

# The Tibetan Phone Bell™ & Timer



# The Tibetan Phone Bell™ & Timer

By



Now & Zen®

*quality of thought, stillness of being*

The Product and this booklet were conceived, designed  
and written by Steve McIntosh

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## I. OPERATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

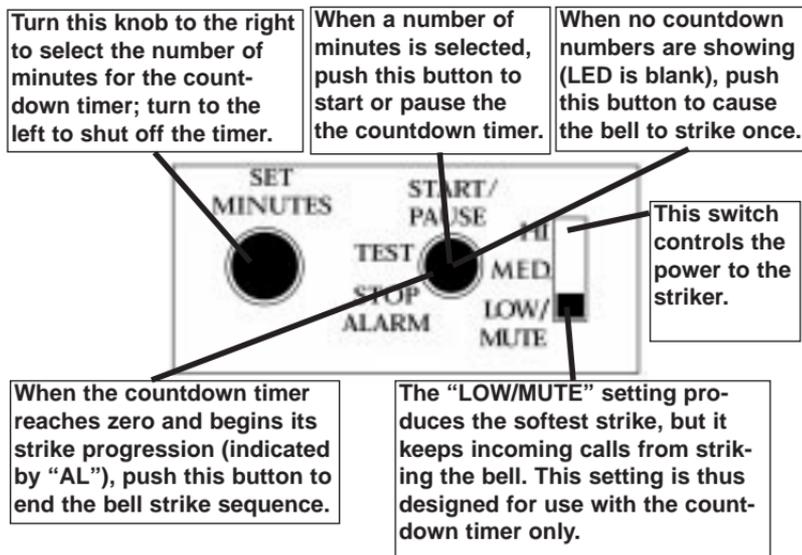


Figure 1.

### Install Batteries

Using a Phillips head screwdriver, remove the battery door on the bottom of the wood platform and install three new "C" size alkaline batteries. Battery life is approximately 2 years with normal use. Replace the battery door using the screws.

### Place the Bowl on the Platform and Test the Strike

Position the bowl on the wood platform so as to produce the best sounding strike. The position of the bowl can be slightly adjusted relative to the striker to vary the sound of the strike, as illustrated in figure 2. Test the sound of the strike by pressing the middle button labeled "TEST" on the control panel found on the side of the wood platform. The strike will occur within approximately 2 seconds after the test button has been pressed. Please note that the test button only works when the Light Emitting Diode (LED) window in the back of the platform is blank with no minute numbers showing. The LED can be made blank by turning the "SET MINUTES" knob to the left until the numbers disappear.

As you test the strike, move the bowl into a position that sounds best to you. The sound of the bowl can be further adjusted by placing padding underneath it. However, the bowl sounds best when the striker tip hits close to the bowl's rim, so elevating the bowl with padding may diminish the quality of the tone. It is normal for the bowl to be slightly rocked by the strike. As shown in Figure 1, there are three power settings for the strike force: "High, Medium, and Low/Mute." When in the "Low/Mute" setting incoming calls are muted but the countdown timer will still strike the bell.

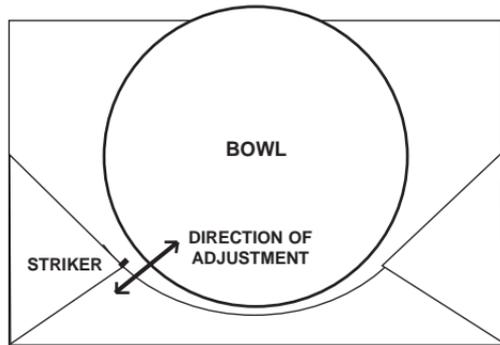


Figure 2.

Plug in a Phone Line and Turn Off Your Telephone's Ringer

Using any analog phone line, plug the phone jack into either of the two sockets in the bottom of the wood platform (either jack will work, they are interchangeable). Using the 1 meter extension line included with the product (or any standard phone line extension), plug one end into the remaining phone jack socket in the bottom of the platform and plug the other end into the "line in" socket of any phone. Just about every modern telephone includes a switch that allows you to turn off the phone's ringer. Find this switch on your telephone and turn it to the "ringer off" position.

Once you have attached your phone line to the Tibetan Phone Bell and your Tibetan Phone Bell to your telephone, when a call comes in on that line your Tibetan Phone Bell will ring every 5 seconds until the call is picked up (by you or your answering machine or voice mail), or until the incoming call signal stops. You can test the Tibetan Phone

## Operation

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Bell's replacement ringer function by calling yourself from your cell phone or from another phone line.

Please note that if you have more than one jack on the same phone line you can plug your phone into one jack and your Tibetan Phone Bell into another jack. As shown in figure 3, you do not need to connect the Tibetan Phone Bell directly to your phone—as long as a line is coming in, the Tibetan Phone Bell will ring when a call comes in.

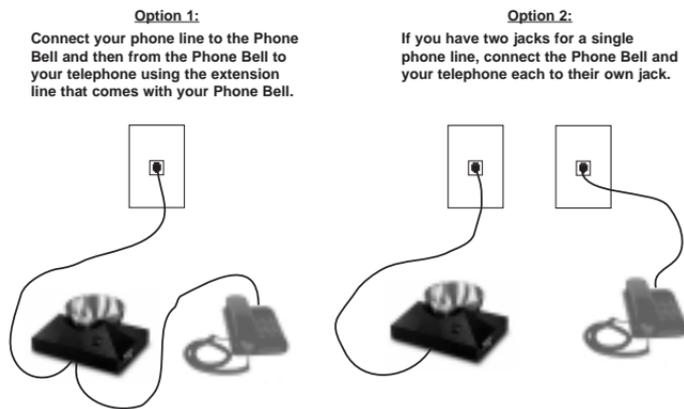


Figure 3.

## Operation

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The Tibetan Phone Bell is designed to work with all North American analog phone and fax lines that are not part of an internal digital phone system (digital phone systems are used mostly by businesses with multi-line configurations).

### Using The Countdown Timer

The Tibetan Phone Bell also functions as an easy-to-use countdown timer. As illustrated in figure 1 (on page 4), the countdown timer can be set to count backwards from 99 to 1 minutes. Select the desired minutes for the countdown time (as shown in the LED window), by turning the "SET MINUTES" knob to the right. When the knob comes to rest on a particular minute setting, the minutes (numbers) for that setting will start to flash indicating that the timer is ready to begin the countdown. When you are ready, begin the countdown by pressing the middle button labeled "START/PAUSE". When the countdown timing has begun, the minute numbers will stop flashing and a small dot will flash on and off in the upper left hand corner as the numbers descend.

When the countdown timer reaches zero it will strike the bowl once and then continue to strike at gradually-increasing intervals over a 10 minute period. During this progression, the LED will display "AL". Strike intervals are indicated in figure 4 on page 11.

Once the LED displays "AL," the progressive strike sequence can be terminated at any time by pressing the middle button labeled "ALARM OFF." An explanation of the significance of the timer's *Golden Ratio* strike sequence is found on page 23.

Please note that the LED will go blank after the progressive strike sequence ends. The LED can also be made blank by turning the "SET MINUTES" knob to the left until the numbers disappear.

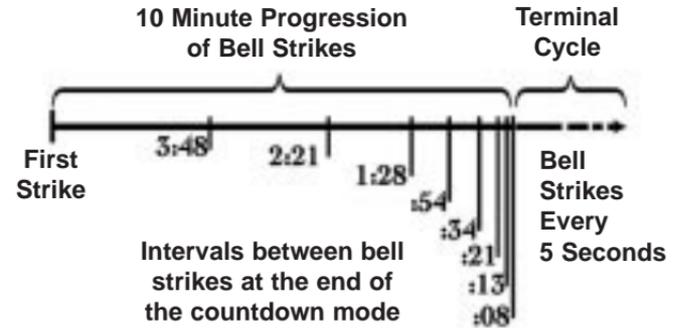


Figure 4.

During the countdown you may pause the countdown time by pressing the "START/PAUSE" middle button. The countdown is resumed by pressing the middle button again. You will know that the countdown timer is paused when the numbers are flashing and you will know that it is counting down when the dot in the upper-left corner of the LED is flashing.

## Operation

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Your Tibetan Phone Bell and Timer is designed for indoor use only. To clean, wipe off with a damp cloth. Never use oils or polishes, and NEVER ADD LUBRICANT OF ANY KIND TO THE STRIKING MECHANISM. If you have any questions or problems with the operation of your Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer, please call us weekdays at (800) 779-6383 (or (303) 530-9028 if you are outside the U.S.) and we will be happy to assist you.

## II. THE TRADITION OF BELLS, GONGS, AND SINGING BOWLS

Bells, gongs, and chimes are used in both Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. In the Christian monastic tradition, the ringing of the bell during meditation or prayer reminds the practitioners to return to the object of worship. Buddhist monks often use a gong to begin their meditations and then during meditation to bring them out of their mental processes back to the stillpoint of emptiness.

The use of metal alloy bowls for devotional purposes can be traced back to the beginnings of metallurgy in China prior to 1,000 B.C. The bowl that comes with your Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer is modeled after a Japanese "rin gong," or *Keiou*, that is periodically struck with a stick to punctuate sutra-reading in Buddhist temples. World famous Zen monk Thich Nhat Hanh has further developed the use of

the rin gong in a practice he calls the "mindfulness bell." This practice is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

The Himalayan peoples have been using metal bowls in their rituals and as offerings to Deities since at least 560 B.C. These hand-hammered Himalayan bowls have come to be known as "Tibetan Singing Bowls" because of the unique way they are sounded by rubbing a mallet over the rim so as to produce harmonic resonances and overtones. Although the bowl that comes with your Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer is not technically a Tibetan Singing Bowl, it will produce harmonic effects if a mallet or striking stick is rubbed around its edge in a circular motion.

The bowl that comes with your Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer is made from the following five metals: copper, zinc, lead, iron, and tin. It has been formed using the same forging techniques that have been used for centuries. Unlike hand-hammered Himalayan-style bowls, the Japanese rin gongs

which served as a model for your bowl are also made using forging techniques which first appeared in Japan with the beginning of metallurgy in the first century. Following these traditions, your bowl's long-resonating tone has been carefully selected to bring beauty and harmony to your environment.

### **III. BEAUTY, MINDFULNESS, AND YOUR TELEPHONE**

Creating an environment of beauty in your home or office makes your life better in many tangible and intangible ways. Indeed, the experience of beauty is a spiritual experience, no matter how subtle. The Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer adds sonic beauty to your space by transforming an unpleasant feature of your environment (your phone's ringer) into a more natural and harmonious sound. And replacing your phone's ringer with the sound of a Tibetan bell makes it fun to receive a call.

But in addition to the pleasure of hearing a Tibetan bell signal you when you receive a call, The Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer also provides the opportunity to practice "mindfulness" when your phone rings. Mindfulness is the practice of being aware of your present moment. And it is in the full awareness of the present moment that we are able to find

our natural state of felt oneness with Being. Because many mindfulness practices use a bell as the signal to be mindful, your Tibetan Phone Bell provides a way to use a phone call as a stimulus to practice the presence of the now.

So when you hear the Tibetan Phone Bell ring, take a moment before you answer the phone to breathe in and out and center yourself in the present. Allow the sound of the bell to connect you to the peace and tranquility that resides inside you. This practice reduces stress and improves your overall health. And by taking the opportunity to become centered every time the phone rings, you will find yourself in a better state when you pick up the call. It is by using little every day rituals like this that we become gradually transformed into higher states of awareness. The Tibetan Phone Bell thus serves as a tool for mindfulness practice as well as an object of beauty for your home or office.

#### IV. THE VALUE OF TIMING—MEDITATION, YOGA, MEETINGS, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Practices such as meditation, yoga, bodywork, counseling sessions, and even business meetings can be enhanced through the use of an aesthetically appealing timing device. This section suggests ways to use The Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer in each of these activities.

Some form of meditation is practiced in every major world religion. Yogis, Christian mystics, Zen Buddhists, Quakers, practitioners of the Kabbala, and Secular Humanists, all experience the benefits of meditation. The Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer has been designed as an "accouterment to meditation." It can be used in a variety of ways to aid your practice and encourage you to "make time" to meditate. The first and most basic use of the timer in your meditation practice is as a signal of the end of your allotted meditation time. If you want to meditate for 20 minutes, simply set the countdown timer for 20 minutes and begin your meditation.

When the countdown timer reaches zero and the first bell strikes you can choose to end there or continue your meditation for about three and a half minutes until the next bell strike, or even longer. Many meditators find that a "three and a half minute warning" is a perfect interval in which to gradually conclude their longer meditations. The first bell strike signals the final phase of the meditation and the second bell strike signals its conclusion. The beauty of the Tibetan bell is that it compliments rather than disturbs the meditative state while acting as an effective timer. No matter how you use it, the natural sonic clarity of the Tibetan bell provides an appropriate conclusion to your stillness.

Like meditation, the practice of yoga and similar disciplines can also benefit from the use of an aesthetically beautiful timer. And not only can your timer be set to signal the end of a session, but the 10 minute sequence of progressive bell strikes can also serve to guide you through a 10 minute practice session with each bell strike acting as a signal to change positions (or phases of the practice). Using The

Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer can also make a practice session more fun. And because The Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer's appearance is aesthetically pleasing, it can be placed on an altar or other prominent location where it can add to the visual beauty of the practice environment.

In addition to the personal and contemplative uses described above, The Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer can also be used as a progressively persistent, yet gentle way to bring people together for meetings and to disperse them when their meeting time is over. To be fully present with another person, you cannot be thinking about where you have to be next. Checking your watch during a conversation or discussion can appear rude and impatient. However, if you have made an agreement to be at a certain place at a certain time, breaking that agreement is also "bad form." In our modern society, considerate people are often faced with the dilemma of being "fully with" the person who is in their presence and also being on time for the person they have agreed to see next. Business meetings, counseling sessions, and even social lunches have a way of running

on. It is often difficult to play the role of "meeting police," interrupting someone in mid-thought. The buzzing of an ordinary alarm clock or watch is also an inappropriately abrupt end. If you shut off the alarm, the meeting continues; if you let the alarm ring, the meeting does not have a chance to conclude gracefully. The Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer's progressive bell strikes provide a gentle signal that only a few minutes remain and that it is time to conclude. Those who are oblivious to the time, however, will not be able to ignore the gradually increasing frequency of the chime. Few meetings can continue in the face of a bell strike every 5 seconds!

When the timer will be used as a signal for a meeting's end, it is a good idea to begin the meeting by telling the participants about the timer and how it works. Agreements about a meeting's conclusion are best made at the beginning. The timer can be set to begin its progression 5 minutes before the scheduled end of a meeting so that the first bell strike does not break the flow too early. The more frequent

## Value of Timing

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chimes occurring at the end of the timer's 10 minute cycle will thus only be heard if the meeting runs late.

The Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer's progressive bell strikes are also useful to call meetings to order. When a meeting involves many people, getting started on time is often a problem. People need time to conclude their preliminary greetings and conversations and take their seats. A gradually increasing 10 minute "call to order" is a perfect way to begin meetings on time. For use in calling a group to order, the timer is most effective when attendees have advance notice of the purpose of the striking bell. Whether you are calling your family to the dinner table or beginning a church service, The Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer provides a lovely way to begin and to end.

## V. THE TIMER'S GOLDEN RATIO PROGRESSION OF BELL STRIKES

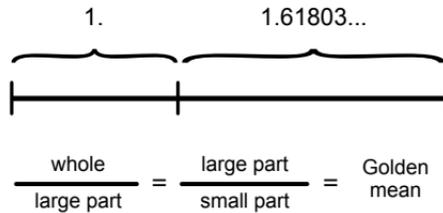
The Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer's sequence of bell strikes progress in frequency over 10 minutes. This progression is measured from the first strike of the bell (when the timer reaches zero) until the progression reaches its terminal cycle of continuous bell strikes, about every 5 seconds. The sequence of bell strikes within this initial 10 minute cycle is designed to approximate the *Golden Ratio*. The Golden Ratio, also known as the "Golden Mean" and the "Divine Proportion," is a special relationship between any given whole and a specific part thereof.

The simplest expression of the Golden Ratio is in the division of a line as illustrated in figure 5: A line with a given length is divided into a small part and a large part. The relationship of the small segment of the line to the large seg-

## The Golden Ratio

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ment of the line is in the same proportion as the relationship of the large segment to the line as a whole.



*Figure 5.*

The Golden Ratio has been used since ancient times by artists, architects and designers to express harmony and balance. The beauty of the Golden Ratio is that all three parts—the small part, the large part, and the whole—are in perfect proportion with each other. Nature uses this divine proportion to grow from within itself. Golden Ratio rela-

## The Golden Ratio

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tionships are everywhere in nature—from the human body to the solar system. The progressive sequence of The Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer's bell strikes expresses the Golden Ratio by dividing the 10 minute time "line" into smaller and smaller Golden Ratio segments. The first strike divides the line at 3 minutes and 48 seconds. The next strike divides the large part of the original division (the remaining 6-1/2 minutes of the 10 minute cycle) by the same ratio. The process continues as illustrated in figures 3 (on page 11) and 6, below.



*Figure 6.*

## Further Reading

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The interval between bell strikes diminishes from within itself according to the Golden Ratio. And the self-accumulating growth which is the essence of the Golden Ratio finds its most elegant natural expression in a "Golden spiral." Nautilus shells, galaxies, whirlpools, and even your fist are examples of Golden spirals. The progression of The Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer's bell thus forms an audible Golden spiral in the sequence of its strikes.

### Further Reading

Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*. Bantam Books 1992

Tolle, Eckart *The Power of Now*. New World Library 1998

Kabat-Zinn, Jon *Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*. Hyperion Press 1995

Fontana, David *The Meditator's Handbook: A comprehensive guide to Eastern and Western meditation Techniques*. Element,

## Further Reading

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Inc. 1992.

Trungpa, Chogyam *The Path is the Goal: A basic handbook of Buddhist meditation*. Shambhala 1995.

Brooke, Avery *Learning and Teaching Christian Meditation*. Cowley Publications 1990.

Leichtman & Japikse *Active Meditation: The Western Tradition*. Ariel Press 1982.

McIntosh, Stephen Ian *The Golden Mean Book*. Now & Zen, Inc. 1997

## **VI. NOW & ZEN'S GUARANTEE AND LIMITED WARRANTY**

Your The Tibetan Phone Bell & Timer is guaranteed against mechanical defect for a period of 12 months from the date of purchase provided the product has not been misused. Now & Zen will repair or elect to replace free of charge any part found to be defective within the warranty period. If your product breaks during the warranty period, it is your responsibility to ensure it is properly packaged with shipping pre-paid for return, as any damage suffered in return shipment is not covered by this warranty. Please be sure to call our Customer Service Department for a Return Authorization number before mailing your package. This warranty does not include damage due to dirt, moisture, or negligent handling. This warranty is only valid when accompanied by a dated proof of purchase.

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## VII. ABOUT NOW & ZEN

Now & Zen, Inc. is a company formed in 1995 with the mission of providing beautiful and useful products that bring more spirit into your life. Our philosophy is summarized as the quest for "quality of thought and stillness of being." Please visit our website ( [www.now-zen.com](http://www.now-zen.com) ) which gives further information on our products and mission. For a catalog of current Now & Zen products, please call us at: (800) 779-6383 or (303) 530-9028, send us an e-mail at: [orders@now-zen.com](mailto:orders@now-zen.com), or write us at: P.O. Box 110, Boulder, Colorado 80306.

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Sincerely,



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Founder and President

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