

South Asia PhoNographic Mornings #11/20

Each Morning of the World #07

Thimpu ~ Bhutan

« The land of the Thunder Dragon »

Burt Gregory

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I was fortunate enough to travel to the Kingdom of Bhutan in early 2018. We were shooting a small documentary about the introduction of skateboarding in Bhutan. A truly awe-inspiring country where stray dogs are well cared for, the mountains are off-limits and sacred, and there is a minister that annually measures the “Gross National Happiness” of the population.

We attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the country's first skatepark, a blessing for safety and well-being. In this recording we have the Lama giving the blessings, the monks playing briefly, and a circular dance and song that is sung in a very old style of the national language, Dzongkha. We made a trip to the legendary Tiger's Nest, but had to surrender all electronics at the entrance. The sounds and chants I heard in the top room will forever be vivid in my memory. In a way I enjoyed *not* recording it; instead I focused on having one chance to experience this feeling. I had walked into a time before recorders, where firsthand experience was the only way to see, feel, and hear. Quite a rare thing in this world today.

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Burt Gregory

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Born in San Francisco, CA, I was constantly entranced by the then-vibrant collection of street musicians all over the city. I started making crude recordings at a young age and followed that path into making field recordings of musicians in other countries, mainly the middle east at first. I was then guided into the film aspect of sound and have worked on a wide array of film and TV projects, but still retain the focus of recording music and wildlife. I have recorded in over 100 countries and still counting. I record specialty audio for “The Amazing Race”, collecting music and ambiance from all of the countries visited on each season of the program. I am currently building projects based on music and language preservation on the African Continent. I live in Brooklyn, NY.

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