

**PERCUSSION PATTERNS IN LHAMO:  
THE DRUM PATTERNS OF THE NEPAL TIBETAN  
LHAMO ASSOCIATION**



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## Introduction

Lhamo, in the West called Tibetan Opera, is a form of total theatre combining dance, song, recitation, colorful costumes, music, and few props, that traditionally is performed—at least since the mid-17th century—in the open air in Tibetan communities after harvest and at festive days. Within lhamo a number of conventions exist, one of which is the convention of percussion patterns.

The musical accompaniment of lhamo is done by two musicians, one of whom plays a drum (*rnga*) and another who plays cymbals (*rol mo*). These instruments, incidentally, are identical in name and shape to the instruments played in Tibetan-Buddhist religious music (see photo 2).

The drummer in lhamo performance is the "master of ceremonies". By means of



Photo 2: Monks playing *rnga* drums and *rol mo* cymbals at Palyul Ösel Gompa.

drum pattern variations, he indicates and controls which

character(s) go on and off stage and when and how they move on stage.

For that he has a number of drum patterns at his disposal, that can be played singly or in various combinations and at various speeds.

The knowledgeable spectator recognizes these percussion patterns and can anticipate the performance.

My aim is/was to study and classify these percussion patterns in lhamo.

In the summers of 2012 and 2013 I spent a total of fourteen weeks in Boudanath near Kathmandu among the Tibetan community. The Nepal Tibetan Lhamo Association (NTLA), one of the eight or so lhamo troupes outside Tibet, resides in Jorpati that lies to

the north-east of Boudhanath. The NTLA perform lhamo in the traditional style, with accompaniment of drum and cymbals.

I decided to study the drum patterns in isolation, without cymbals accompaniment, as the cymbals merely follow the drum's lead and for my research the cymbals were of no importance.

NTLA's music teacher, the drum master Tenzin Namgyal (Wylie<sup>1</sup>: *bstan 'dzin rnam rgyal*) aka Tenam became my teacher and my informant.

Besides being a drum player, Tenam is a versatile and talented musician in general. He taught me to play four of the most simple patterns, which was enough for me to get a feeling for the instrument and the patterns. It also showed me that it was impossible to learn and memorize every drum pattern in the five weeks that were remaining in my 2012 stay. So I changed my original aim. Rather than myself trying to further learn drum patterns, I asked Tenam to play the patterns for me, so that I could film and audio record them. I eventually documented Tenam playing twenty-five different patterns in eight one-hour sessions. He usually showed me the accompanying dance steps too.

In the years following I documented another five drum patterns.

Apart from that I attended and filmed parts of rehearsals of four different lhamo's by the complete NTLA and one outdoor day-long performance of the lhamo of Drimeh Kundan (*dri med kun ldan*)<sup>2</sup>. In 2013 and 2019 I filmed outdoor day-long lhamo performances again.

In theoretical terms, my research can be characterized as qualitative research following a nonlinear research path, the logic arises from ongoing practice. In blunter terms: ethnographic fieldwork.

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<sup>1</sup> The Wylie transcription of Tibetan characters is used here and in following transcriptions in this paper. At [www.thlib.org/reference/dictionaries/tibetan-dictionary/translate.php](http://www.thlib.org/reference/dictionaries/tibetan-dictionary/translate.php), it is a simple process to get from the Wylie transcription to the original Tibetan script.

<sup>2</sup> A lhamo performance that I intended to film on August 8th, 2012, was cancelled literally at the last moment by the Nepali police under suspicion of political activity, which is forbidden for Tibetans. This was not the first time such a thing happened. In 2011 a song-and-dance NTLA performance that had already started was interrupted and stopped by the Nepali police with the same excuse. Without going too deeply into the matter, the excuse that a cultural performance is a political activity is of course rather silly and it only shows how difficult life can be for Tibetan refugees in Nepal, that is politically under strong Chinese influence.

The question of why I entered in such research, apart from my long-time interest in Tibetan culture and my background in Tibetan Studies, can be easily answered.

Descriptions and classifications of lhamo drum patterns are unknown as of yet, there is no existing literature in Western languages, except incidental quotes and references. My study may serve to a better understanding of lhamo in general and lhamo drum patterns in particular and it may be a stepping-stone for future researchers.

As I worked with only one informant and was working alone, there was no question of triangulation of measure, nor of observers. I've been using soft data: photo's, audio and video recordings, interviews, observational notes and correspondence via e-mail and social media.

For validation, I checked consistency—insofar possible within the limited time frame and lack of informants (two potential informants died before the conclusion of my research) and I checked literature. I also expect to generate reactions by publishing this paper<sup>3</sup>.

As I mentioned, percussion patterns in lhamo are not documented well, if at all. For a comparison I briefly looked at percussion patterns in Peking Opera, which are documented well.

Percussion in Peking Opera supports the actor's movements and supplements the narrative; marks all entries and exits; indicates the social status of each performer and has ritual connotations. The main percussionist is the conductor on top of that (Idema 1994: 243).

It is evident that percussion in lhamo and in Peking Opera have identical functions,

My main research effort was to try and compile an exhaustive percussion pattern list with nomenclature, description, purpose, connection with actor's movement, and—possibly—subdivisions. As an extra, there will be a CD accompanying this paper with the percussion patterns that I have recorded. Most examples are played by Tenam while the rest (minus one played by the author) were taken from practices by (combinations of) NTLA members.

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<sup>3</sup> Neuman , W. Lawrence. Strategies of Research Design. In: *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Seventh Edition. Harlow: Pearson, 2014, Ch. 6: pp. 165-199.

Four of the patterns on the CD are played on cymbals. One of those is the only lhamo pattern that is solely played on cymbals (track 29), while the other three are cymbals versions of regular drum patterns (tracks 30, 31, 32). One of the patterns is hummed, and serves as an example of the teaching process (track 33). As a curiosity I added one of my own interpretations of drum pattern playing (track 34), as an example of my participating fieldwork.

A second research question, which arose during my stay in Boudanath, was if it would be possible to find succeeding generations of oral transmission of lhamo patterns and construct a lineage of drum masters and students<sup>4</sup>.

This thesis will pay attention to methodology, organology, oral tradition and lineage in Tibetan culture, the informant(s), and (possibly) audience reception, and it will present the results of my fieldwork on percussion patterns in lhamo.

In the chapter on oral tradition and lineage I will try to reconstruct a lineage for the NTLA percussion patterns tradition, and I will reflect on lineage in Tibetan religion and on lineage in other music cultures: Hindustani classical music<sup>5</sup> and Han Chinese suona bands. In the chapter on organology I will give descriptions of the percussion instruments in hhamo from my own observations and as they are mentioned in dictionaries and descriptions, and compare them to the instruments used in Tibetan-Buddhist religious practice. I will note down my fieldwork observations and draw conclusions from the comparison of theory and practice. The chapter on the informant will give not only a biography of Tenam, but also the locale, the Nepal Tibetan Lhamo Association and the backgrounds of my research.

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<sup>4</sup> A third research question surfaced from the observation that relations and similarities exist between secular and religious Tibetan musical practice, but those comparisons would expand this paper too much, so are not included.

<sup>5</sup> Hindustani classical music is one of the few musical tradition with recognized and reconstructed lineages.

## 2. Rhythm in Tibetan Music

In the winter of 2018/19, when I was making an inventory of the results of my eight field trips into territories and areas inhabited by Tibetans, it struck me that much of what I had documented, recorded and filmed over the years since 1995, was song and/or dance with basic rhythmic accompaniment only, both in folk music and in religious music.

I never quite realised that in Tibetan music such a major role is reserved for rhythm and rhythm instruments. It appears that often only rhythm instruments, such as drums, bells or cymbals, take care of the accompaniment of a song, a dance, or a ritual. Until then I had only looked at isolated aspects of Tibetan music, like at lhamo, or at small folk music ensembles playing stringed instruments. I had never looked at Tibetan music as a whole, and to my knowledge there is also no earlier research into rhythm in Tibetan music. Well, in a way it makes sense, because if there is one particular thing that I learned in studying Tibetan culture over the years it is that everything is interrelated with everything. So it is only natural that the use of rhythm instruments is (one of the) common aspects in Tibetan music and is found in many styles of music, both in lay and religious practice.

The Hornbostel–Sachs system is a widely used system of musical instrument classification, that is named after the two persons, Erich von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs, who developed and first published about it in 1914. The Hornbostel-Sachs system classifies musical instruments into five categories: idiophones, membranophones, chordophones, aerophones, and electrophones. Each category has many subcategories.

The instruments that I'm discussing in this chapter, Tibetan rhythm instruments, fall into three categories: idiophones, aerophones, and membranophones,

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Idiophones produce sound by vibrations of the instrument itself, rather than by strings, or a column of air, or a membrane.

Idiophones in Tibetan music are cymbals ("concussion idiophones"), bells and knee/ankle bells ("percussion idiophones") and boots (used for stamping accompaniment to dance songs) ("unclassified idiophones")<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> I posited the classification of boots as a rhythm instruments in Tibetan music in a presentation about Rhythm in Tibetan Music on 13th April 2019 for the Bake Society in

Membranophones produce sound primarily by way of a vibrating stretched membrane. Tibetan frame drums (*nga*, *rnga*) in various sizes and *damaru* (hourglass shaped drum) fall in the category of directly struck membranophones. Both *rnga* and *damaru* come in various sizes.

Aerophones produce sound primarily by causing a body of air to vibrate, without the use of strings or membranes. Wind instruments without finger holes that are found in the Tibetan-Buddhist monastery orchestra<sup>7</sup> are the *kangling* (*rkang gling*, "thighbone<sup>8</sup> flute"), the *dungchen* (*dung chen*, "long horn", "telescope trumpet"), and the *dungkar* (*dung dkar*, "conch shell"), although I am inclined to think that in the context of religious Tibetan music these instruments have a different and ambiguous function: they are used as rhythm instruments and might also be classified as idiophones. Sound variations are produced only by blowing techniques. They commonly produce only three pitches (Scheidegger 1988: 22), which are produced inside the rhythmic structure of a piece, or in isolation. With regards to the demand that to be regarded as percussion instruments they need to be beaten, I would consider the player's thrusts of air through the mouthpiece of the instrument as "air beats".

All Tibetan drama, whether it be religious, or secular, has a rhythmic structure. That structure can be dissected, by isolating its component parts. I've done that for example for cymbal patterns in *puja*-s of the Kagyu school (Kleikamp & Monhart 2018: 2-10). And I've done that for lhamo, where I made extensive recordings and annotations of the various drum patterns.

Tibetan Opera is called lhamo in Tibetan (*lha mo*, *a che lha mo*, "Sister Goddess"). Although the term Tibetan Opera may be more attractive for Westerners, I will use the more accurate term lhamo in this paper. Lhamo is a lay tradition, a combination of drama, song and dance, and

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Amsterdam. Boot stamping is an essential rhythmic accompaniment to many kinds of Tibetan circle dances (*gorshey*, *skor gzhas*) and circle dance songs.

<sup>7</sup> The *gyaling* (*rgya gling*, "double-reed instrument", "shawm"), which is also found in the monastery orchestra, has finger holes.

<sup>8</sup> *rkang* means "leg", but in combination with *gling* it is meant specifically as "thighbone".

*it includes ritual elements and religious themes.* (Fitzgerald 2014: 271)<sup>9</sup>

Lhamo used to be played in two different styles all over Tibet, White Mask (adhering to tradition), and Blue Mask (sometimes not shying away from modernisations), and lhamo was traditionally always musically accompanied by drum and cymbals. At TIPA<sup>10</sup> lhamo is taught in the Kyomolungpa (*skyor mo lung*)<sup>11 12</sup> style with accompaniment by drum and cymbals, and it is representative of the White Mask style. From the 1970s onwards the Chinese "improved" lhamo by adding a small orchestra of folk instruments to the musical accompaniment; reducing its two- or three-day duration to a mere two hours, stimulation the creation of new operas over the traditional eight, and bringing performance space from out in the open into the confined enclosed space of the theatre (Mackerras 1988). The Chinese post-1970 surgeries into the structure of lhamo are beyond the scope of this paper.

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<sup>9</sup> See Fitzgerald 2014 and 2017 for more extensive information on the definition and history of lhamo.

<sup>10</sup> TIPA, the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts was founded by the Dalai Lama in 1961, to preserve traditional Tibetan culture. TIPA is based in Dharamsala, India, the residence of the Dalai Lama in exile.

<sup>11</sup> *skyor mo lung* is a village west of Lhasa, home of the *skyor mo lung* Opera Troupe, that performed lhamo in a style that has become canonic and that has been named after them.

<sup>12</sup> I've seen *skyor mo lung* transcribed as Kyormolung, Qomolang, Kumulunga, Juemulong, Kumulumga, Gyormulong. Undoubtedly there are more transcriptions. This is an example of the Babylonian confusion of tongues that one sometimes comes across when researching topics and non-specialists transcribing Tibetan script, or as is probably the case with most examples here, it is caused by transcribing Tibetan into Chinese characters first and then into pinyin.

### 3. Organology of drum and cymbals

Drums and cymbals are a requirement for the performance of any ceremony in Tibetan music. So it comes as no surprise that the traditional form of lhamo is accompanied by a double-sided frame drum *nga*, also called *lak nga* (*rnga*, *lag rnga*) and a pair of cymbals *bub*, also called *bub chal* or *röl mo* (*sbug*, *sbug chal*, *rol mo*)<sup>13</sup>. Both instruments are percussion instruments (that is: they are struck or beaten). In the Hornbostel-Sachs scheme these fall in the categories of membranophones (drums) and idiophones (cymbals).

The *nga* falls into the subcategory of struck drums, as opposed to string drums and friction drums.

Cymbals fall into the subcategory of struck idiophones, as opposed to plucked, friction, and blown idiophones.

Drums are among the oldest instruments found on earth and depictions are found as early as ca. 2000 BCE in reliefs and murals in Mesopotamia and Egypt. It is unclear how the drum reached Tibet, but its most probable origin lies in India.

The *Natyashastra* (NS) is a Sanskrit Hindu encyclopedic text on the performing arts, which has had an impact on dance, music and literary traditions in India for hundreds of years.

The text is attributed to Bharata and most probably dates from between 200 BCE and 200 CE. It is not unlikely that the earliest forms of drum playing in Tibet were also guided by the NS.

The NS (Ghosh 1951: 74-75, 325-328) describes the playing of drums as accompaniment to dance, and also mentions when drums are not to be played. It is difficult to link any of the types of drum that are used in Tibetan music today to the drum types mentioned in the NS (as the NS hardly gives construction details), but here and there in the NS clues on drum names and construction details may be found:

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<sup>13</sup> In Tibetan-Buddhist ritual music two different sizes of cymbals are used. The difference lies in the size and diameter of the central bulb, the "boss". The *sbug chal* has a large boss, while the *silnyen* (*sil snyan*) has a small boss that is smaller in diameter and height.

(...) *the mrdanga, panava and dardara (durdara) (are) more important than the rest, are used much in connexion with the production of plays.* (Ghosh 1961:18)

So Bharata considers *mrdanga, panava* and *dardara* as the major drum types and if we are looking for a precursor to the *nga*, we should look at one of these three first, and see what can be found in the NS about their construction and dimensions<sup>14</sup>.

In the chapter in the NS on the making of drums, the following is found about the *dardara*:

*The dardara should be like a bell sixteen fingers [in diameter]. Its face should be that of ghata and should be twelve fingers [in diameter], and have a fat lip<sup>15</sup> on all sides.* (Ghosh 1961: 195)

The *ghata*-shape of the *dardara* probably indicates that it is a kettle drum. Kettle drums come in various sizes—the modern tympani for instance is a kettle drum—but they have one thing in common and that is that they are single-sided. That rules out the *dardara* as precursor for the Tibetan *nga*, as the *nga* is double-sided. *Mrdanga* as a precursor is also ruled out, as that has the wrong shape as well:

*Three are the shapes of mrdangas. In shape they are like myrobalan, barley and cow's tail. The anki or ankika is like a myrobalan [a fruit plant] (...). The mrdanga and the ankika should be three talas and a half long, and their face should be twelve fingers [in diameter].* (Ghosh 1961: 195)

Besides, Bharata mentions (Ghosh 1961: 3) that the *mrdanga* is an "earthen drum" and the *nga* is not.

That leaves the *panava*. *Panava* (Ghosh 1961: 2—notes) is mentioned as a small drum or tabor, that is played with the "tip of the little finger" (Ghosh 1961: 172), and those characteristics are also not compatible with the *nga*.

It seems that neither of the three is the sought-for precursor of the *nga*.

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<sup>14</sup> Dimensions in old Indian sources are given in *angula* (finger, 2 cm), and *tala* (handspan, 8 cm). *Ghata* means "jar".

<sup>15</sup> "Lip" means "rim" in this context.

There is also the added understanding in the NS that the three drum types, *mrdanga*, *dardara*, and *panava*, in ensemble and in combination should be able to produce the "sixteen syllabic sounds" (Ghosh 1961: 166)<sup>16</sup>, so these drums are "talking" drums. We find a distant echo of the talking drum principle in the *nga* as it is played in lhamo accompaniment: the *nga* is beaten on two different spots on the skin, the center and the margin, thus producing two different pitches, which is an essential distinction. I may carefully and provisionally conclude that the *nga* was developed in Tibet.

The NS prescribes cow's hide for drum skins, and after selecting the best unblemished hide and procuring it, it should be rubbed

*with cleansed cowdungs.* (Ghosh 1961: 196)

That is not done anymore today. The drum skin is rubbed with warm oil.

Drum and cymbals, are also found in the set of instrument of Tibetan Buddhism. Drums in Tibetan-Buddhist religious music come in various sizes, and most are beaten with a curved stick, while some have a handle. The round frame of the drum is made of wood. Vandor (1978:85) mentions that the skin is made from horse's hide.

*The wooden resonance chest often exhibits carved or painted ornamental motifs and both skins, traditionally made of horse's hide, are frequently coloured green. The sign of the 'Lucky Circuit Jewel' is often painted in the*



Photo 3: Drum and cymbals of the NTLA, prior to lhamo performance on the 2013 Dalai Lama's birthday.

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<sup>16</sup> It strikes me that the "sixteen syllabic sounds" ka, kha, ga, gha, ca, cha, dza, ja, ta, tha, da, dha, ma, ra, la, ha exist in the Tibetan alphabet as well (except gha and dha) and I'm speculating that maybe the sixteen syllabic drum sounds could have served as one of the elements in designing Tibetan as a tonal language in the seventh century.

*center of the skin (...).* (Vandor 1978:85)

Scheidegger (1988:35) however mentions that

*(...) the skin can be from either a goat or a sheep.*

NTLA's drum and cymbals have the following characteristics:

a. Drum. NTLA's *nga* drum is a wooden two-sided frame drum on a handle, covered with undetermined animal skin<sup>17</sup>, diameter 46,5 cm, height 18 cm. NTLA has fixed the handle in a wide bucket with concrete, for stability (see photo 3 and cover photo).

The *nga* is beaten with one padded beater called *nga yuk* (*rnga dbyug*). The beater is straight and not curved in shape as in Tibetan-Buddhist religious music. Some lhamo troupes use a curved beater (see photo 12)

In Tibetan-Buddhist religious music there are strict rules regarding posture of drums and cymbals players and ways of playing<sup>18</sup> and an extended nomenclature exists for all aspects thereof. Candragomin (Canzio 1980: 67-72; 2019: 77-82) states that:

*Do not stir the middle of the Ocean.*

*Do not go round Mount Meru and  
the four continents*

*Do not strike the edge of the  
mountain*

*Do not pass the rock boundary  
between*

*the mountains and the plains.*

*Do not hit the face of the king  
of the beasts.*

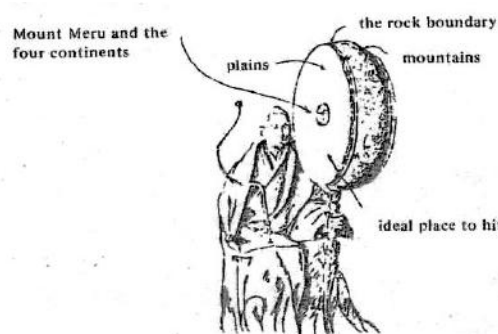


Photo 4: Ideal place to hit the drum, according to Candragomin

<sup>17</sup> My informant told me that snake skin and fish skin are best from drum skins, but those are almost unavailable.

<sup>18</sup> dating back to Sakya Pandita's 12th c. "Treatise on Music" (Wylie: rol mo'i bstan bcos) and commented upon by 16th c. exegete kun dga' bsod nams, who in his turn quotes much from 7th c. Candragomin's non-extant canonical Treatise on Music (Canzio 1980: 72).

To which Candragomin's quote Canzio provides an illustration (see photo 4), indicating the positions of "Mount Meru and the four continents", plains", "the rock boundary", and the "mountains". (Canzio 1980: 68).

Other than a prescription to hit the very center of the drum, the "male" and an off-center spot, the "female"<sup>19</sup>, no other prerequisites are made in lhamo as regards to posture of player and playing style.

The male center is struck with emphasis, the female off-center is used for soft rolls and beats without emphasis. I have seen drums with two spots marked X with tape, to indicate where to beat.

According to Tenam the padded beater is a replacement of the curved stick with which Tibetan-Buddhist monastics beat their drums. NTLA lhamo musicians found the padded beater much easier in use.

Ordinarily before playing the vellum/membrane needs to be heated, as this shrinks the



Photo 5: 2013 NTLA practice drum.

hide and thus produces a higher and much more audible pitch. When not heated it is non-tunable. NTLA's practice drum and performance drum however are not heated with a blower or a candle, but are wiped with hot oil, which has the same effect of shrinking the hide.

During my fieldwork in 2013 I noticed that NTLA used a different practice drum compared to the one they used in 2012 (see photo 5): a modern orchestral two-sided (tunable) snare drum with a copper frame and without snares,

apparently belonging to the set of instruments of the numerous marching brass bands that

Kathmandu is famous for. When asked about the substitution, I was told that it was easier to handle and to play in rehearsals. In lhamo performances however the traditional *nga* is still used.

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<sup>19</sup> The very center of the drum skin is called male, every off-center part of the skin is female.

The practice in Tibetan-Buddhist ritual music differs from the practice of lhamo. There the cymbals player is the leader of the ceremony, and not the drum player. Scheidegger (1988:36) observes:

*A drummer must beat a slow regular tempo. All he has to do is to follow the röl-mo player who directs the whole orchestra.*

Although Scheidegger limits his observations to the Mindroling tradition, the cymbals player in all schools of Tibetan-Buddhist ritual is generally the leader of the orchestra and of the ritual, as I've observed at many religious ceremonies.

b. Cymbals, *bubchal* (*sbub chal*), are also known as *rol-mo* (literally "[sound of] music"). In religious Tibetan Buddhist music various pairs of cymbals are used, the difference being in the diameter and height of the central bulge, the "boss". *Sbub(s)* means "hollow", while *chal* means "to be thrown together confusedly". Cymbals are made of an alloy of copper and tin, sometimes silver or even gold is added (Scheidegger 1988:59),

*(...) the exact constituents and processing of which are the makers' secrets.*  
(Sadie 1984 I:529).

*According to oral traditions, confirmed by written reports, one of the pair represents 'the mother' and the other 'the son' (Helffer 1991: 257)*

Helffer (1991) only mentions the use of cymbals in religious Tibetan music, not in secular music or drama, although later (2004: 77) she writes about lhamo:



Photo 6: NTLA's cymbals

*The instrumental accompaniment normally is limited to a large round drum lag-rnga and to a pair of cymbals.*<sup>20</sup>

Two spellings for the Tibetan cymbals are used: some sources mention *sbug chal*, other mention *sbug chal* (Helffer, Scheidegger). According to Jäschke (2007: 404), both *sbug(s)* and *sbug(s)* have the meaning "hollow" so both words for cymbals, *sbug chal* and *sbug chal*, are correct.

Ntla uses a pair of cymbals with a large boss, the so-called *bub chal*. Their cymbals have a diameter of 16 cm and the boss is raised by 2,75 cm. The distance from boss to the edge is 5,5 cm, so the diameter of the boss itself is 5 cm (see photo 6). The cymbals are held with narrow leather straps which are attached to the centre of the boss. In lhamo accompaniment the cymbals always follow the lead of the drum, they are played simultaneously with the drum, or slightly later, minimally out of phase. The cymbals are held vertically and struck horizontally.

In Tibetan-Buddhist music though, there are various styles of playing the cymbals:

*While playing the cymbals are held almost vertically, so that they are automatically hit via a horizontal movement.*<sup>21</sup> (Vandor 1978:87)

But in the Mindroling style

*The rölmo is held horizontally and struck vertically.* (Scheidegger 1988:60).

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<sup>20</sup> "L'accompagnement instrumental se limite normalement à un grand tambour à manche *lag-rnga* et à une paire de cymbales *sbug-chal*."

<sup>21</sup> "Während des Spiels werden die Becken fast senkrecht gehalten, so dass die Zusammenschlagen zwangsläufig durch eine waagerechte Bewegung erfolgt."

## 4. Lineage and Oral Tradition

### a. Oral Tradition

One of the characteristic features of cultures worldwide, at least until the advent of mass media, was handing down traditions and/or skills, usually via a teacher to student relationship, sometimes (as in Europe in the past five ages) even officiated in guilds with a master-journeyman-apprentice relationship.

In non-Western cultures, claims are usually made of an "unchanged" tradition, but scholars in the past decades have become more and more convinced that something like an unchanged tradition does not exist, and that rather each new generation of musicians (or artisans in general) adds or deletes things, changes tunings, adapts musical instruments. Hence the epithet "living tradition".

In Tibetan culture virtually anything is still passed on from teacher (guru) to student, both in religious and in lay traditions, although not everything is always passed on via oral means only. Script, notations, or drawings may be used as mnemonic aids, although the student is expected to eventually reproduce the teachings by heart.

The texts and music of *yang* (*dbyangs*, "ritual song", "incantation") in *puja*-s have to be memorised, although these are all written down. Cymbal patterns and drum patterns have to be memorised. Although instruction manuals for some oral traditions do exist, like image example books for *thangkas*, or *cham yig* ('*chams yig*, "instruction book on the performance of the sacred dance"), in the end the art or the performance must be reproduced without written aid. Memorisation is still widespread today. During my fieldwork in Boudhanath, I have witnessed several examples firsthand:

a. In July 2012 I attended a *chöd*<sup>22</sup> in the Pal Gyi Langkor Jangsem Kunga Ling Monastery (or Lama Wangdu Gompa as it was commonly called) in Boudhanath. The monks ordinarily recite the sacred texts from oblong unbound *pecha* (*dpe cha*) books during *puja*. That evening there was a power breakdown during *chöd* recitations (as was not uncommon then in the area) and suddenly it was pitch dark. There was no hesitation, all monks (including the novices some of whom were no older than twelve) continued

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<sup>22</sup> *Chöd* (*gcod*, "cutting") is a tantric meditation and visualization ritual.

reciting and singing and it was clear that the monks didn't need the written texts at all, it was all memorised.

b. In July 2013 I interviewed the Kagyu monk Phursang Kelak Lama. I asked him among others about the correct names of the *puja* segments that I had recorded the previous year during a tenth-day-of-lunar-month *puja*. These *puja*-s were performed by ten to twelve reciting monks and accompanied by cymbals, *drilbu* (*dril bu*, "vajra bells"), and *gyaling* (*rgya gling*) I had recorded seven *puja* segments in all, ranging in length from 8 minutes to 25 minutes. The tracks were on my laptop but somehow the volume wasn't very loud and I didn't have earphones with me, so Phursang held his ear to the tiny speakers of the laptop. I had started each *puja* at random more or less in the middle of the recording. Invariably, after just a few seconds, he would identify the *puja*, indifferently if I had started on a recitation point or on an instrumental point. He must have known the *puja*-s by heart, both textwise and accompanimentwise, to have been able to do that.<sup>23</sup>

In lhamo today, a combination of teaching in old style and in modern style is used:

*(...) a performance form that utilizes a variety of didactic techniques ranging from oral repetition to script use, from teacher-to-student long-term apprenticeship to contemporary, institutionalized courses.* (Fitzgerald 2017: 153)

I have observed that teaching style myself during numerous Saturday mornings at NTLA rehearsals. It is not only the music teacher who instructs; it is several instructors who instruct at the same time. Sometimes as many as four instructors are busy, each teaching a part of a lhamo. One would be in a corner of the rehearsal room; another one would be in another corner; one would be in the instrument room; and the last one would be outside on the (enclosed) yard. These instructors would be senior (experienced) members of NTLA. Mind you, it is a veritable cacophony, but it works. Each instructor has a circle of attentive listeners copying the sung or danced examples until the teacher is satisfied. The lhamo libretti and songs are taught from script. NTLA itself has published and printed

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<sup>23</sup> As one of the results of my work with Phursang Kelak Lama, Pan Records released a CD with cymbal patterns in the Kagyu *puja* practice (see: Kleikamp & Monhart 2018), an example of my interest in musical patterns in Tibetan music.

several lhamo libretti in a small circulation. These are used by the members when rehearsing. Eventually all texts are learned by heart because in performance a textual aid is not permitted of course.

By teaching with multiple instructors, it is possible to learn a complete lhamo in three or four rehearsals<sup>24</sup>. NTLA on average performs two different lhamo-s each calender year, and the same lhamo is performed often at different occasions, for example during Tibetan New Year in February, and the following month at the Shoton Festival of TIPA.

Dance steps are taught by example and imitation, there are no written manuals with the dance steps. The same goes for drum and cymbals playing.

Drum and cymbals teaching seems to go intuitively. When a new member comes practicing, in the course of practices, she or he will automatically pick up the cadence and the rhythm. She/he sees others dancing and she/he listens and imitates, until she/he has a grasp of the patterns (and the corresponding dance steps).

I asked Tenam if there were special instruction classes at NTLA for teaching percussion patterns, and he answered:

*No, not anymore. We used to do that now and then with a small class, but now there is no demand anymore. Now they learn by listening, and when somebody is interested to play drum accompaniment and he feels ready, he just goes to sit at the side and starts playing during a rehearsal.*<sup>25</sup>

So today the lhamo drum apprentice learns by listening first, followed by trial and error. Nobody will mind if a mistake is made, because it all happens among friends in the very informal surroundings of a rehearsal.

## b. Lineage

Lineage is found all over Tibetan culture in both religious and lay traditions.

Tibetan-Buddhist religious schools base their raison d'être on orally transmitted teachings from hundreds of years ago. Lineages are depicted with painted portraits with names in

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<sup>24</sup> That is no mean feat, as the length of a Lhamo is at least five to six hours, divided into a morning session which usually starts at ten o'clock, followed by a one-hour lunch break, and then an afternoon session of more or less equal length.

<sup>25</sup> Oral communication from Tenam to the author, 12th May 2019.

the borders of thangka's. Thangka lineages never mention dates, only the succession of teachers is shown

David Jackson (Jackson 2005: 38) perhaps gives the best wording of what lineage means in Tibetan culture:

*The fastidious care paid by generation after generation of Tibetans to recording actual lineages in art as well as in ritual practice and similar written lineage records is, as far as I can judge, special within the Asian Buddhist cultural realm. Though rooted in Indian concepts of the guru lineage, these Tibetan expressions of lineage have few close parallels known to me elsewhere in the world.*



Photo 7: Norbu Tsering, 2008.

The "fastidious care" in recording lineages, as mentioned by Jackson, is not found in lhamo. It is guessing after the reason why.

As regards the lineage of NTLA's music teacher, Tenzin Namgyal, there is no such thing as a written lineage. He knows of course who his teacher was, but does not know the name of his teacher's teacher.

His teacher at TIPA was Norbu Tsering (1927-2013) (photo 7), who himself in his youth was a

member of the Kyomolungpa Troupe from Kyomolung near Lhasa.

He was born in the Lhasa area, then moved to Kalimpong before moving to Dharamsala. Norbu Tsering served as the opera master at TIPA from the late 1960s until he retired in 1996 (see: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqXAf2sBOnA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqXAf2sBOnA) and [www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNS2rDUpDY4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNS2rDUpDY4)).



Photo 8: The drum and cymbals players of the Kyomolungpa Troupe in 1935.

There the lineage cannot be further reconstructed, as there are no records of music teachers at the Kyomolungpa Troupe, neither written nor memorised. But the Kyomolungpa style is iconic, and is representative of the so-called White Mask style of lhamo accompaniment. I have found a 1935 photo of Kyomolungpa's drum and cymbals players, most probably Norbu Tserings teacher, but unfortunately his name was not found in the photo descriptions in the Newark Museum archives (see photo 8).

Kati Fitzgerald (2017: 172), who has done fieldwork with the NTLA in 2010, writes that the average lhamo performer is not very engaged with the lhamo lineage, and I can agree with her conclusion:

She notices a

*(...) demise of the student-teacher relationship.* (Fitzgerald 2017: 153)

Fitzgerald observed the NTLA rehearsing process and noticed not only a traditional teacher to student relationship, as might be expected according to tradition, but a more complex pattern, where students learn from a teacher, from each other, and from traditional (written libretti) and modern media (video) and she concludes

*(...) that performance authority flows from multiple sources into the hands of students.* (Fitzgerald 2017: 174)

Does this mean the end of the traditional lhamo teaching model from teacher to student, as far as it ever existed? Future will tell.

A few other East and South-East Asian cultures acknowledge the concept of lineage. Very rarely 'lineage' is used in its literal meaning of genealogical filiation. In each culture lineage means something different.

- Lineages are found in gharana<sup>26</sup> musical traditions in Hindustani classical music in India from the 1750s onwards (Singha 2014: 40 ff.)

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<sup>26</sup> wiki: In Hindustani music, a *gharānā* is a system of social organization linking musicians or dancers by lineage or apprenticeship, and by adherence to a particular musical style.

Neuman (1980: 53) clarifies:

*In addition to learning a corpus of material, one learns a style from a guru, and each guru's style will be representative of the style of a gharana. This style will be reflected in technique, repertoire, and stress.<sup>27</sup>*

- Lineage is found in suona ("shawm") band traditions on the Central Plain and in North China. One family of suona players of which part of the lineage is documented, is the Zhou Family from Lingbi in Anhui Province.

*It is assumed by the Zhou family members that the tradition of suona playing in the Lingbi region goes back for 800 years. (Kleikamp, 2019),*

although the earliest written sources date from the early 17th century. In the Zhou family we find a musical tradition that is passed on from father to son, so unlike the in gharana where the teacher - student relation is non-familial, in the Zhou family the teacher - student relation is familial.

One comes across the concept of lineage quite frequently in articles, but nowhere a clear definition is found. It is almost like writers expect the readers to understand beforehand what lineage means and I have the feeling that it is considered so common that it is hardly worth it to pay further attention to something as mundane as a definition. Lineage means something different everywhere. The one thing in common in lineage is that of an (unbroken) line of tradition across time, passed on from a teacher to a student, who himself becomes the teacher in the next generation, and so on, and so on.

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<sup>27</sup> Accentuation.

## 5. Percussion patterns at NTLA

Traditional lhamo is accompanied by drum and cymbals.

Each character and each dance step has a different rhythmic drum pattern. A lhamo drum player can be either male or female (see photo 9).



Photo 9: Female drum player of Kalimpong Lhamo Troupe performing at TIPA's 2015 Shoton festival.

Few authors that I've come across have mentioned percussion patterns as part(s) of more general descriptions of lhamo. It is worth taking stock of the few who did.

The first and most important of these authors is Marion Duncan, an American missionary who worked in Batang, East-Tibet from the early 1920s until the mid-1930s. Duncan is a rich source for the performance practice of lhamo.

Duncan published articles about aspects of Tibetan culture in *The China Journal* in the 1930s and after his retirement English translations of lhamo in book publications in 1955 and 1967. He made keen observations of lhamo (Duncan 1932: 107-108):

*Those conversant with Tibetan dancing customs can recognize the different types of music and what they express. The music is in harmony with the dancing. A large drum is suspended in a square frame beaten with one or two curved drumsticks and supplemented with one or two pairs of cymbals compose the whole of the regular orchestra.*

*When the players enter the drum strikes a new stately note; when they leave they must leave on a faster cadence. When the status is peaceful the note is regular and sonorous; when danger threatens the clang of the cymbals and the beating of the drums is fast and furious. Grief is expressed by a slow mournful tapping. During dialogue the music ceases.*

and in the introductory chapter to "Harvest Festival Dramas of Tibet.

*The music is furnished by a two-piece orchestra: a pair of large brass cymbals and a large yak-skin drum. (Duncan 1955: 12).*

to conclude with (and repeating some of his 1932 observations):

*The strokes (of the musicians) vary with the subject. The approach of the players calls for a light, rapid but regular beating of the drum with the clanging of the cymbals followed by a slow, fluttering measure. This last rhythm, a lingering cadence, is also used when the actors are hopping around just before they speak their parts; and to fill in the intervals between speeches and dances. (...) After a bit of recitation the actors, whether one or many, circle in a spinning dance mostly to a measure of two heavy beats interspersed with two light beats—light heavy light heavy. This is repeated twice with a pause, then followed by two beats, one heavy and one light with a pause, and then three heavy beats in succession. The cymbals are clanged in unison with the drum. (...) The music and the dancing harmonize. (Duncan 1955: 13).*

The pattern that Duncan describes in the quote above is most probably the Kings Pattern (no. 1 in list, see below)..

Wang Yao is a Chinese scholar, who—by his own testimony—first came in touch with lhamo in 1952. In the 1950s and 1960 he translated a total of thirteen Tibetan stories and dramas into Chinese. In his research he focused on songs and dances in lhamo, eventually publishing provisional categorisations of both, regretfully neglecting to digress on percussion patterns:

*When the actors enter, percussion instruments are played as accompaniment and the actors dance with their rhythm. (Wang 1982: 88)*

Tian Liantao, another Chinese scholar and ethnomusicologist, published the results of his fieldwork among Tibetans on CD in the 1990s. In 1983 he recorded percussion patterns by the "Tibetan Opera Troupe"<sup>28</sup> in Lhasa and eventually published five of those on CD, namely

*Drum rhythms to accompany the king's appearance 'on stage'. 1:17*

*Drum rhythms to accompany Drowa Sangmo's appearance 'on stage'. 1:35*

*Drum rhythms to accompany fighting on horseback. 0:49*

*Drum rhythms to accompany the appearance of warriors 'on stage'. 1:45*

*Drum rhythms to accompany rowing a ferry. 1:23 (Tian 1996: 10)*

but other than mentioning that

*In the past when AcheLhamo used to be performed outdoors the sole instrumental accompaniment consisted of a drum and cymbals. (Tian 1996: 6)*

Tian does not go into detail into these percussion patterns. I will make a comparison of his 1993 recordings with my 2012-2019 recordings below (in chapter 6).

Foley & Karter in the 1980s and 1990s conducted a series of interviews with elderly Tibetans thus trying to gain information about life in Tibet in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s (Foley & Karter 1998: 124). This is what they noted down about lhamo drum patterns from one of their informants:

*The movement of the actors is accompanied by percussion instruments (drum and cymbals) which accentuate the steps and help to clarify their emotional tenor. Steady beats may indicate continuity, which is interrupted by a frenzied clang of cymbals when a distraught character enters. The dance features step-hops and turns executed with one leg lifted and crooked in front, and fluid rotations of the wrists.*

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<sup>28</sup> Who in fact are the successors of the illustrious Kyomolungpa Troupe. "In the 1960s the Tibetan Autonomous Region Tibetan Opera Troupe was formed using the Kyormolung Opera Troupe as its basis." (Tian (1996: 8)

Jeanette Snyder wrote a brilliant analysis of lhamo in the late 1970s (Snyder 1979: 23-62), out of which I take some quotes about percussion patterns:

*Distinctive drum and cymbal pieces accompany these turning dance steps which signal the end of segments of the drama. (p. 48)*

*Each character in the play has his own special drum and cymbal piece to which he performs a stylized dance upon his entrance or when he moves on the stage. (p. 48)*

*(...) drum and cymbal pieces accompany movement. The most common piece is the fast one that accompanies the turning of the actors that marks the end of a scene or act. There are numerous other pieces that are used for certain kinds of actions or for a specific character's action, covering a wide spectrum of movement such as slow solemn pieces for a courtly procession; bouncy, funny music for a comic character such as Rkang mgyogs dbang chen in Padma 'od 'bar, walking and traveling music, deer-at-play music, battle music, and horse or boat ride music. (p. 52)*

The pattern in the quote above could be the Break Pattern (no. 14 in list, see below).

*There is constant musical change throughout. Very seldom does a piece extend over two or three minutes. The more tender moments, such as goodbyes, are the longest. This may be the key to why there is no more instrumental accompaniment than the drum and cymbals. For what goes on in the music is very economical, employing only two instruments. (p. 52)*

I note that although all of the above authors have signalled and described the significance of percussion patterns in lhamo, none has made an inventarisation nor gives nomenclature. Some paint vivid pictures of actions on stage that are instigated by percussion patterns, but that's all.

## 6. Fieldwork: inventarisation of the percussion patterns

My first stay in Boudhanath was from mid-June to mid-August 2012 for a summer school course in colloquial Tibetan at the Rangjung Yeshe Institute<sup>29</sup>. I had made contact beforehand with the NTLA to ask permission to do fieldwork to research percussion patterns in lhamo, which was granted as a matter of course.

NTLA, also known as Lhamo Tsokpa (*tshogs pa*, "group", "organization"), is based in



Photo 10: NTLA studio during rehearsal of Drimeh Kundan.

Jorpati, a suburb to the east of Kathmandu, Nepal. They have their own studio, measuring circa 16x16 meters, that houses a large rehearsal room of circa 12x16 meters with a 6m long mirror on the long wall (see photo 10) and a kitchen unit at one end, and two smaller adjacent rooms. One of those rooms houses the music instrument collection and is used for meetings, the other rooms is the storage room for costumes and props for the performance of lhamo. The storage room is damp and not ventilated. Props and costumes get damaged by wear, damp, and rats. The fancy drum of 2012 ended its existence as a table in the storage room. It was impossible to be played anymore, as rats had gnawed at the sides of the drum skin (see photo 11).



Photo 11: Sides of drum skin eaten by rats.

<sup>29</sup> I made further visits in July 2013 (4 weeks), July 2018 (4 weeks) and May 2019 (3.5 weeks).

NTLA was founded by expat Tibetans in Boudhanath in 1976. Rehearsals are on Saturdays, which is the day off in the six-day school- and work week in Nepal. In the morning there is lhamo rehearsal, in the afternoon it is time for song and dance, both traditional and modern. By also incorporating modern song and dance in their "curriculum", NTLA over the years has been able to attract a steady influx of young students. The average membership lies around forty to fifty, and ages vary from 18 to 85. NTLA performs regularly. One of the highlights of the year is the day-long lhamo on the Dalai Lama's birthday on 7th July. NTLA takes part in the yearly Shoton festival organised by TIPA in the month of March in one of the domiciles of exile Tibetans in India. NTLA performs at Tibetan New Year festivities, and throughout the year wherever they are asked to perform a lhamo or song-and-dance program. Although in the contents of lhamo much ritual and Tibetan-Buddhist religion is found, lhamo-s are not considered religious plays. Whereas spectators go to cham performances to meditate and gain karma on their way to enlightenment, the spectators to a lhamo performance come strictly for entertainment:

*Tibetans come to a performance of Tibetan Opera Show to get entertained and enjoy the show plus each and every Opera story has a karmic lessons, moral lessons related to Buddhism and it helps to purify your soul after understanding the story's lesson but regarding the tantric rituals, no...it is not considered as a tantric ritual (...)<sup>30</sup>*

Tenzin Namgyal ("Tenam") is NTLA's music teacher. He became my main informant, and a good friend later.<sup>31</sup>

Tenam is commonly called "genla" (*dge rgen lags*, "revered teacher") by NTLA-members, by his students and by his friends.

*Tenzin Namgyal, also known as Tenam, a native Tibetan, was born in 1976 in the Tibetan exile community in Solokumbu in northwestern Nepal. Tenam was*

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<sup>30</sup> Tenam in Facebook Messenger conversation with the author, 17th November 2018)

<sup>31</sup> At the end of each session we would go and have a bottle of Everest beer at the nearby liquor store, which no doubt helped cement friendship. Today (2019) Tenam has stopped the intake of alcohol, so now we meet on a terrace in the sun drinking fruit juice. His is still my friend and informant, my "bro".

*inspired by his grandfather Pema Dorjee, who was a Lhamo (Tibetan Opera) dancer in Tibet.*

*As a boy he learned Tibetan dance and songs in the community. In the years 2000 - 2002 he received extended musical training in Dharamsala at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), and he is now a multi-instrumentalist, playing *dranyen* [sgra snyan. "pleasant sound", a Tibetan plucked stringed instrument], *yangchin* [rgyud mang], *piwang* [pi lbang, "two-stringed fiddle"], *nga* (drum) and *bubchal* (cymbals). His Tibetan Opera teacher at TIPA was the late Norbu Tsering.*

*Tenzin Namgyal currently lives in Boudanath near Kathmandu, where he is a professional musician and a teacher of Lhamo (Tibetan Opera) and of dance and music at the Nepal Kathmandu Lhamo Association. He released 7 CDs in Nepal between 2004 and 2010. (Kleikamp 2013)*

To this I might add that Tenam joined NTLA in 1996. In those years NTLA practised in the open air. After Tenam returned from TIPA and became teacher, NTLA became more versatile, doing not only lhamo, but also performing at weddings, *puja*-s, and dance nights. Young pupils get instruction in modern dances. NTLA performs any time of the year, not only at harvests as traditionally was the case in old Tibet.

In lhamo the drum is the lead instrument. The drum player controls the movements of actors and dancers on the stage via a series of rhythmic patterns with which he cues the actors.

The drum player indicates which actor to call on stage and which dance steps or movements the actors should perform, as well as the speed with which to dance. Each drum pattern is related to a single character or a group of related characters and a certain specified dance step.

I recorded Tenam playing the drum pattern examples in NTLA's studio. Sometimes recording was not possible due to heavy monsoon rains lashing the corrugated iron roof or to neighbouring construction work or to a plane flying over at low altitude<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> NTLA's practice room is at 4 km distance in a straight line from the runway of Kathmandu airport.

Initially Tenam and I started our cooperation by participating observation: Tenam would play a pattern, and I would try to memorize that and reproduce it. There were no instruction books, there was no notation, it all had to be done by memorisation and imitating. It was decided to play the patterns on the *nga* drum only, and not be bothered by cymbals accompaniment, as the cymbals in lhamo player only follows the drum players lead. Tenam and I would meet two times a week for an hour in the practice room of NTLA at the end of an afternoon<sup>33</sup>.

After a couple of lessons, I realised that I didn't have enough time to learn all the patterns in the rest of my stay. The reproduction process went too slow. I could only do one or two patterns in a one hour session. So from session number three, my approach changed. Since my main aim was to get an inventarisation of all the percussion patterns inside lhamo, and not to become a percussion pattern player myself, the teaching part was skipped. From then on Tenam would play a pattern and he would show the accompanying dance-step. Before recording Tenam would often first rhythmically hum the pattern ("ta de da de da de da ....") and do the dance steps simultaneously. After that I would interview him about the pattern, ask for name, function. This way we could do four or five patterns in one session. I videoed and audio-recorded everything and I took notes. Sometimes I would show Tenam (parts of) videos of rehearsals or performances of NTLA and he would identify the percussion patterns. Working this way, it was just about possible to finish my inventarisation before the end of my stay. I was happy to return to Boudhanath in July 2013 and have the opportunity to make additional recordings and interviews to clarify some research questions and identify a few patterns that had been overseen in 2012.

Eventually I have identified thirty different drum patterns.

Below are my notes of recording sessions, and of my observations during lhamo performances, which serve as additional information on understanding (the concept of) the drum patterns.

Some patterns are in a steady meter, other are *accelerando*. Most patterns end with three or four beats, the first and third emphasized, the fourth beat slightly less emphasized.

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<sup>33</sup> In 2012 these sessions were on 16/07; 18/07; 20/07; 25/07; 27/07; 30/07; 03/08; 06/08.

If a dancer makes a mistake, he or she will usually realise this within a few steps and then automatically make a correction, and in that case no adjustments are needed by the drum player.

The dances are generally danced clockwise on the stage, no doubt corresponding to the circumambulation of holy places which is also clockwise.

During a performance the percussion patterns are not played as such, in isolation, they are always part of the stage setting and action. So recording and filming the patterns out of context was sometimes difficult for Tenam.

Patterns in lhamo are often played one following the other in quick succession without breaks, and a drum and cymbals sequence usually consists of several patterns connected

with soft drum rolls. Patterns may be repeated endlessly, all depending on the action on stage. Sequences can last for several minutes, whereas an isolated drum pattern lasts from ten to twenty seconds only. The hunters' dance at the beginning of a lhamo

performance is a continued repeat of the Hunters Pattern lasting fifteen minutes or longer.

Timing is essential: the drum player needs to have knowledge of the complete libretto and shape his pattern playing accordingly; all actions on stage need to be achieved in the right order without hesitation<sup>34</sup>.

Drumming and cymbals playing is sometimes done by the same player during lhamo performance, as is demonstrated on photo 12.

Less skilfull players use two drum sticks when playing percussion patterns in lhamo. TIPA teaches the playing of one drum stick.



Photo 12: One musician playing both drum and cymbals during lhamo performance.

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<sup>34</sup> I asked Tenam to listen to recordings that I had made in 1995 of the lhamo troupe from Tsedang, Ü-Tsang, Tibet, and he commented "No good timing. Today we play much better" (conversation on 22nd July 2013).

Generally the patterns are named after the characters that are accompanied or after the action that is depicted<sup>35</sup>. Over the years I have identified the following drum patterns:

1. Kings Pattern (*rgyal po'i don 'khrab*, "coming dancing of the king"). This pattern is played for kings, buddhist lamas, princes, and gods.

The Kings Pattern is played *accelerando* with emphasis on the odd beats. The end of the pattern is announced by three loud beats, and sometimes a spoken "la so" (*lags so*). A variant of this pattern was recorded by Tian Liantao in 1983 from the Tibetan Opera Troupe in Lhasa.

2. Calling Pattern (*rnga brda'*, "drum cue") or (*khrom brda'*, "market cue"). This pattern calls for audience attention, and is repeated three times before the start of the lhamo. The second part of the pattern played at intervals within the play when a main actor is tired and takes some rest or changes costume backstage. The rest of the troupe then will start a dance.

3. Coming-On-Stage Pattern (*don brda'*, "action cue"). This pattern calls for every actor to enter the stage.

4. Female Pattern or Girls Pattern (*mo 'khrab*, "female performing/dancing"). Fairies and goddesses also dance to this pattern. This pattern can also be danced by males, for instance in the lhamo of Pema Woebar (*pad ma 'od 'bar*), where the *dakini* (female sky spirits) roles are danced by male actors

A variant of this pattern ("Drum rhythms to accompany Drowa Sangmo") was recorded by Tian Liantao in 1983 from the Tibetan Opera Troupe in Lhasa.

5. Soft roll. This pattern seems more like a stage convention than an actual pattern. It is used in many circumstances, as a filler, or to introduce a minor character that is not long on the stage. When following the King's Pattern it is called *rgyal po'i don 'khrab*, "coming dancing of the king".

6. Yama Pattern (*ya ma*). In the Yama pattern two sticks are used to beat the drum instead of one. One stick is padded while the other is a plain wooden stick. In the Yama pattern the padded stick that beats the skin is alternated with the unpadded stick on the side of the the frame (or also sometimes on the skin itself). When the wooden stick beats the side of the frame, an eerie staccato harmony is produced.

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<sup>35</sup> The orthography was checked against sources in the following ways: 1. Written Tibetan notes from Tenam; 2. Online at [www.thlib.org](http://www.thlib.org) THL Tibetan to English translation tool; 3. Tibetan-English dictionaries of Das, Bell, and Jäschke.

The Yama Pattern is played very fast.

7. Old Man Pattern (*rgan khog don 'khrab*, "old person coming dancing"). The Old Man Pattern always starts with (seven seconds of) the Common Pattern.

8. Parrot Pattern (*gcan gzan don 'khrab*, "wild animal coming dancing").

The parrot character plays a major role in Sukyi Nyima<sup>36</sup>.

This pattern is also called Animal Pattern, as it may also be used for deer, pig, tiger, monkey, dog, pigeon, crow. The Common Pattern (see 13) is also used, or sometimes the Bird Pattern (see 26), for animal characters like tiger, monkey, or dog. Sometimes an animal character in a minor role only receives a soft roll (see 5) as introduction.

9. Butcher Pattern (*gshan pa*, "butcher"). This pattern is played for a butcher character on stage,

10. Black Magician Pattern (*sngags pa'i don 'khrab*, "sorcerer coming dancing"). The Black Magician in lhamo is called *ngakpa*. *Ngakpa* wears a unique mask and so is easily recognised by the audience. This pattern is also used for students of the black magician. The black magician always makes a running entrance.

11. Yak Pattern (*gyag don 'khrab*, "yak coming dancing"). Mammals in lhamo all dance to the same pattern: dog, yak, tiger, monkey. The middle part of the pattern sequence is faster, that's when the yak is dancing. Inside the yak costume are two men. The front man makes the same steps as the hind man.

There's a nail on top of a horn, with which the yak can pick up a white scarf, *khatag* (*kha btags*), from the ground when the yak bows its head.

12. Song Accompaniment Pattern (*dal 'khrab*, "leisure performing", in the context of lhamo *dal 'khrab* means "entertainment"). This pattern is called Kampa Lhamo by the actors (*gam pa lha mo*, *gam pa* is the name of a hill in Ü-Tsang, Central Tibet). There is only one song pattern, that is played to many different songs. The dance steps are also always the same. Songs are sung by the chorus when the main actors take their rest or change costumes. There is a large repertoire of songs, that can be sung in any lhamo. There are no songs that are particular to one lhamo only. The slow dance that accompanies the songs is called "tel trap" (*dal 'khrab*, "song dance").

Songs are also sometimes accompanied by the Common Pattern (see 13) or the Slow Speed Pattern (see 25).

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<sup>36</sup> Sukyi Nyima (Wylie: *gzugs kyi nyi ma*, "As radiant as the Sun"), is one of the eight traditional lhamo plays.

13. Common Pattern (*don 'khrab*, "coming dancing"). This is a pattern for every single dancer/actor, and is played as an introduction before coming on stage, hence it is sometimes also called Introductory Pattern. When an actor comes on stage, the rhythm goes ever faster until the actor comes to a standstill which is announced by three loud beats, after which immediately a new pattern starts.

The Common Pattern is played before specific individual patterns, in combination and is usually played twice. The Common Pattern is also sometimes played after special other patterns.

14. Filling-up Pattern (*rnga stong*, "empty drum"), also called Rest Pattern or Break Pattern. This pattern is used as a "filler" between actions on stage. It is also sometimes used for song accompaniment.

15. Changing Pattern (*phyag 'bul dpral bskor/skor*, "to greet each other", "offer respect"). This is played when an actor on stage changes to an other position.

16. (Angry) Horse Pattern (*rta rtsed rnga brda'*, "playful horse drum cue"). Any horse on stage is accompanied by this pattern.

17. Rowing Pattern (*ko ba don 'khrab*, "boat coming dancing"). A variant of this pattern was also recorded by Tian Liantao in 1983 from the Tibetan Opera Troupe in Lhasa.

18. Slow King's Pattern (*rgyal po'i ngal don 'khrab*, "slow/easy coming dancing of the king"). This is identical to no. 1, except that is played much slower.

19. Oracle Pattern (*lha chen don 'khrab*, "great deity coming dancing"). This pattern is almost identical to the King's Pattern. The Oracle is a character that occurs in various lhamo-s. I can only assume that god-like properties are ascribed to the oracle, hence the name *lha chen* ("great god") in the name of this pattern, and not *gros pa* ("adviser", "counsellor").

20. Prayer Pattern (*lha bsangs gi rnga brda'*, "drum cue's incense offering", *bsang(s)* means "ritual", "ceremony", "purification through smoke"). Any action on stage that involves a ritual or ceremony is indicated by the Prayer Pattern.

21. Fetching Water Pattern (*chu len rnga brda'*, "taking water drum cue"). In lhamo it is mostly the girls who fetch water, so this pattern is often preceded by the Girls Pattern (see track 21 on CD).

22. Gomba Pattern<sup>37</sup> (*dgon pa gyi rnga brda'*, "monastery drum cue"). Gomba, also sometimes called Gompa (*dgon pa*) means monastery. This pattern is used in combination with the Lama Pattern and with the Prayer Pattern. It is not originally a lhamo pattern, but is borrowed from outside, according to Tenam.

23. Hunter's Pattern (*rngon pa don 'khrab*, "hunters coming dancing"). This pattern accompanies the beginning dance of lhamo, with the hunters and their characteristic triangular two-dimensional masks. The hunter's dance often takes ten to fifteen minutes duration, the dancers gyrating, swirling and circling on stage. The hunters' dance has the function of purifying the stage. The length of the dance is sorted out between percussionist and dancers at the rehearsals, and can be as long as the drummer likes. A cue to end the dance is played by the drummer at the end of the phrase.

24. Messenger Pattern or (Fast) Speed Pattern (*mgyogs 'khrab*, "speed dancing"). This pattern has two variations: fast (as in this pattern) or slow (see 25). The illusion of speed, like is needed for messengers and fast movements, can be shown by a fast drumming pattern. Two drum sticks are needed to play this pattern. All other patterns (except the Yama Pattern, no. 6, and the Cham Pattern, no. 30) are played with one padded beater.

This pattern (and many others) always starts with ca. seven seconds of Common Pattern played with one stick.

The Messenger Pattern has a fixed length depending on the size/dimensions of the stage. The dancers will do one or two clockwise circumambulations. When the drummer says "*la so*" (*lags so*), the dancer(s) know(s) that the dance is about to end.

25. Slow Speed Pattern (*mgyogs 'khrab ngal 'khrab*, "speed dancing slow/easy dancing"). This variation is played in a slow tempo, accompanies song, and is played when the dancer is not yet ready to come on stage.

26. Bird Pattern (*bya don 'khrab*, "bird coming dancing"). Bird characters (pigeon, parrot, crow), always have the same pattern, but the parrot dance steps are unique. When the parrot plays a major role, it dances to a special pattern, the Parrot Pattern (see 8). This pattern starts with (seven seconds of) the Common Pattern.

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<sup>37</sup> Tenam in his first list of drum patterns that he sent to me (in August 2012) used the same Tibetan title for Gomba Pattern and Prayer Pattern (no. 20). Apparently this was an error, and on my own authority I changed the Tibetan title of Gomba Pattern to *dgon pa gyi rnga brda'*, which makes much more sense, and is also suggested by the English title of the pattern that he gave. Prayer Pattern and Gomba Pattern are indeed different patterns, as can be checked on the accompanying CD, no's 20 (Prayer Pattern) and 22 (Gomba Pattern).

27. Lama Pattern (*bla ma don 'khrab*, "lama coming dancing"). This pattern is used for lama's and for kings. It is actually identical to the Kings Pattern, but it has a different name when played for lama's

28. Bad Lama Pattern (*a mchod don 'khrab*, "ritualist coming dancing") The lama doing evil deeds is a popular character in lhamo. The bad lama is usually a foreigner, who is dressed in a white costume called *napa* with long white hairs and beard. He is praying a bad mantra, which comes out very funny to the audience. *A mchod* translates<sup>38</sup> as person who does ceremonies [for the dead etc. in homes].

29. Tashi Sholpa Pattern (*bkra shis zhol pa rnga tshig*, "good luck dweller's pattern"). This is not a lhamo pattern, it is played to accompany the *tashi sholpa* dance, a good luck dance. But as it is played on drum and cymbals, it should be included in this list. It is the only drum pattern that is played outside lhamo.

30. Cham Pattern (*'chams don 'khrab*, "cham dancing"). Like no. 29, this is also a unique pattern. This is the only one that is played on cymbals. It is used in the lhamo of Nangsa only (*snang sa*, which is the name of the main female character, a princess) in an episode where it is used as accompaniment to a religious Tibetan-Buddhist cham dance. The pattern was taught to the students at NTLA by a monk from the nearby Palyul Ösel monastery in Jorpati.

A comparison of Tian Liantao's five 1983 lhamo pattern recordings with my relevant 2012-2019 recordings learns four things:

1. On average the length of Tian's recordings is twice or three times as long as mine. His recordings have pattern repeats in them, presumably to get a recording length of circa 1 minute 30 seconds. He also recorded drum and cymbals combined, whereas I recorded only drum. These decisions of course were the at the recordist's discretion and not to be criticized.
2. Both Tian's Rowing Pattern and Kings Pattern start with the Common Pattern, and these patterns are identical to the ones of the same name that I recorded.
3. Tian's Drowa Sangmo Pattern, that also starts with the Common Pattern, is equal to the Girls Pattern that I recorded. That makes sense, as to my understanding there are no drum patterns for individual characters like Drowa Sangmo (who is the heroine in the lhamo with the same name), only for groups of characters.

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<sup>38</sup> [www.thlib.org](http://www.thlib.org)

4. Tian's Warrior Pattern and Fighting on Horseback Pattern are unique patterns that are not in the NTLA's repertoire.

A conclusion of this comparison is that the NTLA drum patterns do not constitute an exhaustive list of drum patterns. I expect that future research among other lhamo troupes will give further additions to the drum pattern list.

Five terms need special attention. No.'s 2 - 5 are all classifications, 1 is an exclamation:

1. *lags so* (pronounced "la so") is the only vocal cue in lhamo, which means something like "yes", "very well", "allright", "well done"; it can also mean "continue" or "do it again", or even in a certain dance context "finish now" (at the end of a phrase). In lhamo context it means either of the following: a. ready and continue; b. (sign to) stop / end; 3. okay (as confirmation).

2. *rnga tshig* ("drum word") in lhamo context means "pattern", "drum pattern"<sup>39</sup>. See pattern 29.

3. *rnga* (drum) needs no further explanation. It is an almost redundant addition to the name of the pattern, indicating that the pattern is played on the drum.

4. *brda'* (pronounced "da") means sign, symbol, gesture, name; in lhamo context it is best translated as "cue"<sup>40</sup>.

5. *don 'khrab* (pronounced "dön trap") means something like "coming dancing". *'khrab* is a verb and means to play, perform, to act (as); *don* means action.

Tenam explained the difference between *brda'* and *'khrab* as follows<sup>41</sup>:

*"brda' is for sign and 'khrab is when we are dancing",*

which I interpret to mean that *brda'* is passive and *'khrab* is active; *brda'* is played as a coming-on-stage cue, and *'khrab* is played for actors that are already on stage.

The playing of drums patterns may be speeded up (*accelerando*, *mgyogs*) or slowed down (*decelerando*, *ngal*), all depending on the dramatic need on the stage. There is a constant play with and variation in tempo during the course of a lhamo performance.

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<sup>39</sup> According to Tenam, conversation on 20180726.

<sup>40</sup> As suggested by Peter Verhagen.

<sup>41</sup> Facebook Messenger conversation on 27th March 2017.

Although patterns no.'s 24 and 25 are identified as Messenger Pattern and Slow Speed Pattern, the denominations *mgyogs 'khrab* (speed dancing—*accelerando*) and *ngal 'khrab* (slow/easy dancing—*decelerando*) are used in general to denote speeding up and slowing down of a drum pattern.

Not all patterns are played in all lhamo-s, it all depends on the lhamo itself and on the actors' roles.

Drum patterns cannot display moods, like anger, love, hate, sadness. Only lhamo song can do that.

Three patterns are almost identical (acc. to Tenam): Butcher's Pattern, Old Man Pattern, and the Bad Lama Pattern.

There is no queen pattern. The queen character in lhamo dances to the Girls Pattern, or sometimes to the Kings Pattern (for instance when king and queen together are dancing). Other lhamo associations associated with TIPA use the same patterns, sometimes with small rhythmic variations.

Tibetan-Buddhist religious music has a notational system, which looks like a series of curved and twisted lines, with a high aesthetic visual aspect, but there is no notation system for drum patterns in lhamo.

The staff notation of Western music on five lines, with a key (*clef*) at the beginning and a division in bars is applicable only to tunable percussion instruments, like tympani and xylophones, and not for non-tunable percussion.

The staff notation is also sometimes used for non-tunable percussion, with adapted music notes that have an x as a note head instead of an oval to indicate rhythmic value only, a so-called "ghost note". That would work for the notation of lhamo patterns if the percussion would be in one pitch only. But in drumming lhamo patterns three positions on the drum are beaten: the center and the margin of the membrane, and the wooden rim; each causing a different sound with an indeterminate pitch. Besides there are endless variations in tempo, often at the discretion of the drum player only. So using ghost note notation for lhamo patterns doesn't work well, if at all.

Graphic notation was developed for experimental classical and electronic music in the 1950s, for instances where standard musical notation was thought ineffective. But I think graphic notation—which in essence has a limitless number of notations, because every

composer creates his or her own graphics depending on the need—is useless for lhamo patterns.

Graphic notation needs to be invented again and again for every new music piece.

*"It is generally agreed that a standardized way of notating percussion music is long overdue and that a more careful use of the normal staff could be made." (Sadie 1984, 1:610)*

I have tried to devise a notation for lhamo patterns. But I'm only an ethnomusicologist and not a conservatory graduate, who can do such things. And if brighter minds than me could not design a drum notational system, as is indicated above, it is only logical that my effort was in vain.

## 7. Conclusions

All Tibetan drama, whether it be religious, or secular, has a rhythmic structure. That structure can be dissected, by isolating its component parts.

A total of thirty drum patterns are played at NTLA's lhamo performances. NTLA's music teacher Tenzin Namgyal, aka Tenam, has been an invaluable informant in compiling the eventual provisional inventarisation of drum patterns in lhamo.

To my knowledge this is the first published inventarisation of lhamo patterns.

I have been relying solely on information from one informant, who, although very knowledgeable, doesn't know the sum total of all patterns played in all lhamo-s. For instance the pattern that Tenam's teacher at TIPA, Norbu Tsering, plays on [www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNS2rDUpDY4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNS2rDUpDY4) wasn't recognised by Tenam.

Not all lhamo percussion pattern players have followed the same education, so it's likely that some will have learned other patterns. Not all lhamo troupes have identical repertoires. Different repertoires may also mean the existence of different patterns for characters that appear in only one special lhamo. Two of the patterns that Tian (1996: 10) published, "Drum rhythms to accompany fighting on horseback" and "Drum rhythms to accompany the appearance of warriors on stage" were not known by my informant, and could be added to an eventual total list of lhamo drum patterns.

Taking this in consideration it is likely that the corpus of percussion patterns in lhamo is larger, hence this paper gives only a provisional inventarisation and it is by no means a definite list of percussion patterns in lhamo.

It needs further research with other lhamo troupes to verify this.

None of the drum types as described in NS can be identified as the precursor to the Tibetan *nga* drum. It is likely that the *nga* developed in Tibet.

The traditional teaching method of oral transmission from teacher to student is not the only method used by NTLA. Often multiple instructors teach simultaneously.

By teaching with multiple instructors, it is possible to learn a complete lhamo play in three or four rehearsals.

It is not possible to construct a lineage of lhamo drum pattern teachers for more than three generations. Although it is considered important to know who your teacher (and maybe your teacher's teacher) is/are (*genla!*), this knowledge seems hardly relevant. So my prior idea that there could/should be a lineage of lhamo drum pattern teachers, or rather that such a lineage can be reconstructed, is shattered.

I posited that in the context of religious Tibetan music the *dungchen* (*dung chen*), *kangling* (*rkang gling*), and conch shell (*dungkar*, *dung dkar*), are used as rhythm instruments and might also be classified as idiophones and not as aerophones. I posited that boots are a rhythm instrument in the context of boot stamping as accompaniment to Tibetan song and dance.

Trying to learn lhamo patterns as a Westerner who is not brought up in the tradition is a very time-consuming process. It is difficult to memorize patterns. Lhamo so far has no notation system, that would make learning drum patterns much easier.

I would like to thank the following people and organisations who have made it possible to conduct my fieldwork:

- the Nepal Tibetan Lhamo Association for giving me the opportunity to visit their rehearsals and welcome me as their guest;
- Tenzin Namgyal aka Tenam, for invaluable help, information, and friendship;
- Vereniging KERN at Leiden University for twice giving a travel grant;
- Pan Records ([www.panrecords.nl](http://www.panrecords.nl)) for continued financial support;
- my teachers at Leiden University and especially Peter Verhagen for sharing their knowledge and stimulating my interests;
- my wife Elma for tolerating my prolonged absences and obsessions.

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## Photo Captions

Photo 1 (front page): Tenam demonstrating a percussion pattern. Photo by Bernard Kleikamp, 30th July 2012, in NTLA practice room, Jorpati, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Photo 2: Monks playing *rnga* drums and cymbals at Palyul Ösel Gompa in Jorpati. 10th July 2013. Photo by Bernard Kleikamp.

Photo 3: Drum and cymbals of the NTLA, prior to lhamo performance on the Dalai Lama's birthday, 7th July 2013 in Manang Gompa, Swayambunath, Kathmandu, Nepal. Photo by Bernard Kleikamp.

Photo 4: Photo 4: Ideal place to hit the drum, according to Candragomin. From Canzio 1980: 68 and 2019:81.

Photo 5: 2013 NTLA practice drum, a modern orchestral drum.. NTLA practice room in Jorpati, 4th July 2013. Photo by Bernard Kleikamp.

Photo 6: NTLA's cymbals. NTLA practice room, 30th July 2012. Photo by Bernard Kleikamp.

Photo 7: Norbu Tsering (1928 - 2013) in 2008. Screenshot from [www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNS2rDUpDY4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNS2rDUpDY4)

Photo 8: The drum and cymbals players of the Kyomolungpa Troupe. Photo by C. Suydam Cutting in Lhasa, 1935, during a film expedition into Tibet. From the archive of the Newark Museum, no.73.1011.

Photo 9: Female drum player of the Kalimpong Lhamo Troupe, calling for "audience attention" at the beginning of Sukyi Nyima at TIPA's 2015 Shoton festival, 29th March 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV0rkQ4XDjw>

Screenshot of Youtube film of Kalimpong Lhamo Troupe performance.

Photo 10: NTLA practice room during rehearsal of Drimeh Kundan (dri med kun ldan), 11th May 2019. Photo by Bernard Kleikamp.

Photo 11: Sides of drum skin eaten by rats. NTLA storage room, 14th July 2018. Photo by Bernard Kleikamp.

Photo 12: One musician playing both drum and cymbals during lhamo performance.

Source and copyright: Repkong Lhamo Troupe, december 2019.

Appendix 1

Names of lhamo drum patterns used at NTLA.

Column 1: Tibetan script; column 2: Wylie transcriptions; column 3: English name.

1. རྒྱལ་པའི་དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>reval</u> <u>pa'i</u> <u>don</u> 'khrab	Kings Pattern
2. ཇ་ བརྟམ་	<u>rnga</u> <u>brda'</u>	Calling Pattern
3. དོན་ བརྟམ་	<u>don</u> <u>brda'</u>	<u>Coming-on-stage</u> Pattern
4. མོ་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>mo</u> 'khrab	Female (Girls) Pattern
5. རྒྱལ་པོ་དོན་ དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>reval</u> <u>po</u> <u>don</u> 'khrab	Soft Roll
6. ལ་ མ་	<u>va</u> <u>ma</u>	<u>Yama</u> Pattern
7. རྣན་མོག་ དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>rgan</u> <u>khog</u> <u>don</u> 'khrab	Old Man Pattern
8. ཅངས་ཅན་དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>rgan</u> <u>ezan</u> <u>don</u> 'khrab	Parrot Pattern
9. ཅམན་པ་	<u>rgan</u> <u>pa</u>	<u>Butcher</u> Pattern
10. རྣམ་པའི་དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>sngags</u> <u>pa'i</u> <u>don</u> 'khrab	Black Magician Pattern
11. རྒྱལ་ དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>gva</u> <u>don</u> 'khrab	Yak Pattern
12. དལ་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>dal</u> 'khrab	Song Acc. Pattern
13. དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>don</u> 'khrab	Common Pattern
14. ཇ་ རྩོང་	<u>rnga</u> <u>stong</u>	<u>Filling-up</u> Pattern
15. ཡུག་འབྲུལ་དཔྱལ་རྫོང་	<u>phvag</u> 'bul <u>dpral</u> (b)skor	Changing Pattern
16. རྩ་ རྩེད་ ཇ་ བརྟམ་	<u>rt</u> <u>rtsed</u> <u>rnga</u> <u>brda'</u>	(Angry) Horse Pattern
17. ཀོ་པ་ དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>ko</u> <u>ba</u> <u>don</u> 'khrab	<u>Rowing</u> Pattern
18. རྒྱལ་པའི་ ཇམ་ དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>reval</u> <u>pa'i</u> <u>ngal</u> <u>don</u> 'khrab	Slow King's Pattern
19. ལྷ་ཚེན་ དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>lha</u> <u>chen</u> <u>don</u> 'khrab	Oracle Pattern
20. ལྷ་བསམ་ཇམ་ ཀི་ ཇ་ བརྟམ་	<u>lha</u> <u>bsangs</u> <u>gi</u> <u>rnga</u> <u>brda'</u>	Praying Pattern
21. ལྷ་ལེན་ ཇ་ བརྟམ་	<u>chu</u> <u>len</u> <u>rnga</u> <u>brda'</u>	Fetching Water Pattern
22. དགོན་པ་ ལྷི་ ཇ་ བརྟམ་	<u>deon</u> <u>pa</u> <u>gvi</u> <u>rnga</u> <u>brda'</u>	Gomba Pattern
23. རྣམ་པ་ དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>rngon</u> <u>pa</u> <u>don</u> 'khrab	Hunters Pattern
24. མགྲོགས་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>mevogs</u> 'khrab	Messenger Pattern
25. མགྲོགས་ འཕྲུབ་ ཇམ་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>mevogs</u> 'khrab <u>ngal</u> 'khrab	Slow Speed Pattern
26. ཕུ་དོན་ དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>bva</u> <u>don</u> 'khrab	Bird Pattern
27. ལྷམ་ དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>bla</u> <u>ma</u> <u>don</u> 'khrab	Lama Pattern
28. ལམ་མཚོད་ དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	<u>a</u> <u>mchod</u> <u>don</u> 'khrab	Bad Lama Pattern
29. བཀྲའི་མ་ རྣམ་པ་ ཇ་ རྩོག་	<u>bkra</u> <u>shis</u> <u>zhol</u> <u>pa</u> <u>rnga</u> <u>tshig</u>	<u>Tashi Sholwa</u> Pattern
30. འཆས་མ་ དོན་ འཕྲུབ་	'chams <u>don</u> 'khrab	Cham Pattern

## Appendix 2

Repertoire on the accompanying CD to  
Percussion patterns in Lhamo:  
the drum patterns of the Nepal Tibetan Lhamo Association

Audio part of Master Thesis of Bernard Kleikamp at Leiden University Asian Studies.

1. King's Pattern, preceded by the Common Pattern. Edirol, 20120718.
2. Calling Pattern. Edirol, 20120718.
3. Female Pattern or Girls Pattern, preceded by the Common Pattern. Edirol, 20120718.
4. Yama Pattern, preceded by the Common Pattern. Panasonic, 20120718.
5. Old Man Pattern, preceded by the Common Pattern. Edirol, 20120718.
6. Parrot Pattern, preceded by the Common Pattern. Edirol, 20120720.
7. Butcher Pattern. Edirol, 20120725.
8. Black Magician Pattern (with humming). Edirol, 20120720.
9. Yak Pattern (slow, then fast). Panasonic, 20120720.
10. Song Accompaniment Pattern (drum, cymbals, group song). Panasonic, 20120721.  
NTLA rehearsal. Title of song: Khaypa La (Wylie: kha ya pa la, "Welcome Traveller").
11. Song Accompaniment Pattern (drum, solo song). Edirol, 20120725.
12. Common Pattern (played twice). Edirol, 20120718.
13. Filling-up Pattern, also called Rest Pattern or Break Pattern (drum, cymbals, song).  
Panasonic. 20130622. NTLA rehearsal.
14. Changing Pattern, followed by King's Pattern. Edirol, 20120727.
15. Horse Pattern, followed by Angry Horse Pattern. Edirol, 20120803
16. Rowing Pattern (drum and cymbals). Panasonic, 20120721. NTLA rehearsal.
17. Rowing Pattern, preceded by the Common Pattern. Edirol, 20120803.
18. Slow King's Pattern, preceded by the Common Pattern. Edirol, 20120803.
19. Oracle Pattern, preceded by the Common Pattern. Edirol, 20120803.
20. Prayer Pattern. Edirol, 20120803.
21. Fetching Water Pattern, preceded by the Common Pattern and the Girl's Pattern.  
Edirol, 20120806. With two variations beaten on the side of the drum.
22. Gomba Pattern. Edirol, 20120806.
23. Hunter's Pattern. Edirol, 20120718.  
Four beats on the side of the drum to indicate end of phrase approaching.
24. Messenger Pattern or (Fast) Speed Pattern, preceded by the Common Pattern, Edirol,  
20120718. Four beats on the side of the drum to indicate end of phrase approaching.
25. Bird Pattern, preceded by the Common Pattern. Edirol, 20120720.
26. Lama Pattern, preceded by the Common Pattern. Panasonic, 20120730.
27. Bad Lama Pattern. Edirol, 20120718.
28. Tashi Sholpa Pattern. Panasonic, 20180726. NTLA at Palyul Ösel Monastery, drum  
by Tenam.
29. Cham Pattern (cymbals). Tascam, 20190514. NTLA rehearsal.
30. King's Pattern (cymbals), preceded by the Common Pattern. Edirol, 20120727.
31. Yama Pattern (cymbals), preceded by the Common Pattern. Edirol, 20120727.
32. Black Magician Pattern (cymbals), preceded by the Common Pattern. Edirol,  
20120727.
33. Parrot Pattern (humming). Edirol, 20120720.
34. Old Man Pattern, preceded by the Common Pattern. Edirol, 20120718.

total time 27:53

Recorded 2012, 2013, 2018, 2019 by Bernard Kleikamp.

Performers: Tenzin Namgyal aka Tenam—rnga (drum), bubchal (cymbals), vocals (1 - 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17 - 27, 30 - 33); NTLA-members—rnga, bubchal, vocals (10, 13, 16, 28, 29); Bernard Kleikamp—rnga (34).

Location: Practice room of NTLA in Jorpati near Kathmandu, Nepal, except #28 at Palyul Ösel Monastery in Jorpati. The 2012 and 2013 practice room is different from the 2018 and 2019 practice room.

Recording equipment: 1. Years 2012 - 2019 (video): Panasonic 3CCD video recorder NV-GS400 using an external stereo microphone Sony S959-C; 2. Years 2012 - 2018 (audio): Edirol R-09HR digital stereo with built-in microphones, 44,1 kHz, 24-bit, WAV; 3. Year 2019 (audio): Tascam DR-40 linear PCM digital stereo with built-in microphones, 44,1 kHz, 24-bit, WAV.

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label number: Pan 2123; UPC: 713958212349; ISRC: NLC191900084 - 117.