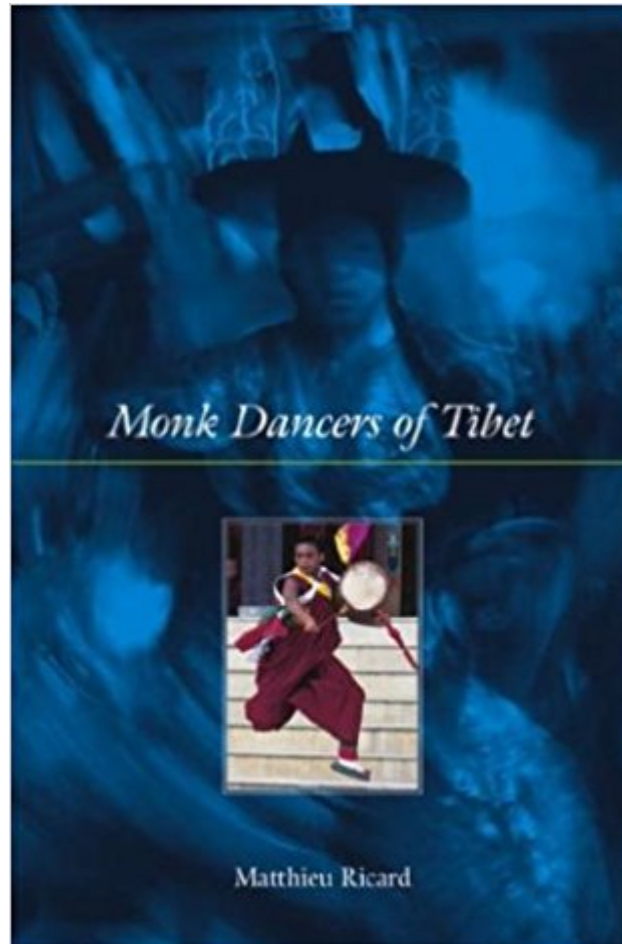




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# Monk Dancers Of Tibet



## Synopsis

In the midst of the devastation that has been wrought on their culture, the monk dancers in the Shechen monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal, are devoted to preserving the sacred dances central to the Tantric tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. The dances, which originated in India and flourished for centuries in Tibet, are teaching stories—each mask, costume, movement, and gesture has a specific significance and embodies the values of Buddhism. The dances are the monks' spiritual gift to the lay community. The origin of the sacred Buddhist dance, or cham, goes back to the ninth century, when Guru Padmasambhava introduced Buddhism to Tibet. Through the ages, the practice has been advanced by great masters whose visionary experiences enriched and enhanced the dance forms. The sacred dances were then transmitted as accurately as possible by the masters' disciples from generation to generation. The dances are now preserved in exile in India, Nepal, and Bhutan, and have been presented in the West, by the monks of Shechen and other Tibetan monasteries, in the same spirit of sharing a profound inner experience. In vivid, full-color photos and illuminating text, the well-known author and photographer Matthieu Ricard reveals the painstaking preparations for and meanings behind the dances, as well as the intriguing history of this uniquely colorful teaching practice.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Tibetan Buddhism, the most symbolic and esoteric of all Buddhist traditions, has a rich history of sacred dance in which every mask, costume, sound and gesture has spiritual significance. Most

Tibetan dances, says Ricard, a French Buddhist monk, are based in the exploits of masters and great teachers, and seek to preserve their legacy. Since the Chinese occupation of Tibet, however, the dances have been restricted, and are now found mostly in exile communities in India, Nepal and Bhutan. The color photographs and illustrations are the real highlight of this book, which discusses the role of sacred dance in Tibetan Buddhism and, most interestingly, profiles what life is like for the monk dancers. The book makes it clear that dance is a meditative practice, and even the crafts associated with it-such as the making of masks and elaborate costumes-are sacred acts. A final section explores the ritual cycle of Tibetan Buddhism, and outlines which dances are performed for holidays and festivals. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"Ricard combines a considerable talent for photography with a clear understanding of Buddhist concepts to create this valuable record of the sacred dance traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. . . . A perfect record of these profound spiritual practices that, like so many other aspects of the rich Tibetan culture, have a precarious existence in exile." — Library Journal

This beautiful book is a treasure. If you want to learn more about sacred dance in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition this is a very informative book from a very knowledgeable source.

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