

# Unbounded Wholeness

Bon, Dzogchen, and  
the Logic of the Nonconceptual



Anne Carolyn Klein  
Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

# Unbounded Wholeness

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Unbounded Wholeness

*Dzogchen, Bon, and the Logic  
of the Nonconceptual*

ANNE CAROLYN KLEIN

GESHE TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

2006

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press, Inc., publishes works that further  
Oxford University's objective of excellence  
in research, scholarship, and education.

Oxford New York

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi  
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi  
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece  
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore  
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Copyright © 2006 by Oxford University Press, Inc.

Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.  
198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016

[www.oup.com](http://www.oup.com)

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,  
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,  
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise,  
without the prior permission of Oxford University Press.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Klein, Anne C., 1947–

Unbounded wholeness: Dzogchen, Bon, and the logic of the nonconceptual / Anne  
Carolyn Klein and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.  
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13 978-0-19-517849-4; 978-0-19-517850-0 (pbk.)

ISBN 0-19-517849-1; 0-19-517850-5 (pbk.)

1. Gtan tshigs gal mdo rig pa'i tshad ma. 2. Rdzogs chen—Bon (Tibetan religion).

I. Wangyal, Tenzin. II. Gtan tshigs gal mdo rig pa'i tshad ma. English. III. Title.

BQ7980.5.G84K58 2005

299.5'4—dc22 2005047273

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America  
on acid-free paper

# Preface

This volume translates and introduces a crucial text of the scholarly Bon Dzogchen tradition, *Authenticity of Open Awareness*.<sup>1</sup> *Authenticity* is a stream of debates eddying around an ancient reservoir of poetic citations. For the highly trained scholar-practitioners who are the text's intended audience, *Authenticity* provides an intellectual structure for meditative endeavor and important glimpses of where that endeavor might lead. Its debates carry the intellectual weight of the tradition, while its poetry voices the authentic wisdom of open awareness.

Open awareness is the heart of all Dzogchen practice, Bon or Buddhist. *Authenticity* explores the nature of this authentic and reflexive awareness (*rang gi rig pa'i tshad ma*, *svasaṃvedana-pramāṇa*),<sup>2</sup> identifying it as primordial wisdom's recognition of itself as unbounded wholeness. This wholeness is the incorruptible mindnature (*sems nyid*). One important purpose of the text is to establish the authenticity of such awareness so that its integrity can be defended against philosophical objections to it. At the same time, the text does not confine itself to logical display.

Indeed, *Authenticity* characterizes study and intellectual under-

1. Listed under the category of "Philosophy and Logic" in Karmay 1977 as No. 73, where it is cited as *gTan tshigs gal mdo rig pa'i tshad ma*, the same title given in the edition published by Lopon Tenzin Namdak. It is also listed in Karmay 1977 under No. 54, *rDzogs chen bsgrags pa skor gsum*, as *gTan tshigs nges pa'i gal mdo* and, more fully, as *Sems nyid rdzogs chen gyis tshad ma gtan tshigs sgra don gtan la dbab pa* (p. 102).

2. Sanskrit equivalents are given here only when it is clear the terms in question are translations from or have clear equivalents in Sanskrit.

standing as in some sense alien to authentic, liberating insight. Mindnature can be known only directly, not conceptually, and thus intellect neither engenders nor directly engages authentic experience of the ultimate. Thus, for all its intellectual weightiness, *Authenticity*, like certain Zen traditions, does not find thought to be an actual path to enlightenment. Nevertheless, *Authenticity* clearly privileges the role of intellectual understanding. It gives far more weight to conceptual framing than does, for example, the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, which addresses itself almost entirely to direct experience. Thus, *Authenticity's* attitude toward the intellect maintains a subtle balance, avoiding anti-intellectualism at the same time as it strongly cautions against placing all hope in the conceptual mind. The work offers instead a view of wholeness in which intellect and other human dimensions, while distinct, are not pitted against one another.

Likewise, this study of *Authenticity*, centered on philosophical inquiry though it is, also involves tales of the fantastic and of poetically inspired raptures. These seemingly more fabulous elements are inextricable from the worldview of *Authenticity's* traditional readers and must be included if we are to understand the text in any but the most narrow, dislocated, and unduly domesticated sense. We go astray if we too rigorously segregate the “high” culture of Tibetan scholasticism from other, less modern-seeming elements. The temptation to do so is strong, however, since the rigor of logic feels familiar; it seems “meaningful” and “important” in ways that Western scholarship and contemporary culture easily appreciate.

Said to have been written in the eighth century by Lishu Daring (Li shu sTag ring; rhymes with See You Starring), its colophon and other sources report that *Authenticity* was discovered by the Three Buddhists who, eager for literature, stumbled upon it amid other texts in the sands near Samye. As the nineteenth-century Shardza Rinpoche tells it, these three Buddhists were manifestations of Vairocana. Having eagerly acquired the works, the three were quick to dispose of them after discovering they were not Buddhist but Bon.<sup>3</sup> In another version of this discovery, the three open their Terma, or Textual Treasures, without making any offerings to the Lord of the Ter (*gter bdag*). This error costs them dearly; the fourteenth-century historian Padon Tengyel Zangpo (sPa ston bsTan rgyal bZang po) relates that all three died suddenly and in great pain.<sup>4</sup> Clearly, he is suggesting that *Authenticity* possesses considerable power, whether one reads it or not.

It can hardly be overemphasized that in the cultural life of which this text is a part, philosophical and what we might call mythic perspectives are pro-

3. Karmay 1972: 152.

4. Padon 746.6.

foundly interfused.<sup>5</sup> We highlight their confluence here not only because it is an important theme of *Authenticity* but also because it is a crucial element of Tibetan religious culture more broadly. Our observations on myth's specific relevance for this study also contribute to a better understanding of the Tibetan *imaginaire* more broadly.

Mythic perspectives are invoked in historical accounts of *Authenticity* and of works related with it. In short, mythic dimensions, syllogistic logic, and an epic sense of history are the matrix in and through which *Authenticity* emerges. Both the story of the text and the text itself raise, in different ways, questions of authenticity. The discovery vignettes noted above barely begin to suggest the colorful stories and uncertain facts regarding *Authenticity*'s actual origins. Thus, even as we give pride of place here to the philosophical concerns of *Authenticity*, we also pay attention in our final chapters to the Terma tales alluded to in its colophon and to other contextualizing narratives, such as descriptions in historical texts of Bon's early dissemination throughout the heavenly realms and of Lishu Daring's sending thousands of texts on the backs of birds from Zhang Zhung to Tibet. These tales, themselves a confluence of historical and mythical currents, help us understand the cultural *imaginaire* in which *Authenticity* is traditionally read. To understand the world of *Authenticity* is to recognize that the philosophizing mind behind it is in no way alienated from these other kinds of narratives.

In this way, *Authenticity* displays with particular flourish a feature found to some degree in many ancient Buddhist works. Traditional scholars of Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, who spend years on the fine points of Nāgārjuna's logic, also maintain that Nāgārjuna discovered the philosophical sourcebooks of Madhyamaka deep under the ocean, in the realm of the *Nāgas*. Commentators on Nāgārjuna's work, revered down to the present day for reasoning and intellect, are admired in traditional circles for other accomplishments as well: Candrakīrti for milking the image of a cow and Tsongkhapa for his direct encounter with Mañjuśrī. The list could go on and on, and these matters are well known. However, Western scholarship on Nāgārjuna, and on virtually all other schools of Buddhist logic, tend to shun the narratives in which such rigorous logic is embedded. Again, these stories seem too strange, too inconsequential, or simply too incongruous with scholarly interests. The inclination to divorce the logic of "high" culture from the mythos that pervades even those

5. Ernst Cassirer 1955: 237, one of the pioneering and trend-setting students of myth and its import for the culture of language, notes that as linguistic culture develops, there tends to be a movement away from immersion in myth and a correlative increase in the distance between a sign and what Cassirer calls "the intuited content to which it refers." *Authenticity* does not consider things in these terms and in a sense offers a counter-example to this model. It is certainly a product of linguistic development in Tibetan culture, but the pride of place it gives to poetry certainly implies a willingness to see words and referents coalescing. See chapter 5.



very logicians is itself a cultural marker that distinguishes contemporary sensibilities from many ancient ones. Traditional readers of *Authenticity* were as comfortable with rigorous logic as with the mythic-fantastic elements in the background of that logic.<sup>6</sup> Those elements, moreover, along with special types of knowing—such as open awareness—help fill in gaps that language and intellect cannot straddle on their own.

In an important sense, then, this is a text about the limits of language and the possibility of overcoming those limits. With one sweeping gesture, *Authenticity* addresses both those whose purpose is to use language precisely, and thereby overcome opponents in debate, and those meditative practitioners who are intent on moving beyond the inherent twoness of language. Logic alone cannot authenticate wholeness, and it need not. There is other recourse. In the world of *Authenticity*, as we have already suggested, there is poetry and there is nonconceptual open awareness, which have their own ways of opening new understanding. Until such liberating understanding actually opens, *Authenticity* seems to say, we engage in debate. But for *Authenticity*, language is a crucial and imperfect instrument, incapable of delivering itself from its own limitations. The very words intended to connect reader-practitioners with wordless reality simultaneously divides them from it. Enter the need for a more open discursive space, such as a poetic space, which is not so rigorously divided into the “this” and “that” of logic. Such logic alone will not be adequate to wholeness.

Wholeness arrives in *Authenticity* especially through the figure, voice, and presence of Samantabhadra. The text, in fact, moves between taking unbounded wholeness as an object of inquiry and allowing its sheer presence to counter such objectification. This is a complex maneuver but not, for the world-view of our text, a paradoxical one.

Whereas, as has often been noted, Greek philosophy grew out of a mythical structure which it then increasingly rejected,<sup>7</sup> in the Tibet of *Authenticity*, the respect for reasoning that began to take hold in the eighth century did not result in a rejection of mythic ways of thinking. This has many ramifications for our reading. One is that in *Authenticity*’s cultural framework, the sense of

6. This is all the more interesting to us because, as has often been observed, the love of wisdom, *philosophia*, which Plato and Socrates enjoined in Greece, was an outgrowth of mythmaking. However, as Judith Berling 1992: 34 points out, such an account of the rise of philosophy can itself be called a myth for two reasons: “(1) it simplifies and reconstructs reality to make a particular point which defines community or tradition . . . and (2) it has been a powerful story that functioned to define and justify certain cultural divisions without submitting them to the scrutiny of rational argument.”

7. Hadot 1995: 299: “Aristotle’s mistake was not in promoting and polishing rational inquiry but in presuming that philosophy was utterly different from mythical disclosure.” There is no such sense of tension apparent in our text, nor is it typical of any Tibetan writing familiar to the translators. This difference in intellectual history affects the different roles possible for reasoning in classic Western and Tibetan (or other similarly situated) reflection. The profound compatibility presumed between philosophical and mythic or poetic expression is apparent in our text.

a person as a localized, isolated unit of experiences, cut off from its objects of experience, is not the cultural norm. Nor is the associated sense, so strong in the post-Cartesian and post-Lockean West, that knowledge is strictly localized within an individual mind forever divided from the objects it knows.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, a sense that the environment itself holds and responds to wisdom is part of Tibetan culture—there are many stories down to this day of streams arising, flowers blooming, or rainbows shimmering because of the presence or actions of certain exalted beings. Knowing and objects known are not utterly independent categories, at least not in the way modernity takes them to be.<sup>9</sup>

Analogously, validation or authentication of the ultimate does not, finally, occur as a relation between a subject and an object, as it does in *Pramāṇa* and *Mādhyamika* literature. This is the mythic-cultural dimension in which traditional readers enter the logic of our text. Taking this a step further in philosophical terms, unbounded wholeness, although accessible only to a special nonconceptual awareness—and thus most definitely not to be confused with the ordinary cultural sensibility of Tibet alluded to above—is everywhere. Inside and outside do not configure or define it. Thus, to put forward a perspective on wholeness, while at the same time valorizing dualistically premised language, logic, and reasoning, is an enormous challenge to which the entire *Authenticity* is a response.

The mythic and poetic spaces in which meaning is simply present, without being established through reasoning or represented through language, is key to *Authenticity's* handling of this challenge. Within this context, readers are invited to be wildly curious about the place of dualistic language and the possibility of authenticity outside or in spite of it.

*Authenticity*, with its syllogistic and poetic voices, can therefore be read as a literary performance of wholeness. This wholeness, moreover, permits the variety, variability, and indefiniteness at the heart of its Dzogchen view. In this sense, it is a text in two registers, with two operative epistemologies and rhetorical strategies. One is a subject's reasoned movement toward knowledge of its object, a narrative well served by syllogistic rhetoric and friendly to the abstract quality of thought. The other is an epistemology of simple presence; its meaning *arrives* (in the manner that Hadot says mythic meaning adroitly arrives) and is present right with scriptural speech, rather than being sought through reasoning.

8. For example, see Taylor 1989: 188–189. Taylor offers the theory of humours as one example of the absence of a clear boundary between psychic and physical in the West. In medieval times, black bile, for example, whether in the body or as the planet Saturn, is melancholia; it is not the cause of melancholia. Subjective mood and objective phenomena are not rigorously divided.

9. They are also not as discrete as Tibetan or Sanskrit texts take them to be—including the works of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti or latter-day Mind and Awareness (*blo rig*) texts, which do indeed define subjects, or consciousnesses, in terms of the kinds of objects they cognize. However, it seems highly probable that this subject-object distinction does not pervade all aspects of cultural experience in ancient Tibet in the way that it does, for example, in the modern West. See Klein 1997.

In short, *Authenticity* invites the reader to follow its reasoning and also pay attention to its poetry. Its many dozens of poetic citations invite a mythic sensibility to commune somehow with the intellectual sensibility to which the work is most explicitly addressed. These two registers, again, are distinct in important ways. The mythic, as we use the term here, is presentation rather than explanation, and it conflates what moderns regard as external and internal. In short, mythical consciousness finds direct access to meaning.<sup>10</sup> Though such immediacy does not characterize the debates that form the bulk of our text, it is vital to their overall direction.<sup>11</sup> And, as we will see, the semantic range of *tshad ma* (*pramāṇa*), the term frequently translated as “valid cognition,” is understood in *Authenticity* to encompass both registers. Mirroring the world itself, our text encompasses both authentication of meaning through reasoned debate *and* the sheer presence of authenticity.

All this suggests, again, that we cannot appreciate the philosophical import of *Authenticity* through its syllogistic logic alone. Nor can we appreciate its received history through facts alone. Mythic elements permeate the philosophical material that is our primary focus and also the narratives that seek to situate our text historically. Both the figure of Samantabhadra and the expansive sweep of Bon history in which *Authenticity* understands itself to exist suggest a concern with placing the self, variously understood, in a larger, more cosmic context than is ordinarily apparent. This, too, has to do with the nature of wholeness as our text understands it. David Levin observes that “the difference between a whole and a totality is an ontological difference which cannot be understood by a reductive or calculating rationality; it can only be understood *aesthetically*, that is to say, in an experience grounded in our sensibility, our capacity for feeling.”<sup>12</sup> In many contexts, the reach toward such wholeness is seen as freeing and fulfilling.<sup>13</sup>

The intended readers of this work were practitioners as well as scholars, and therefore, while nurturing their intellects through studying *Authenticity*, they were at the same time occupied with nurturing something else. Likewise, a deep reading of *Authenticity* is enhanced by sensitivity to both its reasoning and its artful deployment of voice and by remaining alert to the different significance that these two voices have for an exploration of unbounded whole-

10. As Hatab 1990: 32 puts it: “Mythical experience did not hear ‘sounds’ but meanings. Thunder is wrath.” Though his primary reference is to oral culture here, the aura of presence and immediacy remains in the poetic discourse of *Authenticity*.

11. For an interesting set of reflections on the “special relationship” of myth to reason, see Kapstein 2000: 141–144.

12. Levin 1988: 76.

13. I draw here from Arnold Davidson’s introduction to Hadot 1995: 23. Hadot, following Foucault and the Stoics before him, is using the term of art “care of the self,” which we here gloss as a type of nurturing. (“Term of art” is a term with a specialized, even technical import in this context.) For a detailed discussion of the spectrum of meaning related with the term “self” in various ancient Buddhist and contemporary psychological contexts, see Aronson 2004.

ness. Significantly, neither is refused and, in a surprising turn just before the text ends, the two are found to be in a harmony so profound it bespeaks a further opening into the principle of wholeness.

*Authenticity's* style is bold and playful, with intricate reflections that invite paradox, and skirt it, finding its greatest confidence in the expansive arena of undecidability while supporting this indefiniteness with definitive reasonings. To best take its measure, we must recognize the work for what it is: first, a complex philosophical treatise that deploys reasoned argumentation; second, an artful work of literature that makes its meaning through image, metaphor, and multitudinous manipulations of the hidden currents and unintended disclosures that run through all writing.<sup>14</sup>

In organizing this study, we have somewhat artificially divided the unchaptered *Authenticity* into sections; each chapter of Parts I and II of this book coordinates with one such section. We encourage you to read the indicated segment of translation in tandem with its chapter of exposition. This might well be read, at the reader's discretion, either before or after the exposition or both. Each chapter identifies and embellishes central issues and arguments in each segment and show the developing purview of the text. The five chapters in Part I center on the significance of authentic cognition (*tshad-ma*, *pramāṇa*) for Bon Dzogchen and on the features that distinguish it from classic Buddhist materials. The two chapters of Part II, which take the colophon as their point of departure, explore the historical and mythic origins of Bon and the discovery narratives of *Authenticity*. The appendix identifies and contextualizes texts and persons who are significant to *Authenticity's* context and history.

14. For particularly succinct and incisive reflections on this theme, see Barbara Johnson, *The Critical Difference*, 1980, and *A World of Difference*, 1987.

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Acknowledgments

This volume owes its existence, most immediately, to the direct transmission of three generations of Bon eminences and to the deep East-West collaboration that their graciousness made possible. Lopon Sangye Tenzin (d. 1977) was the revered Dzogchen master of both Lopon Tenzin Namdak, now known as Yongdzin Rinpoche, and his foremost student, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Lopon Tenzin Namdak was already, at the young age of 25, the chief scholar-in-residence (Lopon) of Menri Monastic College, the major seat for Bon in Tibet. After coming into exile in 1960, Lopon spent some years in England working with David Snellgrove, then returned to his community to found, with H. H. Menri Khen Rinpoche Lungdog Denpa Nyima, the now flourishing Menri Monastery in Dolanji, near Simla in northern India. The deep learning and extensive meditative experience of these Bon lineage holders profoundly informs this book.

In 1991, I learned by chance that Tenzin Rinpoche was briefly visiting the United States from Europe, where he had been working closely under the auspices of Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Because of my interest in Bon Dzogchen sparked by Chogyal Rinpoche during retreats in Conway, Massachusetts in the 1980s, I invited Tenzin Rinpoche to Rice University. While waiting for his plane to depart at the close of his few days in Houston, he described a most interesting text that uniquely combined Dzogchen perspectives with the elements of logic that I had already written about from the Buddhist side. We quickly agreed to work together on translating and significantly introducing this work to the Western scholarly community and other interested readers. We were able to

work out a proposal for this project during Tenzin Rinpoche's subsequent year as a prestigious Rockefeller Fellow at the Center for Cultural Studies at Rice University.

In 1994–1995, under the auspices of a jointly awarded National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) translation grant, we spent a year working closely together on penultimate drafts of the translation and another year in close communication on continued revisions, with occasional consultation after that as well. As we moved through the text, we often paused for extensive discussions regarding topics that would need to be featured in the introductory chapters of the book. Everything that followed rests on this connection with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and his teachers; I was completely new to Bon studies when this work began.

Supported by these foundational discussions, as well as by ongoing consultation over a period of several years with Tenzin Rinpoche and especially by invaluable tape-recorded discussions with Yongdzin Rinpoche, Lopon Tenzin Namdak, I took up the task, which was part of our joint initial vision for the book, of bringing this rich material into conversation with Western scholarly and cultural modalities through the introductory chapters.

The developing writing was further enriched by conversations with the head of the Bon tradition, Menri Abbot Lungdog Denpa Nyima, and with other scholars closer to Tenzin Rinpoche's generation: Ponlob Thrinley Nyima Rinpoche, Tenzin N. Kyongtrul Rinpoche, Khenpo Denpa Yungdrung, and, at a wonderful dinner hosted by Barbara Heinz in Leiden, Lama Kamsar, who also made time for conversation when he was in Houston. Geshe Samten Tshugphu of Triten Norbutse worked most carefully with Tenzin Rinpoche to gather citations.

As the writing progressed, other Western-trained scholars provided crucial support through reading sections of this manuscript. Above all, Tom Tillemans gave extensive commentary and encouragement for developing thematic contrasts and connections with classic Indian logic; Dan Martin made numerous vitally helpful suggestions for the chapters on history, on which Samten Karmay also expertly commented. Regarding certain points of comparison with Buddhist Dzogchen, Venerable Tulku Thondup graciously answered many questions.

In 1995 I received a summer grant from NEH and in 1999 was a Fetzer fellow of the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society; both of these provided support and learning experiences that contributed to this project.

Conversations with Georges Dreyfus, David Germano, Janet Gyatso, Matthew Kapstein, and Jake Dalton in the course of Ford- and Amherst-funded working conferences on ancient Tibetan materials were very helpful at a formative stage of shaping the material. In addition, my final two years of work on the introductory chapters were conducted partly under the auspices of a Ford Foundation Grant in support of dialogue between ancient and modern voices.

At a later stage, also thanks to Ford support, Jill Carroll made crucial suggestions for streamlining the manuscript. In the final stages of writing, two outstanding readers for Oxford, one anonymous and the other self-disclosed as Matthew Kapstein, provided vital and highly discerning suggestions for improvement. Helpful insights were also offered by Henk Blezer; some important translation terms were arrived at through comments from Steven Goodman.

Thanks to Ford's generosity and that of Fondren Library at Rice University, Greg Hillis was able, in tandem with the Himalayan Digital project headed by David Germano at the University of Virginia, to produce a digital version of the Tibetan text of *Authenticity* which is available to readers on line, thanks to the hard work of Than Garson and the entire digital team there.

Ford also made possible other important supportive work for this project: the translation was checked against the Tibetan by the vetting of another Western scholar and translator of Dzogchen, John Pettit. And, in the very final stages, David Gray, a rising scholar in his own right, gave important editorial feedback on both the philosophical and historical sections and prepared the Tibetan-Sanskrit-English glossaries. Karin Meyers provided extensive, crucial, and precise help in the final copy-editing phases. Brian Nichols gave a close final proofing.

An initial copy-edit of a mid-level draft by the renowned editor Margaret Case paved the way for extensive copyediting and formatting of the final manuscript by the hardworking and good-humored Catherine Howard, then editor for humanities scholars at Rice University. Over the course of several seminars which used late-stage copies of the manuscript, graduate students Brian Nichols, JianYing Shih, and Quiyue Wang creatively engaged the text in ways that furthered its progress. Very special thanks to Mary Ellen McCourt for her expert help with preparing the digital photographs used here.

We, the authors, give our combined thanks to each other and everyone in the background of this book; at the same time, we each have personal narratives of gratitude that we also acknowledge here.

I acknowledge the intelligence and graciousness of friends who sometimes discussed these matters and sometimes didn't. Among many sustaining friends who touched me and this work in some way, I acknowledge José Cabezón, Gail Gross, Michael Fischer, Jeffrey Hopkins, Sharon Jackson, Annette Jones, Jeff Kripal, Jules Levinson, Ronli Liaw, Elizabeth Long, Michele Martin, Niko Mayer, Kathryn Milun, Elizabeth Napper, Gene Smith, Bill Parsons, and Phyllis Pay, as well as the Dawn Mountain and Ligmincha communities, the Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, and the continuing inspiration of my first Buddhist teachers, Gyume Kensur Ngawang Lekden and Bakshi Geshe Wangyal, both of Gomang College, Drepung.



This writing also draws, often indirectly, on decades of study and practice with Buddhist Dozgchen masters. Since 1974 I have had the privilege of learning from Khetsun Sangpo Rinpoche of Nepal, and since Sagadawa of 1996, I have had a richly unfolding connection with Adzom Rinpoche of Sichuan. Augmenting these, in 1980, at the suggestion of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, whose encouragement to study Dzogchen still inspires me, I spent a magical month with the late Ga Rinpoche of Kinooor; there were also several years in the early 1980s of inspiring instruction from the late Lama Gampo Tsyden of Amdo, then living in California, and since that time as well numerous retreat periods with Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, who has also been instrumental in many other ways. And to the extent that this work is an investigation of authenticity, it was made possible because of the gracious teaching of many Geluk scholars with whom in the 1970s and 1980s I read works related to *tshad ma* and *grub mtha'*, especially Ganden Kensur Lati Rinpoche, Loling Kensur Yeshey Tupden, Loling eminence Denma Locho Rinpoche, and Jeffrey Hopkins, who was himself trained by Geshe Wangyal, and who invited these outstanding scholars, the best of their generation, to the University of Virginia. My parents, Ludovic and Isabelle L. Klein, who both passed on during the writing of this book, supported me in all these studies. My heartfelt thanks to all of you and, most particularly on this occasion, to Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Lopon Tenzin Namdak who introduced me to the *Authenticity* and much else, always with thoroughgoing explanations given with unfailing rigor, kindness, and wholeness.

And I deeply thank Constance H. Buchanan of the Ford Foundation, whose radiant mind and inspiring presence sheds light on everything one is, thinks, or cares about. And flowers of thanks to my lifelong delight, intellectually and every other way, Harvey Aronson, who offered good commentary and outstanding company while doing his best to protect me from making this project ever more complicated.

—Anne Carolyn Klein

I thank my mother and father. I owe all my existence to them and as I grow older I feel increasing gratitude to them. It was the direction of my mother Yeshe Hlamo and stepfather Yungdrung Namgyal that led me to the monastery. The connection to all my great teachers came through them.

And my thanks to my teachers—His Holiness Yongdzin Sangey Tenzin, who introduced me to Dzogchen when I was quite young,

and his own student, Lopon Tenzin Namdak, who raised me from the age of eleven and furthered my learning through tireless teaching and conversation during my entire training at the monastery, and whose own lively inquiry inspired my interest in the *Gal mDo*. And my thanks include also Geshe Tshondru Kongpel, a rare scholar who earned two Geshe degrees, one in the Geluk tradition through his studies at Drepung, and the other in the Bon tradition through his studies at Yungdrung Ling.

I thank Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche who came to Dolanji to visit Lopon Tenzin Namdak when I was a teenager. I was very inspired that this great master and scholar of Buddhism had also the openness to connect with Bon teachings. In addition, it was he who first invited me to the West. His inspiration and direction has affected, opened, and inspired all of my dharma teaching in the West.

I thank Anne Klein, the primary reason for my coming to the United States, for the very warm welcome she gave me and for all her support at that time, and for the equally warm welcome I received from Houston, especially the kindness of Mary Rollins, the Menil Foundation, and Rice University, particularly the Center for Cultural Studies then headed by Michael Fischer.

It is not possible to mention all the names of my many dedicated students who helped from the beginning with the establishment of my work, both the academic and the teaching of dharma. Everyone who helped me begin this work, who are presently sustaining it, and who are helping me toward the future have my deepest thanks.

—Tenzin Wangyal

During the years of writing this book, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche founded the now hugely successful Ligmincha Institute, based in Charlottesville, Virginia, with students and related centers around the world, and I founded Dawn Mountain, a Tibetan temple, community center, and research institute in Houston, Texas, with a growing reach in the United States and abroad. Reminded of Vairocana's comment that Bon and Buddhism are like the sun and moon, these two centers work to bring these traditions into living contact with Western scholars and practitioners. May this work, as well as our deep personal and spiritual friendship, augur a healing in the bright tapestry of Tibetan religious culture that this generation bestows on the next.

Full Moon Day  
November 25, 2004

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Technical Note

To make this work accessible to both specialist and general reader, we have rendered Tibetan names phonetically in a way that resembles the pronunciation of the Central Tibetan dialect to the degree possible without resorting to the use of umlauts or other diacritical marks that might be distracting to the reader. In doing so, we have favored ease of pronunciation over rigid systematization. Since the specialist will be familiar with Tibetan pronunciation and its regional variation and the general reader will be forgiven if her approximation of a Tibetan name or term is not perfect, we will not dwell on the minutiae of pronunciation here, other than to mention: before certain consonants (d, l, n, s) the Tibetan vowels *o* and *u* are pronounced like the German *ö* and *ü*, such that Bon is pronounced *Bön*. The letter *h* is used to mark an aspirated consonant, such that *ph* is not pronounced as *f* in “father,” but as *p* in “panther;” *kh* and *th* are likewise aspirated consonants and pronounced like “kaput” and “Thomas,” respectively.

When this work cites contemporary Tibetan scholars who have adopted their own conventions for rendering their names in English, we follow their already established usage. So that the specialist may orient herself in this work, the first appearance of each Tibetan name is followed by the standard Tibetan transcription developed by Turrell Wylie. Readers will find phonetic and Wylie spellings of Tibetan for select texts cross-listed in the Index and for all titles in the Bibliography (See the Technical Note for the Bibliography).

Titles of Tibetan works have been translated into English, followed by the Wylie transcription of the Tibetan at the first mention.

For ease of reading, some of the text names have been abbreviated. In all cases the reader may consult the Index for a cross-listing of the Tibetan, English translation and abbreviation. There are a number of texts cited in *Authenticity* which are unknown to contemporary scholars. To facilitate future scholarship on Bon Dzogchen, a list of these texts can be found at the end of the Appendix.

Tibetan and Sanskrit technical terms have been translated when possible, but have been left in the original language when the meaning of the term itself is at stake. In these cases, as in the parenthetical citations, the terms are italicized. Well known Sanskrit and Tibetan terms that have been adopted into English are rendered without diacritical marks (ex. *sūtra* appears as *sutra*) or by phonetic convention (ex. *rDzogs chen* as Dzogchen). Reconstructions of Sanskrit words from the Tibetan are marked with an asterisk.

The root letters of Tibetan proper names are capitalized as is the first word in the title of a Tibetan text. Text titles and technical terms in both Tibetan and Sanskrit are rendered in italics. References to section numbers of *Authenticity* are given in braces {}.

# Contents

Introduction, 3

## PART I Core Philosophical Issues

1. Authentication and Authenticity, 25  
*Authenticity* 47.1–53.6
2. Unbounded Wholeness: Multiplicity and Indefiniteness, 53  
*Authenticity* 53.6–66.6
3. Primordial Nondelusion: Artful Endeavor and Spontaneity, 87  
*Authenticity* 66.6–86.3
4. The Path of Continuity: Spontaneity and Dependent Arising, 119  
*Authenticity* 86.3–104.2
5. Samantabhadra and Scripture: Reasoning Resolved, 137  
*Authenticity* 104.3–126.1

## PART II Mythic and Historical Narratives of Discovery

6. Colophon Kaleidoscope: Bon's Matrix of Authenticity, 169  
*Authenticity* 126.1–129.2
7. Lishu Daring and a Tangle of Terma Tales, 201  
*Authenticity* 126.2–129.1

PART III The Text in Translation

*The Authenticity of Open Awareness: A Collection of the Essential Reasonings* 223

Appendix

*Authenticity: Background Texts, Locus, and Chronology*, 311

Texts Cited in *Authenticity*, 333

Glossaries, 337

Bibliography, 363

Index, 381

Photo gallery appears after page 166

# Unbounded Wholeness





View from the cave in Central Tibet of Lishu Daring (Li shu sTag ring), author of *Authenticity*. It is known as the “Luminous Peak Crystal Cliff Stronghold” (Shel gyi brag dkar rtse rdzong).

*Photograph by Alejandro Chaoul-Reich*

# Introduction

Through teaching essential precepts, your mind is known.  
Like seeing your face when a mirror is shown,  
To know that is to know the Dimension of Bon

—*The Blissful Manner of Essential Precepts on  
Stabilization (bSam gtan man ngag bde ba'i  
ngang)* (53.3)

Dzogchen, or the Great Completeness, is well known as the most revered system of thought and practice among the ancient Buddhist and Bon traditions of Tibet. In these traditions, mindnature (*sems nyid*) is at once the goal of practice and its starting point. Being wholly uncontrived, mindnature neither improves on enlightenment nor becomes flawed in samsara. Always present in all beings, it is the abiding condition (*gnas lugs*) of every mind. Enlightenment is simply the full manifestation (*mngon du gyur pa*, *abhimukhī*) and experience (*nyams myong*, *anubhava*) of this abiding condition.

What is the student shown? Where is the mirror? The ultimate mirror is this natural, abiding condition itself, otherwise described as an unbounded wholeness (*thig le nyag gcig*). The principle of wholeness governs all of *Authenticity*'s philosophical, soteriological, epistemological, and literary concerns. This is what the practitioner is shown and seeks to recognize. Wholeness defines liberation and determines the strategies, or lack thereof, that most facilitate it; wholeness also characterizes the awareness that recognizes wholeness as itself. Since wholeness does not, like logic, bifurcate the known universe into *is* and *is not* or any variation thereof, *Authentic-*

ity must deploy logic in a manner that somehow allows for this allogical perspective.<sup>1</sup>

*Authenticity's* logic breaks the mold of what students of Buddhist syllogistic logic or tenet systems might expect. It does not, like later Tibetan tomes of debate, configure itself into neat categories, nor does it stop to define its terms. In these ways its organization is unlike either of the two well-known areas of Tibetan discourse with which we juxtapose it here, Madhyamaka and Pramāṇa. These latter systems are structured around the principle of two truths, ultimate and conventional. Dzogchen, by contrast, privileges a single, central principle, often referred to as unbounded wholeness.

The question of authenticity, of taking valid measure (*tshad ma*, *pramāṇa*), has of course long been central to Buddhist reflection. Buddhist discussions of these matters inevitably trace themselves back to the groundbreaking work of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, names and works the *Authenticity* never even mentions. Most literally, the Sanskrit term *pramāṇa* and its Tibetan translation, *tshad ma* mean “measure.” For a subject to take the correct measure of its object means that such a knower is valid with respect to what it knows. It is *tshad ma*. However, Bon and Buddhist Dzogchen texts that, like *Authenticity*, take an interest in the relationship between open awareness and delusion typically do not use the term *tshad ma* at all. And *Authenticity* shares with these texts the perspective that open awareness is not to be understood as a subject which takes proper measure of its object. To be *tshad ma* in the Dzogchen sense is not a statement about the relationship of a subject to its object. Open awareness is authentically present to reality, which is no different from itself. This is unbounded wholeness.

Thus, whereas the Dharmakīrti tradition or Pramāṇa literature by and large inscribes validity onto the grid of subject and object, the open awareness at the center of our inquiry here is not, according to an important interpretation we will feature here, a mind at all. It is an objectless subject, nonconceptual and nondual, that, according to some Dzogchen masters, is not even a consciousness. In this and other ways, the purpose and flavor of *Authenticity's* discussion differs considerably from many (though not all) mainstream interpretations on the work of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti.<sup>2</sup>

In order to clarify this central distinction, *pramāṇa* and *tshad ma* are here translated as “valid” or “valid knower” in the context of the Dignāga-Dharmakīrti literature of India and Tibet, and as “authenticity” or “authentic

1. *Blissful Manner*, like most of the sources cited in *Authenticity*, is apparently no longer extant. Of the 121 works cited, 119 are not mentioned in any catalogue we know of, and Lopon Tenzin Namdak, whose knowledge of Bon Dzogchen literature is encyclopedic, has not seen them. (See Appendix B for a list of the texts quoted in *Authenticity*.)

2. For a concise summary of Dharmakīrti's basic positions, see Dreyfus 1997: 15–22, 60–72.

knower” in the context of Dzogchen. Buddhist Dzogchen texts that, like *Authenticity*, take an interest in the relationship between open awareness and delusion do not, like *Authenticity*, use the language of measure, or *pramāṇa*. Thus, whereas the Dignāga Dharmakīrti tradition by and large discusses authenticity in terms of subject and object, open awareness cannot be approached in those terms. In this and other ways, the purpose and flavor of *Authenticity*’s discussion differs considerably from many (though not all) mainstream interpretations on the work of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti.

## Mindnature and Unbounded Wholeness

*Authenticity* raises religious, philosophical, and pedagogical issues in its exploration of unbounded wholeness. How is it possible to look in the mirror? How does one become introduced to one’s own face? How is that introduction authenticated? How does a system that does not find conceptual thought to be an authenticator of its path understand and implement logic?<sup>3</sup> And what place does language, particularly the syllogistic language of *Authenticity*’s debates, have in this process? In short, what are the significant theses of this work, who studies it, and why?

Unlike Buddhist literature dealing with these issues, *Authenticity* does not organize itself into a series of important topics associated with valid cognition, nor does it constellate its debates around definitions of key terms as does, for example, the Mind and Awareness (*bLo rig*) genre which, along with Collected Topics (*bsDus grwa*) materials, is how the issue of valid or authenticating knowledge is often studied in Buddhist Tibet.

Thus despite being largely in debate format, *Authenticity* does not, like the famous Collected Topics (*bsDus grwa*) genre,<sup>4</sup> put forward formal definitions of *tshad ma* (*pramāṇa*) or any other terms central to its discussion. Moreover, unlike these works, *Authenticity* cites only poetic scriptural passages in support of its position. It never quotes Bon (much less Buddhist) studies of *tshad ma* (*pramāṇa*), or any other Bon philosophical literature such as *Stages of the Vehicles* (*Theg pa’i rim pa mngon du bshad pa’i mdo rgyud*), even though this latter is considered an important background text of *Authenticity*.<sup>5</sup> All this suggests that, whatever the history of our text’s development, the question of authen-

3. It is this self-consciousness, as well as implementation of the rhetoric of *tshad ma*, that distinguishes this work’s use of syllogism from the syllogism-like reflection-and-response that characterizes some of the early Buddhist Tantras. It may be, however, that these have a common matrix with a work that also sources *Authenticity*.

4. For further background on this genre, see Onada 1996: 187–201.

5. This may be because the *Stages of the Vehicle* and its *Commentary* were written after *Authenticity*, though Bon tradition considers them to have been written before it. (See Appendix A for a discussion of the relation of these texts to *Authenticity*.)

tication in *Authenticity* became quite unmoored from the Indic discourse in which *pramāṇa* is most famously situated.

*Authenticity* vigorously puts forward well-known principles of authentication (*tshad ma, pramāṇa*): for example, that seeing smoke validly establishes the presence of fire. Classic Madhyamaka, especially in its Geluk interpretations,<sup>6</sup> similarly finds inferential understanding to be a valid or authentic knower of that system's ultimate truth, emptiness. Words and concepts are a valid way of establishing one's view (*lta ba grub*) but cannot provide authentic realization of it (*lta ba rtogs*).<sup>7</sup> Forever locked into the dualism of subject-object terminology, conceptual reasoning cannot realize the Dzogchen view. Yet, the text's emphasis on reasoning valorizes conceptuality as a way of coming to grips with issues raised by the category of unbounded wholeness. Though neither inference nor direct authentication is explicitly in service of the other, they are tandem processes and, to a degree, complementary. The category of valid inference (*rjes dpag tshad ma, anumāna-pramāṇa*) so vital in, for example, Geluk discussions, does not exist here, for though it can establish the view, it cannot realize it.

The epistemological narrative that unfolds in *Authenticity* is predicated on a crucial distinction between the processes of authentication and the state of authenticity. The view established through reasoning is not the authentic state of open awareness. That state must be described in ontological as well as epistemological terms; hence the conflation, experientially and philosophically, of unbounded wholeness with open awareness. Unbounded wholeness is how and what reality is. In that sense it is an ontological term. Open awareness, fully present to that state of wholeness, is the knowing of it. It is an epistemological unity; open awareness experiencing itself as unbounded wholeness. Establishing the view is not a method for realizing the view. This significantly

6. Unless otherwise indicated, when we speak of Madhyamaka here, we have in mind Geluk interpretations of it; these are invoked not only because they are familiar to many scholars but also because they offer the clearest contrast to the material at hand. But this is not the only view that could be put in conversation with *Authenticity*. For example, Geluk interpreters emphasize that the ultimate, emptiness, is understood by an inferential valid cognition that negates true existence and recognizes emptiness as the absence of such, a mere negation. In Dzogchen, as we shall see, the ultimate is most certainly not a mere negation. Gorampa Sonam Senge in *Distinguishing the Views* (*lta ba shan 'byed*) takes issue with this Geluk position for his own reasons, noting that to call emptiness a mere negation and to be unwilling to negate the explicit attraction (*mngon par zhen pa*) of emptiness are not actually views of the Middle Way (Gorampa, 1988: 41). In this way, too, Gorampa is distancing himself from the kind of acceptance of conceptual "adherence" that the Geluk seem to valorize so strongly. Somewhat analogously, *Authenticity* will emphasize that any trace of adherence (*zhen*) will impede authentic open awareness. Likewise, despite their differences, both Gorampa and Lishu Daring would agree that merely to understand the lack of inherent existence is not sufficient to understand the ultimate. (I am grateful to have consulted José Cabezon's forthcoming translation of Gorampa's text.)

7. The difference between establishing the view (*lta ba grub*) and realizing it (*lta ba rtogs*) can be usefully compared with Hadot's distinction between philosophy and philosophical discourse in Plato's definition of philosophy (*Phaedo*, 67 e–d) as a training for death. He writes: "The theoretical philosophical discourse is completely different from the lived exercises by which the soul purifies itself of its passions and spiritually separates itself from the body" (1993: 34). See also Hadot's distinction between real and notional assent (1995: 277).

distinguishes the Dzogchen presentation from, for example, Geluk's Mādhyamika interpretations of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, where conceptual knowledge of the view is indeed an important step toward realization of it. In *Authenticity*, however, once the view is realized, the distinction between authentication and authenticity dissolves. This, most fundamentally, is the semantic, epistemological, and performative journey of the text.

Conceptual knowledge does not lead to realization, but realization, once attained, is not alienated from it, either. The latter's value lies with allowing cultural and textual storage of the Dzogchen literature, thereby facilitating the social, institutional, and political spaces in which realization can be pursued and, more rarely, can occur.

Therefore, *Authenticity* never applies the term *tshad ma* to an inferential understanding of its ultimate, wholeness. Open awareness cannot validly or authentically be known conceptually.<sup>8</sup> In fact, this is the first helpful clue about what open awareness, or the unbounded wholeness it recognizes as itself, might be. Far from taking an anti-intellectual position, however, this observation spurs the opening reflections on how the category of *tshad ma* intersects with that of authentic open awareness. What, then, does it mean to be authentic? In our text, *tshad ma* is a category that in the final analysis excludes conceptual consciousness. This dramatically contrasts with at least one dominant way of interpreting Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, where inferential knowers are valid, authenticating cognitions. In *Authenticity*, and in Dzogchen more generally, inference is never authentic in relation to the ultimate. Some important interpretations of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti (notably the work of Prajñākaragupta) are more in agreement with Dzogchen and, for that reason, are less useful to us in understanding *Authenticity*'s particular deployment of the term.<sup>9</sup>

8. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Tritten Norbutse, to Klein, Kathmandu, August 1997, oral commentary.

9. The position featured here and contrasted with *Authenticity* is largely the view of Devendrabuddhi, Śākyabuddhi, and Manorathanandin in India and of Geluk interpreters in Tibet. By contrast, Prajñākaragupta (also known as rGyan mkhan po), takes the only ultimate *pramāṇa* to be *svasaṃvedana*. (See Prajñākaragupta 1953: 25.24f., 30.20f.) These verses lead Takashi Iwata to point out that for Prajñākaragupta “the illumination of an unapprehended object” means the illumination of supreme reality which is not yet apprehended by conventional knowledge” (“Prajñākaragupta's Proof of the Buddha's Authority,” p. 4, Iwata 2004.) This is an important difference, I think, because for Dzogchen there is no question of mindnature (*sems nyid*) “illuminating” supreme reality; mind nature itself is that reality. However, for Prajñākaragupta, as for the entirety of the Dignāga/Dharmakīrti tradition, *svasaṃvedanā* remains a consciousness, and implicitly an ingredient in a subject-object paradigm, even when, as in the case of Prajñākaragupta, *svasaṃvedana* is the sole authority with respect to the ultimate.

This matter is also related to the question of the role of a thesis statement in gaining proper inference. See Tillemans 1999: 69–87. Whereas Dignāga in *PS* III.krcd denies that a thesis statement has the power to prove anything, he does apparently find it to be present in an ultimate inference, a *paramārthānumāna*. Dharmakīrti disagrees with this, saying that the thesis statement is *not* appropriately part of the *paramārthānumāna*. Prajñākaragupta diffuses this by stating that a thesis such as “sound is impermanent” need not be presented, since the proof (*sādhya*) is established by the claims of pervasion alone: “Whatever is produced is impermanent.”

## Logic and the Nonconceptual

*Authenticity* thus offers a system of logic without framing such logic as a process of authentication. Its overall point that unbounded wholeness and open awareness are not apprehensible by reasoning is widely accepted across both Bon and Buddhist Dzogchen traditions, but in no other instance that we know of is this claim formulated by Dzogchen with the language of *tshad ma* or *pramāṇa*.<sup>10</sup>

Paṇḍita students, discussed below, work closely with the philosophical texts of their traditions and study Dzogchen in the context of the Nine Vehicles; Kusuli students, who focus on meditation and read less widely, do not. In this sense Paṇḍita students are more advanced in terms of the Dzogchen view and tenets in general; they accompany their Dzogchen meditation practice with formal debate and rigorous study of a cluster of texts associated with *Authenticity*, including *Magical Space Treasure: Great Commentary on the Oral Transmission of Great Completeness* (*Dzogs pa chen po snyan rgyud rin po che nam mkha' 'phrul mdzod*) by Dranpa Namkha (Dran pa Nam mkha'), itself a commentary on *Clearing Extremes from the Primordial Mind* (*Ye khri mtha' gsal*). (Both these texts are discussed in Appendix A.) Also relevant to this style of training are early texts on the Nine Vehicles (*Theg rim/Theg 'grel*), works that are also considered background material to *Authenticity*.<sup>11</sup>

*Authenticity's* debates aim to establish that open awareness (*rig pa*) is uniquely authentic (*tshad ma*), for it alone is fully aware of its own nature as unbounded wholeness. Its authenticity, we will finally be told, is an authenticity innate to reality—not, as with inference, an authentication of such reality. *Authenticity's* use and understanding of the term are thus distinguished from conventional Buddhist sutra understandings of it, just as the open awareness under discussion also differs from the self-knowers (*rang rig*) described in the classic literature on authenticity and authentication.<sup>12</sup> Unlike them, open awareness knows itself as reality. It knows this authentically. *Authenticity* is clearly in conversation with some of the materials available to the Buddhists,<sup>13</sup>

---

*Authenticity* never engages in quite this level of reflection on the components of its syllogistic statements though it does, as we shall see, give some attention to the genres of reasoning involved.

10. Indeed, the only other Dzogchen work we know of that even discusses *mtshad ma* (*pramāṇa*) explicitly is the work identified as its root text, the *Authenticity of Essential Precepts and Scripture* (*Man ngag lung gi tshad ma*), to which we shall refer.

11. According to Lopon Tenzin Namdak, oral commentary, on numerous occasions.

12. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Kathmandu, February 1999, oral commentary. According to Lopon, this conflation of different meanings of *tshad ma* contributed to Tsongkhapa's (Tsong Kha pa) criticism of Dzogchen, though there are others who deny that he did criticize it. This is a topic ripe for future research.

13. Tillemans 1999c: 117. The style of discourse is very much like the Buddhist debate format, with Chaba Chokyi Senge (Phya pa Cho kyi Seng ge, 1190–1169) being a significant contributor to this development. [Dreyfus

although the specific nature of Bon and Buddhist interaction on these matters remains frustratingly speculative at our present state of knowledge.<sup>14</sup> This text, then, is situated on an invisible margin that divides it from and connects it with its Buddhist and therefore Indian counterparts. Because much of its terminology is also found in Buddhist literature—despite the fact that it may here carry a number of variant meanings—we supply, where applicable, Sanskrit as well as Tibetan vocabulary. This does not, of course, mean that the Bon saw themselves as moving from Sanskrit to Tibetan (see chapters 6 and 7), only that these terms provide a relevant mapping for persons familiar with them.

*Authenticity's* approach to logic differs from classic Buddhist approaches even while it resonates deeply with them. Indeed, only its use of the term *tshad ma* (*pramāṇa*), its syllogistic style of reasoning, and the kinds of questions it asks tie this material to the Indian logicians at all. Still, the differences have less to do with the form of logic invoked—though there are some distinctive features here—than with the epistemological arena in which its syllogistic dances are performed. Many Dignāga- and Dharmakīrti-based Buddhist epistemologies include both conceptual and nonconceptual examples of valid and validating cognition, but in *Authenticity* only open awareness is fully authentic.<sup>15</sup> Thus, unlike in the Mind and Awareness (*blo rig*) materials so central to Buddhist monastic scholarship on valid cognition, inference here is not considered authentic or authenticating.

Nor does *Authenticity* make its arguments in a manner familiar to readers of Tibetan works on valid or authenticating cognition. It never mentions what those familiar with literature based largely on Dignāga and Dharmakīrti would call the core problem of universals (*spyi, sāmānya*). For Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, impermanent and permanent are inviolably distinct categories. Phenomena represented to thought are impermanent and specific, though their representations are permanent and generic.<sup>16</sup> None of this, so fundamental to the epistemological issues of *pramāṇa* literature, is discussed in *Authenticity*. Indeed, the terms “specifically characterized phenomenon” (*rang mtshan, svalak-*

1997:22, however, gives Chaba's dates as 1182–1251]. In any case, debate itself was present from the earliest days of Buddhism, with King Trisong Detsen (Khri srong lDe bstan, 742 to c.797) himself taking an interest. The famous debates associated with Samye are evidence of this, as is Trisong Detsen's interest in the matter. From the time of Ngok Lotsāwa Loden Sherab (rNgog Lotsāba bLo ldan Shes rab, 1059–1109) on, there is interest and some practice as well. The late eleventh-century “old logic” of figures like Khyungpo Drakse (Khyung po Gragsse)—who is mocked for his obsession with debate by Zurchung—is further evidence. (Thanks to Matthew Kapstein, personal communication, on these latter points.)

14. The further development of the Samantabhadra project headed by Prof. David Germano, involving the computer input and analysis of early Nyingma and its affiliate Bonpo text project, housed at Rice University (available at <http://antioch.rice.edu/digproj/bonpo>) will greatly aid our research here.

15. “Inference” in *Authenticity* does not always refer to a type of cognizing mind. The term “inference” is also used to indicate a method for establishing a point under discussion. See, for example, 54.2–55.4.

16. For Geluk formulation of Sautrāntika presentation of this issue, see Klein 1986: 33–67.



ṣaṇa), “generally characterized phenomenon” (*spyi mtshan*, *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*), and “generalized phenomenon” (*don spyi*)<sup>17</sup> so central to much of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist epistemology never appear at all.

In addition, *Authenticity* never takes up that most crucial Buddhist doctrine of exclusion (*sel ba*, *apoha*), the cornerstone of philosophical analysis of how thought and words figure in our ability to reflect on objects not present to direct perception. All this suggests a considerable rhetorical distance from Buddhist reflections on issues of authentication.<sup>18</sup> In short, the question of how conceptual thought, which necessarily operates by way of general impressions, can validly perceive specific objects is never considered. In other words, *Authenticity* wholly ignores what Tom Tillemans calls the problem of “how fictional pseudo-entities can nonetheless lead us to knowledge about the real world.”<sup>19</sup>

Yet the text is in no way defensive or even self-conscious about the distance of its own categories and concerns from the prestigious discourse of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. It is simply not in any explicit conversation with these elements of Indian logic or epistemological categories that figure prominently in Indian-based epistemological literature. Most likely these were simply outside its currents of discourse for any number of reasons—chronological, geographical, or political.

We know that by the time *Authenticity* was discovered, Tibetan Buddhism was becoming more philosophically and epistemologically oriented under the influence of Ngok Lotsāwa Loden Sherab (rNgog Lotsāba bLo ldan Shes rab, 1059–1109).<sup>20</sup> Ngok’s tradition centered around the monastery established in 1073 in Sangpu by his uncle Ngok Lekbe Sherab (rNgog Legs pa’i Shes rab)<sup>21</sup>

17. See Kapstein’s and Dreyfus’s comments on earlier translations of this term by several scholars (including Klein) as “generic image.” Dreyfus (1997: 252–253) notes that, in the context especially of Geluk (and other Tibetan) commentaries on Dignāga, it would be misleading to understand this term as suggesting that the inference in question apprehends *only* an internal image and does not get at the actual object. (For extended discussion of the importance in Geluk of recognizing that thought *does* get at actual objects issue, see Klein 1986.) Dreyfus discusses the reasons for his own translation of the term as object-universal (107–108). Kapstein (2001: 328, 402, for example) translates such phenomena as “general objectives.” Our own view is not that the phrase “generic image” necessarily eliminates the connection to actual objects but that the term “image” undermines the richness of this concept in crossing sensory fields—it is not limited to the visual spectrum. The other difficulty, which no translation really circumvents, is the light tethering between subject and object that the term suggests.

18. It may just possibly suggest temporal distance as well. See n. 26 below. “Sa-skya Paṇḍita Kun-dga’ rgyal-mtshan and the Tshad-ma rigs-pa’i gter,” chapter 3 in van der Kuip 1983: 97ff.

19. Tillemans 1999b: 209.

20. The followers of the great early translator Ngok did not emphasize “pseudo-entities” either—largely, as Leonard van der Kuip has observed (1983:100), because they were focused on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* and Chaba’s *Grub don bsdu ba* (*Summary of Established Meaning*) which themselves do not emphasize this topic. Its absence in *Authenticity* is possibly an indication that its author either wrote before Sakya Paṇḍita made this a major topic of discourse or was geographically distant from centers of learning where it was featured. See van der Kuip 1983: 97–98. If, as Bon traditions claim, *Authenticity* was actually written in the eighth century, this would explain its lack of self-consciousness about Buddhist rationalistic hegemony. The background of these claims is discussed in chapter 6. For more on Sangpu (gSang phu), see Onoda 1992: 13–15 and 1989: 203–13.

21. Dreyfus 1997: 22.

in southern Tibet, and if *Authenticity* was written later than is traditionally claimed, it may well have been part of the general groundswell of interest in philosophical debate there.<sup>22</sup>

## Pedagogy: Religious Context of the Text

Bon Dzogchen has two traditions of training.<sup>23</sup> First, and most widespread, is that of the retreatant or hermit (*ri khrod pa'i lugs tshul*), also known as the Kusuli system,<sup>24</sup> “the system of yogis who practice the meaning” (*Ku su lu'i 'dzo*<sup>25</sup> *ki don nyams su len pa'i lugs tshul*). Second, and less widely practiced, is the Paṇḍita system for “learned” persons who take pleasure in elaboration (*gang zag spros pa la dga' ba mkhas pa paṇḍita'i lugs tshul*).

Kusuli students, after completing foundational practices (*sngon 'gro*)<sup>26</sup> such as those of the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* (*Zhang zhung snyan rgyud*), use simple methods to examine whether thoughts have color, shape, or location, whereas the Paṇḍita practitioners use reasoning and logic in this investigation.

At the appropriate point in their training, Kusuli students receive an introduction to mindnature. They rely solely on this identification and on a few general texts that discuss, in a relatively simple manner, the mind's abiding condition. On the basis of these, they cultivate familiarity and stability with their mindnature and develop experience of the special calm state (*thun mong ma yin pa'i zhi gnas*) associated with the main Dzogchen practices of Setting Free (*khregs chod*) and Soaring On (*thod rgal*).

Kusuli students also learn to recognize the difficulties that laxity, distraction, and dullness (*bying ba*, *rgod pa*, *rmugs pa*) present for the meditator and train to deflect these. Although they are said to realize the same ultimate nature as Paṇḍita practitioners, they do not have a full conceptual understanding of the Dzogchen view or of the reasoning that underlies it. Lopon Tenzin Namdak notes:

Kusuli students do not study detailed texts in their entirety. They are not concerned with cultural preservation, studying tenet systems, de-

22. This too would suggest a connection with the followers of Ngok (see note 20 above). For more on Ngok, see Appendix A.

23. The descriptions that follow are taken from discussions with Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Kathmandu, August 1997.

24. As David Ruegg observes, Sakya Paṇḍita makes an analogy between what he terms the *ku sā li pa* and the practice of analytical meditation in *Sage Intention Clarified* (*Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*) (vol. tsa/14ff. 15b–16a; 21f. 7a–b) (Ruegg 1989: 106).

25. 'dzo = yogi; Thanks to Dan Martin, personal communication, for pointing this out.

26. *Sngon 'gro* are often referred to as “preliminary” practices. Although this translation is literally correct, it is extremely misleading, since the practices in this category are retained throughout one's life as a basis for all other practice. They are not “preliminary” in the sense of being discarded for “higher” practices.

bating, or responding to, attacks on their view. They are directed to essential portions of the text, and once they receive their introduction are satisfied to practice on that basis, meditating for four one-and-a-half-hour sessions daily.<sup>27</sup>

Paṇḍita trainees, like the Kusuli, seek first to recognize their abiding condition and then to cultivate this recognition. To gain clarity on this issue, senior students study the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* and works such as *Clearing Extremes from the Primordial Mind*, *Three Revealed Cycles* (*bsGrags pa skor gsum*), and *Nine Hidden Cycles of Enlightenment* (*Byang chub sems gab pa dgu skor*).

A further purpose of Paṇḍita study is to prepare students to make proper retorts to those who would question the value of Dzogchen practice. When practitioners cannot respond to such criticism, says *Clearing Extremes* (812.3), it is as if their tongues have been cut off. Likewise, *Three Revealed Cycles* makes it clear that the Paṇḍita style of study and practice is crucial for maintaining the lineage. This would undeniably have been of concern during the Bon persecution (further documented in chapter 6) contemporaneous with King Trisong Detsen (Khri strong lDe bstan, 742–c.797), the period when, according to Bon tradition, the *Authenticity* was written.

*Authenticity* is of central importance in the Paṇḍita system and used barely, if at all, by Kusuli students. Whereas practitioners in the Kusuli system are usually limited to focusing on only one aspect of the Dzogchen view, those with superior training learn to distinguish the qualities of emptiness, clarity, and spontaneous occurrence that relate, respectively, to the three Buddha-dimensions: emanation (*sprul sku*, *nirmāṇakāya*), resplendence (*longs sku*, *sambhogakāya*), and reality (*chos sku*, *dharmakāya*).

The Bon Paṇḍita system has a long legacy in Tibet, its history intermingled with that of *Authenticity* and associated texts. Still, compared to the Kusuli, followers of the Paṇḍita system are relatively few, which is partly why many critics of Dzogchen wrongly assert that it has no logic or philosophical richness.<sup>28</sup> Dranpa Namkha, the great eighth-century yogi-scholar, and his contemporary, Lishu Daring, are regarded as early exemplars of Paṇḍita-style reflection, and one of the *Authenticity* background texts, *Three Revealed Cycles*,

27. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Kathmandu, February 1999, oral commentary. He is speaking of course in terms of Dzogchen understandings of emptiness. This is not, for example the mere negation (*med dgag*, *prasajya-pratiśedha*) familiar to readers of Geluk prestrations of Madhyamaka, nor the more limited types of emptiness discussed in the classic four schools of tenets.

28. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, whose oral communication to Klein is the source of this paragraph, underscored his point by telling of conversations with two prominent lamas in other traditions with whom he discussed his monastic college's nine-year curriculum. Seeing that two years were allotted to Dzogchen, they both, in independent conversations, felt that this was too long, that there was not so much need to study in the Dzogchen context.

presents a system of logic and debate specifically relating to the Dzogchen teaching that is still used by Paṇḍita students.<sup>29</sup>

We are told that at Yeru Ensakha (gYas ru dBEn sa kha), which between 1072 and 1405 was the main seat of Bon learning in central Tibet, analysis and logic were applied to the three areas of sutra (*mdo*),<sup>30</sup> tantra (lit., *mantra*, *sngags*), and “mind” (*sems*) or Dzogchen. In addition, the meditation practices of *A Khrid* (*Instruction of A*) were very important there, so much so that it was referred to by the monks as *Yeru A Khrid*.<sup>31</sup> The Paṇḍita system has waxed and waned, but Bon maintains that it has continued unbroken since imperial times.

Yeru Ensakha, which can probably be regarded as the initial site of Bon Paṇḍita-style Dzogchen curriculum, was destroyed by flood in 1386,<sup>32</sup> an event Shardza Tashi Gyeltsen Rinpoche (Shar rdza bKra shis rGyal mtshan Rin po che, d. 1934) attributes to the jealousy of Buddhist monks.<sup>33</sup> Notwithstanding this interpretation, the most immediate outcome of the catastrophe was that Ensakha monks attended the school for dialectics at a nearby Sakya monastery, Druyul Kyetsel (Brus yul sKyed tshal).<sup>34</sup> This suggests that there was already a relationship between the two institutions, and very possibly mutual influence as well. In this regard we can note that the same period saw Rongdon Śākya Gyeltsen (Rong ston Śākya rGyal mtshan, 1367–1449) start life as a Bonpo and later identify with Sakyapa. Indeed, Śākya Chokden (Śākya mChog ldan, 1428–1507) writes in his biography of Rongdon that the latter received direct transmission through the lineage of Ngok Lotsāwa.<sup>35</sup> Rongdon’s legacy was a significant encouragement to fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Bonpo scholars, including the great Dolpopa Sherab Gyeltsen (Dol po pa Shes rab rGyal mtshan) himself.<sup>36</sup>

In 1405, Yeru Ensakha was revived as Tashi Menri (bKra shis sMan ri), which means “Fortunate Medicine Mountain.” Founded and miraculously constructed by Sherab Gyeltsen,<sup>37</sup> Menri became the foremost Bonpo monastery

29. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, *Explanation of the Teachings of Yungdrung Bon* (g. Yung drung bon gyi bstan pa'i 'byung khungs nyang bsdus): 25.

30. Buddhist texts on tenets enumerate these philosophical systems as Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Yogacāra, and Madhyamaka. They are commonly known in that context as “sutra systems” in contrast to the perspectives of tantra.

31. Menri Abbot Lungtog Denpa Nyima (Lung rtogs bsTan pa'i Nyi ma), Sunrise Springs, New Mexico, July 1997, oral commentary. For a listing of the eighteen abbots of Yeru Ensakha, see Dagkar 1994: 142 n.8.

32. Khenpo Tenzin Nyima Wangyal, n.d. *Khri brtan nor bu rtse dang bon po'i lo rgyus* (Triten Norbutse and Bon History) [dual language edition], p. 15.

33. Karmay 1972: 142. There is every possibility, of course, that logic and debate came into further ascendancy because of Bon competitiveness with Buddhists.

34. See Tucci 1949: 642. The Kyetsel (sKyed tshal) Monastery was said to have been founded by Sangye Phel (Sangs rgyas 'Phel, 1411–1485). (I thank Dan Martin, personal communication, for bringing this to my attention.)

35. David Jackson 1996: 238.

36. On this last point, thanks to Matthew Kapstein, personal communication.

37. For an account of this event, see Karmay 1972: 142ff.

in central Tibet. Its connection with Sakya continued until relatively recent times, fading after the construction of Yung Drung Ling in 1843.<sup>38</sup>

Yung Drung Ling was founded at a site below Menri as a center for logic and debate.<sup>39</sup> The traditional course of study at Menri and Yung Drung Ling continues in exile at Menri Monastery in Dolanji, a small Indian town north of Simla, and includes training in the five traditional topics of Logic (*tshad ma*, *pramāṇa*), the Perfections, (*phar phyin*, *pāramitā*), Middle Way Philosophy (*dbu ma*, *Madhyamaka*), *Treasury of Phenomenology*<sup>40</sup> (*mdzod*, [*abhidharma*] *kośa*), and monastic discipline (*'dul ba*, *vinaya*). Thus, early on Bon developed a unique system of dialectics and debate specifically related with the Dzogchen teaching.<sup>41</sup>

Lopon Tenzin Namdak's observation that Kusuli students are not concerned with cultural preservation<sup>42</sup> or with defending their views in debate speaks also to the question of the place of intellectual learning in Dzogchen. Such learning may not lead to realization, but it helps create an arena for realization, and it helps preserve the legacies that honor and institutionalize the search for realization.

## Passage to the Ineffable: Study and Meditation

Bon Training in Dzogchen debate relies especially on *Authenticity* and *Magical Space Treasure*, as well as on certain parts of the above-mentioned *Three Cycles* and *Primordial Mind*. Although this training is rigorously engaged, it alone is

38. One branch of the Sakya monastery is quite close to the present Yung Drung Ling, which can be seen today as one heads west on the southern route toward Shigatse from Lhasa. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Sunrise Springs, New Mexico, 1998, oral commentary.

39. During the nineteenth century, nine other Bon monasteries also established schools of dialectics. Cech 1984: 7.

40. We are of course using this term in a different sense than does Western philosophy, where phenomenology is associated with the Hegelian and Husserlian schools of thought. However, we wish to retain phenomenology as a category important to Buddhist thought as well—for the *Abhidharma* indeed introduces its scholars to the phenomenal world as understood in the classic Buddhist period. Because Buddhist and Bon texts of this and related genres (*bsdus grwa*, *grub mtha'*, *blo rig*) understand themselves to thematize the world of chos/bon—all the phenomena that exist, immanent and transcendent—we use this term.

41. For details of their curriculum, see Cech 1984.

42. All things being equal, *Authenticity* prefers to circumvent the limitations it finds with language and, as practitioners, its readers may claim to do just that. But the writer and community of *Authenticity* are keenly aware that while unlanguage processes may suffice to bring about the desired goal for those already inside a community of belief, they leave one vulnerable to the language of outsiders, which may well be used to curtail that very community. For those outside such tradition, and especially for those who are critical of it, verbal communication remains the preferred means of engagement, especially in view of the desire for cultural preservation. I think here of Schleiermacher's distinction in *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology*, in *Literary Genres*, and Donald Lopez's application of this to the Tibetan context (1996: 223 n.2). Apologetics, for Schleiermacher, is "an effort to ward off hostility," while polemics "takes place wholly within the community." In this context, *Authenticity* is really entwining both functions—with the reasoning explicitly assigned an apologetic function—whereas the less obvious, but in my reading equally potent, presence of Samantabhadric mythos speaks directly, in polemical style, to those already in communion with that presence.

not deemed sufficient for Dzogchen understanding. At the monastery in Kathmandu, students exercise the channels and winds (*rtsa rlung*) for one hundred days during winter, after which they enter the traditional forty-nine-day dark retreat. Although even the most cursory description of these practices is well beyond our scope here, it is important to understand that training for the most esteemed monastic scholars—who typically spend ten or more hours a day studying for nine to fifteen years and longer without any holiday except at New Year’s—does not revolve around texts alone.

This simple point is critical for approaching *Authenticity*’s context. That meditation has long been an essential accompaniment to the scholarly style of Dzogchen education is beyond doubt. How this affects the reading of texts, and the epistemology assumed in that reading, is yet to be amply discussed. Traditional readers of religious texts, both Paṇḍita and Kusuli Dzogchen readers, generally hold that full comprehension of their material does not depend solely on their reasoning abilities, but also on something that comes to them from the environment. Paul Griffiths’s distinction between internalist and externalist epistemologies is useful here.<sup>43</sup> The act and art of reading can be “read” through what Griffiths calls either an internalist or externalist epistemology.

The internalist view, as Griffiths describes it, deems readers self-sufficient and able to determine by their own introspection whether or not they have read and conducted themselves appropriately in the light of reasoned principles. Their own judgment authenticates their understanding. They are in this sense individualists in a way that traditional readers of such texts as *Authenticity* are not. Externalists, by contrast, are more “traditional” insofar as they see themselves as part of a particular kind of whole. They experience their entire personal and religious location as, in Griffiths’s words “some process or method of arriving at the belief in question that is not internal to them, and may not be known, understood or controlled by them”<sup>44</sup> Indeed, without these methods, the proper understanding cannot, by definition, be authentic.

One of the greatest challenges for the Dzogchen scholar-practitioner is to avoid what the history of philosophy reveals to be nearly unavoidable: “self-satisfaction with theoretical discourse.” The meditative reader must ask her own variant of the question posed by Pierre Hadot as he analyzes early Greek philosophy: “What is finally most beneficial . . . to discourse on language . . . [or] to learn how to live a human life?”<sup>45</sup> Our text’s point or, more properly, the point of the tradition that enfolds it, is that “living” or in this case “meditating” is indeed an activity distinct from “book learning,” and that the precise rela-

43. Griffiths 1999: 72–80.

44. Griffiths 1999: 73.

45. Hadot 1992: 91; also cited and discussed in Arnold Davidson’s introduction to Hadot 1995: 32.

tionship which connects them will take careful charting. Lawrence Hatab's distinction between what he calls real assent, which engages one's whole being, and the "notional assent" of abstract understanding are also useful categories as we explore, in effect, the different types of wholeness available to reasoned and lived discourse, an analogue of Bon's distinction, already noted, between proving and realizing reality.<sup>46</sup>

If we put this Dzogchen perspective in conversation with Griffiths' categories, we can more easily discern an implicit, yet crucial, principle of *Authenticity*. The different types of assent to which Hadot refers, like the Bon/Buddhist distinction between establishing and realizing an authentic perspective, connote different epistemologies and cultural locations. Likewise, the externalist view, as Griffiths deploys it, cedes the authenticating autonomy crucial to the internalist's identity. In addition, to claim that one's own reasoning can determine truth is to make a self-claim of independence that is, by some lights, at variance with Dzogchen (and other Buddhist) intentions to dissipate any reification of self or any attractions to theoretical discourse that might further that reification. It is above all at variance with traditional beliefs in the efficacy of blessings, transmission, and initiation. From all these perspectives, it makes great sense that a Dzogchen text on reasoning would also want to include a healthy dose of mythic coherence, so that at least every now and then the reader could simply let go of the discourse-building self whom much of the text addresses.

In fact, this is yet another angle from which to consider the reasoning/mythologizing interface that is so pertinent to the subject and structure of *Authenticity*. Though Griffiths speaks specifically of reading practices and related rituals as the amplifiers of traditional reading, we can extend his reflections to the contemplative practices that have historically accompanied the reading of *Authenticity* and other texts, as well as other community rituals of initiation and so on, all of which participate in a contemplative's formation. These can all be seen as part of what Griffiths calls a "belief-forming practice."<sup>47</sup> These practices, these meditations, as well as a whole set of mythically oriented beliefs, are part of what brings the text to life in a particular way. But the reader may not himself understand this. The state of open awareness (which arguably is the ultimate, if indirect, result *and* condition of reading this text) may remain mysterious even when that state is present. The occult nature of its arising is in fact a central subtext of *Authenticity* and a crucial element in the esoteric, elusive nature of authentic scripture, as we shall see in chapter 5.

*Authenticity* does not give instructions on meditation or even extol its virtues, yet meditation informs the practice of its traditional readers, who are,

46. Hatab 1990: 277. See also note #7 above.

47. Griffiths 1999: 74.

without exception, receiving and cultivating Dzogchen practices before, during, and after their work with this text.

Monks who traditionally debate and think along the lines of *Authenticity* were certainly also, at least to some degree, trying to “live” their philosophy—or, in their language, to realize it. In this they are reminiscent of the Greek philosophers whom Hadot describes as being engaged in “spiritual exercises” leading to self-transformation. In both cases, we can say that this intention unifies what might otherwise appear as disparate aspects of training and perspective.<sup>48</sup>

This is an important point for us, since we will argue that a text like *Authenticity* coheres not only through the reasonings that take up most of its pages but also through other important aspects of the practitioner’s religious *imaginaire*. These aspects have especially to do with the juxtaposition of reasoning with other elements of disclosure and expression.

Students currently following the curriculum at Lopon Tenzin Namdak’s monastic center in Kathmandu are required to rise at 4:00 A.M. for one hour’s meditation. They do this, says their teacher, because it is not possible to identify, introduce them to, or cause them to know that which they have not encountered in meditation. In order to be introduced to your mindnature, you must have experienced it; otherwise, adds Lopon, “the teacher can explain things, but grasping with thought is not the system of Dzogchen at all.”<sup>49</sup>

Thus, important as the texts are—some even being labeled authenticators themselves (*lung tshad ma*)—they alone do not provide authentic Dzogchen insight. At the same time, the tradition is adamant that without the more rigorous textual study, students will probably be unable either fully to comprehend or to explain the Dzogchen view, even though they may have valid realization of it.

Paul Griffiths points out that in religious reading, the “visual consumption of ordered patterns of print” is characterized by a particular relationship between reader and text.<sup>50</sup> In the case at hand, that relationship is indeed crucial. The traditional reader of *Authenticity*, and of Buddhist texts generally, approaches literature shaped by a particular worldview that precludes a consum-

48. Hadot 1995: 25 states, for example, that “logic, physics, and ethics distinguish themselves from one another when one *speaks* of philosophy, but not when one *lives* it.” For a compelling summary of Hadot’s relevant and related distinctions between philosophy and philosophical discourse, between *théorique* and *théoretique* as well as the philosophical, historical, and sociological reasons contributing to *philosophia*’s metamorphosis into the more purely theoretical (*théorique*) activity of today’s universities, see pp. 29–34. One difference between his discussion and ours is that he is specifically speaking of the unity of the elite disciplines of logic, physics, and ethics, whereas the integration we examine is broader, including widely available cultural beliefs which, nonetheless, would implicitly or explicitly be supported by the written and oral scholarly texts to which monks had (and have) special access.

49. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, oral commentary, n.d.

50. Griffiths 1999: 41.



erist, I-it relationship to the text in question, an interest limited to consuming information useful to one's purpose without acknowledgment of the larger fabric of tradition. Certainly the text is studied with an eye to how one can improve one's debating skills and consequent ability to defend Dzogchen philosophically. At the same time, since its readers are also practitioners, it is read with the intention of juxtaposing this information about open awareness with their own experience of it. In short, it is read both for information and for the cultivation of a skill that is at the very heart of their religious lives.

Appropriately, then, *Authenticity* is concerned that the principles by which it lays out and settles its views are correct, which is to say, reasonable or logical. The greatest challenge often levied by the text's incorporated objector is "If you agree with what I claim are the consequences of your thesis, *you lose your thesis.*" In each case, the book-respondent reframes the logical narrative so that the thesis is not lost. At the same time, holding a thesis is not the ultimate move, even if it is crucial for logic.

The limitations of thought are presented fundamentally as an epistemological insight, not as an anti-intellectual stance. The West is in considerable debt to Locke, Kant, and other European Enlightenment figures who, given their historical location, found it necessary and liberating to demonstrate the power of reason in the face of religious tradition. "Religion" and "faith" have become, in the popular contemporary understanding, opposed to "reason" and "logic." Knowing this, we can be on guard lest that legacy lead its heirs to confuse Dzogchen or other meditative traditions' privileging of nonconceptual awareness with a stand against the intellect.<sup>51</sup> To do so would be to miss the nuanced theorizing of perceptual functioning offered here. After all, the mirror must be shown, not just described.

This brings us to one of *Authenticity*'s implicit themes: although description does not bring the mirror to view, the mirror is itself reflected in some of the text's words, especially the words of enlightened beings. Early on, *Authenticity* notes that "authentic essential precepts are an uninterrupted continuum of experiential essential precepts from one to another."<sup>52</sup> Even though words do not themselves function as a mirror, they are important. The relationship of these two kinds of words, reasoning and essential precepts, is another important subtext of *Authenticity*.

*Authenticity* itself then, for all its logic, also exhibits and draws inspiration from the recognition that the ultimate toward which the fingers of logic point is both beyond those words and invisibly present in them.

51. The reign of reason in post-Enlightenment Europe did not go unchallenged, either; partly due to Christian resistance to Greek philosophy, there have been a variety of protests, ranging from Luther, who called reason a whore, to the Romantics to Nietzsche. Taylor sums this up wonderfully when, in speaking of a "dialectic of Enlightenment," he observes that "we stand in need of liberation from reason" (1989: 116).

52. This refers to the lineage of transmission from Samantabhadra to Odu Michung ('Od du mi chung).

Thus, Paṇḍita curriculum reflects the conundrum we are here to consider—the relation of textual study and conceptual understanding to the enterprise of gaining a particular nonconceptual state.

## Structure

We have already noted that the questions and issues touched on above are addressed by our text in two different registers: logic and poetry. In a general sense, these parallel the categories of Paṇḍita and Kusuli tradition; distinct, but forming a literary unity in much the same way that the Paṇḍita and Kusuli form a cultural unity. Philosophical arguments are framed as extrapolations of poetic expressions found in ancient tantric works long since disappeared. These two registers bespeak an imperative to develop philosophical positions that can be defended in analytical debate and a poetic impulse to inspire, evoke, and ultimately open the meditator to a certain state. Seeing these as complementary, *Authenticity* models a multivocality well suited to its Dzogchen view.<sup>53</sup>

This is to say that *Authenticity* is as unified and diverse as the reality it explores. It mirrors and expresses curiosity about the relationship between unbounded wholeness and the individual phenomena which, in this Dzogchen perspective, prove its existence. Reflecting this picture, the text is both a single voice and many voices, so that its very structure provokes confidence in the possibility of resolving apparent tensions between unity and multiplicity. These alternating voices mirror the text's position in another way, as well. Naked reality, unbounded wholeness, is utterly simple at its point of origin, which is everywhere. This reality, as the poetic and mythically charged voice of Samantabhadra, speaks clearly enough; then its principles become encrusted, performed in the more convoluted language of debate. As these dense words both prove their point and fail to authenticate it, *Authenticity* opens again and again to the clarifying poetic voice.

## The Guiding Figure of Samantabhadra

*Authenticity* moves swiftly, not only from prose to poetry but also from its own perspective (*rang lugs*) to views that it contests. It lacks rigorous division into the three sections: that characterizes many later Buddhist debate texts: (1) refuting wrong views (*dgag*), (2) presentation of the book's own system (*bzhag*),

53. Indeed, the literary production of one of Dzogchen's greatest Buddhist exponents, Longchen Rabjampa, also dramatically spans this spectrum, though not necessarily in the same text. As Germano (1994: 362) points out, his works range from the highly scholastic, such as *Theg pa'i mchog rin po che'i mdzod*, (*Treasury of the Precious Supreme Vehicle*), to the intensely poetic, such as *Chos dbyings mdzod* (*Treasury of the Dharmadhātu*).