



YIDAM

Gandharva



These compositions are derived from a cycle of Tantric Buddhist prayers and practices we were introduced to in the fall of 1989. With roots extending back into northern India of the 5th century bce and flowering in Tibet over a thousand years ago, these spiritual exercises employ extensive chanting and elaborate visualizations interspersed with periods of silent meditation.

With encouragement from our Tibetan teachers, Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche and his brother Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche, we began putting some of these prayers to music in 2001 and have gradually expanded the part music plays in our daily practice. Some verses are sung in Tibetan, others have been translated directly or lightly re-worked into new forms intended to faithfully reflect the spirit conveyed by the Tibetan texts. With only one exception (track 7), the melodies on this recording are original.

There is a long tradition of tantric practitioners making use of songs as a way of sharing the teachings with others and expressing realization. Now that the Dharma has come West, vigorous hybrid expressions might naturally emerge unique to this time and place. Perhaps it is an aspect of our collective mindset -- from continually siding with the underdogs and being marginalized in the culture wars over the last forty years -- that the powerful vehicle of rock music has not been more widely employed for devotional communion by us barbarians in 'the land of the red-men'. Here is a sincere and passionate effort in that direction. Through this offering, we have attempted to focus attention on the highest reality as reflected in the image and spirit of Padmasambhava. YIDAM draws attention to the subtle beauty and infinite wisdom represented by the simple words of these prayers and mantras.

For more info email
bialick@usit.net

1. Wish Fulfilling Gem 6:00
2. Seven Line Prayer 3:47
3. Ten Branches 5:50
4. Mountain Lake 7:10
5. Buddha of the Three Times 11:13
6. Vajra Guru Mantra 5:14
7. Black Diamond Nagas' Devil 11:18
8. Big Medicine 4:43

Instruments:

guitars, bass, drums, keyboard, vocals
damaru, tambourine, taos drum,
tingshas, bonpo bells, drilbu

recorded spring 2007 at
the foot of Turtle Hill, TN
www.turtlehill.org/yidam.html

1. WISH-FULFILLING GEM

The Buddha emanates through the person of the Lama in the same way that sunshine illuminates the earth under a clear sky. Because of this, in Vajrayana Buddhism, it is taught that a relationship with a qualified lama is the source of all blessings. The words are taken from an English translation of a traditional Tibetan prayer known as Calling the Lama from Afar, composed by an anonymous author, purposed to strengthen the bond with the spiritual lineage of wisdom teachers, those positive influences in our lives who may live at a distance, be deceased or only be seen in person occasionally. To intensify devotion and give voice to the longing for full awakening and the liberation of all beings from suffering, mind turns toward its transcendent source.

Glorious Lama dispelling the darkness of ignorance
revealing the path of liberation
wish-fulfilling gem

Lama, think of me
Lama, think of me
You who know
Lama think of me

Glorious Lama salvation from samsaric ocean
dispelling the sickness of five poisons
wish-fulfilling gem

Palden Lama, please bless me
to recall death and impermanence sincerely
to generate contentment within
to dwell in isolation in samadhi

Palden Lama, please bless me
to practice free of any interruption
to see the path of liberation in obstructions
to instantly achieve my own and others welfare

Please bless me now
Blessing me this instant
Blessing here upon this very (cushion)
Please bless me now
Blessing me this instant
Blessing this entire (situation)!

2. THE SEVEN LINE PRAYER

The primary prayer of Tibet's Ancient Ones (Nyingma) addressed toward Guru Padmasambhava (8th c), a realized being who helped establish Buddhism in the Land of Snows. He is best known in the west as the author of the Bardo Thodrol, published as The Tibetan Book of the Dead. Amongst Tibetans, Padmasambhava is widely regarded as a second Buddha, specifically appearing to transform beings of this degenerate age. According to the late 19th c. Tibetan scholar Mipham Rinpoche, "The Vajra Seven-Line Prayer is the most sacred and important prayer in the Nyingma tradition. This short prayer contains the outer, inner, and innermost teachings of the esoteric trainings of Buddhism. By practicing The Vajra Seven-Line Prayer according to any one of these trainings, the result of that particular training will be attained."

Soon after meeting the Khenpos on the autumn equinox of 1989, we quickly memorized the Tibetan form of this prayer. Since that time, the image, name and teachings of Padmasambhava have become central to our practice. All Nyingma liturgies begin with a triple recitation of the Seven Line Prayer, and volumes of commentary could be written about the levels of meaning layered into these 57 syllables. Lineage lore relates that a black dakini in eastern India, (perhaps Mother Kali herself) composed these lines to summon the Vajra Guru, whom she referred to as her 'brother'. Invariably sung in the original Tibetan, here is an English translation:

HUM

On the northwest border of Oddiyana
On the Distil Stem of a Lotus
Endowed with the most marvelous supreme siddhis
You are renowned as the Lotus Born
Surrounded by a retinue of many Dakinis

I follow in your footsteps
Please approach and grant your blessings

GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG



3. THE TEN BRANCHES

Lama Mipham (1846-1912), "aspiring in all lifetimes to be the servant of Guru Padmasambhava" was a great Tibetan teacher who composed many of the sadhanas we practice. The words to this song are based on Mipham's variation of the 'seven branches' - the basic structure of any tantric liturgy. Among them are beseeching noble and holy beings to be present, making offerings, purifying obstacles, rejoicing in those who have cause for happiness, requesting teachings, and asking that the teacher remain to continue serving beings.

