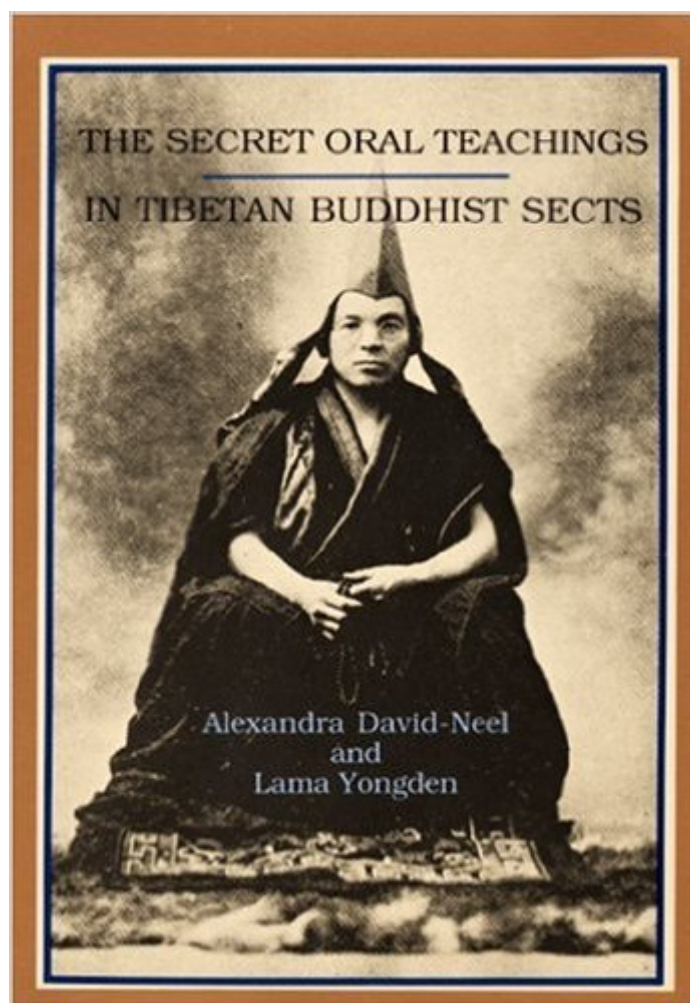


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The Secret Oral Teachings In Tibetan Buddhist Sects



Synopsis

This is an account of the Madhyamika (Middle Way) school of Buddhism, a method of mediation and enlightenment that was developed by the great Indian teacher Nagarjuna. In a collaboration between the Frenchwoman Alexandra David-Neel and her friend, the Tibetan lama Aphur Yongden, these teachings are presented clearly and elegantly, intended for the layman who seeks a way to practice and experience the realization of oneness with all existence. Alexandra David-Neel was born in 1868 in Paris. In her youth she wrote an incendiary anarchist treatise and was an acclaimed opera singer; then she decided to devote her life to exploration and the study of world religions, including Buddhist philosophy. She traveled extensively to Central Asia and the Far East, where she learned a number of Asian languages, including Tibetan. In 1914, she met Lama Yongden, who became her adopted son, teacher, and companion. In 1923, at the age of fifty-five, she disguised herself as a pilgrim and journeyed to Tibet, where she was the first European woman to enter Lhasa, which was closed to foreigners at the time. In her late seventies, she settled in the south of France, where she lived until her death at 101 in 1969.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The one reviewer who claims this is "old news" is pretty far off the mark. As Alan Watts said in the intro of the book, this is the "I told you so" book which you can whip out to back up your claims when other Buddhists accuse you of espousing Vedanta rather than Buddhism. Unfortunately, whether or not anyone will take this book seriously is another matter entirely. The most reliable names in

modern Buddhism, including the Dalai Lama, have sung this author's praises, but some will never be able to see past her prior interest in Theosophy (in her early 20's), which she ultimately realized was fraudulent nonsense and left to spend the rest of her life very bravely exploring new territory in dangerous times and learning real Tibetan Buddhism right from the source: Tibet... during the start of the Chinese invasion. As the Dalai Lama said when he came to speak at the inauguration of David-Neel's museum, "She knew the REAL Tibet." She was one of the first Westerners, and certainly the first Western woman, to have a private audience with the Dalai Lama, helping to teach him about the West. When it was time for the Dalai Lama to pay back her kindness with an authentic Tibetan teaching, often he would direct her to a specific lama, one of his own teachers. The author of David-Neel's recent biography was invited on a speaking tour alongside high lamas, thus demonstrating the importance of her subject, Alexandra David-Neel. How many other western authors have lived in Tibetan caves for several years? Or adopted a monk as their son? These are "secret" teachings in the sense the book says they are: up to the hearer who hears them to realize the truth of the teachings, to penetrate their subtlety and depth. They are not often-repeated, worn-out teachings that everybody already knows. Not at all.

I have been trying to work through this book since I was given a 1st edition of it wayyy back in 1969. Not that it is a difficult read, heck - it's rather skinny. But the concepts/precepts contained in it REMAIN a "secret" to me, even to this day. One thing I DO know for sure; you cannot KEEP this book! You will be tempted to loan it to someone, and they will NEVER return it. EVER. Even people who always return things will find an excuse to keep it, I know this for a fact. This time, I ordered 2 copies. That makes a grand total of about a dozen copies I have purchased through the years. After so many years, I am hoping to grasp the contents this time around. Have no doubt: the authors recognize the reader as likely an idiot, and say so. But they do their best to assist. (If you want to see someone's head explode, try discussing the contents with a dyed-in-the-wool Fundamentalist Anything - or better yet, a Catholic. THEY will tell you all are simply "Mysteries" of the Universe!) Alexandra David-Neel and Lama Yongden allow one to unravel those mysteries, those "secrets" if you will. I think. I dunno. 42+ years later, I still don't quite "get" it. Good Luck to You! Update: 45+ years study now, and I know even less now than I did back in the 60's when first gifted with a copy of this book. I don't know what I know as a result of reading this. I used to know what it was I did NOT know, but further reading has changed even that. I am purchasing a copy today for my grandson. When I asked his age on his birthday recently, he stated "Everyone thinks I'm seven years old. I'm not supposed to tell how old I really am".

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