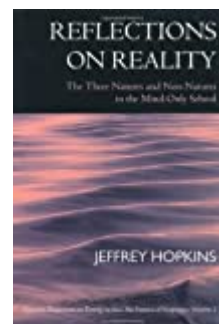


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Jeffrey Hopkins. *Reflections on Reality: The Three Natures and Non-Natures in the Mind-Only School.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. x + 598 pp. \$60.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-520-21120-9.



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Reflections on Reality is the second volume in Jeffrey Hopkins's projected three-volume series on the Mind-Only section of Tsong kha pa's *The Essence of Eloquence* (*Drang nges legs bshad snying po*), an influential fifteenth-century Tibetan work which systematically analyzes Ma-haayaana philosophy. The first volume, *Emptiness in the Mind-Only School of Buddhism* (hereafter *EMOSB*), contains Hopkins's critical edition of the Tibetan of the prologue and Mind-Only section of Tsong kha pa's text and an annotated translation thereof, along with an introduction and a chapter-by-chapter synopsis.[1]

In the Mind-Only section of *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*, Tsong kha pa is mainly concerned with determining the ontology which is found in the major Indian Yogaacaara texts. Tsong kha pa's analysis centers on the key passages from the seventh chapter of *Sa.mdhinirmocanasuutra* concerning the three natures (*trisvabhaava*) and their non-natures (*ni.hsvabhaava*). The conclusion he draws is that, among the three natures, both *paratantrasvabhaava* and *parini.spannasvabhaava* ("other-powered nature" and "thoroughly established nature," in Hopkins's vocabulary) are ultimately real (*don dam par grub pa*) or established by way of their own character (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*); he also concludes that *parini.spanna*, the ultimate reality which is of greatest soteriological significance, is *paratantra*

or dependently produced phenomena's emptiness of a specific kind of *parikalpitasvabhaava* ("imputational nature") which binds beings to the circle of rebirth.

This central theme of Tsong kha pa's text remains the primary focus of Hopkins's new volume. Parts 3, 4, and 5 of the book contain his main philosophical investigations, and they respectively treat three major issues concerning the Yogaacaara view that is presented in the *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*: Tsong kha pa's dGe lugs pa followers' interpretation of the three natures; Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan's rival interpretation of the three natures; and the relationship between the notion of emptiness that Tsong kha pa sees in the *Sa.mdhinirmocanasuutra* and the Mind-Only (*cit-tamaatra*) view of non-duality between subject and object. The book's preceding sections contextualize the topic in various ways. Part 1 deals with the tension between allegiance and rational inquiry in the dGe lugs pa scholastic tradition, which provides a general context for subsequent examinations of the school's interpretations. Chapters 3 and 4 of part 2 present an overview of the Yogaacaara system based on dGe lugs pa doxographies. Here, Hopkins aims to show that Tsong kha pa's text is the genesis of doxographical literature in the dGe lugs pa school; likewise, he discusses the religious significance of the concept of the three natures. The remaining chapters

of part 2 deal with the introductory section of Tsong kha pa's text. Part 6 includes, among other interesting topics, a presentation of eleven arguments, gleaned from Indian texts by dGe lugs pa authors, that aim to prove emptiness in accord with the Yogaacaara school.

Hopkins's treatment of the dGe lugs pa interpretation of the three natures indicates his thorough knowledge of the topic. His materials are drawn from a large body of commentaries, and he details the development and refinement—the latter often done in the guise of pointing out predecessors' intent—of the school's interpretation of the three natures. The numerous controversies over hermeneutical issues which he carefully analyzes show the rigor of the intellectual dynamics within the school. Hopkins also observes that some of the distinctions drawn by these dGe lugs pa scholars in order to create a more seamless system indicate their concern to preserve the hierarchical order of philosophical systems as it is presented in Tibetan doxographies.

The dGe lugs pa emphasis on distinction is then contrasted with the syncretic approach of Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan. Hopkins begins his analysis of the controversy between Tsong kha pa and Dol po pa with a detailed account of the latter's other-emptiness view. Here, Hopkins uses Dol po pa's major work *Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho* as his source. According to Hopkins, Dol po pa aims to prove that his other-emptiness view is the central message of key Mahaayaana sutras and tantras and the central point of the "most profound writings" of major Indian Buddhist authors. By laying out his case for this interpretation, Hopkins also contextualizes Tsong kha pa's critique of Dol po pa for his lack of fidelity to Indian sources in his interpretation of the three natures.

By thus examining Tsong kha pa's criticism in the context of Dol po pa's *Ri chos*, Hopkins clarifies Tsong kha pa's many unclear references (Dol po pa's name was not even mentioned in the *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*), and he reveals the otherwise unnoticed extent to which Tsong kha pa engages with Dol po pa's various positions. But far from merely explaining Tsong kha pa's points, Hopkins evaluates the validity of Tsong kha pa's arguments in the light of Dol po pa's own discussions of the same issues. His general conclusion is that Tsong kha pa makes strong points in certain cases, but that he often does not address the nuances of Dol po pa's positions. It has occurred to me that the relevant section of *Drang nges legs bshad snying po* is much shorter than *Ri chos* and that within that space Tsong kha pa does some justice

to Dol po pa's opinion, but Hopkins appears to be emulating the good example of a Tibetan scholar who urged that one should subject an author to "unblinking analysis" of questionable stances (p. 12). In any case, Hopkins demonstrates very well that the resilience of Dol po pa's position, which is remarkably straightforward in its core form, lies in Dol po pa's great familiarity with and careful analysis of Mahaayaana literature.

Hopkins next turns to the intriguing question of the relationship between the two approaches to emptiness of the Yogaacaara school which were discussed in the dGe lugs pa school. Following *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*, dGe lugs pa authors formulate a type of emptiness which is an object's not intrinsically serving as the referent of terms or conceptual consciousnesses. The second approach to emptiness focuses on subject-object emptiness in the sense of there being no object external to the mind. I find this section to be particularly thought provoking, for the way that Hopkins relates the Tibetan interpretations to the Indian sources raises the question of different modes of ontology in early Yogaacaara texts. In regard to the source of the first type of emptiness, Hopkins suggests that this formulation is derived from the two clauses in the seventh chapter of *Sa.mdhinirmocanasuutra* where *parikalpitas* are described as "characters posited by names and terminology" and are said to "not subsist by way of their own character" (pp. 128, 151). Hopkins also unpacks Tsong kha pa and dGe lugs pa authors' interpretation of what they identify as two other sources of this type of emptiness, viz. the three reasons (pp. 401-403, 466-469), "four thorough examinations" (*parye.sanaa*), and "four thorough knowledges" (*parij-naana*) (pp. 404-406, 469-470), all appearing in *Bodhisattvabhumi* and *Ma-haayaanasa.mgraha*, while the first of these also occurs in *Vini'scayasa.mgraha.nii*.

Hopkins shows that Tsong kha pa and subsequent dGe lugs pa commentators share a basic notion that the two types of emptiness have the same meaning and that a realization of the first type leads to the view of Mind-Only. He then gives the Indian source of this position by identifying a passage from *Asa.nga's Ma-haayaanasa.mgraha* which speaks of entry into Mind-Only through "four thorough examinations" and "four thorough knowledges" (p. 442). Here, Hopkins demonstrates how later commentaries and the oral tradition develop increasingly more elaborate and interesting interpretations of the relationship between the two types of emptiness; he thus shows that, while it is important to distinguish a Tibetan exegesis from its Indian origin, the

Tibetan tradition can and ought to be appreciated for its own value.

In the final step of the analysis, Hopkins looks at the dGe lugs pa interpretation of the two forms of emptiness in the light of Lambert Schmithausen's study of layers of composition of early Yogaacaara texts. Schmithausen judges that *Bodhisattvabhumi* is an earlier work which contains a form of nominalistic philosophy and that a full-fledged idealism first occurred in *Sa.mdhinirmocanasuutra*. Based on this view, Hopkins concludes that Tsong kha pa's attribution of an idealist view to the *Bodhisattvabhumi*, which is not supported by textual evidence, is mistaken, but he regards Tsong kha pa's interpretation of the two types of emptiness as a way of seeing the harmony and continuity between the two early stages of Yogaacaara development, represented by *Bodhisattvabhumi* and *Mahaayaanasa.mgraha* respectively, a perspective which Tsong kha pa inherited from *Asa.nga*.

Hopkins speaks of a complementarity of Schmithausen's historical method of seeing strata of texts and Tsong kha pa's doctrinal perspective of seeing the harmony among texts, but he does not explain how the form of emptiness which Tsong kha pa formulates in *Drang nges legs bshad snying po* relates to nominalism or other theories that Schmithausen sees in the *Bodhisattvabhumi*. However, Hopkins's discussions draw our attention to a style of inquiry in the early Yogaacaara texts that questions the intrinsic connection between language and concept, on the one hand, and object, on the other. In this section, Hopkins also cites *Mahaayaanasa.mgraha* and *Sa.mdhinirmonasuutra* to show that both texts evince a view of Mind-Only which denies the externality of objects. This same theme continues in the three appendices where Hopkins, frequently adducing the Tibetan perspective, presents his arguments against and reflections on a number of views held by contemporary scholars that early Yogaacaara texts do not teach Mind-Only.

In terms of Hopkins's English equivalents, I see two tendencies in his approach. One is to render a term "word for word," which, despite the disadvantage of being unnatural, reflects an awareness that many Buddhist terms do not have natural equivalents in the target language and that the richness of a term is contained in both its meaning and its form. The other tendency is to adopt the interpretation of the tradition which he works with. For instance, Hopkins explains that in the context of Dol po pa's writings there is a good reason to choose "body of attributes" for *chos sku* or *dharmakaaya*,

which he usually translates as "truth body" (p. 274). For *parikalpita* or *kun brtags* in Tibetan, his choice of "imputational nature" is probably based on certain Tibetan definitions of the term,[2] which echo the statement in the *Sa.mdhinirmocanasuutra* that it is the "character posited by names and terminology." In the case of *kun brtags*, however, I think "imagined nature" is still to be preferred, because *brtags pa*, meaning "conceived" in this case, comes from the Sanskrit past participle *kalpita* ("imagined" or "fabricated"); the *parikalpita* which is emphasized in the materials at hand is the fabricated kind, viz. objects' being established by way of their own character as referents of terms and conceptual consciousnesses; and in the host language, the term reinforces such an emphasis.

Although they do not affect my evaluation of Hopkins's work, two additional pieces of information deserve a mention here. Hopkins refers to one reconstruction from the Tibetan of the missing sections of Weonchuk's commentary on the *Sa.mdhinirmocanasuutra* in *EMOSB* (p. 39), but he has overlooked a recent Chinese reconstruction.[3] Hopkins says in passing that *Mahaavibhaa.saa* was never translated into Tibetan (p. 36). The translation of this text from the Chinese canon (T 1545) into Tibetan was accomplished by the Chinese monk scholar Fa Zun (aka Blo bzang chos 'phags) in 1949, and it is mentioned in the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (p. 1895). What remains of this unpublished translation is the first of its two hundred fascicles and the translator's colophon; the missing portion is still being sought.

Throughout this book, Hopkins displays an admirable command of his source materials. His research was meticulously conducted. After giving an overview of the history of commentary on *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*, he said in *EMOSB* (p. 25) that he had used eighteen of twenty-six commentaries which he collected in his translation and annotation. These commentaries are extensively used in the current volume, along with many other sources and occasional reference to the oral tradition. His discussion of *Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho*, besides contributing to our understanding of the controversy between the dGe lugs pa and the Jo nang pa schools on the doctrinal level, also provides a wealth of information on this lengthier work of Dol po pa which, to my knowledge, has not been extensively studied by contemporary scholars. In short, this volume is *by itself* a significant contribution to the studies of Yogaacaara philosophy and Tibetan Buddhism.

Notes

[1]. A review of this volume by Paul Hackett was published in the online *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, at <http://jbe.gold.ac.uk/6/hackett991.htm>.

[2]. See EMOSB, p. 79; and Jeffrey Hopkins's *Cutting through Appearances: The Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism* (Snow Lion Publications, 1989), p. 262.

[3]. Guan Kong, trans., *Jie Shen Mi Jing*

Shu: Juan Sanshiwu Zhi Sishi (Commentary on the Sa.mdhinirmocanasutra: Fascicles Thirty-Five to Forty) (Beijing: Zhongguo Fojiao Xiehui [publication date unknown; the afterword was written in January 1981]). This book also contains the missing portion at the beginning of fascicle twenty-seven. These fascicle numbers appear to follow an edition of Weonchuk's commentary which was published by Jinling Kejing Chu in Nanjing.

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