



## Vajrayana

Tibetan Buddhism like Zen is a form of Mahayana Buddhism, which arose some centuries after the original Buddhist teachings (known as Theravada Buddhism). In Theravada Buddhism stressed the enlightenment of the individual. After about 500 years the concept of the Bodhisattva arose with the advent of Mahayana Buddhism. To the Mahayana practitioner, one practices not just for one's own enlightenment; rather, it's to better help ease the suffering of all beings. One meditates for the sake of all beings happiness and enlightenment. The Bodhisattva is filled with compassion for all suffering beings, who are regarded as a mother regards her beloved child. It's important to realize that in Mahayana Buddhism one's goal is to become a Bodhisattva, not to worship one!

Vajrayana techniques evolved about 500 years after the advent of Mahayana Buddhism with its Bodhisattva ideal. Many advanced Vajrayana meditation techniques were developed in Tibet over the subsequent centuries. Many of these advanced techniques involve vivid visualizations, such as depicted in the sacred tankas (paintings of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and guardians of the Dharma), such as the one of Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of compassion, shown above.

In the Vajrayana tradition, the need for a realized teacher is considered extremely important. One's teacher brings one back to earth; if your ego gets inflated, your teacher sticks a pin into it to pop one's bubble. We are infinitely capable of fooling ourselves, and the guru can serve the essential role of pulling the rug out from under you whenever you get too full of yourself.

The tragic destruction of the Tibetan culture by the Chinese invaders has resulted in the dissemination of Tibetan Buddhism throughout the world. There are now Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and meditation centers in every major country on the planet, and thousands of books have been published on the subject. One can hear highly realized teachers whose first language is English, like Pema Chodron (see the many links to her teachings below).

## Further reading on Vajrayana

Wikipedia's entry on Vajrayana: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vajrayana>

Good short summary of Vajrayana: <http://www.religioustolerance.org/budvaj.htm>

Pema Chodron's website: <http://www.shambhala.org/teachers/pema/>

Tonglen instruction: <http://www.shambhala.org/teachers/pema/tonglen2.php>

Shambala Training: <http://sti.shambhala.org/>

## **Vajrayana Videos**

Pema Chodron:

Tonglen Practice:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=312oBat6MXs&feature=PlayList&p=5B9F22183273D62E&index=56&playnext=2&playnext\\_from=PL](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=312oBat6MXs&feature=PlayList&p=5B9F22183273D62E&index=56&playnext=2&playnext_from=PL)

Guru as Troublemaker:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7qFi52FX1Q&feature=PlayList&p=5B9F22183273D62E&playnext=1&playnext\\_from=PL&index=55](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7qFi52FX1Q&feature=PlayList&p=5B9F22183273D62E&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=55) \

Robert Thurman on Tonglen: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PGmvJdgcT4>

The Dalai Lama:

Stages of Meditation: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2P9F29jT7QQ&NR=1>

On Compassion: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFY4KgOAwzs>

Love Your Enemy:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXaYp7nwWXM&feature=related>

Lama Robina Courtin:

Be Your Own Therapist: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nasIq4E9nNg>