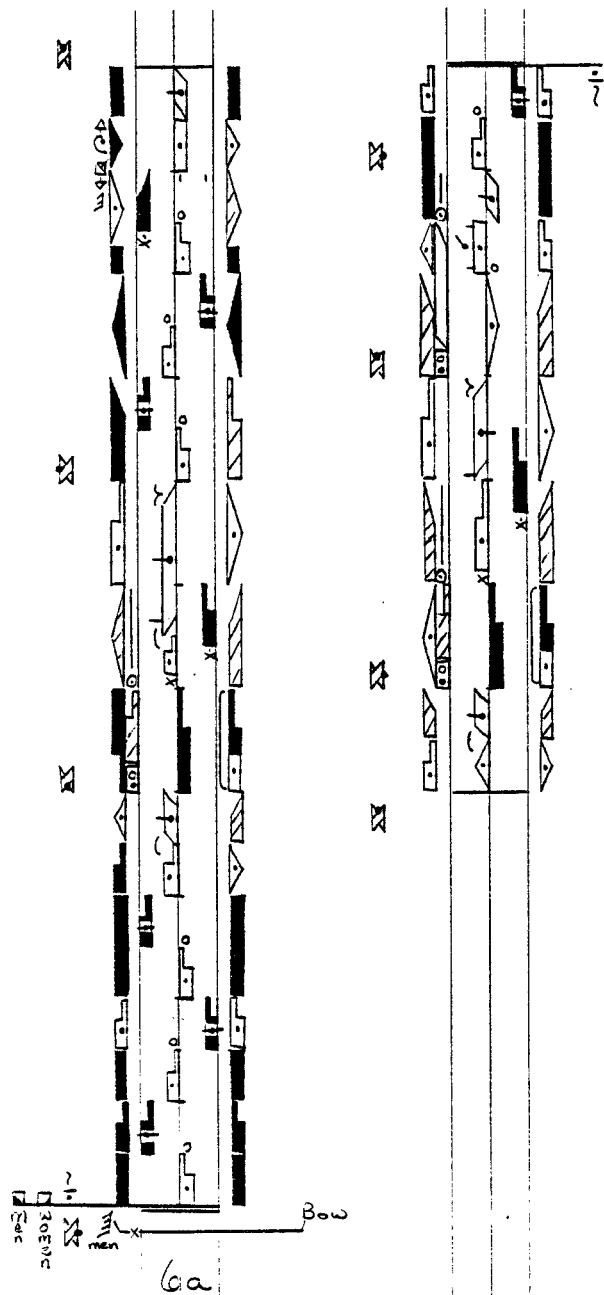


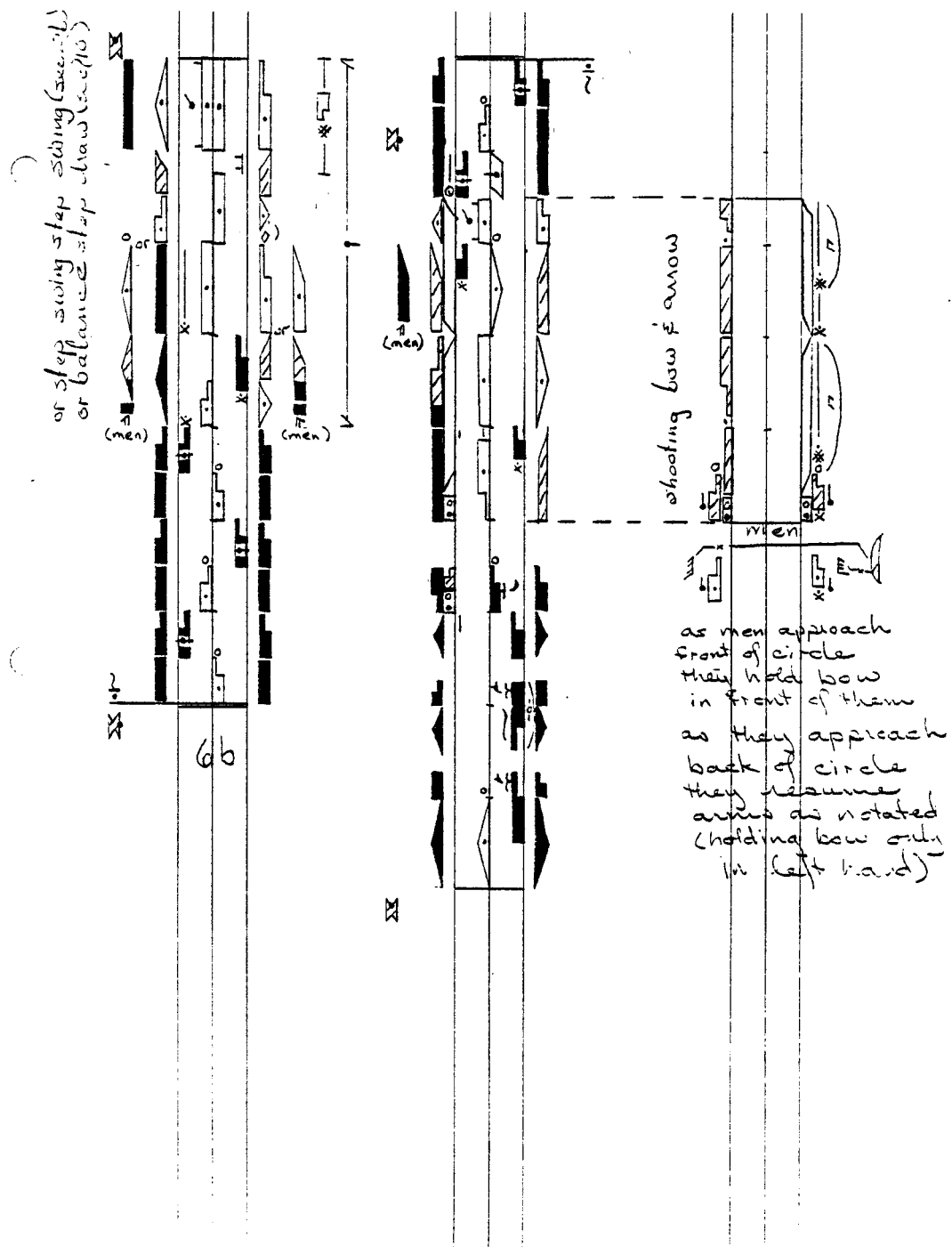


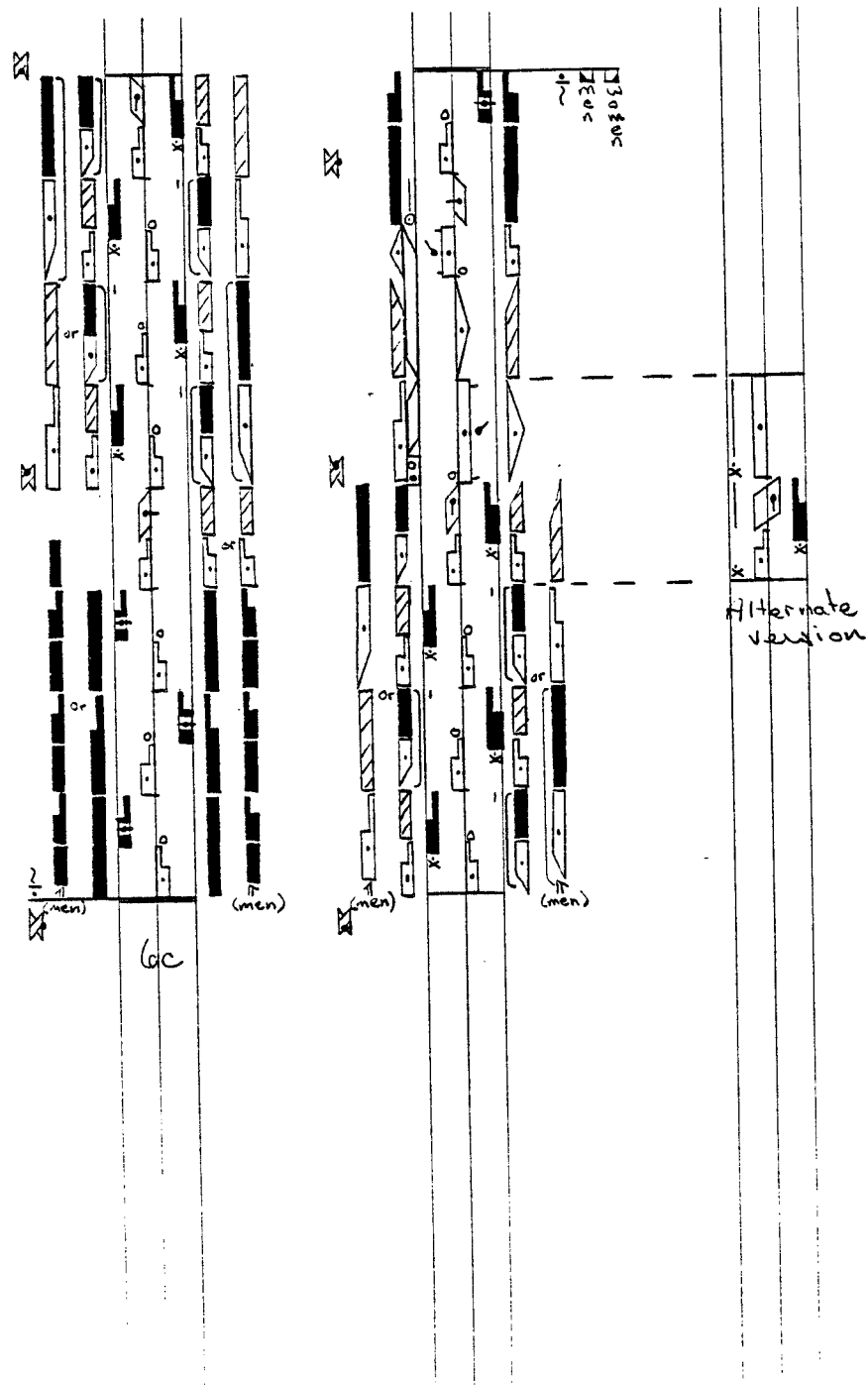


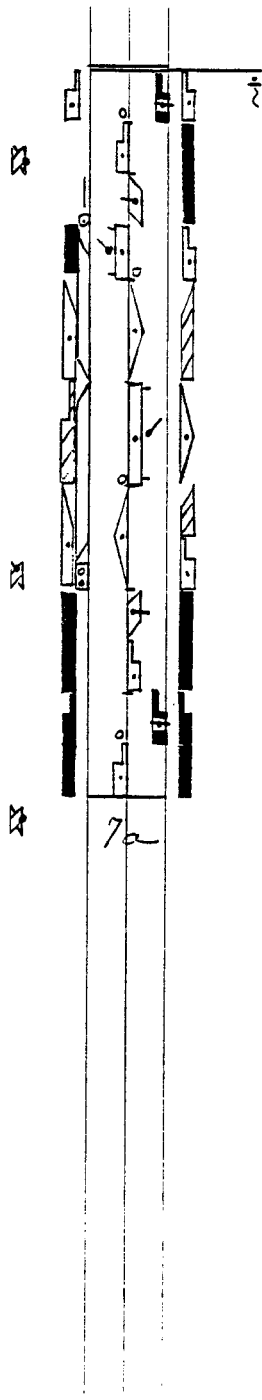
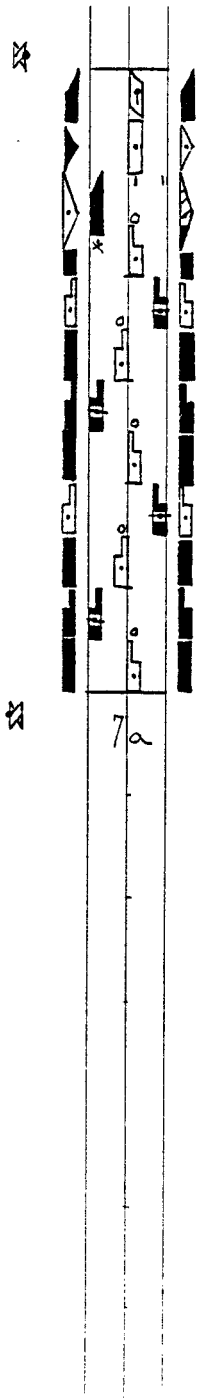
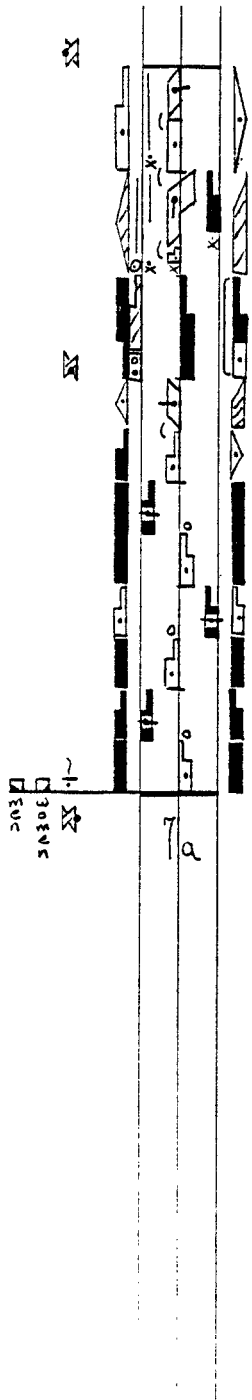












76

men

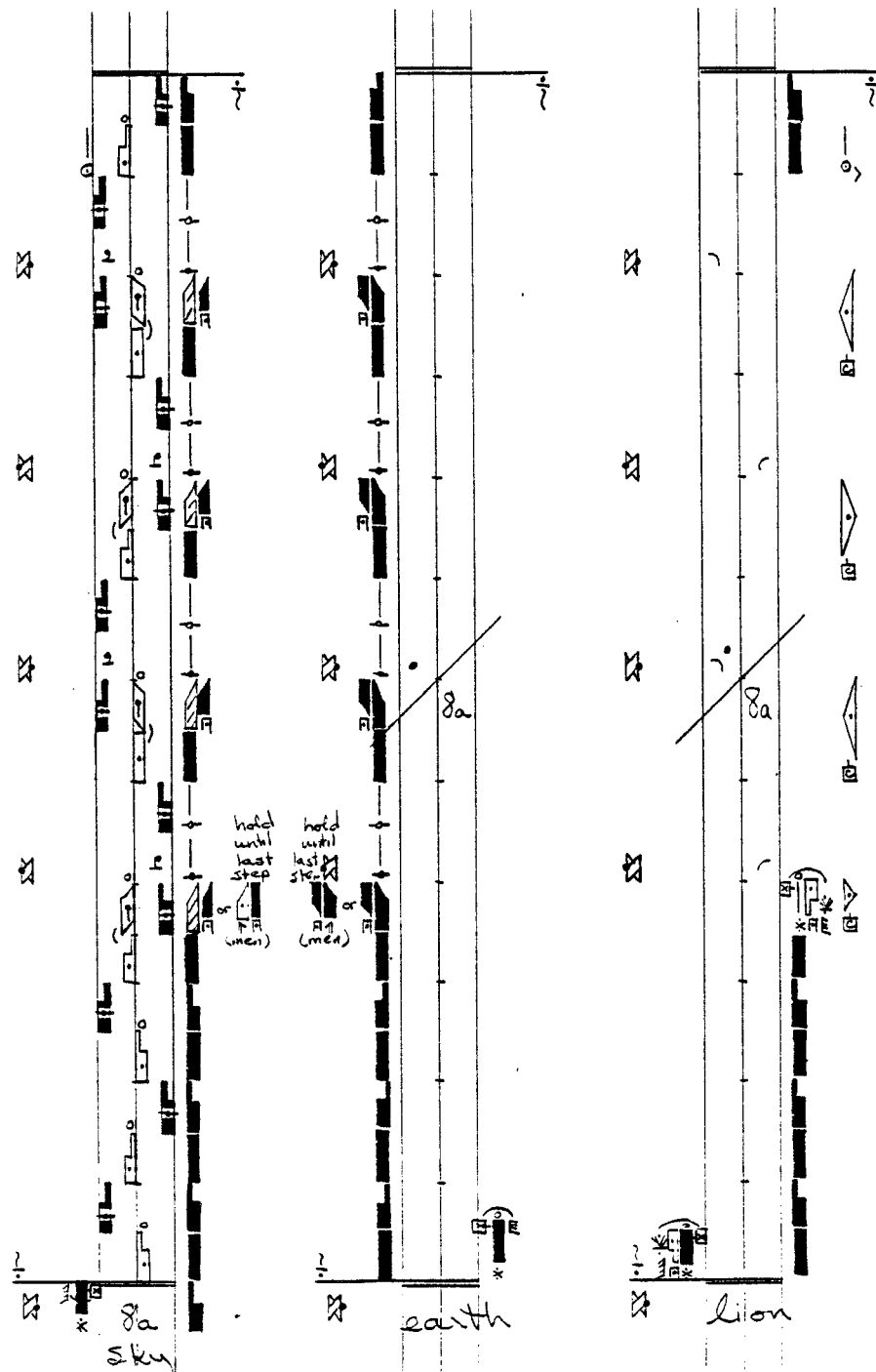
or

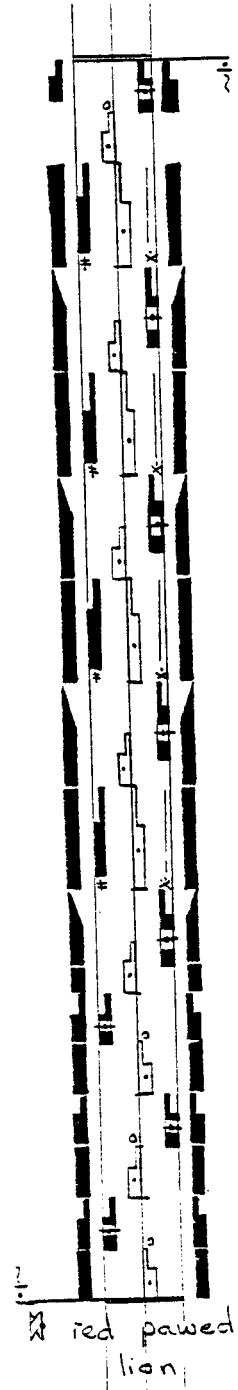
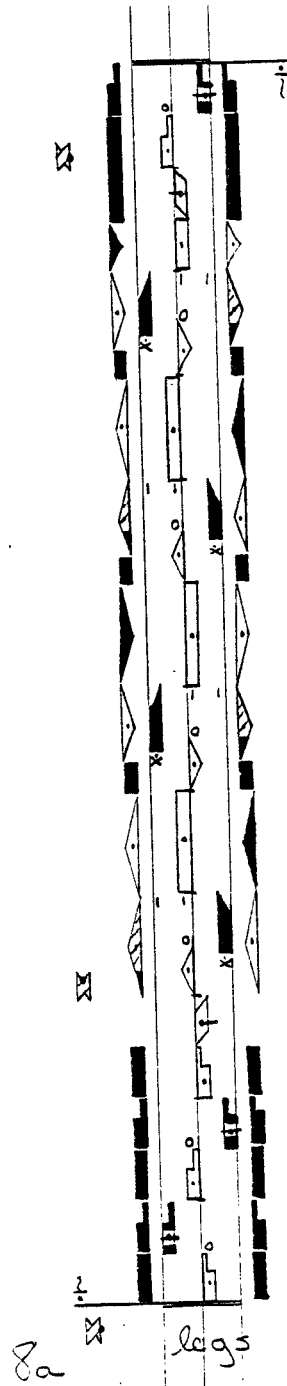
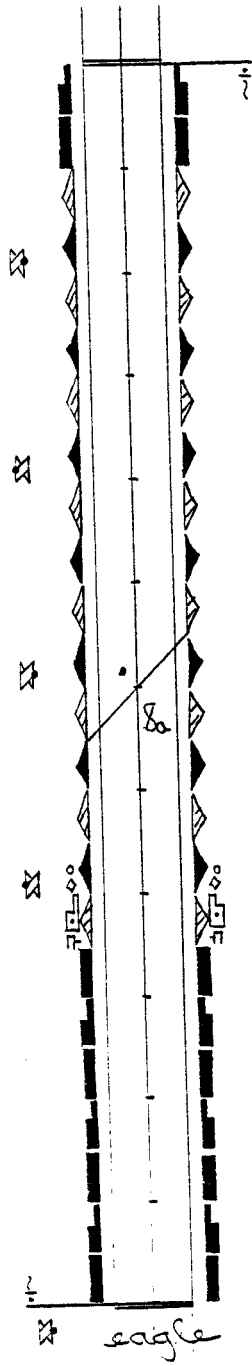
7b

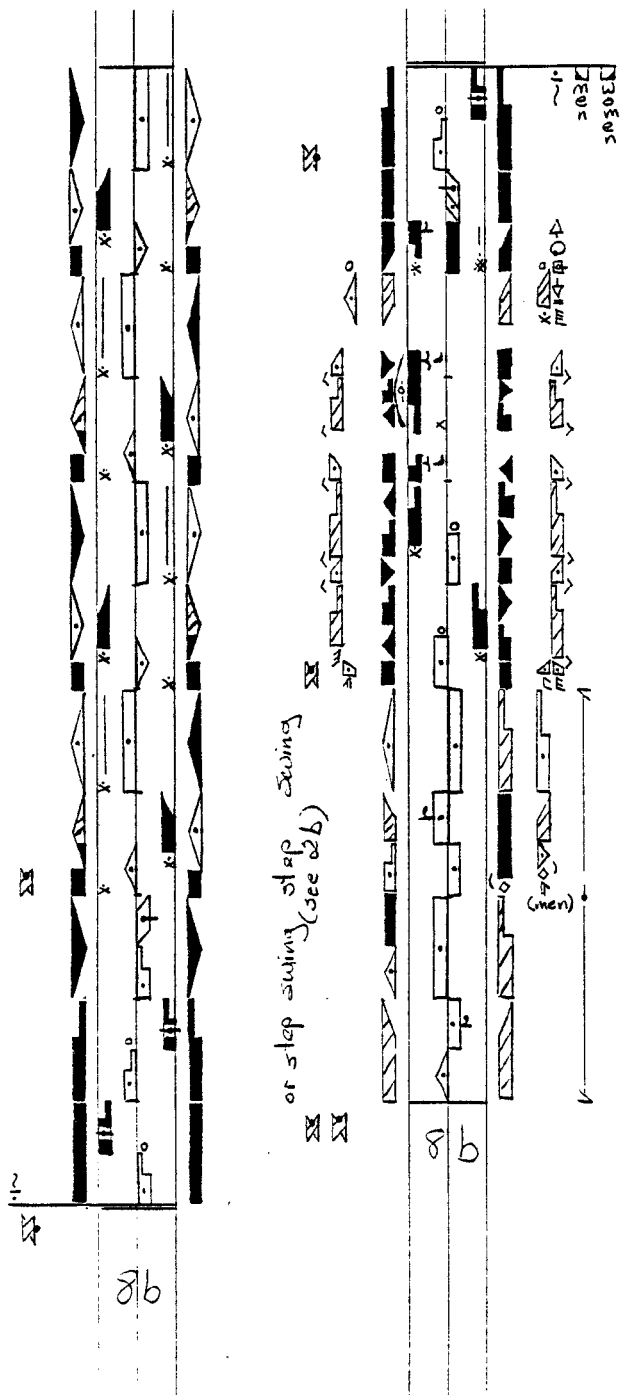
men

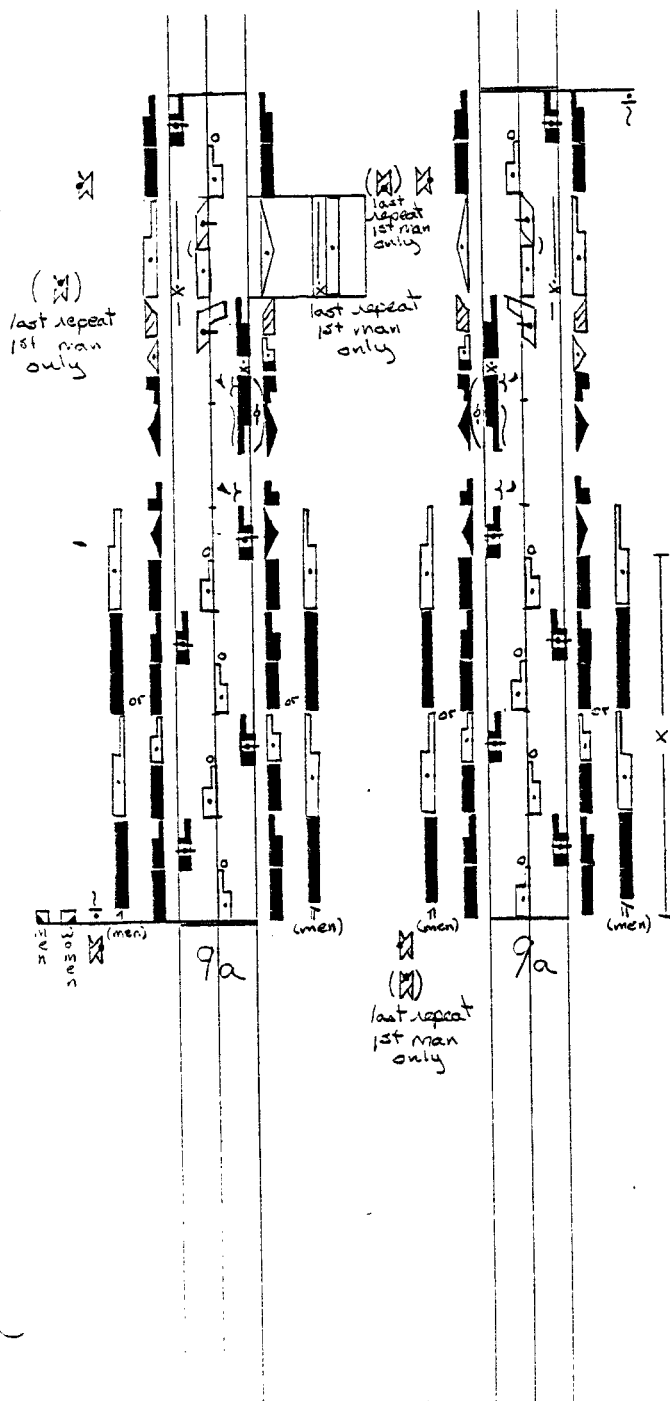
or

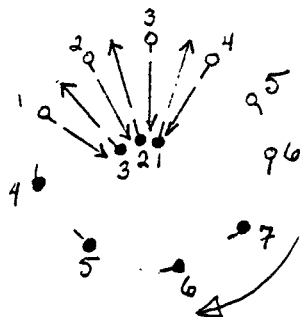
Exit



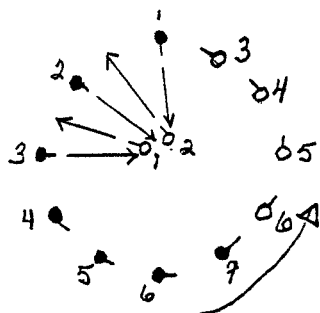




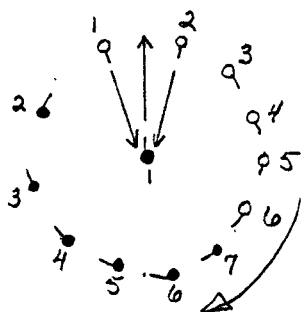




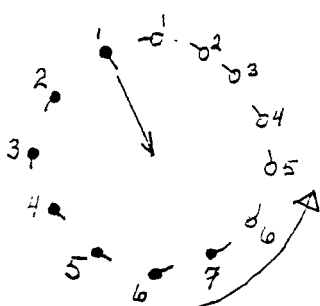
④ next two women
Feed in



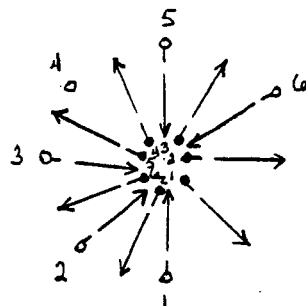
③ next two men
Feed in



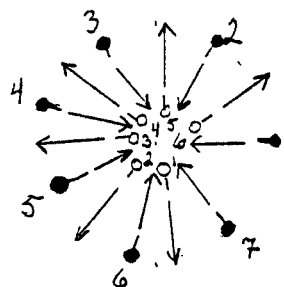
② Begin 9b
First two women
Feed in



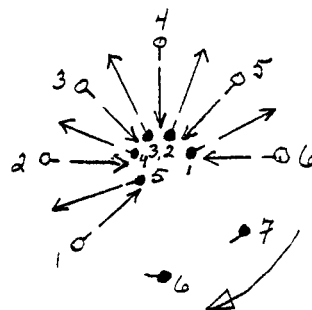
① Second half of
last repeat of



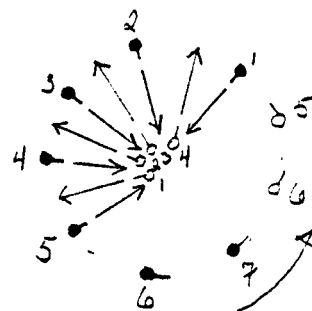
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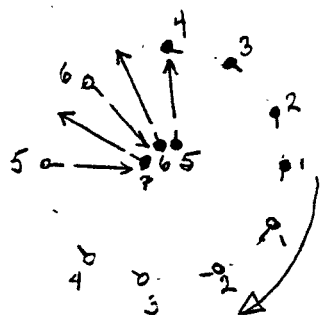
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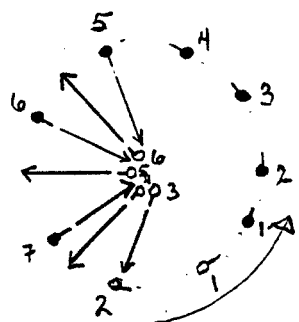
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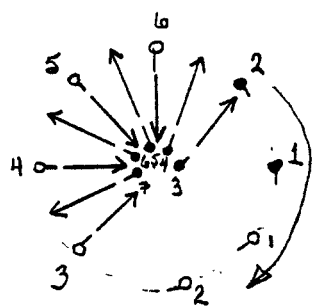
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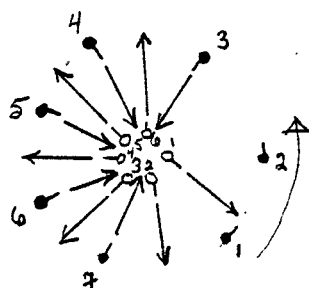
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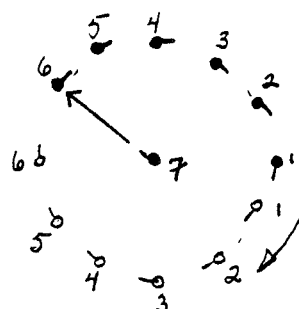
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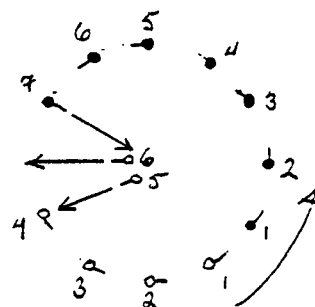
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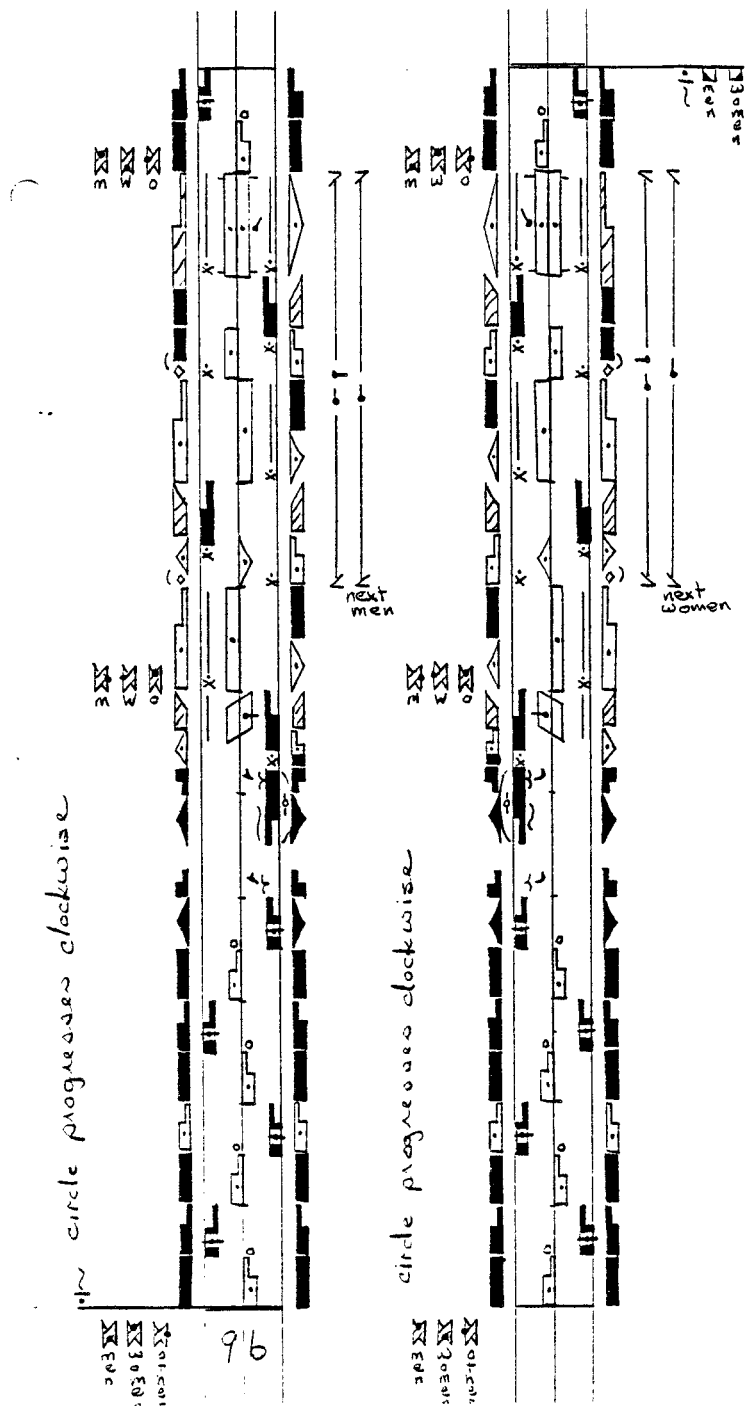
⑨ First two men feed out

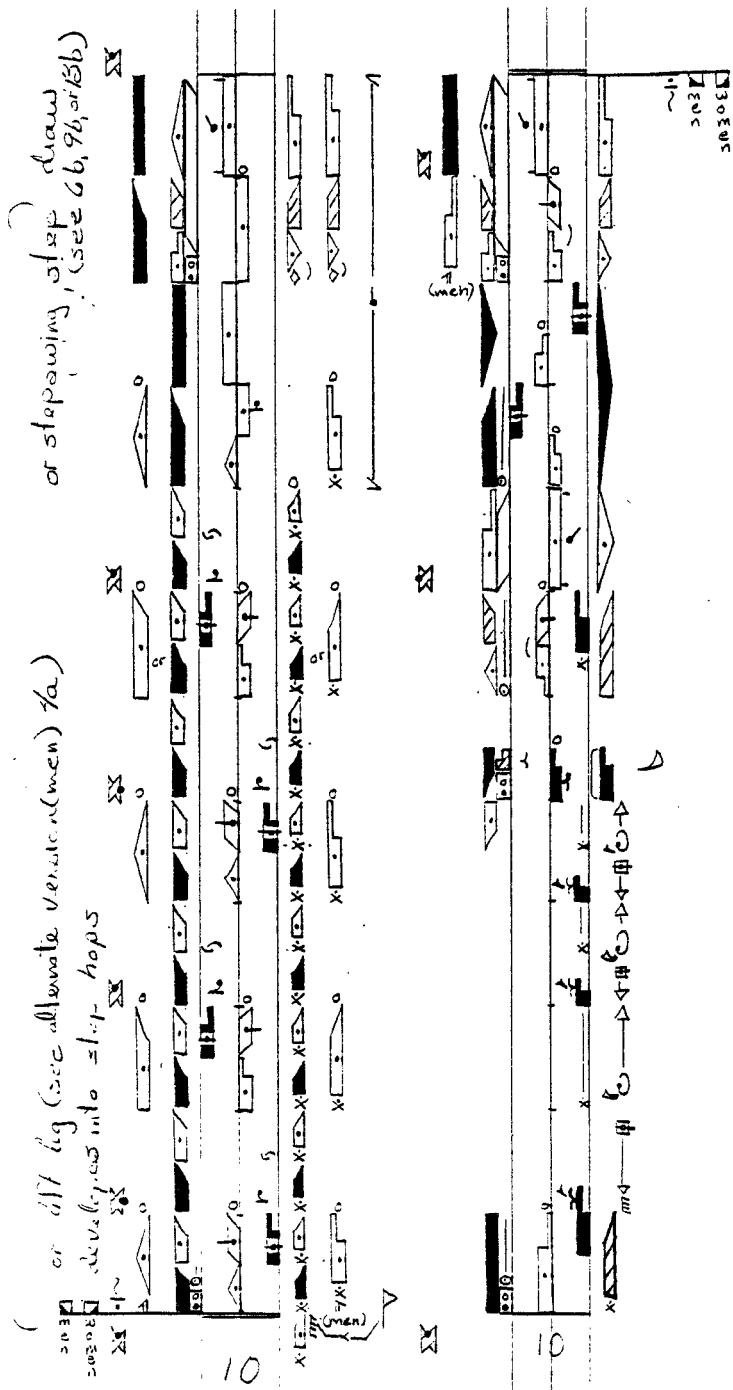


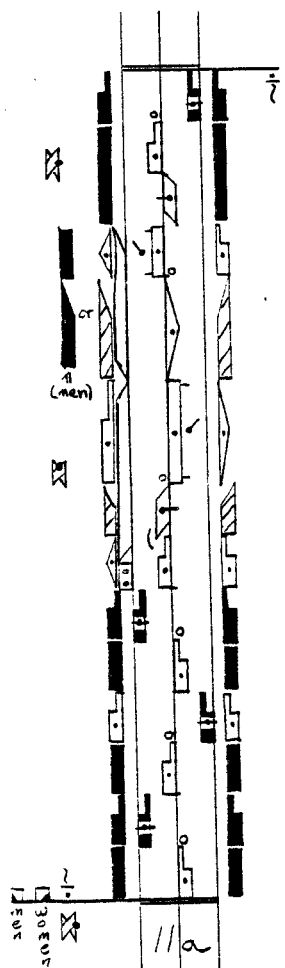
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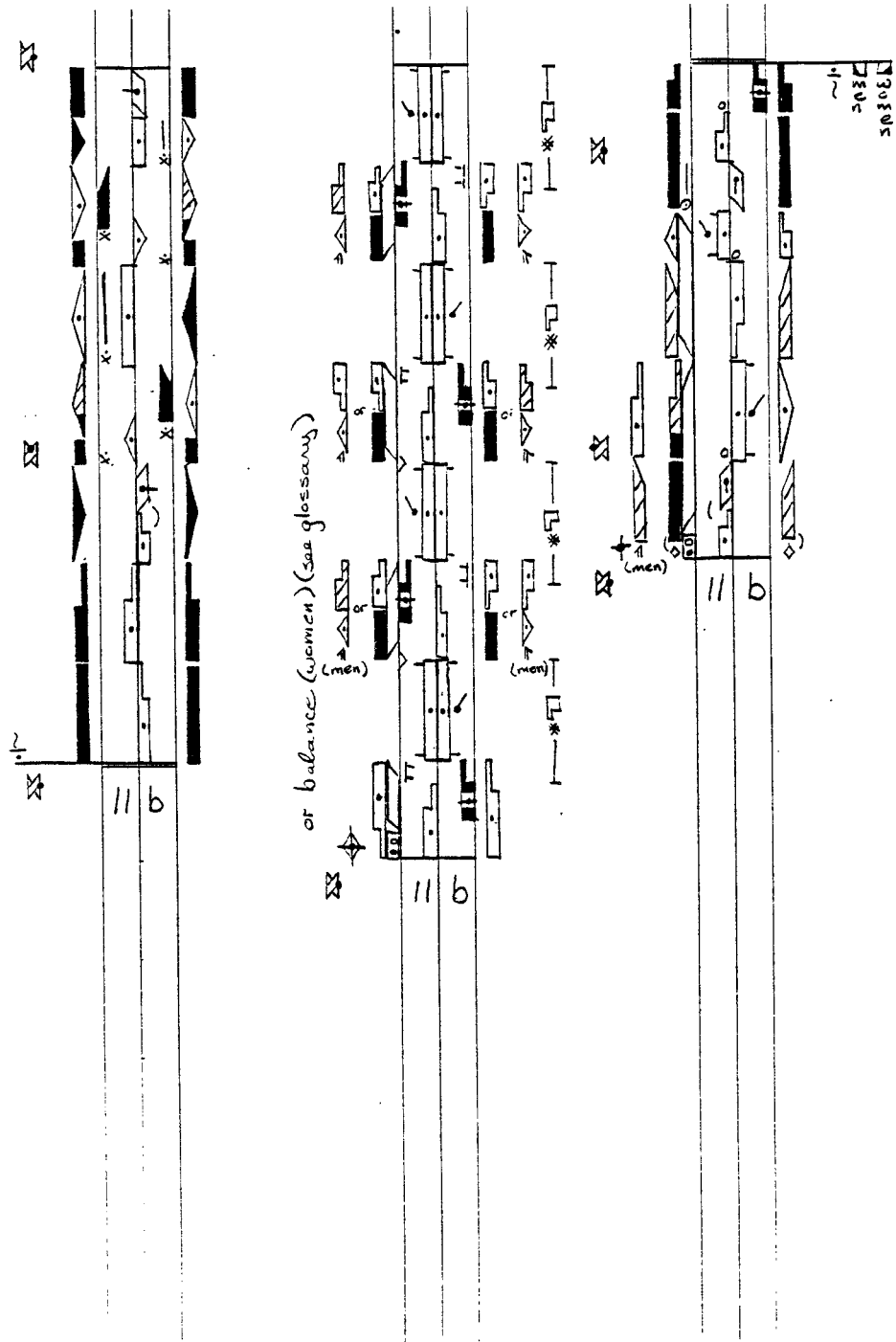


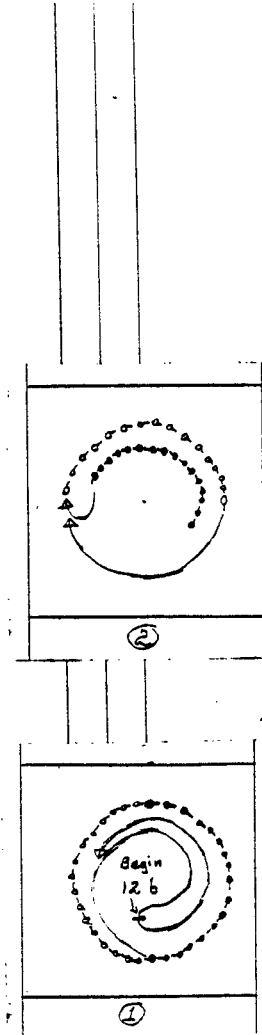
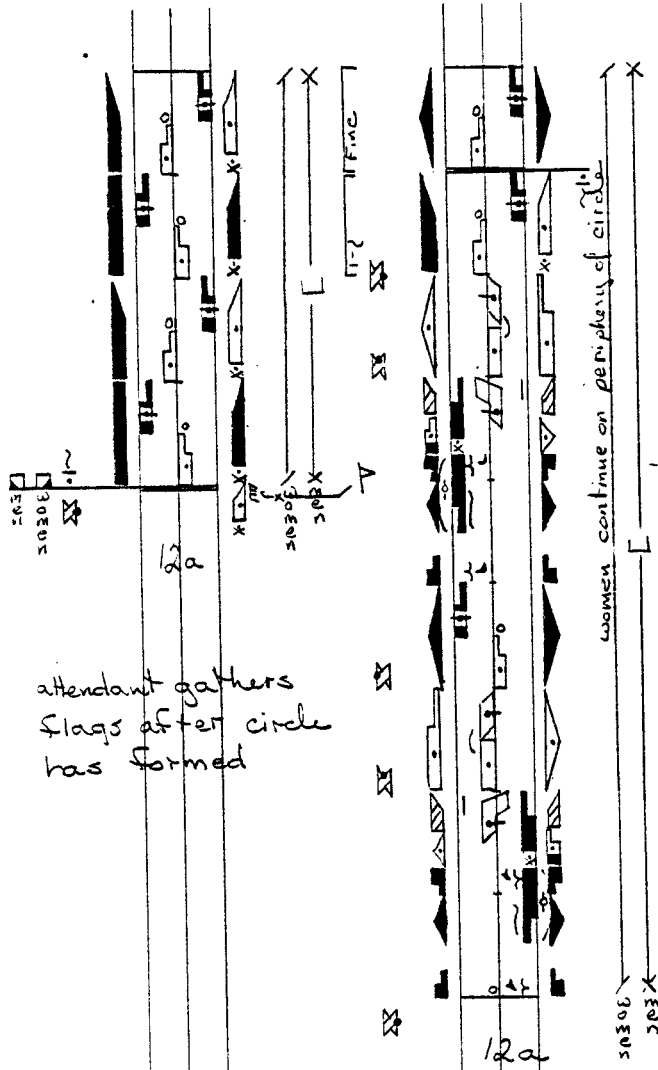
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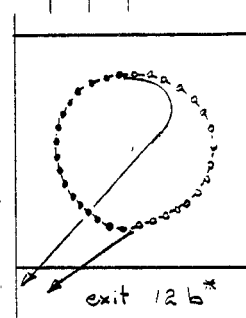
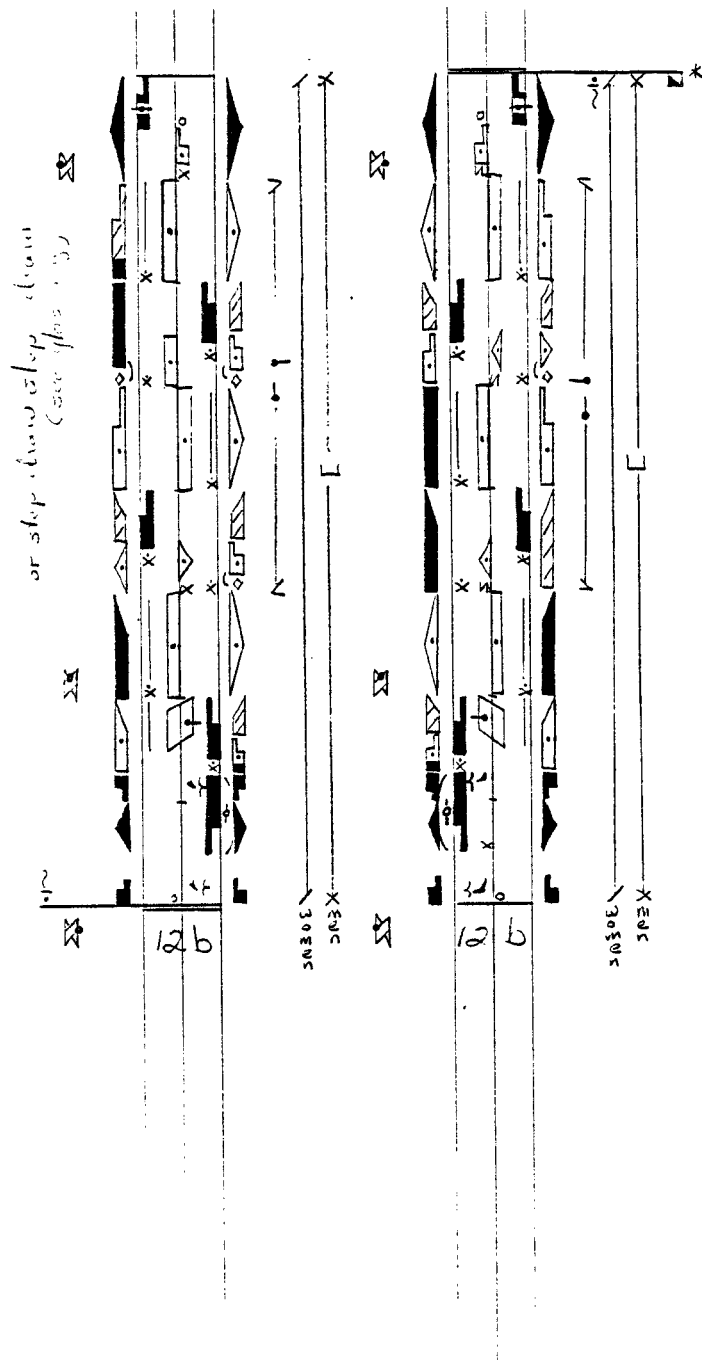


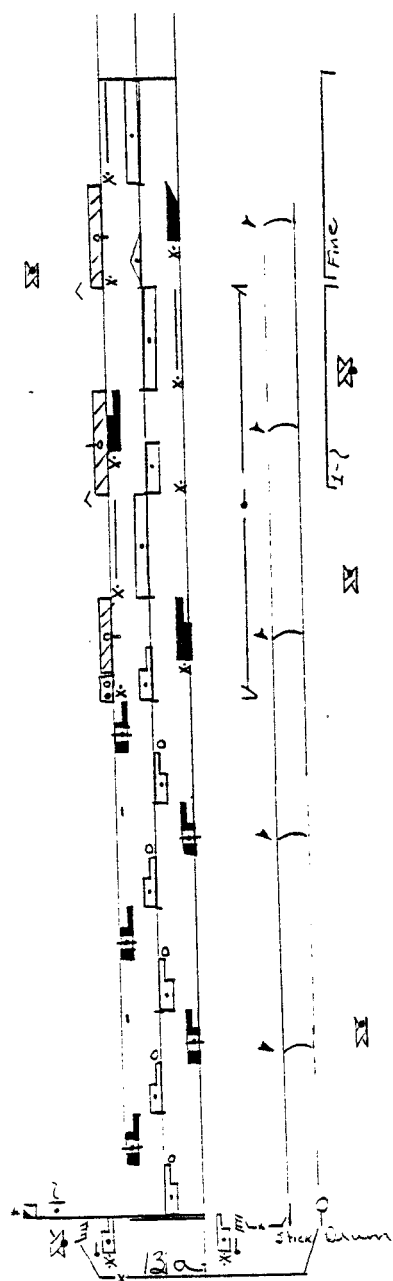




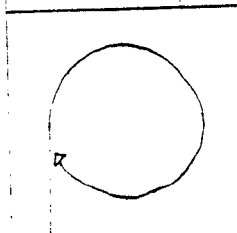
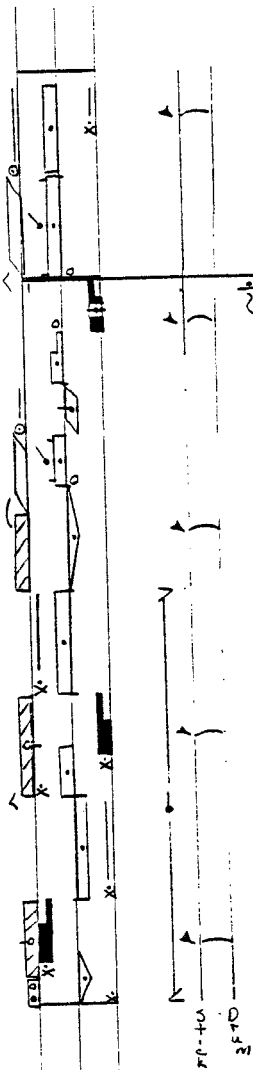








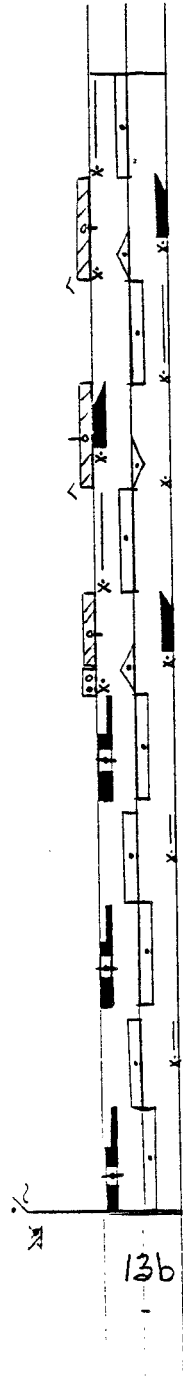
Leader Side Flap
(no drum)



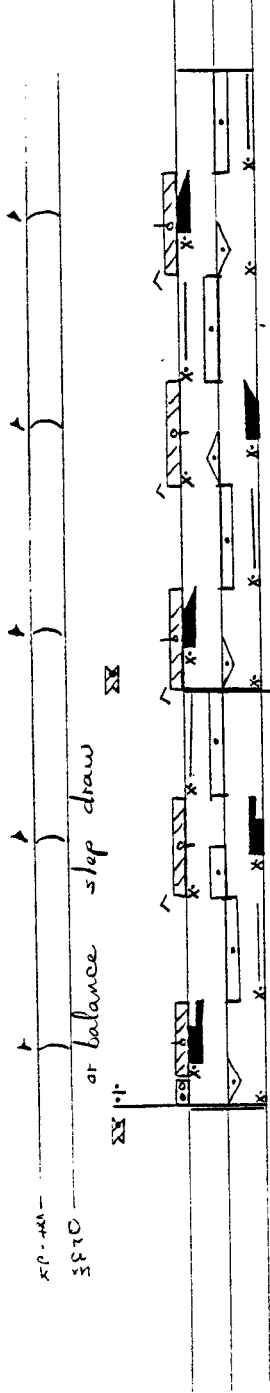
Entrance 13a

hit one side
of drum &
then the other
by rotating
drum in left
hand

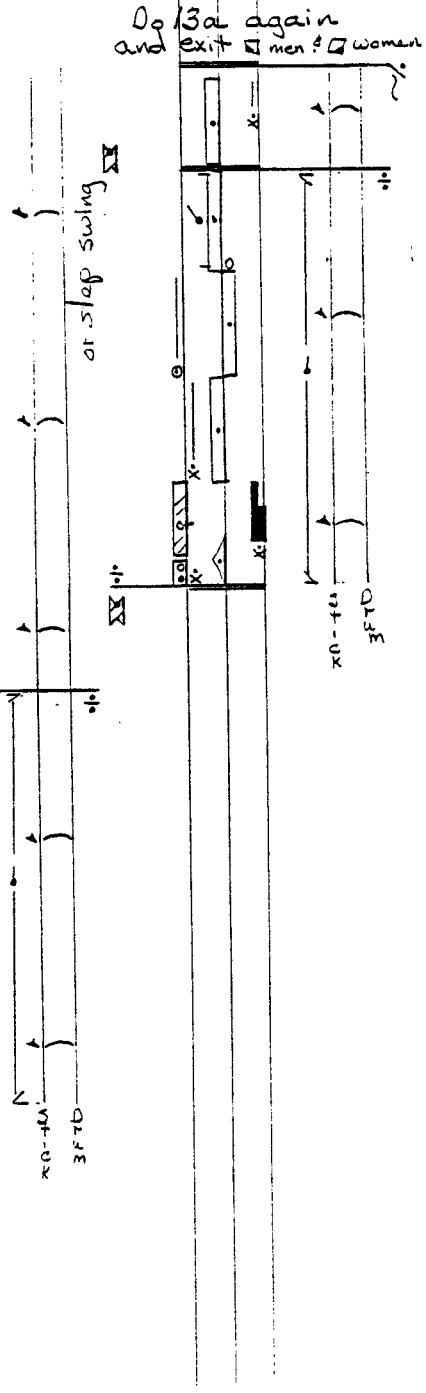
or step draw



or balance step draw



or step swing



GLOSSARY

Ati Yoga (Skt.), Dzog Chen (Tib.) - The highest level of practice according to the Nyingma system.

Avalokitesvara (Skt.) - See Chenrezig.

Bodhisattva (Skt.) - One who vows to work for the well-being and enlightenment of all sentient beings and who vows to remain in Samsara to do so; one who will become a Buddha in the future.

Bodhicitta (Skt.) - The seed of Enlightenment, the mind of Enlightenment.

Begtse (Tib.) - Tibetan god of war.

Bon - Another religion in Tibet, coming from Iran or Eastern Tibet into Central Tibet at the same time as Buddhism was introduced.

Buddha - One who has realized the awakened state of mind, Enlightenment; The Awakened One.

Chakra (Skt.) - A wheel or a circle. Refers to subtle psychic centers in the body.

Cham (Tib.) - The Tibetan religious dance that is performed by members of the monastic community. Often masks are worn.

Chana Dorje (Tib.), Vajrapani (Skt.) - The deity who symbolizes the powerful aspect of the Buddha's teachings.

Chang (Tib.) - Tibetan beer.

Chenrezig (Tib.), Avalokitesvara (Skt.) - The deity symbolizing the compassion of the Buddha, the patron of Tibet. A great Bodhisattva, a future Buddha, the embodiment of compassion, who represents the manifestation of the Buddha's compassionate activity in the world.

Chindaks (Tib.) - Sponsors, patrons.

Chuba (Tib.) - Tibetan dress.

Chorten (Tib.), Stupa (Skt.) - A Buddhist reliquary monument which symbolizes the path of Enlightenment.

Daa Mo (Tib.) - Arrow divination, also called Gesar Mo.

Daka (m.), Dakini (f.) (Skt.), Khandro (Tib.) - Emanations of the wisdom mind which perform the activities of the Buddha, personified in beautiful male and female deities. Called Dwangman (f.) and Dra lha (m.) in the Ling Dro text. Dakas, also called Herukas, are dharma protectors.

Dak nang (Tib.) - An esoteric teaching revealed through a vision.

Damaru - An hourglass drum, often made of two skulls, which when twirled between the thumb and index finger, is struck by two pellets at the end of strings which are attached to the drum's neck.

Dema - One of Gesar's warriors.

Dharma - The doctrine of the Buddha.

Dharmakaya - The omnipresent Buddha's Mind, undefinable, devoid of qualities, spacious.

Dhyani Buddhas - Manifestations of the Buddha which represent the Five Transcendent Wisdoms, aspects of the Buddha Mind.

Di Lutsan - King of the North. One of the Four Evil Kings slain by Gesar.

Dodar (Tib.) - Drum beaten with two sticks on both heads.

Dorje (tib.), Vajra (Skt.) - Thunder bolt and diamond, indicating indestructability.

Dra lhas - Certain protective but not fully enlightened spirits.

Dri - Female yak.

Drung (Tib.) - Epic stories such as Gesar of Ling, enacted by wandering bards.

Dwangman - Dakinis, consorts of the Dralhas.

Dzog Rim - The contemplative phase of meditation, dissolving a visualization.

Empowerment (wong, Tib.) - A tantric initiation wherein a lama transfers to his student the power to practice particular sadhana.

Effort-Shape Theory - A system of movement analysis devised by Rudolph von Laban in which an activity is observed in terms of its relation to time, weight, space, and flow, and the shape of the path of the movement.

Five Poisons - Ignorance, Attachment, Aversion, Pride, Jealousy.

Four Activities - Pacifying, increasing, subduing, and overpowering.
The four types of Buddhist magical practices.

Five Wisdoms - The five aspects of the Buddha's Wisdom Mind, personified as the Five Dhyani Buddhas.

Gardi - One of Gesar's ministers.

Gau - Amulet boxes made to contain relics.

Godown - A grainary storehouse.

Gesar Mo - See Daa mo.

Gong Ter - Concealed teachings received in meditation.

Guru (Skt.) - See Lama.

Gyaling - A shawm.

Heruka - Dharma Protectors, see Daka.

Hor - A place in East Tibet or Szechuan, where Gesar conquered an evil king.

Jampelyang (Tib.), Manjusri (Skt.) - The deity who personifies Wisdom.
The great Bodhisattva wisdom aspect of the Buddha.

Kangling (Tib.) - Trumpet made of human thighbone.

Kham - Area of East Tibet.

Khandro (Tib.) - See Dakini.

Dharma - The law of cause and effect, which governs phenomenal existence.

Kuanti - Chinese god of war.

Kuntu Zangpo (Tib.), Samantabhadra (Skt.) - The Primordial Buddhas according to the Nyingmapa Sect.

Kupse (Tib.) - Twisted fried cookies.

Kurkah - King of Hor - One of the Four Evil Kings slain by Gesar.

Kye Rim - The generative phase of meditation, producing a visualization.

Labanotation - The system of analyzing and recording movements devised by Rudolph von Laban.

Lama (Tib.), Guru (Skt.) - The spiritual teacher capable of leading one to Enlightenment.

Lha Totori Nyentsen - Fourth Century Tibetan king who worshipped a golden stupa and at that time untranslatable Buddhist texts, which fell from the sky onto the roof of his castle.

Ling bu (Tib.) - Flute.

Makara (Skt.), Chu Sin (Tib.) - A long nosed mythological creature.

Mala (Skt.) - A rosary of 108 beads.

Mani - OM MANI PADMA HUM, the mantra of Chenrezig which is recited by most Tibetans.

Melong (Tib.) - Mirror.

Mipham - A great nineteenth century eclectic scholar who envisioned Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo.

Momo - Stamed meat-filled dumplings.

Naga (Skt.), Lu (Tib.) - Water spirit.

Nga (Tib.) - Drum.

Nirmanakaya (Skt.) - The emanation body of the Buddha which he manifests in the physical world in order to help living beings.

Nirvana - The state beyond suffering, birth and death. The goal of the spiritual path according to Buddhist teachings.

Norbu Gakhil (Tib.) - A whirling symbol.

Nyingmapa (Tib.) - The oldest sect of Tibetan Buddhism which follows the teachings of Guru Padma Sambhava.

Padma Sambhava - The great Tantric master who secured Buddhism in Tibet in the eighth century A.D.

Panchen Lama - The head tulku in residence at Tashilumpo Monastery who is considered to be an incarnation of the Amitabha Buddha by members of the Gelugpa sect.

Pandit - A great teacher, a Sanskrit scholar.

Phing (Tib.) - Cellophane noodles.

Prayer flag - A cloth flag printed with prayers that are thought to be activated by the wind.

Puja (Skt.) - A religious offering ceremony.

Regent - A highly powerful lama who governs for the Dalai Lama when His Holiness is too young to do so.

Rinpoche - A title given to incarnate lamas; literally, "precious one."

Sadhana (Skt.) - A liturgical text that is practiced by a yogi, or a practitioner. Also a meditation using this text and the accompanying visualizations.

Sakyamuni - The historical Buddha of this age who realized Enlightenment through meditation.

Sambogakaya - The enjoyment body of the Buddha which manifests on the highest plane of existence in order to teach the great Bodhisattvas. Its essence is luminosity.

Sa ter - A religious book hidden in the earth, in a cave, a temple, etc.

Satham - King of the South. One of the Four Evil Kings slain by Gesar.

Seed Syllable - A specific syllable which represents a deity and the mantra of that deity.

Shambhala - A mythical land in the north where Gesar and King Rigden Drakpo now reside, but will leave in this dark age to rescue.

Singtri - King of the West. One of the Four Evil Kings slain by Gesar.

Silnyang - Cymbals.

Sona - Oboe type double reed instrument.

Srongtsan Gampo - Tibet's 32nd king who ruled in the seventh century. He was the first king to adopt and spread Buddhism and to commission a written form of the Tibetan language.

Stupa (Skt.) - See Chorten.

Sutras - The teachings of the Buddha.

Tanka - A scroll painting depicting religious subjects.

Tantra - The term for Vajrayana Buddhism which is based on a series of esoteric texts called tantras which include ritual practices using mantra, prostration, mudras, visualization, and mandala.

Thugpa (Tib.) - Soup.

Tingmomo (Tib.) - Heavy, doughy steamed buns.

Terton (Tib.) - Discoverer of secret hidden teachings.

Tonmi Sambota - Minister of King Srongtsan Gampo who succeeded in forming a written Tibetan language precisely translatable from the Sanskrit.

Torma - Conical shaped offering cakes.

Trilbu (Tib.) - Bell.

Triple Gem - The Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha.

Trisong Deutsan - King of Tibet during the eighth century who established Buddhism as the official religion of Tibet.

Tsampa (Tib.) - Parched barley flour.

Vajrapani (Skt.) - See Chana Dorje.

Vajrayana - Diamond Vehicle; also a Mantrayana and Tantrayana. The most sublime teachings of the Buddha which, if practiced with the guidance of a spiritual teacher, can enable one to realize Enlightenment. These teachings are contained in the Buddhist Tantras. Tibetans believe them to be the highest teachings of the Buddha.

Vidyadharas - Accomplished Tantric practitioners.

Vinaya (Skt.) - The moral code expounded by the Buddha.

Wisdom Mind - The enlightened mind of awareness.

Yak - A shaggy beast of burden, similar to an ox.

Yang-ter (Tib.) - A revealed teaching which was first interrupted then hidden.

Yidam (Tib.) - A tutelary deity who represents the special manifestation of the Buddha Mind.

FOOTNOTES

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³Rene de Nebesky Wojkowitz, Tibetan Religious Dances (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1976), p. 32.

⁴Sir Charles Bell, The People of Tibet (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 91.

⁵R. A. Stein, Tibetan Civilization (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 46.

⁶Ibid., pp. 48-49.

⁷Bell, loc. cit.

⁸Stein, op. cit., pp. 38-39.

⁹Op. cit., p. 49.

¹⁰Op. cit., p. 192.

¹¹Sir Charles Bell, The Religion of Tibet (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), p. 14.

¹²Stein, op. cit., p. 279.

¹³Jeanette Snyder, "A Preliminary Study of Lhamo," Asian Music Vol. X-2, Tibet issue (1979), pp. 25-28.

¹⁴Rakra Tethong, "Conversations on Tibetan Musical Traditions," Asian Music, Vol. X-2, Tibet issue (1979), p. 8.

¹⁵Michael A. Kimbell, "Tibetan Folk Music," Gesar, Vol. VI, No. 1 (Spring 1979), p. 49.

¹⁶Lama Kunzang, "Garcham, Sacred Tibetan Dances," Orgyen Nyingma Journal, double issue No. 22-23 (Autumn 1975), p. 79.

¹⁷Rakra Tethong, "Conversations on Tibetan Musical Traditions," Asian Music, Vol. X-2, Tibet issue (1979), p. 19.

¹⁸Chogyam Trungpa, Born in Tibet (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1971), p. 92.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 92-3.

²⁰Lobsang Lhalungpa, "The Spiritual Path of Music and Dance," Gesar, Vol. III, No. 1 (Fall, 1975), p. 19.

²¹W. Y. Evans-Wentz, Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 282.

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²³Rene de Nebesky Wojkowitz, Oracles and Demons of Tibet (Graz: Akademische Druk, 1975), pp. 430-431.

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²⁵Jeanette Snyder; "A Preliminary Study of Lhamo," Asian Music Vol. X-2, Tibet issue (1979), p. 23.

²⁶Interview of Norbu Tshering, opera master, in The Tibetan Music, Dance, and Drama Society Newsletter, No. 6, September 1978, pp. 2-8.

²⁷Last Fall, before a ceremony at a Tibetan temple in Massachusetts, many Westerners and I helped several Tibetans make momos. We all struggled as we watched our creations crumble while theirs looked like perfect dough packages.

²⁸Nik Douglas, Tantra Yoga (New Delhi: Munishiram Manoharlal, 1971), p. 5.

²⁹John Blofeld, The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1970), pp. 31-32.

³⁰Carl Jung, Mandala Symbolism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 4.

³¹Rhoda Kellog, "Stages of Development in Preschool Art," in Child Art (Berkeley: Diablo Press, 1966), p. 30.

³²Jung, loc. cit.

³³Jose and Miriam Arguelles, Mandala (Berkeley: Shambala Publications, 1972), p. 13.

³⁴Tarthang Tulku, "Entering the Mandala," Crystal Mirror, Vol. II (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1972), p. 62.

³⁵Mircea Eliade, Myth, Rites and Symbols, Vol. I, Mircea Eliade Reader, Wendell C. Beane and William G. Doty, eds., 2 Volumes (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 34.

³⁶Ralph L. Beals and Harry Hoijer, An Introduction to Anthropology (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1973), p. 461.

³⁷Eliade, op. cit., p. 134.

³⁸Arguelles, op. cit., p. 84.

³⁹Eliade, op. cit., p. 133.

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⁴³Thinley Norbu, The Small Golden Key (privately published, 1977), p. 34.

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⁴⁵Robert Ekvall, Religious Observances in Tibet (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 166.

⁴⁶Dudjom Rinpoche, "Great Bliss Fulfilling All Wishes," from The Profound Path of the Dakinis' Heart Essence, Zab Lam Khandro Tug-Tig, photocopied Tibetan manuscript (New York: Yeshe Nyingpo, Inc.), pp. 23-24.

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⁵⁰Thinley Norbu, op. cit., pp. 17-19.

⁵¹Dale Saunders, Mudra (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1960), pp. 8-9.

⁵²Saunders, op. cit., p. 12.

⁵³Govinda, loc. cit.

⁵⁴Thinley Norbu, op. cit., p. 3.

⁵⁵Lama Anagarika Govinda, "The Significance of the Prayer Wheel (Mani Khorlo)," Gesar, Vol. IV, No. 3 (Fall, 1977), pp. 23-24.

⁵⁶Curt Sachs, World History of Dance (New York: Norton and Co., 1963), p. 144.

⁵⁷L. Austine Waddell, Tibetan Buddhism (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1972), p. 420.

⁵⁸Lama Anagarika Govinda, Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism (London: Rider and Co., 1969), p. 20.

⁵⁹Shega, Jamtrul Rinpoche, a private teaching on Ling Gesar, 1975.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Alexandra David-Neel, The Superhuman Life of Gesar of Ling (London: Rider and Co., 1959), p. 88.

⁶²Tarthang Tulku, "Gesar: Awareness through Myth," Gesar, Vol. V, No. 2 (Summer, 1978), pp. 20-21.

⁶³R. A. Stein, Tibetan Civilization (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 279.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 188-89.

⁶⁵R. A. Stein, L'épopée tibétain de Gesar dans la version lamaïque de Ling (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), p. 1.

⁶⁶Stein, Tibetan Civilization, op. cit., p. 280.

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⁶⁹Ibid., p. 88.

⁷⁰Marion Duncan, Customs and Superstitions of Tibetans (London: The Mitre Press, 1964), p. 17.

⁷¹Khamtrul Rinpoche, private interview, Tashjong, India, June, 1975.

⁷²David-Neel, loc. cit., pp. 18-19.

⁷³Ibid., p. 33.

⁷⁴Manly Palmer Hall, "The Arhats of Buddhism," The Adepts in Eastern Esoteric Traditions (Los Angeles: Philosophical Society, Inc., 1953), p. 102.

⁷⁵David-Neel, op. cit., p. 270.

⁷⁶Ekvall, op. cit., p. 263.

⁷⁷Tarthang Tulku, footnote to "Mind is the Root," by Mipham Lama, Crystal Mirror, Vol. III (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1974), p. 3.

⁷⁸Eva M. Dargyey, The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1977), p. 62.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 63.

⁸⁰Khamtrul Rinpoche, Tashijong, loc. cit.

⁸¹Norbu Sangpo, a letter written in March, 1979.

⁸²Carl Wolz, op. cit., p. 2.

⁸³A descendant of a lineage can be determined in two ways: by blood relationship or by karmic relationship. Pa la's family was somehow related to the King of Ling (an actual living person who claimed to be a descendant of Gesar's adopted son). I am considered in the Lineage of Gesar because I came to study the dance, and because this study fulfilled a dream by a lama.

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⁸⁵Robert Garfius, lecture on Burmese Music at Asia Society, New York, March 2, 1979.

⁸⁶Inspired by Joann W. Kealiinohomoku's Dance Data Guide, "Field Guides," CORD Research Annual VI (1972), pp. 251-53.

⁸⁷Labanotation information sheets (New York: Dance Notation Bureau, 1975).

Footnotes for Illustrations

¹ Author.

² Ibid.

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⁵ The Museum, Vol. 24, No. 243 (Spring-Summer 1972), p. 3.

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⁷ Fosco Maraini, Secret Tibet (London: Hutchinson & co., 1954), p. 129.

⁸ John Scofield, "Bhutan Crowns a New Dragon King," National Geographic, Vol. 146, No. 4 (October 1974), p. 565.

⁹ Luther Jerstad, Mani Rimdu (Calcutta: Oxford and IBH Publishing Co., 1969), p. 163.

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¹¹ Jeanette Snyder, "A Preliminary Study of Lhamo," Asian Music, Vol. X-2, Tibet issue (1979), p. 36.

¹² F. Sierksma, Tibet's Terrifying Deities (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1966), p. 224.

¹³ Hammond Headline World Atlas (Maplewood, N.J.: Hammond, Inc.), p. 18.

¹⁴ Author.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

- ¹⁹ Ibid.
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- ²³ Mandala Calendar (West Somerville, Mass.: Illuminations/Amazing Grace, 1978).
- ²⁴ Ibid.
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- ²⁶ "Tibetan Aid Project," Gesar, Vol. V, No. 4 (Winter 1977), p. 55.
- ²⁷ Author.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ "Vajra Guru Mantra," Crystal Mirror, Vol. 11 (1972), p. 23.
- ³⁰ W. Y. Evans-Wentz, The Tibetan Book of the Dead (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 119.
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- ³² Cover, Gesar, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 1974).
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- ³⁴ Cover, Gesar, Vol. V, No. 3.
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- ³⁷ Author.
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- ³⁹ Author.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Postcard, Das Studio, Darjeeling, India.

⁴⁸ Tupten Jigme Norbu and Colin Turnbull, Tibet (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1968), p. 85.

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⁵² The Section on Gesar, Collected Works of Mipham, Mipham Namgyal Gyatso, n.p.

⁵³ Story of Gesar, "The Transformation of Brug-mo," Part 1, Gesar, Vol. IV, No. 3 (Fall 1977), p. 31.

⁵⁴ Michael Kimbell, "Sacred Sound: The Ritual Music of Tibet," Gesar, Vol. V, No. 4 (Winter 1977), pp. 23-25.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Lobsang Lhalungpa, "The Spiritual Path of Music and Dance," Gesar, Vol. III, No. 1 (Fall 1975), p. 17.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Author.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ibid.

⁶⁴ibid.

⁶⁵ibid.

⁶⁶Cover, Gesar News, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Winter 1973).

⁶⁷Cover, Gesar, Vol. V, No. 4 (Winter 1975).

⁶⁸Ida Zietlin, Gessar Khan (New York: George H. Doran and Co., 1927), p. 179.

⁶⁹⁻⁷⁰Zhong Shuzhi, "A New Tibetan Dance Drama," Chinese Literature no. 11 (1979), pp. 110-12.

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"Ceylon, Singapore and Darjeeling Dances" 11 min.
Denishawn

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"Religious and Ceremonial Dances of Tibet" unedited, 60 min.

"Tibeter, Zentralasien Kindertanze, sPu-gu-i rsted-than rGyug-sted",
1970, 6 min.
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Encyclopedia Cinematographica (En. Cin.)

"Tibeter, Zentralasien, Osttiber Tanze buddhistischer Pilger", 1962
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unsynchronized phonotape, En. Cin.

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1970, 4½ min. dance song by group accompanied by dramien and flute. En
Cin.

"Tibeter, Zentralasien; Tlertanz Phye-me leb, Senge" 1970, 4 min.
Butterfly and snow lion dance. En. Cin.

"Tibeter Zentralasien: Volktanze, Khams gSum dBan-'Dus - gZhas*Tshig
und gYag-Krab-Pa" 1970, 4 min. Women's song, dancer with dramien;
animal pantomime dance. En. Cin.

"Tibeter Zentralasien; Volktanz, dBus-gTsan-gZas, MDo-stod, mDo-sMad"
197-, 5 min. dance song by group accompanied by dramien. En. Cin.

"Tsham-Tanz in einem tibetanischen Lama-Kloster: Kumbum Dschamba Ling"
1967, 11½ min. dGelu pa sect cham dances performed in Dec. 1926 in
Kumbum Monastery, NE Tibet. En. Cin.

APPENDICES



Fig. 68. Gesar

APPENDIX I

FILM SCRIPT

Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo is a ritual dance performed to a poetic religious text which invokes the deity Ling Gesar. The dance performance, generally considered an offering of music, and a visual offering to please the eye, is offered to Gesar as an invitation to enter the dance area and bless the dancers and spectators. The offerings of body, speech, and mind are the dancer's strong and beautiful dance, his melodious song, and his fervent devotional thoughts. In the universal circle of the dance mandala, all wonderful things are offered to the deity Gesar, in order to obtain merit and blessings for all sentient beings. Once the dance is consecrated, it becomes the sacred mandala within which the dancers are blessed, by recognizing themselves to be the same as the deities, dancing in their Buddha realm.

The dance is a meditational practice that contains constantly shifting levels of realization. It is a mandala in which the phenomenal and the noumenal are united. The dancers first visualize the deities and then become them; they are both practitioners and deities. The dancing takes place in the outer dance ground and is the activity of realization within their own minds. Eventually, the dancers realize the dance is skillful activity dancing in and recognizing its own true nature, the space of Wisdom Mind. The mandalas of the three Kayas, bodies of the Enlightened Mind, are the different dancing areas and levels of

realization. All the dancing areas and the occurrences within them occur simultaneously, for Wisdom Mind and the phenomena that arise from it are non-dual.

Through this sadhana, the dancers realize that the whole world, the place where the Nirmanakaya compassionately emanates, is the mandala of Gesar, and that they are the heroes and goddesses of his retinue. Here and now they are mystically identical with Gesar and his time and deeds, and they repeat his triumph over evil: physical (outer), emotional (inner), and intellectual (secret) obstacles. They do this, by bestowing the blessings of the four activities: pacifying, increasing, bringing under power and subduing. The dancers' feet represent wisdom and skillful means, and their song is a playful manifestation of emptiness and bliss. From this point of view, in the mandala, all obstacles are dispersed.

In the radiant sphere of the Sambogakaya, the dancers are in the mandala of the Five Dhyani Buddhas. They realize their minds are identical with these Buddhas. They perform gestures which symbolize and bestow the Five Wisdoms. Within this mandala the obstacles, which are the Five Poisons are transmuted into the Five Wisdoms.

In the skylike space of the Dharmakaya, void of multifarious activities, the dancers are the protectors who perform a wrathful empty dance of intrinsic awareness which liberates the host of discursive thoughts and crushes all duality. This is the mandala of Kuntu Zangpo, the deity who symbolizes the Dharmakaya and one's own original mind. He

gives them teaching and bestows the blessing of the Four Phenomena, the sublime view of Ati Yoga. It is this point of view of Ati Yoga, or the Great Perfection, which permeates the text and makes the dance unique and transcendent. Through Kuntu Zangpo the dancers realize their nature has always been the same as his, inherently pure, open like the sky, and luminous. This is ultimate meaning of the dance. All obstacles and poisons are seen as one's own discursive thoughts which are naturally liberated. Nothing more need be done once this sublime state of mind is realized, the dancer is empty and all is the same as Kuntu Zangpo. While the dance outwardly consecrates the ground and brings merit and blessings to all, it inwardly produces the enlightened, perfect, nondual state.

In Tibet, performances of Ling Dro were presented three times a year at the most important festivals: Losar, the lunar New Year (the most important festival); Ku Juk Cho Pa in the fourth lunar month, when the birth death and enlightenment of Buddha Sakyamuni are celebrated; and at the beginning of the eighth lunar month when the two and one half month monastic retreat is ended. Now, in Chandragiri Settlement located in Orissa, India, performances are presented for visiting dignitaries, either religious or political.

In Orissa, the performance varies somewhat in the degree of pomp and elegance. There is no beginning pageant. The costumes are made mostly of more simple fabrics. Pa la improvised the hats, coats of mail, swords, etc., by making them of cardboard, cotton, and painted wood.

The orchestra also lacks the proper instruments, and the dancers number only one-third their traditional number.

The performances in Tibet took place on a special ground in front of the Palace of the Regent (Podang) in Lhasa, or on the courtyard of a monastery with Mipham Rinpoche, the choreographer, presiding in Derge, Kham.

First, a pageant with flags and beautiful horses was paraded in front of the thrones, which originally seated Mipham Rinpoche. Then the Regent was saluted by the dancers in the center of the grounds. After the pageant was completed, offering prayers were made by one or more of the lamas.

The dance begins with a preliminary section, an offering puja (ceremony), in which the dancers offer long white ceremonial katags, previously to Mipham or Reting Rinpoche, and now to respected guests. At the same time the dance ritual is offered to Gesar and his retinue, who are named in the text.

The line of male dancers enters first, singing, and led by the dancer dressed as Gesar. Gesar wears the largest three-flagged hat. The female dancers closely follow, led by Drugmo, Gesar's wife. They enter from their own line, which converges into the circle at the end of the men's line.

The women wear a spectrum of brilliantly colored brocade short sleeved dresses over red, blue, and green silk blouses; and colorfully striped aprons. Their hair is tied in a loose ponytail at the back

with red and green colored threads. On their feet they wear colored wool boots of black, green, and red. The men wear long brocade belted chubas of various colors, trimmed with otter fur, white shirts, wolf fur caps and thick-soled colored boots. All the dancers hold, in their outstretched arms, long silk offering scarves.

They dance in unison in a clockwise circular formation, most often in single file facing the back of the person in front of them. They take two steps, stamp twice, and then a step-hop lifting one knee and then sliding one foot into the other. This movement is repeated until they go to the second combination, which embellishes the first, adding a turn and increasing tempo until they exit, women first. This pattern of simple first steps leading into a more complex arrangement of the basic step element, ending in a crescendo is the format for nearly every section of the dance.

APPENDIX II

GESAR DANCE TODAY

Traditional dance and drama have been banned in the People's Republic of China. Until 1976, the "gang of four" suppressed folk art and exclusively permitted revolutionary themes presented in modern style. Recently, however, according to articles in two Chinese magazines, traditional forms have been revived. One such example is the story of Gesar, which has been adapted into a new dance drama by the Qinghai National Dance Drama Troupe. The dance entitled "Off to Battle," according to Zhong Shuzhi's article, "New Tibetan Dance Drama," in Chinese Literature, no. 11 (1979), pp. 110-112, was briefly mentioned as "The Expedition" in Ling Yang's article, "Literature and Art, the Last Three Years," Beijing Review, no. 52 (December 28, 1979), p. 8. The performance relates a segment of the Gesar epic in which Gesar's wife is warned of invasion by monsters, and Gesar heroically leaves to battle with them. The mis-en-scene portrays the pastoral nomadic life of Gesar's people and glorifies Gesar's bravery in overcoming evil. Although Shuzhi praises Gesar's heroism and ability to overcome obstacles, he omits any reference to Gesar's godlike religious attributes.

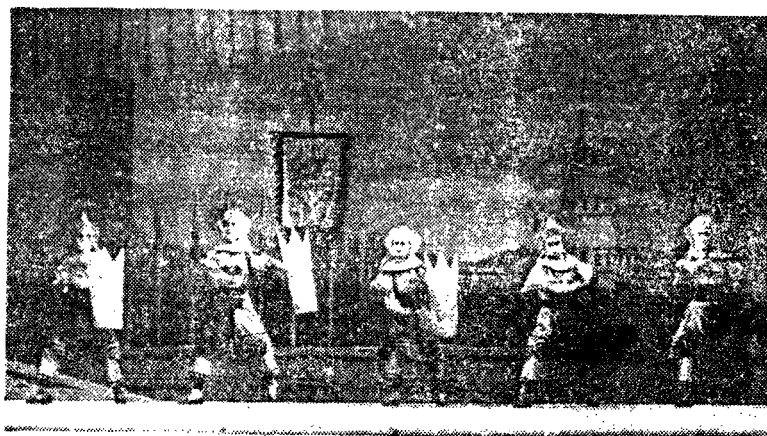
The dancers portray stock figures which appear in Lhamo: arhats, deer, dakinis, generals, and soldiers; and perform adaptations of traditional Tibetan dances. Gesar and his warriors perform a dance reputed to be based on a classical Tibetan warrior's dance. In this, two groups of twenty men, each carrying bows, arrows, and shields in their hands, dance in a militant fashion. The classical prototype mentioned may be

Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo, which is however, religious in theme and danced by both men and women. The magazine photographs of the new Gesar dance display costumes which differ from those of Ling Dro, and postures which resemble the modern Chinese ballet.

Shuzhi cites the music for the new Gesar dance drama to be a mixture of folk ballads about Gesar (possibly drung) and popular Qinghai (formerly known as Amdo) folk songs. Drums and horns provide the instrumental accompaniment, which creates a military ambiance.



King Gesar leads his
troops off to battle



Warriors' dance

Figs. 69-70. "Off to Battle" performed by the
Qinghai National Dance Drama Troupe

APPENDIX III

INFORMATION

Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo has been orally transmitted from teacher to student since its discovery by Mipham Rinpoche. Although Mipham recorded the text of the songs, he left no written instructions for costumes, music, and dancing. Thus each teacher of Ling Dro must teach his students what he has seen and heard from his teacher. This probably led to differences in music, costume, and dance among the different performing groups.

As I have stated, I learned Ling Dro from an "official" teacher, Norbu Sangpo, who, having fled Tibet in 1959, now resides and teaches Gesar dance in Chandragiri Settlement, Orissa, India. While he, assisted by his daughter, exclusively taught me the dance, his brother, Shega Rinpoche, provided me with the information principally concerned with the text, Gesar, and the costumes and pageantry. Norbu Sangpo is the only existing teacher of Ling Dro in India and the dancing group from Chandragiri Settlement is the only existing dancing group. Other Tibetans such as Khamtrul Rinpoche of Tashijong and the Tibetan Dance and Drama Society have requested Pa la and some of his students to visit their communities and teach the dance. However, my teacher claimed they were unable to travel due to his poor health and insufficient funds. Thus, the Ling Dro information rests exclusively in Orissa. No Westerner has ever studied this dance before, nor has it been more than casually mentioned in any book.

Two other lamas from Chandragiri Settlement have supplemented this information about Ling Dro and Gesar. They are Lama Dorje Namgyal who chants the offering prayer preliminary to the Ling Dro dance and Tulku Namkah Trimed, one of the foremost lamas connected with Gesar practice who is believed to be the incarnate older brother of Gesar. Both have provided me with information about Gesar and Gesar practice.

Other information on Gesar I obtained by compiling a series of questions and interviewing several important lamas: Shega Rinpoche, Khamtrul Rinpoche, Tashijong Monastery, who has written Gesar epic stories and teaches and performs a form of Gesar cham, Kalu Rinpoche who has also recorded some Gesar stories, and Khamtul Rinpoche, former head of the Office of Religious Affairs and Education of the Tibetan Government in Exile, Dharamsala, India. When I returned to America, I realized that some of this information on Gesar is not available through written sources.

Much of the information on Buddhism was also unobtainable through Western literature. The information on Buddhism which I needed to know before I could understand the significance of Gesar and the dance was given to me over the past three years by my teachers, His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche, Supreme Head of the Nyingmapa Sect, and the Venerable Thinley Norbu Rinpoche. I have practiced Dudjom Rinpoche's Tersar Ngondro and I have received from His Holiness initiations and teachings on the mind. From Thinley Norbu Rinpoche I have received both basic teachings and mind teachings.

The text was translated by a student of Dudjom Rinpoche, and a Buddhist scholar, John Reynolds. He helped me gain a perspective of the scope of this paper with his translation and explanations.

The detailed and exhaustive Labanotation study of the movements of Ling Dro Dechen Rolmo was scored by Jane Marriett, of the Dance Notation Bureau. Together she and I examined the raw footage of the dance and discussed the movements in terms of their intention as well as their path of movement in space. All of the basic steps including some variations are notated in the score. Jane's help was necessary to completely reconstruct the dance on paper.

APPENDIX IV

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As I have already stated, much of the important literature on Tibet contains very little information on Gesar. The best Western language sources are R. A. Stein's books, Tibetan Civilization, L'épopée tibétain de Gesar dans la version lamaïque de Ling, and Recherche sur l'épopée et le bard au Tibet; Gesar, a magazine of Buddhism, which is published by a Nyingmapa dharma group and which contains a translation of the Gesar epic in monthly installments, and The Superhuman Life of Gesar of Ling, by Alexandra David-Neel. Francke's A Lower Ladakhi Version of the Kesar Saga, is merely a translation of the epic, and Gessar Khan, translated by Ida Zietlen, gives the story of Gesar according to the Kalmuk Mongolian version with only passing remarks.

Recherche sur l'épopée et le bard au Tibet contains a detailed study of books containing references to Gesar, some of which are out of print and even unavailable in the New York Public Library.

The books on Buddhism that are available give information on Vajrayana Buddhism but not many discuss Ati Yoga. Their basic problems are small errors in point of view, perhaps because the authors were not practitioners, and their information was obtained second hand. The very best and clearest book on Ati Yoga is Dudjom Rinpoche's Alchemy of Realization. It was privately printed and not widely distributed. Other books are the series Kindly Bent to Ease Us by Longchenpa. Guenther translates the Tibetan Dzog Chen terms into highly complex existential English terminology. Even the glossary is of little

help, and one wonders whether he really knows what he is writing.

The third area I researched on Tibetan culture and history was somewhat more reliable. Often, however, the books were written by missionaries or English officials who did not understand a Buddhist culture, and explained the Tibetans in their own terms. For example, Harvest Festival Dances was written by Duncan, a missionary, who interpreted Tibetan religious ceremonies with Christian zeal. Other oft-quoted sources, such as Waddell's Tibetan Buddhism, use derogatory and prejudiced terms to describe the rites and methods of the unreformed and semi-reformed sects.

The best books on Tibetan Culture are Norbu and Turnbull, Tibet; Tucci, Tibet, Land of Snows; Stein, Tibetan Civilization; Snellgrove, A Cultural History of Tibet and History of Tibet; and Waddell, Tibetan Lamaism. The definitive history is Roerich's translation of The Blue Annals.

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**632 Vine Street, Suite 1010
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