

Name of the Element: Buddhist Chanting of Ladakh: Recitation of Sacred Buddhist Texts in the Trans-Himalayan Ladakh Region, Jammu and Kashmir, India.

Community/ies: Buddhist community of Ladakh

Region: Kargil and Leh Districts, Ladakh region, State of Jammu and Kashmir, India

Brief Description: The recitation of ancient sacred Buddhist texts are chanted every day in the monks living in various monasteries and following different sects of Buddhism in the trans-Himalayan region of Ladakh in India. Besides, special chanting is conducted on important days of the Buddhist calendar, during life cycle rituals, and important days in the agrarian calendar. It is done for spiritual and moral well being of the people, by appeasing the wrath of the evil spirits and invoking the blessing of various Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, deities and Rinpoches (high 'Lama' reincarnate) for spiritual and moral wellbeing of the people. The chanting is also meant for peace and prosperity of world at large. The chanting is a highly orchestrated musical drama. It is done either sitting indoors or dancing in the monastic courtyards or in private houses in the village. While chanting, the monks wear special costumes and make hand gestures representing the divine being of the Buddha. Musical instruments such as the bells, drums, cymbals and trumpets are used to bring in rhythm. The chanting helps in the meditation process, in attaining enlightenment and getting liberation from the sufferings of the world.

Buddhist Chanting of Ladakh- Inscribed in 2012 on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, UNESCO