

**The Serpent-like *dbyangs-yig* of the Sa-skyapa: the sought-after link between Sa-skyapa musical notations and the *Rol-mo'i bstan-bcos* by Sa-skyapa Pandita**

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During my field research in Nepal, I was lucky to locate the only lineage-holder of the *Rol-mo'i bstan-bcos* by Sa-skyapa Pandita. The drawing manual, supplied by him serves as the missing link between the chant categories defined in the *Rol-mo'i bstan-bcos* by Sa-skyapa Pandita and the chant manual for the Vajrakila ritual. The chant categories of the *Rol-mo'i bstan-bcos* are known and practiced in ritual performances today. The Vajrakila ritual has not only the most ornate musical notations within the Sa-skyapa schools but it also bears all the characteristics of the so-called “snake” notation as mentioned by several *dbu-mdzads*.

One of the three musical instruments mentioned in the chant categories of the Vajrakila *dbyangs-yig* is of Indian and two are of Bon-po origin. These might also reflect upon the background of *dbyangs*, and at the same time give us a better understanding about the time of their composition: