

Project Title : Critical Edition and Translation of a 12th century Tibetan commentary on the Illumination of the Middle Way

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Introduction

I am applying for a sabbatical for the Spring of 2022 to complete project: a critical edition of and translate the 12th century Tibetan manuscript, the Commentary on the Illumination of the Middle Way. My goal is to publish its critical edition and prepare to publish its English translation in collaboration with Dr. Pascale Hugon at the Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia (...sterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften) in the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Hugon is a leading scholar of her research area, the 12th century to 13th century Tibetan Buddhist epistemology and Middle Way philosophy. I have been collaborating with Dr. Hugon since July 2019.

Objectives of the Project

During the sabbatical, I will entirely focus on finalizing the critical edition of Chapa Chškyl Sengge's Commentary on Kamalaśīla's Illumination of the Middle Way. The text of this project is a commentary on the root text, Illumination of the Middle Way. The root text is composed of an 8th century Indian scholastic Buddhist monk, Kamalaśīla. He contributed to establishing the roadmap of Tibetan Buddhism by inheriting the tradition of Indian Buddhism, not Chinese Buddhist Tradition. Among his treatises, the Illumination of the Middle Way is a pivotal treatise representing the Autonomy Middle Way School in expounding a view on emptiness, the key to

The text of the project, Commentary on the Illumination of the Middle Way (henceforth) was a monastic textbook at the center of indigenous Tibetan scholastic tradition, Sangphel Ne'utok Chapa's philosophical views that we will find in this commentary became the doctrinal foundation of the Geluk Tradition, where the 14th

Meanwhile

Travel: While Zoom meetings are okay, it is not as effective as in-person collaboration. Also, working for three hours on a screen makes both of us very tired. With my presence at the institute, Dr. Hugon will devote her time solely to this project as we did in July 2019. Therefore, at the last stage of its publication, I want to work intensively with her in-person to finalize the project.

Importance or Value

As Helmut Tauscher stated in his article in 2009, "the studies of his Madhyamaka (Middle Way) treatises have not yet advanced to a degree that would allow for a comprehensive survey of his Madhyamaka position."⁵ One of the reasons why the research of this field could not be comprehensive was because of a lack of materials. In this sense, his project will be a valuable foundation for research in Buddhist epistemology, logic, Middle Way doctrine, and the 12th century Indian and Tibetan Buddhist tradition, and it will be counted as the first critical edition among scholars.

In addition to a lack of resources and the difficulty of reading manuscripts, Chapa's texts have not been fully translated due to extreme complexity. The philosophical concepts and grammar that he uses are somewhat different from the later period. While Dr. Hugon has focused on the 12th to 13th century, my research is mostly on the 14th to 18th century Tibetan Buddhist philosophy. Therefore, our collaboration can provide a very extensive understanding of the target text. The translation will be the first translation among Chapa's works and will serve as a