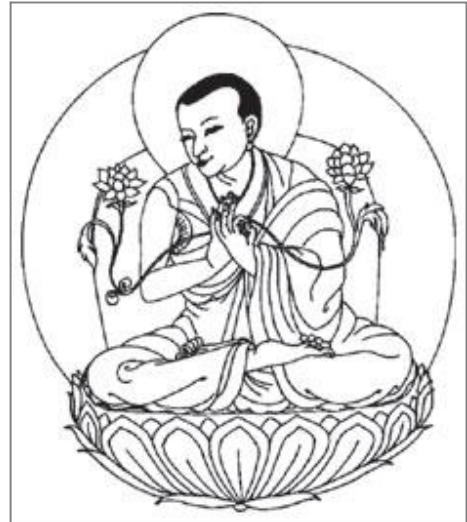


An Indestructible Legacy: The Life of Bari Lotsawa

by Lama Jampa Thaye

One of the greatest and most influential masters in the history of Buddhism in Tibet was Bari Lotsawa (1040 – 1111), the second throne holder (Sakya Trizin) of the Sakya tradition. His contribution, both as a translator (Lotsawa) and tantric master, helped to ensure the continuity of the precious vajrayana teachings in Tibet. Perhaps his outstanding legacy has been the famous collection of deity-meditations known as ‘The One Hundred Sadhanas of Bari’ (Bari Gyatsa) which has been preserved into modern times where it still forms a vital part of contemporary vajrayana practice.



Bari Lotsawa (‘the translator of Bari’) was born in Kham in 1040 AD. His personal name was Rinchen Drakpa. Having studied the dharma in his childhood, by the age of fifteen Bari Lotsawa had decided to travel to India. His ambition was to train as a translator in the footsteps of such luminaries of the ‘new translation era’ as Rinchen Zangpo and Drokmi Lotsawa.

On the way Bari met Atisha at Nyethang shortly before the latter’s death. During this meeting Bari was advised to study in India with Dorje Denpa, a great master of vajrayana and disciple of such siddhas as Jetari.

Bari Lotsawa made two extensive visits to India, where he received innumerable initiations and teachings from Dorje Denpa and other masters. He experienced a number of visions of his yidams Chenrezi and Tara at whose prompting he performed acts of considerable kindness such as ransoming those unjustly imprisoned. Subsequently in Ngari, Western Tibet, he received teachings on the five principal works of Nagarjuna from the scholar Parahita.

Having achieved realisation through intensive study and practice, Bari Lotsawa gathered many disciples throughout Tibet. In 1103, following the death of Khon Konchok Gyalpo, the founder of Sakya, some of the latter’s disciples invited Bari Lotsawa to Sakya. Their plan was for him to act as tutor for Konchok Gyalpo’s son, Kunga Nyingpo, who was then only 11 years old. It is said that it was only after sorcery was performed towards him that Bari Lotsawa acceded to this request. Bari Lotsawa took charge of Sachen Kunga

