

came to power in China. For political reasons the Chinese Emperors decided to put the leaders of the two other sects, the Kadam-pa and the Kagyu-pa on an equal footing with the Sakya-pa.

It is in this complicated political situation, that Tsong Khapa would complete the work of Atisha and that the reforms of the Kadam-pa sect would take place. In particular, he showed how the path of knowledge can be united with that of the yoga exercises.

The complete collected works of Tsong Khapa span 18 thick volumes. He studied, so says the tradition, with more than 100 teachers from all the schools of Lamaism or Tibetan Buddhism existing in his time. (There were four schools, the Kadam, Kagyu, Sakya and Nyingma. The name of the latter means the "old school" and its members are called the Red hoods.) He wrote prose and poetry on hundreds of topics.

His greatest merit is that he made accessible for everyone the path to enlightenment with his magnum opus, "The great treatise on the stages of the path to enlightenment", which he wrote during his stay in Reting in the year 1402 when he was 46 years old. The Reting Monastery is located three day trips on horseback north of Lasha amid beautiful juniper shrub forests.

It must be said, though, that he makes a distinction between two categories of readers.

On the one hand, the ordinary people or beginners, people who are still attached to the pleasures of life and just long for a better next incarnation and also those people, who search only for themselves for liberation and enlightenment.

On the other hand, those people, who stirred by compassion, want to awaken spiritually in order to put an end to the suffering of all sentient beings.

He describes in this book, in a language understandable for ordinary mortals, how man can come to enlightenment through understanding of the teachings of the Buddha. He relies both on the classical Indian and Tibetan literature. It has become a handbook for meditation, in which the existing exoteric writings on the sutras are summarized.

All exercises, which are necessary in order to illuminate the mind, are treated. The Teaching, the Teacher, Meditation, Life, Death, Future Life, The