

Lamdre - Dawn of Enlightenment

by Lama Choedak Rinpoche

Preface

Initiation into the Hevajra mandala, the king of tantras has long been associated with conversion of the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan to Buddhism and the establishment of priest rulership in Tibet. This lasted from the early thirteenth century up to the present Dalai Lama. We all owe this to one hard working Tibetan savant known as Drogmi Lotsawa Shakya Yeshe (993-1074) who introduced the magnificent Lamdre teachings to Tibet during the 11th century.

Those fortunate enough to be able to attend Lamdre are in for a big spiritual bonanza. The comprehensive teachings on the Triple Vision, which deal with the preliminary teachings common to both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, followed by the Bodhisattva vow are more than enough for most beginners. After that come the Hevajra cause and path initiations, teachings on the Triple Tantra and guidance about how to perform the Sadhana practices of Hevajratantra. The "oral teachings on the view" are imparted in the most thorough manner, coupled with transmissions and blessings from all the Lamdre lineage masters. More esoteric teachings associated with the three higher initiations, known as the six yogas in other traditions will be taught in the proper sequence. Lamdre is the most complete form of Tibetan Buddhist path. Lamdre teachings are the father teachings of the Sakyapa school of Tibetan Buddhism. They are coveted by many traditions. The Sakyapa school has preserved the noble tradition of maintaining the integrity of the Hevajra initiation, which to this day is restricted to twenty five or fewer disciples. Because of the purity of this lineage, most prominent masters of all schools of Tibetan Buddhism including Marpa, Milarepa, Longchen Rabjampa and Tsongkhapa have been practitioners of this tantra.

Over the past fifteen years I have been directly involved at a number of Lamdre teachings given by His Holiness Sakya Trizin, His Eminence • Chogye Trichen Rinpoche and His Eminence Luding Khen Rinpoche in the capacity of translator and facilitator. Due to the orthodox and formal setting of the presentation of the Lamdre teachings, a number of non-Tibetan disciples with little or no understanding of these teachings have sought to look into "Lamdre" from a practical and pragmatic point of view. It has not been an easy task to interpret my limited understanding of these ancient wisdom teachings to the rather demanding and inquiring (if not sceptical) minds of modern disciples.

Although Hevajratantra was one of the first Buddhist tantras to be translated into English, the core teaching of this tantra known as "Lamdre" is a still unexplored area of Buddhist scholarship. Until recently, there were no books available in English for non-Tibetan initiates. Yet the Lamdre teachings are given every few years around the world. However, the Triple Vision, the preliminary teachings on Lamdre by Ngorchen Konchok Lhundup, was translated

into English and is now available in most major bookshops. The late Dezhung Tulku Rinpoche's excellent oral commentary, translated by my late friend Jared Rhoton (Inji Sonam) is now readily available. My own translation of Panchen Ngawang Choedak's Triple Tantra is currently being edited for publication.

In the past, monks from far eastern parts of Tibet, Ladakh and Mustang would travel many months on foot to Sakya, Ngor, Nalendra and Yarlung Tashi Choe-de in central Tibet to receive Lamdre. One who receives Lamdre is considered to be officially initiated into the Sakya lineage. Those who attend the Lamdre teachings are required to do the Hevajra Sadhana every day. This assists disciples to fulfil their Pratimoksha, Bodhisattva and Vajrayana vows. In the past, monasteries where Lamdre teachings were given would strengthen their ties with the master who gave the Lamdre and his lineage, and make a strong commitment to maintain regular formal Hevajra practices. Because of the profundity of these teachings, prominent teachers from other Tibetan lineages make great efforts to receive the Lamdre transmission.

The work contained in this book is based on fifteen talks I gave on Sundays in late 1996 at Sakya Losal Choe Dzong in Canberra, Australia at the request of many long time Dharma students who are genuinely interested in receiving the profound Lamdre teachings from His Holiness Sakya Trizin. The editor of this book, Pauline Westwood, dedicated many hours of her time each week to transcribing my talks and subsequently organised and worked with a number of other students to read, proof-read and improve the text. Out of great enthusiasm and teamwork largely inspired by Pauline herself, this book has finally materialised. I am very pleased that now we can make this an offering for other like-minded people who are interested in learning about Vajrayana Buddhism and Lamdre teachings in particular.

It is hoped that the book will serve as an introduction to the Lamdre teachings and their unique method of delivery. If readers discover anything beneficial, it is the power of the activities of the enlightened speech of the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Lamdre lineage masters, whose blessings have been made accessible through the transmission of the joint effort of many people involved. On my part, this was not an attempt to write or comment on such precious teaching as "Lamdre." My words were spoken in joy, honour and praise of the pure and faithful Lamdre lineage and its remarkable masters who are the shining gems of Tibetan Buddhism. The Sakyapa lineage and its adherents are small in number. However, the standards required of a master who maintains its strict requirements are high indeed. This is the only way to preserve the purity of the precious Lamdre teachings.

I hope that the present work will help to introduce some of the fundamentals of Vajrayana Buddhism to its readers and inspire disciples to appreciate the purity of the Lamdre teachings. I am responsible for any errors exposed by "my mouth karma" in this book and all the merits are due to the kindness, generosity and inspiration of my precious teachers, parents, family and students. As a result of being blown by my karmic winds to wander in this part of the world here in 'downunder Australia,' I have discovered a greater joy in sharing my little knowledge of the precious Dharma teachings than I ever envisaged during my novice days in

Lumbini. Like the small boy Jaya, who presented a handful of dirt to Buddha and was later reborn as king Ashoka, I consider this work as a small offering to help purify all negative obstacles on the path of establishing Dharma in Australia. I trust that this will repay some of the great kindness I have received and serve to fulfil some of the wishes of my precious teachers and their forefathers.

May all the sincere wishes of those who have directly or indirectly contributed to the production of this book be fulfilled by the blessings of the Lamdre lineage masters!

May all beings be free from suffering and causes of sufferings!
May they enjoy long-lasting happiness derived from the practice of altruism!
May they experience the calm, clear and empty nature of all things!
May they be guided by qualified masters on the right path life after life
Until all sentient beings are happy and safe!

With sincere prayers

Lama Choedak T. Yuthok
Sakya Losal Choe Dzong,
Canberra
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