

BEYOND ETERNITY THROUGH MYSTICISM

The author, Lama T.D. Bhutia has to his credit 51 years of experience in lamahood, most profound lama as his masters, 13¹/₂ years full time meditation course and 25 years of practice in yoga. He is also Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies.

He has condensed the essence of all his life-time experience in 'Beyond Eternity through Mysticism'. Although the book is written from the Tibetan Buddhist point of view, it is devoid of any superstition or blind faith. The reality of life and death has been made open secret and he has thrown it open to the readers to test it.

The ultimate goal of humanity does not rest within the ambit of eternity, but it is 'Beyond Eternity'. Instead of directly plunging into 'Mysticism', the book initially deals with sub-topics which gradually leads the readers to the depth of mysticism hidden in the subtle energy of our own and finally it penetrates deep into the subtlest mysticism by unveiling the truth pertaining to 'Great Perfection'.

Enlightenment cannot be bestowed upon us by god or goddess, but it has to be generated through our own vital energy like the illumination of electricity which is possible only with the combination of negative and positive circuits. Downward flow of vital energy (white in male and juice in female) is at anybody's beck and call. The

same vital energy, if one can make flow upward through the central channel by mystic force, one can remain in the stage 'Great Bliss' which is the stage 'Beyond Eternity'. Unlike the emission caused due to our carnal lust, 'Great Bliss' is free from vice. At this stage the practitioner spiritually delinks himself from corporeal existence and merges into voidness. Such void nature is not 'nothingness', but it is the voidness which manifests. At this stage, one cuts the root of his 'dualistic existence' and transforms himself to the 'Primordial' non-dual stage which has neither cause, nor effect; neither thought nor thinker; neither craving nor aversion; neither coming nor going, neither existence nor non-existence and neither birth nor death. This is the stage which is 'Beyond Eternity'. This is the originality of our consciousness (mind) which is devoid of 'self' or 'soul'. This is Enlightenment.

How the practice of such mystic technique in this life helps immensely the practitioner after death in the 'intermediate stage' is also made clear in this book. The author has unveiled this mysticism by describing at length three different kinds of meditation to reach 'Beyond Eternity' and has also left it open to readers to try the method and find out the truth. There is no hide and seek. An individual is the creator and he himself is the destroyer, none else. To choose between 'suffering' and 'enlightenment' is in our own hand and god or goddess has no role to play in it.

The book also narrates the horrifying suffering of the sentient being including gods, many of which hitherto were unheard of. It also explains the stage of 'complete Bliss' which is beyond the imagination of a lay-man.

The first mysticism that the book reveals is that the entire truth of the universe lies nowhere else than within the framework of our own body. The body is dissected into two parts, namely 'mind and matter'. The mind is primordially pure and serene, but as soon as it comes into contact with the five sense organs of our body, it is badly influenced. Thus the mind loses its originality and falls in the dragnet

of samsara, i.e., the world of suffering. The chapter 'mind and master' has been dealt with convincingly.

One can never liberate himself and go 'Beyond Eternity' so long as he does not properly understand the true nature of mind. The 'mysticism' concerning the primordial true nature of mind can only be unveiled through the via-media of 'meditation'. The author has highlighted three different modes of meditation for the purpose which are universal and practical.

An amazing description as to how after death our consciousness (mind) dances to the tune of predisposition in the intermediate stage where our Karmic reaction fails to recognise the true nature of mind and how again we choose our birth in the samsara is given.

The author has extended his help to those like-minded readers who want to go into further depth of 'Mysticism' to reach 'Beyond Eternity'. No pre-condition for conversion to any faith is laid for the purpose.

Apart from the esoteric title, at first glance one is tempted to think that this text is technically specific to Nyingmapa Vajrayana students and disciples, and hence is neither intended for nor necessarily suitable to students of other traditions of Buddhism. Yet the sincerity and depth of the author's perspective is so empathetic to the reader's need for the most essential, generalized information on Buddhist practice that any question of whether he is speaking to you or not becomes completely obsolete, despite the Tibetan Buddhist context from which it originates.

The principal motivating theme of Beyond Eternity is to eliminate "blind faith" from Buddhist practice by illuminating the theories underlying activities of Buddhists generally, and Vajrayana practitioners in particular. Beginning with a sound historical evolution of early Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism, the author then explores the topics of cause and effect, the five aggregates, dependent origination, meditation and the Hinayana and Mahayana paths.

Vajrayana is introduced by an in-depth review of Guru Padmasambhava's biography which is followed by a thoroughly detailed explanation of tantric practice. The preliminary practices and Dzogchen practice are then discussed. After a brief exploration of the nature of the Bardo, the author provides a colorful and intimate view of his own personal experience, and follows this with an appendix detailing the practices of offering incense and black tea, butter lamps, and other practical topics. The book closes with an exhaustive bibliography.

From the Yolmowa tribe, and having studied in monasteries and institutions in India since age ten, the author writes in straightforward (Indian-style) English which is not the result of translation. Furthermore, the author is a practitioner of over forty years under the disciple-ship of not only His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and His Holiness Dilgo Khentse Rinpoche, but the renowned holder of all four Tibetan Buddhist lineages, Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro, who spearheaded the non-sectarian movement in Tibet. Their influence permeates the author's presentation, and the information presented is sufficiently general to be of practical value to any student of Buddhism. The author's experience in study and practice with the Vipassana tradition reflects the seriousness with which he pursues his Buddhist life and has further empowered him to transcend orientations toward his own sect of Buddhism while at the same time faithfully pursuing its advice.

This valuable text is the unification of clear academic rigor and heart advice from the author which never relies on the reader's faith or superstition but rather the fruits of the author's own studies and practice. The world at large, and particularly students and practitioners of any form of Buddhism are indeed fortunate to have the opportunity to study with this previously little-known Buddhist and scholar of high caliber, which studying this book enables them to do in a manner rarely seen in other texts. All profits from the book are donated to the charitable cause of preserving the author's personal Buddhist lineage through support to its monastery in Darjeeling.

Presently the author is the Director, Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, Sikkim (India). The book comprising 315 pages can be had from the Institute.

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