

Himalayan Hermitess: The Life of a Tibetan Buddhist Nun

Kurtis R. Schaeffer



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Orgyan Chokyi (1675-1729) spent her life in Dolpo, the highest inhabited region of the Nepal Himalayas. Illiterate and expressly forbidden by her master to write her own life story, Orgyan Chokyi received divine inspiration to compose one of the most forthright and engaging spiritual autobiographies of the Tibetan literary tradition. Her life story is the oldest of only four Tibetan autobiographies authored by women. It is also a rare example of writing by a pre-modern Buddhist woman, and thus holds a unique place in Buddhist literature as a whole. Translator Kurtis Schaeffer prefaces the text with an illuminating study of the life and times of Orgyan Chokyi and an extended analysis of the hermitesss view of the relation between gender, suffering, and liberation. Based almost entirely on primary Tibetan documents never before translated, this fascinating book will be of interest to those studying Buddhism, gender and religion, and the culture of the Tibetan world.

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