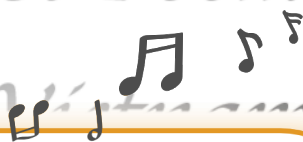


Ky Nam Nguyen

Buddhist Poems

From Vietnam



For SAT.

musicalion

[click for more](#)

percussion

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Instrumentation

SATB Choir or Chamber Choir

Percussion I: Buddhist Wooden Fish (can be substituted with temple blocks)*

2 Conga Drums

Percussion II: Prayer Bowls in D, A, E, and B (can be substituted with vibraphone or chimes)*

Tambourine

Duration: ca. 15+ minutes

Performance note:

The first movement, “Om Muni Muni Maha Muni Shakyamunaye Soha,” is only sung during a procession, when the choir enters or exit the hall. Any section marked with the repeat signs should be repeated at least twice. After two repetitions, the choir can decide how many more repetitions they could add, depending on the program, location, and staff.

Program note:

This work is a collection of poems written in Chinese because, until the twentieth century, all of which were written in Chinese because the language of learning until our Latin-based modern national script was popularized in the twentieth century. I kept the original text of the Sanskrit mantra but translated the poems from Sino-Vietnamese into English.

The Medieval monks who wrote these poems are respected not only for contributing to Vietnamese Buddhism but also for defending and developing our country. Among them, Trần Nhân Tông (1258–1308) was the king who led our nation to victory during the last two Mongol invasions in the thirteenth century. However, he was not attached to the glory of a warrior-king. Spiritually enlightened, he followed the steps of the Gautama Buddha, left his throne as soon as his responsibilities were fulfilled, and became the monk who established Trúc Lâm, the indigenous Vietnamese Zen school.

I kept the melodic tune of the Sanskrit mantra to pay tribute to the Indian origin of Buddhism while gradually transforming it into a multi-voiced texture. Likewise, all other movements are inspired by the long traditions of polyphonic and homophonic singing in Western music. This work expresses how Vietnamese culture and Western music have shaped me as an artist and a person.

** Please contact the composer or North Park University School of Music, Art, and Theatre to have access to the authentic set of four Vietnamese Buddhist Praying Bowls and a Wooden Fish.*

Texts:

1. Om Muni Muni Maha Muni Shakyamunaye Soha
(SATB choir, Buddhist Wooden Fish, and Praying Bowls)

2. Teaching My Disciples – Vạn Hạnh (938–1018)
(SATB choir)

The body exists and disappears like a fleeting flash.
All plants flourish in the spring but wither in the fall.
Be not afraid of the rise and fall of life.
They are like dew on the tip of a leaf.

3. Origin of Fire – Khuông Việt (933–1011)
(SATB choir, conga drums, and tambourine)

In the wood, there lies fire;
And the fire will come alive.
If wood contains no fire,
Where does the spark come from?

4. A Dawn in Spring –
(Sopranos and Altos)

I rose up and looked through
Not knowing that Spring had
A couple of white butterflies
Flew with their flapping wings toward the flowers.

5. The Words from My Heart–Không Lộ (?–1119)
(Tenor Solo, Tenors, and Bass)

I chose to stay in the land of snakes and dragons,
The endless joy of the countryside.
Sometimes, I climb the peak of a lonely mountain,
Shout a long shout that freezes the whole sky.

6. Do Not Tread in the Footsteps of the Buddha–Quảng Nghiêm (1121 – 1191)
(SATB choir, Buddhist Wooden Fish, and Praying Bowls)

Only talk about Nirvana when we are free from the desire of Nirvana
Only talk about Death and Life when we are free from Death and Life
Men have the will to fly our own sky
Do not tread in the footsteps of the Buddha.

A graphic featuring several musical notes floating above a large, rounded rectangular button with an orange border and a soft glow. The button contains the word "musicalion" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font, with "click for more" in a smaller, orange, sans-serif font below it.

musicalion
click for more

Type: Sheet music

Título: [Buddhist Poems from Vietnam](#)

Compositor: [Ky Nam Nguyen](#)

Época: Siglo XXI

Tema: Paz

Categoría: Canciones (espirituales)

Dificultad: Mittel bis schwer

Instrumentación Grupo: Coro mixto con ensamble/orquesta

Arrangement: Coro>SATB+Percusión 2

Instrumentación: Canto coro>voces de bajo = B (1), Canto coro>voces de contralto = A(1), Canto coro>voces de soprano = S(1), Canto coro>voces de tenor = T(1), Percusión (toda la percusión) = Perc(2)

This work is a collection of one Sanskrit mantra and five Buddhist poems of Vietnam, all of which were written in Chinese because Vietnamese people had used Chinese as the written language of learning until our Latin-based modern national script was popularized in the twentieth century. I kept the original text of the Sanskrit mantra but translated the poems from Sino-Vietnamese into English.

The Medieval monks who wrote these poems are respected not only for contributing to Vietnamese Buddhism but also for defending and developing our country. Among them, Trần Nhân Tông (1258–1308) was the king who led our nation to victory during the last two Mongol invasions in the thirteenth century. However, he was not attached to the glory of a warrior-king. Spiritually enlightened, he followed the steps of the Gautama Buddha, left his throne as soon as his responsibilities were fulfilled, and became the monk who established Trúc Lâm, the indigenous Vietnamese Zen school.

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** Please click on this link for the recording and original texts in Chinese and Vietnamese: <https://kynamnguyen.com/en/buddhist-poems-from-vietnam-for-satb-choir-and-percussion/>.