

## 17. Treatises on the Buddha Nature Theorum

Translated by John Whitney Pettit

This composite volume contains several of the key texts presenting the principal Tibetan understandings of the Mahayana Buddhist concept of the Buddha nature. The central text of this volume is the great classic on the subject by Butön Rinchen Drup (1290-1364) entitled *An Ornament Beautifying the Nucleus of Buddhahood*. This is a seminal work that established a standard interpretation of the Buddha nature theorum and the development of hermeneutics of reading the scriptures associated with this important Mahayana Buddhist concept. The Shentong perspective, which represents an alternative standpoint, on the Buddha nature theorum is provided in detail in Dölpopa's *Ocean of Definitive Meaning*, vol. 7 of *THE LIBRARY OF TIBETAN CLASSICS*. The volume also contains a succinct commentary on one of the most important root Indian Buddhist works on the subject, Maitreya's (fourth century) classic *The Sublime Continuum* by the noted Sakya author Rongtön Shakya Gyaltsen (1367-1449). This is followed by Shākya Chokden's lucid commentary on the seminal text on the Buddha nature theorum attributed to Nagarjuna (second century) entitled *Hymns to the Ultimate Expanse*. The final section of the volume consists of two important texts. One is the general exposition of the Buddha nature theorum by the Geluk author Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltsen (1469-1544), which is based upon the reading of two Indian sources – Maitreya's *Sublime Continuum* and his *Ornament of Mahayana Scriptures*. The second is a short work by the Nyingma author Ju Mipham (1846-1912) entitled *Lion's Roar on the Nucleus of Buddhahood* which succinctly presents a critical analysis of the interpretation of the Buddha nature theorum in Tibet.

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