Inside Tibetan Buddhism Rituals And Symbols Revealed

The Taming of the Demons

By offering detailed instruction and friendly, inspiring advice for those embarking on the Tibetan Buddhist foundation practices, Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche provides gentle yet thorough commentary, companionship, and inspiration for committing to the Vajrayana path.

Dreamworlds of Shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism

The imperialist ambitions of China – which invaded Tibet in the late 1940s – have sparked the spectacular spread of Tibetan Buddhism worldwide, and especially in western countries. This work is a study on the malleability of a particular Buddhist tradition; on its adaptability in new contexts. The book analyses the nature of the Tibetan Buddhism in the Diaspora. It examines how the re-signification of Tibetan Buddhist practices and organizational structures in the present refers back to the dismantlement of the Tibetan state headed by the Dalai Lama and the fragmentation of Tibetan Buddhist religious organizations in general. It includes extensive multi-sited fieldwork conducted in the United States, Brazil, Europe, and Asia and a detailed analysis of contemporary documents relating to the global spread of Tibetan Buddhism. The author demonstrates that there is a "de-institutionalized" and "de-territorialized" project of political power and religious organization, which, among several other consequences, engenders the gradual "autonomization" of lamas and lineages inside the religious field of Tibetan Buddhism. Thus, a spectre of these previous institutions continues to exist outside their original contexts, and they are continually activated in ever-new settings. Using a combination of two different academic traditions – namely, the Brazilian anthropological tradition and the American Buddhist studies tradition – it investigates the "process of cultural re-signification" of Tibetan Buddhism in the context of its Diaspora. Thus, it will be a valuable resource to students and scholars of Asian Religion, Asian Studies and Buddhism.

Four Tibetan Lineages
This is a major anthropological study of contemporary Tibetan Buddhist monasticism and tantric ritual in the Ladakh region of North-West India and of the role of tantric ritual in the formation and maintenance of traditional forms of state structure and political consciousness in Tibet. Containing detailed descriptions and analyses of monastic ritual, the work builds up a picture of Tibetan tantric traditions as they interact with more localised understandings of bodily identity and territorial cosmology, to produce a substantial re-interpretation of the place of monks as ritual performers and peripheral householders in Ladakh. The work also examines the central and indispensable role of incarnate lamas, such as the Dalai Lama, in the religious life of Tibetan Buddhists.

**Tibetan Rituals of Death**

A complete introduction to Tibetan art presented in the context of Tibetan Buddhism. Amy Heller places the artwork within its historical social and religious context utilizing in situ photographs from Tibet. It spans 1400 years of art history.

**Library Journal**

Presents excerpts and synopses of the keynote presentations, Dharma talks, and workshops from the three day conference held in Boston in January 1997 on the current practice of Buddhism in the United States.

**Mind in Tibetan Buddhism**

"My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness." --Dalai Lama That's easy for the Dalai Lama to say--but for the rest of us, understanding this mysterious, multilayered faith can be very difficult. With this updated and revised edition of the classic Buddhist primer, you can delve into the profound principles of nonviolence, mindfulness, and self-awareness. From Tibetan Buddhism to Zen, you'll explore the traditions of all branches of Buddhism, including: The life of Buddha and his continuing influence throughout the world A revealing survey of the definitive Buddhist texts What the Sutras say about education, marriage, sex, and death Faith-fueled social protest movements in Tibet, Burma, and elsewhere Buddhist art, poetry, architecture, calligraphy, and landscaping The proven physiological effects of meditation and other Buddhist practices The growing impact of Buddhism on modern American culture In this guide, you'll discover the deceptively simple truths of this enigmatic religion. Most important, you learn how to apply the tenets of Buddhism to your daily life--and achieve clarity and inner peace in the process.

**Turning Confusion into Clarity**

The expanded edition of the classic reference, one of Snow Lion's top ten bestsellers. Thorough coverage of Tibetan Buddhism from its Indian origins to the present day; includes new information on the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism, religious practices and festivals, and the current political situation.
The Cult of Tara

A combination of scholarly, commercial, and popular interests has generated a large quantity of literature on every aspect of Chinese life during the past two decades. This bibliography reflects these combined interests; it is broken up into sections by subject headings, and cross-references refer the researcher to related topics.

The Foundations of Tibetan Buddhism

New translations of teachings on meditative practice from four lesser-known but highly influential Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Drawing primarily from the Pacification, Severance, Shangpa Kagyü, and Bodongpa traditions, Four Tibetan Lineages presents some of Tibet’s most transformative yet lesser-known teachings on meditative practice. Most works in this volume are drawn from a Tibetan anthology known as the Treasury of Precious Instructions compiled by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thayé (1813–1900). A vast preservation project, this anthology reflects Kongtrul’s attempt to rescue rare teachings from disappearing. By foregrounding the teachings of masters like Khedrup Khyungpo Naljor (d. 1135), Dampa Sangyé (d. 1117), Machik Labdrön (1031/55–1126/50), Jonang Taranatha (1575–1634), and Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo (1820–92), this volume extends Jamgön Kongtrul’s preservation efforts into the modern world. ___ "This carefully researched and meticulously organized work presents serious students and practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism with a treasury of knowledge, wisdom, and clearly detailed practices. At a time when the continuity of the Tibetan tradition of valid masters and lineage holders is challenged, this publication will serve to both clarify and preserve the lineages’ gems." —Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo, Founding Director of Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery, author of Reflections on a Mountain Lake: Teachings on Practical Buddhism "A collection of unique and precious original translations from one the most experienced first-generation Western translators of Tibetan texts. This book is like a delicious box of chocolates to be eaten slowly, and each one savored and appreciated as a special gift." —Lama Tsaltrim Allione, Founder of Tara Mandala, author of Wisdom Rising "The massive collection of scriptures preserved by the nineteenth-century masters Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thayé and Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo can be overwhelming for contemporary readers in their richness. We are fortunate to have access to this carefully selected compilation of interrelated core teachings from four important Tibetan lineages—Pacification, Severance, Shangpa Kagyü, and Bodong—all beautifully rendered with Sarah Harding’s cogent and elegant translation expertise." —Sarah Jacoby, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Northwestern University, author of Love and Liberation: Autobiographical Writings of the Tibetan Buddhist Visionary Sera Khandro "Four Tibetan Lineages contains gems of practice-oriented instructions from four distinct Buddhist lineages, prominent in Tibet but lesser known internationally, namely, Pacification, Severance, the Shangpa Kagyü, and Bodong tradition. Drawn mainly from Jamgön Kongtrul’s famed Treasury of Precious Instructions, this ecumenical collection of profound teachings is masterfully translated by Sarah Harding." —Holly Gayley, Associate Professor of Buddhism in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Colorado Boulder, author of A Gathering of Brilliant Moons: Practice Advice from the Rimé Masters of Tibet

Essential Tibetan Buddhism

"The real history of man is the history of religion." The truth of the famous dictum of Max Muller, the father of the History of Religions,
is nowhere so obvious as in Tibet. Western students have observed that religion and magic pervade not only the forms of Tibetan art, politics, and society, but also every detail of ordinary human existence. And what is the all-pervading religion of Tibet? The Buddhism of that country has been described to us, of course, but that does not mean the question has been answered. The unique importance of Stephan Beyerís work is that it presents the vital material ignored or slighted by others: the living ritual of Tibetan Buddhists. The reader is made a witness to cultic proceedings through which the author guides him carefully. He does not force one to accept easy explanations nor does he direct one's attention only to aspects that can be counted on to please. He leads one step by step, without omitting anything, through entire rituals, and interprets whenever necessary without being unduly obtrusive. Oftentimes, as in the case of the many hymns to the goddess Tara, the superb translations speak directly to the reader, and it is indeed as if the reader himself were present at the ritual.

**Power Objects in Tibetan Buddhism**

WINNER OF THE TRICYCLE PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE Expertly and lucidly surveying the basic varieties and teachings of Tibetan Buddhism, renowned scholar Robert Thurman makes this authentic spiritual tradition available to contemporary Western audiences

**Tibetan Zen**

Dubbed a reincarnation of a sixteenth-century Tibetan saint, Catharine Burroughs embarks on a journey from her working-class American hometown to her recent founding of a monastery outside of Washington, DC. 35,000 first printing.

**Love and Compassion**

The Tibetan Book of the Dead is one of the texts that, according to legend, Padma-Sambhava was compelled to hide during his visit to Tibet in the late 8th century. The guru hid his books in stones, lakes, and pillars because the Tibetans of that day and age were somehow unprepared for their teachings. Now, in the form of the ever-popular Tibetan Book of the Dead, these teachings are constantly being discovered and rediscovered by Western readers of many different backgrounds—a phenomenon which began in 1927 with Oxford's first edition of Dr. Evans-Wentz's landmark volume. While it is traditionally used as a mortuary text, to be read or recited in the presence of a dead or dying person, this book—which relates the whole experience of death and rebirth in three intermediate states of being—was originally understood as a guide not only for the dead but also for the living. As a contribution to the science of death and dying—not to mention the belief in life after death, or the belief in rebirth—The Tibetan Book of the Dead is unique among the sacred texts of the world, for its socio-cultural influence in this regard is without comparison. This fourth edition features a new foreword, afterword, and suggested further reading list by Donald S. Lopez, author of Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West. Lopez traces the whole history of the late Evans-Wentz's three earlier editions of this book, fully considering the work of contributors to previous editions (C. G. Jung among them), the sections that were added by Evans-Wentz along the way, the questions surrounding the book's translation, and finally the volume's profound importance in engendering both popular and academic interest in the religion and culture of Tibet. Another key theme that Lopez addresses is the changing nature of this book's audience—from the
prewar theosophists to the beat poets to the hippies to contemporary exponents of the hospice movement--and what these audiences have found (or sought) in its very old pages.

**The Navel of the Demoness**

Vajrayogini is a tantric goddess from the highest class of Buddhist tantras who manifests the ultimate development of wisdom and compassion. Her practice is prevalent today among practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism. This ground-breaking book delves into the origins of Vajrayogini, charting her evolution in India and examining her roots in the Cakrasamvara tantra and in Indian tradition relating to siva. The focus of this work is the Guhyasamayasadhanamala, a collection of forty-six sadhanas, or practice texts. Written on palm leaves in Sanskrit and preserved since the twelfth century, this diverse collection, composed by various authors, reveals a multitude of forms of the goddess, each of which is described and illustrated here. One of the sadhanas, the Vajravarahi Sadhana by Umapatideva, depicts Vajrayogini at the center of a mandala of thirty-seven different goddesses, and is here presented in full translation alongside a Sanskrit edition. Elizabeth English provides extensive explanation and annotation of this representative text. Sixteen pages of stunning color plates not only enhance the study but bring the goddess to life.

**Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism**

"This book engages the reader with its story-telling style as it illustrates the principles of Buddhism with concrete examples. Paying special attention to the rise of Buddhist practice in the West, Habito introduces the novice to Buddhist experience in its historical unity and the variety of traditions that reflect its essence."--BOOK JACKET.

**Knowledge and Liberation**

This is a major anthropological study of contemporary Tibetan Buddhist monasticism and tantric ritual in the Ladakh region of North-West India and of the role of tantric ritual in the formation and maintenance of traditional forms of state structure and political consciousness in Tibet. Containing detailed descriptions and analyses of monastic ritual, the work builds up a picture of Tibetan tantric traditions as they interact with more localised understandings of bodily identity and territorial cosmology, to produce a substantial re-interpretation of the place of monks as ritual performers and peripheral householders in Ladakh. The work also examines the central and indispensable role of incarnate lamas, such as the Dalai Lama, in the religious life of Tibetan Buddhists.

**The Tibetan Book of the Dead**

In the midst of the devastation that has been wrought on their culture, the monk dancers in the Shechen monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal, are devoted to preserving the sacred dances central to the Tantric tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. The dances, which originated in India and flourished for centuries in Tibet, are teaching stories—each mask, costume, movement, and gesture has a specific significance and embodies the values of Buddhism. The dances are the monks' spiritual gift to the lay community. The origin of the
sacred Buddhist dance, orcham, goes back to the ninth century, when Guru Padmasambhava introduced Buddhism to Tibet. Through
the ages, the practice has been advanced by great masters whose visionary experiences enriched and enhanced the dance forms. The
sacred dances were then transmitted as accurately as possible by the masters' disciples from generation to generation. The dances are
now preserved in exile in India, Nepal, and Bhutan, and have been presented in the West, by the monks of Shechen and other Tibetan
monasteries, in the same spirit of sharing a profound inner experience. In vivid, full-color photos and illuminating text, the well-known
author and photographer Matthiew Ricard reveals the painstaking preparations for and meanings behind the dances, as well as the
intriguing history of this uniquely colorful teaching practice.

**Luminous Bliss**

A great esoteric tradition developed in the Himalayan fastnesses of the Tibetan plateau. Over centuries of isolation, this unique culture
investigated the mysteries of mind and magic to a degree never before attempted. Today, as Tibetan spirituality spreads across the
world, the practices of Tibetan magic have scarcely been investigated by Western occultists. Occult Tibet presents this body of
techniques, based partly on Tibetan Buddhist practice and partly on shamanic Bön (the aboriginal religion of Tibet). Learn about
authentic Tibetan magical practices, including: tumo, the ability to stave off the cold by stimulating the chakras and energy channels of
the body; light trance states to recall past lives; manipulation of energies via sound, rhythm, chanting, and drumming; and the spiritual
practice of dream yoga. J. H. Brennan, respected author of numerous books on the Western Esoteric Tradition, has long been
fascinated by Tibetan mysticism and magic. As the result of years of research, Occult Tibet brings the ancient magical techniques of
Tibet to the magicians of the West. Winner of the 2003 Coalition of Visionary Resources (COVR) Award for Best Spirituality Book

**Dakini's Warm Breath**

**Tibetan Buddhism in Diaspora**

**Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism**

The Taming of the Demons examines mythic and ritual themes of violence, demon taming, and blood sacrifice in Tibetan Buddhism.
Taking as its starting point Tibet's so-called age of fragmentation (842 to 986 C.E.), the book draws on previously unstudied
manuscripts discovered in the "library cave" near Dunhuang, on the old Silk Road. These ancient documents, it argues, demonstrate
how this purportedly inactive period in Tibetan history was in fact crucial to the Tibetan assimilation of Buddhism, and particularly to
the spread of violent themes from tantric Buddhism into Tibet at the local and the popular levels. Having shed light on this "dark age"
of Tibetan history, the second half of the book turns to how, from the late tenth century onward, the period came to play a vital
symbolic role in Tibet, as a violent historical "other" against which the Tibetan Buddhist tradition defined itself. -- Georges Dreyfus
Until the early twentieth century, hardly any traces of the Tibetan tradition of Chinese Chan Buddhism, or Zen, remained. Then the discovery of a sealed cave in Dunhuang, full of manuscripts in various languages dating from the first millennium CE, transformed our understanding of early Zen. This book translates some of the earliest surviving Tibetan Zen manuscripts preserved in Dunhuang. The translations illuminate different aspects of the Zen tradition, with brief introductions that not only discuss the roles of ritual, debate, lineage, and meditation in the early Zen tradition but also explain how these texts were embedded in actual practices.

In this transcript, Gelek Rimpoche introduces bodhimind, the ultimate, unlimited, unconditional love and compassion that aspires to full enlightenment in order to help all beings to get to that very enlightenment. He also explains the Six Perfections, the compassionate activities that result from the motivation of bodhimind.

With an annotated English translation and critical analysis of the Orgyan-gling gold manuscript of the short Sukhāvativyūha-sūtra Pure Land Buddhism as a whole has received comparatively little attention in Western studies on Buddhism despite the importance of “buddha-fields” (pure lands) for the growth and expression of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In this first religious history of Tibetan Pure Land literature, Georgios Halkias delves into a rich collection of literary, historical, and archaeological sources to highlight important aspects of this neglected pan-Asian Buddhist tradition. He clarifies many of the misconceptions concerning the interpretation of “other-world” soteriology in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism and provides translations of original Tibetan sources from the ninth century to the present that represent esoteric doctrines that continue to be cherished by Tibetan Buddhists for their joyful descriptions of the Buddhist path. The book is informed by interviews with Tibetan scholars and Buddhist practitioners and by Halkias’ own participant-observation in Tibetan Pure Land rituals and teachings conducted in Europe and the Indian subcontinent. Divided into three sections, Luminous Bliss shows that Tibetan Pure Land literature exemplifies a synthesis of Mahāyāna sutra-based conceptions with a Vajrayana world-view that fits progressive and sudden approaches to the realization of Pure Land teachings. Part I covers the origins and development of Pure Land in India and the historical circumstances of its adaptation in Tibet and Central Asia. Part II offers an English translation of the short Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra (imported from India during the Tibetan Empire) and contains a survey of original Tibetan Pure Land scriptures and meditative techniques from the dGe-lugs-pa, bKa’-brgyud, rNying-ma, and Sa-skya schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Part III introduces some of the most innovative and popular mortuary cycles and practices related to the Tantric cult of Buddha Amitābha and his Pure Land from the Treasure traditions in the bKa’-brgyud and rNying-ma schools. Luminous Bliss locates Pure Land Buddhism at the core of Tibet’s religious heritage and demonstrates how this tradition constitutes an integral part of both
Tibetan and East Asian Buddhism.

**Tibetan Ritual**

This book centres on funeral rituals in Tibetan Buddhism with particular emphasis on their structure and performance. Drawing on historical travel literature, anthropological studies and ethnographic literature, as well as Tibetan texts and existing academic studies, the author describes and analyses Tibetan Buddhist funeral rituals from the earliest available records up to the present.

**Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism**

**Inside Tibetan Buddhism**

The primary emblem of the feminine in Tibetan Buddhism is the dakini, or "sky-dancer", a semiwrathful spirit-woman who manifests in visions, dreams and meditation experiences. Judith Simmer-Brown, an accomplished scholar and an experienced practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism, demonstrates how the dakini symbolises levels of Tibetan Buddhism, demonstrates how the dakini symbolises levels of spiritual realisation: the sacredness of the body, the profound meeting point of body and mind meditation, the visionary realm of ritual practice, and the empty, spacious qualities of the mind itself.

**The Buddha from Brooklyn**

Buddhist philosophy is concerned with defining and overcoming the limitations and errors of perception. To do this is essential to Buddhism’s purpose of establishing a method for attaining liberation. Conceptual thought in this view can lead to a liberating understanding, a transformative religious experience. The author discusses the workings of both direct and conceptual cognition, drawing on a variety of Tibetan and Indian texts. The Gelukpa interpretation of Dignaga and Dharmakirti is greatly at variance with virtually all other scholarship concerning these seminal Buddhist logicians.

**Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China**

**Sacred Spaces and Powerful Places in Tibetan Culture**

Gray Tuttle reveals the surprising role Buddhism and Buddhist leaders played in the development of the modern Chinese state and in fostering relations between Tibet and China from the Republican period (1912-1949) to the early years of Communist rule. Tuttle offers new insights on the impact of modern ideas of nationalism, race, and religion in East Asia. He draws on previously unexamined archival and governmental materials, as well as personal memoirs of Chinese politicians and Buddhist monks, and ephemera from religious
Eat the Buddha

Ritual is one of the most pervasive religious phenomena in the Tibetan cultural world. Despite its ubiquity and importance to Tibetan cultural life, however, only in recent years has Tibetan ritual been given the attention it deserves. This is the first scholarly collection to focus on this important subject. Unique in its historical, geographical and disciplinary breadth, this book brings together eleven essays by an international cast of scholars working on ritual texts, institutions and practices in the greater Tibetan cultural world - Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, and Mongolia. While most of the chapters focus on Buddhism, two deal with ritual in Tibet's indigenous Bon religion. All of the essays are original to this volume. An extensive introduction by the editor provides a broad overview of Tibetan ritual and contextualizes the chapters within the field of Buddhist and Tibetan studies. The book should find use in advanced undergraduate courses and graduate seminars on Tibetan religion. It will also be of interest to students and scholars of ritual generally.

Women's Religious Expression in Tibetan Buddhism

Rich in detail and visually powerful, this compelling picture book provides insight into the intricate and profound world of Tibetan Buddhism. Striking images of sacred spaces, participants, art, and ritual choreography are used to explain such precepts as karma, emptiness, compassion, death and rebirth, the Eight Fold Path, and the processes of Tantric deity practice. 150 color and black-and-white photos.

Occult Tibet

"Foundations of Tibetan Buddhism presents the fundamental practices of this tradition in a clear and easily accessible manner. Beginning with an overview of the Buddhist path, Kalu Rinpoche goes on to explain the preliminary practices of taking refuge, prostrations, Dorje Sempa purification meditation, mandala practice, guru yoga and the guru-disciple relationship. He then discusses the vows of the lay person, the bodhisattva, and the tantric practitioner. The book closes with a explanation of meditation both with and without an object and the key points of mahamudra meditation."--BOOK JACKET.Title Summary field provided by Blackwell North America, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Tibetan Buddhist/Newari Buddhist Interface in the Kathmandu Valley

Explores shamanic and Tibetan Buddhist attitudes toward dreams.

Mandala in the Making

In Power Objects in Tibetan Buddhism: The Life, Writings, and Legacy of Sokdokpa Lodrö Gyeltsen, James Duncan Gentry explores how...
objects of power figure in Tibetan Buddhist societies through a study of the life of Sokdokpa Lodrö Gyeltsen (1552–1624).

**Experiencing Buddhism**

A gripping portrait of modern Tibet told through the lives of its people, from the bestselling author of Nothing to Envy. “You simply cannot understand China without reading Barbara Demick on Tibet.”—Evan Osnos, author of Age of Ambition NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY Parul Sehgal, The New York Times • The New York Times Book Review • The Washington Post • NPR • The Economist Just as she did with North Korea, award-winning journalist Barbara Demick explores one of the most hidden corners of the world. She tells the story of a Tibetan town perched eleven thousand feet above sea level that is one of the most difficult places in all of China for foreigners to visit. Ngaba was one of the first places where the Tibetans and the Chinese Communists encountered one another. In the 1930s, Mao Zedong’s Red Army fled into the Tibetan plateau to escape their adversaries in the Chinese Civil War. By the time the soldiers reached Ngaba, they were so hungry that they looted monasteries and ate religious statues made of flour and butter—to Tibetans, it was as if they were eating the Buddha. Their experiences would make Ngaba one of the engines of Tibetan resistance for decades to come, culminating in shocking acts of self-immolation. Eat the Buddha spans decades of modern Tibetan and Chinese history, as told through the private lives of Demick’s subjects, among them a princess whose family is wiped out during the Cultural Revolution, a young Tibetan nomad who becomes radicalized in the storied monastery of Kirti, an upwardly mobile entrepreneur who falls in love with a Chinese woman, a poet and intellectual who risks everything to voice his resistance, and a Tibetan schoolgirl forced to choose at an early age between her family and the elusive lure of Chinese money. All of them face the same dilemma: Do they resist the Chinese, or do they join them? Do they adhere to Buddhist teachings of compassion and nonviolence, or do they fight? Illuminating a culture that has long been romanticized by Westerners as deeply spiritual and peaceful, Demick reveals what it is really like to be a Tibetan in the twenty-first century, trying to preserve one’s culture, faith, and language against the depredations of a seemingly unstoppable, technologically all-seeing superpower. Her depiction is nuanced, unvarnished, and at times shocking.

**Tibetan Art**

This book examines the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas during the Tibetan (786–848) and post-Tibetan Guiyijun (848–1036) periods at Dunhuang, focusing on the intersections between political authority, religious praxis, and visual language.

**The Everything Buddhism Book**

**Monk Dancers of Tibet**

This groundbreaking study focuses on a village called Te in a “Tibetanized” region of northern Nepal. While Te's people are nominally Buddhist, and engage the services of resident Tibetan Tantric priests for a range of rituals, they are also exponents of a local religion
that involves blood sacrifices to wild, unconverted territorial gods and goddesses. The village is unusual in the extent to which it has maintained its local autonomy and also in the degree to which both Buddhism and the cults of local gods have been subordinated to the pragmatic demands of the village community. Charles Ramble draws on extensive fieldwork, as well as 300 years' worth of local historical archives (in Tibetan and Nepali), to re-examine the subject of confrontation between Buddhism and indigenous popular traditions in the Tibetan cultural sphere. He argues that Buddhist ritual and sacrificial cults are just two elements in a complex system of self-government that has evolved over the centuries and has developed the character of a civil religion. This civil religion, he shows, is remarkably well adapted to the preservation of the community against the constant threats posed by external attack and the self-interest of its own members. The beliefs and practices of the local popular religion, a highly developed legal tradition, and a form of government that is both democratic and accountable to its people all these are shown to have developed to promote survival in the face of past and present dangers. Ramble's account of how both secular and religious institutions serve as the building blocks of civil society opens up vistas with important implications for Tibetan culture as a whole.