



Initiations and Initiates in Tibet

By Alexandra David-Neel

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Nestled amid the high peaks and eternal snows of the Himalayas and other mountain ranges, Tibet is home to a centuries-old Buddhist tradition, rich in mystic rites and rituals aimed at helping adherents achieve spiritual bliss. In this fascinating volume, a noted authority delves into the nature and sources of Tibetan mysticism, providing readers with a wealth of information regarding Lamaic rites of initiation and the teachings given to initiates, both during and after the initiation ceremonies.

The author first defines Tibetan mysticism and examines the role of the spiritual guide and the choice of a master. This is followed by a discussion of the nature of the esoteric doctrines and traditional oral instruction. Madame David-Neel then recounts in detail the various kinds of initiations and their aims, including initiations with and without “activity,” the “Mani” initiation, and the different meanings of *Aum mani padme hum!* Also covered are the magic rites known as *dubthabs*, the “gymnastics” of respiration, daily spiritual exercises, the contemplation of sun and sky, the dalai lamas, different kinds of morality, and many other topics.

Alexandra David-Neel was a historian of religion and a resident of Tibet for 14 years. As a practicing Buddhist, she participated in many of the spiritual rites and practices described in this book, which gives her account a special immediacy and authenticity. Lucid, objective, and highly readable, *Initiations and Initiates in Tibet* is a treasury of fact and lore offering valuable insights and information to students of religion and Tibetan Buddhism in particular.

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