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A Text-Historical Note on *Hevajratantra* II:v:1–2

by Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp

It has been some twenty-four years since D. Snellgrove published his editions and translation of the *Hevajratantra*.¹ Since its appearance, little has been written on this tantra and its associated literature. What follows is but a footnote to his translation and editions of the *Hevajratantra* II:v:1–2, which in its Sanskrit, Tibetan, and English versions reads:

atha vajrī mahārāja Hevajrah sarvadaḥ prabhuh // (1)
sarvākārasvabhāvātmā maṇḍalam samprakāśayet //
sukhāvatyām samāsīnaḥ sarvākārasvarūpataḥ //
cittavajrasya bījena niṣpanno maṇḍaleśvaraḥ // (2)

de nas rgyal po rdo rje 'dzin //
gtso bo kye rdor kun sbyin pas //
rnam kun rang bzhin bdag nyid kyi //
dkyil 'khor dag ni yang dag gsungs // (1)

rnam pa thams cad rang bzhin gyis //
bde ba can na yang dag bzhugs //
thugs kyi rdo rje sa bon gyis //
rang gi dkyil 'khor bskyed pa ste // (2)

And now the Adamantine One, the mighty King and Lord Hevajra, the giver of all things and the substance of all forms, discourses on the *maṇḍala*.

He reposes there in bliss as the essence of all forms, for he is Lord of the *Maṇḍala* and has emanated from the seed of the Vajra of Mind.

In his edition of the Tibetan of these two verses, Snellgrove has noted that both “are omitted in the Narthang edition.” Since he has also used the Beijing print of the revised translation of the *Hevajratantra* by ’Gos Lo-tśā-ba-Gzhon-nu-dpal (1392-1481), the inclusion of these verses in this print of the Bka’-’gyur suggests that these constituted one of his revisions of the earlier translation by Gayadhara and ’Brog-mi Lo-tśā-ba Śākya-ye-shes (993-1050).² The palmleaf manuscript of Kāṇha’s *Yogaratnamālā*, a commentary on the *Hevajratantra* and edited by Snellgrove, also omits these two verses.³

The first indication of the existence of these two verses in certain manuscript traditions of the Sanskrit version of the *Hevajratantra* was given by the great Sa-skyapa scholar and practitioner Ngor-chen Kun-dga’ bzang-po (1382-1456). The author of a number of major works relating to this tantra,⁴ Ngor-chen had apparently found three Sanskrit manuscripts (*rgya-dpe*)—presumably in Sa-skya monastery—which contained these verses. A transcription of the Sanskrit text, its translation by Ngor-chen, and a few additional notes are found in the Sde-dge print of his collected works under the title of *A Translation of the Second Chapter of the Fundamental Tantra*.⁵ The Sanskrit text given by Ngor-chen differs only slightly from the above edition by Snellgrove:

Verse 1: *hevajra* for *hevajrah*, *-ātma* for *-ātmā*, *-prakāśaye* for *-prakāśayet*.

Verse 2: *sukhāvatyam* for *sukhāvatyām*.

The text has a space, occupied by a dotted line, between *hevajra* and *prabhuh* which could suggest a purposive editorial correction of a miscut which had included the *visarga*. To be sure, these variants are unproblematic.

More interesting, however, is the Tibetan translation of these verses given by Ngor-chen:

de nas rgyal chen rdo rje 'dzin //
kun stsol khyab bdag kye rdo rje //
rnam pa kun gyi rang bzhin bdag //
dkyil 'khor yang dag rab gsal ba // (1)

mi mnyam pa yi bde ba can //
nam pa kun gyi rang bzhin las //
thugs kyi rdo rje'i sa bon gyis //
phun sum tshogs pa'i dkyil 'khor dbang // (2)

The translations of the first verse by Ngor-chen and 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba show only minor differences. 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba evidently preferred to underscore the subject of discourse by introducing the instrumental particle (*kun-sbyin*)-*pas*, whereas the Sanskrit (all in the nominative case-ending) and Ngor-chen's translation (no case-ending, hence nominative) have nothing to this effect. Furthermore, Ngor-chen's rendition of *samprakāśaye(t)* by *yang-dag rab-gsal-ba* is perhaps semantically preferable to 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba's *yang-dag gsungs*. *Maṇḍalam* is translated by the latter as *dykil-'khor-dag (ni)*, which is yet another instance of the peculiar function of the particle *dag*, so lucidly analysed by M. Hahn.⁶ Snellgrove's translation of this verse stands to be corrected on a few points:

And now, the Adamantine One, the mighty King, Hevajra, the giver of all, the Lord, may (he) he clarify the *maṇḍala* (having) the nature of the essence of all forms.

Ngor-chen's translation of the second verse is somewhat more problematic, and so is the one by 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba. The first *pāda*, *sukhāvatyā(a)m samāsīnaḥ* is rendered by Ngor-chen as *mi-mnyam-pa-yi bde-ba-can!*, and 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba transposed the first and second *pāda*-s. The latter translated *-svarūpataḥ* with an instrumental *-gyis*, rather than the correct ablative *-las*. *Maṇḍaleśvaraḥ* is wrongly rendered by 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba as *rang-gi dkyil-'khor*, "his own *maṇḍala*," whereas Ngor-chen correctly has *dykil-'khor dbang*, "the lord of the *maṇḍala*." Again, Snellgrove's translation of this verse needs to be somewhat amended:

Reposing in *Sukhāvati*, (he is) the lord of the *maṇḍala*, perfected (or: generated) by the seed of the adamant mind from the essence of all forms.

These two verses are conceptually harmless for the intent of

Hevajratantra II:v, but the evidence suggests that they are later inserts. All of Snellgrove's manuscripts of the Sanskrit version of the *Hevajratantra* apparently contained them, even the fifteenth century one from "the private library of Kaisher Shamsheer in Kathmandu." It would appear, though, that in view of their absence in the early Sanskrit commentarial literature, they were probably added to the fifth chapter during the thirteenth or fourteenth century. The fact that all of Snellgrove's manuscript sources of the *Hevajratantra* contain these would seem to indicate that his texts all go back to this particular version. None of the early Sa-skyapa commentaries on this tantra, including the one by Bla-ma dam-pa Bsod-nams rgyal-mtshan (1312-1375) comment on these verses, although they do on occasion refer to different Sanskrit manuscripts *rgya-dpe*.

Ngor-chen's discovery was either not known to his immediate contemporaries, or was simply ignored by them due to the prevailing strained relations. Thus, these verses were not commented upon by Mkhas-grub Dge-legs dpal-bzang-po (1375-1438)⁷ or Bo-dong Pañ-chen Phyogs-las rnam-rgyal (1376-1445).⁸ At the same time, however, it appears that perhaps Ngor-chen himself realised their questionable authenticity, for he explicitly stated that the translations of the *Hevajratantra* by 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba Khug-pa Lhas-btsas (11th cent.), G.yi-jo Lo-tsā-ba, and Shong Lo-tsā-ba also did not include them. While the available evidence strongly suggests that Ngor-chen was the first to have drawn attention to these two verses, it remains difficult to explain why 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba Gzhon-nu-dpal failed to credit him with this discovery and why he obviously chose to translate them anew. Possibly, the answer should be sought in the fact that he might not have been very satisfied with Ngor-chen's rendition although, as was shown, his own translation is also far from unproblematic. On the other hand, the possibility should also not be ruled out that his was an independent discovery. Certainty regarding this matter may perhaps be gained when his biography is recovered from its place of concealment.

The *Hevajratantra* II:v:1-2 was also noticed by the anonymous study of the different readings found in the various Bka'-gyur-s, which was completed in 1918.⁹ In this important work, it is pointed out that, while absent in the Snar-thang print, it is found in the prints of the Uрга (Khu-ri) and Co-ne Bka'-gyur-s.

The latter also hold for those of the Beijing, Sde-dge, and Lhasa Bka'-gyur-s as well.¹⁰

Appendix:

Note: References to Ngor-chen's and Go-rams-pa Bsod-nams seng-ge's (1429-1489) writings are found in Vol. 9 and Vol. 15 (1969) of the series of Sa-skyapa texts mentioned in note 5.

Ngor-chen

1. *Rgyud-kyi rgyal-po dpal kyai-rdo-rje'i byung-tshul dang brgyud-pa'i bla-ma dam-pa-rnams-kyi rnam-par thar-pa ngo-mtshar rgya-mtsho*, pp. 278 ff.

Written in the first half of 1405. The bulk of this text deals with the origins of *vajrayāna* and the different recensions of the text of the *Hevajatantra*. The biographies (*rnam-thar*) of the "lineage lamas" more often than not merely consists of the mention of their names.

2. *Rgyud-gsum gnod-'joms / de'i 'grel-pa*, pp. 155 ff.

The commentary was written towards the middle of the second half of 1406. It is a polemical text against Ratnākaraśānti and his Tibetan followers, who maintained that the *Hevajatantra* was mentalistic (*sems-tsam-pa*) in philosophical persuasion. These Tibetan followers included Red-mda'-ba Gzhon-nu blo-gros (1348/49-1412) and Bo-dong Paṅ-chen.

3. *Dpal kyai-rdo-rje'i sgrub-thabs-kyi rgya-cher bshad-pa bskyed-rim gnad-kyi zla-zer*, pp. 173 ff.

Written around the middle of 1419. This work consists of a detailed exposition of the *Hevajra* "means of evocation" (*sādhana*), and is frequently polemical. Go-rams-pa wrote a lengthy treatise on the same problematic entitled the *Dpal kyai-rdo-rje'i sgrub pa'i-thabs-kyi rgya-cher bshad-pa bskyed-rim gnad-kyi zla-zer-la rtsod-pa spong-ba gnad-kyi gsal-byed*, pp. 282 ff. The latter is a series of replies to Mkhas-grub-rje's and Bo-dong Paṅ-chen's (Nyi-zer Mkhan-po) objections to Ngor-chen's text. Among the latest Sa-skyapa texts dealing with the issues connected with the generation of the deity in visualisation (*bskyed-rim*) is 'Jam-mgon A-myes-zhabs Ngag-dbang kun-dga' bsod-nams' (1597-1659/62) *Dpal kyai rdo-rje'i phyi-nang-gi bskyed-rim-gyi rnam-par*

bshad-pa dge-legs nor-bu'i phreng-ba gsang-sngags mdzes-rgyan, Bir, 1979, pp. 231.

4. *Dpal kyai-rdo-rje'i lus-kyi dkyil-'khor-la rtsod-pa spong-ba smra-ba ngan-'joms* pp. 135 ff. *lta-ba ngan-sel*, pp. 144 ff.

Written during the first half of 1426, these are two prints of the same text, with some interesting variant readings. It is a polemical work dealing with the *maṇḍala* of Hevajra, conceived as a reply to and criticism of Mkhas-grub-rje's aside on the same in his *Rgyud thams-cad-kyi rgyal-po dpal-gsang-ba 'dus-pa'i bskyed-rim dngos-grub rgya-mtsho*, *Collected Works of Mkhas-grub-rje*, Lha-sa Zhol print, Vol. Ja, Dharamsala, 1981, pp. 254 ff. The latter wrote a reply to Ngor-chen's work which, in the later literature, is usually referred to as the *Ngor-lan* but whose actual title is the *Phyin-ci-log-gi gnam-gyi sbyor-ba-la zhugs-pa'i smra-ba ngan-pa rnam-par 'thag-pa'i bstan-bcos gnam-lcags 'khor-lo*, *Collected Works of Mkhas-grub-rje*, Lha-sa Zhol print, Vol. Kha, Dharamsala, 1981, pp. 1 ff.

NOTES

1. See D.L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajratāntra*, Parts I and II, London Oriental Series. Volume 6, London: Oxford University Press, 1959.

2. As a rule of thumb, the interdependency of the Snar-thang and Beijing prints of the Buddhist canons can generally be assumed in such cases where subsequent revisions were not included in the former. D.S. Ruegg has, however, cogently argued for the necessity of consulting all the prints of the different Tibetan canons in his "The Study of Tibetan Philosophy and its Indian Sources. Notes on its History and Methods," *Proceedings of the Csoma de Kőrös Memorial Symposium* (held at Mátrafüred, Hungary, 24-30 September, 1976), ed. L. Ligeti, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica XXIII*, Budapest, 1978, pp. 377-391. His study should be extended to the Bka'-gyur.

3. These verses are also not met with in the palm-leaf manuscripts of the *Hevajratāntraṭīkā* (Vairocana, incompl., 59 fols), and the *Hevajrapañjikā* (Sarorucha, incompl., 25 fols.), and the *Hevajrapañjikā* (Kamalanāth, compl., 23 fols.), which were filmed by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (respectively, reel nos. C14/6, E260/2, and C26/4). I should like to thank my colleague at the NGMPP, Mr. Jayarāj Ācārya, for checking these out for me.

4. For a brief listing of these see the Appendix.

5. See his *Rtsa-rgyud brtag-gnyis-kyi-'gyur*, in *The Complete Works of the Great Masters of the Sa-skya Sect of the [sic] Tibetan Buddhism*, Vol. 9. *The Complete*

Works of Ngor-chen Kun-dga' bzang-po, comp. Bsod-nams rgya-mtso, Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1968, no. 57, p. 282/3/3–6. In the colophon, Ngor-chen is styled “*vibutpata'i lo-tsā-ba*”. I think that the *vibutpata* is a corruption of *vibuddha*, which renders this expression intelligible: “the wise translator.”

6. See his “On the Function and Origin of the Particle *Dag*,” in *Tibetan Studies*, eds. P. Kvaerne and M. Brauen, Zürich, 1978, pp. 137-147. My friend Christoph Cüppers has drawn my attention to the fact that such a use of *dag* is also often met with in the Tibetan translation of the *Samādhirājasūtra*; see for instance his soon-to-be published critical edition of the *Samādhirājasūtra* IX:4a, 5a, 8a, etc.

7. See his *Dpal brtag-pa gnyis-pa'i rnam-par bshad-pa rdo-rje mkha'-gro-ma rnams-kyi gsang-ba'i-mdzod*, *Collected Works of Mkhas-grub-rje*, Lha-sa Zhol print, Vol. Ja, Dharamsala, 1981, pp. 912 ff. The colophon of this work says nothing about its date of composition.

8. See his *Brtag-pa phyi-ma'i-rgyud bshad* in *Encyclopedia Tibetica. The Collected Works of Bo-dong Pañ-chen Phyogs-las rnam-rgyal*, Vol. 106, New Delhi: The Tibet House, 1973, pp. 315 ff.

9. See the *Rgyal-ba'i bka'-gyur rin-po-che'i 'bri-klog dang 'chad nan-byed mkhan-rnams-la nye-bar mkho-ba'i yi-ge gzhan-phan rnam-dag-gi gsal-byed me-long*, New Delhi: The Tibet House, 1982, pp. 332–333.

10. The blocks of the Snar-thang Bka'-gyur at Shel-dkar Mi-gyur rdo-rje Rdzong, however, do contain 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba's revised translation of the *Hevajratantra*; see the *Bka'-gyur rin-po-che'i mtshan-tho* published as *Catalogue of the Narthang Kanjur*, New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1983, p. 235. These blocks presumably were those of the revised Snar-thang Bka'-gyur of the 1730's. Ngor-chen's catalogue of the Bka'-gyur at Glo-bo Smon-thang (Mustang, Nepal) which he completed in December of 1447, does not contain 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba's revised version either. They are, however, found in the Li-thang Kanjur, *Rgyud-'bum* vol. ka, fols. 258b-259a, which I filmed and catalogued under a generous grant from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.