

Nicolas Eng
Sound Healing Final Paper

Himalayan Singing Bowl Techniques: History and Contemporary Masters

Himalayan Singing Bowls are spiritual “awakening” instruments that have existed since the pre-buddhist Shamanic Bon Po culture of the Himalayas dating over 2600 years ago. According to Himalayan Bowl Practitioner Frank Perry in his book “Himalayan Sound Revelations”, H. H. The Dalai Lama has stated that the singing bowls were originally thought to be linked to “Fire Worship” and kept in lamaseries. As time progressed, Himalayan Bowls were used for meditation and for astral traveling by the indigenous Newars people who believed that the “sound from the bowl went right around the world and then returned back to the bowl.”

During the time of the Buddha 2400 years ago, the Himalayan bowls then became used as tools to teach the Dharma. Singing bowls craftsman are taught only verbally and restricted to within a highly structured clan or caste system. Still today, the Shakyamuni clan handcrafts singing bowls while chanting mantras to imbue the bowls with powerful energies. During the 8th century CE, singing bowls were introduced to Tibet when the great Buddhist Tantric Master Guru Padmasambhava brought Vajrayana Buddhism. While the bowls are not commonly seen in monasteries in current day Tibet, certain monasteries in the Gelug tradition still use the bowls for Dharma rituals. In the booklet “Tibetan Singing Bowls: A Historical Perspective”, Lama Lobsang Molam states that while the Buddha is no longer here to give the Dharma teachings, the bowls have special “connection to Shambhala” and by playing the bowl one receives direct teaching from the Buddha to become enlightened. This perspective strongly connects with the Indian Nada Yoga or Yoga of Sound where sound is a spiritual path towards enlightenment.

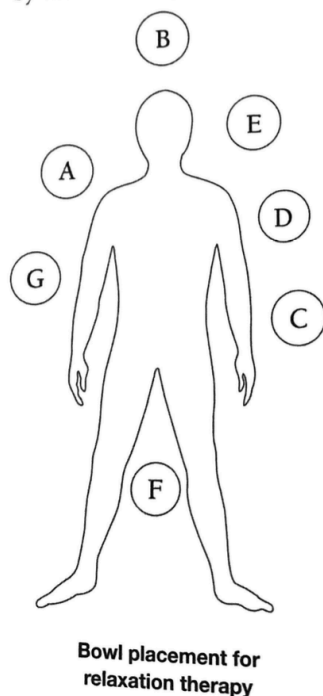
The history of singing bowls in more recent times has been largely lost, with the traditions becoming a dying art in Tibet and Nepal. Only a few masters still practice and teach the traditional singing bowl methods of Nada Yoga and Sound Healing from ancient times. In this paper, I will focus on two prominent Himalayan Singing Bowl masters Suren Shrestha and Akhil Lanka and detail their practices.

Suren Shrestha and the Atma Buti School for Vibration

Suren Shrestha is a master healer from Kathamandu, Nepal born into a traditionally Newar family background, one of the tribes that has preserved Himalayan Sound Healing Traditions. He has written one of the foremost Singing Bowl books in the world, “How to Heal with Singing Bowls: Traditional Tibetan Healing Methods.” He runs the Atma Buti School for Vibrational Healing in Colorado where he teaches workshops in traditional singing bowl treatments that attract students from all over the world.

In an interview with “Practical Magick”, Suren details his definition of sound healing and how to heal with singing bowls. He explains that everyone has a signature vibration of optimal health and well-being that is a natural result of one’s physical, mental, emotional, and subtle bodies. Just like an instrument that can fall out of tune through use, one’s body can fall out of vibrational harmony and become ill due to negative thought, stress, or traumatic experience. Through the use of the Himalayan Singing Bowls, one’s body can be brought back into harmonious vibration.

In terms of treatments, Suren specializes in individual treatments ranging from insomnia to chakra balancing. In his seven bowl treatments, the individual is laying down on the ground or on a massage table surrounded by singing bowls. In terms of bowl placement, Suren details his use of the Himalayan Chakra system which associates with circle of fifth notes, and specific seed syllables. He also adds warm water into the singing bowl and puts it on the torso of the individual which mimics a hot stone massage, and will slide the bowl up and down the client while hitting it with a mallet. This leads to a deeper vibration into the body tissues of the client mimicking a hot stone massage.



Chakra	Vedic Note	Vedic Mantra	Tibetan Note	Tibetan Mantra
7th Crown	B	Silent	B	Silent
6th Third Eye	A	Om	E	Aa
5th Throat	G	Ham	A	Om
4th Heart	F	Yam	D	Hung
3rd Solar Plexus	E	Ram	G	Ram
2nd Sacral	D	Vam	C	Dza
1st Root	C	Lam	F	Silent



Left Figure: Bowl placement for relaxation therapy.

Table: 7 Chakra system - Suren uses Tibetan Chakra System
Bottom right picture: Warm water bowl therapy on the back

Most of Suren's treatments detailed in his book last anywhere between 15-45 minutes and have multiple parts including initiation, treatment, and then closing portions. These separate portions of treatments are introduced in order to control the energy of the session, and to leave the patient relaxed at the end. Finally, Suren stresses the importance of intention during a session to have profound affects on the client.

Master Akhil Anka and the Temple of Singing Bowls Mysore

Master Akhil Anka is a Nada Yogi, Meditation and Sound Healing teacher and the founder of Temple of Singing Bowls Mysore in Karnataka, India. He has his own meditations and teachings on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/TempleofSingingBowlsAkhilanka>, and provides Nada Yoga certifications. He is also a surrealist painter and has won awards for his abstract art.

Akhil is a Nada Yogi who utilizes singing bowls to conduct Nada Yoga or Sound Meditation. In his videos on YouTube, Akhil explains that sound can be divided into two categories: internal and external. Internal sounds include sounds that we have some control over, like our heartbeat, pulse, breathe, thoughts and emotions. External sounds exist outside of ourselves, where we do not have much control, like dogs barking or people yelling. We cannot discriminate between internal and external sounds as they happen simultaneously and affect each other. We are lost in the dynamic relationship, until Nada Yoga cuts through both the internal and external sounds like a "two-edged sword" and helps us realize our true, pure nature.

External Practice of Nada Yoga

- 1) Listen to the surrounding sound
- 2) Whatever the sound you are hearing be aware of it - do not judge it
- 3) "Be aware of all the sounds" without any judgment
- 4) Each sound bringing you something within you
- 5) Go with it without any judgment

Before each session, Master Akhil chants the mantra "OM NAMO, NADA BRAMHA" praising the sound of god. He then plays mostly sitting, with his hands and elbows relaxed. He uses singing bowls, bells, gongs, and koshi chimes during his sound healing meditations.

Throughout his teachings, he emphasizes the importance of intention. He encourages you to "tap" the bowls instead of "hitting" them. This healing intention (instead of violent intention) creates and amplifies the healing effects of the vibrations. Like many other teachings of Buddhist and Hindu spirituality, Akhil advises students to prepare their minds before engaging in any spiritual activity to experience deep and authentic benefits.

Both Akhil's teachings are more spiritual in nature compared to Suren's practical sound healing sessions, yet they both emphasize the importance of setting intentions before any practice. Intentions create subtle, yet powerful vibrations that potentiate healing transformation, while the Himalayan Singing Bowls provide the doorway to manifesting the healer's intentions into reality. Ultimately, Himalayan Singing Bowls are powerful spiritual technologies that when played with proper intention can manifest one's self-realization through Dharma or Nada Yoga. They are the water, sunlight, gentle love, and care that allow the spiritual seed to grow into a healthy limitless tree.