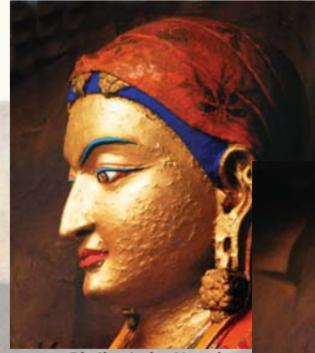


The Light comes from India

Buddhism takes root in Tibet



Statue of Buddha brought by Wen Cheng, in Jokhang Cathedral in Lhasa



Bhrikuti, the Nepalese wife of Songtsen Gampo



Wen Cheng, the Chinese wife of Songtsen Gampo



The Buddha Dharma began shining over Tibet

After marrying a Nepalese and a Chinese Princess, King Songtsen Gampo converted to Buddhism. These two marriages played a crucial role in the spread of the new faith in Tibet.

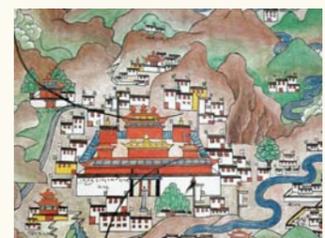
More than hundred years later, King Trisong Detsen invited Shantarakshita, the Abbot of Nalanda to teach the Buddha Dharma and ordain the first monks. Shantarakshita immediately faced serious difficulties due to the strong opposition from the indigenous Bon. He convinced the king that the only way out was to invite the Tantric Master, Guru Padmasambhava; he alone could subdue the forces adverse to Buddhism.

Shantarakshita predicted that a dispute would arise between the two schools of Buddhism, the Indian and the Chinese. The issue was sorted out through the famous Samye Debate. After 2 years of intense discussion, the Indian path prevailed and a proclamation was issued stating that the Indian path was thereafter the orthodox faith.



Pillar erected by Trisong Detsen in Samye. Buddhism became the State religion

Buddhist precepts were progressively incorporated into the laws of the Land of Snows. It was the first steps towards the transformation of the warlike Tibetans into people turned towards inner research.



The Red Palace built by Songtsen Gampo where the Potala stands today



First Tibetan monastery built in Samye by Padmasambhava and Shantarakshita in 779 AD. A debate was held between 792 and 794 to decide which school of Buddhism the Land of Snows would follow



Nalanda Abbot Shantarakshita



Padmasambhava the great Guru from Swat