Mythos and logos: Reading authenticity (*tshad* ma) in the early Bon tradition

Anne C. Klein

A close examination of *gTan tshigs Gal mdo rig pa'i tshad ma* and related materials makes it clear that the category of authenticity cannot be fully appreciated by examining its tenets on *rjes dpag* and *mngon sum*, as is the case in the *tshad ma* traditions stemming from Dignāga and DharmakĪri,

In this paper, therefore, I explore the proposition that, in the cultural life of which this text is a part, philosophical and mythic perspectives are profoundly interfused and have a crucial bearing on questions of authenticity. Nor is mythic import confined to philosophical inquiry. I show that mythos is also invoked in historical accounts of this work and its tradition. In short, mythic dimensions, syllogistic logic, and an epic sense of history as well as ontology form the matrix in which various questions of authenticity can be raised. Thus, along with the philosophical concerns of *Authenticity,* we must also pay attention to the Terma tales alluded to in its colophon, and to contextualizing narratives from Bon histories, such as the early dissemination of Bon throughout the heavenly realms, or Lishu Daring's transference of thousands of texts on the backs of birds in flight from Zhang Zhung to Tibet.

Whereas Aristotle's logic rejected myth, thus setting the course for Western philosophy as a genre, traditional readers of *Authenticity* were as comfortable with rigorous logic as with the mythic-fantastic elements in the background of that logic. I examine how that logic is infused with mythos, especially in the figure of Samantabhadra, who embodies – that is, who presents, rather than represents – the central logos of the text. For this I draw on *Authenticity* as well as *Zhang Zhung sNyan rGyud* as well as several historical sources.