



# A Study of Svatantrika

*Donald S. Lopez Jr.*

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*A Study of Svatantrika* represents an important contribution to our understanding of Mādhyamika philosophy in India and Tibet. The Mādhyamika is considered to have two subschools, Svatantrika and Prasaṅgika. The Prasaṅgika school of Candrakīrti is better known than Svatantrika, in part because the major Svatantrika texts are preserved only in Tibetan translation. The Svatantrikas, however, made important contributions to Buddhist philosophy in their expositions of the nature of reality, the role of reasoning in the process of enlightenment, and in their delineations of the paths to nirvana. The synthesis of Yogācāra and Mādhyamika philosophy by the Svatantrika master Śāntarakṣita represents the final development of Buddhist thought in India. In Tibet, Svatantrika was the first Indian Buddhist school to gain currency, prior to the translation of the works of Candrakīrti into Tibetan.

In preparing this *Study of Svatantrika*, Donald S. Lopez, Jr. consulted the major Indian works of the Svatantrikas, figures central to the development of Buddhist thought in India such as Bhāvaviveka, Jñānagarbha, Śāntarakṣita, and Kamalaśīla, and analyzed a number of Tibetan expositions of Svatantrika. The result is the most extensive examination of this influential school available in the West.

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