

traditions – and not in the Indian or East Asian Mahayana ones – perhaps because Haribhadra, the author of its main commentary, was a disciple of the mid-eighth century Indian master Shantarakshita. Shantarakshita was the first Indian master to visit Tibet.”

He stayed with his first teacher, until he went to central Tibet at the age of 16. There he had as teacher the head of the Drikung Kargyu monastery, the Lama Chennga Choekyi Gyalpo, from whom he received instruction in *bodhicitta* (the selfless spirit) and *mahamudra* (Great Seal). In this monastery he was also inaugurated in the main medical treatises by the famous doctor Konchog Kyab and his fame began spreading already.

At age of 17, he went to the Choedra Chenpo Dewachen monastery in Nyetang. There he studied with Tashi Senghi, Densapa Gekong and Yonten Gyatso. It was the last one, who taught him how to study the great treatises and helped him with the *Ornament for Realisations*. Of this work both the basic text and the commentaries he had learned by heart and he understood them, within 18 days. Also the *Prajña Pāramitā* (perfection of wisdom), he made effortlessly his own within the shortest times. At the age of 19 he was considered as a great scholar, both by his teachers as by his fellow students.

Therefore he began to travel around in the U-tsang province in central Tibet to have debates in several monasteries, such as those of Samye, Zhalu, Sazang, Tzechen and Sakhya, where he got extensive instructions and a number of initiations. In Sakhya he did the exams in the *Prajña Pāramitā*. In Tzechen he met the revered Sakhya Lama, Rendawa Shönu Lodro, who had a special method in the teaching of the *Treasury of Knowledge* and who he would be regarding as his most important teacher. The two developed a mutual teacher-pupil relation. Rewanda taught him the *Madhyamika* philosophy of the Way of the Middle. He also received instruction by Chandrakirti on the *Entrance to the Road of the Middle*.

He returned to Lasha via Nyetang and became apprentice to the Abbot Kazhiwa Losal, a great scholar in *Vinaya*, Monastic Discipline. Under his direction, he studied the basic texts of the *Discipline* and of the *Treasury of Knowledge* with the many associated comments. He could handle more than forty pages of text per day, learn them by heart and understand them. He knew more than twenty thousand verses of the *Prajña Pāramitā* by heart. While