



The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Eight, Part Three: The Elements of Tantric Practice

By Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Taye

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Jamgön Kongtrül's *Treasury of Knowledge* in ten volumes is a unique encyclopedic masterpiece embodying the entire range of Buddhist teachings as they were presented in Tibet. Tibetan Buddhist teachers expected their students to study Buddhist philosophical texts as well as practice reflection and meditation; present-day students have also realized that awakening has its source in study as well as in reflection and practice. *The Elements of Tantric Practice* sets forth the essential components of the path of highest yoga tantra, a system of meditation that unites wisdom and compassion in its two phases of practice. The first phase, that of creation, relies primarily on the use of the imagination to effect personal transformation. The phase of completion allows the practitioner to perfect the process of transformation by training in methods that manipulate the energies and constituents of the mind and body. The result of this path is the direct experience of the fundamental nature of mind and phenomena. *The Elements of Tantric Practice* concerns the meditative processes of the inner system of secret mantra—that of highest yoga tantra—and is based primarily on tantric sources. The author introduces the subject by describing the path of tantra and its underlying principles. The main body of the book deals with two major elements essential to all highest yoga tantras: the practice of the creation phase and that of the completion phase. For the first phase, Kongtrül describes the visualization sequences in which ordinary perceptions are transformed into the forms of awakening and explains how these practices purify the stages of cyclic existence—life, death, and rebirth. The creation phase prepares the practitioner for the techniques of the completion phase, which entail focusing directly on the channels, winds, and vital essences that form the subtle body. Kongtrül presents the key elements of a variety of tantras, including the Guhyasamaja and Yamari, belonging to the class of father tantras and the Kalachakra Hevajra Chakrasamvara Mahamaya Buddhakapala and Tara mother tantras. All these tantras share a common goal: to make manifest the pristine awareness that is the union of emptiness and bliss.

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The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Eight, Part Three: The Elements of Tantric Practice By Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Taye Bibliography

- Rank: #1181181 in Books
- Published on: 2008-10-16
- Released on: 2008-10-16
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.20" h x 1.48" w x 6.30" l, 1.83 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 480 pages



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Editorial Review

Review

"*The Treasury of Knowledge* excellently presents the entire corpus of the sutra and mantra traditions from the paths of the common sciences all the way up to the uncommon Great Perfection or Atiyoga, which is the culmination of the nine vehicles."—H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche

"Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé was one of the leading scholars of the nineteenth century. He broke through sectarian constraints and achieved a deep understanding of the the different philosophical approaches in Tibet. I have no doubt that by studying Kongtrul's works readers will be inspired to emulate his great qualities of humility, dedication, patience, and nonsectarianism."—H.H. the Dalai Lama

"Upon seeing the *Treasury of Knowledge*, the first Khyentse Rinpoche (a contemporary of Lodrö Tayé) said that it was so inclusive of all knowledge that it did not seem to be composed by a human being but must have been written through the blessing of the dakinis."—Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche

"In his monumental *Treasury of Knowledge*, [Jamgön Kongtrül] presents a complete account of the major lines of thought and practice that comprise Tibetan Buddhism. . . . By studying Kongtrül's works, readers will be inspired to emulate his great qualities of humility, dedication, patience, and nonsectarianism."—*The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies*

"*The Elements of Tantric Practice: A General Exposition of the Process of Meditation in the Indestructible Way of Secret Mantra* focuses on the two cornerstones of tantric practice: the stages of creation and completion. Here they are treated in detail and with clarity according to the various systems, such as the Kalachakra, the Guhyasamaja, and the Chakrasamvara. Every serious reader will benefit from this excellent translation."—Adriano Clemente, author/translator of *Supreme Source* with Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

"Those who study and apply the profound details in this beautiful translation will deepen their experiences of Tantric meditation."—Jim Valby, PhD

"Comprehensive, challenging, but very rewarding. Elio Guarisco and Ingrid McLeod have created a marvelous translation supplemented with an excellent introduction and detailed annotations. This is truly an admirable accomplishment!"—JCyrus Stearns, author of *King of the Empty Plain*

About the Author

Jamgön Kongtrül (1813–1899) was a versatile and prolific scholar. He has been characterized as a "Tibetan Leonardo" because of his significant contributions to religion, education, medicine, and politics.

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