



Jeffrey Hopkins. *Emptiness in the Mind-Only School of Buddhism: Dynamic Responses to Dzong-ka-ba's The Essence of Eloquence: I*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, xiv + 528 pages, ISBN: 0-520-21119-7 (cloth), US \$45.00.

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Journal of Buddhist Ethics 6 (1999):232-235
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Hopkins' latest book is the first of a planned three-volume set of contributions to research in the *Cittamātra* ("Mind-Only") School of Tibetan Buddhism complementing his previous work on the *Mādhyamika* ("Middle Way") School. Although drawing on numerous sources both within and outside of the *dGe lugs* ("Ge-luk") tradition both written and oral, Hopkins restricts the content of this first volume to an annotated and detailed translation of the prologue and first chapter of *Tsong kha pa's* ("Dzong-ka-ba") *Legs bshad snying po* ("The Essence of Eloquence"), an exegesis of the hermeneutics of the *Cittamātra* School; intra- and inter-sectarian differences and specific philosophical disputes Hopkins reserves for discussion in future volumes.

The focus of the *Cittamātra* chapter of *Tsong kha pa's* text and Hopkins' book is on the meaning of the *trivabhāva* ("three natures") as presented in the fundamental *Cittamātra sūtra*, the *Samdhinirmocana-sūtra* ("The *Sūtra* Unraveling the Thought"), in both its ontological and hermeneutical dimensions, and on the seventh chapter of the *sūtra* in particular, the *paramārthasamudgata-parivarta* ("The Questions of Paramārthasamudgata"), where a clarification is requested on the meaning of *svalakṣaṇa* ("own character") in the context of the *prajñāpāramitā* ("Perfection of Wisdom") *sūtras*. The answer given by the Buddha on the

trīsvabhāva, the correlated *trīṇiḥsvabhāvatā* (“three non–natures”), and the compatibility of the *prajñāpāramitā sūtras* with the *Cittamātra* worldview serves as the springboard for *Tsong kha pa*’s and Hopkins’ exegesis.

Hopkins’ treatment of *Tsong kha pa*’s presentation of *Cittamātra* takes three forms which are reflected in the three major parts of the book: annotated translation, a section–by–section critical analysis of the text and its issues, and a critical edition of the text in Tibetan script. Given the difficulty of translating such a dense philosophical text, Hopkins has succeeded in avoiding copious footnotes by opting for a novel approach to textual presentation. Although he provides footnotes in each section, Hopkins has embedded page cross–references in and between all three sections of the book, allowing the reader to easily reference the original text from the translation or analysis, and vice versa. By means of this structure, the reader gains insight into the methodological rigor behind Hopkins’ translation at an almost pedagogical level. A notable example is Hopkins’ unpacking of a two–verse quote from Maitreya’s *Madhyāntavibhanga* (“Differentiation of the Middle and the Extremes”) used by *Tsong kha pa*. Although given with heavy bracketing in the translation section (p. 182), the corresponding section of Hopkins’ analysis (pp. 305–307) leads the reader through a word–by–word analysis of the stanzas from the subtleties of Sanskrit grammar to the integration of the sub–commentaries of Vasubandhu and Sthiramati culminating in *Tsong kha pa*’s final reading.

Hopkins’ *Mind–Only* begins with a historical contextualization of both *Tsong kha pa* and his text. This leads into a review of seventeen of the twenty–six sub–commentaries to *Tsong kha pa*’s text which Hopkins obtained and references during the course of his presentation, from the fourteenth century student of *Tsong kha pa*, *mKhas grub* (“Ke–drup”) up through the twentieth century “scholar of scholars” *Jigs med dam chos rgya mtsho* (“Jik–may–dam–chö–gya–tso”). A short discussion of the basic ideas of the *Cittamātra* School follows which serves the two–fold purpose of both framing *Tsong kha pa*’s text in the *Cittamātra* worldview and contextually introducing Hopkins’ translation equivalents in an etymological manner. Because of this, many of Hopkins’ terms which seem awkward or contrived at first — “unreal ideation” for *abhūtaparikalpa* (Tib. *yang dag pa ma yin pa’i kun tu rtogs pa*), “other–powered natures” for *paratantrasvabhāva* (Tib. *gzhan dbang gi rang bzhin*), and so on — attain meanings clearly associated with Hopkins’ chosen rendering. To Hopkins’ credit, once he defines these terms they are used consistently throughout the book, yielding coherence and continuity to the work.

As Hopkins describes it, the original text contains “abrupt, unannounced shifts of topic, unspecified references, omissions and seeming con-

traditions” such that it is “virtually impossible to plunge right into it without becoming lost” (p. 26); hence its reputation as a “steel bow and arrow.” As Hopkins describes it (p. 16),

[Just] as it is hard to pull a steel bow to its full extent but if one can, the arrow will course over a great area, so even the words — not to consider the meaning — of this text are difficult to understand but, when understood, yield great insight. The metaphor states a martial challenge to the reader, calling for heroic strength of intellectual will; the work is viewed as one of genius, difficult to control because of its often cryptic brevity but yielding profound insight if pursued with analytical fortitude. (The metaphor also may be a polite way of communicating that the book is so abstruse and sometimes apparently self-contradictory that it takes tremendous effort to attempt to construct a consistent account of Dzong-ka-ba’s thought.)

Hopkins’ book is undoubtedly intended as a response to this martial challenge. Following his exhaustive treatment of the “Prologue” to the text, Hopkins partitions *Tsong kha pa*’s text into two sections which are then subdivided into chapters (with their titles as given by *Tsong kha pa*) and supplemented by subsection headings drawn from the commentaries. The first section comprises four chapters which deal explicitly with the question posed in the *Samḍhinirmocana-sūtra*, the answer given by the Buddha, the meaning of the *trivabhāva*, and Paramārthasamudgata’s re-statement of the overall meaning. The second section deals with the eight chapters of *Tsong kha pa*’s text which address explicitly the hermeneutical dimension of the *Samḍhinirmocana-sūtra*, the compatibility of the *sūtra* with the various writings of Maitreya, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, and Dharmakīrti, the manner in which the *Cittamātra* system presents a “middle way” avoiding the extremes of permanence and nihilism, and finally, the differentiation of the teachings of the Buddha into the definitive and interpretable as the three Wheels of Doctrine. All of these issues and sections are mirrored in the other parts of the book. Issues within the text that are clear points of controversy are either dealt with or marked in the footnotes as references to the other two volumes in the series. Although the work stands on its own merits, these references to the unpublished volumes leave the reader in a state of anticipation of Hopkins’ treatment of the more subtle disputes which the footnotes merely allude to.

In looking at the issues and apparent contradictions in *Tsong kha pa*’s text that animate the Tibetan commentarial literature, Hopkins engages in the sort of textual analysis which is unfortunately not in favor in academia

today. In this book, the value of such an enterprise is clearly demonstrated: Hopkins' treatment of the *dGe lugs* presentation of *Cittamātra* is truly masterful. This book presents a wealth of knowledge and stimulating engagement with the material, revealing the intellectual mastery of *Tsong kha pa* over Buddhist philosophy and hermeneutics. At the conclusion of the book, the reader's imagination is left sparked with questions. One feels that *Cittamātra* is fertile ground for further investigation, and wonders particularly how other interpretation lineages such as the *Sa skya* or *rNying ma* have dealt with these issues as well as the source of "mistaken" views persistently refuted by *Tsong kha pa*, the *Jo nang pas*. Although Hopkins briefly mentions the comparable philosophies of idealism espoused in Europe over the centuries (pp. 37–38), he does not pursue that avenue of research. Such a comparative study remains needed and would complement Hopkins' exceptional work of integrating what he calls "part of *our* world culture" (p. 4) into the broader world of ideas.