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## The Appropriation of Buddhism in New Age Music: New Age Musicians can do Better at Representing Buddhist Cultures

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## **Abstract**

This paper explores the appropriation of Buddhism in New Age music and argues that New Age musicians should do better at representing Buddhist cultures. Beginning by discussing the popularity of mindfulness and its incorporation into secular settings, this paper highlights the historical connection between sounds, meditation, and spirituality, emphasizing the significance of music in religious expression. This paper then delves into the origins and essential teachings of Buddhism, and an overview of New Age music, which uses ambient sounds to create a relaxing atmosphere, as well as New Age use of Buddhist elements, like chants, mantras, and ritual instruments like singing bowls. However, concern is raised about the potential misrepresentation of Buddhism in New Age music. The harms of cultural appropriation are discussed, leading to concerns over the potential for stereotyping and racism to grow. Finally, the paper analyzes the cultural appropriation of Buddhism by New Age artist, Ashana, an American crystal singing bowl player and spiritual healing influencer. This analysis acknowledges that individuals may unknowingly appropriate elements from other cultures and suggests promoting a better understanding of cultural exchange. The overall aim is to inspire a more respectful and authentic representation of Buddhist cultures in New Age music.

*Keywords: Ashana, Buddhism, cultural appropriation, New Age, singing bowl*

## **The Appropriation of Buddhist Culture: New Age Musicians can do Better**

The connection of mindfulness, meditation, and yoga to sound has a rich history steeped in tradition and religion. Sound is an effective tool often used to aid in mindfulness and meditation practices, through instruments like metal bells, singing bowls, or a recording of soothing music specifically designed for mindfulness practices. From a secular perspective, sound serves as an “anchor” for a practitioner, to shift their mind to the focused subject of that meditation session. Karen Armstrong, decorated author and commentator on religious affairs, offers a perspective on music within the context of religion. In the book, *“The Case for God,”* Armstrong writes “Music has always been inseparable from religious expression, because, like religion at its best, music marks the ‘limits of reason’” (5). Armstrong describes listening to music in the context of spirituality as a highly cerebral connection to the elements of oneself that aren’t so easily defined by reason and language. Even in the enjoyment of music alone, isolated from religion, those who have experienced a deep connection to music relate to this sentiment. Using words to represent the feelings and thoughts that arise through listening to a particularly touching song is often ineffective, as the original listening experience may have been indescribable. It may even feel appropriate to describe such experiences as a spiritual connection to music.

Many religions incorporate music into their practice, and Buddhism is no different. Music and other cultural elements of Buddhism have made their way into mainstream Western consciousness, in part because of the popularity of New Age music. This paper will discuss the appropriative relationship of the New Age musician, Ashana, with Buddhist culture. Through the course of this paper, the East—West dichotomy will be used as a convenience, to refer to how relevant topics and processes which occur in predominantly Buddhist Asian societies compares to increasingly Buddhist European and North American societies.

### **Buddhism and New Age Music**

No religion or music style can be accurately encapsulated in just one or two paragraphs, but a primer is necessary to build the context for this conversation. Buddhism is a religion that originated in South Asia around the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Buddhists place their faith in the teaching of the Buddha, or the Enlightened One—a man named Siddhartha Gautama. The teaching of the Buddha is called the Dharma, a universal truth or ideal that must be understood and lived by in order to achieve a solution to dukkha, a Pali word that means suffering or the unsatisfactoriness resulting from our automatic mental or physical responses that perpetuate unhelpful and unskillful thoughts or actions. Siddhartha Gautama became the Buddha after meditating under a fig tree, becoming enlightened. He discovered the Dharma after clearing the mental turbulence that causes humans to fall victim to dangerous habits and harmful thought. The Buddha would go on to travel and teach the Dharma. The Buddha is revered as a teacher and a prime example of someone who is believed to have discovered this truth and achieved liberation from dukkha through the cultivation of wisdom and the full realization of compassion. Buddhists live their lives walking the path of the Buddha, which means living in accordance with the Dharma, practicing meditation to cultivate their Buddha-nature to become enlightened like he was, vanquishing suffering and unsatisfactoriness (Rahula xv-xvi). These are some of the essential ideas of Buddhism, but not in the least everything one should know about Buddhism.

Like most religions and cultures, there is no version of Buddhism that is considered a true, authentic, or final form. Religions and cultures are fluid and ever-changing, adapting to the nations they reach. The teaching of the Buddha would spread throughout the East, evolving and taking forms that best suited the societies it would be introduced to. From a 2010 Pew report on the population of religious groups, Buddhists compose 7.1% of the world's population. This group is most dense in Asia, next in North America, then Europe. It is the concern of this paper that some of the forces that popularize Buddhism in the West, like New Age music artists, portray a version of Buddhism but neglect its cultural roots.

New Age is a genre of music that uses ambient sound to create a relaxing, peaceful atmosphere within a space or perhaps just within one's mind space. The roots of the New Age music genre involve Western musicians who became inspired to use folk musical elements of typically non-dominant cultures from all over the world. The genre can encompass natural environmental sounds like rain and thunder, as well as gentle synth movements, the constant stable sound of an instrument, and chants in languages associated with spiritual cultures. Many of the sounds of Buddhist practice are incorporated into New Age music. Buddhist sounds and New Age music seek to accomplish similar goals: generating a relaxing and grounding state of mind for the listener or practitioner. This type of music is generally accepted to be calming, with evidence suggesting that it has a soothing effect. A 2013 study by Thoma MV et al. suggests that when peaceful sounds are played to volunteers, their bodies and vitals respond in a way that coincides with states of relaxation. In New Age music, instruments with close associations to Buddhist cultures are popularly used, such as the gong, singing bowl, and chants in Sanskrit or Tibetan. Though New Age music complexly amalgamates the sounds of numerous cultures, there is an undeniable and persistent Asian influence in its themes.

From the very beginning of the genre, New Age music has been tied to Buddhism. Musicologists cite Tony Scott's *Music for Zen Meditation* (1964) as the first New Age album (Masterclass). Zen is a familiar but ill-defined word in Western society, often associated with zen gardens, "zenning-out," zen wellness, or Zen Ramen and Sushi Burrito. In its original context, however, Zen is a school within the Mahayana branch of Buddhism. Zen is a religion. It's the Japanese name of Chinese Chan Buddhism. The word Chan is a transliteration of the Sanskrit word dhyāna, or meditation. Zen's teachings, traditions, and cultural products have a presence all throughout Asia, and it emphasizes values of meditation, self-restraint, and awareness of the present moment. Though this paper looks to address how cultural appropriation happens in New Age music, Scott's *Music for Zen Meditation* is a good example of a justifiably appreciative use of Buddhist cultural elements. It is relatively authentic, having relevant imagery in both

album visuals and references to Zen Buddhist concepts in song names. The album features koto player, Shinichi Yuize, and shakuhachi player, Hozan Yamamoto. Both musicians hail from Japan, a country with a significant Buddhist cultural presence, and one which has spawned several Buddhist traditions.

Since Tony Scott's *Music for Zen Meditation*, Buddhism has had a constant presence in New Age music. Prevalent elements to New Age music production that come to mind are the use of mantras, chants, Buddhist imagery in album art, and traces of Buddhist teachings in album and song titles. Many devout Buddhists produce Buddhist music that could reasonably be categorized into New Age, but there is a discussion to be had about the risk of misrepresenting Buddhism in New Age music as it's understood to be a Western originated genre. Now that the context of different forms of "mindfulness music" are established—Buddhist religious music and New Age music—one may ask: Does the New Age genre respect the cultural roots that it's influenced by? And can the communities involved exist healthily albeit at the risk of misrepresentation?

### **Appropriation and McMindfulness**

New Age appropriation of Buddhism owes its origins in part to a complex development between a Western Buddha-curious population and a capitalist system that seeks to profit from them. The term Buddha-curious has seen popular use on Reddit's Buddhist community forum [r/GoldenSwastika](#) and is optionally used along with other identity tags to publicly indicate the Buddhist tradition of a user. In this paper, Buddha-curious will be used to describe those interested in Buddhist teaching but who do not necessarily identify as a member of the religion or aren't nationals of Buddhist-dominant societies; many of those who are Buddha-curious are Westerners. To provide some background on the increased popularity of Buddhism in the West, it is worthwhile to better understand Buddhism's role in the mindfulness industry.

The Buddhist practice of mindfulness seeks to maintain a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis (Merriam-Webster). The West has bolstered the popularity of mindfulness in such a way that mindfulness techniques are showing up in classrooms and professional spaces. Mindfulness manifests in many forms; most familiar are those found in yoga and breathing meditation. However, that mindfulness, meditation, and yoga must have something to do with spirituality is evident in a close relationship with meditation in many religious traditions. On the other hand, mindfulness also presents as a secular practice, as many advocates adapt these practices into secular settings without much trouble. Practitioners across history, religious and non-religious alike, testify to the positive mental and physical effects of engaging with mindfulness.

In their 2019 book, *McMindfulness: How Mindfulness Became the New Capitalist Spirituality*, Ronald E. Purser, ordained Zen priest in the Korean Zen Taego Buddhist order and research professor at the Lam Family College of Business at San Francisco State University examines the phenomenon of McMindfulness, the use of Buddhism-informed mindfulness in a fashionable and profitable industry in the West. Originally coined by Buddhist psychotherapist and teacher Dr. Miles Neale, McMindfulness encapsulates the mindfulness movement as a remedy for stress and emotional regulation, as well as the industry that supports it. Purser, in speaking about McMindfulness on the Tricycle Talks podcast, states: "I think part of the appeal is that it really appeals to our highly individualistic and entrepreneurial ethos in our society. Our culture is thriving on this individualism and narcissism, so I think that's why it's been so successful." According to Purser, there is no psychological or ethical framework associated with secular mindfulness. Behind the breathing techniques and mindfulness self-help books – there is no foundation for practices that cultivate wisdom and compassion (Shaheen 2:00). The mindfulness industry, Purser claims, caters to the Western values of individuality and

development of the individual, using mindfulness as a tool to help a person manage the mental troubles of their life and perhaps to realize a more authentic form of themselves.

Given the alignment of Western identity attitudes with Buddhism's self-driven philosophical core, the popularity of Buddhism in the West is understandable as it aligns with a growing dissatisfaction with dominant Western religious institutions. Buddhism has no emphasized concept of divine punishment, and shaming isn't acceptable in the Buddhist community. Acceptance of the individual's personal journey to develop better behaviors and mindsets is a supreme aspect of the Buddhist path

### **Cultural Appropriation**

At the same time, the mindfulness movement and industry are part of the reason yoga and meditation have grown so popular in the West. The proliferation of Buddhist-associated objects and wellness content meant to satisfy the Buddhist or Buddha-curious consumer will naturally result in a greater exposure to the Dharma. Studios for Buddhist-informed meditation and yoga are scattered about United States' urban sprawls. Buddha statues can be bought from the home décor section of Ross, and many of the environments that feature New Age music and spirituality have also incorporated Buddhist ideas and imagery. A perspective that encourages the critical consideration of power structures between cultures offers a lens to see if cultural appropriation is occurring in the commercial products of the mindfulness movement. One definition for cultural appropriation is the adoption, usually without acknowledgment, of identity markers from cultures, subcultures or minority communities into the mainstream culture by people with a relatively privileged status (Merriam Webster).

Cultural appropriation is a hot topic in Western popular culture. Celebrities and other high-profile figures often debut new looks that take influence from the elements of non-dominant cultures they don't belong to. For instance, the bindi has been popularly appropriated by celebrities such as Selena Gomez, Katy Perry, and Miley Cyrus. Wearing bindi is a massively popular tradition in India that has thousands of years of religious history (Battle). Another



instance of cultural appropriation is a holiday or amusement costume that portrays a stereotypical caricature of a cultural figure or cultural dress, such as a sexually suggestive cheongsam. More often than not, such appropriation is an attempt by the celebrity to debut a new, non-mainstream look. Or, in the case of a costume manufacturer, to capitalize on an inauthentic depiction of those in non-dominant cultures. In my personal experience, however, I am aware that some Buddhists take no issue with the use of Buddhist cultural elements outside of original contexts, as long the depiction isn't clearly disrespectful. It can be viewed as a proliferation of the Dharma, a vehicle to make the teaching and influence of Buddhism accessible.

Another alternative perspective on cultural appropriation claims that many Buddha-curious and mindfulness practicing Westerners are appreciating the Dharma and Buddhist cultures, not appropriating them. It is difficult to discern whether the Buddha-curious population as a whole appropriates or appreciates because the population contains a variety of perspectives. A common approach to the Dharma by the Buddha-curious is to reject the portions of teachings one disagrees with. This is infamously present within the increasing alignment of Westerners with "secular Buddhism," the name for a Buddhist-informed philosophy and lifestyle that emphasizes scientific rationality, thus rejecting the legendary or supernatural aspects of Buddhism. This form of Buddhist "appreciation" misrepresents or distorts an individual's understanding of Buddhism and encourages the spread of an inauthentic Buddhist worldview.

Misrepresentation is a harm caused by cultural appropriation. Given how culture and religion shape the worldview we hold for our entire lives, and that no two people from the same culture or religion have identical understandings and practices, it is doubtful that a group who recreates the cultural products of another group has an equal understanding and connection to those cultural products. According to the definition, privilege plays an important part in this form of cultural interaction as well. It is difficult for groups without power to hold accountable groups

with power, and because of that, there is little incentive for the powerful group to consider the cultural significance of the products that they are appropriating. When the appropriating group in power reproduces a cultural product for purposes other than its original intended use within the original cultural context, misrepresentation is inevitable. It is my opinion that from misrepresentation, the bad seeds of stereotyping, prejudice, and racism can grow.

Minority communities have been oppressed and exploited by majority communities of power throughout history. These imbalanced power dynamics are a crucial consideration when analyzing issues of cultural appropriation. Synonyms of the word “appropriate,” include to commandeer, or annex, or hijack, a point made by Karen Howard, associate professor of music and the coordinator of graduate music research at the University of St. Thomas. Howard discusses the harms of cultural appropriation and strategies that music educators can take in order to avoid potentially misrepresenting cultures, stating: “There cannot be an equal and free flow of practices as long as the group in power in music education (white people) maintains power and privilege over another group” (Howard 69). Though my paper isn’t about music education, Howard shares an important dynamic to consider: there cannot be an equal and free flow of practices as long as the group in power maintains power and privilege over another group.

User u/buddhiststuff of the r/GoldenSwastika Buddhist community on Reddit authors a brief wiki page titled “The Marginalization of Buddhism in the West.” Describing some of the adverse cultural effects of the Western appropriation of Buddhism, they write:

The direction of the distortion of Buddhism is always the same: to make Buddhism palatable to Christians. To suggest that it can be subordinated to Western norms, Western religion, and Western consumerist materialism. To turn it into a lifestyle accessory. This marginalization of Buddhism has gone hand in hand with the marginalization of ethnic Asians. English-speaking Buddhist spaces (meditation centres [sic], university forums, magazines) regularly exclude Asian teachers. (buddhiststuff)

As demand for Buddhist learning and practice spaces grow in the West, Buddhism's cultural elements are being separated from their original Asian contexts and instead prescribed by Westerners. This is appropriation in action, and appropriators are encouraged to reevaluate their conduct to personify more virtuous interactions with Buddhism, Buddhist culture, and Asian ethnicities.

### **Appropriators Should Do Better!**

Though the discussion of cultural appropriation addresses one group's taking of another group's cultural elements, there is a very important consideration that must be made: individuals within an appropriating culture may be unaware of the cultural appropriation that they take part in. Addressing individuals, organizations, or cultures who participate in the appropriation of other cultures can lead to tense exchanges where communities with less power and privilege, who are victims of appropriation or allies of these communities, must confront powerful people who may be acting unknowingly. This confrontation can sprout accusations and lead to discomfort for all involved. Though appropriators should indeed be held accountable for the ways they harmfully interact with cultures that aren't their own, it is not the concern of this author to speak of any person as something entirely bad. The goal of this paper is to inspire those members of dominant cultures who have a history of appropriating other cultures to allow themselves to proudly engage with learning about how their cultural interactions could be improved upon. Less harm will be caused if those who are culturally appropriating take it upon themselves to do better.

To "do better" is a deliberately chosen phrase, aimed at helping audiences embody, as a personal duty, a practice wherein members of dominant cultures who interact with non-dominant cultures acknowledge that, while there is no agreed upon measure or threshold by which to judge somebody, they consider how they are appreciatively or harmfully engaging with other cultures. In a 2019 TEDx lecture, *Examining Cultural Appropriation through Music*, composer Helen Feng tells of an incident where she was confronted by a peer who pointed out that one of

Feng's composition projects might be appropriating aspects of other cultures. This story inspired Feng to speak on the topic of cultural appropriation. Feng points out: "Throughout history and the present day, societal progress is associated with cultural interaction in which cultures engage in dialogue through conquest, material, and intellectual exchange, and has become more prevalent because of new media, globalization, and technological developments" (Feng 0:45). Feng supports the idea that cultural interaction must happen for societies to advance and states a closely held belief that artists should be encouraged to tell stories from beyond their own personal experience. But they must do so with: 1) a respectful intent, 2) thorough consideration of impact, and 3) an awareness of contextual complexities such as representation, commercialization, and power dynamics. Taking these qualities into account is vital in making sure that those interacting with cultures other than their own 'do better.'

To connect this view of cultural interaction back to New Age music and Buddhism, the next section will examine the work of New Age musician, Ashana, to identify areas where her representation of Buddhism could have been done better.

### **Ashana**

Ashana is a New Age musician from New York. Her musical career began when she started singing in churches as a child. As an adult, she continued to sing in many spiritual spaces, with her website listing synagogues, temples, sweat lodges, and gurudwaras. Ashana would go on to explore all kinds of musical settings, expanding her talent and range, graduating with a degree in vocal studies from Mannes College of Music in New York City.

After discovering dharmic mindfulness practices, Ashana became a student of various meditation practices and studied Sanskrit mantra (Sanskrit is an ancient sacred Indian language associated with the dharmic religions like Hindu traditions and Buddhism). Ashana has had a triumphant career in New Age music production, having recorded seven albums. One of these, "River of Light," was considered during the first round of Grammy nominations in the 2014 World Music category. She considers her work as pioneering the genre of crystal singing bowl healing

music. A central component of Ashana's work is her use of elements from diverse cultures, which is undoubtedly informed by her past exploration of a variety of spiritual-cultural settings. Her website states

From her haunting rendition of the Lord's Prayer in the original Aramaic, to a Sufi chant, Latin verse, Gaelic song and Sanskrit mantra and improvised ambient sound, Ashana blends Western and ethnic instruments with the unique drone of the crystal singing bowls to create the ultimate transcendent music for healing, relaxation and meditation. (soundofashana.com)

This career summary forms a foundation for my analysis, as there is much to consider in the coming discussion. But it's important to consider that an artist's aesthetic is a vital influence on how they are perceived by audiences. A glance around Ashana's website, album visuals, and social media, will also inform the analysis of her depiction of various elements of Buddhism. It should also be carefully noted that nowhere does Ashana's media state any explicit ties to Buddhism, and there is no statement where she confirms herself to be a Buddhist.

Ashana's discography has clear relevance to Buddhism, however, as recorded Buddhist mantra recitation chants, like "Om Tare," a mantra to Tara, a type of enlightened being, appear on her 2011 album, *The Infinite Heart*. Interactive links on her website transition into geometrical designs recognizable as minimalist renditions of mandalas, which are sacred diagrams that map out cosmic bodies and are used as a focus in types of meditation. Clicking around on the website reveals promotional photographs portraying Ashana performing outdoors with a golden Buddha statue in frame. Under the events tab are offers for organizational workshops incorporating mantra-chanting meditation and sessions of activity informed by New Age spirituality concepts like sound and crystal healing. It is true that elements of many different spiritualities are represented by Ashana, but there is a very significant aspect of her art that ties more directly into Buddhism, as well as a product with a strange, murky history in the Western mindfulness industry: her use of crystal singing bowls in meditation for spiritual awakening.

### **Singing Bowl Rabbit Hole**

Crystal singing bowls are musical and spiritual instruments made from pure quartz. They are played by rotating the head of a mallet around the outside rim of the bowl, generating a constant reverberating sound that is considered desirable in common mindfulness settings. Crystal singing bowls are understood by practitioners like Ashana to be instruments of mental and physical healing in a practice known as sound healing or sound therapy. A reliable history of the crystal singing bowl is sparse, but some direction is offered through a guide from Shanti Bowl, a crystal singing bowl distributor, suggesting metal singing bowls, "...began their journey in the ancient time of Buddhism" (shantibowl.com). The guide indicates that the original form of the singing bowl is the Tibetan singing bowl.

Tibetan singing bowls may be recognized as a commonplace product marketed by online spirituality vendors, but they are neither as ancient or Tibetan as New Age spiritualists make them out to be. In a 2020 article, Tenzin Dheden states that "'Tibetan singing bowls' are not Tibetan. Sincerely, a Tibetan person." Dheden, the Toronto representative of the Canada Tibet Committee, states that there is no credible historical evidence of Tibetans using singing bowls, that Tibetan singing bowls are Western inventions, and that these bowls are a racist mythologization of Tibetan people. Dheden credits this information to Ben Joffe, a doctor of anthropology at the University of Colorado. In the 2015 article, "Tripping on Good Vibrations: Cultural Commodification and Tibetan Singing Bowls," Joffe writes

The bowls do however appear in Martin Brauen's comprehensive survey of Western fantasies about Tibet, 'Dreamworld Tibet/Western Illusions'" (2004). In contrast to the meticulous detail with which Brauen traces the origins of a host of other fantastical things connected to Tibet, his comments on singing bowls are surprisingly brief and vague: A special category of such Dharma products is constituted by the allegedly Tibetan 'singing' bowls', which have nothing to do with Tibet. They are metal bowls from North India or Nepal, originally food bowls, which have a beautiful tone, but are no more

sacred objects than Western crystal glasses are musical instruments – despite the beautiful tone one can elicit from them by proper treatment. Some pages later...Brauen re-iterates that the bowls are neither ‘Tibetan’ nor ‘ritual’ in origin and proposes that their beautiful tone “was recognized one day by a clever businessman” and that since then – whenever then was – “the bowls have been marketed as Tibetan ritual objects.” (Joffe)

Researching Tibetan singing bowls also yields information on the standing bell, a bowl-shaped instrument that is played by striking, and is popularly used in Buddhist ritual activity. There exists evidence that the standing bell originated in China during the Shang dynasty (16<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE) (Price). Standing bells are often included in discussions about the singing bowl’s history, given the similarity of the instruments, the proximity of their place of origin, and their association with Buddhism.

Though bowls capable of singing are not present in Buddhist history, they have recently begun to make their way into Buddhist spaces. An example comes from my experiences in following the Thiền Buddhist path at Chùa Phước Huệ Vietnamese Buddhist Meditation Center in Tacoma, Washington. Most prominent in the temple’s main chamber are large standing bells that are used frequently for ritual activity, but alongside statuettes of enlightened beings on shelves and altar surfaces are a few singing bowls. I was given one by a junior monk after inquiring about their use in meditation. He instructed me on how to use it for practice: to strike it three times before and after meditation to designate the time as ceremonial and to invoke praise to the triple gem, which is the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, or the Buddhist community of monastics and laypeople. This junior monk also shared another interesting use for the bowls: rotating the mallet around the rim of the bowl to play the iconic singing that the bowls are named for. Unlike striking the bowl to signify an important period of practice, the junior monk ascribed no significance to making the bowl sing. The singing bowl in this context is treated more or less like a miniature standing bell.

### **Conclusion: How to do Better!**

Ashana's identity and her career in New Age music is built upon by her expertise in using crystal singing bowls. Though Ashana never claimed that crystal singing bowls were a product of Buddhism, these bowls are certainly a product of a complex interaction between Buddhism and a Western orientalist industry set on the capitalization of Tibetan culture. Ashana, as a powerful figurehead for crystal singing bowl healing, has a responsibility to do better.

In addressing the research questions shared earlier in this paper: Does the New Age genre respect the cultural roots that it's influenced by? it seems that—sometimes—it does not. But additional consideration of other New Age artists might bring us closer to a stronger answer. Another topic to consider is whether the communities involved in cultural appropriation or misrepresentation can co-exist. If a community is benefiting from the harm done to another community, the communities cannot, at least not healthily. Cultural appropriators, major and minor offenders alike, are invited to consider engaging in reciprocal relationships with members and artists from the cultures they admire, reflecting critically on their position within the power dynamics with other cultures, to consider adjusting their attribution and sharing portions of their profits to support artists and their cultural communities and raise visibility in dominant markets. Ashana and other perpetrators of cultural appropriation should take steps to adjust their current image by addressing the perpetuation of cultural myths, for example the complex history of singing bowls. They should also address Feng's suggestions for artists: to appreciatively and respectfully explore cultures other than their own, while developing an increased awareness of their impact, and examining contextual complexities such as representation, commercialization, and power dynamics.



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