

## General introduction to the transmission of the Hevajra teachings

In the following, I would like to provide an introduction to this study of the Hevajra teachings (and subsequent to that to the Path with Its Fruit teachings) that is accessible to both those who do read the Tibetan language and those who do not. I have therefore abstained in these two introductory chapters from using the regular Wylie transliteration of Tibetan names, and I have translated an abbreviated form of all titles of Tibetan works mentioned. I am sure that all names, which I have rendered here in an approximate phonetic transliteration, will be easily recognizable to the expert. To ensure, furthermore, the expert's recognition of the translated titles of works, I have added the Tibetan abbreviated form of titles in Wylie transcription in brackets. For all bibliographical references, please refer to the main part of the book. Page and footnote numbers within the text of these introductions in pointed brackets and smaller script provide references to the respective passages of *Part I* and *II* of this book.

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Hevajra is the most prominent tantric deity in the practice of the Sakyapas. This is conspicuous above all in the Path with Its Fruit (*lam 'bras*) cycle, the most important tantric teaching of the Sakyapas, but also apparent when one investigates the extant collected writings of the great Sakyapa writers, such as those of the great founding fathers,<sup>1</sup> and of subsequent masters such as Ngorchhen Künga Zangpo (1382-1456) and Gorampa Sönam Senge (1429-1489).<sup>2</sup> Ame Zhab (1597-1659), too, has authored, compiled and edited commentaries, literary histories and liturgies pertaining to the Hevajra cycle that add up to almost a thousand folios. Among these is a small work of ten folios that is of great interest to anyone interested in literary history, namely the NOTES ON HOW TO ENTER INTO THE WRITINGS OF THE SAKYAPAS (henceforth "NOTES"),<sup>3</sup> which, despite its title, focuses almost entirely on Hevajra literature up to the first half of the thirteenth century, both of Indian and Tibetan origin. This brief but indeed supremely important work is the composition of Chöpal Zangpo (15th c.), which is based on the teachings of Ngorchhen Künga Zangpo, and preserved and (perhaps) edited by Ame Zhab.

The NOTES throws interesting light on one approach to primarily tantric teachings among the Sakyapas during Chöpal Zangpo's time, i.e. the early 15th c., and, representing the teaching of the great Ngorchhen Künga Zangpo, it is certainly an authoritative approach. Central to it was a thorough introduction to the scholar's equipment, i.e. basic linguistic instructions, an overview of the Buddha's teachings in general, a specific introduction to the tantric teachings, and, finally, a full overview of the scholar's activities of teaching (*chad pa*), writing (*rtsom pa*), and debating (*rtsod pa*). This introduction was set forth with the help of some of the masterpieces of the early Sakya tradition by the great Slob-pön, Sönam Tsemo, and his nephew, Tibet's first Pandita, Künga Gyaltzen, namely the ENTRANCE GATE TO THE DHARMA (*Chos la 'jug pa 'i sgo*) and the SYSTEMATIC PRESENTATION OF THE TANTRA SECTION (*rGyud sde spyi 'i rnam par gzhang pa*) of the former and the EXPLICATION THAT INTRODUCES THE YOUNG ONES WITHOUT DIFFICULTIES (*Byis pa bde blag tu 'jug pa 'i rnam bshad*) and the ENTRANCE GATE FOR THE WISE (*mKhas pa rnams 'jug pa 'i sgo*) of the latter. It was furthermore thought suitable to round

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<sup>1</sup> Five masters are often referred to as the "five former Sakyapa [masters]" (*sa skya gong ma lnga*), namely (1) Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (1092-1158), (2) Lobpön Sönam Tsemo (1142-1182), (3) Jetsün Dragpa Gyaltzen (1147-1216), (4) Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltzen (1182-1251), and (5) Phagpa Lodrö Gyaltzen (1235-1280).

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the book I will, in most cases, give dates of persons only at their first occurrence and in the index of names.

<sup>3</sup> The full Tibetan title is: NOTES FOR THE CORRECT EXPLICATION OF HOW TO ENTER INTO THE WRITINGS OF THE VENERABLE SAKYAPAS: OPENING WIDE IN A HUNDRED DIRECTIONS THE DHARMA-GATES TO WHICH ALL BEINGS OF TIBET ARE GUIDED.

off training in the principal tantric teachings of the Sakyapas with the study of two further works by Sakya Pandita, the first viewed as a means for dispelling wrong views and doubts, namely his CLEAR DIFFERENTIATION OF THE THREE VOWS (*sDom gsum rab dbye*), the second seen as a means for preparing the ground for skillful investigation and debate, namely his TREASURE OF VALID KNOWLEDGE AND LOGIC (*Tshad ma rigs gter*). <pp. 21-22>

It is perhaps also interesting to note what were perceived as being the principal tantric transmissions in the fifteenth century at Ngor. The NOTES refers to “four great transmissions,” all of which occurred during the new translation period. These are the transmissions of Drogmi Lotsāva Shākya Yeshe (993-1074/1087), Mal Lotsāva Lodrö Dragpa (11th c.), Lama Yöntan Tsültrim (11th c.), and Bari Lotsāva Rinchen Drag (1040-1112). Drogmi Lotsāva’s speciality was the so-called “nine path-cycles” (*lam skor dgu*), of which the “Path with Its Fruit” cycle, together with the instructions of the “three Hevajra tantras,” was the most important one. From among these, the NOTES focuses exclusively on the Hevajra teachings. <p. 21>

The concern of the NOTES is chiefly a bibliographical one. Beyond the mere bibliographical listing of titles, however, the NOTES also provides us with other interesting information, some of it well known, some not, and some of it rare and unique. The text tells us, for example, that the Hevajra teachings are subdivided into eight sections, namely into the “six great chariot systems” (*shing rta'i srol chen po drug*) plus two systems of pith instructions (*man ngag lugs*), i.e. together eight transmissions. The “six great chariot systems” of the Hevajra teachings are, in short, the cycles of

- (a) Ḍombīheruka,
- (b) Tsokye Dorje (Saroruhavajra),
- (c) Nagpo Damtshig Dorje (Kṛṣṇa Samayavajra),
- (d) Shāntipa (Ratnākaraśānti),
- (e) Nyendrag Zangpo (Yaśobhadra?), and
- (f) Nyime Dorje (Advayavajra/Maitrīpa/Avadhūtipa). <p. 30>

The two systems of pith instructions are those of Nāropa and Virūpa.<sup>4</sup> Of the “six great chariot systems,” the Sakyapas followed four, namely those of Ḍombīheruka (a), Tsokye Dorje (b), Nagpo Damtshig Dorje (c) and Nyime Dorje (f—but the latter got lost quite early). Of the pith instructions they followed Virūpa’s system. In other words, they possessed five (later four) of the eight transmissions. Three of these transmissions were passed on by Drogmi. Two of these are known as “distant lineages” (*ring brgyud* <p. 77 ff.>). They are Virūpa’s “system of pith instructions” (*man ngag lugs*) and the “system of commentaries” (*'grel lugs*), which also originated with Virūpa (system (a) in the above schema). Virūpa’s “system of pith instructions” was passed on to Slob-dpon Nagpo (Kāṇha) and finally to Drogmi. The “system of commentaries” was passed on to Ḍombīheruka and then through some intermediates to Mithub Dawa (Durjayacandra), whose codifying activities provided the system’s name, and eventually to Drogmi. The third transmission (system (b) in the above schema), also found among the “great chariot systems,” originated with Vilāsyavajra and was passed on to Yenlag Mepa and Tsokye Dorje (i.e. Saroruha, who is treated in the Sakyapa tradition as being the same as

<sup>4</sup> I deal with the Indian tradition primarily from a Tibetan perspective. Since the names of Indian masters are a matter of considerable confusion, instead of adding to the confusion by giving my own inexpert reconstructions, I will provide the names here as I found them in my sources, i.e. in Tibetan, unless I mention them in a more general context, or the Tibetan version of the name is a transcription of an originally Sanskrit name, such as in the cases of Indrabhūti or Ḍombīheruka (and in such cases I try to follow the standard Sanskrit orthography). In the case of Indian text titles I will provide abbreviated Sanskrit versions in brackets.

Padmavajra) and eventually reached to Drogmi. A “great chariot system” practiced by the Sakyapas (but not transmitted by Drogmi) originated with Nagpo Damtshig Dorje, was passed on to Nagpo Zhiwa Zangpo (Kṛṣṇa Śāntibhadra) and eventually was passed on to Sachen Kūnga Nyingpo. In contrast to these “distant lineages” there also existed a “close lineage” (*nye brgyud* <p. 77 ff.>) that was directly transmitted from Virūpa to Sachen Kūnga Nyingpo in visions. <pp. 30-32>

distant lineage “system of pith instructions”	distant lineage “system of pith commentaries”	Tsokye Dorje’s transmission	system of initiation of Nagpopa	close lineage
Vajradhara	Vajradhara	Vajradhara	Vajradhara	
Jñānaḍākinī	Jñānaḍākinī	Vilāsyavajra	Nairātmya	
Virūpa	Virūpa	Yenlag Mepa	Nagpo Damtshig Dorje	Virūpa
Lobpön Nagpo (Kāṅha)	Ḍombīheruka	Tsokye Dorje	Nagpo Zhiwa Zangpo	
...	...			
...	Mithub Dawa	...	...	
...	...			
Drogmi	Drogmi	Drogmi		
Sachen	Sachen	Sachen	Sachen	Sachen

The NOTES additionally describes in great detail the many texts that are connected with the above systems. At the core of each of the “great chariot systems” is an Indian commentary on the basic Hevajra tantra plus a number of fundamental tantric rituals such as those pertaining to the maṅḍala (*dkyil ‘khor*), the evocation of deities (*sādhana*, chiefly Hevajra and Nairātmyā), completion practices (*niṣpannakrama*, *rdzogs rim*), tantric feasts (*gaṇacakra*, *tshogs ‘khor*), torma (*balīngta*)<sup>5</sup> and so forth, some of them with their own commentaries. Ḍombīheruka’s system, for example, is said to comprise twenty-one works, of which the first seven are the “basic texts of Mithub Dawa” (Durjayacandra):

- one commentary on the basic tantra
- one maṅḍala ritual
- three evocation rituals
- one work pertaining to practices of completion
- one torma ritual

The remaining fourteen works are “limbs,” such as further evocations and other tantric rituals.

<sup>5</sup> I have left the Tibetan term “torma” (*gtor ma*) untranslated. A torma is a complex ritual tantric object. It may take a multitude of forms and shapes and fulfills various functions. As far as I can see, one might differentiate three general types of torma: (1) representation of a tantric deity, (2) representation of a general food offering and (3) appeasement offering to spirits and demons. There are in addition “inner torma” offerings that do not depend on outer objects.

<pp. 32-35> The system of Tsokye Dorje (Saroruhavajra/Padmavajra) is similar, and comprises five works:

- one commentary on the basic tantra
- one initiation
- one evocation ritual
- one tantric feast
- one praise (stotra) <pp. 35-36>

And again the system of Nagpo-pa (Kṛṣṇa Samayavajra), which consists of thirteen works:

- one commentary on the basic tantra
- one maṇḍala ritual
- five evocations
- one work pertaining to practices of completion
- five limbs (i.e. further rituals)

These thirty-nine works are the most important Hevajra works of the Sakya tradition; the NOTES adds that these teachings have existed “complete and unerringly” down to the present day.<sup>6</sup> <pp. 36-40>

Two further “great chariot systems,” also found documented in the NOTES, are very similar in structure, but are clarified as “not transmitted within the Sakya tradition” (Shāntipa, i.e. Ratnākaraśānti) or as “no longer existing in Tibet” (Advayavajra/Maitrīpa/Avadhūtipa). The last of the “six great chariot systems” is that of Nyendrag Zangpo (Yaśobhadra?). It has one commentary on the basic tantra and one sub-commentary. The NOTES argues against the view of those who hold that the commentary on the basic tantra was authored by Nāropa. <pp. 40-43>

In reliance on several Hevajra commentaries composed by Ame Zhab and Ngorchen Künga Zangpo and on Ame Zhab’s records of teachings received (*gsan yig*), I have been able to supplement information known about a number of the works mentioned. We learn from these secondary sources that certain works are a “support” (*rgyab rten*) for particular other works. Such a remark is sometimes made in passing; in some instances, however, we learn a good deal about the rather intricate relationships these works have with one another, for example, when we are told that a seemingly independent ritual has to be understood as one of the limbs of a particular system, or when we learn that certain commentaries have actually resulted from the blending of two systems. Sometimes these secondary works also provide us with alternative names for authors, or inform us that two or more names were thought, by some (or most) scholars of the tradition, to refer to one and the same person. We also find remarks regarding the authors’ lives, more detailed work titles, assessments of the work’s particular usefulness for the tradition, and details of translation processes and teaching histories. Of particular interest are the different names or expressions under which a work or a system is known or listed. In this regard, I would like to refer the reader to the “Index of specialized terminology” at the end of the book. Here one finds an alphabetized list of relevant terms (in English and Tibetan) with entries such as (to give just a few examples):

- abbreviated path (*lam bsdus pa*)
- eight great instruction systems (*bka' srol chen po brgyad*)
- father’s system of explication (*yab kyi bshad srol*)
- four types of requirements (*dgos tshan bzhi*)

<sup>6</sup> This may refer to the time of Ngorchen or Ame Zhab, but nevertheless, these texts (as far as I have been able to determine) still exist today.

- nine profound ways (*zab pa'i tshul dgu*) and
- three continuities (*rgyud gsum*)

Other information that can be gleaned from these sources pertains to details regarding the number and types of deities in an evocation ritual, the works associated with a particular Buddha family, chapter orders and thematic contents, and other details, including evaluations of the work's compatibility with other works and its suitability for persons with particular (high, medium or minimal) faculties. An interesting piece of information, for example, is that according to an oral tradition, Zhiwa Zangpo (Kṛṣṇa Śāntibhadra) thought that it would not be sufficient to merely sign his own name to one of his compositions. He therefore requested to be allowed to put his master's name (Kṛṣṇa Samayavajra) in the colophon, and thus the name was added. <p. 37> On another occasion we learn that Ngorchen ascertained that large parts of a commentary by Kṛṣṇa Samayavajra were copied from one by Ratnākaraśānti. <p. 38> Beyond their immediate relevance for our particular theme, such remarks may help us, of course, to better our understanding of Tibetan attitudes towards authorship and other related matters. I am, of course, not intending to claim here that these examples are unique discoveries. One can, in fact, find similar remarks in many Tibetan works dealing with literary history. These various remarks—pertaining to one particular cycle such as the Hevajra teachings—should nevertheless be gathered from the different related sources; one of the aims of this study is to collect them, at least in part.

Of great interest is also the treatment of the two systems of pith instructions in the NOTES. The first of these is the system that Marpa Lhodragpa received from Nāropa. These instructions were also received by Sachen, but they were already no longer existent within the Sakyapa lineage by Ngorchen's time. Marpa also received (among other things) the basic Hevajra tantra (*brTag pa gnyis pa*) together with the *Vajrapañjaratantra* (*mKha' 'gro ma rdo rje gur*), the uncommon “explanation tantra” (*vyākhyātantra*, *bshad rgyud*) of the Hevajra cycle. The oral tradition of the pith instructions on the Hevajra tantra was later written down by Ngog Chödor and became known as the JEWEL ORNAMENT (*Rin po che'i rgyan*). When, again later, the text was stolen, it had to be reproduced from memory and its reconstructed form was henceforth called LIKENESS OF THE JEWEL ORNAMENT (*Rin po che'i rgyan 'dra*). This tradition, together with a number of other commentaries and rituals, we are informed, “remains unbroken to the present day” and “is a fully complete path.” <pp. 46-48> It is in this context perhaps important to note that neither Ngorchen nor Ame Zhab voice any doubts regarding Marpa's supposed meeting with Nāropa. Doubts over Marpa's meeting with Nāropa as expressed by Dragpa Gyaltzen have been presented by Davidson (2005: 144 f.). His presentation, however, is chiefly based on hearsay in the fourth degree (Davidson presents a letter by Dragpa Gyaltzen, who quotes Nagtso-Lotsāva, who quotes a disciple of Tsangdar Depa Yeshe, who said he received information from Depa Yeshe, who said he heard it from Marpa). Nevertheless, a certain tension between Marpa's and the Sakya system of Hevajra is certainly noticeable in a quote from the beginning of the LIKENESS OF THE JEWEL ORNAMENT, as cited by Ngorchen:

Saroruha, Ming Zang [Zhiwa Zangpo?], Shāntipa, etc., [are known as] great *siddhas* ... but even with their learning [they] do not understand but a part of its [i.e. the Hevajra tantra's] meaning; however, through these pith instructions of the guru [i.e. Marpa], the JEWEL ORNAMENT, the commentaries [of the other systems that are like] the light of the stars and the moon are blackened out. <fn. 121>

Ngorchen mentions another commentary belonging to the Marpa/Ngogpa tradition, namely that by Ram Dingmawa (a former disciple of Dragpa Gyaltzen), which is also quoted by Ngor as saying:

There are three Hevajra explications: (1) The explication that is the darkness [of being] a wrapped head, (2) the explication that mixes milk with water, and (3) the one that is like a wish-fulfilling jewel. The first is the system of the Khönpa Sakyapa father and sons. The second is the system of Gö Khugpa Lhatse, which partly follows Nagpo Damtshig Dorje's and partly Tsokye Dorje's system. The third is this explication of Marpa's system, because it teaches the pith instructions for obtaining the siddhi of mahāmudrā in this life based on this body. <ftn. 122>

According to this quote, the system of the Sakyapas is worthless. But to which specific system does this remark refer? Since it does not refer to Saroruha and Kṛṣṇa Samayavajra's (as these are combined to form the quote's second system), could it refer to Ḍombīheruka's system, i.e. the "system of commentaries" (which did not include the basic text and the pith instructions)? I find this—because of its polemical nature—rather unlikely, because the Kagyüpas accepted many of Ḍombīheruka's tantric teachings. The thrust of the critique might be against the early commentaries of the Sakya Khön family, on which see below. It is interesting to note that the second system is also considered useless because it mixes the two systems, namely those of Saroruha and Kṛṣṇa Samayavajra. This could either mean that one of these two is milk (i.e. rich) and the other water (i.e. useless), or it could mean that the mixing of systems as such is considered a fault. Ngorchen retorts that Marpa only received the pith instructions on the *Vajrapañjara* and the basic Hevajra tantra, but not the commentaries. For the same reason Ame Zhab considers, in one of his Hevajra commentaries, the system of Nāropa, Marpa, and Ngogpa to be inferior. Ame Zhab also points out that Marpa did not receive the common *vyākhyā* tantra, namely the *Saṃpuṭa* (*dPal kha sbyor gyi rgyud*). <ftn. 114> One possible interpretation of a "Sakyapa" and a "Kagyüpa" approach to tantra may therefore be that the Sakyapas consider the Indian commentaries (and the *Saṃpuṭa*) to be of major importance, while the Kagyüpas stress the importance of the pith instructions alone, and in particular advise refraining from mixing these with commentaries or mixing different systems together. This, however, can merely be a very preliminary working hypothesis, especially since it is only based on material within a polemic context. The matter certainly deserves further attention.

The second system of pith instructions is the one transmitted from Virūpa to the "Nagpo of the East" (Kāṇha). This system is considered by the Sakyapa tradition to be the superior one, among other things because it is based on all three Hevajra tantras, i.e. the basic tantra and the two *vyākhyā* tantras (including the *Saṃpuṭatantra*). The *Saṃpuṭatantra* is considered to be of major importance, because it is here that the stage of completion is revealed in detail. The system is also superior because it possesses Jetsün Dragpa Gyaltsen's (fifty-seven) CLEAR REALIZATIONS OF TANTRA (*rGyud kyi mngon par rtogs pa*), which are (according to the NOTES) the "distinctions of the three clear realizations arising from the blending of the intentions of the [above-mentioned] three tantras into one." <p. 49> This assessment reveals the great confidence placed in the founding fathers by the tradition. The CLEAR REALIZATIONS OF TANTRA, which is perhaps the most central work of Tibetan Hevajra exegesis among the Sakyapas, was finished by Dragpa Gyaltsen at the order of Sönam Tsemo, who deemed it necessary because Sachen's *abhisamaya* had not been put into writing, and who himself had started its composition up to a certain point. The work was finally edited by Sapan. A few interesting remarks on it have recently been made by Davidson (2005: 364-367).

A typical feature of both the Hevajra and the Path with Its Fruit cycles of the Sakya tradition is the great number of texts, indispensable for the practice, which have been composed within the tradition and the systematic way in which they have been organized into thematic or practical units. In particular, the Hevajra pith instructions of the Sakya tradition are organized

into “three successive paths” (*lam rim gsum po* <pp. 49-58>) and a combination of these three (*dkrugs su sbyar ba'i lam*), which itself has two parts, namely the “extensive successive path” for the “successive engager” (*gang zag rim gyis pa bkri ba'i lam rgyas pa*) and the “simultaneous path” for the “simultaneous engager” (*gcig car ba bkri ba'i lam bsdus pa* <pp. 59-61>). The first of the three paths, the successive path, is said to endow the studying practitioner with authoritative statements (*lung*) and provides a comprehensive explanation of the path (*lam gyi khog phub*). The second successive path endows him or her with pith instructions (*man ngag*) and teaches the stages of the practice (*lag len gyi rim pa bstan*). The third successive path provides reasoning (*rigs pa*) and cuts off doubts concerning the path (*lam gyi spros pa gcod par byed pa*).

The first successive path that endows one with authoritative statements and provides a comprehensive explanation of the path comprises twenty-eight “common authoritative texts” (*thun mong ba gzhung*). These are works composed by Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, Sönam Tsemo, Dragpa Gyaltsen and Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen that cover a wide range of tantric topics. They provide important citations from the tantras, differentiate the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna paths in terms of ground, path and goal, focus on the above-mentioned “fifty-seven clear realizations,” provide an outline of how tantras should be taught, and contain praises. We also find here five commentaries on the basic tantra (*rtsa rgyud*), four commentaries on the *Vajrapañjaratantra*, and four on the *Saṃputatantra* by these masters. Their remaining works on this section deal with ripening (i.e. initiation, *dbang*), consecration (*rab gnas*), burnt offerings (*sbyin sreg*), tantric feast rituals (*tshogs 'khor*), ritual tools such as vajra, bell, *mālā*, and filling-pouring [ladle] (*dgang blugs*), and include a systematic presentation of basic transgressions (*rtsa ltung*), evocation rituals (*sgrub thabs*), and a work that apparently deals with the establishing of stūpas. The final of these twenty-eight “common authoritative texts” is Dragpa Gyaltsen’s work on the concealed yogic-ascetic practices (*sbas pa'i brtul zhugs*). <pp. 49-56>

The second successive path that endows the practitioner with pith instructions and teaches the stages of the practice comprises the full set of the sixty basic texts that in Tibet from a certain point onwards were categorized into “four authenticities” (*tshad ma bzhi*). It is uncertain whether this terminology was already applied during Ngorchen’s time when the NOTES was first written down. It may simply occur in the NOTES due to Ame Zhab’s editing (probably following Khyentse Wangchuk’s reckoning). The fact that the Hevajra cycle of teachings as transmitted in the Sakya tradition has much in common with the Path with Its Fruit cycle of the same tradition is most apparent in the case of these sixty works, for these works, which are collected in the YELLOW BOOK (*pod ser ma*), are shared almost completely by the two. I will refer to more details on the YELLOW BOOK below, in the context of the Path with Its Fruit teachings.

The “four authenticities” are in general: (1) the “authenticity of the guru” (*bla ma'i tshad ma*), (2) the “authenticity of experience” (*nyams myong tshad ma*), (3) the “authenticity of the treatise” (*bstan bcos tshad ma*), and (4) the “authenticity of basic scriptures” (*lung tshad ma*). The term “four authenticities” (*tshad ma bzhi*) stems from the VAJRA LINES (*rDo rje tshig rkang*), the basic text of the Path with Its Fruit cycle (on which more below). Dragpa Gyaltsen defined “authenticity” in this connection as “a special ascertained knowledge, which after one has produced it, [is such that] others cannot take away one’s conviction.” The “authenticity of the guru” refers to the guru’s pith instructions on the VAJRA LINES. The “authenticity of experience” are writings of the early lineage masters concerning the practices of the path. The “authenticity of the treatise” refers to the VAJRA LINES and the “authenticity of basic scriptures” to the Hevajra tantras.

The texts of the category “authenticity of the guru” are the histories and biographies of the Path with Its Fruit lineage. Here, the example of the guru’s liberation (*rnam thar*) and his status as a member of an authoritative lineage lend him authority; his teachings are authentic. The category “authenticity of experience” comprises the largest number of texts. These works of the early lineage masters explain the path and its aspects from different perspectives. One theme is the so-called “three continua” (*rgyud gsum*), the first of which is the continuum of the universal ground, which is the cause (*kun gzhi rgyu'i rgyud*), and on which the view that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are inseparable is maintained. The continuum of the body, which is the method (*lus thabs kyi rgyud*), is the practice of the path connected with the four initiations. The third continuum is that of the final fruit (*mthar thug 'bras bu'i rgyud*), i.e. mahāmudrā, where the five bodies, namely the qualities of the five gnoses, arise, which are in accordance with the vajrayāna. Stearns has translated the EXPLICATION FOR NYAG that deals in twenty pages (of the translation) with the three continua (2006: 27-47). Other works focus on themes connected with the four initiations, the outer and inner stages of production (*phyi nang gi bskyed rim*), eliminating impediments (*gegs sel*), tantric pledges (Skt. *samaya*, *dam tshig*), the tantric feast (Skt. *gaṇacakra*, *tshogs kyi 'khor lo*), burnt offerings (*sbyin sreg*) or guru yoga. We also find discussions of the relationship between the non-tantric and tantric forms of Buddhist practice, of the integration of mahāyānic structures (such as the five paths and thirteen levels of the bodhisattva literature and the four bodies of a Buddha) into the Path with Its Fruit teachings, and of the twelve acts of the Buddha aligned with moments of yogic experience. This section also contains drawings or diagrams of the channels and syllables in parts of the body such as the vagina (Skt. *bhaga*) and explanations of the postures of the thirty-two exercises (*'khrul 'khor*).

The section of the “authenticity of the treatise” centers on one of the commentaries of the basic text of the Path with Its Fruit cycle, namely the VAJRA LINES, and on the various clarifications and summaries of that commentary. The VAJRA LINES is a recapitulation of the teachings the tradition claims Virūpa received from the goddess Nairātmyā, the consort of Hevajra. It was transmitted orally until the time of Sachen Kūnga Nyingpo, who, according to the tradition, wrote it down in 1141. Drogmi, its translator, had memorized the verses in Sanskrit and passed them on in Tibetan to his disciples. There are altogether eleven commentaries on the basic text, but this section focuses on the EXPLICATION FOR NYAG <p. 91>, a small authoritative text of vast meaning and the last of the eleven commentaries composed, which derives its name from the teacher for whom the work was composed, i.e. Nyag Zhirawa Wangchuk Gyaltzen (12th c.). The section includes twenty-three further clarifications of this work (for which see below, in the general introduction to the Path with Its Fruit teachings).

Finally, the fourth authenticity, namely that of “the basic scriptures,” in general comprises the three Hevajra tantras. In this particular context, however, it comprises four great collections of authoritative statements (*lung sbyar*) from the tantras and one single work, namely the title list of another collection of Path with Its Fruit works, i.e. of the RED BOOK (*pod dmar ma* or *pusti dmar chung*). These writings make up the second successive path that endows the practitioner with pith instructions and teaches the stages of the practice. <pp. 56-58>

The third successive path is described as an expansion of the pith instructions and a clearing away of erroneous notions (*log rtog*). In order to achieve this, the student of this path enters into Sapan’s CLEAR DIFFERENTIATION OF THE THREE VOWS by studying and reflecting on the author’s own interlinear commentary (*rang mchan*), as well as his epistles and replies to questions. <p. 58>



These are the “three successive paths,” which make up one part of the Sakyapa system of pith instructions of Hevajra. The other part consists of a combination of these three, which again has two parts, namely the “extensive successive path” (*lam rgyas pa*) for the “successive engager” (*gang zag rim gyis pa*) and the “abbreviated path” (*lam bsdus pa*) for the “simultaneous engager” (*gang zag gcig car ba*). The “extensive successive path” for the “successive engager” comprises ten works. Seven of these have already been mentioned: most importantly Dragpa Gyaltzen’s CLEAR REALIZATION OF THE TANTRA, Sönam Tsemo’s ENTRANCE GATE TO THE DHARMA (which is one of the four preliminary texts from the “thorough introduction to the scholar’s equipment”), Sapan’s replies to questions (*dris lan*), some instructions on particular themes such as initiation, Dragpa Gyaltzen’s work on the relation between non-tantric and tantric Buddhist practices, <p. 97, no. 1> and, as the last work of the list, the CLEAR DIFFERENTIATION OF THE THREE VOWS. The other three works are clarifications of tantric practices such as mantras and symbols. <p. 59> Finally, the “summarized path” for leading the “simultaneous engager” comprises only five works: three instructions by Sachen and Dragpa Gyaltzen, a text comprising only a single quatrain of verse, which sums up the teachings on many levels, and a profound guru yoga (*bla ma’i rnal ’byor*) by Sakya Pandita. Ultimately, however, even the extensive path can be summarized into three works, namely Dragpa Gyaltzen’s CLEAR REALIZATION OF THE TANTRA and his work on the relation between non-tantric and tantric Buddhist practices, and Sapan’s CLEAR DIFFERENTIATION OF THE THREE VOWS. <pp. 59-61>

The presentation of the Hevajra cycle through the NOTES as outlined above includes only Indian and Tibetan works up to Sakya Pandita. Ame Zhab, however, also received numerous other transmissions of works pertaining to Hevajra, authored by masters both earlier and later than Sapan. These transmissions can be found in his own records of teachings (*thob yig*), in the records collected by him of his masters’ teachings (*gsan yig*), and in passages in several of Ame Zhab’s own works (or works edited by him) on Hevajra that pertain to matters of bibliography and transmission. All these works are described in my *Life, Transmissions, and Works of Ames-zhabs Ngag-dbang-kun-dga’-bsod-nams, the Great 17th Century Sa-skyapa Bibliophile*,<sup>7</sup> which contains, among other things, a detailed catalogue of the Ame Zhab manuscripts that have recently become available. The records of teachings are an important bibliographical and historical source for the study of Tibetan literature in general. Despite its obvious usefulness, this particular genre has not been studied much. I have provided an overview of the genre in general and of Ame Zhab’s and his teachers’ records of teachings in two recent publications, namely in my article “The ‘Records of Teachings Received’ in the Collected Works of Ames Zhabs: An Untapped Source for the Study of Sa skya pa Biographies”<sup>8</sup> and in my above-mentioned book, where I have devoted Chapters Two and Three of Part One (pp. 33-74) to them. Ame Zhab’s and his teachers’ records of teachings mention well over 3,000 (different) titles that belong to all Tibetan Buddhist genres and themes, mostly in a highly systematic form of presentation. Most important in the present context is the fact that these titles are first of all presented within their respective cycles of teachings such as “the *pañcakrama* instructions of Guhyasamāja” or, of course, the “Path with Its Fruit” teachings and the “Cycle of Hevajra.” The records also often add information beyond the bare titles of works. Whatever I could learn

<sup>7</sup> This book appeared as volume 38 of the “Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland” (VOHD), Berlin.

<sup>8</sup> The article appeared in *Tibet, Past and Present*, (Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the IATS, 2000), Brill, Leiden, pp. 161-181.

through them on the Hevajra teachings is contained in the present book in Chapter Two of *Part I*, sections (a) “Further works on Hevajra transmitted within the Path with Its Fruit transmission” and (b) “Still further works on Hevajra transmitted independent of the Path with Its Fruit transmission.” In (a) we find mentioned the works of Mūchen Könchog Gyaltsen (1388-1469), Gorampa Sönam Senge (1429-1489), who were the second and sixth abbots of Ngor, respectively, and of Dzongpa Kūnga Gyaltsen (1382-1446) and Je Dorje Denpa Kūnga Namgyal (1432-1496), both representatives of the Dzong system of Path with Its Fruit teachings, located at the Dzong-chung monastery, the other great center of mantra teachings of the Sakya tradition (to which I will return below, in the context of the Path with Its Fruit teachings). These are ritual works and instructions on practice, plus a clarification of quarrels and an as yet untraceable commentary on the basic tantra. <pp. 63-64>

In the “Still further works on Hevajra transmitted independent of the Path with Its Fruit transmission” section, I mention only those titles that were not already mentioned in the NOTES. Of some importance are the additional notes (*mchan*) on the basic Hevajra tantra by Phagpa Lodrö Gyaltsen, the nephew of Sapan. These notes are to my knowledge at present unavailable, but they are mentioned in a recent title list that gives all the works that exist in the Potala in Lhasa. In the “teachings received” of Ngawang Chödrag, we find eight maṇḍala works identified among Abhayākara Gupta’s *Vajrāvalī* that pertain to the three Hevajra tantras. These writings have survived both in Sanskrit and Tibetan. We furthermore find ritual works (*sādhana*, initiation and maṇḍala) and explanations of these belonging to the four “chariot systems” transmitted within the Sakya tradition, namely those of Ḍombīheruka, Tsokye Dorje, Nagpo Damtshig Dorje, and Nyandrag Zangpo. These works were authored by Sönam Tsemo, Ngorchen Kūnga Zangpo, and Gorampa Sönam Senge. Ngorchen has also composed an important history of the Hevajra tantra (*rgyud kyi byung tshul*) and its lineage gurus (*bla ma’i rnam thar*) and a very useful title list (*dkar chag*) of Hevajra commentaries (*’grel pa*). Another prolific writer has been Sharpa Yeshe Gyaltsen (d. 1406), the disciple of Palden Tsültrim and teacher of Ngorchen. He contributed, among other things, an abbreviated version of Dragpa Gyaltsen’s work on the manner of giving expositions of Hevajra, supplements to Dragpa Gyaltsen’s explication of the basic tantra, and a blending of Dragpa Gyaltsen’s exposition just mentioned and his Hevajra-*abhisamaya* work. The latter work stands in a long tradition of blending these works of Dragpa Gyaltsen that appears to have become a popular practice around the time of Phagpa’s direct disciples. But we also find mention of earlier examples, such as a work by Khangtön Özer Gyaltsen (fl. 13th c.), who is said to have recorded a teaching by Sapan. It is also said that the blending of Dragpa Gyaltsen’s works (and also sometimes additional works) into one was a teaching method started by Sapan. <pp. 64-66>

As mentioned above, an important source for the study of the Hevajra transmission within the Sakyapa tradition are the colophons of Ame Zhab’s own works on Hevajra and those passages within his works that pertain to matters of Hevajra bibliography and transmission. If we draw up a list of the authors of the Hevajra commentaries and pith instructions that he refers to in his colophons as the basis for his own compositions, it looks like this:

- Ngari Salwe Nyingpo (11th c.),
- Jetsün Dragpa Gyaltsen (1147-1216),
- Sakya Pandita Kūnga Gyaltsen (1182-1251),
- Phagpa Lodrö Gyaltsen (1235-1280),
- Mūchen (unspecified),
- Zhalu Lotsāva Chökyong Zangpo (1441-1527),
- Mūchen Sangye Rinchen (1450/53?-1524),

- Lowo Khenchen Sönam Lhündrub (1456-1532),
- Könchog Lhündrub (1497-1557),
- Thartse Nä Namkha Palzang (1532-1602),
- München Sangye Gyaltsen (1542-1618),
- Nag Gönpa Jinpa Dragpa (late 16th to early 17th c.), and
- Ngawang Chökyi Dragpa? (1572-1641).

To this list we could add more than forty further authors of works that Ame Zhab mentions in his own writings on Hevajra, the most important of these being:

- Gyagom Tshultrim Drag (b. 11th c.),
- Khön Gyichuwa Shākya Bar (late 11th to early 12th c.),
- (Minyag) Prajnyā Jāla (b. 12th c.), and
- Nyen Phul Chungpa Tsugtor Gyalpo (12th c.).

Of great interest are the Hevajra commentaries by Ngari Salwe Nyingpo, a direct disciple of Drogmi Lotsāva. Drogmi transmitted Ḍombīheruka's and Kāṇha's Hevajra systems (of commentaries and of pith instructions) to him. <p. 31> His other tantric teacher was Gö Khugpa Lhatse, responsible for the Hevajra transmission according to Nagpopa's (Samayavajra's) system. <p. 36> Salwe Nyingpo enjoys the reputation of being a great expert on Hevajra in the Sakya tradition. He had apparently produced extremely detailed notes on the three Hevajra tantras and his eccentric teacher Drogmi is reported to have confiscated. Yet Salwe Nyingpo again produced notes (*mchan*) for the basic tantra and explanatory notes (*zin bris*) on difficult passages (*dka' sa*), but the guru again demanded that they be removed. This time, however, he at least hid the explanations of the difficult passages of the basic tantra in a felt bag (*phying khug*); these seem to be the notes that later became famous as the "wrapped book." The tradition further reports that at a later time he composed a large and a small word commentary (*tshig 'grel*) on the basic Hevajratantra and notes to all three tantras. <ftn. 176> A detailed word commentary indeed survived and this may be the earliest extant Tibetan Hevajra commentary. Ame Zhab mentions (another?) work, the CLARIFYING LIGHT (*rGyud sde spyi rnam theg pa gsal ba'i sgron me*), describing it as a very detailed scrutinizing of the basic tantra. <p. 67> I am at present uncertain whether these descriptions refer to one and the same work. The notes of the "wrapped book" are, according to Ngorchen, contained in three Hevajra commentaries by the great Sakyapa fathers, namely (1) Sapan Künga Nyingpo's COMMENTARY ON DIFFICULT PASSAGES: CLARIFYING PITH INSTRUCTIONS (*dKa' 'grel man ngag don gsal*), (2) Sönam Tsemo's LIGHT RAYS OF THE SUN (*rNam bshad nyi ma'i 'od zer*) and (3) Jetsün Dragpa Gyaltsen's DETAILED EXPLANATION POSSESSING PURITY (*rNam bshad dag ldan*). Ame Zhab describes these as being for those of supreme intelligence, of medium and higher intelligence, and of inferior understanding, respectively. <pp. 52-53> Ngorchen also mentions that at first Khenchen Gechuwa (i.e. Gyichuwa) Dralha Bar, the disciple of Salwe Nyingpo, extended the notes on the three tantras and composed a commentary on the "wrapped book" (i.e. his COMMENTARY ON DIFFICULT PASSAGES - *bKa' [!] 'grel*), before Sapan, Sönam Tsemo and Dragpa Gyaltsen again slightly extended the notes. <ftn. 226> It is therefore also possible that Salwe Nyingpo's notes on the three tantras were the teaching that later became known as the "wrapped book." However that may be, it is clear that for the Sakyapas, Salwe Nyingpo and his teachings provided the crucial link to the transmission of the two translators Drogmi and Gö.

The two most important Hevajra works by Jetsün Dragpa Gyaltsen are certainly his (fifty-seven) CLEAR REALIZATIONS OF TANTRA: TREE OF JEWELS and the DETAILED EXPLANATION POSSESSING PURITY, containing the notes of the "wrapped book" (both already mentioned above). In his commentary on the basic Hevajra tantra, Ame Zhab mentions Dragpa Gyaltsen's

“three writings *Dag, lJon* and *sPyi*.” Of these, the first two are the above-mentioned works. The “*sPyi*,” however, is actually Sapan’s TOPICAL OUTLINE OF THE GENERAL MEANING (*sTong thun* [= *spyi don*] *sa bca'd*), which comments on Dragpa Gyaltsen’s “four preceding ways through which tantras are explicated.” <p. 51 > These were later also commented upon by Sharpa Yeshe Gyaltsen (d. 1406) and Nag Gönpa Jingpa Drag (16th/17th c.). <pp. 66 and 67>

Phagpa Lodrö Gyaltsen’s notes on the basic Hevajra tantra have still not turned up. I have been told, however, by the present Drigung Chetshang Rinpoche that he saw Phagpa’s notes mentioned in a recent title list of all the works that exist in the Potala in Lhasa. His commentary on the tantra is rather short and is combined in the collected works with another work. Both of them allude in their titles to two works mentioned in the paragraph above, namely to Dragpa Gyaltsen’s (POSSESSING PURITY/*Dag ldan*) and Sapan’s (GENERAL MEANING/*sPyi don*). Another of his works is the easily read condensed CLEAR REALIZATION: SMALL TREE (*mNgon rtogs ljon chung*). <p. 69>

There are also the three early masters of the 11th/12th century, namely Minyag Prajnyā Jāla (disciple of Sapan), Gyagom Tshultrim Drag (disciple of Sönam Tsemo?) and Nyanphul Chungwa Tsugtor Gyalpo (= Sönam Dorje?), whose COMMENTARY ON DIFFICULT PASSAGES (*dKa' 'grel*) writings were considered by Ame Zhab as being “very necessary works for this system” and as “equal to the seven special teachings of the three great Sakyapa masters,” <p. 68> five of which I was able to identify<sup>9</sup> as the following works (which have all been mentioned above in different contexts):

- (1) Sapan Künga Nyingpo’s COMMENTARY ON DIFFICULT PASSAGES: CLARIFYING PITH INSTRUCTIONS (*dKa' 'grel man ngag don gsal*),
- (2) Sönam Tsemo’s LIGHT RAYS OF THE SUN (*Nyi ma'i 'od zer*),
- (3) Jetsün Dragpa Gyaltsen’s DETAILED EXPLANATION POSSESSING PURITY (*rNam bshad dag ldan*),
- (4) Sönam Tsemo’s SYSTEMATIC PRESENTATION OF THE TANTRA SECTION (*rGyud sde spyi'i rnam gzhas*), and
- (5) Jetsün Dragpa Gyaltsen’s CLEAR REALIZATIONS OF TANTRA (*mNgon rtogs ljon shing*).

Finally Ngawang Chökyi Dragpa (1572-1641), the direct disciple of Mangthö Ludrub Gyatso (1523-1596), must be mentioned. He is referred to as the person on whose teachings and writings Ame Zhab based his own extensive notes on the three Hevajra tantras (see bibliography: *A-mes-zhabs' "Three Tantras"*). Unfortunately, however, the colophon does not mention any details and it remains uncertain which of Ngawang Chödrag’s works (whose title list is documented in *Appendix IIj*) was used as the basis for Ame Zhab’s composition.

Ame Zhab also provides some interesting observations on the VAJRA TENT TANTRA (*Dākinī-Vajrapañjara*) and on the *Saṃpuṭatantra* and their commentaries. The VAJRA TENT TANTRA is the “uncommon *vyākhyātantra*” (*bshad rgyud thun mong ma yin pa*), i.e. one that is not shared with other tantras, while the *Saṃpuṭatantra* is the common *vyākhyātantra* and thus shared with the Cakrasaṃvara (and other) cycles. <p. 29 f.> As already mentioned above, the *Saṃpuṭatantra* is considered to be of major importance, because it is here that the stage of completion is revealed in detail. The commentary on the VAJRA TENT TANTRA by Lhai Rigkyi Lodrö, a COMMENTARY ON DIFFICULT PASSAGES, is in accordance with the system of Slob-dpon Shāntipa (i.e. Ratnākaraśānti). But since Ngorchén has not stressed that commentary, it may be neglected, says Ame Zhab. Nevertheless, except for a small part of its introduction (*gleng gzhi*), it accords with the Sakyapa system. In addition, there were also what appear to be

<sup>9</sup> The quote from which I was able to identify them is unfortunately interrupted.

two commentaries by Indrabhūti and “the lesser Nagpo” (Kṛṣṇapāda), but already Ngorchen noted that they are merely different translations of the same Indian work. Although he makes no indication of the actual author, he nevertheless states that the text was of considerable interest to Sapan and his sons. <p. 75> Accordingly, Ame Zhab states that Dragpa Gyaltsen composed his VAJRA TENT TANTRA ORNAMENT (*Gur gyi rgyan*, see below) “on the basis of the lesser Nagpo’s commentary,” and thereby indicates that he holds Kṛṣṇapāda to be the author of the controversial commentary. As mentioned above, the VAJRA TENT TANTRA reveals the stage of production in great detail. Accordingly, Mithub Dawa (Durjayacandra) based his six-limbed *sādhana*, which is supposedly “for those with highest faculties,” on a model found in the fourth chapter. <fn. 33> Maṇḍalas of the VAJRA TENT TANTRA were transmitted by Abhayākaragupta in his *Vajrāvalī*, namely one with fifteen deities and a *Vajratārā-maṇḍala*. <p. 65>

In Tibet, a number of related works were composed by the early Sakyapas. Sapan Kūnga Nyingpo provided a short list (*tho yig*) concerning the VAJRA TENT TANTRA <fn. 211> and a very abbreviated outline (*chings*). <p. 53> His disciple (Minyag) Prajnyā Jāla is supposed to have composed an explanation of difficult passages. Likewise Sönam Tsemo is said to have composed a commentary “up to the fifth chapter” (*rtse mo ’i le’u lnga pa yan gyi ’grel pa*), but I have not been able to find any trace of it. Finally, Dragpa Gyaltsen contributed three compositions: One full commentary, i.e. the VAJRA TENT TANTRA ORNAMENT, together with its abbreviation and detailed interlinear notes. <fn. 211 and 142>

In regard to the *Samputa*, three Indian commentaries are mentioned, namely the ones by Indrabhūti, Abhayākaragupta and Nyime Dorje (Advayavajra?). They are, however, written only partly in accordance with the Sakyapa system. Furthermore, the one by Indrabhūti is “very unrefined” (*shin tu gyong pa*) and thus “cannot be taught today.” <p. 76> Abhayākaragupta’s commentary only played a role among later Sakyapas (ca. from the 14th century onwards). I could not locate a commentary by Nyime Dorje. Among the “eight minor commentaries connected with Drogmi,” we find a commentary that is ascribed to Nagpo, but that might be a mistake, for such a commentary is otherwise ascribed to Pawo Dorje (Vīravajra), who was, according to the Sakyapas, Prajñendraruci, Drogmi’s collaborator on many occasions. Ame Zhab, however, drawing on notes to Ngorchen’s teachings, suggests that this is really Zangkar Lotsāva, since the latter’s secret name (*gsang mtshan*) may also have been “Pawo Dorje.” <p. 76>

The early Sakyapas also contributed a few works. Ngari Salwe Nyingpo, Sachen and Sapan are all said to have provided interlinear notes. In addition, Sapan composed explanations (*rnam bshad*) <fn. 215> and Sönam Tsemo, in 1175, his extensive CLARIFICATION OF VITAL POINTS (*gNad kyi gsal byed*), the final part of which was somewhat supplemented by Dragpa Gyaltsen, and also made its topical outline (*bsdus don*), which was edited by Dragpa Gyaltsen. <p. 53>