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## Summary

A brief introduction to Tibetan Buddhism, its history and some of the teachings and practices of Vajrayana Buddhism as found in Tibetan Buddhism.

## Tibetan Buddhism

### Introduction

Buddhism is not a religion for a particular race or chosen people. Buddhism aims at the enlightenment of all beings. Its teachings are Universal and not relative to any particular geographic area of any country. Although it originated in India, it soon made the world its home. The spread of Tibetan Buddhism to many countries over the past 50 years is a living example of these facts.

Tibetan Buddhism preserves the pure traditions of all the various levels of teachings taught by Lord Buddha, and their subsequent development in India, long after these traditions died out in India itself.

### The Three Vehicles

Tibetan Buddhists hold that Lord Buddha gave many different teachings to suit all the different needs and abilities of different people. Mainly there are two vehicles (Sanskrit: yana, the Lesser and the Greater. The Lesser Vehicle (Hinayana) carries one to Liberation from suffering (Nirvana). By means of the Greater Vehicle (Mahayana), one can travel beyond this stage to complete Enlightenment or Buddhahood. A Complete Buddha is not only free from suffering, but is omniscient- he knows everything that has happened in the past, everything that is happening now, and everything that will happen, anywhere. This makes him uniquely qualified to help living beings. For every one of these beings he feels unlimited love and compassion.

The Greater Vehicle is itself divided into two vehicles - the Vehicle of Transcendent Actions (Paramitayana) and the Diamond Vehicle (Vajrayana). These are different, but not inconsistent ways of approaching the same goal, Buddhahood. All Tibetan schools accept the Diamond Vehicle as the quickest and most powerful vehicle. However, it is also the most difficult to practise. It can even be dangerous if attempted without proper understanding and the guidance of a fully qualified teacher or "Guru". They therefore teach also the Lesser Vehicle and the Vehicle of Transcendent Actions, as the indispensable foundation for the practise of the Diamond Vehicle.

These two - the Lesser Vehicle and the Vehicle of Transcendent Actions - are together called "Sutra", while the Diamond Vehicle is called "Tantra". The Tibetan sects differ in the relative emphasis they place on Sutra and Tantra. All agree, however, that one cannot understand Tantra without understanding Sutra.

(Theravada is not synonymous with Hinayana, nor are Mahayana and Vajrayana separate, since the Vajrayana is part of the Mahayana. The "Three Vehicles" means either Sravakayana, Pratyekabuddhayana and Mahayana or Hinayana, Paramitayana and Vajrayana.)

Many ordinary people who do not remember their past lives normally - any more than we remember living in our mother's wombs - have remembered them under hypnosis. When hypnotized, they have given many details of past events and ways of life which historians have since verified as correct.

Buddhists argue that body and mind are quite different in nature. Each comes from a direct cause of the same nature as itself. In the case of birth from a womb, for example, the direct cause of the body is the semen from the father and the egg from the mother. But the mind does not come from the parents. Its direct cause is that mind at the last moment of its previous life. The mind is one continuum. The body ages and dies, but the mind goes on to a new life.

### Karma

All pleasures and pains basically derive from the mind. Through acting with an undisciplined mind, clouded by delusion, one accumulates good and bad deeds. The traces of these deeds are carried by the mind from life to life until one meets suitable circumstances, then their result is experienced. Bad actions lead to suffering, life after life, until the accumulation of them runs out. On the other hand, every good action which one does will at some time cause one to experience happiness. Every moment of happiness is the result of some good action of helping others in the past. Every moment of pain or suffering is the result of a bad action one has done. This is called the Law of Karma. "Karma" is a Sanskrit word which simply means "action".

One's karma, or past actions, determine both the form of one's next life and the circumstances one will meet in that life. To be born as a human being at all needs exceptionally good karma, but even as a human being one can meet with unfavourable circumstances. According to the theory of karma, children who are born deformed or die young are merely receiving the fruits of what they have done in a former incarnation. People are ultimately responsible for their own destiny and the pattern of their next incarnation.

### The Need for Religious Practice for Future Lives

Tibetan Buddhists therefore consider it essential to prepare for death in this lifetime. They believe that to be born as a human in a land where the Buddhist teachings are practised is extremely difficult to achieve. Once this 'Perfect Human Rebirth' is lost, it is almost impossible to regain. Unless one has practised religion in this life one will not receive another Perfect Human Rebirth for many, many lifetimes.

But if one practises religion continuously, one can go on meeting the teachings life after life. One's spiritual advances in one life are retained in the next so that it is possible to progress gradually towards Buddhahood. The cycle of birth, death and rebirth can be stopped by following the various disciplines described by Buddhists. Certain advanced beings do not have to incarnate but do so voluntarily in order to assist others. In Buddhism these beings are called Bodhisattvas. Some of them have reincarnated again and again on this planet. One of these great beings is the Dalai Lama.

### The Dalai Lama

Tibetans believe that the Dalai Lama is an incarnation of the great Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. The Dalai Lama apart from being spiritual head, has been in charge of Tibet since the time of his 5th reincarnation in the 17th Century until the Chinese occupation in 1950. "Tenzin Gyatso" is the particular name of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama (the present Dalai Lama). He was born on 6th July, 1935 near Kum-bum in Amdo in the far north-east of Tibet.

It is not necessary that death and rebirth should occur at the same time since there may be time when the spirit is elsewhere. The 13th Dalai Lama died in 1933. The present Dalai Lama is a reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama who was a reincarnation of all the other Dalai Lamas. He was found and identified as the true incarnation by a special committee of senior Lamas.

Among his own people, the Dalai Lama is generally known as Kun-dun which means "Presence". The present Dalai Lama was installed to office when he was only four years old. When he was a very young child, he could recognise the friends he had when he was the 13th Dalai Lama. As a boy, the Dalai Lama was intelligent and eager to learn and was not shy.

In 1950, before he was sixteen, the Dalai Lama was enthroned as a Ruler of Tibet. This ceremony normally takes place when the Dalai Lama is eighteen, but was hurried on because the Chinese were about to take over Tibet. The Chinese occupied Tibet in 1950. The young Dalai Lama visited Peking in 1954 to try to understand the Chinese.

### The Tibetans move to Dharamsala in India

The Dalai Lama has been in India since early 1959. Tibet is occupied by the Chinese. After the Lhasa uprising against Chinese occupation, the Dalai Lama fled across the Himalaya mountains to India with a number of his countrymen. The Government of India offered him and his people a home and he now lives at Dharamsala, a Himalayan Hill station in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh.

Most of Tibet's great monasteries, libraries and sacred art works were destroyed by the Chinese. The Dalai Lama and his followers preserve the old Tibetan books and traditions at Dharamsala in India and elsewhere. Over 100,000 Tibetans have left Tibet and now live in different countries. Although the 13th Dalai Lama had spent some time in India, in the 1920's, there had not been much contact between the Indians and Tibetans in the recent past. In the years since the Dalai Lama and his followers arrived in India, the Indian Government has helped to settle the Tibetans. In Dharamsala, schools have been established to teach about Tibetan Buddhism. Many Westerners have trained as lay people, monks and nuns at these schools over recent years.

His Holiness is against merging of religions. For him, the goal of religion is happiness, meaning peace of mind. He is not concerned that beliefs of different religions are different. For example, he sees no difficulty about Christianity and Buddhism existing side by side. In his opinion, all provide paths by which mankind comes to truth. In more than thirty talks in the main cities of the eleven West European countries visited, the Dalai Lama said the solution to mankind's problems at the present time was to develop "universal responsibility", a genuine concern for the welfare of all other beings. He stressed compassion for others (as opposed to self). This is one of the central teachings of Mahayana Buddhism he quoted a verse which he conveys in the message:

If you are unable to exchange your happiness,  
For the suffering of other beings,  
You have no hope of attaining Buddhahood,  
Nor even of happiness in this present life.

He said that in Mahayana Buddhism you sacrifice yourself in order to attain salvation for the sake of other beings.

Avalokiteshvara is conceived as the "God of Mercy" but the real Avalokiteshvara is Compassion itself. He stressed the development of a kind heart, or feeling of closeness for all human beings, is not just for people who believe in religion. According to the Mahayana school of Buddhism, you must not only think of human beings in this regard but of all sentient beings. The Dalai Lama stressed that, even if someone harms or hurts you badly, you should think of his good qualities and this develops humility towards others.

He quoted another important verse:

If one whom I've helped my best,  
And from whom I've expected much,  
Harms me in a way I can't imagine:  
May I regard such a person my best teacher!

His Holiness sees nothing wrong with material progress provided men take precedence over progress. He has liked science and technology since his childhood and he realises now more than ever before that material progress is highly necessary to mankind, but at the same time he believes material things provide us mainly with physical comfort, not with mental peace. Good human qualities - honesty, sincerity, a good heart - cannot be bought with money, nor can they be produced by machines, but only by the mind itself.

### The Four Noble Truths

All the vehicles are based on the Four Noble Truths, which Lord Buddha taught in his first sermon after receiving Enlightenment.

- (i) All sentient beings are bound to suffering, because
- (ii) They act under the influence of Ignorance, Greed and Hatred. All these delusions come from the basic Ignorance, not knowing the true nature of oneself and of what one perceives. However,
- (iii) Suffering can stop, leaving one in perfect, everlasting happiness (Nirvana).
- (iv) There is a way, or Path, to receive this cessation of suffering by eliminating the delusions.

These Truths may appear very simple, or even obvious, but actually they are very profound. Only a Buddha can understand them completely.

### Title and Discipline in the Monastic Orders.

Those who wear the maroon robes of Mahayana Buddhist monks and nuns have to keep strict discipline. A novice monk (ge-tsul) or novice nun (ge-tsul-ma) has to take 36 vows. A fully-ordained monk (ge-long) takes 253 vows. In Tibetan monasteries, boys of six or seven are ordained as novices: they are said to be old enough if they can frighten crows away. In the west, however, only adults are ordained. To become a ge-long, one must be at least twenty years old. Australia's first novice ordination in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition took place at Chenrezig Institute in June, 1977, when seven ge-tsuls were ordained.

These ordinations have been handed down from person to person in unbroken lineage from Lord Buddha over 2,500 years ago. If a lineage is broken then that ordination can no longer be given. The lineage of the full nun ordination, with 364 vows has already been broken, so it is no longer possible to become a full nun in the Tibetan tradition.

In all Tibetan Buddhist orders, the title "Lama" (literally, "superior") is reserved strictly for Tulkus or incarnate lamas, and for Gurus who give formal teachings, whether or not they are monks or Geshes. Thus, the term "Lama" can never be taken as a synonym for "monk". Rather it is the equivalent of the Sanskrit word "Guru".

When an assistant Abbot becomes Abbot, he earns the title "Rinpoche" (Precious One). If he so chooses, he can start a line of incarnate Lamas after him. These successors will also bear the title "Rinpoche" from birth and be regarded as Lamas.

The title "Geshe", which means a spiritual friend, refers to a degree not unlike a doctorate. From the age of about eight, until twenty-five, the candidate must study and thoroughly master five main subjects, and to pass severe oral examinations on them in public. His Holiness the Dalai Lama too had to take such examinations in front of thousands of monks in Lhasa.

### The Graduated Path to Enlightenment.

The Graduated Path to Enlightenment or "Lam.rim: in Tibetan is based on a text by Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1419) called Lam.rim chen.mo", "The Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path". Lord Buddha taught in many different ways according to the different levels of understanding of different people. This text includes the meanings of all these teachings, arranged in a logical order to show how one starts with simple practices and gradually progresses to more difficult practices, until eventually one can achieve Enlightenment, becoming Buddha.

There are three main stages of the Path. An ordinary, non-religious person acts only to try and make himself happy in this lifetime. To start on the Path, one must consider the consequences of behaving like that. Soon, in less than 100 years, one will die. Then, because one has been behaving selfishly and harming others, creating much bad karma, one will be reborn in an existence of heavy suffering. Therefore, one begins to practise on the first level, avoiding immoral, harmful actions so that one can be reborn as a comfortable human being next lifetime.

But then one reflects that even human life is inseparable from suffering. There is no lasting happiness to be found as a human being, and even if one is reborn in a heaven so blissful that we cannot imagine it sooner or later one

must leave that happy state and undergo terrible suffering again, only by liberating oneself entirely from the need to be reborn can one attain true, lasting happiness. Thus one is led to practise on the second level, seeking Liberation or Nirvana.

Yet even this is not enough. To become a Mahayanist, one must proceed to the third level, meditating on how completely dependent one is on other beings. To strive for one's own Liberation alone is absurdly selfish. Instead, cultivating love and compassion for all beings in the Universe one must practise with dauntless courage to receive perfect Enlightenment, the only state in which one has the power to help all these beings. On this third level" one has to practise the six Transcendent Actions of a Bodhisattva - Giving, Morality, Patience, Perseverance, Concentration and Wisdom. The first five are called Method. They are ways of helping others. Wisdom is the opposite of Ignorance. It involves training the mind through meditation so that one can perceive clearly the true nature of reality. Tibetan Lamas often say that Method and Wisdom are like the two wings of a bird. With only one wing, it cannot fly at all, but with both, it can fly very gracefully, high in the sky. Likewise, one cannot attain Enlightenment without both Method and Wisdom.

### Other Teachings

The Lam.rim is a kind of anthology, with quotations from many other texts each of which concentrates on a limited area of the subject. Tibetan monks preparing for the Geshe degree have to memorise and study several of these texts, and debate a with each other about them until they understand every word. Some of these texts have been taught at Chenrezig Institute. They were written by Buddhist masters who lived in India before Buddhism spread to Tibet. The works of the Indian masters, translated into Tibetan, fill over 200 large volumes. This is in addition to a hundred or more volumes of scriptures which are the words of Lord Buddha himself. There are several projects underway to translate part or all of this enormous mass of scriptures into English.

They include works from all the Buddhist schools, not just the Mahayana. For example, one of the most widely studied texts, the "Treasury of Higher Truths" (Abhidharmakosha) by Vasubandhu (c. 400-480 A. D.) is a Hinayana work. The main text on logic, Dharmakirti's "Valid Cognition" (Pramanavarttika), includes explanations according to the "Mind-Only" school, a Mahayana school. Other important texts such as the "Introduction to the Middle Way" (Bodhisattvacharya-avatara) by Shantideva, one of the most beautiful religious works ever written, follow Nagarjuna's deep philosophy of the Middle Way. Nagarjuna was born in South India about the second century A.D. and is said to have lived for 600 years. The philosophy he developed, called "Madhyamika", "The Middle Way", is recognised by all Orders of Tibetan Buddhism to be the most profound of all philosophical systems.



## Tantra.

In addition to these Sutra teachings, many Tibetan Buddhists also practise Tantra, the Diamond Vehicle. Tantra offers methods for purifying one's mind of delusions and transforming one's ordinary body and mind directly into the body and mind of a Buddha. These methods involve advanced techniques of meditation, with intricate visualisation of deities, mandalas, mantras and so on.

Even in Sutra, the relationship of the disciple to his Guru is considered extremely important. In Tantra, it is still more so. Little can be achieved without the personal guidance of a fully qualified Guru, in whom the disciple must have complete confidence. Such a teacher is hard to find. In the past, Tantric teachings were carefully guarded. Many are transmitted only orally and never written down. A Guru would often test a disciple for several years before deciding he was sufficiently qualified to receive such teachings.

Tantric concepts are often expressed in paintings and statues in an elaborate visual symbolism. Westerners enjoy these as "works of art", but to those who understand them, they are far more than that.

Tibetan sacred art often depicts terrifying, wrathful deities, which a Westerner might mistake for demons. In fact, they do not represent evil but are simply different aspects of the same forces represented by the peaceful deities. Their violence is directed against the delusions which are one's true enemy. Other demon-like figures, animal-headed deities in an aura of flames, are likewise guardians of the teachings, or Dharma.

## The Personal Guardian Deity (Yidam in Tibetan).

The personal guardian deities of Tibetan Buddhism are known by the name of Yidam. Three of the most important Yidams are Samvara, Hevajra and the conqueror of death, Vajrabhairava or Yamantaka.

The name Samvara means supreme bliss (Tibetan: Demchog). There are important Mandalas of Samvara handed down by Mahasiddhas of Tibet.

The Yidam Hevajra is the proclaimer of compassion and wisdom. The guardian deity Hevajra is found in different forms; for example, with two arms, four arms, six arms, and the large manifestations with sixteen arms. In the sixteen-arm version, Hevajra has eight faces and four legs. He wears a chain of skulls. Even though his powerful appearance is terrifying, his inner nature has great bliss.

The Yidam Vajrabhairava is a form of manifestation of Manjushri, who is a

Bodhisattva. That is why Manjushri's peaceful face is at the top of the nine heads of the god who is usually known by the name of Yamantaka. The Bull-headed god with his nine heads, thirty-four arms and sixteen legs is the guardian of the secret doctrines. Yamantaka became the conqueror of Yama, the death god. The nine heads represent the nine-fold division of the Buddhist scriptures and the two horns represent the relative and absolute truth.

The concept of guardian deities as real, powerful beings, existing separately from oneself, to whom one might appeal for personal protection, help and riches, was widespread among the people of Tibet. Senior Tantric practitioners, however, are encouraged to go beyond this primitive idea. The deities are merely an interplay of psychological forces, different manifestations of one's own mind, whose reality is resolved with increasing insight.

### The Meaning of the Colours used in Buddhist Paintings and Mandalas.

The symbolism of Tibetan art can only be understood by those who are trained; for example, a blue background is found in all paintings, indicating Dharmakaya (the Dharma Body of the ultimate State of Enlightenment). Each colour symbolises both the negative emotion and its positive part. Such paintings focus on the unity between things. Black symbolises Ignorance, although, at the same time, it represents the power of wisdom. The mandala deserves special mention. Its complex system of Colour and design contains coded messages. The source of all mandalas is a form of Sambhogakaya (Tibetan: Longs-sku). Sambhogakaya means the body of the heavenly enjoyment of supreme happiness.

### Mandalas.

A mandala is a kind of symbol, not to be confused with a sign. A sign points to reality, but is less than reality. A sign, which we find upon highways when driving a car may give certain information but the sign is distinct from the reality of the information. The sign gives the driver limited information. There are different sorts of mandalas like the mandala of Mount Meru, the four Continents, Sun and Moon, etc., which are frequently visualised as an offering and are not to be confused as a mandala which is the palace of a deity. Mandalas of different deities are different.

Mandalas have been used by various American Indians, Christians, Ancient Persians, Aztecs and many other people in history.

There are many ways of looking at a mandala. The mandala is both a map of the cosmos and the means that can be used to "link" man with cosmos. The symbol is not arbitrary. To understand how mandalas function, it is necessary to have some knowledge of psychology. The goal of looking at the mandala is that the person will become inwardly aware of the Deity.

Mandalas are arranged according to the five directions. An element corresponds to each direction. Water to the east, earth to the south, fire to the west, air to the north (right), and space to the fifth direction, the centre. Each direction has a certain colour symbol and some aspect of wisdom. The centre may be considered to be the four-sided mountain Meru and surrounding it the countless worlds which Buddhism regards as existing. In almost every Tibetan Centre there would be some kind of painting representing the mandala.

### History of Tibetan Buddhism

Many famous Indian scholars, such as Santaraksita and Kamalasila and Padmasambhava translated and taught many Sutras. Later, Tibetan scholars such as Rin-chen-sang-po (Rin-chen-bzang-po) met with famous Indian scholars.

Many Indian scholars, such as Atisha, came to Tibet and translated the writing of Sutras and Tantras. As a result, there were all types of Indian Buddhist thought introduced into Tibet.

### The Introduction of Mahayana Buddhism.

In Tibet about the 1st century B.C., the idea of Mahayana Buddhism came into existence.

Mahayana Buddhism has the idea of the Infinite Void or Emptiness (Sanskrit: Sunyata). Another Mahayana Buddhist idea is the pursuit of compassion (Sanskrit: Mahakaruna), that is the Bodhisattva ideal.

A Bodhisattva is an active being who carries out the teachings of Compassion in the world and places all his/her merit for other beings in order to show them the path to liberation.

The most important Bodhisattvas are Avalokitesvara and Manjushri. The central theme of the Vajranaparamita scriptures led to teaching which became known as the Madhyamika doctrine, the Mijnanavada and the Yogacara.

### The Adi-Buddha of Mahayana Buddhism.

One of the main ideas of Mahayana is that there were many, many Buddhas. The original Buddha is known as Adi-Buddha. The Adi-Buddha became a highest being of Esoteric Buddhism. The Adi-Buddha leads us into the "diamond vehicle" doctrine (Sanskrit: Vajrayana). Vajrayana became the basis of Tibetan Buddhism.

## Vajrayana Buddhism (Vajra means "Jewel" in Sanskrit).

There were secret writings called Tantras which involved magic ritual. Vajrayana may also be called Tantrism because of its Tantric writings. It used secret doctrines, rites and symbols and included use of the ancient Indian tradition of Yoga. The spiritual teacher is the Guru (Tibetan: Bla-ma). A Guru is needed otherwise the attempt to gain insight into the Tantric vision may lead to harm. The Guru becomes the disciple's supreme teacher. The end of the path enables the experience of wisdom (Tibetan: Shes-rab), characterised by the female symbol of the Dakini or Prajna. The supreme wisdom includes the knowledge of the unity of the male and female elements (Tibetan: Yad-yun).

## Mantras in Vajrayana.

The sacred formulae of the Mantras are important in ritual. Mantras are strings of syllables and formulae addressed to the Devas of Buddhism. Mantras are found in all texts of the Vajrayana. Mantras can be very short consisting of one or more syllables. From the syllables the various Buddhist symbols, lights and rays appear before the eyes of the meditator. The person using the mantra is able to see the Deva by practice or use of the mantra. The lamas (Tibetan monks) teach the mantra appropriate to each of the divine forms holding the psychic energy of that "being". As the sound is no more than a symbol of the mantra's latent power, mispronunciation of the syllable does not matter, since it is the INTENTION of the person using it that unlocks the powers of the mind. On the other hand, Hindu teachers of mantric yoga are said to attach immense importance to ensuring correctness of sound and vibration.

## Tibetan Kings and Buddhism.

The support of the Tibetan kings of Buddhism began with King Sorong-btsan Sgam-po (629-649). He married two wives, one from Nepal and one from China. Buddhism was widespread in both these countries at that time: The Queen founded the oldest temple in Lhasa, the Ra-mo-che and the "Phiul-snang", where the first images of Buddha were set up in Tibet. Sorong-btsan Sgam-po commanded his scholar Thon-mi Sambhota to find a method of writing in India which would serve Tibet as a model. The Buddhist teachings were translated from the Sanskrit into the new Tibetan written language. These writings spread throughout the country.

About 100 years later, King Shri-srong-ide'u-btsan (756-797) showed great interest in the religion. This king had a scholar, Santaraksita, brought from India, and on his advice, Padmasambhava came to Tibet. Both men were famous teachers. They translated Buddhist writings and founded the first monastery for Bsim-yas.

### Tibet's First Monastery - Bsim- yas.

The Bsim-yas monastery is believed to have been built on a model of the Indian monastery of Odintapuri in Bihar. Padmasambhava devoted himself to magic practices. Tradition relates he banished many Demons which threatened the land of Tibet. With the support of the Tibetan Kings, Bsim-yas became the first centre of Buddhist translating and teaching activity. The followers of Buddhist doctrine of this period later called themselves the Raying-ma-pa school.

### Opposition of Buddhism by the Bon Religion.

Long before Buddhism spread in Tibet, the Bon religion which came from the country of Shang-Shung was practised in Tibet. When Buddhist teaching spread from India, the Bon system became more complex. The Bon religion have their own Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with different names. The main deities of the Bon-pos were originally those of the sky. The impact of Buddhism was so overpowering that the Bon religion adopted Buddhist methods. The Bon-pos reversed the direction of walking around (circumambulation) their monastery as compared to the traditional Buddhist methods. The swastika sign of the Bon-pos points to the left, while the Buddhist one points to the right. A Tibetan king, who was a staunch supporter of the old Bon religion, closed the Buddhist monasteries and the monks fled to neighboring countries and into Eastern Tibet. This is the end of the first period of the spread of the doctrine (Tibetan: Snga-dar) in Tibet.

### The Second Spread of Buddhism by Atisha (982-1054 A D).

The second spread of Buddhism proceeded under western Tibetan kings in the 10th and 11th Centuries. Atisha came to Tibet in 1042 and translated over 100 Indian texts. Atisha introduced the tradition of Kala Cakra (meaning: the Wheel of Ages). Atisha (Tibetan: Jo-bo-rje) was born in what is now Bangladesh. His father was king Kalyapsri. Atisha had two brothers, the eldest one succeeding to the throne. Atisha is a name of honour and his Buddhist name was Dipankarasrijnana. Atisha was brilliant from his boyhood. At the age of ten, he was skilled in medicine, fine arts and literature. At eleven, disgusted with palace life, he went to the forest, where he talked to a Buddhist monk. He became a monk and by the age of twenty-one had made studies of both Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachings. He travelled and continued studying. He returned to India when he was forty-four years old. By this time he was so famous that a descendant of the royal Tibetan family, named Yes-ses hod, sent scholars to India to see if Dipankarasrijnana (Atisha) would come to Tibet to sort out the different views of Buddhism. Ye-ses set out to collect funds for a mission but was captured and held in prison for gold ransom. Ye-ses said in prison "Take all the gold to India as offering. I'd rather

die here, offering my life for the sake of the Dharma". He died in prison. Ye-ses' friends offered Atisha the gold and told him of his suffering. Atisha would not take the gold but said he would go to Tibet with Ye-ses' friends. Unfortunately, when they were at Nepal, one of the party, the Tibetan translator, died. Atisha was upset and said, "It would be no use for me to go to Tibet, being thus deprived of my tongue". He left Nepal one year later (1041 A.D.) and went to Tibet and stayed at the Monastery founded by Ye-ses-hod. He wrote a book called "Byan-chub-Iam-gyu Sgron-ma", which is still used as a guide for Buddhists of Tibet. The book set out the proper teaching of the Buddha. Atisha had many disciples and discovered a number of Sanskrit manuscripts at Bsim-yas which had long been lost in India. He sent them back to India. Atisha stayed in Tibet and with the help of native interpreters translated many texts. He died in 1054 A.D. It was Atisha's work that led to the establishment of the Bkah-gdarns-pa school of Buddhism in Tibet. This school accepts all doctrines of the Buddha and every Dharma is seen as an aid to the attainment of Buddhahood. The Tibetan Bstan-bgyur (Tangyur or collection of treatises) contains a volume of Atisha's essays and a number of other writings on which Atisha founded his own system.

Text reproduced below of Tibetan chanting used by some Tibetan Buddhist Centres.

### Prayer of the Graduated Path

Yon.tan kun.gy'i zhir.gy'ur dr'in.chan:je  
Tsul.zhin ten.pa lam.gy'i tza.wa.ru  
Leg.par t'ong.na ba.pa d'u.ma.yi  
G'u.pa ch'en.po ten.par j'in.gy'i.lob

Seeing that the root of the path, true Guru devotion to a kind holy teacher is the stable foundation for developing all the good qualities that there are, I make this request with the utmost respect; send forth to me waves of inspiring strength to practise sincerely true Guru devotion

Lan.chig nye.pa: d'al.wa: ten.zang.di  
Shin.tu nye.ka d'on.ch'en she.gy'ur.na  
Nyin.tsan kun.tu nying.po len.pa: lo  
Gyun.ch'a me.par kye.war j'in.gy'i.lob

Seeing how important and how difficult to gain is this meaningful and excellent full human form, and that it is only this one time obtained, I make this request; send forth to me waves of inspiring strength to develop without any break or disruption, the pure state of mind that sees day and night no essence at all to worldly attachments.

Lu.sog yo.wa ch'u.yi ch'u.b'ur.zhin  
Nyur.d'u jig.pa: ch'i.wa dr'an.pa.d'ang  
Shi.wa: je.su lu.d'ang dr'ib.ma.zhin  
Kar.nag la.dra ch'i.zhin drang.wa.la

Nge.pa t'an.po nye.na nye.pa: tsog  
Tr'a.zhing tr'a.wa nam.kyang pong.wa.d'ang  
Ge.tsog t'a.d'ag drub.par j'e.pa.la  
Tag.tu b'ag.d'ang dan.par jin.gy'i.lob

Keeping in mind that my life and my body at death will depart in an instant like bubbles on a fast-moving stream, and firmly convinced that once I have died all the fruits of my actions-both black and white ones which I shall have to experience in births yet to come-like a shadow will follow wherever I go, I make this request; send forth to me waves of inspiring strength not to collect even the slightest non-virtue. But always to remain in control of mind so that I may amass only virtuous deeds.

Sa.cha gyal.wa: ma.j'ung tr'in.la.la  
Leg.dr'ub j'ang.ch'ub lam.gy'i rim.pa.kyang  
T'ar.do nam.kyi yi.la pal.ter.zhing  
Gyal.wa: dza.pa ring.d'u kyong.gy'ur.chig

By the merit of the marvelous good acts of the Buddhas and of all the Bodhisattvas, and even of this, my work on the Lam.rim, may the deeds of the Buddhas for a long time be nourished to bring wondrous peace to those who would be free.

Lam.zang dr'ub.pa: tun.kyen drub.j'e.ching  
Gal.kyen sel.j'e mi.d'ang mi.min.kun  
Tse.rab kun.tu gyal.wa ngag.pa.yi  
Nam,d'ag lam.d'ang dral.war ma.gy'ur.chig

As for all of the people and beings not human, who prevent bad conditions and make things conducive for unhindered practice of the excellent path-may they never be parted for all of their life times from the purest of paths which the Buddhas all praise.

G'ang.tse t'eg.pa ch'og.la ch'o.cho.chu  
Tsul.zhin drub.la tzon.pa d'e.yi.tse  
T'u.dan nam.kyi tag.tu drog.j'e.chin  
Tra.shi gya.tso ch'og.kun ky'ab.gy'ur.chig

When someone with vigour makes effort in accordance with the ten points of conduct of the Mahayana path, may he

always be assisted by the mighty Dharmapalas and may oceans of good fortune spread out, reaching all.

### Final Lan.rim Prayer

D'er.ni ring.d'u ba.la tsog.nyi.ni  
K'a.tar yang.pa g'ang.zhig sag.pa.d'e  
Lo.mig ma.rig g'i.dong dro.wa.nam  
Nam.dren gyal.wa: wang.por dag.gy'ur.chig

From my collection of insight and merit vast as space, that I have amassed from working with effort at the practice of Lam.rim for a great length of time, may I quickly become the chief leading Buddha for all those who suffer from ignorance clouding their mind's Wisdom Eye.

D'er.ma son.pa: tse.rab kun.tu. yang  
Jam.pa: yang.kyi tze.wa: je.zung.na  
Tan.pa: rim.pa kun.tsang lam.gy'i.chog  
Nye.na drub.pa gyal.nam nye.j'e.shog

Even if I do not reach this high state, may I always be held in your boundless compassion for all of my lifetimes, O great Manjushri, may I discover the best of complete graded paths of the teachings. May I please all the Buddhas by practising well.

Rang.g'i j'i.zhin tog.pa: lam.gy'i.na  
Shug.dr'ag tze.wa dr'ang.wa: t'ab.k'a.kyi  
Dro.wa: yi.kyi mun.pa sal.j'a.na  
Gyal.wa: tan.pa yun.ring dzin.gy'ur.chig

By teaching all points of the path just as I have discerned them, thus lifting the darkness from the minds of all others, through their most skillful means, with the force of compassion as guiding incentive, may I uphold Buddha's teachings for aeons of time.

Tan.pa rin.ch'en ch'og.g'i ma.ky'ab.b'am  
Ky'ab.kyang nyam.par gy'ur.pa: ch'og.d'er.ni  
Nying.j'e ch'en.po yi.rab kyo.pa.yi  
P'an.de: ter.d'e sal.war j'e.par.shog

With my heart going out in the ten main directions where the supreme jewel-like Dharma has declined or not spread, compelled by the powerful force of great mercy, may I expose this vast treasure that brings pleasure and aid.



Cha.pa mi.ngom dug.ngal kun.gy'i.go  
Yi.tan mi.rung si.pa: pun.tsog.ky'i  
Nye.mig rig.na t'ar.wa: de.wa.la  
D'on.nyer ch'en.por kye.war j'in.gy'i.lob

Seeing the pit falls and all the shortcomings of the luxuries found in the midst of samsara-they never can make me feel truly secure, nor can they afford me the least satisfaction though I might indulge in their pleasures forever; they are only the gateways to all my suffering-I make this request; send forth to me waves of inspiring strength that I may develop the strongest interest in attaining the wonderful bliss of Nirvana.

Nam.d'ag sam.pa d'e.yi dr'ang.pa.yi  
Dr'an:d'ang she.zhin b'ag.yo ch'en.po.yi  
Tan.pa: tza.wa so.sor t'ar.pa.la  
Drub.pa nying.por j'e.par j'in.gy'i.lob

Inspired to action by these purest of thoughts to renounce all my suffering and gain Liberation, I make this request; send forth to me waves of inspiring strength to take to my heart and to follow most truly with mental alertness and mindful awareness all the vowed rules of pure moral conduct, the root of the practical teachings of Dharma.

Rang.nyi si.tsor lhung.wa j'i.zhin.d'u  
Mar.gy'ur dro.wa kun.kyang d'e.dra.war  
T'ong.na dro.wa drol.wa: k'ur.ky'er.wa:  
J'ang.ch'ub sem.ch'og jong:par j'in.gy'i.lob

Seeing that I am not alone in samsara's cruel ocean, but here with me also are all fellow beings who have all been my mothers in previous lifetimes, I make this request; send forth to me waves of inspiring strength to develop Bodhicitta, the highest of motives, to take on myself the responsible burden to free from their suffering all sentient beings.

Sem.tzam kye.kyang tsul.tr'im nam.sum.la  
G'om.pa me.na j'ang.ch'ub mi.drub.par  
Leg.par t'ong.na gyal.sa dom.pa.la  
Tzon.pa dr'ag.po lob.par j'in.gy'i.lob

Seeing full well that if I lack the habit of following strictly the three moral codes, my development merely of the wish to be Buddha will not be sufficient for gaining this goal, I make this request; send forth to me waves of inspiring strength to exert intense effort to put into practice the vowed rules prescribed for the Buddhas' -

brave Sons.

Log.pa: yul.la yeng.wa zhi.j'e.ching  
Yang.d'ag don.la tsul.zhin cho.pa.yi  
Zhi.na lhag.t'ong zung.d'u drel.wa:lam  
Nyur.d'u gyu.la kye.war j'in.gy'i.lob

Trying to pacify all mental wandering towards objects of sense incorrectly conceived, and develop the wisdom to analyse clearly the actual meaning of the Voidness of things, I make this request; send forth to me waves of inspiring strength to develop my mindstream into a path wedding penetrative insight to mental quiescence.

T'un.mong lam.jang no.d'u gy'ur.pa.na  
T'eg.pa kun.kyi ch'og.gy'ur dor.je.teg  
Kal.zang kye.wo: jug.ngog d'am.pa.d'er  
De.lag nyi.d'u jug.par j'in.gy'i.lob

When I have become a pure suitable vessel trained in the path shared by sutra and tantra, renunciation of suffering, the wish to be Buddha, and the right view of Voidness, I make this request; send forth to me waves of inspiring strength to enter most quickly the diamond-hard vehicle, Vajrayana, the best of all vehicles, the highest of pathways for those of good fortune.

D'e.tse ngo.dr'ub nam.nyi drub.pa: zhi  
Nam.d'ag d'am.tsig dom.par sung.pa.la  
Cho.ma min.pa; nge.pa nye.gy'ur.na  
S'og.d'ang do.te sung.par j'in.gy'i.lob

Then, truly believing Buddha who taught that the vows and the sworn words of honour, to follow the practice, when purely observed, are the very foundation for gaining the two kinds of powerful attainments, I make this request; send forth to me waves of inspiring strength to protect with my life tantric vows of the practice.

D'e.na gyu.de: nying.po rim.nyi.kyi  
Na.nam j'i.zhin tog.na tzon.pa.yi  
T'un.zhi: nal.jor cho.la mi.yel:war  
D'am.pa: sung.zhin dr'ub.par j'in.gy'i.lob

Then perceiving correctly all the fine points of both of the stages of full tantric practice, the heart of all four of the classes of tantra, I make this request; send forth to me waves of inspiring strength to practise with vigour in accord with the teachings of spiritual masters and never to neglect the daily performance of four session yoga.

D'e.tar lam.zang ton.pa: she.nyen.d'ang  
Ttul.zhin drub.pa: dr'og.nam zhab.tan.ching  
Ch'i.d'ang nang.g'i b'ar.d'u cho.pa: tsog  
Nye.war zhi.war j'in.gy'i lab.tu.sol

May the feet of all Gurus who show the pure path and of friends of true practice be planted with firmness for long fruitful lives. May I receive inspiration to quell all the hindrances, outer and inner, disturbing my practice.

Kye.wa kun.tu yang.d'ag la.ma.d'ang  
Dral.me ch'o.kyi pal.la long.cho.ching  
Sa.d'ang lam.gy'i yon.tan rab.dzog.na  
Dor.je ch'ang.g'i g'o.p'ang nyur.t'ob.shog

May I never be parted for all of my lifetimes from masterful Gurus. May I put what these Gurus have taught to good use. By completely achieving all of the stages and paths Bodhisattvas must tread, may I quickly attain your state of Enlightenment, O Vajradhara, great Buddha of Tantra.