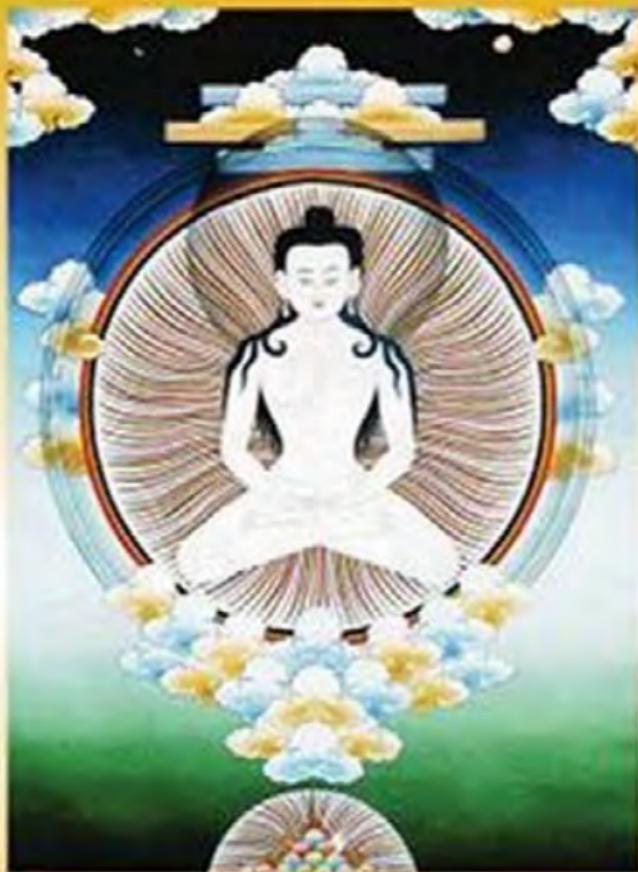


Unbounded Wholeness

Bon, Dzogchen, and
the Logic of the Nonconceptual



Anne Carolyn Klein
Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

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of the Nonconceptual*

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Preface

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

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

Indeed, *Authenticity* characterizes study and intellectual under-

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Karmay 1972: 152.

4. Padon 746.6.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12. Levin 1988: 76.

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

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

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

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

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

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Acknowledgments

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—Anne Carolyn Klein

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

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

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

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

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

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

—Tenzin Wangyal

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

Full Moon Day
November 25, 2004

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Technical Note

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Unbounded Wholeness



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

Photograph by Alejandro Chaoul-Reich

Introduction

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

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

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

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

ity must deploy logic in a manner that somehow allows for this alogical perspective.¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mindnature and Unbounded Wholeness

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. The position featured here and contrasted with *Authenticity* is largely the view of Devendrabuddhi, Śākyabuddhi, and Manorathanandin in India and of Geluk interpreters in Tibet. By contrast, Prajñākaragupta (also known as rGyan mKhan po), takes the only ultimate *pramāṇa* to be *svasamvedana*. (See Prajñākaragupta 1953: 25.24f., 30.2of.) These verses lead Takashi Iwata to point out that for Prajñākaragupta “the illumination of an unapprehended object” means the illumination of supreme reality which is not yet apprehended by conventional knowledge (“Prajñākaragupta’s Proof of the Buddha’s Authority,” p. 4, Iwata 2004.) This is an important difference, I think, because for Dzogchen there is no question of mindnature (*sems nyid*) “illuminating” supreme reality; mind nature itself is that reality. However, for Prajñākaragupta, as for the entirety of the Dignāga/Dharmakīrti tradition, *svasamvedanā* remains a consciousness, and implicitly an ingredient in a subject-object paradigm, even when, as in the case of Prajñākaragupta, *svasamvedana* is the sole authority with respect to the ultimate.

This matter is also related to the question of the role of a thesis statement in gaining proper inference. See Tillemans 1999: 69–87. Whereas Dignāga in PS III.k1cd denies that a thesis statement has the power to prove anything, he does apparently find it to be present in an ultimate inference, a *paramārthañumāna*. Dharmakīrti disagrees with this, saying that the thesis statement is not appropriately part of the *paramārthañumāna*. Prajñākaragupta diffuses this by stating that a thesis such as “sound is impermanent” need not be presented, since the proof (*sādhya*) is established by the claims of pervasion alone: “Whatever is produced is impermanent.”

Logic and the Nonconceptual

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19. Tillemans 1999b: 209.

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

21. Dreyfus 1997: 22.

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

Pedagogy: Religious Context of the Text

Bon Dzogchen has two traditions of training.²³ First, and most widespread, is that of the retreatant or hermit (*ri khrod pa'i lugs tshul*), also known as the Kusuli system,²⁴ “the system of yogis who practice the meaning” (*Ku su lu'i 'dzo²⁵ ki don nyams su len pa'i lugs tshul*). Second, and less widely practiced, is the Paññita system for “learned” persons who take pleasure in elaboration (*gang zang spros pa la dga' ba mkhas pa paññita'i lugs tshul*).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

presents a system of logic and debate specifically relating to the Dzogchen teaching that is still used by Pañḍita students.²⁹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

35. David Jackson 1996: 238.

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

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

in central Tibet. Its connection with Sakya continued until relatively recent times, fading after the construction of Yung Drung Ling in 1843.³⁸

Yung Drung Ling was founded at a site below Menri as a center for logic and debate.³⁹ The traditional course of study at Menri and Yung Drung Ling continues in exile at Menri Monastery in Dolanji, a small Indian town north of Simla, and includes training in the five traditional topics of Logic (*tshad ma*, *pramāṇa*), the Perfections, (*phar phyin*, *pāramitā*), Middle Way Philosophy (*dbu ma*, *Madhyamaka*), Treasury of Phenomenology⁴⁰ (*mdzod, [abhidharma] kosa*), and monastic discipline ('*dul ba*, *vinaya*). Thus, early on Bon developed a unique system of dialectics and debate specifically related with the Dzogchen teaching.⁴¹

Lopon Tenzin Namdak's observation that Kusuli students are not concerned with cultural preservation⁴² or with defending their views in debate speaks also to the question of the place of intellectual learning in Dzogchen. Such learning may not lead to realization, but it helps create an arena for realization, and it helps preserve the legacies that honor and institutionalize the search for realization.

Passage to the Ineffable: Study and Meditation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

43. Griffiths 1999: 72–80.

44. Griffiths 1999: 73.

45. Hadot 1992: 9; also cited and discussed in Arnold Davidson's introduction to Hadot 1995: 32.

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

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

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

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

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

47. Griffiths 1999: 74.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

50. Griffiths 1999: 41.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Structure

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

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

The Guiding Figure of Samantabhadra

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

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

and (3) dispelling objections (*spang*).⁵⁴ Even the most illustrious scholars of this tradition sometimes find it a challenge to be certain of whose voice we are listening in on: an opponent's or the text's own musing on an opponent's hypothesis. This is partly because the opponent's voice is always actually also the text's own voice; in the famous manner of debate, *contra* positions are introduced with the phrase "If someone says . . .," and the book then describes what it would say in that hypothetical case. In this way, the entire work can be read as the interior monologue of a scholarly mind calling forth a multiplicity of views that challenge its own, in response to which its view becomes clarified.

This famous "consequence" (*thal ba, prasanga*)-driven style of debate has a literary, as well as a logical, significance. The subject is speaking to itself in order to dissolve its speech into the authenticity that, the text ultimately concludes, gives rise to it. The sense that genuine subjectivity is the essential dynamic of genuine, divinely poetic speech is a potent principle here. Given that the work in question puts the nature of this subjectivity at the very center of its inquiry, it behooves us to note the type of subjectivity modeled by its mono-dialogue. For, although both voices participate similarly in unbounded wholeness, they also interact differently with the various subjectivities of the reader. Bringing these two subjective modalities into awareness and into play is the most powerful subtext of this work.

Rather than taking shape around particular definitions, then, debates in *Authenticity* are usually initiated by setting two elements of an apparently binary pair against each other: for example, Buddhas and ordinary beings, or conditioned and unconditioned. The type of relation that could obtain between them is then questioned. Debate continues along these lines until the bifurcated issue under discussion breaks open into a kind of discursive wholeness, which is then often decorated by a poetic celebration—as opposed to triumphant clinching—of the point being made. This performance is as close as the text comes to suggesting that reasoning aims at its own abatement.

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

The work thus takes form through the flow of ideas in and around certain themes. It does not build its intellectual narrative through fine-tuned defini-

54. This trifold structure abbreviated begins with refuting the system of *others* (*gzhan gyi lugs dgag*), presenting one's own system (*rang gi lugs bzhag*), and dispelling objections (*rtsod pa spang*).

tions; it does not even organize itself into chapters. So what is its underlying logical structure? How will we discover this?

Here we take a cue from Pierre Hadot's illuminating studies in Latin Patristics. Hadot describes how an apparently arbitrarily arranged painting suddenly takes on meaning when

one looks at the whole painting from a certain angle [and] the landscape transforms itself into a hidden figure, a face or a human body, and one understands then that the house or the tree was not there out of pure fancy, but was necessary because it made up part of the hidden figure. . . . We often have the impression when we read ancient authors that they write badly, that the sequence of ideas lacks coherence and connection. But it is precisely because the true figure escapes us that we do not perceive the form that renders all the details necessary.⁵⁵

We propose that a crucial “true figure” organizing this material is that of Samantabhadra, central in both Buddhist and Bon Dzogchen traditions. That is, although the text’s title, language, reliance on debate, and, perhaps above all, its use of the term authenticity (*tshad ma*) suggest that it is a work intent on logic and reasoning, *Authenticity*’s literary structure reveals that to consider it only as a work of logic will not, in the end, do it justice, for its most pivotal premises on authenticity depend on our reading the work through the figure of wholeness, namely Samantabhadra.⁵⁶ And this, we will point out in chapter 5, is actually crucial to its philosophical import, which has everything to do with the text’s own authentic relation to unbounded wholeness.

The Resonance of Myth and Philosophy

An important subtext of *Authenticity* is that reason and logic can, and apparently must, exist side by side with poetic, mythic, and other voices. These do not cancel each other out; they are not even presented as contradictory. Like notes in a chord, enriched when they sound together, each also retains its unique resonance.

The voices of this subtext range from metaphysically charged narratives of the divine descent of the Bon tradition itself to colorful tales of the text’s author, Lishu Daring, and include as well the apparently more factually grounded sto-

55. Hadot 1995: 7–9, citing “Patristique Latine,” p. 218.

56. We will not, of course, claim that this is the *only* way to read it, or even the best, but rather that to do so demonstrates something crucial about a developing methodology for reading ancient philosophical literature. Hadot is onto something important in thinking it an error to consider abstraction the most important element of ancient philosophy.

ries of its own history.⁵⁷ All these authenticate *Authenticity*, attesting to its rightful place at the center of Bon monastic curriculum and Dzogchen heritage.

Thus, in the world of *Authenticity*, there is nothing unusual about an interest in logical rigor—which is never meant to be a consuming interest—conjoining with a belief that the brilliant author of this work was capable of transgendering rituals or of transporting hundreds of texts on the backs of birds. That such a claim would not withstand scientific scrutiny is, most happily, not the point. It expresses something important about the location, origins, and charisma of this work. As Derrida says in a different context: “Between the too warm flesh of the literal event and the cold skin of the concept runs meaning.”⁵⁸ We are interested in that warm current and how it shapes the landscape of the reader.

In Part I, we follow that stream through the intersection of myth and philosophy, the intermingling of mythos and poetry with reasoning and debate. In Part II we follow it through the intersection of mythos and history. We begin by touching on the broadest and, to modern sensibilities, the most mythic narrative, the story of Bon’s metaphysical origins and descent into the known world. Subsequently we consider Bon’s entry into a more recognizably historical context, that of the early Tibetan kings, prelude to a Tibet just entering its period of imperial grandeur. Appearing in that scene are figures such as Padmasambhava and Vairocana, usually described through a Buddhist lens, here reflected rather differently in a Bon mirror.

Then, narrowing our focus to *Authenticity*, we take account of what is known of its author, Lishu Daring, whose amazing life conjures the vibrant ancient culture and language of Zhang Zhung. We move from this, in chapter 7, to a network of narratives related to the discovery of this work and subsequent transmission into the hands setting in motion the events that preserved it down to the present day. Once buried, *Authenticity* ripens into a revealed treasure, a *terma* (*gter ma*), that, like the underground gold of its own metaphors, is already there as we begin to look for it.

Let us enter the world of *Authenticity* as perceived by those who follow its traditions. We begin here with Bon’s philosophical inquiry into the vastness of unbounded wholeness; in Part II, as noted, we take up Bon’s most vast historical perspective on its own origins and move from there toward the narratives most directly related with events referred to in *Authenticity*’s colophon. Readers interested in the literary context and historical development of Bon may consult Appendix A which explains the place of *Authenticity* within a broader textual and historical context.

57. Janet Gyatso 1993 makes a useful distinction between *origin account* and *account of revelation*. I will be arguing for the special significance of the origin account here.

58. Derrida 1978: 75.

PART I

Core Philosophical Issues

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I

Authentication and Authenticity

Authenticity 47.1–53.6

Our text's title, homage, and opening statements are important indications of its perspective. Its brief section on *tshad ma* in particular provides the work's most concise explication of its purpose and perspective.

Title: *Authenticity of Open Awareness: A Collection of the Essential Reasonings* (*gTan tshigs gal mdo rig pa'i tshad ma*)

Most striking about the title is its inclusion of key terms from two prominent and radically disparate streams of discourse. We saw that *tshad ma*, the Tibetan translation of the classic term *pramāṇa*, most literally means “measure,” often in the sense of applying an authoritative standard.¹ To take the authentic, valid, or correct measure of an object is to know it authentically. A mind capable of taking the correct measure of its object, whether through direct perception or correct reasoning, is a valid, authentic mind. To validate or authenticate is a key concept in Buddhist epistemology and central to the thought of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. Because of the different meanings that undergird the principles of *tshad ma/pramāṇa* in Dignāga and Dharmakīrti on one side and Dzogchen on the other, I will

1. In the Sakya Lamdre (*Lam 'bras*) tradition, for example, there are four such standards or *tshad ma*: “scriptural authority (*lung*), historical precedent (*lo rgyus*), esoteric precepts (*man ngag*), and spiritual experience (*nyams myong*).” (Thanks to Matthew Kapstein for reminding me of this in private correspondence.)

translate this term as “valid” in the former case. In the latter I will move between “authenticating” and “authentic” in order to articulate the semantic range of this term in the material at hand and, especially, to highlight our text’s own movement between these two meanings.²

Though “awareness” (*rig pa*) is construed variously in different Buddhist systems, we use it here in the Dzogchen sense of open awareness. For *Authenticity*, as for Dzogchen in general, open awareness is the only subjectivity wholly free of unawareness. This failure of awareness is what Dzogchen practice primarily addresses. However, open awareness is by no means a valid cognizer (*tshad ma, pramāṇa*) in the manner of Dignāga or Dharmakīrti. It is not even a consciousness (*shes pa, vijñāna*) but an emptiness naturally rich in potential. As we shall see, the tension between valid thinking and authentic nonconceptual awareness, augured by the title, becomes a critical point of reference throughout the text.

Insofar as this is a text of debates, it is not surprising that it calls itself a “collection of reasonings.” The term *gtan tshigs* here rendered as “reasoning” could also be rendered as axiom, logical syllogism, proof, conclusion, or argument. Literally it means a word or phrase (*tshigs*) which supports stability, regularity, and, by extension, certainty (*gtan*). It is this quality of definiteness that will be contrasted, in our text, with a specific type of indefiniteness considered an inalienable aspect of the Dzogchen views.³ “Reason” or “axiom” is synonymous with “proof-sign” (*rgyu mtshan*), “sign” (*rtags*) and “reason” (*rigs pa*). Yet neither of these two more rigorous terms of art, common in the discourse of valid cognition, is employed here. This would perhaps not merit notice except that, according to Bon oral scholarly tradition, *gtan tshigs* in *Authenticity* refers rather broadly to the settling of principles (*gtan la 'phebs pa'i gzhung lugs*).⁴ This is a process that, as the title suggests and the text bears out, does not necessitate the kind of strictly patterned reasoning that is most characteristic of classic logical (*tshad ma, pramāṇa*) syllogisms.

It is difficult to know how much to make of this. However, this distinction (which may exist primarily or mainly only in certain areas of the oral tradition) contrasts with common Buddhist usage, where *rtags* and *gtan tshigs* are virtually interchangeable. Still, this distinction, slight as it may be, alerts us to note

2. One could profitably reflect on the dynamics of this movement in comparison with those of Greek/Western trajectories as seen, for example, by Heidegger, to be a move from a focus on Being to a conception of truth as a correspondence between a subject (idea) and an object. As Kapstein 2001: 219 notes, this shift foreshadowed the entire Western notion of rationality. This is yet another reason why it will be inappropriate to consider *Authenticity* solely as a text of ratiocination, as many Buddhist “logical” texts have been framed. “Logic” is a Western genre that does not fully capture the premises and scope of thought in *Authenticity*.

3. Though the emphasis is slightly different, this interpretation of *gtan tshigs* is well in line with Das’ definition of the term as “fixed in meaning” (*tshig dang don la 'gyur rgyu med pa*), from *gtan* understood as arranging or systemizing and *tshigs* as that which connects or joins, derived from its arguably primary meaning as “joint,” as well as the tissue or muscle between two joints. Das 1977: 521.

4. Menri Ponlob Thrinley Nyima Rinopche, Houston, February 2000, oral commentary. This appears not

that, whereas most debate texts would most likely use the term *rtags* in syllogistic sparring, as in the well-known retort, “your reason is not established” (*rtags ma grub*), our text typically will say “your reason is not settled” (*gtan tshigs ma grub*).⁵

Even though the boundary between “reasonings” (*gtan tshigs*) and “syllogistic reasoning” (*rigs pa*) is often difficult to discern, the term of choice in our text tends to be the former. All this may bespeak a slightly more flexible format than one might expect in a debate text. We note this as a first step toward pointing out that, in many vital respects, the work at hand is *not* a “debate text” although it consists mainly of syllogistic debates.

For example, *Authenticity* does not always take on each of the opponent’s points, one by one, and methodically counter them, as one might typically do in debate. Reasoned statements need to be resolved into wholeness, not simply defeated, and thus the text often “settles” its discussion by a more indirect route. Frequently, the text will put forth its view through a combination of poetic citations and graceful sidestepping of direct confirmation. This is part of the art of its discussion.

The text collects, examines, and puts forward various ways of settling matters; hence, the phrase “Collection of the Essential Reasonings” (*gTan tshigs Gal mDo*). The adjectival *gal* means that which is central or important.⁶ That which is important here is the *mdo* or collection. The phrase “*gal mdo*” as a unit also means “refutation of an essential point” or “very essence.”⁷ Ponlob

to be a universal gloss, however; Lopon Tenzin Namdak was willing, in certain circumstances, to consider *gtan la 'pheb* as a term of art as rigorous as *rtags* (Ligmincha, Serenity Ridge, Charlottesville, Va., July 2000, oral commentary to Klein).

5. See, for example, [57.3, 60.1]. The same term frequently appears in segments of the *Great Commentary on Oral Transmission of Great Completeness: A Magical Space Treasure* [abbrev. as *Magical Space Treasure*] (*rDzogs pa chen po snyan rgyud rin po che nam mkha 'phrul gyi mdzod chen*), attributed to Drampa Namkha, considered an important background text to *Authenticity*, in apparent preference to “reasoning” for example, 290.2, “six ways of settling the way of self-arisen primordial wisdom”; 293.2, “settling indefiniteness of the essence,” 295.3; and others. This is consistent with the way terminology in this text has a broader semantic range than “reason” in the strict syllogistic sense of the term.

6. The *Presentation of the New Orthography* (*Dag yig gsar bsgregs*) n.d., defines *gal* (p. 107) as *gnad dang don dang rtsa ba sogs*, “essential, principle, root and so forth,” and defines *mdo* (p. 393) as *lung ba dang chu bo sogs . . . 'dres sa'i mishams gyi ming ste lung mdo chu mdo lam mdo zhes pa lta bu*, “the name of an intermediary area where scriptures or waters and so on converge—for example, a scriptural convergence, water convergence, or path convergence.” The three-volume edition *Great Treasury of Tibetan Words* of Yisun Zhang (*Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*), defines *gal mdo* as *gnad 'gag gam rtsa ba*, “essential point or root,” and as *gal chen du 'dzin pa* “holding as very important” (Vol. I: 353).

7. We can also note that Bon and Buddhists differ somewhat in their use of the term *mdo*. The Bon Kanjur (*bKa' gyur*) is divided into four sections: *mdo*, *'bum*, *rgyud*, and *mdzod*. Many types of texts are included in the *mdo* (sutra) category, for example the Zermik (*gZer nigs*) [Shenrab Miwo’s biography], as well as ritual texts. The category known as Compiled or *'bum* texts are sutra texts connected with the Perfection of Wisdom literature, the categories of *rgyud* (Tantra) and *mdzod* (Abhidharma) are parallel to the Buddhist categories of the same names. But for Buddhists *mdo* most strictly refers to words spoken by Buddha.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche writes in the introduction to his *Catalogue of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives*, “In the 18th century, the Bon *bKa' gyur* was categorized in these four ways by Kungrol 'Ja' tshon sNyinpo, also known as Rig 'dzin kun grol grags pa (b. 1700). According to the catalogue written by the twenty-second Menri Abbot, Khenchen Nyima Tenzin (mKhan chen Nyi ma bsTan 'dzin, b. 1813), the *mdo* section

Thrinley Nyima Rinpoche breaks this down further, understanding *gal* as a victory over inappropriate or inferior views (*lta ba mi mthun phyogs las rnam par gal ba*) and reading *mdo* as “examine” or “investigate thoroughly.”⁸ More colloquially, however, *mdo* can mean what is prior or previous, or a river’s outflow at river bottom, hence an area of confluence or passage. Although oral tradition does not take this to be its meaning here, where *mdo* is translated as “Collection,” the metaphor of confluence will be very useful as we consider the intellectual, historical, and mythical-religious streams flowing in and through the text.

Lopon Tenzin Namdak glosses this title as *Gal ba'i rtsod pa'i mdo*, literally, “a collection of statements which argue the important points.” In all these permutations of its title, we see a framing of the reasoned reflection that it both performs and calls into question. Above all, the juxtaposition of two of the most prominent terms from the traditions of logic and Dzogchen—*tshad ma* and *rig pa*, respectively—are harbingers of the central principles *Authenticity* will here collect.

Homage: Samantabhadra

Homage to the All Good, Samantabhadra, unique nature of (all) phenomena and minds.

A text’s homage frames its esoteric and intellectual parameters. We have already noted that Samantabhadra, glossed by the annotator as “primordial, original teacher,” symbol and signifier of reality, is a trope whose full import regarding authenticity and authentication will unfold gradually throughout the text. Is Samantabhadra a “person”? From the viewpoint of reality itself, the base (*gzhi*), Samantabhadra, literally, the “All-Good” is a principle rather than a person; from the viewpoint of the base’s dynamic display (*rtsal*), Samantabhadra embodies reality, and in that sense is a person.⁹ This itself exemplifies *Authenticity*’s view of an unbounded and unfixable wholeness.

The homage thus also points to mindnature (*sems nyid*) and its relation with the nature of all other phenomena (*bon nyid*). The empty base (*stong gzhi*)

contains 62 volumes; the *bum sde* 91 volumes. The *rgyud sde* consists of 18 volumes, and the *mdzod sde* of 4 volumes. Thus, there are 175 volumes in all. He also catalogues 131 volumes in the Bon *bsTan 'gyur*. p. vi. The definition of *grad 'gag gam snying po* is from *Bod rgya nang don rig pa'i tshig mdzod* (*Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary of Buddhist terminology*), p. 188.

8. Menri Ponlob Thrinley Nyima Rinpoche, Houston, May 8–9, 2000, personal communication to Klein. Ponlob notes that Das defines *mdo* as *don mang po 'dus pa'i yi ge*, the condensation of multiple meanings, and thus the common term *mdor du* “to abbreviate.” *Mdo* is also, as the place where a low valley merges into the plain, a place of junction and crossing. Das 1977: 675. The common element seems to be a place where multiplicities (whether geographical or conceptual) merge and mix.

9. For an interesting discussion of this intersection, see Kapstein 1992.

is a phenomenon; it is a *bon*, the Bon synonym of the Buddhist *chos* (*dharma*). The possessor of *bon*¹⁰ is the mind (*bon can*). Similarly, the genuine bon-dimension (*bon sku*, equal to Buddhist *chos sku*) is most strongly related with *gzhi*, and thus with emptiness. When this empty base manifests in the aspect of Samantabhadra, it is further associated with the dawning of clarity (*gsal shar*). The wholeness in which they participate is a oneness of open awareness and emptiness (*rig stong dbyer med*),¹¹ an indivisibility of mind and phenomenal natures. Most succinctly, emptiness and appearances, like reality and Samantabhadra, are one unbounded wholeness and indivisible (*dbyer med*). The figure of Samantabhadra thus foreshadows the entire development of *Authenticity*'s particular meaning of *tshad ma*. It even suggests the vexed yet porous boundary with Buddhism dramatized in its colophon. We will be in a better position to appreciate both these points shortly.

Having potently opened the text and figured its subject matter, Samantabhadra drops, temporarily, from direct view as focus shifts to the work's purpose and procedures. Its intent, it baldly states, is to best opponents in debate, proving the merit of its view of open awareness. To do so, it will negotiate a delicate balance between using reasoning and avoiding full validation of it. This is one of the enlivening tensions of the work. But too much cannot be made even of this tension, since unbounded wholeness includes all things—tensions, reasoning, delusion, and errors being no exception.

Opening Statement: Body of the Text

That the text centers on the relation between reality and awareness of it is further indicated by its opening statement:

The authenticity of the collection of essential reasonings will be explained so as to disprove and eliminate erroneous views of unrealized beings and those with erroneous conceptions, as well as those adhering to limited perspectives accessing merely the words and not the meaning and also for those who lack profound and correct experience. {48.2}¹²

Significantly, *Authenticity* seeks to rectify both wrong ideation and shallow experience. In each case, its focus is the reality figured by Samantabhadra.

As unbounded wholeness, Samantabhadra is realization, realizer, and

10. Bon is capitalized when referring to the tradition; *bon* is also a term meaning “phenomena” and in this context appears in lowercase, as here.

11. Menri Ponlob Thrinley Nyima Rinpoche, Houston, May 7–9, 2000, personal communication to Klein.

12. See the appendix to this volume for a brief indication of the lower vehicles whose views are often referred to in *Authenticity*.

what is realized. By the end of the work, Samantabhadra is also the ultimate source of the text: not just its inspiration and subject matter, but its true voice.¹³ The possibility for this is set in a crucial opening passage:

Through blessings of the Victor Samantabhadra bon-dimension, reflexive open awareness, a wholeness which is the heart essence of our ancestor is understood. {48.2}

Reflexive open awareness is cognate with reality and thus with unbounded wholeness. Lyrical speech, which teaches reality, emerges from primordial self-recognition of this awareness:

The excellent essential precepts are methods for realizing that within the base, all bon-phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana, positive as well as negative, what is worthy as well as what is deluded error, are meaningwise one whole. They [the instructions] eradicate others' arguments and have no fault. {49.4}

Authentic essential precepts (*man ngag tshad ma*) are synonymous with experiential instructions (*nyams khrid*).¹⁴ Words ascertain the meaning which essential precepts allow one to realize. In addition, an essential instruction that, being authentic, can also authenticate (*man ngag tshad ma*) must be spoken by a teacher who is fully qualified (*mtshan nyid dang ldan pa*), a master who is neither mistaken nor speaking out of place (*'phyug med pa*).¹⁵

Moreover, in bestowing instruction, the teacher is responding out of his or her own experience to something that the student has asked or experienced. Though essential and experiential instructions can occur in writing, they frequently emerge in relation to a student's practice, given in the context of a strong connection between student and teacher. This focus itself arguably removes them somewhat from the hegemony of reason, and the fact that they sometimes occur in writing does not undermine this relational dynamic since, as we have already suggested, in a traditional context the student's relationship with scripture is nearly as interactive as that between student and teacher.

The uneasy confluence of these concerns—using logic and moving beyond it to what is “meaningwise one whole”—again raises the question of how conceptual thought (*rtog pa*, *kalpanā*) pertains to direct perception (*mngon sum*, *pratyakṣa*) of the ultimate in the Dzogchen context. Using reasoning in support of a thesis clearly has a place in this scheme of values, yet its importance is

13. In Buddhist Dzogchen as well, Samantabhadra is the voice of reality; this occurs, for example, in the *All Creating Majesty* (*Kun byed rgyal po*) and other early Nyingma Dzogchen works such as the Seventeen Tantras.

14. This entire paragraph is based on Klein's discussion with Lopon Tenzin Namdak. For background on Buddhist context of experiential instructions (*nyams khrid*), see the introduction in Klein 1994.

15. Although the text does not use the term, such a master is in fact “one who has attained authority” (*pramāṇabhūta*). See discussion of *pramāṇabhūta* in Ruegg 1995: 82off.

limited by the conviction that no conceptual apparatus can be “fully authentic” with respect to the ultimate.¹⁶

Having introduced the category of essential precepts, *Authenticity* brings forward its first series of scriptural citations, which, of course, are themselves such instructions.

The *Profound Great Bliss Sutra* (*bDe chen zab mo'i mdo*) says:

Mind of mine, dwelling in the present
Uncontrived, uncoarsened, and untouched
Heart essence of all that is,
Dwells solely as wholeness unbounded.

Also, the *Authentic Scripture* (*Lung tshad ma*) says:

Prior to all Buddhas and sentient beings
When even their names do not exist
Is ancestral wholeness, mindnature.

These and other [scriptures] make this clear. How does delusion arise in relation to this? It is this way. The very essence of one's own mind is primordially thus [as just described]. Not recognizing it gets the name “inborn unawareness.” {50.4–6}

To understand reality, one must understand delusion; the two explorations are one. Dzogchen reveals and revels in the teeming variability of a constant and undisrupted wholeness, which, once recognized, reverses the delusion that it itself embraces. This claim brings us to the text’s discussion of how methods for reversing delusion are authenticated. Only after extensive reflection on this matter will the import of Samantabhadra as the All-Good be present.

Authenticity in *Authenticity*

Authenticity declares early on that the three factors crucial to ascertaining meaning are eradicating doubt, proving textual statements, and engaging in debate. It elaborates as follows:

Three aspects of ascertaining the meaning are relevant here. (1) Eradicating [doubt] which through verbal weaponry renders the enemy speechless; (2) proving statements in texts, [thus gaining] the powerful armor of invulnerability oneself; and (3) in between engag-

16. Here and throughout the term “logic” is used to denote the formal or syllogistic style of reasoning in which the central ideas and arguments in *Authenticity* are expressed.

ing in any and all debates [responding to] an opponent's [explicitly] accomplishing or implicit words. {49.3}¹⁷

In this sense, the text itself is initially framed as an authenticator, a textual inquiry into that more authentic Dzogchen principle, the open awareness, recognizer of unbounded wholeness.

To this end, shortly after invoking Samantabhadra, *Authenticity* names what it calls three “authenticators of method” (*thabs kyi tshad ma*) {52.3}.¹⁸ The term “authenticator of method” is, as far as we know, unique to this presentation. The three are called “methods” insofar as they are supports for understanding or establishing the view of unbounded wholeness.¹⁹ They do not, however, authenticate it.²⁰ The term “authenticator” is never defined in this text, though in its root text, *Authenticity of Essential Precepts and Scripture* (*Man ngag lung gi tshad ma*) “authenticator” is defined as “that which finally clarifies misunderstanding.”²¹ *Authenticity* itself calls these methods because they facilitate understanding of unbounded wholeness.²² The three methods are: (1) scripture (*lung*), (2) essential precepts (*man ngag*), and (3) reflexively authentic open awareness (*rang gi rig pa'i tshad ma*). The three authenticators are intimately related. Authenticating essential precepts connect the practitioner to authenticating scriptures, which themselves are authenticated through authentic open awareness. The principle of authenticity, then, is fluidly mobile, circulating among these three. How this circulation is energized is not explicitly stated. However, at the very least we can see that a mutually enhancing network

17. These are analogous to the categories of refutation of objections, presentation of one's own system, and deflection of wrong views (*dgag, bzhag, spang gsum*) well known, for example, in Geluk debate texts.

18. Background texts to *Authenticity* configure the terminology of authentication somewhat differently. In *Stages of the Vehicles* (*Theg pa'i rim pa mnong du bshad pa'i mdo rgyud*), one category of authenticator is a form of critique or objection; this is the *kun 'byung ba'i tshad ma*. Not an authenticator in any normative Buddhist sense, it does suggest a certain authority—one that needs countering—to its viewpoint, and so we refer to it here as authoritative refutation. *Stages* uses this term in the context of a discussion of spontaneous occurrence (*Vehicle Commentary*, 519.6–520.1).

19. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Triten Norbutse Monastery, Kathmandu, February 1999, oral commentary.

20. The same three are mentioned in the commentary to the *Authenticity of Essential Precepts and Scripture* (*Man ngag lung gi tshad ma*). See for example, 16.4. Bon also sometimes refers to another authenticating triad (*tshad ma rnam pa gsum*): (1) the Conqueror's Authentic Word (*rgyal ba'i bka' tshad ma*); (2) authentic scriptures of the Superiors (*phags pa'i lung tshad ma*): this refers to interpretations based on oral teachings and is similar to authenticating essential precepts (*man ngag tshad ma*), although “Superior” (*phags pa, ārya*) is not a Dzogchen term in either Bon or Buddhism; and (3) authentic reflexively authentic open awareness (*rang gi rig pa'i tshad ma*), just as in our text.

In the above schematization, Conqueror's Authentic Word refers only to canonical materials, whereas authenticating essential precepts are outside the canon. The prime examples of such transmission in Bon are the experiential teachings of the twenty-four masters in the *Experimental Transmission, the Victor's Venerable Instructions* (*Nyams rgyud rgyal ba'i phyag khrid*), in which the teacher is responding to something the student has asked or experienced, and the *man ngag tshad ma*, which constitute the teacher's responses specific to the student's practice. Significantly, such exchanges occur in the context of a strong connection between student and teacher (Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Kathmandu, February 1999, oral commentary to Klein).

21. *Tshad ma'i mtshan nyid bstan pa na / ma rtogs don gsal mthar thug go/* {52–53}.

22. Gloss by Lopon Tenzin Namdak.

of “methods” suggests an authenticity that need not proceed linearly from one type of authenticating state to another.

It might therefore seem that these three are authenticators of some object to be understood, in the familiar manner of the philosophical (*siddhānta*) literature. To read them in this way, in fact, seems comfortable at this point in the text.

However, we will not be allowed for long to forget that in Dzogchen, method and goal, or path and fruit, are one. This will require us to reread these terms. Above all, it will require us to understand that open awareness is neither an authenticator nor ultimately authenticated in the course of these reasonings. Rather, it is revealed as itself authentic. This will be its unique way of clarifying misunderstanding, for its presence entails the absence of unawareness, ignorance.

Are scripture, essential precepts, and reflexively authentic open awareness authentic or merely authoritative? Do they authenticate something else or reveal themselves as authentic? The text has not yet presented enough evidence for us determine this, but certain indications and points of contrast with Buddhist discussion of valid knowers can be noted.

As Dreyfus observes: “The heart of the *pramāṇa* method is that all pronouncements about the world and our ways of knowing it must rest on some form of knowledge, such as perception and inference.”²³ This is key to Dharmakīrti’s system.²⁴ Subjects must responsibly validate objects. Building on this view, later Geluk interpretations of Sautrāntika maintain that whatever exists is, by definition, established by valid cognition. This being the case, reasoning naturally takes on a significant role in the process of authenticating.

In exoteric meditation practices, based on certain (especially Geluk) interpretations of classic *pramāṇa* theory, reasoning precipitates a valid inferential understanding or *tshad-ma*—a precise representation (*don spyi*) of emptiness—which then yields to direct perception of it. Most significantly, classic Buddhist discussions derived from Dignāga and Dharmakīrti grant inference its validating power because of its reliance on the three modes of correct reasoning (*tsul gsum*). The inferential consciousness is valid with respect to its referent object (*zhen yul*), in this case emptiness itself.²⁵

Here however there is no such epistemology chronicling movement from a correct object representation (*don spyi*) or other sensory impression to direct experience. Rather, *Authenticity*, and Dzogchen more generally, emphasize that from the beginning, authentic, unbounded wholeness is present, though the

23. Dreyfus 1997: 47.

24. For discussion of the difficulties that this view entails, see Dreyfus 1997: 296–297, 310–315.

25. For full discussion of how this affects Geluk epistemology and especially its interpretation of Sautrāntika, see Klein 1986: chaps. 2–3.

untrained fail to recognize this. Conceptual thought, even the most refined inference of wholeness, can neither access nor facilitate the recognition process. This overall emphasis in *Authenticity* seems also to support contention that wisdom (*shes rab*), being the main discerner of the ultimate is, in Karmay's phrase, "immune to logic."²⁶

This point speaks also to the role of logic here. In most contexts of debate or syllogistic reasoning, the mind that understands the predicate of the syllogism also understands the point being proven. For example, to understand that "the subject, a pillar, is impermanent because of being produced by causes and conditions" is to understand the thesis that a pillar is impermanent. However, the conceptual mind that contemplates a Dzogchen syllogism on unbounded wholeness does not realize unbounded wholeness. Nor is such a mind valid with respect to its referent object—that is, with respect to unbounded wholeness. Again, syllogistic reasoning does not lead to an understanding of reality. Therefore, reasoning has no place in Dzogchen meditation praxis, even though it may be used to foster correct intellectual appreciation of its perspective.

Though it is explicitly part of *Authenticity*'s purpose to foster critical understanding, such understanding is never called "valid" or "authentic." Indeed, neither authenticity nor validation is set forth as a relation that obtains between subject and object, as is axiomatic in Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and virtually all Buddhist literature that invokes the category of *pramāṇa*. Here, however, authenticity will be located in open awareness itself, and all phenomena—whether objects of inference or direct perception—are the dynamic display of the unbounded wholeness that open awareness recognizes as its own nature. This distinction will surface again and again as we note significant features of Dzogchen epistemology and its consideration of what is authentic.

All this, of course, has strong implications for why the place accorded to reasoning in *Authenticity* is quite different from that of Pramāṇa literature. In some accounts, most famously those of Geluk epistemologies drawn from Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, a practitioner's first task is to develop, rather arduously, correct inferential understanding of emptiness, which then allows her to access it directly. This, however, is not the goal of Dzogchen students. By definition, a direct perceiver of wholeness cannot be a conceptual mind. Direct and conceptual ways of perception are distinct; one is not the other and each have their own defining characteristics. Authentic knowers, like all other kinds of consciousnesses, must in Dzogchen be dissolved via the open awareness which alone can directly experience reality. This awareness is neither a dualistic mind nor, technically, a consciousness at all. In this sense, the very idea of

26. Karmay 1988: 129. Karmay is here discussing Rongzom Pañjita's *On Entering the Great Vehicle* (*Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa*) and its discussion (69a.4ff) of logic in relation to the absolute.

taking the measure of an object undermines, and is undermined by, the principle of unbounded wholeness. In the same way, a measuring mind—whether conceptual or nonconceptual—cannot authenticate unbounded wholeness. By what set of premises or parameters does this become a tenable principle of *Authenticity*?

Logic and the Path: Distancing Dignāga and Dharmakīrti

When Madhyamaka calls emptiness inexpressible and unthinkable, it is referring to the structural inability of language to describe nondualistic reality. The emptiness experienced by its practitioners is famously inexpressible. Whereas in Madhyamaka the realizer of emptiness is a consciousness, and therefore an impermanent thing (*dngos po*), open awareness is not, in this interpretation of Dzogchen, a consciousness, rather such authentic open awareness is an emptiness.²⁷ Inexpressibility here points not only to the limited capacity of conceptual or linguistic consciousness in relation to the ultimate, wholeness, but to its dissolution in the face of it and ultimate identification with it.

Even more pointedly, Lopon Tenzin Namdak observes that reflexively authentic open awareness (*rang gi rig pa'i tshad ma*) refers to an inseparability of subject and object. Unbounded wholeness and authentic open awareness are one essence (*ngo bo gcig*). Therefore such open awareness is not, as in classic discussions of logic or epistemology (*tshad ma, pramāṇa/blo rig*), a case of a subject validating or being valid with respect to an object.

Reflexively authentic open awareness is itself a union of the clear and empty,²⁸ for which reason it is also known as the base, the authentic state toward which the other two authenticators, scriptural and essential precepts, are directed.

Thus, the function of the authoritative—a term we can use to span the semantic range between authentication and the authentic—is here quite different from, for example, Sautrāntika or Madhyamaka discourse on valid cognition. There, valid cognition includes direct as well as inferential cognition of

27. This point is emphasized in Lopon Tenzin Namdak's interpretation of *Authenticity*. It is not necessarily universal among Bon or Buddhist philosophers of Dzogchen; we give it prominence here not just because we have worked closely with Lopon in developing this material, but because it highlights several crucial elements of the Dzogchen view that are relevant to our discussion.

It is also interesting to consider this and other similar statements of *Authenticity* in connection with Rongdzom Panḍita's observation that "logic is an established system within the circle of those who hold the view of things as absolute (*dngos por lta ba*)."²⁹ Consider, for example, Karmay 1988: 128, where he discusses Rongdzom Panḍita's *On Entering the Great Vehicle* 78.6

28. Like the term "emptiness," "clarity" or "the clear" (*gsal ba*) or even "the mind of clear light" can refer to different qualities or states, depending on context. In Mind and Awareness (*blo rig*) texts "Clear and knowing" (*gsal zhing rig pa*) is the definition of "mind." That clarity and the clarity of Dzogchen, or the clear light of Tantra, are quite distinct. See a survey of this issue by the Dalai Lama in *Kindness, Clarity and Insight*.

the ultimate. None of the three authenticators of method is consciousness, and only one of them, open awareness, has functions analogous to those of consciousness. *Authenticity* labels *method* authoritative, but *method* itself includes open awareness which is not merely authoritative but authentic. Though this does not become clear until later in the text, this is an important general distinction; let us refine it further.

The second of those methods, “essential precepts” (*man ngag*) is by no means the equivalent of inference, yet not mutually exclusive with it either. “Once the essential precepts are taught,” we read in *Authenticity*, “further development of this yields excellent insight. [Unbounded wholeness] is established by that” {56.5}. Thus, the soteriological function of essential precepts is similar to that of inference, yet the epistemological process invoked is quite different—*Authenticity* does not suppose that reasoning catapults one into an experience of unbounded wholeness. The “further development” involved does not privilege reasoned knowing.

As always, *Authenticity*’s position is nuanced—*inference*, though not an authenticator, is not neglected altogether. Immediately following the itemization of the three authenticators of method, we learn that inference can “establish unbounded wholeness.” That is, it can establish or prove it for the intellect in much the way that smoke proves the existence of fire, but in neither case is one put into direct contact with what is established. The text also notes shortly thereafter that essential precepts “establish unbounded wholeness,” which suggests that inference is sometimes a subcategory enclosed in the method of essential precepts. This apparent fuzziness of categorization cannot be resolved until the principles of authenticity and unbounded wholeness are clarified further. For the moment, let us continue to note the broader distinctions that separate *Authenticity*’s initial presentation of the three authenticators of method from those of Indian Buddhist logicians and their Tibetan interpreters.

The biggest distinction to be noted here is the inclusion of scripture among “authenticators of method.” Wherein lies scriptural authority? Buddhist treatises in general firmly distance themselves from the ancient Vedic idea that scripture is intrinsically authentic or valid (*svataḥ-pramāṇa*). Scriptural authenticity, after all, does not rely on correct signs or reasons (*rtags yang dag*), as does inferential valid cognition. Nor is scriptural authenticity an unmistaken knower of objects, as are both inference and direct perception. Further, even though Buddhist Pramāṇa literature accepts authenticating verbal knowledge and scripture (*yid ches pa'i lung/yid ches pa'i tshig, āptāgama/āptavacana*), it does so, as David Ruegg points out, “without recognizing such knowledge as a separate and independent third *pramāṇa*.²⁹ Thus *Authenticity*, even as it engages the

29. Ruegg 1995: 818–819. It is also notable, and possibly an indication of the early strata of material *Authenticity* uses as a source, that the earliest pre-Dignāga Buddhist logical treatise, the *Upātyahṛdaya* includes

famous Buddhist category of *pramāṇa* without reference to the Buddhists who made it famous, rejects one of the key tenets by which Buddhist traditions forged an identity distinct from the Indian religious bedrock in which they grew.³⁰

Unlike inference and direct perception in classic Buddhist discussions of mind and logic, reflexively authentic open awareness does not take the measure of anything. There is no process of authentication associated with open awareness at all; it is simply, in and of itself, authentic to its own nature.³¹ This is possible because, again, open awareness is not a consciousness. This is its unique epistemological characteristic, privileging it over the other authenticators.³²

All this gives the category of authentication a cast that is at once democratic, since everyone has primordial open awareness, and esoteric, since only the recognition of this, not other kinds of knowing, are deemed authentic. *Authenticity of Essential Precepts and Scripture*, the short root text for which *Authenticity* is the decisive overview (*lta ba spyi gcod*), opens by stating that the

a category very similar to that of “valid scriptures” when “verbal testimony” (*āptaśruti*) is included among the four categories of valid knowledge (Nagasaki 1989: 221ff.). It may be that *Authenticity*’s inclusion of such a chronologically early category suggests its connection to an early strata of Indian thought that began its migration north and west before Buddhist logic achieved its classic form in India. On another aspect of Dharmakīrti’s early work, the *Drśānupalabdhī*, see Kellner, 2003.

30. Dharmakīrti and Buddhist traditions have recognized Buddha as “an authoritative person,” and his teaching can also be recognized as authoritative. Dignāga called him an authoritative person (*pramāṇapahūta, skyes hu tshad ma*). Scriptures are authoritative insofar as they were spoken by the authoritative Buddha. Ruegg points out (1988: 838) that in the Buddhist Pramāṇa school, “scripture constitutes a special case included under *anumāna*.” This makes it notable that *Authenticity* denies the latter, *pramāṇa-anumāna*, as an authenticator, but accepts the former, *pramāṇa-āgama*, as one. Likewise, Candrakīrti recognized scripture as a third authenticator (emphasizing that there is no inherent existent possessed by any authenticator or its object). But he was rather an exception. Most Mādhyamika thinkers, Indian and Tibetan, recognized only two *pramāṇas* or valid perceivers (*mngon gsum/pratyakṣa, rjes dpag/anumāna*). In *Authenticity* only a single footnote, added by an unknown scribe, explicitly links scriptures with reasoning [54.1].

31. This interpretation of reflexivity, the *rang* of *rang rig*, can be distinguished from more familiar debates, especially between Madhyamaka and Cittamātra about whether or not a consciousness can be aware of itself. This remains a vitally current debate even in the recent Tibetan tradition. For a thought-provoking discussion, see Williams 1998. For example, Williams notes (p. 235) that for Śāntarakṣita, it is the nature of consciousness to be self conscious. This is both near and far to the *Authenticity* view, since here we find that reflexively authentic open awareness (*rang rig pa i tshad ma*) is not a consciousness, nor aware of consciousness, but aware of its own nature, unbounded wholeness. This also of course distinguishes it from Tsongkhapa’s famous “infinite regress” argument, which Williams also discusses, pp. 236–237. Does Williams confuse *rang rig* with *rig pa*? In *Authenticity* and its accompanying oral traditions, these seem, in fact, sometimes to be conflated; however, in other contexts it is very clear that reflexive open awareness is simply a case of being awake in a state of intrinsically aware unbounded reality. It is not, as such, a case of remembering, recognizing, identifying, or introspection. It is not the reflexivity of consciousness qua consciousness (See Williams 1988: 208–210), it is a function of a reality that *Authenticity* considers to pervade and be beyond consciousness, as well as all other conditioned phenomena. Perhaps most interesting to us is that *Authenticity* does not entertain what have become the most famous arguments for the existence of reflexive open awareness (*rang rig*): just as its discussion of *tshad ma* falls outside the general discourse on the topic, so does its discussion of the ultimate *tshad ma*, *rang gi rig pa i tshad ma*.

32. *Stages of the Vehicles* and its commentary, considered among the main background texts of *Authenticity*, discuss authoritative faulting (*skyon btang ba i tshad ma*) and authoritative fault finding (*skyon brjod pa i tshad ma*) (*Vehicle Commentary* 522.1). To the best of our knowledge, these terms do not occur in Buddhist discourse.

profound can be settled through authentication (*tshad ma*) and that unmnistaken direct perception and inference are not separate (nondual) (*gnyis med*) from reality itself.³³ The root text also here articulates what is simply implicit in *Authenticity*—that reasoning, rather than being positioned as outside of reality, as an authenticator of it, here is depicted as an expression of it, just as all existents are. Expressiveness is thus characterized as a function of reality, a key point that will be brought home in a different way at the conclusion of *Authenticity*.

The text's three categories or authenticators of method, seemingly so vital to a text on authenticity, do not receive any further clarification. Nor is it put forward as to why or how scripture, open awareness, or essential precepts are determined to be authoritative. The first two, however, are not, like reflexively authentic open awareness, identified with unbounded wholeness. In this sense there are, implicitly, two degrees of authenticity. The association of each with an intimate understanding of “the natural state which is the actual meaning of the basis” {54.1} is apparently sufficient for it to be called authentic.

The Limits of Reason and the Voice of Samantabhadra

After its brief identification of the three authenticators, *Authenticity* goes on to cite a number of tantras, most no longer extant, that it sees as supporting its presentation. This support is often implicit rather than explicit, since several of the sources do not even mention the categories of authentication.³⁴ Clearly, the architecture of authentication is a discourse belonging to the era of our text, not to that of its poetic sources. Rather, the verses are interpreted to suggest an occult ontic source from which scriptures, precepts, and awareness could naturally come forth. The alogical manner in which the following poetic “proof” unfolds is analogous to the manner in which the argument of the text as a whole proceeds:

The second text cited in this context, *Secret Scripture Collection* (*mDo lung gsang ba*), says:

Nothing, not even one thing
Does not arise from me.
Nothing, not even one thing

33. This position arguably stands between discourses that emphasize valid direct perception and inference in their epistemologies of liberation and the discourse of *Authenticity*, in which direct perception and inference do not figure significantly.

34. For example, verses cited from the *Venerable Bon Awareness of Everything Tantra* (*Kun rig bon gyi rje rgyud*), the *Secret Scripture Collection* (*mDo lung gsang ba*), the *Great Sky Beyond Effort Tantra* (*Nam mkha' rtsol 'das chen po'i rgyud*), and the *Collection of the Essential Precepts, Thoughts of the Shenrabs of a Thousand Eons* (*sKaI stong gshen rab kyi dgongs pa man ngag tu 'dus pa*) do not even mention these categories.

Dwells not within me.
 Everything, just everything
 Emanates from me.
 Thus I am only one.
 Knowing me is knowing all—
 Great bliss. {52.5}

In this we hear, as so often throughout the *Authenticity*, the poetic voice of Samantabhadra, the voice of reality. And it turns out that reality is characterized by that most aesthetically appealing of all qualities—bliss. That reality, fundamentally characterized by bliss rather than by any particular cognitive content, is what open awareness recognizes and encompasses. A few lines later, the blissful nature of reality is reiterated in a quote from the *Collection of the Essential Precepts, Thoughts of the Shenrabs of a Thousand Eons* (*sKal stong gshen rab kyi dgongs pa man ngag tu 'dus pa*):

Any mindnature is bon-nature
 Any bon-nature, a mindnature.
 Dwelling inseparably, continuously
 With that very principle,
 Bon and mind unto,
 Is called great bliss. {53.1}

These verses offer another perspective on why inference and intellect cannot authenticate the mindnature to which the text, in its first lines, pays homage. The ultimate in Dzogchen, unlike the mere negative (*med dgag*) of many classic interpretations of Madhyamaka, is itself multiple. Herein lies a key point regarding the inefficacies of inference according to our text. Reasoning by its very structure is primed to point to a single focus, not to a disparate array of data. Even though perspectivalism can be introduced, as *Authenticity*'s own reasoning will do, any one reason has a single target, not an unbounded whole, as its horizon. Furthermore, certain elements intrinsic to reality, such as bliss, expansiveness, and clarity, are simply not matters of the intellect but are amenable only to direct subjective experience, perhaps even having a special affinity with aesthetic experience. In short, there is a dimension to reality that cannot be circumscribed by any consecutive amalgamation or totaling of data. Furthermore, the reflexivity of open awareness means its purview is complete. No eye can observe the entire universe unless it sees itself.

Mindnature beckons the seeker beyond the cognitive processes that produce these tensions. The *Excellent Essential Precepts* (*Man ngag dam pa gsang sde dam pa*) says:

Within non-contrivance and non-distraction dwells clarity
 In uncontrived mindnature.

No effort, no thought, clear.
 No reflection, no analysis,
 Naturally placed there. {53.2}

“Uncontrived” is never an epithet of conceptual thought, which always involves effort. *Heart of Essential Precepts* (*Man ngag snying po*) is also cited:

When this errorless essential precept is shown
 Your own mind is effortlessly known,
 Hope and doubt gone, fruition comes on. {53.2}

Such is the connection between open awareness (*rig pa*) and its own basic nature, unbounded wholeness. The theme of effortlessness, augured here, will surface in earnest later on. The uncontrived fruition that comes on is not simply beyond words but beyond the type of effort and boundedness that is inevitably linked with thought and verbalization. This is a key point.

Language, Confidence, and Authority

With all its emphasis on the nonconceptual reflexivity of wholeness, is *Authenticity* heedless or indifferent to the expressive power of language? Not at all. The central place it cedes to poetry and at the same time its preponderance of syllogistic format evidence an interest in the complementary use of different types of language. Pedagogy and meditation apparently require different voices.

From the outset, as we have seen, it is clear that the text’s whole purpose cannot be served by reasoning alone. After all, in addition to its goal of defusing delusion, it also addresses itself to persons who are capable of “accessing merely the words but not the meaning” and to those who, though perhaps getting both words and meaning right, nonetheless “lack profound and correct experience” {48.2}.

However, correct ideation is also important, and erroneous thoughts and mistaken statements must be disproved. And so we would be justified in expecting a text full of sharp debate, brimming with logical precision, the better to excoriate foolish opponents’ dizzy deceptions. The scene is set for a duel of wits, understanding that even the sharpest wit cannot win the real prize. To this end, *Authenticity* puts forward a multitude of reasoned arguments, though it is often less intent on destroying an opposing view than on floating past it—that is, unraveling or defusing the structure or picture being proposed so that something else can be brought forward. Meaning, profundity, and experience are introduced as categories that, together with open awareness itself, will balance the hegemony of reason.

After the poetic sequence noted above, prose again takes up the question of open awareness and its relation to authentication:

Regarding the authenticity of reflexively authentic open awareness (*rang gi rig pa'i tshad ma*), [its] surety (*gdeng*) in not contradicting the import (*don*) experienced via external, internal or secret Essential Precepts is known as never being separate from spontaneous meditation in the three times. . . . Likewise, authentic scripture settles the mindnature through all the words of the Tathāgatas. {53.4–5}

Lopon Tenzin Namdak notes that here the term *rang gi rig pa'i tshad ma* (“reflexively authentic open awareness”) does not refer to a conceptual awareness, or even to a consciousness, but rather to the inseparability of subject and object, a state of spontaneous and hence effortless meditation. Such is the manner of Dzogchen authenticity. Authentic essential precepts (*man ngag tshad ma*) that dissolve the distance between unawareness and awareness are described as “an uninterrupted continuum. . . . Essential Precepts derived from the experience of enlightened beings” {53.5}. *Authenticity* will later describe Essential Precepts as the crucial link between authentic scriptures and open awareness.

The text then turns its attention to the matter of authentic reflection (*rig pa'i tshad ma*), not to be confused with the reflexively authentic open awareness (*rang gi rig pa'i tshad ma*) introduced above, which as we noted refers solely to the nonconceptual. Authentic reflection itself encompasses two modalities: “(1) a confidence (*gding*) in oneself during practice that is produced from the mind in practice; and (2) a severing of doubt (*gdar sha gcod*) by a sharp, quick, intellect in the course of debating an opponent” {53.5–6}. Thus authentic reflection, we now learn for the first time, has two subsets: nonconceptual, associated with confidence, the first category above, and conceptual, associated with the second, the severing of doubt. For that reason, the Tibetan phrase *rig pa'i tshad ma*, which we often here translate as “authentic open awareness” when it is used more or less synonymously with reflexively authentic open awareness, is translated as “authentic reflection” in order to encompass both the conceptual and the nonconceptual.³⁵

Thus, “confidence in oneself during practice,” the first division in the subset of authentic knower (*rig pa'i tshad ma*), has the same referent as reflexively authentic open awareness (*rang gi rig pa'i tshad ma*), defined as the spontaneous confidence of not contradicting external, internal, or secret precepts. Both are nonconceptual. However, the second subset here, “a severing of doubt (*gdar sha gcod*) by a sharp, quick intellect in the course of debating an opponent” refers to a more general form of authentication, which is primarily conceptual, much like an inferential consciousness.

The self-confidence of practice is the nonconceptual awareness arrived at

35. *rang* = reflexive; *rig pa* = open awareness; *tshad ma* = authentic.

through experience of Dzogchen. In this regard, *Authenticity* also notes: “This teaching, displayed by his [Shenrab Miwo’s] great mindheart has three areas of confidence (*gding*)” {49.1–2}. Confidence is the certainty of holding something in your own hand. Because it arises during practice, it is a subtopic of the text’s consideration of the authenticity of open awareness {53.5}. Such confidence emerges through contact with reality, a direct connection with Samantabhadra. This is the reflexively authentic open awareness, the actual authentic Dzogchen cognition, which we are now newly to understand as a subset of a more generic term, authentic reflection.

Confidence (*gding*) differs from a very similar term, surety (*gdeng*), which puts more emphasis on the lack of doubt and skillfulness. Authentic open awareness naturally possesses this. Confidence is especially linked with the flow and spontaneous character of the authentic, and surety more specifically with a connection to the authentic itself. They are both therefore associated with the nondual or reflexive aspect of the authentic. Lopon Tenzin Namdak notes that, experientially, open awareness is indeed characterized by surety (*gdeng*), and *Authenticity* itself states “surety is gained through realizing one’s own mind” {52.4}. And meditation itself is confidence {53.4}.

In short, realization of one’s own mind brings surety. This surety is a nondualistic principle, in contrast with trust (*yid ches*), which is dualistic. Trust and surety are intimately associated, their relationship roughly analogous to that of conceptual reasoning and the nondualistic experience which in *Authenticity* is framed by it:

Trusting (*yid ches*) in the import of this [karmic cause and effect],
one has surety (*gdeng*) regarding experiences [arising from] medita-
tion on the Essential Precepts. {61.1}³⁶

The dualistic structure of “trust” enables it to describe the practitioner’s relationship to a conceptual “import” such as that of karmic cause and effect. It is at home in the realm of conceptuality. By contrast, surety, like bliss, bears little relation to ratiocination. Reflexively authentic open awareness (*rang rig pa’i tshad ma*) is necessarily an “authentic knower” (*rig pa’i tshad ma*), but, as Lopon Tenzin Namdak notes, the reverse is not true because authentic reflection can also exist in Madhyamaka, which does not recognize authentic open awareness in the Dzogchen sense. In other words, the direct experience of emptiness discussed in Madhyamaka is an “authentic knower,” but it is not the reflexively authentic open awareness that Dzogchen understands as the knowing factor (*mkhan cha*) in emptiness itself and thus not a knower of emptiness as in Madhyamaka. Only reflexive authentic open awareness is in and

³⁶ This is because in Dzogchen, experience arises on the basis of faith and faith-related practices such as guru yoga. It does not, as in sutra practices, arise through conceptual reflection.

of itself authentic, for it alone among the three types of authenticators discussed in *Authenticity* recognizes itself as unbounded wholeness. Furthermore, since unbounded wholeness includes all cyclic existence and nirvana, no authenticating description, reason, proof, or subjective perceiver is external to it. Thus, ontologically, epistemologically, and metaphorically, reason is subsumed to and contained by wholeness, not the reverse. This, the self-recognition of reflexive authentic open awareness, is what distinguishes Buddhas from ordinary beings.

“Validation” in Dharmakīrti and “Authenticity” in Dzogchen

This dense but brief section of *Authenticity* is its most sustained discussion of the term *tshad ma*. Although the text’s use of the term “authentic” in “authentic reflection” leaves room for the play of conceptuality, this is far from the term’s primary meaning. The most crucial category of authority, the actual Dzogchen state of open awareness named in the title of the text, is unambiguously nonconceptual. To further clarify how authentic reflection here differs from certain classic Buddhist presentations, we depart briefly from our textual exegesis to step into a Buddhist framework. This is important because it allows us to see more precisely the difficulties encountered in a system that seeks to embrace authority. Yet, *Authenticity* refuses the binary of subject and object as well as the binary of conceptual and nonconceptual. How will authenticity or validation arise in this context?

A clearer picture emerges when we contrast *Authenticity*’s structure with the binary system that firmly governs some (though not all) of the best-known implementations of the term in Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. Therefore, we pause briefly here to consider this in more detail.

We know that for Buddhist Pramāṇa literature an important governing principle is the organization of all phenomena into two truths and the corresponding division of consciousnesses into the two kinds of minds that know them. Dharmakīrti, commenting on Dignāga, famously and succinctly let it be known that

Because comprehensible objects are two,
There are two types of valid cognition.³⁷

The two types of valid cognition, as we have seen, are direct perception and inference.

This distinction remains relatively intact in the Dignāga-Dharmakīrti leg-

³⁷. Dharmakīrti, P5709, 88:3–7. Discussed in the context of Sautrāntika and Sakya views of valid cognition and of specifically characterized phenomena (*rang mtshan, svalakṣaṇa*) in Klein 1987: 80–84.

acy, despite certain turns taken by Prajñākaragupta, which are of interest in that they concur with *Authenticity*'s perspective more completely than do many better-known interpretations (Devendrabuddhi, Śākyabuddhi, and Manorathanandin) and which, for this very reason, highlight even more clearly some of *Authenticity*'s more salient features.³⁸

Dharmakīrti finds that direct perception and inference are correct because these are cognitions that do not prevent one (*na visarpaṇvādyate*) from achieving one's purpose (*arthakriyā*). This is because such cognitions do not deceive (they are *mi slu ba, avisarpaṇvādin*). Yet another definition offered by Dharmakīrti is that valid cognition is the illumination of a previously unapprehended object.³⁹ This already, of course, sets in place a dualistic paradigm that *Authenticity* excludes. However, Prajñākaragupta takes an interesting turn with this point, highlighting still further a fundamental fissure in the perspectives in question. For Prajñākaragupta, as Iwata points out, this second definition, insofar as it incorporates an "unapprehended object," points to the ultimate. Thus Prajñākaragupta distinguishes between conventional and ultimate kinds of functioning. For him, Buddha is a valid authority because he proclaims the Four Truths.⁴⁰ His authority in relation to verbal activities (*sāmvyatavahārika*) is his conventional authority.⁴¹ This kind of observation is incommensurate with *Authenticity*, not only because this text does not take the Four Truths as a doctrinal touchstone but also because there is no sense that an enlightened being or authentic open awareness needs to do any particular thing to demonstrate authority. Even more interesting in this regard is how Prajñākaragupta develops his understanding of authority when he turns to Dharmakīrti's second definition. For him, it is direct perception of one's own self-cognition (*svasaṃvedana*) that alone is authoritative regarding the ultimate.⁴²

Among the better known Indian commentators on Dharmakīrti, Prajñākaragupta is perhaps closest to *Authenticity* in his glossing of "ultimate" authority as a cognition possessing a non-dual essence; that is, as free from the duality of grasped and grasper.⁴³ However, Prajñākaragupta, unlike *Authenticity*, is still within the two-truths paradigm. For Prajñākaragupta, as Iwata so

38. Although much of the Dignāga/Dharmakīrti tradition in Tibet greatly valorizes inference, *Authenticity* is not the only work to suggest significant limits to its validity. For Prajñākaragupta, self-cognition (*svasaṃvedana*) is the ultimate *pramāṇa*, whereas the others are conventional. (I thank Tom Tillemans for this point; see also Iwata 2004.)

39. Discussed in Iwata 2004: 3.

40. For a discussion of the Four Truths in relation to the concept of Truth, and especially in connection with Dharmakīrti, see R. Jackson 1993, esp. pp. 27–42 and 68–80 as well as his translation of the relevant portions of Gyaltsap's commentary on the Pramāṇasiddhi chapter of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*: 339–349 (for general views on the Four); 351–485 (for discussion of each individually).

41. Prajñākaragupta 1953: 30, 22 (cited also by Iwata 2004 n. 10 with correspondence to Motoi Ono 2000).

42. Prajñākaragupta, 1953: 25.24f; 30.20f.

43. Iwata 2004: pp. 4–5 discusses this, citing Prajñākaragupta's *Pramāṇavārttika-bhāṣya* 32.14f.

helpfully observes, the possibility for claiming nondeception and, in addition, functionality is made possible by the tenet of reflexivity, *svasamvedana*.⁴⁴ For Prajñākaragupta, this alone is an ultimate authority.

Here, in order to draw maximum contrast, let us note that in Geluk interpretations of Sautrāntika following reasoning, which offer a particularly strong contrast to *Authenticity*, the two types of phenomena aligned with the ultimate and conventional truths are the impermanent and the permanent, respectively. These are known, respectively, as ultimate and conventional minds. This pattern is present also in Geluk and other interpretations of Madhyamaka for, according to Tsongkhapa, even the ultimate phenomenon, emptiness, is certified by an ultimate valid cognizer. These minds are valid because of the kind of relationship they have with their objects, the two truths.

But the core organizing principle of Dzogchen is not the binary of the two truths,⁴⁵ nor is reflexively authentic open awareness discussed in terms of its relation to different types of objects. Rather, the distinction the ordinary mind makes between conventional and ultimate and, analogously, between subject and object, epitomizes the error that Dzogchen addresses. Its central axiom of unbounded wholeness is a oneness that wholly allows and is never disrupted by the infinite particularities of which it is the source. This principle at the heart of Dzogchen philosophy is central to its critique of both Pramāṇa and Madhyamaka.

For *Authenticity*, “any appearance associated with subject and object is a conventional truth” {86.5}. And such a subject can never, in Dzogchen, be fully authentic. *Authenticity*’s task is therefore to elaborate on authentication without locating it as a process that occurs between or that produces a subject and an object. Because thought is always predicated on a subject and an object, it is, again, by definition excluded from having unbounded wholeness as an object. Just as boiling water never becomes fire, conceptual understanding can never transform into the direct experience of reflexive authentic open awareness. A subject focused on an object can never fully know itself.

One characteristic of the authentic is that it is authentic to everything. Again, this dramatically departs from the premise so famous in Dharmakīrti that “because there are two types of objects / there are two types of valid cognition.” There is no going outside wholeness, no movement from authentic to inauthentic within open awareness. This itself is sufficient reason not to support the structure of two truths. Thus:

44. For Prajñākaragupta, it is the factor of reflexivity that makes it “possible to determine the completion of its own function without dependence on any other factors” (Iwata forthcoming: 8). This concern with avoiding infinite regress, which to a large extent drives Prajñākaragupta’s discussion throughout, is nowhere a concern in *Authenticity*.

45. The words “conventional truth” and “ultimate truth” do occur, however; for example, see *Authenticity* 86.3–4 and 104.1.

I do not assert the two truths because I assert an unwaveringness from within unbounded wholeness, an especially superior [view]. . . .

From the first, I do not make twofold discriminations among bon-phenomena. I assert the self-clarity of the mindnature. Hence this very special [view] is not touched by the two extremes. {105.5}

Embedded in its disavowal of the two truths' binary structure is a critique of understanding the path in terms of causality, or as a narrative of transformative conditions that bring an end to the causes of affliction and suffering. Dzogchen practitioners, however, whether Bon or Buddhist, train in precisely these "conventional activities" to create a foundation for their own understanding of Dzogchen. Wholeness is not gained through leaping past elements that support genuine awareness of it. Thus, although scholarly study of Madhyamaka or even Dzogchen is not technically a path to the authenticity of open awareness, it provides crucial pedagogical context for it.

Two Truths and Functionality (*don byed nus pa*)

Validity or authenticity (*tshad ma, pramāṇa*) refers, in Buddhist texts, to the validation or authentication of phenomena through the conceptions and perceptions by which we know them. In opening the second chapter of his masterpiece, the *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti states: "Valid cognition is that cognition (*shes pa, jñāna*) [which is] nondeceptive (*mi slu ba, avisarvādin*). Being nondeceptive [consists] in the readiness [for the object] to function." The "ability to perform a function" (*don byed nus pa, arthakriyāśamartham*),⁴⁶ a phrase foundational to Dharmakīrti's thinking and to Buddhist exegeses of it, never appears in *Authenticity*. The term does appear, however, in *Stages of the Vehicles*,⁴⁷ considered an important background text of *Authenticity* (and perhaps suggesting that this text or at least its commentary is more recent than *Authenticity*, rather than a precursor as emic tradition now holds).

Yet there is philosophical merit to the absence of this term. Dharmakīrti takes functionality to mean, above all, the ability to produce an effect. This includes, most significantly, the effect an object has on the subject, which, after the fact of the object, is caused to perceive it. In *Authenticity* and Dzogchen more generally, however, causality is not the ruling epistemological and ontological principle, as it is for Dharmakīrti and the major philosophical schools of Tibet. Thus we see our text explain outside the rubric of cause-and-effect

⁴⁶. Of the other two major significant terms in Dharmakīrti's legacy descriptive of *tshad ma*, "undeceived" (*mi slu ba, avisarvādaka*), appears only three times in the text, once by the annotator's hand, and never in explication of *tshad ma*. The second term, "new," also is never encountered in relation to a quality of authenticating awareness.

⁴⁷. For example, 457.4.

numerous crucial relationships such as those between practice and realization, ordinariness and Buddhahood, or reasoning and the understanding to which it gives rise.

Let us therefore read *Authenticity* against Tibetan interpretations of Dharmakīrti wherein functionality is the crucial criterion for determining ontological status. Dharmakīrti famously states that “Whatever phenomena are able to function exist ultimately, others exist conventionally.”⁴⁸ *Authenticity* neither makes functionality a central piece of its epistemology nor offers, as part of its discussion of authenticity, an all-inclusive categorization of phenomena and their authenticators. Instead of two types of valid cognition, there is only authentic open awareness, which is authentic to unbounded wholeness, mind-nature. The authenticating power of thought (*rtoq pa, kalpanā*) is evaluated solely in relation to mindnature and is found wanting.

In discussing the pitfalls associated with apprehending external objects (*Authenticity* 66.6ff.), the text’s focus immediately turns to primordial wisdom and its status; these objects will later be described as the dynamic display (*rtsal*) of that wisdom. Their more material causes are ontologically secondary to the matrix of wisdom itself (*Authenticity* 75.3ff.). This point also helps explain, or at least foster appreciation for, the absence of “functionality” as a core term in *Authenticity*. Dharmakīrti’s system was forged in an effort to defy the Nyāya realism already widespread in India. *Authenticity*’s interest is to articulate, against a variety of opposing views, the authenticity of unbounded wholeness, the heart of its philosophy and practice. The status of other phenomena is also considered, but always directly in relation to that wholeness.⁴⁹ The opposing views against which its own position is situated are presented as Bon interpretations of the lower vehicles, but they also stem from an eclectic mix of Buddhist and non-Buddhist sources.

The full scope of *Authenticity*’s deployment of *tshad ma* emerges gradually. By the closing sections of the text, there is a shift from the initial focus on authenticating open awareness via argumentation and scriptural citation to wisdom as itself intrinsically and reflexively authentic, like the scriptures that proclaim it. Although reflexively authentic open awareness is a focus of reason and scripture, its own intrinsic authenticity is shown, finally, to be the source of both. The fluid circulation from one meaning to another, at once paradoxical and profoundly synthetic, is a crucial characteristic of Dzogchen rhetoric. Its authenticity, like the primordial awareness-reality it describes, has no point of origin. To search for one, as is natural for students of logic to do, is to assume

48. Iwata cites Prajñākaragupta P 5709 [Peking Tripitaka]: Vol. 130 88: 3–5. For Daktsang’s analysis of this, and its contestation by Geluk readings of the issue, see Klein 1987: chap. 2. More specifically, for Jamyang Shaypa’s paraphrase of this, see Klein 1999c: 229–230 n.6. See also Dreyfus 1997: 48ff. and 67ff.

49. To take a point of comparison with Madhyamaka: conventional phenomena are, of course, characterized as empty, but they are not defined in relation to their emptiness or to emptiness in general.

the very kind of binary model that Dzogchen means to avoid. For reasons inherent to both its system and the limits of logic, the text cannot explicitly declaim against origins or binary oppositions but seeks to demonstrate their impossibility over and over again. In this sense, the debates in the text, as well as the sacred scriptures that decorate them, are performative as well as communicative. The debates mirror internal dialogues crucial to any contemplative tradition of what Hadot calls “spiritual exercises.” The importance of performative language and the kind of performance it is called on to make further distinguish the text’s discourse on logic from classic Buddhist Dharmakīrti-derived texts.

This epistemological wholeness—or circularity—is mirrored by a soteriological one. Dzogchen often states that the path is the goal and that both are reality. The goal, being self-authenticating, bestows this authenticity also on what is designated as “path.” The practitioner, after all, is only on the path in the sense that she is already in full possession of the goal she erroneously feels the need to seek. Although this is not necessarily impeccable logic, it is a convincing and galvanizing metaphor. In other words, it is religiously affective language, strengthened by reasoned statements without being utterly beholden to them:

The basis of both Buddhas and sentient beings is the great self-arisen primordial wisdom, enlightenment mind; therefore, sentient beings are the cause of Buddhas and Buddhas are the cause of sentient beings. Hence one speaks of “the Buddha wherein cause and effect are of one taste.” {84.5–6}

Thus, cause and effect, sentient beings and Buddhas, subjects and objects, path and goal are ultimately revealed to be of one taste: Movement from one to the other is no movement at all, really, but a dynamic stillness.

In our text, authenticity par excellence is an inalienable quality of an all-inclusive subjectivity, reflexive authentic open awareness, whose actual nature is unbounded wholeness and which neither needs nor is amenable to external validation or authentication. Partly for these reasons, let us note again, *tshad ma* is in these pages translated as “valid” or “authenticating” in most Indic-based philosophical contexts, and as “authenticity” when it is put forward as a Dzogchen principle.⁵⁰

The text, having briefly laid out the categories of authenticity, now seeks to establish that unbounded wholeness does in fact exist, as we will see here

⁵⁰ Ruegg 1995: 823–825 is right to point out the difficulties that ensue when *pramāṇa* is regarded as “valid”: namely, a detraction from the immediacy and self-containedness of *pramāṇa* and an obscuring of its cognitive nature (825). In a sense, these are also the fault lines meant to be healed through our text’s understanding of open awareness as authentic rather than authenticating.

in chapter 2. For, though inaccessible to ordinary consciousnesses, unbounded wholeness is known to be reflexive authentic open awareness:

Although [unbounded wholeness] is not an external object, *through the mere indication of essential precepts* it is manifestly clear for reflexive open awareness, which knows it clearly, nonconceptually, and thinglessly. {55.5–6}

The Scriptural Voice of Samantabhadra

We have said that the figure of Samantabhadra foreshadows the connections our text describes among scriptural authority, open awareness, and the three Buddha dimensions (*sku, kāya*). To observe how Samantabhadra constitutes a whole of several early strands of discourse in the text, we return now to the opening verse discussed at the head of this chapter and pursue it further:

Through blessings of the Victor Samantabhadra bon-dimension, reflexive open awareness, a wholeness that is the heart essence of our ancestor, is understood by the White Shen Deity, protector of beings. That itself, the very essence of mindheart understanding, dawns as open awareness in the mindheart of Shenrab, the emanation dimension. Lyrical speech, the musical expression of this [open awareness], is addressed to fortunate ones, the heroically minded Yung Drung Shen [practitioners, Bodhisattvas].⁵¹

This teaching, displayed by his [Shenrab Miwo's] great mind-heart, has three areas of confidence (*gding*) regarding experience, explanation, and essential precepts and is explained extensively for the well-being of those having the karma to meet with it.

Three aspects of ascertaining the meaning are relevant here: (1) Eradicating [doubt] which through verbal weaponry renders the enemy speechless; (2) proving statements in texts, [thus gaining] the powerful armor of invulnerability oneself; and (3) in between engaging in any and all debates [responding to] an opponent's powerful deceptive words. {48.2–49.4}

This passage, one of the most heavily annotated of the text, has made several points significant for our discussion. It introduces the “ancestor” as

^{51.} According to the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* tradition, it is due to the blessings of the *dharma kāya* (Body of Bon), Samantabhadra, that the realization of the *sambhogakāya* (Enjoyment Body), the White Shen Deity, arises, which, in turn, brings about the teaching of the *nirmāṇakāya* (Emanation Body), Shenrab. Tapihritsa, a figure central to practice in Bon, is considered a historical figure associated with the Body of Bon or bon dimension (*bon sku*); however, the dimension itself is Samantabhadra.

wholeness, honoring open awareness as the ultimate progenitor of authentic scriptures.⁵² That is to say, the metaphorical descent of authenticating scriptures through “blessings” is a structure that supports, in ways the text has yet to elaborate, the performative significance of language in the text. Scriptures, authentic scriptures, are the stuff of reality. To say so is not just to provide a narrative about scripture but also to proffer a metaphor illustrating a crucial ontological principle of Dzogchen: namely, that unbounded wholeness proliferates itself. It projects itself into, or manifests itself as, subtle and then increasingly coarser types of forms. This is also the background against which the conceptual and the nonconceptual, or reasoning and scripture, can be presented as categories that are distinct but not dyadic. Above all, it is a narrative that facilitates the apparent assimilation of authenticator into authentic in the text’s culminating segments.

This suggestion about scripture and its ontological significance is easily overlooked; introduced early on, it remains in the background for almost the work’s entire length. Although the importance of scriptural authority is clear from the outset, its exact relation to authority as such is inherently problematic. After all, no one outside the scriptural system is convinced by scriptural citation, nor is it typically amenable to logical analysis.

In this context it is notable that, having briefly identified the three authenticators, *Authenticity* brings in Samantabhadra’s voice through the *Venerable Bon Awareness of Everything Tantra* (*Kun rig bon gyi rje rgyud*):

I am heart essence of all bon that is,
Bon-nature, not an object, is your own mind:
Your uncontrived mind is the bon-dimension
All arises from me, bon-phenomena lord.
Know me and the All-Good is there. {52.4–5}

To identify Samantabhadra with the nature of reality is common in both Bon and Buddhist Dzogchen. And once reality is personified, however abstractly, it is natural for it to have a voice. Hence, perhaps, the logic of this text’s interest in slowly forging a special conflation of this voice, scriptural authenticity, and the domain of reality itself. To this end it will, over the next eighty folios, weave various strands of reflection into a potent narrative on authenticity. Once these are well situated in relation to each other, it will return to the trajectory initiated here. Gradually, these strands take their place in relation to the Samantabhadra of *Authenticity*’s homage and introduction, who

^{52.} An unknown annotator of the *Authenticity*’s current redaction glosses “ancestor” as “source of trust” (*yid ches ba'i lung*), with “source” (*lung*) being a term cognate with “scripture,” thus implying, however unintentionally, a profound connection between authenticating scriptures and confident realization.

in retrospect stands as a powerful figure orienting the text's arguments as a whole.

Here, following the brief exposition just surveyed, the issue of what is authentic and what authenticates now recedes to eddy beneath the stream of reflections on the nature of unbounded wholeness and its accommodation of multiplicity. Before *Authenticity* can address the connection between scriptural authority and reality, this reality, unbounded wholeness, must itself be established as the ultimate locus of authenticity.

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2

Unbounded Wholeness: Multiplicity and Indefiniteness

Authenticity 53.6–66.6

Because of the thesis¹ that there are many diverse perspectives, it follows that the bon-subject (*bon can*)² of all samsara and nirvana is the primordial ancestor, the great vehicle, unbounded wholeness. {54.1}

In this chapter we take a closer look at unbounded wholeness. We consider its relation to reasoning, which cannot access it fully, and to open awareness, which can. From this vantage point we inquire further into how *Authenticity*'s presentation differs from certain (arguably more conservative) elements of Pramāṇa epistemology and from the use of reasoning in certain interpretations of Madhyamaka. More specifically, we take an interest in how an inferential reasoning consciousness is not authentic when it comes to open awareness and unbounded wholeness. These differences derive in significant measure from the fact already noted that unlike either of these systems Dzogchen is not governed by the two truths.

The thesis above, appearing as it does so early in the text and functioning in part as a literary device, suggests that unbounded wholeness is not to be understood as a master narrative that restricts, imposes order on, enfolds, or excludes. In short, it does not

1. The text uses the term “thesis” (*dam bca*) in addition to the *yin de* at the end of the predicate clause as is typical in later Buddhist texts on logic. As far as we know, this usage is unique to the *Gal mdo* or other texts in the same cycle or time period.

2. Note the use of the term *bon can* here, parallel to the famous Buddhist *chos can* (*dharmin*).

behave as words or reasons do. Sending a stream of reasoning toward a pool of poetry, as *Authenticity* does again and again, suggests that reasoning is not simply a bridge leading toward open awareness. It is subject to the art of collapsing ideation, opening the mind for the mythic presence of poetry. This seems a useful way to reflect on the literary achievement of the text, though nothing in the work's explicit epistemology describes such a process.

What is explicit is that this wholeness, which cannot be totalized or bounded, is thoroughly compatible with diversity. Indeed, diversity, though ordinarily considered the antithesis of unity, is here offered as proof that unbounded wholeness exists. Being so diverse, and constantly changing besides, means that unbounded wholeness admits of no defining characteristic or stable identity; in this sense it is indefinite and unspeakable. How can indefiniteness be a characteristic of reality? How can one develop authentic trust or confidence in such an unstable reality? This is critical, since we already know that confidence in oneself at the time of practice is a quality of authentic open awareness. Without such confidence, open awareness itself would, unacceptably, be unstable.

The Thesis of Indefiniteness

Unbounded wholeness, we have just read in the text's first syllogistic thesis, is established because there are "many diverse perspectives." Unbounded wholeness cannot be decided or defined as any one thing. This claim of holistic diversity is a clarion call to debate; it immediately elicits an objection, thereby setting in motion the type of syllogistic exchanges that dominate the rest of the work and that, in this section, are meant to clarify central themes related to unbounded wholeness.³

Is there, in fact, such diversity? When an opponent raises this question, the text takes up the challenge:

If someone objects that our reason [that there are diverse perspectives] is not established, we answer that it follows that the perspectives of the Nine Vehicles are established by inference because they rely on scriptural reasoning.

The appearance of the six realms is also established by inference. This is so, for it follows that as regards the bon-subject, appearances, ways of seeing the six realms' appearances are diverse, because it is so stated in scripture. {54.2–3}

3. As Tom Tillemans has pointed out (1994a: 119ff.), these statements are not, strictly speaking, syllogisms, although they have often been so named by Western scholars.

The distinction being drawn here is that although forms and other sensory objects are manifestly observable, they can appear in diverse ways. To maintain that conceptual and perceptual processes are both diverse and whole is not to emphasize how one cognizer leads to or is superior to the other but how they are proofs of wholeness.

Immediately after this statement, which is part of the thrust and parry of debate, the discursive horizon shifts. After all, scripture is also authoritative, and so our text, having made its point in logical terms (thereby possibly lessening conceptual resistance) and having then come to a kind of impasse in reasoning (thereby temporarily blunting the rationalist charge forward), *Authenticity* lifts scriptural citations from ancient texts to open the vista.

The text swiftly points out that the subject of the above thesis, all of samsara and nirvana, does in fact exist. Samsara's existence is established by direct perception, which testifies to its diversity, and nirvana's existence is established by inference, an inference not here given autonomous authority but described as based on authenticating scripture:

To claim that the base is definite has its perils, as an opponent is quick to point out. For, he argues, to claim that the base definitely exists is to fall to an extreme of eternalism; to claim that it is definitely nonexistent brings one to the extreme of annihilation {60.3}.

In response, the text expounds on its claim that unbounded wholeness is both definitely existent and definitely nonexistent:

There is the view that because open awareness, being self-clarified [definitely] dwells as an unthing, the base [unbounded wholeness] too definitely exists. It is also definitely nonexistent, because it is not a substantially established thing. It is also indefinite because even Samantabhadra cannot teach "It is only this." {62.1}⁴

This avoidance of any center point of argument is characteristic of *Authenticity* and distinguishes it from the certainties of much Mādhyamika logic, where emptiness is analytically established to be a lack of inherent existence, compatible with conventional existence. Even though *Authenticity* moves with logical steps, it comes to a point where no one step will suffice. This is not simply the point of inexpressibility; it is the point of the impossibility of logical mul-

4. In general, "substantial establishment" is an explicit object of negation (*dgag bya*); here it is not. A strikingly similar passage occurs in the commentary to *Six Expanses* (*kLong drug*), one of the famous Seventeen Tantras of Nyingma Dzogchen. Because the base is indefinite, we read, nothing at all is established; everything arises unceasingly. Because of the indefiniteness of nothing being established and because everything arises from it, we do not identify the base by saying "this is." See 257.3ff.

tiplicities. Any particular reason, at least of the kind associated with Pramāṇa discourse, can only deal with the absence or presence of certainties, not with a wholeness that encompasses both.

Regarding this, *Reversing the Causes of Samsara Tantra* ('Khor ba rgyu ltog gi rgyud) says:

Mindnature, clear light which is this wholeness,
 Primordially not a substantial thing,
 Primordially clear conscious open awareness.
 For me to say "This" is unfitting. {62.1}

Because neither reflexive open awareness nor unbounded wholeness can be "constrained in any one direction" (*phyogs gcig tu ma lhung ba* {55.1}), neither is fit to be identified as solely this or that. The inability to describe unbounded wholeness in any one way bespeaks no inadequacy on the part of Samantabhadra; rather, it dramatically testifies to wholeness's decentered multiplicity and thus to its incommensurability with conceptual limitation. Unbounded wholeness can, and must, be called both definite and indefinite; this is the principle of wholeness. This means, among other things, that *Authenticity* is more than comfortable with what Paige calls the "apophasic breakdown of conventional language."⁵ In effect, once one concedes the indescribability of the ultimate, one can relax. Effortless ease, a prominent feature of Dzogchen, gains its potency partly from this. For apophasis always refuses reification, stability, and orderliness.⁶

What Samantabhadra declines to summarize as "this" cannot be circumscribed by reasoning, either. Indeed, the above statement that unbounded wholeness is both impermanent and permanent slips away from the confines of the classical tetralemma, structured as it is around the binary contradictions of self and other, both and neither. Definite and indefinite, for example, here turn out not to be a mutually exclusive binary. Likewise, other dyads such as impermanence and permanence, Buddhas and sentient beings, conventional and ultimate, or conditioned and unconditioned are all—to borrow a phrase from A. H. Almas—"facets of wholeness,"⁷ not mutually exclusive. For *Authenticity*, indefiniteness is not so much the predicate of a subject position as an evocation of multifarious reality, continuously brimming with shapes and colors even as it remains an unmitigated whole.

In this context, the text reflects on what sort of phenomenon mindnature or unbounded wholeness might be. Animated by a binary familiar to all students of logic, the text's unnamed interlocutor inquires: is it a thing or is it a

5. Paige 2001: 211.

6. Paige 2001: 221. See also Derrida 1982–1984. Derrida, as Paige notes here, finds "going too far" to be an essential trait of apophasis.

7. Almas 1998.

non-thing? The opponent wishes to prove the nonexistence of unbounded wholeness, in good tetralemma style, by showing it to be neither. If successful, this move would also undermine the authenticity of open awareness, thereby undoing the central premise of the text. So a good deal is at stake here. How *Authenticity* responds to this challenge will be paradigmatic for how it manipulates logic so as to be maximally free of the binary structure that typically attends it.

Thus, asked whether unbounded wholeness is a thing or a non-thing, *Authenticity* refuses to be caught in this dyadic grid. In the face of an opponent's black-and-white, either-or choices, it is typical for the text to make way for a "both-and" response, as it does here:

Lama of Light Sutra ('Od gyi bla ma'i mdo) says:

Definite principle, heart-essence, samsara and nirvana's base,
An essence neither eternal nor nil. {61.6}

The *Tantra of the Blissful Wheel* (rGyud bde ba'i 'khor lo) says:

Not existent, it is undemonstrable
Not nonexistent, clear reflexive open awareness
Not eternal, it is an unthing
Not annihilated, spontaneously there
Not two, it has no match
Not one, self-appearance dawning—
Enlightenment mind beyond extremes. {61.3}

The mind of enlightenment, unbounded wholeness, then, is a state of self-arisen wisdom, an open awareness united with clarity. Being all inclusive, it has no match, no pair, so it cannot be two; yet it is not only one, since it is the potential of all that exists.

This disclosure further displays the definite indefiniteness of unbounded wholeness. Verbal indefiniteness apparently facilitates an experiential confidence unbounded by cognitive limits. Such an expanse is best illuminated in verse, where meanings are more fluidly construed than in logic, which depends on tight semantic boundaries.⁸

Authenticity's verses are often the voice of Samantabhadra, and in this way mythic goodness and bliss arrive in the midst of the text's more manifest concern for argumentation. Such qualities are not won through analysis; they

8. An image of Averroes as imagined by Borges comes to mind: "The effort of writing syllogisms and linking vast paragraphs did not keep him from feeling, like a state of well-being, the cool and deep house surrounding him" (Borges 1962: 148). Borges, like the writer of *Authenticity*, moved freely between reasoning intellect and poetic imagination.

simply arrive, and their presence mitigates or even resolves a crucial issue that philosophy itself, strictly speaking, could not bring to completion. The kind of assent involved is, to invoke Hadot again, not abstract but lived, or at least integrated into a body of multiple assents. Through its character of arrival and because of the living flourish with which it is encountered, indefiniteness can be mythologized as certainty, though it would not be interpreted so philosophically.

With such indefiniteness, the issue of first principles, so crucial in Western philosophy, virtually dissolves. Within this kind of mythic *imaginaire*, there are no prior natural objects. Still it is worth noting that ever since Aristotle, Greek and European philosophers have recognized that first principles, being just that, cannot themselves be justified. To the extent that Aristotle (and much Western philosophy after him) was interested in certainty, the lack of such foundations was not troubling to him. Rather than see these principles as “ground-less,” he declares them to be “self-evidently true.”⁹ In other words, the messy business of first principles is resolved by hewing to cleansing abstraction, an open ground for theory. Abstraction of this order, a hallmark of Greek and subsequent Western philosophy, stands against the specificity and incoherent multiplicities of myth—that is, against uncertainty and undecidability.¹⁰

The bridge between reasoning and reality is planked with arguments that themselves have cracks and whorls, through which the arriving, encompassing flood of Samantabharic wholeness seeps. Because detached objectivity and disinterested reflection are not part of a mythic sensibility, the mythic takes the form of living beings, not of objects or abstractions.¹¹ This, of course, speaks to our ongoing interest in placing the figure of Samantabhadra among more theoretical expressions of Dzogchen philosophy. It speaks also, most subtly, to the utter consanguinity of knowing and being in open awareness. Conflating

9. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* I.3.19–23. See also the discussion in Hatab 1990, *passim*, but especially pp. 305–306. As Hatab points out, Aristotle himself appealed to a divine mind to ground first principles. For further discussion, see also Blondi 1999.

10. See Hatab 1990: 31–32 and 308–310. We do not by any means assume that what was true of mythic perspectives in the ancient Greece on which Hatab focuses is equally true in Tibet. However, this part of his assessment does seem commensurate with what we call the “mythic” understanding that moves through *Authenticity*.

11. Hatab 1990: 26. He notes also that myth is passive, while reasoning is active. This too we can relate with the epistemology of Griffiths’s categories of externalists and internalists, as well as with the two types of assent—intellectual and lived—that are postulated by Hadot. We can also relate this to the difference between systematic and narrative thought, the former being connected through logic and the other through sequencing. Collins 1998 makes extensive use of this distinction, summarizing his deployment of them on pp. 121–133. Most of what he says there is also useful here insofar as the distinction we draw throughout this discussion between myth and reasoning is a subset of his distinction between systematic and narrative thought, in which myth is a particular subset of narrative. Myth’s specific qualities of arrival, directness, and so forth, which do not characterize all narrative, are significant enough here that we use “myth” rather than “narrative” as our focal category, despite (and because of) recognizing that there is considerable overlap. There is enormous work to be done in order to explore the significance of these and related categories to the material at hand; we can only begin to make some indications here.

mythic presence with rhetorical reflection, we can understand our text as seeking to perform that unison as well as describe it.

The planks of reasoning and the water on which they float are mutually interactive. Unless one understands this, it can be confusing to find an authorial voice moving so swiftly between logos and mythos or, analogously, between reason and poetry. *Authenticity*, after all, is part of a cultural *imaginaire* wherein mythic elements can be welcomed into the midst of reasoned analysis.¹² This allows the mythically charismatic Samantabhadra, invoked precisely at this point, to resolve the conundrum of limited and therefore un-whole analytical certainty simply through arriving on the page.

At the same time, Samantabhadra is the principle of definite variability and thus is philosophically significant. Such a conflation of mythic and philosophical is particularly comfortable in a cultural ambit that has never, at least until very recently, undergone the multiple moves of objectification, disenchantment, and distancing from traditional religious perspectives. It was largely on account of these moves in Western cultures that mythos came to be seen “not as a relevant *presentation* of the world but as simply a story which has an emotional effect on listeners and thus not a decisive account (*logos*).”¹³ Yet, the logic of myth is crucial to wholeness and the indefiniteness that accompanies it, for mythic logic is, in the words of Jean-Pierre Vernant, “a logic of the ambiguous, the equivocal, a logic of polarity.”¹⁴

The statement with which we began our chapter is thus only problematically labeled a “thesis” (*dam bca*) at all, since “thesis” classically indicates a statement that represents the text’s own view. Yet this statement is tantamount to saying that samsara is unbounded wholeness. How can this statement be a thesis? Only, perhaps, if we qualify it in ways that it is not customary to qualify theses—that is, if we accept that while not literally the case it is pedagogically useful, and not altogether mistaken, to equate unbounded wholeness with the objects of samsara.

Still, a table is not unbounded wholeness even though, from the viewpoint of the ultimate (*don dam du dbang du byed na*) a table is, like all other objects, pervaded by it. This averment, however, has to be made in the face of acknowledging that, in this tradition, the term “samsara” technically refers to a consciousness (*'khor ba yin na, shes pa yin bas khyab*), even though, in some important interpretations (including the one we are following most closely here)

12. India, China, and Tibet all had scientific and philosophical trajectories of development; nevertheless, they did not undergo deliberate attempts at freeing these disciplines from traditional religion, a centuries-long process that indelibly stamped Greek science and philosophy as revolutionary and that set the stage for parameters of scientific thinking today. Nor, as Hatab 1990: 334 n.30, referencing Greece in particular, points out, were mythos and logos always opposed. After all, mythos could be considered *hieros logos*, sacred speech; “it was only when logos evolved to the sense of logical reasoning that *mythos* became problematic.”

13. Hatab 1990: 334 n.30. The final sentence is cited from Burkert 1985: 312.

14. Vernant 1980: 239. Discussed in Hatab 1990: 30, 334 n.30.

neither unbounded wholeness nor its ontological homonym, open awareness, is a consciousness. Thus, to indicate that the objects of samsara *are* unbounded wholeness is a thesis not fully supportable. Still, such a statement helps open the mind to the multiplicities congruent with open awareness's unbounded wholeness. The power of allusion and metaphor here gains priority over the power of logic, even in the implementation of a thesis.

Dzogchen Emptiness and Unbounded Wholeness

Although both Dzogchen and Madhyamaka speak of emptiness, they differ in their actual understandings of this. Madhyamaka, according to many interpretations in India and Tibet, maintains that phenomena are empty of inherent existence. This emptiness, an unfindability of just such inherently or independently established phenomena, makes causation both possible and a mere convention. Unconditioned emptiness and conditioned causality have the same ontological status: both exist conventionally. However, emptiness is an ultimate truth because it is only true for an ultimate consciousness and because it does not get misrepresented to the senses. All other phenomena are conventional truths.

Authenticity's ontology is not premised on distinguishing ultimate from conventional, on determining which is deceptive (*slu ba*) in appearance or findable under analysis; for example, through the famous tetralemma of Nāgārjuna or the sevenfold analysis of Chandrakīrti. Its chief emphasis is on the unlimited reach and unconstrained holism of unbounded wholeness, the multiplicity of appearances consonant with this, and the availability of open awareness to itself as just such unbounded wholeness. In all these contexts, even when phenomena self-arise from wholeness to become manifest due to specific causes and conditions, there is neither coming together nor separation within unbounded wholeness. “No separation” (*ma bral*) is considered an even stronger connection than “union” (*zung’jug*), a term so often found in tantra.¹⁵

Dzogchen differs from sutra in that it does not investigate, as sutra does, whether things inherently exist. It simply investigates whether or not the mind exists.¹⁶ It does not ask whether this mind inherently exists or not but investigates whether color, shape, and so on *are* the mind. The tradition of *Authenticity* does not consider phenomena empty because they are unfindable; it sees

15. These points and much of what follows are summarized from Klein's discussions with Lopon Tenzin Namdak over the course of several years, especially in our culminating discussions at the Ligmincha Institute in July 2000.

16. At the same time, Lopon, like most Buddhist Dzogchen masters, will affirm the helpfulness, if not downright necessity, of understanding Madhyamaka before practicing Dzogchen.

all appearances as empty because they are one in essence (*ngo bo gcig*) with mindnature (*sems nyid*). This is pivotal to understanding Dzogchen's view of the authentic. Neither the merely empty nor the wisdom realizing it can be authentic in the way that, finally, our text will propose that reflexive open awareness is authentic to unbounded wholeness.

Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka searches for objects or persons and does not find them, and in this way it realizes the lack, or emptiness, of inherent existence. This emptiness is a mere negative; a reason that negates inherent existence can get at it. (Geluk presentations are a particularly strong example of this position.) Further, whereas for Prāsaṅgika emptiness is definitely an expression of the middle way, in *Authenticity* the middle is found through avoiding any sort of definiteness. Conceptual processes, the *via negativa* alone, can neither access unbounded wholeness nor make open awareness of it manifest.

Although at various junctures in *Authenticity* unbounded wholeness, like the emptiness of Madhyamaka, is described in terms of what it is not, the text never rests with this but moves on to show that inclusion of various viewpoints, rather than the elimination of all of them via reasoning, is its way of understanding reality. This is a critical difference in our text's approach to the ultimate.

Being authentic with respect to unbounded wholeness thus requires not so much a superior logic as a more suitable subjective positioning. Although these two cannot be entirely separated, it seems fair to say that in contrast to classic Mādhyamika emphasis on logic¹⁷ and the centrality in praxis and theory of the tetralemma analyses (*catuskoṭi*), Dzogchen emphasizes the subjective state of wisdom. After all, even though the existence of multiplicity, spontaneity, and bliss can be established through reasoning, they are not available to authentic recognition via reasoning.

Nāgārjuna demonstrated the possibility of staking a philosophical claim without using an inherently existent thesis. In a sense, this was his response to the recognized incommensurability of language and reality. *Authenticity* is clearly quite willing to state a position when circumstances require it.¹⁸ When it comes to descriptions of reality, however, the definitive vanishes along the open horizon of a divergent, vitalizing incongruity that can only be liberated, never resolved. No ultimate exists apart from the immediacy of unbounded

17. This emphasis may, however, be partly a function of how Madhyamaka has been interpreted in the West—that is, many of its leading investigators (Hopkins, Napper, Garfield, Inada, Ruegg) have been inspired to a large extent by the logic of Madhyamaka and have emphasized this to the point where other elements of Madhyamaka/Mahāyāna praxis such as ritual, contemplative learning, the relationship between subjective and ontological premises, and so on, are nearly invisible in their overall outstanding work.

18. For example: “According to the mindnature or Great Completeness system, objects are not included within mind. . . . Objects are neither altered nor destroyed by a reasoning mind, therefore we are not like the Ceaseless Changeless Ones [followers of Mādhyamika tenets]” (*Authenticity* 64.3ff.).

everything, though this is not obvious to untrained and inauthentic perception.¹⁹ For *Authenticity*, the challenge is to express a wholeness from which nothing is excluded, even while recognizing that words and reasonings, by their very nature, always exclude something. Hence, in part, the occasional recourse to more mythically oriented poetry. Reasoning's abstraction arguably differs from myth's concreteness in that the latter does not so clearly operate by way of exclusion or isolation.

The absurdity toward which conceptual fractiousness tends has been brilliantly characterized by Borges in the person of Funes the Memorious, who takes up a challenge that Locke had rejected: Funes wants to create "an impossible language in which each individual thing, each stone each bird and each branch, would have its own name." For Funes, however, even this is too general, for he "remembered not only every leaf of every tree of every wood, but also every one of the times he had perceived or imagined it."²⁰ In reading Borges's description of this extreme, a fresh sense of absurdity, of predicament, arrives. Its arrival evokes wonder at Borges's brilliance and a sense that, through this very absurdity, one has glimpsed a dimension overlooked by the ordinary mind, a dimension of mythic proportions. Such is the expansive power of sheer creativity. We shall return to this point in chapter 5, in the discussion of scriptural authenticity, where Borges will again have some poetic wisdom for us.

Dzogchen practitioners, initially using minds and methods constructed along the binary of subject and object, must break both those tools and the delusion they are intended to disarm. Hence "authentic methods" are required that do not further rely on delusion and dualism. Reasoning, for all its merit, replicates elements of both. Consequently, *Authenticity* will move from a concern for the correspondence between subject and object to a sheer awareness of awareness, a move from truth to being true. But we get ahead of ourselves.²¹

To put this another way, a central challenge of both text and practice is to reconcile multiplicity with the enduring nature of reality: "The bon-nature, heart of that definite base, is utterly unchanging. Moreover, the unrealized see many appearances in relation to the base itself" {62.4}. Only Dzogchen is deemed fully equal to meeting this challenge; the lower eight vehicles are like "blind persons [who] designate various names to the body of a sturdy elephant, but the elephant itself does not become other than what it was" {63.2}. Dzogchen sees the elephant in its infinitely various completeness. Hope of

19. For more on the theme of singleness, contrasted with Sautrāntika and Mādhyamika presentations of the two truths, see Klein and Wangyal 1995: 780–788.

20. Borges 1962: 65.

21. Taylor 1989: 130–131, reflecting on Augustine, coins the term "radical reflexivity" to emphasize the centrality of the first-person standpoint. To a degree this is also Dzogchen's interest, with the enormous difference that Dzogchen does not, like Augustine or Descartes after him, affirm an increasingly strong boundary between subject and object, between internal and external.

liberation—from the bonds of reasoning, as well as from other thought forms—invites both meditative inspiration and poetic intercession. As said in the *Sutra on the Three Aspects of Primordial Existence* (*Ye srid rnam gsum gyi mdo*) {74.3}:

Enlightenment mind, heart-essence of everything
 Mother-bases, self-risen primordial wisdom
 Things absent, open awareness present,
 Not indefinite, spontaneously changeless and ceaseless.

Thus it is with unbounded wholeness and open awareness. What is their relationship to indefiniteness, and, given that indefiniteness, where does authenticity reside?

How Diversity Proves Wholeness

To interrogate further the above thesis is to analyze the relationship between reasoning and wholeness. Reasoning, as we have seen, is premised on a separation of subject and object. This puts it in tension with Dzogchen's sense of unbounded wholeness. Our inquiry into reasoning therefore lands us in the heart of the tension between Dzogchen and Pramāṇa styles of reflection.

While both Dzogchen and Pramāṇa inquire into the nature of knowing, Dzogchen explicitly sees itself as inquiring into the nature of an all-encompassing subjectivity: a playful and open plurality is more truthful than a limiting certainty.²² Pramāṇa inquiry is generally interested in a subject's ability to take the measure of its object fully and correctly; its assumption is that there is a correct measure to be taken. In that case, certainty and definiteness are appropriate. Thus, for example, in Geluk exegesis, founded as it is on the principles of *pramāṇa*, even in a nondualistic direct cognition of the ultimate, emptiness, there is an observing subject. The subject is not experientially distinct from the emptiness with which it is “like fresh water poured into fresh water,” but it is epistemologically and philosophically distinguishable from it.

The fact of many diverse perspectives, *Authenticity* has argued, means that there must be a wholeness in which they participate. Therefore, *Authenticity* will philosophically as well as mythically embrace philosophical incommen-

²². This also means, of course, that there is no abstract “truth” divorced from subjective engagement. The world is not fixed in the way that it is when truth is coextensive with certainty, as it has been in the West since the time of Plato, a trend that was profoundly furthered by the Cartesian method with its focus on certainty. Descartes’s ultimate referent, however, was a perfect God and the immortality of the soul—of this, too, he was certain. What distinguishes our text from these tendencies in Western philosophy as well as much of Pramāṇa logic is the philosophical embracing of uncertainty. Postmodern narratives embrace undecidability in a similar but at the same time very different way from non-Western tradition. These do not point to the kind of transcendent referent that, however different in articulation, is present in early Western philosophy and in *Authenticity*.

surability and the uncertainty that ensues. Thereby, its truth does not so much become subjectivized, relative to the principles of *pramāṇa*, as pluralized:²³

Since there are many diverse perspectives, it is impossible that there not be a whole, all-suffusing mind nature which is the basis. For example, once there is smoke, it is impossible that there not be fire.

The opponent remains unconvinced and puts forward a counterargument:

That is not comparable, because fire and smoke have a relationship of one arising from the other;²⁴ in this case there is no such relationship.

Authenticity responds that there is, in fact, a relationship of one's arising from the other, because the base, mindnature, is an all-pervasive wholeness not constrained in any one direction. This answer is typical of the text's indirect style. It does not argue outright, as it cannot, that unbounded wholeness is a cause—only that it is “not constrained,” thereby suggesting that nothing is prevented from arising in it.

The claim regarding unbounded wholeness's character of diversity here rests, albeit briefly, on a claim that the relationship between these diverse phenomena and unbounded wholeness is “that which arises from another” (*de byung 'brel, tadutpatti*)²⁵ like fire and smoke. Mindnature, like fire, is a source of something that appears different from it but is not.

Readers of *Authenticity*, familiar as they would be with other central Dzogchen materials of Bon, especially the poetic and canonical *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, would accept this statement quite easily. According to the Zhang Zhung tradition, mindnature has four qualities: being nonconceptual, being the basis of the moving mind, being neutral, and possessing unlimited potentiality for manifestation.²⁶

Thus, mindnature, the base that is unbounded wholeness, is a source whose intrinsic diversity is displayed by the multitudinous appearances that emerge from it, much as distant smoke signifies the presence of a yet unseen fire. The metaphor breaks down, however, in that unbounded wholeness, unlike fire, is not a conditioned phenomenon and thus not a cause of that which rises from it. Though not its cause, unbounded wholeness is its source.²⁷

23. Hatab 1990: 308–309 makes a similar distinction between Greek myth and philosophy.

24. *de las 'byung ba'i 'brel pa* {54.6}. This is the first instance in this text of a classic phenomenologically descriptive term; several centuries later it becomes one of two types of relationship possible between objects.

25. Classically discussed by Dharmakirti, *Treatise on Valid Cognition* (*Pramāṇavārttika*) [a commentary on Dignāga's *Compendium on Valid Cognition*] II.25–46. See Dreyfus 1997: 143–145.

26. These are discussed in the *Commentary on the Twenty-One Stakes* (*gZer bu nyer gcig gi 'grel ba*) in the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* (in the *History and Doctrine of Bon-po Nispanna Yoga*), reproduced by Chandra and Namdak 1968: 527.6. See also Wangyal 1993: 85.

27. This introduces a distinction between cause and source crucial to Bon Dzogchen's way of distinguishing itself from Madhyamaka and to the all-important philosophical principle of spontaneous presence (*lhun grub*) in relation to dependent arising. See chapter 4.

The *Authenticity of Essential Precepts and Scripture* offers a further analysis of reasoning's relationship to unbounded wholeness. Unlike *Authenticity*, its root text mentions the three types of relationship possible between unbounded wholeness and its scriptural authenticator.²⁸ Well known to students of the Collected Topics genre, these three relationships are: being the same in nature (*bdag nyid gcig pa'i 'brel ba*), the arising of one from the other (*de las byung ba'i 'brel ba*), and arising from causes and conditions (*rgyu dang rkyen gyi 'brel ba*).²⁹ All are imputed by the mind that posits them.³⁰

For example, a syllogism such as "it follows that the subject, sound, is impermanent, because of being a product like a pot" is sensible insofar as product and impermanence are equally characterized by the "momentariness" (*skad gcig ma*) that defines impermanence. This is reasoning by way of the nature (*rang bzhin gyi rtags yang dag*). Product and impermanence have one nature but are different for thought.

Here the text and its epistemology seem to struggle to hold together principles of both Dzogchen and Pramāṇa. One *Authenticity* debate, cited above, describes the relationship of all existents (samsara and nirvana) to unbounded wholeness as like that of smoke to fire. This relationship exemplifies two kinds of functionality (*don byed nus pa*) crucial to Pramāṇa and related perspectives: (1) a cause producing an effect, and (2) an object serving as a causal condition for the production of a perceiving consciousness. At the same time, it is a central Dzogchen principle that unbounded wholeness, being changeless, ceaseless, and unconditioned, can never be called the cause of samsara and nirvana.

A crucial point for *Authenticity* is that just as subjects are not really divided from their objects, "effects" are one in Buddha nature with their causes. Indeed, unbounded wholeness itself is said to be established only by reasons that are one in nature with it.³¹ Further, *Authenticity* maintains that all effects occur spontaneously (*lhun grub*) and thus are not sufficiently separate in nature from their causes to justify saying that a fruit or an effect is dualistically related with the causes or circumstances that facilitated it. Reasoning, however, can never completely uncover or articulate the subtle nature connecting such statements with their object of proof, nor can it cause reflexive authentic awareness of

28. *Authenticity* {105.6ff} does discuss the difference between reasons that operate through the power of connection ('*brel*) and those that operate through opposites ('*gal*) and relates this with its discussion of cause and effect. It does not, however, like its root text, elaborate on the three relationships between reasoning and that which it authenticates.

29. *Essential Precepts* commentary 16.5–6. The typologies of reasoning in relation to *Authenticity* require further analysis; here we can only begin to introduce the problems involved. Scholars familiar with Dharmakīrti will recognize that this list differs from the categories of internal and causal relationships (*tādātmyalakṣaṇasambandha* and *tadutpattilakṣaṇasambandha*; the latter being particularly important also in Geluk and other Collected Topics (*bsdsus grwa*) materials. In a different vein, Kapstein 2001: 171–172 gives a contemporary restatement of these categories and personal identity.

30. *Essential Precepts* commentary 17.3–18.2.

31. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, in glossing this (oral commentary), uses the well-known sutra term *ngo bo gcig ldog pa tha dad* (*a single entity, but different for thought*), a phrase that does not occur in the text.

unbounded wholeness. It cannot mimic the unique characteristic of unbounded wholeness to participate in everything.

Reasoning, itself an instance of dynamic display (*rtsal*), arises in and through unbounded wholeness. In this way, correctly engaged reasoning does not so much prove unbounded wholeness as participate with it. As with all dynamic display, by its mere existence, the display that is reasoning demonstrates, not merely through logic, but also in the manner of a mythic “arrival,” that unbounded wholeness is its source. To return to our smoke and fire analogy, whereas the philosophical schools emphasize that smoke, being an effect of fire, is also a sign indicating that its cause is present, Dzogchen would emphasize that smoke, being of the nature of fire, bears witness to the potency of its source.

Reasoning, then, structured to take the measure of specific phenomena, fails to ascertain the multifarious whole. Reasoning, after all, does not simultaneously point in many directions; it is premised on definiteness, valued for bringing closure, and is inadequate to the unbounded, undecidable nature of reality. Still, even though unbounded wholeness’s crucial quality is openness, and even though it is in some sense incommensurable with reasoning, unbounded wholeness does not stand in opposition to reasoning. In this sense, Dzogchen and Pramāṇa processes operate simultaneously and in the same location, without ever being conflated. After all, if reasoned logic were excluded from this openness, claims of wholeness would be undone. In this way, wholeness proves multiplicity as much as, in *Authenticity*’s words, multiplicity proves wholeness. Thus, indefiniteness abounds.³²

Once a reason is considered one in nature with what it establishes, the principle of all-inclusivity is arguably unviolated by it. In this sense too, reasoning points to unbounded wholeness in much the same way as every existent thing does—if one understands that thing as dynamic display. Unlike other displays of wholeness’s diversity, however, reasoning has the added characteristic of *identifying*, and in this sense of moving to authenticate, the unbounded wholeness in which it participates. The reasoning of *Authenticity* is best understood as functioning in both of these ways, suggesting the extent to which Dzogchen and Pramāṇa perspectives again are in confluence, one streaming through the other without necessarily disrupting either:

The same diversity that exists in tension with reasoning is a salient characteristic of direct perception. *Scripture of Blissful Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang bde ba'i lung*) says:

32. By way of contrast, the indefinite diversity of unbounded wholeness makes it unamenable to the certainties of Mādhyamika discourse, where emptiness, for example, is in Geluk interpretations merely absence. That mere absence is sufficiently definite to be validly knowable through reasoning itself. The question of whether emptiness is a mere negative or not is also fiercely debated in intersectarian interpretations of Mādhyamaka. It is well known that the Sakya scholar Gorampa Sonam Senge takes a position opposed to that of Tsongkhapa in this debate.

Beings of the six realms see water six ways. {54.4}

Also, *Sun Suffusing the Thousand Directions* (*Nyi ma stong khyab*) says:

Because appearances are not definite as one

Perceptions arise differently for the six wanderers. {54.5}

For virtually anyone in India or Tibet during the centuries before and after this text, these are not controversial statements. They refer to the different perceptions that different types of beings have: where humans see water, hungry ghosts see pus and blood, while gods see ambrosia. No one in the *Authenticity*'s cultural and temporal setting would need to be persuaded of this; the citation would serve primarily as a reminder. *Authenticity*'s emphasis on perspective is crucial to its style of argument. The point is that the dynamic display of unbounded wholeness can itself be either permanent or impermanent, depending on the perspective taken. *Authenticity* states that unbounded wholeness is a non-thing (*dngos med*) and thus permanent, yet from the viewpoint of its own dynamic display it is an impermanent thing (*dngos po*). A touchstone of reality is that it cannot be fully characterized in any one way. Dynamic display includes everything other than the base, unbounded wholeness. Even subtle phenomena such as unconditioned space and the Buddha's nature dimension (*ngo bo nyid sku, svabhāvikakāya*) are all dynamic display from the base (*gzhi'i rtsal*).³³

The point is that because mutually antithetical sense perceptions (*mimthun / 'gal ba dbang po mthong snang*) arise, including the perceptions of delusion, many discordant appearances also arise, just as smoke rises from fire {55.1–55.2}. The text again supports its point by a poetic citation, in this case from *Mirror of Mindnature Treasure* (*Sems nyid me long gi mdzod phug*):

Appearances are different, diverse, and so

Extend all through mindnature, samsara and nirvana;

Because they always self-arise [from] wholeness,

These things are related with, rise from, reality. {55.1}

In *Authenticity*, as for Dzogchen in general, any appearance participating in a subject-object dyad is a conventional truth. Expressing a view that is also held in the early Perfection of Wisdom (*sher phyin, prajñāpāramitā*) literature, we read:

Regarding this, any appearance associated with subject and object is a conventional truth. An ultimate truth such as open awareness is not [in Dzogchen] associated with either subject or object. Therefore,

33. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Kathmandu, January, 1999, oral commentary.

the appearance of all signs of conventionalities are conventional. The pacification of all signs of elaboration is ultimate. {86.4–6}.

Although the principle of the two truths does not govern its presentation, *Authenticity* does occasionally use the term “conventional” or “ultimate.” Only authentically reflexive open awareness, however, is an authentic pacification of elaborations. The most important conclusion to be derived from this, according to one important strand of interpretation, is that reflexive authentic awareness is not a consciousness.³⁴ We will return to this point below.

In light of this glorious indefiniteness, the inevitable contradictions of the world become proof for the existence of unbounded wholeness. Thus plurality proves wholeness. Put another way, it is precisely because unbounded wholeness is rife with multiplicities that it is an authentic whole. This understanding of unbounded wholeness is, to our best knowledge, unique to Bon.

Although teeming with the diversity that proves its existence, this wholeness is frequently described in unitary terms: as extremely profound and partitionless (*shin tu zab zhing cha 'bral ba*), as well as extremely profound and subtle (*shin tu zab zhing cha 'phra ba*). The emphasis on the fact of diversity helps to explain the limits of reasoning; the emphasis on wholeness supports the coherent subjective state of authentic open awareness. Reasoning, by its very functioning, disrupts both subjective and objective unities. The unborn and unceasing is “whole” or “one” (*gcig*) in the sense of being a single essence (*ngo bo gcig tu song ba*) and in the sense of being one with the self-arisen primordial wisdom that is open awareness wisdom. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, in his *Annotations to the Unbounded Primordial Wisdom Mother Tantra* (*Ma rgyud ye shes thig le'i mchan 'grel*)³⁵ notes that clarity is the primordial wisdom of reflexive authentic awareness (*rang rig pa'i ye shes*) and that being empty (*stong cha*) is the abiding condition, the self-arisen primordial wisdom (*rang 'byung ye shes*). These are one essence (*ngo bo gcig*).³⁶

In the same text, Lopon Tenzin Namdak names the following four characteristics of unbounded wholeness:

Unbounded wholeness is

1. Unconditioned because it is permanent
2. Unchanging because it is not produced through causes and conditions
3. A changeless ceaseless dimension (*g.yung drung gi sku*) because it

34. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Ligmincha Institute, July 2000, oral commentary.

35. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, *Ma rgyud ye shes thig le'i mchan 'grel thar lam rab gsal* (*Illuminating the Path of Freedom: Annotations to the Open Sphere of Primordial Wisdom Chapter of the Mother Tantra*; abbrev. as *Annotations to the Mother Tantra*), 13.I–2.

36. See end of chapter 3 for discussion of a three-fold typology of open awareness.

is the base and support for the many exalted qualities (*yon tan*) that rely on it, and because its own essence (*ngo bo*) is unchanging

4. Great bliss because its essence is uncontaminated by an accumulation of poison and because it is the final abiding condition. Moreover, because unbounded wholeness is free of all extremes, it is the abiding condition of all knowable phenomena.³⁷

Being the “abiding condition of all knowable phenomena” means that nothing whatsoever is contradictory with unbounded wholeness; hence, again, its character of diversity. The above citation from *Mirror of Mindnature Treasure* (55.1) claims that without limits of any kind, the unbounded is fundamentally a principle of inclusion and as such cannot be ruptured by contradictions or multiplicities. To the contrary, emphasizing its multitudinous character helps demonstrate its spaciously open nature, an ambience innocent of limits—hence, one well-rounded “whole” (*thig le*).³⁸

It is noteworthy that in addition to its various meanings associated with the seminal and spherical, Bon Dzogchen etymologies of *thig le* make explicit its affinity with what is wholly unencumbered—spatially, temporally, ontologically, and epistemologically. Emic understanding equates *thig* with the unborn and *le* with the unceasing.³⁹ In *Authenticity*, as elsewhere in Dzogchen, this phrasing expresses a middle way: avoiding the extreme of annihilation through being unceasing and avoiding the extreme of permanence through being unborn. As neither quality is definite, wholeness goes unchallenged. (Madhyamaka also, of course, rejects these extremes but does not therefore conclude

37. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, *Annotations to the Mother Tantra* 14.10–18.

38. For this and other reasons that will gradually become clearer in our discussion, we do not translate *thig le* as “drop” or “semen,” which are commonly used in other contexts to render this term, nor do we want to render *nyag gcig* as “one” or “singular” since its significance is not numerical but holistic. In this we are supported by a variety of commentators on the term. Karmay 1988: 118 n.55 notes the sense of *thig le* in Nyingma Dzogchen as “without amplification.” He understands it to refer to the “Primordial Basis” and equates *thig le chen po* with *thig le nyag gcig*. According to the noted Nyingma Dzogchen lama and scholar Tulku Thondup, the term *thig le nyag gcig* in Nyingma Dzogchen signifies Body of Dharma (*chos sku*, *dharmakāya*) or great bliss. Further, its roundness, innocent of edges, symbolizes freedom from extremes. Khenpo Palden Sharab, among the most respected Nyingma Dzogchen scholars today, notes that the term *thig le nyag gcig* is found in Longchen Rabjampa, especially *Treasury of the Dharmadhatu*, to be synonymous with *dbyings*, *rang 'grol*, and *spros pa dang grel ba*. (Oral commentary to Klein, July, 1989). Further study, especially of *chos dbyings mdzod*, is necessary to develop this comparison.

Herbert Guenther (1994: 2–3 and 18 n.10) cites several very early Buddhist sources in his survey of meanings of this term, noting, among other points, that according to the *Rousing the Mind to Enlightenment* (*Byang chub tu sems skyod pa*) attributed to Jampel Shenyen (Jam dpal bShes gnyen) and preserved in the *Collected Tantras* (*rGyud 'bum*) of Vairocana (Vol. 7, pp. 287–340) the *le* of *thig le* means totality, arising as anything; that *nyag* means “profound and subtle,” and *gcig* refers to the continuity between subject and object. Śrīsimha concurs, as does a passage from Padmasambhava’s *s'Pros bral don gsal*. These writings, of course, are regarded as having originated approximately contemporaneously with Lishu Daring.

39. This discussion is based on Klein’s conversations with Lopon Tenzin Namdak.

that emptiness, its ultimate category, is indefinite. If we are correct in maintaining that the argument of indefiniteness helps support the tradition's view of reasoning as limited, it also follows that *Madhyamaka* has no need to cite indefiniteness as a characteristic of the ultimate. Thus, many interpretations of *Madhyamaka*, as we have seen, find definitive reasoning capable of establishing emptiness and inferential understanding valid [authenticating] in relation to it.)

Unbounded wholeness is clearly central to Dzogchen, but the principle of indefiniteness associated with it seems to fall short of the philosophical rigor that good argumentation requires and of the soteriological certainty that makes liberation possible. If unbounded wholeness is indefinite, "there would be the fault of having no effective method, that is to say, no definiteness, regarding the bon-nature" {60.5}. The text responds by underscoring reality's indefiniteness with a citation from *Scripture of Blissful Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang bde ba'i lung*):

Most especially, this unsurpassed Great Completeness
Is shown free from both the eternal and the nil.
Eternal? Its heart essence is changeless and ceaseless.
Nil? It is the unborn sky realm:
Bon Body, neither changelessly eternal nor nil,
Beyond the realm of free and unfree. {61.5}

The view of unbounded wholeness is not eternalism, because it is not actually established. This describes its nature. Nor is it annihilation, because open awareness is unceasing clarity, a reference to its dynamism {60.6}. Here, the text locates itself in relation to a binary, the better to deny that it participates in such. Its middle way, unlike that of *Madhyamaka*, entails both positive and negative propositions, and thus it, too, is multifaceted and indefinite.

Undecidability is also discussed in *Magical Space Treasure*. Attributed to the eighth-century Drampa Namkha and considered one of the background texts to *Authenticity*, it states:

Why is it said that the essence (*ngo bo*) of all the phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana is settled as indefinite? The base of the essence is a spontaneity, the essence of that essence is indefinite, the principle of the essence is unborn, and the nature of that essence is without beginning or end. In this way, base, essence, principle, and nature are settled as being equally indefinite.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ *Magical Space Treasure*, 293.2ff.

Without indefiniteness, there could be no Dzogchen, no Great Completeness. After all, unbounded wholeness's completeness lies with its infinite encompassment—definiteness is finite.

Confidence, Trust, and the Indefinite

From the viewpoint of its own dynamic display (*rtsal*) the base, as we have seen, is an impermanent thing (*dngos po*); from the viewpoint of its own essence, it is changeless and ceaseless. Hence, it is also described as a non-thing (*dngos med*) and as permanent. That it is impossible, as well as unnecessary, to “resolve” any such contradiction is itself part of the dynamic nature of unbounded wholeness. No wonder the vocabulary depicting a confident subjectivity free of doubt is a rich one.

Here, then, are two points that at first seem incompatible: namely, that the nature of reality is “indefinite” and that meditation on it is characterized by “confidence and surety.” To recognize that indefiniteness and “confidence in oneself during practice” are in fact splendidly complementary is to move toward a clearer understanding of the magical inclusiveness attributed to unbounded wholeness.

That the text brings these two points together so shortly after introducing its first thesis is probably not accidental, for, in addition to asserting that unbounded wholeness is indefinite, *Authenticity* also maintains that its portrayal of open awareness is a narrative of confidence and definiteness. After all, the indefiniteness it describes is an ontological opening, not a subjective certainty. Lopon Tenzin Namdak notes that in Dzogchen works associated with *Authenticity* all phenomena are spontaneously present to a birthless, ceaseless just-isness (*ji bzhin nyid*).⁴¹ This is both indubitable (*chig chod*) and indubitably indefinite.

Although there is no definiteness regarding the base, practitioners gain confidence and surety on at least two grounds. Ontologically, there is an unchanging abiding nature of which one can be sure. Epistemologically, as we have seen, open awareness itself is characterized by confidence arising in practice {53.5–6}. With these assertions, the text artfully begins to distance authenticity from any fixed location, as in scripture, or in words at all. In do-

41. Unlike *Authenticity*, the *Vehicle Commentary* describes the Dzogchen view in terms of, first, primordial purity (*ka tag*); second, spontaneous presence (*lhun grub*); and third, the union of these with just-is-ness (*ji bzhin nyid kyi skye mched*). Regarding this, Lopon Tenzin Namdak notes that though it can be understood this way, it is more common to speak of the union of clarity and playful eruption (*sel zhing rol ba'i zung jug*), as *Authenticity* suggests here. That is, Dzogchen emphasizes the indivisibility of the factors of clarity (*sel cha*) and emptiness (*stong cha*). “Spontaneous presence” is not typically described as indivisible with these, although, of course, it is.

ing so it also shifts attention away from objects to the internal subject. This move yields the possibility that open awareness, conjoined as it is with wholeness, is the actual locus of an authenticity not derived through the certainties of reasoning.

At this early stage in the text, and foreshadowing how reasoning is deployed throughout it, we find a discrediting of any center point to arguments engaged; this claim is often supplemented by an appeal to scriptural verse. The inappropriateness of Samantabhadra describing reality as “this” underscores the unboundedness of the nature that reflexively authentic open awareness recognizes as its own. However, as we have seen, ontological undecidability does not preclude epistemological certainty. Indeed, one provokes the other, since the clearer one is about the open, unfettered, and indefinable nature of reality, the more confidence one has in it. Confidence in reality is confidence in authenticity, and specifically in the authenticity of spontaneous meditation. Confidence and authenticity are actually one, in that reflexively authentic open awareness does not cause confidence any more than it causes authentication of an object. Confidence is spontaneously present to this awareness, and, similarly, confidence in “it” is revealed as confidence in oneself. Such authentic confidence is free of abandonment, inclusion, and adherence. These have not been negated; they have not been reasoned away; instead, they have melted away in the presence of awareness.

“Confidence (*gding*) in oneself at the time of practice” is thus the epistemological key to the nonopposition between apparently dichotomous categories. Though illuminated by reasoning, it does not, as in philosophical discussions of proof and inference, arise on the basis of reasonings pointing to what is definite or definitive. Dualistic, conceptual trust “in the import of” the complementarity of wholeness and spontaneous presence with karmic process yields to (but does not cause) nondualistic and nonconceptual surety born of a meditation founded on quintessential precepts.

And, in rhetoric as in praxis, it is not reasoning alone that inspires or sustains confidence but poetic incantations such as this one from *Authentic Scripture*:

Untouched by annihilation, clear and aware,
 Untouched by extreme twoness, not part of a pair.
 Untouched by extreme oneness, spontaneously there
 Essence itself, in its own place dwelling. {61.2}

Freed of either twoness or oneness, unbounded wholeness can only be described as indefinite. Open awareness, bearing nondual witness to this fact, is confident and sure in its authenticity.

Reasoning without Contradiction: The Both/And Solution

Let us briefly consider the formal aspects of the thesis that opens *Authenticity* (and this chapter) as it relates to conceptual authenticity. How does reasoning in *Authenticity* proceed if not through the dichotomous contradictions on which reasoning is classically based?

To claim that because there are many diverse perspectives it follows that “all of samsara and nirvana is the primordial ancestor, the Great Vehicle, unbounded wholeness,” does not appear to rest on an axiomatic binary. It cannot. By definition unbounded wholeness is “not part of a pair.” Even though “diverse” may loosely be contradictory (*'gal ba*) with “oneness” and thus with “wholeness,” the thesis does not rest on such an opposition in the way that the thesis “it follows that the subject, a pot, is impermanent because of being a product” rests on the explicit contradiction (*dngos 'gal*) between permanent and impermanent. For, it is well known that whatever exists is either permanent or impermanent; therefore if the pot were not impermanent, it would have to be permanent, which is impossible.⁴²

Even though unbounded wholeness cannot be solely “this” or “that,” existent or nonexistent, the bon-nature itself, “heart-essence of that definite base,” is unchanging. The appearances that arise from it, however, are indefinite: they are nirvanic for the realized, samsaric for the unrealized. Indefiniteness, then, is not a statement about external objects. *Authenticity*’s fundamental concern is with subjectivity; its description of “objects” thus points to subjective fluctuations that are part and parcel of the base’s dynamic display, and thus sourced in the perceiver of that display.

Thus, when asked to choose between explicit contradictories in this and subsequent debates, the text’s initial response is to inquire into the *point of view* from which this choice is put forward. For example, when challenged to state whether unbounded wholeness is a thing or a non-thing, the text asks whether this is a question asked from the viewpoint of the essential base (*snying po'i gzhi*), the unceasing nature of subjective clarity and open awareness or from the viewpoint of that which emerges from the base, its own dynamic display {57.7}. The base is definite, the display (inseparable from it) is indefinite. Any description of unbounded wholeness must include both the definite and the indefinite. Liberation from binary structure will be exalted in one of the last poetic citations of the entire text:

42. This style of thinking, a hallmark of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti’s legacy, bears a striking family resemblance to Aristotelian logic. As Kapstein 2000: 86–87 points out, Aristotle found oppositionality central to the statement of propositions: “It is plain that every affirmation has an opposite denial, and similarly every denial an opposite affirmation.” See chapters 5 and 6 in McKeon 1941: 42.42. The logos of mythos as found in *Authenticity* suggests a more fluid intermingling of these categories.

Although reflexive open awareness is thingless
 Just that very thinglessness is aware of itself. {119.6}
 Hence not fractured into opposites.
 Clarity itself is nonconceptuality
 That very nonconceptuality, clear reflexive open awareness.
 Their unnduality, the mother wholeness.
 Unfindable elsewhere, it is experienced through itself. {120.1}

Not being “fractured into opposites” (*rgya ma chad*) is a central principle of open awareness and unbounded wholeness. *Authenticity*’s challenge is to bring this principle into line with the reasoning that purports to release misconceptions about wholeness. As we know, this alignment is problematic because the strength of logic lies so largely with its power of excluding principles or entities that contradict the proof statements it puts forward.⁴³ But open awareness, as we have seen, is not arrived at through logical exclusion.

The various characterizations of unbounded wholeness as definite, indefinite, all inclusive, allied with confidence, not part of a pair, and so forth arguably constitute what E. F. Schumacher called a “divergent” problem, one that cannot be resolved because the more information you have, the more divergent description becomes. Such an interminable problem, being incapable of solution, never “dies” as an issue. By contrast, convergent problems are those regarding which accrued information leads to a greater convergence of perspective, and hence to “solution,” at which point the discussion becomes lifeless. To the extent that it resists formal, logical structures, unbounded wholeness is not, in the end, a “problem” to be solved; there is no real closure in the face of it, only recognition and infinite vitality.⁴⁴

Similarly, in Dzogchen, the “problem” of samsaric energies is not capable of solution but only of active, ongoing transformation or liberation. These are forces that do not resolve or die simply through becoming fixed in understanding. As there is no “solution” available through logic, there can only be a living response to continuing complexities. In a sense, instability is enshrined as dynamic display, and practitioners cultivate full acceptance in the process of opening to the infinitely various unchanging base that is unbounded wholeness. Lopon Tenzin Namdak writes:

43. In this and other contexts, *Authenticity* criticizes the use of oppositionality in reasoning. Specifically, it argues against the assumption that to refute appearances is to establish their absence. For it is impossible thoroughly to establish (*yongs su grub*) two opposite things simultaneously. See {105.6–106.1}.

44. Quotations from Schumacher 1977: 12, 125. Arguably then, even nirvana, that “Buddhist felicity” that Collins 1998 persuasively positions as offering narrative closure in the Theravādin context, cannot be said to have that function here. This is not, of course, only because of the ongoing, inclusive nature of unbounded wholeness but also because in Mahāyāna generally enlightenment is only the real beginning of the Bodhisattva’s infinite career. (Which is not to deny that, even in these contexts, nirvana is something of a narrative capstone, but not a terminating one.)

On the basis of a Lama's oral instructions (*gdams ngag*), there is an identification of the open awareness of dynamic display (*rtsal gyi rig pa*). Through becoming familiar with that, realization of the abiding condition of the basis will occur, just as, for example, in dependence on its rays, the sun can be identified.⁴⁵

In this way, Lopon points directly to the meditative and esoteric meaning of proving wholeness through multiplicity.

What, then, is the relationship between apparent binary opposites such as the conditioned and the unconditioned? The manner in which such conundrums are addressed is worthy of our attention. They are neither resolved nor unresolved but, to coin a term, aresolved. And this is key to the character of its Dzogchen logic and overall perspectives. For example: Are appearances the uncontrived body of bon (*bon sku*)? If they are unconditioned, then bon-nature unacceptably takes on the character of appearances (the conditioned). Or, if bon-nature is assimilated to appearances, then appearances either unacceptably take on attributes of the body of bon, or do not actually exist, or the assertion of their existence is redundant because they merely are the body of bon. Likewise, "if the mind is one with the object then just as the object is material, so mind would also be material. Or, just as the object can be destroyed by the seven fires and one flood, so the mind too can be destroyed" {65.3–4}. Having sprung these seeming paradoxes on the reader, prior to its own prose investigation of the matter, the text offers poetic aresolution of these impossibilities in a quote from the *Primordially Existing Sky Tantra* (*Nam mkha'i ye srid gyi rgyud*):

Since the body of bon is the world and its inhabitants
 Why would it not arise and cease?
 Since appearances are mind itself
 Why would they not be conscious and aware?
 Since one's own mind is appearances
 Why would it not be a material thing? {66.4}

In these and other ways, unbounded wholeness is shown to hold in harmony what other systems might call contradictions. This is not the only thing *Authenticity* has to say about contradictions; a more logic-based discourse will surface later in terms of the reasoning of one and many.⁴⁶ Here what is important is the principle of multiplicity and multiple perspectives. It is this

45. In the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* as native readers of this text would be well aware, water, crystal, sun, and lamplight are examples of the "great unity of objects"; see, for example, 544.6–545.2.

46. This is introduced by way of undermining the sutra-style presentations of the two truths. See *Authenticity* 87.3ff. On the reasoning of the one and many, see Tillemans 1986 and Lopez 1987.

above all which supports the principle of wholeness, a theme that pervades the entire text.

Open Awareness Is Not Consciousness

We are now in a good position to appreciate the philosophical and epistemological significance of the claim that open awareness is not a consciousness. This tenet brings us to the very heart of the question of authority's location, as well as to central features of the authenticity of open awareness. To claim that the ultimate authentication, the ultimate *tshad ma* is not a consciousness is simply an astonishing statement in the context of most reflections on Dignāga and Dharmakīrti.⁴⁷ Yet, this point is pivotal: once there is a consciousness, there must be an object and thus a dualism that threatens the premise of wholeness as this work understands it. Let us observe this debate more closely, not only for the conclusion toward which it points but also for the discursive path it travels and the categories it brings into play along the way. We consider again unbounded wholeness and how being authentic to it will require epistemological moves different from those most common to Pramāṇa literature.

Having established (by 57.1) that unbounded wholeness is authentically known, the discussion turns to what it is like. Is “the essential heart of all that is” permanent or impermanent? An impermanent phenomenon must, in the purview of *Authenticity*, be either matter or consciousness. Certainly, it is easy to rule out that unbounded wholeness is matter. But the next rubric, consciousness, requires more attention:

If [unbounded wholeness is] an impermanent thing which is a consciousness, it would be like the permanence asserted by Tīrthikas who are Proponents of the Ultimate Secret Knowing (*Rig byed gyi mtha' gsang*).⁴⁸ Why? Because it is a consciousness. Obviously, you cannot agree. {57.3–4}

The Tīrthikas in this passage apparently assert the existence of a permanent consciousness like Sāṃkhya or Vedānta, for example. The kind of cause-

47. It is by no means, however, an area of reflection unique to Dzogchen. Tillemans and Tomabechi 1995: 893 n.5 cite Tāranātha (b. 1575) on a point relevant here. His *Twenty-one Features of the Profound Meaning* (*Zab don khyad par nyer gcig pa*), which distinguishes the views of Śākyā Chokden (Śākyā mChog ldan, 1428–1507) from those of Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen (Dol po pa Shes rab rGyal mtshan, 1292–1361), shows in points 7–8 (f3b.6–7) that for Śākyā Chokden, nondual wisdom is a consciousness, *shes pa*, whereas for Dolpopa it is neither existent nor nonexistent, neither conditioned nor unconditioned (which may, in the final analysis, come down to rather the same view as *Authenticity*, though framed rather differently). See translation of the third section of this work, Tillemans and Tomabechi 1995: 898–918.

48. Very possibly this refers to some school of Vedānta; *rig byed* most likely refers to the Vedas.

less and thus permanent consciousness they accept differs from open awareness, Bon argues, because it is not a union of clarity and emptiness, whereas the base that is open awareness is such a unity. Emptiness is not separate from the clarity of awareness. That base is, itself, unbounded wholeness.⁴⁹

This is an axiomatic principle with numerous consequences and dramatic points of contrast with much Buddhist literature, where *that which is clear and knowing* is a common definition for consciousness.⁵⁰ Here, however, and in contrast to the opponent's position, the clear and the empty are indivisible (*gsal stong dbyer med*) and are not a consciousness. Clarity is in Dzogchen a category associated with dynamic display, which includes all phenomena, subjects as well as objects. Dynamic display and open awareness are not different; they dwell primordially as self-arisen in wholeness (*nyag-gcig*).

Why deny that open awareness is a consciousness?⁵¹ It is clear and knowing, but not in the usual way. Axiomatic to the philosophical schools of Indian and Indian-based Tibetan Buddhist epistemology is that any consciousness must have an object of which it is conscious (*shes bya, jñeyā*): that is, an object that it observes (*dmigs pa, ālambana*) and thus on which it is focused. Focusing in turn requires effort; open awareness is free of effort. Focusing also involves a scope narrower than the open expanse of unbounded wholeness, the arena of open awareness.

Dzogchen's claim that some form of awareness functions outside the limits of consciousness solves certain epistemological issues and raises many more. *Authenticity*, however, is mainly concerned with the way this claim resolves the logical puzzle of how knowing, which is conditioned and imper-

49. Oral commentary by Lopon Tenzin Namdak responding to questions from Klein, Kathmandu, February 1999. A further interesting difference noted by Lopon between Sāṃkhya and Dzogchen (at least as Bon understands these) is that not all matter is atomically established (*dul du grub pa*); for example, impermanent things, conditioned phenomena, cause and effect are matter but are not atomically established. Conspicuously absent in this conversation is the possibility of its being neither one nor the other, which would render it a nonassociated conditioning factor (*ldan min 'du byed, viprayuktasāṃskāra*). This term *viprayuktasāṃskāra* was first used in India as early as the fifth century B.C.E. and gains importance with its usage among Sarvāstivādins and in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*. But early theorists of India and Tibet (sNgā rol pa) did not necessarily accept the category of *viprayuktasāṃskāra* (*ldan min 'du byed*), which meant that, as in the debate above, whatever is impermanent must be either matter or consciousness. This is also the view of *Authenticity*, which does not accept *viprayuktasāṃskāra* (*ldan min 'du byed*) as a category, a lacuna that may be evidence of its relatively early existence or the early date of its chief sources.

The term *vippayutta* occurs as early as the *Kathavatthu* (*Points of Controversy*), especially in connection with philosophically problematic areas such as accumulation of karma (*kamma-upacaya*) and the status of the latent afflictions (*anusaya*), both of which are said to be karmically neutral (*abhyata*), unassociated with mind (*citta-vippayutta*), and without an epistemic object (*anrammaṇa*). (*Kathavatthu* I X.4; XI.1). (Thanks to William Waldron, personal communication, on this point.) For more on the Indian usage of this term, see Stcherbatsky 1970: 23–24. The most comprehensive treatments of the Sarvāstivāda usage of the term are Jaini 1959 and Cox 1995. For investigation of sources earlier than those explored by Jaini and Cox, see Buswell 1977. (Thanks to Robert Buswell, personal communication, for these latter citations.)

50. See, for example, Lati Rinpoche and Napper 1981: introduction and 45–46.

51. To emphasize that these crucial Dzogchen states are not consciousness contradicts a broad swath of philosophical systems from Vaibhāṣika to Madhyamaka and therefore becomes a source of debate between Dzogchen and Madhyamaka, as well as within Madhyamaka itself. See Klein 1994: 40–41.

manent, can be primordial wisdom and therefore authentic in and of itself. It is also a succinct and forceful way to underscore that this state is beyond all ordinary types of experiences and verbalizations.

The issue of oppositionality, or contradiction, is further rendered problematic by *Authenticity*'s emphasis on a coherent and objectless subjectivity. A crucial element of Dzogchen subjectivity is that

with regard to just what appears as an object,
we avoid the three: abandoning, including, and adherence
(*spang bdud zhen gsum*).

Likewise, in *Vehicle Commentary*:

The body of bon, unbounded wholeness, except for being a mere name, is not actually established. Therefore, it is purified of abandoning, including, and adherence.⁵²

Any of these three impede unbounded wholeness. Moreover, the three are unnecessary because “self-liberation occurs without abandonment or transformation”: that is, without the comparatively effortful styles of practice associated, in Bon and Buddhism, with sutra and tantric vehicles. Abandonment has to do with overcoming affliction, inclusion with tantric incorporation as deity: seeing the five aggregates as father (*yab*), the five elements as mother (*yum*), and the five poisons as wisdom. Adherence refers to an error in Dzogchen practice itself: becoming addicted, however subtly, to the sense that one is a great practitioner, thereby becoming a practitioner of false Dzogchen.⁵³ Any ordinary consciousness is inevitably involved in one or all of these.

In his *Illuminating the Path of Freedom: Annotations to the Open Sphere of Primordial Wisdom Chapter of the Mother Tantra* (*Ma rgyud ye shes thig le'i mchan 'grel thar lam rab gsal*),⁵⁴ Lopon Tenzin Namdak maintains that although open awareness is a type of direct perception, it is not found among the classic categories of direct perception discussed in sutra vehicle literature, especially that associated with the Sautrāntika and Cittamātra systems (*mdo sems thun mong ba*).⁵⁵

His conclusion, wholly consistent with *Authenticity*, is also different from

52. *Vehicle Commentary*, 538.6–539.1

53. Ponlob Thrinley Nyima Rinpoche (of Menri Monastic College, Dolanji India) to Klein, Houston, May 2000, personal communication.

54. *Annotations to the Mother Tantra* 8–9. Although this text in general is from the viewpoint of the seventh vehicle, its discussion here accords with Dzogchen.

55. According to Lopon Tenzin Namdak, criticism of Dzogchen often assumes that its reflexive open awareness is like the Cittamātra self-knower (*rang rig*), but it is not. For a concise discussion of the types of sense perception in the context of Dharmakīrti's own views, see R. Jackson 1993: 122–126. As he notes, “appereception” or perception of perception itself (*rang rig*) is among the most contested of these categories; it is, in a sense, the malleability of this rubric that gives *Authenticity* philosophical room to maneuver within it.

Authenticity in that it is explicitly framed in terms of the subcategories of direct perception.

The four direct perceivers described in Sautrāntika and Cittamātra are well known: sensory direct perception (*dbang po'i mngon sum, indriya-pratyakṣa*); mental direct perception (*yid kyi mngon sum, mānasa-pratyakṣa*); and the categories seemingly most compatible with Dzogchen discussions, yogic direct perception (*rnal 'byor mngon sum, yogi-pratyakṣa*) and reflexive awareness direct perception (*rang rig mngon sum, svasaṃvedana-pratyakṣa*). Lopon's point is that Dzogchen's reflexive open awareness is none of these. Open awareness is neither sensory nor mental direct perception, writes Lopon, because these do not observe their own natural state.⁵⁶ Their perception lacks the meditative stabilization of open awareness, and open awareness is not, like these, induced by an immediately prior condition (*de ma thag rkyen*).

Nor is open awareness an instance of yogic direct perception as described in the philosophical literature. On this point, Lopon Tenzin Namdak specifically considers whether or not the wisdom of meditative equipoise belonging to a Superior of the Outer Vehicles is the same as Dzogchen open awareness's authenticity. After all, dualistic appearances dissolve for such a consciousness, allowing meditative equipoise access to the natural condition, emptiness.⁵⁷ However, the wisdom of meditative equipoise cognizing emptiness is described, for example, in Geluk texts as induced by an inferential consciousness that then segues into the wisdom of emptiness. By contrast, the open awareness of Dzogchen is described as self-settled; there is no process by which conceptual thought is transformed into or precipitates it.

In *Commentary on the Mother Tantra*, Lopon writes:

Thus, in relation to the abiding condition of the base, the mind and predispositions are adventitious (*glo bur*), so there is no [logical] fault of that person subsequently producing a primordial wisdom on the basis of newly realizing the base. This being so, once one has completed familiarization with the primordial wisdom, the spontaneously occurring mind, thoughts, and desires no longer dwell or form within the continuum of that person. They are finished, just as some oily husks placed in fire will burn without residue. In this way, primordial wisdom has the capacity to overcome the faults in this person's continuum because that primordial wisdom is the open awareness which realizes the final abiding condition of all knowables.⁵⁸

56. *Annotations to the Mother Tantra* 9.8ff.

57. *Annotations to the Mother Tantra* 35.13ff.

58. *Annotations to the Mother Tantra* 56.9.

Likewise, Dzogchen's reflexively authentic open awareness is not induced by a meditative stabilization that exists prior to it. It is a pristinely unconstructed state, an epistemological oasis that includes all methods yet cannot be reached by any means other than itself. All other states, though they cannot reach it, are its own dynamic display. Only by experiencing them in this way—not syllogistically or conceptually—does one connect to reflexively authentic open awareness.

Is the reflexive open awareness of Dzogchen the same as the reflexive awareness spoken of in Cittamātra? No, for the latter necessarily has consciousness, rather than unbounded wholeness, as its explicit object (*dngos yul*). For the reflexive awareness associated with the eye consciousness is aware of that eye consciousness, not of reality. Moreover, the consciousness that is the direct object of the open awareness described in Cittamātra is conditioned, whereas the ultimate, unbounded wholeness is unconditioned.⁵⁹ In addition, this unbounded wholeness is not a “direct object” of open awareness, but the very nature which is that awareness. Further, Dzogchen's open awareness is not an awareness or authentication of something else; it is itself authenticity.

Consciousness is an impermanent phenomenon (*dngos po*), whereas open awareness and unbounded wholeness are not. Consciousness necessarily arises from causes; self-arisen primordial wisdom does not. Primordial wisdom is neither a consciousness nor related with any cause,⁶⁰ nor is it a causeless impermanent thing, because such items do not exist. This distinction between consciousness and self-arisen primordial wisdom is not universally held in Bon Dzogchen,⁶¹ but it serves well as a way of philosophically protecting the unique Dzogchen epistemology from assimilation into other perspectives. (Those upholding this perspective maintain that to consider wisdom a causeless consciousness is to take up a Tīrthaka tenet.) This awareness can neither be reasoned into existence nor otherwise concretely labeled. Such immediacy renders the use of demonstrative pronouns, as in “it is this,” worse than useless.

Samantabhadra, of course, is a figure par excellence of spontaneous, effortless, and uncreated reflexivity. To say that the nature of reality renders the pronoun “this” meaningless is also to say that open awareness, like Samantabhadra, like mythic vivacity, simply “arrives.” Unlike reasoning, open aware-

59. For example, the open awareness experiencing an eye consciousness observing a table has that eye consciousness as its direct object, whereas the table itself is not a direct object.

60. In the context of this discussion, and at this early period in Bon philosophical reflection, we again note that the third category of phenomena known as neither form nor consciousness (*l dan min 'du byed, vīpravuktasañskāra*) did not exist. The shape of this argument itself, therefore, can be understood to emerge from a relatively early period in Tibetan philosophical thinking.

61. I do not know to whom Lopon is referring here; he made it clear that he regards Longchen Rabjampa as a proponent of this same view. The early Dzogchen Tantras certainly by and large hold this viewpoint, as well. He seems to be suggesting, however, that certain latter-day Dzogchen practitioners do not. Also to the point for Lopon is that Longchen Rabjampa cites sutras to establish that Buddha taught Dzogchen and that Mādhyamika teachings on emptiness are not the final teachings. Discussion with Klein in February 1999.

ness does not strive to accomplish or seek to “work on” anything. That is, myth “does not ‘represent’ the world; it presents the world.”⁶² In this sense, as we have seen, it simply “arrives.”

In the end, then, authenticity is open awareness. To equate open awareness with unconditioned emptiness, rather than any type of consciousness, dramatizes its seamless reflexivity and the absence of any object in relation to which it could be designated a subject.⁶³ There is no place, or *epi*, on which a subject might stand, *histāmi*. Is this an epistemology without an episteme? Even to speak of open awareness as reflexive suggests a kind of double movement that Dzogchen does not intend. The *rang* of *rang-rig* (reflexive open awareness) is literally “own” as well as “self.” Open awareness is simply present to, aware of, its own state of unbounded wholeness. It needs no reflexive motion to accomplish this state. After all, it is itself empty and it is emptiness.⁶⁴ Unlike in the Lower Vehicles, here emptiness is itself a special kind of clarity and objectless awareness.

Thus, open awareness and unbounded wholeness, in addition to being nonconceptual, do not even fall within the spectrum of consciousness. To say that “open awareness is not a consciousness” creates a discursive space in which it can be emphasized that open awareness, the empty, is also open awareness, the clear. This clarity, too, is the empty, just as the empty is also the clarity. “All these terms,” says Lopon Tenzin Namdak, “are the equivalent of open awareness.” What kind of subjectivity is this? “Although innocent of any ‘object,’ it is aware. Without differentiating anything, it is clear. It is a union of clarity and emptiness.”⁶⁵ For Dzogchen the open awareness is emptiness. As Lopon Tenzin Namdak notes, “This is difficult to explain.”⁶⁶ Yet, on reflection, an explanation will surface.

To distinguish authentic open awareness from consciousness is, for all the above reasons, a vitally important point, ontologically, soteriologically, and epis-

62. See Hatab 1990: 33–34. Drawing from Snell 1953, Hatab observes that mythical forms come forth in much the way that dreams come forth, already formed and simply “taken in.” See also Cassirer 1955: 175. This point resonates also with the effortlessness that Buddhist “gradual” practices associate with reasoning and the purported ease of paths such as Ch'an and Dzogchen, wherein open awareness, *satori*, or enlightenment simply arrive, effortlessly and all at once.

63. In this sense, perhaps, it is an even more radical subjectivity than the “radical reflexivity” Charles Taylor 1989 attributes to Augustine.

64. Lopon Tenzin Namdak (oral commentary) emphasized that one could use either empty (*stong pa*) or emptiness (*stong pa nyid*) to describe open awareness.

65. When I discussed with Lopon the suitability of writing about this essential instruction of Dzogchen, he reflected: “It is all right. Those who hear such things in the center of a large gathering (that is, the reading public) make a good karmic connection with this information. Actual mindnature instructions (*sems khrid*) can only be given to suitable students; others will not understand it, but the general view of Dzogchen can be explained anywhere; it gives good predispositions to its listeners. Dzogchen itself is free and open, but the Dzogchenpa [the practitioner] must take care” (Kathmandu, February 1999, personal communication). This point, like many we have discussed here, is common to Buddhist Dzogchen and was much emphasized, for example, by Adzom Paylo Rinpoche in his U.S. lectures during the summer of 2000.

66. Lopon Tenzin Namdakto Klein, Kathmandu, 1999, oral commentary.

temologically. Here we begin to understand that the title of the text, “The Authenticity of Open Awareness,” is not indicating open awareness to be the *agent* of authentication, but describing the “authenticity *which is*” open awareness. The Tibetan genitive construction permits both interpretations, and indeed both are employed. Again, in an important sense, the text can be understood as a journey between these two readings.

Open awareness is not a consciousness and does not have an object in relation to which it is a subject. Thus, naturally enough, reality is not an object of wisdom but wisdom itself. Likewise, open awareness is not simply a knower of empty reality but is emptiness and reality.⁶⁷ Its authenticity comes as much or more because of the kind of subject it is rather than because of the kind of object whose measure it takes. This emphasis on the subjective state as such is characteristic of Dzogchen (and of many esoteric contemplative traditions).

The meaning of the mind of enlightenment not realized by the lower mind can be understood through three signs: clarity (*ngang*), nature (*rang bzhin*), and the nonduality (*gnyis med*) of clarity and emptiness.⁶⁸ Oral commentary notes that terms such as *ngang* and *nga* are self-referential, not a description of other persons or objects⁶⁹ or, we might add, of any relation to such others.

In the passage on the three methods of authentication, we saw that open awareness alone was named as authentic to unbounded wholeness. The issue there was the connection of open awareness to authenticating essential precepts and to the unmanifest presence of yogic direct perception in ordinary consciousness.⁷⁰ In that context, as we noted, open awareness seemed to be framed as an authenticator of wholeness.

67. Hatab 1990: 308 writes: “The subject-object distinction is a historical and circumstantial phenomenon which has no absolute foundation. The mythical sense of existential transcendence reflects a form of disclosure which could not be sufficiently understood by means of that distinction. The suggested relationship between myth and philosophy hints at a model of thinking which is at once nonobjective and nonsubjective. ‘Subject’ and ‘object’ polarize an original correlation of self and world which was evident in the beginnings of culture and which continued to be evident in the advent of philosophy. The subject-object model, then, is not one to which we need be bound.” To delve into the interesting conversation possible between this perspective and that of *Authenticity* would take us too far off course here; yet it remains a tantalizing focus for future consideration. At the very least, we can note that most Buddhist and Bon systems of philosophy and practice would say that the subject-object dyad comes about because of how human sensory perception is structured. The recognition of unbounded wholeness is not the mythic equation of self and world referred to here, nor is the subject-object constraint it liberates merely, in this view, a cultural tradition. Nevertheless, the willingness to see through such a pervasive patterning is something deeply shared with Hatab’s perspective here.

68. *Authenticity* 175.3. The three mentioned here are similar to the famous triad of essence, nature, and compassionate responsiveness (*ngo ba rang bzhin thugs rje*), perhaps best known from the refuge prayer of Jigme Lingpa’s foundational practices (*sngon ’gro*). Likewise, the term *thigle nyag gcig*, widely used in both Nyingma and Bon Dzogchen, is also the thematic connection in the *Twelve Minor Tantras* (*Byang sems thig le nyag gcig gi rgyud bu chung bcu gnyis*) of the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*.

69. Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Houston, February 2001, personal communication.

70. An issue that could be explored further is whether yogic direct perception exists nonmanifestly in the ordinary mind or, if it exists there potentially, whether this means that it exists or that it does not exist. This is

Soon thereafter, however, the text begins to suggest that open awareness is authentic, not simply because of what it knows but also because of what it is. *Dwelling as the Very Heart of Space Tantra* (*sNying po nam mkha' ltar gnas ba'i rgyud*) is cited at this point in the text:

Essential heart of all that is,
 Mindnature, uncontrived and naturally pure,
 Exists from the first, without start or stop
 This is sure.
 Its own state beyond overlay or detraction,
 Untouched by limits:
 Self-arisen open awareness, definitive pith
 Dwells as the heart of the sun
 This is sure. {57.2}

We can see the textual movement from debate to poetic citation as isomorphic to the point it makes; the debate sequence has both cleared the discursive space and established the need for authenticity to be present in it. Into this space is introduced not a correct reason (*rtags yang dag*) but poetry from scripture. Such scripture valorizes less (if at all) through disputation than through metaphor. At play also is the power bestowed on metaphor by scripture's own position as itself an authentic method. Whereas reasons reveal (but cannot resolve) indefiniteness, this verse concludes with certainty. Open awareness, an authenticity that requires no further authentication, is often, as here, symbolized in Dzogchen literature by the sun, which requires no other source of light.⁷¹

Given this perspective, if scripture were not already authentic, it could not authenticate or even point to an open awareness that is. Scriptural authority therefore is intrinsic and able to (re)manifest by an act of (re)writing. The deeper significance of its status does not unfold until the end of *Authenticity* when scripture and open awareness are conflated with the voice of reality, thereby clarifying that open awareness, being as authentic as Samantabhadra, needs no external authentication and that Samantabhadra, having “arrived,” need not explain anything, but need only be present.

Clearly, the Dzogchen traditions, which so value instructions based on experience also value the experiences to which those instructions give rise. There can be no question that practitioners of this tradition have had and

similar to an argument with the Sāṃkhyas: Does the insect which will be reborn as an elephant exist or not? If it does, how can it stay on the delicate branch? So the question is whether the nonmanifest yogic direct perception is yogic direct perception or not. Does it exist therefore in ordinary beings?

71. A typical use of this metaphor in the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* is “like the sun in the expanse of sky” (*rnam mkha'i klong nas nyi ma bzhi*), 273.3.

continue to have experiences that *feel like* the uncontrived heart of authenticity. Such a position is not easily defended. Nor do those who live within this state necessarily feel an impulse to defend it.

Yet, as we well know by now, the text is also committed to reasoning. It therefore has the agenda of holding together, as well as it can, the authenticity that so confidently arises in meditation and the authentication that comes through a reasoned defense of Dzogchen correlates of this position.

This complex agenda apparently invites a multivocal textuality. We see this in *Authenticity* as well as in *Stages of the Vehicles* and its commentary. Characteristic of the Zhang Zhung Collection, *Stages*, unlike *Authenticity*, does not achieve multivocality through citing other works. Its variegated tone comes all in its own voice. For example, after a series of debate moves, *Stages* shifts to take on the kind of evocative expression more characteristic of Dzogchen in general. The structure of debate loosens as a steady stream of descriptive ontologies evokes the bon-nature's consanguinity with unbounded wholeness and open awareness in ways that reinforce *Authenticity*'s position:

Because reflexive open awareness lacks holding to any focus (*dmigs pa*), its nature (*rang bzhin*) is clear light. Because its essential nature (*ngo bo nyid*) is untouched by extremes of permanence or annihilation, its nature is nondual. Because it is uncontaminated by an attraction to either excluding or including, its nature is blissful.

Because bon-nature (*bon nyid*) is the naturally and spontaneously present unbounded wholeness, it has a nature of not arising through another effect. Because it arises as birthless streams of light, like the sun dawning in the sky, its nature is ever unceasing. Because it dwells in the prior unarisen varieties of objects and conventions, its nature abides as the great ancestor. . . . Because [bon-nature] is neither made by Buddha's meditation, arising as the changeless, ceaseless heart, nor contrived by beguiled sentient beings, and because it is untouched by either cyclic existence or nirvana, it is uncontaminated; untouched by either the extreme of permanence or annihilation, it is the lord that dwells just as it is, aware of everything.⁷²

Being "just as it is, aware of everything" means, in the context of *Authenticity*, that no authenticating agency or indeed any other subject-object process is required. Authentication is superfluous, even a hindrance, to the always authentic open awareness.

72. *Vehicle Commentary* 526.6ff.

This poetically satisfying statement introduces significant philosophical problems, most especially whether or not such open awareness, unmanifest prior to practice and fully manifest on enlightenment, is newly produced. If so, it is not primordial. If primordial, how can the presence of unawareness be explained? These are the issues we next consider.

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3

Primordial Nodelusion: Artful Endeavor and Spontaneity

Authenticity 66.6–86.3

If we are right to understand *Authenticity* as a journey from the project of authentication to authenticity, we would expect it to reflect on how such authenticity relates to delusion or unawareness. And it does.

Authentication, it would seem, relieves delusion (*'khrul ba*). How can delusion even arise in the face of primordial wisdom? Beyond this, if delusion must end for open awareness to begin, then neither it nor authenticity can be primordial.¹

To address these matters, we first take a bird's eye view of the metaphorical and metaphysical "location" of primordial open awareness and then a closer look at how delusion arises and functions. This brings us to yet another vantage point on the matter of *Authenticity*'s deflection of oppositionality. After all, ignorance and wisdom or, in the language of our text, unawareness and open awareness, would seem prime contenders to be named the most central opposition in all of Buddhist thought. Therefore, to see this dichotomy undermined is to suggest something crucial to the text's view of oppositionality in general. On this matter, we draw from the *Mother Tantra* and Lopon Tenzin Namdak's commentary on it, especially its tripartite division of open awareness. This division proves central in claiming that new understanding does not contradict the tenet of primordial open awareness.

1. As Collins 1998: 185 points out, some version of this problem is present in all religions. Yet, it is given particular animating centrality in this section of *Authenticity*'s discussion.

Even more interesting, the incompatibility in which the text takes greatest interest is not that between wisdom and ignorance but between wisdom and effort. To understand this crucial point more clearly, we explore in the second part of this chapter how the meditative stabilization (*ting nge 'dzin*) so sought after in other traditions is here framed as inappropriately effortful, whereas artful endeavor is required.

Ever-Present Awareness and Spontaneous Delusion

Underground Gold

A system that cannot account for delusion will hardly be believable, much less useful. Moreover, if wisdom simply arises once delusion has ended, Dzogchen becomes indistinguishable from the lower systems of tenets. Hence the issue must be confronted.

Delusions brought on by unawareness are a nonunderstanding and nonrecognition. Since it is through relying on special scriptures and essential instructions that one recognizes and understands, it follows that primordial wisdom is newly produced. Why? Because previously there was no understanding, and subsequently there is. In that case, it follows that this is not a self-arisen primordial wisdom because it is newly emerging. There would then be no difference between this wisdom and the emerging wisdom of first-stage Bodhisattvas producing a path of seeing. Why? Because their primordial wisdom newly emerges. In that case, the basic principles of the primordially dwelling Great Completeness (*rdzogs chen*) would completely disintegrate.² This is hardly a negligible point. And our text's fundamental response is that primordial wisdom, though present all along, lies unseen, like gold buried underground.

Underground gold is referred to often and powerfully; indeed, *Authenticity* relies on this example as much as on logical counterattacks to quell the opponent's reading. We might even say that with this image, textually speaking, Dzogchen meaning "arrives" and is present in a way it could not be through reasoning. We, like the text, will stay with the metaphor as we explore the work's way of revealing the gold of which it speaks.

The opponent objects {58.3} that *Authenticity* cannot account for the presence of delusion once it states that, primordially, everything is unbounded

2. There would be nothing special about Dzogchen because it would share with the lower vehicles the developmental process of moving through conceptual and nonconceptual stages of experience from ignorance to understanding. For example, a classic description of movement along the paths from Mādhyamika literature is the following: "On the path of accumulation the image is realized, on the path of preparation one realizes through the capacity of clear appearance, on the path of seeing one directly realizes [emptiness] for the first time (*tshogs lam don spyi su rtogs/ sbyor lam gsal snang nub ba'i tshul gyis rtogs/ mthong lam gsar du thob ba'i mnong sum tshul gyis rtogs*)."

wholeness. *Authenticity* accepts the reason but not its consequence. In formal terms, this means denying the pervasion (*khyab pa, vyāpti*) suggested by the opponent—namely, that if primordial wisdom exists, delusion cannot arise. Then, in good debate style, the text introduces an example:

It is not contradictory for delusion to arise since unbounded wholeness itself has not been understood. For example, even though something is primordially golden, due to being covered with earth, it is not seen. {58.3–4}

The objector, apparently accepting both the pervasion and the relation between reason and subject (*phyogs bon/phyogs chos, paksadharma*), now forgoes the kind of formal move that would require him to question either the pervasion or the reason and introduces a new point: delusion is a failure of recognition. If recognition later arises through relying on scripture and precepts, then it follows (now introducing “formal” language again) that primordial wisdom is newly produced. This, he points out, defeats the most fundamental principle of Dzogchen, for then the great completeness (*rdzogs chen*) to which its name refers is not primordial.

Our proponent’s response, typical of moves throughout the text, is to offer two alternatives. Does primordial wisdom newly arise in the person’s mind or in the natural condition of things? This invitation to “search” is familiar to all students of Madhyamaka.³ In Nāgārjuna’s famous tetralemma, one considers whether something can arise, for example, from itself, another, both, or neither, thereby gradually eliminating each position. In *Authenticity*, however, emphasis is less on the elimination of positions than on the claim that no *one* of these positions is sufficient.⁴ In a sense, as we saw in the allegory of blind men touching an elephant, *all* the positions, rather than requiring refutation, are used to illustrate the diversity of wholeness.

The objector protests that because delusion gives way to understanding on the basis of hearing, thinking, and meditating, such understanding is newly produced and not primordial. Here, our proponent proffers an unwanted consequence, playing on the example already introduced: in that case you would succeed in finding gold simply by digging, whether or not any gold lies underground. The opponent is forced to agree that unless gold is already underfoot, one cannot dig it up. Likewise, we are told, unless wisdom is primordially present, no amount of effort can bring it forth, much less create it. This partly

3. In particular, the procedure here is reminiscent of, but not a true variation on, classic fivefold reasoning of Nāgārjuna or sevenfold reasoning of Candrakīrti. See Hopkins 1983; on fivefold, 61–66, 176–178, 687–693; on sevenfold, 48–51, 176–192, 687–697.

4. In this, *Authenticity*’s logic resembles the Jain principle of *syādvāda*. We have not so far been able to discern any concrete evidence for a historical connection between the two. However, we could interpret this family resemblance in favor of Snellgrove’s thesis, now widely accepted, that a strand of Buddhism made its way into Central Asia from India sometime around the tenth century. See Snellgrove 1987: 390–391.

logical, partly metaphorical response discloses why such wisdom is not newly arisen. Just as underground gold is already golden and present, so primordial wisdom is also ever available. Oral commentary further maintains that although one can speak in Dzogchen of new understanding, this new understanding is not a consciousness. Since it is not understood to be a consciousness, the logical necessity that it be caused and impermanent falls away. Unconditioned, it is the open awareness which is primordial wisdom (*rig pa'i ye shes*).⁵

How Delusion Arises

Authenticity's core position on the etiology of delusion is set forth early and frequently resurfaces in the first third of the text. From the outset, delusion is positioned in relation to open awareness, as poetically described in the *Profound Great Bliss Sutra*:

Overpowered by this [inborn unawareness] one has been deluded since beginningless time; through accumulating predispositions on the basis of all, one enters the three realms of samsara. Why? There is attraction. Due to wrongful imputation one wanders among the six places of rebirth experiencing a variety of unsatisfying circumstances.

Moreover, the *Great Sky beyond Effort Tantra* (*Nam mkha' rtsol 'das chen po'i rgyud*) says:

Due to inborn unawareness, heart essence itself
Though ever here, goes unrecognized.
Through beginningless delusion
Samsara is engaged, wherein
Attracted to external objects and
With wrongful imputation
We wander the six realms of rebirth
Incurring various dissatisfactions
Since grasping at objects is deeply ingrained.

Even though everything is . . . primordially [Buddha], it is not contradictory for delusions to arise since unbounded wholeness itself has not been understood. For example, even though something is primordially golden, due to being covered by earth, it is not seen. {50.5–58.4}

5. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Serenity Ridge, July 2000, oral commentary.

Because of not understanding and not recognizing enlightenment mindnature at the root of samsara and nirvana, there is delusion, whereby one cycles in the three realms and wanders among the six types of rebirth. Moreover, through the power of not realizing, there is delusion due to an increase in the consciousness apprehending something that is not there. {77.6–78.1}

Also, the *Collection of Jewels Sutra* ('Dus pa rin po che'i mdo) claims :

Though the base is utterly without delusion
Mental delusion modifies the base, and so
Not seeing the very base due to causes and conditions,
That very base appears as the bon-phenomena of samsara. {81.5}

In short, to understand how delusion arises is to move toward understanding primordial wisdom. Hence the partial usefulness of logic. Delusion arises when one's own primordial mind goes unrecognized {50.5–6}, springing from an inborn unawareness that is this failure of recognition. Once present, "mental delusion modifies the base," thereby creating the causal conditions for the base to appear as ordinary samsaric objects. Unawareness and the delusion born of it are among the vast sea of possibilities that can emerge through primordial wisdom. Primordial open awareness, being itself an unbounded wholeness in relation to which anything may spontaneously occur, while not the cause of delusion is the crucial matrix of its existence. This is why evocations of primordial wisdom dominate even the topic of delusion. Unbounded wholeness, being "unconstrained," obstructs nothing, not even the inborn unawareness of delusion emerges.⁶

Delusion's Functioning

The discussion sharpens when *Authenticity* states that delusions and Buddhas occur adventitiously and simultaneously {78.5–6}, a perspective that claims to avoid the extreme of permanence by declaring everything to be entirely pure and to circumvent the extreme of nihilism by declaring everything mere delusion. In this way, the all-inclusive (and indeterminate) nature of unbounded wholeness is again affirmed.

If delusion exists, where does it reside? If the abiding nature itself is despoiled by delusion, then practice is useless; it will reveal nothing better than

6. Among Bon scholarly reflections on Dzogchen, the *Vehicle Commentary*, one of the important background texts to *Authenticity*, also reflects on the ontological status of delusion, considering, for example, whether it is causeless or not. Like *Authenticity*, the *Vehicle Commentary* concludes that delusion ('khrul ba) beginninglessly arises from unawareness (*ma rig pa*). Failure to recognize one's own self-arising primordial wisdom is the source of innate unawareness. Learned unawareness follows from this.

what already exists. If something else were deluded by delusion, mindnature would not be obscured by it. Further, if error is something wholly separate from mindnature, even the artful endeavor of practice is pointless, for dissipating delusion will have no effect on one's relation to mindnature {76.5ff.}.

Rather than refute these possibilities point by point, the book cuts to the chase: the base, "heart essence and abiding state of things, is not at any time" deluded." Delusion is *with respect* to the base, not *in* it, especially not in the extreme sense intended by the opponent. The base, unbounded wholeness, thus remains inviolate of delusion and equally unadorned by primordial wisdom. The *Unbounded Samantabhadra State Tantra* (*Kun du bzang po'i dgongs pa thig le rgyud*) says:

Wrong ideas, unawareness, differ from primordial wisdom, yet
Neither exist in the essence itself, the base;
How they appear emerges and arises in the face of attraction. {79.1}

Any adherence or attraction to appearance obstructs recognition of the true nature, figured as Samantabhadra. "Knowing me is knowing all/ Great Bliss" we read in one of the first verses cited by *Authenticity*; in one of its last citations, the two great themes coalesce in lines from the *Great Sky beyond Effort*:

Without adherence, everything is clarified in great bliss.
Reflexive open awareness is authentic experience. {123.2}

Indeed, the chief problem with Lower Vehicles' views, from this Dzogchen perspective, is that they rely on conceptuality to release conceptuality. This, in a striking metaphor, is described as trying to wash blood with blood {103.5}. The stain remains. The same adhering attraction that taints the calm state (*zhi gnas*) also obstructs the principle of fluidity, indeterminacy. Thus, immediately after the citation from the *Samantabhadra State Tantra*, an apparently contradictory one is brought forward:

The *Root Sutra of Primordially Existing Phenomena* (*Ye srid bon gyi mdo rdza*) says:

Though in no way different in terms of the base
Adventitious unawareness and primordial wisdom
Appear as any exalted qualities or degraded delusion; still
They move not one single iota from the base. {79.2}

The base, unbounded wholeness, is a fount from which anything can arise. It is an openness unoccupied by either samsara or nirvana. As long as there is a

7. Poetic license for the "three times" (*dus gsum*)—past, present, and future.

physical body, any spontaneously present occurrence such as illness, awareness, delight, or understanding can come forth.⁸ In all situations, the Dzogchen practitioner seeks a mind, unfixed as appearances themselves, which recognizes their relation to the base. This means that the response to illness, delight, and so forth is not one of abandonment, inclusion, or attraction. Or, to put this yet another way, the base remains untouched by what is designated as its quality:

The essential nature that is the basis lacks the conventions of both unawareness and primordial wisdom. Developing realization of this base and excellent insight into it is conventionally designated as “wisdom.” Not understanding, not realizing, this very base at any time is conventionally designated “unawareness.” There have never been two independently existent things in one’s own being.

Therefore, [they are] adventitious. {79.3–4}

Essential Precepts, root text of *Authenticity*, gives further insight into early Bon Dzogchen etiologies of delusion.

This work has a more Indian flavor than *Authenticity*, even presenting Dharmakīrti’s famous definition of direct perception as “that which is free from conceptuality and undeluded” (*rtog pa dang bral zhing ma khrul ba*) {15.4}. *Essential Precepts* never classifies this phrase as a definition or connects it with Dharmakīrti but employs the phrase when highlighting the nondeluded nature of direct perception as compared with the delusion that attends thought.⁹ Even to have an object of adherence is to be inauthentic with respect to unbounded wholeness. Conceptuality is always tainted.

Although Buddhist and Bon “Lower Vehicle” texts would agree with *Essential Precepts* that delusion itself is illusory, a distinctly Dzogchen thread runs through the latter’s discussion. The point for both texts, and for Dzogchen in general, is that delusion, like everything, is part of the dynamic display from the base. Its section on delusion, mentioned above, opens with a description of all appearances as the primordial Buddha, noting that since these are liberated in their own place, delusion does not actually exist (that is, it is not reified). It is spontaneously present there. “Spontaneous presence” here describes both the etiology and the status of delusion. Hence, nondelusion, rather than resulting from effort, is spontaneous.

Analyses linking the lack of delusion with spontaneous presence are virtually unknown in Tibetan philosophical literature such as materials on Mind

8. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Houston, Texas, April 2001, personal communication.

9. By contrast, in Sautrāntika materials, which Gelukpas take as a basis for Mādhyamika epistemology, inferential valid cognition, though deluded with respect to the appearance of phenomena and due to conflating an image with an actual object, is nonetheless considered valid because it is valid with respect to its object of adherence (*zhen yul*). See Klein 1986: chap. 3.

and Awareness (*blo rig*),¹⁰ but here nondelusion occurs spontaneously. As in *Authenticity*, this raises the locative question, does spontaneous delusion exist in the object or in the mind? “According to me” responds the *Essential Precepts*:

Appearances are primordially Buddha, that very place liberated in its own place. Thus, there is no delusion regarding what is primordially Buddha just as, on an island of gold [there are no stones]. Where is there delusion or nondelusion? Where there is utterly no thought; that is nonconceptual and therefore undeluded and free of thought. Hence, through holding the meaning of nondelusion, meeting with nondelusion is said to occur spontaneously. Such [ordinary appearances] and what is primordially Buddha are not two, we consider them one. Being nondual, there is no conceptuality; that [nonconceptuality] is itself a nondeluded state. “That for which an object is clear” is known as direct perception. You are imputing duality where there is none, imputing ultimate and conventional. That is delusion.¹¹ {15.3–16.1}

Delusion, and the appearances associated with it, do not have an ontological domain separate from that of primordial wisdom. Delusion’s spontaneous presence to the base means that appearances are not really deluded; they need not be abandoned. Nor do “delusions” necessarily delude; that is, if one does not take them to be true, emptiness remains apparent even in the face of their appearance.

Such nondelusion, being spontaneously present to the base, need not be sought, be included, or become an object of attachment. Everyone perceives appearances, but Dzogchen neither refutes nor holds to them and thus avoids delusion. *Authenticity* refines this point with its emphasis on being free from holding and from the very subtle analogue of holding, adherence (*zhen pa*).

In a compelling variation on the famous “double moon” example of sensory error, the root text here goes on to expand on the meaning of delusion. Pressing your eyes, you may see two moons. If, while gazing upon these moons you are drawn to wonder which is the actual one, the moon on the right or the moon on the left, only confusion results. To perceive delusion and nondelusion as separate is fundamentally deluded.¹²

¹⁰. See Napper 1980, especially the introduction.

¹¹. *Nga ni snang ba 'di ye nas sangs rgyas te/ rang sa rang sar grol ba yin/ de ltar ye sangs rgyas pa la 'khrul du med de/ dper na rin po che gser gyi gling dang 'dra'o/ de na gar 'khrul te ma 'khrul lo/ gang la yang rtog med de mi rtog ste/ des na rtog pa dang bral zhing ma 'khrul pa'o/ des na ma 'khrul pa'i don bzung bas/ ma 'khrul dang 'phrad pa de la lhun gyis grub pa zer/ ye sangs rgyas pa dang 'di ltar snang ba gnyis su med pa de la goig bu zer/ gnyis su med pas gang la yang mi rtog ste/ de kho na ma 'khrul bar 'dug pa/ de'i don gsal bar 'dug pa de la mngon sum zer/ khyod gnyis su med pa la gnyis su brtags pa ste don dam dang kun rdzob tu btags pa de nyi/ de 'khrul pa yin te {15.3–16.1}.*

¹². *Essential Precepts* 16.1–3.

Essential Precepts makes an explicit connection between the status of the authentic and the error of wondering which moon, which truth, or which being, is true.

Thus, like the *Authenticity*, its root text denies a paradigm in which some objects are true and others are not. The fundamental error is starting off with such a twofold typology. As with double moons, it only breeds confusion to ask which truth is correct, the ultimate or conventional, or who is right, Buddhas or sentient beings. Since everything has the same nature, there is only one truth, not two. There are neither two moons nor two truths, only one.

Presumably referring here to Mādhyamika discourse on the two truths, *Authenticity* explicitly rejects this way of considering the nature of things:

In that case, do you maintain that the two, conventional and ultimate, have a single characteristic nature? Or are they different? Or is this itself inexpressible? . . .

If you say they have the same characteristic nature, it follows that in realizing the conventional as a thing you also realize the ultimate. Why? Because they are one. Obviously, you cannot accept this.

Are they one as an ultimate or one as a conventionality? If they are one as an ultimate, then just as the ultimate has neither production nor cessation, so the conventional also would be without production or cessation. Why? Because they are one as an ultimate. Obviously, you cannot agree.

If you say they are one as a convention, then just as the conventional has elaborations, so the ultimate would have elaborations.

Why? Because it is one with the conventional. Obviously if you accept this, it is clear even from the words themselves that it would not then be ultimate.

If you say they are different, the ultimate [mind] would not overpower the signs [of elaboration] of the conventional [mind]. Why? Because they are different. If you accept this, there would be signs [of elaboration] on the stage of Buddhahood. {83.2–88.1}

To describe the unbounded in terms of the two truths raises what *Authenticity* considers a moot problem; once the world is divided into conventional and ultimate, there is no satisfactory way to explain the relationship between them. Oppositionality of any kind turns out to be a distortion in the face of the one and all-inclusive unbounded wholeness.

This point is integral to a point made in the citation above, which undergirds the entire premise of *Authenticity*: *Once there is no duality, there is no conceptuality*. Dualism is conceptually imputed, just as the categories of ultimate and conventional are imputed, just as the existence of two moons is erroneously imputed. In that case, what is the role of authentication? Its purpose is not going to be, as it is in Dharmakīrti traditions, to distinguish what

is deluded from what is not. In authentication, a valid mind eliminates an invalid one by validating or authenticating the objects of one and not the other. This process is not described here.

To depart from a presentation of two truths is common enough in Dzogchen, but it is unknown to the discussions of authentication in Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and their Tibetan heirs. This difference is so substantial as to raise questions about whether we should even be juxtaposing their legacy with *Authenticity*. However, the utter centrality of the concept of authentication and authenticity (*tshad ma*) in both arenas demands that we do, even as it provides a significant point of departure for distinguishing characteristics unique to Bon Dzogchen.

Delusion and Wholeness: No Excluded Middle

For *Authenticity*, delusion arises from and within unbounded wholeness and can only be dissipated through open awareness's recognizing its own unbounded wholeness. Delusion cannot be dissolved through any type of authenticating mind. Authenticity occurs when it is recognized that "everything, just everything, emanates from me/ Knowing me is knowing all/Great Bliss" {52.5}. This has a very different feel from the statement, well known to students of Collected Topics texts, that "whatever exists is established by valid cognition"¹³ In sutra, by and large, epistemology establishes ontology. In Dzogchen, epistemology is ontology.

Reasoning is used to overturn opponents' views and to articulate the right view for oneself but never as a tool of authentication. Valid reasons are powerful in the world of discourse, helpful for the settling of particulars, but not when it comes to unbounded wholeness.

Delusion and unawareness, after all, are not in the final analysis constructed as opponents to liberation. Even though delusion in no way disrupts unbounded wholeness or clouds open awareness, it does interfere with authentic self-recognition, the unique faculty of open awareness. For this reason, delusion must be dealt with. "Nonmanifestation," however, is a quality of primordial wisdom, not opposite to it, certainly not in the way that ignorance opposes wisdom in the tenet systems.

This is consistent with the different ways in which authority is situated in Dzogchen and other philosophical systems such as Sautrāntika or Mādhyamaka. Given the former's emphasis on identifying and abandoning error, a mind that can validate what is nonerroneous is crucial. In Mādhyamika analysis, for example, wisdom is reached through identifying a negandum (*dgag*

13. *yod pa yin na tshad mas grub pa yin pas khyab*

bya), which is eliminated through reasoning. Effort and conceptuality are crucial to such reasoned success. By contrast, *Authenticity* partners authenticity with effortless artful endeavor and spontaneity. It explicitly disavows the effortful urgency called for in many Buddhist systems of practice.

If ordinary persons' afflictions do not obstruct them from enlightenment, how are we to understand the relationship between sentient beings and Buddhas? Like the pairing of ultimate and conventional, this dyad is scrutinized and found wanting.

The two-truths structure suggests a relation of cause and effect between path and goal that Dzogchen finds untenable. Whereas for Nāgārjuna the conventional is required to get at the ultimate,¹⁴ for *Authenticity* and elsewhere in Dzogchen, and for much of tantra as well, this is a highly problematic paradigm. It suggests that there are afflictions about which something must be done in order to accomplish Buddhahood:

Even though one is thus primordially a Buddha, one does not realize that one is, and therefore is deluded. Because of ripening into a sentient being, Buddhas are known, conventionally, as the causes of sentient beings. The very essence of the base does not change at all.
 {85.5–86.1}

The emphasis on meditative continuity and spontaneous presence, though consonant with the theme of unbounded wholeness, is in danger of collapsing the difference between Buddhas and non-Buddhas. If Buddhas and sentient beings are one, the opponent is quick to point out {84.4ff.}, liberation is effortless and, we might add, worthless. Or, if even Buddhas wander in samsara, sentient beings will forever be bereft of enlightenment. Again, an appeal to wholeness and spontaneous presence, rather than reason, sustains the premise:

Again *Sun Suffusing the Thousand Directions* says:

Both sentient beings and Buddhas
 Are Buddhas for whom cause and effect are of one taste.
 That cause and effect can be reversed is the crucial point. {85.1}

Cause and effect can be reversed in part because cause and effect are not, in a certain qualified sense, the final word on how wholeness unfolds. There is a causal narrative to be sure, including the narrative of karmic cause and effect, but for Dzogchen there is another, equally important acausal narrative.

^{14.} *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 24.10. See also Garfield 1995: 298–299.

In its epistemological narrative, the categories of spontaneous presence, dynamic display, and playful manifestation constitute the central elements of Dzogchen's response to this issue:

If one unmistakenly realizes one's own mindnature, one also understands all bon-phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana, internal and external, as unbounded wholeness. Therefore, both the welfare of oneself and the welfare of others are spontaneously present; one abides naturally within the great equality that is the nonduality of Buddhas and sentient beings. Because there are no narrowly purposeful activities, there is no contradiction. {103.2-3}

The abiding condition, the mindnature at the heart of Dzogchen philosophy and practice, has two types of spontaneous presence: samsara and nirvana. Any consciousness is necessarily connected with either samsara or nirvana. Thus, any particular base necessarily has the spontaneous occurrence of one or the other; no single base manifests both simultaneously. The minds of ordinary beings are connected with suffering, while the minds of liberated Bodhisattvas or Aryans have a base of nirvana, beyond suffering.

Does this not suggest that samsara and nirvana form the very type of binary that *Authenticity* claims to pass beyond? Not exactly, for *Authenticity* intends no stable binary here, insofar as the base itself is neither samsaric nor nirvanic but temporarily becomes one or the other, like a cloth that can be either dirty or clean.

In considering ordinary beings' relationship to the "uncontrived mind" of Dzogchen, *Authenticity* cites *Unbounded Wholeness, the Changeless, Ceaseless Essential Heart* (*g.Yung drung snying po nyag gcig*):

Enlightened mind, root of all minds and bon-phenomena,
Heart essence (*rngo bo snying po*), mother unbounded wholeness—
Within this wholeness is neither meeting nor separation, ever
Primordially undeluded, originally perfect. {77.2-3}

Moreover,

Buddhas and sentient beings, because neither is outside the fundamental basis, are temporarily separate, finally inseparable. {84.4}

For all these reasons, *Authenticity*, like Dzogchen in general, will not lay out a path to Buddhahood. Its path is Buddhahood. Yet two of its authenticating methods, scripture and essential precepts, are specifically relevant to the path of sentient beings. Buddhas do not need them. Thus, in an analogue of earlier tensions, we see here a tension between denying the need to move along a path and affirming the need for authenticating scriptures and precepts which clarify the process of the path: "Without essential instructions there is no benefit but continual delusion" {84.4-5}. Open awareness cannot recognize itself

as unbounded wholeness without the intervening method of Essential Precepts. Does this mean such precepts are methods for achieving such realization? This is so perilous and subtle a point that, despite being hinted at in the sections noted above, it is only given full voice in the text's final strand of poetic citations, including *Blasting out from the Hold of Cyclic Existence* ('*Khor ba dong sprug*), which says:

Through special instructions dwelling spontaneously in the three intervals,
Even without meditating one is never separate, and thus
Through realizing the meaning of such essential instructions
Without negating delusions, they are reversed by their own force.
{122.3; emphasis added}

This is followed by *Authenticity*'s own final summation of the matter.

As regards this way of asserting clarity and nonconceptuality, because all bon-phenomena are primordially clarified in one's own enlightened mindnature merely by not seeing laxity and dullness as faults, one can realize penetrating primordial wisdom. {122.4–5; emphasis added}

The foregoing discussion reinforces a line already noted from the opening pages of the text: "The Great Completeness (*rdzogs chen*) [is] the fruit which reverses delusion" {52.3}. It has taken much of the intervening text to disclose the epistemological and ontological implications of this. By now we begin to see more clearly how *Authenticity*'s understanding of delusion and its privileging of primordial wisdom relates also to the nonoppositionality of the reasoning that opens toward wisdom. For one thing, the opposing of delusion or error is not the primary method. Not seeing erroneously, rather than engaging methods in order to see correctly, is key. It is more important to liberate a fault than to attack something as a fault. For example, despising drowsiness does not make it go away. It is far better is to sharpen your mind.¹⁵

This principle of nonoppositionality also governs *Authenticity*'s brief discussion of external objects:

Scripture of Blissful Samantabhadra says:
Buddhas are not found by meditation
Nor lost by not meditating—
Undistracted, maintain continuity.
Thus, turning from this excellence leads to naught.
There is no meditation more excellent than this. {101.3}

¹⁵. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Houston, April 2000, personal communication.

Continuity of meditation means that both “overlays (or superimpositions) onto” and “detractions from” are in abeyance. Here the opponent again raises, in familiar locative terms, the question of where overlays occur in relation to the object. As before, *Authenticity* finds this to be an unproductive question that misses the aloneness of unbounded wholeness. Appearance and emptiness, like bon-nature and the conditioned phenomena that possess it, are indivisible but not conflated; rather, “appearances are the self-dawning play of primordial wisdom” {67.1}. Thus, “appearance and emptiness are beginninglessly one in the mindnature because they do not pass beyond the mindnature” {68.3}.

Attribution of inherent existence to such display or regarding some manifestations as inherently pleasant or unpleasant are overlays. Such superimpositions cannot be located in the object, nor are they simply in the mind: “In terms of the essential heart, the very essence which is the base for both cyclic existence and nirvana, these two are adventitious appearances, therefore, there is nothing targeted for purposeful elimination” {72.3–4}. In this way, *Authenticity* offers a presentation of external objects consistent with its position on primordial wisdom and delusion.

Neither overlays nor other delusions can be located exclusively in subject or object. As an opponent observes {72.5}, if the essential nature, the essence of the base, were something to meditate upon, this would entail a superimposition in the same way that Lower Vehicles’ cultivation of calm abiding entails overlays. Again, the “purposeful elimination” of error is not advocated. This would disrupt the meditative continuity characteristic of authentic open awareness. The oppositional relation between existence and nonexistence of meditation is undermined, for there is fault in both positions if either excludes the other.

In these ways, a practitioner’s focus is not the abandonment of wrong views but, rather, opening to an unbounded wholeness that is simply free of them. Thus, the ontological status of objects has everything to do with their relation to the base, the “essential heart” that is unbounded wholeness. Their status does not, as already noted, bifurcate into a discussion of ultimate and conventional truths. More to the point, as long as unbounded wholeness goes unrecognized, error is part of the play. But attraction and adherence are at issue, not the presence of appearances.

Delusion and Reasoning: Not the Excluded Middle

In these ways, there gradually emerges in *Authenticity* a law of what could be called the nonexcluded middle.¹⁶ “Middle” implies boundaries and extremities, which here are all abrogated in the face of wholeness. Our text implicitly en-

16. However, the name betrays its origin in a system inimical to Dzogchen logic.

gages a law of a whole without periphery, a kind of included middle, and in this way it contrasts with classical Madhyamaka. For example, Nāgārjuna's famous discussion of going in *Treatise on the Middle Way* (*Mūlamadhyamakārikā*) states that if a goer does not go, and a non-goer does not go, what third goer could there be other than this? Commenting on this in *Clear Words* (*Prasannapadā*) II.8, Candrakīrti explicitly invokes the exclusion implicit in Nāgārjuna: "If you hold that one excluded (*vyatirikta*) from both [goer and non-goer] goes, it is not so, for what third one is there dissociated from goer and non-goer of whom it is conceived that he goes?" (II.4–5).¹⁷ There is no third, or middle, possibility.

The law of the excluded middle is predicated on dichotomy, on a clearly defined binary boundary.¹⁸ This is not how *Authenticity* reasons, and there are very good reasons why it does not. Thus, when *Authenticity* speaks of the existence and nonexistence of meditation, these, like the definiteness and indefiniteness of the base, are meaningful categories, but their soteriological import does not centrally derive—as virtually all verbal expression does—from excluding that which each is not. Dzogchen, as we have seen, is by no means averse to trumping such philosophy with its own ontology. Its rhetoric must be mimetic of the reality to which it speaks, not to objective rules of logic.

This needs to be stated very carefully. It would be far too extreme to claim that exclusion and oppositionality are unrecognized, irrelevant, or even unimportant in *Authenticity*. The verbal oppositionality of pairs is employed as a rhetorical device, and many questions posed by the opponent and by the text itself are framed in terms of oppositionally binary categories.¹⁹ However, in the

17. See Robinson 1967: 51; de Jong 1949; May 1959; Sprung 1979.

18. This type of binary, fundamental also to a wide variety of mathematics, artificial intelligence, and other scientific calculation, has been challenged by a system known as "fuzzy logic" that seeks to define relationships between objects described in terms that move along a spectrum. The philosophical roots of this have been traced to Plato, who indicated that there was a region beyond True and False where opposites "tumbled about." See Brulé 1985. For a general introduction, see Kosko 1993. Thanks to Brian Nichols (personal communication) for bringing this to my attention.

19. There is both important similarity and difference between this strategy and that which today goes under the perhaps too widely used rubric of deconstruction. For deconstruction also seeks to undo simple either/or structures, as well as both/and and neither/nor—it sets its sights at highlighting the fluidity of linguistic boundaries. Dzogchen here is not altogether dissimilar to this aspect. For Dzogchen, however, there actually is an unboundedness that somehow includes the very disjunctions whose oppositions its presence undermines and that becomes something unknown to contemporary theory, a place to rest, an objectless subject which, far from blank, simply knows itself and, in the process, all things that are immutably related to it. This would seem at odds with Derrida's 1981: 8 statement in *Positions* that "*difference* is not preceded by the originary and indivisible unity of a present possibility."

Derrida here also describes *difference* as the "factive and passive] movement that consists in deferring by means of delay, delegation, reprieve, referral, detour, postponement, reversing." In an important sense, in fact, Derrida's *difference* ontologically contradicts, is opposed to, any principle outside itself, for such a principle, which Derrida calls *presence*, is precisely what is deferred through the play of differing and deferring verbs. In some ways Dzogchen, though apparently more conservative in its call to unbounded wholeness, is even more radical than Derrida, precisely because its evocation of play and dynamic display, though every bit as fluid as the effulgence of *difference*, is nonetheless not held in binary or any other kind of opposition to Dzogchen's structural equivalent of *presence*, namely, unbounded wholeness.

larger system the main point is not the oppositionality of these terms but their mutual inclusion in and relationship to unbounded wholeness. Epistemologically, ontologically, and soteriologically the most important fact about both delusion and nondelusion is not their oppositionality but their sameness in spontaneously emerging through the base. *Contra* their verbal positioning, they are not mutually exclusive in the context of wholeness, and this inclusion is dramatized by the rhetoric (but not the logic) of the text. *Authenticity* seeks to demonstrate this nonexclusivity again and again. Likewise, terms such as “ultimate” or “conventional” are not best understood in relation to each other—that is, in relation to what is apophatically excluded by them—but by their cataphatic engagement with unbounded wholeness. If we can distinguish between mythic-philosophical and rhetorical meanings in *Authenticity*’s use of language, its discussion is not structured by the process of exclusion (*gzhan sel, apoha*) that grounds so much Buddhist discourse on epistemology. Without being mutually exclusive, categories such as permanent and impermanent, or definite and indefinite, or what is and what is not meditation are yet meaningful, and that meaning comes about not in relation to a rhetorically excluded term but, as with all things in Dzogchen, in relation to the base itself.

The *Source of [Buddha’s] Words Tantra* (*bKa’i ’byung gnas rgyud*) says:

Yes to meditation cultivating the uncultivated,
 No to meditation on the primordially effortless
 Hence, no contradiction between these two. {74.1}

Reasoning, even in debate, must finally accord with this unbifurcated realm. It must avoid succumbing to a fundamental premise of logical argument: namely, that something is to be excluded by the position put forward.

There is, indeed, a mythic quality to the way logic is unfurled in this text. Ernst Cassirer, drawing on Bruno Snell, was a pioneer in commenting philosophically on the compass of myth. He observed that mythical thinking can be distinguished from purely theoretical perspectives as much by its concept of causality as by its description of objects.²⁰ Moreover:

For the mythical imagination there is no separation of a total complex into its elements, but . . . only a single undivided totality is represented—a totality in which there has been no “dissociation” of separate factors. . . . Whereas empirical thinking is essentially directed toward establishing an unequivocal relation between *specific “causes”* and *specific “effects,”* mythical thinking even when it raises

²⁰. See Cassirer 1955: 43.

the question of origins as such, has a free selection of causes at its disposal. Anything can *come from* anything, because anything can stand in temporal or spatial contact with anything.²¹

Authenticity does not violate the principle of contradiction insofar as it does not find the rhetoric of oppositionality meaningless. It does not say that from the same point of view delusion and nondelusion are identical, only that this point of view is not the only one.

Putting this more technically, *Authenticity* finds reasoning unworkable insofar as excluding what is negated will inevitably give rise to asserting the existence of that absence, and this, too, engages conceptualization and boundedness:

For example, when you bring in the sensation of heat, you eliminate the sensation of cold. In that way, in the process of excluding (*rnam par bcad*) appearance through reasoning, an inclusive assessment is made (*yongs su gcod*) that there is an absence of one and many. [For this absence itself is an appearance.] Hence, there would be an extreme of [grasping at] the one and many.

If you eliminate the one and the many, you will be in an extreme of appearance. [The point is that when making an inclusive judgment, something that is absent, that is neither one nor many (*gcig dang du ma 'bral ba*), is proven to exist.] Therefore, you cannot [refute extremes] through the power of contradiction. [For, contradiction inevitably divides wholeness and thus cannot access it.] {105.5–106.1}

Despite illustrating the limits of binary logical process, there are various assertions *Authenticity* does intend to exclude, of course, such as that Dzogchen is really no different from Tīrthika or Lower Vehicle positions. But as the discussion circles in more closely to *Authenticity*'s own position, any hard lines of dyadic demarcation fall away, and it opens to a different kind of subjective and discursive space.

It is into such space, as we see again and again, that poetry is most likely to be invited, its words linked for the practitioner with specific meditative experiences that have been carefully identified through individual practice and personal instruction. Such a verse is itself an “authenticating scripture” replete with poetry’s syllogism-free manner of skirting, bridging, and boldly stating positions that openly beg the question of the binary. Poetic authority in *Authenticity* comes not only from scripture but ultimately, as becomes clear by the end of the text, from the reality that gives rise to it. Reality is also the source of logic and debate, but language is not regarded as the voice of reality.

21. Cassirer 1955: 46.

Analysis Regarding the Existence and Nonexistence of Meditative Stability (*bSam gtan yod med thag gcod*) says:

In wholeness, the essential heart, which is mindnature,
 Both presence and absence of meditation are contradictions
 Its presence, a superimposition due to calmness
 Its absence, a nihilist's detraction.
 If neither, indefinite and undemonstrable. {72.6–73.1}

Also, the *Scripture of the View Burning Like Fire* (*lTa ba me ltar 'bar ba'i lung*) says:

In the scriptural heart of Samantabhadra
 [Imputing] the existence and nonexistence to experience are both
 faults.
 Noncontradiction of these is the superior meaning.
 There is neither effort, definiteness, nor conceptuality in clarity
 Within equality is excellence. {120.4–5}

The theme of indefiniteness resurfaces here and is explored through swift alternation between poetic citation and reasoned prose:

The Compassionate Prophecy Scripture (*Thugs rje lung bstan lung*) says:

As for the base, the actual base of everything, which is indefinite,
 Itself is explained as the ultimate definitive meaning. . . .

Because all bon-phenomena are definite in only being free from elaborations, there is no fault of indefiniteness. Because bon-nature itself is definite in not being a particular thing or attribute, there is no fault of indefiniteness. Regarding this, the heart, which is the definite basis, is not indefinite because the dynamic display and play are capable of arising from it anywhere and with multifarious characteristics. {75.2–4}

Since the apparently dichotomous terms “definite” and “indefinite” do not exclude each other, they are not “opposites” (*'gal ba*). They gain soteriological meaning on account of their relationship to the base (*gzhi, alaya*), rather than their ability to exclude one another. They are self-appearances that, unless the reader becomes overly attached to one of them, do not obscure unbounded wholeness. This is a vital point: only if wisdom and delusion do not exclude each other can wisdom be primordial. Once again, an implicit soteriological mythos-narrative supersedes and incorporates the more strictly rhetorical one.

More compelling and less demonstrable is that if language can function without configuring its meaning in opposition to another term, then language

and, by extension, scripture, can be understood as arising out of an uninterrupted wholeness that they themselves do not disrupt but simply express.²² In this sense, the mythos of the text is isomorphic to the experience of the practitioner: namely, her own wisdom and delusion do not displace each other, and wisdom is beginningless.

For more detailed reflection on one Bon response to this matter, we turn briefly to a discussion anchored in the *Mother Tantra* and elaborated in the work of Lopon Tenzin Namdak. Besides introducing an articulation of open awareness unique to Bon, this exposition helps us to contextualize the discussions of effortlessness in relation to the status of delusion, the topic that closes this chapter.

Categories of Open Awareness

Despite the comfortable mythical or meditative feel of this claim, philosophically it remains a challenge to explain how to juxtapose the need for practice with the claim that wisdom is not new, or that Buddhas and sentient beings are in a profound sense the same. Partly with this question in mind, Bon puts forward a threefold enumeration of open awareness, which together with its understanding of unbounded wholeness provides resources for resolving, or at least releasing, the conundrum of the simultaneous existence of primordial wisdom and delusion. In effect, it divides the functions of open awareness in order to account for both the “new” and “primordial” aspects of it. In the *Mother Tantra*, then, unlike in *Authenticity*, open awareness becomes a category, a trope that encompasses actual open awareness as well as states that approximate it.

These three are known as pervasive, contemplative, and primordial open awareness (*khyab rig*, *bsam rig*, *ye rig*). Pervasive open awareness refers to the clarity that exists everywhere, pervading the material and immaterial alike; despite its name, it is not itself an open awareness. Contemplative open awareness is the awareness that arises through practice. Primordial open awareness is a pristine state of awareness, always present in everyone. Though these three are not, strictly speaking, a Dzogchen set of categories insofar as they derive from the *Mother Tantra*, they are used in Panḍita-style Bon Dzogchen instruction to clarify the question of what newly arises in the course of Dzogchen practice.

Expanding on this topic is an important contemporary work by Lopon Tenzin Namdak, *Illuminating the Path of Freedom: Annotations to the Open Sphere of Primordial Wisdom Chapter of the Mother Tantra* (*Ma rgyud ye shes thig*

22. The merely linguistic exclusion that characterizes this textual or conceptual environment (like the *difference* so salient in postmodern understandings of language), arguably looks beyond the margins that create it to a greater fullness in which they are slowly recognized to take place.

le'i mchan 'grel). There he elaborates the three types of open awareness (pp. 10.13ff.):

Pervasive open awareness (khyab rig) is the clarity that pervades everything, the base which is a union of clarity and emptiness.

Contemplative open awareness (bsam rig) is an open awareness that in meditation is aware of the abiding condition and in other contexts does not see (it).

Primordial open awareness (ye rig) is, whether one is meditating or not, at all times whatsoever, an open awareness that neither conjoins with nor distances from the abiding condition that is the base. It is called "open awareness and clarity."

There are also two [types of primordial open awareness]: (1) reflexively broad open awareness of the abiding base (*gzhi gnas gyi rang rig*) and (2) reflexively open awareness of the dawning dynamic display (*rtsal shar gyi rang rig*). Although there is no [activity of] identification, developmental cultivation, and so on in connection with [open awareness of the] abiding base, there is a new identification. There is also the development of gradual cultivation in relation to the dawning dynamic display [category of open awareness]. Finally, there must be an identification that is not different from the reflexive open awareness of the basic condition.

Like the sun that shines everywhere—on stone, wood, and crystal—open awareness is present in all things, though not everything has the same quality to reflect it, just as stones, though the sun shines on them, cannot reflect its light back very well. Only when sun shines on something capable of mirroring it back, such as crystal or water, can it be identified there. Thus, there are instances when pervasive open awareness does not recognize itself.

The second type mentioned here, contemplative open awareness, is actually a consciousness, not an open awareness. Strictly speaking, Dzogchen does not accept the contemplative open awareness discussed in the *Mother Tantra* but focuses instead on primordial and pervasive open awareness.²³ *Authenticity*, however, in effect uses an analogue of this second category when it describes the open awareness cognizant of all the disparate displays inherent in unbounded wholeness. Another way to put this is to say that there is meditation and development with respect to the open awareness that dawns as dynamic display (*rtsal shar gyi rig pa'i ye shes*) but not with respect to primordial wisdom itself, into which the open awareness of dynamic display eventually dissolves.²⁴

In meditation, contemplative open awareness functions as a bridge from

23. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Serenity Ridge, Charlottesville, Va., July 2000, oral commentary.

24. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Triten Norbutse, Nepal, February 1999, oral commentary.

delusion to the awareness of the abiding condition. In the language of the *Mother Tantra*, this abiding condition is primordial open awareness; it is what *Authenticity* calls reflexively authentic open awareness. Further, the locus of its authenticity is open awareness itself. This is what is primordial.

Lopon Tenzin Namdak, in oral commentary, further enriches the point:

New understanding arises on the basis of scripture and so on, but self-arisen primordial wisdom does not newly arise. This [new] understanding itself is a consciousness, whereas primordial wisdom is not. It [new understanding] is like a shepherd, keeping track of sheep and bringing them together. So long as there is the possibility of one sheep wandering off, the shepherd has to be ready to take action, but when they are safely fenced in, he can relax. His watching over them is like using mindfulness (*dran pa*) and investigation (*shes bzhin*); these faculties, however, only watch the sheep; they are not in play when the shepherd is relaxed, and they do not themselves cognize [the sheep in the corral], the abiding condition (*gnas lugs*).²⁵

Understanding that derives from scripture or the Lama's oral instructions (*gdams ngag*) is, generally speaking, a conceptual consciousness. Reflexively authentic open awareness is never conceptual; it is not a consciousness and therefore is not to be confused with contemplative open awareness (*bsam rig*). Lopon notes that "Authentic open awareness is primordial wisdom itself. It is not like an effect arising from causes and conditions; it is the base awakening to itself, for the base is always there."²⁶ Bon Dzogchen discussions of being "pure from the beginning" (*ye nas dag pa*) refer to primordial open awareness, not to contemplative open awareness.²⁷

Such realization arises within relaxation, not effort; it occurs when delusions cease to interfere. One of *Authenticity*'s crucial points is that the freedom from abandonment, inclusion, and adhering attraction²⁸ (*spang, bdud, zhen*)

25. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Kathmandu, January 1999, oral commentary.

26. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Serenity Ridge, July 2000, oral commentary. Lopon also contrasts this with Tsongkhapa's often voiced observation (especially in *Instructions on the Middle Way* (*dBu ma'i lta khrid*) and *Illuminating the Middle Way's Liberating Path* (*dBu ma thar lam gsal byed*) that without a consciousness there can be no understanding, but this is clearly not the Dzogchen view. Lopon likens the view here to that given in the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* and also to the discussion of Dodrupchen III about the genuine primordial wisdom (*gnyug ma'i ye shes*). A comparative study of the different ways in which Dzogchen, and critiques of Dzogchen, model the initiating phase of realization is certainly in order.

27. These three are sometimes related with the three Buddha dimensions: pervasive open awareness with the bon dimension or Body of Bon (*bon sku*); primordial open awareness with the White Shen Deity; the resplendent dimension and contemplative open awareness with Shenrab, the emanation dimension.

28. *zhen* in this text's usage is a more subtle type of holding than '*dzin*'; it suggests one is adhering to an object due to a yen, yearning for, or attraction to it. When context suggests that one factor is stronger than the other, or when the line requires brevity (as in poetry), we may translate this term simply as "adherence" or "attraction"; however, in our reading, neither factor is utterly free of the other.

descriptive of open awareness is consonant with full recognition of and by the wisdom already there, whereby concepts and desires no longer obscure it.²⁹ In brief, even though understanding newly arises, primordial open awareness does not.

Interpreting *Authenticity*'s statements about delusion through the lens of the *Mother Tantra* and the *Magical Space Treasure*, as emic adherents themselves do, we understand that primordial open awareness is always present but there is also a wisdom that is not yet there: namely, contemplative open awareness. We also see that the reflexive recognition of wholeness on which *Authenticity* focuses is not a case of solipsistically reducing the universe to one's own mind. Indeed, *Authenticity* distinguishes between realizing that all the phenomena, the *bon*, of samsara and nirvana are in one's mind, a realization that does not liberate, and the Dzogchen perspective wherein "all bon-phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana are primordially included in the enlightenment mind; that very essence is unbounded wholeness" {90.5–91.1}. This speaks to *Authenticity*'s perspective on what *Mother Tantra* calls primordial open awareness and also to the latter's description of pervasive open awareness.

The intrinsically authentic open awareness discussed in *Authenticity* seems to have the functions of both primordial and contemplative open awareness, though the text never mentions these categories. Indeed, in light of the discussion in *Mother Tantra*, it is interesting that *Authenticity* does not really address the epistemological journey from delusion to wisdom. Focus is on where delusion comes from and its ontological relation to primordial wisdom. In its epistemological mapping of this issue, there is no navigable distance between them at all. Thus, the only requirement is to recognize the authenticity of the open awareness of unbounded wholeness that includes every possible response to the dynamic displays emerging from it. Neither open awareness nor unawareness is established as a thing, nor are they innate to the base. Delusion has the same relation to the base as have the exalted qualities of nirvana. Because delusion can coexist with primordial open awareness, the beginningless nature of that awareness is not contradicted by the presence of delusion. In a sense, the two operate quite independently, except that delusion does interfere with the manifestation of contemplative open awareness, which, according to the *Mother Tantra*, bridges the gulf between delusion and primordial open awareness.

The *Mother Tantra*'s threefold division of open awareness, a schema that apparently does not appear in Buddhist Tantric or Dzogchen materials, is also mentioned (30.5) in the *Magical Space Treasure*, attributed to Dranpa Namkha and considered one of the main works providing intellectual background to

29. *Authenticity* 64.4–5; 66.1; 107.4.

Authenticity. Here pervasive open awareness is glossed as the pervasion of all beings by the Bliss Gone Ones' heart essence (*bDe bar gshogs pa'i snying po*).

Whether one understands or not, the open awareness that abides in one's own continuum is primordial open awareness, a primordial dawning of primordially empty appearances. Even without meditation, there is an open awareness of the primordial bon-nature and the phenomena that have it (*bon can*); an open awareness that sentient beings are actually, primordially Buddhas, an open awareness of the five poisons actually being primordial wisdom. Even without meditation, appearances actually are primordial open awareness whereby open awareness dawns as an open awareness without objects or temporal limits.³⁰

Lopon Sangye Tenzin, teacher of both Lopon Tenzin Namdak and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, taught that the essence (*ngo bo*) and base (*gzhi*) of self-arisen wisdom (*rang byung ye shes*) is the allbase (*kun gzhi*), that primordial open awareness is the nature (*rang bzhin*) of the base, and that *recognition of this base is not separate from the basic primordial wisdom itself*. This latter speaks directly to the point toward which *Authenticity* is steadily moving: that open awareness is itself authentic and that its authenticity is a function of it being aware of, or recognizing itself as, the base. "Just that spontaneously occurring unbounded wholeness is the key to the allbase, the primordial principle," says *Authenticity* {50.1}. The reflexively self-aware primordial wisdom (*rang rig ye shes*) is itself open awareness (*rig pa*), inalienably one with unbounded wholeness.

Thus the opponent in *Authenticity* seems erroneously to have conflated new understanding and contemplative open awareness with primordial open awareness. Even more significant is his conflation of understanding and primordial wisdom. Unlike understanding, primordial wisdom is beginningless, and delusion arises concurrently with it.

In sum, three matters are central to *Authenticity*'s discussion of delusion. First is the need to explain how delusion occurs. This is a soteriological analogue of scientific inquiries into the origins of the big bang. One of its important subtopics is whether primordial wisdom is in any sense newly produced through practice.

The second matter concerns how delusion can coexist with primordial wisdom. As we saw, delusion is not fundamentally opposed to wisdom and is, in fact, part of its dynamic display. The same essential nature, present in Buddhas and non-Buddhas alike, is true, authentic, and not exactly authenticated. Liberated or not, delusion and nondelusion are empty and spontaneously arise from the same nature.

30. *Magical Space Treasure* 31.1–4.

The third matter concerns delusion's relationship to external objects and the status of those objects. If delusion is framed as a misperception of objects, undermining the existence of these objects will assist in revoking delusion. But this is not really Dzogchen's emphasis. These objects or "appearances" (*snang ba*) are "beginninglessly one in the mindnature," since from the beginning "they do not pass beyond mindnature" {68.3}. "Appearance" is a term that acknowledges the power in ordinary experience of objects; it also suggests that this experience is fraught with delusion. Because that delusion is in an important sense coterminous with the underground gold of primordial awareness, the two are not logical opposites in the usual sense. Descriptions of the path and the methods employed in it will need to reflect this nonpolarized relation.

Vehicle Commentary (*Theg 'grel*), perhaps the most celebrated Bon survey of tenets, also moves over this terrain. It entertains the objection that primordial wisdom cannot be primordially pure because, if ignorance and primordial wisdom are one entity (*ngo bo gcig*), then either "primordial" wisdom newly arises when unawareness is vanquished, in which case wisdom could be not called self-arisen, or ignorance does not have myriad delusions, making it wisdom. In that case, the objector points out, if you disregard the wisdom that is not any of the eight collections of consciousnesses or the fifty-one mental factors, how will wisdom be established?³¹ For you have thrown away your proof! Discussion then turns to a reflection on the ontological status of delusion—for example, whether or not it is causeless.

All this, as we have seen, speaks directly to the already-completeness of the path that is primordial wisdom itself. This averment of completeness, however, does not connote a static sense of being finished but rather a dynamism that catalyzes both liberation and the display of delusion, toward which artful endeavor—not effort—must be directed.

What kind of path is an effortless path? If primordial wisdom does not newly arise, effort to make it do so is pointless at best. Yet delusion, the dirt that hampers access to the gold lying at our feet, cannot be expected to disappear of its own accord. Some method is required. Or does affirmation of primordial wisdom undermine a path-strategy of any kind? To explore this we now scrutinize not only the inappropriateness of effort but also the necessity in *Authenticity* of effortless, artful endeavor.

³¹. *Authenticity* never mentions the fifty-one mental factors and uses the term *tshogs brgyad* (eight collections) only once {115.1}. Further research into the development of mental factor discourse in Tibet might possibly suggest, therefore, that *Authenticity* was in fact, as Bon tradition holds, written earlier than the *Theg rim*.

Effort (*rtsol ba*) and Artful Endeavor ('*bad pa*)

The inappropriateness of effort, as discussed in *Authenticity*, touches on several crucial principles of Dzogchen. Effort is incompatible with open awareness because effort is a property of consciousness, and open awareness is not a consciousness. Most significantly, the path itself is such that effort is incompatible with it. All these are simply different ways of putting forward the inalienable authenticity that is open awareness.

Once present, delusion inevitably involves wrongful ideation that either exaggerates by superimposing overlays (*sgro* 'dogs, *samāropa*) or underestimates by detracting from (*skur* 'debs, *apavāda*) the actual nature of things. Delusion is also inextricable from the three moves that prevent reflexive recognition: abandonment, inclusion, and attraction (or adherence) to objects. Also, the *Expansive Space Great Completeness Tantra* (*Nam mkha' yangs pa'i rdzogs chen gyi rgyud*) says:

Although the external appears as object,
Clear, nonconceptual, and so forth,
Although the mind does nothing at all
It's attracted, allured by the taste of calm abiding, so
Eliminate just that internal superimposition.
This is clear. {72.1-2}

While the mind is in the calm state (*zhi gnas*), the object appears clearly, and the mind seeing it is clear and nonconceptual. Nonetheless, there is delusion because of the mind's attraction to its own calmness. Delusion can be subtle indeed.

It is axiomatic in Indian and Tibetan epistemology that any consciousness has an object of which it is aware (*shes bya*)—that is, an object that it observes (*dmigs pa*) and thus on which it is focused. Without an object known, there can be no consciousness. The calm state and meditative stabilization taught in the Lower Vehicles are no exception. Moreover, any focus on an object, however stable, and whether conceptual or nonconceptual, is tainted by abandonment, inclusion, or attraction. Even nonconceptual calm abiding, so valued in sutra practice, is thus deluded, because “once that clear and nonconceptual calm abiding on an object is a superimposition, it is to be negated” {71.5}.

Authenticity argues that meditative stabilization as taught in other vehicles is such a consciousness, whereas open awareness and unbounded wholeness are not.³² Reflexively authentic open awareness is not focused on any particular

³². Lopon Tenzin Namdak emphasized this point repeatedly throughout our discussions in February 1999. For him, it is one of the most important tenets of Dzogchen, even as he recognizes that there are Dzogchen masters who would not agree with this position.

object, and this goes a long way toward explaining why no effort is required. Whereas a consciousness necessarily arises from causes, one of which is its object (*dmigs rkyen*), self-arisen wisdom does not. As there is neither consciousness nor a subject, there is no need to posit an object and no effort needed to get it “right.” Moreover, not being a consciousness it is not related with any cause.³³ This is one of the central reasons for casting away effort toward meditative stabilization.

Equally important, it is the absence of any effort of “discarding and upholding” that allows meditative stability to continue undegeneratively. Effort always involves conceptuality; to discard the former is to be free of the latter. Mere nonconceptuality alone in a meditative session does not accomplish the same kind of continuity.

The *Vehicle Commentary*, like *Authenticity*, also emphasizes that the experience of open awareness never results from conceptual endeavor, which is always effortful. There, as in *Authenticity*, effort and conceptuality are antithetical to base, path, and fruit. The spontaneous, primordial purity of the base, we are again reminded, is discovered only in the absence of effort. Indeed, for *Authenticity*, effortlessness and nonholding mark the difference between correct and incorrect practice. Any attraction or adherence (*zhen*) to internal thoughts or external objects is effortful and therefore must be abandoned before mindnature can be experienced. The Lower Vehicles, however, recognize neither primordial purity, nor spontaneous occurrence, nor just-is-ness (*ji bzhin nyid*). This, most succinctly, for *Vehicle Commentary*, is the difference in view between Dzogchen and the other vehicles. One does not cultivate the five paths or methods, such as meditative stabilization, separately. They are simply correlates of open awareness.³⁴ Their unborn nature and ceaseless play signify a liberation into the mind’s own essence that does not occur in Lower Vehicles.³⁵

Thus, the instruction on effortlessness is also an epistemological comment on the process of realization. *Authenticity* observes:

Although Dzogchen requires the two wisdoms of hearing about and reflecting on the principles of meditation [as] unseparate, it does not require the wisdom of [dualistic] meditation. Moreover, because it is settled that profound quintessential instructions [of Dzogchen] are the unbroken Word, understanding is immediate through the mere teaching of just quintessential instructions. {74.5–6}

33. The shape of this argument is better understood when we note that *Authenticity* does not recognize the category of *idam min 'du byed, viprayukta saṃskāra* as an impermanent thing that is neither form nor consciousness. For various uses of this term, as well as its chronology, see, for example, Cox 1995, Bareau 1955, Jaini 1959. (Thanks to Bill Waldron and Robert Buswell, personal communications, for these references.)

34. *shugs kyi's 'gro bar 'dod*; *Vehicle Commentary* 539.3–5.

35. *Vehicle Commentary* 539.3–4.

In this way, *Authenticity* emphasizes yet again that open awareness is never an effect and certainly not an effect of conceptual endeavor.

How are we to understand the soteriological and epistemological significance of effortlessness in *Authenticity* and related materials? And how is this effortlessness to be construed in face of the clearly expressed need to correct nonrealization of one's own Buddhahood? Failure of recognition is delusion; how will it be overcome without effort? And what is so wrong with effort? Is it simply that, if nothing fundamentally changes at Buddhahood, effort is superfluous? Or are there other reasons why effort is incompatible with open awareness, and thus with reality?

There are, of course, other reasons. First, as already suggested, the nature of reality discussed in our texts is such that effort is intrinsically at odds with its most salient characteristics, especially spontaneity. The apparent tension between the need to do something and the injunction to do nothing is at the heart of the Dzogchen view. The undoing of delusion that allows recognition of spontaneous open awareness is given a very particular flavor here.

It must be understood, however, that even without the effort of “taking up [or] putting aside,” enormous perseverance is necessary to realize the Dzogchen view. In this regard, the *Authenticity*'s distinction between artful endeavor (*'bad pa*) and effort (*rtsol ba*) is critical. Effort (*rtsol*) is a great error, but practitioners must definitely employ artful endeavor (*'bad pa*). Effort always involves some kind of conceptuality, a straining beyond what accords with the liberated spontaneity of wholeness. The literal translation of *'bad pa*, here rendered as artful endeavor, is “that which descends, flows, or falls downward”—in other words, that which follows a natural trajectory and proceeds without resistance. The distinction between effort and artful endeavor, though unanalyzed and unremarked upon, is consistent throughout the text:

Once one realizes the state of what simply is, view, meditation and fruit are one. Primordially whole and complete, one does not seek origins . . . Absent negation and proof, mind is effort-free.³⁶

Likewise, *Vehicle Commentary* states:

Within the view, open awareness, there is neither [the effort of] taking up nor putting aside.³⁷

Cautionaries against effort are present in many contemplative traditions, most notably, perhaps, the various “sudden” schools of Ch'an and Zen Buddhism. Here Dzogchen inquires deeply into the ontological implications of such effort. On the basis of this inquiry, effort is decried.

³⁶. *Ji bzxin ngang du rtogs na lta sgom 'bras bu gcig/ ye nas yongs rdzogs da gzod btsol da med . . . dgag sgrub med pas rtsol sems bral ba yin;* Stages 382.1–24.

³⁷. *lta ba rang rig sgo nas spyod pa blang dor med;* Stages 383.3.

The need for artful endeavor is defended against an opponent who suggests that, given Dzogchen's emphasis on primordial wisdom, liberation can be attained without it. This opponent suggests that if, as *Authenticity* claims, the conditioned and unconditioned go undifferentiated, then liberation either requires no effort whatsoever or is impossible to achieve.

The first is unacceptable, says *Authenticity*, for without artful endeavor one will simply bypass the truth without recognizing it, like passing a person to whom one has not been introduced and whom, for that reason, one cannot actually acknowledge.³⁸ Thus, artful endeavor is crucial. But what about dealing with delusion? The opponent opines:

Delusions could not be purified because causes for delusion exist; just as, for example, coal [cannot be purified of being] black. Therefore, artful endeavor (*'bad*) would be pointless. {81.1–2}

This too is rejected. Something does happen when one practices. Causes of delusion are purified. Still, the injunction to eliminate delusion must be not confused with a call to effort:

When it comes to the thingless mindnature . . . because open awareness and unawareness are inseparable, there is neither purification of obstructions, rejection of unawareness, nor any search for wisdom. {94.4–5}

We have seen that effort cannot be a part of Dzogchen, first, because it is always associated with consciousness, and open awareness is not a consciousness; second, because it is inconsistent with the nature of reality. We now come to a third incompatibility. This has to do with the structure of the path itself.

Effort is extraneous to the path insofar as Dzogchen practice is always already complete. In this sense, there are no stages to be traversed by effort. Effort is also untenable because the nature of reality, replete with spontaneous presence, pervades everything, suffusing effort itself and thus rendering absurd and ineffectual any effort toward itself. After all, effort too needs to be understood as an instance of reality's spontaneous dynamic display. That which recognizes it is a nonconceptual presence which, as we have seen, is incompatible with effort for two reasons. First, not being a consciousness, it will not arise due to any causal factors that effort might bring forth. Second, effort is always conjoined with conceptual thought, which is absent in open awareness.

In the context of the Bodhisattva path, the *Stages of the Vehicles* designates effort as “the great method”;³⁹ Mahāyāna praises effort as the fourth perfection,

38. See, for example, *Essential Precepts* 13.6–14.2.

39. *Stages* 376.2; here specifically referring to the *Great Vehicle of Compassionate Ones* (*Thugs rje sems dpa'i theg pa chen po*).

and other schools honor it as part of the eightfold path, but in Dzogchen effort is part of the problem:

Primordially a spontaneous occurrence, unconditioned . . .
 Without causes or conditions, meditate on the way of completeness
 No need for accomplishment, purified of effort.⁴⁰
 . . .
 With aware presence in the view, there is neither taking up nor
 putting aside.⁴¹

Effortlessness, by contrast, is a crucial ontological and soteriological feature of Dzogchen. The *Vehicle Commentary* finds effortlessness crucial to its explanation of how Dzogchen differs from the Lower Vehicles in view, behavior, fruit, meditative stabilization, and great reasoning. Since all other differences follow from this view, which we have considered at some length, let us now briefly survey the remaining categories.

Behavior differs because Dzogchen practice is free from taking up certain activities and discarding others, as is characteristic of the Lower Vehicles. It therefore eschews exhortations to do this or not to do that (*gnang 'gag*).⁴² Thus, virtue has its place but is not to be adopted, just as nonvirtue is not to be abandoned through effort. Doing and not doing are equally inappropriate.⁴³ From this perspective, the behavior of the Lower Vehicles is contrived and artificial. Similarly, fruition is different in Dzogchen because Lower Vehicles lack recognition of its spontaneously occurring indivisible, changeless, ceaseless unbound wholeness.

As for meditative stabilization, discussion of its dynamic display is not found in lower schools, whereas Dzogchen identifies it as a spontaneously occurring state. Likewise, the *Stages of the Vehicle Commentary* observes that the natural dynamism of a meditative stabilization that primordially and spontaneously arises is not discussed in the Lower Vehicles. There, meditative stabilization requires cultivation of the calm state, which *Authenticity* associates with effort.⁴⁴ After all, effort is required to focus on an object. In Dzogchen, meditative stabilization (*ting nge 'dzin, samādhi*) is not mind-made insofar as it is unmoving; hence, again, it is effortless. Its being unmoving (*g.yo ba med pa*) is indicated by the first Tibetan syllable, *ting*, whereas the second syllable, *nge* indicates that it is unchanging (*ma 'gyur pa*), and the third, *'dzin*, means not giving up or losing track of (*mi gtang ba*). Though meditative stabilization here is similar to that of other vehicles in being unmoving, there it is a con-

40. *Stages* 380.2; 4.

41. *Stages* 383.3.

42. See *Vehicle Commentary* 539.1.

43. *Vehicle Commentary* 539.2.

44. *Vehicle Commentary* 539.3–4.

sciousness whereas here it is not. Its not being a consciousness, however, does not mean that perception vanishes. *Authenticity* states:

We are not negating the mere sensory perception of objects, because we assert the self-clarity of mindful awareness. The continuum of discrimination is not annihilated due to the five doors having ceased. {68.5}

Sense perception is not negated; rather, it is the three factors of abandonment, incorporation, and attraction that are rejected.

In short, the effortful has no place in Dzogchen proper, however much it may be needed in preparing to receive Dzogchen. Since the path is complete once unbounded wholeness is recognized, effort in traversing the path is unnecessary. Because the authentic recognition of itself as unbounded wholeness is not a consciousness, and thus is free of effortful concepts, making conscious effort toward it keeps it forever at bay.

Completeness of the Path in Three Revealed Cycles

Effortlessness can also be seen as a corollary of the central Dzogchen claim that its path is primordially complete. That is, the path itself is realization. This topic is important to us for the way it grounds and contextualizes *Authenticity* philosophically and because it introduces us, however briefly, to an important work that is considered historically as well as thematically related to *Authenticity*. Though not explicitly discussed in *Authenticity*, this work and its ideas are an intrinsic part of the intellectual background familiar to its traditional readership.

Three Revealed Cycles is thought to be among the earliest Bon discussions of Dzogchen and is, moreover, a work encompassing all the central principles of Dzogchen.⁴⁵ It is also, like *Authenticity*, a commentary on the *Essential Precepts*. *Three Revealed Cycles* resonates with classical Indian Buddhist soteriology in its attention to the five paths and ten grounds, which, it states, are complete in Dzogchen meditation.⁴⁶ The text's discussion of these provides a general introduction (*spyi spyod*) to Dzogchen.

The principle of completeness is invoked at the outset of *Three Cycles'* explanation of how the five paths and ten grounds, along with their perfections, are included in Dzogchen: "This great perfection is without consciousness (*shes pa med pa*) but is an excellent superior wisdom (*shes rab*)."⁴⁷ It further declares

45. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Kathmandu, February 1999, oral commentary.

46. *Three Revealed Cycles*, Vol. Ka 71.3a–79.6a.

47. *Three Revealed Cycles* 72b3.

Dzogchen to be beyond the “the paths of great essence,”⁴⁸ by which we understand Dzogchen to be extolled as beyond the teachings of sutra and tantra. All has been perfected, so that the ten grounds and nine vehicles are all included in it. These classic categories of Indian Buddhism are in *Three Cycles* assimilated to Dzogchen:⁴⁹

Grasping and desire being absent, giving is complete.

Neither of the first two truths, suffering and its causes, being present, ethics are complete [presumably a reference to the way in which nonethical activities cause suffering].

This nature being without feelings (*tshor ba, vedanā*) of happiness or suffering, patience [which is only needed in the face of such feelings] is complete.

The abiding state has neither laziness nor neutrality, hence the quality of effort is complete.

Concentration (*bsam gtan, dhyāna*) being unchanging, its qualities are complete. There is no risk at all of falling into the abysmal [error], hence the quality of [concentration’s] power is complete.

There being no afflictions or suffering, compassion is complete.

This nature being without hope or doubt, the perfection of prayer is complete. The nature not being bound up with any worldly conditions, the perfection of method is complete.

Because it has no delusion (*'khrul ba, bhrānti*), the perfection of wisdom is present.

The five paths are also perfected:

The abiding state is unceasing, ongoing, not dependent on causes, hence the accumulation path (*tshogs lam, sambhāramārga*) is complete.

The abiding state has neither internal nor external portions, being simply unbounded wholeness, the path of union is complete.⁵⁰

Being beyond saying “this is this,” a pure seeing without any elaborations, the seeing path (*mthong lam, darśanamārga*) is complete.

48. *snying po chen po lam las 'das*; gloss follows Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Kathmandu, February 1999, personal communication.

49. This passage is reminiscent of a strikingly similar one, pointed out to Klein by John Pettit (personal communication), in the *Candid Counsels or the Heartfelt Advice of Padmasambhava as Recorded by Yeshe Tsogyal and Discovered by Terton Sangye Lingpa* (*gZhal gdams snying thur*) of Sangye Lingpa, pp. 16ff., which assimilates the six perfections, five paths, and three *kāyas* to Dzogchen practice. Translated by John Pettit n.d.

50. Thus *sbyor lam* [*prayoga mārga*] does not mean preparation, in the way that the union of calm (*zhi gnas, samādhā*) and special insight (*lhag mthong, vipaśyanā*) are said in sutra to prepare one for direct perception of emptiness. Here it has to do with the quality of meditative stabilization (*ting nge 'dzin, samādhi*).

Being without effortful thought or speech, the meditation path (*sgom lam, bhāvanāmārga*) is complete.

Being without center or boundary, the liberation path (*mthar phyin pa'i lam, niṣṭhāmārga*) is complete, so that there is no more learning (*mi slob lam, aśaikṣamārga*).⁵¹

Significantly, Dzogchen is not so far beyond the paths of sutra that it does not contain them; it is complete and perfect (*rdzogs*) precisely because all ten grounds, five paths, and Nine Vehicles are included in it.⁵² This does not mean that one traverses these grounds and paths in Dzogchen practice or that Dzogchen itself requires the methods of development and completion, as does tantra. The base itself is a place of completeness (*rdzogs sa gyi gzhi*). Bon and other Dzogchen texts do not speak of moving step by step through the five paths, for all these find their perfection in the naturally abiding state of open awareness.

The superfluity of gradual effort is further addressed by *Authenticity* in its treatment of open awareness. Crucial here is the contrast made between open awareness and the category of consciousness. Open awareness is identified with the nature of reality; consciousness is not. That reality, unbounded wholeness, is naturally complete. It is at once base, path, and fruit. And, we will eventually discover, it is also scripture. These vital matters pertain to the presence of spontaneity, a central Dzogchen topic to which we now turn.

51. *Three Revealed Cycles*, Vol. Ka in possession of Lopon Tenzin Namdak, 72b.3ff. n.d., n.p.

52. The interest in mapping Dzogchen onto Nine Vehicle structure is a significant feature of *Authenticity*, although not one we can elaborate here. Suffice it to state that *Three Revealed Cycles* also is concerned with the hierarchical structure of its teaching and thus with the Vehicles. *Authenticity* is not an isolated instance of this combination.

4

The Path of Continuity: Spontaneity and Dependent Arising

Authenticity 86.3–104.2

Since they appear as the mind's nature
And because Buddhas and sentient beings have one cause
Buddhahood is natural and spontaneous.

—Venerable Bon Awareness of Everything
{85.4–5}

Spontaneity is a hallmark of Buddhahood. A central principle of *Authenticity*, it is also integral to many features vital to Dzogchen's unique identity. Wisdom's status as primordial has to do with its being spontaneously arisen from the base and thus not dependent on causes. Likewise, wisdom is not paired oppositely with delusion—nor love with hatred, and so on—because all such qualities spontaneously arise in relation to the base. Wisdom's spontaneous presence also allows Dzogchen to maintain that wisdom itself is the path, meaning that path and goal are one, that meditative stabilization and its aftermath are a continuum, and that effort, being always conceptual, is not part of the path. This observation draws us to ask how a focus on virtue can itself be delusional, including such virtues as the cultivation of meditative stabilization. We will find that virtue, like reasoning, has its limits, but is at the same time a crucial element in the overall pallet of scholar and practitioner alike. Here we see the inextricable connections between claims of spontaneous presence, primordiality, and unbounded wholeness.

These claims are so interfused it is difficult to speak of one without the other. We focus now on spontaneous occurrence as a crucial epistemological and ontological principle for *Authenticity* and

Dzogchen. In doing so, we revisit some of the above claims and expand on them with the intention of drawing distinctions between spontaneous occurrence and its closest analogue, dependent arising, especially as taught in certain interpretations of Madhyamaka. In all these ways we can begin to appreciate an often overlooked principle that significantly distinguishes Dzogchen's perspective from that of the other eight vehicles.

That which is spontaneously present need not, and cannot, be found through effort. In this way emphasis on spontaneous presence is crucially related to the principle of effortlessness. Obviously, counseling students to relinquish effort is a matter that requires considerable nuance lest it foster laxity or, worse, disdain for study or practice. Yet, clearly, the pedagogical dangers of emphasizing the effortless pale, in Dzogchen, beside the imperative to sustain effortlessness. Perhaps for this very reason Dzogchen, unlike the Lower Vehicles, inquires deeply into the ontological implications of effort and the grounds on which effort must be denied.

Let us then consider two dyads that are fundamental to Madhyamaka and inimical to the principle of spontaneity: first, practicing virtue and abandoning affliction; second, presenting the two truths. We especially inquire into how the Lower Vehicles' understanding of virtue, and specifically the virtuous practice of meditative stabilization, are reevaluated in *Authenticity*. Following this, we revisit the matter of the two truths, this time emphasizing interconnections between spontaneity and effortlessness. Our reflections on spontaneity overall are furthered by material from *Stages of the Vehicles*.

Afflictions but No Antidote?

Authenticity, as we have seen, is consistently attentive to matters that distinguish it from the Lower Vehicles. The way in which it integrates reflections on effort, delusion, spontaneity, and unbounded wholeness is one of these distinguishing features. Its position on any of these makes the others necessary. For example:

The *Stable Elephant Sutra* (*gLang brtan gyi mdo*) says:

The very essence of delusion (*'khrul ba*) and nondelusion is one,
and so

These spontaneously occur without falling to any extreme.

Thus [samsaric] travelers do not have two mental continuums.

{83.6}

Indeed, the category of spontaneous presence is inextricably related to the call to effortlessness, as well as to the status of meditative stabilization and virtuous

activity in general. Easily mistaken for a gentle, even Pollyannaish premise, “spontaneous presence” proves in *Authenticity* to be a significant philosophical term with strong implications. This is a major focus of our next chapter; still, it is useful to note here Bon and Dzogchen’s understanding of delusion in relation to spontaneity; this will set the scene for other crucial elements. With this in mind we read again a telling line from *Vehicle Commentary*:

Realizing just what is, view, meditation, and fruition are one
Wholly complete from the beginning, there is from the first no
effort.¹

In a similar vein, under the heading “Rejecting the Delusion of the Lower Vehicles” {86.3}, *Authenticity* itself critiques those who regard the teaching as providing antidotes to the three poisons and those who divide those antidotes into conventional and ultimate truths. Quite the contrary, says *Authenticity*. For, within nondual realization of unbounded wholeness “the three poisons [desire, hatred, and unawareness] are the nature of body, speech, and mind; they are not actual. Thus, there is nothing to change in order to abandon the three poisons” {91.1–2}. And, as we have seen, it is a significant ontological and epistemological error to think that change is necessary.

The abiding nature is unwavering, and open awareness—being primordial—is the only subject that is similarly constant. Yet, as we know, open awareness is incompatible with effort. Thus:

It follows that there is no point in meditating on the path of virtue or doing any virtuous Bon practice. Why? Because these are separate. Such practices do not bring about the fully qualified unchanging Buddhahood, and are destined to fail “like a fledgling Garuda seeking out the ends of space.” {90.6o}

The principle of changelessness is at odds with any kind of developmental or gradual path and thus with the principle of cultivating virtue.

In terms of its provisional meaning, it is taught that the three poisons produce the three bad migrations. In actual fact, the three poisons cannot obscure. Further, when there dawns the realization that mindnature is one’s own open awareness, whichever of the three poisons you engage, appearances are not conceptualized.² Therefore, it neither obscures nor harms:

Further, *Mirror of Miraculous Primordial Wisdom Sutra* (*Ye shes 'khrul gyi me long gi mdo*) says:

1. Stages 382.1–2.

2. That is, appearances are not conceived of as truly existent. Ponlob Thrinley Nyima Rinpoche to Klein, Houston, 2002, oral commentary.

Even the eighty-four thousand afflictions are
 Without ultimate production or cessation, hence
 The three poisons are neither abandoned, transformed, nor purified.

Further, the *Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra* says:

Once hatred is renounced, love cannot be revealed
 The single nature of the mind renounces nothing.
 Once ignorance is renounced, wisdom cannot be revealed
 The single nature of the mind renounces nothing.
 Once desire is renounced, generosity cannot be revealed
 The single nature of the mind renounces nothing. {91.4–6}³

This, one of the most haunting verses cited in *Authenticity*, demonstrates yet again the text's insistence on wholeness. No movement departs from its open dimension. *Authenticity* finds lower vehicle discussions of virtue wanting because they do not speak of the relationship of virtuous qualities or actions to the base, unbounded wholeness; that is, they do not identify either virtues or nonvirtues as dynamic display from the base. In this sense, their real nature is not understood, and therefore hatred, for example, is simply framed as something to be abandoned. However, hatred is of no ethical consequence unless one holds onto it, causing it to grow. Its mere presence is not a problem. Because if one fixates too narrowly on the serious business of eradicating hatred, one may be drawn off balance, forgetting what hatred's nature actually is: a spontaneous emergence from the base that can also be revealed when that nature is recognized.

That the quality of spontaneous presence applies to all things is thus made clear in as radical terms as possible. Lest there be any doubt that it is an all-inclusive principle, *Authenticity* further cites the *Spontaneously Complete Open Awareness Tantra* (*Rig pa lhun rdzogs rgyud*):

From the Conquerors' mandala to the golden mat of cyclic existence
 All samsara and nirvana
 Are just the spontaneous heart essence
 In whose self-appearance, whether pure or erroneous,
 There is not even one iota of movement from that [spontaneous
 essence]. {85.5–6}

Not only does the principle of spontaneity pervade everywhere in space and time, but there is no possible departure from it. Like mindnature, it can neither be lost nor found, neither debased nor improved. This point relates

3. Two correlate principles are invoked here: the relation of all phenomena to the base, and the spontaneous occurrence of everything.

directly to the matter of delusion and its relationship to mindnature, to the ongoing presence of enlightenment, and, above all perhaps, to the relationship between delusion and the innate wisdom of open awareness and the process of moving from one to the other.

Authenticity has already made it clear that delusions are not, as in sutra vehicles, to be abandoned or, as in tantra, to be transformed. Either activity is inappropriately effortful. Spontaneously present qualities are not the effects of effort on the path. Thus the *ma rig pa* which the Lower Vehicles understand as an ignorance to be overcome by developing wisdom, is understood in Dzogchen as more of a failure of awareness—literally, an unawareness. But awareness, linguistically and epistemologically is always there.

We have already seen that calm abiding, a precursor to the meditative stabilization classically counted as one of the six perfections, is rejected on account of its association with delusion; more precisely, it is rejected because as a consciousness focused on an object, it is associated with effort. The one-pointedness of mind associated with both these states in the Lower Vehicles is also rejected as contradictory with the Dzogchen view {102.2}.

From *Authenticity*'s perspective, perhaps the most compelling point about these verses is the prominence they give to what we could call its “unified theory” of the base. Without denying the ethical distinction between, for example, hatred and love, the verse showers its attention on the emptiness that is equally the essence of hate, love, unawareness, and wisdom. Hatred, like love, is a display from the base and spontaneously present to that base. To renounce hatred is to renounce the base that is its own natural condition, and that natural condition is essentially also fused with love. In short, if hatred is utterly renounced, emptiness and the base are also renounced. In that case, from what inner or outer space could love possibly arise? To recommend love over hatred is also to fall into the binary that this part of *Authenticity* is specifically contesting. Most significantly, to focus on the necessity of renouncing hatred is to miss its status as an illusion that occurs spontaneously in relation to the base.⁴ Unbounded wholeness is such that to renounce anger is also to renounce that which is considered its opposite.

Naturally, such an apparently antinomian view will elicit objections. Here we see one that takes us into the issue of spontaneous presence from a different angle:

OBJECTION: Ultimately then, is the taker of life, hatred, one's own mind? Does it arise adventitiously and by chance ('*bral byung glo bur*)? Is it something other [than one's own mind]? If it is one's

4. These three paragraphs draw on Klein's conversations with Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Kathmandu, February 1999 and Ligmincha Institute, July 2000.

own mind, how can mind, an unthing which has neither color nor shape, take a life due to hatred? If it can kill, how is this wrongful, since hatred itself comes about without any base? Therefore, if it cannot take life, how can wrongfulness come about? For example, fruit will not arise from a seed that is not planted.

RESPONSE: If it [anger] arises adventitiously and by chance, through realizing the principle of the primordially birthless and deathless mindnature, [one understands that] a bodiless mind cannot be obstructed or harmed by taking the life of an embodied being.⁵

Further, the *White Shen Deity Mindheart Scripture* (*gShen lha dkar po thugs kyi lung*) says:

Mindnature having neither birth nor death, how can life be taken?
No need to fear hell realm's suffering.
Not being there [hatred] cannot obscure.

Also, because mindnature has no creator, it is neither male nor female. Therefore, no matter how lusty one's behavior in the past, present, or future, ethics and vows would not deteriorate because no cause which deteriorates is seen, since there is no actual thing. {93.5–94.3}

Enlightenment, in an important but nuanced sense, does not depend on virtue. It is an awareness of the intrinsic, spontaneously and ubiquitously present qualities of awareness itself. The wholesome qualities toward which lower vehicle practitioners strive are understood and experienced as already present in that state. Clearly subject to misinterpretation, as approval of licentiousness or laissez-faire ethics, this teaching is “not for the ordinary person.”

We can pause here for a moment to note again how far this conversation has moved from some of the pillars of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, where a valorization of the infinite potential for cultivating compassion, for example, is a hallmark of the path to enlightenment. This move pertains directly to the absence in *Authenticity* of a connection in its discussion of authenticity with the concept of functionality so important to Dharmakīrti.

Dharmakīrti takes compassion as a way of establishing (*sgrub thabs, sādhanā*) Buddha's authority; thus his perspective differs from *Authenticity*, which explicitly declines to understand “good qualities” as in any sense in a causal relationship with unbounded wholeness or the fact of Buddhahood. Compassion is neither method nor proof for authenticity; to claim such would

5. This is highly reminiscent of the *Bhagavad Gīta*, Sarga II, v. 19–21.

skew the entire perspective of our text. After all, being a proof requires some measure of difference between that which is proven by reasoning (*grub bya, sādhya*) and the reasoning-phenomenon that proves it (*'grub byed chos, sādhak-adharma*). As we know, *Authenticity* explicitly denies any causal relationship between good qualities and the enlightened state. Dharmakīrti states that compassion can, at a certain point, spontaneously increase without any further effort (*'bad rtsol, prayatna*) other than the presence of its own seed (*bija*).⁶ For *Authenticity*, however, the effortless spontaneity that characterizes the display of compassion, and all other qualities associated with full awakening, has no developmental trajectory as it does in Dharmakīrti.

Even more to the point perhaps, is that in *Authenticity* there is nothing like Prajñākaragupta's division of Buddha's omniscient authority into two kinds—that associated with conventional functioning and that associated with the ultimate. This division has the effect, unknown in *Authenticity*, of separating out knowledge of the world from knowledge related to liberation, as well as of putting a spotlight, as already indicated, on good qualities that are associated with authority. As Takashi Iwata puts it: "The Buddha knows the Four Noble Truths and his knowledge of them, i.e., omniscience in the sense of the Buddhist logical tradition, motivates him to be actively engaged in proclaiming these Truths to protect all living beings. . . . Therefore, the reason 'proclaiming the truth,' from which the consequence 'being omniscient' of the Buddha is derived, is a reason as effect (*kāryahetu*)."⁷ This is wholly at odds with *Authenticity*'s emphasis on the spontaneous presence of all good qualities associated with fully manifested reflexive open awareness, as well as the effortlessness characteristic of the entire Dzogchen path.

Yet it would be a mistake to construe, as in some interpretations of tantra, this apparent rejection of virtuous cultivation as simply iconoclastic. Virtue, like reasoning, has its important place. As a further measure of its unbounded view, *Authenticity*, in addition to making its objections clear, finds a place for the positive activities so central to the Lower Vehicles, indicating in this way a kind of soteriological undecidability:

Further, it is not that [virtuous actions] are utterly unhelpful.

Through the wisdom of individual realization, through realizing the nature of bon-phenomena just as they are, through an understanding deep in the mind, not mere verbiage, on account of not being separate from the wisdom of bon-nature, the ten unsurpassed perfections of giving and so forth, all whatsoever virtuous actions, will be the collection of primordial wisdom. And that cause and fruit which one desires will arise without fail. {97.3–4}

6. *Pramānavārttika*, II. 24 b–d. See Iwata, forthcoming: 14 (ms.); also, Iwata 2001: 73 n.49.

7. Iwata, 12 (ms.); Takahashi, 2004.

Virtuous actions are not “utterly unhelpful.” Although this may seem like faint praise, it must be remembered that traditional readers of this text would come to it only after years of training in karmic cause and effect, in monastic *vinaya*, and other traditional canons of sanctity. The readers of *Authenticity* were almost exclusively monastic scholar-practitioners. Little if anything in their environment would encourage hugely unconventional behavior, as opposed to distinctly antinomian positions taken up, for example, by Kamakura Zen Masters or the great Indian *Siddhas*.

Moreover, in the same way that the opening lines of Śāntideva’s ninth chapter of *Taking Up the Bodhisattva Deeds* (*sPyod 'jug, Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*) states that all perfections are taught for the sake of wisdom, *Authenticity* now notes that “if one does not have an eye for identifying jewels, they might as well be ordinary rocks. So also, even though one engages in bon-activities such as the unsurpassed perfections, [without] view and meditation, one remains an ordinary person” {101.5}.

Meditative Stabilization Is Not Dzogchen

These positions on virtue and spontaneous presence also bring meditative stabilization, a central part of lower vehicle practice, under scrutiny. This evaluation is part of a more global consideration of meditation in general. Our text notes that encouraging the cultivation of meditative stabilization, like encouraging meditation in general, can be misinterpreted as a call to effort and a blindness to the spontaneous presence of this and other “sought-for” qualities. For *Authenticity*, to claim that meditation exists is an extreme of eternalism; to say that it does not is an extreme of annihilation. {61.2–62.1} For this reason, *Authenticity* takes an apparently radical stand against it:

In order to eliminate the pitfalls of the Lower Vehicles, it is said that there is no meditation. The principle of Great Completeness is primordially freed from the extremes of meditation as existent or nonexistent. Both existence and nonexistence dwell in a single entity [contradictions are dissolved].

OBJECTION: But how can there be a meditator without meditation?

RESPONSE: One is undistracted within the spontaneously occurring mindnature. {100.4–5}

Meditation is usually about being focused, stable, and clear, and in these senses it is quite distinct from other states. For *Authenticity*, however, being undistracted within the spontaneously occurring mind is not “meditation” as commonly understood. According to the *Blissful Cakra* (*bDe ba'i 'khor lo*):

If one understands the heart essence, the essential nature just as it is,

One neither “sees oneself as” nor “arises from” meditative stability, equipoise

Neither meditating on, nor separating from it.

This, the excellent Buddha state. {99.6}

In its early discussions of authenticating methods, we saw *Authenticity* refer to meditation as “continuous,” meaning without fluctuation and undifferentiable from its aftermath, for “even without [conceptual or effortful] meditation you continually, without interruption, dwell in the actual state of the Buddha” {99.4–5}. Thus, view and meditation are primordially one. Continuity, in fact, is a crucial corollary of the principle of primordiality discussed earlier.

What is it like, the view, the errorless meaning? Within an errorless meditative stability in which great wisdom errorlessly realizes and internalizes the principle—the essential nature of things, their heart essence—there is no distinction between meditative equipoise and its aftermath:

Further, the *Heart Essence of Unified Space* (*sNying po'i myam kyi rgyud*)⁸ claims:

When reflexive open awareness abides in meditative stability
There is no distinction between meditative equipoise and its aftermath.

Why? Because bon-nature is completely understood.

To dwell there is great bliss itself. {99.5–6}

In *Authenticity*’s opening description of the three authenticators of method, we saw that the “authenticity of reflexively open awareness . . . is known as never being separate from spontaneous meditation” {53.4}. In fact, unpartitioned continuity is another type of wholeness.⁹ There is thus no need to meditate by way of purposefully focusing the mind. When open awareness is retained or held steady (*zin*), meditative equipoise and its aftermath (*rjes thob*) are indivisible. There is no distinction between meditative equipoise and the state subsequent to it, for “even without [conceptual or effortful] meditation, you continually, without interruption, dwell in the actual state (*dgongs*) of the Buddha” {99.4–5}. This steadfastness in turn is possible because there is in fact no subject-object relation to come undone.

The simple continuity between meditative equipoise and its aftermath is

8. This phrase refers to the union of internal and external space.

9. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Kathmandu, February 1999, oral commentary.

a distinguishing feature of Dzogchen. This is reiterated clearly at text's end, where *Changeless, Ceaseless Primordially Complete* (*g.Yung drung ye rdzogs*) says:

Because each and every *bon*
Is primordially the great unbounded,
Because even this present time does not exist
Because meditative equipoise and its aftermath are indivisible
For all these reasons, everything is sameness. {120.2-3}

This seamless continuity is another kind of completeness in the face of which effort is not necessary. There is simply nothing to do.

The same text also says:

Mindnature, essential precept of the Great Completeness
Realizes everything as the very essential nature.
Therefore no need to meditate on mind-objects;
There is no discarding or upholding, hence sameness:
Meditative stability never degenerates. {120.3-4}

What might this mean about the broader category in which meditative stabilization is included, the cultivation of virtue? Are “compounded roots of virtue” necessary? No, says *Authenticity*. In an awareness open to unbounded wholeness, all purposes are spontaneously complete. Indeed, just as the discussion of spontaneous presence opens toward wholeness, *Authenticity*'s discussion of virtuous activities opens to the same horizon. Two further crucial principles regarding spontaneous occurrence are 1) the extent to which agency is located in the subject and 2) the claim that, virtuous or not, the subject is always and inexorably connected to its own base.

By this point in the readers' careers, the text seems to imply, virtuous behavior is presumed; its narrative structure, however, is shifting. Likewise, that view and meditation are in fact one “does not contradict the mere convention which discusses them as two” {100.4}. Twoness as a convention is acceptable, though not so acceptable as to be the object of a validly cognizing or authenticating subject.

Spontaneous Presence and the Ultimate

In *Authenticity*, as we have seen, whatever is conceptual is already deluded. One need not specify particular concepts to negate. But, there is the fault of exaggerating the sense in which an absence of that negation exists:

Also, since conventionally you assert the afflicted and thoroughly pure as existent and, because you distinguish between objects and

minds, you are extremists regarding existence. And, because ultimately you assert nothing whatever and nonexistence, you come to an extreme of annihilation. From the first, I do not make twofold discriminations among bon-phenomena. I assert the self-clarity of the mindnature. Hence, this very special [view] is not touched by the two extremes. {105.4–5}

The key to understanding wholeness, and to the confluence of apparent opposites—love and hatred, virtue and nonvirtue, Buddha and sentient being—within that wholeness, is the ontology of spontaneity.

All bon-phenomena are asserted as being natural, spontaneous occurrences, so the three poisons are also not established, and action, virtue, and wrongfulness (*sdig pa*) are not asserted, either. Therefore, we do not distinguish between the ultimate and conventional. This [making of distinctions] is the position of a lower vehicle. {92.3}

Can spontaneous presence be distinguished clearly from the all-but-ubiquitous Buddhist category of dependent arising? In Buddhist ontology this principle is as pervasive as emptiness itself, so much so that the two are often considered synonymous.

Dependent Arising (*rten 'brel*) and Spontaneity (*lhun grub*)

Dependent arising and spontaneous presence are crucial philosophical categories in Madhyamaka and Dzogchen, respectively. Each term suggests in its own way that the apparent world is evidence of, rather than in conflict with, the numinous ultimate as that system understands it. In Madhyamaka, to be empty of inherent existence is to be a dependent arising. Emptiness itself is a dependent arising. In Dzogchen, objects of the senses are the dynamic display of unbounded wholeness and, as such, are spontaneously present. In this way the two terms are functionally quite similar. Let us consider this more closely and explore where that similarity ends.

The definition of spontaneous presence is “that which is ceaselessly able to appear” (*byung rung ma 'gag pa*). In general, whatever exists (or technically, whatever is an established base, a *gzhi grub*) is spontaneously present and a dependent arising. How then does spontaneous presence differ from dependent arising? Dependent arising indicates how things are related; spontaneous presence indicates their origination from the base.¹⁰

10. Lobon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, August 1997, oral commentary. The verse is discussed, for example, in Hopkins: 1986, 438, and gives an extensive discussion of Nāgārjunian-based Madhyamaka in Geluk interpretation 399–422. And Garfield 1995:301ff.

The Dzogchen term *lhun grub* can be rendered as spontaneous presence, spontaneous occurrence, spontaneous accomplishment, spontaneous performance, spontaneous complete perfection, or spontaneity. That which occurs (*grub*) in a spontaneous (*lhun*) way is that which arises effortlessly and naturally ('bad med rang bzhin gyis grub pa).¹¹ Traditional oral glosses emphasize that in this case *grub* means complete or perfect, as well as naturally present. It is especially an epithet of the good qualities (including meditative stabilization, as we have seen) associated with Buddhahood, as well as a description of all things whatever as in fact complete and perfect. Just as for Madhayamaka, an understanding of dependent arising means that the phenomenal world is understood (or experienced) as consonant with emptiness, so the principle of spontaneous occurrence is, in Dzogchen, a way of expressing the profound consonance of phenomena with unbounded wholeness.

The *Magical Space Treasure*, another work associated with *Authenticity*, rhetorically inquires, "How does the base primordially abide?" (29.5) and responds with a sequence of reasonings that suggests an underlying logic complementary to that of *Authenticity*. Freed from the existential prism of creation and cessation, the base is self-liberated. In this sense, nothing whatsoever in cyclic existence or nirvana lacks being uncreated and, therefore, the absence of creation and cessation is primordially Buddhified and spontaneously present in the expanse of the resplendent Buddha dimension.

Indeed, what distinguishes the primordial from the nonexistent is that its absence of production and cessation is redolent with other qualities, such as being empty and clear. Most significant for our discussion is that the base too is "spontaneously liberated into just-is-ness (*ji bzhin nyid*)."¹² Likewise, all phenomena that, by definition, emerge from the base, are spontaneously occurring in just-is-ness. All the rest follows from this.

In the opening verses of his *Treatise on the Middle Way*, Nāgārjuna pays obeisance to Buddha, teacher of dependent arising, in which there is neither cessation nor production, nor any other elaboration. Later in the same work, Nāgārjuna famously states that once emptiness is possible, everything is possible. This has been interpreted, in Geluk for example, to mean that emptiness, as a mere absence (*med dgag, prasajyapratiṣedha*), makes all dependent arising possible and is, in fact, profoundly synonymous with it.

In the four classic schools of tenets, generally speaking, emptiness is understood as the lack of a particular set of qualities that are wrongly construed as self—permanence, self-sufficiency, independence, existence from its own

11. See Das 1977: 1339 and *Tibetan-Chinese dictionary of Buddhist terminology* (*Bod rgya nang don rig pa'i tshig mdzod*), 1186.

12. Dranpa Namkha (attribution), *Magical Space Treasure* (Karmay No. 58) (Dolanji: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1972), 29.1.

side and so on. In Madhyamaka, specifically, it is the lack of inherently depending on either cause, parts, or imputation by thought. Practitioners strive to see, to know, to realize this emptiness and they come to it largely by negating that which is contradicted by emptiness. For example, the emptiness of inherent existence is arrived at by using reasoning to negate inherent existence.¹³

In Madhyamaka there is no emptiness without negation, but in Dzogchen there is no negation at all. Rather, emptiness is present because one's mind-nature and appearances are a single entity.¹⁴ Spontaneous presence is not premised on absence. Dependent arising points to emptiness, Dzogchen and Madhyamaka agree, but in Madhyamaka, emptiness is not the base in Dzogchen's sense of being the source of what it qualifies. This is a crucial difference. Further, Madhyamaka does not describe emptiness as spontaneous occurrence, though it is a dependent arising.

In Dzogchen, the base is a support (*rten*) and also a source ('*byung khungs*), but not a cause. Thus, Madhyamaka might explain that a house can be built because it, the builders, the materials, and everything else concerned with the process lack, or are empty of, inherent existence. Although made possible by that absence, the house does not arise from the lack of inherent existence. Causality requires emptiness, but emptiness is not described as a support for the phenomena whose causation its existence makes possible.

The causes of a tree are sun, earth, water, and so forth, but space allows the existence of the tree. Likewise, the emptiness of space allows a table to be built, but that emptiness is not the base of the table in the way that space is considered by Dzogchen to be the base of all existents. For Dzogchen, everything spontaneously occurs in space, the primary or foundational element of all things. The base does not cause good or bad qualities but allows both, as space does. In the language of this tradition, emptiness also allows, but, again, does not act as a source for what is allowed. In *Authenticity*'s Dzogchen, whatever is the abiding condition is the base, but the base is not necessarily the abiding condition. Space, for example, is the base of the elements because it allows them, but, again, it is not their abiding condition. Rather, space itself is the dynamic display of the abiding condition, a display from the base (*gzhi'i rtsal*). Whatever is a dynamic display cannot be either the base or the abiding condition.¹⁵

Spontaneous presence and dependent arising are mutually pervasive, but although emptiness is a dependent arising, it is not spontaneously present.

13. Nāgārjuna, *Mūlamadhyamakākārikā* (Treatise on the Middle Way) XXIV.14ab. See also, Garfield 1995: 301.

14. *sems nyid dang snang ba thams cad ngo bo gcig pa red*; cited by Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Ligmincha, July 2000, oral commentary.

15. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Kathmandu, January 1999, oral commentary.

For, again, although emptiness is the abiding state (*gnas lugs*) and nature (*rang bzhin*) of all phenomena, it is not their base (*gzhi*).¹⁶ Thus, emptiness is not spontaneously present insofar as it is not the base of samsara and nirvana. Emptiness is not the base, nor is it spontaneously present in the sense of “being suitable for unceasing arising,” because nothing comes from emptiness; that is, emptiness is not itself the source of things, though it does allow them.¹⁷ The crucial difference is that the base has spontaneous presence as a naturally indwelling quality, whereas emptiness is not described this way.¹⁸

For *Authenticity*, and for Dzogchen more broadly, although not causeless in general, conditioned phenomena are causeless in relation to the base. We have already seen that this is very significant in its consideration of negative qualities such as hatred and of positive qualities such as meditative stabilization. Whereas the term “base” suggests origin, in Dzogchen the words “nature” (*rang bzhin*) and “abiding state” (*gnas lugs*) have more to do with a phenomenon’s defining characteristic. The lack of a person’s own nature (*rang bzhin med pa*), which is the defining characteristic of ultimacy in Madhyamaka, here enters Dzogchen vocabulary with a slightly different meaning and very different significance: that which is spontaneous is naturally (*rang bzhin*) without effort. Strictly speaking, one does not simply say that a table, for example, occurs spontaneously but that it is spontaneous with respect to the base (*gzhi la lhun gyis grub*). It is also a dependent arising, since spontaneous occurrences and dependent arisings are mutually pervasive (*yin khyab mnyam*), not contradictory. To say that things occur spontaneously (*lhun gyis*) is to say they are natural and effortless.

In brief, Dzogchen understands all phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana to occur spontaneously with respect to their base. This does not preclude their being dependent arisings, but it does relegate their status as dependent arisings to a more secondary position than found in, for example, Geluk interpretations of Madhyamaka.

The emphasis on an acausal source supports the text’s identification of mindnature as itself this kind of source. It is also consonant with the way that, for Dzogchen, open awareness manifests without “performing a function” in the manner of classic Buddhist discussions of valid cognition.¹⁹ Moreover, by aligning with the principle of spontaneity Dzogchen calls attention, in ways

16. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Triten Norbutse, Kathmandu August, 1997, oral commentary.

17. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Ligmincha, July 2000, personal communication.

18. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, oral commentary. Some proponents of Madhyamaka might disagree, remembering for example, Nāgārjuna’s famous statement, “For whom emptiness is possible/ everything is possible.” Nāgārjuna, XXIV.14ab.

19. The ability to function (*don byed nus pa, arthakriyāsamartha*) is a central criterion for discussions of ultimate versus conventional in Jamyang Shaya, Daktsang, and, of course, Dharmakīrti himself. See Klein 1986: 70–78.

that discussions of emptiness and dependent arising do not, to a vibrant inferiority known as the allbase. In this way, it names a subjective dimension that is intensely dynamic in a way that is both temporally and ontologically prior to dependent arising.

Authenticity itself does not say a great deal about the base or its process of manifestation. However, its traditional students would be well familiar with the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, which explores this in detail in texts such as the famous *Twenty-One Stakes* and *Six Bardos*. There we learn that this process involves the moving forth and coarsening of sound, rays, and light. And, significantly, even though the sound, rays, and light that reify into phenomena arise from the base, the base is not their cause. The base, being unconditioned, is never a cause but simply the abiding state (*gnas lugs*) of the sound, rays, and light, which are a manifestation of it. Moreover, although the descriptive language brought to bear on this process is necessarily sequential, the process of manifestation itself is not. Light does not arise in dependence on sound; the two are simultaneous, in the manner of the sun and its rays. Sound, rays, and light lack inherent existence. Sound is related to emptiness, light to clarity, rays to nonduality (*gnyis med*) of the base. In this paradigm of the relationship between ordinary mind-states and primordial wisdom, primordial wisdom is meaningfully, yet unmanifestly, always already present in these states; it does not arise in dependence on causes and conditions, such as through the accumulation of virtue or meditation practice. Nor does it cease when they are absent.

In Mādhyamika treatises and oral traditions, dependent arising is often said to be synonymous with emptiness. The term “dependent arising” never appears in *Authenticity*, and in any case, it does not sufficiently characterize how things occur. They are more significantly seen to arise from wholeness through a manifestation process that gradually splits into apparent subject and object, hardening and coarsening until they become solid materiality.²⁰ To call these phenomena “dependent arisings” is not wrong in this view but fails to indicate their final nature.²¹ “Dynamic display” (*rtsal*) is a more precise term ontologically for Dzogchen because it indicates this connection with the base; it acknowledges the table as a spontaneous occurrence through the sound, rays, and light that move forth from the base. As the process coarsens, thought

²⁰. This process, the manifestation of sound, light, and rays, (*sgra, 'od, zer*), is classically discussed in Bon in the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, is also significant in Buddhist Dzogchen; especially, for example, in the first four chapters of Longchen Rabjampa's *Precious Treasure of Words and Meaning* (*Tshig don rin po che mdzod*). For discussion and translation, see Germano 1992. See also Tenzin Wangyal, *Wonders of the Natural Mind*. Although *Authenticity* itself never discusses this process, most if not all traditional readers of *Authenticity* would be very familiar with this process and would easily connect it to the discussion of spontaneous occurrence.

²¹. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Serenity Ridge, July 2000, oral commentary.

begins to designate it in certain ways. Thus, it is both spontaneous and reified due to thought processes of designating it as such.²²

Whereas to understand dependent arising is to understand the emptiness of Madhyamaka, such an understanding does not lead to the Dzogchen view. From a Dzogchen perspective, the same table that Madhyamaka describes as a dependent arising and therefore empty is, in addition, the dynamic display of the base (*gzhi'i rtsal*). The main difference between spontaneous presence and dependent arising comes not in connection with ordinary objects like tables, however, but in relation to the base itself, especially in its aspect as ultimate subject and in the way that phenomena, including thoughts, emerge from that base. A classic Dzogchen example of spontaneous presence is the emergence of thoughts unbidden, coming “without any planning”²³ when you try to look into your nature. For the philosopher-practitioner reading *Authenticity*, there is neither ontological need for nor soteriological benefit in establishing or negating such thoughts.

In a cause-and-effect relationship, the sense of separation is strong—a cause ceases when its effect arises. For Dzogchen, the base is always unified with sound, rays, and light, as well as with whatever further manifestation they take on. Sound, rays, and light are thus neither dependent on the base nor dependently arisen from the base. They are spontaneously present to it. This is not understood as a relationship of cause and effect.

In Madhyamaka, dependent arising is a “middle way” between the unacceptable extremes of inherent existence and nonexistence. In *Authenticity*, spontaneous presence is a touchstone for its understanding of the middle way. We noted earlier a passage concerning the principle of indefiniteness in relation to the middle way. Let us revisit the passage with a focus on its significance for spontaneity:

OBJECTION: In your view, is the base definitive (*nges pa*) or not?²⁴ If definite, it is sure to be either existent or nonexistent. If definitely existent, there would be the fault of eternalism. Why? Because it is definitely existent. If definitely nonexistent, there would be the fault of an extreme of annihilation. Why? Because it would not exist.²⁵

22. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Nepal, August 1997, oral commentary. This process, in fact, becomes so conflated that some Dzogchen scholars, at least in the Buddhist tradition, emphasize that these phenomena are not be called *rtsal* at all except in relation to ordinary mind (Khetsun Sangpo Rinpoche and Tulku Thundup, personal communications).

23. Lopon Tenzin Namdak used this English phrase while otherwise speaking mainly in Tibetan to Klein, Nepal, 1997, oral commentary.

24. *nges pa* also means “definite” and “ascertained” (*adhyavasāya*). Here the discussion centers more on how the base is, rather than how it is seen; hence we render the term as “definitive,” thereby somewhat blurring, in accordance with Dzogchen sensibilities, the line between subject and object.

25. Also, that which is indefinite is neutral (*lung ma bstan*)—that is, it is neither definite as virtuous nor as nonvirtuous; hence, it is neutral.

If the base is not definitive, there would be the faults of saying it is undefined (*lung ma bstan*) and of contradicting the cause and effect of actions. There would be no definiteness which could match the understanding (*dgongs*) [of a Buddha]. Why? Because the base²⁶ is not definite.²⁷ Thus there would be the fault of having no kernel of a method,²⁸ that is to say, no definiteness regarding the bon-nature.

Obviously, you cannot agree; it would be false and deceptive [if you did]. Why? Because [in that case] you have neither definiteness nor the kernel of a method.

RESPONSE: It is not like that. In the heart essence of all bon-phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana is the very essence of spontaneous occurrence; therefore, this is not an extreme of eternalism.²⁹ Nor is this an extreme of annihilation because the clarity of the enlightenment mind, open, conscious awareness is unceasing.³⁰ {6o.6}

This is, according to *Authenticity*, Dzogchen's own middle way. To call the unceasing clarity itself an open, conscious awareness is like saying there is light in the sun because the sun is light. From the Dzogchen perspective, Madhyamaka fails to adequately emphasize the presence and indivisibility of clarity and emptiness. Further, especially in the Geluk commentarial tradition patterned after Tsongkhapa, emptiness is an *object* of the wisdom consciousness, meaning that wisdom itself cannot be emptiness. This is a theme that continues into contemporary debates between Dzogchen and, especially, Geluk discussions of Madhyamaka.

Spontaneous presence is an ontological analogue of the continuity that *Authenticity* discusses in relation to Dzogchen meditation. Each in its own way dissolves the distances between sentient beings and Buddhas, between delusion and primordial wisdom, between endeavor and effortlessness, without admitting that there is any real distance to speak of. For all these reasons,

26. These options have to do with how the base is interpreted, i.e. as permanent, nonexistent, or neutral.

27. Meaning unbounded wholeness (*thig le nyag gcig*), also identified as the base (*gzhi*), is not definite.

28. The Tibetan dictionary Yisun Zhang's *Great Treasury of Tibetan Words* (*Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*) glosses *gtol* as *thabs* (Vol. 2, p. 1051). It can also be understood as "lacking a source"; in addition to there being no source for such a method, the term has the connotation of unfindability.

29. The *Gal mdo* cycle often uses classic terms of Perfection of Wisdom (*Prajñāpāramitā*) literature though frequently providing a different context or interpretation. In this it differs from the Bon *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, which has virtually no point of contact with Indian texts.

30. The great nineteenth-and early-twentieth-century Nyingma Dzogchen master and scholar Mipham (1846–1912) observes in the *Lion's Roar* (*Seng ge'i nga ro*) that the Buddha-nature is not a mere emptiness devoid of qualities. In the same text he notes that although the Perfection of Wisdom sutras find it necessary to identify the unconditioned—that is, emptiness—they never say to take it as an *object*. Mipham 1976, *The Lion's Roar of the Great Synopsis of Topics on Sugata Essence* (*bDe gshegs snying bo'i stong thun chen mo seng ge'i nga ro*) Vol. 62, 568.2 and 471.1–4. Discussed in Klein 1992: 271–273 and 294ff.

“spontaneous presence,” like the less frequently invoked “continuity,” is a vital, multifaceted philosophical term and crucial to *Authenticity*’s emphasis on wholeness.

Unbounded wholeness is the source of infinite, spontaneously present, dynamic display. This reality is present in the figure of Samantabhadra, whose voice is scripture and whose being is reality. And, we now find, these matters are central to the presence of authenticity itself, especially the authenticity of scripture, the third type of authentic method mentioned at the outset of the text, about which we have heard very little until now.

5

Samantabhadra and Scripture: Reasoning Resolved

Authenticity 104.3–126.1

The text's opening theme of wholeness and its piquant relation with reasoning are now rejoined as we approach the text's closing poetic rapture on the unimpeachably authentic nature of scripture. At its heart, this is an exploration of the etiology and epistemology of transmission, not simply from teacher to student, but also from reality itself to those who recognize such reality as their own most profound identity. The source of this transmission in *Authenticity*, as in Dzogchen more generally, is Samantabhadra, the key figure emerging from what we can now see as a central move of the text, the move from authentication to authenticity.

Samantabhadra has a special and well-known place in both Bon and Nyingma understandings of Dzogchen's origins. *Authenticity's* further contribution is to invite Samantabhadra to preside over an inquiry into the relevance of reasoning, language, and concept to a path of nonconceptuality. In this regard, however, *Authenticity* does not consider a problem that its root text commentary must entertain—the extent to which phenomena that are the same in nature can authenticate or indicate the presence of one another. For, as an opponent observes, if one could use the sign, or reason, of one phenomenon to establish the presence of another with which it has no other relationship than being one in essence (*ngo bo gcig*) with it, then one would have to be able to establish an ox through the reason of a horse. This won't work, as there is no proof which establishes a connection between horse and ox, even though in a sense they are one in their nature of unbounded wholeness.

Reasoning and Authenticity

In the meantime, we revisit the issue of the relationship between an authenticator and unbounded wholeness—or between any subject and object. This is, of course, directly related to the issue of the relationship between cause and effect. Madhyamaka, in many interpretations, maintains that because phenomena are empty, any causal relationship connecting them is merely conventional. Our root text takes this point further, maintaining that there is actually no plurality or separation within unbounded wholeness. This does not mean that there is no causality, but only that it is not predicated on the kind of dualism usually assumed between cause and effect.

All phenomena within unbounded wholeness are not un-separate in the same way. The unbounded nature of wholeness does not place all signs or reasons on a level playing field and certainly does not mean that any sign can prove any predicate. However, because, say, “product” and “pot” are one nature (*rang bzhin gcig*) or one entity (*ngo bo gcig*), it is possible to employ a reasoning by way of the nature (*rang bzhin gyi gtan tshigs*). For example, one can say, “It follows that the subject, sound, is impermanent, because of being a product, like pot; for product and impermanence are one nature.” More technically, pot and product are one entity but different for thought.¹ All pots are indeed products, and all products are impermanent. But even though all pots are products, not all products are pots, and this gives the reasoning the torque that makes it function, a torque that is absent from the perspective emphasizing that all objects share a nature of being displayed from the base.

The typology of reasoning receives some attention in *Authenticity* {55.1–56.5} but receives more concerted attention in its root text, *Essential Precepts*.² The *Essential Precepts* commentary states early on that the profound can be settled through authentication (*tshad ma*) and that unmistaken direct perception and inference are not other than (*gnyis med*) reality itself.³ In this way it supports what is simply implicit in *Authenticity*—that reasoning, rather than being positioned outside of reality, raising the question of whether or not it leads to reality, is explicitly regarded as an expression of it, just as all existents are. At this juncture of the *Essential Precepts*, reasoning’s place within the circle

1. Lopon, in glossing this point, uses the well-known philosophical term *ngo bo gcig ltog pa tha dad*, a phrase that does not occur in the text.

2. The reason of being one in nature with what is established, is mentioned only once in *Authenticity*, whereas the root text/commentary discusses it in some detail.

3. Sherab Gyaltsen’s edition of *Essential Precepts* (*Man ngag lung gi tshad ma*), Vol. Kha 2.4 in *Collected Works of the Unparalleled Sherab Gyaltsen* (*mNyam med She rab rGyal mthsan gsung 'bum*). [This text is also found in *Gal mDo, Texts concerned with the Logical Establishment of the Authenticity of the rDzog chen teachings of Bon* 1972. Reproduced by Tenzin Namdak.]

of wholeness takes precedence over the issue of its capacity for being authentic in relation to that wholeness.⁴ Expressiveness, reasoned or poetic, is, in fact, a function of reality. This perspective is important in supporting *Authenticity's* claims regarding authentic scripture.

There are three types of relationship between reason and probandum, says the root text. And, unlike *Authenticity*, it names them. The three, known also to Buddhist philosophical exegesis, are same-nature relationship (*bdag nyid gcig pa'i 'brel ba*), relationship of one arising from the other (*de las byung ba'i 'brel ba*), and relationship arising from causes and conditions (*rgyu dang rkyen gyi 'brel ba*).⁵ Only a sign that operates by being one in nature with what it establishes (*bdag nyid gcig gi gtan tshigs*) can prove wholeness or emptiness. A reasoning establishing the arising of one thing separately from another could not.⁶ *Authenticity* may seem to contradict this understanding of reasoning and reality when it states that the relationship of unbounded wholeness and the scriptures proving it is like that of fire and smoke. However, the type of “causality” *Authenticity* actually postulates between phenomena and unbounded wholeness has to do, most significantly, with their sameness of nature.⁷ It is worth noting that the one instance in which *Authenticity* considers this type of reasoning alludes, however obliquely, to the authenticity of scripture:

If, regarding this, someone says that the bon-subject is not established we answer that cyclic existence is established by direct perception and nirvana is established by inference. This is so; the bon-subject nirvana actually exists because special scriptures [which say so] are observable like, for example, fire and smoke. (In both cases, if there is one there will be the other) {54.1–2}

At first sight, this may seem an overly strong reading of the mention of “scripture” in this context. Read through the lens of the emphatic interfusing of scripture and reality with which the text closes, however, it can well be seen as a harbinger of what is to come.

Thus, both *Authenticity* and the *Essential Precepts* reflect on the rich rela-

4. The text does acknowledge here that reasoning is important for clearing away Outsiders' arguments and for severing devaluation (*'gro 'dogs*) in *Essential Precepts* 21.4. Compare with *Authenticity* {48.2} which states that reasoning is provided “so as to disprove and eliminate the erroneous views of unrealized beings and those with erroneous conceptions.”

5. *Essential Precepts*.16.5

6. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, oral commentary.

7. This harks back to the point made earlier in *Authenticity* and renowned in Dzogchen generally that all phenomena, when fully recognized, are the dynamic display (*rtsal*) of unbounded wholeness. Both Khetsun Sangpo Rinpoche and Tulku Thondup, speaking primarily from the Buddhist Longchen Nyingthig tradition of Dzogchen, have pointed out that it will not do to say that in general, or from the viewpoint of ordinary beings like ourselves, these can be called *rtsal*. That is, they are not objectively the display of reality, simply subjectively so.

tionship that reasoning has with reality. The type of continuity that these works suggest will flow back into the final stream of reflections on scripture and reality with which the text closes.

Unbounded wholeness can only be established by a sign that is one in nature with it. What can this mean? All phenomena are one in nature with it and also, in some sense, with one another. Yet they are obviously not all equally proofs for one another. So the establishment of wholeness is already a special case in the arcana of logic. What does it even mean to “establish” unbounded wholeness? In the end, even logically speaking, only some part of wholeness, which is ubiquitous, can establish wholeness.

This perspective is more or less consonant with claims about the authenticity intrinsic to open awareness, for only open awareness is fundamentally and *experientially* one in subjective nature with unbounded wholeness. This is consistent with how dynamic display is not called dynamic display unless and until it is so experienced, though the text does not make much of this point. In other words, the play of subjective experience will in the final analysis trump—or dissolve—the mechanics of reasoning. The concluding gnosis of *Authenticity* sheds the text’s fullest light on this issue.

The relationship of being one in nature is mentally imputed, not truly established. Because forms, including forms such as pots, arise in dependence on causes and conditions, they do not have their own nature; that is, they are neither established by their own nature nor from their own side for this would mean they exist without in any way being imputed by thought. This much accords with *Madhyamaka*.

Obviously, this or any discussion of causes applies only in the realm of conditioned things. To say that authentic open awareness “is not separate from its cause” is meaningless. For when it comes to primordial wisdom, as we well know, there is no talk of causality at all. Thus, despite its attention to the categories of reasoning and causality, we see that (unlike in *Geluk Sautrāntika* or *Sautrāntika*-based *Mādhyamika* theories of knowing, for example)⁸ there is for *Authenticity* and its associated texts no epistemological narrative by which conceptual reflection can exist in, cause, or actively catalyze authentic open awareness. Toward its conclusion, *Authenticity* takes this by now familiar point in a new direction. It is going to explore how the particular ontology of unbounded wholeness, combined with the particular epistemology of open awareness, paves the way for a distinctive kind of textuality, seen as sourced in the very wholeness it expresses. But we still have a few steps to reflect on before we can address this issue directly.

When the *Essential Precepts Commentary* states that that authentication can settle the profound, this is not, as it might seem, a comforting suggestion that

8. See Klein 1991, especially chapters 2 and 4.

Pramāṇa and Dzogchen perspectives regarding authentication (*tshad ma*) are congruent. It cannot be given, as we have already seen, that the texts' main emphasis here is on the indivisibility of direct perception or inference from reality itself.⁹ This perspective is reinforced by closing statements in the *Essential Precepts Commentary* to the effect that “pairs” typically conceived of as two are in fact one *and* that this is wholly compatible with causality.

Let us pause to consider this point, which elides classic Pramāṇa and Madhyamaka with Dzogchen perspectives. All agree that, arising due to conditions, a thing fails to come about through its own wherewithal. In more technical language, such a thing is not at all established by way of its own entity (*rang gi ngo bo bas gang du grub pa med*). It is a mere appearance due to its arising on the basis of conditions. Having a nature that is empty of essence, it is therefore a *mere* arising from conditions. For this reason, it lacks establishment by way of its own entity. This much is familiar to any student of Madhyamaka, as is the union of appearance and emptiness. As its analysis continues however, our text begins to diverge from formal Madhyamaka structure, concluding that all is Buddha and all arises spontaneously:

It is not established by way of its own entity *and* it is produced from conditions. Therefore, these two are one. . . . Appearances and their lack of being established by way of their own entity are one, they are not two. Therefore, everything is primordially Buddha, one. Appearances also are primordially Buddha, emptiness also is primordially Buddha. Why? Because there are no differences in their being ('*dug pa tha dad med pa'i phyir*). High status and the bad migrations, ultimate and conventional, and so on, the nature of all these is primordially pure; they are one in being primordially Buddha, and they are not two. If one realizes the spontaneously present meaning that Buddhas and sentient beings are not two, everything lacks self and there is also no error anywhere. The fruit is one, there is no time of going higher, there is no plummeting down to bad rebirths.¹⁰

In these ways, *Essential Precepts Commentary* states what is simply implicit in *Authenticity*—that reasoning, rather than providing a perspective on reality from the outside (hence raising the question of whether it leads to reality) is here explicitly regarded as an expression of it, and in that sense continuous with it, just as all existents are.

That expressiveness as a function of reality, rather than a bridge to it, is a key principle in the concluding pages of *Authenticity*. Before considering how such continuity relates to the matter of Samantabhadra and the waves of textual

9. *Essential Precepts* 2.4 [Sherab Gyaltsen edition].

10. *Essential Precepts* commentary 20.1–6.

transmission that surface in its ocean of reality, let us look into how continuity and reasoning are and are not in tension in another work belonging to the *Gal mdo* cycle.

Legacy: Reasoning and the Moons of Delusion

Emptiness is the final way things are, Madhyamaka states, and reasoning can access it, particularly when the emptiness in question is a mere negation. The base, however, is less accessible to reasoning. It is at once too multifaceted and too simple. Unbounded wholeness is not the negation, not the opposite of anything. In the face of wholeness, the best that reasoning can do is precisely what it does in *Authenticity*: it can reflect with precision on its own limitations. This is its fundamental and genuine usefulness.

Reason's purported ability to penetrate to truth is controverted by a boundlessness that by definition can never be captured, measured, or mastered. The famous inexpressibility of reality now takes on a distinct ontological meaning. It is the structure of reality itself that, in part by encompassing all expression, in part by dissolving all thought of which itself is the source, cannot be indicated through the partial, eliminative process of making words and thinking thoughts.

Words of reasoning operate temporally and spatially; they take place over time; they seem to move us from misunderstanding here and now to fuller understanding there and then. To emphasize that reality is an open dimension of wholeness is also to emphasize that there is no *terra cognita* outside it. There is nowhere to go, cognitively or figuratively. The only gesture possible is to be present to wholeness.

Let us pursue a fuller picture of this relationship by considering a work that might be regarded as part of the legacy of *Authenticity*'s reflections on reasoning. For, if *Authenticity* indeed contributed to an early philosophical impulse in Bon, one would expect to see later developments of themes it introduces. And one does. As an example of this we briefly consider *Lamp of the Vehicles* (*Theg¹¹ pa che chung gong 'og rnam par 'byed pa'i gal mdo nges pa'i gtan tshigs dri med gsal sgron*).¹²

Lamp shares with *Authenticity* a focus on unbounded wholeness and, like it, brings forward the category of *tshad ma* to inquire into the apparently par-

11. Karmay 1977, *Catalogue*, spells this word *thegs*, but the Tibetan itself reads *theq*.

12. Like *Authenticity*, listed under No. 73 of Karmay 1977. There is only one edition of *Lamp*, a reproduction of the xylographic edition made from the blocks of Menri (*sMan ri*) Monastery in Tsang (*gTsang*). See the appendix to this volume. The section discussed here begins at 502.5. Although we do not know what, if any, historical circumstances connected the two works, *Lamp of the Vehicles* (*Theg pa che chung gong 'og rnam par 'byed pa'i gal mdo nges pa'i gtan tshigs dri med gsal sgron*) deals with issues very similar to the ones our text has laid out. *Lamp*'s author, 'Gro mgon blo gros rgyal mtshan, was a Lama of Yeru Ensakha (see Wangyal, 2001: 256).

adoxical genesis of delusion and samsara from a primordially pure base. In addition, it describes in some detail the Nine Vehicles of Bon according to the systems of the Southern and Central Treasures (*gTerma*).

More specifically, the work is divided into three main sections. The first explains the meaning and significance of unbounded wholeness, a term that here, as in *Authenticity*, pertains to experience of one's own open awareness (*rang gi rig pa*). The second section focuses on the nature of unbounded wholeness, and the third on its activities. This third segment moves well beyond the arena of *Authenticity*, dwelling on the relationship between verbal explanations of unbounded wholeness and nonconceptual understanding of it, thereby exhibiting a self-consciousness about linguistic representation and metaphor that is absent (though arguably implicit) in *Authenticity*. Here we consider a subsection of *Lamp*'s analysis of the relation between verbal explanation and nonconceptual understanding.

"Someone might object," *Lamp* observes, that "whatever depends on signs or conventions is fabricated by the [conceptual] mind, but without depending on these it is impossible to communicate the teaching to others or produce [realization in] oneself." Realization can neither rely on signs nor be elicited without them. What's a reader, a learner, a practitioner, to do?

Authenticity's own premise, as we know, is that insofar as logic involves both conceptuality and effort, it cannot produce realization, which by definition is unproduced and uncontrived. *Lamp*'s position is a bit more radical:

There is no mental fabrication [in the resulting realization] because
this is a sign which induces understanding; meaning is indicated
through a verbal convention, like a finger pointing at the moon.¹³

This appears to beg the issue so central to *Authenticity*—the incommensurable tension between words and wordless understanding. Yet, except for noting and poetically or metaphysically circumventing this conundrum, *Authenticity* does not inquire deeply into related epistemological assumptions.

Lamp however considers this matter closely. In particular, it considers a cogent objection: if there were no proof-establishing connection between the actual state of realization and conventional expressions, there would be no way to indicate unbounded wholeness. Nevertheless, a connection between the two suggests either that unbounded wholeness is one with the expression or arises from it and thus (unacceptably) is itself a conditioned phenomenon.

The text's solution is to maintain that because unbounded wholeness is

¹³. This phrase is found in a passage of the *Kathāsaritsāgara* VIII.32–33 (see Penzer 1952 vol. 5, p. 141, chapter LXIV.144). The rough translation is as follows: "A certain fool who wanted to look at the new moon was told by a man who had seen the new moon, 'Look in the direction of my finger!' He took [his eyes] away from the sky and looked at the finger of that same [man]. He stood [there] and did not look at the moon but looked [instead] at the people laughing [at him]." (Thanks to Jonathan Silk, personal communication, for this citation.)

not *actually* established by conventional expressions, its connection with such expression is also not actually or truly established. There is therefore no relationship either of oneness or causality. But, “even without such an inherent relationship, it is not impossible to indicate [unbounded wholeness] as a finger indicates the moon.” If the finger actually touched or reached to the moon, if conceptual thought actually touched unbounded wholeness, there would be the problem of mental fabrication, but the finger, the statement, simply sets one in the right direction, training the eyes skyward, as it were, and thereby facilitating, but not itself transforming into, direct experience. The finger does not meet the moon, just as reasonings do not bring the mind to unbounded wholeness.

After a few more observations on this topic, *Lamp* considers reasons that refute and establish unbounded wholeness. This consideration leads it to discuss two authentic knowers: objectively empowered authentic cognition (*stobs shugs kyi tshad ma*) and a type of authentic cognition that is well known to others (*gzhan grags kyi tshad ma*).¹⁴

Here in the system of the special unsurpassed Great Completeness such [objectively empowered] authentic cognizers are not established. The correct meaning of the natural condition is not settled [by such cognition] for that which is conjoined with extremes cannot settle what is free from extremes *just as a pot cannot indicate the sky*.¹⁵ But if someone thinks that there is a discontinuity in the authentic cognition which ascertains the natural condition, this is not so. {*Lamp* 516.5ff.; emphasis added}

A pot’s contained space is what makes it a pot. Yet, a pot neither indicates the essence that space in general symbolizes nor fosters any understanding of it. In these ways, pot here signifies that which does not indicate the ultimate. But a finger, though it does not actually touch the moon, can point to it, thereby

14. In addition to *Lamp*’s argument here, it is interesting that these authenticators, like other consciousnesses mentioned in *Lamp*, have names that occur neither in *Authenticity* nor in any Buddhist text that we know. At the same time, they bear a clear structural similarity to the authentic inferences (*rjes dpag tshad ma*) mentioned in Mind and Awareness (*blo rig*) materials of later Buddhist scholasticism—that is, *stobs zhugs kyi tshad ma* to *dgongs stobs rjes dpag* and *gzhan grags kyi tshad ma* to *grags pa'i rjes dpag*. See Napper 1980: 77ff. *Lamp* refutes objectively empowered authentic cognition in the present segment; it refutes the nonexistence of authentic cognition that is well known to others beginning at section 512.2, and it refutes apparent contradictions between these positions beginning at 514.4.

15. We note here the use of the term “settle” instead of “reason” (see chapter 1). *Authenticity* rarely uses *rigs* to signify a reason; it is more frequently used to describe a certain type of mind (*rigs shes*) (for example, 70.6, 71.1, 71.3, 87.1, 89.2, 104.3) or reasoning consciousness or to observe that a statement is not reasonable (*mi rigs*) (for example, 58.3, 76.5, 80.3, 84.1). Less frequently it will observe that something is “established by reason” (*rigs pas grub*) (8.6, 89.1, 104.6, 119.3, 119.4) but never with specific reference to the three marks of a fully qualified reason (*tshul gsum*), which term itself never occurs in the text at all. Still, to speak of *rigs* facilitates reflection on how a conceptual process relates to fingers and pot.

offering a method, a supporting circumstance, that motivates one to turn toward the moon.¹⁶

Thus, despite a huge gap between finger and moon, and likewise between reasoning and open awareness, a finger can direct one toward the moon, just as logic can guide one in the general direction of open awareness and unbounded wholeness. In *Lamp*'s use of this metaphor, the finger also points to a circumscribed discontinuity between words and the nonconceptual reality they indicate. The example of the pot dramatizes the point, exemplifying an inability to indicate the very ultimate with which it (like all phenomena) participates. The *White Shen Deity Mindheart Scripture* cited toward the end of *Authenticity* says: "Nothing can be proved by destroying with the sound of reasonings" {109.1}. Yet, the discontinuity between ordinary conceptuality and nonconceptual open awareness, so explicit in *Authenticity*, is in *Lamp* set in the context of a broader continuity between, for example, moon and finger.

We are not surprised to read here that if reasoning were to cause open awareness, then open awareness would sometimes exist and would sometimes not, depending on the availability of its causes. But *Lamp* does not let the issue rest here:

If someone thinks there is a discontinuity in the authentic cognition which ascertains the abiding state, this is not so. There is indeed a nature in which nothing is established and nothing is negated; still, for those who have not realized this, refutations for deluded views do conventionally exist, and also the correct meaning is established by that [conventional authentic cognition]. *{Lamp 516.6ff.}*

Words, like fingers, have sufficient connection to the moon of unbounded wholeness to set us in the right direction. Authentic open awareness of the abiding state is ever and spontaneously present. However, *Lamp* here comes very close to maintaining that authenticating cognition—a mind, which according to the larger discourse on *pramāṇa* is usually, by definition, conventional and conditioned—is, for all intents and purposes, constant and unconditioned. These are its crucial perceptual and existential properties. These are also its two inseparable types of continuity, epistemological and ontological. Being is seeing.

Epistemologically, there is the ongoing awareness of unbounded wholeness; there was never a first moment when the subject became authenticated or the subject performed this authentication. This is an idea consonant with *Authenticity*. For, says *Lamp*, "Because the methods or branches for realizing this state arise unceasingly, there is also the unceasing occurrence of the au-

16. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Kathmandu, February 1999, oral commentary.

thentic cognition which realizes this" (*Lamp* 517.2). What distinguishes *Lamp* is its claim, surprising in terms of classic Indic discussions of *pramāṇa*, that there is no discontinuity in the authentic cognition that ascertains the abiding state. Like *Authenticity*, *Lamp* finds such authentic awareness to be free from the effortful process of focusing because there is neither subject nor object; likewise, it is free from any effortful mind because there is neither negating nor establishing (*dgag sgrub*), which, by definition, require conceptuality and therefore effort. In this way, some of the main points, as well as the use of debate found in *Authenticity*, are present in this work. Still neither *Authenticity* nor *Lamp* sees correct reasoning as integral to the path. An "unceasing occurrence of authentic cognition" must be tapped into, not created. They do not understand meditation as a process of developing an image (*don spyi*) of the ultimate that gradually devolves into direct perception.¹⁷

Ontologically, unbounded wholeness is present in all "things," which are actually its own dynamic display. We have spoken of this already. Now, however, such ontology is framed as justification for yet another type of continuity, described at the conclusion of *Authenticity*. This is the continuity between reality and expressions of and through it in the voice of Samantabhadra. In this context, epistemological continuity is reframed as an awareness that identifies itself as Samantabhadra. Indeed, the figure of Samantabhadra, as we have suggested from the outset, makes it possible to bring these otherwise incompatible paradigms of knowing and being into alignment. This mythic relationship of Samantabhadra to textual expression also stands in implicit and even ironic backdrop to the various narratives of the text's discovery referred to in *Authenticity*'s colophon.

Thus, in their emphasis on authenticating open awareness, both *Authenticity* and *Lamp* bring together the principles of Indian epistemology and its emphasis on *pramāṇa* and Dzogchen in ways that, by and large, Nyinmga Buddhism has not. It is possible, though unprovable, that this occurred partly because Bon is correct in claiming that it had earlier connections with India (through Gilgit and Tagzig) than Tibetan Buddhism had, and thus it became aware of and interested in questions of *pramāṇa* when Dzogchen was still in a relatively formative state. Or there may be other explanations for the uniquely Bon interest in this project of bridging *pramāṇa* and Dzogchen discourse, explicitly using debate, logic, and sutric epistemological inquiry to interrogate Dzogchen assumptions. At this stage of our knowledge, we remain embarrassingly speculative; yet, as suggested throughout these pages, there is

17. Although Madhyamaka also finds emptiness all pervasive and everywhere, it never takes this particular tack regarding reasoning; its concerns revolve around the possibility of a conventional thesis that functions to bring home the ultimate meaning. See Klein 1991, especially chapters 4 and 9.

evidence of a fairly independent strand of reflection proceeding under the Bon rubric, even while profound similarities with Nyingma Dzogchen further support the well-established hypothesis that Bon and Buddhist Dzogchen may well have shared some common sources.¹⁸

In order better to understand the relationship of *pramāṇa* to the Dzogchen significance of continuity—a relationship that the text states but never elaborates—let us now return to the theme of authenticity and the ways in which tropes of scripture, essential precepts, and the voice of reality itself converge in our text. These considerations bring us to the final section of *Authenticity*.

Samantabhadra, Scripture, and Continuity

The most fundamental fissures that divide reasoning from direct perception and reflexively authentic open awareness are nowhere clearer than in this culminating section of *Authenticity*, where the emphasis on averbal transmission becomes most radical and clearly defined.

This conclusive unwinding of the text's central principles returns to the theme of continuity noted in its opening pages and, centuries later, elaborated in *Lamp*. This continuity is now put forward as a unique feature attesting to the superiority of Dzogchen; importantly, this is a continuity not only of realization or unbounded reality but also of the spontaneous ongoing presence of the essential precepts themselves. Such continuity is an esoteric revisioning of concerns earlier in Buddhist history for establishing the validity of *Buddhavacana*.¹⁹ Over the course of time, the requirement of a historical relationship with Buddha was loosened considerably, authenticity was constrained primarily by the correctness, variously assessed, of doctrinal perspectives and accord with reality. At the outset of *Authenticity* we read: “Likewise, authentic scripture settles the mindnature through all the words of the Tathāgatas” {53.4–5}. Our text sets forth no criteria for textual authenticity, though it does expect authentic texts to be a method for engaging open awareness. Although it is important not to contradict scripture {75.6}, we are not here given any criteria for establishing which scriptures should not be contradicted. Most significant here is that authentic essential precepts are regarded as an uninterrupted continuum of the word, that is, of “essential precepts derived from the experience [of enlightened beings]” {53.5}.

Fundamentally, then, authentic scripture is so because it “settles the mind-

18. See Karmay 1988: 219.

19. Davidson 1990 surveys these criteria.

nature" by way of the Tathāgata's utterances, and the uninterrupted continuum of that word unfolds as essential precepts for showing the mind to its own mirror. Early on, we saw, *Authenticity* cites *Heart of Essential Precepts*:

When this errorless essential precept is shown
 Your own mind is effortlessly known,
 Hope and doubt gone, fruition comes on. {53.2}

Only toward the end of the text do we get a sense of what distinguishes genuine scripture and, thus, essential precepts:

The very essence, unadorned by either the faults of cyclic existence or the good qualities of nirvana, the superior essential nature dimension (*ngo bo nyid gyi sku, svabhāvikakāya*), the primordial wisdom of the primordial meaning which belongs neither to Buddhas nor sentient beings, having been realized and understood by Samantabhadra, having taken that essence from the center of Samantabhadra's heart-mind (*thugs*), explained through the blessings [of Samantabhadra],²⁰ this is the definitive authentic scripture of the teacher. {109.6–110.1}

Soon, however, we suddenly read what we might have thought would come earlier, a set of quasi-criteria for valid scriptures. The very placement of this point so close to the text's conclusion, raises a question: does validity hinge on proper reasoning? Does authenticity?

OBJECTION: If there are such scriptures of the definitive teacher, do these have reasoning or not? If they do, what is it?

RESPONSE: If valid scriptures have no reasoning, they would be indefinite and dubious; they have four great reasonings (*gtan tshigs*): (1) Those stated by the bon-dimension Buddha, (2) teaching simply the definitive meaning, (3) special features of secret mantra, (4) general commentary on all vehicles, fulfilling all needs. All these being fulfilled there is definitely a scripture of the teacher. These become a resource for the faithful. {112.5–113.1}

We can almost read this as a condensed expression of cultural tensions crucial to the imperial era when, we are told, *Authenticity* was composed. We know that reasoning was gaining greater cultural prestige during this period. It was, after all, part of the process by which Tibet came to distinguish itself as a power to contend with in the ancient world. Here we see *Authenticity* claim reasoning

^{20.} The point is that his teachings arise through his own blessings, in connection with his own experience, so no effort is involved.

as a significant criterion in its own reckoning of scriptural authority, yet the four points above do not speak of reasoning as such but, rather, of broader qualities of discourse.

The first of these, that they be stated by the bon-dimension Buddha, the *bon sku*, is both similar to and very different from the text's earlier attempts to establish authentic scriptures. On the one hand, such reasons must be attributable to the original authority of the tradition. On the other hand, that original authority is here not an emanation but reality itself. On what grounds could such an attribution possibly be tested? Only, perhaps, if the reasons and essential precepts emerging from reality were in fact methods for recognizing that reality in oneself.

King Trisong Detsen (*Khri srong lDe btsan*) was himself apparently interested in the linked realms of spiritual and imperial authority. He authored, or perhaps had authored in his name, a text called *The Authenticity of the Word* (*bKa' yang dag pa'i tshad ma*).²¹ Reason is here an object of delight; this is not surprising. During this period, the organizing powers of reason were valuable to the newly emerging empire for their role in bringing coherence to a newly complex administrative organization.

Whatever else it does, *Authenticity* is certainly making a reasoned case for the viability of Dzogchen as a system of thought and thus capable of engaging a newly emerging cultural domain. To this extent, it is a bid for prestige and protection. Philosophically, it draws on simple, yet important principles to organize an increasingly complex perspective in a manner appealing to intellectual, mythic, poetic, and religious sensibilities of the new order. Still, however much of a nod it gives to reasoning, in the end it will follow its heart to a more holistic sense of what constitutes the most potent kind of knowing. To this extent, it is a bid for the increased devotion and perseverance of its adherents, and its refusal to be wholly bound by the reasoning it so vigorously engages can possibly be seen as an attempt to create a new kind of religious space for Bon in the emerging milieu.

To some degree the struggles of this work around the location of authority and authenticity are similar in contour to the shift that occurred in the West between Platonic and Cartesian styles of approaching "reality." In the ancient Greek world, knowing reality was significantly, if never exclusively, a matter of attuning to an already existent ideal or truth. After Descartes, and more akin to the Dignāga-Dharmakīrti agenda, the process was understood to be an exploration of the range and laws of valid knowledge, of becoming an authentic

²¹. Kapstein (2000: 45) briefly mentions this work, noting its implication in the twin processes of making sense and seizing political control through the newly discovered efficacy of writing and reasoning, especially the reasonableness of the karma-samsara narrative.

viewer who could judge or perceive according to those canons.²² In the West, concomitant with this shift, is the move to what Charles Taylor calls the “quintessentially modern doctrine” of divine right. Only a special granting of divine power to kings could avoid the chaos ready to precipitate in a society thought to be constituted of persons not “by nature” bound to any authority, among whom no natural systems of authority could be assumed.²³

Although, of course, the situation in Tibet is widely different from the above, there are certain homologous themes. A king ruling over a broader realm than the hitherto “Tibetan” region of the Yarlung Valley would need profound authority. It is clear that neither the local inhabitants nor the myriad local deities were up to working things out on their own, as tales swirling in the background of *Authenticity* will attest. In short, there was, and is, in these debates regarding authority a great deal at stake in terms of the construction of self-knowledge; certain empire-building concerns might have infused this reflection to a degree.

In any case, *Authenticity* will now, at its conclusion, come down even more strongly than before on the side of an attunement or resonance model of knowing. Now, authentic awareness of reality is even more emphatically not an approach to reality: it is not a reflection on reality but, rather, an acknowledgment of full consonance with it. To an important degree, the text makes this plain by allowing the metaphysical-mythic dimensions of Samantabhadra to express, embody, and in that sense hold the whole, rather than leave reasoning to defend it. Here, unlike in referential language, expression is embodiment. Meaning arrives with it, not through it. In that sense, meaning is as mythic as it is philosophical. Further, the mythic element here includes an appreciation of, and confidence in, specific subjective states. Bon may not have had imperial ambitions or possibilities at that time, but it did want to make claims about the viability of Dzogchen as a system—a system that was much under attack from the late tenth century onward, during which period *Authenticity* is said to have been discovered.

Putting forward a defining vision of Dzogchen—which the body of literature contextualizing *Authenticity* certainly aims to do—also promised to give Bon a more public face. In any case, defending the kingdom of Dzogchen, as it were, required a very special strategy, one that would be in consonance with the Dzogchen view and would also define it as distinct from the powerful ethos of *pramāṇa* (especially if, as many scholars would argue, *Authenticity* was not actually written until after the tenth century). To this end, in the passage directly following the reflections on reasoning cited above, we see a significant reframing of the crucial qualities of scripture:

22. See Taylor 1989: 197ff.

23. Taylor 1989: 194–195.

The *Sun Pervading the Thousand Directions* says:

Through the blessings of the Bon-dimension
Samantabhadra errorlessly taught the definitive meaning. {113.2}

Here the text rejoins a theme only hinted at in its early pages, the proactive power of “blessings” associated with reality. Resonance with and receptivity to these are the ultimate method. From this perspective, it is entirely fitting that in its closing, the rhetoric of debate devolves into simple, straightforward enumerations, a pattern analogous, perhaps, to the way in which, among practitioners, conceptual argument may open to steadfast internalization of simple principles. For the first time we learn that “continuity,” a word we have noted from the outset means an ongoing occurrence that transpires across three crucial existential synapses: those associated with meditation in a given lifetime, with the death and rebirth process, and with the actual achievement of Buddhahood. This is the state of Samantabhadra, in which “open awareness is altogether steadfast” {122.1}.

In the opening section of our discussion, we proposed that the “figure” in relation to which otherwise problematic matters of the text made sense was Samantabhadra, equally present in mind, mindnature, mindnature’s open awareness of itself, and—as a close reading of the concluding section of the text reveals—in the scriptures that explain the continuous connection among these. Here again, a certain type of mythic element comes into play. Another way to say this is that the metaphysical narrative of the text may seem familiar enough to a reader for whom the world is fundamentally something alive, something to be experienced in its plentitude rather than summarized, and in that sense become subordinate to the administration of ideas.²⁴ In that kind of world, it is possible to have a different sort of relationship with a text than that of a reader gleaning information—something approximating the contemplative style of reading described by Paul Griffiths, in which one takes in meaning slowly, deeply, and in accordance with particular methods.²⁵ These methods in turn involve participating in a larger order, a perspective more Platonic than Cartesian in style.

Ancient philosophy, writes Pierre Hadot, believed in the “ontological value of the spoken word.” Such words were not valued solely as information-bearing ciphers but were intended “to produce a certain psychic effect in the reader or listener.”²⁶ Hadot was studying Greco-Roman antiquity, but this observation holds true for much of India and Tibet as well.

24. This paradigm could also, of course, serve the development of an imperial state.

25. Griffiths 1999. We have noted Griffiths’ emphasis on the term “religious reading,” which he contrasts to great effect with “consumerist reading”: 42–44. In the Indian context, specifically, he notes that “works are read [heard], reread, memorized, pondered upon, excerpted, commented upon, chewed over, smelled and incorporated. This is what religious readers do; it is not what consumerist readers do” (147).

26. Hadot 1995: 20.

The presence of Samantabhadra, the ultimate voice and authenticity of the text, means that there is something in the text that is also in the reader.²⁷ The task of the reader therefore is not simply to understand the logic of the words but to allow them to arrive and resonate deeply, and to share subjective space with them. This is far more obvious, of course, in ritual or meditation texts, in which the principle is made explicit through practices such as guru yoga, the cultivation of concentration, or meditation on emptiness. Yet the same principle is present here, even if not explicitly enacted by the reader in the reading. We call this mythic in the way that Snell describes the term, as reaching “beyond the outlines of the natural world, seeing that the genesis of concepts, feelings, desires, decisions and so forth is also associated with the intervention of the gods.”²⁸

Although we may substitute “cosmic blessings” for “gods,” *Authenticity* does not assume the kind of sealed-off interiority that Clifford Geertz, and others, identify with modern (mostly Western) individuality.²⁹ The premise of continuity here connects outside and inside, not as an abstract philosophical principle but as cultural and epistemological premises. Even though we are unable to say precisely how Tibetan subjectivity was construed, we cannot assume that traditional readers of *Authenticity* constructed selfhood or its relation to reasoning as inheritors of Greek and European thought might do today. If, as Kapstein suggests, Trisong Detsen valued “the legislative role” of reason to help hold his burgeoning kingdom together,³⁰ it is equally clear that he by no means relied on this alone. No ruler, or practitioner, could. To the extent that *Authenticity* is a systematic presentation, reasoning provides some “assurance [*la certitude*] in the soul” to use Hadot’s term,³¹ but it remains for a genuine internal shift, such as the disclosure of open awareness, to provide the continuity of trust and confidence characteristic of Dzogchen understanding.

For *Authenticity*, the authenticity of scripture lies at least as much in the blessings—literally, the “gift waves” (*sbyin rlabs*)—that bring it about, as in its actual words. Authentic scriptures are intrinsically dynamic in the way that Samantabhadra, and thus mindnature itself, is dynamic; however, their efficacy, the text now seems to say, lies neither in description nor in reasoning—not really in words at all. This is a notable shift from *Authenticity*’s earlier

27. This, again, resonates with Griffiths’s category of “religious reading.” It has deep antecedents in the West. When Aristotle says that “actual knowledge is identical with its object,” he is suggesting that knowledge does not reside strictly in the subject but also to some extent in the object. *De Anima* 425b.26–27; cited, discussed, and contrasted with Locke and Descartes by Taylor 1989: 186.

28. Snell 1953: 223. Snell also notes that “Homer’s man does not yet regard himself as the source of his own decisions; that development is reserved for tragedy. . . . The soul of a man is the deity transplanted into him. For what was later known as the ‘life of the soul’ was at first understood as the intervention of a god” (31).

29. See Klein 1995: 25–57 and Klein 1997, as well as Aronson 2004:19–31.

30. Kapstein 2000: 45–46.

31. Hadot 1995: 22. See also Hadot 1993: 16.

forthright interest in argumentation: that is, in the expressive power of words. Conceptual authentication has no place in actual Dzogchen practice, however important it may be in Dzogchen studies.

Thus we arrive at the alogical conclusion toward which the text has been moving all along and which we can only now appreciate. We have seen that the text expresses itself in ways that are unbound by the linearity of conventional logic, even as it aligns itself with reason's rigor. Overall, it lifts a voice that follows the form not only of syllogistic reasoning but also of poetic exploration. After all, we have already been told that neither description nor reasoning is the acme of scriptural performance. If it is impossible even for the reality dimension (*dharma-kāya*) Samantabhadra to indicate mindnature as "this" because of the incompatibility of verbalization and realization of the whole—Shenrab has a similar conundrum at the work's close. As it did in the earlier instance, *Authenticity* cites *Scripture of Blissful Samantabhadra*:

This is the heart of the Great Completeness:
 One being indefinite, there are many
 Many not occurring, a dwelling as one,
 A non-difference between one and many
 Even nonexistence itself passes beyond nonexistence.
 The convention of saying "beyond"
 Has not been stated even by Shenrab. {123.5–6}

Two important points for us here: First, that the theme of undecidability—which has been presented as a correlate of wholeness—is reintroduced in order to support the contention of continuity. Undecidability, in addition to being characteristic of unboundedness, now emerges somewhat more precisely as a category that reveals and undermines the propensity of verbal expression to limit or disrupt the continuity of wholeness. At this juncture, the text brings in the following from the *Essential Heart of Samantabhadra Tantra* (*Kun bzang thugs kyi snying po'i rgyud*):

In unbounded wholeness, mindnature beyond conventions
 All bon are primordially Buddha.
 Being effortlessly situated in that state, and
 Breaking from the body, in an instant one is Samantabhadra. {124.4}

This describes a continuity more epistemological than temporal. The need to express such natural and uninterrupted continuity requires *Authenticity* to distinguish fissuring, oppositional language from the supportive and ongoing stream of scriptural expression. In other words, rather than reading the claims of Dzogchen textual origins as suspicious textual hagiography, we do well to see it as a metaphysical, even poetic, evocation of the kind of subjective truth or authenticity that is central to Dzogchen perspectives. Like the historical record of *Authenticity*'s discovery, the subject of our next two chapters, this is

not a tale of objective facts offered for scientific scrutiny; there is another kind of scholarly and human exploration behind it, and within this framework it stands as a profoundly important subjective truth: the obtainable subjective state Dzogchen identifies as open awareness's recognition of itself as an unbounded wholeness. And this text, keenly aware of its own place in and resonance with that wholeness, turns for the first time to an ontology of scriptural presence.

Most important, in this section of *Authenticity*, we see that authentic scriptures are the direct expression *from*—not *about*—reality. This too harks back to ancient Indian ideas of words—that they have ontological heft. They demonstrate this by their very existence, not simply by what they say. Scriptures arise from the heart of effortlessness to express the spontaneous mindnature, the base that exists prior to any division into Buddhas and sentient beings. This is what is most valuable about them. Scripture itself decries such descriptive phrases as inferior:

Though coal be beautified, there is no tree.
Though descriptive phrases be written, they are
inferior to scripture. {108.5}

Emphasizing the point, *Scripture of Blissful Samantabhadra* says:

Like the baby Garuda who breaks its egg and flies full force,
“Breaking away [from the body] one is liberated”—even this
does not describe it. {124.1–2}³²

Words, apparently, do not scriptural authenticity make. The stunning point here is the principles pertinent to authentic scripture themselves teach the authenticity of open awareness. This, finally, is how scripture becomes the authentic method it is claimed to be at the opening of *Authenticity*. Scripture, like open awareness, has the kind of completeness that correlates with effortlessness and spontaneity. Not inconsequentially, by realizing these, which means recognizing or arriving at one's own nature as Samantabhadra, one is enlightened:

Regarding this, the *Unbounded Wholeness, the Changeless, Ceaseless Essential Heart* (*g.Yung drung snying po nyag gcig*) says:

If one realizes the essential precepts dwelling spontaneously
during the three intervals

³² Bon cosmology tells how the Garuda makes its nest in space, and when the egg breaks, the baby bird is already as powerful as its mother. Similarly, the practitioner who has an authentic experience of open awareness also possesses power that is complete, so that when the shell of the body breaks, the full power is there—one can fly as a Buddha.

From then on one's own mind is the body of bon
 Hence, at the moment of separating from the body
 One is a Buddha, manifesting the great bliss which itself is
 The excellent Samantabhadra. {122.4}

To “realize the essential precepts” now comes to mean not simply realizing the words but also understanding that their existence is sewn into the very fabric of reality, and thus that they are literally a “sutra”—the metaphysical intertwining of words, mind, and reality, primordially sutured together as scripture.

Finally, in the very last stanza of the work, we see what can be interpreted as an ultimate sealing of the fissure between the different kinds of speech the text has adumbrated. *Authenticity*'s focus on establishing through reasoning seems to dissolve at the same time that the art of using the settling-out language of *gtan tshigs* becomes conflated with the “miraculous speech” of scripture {125.5}, both of which “are explained for the sake entering the path to enlightenment” and which “open the heart of Samantabhadra”:

Essential Heart of Samantabhadra says:

When setting silk on crystal
 We see color, because of the silk
 While the crystal itself is unaltered. Similarly,
 The bon-nature itself, self-risen wholeness, open awareness,
 Though seen and imputed as many by the systems of eight and nine
 vehicles
 Is not all [these], but only wholeness.
 Therefore, even all these are not beyond the very essence.
 They are causal branches of partial description, not at all contradictory.
 {125.4}

So finally the settling-out language, which is partial in nature, becomes in effect scriptural, whereby it is authentic and holistic. Scripture, in contrast, though naturally authentic, becomes viable cultural material due to settling-out language and reasoning. Furthermore, settling-out language, once coalesced with scripture, becomes newly valorized (if not more authentic) precisely because it is seen through the freshly available recognition of open awareness. For, in its primordial wisdom, reasoning and scripture, like all that exists, are recognized as a dynamic display from the source. This, however, can only be suggested at the very close of the text, when the primordial gold has been, however figuratively, unburied. The unbegun continuity of that primordial wisdom is now assimilated to—and also assimilated from—the spontaneous

emergence of scripture from reality itself. Indeed, the mutual mingling of the co-configuring currents of wisdom and scripture is a central premise here. By the time of its closing poetic sequences *Authenticity* has folded into its own sourceless source and beginningless production. The art of enlightenment is in part an art of remembering, of seeing the already complete.

The full measure of this resolution into authenticity emerges as the text has moved, gradually, from an apparent emphasis on indefinite analysis to a disclosure of the confident certainty that grounds this resolution. Reasoning can question; it can never be confident: Its very intent to seek an answer, to be correct, colors it with *zhen pa*, an attraction to something other than what directly presents itself. Reasoning inevitably parts the waters of oceanic completeness, possibly revealing something of interest on the briefly accessible ocean floor below, but never for very long. And it never reveals wholeness. *Authenticity* swiftly closes the rupture that reason reveals. Again and again, *Authenticity* lets reasoning come to the brink of such oppositionality, parting the waters as it were, and invites the voice of scripture to let them loose and comingle once again. Scriptural presence presides in *Authenticity*, also, often explicitly, as the voice of Samantabhadra.

That Samantabhadra is a figure of completeness and resolution becomes especially clear in one of the most deeply read texts from the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung, Commentary on the Twenty-One Stakes*. The *Twenty-One Stakes* is declared to be “the essential precepts (*man ngag*) from the mind-transmission of nine Tathāgathas.” In other words, it is precisely the kind of authentic scripture *and* essential precepts of which *Authenticity* speaks. In this work, well known to traditional readers of *Authenticity* though from a different stratum of Bon teachings, each of the twenty-one “stakes” or “linchpins” or chapters that seal the meaning of reality opens with an homage to Samantabhadra, an homage that shifts chapter by chapter to reflect the way Samantabhadra is the presence of whatever aspect of reality that chapter reveals. Taken together, they demonstrate that “the All-Goodness (Samantabhadra) is a self-arisen body of wholeness, an ocean that cannot be consumed by ladling.”³³ It is an inexhaustible ocean, spooning out water will never deplete it.

In the recurring homages of the *Twenty-One Stakes*, the two terms of Samantabhadra’s name, Tibetan *Kun* (all) and *bZang* (good),³⁴ are glossed in a variety of ways as the work proceeds. At the outset, “all” beckons toward the theme of inclusivity, explicitly glossed as “whatever arises, appears or exists.”³⁵

33. *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* 109.1.

34. *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* 523.1.

35. This brings to mind a central principle of Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*, namely, that “Goodness itself is unity,” as *Philosophia* tells Boethius (p. 125 Book IV.9 and earlier). But quite unlike his muse, this text does not hold that all human activity depends on two things, will and power—no, wisdom depends on blessings, which is perhaps a kind of power after all.

“Good” is likened to the great empty sky, on which terms like good or bad, great or small, high or low, far or near, have no purchase.

Later glosses render “all” as referring to “*samsara* and *nirvana*,”³⁶ whereas “good” becomes the equivalent of what *Authenticity* finds authentic, “the reflexive and majestic knowing of open awareness” (*rang shes rig gi rgyal po*). (Note *Zhang Zhung*’s use of the term *shes rig* here, emphasizing ever further the awareness function of *rig pa*. It does not mean *rig pa* is a *shes pa*, a consciousness.) Later, the “All-Good” is simply equated with reflexive open awareness.³⁷ This is the point on which *Authenticity* itself begins and ends and by which it is contained. The All-Good, Samantabhadra, is triply present as the origin, arising, and fundamental nature of all things. Origin and arising themselves are expressions of an intrinsic dynamic.³⁸ This is what authenticity is and what it yields. This triple, indeed pervasive, presence of Samantabhadra is never questioned; it is not an object of proof but the unproved prover. Or, in the language of the homages mentioned in *Twenty-One Stakes*, it demonstrates that primordial wisdom dawns as its own sky. More than a *rtags*, a sign of reason, Samantabhadra figures conviction and experience.³⁹

As it turns out, these same aspects are crucial to the suturing function of Samantabhadra in *Authenticity*. *Stakes* opens with an homage to Samantabhadra, “whose nature is bliss.”⁴⁰ Early in *Authenticity* we saw it proclaimed that “knowing me (Samantabhadra) is knowing all—Great bliss.” We suggested then and reiterate now that such bliss is a mark of wholeness; not something that proves or is proven, it simply is available to experience for one who recognizes completeness completely.

“God becomes God when creation says God,” observed Master Eckhart.⁴¹ For Derrida, this enigmatic statement hints at the way in which God is inevitably involved in the process of writing. He, like our author, sees something more than words at play in the act and art of writing:

36. *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* 530.1.

37. *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* 533.1 and, in separate homages, 533.6 and 338.6.

38. Janet Gyatso, following Bernard Faure, points out how the principle of “doubling” describes the relationship between *gter*, revealed treasures, and their origins. We will see this operating in tales of colophon, discussed in chapter 6. It is by no means accidental that these processes are understood to mirror each other. See Gyatso 1993: 132, as well as Faure 1991.

39. However problematic a category this may be in some contexts, there is no question that it is a category of conviction in the Tibetan Dzogchen corpus and collective. See Gyatso 1999 and Sharf 1998. Our text, however, is not referring here to the terms Gyatso discusses—“meditative experiences” of the *nyong-ba* or generic sorts of experiences—or even to the *nyams*, a term used both in derision and praise of events that transpire in the course of intense meditation. One of the characteristics of fruitional reflexive open awareness—not the hint of it that beginners have on the path, but its actual Samantabhadric essence—is that it is *not a nyams*: that is, it is not subject to caprice or alteration.

40. *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* 522.1.

41. The ramifications of this for writing seed some of Derrida’s most interesting reflections on writing, subjectivity, and an infinite essential. See Derrida 1978: 64–78.

The letter is the separation and limit in which meaning is liberated from its imprisonment in aphoristic solitude. No “logic,” no proliferation of conjunctive undergrowth can reach the end of its essential discontinuity and noncontemporaneousness, the ingenuity of its *understood* silences.⁴²

Derrida can make our text look modern; he shares its urgency to go beyond meanings and plumb the very process, the existential depths, of writing’s own meaning. At the same time, *Authenticity* emerges as most distinctly unmodern in its claim that meaning itself drives and is the writing. This is a divine presence both akin to and quite distinct from what Derrida means when he asks whether “the divine—the disappearance of man” is not announced in the very absences that distress all writing. For absences themselves participate in wholeness as *Authenticity* understands it. Absences, including under-standing, neither rupture nor distance the knowing reader’s connection with that wholeness.

The story of distressing absences to which Derrida refers is a story of longing, of the felt absence of wholeness. It is a familiar narrative insofar as it follows well-known patterns—patterns that are well articulated in the contemporary work of Ricoeur and others, in which stories are sequential and, as such, mirror the situation in which we find ourselves: finite beings with beginnings, middles, and ends. This is the pattern that structures the stories of our day-to-day lives. But this is not *Authenticity*’s vision of wholeness; *Authenticity* does not offer a closed or complete system in this manner. Unlike the progressive movement of narrative discourse, this triple presence is not, from its own authentic perspective, sequential. If, contra Ricoeur, we can agree to name as story that which has neither beginning, middle, nor end, then that nonsequencing is the story of Samantabhadra.⁴³ This is a different story—a story, one could almost say, of simultaneity.⁴⁴ Unlike narratives governed by time, this one is not heteronomous to anything; it is subject neither to time nor to space. Unbounded wholeness is invoked as a category that is not so much outside these temporal categories as the unmoving fulcrum of them. That such wholeness exists and can be known is settled at the outset of the text, as we have seen. And it is hard to argue against this point, given that the text also acknowledges, as does the tradition in general, that it is not something everyone will know. In any case, at this mythic depth of the textual stream,

42. Derrida 1978: 71, emphasis in the original.

43. For example, Ricoeur 1992: 113–168, especially 146–149. This position is central to Ricoeur’s 1984–1988 *Time and Narrative*.

44. Not, of course, simultaneity in the *Sarvastivādin* sense in which past, present, and future phenomena are explicitly simultaneous, but the simultaneity of all aspects of the primordial Samantabhadra. A further exploration juxtaposing these views could shed interesting light on both.

argument is really not the driving force. Samantabhadra simply is. To be present with this state of being is to be present with oneself, not to call something else by a new name. Being so incandescently aware is a type of “radical reflexivity” that does not divide one from the ultimate. Given that the ultimate is one’s abiding nature, this is a reflexivity that (unlike Taylor’s, who is thinking of Descartes’s and Locke’s withdrawal into the self at the expense of wholeness) is framed as whole and complete. Samantabhadra and unbounded wholeness are not the end of the story. Such unbounded wholeness differs from the nirvana that Steve Collins reads as the necessary conclusion of the Buddhist story as it unfolds in what he calls the Pāli *imaginaire*.⁴⁵ Unlike such a conclusion, either nirvana, Samantabhadra, or wholeness is the story’s center without periphery.

Or could this be what unbounded wholeness amounts to, after all? An attempt at closure? Or, perhaps, a blithe panacea to the understandable desire of frail and besieged beings for a complete, death-defying explanation with which they can close off inquiry? An attempt to be at rest, find closure, and an enclosed shelter through open-ended awareness? Can we even tell the difference between a wholeness that is open and one that is conclusive? I think we can, at the very least, imagine one.

In the final analysis, which we are rapidly approaching, reasoning arrives. Its arrival does not really provide proof of wholeness—though it does approach that role—but is inspired by and participatory with wholeness. For all its syllogisms, the mythic orientation wherein wholeness arrives only to be followed by logic, is powerful in *Authenticity*.⁴⁶ This may be key to the possibility of authentic scripture.

Hatab writes: “The problem with [Greek-European] philosophy is not that it moved away from mythical imagery, but simply that it took itself to be *nothing like* myth.”⁴⁷ In *Authenticity*, philosophy and myth open unique discursive spaces into which the other is welcomed and within which each bears a weight it would not have in a space maintained or disclosed only by itself. These syllogistic and poetic, or philosophical and mythic, spaces, in turn, are analogous to the intellectual, contemplative, and even downright yogic performances the text is meant to support. Indeed, the wide range of performances connected

45. Collins 1998: 126.

46. Cassirer 1955: 12 quotes Schelling’s *Philosophie der Mythologie* to suggest that myth is fully understood only if its process is fully understood. For Cassirer himself (1946: 14), myth is “one of the determining factors by which consciousness frees itself from passive captivity in sensory impression and creates a world of its own in accordance with a spiritual principle.” Release from such “passive captivity,” though in an altogether different context, is arguably also the purpose of those who “lack profound and correct experience” to whom *Authenticity* addresses itself [48.2–3]. The mythic element of *Authenticity*, and specifically of Samantabhadra, has to do with the mythic presence of presence itself.

47. Hatab 1990: 299.

with the work—interpersonal and intrapersonal debate, cultural preservation, meditative expansiveness, literary innovation—suggest a further reason for its need to be unified by more than reason, to be both coherent and multivocal.

Language has the potential to evoke wholeness and disrupt it as well. The vexed relationship between language and wholeness is a theme that stretches from the ancient world of Asia to the modern thought of the Americas. Jorge Luis Borges dramatizes it to great effect in the impassioned soliloquy of the prisoner Tzinacán. This man, once a priest of an ancient god is now a tormented denizen of the cavelike prison in one of Borge's most haunting stories, "The God's Script." Naturally, Tzinacán wants to be free. Given his circumstances, however, freedom would require divine intervention. In his torment, his mind turns to the possibilities of language and its relation to the divine, or the absolute.

"What type of sentence will an absolute mind construct?" he asks. He spends year after year probing this question in virtual darkness. During this time he occasionally glimpses the jaguar pacing in the cell next to his. Tzinacán seeks to remember the magical sentence left by his god to ward off ultimate evil. Catching sight again and again of the patterning in the jaguar's fur, he eventually recognizes this very pattern as the script he seeks. This script is part of the natural world, part of the nature of creation. With it he penetrates the mystery of his own question. He sees the all powerful words of creation hidden to him until now. With this understanding comes the power to destroy and break out of his prison walls. But this knowledge has transformed him. He no longer seeks freedom; he has it, right there in the dank darkness in which he has already died to his former self. The divine script that he finally discovers is able to "enunciate that infinite concatenation of fact . . . not progressively but instantaneously."⁴⁸

Borges and his protagonist have moved from dreaming an infinitely complex language of correspondence in "Funes the Memoria" to an infinitely simple, yet complete language of sheer and powerful presence. In doing so they have abandoned the Platonic narrative of cave-emergence, as well as linguistic sequencing. The authentic power of that language liberates him also from the need to use that power. Becoming a Buddha releases one from the perception that one is not, already, a Buddha. For *Authenticity*, the words that express this are part of the inviolable Buddha nature; as expressions of Samantabhadra, they are authentic scripture.

If Borges remythologizes language, radically wrenching it from any acquired tendency toward representational correspondence (the very type of correspondence Derrida also undermines), *Authenticity* invokes a mythos of lan-

48. Borges 1964: 171.

guage that has already been well established for its readers. This mythos is crucial to its rejection of two-truths structure and it also indicates *Authenticity's* keen interest in the metaphysical foundations of religious and scriptural inspiration. That foundational font turns out to be authenticity itself.

Perhaps Borges can help us here to perceive and appreciate *Authenticity's* position more clearly. This modern master is such a nimble sailor on the sea of words that he seems to write right into the wind of language itself. If we imagine inspiration as a force that propels language forward, Borges (and other great poetic theorists of language such as Derrida) seems to address the font of inspiration in a way that is broadly analogous to *Authenticity*. After all, like Tzinacán, *Authenticity* interrogates the possibility of holistic knowing and the kind of writing that might attend it. Thus, ripe with speech, only occasionally reeking with logic, it aligns itself with an early, pre-Buddhist Indian idea that speech can be characterized as *satya* in the sense of "related to being."⁴⁹ It is present not as an idea but as something more akin to lived reality, specific and subtle. Mimetically attuned to this are elements of speech that are more mythic than objective and more present than abstract. Mantras are an example of such "mythically" laden speech, resonant with enlightened qualities. Likewise, to perceive scripture as the voice of Samantabhadra is to perceive it as redolent with intrinsic significance. Such words are presentations, not (or not only) representations.⁵⁰ Whereas a two-truths theory invites reflection on the propositions, or language, by which truth is adjudicated and authenticated, a myth-like theory does not, though its relationship to language is no less complex.

Scriptures, as *Authenticity* now portrays them, may use propositions, but they do not really reveal truth through them. Instead, they disclose truth by being true. Scripture as reality, therefore, serves in *Authenticity* as a metonym for truth; it is what it reveals. In this it surpasses even the all-inclusiveness of Borges's divine words.

Certainly, at the very least, *Authenticity* provides a different presentation of language from that which we find in other *pramāṇa* (*tshad ma*)-related materials, where the principle of exclusion (*gzhan gsal, apoha*) is considered central to the functioning of thought, as well as to verbal and written expression.

We have been drawing a contrast all along between a mythic and reasoned approach. Reasoned, authenticating language operates with definiteness and is embedded in a soteriological process that has a beginning, known as ignorance or invalid perception, and a middle, during which one debates, meditates, or both; in the end, this results in valid perception and, finally, liberation. The *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, too, though it never uses the term *tshad ma*, presents essentially the same picture of open awareness as does *Authenticity*.

49. See Kapstein 2001: 212.

50. See Klein 1987, introduction and Chapter II.

This again suggests, if we needed any further persuading, that the term *tshad ma* here is being drawn into the service of a classic Dzogchen perspective, not in order to subordinate or even profoundly link Dzogchen with the principles associated with the study of logic.

This is an important point, for it speaks also to the issue of reason's place in the world of *Authenticity*. In the Aristotelian, post-Cartesian West, reason is the fulcrum on which objectivity turns—a technique free from subjective projections and idiosyncratic prejudices. For *Authenticity*, and much of Tibetan culture, reasoning is a locus of philosophically and politically potent rhetoric. During the time of Trisong Detsen, it was a tool by which others' views could be challenged and righted, by which political sovereignty could be advanced, and it was a method for state administration and organization. It was therefore a challenge not so much to subjectivity and superstition (as in post-Enlightenment Europe) as to diffuseness and shortsightedness in public, as well as religious, matters.⁵¹

Hayden White, following Genette, Benveniste, and others, distinguishes between an “objective narrative” in which “no one speaks, the events seem to tell themselves” and discourse, replete with subjectivity and first-person pronouns.⁵² The debates so prominent in the body of *Authenticity* are a mix of both—there are clearly speakers, yet the authorial orchestration of these voices is not clearly in evidence. The text lacks chapter headings and a table of contents. All we have are the very quiet divisions into one’s own and others’ tenets. In this sense, the debates are themselves a kind of chronicle of undated views. This kind of debate chronicle does not move in any clear way from past through present to future, in the manner of historical or fictional narratives, nor even, to a large extent, from proposition to conclusion.⁵³

It is important to distinguish between unbounded wholeness as a rhetorical device or systematic category and as a religiously significant modality, especially as figured by Samantabhadra. As the latter, it functions as a mirror for meditative experience (*nyams*) and realization (*rtogs*). The practitioner-reader of this text will read this work not only for information that allows Dzogchen assertions to be defended but also, as the text itself declared in the beginning, to remove erroneous conceptions directly addressing the limitations of those “who lack profound and correct experience” {49}. The text has revealed itself to be the very sort of a method for realization it describes early on {49.3} and

51. See Kapstein 2000.

52. White 1987; esp. 2–4.

53. The historical chronicles we reference here and in chapters 6 and 7 could be called “narratives,” and yet they are quite outside the kind of self-consciousness that White describes, especially the self-consciousness that necessitates keeping an appropriate boundary between what is factually knowable and what is not. What he calls “mythic narrative” finds no such compunction. But for us the situation is complex—for these texts often report events considered to be real, or at least events that possibly were actual, yet in translation are inevitably introduced into a cultural context where they are not likely to be so judged.

illustrates in its conclusion. Its authenticity arrives not by virtue of what it proves through reasoning but through its scriptural ability to let the winds of presence, of wholeness, that animate scripture further animate the open awareness the scholar-meditator has been cultivating. The “mirroring” quality occurs as the student reads the text for images, impressions, and insights that confirm what has shown up in his or her own meditative experience. And such confirming scriptural words or images strengthen those very experiences at the very same moment as the experiences are illuminating those scriptures.

Samantabhadra is the mythologized matrix and figure of this illumination. The mythic power invested in Samantabhadra, conflates with the authoritative power of the tradition, the text, and the Lama who imparts it. This ensures against a merely solipsistic encounter with this mirror of meaning. After all, *Authenticity* was never traditionally read outside the context of monastic life.

The normative powers with which Samantabhadra is mythically invested in the Bon tradition are particularly illuminated, we have already suggested, in the *Twenty-One Stakes*. Let us return briefly to a few more relevant points from that text.

The agency of Samantabhadra, having already been called self-dawning, is also indicated in an homage associated with the seventh Stake, “Emanation Body of Open Awareness.” This, explains the commentary, indicates that all marvelous displays (*cho 'phrul*) of open awareness indicate it to be the doer of everything (*kun gyi byed pa po*). Given the premises of this cultural worldview (which tends toward a unified theory of self and world) and of Dzogchen (which explicitly describes the subjective origins of everything), the agency of Samantabhadra is the agency of authenticity, and this is the same authenticity discovered in the practitioner.

Among the special qualities of which Samantabhadra is the source, perhaps the most important for our consideration is that of “clearing away the darkness of doubt”—indicating the intrinsic presence of trust (*gdeng*), which *Authenticity* glosses as “surety regarding experiences [arising from] meditation on the essential precepts.”⁵⁴ The power of essential precepts, the method for realizing wholeness (*Authenticity* {49.4}), lies neither solely nor perhaps even primarily with their words but, rather, with their status as “an uninterrupted continuum of the word, that is, of essential precepts derived from the experience [of enlightened beings]” {53.5}. We have considered these matters earlier. Now it becomes clear that the discussion of authentic methods is an intrinsic part of the subtle ontology of the Dzogchen view. This “uninterrupted continuum of the word” invokes the three kinds of transmission well known in Bon and Buddhist Dzogchen: the mind-to-mind transmission from Buddha mind itself (*dgongs rgyud*); the condensation of this into more localized signs and

54. *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* 544.4–5; *Authenticity* 61.1.

symbols (*brda rgyud*), which beam the transmission through time and space; and the form in which humans can understand the teaching—namely, the transmission of words into the ears of listeners (*snyan rgyud*).

These three are associated, respectively, with the flow “of blessings” from the unlocalizable space of realization to esoterically charged symbols, to and through the words of human language. The point is that these are in continuity, that the essential precepts are present in every case, that scripture is therefore, in and of itself, authentic. These are what Collins calls *systematic* categories.⁵⁵ They are not historiographical tools for narrating precise events or meanings or for specifying texts, times, persons, or even processes involved. They are, however, crucially important in allowing us to understand the mindset of those times and persons and how the texts they receive—in whatever form—are understood. We can apply this category to the more conventionally narrative form of the colophon. Mythic elements abound in the literature of reason and of historical narrative, as we shall soon see.

For traditional readers of this text, Samantabhadra presents what is most fundamental about one’s own mind. Unlike the Cartesian objectifying subject so familiar to Western modernities, this subject participates in the world and sees itself there; making this a world wherein subject and object are mutually engaged.⁵⁶

Samantabhadra is the ultimate awareness of this relationship, the very awareness that *Authenticity*’s meditator-reader-debater seeks to understand and experience. The debates defend this point of view, and the acknowledged project of the scholar-practitioners is to realize it.

The Tibetan *rtags*, which can be rendered most literally as “sign” and most functionally as “reason,” renders the Sanskrit *linga*. The term’s semantic range, its continuity of meanings, already suggests that we are in a world of discourse not to be understood only as a disembodied cognitive system of syllogistic proofs. *Linga*, after all, fundamentally means “anything attaching to an object.”⁵⁷ As connector, sign, and instrument of speech, it is language itself. It is also the manifester of language, the tongue making language physically possible and orally present, whereby language itself becomes the tongue, making connections with other minds and other meanings. What is the relationship between such speech and open awareness? “When speaks the soul, alas, the

55. Collins 1998: identified briefly on p. 3 and elaborated especially on 121–133.

56. For a roughly analogous worldview in the Western medieval period, when externally available elements like black bile were equated with internal states like melancholia, see Taylor 1989: 188–189. As Taylor observes, the Cartesian soul frees itself “not by turning away but by objectifying embodied experience” (1989: 146); by contrast, the Platonic soul realizes its eternal nature by becoming absorbed in its ideal form unavailable to the senses.

57. Thus, *lingam* is the male sexual organ and mythic phallus, paramount sign of the Indian god Śiva. Macdonell 1954: 262.

soul no longer speaks!" writes Ernst Cassirer.⁵⁸ Such tonguing is also a divining rod that, by touching an untongued, unlanguaged intimate space, brings release from all linguistic tethers and traces.⁵⁹ *Authenticity* is, in a very real sense, an homage to the mythic properties of linguistic emergence through an ultimate, authentic alinguistic but generatively potent and encompassing space.

In all these ways, it turns out that the binary of reasoned settling-out language and poetic declaration so essential to the structure of *Authenticity* is also disclosed as an intrinsic hermeneutical continuity. Poetry, lit from within by a mythic luminosity, has been a natural vehicle for putting forward such alogical and metaconceptual lore. At the same time, the philosophical principles rooted in such poetic expression are also given rigorous voice in *Authenticity*. Their interaction is isomorphic to the way that reasoning and open awareness are both part of that text and part of the overall makeup of any given practitioner.

Moreover, the text is about to release the reader into the colophon, which, whether originally part of the work or not, opens a third kind of discursive space. Now that the picture of *Authenticity*'s metaphysical and scriptural origins has been divulged, tales of the text's material production and transmission will for the first time place the work in a temporal, geographical, and cultural-historical framework. To probe the stories of the colophon is to find ourselves in a matrix of occult, mythic, and historical narratives, all of them claiming authority in relation to *Authenticity*.

58. Cassirer, tr. Suzanne Langer, 1946: 7.

59. For some compelling reflections on the connection between poetic language and mysticism, drawn from analyses of the work of Louis Massignon, see Kripal 2001: esp. 114–118. This remarkable book was graciously given to me by the author as I was completing the present manuscript. There are some important resonances, as well as real differences between Massignon's premises, as presented by Kripal, and those of *Authenticity*. Both acknowledge the mystical import of words, but unlike Massignon and like Dzogchen in general, *Authenticity* also valorizes experience, which it *not* understood always to be delineated by language. See also Gyatso 1999.

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PART II

Mythic and Historical Narratives of Discovery

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6

Colophon Kaleidoscope: Bon's Matrix of Authenticity

Authenticity 126.1–129.2

In the body of *Authenticity*, poetic and syllogistic voices provide a philosophically rich mythos about their own origins and purpose. As we know, the expansive metaphysical vision of *Authenticity* is signaled by its opening homage to Samantabhadra and by the centrality given to the principle of unbounded wholeness figured by Samantabhadra. The traditional Bon histories we consult here offer an equally vast panorama, filled with bold events and mythically enshrined human beings. The narrative surrounding *Authenticity* presumes the existence of Zhang Zhung, a geographical area with its own language, history, and mythic prestige. It presumes as well an early, often conflictual relationship between Zhang Zhung and Tibet, as well as between Bon and Buddhism, including events that precipitate the text's burial in the eighth century.

In important, if broadly defined, ways, the philosophical perspective and the larger Bon narrative in which it is embedded are similar; each depicts a movement that, originating in a vast unworldly realm, gradually makes itself known in the world and is contested there. The philosophical text and historically oriented colophon of *Authenticity* have, to borrow Ricoeur's term,¹ the same ultimate referent: vastness.

1. The analogy is indeed limited, yet strikingly useful. It is limited because Ricoeur is speaking primarily of the relation between history and fiction, and the “ultimate referent” to which he refers is humanity’s experience of time. It is useful because it allows us to think of ways in which both such narratives participate in a particular kind of cultural landscape and perspective. If Kant, in Ricoeur’s reading, “never rose above the horizon,” this landscape is both internal and external—a

Just as Samantabhadric awareness is contested by unawareness, the pristine Bon teachings are contested by political intrigue. In both cases, authenticity is challenged.

Authenticity depicts open awareness's authentic power by carefully moving away from a story of origins, discrediting the view that causes produce such an awareness; it is a narrative of intrinsic presence set in motion by a descent of "blessings" from Samantabhadra. Philosophically speaking, the reigningly authentic moment is recognition of a timeless state of open awareness, vast and unbounded.

The themes of origins and authority are also relevant as we consider Bon narratives of the text's discovery. As Bon understands it, its ultimate referent, historically and philosophically is an open, unconditioned space and timeless time that are, nonetheless, infused with the dynamic displays of conditionality and historical unfolding. For this reason it makes sense for us to try to understand the historical chronicles that relate with this view of Bon.

The historical narratives of the text's colophon are set in motion by events in a vastly distant, transcendent realm where Bon teachings begin and which culminate in the writing, burial, and discovery of *Authenticity*. The colophon closes as Dranpa Namkha, Lishu Daring, and the gloriously nonpartisan Vairocana, stand before the king of Tibet, praising Bon teachings while variously threatening, cursing, or declaiming the tragic circumstances in which they find themselves.

Our primary goal thus far has been to understand *Authenticity*'s philosophic matrix; here we take interest in certain other narratives that would be present in the minds of its readers. We therefore read historiographical materials with an appreciation for whatever we can glean of actual events and, even more, to help us understand how their perspective, seamlessly, nearly invisibly, woven into the fabric of the text, affects the way *Authenticity* is read. Although it is the nature of Tibetan colophons to be of uncertain origin, this one—whenever it may have been written—does correspond to known difficulties suffered by the people who, at least retrospectively, are referred to as Bonpos and who by their own accounts did not have an easy time of it when a new religion, Buddhism, emerged in their midst.²

In the textual and cultural world of *Authenticity*, the most rigorous debater and analyzer of reason is also, as we have said, a practitioner who approaches meaning in other ways as well—through nonconceptual meditation on unbounded wholeness. Such a person's training in the rigors of debate leaves

holistic perspective as well as a vast one. The ultimate referent, from *Authenticity*'s viewpoint, is a state of subjectivity that might or might not be referenced in time. See Ricoeur 1982: 140–142, and 1984–1988, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1, as well as White's 1987: chapter 7, esp. 175 discussion of this.

2. Snellgrove 1987: 2:389–390.

fully intact, and in fact draws strength from, a host of other kinds of convictions that to post-Enlightenment Western ways of categorization may seem to have no real place in reasoned discourse. We will tend to those shortly.

For intellectuals in a world dominated by science and a widespread, if not wholly unchallenged, belief in verifiability and objectivity, the mere appearance of names, dates, and chronicles raises the question “Did it really happen that way?” This question, driven by a need to drive a stake clearly marking the boundary of “fact” and “fiction,” is a blow that in Hayden White’s words, would “take the story out of history.”³ The detailed attention in modern scholarship to the fallacy of this boundary testifies to its power. Traditional narratives such as we consider here, however, churn through very different conceptual waters than do those of the modern and postmodern Western scholar.

For, despite considerable philosophical reflection on the relationship between the imagined and the real, Tibetan literature has not been thematized along the lines of fact and fiction. There is good reason to believe that many of the tales we encounter below do have a basis in history, though we cannot prove that they do. Whether or not these events happened, the belief that they did helped create a community in which stories such as these formed the world and the mythos in which *Authenticity*’s readers lived.

The Big Picture: Scope of Bon History

From the Bon historian Padon Tengyel Zangpo (sPa ston bsTan rgyal bZang po, 1290–1364), author of *Lamp Clarifying the Dissemination of the Explanatory Teaching* (*bsTan pa'i rnam bshad dar rgyas gsal ba'i sgron ma*), we draw an account of the beginnings of Bon.⁴ Variously said to have been written in 1345 or 1405, or possibly in 1465, this work remains for Yung Drung Bon a crucial resource for representing their earliest beginnings.⁵ For us it provides a context for placing *Authenticity*, both religiously and historically.

3. White 1987.

4. This text is contained in Padon Tengyel Zangpo (sPa ston bsTan rGyal bZang po, fl. 13th–14th c.), *Sources for the History of Bon* (Karmay 1977: 117, #22). Discussed in van der Kuijp 1996a: 41–42 and 50 n.10. Regarding early Tibetan history as it relates to Bon, the reader is also referred to the exemplary work of Karmay 1972, Snellgrove 1987, Beckwith 1987, and Haarh 1969.

5. 1345 is given in Norbu 1995a: 239 n.51. Norbu Rinpoche gives the name as Paden Gyel Zangpo (sPa bstan rgyal bzang po). Karmay 1972: 24 n.4 notes that Padon is also known as Gyelse Pa (rGyal-sras sPa), adding that he was a contemporary of Dru Guelwa Yung Drung (Bru rGyal ba g.yung drung), whose dates are given by Abbot Nyima Tenzin (Nyima ma bsTan 'dzin as) 1242–1290.

However, in private communications (October 25, 2003, also April 9–10, 2004) Samten Karmay noted that he no longer holds these two to be contemporaries. Even more significantly, in the *Journal of Bhutan Studies* (2000 p. 9) he observes that Padon (whose works were not available to him in 1972 when he translated *Treasury*) himself refers to Yung Drung Lingpa [1346–1405, per Samten Karmay] as a practitioner “of our time.” Karmay further concludes that Padon wrote the *Lamp for the Flourishing* (*Dar rgyas gsal sgron*), in 1384, a wood mouseyear.

The scope of this work is epic—indeed, cosmic. It describes how Bon arose not only in the knowable world but also in the infinite universe.⁶ Padon's deep reach into the past, unverifiable and fantastic though it often appears, has much significance for one seeking to enter the world of *Authenticity*. Though it might be quixotic to suggest that Padon's wide-angle historical narrative mirrors the inclusivity of *Authenticity*'s central philosophical concept, unbounded wholeness, the harmony of scale evinced by these two works is not insignificant.

That the descent from unconditioned dimensions so important to *Authenticity* philosophically is incorporated into Bon history shows us that this idea, far from being merely a metaphysical concept of sheltered scholastic communities, is part of a broad cultural belief system. In this sense, too, the historical and philosophical materials have a single “ultimate referent” in which there is virtually no need to speak of a dichotomy between fact and fiction. Their conjunction is simply a cultural and mythic truth.

Such perceived parity between the all-encompassing nature of religious truths and the story of their origins reminds us, if reminding were needed, that we are entering a traditional worldview here, one that feels itself capable of accounting for everything.

Padon divides his expansive discourse into four parts: first, a general discussion of how Bon arose and spread in the universe (*'jig rten*); second, a more specific account of Bon's transmission through the three-thousandfold world (*stong gsum*); third, further detailed descriptions of how Bon traditions were disseminated in Dzambuling ('Dzam bu gling)—the southern continent of our world system; and fourth, consideration of their spread in Tibet.

Padon opens his first section by explaining that teachings spreads through the universe because compassion causes the teacher's words to arise wherever sentient beings exist, and emanation Buddhas go forth, equal to the number of beings who require help. On this point, reminiscent of the more philosophically stated description of Samantabhadra's blessings, Padon cites the largest “stages of the path” (*lam rim*) text of the Bon tradition, the eleventh-century *Three Hundred-Thirty Bon Verses, Methods for Accomplishing Enlightenment* (*Byang chub sgrub thabs kyi bon tshigs su bcad pa sum brgyas sum cu pa* [sic.]):⁷

Dar rgyas gsal sgron, bsTan pa'i rnam bshad dar rgyas gsal ba'i sgron me; Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1992). This is a revision of Karmay's statement (1988: 233) that this historical text was written in 1405. Dan Martin suggests 1465 or even 1477 as equally plausible dates (personal communication). Any of these would necessitate our reconsidering whether or not Padon's dates are not later than 1290–1364 as some scholars state.

6. Its scope is equaled by the well-known and extremely informative work of Shardza Rinpoche, which often cites Padon. This great scholar, who died in 1934, is said by both Bon and Nyingma to have attained the “Rainbow Body.” Dudjom Rinpoche described him as a Nyingma teacher named Dzapa Tashi Ozer (rDza pa bKa shis 'Od-zer) (lHa dbang g.yul las rgyal ba, f. 373b; as discussed by Karmay 1988: 203).

7. Authored by Yardrok Medon Sherab Ozer [Yarmel] (Yar 'brog Me ston Shes rab 'Od zer); dates given by Karmay 1977: 167 as 1058–1132. Yarme was a disciple of Gongdze Ritrud Chenpo (dGongs mdzad ri khrod chen po, 1038–1096), initiator of the Bon A *Khrid* system).

This, the three-thousandfold, is the inviolate world
 Through compassion and the different causal grounds.
 The words of the teaching accord with [specific needs] of disciples.⁸

To suggest that the universe spontaneously responds to its inhabitants is of course fully consonant with Bon and ancient Tibetan shamanic lore, as well as with karmic theory, and with many Buddhist descriptions of Buddhas' capacities, not to mention Dzogchen's understanding of mindnature. It is one more indication of the subject-object resonance that permeates in this distinctly non-Cartesian universe.

As if harking back to the *Rgveda*'s *Hymn to Puruṣa*, Padon writes that from the flesh, blood, heat, and breath of Donpa (Teacher) Shenrab arise the deities of the four seasons, working for the welfare of gods, humans, and *nāgas*. Within the thousandfold world, teachings are spread by emanations of Donpa Shenrab in all six realms and on all four continents. We have already noted how consonance between world and world dweller implicitly supports *Authenticity*'s framing of scriptural and subjective authenticity. Now such consonance becomes important background for understanding the enormous sweep of Bon's view of its own transmission. Nor will this mythic element be absent, even when we narrow that scope to this world and the realm of humans in it.

The section on Dzambuling deals mainly with Zhang Zhung, Tagzig (sTag gzigs), and western Tibet.⁹ It states that Bon teachings first spread to Olmo Lung Ring ('Ol mo lung ring) and from there went to Tagzig¹⁰ and thence to Zhang Zhung and Tibet.¹¹

But where exactly was Zhang Zhung? Is it even appropriate to look for a geographical location for the sacred Olmo Lung Ring? Most scholars agree that until the seventh century, Zhang Zhung existed as a separate state in what we now know as western Tibet—that is, west of the areas of U (*dbus*) and Tsang (*gTsang*). It became an integral part of Tibet when its last dynastic king, Lig-migya (Lig myi rhya / lig mi rgya), was assassinated by King Songtsen Gampo if we follow Dunhuang documents,¹² or by Trisong Detsen according to the

8. Cited by Padon 628.1.

9. Padon 628.7ff.

10. In personal communication, Samten Karmay points out that the term *stag gzig* derives from *Ta zig*, a form itself based on the Chinese term for Persia, *Ta che*. It is found frequently in the *Zermik* which most likely dates back to the eleventh century. Nonetheless, historian Dan Martin has observed, also in personal communication, that *stag gzig* does not come into [common?] use until the twelfth century.

11. For a fuller account of the transmission of Bon according to Padon, see the appendix to this volume. The narrative presented there differs slightly from Shardza Rinpoche's account in the *Treasury*, which states that Bon first reached Tibet in Shenrab's lifetime, when he visted there from Olmo Lung Ring, passing through Zhang Zhung on the way. Shardza Rinpoche 1973: 547.1ff (translated by Karmay in *Treasury of Good Sayings*) refutes conceptions regarding the esoteric Olmo Lung Ring. The polemical context of his discussion is elaborated in Martin 1991: 178ff; for the full lineage as given in the *Lamp Illuminating the Darkness of Indirect Meaning* (*Drang don mun sel*), see the appendix to this volume. This, and many related topics touched on here are also discussed in a work in Tibetan by Lopon Tenzin Namdak, *The History of Tibet according to Bon*, 1983.

12. See Triten Norbutse and Bon History [dual language edition] by Wangyal, 14.

Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung and the *Treasury of Shardza Rinpoche*.¹³ We will speak of this discrepancy again below.

Padon records that Bon teachings traveled from Olmo Lung Ring to Zhang Zhung; similarly, Shardza Rinpoche writes that Donpa Shenrab Miwo (sTon pa gShen rab Mi bo), the legendary founder of Bon, set out from Olmo Lung Ring and journeyed to Tibet.¹⁴ He did not go there to teach; a demon (*bdud khyab pa lag ring*) had stolen his seven horses, and Bon tradition relates that it was in search of them that Shenrab Miwo came to Tibet by way of Mount Kailash, later arriving at Bonpo Bonri.¹⁵

But Donpa Shenrab did teach in Tibet, and thus the teachings proceeded from the “inner door” (*sgo phug*) of Zhang Zhung, also known as Olmo Lung Ring (considered by some synonymous with Shambala)¹⁶ to Tagzig in the middle-door area (*sgo bar*), which itself was also known as Zhang Zhung.¹⁷ From there they went to Tibet. The “Demonic Challenge” (*bDud gyi 'gran rtsol*) chapter of *Zermik* ([*mDo*] *gZer mig*), a hagiography of Donpa Shenrab, in effect supports this narrative, at least metaphorically, for it reports that many scholars manifested as eagles, which enabled them to bring the teaching from Olmo Lung Ring to Precious Snow Mountain (*gangs rin po che*), also known as Mount Kailash, in Zhang Zhung.

Likewise, Padon notes that Bon teachings moved into Tibet in phases.¹⁸ Some of the causal vehicles of Bon entered during Donpa Shenrab’s lifetime, but the result vehicles of sutra, tantra, and Dzogchen did not.¹⁹ Even the complete causal vehicles did not come at this time. The main emphasis during this period was on ritual—printing mantras and sending these up by smoke (*bsang*) and “wind-horse” (*rlung rta*), prayer flag (*rta mchog*), divination (*mo*), some astrology (*rtsis*), ritual discard (*gtor ma*), and medicine (*sman*). After teaching these practices, Donpa Shenrab returned to Olmo Lung Ring, having deter-

13. Shardza [Tashi Gyalsten] Rinpoche [Shar rdza bKra shis rGyal mtshan, 1859–1933], among whose major works the *Kun tu bzang po'i snying thig* (trans. 1991 as *Heart Drop of the Dharmakaya*) describes practices remarkably similar to those of the *Ye shas blama*, studied with one of greatest Buddhist masters of his day, Jamgon Kongtrul. Jamgon Kongtrul’s father was Bon, as was Kongtrul himself in his youth.

14. Karmay 1975: 178 notes that no pre-tenth-century sources are yet available that could illuminate his visit to Tibet or his relationship with Khyab-pa lag-ring, although there are such early sources on other aspects of his activities.

15. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, August 1997, oral commentary; see also Karmay 1990: 176. For a synthesis of religious traditions in Tibet before and during the arrival of Shenrab Miwo, see the *Twelve Consciousnesses* (*Shes pa bcu gnyis*); for main sources on this, see Clemente 1994: 127–128 and 133 n.9.

16. Tenzin N. Kyongtrul to Klein, Sunrise Springs, New Mexico, July 1997, oral commentary; see also Karmay 1972: 23, who notes that the Indians called it Shambala.

17. For a discussion of the different areas of Zhang Zhung, see the appendix to this volume. The ancient history of Zhang Zhung is discussed by Namkhai Norbu in (*Zhang bod gna' rabs kyi lo rgyus nor bu'i me long*), n.p., Si kron mi rigs dpe skrum khang, 1990. Cited in Norbu 1995a: 220 n.6. We have not yet succeeded in getting a copy of this text.

18. Padon 635.6ff.

19. The *Lha byang chen mo* contains much material on Donpa Shenrab.

mined that Tibet was not ready for high teachings. Padon tells us that after Donpa Shenrab's death, and in accordance with his prayers, higher Bon teachings did indeed reach thirty-seven places in Tibet, including Samye Dragmar (bSam yas Brag dmar), as well as Yarlung and surrounding areas; in other words, the general locale of *Authenticity*'s discovery.²⁰

The Tibet of Donpa Shenrab consists only of U (dBu) and Tsang (gTsang), which itself comprised four areas (*ru*):, Right (g.Yas ru), Left (g.Yon ru), Central (dBu ru) and Branch (Ru lag). According to a contemporary etymology, the *ru* in these names (which in other contexts means "horn") refers to military camp areas where the soldiers would *ru* (collect), protecting the king at the center (*dbu*) of their military flanks. Prior to the seventh century, when Tibet was an imperial power on the rise, these four made up the entire country of Tibet.²¹

As for the relationship between Tibet and Zhang Zhung, Bon scholars generally agree that although there seems to have been a time when Tibet was part of Zhang Zhung,²² during the period of Bon's transmission, Tibet—albeit consisting mainly of what is now central Tibet—was a separate country.²³ This distinction was about to dissolve however, for as the central Tibetan kingdom expanded westward, Zhang Zhung was annexed and became "virtually Tibetanized" in the late seventh through eighth centuries.²⁴

There is much at stake in this discussion. To claim that Tibet was once part of Zhang Zhung avoids the suggestion that Tibet has no native religious practice. For, if Bon originates in Zhang Zhung, and Buddhism comes from India, what can Tibet claim for its own? By maintaining that Tibet was part of Zhang Zhung and that Bon began there, Bon becomes the native Tibetan religion.²⁵ This does not contradict the well-known narrative that when Donpa Shenrab came to Tibet he came by way of Zhang Zhung, and that the two were distinct countries at that time.²⁶

20. Padon 636.2 cites the *bDal bum*, which reports the teacher's prayer that after his death teachings would spread through Tibet, and lists (646.1–2) thirty-seven places to which Bon did spread in Tibet. (In Padon's listing of the three Buddhists who discovered the *Gal Do*, the name of the third is given as *bsam yas brag btsan dmar*. In the different renderings of the given names of the three, the latter seems to vary the most.)

21. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, at his monastery, Triten Norbutse, August 1997 to Klein, oral commentary. As Gibson 1991: 13 notes, Tagzig originally referred to the Arabs; later its referent included Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Iran. See Beckwith 1987: 77 and Snellgrove 1987: 390.

22. Tenzin N. Kyongtrul, Houston, and Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Kathmandu, oral commentary.

23. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, August 1997, oral commentary.

24. Karmay 1972: xxx.

25. Tenzin N. Kyongtrul, who holds this view, notes that many of his colleagues disagree with him. It is a view that may have political significance, however, given the recent, and patently absurd, Chinese claim that Buddhism was never part of Tibetan culture, insofar as it was imported from another country. (Oral commentary to Klein.)

26. According to at least one account, Shenrab was a prodigious traveler from an early age. He is said to have visited Lang-ling at the age of three, a place that Kuznetsov identifies as Jerusalem. Martin 1995: 25 argues forcibly against the Kuznetsov thesis (citing Kuznetsov and Gumilev 1970) and also gives a new version of this argument; a more fully developed and illustrated version of this article appears in Huber 1999: 258–301.

In contrast to the explicit identification of Olmo Lung Ring with Mount Kailash in texts cited by *The Treasury of Good Sayings*,²⁷ biographers of Shenrab hold that this area is a mere representation of the actual Olmo Lung Ring, which is in another realm entirely. Traditionally, the first syllable of its name, 'Ol, is said to symbolize the unborn, *mo* the undiminishing, *lung* the prophetic words of Donpa Shenrab, and *ring* his everlasting compassion.²⁸ Mythic charisma abounds here. Thus, to the readers of *Authenticity*, Olmo Lung Ring has a significance quite beyond its geographical location. This is yet another example of an ultimate referent by which authenticity, philosophical or historical, is understood to derive from a realm beyond.

Karmay surmises that after the collapse of the central Tibetan kingdom following persecutions of both Bon and Buddhism, the location of Olmo Lung Ring was forgotten;²⁹ he also suggests that Bonpos may have been inspired by the tenth-century prestige of Buddhism to consider that their religion could not have originated in any ordinary place.³⁰ Moreover, Buddhist teachings were still finding their way into Tibet from India; Bon may well have felt the need to locate an equally foreign source of Bon and placed it in Tagzig.³¹

In any case, there is another route to claiming Bon as the native religion of Tibet, insofar as the first king of Tibet is claimed to be a follower of Bon.³² Indeed, Padon tells us that the administration of each of the first seven Tibetan kings is staffed by forty-two Bon practitioners, including ten close personal advisors, ten consultants to the ministers, ten who protect the Tibetan border with China, and ten others protecting the border with Sumpa.³³ This territory, which in ancient times included part of modern Amdo, was a province of Zhang Zhung until the latter's conquest by Tibet.³⁴ The Sumpa peoples were known to be part of the Tibetan kingdom in the sixth century³⁵ and Shardza records how the conquest of Zhang Zhung by Tibet also dissolved Zhang Zhung's authority over Sumpa.³⁶ One of the Three Buddhists who discovered *Authenticity* is named Sumpa Wang Tshul (Sum pa dBang tshul), suggesting

27. Karmay 1990: 175 also points out that this identification is supported in the fourteenth-century work *rTsa rgyud nyi zer sgron me*, a rediscovered text of Drabo Gyalwa Drakpa (Bra bo rGyal ba Grags pa) (Delhi 1966) on p. 216 n.4.

28. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, oral commentary. See also Wangyal, "A Short Historical Outline of Bon Religion," 12 [author of this excerpt is not attributed; most likely, it is Lopon Tenzin Namdak]. Karmay 1990: 172 gives an identical iteration, adding that this "is a rather late and arbitrary explanation." He suggests its literal meaning is "Long Valley of 'Ol mo."

29. Karmay 1990: xxix. Tenzin N. Kyongtrul made the same point in discussion with Klein, July 1997.

30. Karmay 1990: 174.

31. Karmay 1972: xxx.

32. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Kathmandu, August 1997, oral commentary.

33. Padon 648.6ff. This is confirmed also by Buddhist sources such as the history (*chos 'byung*) of Nyangrel Nyima Ozer (Nyang ral Ny ima 'Od zer), as discussed in Gibson 1991: 141.

34. Norbu 1995a: 235 n.45.

35. Stein, 1972: 29–31.

36. *The Treasury of Good Sayings* (Karmay 1972) discusses the relationship between Zhang Zhung and Sumpa on pp. 86–87 and the end of that relation on pp. 97ff.

that he came from this area and, not surprisingly, that it had become at least partly Buddhist by the tenth or eleventh century.

In addition to these regal attendants, two Bon priests were involved in ceremonial duties focused on the accrual of wealth. This system of kingship “in which religious specialists played a leading role” follows the pattern described in other Bon sources such as the *Origins of Bon Royalty* (*rGyal rabs bon gyi 'byung gnas*).³⁷ Eventually, it was whispered about and then declared more loudly that these priests had more power than the king himself.³⁸ The most dramatic result of such criticism was the Bon persecution that lies deep in the memory of the protagonists of *Authenticity*’s colophon and of its readers to this very day. Lopon Tenzin Namdak notes that the causes of Bon’s undoing at this time were different from the causes that eroded it during the time of Trigum Tsenpo (whose dates Lopon gives as 681 B.C.).³⁹ Since his narrative, apparently drawn from the *Testament of Ba* (*sBa bzhad*), gives a different view of events familiar to students of Buddhist history, we pause to take brief note of it here.

During the time of Dranpa Namkha and Lishu Daring, Central Tibet was plagued by illness and famine, resulting in widespread misery. A seer asked to do a *mo* (prognostication) laid the blame on a fifteen-year-old youth. This boy was exiled to Kashmir, where he became skilled in their dharmas and acquired the name “Bodhisattva.” Some say this tale refers to Śāntarakṣita.

Lopon Tenzin Namdak, ever the careful and nonpolemical scholar, forthrightly notes that we cannot be sure that this boy was in fact the great scholarly Bodhisattva, Śāntarakṣita. Among Bonpos, some say he was, others disagree.

In any case, this Bodhisattva had an understandable dislike both for prognostication and for Bon and, as related in the *Commentary to the Nine Hidden Cycles of Enlightenment* (*Byang chub sems gab pa dgu skor*), he petitioned the King and ministers to do away with Bon and to develop the (Buddhist) Dharma (*bon snubs chos spyod*).⁴⁰ The *Testament of Ba* quotes the Bodhisattva Śāntarakṣita as saying: “It is a great sin to have two religions in one country;”⁴¹ he therefore offers to debate with the Bonpos, with the understanding that if the dharma (*chos*) triumphed, it would destroy Bon. Interestingly, the text reports that Bon lost because of the inferiority of its *gtan tshigs*—its axiomatic reasoning. For readers of *Authenticity*, impressed with its syllogistic agility, this memory is no doubt particularly ironic and, perhaps, an incentive to display the actual acuity

37. Lodro Gyalsten (*bLo gros rGyal mtshan*) 1974: 99–100. This and other descriptions of Bon kingship are discussed in Gibson 1991: 132ff.

38. Padon 648.5.

39. Lopon Tenzin Namdak 1983: 142.5.

40. Lopon Tenzin Namdak 1983: 142.13–14 and 188. *Four Commentaries on the Hidden* (*Gab pa'i 'grel bzhi*). Ter written by Khu Tsha lZa 'od in 1037. For other bibliographical details, see Karmay 1988: No. 53 and Wangyal 2001: 311–312.

41. This reference to the Bodhisattva, very similar to that from the *Four Commentaries on ‘The Hidden*, is found in the *Testament of Ba* 1980: 122 (Dharmasala 1961 version, p. 51).

of their prowess in debate. For anyone who wonders why Dzogchenpas, with their emphasis on nonconceptual access to wholeness, would hone their reasoning skills, this tale suggests an important possible answer: cultural survival.⁴² Indeed, we saw Lopon Tenzin Namdak make this very point in his discussion of the Pañḍita system of practice.

Also on readers' minds would have been a passage from the *Northern Revelation* (*sGrags byang*), describing how the minister Yu Dranen (g.Yu sGra nen) urged the king (presumably Trisong Detsen) to do away with Bon. The minister noted that India's dharma was different from Bon: "It is easy to uphold, let us invite it into Tibet." Another minister, Chim Dorje Chung ('Chims rDo rje Chung), supported this, explaining that Bon was difficult to maintain, too vast to study, and too profound to actually accomplish. Therefore, he concluded, it must be done away with.⁴³ Shardza Rinpoche's *Treasury of Good Sayings*, drawn from many earlier accounts as we have seen, describes the outcome of these exhortations. After his own brief and grandiose vision of Bon's transmission, Padon considers with more specificity the fourfold spread of Bon vinaya, sutra, tantra, and "mind" or Dzogchen teachings.⁴⁴ He makes no mention of the obvious (yet incomplete) parallel with Buddhist *tripitaka* categories.

By its own accounts, Bon tantric teachings spread both from Zhang Zhung and from India. Here we mention primarily the former. From Zhang Zhung comes an important tantric and Dzogchen cycle known as the General Rituals (*sPyi spungs*), said to derive from Shenhla Okar (gShen lha 'Od dkar), who bestowed direct transmission (*dgongs rgyud*) on Tseme Oden (Tshad med 'Od ldan), who then bequeathed them to "the mother, child, and practitioners" (*yum, sras, gshen*), meaning the mother (*yum*), Zangza Ringtsun (bZang za Ring btsun); the child (*sras*), Chime Tsukpud ('Chi med gTsug phud); and the practitioner (*gshen*), Sangwa Dupa (gSang ba 'Dus pa).

The tantric teachings also reach back to a mythic vastness. Padon writes that they spread to gods, humans, and *nāgas*.⁴⁵ What are we to make of this?

42. p. 52 (Dharmasala edition). Lopon Tenzin Namdak 1983: 142 cites similar passages in the *Testament of Ba*, regarding the decline of Bon and the rise of Dharma. Lopon cites also the *Northern Proclamation* (*bsGrags byang*) (Karmay No. 64), one of the three *Renowned Places of Proclamation* (*bsGrags pa gling grags*) (Karmay No. 65). Lopon Tenzin Namdak 1983: 188 also names this work's Terton as Lodro Thokme (*bLo gros Thog med*) but gives no date. The works themselves, as Karmay notes, are attributed to the eighth-century (Tibetan) Dranpa Namkha.

43. Cited by Lopon Tenzin Namdak 1983: 142.14–21. The *Northern Proclamation*, described by Karmay 1988: 114 (No. 14) is probably one of the three *Renowned Places of Proclamation* (T 224). See also Karmay 1988: No. 65 and Wangyal 2001: 311 for further descriptions of these works. Lopon Tenzin Namdak 1983: 188 notes that the *Renowned Places of Proclamation* (Karmay No. 65) was a terma discovered by Lodro Thokme. No date is given.

44. Padon 628.7.

45. Padon 631.1–2. In the human realm, the lineage of tantric transmission is (1) Shenhla Okar (gShen lha 'Od dkar), (2) Tseme Oden (Tshad med 'Od ldan), (3) Trulshen Nangden ('Phrul gshen sNang ldan), (4) Chime

Without assuming that we really know the answer, without in fact assuming that in its own context there is even a question here, we can note that it would have been quite natural for the intended audience of *Authenticity* to suppose that what interests humans also interests other living beings, whether in the air or under the sea. Neither a fantastic nor a factually objective assumption, it is simply how life is experienced in that context. Stories are stories—they are told. In these stories, and in Tibetan (and most traditional) cultures, boundaries between human and other worlds are porous in a variety of ways, as is the boundary between the dynamic display and the unbounded wholeness of Samantabhadra, or the boundary between ordinary and enlightened beings. Likewise, the cause and effect of karma propels a person's migration through these realms, while various invisible beings and sometimes visible ones appear to humans and affect them. This, then, is an unspoken constant behind the tale of Bon transmission.

A Contemporary View of Bon's Past

Lopon Tenzin Namdak speaks of three general categories of Bon: Zhang-Zhung Bon, Ancient Bon (*rnying ma'i bon*),⁴⁶ and New Bon (*bon gsar ma*).⁴⁷ These emic categories differ from the ones used by Buddhists to describe Bon traditions, which we will discuss shortly.⁴⁸

Ancient Bon is considered a continuation of traditions that existed prior to the arrival of Buddhism and prior also, therefore, to Yung Drung (g.Yung drung) Bon. Lishu Daring, by contrast, adhered strongly to the ancient tradition; new Bon traditions do not mention him. Drampa Namkha and Vairocana are among the main persons who integrated old and new Bon for the first time. In any case, New Bon was not practiced during this earlier period; it would come into its own only much later, through the activities of the "Four Masters" and especially following its rediscovery in the seventeenth century.⁴⁹

45. Tsukpud ('Chi med gTsug phud), (5) Zangza Ringtsun (bZang za Ring btsun), (6) Sangwa Dupa (gSang ba 'Dus pa), and (7) Dakhla (sTag lha).

46. Overall, early Bon Dzogchen is considered by Bon masters to be very similar in meaning to that of Nyingma, especially to the presentations of Longchen Rabjampa. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Jemez Springs, July 1995 and reiterated there July 1998, oral commentary.

47. New Bon, even more closely connected with Buddhism and with Vairocana than other forms of Bon, is regarded as having four founders known as "the Four Tulkus." These are Sangye Lingpa (Sangs rgyas gLing pa, b. 1705), Loden Nyingpo (bLo ldan sNying po, b. 1360), Kungdrol Drakpa (Kun grol Grags pa, b. 1700), and Mishik Dorje (Mi shig rDo rje, b. 1650). See Karmay 1972: 185; also for the above dates, respectively: 92, 6, 71, 165.

48. We report this as the view of the tradition in which we are working; this nomenclature is not found in the classic texts but was formulated by Lopon Tenzin Namdak to account for long-held Bon perspectives. These categories and related dates have yet to be fully explored in the wider context of Tibetan and Western scholarship on Bon. For further discussion of divisions of Bon and on the possible existence of Dzogchen prior to entry of Buddhism in Tibet, see Haarh 1969; see also Kvaerne 1972.

49. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Jemez, July 1995, oral commentary. Of the Four Tulkus (see note 47) Loden Nyingpo did not himself use the term "New Bon," though the tradition subsequently claimed him.

Buddhists speak of White Bon, whose adherents follow both Donpa Shenrab and Shakyamuni Buddha, and Black Bon, whose adherents follow only Donpa Shenrab. Another widely known Buddhist schema, dividing Bon into three periods, was very possibly the creation of Sherab Jungnay (*Shes rab 'byung gnas / Sher 'byung*) in the thirteenth century⁵⁰ or, as Dan Martin has proposed, of his disciple Dorje Sherab (*rDo rje Shes rab*) in about 1260.⁵¹ The first is Emergent Bon (*rDol Bon*), a term with the connotation of “bursting forth,” suggesting that it simply “popped up” out of nowhere. Bon history, as we have seen, belies this suggestion, and Bonpos themselves do not use this term. The second is Dispersed Bon or Straying Bon (*'Chal Bon*, also referred to as *'Khyar Bon*), which connotes that in this phase Bon was mixed with the “erroneous” philosophical ideas of those outside the Buddhist fold, the Tirthikas.⁵² Finally, Transformed Bon (*'Gyur / bsGyur bon*) refers to the period when Buddhist scriptures were transformed into Bon scriptures through the changing of a few words. Naturally, none of these somewhat pejorative terms are used by Bonpos themselves.⁵³

Mythic and Imperial Tibet: The Early Kings

We reach an intermediary zone between mythic and historical time as we consider Bon's understanding of its relationship with the early Tibetan kings and especially its trials and development during the Imperial period. All this sets the stage for our more detailed consideration of the various tales of *Authenticity*'s discovery.

Both Buddhist and Bon historians describe the early Tibetan kings as having magical powers. Bon sources speak of the magical skill demonstrated by Nyatri Tsenpo (*gNya 'khri bTsan po*),⁵⁴ who descended from his god-realm to become the first Yarlung Valley Tibetan king. Padon also describes the reign of the first Tibetan king in glowing terms: people were honest, lived long healthy lives, behaved ethically, and received blessings from light into which they could again dissolve. The king always followed the advice of the yogis, and the ministers were very skillful.⁵⁵ Tibetan his-

50. Martin 1996b; see also Norbu 1995a: 38–39.

51. Martin 1997: 265, 282, 286, 291–292 n.15.

52. This is the view of the famous Geluk scholar Tugen Losang Chokyi Nyima (*Thu'u bkwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma*, 1737–1802), set forth in *Crystal Mirror of Tenets* (*Grub mitha' shel gyi me long*), in which he devotes a chapter to Bon. Dege Xylographic ed. 1963, 411.5.

53. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Jemez Springs to Klein, July 1995 (and on other occasions), oral commentary.

54. Sources differ on the dates of his reign; 247 B.C.E. is given as a likely date in the Yeshey De Project 1986: 354; see also p. 143.

55. Padon 649.fff. Namkhai Norbu writes (1995a: 229 n.68): “There are three different traditions on the origin of the first Tibetan king: *gsang ba chos lugs* (the secret Buddhist tradition), in which he descends from the Indian Licchavi Dynasty; *grags pa bon lugs* (the exoteric Bon tradition), in which he was of divine origin; and the *yang gsang lugs* (the most secret tradition), in which he was descended from the The'u rang in the Spo bo region of Tibet; cf. Haarh 1969, pp. 168ff.”

toriography variously places Nyatri Tsenpo between the fourth and second centuries B.C.E., thus either one hundred or three hundred years after Shak-yamuni.⁵⁶

His son, Mutri Tsenpo (Mu khri bTsan po),⁵⁷ received tantric teachings from Namkha Nangway Dokjen (Nam mkha' sNang ba'i mDog can).⁵⁸ Mutri Tsenpo "had faith in Bon and, after practicing the secret doctrines of General Rituals, achieved the supreme and ordinary attainments."⁵⁹ He was a lineage holder in both tantra and Dzogchen; to this day his name is included in Bon ritual recitation.⁶⁰ For three generations, teachings were prohibited from being taught outside the king's own family.⁶¹ As a result of this miserly behavior, the king's power became a third of what it had been, and four medicinal goddesses carried the teachings to a yogi from the country of Mon.⁶² Once again, the fate of the teachings supersedes human agency.

Problems for Bon arose during the reign of the seventh Tibetan King:⁶³ "This was the first vanquishing of the profound Yung Drung Bon in Tibet."⁶⁴ Although some of the causal vehicles remained, the result vehicles—including, of course, Dzogchen—very nearly disappeared due to power struggles between ministers and priests.⁶⁵ These same teachings continued in Tagzig and Zhang Zhung, however.

56. One tradition notes that 660 years elapsed between the first king and King Hla Thothori, and another 150 between Hla Thothori and the seventh-century Buddhist religious king, Songtsen Gampo. Another suggests that 500 years elapsed between the above-mentioned kings, thereby placing the first king in the second century B.C.E. It is also possible to conclude that Nyatri Tsenpo (Nyā 'khri bstan-po) lived in the third century, if one considers that there were forty-two generations to the Tibetan dynasty and thus approximately 1050 years between the first and last kings, the last of whom died in 841 C.E. Also, annals from the T'ang Dynasty mention a fourth-to fifth-century prince from the Liang Dynasty who is said to have fled China in 414 and become the ruler of the T'u-fan (Tibetan) tribes. Yeshey De Project 1986: 146–147.

57. Lopon Tenzin Namdak 1983: 189 gives his dates as 1075 B.C.

58. For an excellent survey of early accounts of kingly origin, see Karmay 1994.

59. Karmay 1972: 5; see also pp. 44ff. The textual cycle here is the *Spyi spungs*; commentaries on this and the *dBal phur* cycle (*sPyi spung dang dbal phur gyi 'grel pa*), were written by Kyabdon Rinchen Ozer (b. 1353) and published by the Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1973.

60. He is included in most of the Bon teaching lineages of sutra, tantra, and Dzogchen—the only Tibetan king with such status, although Trisong Detsen is mentioned occasionally in the *Three Revealed Cycles* (*bsGrags pa skor gsum*) and *Utmost Peak, Great Expanse* (*Yang rtse klong chen*).

61. Padon 631.6.

62. Padon 632.1. Dan Martin notes that according to *Commentary on the Wrathful* (*Khro 'grel*), it was the power of the teaching which diminished by a third.

63. Padon 650.5.

64. Padon 653.3. This very early period is known as the period of Yung Drung Bon, though texts did not use this term until after the eighth century. Snellgrove 1987: 2:390 discusses this term. The sources of the Yung Drung Bon are discussed by Lopon Tenzin Namdak in *Explanation of the Teachings of Yundrung Bon* (*g.Yung drung bon gyi bstan pa'i 'byung khungs nyung bsdus*), Dolanji, n.d.

65. Padon 653.3ff.

The Imperial Period: Historical Perspectives and Rumors of Royalty

If the vast scope of Padon's history matches the expansive metaphysical reach of the reality described in *Authenticity*, it is the narratives of the early Buddhist kings that speak directly to the events suggested in its colophon.

The second decline of Bon, an event affecting Zhang Zhung as well as Tibet, came during the reign of Trisong Detsen. Unlike the first period of deterioration, this was not simply an internal political matter but an inter-religious conflict involving the emergence of Buddhism in Tibet.⁶⁶ From this point on, we see highly discordant narratives put forward by Bon and Buddhist sources as to what occurred.

We noted earlier that *Authenticity* can be read as a story of language. Historically, of course, language has been an explicit and crucial element in the struggle for cultural, political, and administrative dominance in Tibet. The image of language as weaponry invoked at *Authenticity*'s opening is multivalent. One who can manipulate not only language but the story of language does indeed gain what *Authenticity* calls a "powerful armor of invulnerability."⁶⁷

The tales of Bon's early days in Tibet and its relation to Buddhism also involves a reflection on language, in this case on the origins of written language in Tibet. Tibetan Buddhists maintain that Tibetan script was created in the first half of the seventh century by Thumi Sambhota (Thon mi Sambhoṭa). Bon takes issue with this, suggesting Iranian or Central Asian origins for the written language rather than the Indian ones claimed by Buddhists.⁶⁸ In the classic Buddhist view, recapitulated by Padon, Thumi Sambhota was sent to India at the behest of King Songtsen Gampo and, using a Kashmiri prototype, "he fashioned the thirty letters of the Tibetan alphabet."⁶⁹

As further evidence of the Buddhist perspective here, Padon cites the *Last Testament* (*bKa' chem*).⁷⁰ This work, ascribed to King Songtsen Gampo, states that the translator Thumi took from Zahor six Tibetan letters that were not available in India—ca, cha, ja, zha, za, and 'a. In a curious passage he notes the precise need that each of these letters fulfilled. For example, he says the Indian language gives "eka" for "one"; the Tibetans could not translate this as

66. Padon 673.3.

67. The full lineage of the text is found in the *Lamp Illuminating the Darkness of Indirect Meaning* (*Drang don mun sel sgron ma'i grel pa*) in the *Cycle of the Defining and Interpreting the Magical Space Treasure* (*sNyan rgyud 'phrul mdzod drang nges skor*) p. 105.6. Listed Karmay 1977: no. 58.

68. *Tshul khrims phun tshogs* 1985: 395ff., cited in van der Kuijp 1996: 431; for further details on the development of the script, see pp. 432ff.

69. Padon 641.6 and 642.6.

70. Padon 642.4, *bka' chems ka bkol ma / ka khol ma*. Study of this text is crucial for a fuller account of events marking Songtsen Gampo's reign; see van der Kuijp 1996: 47.

gcig until they introduced the letter *ca*. Likewise, Tibetans could not render *dharma* as *chos* until they introduced the letter *cha*. To translate *loka* (world) into *'jig rten*, they needed a *ja*; to make *rupa* (form) as *gzugs* they needed the *za*, and to render *rula*⁷¹ as *zhes* they required a *zha*. Finally, because there were no long vowels in Tibetan, they introduced the '*a*'.⁷²

Important strands of scholarship east and west are prepared to cast doubt on the narrative that credits Thumi with creating a new language. Shardza Rinpoche discredits it, calling such explanation "empty words."⁷³ He offers, in counterpoint, a biography of Shenrab Miwo, according to which the original characters of the Tibetan language were devised by "the enlightened one." Citing the *Zermik*, Shardza writes:

Thirty consonants form the basis of Bon texts
 The introductory sign (*mgo*) leads the way
 The "full-stop" (*shad*) creates divisions
 The dot (*tsheg*) promotes clarity
 The vowels i, e, o, u and subjoined letters
 Are added as circumstances require.⁷⁴

These characters developed into the writing system of Zhang Zhung.⁷⁵

Five centuries ago, Padon did not find the Buddhist account convincing, either. Indeed, he considers it laughable: Bon already had many texts, he observes. Were these six letters missing from those texts? If they were not missing, why should they be brought in from elsewhere? He, like Shardza Rinpoche after him, finds it entirely at odds (*dngos 'gal*) with the situation to consider Tibetan writing to have come from India. During Thumi's time, he argues, Indian and Tibetan writing were discordant in sound and graphs.⁷⁶ Shardza Rinpoche, who also cites this passage, adds for good measure a quote from the *Mother Tantra* (said to have been discovered in the early twelfth century):

Indian and Tibetan letters are certainly not similar to each other.
 Therefore, you should believe what the teacher Padma says:
 When (the texts of) the dharma of India were translated into Tibetan
 They were unable to transpose the Indian characters into Tibetan.
 So the thirty characters were modeled on Tibetan.

71. Shardza, who also discusses this passage (Karmay 1972: 28–29), says "nāma" instead of "rula," which seems to make more sense.

72. David Snellgrove surmises that the Zhang Zhung alphabet, reminiscent of the Tibetan ornate *lan-tsha* lettering, is in fact "modeled letter for letter upon Thonmi Sambhota's alphabet of thirty letters." Snellgrove 1987: 2393. See also Padon 642.2–5.

73. Karmay 1972: 29.

74. Karmay 1972: 28 and n.3. Shardza cites the *Zermik* as the source for this quotation, though Karmay could not locate it in the 1966 edition of that text.

75. Karmay 1972: 28 and n.3. See 28–29 for further iteration of the migration of this script.

76. Padon 642.2–5.

The names of gods were taken from the sounds of the elements.
The mantras were not translated, but left as they were.⁷⁷

Lopon Tenzin Namdak modifies this position slightly, maintaining that unlike the form of the letters, their sound does come from India.⁷⁸

In any case, Steven Beyer notes numerous difficulties with the Buddhist claim of linguistic invention, and even with the historicity of Thumi himself.⁷⁹ An Indian inscription on baked bricks from Gopālpur, its script virtually identical with that of Tibetan, has been independently dated to around 500 B.C.E.⁸⁰ Thus, it is certainly possible, as Padon says, that “Tibetan” writing existed in Tibet or elsewhere well before Thumi went to India. The suggestion that it arose independently of a subcontinental script is more difficult to support. Such writing probably developed, however, more under administrative than under religious pressure, as Padon’s account would have us understand.⁸¹ Further evidence in favor of this theory is adduced by Namkhai Norbu, who cites the *Great Vairocana* (*Be ro Drag bag Chen mo*), which states that “Thon mi Sambhota modified or changed (*bsgyur*) the (already existent) Tibetan writing system.”⁸²

Traditional Buddhist accounts of a written Tibetan language arising simultaneously with Buddhism relate to an even more crucial claim—namely, that Bon texts in the language of Zhang Zhung were subsequently translated into Tibetan.⁸³ Recent scholarship has greatly developed our understanding of

77. Karmay 1972: 29; Tibetan text 217. The translation here is adapted from Karmay. Though both Shardza and Padon are citing the *Last Testament* (*bKa' chens*) for this passage on Sanskrit words requiring the invention of new Tibetan letters, they are apparently working from different editions (see Karmay 1972: 29). Where Shardza refers to *nāma* as the reason for introducing the Tibetan *zha*, Padon says *rupa* required it; the *za* needed to translate *rupa* as *gzugs* is fifth in Padon’s list and last, or sixth, in Shardza’s (compare Karmay 1972: 216–217 with Padon 642.4–5). At the very least, this discrepancy indicates that this citation received sufficient attention in Tibet to proliferate and undergo editing. The *Ma rgyud thugs rje nyi ma* was rediscovered by ('Phrul sku Guru rNorn rtse, b. 1136 (according to the *Chronology of Teaching: An Amazing Garland of Jewels* (*Sangs rgyas kyi bstan rtis ngo mtshar nor bu'i phreng ba*)), written by the abbot Nyima Tenzin (Nyi ma bsTan 'dzin) in Tanak Dunphor (rTa nag Dung phor). Other discoveries from this site are discussed in Karmay 1972: 166ff.

78. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Triten Norbutse, August 1997, oral commentary. In *dpal gtam* Lopon also writes that we should not assume that all works occurring in the Sanskrit language [orthography?] are Indian; 40.17–41.3.

79. He also suggests, contra Padon, that Thumi was a borrower rather than an inventor. See Beyer 1992: 40–41; for a list of works on origins of the Tibetan alphabet, see pp. 446–447.

80. Beyer 1992: 41.

81. I am told by Kyung Trul Rinpoche of Dolanji that several Tibetan scholars now support this position, but I have not been able to identify their work.

82. Norbu 1989: 11. This is also in line with A. H. Francke’s conclusion, in 1903, in *Indian Antiquity* that Tibet already possessed a “headless” alphabet and that Thumi’s innovation was to furnish it with a head. Gendun Choephel himself considers that the *dbu-can* (with heads) and the *dbu med* (without heads) were not developed simultaneously, but that the latter developed from the former under pressures to write with greater ease (Choephel 1978: 15).

83. For an account of scholarship in this area, see Orofino 1990. Notwithstanding excellent foundational explorations such as Hoffman 1967 and 1972, and more recent important work by Hummel, 1995 and 1996 especially, Orofino’s observation that “the actual state of the research does not permit any definite conclusions” (p. 85) is still true today. However, a great step forward is found in the articles by Nishi and Nagano, van Driem, Takeuchi et al., and Matisoff in Nagano and La Polla, eds., 2001, as well as work by Dan Martin 2000 and the

possible sources of the Zhang Zhung language. Namkhai Norbu states that the formation of a Tibetan word such as *brKyangs*, with its superscribed *ra* and subscripted *ya*, together with a prefix and suffix, shows characteristics unique to Tibetan and ancient Zhang Zhung language. He states that most of the words were not translations from Sanskrit (though some were), but from ancient Zhang Zhung language and ancient Tibetan. He also states that the Zhang Zhung grammatical particles *gu*, *chu*, *da*, *du*, *tu*, *au*, *su*, *tur*, and *sur* have been modified and reduced to the present Tibetan *su*, *ru*, *du*, and *tu*.⁸⁴ Scholars researching evidence of the Zhang Zhung language have found that some of its vocabulary still exists in the spoken language of Kinoor, pressed against the Tibetan border north of Simla. If there was indeed a separate body of texts in the Zhang Zhung language,⁸⁵ this obviously bolsters the possibility that works such as *Authenticity* and its related texts could, as we will suggest in more detail below, have had intellectual sources outside the Indian Buddhist ones.⁸⁶

Such is the deep background of the colophon, where we eavesdrop on Dranpa Namkha, Lishu Daring, and Vairocana declaiming the unnamed king (who is almost certainly Trisong Detsen), his ministers, and his Buddhist monks for their treatment of Bon. Their appearance together on the stage of *Authenticity*'s colophonic amphitheatre is not surprising; other sources, such as the *Utmost Peak*, *Great Expanse* also describe Trisong Detsen, Dranpa Namkha, and Lishu Daring as contemporaries.⁸⁷

Quite apart from its historicity, which is difficult to ascertain, the mythic grandeur of this story makes *Authenticity*'s colophon a powerful coda to the text. We are reminded that the demise of physical bodies, as well as bodies of knowledge, is inevitable. A text's subject matter is valued all the more on that account. In this way, the colophon functions to accentuate a type of religious reading referred to by Paul Griffiths: a reading in service of contemplation and,

growing existence of a lexicography of Zhang Zhung, such as Haarh 1968. Haarh's work, as Dan Martin notes in his annotated bibliography, is based almost entirely on a glossary by the Bon scholar Nyima Drakpa (*Nyi ma Grags pa*, 1616–1670).

84. For other examples and sources, see Norbu 1989: 10–11. See also Nagano and La Polla 2001.

85. One lengthy Zhang Zhung text, which has been used as the basis for most Zhang Zhung-Tibetan glossaries, is the *Treasure Cave of Existents* (*Srid pa'i mdzod phug*) [a Bon Abhidharma text] rediscovered by Gyermi Nyi-od (Gyer mi Nyi 'od, twelfth century). Of its four published editions, the most widely available one is *Mdzod-phug: Basic Verses and Commentary by Dran-pa-nam-mkha'*, Lopon Tenzin Namdak (Delhi 1966), recently reprinted at Sarnath. Dan Martin has prepared a disc version of this text, based on four separate editions. The disc also includes the Zhang Zhung Glossary by Zhu Nyi-ma-grags-pa (seventeenth century), that is, the Zhang Zhung/Tibetan section of the *Lamp Illuminating the Conjoined Meanings of Terms* (*Sgra yi don sdeb snang gsal sgron me*) by Zhuyi Neljor Nyima Drakpa (Zhu yi Rnal 'byor Nyi ma Grags pa).

86. This does not mean that Zhang Zhung culture had no contact with India. On the contrary, the presence of loan words in this language led Hoffman and Haarh to conclude that such contact existed prior to the translation of Zhang Zhung Bonpo texts into Tibetan. R. A. Stein, however, disputes this. He notes that such Sanskrit words as do appear in Zhang Zhung texts were common to religious discourse. (Orofino 1990: 85, citing Stein 1971.)

87. Lopon Tenzin Namdak 1983: 141.14–15. Karmay 1972: 26 notes that the [Dzogchen] *Utmost Peak*, *Great Expanse* ([rDzog pa chen po] *Yang rtse klong chen*) is attributed to Lishu Daring. For a description of its rediscovery by his reincarnation Zhodon Ngodrup Drakpa (bZhod ston dNgos grub Grags pa) see Karmay 1972: 154.

especially, of the rationale for contemplation.⁸⁸ One reads this text in the face of past, and future, disaster.

We turn now to these spokespersons of the colophon and to others associated with them in Bon historiographies. In doing so, we step through the Buddhist looking glass, into the period of imperial power as it is remembered by Bon:

I am Dranpa Namkha, Master [in the tradition] of Shenrab, I initially trained in study and the verbal arts of translation; I know sixty-seven different [systems of] terms and logic.

Once having understood all the bon [teachings] of all the vehicles, I [then] set myself in meditative equipoise in the abiding state of mind. Finally, I realized that all of cyclic existence and samsara do not depart from the heart which is unbounded wholeness.

Having most excellent insight into this, I remain in connection with Samantabhadra. You foolish king, you very wrongful ministers! May the king and public be at cross purposes. . . . [May] your afflictions, your coarse desire and hatred roil like poison! With the force of your foul and harsh mouthings, you destroy the sun of the world, my changeless, ceaseless magical speech of the truth of Bon, king of doctrines. Pity these Buddhist monks who have gone under the power of affliction! I, at the very heart of the Shen Deity, Samantabhadra, am primordially without birth, death, increase, or decline; therefore, I dwell continually in great bliss.

By your having destroyed the blazing light of the changeless, ceaseless sun, bringing in the dharma from the south [India] and from Nepal, may the king have a short life, may your villages be poor, may the monks fight and remain in the villages [instead of the monastery], may one monk criticize another and deal in [black] magic, may the community disintegrate and speak harshly of the king, may the teaching of the dharma be destroyed from the center, may the teaching of Bon spread from the margins, may reincarnations arise in Dzambuling, may all these buried teachings be opened at that time, may the spiritual children who are reincarnations continually teach, may the Changeless Ceaseless Yung Drung Teaching move from the margins to the peak of victory. {127.3–5}

With its emphasis on such curses, the colophon also strongly suggests why it and other Bon texts came to be hidden. Thus *Authenticity*, unlike texts associated with it such as *Clarifying Tenets of the Primordial Throne* (*Ye khri mtha' sel*) and *Utmost Peak, Great Expanse*, does not portray Trisong Detsen in

88. Griffiths 1999: 72–80.

a favorable light. Curses are a serious thing in Tibetan culture, and there are eminent contemporary ethnic Tibetan scholars who believe that those curses are still a source for the troubles that Tibet experiences today.⁸⁹

Trisong Detsen

The question of Zhang Zhung's political relationship with Tibet and its place in Bon history turns to a significant degree on the view one takes of Trisong Detsen. Here, as with the philosophical discussion of reality, we come on an undecidable horizon. Trisong Detsen is characterized variously as archvillain and revered lineage holder of Bon. Let us therefore look more closely at both these depictions of him in Bon sources. In the process we will consider as well the nearly parallel story of Songtsen Gampo, who, according to other sources, spearheaded Tibet's destruction of Zhang Zhung.

Various chronicles record that Trisong Detsen rebuffed Bon protests, conquered Zhang Zhung, brought death to its last king, Ligmigya, and made Buddhism the rising religion of the land. Some accounts say he acted against Bon when he was twenty,⁹⁰ others when he was twenty-eight,⁹¹ while Shardza Rinpoche says he was thirty-two.⁹²

However, in the broad sweep of Bon memory, Trisong Detsen is a dramatically ambiguous figure. The main works we know of that treat him in a positive light are far earlier than Shardza's *Treasury*; these include the Dunhuang materials, as well as *Clarifying Tenets of the Primordial Throne*, and the *Utmost Peak, Great Expanse*, the last of which names him a lineage holder in the Bon tradition. We may therefore wonder whether the vilification of Trisong Detsen was a latter-day development in Bon (or, perhaps, a response to his growing heroic stature in the Buddhist tradition).⁹³ However, the *Oral Trans-*

89. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Kathmandu, August 1997, oral commentary; Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinopche has also spoken of this.

90. Snellgrove 1987: 410–411; see also pp. 420ff.

91. Tucci 1980: 249 gives Songtsen Gampo's dates as 620–649, noting that the birthdate is much disputed. He gives Trisong Detsen's dates as 755–797(?). Karmay 1972: 117 n.1 observes that the *Chronology of the Teaching: An Amazing Garland of Jewels*, relying on the account of the *Continuity of Existents* (*Srid rgyud*) (rediscovered by Gyer Thokme), states that Trisong Detsen was born in earth-horse 718 C.E. The *Red Book on Tibetan Royalty* (*Bod kyi rgyal rabs deb dmar*) and *Amazing Ocean* (*Ngo mtshar rgya mtsho*) all give Trisong Detsen's birth date as 730; Dun Huang documents place his birth at 742, and the *Tibetan History* (*Bod kyi lo rgyus*) in 790. See Yeshey De Project 1986: 327–329.

92. Karmay 1972: 117; Tibetan text 239.7ff. The difficult question of when the king was born is discussed by Karmay 1972: 94 n.2. As Kvaerne (1971: 157–158) reports, the *Chronology and Guide for the Fortunate Era* (*bsTan rtsis bskal ldan dang 'dren*) observes that this persecution began when the king was twenty-eight years old. It also says that Bon was suppressed by the king in a fire-bird year, which would have been 757 C.E. If he was twenty-eight at that time, he would have been born in 729; this is out of line, however, with the generally accepted year of his birth in 742 C.E. Kvaerne also notes that, according to the TKDD, Trisong Detsen was born in 802, suppressed Bon in 845, and died in 857. Kvaerne considers these to be one *rabjung* (sixty years) too late, but the first two dates support those put forward by Karmay.

93. It is possible that further clarification may become available through an investigation of “edicts” issued by him and preserved by the sixteenth-century historian Pawo Tsuklak Tengwa (dPa' bo gTsug lag Phreng ba,

mission of Zhang Zhung, itself part of the earliest stratum of Bon literature, also implicates Trisong Detsen in the fall of Zhang Zhung.

The persecution of Bon certainly is a crucial background to the history of *Authenticity*, and a variety of Bon sources, in addition to the well-known *Treasury of Good Sayings*, describe the turmoil of the period. At the same time, over and above its historic grounding, the conflict between Bon and Buddhism takes on mythic dimensions, with both sides describing contests of magic and each blackening the name of the other as a source of world devastation. King Ligmigya is a crucially important figure, which makes it all the more remarkable that different narratives attribute his death to Tibetan kings separated from each other by three generations.

By the logic of its own narrative, the king cursed in the *Authenticity* colophon is Trisong Detsen. Still, it could well be that Lishu Daring also has in mind the great-great-grandfather of Trisong Detsen, King Songtsen Gampo who, as Beckwith tells us, “seems to have spent his final years principally in the work of completely assimilating the former Zhang Zhung state into his empire.”⁹⁴ It was he who, according to some Bon sources, arranged the assassination of the last ruler of the Zhang Zhung Dynasty, Ligmigya, at which time Zhang Zhung became an integral part of Tibet.⁹⁵ Songtsen Gampo died in approximately 659 C.E., at least fifty years earlier than the eighth-century date associated with the writing of *Authenticity*.⁹⁶

In the account given in the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* and reiterated in the *Treasury*, the king is clearly Trisong Detsen. His minister, Nangnam Legdrub (sNa nam Legs grub) takes it upon himself to visit Ligmigya’s newest wife⁹⁷ and suggests to her that she is too grand a person to be, at age eighteen, the least of Ligmigya’s three wives. Rather, if she would assist in depriving the Zhang Zhung king of his power, she could become the primary wife of the king of Tibet.⁹⁸ Shardza Rinpoche, clearly using the *Oral Transmission* as a source here, also follows the earlier work in naming Trisong Detsen as the

1504–1566) which, as Leonard van der Kuijp 1994: 41 points out “may now lie buried somewhere in the vast collections of the Potala.” As both van der Kuijp 1996a: 42 and Kapstein 2002: 41–46 point out, the *Testament of Ba*, written by the first Tibetan monk, or one of the first, Ba Yeshe Wangpo (sBa Ye shes dBang po), also promises to provide much insight into the life and times of Trisong Detsen.

94. Beckwith 1987: 25. Beckwith also notes (p. 25 n.67) that according to Liu Hsu’s *Chiu T’ang shu*, Zhang Zhung (Chinese Yang t’ung) is included among the countries listed as having come to court in 648. Beckwith also reports from Tibetan sources on the Zhang Zhung rebellion of 679–680 (see his p. 43 n.31).

95. Wangyal n.d.: 14. Lopon Tenzin Namdak concurs: “Bon’s difficulties in Tibet all go back to Songtsen Gampo” (Kathmandu, August 1997, oral commentary).

96. Uray 1972b: 34 n.86. Richardson places his death at the end of 649 C.E. or beginning of 650 C.E. and the “Zhang Zhung revolt” or overthrow of Ligmigya around 644 C.E.

97. Shardza gives her name as Nanzi Dronley (sNang bza sGron legs) (Karmay 1972: 86–87) and the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* gives it as Grubza Nangdon Lekmo (Gu rub za sNang sgron Leg mo), whereas Padon refers to her as Gurub Zadronlek (Gu rub Za sgron legs).

98. Norbu 1995a: 32–33. See *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, p. 261.5; also Karmay 1972: 86–87.

Tibetan king in question.⁹⁹ Both the *Treasury* and the *Oral Transmission* refer by name to the minister as Nangnam Legdrub and to the young wife as Nangdron Legma (sNang sgron legs ma).¹⁰⁰

She concurs with the plan, using a symbolic code (*lde'u*) to communicate a strategy for a successful ambush. On a designated mountain pass she leaves a pan of water containing a piece of gold, a conch shell, and a poisoned arrowhead. King Songtsen Gampo finds these items and, even more significantly, understands their meaning: The round pan indicates King Ligmigya will arrive at this pass on full moon; the gold and conch shell, that his own soldiers should lie in wait in the Gold Cave and the Conch Cave; and the arrowhead that they should ambush and kill the king. And they do.¹⁰¹

Afterward, King Ligmigya's first wife, Chungza Tsogyel (Khyung bza' mTsho rgyal), plots revenge against her husband's murderers, a vendetta that has far-reaching effects. She, too, relies on symbolic language.¹⁰² In Shardza's story, she asks one of the most powerful Bon ritualists of the day, Yerbung Nangzher Lopo (Gyer spungs sNang bzher Lod po), to avenge the murder of her husband.¹⁰³ The rites he proposes to use all involve gold, just as the message of betrayal left by Nangdron Legma involved gold.¹⁰⁴ Yerbung tells the grieving Chungza Tsogyel that he can, through using different amounts of gold, either destroy all of Tibet or only all of Yarlung, the king and his attendants. Using the least amount of gold will kill the king alone. What does she prefer?

Chungza Tsogyel, "being compassionate, says, 'It is not the fault of the Tibetan people but their kings,'" and requests the last of these three options.¹⁰⁵ But in fact, since he does not want to see Tibet plunged into the misery sure to ensue on the death of the king, Yerbung effects lesser curses: killing animals, drying up a lake near Yarlung, setting fire to the king's castle, and making him ill. Once he understands that his illness and ruined residence are the result of

99. *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* 261.1; Karmay 1972: 86 ff.

100. *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* 262.1-2.

101. From the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* 63, p. 259 2a.4, cited by Norbu 1995a: 33. See also Karmay 1972: 86-87.

102. Women of this period appear to provide particularly powerful examples of symbolic language or *lde'u*. The Chinese princess Weng Chen Kong Jo, wedded to King Songtsen Gampo, also uses secret language to convey a complex message to the Tibetan ministers (see Norbu 1995a: 33-34). In another famous coded communication, Milarepa's mother sends him a cloak into which she secretly sews the constellation of the Pleiades accompanied by a mysterious letter (Lhalungpa 1977: 36-37).

103. Karmay 1972: 98-99.

104. Gold was a significant aspect of the Tibetan landscape. Gendun Choephel cites the Tazig history '*U-dul 'A-la-lam*', which gives an account of the various principalities of Tibet where gold was found, saying that gold was mined in nuggets as large as sheep's heads. Immediately following this, Choephel 1978: f. 51, not known for whimsy, reports: "Another peculiar feature of the country was that whosoever arrived in the country would do so in a very happy mood. The reasons for this behavior is [sic] unknown."

105. Karmay 1972: 97-98.

Yerbung's revenge, the *Treasury* tells us, the "intelligent king" of Tibet agrees to provide a large gold shrine for the Lord of Zhang Zhung, to refrain from taxing the people of Gurub (apparently the natal area of Ligmigya's third wife) when they visit Yarlung, and, above all, not to suppress any of the 360 kinds of Zhang Zhung Bon which Yerbung himself practices. Accordingly, Yerbung reverses his curse, and "many pieces of gold, which were like horse-tail hair, came out from the king's body."¹⁰⁶

Subsequently, Dranpa Namkha, presumably some time after the outburst recorded in the colophon, was permitted to return to his faith, and the Bonpos were offered the three land areas of Olmo Lung Ring in the Upper Land, Kongyul Drena (Kong-yul Bre-sna) in the Lower Land, and Yardrok Tunsum (Yar 'brog Thun gsum) in the center. On this occasion the king made a statement in support of Bon that gently echoes, or is echoed by, words attributed to Vairocana in the colophon of *Authenticity*: "Bon and Buddhism have each been suppressed in turn in the past. But now as I have called you back I ask you to bring out the textual treasures and to practice Bon and Buddhism together." The vow to keep the two faiths together was practiced for three years.¹⁰⁷ After apologizing and making amends in this way, it is said that Trisong Detsen himself practiced Bon in secret.¹⁰⁸ This is not the only rendition of events.

According to the *Treasury*, Joza Bonmo, consort of *Authenticity*'s author, searched out Bon ritualists when the Buddhist monks, following the suppression of Bon, disgraced themselves with women and eating flesh. The country was in disarray, and the king fell ill again. Joza Bonmo managed to locate the great adept Jetsa Kharpu (lCe tsha mKhar bu) of Minyag (Me nyag), who returned with her to central Tibet, observing that "as we feel compassion . . . we must go."¹⁰⁹ His consecration cured the king. And we are told that the king's vow to practice the two faiths together was kept for three years, so the doctrine of Bon was not completely suppressed: "This is also the reason why the doctrines of Bon have still survived in this Land of Snows, Tibet."¹¹⁰ After Trisong Detsen's reign, only a few Bon priests remained to conduct the rituals in support of royal health and power. Trisong Detsen's last-born son, Mutuk Tsenspo (Mu thug bTsan po),¹¹¹ ascended the throne following the deaths of his father and brothers and later concealed numerous Bon texts from his father's library in order to preserve them.

Mutuk's son was the great Buddhist king Relpajen (Ral pa can), who

^{106.} Karmay 1972: 98.

^{107.} Karmay 1972: 101-102; Tibetan text p. 267 l. 36 (f. 183a).

^{108.} Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Kathmandu, August 1977, oral commentary.

^{109.} Karmay 1972: 100.

^{110.} Karmay 1972: 102.

^{111.} As Karmay 1972: 102 notes, the ordering of these sons is a confusing issue due to the similarity of their names.

renewed and expanded Buddhism and who is famous for being so respectful to Buddhist monks that he had them sit on his own hair. The fact that this king's bodyguards were Bon suggests a good relationship with his father's coreligionists,¹¹² and, indeed, he forbade anyone to cause physical injury to Bonpos or to take over their property.

Thus, in at least one central strand of Bon memory, the survival of their tradition is attributed to the promise made by the same king whom Buddhists regard as a Dharma Lord, Trisong Detsen, and to the legacy of his immediate descendants, who ruled over a Tibet in which Buddhism was on the ascendant.

Many of the important features of Trisong Detsen's relations with Bon are paralleled in other Bon narratives about Songtsen Gampo. Here, too, we have a Tibetan king who conquers Zhang Zhung and murders its king, aided by symbolic communication from a female relative. Dunhuang documents record that King Songtsen Gampo's sister, Semakar (Sad ma dkar), was the youngest wife of King Ligmigya. Through a messenger, the king's sister sends thirty ancient turquoise stones of excellent quality. "If you have the courage to confront Ligmigya, wear the turquoise stones (around your neck, as men do), otherwise you will show you are like women so wear them as ornaments in your hair (as women do)!" "Then the king and ministers reflected further and consulted together, and in the end they demolished Ligmigya's power."¹¹³

According to Gendun Choephel, matrimonial strife had arisen because Semakar was "ignoring both her wifely and household duties." He concluded that though Songtsen Gampo had subdued Zhang Zhung through diplomatic means, taking advantage of his sister's unhappy marriage, he went on to conquer the kingdom at her urging.¹¹⁴ At the very least he was felt to oppose Bon; the Bon *Byams ma* states that "as Srong-tsen was hostile to Bon, he could not survive for more than thirty-six years."¹¹⁵ "The considerable confusion surrounding the date of the conquest of Zhang-Zhung is no small matter," observes Samten Karmay.¹¹⁶ The discrepancy regarding who conquered Zhang

¹¹². Both Padon and Shardza Rinpoche (Karmay 1972: 103) mention this point.

¹¹³. *Tun Huang Documents on the History of Tibet* (*Tun Huang nas thon pa'i bod kyi lo rgyus yig cha*), Op. 96, p. 78 I. II, cited by Norbu 1995a: 32. As discussed in Hummel 1994, she conveys this message in song; together with some objects that only made sense in light of the song, she manages to convey militarily crucial information to the Tibetan army, which results in their conquest of Zhang Zhung. See also Uray 1972a.

¹¹⁴. Choephel 1978: 67; see also 10–11. Writing in the twentieth century, Gendun Choephel (1905–1951) was apparently the first Tibetan scholar to incorporate documents in Old Tibetan and Uighir historiographical sources discovered in a Khotanese temple, as well as other ancient sources.

¹¹⁵. Cited by Gendun Choephel (dGe mdun Chos 'phel) as reported by his translator. See Samten Norboo's introduction to Gendun's *White Annals*, 1978: 13 (apparently cited in the larger text from which this translation is condensed, but which we have not seen).

¹¹⁶. Karmay 1975/reprint 1998: 115 cites Gendun Choephel as the first Tibetan to notice this discrepancy and agrees with this famous scholar's unremarked reordering of events Dun Huang ms. Pelliot Tibétain (PT) 1287 so that the fall of Zhang Zhung falls under the reign of Songtsen Gampo rather than, as that work appears to have it, under Trisong Detsen. See *The Ways of Great Tibet and White Historical Text on its Royalty* (*Bod chen*

Zhung may, at least in part, be due to the ambivalent semantic range of the name Ligmigya itself. Ligmi (*lig mi*) means “existence” (Tib. *srid pa*) in the Zhang Zhung language, and Gya (*rkyā*) means “honorable” or “Lord” (Tib. *rje*). It may have been the proper name of one king, but it was also a common epithet used to describe many monarchs of Zhang Zhung.

These stories are remarkably similar; in addition to the features of family intrigue and spousal betrayal they share an emphasis on symbolic language, an absence of words giving way to a plethora of meaning. The verbal synapse between the two cultures, Bon and Buddhist—and before that, Zhang Zhung and Tibetan—is also made visible through competing narratives regarding the origins of Tibetan written language. This clash eventually precipitated a powerful cultural shift that entails wholesale replacement of the language of defeated Zhang Zhung with the language of Tibet.

The ambiguous position of Trisong Detsen is curiously, if inconclusively, analogous to a constellation of more or less homophonic Tibetan terms that conflate symbol-laden elements which would otherwise distinguish Bon from Buddhism. The king’s very title, Tsenpo, may, as Kapstein has noted, be related with the *tsen* (*btsan*) class of unruly beings who became, with the rise of Buddhism, its protectors.¹¹⁷ Something more complex and more closely bearing on our interests is also suggested by this name.

The *khri* that precedes the Buddhist king’s proper name is very nearly homophonic with *tri*, an ancient word of Zhang Zhung meaning “mind” or “great mind nature” or even “longevity,” all terms that, as Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche points out, suggest something of great importance and thus worthy to be included in the name of a sovereign.¹¹⁸ Moreover, since it is a widespread custom among Tibetans to give even ordinary children names with auspicious meaning, it seems very unlikely, as Namkhai Norbu further observes, that kings would not also have meaningful names. Yet, he notes, names such as Agsho Leg, Tisho Leg, Mune Tsenpo, and Murub Tsenpo have no meaning in Tibetan but are, in fact, names from the language of Zhang Zhung.¹¹⁹

In a common iconographical symbol, widely known especially among the Nyingmapa, Trisong Detsen is symbolized by the icon of a knife or blade (Tib. *gri*, nearly homophonic with *khri*). This representation occurs most famously

po srid lugs dang 'brel ba'i rgyal rab deb ther dkar po), ed. Lhasa, f. 29a. Karmay points out that we now know that the manuscript itself had been previously arranged, thus erroneously giving the impression that the fall of Zhang Zhung took place under Trisong Detsen. Nonetheless, as Karmay argues, we cannot definitely assign the fall to the earlier king.

117. Kapstein 2000: 54.

118. Norbu 1995a: 24–25. Norbu Rinpoche notes that he is not convinced by accounts of *khri* meaning throne, and preceding the name of the first Tibetan king Nyatri Tsenpo (Nya khri btsan po). It is often said that this is because the people lifted him high on a throne supported on their necks. This Zhang Zhung understanding of the term *khri* is drawn from the *Treasure Cave of Existents*, described by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche as “a bilingual Zhang Zhung–Tibetan text rediscovered in 1108 by Terton Gyermi Nyi-od.” Norbu 1995a: 232 n.15.

119. Norbu 1995a: 25.

in a tripartite symbolic representation in which a knife emerges from a lotus which itself grows out of a lake. The lake (Tib. *mtsho*) is understood to symbolize Śāntarakṣita (Zhi ba 'tsho), the scholarly "Bodhisattva" monk from India who was instrumental in establishing monastic life in Tibet, thus making possible the kind of scholarly environment in which texts like *Authenticity* found their home. The third syllable of Śāntarakṣita's name, 'tsho, is nearly homophonic with *mtsho*. The latter means "lake"; the former, "protect." Śāntarakṣita is indeed famous as a protector of traditional Buddhist order; he was invited to Tibet to foster precisely the sort of scholarship that encouraged Buddhism to claim superiority to the untamed and arguably more fluid elements of Tibet such as Bon. He also protected Buddhism at a crucial moment through the legendary expertise of his student, Kamalaśīla, who defeated the (Dzogchen-like) views of Hva-Shang Moheyān at the highly mythologized debate of Samye.¹²⁰ At the same time, from this particular lake there grows a lotus, that signifies Padmasambhava, tamer of the spirits and other natural forces who stood against Buddhism. In short, embedded in this symbolic representation is the imperial and religious mythos by which Buddhism, through its identification with the human icons of the imperial period, becomes identified with Tibet itself.

The threefold representation of lake, knife, and lotus, linking three main figures in the Buddhist transmission from India to Tibet, is itself a kind of *lde'u* or symbolic language capable of eliding one language and culture with another, a passage rendered invisible through a complex mix of cultural erasure and cultural presence.¹²¹

For example, Bon narratives tell of a young child who parts from his father, Dranpa Namkha,¹²² and twin brother, Tsewang Rigzin (Tshe dbang Rig 'dzin), travels to India with his mother, the Dakini Oden Obarma ('Od ldan Od 'bar ma), and arrives at Tso Pema ("Lotus Lake," today's Riwalzer) in northern India, where Buddhists say Padmasambhava sojourned with Mandarava. In the Bon tale, his mother departs to join with other dakinis in prayer, leaving her son for safekeeping in one of the large flowers in a local garden. When she returns at sunset, all the flowers are closed. Desperately searching for her son, she plucks and tosses all the flowers into the river. The next morning, the great

120. See Gómez 1983.

121. Norbu 1995: 21 states that *lde'u* is an ancient Tibetan term, probably from Zhang Zhung, but possibly common to both languages, though it has no specific meaning in modern Tibetan. It is also indicative of the erasures to cultural memory of the ways in which Buddhist themes were, at least occasionally, founded on more ancient Bon ones. Most notable among these is the comparison of the fourteenth-century Buddhist account of Padmasambhava's journey to Tibet with that of Donpa Shenrab Miwo, recounted in the *Zermik*, of his journey from Olmo Lung Ring to Kongpo. Blondeau 1971 concludes, as does Karmay 1988: 216–223, that this central account of the Buddhist tradition was, in fact, based on the earlier Bon epic.

122. Dranpa Namkha himself, according to one biography of Padmasambhava, is the reincarnation of a *naga* girl about whom we know nothing except that she "passed away/ On the great continent of Iron Tree"; Tsogyal 1993: 103.

and childless King Indrabhuti is apprised by a serving man returning from the river, where he went to draw water for the king, that there is a young boy inside a flower floating on the lake. Together they retrieve the boy from the flower.¹²³

This tale contrasts sharply, of course, with the claim of many Buddhist texts that Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rinpoche, had no parents, but was born within (*sambhava*) a lotus (*padma*). The question of his actual origins cannot be fully settled; however, Tucci and others have identified Odḍiyāna with the Swat Valley of Pakistan.¹²⁴ Herbert Guenther argues fairly convincingly, if idiosyncratically, that Padmasambhava more likely came from Central Asia, south of the Aral sea, noting the frequency of the suffix *ana* in places such as Sogdiana, near Lake Aral, and the fact that Sogdians were syncretists, drawing from elements of Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Further, Guenther here offers a kind of “middle way” between the Bon and Buddhist tales of Padmasambhava’s origins. Entering Tibet as a refugee when Sogdian civilization was overtaken by Arabs, “in order to protect his relatives, who were left behind, [he] declared himself to have neither a father nor a mother.”¹²⁵ This and the fact that numerous Buddhist sources also regard Padmasambhava as parented means there is no reason to consider these Bon narratives as anti-Buddhist, as some might read them. Guru Rinpoche is arguably simply part of their story, too, albeit not the central figure he is in Buddhist tales.

The Buddhist view thus can itself be seen to encompass important elements of this Bon tale. As Aris notes, Pema Lingpa’s (Pad ma Gling pa) writing on the life of Padmasambhava “combines a miraculous version, according to which he is born out of a lotus in the lake of Danakośa, and a ‘rational’ version (according more with the Bon tale we saw above) wherein he is the foundling son of King Indrabodhi of Odḍiyāna. Blondeau likewise divides the Buddhist literature on Padmasambhava into analogous categories.¹²⁶ We can take this very consanguinity to suggest that Tibetan cultural imagination does not necessarily find these kinds of stories to be in tension with each other, although they may serve different purposes. When one thinks, in the Tibetan context, of Padmasambhava, these images blend together. Though for Buddhists, more

123. H.H. Lungtög Denpa Nyima (Lung rtogs bsTan pa'i Nyi ma), spiritual head of Bon tradition and thronewholder of Menri Monastery (sMan ri Khri'-dzin), to Klein, Serenity Ridge, summer 2000, oral commentary.

124. More recently Ron Davidson 2000 concurs, citing the recent discovery in the Swat valley of inscriptions containing this place name. Thanks to David Gray, personal communication, for pointing this out; this chapter was written before Davidson’s important work was published.

125. Guenther, 1994: 26–27.

126. Aris 1989: 25. See also Blondeau’s taxonomy, derived from Kongtrul Lodro Thaye (Kong sprul bLo gros mTha' yas), who himself relies on a number of sources. Blondeau 1979: 46 synthesizes the significance thus: “According to this passage [from Kong-sprul Rinpoche] we have an intersecting classification: that of the *ger ma*, which with the exception of Bakhel Mukpo (Ba mkhal sMugpo), adopt the version of the *rdzus-skyes*, ‘miracle birth,’ and that of the *bka' ma* which adopt the version of the *ningal skyes* ‘birth in a womb.’”

than Bon, certain elements of the more “magical” one largely predominate, it is the blending of these into a *single cultural imaginaire* that is the point.

In the *Bon Instructions of Purest Gold* (*Bon khrid gser gyi yang zhun gi khrid yig*) it is stated that on a certain occasion Guru Rinpoche saw Shenhla Okar and, taking him to be Donpa Shenrab, received Dzogchen teachings from him.¹²⁷ These teachings were “put into the form of letters” by “Pema” and given to Yeshe Tsogyel. She rewrote what she received, then hid it. This writing was later discovered by Tsewang Gyelpo (Tshe dbang rGyal po) at Tsebung Sangwa (Tshe spungs gsang ba), after which it was again copied down from yellow pages by Yanga Bonpo Yung Drung Gyelpo (Ya nga Bon po Yung drung rGyal po).¹²⁸ The vital subtext of this vignette is, of course, the connection made between Guru Rinpoche and the Zhang Zhung transmission of Dzogchen. Though *Purest Gold* uses only the bare term “Dzogchen,” without specifying a lineage, Bon teachers interpret the mention of Tsewang Gyelpo, guardian of the *Oral Transmission*, to indicate that Zhang Zhung, and especially the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, was a source of Guru Rinpoche’s teaching.¹²⁹

The Buddhist side characterizes Padmasambhava’s connection with the *Oral Transmission* quite differently. *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*¹³⁰ states that Guru Rinpoche traveled to Zhang Zhung, manifested himself as Tapihritsa (’Od kyi khye’u), and there transmitted the Dzogchen *Oral Transmission* to Yerbung, who was himself a contemporary of Trisong Detsen and Vairocana, and regarded as the great *siddha* who brought the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* into Tibet in the eighth century.¹³¹ It is also stated there that the twelfth lineage master following Shenrab Miwo was a teacher named Zhang Zhung Garab (dGa’ rab), who, Namkhai Norbu concludes, was the very Garab Dorje whom Nyingma famously names as the first human practitioner of Dzogchen.¹³²

127. *Bon Instructions of Purest Gold* (*Bon khrid gser gyi yang snying zhun gi khrid yig*) n.p., n.d. 17a.5 (manuscript copy in possession of Lopon Tenzin Namdak).

128. Tsewang Gyelpo is listed as the author of *sNyan brgyad bon gyi bka’ skyon rgyal po nyi pang sad kyi bskang ba*, a ritual text connected with the 1882 *sNyan rgyud bka’ srung nyi pang sad kyi mngon rtogs spyam ’dren*, listed in Karmay 1977: 129 No. 37.

129. Another Bon source, the biography (*rnam mthar*) of Shengyel Hlatse (gShen rgyal Lha rtse), says that Lama Zur Chen, a renowned Nyingma lama received *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* from Shengyel Hlatse.

130. Dorje 196?, English trans. 1991: f. 410. On the attribution of bringing *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* into Tibet, see Kvaerne 1983: 369. There is much work yet to be done however. Karmay 1988: 203 notes that Yerbung is said to be contemporary with Trisong Detsen (742–797) “but so far we have been unable to find any evidence of his existence in the eighth century.”

131. Karmay 1988: 203. It is possible that, as Gyatso 1993: 113 observes (and as Blondeau 1979 implicitly suggests), if Guru Rinpoche’s exalted position in Buddhist circles emerged only subsequent to his activities in Tibet, these stories may reflect something of how he was perceived, perhaps not only by the Bonpo (who in any case were not “officially” a tradition at that time) but more generally during the imperial or immediately postimperial period.

132. Norbu 1989: 17, referencing *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*; see *History and Doctrine of Bon-po Niṣpanna-Yoga*, p. 20.5. Guenther 1994: 9 and p. 26, n. 56 notes that Garab Dorje (dGa’ rab rDo rje) was from

Both Vairocana and Trisong Detsen, along with Lishu Daring and Padmasambhava, either are named or their presence is implied in the closing vignette of *Authenticity*'s colophon. In the nexus of stories to which we here refer, and especially in the context of the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, these figures are characterized as part of a bidirectional current, which each side claims to have initiated and passed to the other. To appreciate this most fully we forgo the temptation to dichotomize these stories in the manner of logic, naming one set as true and the other as false. Rather, using the inclusive and poetically inclined perspective of *Authenticity* itself, we can say, with care, that these stories are all true. There surely were, along the banks of the Yarlung River flowing past Samye, innumerable multidirectional currents connecting and then separating the groups now identified as Buddhist and Bon. Only detailed archival work, of the sort now being undertaken through digital analysis of texts, will succeed in significantly unraveling these strands.¹³³

What can we make of this? On the evidence of works authored or discovered by Nyangrel Nyima Ozer and the earlier *Testament of Ba*, as discussed by Matthew Kapstein, it would appear that Guru Rinpoche's fame was on the rise sometime between the fall of the empire and the late-tenth-century renaissance of Buddhism¹³⁴—in other words, right during the period when *Authenticity* is said to have been written, buried, and revealed. From this perspective, of course, *Authenticity*'s colophon is an opportunity to give the Bon point of view center stage, offering its framing of the imperial period and Padamsambhava's role in it. The Bon, no less than the Buddhists, are interested in displaying their legitimacy by making connections with the early kings, a narrative so necessary that it is put forward despite counternarratives, also essential to Bon identity and *Authenticity* history, of the threat and diminishment Bon endured under those very dynasties.

For those steeped in Buddhist accounts, entering the Bon narratives is a bit like moving through Alice's looking glass—much is familiar, but everything is different. Familiar characters are found doing surprising things or remaining curiously on the margins, and it is former near-unknowns who are now at the center of the action.

Of the three voices in the colphon, Lishu Daring and Drarpa Namkha are filled with ire and curses; Vairocana, however, closes the text with a verbal olive branch of hope and harmony. This Bagor Vairocana who, according to Padon,

Dhanakośa "as yet unidentified, but probably an important trading center on the Silk Route whether the Southern (Kucha) or northern (Khotan) routes. Wealth flowed along both of these, as Guenther notes, and literally Dhanakośa means "Treasury of Wealth."

¹³³. A University of Virginia project headed by Prof. David Germano at the university and a branch of this headed by Prof. Anne Klein at Rice University are, with the active participation of many other scholars including Prof. David Gray then of Rice University, now working at Santa Clara University to catalogue early Bon and Nyingma materials. See <http://www.thdl.org>.

¹³⁴. Kapstein 2000: 157, 159.

received Bon sutra teachings from Lekdang Mangpo (Legs tang rMang po) is the same Vairocana venerated by the Buddhists. His life is indexed to the struggle and connections that link Bon and Buddhist traditions. He was the first of seven Tibetans ordained by Śāntarakṣita as a Buddhist monk at Samye, a translator and a yogi who trained under Padmasambhava, and he was sent by King Trisong Detsen to India in search of the most exalted Buddhist teachings.¹³⁵ There he learned Sanskrit and fulfilled his assignment by carrying into Tibet five Dzogchen (rDzogs chen) texts, as well as many others.¹³⁶ On his return, he was banished by the Bonpo ministers for practicing Buddhism.¹³⁷

According to the great Bonpo Dzogchen encoder Dorje Lingpa (rDo rje Gling pa, 1345–1405), Vairocana was a follower of Bon early in life, at which time he was called Yung Drung Tsuklak (g.Yung drung gTsug lag). Subsequently, due to the conflicts of the period, and because Vairocana would not relinquish his Bon origins,¹³⁸ the king banished him from central Tibet.¹³⁹ This is the Vairocana whose voice we hear in the colophon of *Authenticity* and who is said to have buried that text together with its author, Lishu Daring. The *Lamp Illuminating the Darkness of Indirect Meaning* (*Drang don mun sel sgron-ma*) refers to him as “the Vairocana who is unbiased regarding Bon and Chos” (*bon chos phyogs-med be-ro-tsa-na*).¹⁴⁰

In addition to his appearance as part of *Authenticity*’s colophon, Vairocana also appears in the colophon of *Stages of the Vehicles*, which states that it was translated into Tibetan by him.¹⁴¹ He writes there that “[I studied] very hard the vital life [of Yung Drung Bon], going over and over it. I translated the great Yung Drung Bon, dear to me as my life (*bsdos*), then hid these teachings at Yerba Fort, in the pristinely silent Samye area of central Tibet.”¹⁴² According to Bon narratives, *Authenticity* was composed just as the nascent divide between Bon and Buddhism was becoming an abyss. Images of an earlier har-

135. See Karmay 1988: 17–37 for discussion of the legend of Vairocana.

136. These are listed in Thondup 1989: 31–33.

137. Karmay 1988: 217.

138. Bon narratives hold that Vairocana was raised in a Bon family. According to Lopon Tenzin Namdkak, oral commentary, “while he converted for some time, his nature remains Bonpo.” For sources on the varying accounts of Vairocana’s exile, see Dudjom 1991: 2:45 n.587. For Dudjom Rinpoche’s own account, see pp. 538ff., where no mention is made of Vairocana’s Bon origins. His exile is attributed to slander by “Indians, who were jealous that the instructions had been lost to Tibet. And because one of the queens and her ministers became ill-disposed to the doctrine, master Vairocana was obliged to pass some time [in exile] in Tshawarong” (540). Hugh Richardson 1990 documented the importance of Vairocana to the early Tibetan kings, and the *Mahāvairocanaśātra* was translated from Sanskrit to Chinese in the first quarter of the eighth century (Heller 1994: 339).

139. Karmay 1985: 275. Karmay draws here from *A Great Likeness: Narrative of the Noble, Omniscient Vairocana* (*Rje btsun thams cad mukhyen pa Bai ro tsa na'i rnam thar 'dra 'bag chen mo*) (ed. Lhasa), fol. 45b–71a.

140. See *Magical Space Treasure* 1–43. Shardza Rinpoche notes that Lunbon Hlanyen (Lung bon lHa gnyan) received instructions on this and other texts (including *Clearing Extremes from the Primordial Mind*) from Tsewang (Tsé dbang) at Tashi Chukmo (bKra shis Phyugmo), and subsequently transmitted them to Lunbon Khorlo Gyelpo (Lung bon 'Khor lo rGyal po), after which these teachings flourished (Karmay 1972: 115).

141. Shardza Rinpoche concurs; see Karmay 1972: 23.

142. Padon also notes this, 385.iff. The term *bsdos* was glossed by Lopon Tenzin Namdkak as here meaning “important as my life.” The word itself, sometimes also rendered as *brdos*, means “to kill” or “to cut.”

monious time, real or imagined, and harbingers of another like it are found in the colophon of *Authenticity*, especially in words attributed to Vairocana:

Bon and Dharma differ only in terms of their disciples, their meaning is inseparable, a single essence. Respecting one and undermining the other is deluded and a pitfall. The time of the decline of Bon and the spreading of the Dharma, the wheels of the teachings come in turn; even so, in the end, Bon will also spread and be practiced. Bon and Buddhism are like sun and moon in the world. . . . I [Bagor Vairocana] pray that in the end both will spread without decline. There is no need to say that these will spread by the spiritual children, the emanations. {128.4–6}

Because Vairocana translated both Buddhist and Yung Drung Bon texts, he represents for Bon a conciliatory voice in the larger chorus of dissension between Bon and Buddhism. His words rise directly from the mythologized hermeneutic of the tradition itself. They hark back to the blessings, described at the opening of *Authenticity*, that descended from Samantabhadra. Samantabhadra, who figures so much in our consideration of *Authenticity*, also figures as the unified source and multiply envisioned voices of Bon and Buddhist Dzogchen who carry forward that transmission. The blessings of reality impel the authentic self-recognition that gives rise to scripture. This same recognition, open awareness, also gives rise to an unbiased practitioner, who foresees that the flow of recognition will continue through future emanations.

But such ecumenism was a fading dream during the period of our text. We are told that *Authenticity* and other works were hidden during the seventh and eighth centuries, when “many Bonpo priests fled Central Tibet, having first concealed their scriptures for fear of their destruction and to preserve them for future generations.”¹⁴³

Yet, in closing with Vairocana’s healing vision, the colophon also points to a mythic resolution for the warring factions of its time, thereby mirroring the philosophical inclusiveness of unbounded wholeness. For, if oppositionality is unacceptable to the philosophical premises of the tradition, the opposition of historical forces puts the tradition’s very survival at risk.

More than ten centuries later, these conciliatory remarks are echoed in the work of Shardza Rinpoche:

there is no difference in profundity between the earlier and late Bon. *Bon* or *Chos* are just appellations; in reality they are changeless. To put it concisely, Enlightened Ones in their unceasing efforts and compassion as they labor for the welfare of sentient beings have

^{143.} Wangyal Nyima n.d. 15.

made manifest temporary revelations of both *Bon* and *Chos*. We follow different doctrines to achieve different purposes.¹⁴⁴

The vast “ultimate referent” of both traditions is thus eternally the same and temporally different. “Different purposes” arise through different doctrines being engaged, but their motivation and profundity are consonant. The uniqueness of historical time is always subsumable to, or at least underwritten by, the changelessness in which the practitioner of *Authenticity* is counseled to gain confidence, that same stream of continuity that charges scriptural authenticity and authentic open awareness. In the world of *Authenticity*, it is this stream that is tapped by exemplars of the tradition, who simultaneously move in mythic timelessness, philosophical openness, and historicized time. This is further exemplified by the story of Lishu Daring and the nexus of tales purporting to tell the fate of his text after he buried it during the persecution that Bon endured after the death of King Ligmigya.

144. Karmay 1972: 187.

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7

Lishu Daring and a Tangle of Terma Tales

Authenticity 126.2–129.1

Every line of its colophon reminds readers that the *Authenticity* which offers them access to dynamic reality is itself part of the dynamism of world events.

The text's historical legacy is powerfully condensed in the dramatic colophon that reverberates with *Authenticity*'s central narrative of its own continuity and metaphysical ancestry. The colophon is concerned more concretely, in historical as well as mythic terms, with continuity of the text and of Bon itself. It therefore focuses on events that facilitated or stood in the way of their preservation. We explore some of these narratives in order to expand the textual horizon so that it can approximate somewhat more nearly—though never actually—that of a traditional reader of this text.¹

The text had to be hidden in order to preserve it when the imperial tide turned against Bon, a time when one person's spiritual nourishment was another's excess baggage. In fact, a cache of texts, possibly including *Authenticity*, is literally traded for food when the Three Buddhists who discover them realize that the texts are Bon. Though apparently the result of bumbling, their discoveries are also considered related with the prayers of Drampa Namkha, and thus in direct continuity, by way of his realization, with the kind of authentic scriptural presence that is so much at issue in the closing segment of *Authenticity* itself.²

1. For discussion of myths' character of disclosing the world of experience, see Hatab 1990: esp. 25–29. See also, among his main sources, Cassirer 1946 and Snell 1953.

2. Gyatso 1998: 295 n.41 notes this in the context of Buddhist distinctions between their own and Bon terma.

The first to express outrage at the king is Lishu Daring himself, whose name now appears in the work for the first time. For traditional readers, the mere mention of his name evokes a mythically charismatic life; his famous adventures and accomplishments are immediately available to the mind of such a reader. For the Tibetan *imaginaire*, these images arrive swiftly and easily, as mystic meaning tends to do. We take a moment to bring some of those elements into presence here.

Lishu: A Story and a Trope

By any measure, even that of the frequently fantastic hagiographies of India and Tibet, Lishu Daring had an interesting life. This great scholar, whose most famous work crosses genre lines by forging poetic allusion and logical reasoning into a textual whole, also crosses cultural, linguistic, and gender boundaries. He begins life as a girl, discovered in a grove by royal parents who name her sTag za Li ver.³ “Li-ver” is a Zhang Zhung name meaning “Lord of the Winds,” with *li* the equivalent of the Tibetan *rlung*, or wind, and *ver* meaning *rgyal* or *lord*. She becomes a man by performing the Five Rituals (*chog linga*), very likely the rite that she herself composed and which is today contained in the *Three Revealed Cycles* compendium. Lishu Daring was still a female known as Bon Mo Lishu Daring when she wrote two texts crucially related with *Authenticity*: the *Three Cycles of Proclaiming Dzogchen* (*rDzogs chen sgrags pa skor gsum*) and the *Utmost Peak, Great Expanse* (*Yang tse klong chen*). He was male, or at least mainly male, when *Authenticity* was written.⁴

Further details of his life come from a variety of sources, many of them cited in Shardza’s *Treasury*. Though it is not always easy to piece together the sequence of these events, Shardza is clear that after eighty-two years of teaching, presumably in the area of her birth, Lishu departs for Tagzig (sTag gzigs). Perhaps this is the occasion on which, according to Padon, he magically flew there, a manner of travel he employs on several occasions.⁵ Indeed, sTag ring, which came to be his second name, may signify his swift departure or eagerness [rings]⁶ for the far off [ring] land of sTag gzigs. Through practicing Bon teachings learned in Zhang Zhung, he becomes a *siddha*. He also retrieves a

3. Lopon Tenzin Namdak noted in discussion with Klein the emic tradition that Lishu changed gender numerous times but added that there do not seem to be clear specifics on this matter. Lishu is said to have been born, as a girl, in Nyenyul Zara Dakya (gNyan yul Za ra sTag sky). I have not been able to identify where this is; Lopon Tenzin Namdak says it is no longer known.

4. Ponlob Thrinley Nyima Rinpoche to Klein, Houston, October 2002, oral commentary. We have not yet ascertained other sources on this matter.

5. Padon 643.1. Padon also notes that he “transformed himself there,” possibly an allusion to either gender or spiritual transformation.

6. Padon, unlike Shardza, places the *sa* suffix at the end of *rings*: 643.1.

large number of Tantric texts from the region, which he “put[s] into bags of tiger and leopard skin [much like the containers described elsewhere in discovery narratives] and then into leather boxes.”⁷

At the age of seven hundred he makes many translations of Bon texts from India and China. In the middle of his life, aged twelve hundred, Lishu accomplishes one of his greatest feats. Shardza Rinpoche writes that Lishu and others “traveled through many countries, the languages of which were strange to them and reached Yung Drung Gutek (g.Yung drung dGu brtegs) and other places in sTag-gzig.” His return is somewhat more expeditious, for according to the *Utmost Peak, Great Expanse* he proceeds from Tagzig to Kailash in the space of a mealtime. This passage into Tibet by way of Kailash recalls, of course, the serendipitous first visit of Teacher Shenrab by the same route, giving the journey even stronger mythic resonance. But Lishu does not tarry there; he goes on to reach Samye in the space of another mealtime.⁸

He thereafter acts as preceptor at the royal court,⁹ presumably of Trisong Detsen, and his contribution during a contest between Bon and Buddhist miracle performances includes transforming himself into a vulture while his consort, Joza Bonmo, ties three knots in a sword. Their colleague Vairocana, here apparently appearing for the Bon side, displays swift-footedness equal to that of a bird.¹⁰

It is apparently during this period that Lishu translates works from the languages of Zhang Zhung and Tagzig into Tibetan.¹¹ For his role in these feats, Lishu is known as one of the “Four Great Translators of Tibet,”¹² sometimes called the “Four Scholars” (*mkhas pa mi bzhi*).¹³ Thus, Lishu Daring, also known as Nyachen (sNya chen) Lishu Daring, is an important figure in both the Tagzig (sTag gzig) and Tibetan periods of early Bon. The period during which Lishu Daring, Dranpa Namkha ([bLa chen] Dran pa Nam mkha’),¹⁴ and Trisong Detsen were contemporaries is described in the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* as a time of Bon’s decline.¹⁵

7. Karmay 1972: 20–21.

8. Karmay 1972: 26.

9. Karmay 1972: 26.

10. Shardza Rinpoche, citing the *Stream of What Is* in Karmay 1972: 89.

11. Karmay 1972: 77.

12. For a list of the eight teachers Lishu encountered and a list of twenty Bon scholars that includes his name, as well as the names of the nine great magicians, see Karmay 1972: 42–43.

13. Karmay 1972: 77. The others are Khungpo Dakdra Dontsuk (Khyung po sTag sgra Don gtsug), Bhe Shotram (Bhe Shod khram) the Great, and Sumpa Mucha (Sum pa Mu phya).

14. This is the Tibetan Dranpa Namkha, not to be confused with the Zhang Zhung Dranpa Namkha, (whose date Lopon Tenzin Namdak 1983: 188 gives as 915 b.c.) and whose emanation he was. See Norbu 1995a: 233 n.21. Dranpa Namkha is also mentioned as one of the twenty-five disciples of Guru Rinpoche in, for example, Tsogyal 1993: 241. For a succinct modern emic account of Trisong Detsen in relation to Bon and the contemporaneous activities of Dranpa Namkha, see Lopon Tenzin Namdak, *Explanation of the Teachings of Yungdrung Bon* n.d.: 45ff.

15. *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, 2a.6, cited also by Shardza Rinpoche in Karmay 1972: 26.81 and

Lishu returns to Tagzig again at the age of twenty-two hundred, at which time he translates many texts from Zhang Zhung into Tibetan, and continues his altruistic activities until the age of twenty-five hundred.¹⁶

Perhaps this narrative can be considered a metaphorical release of the image of Lishu Daring back into the still-potent memory of Zhang Zhung. We are not explicitly told that he returned to Tibet again. In any case, the colophon's emphasis is on the actual events of the imperial period.

We have already described *Authenticity*'s select audience as persons involved in intellectual and contemplative pursuits, persons who would find it natural to admire someone who combined religious (which in Tibet and virtually all of Asia includes the religo-magical) with scholarly expertise. Lishu Daring commands respect on both counts; his life is the imaginal world of his readers writ large, spanning the magical, the meditative, and the meticulously reflective.

We have suggested that *Authenticity* is in part a book about the limits, transmutability, and referencing of language; tradition says it was written at a time when stories about the movement between linguistic domains were very much in the air. Lishu Daring's own story also depicts the broad cultural exchanges that linked Tibet, Zhang Zhung, and Tagzig before and during the early imperial period. The story of his text, characterizing *Authenticity* as an item of exchange and a nexus of cultural dissonance, also provides a trope for the process of cultural interfusion and resistance to it. Tales of the written Tibetan language, the communication between Zhang Zhung and Tibet, the relationship between their languages and cultures, and the nature of scriptural expression can all be seen as participating in this trope.

Authenticity is not revealed through the kind of remarkable intercession of *dakinis* that marks, for example, the revelations of Jigme Lingpa eight centuries later; it is, however, part of a revelation whose import lies not simply with its discovery but with its true origins.

Finding: Another Continuity

Clearly, our text's quest for authenticity is not only philosophical but historical as well. During the second decline of Bon under Trisong Detsen, many texts

80.81. Shardza Rinpoche also notes that Lishu's life spanned the reigns of the "Four Bonpo Kings"; Karmay 1972: 77.

16. Are we to understand that the time of Trisong Detsen coincides with the period after Lishu's second return from Tagzig? Possibly. Yet, there is much to warrant situating this period at his first return from Tagzig, and the flair with which he accomplished that journey heralds great deeds about to be undertaken there. However, it then becomes problematic to claim, as Shardza does, that at over two thousand years of age Lishu returned to Zhang Zhung, which, of course, would no longer have existed so long after the time of Trisong Detsen.

were buried for preservation. In this way, early Bon texts became terma in Tibet (whereas the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* never did). It may even be that the need to bury texts and other precious items for preservation during anti-Bon campaigns provided a certain inspiration for the more esoteric forms of treasure concealment later practiced by the Nyingma.¹⁷

Padon writes that Dranba Namkha and Vairocana from Bagor hid the *Precious Bon Cycle of India* (*Rin chen rgya gar bon skor*) in the “very isolated” area of Yerdzong,”¹⁸ another name for the Lhasa Yerba, mentioned in *Authenticity’s* colophon. The texts found here are known as the Yerdzongma. It is also said that Lishu and Vairocana together concealed texts in the red stupa at Samye,¹⁹ and that Lishu himself hid texts associated with *Authenticity*²⁰ that were later found by Lishu’s own reincarnation Zhodon Ngodrup Drakpa (gZhad ston dNgos grub Grags pa) in Hlodrak Khomting (hLo brag Khom mthing). Still another Terton, Trotsang Drukhla (Khro tshang 'Brug lha, 956–1077)²¹ was considered an emanation of Lishu.²² In all these ways, narratives associated with Lishu Daring intersect deeply with Bon Terma traditions.

During the eleventh century, the period of the *Authenticity*’s reputed discovery, many texts came to light. This period also saw an expansion of the historiographic genres by which such events were proclaimed.²³ As van der Kuijp points out, several historiographical genres such as *rgyal ra*, “Chronicles of the Kings,” and *chos 'byung*, “Emergence of Dharma,” came into use during the eleventh or early twelfth century. The genre of “Chronicles” (*lo rgyus*), “Records of the Years,” was also probably first used in the eleventh century by Lhudon Tsöndru Yung Drung (Khu sTon brTson 'grus gYung drung, 1011–1075).²⁴ This term is very nearly homophonic with *glog rgyus*, or “story,” suggesting that these categories are not as hard and fast divided as “fact” and “fiction” tend to be in terms of modern narratives.

How do these genres, these “stories of what happened before” (*sngon byung gi lo rgyus*), cut across the boundary of actual and imagined or mythologized events? The historic genres of *chos 'byung* and *rnam thar* alike will frequently contain fantastic descriptions of yogis and their *siddhis*. Even the twentieth-century iconoclast, the brilliant Gendun Choephel, writing a factually based account in his *White Annals* (*Deb ther dkar po*), refers without comment to Songtsen Gampo as the incarnation of Avalokiteśvara and states that Songtsen

17. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, to Klein, Kathmandu, August 1997, oral commentary.

18. Padon 746.2ff.

19. Karmay 1972: 160.

20. The *Three Cycles of Revelation* and *Utmost Peak, Great Expanse*, the latter of which is also attributed to Lishu Daring.

21. Abbot Nyima Tenzin, *Chronology of the Teaching: An Amazing Garland of Jewelsa*, cited by Karmay 1972: 124 n.3.

22. Karmay 1972: 124, citing the *Stream of What Is*.

23. See Schweder 1991 on cultural understandings of facticity in relation to narrative.

24. This paragraph is drawn from van der Kuijp 1996a: 42–43.

Gampo, though “in human form, attired in coat of mail, was in reality the personification of rTag mchog rol pa.”²⁵ This is neither a demonstrable literal truth nor an untruth, since Songtsen Gampo was so regarded. Likewise, Gendun Choephel invokes “the divine protectors” in an interchapter verse and closes with a poetic evocation of Avalokiteśvara. Perhaps this illustrates as well as anything could the interwoven permeability of the “historical” and “mythical” as perspectives *and* as genres.

What does this mean to us, curious as we are about the reception of *Authenticity* among its intended readers? Surely its status as a revealed terma increases its prestige, an advantage in many personal, political, and other cultural contexts. Is such status always a matter of fraudulent deception? “There is a peculiar reluctance on the part of many modern scholars to recognize the entirely fabricated nature of the Tibetan ‘treasure-texts,’ ” Michael Aris has observed.²⁶ And he points to the detractors and accusers of Pema Lingpa as evidence that such suspicions are not a cultural anomaly in Tibet. But taking sides in the terma authentication debates is often motivated as much by political as by religious structures. More to the point, doubting one terma finder by no means suggests a disavowal of the genre entirely. For readers of *Authenticity*, terma are a genuine genre; moreover, burying texts in times of trouble is a custom we have seen down to the twentieth century in Tibet. Further, the linkage of that perhaps mundane event with the emanations, the Three Buddhists, propels the work out of the world of the ordinary hardships of life and into a realm of the imagination where a figure such as Samantabhadra is entirely at home. The interconnected webs of tales, harnessed to real historical events, extends the narrative scope of the text in ways that support the literary, and perhaps experiential, participation, in a multidimensional cultural horizon.

The Three Buddhists

Exploring the chronology of *Authenticity*, which we do here very gingerly, presents three nearly insurmountable problems. We must ask when it was written, when it was discovered, and what, in fact, the relationship between these two events is. Traditional narratives provide us with an author, Lishu Daring; with

25. Gendun Choephel 1978: 63, 81.

26. Aris 1989: 96–97. One can sympathize with a brilliant scholar’s weariness, born of extensive experience, of Westerners who see magic in everything Tibetan (1–5). And yet without investigating the crosscultural analogues of terms such as “facticity” and “magic,” we do not come any closer to understanding the texture of Tibetan worldviews, even to the extent that it might be feasible to do so. An unanalytically dismissive attitude toward the “magical” is just as problematic as naive belief.

discoverers, the Three Buddhists; and with strong evidence that Bon texts were buried and rediscovered during the centuries spanned by this narrative. Nonetheless, even if we consider it indisputable that certain texts, and Bon texts at that, were discovered by the Three Buddhists, how sure are we that *Authenticity* was among them? We ask these questions not because they will lead us to certainty but because they impel us to inquire as deeply as possible into the matter.

Were there ever really “Three Buddhists” near Samye? The last line of *Authenticity*’s colophon describes it as having been found by “Subon Wangtshul (Su bon dBang tshul) and others, the three openers of the doors of Buried Treasure in Lhasa Yerba” {128.2}. Padon gives a similar name in his list of the three Buddhists (he uses the term *Bandhe gSum*: Sum pa dBang tshul, sGre tshul seng, Kyang bu dBang phyug grags),²⁷ whereas Shardza Rinpoche gives them as “the Three Buddhists of Tsang: Sum pa Byang tshul, ’Bre tshul sang, and gCer bu dBang phyug.”²⁸ The strong similarity among these iterations suggests a reference point in actual persons rather than figures made up out of whole cloth, although the several discovery narratives in which the three appear may have been partly conflated.²⁹ This literature seems to fuse traces of actual events with mythological elements in ways we cannot entirely untangle. Still, we examine this material with a curiosity about what if anything can be gleaned about the historical origins of our text.

Before we enter the complex of tales about *Authenticity*’s origin, let us consider what we know about when the texts might have been discovered. Neither Shardza Rinpoche nor Padon gives us dates. Karmay notes that Jamgon Kongtrul Yonden Gyatso “vaguely states that these Three Buddhists came in the 5th rab-byung (i.e., 1267–1326).”³⁰ However, new chronological studies by Per Kvaerne, which in general move dates backward, pull this “vague” statement in the direction of the eleventh century or possibly even the tenth. Other information, considered below, also suggests an earlier time—at least the eleventh, if not the tenth century.

For example, we know that the Bon revival received significant impetus from the important texts discovered by Shenchhen Luga (gShen chen Klu dga’, 969–1035) in 1017. The discovery at Yerdzong, mentioned in the colophon of *Authenticity* and in more detail by Padon and Shardza Rinpoche, apparently

27. *Lamp Clarifying the Dissemination of the Explanatory Teaching*, 746.4, 6.

28. Karmay 1972: 152; Tibetan text 277.14. Karmay, following the *Zab mo'i ger dang gter ston grub thob ji ltar byon pa'i lo rgyus mdor bsdus bkod pa rin chen vaidurya'i phreng ba* of Kongtrul Yonden Gyasto (Kong sprul Yon tan rGya mtsho), gives Sumpa Yangtsul’s (Sum pa dbyang tshul) full name as Changchub Tsultrim (Byang chub Tshul khrims); this would seem to accord more with yet a different version of the first figure’s name—which the Tibetan in all three sources gives as *dhang*, not *dbyang*.

29. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, in discussion with Klein, concurred with this view when she proposed it.

30. Karmay 1972: 152 n.2.

occurred concurrently with this resurgence, which different sources place between 1088 and 1112.³¹ In addition to Shenchen Luga, the Terton Zhodon Ngodrup Drakpa, as mentioned earlier, discovered texts related with *Authenticity* that had been hidden by his previous incarnation, Lishu Daring, in Hlodrak Khomting. Zhodon lived during the eleventh and early twelfth centuries and is said to have been a teacher of the Nyingma Terton Nyangrel Nyima Ozer (Nyang rel Nyi ma 'Od zer), born in 1136.³²

Should we assume that *Authenticity* was discovered during the eleventh century? Or was it written at that time? Tertons are often suspected of composing their discoveries. This is feasible when the Terton is a learned or yogically inclined person, as is usually the case in Buddhist traditions. In these Bon narratives, however, as we will see shortly, the Tertons stumble onto texts through luck or treachery and are in no way capable of writing the works they reveal.³³ Although this does not prove that *Authenticity* was written by the eighth-century Lishu Daring, it does leave us without a clear and plausible alternative to that claim, as we shall observe further below.

There is further evidence that Three Buddhists arrived in central Tibet around the eleventh century. An important clue is Shardza Rinpoche's statement that the Three Buddhists passed their texts on to Lungdon Obar (Lung ston 'Od 'bar).³⁴ His son, Nyendon Zijid (gNyen ston gZi brjid) (also mentioned by Padon, though Lungdon Obar is not), transmits them to Yerdon Trose (g.Yer ston Kho gsas), who transmits them simultaneously to Lungbon Hlanyen (either 1088–1124 or 1112–1148)³⁵ and to the famous Buddhist yogi Milarepa (Mi la Ras pa, 1040–1123). Passing over the matter in a single phrase, Shardza notes that after receiving meditation instruction from Marpa, Milarepa became a Buddhist.³⁶ Milarepa's father, Mila Sherab Gyeletsen, was Bon-po;³⁷ their lineage, according to the *Origins of the Teaching* (*bsTan 'byung*)³⁸ goes back to the

31. Karmay 1977: 102.b suggests 1088 and 1100. Anne Marie Blondeau also accepts these (1984: 91 n.59, 92). However, as Per Kvaerne (1988: 242) has noted, the *Dpyod gsum dag rtsis bskal srid dus kyi 'khor lo* of Khyungtrul Jigme Namkhai Dorje (Khyung sprul 'Jigs med Nam mkha'i rDo rje, 1897–1956) gives 1112 as the date of discovery, the same date found in Horjum's (Hor-bcum) *Chronological Tables* (*bsTan-rtsis*) (8a).

32. Karmay 1972: 154.

33. Not all Tertons who found Bon texts were in this category; for example, the discovery of the Three Acaryas (who were themselves of course Buddhist) is said to have occurred "through the power of the prayers of Dranpa Namkha."

34. Karmay 1972: 152; Tibetan text 277.12–19. Sources for a History of Bon 748.1. Padon refers to Lung ston Hla gnyan in connection with Gyerdon Namyung (sGyer ston Nam yung), the son of Gyer Wangdrup (sGyer dBang grub).

35. Karmay 1977: 116. Lungbon Hlanyen (Lung bon Lha gnyan) is sometimes referred to as Lungdon Hlanyen (Lung ston Lha gnyan). There may occasionally be some confusion between Lungbon Hlanyen and Lungdon Obar (Lun ston 'Od 'bar), but in this narrative they are clearly different persons. See also *Biography of Lungdon* (*Lung ston rnam thar*) in Sources 77.6.

36. Karmay 1977: 152; Tibetan text 278.18.

37. This suggests that Milarepa's story can in part be read as a narrative of Buddhist virtue vanquishing Bon "magic."

38. *Rise of the Teachings* (*bsTan 'byung*) 110b7ff; noted in Karmay 1972: 13 n.2. Although Milarepa states that his clan is Khyungpo, in this text he also describes his ancestor as the son of a Nyingmapa lama.

Khyung (“Garuda”) clan, which is also mentioned in *The Life of Milarepa*.³⁹ Thus, Shardza Rinpoche finds Lungbon to be contemporary with Milarepa.⁴⁰

Unlike Shardza, Padon does not mention Milarepa, but both versions tell of the passage from father to son of books received from the Three Buddhists. According to Padon, after the death of the three, their texts come into the hands of Nyakdon Lhabar (*gNyag ston Lha 'bar*), though it is his son, Nyakdon Zijid (*gNyag ston gZi brjid*), who actually opens the texts by giving teaching transmission (*lung bgrol*) on them. His pupil confers the teaching on Lungbon Hlanyan.⁴¹ Thus both sources name Lungbon Hlanyan as a significant person in this lineage, as we will have occasion to note again below.

The narratives of the *Authenticity* colophon are largely in agreement with what we find in Shardza Rinpoche, Padon,⁴² and the *Guide to the Termas* (*gTer gyi kha byang*), written in 1398. It may be that the colophon was added well after the fact in order to align the work with the then well-known discovery at Yerba and that this connection became widely enough accepted to find its way into other narratives. But for reasons explored further below, this does not satisfactorily explain the situation. A variety of discrepancies in important details make it unlikely that the network of tales we are about to consider derive from a single source. Both the *Treasury* and *History* indicate that Lungbon Hlanyan lived at least one, and more likely three, generations later than the Three Buddhists.⁴³ If this is correct, it would seem to place the discovery early in or just prior to the eleventh century.⁴⁴

Padon’s *History*, written in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, and the twentieth-century *Treasury* of Shardza Rinpoche offer highly compatible versions of the Three Buddhists’ sojourn in Tibet.⁴⁵ Both texts also mention another Terton trio, the three Nepalese, known as the three Acaryas. Shardza gives their names as Konchok Drakpa (*dKon mchog Grags pa*), Nyamo Gonpo (*Nya mo mGon po*), and Sadku Ratna.⁴⁶ The story of the Nepalese is further amplified by second pair of both ancient and more recent tales. The older source, the *Guide to the Termas*,⁴⁷ was written by the eminent scholar Gadon

39. Trans. Lobsang Lhalungpa 1977: 13.

40. Karmay 1972: 118; Tibetan text 27.

41. Sources 746.4–6.

42. Shardza Rinpoche would certainly have read Padon, but either he saw a different manuscript from the one currently in publication, or he simply did not rely on it for details such as the spelling of the names Lungbon Hlanyen or the Three Buddhists, for which the two texts are discordant.

43. This is also the conclusion reached by Martin 1982: 59–60.

44. Samten Karmay (1977: ix) cites elusive evidence that three Buddhists came during the fifth Rab-byung (i.e., 1267–1326). Unlike Lopon and Martin, he argues that the Three Buddhists were contemporaries of Lungbon Hlanyen who was born in 1088 (1972: 23 n.2) according to the chronology of Nyima Tenzin, though he may have been born as late as 1112 (Karmay 1972: 11).

45. Of Shardza Rinpoche’s work, Samten Karmay has written, “no other writer has surveyed so thoroughly the various records of the origins and early development of Bon. . . . I know of no other work equal to this in scope among Bonpo histories.” Karmay 1972: xvi.

46. Karmay 1972: 118.

47. To my knowledge, this work exists only in manuscript, in the possession of Lopon Tenzin Namdak,

Tsultrim Gyalsten (sGa ston Tshul khrims rGyal mtshan). Born in 1298, he was roughly contemporaneous with Padon.⁴⁸ In these older stories, we find fairly detailed descriptions of a discovery of leather bags and the texts they contained, as well as incidental information that helps fill out the picture of Terton adventures in early-eleventh-century Tibet.

Thus, two of the works we consult on the Three Buddhists—those by Padon and Gadon—date from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries; at the most they were written a few hundred years after the discoveries they describe. Both record the discovery of texts at Lhasa Yerba by the Three Buddhists. Like Shardza Rinpoche, these earlier texts tell a story compatible with *Authenticity's* colophon, though none mentions *Authenticity* by name. Their colophonically concordant tales are not all the same, however. Let us consider more closely the intermingled narratives emerging from the *Authenticity* colophon and these works.

Padon presents the Three Buddhists as dedicated but fallible human beings. The scene opens with the Three in Tsang, from where they travel to Samye in search of Revealed Treasure Texts. Two or three years later, they are still empty-handed and ready to abandon the search. Still, their shame at this failure motivates them to try once more at Yerba. They discover terma there but fail to make offerings to the Lord of Terma (*gter bdag*), an error that costs them dearly, for all three die suddenly and in great pain.

Even today Bonpos are known for their careful solicitation of local deities, a cultural inclination which, though adapted by all Tibetan religious orders, almost certainly predates the arrival of Buddhism in Tibet. It may be that the earlier report of the three's ignorance of their importance bespeaks a period when it had not yet been integrated into Buddhism, and so marks an early distinguishing feature between followers of Bon and Buddhism (*chos*).

Shardza Rinpoche also refers to Yerdzong, using its full name, Lhasa Yerdzong (lHa sa Yer ba'i rdzong), and cites a prophecy (*lung bstan*) from the *Stream of What Is* (*Srid rgyud*)⁴⁹ stating that during the reign of Trisong Detsen texts were concealed at Yerdzong by Vairocana and Dranpa Namkha and entrusted to local textual guardians. He mentions, as well, that the discoverers of

who is preparing it for printing. He kindly gave me the section on the three Buddhists. Gadon's date is from the *Chronological Tables* (*bsTan rtis*) of Nyima Tenzin, himself born in 1360.

48. The *Guide to the Termas* (*gTer gyi kha byang*) was apparently a source for the narrative found in chapter 16 of the *Sangs rgyas g.yung drung bon gyi bstan pa'i byung ba brjod pa'i leg bshad bskal pa bzang po'i mgrün rgyan rab gsal chu shel nor bu'i do shal*, written by Pelden Tsultrim (dPal ldan Tshul khrims, 1902–1973), published in 1988, in mTsho sngon (near Kokinor) by mTsho sngon mi rigs par 'debs bzo grva, pp. 315–316, listed in Karmay 1977: No. 67. (Karmay names a different edition, with an identical title but omitting the phrase "rab gsal chu shel nor bud do," published by the Tibetan Bon Monastic Centre in Delhi, 1972.) This latter work was written at the behest of the Menri Abbot, Lungdog Denpa Nyima and Lopon Tenzin Namdkar.

49. *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang rnam thar chen mo* (rediscovered by [Dra]Gyer Thokme ([d'Bra] Gyer Thogs med), also known as [Khopo] Lodro Thokme ([Kho po] bLo gros Thogs med), b. 1280), listed in Karmay 1977: No. 61.

these works are described in the *Stream of What Is* as “the prophesied manifestations of Vairocana”:⁵⁰

The Three Buddhists of gTsang, the chief and his retinue, Sum-pa Byang-tshul, Bre Tshul-seng, and gCer-bu dBang-phyug, [who] made their discovery after years of searching, . . . went to bSam-yas in search of Buddhist textual treasures, but even after several years nothing was found. When they set out for home they said to themselves: “We are supposed to be great men, it is shameful not to have found any texts.” So they went to Yerba and began to search. They discovered a textual treasure, but it was all Bon texts and (therefore) not what they wanted.⁵¹

The comment that the Three Buddhists are emanations of Vairocana is of interest to us here. As Kapstein has discussed, the Buddha Vairocana was especially favored by King Trisong Detsen, and it was probably under his direction that Vairocana was placed as the central divinity on the second story of Samye. Other representations of Vairocana in Dun Huang and Anxi Yulin—in other words, at far-flung domains of the Tibetan empire—suggest that Vairocana like other important elements of Buddhist culture such as written language, reasoning, and a sense of cosmic presence, were demonstrations of Tibet’s new imperial reach.⁵² At the very least, these associations with Vairocana and Trisong Detsen suggested in the colophon cast *Authenticity* as part of that milieu, participating in and perhaps even contributing to trends that were coalescing with the rise of imperial power. The Three Buddhists themselves are symbolic emanations of imperial as well as sacred power. The Bon texts, once recognized as such, did not fit with this program.

Other works see the Three Buddhists interact with three Nepalis. According to the *Guide to the Termas* of Gadon, whose narrative we here interweave with supporting information from Palden Tsultrim (dPal ldan Tshul khrims, 1902–1973), the Three Buddhists come from western to central Tibet in search of books. There they encounter three “Acaryas” also called “men from the South,” who have come to Tibet from Nepal in search of gold. Palden Tsultrim gives their names as Gonchok Drakpa (dGon mchog Grags pa), Nyamo Gono (Nya mo mGon po), and Sekun Rena (Sad kun Rad na).⁵³ (Shardza Rinpoche, who also takes up this matter, gives virtually identical names and tells the tale so similarly that it seems likely he used the *Guide to the Termas* as one of his sources.)⁵⁴

50. Karmay 1972: 152.

51. Karmay 1977: 152ff.

52. Kapstein 2000: 61–65.

53. *Guide to the Termas* 315.10.

54. Karmay 1972: 119ff.

Their search for gold brings the Acaryas to Drakmar Samye, reputed to hold a great deal of it. The temple doorkeeper, taking them to be Nepali persons of good faith (*bal gyi mi dad*),⁵⁵ allows them entry. Once inside the temple, they notice some cases, which both *Guide to the Termas* and *Origins of the Teaching*, as well as Shardza Rinpoche later,⁵⁶ describe as containing three bags made of tiger skin, leopard skin, and bear skin, respectively. Opening the cases, the Acaryas steal the bags and depart. At about this time, the Three Buddhists are heading toward Dolung (sTod lung), a valley not far west of Lhasa, near Tshurpu—just possibly making their way there after passing through Yerba and discovering the Yerdzongma texts mentioned in other narratives. Did the two groups ever meet, or were they connected by some intermediary who encountered them both?⁵⁷

The *Guide to the Termas* tells that the three Nepalese Acaryas arrive in Dolung and find themselves in need of sustenance. At this juncture they come upon Tashi Trulse (mTha' bzhi 'Phrul gsas) performing a Bon rite. He is a Terton who, like the Three Buddhists, is prophesied in the *Stream of What Is*.⁵⁸ The Nepali entrepreneurs sell him a volume from the bearskin bag in exchange for food. Contained in this bag, Shardza tells us, is the Method for Accomplishing the Three Black Tantras (*Nag po rgyud gsum sgrub thabs*), a rite for black Phurba, root text and commentary, as well as other ritual texts.⁵⁹ Could the one volume traded for food have been *Authenticity* after all? Many miraculous events accompany the exchange of these texts for food—a sure sign that, at the very least, this was a transfer of momentous importance to Bon views of its own continuity.

Tashi Trulse, the Bon ritualist just mentioned, subsequently encounters Gyadon Drophen (rGya ston sGro phan) from U-yuk (near Yung Drung Ling—at the end of Uk Valley), who requests transmission of this text from him. Other requests follow suit. In this way the transmission comes down to Drudon Namyung (Bru ston Nam yung), who participates in the beginnings of the great Bon monastic center Yeru Ensaka, where, as we know from other sources, the scholarly study of Dzogchen texts related with *Authenticity* (if not *Authenticity* itself) were crucial to the curriculum.

The Nepalese Acaryas take their remaining bags and head north from

55. Palden Tsultrim 9a. (computer printout of manuscript in possession of Lopon Tenzin Namdak, privately circulated, 1.13).

56. Karmay 1972: 119.

57. For another tale involving a metaphorical Samye gatekeeper and Bonpo texts, from the *Rise of the Sakya Monastery Teachings* (*Sa skyā mgon po chos 'byung*), see Vitali 1996: n.324 and pp. 226–228.

58. *Stream of What Is* 87b.7, cited in Karmay 1972: 120.

59. 2.1, computer printout entered under direct supervision of Lopon Tenzin Namdak.

Dolung,⁶⁰ where they meet the Three Buddhists.⁶¹ The Acaryas trade their books for horses and food from the Three Buddhists (here described as hailing from India, as suits their Sanskritized names, rather than from Tsang as in Padon and Shardza), for the Buddhists, as we know, had been searching for books and were equipped to transport them. The Buddhists do not inspect the contents of the leather bags but simply make the trade, glad finally (or again) to acquire books as they had hoped. They bring their newly acquired texts to Chang Dodok Mengong (Byang sTod mdog sMan gong), where they meet and stay in the home of Zeben Sherab Gyalsten (gZe ban Shes rab rGyal mtshan). There they finally look inside the leather bags. Seeing that all the texts are Bonpo, two Buddhists want to burn them, but the third, Darben Śākyamuni, forbids this, and instead the books are sold to a nephew of their host.

This nephew, named Zegur (gZe rgur), is a wealthy man and a follower of Bon. It is he who actually empties the leather bags and carefully examines their contents. In the tigerskin bag he finds *vinaya* and sutric cycles; in the leopardskin bag, Bon *prajñāpārmitā* and *abhidharma* texts; and in the bearskin bag, a *Phur ba* text, as well as the most profound teachings of secret mantra and Dzogchen. Altogether, 340 different Bon texts are found.

Could *Authenticity* have been among these Dzogchen texts that the Nepalese stole from Samye and then traded to the Three Buddhists? Possibly, although that would confound its colophon, which says it was found at Lhasa Yerba. Or possibly the Three Buddhists added what they found at Yerba on their way to Dolung to the bags of books they acquired from the Nepalese whom they encountered shortly after passing through there.

Or perhaps this tale simply offers a different version of how Bon texts emerged from the valley lands outside Lhasa. For us, its primary significance lies in the corroboration of the Three Buddhists' activities. Although we cannot be certain that the Three Buddhists who encountered the Acaryas were the same three who found texts at Lhasa Yerba, we have no evidence that this appellation was ever applied to another group of searchers, and the different versions of their names are strikingly similar. Moreover, their behavior in both narratives is consistent; they are ever the road-weary wanderers longing for texts.

Shardza Rinpoche, one of our sources for the Yerdzong discovery of the three Buddhists, also mentions the three Acaryas from Dolung. In his version, they meet three persons with names strikingly similar to the three Buddhists—

60. To Namra or, according to the *Guide to the Termas*, to a place above Dolung (sDo lung). This discrepancy suggests that the modern author here is using a source different from the *Guide* (*gTer byang*).

61. Palden Tsultrim gives their names as 'Dar ban Shagyamuni, mChim gyi shag bra and 'O ma byang. These are not the same names given by Shardza or Padon; they are similar to but not identical with the names given in the *gTer byang*: 'Dar ban shag kya munne; 'Chim shag kya bra ma; 'O ma Byang chub bde.

Darben Śākyamuni, Chim Śākyamuni Drawa (mChims Śākyamuni Bra-ba), and Oma Changchub Senge ('Oma Byang chub Seng ge). Shardza describes the men as having horses, but in his version it is the book-hungry Buddhists and their horses, not the gold-seeking Acaryas, who are headed to Samye. Perhaps the tales of the two searching threesomes have become confused; perhaps Samye was simply a natural destination for books as well as gold. In any case, Shardza states that the Acaryas offer to trade the books they had already found for a horse. When the Buddhists later try to remove the texts, "lights and sparks came forth."⁶² Other wondrous occurrences prevent the texts from being opened until, as in the *Guide to the Terma*s, the three gave them to the Bonpo Zegur. No mention is made here of different skins.

Thus, the *Authenticity* colophon, the Shardza Rinpoche and Padon narratives, as well as the work of Gadon Tsultrim Gyalsten and Palden Tsultrim, though composed at widely different periods, agree on the general outline of the discovery of texts by the Three Buddhists and the presence of Bon texts in the Samye-Lhasa area.

This narrative evidence, though set to paper several hundred years after the event, makes it plausible that the Three Buddhists did make their discovery in the mid-to-late eleventh century.⁶³ Did *Authenticity* come into their hands at that time? Or did the *Authenticity* colophon simply seek to connect its text to this well-known discovery, perhaps partly to support its composition, two centuries earlier, by Lishu Daring?

Insofar as *Authenticity* clearly seeks to vanquish opponents, it would be understandable for Bon to position the text so as to command maximum respect. Still, given the corroboration from diverse sources, the principle of Ockham's razor inclines us to the view that *Authenticity* did in fact emerge in or near Lhasa Yerba in approximately the eleventh century, leaving open the possibility that it was indeed written at an earlier time, perhaps as early as the eighth or ninth century or at the very least by the tenth or eleventh.

If we set aside these tales for a moment, there is another approach that also suggests the *Authenticity*'s emergence in the 11th century. These lines could be considered similar in spirit to the opening lines of the *Womb of the Mysterious Tantra* (*rGyud kyi rgyal po gsang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid nges par 'byung ba*).⁶⁴ This begins to open the possibility that *Authenticity* or some

62. Karmay 1972: 120.

63. Present research is inconclusive on the earliest written allusion to the Three Buddhists.

64. Understanding, discipline and the secret (/sacred),

Nonrealization and erroneous realization

Partial realization and not realizing reality

Brings forth doubts about the ultimate.

(*dgong pa dul ba bsang ba dang/ ma rtogs pa dang log par rtog/ phyogs rtogs yang dag nyid ma rtogs/ don dam 'di la the tshom za*) folio 30a. Translation adapted from Kapstein 2000: 104. The legacy of these passages has

elements of it, arose in connection with interactions among Bon, Nyingmapa, and early logic schools during the 11th century. This still does not undermine the possibility that some of *Authenticity's* unique features, and almost certainly its poetic citations, are rooted in an earlier time. To return to the traditional narratives we have been following, however, we have yet to ask a crucial question. If Lishu did not write *Authenticity*, who did? Neither the three Nepalese, intent on gold, nor the three Buddhists, who would hardly have composed a Bonpo text, are likely candidates. Nor could Zegur, the nephew credited with first actually opening the texts delivered from Yerdzong, have written it, for though wealthy he was wholly uneducated in the erudite issues of *Authenticity*.⁶⁵ Our first likely candidate, if we are in the substitute-author finding business, is Lungbon Hlanyen.

Lungbon Hlanyen was probably capable of such a composition. His biography, written by his son, states that he spent his early youth as a student, culminating in three years of Dzgochen study from ages seventeen to twenty. After this he devoted several years to successful meditation and had dramatic encounters with visionary figures, one an unrecognized Tsewang Rigzin (Tshe dbang Rig 'dzin) and the other a dakini, either of whom, we can surmise, would be capable of inspiring fine writing.⁶⁶ He thus seems, after Lishu Daring, to be the first person in the emic lineage of *Authenticity* capable of writing it. His biography, however, makes no mention of this or of any other specific compositions by him. Shardza also fails to note any literary achievement attributed to him with which to compare *Authenticity* and thereby test this highly speculative hypothesis.

This brings us back to the question of what it means for *Authenticity* to be considered a treasure, a text lost and then recovered. As we have seen, *Authenticity* is very much about the way in which formless, sourceless authenticity comes to express itself, even as it thereby seems to segue from authenticity to authentication. The assimilation of Samantabhadra to scripture depends on and forges a continuity upon which the authority of tradition itself rests. That

been discussed in Kapstein 2000: 104ff; 245 n. 83 discusses and translates this verse in the context of Karma Pakshi's work and thought.

Kapstein (personal communication, October, 2003) notes the similarity between this verse and the opening lines of *Authenticity*. Whether or not, as he suggests, this indicates a connection with the way of utilizing doubt on the path to realization, as put forth by Karma Pakshi, is a fascinating area for future investigation. As Kapstein also mentioned in his remarks on this point, one of the important early schools of *Guhyagarbhatanta* (*rGyud gsang ba snying po*) exegesis, the Zur, was in the 11th century closely interacting with the Bonpo and with "old logicians" such as Khyungpo Drakse (Khyung po Grags se).

The similarities one can find with *Guhyagarbha* exegesis could be explored in tandem with resonances found in Vairocana's *Ratnavādacakra* (*Rin po che rdzod pa'i 'khor lo*) which Chogyal Namkhai Norbu feels bears a strong similarity with *Authenticity* (personal communication to Klein, Fall, 1995, Conway, MA).

65. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Kathmandu, January 1999, oral commentary.

66. *Biography of Lundon Hlanyen* (*Lung ston lha gnyan gi rnam thar*) by Lungdon Khorlo Gyelpo (Lung sgom 'khor lo rGyal po) in *Sources*: 278.2–3ff. See also Karmay 1972: 113–115.

continuity is metaphorical, metaphysical, and also, as we now come to foreground, historical.

Authenticity as Buried Treasure

Authenticity, we are told, is a *terma*, a revealed treasure that, because of threats to the lives of those who cherished it, was hidden and later discovered. It was not revealed by its initial discoverers, the Three Buddhists, but passed through them to the hands of those who had the trust and confidence to return it to the world of practice and debate.

The area in which terma in general and *Authenticity* in particular is found becomes sacred ground, *gnas*,⁶⁷ and the significance of this is multivalent. Wisdom, not localized in an individual mind as in the post-Cartesian West,⁶⁸ can reasonably be considered to reside elsewhere, including in the earth. Itself mythologized as a demoness tamed by Buddhism, the Tibetan landscape confers prestige and thus from yet another direction streams a mythic authenticity into the philosophical enterprise of the text. Further, since in this case the text is found in an area famously sacred to Buddhism, it becomes encoded in a narrative running through the already complex nexus of imperial and spiritual power constructed at Samye, and in the nearby Yarlung cradle of Tibetan civilization and imperial power. At the same time, imperial glories anchor the legitimacy and power against which Bon is pitted, and in this way *Authenticity* is inserted into a much larger context of tensions between Bonpo and Buddhists.

As Janet Gyatso writes in connection with the Terma of Jigme Lingpa: "The essential meaning of Treasure can be characterized as continuum." It is a continuous communication; it "is never fixed but always transforming."⁶⁹ Continuity, as we are by now well aware, is one of the crucial themes of *Authenticity*; continuity is the mark of genuine meditation, authenticity, and scripture, sometimes all at one stroke. As our text itself stated at the outset, continuity supremely characterizes spontaneously occurring meditation, which is resonant with reality itself.

Transmutation of reality into scripture is at the heart of *Authenticity*. Scriptures and essential precepts, being identified with Samantabhadra, are at once

67. David Germano points out that the significance of charnel grounds, pervasive in late Indian Buddhist tantra, seems linked to the Tibetan focus on place, a focus in which the treasure traditions were deeply immersed. Germano, *The Secret Transformation of Buddhist Tantra in Ancient Tibet*, unpubl. ms., 145.

68. As Charles Taylor observes in rich detail, the feeling modern Western persons have that ideas exist in the mind and nowhere else is the result of multitudinous cultural influences; it was not always thus. Taylor 1989: 186

69. See Gyatso 1998: 238ff., where she assimilates the concept of continuity and lineage to the identity of a treasure-discoverer, in this case, Jigme Lingpa himself. See also her discussion 1998: esp. 162–167.

immutable and continually transforming. Understood as the dynamic display of reality, they are powerful less for what they say than for what they are: “spontaneous occurrences in relation to the base.” This is the support they extend to the practitioner. They are the mediate displays and the immediate open awareness itself. The authentic scriptures that vitalize *Authenticity* are themselves temporally and ontically continuous with the reality-mirror, sheer authenticity itself, into which they beckon the practitioner. Reader, text, and their common authenticity are simply present with their own relationship to the base.

In another, more personal way, the simple act of reading, listening, chanting or speaking sends a stream of image ideas through the mind-continuum. The trained practitioner experiences these, too, as a display from his or her own mindnature. In this way, any action can mirror, if not quite match, the authenticity of scripture. In this sense too, Samantabhadra, naked reality, demonstrates that, indeed, all is good, all is authentic. But only—and this is a crucial caveat—if it is recognized in this manner.⁷⁰

We might even say that just as there are no phenomena separable from the numinous unbounded wholeness, so there is no fully distinguishing what “actually” happened from what did not, and yet the traces of that actually occurring event are certainly present. Here we have had space only to acknowledge, but not discuss, the complex relationship between historiography and fiction. Our point is to note that those whose intellects are rigorously involved in the topics of *Authenticity* are, at the same time and without tension, immersed in the world of mythos, philosophically and historically. Just as the figure of Samantabhadra holds (rather than providing closure for) the philosophical conundrums and diffuseness discussed in our text, so perhaps the sheer richness of the mythos pervading our text’s discovery story holds and sheds a charisma that all but replaces the necessity for narrative certainty and conceptual closure.

Although in Tibet generally the difference between fact and imagination is clearly recognized culturally and philosophically, there is not a strong sense that the two are intrinsically in tension. That is, stories are not fundamentally appraised, or genres named, in terms of their factual standing; there is no easy equivalent for “fiction” and “nonfiction,” for example, though there are a variety of words for “story.”

Actually, then, there are at least two levels where mythos, or imagination, plays into the materials we discuss here. Events are described that most readers, Eastern or Western, will agree could indeed have occurred—such as the

⁷⁰. Secular Western-educated readers or scholars are unlikely to situate themselves in this way, even if those who read religiously in Griffiths’s sense of the term might find this orientation somewhat familiar. It is important that such a style of reading not be ignored, however.

murder of a Zhang Zhung king or three men stumbling upon eighth-century texts in the area of Samye—and that if they did occur, have enormous cultural power. At the same time, “mythic” suffusion comes through the symbolic power of the locale, its historio-mythic connection with a network of stories and personages that mutually bestow prestige on one another.

Another level of mythical modality emerges through narration of fantastic events, such as some of the elements of Lishu Daring’s life. These strike the modern scholar as supernatural, unliteral, and in that sense mythic. The text’s own intended readership would likewise be carried by such stories away from mundane reality, but not in a manner that pits these tales against claims deemed more objective, literal, or psychologically compelling. Such elements heighten the importance of the text, are entertaining and informative in their own right, and linger luminously in the ambient awareness of the reader. In their native context, then, these elements make the narrative more powerfully awesome, but no less believable.

In some ways, the complexities of these tales—mutually contradictory as some of them are, yet illuminative of genuine events and impulses at the foundations of Tibetan culture—contribute to a narrative wholeness that has eluded us until now. What we can see, however, is that both the body and the colophon of the work are stories of authentic discovery.

The colophon, naturally, appears at the end of the text. However the discovery it references is not the end of the story; the end, the outcome, is the text itself, which we have in our hands and have already read as we enter the tale of its finding.⁷¹ Most important, for the reader, the text is directly relevant to the ever-shifting present. It thus appears three-dimensionally in the past, through its discovery, in the present through the tale of that discovery, and at the disposal, both present and future, of the reader who engages it.

In this sense, the trifocal presence of Samantabhadra is mimicked, and even exceeded, by the triple presence of the text itself—in the authentic state from which it issued forth and with which it remains in continuity, in the nameable past when it was written, and in the present when it functions as a mirror, or at least a signpost, for authentic awareness. The genres of text and colophon, of mythic history and inspired philosophy, are collaboratively engaged in matrixing a broad domain of authenticity that is, alternatively or simultaneously, textual, geographic, historical, and subjective.

The discovery of open awareness mirrors in important ways the more metaphysically oriented narratives of scriptural origins and the ultimate source of *Authenticity* itself.⁷² For, traditional readers’ meditative engagement offers

⁷¹ If we apply Kermode’s idea of “the weight of meaning” to the event of discovery, the significance of the discovery is “thrown forward” to the text we now hold and refracts backward as well to the time prior to discovery. This also relates to the phenomenon of “doubling.” See Gyatso 1993: 132–134.

⁷² Gyatso 1993: 132 points out that the timeless and authoritative past that surfaces through the presence

yet a further terrain for textual presence; practice constitutes another rediscovery and presence of the text. This contemplative unearthing of textual meaning, we can observe, is possible because subject and object are equally authentic. In this sense Samantabhadra is both the ultimate discoverer and discovery.

In this way, the treasure is valued as much, if not more, for its esoteric origins as for its narrative history and ancient pedigree. "Existence through time" may bring authority, as Steve Collins argues,⁷³ but here it is the fathomless origin that is most fundamental, and not simply because it was a long "time" ago. From its own perspective, authenticity endures through time and timelessly; time does not create authenticity. The kind of authority any work gains simply by existing for a long time here recedes into the timelessness of Samantabhadra.⁷⁴ This is the distinction between narrative and analytical or systematic philosophy.⁷⁵ Still, for all its referential vastness, it is not the *extent* but the *fact* of continuity that is significant, for this reveals something that, for Dzogchen, is crucial to authentic subjectivity.

"Beings of the six realms see water six ways," we read early in *Authenticity*. From one entirely appropriate point of view, the book we now hold is a scholarly work produced through collaboration between Western and Tibetan scholars, introducing *Authenticity* and some of its context. From another, more mythically informed perspective, *Tulkus* of the Bon tradition today are living out Vairocana's prophesy and encouraged by it: "There is no need to say that these [Bon teachings] will spread by the spiritual children, the emanations." From the perspective *Authenticity* discloses here, the presence of this text in English is testament to ongoing processes of continuity. Insight, the sight within sight, opens continuously; its boundless dimension finds no end to the vastness.

of the discovered text does not mean that the primordial and temporal continua completely coalesce, since "the happy ending of perfection" is missing from these accounts. This is true if we consider the story to end with the discovery of the text and the fate of its discoverers. But if it ends rather with the full assimilation of its meaning into the reader, its stated ultimate purpose, the ending is blissful indeed. (This, of course, is not the complete ending with which the Pāli *imaginaire*, as interpreted by Collins 1998, equates nirvana, for in Mahāyāna this is only the beginning of splendid and infinite reappearances in the service of other, equally happy, inconclusions.)

73. Collins 1998: 145.

74. Compare with Eliade's 1959 classic presentation of the myth of the eternal return in his book by that name; see also Collins's 1998: 234–240 reflections on the myth of the eternal return.

75. These reflections are inspired in part by Steven Collins's 1998 discussion of the difference between systematic and narrative historiography in *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities*.

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PART III

The Text in Translation

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The Authenticity of Open Awareness

A Collection of the Essential Reasonings

(*gTan tshigs gal mdo rig pa'i tshad ma*, attributed to Li shu s'Tag ring; discovered by the Three Buddhists [*Pan dhe mi gsum*] at Lhasa Yerba)

Authentication and Authenticity

In the language of the gods, *Maha santing na yo na yva gha sid su tha du a nod ya na ma*.¹

In the language of Tibet, *Authenticity of Mindnature, the Great Completeness: Settling the Meaning of Reasoning and Terminology* (*Sems nyid rdzogs chen gyi tshad ma gtan tshigs sgra don gtan la phab pa*).

An unknown Tibetan annotator has added notes to this text, the translations of which can be found in the endnotes. Notes and commentaries inserted by the translators are indicated by ED.; all other notes are the work of the annotator. For readers' ease, these all appear here, even if cited in earlier chapters. The full Tibetan text is available at: <http://www.thdl.org/xml/showTib.php?xml=/collections/literature/bon/galmdo.xml>.

i. The presence of a Zhang Zhung title for a text originally written in Tibetan might strike the reader as curious. This however is typical of Bon materials. Just as it was the custom of translators of texts from Zhang Zhung language into Tibetan to offer their own homage, so even when the text was composed in Tibetan, as was *Authenticity*, the composer would add an homage in the same manner. These Zhang Zhung and Bon homages are known as *sgyur phyag* and *sgyur phyag dang mithun pa'i phyag*, respectively. The sense was that, even in writing his own text, Lishu Daring was not relying only on his own mind, and so acknowledges respectfully all those texts, spoken by or commenting on the Buddha's word, that exist in Zhang Zhung language. Triten Norbutse Khen Rinpoche Denpa Yung Drung to Klein, Ligmicha, Serenity Ridge, Oct. 31, 2004. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, commenting on this as well, simply said that it is the Bon custom to include a Zhang Zhung title because, even if they do not actively use it, Bonpos have felt that it is their "home" language and so maintain this connection with it. Conversation with Klein, Oct. 31, 2004, at Ligmicha, Serenity Ridge, outside Charlottesville, Va.

Homage to the All Good Samantabhadra² unique³ nature of (all) phenomena and minds. {48.2}

The authenticity of the collection of essential reasonings⁴ will be explained so as to disprove and eliminate erroneous views⁵ of unrealized beings⁶ and those with erroneous conceptions,⁷ as well as those attracted by limited perspectives accessing merely the words and not the meaning⁸ and also for those who lack profound and correct experience.⁹

Through blessings of¹⁰ the Victor Samantabhadra bon-dimension (*bon sku, dharmakāya*),¹¹ reflexive open awareness (*rang rig pa, svasaṃvedana*), a wholeness¹² that is the heart essence of our ancestor¹³ is understood by the White Shen Deity, protector¹⁴ of beings. That itself, the very essence¹⁵ of mindheart understanding, dawns as open awareness in the mindheart of {49.1} Shenrab, the emanation dimension. Lyrical speech,¹⁶ the musical expression of this [open awareness], is addressed to fortunate ones, the heroically minded Yung Drung Shen-practitioners¹⁷ [Bodhisattvas].¹⁸

This teaching,¹⁹ displayed by his [Shenrab Miwo's] great mindheart {49.2},

2. Primordial original teacher.

3. ED.: *nyag gcig* also often refers, in this text and in Dzogchen more generally, to the union of open awareness and emptiness (*rig stong byer med*).

4. Whose import is at grave risk (*don gyi phrang*). ED.: *'phrang* is glossed by Lopon Tenzin Namdak as meaning a path that is narrow, not accommodating, a place of danger.

5. Of [the lower] eight [vehicles surpassed] by the Great Completeness. ED.: These are known as "causal" vehicles because, first, they must be completed in order to obtain the complete teaching and, second, the practices of these vehicles become causes for further development. Because these are taught primarily through words, they are considered part of the Definition Vehicle.

6. *hla me gzhān brten*. ED.: "the way of gods and humans mutually relying on each other". This is the name of the first causal vehicle in the presentation of nine vehicles described in the Central Treasure. See Wangyal 1992: 206. Note that although those associated with the lower eight vehicles may be unrealized, they do not, like the Tīrthikas have an erroneous view. See also Karmay 1988: 148ff.

7. ED.: Tīrthikas with views of eternalism or annihilation.

8. Followers of the [remaining three] causal vehicles. ED.: According to the Central Treasure, as described in the *g.Yung drung bon gyi bshad sgrub 'das sde'i tshogs' don mtshan nyid rtsa gzhung* (*Principal Definitions Recited from the Collected Explanations of the Ceaseless, Changeless Bon*), Dolanji: Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1993, p. 15.2ff., the Shenrab Theg pa (Bon vehicles) consist of four causal vehicles, the two outer tantric vehicles, and three inner tantric vehicles, the third of which, the Great Completeness, refutes all the previous eight. The first causal vehicle, the *lha mi bzhān brtan*, has already been indicated here; thus, the present phrase refers to the others: *rang ltog shen rab; thugs rjes sems; and yungs grung sems*.

9. Followers of the three tantras, one [external] and [three] internal tantras. ED.: This is the system of *Clearing Extremes from the Primordial Mind*. Lobon Tenzin Namdak notes that in most presentations there are two external and two internal tantras.

10. How it is explained.

11. Who explains it.

12. Which is [a term] that is an explanatory response to [a request for] explanations regarding entityness and such. ED.: *dag* here means *la sog*.

13. Source of confidence. ED.: *lung* here signifies "source" and not "text."

14. If [one asks], to whom is it explained? It is the Sambhogakāya [the White Shen Deity].

15. The White Shen [Deity] itself explains.

16. Associated with the aesthetics of composition.

17. [Followers of] the [Shen] deity.

18. ED.: That is, the practitioners of Bon (*sems dba' gyung drung = byang chub sems dba'* = Bodhisattva).

19. Widespread pervasion of Yung Drung [teachings].

has three areas of confidence (*gding*)²⁰ regarding experience, explanation, and essential instructions and is explained extensively²¹ for the well-being of those having the karma to meet with it.

Three aspects of ascertaining the meaning are relevant here:²² (1) Eradicating [doubt]²³ which through verbal weaponry²⁴ renders the enemy speechless;²⁵ (2) proving statements in texts, [thus gaining] the powerful armor of invulnerability oneself; and²⁶ (3) in between engaging in any and all debates²⁷ [responding to] an opponent's powerful deceptive words.²⁸ {49.4}

The excellent essential instructions²⁹ are methods for realizing that within the base, all bon-phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana, positive as well as negative, what is worthy as well as what is deluded error, are meaningwise one whole.³⁰ They [the instructions] eradicate others' arguments and have no fault.³¹

Regarding this, the mindbase (*gzhi sems*),³² {49.6} the natural state of bon-phenomena is like this: open awareness,³³ the enlightenment mind (*byang chub kyi sems*),³⁴ heart essence of all bon-phenomena of samsara³⁵ and nirvana,³⁶ is a self arisen mind, uncontrived {50.1} and genuine.³⁷ Untouched by either samsara or nirvana, its essential nature is uncoarsened³⁸ by the five elements. Just that spontaneously occurring unbounded wholeness³⁹ is the key⁴⁰ to the allbase, the primordial principle. It dwells primordially as the root and base of all bon-phenomena. Further, *Unbounded Wholeness, the Changeless, Ceaseless Essential Heart* says:

20. [Confidence in] in one's own [experience], the Sugata's [speech] (*bde gshegs*, not *de gshegs*), and the master's [essential instructions].

21. For those practitioners having a blessed karmic connection (*las 'phros*) with Shenrab.

22. If one should ask what these are:

23. Destroying (*brdeg*).

24. Eradicating [the views] of others.

25. ED.: Literally, "cuts the breath of the enemy."

26. Due to one's own knowledge of others.

27. Objection to what follows.

28. Both.

29. [That] mind and things are one thing (*blo dngos gcig*).

30. ED.: A reference to unbounded wholeness (*thig le nyag gcig*).

31. Hey! [Arguments are eradicated in] the texts of others, my own texts [are without error]. ED.: (Gloss to Klein from Lopon Tenzin Namdak.)

32. ED.: This, like the mindnature (*sems nyid*), is not itself a mind.

33. A clarity associated with [awareness of all] other [phenomena]; ED.: here signifying the one unbounded wholeness (*thig le nyag gcig*).

34. ED.: This reference to unbounded wholeness also refers to the allbase, often translated as basis of all (*kun gzhi*). The *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* often uses the phrase "mind of enlightenment allbase" (*kun gzhi byang chub gyi sems*). See for example 272.6.

35. The external vessel.

36. The [Buddha] bodies and the primordial wisdom (*sku dang ye shes*).

37. Not depending on anything else existing in all three times [past, present, and future].

38. The very nature of all bon-phenomena.

39. Primordially [uncoarsened].

40. Of samsara and nirvana.

Uncontrived and genuine, mind's bon-nature,
 Uncoarsened by elements
 Untouched by samsara or nirvana
 Is declared heart essence of all that is.⁴¹ {50.3}

Further, *Expansive Sky Tantra (Nam mkha' yangs pa'i rgyud)* says:

Prior to Buddhas or ordinary beings,⁴²
 Our primordial ancestor, the quintessential heart essence base
 Dwells as just that unbounded sun heart essence
 Because it is one with, being everywhere suffused by,⁴³
 The dynamic display (*rtsal*) of the bon-dimension,
 My own mind, just that greatness, vast and whole
 Dwells primordially uncoarsened by any external element.

Also, *Profound Great Bliss Sutra* says:

Mind of mine, dwelling in the present
 Uncontrived, uncoarsened, and untouched
 Heart essence of all that is,
 Dwells solely as wholeness unbounded.

Also, *Authentic Scripture* says:

Prior to all Buddhas and sentient beings
 When even their names do not exist
 Is ancestral wholeness, mindnature.

These and other [scriptures] make this clear. {50.5} How does delusion arise in relation to this? It is this way:⁴⁴ The very essence of one's own mind (*rang gi sems kyi ngo bo nyid*) is primordially thus [as just described]. Not recognizing it⁴⁵ gets the name "inborn unawareness"⁴⁶ (*lhan jig skyes pa'i ma rig pa*). Overpowered by this, one has been deluded⁴⁷ since beginningless time; through accumulating predispositions on the allbase {51.1} one enters⁴⁸ the three realms of samsara. Why? There is an adhering attraction (*zhen*)⁴⁹ for external objects. Due to wrongful imputation (*kun brtags*) one wanders among

41. ED.: Poetic rendering of "all bon phenomena" (*bon thams cad*).

42. ED.: *sems can* is the term used here, which simply signifies all who are non-Buddhas.

43. ED.: Poetic license for *khyab*, often translated "pervade."

44. ED.: For a classic Buddhist discussion of this topic, see Longchen Rabjampa rept. 1983, *Treasury of Meaning (Tshig don mdzod)* Gantok, Sikkim: Sherab Gyalsen and Khentse Labrang Palace Monastery [reproduced from prints from the Sde-dge blocks belonging to Lopon Sonam Sangpo]. For Dzogchen, individual error for a particular rebirth commences during the clear light bardo, but there is no beginning of error in general.

45. As such.

46. This convention [is given] to that [ignorance].

47. In samsara.

48. The consciousness.

49. For ordinary objects.

the six places of rebirth⁵⁰ experiencing a variety of unsatisfying circumstances. Moreover, *Great Sky Beyond Effort Tantra* says: {51.2}

Due to inborn unawareness, heart essence itself
Though ever here, goes unrecognized.
Through beginningless delusion
Samsara is engaged, wherein
Attracted to external objects and
With wrongful imputation
We wander the six realms of rebirth
Incurring various dissatisfactions,⁵¹
Since grasping at objects is deeply ingrained. {51.3}

Also, *Primordially Existing Sky* (*Nam mkha' ye srid*) says:

Not recognizing just as it is
The mind's real nature
Is delusion
Lost in enormous, elemental darkness⁵²
Endlessly a wanderer, endlessly in circles.

Also, *Sun Suffusing the Thousand Directions, the Bon Teachings Tantra* (*Bon sde nyi ma stong kyab rgyud*) {51.4} says:

Like taking a rope for a snake⁵³
Not seeing what's there yields delusion
Whereby one wanders in samsara.

Also, *Blasting Out from the Hold of Cyclic Existence* ('*Khor ba dong sprung*)⁵⁴ says:

Though ever thus
Due to the eight delusions of unawareness,⁵⁵

50. ED.: *rgyu drug*, literally, “six causes.” Here however, according to oral commentator tradition, *rgyu* is a reference to *rgyu ba'i lam*, that is, a cause which is a path that precipitates rebirth in a particular area. The *Great Treasury of Tibetan Words* gives *bcud kyi 'jig rten* as one meaning of *rgyu ba*. Also cf. the *rgyu drug*: *byed rgyu/ lhar cig byung ba'i rgyu/ skal mnayam gyi rgyu/ mtshungs ldan gyi rgyu/ kun 'gro'i rgyud/ rnam smin gyi rgyu*.

51. Birth, aging, sickness, and death.

52. ED.: Lopon Tenzin Namdak glossed *hyung gtos stong ra mun pa* as “darkness caused by the elements,” meaning, however, simply darkness. Ponlob Thrinley Nyima glossed *gtos* as indicating a darkness seen from a great height, a huge area of darkness, foreclosing any knowledge of where to go.

53. ED.: This may be an indication that the author is familiar either with Nāgārjuna or with the *Upaniṣads*.

54. ED.: Tenzin Rinpoche believes this title can be found among listings of Buddhist texts, though it is usually a considered sutric text rather than tantric or *rdzogs chen*. We have not been able to locate it to date.

55. ED.: Lopon relates these not to eight specific delusions but to the *rnam shes tshogs brgyad*, the group of eight consciousnesses (five senses, mental consciousness, afflicted mind, and mind basis of all consciousness), which are influenced by ignorance.

The erroneous designations,⁵⁶
We cycle and circle in samsara's three realms.

Thus the allbase is established by these three [unawareness, delusion, and wrongful designation]. Such is established by the three allbases.⁵⁷

Also, *Mindnature, Heart Essence of Profound Completeness*⁵⁸ (*Sems nyid gting rdzog snying po*) says: {51.5}

Regarding this, methods for reversing delusion and superior seeing⁵⁹ of truth's principle, were spoken and shown by the Tathāgatas, pure beings who, in connection with beings of heightened, average, and lesser abilities, applied the 84,000 doors of Bon as remedies for the 84,000 afflictions of those living beings. {52.1}

Also, *Luminous Cave Vehicle* (*Theg pa 'od ltan gyi mdzod phug*) says:

So as to restrain the eighty-four thousand afflictions,
Eighty-four thousand doors of Bon were
Shown by Buddhas of purity and manifest realization
According to sentient beings' capacity and wishes.

Also, *Definitive Essential Collection* (*Gal mdo nges pa*) {52.2} says:

Various emanation dimension teachers
Teach the excellent treasure, the precious teaching⁶⁰
All the while conforming to the capacity
And suiting the mental disposition
Of living beings clustered in samsara's six realms.

In this regard, the Great Completeness, the fruit ('bras bu) which reverses delusion is the heart essence (*snying-po*) of all vehicles. {52.3} There are three authenticators of [its] method: scriptures, essential instructions, and reflexive

56. ED.: *rnam brtag*.

57. ED.: These are also mentioned in the *Transmission of the Twenty-Four Rainbow Body Masters* (*nja' lus ny shi rtsa bzhi*), 62.6. Lopon Tenzin Namdak glosses these as the *grol gzhi*, *mkhrul gzhi*, and *shyir gtang kun gzhi*: the allbase of liberation, the allbase of delusion, and the general allbase. He pointed out that the deluded allbase (*khrul gzhi*) is not the self-risen primordial wisdom allbase. Ponlob Thrinley Nyima Rinpoche glosses the three as external, internal, and secret, associated respectively with space, the dynamic display that dawns from the base (*gzhi rtsal la shar*), and the self-arisen wisdom. On learning from me, some years later, that Lopon had not wholly agreed with this, he turned to an interpretation from a verse in the *Srid pa'i mdzod phug gi 'brel ba* by Sherab Gyeltsen, first Abbot of Menri; this states that the external allbase is space (*nam mkha*), the internal allbase is the allbase consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes*) from among the eight collections of consciousness, and the secret allbase is mindnature (*sems nyid*), or, according to the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, the self-risen primordial wisdom. He cited these lines from memory, and we have not been able to trace them.

58. The fourth chapter explaining the View.

59. ED.: *lhag mthong* is often translated as "special insight" in the context of Madhyamaka, where it is a very common term that can refer to either conceptual or nonconceptual insight. In Dzogchen, however, where it is not much used, it always signifies direct experience; hence we have translated it "excellent insight."

60. ED.: Dzogchen remains the highest teaching even though one might need to be taught something else. It is not that in those cases sutra or tantra becomes the final teaching.

open awareness (*rang gi rig pa*). The definitive meaning⁶¹ is determined by these three,⁶² and surety (*gdeng*) is gained through realizing one's own mind.⁶³ As for a definitive scripture which teaches this, *Venerable Bon Awareness of Everything Tantra* says:

I am heart essence of all bon that is,
 Bon-nature is not an object, is your own mind:
 Your uncontrived mind is the Body of Bon
 All arises from me, bon-phenomena lord.
 Know me and the All-Good is there.⁶⁴

Also, *Secret Scripture Collection* says: {52.5}

Nothing, not even one thing
 Does not arise from me.
 Nothing, not even one thing
 Dwells not within me.
 Everything, just everything
 Emanates from me
 Thus am I only one.
 Knowing me is knowing all—
 Great bliss.

Also, *Great Sky Beyond Effort Tantra* says:

Being its own heart
 It arises from that.
 Once taught, is seen⁶⁵
 And therefore is itself.⁶⁶

As for authentic essential instructions, *Collection of the Essential Precepts: Thoughts of the Shenrabs of a Thousand Eons*⁶⁷ says: {53.1}

61. The quintessence which is the one single source of all, errorlessness itself.

62. ED.: In another way, it is said that there are three types of validity or authenticity (*tshad ma rnam pa gsum*): (1) The authentic word of the Conquerors (*rgyal ba'i bka' tshad ma*); (2) the authentic valid scriptures of the Superiors (*'phags pa'i lung tshad ma*) (this latter is similar to direct speech authentication [*man ngag tshad ma*]; however, the term Superior [*'phags pa, ḍāyan*] is not a Dzogchen term; *bla ma* is a much more important designation); and (3) one's own authentic reflexive open awareness (*rang gi rig pa'i tshad ma*).

63. As one's own open awareness.

64. ED.: The "me" of this poem is itself Samantabhadra. For this reason, we have translated the *byung* of this line as "is there" instead the more literal and, in our work, more common translation of *byung* as "arise." Samantabhadra is a personification of the bon-nature.

65. ED.: Since there is only this one, from which everything arises, to teach any aspect of it is to see it, to show it is to know it, since there is nothing outside it. Here again, the idea of *thig lge nyag gcig* is central.

66. ED.: Here and elsewhere some liberties are taken with line arrangements for a more felicitous presentation in English.

67. ED.: Bon teaches that there is one Shenrab for each eon, thus a thousand Shenrabs during a thousand eons. There are four main categories of Tathāgathas (*bde gshegs gtso bo gzhi*) associated with the four directions. These are goddesses (*lha mo*), great gods (*lha chen*), those occupied with existence (*srid pa*), and Shenrabs (*gshen*

Any mindnature is bon-nature.
 Any bon-nature, a mindnature.
 Dwelling inseparably, continuously
 With that very principle
 Bon and mind unto
 Is called great bliss itself.

Also, *Excellent Essential Precepts* says: {53.2}

Within noncontrivance and nondistraction dwells clarity
 In uncontrived mindnature.
 No effort, no thought, clear.
 No reflection, no analysis,
 Naturally placed there.⁶⁸

Heart of Essential Precepts says: {53.2}

When this errorless essential precept is shown
 Your own mind is effortlessly known,
 Hope and doubt gone, fruition comes on.

Also, *Blissful Manner of Essential Precepts on Stabilization* (*bSam gtan man ngag bde ba'i ngang*) says: {53.3}

Mindnature is primordially Buddha but
 Not knowing this, one wanders in samsara.
 Through teaching essential instructions, one's mind is known.
 Like seeing one's face when a mirror is shown,
 To know that is to know the dimension of Bon.

Regarding the authenticity of reflexively open awareness (*rang rig pa'i tshad ma*), [its] surety (*gdeng*) in not contradicting the import (*don, artha*) experienced⁶⁹ via external, internal, or secret essential instructions is known as never being separate from spontaneous meditation in the three⁷⁰ times. Regarding the authenticity of open awareness toward itself, the surety of not contradicting meaning experienced by way of the external, internal, and secret precepts is known to be inseparable from spontaneous meditation during the three times. Likewise, {53.5} authentic scripture settles the mindnature through all the words of the Tathāgata.

rab). The *lha mo* are a base or source, the *lha chen* are creators, the *srid pa* are assistant creators, and the *gshen rab* are manifestations for sentient beings. Bon mythology states that Shenrab 'od dkar's exhalation of breath was the cause of the world. For a discussion of Bon cosmology, see the *mDzod phug: Basic Verses and Commentary*, by Dranpa Namkha published by Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Delhi: 1966, pp. 52.iff.

68. ED.: As elsewhere, poetic license permits loose translation of nontechnical terms, here *bzhag*.

69. Realized.

70. For the sake of.

As for authentic essential instructions, these are an uninterrupted continuum of the word—that is, of essential instructions derived from the experience [of enlightened beings].

As for the authenticity of open awareness (*rig pa'i tshad ma*)⁷¹ there are two topics: (1) a confidence (*gding*) in oneself during practice {53.6} that is produced from the mind in practice,⁷² and (2) a severing of doubt (*gdar sha gcod*) by a sharp, quick⁷³ intellect (*rig pa*) in the course of debating an opponent.⁷⁴

[This concludes the introductory section on the three types of authenticity.]

Multiplicity and Unbounded Wholeness

Regarding this, in terms of overcoming an opponent's criticism of the view, namely [of] the natural state which is the actual meaning of the basis: {54.1}

Because of the thesis that there are many diverse⁷⁵ perspectives, it follows that the bon-subject,⁷⁶ all of samsara and nirvana, is the primordial ancestor, the great vehicle, unbounded wholeness.

If, regarding this, someone says the bon-subject is not established,⁷⁷ we answer that cyclic existence is established by direct perception and nirvana is established by inference. This is so; {54.2} the bon-subject nirvana⁷⁸ actually exists because special scriptures⁷⁹ [which say so] are observable like, for example, fire and smoke.⁸⁰ (In both cases, if there is one there will be the other.)

If someone objects that our reason⁸¹ is not established, we answer that it follows that the perspectives of the nine vehicles are established by inference because they rely on scriptural reasoning.⁸² {54.3}

In a similar way, diverse forms, sounds, and so forth are established by

71. ED.: Here *rig pa* does not have the special Dzogchen meaning of “open awareness.”

72. ED.: This subset of *rig pa'i tshad ma* is the actual Dzogchen unitary open awareness.

73. Set of distinctions.

74. ED.: Lopon Tenzin Namdak notes that this category can include both conceptual and nonconceptual forms of awareness.

75. Reasonings (*gtan tshigs*)

76. ED.: The term *bon can* is equivalent to the better-known *chos can / dharmin* of Buddhist logic. As with our translation of *bon (chos, dharma)* as “bon-phenomenon” we here use the phrase “bon-subject” to remind the reader of the variant uses of this term, one of the self-identifying idioms of Bon traditions.

77. Now. ED.: That is, here in samsara.

78. The thesis.

79. Reasonings. ED.: Lopon comments that a “special scripture” is one that is purified via three analyses (*dpyad gsum gyis dag pa'i lung yin pa'i phyr*) However, he understood this particular statement as from a hypothetical Saurāntika viewpoint, not Dzogchen itself. The three purifying analyses are direct perception, inference, and correct assumption (*mgnor sum, rjes dpag, yid dpyod*). Tape 9a, Serenity Ridge, Charlottesville, VA, July, 2000.

80. ED.: This would seem analogous to Signs and Reasons (*rtags rigs*) discussions of a correct sign that is the effect of the predicate's being established (*'bras rtags yang dag*).

81. That there are diverse perspectives. ED.: No difference is made here between *rtags* (*linga*) and *gtan tshigs* (*hetu*)

82. The nine vehicles and their own [commentatorial] texts.

direct perception. The appearance of the six realms is also established by inference.⁸³ This is so, for it follows that as regards the bon-subject, appearances, ways of seeing⁸⁴ the six realms' appearances are diverse,⁸⁵ because it is so stated in scripture. *Scripture of Blissful Samantabhadra* says: {54.4}

Beings of the six realms see water six ways.

Treasure of Three Primordial Existences (Ye srid gsum gyi mdzod) says:

Appearances to the six wanderers differ, therefore
Actual external objects appear in those ways.

Also, *Sun Suffusing the Thousand Directions* {54.5} says:⁸⁶

Because appearances are not definitively one
Perceptions arise differently for the six wanderers.

[This concludes the statement of the text's own position on the establishment of the natural condition and, by extension, all of cyclic existence and nirvana. Now follows the section on refuting objections an opponent might pose.]

OBJECTION: Even though there are many⁸⁷ diverse perspectives, what would be wrong if there were no great all-suffusing (*khyab brdal*) mindnature of samsara and nirvana [so that diverse appearance did not comprise unbounded wholeness]? Your pervasion is not established [i.e, your contention that once there are many diverse perspectives there is necessarily an unbounded wholeness has not been proven].

RESPONSE: Since there are many diverse perspectives, it is impossible that there not be a whole, all-suffusing mindnature which is the basis.⁸⁸ For example, once there is smoke, it is impossible that there not be fire.

OBJECTION: That is not comparable because fire and smoke have a relationship of one arising from the other; no such relationship exists here.⁸⁹ {55.1}

RESPONSE: They have the relationship of one arising from the other here,

83. Supported by scriptural reasoning.

84. [As stated in] the texts of each of the nine vehicles.

85. The thesis.

86. At this point.

87. Of these.

88. ED.: Here, base, mindnature, and unbounded wholeness are the same in meaning (*gzhi*, *sems nyid*, and *thig le nyag gcig* are *don gcig*). With respect to the relationship between base (*gzhi*) and mindnature (*sems nyid*), there are three possibilities (*mu gsum*). For, whatever is mindnature (*sems nyid*) is necessarily a base (*gzhi*), but whatever is a base is not necessarily a mindnature. For example, bon-nature (*bon nyid*) is a base, but not a mindnature; likewise, the emptiness of a table is a base but not a mindnature, for a mindnature must be connected with mind. It is also said that the fortunate meditate on the three, bon-nature (*bon nyid*), mindnature (*sems nyid*), and the sky's expansive nature (*nam mkha'i dbyings nyid*), as one and inseparable.

89. Between cyclic existence and nirvana and the mindnature.

because the base, the mindnature, which is the all-suffusing wholeness, is not constrained in any one direction. Various sense perceptions (*dbang po mthong snang*)⁹⁰ arise [from it]; therefore many discordant appearances arise. Further, the *Mirror of Mindnature Treasure* says: {55.2}

Appearances are different, diverse, and so
Extend through all mindnature,⁹¹ samsara and nirvana;
Because they always self-arise [from] wholeness,
These things⁹² are related with, rise from, reality.⁹³ {55.3}

This is clear. Moreover, it follows that the bon-subject, the great primordial ancestor asserted [in the syllogism] is ascertained as actually existent⁹⁴ because proof exists and⁹⁵ there is no disproof. The bon-subject⁹⁶ is established [as a basis for debate] by agreement [that it is the topic under examination].⁹⁷

OBJECTION: The reason stating “because the proof exists” is not established because [if it were], it would be established by direct perception,⁹⁸ inference,⁹⁹ or scripture.¹⁰⁰

RESPONSE: It [the reason denying unbounded wholeness] is not [disproved by any of these three. Unbounded wholeness is] established by direct perception.

OBJECTION: If established by direct perception, it would have to be established by far-sighted [yogic] direct perception or short-sighted [ordinary] direct perception.

RESPONSE: It is established even by near-sighted direct perception.

OBJECTION: It [unbounded wholeness] is not established by that [near-sighted direct perception] because unbounded wholeness is not an object of direct perception.

RESPONSE: It [unbounded wholeness] is established even by that [direct perception]. Although not an external object, it is manifestly clear for reflexive open awareness which¹⁰¹ knows it clearly, nonconceptually, and thinglessly. For, external superimpositions (*sgros 'dogs*) are eliminated from the beginning.

90. For the nine vehicles and the six wanderers.

91. The one unbounded wholeness.

92. ED.: The appearances—that is, all experienced phenomena.

93. From the very essence.

94. The thesis.

95. From one basis.

96. Just whatever is established.

97. ED.: Here and elsewhere in this text, *thal* is an equivalent for *'gyur* meaning “become” or “would be.” It is not strictly a *thal* *'gyur* or unwanted consequence in the manner of later logic texts. See also 56.1.

98. Which comprehends a manifest object of comprehension.

99. In relation to a hidden object of comprehension.

100. In relation to what is very hidden.

101. Through the mere indication of the essential precepts.

OBJECTION: Because unbounded wholeness is clear¹⁰² to reflexive open awareness, it follows that it is experienced.¹⁰³ It therefore follows that {56.1} you are seeing what is true.

RESPONSE: Are you saying this follows for a practitioner¹⁰⁴ possessing the essential instructions who experiences unbounded wholeness, or that such experience follows for an ordinary person who lacks the essential instructions?

We cannot agree since the essential instruction [lineage]{56.2} is uninterrupted, and once instruction [is given], understanding¹⁰⁵ is immediate. Through experientially based instructions on this, one sees the truth [that is, experiences mindnature]. In the second case [of those bereft of essential instructions], why would one see the truth? There would be only delusion.

OBJECTION: It [unbounded wholeness] is not established by far-seeing [yogic] direct perception because such yogic direct perception is not now arising in that [ordinary] continuum of consciousness. If it did arise, one would see the truth. Therefore, it [unbounded wholeness] is not set up by that [far seeing yogic direct perception] just as the nonexistent horn of a rabbit cannot make a hole.

RESPONSE: Not so, for then it would follow that [far-seeing] yogic direct perception does not exist at all. Why? {56.4} Because it does not exist in that [ordinary] flow of consciousness. Obviously¹⁰⁶ you cannot agree.

OBJECTION: [It]¹⁰⁷ does exist in the flow of consciousness,¹⁰⁸ but realization has not yet become manifest, just as, for example, the basis for butter exists in milk, but milk does not appear (*snang*) as butter.

RESPONSE: [Therefore] It is not [as you suggested above, that unbounded wholeness is not established by yogic direct perception, precisely] because [as you have just said] the basis of butter does exist in milk. Through shaking it up, butter will emerge; therefore, similarly, the basis of yogic direct perception exists in the flow of consciousness.¹⁰⁹ Once the essential instructions are taught, the development of meditative experience from those [instructions] yields excellent insight. [Unbounded wholeness] is established by that.

[This completes discussion of direct perception. The book's own perspective continues to be laid out as the discussion turns to inference.]

How is [unbounded wholeness] established by inference? The bon-subject, my {56.6} assertion [about the ancestor]¹¹⁰ actually exists¹¹¹ because

¹⁰². Manifestly.

¹⁰³. Since it is experienced as a mind.

¹⁰⁴. Sherrab (gShen rab).

¹⁰⁵. The mindnature, which is the one unbounded wholeness.

¹⁰⁶. It is directly observable (that).

¹⁰⁷. Someone states “the basis of yogic direct perception.”

¹⁰⁸. For the opponent, [consciousness] is the basis of yogic direct perception.

¹⁰⁹. In the [ordinary] continuum of consciousness.

¹¹⁰. ED.: *yang mes chen po* (cited 55.3).

¹¹¹. [This is] the thesis.

it¹¹² is found in scripture and essential instructions. It is the same with fire and smoke. [Once scripture and essential instructions exist, the unbounded wholeness they describe must also exist, just as once smoke exists, there is fire.]

The bon-subject [the thesis regarding the great ancestor] is established by my assertion [that it and unbounded wholeness are objects of yogic direct perception]. The reason [namely, the reason of their being present in scripture and essential instructions] is established by direct perception.

OBJECTION: Although there indeed are scriptures and essential instructions [establishing the single ancestor and unbounded wholeness], what would be wrong if this unbounded wholeness {57.1} which is the heart (*snying*) of your assertion did not actually exist? For, it does not necessarily follow [that just because something is in scripture and taught through essential instructions it must exist].

RESPONSE: In that case, even though there is smoke, what would be wrong in saying that fire does not actually exist, for it does not necessarily follow [that wherever there is smoke there is fire]? For, if that [example of smoke, like unbounded wholeness] is ruled out by direct perception, this [the necessary existence of fire, like the existence of what is stated in scripture] is also ruled out by direct perception.

What kind of scripture establishes this [unbounded wholeness]? It is established by authentic scripture. Moreover, *Dwelling as the Very Heart of Space Tantra* (*sNying po nam mkha' ltar gnas ba'i rgyud*) explicitly says: {57.2}

Essential heart of all that is,
 Mindnature, uncontrived and naturally pure,
 Exists from the first, without start or stop¹¹³
 This is sure.
 Its own state beyond overlay¹¹⁴ or detraction,
 Untouched by limits:
 Self-risen open awareness, definitive pith
 Dwells as the heart of the sun¹¹⁵
 This is sure.¹¹⁶

112. Has the quality of being.

113. ED.: *dgag bsgrub*.

114. ED.: Poetic license for “superimposition” and also because this term gives clear contrast with “detraction.”

115. ED.: The sun is usually an example of open awareness, and space (*nam mkha'*) of clarity. A typical use of this metaphor in the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* (273.3) is “Like the sun in the expanse of sky” (*nam mkha'i klong nas nyi ma bzhin*). This verse describes the base (*kun gzhi*), as well as its analogue, the mindnature (*sems nyid*) and also the experience of it, which is open awareness (*rig pa*).

116. ED.: This is the same term *nges pa* we also translate as “definite,” and thus the verse can be read as part of the *Authenticity*'s ruminations on definiteness and undecidability (see chapter 2).

It is evident [from this citation that our position is correct].

OBJECTION: {57.3} Because it does not impair [your claims regarding unbounded wholeness], the reason-by-way-of-activity (*bya ba'i gtan tshigs*) is not established.¹¹⁷ This mindnature of yours, unbounded wholeness, is it a bon-phenomenon which is an impermanent thing or a bon-phenomenon which is a non-thing? If an impermanent thing, is it consciousness or matter? If an impermanent thing {57.4} that is consciousness, it becomes like the permanence¹¹⁸ asserted by Tirthikas¹¹⁹ who are “Proponents of the Ultimate Secret Knowing (*rig byed kyi mtha' gsang*).¹²⁰ Why? Because it is a consciousness. Obviously, you cannot agree.¹²¹

Is it [unbounded wholeness] a materiality?¹²² If so, you are no different than the {57.5} self-realized practitioners.¹²³ Why? Because [you claim] external objects actually exist.

Is it [unbounded wholeness] a non-thing?¹²⁴ If so, it follows that it is utterly nonexistent, because it exists as a bon-phenomenon which is a non-thing; like, for example, the horns of a rabbit.

RESPONSE: It is not like that. {57.6} Are you inquiring within the framework of the heart essence (*snying*), which is the base, or in the framework of

117. ED.: This appears to function similarly to the '*bras rtags yang dag* discussed in later *brtags rigs* texts. (See Rogers 1980.) That is, the text's opponent maintains that the presence of an effect whose activity establishes the probandum of the thesis—unbounded wholeness—is not established. Possibly this is because once unbounded wholeness is on the one hand unconditioned, and thus not a cause, but is at the same time the source of everything, it cannot be contradicted by any type of reason, and certainly not by a sign of any particular activity that is its cause. Or possibly, as John Pettit has suggested, it is the scriptural citation itself that is being declared unimpaired.

118. Because all bon-phenomena actually exist. ED.: Note that here *dngos po* is glossed as “all phenomena” and thus does not refer only to impermanent phenomena.

119. ED.: The opponent wants to know whether unbounded wholeness is an uncaused consciousness, as in the Sāṃkhya system, in which the *puruṣa* is both a consciousness and causeless. This system is known as “secret extreme of knowing.”

An important point here is that in general the *sNga rol pa* or Early Transmissions in Tibet do not, like later logicians, accept *ltan min 'di byed*. Rather, they maintain that whatever is impermanent must be either matter or consciousness. Furthermore, they do not maintain that any material phenomenon is necessarily atomically established. For example, impermanence, product, conditioned thing, effect—all these are matter but are not atomically established. It is within this context that the opponent inquires whether unbounded wholeness is matter or consciousness. There is no other alternative; *Authenticity* does not recognize *ltan min 'du byed* as a category.

If one were to accept that this were a unification of the empty and clear, it would in fact be like the assertions of the Sāṃkhyas, for Sāṃkhyas accept *bdag shes rig gyi ryal po* as something which is a consciousness and unborn, but they do, like Dzogchen, speak of it as a unification of the clear and empty. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Kathmandu, February 1999, oral commentary.

120. ED.: *Rig byedgi mtha' gsang* = *vedānta-guhya-vādināḥ. The *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* defines *rig byed mtha' ba* as *mu stegs tshangs pa bu'i nang gses grub mtha'* (p. 2684), “the philosophical system of a subset of the Brahma-vāda Tirthikas”—in other words, the Vedānta (*Rig byed gyi mtha'*).

121. ED.: Literally: “If you agree [your assertion will be contradicted by] direct perception.”

122. It follows that it is not the mindnature.

123. ED.: These are analogous to the *pratyekabuddha* of Buddhism.

124. ED.: *dngos med*. In later debate literature, this term is synonymous with “permanent thing” and is often so translated; in this context however, when the issue of its opposition to impermanent things is not central, we render it more literally.

its dynamic display (*rtsal*)? If you are exploring the heart essence's very characteristics, it is a non-thing. If you say it would have to be utterly annihilated and nonexistent, I say it would not, due to the unceasing nature of clarity in conscious open awareness.¹²⁵

OBJECTION: But then it would [impossibly] be a permanent impermanent thing {58.1} because consciousness and open awareness exist as [unceasing] clarity.¹²⁶

RESPONSE: Not so, because clarity itself¹²⁷ is a non-thing, which itself is unceasing clarity¹²⁸ [and] because clarity is without an inherent nature (*rang bzhin, svalakṣana*).

[Unbounded wholeness and open awareness are clarity and emptiness indivisible, these can be neither a consciousness nor an impermanent thing.¹²⁹ Thus, unbounded wholeness] is utterly nonestablished as a material thing (*rdzas su grub pa ni gtan med do*).

[This concludes the discussion regarding the heart-essence; now the response turns to the question of whether the base's dynamic display (*rtsal*) is thing or non-thing.]

If you are asking from the viewpoint of dynamic display, then this is an impermanent thing, because all of samsara and nirvana appear as just that knowing [open awareness]¹³⁰ itself. {58.2} However, it is also a non-thing because, except for being a mere name, the appearance apprehended as that is not actually established.¹³¹

OBJECTION: Nevertheless, if all samsara and nirvana are primordially Buddha, it is unreasonable for these current delusions to have arisen. Why? Because everything is primordially unbounded wholeness.

RESPONSE: Even though everything is so primordially, it is not contradictory for delusions to arise since unbounded wholeness itself has not been understood. {58.4} For example, even though something is primordially¹³² golden, due to being covered by earth, it is not seen.¹³³

OBJECTION: Although that is so, delusions brought on by unawareness are a nonunderstanding and nonrecognition. Since it is through relying on

^{125.} ED.: *shes rig* and *rig pa* are here identical in meaning, even though the terms *shes pa* and *rig pa* might be used differently in the context of debate.

^{126.} ED.: In the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, “*shes rig rgyud kyi rgyal*” is a synonym for *rang rig*.

^{127.} If one says “it is only this,” it is nonexistent. ED.: That is, one cannot say it is *only* clarity, or *only* without inherent existence. It is always and necessarily both.

^{128.} [And] by its own nature empty.

^{129.} ED.: Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, Triten Norbutse, Kathmandu, February 1999, oral commentary. This is another way in which *Authenticity*'s discussion of *tshad ma* differs from that of the Indian-based systems.

^{130.} ED.: Here *shes pa* specifically refers to open awareness; probably the term *shes pa* is used here because it is speaking from the viewpoint of dynamic display rather than from the perspective of the base.

^{131.} ED.: The section to here is, in the opinion of Lopon Tenzin Namdak, the most important section of the *Authenticity* and raises the points most crucial for Dzogchen.

^{132.} The actual mindnature, wholeness (*semis nyid nyag gcig*).

^{133.} As golden.

special scriptures and essential instructions that one recognizes and understands, it follows that primordial wisdom is newly produced. Why? Because previously there was no understanding, and subsequently there is. If you agree, it follows that this is not a self-arisen primordial wisdom because it is newly emerging. There would then be no difference between this and the emerging of a first-stage Svāstikan [Bodhisattva] producing a path of seeing.¹³⁴ Why? Because [their] primordial wisdom newly emerges. In that case, the basic principles¹³⁵ of the primordially dwelling Great Completeness¹³⁶ would completely disintegrate.

RESPONSE: It is not like that. Does this consequence of yours maintain that this new emergence occurs in the person's mind, or in the natural condition (*gnas lugs*) of things?¹³⁷ {59.1} If you say it is in the mind, we can accept this because there is an ordinary worldly consciousness so long as one is not realized. Through the teaching of scripture and special essential instructions, the mindnature is understood, and there is excellent insight.

[New understanding arises on the basis of scripture and so on, but the self-arisen primordial wisdom does not newly arise. Another way to put this is to say that there is meditation and development with respect to the primordial wisdom which is the open awareness dawning as dynamic display (*risal shar gyi rig pa'i ye shes*) but not with respect to primordial wisdom itself, into which the open awareness of dynamic display eventually dissolves.¹³⁸]

If you say it follows that [primordial wisdom newly emerges] in the natural condition of things, {59.2} why is that? That self-arisen primordial wisdom, dwelling as unimpeded open awareness, is primordially free of all obstructions. It need not, therefore, be newly sought just as, for example, underground gold is itself primordially golden.

OBJECTION: Through the three¹³⁹ wisdoms of hearing, {59.3} thinking, and meditation, this deluded consciousness which is unawareness currently gives rise to a "primordial" wisdom which understands it from then on.¹⁴⁰ Thus it is newly produced and not primordial.

RESPONSE: In that case, it follows that even when no gold lies underground, gold would emerge due to your clearing away clods of soil. Why?

^{134.} ED.: This is the fourth of the nine vehicles (*yānas*) as presented in the system of the Central Treasure (*dBu gter*), *Svāstikans* or *g.yung drung sems dpa' spros med pa'i theg pa* (The Way of the Bodhisattvas which is without conceptual elaboration).

^{135.} ED.: *gzhung* often simply means "texts" but here refers specifically to the general principles or doctrines of the Great Completeness as found in its major texts.

^{136.} Vehicle.

^{137.} Is primordial wisdom newly developed.

^{138.} ED.: Lopon Tenzin Namdak, February 1999.

^{139.} Individual.

^{140.} ED.: The phrase "from then on" renders *gzod* 59.3, which Lopon glosses as "in the future" or "afterward." It is considered a particularly ancient term whose meaning is little known or used today.

Because even though it is not primordially present, it emerges through effort. {59.4} Obviously, you cannot agree.

OBJECTION: It is not like that. Unless gold is present from the beginning, it will not come into existence through subsequently clearing away the material soil.¹⁴¹

RESPONSE: Unless the self-arisen primordial wisdom is present from the beginning, primordial wisdom will not come into existence even through the effort of the three wisdoms (of hearing, thinking, and meditating). {59.5}

OBJECTION: But the unbounded wholeness you assert does not actually exist. If it did, it should be capable of appearing, but it goes unobserved.

RESPONSE: In that case, even though gold definitely exists underground, when it goes unseen because of the external obstruction of soil, it follows [for you] that the gold itself does not exist. {59.6} Why? Because if something exists it must be capable of appearing, but [that gold] goes unseen. Obviously, you cannot agree.

Further, are you saying [unbounded wholeness] is unobserved by the mind¹⁴² of a worldly person¹⁴³ or unobserved by a mind¹⁴⁴ [associated with] profound reasoning? {60.1}

In the first case even though they do not observe it¹⁴⁵ [unbounded wholeness] actually exists; it is not an object¹⁴⁶ for that¹⁴⁷ [worldly mind]. In the second case, the reason¹⁴⁸ is not established. Also, *Origin of All [Buddhas'] Word Tantra* (*bKa' thams cad gyi 'byung gyi rgyud*) says:

Mindnature, unbounded wholeness, {60.2}
Though unobserved by worldly minds
Actually exists. This is sure.¹⁴⁹

And *Precious Treasure Sutra* (*Rin po che'i gter gyi mdo*) clearly says:

Without appearing, emptiness exists,
Conjoined with open awareness, it actually is.¹⁵⁰ {60.3}

^{141.} ED.: This is a cardinal principle of all Dzogchen, and the discussion here is roughly analogous to that of Longchen Rabjam, *Treasury of Meaning* (*Bshig don mazvod*). Briefly, Longchenba observes that even though the natural state (*gnas lugs*) is unconditioned, it does not follow that it is permanent because it is beyond being either permanent or impermanent. (1983, Labrang Palace Monastery, Gangtok Sikkim: Sherab Gyaltsen, reproduced from print from the sDe-dge blocks belonging to Lopon Sonam Sangpo, p. 174.3ff.)

^{142.} ED.: Here *rig pa* merely means mind (*blo*), not the open awareness of Dzogchen.

^{143.} Authentic.

^{144.} Of the three yogis [probably Hearer, Solitary Realizer, and Bodhisattva, since these are discussed in the Central Treasure].

^{145.} Worldly [persons].

^{146.} ED.: The text mistakenly reads *mul* for *yul* (60.1).

^{147.} The wholeness which is mindnature, the heart of open awareness.

^{148.} Observed and established through profound instructions.

^{149.} ED.: As above, poetic license for *nges pa*, which in a similar context in the prose section below is rendered "definitive."

^{150.} ED.: Both lines refer to *thig le nyag gcig*.

OBJECTION: In your view, is the base (*gzhi*) definitive (*nges pa*)¹⁵¹ or not? If definitive, it is sure to be either existent or nonexistent. If definitively existent, there would be the fault of eternalism. Why? Because it is definitively existent. If definitively nonexistent, there would be the fault of an extreme of annihilation. {60.4} Why? Because it would not exist.

If the base is not definitive, there would be the faults of saying it is undefined (*lung ma bstan*); and of contradicting the cause and effect of actions. There would be no definiteness which could match¹⁵² the understanding (*dgongs*) [of a Buddha]. Why? Because the base¹⁵³ is not definite.¹⁵⁴ {60.5} Thus there would be the fault of having no kernel of a method,¹⁵⁵ that is to say, no definiteness¹⁵⁶ regarding the bon-nature.

Obviously, you cannot agree;¹⁵⁷ it would be false and deceptive [if you did]. Why? Because [in that case] you have neither definiteness nor the kernel of a method.

RESPONSE: It is not like that. In the heart essence of all bon-phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana, which is the very essence of spontaneous occurrence, neither things nor unthings are truly established. Therefore, this is not an extreme of eternalism.¹⁵⁸ Nor is this an extreme of annihilation because the clarity of the enlightenment mind, open conscious awareness, is unceasing.

Because the very essence itself of both [bon-phenomena and enlightenment mind] is primordially understood as spontaneously occurring, {61.1} there would not even be the shortcoming (*skyon*) of its being undefined [as virtuous or nonvirtuous or, more precisely, in terms of purity or impurity as a Buddha or sentient being]. Since there is no departing from the principle of spontaneous occurrence, there is no fault of overturning the cause and effect of actions. Trusting (*yid ches*) in the import of this, one has surety (*gdeng*) regarding experiences [arising from] meditation on the essential instructions. *Authentic Scripture* [speaking of unbounded wholeness] says {61.2}

151. ED.: *nges pa* also means “definite” and “ascertained.” None of the connotations of *nges don*, often translated as “definitive meaning,” are intended here.

152. ED.: *tshad du skyol*, literally, “reaches the measure” and thus measures up to or matches.

153. These [options regarding how the basis is interpreted—i.e., as permanent, nonexistent, or neutral].

154. ED.: Meaning unbounded wholeness, *thig le nyag gcig*, also identified as the base (*gzhi*).

155. ED.: The Tibetan dictionary *Great Treasury of Tibetan Words* glosses *gtol* as *thabs*, Vol. 2, p. 1051. It can also be understood as “lacking a source”; in addition to there being no source for such a method, the term has the connotation of unfindability.

156. The base that is the mindnature.

157. With respect to this, there is no ascertainment and no method regarding the bon-nature.

158. ED.: The *Gal mdo* cycle often uses classic terms of *Prajñāpāramitā* literature though frequently providing a different context or interpretation. In this it differs from the Bon *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, which has virtually no point of contact with Indian texts.

This hidden heart essence, so secret,
 An unthing¹⁵⁹ untouched by the eterne¹⁶⁰
 Untouched by annihilation, clear and aware,
 Untouched by extreme twoness, not part of a pair.¹⁶¹
 Untouched by extreme oneness, spontaneously there
 Essence itself, in its own place dwelling.

Also, {61.3} *Tantra of the Blissful Wheel* (*rGyud bde ba'i 'khor lo*) says:

Not existent, it is undemonstrable
 Not nonexistent, clear reflexive open awareness
 Not eternal, it is an unthing
 Not annihilated, spontaneously there
 Not two, it has no match
 Not one, self-appearance dawning—
 Enlightenment mind beyond extremes. {61.4}

Scripture of Blissful Samantabhadra says:

This unsought heart essence, (*snying po*)
 Not nonexistent, heart of unchanging ceaselessness¹⁶²
 Not existent, heart of nonexistence.¹⁶³

The same sutra says:

Most especially, this unsurpassed¹⁶⁴ Great Completeness
 Is shown free from both the eternal and the nil.

159. ED.: Here *dngos med* means “not truly existent” rather than, as in other contexts, “a permanent phenomenon.”

160. However you analyze it.

161. ED.: As with method and wisdom, or the two truths, ultimate and conventional, for example.

162. ED.: This term (*g.yung drung*) is understood as ‘gyur ba med pa gyung,’gag pa med pa drung, hence “unchanging, unceasing.”

163. ED.: This is similar to a verse contained in a short prayer (two folios) from the “Prayer of the Base, Path, and Fruit” (*gzhi lam 'bras bu'i smon lam*) by the great eighteenth-century Nyingma yogi and Dzogchen scholar Jigme Lingpa ('Jigs med gLing pa, 1729–1798): *gtod ma'i gnas lugs rang bshin spros dang bral/ yod pa ma yin rgyal bas 'di ma gzigs/ med pa ma yin 'khor 'das kun gyi gzhi/ 'gal 'du ma yin brjod bya'i yul las 'das/ rdzogs chen gzhi yi gnas lugs rtogs par shog*. Thanks to Tulku Thondup for pointing this out and helping us locate this verse.

And on the last page:

༄༅· ༐ རྒྱྲླ ༐ རྒྱྲླ ༐ རྒྱྲླ ༐
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 ༐ རྒྱྲླ ༐ རྒྱྲླ ༐ རྒྱྲླ ༐

This text is translated in Guenther 1977.

164. ED.: *bla med* (61.4).

Eternal? Its heart essence is changeless and ceaseless.
 Nil? It is the unborn sky realm.
 Bon Body, neither changelessly eternal nor nil,
 Beyond the realm of free and unfree.

Also, *Lama of Light Sutra* says:

Definite principle, heart-essence, samsara, and nirvana's base, {61.6}
 An essence neither eternal nor nil.

Again, there is the view that because open awareness, being self-clarified [definitely] dwells as an unthing, the base [unbounded wholeness] too definitely exists. It is also definitely nonexistent, because it is not a substantially established thing.¹⁶⁵ It is also *indefinite* because {62.1} even Samantabhadra cannot teach "It is only this."¹⁶⁶

Moreover, *Reversing the Causes of Samsara Tantra* says:

Mindnature, clear light which is this wholeness,
 Primordially insubstantial,¹⁶⁷
 Primordially clear conscious open awareness.
 For me to say "This" is unfitting.
 Clearly. {62.2}

OBJECTION: Regarding this indefinite appearance of yours, is wholeness, heart essence of the base, indefinite, or is something else indefinite? If the heart essence itself is indefinite, your thesis stating that the base is definite falls apart (*nyams*), and the faults are as above.

If something else is indefinite, {62.3} then the base is unrelated¹⁶⁸ with that indefiniteness so that base would not arise ('*char*) as samsara and nirvana.

[If something else is indefinite, this something else must refer to samsara and nirvana. If samsara and nirvana are indefinite, they cannot arise from the base, because the base has no relationship with being indefinite. In other words, if the effect (in this case samsara and nirvana) is definite, the cause also (in this case the base) should be definite. Since it is not, we are now back to the base's not being definite, and thus to the problems just discussed.]

If you agree,¹⁶⁹ your thesis falls apart.

165. ED.: In the Perfection (*phar phyin*) literature and in Madhyamaka generally, "substantial establishment" is connected with the object of negation (*dgag bya*); here it is not.

166. ED.: This avoidance of any focal outcome to an argument is characteristic of the *Authenticity* and distinguishes it from the certainties of Mādhyamika logic where emptiness is clearly a lack of inherent existence, which itself is accessible through reasoned proof. Even though the *Authenticity* moves wth logical steps, it comes to this point where no one step will suffice.

167. ED.: The term *rdzsa yod* is much discussed and contrasted with *bdags yod* in sutra texts. (For Geluk Sautrāntika discussion of this, see Klein 1986 [2nd ed., 1999]: 52–56, 63–64.)

168. [With the] mindnature's appearance.

169. That samsara [is] self-arisen.

RESPONSE: It is not lost because indefinite appearances arise from the heart essence itself, due to the distinction between realizing and not realizing. [While one is unrealized, there is samsaric appearance that once realized is nirvanic.] {62.4}

The bon-nature,¹⁷⁰ heart essence of that definite base,¹⁷¹ is utterly unchanging. Moreover, the unrealized see many appearances in relation to the base itself.

The Eternalist Tirthikas (*Mu stegs rtag pa ther zug pa*) perceive [appearances as an] unchanging and continually existent substance, {62.5} maintaining that there is utterly no annihilation, seeing everything as merely adventitious. Gods and Humans in Mutual Reliance [followers of *Lha mi gshan brten*]¹⁷² see¹⁷³ [appearances] as true.¹⁷⁴ The Self-Realized Practitioners (*Rang rtogs gshen rab kyi theg pa*, analogous to Pratyekabuddhas)¹⁷⁵ see [appearances as] mere subject and object; the Compassionate Ones (*Thugs rjes sems dpa'*) [analogous to Bodhisattvas, with a tenet system similar to that of Cittamātra]¹⁷⁶ see [appearances] as aspects of the mind;¹⁷⁷ and {62.6} Changeless, Ceaseless Bodhisattvas (*g.yung drung sems dpa'*) [whose system is like that of the [Mādhyamika] proponents of essencelessness (*Ngo bo nyid med par smra ba*)]¹⁷⁸ see the two truths.¹⁷⁹

The Ethical Ritualists¹⁸⁰ (*gTsang spyod pa theg pa*) [whose practices are essentially those of Action Tantra (*bya rgyud, kriyā yoga*)]¹⁸¹ assert the three purities. The Possessors of All (*Kun-ldan-pa*,¹⁸² [whose practice is essentially those of Performance Tantra (*spyod rgyud, caryā yoga*)] assert the (12) changeless and changeless [perceptual] sources (*skye mched*). Manifesters of the Actual (*dNgos-bskyed-pa*)¹⁸³ [whose practice is essentially that of Yoga Tantra (*rnal 'byor gyi rgyud*)] see {63.1} open awareness as a mandala¹⁸⁴ of deities. The Possessors of Meaning (*Don ldan pa*)¹⁸⁵ [whose practice is essentially that of Mahāyoga Tantra

170. Which is definite.

171. Primordially.

172. ED.: These are analogous to the Hearers (*nyan thos, śrāvaka*). For a brief description of this and the following nine vehicles as described in the Central Treasure, see Wangyal 1992: 206–207. The *lha mi gshan brten* are similar to the Vaibhāṣikas. For the tenets of this school, see *Bonpo Tenets* (*Bon po grub mtha'*), 400.6ff.

173. Discriminating (*skyu ma mthong*).

174. ED.: That is, as truly established.

175. ED.: *Bonpo Tenets* 404.2.

176. ED.: see *Bonpo Tenets* 416.3.

177. All bon phenomena.

178. ED.: *Bonpo Tenets* 438.5.

179. [As] actually ultimate and conventional.

180. Sees as illusion. ED.: Literally translates as “The Way of the Primordial Bon of Pure Conduct and Ritual Activity.”

181. ED.: *Bonpo Tenets* 481.3.

182. ED.: *rnam pa kun ltan mong shes gyi theg pa*. See *Bonpo Tenets* 487.2.

183. ED.: *Bonpo Tenets* 491.3.

184. Actual.

185. ED.: *Bonpo Tenets* 502.3.

(*rnal 'byor chen po gyi rgyud*)] see¹⁸⁶ open awareness as self-appearing pure cause and effect.

With respect to this lack of definiteness regarding appearances, the conventions of the lower (eight vehicles) can impute in any manner; however, they are either superimpositions or detractions, merely partial indications of reality. {63.2} Other than this they do not touch even the merest atom of actuality.

For example, blind persons designate various names to the body of a sturdy elephant, but the elephant itself does not become other than what it was.¹⁸⁷ Also, the *Expansive Changeless, Ceaseless (Svāstika)*¹⁸⁸ Tantra (*g.Yung drung bdal pa'i rgyud*) says {63.3}:

Due to delusions and obstructions, from the first
The base's own appearances are indefinite, and
Due to vehicles' distinctive perspectives
Each with its own plethora of perceptions
Predispositions ripen. Hence
No definiteness to the essential base¹⁸⁹
In which therefore, there is no change.

Moreover, *Changeless, Ceaseless Primordial Existent* (*g.Yungs drung ye srid*) says:

Appearances are *indefinite* and so
Desire gives rise to various sights
That themselves touch reality no more¹⁹⁰
Than blind men's conventions regarding the elephant.

OBJECTION: Do you consider¹⁹¹ objects to be mind, or is mind an object? Or is it {63.5} that once mind has destroyed an object, it [the object] is considered empty?

If objects are mind, the five external elements would experience suffering.

186. A very spacious arena which is the mandala of primordial wisdom.

187. ED.: Longchen Rabjampa cites this same example from the *Buddhagarbha* (in Thondup 1989: 224): “A king summons many blind people and asks them to describe the shape of an elephant. The person who touches the trunk describes the elephant as a hook. . . . [All their various] descriptions are not unrelated (to the elephant), but they did not have complete understanding. Likewise the Buddha-essence will not be understood by different interpretations, such as voidness, apparition-like, and luminescent.”

188. ED.: *g.Yung drung* is glossed in Bon as “changeless (*g.yung*) and ceaseless (*drung*).”

189. ED.: Lopon Tenzin Namdak glossed *gzhi a mo* as feminine for *rtso bo*.

190. ED.: In the sense that when a blind man says, “The elephant is like a tail,” he does not touch the whole reality or the full measure of the elephant.

191. ED.: Because the term ‘*dod*, which literally means to agree or accept, appears so frequently in these sections, it will be variously rendered as consider, maintain, say, agree, or accept. In Tibetan, the persistent repetition of this term does not impair the fluidity of the prose; only alternative parallel translations are able to convey this flow in English. Since ‘*dod*, though a term of art in debate, does not actually have a highly technical meaning in these contexts, nothing is lost.

Why? Because the object itself is mind. Obviously, you cannot agree or matter such as stones would have minds. {63.6}

If mind is an object, one's own conscious open awareness would not exist.¹⁹² Obviously, you cannot agree. Why? Because mind is an object.

If you maintain that neither minds nor objects exist,¹⁹³ this too is something you obviously cannot accept. {64.1} Because to mix mind and object [in this way, that is, to say that the mind destroys an object] is to have the view of Cataleptic Tirthikas (*Mu stegs brgyal 'bog*).

To say that objects are minds and minds are also objects is to maintain that these two do not pass beyond the mind. If you agree to this, then knowable things (*shes bya*) mutually collapse {64.2} into each other [subject into object, and object into subject]. The young and powerful¹⁹⁴ Tirthika asserts that the mind itself goes toward an object which then appears,¹⁹⁵ in which case it is asserted that the object is not actually established like that.¹⁹⁶ Or it would be like the assertion of the Tirthika Proponents, of the Ultimate Secret Knowing (*Mu stegs rig byed mtha' gsang smra ba*)¹⁹⁷ that all bon-phenomena are not passed beyond mind. {64.3} Why? Because you maintain that objects themselves are not passed beyond [the category of] mind.

RESPONSE: According to the Mindnature or Great Completeness (*sEms nyid rdzogs chen*) system, objects are not included within mind. Therefore, there is no harm [to our thesis by bringing forward this absurd consequence] that suffering exists in the elements.

Objects are neither altered {64.4} nor destroyed by a reasoning mind;¹⁹⁸ therefore we are not like the Changeless, Ceaseless Ones [followers of Mādhyamika tenets]. Because mind is not considered an object, we do not have the fault [of] its being matter. In brief, with regard to just that which appears as an object, we avoid the three: rejecting, conflating, and adhering attraction (*spang bdud shen gsum*).

Self-liberation occurs without abandonment or transformation. {64.5} Therefore appearances are the arena (*dbyings*) of uncontrived bon-nature, and consequently [this assertion] is primordially without the pitfalls associated with

192. Consciousness would be matter.

193. If you agree that once the mind has destroyed an object it is empty, this would be no different from the Yung Drung practitioners [i.e., Madhyamaka].

194. ED.: Possibly a proper name such as Kumara-Indriya.

195. ED.: The mind "goes toward" the object, as a result of which, there is appearance *snang ba*.

196. As having a feature [like that].

197. ED.: Lopon Tenzin Namdak glossed *rig byed* as *rtags dang gtan tshigs gyi sgo nas lta ba 'dod* and glossed *mtha'* here as extreme in the sense of being ultimate, so that *mtha' med* refers to an inexpressible, and hence secret (*gzang*), view. Very possibly this indicates a type of Vedānta, or Vedānta more generally.

198. ED.: The text says *sems gyi rig pas*, "awareness of mind"; the translators emend this to *sems rigs*. Typically the term *bshigs* refers to the destruction of self-grasping (*bdag 'dzin*) by logic.

worldly beings¹⁹⁹ or the lower vehicles. Because we maintain that duality is nonexistent, ours is not like the Tirthika view.

If you say this appearance is the bon-dimension-nature,²⁰⁰ does this appearance exist in the entity (*ngo bo*) of the bon-dimension or not? If it exists [there], it follows that the bon-dimension is a thing possessed of characteristics. Why? Because it actually exists as an appearance. If you agree, it follows that this is not the bon-dimension because it is a thing possessed of characteristics.

If you say that this appearance does not exist in the entity (*ngo bo*) of the bon-dimension {65.1}, nevertheless, to assert this appearance as the bon-dimension is either to assert that [the appearance] is or to assert that it is not. To assert that it is entails the fault of establishing what already exists.

If you maintain this [appearance] does not exist [in the bon-dimension], then butter would also arise in dust [even though no butter exists there, just as no appearances exist in the Bon Body]. If you maintain that there is no talking about “this appearance” when it comes to the entity of the bon-dimension, {65.2}, then the *lack* of appearance itself cannot be (*yin rgyu med*) the bon-dimension, just as, for example, the nonexistent horn of a rabbit can have neither color, nor shape, nor measure.

If you maintain that this absence of appearance is the bon-dimension, it follows that the bon-dimension is utterly nonexistent, that the bon-dimension is annihilated. Why? Because it itself would be nonexistent. Further, {65.3} regarding the nonduality of mind and object, if you say these are one, are they one in that mind goes out to be with the object, or in that the object comes in to be one with the mind? If you say they are one, it follows that just as the object is material, so mind would also be material. Or, just as objects are destroyed by seven fires and a single flood, {65.4} so mind too would be destroyed. Why? Because the mind has gone over to the object. Obviously you cannot agree.²⁰¹ If you say that the object comes over [to be one with the mind], it follows that just as mind has awareness, so the object should also have awareness. Why? Because it has come over to be one with mind. {65.5} Obviously, you cannot agree.

If you say that external and internal, all the world and its inhabitants, are primordially the bon-dimension—great bliss—then either the world and its inhabitants are the bon-dimension, or the bon-dimension is the world and its inhabitants. If the former, it follows that all the world and its inhabitants neither arise nor cease. Why? {65.6} Because they are the bon-dimension. Obviously you cannot agree.

199. Gods or humans.

200. ED.: Here *bon nyid kyi sku* and *bon sku* are the same.

201. This is clear even in the secret scriptures.

If the latter, it follows that the bon-dimension arises and is destroyed. Why? because it is the world and its inhabitants. If you agree, it follows that it is not the bon-dimension because it has production and destruction. Or, it follows that [the bon-dimension] is not great bliss. Further, {66.1} *Heart of Open Space Tantra* (*sNying po mnyam dbyings rgyud*) says:

Mind is no object, object itself no mind:
 Neither untwo, nor one, nor different
 Neither abandoned, included, nor adhered to
 Free in their own place—
 Hence uncontrived seeing (*snang ba*) is the arena of bon.

Also, *Unbounded Open Awareness Tantra* (*Rig pa thig le'i rgyud*) {66.2} says:

An object is not a mind, so
 Experiences no suffering.
 Mind is not an object, so
 No fault of being material.
 Not asserting these two as one
 We avoid Tirthika pitfalls.

Also, *Completeness of Primordial Existence Tantra* (*Ye srid rdzogs pa'i rgyud*) says: {66.3}

From five great elements themselves
 No mind-object with awareness, and so
 Being external things, they are not primordial wisdom.
 Hence, that these five include mind
 Is an inferior deluded view, and so
 Objects are free of purposeful effort
 I [Samtantahadra] am untwo, appearing and empty, an object
 Considered neither mind nor other than that. {66.4}

Also, *Primordially Existing Sky Tantra* (*Nam mkha'i ye srid gyi rgyud*) says:

Since Bon Body is the world and its inhabitants
 Why would it not arise and cease?
 Since appearances are mind itself
 Why would they not be conscious and aware?
 Since one's own mind is appearances
 Why would it not be a material thing? {66.5}

This is clear. Also, such appearances themselves (*de nyid*) are the self-dawning play of primordial wisdom. Therefore, appearance itself is empty,²⁰² the empty itself is appearance.

²⁰². The appearance itself, being a mere appearance, is empty; emptiness itself is the appearance.

Since it is merely empty, it is a self-dawning appearance, so there is no purposeful exclusion of external pitfalls [such as seeking to separate appearances from emptiness]. {66.6}

[This concludes the statement of the text's own position (*rang lugs*) on the relationship between appearances and minds. The text now entertains objections to its views.]

Delusion

OBJECTION: In eliminating the pitfall [associated with] apprehending the external, {66.6} this is eliminated either through [the relationship between subject and object] being severed, or it is eliminated without severance. If eliminated by being severed, the continuum of discernment would be annihilated once the five doors cease. Why? Because the sense powers do not perceive any objects. Obviously you cannot agree.

If it [the pitfall] is eliminated without [subject and object] being severed, you would be no different from Self-Realized {67.1} Practitioners (*Rang rtogs gshen rab* abbreviates *rang rtogs gshen rab kyi theg pa*)²⁰³ [also as] Self Realized [Proponents of] External [Objects] as Real (*Rang rtog phyi rol yang tag ba*).²⁰⁴ Why? Because you maintain that object has no connection with mind. Moreover, there would be no need to eliminate the pitfall.²⁰⁵

RESPONSE: It is not like that. Such appearances are the self-dawning play of primordial wisdom. {67.2}²⁰⁶

OBJECTION: Does the play of primordial wisdom dawn in dependence on causal conditions or not? If its dawning depends on causal conditions,²⁰⁷ it is not self-arisen (*rang 'byung*) primordial wisdom, because it must rely on other causes. Or, it follows that this primordial wisdom {67.3} is powered by something else.

If you say its dawning does not depend on causal conditions, it follows that samsara only has impermanent phenomena, or that it has only non-things.

^{203.} If the object is separate from [the mind], it is asserted to exist.

^{204.} ED.: An apparent reference to the Buddhist Sautrāntikas, and/or a Bon analogue of these. Like the Buddhists, Bonpos refer to themselves as insiders in discussions regarding the Nine Vehicles. This statement accords in principle with Longchen Rabjampa and Mipham, who equate Pratyekabuddhas with Sautrāntikas.

^{205.} ED.: Because subject and object are separate, objects are in fact external to the mind, and thus it is not erroneous to see them that way. More precisely, if subject and object truly exist, there is no connection between these external objects and the internal mind. Menri Ponlob Thrinley Nyima adds that there is no connection because the external objects are not posited by the mind; they do not depend on the mind, and thus there is no connection. Madyamaka and Dzogchen, and all the Mahāyāna say that such objects are posited by the mind. Houston, May 2000.

^{206.} ED.: This is one of many examples of what in the introduction we refer to as the "holographic space" of this text's reasoning process.

^{207.} It would be powered by others (phenomena).

Why? Samsara self-dawns without depending on the condition of primordial wisdom. {67.3} Obviously, {67.4} you cannot agree to this.

Or it would follow that Buddhas themselves revert to samsara.²⁰⁸ Why? Because Buddhas dawn²⁰⁹ into samsara without depending on causes and conditions. [Once samsara can arise without depending on causes such as unawareness, then Buddhas could also come into samsara despite being without unawareness and so forth.] If you agree, then artful endeavor [on the path] would be pointless.

RESPONSE: It is not like that. The play of primordial wisdom {67.5} dawns as samsara when it is not recognized as play.

OBJECTION: It follows then that [primordial wisdom] dawns in dependence on causal conditions. Why? Because it arises through nonunderstanding, that is, through unawareness of samsara. If you agree, your thesis²¹⁰ [that primordial wisdom is self-arising] falls apart.

OBJECTION: [You say that] the appearance itself is empty, emptiness itself is appearance. These two are decidedly one. {67.6} Why? Because if appearance and emptiness are indivisible, it follows that when appearance is destroyed, that is, when the seven fires and single flood have destroyed the external vessel of birth, old age, sickness, and death and have destroyed the internal beings, then since they are merely one, emptiness would also be destroyed.²¹¹ {68.1} Why? Because appearance and emptiness are indivisible. If you accept this, it follows that the bon-nature is a conditioned phenomenon.²¹²

Further, if (as you say) appearance itself is empty and emptiness is appearance, fire would be water and water itself would be fire.

RESPONSE: What about you? This thesis of yours, is it an autonomous syllogism (*svātantra*) or a consequence (*prāsanga*)? {68.2} [Is it an absurd consequence to say that then fire would be water, or is this your thesis? Likewise, is it an absurd consequence to say that Bon nature is conditioned, or is it a thesis? Or to say that appearance and emptiness are one?] If it is an autonomous syllogism, it is eliminated by its own statement. If you say the absurd consequence is the thesis, fire itself would be water. Why? Because appearance itself is empty. {68.3} Why? Because this appearance and emptiness are beginninglessly one in mindnature because they do not pass beyond the mindnature.

OBJECTION: Water and fire are primordially one as elements [that is, both

²⁰⁸. ED.: They decide to engage in activities within samsara but do not become subject to samsaric influences themselves ever again.

²⁰⁹. ED.: *Shar* means to arise, appear, or dawn; it has a special meaning in Dzogchen that is best evoked by the term “dawn,” and the connotation of a spacious dimension in which the dawning event occurs.

²¹⁰. Dawning without depending [i.e., independent of samsara].

²¹¹. Or just as emptiness is not destroyed, so it would follow that appearances are not destroyed.

²¹². If you ask “why destruction?” it is because it has been destroyed. ED.: Menri Ponlob Thrinley Nyima notes in this context that anything which can be destroyed (*jig pa*) is necessarily conditioned (*jig pa yin na*, *lus byed yin pas khyab*). Ligmincha, Houston, January 1999.

are elements] because from the beginning they do not pass beyond [being] elements. Even though they are one as elements, fire itself is not water. What is wrong if the pervasion [that whatever is fire is water] is not established? {68.4}

RESPONSE: Even though mindnature itself is one, appearance itself is not emptiness. This being so, what is the fault if the pervasion is not established? Therefore, having eliminated pitfalls regarding external objects, we do not assert a substantially established object which is not imputed (*ma btags*) by the mind. Therefore, we are not like the Self-Realized Ones, for whom the external is real. {68.5}

We have eliminated the pitfall of the three conceptions of apprehended objects.²¹³ However, we are not negating the mere sensory perception of objects, because we assert the self-clarity of mindful awareness. The continuum of discrimination is not annihilated due to the five doors having ceased.

OBJECTION: Regarding the elimination of your internal superimpositions, (*sgro 'dogs*) is a superimposition not {68.6} included in the object that is destroyed, or is the object itself a superimposition? In that case, [the object itself being a superimposition would mean that] it is not an internal but an external pitfall. Why? Because the [external] object itself is a superimposition, and that has been eliminated. If you agree, your thesis eliminating internal superimpositions falls apart. {69.1}²¹⁴

If it is a [superimposition] not included in the object [it is eliminated; that is, if the superimposition is a consciousness], how does it exist?

RESPONSE: That [superimposition which is not an object] is the adhering attraction that exists in a clear, nonconceptual consciousness in calm abiding on any object²¹⁵ [that is, an adhering attraction to the calm state is a superimposition].

OBJECTION: That clear and nonconceptual consciousness of an object itself is the correct principle {69.2} not a superimposition.

RESPONSE: If this is correct, then when the object is clear, either the consciousness itself is clear on account of having become the object, or an object exists which is made clear without being included in the consciousness. Clear consciousness is also open awareness. {69.3}²¹⁶

²¹³. Abandoning, incorporating, or adhering to.

²¹⁴. ED.: In these early kinds of debate materials, the way of procedure when two or three possibilities are given is to work backward, considering the third possibility first. Geluk debate texts never do this. Perhaps this has to do with being closer to an oral form, where what has been spoken last is closest to the surface of one's thinking.

²¹⁵. ED.: Lopon Tenzin Namdak. In fact, Lopon further noted, wherever there is *zhen pa*, adherence, there is *rtog pa*, conceptuality, which is incapable of knowing clearly.

²¹⁶. ED.: In general, it is not the case that whatever is a clear consciousness is necessarily also an open awareness, but here such a pervasion is appropriate. From the point of view of the *gzhi*, there is such pervasion—indeed, from the viewpoint of the base, everything is open awareness, clear consciousness as well as unclear con-

OBJECTION: If that object illuminated by consciousness is correct, it follows that the bon-subject, the various appearing objects, are not correct²¹⁷ because of being neither one with nor many. The pervasion as well as the reason is established. If you agree, your thesis {69.4} that “the object itself is a correct mind” falls apart.

Or, it follows that the bon-subject, object and mind, are not one, because they are mutually contradictory in aspect. If you say that the reason is not established, it is obvious that it is established.

Or, [if object and mind are mutually one,] then either the mind goes over to the object or the object goes over to the mind. {69.5} If [mind] goes over [to the object], it follows that mind itself is also matter. Why? Because it has gone over to the object. If you say the [object] goes over [to the mind], it follows that the object itself is also a knower. Why? Because it is one with mind. Obviously, you cannot accept this.

Or, if object and mind are one, {69.5} then this would be like the Compassionate Ones for whom Sources are Correct (*Thugs rjes sems dpa skye mched yang dag par 'gyur ro*).²¹⁸ Or there is no difference between you and the Tirthika Proponents of the Ultimate Secret Knowing. {69.6} Why? Because object and mind are one.

RESPONSE: If there is some object not included in the consciousness, {70.1} is there or is there not a relationship between mind and object? If there is, there would not be an object which is not included in the consciousness. Why? Because there is a relationship. If you say there is no relationship [between object and mind] the consciousness is unable to illuminate the object. Why? Because there is no relationship. Or {70.2}, it would follow that the eye²¹⁹ hears sound, because even though there is no relationship,²²⁰ there is sight.

OBJECTION: Not so. Form is seen because it is the object [of the eye sense]; sound is not [such an] object and therefore is not seen.

RESPONSE: Just as sound is not an object, form also would not be an object. Why? Because they are similarly unrelated [with the consciousness that perceives them]. {70.3}

Or, if there is an object not included in mind, either they [mind and object]

sconsciousness. However, from the viewpoint of dynamic display, there is no such pervasion. Here, they are talking from the view of the *gzhi*, and therefore they can assert such pervasion.

217. The thesis.

218. ED.: This is a subdivision of the fourth of the nine vehicles according to the Central Treasure. It is one of the two types of the system as presented in Bon. The two divisions of this system are described in the *Vehicle Commentary* are *shes pa'i mchad skyed yang dag 'dod pa shes pa* and the *skyed mchad 'khrul ba'i 'dod pa*. These can in at least a loose sense be considered analogous to the true and false aspectarians discussed in latter-day works on tenets. See, e.g., Sopa and Hopkins 1989: 249–259.

219. Consciousness.

220. Because although there is no relationship, it is severed. ED.: We are not sure of the intent of this note.

would be one or they would be many. In this way it is refuted [that there is an object not included in the mind]. Just as there is no relationship between sound and eye, so there is none between a mind and its object. Or, it would follow that the consciousness is not able to illuminate the object. Why? Because of being separate from the object.²²¹ {70.4} If you agree, your thesis²²² falls apart.

Or, what understands the existence of an object which is not included in consciousness? Either it is in the experiencing consciousness or it is in matter. If in consciousness, {70.5} your thesis that the experiencing consciousness²²³ is matter falls apart. If you say it is matter that experiences, then that object would be aware. Why? Because it is experiencing. Obviously, you cannot agree to this. If awareness is not in the object, {70.6} you lose the statement (*bya ba*) that [the object] exists due to experience.

Either this nonconceptuality is determined by a reasoning consciousness and there is nonconceptual understanding, or without any settling it primordially realizes itself nonconceptually.²²⁴

OBJECTION: In that case it would follow that even the minds of foolish ordinary beings would realize nonconceptuality. Why? Because {71.1} even though they have not determined [anything by the reasoning consciousness] there is primordial self understanding. If you agree, there would be liberation even without effort. This too is clear.

RESPONSE: If you say there is understanding through proof determined by the reasoning consciousness, either it is determined within, there being a connection between the reasoning consciousness and nonconceptuality, or it is determined {71.2} even without such a connection.

If it is determined even without a relationship, then an eye consciousness would also determine sound, because it can be determined even in the absence of any relationship.

If it is established within an existing relationship, either there is a relationship of [knower and known sharing] a single nature {71.3} or the relationship of one arising from the other. If one arises from the other, either nonconceptuality arises from the reasoning consciousness or the reasoning consciousness arises from nonconceptuality.

If the former, it follows that just as nonconceptuality is free of elaborations, so also the reasoning consciousness is free of elaborations and nonconceptual. If the latter, it follows that just as the reasoning consciousness is as-

221. Not actually included in the consciousness.

222. That [mind illuminating object] is clear.

223. As actually not included in consciousness.

224. ED.: This in a nutshell summarizes one of the most crucial debates in Buddhist traditions all over Asia, sometimes referred to as the difference between gradual and sudden enlightenment, and directly related to the question of what role intellect or other “skillful means” plays in realization. Anne Klein discusses this ancient and current divide in terms of the developmental and discovery models of Buddhism; see *Meeting the Great Bliss Queen* (Klein 1995), especially the introduction and final chapter.

sociated with elaborations, {71.4} so also nonconceptuality would be associated with elaborations. Why? Because one arises from the other.

If they are one nature, then either it [nonconceptuality] would be one with the reasoning consciousness, or [the reasoning consciousness] would be one nature with nonconceptuality. In either case there is criticism (*skyon*).

Or, if all bon-phenomena are nonconceptual, they would be clear to direct perception, just as, for example, {71.5} once red exists, red appears to direct perception. [All bon-phenomena] do not appear like that, and therefore it is manifestly clear [that they do not exist].

Further, [the thesis that] all bon-phenomena are nonconceptual is also undermined (*gnod*) by inference, because if a nonconceptual [phenomenon] exists, it is suitable to appear, but it is not observed. For example, with respect to the lack of a pot on a certain spot,²²⁵ if it [the pot] existed, it would be capable of appearing, but it is not observed.

Therefore, once that clear and nonconceptual calm abiding on an object is a superimposition, it is to be negated. Further, the *Door to Establishing the Secret Collection* (*gSang 'dus grub pa'i sgo*) says:

The method eliminating external pitfalls
 Negates not objects which appear, yet {72.1}
 Negates conceptions adhering to them.
 Not eliminating the pitfall of grasping [it] “as that” that is delusion.

Also, the *Treasure Cave of the Primordially Existent Lama* (*Ye srid bla ma'i mdzod phug*) says:

An object itself, clear and nonconceptual
 That itself [attachment] is the thing to be negated.

Also, the *Expansive Space Great Completeness Tantra* (*Nam mkha' yangs pa'i rdzogs chen gyi rgyud*) says:

Although the external appears as object, {72.2}
 Clear, nonconceptual, and so forth,
 Although the mind does nothing at all
 It's attracted, allured by the taste of calm abiding, so
 Eliminate just that internal superimposition.

This is clear.

OBJECTION: If all bon-phenomena thus described as external pitfalls or internal superimpositions are pitfalls, then there is something [which is not a pitfall and is] other than either cyclic existence and nirvana. This therefore contradicts the statement that a going beyond which abandons cyclic existence

²²⁵ The bon subject [of] the thesis.

and nirvana is not a Great Completeness. [In one case it seems there is something to eliminate; the latter statement denies this.]

RESPONSE: There is no contradiction. In terms of the essential heart, the very essence which is the base for both cyclic existence and nirvana, these two {72.4} are adventitious appearances; therefore, there is nothing that is targeted for purposeful elimination. Therefore, if one does not realize the essential heart, the very essence which is the base, no matter how much you explain the characteristics of the bon-phenomena of samsara and nirvana, one will not realize mindnature.

OBJECTION: However, if you say that the spontaneously occurring essential heart, the very essence of both cyclic existence and nirvana, {72.5} is the base, this itself is either something on which to meditate or something on which one does not meditate. Or, is it both?

RESPONSE: If it is something on which to meditate, it would be a superimposition [created] by a calm state of the lower vehicles. Why? Because it is something on which to meditate. If it is something on which one does not meditate, {72.5} it would be either [the same as] a Tirthika detraction (*bskur 'debs*) {72.6} or [the view of] an ordinary person. If it is both meditated and not meditated, it would be indefinite.²²⁶

Moreover, *Analysis Regarding the Existence and Nonexistence of Meditative Stability* (*bSam gtan yod med thag gcod*) says:

In wholeness, the essential heart, which is mindnature,
 Both presence and absence of meditation are rejected ('gal)
 Its presence, a superimposition due to calmness {73.1}
 Its absence, a nihilist's detraction.
 If neither, indefinite and undemonstrable.

This is clear.

Untouched by these faults, there is no purposeful meditation wrought by taking an actual object to mind; therefore, it does not become the calm abiding of the lower {73.2} vehicles. The authenticity of realizing the very essence of cyclic existence is not disconnected from the realization of objects [or meanings] ascertained through the essential instructions of tenets. Therefore, it does not blunder into the [views of] Tirthikas or ordinary people, nor does it [incur] the contradiction of both [meditation and nonmeditation].

By understanding the primordially dwelling principle, the bon-nature which has not [yet] been understood, there is {73.3} realization of what one has not realized. In the sense of cultivating what has not been cultivated, there is indeed something to meditate. {73.3} Regarding the primordial bon-nature, which is great bliss, one is without meditation in the sense of being free from

226. ED.: The text writes *des*; translators have corrected this to *nges*.

losing or separating from it, of neither arising from from nor entering in it, and in being free of concerted effort [with regard to it].

Further, the *Expansive Changeless, Ceaseless Nature* (*g.Yung drung bdal ba*) says {73.4}:

Since the essential heart essence, the definitive meaning
Is neither meditated, separate, nor purposeful²²⁷
Claiming meditation exists or does not
Is deluded, an extreme of the eternal or the nil.

Further, *Blasting out from the Hold of Cyclic Existence* says:

[Even] without meditation, one remains inseparable
From essential instructions for spontaneous dwelling in the three
times.

Also, {73.5} *Analysis Regarding the Existence and Non-existence of Stable Contemplation* says:

Both meditation's presence and its absence are flaws.
Realize the meaning and, without meditation, you're inseparable
[from it]:
Errorless meaning; delusion's power reversed.

Further, *Reversing Samsara Tantra* ('*Khor ba ru ltog rgyud*) says:

Meditate mindnature, wholeness, and Bon dimension—
Even so, no contradiction, since no realization;
Nonmeditation, never separate,²²⁸ not cast away.

Further, *Origin of All Buddha's Word Tantra* says:

In laying out any Bon as the base
Yes to meditation cultivating the uncultivated,
No to meditation on the primordially effortless:
Hence, no contradiction between these two. {74.1}

OBJECTION: Then this basis of yours, the bon nature, would be indefinite. Why? Because there is no contradiction between meditation and nonmeditation. If you agree, your thesis that the base is definite falls apart. Further, yours would be an indeterminate view,²²⁹ wherefore the bon-nature would not be real. {74.2}

RESPONSE: There is no such fault because the essence of both meditation

227. ED.: That is, no meaning can be found if you seek to find it.

228. ED.: '*bral med*; also translated in these pages as "inseparable."

229. Indefiniteness [the indeterminate].

and nonmeditation, the Bon dimension that is great bliss, open awareness, and enlightenment mind, the great self-arisen primordial wisdom, being changeless, is. [Thus,] there can be no fault of having an indefinite base. {74.3} The essence of both presence and absence does not change; this essence is the Bon body of great bliss, and so forth.

Moreover, *Sutra on the Three Aspects of Primordial Existence* (*Ye srid rnam gsum gyi mdo*) clearly says:

Enlightenment mind, heart-essence of everything,
Mother-bases, self-risen primordial wisdom
Things absent, open awareness present
Not indefinite, spontaneously changeless and ceaseless.

This is clear.

OBJECTION: To understand what has not been understood and to cultivate {74.4} what has not been cultivated is no different from the lower vehicles, and, because there is no difference with these, this would not be the Great Completeness.

RESPONSE: Not so. From the viewpoint of meditation being present, it is taught that there is an understanding of what has not been understood and cultivation of what has not been cultivated {74.5}, but [Dzogchen] is not limited only to this, is not collapsed into one category. Therefore, although Dzogchen requires the two wisdoms of hearing about and reflecting on the principles of meditation [as] unseparate, it does not require the wisdom of [dualistic] meditation. Moreover, because it is settled that profound quintessential instructions [of Dzogchen] are the unbroken Word, {74.6}, understanding is immediate through the mere teaching of just quintessential instructions. Therefore, activities of cultivation, stabilizing or becoming tight in relation to the essence are unnecessary because from the very beginning there is no change within the base. {74.6}

Further, *Tantra of the Heart of Primordial Completeness Sutra* (*sNying po ye rdzogs gyi mdo rgyud*) says:²³⁰

Settled by profound essential instructions which {75.1}
Once taught, precipitate realization and understanding then and
there;
Hence, not needing purposeful cultivation, steadyng, or force
Is a special feature, different from the lower vehicles.
As for meditation, the coy intention is to teach just this.

^{230.} ED.: Ponlob Thrinley Nyima notes that here sutra does not refer to the sutra of sutra, tantra, and quintessential instructions but to the principle of the text; *mdo rgyud* means “the way of settling a text” (*gtan la phab pa'i gzhung lugs*). Oral commentary to Klein, Houson, May 2000.

[Since the basis has been described as neither definite nor indefinite, the following objection emerges:]

OBJECTION: {75.2} Unless just the bon nature of the indefinite base is the real meaning, this would contradict the Word of the following tantras, sutras, and scriptures, which would therefore be faulty:

Sky Cave Treasure Sutra (Nam mkha' mdzod phug gyi mdo) says:

All the bon that there is, free of elaborations, are not at all definite, not definite in any way.

Also, *Compassionate Prophecy Scripture (Thugs rje lung bstan lung)* says:

As for the base, the actual base of everything, which is indefinite, {75.3} Is itself explained as the ultimate definitive meaning.

Also, *Changeless, Ceaseless Ornament Tantra (g.Yung drung rgyan gyi rgyud)* says:

The bon-nature free of elaborations is indefinite and hence The convention of it being nothing in particular.

RESPONSE: {75.3} Should you argue that because this contradicts tantra, transmission, and sutra, all three, there is a problem when it comes to scriptural [evidence], there is no problem. Because all bon-phenomena are definite in only being free from elaborations, there is no fault of indefiniteness. Because bon-nature is definite in not being a particular thing or attribute, there is no fault of indefiniteness. Regarding this, the heart,²³¹ which is the definite basis, is not indefinite because dynamic display {75.4} and play are capable of arising from it anywhere and with multifarious characteristics.

Conventionally [these appearances] are said to be indefinite. Even though the dynamic display and play of all of these [phenomena] change and are [in that sense] indefinite, they are inalienable from the heart essence which is the base, the enlightened mindnature.²³² Thus, never has any indefiniteness [or any indefinite phenomenon] been autonomous; hence scripture is not contradicted.

Also, *Great Sky Beyond Effort* says:

The great changeless base is definite,
Dynamic display, dawning, and play are indefinite.
Though they do not pass beyond the base, and so {76.1}
The independently indefinite does not exist.

231. Mindnature.

232. These would be the dynamic display and play that are all bon phenomena, and [they are] indefinite.

To claim that the indefinite base is nondirectional (*phyogs med*) avoids acknowledging either freedom from or connection with elaborations and [thus] guards the abyss of refuting all appearances whatsoever, existent and nonexistent, like the view of the Tirthika Proponents of the Ultimate Secret Knowing (*Vedānta*).

Further, *Sutra of the Tathāgata's Origins* (*bDe gshegs 'byung rabs kyi mdo*) says:

That the base is not definite as either existent or nonexistent
 And all play unceasing, [these] safeguard the abyss.
 Mentally holding that nothing whatsoever exists
 Is the deeply deluded view {76.3}
 Of Tirthika Proponents of the Ultimate Secret Knowing.

Also, *Heart of Open Space Tantra* says:

From the indefinite base
 The play of anything whatsoever is unceasing—
 [This is] the view of safeguarders at the abyss,
 Tirthika Knowers of the Ultimate Secret,
 Claiming such is mental delusion—alas!

Also, {76.4} *Profound Stake²³³ Sutra* (*gZer bu zab mo mdo*):

Deluded, minds misled by demons
 Assert an indefinite base to guard the abyss.

OBJECTION: If the view of the natural state of the actual basis, a wholeness which is the heart of all bon-phenomena, is like that, it is unsuitable for these present delusions to arise. {76.4} In any case, either the teaching of enlightenment mind, heart and root of all bon-phenomena whatsoever, is itself deluded, or something else is deluded.

If the root which is the enlightenment mind itself is deluded, there would be no point in artful endeavor (*'bad*) regarding the trio {76.6} of hearing, thinking, and meditating. Why? Because Buddhas are deluded into [becoming] sentient beings. Therefore, all Word would be false. If you say something else is deluded, then such delusion could neither²³⁴ harm nor obscure.²³⁵

Why? {77.1} Because delusion is something else. Or, it would follow that this delusion is causeless. Why? Because delusion is other than that very en-

^{233.} ED.: So called because whatever is affixed with this peg or nail becomes immovable. This is a particularly difficult issue.

^{234.} Mindnature is obstructed.

^{235.} Listening and explaining would be meaningless.

lightenment mind which is the root.²³⁶ Or, if primordial wisdom and the error of unawareness are separate, artful endeavor would be pointless.

RESPONSE: It would not. That very mind of enlightenment which is the base, the heart essence and natural condition of things, is never in the three times deluded. Moreover, *Unbounded Wholeness, the Changeless, Ceaseless Essential Heart* says {77.3}:

Enlightenment mind, root of all minds and bon-phenomena,
Heart essence (*ngo bo snying po*), mother unbounded wholeness—
Within this wholeness is neither meeting nor separation, ever,²³⁷
Primordially undeluded, originally perfect.

Expansive Sky Tantra says:

Neither before, after, nor in the present
Primordially pure, {77.4} one mother wholeness.

Also, *Great Effortless Space* says:

Regarding the base, natural condition of things,
Delusion is primordially unrenounced. Hence,
Reflexive open awareness is utterly unobstructed.

Also, *Luminous Changeless, Ceaseless Ornament* (*g.Yung drung rgyan gyi 'od zer*) says:

Regarding the heart essence, enlightenment mindnature itself, {77.5}
It is primordially undeluded throughout all time.²³⁸

Also, *Fully Arrayed Tathāgata Lamp Sutra* (*bDe gzhegs sgron ma yongs su bgod pa'i mdo*) says:

Should someone ask, “What is the root of all bon-phenomena?”
It is the heart essence, the enlightenment mind.
The self-nature of the basis is primordially devoid of
Conventions known as unawareness and primordial wisdom,
Without {77.6} even the names “delusion,” “nodelusion”.
Why? Both are adventitious.

Therefore something else is deluded. Because of not understanding and not recognizing enlightenment mindnature at the root of samsara and nirvana, there is delusion, whereby one cycles in the three realms {78.1} and wanders among the six types of rebirth. Moreover, through the power of not realizing,

236. Which is the base.

237. ED.: Poetic license for “in the three times” (*dus gsum*).

238. ED.: Poetic license for “three times” (*dus gsum*).

there is delusion. This is due to an increase (*brtas*) in the consciousness's apprehending something that is not there. Moreover, *Heart of Open Space* says:

One wanders deludedly through not understanding {78.2}
Enlightenment mind, heart essence of bon-phenomena.

Also, *Cutting Delusion's Root* ('*Khrul rdzad gcod*) says:

Like taking a rope for a snake
Apprehending what it is there,
Deluded, not understanding the meaning of that as that.

Also, *Shenhla Ogar Heart Mind Scripture* (*gShen lha 'Od dkar gyi thugs*) says:

Not seeing what is as it is {78.3}
Seeing what is not as though it were—
Like seeing [white] conch as yellow.
Amplifying that, one wanders and cycles.

Moreover, this is explained in many scriptures.

OBJECTION: Regarding that inborn (*lhan cig skyes*) unawareness, what is inborn with what? {78.4} If bon-nature and unawareness arise together (*lhan cig skyes*), unawareness would also not be adventitious [because, he thinks, wisdom is not adventitious].

If it is not born, then it is not inborn, in which case one would not assert purification of obstructions. If you assert this, then having purified both [bon-nature and the afflictions] there would be annihilation. For example, {78.5} when fire ceases, heat also ceases.

RESPONSE: There is no such fault. Unawareness and primordial wisdom arise together; both are adventitious, but that is not the meaning of essential heart essence (*snying po'i ngo bo*). [There is primordial wisdom which is always there, namely the primordial open awareness *ye rig*; but there is also a primordial wisdom which is not there yet, namely the reflective open awareness, *bsam rig*.]

Moreover, unawareness is a degraded delusion, (*skyon mar 'khrul*) a samsaric bon-phenomenon. {78.6} The exalted good qualities of primordial wisdom are bon-phenomena of nirvana. For this reason, neither are established as things, nor are they inborn with the base.

Also, *Unbounded Samantabhadra State Tantra* (*Kun du bzang ba'i dgongs pa thig le rgyud*) says:

By considering samsara faulty, nirvana excellent, {79.1}
Wrong ideas, unawareness, differ from primordial wisdom, yet

Neither exist in the essence itself, the base—
How they appear emerges and arises in the face of attraction (*zhen*).

Also, *Root Sutra of Primordially Existing Phenomena* (*Ye srid bon gyi mdo*²³⁹ *rdza*) says:

Though in no way different in terms of the base, {79.2}
Adventitious unawareness and primordial wisdom
Appear as any kind²⁴⁰ of exalted [quality] or degraded delusion; still
Not even a single iota do they move from the base.

Precious Mirror Sutra (*Rin po che me long gi mdo*) also says:

The base, utterly unfluctuating,
Is primordially unclothed, untouched by unawareness or primordial
wisdom. {79.3}

OBJECTION: Unawareness and primordial wisdom are not adventitious.

RESPONSE: The essential nature that is the basis lacks the conventions of both unawareness and primordial wisdom. Developing realization of this base and excellent insight into it is designated conventionally as “wisdom.” {79.4} Not understanding, not realizing, this very base at any time²⁴¹ is conventionally designated “unawareness.” There have never been two independently existent things in one’s own being. Therefore, [they are] adventitious.

OBJECTION: Is the root, the enlightenment mind heart-essence, the state (*dgongs*) of a Buddha? Is not the failure to {79.5} realize this meaning the activity of a sentient being? If so, there would be the fault of not asserting a reversal from that. If there is a reversal that relies on the trifold method of hearing, thinking, and meditating, there would be the fault of Buddhas being conditioned. [If it is the karma of sentient beings not to realize, then there is nothing to be done. If there is something to be done, then Buddhas are conditioned.]

RESPONSE: Not so. A Buddha’s state {79.6} is the unchanging heart essence of all time. If one realizes its meaning, then sentient beings’ activities as well as their thoughts are [recognized as] adventitious. Thereby it [unawareness] effortlessly (*’bad rtsol med*) reverses itself. {79.6}

Also, *King of Arising and Existence Sutra* (*Srid pa ’byung rgyal gyi mdo*) says:

Buddha’s {80.1} state, being difficult to examine,
Is unaffected by sentient beings’ acts

239. Sutra.

240. Also appear.

241. ED.: Literally, “the three times,” past, present, and future.

If affected, it would not be primordial wisdom.
Impossible to affect, it is a something which is space.

Further, since the trio of basis, path, and fruit²⁴² are not separate minds, everything is one {80.2} in the enlightenment mindnature (*byang chub gyi sems nyid*). Hence Buddha is not conditioned. Also, the same sutra says:

The cause itself, changeless, ceaseless,
Birthless and so, no connection with destruction
Is unconditioned Buddha.

RESPONSE: The Buddha's state is primordially without delusion. As for the delusions of sentient beings, are they causelessly deluded, or are their delusions caused? If the former, it is unreasonable for an effect to arise without cause. Or, it would follow that delusion is utterly nonexistent (*gtan med*). Why? {80.4} Because in the absence of causes there would be delusion. Obviously, you cannot agree.

OBJECTION: What would be the harm if, even though there is no cause, delusion arises? It does not follow that it could not.

RESPONSE: Then even without causes, rabbit horns would exist. Obviously, rabbit horns do not exist. {80.5} Then it is also obvious that causeless delusion does not exist.

OBJECTION: Just like this [delusion] manifestly appears.

RESPONSE: It appears because it has a cause. If you accept this, your thesis regarding causeless delusion falls apart.

OBJECTION: If you say that initially there is no cause and then in between there is delusion, then {80.6} Buddhahood is of no benefit. Why? Because even though initially there is no [delusion] it can arise in between. Therefore there is delusion due to causes and conditions. If the latter,²⁴³ it could not be asserted that conceptual thoughts are indicated as the Bon nature. {81.1}

Delusions could not be purified because causes for delusion exist, just as, for example, coal [cannot be purified of being] black. Therefore, artful endeavor (*bad*) would be pointless.

RESPONSE: It is not like that. That delusion is not causeless delusion²⁴⁴ {81.2} There are causes because the cause itself is adventitious. Therefore, these can be purified.²⁴⁵

Therefore, artful endeavor is meaningful. And how is this? Due to not recognizing this great self-arisen primordial wisdom, the enlightenment mind which is heart-essence of the basis, there is delusion. This itself is the cause,

²⁴². The consciousnesses of hearing, thinking, and meditating are, respectively, cause, condition, and effect.

²⁴³. If delusion arises from an existing cause.

²⁴⁴. ED.: *rgyu med par las 'khrul pa ma yin te*. Read *med pa* for *med par*.

²⁴⁵. Capable of being purified.

{81.3} inborn unawareness. The causal conditions are the learned unawareness. Therefore, with the ripening of the effects of the five—desire, hatred [pride, jealousy, and obscuration]—one wanders in the six realms.

Further, {81.4} *Meaningfully True Sutra* (*Don ltan bden pa'i mdo*) says:

With learned unawareness its causal condition,
Ripening of its five fruits proceeds: desire, hatred—
We wander the three realms and six rebirths.

Also, *Scripture of the Ten Bon Natures* (*Bon nyid bcu ba'i lung*) says:

Because of these two,
Cause and {81.4} conditions of unawareness,
Bon mind, that great root, appears as delusion.
It's due to nonrealization.

Also, *Collection of Jewels Sutra* ('*Dus pa rin po che'i mdo*) claims:

Though the base is utterly without delusion
Mental delusion modifies the base, and so
Not seeing the very base due to causes and conditions,
That very base appears as the bon-phenomena of samsara. {81.5}

OBJECTION: How does the source of the unawareness you assert {81.6} arise adventitiously to start with?²⁴⁶

RESPONSE: Are you asking in terms of the actual bon-nature, in terms of delusion, or in terms of both? {81.6}

If the first, then no bon-phenomena {82.1} would ever lack being Buddha; therefore unawareness would be primordially nonexistent, for even the very golden mats in hell would be none other than the great bliss which is the Bon Body. Furthermore, Bon nature is, through all time, without birth or cessation. Moreover, *Blissful Samantabhadra Scripture* says: {82.2}

The Conquerors' mandala, the golden mats [of the hells]
Are the external. Their internal (inhabitants)
Are no other than great bliss itself,
Do not depart from just Buddha nature.

Also, *Spontaneously Complete Open Awareness Tantra* (*Rig pa lhun rdzogs gyi rgyud*) says {82.2}:

In terms of the essential base
Nothing, not even one thing, {82.3}
Fails to be a Buddha, primordially

²⁴⁶ Because it is not realized.

Without production or cessation through all time, thus heart essence itself.

In the second case [in terms of delusion], there would be no way to gain realization through scripture and essential instructions. Because [beings] would not benefit from the Bon [scriptures and direct instructions] the Buddha bliss would be profoundly absent, {82.4} there would be beginningless and endless wandering in delusion. Moreover, the predispositions for the five [poisons] of desire, hatred [and so forth] would increase and would be manifestly enacted.

Further, *Sutra of Wandering in the Three Realms of Samsara* (*Khams gsum 'khor ba'i mdo*) says:

Not understanding Bon at all, no benefit [from it]
 Continuous wandering in samsara, no connection with genuine
 bliss. {82.5}

Also, *Changeless, Ceaseless Primordial Completeness* says:

Unrealized, hence erroneous,
 Through wandering in samsara without start or finish
 Five predispositions for desire and hatred increase.

In the last case, [from the viewpoint of both the actual bon-nature and delusions] the body and primordial wisdom of Buddha as well as the bodies {82.6} and predispositions of sentient beings, however they appear, are true. Therefore both are thus. Moreover, [all these appearances] primordially do not pass beyond one's own mindnature.²⁴⁷ Further, *Spontaneously Complete View Tantra* (*lTa ba lhun grub gyi rgyud*) says:

Buddha's bodily dimension and primordial wisdom,
 All bodies and predispositions of sentient beings {83.1}
 Do not pass beyond your own mindnature.
 Therefore, whatever appears so is true as such.

Also, *Changeless, Ceaseless Excellent Bon Collection* (*Bon sde dam pa g.yung drung*) says:

In terms of Bon-nature or delusion,
 If one debates either [conventional or ultimate truth],²⁴⁸ {83.2} neither
 is at all contradicted.
 It is true as it appears, it does not depart from the base.

²⁴⁷. No matter how these appear.

²⁴⁸. ED.: Lopon Tenzin Namdak.

OBJECTION: Similarly, [from the viewpoint of both the actual bon-nature and delusions] if it is determined that the pure and impure are simultaneous, both positions would be the same. Why? Because there is sameness²⁴⁹ through all time. But if you say that it is not²⁵⁰ like that since one is realized and the other abandoned,²⁵¹ there would be adoption and discarding [and this is inappropriate for the Great Completeness]. If you say it is not like that²⁵² since both [pure and impure] occur in the continuum of consciousness, then migrants would have two mental continuums.

RESPONSE: These faults do not occur. {83.4} Because we do not claim that all such appearances are in essence themselves Buddhas,²⁵³ this is not a one-sided position [of falling to an extreme of] purity. Also, we do not one-sidedly consider all bon-phenomena to be deluded; therefore they are not categorized only as delusions. The entity of both {83.5} of these is realized as spontaneously occurring; therefore, there is no fault of adopting and discarding. Because both are simultaneous and primordially one in the very essence which is the basis, there is no fault of two mental continuums. Moreover, *Stable Elephant Sutra (Klang brtan gyi mdo)* says: {83.6}

The very essence of delusion and nondelusion is one, and so
These spontaneously occur without falling to any extreme.
Thus travelers do not have two mental streams!

OBJECTION: Then either these two, a Buddha's heartmind and a sentient being's mind, are one essence, or they are different. If they are one, {84.1} then it would not be possible for the deluded and nondeluded, realization and nonrealization, to arise. Also, if these two are one, either they are one with the heartmind of all Buddhas—primordial wisdom—or one with the mind of sentient beings. If the former, then liberation would be effortless (*'bad pa med*), because of the oneness with all Buddhas. Clearly you cannot accept this. If the latter, then even Buddhas would be in cyclic existence and artful endeavor would be meaningless. Why? Because of being one with sentient beings.

If they are not one but different, then because there is no connection, {84.3} sentient beings would not be able to accomplish Buddhahood, and artful endeavor would be meaningless. Also, even a Buddha's compassion would not benefit sentient beings, because it is [unrelatedly] separate [from them]. For example horses do not give help to elephants.

RESPONSE: There are no such faults. {84.4} Further, *Great Sky Beyond Effort* says:

249. Of pure and impure.

250. The pure.

251. The impure.

252. Pure.

253. ED.: Read *gyi* as *gyis*.

Buddhas and sentient beings are
 Temporarily separate, finally inseparable
 Because neither are outside the mother base mind and
 Because actions and compassion are different—
 Without essential instructions {84.5} there is no benefit, only
 continual delusion.

The basis of both Buddhas and sentient beings is the great-self arisen²⁵⁴ primordial wisdom heart essence enlightenment mind; therefore, sentient beings are the cause of Buddhas, and Buddhas are the cause of sentient beings. Hence one speaks of “the Buddha wherein cause and effect are of one taste.” {84.6}

The reason for that is stated in *Tathāgata State Sutras* (*bDe gshegs dgongs bgros pa'i mdo*):

Sentient beings are all primordially suffused with the Tathāgata heart essence.²⁵⁵

Therefore, Buddhas are the causes of sentient beings.

Also, *Sun Suffusing the Thousand Directions* says: {85.1}:

Both sentient beings and Buddhas
 Are Buddhas for whom cause and effect are of one taste.
 Cause and effect can be reversed; that is the crucial point.

Obviously the cause of sentient beings is the essential heart essence (*ngo bo nyid gyi snying po*). {85.2} Also obvious is that sentient beings are the causes of Buddhas. {85.2} Moreover, *Nine Circling Moons Sutra* (*Zla ba dgu skor lung*) (probably extant) says:

Sentient beings themselves cause Buddhas
 When the unrealized is realized, great bliss²⁵⁶ occurs.
 Arising, moreover not from another; arising from oneself.

Moreover there is no cause and effect posited through dependence because cause and effect {85.3} are one taste. This is because its way of being, from the Conquerors’ mandala on high to the hells’ golden mat way below, is the spontaneously occurring heart essence, the primordial self-arisen wisdom.

As for how the spontaneously occurring heart essence appears—it appears as {85.4} the bodies and predispositions of sentient beings²⁵⁷ and the self-

254. Very essence of objects [and meanings].

255. Read *snying po 'gro* for *snying po'i 'gro*.

256. ED.: Buddhahood

257. If one is not realized.

appearing dimension (*sku*) and primordial wisdom of the Buddhas.²⁵⁸ Thus, *Venerable Bon Awareness of Everything Tantra* (says):

Since they appear as mind's nature (*sems kyi rang bzhin*)
And because Buddhas and sentient beings have the same cause,
Buddhahood {85.5} is natural and spontaneous.

Also, *Spontaneously Complete Open Awareness Tantra* (*Rig pa lhun rdzogs rgyud*) says:

From the Conquerors' mandala to the golden mat of cyclic existence
All samsara and nirvana
Are just the spontaneous heart essence
In whose self-appearance, whether pure or erroneous, {85.5}
There is not even one iota of movement from that.

OBJECTION: If even primordial Buddhas are cycling sentient beings, either Buddhahood is pointless or has the fault of being reversible.

RESPONSE: There is no such fault. Even though {86.1} one is thus primordially a Buddha, one does not realize that one is, and therefore is deluded. Because of ripening into a sentient being, Buddhas²⁵⁹ are known, conventionally, as the causes of sentient beings.²⁶⁰ The very essence of the base²⁶¹ (*gzhi gyi ngo bo*) does not change at all.

OBJECTION: From what source does nonunderstanding {86.2} arise?

RESPONSE: It arises from unawareness.

OBJECTION: What is the source of unawareness?

RESPONSE: It arises adventitiously, as discussed above.

[This concludes the discussion of the relationship between Buddhas and sentient beings, delusion and primordial wisdom. Attention now turns to consideration of the lower vehicles.]

The Path of Continuity

Rejecting the Delusion of the Lower Vehicles

As for reversing Lower Vehicle delusion, the 84,000 afflictions of sentient beings when condensed are included in the three poisons. The 84,000 doors of bon-dharma are their antidotes, and the antidotes are condensed into the three *Collections*.²⁶²

258. If one is realized.

259. The effect.

260. The effect.

261. From the original.

262. Ethics, sutra, phenomenology ('dul mdo sde m ngon).

In addition, both the discordant portion [the afflictions] and antidotes are included in the two truths [of the Lower Vehicles]. These are the conventional truths {86.4} and the ultimate truths. Regarding this, any appearance associated with subject and object is a conventional truth.²⁶³ An ultimate truth such as open awareness²⁶⁴ {86.6} is not [in Dzogchen] associated with either subject or object. (Therefore, the appearance of all signs or conventions is conventional. The pacification of all signs of elaboration is ultimate.)

In this regard, having posited appearance {86.6} as the bon-subject, and then having implicitly eliminated actual elaborations in relation to appearance [i.e., the conception of true existence] through the reasoning of the one and many, false illusions are thoroughly eliminated and [the ultimate truth is] established.²⁶⁵

Further, in using reasoning²⁶⁶ to analyze appearances, conventions are imputed merely to an elimination, thereby pacifying all elaborations.²⁶⁷ [Even though something is eliminated, there is still a place for conventional imputation, like refuting ultimate existence while imputing conventional existence.] {87.1} The elimination of error by the reasoning consciousness does not remain, because once having been eliminated, there arises the actual [sense of inherent existence].

Does appearance to the reasoning consciousness appear or not appear?²⁶⁸ It appears. Does it exist or not exist? It does not. Further, with respect to the appearance {87.2}, does it or does it not appear to a reasoning consciousness? It appears as an illusion. Such is asserted.

OBJECTION: In that case, do you maintain that the two, conventional and ultimate, have a single defining characteristic (*mtshan nyid*)? Or are they different? {87.3} Or is this itself inexpressible?²⁶⁹

If you say they have the same characteristic nature, it follows that in realizing the conventional as a thing you also realize the ultimate. Why? Because they are one. Obviously, you cannot accept this. {87.4}

Are they one as an ultimate or one as a conventionality? If they are one as an ultimate, then just as the ultimate has neither production nor cessation, so the conventional also²⁷⁰ would be without production or cessation. Why? Because they are one as an ultimate. Obviously, you cannot agree.

²⁶³. A consciousness opening toward its appearance.

²⁶⁴. Direct perception, freedom of elaborations, inference. ED.: Lopon Tenzin Namdak commented that the “direct perception” mentioned here is *rig pa* and that inference itself is not ultimate, despite the apparent intention of the annotator.

²⁶⁵. When the play of sense fields is apparent (*rol skye mched pa'i dus*).

²⁶⁶. ED.: Text mistakenly has *rig*; read *rigs*.

²⁶⁷. At the time of being free of all signs, not abiding in any way.

²⁶⁸. For example, does yellow appear or not appear to an eye which is jaundiced?

²⁶⁹. As anything else?

²⁷⁰. Because it is free of elaborations.

If you say they are one as a convention, {87.5} then just as the conventional has elaborations, so the ultimate would have elaborations. Why? Because it is one with the conventional. Obviously if you accept this, it is clear even from the words²⁷¹ themselves that it would not then be ultimate.

If you say they are different, the ultimate [mind] would not overpower the signs [of elaboration] of the conventional [mind]. Why? Because they are different. If you accept this, there would be signs [of elaboration] on the stage of Buddhahood.²⁷² {88.1} Further, it follows that there is no point in meditating on the path of virtue or doing any virtuous Bon practice. Why? Because they are separate. If the object to be attained once and for all is ultimate and one attains it through {88.2} a conventional path of meditation, it follows that the ultimate is not attained. Why? Because they are separate.

Moreover, it follows that the nature of the conventional is unultimate.²⁷³ Why? Because they are different. If you agree, you contradict the word of Shenrab. Further {88.3} *Song of Two Truths Sutra* (*bDen gnyis sgra dbyangs kyi mdo*) says:

Whatever the conventional nature,
That itself is the ultimate meaning.

That is clear.

If you say it is inexpressible, it follows that these conventionalities do not appear at all. {88.4} Why?²⁷⁴ Because they are neither ultimate nor expressed as other than ultimate. Obviously, you cannot agree. Further, it follows that the ultimate would not exist at all.

Further, in general, the characteristic of emptiness is the nature of all bon-phenomena, {88.5} but your assertion, having eliminated the actual elaborations of true [existence], implicitly establishes illusions as false, and so it follows that this is not the characteristic of emptiness; it is a partial emptiness.

If you accept this, it follows that you are no different than the Self-Realized Ones for whom the external is real. {88.5} Why? Because elaborations dwell in one portion [of the inquiry], and there are two; there is the elimination of the ultimate and the establishment of illusoriness. In that sense there is a dualism.

Or, if you accept there is {88.5} proof through reasoning [of an absence, a negative] and an assertion of falsity [a positive phenomenon], then your own words are contradictory. If you maintain they are not contradictory, then I can say my mother is a barren woman, for this also is a verbal contradiction. If

271. Being free of elaborations.

272. Which is free of elaborations.

273. Is not.

274. The conventional.

you ask, "How are you {89.1} the son of a barren woman?" I will say, what is this falsity you have established by the reasoning mind [analyzing the ultimate]; these are analogous.

Further, there would be no difference between an inferential consciousness and a consciousness which apprehends pervasion [at the time of settling the ultimate]. Why? Because there is no appearance.

Further, a reasoning consciousness {89.2} would not be capable of negating appearances. Why? Because appearances are not objects of the reasoning consciousness. For example, an eye²⁷⁵ consciousness cannot negate sound.

Further, at the time of determining the ultimate, a reasoning consciousness would not be able to negate appearance because the appearance does not appear to the reasoning consciousness.

Further, conventionally one purifies the afflictive obstructions through accumulating the collections [of merit and wisdom] and through virtuous behavior. Having done so, one makes petitionary prayers for the welfare of sentient beings and ultimately {89.4} abides in a peace which is a pacification of all elaborations of the ultimate, the emptiness of all bon-phenomena and their lack of self. In this way, and through meditation on excellent insight, one purifies obstructions to omniscience. Having done this, one purifies the two obstructions²⁷⁶ by way of the ten perfections, the unsurpassed method,²⁷⁷ within the unelaborated²⁷⁸ reflexive open awareness.

Having done so, it is asserted that the eleventh ground, the Luminously Blissful {89.5} is attained through the changeless, ceaseless meditative stabilization.

RESPONSE: This would have the fault of being contradictory. Specific teachings are engaged for those of superior and middling senses, the fruit of realization by those of lower minds would not be a cause of Buddhahood. {89.5} In that case, wouldn't the teaching that an effect exists be false? Or does one attain the equivalent of Buddhahood?

If you say that they attain the fruit of Buddhahood along with [the others], there would be no need to explain the category of those of middling capacity because they all attain the same effect.

OBJECTION: They are able to produce a temporary effect. {90.1}

RESPONSE: Since what you call a temporary effect is impermanent and changeable, there would be no point in making effort for it.

Or if you say that the fruit which is one's own perspective actually exists (*yang dag tu yod*), does it exist in the face of delusion, or does it exist in the

275. In the context of determining the ultimate.

276. Afflictive obstructions and obstructions to omniscience.

277. Being the path.

278. Ceaselessly, changelessly.

face of realization? {90.2} If the former, then bon-nature which is realized does not count for much. Why? Because it exists in the face of a deluded mind.

If the latter, [real for realization], then Buddha would also be deluded. Why? Because the temporary effect is actual.

Further, because with two phrases (realization and error),²⁷⁹ the teaching for those of sharp, middling, and lesser senses [indicates for you] {90.3} that even Shenhla Ogar is not a Buddha [because he is not a temporary effect and does not change]. Why is he not a Buddha? Because he is neither [an effect] made by a Buddha²⁸⁰ nor contrived by sentient beings, nor does he depend on the five causal elements. {90.4}

OBJECTION: It is not like that.²⁸¹ Further, because sentient beings [seeking Buddhahood] make offerings using special substances for which the elements²⁸² are causes, and on the wind²⁸³ of the conceptual thought of calm abiding, therefore the bon²⁸⁴ [of Buddhahood] is an aggregated phenomenon which is not permanent.

The arising of samsara {90.5} and nirvana itself is one's own mind; all bon-phenomena are in the mind.

RESPONSE: It will not liberate one to discern ('du shes) [in the manner of the lower vehicles, such as Mind-Only] all phenomena, internal, external, actions, and so on, as mind. *Expansive Scripture Treasury* (*Lung yangs pa'i mdzod phug*) {90.6} says:

Though understanding outer, inner bon-phenomena as one's own
mind

One neither touches nor realizes samsara and nirvana; pointless
delusion.

The two truths, the collections and so on are like a fledgling Garuda
seeking out the ends of space.

In the Great Completeness, all bon-phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana {91.1} are primordially included in the enlightenment mind; that very essence is unbounded wholeness. Therefore, when realization of this meaning dawns, the three poisons are the nature of body, speech, and mind; they are not actual. Thus, one does not change in order to abandon three poisons {91.2}.

OBJECTION: Your assertion contradicts scripture. *The Hundred Thousand (Verses) Purifying the Three Poisons in the Expanse* says, "Shenrab has bestowed

279. ED.: Ponlob Thrinley Nyima Rinpoche, Houston, 2002.

280. Actual Buddha.

281. White [Shen is] Buddha (ED.: i.e., Shenhla Okar).

282. Temporary effect.

283. ED.: The text mistakenly has *klung* for *rlung*.

284. The effect.

this Word: The three poisons are purified in the expanse." As a result of attraction (*zhen*) to the character of hatred, sentient beings are born in hell. Due to desire, as a hungry ghost. {91.3} Due to unawareness, as an animal. The three poisons are causes of the three bad migrations." You have contradicted this statement.

Further, even though one abides only in the three poisons, one would achieve the effect of [a Buddha's] body, speech, and mind because the lack of the three poisons is [a Buddha's] body, speech, and mind. {91.4}

RESPONSE: There is no such fault. Though in terms of its provisional meaning, it is taught that the three poisons produce the three bad migrations, in actual fact, the three poisons cannot obscure. Further, when there dawns the realization that mindnature is one's own open awareness, whichever of the three poisons you engage, appearances are nonconceptual.²⁸⁵ Therefore, it neither obscures nor harms. Further, *Mirror of Miraculous Primordial Wisdom Sutra* (*Ye shes 'khrul gyi me long gi mdo*) says:

Even the eighty-four thousand afflictions are
Without ultimate production or cessation, hence
The three poisons are neither abandoned, transformed, nor purified.

Further, *Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra* {91.6} says:

Once hatred is renounced, love cannot be discerned
The single nature of the mind renounces nothing.
Once unawareness is renounced, wisdom cannot be discerned
The single nature of the mind renounces nothing.
Once desire is renounced, generosity cannot be discerned
The single nature of the mind renounces nothing. {92.1}

Further, *Medicine for Subduing Demons Sutra* (*bDud 'dul sman gyi mdo*) says:

Because even the one thousand and eighty afflictions
Are primordially within the essential heart, the mind
With the mere dawning of this realization
The three poisons, not renounced, purifies in the expanse.
To perceive obstructions is delusion. {92.2}

OBJECTION: If, as you maintain, virtue and sin are ultimately realized as nonexistent, whereas conventionally the cause and effect of actions is accepted as nondeceptive, this is neither correct in terms of reasoning, nor is it established as the Great Completeness.

RESPONSE: However, the Great Completeness does not assert in this way. {92.3} All bon-phenomena are asserted as being natural, spontaneous occur-

²⁸⁵ ED.: The text here mistakenly reads *snang la mi rtogs* for *snang la mi rtog*.

rences, so the three poisons are also not established,²⁸⁶ and action, virtue, and wrongfulness (*sdig pa*) are not asserted either. Therefore, we do not distinguish between the ultimate and conventional. This [making of distinctions] is the position of a lower vehicle.

OBJECTION: Because you maintain that the cause and effect of virtue and wrongfulness do not exist, {92.4} you would be a Nihilist Tīrthika (*Mu stegs chad pa*).

RESPONSE: We would not. Nihilist Tīrthikas do not realize the principle of sameness in the two, virtuous and wrongful actions; they maintain that virtuous and wrongful actions do not exist at all. I, however, having unerroneously realized²⁸⁷ the principle of sameness, {92.5} realize the fruit primordially without depending on the cause and effect of virtuous and wrongful actions. That is, I realize that there are no causes or effects not included in mindnature. Hence the convention, “These do not exist.”

Moreover, *Great Bliss and Emptiness Sutra* (*bDe ba stong chen gyi mdo*) says:

Nihilist Tīrthikas gazing on what is out there {92.6}
 Fail to realize Bon heart essence sameness,
 They assert that virtuous and wrongful actions do not ripen.
 I, realizing the heart essence sameness,
 Assert virtuous and wrongful actions as not other [than that],
 As fundamentally unequal, highly distinct.{93.1}

OBJECTION: Although, according to your assertion, the ultimate is thus, in conventional terms, meditating on love and developing compassion as antidotes for hatred; meditating on ugliness, giving, and keeping ethics as antidotes to desire; and {93.2} [practicing] stabilizing meditation and primordial wisdom as {93.2} antidotes to unawareness—these causes would not bring about the effect of Buddhas arising from sentient beings because virtuous and wrongful actions have neither cause nor effect.

RESPONSE: There is no fault of not {93.3} attaining Buddhahood because everything arises primordially there in the mindnature. Moreover, *Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra* says:

Everything unbounded wholeness, mindnature.

The same scripture also says:

Mind which perceives the six realms
 Is mind which is all and everything. {93.4}
 Nothing whatever is not included in mind.

286. As qualities which are things (*dngos po*).

287. All bon phenomena.

This is the definitive meaning. The meaning to be interpreted, however, explains that the fruit is attained with the support of an antidote, as is said in *White Shen Deity Mindheart Scripture* (*gShen lha dkar po thugs kyi lung*):

When the provisional meaning appears to disciples,
Using it {93.5} as an antidote to the three poisons
Does not contradict attainment of a temporary effect.

OBJECTION: Ultimately, then, is the taker of life, hatred, one's own mind? Does it arise adventitiously and by chance (*'bral byung klo bur*)? Is it something other [than one's own mind]? If it is one's own mind, {93.6} how can mind, an unthing which has neither color nor shape, take a life due to hatred? If it can kill, how is this wrongful, since hatred itself comes about without any base?²⁸⁸ Therefore, if it cannot take life, how can wrongfulness come about? For example, {94.1} fruit will not arise from a seed that is not planted.

RESPONSE: If it [anger] arises adventitiously and by chance, through realizing the principle of the primordially birthless and deathless mindnature, [one understands that] a bodiless mind cannot be obstructed or harmed by taking the life of an embodied being.

Further, *White Shen Deity Mindheart Scripture* says: {94.2}

Mindnature having neither birth nor death, how can life be taken?
No need to fear hell realm's suffering.
Not being there [hatred] cannot obscure.

Also, because mindnature has no creator, there is neither male nor female. Therefore, no matter how lusty one's behavior in the past, present, or future, ethics and vows would not deteriorate because no cause²⁸⁹ that deteriorates is seen, since there is no actual thing.²⁹⁰ Moreover, *Profoundly Great and Miraculous Sutra* (*rMad chen zab mo'i mdo*) says: {94.3}

Mindnature primordially unimpeded,
Attachment lacks real cause, and so
No matter how much men and women conjoin throughout time
{94.4}
Ethics do not deteriorate.
Predispositions for similar behavior do not accumulate
And birth in the hungry ghost place does not occur.

Also, when it comes to the thingless mindnature, the enlightenment mind heart essence, because open awareness and unawareness are inseparable,

²⁸⁸. This killing being mind itself.

²⁸⁹. Ethics, vows.

²⁹⁰. Desire.

{94.5} there is neither purification of obstructions, nor rejection of unawareness, nor any search for wisdom. Hence, causes for animal rebirth are not observable.

The same text says:

In primordial bon-nature, thingless open awareness.

Unawareness is not purified, primordial wisdom not established.

Without cause, rebirth as an animal does not occur. {94.6}

OBJECTION: If, according to you, the three poisons cannot obscure, are the three poisons and mindnature the same or different? If different, the three poisons would not obstruct or harm even the mind of ordinary persons. Why? Because they²⁹¹ are different. {95.1} If you agree, liberation would be artless ('bad med).

Also, if they are different, it follows that the three poisons would not be produced in the flow of consciousness, because they are different from mind. Obviously you cannot agree.

Moreover, {95.2} the three poisons are either experienced or not. If they are experienced, it follows that they are mind. Why? Because they are experienced. If you accept this, your thesis that [the three poisons] are different from mind falls apart. Obviously,²⁹² you cannot accept that [the three poisons] are not experienced.

Also, if you say they are one,²⁹³ then are they one as three poisons {95.3}, or are they one as mindnature? If [mindnature] goes out to be one as the three poisons, it follows that mindnature utterly does not exist. Why? because mindnature is one with three poisons. If you accept that,²⁹⁴ artful endeavor would be pointless.

Also, it follows that all the [scriptures, that is the] Word {95.4} would be false because it explains mindnature as actually existent.

If [the three poisons] come to be one with mindnature, it follows that the three poisons are utterly nonexistent. Why? Because they are one with the mindnature. If you agree, liberation would be effortless. {95.5}

RESPONSE: It would not be that way. The essential heart essence, mindnature, is primordially one with the three poisons, but the three poisons are utterly absent in their thingness (*dngos po*).²⁹⁵

OBJECTION: Right now the three poisons exist; therefore, [your claim that they are absent] is contradicted by direct experience. {95.6}

291. Mindnature and the three poisons.

292. It would be matter.

293. Mindnature, the three poisons.

294. Because mindnature does not exist, it is forever nonexistent.

295. ED.: Lopon Tenzin Namdak glosses *dngos po* here as *gnas lug*; clearly, the ordinary meaning of *dngos po* as thing would be out of place in this context.

RESPONSE: Because they arise adventitiously in a person's mind, this is not contradictory.²⁹⁶ {95.6}

Therefore, when the mind (*blo*) is realized as thingless, there will be excellent insight into the mindnature, at which point the three poisons are asserted to be utterly nonexistent, {96.1} for one is meeting the mother, primordial wisdom.

Further, *Hundred Thousand on Pure Open Awarenesses* (*Dam pa rig 'bum*) says:

The three poisons, primordially mindnature, are one wholeness²⁹⁷
 Realizing this [mindnature] does not contradict mere adventitious
 appearance

In this sense the three poisons are "utterly nonexistent."

OBJECTION: Although, for one who has realized bon-nature, there is neither harm {96.2} nor obscuration due to the three poisons, is the fruit of engaging in giving, ethics, or concentration attained or not?

RESPONSE: Are you asking whether the person who has realized [bon-nature] does or does not attain the fruits of these three actions, or are you asking whether the person who has not so realized does or does not attain the fruits of these three actions?

If the former, {96.3} the fruit of realization is attained primordially; therefore, there is no seeking out any fruit based on these three. There is also no purposeful cessation, nor any adopting or discarding.

If the latter, then since one does not recognize mindnature, when it comes to giving²⁹⁸ {96.4} and the like, no matter how much is given, even though it benefits the recipient, the giver does not get even an iota of benefit. For, once having departed the body and taken another rebirth, there is no possibility for being released from that debt [for one remains in samsara]. {96.5} Why? Because one is not realized; it is, for example, like collecting on a debt from someone you don't know. Or, as regards the giving and so forth of someone who is not realized,²⁹⁹ that person's giving does not yield the fruit of nirvana³⁰⁰ it merely ripens³⁰¹ within cyclic existence. Why? Because the three fields [of activity: gift, giver, receiver] are wholly impure [seen as real]. Moreover, {96.6} *Bon Spacious Expanse Sutra* (*Bon dbyings bdal pa'i mdo*) says:

296. Not primordially established in the essence of mindnature.

297. ED.: It is possible to read this phrase simply as "possessing one wholeness" (*nyag gcig ma*).

298. Vast roots of virtue.

299. The view.

300. Because of not being unsurpassed.

301. Lined with error.

Without realizing the view's heart essence just as it is
 How could any compounded roots of virtue whatsoever, giving and
 the like,
 Yield experience of the fruit, the pure dimension? {97.1}

Again, *Venerable Hundred Thousand Scriptural Teachings* ('Bum rje lung bstan mdo) says:

Empty of receiver, gift, and giver,
 The three actual spheres [allow one to] transcend the unstable realm
 [this world].
 Unless one understands these, attraction rises, whereby
 Samsaric ripening [is] merely that unstable realm. {97.2}

Also, *Steadfast Sun Scripture* (Rab rtan nyi ma lung) says:

Because mind is thingless, actions are fruitless
 To assert the ripening of things is a deluded path.

Also, the *Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra* says:

Unless one realizes that there is primordially Buddha {97.3}
 How could the fruit be found through temporary effort?

The same text says:

How could Buddhahood come from these childish actions?
 From a Lesser Vehicle practitioner's devotion to giving,
 Or the erroneous hope of creating a fruit based on causes?

Also, *Compendium of Very Secret Bliss Sutra* (Yang gsang bde ba 'dus pa'i mdo)³⁰² says: {97.4}

Unconnected with a Changeles, Ceaseless (Bodhisattva) mind,
 offering and homage
 Do not liberate, being tied to great pride.
 This virtue causes such suffering, cyclic existence.

Further, it is not that [virtuous actions] are utterly unhelpful. Through the wisdom of individual realization, {97.4} through realizing the nature of bon-phenomena just as they are, through an understanding deep in the mind,³⁰³ not mere verbiage, on account of not being separate from the wisdom of bon-

³⁰². Stated also in the Guhyasamaja sutra. ED.: We have not followed up on this statement by the text's unknown annotator.

³⁰³. Errorless.

nature,³⁰⁴ the ten unsurpassed perfections of giving and so forth, all whatsoever virtuous actions, will be the collection of primordial wisdom. And that cause and fruit³⁰⁵ which one desires will arise without fail.

Further, *Pure Dynamic Display (Rab rtsal dam pa)* says:

If one conjoins dedication of giving and so forth
 With wisdom of bon-nature, of how things are,
 The fruit of that will not be wasted and {98.1}
 Is included in the primordial wisdom collection.

Further, without the view of the nonabiding nirvana,³⁰⁶ whatever activity one undertakes, from Upasaka (*dGe snyen*) vows³⁰⁷ to beating the body or [other] ascetic practices,³⁰⁸ these would be only the suffering of aging. Through accumulating the corresponding³⁰⁹ latencies, {98.2} there will again be a ripening into and wandering in cyclic existence. This is unrelated to the path to enlightenment.

From *Sutra Requested by the Open Awareness Rishi (Rig pa drong srong gis zhus ba'i mdo)*:

Unless they realize the view of the great nirvana
 The disciplined ones, male and female [monks and nuns]
 Shaving their heads, {98.3} washing their faces, maintaining vows
 Through however much pain they give their body in this life
 They just foster the pain of aging and
 Later, having accumulated the corresponding³¹⁰ latencies,
 Are destined for birth where hungry ghosts live,
 Not even attaining a human body.

Also, *Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra* says: {98.4}

Upasaka and Rishis' lower vehicles
 Consider physical suffering a cause of enlightenment but
 How can butter come from water?

The same text says:

Similarly, enlightenment is not attained through
 The pure asceticism of Upasakas, Rishis, and others. {98.5}

³⁰⁴. Through recognition.

³⁰⁵. Of whatsoever activity.

³⁰⁶. Great.

³⁰⁷. Individual Rishis.

³⁰⁸. Also suffering.

³⁰⁹. Activities of a hungry ghost.

³¹⁰. Activities of a hungry ghost.

Like a caterpillar ensnared in the thread it unravels,
 Through the main and ancillary vows and so forth
 Thoughts arise and bind one ever faster!
 Asceticism and holding vows counter the principle of
 completeness.³¹¹

Through unmisstakenly realizing the view which is the definitive meaning {98.6}, once whatsoever activities of ethics, vows, and pledges and so forth one does are realized to be mindnature, they are understood as allies of bon-nature, not separate from the principle. Therefore, these ethics and so forth will be causes of the great enlightenment, and one will be free from the suffering of the eight non-leisures. {99.1}

Also, *White Shen Deity Mindheart Scripture* says:

If one unmisstakenly understands the definitive meaning just as it is
 Whatever virtuous activities one collects, pledges, mantras, or vows
 Are not separate from that [meaning], but {99.2} become allies of it
 Therefore, one is definite to attain enlightenment free from the eight
 sufferings.

Samantabhadra and Scripture

Further, unless the view, the definitive principle, is unmisstakenly³¹² realized, even though one cultivates a nonconceptual calm state³¹³ one-pointedly and without the sense of an object there, one remains separate from the actual principle, the heart essence that is bon-nature {99.3} and again wanders in circles among three realms.

Further, the *Changeless, Ceaseless Expanse Scripture* (*g.Yung drung yangs pa can gyi lung*) says:

Though one cultivates a one-pointed nonconceptual calm state,
 Without the errorless definitive principle, just as it is,
 The demons directly {99.4} lead one to wander in circles.

What is it like, the view, the errorless meaning? Within an errorless meditative stability in which great wisdom errorlessly realize and internalizes the principle—the essential nature of things, their heart essence—there is no distinction between meditative equipoise and its aftermath. Therefore, even

^{311.} ED.: Dzogchen understands vows are primordially perfected rather than created by or grasped with thought.

^{312.} The mindnature which is wholeness (*sems nyid gnyag gcig*).

^{313.} Bon-nature.

without [conceptual or effortful] meditation {99.5}, you continually, without interruption, dwell in the actual state of the Buddha.

Further, *Heart Essence of Unified Space* (*sNying po'i myam kyi rgyud*)³¹⁴ claims:

When reflexive open awareness abides in meditative stability
There is no distinction between meditative equipoise and the
attainment following upon it.

Why? Because bon-nature is completely understood. {99.6}
To dwell there is great bliss itself.

Further, *Blissful Cakra* (*bDe ba'i 'khor lo*) says:

If one understands the heart essence, the essential nature, just as it is,
One neither rises from meditative stability, equipoise,
Nor parts from it without meditation.
This is the excellent Buddha state.

Also, {100.1} *Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra* says:

No delusion, no wandering, purified of samsara
Unsearched, unsearching; primordial just-is-ness
Unmeditated, unthought, beyond thought objects—
From this beyond, what is there to explain?

Also,

When these essential instructions are realized {100.2}
Unsearched for, there is an actual Buddha.

OBJECTION: Are the view and meditation separate (*so sor*) or not? If the former, it cannot be the Great Completeness; once there is imbalance between view and meditation, it becomes a lower vehicle.³¹⁵ Or, because one has realized the view, meditation is pointless,³¹⁶ so that view and meditation {100.3} would be unconnected (*ma 'brel*).³¹⁷ Or, one should meditate on something other than the view. Why? Because they are different (*tha dad*).

If it is the latter [if view and meditation are not separate], there would be no need to teach view and meditation as two.

314. ED.: This phrase refers to the union of internal and external space.

315. Because they are different.

316. Separate from [the definitive] meaning.

317. ED.: *ya* here signifies the opposite of being a pair. Mādhyamika logic depends very much on the idea that if you accept one thing, you have to reject its opposite: in order to say right, you have to say left. This is the principle of *dngos 'gal*. Dzogchen does not tend to work with the category of *dngos 'gal*.

RESPONSE: It is not like that. That view and meditation are one³¹⁸ {100.4} does not contradict the mere convention that discusses them as two. Further, [meditation] is primordially included within the view, which is errorless understanding and realization. Therefore, in the sense of doing something purposeful,³¹⁹ there is no meditation.

OBJECTION: If there is no meditation whatever, this too would be nihilistic.

RESPONSE: In order to eliminate the pitfalls of the lower vehicles, it is said that there is no meditation. {100.5} The principle of Great Completeness is primordially freed from the extremes of meditation as existent or nonexistent. Both existence and nonexistence dwell in a single entity [contradictions are dissolved].

OBJECTION: But how can there be a meditator without meditation?

RESPONSE: One is undistracted within the spontaneously occurring mindnature; therefore, this is not nihilism. Moreover, *Heart Essence of the Changeless, Ceaseless Continuum* (*rGyud g.yung drung snying po*) says:

To eliminate the Lower Vehicle pitfalls

I, Lord of Bon, explain “there is no meditation.”

In fact, it is beyond the extremes of existence or nonexistence.

The actual basis of both is the one, wholeness itself.

Also, *Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra* {101.1} says:

Everything being Buddha

For what are you looking?

For what are you meditating?

For what are you practicing?

In this regard, Great Completeness means

Doing meditation is deluded.

And:

View and meditation are nondual. In this essential instruction
{101.2}

The power of the view clarifies meditation

The power of meditation produces the view

How could view and meditation be different?

Everything is nondual, the body of wholeness.

318. Different in meaning.

319. Focusing the mind (*blo gdad*). ED.: This refers to focusing with grasping; focusing that does not grasp, as in the case of open awareness, is a suitable state.

Also, from the same text:

When you realize everything is Buddha
 View, meditation, do not dwell as two {101.3}
 Meditation itself is the marvel of the view

And:

Buddhas are not found by meditation
 Nor lost by not meditating.
 Undistracted, maintain continuity.
 Thus, turning from this excellence leads to naught,
 There is no meditation more excellent than this. {101.4}

OBJECTION: Those who do not understand the view need bon-deeds, the unsurpassed perfections, but for those who do understand the meaning, is this necessary or not?

RESPONSE: Within realizing the view—one’s own uncontrived mind which is the bon-dimension—deeds of the unsurpassed perfections are naturally complete; therefore, {101.5} one does not need these deeds [to bring these perfections about] for one’s own welfare, but, empowered by previous prayers, one performs these deeds for the sake of others.³²⁰

The unsurpassed perfections and bon-activities are taught just as, for example, even though many jewels are gathered together, if one does not have an eye for identifying jewels, they might as well be ordinary rocks. {101.6} So also, even though one engages in bon-activities such as the unsurpassed perfections,³²¹ [without] view and meditation, {101.6} one remains an ordinary person.

Further, *Profound Lion Sutra (Seng ge zab mo'i mdo)* says:

Without realizing wisdom, the view’s heart essence,
 The five unsurpassables,³²² and
 Whatever bon-activities of conditioned virtue you do, {102.1}
 You are just a common person, ordinary,
 As jewels are ordinary for one who lacks eyes;
 Therefore,³²³ realize unsurpassed wisdom.

OBJECTION: Even if one realizes in this way, all unsurpassed perfections and bon-deeds, since they occur due to {102.2} effortful exertion (*'bad rtsol*), are³²⁴ faults of meditative stability and contradictory with this.³²⁵

320. ED.: *bon spyod* means good actions, not specifically the six perfections, though it could include these.

321. Whatever virtuous activity one does, [one is still] an ordinary person.

322. ED.: The ten refer to the ten perfections.

323. ED.: Text, which is unclear here, should read *des na*.

324. Effortful exertion.

325. Meditative stability (*bsam gtan*).

RESPONSE: There is no contradiction. The lower vehicle's one-pointedness of mind³²⁶ contradicts that,³²⁷ but when it comes to realizing the meaning of the Great Completeness, one does not subsequently take birth because one is not connected with conditioned {102.3} roots of virtue.

Nevertheless, [the deeds] of oneself and so forth are not wasted, for when actions are joined with the view of great wisdom, even performing the unsurpassed deeds, bon-perfections, does not contradict it. {102.4}

Also, *Expanse of the Nine HIDINGS Tantra* (*sBas pa dgu 'byams gyi rgyud*) says:

Shen practitioners who realize Great Completeness
Are unsullied by any latencies at all;
They thus take no other body and so
Have no connection ('brel ba med) with conditioned bon;
Held in the embrace of great wisdom,
They forsake not others' welfare {102.5} and so
Doing also is not contradicted.

Also, *Sun Suffusing the Thousand Directions, the Bon Teachings Tantra* says:

When you dwell well in the Great Completeness's principle,
You are unsullied by the three kinds of faults³²⁸ and so
You do not enter another womb-door.

Therefore, unconnected with conditioned bon-phenomena. {102.5}
You practice sowing what promotes³²⁹ others' welfare.

Also, *Scripture of the Seven Secrets* (*gSangs sde bdun lung*) claims:

If you realize the principle, you are not dressed in faults,
Accumulate no latencies (*bag chags*)
And take no rebirth. Thus, conditioned bon-phenomena do not help!
Bon deeds are wed to wisdom, done {103.1} for the sake of others.

OBJECTION: Even if one does not need compounded roots of virtue for oneself, one does need them for the sake of others; therefore, the welfares of oneself and others are contradictory.

RESPONSE: They are not contradictory. If one unmisleadingly (*phyin ci ma log bar*) realizes one's own mindnature, one also understands all the bon-phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana, internal and external, as the great unbounded wholeness (*thig le chen po nyag gcig*). Therefore, both the welfare

326. Known as calm abiding.

327. Meditative stability.

328. ED.: This might refer to the *khor gsum*—that is, the fault of wrongly reifying as inherently existent the agent, action, and its object; for example, giver, giving, and gift.

329. ED.: *phabs rtsis*—a substance something like yeast; in this case a metaphor for what makes compassion rise (Ponlob Thrinley Nyima Rinpoche).

of oneself and the welfare of others are spontaneously perfected,³³⁰ one abides naturally within the great equality that is the nonduality of Buddhas and sentient beings. Because there are no narrowly purposeful activities, {103.3} there is no contradiction.

Further, *Expansive Sky Tantra* says:

Even though the Shen practitioner has no need of compounded
virtues for her own sake

In order to guide unrealized sentient beings, for the sake of others,
Realized persons engage in gradually teaching what is necessary to
whoever is in need.

In fact, the two [compounded and uncompounded virtues] are not
divisible; they are one entity.

Also, *Very Expansive Dynamism Tantric Scripture (Rab rtsal rgyas pa'i rgyud)*
says:

E Ma Ho

For Shen practitioners who realize their own minds,
Their own and others' welfare spontaneously exist;
Therefore, whatever is required for the welfare of others
Is not contradictory with any virtuous bon-activity
And is not done for the sake of one's own welfare.
Why? Because they are the one unbounded wholeness.

Therefore, in the Great Vehicle of Definitions, everything³³¹ is conceptual and done for a purpose: accomplishing the path, enlightened activities, and views of realization. [But] this is like washing away blood with blood,³³² {103.6} for it takes one's usual [samsaric] conceptions and heaps further, purpose-oriented thought upon them. The effect attained is conceptual; one is not liberated.

Also, according to the assertions of the vehicle free from elaborations [the Great Completeness], through the comprehension of the consciousness which understands the two truths, {104.1} this which appears vividly (*wa le*) and brilliantly (*khyug ge*) is said to be only conventional truth. The open awareness free from elaborations,³³³ empty and selfless, is said to be the ultimate truth.

OBJECTION: But then the appearance of two moons to a deluded eye consciousness {104.2} or the appearance of self, permanence, and so forth to

330. ED.: "Narrowly purposeful activities" (*ched du bya wa*) is in contrast with the spontaneously perfected (*lhun gyi sgrub ba*).

331. Negating and proving; abandoning and adopting.

332. Stain with stain.

333. The eight.

a deluded mental consciousness would also exist. Why? Because they exist as conventional truths.

RESPONSE: Are you saying that these exist for the entity of the deluded consciousness or {104.3} for the reasoning consciousness?³³⁴ If the first, this is acceptable, since we do not assert the existence of things;³³⁵ reasoned analysis does not enter here, just as it makes no sense to kill someone who is already dead.

If you ask whether it exists for a reasoning consciousness, this is refuted through the analysis of the one and many. Once it does not exist for a reasoning consciousness, it does not inherently exist. Therefore it is a convention. Because it does not exist in that way [inherently], even the very nonexistence of its refutation is not established.³³⁶

OBJECTION: However, since neither existence nor nonexistence is established ultimately, {104.4} are you maintaining that it is utterly nonexistent, (*cir yang ma yin par*) [as a third alternative to saying it is existent or nonexistent]?

RESPONSE: This explanation³³⁷ is intended to overcome the adhering attraction to existence and nonexistence. However, ultimately we also do not assert that it is utterly nonexistent. {104.5}

OBJECTION: Insofar as you do not assert things to be utterly nonexistent, do you not thereby find them to be utterly existent?³³⁸

RESPONSE: This would contradict reasoning. For example, since there are no limits to the sky, there is also no center. We do not assert any existence or nonexistence.³³⁹ {105.1}

Thus, the two truths are presented on the basis of the two types of consciousness, if whatever appears is comprehended by a consciousness that comprehends the two truths. That which exists for the understanding of a consciousness that comprehends conventionalities {105.2} does not exist for a consciousness that comprehends the ultimate because it exists for a deluded understanding.

That which does not exist for a consciousness comprehending the ultimate does exist for a consciousness comprehending the conventional; it does not exist for a reasoning consciousness. Unanalyzed, it exists simply in terms of one's own inclination.³⁴⁰

334. ED.: These two types of consciousness are very much set in contrast to one another in the sutra systems.

335. What is wrong if this exists for a deluded [consciousness]?

336. ED.: "Nonexistent" refers to the way the opponent is presumed to hold on to it, that is, grasping it, and thus grasping at emptiness inappropriately.

337. [Of phenomena] as nonestablished.

338. Not accepting either the extremes or the middle?

339. ED.: Here the text speaks from a Lower Vehicle perspective.

340. ED.: *nyams dga' tsam* means, "just as one likes"—that is, whatever you want to exist, exists for you, as long as you don't question it.

Further, if one analyzes [such things, they are] simply unable to bear analysis. [The definition vehicle] asserts it so. The explanation [attacking sutra perspectives on reasoning] that refutes this has been given above because, to begin with, you asserted the two truths. There would be two compartments for knowable objects. I do not assert the two truths because I assert an unwaveringness from within one great wholeness, an especially superior [view].

Also, since conventionally you assert the afflicted and thoroughly pure as existent, and, because you distinguish between objects and minds, you are extremists regarding existence. {105.5} And, because ultimately you assert nothing whatever and nonexistence, you come to an extreme of annihilation.

From the first, I do not make twofold discriminations among bon-phenomena. I assert the self-clarity of the mindnature. Hence, this very special [view] is not touched by the two extremes.

Further, when you refute appearance through the reasoning of one and many, are you refuting through the power of opposites ('gal), or are you refuting through the power of connection ('brel ba)? In the first case, when you exclude something by way of contradiction, then something [else] is implied. For example, when you bring in the sensation of heat, {106.1} you eliminate the sensation of cold. In that way, in the process of excluding (*rnam par bcad*) appearance through reasoning, an inclusive assessment is made (*yongs su gcod*) so that there is an absence of one and many. [For this absence itself is an appearance.] Hence, there would be an extreme of [grasping at] the one and many.

If you eliminate the one and many, you will be in an extreme of appearance.³⁴¹ Therefore, you cannot [refute extremes] through the power of contradiction.³⁴²

Nor can it be the second case [refutation through connection]. In terms of connections, there are [the connection between] cause and effect and [the connection between] the pervaded and the pervader. Of these, one cannot refute by way of cause and effect because the causes of appearances are not free (*bral*) from being either one or many.

OBJECTION: There is refutation by way of pervasion, for once appearances are pervaded by being one or many, if one and many are reversed, appearances³⁴³ are also overturned; therefore, because there is a lack of one and of many, there are no appearances.

RESPONSE: But are you saying that there are no appearances due to the

341. ED.: The point is that when making an inclusive judgment, something that is absent, that is neither one nor many (*gcig dang du ma bral ba*), is proven to exist.

342. ED.: For contradiction inevitably divides wholeness and thus cannot access it.

343. ED.: Any perception of an object is accompanied by a sense that it is one or many. Thus, the text argues that appearances are always imbued or pervaded by the quality of being singular or multiple. This, then, is the measure of being an appearing object.

lack of any inherent (*yang dag*) one or many, or are you saying that there are no appearances due to a lack of one or many appearances? {106.4}

It is not the first case. Even though not [inherently] being a pervader lacks being one or many, not being [inherently] pervaded, what is wrong if there is no refutation of any kind of an appearance that is the object pervaded? There is no pervasion.

It is also not the second case [that because there is separation from one and many there are no appearances]. Appearances are not established as separate from being one or many, because some appearances are one, and some are many. Therefore, your assertion is not correct.

[This concludes the refutation of one and many.] {106.6}

Further, the thesis is that the bon-phenomenon, the appearance which is experienced, is without inherent cause and effect because it is free from the four extremes of production, being produced from itself and so forth, like, for example, flowers in the sky. {107.1}

At the time of presenting the syllogism of the reasoning of the great changeless, ceaseless, fragments (*g.yung drung gzegs chen gyi gtan tshigs*), the bon-subject [of the syllogism] is itself a negated object; the bon-subject [is also] a negator. Since there is no [analytical] difference in the activities of overturning the bon-subject and the object negated, does the reason, freedom from the four types of production, reside in the bon-subject or not?

If you say it does not, there would be the fault of the reasoning not being established. If [the reasoning does abide in the subject], then since the reason resides in categories at odds (*mi mthun*) with the negated object, that reasoning would be contradictory or indefinite.

Therefore, because your assertions {107.3} and so forth are conjoined with the lower vehicle's purposeful conceptuality and effortful accomplishment, they are deluded. The mindnature that is the great completeness is free from all extremes of conceptuality, primordially passed beyond the disease of effortful accomplishment {107.4} because of being primordially free from the three: abandoning, including, and adhering.³⁴⁴ Therefore, it is not an object engaged in by the lower vehicles.

Further, *Great Sky Beyond Effort* says:

I, the great ancestor of all vehicles

Am primordially without abandonment, inclusion, or adherence

Primordially beyond the illness of effortful accomplishment

Primordially free from the extremes of permanence and annihilation.

Primordially untouched by the lower vehicles

All those desire me, [but] through effortful accomplishment

344. ED.: Text reads *spas* meaning “move, transpose, change.” We read it, however, as *spang*, which frequently appears throughout the text as the first member of this well-known triad.

They are again seized by the disease of thinking.
 Seeing indefinite essence does not occur. {107.6}
 Therefore [this teaching] is not for the ordinary everyone.

Also, *Spontaneously Complete Innate Awareness Tantra* says:

E Ma Ho.
 Marvelous
 This great Samantabhadra realm being
 Primordially the essence of great bliss,
 Tis a pity to make effort now
 The lower vehicles are great contrivances:
 A fox, even though making a lion's sound {108.1}
 Will never be an actual lion.

Also, *Essence Dwelling as Space Tantra* (*sNying po'i nam mkha' ltar gnas pa'i rgyud*) says:

I, the great self-arisen, dwelling just so
 Am primordially known as the ancestor of all bon-phenomena.
 Whoever effortfully searches, desirous to find me,
 Becomes tired, not finding even over many eons;
 This meaning of mine is not for the ordinary everyone
 Trying to contrive a me that is not me cannot be the same. {108.2}

Also, *Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra* says:

The enlightened transmission of effortless unbounded wholeness—
 Such teachings are not for the ordinary everyone.
 The great Garuda's ascent through space
 Is not common to ordinary birds.
 The lion's leaping in snow
 Is not common to those with ordinary claws or hoofs.³⁴⁵

The same text also says:

Some claim as the Great Vehicle what is not the Great Vehicle.
 Even though a criminal's son holds the place of a king, he cannot
 maintain it.
 Like covering a donkey with a lion's skin.
 A stone, even when polished, is not a great jewel.
 How can a tree grow from coal?
 And those adopting the Great Vehicle without being of the Great
 Vehicle
 Cannot see its meaning. {108.5}

345. ED.: *sder chags* refers to animals with nails or hoofs—that is, not birds.

Also, the same text says:

As for persons on the path of effortful accomplishment:
 Though silver be melted, iron does not arise.
 Though a whitish stone³⁴⁶ be cleansed, it is no jewel.
 Though coal be beautified, it is no tree.
 Though descriptive phrases be written, they are inferior to scripture.
 How can the meaning of this Great Completeness be understood by
 others?³⁴⁷

White Shen Deity Mindheart Scripture says:

E Ma Ho.

Marvelous

This Great Completeness, wholeness which is mindnature—
 Lesser [persons] cannot understand this, however much they analyze:
 An ocean cannot be consumed by ladling {109.1}
 You cannot account for or number
 A mountain's grains of sand
 Nor grab space with your hands;
 Through reversing a river flow you cannot send it back.
 Nothing can be proved by analyzing with words of reasoning.

Clearing away Faults (skyon gsal ba) {109.2}

Regarding this, clearing away the faults of understanding the scriptural words which are the teachings of the Great Completeness:

OBJECTION: The word of your teacher, those valid and definitive scriptural words, were they spoken by a Buddha who was once a sentient being, or were they taught and explained by someone who doesn't have a sentient being as a cause? {109.3} If they were spoken by a teacher who was not a sentient being, that Buddha would lack consciousness and awareness; the five elements would be the Bon dimension,³⁴⁸ and thus there would be no need even to realize the mindnature. {109.4}

If they were spoken by a Buddha who was once a sentient being, Samantabhadra himself would also have a teacher and would have become a Buddha after purifying obstructions, having previously been a sentient being. Why? Because you spoke of a Buddha who was once a sentient being.

If you agree, then the basic bon-nature (*gzhi bon*) would be false. In that case, the path of the bon-phenomenon would also be false. If you say that path

346. ED.: *mchong bu* is a semi-precious stone described as grey-white in color.

347. ED.: That is, followers of the lower vehicles.

348. ED.: If one with no mind can be a Buddha, then the elements could be Buddha, too, since they also have no mind.

and base are one, there would be no difference between the realized and the unrealized. Therefore, there is also no need for the Tathāgatas' word. {109.6}

RESPONSE: It is not like that. The very essence, unadorned by either the faults of cyclic existence or the good qualities of nirvana, the superior Essential Nature dimension, the primordial wisdom {110.1} of the primordial meaning which belongs neither to Buddhas nor sentient beings, having been realized and understood by Samantabhadra,³⁴⁹ and that essence having been extracted from the center of Samantabhadra's heartmind (*thugs*), and explained through the blessings [of Samantabhadra],³⁵⁰—this is the definitive authentic scripture of the teacher. {110.2}

Also, the *Essence of the Precious View Tantra* (*Rin po che'i lta ba'i snying po'i rgyud*) says:

The errorless, definitively authentic great scripture
 Prior to either Buddhas or sentient beings
 Through the Essential Dimension, the great ancestor
 Worldlessly realizes the meaning in the heartmind of Samantabhadra
 Extracts the essence of blessings of that heartmind.

Also, *Essential Wholeness* (*sNying po nyag gcig*), the *Changeless, Ceaseless Essence Tantra* says:

Prior to either cyclic existence or nirvana
 Is the ancestor, realization which is me, source that is All Good
 (Samantabhadra)
 Such is the forerunner of all Buddhas.
 I am their progenitor, for I am their ancestor.
 Explanations blessed by the heart of Samantabhadra are the scriptures.

Also, *Seeking Definitive Meaning* (*Nges don rdzad bcod*) says:

I, abiding prior even to the Buddhas
 I, abiding prior also to sentient beings
 I, abiding prior even to the elements
 I have no boundaries; others have boundaries.
 Therefore, the adventitious Samantabhadra
 Is the Samantabhadra who arises through realizing me.
 By the blessings of this, there are definitive scriptures. {110.5}

Also, *Changeless, Ceaseless Primordial Completeness* says:

349. The basis of all which is the very essence of the basis (*gzhi'i ngo bo nyid kun gzhi*).

350. ED.: The point being that his teachings arise through his own blessings, in connection with his own experience, so no effort is involved. Whereas the hard-working Old Testament Creator-deity rested on the seventh day, Samantabhadra is characterized as always in restful ease.

Realization arises for me, Samantabhadra
 Via blessings of the sole single ancestor
 Not being deluded, it is known thus³⁵¹
 From the center of the heart of Samantabhadra
 Extracting the essence, explaining [this] through blessings
 This is the authentic and great definitive scripture. {III.1}
 Clear like the moon in water, appearanceless.
 Like the lotus, naked of fault—
 Spontaneous beauty, massive like the king of mountains.

Also, *Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra* says:

Because of Teacher's great compassion
 In extracting essence from that heart's center,
 Scripture which explains by way of blessings
 Is scripture of knowledge, the single effortless one:
 This is the king of all scriptures
 Powerfully piercing, like the great Garuda
 Leaping strongly like the lion
 Extending everywhere like the sky.
 Moistening everything like the ocean.

In brief, the dynamic display and blessings themselves of the single one, the teacher who abides prior to Buddhas and sentient beings, come to be errorlessly realized as one's own open awareness by the Buddha Samantabhadra, the blessedly empowered explanations known as valid scripture.

Further, if you speak to persons who are either distractedly excited (*'chal ba*) by the eight vehicles or who adhere to a common Great Completeness, they are frightened and harmed. Due to their condition of non-faith, being doubtful, they will come to bad rebirths. Therefore, keep this very secret. {III.5} Also, *Complete Clear Light Mindnature Tantra* (*Sems nyid 'od gsal rdzogs pa'i rgyud*) says:

If the essential nature itself of the great ancestor, the adventitious Samantabhadra,
 Is taught to persons distractedly excited by lower vehicles
 Their heart explodes into fear and hatred
 Because of their derogatory denials, those without respect are plunged
 into bad rebirths.
 Therefore, keep this very secret.

351. ED.: That is, as Samantabhadra—for one's own undeluded mind is Samantabhadra. Here the “I” or narrator of the poem is Samantabhadra; above it was the Great Completeness, the meaning is the same, for this Great Completeness is the *dgongs pa* or enlightened knowing of Samantabhadra. As a term, “Dzogchen” sometimes refers to a tenet system, sometimes to a state of realization.

Self-contrived understanding, loose with truth,
 Will never see me at all.
 I do not exist [for them]; all bon-phenomena are also adventitious³⁵²
 It is a great pity to be like that.

Also, *White Shen Deity Mindheart Scripture* says:

For persons whose minds are focused on ways
 Opposed to the Very Essential Dimension of phenomena (*ngo bo nyid sku*) {112.1}
 Exaggeration or devaluation are
 Not different in nonrealization.
 This is an approach to the bad migration of hell.
 Therefore the Great Completeness is superior to others.

Also, *Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra* says: {112.2}

Through devaluation opposed to this [Great Completeness]
 Some demean the Great Vehicle's meaning
 Or exaggerate about the peak from within an enclosure
 Or engage in devaluation;
 Such sentient beings are born in hell.

Also, the same text says:

To criticize this without understanding its meaning {112.3}
 Is like killing all beings in the three realms simultaneously.

Also, *Deep and Secret Definitive Completeness Scripture* (*gSangs gting rdzogs nges pa'i lung*) says:

The description of my errorless ways
 Explodes the heart of the eight blind ones.³⁵³
 Children fear the Great Completeness and hate it. {112.4}
E Ma Ho! Marvelous!
 Therefore, keep very secret, teach few vessels only
 Because otherwise, through derogatory denials of this,
 Blind children will stumble into hell.
 Therefore renounce childish desires
 Rest your gaze on self-arisen wholeness. {112.5}
 This was said by the White Shen Deity.

OBJECTION: If there are such definitive scriptures by the teacher, are there reasons for [finding them to be so] or not? If so, what are they?

352. ED.: There is no Samantabhadra *dgongs pa* that is *not* adventitious.

353. ED.: Followers of the eight lower vehicles.

RESPONSE: If there were no reason to consider scriptures valid, they would be indefinite and dubious. There are four great reasonings: (1) they are spoken by the bon-dimension Buddha, (2) they teach only the definitive meaning, (3) they are special [teachings on] secret mantra, and (4) in addressing all issues they [provide] general commentary on all vehicles. All these being addressed, {113.1} they definitely are scriptures of the teacher. These become a resource for the faithful.

Also, *Sun Suffusing the Thousand Directions* says:

Through the blessings of the bon-dimension
 Samantabhadra errorlessly taught the definitive meaning
 The special feature, the peak of secret mantra {113.3}
 The core meaning (*snying pa'i don*) which addresses all needs,
 A general commentary on all vehicles.
 Therefore, there are four reasons [regarding] scripture.

The definitive causal vehicle is said to be lower [than the Great Completeness] for four reasons: {113.3} (1) It is taught verbally by the Emanation Body; (2) in terms of the two truths,³⁵⁴ it states a meaning that requires interpretation; (3) it does not have the special features of secret mantra; (4) it is explained by way of meeting with the superior or middling capacity of a person;³⁵⁵ their own texts are [therefore] not reliable.³⁵⁶

Therefore, the lower vehicles are said to be inferior in character.

Also, *Sutra Prophesying Compassion (Thugs rje bstan gyi mdo)* says:

The melodious sounds of all words spoken from the emanation dimension
 To persons of refined, middling, and lesser sensibilities
 Are not the great special meaning of secret mantra
 In relation to the two truths,³⁵⁷ only a secondary meaning is taught.
 Because their own texts are unreliable, they are
 Known as the causal definition vehicle.

Overcoming Objections to the Essential Instructions³⁵⁸ of the Experiential Transmission

Before, from the upper boundary which is the dimension of the Essential Nature³⁵⁹ [Samantabhadra] down to the lower boundary of lesser humans

354. Ultimate and conventional.

355. Their level of mind (*blo'i rim pa*).

356. ED.: Dzogchen, in its own view, is taught because it is so—other teachings are stated in a certain way because that is what a person wishes or needs to hear.

357. Conventional and ultimate.

358. Authentic (*tshad ma*).

359. ED.: The *ngo bo nyid sku* is part of the *bon sku*.

{113.5} this teaching has been taught. These essential instructions have remained unbroken, and these essential instructions³⁶⁰ are taught to followers by the Masters who posses them. Is the teaching of these essential instructions one with what has existed primordially, or are {114.1} they teaching something [previously] nonexistent, which arises adventitiously?

If a primordially existent meaning is taught, what is the need to teach that which has existed primordially? There would be the fault of establishing what has already been established. If the teaching is something adventitious that did not exist previously, there is no cause for showing the nonexistent because [the nonexistent] is not observed; it cannot be shown, as with the horns of a rabbit. Or, the essential precept would be superimposed (*sgro 'dogs*) because of showing adventitiously that which is primordially nonexistent.

RESPONSE: {114.2} This essential precept does not adventitiously arise from what did not previously exist; it teaches a meaning that has existed primordially. There is no fault regarding that.³⁶¹ Mindnature, which is the very essence {114.3} of enlightenment, is primordially self arisen in the single one, a resource one has within oneself yet does not recognize,³⁶² for example, like the treasure of the poor woman. Recognition functions when this essential precept is pointed out.

Also *Cakra of the Open Awareness Ornament* (*Rig pa rgyan gyi 'khor lo*) says: {114.4}

Even though definitely existing primordially in oneself
Not realizing that it exists, one wanders in delusion
Through teachings by masters possessed of [authentic] scriptures.
When essential instructions are taught, clarity is manifest.

Also, *Changeless, Ceaseless Dance Empowerment Tantra* (*g.Yung drung gar dbang rgyud*) says: {114.5}

The very essence abides primordially.
Due to unawareness one does not realize this.
Through teaching the essential precept, it is clearly seen.
Like when a person whose face is unseen
Is shown a mirror, it is seen.

And *Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra* says: {114.6}

This hidden very secret essential precept³⁶³
Dwelling in the nature of all beings

360. Such as the lama Shenrab.

361. Of establishing what has already been established.

362. That very essence which one possesses.

363. The wholeness (*nyag gcig*).

Though always together with your face, you do not see that face
 Although you have everything needed [for enlightenment],
 You have not reached the source of mind.

Despite the jewels just beneath her, the poor woman dies from
 hunger. {115.1}

Mind seeing the mind [recognizes] the meaning within you.
 That meaning, the mother wholeness, is not found anywhere else.

OBJECTION: When the essential precept is taught through the teaching of your master, is there need for some contrivance {115.2} in the eight-fold collection of consciousnesses, or is teaching not necessary? If contrivance is required, this contradicts the statement that in the system of the Great Completeness the mindnature of all bon-phenomena is primordially uncontrived. This would be like the lower vehicles.³⁶⁴ If there were no contrivance on account of the essential instructions, there would be no need for the meaning to be taught by the essential instructions, and ordinary persons would be the same (as enlightened ones).

Further *Scripture of the Expansive Samantabhadra* (*Kun bzang yangs pa'i lung*) says:

If there is change in the consciousness of unrealized
 Ordinary beings, it becomes common calm abiding. {115.4}
 This contradicts the meaning of Great Completeness uncontrived.
 The uncontrived, the actual, will not change
 As with ordinary persons.

Regarding this, among the eight collections of consciousness, some need to be altered, {115.5} and others do not. The consciousnesses of the five sense doors require no alteration.³⁶⁵ Appearances are grasped as objects by the deluded [mind], thereby increasing thought's³⁶⁶ predisposition for adhering to objects that are not actually established. [The five senses] do not become³⁶⁷ obstacles to enlightenment, for they dwell as the bon-dimension in one's own body.

Also, the same text says:

The meaning itself is uncontrived [requiring no alteration].
 Through continual awareness, the bon-dimension is clear.

Also, {116.1} *Method for Establishing the Mind of Enlightenment* (*Byang chub sems gyi gzhag thab*) says:

364. Because contrivance is required.

365. ED.: Seeing itself is not grasping, but the conceptual mind grasps at something it itself has made, which is not actually there on the object.

366. Is an object grasped by a grasper.

367. Established as.

Regarding five doors and their objects, no contrivance is required
 Because there is in fact no grasping at what is not there
 The very essence within the body
 Is unwavering and steady.

No contrivance is necessary regarding the mind basis of all consciousness {116.2} because its own nature dwells in the bon-dimension. Also, the same text says:

If one leaves the allbase unaltered, bliss is there.
 If one leaves water unstirred, it is clear.
 The character of even deluded consciousness in oneself
 Is the nature of the very bon-dimension.
 Once changed, {116.3} it becomes something else.

The mental consciousness and the afflicted mind need to be altered through essential instructions. It must be altered to show that the mental consciousness is the bon-dimension, that the adventitiously afflicted mind is like clouds vanishing in space {116.4} or ice melting in the ocean. When it comes to teaching, alteration is required in order to cut the continuum of what is primordially nonexistent. Also, the same text³⁶⁸ says:

The mind, conjoined with thought and with causality
 Alters when shown to be
 The unborn bon-dimension.
 The afflicted mind, grasper of I,
 Like clouds in the sky or ice in the ocean,
 Alters when its continuity is cut.

Because the five doors and the basis of all are uncontrived, there is no contradiction with the principle (*don*) of all bon-phenomena of the mindnature, the Great Completeness, being uncontrived. {116.6} Through the requisite alteration of the mental consciousness and the afflicted mind by way of the essential precept, the principle of mindnature is realized; therefore, this is not an ordinary person;³⁶⁹ thus, one needs the essential instructions.

Moreover, *Jewels Shining Like Light Tantra* (*Rin po che'i 'od ltar 'bar ba'i rgyud*) says: {117.1}

In the natural condition of mind, the Great Completeness,
 There is neither contrived nor uncontrived; this is clear
 “Contrived” is a mere convention in relation to clarity.
 The five doors are clear, uncontrived primordial wisdom

³⁶⁸ Enlightenment.

³⁶⁹ Who realizes.

The uncontrived allbase is the blissful bon-dimension. {117.2}
 The afflicted latencies are like disappearing clouds
 The mind realizes itself as the bon-dimension.³⁷⁰
 Therefore, this completeness is free of effort and without aspects.

Overcoming Objections to the Authenticity of the Experience of One's Own Open Awareness

OBJECTION: The assertion that meditation involving open awareness is in principle a clear, unwavering nonconceptuality would [mean that Dzogchen is] the same as the great definition vehicle, because these experiences exist in the lower vehicles. {117.3}

RESPONSE: This is contradictory. If clarity is experienced as a feeling, nonconceptuality would deteriorate. {117.4} Therefore, how can there be [both such] clarity and an experience of unwavering nonconceptuality?

Further, *Open Awareness, Treasure Cave of the Eons* (*Rig pa bskal srid kyi mdzod phug*) says:

Those who enter into the principle of concentration³⁷¹

Experience clarity and unwavering nonconceptuality.

Therefore, to have one and not the other contradicts your own words. {117.5}

If clarity exists, how can there be nonconceptuality?

If there is nonconceptuality, how could there be clarity?

These foci³⁷² are contradictory, like the feel of cold and the feel of heat.

First, this is not the same as the clarity and nonconceptuality of the lower vehicles. For example, the two, a gold pot {117.6} and a clay pot, although the same in being pot, are different in substance (*rgyu*). Similarly, although both the higher and lower vehicles are similar in having meditative stability, their ways of experiencing are different. These terms are similar, but the meanings' measure of the lower vehicles [has to do with the] consciousness's observing an object and the {118.1} mind's focusing ardently on clarity and nonconceptuality. Having done so, there is an experience of mere clarity, which is a nonconceptual grasping.

Further, *Sutra of Pure Brahmanical Melody* (*sGra dbyangs tshangs ba'i mdo*) says:

370. ED.: The text should read *skur*; *yid* here is synonymous with *sem*. When mind (*sems*) realizes itself as open awareness, then it is no longer mind (*sems*). Thus, Buddha has *ngo bo nyid rtog pa*, but not *rtogs pa*.

371. ED.: *bsam gtan, dhyāna*.

372. ED.: *dmigs pa*.

Greetings to you, Shenrab King.

When one meditatively surrenders to one pointed focus, without an object, {118.2}

While within³⁷³ a mere nonconceptuality regarding mind-objects

An experience of grasping arises,³⁷⁴

This falls away from the errorless definitive meaning.

Within the Great Completeness all bon-phenomena are unmixed,³⁷⁵ wholly complete in the clarity of the great unbounded whole (*thig le chen po*); one's own self-awareness experiences this meaning effortlessly {118.3} and without falling [to any extremes]. Moreover, because mindnature is not a thing, even Buddha could not teach that "the meaning of this is the excellent insight which arises."

Moreover, the same text says:

The great errorless definitive meaning

The primordial lack of subject and object

The mindnature which does not fall into partiality

One's own open awareness itself is not a thing and

Dwells without moving forth from this [natural state of mind].

Also, *Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra* says:

The undwelling, unseen emptiness, an inclination {118.4}

That, like a stammerer's dream, is difficult to indicate as "this."

Who can understand this undemonstrable meaning? {118.5}

Other than Buddhas themselves, no one can.

Also, the same text says:

Awareness of this is not indicated even by me.

The difficulty of indicating "this" is the heart of Samantabhadra.

Also, the same text says: {118.6}

Looking at the mind, it is like that:

There is nothing whatever to be seen

373. ED.: *Zhe* here means "inside the mind." This has to do with important differences between sutra and Dzogchen regarding the meaning of *bden snang* and *bden 'dzin, gsal ba*, and *mi rtog pa*. In the sutra or definition vehicles, clarity and nonconceptuality are intermittent, whereas in Dzogchen practice they have the potential to be continuous. This again, Lopon Tenzin Namdak in particular points out, relates to the point that the state of *rig pa* is not a consciousness. Likewise, unbounded wholeness, *thig le gnyag gcig*, is not caused. This is why clarity can be emptiness, and emptiness clarity. It will be a marvelous project to make a close comparison between Bon and Buddhist texts on this. Longchen Rabjam's will be an important source for such a comparison.

374. ED.: The mind is not grasping at the object but it does have some quality of adherence (*zhen pa*) in itself. Or you can say that there is no *bden 'dzin* but there is *bden snang*.

375. Equal.

Originally this has the very essence of nonexistence.
Become naturally familiar (*dris*) with that.

Also, *Sun Suffusing the Thousand Directions* says:

In this unsurpassedly special Great Completeness {119.1}
The mind looking for the mind does not find mind
Because clear light is without object, obscuration, or thingness;
An unbiased positioning.
One brings together (*mnyam*) clarity and nonconceptuality.
Regarding this, there is no fault whatsoever
Of one existing and the other not.

Also, *Sutra of the Miraculous Gods* (*gSas³⁷⁶ rje 'phrul gyi mdo*) says:

The Definition Vehicles' Compassionately Minded Ones³⁷⁷
And the Changeless, Ceaseless Ones,³⁷⁸ these two

Assert actual mind as clear and
Emptiness as nonconceptual,
Because opposing one to the other would descend into bias
To assert clarity together with nonconceptuality contradicts your own
words.³⁷⁹ {119.3}

The experience of the great definition vehicle does not permit [simultaneous] clarity and nonconceptuality. Assertions³⁸⁰ by the Compassionately Minded Ones maintain that the substance of the mind is experienced as clear and aware; from that perspective, there is no nonconceptuality at all. If this is so, the mind would not exist at all. {119.4}

According to the Changelessly Ceaselessly Minded Ones, all bon-objects, which are empty, are considered to be thoughts, lacking self, that are pacified of all elaborations. From that perspective, self-awareness is asserted as lacking clarity. If this were so, due to being established by reasoning, {119.5} it would really (*yang dag bar*) exist.

Therefore, in these two assertions, each is opposed to the other. Because of falling to an extreme of difference, the above-mentioned errors ensue. However, *Mindnature Which Is the Great Completeness* (*Sems nyid rdzogs pa chen po*) says:

376. ED.: A Bon term for *hla* (god, deity).

377. ED.: Bon term for Cittamātra.

378. ED.: Followers of Mādhyamika.

379. ED.: A state of clarity without grasping, this is one interpretation of "clear and empty" *gsal stong*, or in other contexts "appearing and empty" (*snang stong*). These are supposed to be one mind; any apparent separation between them is an error.

380. On awareness.

Although reflexive open awareness is thingless
 Just that very thinglessness is aware of itself {119.6}
 Hence not fractured into opposites.
 Clarity itself is nonconceptuality;
 That very nonconceptuality, clear reflexive open awareness.
 Their unduality nonduality, the mother wholeness.
 Unfindable elsewhere, it is experienced through oneself. {120.1}

For, these two do not fall into extremes of difference; they dwell primordially as self-arisen in wholeness (*nyag gcig*). Therefore, they are primordially free from the faults mentioned above. Therefore, in the great vehicle of the Great Completeness, all bon-phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana are primordially realized as lacking abandonment and accomplishment and as the nature of the great unbounded wholeness (*thig le chen po gcig*). {120.2}

Therefore, there is no need to meditate by way of purposefully focusing the mind on that seen to be an object of mind.

There is no discrepancy (*dbye ba*) between meditative equipoise and its aftermath; therefore, all [bon-phenomena] are clear in their equality. Moreover, *Changeless, Ceaseless Primordially Complete* says:

Because each and every bon {120.3}
 Is primordially the great unbounded,
 Because even this present time does not exist,³⁸¹
 Because meditative equipoise and its aftermath are indivisible,
 For all these reasons, everything is sameness.

The same text also says:

Mindnature, essential precept of the Great Completeness
 Realizes everything as the very essential nature. {120.4}
 Therefore no need to meditate on mind-objects;
 There's is no discarding or upholding, hence sameness:
 Meditative stability never degenerates.

Also, *Scripture of the View Burning Like Fire* (*lTa ba me ltar 'bar ba'i lung*) says:

In the scriptural heart of Samantabhadra
 [Imputing] the existence and nonexistence to experience are both
 faults.
 Noncontradiction of these is the superior meaning.

^{381.} ED.: *yangs* should read *yang*.

There is neither effort, nor definiteness, nor conceptuality in clarity.
Within equality is excellence.

Because the lower causal great vehicles engage in discarding and adopting, and because meditative equipoise and the attainment following upon it are different, even though they maintain these are equal, they do not realize³⁸² for example, like the fox making the call of the lion.

Also, the same text says:

Although the words are indeed the same,
The meaning is not.
That the lower vehicles engage in effort
Contradicts the meaning of sameness,
Like the fox {121.1} pretending to be a lion.

Further, in the lower vehicles, when it comes to the experience of clarity and unwavering nonconceptuality, that clarity is asserted to be the clarity of the five [sense] doors not abiding in thought. Nonconceptuality means not conceptually following after ordinary objects such as forms, sounds, and so forth. {121.2} The basis of both of these [clarity and nonconceptuality] is asserted as not wavering from nonobservation [i.e., nonconceptuality].

Further, *Treasure Cave of Open Awareness Ornamentation* (*Rig pa rgyan gyi mdzod phug*) says:

Because conceptual mental consciousnesses do not dwell
In the clarity that is the unceasingness of the five doors, {121.3}
It is asserted that these two do not move from the mind basis of all.
This itself is the excellent method for stabilizing (*bzhag*) the mind.

Regarding the superiority of what is experienced in the Great Completeness, it encompasses the three—external, internal, and secret; moreover, the internal open awareness is realized³⁸³ as the self-risen wholeness. When the essential instructions dwell spontaneously in the past, present, and future, even though the mind does not purposefully meditate, there is no separation from the meaning. Even though there is activity which is just a movement, there is no obscuration and the meaning does not deteriorate, because this is manifestly clear to open awareness in the three sets of the three times, which are nine. {121.4}

Therefore, meditative stability does not deteriorate during any of these three external intervals: (1) the time of meditative equipoise, or (2) the time of the attainment following upon meditative equipoise, or (3) at the time of be-

³⁸². The meaning of sameness. ED.: This *rtog* should be read *rtogs*.

³⁸³. ED.: Read *rtogs* for *rtog*.

coming free from the production of the five poisons. [Nor does it deteriorate] during any of these three internal intervals: (4) while in the womb, (5) when of awakening, or (6) during the clear emergence of the intermediate state of existence [i.e., just before entering the womb to take rebirth]. [Nor does it deteriorate] during the three sacred intervals: (7) the time of achieving Buddhahood, (8) the time of being a sentient being, and (9) the time prior to either of these.

If the meaning of these is realized {122.1}, there is the simple fruition, the state of the Buddha Samantabhadra. In brief, sleep and strong suffering, and any illness that occurs, are never separate from the very meaning itself. Further, open awareness is altogether steadfast (*gzungs gyis theb*).

Further, *Great Three Realms Beyond Effort* (*Khams gsum rtsol 'das chen po*) says: {122.2}

The three times of beginners and
 The three times that arise through familiarity
 And the three times that realize one's mind—
 Realization in these nine is the very Samantabhadra.
 From now on there is the bon-dimension
 When mind and body separate, Buddhahood manifests.

Blasting Out from the Hold of Cyclic Existence says:

Through special instructions dwelling spontaneously in the three intervals,
 Even without meditating one is never separate, and thus
 Through realizing the meaning of such essential instructions
 Without negating delusions, they are reversed by their own force
 (*shugs*).

Also, *Unbounded Wholeness, the Changeless Ceaseless Essential Heart* says:
 {122.4}

If one realizes the essential instructions dwelling spontaneously
 during the three intervals
 From then on one's own mind is the bon-dimension.
 Hence, at the moment of separating from the body
 One is a Buddha, manifesting the great bliss that itself is
 The excellent Samantabhadra.

As regards this way {122.5} of asserting clarity and nonconceptuality, because all bon [objects] are primordially clarified in one's own enlightened mind-nature, by not seeing laxity and dullness as faults but merely as such [mind-nature] one can realize penetrating primordial wisdom.³⁸⁴

384. ED.: Otherwise, one sees these as faults instead of liberating them. That is, finding fault with drows-

Because no thoughts are regarded as other than one's mindnature, {122.6} they do not depart [from it]. Through not seeing diffuseness and excitement (*'phro rgod*) as faults, one realizes the bon-dimension as one support (*tshugs*). Through understanding the basis of both of these as spontaneously occurring in the mindnature, there are no activities that move in the slightest from the self-arisen primordial wisdom. {123.1} Therefore, come to know the self-arisen primordial wisdom as spontaneously occurring.

Also, *Great Sky Beyond Effort* says:

Realizing all nature as it is, beyond fault and goodness,
Is the correct view of spontaneous occurrence.
Not moving from that state is the superior meditation.
Not blocking anything or falling into judgment {123.2} is conduct;
Without adherence, everything is clarified in great bliss.
Reflexive open awareness is authentic experience.

Also, *Precious Treasure Sutra* says:

Unimpeded primordial wisdom [i.e., clarity] is there in lethargy and drowsiness.
The nonconceputal bon-nature is there in diffuseness and excitement.
Neither goes beyond the base,
The spontaneously occurring mindnature,
Therefore, realization of this [nonmovement] is without faults or qualities,
Experience of just this is authentic open awareness.

That mindnature, essence of enlightenment, is primordially beyond³⁸⁵ being one or many, {123.3} primordially beyond even the conventional expression "beyond." The bon-nature is thus primordially Buddha, and so long as the mind does not move from being that,³⁸⁶ one is entering reflexive open awareness. Experiencing open awareness is authenticity, for as soon as (*ma thag*) this authentic open awareness is free of the materiality of the body, one is a Buddha.³⁸⁷

Further, *Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra* says: {123.5}

iness is not the way to deal with it. Better simply to sharpen the mind. At the same time, the fact that you do not denigrate drowsiness does not mean you do not get rid of it.

385. Not touching the extremes of.

386. Is not other than that.

387. ED.: This is reminiscent of Prāsangika distinctions between nirvana with and without remainder; see, for example, Sopa and Hopkins 1989; esp. 291–292, 317–318 (translation of *dKon mchig jigs med dbang po*, 1728–1791; *Grub mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa rin po che'i phreng ba*). See also Longchenpa *Chos dbyings mdzod*, tr. Richard Barron, chaps. 9 and 13.

This is the heart of the Great Completeness:
 One being indefinite, there are many
 Many not occurring, a dwelling as one,
 A nondifference between one and many
 Even nonexistence itself passes beyond nonexistence.
 The convention of saying “beyond”
 Has not been stated even by Shenrab.

Also, the same text says:

Everything indivisibly is the dimension of wholeness
 Everything is Buddha and
 Without one moment’s interruption
 Shenrab-mind is present,
 Actual mind, undual Buddha’s dimension. {124.1}

Again, the same text says:

Everything appears as featured (*mtshan mar*) bon-phenomena
 In the great Buddha bliss.³⁸⁸
 These are primordially Buddha within the bon-nature.³⁸⁹

Also, the same text says:

Like the baby Garuda who breaks its egg and flies full force, {124.2}
 Breaking away [from the body] one is liberated”—even this does not
 describe it.

In brief, in the mindnature which is the very essence of liberation from all conventions, all bon-phenomena are Buddha, and being so placed, this clarity, which is without adopting or discarding and without effortful striving, is the place where {124.3} breaking away from the body one dwells without a moment’s interruption in the bon-nature, the great bliss which is the bon-dimension.

Further, *Essential Heart of Samantabhadra Tantra* (*Kun bzang thugs kyi snying po'i rgyud*) says:

In unbounded wholeness, mindnature beyond conventions
 All bon are primordially Buddha.
 Being effortlessly situated in that state, and {124.4}
 Breaking from the body, in an instant one is Samantabhadra.

388. ED.: That is, the primordial open awareness, *ye rig*.

389. ED.: *bon can* is what arises, the *bon nyid* is the way it arises. The conceptual mind can be very organized; organizing is what conceptual mind does. But Great Completeness is, in a sense, messy, and messy is also a form of liberation. This is a delicate point; put another way, it speaks to the fluidity of mind, knowledge and experience—the way the said needs also to be unsaid, lest it become too stolid.

OBJECTION: There is a fault that contradicts your assertions. It is contradictory to cite the definition vehicle and the scriptures of sutra in the context of the Great Completeness.

Further, even the basis itself has the fault of not being definitively ascertained [because you are quoting from everywhere in describing it]. {124.5}

RESPONSE: There is no fault. All bon-phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana are primordially unmoved from the one unbounded wholeness, essence that is the mind of enlightenment. Minds of the lower vehicles' various tenet systems impute on account of what appears to them; however, in actuality other than being the bon-dimension, such appearances are not at all established; they are unmoving and without any alteration whatever.

Likewise, the appearances of the six realms [are different, but this doesn't mean that water is blood].

For example, if you place a clear white crystal on a laid-out piece of silk, through the {125.1} power of the silk's color, various colors and shapes arise in the crystal, whereas in fact there is nothing other than the crystal, which has neither shifted nor altered. Therefore, there is no fault of the base being indefinite.

Therefore, since from the conqueror's mandalas above to the golden mat of the hells below, there is no departure from the one single essence which is bon-nature, there is no contradiction with the scriptures of the lower vehicles. Rather, they become ancillary for explaining and indicating some part of the meaning. Even these do not depart from that.³⁹⁰

Further, *Essential Heart of Samantabhadra* says:

When setting silk on crystal
 We see color because of the silk
 While the crystal itself is unaltered. Similarly,
 The bon-nature itself, the one self-risen whole open awareness.
 Though seen and imputed as many by the systems of eight and nine
 vehicles
 It is not all [these], but only wholeness.
 Therefore, even all these are not beyond the very essence.
 They are causal branches of partial description, not at all
 contradictory. {125.5}

Also, *Scripture of Blissful Samantabhadra* says:

This bon[-nature] without base or root
 However it is imputed, so it appears
 As the six realms see water in six ways

390. ED.: That is, there is no interest in contradicting the lower vehicles as long as their precepts serve a purpose appropriate to their context.

These profound, superb reasons, miraculous speech,
 Explained as an entry to the path of Enlightenment, {126.1}
 Finely honed discernment refuting
 Tirthikas inclined toward view-grasping and
 Those attracted to the corpse of the calm state, concentration,
 Who train in logic despite disowning true existence or
 Without transmission, analyzing and setting forth their inventions
 With respect to Mind Teachings they propound; pointless chatter.
 Those who are not vessels despise and lose the true;
 Entrust the vessels who rely on scripture
 Meaningful fruit
 Authentic Minds
 Reverse the causes of samsara.
 Hold Buddha in your hand
 The bon-nature mirror {126.2}
 Disturbs the lesser minds of lower vehicles.
 Reasoning, which is miraculous speech,
 Touches the profundity of Great Completeness
 Opening Samantabhadra's heart, [this teaching]
 Will in the future meet a spiritual child emanation.
 The profound heart of Dranpa Namkha,³⁹¹
 The deep understanding of Lishu Daring,
 The very life of [the yogi] Gyatso Machung
 Under dominion of the wheel of time {126.3}
 Not permitted to practice, entrusted to the King
 Hidden as terma.
 In future times, from Samantabhadra down to Vairocana,
 [Those who] overstate (*sgro 'dogs*) or underplay will
 Through such criticism wander in the painful hells.
 Therefore do not despise this; treat it like a jewel. {126.4}

This was stated by Lishu Daring.

Seal, seal, seal, seal, seal, seal, seal, seal, seal, seal, seal

Colophon

Hey you foolish king, stationed up there, listen to me. [Your] Buddhist monks sitting so properly have bad intentions. Listen, you bad ministers seated below;

^{391.} ED.: The *Pema Ga thang*, a Nyingma text rediscovered by Ngodrup Drakpa around the twelfth or thirteenth century states that Dranpa Namkha was the father of Guru Rinpoche. (Oral communication; we have not located this citation.)

you listen also, you foul yea-saying acolytes of the king! From the Majesties' mandala on high down to the hells' golden mats below, and all the gods, ghosts, and terrifying spirits dwelling in between, each and every one of you listen to me today. I am Dranpa Namkha, a Master [in the tradition] of Shenrab, initially trained in study and the verbal arts of translation; I know sixty-seven different [systems of] terms and logic.

In the past, I came to understand all bon [teachings] of all vehicles. I [then] set myself in meditative equipoise in the abiding state of mind. Finally, I realized that all of cyclic existence and samsara {127.1} do not depart from the heart, which is unbounded wholeness.

Having most excellent insight into this, I remain in connection with Samantabhadra. You foolish king, you very wrongful ministers! May the king and public be at cross purposes. And you foully intentioned, honey-eyed smooth talkers,³⁹² you householder and monastic practitioners whose hatred and anger burn like fire, {127.2} [may] your afflictions, your coarse desire and hatred roil like poison! With the force of your foul and harsh mouthings, you destroy the sun of the world, my changeless, ceaseless, magical speech of the truth of bon, king of doctrines. Pity these Buddhist monks who have gone under the power of affliction! I, at the very heart of the Shen Deity, Samantabhadra, am primordially without birth, death, increase, or decline; therefore, I dwell continually in great bliss.

For your having destroyed the blazing light of the changeless, ceaseless sun, bringing in the dharma from the south [India] and from Nepal, may the king have a short life, may your villages be poor, may the monks fight and remain in the villages [instead of the monasteries], may one monk criticize another and deal in [black] magic, may the community disintegrate and speak harshly of the king, may the teaching of the dharma be destroyed from the center, may the teaching of Bon spread from the margins, may reincarnations arise in Dzambuling, may all these buried teachings be opened at that time, may the spiritual children who are reincarnations continually teach, may the Changeless, Ceaseless Yung Drung Teaching move from the margins to the peak of victory.

Hey, listen, you cohorts of the King and Buddhist monks, let all the world's gods and deities also bear witness to this! A no-good person such as myself, Li-shu-stag-ring, entered into the door of Changeless, Ceaseless Bon when I was five years old. When I was seven, I trained in the terms of translation; at nine, I understood the scriptures and essential instructions; at twenty-one I

392. ED.: *kha 'phra mchu*= slander; smooth talking on the surface, bad minds behind it. *Mchu* = smooth, nice, elegant speech; words are gentle but the deeds are bad; *ngur mig*= yellow eyes, meaning looking deceptively smooth and gentle.

saw the subtle truths. These meanings cannot be had even if you give your life for them. I trained my mind, completed the welfare of all beings, [yet now, thanks to you] it is impossible to practice the essential instructions, which have been thus given. The no-good types of hateful Buddhist monks foment conflict [by saying evil things about us to the foolish king who believes them]. Folded, sealed, and hidden as Terma.

Destroying the Changeless, Ceaseless Bon, seeking the dharma in the South and in Nepal; King and ministers, {128.2} you have the sin of declaiming against us! May a plethora of unwanted sufferings arise! When the time for my essential instructions arrives, may it not stay unhidden despite attempts to hide it and spread through the incarnate teachers. Finally, I pray that the Changless, Ceaseless Teaching will spread widely.

May the essential instructions of the skillful teacher Drampa Namkha and my own lowly self {128.3} be found as terma, spread widely, and increase through practitioners who are student-emanations.

Hey listen, you stupid and dull kings, ministers, and Buddhist monks, one like me, a lord of space³⁹³ [Vairocana's name early in life], a translator skilled in terminology, I entered the door of the Changeless, Ceaseless teaching early in my life and practice. [At that time] I was called by the name Bakor Rinchen Sey. Later in life, I entered into the door of the holy dharma and practiced; [at that time] my name was Bakor Vairocana. Bon and Dharma differ only in terms of their disciples; their meaning is inseparable, a single essence. Respecting one and undermining the other is deluded and a pitfall. In time, bon declines and dharma spreads: the wheels of the teachings come in turn; even so, in the end, bon will also spread and be practiced. Bon and Buddhism are like sun and moon in the world; by the power of my prayer both will spread like that; I pray that in the end both will spread without decline. There is no need to say that these will spread by the spiritual children, the emanations.

Subon, Wang Tshul, and the others, the three openers of the doors of Buried Treasure, found the Terma of Lhasa Yerba.

393. ED.: *mu dza* is a Zhang Zhung word: *mu*= space; *dza* was glossed by Ponlob Thrinley Nyima as “majesty,” an epithet of Vairocana.



The Queen of Existence (*Srid pa'i rGyal mo*); she is the Protectress of Bon.

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Appendix

Authenticity: Background Texts, Locus, and Chronology

Formation of the Bon Canon and Major Textual Categories (Mostly According to Padon)

Four Categories of Bon Texts

Vinaya. Much of the vast Bon canon is attributed to the legendary founder of Bon, the Donpa (Teacher) Shenrab Miwo (sTon pa Shen rab Mi bo).¹

The texts on ethics originate in Olmo Lung Ring at the instigation of Donpa Shenrab.² They are subsequently collected by Tsukshen Gyalwa (gTsug gshen rGyal ba), one of the six main students of Mucho Demdruk (Mu cho lDem drug),³ and transmitted to Mutsha Drahe (dMu tsha Tra he), who spreads them in Tagzig.⁴

From Tagzig they proceed to Zhang Zhung in connection with a human resident of that area known as Zhang Zhung Gekho Pel (Ge khod dPal). Padon describes a vision in which Gekho sees a monk composed of six different lights coming from the west. Gekho pros-

1. Samten Karmay observes that all we reliably know of Shenrab, also spelled *gShen rabs*, is that he was a priest seen as capable of communicating between the living and the dead who lived some time prior to the seventh century. Bon chronology, however, places him earlier than Buddha Shakyamuni. See Karmay 1975.

2. Padon 628,6ff.

3. Noted in Karmay 1972: 17. However Padon lists 630.2

4. Padon 629,1.

trates to that monk, and as he prays, the visionary figure is illuminated with increasing clarity until the light has transformed into an actual flesh-and-blood monk.⁵ Gekho takes monk's vows from this newly manifest cleric, receiving the ordination name of Yeshe Tsultrim (Ye-shes Tshul-khrims). Subsequently he spreads vinaya teachings throughout Zhang Zhung.

Sutras. The sutra wheel of Bon teaching was initially turned by Donpa Shenrab and collected by Azha Sangwa Dupa (A zha gSang ba 'Dus pa) and others.⁶ Shenrab's dates are indeterminate, though Chogyal Namkhai Norbu calculates his birth at 1917 B.C.E.⁷ and locates him in the region between Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar.⁸ Padon does not give dates but simply notes that during the three years immediately following Shenrab's death, teachings were disseminated by his successor, Mucho Demdruk, who "turned the wheel" of these teachings for three years. His six main students were known as the three wise ones of Tagzig (lTag gzig gi mkhas pa gsum)⁹ and three translators with magical legs (*rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa thob pa'i lo tsha ba gsum*), who spread these teachings "in the ten directions."¹⁰

Hladak Ngakdro (Hla bdag sNgags Dro), of India, transmitted the sutra teachings to Gyalpo Ratsa Pungpa (rGyal po Ra tsa sPungs pa), who in turn transmitted them to a Zhang Zhung follower of Bon known as Mukho Dang (Mu kho sTangs),¹¹ who passed these teachings on to persons of four different countries: to the Indian practitioner Khalusha, to the Muslim abbot (Kha che mkhan po) Srami Rican, to a practitioner named 'A ba Shang Shang, from Thogar (western Tokharistan, near or part of Bactria), and to Dokane (lDo ka ne) from Bruzha (near Gilgit). Thus the sutras, initially propagated by Mucho, spread widely.¹²

5. Padon 629.4. Shardza Rinpoche, perhaps taking this passage from Padon, similarly describes Gekho Pel (Ge khod dpal), as well as his students in Karmay 1972: 36.

6. Padon 629.6ff.

7. He makes this calculation partly based on a passage in the *History of Bon*, which states that "after the master [Shenrab Miwo] passed away Lishu (Daring) was born, and when the latter reached the age of 2,500 years, in the water-pig year, Trisrong (Deytsen) started to persecute Bon." This, Norbu calculates, places Shenrab's birth at 1917 B.C.E. Norbu 1995a: 156.

8. Norbu 1995a: xv.

9. Padon 630.1. Here the three "wise persons" are clearly designated as being from Tagzig, and the *Treasury* (Karmay 1972: 17) also refers to them as from Tagzig. However, in initially mentioning their names, the *Treasury* notes that these three come from Tagzig, Zhang Zhung, and Sumpa, respectively (16). This type of confused nomenclature can, perhaps, be partly explained by taking into consideration the geographical designations mentioned above.

10. The six names are given (630.2) as: (1) mKhas pa Sang sbung dun, (2) Gyer sangs gTsug phud, (3) dMu gtso Ting rum, (4) dMu ban rten, (5) dMu mkha' lDing nam, and (6) dMu rje sPrul. The dMu tribe of which these latter are presumably members, is led by the clan of dMu tsha rKa/sGa and is famous for its learnedness. This tribe is closely associated with Zhang Zhung and is discussed extensively in Bon texts such as the *Stream of What Is*; the tribe is also mentioned in Yeshe De Project 1986: 132–133, though I have not been able to access the Tibetan sources used in this monograph.

11. Padon 630.3.

12. Padon 630.3–4.

Through these and other disciples,¹³ Padon tells us, the teaching was transmitted into 360 different languages.¹⁴ Among humans, Padon further reports, the teachings spread widely through the activities of Trulshen Nangden ('Phrul gshen sNang ltan)¹⁵ until they reached the renowned Milu Samlek (Mi lus bSam legs),¹⁶ teacher of Namkha Nangway Dokjen (Nam mkha' sNang ba'i mDog can), who in turn was the teacher of the second Tibetan king.

Lekdang Mangpo (Legs tang rMang po), another student of Mucho Demdruk, transmitted the sutra teachings to a Chinese practitioner, Tsuklak Pelge (gTsug lag dPal ge), and to Bagor Vairocana. The activities of the Chinese Tsuklak Pelge and Vairocana brought the teachings to China, and those of Jetsa Kharbu (lCe tsha Khar bu) brought them to Minyag (Me nyag).¹⁷ Shardza Rinpoche writes that at the time of King Lang Darma (gLan Dar ma) "the kingdom of Me-nyag came into being between Tibet, China, and Mongolia; during the reign of Menyak-gha (Me nyag gha), Bon spread in Do-me (mDo smad) due to the rediscovery of the Vinaya teachings."¹⁸ (There were actually two Minyags:¹⁹ one in the south around Jakla (lCags la) and Darstedo (Dar-tse mdo); the other, far better known, in the north beyond Koko Nor, which in the eleventh century seems to have been part of the kingdom known to the Chinese as Hsi-hsia.)²⁰

The Four Doors and Five Treasures. The first and most ancient portion of this material is that of the Four Doors (*Sgo bzhi*) and Five Treasures (*mDzod lnga*), rubrics unique to Bon. The Four Doors or, more fully, the Four Doors of Divine Bon (*lHa bon sgo bzhi*) is the older of these two collections, having

13. 630.4–5. The text goes on to mention a third student of Mucho (Mucho), Serthok Jecham (gSer thog lCe 'byam), and notes the spread of the teaching through his disciples to Gesar, Sumpa, Tibet, and Minyag.

14. *The Treasury*, citing the *Northern Proclamation*, also mentions 360 as the number of tongues that emanated from the speech of "the God of dMu-gshen." Karmay 1972: 16–17.

15. Padon 631.2.

16. For further discussion of Mi lus, see Martin 1994a.

17. Padon 630.4–5.

18. Karmay 1972: 115.

19. These did not necessarily exist simultaneously however. The later Minyag, in eastern Tibet (beyond Koko Nor) was, according to Dan Martin, so called because of claiming descent from Hsia-hsia after its destruction at the hands of the Mongols.

20. Yeshe De Project 1986: 354. Tibetan records connect this kingdom with the Dong (lDong) tribe; see *Ancient Tibet* pp. 129ff. Bon sources say the Dong flourished because they performed important rituals in the days before the first king. Ancient connections also exist between the Dong and the Sakya. The dBas clan is sometimes connected to the Dong as well. The two Minyags may have had their origins when a Chi'ang tribe, known as the Tang hsiang, which controlled much of the eastern borderlands by the fifth century C.E., split into two groups in the seventh century. Tang Dynasty records show that one group moved to the south and the other to the north. *Ancient Tibet* 1986: 133. Shardza Rinpoche, citing a passage from a work known as the *rGyal rabs bon gyi 'byung gnas* also notes that when Tibet was under the Mongolian descendants of Genghis Khan, twenty-one Bonpo administrators did much to promote Bon in mDo, dBus, and gTsang. In China, the preceptor of This-tsang and his son was "the Bonpo of China," Cang-thang Thas-sris, whose name in Chinese means "Bonpo of Heaven" (*gnam gyi Bon po*). Karmay 1972: 116. This matter bears considerable further investigation.

become very widespread during the time of King Trigum Tsenpo (Gri gum bTsang po), whose funerary rites, we are told, were presided over by Shenrab Miwo himself.²¹ The Four Doors include, respectively, teachings on spells, rituals, monastic discipline, and Dzogchen meditation; the Five Treasures discusses all of these.²²

The Three Collections of Dzogchen. Bon Dzogchen writings are also sometimes categorized as the collections of mind, sphere, and essential instructions (*sems sde, klong sde, man ngag gi sde*),²³ rubrics that are shared with Nyingma, although the texts assigned to them are different.²⁴ In addition, Bon Dzogchen includes a variety of text cycles,²⁵ the oldest of which is the *Essential Collection* (*Gal mdo*). *Authenticity* is the most prominent, most studied, most influential text in the *Essential Collection* cycle.²⁶

Namkha Nangwa Dokchen taught the mind (Dzogchen) teachings to the Lady of Bon, Shendak Werliwer (Bon mo gShen sTag Wer li wer) and taught the tantric tradition to King Mutri Tsenpo (Mu khri rTsang po).²⁷ Subsequently the teaching was held by six teachers known as the Six Great Upland Lamas,²⁸ who transmitted the teaching through symbols (*brda'i rgyud*), which did not require extensive explanation or, presumably, written records.²⁹

The Zhang Zhung and Indian Collections and Authenticity

The Zhang Zhung Collection. Zhang Zhung, gateway to Central Asia with access to Gilgit and Khotan, is described as having had a thriving literary culture whose texts, many transported to Tibet by Lishu Daring himself, brought a new strand of religious and philosophical discourse to mingle with the Buddhist practices newly arising in Tibet during the era associated with the writing

21. Norbu 1995a: 35, 39.

22. The Four Doors are White Water, Black Water, the Country of 'Phan, the Leader. The Treasure is called the Summit (*Chab dkar, Chab ngag, Phan yul, dPon gsas, mTho-thog*). See Karmay 1975: 178–179.

23. See Karmay 1988: 206–215.

24. For example, Bon would consider its *Gal mdo* cycle part of the series on mind and its *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* to be part of the series on essential instructions, whereas these works are not part of the Nyingma corpus.

25. For brief descriptions of some of these, see Karmay 1988: 201ff. He does not there mention the *Gal mdo* cycle.

26. Bon traditionally dates the earliest *Gal mdo* texts from the eighth century (though some are attributed to the primordial Samantabhadra) and the last from the thirteenth century. The work's centrality and scope have led Lopon Tenzin Namdak, the chief living authority on this work, to describe it as the "Legs bshed snying po of Dzogchen" (Jemez Springs, July 1995).

27. Padon 631.3–4.

28. Padon 631.4–5.

29. The three transmissions—mind to mind, symbolic, and oral—are of course well known in the Nyingma tradition also.

of *Authenticity*. Early Bon writings are often grouped into the Indian and Zhang Zhung Collections.³⁰

Bon understands most of its Tantric and Dzogchen teachings to have come from Tagzig³¹ and to have been translated into Tibetan from Zhang Zhung. Shardza Rinpoche categorizes the many Zhang Zhung languages³² into those of inner, central, and outer Zhang Zhung and the colloquial idiom. Most translations into Tibetan were made from Zhang Zhung Mar (sMar), the language of outer Zhang Zhung.³³ Indeed, *Authenticity* author Lishu Daring was one of the foremost translators of esoteric texts into Tibetan.³⁴ Although *Authenticity* itself is said to have been written in Tibetan, much of its background literature, the most venerated ancient strata of Bon philosophical literature, bears Zhang Zhung titles and is said to be translated into Tibetan from that language.

The Indian Collection. The Indian Collection characteristically includes terma and oral transmission mixed together in a single text. Zhang Zhung works are most significantly distinguished from the Indian by the fact that they do not quote other writings.³⁵ This is regarded as a sign of their integrity, their completeness unto themselves. The Indian Collection is acknowledged to contain many texts similar to Nyingma, though the place names and lineages differ, whereas the Zhang Zhung Collection is regarded as more distinct from Nyingma.

30. The two collections do not form clearly bounded areas, however. For example, Padon notes that *Clearing Extremes from the Primordial Mind* was translated from Zhang Zhung into “the language of India” by gSal ‘od Yung g.ryung. Once it came into India and spread there, it became known as part of the Indian Collection. Padon 634.4 (*Man Ngag lung gyi tshad ma*, *Essential Precepts*). Lopon Tenzin Namdak notes that the *man ngag* and *lung* of the title do not list two of the three types of authentication discussed in *Gal mdo* but are synonymous. Other informants, however, have interpreted the title to list two kinds of authentication (*tshad ma*), that of essential instructions (*man ngag tshad ma*) and scripture (*lung tshad ma*).

31. Tagzig is commonly regarded as Bonpo’s term for Bactria and Sogdia, though it is often located in the Kara Korum Mountain area at the boundary of Pakistan. This term has various meanings and spellings in Tibetan literature. Before the tenth century, “sTag-gZig” meant a place in which beasts such as tigers and leopards made travel difficult.

32. Khenbo Nyima Wangyal, “A Short History of Bon” discussing *Khri brtan nor bu rtse dang bon po'i lo rgyus* 14. According to Wangyal: “There are reliable indications that Zhang Zhung may have extended over the vast area from Gilgit in the west to the lake of Namtso (*gnam misho*) in the east, and from Khotan in the north to Mustang in the south.” The capital of Zhang Zhung was Khyunglung Ngulkhar (*kyung lung dngul khar*). “The Silver Palace of the Garuda Valley,” the ruins of which are found in the upper Sutlej Valley to the southwest of Mount Kailash. Samten Karmay, following Stein, gives a slightly different description, saying that Zhang Zhung probably extended from the Khyunglung Ngulkhar to Danra Khung rDzong in the east, to gTsang in the south, and Kashmir in the west. Karmay 1972: xxx.

33. Karmay 1972: 27. On the sMar language, see also Nyima Drakpa 1965: 6.

34. Snellgrove 1987: 1.39off. observes that the Bon claim that their teaching originally came from Tagzig to Zhang Zhung can be taken quite seriously, even if subsequently incorporated Buddhist texts were also claimed to have been translated from the Zhang Zhung language.

35. In addition, the transmission does not rely on practitioner’s notes but is considered to record only what passed directly from teacher to student; the texts, unaltered by any subsequent editor, are said to have remained pristinely aloof from the interpretations of others, especially those interpretations inspired by jealousy (Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Jemez Springs, New Mexico, Ligmincha Summer Retreat, 1995).

The difference in tone and intent between the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* and the more philosophical literature we consider here is unmistakable. *Authenticity* and its root text for the most part proceed by way of logical discourse, methodically invoking well-known philosophical categories. The *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, by contrast, is a precise and poetic evocation of Dzogchen realities, narrating access to reality in terms both philosophical and physiological, with an emphasis on a variety of subtle practices and experiences undisussed in the aforementioned texts. Further, unlike the more Indic-related works, *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* materials, being strictly Dzogchen, do not centrally concern themselves with rival points of view, and thus they are concerned neither with debate nor philosophical structure. They do not provide for extensive discussions of areas of the Dzogchen tradition that, on the Buddhist side, were introduced by the Mind Collection (*Sems sde*) corpus—visionary experiences, including those associated with the death and bardo states, and subtle body practices.³⁶ This difference in subject matter marks a further distinction between the Zhang Zhung and Indian Collections.³⁷

Our Text. Authenticity, influenced by both Indian and Zhang Zhung materials, belongs to neither cycle, since it was written in Tibetan by Lishu Daring. Still, it seems more related to the Indian than the Zhang Zhung Collection, for it contains none of the photic and post-death tropes that characterize much of Zhang Zhung literature.³⁸ Moreover, like Indian, and unlike Zhang Zhung, it

36. Buddhists also cite non-Tibetan sources for these practices, most significantly Padmasambhava, Shrisimha, Vimalamitra, and Garab Dorje. For example, the terms *khregs chod* and *thod rgal*, which are so significant in Nyingma Dzogchen texts and form an important part of the *Man ngag gi sde* (see Karmay 1988: 214–215) do not occur in *Authenticity* or, on the Buddhist side, in the *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba*, widely regarded as the earliest Tibetan Dzogchen text attributed to Padmasambhava. (For translation and transliteration, see Karmay 1988: 152–171.) These categories, which do figure importantly in the *Man ngag gyi sde*, gain their common currency somewhat later in Tibet. Karmay also notes that *thod rgal*, unlike *khregs chod*, is in fact a translation of a Sanskrit term—either *vyuktikrantika* or *viskandaka*. As he notes, Jacques May 1967 has published a detailed study of this term. For other characteristics of early Buddhist Dzogchen, see Germano 1994: 2.

37. The Dzogchen view put forth in the two collections is, according to Lopon Tenzin Namdak (August 1997, oral commentary), the same, although coming through different lineages. Since these collections include only the very early writings, famous works such as the *A Khrid* cycle are not included. The *A Khrid* belong to a threefold classification unique to Bon known as *A rdzogs snyan gsum* (see Karmay 1975: 215 and Karmay 1988: 203). The other two works in this trio are the *Great Completeness* (*rDzogs-chen*) and the *Transmission through Hearing* (*sNyan brgyud*).

The *A Khrid* are compendia of Dzogchen teachings that form part of the mind-treasure (*dgongs gter*) of the Great Gongdze Ritro (*dGongs mdzad Ri khrod chen po*, 1038–1096), also known as Dampa Ritro (*Dam pa Ri khrod*), and that were later synthesized by Drugyelwa Yung Drung (*Bru rgyal ba g.Yung drung*, 1242–1290). (Part of this teaching has been translated and discussed by Per Kvaerne 1973.) *Nine Hidden Cycles of Enlightenment* (*Byang chub sems gab pa dgu skor*), an important source for this work, is also considered background to *Authenticity*.

38. Bon Zhang Zhung and the Buddhist *Heart Essence* (*sNying thig*) literatures share an emphasis on visionary experience and detailed discussions of internal states linked with theories of embodiment. There may well have been some kind of creative exchanges or common matrix. (This much is suggested also by David Germano in his unpublished ms, “The Secret Transformation of Buddhist Tantra in Ancient Tibet.” Bon tradition

does quote other texts, though never anything resembling the classic Indian texts on logic that one might expect. Hence this work, concerned with the linguistic and logical synapse between expressions and the inexpressible, is situated within the cultural and linguistic interstices that characterized the period in which it was created.

Locating Zhang Zhung and Olmo Lung Ring

Zhang Zhung itself, like ancient Gaul, is said to have had three parts: the door or outer area (*sgo ba*), the interior (*phugs pa*), and the area between these (*bar ba*).³⁹ Each of these three areas is similarly subdivided into the areas of door, interior, and in between. Olmo Lung Ring, in the view of some scholars, was in the door of the door region (*sgo ba'i sgo*).⁴⁰ Karmay describes Olma Lung Ring as the area around Mt. Kailash, itself once the center of Zhang Zhung,⁴¹ though this view has been significantly contested by Dan Martin.⁴² Moreover Mount Kailash (which Tibetans often refer to as Ti se or Gangs Rin po che) is, according to Lopon Tenzin Namdak, in the first *sgo phugs* of Zhang Zhung. The same region contains the valley of the Garuda (Khyung lung), birthplace of many Bon Dzogchen masters. In the middle region of the door area (*sgo bar ma*) is located the castle of Ligmigya (Lig myi rkya/Lig mi rgya), last ruler of Zhang Zhung.⁴³

suggests that the main differences between these collections and much of Nyingma also has to do with lineage rather than substance. Moreover, the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* is considered very close, philosophically, to the *Man Ngag sDe*, though it has its own independent lineage. See Karmay 1988: 209.

39. Tenzin N. Kyongtul (sKyong sprul bsTan 'dzin rNam rgyal), Sunrise Springs, New Mexico, July 1997, first pointed this out to us (personal communication). One interpretation of this view is that the outer *sgo* region corresponds to what we might call western Tibet, from Gilgit in the west to Dangra Khyungdzong (Dangs ra Khyung rdzong) in the east, next to lake Namtso (gNam mtsho), and from Khotan in the north to Chumik Gyed Tsanyi (Chu mig brGyad cu rTs'a gnyis) in the south. The inner *phug* region then corresponds to Tagzig, and the middle (*bar*) Gyakhar Barcho (rGya mkhar bar chod) is a region not yet identified.

This tripartite terminology is quite common among scholars of Menri today. Roberto Vitali 1996: 158 notes the “unconventional and obscure” notion of an inner and outer Zhang Zhung, where “inner” might possibly refer to Guge with the terminology itself being incorporated into the dynastic history of this and adjoining Zhang Zhung areas. See Vitali 1996: n. 512; he cites several references to this in n. 212.

40. Tenzin N. Kyongtul to Klein, Sunrise Springs, New Mexico, July 1997, personal communication. Other accounts seem to place it in Burma. For further discussion of Olmo Lung Ring’s mythic vs. geographical location, see Karmay 1990: 172–175.

41. Karmay 1972: xxviif; see also Karmay 1990: 180.

42. Martin 1995. As Martin points out, the *Mother Tantra* (*Ma rGyud*) is the core source on this topic. Politically speaking, the central question is whether or not Olmo Lung Ring can be considered to have existed inside the boundary of “Tibet.” See also a more recent and expanded version of Martin’s article in Huber 1999a.

43. According to Lopon Tenzin Namdak, the Zhang Zhung *sgo phugs* area is also called Zhang Zhung *sgo bar ma'i yul* and referred to as Tagzig (sTag zig yul), which itself has three parts. This, Lopon believes, is also the location of Olmo Lung Ring. See also Namdak n.d.(b), *Early Short History of Tibetan*, 31.6ff. Lopon discusses the three sections of *sgo phi ma* (40.8). His view, as he himself has discussed, is not universally accepted, even among native Tibetan-trained scholars. Namkhai Norbu, for example, does not hold this threefold division of Zhang Zhung, nor does he speak of Kyung po being the outer door. All of Zhang Zhung, in his view, is contained in

The third *sgo* area, known as the Outer Door or Outback (*sgo phyi ma*), includes the area now known as Khyung-po, or “Garuda Place.”⁴⁴ This also is subdivided into three “doors” designated as white, black, and mottled (Khyung po dkar bo nag po phra gsum).⁴⁵ This area includes one of the four main castles of Zhang Zhung, home to some of the Zhang Zhung kings. According to Lopon Tenzin Namdak, the Outer region of the Zhang Zhung Door (*sgo phyi ma*) has three doors:

1. The Interior of the Outback (*sgo phug pa*) contains the Valley of the Garuda (Khyng Lung).
2. The Central Outback (*bar ba*) is the Door of Pure Goats and Horses (dwang ra rta sgo).⁴⁶
3. The Outback of the Outback (*sgo phyi ma*) contains the six strongholds of Khyimsho Shele (mKhyim shod she le rdzongs drug).⁴⁷

Authenticity and Tibet’s Intellectual History: An Annotated Speculation

Overview

Authenticity is related with the four major Bon Dzogchen texts: *Magical Space Treasure; Three Revealed Cycles; Utmost Peak, Great Expanse; and Nine Hidden Cycles*. Each provides a general discussion of the Dzogchen view, as well as a Decisive Overview (*lta ba spyi gcod*) for another text in order to eliminate related erroneous views. In short, whatever our difficulties in dating Lishu Daring’s work and its sources, as a collective these texts certainly provide an important intellectual context for *Authenticity*. To this extent we can argue that *Authenticity* did have significant sources of inspiration outside orthodox Buddhist ones.

The difference in tone and intent between *Authenticity* and works associated with it (such as its root text, *Stages of the Vehicles*, or its appendix, *Just-Isness*) and *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, as we have seen, is almost palpable. The latter pithily evokes the Dzogchen view, elaborating access to reality in terms both philosophical and physiological. In addition, *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* materials, being strictly Dzogchen, do not greatly concern themselves with rival points of view (as do the more Indic-related works like

western Tibet. For Chogyal Norbu Rinpoche, Olmo Lung Ring is Kailash; neither he nor Karmay makes reference to an unworldly Olmo Lung Ring; Norbu 1995b: 23.

44. The area of Kyhung po is Lopon’s own native area. In his view Zhang Zhung spread all the way to the east. It remains for a future project to investigate whether local oral traditions [still] carry this view.

45. Lopon Tenzin Namdak n.d.(b), *Early Short History*: 39.5ff.

46. Lopon Tenzin Namdak n.d.(b), *Early Short History*: 40.8

47. Lopon Tenzin Namdak n.d.(b), *Early Short History*: 40.8. We could not discover the meaning, if any, of what seems to be the proper noun MKhyim shod shele.

Stages) and thus engage neither with debate nor philosophical structure as such. Its tone is of an exposition confident of its location at the center of its world, a siren call to reality, not to analysis or argumentation. Both voices are found in *Authenticity*.

A potentially significant difficulty in accepting an authorship as early as Lishu's for this particular work is its sophisticated philosophical inquiry into questions of authenticity, whereas interest in *tshad ma* would only just begin in Buddhist Tibet with the work of Ngok Lotsawa (rNgog Lo tsā ba bLo ldan Shes rab, 1059–1109).⁴⁸

The revised translation of the *Ornament of Valid Cognition* (*Tshad ma rnam 'grel rgyan*) done by Ngok Lotsāwa was sponsored by Wangde (dBang lde), King of Gu-ge, who became Ngok's patron in 1092.⁴⁹ After his studies in Kashmir (Kha che), Ngok returned to Do (sTod) where some Tibetan sources say he made this translation. Whether or not the translation occurred there,⁵⁰ Do was certainly a place where old and new—Bon and Buddhist—traditions intersected, as they do in the narratives we examine here.

The subtext of Ngok's life is itself a narrative of Bon-Buddhist intersections, though it is not generally read that way by Buddhists. David Jackson calls Ngok “the father of Tibetan scholasticism”⁵¹ because of his pervasive legacy in Tibetan logic and epistemology, which he initially studied in Kashmir, a place where what we now call Bon would likely have been present, at least in some form, in the late eleventh century. Ngok also lived in Zhang Zhung for a time, a place where his biographer, Drolunpa (Gro lung pa), says conditions were good. Whether or not we can infer from this that Ngok learned something of logic from Bon or Bon-related sources is a question yet to be adequately addressed. The glory of Ngok as depicted in his biography depends in part on the poor state—though not the nonexistence—of logic or *tshad ma* discourse prior to Ngok's return.⁵²

From this point of view, the eighth century, or even the late tenth, seems very early for the kind of reasoned dialectic found in *Authenticity*. At the same time, the real point here is that our difficulty in imagining an earlier date may stem primarily from the paucity of our understanding of early Bon philosophical literature. A text like *Authenticity* could not have come out of a vacuum. Perhaps it was in fact not written until the twelfth century, after Ngok.⁵³ However, to make more substantial judgments regarding its chronology we must

48. Dreyfus 1997: 20.

49. See Vitali 1996: 336–337, including nn. 531 and 532.

50. Vitali 1996: 337 adduces evidence it did not.

51. Jackson 1994: 372.

52. Jackson 1994: 372, 377–378.

53. However, this would not explain the utter lack of reference to and alignment with the thought of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti in the Bon reflections on *tshad ma*.

inquire further into Bon textual traditions and their reflections on authenticity, as well as their styles of debate.

In short, even though historical narratives tend to support Bon's own view of the place of *Authenticity*, unless we can find an intellectual context for it, we remain on weak ground in considering an eighth- or even a tenth-century time frame for this text. Thus we turn now to consider that intellectual framework as Bon scholars today understand it. We survey here seven major texts considered to provide background for and possibly to pre-date *Authenticity*, and an eighth text that can be regarded as an important legacy of *Authenticity*.

Textual World of Authenticity

Bon scholarly tradition regards *Authenticity* as part of a group of mutually explicating texts that offer analyses of Dzogchen. Most succinctly, these are as follows.

Stages of the Vehicles or “*Stages*” (*Theg pa'i rim pa mngon du bshad pa'i mdo rgyud* or “*Theg rim*”).⁵⁴ and its commentary, *Stages of the Vehicles Commentary* or “*Vehicle Commentary*” (*Theg pa'i rim pa mngon du bshad pa'i mdo rgyud kyi 'grel pa* or “*Theg 'grel*”).⁵⁵ *Stages of the Vehicles* is one of the earliest Bon sources to name nine vehicles.⁵⁶ Both works are traditionally attributed to Shenrab Miwo. Vairocana,⁵⁷ who by some accounts studied with Shenrab Miwo, is said to have translated *Stages of the Vehicles* from the Zhang Zhung language (also identified as the language of Gilgit) and later to have hidden it as a terma at Yerba near Samye.

This root text and commentary are the main critical texts studied at Menri monastery in exile. They provide the Decisive Overview for another crucial work considered to be closely associated with the *Authenticity*, *Clearing Extremes from the Primordial Mind* (*Ye khri mtha' gsal*).⁵⁸ Like *Authenticity*, they are said to have been discovered by the Three Buddhists.

54. In *Bonpo Tenets*, reproduced from manuscripts from the Bsam gling Monastery in Dolpo, published by Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1978, pp. 369–385. Samten Karmay lists this in his Catalogue (1977) as No. 74.1 as a work of Shenbla Ogar, traditionally considered an emanation of Donpa Shenrab Miwo. Karmay refers to the work as a canonical Bon text. However, we have not located it in Per Kvaerne's table of contents of the Bon Canon.

55. Listed Karmay 1977: No. 75. These texts occupy a central place in the curriculum of Menri Monastery in exile, at Dolanji.

56. See, for example, 371.1–374.1.

57. The great nonsectarian Dzogchenpa Dorje Lingpa (rDo rje gLing pa, 1346–1415) considered himself a reincarnation of Vairocana, and Vairocana a reincarnation of Shenrab's disciple Yikyi Khye'u Chung (Yid kyi Khye'u chung) and of Buddha's famous cousin-disciple, Ananda. Karmay 1988: 217.

58. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, August 1997, notes that this is a genre that combines both terma and Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung—which is to say it is both a discovered text and part of the oral transmission received by Lung-ston Hla-gnyan. See also *Biography of Lunden Hlanyen*, the biography written by his son, Lungom Khorlo Gyelpo, 1972: 276–286.

The root text of *Stages* opens by giving its own title in the languages of Zhang Zhung,⁵⁹ Sanskrit,⁶⁰ Brusha, and, finally, Tibetan. The title in “Sang skrit’i” is *Ya man kra ma ti su tra na ma*, and in the language of Brusha it is *Ha pang ril te tang seng zhe ma ham*. Commenting on this work and its history in *The Treasury of Good Sayings*, Shardza Rinpoche surmises that the transmission of this work was from Zhang Zhung to India, and then to Gilgit and from there to Tibet, where it was translated from the language of Gilgit into Tibetan by Vairocana.

Like many Buddhist works on tenets (*grub mtha'*, *siddhānta*), *Stages of the Vehicles* begins by making a twofold classification into the external Tīrthika and the “internal” *gzen rabs*, categories analogous to Insider and Outsider divisions in Buddhism.⁶¹ Bon further subdivides the internal vehicles into the two main categories of cause and effect vehicles. Causal vehicles consist of the Great Vehicle (*theg pa chen po*) and the Little One (*chung ngü*). Effect vehicles refer to external and internal, which itself includes the categories of external, internal, and secret.⁶² The text’s ninefold structure is meant to clarify how Dzogchen differs from and is superior to the other eight vehicles. *Authenticity*, too, makes considerable reference to a nine vehicle system. Such referencing, while present in the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*,⁶³ is not a strong focus there—a contrast that can be read in support of Bon historical narratives asserting their different origins.

The names of the vehicles given in *Stages*, while corresponding most closely to those of the Central Treasure, are not identical with them as given in the fourteenth-century *Opening the Door of Bon* (*Bon-sgo gsal-byed*) by Dredon Gyaltsen Pel (Tre ston rGyal mtshan dPal; see Mimaki 1994; Mimaki and Karmay 1997). This discrepancy might indicate an earlier, or simply variant, iteration of this nomenclature. There is a clearer awareness of nine vehicle literature in *Opening the Door of Bon*, for Dredon Gyaltsen Pel systematically describes the three treasures and their respective enumeration of the nine vehicles.

Stages of the Vehicles’ nomenclature, as mentioned, accords with that of the Central Treasure.⁶⁴ There, the Great Vehicle is subdivided into the Great Vehicle of Compassionate Ones (*Thugs rje sems dpa'i theg pa chen po*) and the

59. Its Zhang Zhung title is written in a slightly off-standard Tibetan script: *rka kha ga*. What looks like a Tibetan subscribed “r” here is simply design according to Kyungtrul (sKyong sprul) Rinpoche, July 1997. *bab rake thang'a ba' the tho ye de cu shel zhi tan tra da dod ci*.

60. Written in the text as *sang skrad*.

61. It would be interesting to determine when Buddhists began to designate themselves as *nang pa* and when they began to use the term *chos pa*.

62. *Stages* 372.5.

63. See, for example, 150.1ff.

64. The nine vehicles according to the Southern and Central Treasures are named and briefly discussed in Wangyal 1992: 205–207. The presentation of the Southern Treasure is discussed extensively in Snellgrove’s classic, *The Nine Ways of Bön* (1967).

Unelaborated Vehicle of the Changeless, Ceaseless Ones (*g.Yung drung sems dpa'i theg pa spros med*). These are followed by two external tantric effect vehicles: the Vehicle of the Primordial Bon of Pure Behavior (*Bya ba gtsang spyod ye bon gyi theg pa*), and the Vehicle of Clairvoyance in All Aspects (*rNam pa kun ldan mgnon shes theg pa*). The three internal tantric vehicles are the Play of Actual Compassionate Development Vehicle (*dNgos bskyed thugs rje rol pa'i theg pa*), the Very Meaningful All-Inclusive Vehicle (*Shin du don ltan kun rdzogs theg pa*), and the Primordial Dzogchen, Unsurpassed Peak of the Vehicles (*Ye nas rdzog chen yang tse bla med gyi theg pa*).

Stages of the Vehicles, then root text and commentary, seek like *Authenticity* to authenticate the view of Dzogchen by systematically distinguishing it from the lower vehicles. The lineage of these closely linked works is traced in the opening section of the *Magical Space Treasure*,⁶⁵ one of the main texts associated with *Authenticity*. *Magical Space Treasure* is attributed to Dranpa Namkha who, as discussed in chapter 7, is mythically connected, for Bon, with both Padmasambhava and Lishu Daring.

From the godly realm, the lineage descends to India,⁶⁶ and thus the work is included among the Indian Collection. Its first lineage holder in India is an incarnation of Shenhla Ogar, Dewa Nyingpo Se (*bDe ba sNying po Sras*),⁶⁷ the first Indian Bonpo Dzogchenpa. The four-generation Tagzig lineage⁶⁸ is named next, beginning with Wangdrup Mengyi Shenrab (*dBang grub sMan gyi gShen rab*) and passes from there to Shenkhawa Pradi Bara (*gShen kha-ba Pra-di Ba ra*), who originates the Brusha lineage.⁶⁹

65. The full lineage of the text is found in the *Lamp Illuminating the Darkness of Indirect Meaning* (*Drang don mun sel sgron ma'i grel pa*) in the *Cycle of the Defining and Interpreting the Magical Space Treasure* (*sNyan rgyud 'phrul mdzod drang nges kor*), p. 105.6. Listed in Karmay 1977: No. 58.

66. *Lamp Illuminating the Drakness of Indirect Meaning* 106.3.

67. *Lamp Illuminating the Drakness of Indirect Meaning* 106.3ff. The Indian lineage of *Stages of the Vehicles* is as follows:

- [1] *bDe ba sNying po Sras*
- [2] his pupil, *gSan Mandhabhisha* (106.5)
- [3] *Thugs rje g.Yung drung Grub pa* (107.1)
- [4] *gShen khro gSas Padma 'Od zer* (107.2)
- [5] *gShen blo rDzogs g.Yung drung Seng ge* (107.3)
- [6] *gShen bon Khrims Yongs su dag pa* (107.4)
- [7] *bDud rtdzi Yang dag Grub pa* (107.5)
- [8] *gShen don Yod bde ba gNam gsas* (108.1)
- [9] *gShen rab gSang ba Hla'i sNying po* (108.2)

68. *Lamp Illuminating the Darkness of Indirect Meaning* 108.4. The Tagzig lineage is as follows:

- [1] *dBang grub sMan gyi gShen rab* (108.4)
- [2] *g.Yung drung rGyal po gShen rab* (108.5)
- [3] *gSas drag bDud rtsis gShen rab 'Bar ba* (108.6)
- [4] *gShen ga pa Pra ti ba ra* (109. 1)

69. *Lamp Illuminating the Darkness of Indirect Meaning* 109.1. The Brusha lineage is as follows:

- [1] *gShen ka ba Pra ti ba ra*
- [2] *gShen hon Ril pa tra*
- [3] *gShen pra Sho zang he*

From Brusha the lineage reaches Tibet, initiated there by Mushen Dranpa Namkha (dMu gshen Dran-pa Nam-mkha'), also one of the twenty-five students of Guru Rinpoche.⁷⁰ From him the lineage of the *Stages of the Vehicles* passes to King Trisong Detsen, to Vairocana, to Joza Bonmo (),⁷¹ and thence, after becoming terma, to Lungbon Hlanyen (Lung bon Hla snyan).

Lungbon Hlanyen met "Lord Tsewang"⁷² and later transmitted the teachings he received on Dranpa Namkha's texts to Lungbon Khorlo Gyalpo (Lung bon 'Khor lo rGyal po), "and so the teachings flourished," writes Shardza Rinpoche.⁷³ The *Magical Space Treasure* and *Clearing Extremes* were received by Lungbon Hlanyen's grandson, Lungbon Wangdrup (Lung bon dBang grub), who gave these texts to Azha Lodro Gyeletsen (A zha lo-gros rGyal mtshan, 1198–1263),⁷⁴ the famous scholar at Yenru Ensaka.

The *Vehicle Commentary* opens with Donpa Shenrab exhorting his three main students, known as the "three sharp ones" (*skam gsum*) to listen undistractedly.⁷⁵ Referring to himself as the Lion Speaker, he notes that his extensive discussion of the Dzogchen Vehicle will proceed by way of seven central topics:

1. View realized
2. Pledges held
3. Stages of meditation
4. Method of accomplishment
5. Good activities engaged
6. Effects of accomplishment
7. That which distinguishes Dzogchen from lower vehicles.⁷⁶

These topics are elaborated in terms of five categories: view, behavior, fruition, the dynamic display (*rtsal*) of meditative stabilization, and great reasoning.⁷⁷ Even though we cannot be sure, as Bon tradition holds, that *Stages* and

[4] gShen a mi si ha sel shla

[5] gShen ma sha se dza

70. Although this is a widely held view among Bon, Lopon Tenzin Namdak, oral commentary, himself expressed doubt that the son of the Zhang Zhung Dranpa Namkha, and brother of Tsewang Rigzin, was actually the same "Lotus Born" as the person known to Buddhists as Guru Rinpoche. Bon holds that Zhang Zhung Dranpa Namkha lived more or less contemporaneously with Buddha Shakyamuni.

71. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, oral commentary, notes that stories of Joza Bonmo are found in this text and also in the *Three Revealed Cycles* and *Utmost Peak, Great Expanse*; I have yet to locate them.

72. Karmay 1972: 115.

73. Karmay 1972: 115. I take this to be Tsewang Rigdzin, son of Dranpa Namkha.

74. See Karmay 1972: 115 and 140; dates are from *Chronology of the Teaching: An Amazing Garland of Jewels* by the Abbott Nyima Tenzin. For his life story see *A-khrid*, pp. 31ff. Cited in Karmay 1972: 140 n. 5.

75. *Vehicle Commentary* 513.4. The names of the three students are given elsewhere in the text as Hla'i-bon-bo-lha-bo-hla sras, Li-sha-thang-po, and Hlen-than-'phrul-po-che (389.4).

76. *Theg rim* 513.3–6.

77. *Theg rim* 538.5.

its commentary predate *Authenticity*, they provide an important intellectual context for our understanding of it.

Lion's Roar, Eliminating Debates on the Arising of Is-ness (*Ji bzhin nyid gyi skye mched la rtsod spong smra ba'i seng ge*), attributed to Donpa Shenrab Miwo. Focused exclusively on Dzogchen, this work is considered a kind of appendix to *Stages of the Vehicles*,⁷⁸ and it too was discovered by the Three Buddhists at Yerba. A short work of eleven folios, it is very similar in style and subject matter to *Authenticity* and is considered an important source for it.⁷⁹

Authenticity of Scripture and Essential Precepts or “*Essential Precepts*” (*Man ngag lung gyi tshad ma* or “*Man ngag*”). This is a short work of six folios in seven-syllable versification said to have been authored by Lishu Daring. It is redacted together with a twelve-folio commentary (*Man ngag lung gi tshad ma'i 'grel ba*), found in the *Three Cycles of Revelation*.⁸⁰ Tradition holds that the commentary was written by the Four Scholars (*mkhas pa mi gzhi*).⁸¹ It contains the main points of *Authenticity*,⁸² as a look at its table of contents will confirm.⁸³ However, *Authenticity* does not comment closely or in any systematic way on this work but rather mirrors its arguments, which are often at least implicitly used as starting points for its own reflections. Its stated purpose, like that of *Authenticity*, is to defeat heretical views.⁸⁴ Although *Essential Precepts* shares the basic purpose of *Authenticity*, it also seems to emerge from a slightly different stratum—conceptually, if not chronologically—than either *Authenticity* or its purported predecessors, *Stages of the Vehicles* and *Lion's Roar of Just-Is-ness*. Unlike *Authenticity* it does use the term *ka-dag*, “primordial purity,” albeit perhaps only once,⁸⁵ and not in a specifically Dzogchen sense—simply describing the nature (*rang bzhin*) as primordially pure. In its discussions of reasoning, it uses terminology more famously found in latter-day discussions, such as “correct sign which is an effect (of that which it is proving)” (*'bras rtags yang dag*). Possibly, this suggests that *Essential Precepts* is actually later than *Authenticity*.

78. Lopon Tenzin Namdak to Klein, February 1999, oral commentary.

79. Listed in Karmay 1977 as No. 75; *Bonpo grub mtha'*, 681–702. This text is attributed to Kyabdon Rinchen Ozer (sKyabs-ston Rin-chen-'od-zer, b. 1353).

80. Karmay 1977: No. 54, text 42.

81. The Four Scholars (*mkhas pa gzhi*) or Four Great Translators of Tibet are Lishu Daring, Khyungpo Dakdra Tontsuk (Kyung po sTag sgra Don gtsug), Be Shodram (Bhe Shod kram), and Jobon Tritsuk (gCo bon Khri gtsug). They all lives, according to Karmay and Shardza Rinpoche during the reign of Tritsen De (Khri bstan lde). Karmay 1972: 20–21.

82. Menri Abbot Lungtog Denpa Nyima, July 2000, Serenity Ridge, CA, oral commentary.

83. *Essential Precepts* 21. 5–22–7.

84. *Essential Precepts* 21.4.

85. 7.7, Vol. Ka 4a.7.

The root text introduces themes on which *Authenticity* itself elaborates, beginning with the issue of wholeness and the question of whether conventional and ultimate are the same or different. *Essential Precepts*, like other texts closely associated with the *Authenticity* (especially the *Stages* root text and its commentary, as well as the *Lion's Roar of Just-Is-ness*) immediately sets itself apart from the *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung* by addressing the structure of Bon doctrines as a whole and, in this context, in considering both particular ways in which Dzogchen is unique among them and, more specifically, the conceptual arguments by which Dzogchen positions can be supported.

This text does not engage uniquely Dzogchen language, though its principles are often very much in line with classic Dzogchen thought. This, the root text for both *Authenticity* and *Three Revealed Cycles*, offers its title not only in the languages of Zhang Zhung, India, and Tibet, as do other works considered sources for *Authenticity*, but also in the language of China, an inclusion possibly suggestive of an eighth- to tenth-century time frame. The work's Tibetan subtitle describes the *Essential Precepts* as clearing away the lattice of conceptuality,⁸⁶ a classic aim of Dzogchen and many other practices, especially the Ch'an practices that reach their apex in ninth-century T'ang Dynasty China.

Three Revealed Cycles. The three groups of texts collected under the title *Three Revealed Cycles* are Perfection of Wisdom (*Sher spyin*), General Rituals (*sPyi spungs*), and Great Completeness (*rDzogs chen*). This work, like *Authenticity*, is considered a commentary on *Essential Precepts*, a work attributed to Samantabhadra, with a commentary by Lishu Daring. It provides a broad explanation of Dzogchen, relating this also to a general discussion of the nine vehicles. *Authenticity* offers a Decisive Overview (*lta ba spyi gcod*) to *Three Revealed Cycles*. The latter work also contains scattered teachings on the preliminary practices in *Utmost Peak, Great Expanse*.

Tradition holds that *Three Revealed Cycles* was written by the Four Scholars, *Utmost Peak, Great Expanse* (*Yang rtse klong chen*) [see below] are collected and hidden by Lishu Daring. Its stated purpose, like that of *Authenticity*, is to defeat heretical views, maintaining that the profound can be settled through authentication (*tshad ma*) and that unmisplaced direct perception and inference are in no way separate (*gnyis med*) from reality itself.⁸⁷

Three Revealed Cycles is a collection of forty-seven different texts discovered (together with *Utmost Peak, Great Expanse* behind a Vairocana statue in the temple of Khomting (Khom-mthing) in Lodrak (Lho-brags) by Zhodon Ngo-

86. *mNyam med gzungs 'bum*, Vol. Ga 2.3.

87. *mNyam med gzungs 'bum*, Vol. Ga 2.4.

drup Drakpa (gZhad ston dNgos grub Grags pa) in 1100.⁸⁸ Shardza Rinpoche describes Zhodon Ngodrup as a distinguished scholar and an emanation of Lishu Daring and says that these texts were hidden during the waning days of Bon by none other than Lishu Daring.

Like many Tantric and Dzogchen works, *Three Revealed Cycles* is divided into external, internal, and secret segments. Like *Authenticity*, which is the Decisive Overview for it, and *Authenticity's* root text, *Essential Precepts*, *Three Revealed Cycles* seeks here decisively to eliminate doubts regarding the Dzogchen view and to distinguish it from lower views. We already know that in *Authenticity's* presentation, open awareness is not a consciousness. This is also a central premise of *Three Revealed Cycles* as it frames the completeness of Dzogchen in terms of the five paths, ten grounds, and six perfections.

Clearing Extremes from the Primordial Mind (*Ye khri mtha' gsal*). This work, discovered by Lungbon Hlanyan⁸⁹ is considered one of the most important sources for *Authenticity*. Said to have originated in Zhang Zhung and gone from there to India, it is thus included as part of the Indian Collection.⁹⁰

We cannot be sure when *Clearning Extremes* came into Tibetan, but contemporary Bon scholars agree that it was sometime during or after the reign of Nyatri Tsenpo and no later than that of Trisong Detsen, who is said to have studied this text together with Jozha Bonmo, Lishu's consort and a great yogini in her own right. Indeed, it was through contemplating this work that Jozha Bonmo achieved a rainbow body. Since nothing suggests that either Trisong Detsen or Jozha Bonmo was familiar with Zhang Zhung language, they would necessarily have read it in Tibetan.

Clearning Extremes has two Decisive Overviews (*lta ba spyi gcod*): *Stages of the Vehicles* together with its commentary; and *Magical Space Treasure*. Within the *Clearning Extremes* is a commentary by Dranpa Namkha that lays out the stages of Dzogchen. *Clearning Extremes* also contains scattered teachings on the foundational practices (*sngon 'gro*), practices exercising the winds and channels (*rtsa rlung*), teachings on signs of death, the intermediate state, and also inspirational narratives (*gtam rgyud*), which are collected and ordered in *Magical Space Treasure*. Tulku Tsewang Rigzin is the Lama said to have transmitted *Clearning Extremes* to Lungbon Hlanyan, who is also sometimes designated as the discoverer of this work.⁹¹

88. Karmay 1977: 102.

89. Almost certainly published in Delhi, though the title page does not specify. The work does not appear in Karmay 1977. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is in possession of this text.

90. According to Tenzin N. Kyongtul Rinpoche, from India the books went to Tibet. Sunrise Springs, New Mexico, July 1997, personal communication.

91. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Houston, Texas 2001, personal communication.

*Magical Space Treasure (Nam mkha' phrul mdzod)*⁹². Considered contemporary with *Authenticity*,⁹³ this work is the main commentary on the *Clearning Extremes* for which it (like *Stages of the Vehicles*) is a Decisive Overview. Because it is such an expansive discussion of Dzogchen, Bon practitioners look to *Magical Space Treasure* for refining any discussion of view, tenets, meditation, or behavior. It is thus an important reference for further clarification of virtually all major Bon Dzogchen texts,⁹⁴ whether of the *Three Cycles*, *Clearning Extremes*, *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, or *Instructions on A (A khrid)*. All these center on the meaning of unbounded wholeness, and Bon scholars regard them as identical in view, even though *Magical Space Treasure* does not, like *Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, discuss the paths of Setting Free and Soaring On (*khregs mchod* and *thos rgal*).

*Nine Hidden Cycles of Enlightenment (Byang chub sems gab pa dgu skor)*⁹⁵. Consisting of eighty-seven folios, this is a basic work of Bon Dzogchen philosophy. Its origins are mythic, and it is part of a fantastic history linking it with the realm of the nāgas (and thus, perhaps with some elements of the Nāgārjuna mythos). It is said that during the reign of Trigum Tsenpo, when Buddhism did not yet exist, the *Nine Hidden Cycles* had to be hidden and thus became a terma. The work was discovered during the latter diffusion in 1017 by Shen Gomchen (gShen sGom chen), also known as Shenchen Luga (gShen chen Klu dga', 996–1035),⁹⁶ who kept it hidden in his heart for eight years before teaching it to Zhugay Jowo Lekpo (Zhu gyas Jo bo Legs po). From there it came down to Lama Gungthangwa (Bla ma Gung thang ba).

Nine Hidden Cycles is regarded as a source for the later *Instructions on A* Dzogchen cycle promulgated by Gongzod Ritrod Chenpo (dGongs mdzod Ri khrod Chen po, 1038–1096) and for *Magical Space Treasure*. It appears to be a source for *Authenticity* in a rather more general sense than *Three Revealed Cycles*.⁹⁷

92. Karmay 1977: No. 58, p. 108.

93. Oral tradition holds that Lishu Daring may have relied significantly on this text for his basic quotations; however I have not been able to locate actual passages appearing in both works.

94. Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Kathmandu, February 1999, oral commentary.

95. Karmay 1972: No. 52. Published by Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre in *po ti* form (Delhi, 1967).

96. Dan Martin 1991: 268ff. details an argument for these dates in his dissertation; he also considers in detail and then rejects that gShen-chen klu-dga' should, following a suggestion by Gene Smith, be identified with Sangye Kargyal (Sangs rgyas sKar rgyal), a young contemporary of Rinchen Zangpo (Rin chen bZang po, 958–1055); see pp. 274–289.

97. Drarpa Namkha's commentary on *Nine Hidden Cycles* says it was taught by Samantabhadra to Shenhla Ogar; by him to Tseme Oden (Tshad med 'Odldan), who transmitted it to Trulshen Nangden ('Phrul gshen sNang ldan), who in turn taught it to Chime Tsukphud ('Chi med gTshugs [phhud]), from whom it went to Shen (gShen) [here a Bon term for "Lopon"] Sangwa Dupa (gSang ba 'Dus-pa) and thence to Yumzung Zaringtsun (Yum bzang Za ring btsun). She took it to the Land of Nagas, and Shen Sangwa Dupa brought it the realm of the gods. Sangwa Dupa taught it to Shen Yongsu Dakpa (gShen Yongs su dag pa) in the realm of the gods, whereafter Yongsu Dakpa taught it to Lule Drupai Shenpo Yeshe Nyingpo (kLu las Grub pa'i gShen po Ye shes sNying po)/ Ludrup Yeshe Nyingpo (kLu Grub Ye shes sNying po) (sometimes considered a reference to Nāgārjuna). In this

Legacy of Authenticity: Lamp of the Vehicles. This fourteenth-century work gives us a standard of comparison with the *Vehicles Commentary*, which is clearly an earlier text or of a different transmission school, or both. Unlike the later work, which cites Indian literature such as the *Abhidharmaśāstra* and *Madhyantavibhāga* of Vasubandhu, Asaṅga's *Abhidharmaśāmasamuccaya*, the *Lankāvatārā*, various Bon Abhidharma texts, as well as Buddhist Nyingma material,⁹⁸ *Stages* never cites other sources. It also includes a strong focus on Dzogchen, which the later work does not.

Lamp of the Vehicles (*Theg*⁹⁹ pa che chung gong 'og rnam par 'byed pa'i gal mdo nges pa'i gtan tshigs dri med gsal sgron)¹⁰⁰ is a work of 126 folios, included as a later part of the *Essential Collection* (*Gal mdo*) cycle in which the text of *Authenticity* is also found; it was written at the request of the famous Terton, Yildon [Ponsay] Khungod Tsel (dByil ston [dPon gsas] Khung rgod rtsal, b. 1175). Its author, Azha Lodro Gyeltsen (A zha Blo gros rGyal mtshan, 1198–1263), abbot of Yeru Ensaka, was the eighth of eighteen famous masters of that institution. Many of his works are still studied in Bon monasteries in exile.

As noted in chapter 5, The *Lamp* takes unbounded wholeness as a focal topic and, like *Authenticity*, engages the category of *tshad ma* to make points about it. Without making any mention of Dignaga or Dharmakīrti (as *Authenticity* also does not) the *Lamp* inquires into the apparently paradoxical genesis of delusion and samsara from a primordially pure base. In addition, it describes in some detail the nine vehicles of Bon according to the southern and central presentations and elaborates issues discussed in *Authenticity*.

Nine Vehicles and Authenticity Terminology

Of the three terms that *Vehicle Commentary* finds central to Dzogchen—primordial purity, spontaneous occurrence, and just-is-ness—only one, spontaneous occurrence (*lhun grub*), is found in *Authenticity*. The absence of the well known-term *ka dag*, primordial purity, in *Authenticity* is most curious, not least because the term occurs frequently in both *Stages of the Vehicles* and its commentary. Perhaps these two works, though now eminently considered a source for *Authenticity*, were in fact written after it, although clearly some kind of nine vehicle literature is in the background of Lishu Daring's text. The term frequently occurs in other Bon Dzogchen works; we find it in *Clearning Extremes*,

way, Bonpos find Nāgārjuna in their lineage, and regard his teachings on Madhyamaka as similar to Dzogchen. Shenrab is also said to have taught a great deal in the Nāga realm.

Ludrup Yeshe Nyingpo taught the *Nine* to Gyelrik Shenpo Milu Samlek (rGyal rigs bShen po Mi lus bSam Legs), who bestowed it on the thirteen lineage holders, who passed it on to the four scholars (*mikhas pa mi bzhi*).

98. Mimaki and Karmay 1997: x–xi.

99. Karmay 1977 spells this word *thegs*, but the Tibetan itself reads *theg*.

100. Like *Authenticity*, listed in Karmay 1977 as No. 73. There is only one edition of the *Lamp*, a reproduction of the xylographic edition made from the blocks of Menri Monastery in Tsang.

Space Treasure, and *Three Cycles of Revelation*, as well as the *Oral Transmission from Zhang Zhung*. Given the latter, *Authenticity's* connection with Zhang Zhung cannot account for the lacuna of this term. What could?

Samten Karmay speculates that the term *ka dag* originated in tenth-century Tibet, in the period between Lang Dharma's assassination in 842 and about 950.¹⁰¹

If *Authenticity* were written in the eighth century, as is emically claimed, we would have a very simple explanation on hand; however, we would also have to assume the presence of nine vehicle literature in Tibet in the eighth or ninth century. And we may be able to do that.

Based on his study of canonical materials and early doxographical literature, Phillip Stanley has documented the presence in eighth-century Tibet of translations of all major categories of the nine vehicle system.¹⁰² He has likewise argued convincingly that the Mind Class (*sems sde*) of Buddhist Dzogchen materials likely came to Tibet very soon after their inception in India.¹⁰³ Or, even more likely, while deriving the notion of vehicle in relation to spiritual path from India, the ninefold enumeration itself was a Tibetan innovation.¹⁰⁴ In addition, Matthew Kapstein cites an early Buddhist reference to the nine vehicles from Dunhuang, in which the first two are, much like the presentation in Bon's Central Treasure, the vehicles of men and of gods.¹⁰⁵ The Buddhist *Tantras of the Ancients* (*rNying ma rGyud 'bum*) also include mention of the nine vehicles in, for example, the *Unfolding Sound* (*sGra thal 'gyur*) and *Sun-Moon Unity* (*Nyi zla kha sbyor*).¹⁰⁶

Samten Karmay notes the antiquity of the nine vehicle classification also

^{101.} Karmay 1985: 277.

^{102.} Stanley 1998. We also note that, among the Ancient Transmission Tantras, the *sgra thams cad* and *All Creating Majesty* (*Kun byed rgyal po*) bear reference to the nine vehicles.

^{103.} Stanley 1998 also argues that the *Man ngag sde*, which is not present in these earlier materials, very possibly did emerge in Tibet itself. If this is true, then we might speculate whether *Authenticity's* mention of *Authenticity of Scripture and Essential Instructions* (*Man ngag lung gyi tshad ma*) could indicate a closer, or at least different, relationship with Indian roots than that of the *Stages*.

^{104.} Kapstein 2000: 13.

^{105.} Kapstein, 2000: 209 n. 60 cites Pelliot Tibétain 849.14–16. This text also lists subdivisions of the last three vehicles “of which Yoga is divided into the four branches of Yoga, Mahayoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga.” How, precisely, these relate to Nyingmapa usage of these terms has yet to be determined.

^{106.} While most of the seventeen Tantras mention the term *theṅ pa* (of the six I searched only the *Ngo sgrod* did not even mention it), two of the clearest mentions are in the *Unfolding Sound* (*sGra thal 'gyur*) [p. 103]:

*dbang po gsum ni rab 'bring tha
des ni theg gsum 'du shes bral
de las gsum gsum rab phye bas
dgu ste theg dgu dbang po'i gnad*

and the *Sun-Moon Unity* (*Nyi zla kha sbyor*) [p. 182]:

*dbang po gsum ni rab 'bring tha
des ni theg gsum 'du shes bral
de las gsum gsum rab phye bas
dgu ste theg dgu dbang po'i gnad*

Thanks to the prodigious Dr. Jim Valby for the digital version that allowed this searching.

in Buddhism.¹⁰⁷ A Bonpo classification that appears in the Dunhuang document *Pelliot Tibétain 489* names its first two vehicles as the “human vehicle” (*mi'i theg pa*) and “godly vehicle” (*lha'i theg pa*). No Nyingma work uses this classification, but the two are combined as one vehicle in the fourteenth-century *Vehicle Commentary*, one of the background texts of *Authenticity*. For this and other reasons, Karmay concludes that the *PT 489* rendition of nine vehicles is the earliest one. This work, like the *Essential Precepts: Garland of Views* (*Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba*)¹⁰⁸ and *Multicolored Plain of Turquoise* (*gYu'i thang ma kras dgul*),¹⁰⁹ probably dates to the late ninth or early tenth centuries. As Kapstein shows, this work, is attributed to Padmasambhava and certainly was in circulation prior to the eleventh century.¹¹⁰

Authenticity clearly presumes wide knowledge of the nine vehicle system and thus could not have been written before this presentation became fairly widespread in Tibet. At what date could such an assumption be made? Even if such a discourse was in fact present in Tibet in the eighth century, this by no means establishes an eighth- or even tenth-century date for *Authenticity*, but it does mean the door remains open to the possibility that *Authenticity* was indeed a relatively early text. Thus a consideration of the nine vehicle rubric’s early history in Tibet is relevant because of the light it may shed on the date of *Authenticity*, whose author is clearly aware of this manner of categorizing philosophical systems.

Can *Authenticity*’s focus on nine vehicles help us construct a chronology for material understood as background to it? One of the earliest known Buddhist references to the nine vehicle schema is found in *Nubchen Sangye Yeshe* (*gNubs chen Sangs rgyas Ye shes*, b. 844). There is also a nine vehicle text attributed to renowned Buddhist Dzogchen master Śrīsimha,¹¹¹ a native of China who studied logic and who lived, according to traditional lineage narratives, three teaching generations before Padmasambhava and the Buddhist King Trisong Detsen. Inspired by visions of Avalokiteśvara and said to have studied at Wu-t’ai-shan and in India, he also, according to the *Dakini Heart Essence* (*mKha' 'gro nyung-thig*), received teachings from Garab Dorje (*dGa' rab rDo rje*, Prahevajra), described by Buddhists as the first human practitioner of Dzogchen.¹¹² He later transmitted these teachings to Padmasambhava. Śrī-

107. Karmay 1988: 148ff.

108. Derge edition of the Tibetan Cannon (*bsTan 'gyur*) Vol. 83, No. 4726. Title Translation is tentative. Tibetan oral traditions consulted are not definitive.

109. Derge edition of the Tibetan Cannon (*bsTan 'gyur*) Vol. 83, No. 4729.

110. For comparison of relevant passages in this work with that of *Stages of the Vehicles*, see Kapstein 2000: 13–15. See chart comparing Dun Huang, Padmasambhava, and Bon Central Treasure Vehicle enumerations, p. 16.

111. Derge edition of the Tibetan Cannon (*bsTan 'gyur*) No. 4670, *Thugs kyi sgo lcags*. Currently being studied and translated by Philip Stanley, who discussed it at the Eighth Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies in 1998.

112. Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has sparked some controversy in Buddhist circles with his sug-

simha also taught Vimalamitra,¹¹³ who presided over the funeral of Prince Mune Tsenpo, a son of Trisong Detsen whose Zhang Zhung name means “Sky King.”¹¹⁴ This is compelling information, for it strongly suggests the presence in the early Tibetan religious landscape of nine vehicle materials, which had only very shortly before appeared in India.¹¹⁵ The Bon *Stages of the Vehicle* literature, considered background to *Authenticity*, is possibly contemporaneous or otherwise contiguous with this, either inspired by or making its own contributions to philosophical developments during this period, or both.¹¹⁶

Nyingma is the only Buddhist school explicitly and consistently to organize its teachings into nine vehicles. Bon also uses the nine vehicle structure with three different enumerations of these in accordance with three sets of Discovered Treasures (*gTer ma*): the Northern, Central, and Southern Discovered Treasures.¹¹⁷ All, like Nyingma, present Dzogchen as the ninth and most efficacious path. *Stages of the Vehicles*, one of the key background texts to *Authenticity*, is considered the earliest Bon source to name nine vehicles. All of this evidence further supports the early appearance of nine vehicle literature in Tibet, meaning that its awareness of nine vehicles alone does not position *Authenticity* later than emically dated.¹¹⁸

gestion that Shenrab Miwo’s teachings may have surfaced in Ogyan, possibly prior to the teachings of Padmasambhava, and that the famous Garab Dorje of Buddhist Dzogchen lineages may have been Shenrab Miwo’s disciple. Norbu 1979: writes: “It is possible that the ancient Dzogchen which Lord Shenrab Miwo propounded gradually developed into the Ogyen Dzogchen as it is clearly recorded in the *Bon Dzogchen Zhang-shung sNyan-rgyud* that after the 12th lineage of the disciples from Lord Shenrab Miwo, there came a Dzogchen teacher named Zhang-zhung dGa-rab. This teacher . . . may have been Garab Dorje, the universally accepted teacher of Dzogchen. And the twelve Dzogchen masters recorded in the history of Dzogchen as existing in ancient times may have been the twelve Zhang Zhung masters who came before Zhang Zhung dGa-rab.” The historical reference for mention of Zhang Zhung Garab is *Zhang Zhung snyan brgyud rnam thar* (text Ka in *History and Doctrine of Bonpo Nispanna-yoga*), p. 20. Norbu Rinpoche also mentions Pavo Tsuklak Tengwa (dPa bo gTsug lag Phreng ba, 1504–1506) in *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga ston*. See Norbu 1981: 17 and 33 n.14.

113. Dudjom Rinpoche 1991: 497ff. and Tulku Thondup 1996: 62ff. Lama Jigtray and Tulku Pema Wangyal n.d.: 55b.1; sNga 'gyur rdo rje theg pa gtsobor gyur pa'i sgrub brgyud shing rta brgyad kyi byang ba brjod pa'i pad ma dkar po'i rDzing bu (f. 284) by Gyurme Pema Namgyel (Zechen Gyaltschap, 1871–1926). Reproduced by S. W. Tashigangpa, Ladakh, India. See also Tulku Thondup 1996: 367, no. 82–87.

114. Norbu 1989: 26. For more on Mune Tsepo (Mu ne bIsad po), see Dudjom Rinpoche 1991: 519, 603. 115. Phillip Stanley, private communication.

116. Further, David Germano n.d.: 113ff has argued that the Seventeen Tantras emerged in the eleventh century. Other early Buddhist references to the nine-vehicle schema occur in *The Great Self Dawning Presence* (*Rig pa rang shar chen po*), which lists the Hearer, Solitary Realizer, and Bodhisattva vehicles, followed by the Tantric Vehicles of Action (*Kriya*) Method (*Upāya*) Yoga Tantra, Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Dzogchen; *rNying ma rGyud 'Bum*, Vol. Tha, p. 73, 5–6. These categories are also enumerated, for example, in the *Lord Creator of All* (*Kun byed rgyal po*) [44a.4 Derge Kangyur]. Other early references to the nine Buddhist vehicles occur in the Nying-gyud section of the Derge Kanjur, in the *Kun 'dus rig pa'i mdo*, also known as the *Sangs rgyas kun gyi dgongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo* (*sPyi mDo*), 203a.3.

117. For a listing of these and for a list from the *Gab 'grel*, see Wangyal 1993: 103 and Mimaki and Karmay 1997: xv–xvi.; see also discussion in Kapstein 2000: 14–17. The Nyingma presentation of nine vehicles resembles the Bon discussion in the Central Treasure in some of its categories. Classic Nyingma sources on the nine are found in the *Kun 'dus rig pa'i mdo/Sangs rgyas kun gyi dgongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo* (popularly known as *sPyi mDo*) in Vol. Ka (folio 86b/1–290a/6 of the *Nying gyud* section of the Derge *bKa 'gyur*. These nine are also listed in the *Rig pa rang shar ch'en po*, one of “the Seventeen Tantras” in the *Man ngag sde*. See Vol. Tha of *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*. (Thanks to Ven. Tulku Thondup for these references.)

118. See, for example, 371.1–374.1.

The Central Treasure, regarded as most similar with Nyingma, is especially connected with esoteric practices. As listed in the *Opening the Door of Bon*,¹¹⁹ the Central Treasure tradition is the only one to mention Dzogchen by name, though Dzogchen is also the ninth vehicle of the Southern Treasure, where it is referred to as the Peak of Vehicles (*Bla med theg pa*), and of the Northern Treasure, where it is called the *Unsurpassed Vehicle, Highly Distinctive* (*Bla med theg pa khyad pa che pa*).

Certain issues in the Bon literature under consideration surface also in the early Buddhist tantras. For example, the *Dawning of Open Awareness* (*Rig pa rang shar*) and the *Six Expanses* (*kLong drug*) reflect on a conundrum also central to *Authenticity*: How can an unconditioned and primordial wisdom be explained in the face of ignorance?¹²⁰ Does the so-called primordial wisdom actually only come into being when we actually complete the path? This consonance may possibly suggest a common matrix from which both Bon and Buddhist esoteric material emerged (although not one that can be designated based on present knowledge).

The evidence is strong that these were nascent but potent issues by the eleventh century at least. Could they have surfaced even earlier in Bon and perhaps also Buddhist materials? We do not know, but as research develops, and further research will be crucial, it becomes clear that any such refutation will have to be more nuanced than was previously thought necessary, commensurate with the increased difficulty of dismissing this possibility out of hand.¹²¹

^{119.} Mimaki and Karmay 1997: xv–xvi, Tib. 8b3 and 12b.2.

^{120.} For synopses of these and other early tantras, see Germano n.d.: 26ff.

^{121.} The joint Samantabhadra and Zhang Zhung projects are dedicated to make computer analysis of the relevant texts available to researchers. Visit the Zhang Zhung Collection at <http://antioch.rice.edu/digproj/bonpo> and the Samantabhadra Collection at <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/tibet>.

If we are inclined to high-risk speculation, we can note that several elements characteristic of the early Buddhist period in India are visible in the material associated with *Authenticity*, or with the *Authenticity* itself. In addition to the absence of the influential term *ga dag*, introduced in the tenth century, we can note other textual developments, though they too require considerable further investigation before they can stand as serious chronological evidence. Though at this stage of our knowledge they are close to whimsical, they bear further study:

- [1] Absence of use of the concept of functionality (*don byed nus pa*), as discussed in chapter 1.
- [2] Absence of use of term *ka dag*, as discussed above.
- [3] Identification of scriptural *pramāṇa* (*lung gi tshad ma*), as discussed in chapter 1.
- [4] Related with this, a similarity to the pre-Dignāga Buddhist text giving *āptāruti* “verbal testimony” (an analogue of scripture) equal status among four types of *pramāṇa*: (Nagasaki 1991: 221, cited in chapter 1).

- [5] Similarity to Jain *syādvāda*, as mentioned in chapter 3.

As a cluster of otherwise apparently unrelated details these could, with considerable further investigation, provide textual and historical background in support of connecting *Authenticity*, however distantly, with a body of knowledge extant in the earliest Indian Buddhist period.

Texts Cited in Authenticity

Texts are listed in order of first appearance.

- Unbounded Wholeness, the Changeless Ceaseless Essential Heart Tantra* (g.Yung drung snying po nyag gcig gi rgyud) 50.2; (g.Yung drung snying po nyag gcig) 77.2, 122.4; (sNying po nyag gcig) 110.3
- Expansive Sky Tantra* (Nam mkha' yangs pa'i rgyud) 50.3, (Nam mkha' yangs pa'i tra) 77.3, 103.3; *Expansive Space Great Completeness Tantra* (Nam mkha' yangs pa'i rdzogs chen gyi rgyud) 72.2
- Profound Great Bliss Sutra* (De chen zab mo'i mdo) 50.4
- Authentic Scripture* (Lung tshad ma) 50.5, 61.2
- Great Sky Beyond Effort Tantra* (Nam mkha' rdzol 'das chen po'i rgyud) 51.2, 52.6, 75.6, 77.4; (Nam mkha' rdzol 'das chen po) 84.4, 107.4
- Primordially Existing Sky* (Nam mkha' ye srid) 51.3
- Sun Suffusing the Thousand Directions, the Bon Teachings Tantra* (Bon sde nyi ma stong kyab rgyud) 51.4, 54.5, 84.6-85.1; (Nyi ma stong khyab) 102.5, 113.1, 119.1
- Blasting out from the Hold of Cyclic Existence* ('Khor ba dong sprug) 51.4, 73.4
- Mindnature, Heart Essence of Profound Completeness* (Sems nyid gting rdzog snying po) 51.5
- Luminous Cave Vehicle* (Theg pa 'od ltan gyi mrdzod phugs) 52.1
- Definitive Essential Collection* (Gal mdo nges pa) 52.2
- Venerable Bon Awareness of Everything Tantra* (Kun rig bon gyi rje rgyud) 52.4, 85.4
- Secret Scripture Collection* (Mdo lung gsang ba) 52.5
- Collection of the Essential Precepts, Thoughts of the Shenrabs of a Thousand Eons* (sKal stong gshen rab kyi dgongs pa man ngag tu 'dus pa las) 53.1
- Excellent Essential Precepts* (Man ngag dam pa gsang sde dam pa) 53.2
- Heart of Essential Precepts* (Man ngag snying po) 53.2
- Blissful Manner of Essential Precetps on Stabilization* (bSam gtan man ngag bde ba'i ngang) 53.3
- Scripture of Blissful Samantabhadra* (Kun bzang bde ba'i lung) 54.4, 61.4, 61.4-5, 82.1; (Kun du bzang po bde ba'i lung) 91.5, 93.3, 93.3, 97.2, 97.3, 98.3, 98.4, 100.1, 100.2, 100.6, 101.1, 102.2, 108.2, 108.3, 108.5, 111.1, 112.1, 112.2, 114.6, 123.5, 123.6, 124.1-2, 125.5
- Treasure of Three Primordial Existences* (Ye srid gsum gyi mdzod) 54.4
- Mirror of Mindnature Treasure* (Sems nyid me long gi mdzod phug) 55.2
- Dwelling as the Very Heart of Space Tantra* (sNying po nammkha' ltar gnas ba'i rgyud) 57.2; 108.1
- Origin of All Buddha's Word Tantra* (bKa' thams cad gyi 'byung gyi rgyud) 60.1, 73.6
- Precious Treasure Sutra* (Rin po che'i gter gyi mdo) 60.2, 123.2
- Tantra of the Blissful Wheel* (rGyud bde ba'i 'khor lo) 61.3
- Light of the Lama Sutra* ('Od gyi la ma'i mdo) 61.5
- Reversing the Causes of Samsara Tantra* ('Khor ba rgyu ltog gi rgyud) 62.1
- Changeless, Ceaseless Tantra* (g.Yung drung bdal la pa'i rgyud) 63.3
- Changeless, Ceaseless Primordial Existence* (g.Yungs drung ye srid) 63.4

- Heart of Open Space Tantra (sNying po mnyam dbyings rgyud) 66.1; (rGyud snying po mnyam dbyings rgyud) 76.3; (sNying po mnyam dbyings) 78.1*
- Unbounded Open Awareness Tantra (Rig pa thig le'i rgyud) 66.2*
- Completeness of Primordial Existence Tantra (Ye srid rdzogs pa'i rgyud) 66.3*
- Primordially Existing Sky Tantra (rNam mkha'i ye srid gyi rgyud) 66.4*
- Door to Establishing the Secret Collection (gSang 'dus grub pa'i sgo) 71.6*
- Treasure Cave of the Primordially Existing Lama (Ye srid bla ma'i mdzod phug) 72.1*
- Expansive Space Great Completeness Tantra (Nam mkha' yangs pa'i rdzogs chen gyi rgyud) 72.2*
- Analysis Regarding the Existence and Non-existence of Stable Contemplation (bSam gtan yod med thag gcod) 72.6, 73.5*
- Expansive Changeless, Ceaseless Nature (g.Yung drung bdal ba) 73.3*
- Reversing Samsara Tantra ('Khor ba ru ltog rgyud) 73.4*
- Sutra on the Three Aspects of Primordial Existence (Ye srid rnam gsum gyi mdo) 74.3*
- Tantra of the Heart of Primordial Completeness Sutra (sNying po ye rdzogs gyi mdo rgyud) 74.6*
- Sky Cave Treasure Sutra (Nam mkha' mdzod phug gyi mdo) 75.2*
- Compassionate Prophecy Scripture (Thugs rje lung bstan lung) 75.2, 133.4*
- Changeless, Ceaseless Ornament Tantra (g.Yung drung rgyan gyi rgyud) 75.3*
- Sutra of the Tathāgatha's Origins (bDe gshegs 'byung rabs kyi mdo) 76.2*
- Profound Stake Sutra (gZer bu zab mo mdo) 76.4*
- Luminous Changeless, Ceaseless Ornament (g.Yung drung rkyan gyi 'od zer) 77.4*
- Fully Arrayed Tathāgatas Lamp Sutra (bDe gzhegs sgron ma yongs su bgod pa'i mdo) 77.5*
- Cutting Delusion's Root ('Khrul rdzad gcod) 78.2*
- Shenbla Okar Heart Mind Scripture (gShen lha 'od dkar gyi thugs) 78.2, 94.1; (gShen lha dkar po thugs kyi lung) 99.1; (gShen lha dkar po thugs kyi lung) 108.6, III.1*
- Unbounded Samantabhadra State Tantra (Kun du bzang ba'i dgongs pa thig le rgyud) 78.6*
- Root Sutra of Primordially Existing Phenomena (Srid bon gyi mdo rdza) 78.1*
- Precious Mirror Sutra (Rin bo che me long gi mdo) 78.2*
- The King of Arising and Existence Sutra (Srid pa 'byung rgyal gyi mdo) 79.6, 80.2*
- Meaningfully True Sutra (Don ltan bden pa'i mdo) 81.3*
- Scripture of the Ten Bon Natures (Bon nyid bcu ba'i lung) 81.4*
- Collection of Jewels Sutra ('Dus pa rin po che'i mdo) 81.5*
- Hundred Thousand (Verses) Purifying the Three Poisons in the Expanse (Dug gsum dbyings su dg pa'i 'bum)*
- Spontaneously Complete Innate Awareness Tantra (Rig pa lhun rdzogs gyi rgyud/rig pa lhun rdzogs rgyud) 82.2, 107.6*
- Sutra of Wandering in the Three Realms of Samsara (Khams gsum 'khor ba'i mdo) 82.4*
- Changeless, Ceaseless Primordial Completeness (g.Yung drung ye rdzogs) 82.5, 110.5, 120.2, 120.3*
- Spontaneously Completed View Tantra (lTa ba lhun grub gyi rgyud) 82.6*
- Changeless, Ceaseless Excellent Bon Collection (Bon sde dam pa g.yung drung) 83.1*
- Stable Elephant Sutra (Klang brtan gyi mdo) 83.5*
- Tathāgata State Sutras (bDe gshegs dgongs bgros pa'i mdo) 84.6*
- Nine Circling Moons Sutra (Zla ba dgu skor lung) 85.2*
- Spontaneously Complete Open Awareness Tantra (Rig pa lhun rdzogs rgyud) 85.5*

- Song of Two Truths Sutra (*bDen gnyis sgra dbyangs kyi mdo*) 88.3
Expansive Scripture Treasury (*Lung yangs pa'i mdzod phug*) 90.6
Mirror of Miraculous Primordial Wisdom Sutra (*Ye shes 'khrul gyi me long gi mdo*) 91.5
Medicine Sutra for Subduing Demons (*bDud 'dul sman gyi mdo*) 92.1
Sutra of the Great Bliss and Emptiness Sutra (*bDe ba stong chen gyi mdo*) 92.5
White Shen Deity Mindheart Scripture (*gShen lha dkar po thugs kyi lung*) 93.4, 94.2,
 99.1, 109, 112
Profoundly Great and Miraculous Sutra (*rMad chen zab mo'i mdo*) 94.3, 94.5
Hundred Thousand on Pure Open Awarenesses (*Dam pa rig 'bum*) 96.1
Bon Spacious Expanse Sutra (*Bon dbyings bdal pa'i mdo*) 96.6
Venerable Hundred Thousand Scriptural Teachings (*'Bum rje lung bstan mdo*) 97.1
Steadfast Sun Scripture (*Rab rtan nyi ma lung*) 97.2
Compendium of Very Secret Bliss Sutra (*Yang gsang bde ba 'dus pa'i mdo*) 97.3
Pure Dynamic Display (*Rab rtsal dam pa*) 97.6
Sutra Requested by the Awareness Rishi (*Rig pa drong srong gis zhus ba'i mdo*) 98.2
Ceaseless, Changeless Expanse Scripture (*g.Yung drung yangs pa can gyi lung*) 99.3
Heart Essence of Unified Space (*sNying po'i mnayam kyi rgyud*) 99.3
Blissful Cakra (*bDe ba'i 'khor lo*) 99.6
Heart Essence of the Changeless, Ceaseless Continuum (*rGyud g.yung drung snying po*)
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Glossaries

English-Tibetan-Sanskrit Glossary

English	Tibetan	Sanskrit
abiding base, base	gzhi gnas	ālaya-adhikaraṇa/ād-hāra
abiding condition, abiding state, natural condition, natural state	gnas lugs	sthiti
accumulation path	tshogs lam	sambhāramārga
actual state, understanding	dgongs	abhiprāya
adventitious	glo bur	āgantuka
aftermath	rjes thob	prastalabdha
allbase, basis of all	kun gzhi	ālaya
allbase consciousness	kun gzhi rnam shes	ālayavijñāna
all-suffusing	khyab brdal	
Ancient Bon	rnying ma'i bon	
animals with claws or hoofs (excluding birds)	sder chags	
appearance	snang ba	ābhāsa
appearing and empty	snang stong	ābhāsaśūnyata
artful endeavor	'bad pa	yatna
astrology	rtsis	

authentic cognition that is well known to others	gzhan grags kyi tshad ma	
authentic valid scriptures of the Superiors	'phags pa'i lung tshad ma	āryāgamapramāṇa
authentic word of the Conquerors	rgyal ba'i bka' tshad ma	
authenticating scripture	yid ches pa'i lung	āptāgama
authenticating verbal knowledge	yid ches pa'i tshig	āptavacana
authenticating verbal testimony	yid ches pa'i thos pa	āptaśruti
authenticator of method authenticity, authenticating, valid or authenticating mind, principles of authentication, authentic cognition, logic	thabs kyi tshad ma tshad ma	pramāṇa
authoritative fault finding	skyon brjod pa'i tshad ma	
authoritative faulting	skyon btang ba'i tshad ma	
base	gzhi	ādhāra
blessings	byin rlabs	adhiṣṭhāna
Bon, phenomenon (often used in place of the Buddhist term <i>chos</i> , <i>dharma</i>)	bon	
bon-nature	bon nyid	
bon-subject	bon can	
brilliantly	kyug ge	
calm, calm state	zhi gnas	śamathā
Cataleptic Tīrthaka	mu stegs brgyal 'bog	
cause	rgyu	kāraṇa, hetu
center, middle	dbu	madhyama
changeless ceaseless dimension	gyung drung gi sku	
channels and winds	rtsa rlung	nāḍivāyu
Chronicles of the Kings [genre]	rgyal ra	
clear and empty	gsal stong	
clearing away faults	skyon gsal ba	
cognition	shes pa	jñāna

Collected Topics [genre]	bsdus grwa	
compassion	thugs rjes	karūṇā
Compassionate One	thugs rjes sems dpa'	
concentration, meditative stability	bsam gtan	dhyāna
conceptual thought	rtog pa	kalpanā
confidence	gding	
Conqueror	rgyal ba	jina
consciousness	shes pa	vijñāna
consequence	thal ba	prāsaṅga
contemplative open awareness	bsam rig	
contradictory, opposites	'gal ba	vipakṣa
core meaning	snying pa'i don	
correct assumption	yid dpyod	manaparikṣa
correct reason	rtags yang dag	
dawning of clarity	gsal shar	
deceptive	slu ba	vañcana
decisive overview	lta ba spyi gcod	
defining characteristic	mtshan nyid	lakṣaṇa
definitive	ngeś pa	niyata
degraded delusion	skyon mar 'khrul	
deluded allbase	'khrul gzhi	
delusion	'khrul ba	bhrānti
dependent arising	rtēn 'brel	pratīyasamutpāda
detraction, underestimate	skur 'debs	apavāda
different	tha dad	bhinna
diffuseness and excitement	'phro rgod	
direct perception	mngon sum	pratyakṣa
discern	'du shes	samjñā
discrepancy, division	dbye ba	bhedā, vivecana
discriminating	skyu ma mthong	
dispelling objections	rtsod pa spang	
Dispersed Bon	'chal bon	
display from the base	gzhi'i rtsal	
distractedly excited	'chal ba	
distraction	rgod pa	
divination	mo	
doer of everything	kun gyi byed pa po	
dullness	rmug pa	
dynamic display	rtsal	

Dzogchen, Great Com- pleteness	rdzogs chen	
effort	rtsol ba	
effortful exertion	'bad rtsol	prayatna
effortless, artless	'bad pa med	ayatna
effortlessly	'bad rtsol med	aprayatna
emanation dimension	sprul sku	nirmāṇakāya
Emergence of Dharma [genre]	chos 'byung	
Emergent Bon	rdol bon	
enlightenment mind	byang chub kyi sems	bodhicitta
erroneous designation	rnam brtag	vikalpa
esoteric precept, essential precept	man ngag	āmnāya
essence	ngo bo	bhāva
essential base	snying po'i gzhi	
essential nature	ngo bo nyid	bhāvatā
essential nature dimen- sion	ngo bo nyid sku	svabhāvikakāya
establishing one's view	lta ba grub	
Eternalist Tirthika	mu stegs rtag pa ther zug pa	
Ethical Ritualists	gtsang spyod pa theg pa	
exalted qualities	yon tan	guṇa
excluding	rnam par bcad	
exclusion	gzhan sel	apoha
existence, those occupied with existence	srid pa	
experience	nyams myong	anubhava
experiential instructions	nyams khrid	
explicit attraction	mngon par zhen pa	
explicit contradiction	dngos 'gal	
explicit object	dngos yul	
factor of clarity	sel cha	
factor of emptiness	stong cha	
factor of knowing	mkhan cha	
feeling	tshor ba	vedanā
focusing the mind	blo gdad	
force	shugs	
form	gzugs	rūpa

foundational practices	sngon 'gro	
fruit	'bras bu	phala
full manifestation	mngon du gyur pa	abhimukhi
functionality	don byed nus pa	arthakriyāsamartha
generalized phenomenon	don spyi	arthasāmānya
generally characterized phenomenon	spyi mtshan	sāmānyalakṣaṇa
genuine bon-dimension	bon sku	
goddess	lha mo	devi
Gods and Humans in Mutual Reliance [sect]	lha mi gshan brten	
good actions	bon spyod	
great unbounded whole	thig le chen po	mahābindu
grey-white semi-precious stone	mchong bu	
Hearer	nyan thos	śrāvaka
heart	snying	hṛdaya
heart essence	snying po	sāra
Heart Essence [genre]	snying thig	
heart-mind	thugs	citta
historical precedent, Chronicles [genre]	lo rgyus	
holding, adherence, attraction, adhering, attraction	zhen pa	āsakti
honey-eyed	ngur mig	
immediately prior condition	de ma thag rkyen	tatkṣaṇapratyaya
impermanent thing/phenomenon	dngos po	vastu/bhāva
import	don	artha
inborn, arising together	lhan cig skyes	sahaja
inclusive assessment	yongs su gcod	pariccheda
increase	brtas	
indubitable	chig chod	
inseparable, never separated	'bral med	aviyoga
inspirational narratives	gtam rgyud	
investigation	shes bzhin	samprajanya
just-is-ness	ji bzhin nyid	ananyathā

latencies	bag chags	vāsanā
laxity	bying ba	
liberation path	mthar spyin pa'i lam	niṣṭhāmārga
light	'od	prabhā
Lord of the Ter	gter bdag	nidhipati
Mādhyamika proponents of Essencelessness	ngo bo nyid med par smra ba	niḥsvabhāvatāvādin
Manifesters of the Actual	dngos bsgyed pa	
marvelous display	cho 'phrul	prātiḥārya
medicine	sman	
meditation path	sgom lam	bhāvanamārga
meditative stabilization	ting nge 'dzin	samādhī
mental direct perception	yid kyi mngon sum	mānasa-pratyakṣa
mere absence, mere nega- tive	med dgag	pratiṣedha
mind	blo	buddhi
mind	sems	citta
Mind and Awareness [genre]	blo rig	
Mind Collection [genre]	sems sde	
mind-to-mind transmis- sion	dgongs rgyud	
mindfulness	dran pa	smṛti
mindnature	sems nyid	caitanya
mindnature instructions	sems khrid	
momentariness	skad gcig ma	kṣaṇikat
mutually pervasive	yin khyab mnyam	
nature, self-nature	bdag nyid	ātmatvā
negandum, object of nega- tion	dgag bya	pratiṣedhya
neither form nor con- sciousness	ldan min 'du byed	viprayuktasamśkāra
New Bon	bon gsar ma	
Nihilist Tīrthika	mu stegs chad pa	
no separation	ma bral	
Nonconceptualizing Bo- dhisattva	g.yung drung sems dpa'	
nonduality	gnyis med	advaya
non-thing, unthing, per- manent	dngos med	avastu/abhāva
not giving up, not losing track of	mi gtang ba	

object, focus, observe	dmigs pa	ālambana
object-condition	dmigs rkyen	ālambana-pratyaya
object of awareness	shes bya	jñeya
objectively empowered authentic cognition	stobs shugs kyi tshad ma	
one in essence	ngo bo gcig	ekabhāva
oneness, indivisible	dbyer med	abheda
oneness of open awareness and emptiness	rig stong dbyer med	
open awareness	rig pa	samvedana
open awareness of dynamic display	rtsal gyi rig pa	
oral instructions	gdams ngag	upadeśa
ordinary being	sems can	sattva
path of no more learning	mi slob lam	aśaikṣamārga
path of union	sbyor lam	prayogamārga
pervasion, pervade, suffice	khyab pa	vyāpti
pervasive open awareness	khyab rig	
playful manifestation	rol ba	
Possessors of All	kun ldan pa	
prayer flag	rta chog	
presenting one's own system	rang lugs bzhag	
primordial open awareness	ye rig	ādisamṛvedana
primordial purity	ka tag	
primordial wisdom	ye shes	jñāna
proof	sgrub pa	sādhyā
proof-sign	rgyu mtshan	nimitta
Proponents of the Ultimate Secret Knowing	rig byed kyi mtha' gsang smra ba	vedānta-guhya-vādin
proven by reasoning	grub bya	
pure from the beginning	ye nas dag pa	
purposeful	don byed	arthakriyā
rays	zer	kiraṇa
reality dimension	chos sku	dharmakāya
realization	rtogs	adhigama
realizing one's view	lta ba rtogs	
reason	rigs pa	yukti
reasoning	gtan tshigs	hetu

reasoning by way of the nature	rang bzhin gyi rtags yang dag	
reasoning of the great ceaseless, changeless fragments	g.yung drung gzegs chen gyi gtan tshigs	
reasoning-phenomenon that proves	grub byed chos	
referent object, object of adherence	zhen yul	
reflexive awareness, self-cognition, reflexivity	rang rig	svasamvedana
reflexive awareness direct perception	rang rig mngon sum	svasamvedanapratyakṣa
reflexively authentic open awareness	rang gi rig pa'i tshad ma	svasamvedanapramāṇa
reflexively broad open awareness of the abiding base	gzhi gnas gyi rang rig	
reflexively open awareness of the dawning dynamic display	rtsal shar gyi rang rig	
reflexively self-aware primordial wisdom	rang rig ye shes	svasamvedanajñāna
refuting the system of others	gzhan gyi lugs dgag	
relation between reason and subject	phyogs bon/phyogs chos	pakṣadharma
relationship of one arising from the other	de las byung 'ba'i 'brel ba	tadutpattisambandha
resplendence dimension	longs sku	sambhogakāya
retained, held steady	zin	saśakta
revealed treasures	gter	nidhi
Rishi, sage	drong srong	ṛṣi
ritual discard	gtor ma	bali
Samantabhadra	kun bzang	samantabhadra
same-nature relationship	bdag nyid gcig pa'i 'brel ba	ekātmatvasambandha
scriptural authority	lung	āgama
secondary meaning, requiring interpretation	drang don	neyārtha
seeing path	mthong lam	darśanamārga

self-arisen primordial wisdom	rang byung ye shes	svayambhūjñāna
Self-Realized Practitioners	rang rtogs gshen rab kyi theg pa	
sense perception	dbang po mthong snang	
sensory direct perception	dbang po'i mn̄gon sum	indriya-pratyakṣa
separate	so sor	
Setting Free/Letting Be settling of principles	khregs chod gtan la 'phebs pa'i gzhung lugs	
severing of doubt	gdar sha gcod	
Shenrab, practitioner	gshen rab	
sign, reason	rtags	linga
smooth talker	kha 'phra mchu	
Soaring On	thod gal	
sound	sgra	śabda
source	'byung khungs	
sources	skye mched	āyatana
space	nam mkha'	ākāśa
special calm state	thun mong ma yin pa'i zhi gnas	asādhāraṇaśamatha
special insight, excellent insight	lhag mthong	vipaśyanā
specifically characterized phenomenon	rang mtshan	svalakṣaṇa
spontaneous presence, spontaneity	lhun grub	anābhoga, nirābhoga
state, in a state of	ngang	
Straying Bon	'khyar bon	
subject	chos can	dharmin
substantial thing	rdzas yod	dravyasat
Sugata	bde gshegs	sugata
superimposition, overlay	sgro 'dogs	samāropa
Superior	'phags ba	āryan
support	rten	āśraya
support	tshugs	
surety, trust	gdeng	
three times	dus gsum	kālatraya
Transformed Bon	'gyur /bsgyur bon	

transmission of words into the ears of listeners	nyan rgyud	kārtantra
transmission through symbols	brda'i rgyud	saketa tantra
trust	yid ches	pratyaya
unawareness/ignorance	ma rig pa	avidyā
unbounded wholeness	thig le nyag gcig	
unchanging	ma gyur pa	
unconnected	ya bral	
undeceived	mi slu ba	avisaṁvādin
undefined	lung ma bstan	avyākṛta
union	zung 'jug	yuganaddha
union of clarity and play	sel zhing rol ba'i zung 'jug	
universal	spyi	sāmānya
unmistakenly	phyin ci ma log par	avithatha
unmoving	g.yo ba med pa	acala
unsurpassed	bla med	anuttara
utterly nonexistent	cir yang ma yin par, gtan med	
Upasaka, ordained lay per- son	dge snyen	upāsaka
valid inference	rjes dpag tshad ma	anumāṇa pramāṇa
vehicle	theṅ pa	yāna
vividly	wa le	
way of establishing	grub thabs	sādhana
Way of the Bodhisattvas which is without con- ceptual elaboration	g.yung drung sems dpa' spros med pa'i theṅ pa	
whole	thig le	bindu
wholeness	nyag gcig ma	
wind-horse	rlung rta	
wisdom	shes rab	prajñā
wrongful imputation	kun brtags	parikalpa
wrongfulness	sdig pa	pāpa
yogic direct perception	rnal 'byor mn̄gon sum	yogi-pratyakṣa
Yungdrung	g.yung drung	svāstika

Tibetan-Sanskrit-English Glossary

Tibetan	Sanskrit	English
ka tag		primordial purity
kun gyi byed pa po		doer of everything
kun brtags	parikalpa	wrongful imputation
kun ldan pa		Possessors of All
kun bzang	samantabhadra	Samantabhadra
kun gzhi	ālaya	allbase, basis of all
kun gzhi rnam shes	ālayavijñāna	allbase consciousness
kyug ge		brilliantly
skad gcig ma	kṣaṇikatā	momentariness
skur 'debs	apavāda	underestimate by de- tracting, detraction
skyu ma mthong		discriminating
skye mched	āyatana	sources
skyon brjod pa'i tshad ma		authoritative fault find- ing
skyon btang ba'i tshad ma		authoritative faulting
skyon mar 'khrul		degraded delusion
skyon gsal ba		clearing away faults
kha 'phra mchu		smooth talker
khyab brdal		all-suffusing
khyab pa	vyāpti	pervasion, pervade, suf- fuse
khyab rig		pervasive open aware- ness
khregs chod		Setting Free
mkhan cha		factor of knowing
'khyar bon		Straying Bon
'khrul ba	bhrānti	delusion
'khrul gzhi		deluded allbase
grub thabs	sādhana	way of establishing
grub bya		proven by reasoning
grub byed chos		reasoning- phenomenon that proves
glo bur	āgantuka	adventitious
dgag bya	pratiṣedhya	negandum, object of negation

dge snyen	upāsaka	Upasaka, ordained lay person
dgongs	abhiprāya	actual state, understanding
dgongs rgyud		mind-to-mind transmission
'gal ba	vipakṣa	contradictory, opposites
'gyur /bsgyur bon		Transformed Bon
rgod pa		distraction
rgyal ba	jina	Conqueror
rgyal ba'i bka' tshad ma		authentic word of the Conquerors
rgyal ra		Chronicles of the Kings [genre]
rgyu	kāraṇa, hetu	cause
rgyu dang rkyen gyi 'brel ba		relationship arising from causes and conditions
rgyu mtshan	nimitta	proof-sign
sgom lam	bhāvanamārga	meditation path
sgra	śabda	sound
sgro 'dogs	samāropa	superimposition, overlay
sgrub pa	sādhya	proof
ngang		state, in a state of
ngur mig		honey-eyed
nges pa	niyata	definitive
ngo bo	bhāva	essence
ngo bo gcig	ekabhāva	one in essence
ngo bo nyid	bhāvatā	essential nature
ngo bo nyid sku	svabhāvikakāya	essential nature dimension
ngo bo nyid med par smra ba	nihsvabhāvatāvādin	Mādhyamika proponents of essencelessness
dngos 'gal		explicit contradiction
dngos bsgyed pa		Manifesters of the Actual
dngos po	vastu/bhāva	impermanent thing/phenomenon
dngos med	avastu/abhāva	nonthing, unthing, permanent
dngos yul		explicit object

mngon du gyur pa	abhimukhi	full manifestation
mngon par zhen pa		explicit attraction
mngon sum		direct perception
sngon 'gro		foundational practices
cir yang ma yin par		utterly nonexistent
chig chod		indubitable
cho 'phrul	prātihārya	marvelous display
chos sku	dharmakāya	reality dimension
chos can	dharmin	subject
chos 'byung		Emergence of Dharma
mchong bu		[genre]
'chal ba		grey-white semi-precious stone
'chal bon		distractedly excited
ji bzhin nyid	ananyathā	Dispersed Bon
'jig rten	loka	just-is-ness
rjes thob	pr̄śtalabdha	universe
rjes dpag tshad ma	anumāṇa pramāṇa	aftermath
nyag gcig ma		valid inference
nyan thos	śrāvaka	wholeness
nyams khrid		Hearer
nyams myong	anubhava	experiential instructions
snyan rgyud	kāraṇatantra	experience
gnyis med	advaya	transmission of words
rnying ma'i bon		into the ears of listeners
snying	hr̄daya	nonduality
snying thig		Ancient Bon
snying pa'i don		heart
snying po	sāra	Heart Essence [genre]
snying po'i gzhi		core meaning
ting nge 'dzin	samādhi	heart essence
gtan med		essential base
gtan tshigs	hetu	meditative stabilization
gtan la 'phebs pa'i gzhung lugs		utterly nonexistent
gtam rgyud		reasoning
gter	nidhi	settling of principles
gter bdag	nidhipati	inspirational narratives
gtor ma	bali	revealed treasures
		Lord of the Ter
		ritual discard

rta chog		prayer flag
rtags	linga	sign, reason
rtags yang dag		correct reason
rten	āśraya	support
rten 'brel	pratityasamutpāda	dependent arising
rtog pa	kalpanā	conceptual thought
rtogs	adhibhāma	realization
lta ba grub		establishing one's view
lta ba rtogs		realizing one's view
lta ba spyi gcod		decisive overview
stong cha		factor of emptiness
stobs shugs kyi tshad ma		objectively empowered authentic cognition
brtas		increase
tha dad	bhinnā	different
thal ba	prāsaṅga	consequence
thabs kyi tshad ma		authenticator of method
thig le	bindu	whole
thig le chen po	mahābindu	great unbounded whole
thig le nyag gcig		unbounded wholeness
thugs	citta	heart-mind
thugs rjes	karūṇa	compassion
thugs rjes sems dpa'		Compassionate One
thun mong ma yin pa'i	asādhāraṇaśamatha	special calm state
zhi gnas		
theg pa	yāna	vehicle
thod gal		Soaring On
mthar spyin pa'i lam	niṣṭhāmārga	liberation path
mthong lam	darśanamārga	seeing path
dus gsum	kālatraya	three times
de ma thag rkyen	tatkṣaṇapratyaya	immediately prior condition
de las byung 'ba'i 'brel ba	tadutpattisambandha	relationship of one arising from the other
don	artha	import
don byed	arthakriyā	achieving one's purpose
don spyi	arthasāmānya	generalized phenomenon
don byed nus pa	arthakriyāśamartha	functionality

dran pa	smṛti	mindfulness
drang don	neyārtha	secondary meaning, requiring interpretation
drong strong ldan min 'du byed	r̥ṣi viprayuktasaśkāra	Rishi, sage neither form nor consciousness
gdams ngag gdar sha gcod gding gdeng bdag nyid	upadeśa	oral instructions severing of doubt confidence surety, trust nondual nature [of clarity and emptiness]
bdag nyid gcig pa'i 'brel ba	ekātmatvasambandha	same-nature relationship
bde gshergs 'du shes	sugata	Sugata
rdol bon	amjñā	discern
sdig pa	pāpa	Emergent Bon wrongfulness
sder chags		animals with claws or hoofs (excluding birds)
brda'i rgyud bsdus grwa	samkhetatantra	Collected Topics [genre]
nam mkha' gnas lugs	ākāśa sthiti	space abiding condition, abiding state, natural condition, natural state
rnam brtag rnam par bcad	vikalpa	erroneous designation excluding
rnal 'byor mngon sum	yogi-pratyakṣa	yogic direct perception
snang stong	ābhāsaśūnyata	appearing and empty
snang ba	ābhāsa	appearance
spyi	sāmānya	universal
spyi mtshan	sāmānyalakṣaṇa	generally characterized phenomenon
sprul sku	irmāṇakāya	emanation dimension
phyin ci ma log par	avitatha	unmistakenly
phyogs bon/phyogs chos	pakṣadharma	relation between reason and subject
'phags ba	āryan	Superior

'phags pa'i lung tshad ma	āryāgamapramāṇa	authentic valid scriptures of the Superiors
'phro rgod		diffuseness and excitement
bag chags	vāsanā	latencies
bon		Bon, phenomenon (often used in place of the Buddhist term <i>chos, dharma</i>)
bon sku		genuine bon-dimension
bon can		bon-subject
bon nyid		bon-nature
bon spyod		good actions
bon gsar ma		New Bon
byang chub kyi sems	bodhicitta	enlightenment mind
bying ba		laxity
bla med	anuttara	unsurpassed
blo	buddhi	mind
blo gdad		focusing the mind
blo rig		Mind and Awareness [genre]
blo'i rim pa		level of mind
dbang po mthong snang		sense perception
dbang po'i mnгон sum	indriya-pratyakṣa	sensory direct perception
dbu	madhyama	center
dbye ba	bheda, vivecana	discrepancy, division
dbyer med	abheda	oneness, indivisible
'bad pa	yatna	artful endeavor
'bad pa med	ayatna	effortless, artless
'bad rtsol	prayatna	effortful exertion
'bad rtsol med	apravatna	effortlessly
'byung khungs		source
'bral med	aviyoga	inseparable, never separated
'bras bu	phala	fruit
byin rlabs	adhiṣṭhāna	blessings
sbyor lam	prayogamārga	path of union
ma gyur pa		unchanging
ma bral		no separation
ma rig pa	avidyā	unawareness/ignorance

man ngag	āmnāya	esoteric precept, essential precept
mi gtang ba		not giving up, not losing track of
mi slob lam	aśaikṣamārga	path of no more learning
mi slu ba	avisaṃvādin	undeceived
mu stegs chad pa		Nihilist Tīrthika
mu stegs brgyal 'bog		Cataleptic Tīrthika
mu stegs rtag pa ther zug pa		Eternalist Tīrthika
med dgag	pratiṣedha	mere absence, mere negative (negation?)
mo		divination
dmigs rkyen	ālambana-pratyaya	object-condition
dmigs pa	ālambana	object, focus, observe
rmug pa		dullness
sman		medicine
gtsang spyod pa theg pa		Ethical Ritualists
rtsa rlung	nādīvāyu	channels and winds
rtsal		dynamic display
rtsal gyi rig pa		open awareness of dynamic display
rtsal shar gyi rang rig		reflexively open awareness of the dawning dynamic display
rtsis		astrology
rtsod pa spang		dispelling objections
rtsol ba		effort
tshad ma	pramāṇa	authenticity, authentication, valid or authenticating mind, principles of authentication, authentic cognition, logic
tshugs		support
tshogs lam	sambhāramārga	accumulation path
tshor ba	vedanā	feeling
mtshan nyid	lakṣaṇa	defining characteristic
rdzas yod	dravyasat	substantial thing
rdzogs chen		Dzogchen, Great Compleness
wa le		vividly

zhi gnas	śamathā	calm, calm state
zhen pa	āsakti	holding, adherence, attraction, adhering
zhen yul		referent object, object of adherence
gzhan gyi lugs dgag		refuting the system of others
gzhan grags kyi tshad ma		authentic cognition that is well known to others
gzhan sel	apoha	exclusion
gzhi	ādhāra	base
gzhi gnas	ālaya-adhikaraṇa/ād- hāra	abiding base, base
gzhi gnas gyi rang rig		reflexively broad open awareness of the abiding base
gzhi'i rtsal	samṣakta	display from the base
zin	kiraṇa	retained, held steady
zer	yuganaddha	rays
zung 'jug	rūpa	union
gzugs	prabhā	form
'od		light
ya bral	mānasa-pratyakṣa	unconnected
yid kyi mngon sum		mental direct percep- tion
yid ches	pratyaya	trust
yid ches pa'i tshig	āptavacana	authenticating verbal knowledge
yid ches pa'i lung	āptāgama	authenticating scrip- ture
yid ches pa'i thos pa	āptaśṛuti	authenticating verbal testimony
yid dpyod	manaparikṣa	correct assumption
yin khyab mnyam		mutually pervasive
ye nas dag pa		pure from the begin- ning
ye rig	ādisamvedana	primordial open aware- ness
ye shes	jñāna	primordial wisdom
yongs su gcod	pariccheda	inclusive assessment
yon tan		exalted qualities

g.yung drung	svāstika	Yungdrung
g.yung drung gi sku		changeless ceaseless dimension
g.yung drung gzegs chen gyi gtan tshigs		reasoning of the great ceaseless, changeless fragments
g.yung drung sems dpa'		Nonconceptualizing Bodhisattva
g.yung drung sems dpa' spros med pa'i theg pa		Way of the Bodhisattvas which is without conceptual elaboration
g.yo ba med pa rang gi rig pa'i tshad ma	acala svasañedana-pramāṇa	unmoving reflexively authentic open awareness, authentic and reflexive awareness
rang rtogs gshen rab kyi theg pa		Self-Realized Practitioners
rang byung ye shes	svayambhūjñāna	self-arisen primordial wisdom
rang mtshan	svalakṣaṇa	specifically characterized phenomenon nature
rang bzhin	svabhāva	reasoning by way of the nature
rang bzhin gyi rtags yang dag		reflexive awareness, self-cognition, reflexivity
rang rig	svasamvedana	reflexive awareness direct perception
rang rig mngon sum	svasamvedanapratyakṣa	reflexively self-aware primordial wisdom
rang rig ye shes		presenting one's own system
rang lugs bzhag		oneness of open awareness and emptiness
rig stong dbyer med		awareness
rig pa	samvedana	Proponents of the Ultimate Secret Knowing
rig byed kyi mtha' gsang smra ba	vedāntaguhyavādin	reason
rigs pa	yukti	playful manifestation
rol ba		

rlung rta		wind-horse
lung	āgama	scriptural authority
lung ma bstan	avyākṛta	undefined
lo rgyus		historical precedent, Chronicles [genre]
longs sku	sambhogakāya	resplendence dimension
shugs		force
shes pa	jñāna	cognition
shes pa	vijñāna	consciousness
shes bya	jñeya	object of awareness
shes bzhin	samprajanya	investigation
shes rab	prajñā	wisdom
gshen rab		Shenrab, practitioner
sems khrid		mindnature instruc- tions
sems	citta	mind
sems can	sattva	ordinary being
sems nyid	caitanya	mindnature
sems sde		Mind Collection [genre]
sel cha		factor of clarity
sel zhing rol ba'i zung		union of clarity and playful eruption
'jug		separate
so sor		existence, those occu- pied with existence
srid pa		deceptive
slu ba	vañcana	clear and empty
gsal stong		dawning of clarity
gsal shar		concentration, medita- tive stability
bsam gtan	dhyāna	contemplative open awareness
bsam rig		Gods and Humans in Mutual Reliance
lha mi gshan brten		[sect]
lhan cig skyes	sahaja	inborn, arising to- gether
lha mo	devī	goddess
lhag mthong	vipaśyanā	special insight, excel- lent insight

lhun gyis		spontaneously
lhun grub	anābhoga, nirābhoga	spontaneous presence, spontaneity

Sanskrit-Tibetan-English Glossary

Sanskrit	Tibetan	English
Acala	g.yo ba med pa	unmoving
Advaya	gnyis med	nonduality
Adhigama	rtogs	realization
adhiṣṭhāna	byin rlabs	blessings
Ananyathā	ji bzhin nyid	just-is-ness
Anābhoga	lhun grub	spontaneous presence, spontaneity
Anuttara	bla med	unsurpassed
Anubhava	nyams myong	experience
anumāṇa pramāṇa	rjes dpag tshad ma	valid inference
Apavāda	skur 'debs	detraction, underesti- mate by detracting
Apoha	gzhan sel	exclusion
Aprayatna	'bad rtsol med	effortlessly
Abhāva	dngos med	nonthing, unthing, permanent
Abhiprāya	dgongs	actual state, under- standing
Abhimukhi	mngon du gyur pa	full manifestation
Abheda	dbyer med	oneness, indivisible
Ayatna	'bad pa med	effortless, artless
Artha	don	import
Arthakriyā	don byed	purposeful
Arthakriyāsamartha	don byed nus pa	functionality
Arthasāmānya	don spyi	generalized phenome- non
Avastu	dngos med	nonthing, unthing, permanent
Avitatha	phyin ci ma log par	unmistakenly
Avidyā	ma rig pa	unawareness/igno- rance
Aviyoga	'bral med	inseparable, never sep- arated

avisaṁvādin	mi slu ba	undeceived
avyākṛta	lung ma bstan	undefined
āśaikṣamārga	mi slob lam	path of no more learning
asādhāraṇaśamatha	thun mong ma yin pa'i zhi gnas	special calm state
Ākāśa	nam mkha'	space
Āgama	lung	scriptural authority
Āgantuka	glo bur	adventitious
Ātmatvā	bdag nyid	nature, self-nature
ādiṣaṁvedana	ye rig	primordial open awareness
Ādhāra	gzhi	base
Ādhāra	gzhi gnas	abiding base, base
Āptavacana	yid ches pa'i tshig	authenticating verbal knowledge
Āptaśruti	yid ches pa'i thos pa	authenticating verbal testimony
Āptāgama	yid ches pa'i lung	authenticating scripture
Ābhāsa	snang ba	appearance
Ābhāsaśūnyata	snang stong	appearing and empty
Āmnāya	man ngag	esoteric precepts, essential precepts
Āyatana	skye mched	sources
Āryan	'phags ba	Superior
āryāgamapramāṇa	'phags pa'i lung tshad ma	authentic valid scriptures of the Superiors
Ālambana	dmigs pa	object, focus, observe
ālambana-pratyaya	dmigs rkyen	object-condition
Ālaya	kun gzhi	allbase
Ālayavijñāna	kun gzhi rnam shes	allbase consciousness
ālaya-adhikaraṇa	gzhi gnas	abiding base, base
Āśraya	rten	support
Āsakti	zhen pa	holding, adherence, attraction, adhering
indriya-pratyakṣa	dbang po'i mn̄gon sum	sensory direct perception
Upadeśa	gdams ngag	oral instructions
Upāsaka	dge snyen	Upasaka, ordained lay person
r̄ṣi	drong srong	Rishi, sage

Ekabhāva	ngo bo gcig	one in essence
ekātmatvasambandha	bdag nyid gcig pa'i 'brel ba	same-nature relation- ship
karūṇa	thugs rjes	compassion
karṇatantra	snyan rgyud	transmission of words into the ears of lis- teners
Kalpanā	rtog pa	conceptual thought
kāraṇa	rgyu	cause
Kāryahetu		reason as effect
Kālatraya	dus gsum	three times
kiraṇa	zer	rays
kṣaṇikatā	skad gcig ma	momentariness
guṇa	yon tan	exalted qualities
catuhṣkoṭi		tetralemma
Citta	thugs	heart-mind
Citta	sems	mind
Caitanya	sems nyid	mindnature
Jīna	rgyal ba	Conqueror
Jñāna	ye shes	primordial wisdom
Jñāna	shes pa	cognition
Jñeyā	shes bya	object of awareness
tatkṣaṇapratyaya	de ma thag rkyen	immediately prior con- dition
Tadutpattisambandha	de las byung 'ba'i 'brel ba	relationship of one arising from the other
Darśanamārga	mthong lam	seeing path
Devi	lha mo	goddess
Dravyasat	rdzas yod	substantial thing
Dharmakāya	chos sku	reality dimension
Dharmin	chos can	subject
Dhyāna	bsam gtan	concentration, medita- tive stability
nāḍīvāyu	rtsa rlung	channels and winds
Nidhi	gter	revealed treasures
Nidhipati	gter bdag	Lord of the Ter
Nimitta	rgyu mtshan	proof-sign
Niyata	nges pa	definitive
Nirābhoga	lhun grub	spontaneous presence, spontaneity
nirmāṇakāya	sprul sku	emanation dimension

niṣṭhāmārga	mthar spyin pa'i lam	liberation path
niḥsvabhāvatāvādin	ngo bo nyid med par smra ba	Mādhyamika proponents of essencelessness
neyārtha	drang don	secondary meaning, requiring interpretation
parikalpa	kun brtags	wrongful imputation
pariccheda	yongs su gcod	inclusive assessment
pakṣadharma	phyogs bon/phyogs chos	relation between reason and subject
pāpa	sdig pa	wrongfulness
prayatna	rjes thob	effort
pr̥ṣṭalabdha	shes rab	aftermath
prajñā	med dgag	wisdom
pratiṣedha	dgag bya	mere absence, mere negative
pratiṣedhya	rten 'brel	negandum, object of negation
pratītyasamutpāda	mngon sum	dependent arising
pratyakṣa	yid ches	direct perception
pratyaya	'od	trust
prabhā	tshad ma	light
pramāṇa		authenticity, authentication, valid or authenticating mind, principles of authentication, authentic cognition, logic
prayatna	'bad rtsol	effortful exertion
prayogamārga	sbyor lam	path of union
prātiḥārya	cho 'phrul	marvelous display
prāsaṅga	thal ba	consequence
phala	'bras bu	fruit
bali	gtor ma	ritual discard
bindu	thig le	whole
buddhi	blo	mind
bodhicitta	byang chub kyi sems	enlightenment mind
bhāva	ngo bo	essence
bhāva	dngos po	impermanent thing/phenomenon
bhāvatā	ngo bo nyid	essential nature
bhāvanamārga	sgom lam	meditation path

bhinna	tha dad	different
bheda, vivecana	dbye ba	discrepancy
bhrānti	'khrul ba	delusion
madhyama	dbu	center
manaparikṣa	yid dpyod	correct assumption
mahābindu	thig le chen po	great unbounded whole
mānasa-pratyakṣa	yid kyi mngon sum	mental direct perception
yatna	'bad pa	artful endeavor
yāna	theṅ pa	vehicle
yukti	rīgs pa	reason
yuganaddha	zung 'jug	union
yogi-pratyakṣa	rnal 'byor mngon sum	yogic direct perception
rūpa	gzugs	form
lakṣaṇa	mtshan nyid	defining characteristic
lin̄ga	rtags	sign, reason
loka	'jig rten	universe
vañcana	slu ba	deceptive
vastu	dngos po	impermanent thing/phenomenon
vāsanā	bag chags	latencies
vikalpa	rnam brtag	erroneous designation
vijñāna	shes pa	consciousness
vipakṣa	'gal ba	contradictory, opposites
vipaśyānā	lhag mthong	special insight, excellent insight
viprayuktasamṛskāra	ldan min 'du byed	neither form nor consciousness
vedanā	tshor ba	feeling
vedānta-guhya-vādin	rig byed kyi mtha' gsang smra ba	Proponents of the Ultimate Secret Knowing
vyatirikta	khyab pa	excluded
vyāpti		pervasion, pervade, suffice
śabda	sgra	sound
śamathā	zhi gnas	calm, calm state
śrāvaka	nyan thos	Hearer
saṃketatantra	brda'i rgyud	transmission through symbols
sattva	sems can	ordinary being
samantabhadra	kun bzang	Samantabhadra

samādhi	ting nge 'dzin	meditative stabilization
samāropa	sgro 'dogs	superimposition, overlay
saṃjñā	'du shes	discern
samprajanya	shes bzhin	investigation
sambhāramārga	tshogs lam	accumulation path
sambhogakāya	longs sku	resplendence dimension
samvedana	rig pa	open awareness
samsakta	zin	retained, held steady
sahaja	lhan cig skyes	inborn, arising together
sādhana	grub thabs	way of establishing
sādhya	sgrub pa	proof
sāmānya	spyi	universal
sāmānyalakṣaṇa	spyi mtshan	generally characterized phenomenon
sāra	snying po	heart essence
sugata	bde gshegs	Sugata
sthiti	gnas lugs	abiding condition, abiding state, natural condition, natural state
smṛti	dran pa	mindfulness
svabhāvikakāya	ngo bo nyid sku	essential nature dimension
svayambhūjñāna	rang byung ye shes	self-arisen primordial wisdom
svasamvedana	rang rig	reflexive open awareness, self-cognition, reflexivity
svasamvedanajñāna	rang rig ye shes	reflexively aware primordial wisdom
svasamvedanapratyakṣa	rang rig mngon sum	reflexive awareness direct
svasamvedanapramāṇa	rang gi rig pa'i tshad ma	reflexively authentic open awareness
svāstika	g.yung drung	Yungdrung
hr̥daya	snying	heart
hetu	rgyu	cause
hetu	gtan tshigs	reasoning

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