

3. The Great Chariot: A Treatise on the Great Perfection Longchen Rapjampa (1308-1363)

Translated by Ives Waldo and edited by Connie Miller

According to the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, the "Great Perfection" (dzokchen in Tibetan) is recognized to be the apex of Buddhist thought and practice. Referred to as the "pinnacle of all vehicles," the teachings of the Great Perfection were introduced to Tibet by Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and the translator Vairocana in the ninth century. A central theme in the Dzokchen teachings is the recognition of the nature of mind, especially its fundamental aspect called the "pristine awareness" or rikpa. It was, however, the writings of the great master Longchen Rapjampa that systematized the various aspects of the teachings of the Great Perfection thus presenting them as a cohesive philosophical and contemplative system.

The present text, *The Great Chariot*, represents one of the most important treatises expounding in the teachings of the Great Perfection within the wider context of Buddhist thought and practice. It is effectively a detailed exposition of a versified work by the same author entitled *Mind at Ease* (sem nyi ngal so), which is in turn part of the cycle of three texts. *The Great Chariot* is divided into thirteen chapters, each dealing with important Buddhist theme, such as from the recognition of the value of human existence and cultivating awareness of impermanence to generating the awakening mind, finally culminating in a detailed presentation of the central elements of the great perfection. This monumental work, which is undeniably one of Longchenpa's greatest classics on the subject, was selected for inclusion in *The Library of Tibetan Classics* series by the contemporary Nyingma teacher H.E. Trulshik Rinpoche.

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