

Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism

John Powers

Snow Lion Publications

Ithaca, New York USA

Table of Contents

Preface	9
Technical Note	11
Introduction	13
PART ONE: THE INDIAN BACKGROUND	
1. Buddhism in India	
The Buddha	23
The Buddha's Life and Lives	26
Epilogue	47
2. Some Important Buddhist Doctrines	
Cyclic Existence	54
Appearance and Reality	61
3. Meditation	
The Role of Meditation in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism	70
Stabilizing and Analytical Meditation	74
The Five Buddhist Paths	80
4. Mahāyāna	
Origins	86
Mahāyāna Doctrines	90
The Bodhisattva Path	97
PART TWO: TIBETAN HISTORY AND CULTURE	
5. Tibetan Religious History	
Tibet: Geography and Environment	119
The Early History of Tibet	121
The Period of the Religious Kings	126

The Second Dissemination of Buddhism	136
Mongol Influence and Sakya Supremacy	139
The Gelukpa Ascent to Power	142
The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries	148
6. The Twentieth Century	
Foreign Conflicts	158
The Fourteenth Dalai Lama	161
The Interregnum Period	169
The Fourteenth Dalai Lama Assumes Power	171
The Chinese Occupation of Tibet	179
7. Festivals and Holy Days	
Mönlam	190
The Butter-Sculpture Festival of Kumbum	193
Sacred Dance	197
Other Religious Festivals	199
Common Elements in Tibetan Religious Ceremonies	200
8. Geography and Architecture	
The Religious Environment	203
Construction of Religious Structures	206
Stūpas	211
PART THREE: TIBETAN BUDDHIST DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES	
9. Tantra	
The Place of the Tantras in Buddhist Literature	219
Tantra as a Branch of Mahāyāna	221
Tantric Symbols	227
Entering Tantric Practice	232
The Four Classes of Tantra	242
The Preliminary Practices	256
The Fourteen Root Downfalls	275
10. Death and Dying in Tibetan Buddhism	
Introduction	283
Death Meditation: Exoteric and Esoteric Traditions	287
The Bardo Process	299
Tibetan Rituals of Death and Dying	305

**PART FOUR: THE SCHOOLS OF TIBETAN
BUDDHISM**

11. The Four Schools	313
12. Nyingma	
History and Doctrines	319
The Nine Vehicles	327
Terma: Hidden Treasures	330
Distinctive Practices: Dzogchen	334
13. Kagyu	
History and Doctrines	346
Meditation Practices	352
14. Sakya	
Origins of the Sakya Tradition	377
The Development and Dissemination of Sakya Doctrines and Practices	382
Sakya Becomes a Political Force	386
The Sakya Monastic Order	389
Distinctive Practices: "Path and Fruit"	391
15. Geluk	
History of the Lineage	402
The Gelukpa Monastic System	412
Distinctive Practices: The Stages of the Path	416
16. Bön: A Heterodox System	
Introduction	431
Bön Teachings and Practices	435
Lexicon of Buddhist Terms	449
English-Tibetan-Sanskrit Glossary	455
Bibliography	475
Indexes	
Technical Terms	487
Personal Names	493
Locations	498
Titles Mentioned	500