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# Triumphalism and Ecumenism in Thu'u bkwan's *Crystal Mirror*<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** *The article focuses on the Crystal Mirror of Tenet Systems by Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1737-1802). It traces the history of the text and its reception, analyzes its genre, and examines in some detail the question of Thu'u bkwan's oft-alleged impartiality toward the various Tibetan orders that he describes. The latter is explored through an analysis of the rhetoric he employs in discussing three traditions: the Jo nang, the Dge lugs, and the Rnying ma. While Thu'u bkwan clearly is more favorable to some traditions than others (and the Dge lugs above all), he also defends traditions like the Rnying ma against certain criticisms, some of which may come from Dge lugs quarters. And even the Jo nang, though disparaged, is not so unequivocally condemned that some virtues are not acknowledged. The conclusion is that although Thu'u bkwan may not approximate today's ideal of dispassionate scholarship, he does seem on balance to be reasonably fair within the context of premodern Tibetan intellectual discourse.*

## Introduction

Completed shortly before its author's death in 1802, the *Crystal Mirror of Tenet Systems* (*Grub mtha' shel gyi me long*)<sup>2</sup> of the third Thu'u bkwan incarnate, Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1737–1802), has been regarded virtually since the time of its composition as – in the words of E. Gene Smith – “one of the most important

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<sup>1</sup> A shorter version of this paper was presented as part of a panel on “Comparative Religion in Eighteenth Century Tibet” at the Wisconsin Conference on South Asia, in Madison, in October, 2003. I would like to thank my fellow panelists, Leonard Zwilling, Michael Sweet, and John Dunne, for their incisive comments on my paper.

<sup>2</sup> The full title of the text is: *The Crystal Mirror: An Excellent Exposition That Shows the Sources and Assertions of All Tenet Systems* (*Grub mtha' thams cad kyi khung dang 'dod tshul ston pa legs bshad shel gyi me long*).

sources for the study of the comparative philosophical schools of India, Tibet, China, and the Mongol world.”<sup>3</sup> In roughly five hundred pages or folio sides, Thu'u bkwan discusses the development and structure of religious philosophy in India (chapter 1); in the Tibetan traditions of Rnying ma, Bka' gdams, Bka' brgyud, Zhi byed, Sa skya, Jo nang, Dge lugs, and Bon (chapters 2-9); in Buddhist and non-Buddhist Chinese settings (chapters 10-11); and in such inner Asian areas as Mongolia, Khotan, and Shambhala (chapter 12).

Among Tibetan scholars, A. I. Vostrikov observes, the *Crystal Mirror* “enjoys great and fully deserved fame...as the first attempt at expounding not only the history but also the system of views of various philosophical and religious streams of Tibet and neighboring countries.”<sup>4</sup> It has been utilized by members of Thu'u bkwan's Dge lugs pa order as a textbook for studying traditions other than their own, but it also seems to have been known, and perhaps even appreciated, by members of other orders, notably the Rnying ma pa.<sup>5</sup> Originally published early in the nineteenth century as part of his collected works by Thu'u bkwan's home monastery of Dgon lung byams pa gling in A mdo, the *Crystal Mirror* was issued in subsequent editions in Sde dge, Ulan Bator (then Ugra), and Lhasa, where it forms part of the famous Zhol edition of Thu'u bkwan's writings.<sup>6</sup> In 1969, through the efforts of E. Gene Smith, the Zhol edition was photocopied and bound in large-book format in Delhi by Ngawang Gelek Demo, making it accessible for the first time to scholars in multiple Western university settings.<sup>7</sup> Most recently, in 1984, a different edition of the *Crystal Mirror* was published in standard book format in Lanzhou, Gansu province, by the Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, thereby increasing its availability still further.<sup>8</sup>

The *Crystal Mirror* has enjoyed equal or even greater celebrity among non-Tibetan scholars. Its existence was first noted in 1855 by the Russian Tibetanist, V. P. Vasili'ev, and subsequent Russian scholars such as B. Ya. Vladimirov and, in his great *Tibetan Historical Literature*, A. I. Vostrikov paid it significant attention as well.<sup>9</sup> The first attempt at translating any of the *Crystal Mirror* was made in the early 1880s by Sarat Chandra Das, who published, in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, English versions – sometimes partial, sometimes complete, and generally unreliable – of the Rnying ma, Bon, China, and Mongolia

<sup>3</sup> E. Gene Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts: History and Literature of the Himalayan Plateau* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 147-48.

<sup>4</sup> A. I. Vostrikov, *Tibetan Historical Literature*, trans. Harish Chandra Gupta (Calcutta: Indian Studies Past and Present, 1970), 155.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew T. Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 255n60. See, however, note 53, below.

<sup>6</sup> Vostrikov, *Historical Literature*, 155-56; Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 147.

<sup>7</sup> See Blo-bzañ-chos-kyi-ñi-ma, Thu'u-bkwan III, *Collected Works of Thu'u-bkwan Blo-bzang-chos-kyi-nyi-ma*, edited and reproduced by Ngawang Gelek Demo, with introduction by E. Gene Smith, vol. *kha* (Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, 1969), 5-519.

<sup>8</sup> See Thu'u bkwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, *Thu'u bkwan grub mtha'* (Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1984).

<sup>9</sup> Vostrikov, *Historical Literature*, 156.

chapters.<sup>10</sup> In the twentieth century, translations appeared of the whole or large parts of the chapters on Bon,<sup>11</sup> Jo nang,<sup>12</sup> Bka' gdams,<sup>13</sup> India,<sup>14</sup> and China.<sup>15</sup> Chinese and Japanese scholars, such as Li An-che<sup>16</sup> and Tachikawa Musashi,<sup>17</sup> employed the *Crystal Mirror* overtly or indirectly for English-language reports on the Rnying ma, Bka' brgyud, and Sa skya, and they and others have utilized it in scholarship published in their own languages, as well. In 1985, Qianli Liu published a Chinese translation of the entire text from Chengdu.<sup>18</sup> A complete English translation is currently being prepared under the supervision of Geshe Lhundup Sopa, professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin, and will be brought out by Wisdom Publications in 2007.

Why has the *Crystal Mirror* gained such renown? One might cynically point out that as an authoritative text on religious philosophies for the most powerful of the Tibetan orders, the Dge lugs, the *Crystal Mirror* became a work whose representations of them members of other Tibetan traditions could ill afford to ignore, and that Dge lugs pa *bla mas* could foist on foreign scholars who sought a grand Tibetan summation of a range of Tibetan and other Asian religious systems. There is undoubtedly some truth to this contention, but it belies at least two important qualities of the *Crystal Mirror* that do set it apart from much that Tibetans have written about their own and other religious traditions. The first, already intimated in the quote from Vostrikov above, is that the *Crystal Mirror* transcends the usual limits of historical and philosophical literature in Tibet, putting it into a genre of which it is one of the few exemplars, particularly in the age in which it was written. The second is that numerous scholars, Tibetan and non-Tibetan alike, have been impressed, in Matthew Kapstein's words, with Thu'u bkwan's "relative impartiality...despite the fact that he was no doubt limited with respect to his sources

<sup>10</sup> See Sarat Chandra Das, *Studies in the History and Religion of Tibet* (Delhi: Mañjuśrī, 1971) [originally published in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 50, part 1 (1881): 187-205; vol. 51, part 1, no. 1 (1882): 1-14, 58-75; vol. 51, part 1, no. 2 (1882): 87-114].

<sup>11</sup> See Helmut Hoffman, *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon-Religion* (Wiesbaden: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1950).

<sup>12</sup> See D. S. Ruegg, "The Jo nang pas: A School of Buddhist Ontologists According to the Grub mtha' Śel gyi me loñ," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 83, no. 1 (1963): 73-91.

<sup>13</sup> See Alaka Chattopadhyaya with Lama Chimpa, *Atīśa and Tibet* (Calcutta edition, 1967; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981).

<sup>14</sup> See Kewal Krishan Mittal with Lama Jamspal, *A Tibetan Eye-view of Indian Philosophy* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1984).

<sup>15</sup> Guilaine Mala apparently has utilized (and perhaps translated) this chapter as part of a thesis for Oxford University completed around 2000. I so far have been unable to locate bibliographic details concerning her work.

<sup>16</sup> See Li An-che, "The Sakya Sect of Lamaism," *Journal of the West China Border Research Society* 16, series A (1945); Li An-che, "Rñinmapa, the Early Form of Lamaism," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 68 (1948); Li An-che, "The Bkañ-brgyud Sect of Lamaism," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 69 (1949): 51-59.

<sup>17</sup> See Tachikawa Musashi, "The Tantric Doctrine of the Sa skya pa according to the Śel gyi me loñ," *Acta Asiatica* 29 (1975): 95-106.

<sup>18</sup> See Liu Qianli, *Tuguan Zongpai Yuanliu* (Chengdu: Xizang Renmin Chubanshe, 1985).

for schools other than the Dge lugs pa.”<sup>19</sup> It is the question of Thu'u bkwan's impartiality that interests me most here, but before discussing it, I do want to touch briefly on the issue of genre.

### **The Genre of the *Crystal Mirror***

According to its title, of course, the *Crystal Mirror* is a *grub mtha'* text, hence part of the genre of Tibetan literature variously translated as “doxography,” “religious philosophy,” “tenet systems,” “schools of thought,” “philosophical schools,” “philosophical positions,” and so forth. Even a superficial examination of its contents, however, makes it clear that while the *Crystal Mirror* does present and analyze the views of various schools in a manner suggestive of other *grub mtha'*, it differs from them in three important respects. First, whereas *grub mtha'* tend to keep their focus largely on matters of doctrine, each chapter of the *Crystal Mirror* includes not just philosophical and doctrinal material, but significant discussions of the historical development of the tradition or traditions to which the chapter is devoted. Second, whereas *grub mtha'* usually are organized so as to proceed from “lower” to “higher” schools of thought, the *Crystal Mirror*, as E. Gene Smith has noted, “seem[s] to have been arranged more by historical than typological considerations,”<sup>20</sup> moving as it does, like Buddhism itself, from India to Tibet, China, and Mongolia, and generally proceeding within its major sections and individual chapters from earlier to later developments – with the Bon chapter occupying a sort of categorical *bar do* between Tibetan Buddhist and Chinese traditions. Third, whereas most *grub mtha'* concern themselves primarily with Indian schools of thought, the *Crystal Mirror* makes a systematic attempt to present and analyze non-Indian traditions, such as those of Tibet, China, and Mongolia. Thus, if the *Crystal Mirror* is a *grub mtha'*, it is a rather unusual one.

Though the question of its actual genre has been little discussed, it is interesting to note the range of views among those who *have* sought to define it as more than mere *grub mtha'*. Thus, Vostrikov includes it in his chapter on religious histories (*chos 'byung*), while the website of the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center lists it as both *grub mtha'* and *lo rgyus* – the latter generally being translated as “history,” “chronicle,” or “narrative.” My own inclination is to regard it as a combination of all three, and it is in the *combination* of genres that the *Crystal Mirror*'s originality lies. Certainly, Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, and Mongolian traditions all had been analyzed both historically and doctrinally by previous Tibetan writers – including three of Thu'u bkwan's teachers, Lcang skya II Rol pa'i rdo rje (1717–86) and Dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po (1728–91),<sup>21</sup> who were masters of traditional *grub mtha'*, and Sum pa mkhan po (1704–88), who wrote the massive *Excellent Wish-Fulfilling Tree* (*Dpag bsam ljon bzang*), an institutional history of Buddhism

<sup>19</sup> Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, 60.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 148.

<sup>21</sup> On the latter, see Geshe Sopa and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Cutting Through Appearances: The Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 1990).

in India, Tibet, China, and Mongolia, which also includes some strong polemics against the non-Dge lugs Tibetan schools.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the genius of the *Crystal Mirror* lies not so much in its creation of a new genre, as in the way it brings together intellectual approaches seldom found in Tibet in the same work. In this sense, Vostrikov was quite right to claim that the *Crystal Mirror* has “a special place among the Tibetan historical works of analytical type,” and one cannot, in the end, really improve on his plain description of it as a “historico-philosophical work.”<sup>23</sup>

## An Overview of Thu’u bkwan’s Attitude Toward Other Traditions

I want to spend the remainder of this paper examining the question of Thu’u bkwan’s impartiality, or, to put it in modern Western theological language, the relative proportions of ecumenism and triumphalism that he displays. Though they are not without implications for his understanding of Tibetan traditions, I will leave aside Thu’u bkwan’s chapters on Indian, Chinese, and Mongolian and other central Asian traditions, focusing solely on the way he represents Tibetan Buddhist schools and Bon. After all, if Thu’u bkwan’s Dge lugs pa co-religionists served as his primary audience as he composed the *Crystal Mirror*, scholars in other Tibetan orders probably were not far from his mind either. His Chinese and Mongolian audience, on the other hand, would have been limited to those who could read Tibetan. I will not have the space to provide detailed analyses of Thu’u bkwan’s treatment of all the schools, but I do hope to give the reader a general tour of his attitudes toward the full spectrum of Tibetan traditions, and somewhat more detailed expositions of his treatment of three specific schools.

Commenting on the *Crystal Mirror* as a whole more than thirty years ago, E. Gene Smith observed that “in his exegesis... Thu’u bkwan normally organizes his material around three broad topics: 1) historical origins; 2) philosophical teachings; 3) examination of these doctrines in terms of the orthodox Dge lugs pa Prāsaṅgika dialectic.”<sup>24</sup> This comment is essentially correct, but it belies the considerable range of approaches that Thu’u bkwan actually takes in relation to both presenting and analyzing the doctrinal positions of the different Tibetan schools. For one thing, it appears that only three of the sections – those on Rnying ma, Bka’ brgyud, and Jo nang – are explicitly organized in the manner suggested by Smith, though this does not mean that the concerns he highlights do not find their way into each of Thu’u bkwan’s chapters. Moreover, whatever his rubrics, Thu’u bkwan does not subject every tradition’s doctrines to the same degree of critical scrutiny. His judgments, pro, con, or mixed, are presented quite clearly (though in varying detail) in the cases of the Dge lugs, Rnying ma, Bka’ brgyud, Zhi byed, and Jo nang, but

<sup>22</sup> See Vostrikov, *Historical Literature*, 151; Dan Martin, *Tibetan Histories: A Bibliography of Tibetan-Language Historical Works* (London: Serindia, 1997), 287.

<sup>23</sup> Vostrikov, *Historical Literature*, 154. In his (unpublished) response to this and other papers at the Madison conference (see note 1), John Dunne described Thu’u bkwan’s contribution, along somewhat similar lines, as the introduction of institutional history into the *grub mtha’* genre.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 148.

rather less obviously when it comes to Bka' gdams, Sa skya, and Bon. Nevertheless, Thu'u bkwan does seem to provide explicit or implicit evaluations of nearly all the Tibetan traditions, most often in terms of their adherence to the Dge lugs pa interpretation of the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka view. Thus, it is to an attempt to chart those evaluations that I turn next.

The overall spectrum of judgments in Thu'u bkwan's Tibetan chapters is a very broad one. It ranges from the negative extreme of the Jo nang, which is roundly condemned and refuted in extraordinary detail, to the positive extreme of the Dge lugs, which is treated almost completely uncritically, and, indeed, explicitly exalted above all other traditions. We may roughly arrange the other traditions considered by Thu'u bkwan between these two poles. Closer to the positive pole, we find the Bka' gdams, which is, of course, seen by Dge lugs pas as their school's own direct precursor, and the Sa skya, which while acknowledged by Thu'u bkwan to reflect various philosophical strands, including Cittamātra and both Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika Madhyamaka, is presented descriptively and sympathetically, without any attempt to expose philosophical error. Closer to the negative pole, we find Bon, of which Thu'u bkwan admittedly knows little, and which he presents primarily through verbatim quotations from works on it by its Buddhist critics, who are especially keen to point out the ways in which "Transformed Bön" (*Sgyur bon*) supposedly consists almost entirely of paraphrased Buddhist texts, ideas, and practices.<sup>25</sup> Somewhere in the middle, we find the Bka' brgyud, Rnying ma, and Zhi byed, which Thu'u bkwan regards as rooted in pure views and practices, but prone in their latter-day forms to errors that their irreproachable founders would not have countenanced. His attitude toward these schools is typified by his analysis of the view of the founder of Zhi byed, Pha dam pa sangs rgyas:

Because the view that is taught is free of extremes, I think it does not go beyond the Madhyamaka view. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that, in the writings of later generations, there often is an admixture of fish and turnips.<sup>26</sup>

In what follows, I will briefly examine the grounds on which Thu'u bkwan (a) denigrates the school closest to the negative pole, the Jo nang, (b) exalts the one closest to the positive pole, the Dge lugs, and (c) expresses a mixture of attitudes toward one school in the middle, the Rnying ma.

## A Negative Assessment: The Jo nang

Thu'u bkwan's chapter on the Jo nang school is the most relentlessly critical of any in the *Crystal Mirror*. Fully thirteen of its twenty-one pages in the Gansu edition are devoted to an explicit refutation of Jo nang pa views, primarily the

<sup>25</sup> On this, see Dan Martin, *Unearthing Bon Treasures: Life and Contested Legacy of a Tibetan Scripture Revealer* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 133-36.

<sup>26</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 170-71: *lta ba mtha' bral du gsungs pa'i phyir na dbu ma'i lta ba las ma 'das par sems so/ 'on kyang phyi rabs kyi yi ge rnam su ni nya dang nyung ma bsres pa mang du yod pa gor ma chags so.*

theory of extrinsic emptiness (*gzhan stong*). Even the sections concerned with presenting the history of the Jo nang contain explicit or implicit polemics. For instance, Thu'u bkwan claims that the extrinsic emptiness view originated in the eleventh century with Yu mo mi bskyod rdo rje, on the basis of a confused reading of Buddhist scripture following on a *Kālacakra*-related meditative experience that he did not understand.<sup>27</sup> This crystallized into an erroneous understanding of emptiness that was transmitted orally from master to disciple until it was committed to writing in the fourteenth century by Dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292–1361). Thu'u bkwan also maintains that not long afterward, “because many scholar-adepts thoroughly rejected it,”<sup>28</sup> the extrinsic emptiness view disappeared for well over a century, before its revival in the seventeenth century by Tā ra nā tha – though this turned out to be a brief interlude before the effective destruction of the Jo nang under the Fifth Dalai Lama. Whether deliberately or not, this presentation underplays the continuing influence of the extrinsic emptiness view in a variety of Buddhist traditions, both in the period between Dol po pa and Tā ra nā tha and in the era in which Thu'u bkwan himself lived.

Thu'u bkwan's actual refutation of the extrinsic emptiness view cannot be detailed here. Suffice it to say that he rejects it primarily on two grounds: (1) that it is virtually indistinguishable from the absolutist views of such Hindu schools as Sāṃkhya and Vedānta and (2) that it results from a serious misreading of a range of Buddhist Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna literature, including the *Kālacakra* corpus, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, and the writings of Nāgārjuna. To clinch his historical-cum-philosophical critique, Thu'u bkwan notes that, unlike other Tibetan Buddhist schools, which all have included masters with a pure view of reality, and which inherit legitimate lineages traceable to India, “the Jo nang pa view...burst forth on its own, and does not have its source in transmissions from Indian pandits and adepts.”<sup>29</sup>

Though Thu'u bkwan is severely critical of the Jo nang pa view of extrinsic emptiness on a variety of historical, textual, and philosophical grounds, he is not, in fact, absolute in his condemnation of the Jo nang tradition itself, for he recognizes that it is through the Jo nang pas that many important teachings were transmitted in Tibet, most notably those related to the *Kālacakra Tantra*. Indeed, in his concluding verses to the Jo nang chapter – and it is in such verses that he often reveals his true attitude toward a tradition – Thu'u bkwan writes:

Sometimes masters bring down a hail of refutations;  
 On occasion they offer flower-garlands of praise:  
 When one like me resolves it to a single aspect,  
 It is difficult to express [only] praise or deprecation – this is the system of Jo mo nang.

<sup>27</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 216-17.

<sup>28</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 215-16: *mkhas grub du mas mgrin gcig du bkag pas*.

<sup>29</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 229: *jo nang pa 'i lta ba rang mal las brdol ba las/ rgya gar pan grub las bryud pa 'i khungs med*.

This system...combines into one  
 Both the metal wire of the view of a permanent, fixed and eternal [self]  
 And the golden thread of tantric initiations and esoteric instructions....<sup>30</sup>

This may be damning with faint praise, but it does demonstrate that even when rejecting a tradition's philosophical views without qualification, Thu'u bkwan still is able to find something positive to say.

## A Positive Assessment: The Dge lugs

The chapter on Dge lugs – Thu'u bkwan's own tradition, and the one he knew best – covers nearly thirty percent of the *Crystal Mirror*: 143 pages in the Gansu edition. Of this mass of material, over half (seventy-five pages) is devoted to an account of the life and deeds of Tsong kha pa (1357-1419), nearly a third (forty-five pages) to the development of the tradition by Tsong kha pa's successors, and the last sixth (twenty-five pages) to a demonstration of how the Dge lugs is superior to other traditions. The biography of Tsong kha pa is an undisguised panegyric, which maintains, among other things, that never before in Tibet had there appeared a master who so thoroughly integrated and articulated all the Buddha's teachings, theoretical and practical, Sūtra and Mantra<sup>31</sup>; and the discussion of his successors also points to the extraordinary qualities they developed, which allowed them to avoid the pitfalls to which members of other traditions might be prone.<sup>32</sup> But Thu'u bkwan's major attempt to establish the superiority of the Dge lugs is clearly contained in the final section of the chapter. The Dge lugs pa is said by Thu'u bkwan to be superior in terms of its approach to both Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna. Its superiority in terms of Sūtrayāna is considered in relation to the triad of view, meditation, and conduct; its superiority in terms of Mantrayāna is discussed in terms of its view, its understanding of the two stages of Highest Yoga Tantra, and its general mode of interpreting the tantras. I will summarize these arguments only briefly.

In discussing the Sūtrayāna view, Thu'u bkwan argues that, more skillfully than any Tibetan master before him, Tsong kha pa managed to avoid extremes of eternalism and nihilism by demonstrating that all *dharmas*' emptiness of intrinsic existence is compatible with their being conventionally established dependent arisings.<sup>33</sup> In terms of Sūtrayāna meditation, Thu'u bkwan emphasizes Tsong kha pa's rejection of such mistaken approaches as an over-emphasis on concentration meditation combined with a rejection of analytical meditation, and he underlines Tsong kha pa's ability to distinguish clearly the proper context for each type of

<sup>30</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 232: *mkhas pas la lar sun 'byin gser ba 'bebs/ skabs 'gar bsngags pa 'i me tog phreng bas mchod/ bdag 'dras rnam pa gcig tu thag bcaad nas/ bstod smad brjod dka' jo mo nang ba 'i lugs// rtag brtan ther zug lta ba 'i lcags skud dang / dbang rgyud man ngag gser gyi srad bu gnyis/ gcig tu bsgril ba 'i lugs 'di....*

<sup>31</sup> For example, Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 303.

<sup>32</sup> For example, Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 349-50.

<sup>33</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 354-59.

meditation, and the meaning of meditative experiences that often are misconstrued.<sup>34</sup> With respect to Sūtrayāna conduct, Thu'u bkwan points to Tsong kha pa's uncommon emphasis on observing all vows with the utmost scrupulousness, and not seeing any contradiction between upholding the Vinaya and practicing Tantra.<sup>35</sup> On the Mantrayāna side, Thu'u bkwan notes that the Dge lugs pa's adherence to the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka view of emptiness will hasten and deepen the experience of the bliss-emptiness gnosis that is developed in Highest Yoga Tantra.<sup>36</sup> He also argues that Tsong kha pa provided explanations of the two stages of Highest Yoga Tantra with a clarity unprecedented in Tibet, refuting masters who suggested, for instance, that the nature of what is imparted by the Fourth Initiation of Highest Yoga Tantra is simply contemplation of a space-like emptiness, or that references to the illusory body attained on the completion stage merely denote the physical body's lack of true existence.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, Thu'u bkwan claims, the Dge lugs is unique in the way in which its adherents carefully study and harmonize the vast array of ideas and practices contained in the tantras.<sup>38</sup> At the outset and conclusion of his discussion, Thu'u bkwan emphasizes a central point, implicit in much of the argument, namely, that the Dge lugs is above all superior because of its comprehensiveness, balance, and harmony, such that all the teachings of the Buddha – and all the important traditions of Tibet – find their proper place in Tsong kha pa's great synthesis.<sup>39</sup>

Thu'u bkwan's argument for the superiority of the Dge lugs would seem to be as relentlessly triumphalist as the critique of Jo nang appeared to be uniformly negative – yet here, even more than there, there is evidence that an ostensibly absolute stance is actually mitigated in various ways. First, in the course of praising the Dge lugs, Thu'u bkwan seldom names those whose ideas and practices he is comparing unfavorably, and when he does, it is often a classic whipping boy, like a Gzhan stong pa or Hwā shang ma hā yā na. When he does mention specific Tibetan teachers, he usually is careful to note that he is not questioning their realization, but only the precision with which they articulated it. Second, it is important to see that when Thu'u bkwan exalts the Dge lugs, it is almost always in reference to the unique role and teachings of Tsong kha pa. There is no implication that Dge lugs pas subsequent to Tsong kha pa, great as many of them were, were without flaws. Thu'u bkwan rarely criticizes fellow Dge lugs pa in the Dge lugs chapter itself, but he does take them to task elsewhere in the *Crystal Mirror*, defending other traditions against what he feels are unwarranted criticisms of them launched from within his own school. (Indeed, as Matthew Kapstein has demonstrated,<sup>40</sup> Thu'u bkwan elsewhere goes so far as to criticize his own teacher,

<sup>34</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 359-65.

<sup>35</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 365-66.

<sup>36</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 366-68.

<sup>37</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 368-72.

<sup>38</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 372-74.

<sup>39</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 351-53, 374-75.

<sup>40</sup> Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, 121-37.

Sum pa mkhan po, for his attack on the legitimacy of Rnying ma Treasure traditions.) Third, even in the “triumphalist” portion of the Dge lugs chapter that we have just reviewed, Thu'u bkwan makes it clear on at least two separate occasions that while he considers Tsong kha pa and his successors peerless in their ability to articulate the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka, he does *not* believe that a failure to explain the Prāsaṅgika as skillfully as Tsong kha pa, or even a neglect of Prāsaṅgika altogether, bars a tradition from producing enlightened individuals. Indeed, near the very end of his argument for the Dge lugs, he entertains a qualm, as follows: “If it is as you [say], then other Tibetan tenet systems will not have a method for accomplishing the path of liberation and omniscience.” His reply is that while he believes this to be true of the Jo nang, of the other systems that arose in Tibet, “there does not appear to be even a single one fit for consistent denigration, so those who desire the good should [see] that pure appearance pervading every [system]....”<sup>41</sup>

### A Mixed Assessment: The Rnying ma

Thu'u bkwan's chapter on the Rnying ma covers some twenty-five pages. He devotes most of this to an attempt to (a) give an account of what might be called the Age of Padmasambhava; (b) trace the various important Rnying ma lineages, e.g., of Oral Transmission (*Bka' ma*), Treasure (*Gter ma*), and Pure Vision (*Dag snang*); and (c) describe the view and meditation of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs chen*) tradition. As with his presentation of any tradition not his own, one might wonder whether Thu'u bkwan's limited sources and his perspective as a Dge lugs pa would permit him to do full justice to the Rnying ma. It is unlikely that they do, yet his presentation of historical, philosophical, and meditative material does not seem overtly polemical, either. Indeed, there are a number of places where he tries to draw connections between the Rnying ma and the New Translation (*Gsar ma*) schools he undoubtedly knew better, and he goes out of his way on several occasions to defend the Rnying ma against criticisms of it by members of other traditions, including the Dge lugs.

The connections he attempts to draw between Rnying ma and New Translation schools are in terms of both path practices and meditation in the Great Perfection. He points out that the way Rnying ma pas interpret practice-instructions in a number of their important Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna texts is very similar to the ways in which New Translation schools interpret their own texts – though he does add that latter-day Rnying ma pas do not seem to expound, study, or practice these traditions.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, in discussing the meditative practice of the three classes of Great Perfection traditions, he notes that meditations in the Mind Class (*Sems sde*) are much like those related to the Great Seal (*Phyag rgya chen po*, San. Mahāmudrā)

<sup>41</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 375-376: *khyod kyi 'di ltar na/ bod kyi grub mtha' gzhan rnams la thar pa dang thams cad mkhyen pa 'i lam sgrub pa 'i thabs med par 'gyur.../ skur ba 'debs pa 'i 'os su gyur pa gcig kyang mi snang bas/ ...bde legs su 'dod pa rnams ni kun la dag snang khyab par byed pa nyid....*

<sup>42</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 69.

in New Translation schools, especially the Bka' brgyud; and that meditations in the Expanse Class (*Klong sde*) and Esoteric Instruction Class (*Man ngag sde*) bear certain similarities to aspects of the five stages of completion-stage (*rdzogs rim*) practice observed by New Translation traditions. In each case, Thu'u bkwan also is careful to note that while there are similarities, there are significant differences, too: Great Seal meditations (at least according to Rnying ma pas) focus on objective emptiness rather than the subjective self-illuminated gnosis emphasized in the Mind Class, while the five stages practiced by New Translation schools involve, among other things, particular active techniques for generating and purifying the illusory body, rather than – as in the Expanse and Esoteric Instruction class meditations – the radically non-conceptual contemplation of primordial gnosis leading eventually or immediately to the Rainbow Body.<sup>43</sup> Whether Thu'u bkwan's comparative analyses would be accepted by a Rnying ma pa is far less important, it seems to me, than the fact that he does try to show points not just of difference, but of similarity, between the old and newer traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.

Thu'u bkwan defends the Rnying ma against its critics on a number of grounds, both historical and philosophical. To those who claim that Padmasambhava stayed only briefly in Tibet and taught little there, and that Rnying ma doctrines actually were concocted by later masters and attributed to Padmasambhava, Thu'u bkwan replies that this is “a biased report” (*chags sdang gi gtam*), which fails to make sense of known chronologies.<sup>44</sup> To those who suggest that the Treasures revealed beginning in the eleventh and twelfth centuries were unique to the Rnying ma, and simply forgeries, he argues as follows:

In general, there were Treasure *dharma*s even in India, and since they also exist in other Tibetan tenet systems, to make [the case that] all Treasure *dharma*s are Rnying ma *dharma*s is ignorant. Although some reputed to be Treasure Revealers were imposters who hid what they concocted themselves and then “revealed” it, there also definitely were a great many that were pure, so it is improper one-sidedly to denigrate [all Treasures].<sup>45</sup>

To those who argue that no uniquely Rnying ma tantras have Indic sources, Thu'u bkwan cites evidence to the contrary from Bu ston.<sup>46</sup>

To those who question the purity of the Rnying ma tradition as a whole, and cite New Translation texts to support their qualms, Thu'u bkwan points out that while there certainly have been distinguished masters who criticized the Rnying ma, (a) overt criticisms are far less common than often imagined, (b) some texts

<sup>43</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 66-67.

<sup>44</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 60-61.

<sup>45</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 68: *spyir gter chos rgya gar du'ang byung zhing / bod kyi grub mtha' gzhan la'ang yod pas gter chos thams cad rnying ma'i chos su byed pa ni thos rgya chung ba'i skyon no/ gter ston du grags pa 'ga' zhig gis rang gis bcas nas sbas te bton pa'i brdzus ma'ang yod mod kyang / rnam dag yin nges kyang ches mang bas mtha' gcig tu smod mi rung ngo.*

<sup>46</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 76.

critical of the Rnying ma attributed to important figures like Bu ston are probably forgeries, and (c) the Rnying ma has been defended as pure by many great New Translation masters, including, among Dge lugs pas, the Fifth Dalai Lama.<sup>47</sup> On the all-important question of Tsong kha pa's attitude, Thu'u bkwan maintains that ultimately he, like his spiritual sons Mkhas grub rje and Rgyal tshab rje, maintained neutrality. Thu'u bkwan cites a biography of Tsong kha pa in which the Dge lugs founder, asked whether the Great Perfection is pure or not, replies: "It is pure, but the adulterations fabricated by many later ignoramuses have entered into it."<sup>48</sup> This, then, becomes a guide for Thu'u bkwan in articulating his own view, as follows:

I myself accept the interpretation to the effect that the present-day Great Perfection view is stained by adulteration. I do not, however, dare to say that the view in and of itself is a wrong view. Nevertheless, it appears that a view so elevated was meaningful because it was appropriate to the mental continuums of the sharpest students during that wonderful era when the Great Spiritual Master [Padmasambhava] and others came. I think, however, that in those whose minds are not the least bit superior to those of present-day, ordinary people, a view so elevated might be greatly harmful, and far from beneficial.<sup>49</sup>

He adds:

Moreover, even though many impurities are apparent in the Rnying ma tantric texts, and in those scriptures that establish view, meditation, and conduct, and the base, path, and result, it is not right to deprecate them for that reason, and say they are mistaken *dharma*: that would be the same as inappropriately calling tarnished gold brass. As for impurities, when the intelligent analyze in detail, not only the Rnying ma but all Tibetan tenet systems appear to have them.<sup>50</sup>

Interestingly, Thu'u bkwan immediately follows this remark with the observation that if one understands his point clearly, then "there will arise a definite understanding, induced by faultless reasoning, that only the tradition of the

<sup>47</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 74-75.

<sup>48</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 75: *rnam dag yin kyang physis kyi mi mkhas pa du mas blos byas kyi slad pa zhugs 'dug*.

<sup>49</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 75: *kho bos ni/ deng sang gi rdzogs chen gyi lta ba 'i bshad tshul 'di nrams ni bsre slad kyi dri ma can du khas che yi/ lta ba de 'i rang ldog nas log pa 'i lta ba 'o zhes srma bar mi spobs so/ 'on kyang mthon po 'i lta ba de lta bu ni/ slob dpon chen po sogs byon pa 'i dus skabs bzang po 'i gdul bya dbang po yang rab tu gyur pa de dag la rgyud tshod dang 'tshams pa 'i dbang gis don du gyur par snang yang / deng sang gi skye bo shes rgyud tha ma las cung zad kyang ma phags pa dag la lta ba mthon po de lta bus phan pa las gcig shos su 'gyur ba 'i nyen che bar sems*.

<sup>50</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 76: *gzhan yang rnying ma 'i rgyud nams dang / lta sgom spyod gsum dang / gzhi lam 'bras gsum gyi rnam gzhas gang dang gang la yang slad zhugs pa mang du snang mod kyang / rgyu mtshan des 'di ni log pa 'i chos so zhes skur ba 'debs mi rung ste/ g.ya' zhugs pa 'i gser la ra gan zhes zer mi rung ba dang mshungs so/ slad zhugs pa ni rnying ma gcig pur ma zad kyi/ rnam dpyod can gyis zhib tu brtags na bod kyi grub mtha' thams cad la yod par snang*.

conqueror Rje tsong kha pa opens the door for those intent on liberation.<sup>51</sup> This rather triumphalist claim seems a bit out of place in the context of a defense of the overall purity of the Rnying ma, but it does highlight the fact that Thu'u bkwan's assessment is a decidedly mixed one. While he does uphold the Rnying ma against a range of criticisms, and defends the legitimacy of its founders, its texts, its view, and its practices, he clearly is of the opinion that many latter-day Rnying ma pas have not understood or practiced their traditions properly, and he also suggests that this is so in part because the subtlety and difficulty of the Great Perfection make it especially liable to misinterpretation, such that one might see it as absolutist or quietist, even if, properly understood, it is not really liable to either of these faults.<sup>52</sup> It should be noted that Thu'u bkwan's strategy here, of defending the purity of a tradition's founders, while criticizing its latter-day adherents, is one he will repeat in his analyses of the Bka' brgyud and Zhi byed – in great detail in the former case, rather briefly in the latter. To my mind, this cements this strategy as a centerpiece of Thu'u bkwan's approach to other traditions, especially those in the “middle”: they and their founders are probably pure, but they have been misinterpreted and wrongly practiced when the great originators no longer were around to provide clear explanations.<sup>53</sup>

## Theological and Historical Implications

What, then, are we to make of Thu'u bkwan's attitudes toward the range of Tibetan religious and philosophical traditions? There are, I think, both theological and historical answers that might be offered.

Theologically, the issue at hand is the degree to which Thu'u bkwan is what in the West we would call an ecumenist or a triumphalist, that is, whether he sees grounds for accepting the validity of a range of traditions besides his own, or

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<sup>51</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 76: *rgyal ba'i tsong kha pa ring lugs 'ba' zhid thar 'dod rnam kyi 'jug ngogs skyon med du rigs pas drangs pa'i nges shes skye bar 'gyur*.

<sup>52</sup> In a still-unpublished paper delivered as part of the panel for which this article originally was prepared (“Divining Loyalties: Thu'u bkwan's Polemic on the Origin of Chinese Divination”), Leonard Zwilling argues that Thu'u bkwan was more of a polemicist than he is generally portrayed to be, particularly with respect to the Rnying ma. Zwilling cites political tensions between Rnying ma pas and Dge lugs pas (especially Mongols) during the eighteenth century, and focuses on Thu'u bkwan's attack, in the China chapter of the *Crystal Mirror*, on certain early Tibetan (i.e., Rnying ma) interpretations of the origins of divination in China, as well as on his criticisms of his Rnying ma pa contemporaries at the end of the Rnying ma chapter. Zwilling's argument is intriguing, but I would maintain that, despite his occasional polemics, Thu'u bkwan on balance remains appreciative of the various traditions he studies, and is basically mixed in his assessment of the Rnying ma.

<sup>53</sup> At the very end of the Rnying ma chapter, Thu'u bkwan reports on the apparent degeneration of Rnying ma lineages and practice in his own time (Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 80), which prompts Dudjom Rinpoche to remark: “Such uncritical prattle is exceedingly false. Since a great scholar like Thukun, who bears up to examination, would never present a corrupt account, we think that this statement was undoubtedly an interpolation made later on by some foolish fanatic”; see Dudjom Rinpoche, Jikdrel Yeshe Dorje, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, trans. Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991), 735-36. I know of no evidence suggesting that Thu'u bkwan's passage is a later interpolation, and whether his motive for including it reflects an attempt at reportage or polemic is difficult to say.

whether he exalts his own above all others. Not surprisingly, the answer seems to be that he gives evidence of being both. He certainly takes pains to present what he considers fair-minded accounts of the histories and philosophies of the traditions he describes, and in assessing them in terms of view or practice, he tends usually to be generous, insisting that at their best, all Tibetan Buddhist traditions except the Jo nang produce enlightened individuals. He also suggests that where there are flaws in a tradition, they are not due to impurities in the lineage, the founders, or their teachings, so much as in misunderstandings on the part of later practitioners. At the same time, Thu'u bkwan clearly believes that no greater master appeared in Tibet than Tsong kha pa, and that his unique and balanced synthesis of the best of both Indian and Tibetan Buddhist traditions makes the Dge lugs, when properly understood, superior to other traditions, especially in the clarity and precision of its explanations of such knotty problems as the nature of emptiness, the proper approach to meditation, and the way to maintain purity of conduct, whether in monastic or tantric vows. Just as Thu'u bkwan's ecumenism is undermined to some degree by his exaltation of the Dge lugs, so his triumphalism is mitigated by the fact that he is careful to specify that even though other traditions may lack the intellectual force of the Dge lugs, they still are capable of producing great masters and great texts, many of which, of course, Tsong kha pa himself utilized in forging the Dge lugs synthesis.

The theological liberal might object that this amounts to damning with faint praise, and that Thu'u bkwan actually evinces a sort of smug tolerance (like that sometimes attributed to Hindu neo-Vedāntins) that assures his compatriots, in effect, that all Tibetan Buddhist traditions are equal, but the Dge lugs is more equal than others. I don't know if this is quite fair – especially in the context of the Tibetan intellectual tradition – but it does raise the question of the adequacy of the terms ecumenism and triumphalism. Indeed, I would suggest that if we want to understand Thu'u bkwan's attitude, we are better served by a threefold typology discussed by John Hick in his analysis of possible Christian stances toward other religions.<sup>54</sup> He identifies three possible outlooks: exclusivist, inclusivist, and pluralist. The exclusivist insists that there is but one understanding of and one approach to what Hick calls “the Real,” and that traditions that do not conform to that understanding and approach are to be regarded as incapable of leading to salvation. The inclusivist believes that there are multiple understandings of and approaches to the Real, but that one of them is superior to the others by virtue of its scope, clarity, subtlety, and efficacy. The pluralist (whose view Hick supports) believes that the Real is beyond the purview of any single tradition, and that all traditions in equal measure can help us to understand and approach it, our decision for one or the other being based on cultural and psychological factors alone. Thu'u bkwan clearly is neither an exclusivist nor a pluralist in Hick's sense. He does, on the other hand, seem to fit comfortably with the description of an inclusivist – or, if we resume the earlier terminology, makes him either an ecumenical triumphalist

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<sup>54</sup> John Hick, *A Christian Theology of Religions: The Rainbow of Faiths* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 18-30.

or a triumphalist ecumenist, depending on whether we wish to emphasize his establishment of differences or his underscoring of similarities.

As an aside, I would note that this discussion leads naturally to a reconsideration of the genre of the *Crystal Mirror*. It's not that we can define it in terms of Tibetan genres any better than we did before, when we described it as a combination of *grub mtha'*, *lo rgyus*, and *chos 'byung*. If, however, we ask what sort of text it is with respect to literature about religions produced in the West or elsewhere, we find that it seems to fall somewhere between heresiography and straightforward comparative religion. Heresiographies, of which many instances were produced (and still are produced) in the Christian and Muslim worlds, may provide considerable information, some of it accurate, about a range of religious traditions (usually within one's own church or community), but do so in the ultimate service of exposing these traditions as heretical. What I am describing as "straightforward" texts on comparative religion seek, as neutrally as possible, to describe and explain a range of traditions, leaving aside all attempts at evaluation, or perhaps articulating a respect for all traditions equally. The *Crystal Mirror* clearly is not a heresiography, in that its primary purpose is not the rejection of traditions other than that of its author. On the other hand, it is not a text on comparative religion in the contemporary style, since it is concerned with evaluation, and does on occasion promote a sectarian agenda. What, then, is it? I have not researched this adequately, but I suspect that the closest Western parallel may be found in Christian texts, written over the past two centuries, that attempt to give dispassionate accounts of a range of the so-called "world religions," but do so with a keen eye to points of comparison with Christianity, and with an assumption, either implicit or explicit, that the world religions, while containing much that is of value, probably fall short of Christianity as fully adequate responses to the human condition.<sup>55</sup>

Neither historiography nor history have been central to my concerns in this paper, but we cannot help asking: If Thu'u bkwan was, in fact, an inclusivist in the sense meant by John Hick, what circumstances of his life and times might explain why this is so? We cannot at this stage examine Thu'u bkwan's biography in detail, but merely note that he was as cosmopolitan as an eighteenth-century Tibetan could be: Mongol by heritage, Dge lugs pa Tibetan by education, hailing from a region – A mdo – in which several traditions flourished, and equally at home in a central Tibetan monastery or the Qing court in Beijing. Matthew Kapstein has ably summarized the relation between Thu'u bkwan's background and what he calls his impartiality, and I call his inclusivism:

He was one of a generation of clergymen from Amdo whose spiritual loyalties were unmistakably Gelukpa, but who allied themselves politically with the Qing court. The worldview of these churchmen bore a strange resemblance to that of medieval Latin Christendom, with the Manchus filling the role of Imperial Rome and the Gelukpa hierarchy that of the Catholic Church. These were not the products

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<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Hans Küng, et al., *Christianity and the World Religions: Paths to Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism*, trans. Peter Heinegg (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986).

of a denomination under fire but rather represented the synthesis of a peerless salvific vehicle with a universal temporal order. Not personally threatened by the Central Tibetan feuds, they could afford to regard the situation there only with equanimous compassion. Their intellectual curiosity could be given free rein to explore their own and other traditions impartially.<sup>56</sup>

Further perspective on Thu'u bkwan's inclusivism may be gained by remembering that, hailing from A mdo, he was exposed to a wide variety of traditions, and that the Rnying ma was especially popular there among lay people. As Kapstein has noted, Thu'u bkwan's and other Mongol incarnation lineages are remembered by Rnying ma pas as having protected them in A mdo, and the deity about whom Thu'u bkwan composed by far the most works was a form of Hayagrīva of Rnying ma provenance.<sup>57</sup>

A further, and final, historical point to observe is that Thu'u bkwan's attitude toward other traditions must in part have been forged in the crucible of intra-Dge lugs debates over precisely the sorts of questions of ecumenism and triumphalism, or exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, that we have examined here. These debates are not unique to Thu'u bkwan's time and place. They may have occurred as far back as the early years of the tradition, as Dge lugs pas began to define themselves as an order quite distinct from those that Tsong kha pa had drawn on in effecting his great synthesis. There are clear hints of such debates in the work of the first Panchen Lama, Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1570-1662), who in his classic verse exposition of a Dge lugs pa Great Seal tradition, asserted that the great Tibetan practice-traditions, including the Rnying ma pa Great Perfection, the Bka' brgyud pa Great Seal, the Sa skya pa Path-and-Fruit, and many others besides, all were based on the same pure view, and all were conducive to enlightenment.<sup>58</sup> Thu'u bkwan, in fact, cites this very verse with approbation more than once in the *Crystal Mirror*, and defends the first Panchen against some of his critics – thereby clearly associating himself with an “ecumenical” wing of the Dge lugs that goes back well before his time.<sup>59</sup> Though triumphalism certainly is understandable historically and psychologically, and has been common among Dge lugs pas from

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<sup>56</sup> Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, 130. In his response to the Madison panel (see note 1), John Dunne argued that Thu'u bkwan's *grub mtha'* ought to be understood as part of a larger “colonial” project, in which the Qing dynasty sought to cement its influence in Tibet and its overall legitimacy by encouraging the production of texts that (a) upheld the Dge lugs system it considered a bulwark of its rule and (b) established the historical and institutional linkages between the Dge lugs and the Chinese empire. This a fascinating perspective on Thu'u bkwan – but an assessment of it would require a more detailed consideration than is possible here of such matters as Thu'u bkwan's actual and intended audience and the relation between A mdo-based Dge lugs pa *bla mas* and the Qing court in the last decades of the eighteenth century.

<sup>57</sup> Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, 256n62 .

<sup>58</sup> See, e.g., H. H. the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Alexander Berzin, *The Gelug/Kagyü Tradition of Mahāmudrā* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1997), 98.

<sup>59</sup> Thu'u bkwan, *Grub mtha'*, 157-58, 229. See also Roger R. Jackson, “The dGe ldan bka' brgyud Tradition of Mahāmudrā: How Much dGe ldan? How Much bKa' brgyud?” in *Changing Minds: Contributions to the Study of Buddhism and Tibet in Honor of Jeffrey Hopkins*, ed. Guy Newland (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2001) 155-92.

early times to the present (as among members of other traditions – it's hardly a Dge lugs pa monopoly), there also is a powerful internal logic to ecumenism for Dge lugs pas in particular: to the degree that Tsong kha pa drew explicitly on a tremendous range of Tibetan Buddhist teachers and traditions, the authenticity of the Dge lugs may be seen as in some way contingent on the authenticity of the streams that fed into it. An excessively triumphalist stance, then, might actually tend to undermine the Dge lugs, whereas an admission of the purity and salvific value of the strands that originally formed the Dge lugs would assure that its own purity and salvific valued could not be gainsaid.

Finally, to retreat just a bit from these intimations that Thu'u bkwan's charity toward other traditions was merely patronizing or self-serving, we must consider the possibility – on which he himself insists repeatedly – that a central motivation for his inclusivism was a genuine belief that the message of the Buddha, and all great masters after him, was that we must whenever possible avoid partiality and bias, and try as much as we can to see the good in others and their traditions. I certainly would not make this the sole explanation for Thu'u bkwan's outlook, but I think that it must be given due weight as a factor that he himself consciously considered, as he set out, near the end of his life's journey, to write all that he knew about the great religious traditions of Asia. I would submit that in the Tibetan world of the eighteenth century, as unquestionably in our own, there have been many worse reasons for which people have written books. Those in any age who even attempt to be fair are few, and even if Thu'u bkwan's *Crystal Mirror* made no other contributions – though surely it did – it would be justly celebrated for its author's effort to transcend narrow partisanship and inquire into the central views and values of the traditions he set out to describe.

## Glossary

**Note:** *Glossary entries are organized in Tibetan alphabetical order. All entries list the following information in this order: THDL Extended Wylie transliteration of the term, THDL Phonetic rendering of the term, English translation, Sanskrit and/or Chinese equivalent, dates when applicable, and type.*

Ka					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Sanskrit/Chinese	Dates	Type
<i>dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po</i>	Könchok Jikmé Wangpo			1728–91	Person
<i>bka' brgyud</i>	Kagyü				Organization
<i>bka' gdams</i>	Kadam				Organization
<i>bka' ma</i>	Kama	Oral Transmission			Term
Kha					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Sanskrit/Chinese	Dates	Type
<i>mkhas grub rje</i>	Khedrup Jé				Person
Ga					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Sanskrit/Chinese	Dates	Type
<i>grub mtha'</i>	drupta				Term
<i>grub mtha' thams cad kyi khung dang 'dod tshul ston pa legs bshad shel gyi me long</i>	Drupta Tamchekyi Khung dang Dötsül Tönpa Lekshé Shelgyi Melong	<i>The Crystal Mirror: An Excellent Exposition That Shows the Sources and Assertions of All Tenet Systems</i>			Text
<i>grub mtha' shel gyi me long</i>	Drupta Shelgyi Melong	<i>Crystal Mirror of Tenet Systems</i>			Text
<i>dge lugs</i>	Geluk				Organization
<i>dge lugs pa</i>	Gelukpa				Organization
<i>dgon lung byams pa gling</i>	Gönlung Jampa Ling				Monastery
<i>rgyal tshab rje</i>	Gyeltsap Jé				Person
<i>sgyur bon</i>	Gyur Bön	Transformed Bön			Organization
Ca					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Sanskrit/Chinese	Dates	Type
<i>lcang skya sku phreng gnyis pa rol pa 'i rdo rje</i>	Changkya Kutreng Nyipa Rölpé Dorjé	Changkya II Rölpé Dorjé		1717–86	Person
Cha					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Sanskrit/Chinese	Dates	Type
<i>chags sdang gi gтам</i>	chakdanggi tam	a biased report			Term
<i>chos 'byung</i>	chönjung	religious history			Term
Ja					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Sanskrit/Chinese	Dates	Type
<i>jo nang</i>	Jonang				Organization
<i>jo nang pa</i>	Jonangpa				Organization

<i>jo mo nang</i>	Jomonang				Organization
<i>rje tsong kha pa</i>	Jé Tsongkhapa				Person
<b>Nya</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>rnying ma</i>	Nyingma				Organization
<i>rnying ma pa</i>	Nyingmapa				Organization
<b>Ta</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>tā ra nā tha</i>	Taranata	Tāranātha			Person
<i>gter ma</i>	Terma	Treasure			Term
<b>Tha</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>thu'u bkwan</i>	Tuken				Lineage
<i>thu'u bkwan grub mtha'</i>	Tuken Drupta				Text
<i>thu'u bkwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma</i>	Tuken Lozang Chökyi Nyima				Author
<b>Da</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>dag snang</i>	Daknang	Pure Vision			Term
<i>dol po pa</i>	Dölpopa				Person
<i>dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan</i>	Dölpopa Sherap Gyeltsen			1292–1361	Person
<i>sde dge</i>	Degé				Place
<b>Pa</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>dpag bsam ljon bzang</i>	Paksam Jönzang	<i>Excellent Wish-Fulfilling Tree</i>			Text
<b>Pha</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>pha dam pa sangs rgyas</i>	Padampa Sanggyé				Person
<i>phyag rgya chen po</i>	Chakgya Chenpo	Great Seal	San. <i>Mahāmudrā</i>		Doxographical Category
<b>Ba</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>bar do</i>	bardo				Term
<i>bu ston</i>	Butön				Person
<i>bon</i>	Bön				Organization
<i>blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan</i>	Lozang Chökyi Gyeltsen			1570-1662	Person
<i>blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma</i>	Lozang Chökyi Nyima			1737–1802	Person

<b>Ma</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>man ngag sde</i>	Menngakdé	Esoteric Instruction Class			Doxographical Category
<b>Tsa</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>tsong kha pa</i>	Tsongkhapa			1357-1419	Person
<b>Dza</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>rdzogs chen</i>	Dzokchen	Great Perfection			Doxographical Category
<i>rdzogs rim</i>	dzokrim	completion-stage			Term
<b>Zha</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>zhi byed</i>	Zhijé				Organization
<i>zhol</i>	Zhöl				Place
<i>gzhan stong</i>	zhentong	extrinsic emptiness			Term
<i>gzhan stong pa</i>	Zhentongpa				Name
<b>Ya</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>yu mo mi bskyod rdo rje</i>	Yumo Mikyö Dorjé				Person
<b>La</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>lo rgyus</i>	logyü				Term
<i>klong sde</i>	Longdé	Expanse Class			Doxographical Category
<b>Sa</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>sa skya</i>	Sakya				Organization
<i>sa skya pa</i>	Sakyapa				Organization
<i>sum pa mkhan po</i>	Sumpa Khenpo			1704–88	Person
<i>sems sde</i>	Semdé	Mind Class			Doxographical Category
<i>gsar ma</i>	Sarma	New Translation			Name
<i>gsar ma pa</i>	Sarmapa				Name
<b>Ha</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>hwā shang ma hā yā na</i>	Hashang Mahayana				Person
<i>lha sa</i>	Lhasa				Place
<b>A</b>					
<b>Wylie</b>	<b>Phonetics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Sanskrit/Chinese</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Type</b>
<i>a mdo</i>	Amdo				Place

Non-Tibetan					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Sanskrit/Chinese	Dates	Type
			San. <i>Cittamātra</i>		Doxographical Category
			San. <i>Hayagrīva</i>		Deity
			San. <i>Kālacakra</i>		Text
			San. <i>Kālacakra Tantra</i>		Text
			San. <i>Lankāvatāra Sūtra</i>		Text
			San. <i>Mantra</i>		Doxographical Category
			San. <i>Mantrayāna</i>		Doxographical Category
			San. <i>Nāgārjuna</i>		Person
			San. <i>Padmasambhava</i>		Person
			San. <i>Prāsaṅgika</i>		Doxographical Category
			San. <i>Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka</i>		Doxographical Category
			San. <i>Sāṃkhya</i>		Doxographical Category
			San. <i>Sūtra</i>		Doxographical Category
			San. <i>Sūtrayāna</i>		Doxographical Category
			San. <i>Svātantrika Madhyamaka</i>		Doxographical Category
			San. <i>tantra</i>		Term
			San. <i>Tantra</i>		Doxographical Category
			San. <i>Vedānta</i>		Doxographical Category
			San. <i>Vinaya</i>		Doxographical Category
			Chi. <i>Chengdu</i>		Place
			Chi. <i>Gansu</i>		Place
			Chi. <i>Lanzhou</i>		Place
			Chi. <i>Qing</i>		Organization
			Chi. <i>Tuguan Zongpai Yuanliu</i>		Text

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