



Approaching the Great Perfection: Simultaneous and Gradual Methods of Dzogchen Practice in the Longchen Nyingtig (Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism)

Sam Van Schaik

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Dzogchen, the Great Perfection, is the highest meditative practice of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism. *Approaching the Great Perfection* looks at a seminal figure of this lineage, Jigme Lingpa, an eighteenth-century scholar and meditation master whose cycle of teachings, the Longchen Nyingtig, has been handed down through generations as a complete path to enlightenment. Ten of Jigme Lingpa's texts are presented here, along with extensive analysis by van Schaik of a core tension within Buddhism: Does enlightenment develop gradually, or does it come all at once? Though these two positions are often portrayed by modern scholars as entrenched polemical views, van Schaik explains that both tendencies are present within each of the Tibetan Buddhist schools. He demonstrates how Jigme Lingpa is a great illustration of this balancing act, using the rhetoric of both sides to propel his students along the path of the Great Perfection.

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