

ception, therefore, is one of five overlapping subsystems that may be dynamically interactive, and that together form a dense medium through which goods, techniques, and symbols can be transmitted over very great spaces throughout equally great periods of time, despite whatever technological limitations may be thought to have hampered the flow of knowledge during the period concerned.

Seen from such a perspective, the cases considered here stand as tokens—markers of the specific patterns and processes informing an overarching system next to which they in themselves appear trifling. It would be incorrect to allow this perspective to undermine the value of investigating such matters, however. If we think of our subject now as a science of cultural ecosystems, it should be at once clear that these cannot be studied at all, apart from the particular species that both constitute and thrive within a given system taken as a whole.

Turning now to the history of Tibetan Buddhism in particular, we must understand that the three examples taken up in this chapter would have to be multiplied a thousandfold to do justice to the full range of texts and teaching traditions that variously became interwoven or opposed to one another in the fabric of Tibetan thought, from about the eighth through the thirteenth centuries. The few connections between Tibet and Korea are good to think, so to speak, just because they are so much simpler than those between, say, Bengal, Nepal, Kashmir, or China, and Tibet overall. The full complexity of such connections, moreover, must be considered in relation to the full panoply of Tibetan individuals, lineages, and institutions that identified themselves with, rejected, or ignored specific materials that became available through the varied processes of cultural transmission. Once more, our examples from Korea illustrate this in a usefully austere manner. In the chapter that follows, however, it will soon be apparent that in examining just a few aspects of Tibetan Buddhist thought, austerity must soon give way to reflection upon the intricate textures and the numbertless tensions that characterize the field overall.

6

What Is “Tibetan Scholasticism”?

Three Ways of Thought

During the eleventh century, Tibetan Buddhism entered a period of renewed development and change. The collapse of the old Tibetan royal dynasty had taken place, according to traditional accounts, following the assassination of the anti-Buddhist monarch Lang Darma, probably in 842,¹ and the ensuing power vacuum persisted for a full four hundred years. Local lords vied for ascendancy, and religious authority was no less contested than temporal power. As cultural life was gradually restored, Tibetan seekers and adventurers began to look outside Tibet for authoritative sources of Buddhist teaching, with the result that throughout the eleventh century we find Tibetan translators and pilgrims journeying to India and Nepal in search of gurus, Scriptures, and esoteric lore. These developments were particularly prominent in Western Tibet, where the great translator Rinchen Zangpo (958–1055) was patronized by the monarchs of the Guge kingdom. There, too, the saintly Indian scholar and adept Atiṣa (982–1054) was invited to teach, beginning in 1042. The careers of these two notable Buddhist monks mark the start of what Tibetan historians call the “later spread of the teaching” (*bslan-pa phyi-dar*), or the age of the “new translations” (*gsar-'gyur*).

The renewed Buddhist activity of the period, however, was not without its tensions. We have already suggested that competing lines of transmission accounted for this in part. Yet there were many factors operating besides mere difference of religious lineage: regional and clan affiliations, relations with preexisting Tibetan Buddhist traditions versus involvement in the new infusion of Indian teaching, orientations favoring monastic scholarship versus those emphasizing tantric yoga, competition for patronage—these were among the elements informing the developing scene. Indeed, difference of religious lineage can often be interpreted in terms of other, more fundamental oppositions.²

The areas of contention in eleventh- and twelfth-century Tibetan Buddhism, however, also fueled a creative dialogue that was characterized in some instances by imaginative and visionary syntheses and restatements of Buddhist teaching, and in others by the effort to clarify that teaching through reasoned analysis, interpretation, and debate. Though these tendencies may be associated in many instances with the

divisions between contemplative and scholarly orientations, or between tantric and nontantric traditions, it is important to recognize that neither of these oppositions was absolute, and that in the lives and careers of individual masters differing facets are frequently intermingled. By the thirteenth century, the intellectual and spiritual ferment of the age had issued in a period of unusual creativity whose varied explorations of Buddhist thought will be illustrated through the three sketches presented in this chapter.

It has become customary to characterize the intellectual life of the Tibetan monastic colleges as a type of scholasticism. Though I regard this convention to be generally an appropriate one, I think that our notion of just what counts as Tibetan scholasticism needs to be in some respects problematized, and to do this will be one of my concerns here. We should begin, however, by first clarifying the application of the Western notion of scholasticism to things Tibetan.³

Scholasticism, of course, primarily characterizes a dominant form of intellectual practice in the Latin Catholic universities of the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries. Among the features that have been regarded as defining scholasticism, those frequently emphasized have included the effort to elaborate Catholic theology according to purely rational principles, the harmonization of theology with Aristotelian philosophy that this effort involved, the emphasis in this context upon Aristotle's logical writings, or *Organon*, and the primacy of scholia, commentarial glosses on texts, as the written medium for the elaboration and expression of ideas. The word "scholasticism," in fact, derives from "scholium."

It is not difficult to find here strong analogies with important aspects of intellectual practice in the Tibetan monastic colleges that developed from the late eleventh century onwards, where there was a marked concern to emphasize a highly rational approach to Buddhist doctrine, over and against one dominated exclusively by faith.⁴ This required the careful study of Indian Buddhist philosophical writings, with the epistemological and logical works of Dharmakīrti (c. 600) supplying the major methodological organ.⁵ Finally, as in the Latin West, it was the commentary, in several specific forms, that emerged as the preeminent literary form of philosophical and doctrinal writing. All of this, it seems, makes it entirely reasonable to extend the use of the word "scholasticism" to the non-Christian, non-Aristotelian context of Buddhist Tibet.

Beyond these generalities, when we focus our attention upon some characteristically Aristotelian assumptions, it often appears that they have marked parallels in the thought of Dharmakīrti and his Tibetan successors. Aristotle, for instance, tells us that "[t]he first class of simple propositions is the simple affirmation, the next, the simple denial . . ." and that "it is plain that every affirmation has an opposite denial, and similarly every denial an opposite affirmation."⁶ The essential role of the binary opposition of affirmation and negation in the formation of human thought and language has been almost universally presupposed in Western philosophical traditions, from those of the Lyceum down to the logical positivist and structuralist movements of recent times. In the schools of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist thought, too, a similar opposition is often regarded as fundamental, as is suggested in a somewhat whimsical manner in this episode reported in the biography of the famed nineteenth-century Tibetan Nyingmapa thinker, Mi-pham Gyamsho (1846–1912):

When Mi-pham Rinpoche was looking over the *Exposition of Valid Cognition* [the *Prāmāṇavārtika* of Dharmakīrti] he had a dream in which one who was Sakya Paṇḍita in essence appeared to him in the guise of a learned and accomplished master from India, the tip of his nose slightly crooked, and said, "What is there that you do not understand in the *Exposition of Valid Cognition*? It has two parts, refutation and proof." Then, he divided a volume of the *Exposition of Valid Cognition* into two parts and handed it to Mi-pham, saying, "Combine these two together!" No sooner had he combined them than they turned into a sword, and all things that may be known appeared before him. Swinging that sword once, it appeared to Mi-pham that he cut through them all in an instant, without impediment. Consequently, he said, there was not a single word in the *Exposition of Valid Cognition* which he did not understand.⁷

The opposition of proof and refutation at the level of demonstrative reasoning structurally parallels that of affirmation and denial at the level of the proposition. Aristotle, who regards affirmation to have priority over negation similarly accords primacy to affirmative demonstration,⁸ and in this respect his view differs somewhat from that represented in Mi-pham's dream, where the two-edged sword is perfectly balanced. Whether this balance was maintained in practice, however, is perhaps another question.

It is significant, too, that it was Sakya Paṇḍita who appeared in Mi-pham's dream. In the development of the Tibetan scholastic traditions, the contributions of Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyeltsen (1182–1251) to the formation of ideals of scholarship and intellectual refinement were enormous, and his writings ranged over rhetoric and the linguistic sciences, music and pedagogy, logic and Buddhist philosophy.⁹ In this chapter, we shall follow Mi-pham's lead and concern ourselves with aspects of Sakya Paṇḍita's contributions to Buddhist logic and epistemology, examining in particular his arguments in connection with the theory of objects, including, in principle at least, books that turn into swords and other objects appearing in dreams.

The remaining two figures to be considered here, Karma Pakshi (1204–1283) and Dōlpopa Sherap Gyeltsen (1292–1361), are both renowned as great exponents of yoga and tantric esotericism, in which the cultivation of imagination and vision is most valued. Of course, it has sometimes followed that this emphasis on the visionary, on exploring what the great interpreter of Islamic mysticism, Henry Corbin, has aptly termed the *mundus imaginalis*,¹⁰ has given rise to novelty that resists ready harmonization with more conservative traditions of scriptural exegesis. For this reason, one of the challenges for Tibet's religious visionaries was to elaborate doctrinal apologetics, indeed sometimes polemics, through which to express and to justify their perspectives. It will become apparent here that the distinction between visionary and scholastic approaches to the interpretation of Buddhist teaching was therefore by no means an impermeable one, and to recognize this is one of the ways in which our conception of Tibetan scholasticism needs to become more nuanced.

In these examples it will be found too that each author's style of reflection corresponds in certain respects with his substantive concerns regarding the nature of Buddhist insight. Briefly, we may say that while Sakya Paṇḍita regards a precise mastery of Indian Sanskrit learning to be the bedrock for the formation of the refined Buddhist layman or monk, Karma Pakshi embraces an intuitive, but at the same time skeptical, vision that countenances the possibility that direct insight may be catalyzed by any of a rich plurality of sources. This well comports with the tolerant and plural-



Figure 6.1 Sakya Pandita. Sixteenth century. Now preserved at the Nyingmapa monastery of Mindröling.

istic outlook that he encouraged in his religious dealings with the Mongol empire. Dölpopa, in contrast to both, emphatically privileges particular texts and doctrines within the great corpus of Indian Buddhist scriptures and finds in the contemplation of their inner meaning the key to the understanding of the Buddha's teaching overall.¹¹

In describing some of the issues we encounter here, I shall often adopt a comparative approach, suggesting ways in which these three thinkers sometimes touch upon concerns shared by Western philosophers, and reconstructing aspects of their arguments from a contemporary philosophical perspective. This is both a matter of exegetical convenience, referring to things near at hand to explain those farther afield, and a reflection of aspects of my own outlook: relativism and antirelativism, I think, each at best embody partial truths that in the real world require one another. Human culture and thought spin out their magical net in the interweaving of difference and identity. In the three studies that follow, the territory we must traverse will be found, I think, to be at once both familiar and foreign.

Sakya Pandita's Reasons

Objects and Entities in Buddhist Philosophical Logic: Some Problems

Though the Indian logical and epistemological tradition had been introduced to Tibet as early as the eighth century—we have already seen evidence of royal interest in this area (p. 45)—this appears to have been one of the branches of Buddhist learning in which Tibetan activity came to a halt with the fall of the old dynasty. It was during the eleventh century that there was a renewal of interest here, and Tibetans began to study and to translate Indian logical treatises once again. An indigenous Tibetan tradition of philosophical study and debate took root at Sangphu monastery (founded 1071 or 1073) in Central Tibet, which was to remain a singularly influential scholastic center for the next three centuries and more.¹² Sakya Pandita, as a scholar of Sanskrit who revised the Tibetan translation of one of the major treatises of the Indian philosopher Dharmakīrti,¹³ while no doubt indebted to the tradition of Sangphu in some respects, became sharply critical of it in others. His *Treasury of Epistemological Reason* (*Tshad-ma-rigs-gter*), which was to be one of the most widely studied philosophical works ever composed by a Tibetan author, delineates and defends the distinctive elements of his own reading of the Indian Buddhist epistemological tradition, frequently opposing the school of Sangphu.¹⁴ In the eleven chapters of his treatise, he surveys a variety of questions pertaining to three central categories: the epistemological object (*shes-bya'i yul*), the subject that knows the object—that is, the mind (*shes-byed-kyi blo*)—and the act of knowledge through which the two are related (*blo des yul riggs-pa'i tshul*).¹⁵ As it is my primary purpose here to indicate something of the style of argumentation Sakya Pandita employs in this context, my remarks will be limited to a survey of his treatment of the first of these topics, the object.

For philosophers concerned with the fundamental problems of ontology, the problems surrounding the inquiry into just what is, a special set of difficulties arises when our intentional attitudes are considered. The objects of belief, thought, love, and hate need not be concrete physical objects such as this chair, this desk, or this writing tablet. Neither must they be mental events per se, that is, the objects of thought need not be themselves thoughts. Our minds seem to have access to a whole range of objects that, if they exist at all, exist in no ordinary sense. Unhappy with the prospect of ontic superfluity, the ontologist may wish to deny the existence of such objects altogether. The theory of objects and ontology, it would seem, part company here. Alexis Meinong has put the point succinctly: "[T]he totality of what exists, including what has existed and will exist, is infinitely small in comparison with the totality of the objects of knowledge."¹⁶

Philosophical concepts related to questions of intentionality had begun to develop in India at an early date, and, no later than the first centuries C.E., Buddhist thinkers had already argued that having an intentional object (*sāmbhāvanam*) is the mark of the mental.¹⁷ Moreover, intentional objects as intentional objects were systematically distinguished from the external objects of the senses by means of the adoption of an appropriate technical terminology whose definitions were rigorously formulated. Sakya Pandita was thus the heir to an already ancient tradition of reflection on the nature and significance of intentional phenomena.

In both India and Tibet, certain of the philosophical schools of Buddhism sought to maintain that some of the more anomalous objects among our ideas, as well as such things as hallucinated objects, really do exist. Sakya Pandita summarizes their views as follows:

The Tibetans say: "If there do not exist both objective generalities (*don-spyi*), which are the objects of conceptual error, and unreal appearances (*med-pa gsal-sung*), which are the objects of nonconceptual [i.e., perceptual] error, then error becomes groundless. Hence, there exist both [those two types of] apparent object. This is proven perforce of the self-presentations (*rang-rig*) in which both [those types of] erroneous cognition are apprehended."

Moreover, the Saṃmitiya sect among the pious attendants (*nyan-thos*, *śrāvaka*) and others hold that both general terms (*ming-spyi*) and objective generalities, whose forms are [respectively] words and marks, are concreta [to be classed among] those factors of being which are set apart; for they are set apart from [the classes of] physical forms, minds, and mental events. Moreover, they hold that unreal appearances—even the objects of dreams—are so-called "factors of being which are without the marks of sensible objects," and that these are concreta; and that dream-cognitions are born from these.¹⁸

It will be useful to consider in this context some of the definitions that have been put forward by Tibetan Buddhist logicians in connection with the theory of objects:

- (D1) Object (*yu*) = Def. That of which a mind can be aware.
- (D2) Knowable (*shes-bya*) = Def. Possibly an object.
- (D3) Intelligible (*rig-bya*) = Def. Possibly comprehended by an epistemic operation.
- (D4) Established ground (*gzhi-grub*) = Def. That upon which an epistemic operation is directed.
- (D5) Certainly existent (*nod-riges*) = Def. Possibly within the purview of an epistemic operation.¹⁹

These five terms (D1–D5) are sometimes said to have the same reference. Our next group of definitions distinguishes various types of object:

- (D6) Apparent object (*snang-yul*) = Def. That object which appears either as a representation, or directly without representation. (Note: The disjunctive form of this definition insures that it will be applicable in the contexts of both direct realism and representationalism.)
- (D7) Apprehended object (*gzung-yul*) = Def. The external object whose representation is directly perceived by the apprehending subject.
- (D8) Object of intellection (*zhen-yul*) = Def. That of which a mind can be aware through an intellectual operation which in apprehending it renders it predominant. (This may seem somewhat obscure. The object of intellection is usually said to be an object indirectly referred to through a mediating concept, e.g., the fire referred to when, having seen smoke, one thinks, "There's been a fire.")
- (D9) Operational object (*jug-yul*) = Def. That object which is the predominant [established] ground for an [epistemic] operation directed upon it by a corresponding subject.

It will not be necessary here to examine these definitions in detail. What is of interest in the present context is a problem that flows from the assumption that (D1)–(D5) have the same reference. For then, by simple substitution, we can derive from (D1) and (D5) the equation:

Certainly existent = that of which a mind can be aware.

Buddhist idealists were, of course, not in the least troubled by this: some of them would have surely affirmed Berkeley's formula, *esse est percipi*. The idealists, in other words, would argue that the equivalency derived from (D1) and (D5) follows from the fact that all that certainly exists and all of which a mind can be aware are mental acts. We should note, however, that (D7) may be taken to insist on there being external objects—it is a definition advanced in connection with a realist ontology. To abandon (D7) might open the way for the proposed idealistic recasting of the remaining definitions; but to preserve (D7) while admitting, too, an apparent equation of existence and object, we might be led to assert that there are actual existents corresponding to all cognitive objects.

Some such considerations as these must have motivated the various theories of objects advanced by Buddhist logicians. One approach to the resolution of the ontological problems encountered here was suggested by the eight-century Indian Buddhist philosopher Dharmottara and was elaborated by Tibetan thinkers of the Saṅghu school in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.²⁰ Their strategy was to elaborate a theory of objects sufficiently rich to accommodate such things as objective generalities and apparitions as real, but peculiar, "objects of apprehension," which they determined to be of three kinds altogether: (1) the concrete particular object of apprehension (*gzung-yul rang-mshan*), for instance, "the object of apprehension of that sensory direct perception that grasps a vase when a mind immediately perceives a vase"; (2) the general characteristic as an object of apprehension (*gzung-yul spyi-mshan*), for instance, "the object of apprehension of that thought that grasps the vase as a vase, that is, as an objective generality"; and (3) the nonexistent, apparitional object of apprehension (*med-pa gsal-sung*), for instance, "the object of apprehension of that sensory consciousness to which there appear hairlike lines, when hairlike lines are apparent to the erring sensory consciousness [as in the case of one with cataract]." The use of the term "object of apprehension" in these contexts may suggest that these thinkers were not originally concerned to elaborate an ontological theory, but rather sought merely to create a typology of epistemic objects. Nonetheless, even if that was the case, speaking in terms of there being such objects led to a certain hypothesis, the objects of types (2) and (3) coming to be regarded as real in just the same sense as those of type (1).

Objective Generalities and Illusory Objects

How are we to understand all of this? The term "objective generality" (*don-spyi*) is defined in a great many ways by later Tibetan thinkers. Recent interpreters of Tibetan scholastic documents have sometimes used here the term "generic image," but I think we should be on our guard lest we assimilate the concept to one of mental imagery.²¹ Indeed, while some Tibetan writers do single out mental images as paradigm cases of what I here call "objective generalities," others emphasize nonimagistic,

discursive paradigms. For the purposes of the present discussion, the various scholastic definitions do not have to be considered in detail. To indicate the sense of "objective generality" and the manner in which the objective generality provides a source of conceptual error, a useful analogy may be found in the empiricist notion of an idea. Consider David Hume's famous example of the golden mountain.

The golden mountain, of course, does not actually exist, but nonetheless I can think of such a thing. How can this be? According to Hume, I combine my idea of gold with that of mountain. Such ideas are of course not identical to the actual things out there in the world, but neither does it make good sense to think of them as self-existent universals. Rather, they are somehow derived from my impressions of the things to which they correspond. Similarly, the Buddhist logician's objective generalities are neither concrete particulars nor Platonic ideas (the existence of which Buddhist philosophers would in any case deny).²² And, in the present example, these queer objects do not correspond to what is, but rather to what is not. Thus, they are a source of conceptual error. The question that Sakya Pandita will seek to answer, then, is this: is there nevertheless some sense in which these peculiar objects themselves exist?

To clarify further what is meant by "objective generality," as well as the motive for positing that there are such objects, let us consider a commonplace example. Suppose you enter a room and, your feet being tired, you want a chair. Then what is the object of your desire? It is a chair to be sure, but can we say that it is this chair or that chair? The curious thing is that whatever conclusions we might come to with regard to "a chair," the thing that eventually satisfies your desire is *this* chair, even if you didn't have *this* chair in mind when at first you wanted *a* chair. To see just what is at stake here, let us look more closely at some typical sentences:

- (1) Dechen wants a chair.
- (2) There is some particular chair that Dechen wants.²³
- (3) There is chair number one, and chair number two, et cetera, and Dechen wants chair number one, or chair number two, et cetera.²⁴

Sentence 1 is illustrative of the kind of case with which we are here concerned, and sentences 2 and 3 represent attempts to express the sense of sentence 1 using the logical device of existential quantification, without the entire sentence being governed by a verb of intention. (That is, the statement of the chair's existence stands outside of the statement of Dechen's want, and so only the chair, not its existence, is what is wanted.) Sentence 2 exemplifies what has become known as a failure of existential generalization. It says: there is something such that Dechen wants it. This suggests that Dechen had one particular chair in mind all along, which renders mysterious the fact that her desire may be satisfied by a chair of which she had no previous knowledge, or that she may desire something that does not exist at all. Sentence 3, on the other hand, suggests that when Dechen wants a chair, she wants it—doesn't it—matter—which one of a very large number of things. And there is, of course, a sense in which this is true, although it seems unlikely that sentence 3 has succeeded in capturing just that sense. For supposing that the object of Dechen's want is, as is here proposed, a disjunction, then is it merely a very long disjunction, or is it one that includes (in this case) all chairs? If it does include all chairs, how is it that Dechen knew to do this? But if it does not include all chairs, then why should we suppose

that it includes that chair which eventually satisfies Dechen's desire? The failure of sentences 2 and 3 to represent sentence 1 adequately is symptomatic of the unusual ontological status of "a chair."

Do we wish, then, to say that "a chair" really represents some sort of ideal object? This cannot be answered without further determining just what kind of ideal object it might be. Certainly it is not a universal, that is, the property of being a chair. Even if we assume here an extreme Platonist account of universals, we do not say that one's desire for a chair has for its object the ideal form, the universal Chair. Similarly, we may speak of senses, or meanings, or immanent objects, but all alike leave paradoxical the satisfaction of the desire by a concrete particular chair.

The second type of intentional object with which Sakya Pandita will be concerned is the perceptual object that seems to exist but does not exist actually. The apparitional city seen in the midst of a desert, Rāma's vision of an illusory deer, images seen in dreams, various hallucinated sensations—these are just a few of the stock examples. The ontological problems arising in connection with such objects present certain formal analogies to those that arise in connection with the indefinite descriptions just discussed. For example,

- (4) Rāma sees the illusory deer.
- does not seem to say the same thing as
- (5) There exists something such that Rāma sees it.²⁵

In this instance, however, a disjunctive translation along the lines of sentence 3 would be too absurd even to consider, and we will ignore here the suggestion that really it is an abstract object that is seen, perhaps the disembodied principle of deerhood.

Sakya Pandita's Approach to the Problem

Before examining his arguments with respect to objects of these types, it will be useful to consider some essential features of Sakya Pandita's ontology overall. It is clear that he sought to subsume all things that are in the two great classes of mental and physical substances. The former are discrete self-presentations, and the latter are concrete particulars.²⁶ All abstract objects are to be reduced to one or another of these classes or are held to be in some sense ontologically parasitic. Thus, Sakya Pandita was a sort of reist, though certainly not a pansomatist: that is to say, he believed that only real things exist, but that these need not only be bodies. On the contrary, he believed that a further reduction of the two great classes would result in the elimination of the physical in favor of the mental, the world thus being ultimately constituted only of self-presenting states.²⁷ This idealist turn, however, need not concern us here; only his dualist ontology is relevant in the present context.

Sakya Pandita advances two main arguments against the thesis that objective generalities and apparitions actually exist. The first depends on the premise that where a real object corresponds to a mental state representing that object, the cognition is veridical,²⁸ as when one sees a pot under normal conditions. Assuming then, that objective generalities and apparitions are real, the mental states representing them are veridical. This conclusion, however, is counterexemplified by instances of cognitive error. Unless we wish to jettison the correspondence theory, our sole option is to reject the reality of objective generalities and apparitions.

I think that with regard to apparitions the point being made here is clear enough. The assumption that the deer seen by Rāma is a real deer is not consistent with the assumption that Rāma is deluded in his perception of it. This is clearly part of what we mean when we speak of hallucinations. The force of the argument with respect to objective generalities, however, is not quite so straightforward. Sakya Paṇḍita himself saw this and proceeded to elaborate a further line of argument in order to make his case here.

Let us consider someone who, entering a poorly lit chamber, takes a rope in the corner to be a snake. The objective generality that he believes corresponds to his perception is in this case "a snake." And, certainly, his taking the rope to be a snake is an example of an errant cognition. Consider:

(6) Sonam takes the rope to be a snake.

We will generally concur in rendering this as:

(7) There is something that Sonam takes to be a snake.²⁹

But

(8) There is something that Sonam takes the rope to be³⁰

seems at best ambiguous, and certainly false if "there is something" is taken to mean "there really is a snake here."

In his assumption that objective generalities have some role in cognitive error, then, Sakya Paṇḍita was also pointing to a basic peculiarity of the objects of such intentional states as "taking," "believing," "appearing to," and so forth.

Returning, for the moment, to the initial premise, which concerned the correspondence between vertical states and real objects, Sakya Paṇḍita has a supposed objection draw attention to the peculiar features of the situation exemplified by statement 7: there is a real object of this state of taking to be. Hence, it is not erroneous.³¹ He responds that the objection proceeds from a false analysis of the situation. The visual perception of a variegated ropelike (or snake-like) object has been here conflated with the taking of that object to be a snake. True enough, the visual perception of a certain shape and arrangement of color is by no means erroneous, but that is not what is here at issue. The error is Sonam's *taking* the real object to be a snake, when there is no such snake. Hence, the objective generality "a snake" is no real object at all.

Sakya Paṇḍita's second argument is more difficult and involved than the first, and I am not entirely certain about the manner in which it is to be understood. Its fundamental assumption seems to be that real objects belong to the domain of intersubjectivity, in other words, there are no real private objects. If the apparition or objective generality apprehended by Sonam were a real object, then others who are appropriately situated might apprehend that very same object.³² But there is no reason to suppose that they do. Hence, these are not real objects. In other words, Rāma's deer should be intersubjectively accessible in just the same sense as is any ordinary deer. And so, too, a snake, when Sonam is deluded with respect to the rope.

An objection that is raised here states in effect that although objective generalities and apparitions are real objects, they are not intersubjectively accessible just

because they are private (lit., "bound to one's own mind," *bdag-gi blo dang 'brel*), like the insides of our bodies. The response given to this is that first of all the example is a bad one—our internal organs are possibly such that they are perceived by others, for instance, if one is gravely wounded; and in any case we don't even perceive them ourselves under normal circumstances; hence, our innards are not similar to supposed "private objects." And, more importantly, there are simply no such private objects. How is this to be established?

Let us suppose that Dechen takes the rope in the corner to be a snake and that Sonam takes the very same rope to be a snake. Is there any sense to the notion that they are, or are not, referring to the same snake? On the assumption that they are referring to real private objects, it would seem that they are taking one and the same rope to be utterly different things, for each is referring to a discrete private object. Thus, should they attempt to converse with one another, there will be no possibility of understanding, for ex hypothesi they are speaking of utterly disparate things about which they have no common knowledge.³³ Then is communication between them to be explained by supposing there to be a resemblance (*rnam-pa 'dra-ba*) between their nevertheless discrete objects? Sakya Paṇḍita's response to this suggestion is that there can be no possibility whatsoever of establishing any such posited resemblance: I know only the object before my own mind and have no means by which I might compare it to the mysterious private object of which you speak, except by reference to what you say about it. But now we have begun to turn in circles. Only Dechen can in fact ever know what she takes the rope to be, and analogously for Sonam. One wonders: did Meinong and Russell ever puzzle about the same unicorn?

One question that it may be well to pose at this juncture is: how is it established that Sonam and Dechen both refer to the same thing when in fact they do refer to "the very same rope"? The answer that I think Sakya Paṇḍita wants to give here involves a rather strong principle of verification. That they are referring to the same thing is established only when they pick out the same actual being in the world. But in that case the referent is a concrete particular, not an objective generality. The conclusion we must draw is that there is no way to verify the identity of objective generalities; the rules of our common discourse simply demand that we play it as if such an identity obtained. Thus, all reference to such things is wrapped up in error.³⁴

Sakya Paṇḍita concludes from this that we must abandon altogether the attempt to conceive of objective generalities and apparitions as real objects. They are to be reduced, he maintains, to the self-presenting (*rang-rig*) states of the subject.³⁵ Thus if Dechen takes something to be a snake, what we mean to say is that the taking of such-and-such a phenomenon (for instance, a patch of color) to be a snake is self-presenting for Dechen. And analogously in the case of apparitions.

Our consideration of Sakya Paṇḍita's theory of objects points to a number of analogous developments in recent Western philosophy. The problem of objective generalities seems to be rather closely related to that which arises in connection with what Russell calls "indefinite descriptions" or "ambiguous objects." Some of his observations on this subject would be appropriate here:

[M]any logicians have been driven to the conclusion that there are unreal objects. . . . In such theories, it seems to me, there is a failure of that feeling for reality which ought

to be preserved even in the most abstract studies. . . . In obedience to the feeling of reality, we shall insist that, in the analysis of propositions, nothing "unreal" is to be admitted. . . . "A unicorn" is an indefinite description which describes nothing. It is not an indefinite description which describes something unreal.³⁶

Russell's argument is thus similar to Sakya Paṇḍita's in its negative purpose, that is, to banish unreal objects from our ontology. But the positive aspect of Russell's theory of descriptions is certainly without clear precedent in the material under consideration.

The concept of the objective generality may also have some affinities to that of the common name—perhaps this is what is involved in Sakya Paṇḍita's reference to the doctrine of general terms. If so, I suspect that he would concur here with Reinhardt Grossmann:

What does it mean to name something commonly? . . . there is no sensible answer to this question. The notion of a common name is inherently confused. I, for one, cannot make sense of the assertion that, say, 'fish' names every single fish, but does not name either this or that particular fish, or the property of being a fish, or the class of all fish.³⁷

Sakya Paṇḍita's suspicions with respect to supposed private objects are perhaps in some respects also reminiscent of views advanced by Wittgenstein and his disciples. On what grounds do we say that two people have the same idea, when that idea refers to nothing real? Some philosophers, concurring with Meinong, would insist that this puzzle forces us to acknowledge that there must be some types of nonreal object. According to Meinong:

[I]n this case there exist two different ideas since there occur two mental acts of presentation. But these two ideas are equal . . . when we say that two persons have the same idea, we can only mean that there occur two ideas of the same entity.³⁸

Sakya Paṇḍita would, of course, dissent. He affirms, I believe, something very much like Quine's maxim: "No entity without identity." In the absence of specifiable identity conditions for the entities conceived of by two persons who ponder the golden mountain, we cannot affirm that they conceive of the same thing at all.

Sakya Paṇḍita's theory of objects was not, however, purely negative. He asserted positively that nonreal objects are ontologically dependent upon the self-presenting states of the subject. It seems to me that here his theory has some similarities with the early phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, that of the *Logical Investigations*:

[T]he object is aimed at, which signifies that the act of aiming at it is an experience; but the object is still only presumed and, in truth, is nothing. . . . I represent the god Jupiter, which is to say that I have a certain experience of representation, which in my consciousness is realized as the representation-of-the-god-Jupiter. . . . But if, in addition, the object aimed at exists, the situation has not necessarily changed from the phenomenological point of view. For consciousness of what is given is essentially the same thing, whether the object represented exists, or if it is imagined and even perhaps absurd.³⁹

Before leaving this topic, it may be well to close by asking what all of this has to do with Buddhism. Some Tibetan authorities perhaps believed that mastery of the Dignaga-Dharmakīrti system of logic and epistemology was to be counted among the necessary conditions for progress towards the Buddhist enlightenment, for en-

lightenment, being perfect knowledge, was to be engendered by flawless reason that frees itself from all error. Sakya Paṇḍita's views about this have been disputed and are less than entirely clear-cut. Though he may have regarded logic and epistemology, like the other "outer" sciences,⁴⁰ to have no direct relationship with the final ends of the Buddhist path, he did insist that the ability to reason and to refute what was unreasonable should contribute to one's ability to understand and to interpret rightly the Buddha's teaching.⁴¹ And this conceptual clarity, of course, may well conduce to spiritual advancement, if what is rightly understood is practically applied. It will be seen in what follows, however, that the relationship between natural reason and the teaching's highest insights poses a problem that runs deep within the Tibetan tradition.

Karma Pakshi's Doubts

The Magus Karmapa

In 1978, two rare volumes attributed to the third Karmapa hierarch, Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339), and entitled *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas-kyi skor* (The Limitless Ocean Cycle) were published in India. The title, it seemed to me at the time, was suggestive of two famous verses from the *Bhadracaripravāhāraṇā* (The Regal Aspiration of Fine Conduct), perhaps the most widely known prayer in Tibet:

Purifying the ocean of fields,
Liberating the ocean of beings,
Beholding the ocean of dharmas,
Immersed in the ocean of gnosis,
Refining the ocean of conduct,
Perfecting the ocean of prayer,
Worshipping the ocean of Buddhas,
May I practice for an ocean of aeons, never fatigued.⁴²

Through the biographical accounts of the third Karmapa, it was known that he had composed a treatise concerning the cosmology of the *Avatamsakaśāstra*,⁴³ the collection of sūtras from which the *Regal Aspiration* is drawn. Could this *Limitless Ocean Cycle* be Rangjung Dorje's work on the *Avatamsaka*? Obtaining a copy, I plunged into the text and, as I soon discovered, into an ocean of philological difficulty.

The *Limitless Ocean Cycle* is a collection of treatises that taken together present an exceedingly thorough survey of the nine vehicles (*theg-pa*, Skt. *yāna*) of the Nyingmapa school (see p. 16, table 1). The author's perspective, though, is that of one who has very close ties to the new translation schools that arose after the tenth century, the Kagyüpa in particular. The published manuscript is incomplete—my guess is that it contains about half of the original content—but this much is sufficient to provide us with some understanding of the author's general scheme.⁴⁴ As that author, according to the colophons of individual texts making up the cycle, styles himself Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, both the publisher and the U.S. Library of Congress naturally identified him with the third Karmapa hierarch.⁴⁵

Here, however, as I read through the *Limitless Ocean Cycle*, something struck me as being amiss: my previous reading of Rangjung Dorje's work had revealed an

exacting thinker and precise stylist, one who was fascinated with the minutiae of astronomical calculations and yogic physiology, and who sought to express these in the clearest manner possible. His concern for exactitude was to be found also in his contemplative works.⁴⁶ The author of the *Limitless Ocean Cycle*, however, was clearly a visionary who liked to work in great, broad strokes, who adhered to a well-defined architectonic, to be sure, but still ventured to make rambling digressions or to conjure up strange associations of ideas in the course of advancing an arcane, yet luminous, doctrine. That doctrine itself is one in which the teachings of all the nine vehicles, of the tantras old and new, and of even the non-Buddhist "extremists" (Skt. *tirthika*, Tib. *mu-stegs-pa*), come crashing together in the realization of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs-pa-chen-po*). In short, my initial impression of the author of the *Limitless Ocean Cycle* was that he differed greatly in intellectual temperament from Rangjung Dorje, hardly less than did, say, Eckhart from Aquinas. Nonetheless, in the face of the colophonic data and uncertain of the value of my general impressions, I hesitated to conclude that the *Limitless Ocean Cycle* was not the work of the third Karmapa.

It was quite by accident that several months after beginning to study the *Limitless Ocean Cycle* I came across the following passage, which laid bare the solution to the entire problem. It comes from the *Ri-chos mishams-kyi zhal-gdams* (Precepts on Solitary Retreat) by the seventeenth-century yogin Karma Chakme. Significantly, as we shall see, it is found in the chapter of that work that treats the teaching of the tantras of the anuyoga-class:

[What I have set forth here] is merely the kernel, based on my own experience and easily understood. It may be elucidated at length by regarding both the great text of the *Gdams-ngag rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas* (Limitless Ocean of Instructions)⁴⁷ and the *Zab-chos rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas* (Limitless Ocean of Profound Doctrine),⁴⁸ which include numberless texts, fundamental and ancillary, these being found in the *Collected Works* (*Bka'-bum*) of the great siddha Karma Pakshi (1204–1283).⁴⁹

Accepting Karma Chakme's attribution as a working hypothesis, it seemed essential to discover why it was that the colophons of the *Limitless Ocean Cycle* were signed "Rangjung Dorje." The *Autobiographical Writings of the Second Karma-pa Karma Pakshi*, published in India at the same time as the *Limitless Ocean Cycle* (and by the same publisher⁵¹), provided an answer on the first folio:

This is the unborn, primordially pure Lion's roar proclaimed by one who is in the future to be emanated by Śīṃhanāda.

In the past Dūsūm Khyenpa [the first Karmapa hierarchy] himself.

At present Rangjung Dorje. . . .⁵⁰

And again, some verses further on:

I am Rangjung Dorje,

The vajra-king, one of great might. . . .

"Rangjung Dorje" occurs frequently throughout the *Autobiographical Writings* as the name whereby the author refers to himself,⁵¹ though he also uses "Dharmasiddhi" on occasion,⁵² and, in some of the episodes connected with the Mongol court, the

famous title "Karma Pakshi."⁵³ In tales of past lives, "Sempa Rangjung Dorje" is met with frequently, which may lead us to conclude that this is understood to be the proper name of the bodhisattva who in Tibet is manifest as the Karmapa.⁵⁴ It is in the light of all this that an episode in the life of the third Karmapa, which is reported by Pawo Tsuklakthenga, may be comprehended: the master Orgyenpa (1230–1309), having just identified the youth who would be the third Karmapa as Karma Pakshi's reincarnation declares, "As my guru's esoteric name (*gsang-mshan*) was Rangjung Dorje, I will name you just that." And so he names him.⁵⁵

Karma Pakshi, known as the rebirth of Karmapa Dūsūm Khyenpa (1110–1193), one of the four preeminent disciples of Gampopa (1079–1153), is sometimes regarded as the first representative of the most distinctive of Tibetan hierarchical institutions, the identification of a future hierarch as the rebirth, or "emanational embodiment" (*sprul-sku*), of his deceased predecessor. Certainly, with Orgyenpa's recognition of his successor, this began to emerge as a primary means of succession within Tibetan religious institutions.⁵⁶ The successive Karmapas, who, like the later Dalai Lamas, are thought to be emanations of Tibet's patron bodhisattva, Avalokiteśvara, played a major role in Tibetan religions, and sometimes also political, life down to the time of the line's recent representative, Karmapa XVI Rangjung Ripkei Dorje (1927–1981). Indeed, the latter's disputed succession demonstrates just how important this office continues to be for Tibetan Buddhists.⁵⁷

Karma Pakshi hailed from far eastern Tibet and during his youth became the pupil of Dūsūm Khyenpa's illustrious grand-disciple, Pomdrakpa (1170–1249), who initiated him into the Kaśyāpa system of yoga and meditation. He later was ordained and continued his studies under one of the leading masters of the Nyingmapa school, Jamphum (1179–1252), the third abbot of Kathok monastery in what is today western Sichuan.⁵⁸ Kathok had its own distinctive tradition of doctrinal learning, reaching back to the Nyingmapa lineages that had been active during the period between the fall of the old dynasty and the eleventh-century revival.⁵⁹ The hallmarks of the system were the analysis of the entire range of Buddhist teaching in terms of nine progressive approaches to the highest enlightenment called vehicles (*theg-pa, yāna*),⁶⁰ and a special emphasis on the three highest vehicles, those of esoteric tantras, particularly as these were embodied in the teachings of the *Guhya garbha tantra* (The Tantra of the Secret Nucleus), the *Mdo dgongs-pa 'das-pa* (The Sutra Gathering All Intentions), and the highest contemplative teachings of the Nyingmapa, those of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs-pa-chen-po*).⁶¹ Karma Pakshi's *Limitless Ocean Cycle* is in most respects, in fact, an elaborate systematization of the Kathok tradition of teaching.

In 1255/56, responding to the invitation of the Mongol ruler Möngke Khan, Karma Pakshi traveled to Sira-ordos (the Mongol imperial camp) to participate in a religious conclave sponsored by the Khan. Though he participated in debates with the adherents of other religions, primarily Taoists but probably also Confucianists and Nestorian Christians, he came to be a strong proponent of the Mongol imperial policy of religious tolerance and praised the Khans for this at several points in his autobiography.⁶² With the definitive ascension of the leaders of the Sakya school to the pre-dominant position in Mongol-Tibetan affairs, Karma Pakshi was for awhile out of favor, and his relations with Khublai Khan (1215–1294), the Mongol founder of the

Yuan dynasty in China, seem to have undergone considerable fluctuation. Nonetheless, he adopted and is primarily remembered by the epithet bestowed on him at the Mongol court: Karma Pakshi, "the magus Karmapa."⁶³

Karma Pakshi's autobiography reveals that, like many leading Tibetan Buddhist masters, he was prone throughout much of his life to intense visionary experiences, and these formed a major part of his inspiration as a doctrinal author. His writings, no complete set of which is known to be available at the present time, were primarily devoted to esotericism but included at least one treatise on Buddhist logic and epistemology, now lost, and several other opuscles of philosophical interest.⁶⁴ He regarded all of his writings as disclosing a unified, comprehensive vision of Buddhist teaching and practice, which is embodied in the *Limitless Ocean Cycle*. According to his own testimony, the text to be discussed in the following section was central to his thought, and this reveals a distinctively skeptical frame of mind.

That the Rangjung Dorje of the *Autobiographical Writings* is definitely none other than the Rangjung Dorje of the *Limitless Ocean Cycle* is confirmed both by direct references to the *Limitless Ocean Cycle* within the *Autobiographical Writings* and by the stylistic and doctrinal similarities between the two. Among the direct references to the *Limitless Ocean Cycle*, we find:

Having journeyed to the land called "Ke-cu" in China, I remained there for eight months. At that time all of China arose shimmeringly, appearing as the mandalas of Mañjuvajra and Cakrasamvara and their assembled deities. I then heard all sounds and voices as the doctrinal wheels of the various vehicles, and of the outer and inner philosophical systems, and I realized them. Thereupon, most of the *Limitless Ocean of the Teaching* (*Bstan-pa rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*), the doctrinal wheel of the nine vehicles, became clear, and I composed it at length.⁶⁵

Again, he tells us:

I, the renowned Karmapa, realizing, obtaining the great transmission of myriad transmitted doctrines and so having perfected and analyzed, without adulteration and in particular, the words and the meanings of the trio of nonrealization, mistaken realization, and partial realization, have discussed the *Limitless Ocean of the Teaching*, which accords with the intention of the Buddhas, with the host of dākas, dākinīs, bodhisattvas, śrāvakas, and pratyekabuddhas, and, in accord with all the philosophical systems, have discovered and realized within myself the Buddha, [who is endowed with] fivefold embodiment.⁶⁶

Finally, we may remark that in one passage he refers to his *Autobiographical Writings* as the background histories (*gteng-gzhi*) for the *Bstan-pa rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas* (The Limitless Ocean of the Teaching) and the *Ye-shes rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas* (The Limitless Ocean of Gnosis).⁶⁷

Let us note, too, that neither Pawo Tsuklakthenga, nor even the recent Mendong Tshamapa Rinpoche (writing in 1897), was in the least uncertain as to the use of the name Rangjung Dorje, or as to the provenance of the *Limitless Ocean Cycle*. I have uncovered, in fact, no evidence whatever for there having been any confusion about these matters within the tradition itself prior to our own generation. Thus the mistaken identification of the author of the *Limitless Ocean Cycle* must be regarded as a contemporary, and not as a traditional, misattribution.⁶⁸

Skepticism and Breakthrough

What of the actual teaching of the *Limitless Ocean Cycle*? It may be best to begin by making a somewhat rough and subjective observation: the *Limitless Ocean Cycle* is unusual among the Tibetan encyclopedic works that have become available in that it aims not to delimit and then to dissect the knowable, but rather to challenge us throughout with its irreducible, infinite grandeur. This is not to say that the notion that knowledge is without limits is a particularly novel one for Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism; the point here is that while the scholastic pedagogy prefers to treat carefully circumscribed bodies of learning, this is not entirely true of Karma Pakshi. He wishes, instead, to confront us at every turn with what he terms "the trio of nonrealization, mistaken realization, and partial realization" (*ma-rtoḡs log-rtoḡs phyogs-rtoḡs gsum*) and thereby to make of ignorance and doubt catalysts for the emergence of an enlightened awareness.

Let us attempt to see just how this is evidenced within the text itself. One of the opuscles making up the *Limitless Ocean Cycle* is a peculiar work called the '*Dod-pa rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*' (The Limitless Ocean of Tenets).⁶⁹ Its relation to the entire cycle is known to us in very general terms through references to it found in other sections of the *Limitless Ocean Cycle* itself, for instance:

The *Gdams-ngag rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas* (The Limitless Ocean of Instructions), the *Zhus-lun rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas* (The Limitless Ocean of Dialogue),⁷⁰ and the '*Dod-pa rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*' (The Limitless Ocean of Tenets) are all-embracing: the exposition of these does not belong to any sequence [that is to say, they do not have set positions within the sequence of the nine yānas].... They are the general framework for the whole....⁷¹

In what way does the *Limitless Ocean of Tenets* "embrace everything"? What kind of "general framework" does it provide? Turning to the text, we find a strange list of conflicting doctrines, dozens of them, with a minimum of explanation and analysis, for instance:

It is held that saṃsāra has a beginning and end, and it is held that saṃsāra is without beginning or end. It is held that minds are of identical nature throughout all saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, and it is held that all minds are of differing natures. It is held that sentient beings are newly produced, and it is held that sentient beings are not newly produced.⁷² It is held that in understanding and practicing by means of various reasonings, one definitively establishes [the doctrine] by reasoning, and it is held that one definitively establishes it [without relying on natural reason] through the transmitted precepts spoken by all the buddhas, and it is held that the trio of Buddha, doctrine, and teaching has not been experienced as emerging and thus is not. It is held that there is no karma, and it is held that there is karma and the ripening of karma. It is held that when offspring are born to the males and females of all creatures, they are generated by body [alone], and [it is held] that they are generated by both body and mind. It is held that there is a connection between the illusion and the illusionist, and it is held that there is no connection between the illusion and the illusionist.⁷³ It is held that there is a connection between the echo and the place where the echo occurs, and it is held that there is no connection between the echo and the place where the echo occurs. It is held that there is a connection between the cause and the result, but if there were a connection between the cause and the result, then there would be the fault of

the Buddha reverting into sentient being, just as the result reverts to the cause; and if there were no connection between the cause and the result, there would be the fault of meaninglessness [with respect to the proposition that] all phenomena subsumed in saṃsāra and the path to nirvāṇa are formed [as the results of causes]. It is held that there is a connection between both body and mind, and it is held that there is no connection between body and mind. It is held that there is ultimate truth, and it is held that there is the truth of superficial appearance. It is held that the eight aggregates of consciousness have objects, it is held that they are subjects, and it is held that they have neither object, nor causal conditions. It is held that scriptural authority is true and that reason is untrue, and it is held that reason is true and scriptural authority untrue. It is held that there is a connection between all material substances and their shadows, and it is held that they have no connection with their shadows. It is held that there is a connection between all the particulars of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and the names by which they are designated. It is held that [for some types of sentient creatures] fire relieves the affliction of thirst, and it is held that water makes [those creatures] warm and thirsty. It is held that the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa have a beginning and an end; and it is held that if [they] were incessant, then [everything] would have to come to be everywhere; and it is held that, abiding without going and coming [in a state of equipoise], they have come to be all-pervading. It is held that there is a connection between cloud and sky, and it is held that there is no connection between cloud and sky. It is held that there is no connection between day and night, and it is held that there is a connection between day and night. It is held that there is a connection between this birth and the next, and it is held that there is no connection between this birth and the next, and it is held that there is no birth at all after this one. It is held that there is a connection between fire and smoke, and it is held that there is no connection between fire and smoke. It is held that there are connections among the three poisons [stupidity, hatred, passion], and it is held that there is no connection among the three poisons. It is held that there is a connection between both happiness and suffering, and it is held that there is no connection between both happiness and suffering. It is held that there is a connection between both the locus of a real property and reality per se, and it is held that there is no connection between the locus of a real property and reality per se. Please know, by means of the two types of epistemic authority [perception and inference], the inconceivable extent to which appearances of there being connections are imputed where there are no connections. One who comprehends everything [in this way] is the king of all-knowers and omniscient ones!⁷⁴

Occasionally, however, the purpose of this catalogue is made explicit and clear:

It says in the transmission of the *Prajñāpāramitā* (The Perfection of Discernment):

Tenets are like the edge of a sword. Tenets are like a poisonous plant. Tenets are like a flaming pit. Tenets are like the [poisonous] *kimpaka* fruit. Tenets are like spittle. Tenets are like an impure container. Tenets are reviled by all.⁷⁵

Therefore, whatever tenets—whether good, bad, or mediocre—you might harbor are the causes of good, bad, or mediocre [conditions of] saṃsāra. They are devoid of the life-force of nirvāṇa. Therefore, whatever tenets, hankerings, or particular philosophical

positions you hold, they cause you to be buddhalless and make you meet with saṃsāra. You should know the masses of tenets, [each one] in particular.

In all the outer and inner philosophical systems there are various tenets. They appear all mixed together. The wise appear to have tenets; the ignorant appear to have tenets, too. Because tenets are all-pervading, I pray that the wise analyze them. It is held that Buddhahood is attained from having tenets; it is maintained that Buddhahood is attained from not having tenets; and it is maintained that Buddhahood is attained from removing both extremes. I pray that you direct your attention to each and every such tenet in turn. . . . It is held that Buddhahood is attained from gradually traversing the stages and paths; and it is held that Buddhahood is attained naturally, not performing the slightest virtue, not repenting of the slightest sin. The number of tenets is vast; because thought cannot embrace [all] tenets, do you not harbor doubts as to what is genuine?⁷⁶

If you do not doubt, Karma Pakshi seems now to be telling us, you very well ought to do so. Why so?

The genuinely skeptical portion of the argument resembles the tenth mode of classical skepticism in the West, according to which the conflict of views on a particular topic leads us to withhold judgement when we find that there is no uncontested criterion that will resolve the conflict in question.⁷⁷ Thus, Karma Pakshi's procedure consists of juxtaposing opinions on diverse topics, such as the limits of the round of rebirth (saṃsāra), the nature of karma, the creation of sentient beings, the relationship between reason and faith, and so on. The insights of the great mediative traditions are to be realized in a breakthrough rendered possible, in part, by this ground-clearing operation, but their achievement is not, in any straightforward sense, the result of the dialectical procedure alone. Thus he continues:

You must realize the perversity of the Buddha. You must realize the perversity of the Dharma and Saṃgha. You must realize the perversity of the deity and of the mantra. . . . There is a limitless ocean of tenets pertaining to the dharmas of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and to the particular philosophical systems. You must realize it to be neither conjoined with, nor separate from, the limitless ocean of realization, which is free from all acceptance and rejection, and which is spontaneously present gnosis.⁷⁸

Moreover:

Though there appear all the dharmas of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, various philosophical systems, and the inconceivably many adherences, the root of all of them is the essential abiding nature of actual entities (*drago-po gshis-kyi gnus-lugs*), naturally and spontaneously present, the expanse of reality (*chos-kyi dbyings*) that is limitlessly extensive and without measure. Without limit and center it can be labeled neither "Buddha" nor "sentient being." All that appear, the dharmas of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, abiding naturally and essentially, cannot by any means be abandoned or acquired through effort and practice. Such is the essential abiding nature of the actuality of mind. . . .⁷⁹

Thus the truly significant foundation we seek, which can only be known intuitively, is the enlightenment of the Great Seal (Mahamudrā) and Great Perfection traditions and all that this entails. The *Limitless Ocean of Tenets* embraces the entire content of the *Limitless Ocean Cycle* by calling upon us to question any and all doctrines to

which we might adhere before we have gained that realization. Like some of the skeptical fideist philosophers and theologians of seventeenth-century Europe,⁸⁰ Karma Pakshi maintains that conflict among differing philosophical and religious doctrines must lead us to doubt and a suspension of judgment. In this case, however, that suspension provides an opening not for Christian faith, but precisely for a letting go of the limiting views and opinions that obstruct our realization of the liberating vision of the Buddhist enlightenment, as taught in the Great Seal and Great Perfection mediational precepts of the Kagyüpa and Nyingmapa traditions. If, then, I am reading Karma Pakshi correctly, doubt provides us with a pathway leading to realization, so that any tenet belonging to the trio of nonrealization, mistaken realization, or partial realization may legitimately become a point of departure for the pursuit of awakening. This approach to doctrine may be exemplified by Karma Pakshi's distinctive attitude towards other religions. While his views here are difficult to interpret precisely, they do appear to confirm my basic thesis. To see this we may turn to the *Bstan-pa rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas* (The Limitless Ocean of the Teaching), where, after making some standard assaults on the non-Buddhist *mu-tek-pa* (*mu-steps-pa*, *ñirika*, "extremist") positions, he continues:

Birth in the *mu-tek-pa* family has not arisen without cause. Because the causes [for achieving circumstances favorable to enlightenment] are amassed, the *mu-tek-pa* paths tend towards the path, and their philosophical systems bring about a change of mind. One must not, then, disparage the *mu-tek-pas*. Again, they magnify the teaching, for the philosophical systems of *mu-tek-pa* teachers are said to be miraculous displays of the Conqueror. . . . *Mu* is the expanse itself, and *tek* is gnosis.⁸¹

It will be worthwhile now to inquire briefly into the sources of Karma Pakshi's inspiration. In the foregoing discussion we have several times met with a phrase that occurs often in the *Autobiographical Writings*, that is, the "trio of non-realization, mistaken realization, and partial realization." It seems in fact to be drawn from a verse that we find repeated on numerous occasions throughout the *Limitless Ocean Cycle*, and that paraphrases a verse from the thirteenth chapter of the *Guhyaagarhatantra* (The Tantra of the Secret Nucleus), the foremost of the Nyingmapa tantras of the mahāyoga class.⁸² The cryptic verse in question reads:

Intention, discipline, and esotericism,
Nonrealization and mistaken realization,
Partial realization and not realizing what is genuine
Give rise to doubts about this absolute!⁸³

According to the traditional exegesis of the *Secret Nucleus*, each of the terms in the first three lines refers specifically to one or another of the philosophical systems, or vehicles, that is ranked below the mahāyoga.⁸⁴ Before Karma Pakshi's age, the pandita Rongzom Chöki Zangpo (eleventh century), in commenting upon Padmasambhava's *Man-ngag lla-ba'i phreng-ba* (The Garland of Views: An Esoteric Precept), had already utilized this passage as the framework for his analysis of the master's presentation of the various philosophical and spiritual systems.⁸⁵ Now, Karma Pakshi tells us:

The words and meanings [of the verse just cited] have been amply set forth in verse in the *Limitless Ocean of the Teaching*. . . .⁸⁶

As that work never attempts, in the available texts, a word-by-word exposition of the key verse, it is plausible to conclude that Karma Pakshi means here that the *Limitless Ocean of the Teaching* is in its entirety a revelation of the full implications of the one four-line mnemonic. But if this mnemonic provides some insight into Karma Pakshi's general approach as illustrated earlier with reference to the "extremist" *mu-tek-pa*, that is, his tendency to move from exposition through doubt to the triumphant assertion of the Great Perfection, still it does not reveal the source of his overall archetypic. This, however, may be reasonably identified with the nine-yāna system of the Nyingmapa, above all as it is elaborated in connection with the exegesis of the anyoga-tantras.⁸⁷ Karma Pakshi's extensive treatment of the anyoga would in fact be noted by the Nyingmapa polemicist Sokdokpa Lodrö Gyeltsen (b. 1552),⁸⁸ and Karma Pakshi himself unequivocally states his opinion concerning the crucial role of the anyoga as follows:

Because the anyoga is the general transmission of all the vehicles, all vehicles and philosophical systems are distinguished and established within the anyoga. . . . Know that the anyoga is like a vast ocean, in comparison with which all the other vehicles and philosophical systems are like rivers and streams. All vehicles are subsumed in the anyoga. The utterly perfect fruit of anyoga is the Great Perfection. . . .⁸⁹

We may say summarily that Karma Pakshi's view of the general architecture of the path is derived from the *Mdo dngongs-pa 'dus-pa* (The Sutra Gathering All Intentions) and other fundamental works of the anyoga, that his treatment of specific systems seems to be grounded in the teachings of the *Secret Nucleus* and its exegetical tradition, belonging to the mahāyoga, and that the goal to which he seeks to guide us is that of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs-pa-chen-po*, or *atiyoga*). In the *Limitless Ocean Cycle*, then, we have perhaps the grandest attempt, prior to the age of that crown jewel of Tibetan visionaries, Longchen Ramjampa (1308–1363; see chapter 9), to elaborate a syncretic approach to the Buddhist traditions of Tibet, one based upon the peculiar traditions of the Nyingmapa school.⁹⁰

What of Karma Pakshi's Kagyüpa affiliations? Often he refers to himself as one who is blessed by the lineage of Nāropa,⁹¹ Marpa's Indian teacher and the fountain-head of the Kagyüpa tradition; and the tantric transmissions of the new translation schools are considered at length in connection with the mahāyoga sections of the *Limitless Ocean Cycle*.⁹² In the *Autobiographical Writings*, he insists, at one point, that the Great Perfection and the Great Seal differ only in name,⁹³ which no doubt accounts for Karma Chakme's references to Karma Pakshi as a precursor of Chakme's own synthetic teaching of the "coalescence of Great Seal and Great Perfection" (*phyag-rdzogs zung-'jug*).⁹⁴ Still, the thrust of the *Limitless Ocean Cycle* is without doubt Nyingmapa, a fact which may explain its extreme rarity even in Karma Kagyüpa circles. While Karma Pakshi certainly anticipates much of the later Kagyüpa/Nyingmapa eclecticism that in time came to pervade the various Kagyüpa lineages,⁹⁵ his actual impact on the later masters of these schools remains unclear.⁹⁶

How are we to assess Karma Pakshi's contributions? What is certainly most distinctive about his thought is the robust skepticism we have seen presented in the *Limit-*

less *Ocean of Tenets*. Though skeptical arguments of many kinds were well known to Tibetan scholars, Karma Pakshi appears to have given much freer rein to this tendency than we find elsewhere, except perhaps in some of the tantras of the Great Perfection teaching, which must be counted among his major sources of inspiration. In his exceptional deployment of skeptical argument, he may perhaps be described in certain respects as an antischolastic. Nevertheless, I am inclined to hold that his doubts were less unusual than his manner of expressing them; for, though the contemplative traditions frequently employed informal skeptical arguments in connection with meditational training, their philosophical articulation tended to be cautiously restrained.⁹⁷ One result was that, although the tension between positive reason and skeptical doubt did impart a measure of impetus to the development of Tibetan Buddhist intellectual traditions, this tension seldom emerged so forcefully as it did in the writings of the second Karmapa. The dilemmas posed by the presence of strong skeptical undercurrents within the tradition were resolved in part, as we shall see emphasized in turning now to Dölpopa, by ensuring that one's reflections were securely anchored in the interpretation of scripture.

Dölpopa on the Age of Perfection

Reason and skepticism, which turns reason back against itself, though perhaps sometimes regarded as describing a binary opposition in the field of thought, by no means demarcate the full range of thought's varied ways. In Tibetan Buddhist writing, poetic and hermeneutical modes of reflection are also very well represented. The historical theories of Dölpopa offer a particularly remarkable example of hermeneutical reflection.⁹⁸

To begin to place Dölpopa in the Tibetan world of the fourteenth century, and to understand his own world-making activity, which is reflected in his view of Buddhist history, we need to examine briefly some aspects of his life.⁹⁹ The biography included in the first volume of Dölpopa's collected works begins, indeed, with a series of accounts of his past lives, making it one of the documents of special interest for the study of the emergence of the characteristically Tibetan institution of emanational hierarchy (*sprul-sku*).¹⁰⁰ Like Karma Pakshi, Dölpopa regarded himself as the present instantiation of a being whose personal history spanned aeons. And again like the Karmapa, and several other major emanational lines in Tibet, including the Dalai Lamas, Dölpopa identified himself with Tibet's patron bodhisattva, Avalokiteśvara, and his Tibetan emanation in the form of King Songtsen Gampo. He thus was aligned with a cult that had already given cosmological meaning to Tibet in its relation with the Buddhist universe (see chapter 8). Dölpopa was further considered to have been the great Kagyüpa master Drigung Kyopa Jiketsungmön (1143–1217) in his preceding lifetime,¹⁰¹ and like that master he was also identified with the Indian philosopher Nāgārjuna. Moreover, in the twenty-seventh of the rebirths listed, he had been Kalki Pundarikā, the "king of the clans" (*rigs-lan*) of the kingdom of Shambhala, the guardian realm of Kālacakra, the Wheel of Time.¹⁰² This will be seen below to be a detail of special significance. The biography of Dölpopa includes tales of thirty-two lifetimes in all, matching the number of the Buddha's major marks, and so representing the culmination of Dölpopa's course in the attainment of perfect buddhahood.

In its general features, Dölpopa's life story is not at all atypical; its pattern is entirely of a piece with the biographies of other leading lamas, in particular those of the fourteenth century. Born in the region of Dölpo, in what is today far northwestern Nepal,¹⁰³ he traveled as a young man to Central Tibet, where for a number of years he studied with one leading teacher after another in succession. His pursuit of Buddhist learning was wide-ranging and open: monastic discipline and the ethical path of the bodhisattva, epistemology and Madhyamaka philosophy, tantric and yogic instruction in a variety of lineages—all figure prominently among his studies. In his thirties, he arrived at the hermitage of Jonang to learn the esoteric teachings of the *Kālacakra*tantra (The Tantra of the Wheel of Time) from the adept Yönten Gyamtsho (1260–1327).¹⁰⁴ and it was here that his quest found its end. He became the master's foremost disciple and lineage heir, and it was under Dölpopa's leadership that Jonang began to emerge as the center of a distinct sect and philosophical tradition. The memorial *caitya* that he constructed to honor his teacher became one of Tibet's celebrated religious monuments, graphically representing his vision of the Buddhist cosmos as a whole.¹⁰⁵ During his last thirty years, he taught widely throughout Central Tibet and Tsang, attracting a large following and leaving an enduring impression on Tibetan Buddhist practice and thought.

In some respects, this is the quintessential Tibetan "local boy makes good" story: a youth of humble origins, belonging to a religious family, goes forth to study widely and eventually becomes the disciple of some of the leading masters of his time.¹⁰⁶ Attaching himself to one lineage in particular, he becomes established as a prominent teacher in his own right, and his career begins to unfold as the actualization of the tradition to which he is heir, a cosmic event understood in its relation to a history spanning many lives, and embodying an entire cosmology. Where Dölpopa is perhaps a distinctive figure, if not an entirely unique one, is in the self-conscious determination with which he elaborated this enterprise, so as to generate an altogether distinctive material and doctrinal expression of it.¹⁰⁷ This is above all in evidence in the case of his foundation of the great memorial *caitya* for his teacher, a *caitya* designed as a grand embodiment of the universe with its myriad Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and tantric divinities. Dölpopa's own abundant writings about *caityas* make it entirely clear that he saw its construction as an event of transcending importance,¹⁰⁸ and it is of crucial significance that his distinctive teaching of "extrinsic emptiness" is said to have been proclaimed at this time.¹⁰⁹ Here, however, our chief concern will be the vision of historical time that his cosmic vision entailed.

Doxography and History

In the Indian and Tibetan traditions of Buddhist scholasticism, the study of the several doctrinal and philosophical approaches to the interpretation of the teaching was in large measure a matter of doxography.¹¹⁰ The perspectives of texts and authors were allocated to distinctive "schools," whereupon the primary task for the doxographer became the characterization of the doctrines of the schools in question. Unremarkably, the doxographic approach tended to flatten out distinctions among authors allocated to a particular school and works attributed to a single author. It tended, too, to ignore history almost entirely. Without much exaggeration, we may say that, though Buddhist philosophy indeed had a history in India and Tibet, there was nevertheless no history of philosophy.

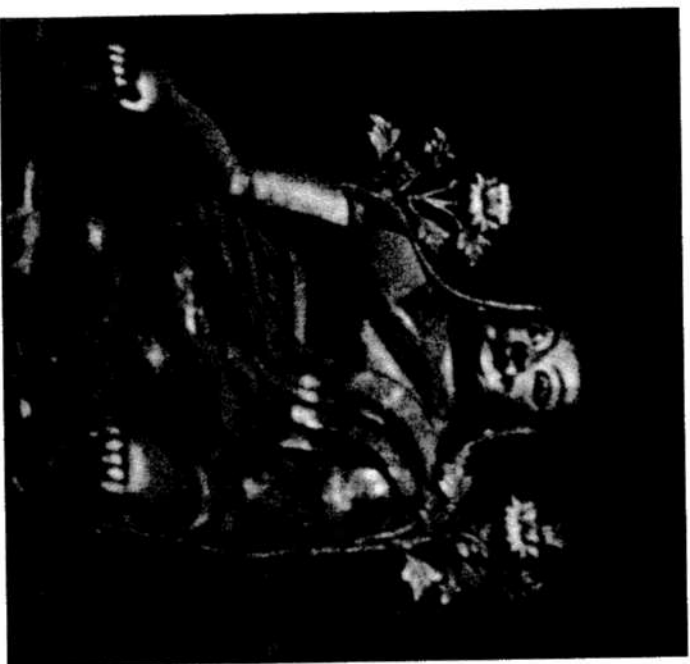


Figure 6.2 Dölpopa. A modern image at Se Monastery in Sichuan.

Or almost none. It is clear, for instance, that the authors of philosophical commentaries in Sanskrit often had knowledge of the earlier commentarial history of the texts with which they were concerned. That is to say, they knew, more or less, the chronological sequence in which the earlier commentaries were composed, and who it was that was refuting or defending whom. So, for instance, Candrakīrti on Buddhapaṇita and Bhāvaviveka.¹¹¹ But we may point, too, to other examples: Haribhadra's references to the earlier commentarial tradition of the *Abhisamayāṅkāra* (The Ornament of Emergent Realization),¹¹² for example, or Yaśomitra's to that of the *Abhidharmakośa* (The Treasury of the Meta-Doctrine).¹¹³

One of the contributions the Tibetans certainly made to the Indian traditions they inherited was to accentuate and elaborate the apparently thin historical elements found in Indian commentaries and doxographical writings. Despite the tendency within the monastic colleges to deprecate history as a frivolous distraction,¹¹⁴ historical and legendary narratives were much loved by Tibetan authors, so that the frequent incorporations of hagiographical and historical elements within Tibetan exegetical writings is not at all surprising. For the most part, in Tibet as elsewhere in the Buddhist world, doctrinal history emphasized the succession of lineages, and here innovation and change were frequently effected in an effort to establish authority by demonstrating the invariability of what had come down from the past.¹¹⁵ No doubt, too,

the great emphasis on lineage histories as sources of religious legitimation within the esoteric traditions of Tibet did much to encourage this tendency.¹¹⁶ In some cases, particular currents in Buddhist philosophical thought became the subject matter for lineage history as well, and this perhaps influenced the doxographical literature: we may point to the fourteenth-century *Grub-miha* (Philosophical Systems) of Ūpa Losel. Here, the first folios provide short accounts of the lives of the great Indian Buddhist philosophers—Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, and others—drawing upon, for instance, the relevant prophetic verses of the *Mañjuśrīmūlāntara* (The Root Tantra of Mañjuśrī).¹¹⁷

Still, the incorporation in doxography of short hagiographical digressions is not what we generally mean when we speak of the history of philosophy. That we do not use this phrase univocally in our own intellectual community, and that history of philosophy in the West is indeed a contested category, has been well and concisely argued by Richard Rorty in an exceptional article entitled "The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres."¹¹⁸ But in the present context, we may be excused if our usage remains a bit rougher than Rorty would countenance there: the history of philosophy may be understood generally as involving the conception that historical change and intellectual change are rather deeply interconnected, that historical time is not just a container in which ideas indifferently occur, like furnishings that may be rearranged anywhere in a room. There is a temporal order to the world, and the historical articulation of ideas reflects it.

Buddhist doctrine, in certain of its aspects, is certainly capable of harmonization with such a perspective.¹¹⁹ The notion of the decline of the doctrine, for instance, correlated the degeneration of human life in several spheres with the corruption of views. The ramifications of this and allied conceptions were influential far beyond India, where they originated, and shaped East Asian Buddhism in important respects.¹²⁰ The belief that a particular scripture or doctrine was especially suited to a particular age was among its important entailments.¹²¹ But this is not quite the same as the effort to read the earlier history of philosophy as a disclosure of the changing shape of lived time.

Now, there are a number of occasions where we do find Tibetan authors going beyond the mere superaddition of hagiography to doxography to suggest, at least, a more genuinely *historical* approach to Buddhist thought: notable in this regard is the work of Serdok Panchen Śākya Chokden (1428–1507), who authored important histories of both epistemology and Madhyamaka thought.¹²² Gelukpa schoolmen, moreover, though coming from a tradition that generally discouraged the study of history, nevertheless did have opinions about the historical unfolding of the doctrine, which we find very well articulated in such writings as the introduction to the great *Grub-miha* *lhun-po mdes-rgyan* (Philosophical Systems: The Ornament Beautifying the World Mountain) of Cangkyā Rolpe Dorje (1717–1786).¹²³ Here, the doctrinal history of the teaching is depicted as a series of oscillations between brilliant articulations of the Buddha's intention, and the degeneration of understanding in the generations that followed each such disclosure, this cyclical process reaching its culmination, for the Tibetans at least, with the appearance of Je Rinpoche Tsongkhapa Lozang Trakpa (1357–1419). The repeated movement towards refinement of the doctrine, however, occurs in a contrapuntal relationship with a pattern of general decline, so that we arrive at the only apparently paradoxical conclusion that, as Cangkyā writes:

Even as behavior has visibly spread
To new depths of degeneration,
Even now through [Je Rinpoche's] grace,
The secret of the Sage's words has not vanished.¹²⁴

Dölpopa's Teaching and the Four Ages of the Doctrine

The Tibetan Buddhist school generally represented as standing in the most extreme opposition to the Gelukpa in matters of doctrinal interpretation, namely the Jonangpa, was also among those that elaborated a distinctive view of the history of the doctrine.¹²⁵ The controversial philosophical teachings of Dölpopa, the first great exponent of a distinctively Jonangpa viewpoint, have aroused growing interest among specialists in Tibetan and Buddhist Studies since Ruegg first described the doctrines of the Jonangpa school as they are reported in the *Grub-mtha' shel-gyi me-long* (The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems) of Taken Lozang Chöki Nyima (1737–1802) and so established the unique position of the Jonangpa tradition in Tibetan Buddhist thought.¹²⁶ The key doctrine of the absolute's "extrinsic emptiness" (*gzhan-srong*) with respect to superficial phenomena was there presented in some detail to contemporary students of Buddhist thought for the first time, though the perspective represented by Tuken was that of a determined opponent of the Jonangpa "heresy." More recent contributions have made it clear that the intellectual and spiritual legacy of Dölpopa has remained influential among the traditions of Tibetan Buddhism down to the present time, whether this be through the extreme antipathy to his views evinced by his philosophical opponents, or through the ongoing attempt to retrieve and reformulate what seem to be his most enduring insights.¹²⁷ An entry into his way of thought may be found in his interpretations of the Prajñāpāramitā, the perfection of wisdom, or discernment.

As we have seen in chapter 5 (p. 80), the *Sandhinimocanaśūtra* (The Sūtra Which Sets Free the [Buddha's] Intention) was invoked by scholars who held that the second of the Buddha's three "turns of the wheel of the doctrine" was a provisional teaching surpassed by the third and final turn, which alone was definitive and unsurpassed.¹²⁸ The paradigms of the second turn, however, are generally thought to be the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras, and the most authoritative commentaries on their intention to be the Madhyamaka writings of Nāgārjuna. Like those who opposed his teaching, Dölpopa clearly regarded these to be in some sense definitive too. We may ask then how Dölpopa sought to resolve the apparent conflicts to which his position gave rise. This question, certainly, is of some importance: Tsongkhapa's decisive rejection of Dölpopa's approach to interpretation, and the formation of the Gelukpa commentarial tradition as one in many respects opposed to the Jonangpa, are among the issues that must be related directly to it.¹²⁹

Dölpopa, though perhaps in some respects an eccentric interpreter, was not so overwhelmed by his own vision that he lost sight of the foremost objections that might be raised to it. Scattered throughout his writings are hints about how he thought these were to be met; on the question of the interpretation of the second turn of the wheel, a comment responding precisely to the line of criticism that Tsongkhapa would later refine and defend is found in his most famous work, the *Ri-chos nges-don rgya-msho* (Teachings for Mountain Retreat: The Ocean of Certainty):

Some hold the [*Sandhinimocanaśūtra*] to be of provisional meaning, but this is unreasonable, for such has been neither declared [in scripture], nor is it established by reason, and therefore [the sūtra in question] is of definitive meaning and unobjectionable.

It is objected, however, that, because the middle turn is Madhyamaka, and the last Mind Only, then it is the middle that remains of definitive meaning, while the last remains provisional.

But this is most exceedingly unreasonable, because there is neither scriptural authority nor reason [establishing] the final turn to be the proper canon (*rang-gzhung*) of Mind Only, for its teaching surpasses Mind Only, and it teaches the culminating significance of the Great Madhyamaka, and teaches [this] in accord with the culminating significance of the Vajrayāna.¹³⁰

It is clear why some such maneuver appealed to Dölpopa and other Tibetan proponents of similar positions; for sūtras typically considered paradigmatic of the third turn of the wheel, such as the *Lañkāvatāra* and the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, do indeed teach much that surpasses Mind Only, at least given the relatively restricted perspective on that philosophical school that had come to dominate the doxographical literature. Indeed, these sūtras are not infrequently cited as authorities by major teachers of the Madhyamaka, like Candrakīrti and Śāntideva, and this was taken by Dölpopa and his adherents as providing some support for the conception of a "Great Madhyamaka" tradition surpassing the more widely known Madhyamaka philosophical schools, as understood, once again, according to the doxographical stereotypes.¹³¹ Finally, but certainly not least, there were many in Tibet who held that the Vajrayāna, the way of mantra, was in crucial respects a "higher" teaching than that of the sūtras, and that the apparent affinities of the tantras with at least some of the sūtras of the third turn are more pronounced than with the sūtras of the middle turn.¹³² But where does this leave the Prajñāpāramitā itself? Dölpopa's discussion continues:

The second turn . . . is not taught to be of provisional meaning and surpassed, etc., for the reason that it teaches Prajñāpāramitā, but rather because it teaches that which is not intrinsically empty to be intrinsically empty, and for other such reasons. The Prajñāpāramitā that is unborn, unceasing, primordially pacific, etc., is taught in the third turn and in the Vajrayāna. But it is taught [in these three respective divisions of the teaching] unclearly, clearly, and exceedingly clearly. . . .

In short, Dölpopa suggests that the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras, in their verbal form, do not always clearly articulate the teaching that is in fact their intention, namely, the teaching of the nucleus or inherent potential for buddhahood shared by all living beings, which is also known as nondual gnosis, the Great Seal, the enlightened mind in its absolute aspect, et cetera.¹³³ And this he identifies as well with emptiness, reality, Perfection of Discernment, and so on.¹³⁴ Dölpopa in this way combines the formulation of a qualitative gradation of the teaching with a type of esotericism.¹³⁵ the *Kalacakra Tantra*, for instance, is in many respects held to be superior to the *Asyaśāstrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (The Eight Thousand-Line Perfection of Wisdom), but their essence is suffused with the same radiant light, which just shines more brightly in the former. And this, he goes on to say,

is the culminating emptiness-cum-compassion, means-cum-wisdom, that is the coalescent union of bliss and emptiness, the sole savor; and this is also the sole savor of the union of the expanse (*dhyaṃs*, *dhātu*) and awareness, in which the culminating abiding nature of reality, as noesis and noetic object, is one. Such is the real (*mūṣṇan-nyid-pa*) Prajñāpāramitā, the culmination of the Prajñāpāramitā of the ground and the Prajñāpāramitā of the result, the quiddity of [their] indivisible essence. The path whereby it is disclosed and the canon which teaches these [topics under discussion] are only conventionally designated (*byags-pa-tsam*).

Dōpopa, however, does not provide us merely with such general and idealized accounts of the Prajñāpāramitā teaching; his view of Prajñāpāramitā is developed in impressive detail in four major commentaries and several short commentarial notes devoted to the Prajñāpāramitā literature. The most important of these works are a detailed commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, and separate commentaries on the *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikā* (The Eighteen Thousand-Line Perfection of Wisdom), the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* (The Twenty-five Thousand-Line Perfection of Wisdom), and the *Śatasāhasrikā* (The Hundred Thousand-Line Perfection of Wisdom).¹³⁶ While a preliminary survey of this material suggests that Dōpopa generally restrained his inclination to read his philosophy of extrinsic emptiness into these texts, nevertheless he does not hesitate to articulate it when remarking on those passages in which the relative "unclearly" of the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras seems to intimate the "clarity" of the sūtras of the third turn, or the "exceeding clarity" of the tantras. Thus, in a note on the sixth fascicle of the *Śatasāhasrikā* he writes that

the absolute ground of emptiness is extrinsic emptiness, self-emergent gnosis, the changeless absolute, the nucleus of the [Buddha] who has fared well (*sugatagarbha*, *bde-bar gshegs-pa'i smying-po*), the Great Madhyamaka, the real Prajñāpāramitā and the culminating Secret Mantra. . . .¹³⁷

And elsewhere, where it is a question of the innate virtue of all dharmas, "which being insubstantial are empty, naturally luminous (*rang-bzhin-gyis 'od-gsal-ba*, *prakṛitiprakāśā*), and therefore good (*dge-ba*, *kuśāla*)." Dōpopa briefly enumerates the deities of the Kālacakra, Hevajra, and other maṇḍalas, who, like Rūpavajrā ("she who embodies the adamantine essence of form"), are taken to be apotheosized dharmas; for it is precisely the goodness of those dharmas, as disclosed in the Prajñāpāramitā, that is defined in the tantras.¹³⁸

But how do Dōpopa's views about this relate to his peculiar views about Buddhist history? He offers some elements of his response to this question in a letter addressed to his disciples, in which he summarizes his views regarding a wide variety of particular topics:

Relying upon the determination of the many exalted sources in which the Buddha, the Transcendent Lord, has definitively spoken, and on the autocommentaries that he has clearly spoken, I have had much to teach you that is profound and especially exalted, and generally causes the increase of discriminative intelligence. Concerning that, following the flawless doctrines and persons of the Kṛtayaṅga [the Perfect Age] endowed as they were with measureless qualities, there emerged, among the famous doctrines and persons of the Tretāyuga [the Third Age] and later ages, those that have had repute while being in fact untrue. So it is inappropriate to have confidence in them.

Now, then, it is well ascertained by pure scriptural authority and reason that the widespread assertion that the third wheel of the transmitted precepts is Mind Only is untrue. The *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* (The Ornament of Mahāyāna Sūtras) and all the other doctrines of Maitreya are ascertained to be texts of the Great Madhyamaka; the *Buddhāvataṃsaka* (The Bounteousness of the Buddha), the *Mahāvairocana* (The Great Decease), etc., that are renowned as the sūtras of Mind Only, are ascertained to be the sūtras of the Great Madhyamaka; and Ārya Asaṅga and his brother [Vasubandhu], and ācārya Dignāga, and others, many of whom are renowned as scholars of Mind Only, are also ascertained to be Madhyamikas. This widespread assertion that they have commented on Madhyamaka in the manner of Mind Only is also ascertained to be untrue. . . .

It says in the *Saṃdhiṃmucanasūtra*, among pronouncements of the Buddha, the Transcendent Lord: "Then the bodhisattva Paramathasamudgata said to the Transcendent Lord, 'The Transcendent Lord has at first, in the land of Vārāṇasī in the Mṛgadava at Rāṣṭapana, on behalf of those who had truly entered the vehicle of the pious attendants, turned the amazing and wonderful wheel of the doctrine teaching the four sublime truths, which had not been turned previously in accord with the doctrine by either any god or any man in the world. That turning of the wheel of doctrine by the Transcendent Lord is surpassed, contextually relative, of provisional meaning, and verbally debatable. Then, beginning with the phenomenal absence of essence, the Transcendent Lord has turned the second most amazing and wonderful wheel of the doctrine, speaking of emptiness on behalf of those who have truly entered the greater vehicle, taking as the point of departure the absence of production, the absence of cessation, primordial quiescence, and the natural, complete attainment of nirvāṇa. That turning of the wheel of doctrine by the Transcendent Lord is surpassed, contextually relative, of provisional meaning, and verbally debatable. Then, the Transcendent Lord, beginning with the phenomenal absence of essence, on behalf of those who have truly entered all vehicles, turned the exceedingly amazing and wonderful third wheel of the doctrine, which is endowed with excellent analysis. This turning of the wheel of doctrine by the Transcendent Lord is unsurpassed, not contextually relative, and of definitive meaning. It is not subject to verbal debate."¹³⁹ In these and other ways he has said that [the third turning of the wheel] is endowed with profound distinctions.

Ācārya Dharmamitra and others say that in this passage the middle transmission [referred to] is the Madhyamaka and is of provisional meaning; while the final transmission [referred to] is Mind Only and is of definitive meaning; and they call it a confusion to make [Madhyamaka,] which is not refuted by reason, into provisional meaning; and [Mind Only,] which is refuted, into definitive meaning. But in this case, their rebuttal is directed against the Buddha, the Transcendent Lord, and so will be regarded by believable witnesses as confusion compounded by confusion! For there can be none greater than the Buddha; and he has not taught the final [turning of] the wheel to be Mind Only; and both the middle and the final [transmissions] equally teach absence of essence, nonproduction, noncessation, original quiescence, and the complete nirvāṇa that is naturally attained; and it is a grotesque perversion to hold that he has said what he has not said, namely, that Madhyamaka is of provisional meaning while Mind Only is of definitive meaning. . . .

The intention is to distinguish intrinsic emptiness and extrinsic emptiness. Those who do not do so and say that it is all only intrinsic emptiness, and that emptiness is not determined in terms of extrinsic emptiness, but that only intrinsic emptiness determines emptiness, and maintain that all the [scriptural] statements that ultimately

there is existence, permanence, self, purity, and truth are of provisional meaning, while all the statements of nonexistence, impermanence, nonself, impurity, and rotteness are of definitive meaning, and that the nine or twelve absolutes, the ultimate body of reality, the essential body, natural luminosity, natural coemergence, natural great bliss, the naturally innate, natural nirvāṇa, the natural and spontaneously achieved maṇḍala, and so on, as well as the natural abiding buddha-family (*gotro*) with its many classifications, the ultimate nucleus of the Taḥgaga (*taḥgagatagurba*) endowed with many attributes, and so forth, are to be held with respect to reality but that reality itself is to be held as intrinsically empty—these and more are so many perverse views, coarse and bad views, without number. *All are to be dispelled by making a genuine witness of the scriptural authority and reason of the Kṛtavyuga tradition.* Though there are many who adhere to the evidence of the Treṭayuga and later polluted and flawed scriptural authorities and reasons, these are in fact inappropriate as genuine witnesses. Therefore, do not follow in their path of error!¹⁴⁰

In these concluding sentences, Dōlpopa invokes concisely his view of Buddhist history and its implications for Buddhist hermeneutics: he appears to have combined widespread beliefs regarding the decline of the doctrine with the notion of cosmic time, common to several Indian traditions, embodied in the scheme of four yuga, or world ages.¹⁴¹ The task for the would-be interpreter of the Buddha's teaching, accordingly, is to recover the teaching of the Perfect Age, or Kṛtavyuga (*Rdzogs-ldan*), and to shun the misunderstandings foisted upon the teaching by the mundane scholars of the Third Age, or Treṭayuga (*Gsum-ldan*), and later periods.¹⁴² The principles according to which Dōlpopa distinguishes among the ages of the doctrine have yet to be adequately determined on the basis of his writings, though my general impression is that in this regard he is primarily concerned with doxographical classification, allocating philosophical doctrines to "aeons" according to purely dogmatic, and not temporal, criteria. The closest Dōlpopa ever seems to come to a clear articulation of his conception's general architecture is in his *Bka'-bdas bzhi-pa'i don bstan-ris chen-po* (The Great Calculation of the Teaching, Whose Significance Is the Fourth Gathering of the Transmitted Doctrine).¹⁴³ In introducing this work, he writes:

The great four aeons concern the quality of the temporal kalpa, And the lesser four aeons the quality of the teaching.

The first is in years four million,

Three hundred and forty thousand; its fourth part

Is called a "foot," and one, two,

Three, and four feet are, respectively, called

Kali, Dvāpara, Trētā and Kṛt.

As for the lesser four aeons, concerning the quality of the teaching, Their duration is of 21,600 human years,

One-fourth of which provides the measure of each of the four aeons.

Faultless, endowed with all virtues, is the doctrine of the Kṛtavyuga.

Then, when that fourth has passed, there is the "former" Trētā.

When half has passed, it becomes the "latter" Trētā.

The remainder when three-fourths has passed is Dvāpara,

And when not even one-fourth remains there is the Kālyuga,

Said to be the evil doctrine of demons and of barbarians.

Having become well aware of these distinctions, Desiring to purify and to cleanse the teaching, To establish self and others on the excellent path, The excellent doctrine of the Kṛtavyuga should be accepted as one's sole witness.

The Trētā and what follows are flawed,

Their texts corrupted like milk in the market.

In no case should they be accepted as witnesses.

The superior refutes the inferior.

As superior philosophical systems refute their inferiors.¹⁴⁴

The Kṛtavyuga doctrine is the taintless transmission of the Conqueror,

That has been definitively spoken by the lords of the tenth bhūmi

And by the great, systematic path-breakers.¹⁴⁵

It is not at all clear how Dōlpopa wished to apply the four-aeon scheme to the actual historical interpretation of Buddhism, except through an aprioristic allocation of texts and commentators to aeons on the basis of the doctrines they upheld. Based on what we have seen already, what can be offered in the way of a preliminary statement of the theory's application is a brief list of some of the characteristic writings belonging to the Kṛtavyuga doctrine, namely: the teachings transmitted by Śākyamuni himself and their "autocommentaries" (*rang-'grel*, by which Dōlpopa seems to refer to those passages in the sūtras offering guides to interpretation); the doctrines of Mañjuśrī; the writings of Nāgārjuna, Aśaṅga, Vasubandhu, Dignāga, and perhaps several of the other great paṇḍitas of India. Ārya Vimuktisena, Haribhadra, and some of the other late scholastic masters are named as representing the teachings of the Treṭayuga.¹⁴⁶ Note, however, that they are not so classified owing to the late period in which they lived and worked; one of the last great paṇḍitas of Buddhism in India, Abhayākaraṅga, seems certainly to have been considered by Dōlpopa to have been a sage of the Kṛtavyuga.¹⁴⁷ Significantly, too, Dōlpopa persistently labels his own commentarial tradition the Kṛtavyuga Tradition (*Rdzogs-ldan-lugs*).¹⁴⁸

Sources of Inspiration

Where did Dōlpopa get his ideas about the history of the doctrine, or were they, rather, the product of wholly unprecedented innovation? He himself answers this question for us:

What I have said upon careful analysis, that "The greater and lesser four aeons," et cetera, may be found in the great commentary upon the Glorious Kālacakra.¹⁴⁹

And this is just where one familiar with his work would have thought to look, even if Dōlpopa had not mentioned it explicitly. But, we must ask, what does the "great commentary upon the Glorious Kālacakra," that is, the *Vimalaprabhā* (Taintless Light) commentary, in fact say that would support Dōlpopa's viewpoint? The relevant passage, found in comments on verses 22–23 of the *Lokadhātupañjala* (The Chapter on World Systems), proves to be highly suggestive but exceedingly thin:

On the farther sides of Meru, the one who cannot be conquered by the demons or barbarians roams the earth where the religion of the Taḥgagata has been destroyed and their perverse religion is current. In that terrain, the Cakṛin roams, his practice during

the Kāliyuga being irrelevant. This is the significance of his "carrying the Kāliyuga." That, indeed, is the Kāliyuga whose nature is irrelevant. In whatever region the religion of the barbarians is carried, in that region, especially, he travels. Having slaughtered in battle the barbarians and others, including the demons, he wanders, converting those before him to his own religion. Thus the "other" Kṛt, Treta, and Dvāpara, and the ["other"] Kāliyuga proceed by connection with time. Here "other yuga," the Kṛt, etc., means that this is not the great Kṛtayuga, etc. This yuga proceeds by connection with time. Time is the circle of the zodiac. . . .

In whichever part [of the earth] the Cakrin dwells in power, there proceeds the Kṛtayuga. The meaning here is that the doctrine of authentic and perfect Buddha (*Saṃyaksambuddhadharma*), which is called "Kṛtayuga," proceeds. . . .¹⁵⁰

The essential framework, then, is indeed to be found just where Dōlpopa has told us to look. In order to develop a view significantly similar to Dōlpopa's on this basis, however, we would need to know just what the *Vimalaprabhā* regards the content of the "doctrine of authentic and perfect Buddha, which is called 'Kṛtayuga,'" to be, and about this that commentary is by no means clear, save to say that the doctrine of the Kalacakra Tantra itself must be at least part of what is intended. One further passage that may have inspired Dōlpopa in this connection is the commentary on *Adhyāmapāṭala* (The Chapter of Inner Meaning), verses 161–179, in which a brief doxographical survey of Buddhism and some rival doctrines (including Islam) is to be found.¹⁵¹ Significantly, verse 161 and its commentary describe emptiness (*śūnyatā*) as "not insentient" (*ajāda, bera-min*), a locution that would figure prominently in the arguments of the partisans of extrinsic emptiness (*gzhan-stong*), and of their occasional allies, the Kagyüpa Great Seal and Nyingmäpa Great Perfection proponents. If it is correct to suppose that Dōlpopa took what is in fact by and large a very general account of esoteric Mahāyāna philosophical doctrine, as is that offered in the *Adhyāmapāṭala*, to be a normative dogmatic tract supporting his identification of the philosophical quintessence of the Kṛtayuga doctrine with his own teaching of extrinsic emptiness, then the inspiration for his theory may in fact have been the *Vimalaprabhā* alone. And to this we must add that because in a past life he himself had been the noble king of Shambhala, Kalki Puṇḍarīka, to whom the authorship of the *Vimalaprabhā* is attributed,¹⁵² he could indeed claim that his teaching was that of the Perfect Aeon, according to the principle that "in whichever part [of the earth] the Cakrin dwells in power, there proceeds the Kṛtayuga."

The Problem of "Mind Only" and the Legacy of the Theory

Dōlpopa's original contribution to the development of Buddhist thought in Tibet may be seen as an effort to elaborate an account of the actual content of the *Kālacakra*tantra's "teaching of the golden age," philosophically, in terms of extrinsic emptiness and the doctrines allied to it, and hermeneutically, as we have seen, in terms of his classification of Indian Buddhist writings taken to represent that teaching. The picture of the historical degeneration of the doctrine that this involved suggested to Dōlpopa, among other things, that the interpretation of the teachings of Maitreya, Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu as representing a Mind Only (*Sems-tsam, Cittamātra*) school was itself the product of that degeneration, and that, in conjunction with Nāgārjuna, the works of these thinkers should be interpreted as representa-

tive of the Great Madhyamaka teaching (*Dhu-na-chen-po*).¹⁵³ It is this teaching, of course, that Dōlpopa proposes to retrieve through the extrinsic emptiness doctrine. Dōlpopa's suggestion raises, however, an unavoidable problem in doctrinal history, for just how are we to understand the position of what is called the Mind Only school in the light of the proposed redescription? I emphasize this problem not so much because it is significantly more prominent than others that Dōlpopa entertained, but because it presents us with a particularly clear example of the ramifications of Dōlpopa's theory for the writing of Buddhist history in Tibet.

In the letter to his disciples, parts of which we have examined here, Dōlpopa has much to say about the relationship between the so-called Mind Only school and his theory of the four aeons of doctrine. There we have seen that he writes:

Ārya Asaṅga and his brother [Vasubandhu], ācārya Dignāga, and others, [who] are renowned as scholars of Mind Only, are also ascertained to be Madhyamikas. This widespread assertion that they have commented on Madhyamaka in the manner of Mind Only is also ascertained to be untrue. . . .

Later he develops his position as follows:

Ācārya Haribhadra stated that,

"Vasubandhu, the relative benefiting beings,
Making his own inclination foremost,
Explicated [the text], having rightly relied
On the inwardness of the knowable."¹⁵⁴

As for the assertion, based upon this, that ācārya Vasubandhu is therefore (a proponent of) Mind Only and his textual commentaries are the texts of Mind Only—this is in fact completely untrue. If one thinks it to be true, then have him investigate carefully whether or not the most supreme commentary, the *Gṇod-'joms* (The Defeater of Objections) and the autocomentaries that the Buddha, Transcendent Lord, has himself definitively spoken are in accord.¹⁵⁵

Similar arguments are offered concerning Asaṅga and Dignāga. Dōlpopa in effect reasoned that, because we know that Mind Only is manifestly not a correct view, and that Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, and Dignāga were teachers who held correct views, they could not have been proponents of the obviously false teaching of Mind Only. But Haribhadra, for instance, has attributed just that doctrine to Vasubandhu, which shows us that he did not clearly comprehend the teaching of the Kṛtayuga and therefore must be assigned to the belief system of a later, degenerate age. The so-called Mind Only school turns out on this account to be an interpretive mistake, the invention, not of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, but of those who misread them.

Dōlpopa's picture of Buddhist history was to have its own important legacy in Tibet and was to resurface, albeit in modified form, in later authors such as Tāranātha (1575–1634), Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–1892), and Jangñon Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye (1813–1899).¹⁵⁶ Perhaps most striking among the modifications we find in their works is an alteration in the story that is told to explain the philosophical embarrassment of Mind Only. A recent retelling may be found in the *Jo-nang chos-'byung* (The History of the Jonangpa Tradition), by Khenpo Lodrö Drakpa (1920–1975), who writes:

Sometime after the three gatherings of the Hīmayāna transmissions were done, there came, moreover, about five hundred teachers of the doctrine, including the great and venerable Avīṭarka, who propounded the Mahāyāna doctrine. From various places they brought forth and then propagated many sūtras of the Mahāyāna [belonging to] the Mahāyāna Pīṭaka, including the *Laṅkāvatāra*, the *Chāndavyūhaśāstra*, and so on. From this arose the substantialist idealist tradition (*dhgōs smra-ba'i sems-tsam-lugs*) of the Mahāyāna school.¹⁵⁷

The “great Madhyamaka” tradition only arises afterwards, thanks to the continuing disclosures of the definitive significance of the Mahāyāna by Saraha, Nāgārjuna, and Asaṅga. And Khenpo Lodrö Drakpa elsewhere specifies that, though the “substantialist idealist tradition” is known from later commentarial writings, the original treatises of Avīṭarka and his colleagues were never translated into Tibetan and so are no longer available.¹⁵⁸

What are we to make of this tale? I am not certain where it in fact originates, or whether it was in circulation prior to the age of Tāranātha (1575–1634).¹⁵⁹ Apparently, Dōlpopa knew nothing of it. To understand what may have motivated its acceptance, however, it must be noted that Dōlpopa’s assault on Haribhadra probably could not be sustained. Indeed, until Dōlpopa’s own extensive commentaries on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* have been thoroughly examined, we cannot even be certain that Dōlpopa was entirely consistent on this score. However that may be, there can be no doubt that, given Haribhadra’s great prestige for Tibetan commentators on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*,¹⁶⁰ and the widespread Indian doxographical evidence for a Mind Only tradition,¹⁶¹ something better than Dōlpopa’s story about the supposed late commentarial misreading of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu was required if the historical vision of the Kīṛtyuga tradition was to be maintained. Avīṭarka and the five hundred teachers were, I suspect, literally “made to order.”

It was Gilbert Ryle who said of the history of philosophy in the West that “our standard histories of philosophy” were “calamity itself, and not the mere risk of it.”¹⁶² Richard Rorty, elaborating upon Ryle’s thought in the article mentioned earlier, writes that

awkward attempts to make a new question fit an old canon remind us . . . that new doxographies usually start off as fresh, brave, revisionist attempts to dispel the dullness of the previous doxographic tradition, attempts inspired by the conviction that the true problematic of philosophy has finally been discovered. So the real trouble with doxography is that it is a *half-hearted* attempt to tell a new story of intellectual progress by describing all texts in the light of recent discoveries. It is half-hearted because it lacks the courage to readjust the canon to suit the new discoveries.¹⁶³

In part, Rorty’s words appear apt for the case we have been considering, though, by the relatively conservative standards of Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism, Dōlpopa and his successors may strike some as having remarkably sought “to readjust the canon,” by however small a degree. That their efforts seem to us more successful in the delineation of a philosophical standpoint than in the revision of Buddhist

historiography, however, discredits them no more than, as Rorty reminds us, the doxographic history of philosophy in other settings. We should not lose sight of the fact that, by making the history of Buddhist philosophy itself a field of contestation, Dōlpopa may have to some degree actually encouraged the development of the traditions of Tibetan Buddhist historiography that flowered in the writings of his successors, Tāranātha above all.

Contestation and Self-representation

Those conversant with some of the varieties of Tibetan Buddhist discourse may object that I have loaded the dice in this chapter: though there are certainly important stylistic and substantive differences among doctrinal authors, they are not, by and large, so profoundly divided as the presentation here seems to suggest. With this I would agree. To illustrate the point, we may note that Sakya Paṇḍita, in writing on Madhyamaka philosophy, does countenance some place for skeptical argument,¹⁶⁴ while Karma Pakshi, as we know, wrote his own treatise on epistemology.¹⁶⁵ Dōlpopa, for his part, was educated by and enjoyed warm relations with the successors of both and left his own mark on later Sakyapas and Kačyūpas.¹⁶⁶

There can be no question but that the relationships among differing schools and approaches to doctrine were often fluid, and that Tibetan Buddhist thought permitted and sometimes even encouraged a remarkable degree of mutual exchange. Nevertheless, I am certain that anyone who has read these authors, among many others, with some care, cannot but conclude that, regardless of significant areas of overlap, there remain striking differences of approach and of content among them. The individuality of the major Tibetan thinkers is unmistakable, whatever the difficulties involved in attempting to convey that difference through a non-Tibetan medium.¹⁶⁷

In a polemical work written in the early nineteenth century, the great poet and mystic Zhabkar Tshokdruk Rangdrol (1781–1850), after reviewing some of the disputes that had erupted in the history of Buddhism in Tibet, concludes that if a dialectician is skillful enough, he may prove anything at all.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, in the monastic debate courts of Tibet, the ability to mount a successful defense for what was generally regarded as the weaker position was a much admired achievement.¹⁶⁹ It should be no surprise, then, that dialectical virtuosity could easily pass into sophistry. Argument alone was regarded in some circles with suspicion and seldom supplanted the authority of tradition when it came to matters of practice. In the world of Tibetan Buddhism, as for Indian religious traditions more generally, orthopraxy was crucial, orthodox less so. The famous claim of the Buddhist logicians that the only two valid criteria for knowledge were direct perception and inference tended to represent an ideal; a Buddhism of “reason alone” was never realized, except perhaps in the imaginations of small numbers of monk-scholars.

There are, however, other dimensions of intellectual contestation in the Tibetan world that in some respects may be of greater importance than the very interesting questions surrounding the soundness and validity of arguments. Janet Gyatso, in her fine recent study of the secret autobiographies of the “treasure-revealer” Jikme Lingpa

(1730–1798), examines in depth the general problem posed by the remarkable production of an abundant autobiographical literature in Tibet. Some of her conclusions warrant consideration here as well:

Compelling reasons for self-assertion and distinction can be traced to the dawn of the hegemony of Buddhism in Tibet, which produced a competitive climate in which the personal accomplishments of the individual religious master became a centerpiece in the struggle to establish a lineage and eventually an institution and a power base. . . . The comparative absence of culture and traditional authority in the wake of the collapsed empire gave the individual religious entrepreneur considerable leeway for self-assertion . . . religious power and prestige were based upon ability and personal achievements.¹⁷⁰

Something similar, I think, is at work in the articulations of doctrine we have been considering here. In the contest for authority within the Tibetan religious world, the crafting of a distinctive vision that at once established both the personal virtuosity of the author and his (or in rare cases, her)¹⁷¹ mastery of what was sanctioned by tradition became a fundamental means of self-representation. This helps us to understand, for instance, the apparent paradox of Sakya Pandita's *Eight Ego Poem*, which I have considered in greater detail elsewhere but which bears repetition here:

*I am the grammarian. I am the dialectician.
Among vanquishers of sophists, peerless am I,
I am learned in metrics. I stand alone in poetics.
In explaining synonyms, unrivaled am I.
I know celestial calculations. In exo- and esoteric science
I have a discerning intellect equaled by none.
Who can this be? Sakya alone!
Other scholars are my reflected forms.¹⁷²*

We must recall that this bit of doggerel was authored by a prominent Buddhist monk, an exponent of the teaching of the selflessness of persons.

It is in this context, too, that we should also recall the assertion with which Karma Pakshi began his autobiography:

*I am Rangjung Dorje,
The vajra-king, one of great might. . . .*

Further, Dölpopa's identification with the kings of mythical Shambhala, and his tacit reliance on this identification as one of the warrants for his doctrinal speculations, must, I think, be seen in the same light.

This is not to say, of course, that reason and argument were wholly subservient to other interests, which they effectively masked. Doctrinal claims were only a single element in a larger field of contestation, in which many means of self-assertion might also be deployed. One result, which I have tried to illustrate in this chapter, was the great diversity and creativity of Tibetan Buddhist thinkers and visionaries, particularly prior to the fifteenth century, after which time the emerging dominance of the Gelukpa sect began gradually to narrow the range of scholastic thought.¹⁷³ As we shall see in the following chapter, however, there was still much left to debate, even under the Gelukpa's ascendant star.

The Purificatory Gem and Its Cleansing

A Late Polemical Discussion of Apocryphal Texts

Our Notions of Buddhist Canon and Apocrypha

When we first entertain the notion of Buddhist apocrypha, it may seem that the questions to be addressed are entirely straightforward ones: which Buddhist texts are to be considered apocryphal? what are their sources? how are they regarded within the Buddhist world? Indeed, it seems that such terms as “canon” and “apocrypha” have well-established and clearly defined positions within the field of contemporary Buddhist studies, and that as students of Buddhism we know just what it is of which we speak whenever we employ these terms.¹ Some scrutiny, however, reveals our usage to be equivocal: works termed “canonical” with reference to one traditional Buddhist context must be labeled “apocryphal” with reference to another, for instance, the entire corpus of Mahāyāna sūtras,² and texts that may be said to exemplify canonical scripture for the devotees of a given tradition are held to be apocryphal according to the canons of traditional or contemporary scholarship, for example, the Chinese *Śūraṅgama-sūtra* (The Sūtra of the Hero's March).³ It is evident that for students of Buddhism the terms “canon” and “apocrypha” are not closely similar to the same terms used by, say, contemporary writers on Protestantism, who have well-defined sets of scripture in mind whenever they employ them. Thus, before proceeding to the main subject matter of this chapter—the problem of the revealed “treasures” (*giel-ma*) as treated in Tibetan polemical writings of the eighteenth century—we must first clarify the concepts we ourselves introduce into the discussion.

Let us begin with the notion of “canon.” The term itself, with its meanings of “measure, model, norm, standard,”⁴ is *prima facie* suggestive of our Buddhist term *sūtra*—“thread, measuring line, plan, aphoristic rule”⁵—and by extension carries some of the import with which Buddhists endow the terms *buddhavacana* (“Buddha-speech”), *buddhabhāṣita* (“spoken by the Buddha”), and *saddharma* (“True Dharma”). What a given Buddhist community considers to be *buddhavacana*, et cetera, is what, or at least is part of what, we would say it holds to be canonical, that is to say, representative of the ultimate scriptural authority to which it adheres. The important point to note is that “being canonical” is here not a one-term predicate

bibliophile. Later, he was in fact exiled to Tibet, though so far no evidence of his impact there has emerged. See Sohn, Kim, and Hong 1970, pp. 117–118. It is amusing to speculate, though of course there is no evidence to support it, that he and Melhims 'Jam-dbyangs might have crossed paths at some point!

100. This is very much in evidence in Spatnam 1993 and Hopkins 1999.

101. A world-systems approach to the study of Central Asian history is elaborated in Andre Gunder Frank 1992.

102. Of course, in the examples we have considered, the only teaching actually formulated in Korea whose transmission reached Tibet was that of the *Vajrasamādhisūtra*. Master Kim and Wŏnch'ŭk, by contrast, though of Korean birth, both spent their careers in China.

103. Hobsbawm 1992.

104. Robert E. Buswell, Jr., at the conference "Korea's Place in the East Asian Buddhist Tradition" in his remarks entitled "Imagining 'Korean Buddhism': The Invention of a National Religious Tradition."

105. Cf. my remarks in Goldstein and Kapstein 1998, ch. 6.

106. Mair 1994, Pollock 1996.

107. Takata 1994 offers an excellent example. The Tibetan script was being used to write a number of other languages as well, for instance, the otherwise unknown language called *Nam* (see Thomas 1948).

108. Refer to n. 71 above.

Chapter 6

1. Refer to ch. 1, pp. 10–12.

2. Mar-pa's disaffection with the translator 'Bro-g-mi, and the long history of complex relations between the Bka'-bryud-pa lineages (stemming from Mar-pa's teaching) and the Sa-skya-pas (stemming from 'Bro-g-mi's), offer much data meriting reflection in this regard. D. Jackson 1990, 1994, offer valuable points of departure, though perhaps Jackson minimizes to some degree the role played by material and political competition, in tandem with the more purely doctrinal contests that he excellently documents.

3. Cabézon 1994 examines the relationship between the Western notions of scholasticism and aspects of Dge-lugs-pa thought, while the essays in Cabézon 1998 explore scholasticism as a category in the comparative philosophy of religions. For the purposes of the present discussion, I have restricted my initial conception of scholasticism to one grounded in Western medieval thought, as defined and described, for instance, in Price 1992, ch. 6.

4. This distinction is made explicit by the use of the terms *rigs-pas rjes-su 'brangs-pa*, "rationalist," and *dad-pas rjes-su 'brangs-pa*, "fideist." A fine example of the distinction is found in the famous *Tshad-ma lam-rim* (The Progressive Path of Pramāṇa) of Leang-skya Rol-pa'i ro-rgye, *Leang-skya man-thar*, p. 636: "This *Pramāṇavṛtika* is a superlative treatise! In those who strive for liberation and omniscience a faith in our teacher and teaching that reaches the depths must be born from the heart. About that, even though certainty brought forth by pure reason is not born in the fideists, though a faith involving conviction may well be born in them, it is hard [for them] to get beyond a conditional [sort of faith]. If certainty is born on the basis of genuine reason, it won't be turned back by conditions; a firm disposition is established."

5. Dreyfus 1997a.

6. *On Interpretation*, ch. 5, 6, in McKeon 1941, pp. 42, 43.

7. Duddiom 1991, vol. 1, p. 874.

8. *Posterior Analytics*, book 1, ch. 25, in McKeon 1941, pp. 150–152.

9. For a review of Sa-skya Pandita's life, career, and contributions, with full references to earlier studies, see D. Jackson 1987. More recent contributions include D. Jackson 1990, 1994; Kapstein in press; Rhoton forthcoming.

10. As Shaveegan 1990, pp. 52–53, explains: "Ce [monde de l'*imaginal*] a de multiples résonances tant au niveau de l'ontologie que de la cosmologie et de l'angéologie. Il fonde une métaphysique des Images où celles-ci acquièrent une valeur cognitive et noétique propre. Car les Images surgissent non pas de l'inconscient mais de la surconscience; elles sont donc de ce fait des Images intellectives. Pour les distinguer nettement de l'imaginaire qui en tant que <<folie du logos>> ne sécrète que du fictif et de l'irréel, Corbin forgea le terme d'*imaginal*. Le monde de l'*imaginal*, *alam al-mithāl* est le monde où ont lieu les visions des prophètes, des mystiques et les événements de l'âme, événements aussi réels que ceux du monde sensible mais qui ont lieu à un autre niveau de l'Être." Corbin 1969, pt. 2, elaborates this conception at length; the English translation uses the phrase "world of Idea-Images."

11. A caveat is required here, for there is a sense in which the privileging of particular texts, doctrines, or practices is standard procedure in Tibetan Buddhist circles, and not at all a peculiarity of Dölpopa's approach. Nevertheless, I think that it is fair to say that Dölpopa's use of selected key texts and passages, as will be illustrated here, at the very least exemplifies with unusual sharpness the role of the proof text in Tibetan dogmatics.

12. On the historical background and the development of the tradition at Gsang-phu, see Kuji 1983, 1989; D. Jackson 1987; Onoda 1990, 1992.

13. D. Jackson 1987, pp. 112–113.

14. On Sa-skya Pandita in relation to the Gsang-phu school, see in particular D. Jackson 1987 and Dreyfus 1997a.

15. For a detailed topical analysis of the entire text, see Horváth 1984.

16. Alexis Meinong, "The Theory of Objects," in Chisholm 1960, p. 78.

17. *Abhidharmakośam*, vol. 1, p. 90 (ch. 1, verse 34ab).

18. *Tshad-ma rigs-gter*, pp. 43–44.

19. For these definitions, I follow one of Sa-skya Pandita's leading commentators, Gorams-pa Bsod-nams seng-ge (1429–1489), in his *Rigs-gter gsal-byed*, pp. 2–5.

20. In this paragraph, I follow the eighteenth-century commentator, Ngag-dbang-chos-grags, in his *Rigs-gter dgongs-don*, p. 20.

21. I concur here with the remarks of Dreyfus 1997a, ch. 14, who translates *don-spyi* as "object universal."

22. Nevertheless, there are strong tendencies to realism within certain of the Buddhist epistemological traditions, e.g., the Dge-lugs-pa, though I think that they would resist genuine Platonic realism. For an excellent review of this issue, refer to Dreyfus 1997a, pt. 2, esp. chs. 9–10.

23. In the symbolic notation of the predicate calculus this is: $(\exists x)(\text{Dechen wants } x)$.

24. $(\exists x)(\exists x^2) \dots (\exists x^n)(\text{Dechen wants } x^1 \vee x^2 \vee \dots \vee x^n)$.

25. $(\exists x)(\text{Rāma sees } x)$.

26. *Tshad-ma rigs-gter*, p. 74, *tshad ma'i shes pa gnyis po yang, rang rig tshad ma kho nar 'das*; and p. 47, *gzhal bya rang mshan gcig kho na*. On the primacy of discrete self-presentations, cf. Kapstein 1988b, p. 158.

27. *Tshad-ma rigs-gter*, pp. 55–60.

28. *Tshad-ma rigs-gter*, p. 44, *yul yin na de 'dzin pa'i trog pa ... ma 'khrul par 'gyur*.

29. $(\exists x)(\text{Sonam takes } x \text{ to be a snake})$.

30. $(\exists x)(\text{Sonam takes the rope to be } x)$.

31. *Tshad-ma rigs-gter*, p. 44, *yul yod phyir ma 'khrul*.

32. *Tshad-ma rigs-gter*, p. 44, *don spyi dang med pa gsal ba gnyis shes pa las tha dad pa'i yul zhiig yin na yul shung rang gcig na gnyis pa'i gang zag gzhan gyis kyang mthong bar 'gyur*.

33. *Tshad-ma rigs-gter*, p. 45, *gnyis ka'i brjod bya thun mong ba go bar mi nus*.

34. *Tshad-ma rigs-gter*, p. 46, *don spyi rang rang gi yul tha dad yin yang 'khrul nas gcig tu 'dzin*.

35. Williams 1983b; Kapstein 1988b.
36. Russell 1919, pp. 169–170.
37. Grossmann 1974, pp. 41–42.
38. Grossmann 1974, p. 42.
39. Husserl, 1962, vol. 2, pt. 2, sec. 5, pp. 175–176.
40. The outer sciences (*phyi'i rig-pa*) are: the linguistic sciences, logic and epistemology, medicine, and the arts and crafts. Refer to Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, pp. 97–107.
41. Thus, for instance, in the third chapter of Sa-skya Paṇḍita's *Mkhas-'jug*, concerning logic and debate, he describes purposeful debate as that which "takes up truths that accord with the doctrine, while abandoning errors," and he extols such debate as "a cause of the teaching's increase" (text in Jackson 1987, p. 251, line 7, and p. 296, lines 7–8), but nowhere does he seem to suggest that mastery of Pramāṇa will conduce directly to enlightenment. The relationship between the study of Pramāṇa and Buddhism's soteriological ends was a controversial issue in Tibet, and the interpretation of this matter has given rise to some confusion in contemporary scholarship, which often misleadingly treats it as a dispute between "secular" and "religious" understandings of Pramāṇa, though there is clearly no distinction made, in a traditional context, that closely conforms with the Western notions this involves. For a judicious survey of the question, see Dreyfus 1997a, ch. 27. Cf. also Kapstein 1988b.
42. *Arvabhadracaripurnāṇḍarjā*, verses 39–40.
43. Karma-pa III, Rang-byung-rdo-rje's *Phal-chen zhing-bkod-kyi bstan-bcos*, is referred to in *Mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston*, II.938; *Karma-pa'i mtzad-nam*, p. 128.
44. Unfortunately there is no available *dkar-chag* giving a complete list of the contents of the *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*. While no complete set of *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas* has been located to date, some were in circulation in Tibet: the Rnying-ma-pa Bla-ma Bsod-nams stobs-rgyal, presently of Toronto, has told me of such a set that was kept at the home of an uncle in Khams Ri-bo-che. See Kapstein 1985, p. 359, n. 2, for remarks on the marginalia of the present manuscript.
45. The author refers to himself as Rang-byung-rdo-rje at *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, I.29, 207, 435, 467, 637, II.453, and elsewhere; and as "Bla-ma Karma-pa" at I.637.
46. On Rang-byung-rdo-rje's astronomical contributions, see Schuh 1973, pp. 34–36. Rang-byung-rdo-rje's great work on yoga is the *Zab-mo nang-gi don*, a good modern xylographic edition of which is available at Rumtek Monastery, Sikkim. The autocommentary, though long unavailable, has recently reemerged: I am grateful to Ven. Rdzogs-chen Dpon-slob Rin-po-che for his efforts to make this text available to me. For examples of his contemplative works, see *Gdams-ngag mtzod*, vol. 6.
47. This is not found in the present edition of *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*. It is referred to, however, at I.4, 207, II.53, and elsewhere.
48. Unavailable, but referred to at *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, I.207.
49. *Chags-med ri-chos*, fol. 217.b.5–218.b.3. This passage was dictated on the twenty-third of Bhādrapada (*Kirums-zla*) during a fire-horse year, i.e., September 21 or 22, 1666.
50. *Pakshi'i rang-nam*, pp. 2–3.
51. It is perhaps noteworthy that this is the name by which he chooses to be propitiated in a prayer to the Bka'-bryud lineage: *Pakshi'i rang-nam*, p. 6.
52. E.g., *Pakshi'i rang-nam*, pp. 12, 18; cf. the name given to him in infancy, according to *Mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston*, II.882, "Chos-'dzin."
53. The first occurrence of this name in *Pakshi'i rang-nam* is on p. 16, line 1. Note that in addition to the names given here, Karma Pakshi also had the ordination name of "Chos-kyi-bla-ma," which he received from the Rnying-ma-pa hierarch Byams-pa-'bum of Kaḥ-thog (1179–1252), certainly the major source of his Rnying-ma-pa doctrinal background (Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, pp. 693–694). Kaḥ-thog appears to have specialized to some degree in the exegesis of the nine-vehicle system, and the work of Kaḥ-thog's founder, Dam-pa Bde-gshegs
- (1122–1192; Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, pp. 688–691), on this, *Theg-pa spyi-bcings*, has recently become available. The study of this work may well help to clarify further Karma Pakshi's sources of inspiration.
54. See, for instance, *Pakshi'i rang-nam*, pp. 21–22, 79–80. Significant in this regard is the remark made to me by the late Ven. Gnas-nang Dpa'-bo Rin-po-che in July 1981: "Rang-byung-rdo-rje is the name of *all* the Karma-pas." The Sems-dpa' Rang-byung-rdo-rje of Karma Pakshi's autobiography is a form of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, who is thought to be the ground for the emanation (*spyul-gzhi*) of the Karma-pas.
55. *Mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston*, II.927; *Karma-pa'i mtzad-nam*, p. 119.
56. Indeed, according to the account of O-rgyan-pa's recognition of the infant third Karma-pa given in *Mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston*, II.926–929, it is evident that some among Karma Pakshi's former disciples were extremely reticent, at least initially, to accept this as a valid succession. It must be emphasized that the notion of there being identifiable rebirths of deceased masters was not in itself an innovation; what was new was the effort to tie the actual inheritance to such identification.
57. Following the passing of the sixteenth Karma-pa in 1981, two of his leading disciples, Ta'i Si-tu Rin-po-che and Zhwa-dmar Rin-po-che, recognized opposing candidates. The former's, O-rgyan Phrin-las, was installed as the seventeenth Karma-pa at the traditional seat of the order at Mishur-phu monastery in Central Tibet, where he commands very broad allegiance in Tibet itself, and among important elements of the Tibetan communities in India and Nepal. The Zhwa-dmar's candidate, who resides in New Delhi, has a smaller following, which strongly insists, however, upon the unique legitimacy of his claim. In late 1999 O-rgyan Phrin-las left Tibet to continue his education in India.
58. See n. 53.
59. Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, pp. 688–699.
60. For convenient summaries, see Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, pp. 223–237, 346–372.
61. These are commonly referred to by the acronym *mdo-rgyud-sems-gsum*, "the trio of the sūtra, tantra, and mind" (The first two are named in reverse order for reasons of euphony.) The history of this tradition is the main topic of Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, book 2, pt. 5.
62. See n. 81.
63. Demieville 1973; Douglas and White 1976; Karma Thinley 1978; Rossabi 1988, pp. 40–41; Pelech 1990, pp. 14–16.
64. This is discussed in the seventh Karma-pa's *Rigs-gzhung rgya-mtsho*, vol. 1, p. 76ff.
65. *Pakshi'i rang-nam*, p. 25. Of the available texts, three have titles that include the phrase *Limitless Ocean of the Teaching*: (1) *Bstan-pa rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas-kyi spyi-gzhung chen-mo rlogs-pa rub-'byams chos-dbyings ye-shes lnga-lān*, = *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, I.25–208; (2) *Glegs-bam 'dri bstan-pa rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas-kyi bshad-pa phun-sum-tshogs-pa*, = *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, I.209–470; and (3) *Bstan-pa rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas byin-gyis-rdabs-pa'i bka'-chen*, = *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, I.471–601. Judging on the basis of the contents of these, my guess is that if the reference in the passage cited is not to *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas* as a whole, then it is to (1).
66. *Pakshi'i rang-nam*, p. 86.
67. *Pakshi'i rang-nam*, p. 84. It is not entirely clear whether *Ye-shes rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas* refers to a text, or to the enlightenment that is the goal of the *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*.
68. For the name "Rang-byung-rdo-rje," see *Mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston*, II.897, 904, 906, 910, etc.; and *Karma-pa'i mtzad-nam*, pp. 83, 85, 101, etc. For the *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, see *Mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston*, II.885, 906; and *Karma-pa'i mtzad-nam*, p. 85. Note, too, that *Mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston*, II.896ff. quotes *Pakshi'i rang-nam* profusely. *Karma-pa'i mtzad-nam*, pp. 107–108, mentions that there are six volumes of Karma Pakshi's writings presently in the "human world."
69. *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, I.603–637.
70. Presently unavailable.

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71. *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, 145.
72. The question here is whether the round of rebirth has a fixed stock of sentient creatures, or whether genuinely "new" beings are sometimes produced.
73. Contemporary Western logics generally hold that between any two entities, *a* and *b*, the form *Rab*, "a is *R*-related to *b*," as, for example, "the Potala is very far from (= *R*) Mars," types of relation that Buddhist epistemologists considered significant: causal relations, and what to the *relata* (e.g., the relation of a pot to its materiality). Kapstein 1989c outlines the Dharmakīrti's theory of relations, with which Karma Pakshi was certainly familiar.
74. *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, 1611–613.
75. Sa-chen Kun-dga'-snying-po (1092–1158), in his *Rgyud-sde spyi'i nam-gzhung chung-ngu* (in *So-shkyu bka'-'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 5–9), cites the same passage but understands 'dod-pa in its more primary sense of "desire" and not "tenets."
76. *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, 1613–614.
77. Annas and Barnes 1985, pp. 151–171.
78. *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, 1625–626.
79. *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, 1634.
80. Popkin 1979.
81. *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, 141. To assess Karma Pakshi's view of other religions, it is essential that we take account not merely of his doctrinal viewpoint, which was derived from Buddhist textual sources, but also of his practical dealings with the religious life of the Mongol empire. A number of interesting passages may be found in *Pakshi'i rang-rnam*, e.g., Buddhist (*phyi-rol mu-stegs-pa*) shrines, and pp. 101–102, where he notes with approval an (*thams-cad rang-rang-gi grub-mtha' dang 'thun-par* [sic] *sdon-pa srung-ba'i 'ja'-so*). This a dragon year (certainly = 1256; *'brug-gi lo-la zi-ra-'ur-rdor rgyud-rgyud thams-cad 'ishogs-pa'i dus*), at which Karma Pakshi also claims to have turned the Khan and his immediate circle away from other religions and to have converted them to Buddhism (*mu-stegs-kyi grub-mtha'-'las rje-'bungs thams-cad bzlog-cing nang-pa sangs-rgyas pa'i tshar-pa-la bisul*...). One is tempted to associate all this with the famed Buddhist-Taoist controversy of 1255–1256. It has been hypothesized that Karma Pakshi is none other than the somewhat mysterious Lama (see, e.g., Deméville 1973, esp. pp. 205–209 and n. 29). Pakshi's fanciful etymologizing of *mu-stegs-pa* no doubt has its origin in earlier Rnying-ma-pa sources, and it reappears in later doxographical writing, as well. (*Tirhika* in Sanskrit is derived from *tirha*, the ford of a river, and is used also for sacred places for ritual ablutions. The Tibetan coinage that was contrived to represent this foreign idea, *mu-stegs*, was no doubt intended to refer to a bathing platform [stegs] on the bank [mu] of a river. Though this was well known to scholars of the canonical commentaries, it is easy to see how it might also be taken to mean "approaching [stegs] the brhad-pa, for instance, is sharply critical of Stag-tshang Lo-tsa-ba Shes-rab-th-chen (b. 1405) for defining the term in this way (*Grub-mtha' chen-mo*, p. 80). At the same time, there are no authors known to me besides Karma Pakshi who actually sought to invoke this definition in a context in which it seems to have clear political entailments.
82. The mahayoga system of the *Guhnyagarbhatantra* is summarized in Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, pp. 275–283, 359–363. Guenther 1984 offers an interpretation of the *Guhnyagarbhatantra* based upon the commentary of Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa.
83. *dgongs pa 'dul ba gsung ba dang/ ma rtags pa dang log par rtags/ phyogs rtags yang dag nyid ma rtags/ don dam 'ti la the isom zoff*. Cf., e.g., *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, 126, 30, 210, 632–633, II.53, etc. Karma Pakshi himself refers to the source at 1210 as being the *Rgyud-kyi rgyud-po gsung-ba'i snying-po de-kho-ma-nyid nges-par 'byung-ba*. The passage he is paraphrasing in this verse may be found on folio 30a of the Rumtek xylographic edition of that text.
84. According to Vilāsavajra's influential commentary on the *Guhnyagarbha*, "non-realization" refers to ordinary mundane folk; "mistaken realization" to those who adhere to nihilism or eternalism, i.e., the non-Buddhists; "partial realization" to the Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and adherents of the Vijñaptimātrāivāda; "not realizing what is genuine" to the Mādhyamikas; and "intention, discipline, and esotericism" to the followers of the lower tantras. See *Gsang-snying Rgyud-'gyel*, vol. 1, pp. 160–161.
85. *Rong-zom gsung-bus*, p. 20. Rong-zom-pa's quotation agrees precisely with the tantra. On Rong-zom-pa (eleventh century), see Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, pp. 703–709.
86. *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, 1210.
87. The nine-yāna system is taught throughout Rnying-ma-pa tantric traditions but has a special association with the anuyoga teaching owing to the great emphasis it receives in the primary tantra of the anuyoga, the *Mdo dgongs-pa 'dus-pa*, in connection with which the nine-yānas form the basis for the initiatory progression of the rites of empowerment. This became a matter of some controversy, as it required the conferral of tantric empowerments for the nontantric yānas of the Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and Bodhisattvas. On this, refer to Dudjom, vol. 1, pp. 911–913. For more on the teaching of the *Mdo dgongs-pa 'dus-pa*, see also ch. 9 in the present work.
88. *Sog-bzlog-pa*, vol. 2, p. 135. Though not referring to the *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas* by name, Sog-bzlog-pa does mention, among other works of Karma Pakshi, a *Dgongs-'dus-kyi don so-sor-dbye-ba*. This may be a reference to the lengthy anuyoga section (pp. 374–435) of the *Piṇḍa-sun-tshogs-pa rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas* (*Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, 1209–470). See, in particular, the remarks introducing that section, on p. 376; *de-la Mdo dgongs-pa 'dus-pa lung thams-cad-kyi tsa-ba yin*... *so-sor-'bayed shes-par bya'ol* ("The *Mdo dgongs-pa 'dus-pa* is the root of all transmitted doctrines. You should know how to analyze it...").
89. *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, 1430–431.
90. The origin of Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's renowned epithet may be the group of Rdzogs-chen tantras called *Klong-chen rab-'byams-kyi rgyud*. Karma Pakshi, referring to these (*Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, 1453), attributes to them the "ultimate view of the Great Perfection."
91. E.g., *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, 127, 467, 637, etc.
92. See, in particular, *Rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*, II.1–70, 235–453, the latter being wholly devoted to an exposition of the Gasar-ma tantras.
93. *Pakshi'i rang-rnam*, p. 86.
94. *Chags-med ri-chos*, 218b: "Pakshi's intention was the coalescence of the new and ancient [schools of the Vajrayāna], and his ultimate intention was the coalescence of Mahāmudrā and of Rdzogs-pa chen-po." See, too, his *Phyug-rdzogs-zung-'jug*, p. 9: "Karma Pakshi received the three cycles of the *Mdo dgongs-pa 'dus-pa*, *Guhnyagarbha*, and *Rdzogs-chen sems-sde* (*Mdo-sgyu-sems-gsum*) from Byams-pa-'bum of Kaḥ-thog, and he became learned in them. Hence, his own doctrinal compositions concern the coalescence of Mahāmudrā and Rdzogs-pa chen-po."
95. See, for example, Goldstein and Kapstein 1998, ch. 4, on the 'Bri-gung Bka'-'brgyud.
96. Two important works deserving attention in this regard are: Karma-pa VII Chos-grags *rgya-mtsho's Riggs-gzhung rgya-mtsho*, vol. 1, p. 76ff., which preserves extracts from Karma Pakshi's now unavailable *Tshad-ma rgya-mtsho mtha'-yas*; and Karma-pa VIII Mi-bskyod rdo-rje's extraordinary commentary on Pakshi's *Ska-gsum ngo-sprod* precepts, the *Ska-gsum*

97. The canonical teachings of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras and the Madhyamaka philosophy of Nāgārjuna of course employ a wide range of skeptical arguments, though the main lines of interpretation in Tibet sought to contextualize them so as to restrain the force of their skepticism. Skeptical argument is sometimes employed in connection with the meditational teachings of the Mahāmudrā and Rdzogs-chen, and this was sometimes castigated as a "nihilist" (*chad-lia*) tendency within these traditions. See, for instance, Takpo 1986, pp. 105–109; Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, pp. 896–910. A good example of the application of skeptical argument in a contemplative context may be found in Takpo 1986, p. 184ff., where it is a question of analytic meditation (*dpyad-bsgom*), systematically calling into question the assumptions and attributions through which one conceptualizes the mind. The author comments that the "mediator should therefore examine thoroughly with a persistence in the manner of an inquisitive person crushing a bone with a stone!"

98. This section is based on my unpublished article "A Golden Age of Understanding? Dol-po-pa on the Kṛtyayuga and What Followed." In Stearns 1999, it is referred to as "Kapstein 1994."

99. Several versions of Dölpopa's biography have now become available. These have recently been studied with great care in Stearns 1999, which work should be consulted by those wishing to examine Dölpopa's life in depth. See also Kapstein 1992f.

100. See n. 56 above, and Kapstein in press.

101. This raises interesting questions concerning the possible relationships between 'Brig-gung Skvob-pa's distinctive *dgeons-gcig* ("single intention") doctrine and the *Rdzogs-ldan-lugs* ("Kṛtyayuga tradition") of Dol-po-pa. One apparent affinity between them is noted below, n. 131. Both, of course, are castigated by their opponents as representatives of *Hwa-shang lha-ba*, "the views of Heshang Moheyan."

102. Refer to BA, book 10, and Tenzin Gyatso and Hopkins 1988.

103. On the Dol-po region, which is within the political boundaries of modern Nepal, see esp. Snellgrove 1957, 1967b, 1989; Jest 1974a, 1974b.

104. Dol-po-pa's own biography of his master is found in *Dol-po-pa*, no. 60.

105. The construction of the *catvya* is described in Kapstein 1992f, pp. 13–14; Stearns 1999, ch. 1, pt. 4. For further background see Tucci 1949, p. 189ff., and Vitelli 1990, pp. 126–133. Cabézon 1998, pp. 141–158, offers interesting suggestions concerning the relationship between Tibetan religious thought and architecture.

106. As A. W. Macdonald 1984b, p. 70, remarks of the Sherpa scholar Sangs-rgyas-bstan-dzin (1924–1990), his biography "shows us what can still be accomplished, even in these days, by a man of stubborn courage and solid faith."

107. The fourteenth century, however, was a period of distinctive doctrinal synthesis. Dol-po-pa's contemporaries—including Karma-pa Rang-byung-rdo-rje (1284–1339), Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290–1364), and Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen Rab-b'nyams-pa (1308–1363)—all merit comparison in this regard.

108. *Dol-po-pa*, nos. 16, 39, 70.7, 70.8.

109. Stearns 1995, 1999, ch. 1, pt. 4–5.

110. "Doxography" has been more widely used in continental than in anglophone discourse on the history of philosophy; it refers to writings on philosophical doctrines and systems, for example, in standard histories of philosophy that summarize the key ideas of a succession of thinkers, often beginning with the "Presocratics." Refer to Rorty 1984. The term has become current in recent work on the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist *siddhānta* (*grub-mtha*), "philosophical systems," lit. "limit [of what can be] proven." See, for instance, Hopkins in Jackson and Cabézon 1995, pp. 170–186; Mimaki 1994.

111. *Prasamapāda*, on *Madhyamakāsāstra*, ch. 1, verse 3, for instance, repeatedly cites Bhāvaviveka's criticisms of Buddhapālita, e.g.: *acāryabuddhapālitas tu vyācāṣe . . . acārya-*

bhāvaviveko dīṣṇam āha, "Master Buddhapālita asserted . . . and Master Bhāvaviveka said in refutation . . ."

112. *Abhisamayālaṅkāraśloka*, ch. 1, verses 1–3, traces the commentarial succession of the Prajñāpāramitā from Maitreya, through Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, and thence to Ārya-Vimuktisena and Vimuktisena.

113. Refer to the introductory verses to the *Sphuṭārthā Vyākhyā in Abhidharmakośam*, vol. 1, pp. 1–2.

114. This has been affirmed to me by many of the traditionally trained scholars I have queried about the place of history in Tibetan scholasticism, including H. H. the Dalai Lama, when I interviewed him at his home in Dharamsala in the spring of 1993. Nevertheless, there have always been some who have taken a special interest in this area. Among my own teachers, for instance, H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche and Ven. Dezhung Rinpoche particularly encouraged the investigation of Tibetan historical writing, though this was never part of a formal scholastic curriculum. Indeed, the inherent perennialism of Tibetan scholastic traditions militated strongly against the independent value of historical research.

115. Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, p. 959, exemplifies prevailing opinion when he writes: "Although, in general, there have been many changes in the political life of Tibet during the past, as far as the doctrine is concerned, the veracity of the Teacher's own prophetic declaration that his teaching would increasingly spread northwards has been actualised. Due to the merits of those to be trained in Tibet, and by the power of the timely penetration of [the world by] the Conquerors' compassion, individuals who have held the teaching and have shown mastery in inconceivable careers of learning, dignity, and accomplishment, have successively appeared from the time of the teaching's inception in the past down to the present day. Because they preserved the most precious teaching and continue to preserve it, the continuity of the doctrine in Tibet has never been impaired."

116. This is perhaps best exemplified by the entire *Bka'-bryud goer-phreng*—"golden rosary of the oral lineage"—genre. For an example in English translation, see Könchog Gyaltsen 1990 on the "Br'ig-gung Bka'-bryud."

117. Mimaki 1982, text fol. 2a–3a.

118. Rorty 1984.

119. See now, in particular, Collins 1998, ch. 3, "Nirvana, Time, and Narrative."

120. Buddhist prophecies of decline and their ramifications for Buddhism in East Asia are considered in detail in Nattier 1991.

121. Nattier 1991, pp. 136–139, on "Decline and Dispensationalism in Buddhist Thought and Practice."

122. van der Kuif 1983; Tillemans and Tomabechi 1995; Dreyfus 1997a, pp. 383–385.

123. *Grub-mtha* 'lhun-po mdzes-rgyan, pp. 2–9.

124. *Grub-mtha* 'lhun-po mdzes-rgyan, p. 8; *sn'yigs ma las kyang ches sn'yigs ma* 'i//ngang tsul mdgon par brtas gyur kyung// thub pa 'i gsung gi gsang ba ni//da dung ma nyams 'di yi drit//

125. The Rnying-ma-pa and Bon-po must be noted as having also formulated peculiar views of many aspects of doctrinal history, though we shall not consider them here. See, in particular, Karma 1972; Dudjom 1991.

126. Ruegg 1963.

127. Smith 1970; Ruegg 1989; Hookham 1991; Thurman 1984; Dudjom 1991; Kapstein 1992, 1997c; Hopkins 1999; Stearns 1999.

128. Lamotte 1935, p. 85 (Tibetan text) and pp. 206–207 (translation).

129. These topics and the previous researches relevant to their investigation are recently examined in Tauscher 1995. See also Kapstein 1997a, 1997c; Hopkins 1999, pp. 47–55.

130. *Dol-po-pa*, vol. 2, p. 228, line 3f.; *Dol-po-pa* 'i tri-chos, p. 177, line 3f.

131. Thus, for instance, 'Brig-gung Skyobs-pa 'Jig-ten-mgon-po (1143–1217) in his *Dam-chos dgongs-pa ge-tig-pa'i rtsa-tshig*: "There are those who hold the promulgations of Madhyamaka and the promulgations of Mind Only to be different, but, according to the vajra-speech, the very same promulgations that teach Mind Only teach Madhyamaka" (*du-ma'i bka'-'dang sems-tsam-pa'i bka' lhu-dad-par 'dol-de; rdo-rje'i gsung sems-tsam ston-pa'i bka'-nyid dhu-ma ston-par bzhe'd*). From *Dgongs-ge-tig yig-cha*, vol. 1, pp. 157–158. It is perhaps not without significance that Dol-po-pa was regarded as an emanation of 'Brig-gung Skyobs-pa.

132. See, for example, Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, pp. 191–216, 243–256, 911–913.

133. The key technical terms here are: *tathāgagarbha* (*de-bzhin-gshegs-pa'i snying-po*), *advaya* (*don-dam-pa'i byung-chub-sem*), *Mahamudrā* (*phyag-rgya chen-po*), and *paramārthika-bodhicitta* (*don-dam-pa'i byung-chub-sem*).

134. *Śūnyatā* (*stong-pa-nyid*), *dharma* (*chos-nyid*), and *Prajñāparamitā* (*shes-rab-kyi phar-vol-tu phyin-pa*).

135. I use "esotericism" here in the specific sense in which contemporary philosophers of religion understand it, that is, as referring to the assertion of a philosophical doctrine or intuition that, while not explicitly represented throughout the corpus being interpreted, is nevertheless held by its proponents to be present as the implicit or concealed message unifying the whole as its deepest or ultimate significance. In this sense, efforts to identify, say, Advaita Vedānta as the teaching underlying all Hinduism are similarly esoteric.

136. *Dol-po-pa*, nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13. The commentaries on the three *Prajñāparamitā* do not offer word-by-word explanations, of course, but rather detailed summaries, with glosses on selected topics, that attempt to illustrate the manner in which the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* itself functions as a commentary on these sūtras.

137. *Dol-po-pa*, vol. 3, p. 76.

138. *Dol-po-pa*, vol. 3, p. 277, line 6f.

139. See n. 128.

140. *Dol-po-pa*, vol. 5, pp. 340–343; Kapstein 1992f, p. 40–43.

141. Natier 1991, pp. 15–19.

142. "Third" here refers to the second age, and is called "third" because three was the second-best score in the Indian game of dice ("threes"). Similarly, "second" (*dhūpara*) is the Third World Age ("twos" in the dice game), while the worst and last is *kali* ("craps"). Contrary to the prevailing (Western) mythology, the name of the Kaliyuga has nothing whatever to do with the goddess Kālī. Refer to Natier 1991, p. 17, n. 4.

143. The title is explained in *Dol-po-pa*, vol. 5, p. 328. See also Stearns 1999, where a complete translation of the root text will now be found.

144. This couplet paraphrases *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, ch. 9, verse 4ab: *bādhyante dhīrīṣyena yogino py uttarottarūhi*. "[Interior] adepts are refuted by ever superior ones, according to perspicacity."

145. *Dol-po-pa*, vol. 5, pp. 208–209.

146. *Dol-po-pa*, vol. 5, pp. 336–343; Kapstein 1992f, pp. 27–43.

147. *Dol-po-pa*, vol. 7, nos. 56, 58, 59, all related to the *Vajrāvāṇī* of Abhayākara-guṇa, nang-pa tradition. In fact, during my investigations of contemporary Jo-nang-pa communities in Sichuan (Kapstein 1991), I learned that only the initiation of Kālacakra as included within the *Vajrāvāṇī* is considered an acceptable substitute for the property Jo-nang-pa Kālacakra *abhiṣeka*.

148. Compare Stearns 1999, ch. 3.

149. *Dol-po-pa*, vol. 5, p. 293.

150. *Vimalaprabhāṅkā*, p. 74, on ch. 1, verse 22.

151. *Vimalaprabhāṅkā*, pp. 255–271.

152. *Dol-po-pa*, vol. 1, pp. 190–201; see also Stearns 1999.

153. "Great Madhyamaka" is widely used by Rnying-ma-pa, Bka'-bgyud-pa, Sa-skya-pa, and Jo-nang-pa authors as a designation of the highest philosophical view, in many cases with the polemical intent of asserting a position which, like Dol-po-pa's, is thought to harmonize the traditions of Nagarjuna and Asaṅga, while transcending both Cittamātra and Madhyamaka insofar as they are discursively accessible philosophical systems. See, e.g., Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, pp. 178–186.

154. For Haribhadra's text, see Amato 1975, p. 3.

155. *Dol-po-pa*, vol. 5, p. 339; Kapstein 1992f, p. 39.

156. *Mthven-brise'i gsung-tson*, p. 222; *Shes-bya kun-kyib*, vol. 1, p. 403. On Tāranātha see n. 159.

157. *Jo-nang chos-byung*, pp. 13–14.

158. *Gzhan-stong chen-mo*, p. 92.

159. Tāranātha does mention Avitarka (Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1980, p. 102) but only characterizes him generally as a teacher of the Mahāyāna.

160. Makransky 1997 now offers an excellent study of the main commentarial traditions on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, devoting particular attention to Haribhadra in chapter 10, and in chapter 12 taking up the question of Tsong-kha-pa's debt to Haribhadra and, hence, his importance to the later Dge-lugs-pa school.

161. Examples include Buddhist works such as Bhāvaviveka's *Tarkajyāla*, and the *Jñāna-sārasamuccaya*, attributed to Aryadeva, as well as Brahmanical texts like the *Sarvasiddhānta-saṅgraha*, attributed to Śaṅkara, and Śaṅgana Mañjave's *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*. There can be no doubt that, in India, Vasubandhu and Asaṅga were in fact widely associated with a form of idealism.

162. Rorty 1984, p. 62.

163. Rorty 1984, pp. 62–63.

164. It must be said, however, that Sa-skya Paṇḍita is remarkably restrained here. Thus, even in commenting on Śāntideva's (in)famous verse, "the absolute is not within the scope of intellect" (*buddher agocoras tattvaṃ, Bodhicaryāvatāra*, ch. 9, verse 2, cited in *Sa-paṅ gsung-'bum*, vol. 1, p. 131), he remarks that "this [refers to] the definitum but not to the definitans" (*'di mshan gchi yin gyi mshan nyid ma yin no*), which is to say that the skeptical view apparently articulated by Śāntideva in this passage bears upon the intellect's ability to refer directly to the absolute, but *not* upon its ability so to refer indirectly, through a mediating concept.

165. See nn. 64, 96.

166. Kapstein 1992f; Stearns 1999.

167. Hopkins 1999, p. 3, nicely describes the perspective that must characterize thoughtful interpretation of Tibetan religious discourse when he writes of his own fascination "with what seemed to be a cacophony of perspectives within the tradition."

168. *O-rgyan glegs-bum*, p. 489.

169. This may also be a point of some importance for the assessment of Tibetan philosophical writings. The great Rnying-ma-pa master, 'Jam-mgon 'Ju Mi-pham Rin-po-che (1846–1912), for instance, was the author of a short treatise in defense of the "extrinsic emptiness" doctrine, *Gzhan-stong kha-s-len*. In interviewing scholars trained in differing branches of Mi-pham's lineage, however, it became apparent that while some held this text to represent Mi-pham's real view of the matter, others maintained that Mi-pham dictated the *Gzhan-stong kha-s-len* only as an exercise, in order to demonstrate the best case one might make in favor of a viewpoint that in the end would have to be abandoned.

170. Gyatso 1998, pp. 116, 119.

171. The best example of such a rare case is no doubt Ma-cig Lab-sgron (1055–1143). Several of the works attributed to her authorship are studied in Orofino 1987.

172. *Sa-paṅ gsung-'bum*, vol. 1, p. 681; see also Kapstein in press.

173. This process has yet to be studied in detail. It is clear that during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the contribution of the Sa-skya-pa, Jo-nang-pa, and Bka'-brgyud-pa, to the ongoing development of Tibetan scholasticism remains a vital one, as is seen in the works Shakra mehog-ldan (1428–1507), Go-rans-pa Bsoḍ-nams-seng-ge (1429–1489), Karma-pa Dwaḡs-po Bkra-shis man-rgyal (1512–1587), 'Brug-chen IV Padma dkar-po (1527–1592), and Jo-nang Rje-btsun Taranātha (1575–1634). After the time of the latter, the creativity of the non-Dge-lugs-pa traditions in Central Tibet seems largely exhausted and picks up again only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, primarily in far eastern Tibet. This is most likely explained by the impact on religious institutions of the struggles of the Dbus-Gtsang civil war, the consolidation of power under the Fifth Dalai Lama, the subsequent state-sponsored promotion of the Dge-lugs-pa sect and restriction of their opponents, and, finally, the devastating effects of the early-eighteenth-century Dzungar invasions (on which see ch. 7, n. 64). On the religious history of this period, refer to Smith 1968, 1970. We should note, too, that even with the revival of non-Dge-lugs-pa scholasticism in eastern Tibet, the general dominance of Dge-lugs-pa thought was often in evidence; see, for instance, Kapstein 1997c on the nineteenth-century Jo-nang-pa master Ba-'mda' Dge-legs.

Chapter 7

1. See now esp. Buswell 1989, 1990; Cabézon 1992; Collins 1990.
2. For a useful introduction to the textual traditions called "canon" in recent Buddhist Studies, see Lancaster 1979. As for "apocrypha," Lamotte, 1976, p. 180, referring to the proliferation of sūtras prior to the actual emergence of the Mahāyāna, introduces the term as follows: "D'autre part à côté de sūtra authentiques, d'innombrables classes dans les collections, ont circulé des textes séparés (*muktaḥ*) et apocryphes (*adhyatropiata*). . . . La multiplication d'authenticité. . . ." Consider, too, Warder's remarks (1970, p. 354) on the formation of the Mahāyāna literature itself: "[C]ertain monks felt the need not simply for new interpretations of the original sūtras . . . but for wholesale restatements of the doctrine. For this purpose they rewrote the sūtras, or wrote new sūtras. . . . It is a matter of speculation how far there was deliberate deception in this fabrication of new sūtras."
3. On the background of this popular text (no. 945 in the Taishō Tripiṭaka), refer to Demiéville 1952, pp. 43–52, n. 3; Lamotte 1965, pp. 106–107. Neither writer hesitates to refer to this version of the *Sūrangama* as "un apocryphe chinois."
4. Butrick 1962, vol. 1, pp. 498–499; Hennecke and Schneemelcher 1963, vol. 1, p. 21.
5. Cf. Monier-Williams 1899, p. 1241. For characteristic explanations of the word *sūtra* found in later Buddhist scholastic writings, as known in Tibet, see Rahula 1971, p. 131; Obermiller 1931, p. 31; Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, p. 79.
6. We should note too that, following this definition, large portions of such hallowed collections as the Tibetan Tanjur will have to be regarded as being in some sense extracanonical. This, however, is as it should be, for only a few of the works and authors represented therein are generally thought to be so exalted as to be accorded the authoritative status otherwise reserved for works described as *buddhavaṇana*. The commentaries, treatises, and literary works making up the Tanjur and similar compilations are canons primarily in the sense in which we speak of "aesthetic canons" or "legal canons"; that is, they provide the models and standards for the specific classes of endeavor that they represent and as such are considered to merit emulation. The degree to which they embody the Buddha's message, however, is subject to merit discussion and debate and in some cases may be doubted altogether.

7. Cf. the usage of Demiéville and Lamotte in the passages referred to in notes 2 and 3 above; and that of Zürcher 1959, p. 308ff.
8. Hennecke and Schneemelcher 1963, p. 27.
9. There are, however, some exceptions to this, e.g., the "genuine" Chinese sūtras when contrasted with the "spurious" Chinese sūtras, though both classes are agreed not to have originated in Buddhist India. See Mizuno 1982, p. 116ff. (However, the dominant tendency in China was certainly to regard the dichotomy of spurious and genuine as excluding any intervening category; see Kyoku Tokuno, "The Evaluation of Indigenous Scriptures in Chinese Buddhist Bibliographical Catalogues," in Buswell 1990, pp. 31–74.) For a noteworthy exception within the Tibetan tradition, see Taranātha's comments on the authenticity of the *Mani bka' - 'bum* in ch. 8 here.
10. The *gter-ma* are considered in more detail later in this chapter. On the term "apocrypha" in Gnostic contexts, see Butrick 1962, vol. 1, p. 162; Hennecke and Schneemelcher 1963, pp. 25–26. Edward Conze 1967, p. 658, has juxtaposed Gnostic and Mahāyāna ways of authenticating scripture, comparing *gter-ma* to certain Hermetic texts.
11. Cabézon 1992, p. 236, n. 4, takes issue with certain aspects of my discussion here, but I think that his remarks miss the point of this paragraph. My intention is only to emphasize that, when we use the term "apocrypha" to refer to concepts found within Buddhist disputes on scriptural authenticity, we are not using it in just the same way that we do in Jewish and Christian contexts, and that we need to be clear about the semantic shift that has taken place. I am grateful, however, to Cabézon both for his generous comments about this chapter (as it appeared in Kapstein 1989a), and for his contribution to enlarging the scope of reflection on its subject matter through his valuable examination of Vasubandhu's *Vyākhyāyukti*.
12. Cf. *Kuṭāvatthū* XVIII, 1 ("Of the Buddha and this World") and 2 ("Of how the Norm was taught"), in Aung and Davids 1969, pp. 323–325; and Buddhaghosa's comments in Law 1969, pp. 211–212.
13. *Spyod-'jug nam-bshad*, pp. 346.4–347.2: *nyun thos pa dag na rel . . . theg pa chen po'i gshung dag ni sangs rgyas kyi gsungs pa'i bka' ma yin rel* Bye brag tu bshad pa chen por' chos 'khor gnas dang yangs pa can' sa dkar can dang lha yi gnas . . . zhes bshad pa'i gnas 'thi dag tu bshags pa na riag par phyi bzhin 'brang ba'i nyun thos chen po mams kyi ma thos pa'i phyir . . .
14. Davidson 1990.
15. *Abhidharmakośam*, vol. 2, pp. 1206–1207: *yo hi granthaḥ sarveṣu nikāyaṅgareṣv āmāyate, na ca sūtram dharmatām vā bādhaite, so 'smābhū apaihan na buddhavaṇanam iti kevalam sāsasamātram!*
16. As Davidson 1990 rightly points out, one Indian oral tradition, that of the Vedas, was transmitted with verifiable precision. But in the absence of anything like the Vedic system of checks and balances, only an early written tradition could have avoided some of the difficulties faced by the Buddhists in ensuring the authority of their transmissions. For a fine example of the degree of accuracy that was attained in the transmission of some Indian folk traditions, see Griterson and Barnett 1920, pp. 3–4. While the evidence for exactitude here is impressive indeed, we must not forget that the sayings of Lalla form a relatively small collection of verses and so cannot be the basis for a comparison with the extensive prose corpus of ancient Buddhism. Still, the mnemonic achievements of the early Buddhist *bhāṇaka*-s ("reciters") have yet to be considered in detail.
17. Cf. Collingwood 1956, pp. 25–26. There is little doubt that by the time the Buddhists began to commit their scriptures to writing, the lives and teachings of the founder and his original circle of disciples were no longer within the range of scientific history as Collingwood here conceives of it.
18. Cf. Davidson 1990.

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