

*Sahajavajra's integration of Tantra into mainstream Buddhism: An analysis of his **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* and **Sthitisamāsa*

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During the final phase of Buddhism in India, monastic communities started to integrate more readily elements of Tantric Buddhism from the milieu of the great Siddhas.¹ While the philosophy of the methods of perfection (Pāramitānaya), i.e., non-Tantric Mahāyāna, could be easily brought in line with the methods of *mantras* (Mantranaya),² certain elements of the latter, such as sexual *yoga* during empowerment (*abhiṣeka*)³ and subsequent practices, remained problematic in mainstream Buddhism that continued to be dominated by monasticism. However, since empowerment was an important requirement for the Tantric path, though, ordained practitioners faced the conflict of either strictly following the monastic rules or practising the new powerful and effective techniques.

Such must have been the situation in a typical Buddhist community when Maitrīpa (986–1063 CE)⁴ interrupted his career as a monk-scholar at

¹ In other words, great accomplished adepts. The term **mahāsiddha* refers to any one of a group of Indian Tantric masters. Many of these were historical figures. See BUSWELL & LOPEZ 2014: 508–509.

² In his *Tattvaratnāvalī*, Maitrīpa includes Tantra within mainstream Mahāyāna by dividing the latter into non-Tantric Mahāyāna, which he calls Pāramitānaya, and Tantric Mahāyāna, which he calls Mantranaya. See TRĀ 342_{9–10} and MATHES 2015: 59.

³ Lit. “anointment,” a term originally used to refer to the anointment of a king. By extension it was applied to the anointment of a Bodhisattva as a Buddha (see BUSWELL & LOPEZ 2014: 12). In Mantranaya, an *abhiṣeka* refers to a ritual that allows the adept to employ Tantric means of practice, such as visualising himself as a deity, reciting its magical formula (*mantra*), or generating exemplifying bliss in sexual *yoga* (see MATHES 2015: 10–14).

⁴ ROERICH (1949–53: 842) settled on 1007/10–1084/1087, while TATZ (1994: 65) suggested ca. 1007 – ca. 1085. ROBERTS (2014: 4 and 212, n. 8) rightly points out, however, that ‘Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal’s (1392–1481) Tibetan historical sur-

Vikramapura Monastery⁵ to search out the great Siddha Śavaripa. Having received empowerment and “great seal” (*mahāmudrā*)⁶ teachings from him, Maitrīpa returned to the academic milieu and started composing several texts that embed *mahāmudrā* in his favoured Madhyamaka philosophy of non-abiding (*apratiṣṭhāna*).⁷ The Sanskrit term *apratiṣṭhāna* also means “non-foundation,” which conveys the idea that there is no foundation in anything whatsoever by which the latter can be reified in any conceivable way. Maitrīpa’s student Rāmapāla equates *apratiṣṭhāna* with mental non-engagement (*amanasikāra*),⁸ a term that Maitrīpa also interprets as luminous self-empowerment.⁹ This means that the practitioner not only refrains from projecting mistaken notions (such as an independent existence or characteristic signs) onto anything arisen in dependence, whether *skandhas*, *dhātus*, or *āyatanas*,¹⁰ but also realises the luminous nature of mind. With such a fine blend of *mahāmudrā* and Madhyamaka, Maitrīpa and his disciples considerably contributed to integrating the new teachings and practices of the great Siddha into mainstream Buddhism.

A key role in this process is played by the *Tattvadaśaka*, or “Ten Verses on True Reality,” a text in which Maitrīpa combines an analytic Madhyamaka path of excluding what true reality is not (via negationis) with a direct approach of experiencing true reality as luminosity (via emi-

vey, called the *Blue Annals* (Tib. *Deb ther sngon po*), does not give any precise information on the specific elements attributed to the year, and that according to the life stories of Maitrīpa’s disciples their master must have passed away already before Vajrapāṇi reached Nepal in 1066. See also MATHES 2015: 1.

⁵ According to some Tibetan sources (the biography in the ‘*Bri gung bka’* *brgyud chos mdzod*, Dpa’ bo Gtsug lag phreng ba’s *Chos byung mkhas pa pa’i dga’ ston* and the one in the Tucci Tibetan fund (ms 1095) being an exception), Maitrīpa did not leave Vikramapura but was expelled from Vikramalaśīla for being involved with alcohol and women (BRUNNHÖLZL 2007: 511).

⁶ In its Tantric context, *mahāmudrā* stands for the fruition of the path, but for *Sahajavajra the term is also used to qualify pith instructions and the true reality they reveal. See MATHES 2015: 229.

⁷ Later known as the collection of texts on non-conceptual realisation (*amanasikāra*). For an edition and translation of this corpus, see MATHES 2015.

⁸ This is very clear from the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* of Rāmapāla (one of the four main disciples of Maitrīpa), who glosses *apratiṣṭhāna* as “not to become mentally engaged” and “not to superimpose.” See *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* on SN 29 (SNP 192₆): *apratiṣṭhānam amanasikāro ’nāropah*.

⁹ This will be further explained below. See also MATHES 2015: 20 and 247.

¹⁰ SNP 192₅₋₆: *sarvasminn iti pratītyasamutpannaskandhadhātuvāyatanādaū...*

nentiae).¹¹ In his commentary on verse 8 of the *Tattvadaśaka* (i.e., the **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā*), Maitrīpa's disciple *Sahajavajra explains the via eminentiae in terms of a *mahāmudrā* practice that differs from the usual Tantric *mahāmudrā*. It seems to fall in between the distinction of Mahāyāna into Pāramitānaya and Mantranaya, since it takes the *Tattvadaśaka* as Pāramitānaya pith instructions that accord with, or follow,¹² Mantranaya.¹³ To be sure, this kind of *mahāmudrā* path is beyond the pride of being a deity (*lha'i nga rgyal*) and the sequence of the four seals, i.e., the generation and completion stages of formal Tantric practice.¹⁴ It could be argued that we have here an Indian predecessor of what came to be known in Tibet as *mdo lugs phyag chen*, i.e., “*sūtra*-style *mahāmudrā*.”¹⁵ The implication of **sūtra-mahāmudrā* is that the advanced practices of the great Siddhas are possible even without formal Tantric empowerment. In Tibetan Buddhism, there were of course also other strategies of adopting the empow-

¹¹ MATHES 2006: 209–212.

¹² Tib. *rjes su mthun par*. Unfortunately, the Indian original of the **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* has not come down to us, but in Maitrīpa's *Mahāyānaviṃśikā*, verse 4 (in which the term is used in a similar context) we find the Sanskrit equivalent *anusāreṇa*. (MATHES 2015: 451).

¹³ TDT (B 1b4–2a₂, D 161a2, P 176a₄₋₅): “Having presented in detail the stages of penetrating the meaning of non-abiding in accordance with Pramāṇa, Madhyamaka and authoritative scriptures (*āgama*), [Maitrīpa] wished to compose brief Pāramitā[naya] pith instructions which accord with the tradition of the secret Mantra[naya]...” (*tshad ma dang | dbu ma dang | lung* ^(a)*rnams gis 'dir rab tu mi gnas pa'i*^(a) *don la 'jug pa'i rim pa rgyas par* ^(b)*bstan nas*^(b) ^(c)*gsang ngags kyi tshul dang*^(c) *rjes su mthun*^(d) *pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa'i*^(e) *man ngag mdor bsdu*^(f) *pa byed par 'dod pas*^(f) | ... ^aB *bzhin* ^bD *nyid de bzhin nyid* ^cP *du* ^dP *om*. ^eD *brlabs* ^fBD *ba'i*). First quoted and translated in MATHES 2015: 215.

¹⁴ The pride of being a deity, often referred to as *vajra* pride in the secondary literature, is an important element in the generation stage of Tantric practice, during which the adept not only generates himself as a deity but is also proud of that. The four seals are the *karmamudrā*, *dharmamudrā*, *mahāmudrā*, and *saṃayamudrā*. Their sequence describes the completion stage in the Yoginī Tantras. *mahāmudrā* corresponds here to the level of the fruit, and *dharmamudrā* to the ultimate (i.e., *dharmadhātu*, or the like), which is meditated upon or cultivated on the path. This path is fully in accordance with Pāramitānaya but can be effectively initiated with the help of a *karmamudrā*, which involves sexual union with an actual woman in order to identify the goal of co-emergent joy. The *saṃayamudrā* is the display of Tantric form *kāyas* for the sake of others as a result of having attained *mahāmudrā* (see MATHES 2009: 89).

¹⁵ MATHES 2006: 201–203.

erment ritual to a monastic environment, such as substituting the critical parts with less-offensive ritual elements,¹⁶ but **sūtra-mahāmudrā* offers a more elegant solution to this problem and also helps to legitimise the substitution in the case a formal empowerment is still preferred.

However, a third approach beyond the methods of *pāramitā* and *mantra* is absent in the only other known work by **Sahajavajra*, the **Sthitisamāsa*. The possible explanation proposed in this paper is that Pāramitānaya pith instructions that accord with Mantranaya become part of the Mantranaya. It will be further argued that **sūtra-mahāmudrā* does not mean that *mahāmudrā* becomes “Sūtric,” but that *sūtra* passages that support pith instructions become Tantric. This “upgrade” of *sūtra* passages must also be seen in the wider context of integrating the new *mahāmudrā* teachings into mainstream Buddhism by showing that they are in line with the view, conduct, and practice of traditional Mahāyāna. In the process, Tantric terms were explained in a broader Mahāyāna context with the purpose of demonstrating that their meaning was already latent in more traditional forms of Buddhism. By showing that *mahāmudrā* is compatible with more traditional presentations of view and meditation, such as *apraṭiṣṭhāna* and *amanasikāra* (see below), it must have been easier for Maitrīpa to propagate the teachings of his *guru* Śavaripa among the communities of the big monastic universities in Northern India. Once the bridge between *mahāmudrā* and *amanasikāra* had been built, it was possible to traverse it in both directions.

To what extent this was in fact intended by Maitrīpa is another question. In Tibet, however, sGam po pa (1079–1153) and the Dwags po bKa’ brgyud lineages profited from this bridge by giving *mahāmudrā* teachings without Tantric empowerments on the basis of calm abiding and deep insight. The possibility of such a **sūtra-mahāmudrā* was already indicated in Jñānakīrti’s *Tattvāvatāra* and (probably in dependence on that) in **Sahajavajra*’s **Tattvadaśakaṭikā*. Later bKa’ brgyud masters, such as ’Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal (1392–1481) and Dwags po bKra shis nram rgyal (1511–1587), discerned in these Indian masters’ writings a doctrinal foundation for their *mahāmudrā* approach of combining Tantric and Sūtric methods into a single system of liberation.

¹⁶ The *guhyābhiṣeka* is thus conferred by bestowing the adept a drop of alcohol from a skull (*kapāla*) instead of the sexual fluids from the *guru* and his consort; and the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka* is performed by showing the adept a small drawing (Tib. *tsak li*) with a Tantric couple, and not the adept’s union with an actual consort.

In his *Ratnagotravibhāgavyākhyā* commentary, gZhon nu dpal thus claims, on the basis of the *Tattvadaśaka* and its *ṭīkā*, that what Maitrīpa called *mahāmudrā* is a Pāramitānaya path that accords with the secret Mantranaya (see below). The way in which the Pāramitānaya would accord with the Mantranaya is evident in gZhon nu dpal's description of how those who rely on pith instructions take refuge by seeing their *guru* as the Buddha:

Those who rely on pith instructions must be certain about [their] refuge in the Three Jewels. For this reason, they have to take refuge with the confidence that [their] *guru* is a Buddha. The *guru*, furthermore, cannot be anyone, but he must be one who has seen reality. This is what Maitrīpa called *mahāmudrā*, a Pāramitā[naya] path that accords (*rjes su mthun pa*) with the secret Mantra[naya]. This is the meaning derived from the *Tattvadaśaka* and its *ṭīkā*. Likewise, it is obvious that the well-known *guruyoga* exclusively accords with the Mantra[naya]. If it is not right for followers of Pāramitānaya¹⁷ to practice something that only accords with [Mantranaya], then it is also not right for Śrāvakas to pacify sickness with *mantra* formulas, which lean on [Mantranaya].¹⁸

In other words, *guruyoga*,¹⁹ or rather one's reliance on somebody who has seen true reality as it is, in this case upgrades ordinary Pāramitānaya into a system that deserves the label *mahāmudrā*. It could be argued that *guruyoga* is tantamount to Tantric empowerment, since one receives the *guru*'s

¹⁷ Lit. "Pāramitāyāna."

¹⁸ DRSM 190₈₋₁₃: 'dir man ngag pa dag ni dkon mchog gsum la skyabs su 'gro ba ni nges par bya dgos pa yin kyi | de las kyang bla ma nyid sangs rgyas su mos nas skyabs su 'gro bar bya ba yin la | bla ma de yang su yang rung ba ma yin gyi | bden pa mthong ba zhig zin no zhes bzhed de | 'di ni mai trī pas phyag rgya chen po zhes bya ba pha rol tu phyin pa'i lam gang zhig gsang sngags dang rjes su mthun pa yin no zhes bya ba'i don 'di de kho na nyid bcu pa'i rtsa 'grel du 'byung ba yin la | de bzhin du bla ma'i rnal 'byor zhes grags pa ni sngags dang rjes su mthun pa kho nar snang la | de pha rol tu phyin pa'i theg pa bas rjes su mthun pa tsam yang nyams su blang du mi rung na so sor 'brang ba'i rig sngags kyi nad zhi bar byed pa nyan thos rnam la mi rung bar 'gyur zhing |

¹⁹ That is, a Tantric ritual of *guru* devotion, during which the adept visualises his root *guru* as not being separated from the Buddha. It is mostly practiced together with three other preliminary practices, i.e., prostration, Vajrasattva purification, and *maṇḍala* offering (see BUSWELL & LOPEZ 2014: 339).

blessing and thus the wisdom of *mahāmudrā*.²⁰ The Eighth Karmapa Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507–1554) clarifies this in his *sKu gsum ngo sprod rnam bshad* as follows:

Sgam po pa explained: This *mahāmudrā* of our bKa' brgyud [tradition] first of all involves a fortunate disciple taking to the limit [his or her] devotion to a qualified teacher [in the way that] Nāro relied upon Tīlo, Mar pa upon Nāro, Mi la upon Mar pa, and 'Brom ston upon the master Atiśa. This is referred to as “making devotion the path.” Its power makes it possible for the blessing of the *guru* to enter [the disciple]. When a [corresponding state of] mind (*blo*) arises, the *samādhi* of calm abiding and deep insight arises effortlessly. This is referred to as “making blessing the path.” Through its power, the abiding mode of the true nature and the extent of all phenomena are seen directly. This is “making direct perception the path.”²¹

The *Tattvadaśakaṭīkā

*Sahajavajra's commentary on the *Tattvadaśaka* has not come down to us in its Indian original, so that we have to rely on its Tibetan translation contained in the bsTan 'gyur. It was translated by Vajrapāṇi (b. 1017)²² and mTshur ston Ye shes 'byung gnas (a translator related to 'Brog mi). This *paṇḍita*-translator pair is also known to have translated Maitrīpa's *Kudrṣṭi-nirghātana*, *Mahāyānaviṃśikā*, *Premapañcaka*, *Sahaṣaṣṭaka*, and accord-

²⁰ In the chapter on the transmission of *mahāmudrā* lineages In his *Deb ther sngon po* (984_{18–20}), gZhon nu dpal states that “... the remedy, which is not mere theory, is the wisdom of *mahāmudrā*. It arises from the blessing of the genuine *guru*.” (*des na lta bar ma gyur pa 'di'i gnyen po ni phyag rgya chen po'i ye shes yin la | de ni bla ma dam pa'i byin rlabs nyid las 'byung ba yin no |*).

²¹ Mi bskyod rdo rje: *sKu gsum ngo sprod rnam bshad*, vol. 21, 168₆–169₄: rje sgam po pas | 'o bkol gyi bka' brgyud 'di'i phyag rgya chen po 'di la slob ma skal ldan gyis bla ma mtshan ldan la dang por mos gus tshad du skyol pa nā ros tai lo bsten pa dang | mar pas nā ro pa bsten pa dang | mi las mar pa bsten pa dang | 'brom gyis jo bo bsten pa ltar bston pa de la mos pa lam byed bya ba yin | de ltar mos pa lam du song ba'i mthus bla ma'i byin brlabs 'jug tu rung ba'i blo skye zhing de ltar skye ba la zhi lhag gi ting nge 'dzin rtsol med du skye ba de byin brlabs lam byed yin | byin brlabs lam du song ba'i mthus chos thams cad ji lta ba dang ji snyed pa'i gnas tshul mngon sum du mthong pa de la mngon sum lam byed yin |. I thank Dr. Martina Draszczyk (Vienna) for this reference and also its translation.

²² ROERICH 1949–53: 843.

ing to the Peking bsTan 'gyur²³ also the *Tattvadaśaka*. Compared to these translations, I did not find any evidence that would call into question the authenticity of the **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā*. Yet, Ulrich Timme Kragh raises doubts because *Sahajavajra's commentary quotes Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanā-krama(s)*,²⁴ of which no Sanskrit manuscript "has ever been found outside Tibet."²⁵ However, there is an untold number of Sanskrit manuscripts that are not found outside of Tibet, and the fact that no other quotation of the *Bhāvanākramas* could so far be identified is not very telling. Given the intense economic and cultural relations between Central Tibet and its southern neighbours at the time, it is difficult to see how such important texts of the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka school should have remained unknown in India. On the contrary, the quotation of the *Bhāvanākramas* in *Sahajavajra's commentary demonstrates their presence in eleventh-century India, just as there is evidence for the presence of Kamalaśīla's *Madhyamakāloka* in India from this time onwards.²⁶

If the text was, however, for the sake of argument, composed within a Nepalese or Tibetan tradition that had been in need of scriptural support for Pāramitānaya-based *mahāmudrā*, the author would not have referred to the *Hevajratantra* (i.e., HT I.8.44cd)²⁷ in support of a non-conceptual access to the ultimate.²⁸ This reference to Maitrīpa's preferred Tantric source perfectly adds to the picture that this commentary on the *Tattvadaśaka* can be taken as a genuine Indian source.

Although *Sahajavajra already reports a *mahāmudrā* practice of firmly realising reality, the main context of *mahāmudrā* in Maitrīpa's system is

²³ The Derge bsTan 'gyur mentions Tshul khriims rgyal ba as translator.

²⁴ There are, to be precise, three of them.

²⁵ KRAGH 2015: 75, n. 110.

²⁶ See KEIRA 2004: 7–8.

²⁷ HT I.8.44 (HT 95₅₋₆): "The whole world should be meditated upon [in such a way] that it is not produced by the intellect. Meditation is actually non-meditation (or non-production by the mind), the thorough knowledge of all phenomena." (*bhāvyate hi jagat sarvaṃ manasā yasmān na bhāvyate | sarvadharmaparijñānaṃ bhāvanā naiva bhāvanā ||*).

²⁸ In his subcommentary on the **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā*, Ti pi 'Bum la 'bar uses this opportunity to claim that the direct approach, or non-conceptual *bodhicitta*, manifests during empowerment: "As to the non-analytical [*bodhi*]citta here, in the secret Mantranaya a non-analytical realisation manifests during the fourth empowerment." ('*Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod*, vol. kha, 184a₃: 'di la dpyad pa med pa'i sems ni gsang sngags kyi theg pa 'di la dbang bzhi pa'i dus su ma dpyad rtogs pa 'char bas so |).

provided in his *Sekanirdeśa*,²⁹ where it is embedded in the sequence of the four seals. In this context, it primarily represents the goal of Buddhahood that is attained through the experience of four joys on a physical *karmamudrā*-level and/or the four joys on a verbal *dharmamudrā*-level.³⁰ According to *Kāropa, another disciple of Maitrīpa, the *karmamudrā* is not required in order to embark on the path to enlightenment,³¹ and Maitrīpa claims in his *Tattvaviṃśikā* that in Tantra, inferior practitioners rely on a *karmamudrā*, while a more direct approach to *mahāmudrā* is available to those with sharp faculties.³² In other words, the sequence in which *mahāmudrā* is embedded is not so strictly prescribed, and it does not cate-

²⁹ The *Sekanirdeśa* and the *Tattvadaśaka* belong to the same collection of Maitrīpa texts, referred to as *Yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor* in the Tibetan tradition (see MATHES 2015: 4–6).

³⁰ See Rāmapāla's commentary on the *Sekanirdeśa* (SNP 191_{10–11}): “Now that the *karmamudrā*, which has the nature of the four joys and is based on physicality, has been propounded, he teaches the *dharmamudrā*, which has the nature of the four joys and is based on speech.” (*caturānandasvabhāvā kāyikī karmamudroktaiḥ | vācasīm dharmamudrām caturānandasvabhāvām āha* |). For Maitrīpa and his disciples, the four joys are joy, supreme joy, co-emergent joy, and no-joy. They are first enjoyed physically with a *karmamudrā* (the technical term for a consort). This proceeds to the subsequent phase of *dharmamudrā* in which the practitioner realises the four joys again, but this time on the basis of teachings of how the manifold manifests in the co-emergent and so forth (see MATHES 2009: 89 and 112–113).

³¹ In Rāmapāla's commentary on the *Sekanirdeśa*, we are informed that the *dharmamudrā* relates to a central practice of the outer creation phase, while *karmamudrā* practice extends through the perfect completion stage.^a In other words, the way *dharmamudrā* is presented here suggests not so much a progressive succession following from the *karmamudrā* empowerment but rather the possibility of an alternative path which begins with the outer creation phase. According to *Kāropa, a disciple of Maitrīpa, the four moments and joys can also arise directly on the level of *dharmamudrā*, and one must rely on a *karmamudrā* only when this is impossible. See MATHES 2009: 94.

^a It should be noted, however, that creation stage visualisations can occasionally be employed in the advanced levels of the completion stage.

³² See TV 7 and 11 (TV 459_{12–13} & TV 460_{16–17}): “Those with inferior capacities have perfectly cultivated the circle with the help of the *karma*- and *samayamudrā*. [With a mind] directed to the external in the matter of pure reality, they meditate on enlightenment. (TV 7) ... The yogin who has seen true reality, however, is wholly devoted to *mahāmudrā*; his faculty being unsurpassable, he abides in [the realisation of the] nature of all entities.” (TV 11). (*karmasamayamudrābhyāṃ cakram niṣpāḍya bhāvitāḥ | dhyāyanti mṛdavo bodhiṃ śuddhatattve bahirmukhāḥ || ... dṛṣṭatattvaḥ punar yogi mahāmudrāparāyaṇaḥ | sarvabhāvasvabhāvena vihareḍ uttamendr iyaḥ ||*).

gorically exclude *Sahajavajra's *mahāmudrā* as being outside the sequence of the four seals. Moreover, *mahāmudrā* is not only fruition (i.e., Buddhahood): in his *Sekanirdeśa*,³³ Maitrīpa introduces his purely Madhyamaka presentation of *mahāmudrā* by equating the latter with non-abiding, which Rāmapāla equates, as already mentioned, with the practice of *amanasikāra* (i.e., the withdrawal of one's attention from conceptually created duality³⁴).³⁵ Rāmapāla also makes it clear that the doctrinal source for this is the *Jñānālokālaṃkārasūtra* as well as the *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*, an earlier non-Tantric Dhāraṇī text. Here four sets of characteristic signs, i.e., the mistaken projections of the ordinary phenomenal world, remedies, true reality, and the fruit, are abandoned through the practice of not becoming mentally engaged. In the last of the eight verses on *mahāmudrā* found in the *Sekanirdeśa*, Maitrīpa takes up this topic and thus establishes, according to Rāmapāla's commentary, an essential link between *mahāmudrā* and the abandoning of characteristic signs through mental non-engagement.³⁶ It should be noted, however, that for Maitrīpa the term *amanasikāra* stands not only for mental non-engagement but also for "luminous self-empowerment."³⁷ For this reason, I propose to translate *amanasikāra* in its Tantric meaning as "non-conceptual realisation."

In his commentary on verse 7 of the *Tattvadaśaka*,³⁸ *Sahajavajra refers to precisely this context when he quotes verse 36 of the *Sekanirdeśa*. In

³³ *Sekanirdeśa*, verse 29 (SN 386₁₁₋₁₂) reads as follows: "Not to abide in anything is known as *mahāmudrā*. Because self-awareness [i.e., *mahāmudrā*] is stainless, [the moments of enjoying] manifold [appearances] and so forth do not arise." (*sarvasminn apratiṣṭhānaṃ mahāmudreti kīrtyate | vimalatvāt svasaṃvitter vicitrāder na sambhavaḥ ||*).

³⁴ See MATHES 2015: 248–258.

³⁵ SNP 192₂₋₃: *sarvasminn ... apratiṣṭhānaṃ amanasikāro 'nāropaḥ |*.

³⁶ In his commentary on SN 36, Rāmapāla offers a nearly verbatim citation from the section of the *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* that describes the abandonment of the four sets of characteristic signs through *amanasikāra*. For details, see MATHES 2016: 327–331.

³⁷ At least this is Maitrīpa's final analysis of the term *amanasikāra* in the *Amanasikāradhāra* (AMĀ 497₆₋₇): "[The letter] *a* stands for the word 'luminous,' and *ma-nasikāra* for the word 'self-empowerment' (*svādhiṣṭhāna*). It is both *a* and *ma-nasikāra*, so we get *amanasikāra*." (*a iti prabhāsvarapadam | manasikāra iti svādhiṣṭhānapadam | aś cāsau manasikāraś cety amanasikārah ||*).

³⁸ Verse 7 of the *Tattvadaśaka* (TD 487₆₋₇) reads as follows: "The world itself, which is free from knowledge and knowable objects, is taken to be non-duality. But even vain clinging to a state free of duality is taken, in like manner, to be luminous."

verse 5 of the *Tattvadaśaka*, Maitrīpa explains that phenomena are experienced as being luminous, and verse 7cd even takes helpful concepts such as the clinging to a state free from duality to be this way. *Sahajavajra then comments that for Maitrīpa the characteristic signs, which are abandoned through *amanasikāra* in the *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*, are all realised as luminous. In other words, for Maitrīpa nothing is really abandoned. One simply realises everything for what it truly is: luminosity. This perfectly fits Maitrīpa's interpretation of *amanasikāra* as luminous self-empowerment in his *Amanasikārādhāra*.

To recapitulate, I suggest that *Sahajavajra here refers to the *mahāmudrā* part of the *Sekanirdeśa* not because of its being embedded in the sequence of the four seals, but because of its Madhyamaka context of non-abiding (i.e., Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka)³⁹ and the related practice of *amanasikāra* – understood as a practice of realising the luminous nature of everything. This calls into question whether *mahāmudrā* in the *Sekanirdeśa* stands only for fruition, as would be required by the strict Tantric context of the four seals. We have already seen that through its equation with non-abiding and *amanasikāra*, for Rāmapāla *mahāmudrā* also includes the path. In his **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā*, *Sahajavajra offers an additional interpretation following his citation of *Sekanirdeśa*, verse 36: “Here *mahāmudrā* [refers to] the pith instructions on the true reality of *mahāmudrā*.”⁴⁰

Thus, as true reality, *mahāmudrā* refers not only to the fruition and the path, but also to the foundation. In sum, this provides the familiar triad of foundation, path, and fruition (*gzhi, lam, 'bras bu*) *mahāmudrā*. In his *Phyag chen zla ba 'i 'od zer*, Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal also comes to this conclusion with a particular reference to the definition of *mahāmudrā* in the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*:

(*jñānajñeyavihīnaṃ ca jagad evādvayaṃ matam | dvayahīnābhimānaś ca tathaiva hi prabhāsvaṛaḥ* ||). In the eyes of *Sahajavajra, here Maitrīpa replies to the possible objection that he postulates the same characteristic signs which are to be abandoned through *amanasikāra*. His reply then is that this is achieved through realising their luminosity.

³⁹ All eight verses on *mahāmudrā* in the *Sekanirdeśa* are Madhyamaka. Some of them are also found in the Apratiṣṭhāna section of Maitrīpa's *Tattvaratnāvalī*.

⁴⁰ See MATHES 2005: 24. In the quotation of the **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* in his *Ratnagotravibhāḡavyākhyā* commentary, 'Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal omits “reality” and only states: “Here *mahāmudrā* refers to *mahāmudrā* pith instructions.” (DRSM 462_{18–19}: 'dir zang phyag rgya chen po zhes ba ba ni phyag rgya chen po 'i man ngag ste |).

In the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* composed by Rāmapāla [we find]:

“Then, given that it impresses its seal (*mudrā*) on the three [other] *mudrās*, [*mahāmudrā*] is both great (*mahā*) and a seal. It is beyond analysis, and its nature is non-abiding.⁴¹ It is made manifest [by] the diligent and continuous cultivation of the wisdom of the path. It is non-existent (i.e., lacks an own-being), free of the hindrances of the knowable, and the basis of everything perfect. It has the identity of [cyclic] existence and *nirvāṇa* as its nature, consists of universal compassion, and has the unique form of great bliss.”

Such are the definition and the identification of *mahāmudrā*, by which foundation, path, and fruition *mahāmudrā* are recognised.⁴²

⁴¹ The Sanskrit text which served as a basis for bKra shis nnam rgyal’s Tibetan quotation must have read: **avicārāgatā-apraṭiṣṭhānarūpā*. In the edition by ISAACSON & SFERRA (SNP 190₁₃) we find instead: *vicārāgatāpratiṣṭhānarūpa-*, which means that both of the two compounds are in compound with what follows, thus describing the wisdom of the path instead of *mahāmudrā*. The other difference is that *vicāra* (“analysis”) is not negated, so that we get a “wisdom of the path that is reached by analysis.” ISAACSON’s & SFERRA’s Sanskrit edition is also supported by the Tibetan translations of the SNP in the bsTan ’gyur editions and the dPal spungs edition of the Karmapa VII’s *Phyag chen rgya gzhung* (ISAACSON & SFERRA 2014: 236, l. 3–4). The compound *vicārāgatāpratiṣṭhānarūpa-* perfectly describes the path, but the path is not the main subject in this definition of *mahāmudrā*. Moreover, *avicārāgatā* and *apraṭiṣṭhānarūpā* are well-established attributes of *mahāmudrā*: In SN 29ab, *apraṭiṣṭhāna* is equated with *mahāmudrā*, and in his commentary on SN 30, Rāmapāla explains that *apraṭiṣṭhāna* is inexpressible wisdom that does not arise from analysis but is effortless and occurs in its own sphere (SNP 193₇₋₈: *tac cāpratiṣṭhānam acintyaṃ jñānaṃ na tad vicārāgataṃ kiṃ tarhy anābhogaṃ svarasābhyā-gataṃ*).

⁴² Dwags po bKra shis nnam rgyal: *Phyag chen zla ba’i ’od zer* (148₁₈–149₅): *dbang bskur nges bstan kyi bka’ ’grel ra ma pā las mdzad pa las | phyag rgya gsum la rgyas gdab pa’i phyir | ’di chen po yang yin la phyag rgya yang yin te | dpyad pas ma ’ongs pa mi gnas pa’i ngo bo nyid | lam gyi ye shes gus pa dang bcas shing rgyun mi chad par goms par byas pa mngon du byas pa dngos po med pa | shes bya la sogs pa’i sgrib pa spangs pa | phun sum tshogs pa ma lus pa’i gzhi rgyur pa | srid pa dang mya ngan las ’das pa ngo bo nyid kyi gcig pa | dmigs pa med pa’i snying rje chen po’i lus can | bde ba chen po’i sku gcig pu ni phyag rgya chen po’o | | zhes phyag chen gyi nges tshig dang ngo bo ngos ’dzin dang | de rnam kyi gzhi lam ’bras bu’i phyag chen ngos bzung dang...* First translated by LHALUNGPA (2006: 103–104).

Impressing its seal on the lower three seals means that *mahāmudrā* is the nature of these seals, and therefore it can be made to shine through by cultivating the wisdom of the path. Shortly after this, in a section entitled “Clearing away the confusion of other schools” (*Zhar bzung gzhan gyi log rtog gsal ba*), which is basically a response to Sa skya Paṇḍita’s (1182–1251) critique of the author’s *mahāmudrā* tradition, Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal writes:

Moreover, in your *Thub pa’i dgongs gsal* [you claim that] if it is *mahāmudrā*, it must have arisen from empowerment. This is not acceptable for the following reasons: One would have to explain that the primordial abiding nature of all phenomena, i.e., foundation *mahāmudrā*, has arisen from empowerment. If one did not maintain such a foundation *mahāmudrā*, one would be forced to deny also path and fruition *mahāmudrā*, since the fruit must be actualised after having cultivated on the path that which abides as the foundation. Moreover, one would have to engage in the deeds of abandoning the *dharma* enunciated in many *mahāmudrā* works such as the ones by those gone before us – the elder and younger Saraha, Tīlopa, Nāropa, and Maitrīpa – as well as [other] works such as the seven works on accomplishment.⁴³

The point made here is that if *mahāmudrā* is the fruit, it must also be the foundation, the true nature of all phenomena. This argument presupposes the position found in the *Caturmudrānvaya*, namely that an uncontrived fruit cannot be produced by something contrived.⁴⁴ While it is true that the

⁴³ Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal: *Phyag chen zla ba’i ’od zer*, 156_{3–11}: *yang khyed kyi dgongs su | phyag rgya chen po yin na dbang las ’byung dgos pa’i khyab ’cha’ ba’ang mi rigs te | de ltar na chos thams cad kyi gdod ma’i gnas lugs gzhi’i phyag rgya chen po de yang dbang bskur las byung tshul brjod dgos par ’gyur ba’i phyir dang | de ’dra ba’i gzhi’i phyag chen khas mi len na | gzhi la gnas pa lam gyis goms par byas nas ’bras bu mngon du byed dgos pas | lam gyi phyag chen dang ’bras bu’i phyag chen yang med par smra dgos pa’i phyir dang | sngar bshad pa’i sa ra ha che chung tai lo nā ro mai tri pa sogs kyi phyag rgya chen po’i gzhung dang | grub pa sde bdun la sogs pa’i gzhung mang po la chos spong gi las sgrub dgos par ’gyur ba’i phyir dang | ... First translated by LHALUNGPA (2006: 109).*

⁴⁴ The *Caturmudrānvaya*, which is ascribed to the Tantric Nāgārjuna, served as a basis for the *Sekanirdeśa*, and thus it represents the most important source for Maitrīpa. The text explains how something artificially created, such as the physical experience of the four joys (i.e., the wisdom arisen from a *karmamudrā*), can initiate

nature of everything becomes manifest through empowerment, the questions remains which elements constitute the latter and whether formal empowerment is required at all. It may be argued that *mahāmudrā* can also be manifested by the practice of abandoning all characteristic signs through *amanasikāra* based on the kindness of the *guru*. In fact, this can be gathered from the commentary on verses 29 and 31 of the *Sekanirdeśa*, the latter being another one of the eight verses on *mahāmudrā* that are purely Madhyamaka. In his explanation on these two verses, Rāmapāla emphasises the importance of the *guru*'s kindness that enables a direct realisation of true reality.⁴⁵ In his commentary on the second part of SN 29,⁴⁶ Rāmapāla then adds that this occurs beyond the impure moments and joys. Isaacson and Sferra object to this that *mahāmudrā*'s freedom from the impure joys only refers to the "single undefiled moment within the sequence of the moments and the Blisses (i.e., joys) of the sexual union of the third consecration."⁴⁷ In my opinion, however, Rāmapāla addresses the possible ob-

a process that leads to *mahāmudrā*, i.e., Buddhahood. The wisdom which arises from a *karmamudrā* or *prajñā* (i.e., the *prajñā* wisdom) is only an imitation of the real wisdom, with the *prajñā* wisdom of the third empowerment being only an exemplifying wisdom. It becomes a cause for *mahāmudrā* exclusively in combination with the teaching of the *dharmamudrā*. See MATHES 2008: 108.

⁴⁵ Rāmapāla on SN 29 (SNP 192₁₀₋₁₂): "One should not think that [this *amanasikāra* as taught in the *Jñānālamkāra*] cannot be practised, for by the kindness of [one's] venerable *guru*, *mahāmudrā*, which has the defining characteristic of being endowed with all supreme qualities, can certainly be made directly manifest." (...*śakyānuṣṭhānatā ca na mantavyā. sadgurupādaprasādenāvaśyaṃ sarvākāravaro-petalakṣaṇamahāmudrāyāḥ pratyakṣikartuṃ śakyatvāt*). First translated in MATHES 2007: 555–556. Rāmapāla on SN 31 (SNP 193₁₂₋₁₅): "If ... this reality was to be experienced directly ... [then] it should be known through an awareness [which is obtained through] the kindness of a genuine *guru*." (*yady ... tat tattvaṃ pratyakṣam anubhūtaṃ syāt. ... sadgurupādaprasādavitter jñeyam*). First translated in MATHES 2011: 120.

⁴⁶ SN 29cd (SN 386₁₂): "As self-awareness (i.e., *mahāmudrā*) is stainless, [the moments of enjoying] manifold [appearances] and so forth do not arise." (*vimalatvāt svasaṃvitter vicitrāder na sambhavaḥ*). The commentary (SNP 192₁₃₋₁₅) reads as follows: "How is it, then, that [*mahāmudrā*] does not have the nature of the four moments? [In 29c] it is stated: 'Because self-awareness [i.e., *mahāmudrā*] is stainless.' Being stainless, the three stained moments of the manifold and so forth do not occur in it. Therefore the three [impure] joys do not arise in it either." (*nanv atra katham na catuḥkṣaṇarūpatā. āha – vimalatvāt svasaṃvitter nirmalatayā vicitrādeḥ kṣaṇatrayasya samalasya nātra sambhavaḥ. tato nānandatrayasambhavaḥ*). First translated in MATHES 2007: 556.

⁴⁷ ISAACSON & SFERRA 2014: 413.

jection that *mahāmudrā* does not have the nature of the four moments if the practice is exclusively *amanasikāra*, so to say. Rāmapāla's reply, then, is the reassurance that the three impure moments do not occur in *mahāmudrā*. While it is true that the third moment and co-emergent joy are related to *mahāmudrā* in the context of assigning the four joys to the four *mudrās* (although *mahāmudrā* is beyond the four joys),⁴⁸ in his *Caturmudropadeśa* Maitrīpa explains the following just before referring *mahāmudrā* to co-emergent joy:

mahāmudrā [stands for] the union of all phenomena into a pair with [their own] true nature of non-arising. It is free from [any] thought relating to a perceived object and a perceiving subject – the hindrances of defilements, knowable objects, and so forth having been abandoned. One experiences it as it truly is according to its specific characteristic. It is called the fruit which is stainless. As for its nature, it does not have a form [like] all phenomena everywhere, [and] it is all-pervading, unchangeable, and ever-present. *mahāmudrā* is therefore perfect enlightenment in a single moment, and not [something that can be] broken down into four moments and four joys...⁴⁹ [When it comes to] reality as it truly is, it needs to be learned from the mouth of the *guru* when [he sets] the wheel of the *dharma* [in motion].⁵⁰

⁴⁸ CMU (B 13a₂₋₃, D 214a₇–b₁, P 234a₁₋₂): “Still, there is a presentation of the four joys in relation to the four seals. The *karmamudrā* is joy, the *dharmamudrā* supreme joy, *mahāmudrā* co-emergent joy, and the *amayamudrā* the [joy of] no-joy.” (‘on kyang phyag rgya bzhi la ltos nas dga’ ba bzhir bzhag ste | las kyi phyag rgya ni dga’ o || chos kyi phyag rgya ni mchog tu dga’ ba’ o || phyag rgya chen po ni lhan cig skyes pa’i dga’ ba’ o || dam tshig gi phyag rgya ni bral lo |).

⁴⁹ Here Maitrīpa explains how the four seals can be taken as the four joys in their relation to *mahāmudrā* (see below).

⁵⁰ CMU (B 12b₅–13a₃, D 214a₅–214b₁, P 233b₆–234a₂): phyag rgya chen (^apo ni^a) chos thams cad skye ba med pa’i ngo bo zung du ’jug pa | gzung ba dang ’dzin pa’i rtog pa dang bral ba | nyon mongs pa dang shes bya la sogs pa’i sgrib pa spangs pa | ji lta ba bzhin du rang gi mtshan nyid nyams su myong ba ste | dri ma med pa’i ’bras bur brjod do || de’i ngo bo ni mtha’ dbus kyi chos thams cad gzugs can ma yin pa dang | thams cad du khyab pa dang | mi ’gyur ba dang | dus thams cad pa’o || des na phyag rgya chen po ni skad cig ma gcig^b la mngon par rdzogs par sangs rgyas pa ste | skad cig ma bzhi dang dga’ ba bzhi dbye ba ni med do | ... de nyid ji lta ba bzhin chos kyi ’khor lo’i dus su bla ma’i zhal la ltos par bya’o |. ^a P po’i ^b P cig.

To be sure, “enlightenment in a single moment” does not mean here that *mahāmudrā* is experienced for a single moment only, but that it is attained instantaneously, for it is clear that once true reality is experienced as it is, this realisation remains.⁵¹ That it is not the co-emergent joy of *karmamudrā* practice also follows from the closely related *Caturmudrānvaya* that calls the wisdom that arises from a *prajñā* an “image of the real co-emergent,”⁵² and in verse 8cd of his *Mahāsukhaprakāśa* Maitrīpa must be referring to something similar when he notes that the “pure apparent [truth] should be known to be something in which there is a false manifestation of bliss.”⁵³ This raises the question to what extent the verses on *dharmamudrā* and *mahāmudrā* in the *Sekanirdeśa* still belong to the *prajñā* wisdom empowerment. In his **Guruparamparākramopadeśa*, Maitrīpa’s disciple Vajrapāṇi thus categorises empowerment under supreme, average, or inferior types: inferior empowerment corresponds to the outer creation stage (up to the master empowerment); average empowerment to *karmamudrā* (including both the profound creation stage and the completion stage proper); and supreme empowerment to *dharmamudrā* (the supreme creation stage). *mahāmudrā*, then, is taken as the most supreme empowerment (the natural completion stage).⁵⁴

Based on this, I agree with ISAACSON & SFERRA (2014: 413) that the “reference to the necessity of the favour (i.e., kindness) of a true teacher (to directly manifest *mahāmudrā* or realize reality in the *Sekanirdeśa*) should

⁵¹ This can be compared to the *ekakṣaṇābhisamaya* in the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, which refers to the Bodhisattva’s simultaneous realisation of all aspects of the three knowledges in the *vajra*-like *samādhi* during the last moment of the tenth *bhūmi*, which is immediately followed by the attainment of Buddhahood (Brunnhölzl 2010:60). To be sure, “perfect enlightenment in a single moment” does not mean that it only lasts for a single moment, for once *mahāmudrā* is attained it will never be lost.

⁵² CMA 392₅₋₆: “All that [appears as] co-emergent is called co-emergent because it duplicates the image of the [real] co-emergent. [This] image of the co-emergent leads [the adept] to realise [a type of] wisdom that is similar to the co-emergent. The co-emergent is thus [only in this limited sense] the wisdom based on a *prajñā*.” (*sahajaṃ tat sarvaṃ sahajacchāyānukāritvāt sahajaṃ ity abhidhīyate | sahajacchāyā sahajasadrśaṃ jñānaṃ pratipādayatīti sahajaṃ prajñājñānam*). First translated in MATHES 2011: 110.

⁵³ MSP 453₁₆: *sātālīkaprakāśa tu vijñeyā śuddhasaṃvṛtiḥ ||*. First translated in MATHES 2015: 182.

⁵⁴ GPKU (B 299b₄–300a₆, D 170a₄–b₃, P 191a₅–b₅), for an English translation see MATHES 2015: 142–143.

rather suggest a Tantric context.”⁵⁵ However, on this level these can hardly be pith instructions on *karmamudrā*. In this context, they are rather pith instructions on true reality (such as Dohā songs or Pāramitānaya pith instructions that accord with Mantranaya). As can be seen in the **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā*, such pith instructions on the reality of *mahāmudrā* (*mahāmudrā* pith instructions)⁵⁶ are also based on non-Tantric sources, such as the *Samādhirājasūtra*. In order to demonstrate that characteristic signs are luminous (or pure and unborn), *Sahajavajra quotes a group of verses from this *sūtra* (SRS 32.92–105), the content of which corresponds to a verse quoted below, i.e., verse 30 of the *Sekanirdeśa*, the second of the eight verses on *mahāmudrā*.⁵⁷

Effortless wisdom

[Can] be taken as inconceivable.

Something “inconceivable” that one has [been able to] conceive

Cannot be truly inconceivable.⁵⁸

One could argue that when passages of the *Samādhirājasūtra* are used as pith instructions that enable direct access to true reality or emptiness, they become Tantric or “accord with Mantranaya,” to use *Sahajavajra’s words. In this context, it is interesting to note that in his *Advayavivaraṇa-prajñopāyavinīśayasiddhi* Padmavajra⁵⁹ refers to the *Samādhirājasūtra* as *Samādhirājatantra* when he quotes verse 72 from the first appendix to the *Samādhirājasūtra*.⁶⁰ The Madhyamaka-based *mahāmudrā* explanations of

⁵⁵ The additions in brackets are my own.

⁵⁶ That is, following gZhon nu dpal’s reading of the **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* (see above).

⁵⁷ For a translation of this part, see MATHES 2005: 24–27 and BRUNNHÖLZL 2007: 177–181, who also identified the verse following the *Samādhirājasūtra* quotes as SN 30.

⁵⁸ SN 386_{18–19}: *anābhogaṃ hi yaj jñānaṃ tac cācintyaṃ pracakṣyate | saṃcintya yad acintyaṃ vai tad acintyaṃ bhaven na hi ||*.

⁵⁹ The attribution of the *Advayavivaraṇaprajñopāyavinīśayasiddhi* to Padmavajra is seen as critical by Adam Krug, because the text also quotes Anaṅga-vajrapāda’s *Prajñopāyavinīśayasiddhi* (and in that text it is clear that Anaṅgavajra treats Padmavajra as his teacher). Communicated by e-mail on September 10, 2015.

⁶⁰ AVPUV 215_{17–18}: “Thus it has been said in the *Samādhirājatantra*: ‘All living beings will become a Buddha, there is absolutely no sentient being who is unworthy.’” (*tathā cokaṭaṃ samādhirājatantraṃ (sūtre): buddha bhaviṣyati sarvajano ’yaṃ nāstiha kaścid abhājanasattvaḥ*). The quotation accords with SRS 317_{13–14} (appendix 1, verse 72cd). I thank Adam Krug, UC Santa Barbara, for this reference.

the *Sekanirdeśa* fulfil a similar function as certain parts of the *Samādhirājasūtra*, in that they enable one to directly point out *mahāmudrā* in a process that Vajrapāṇi calls the most supreme empowerment. Whether such teachings then belong to the Pāramitānaya or Mantranaya was at times regarded as a difficult question, and this issue is very diplomatically addressed by Maitrīpa's disciple Vajrapāṇi in his pith instructions on the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayasūtra*:

One may doubt whether these special instructions on the meaning of the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya[sūtra]* belong to the philosophical vehicles or the *mantra* vehicles. They appear differently in the mind of sentient beings, but in terms of the profound nature of phenomena [to which they refer] there is no difference.⁶¹

The Pāramitānaya-based pith instructions of Maitrīpa's *Tattvadaśaka* can be seen in the same light. Moreover, they may be used in a full-fledged empowerment or else in direct mind-to-mind transmission of realisation, such as the one Maitrīpa received from Śavaripa.⁶²

The best support for the case of a *mahāmudrā* practice outside the sequence of the four seals remains the **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* on verse 8, where **Sahajavajra* identifies a *mahāmudrā* approach distinct from both the Mantranaya and Pāramitānaya. From the *Tattvadaśaka*:

By [the power of] having realised this reality,
The *yogin*, whose eyes are wide open,
Moves everywhere like a lion,
By any [chosen] means and in any [chosen] manner.⁶³

**Sahajavajra* immediately adds the commentary:

⁶¹ BHPHṬAP D 293a₁₋₂; P 317a₁₋₃: *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i snying po'i don gyi gdams ngag 'di mtshan nyid kyi theg pa yin nam sngags kyi theg pa yin zhes the tshom za na | sems can rnam kyi blo'i snang ba la tha dad du snang mod kyi zab mo'i chos nyid la tha dad med de | de lta bas na shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i sngags 'di ni gsang sngags rnam kyi don kyi snying po yin no |*.

⁶² According to one version of Maitrīpa's life story reported in the '*Bri gung bka'* *brgyud chos mdzod* (see MATHES 2014: 374–375).

⁶³ TD 487₁₅₋₁₆: *etattattvāvabodhena yena tena yathā tathā | vivṛtākṣo bhramed yogī keśarīva samantataḥ ||*.

Thanks to the yoga of firmly realising the previously taught nondual reality through the pith instructions of the genuine *guru*.⁶⁴

He subsequently elaborates on this point as follows:

Well then, if one asks, what is the difference compared to a *yogin* who follows Mantranaya? [The answer is as follows:] because [the *yogin*'s practice] is [conducted] without [following] the sequence of the four seals, and because it takes a long time to perfect complete enlightenment through the type of equanimity that lacks the experience of great bliss resulting from pride in being the deity, there are great differences with regard to what is accomplished and that which accomplishes. On the other hand, it differs from the *yogin* in the Pāramitānaya, specifically because the suchness of indivisible union, the emptiness discerned through the instruction of a genuine *guru*, is firmly realised. Therefore, those who do not practice austerities [but rather] have perfect certainty that the reality of one taste is emptiness are like [skillful] villagers grasping a snake: even though they touch the snake, they are not bitten. Some call this the wisdom of reality [or] *mahāmudrā*.⁶⁵

In reference to this passage, Kragh speculates that “certain passages, perhaps the text’s reference⁶⁶ to a non-Tantric form of *Mahāmudrā*, could be

⁶⁴ TDT (B, 23a₆–b₁; D 174b₆, P 191b_{5–6}): ‘di’i sngar bstan pa’i gnyis su med pa’i de kho na nyid ni^a bla ma dam pa’i man ngag gis nges par rtogs pa’i rnal ’byor pas so |.^a B du.

⁶⁵ TDT (B 24a₃–b₁, D 175a_{4–7} P 192a₅–b₁): ‘o na gsang sngags kyi tshul gyi^a rnal ’byor pa dang bye brag ci yod ce na | | phyag rgya bzhi’i rjes su ‘gro ba med pa’i phyir dang | lha’i nga rgyal gyi bde ba chen po’i ro med pas | | btang snyoms kyi rnam pas mngon par byang chub pa dus ring pos rdzogs pa’i phyir | bsgrub par bya ba dang sgrub par byed pa nyid^b kyi rnam pas^c bye brag nyid shin tu che’o | | gzhan gyis^d pha rol tu phyin pa’i tshul gyi rnal ’byor pa las ’di khyad par yod de | bla ma dam pa’i man^e ngag gis^f dpyad pa’i stong pa nyid zung du ’jug pa’i de bzhin nyid nges par rtogs^g pas shin tu khyad par ’phags pa’i phyir ro | | de’i phyir ’di nyid dka’ ba’i spyod pa med pa ’di nyid ni^h stong pa nyid du ro gcig pa’i de kho na nyid shin tu ngesⁱ pa dag ni yul gyi grong gis sbrul ’dzin pa ltar sbrul la rtse yang de’i^j ‘bigs par mi ’gyur ro | | ’di nyid la de kho na nyid kyi ye shes phyag rgya chen po zhes kha cig brjod de |)^a BD gyis^b B gnyis^c DP pa^d P gyi^e B gdams^f D gi^g D rtog^h D om.ⁱ BD shes^j B des ni D nges. First quoted and translated in MATHES 2006: 220–221.

⁶⁶ For a translation of this reference, see below.

later interpolations.” Moreover, he claims that “in Indian and Tibetan sources, the use of the pronoun ‘some’ (*kha cig*, *ke cid*, or *kaś cid*) often marks a rhetorical statement, in which the author distances himself from what is said by attributing it to someone else.”⁶⁷ Besides the fact that there is no formal linguistic indication for taking this passage as an interpolation, there is also no reason to do so if one includes Pāramitānaya-based *mahāmudrā* within Tantra, even though it is outside of the sequence of the four seals. *Sahajavajra certainly does not call it non-Tantric,⁶⁸ which means that there does not need to be a contradiction between it and the **Sthitisamāsa*. In this context, it should be noted that Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal’s path of direct cognition also belongs to the Vajrayāna, namely as a category separate from the path of blessing.⁶⁹ As for the issue of *ke cid* or *kaś cid*, even though these indefinite pronouns may introduce a statement opposed to the author’s view, they are also found in Sanskrit philosophical texts with the connotation of “we” (i.e., “we are of the opinion that...”), which fits the context here much better.⁷⁰ Moreover, I cannot understand why Kragh has a “fundamental difficulty” with my “line of argument when it comes to establishing a connection between the Indian sources and the beginnings of ‘*Sūtra Mahāmudrā*’ in Tibet. ... The problem is (i.e., according to Kragh) that the texts stemming from the Indian circle of Maitrīpa and his students are hardly ever referred to in the *Dags*

⁶⁷ Kragh 2015: 75.

⁶⁸ In my first publication on this topic, I used “non-tantric” (Mathes 2006: 220 and 224), but always in the sense of *Sahajavajra’s “Pāramitānaya pith instructions that accord with Mantranaya.” In Mathes 2008 I thus preferred “not specifically tantric.”

⁶⁹ Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal: “This very tradition in the cycle of Dohās and cycles of *mahāmudrā* in symbolic transmission belongs, in terms of the *sūtra/mantra* divide, to the secret Vajrayāna. From among the latter’s threefold [sub]division into the path of blessing, the path of reassurance, and the path of direct [cognition], it is explained as the last of [these three]. It has been [further] explained that a ripening empowerment is needed, an extensive or abbreviated one, whatever is appropriate.” (*Phyag chen zla ba’i ’od zer* 156_{15–19}: *do ha’i skor dang | phyag chen brda brgyud kyi skor ’ga’ zhig tu | lam srol ’di nyid mdo sngags gnyis kyi nang nas gsang sngags kyi theg pa dang | de la byin rlabs kyi lam dang | dbugs dbyung gi lam | mngon sum gyi lam gsum du phyed ba’i phyi ma yin par ’chad la | smin byed du dbang rgyas bsdu gang yang rung ba zhig dgos par bshad pa dang* ...). First translated by Lhalungpa (2006: 109).

⁷⁰ I thank Prof. Diwakar Acharya for this observation.

po'i bka' 'bum..."⁷¹ My own "fundamental difficulty" with Kragh's argument is that the *Tshogs chos* material of the *Dwags po'i bka' 'bum*, i.e., the larger part of the corpus based on notes taken by sGam po pa's disciples, contains hardly any quotations of original sources, and the texts of the *Tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs* feature a threefold division of the path similar to the one in the **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā*.⁷² It is well-known that Indian and Tibetan masters incorporated ideas and whole systems of thought from others without acknowledging this. Abhinavagupta's works, for example, are strongly influenced by Śaṅkara, but the latter is not even referred to once.⁷³ In such cases, it makes perfect sense to look for similarities. According to gZhon nu dpal, the fact that the *Tattvadaśaka* and its commentary lend doctrinal support for sGam po pa's "*pāramitā-mahāmudrā*" was already observed by rJe rGod tshang pa (1189–1258).⁷⁴ Moreover, the importance of the **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* for the Mar pa bka' brgyud schools is also stressed by the Eighth Karmapa Mi bskyod rdo rje.⁷⁵

Finally, I would like to take issue with Kragh's statement that my "analysis has thus established that there were rare, isolated Indian cases of using the otherwise Tantric word *mahāmudrā* in its contemplative sense as referring to advanced non-Tantric stages of meditation."⁷⁶ I agree with Kragh that *mahāmudrā* is a Tantric term. But why should Pāramitānaya pith instructions that accord with Mantranaya not be labelled with this term? Moreover, as I have already pointed out in previous publications, the two main sources for Pāramitānaya-based *mahāmudrā* are not isolated but

⁷¹ Kragh 2015: 76. The addition in brackets is my own.

⁷² See MATHES 2008: 39–40.

⁷³ Oral information from Prof. Diwakar Acharya.

⁷⁴ As reported in MATHES 2006: 206. For a comparison of *Sahajavajra's passage with a similar one in sGam po pa's *Tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs*, see MATHES 2008: 40–41.

⁷⁵ Mi bskyod rdo rje: *sKu gsum ngo sprod kyi rnam par bshad pa*, vol. 21, 132₁₋₃: "If one wonders how the view of the two truths transmitted by the Mar pa bKa' brgyud is, it must be said here that it is roughly the one of Jina Maitrīpa's *Tattvadaśaka* and *Sahajavajra's **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā*. ... They are taken to be Pāramitā[naya] pith instructions that accord with the Mantra[naya]." (*rje btsun mar pa lo tsa ba'i bka' brgyud las 'ongs pa bden gnyis kyi lta ba ji lta bu'o snyam na | rgyal ba mai tri pa'i de kho na nyid bcu pa zhes pa'i 'grel pa slob dpon chen po lhan cig skyes pa'i rdo rjes mdzad pa de nyid kyi don che long 'dir brjod par bya ste | ... sngags dang rjes su mthun pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag mdor bsdus mdzad par bzhed pas*).

⁷⁶ Kragh 2015: 75.

closely related to each other, in view of the fact that *Sahajavajra quotes and comments on a verse from Jñānakīrti's *Tattvāvatāra* (still in the context of explaining TD 8):

For outstanding *yogins*
The union of insight and means is simply meditation.
The victorious ones call it
mahāmudrā union^{77 78}.

[But] the followers of the [Mantra]yāna point out that the mere meditation of uniting means and insight is not *mahāmudrā* meditation; otherwise it would follow that the traditions of Pāramitā[naya] and Mantra[naya] are not different.⁷⁹

The verse just cited is taken from the beginning of the fourth chapter in Jñānakīrti's *Tattvāvatāra*, which considers the mode of Mantranaya for those of superior faculties. The same verse is also found in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, where it is explained at length. The *Subhāṣitasamgraha* leaves no room for Pāramitānaya-based *mahāmudrā*. Its purely Tantric description of *upāya* diverges from Jñānakīrti, however, in that the latter understands it in the more general Mahāyāna sense of the threefold compassion.⁸⁰ In his explanation of compassion without a focus, Jñānakīrti then

⁷⁷ Lit. “*mahāmudrā* union is called meditation by the victorious ones.” It should be noted that *mahāmudrā* union does not mean that one unites with an objective reality called *mahāmudrā*; it refers rather to a realisation that lies beyond a perceived object and a perceiving subject (oral information from Chetsang Rinpoche).

⁷⁸ TA (B 327b₂₋₃, D 43a₇–b₁ P 47b₂₋₃): *thabs dang shes rab mnyam sbyor ba'i* | | *bsgom pa nyid rnal 'byor mchog gi*^a *ni* | | *phyag rgya chen po*^b *i*^b *mnyam sbyor ba* | | *sgom*^c *par rgyal ba rnams kyis gsungs* |. ^a B *gis* ^b BP *por* ^c D *bsgom*. For the Sanskrit of this verse, see *Subhāṣitasamgraha* (SBhS, part 1, 397₈₋₉): *prajñopāyasamāyogo bhāvanāvāgrayoginām | mahāmudrāsamāyogo* bhāvanā bhāṇyate jinaiḥ* ||.

* BENDALL reads -*yogā*- (I forgot to make this emendation in MATHES 2015: 238).

⁷⁹ TDT (B 24b₁₋₃, D 175a₇–b₂, P 192a₁₋₃): *thabs dang shes rab mnyam sbyor bas*^a | | *bsgom pa nyid ni rnal 'byor mchog* | | *phyag rgya chen por mnyam sbyor ba*^b *i*^b | | *bsgom pa ru ni rgyal bas bshad* | | *ces pa'o* | *thabs dang shes rab mnyam par sbyor ba* *bsgom pa tsam ni phyag rgya chen po bsgom pa ma yin te* | *pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshul dang* | *sngags kyis tshul dag*^c *tha dad med par thal bar 'gyur ba'i phyir ro zhes sngags pa dag go* |. ^a DP *ba* ^b B *bas* DP *ba* ^c DP *om*.

⁸⁰ That is, compassion directed towards sentient beings, compassion born from beholding the impermanent nature of phenomena, and compassion without a focus.

addresses the question whether or not insight and means are cultivated simultaneously:

When cultivating compassion without a focus, the compassion of [the *yogin* who is] identical with means and insight is not at all like that of cultivating the opposite, [compassion with a focus.] ... What then is the meditation like for someone who is identical with means and insight in the state of cultivating compassion without a focus? An answer is given in the following:

In his identity with the nature of all phenomena,
The *yogin* is [naturally] endowed with compassion.
On a later meditation level,
He will become identical with *mahāmudrā*.⁸¹

The relation between the *Tattvāvatāra* and the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* requires further investigation, but it should be noted at this point that while the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* accords with Jñānakīrti in the explanation of insight,⁸² its Tantric presentation of the means does not. It is worth recalling here what I have already mentioned in previous publications: namely that for Jñānakīrti advanced Pāramitānaya practitioners of *śamatha* (calm abiding) and *vipaśyanā* (deep insight) are already in possession of *mahāmudrā* even at an initial stage.⁸³ Moreover, in his description of the Pāramitānaya, Jñāna-

See TA (B 331a₁₋₅; D 45b₃₋₆; P 50a₃₋₈). See also MATHES 2015: 239–240.

⁸¹ TA (B 331a_{6-b3}; D 45b_{6-46a2}; P 50a_{8-b4}): *dmigs pa med pa'i snying rje sgom pa'i gnas skabs su ni thabs dang shes rab de'i bdag nyid can*^a *gyi | snying rje cig shos sgom pa'i gnas skabs su ni ma yin te | ... yang dmigs pa med pa'i snying rje sgom pa'i gnas skabs su thabs dang shes rab de'i bdag nyid can du bsgom par ji ltar 'gyur ro zhe na | | brjod par bya ste | dngos kun rang bzhin bdag nyid du | | rnal 'byor snying rje can gyur pa | | sgom pa'i rim pa phyi*^b *nas ni | | phyag rgya che bdag nyid can 'gyur |.* ^a DP *yin* ^b B *phye*.

⁸² Even though the explanation of insight is mainly Madhyamaka, a Tantric context is indicated by an unidentified verse quoted in the *Tattvāvatāra* and the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, in which insight is taken as the awareness of the mind-*vajra*.^a See MATHES 2015: 239.

^a In *Hevajratantra* 2.5.2cd (HT 110₅) “the lord of the *maṇḍala* (i.e., Hevajra) [is said] to have arisen from the [seed] syllable, which is the mind-*vajra* (*cittavajrasya bījena niṣpanno maṇḍaleśvarah*).” “Seed [syllables, in turn arise] from the awakening towards emptiness.” See *Mahāśukhaprakāśa* 4a (MSP 452₁₄: *śūnyatābodhito bījam*).

⁸³ It should be added that Jñānakīrti structures his *Tattvāvatāra* according to the

kīrti links the traditional fourfold Mahāyāna meditation with *mahāmudrā* by equating the goal “Mahāyāna” in *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* 10.257d with *mahāmudrā*.⁸⁴

In summary, the fact that *Sahajavajra quotes Jñānakīrti’s *Tattvāvatāra* demonstrates that he was familiar with Jñānakīrti’s system of classification, and the same could probably be said of his master Maitrīpa. In other words, they could have picked up the idea of a *mahāmudrā* path outside of the sequence of the four seals from this famous master. It should also be noted that Jñānakīrti’s work was translated, in cooperation with Padmākaravarman, by the translator Rin chen bzang po (958–1055), who helped the king Ye shes ‘od (947–1024) to initiate the revival of Buddhism in Tibet known as the later dissemination of the *dharma*.⁸⁵

The *Sthitisamāsa

The only other known work by *Sahajavajra is the **Sthitisamāsa*,⁸⁶ in which a summary of the four traditional “positions” (*sthitī*) of the Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Yogācāra, and Madhyamaka is immediately followed by a presentation of Mantranaya. I have already observed⁸⁷ that the Mantranaya part of the **Sthitisamāsa* begins with a summary of the Madhyamaka-crowned analysis of true reality, which is the quintessence of Pāramitānaya (SS V.1–2b). The actual exposition of Mantranaya begins with line V.2c:

distinction of three approaches to reality, namely those of the Mantranaya, Pāramitānaya, and “the path of freeing oneself from attachment” (i.e., Śrāvakayāna). Each of these three again has three distinct forms, for adepts with sharp, average, and inferior capacities. See MATHES 2008: 36.

⁸⁴ See MATHES 2008: 36.

⁸⁵ BUSWELL & LOPEZ 2014: 714.

⁸⁶ There is only one Sanskrit palm-leaf manuscript which has been photographed. Confusingly, the microfilm of the manuscript (B 24/4) and the photos (B 25/5) were catalogued separately. Further, both texts (the original and the photographed text) were provisionally catalogued under the title *Kośakārikā* by the National Archives in Kathmandu and consequently also by the NGMPP. The text was identified by MATSUDA (1995: 848–843 (= 205–210) as *Sahajavajra’s “*Sthitisamuccaya*” (SS). I thank Alexis Sanderson, who pointed out that the correct title of the work should be **Sthitisamāsa*.

⁸⁷ In MATHES 2006: 222–223.

Based on the Mantra tradition,
By virtue of its being linked with the four *mudrās*,

[True reality is realised] without confusion, [even] when not analysed.
This is because of the special experience of emptiness [received]
from the *guru*.

It is the bliss of insight and means,
Which must be experienced through self-awareness.⁸⁸

It should be noted that the explanation of Mantranaya begins immediately after the one of the Pāramitānaya is completed. If *Sahajavajra had intended to formally distinguish a third category, i.e., a *pāramitā*-based *mahāmudrā* outside of Pāramitānaya and Mantranaya (as in the **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā*), this would have been the place. Moreover, such a third category is found nowhere in the **Sthitisamāsa*, and it is also ruled out in SS V.7cd:

When [one's practice] is free from investigation,
How can it be free from the tradition of *mantras*?⁸⁹

Tantra is presented in the **Sthitisamāsa* in a way that diverges from Maitrīpa's system. First, *Sahajavajra still endorses Maitrīpa's preferred sequence of the four moments. This is evident from SS V.18ab, where *Sahajavajra claims:

The [moment of] the co-emergent should be known as the third.
In the empowerment of forceful [yoga] (*haṭhayoga*) it is the fourth.⁹⁰

In his "Proof that master Nāropa's and Maitrīpa's presentation of empowerment are in accordance" (*mKhas grub nā ro mai tri dbang gi bzhed pa mthun par grub pa*), Zhwa dmar IV Chos kyi grags pa (1453–1524) takes *haṭhayoga* to refer to the empowerment found in Nāropa's *Sekoddeśaṭīkā*, i.e., the system found in the *Kālacakratantra*.⁹¹

⁸⁸ SS 11a₄–b₁: **mantranūtiṃ* (em., *mantranīta* cod.) *samāśritya caturmudrānva-yāgamāt || avicāram asaṃdigdhaṃ viśiṣṭānubhavād guroḥ | śūnyatāyāḥ sva-saṃvedyaṃ prajñopāyamahāsukham ||*.

⁸⁹ SS 11b₄: *parāmarśaṃ vinaiva syāt kathaṃ mantranayaṃ vinā ||*.

⁹⁰ SS 12b₄: *trītyaṃ sahaṃ vidyāt | seke tu *turīyaṃ* (em., *turiyaṃ* cod.) *haṭhe ||*.

⁹¹ Zhwa dmar Chos kyi grags pa, *mKhas grub nā ro mai tri dbang gi bzhed pa*

In the section of the **Sthitisamāsa* that follows verse V.18ab, **Sahajavajra* surprisingly explains empowerment in line with the *Sekoddeśa*, with verses V.21–28 of the **Sthitisamāsa* being nearly identical with the verses 80–82, 135, and 139–143 in the *Sekoddeśa*.⁹²

It has been said [in the *Sekoddeśa*]:

Joy is the descent of the semen

[From] the lotus at the crown [to the one at the] spot between the eyebrows.

[From] the throat to the heart it is supreme joy.

From there [further down] there is intense joy.⁹³ (SS V.21, see SU 80)

Through manifold play [with a consort, the semen] abides at the navel.

As long as one is inside the secret lotus,

[The semen] remains in the secret jewel.

As long as it is not emitted, there is co-emergent joy.⁹⁵ (SS V.22, see SU 81)

mthun par grub pa 839₅₋₆: “In forceful *yoga*, the generation stage, and so forth, venerable Maitrīpa places co-emergent [joy] at the end. This accords with Nāropa...” (*rje mai tri pas drag po'i sbyor ba'i dbang bskur dang bskyed rim sogs la lhan skyes mthar 'don pa ni nā ro pa dang 'thun ...*). In other words, *haṭhayoga* stands here for a Buddhist practice or empowerment in which co-emergent joy is taken as the last of the four joys (as explained, for example, in Nāropa's *Sekoddeśaṭīkā*). In the same text (826₂₂₋₂₄), Chos kyi grags pa tells us: “Forceful *yoga*’ means the stabilisation of the element (i.e., the drop of *bodhicitta*) in the jewel of the *vajra* through the forceful *yoga* of bodily exercise and the power of the subtle winds. Before, in the *Ca-turmudrā*[*nvaya*], it is referred to as *haṭhayoga*.” (*drag po'i sbyor ba zhes byung ba'i don yang | lus kyi 'khrul 'khor dang rlung gi stobs drag shul gyi sbyor bas | kham rdo rje nor bur brtan par bzung ba ste | gong du phyag rgya bzhi par btsan thabs sbyor ba zhes pa dang |*).

⁹² For the Tibetan edition of these verses from the *Sekoddeśa*, see OROFINO 1994: 81 and 100–103. The English translation of V.24–28 mainly follows OROFINO 2009: 32.

⁹³ That is, the meaning of **virama* (for Tib. *dga' bral*) in a Kālacakra context.

⁹⁴ SS (B 185b₆–186a₁, D 97a₃, P 104b₁₋₂): *de gsungs pa | dga' ba khu ba* ^(a) *'bab pa* ^{a)} *ste | | gtsug tor* ^(b) *smin phrag* ^{b)} *padma'i tshad* ^{c)} *| | mgrin pa snying gar mchog dga' ste | | da' nas dga' ba dang bral bar 'gyur |*. ^a B *'babs* ^b B *smig phrag* P *smin phyag* ^c BD *tshal* ^d BP *de*.

⁹⁵ SS (B 186a₁, D 97a₃₋₄, P 104b₂): *| sna tshogs rol mos lte ba gnas | | ji srid gsang ba'i padmar son | | de srid gsang ba'i nor bur gnas* ^a *| | ma 'phos bar bu lhan cig skyes |*. ^a DP *nas*.

It is non-abiding *nirvāṇa*,
 [The state of the] lord full of great passion.
 The bliss which is not emitted lacks [ordinary] passion
 And one abides in *nirvāṇa*.⁹⁶ (SS V.23, see SU 82)

There does not exist a greater transgression than the lack of passion,
 No greater merit than supreme bliss.
 Therefore one should constantly seek to actualise
 The mind of immutable bliss.⁹⁷ (SS V.24, see SU 135)

From emission is born dispassion.
 From dispassion suffering is born.
 From suffering the elements are ruined, and as it was handed down,
 From the ruin of the elements death will come.⁹⁸ (SS V.25, see SU 139)

After death they will be born in another [existence],
 Bound in cyclic existence, and born [again].
 Therefore one must avoid
 With all effort the loss of passion.⁹⁹ (SS V.26, see SU 140a–141b)

Without passion one would [even] not be a [good] lover,
 And not seek out the *Kāmaśāstra*.
 If this is so, why would a *yogin* create suffering
 In accordance with the Tantra I proclaim?¹⁰⁰ (SS V.27, see SU 142)

⁹⁶ SS (B 186a₁₋₂, D 97a₄, P 104b₂₋₃): | *mi gnas pa yi mya ngan 'das* | | *'dod chags chen pos*^a *khyab bdag gtso*^b | | *ma 'phos*^c *bde ba chags bral te* | | *de*^d *ni mya ngan 'das rab gnas* |. ^a P *po 'i* ^b B *nyid* ^c D *'phros* ^d DP *'di*.

⁹⁷ SS (B 186a₂₋₃, D 97a₄₋₅, P 104b₃₋₄): | *chags bral las ni sdig pa med* | | *bde ba mchog las bsod nams med* | | *de phyir mi 'gyur bde ba 'i sems* | | *rtag tu nges*^a *gnas mos par bya* |. ^a D *der*.

⁹⁸ SS (B 186a₃, D 97a₅₋₆, P 104b₄₋₅): | *'pho ba las ni chags bral 'byung* | | *chags bral las ni sdug bsngal 'byung* | | *sdug bsngal las ni khams zad de* | | *khams zad pas*^a *ni 'chi bar gsungs*^b |. ^a B *las* ^b P *'gyur*.

⁹⁹ SS (B 186a₃₋₄, D 97a₆, P 104b₅): | *shi bas de dag* (^a*gzhan du*^a) *'byung* | | *srid par 'ching zhing skye ba ste* | | *de phyir 'bad pas*^b *thams cad kyis* | | *chags pa dor ba rnam par spang*^c |. ^a D *bzhin du 'ang P gzhan du 'ang* ^b B *pa* ^c DP *spangs*.

¹⁰⁰ SS (B 186a₄₋₅, D 97a₆₋₇, P 104b₅₋₆): | *chags bral 'dod ldan ma yin te* | | *'dod pa 'i sbyor thabs mi*^a *'dod na* | | *nga yis bstan pa 'i*^b (^c*rgyud du*^c) *yang* | | *ci ste rnal 'byor sdug bsngal bskyed* |. ^a D *'di* ^b DP *pa* ^c P *rgyun du*.

Taking advantage of the nature of immutable bliss,
 One must attain the supremely immutable.
 Once the support is released,
 The supported [*yogin*] will be passionless.¹⁰¹ (SS V.28, see SU 143)

There is no refutation or critical assessment of this relatively long quotation. In other words, with his tacit acceptance of these verses, *Sahajavajra not only contradicts his own initial statement but also stands against his teacher in one of the most controversial debates in eleventh-century India. On the other hand, it could also be argued that Maitrīpa himself had already given an explanation of this contradiction: in treatises such as the *Hevajratāntra*, the correct sequence was not made explicit in order to protect the instructions from those who do not rely on a *guru*.¹⁰²

The second problem with these *Sekoddeśa* verses in the **Sthitisamāsa* is that *Sahajavajra implicitly endorses the strong emphasis of disadvantages that result from releasing one's semen, a teaching that is directly opposed to what we find, for example, in Maitrīpa's **Caturmudropadeśa*, where the co-emergent joy (in the third position) corresponds to two of altogether four descending drops at the tip of the jewel and two on the stamens of the lotus. The fourth joy is then experienced when all four drops are inside the lotus.¹⁰³ Khenpo Phuntsok, the abbot of Lekshay Ling Monastery in Kathmandu, warned, however, against a too literal reading of these lines from the **Caturmudropadeśa*, stressing that it is the real drop (*don gyi thig le*) and not the material drop (*rdzas kyi thig le*) that is being released.¹⁰⁴

To summarise, there is a strong *Kālacakra* influence in *Sahajavajra's **Sthitisamāsa*, which is missing in Maitrīpa's own works.¹⁰⁵ Given these differences, one could be inclined to doubt whether the author of the **Tattvadaśakaṭikā* is the same person who composed the **Sthitisamāsa*. Of

¹⁰¹ SS (B 186a₅, D 97a₇, P 104b₆₋₇): | *bde ba mi 'gyur rang bzhin gyis* | | *mi 'gyur mchog ni bsgrub par bya* | | *rten ni shor bar gyur pa yis* | | *brten^a pa chags dang bral ba yin* |. ^a D *rten*.

¹⁰² CMU (B 11b₁₋₂ ; P 232b₆₋₇): *de ni bla ma la ltos^a pa dang bral ba^b glegs bam gyis mkhas par byed pa'i gang zag gi ched^c du dkrugs nas bshad de* |. ^a P *bltos* ^b P *om*. ^c P *phyed*.

¹⁰³ See MATHES 2016: 314–316.

¹⁰⁴ For Khenpo Phuntsok, there are in reality not four drops but one drop.

¹⁰⁵ See also ISAACSON & SFERRA (2014: 83, n. 104), who notice early *Kālacakra* influences in the **Sthitisamāsa*.

course there are other possible explanations, such as that *Sahajavajra may have adopted his doctrine in an environment of growing Kālacakra influence. But if this was the case, he could have also abandoned his idea of Pāramitānaya-based *mahāmudrā*.

Conclusion

To conclude this discussion, I would like to propose that Pāramitānaya-based *mahāmudrā* practice falls into the category of Mantranaya, although it can be independent of the formal Tantric practice of the creation and completion stages. What counts is that the adept is considered to profit from an immediate access to emptiness, just as in Tantra. In other words, since the particular form of Pāramitānaya under discussion here has, thanks to the pith instructions of the *guru*, an important Tantric element, it not only accords with, or follows, Mantranaya, but it is Mantranaya. This would then be in line with the direct access to *mahāmudrā* described in Maitrīpa's *Tattvaviṃśikā*, verse 11 ("The *yogin* who has seen true reality, however, is wholly devoted to *mahāmudrā*; his faculties being unsurpassable, he abides in [the realisation of] the nature of all entities"¹⁰⁶), as well as the *mahāmudrā* union of insight and means taught in the verse from the **Tattvāvatāra* quoted by *Sahajavajra ("For outstanding *yogins* the union of insight and means is simply meditation. The victorious ones call it *mahāmudrā* union"¹⁰⁷). In other words, **sūtra-mahāmudrā* then does not mean that *mahāmudrā* becomes "Sūtric," but that *sūtra* passages that support pith instructions become Tantric. This reversal is a key point. That Padmavajra refers to the *Samādhirājasūtra* as a Tantra must be certainly seen in this light.

¹⁰⁶ See above, n. 32.

¹⁰⁷ See above, n. 78.

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AMĀ: *Amanasikārādhādhāra*

Ed. by MATHES 2015: 489–497

GP KU: *Guruparamparākrama-Upadeśa* (Tibetan translation)

— B: dPal spungs block print of the *Phyag rgya chen po'i rgya gzhung*, vol. *hūm*, 290b₃–320b₄.

— D: Derge bsTan 'gyur 3716, *rgyud*, vol. *tsu*, 164b₂–183a₅.

— P: Peking bsTan 'gyur 4539, *rgyud 'grel*, vol. *nu*, 184b₂–206b₁.

GAS: *Guhyādi-Aṣṭasiddhi-saṅgraha*

Ed. by Samdhong Rinpoche and Vrajvallabh Dwivedi. Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1987

CMA: *Caturmudrānvaya*

Ed. by MATHES 2015: 389–402

CMU: **Caturmudropadeśa* (Tibetan translation)

— B: dPal spung block print of the *Phyag rgya chen po'i rgya gzhung*, vol. *hūm*, 9a₁–13b₁.

— D: Derge bsTan 'gyur 2295, *rgyud*, vol. *shi*, 211b₄–214b₅.

— P: Peking bsTan 'gyur 3143, *rgyud 'grel*, vol. *tsi*, 231a₁–234a₅.

TRĀ: *Tattvaratnāvalī*

Ed. by MATHES 2015: 341–369

TA: *Tattvāvatāra* (Tibetan translation)

— B: dPal spung block print of the *Phyag rgya chen po'i rgya gzhung*, vol. *hūm*, 320b₅–377a₃.

— D: Derge bsTan 'gyur 3709, *rgyud*, vol. *tsu*, 39a₂–76a₄.

— P: Peking bsTan 'gyur 4532, *rgyud 'grel*, vol. *nu*, 42b₁–84b₂.

TD: *Tattvadaśaka*

Ed. by MATHES 2015: 485–88

TDT: **Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* (Tibetan translation)

— B: dPal spung block print of the *Phyag rgya chen po'i rgya gzhung*, vol. *ā*, 1a₁–27a₆.

— D: Derge bsTan 'gyur 2254, *rgyud*, vol. *wi*, 160b₇–177a₇.

— P: Peking bsTan 'gyur 3099, *rgyud 'grel*, vol. *mi*, 176a₂–195a₃.

TV: *Tattvaviṃśikā*

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MSP: *Mahāsukhaprakāśa*

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BhPHTAP: *Bhagavatīprajñāpāramitāhṛdayaṭīkāṛthapradīpanāma* (Tibetan translation)

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Ed. by MATHES 2015: 385–88

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— See also MATSUDA 1995

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