



The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems: A Tibetan Study of Asian Religious Thought (Library of Tibetan Classics)

By Thuken Losang Chokyi Nyima

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The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems, by Thuken Losang Chokyi Nyima (1737-1802), is arguably the widest-ranging account of religious philosophies ever written in pre-modern Tibet. Like most Tibetan texts on philosophical systems, this work covers the major schools of India, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, but then goes on to discuss in detail the entire range of Tibetan traditions as well, with separate chapters on the Nyingma, Kadam, Kagyu, Shije, Sakya, Jonang, Geluk, and Bon schools. Not resting there, Thuken goes on to describe the major traditions of China--Confucian, Daoist, and the multiple varieties of Buddhist--as well as those of Mongolia, Khotan, and even Shambhala. *The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems* is unusual, too, in its concern not just to describe and analyze doctrines, but to trace the historical development of the various traditions. *The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems* is an eloquent and erudite presentation exploring the religious history and philosophical systems of an array of Asian Cultures--and offering evidence that the serious and sympathetic study of the history of religions has not been a monopoly of Western scholarship.

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Editorial Review

Review

"An impressive translation of a fascinating and vitally important book. This will be of great interest to students of Tibetan Buddhism. Its broad scope and keen observation makes it an invaluable resource. And for scholars interested in the history of comparative religion, it shows how sophisticated, eighteenth-century Tibetan Buddhists could come to terms with diverse world religious traditions." (Guy Newland, Central Michigan University, author of *Introduction to Emptiness*)

"Thuken's *Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems* is a unique work, seeking to document the full range of philosophical traditions known in Tibet, including Indian, Chinese and, above all, indigenous Tibetan traditions. This translation is precise and a pleasure to read." (Matthew T. Kapstein, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes and the University of Chicago, editor of *Buddhism Between Tibet and China*)

"This notable work, completed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, presents an in-depth treatment of the key schools of Tibetan Buddhism--Nyingma, Kadam, Sakya, Kagyu, Gelug, and Jonang, as well as Bon. The reader-friendly translations introduce the texts to the general reader, making this a valuable contribution to our understanding of the richness of Tibetan Buddhism." (*Mandala*)

About the Author

Thuken Losang Chokyi Nyima (1737-1802) was among the most cosmopolitan and prolific Tibetan Buddhist masters of the late eighteenth century. Hailing from the "melting pot" region of Amdo, he was Mongol by heritage, and educated in Gelukpa monasteries. Throughout his life, he traveled widely in east and inner Asia, spending significant time in Central Tibet, Amdo, inner Mongolia, and at the Qing court in Beijing. He served as abbot of several important monasteries, and wrote hundreds of texts on Buddhist thought and practice, the most enduring and influential of which is the *Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems*.

Born in the Tsang region of Tibet in 1923, Geshe Lhundub Sopa is both a spiritual master and a respected academic. He rose from a humble background to complete his geshe studies at Sera Je Monastic University in Lhasa with highest honors and was privileged to serve as a debate opponent for the Dalai Lama's own geshe examination in 1959. He moved to New Jersey in the United States in 1963 and in 1967 began teaching in the Buddhist Studies Program at University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he is now professor emeritus. In 1975, he founded the Deer Park Buddhist Center in Oregon, Wisconsin, site of the Dalai Lama's first Kalachakra initiation granted in the West. He is the author of several books in English, including the five-volume comprehensive teaching, *Steps on the Path to Enlightenment*.

Roger R. Jackson is the John W. Nason Professor of Asian Studies and Religion at Carleton College in Minnesota, where he teaches the religions of South Asia and Tibet. He has published many articles on the philosophy, ritual, meditative practices, and poetry of Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, and has written or co-edited several books, including *Is Enlightenment Possible?*, *Tibetan Literature*, *Buddhist Theology*, *Tantric Treasures*, and *Mahamudra and the Bka' brgyud Tradition*. He is a past editor of the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, and is currently co-editor of the *Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies*.

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