

A study of the assimilation of Buddhism into Tibetan indigenous culture and life

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Buddhism consists of three main traditions. They are; Hinayana Buddhist Tradition, Mahayana Buddhist Tradition, Vajrayana Buddhist Tradition.

Within the structure of various Buddhist teaching methods were developed, which are suited to different types of individuals. These various methods are included within these three principle paths or yanas.

This essay intends to give a brief account of the development of tantric Buddhism in Tibet. Before Buddhism was introduced into Tibet, the Tibetans believed in a form of shamanism called Bon. The Bon world was filled with spirits both good and hostile. Such spirits roamed about in the mountains and valleys or lived in trees and rocks. Sacrifices also can be seen; animal sacrifices were resorted to on certain occasion, such as the swearing of the oath of fealty and the signing of treaties. According to the Chinese chronicles, the people sacrificed sheep, dogs, monkeys, horses, oxen, asses and even human beings. Such were some of the beliefs and practices of native Bon religion, which confronted Buddhism when it was first introduced into Tibet during the seventh century. At that time Tibet was ruled by a king named Srong-bTsen-Sgam-po. After 7th century A.D. Buddhism penetrated into all aspect of Tibetan life and culture.

Tibetan Buddhism is unique in that it contains the scriptures, teachings and traditions of practice of all three yanas. Its almost infinite depth and richness make it one of the world's most profound living traditions.

This paper discusses the establishment of Buddhist tradition in Tibet, and how traditional elements of Buddhism defeated the nationalistic Bonism when penetrating to the Tibetan society, as follows.

01. The establishing of Buddhism in Tibet: I. Social background, II. The History of Buddhism.
02. The Peoples attention towards primary beliefs and rituals.
03. The emergence of Buddhism by defeating the primary beliefs.
04. The incorporation of Buddhism in Tibetans life, in relation to Language, Literature, Politics, Culture, Traditional beliefs and festivals, Legal

Key words: Buddhism, Tibet, Tibetan Buddhism, Bon, Tantric Buddhism

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